

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEONIDAS MERRITT 11/12/44

2/8/45
Exam. O. Report

STORAGE OF CARGO: "A bomb carried aboard the plane exploded together with the plane's gasoline supply. The SS LEONIDAS MERRITT caught fire from the foremast aft to the forward part of the bridge. The vessel had about six drums of gasoline on the deck by #8 hatch on the starboard side. These caught fire as well as the tarpaulins on the hatches and the booms on the foremast and mainmast. The plane's gasoline supply had ignited at the time of the impact and flames had momentarily enveloped the vessel clear to the mizzenmast."

2/8/45
Master

FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT: "We had the hoses trained on the gasoline drums where the gas was puring out in one mass of fire. We put that out with a tremendous force of water right on the spot. It was all you could do. We used the strongest force of water we could to put them out. We used CO-2's for the little outbreaks all over the place. We had no CO-2's big enough to combat the fire on deck and used water pressure. Our fire locker is the mast house in the mainmast. That is where the first plane hit. All our spares and refills were smashed in our first attack. There is no mistake, the only thing is your fire hoses for putting out the big fires. The small fire extinguishers are meant only for minor fires, those which you can get out quickly. Of course, if you get too much other equipment around, it is more or less liable to get into your way. Those fires you must get out immediately. You have got to have your rough and ready hoses right on the job."

2/8/45
Master

CLOTHING: "The only thing to do is to keep as much clothing on as you can and still be comfortable in the weather you are in. Of course, you've got to move around, and a couldn't be smothered up where the temperature is around 80 or 90 degrees. On the first attack, one of the Armed Guard did have his shirt on, and was badly burned around the body and arms. On the second attack, it was made sure each one was wearing a shirt. The burns were much less severe. In fact, in one case, one of the Armed Guard crew was wearing a short-sleeved shirt, and was badly burned around both arms only as far as the shirt sleeves were, above which point the burns visibly stopped. Also, I heard the commanding officer or medical officer on an escort vessel close to us, upon receiving the report of his medical officer whom he had sent on board to help, give orders to his crew through the loud speaker, for all of them to immediately put on shirts and trousers. I gathered that this was owing to a report given him by the medical officer whom he had sent aboard my ship."

EDWARD H. CROCKETT: 9/27/44

2/8/45
Master

SHIP'S RADIO: "I believe that the emergency batteries should be placed in a more secure position in order to avoid being displaced in case of sudden explosion".