

SS MATTHEW P. DEADY

SS ALCOA PIONEER

On 4 November, 1944, the SS MATTHEW P. DEADY, a liberty type freighter was struck by a Japanese suicide plane on the port side of No. 1 hold while anchored at Tacloban, Leyte. Twenty-eight of the three hundred sixty-four personnel on board were killed by the explosion of the plane and part of the highly inflammable cargo was immediately set fire. The following verbatim testimony of the master of the MATTHEW P. DEADY concisely describes the effectiveness of the ships fire fighting equipment:

"The explosion set off 150 cylinders of acetylene gas that was on the foredeck, starboard side. These cylinders exploded and set fire to drums of gasoline, fuel oil and sulphuric acid which was on deck. The fire was fought with all means at hand and was controlled after about one hour's fighting." "The Room was for the fire pumps to be running continuously and all fire hoses were laid out. There were no orders given to the crew because they responded immediately on the crash. From my position on the bridge you could see nothing on the forward deck but flames and I don't know how the crew got out to get a hold of these hoses on the forward deck, but it seemed only a matter of seconds when they had all the hoses forward playing on the fire. Within three minutes, the entire fire was under control and only in isolated places did the fire continue to burn for any length of time. These places were extinguished by using the hoses and the CO 2-extinguishers that were available."