

THE CARRIER CAME THROUGH

The U.S. aircraft carrier Franklin is home in triumph. Through her torn side brave men thrilled as the Statue of Liberty hove in sight. ~~From almost certain disaster Franklin was back home.~~ Bomed only 66 miles off Japan she limped 12,000 miles across the Pacific, through the Panama Canal, up to New York.

This is what happened: March 19th, a routine naval patrol; the Americans trailing their coats almost on the shores of Japan. Action stations. Japanese bombers, hidden by thick clouds, ~~are~~ ^{were} swooping down on the American fleet. Half the Franklin's complement of fighter planes were already on a mission. The deck was now full as more prepared to take off.

(air shot) When they were airborne a Jap bomber came through the clouds and ~~shattered the Franklin with two bombs.~~ ^{got 2 hits!}

The first blast exploded big tanks of aviation spirit. ~~Twenty-two planes below deck blazed up, spat out a~~ white-hot sheet of flame ~~that~~ instantly killed hundreds of men. Then more explosions.

This time the ammunition was going up. Save the ship, was the order given to survivors. The American ~~ship~~ ^{vessel} Miller came alongside. ~~The aircraft carrier list was blown sideways.~~ All over the ~~ship~~ ^{carrier} men were dying, more men than the ship's doctors could possibly attend. ~~They did their best.~~ ^{But} There was no panic anywhere, ~~on the ship.~~ Everybody aboard knew that any second might bring the explosion that would scatter the Franklin in pieces over the Pacific. Another ship, the Santa Fe, came alongside and the wounded were transferred by Breeches Buoy. ~~While the rescue was going on~~ ^{then} came yet another terrific explosion.

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It was nearly ten o'clock, close on three hours after the ^{first} bomb struck. Three hours of Hell on earth. ~~But there was no panic.~~ As Padres attended the dying survivors fought ^{to} save the ship. ^{a fight so terrific could} ~~It seemed a hopeless task.~~

Listing heavily after that last explosion Franklin still had the help of the Santa Fe. It was a perilous position. Any one of those tremendous explosions might have sunk anything close by. The Franklin's flight-deck was a shambles, The stricken carrier ~~was~~ ablaze almost from end to end. Every hose the Santa Fe could muster was brought to bear on the fires. ~~Aircraft carriers are the most vulnerable of warships - lightly armoured, tight-packed with petrol, shells, oil, one huge store of explosives.~~

The U.S.S. Hickock joined in the rescue. The daylight of that death-crowded day was fading. Men on the fan tail had been trapped for three hours, a wall of flame creeping closer behind them. The Hickock nosed up and they jumped to safety.

The man who fell in the sea was rescued. All through the day men ~~was~~ had been blown overboard by explosions. For miles around hundreds were picked up other ships. Some came to safety after hours on flimsy rafts. But by this time Franklin had come through the worst of the ordeal. She was still burning, but the fires were under control. There were no more explosions.

Next day, miraculously, she was still afloat, able to sail for home, her surviving crew heroes of an action of bravery unsurpassed in warfare at sea.

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May 22, 1945

TITLE: "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!" THE SAGA OF THE U.S.S. FRANKLIN

These are official U.S. Navy films, made by combat cameramen under fire, aboard the aircraft carrier Franklin.

One of the greatest disasters in American naval history---but a proud story of heroism and devotion to the old Navy battle cry... "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!"

2. The Franklin comes home! Back from an almost certain Pacific grave comes the ship the Japs boasted they had sunk---blasted and shattered, but moving under her own power, her own crew aboard. These pictures, long delayed, as a camera record of an amazing story of disaster, then triumph, at sea.
7. Her Captain, Leslie E. Gehres, shows where she was hit 66 miles off Japan, and then the route she took home---via Pearl Harbor---12,000 miles across the Pacific.
10. It all began on the morning of March 19. An ordinary day in the long campaign to smash Japan. Aboard the Franklin, was Father Joseph Timothy O'Callahan, Senior Ship Chaplain. In a few moments he is to be plunged into a blazing inferno and to show himself to be one of the bravest men that ever lived. Elsewhere, pilots are being briefed for this morning's strikes. Then, call to battle stations. Other patrol planes and fighters have been launched long before dawn. Now it is 7 o'clock, and another powerful striking force of planes is ready, loaded with all the munitions they can carry. Corsairs, Helldivers, torpedo planes, loaded with 500-pounders, 250-pounders, rockets,---the two top decks crammed with high explosives. Now it is 7 minutes after 7. Everything's all right---everything's going smoothly. Another battle day moves ahead, and then, in the words of Captain Gehres: (TALK)

PART II

2. The first blast sets fire to 100-octane gasoline tanks. Twenty-two planes on the hangar deck below are aflame. Hundreds were killed instantly as the first white-hot flash swept the deck.
4. Munitions are flying everywhere all over the great flat-top---about as long as three city blocks. Men fight to save their ship. The U.S.S. Miller comes alongside. The flight deck's elevator has been blown out in blasts that threw planes and men the length of the ship. But there is no panic. Survivors look after the scores of wounded. More than 1100 men were lost or injured---probably the greatest loss on any American ship in the war. These are men we cannot fail. Our war bonds, more war bonds, must be our answer to their heroism.
11. Wounded are transferred to the U.S.S. Santa Fe. Scores are removed by

PART II

makeshift breeches-buoys. It is now 9:52. Another terrific explosion shakes the Franklin.

14. The fight to save the ship seems impossible, but the men will not abandon her. On the nakedly exposed flight deck, Father O'Callahan administers last rites to the dying. The Father is reported as slated to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism. The wounded man, Robert Blanchard of Brooklyn, is near death from burns. But he is later to make a spectacular recovery--and live. Meanwhile, the fight goes on as new explosions rock the Franklin.
20. The Sante Fe returns to the now heavily listing ship to resume her mission of mercy and help with her own firelines. Death is everywhere. Even now, no man aboard knows where new explosions may occur. The flight deck is a shambles, scarred and blackened. And below are huge gasoline tanks, torpedo racks, ammunition magazines, the ship's own fuel. An aircraft carrier is the most explosive and inflammable when hit. Men already exhausted and weary of the struggle keep on. In the face of almost certain failure, they will not give up. They will not give up the ship.

PART III

2. Now, thrilling scenes of rescue as the carrier appears doomed. The U.S.S. Hickok comes up to the fantail where part of the crew is trapped by flames. These men had stood heroically through three hours that seemed a lifetime. Tense, terrible moments as they prepare to jump to the other ship.
8. One man misses. Prompt action brings him in to safety. More than 800 men had to be fished out of the sea. Heads bobbed in the water for miles behind the carrier. More lives are saved as these men are picked up from a life raft. By early afternoon, fires are being brought under control. The Franklin still floats. Then, next day, amazingly, homeward bound, her engine stepped up by repairs. She had taken more punishment than any other carrier ever took--and still remained afloat. The determination of her men pulled her through.
22. Now, a Purple Heart Ceremony for the men of the Franklin. Nearly every man aboard turned out a hero. For especial bravery the Captain has recommended 500 awards. Today all America salutes men like these: Boatswain Frisbee of Philadelphia, Quartermaster G.P. Abbott of Jacksonville, Florida, Steward T.J. Frasure, Little Rock, Arkansas, Seaman 1st Class N.C. Mayer, Private 1st Class Stephen Novack, Worcester, Mass. Water Tender J.W. Turner of Indianapolis, and 18-year-old Fireman F.W. Masters of Portland, Oregon. Yes, she still waves, the proud flag of the Franklin. The world will long remember the courage and heroism of her fighting men--and all the men that are making history in the Pacific. And the world will remember, too, those who were more than heroes. Today, the Franklin is a symbol of the fighting spirit that will lead to final victory--"Don't Give Up The Ship!"