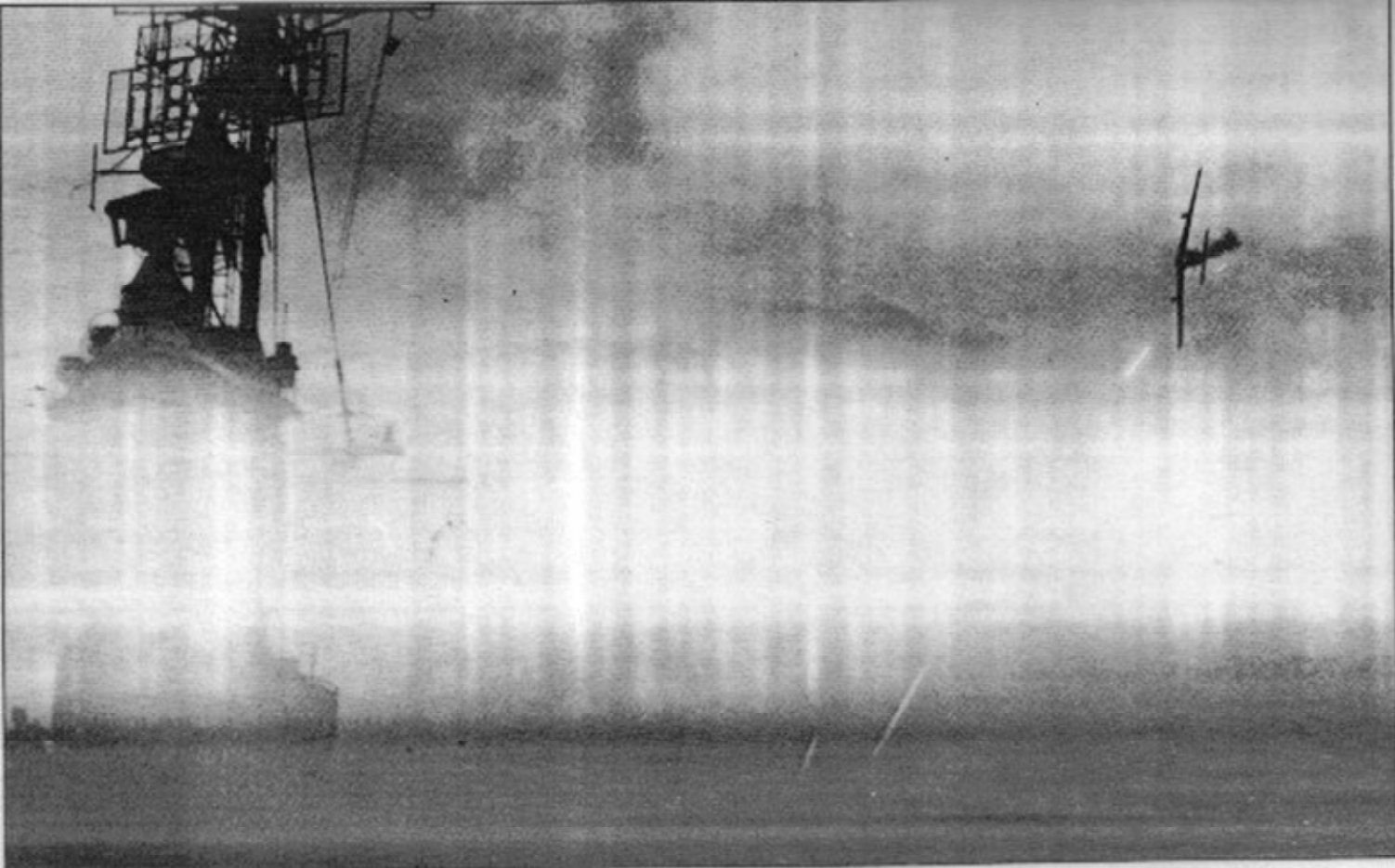
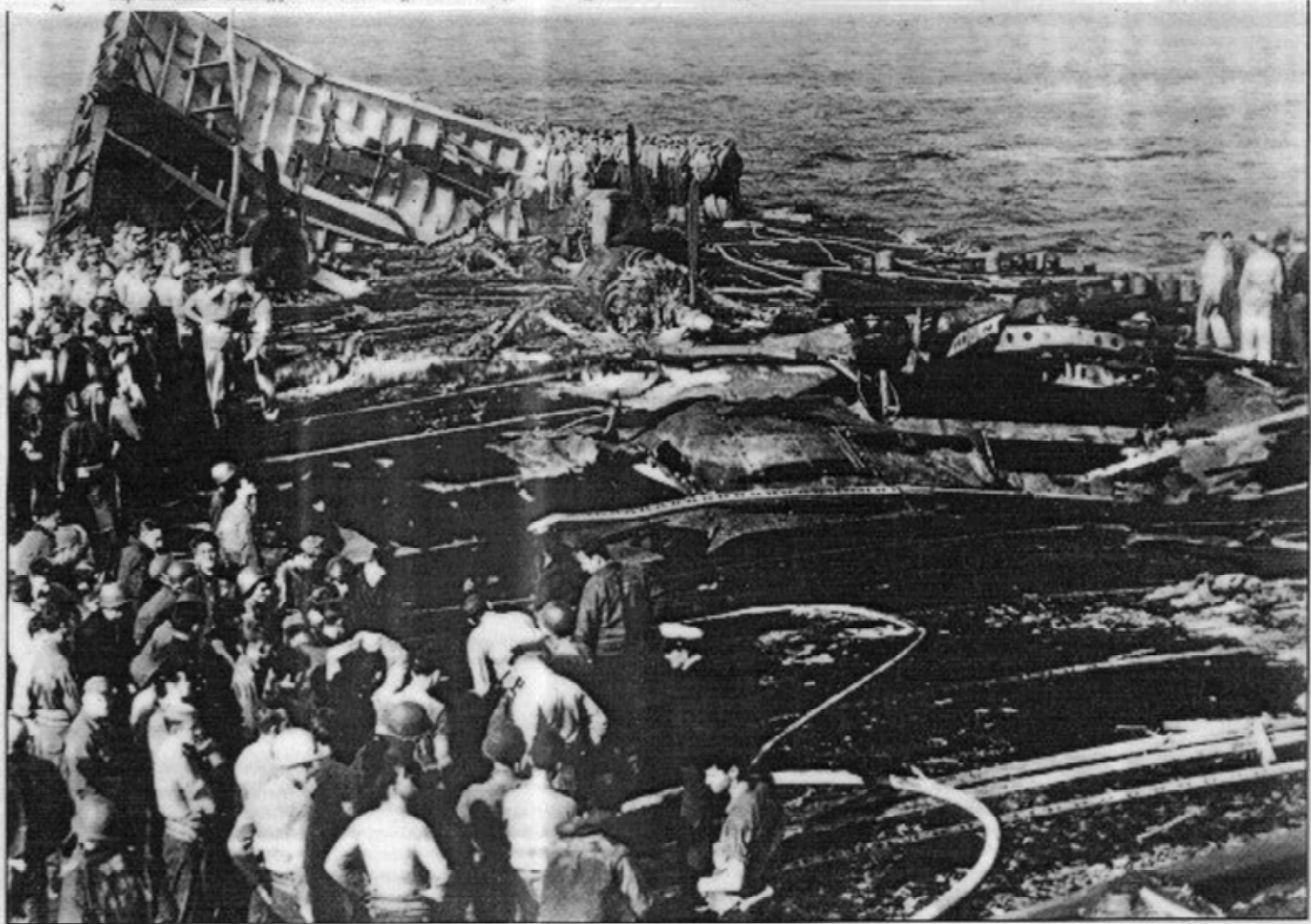




USS SANGAMON CVE 26



Jap kamikaze heading for the USS Sangamon on May 4, 1945 off Okinawa. She dropped a bomb and crashed into the flight deck. (US Navy photo)



The flight deck on the USS Sangamon CVE-26 the morning after the kamikaze attack of May 4, 1945. This was madder to see who was missing. (US Navy photo)

United States Ship

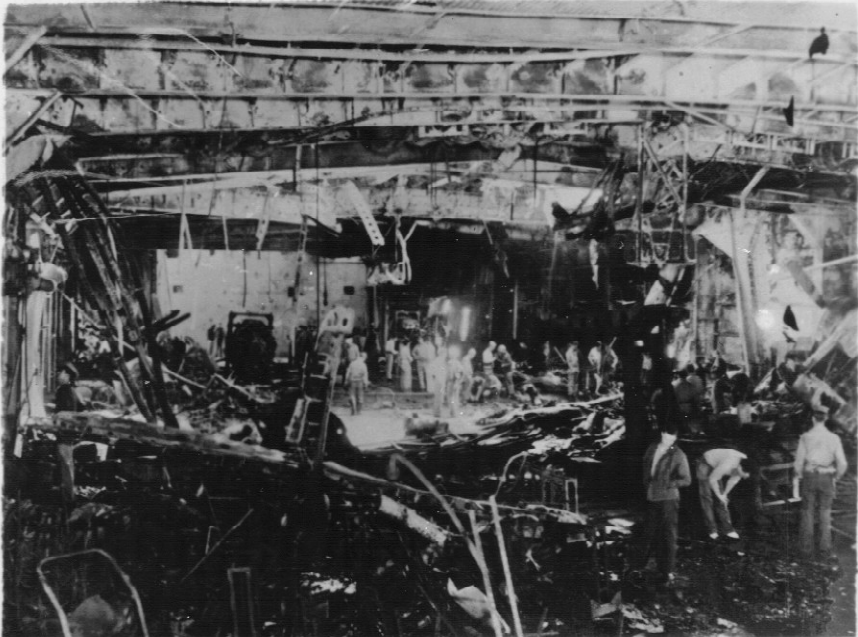
U.S.S. SANGAMON (CVE-26)

The second Sangamon (AO-28), was laid down as Esso Trenton on 13 March 1939 by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., Kearny, N.J.; launched on 4 November; acquired by the Navy on 22 October 1940. Renamed Sangamon AO-28, she was commissioned on 23 October 1940, Comdr. J.R. Duncan in command.

With the new year, 1942, however, she was designated for conversion to an auxiliary aircraft carrier. On 11 February, she arrived in Hampton Roads. On the 25th she was decommissioned. On 20 August, she was redesignated ACV-26; and, five days later, she was recommissioned, Capt. C.W. Wieber in command. On 25 October, she sailed east with Task Force 34 to provide air cover for Operation "Torch," the invasion of North Africa. She got underway to return to Norfolk; whence, after repairs, she sailed for Panama and the Pacific. By mid-January 1943, Sangamon had arrived at Efate, New Hebrides.

Redesignated CVE-26 on 15 July 1943, Sangamon shifted her base of operations from Efate to Espiritu Santo in August; and, in September, she returned to the United States for an overhaul at Mare Island. On 19 October, she departed San Diego, embarked and sailed for Espiritu Santo. On the 20th, arrived in the Gilberts to support the assault on Tarawa. Her next amphibious operation, the assault on Kwajalein in Marshalls. At 1651 on the 25th, during routine flight operations, a returning fighter failed to hook a wire on landing; broke through the barriers. Its belly tank, torn loose, skidded forward, spewing flaming fuel. Fire soon spread among the planes. By 1659, it was under control. Seven of the crew died in those 8 minutes. Temporary repairs were made at sea; and from 31 January until mid-February, Sangamon supported the assault and occupation of Kwajalein. She departed the Marshalls and headed back to Pearl Harbor to complete repairs. She covered the landing at Aitape from the 22d to the 24th; retired to Manus for two days. Sangamon then returned to Espiritu Santo.

After the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Sangamon was detached from TF 53. From 13 July to 1 August, she covered the bombardment groups engaged in the capture of Guam. On 9 September, Sangamon departed Seeadler Harbor and steamed for Morotai. Prior to the 20 October landings on Leyte, Sangamon launched regular flights. On the 20th, her planes covered the landing forces and the ships in the transport areas. That day, she also came under enemy air attack and took a hit at the main deck level. Tore a two by six foot section of plating loose. During the intense fighting, several of Sangamon's crew were injured and one was killed by strafing fire. Sangamon anchored in Seeadler Harbor on 3 November. Six days later, she headed back to the United States for a shipyard overhaul at Bremerton, Washington. In mid-February, the CVE arrived in Hawaiian waters. On 5 March, she continued westward; and, on the 16th, she arrived at Ulithi. Assigned to the initial assault phase of Operation "Iceberg"-the invasion of the Ryukyus. On the 21st, Sangamon departed Ulithi. On 4 May, she put into Kerama Retto to rearm. At 1830, the CVE got underway. Japanese attackers, however, were soon reported only some 29 miles off. At 1933, the kamikaze dropped his bomb and crashed into the center of the flight deck, and the ship was soon out of control. By 2230, all fires under control. Communication with other units had been regained. At 2320, Sangamon with 11 dead, 25 missing, and 21 seriously wounded, got underway to return to Kerama Retto. On 12 June, she arrived at Norfolk. Decommissioned on 24 October 1945, she was struck from the Navy list. She was sold to Hillcone Steamship Co., San Francisco.



WRECKAGE ON HANGAR DECK OF ESCORT CARRIER SANGAMON
AFTER A KAMIKAZE ATTACK IN THE RYUKYUS.

US NAVY PHOTO 105-14