

USS Bennington Crew's Stories

<http://www.uss-bennington.org/stz-boilerexpl53.html>

Boiler Explosion

USS Bennington CVA-20
27 April 1953
10:03 Hours

The following information is provided directly from articles, which I've researched.

Joe Pires 8-2-1999

Names of 11 killed and seven hurt in carrier blast

The Navy released the names of the 11 killed and seven injured in an explosion aboard the aircraft carrier Bennington off Cuba. Of those injured, only one was admitted to the Naval Hospital at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. All of the injured were listed as having 1st or 2nd degree burns.

The explosion was caused by a failure of the boiler tubing while the 27,000-ton carrier was on a shakedown cruise off the southeastern part of Cuba.

Ship Damaged Slightly

Reports stated that there was slight damage to the ship in the accident. The explosion occurred at 10:03 AM Norfolk time. Apparently, the Bennington was helping another ship at the time of the explosion. A message intercepted by the Headquarters of the Navy's Atlantic Air Arm in Norfolk stated that the destroyer USS Cone indicated that the carrier Bennington had taken an injured man from the destroyer and performed emergency surgery on him, then transferred him to a hospital by helicopter.

In Memoriam

They That Go Down to The Sea in Ships,
That Do Business in Great Waters;
These See the Works of The Lord,
And His Wonders in The Deep.
(Psalm 107: 23-24)

Killed in Blast

Fireman

Charles Arthur Arrowood
13 November 1933 ----- 27 April 1953
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Fireman

Paul Raymond Cuvar
31 December 1931 ---- 27 April 1953
Lake City, Florida

Fireman

William Arnel Garretson
26 July 1931 ---- 27 April 1953
Cornell, Illinois

Fireman

Robert Adolph Jones
23 April 1933 ---- 27 April 1953
Jersey City, New Jersey

Boilerman 3RD class

Walter Elvin Liston, Jr.
5 August 1930 ---- 27 April 1953
Columbus, Ohio

Fireman

James Wilfred Mills
28 May 1929 ---- 27 April 1953
St. Albans, Maine

Fireman

Louis Jackson Mitchell
22 March 1931 ---- 27 April 1953
Chancellor, Virginia

Fireman

Richard Joseph Mott
15 May 1933 ---- 27 April 1953
Detroit, Michigan

Fireman

William Edward Satterfield, Jr.
27 January 1932 ---- 27 April 1953
Georgia

Boilerman 3rd Class

Frederick Paul Selfridge
18 December 1930 ---- 27 April 1953
Pinehurst, Massachusetts

Fireman

Lowell Dale Wells
16 September 1930 ---- 27 April 1953
Tolar, Texas

Injured in the blast

Seaman - Harold E. Latimer of LeClair, Iowa
Boilerman 3RD Class - Jerry G. Caldwell of Seattle, Washington
Boilerman/Fireman - Donald A. Becker of Lesueue, Minn.
Seaman Apprentice - Arthur Van Teymbroeck of Milpon, Florida
Commissaryman 3RD Class - James L. Craig of Waukegan, Ill.
Aviation Storekeeper - Edward Leroy Miller of Syracuse, N.Y.
Seaman - Wallace MacGreer of East Gadsden, Ala.

Navy Commendation

It should be noted here that because of the actions of Joseph Pugh, a Boilerman 1st Class, B-Division, from #2 Fireroom, this event didn't have the chance to become a greater Tragedy. In response to his actions, he received the following:

The secretary of the navy takes pleasure in commending:

Joseph Pugh
Boilerman 1st class
United states navy

For service as set forth in the following citation:

For outstanding performance of duty as petty officer in charge of number two fireroom, onboard the USS Bennington, while the vessel was operating off the coast of Cuba on 27 April 1953, when a major boiler casualty occurred in the number one fireroom, completely filling the number two fireroom with steam, Pugh skillfully directed his crew in the securing of the number two fireroom, despite extreme conditions of physical discomfort. By his leadership, initiative and prompt actions, Pugh was greatly instrumental in reducing the possibility of additional personnel casualties and in preventing serious material damage to the engineering plant of the Bennington, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the united states naval service.

The Navy Commendation ribbon is hereby authorized.

This statement was released by the secretary of the navy for the president

From: "louis hodgson" [louhod@frontiernet.net]
To: [info@uss-bennington.org]
Subject: 1 ARTICAL
Date: Tuesday, March 02, 2004 9:53 AM

Joe and Lonnie,

This is one article from two pages of Jet Blast 5-11-53. It may clarify some "mistakes" in the Bennington site.

It happened in #1 not #2 fire room, I was there!

Lou

Faulty Installation Causes Explosion

At 1003 Monday, April 27, a ruptured downcomer tube on a boiler in Number 1 Fire Room caused an explosion that cost the lives of eleven men. Four others were seriously burned by the steam that poured through the break.

Captain David B. Young, in a

In Memoriam

Charles A. Arrowood, FN
Paul R. Cuvar, FN
William A. Garretson, FN
Robert A. Jones, FN
Walter E. Liston, Jr., BT3
James W. Mills, FN
Louis J. Mitchell, FN
Richard J. Mott, FN
William E. Satterfield, Jr., FN
Frederick P. Selfridge, BT3
Lowell D. Walls, FN

Died April 27, 1953
On Board USS Bennington
In the Line of Duty

special statement for the JET BLAST, said, "The unfortunate and unforeseeable accident was caused by the defective installation of a large boiler water tube at the time that the ship was built."

"It was not possible to detect

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Boiler Explosion

Continued from Page 1

the defect in the tube installation. No Bennington personnel could possibly have contributed to the casualty nor could they have prevented it."

Captain Young was high in his praise of the manner in which the crew reacted to the emergency and stated, "The prompt and heroic damage control measures taken by the surviving engineering personnel limited the loss of life and material damage."

Vice Admiral John J. Ballentine, ComAirLant, said, in a dispatch to the ship: "I want to express to you and to your officers and crew my strong feeling of sympathy and regret concerning the recent tragic accident in which eleven of your shipmates lost their lives. Such material failures are a constant hazard to you people, and I feel that these men who lost their lives have served their country as nobly and honorably as those who are fighting in Korea today."

"I have just talked with Rear Admiral Regan and Commander Cole and concur with their high opinions of the manner in which you have handled this difficult situation. The prompt and effective manner in which the casualty was controlled no doubt saved the loss of many more lives and is proof of the high spirit and devotion to duty of your men."