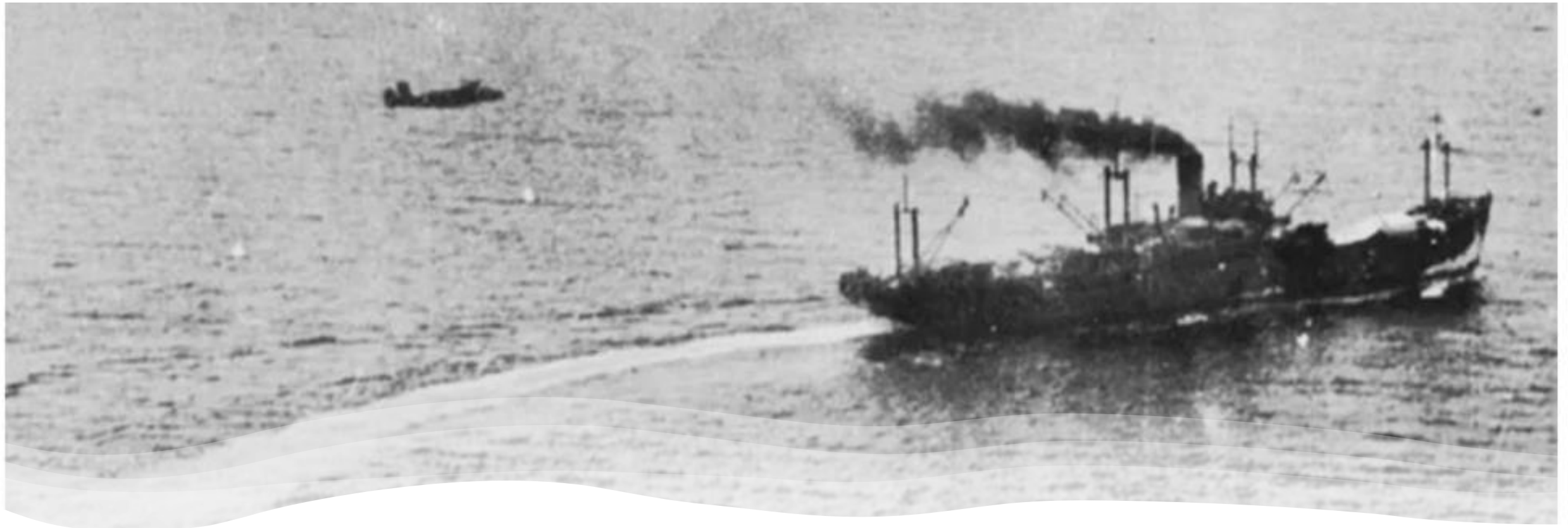
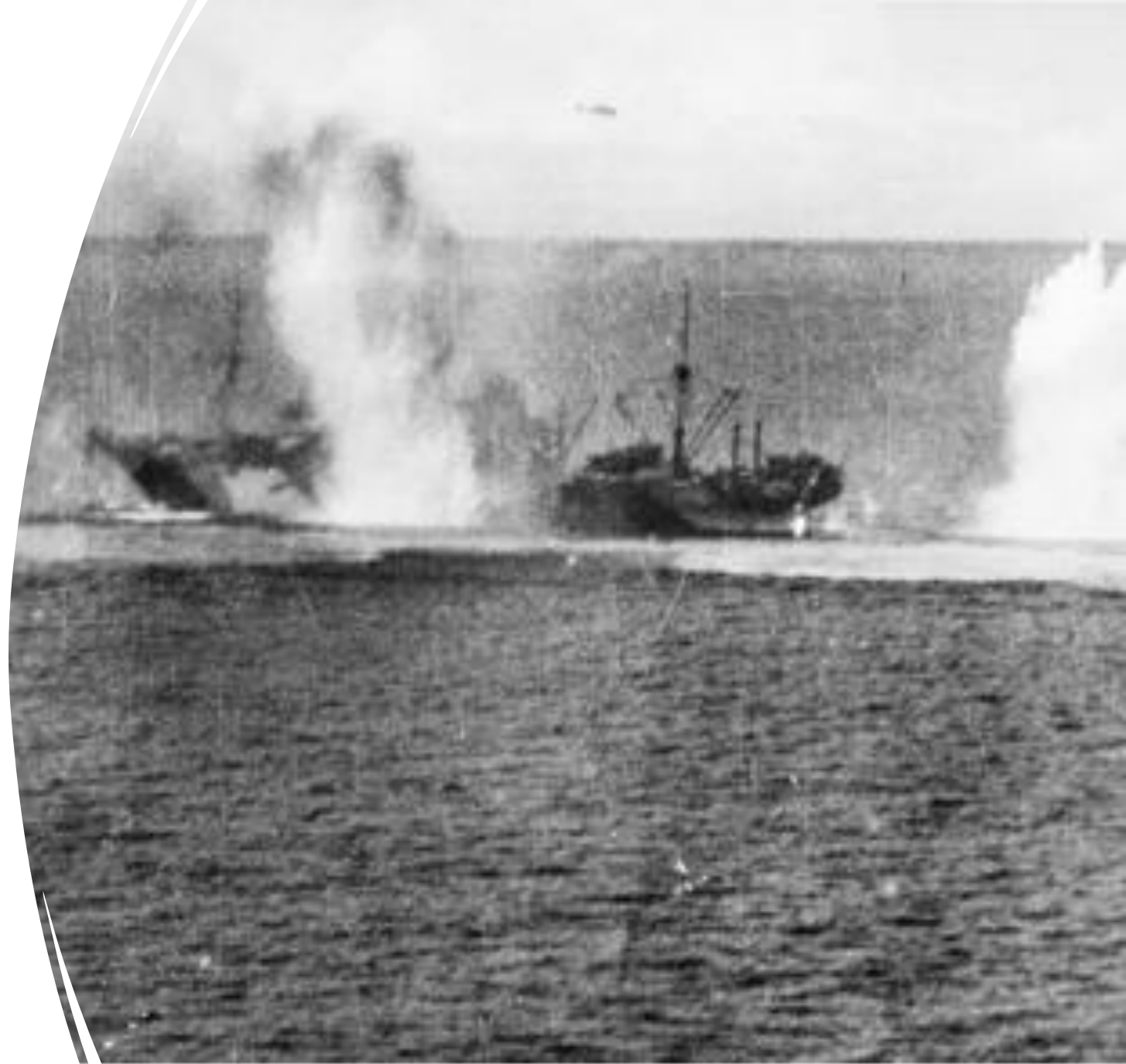




**What was the Battle of
Bismarck Sea?**

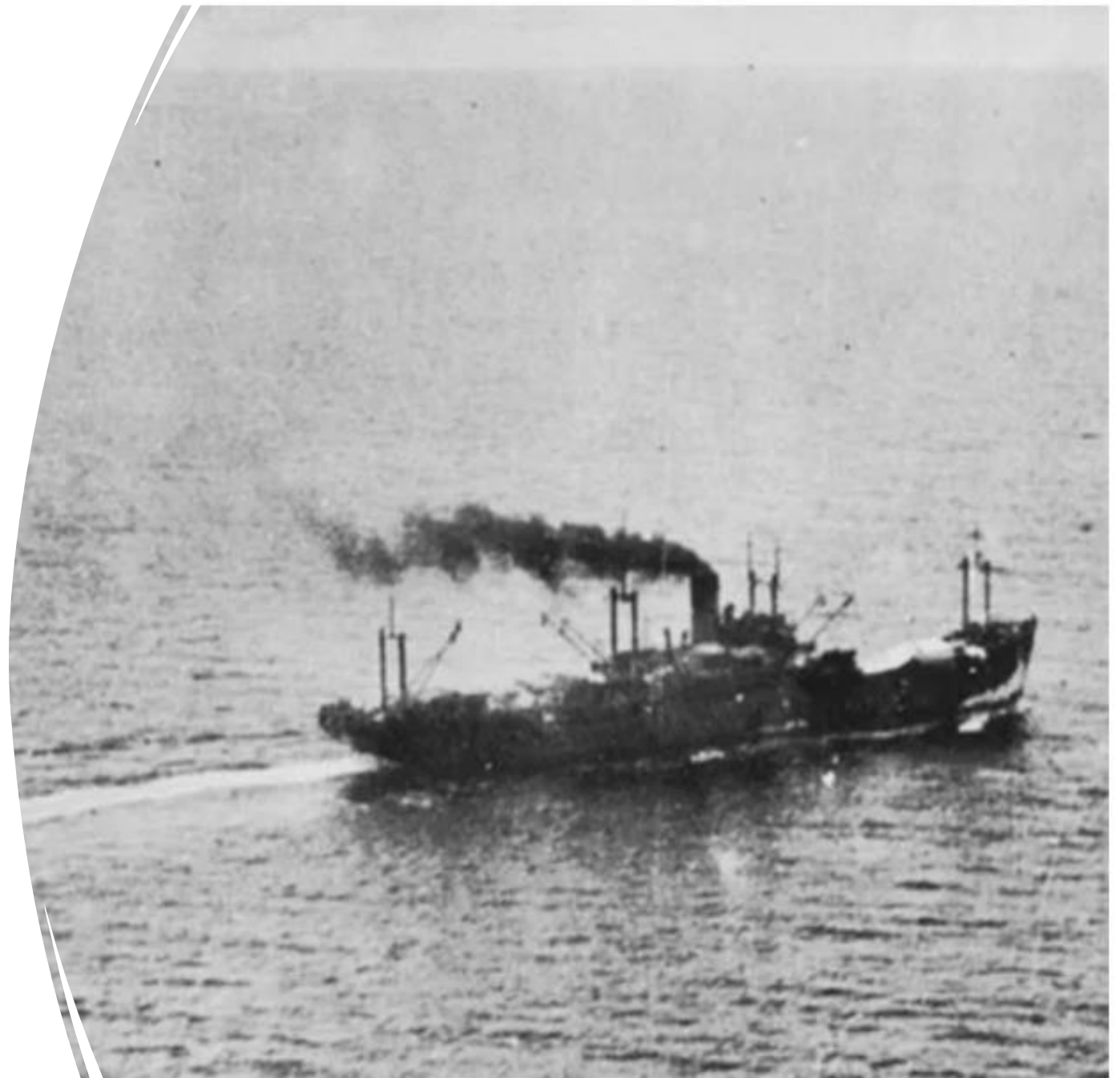
What was the Battle of the Bismarck Sea?

- A Battle between Japanese Navy & the Allies (US & Australia)
- 2 - 4 March 1943



Why did the Battle of Bismarck Sea happen?

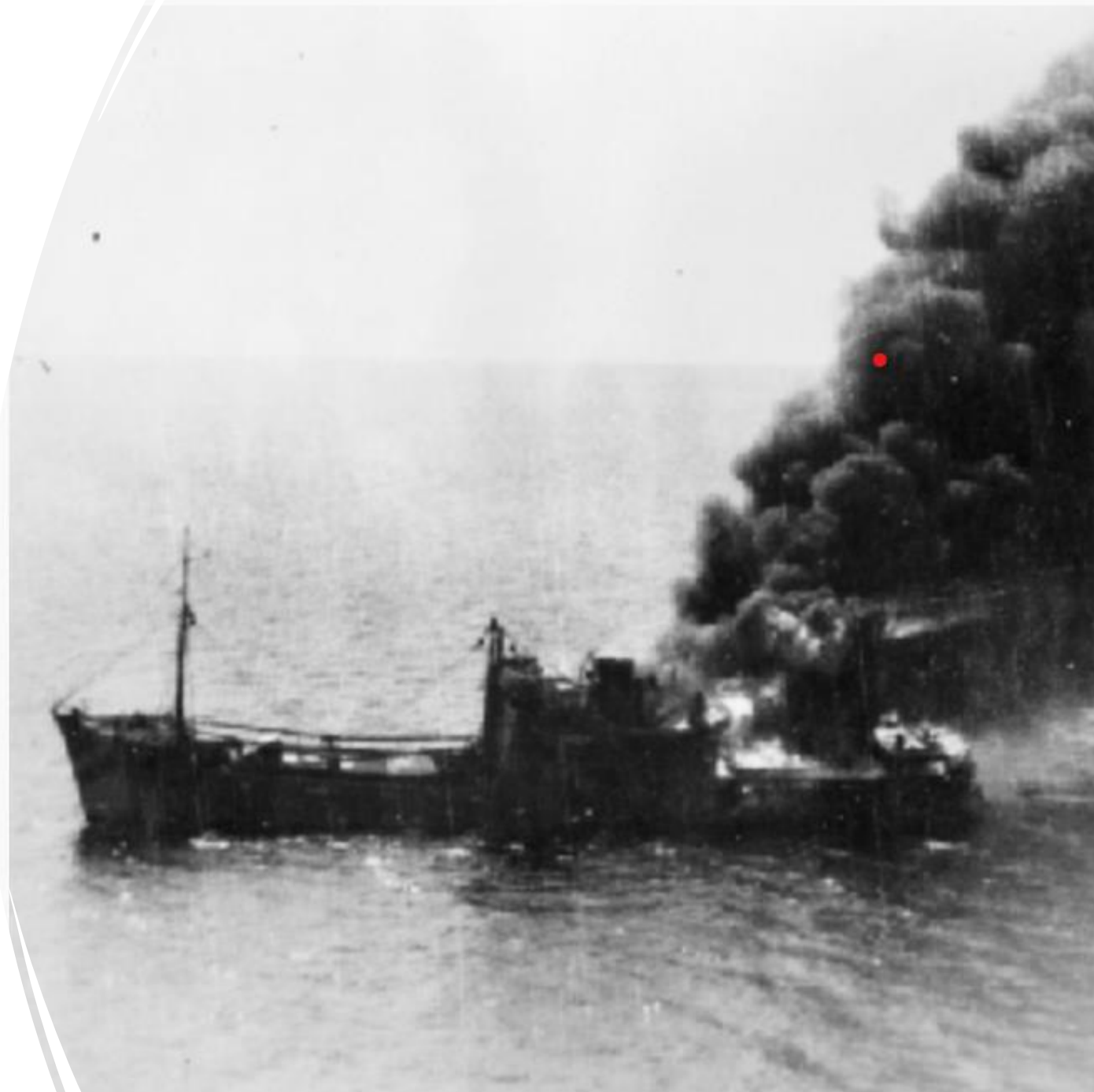
- A Japanese convoy was bringing supplies & troops to New Guinea.
- Allies showed up to stop them.



📷 Low level attack on Japanese shipping during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. US Air Force

What was the target?

- Japanese naval convoy.
- 8 destroyers.
- 8 transport ships.
- 6,900 soldiers.
- 100 Japanese Zeros.



What did the Japanese Zero look like?



Where is the Bismarck Sea?

- North of Queensland, North Papua New Guinea.



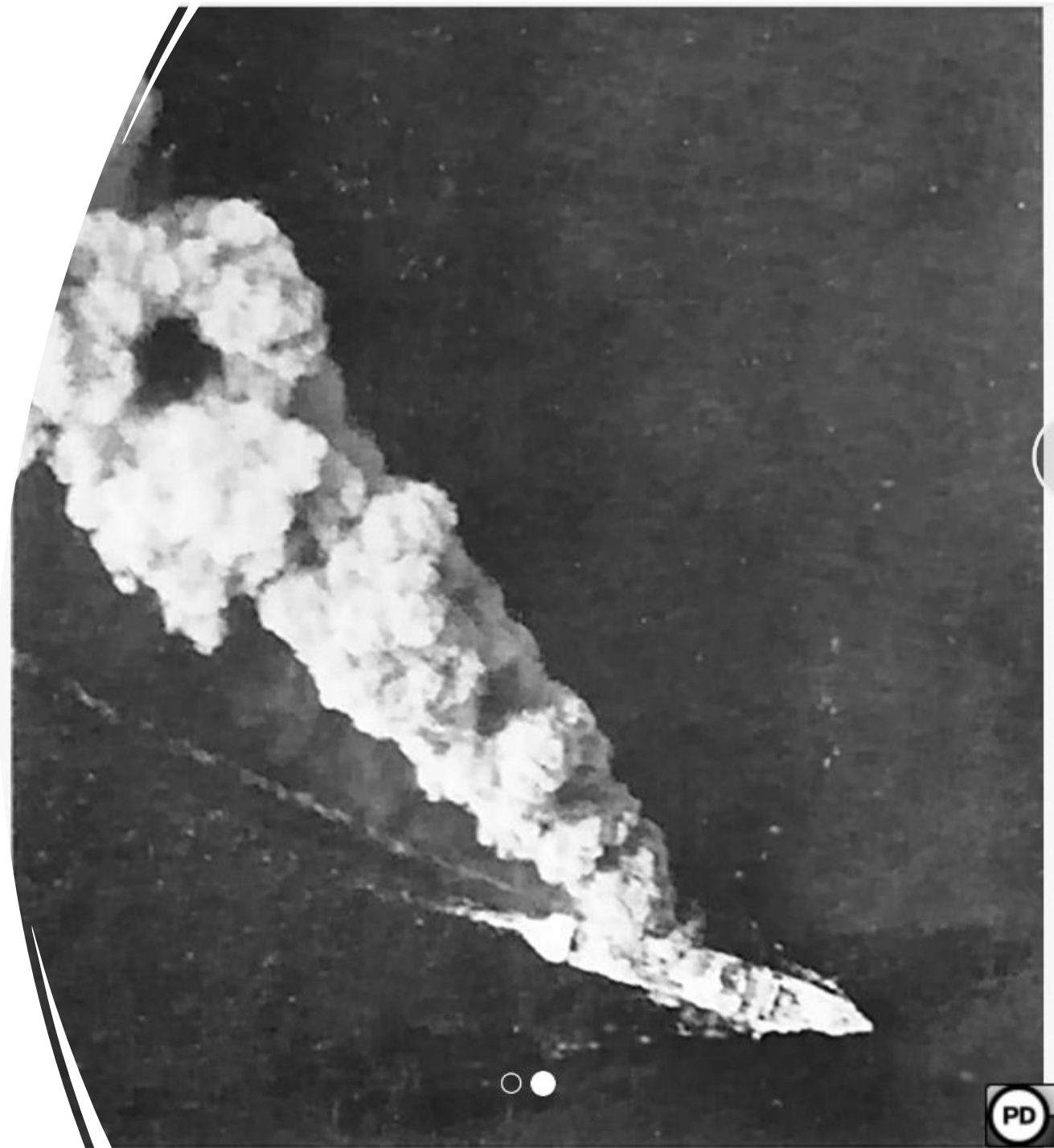
What happened 2 March 1943?

- RAAF Kieth Hampshire led **Douglas Boston's** to **bomb & strafe Lae airstrip.**
- Airstrip **damaged.**
- They **stopped the enemy** from using the airstrip to take-off & join the battle.



Then what happened?

- **B-17 Flying Fortresses** attacked.
- **1000-pound bombs** dropped on war ships, setting one on fire.
- Ships zig-zagged but **could not escape.**



—

For example?

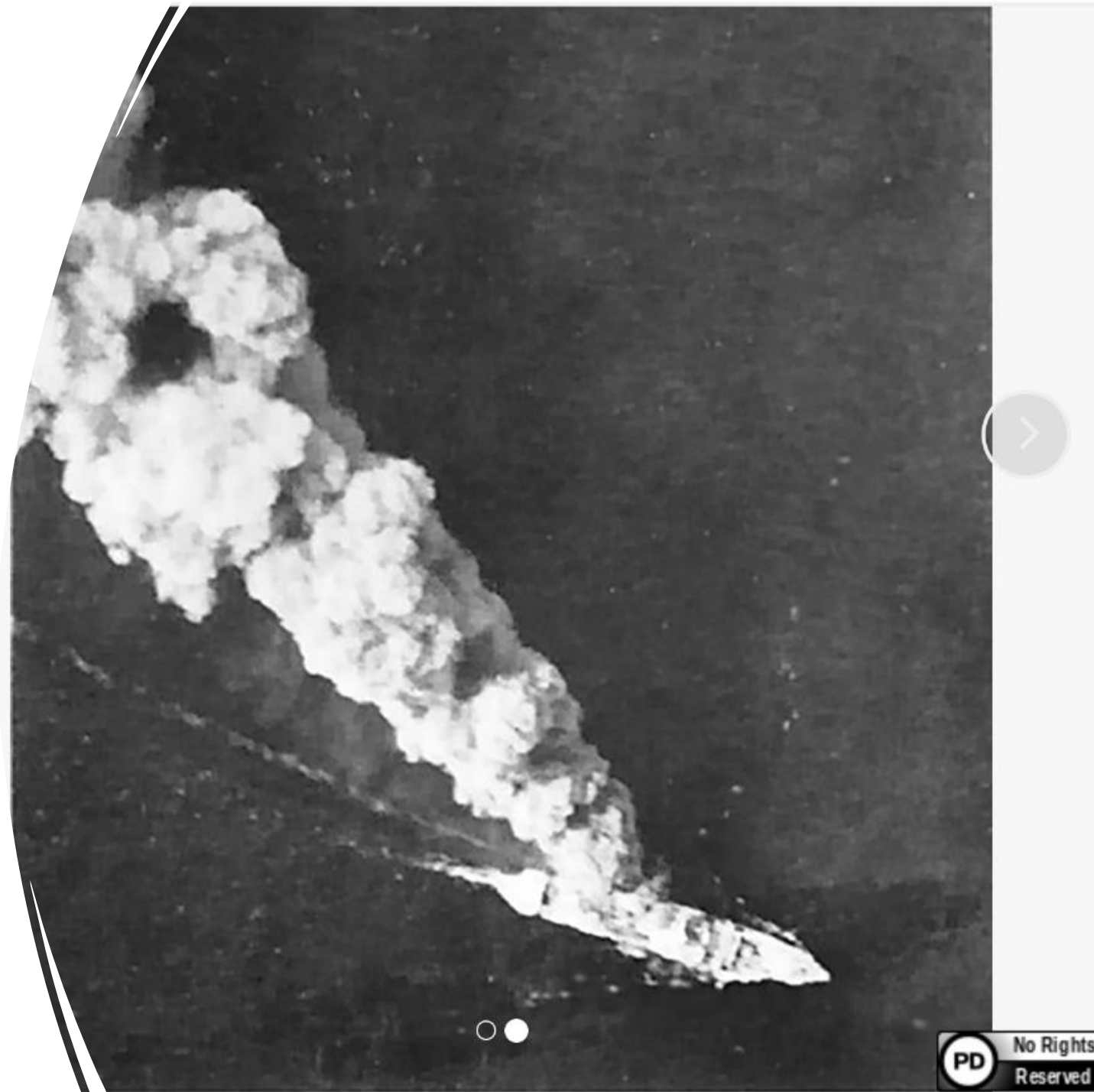
Kyokuesi Maru

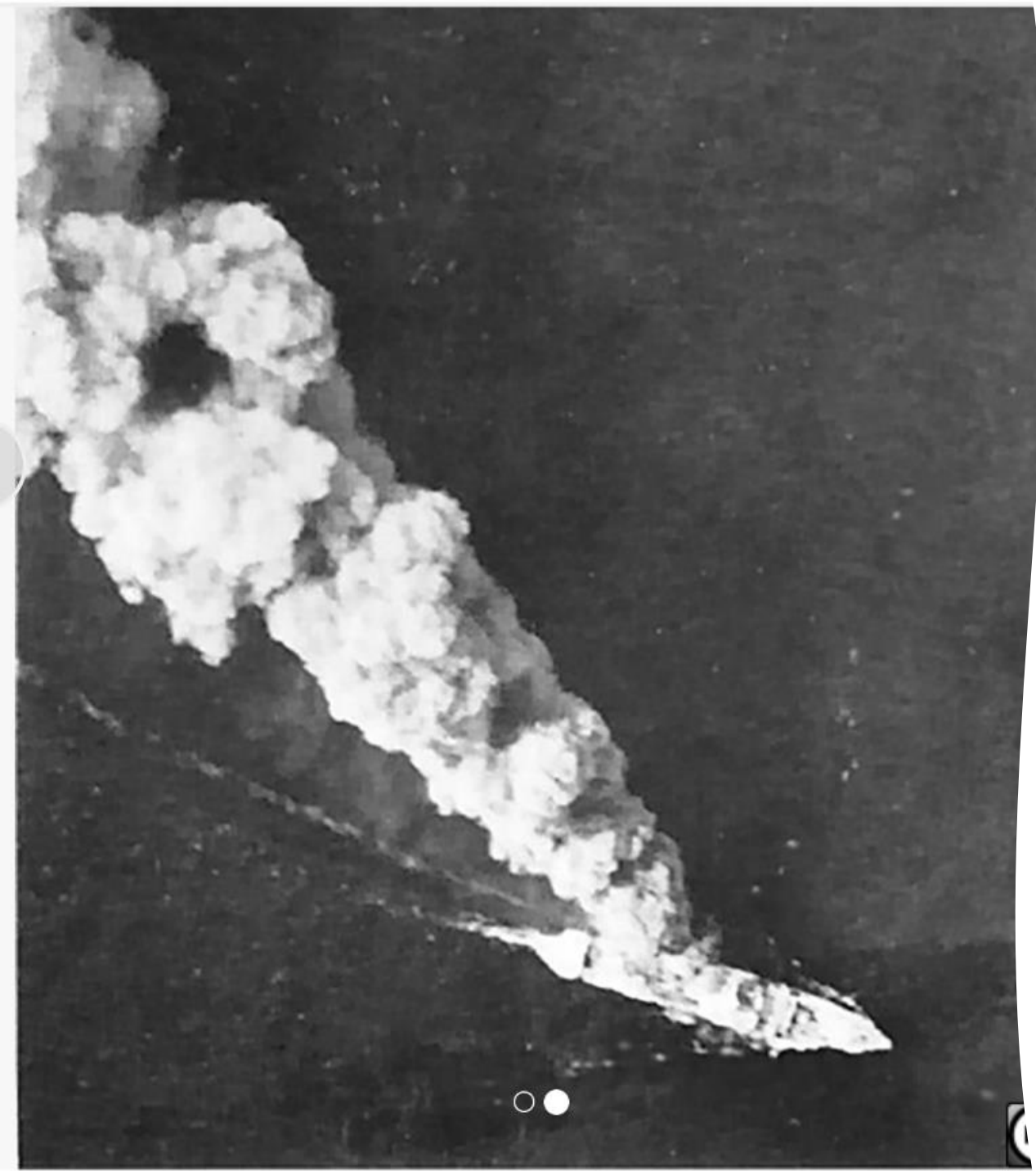
– Japanese destroyer
hit & sunk by a 1000-
pound bomb.



What happened?

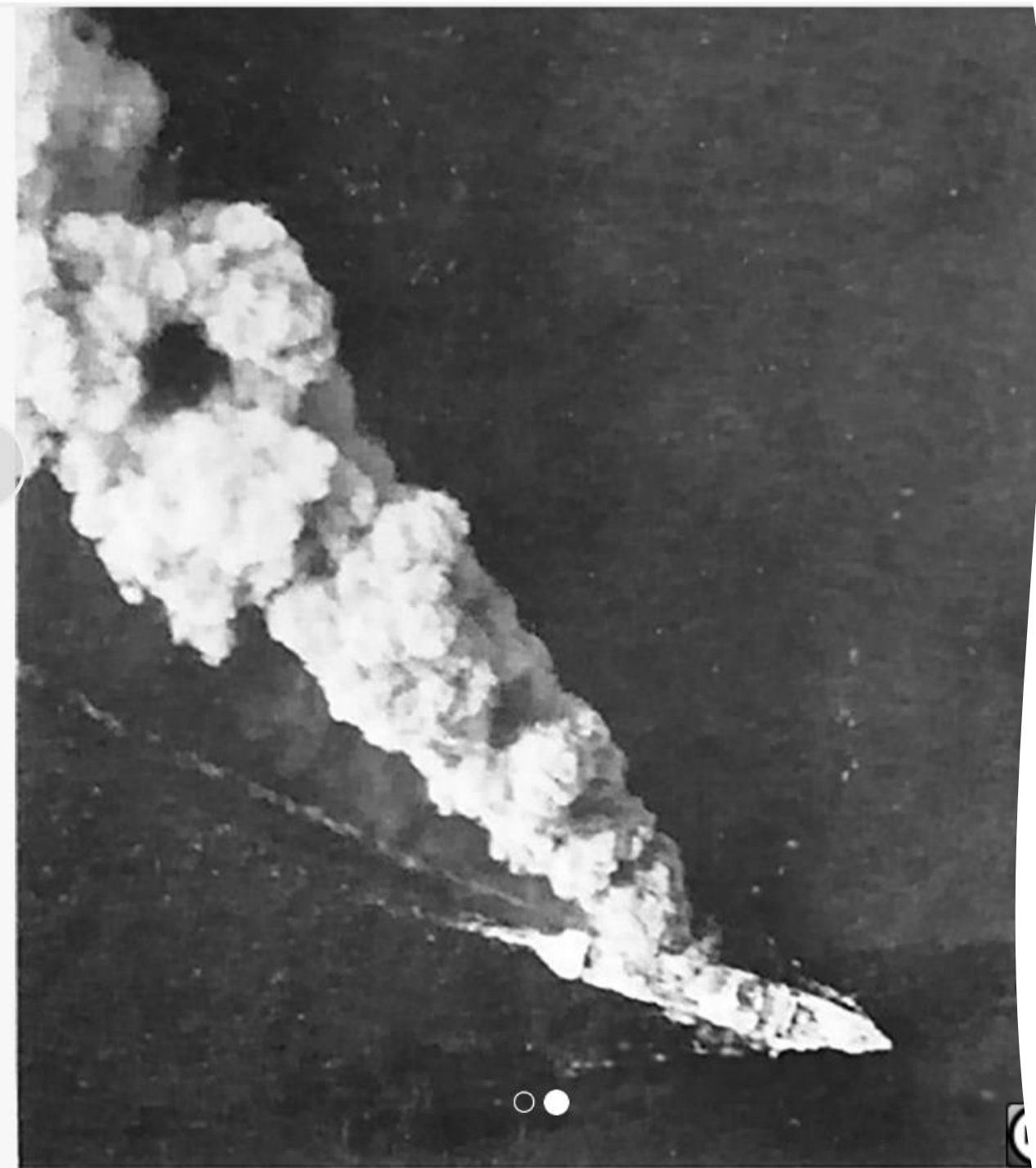
- Barrels of fuel exploded.
- Smoke billowed.
- One battleship sank.
- Japanese troops jumped into the sea, swimming to life rafts.





After that?

- USAAF Lt. Woodrow Moore's B-17 Flying Fortress spiraled down.
- 7 of 11 crew jumped with parachutes but were gunned down by Japanese Zero's.
- Outraged, the Allies attacked & shot down another 4 Zero's.



By the end of the day....

- Flying Fortresses bombed two more cargo ships.
- Catalinas tracked the convoy overnight.

What is a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress?

- Heavy bomber
- Resilient, powerful, deadly
- 4 engines, 4 propellers



More details?

- 4 x **Wright cyclone** radial piston supercharged engines.
- **Wingspan:** 140 ft.
- **Max Altitude:** 25,000 feet



Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress
The final variant of the US Air Force heavy bomber which together with the Consolidated B-24 Liberator dominated the daylight bombing campaign of Germany in WW II. Max bombload 7983kg.

You can see the Wright Cyclone Radial Engine at the museum.



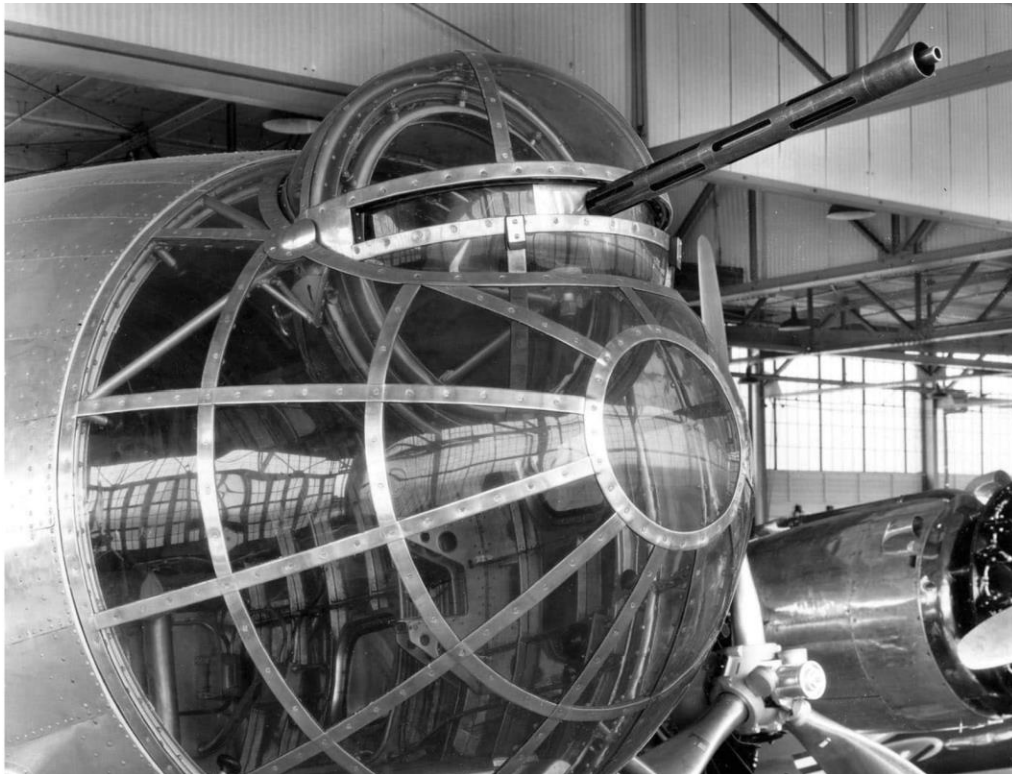
Armament:

- 13 machine guns
- The E Version was equipped with turrets in the upper fuselage, belly, and tail.
- 20,000 pounds of bombs



Where were the machine guns?

Nose Turret

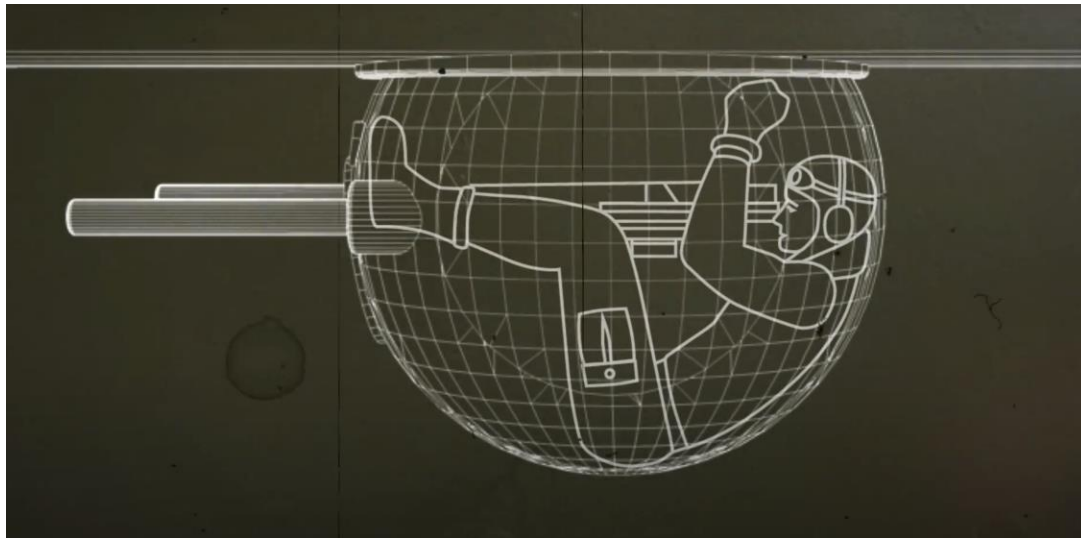


Ball turret under fuselage

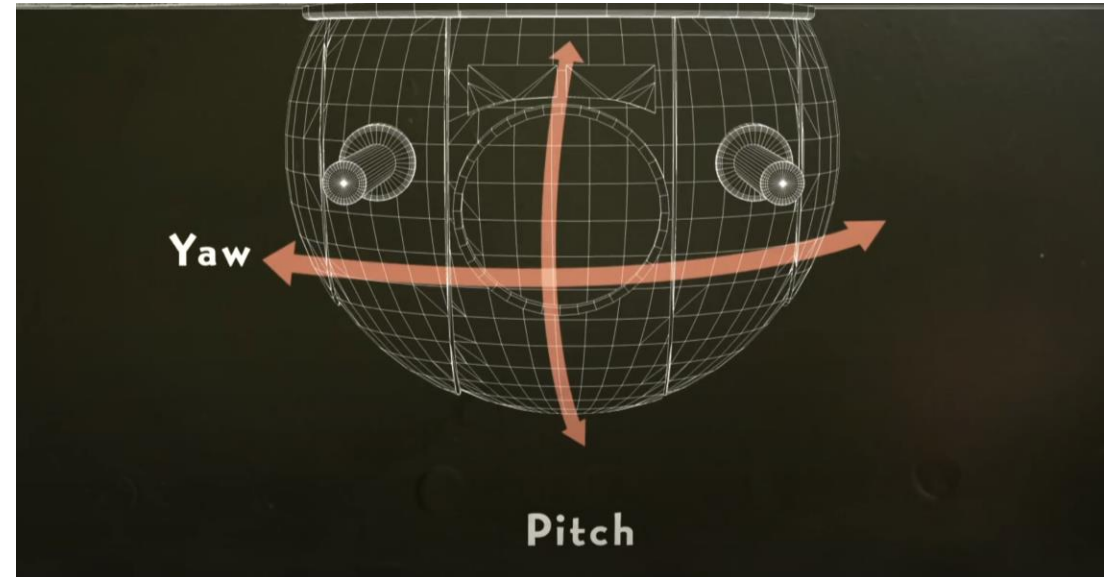


What was the ball turret?

Place for a gunner - curled up in ball
– under the fuselage.

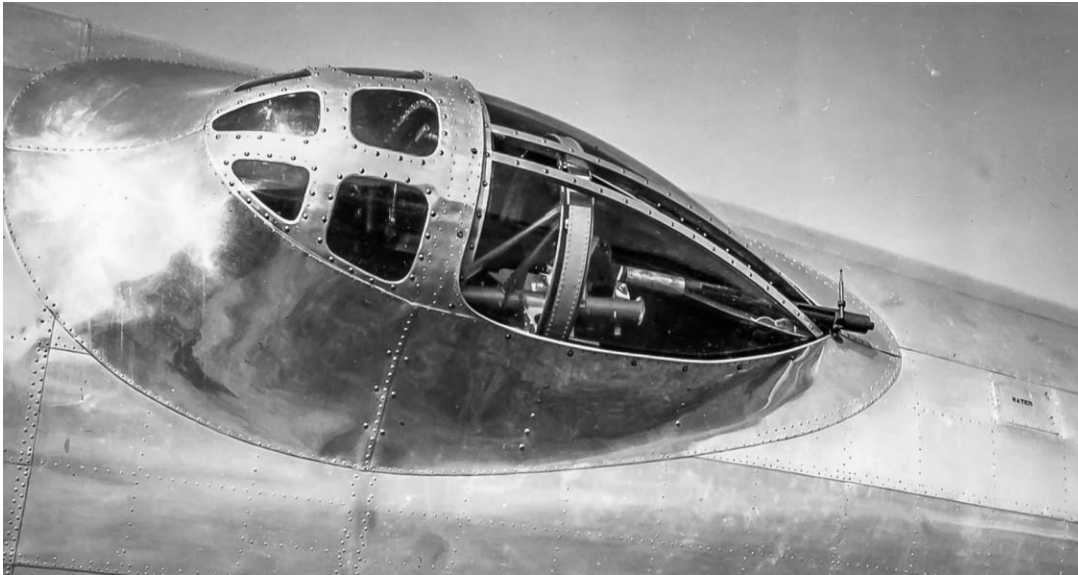


Turret could spin up, down, left & right.



What was the side blister?

A place for waist gunners / air gunners on the side.



Machine guns pointed out & up.



Was there rear facing machine guns?

Dorsal Turret



Rear Turret



How many crew did the B-17 have?

10

- Pilot & Copilot
- Bomb Aimer (nose)
- Flight Engineer
- Navigator
- Wireless Operator
- Ball turret gunner (under belly)
- 2 x Waist gunners
- Tail gunner



B-17 assembly line Seattle, 1942. Over 12,000 produced.



Fighter comparison

Mitsubishi Zero A6M



Lockheed Lightning P-38



Mitsubishi A6M Zero

Year - 1940

Purpose – Fighter

Crew - 1

Engine – 1 x Nakajima Sakae radial - 12 cylinder

Wingspan – 39 feet

Max Speed – 350 mph

Max Altitude – 33,000 feet

Armament – 2 cannons, 2 machine guns, 130 pounds of bombs

Advantage: Light, manoeuvrable, long range,



Lockheed Lightning P-38

Year - 1941

Purpose – Fighter

Crew – 1

Engine – 2 x Allison V-12 inline with super-chargers

Wingspan – 52 feet

Max Speed – 440 mph

Max Altitude – 40,000 feet

Armament – 1 cannon + 4 machine guns + 4000 pounds of bombs

Advantage: Long-range, high-altitude,





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

SUK1517

What happened 3 March 1943?

- RAAF Group Captain **William “Bull” Garing (DFC)** - proposed a revolutionary plan.
- A coordinated, multi-level attack, using every warplane available.



What is a Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)?

**Exemplary gallantry in the
face of the enemy while
flying in the air.**

What happened 3 March 1943?



- Over 90 Allied aircraft left Port Moresby to find the convoy.
- Douglas Boston's
- B-25 Mitchell's
- Bristol Beaufighters
- B-17 Flying Fortresses &
- Lockheed P-38 Lightnings



Early morning, 3 March 1943...

- Boston's bombed the Lae Airfield.
- Damaged the runway.
- Three Zeros caught fire.
- This stopped the enemy from joining the battle.



What else happened?

- **B-25 Mitchells** strafed & bombed low.
- **Bristol Beaufighters** attacked with cannons & machine guns - 6000 feet.
- **Flying Fortresses** bombed from medium altitude - 9000 feet.



What was the B-25 Mitchell?

Bomber

3,000 pounds of bombs

2 rudders

2 engines - Wright Cyclones - 14-cylinder radials - R-2600

Machine guns - 3 nose, 2 upper, 2 waist, 1 rear cannon

What was a North American B-25 Mitchell?

Wingspan: 67 feet

Max speed: 320 mph

Max Altitude; 21,000 feet

Crew : 5

Pilot, Copilot, Navigator-gunner, Radio-gunner & Bombardier



“Dirty Dora” was a USAAF B-25 Mitchell



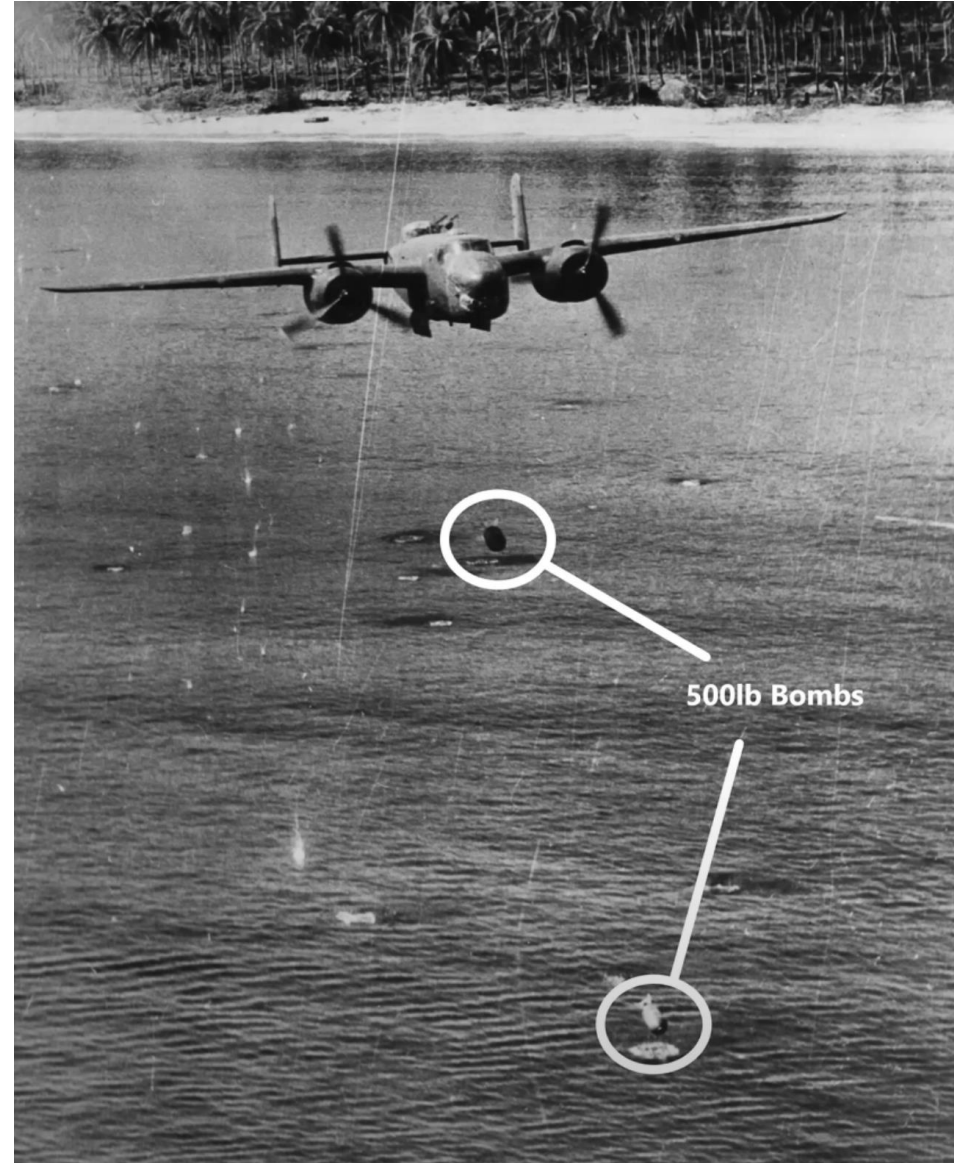
**What did the B-25
do?**

B-25 Mitchell bombed
Arashio (destroyer) &
Nojima Maru (cargo
ship) - sinking both.



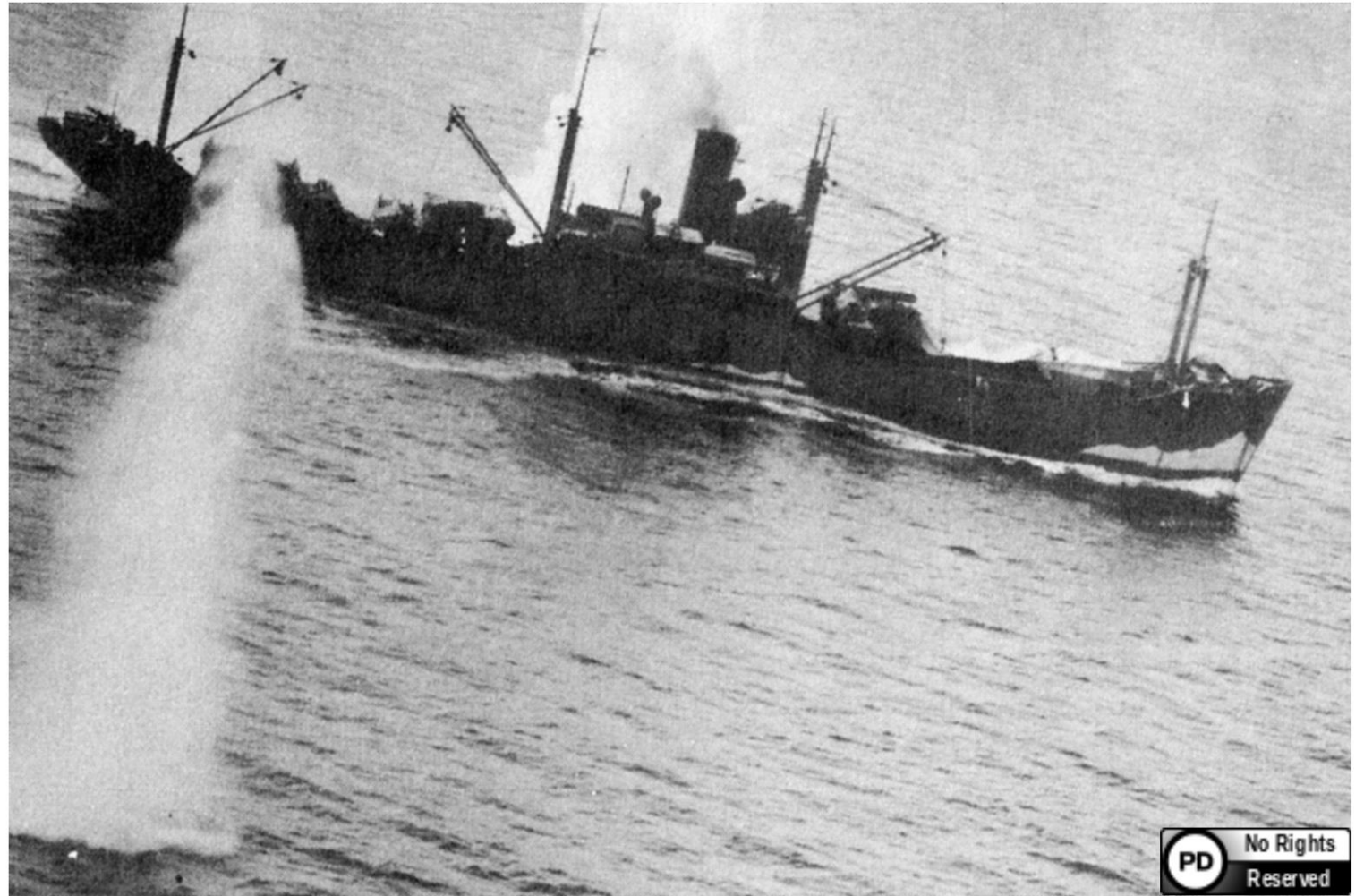
North American
Mitchell B-25 also
used **skipping-bomb**.

They **spun & skipped**
off water into the side
of battle ships,
detonating on impact.



Douglas Boston A-20
bombed & sunk the
Taimei Maru.

It flew so close to the
ship, the Japanese
thought the A20's had
crashed into the deck.



What was a Bristol Beaufighter?

- Medium bomber & fighter
- Agile, robust, powerful.
- X2 **Bristol Hercules 14-cylinder** radial engines
- Crew: 2 Seat - Pilot & Navigator



Did it have guns?

- **Armament:**
- **4** x cannons (nose)
- **6** Browning machine guns (wings & dorsal position)
- **2000 pounds** of bombs on hard-points under wings or
- **1** x Torpedo



Was a Bristol Beaufighter deadly?

- Nicknamed “**whispering death**” because it’s silent engines could sneak up on the Japanese, or
- “**Ten-gun terror**”.
- Photo: Feeding the cannons with bullets.



Loading the cannons



- Wingspan: 58 feet
- Max speed: 340 mph
- Max Altitude: 25,000 feet

RAAF Squadron 30 with Bristol Beaufighter

– Navigators standing, pilots seated.

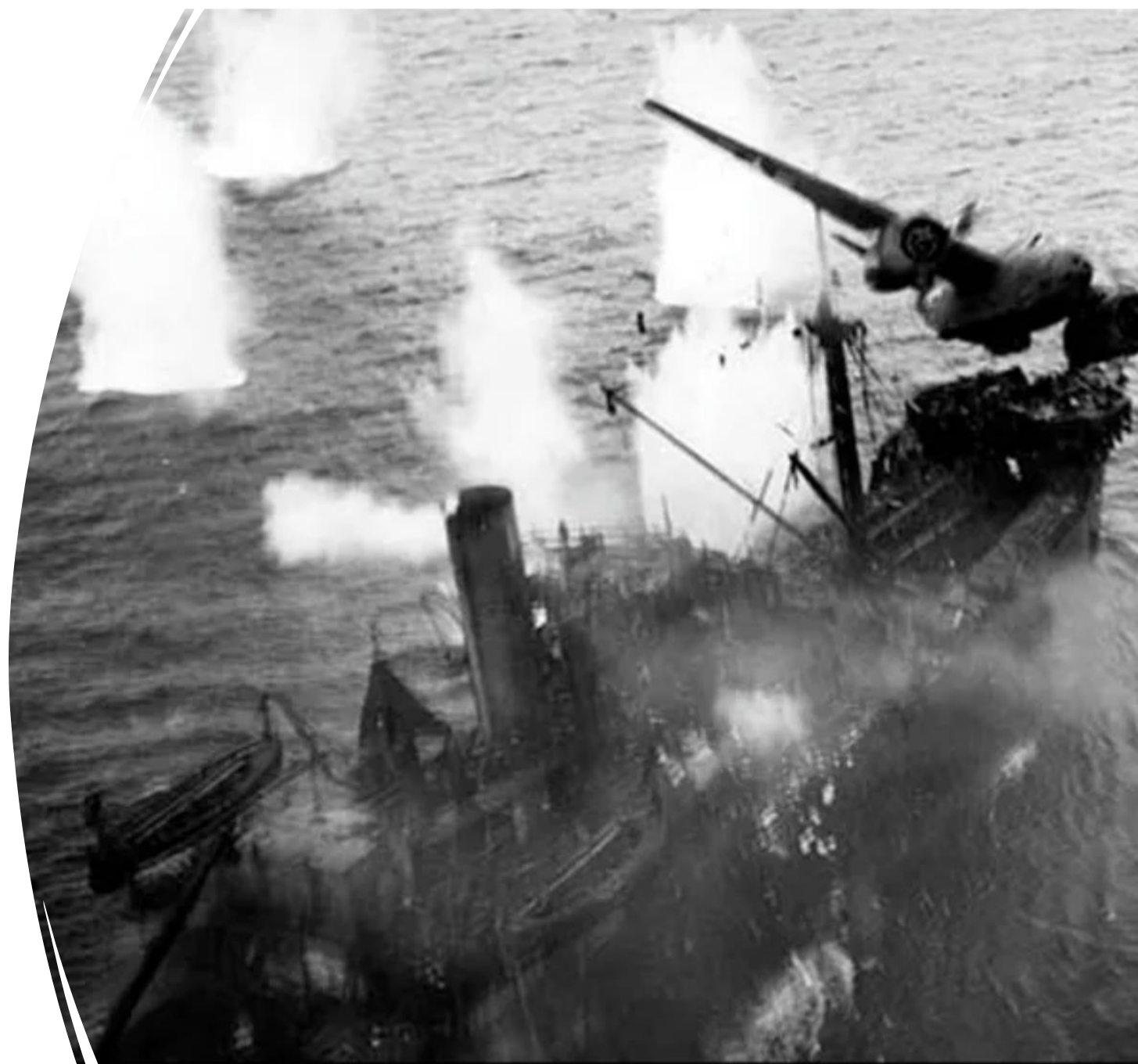


No 31 Squadron RAAF Beaufighter Crew



What did it do?

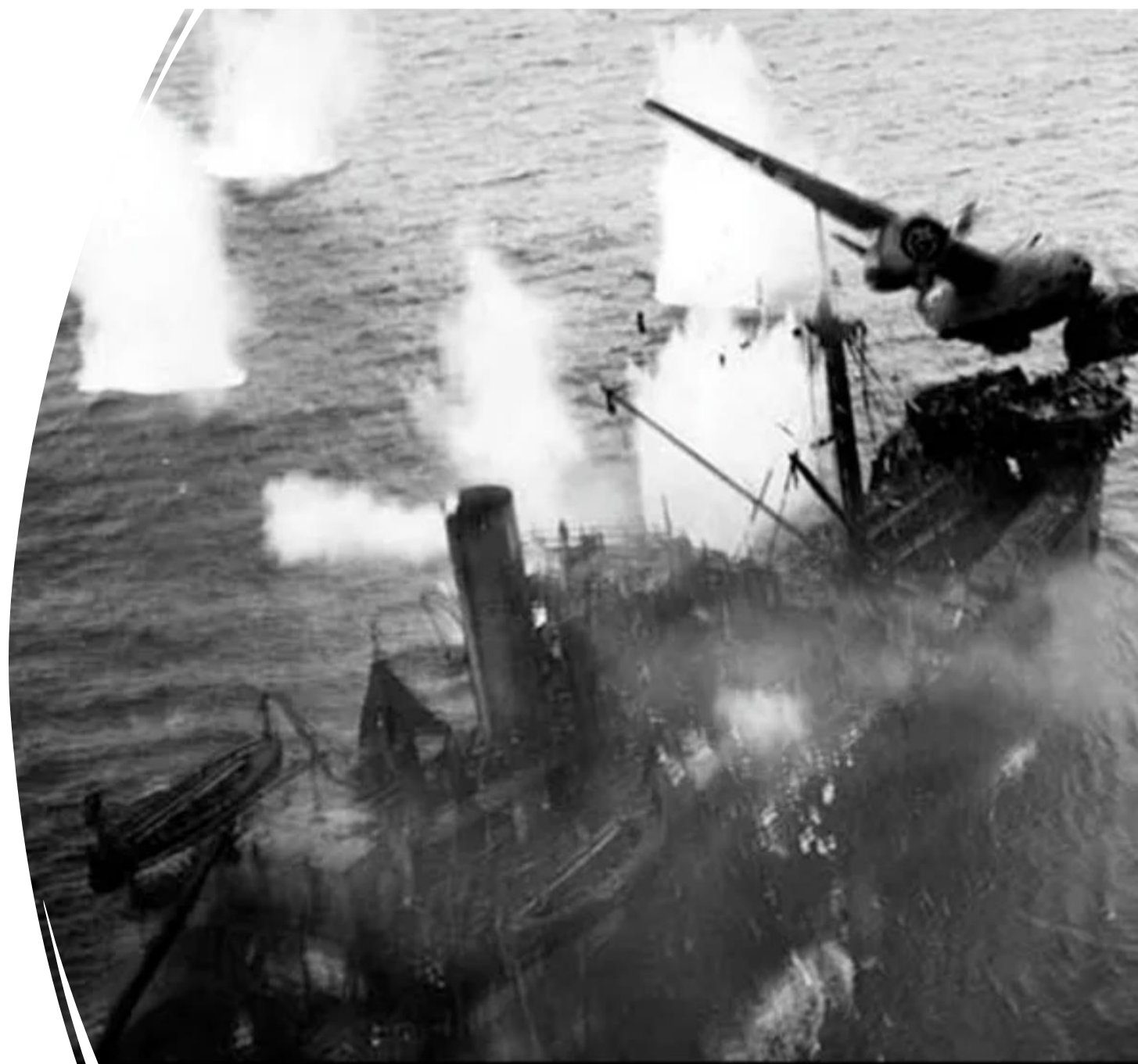
dropped bombs
on merchant
vessels



USS Oregon (BB-3) from 89th BS blasts Japanese ship Taiei Maru (PH 43-9477 "Tobias the Terrible")

What else?

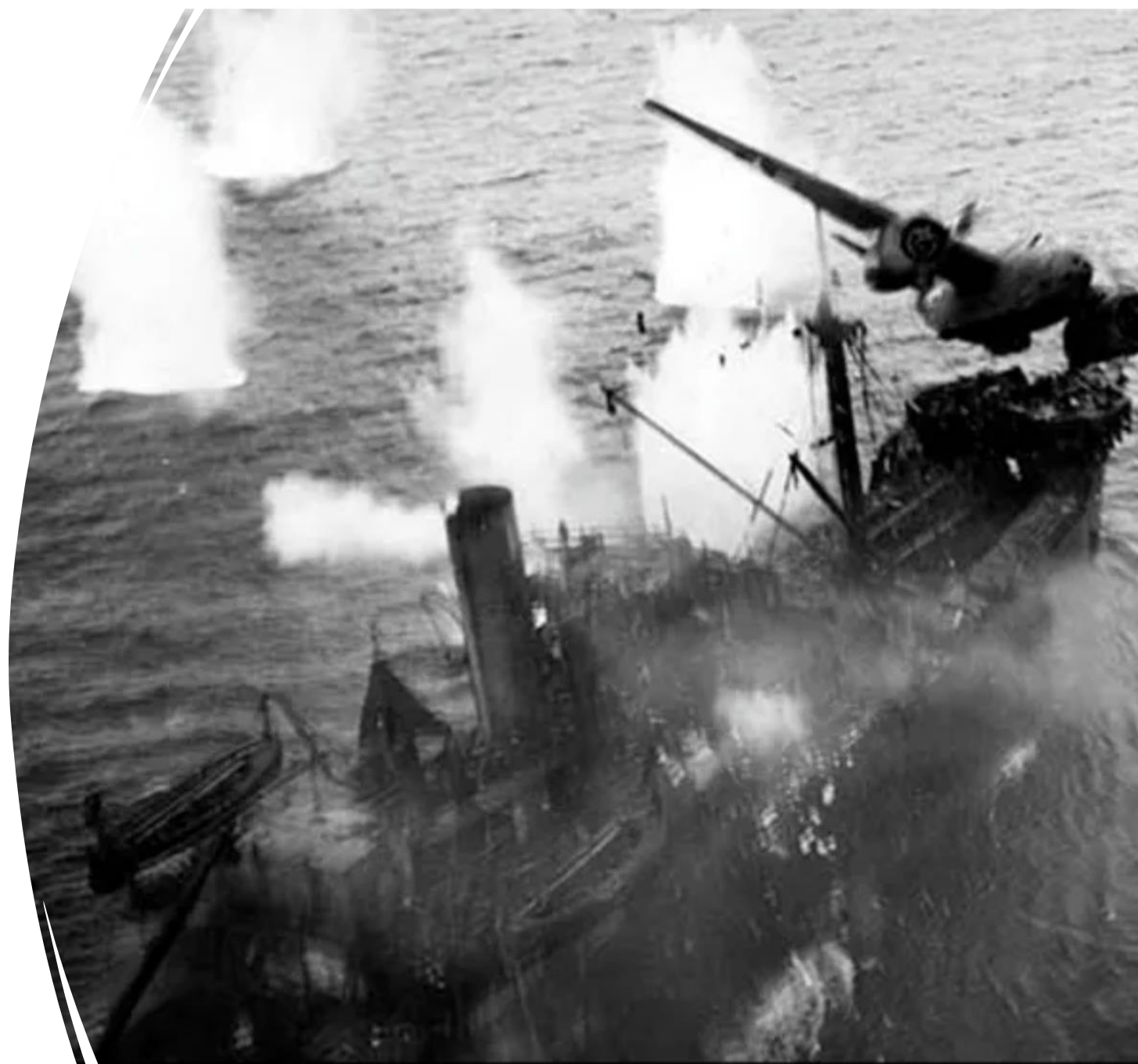
- Japanese made the fatal mistake of thinking the Beaufighters were torpedo bombers.



- LOG 43-9477 "Tobias the Terrible" from 89th BS blasts Japanese ship Taiei Maru (PH

And then?

- They turned their ships towards the fighters, making it easier to strafe the ships from stern to bow.





ORIAL

**Bristol
Beaufighter
pilot Torchy
Uren sips from
his water bottle**



Then what happened?

- Lockheed P-38 Lightnings dove into battle.
- Bombs dropped & exploded.
- 2 Turbo-charged Allison V inline engines enabled flying at 40,000 feet.
- Twin booms & twin rudders, joined by a horizontal tail.



Lockheed P-38 Lockheed P-38 Lightning.

P-38 Lightnings fly over New Guinea (USAAF).



What about the Boston's?

- Douglas Boston's (A-20's) attacked.
- Carrying 250 & 500-pound bombs, they attacked low at 1,500 feet.
- Boston's Crew: 2/3
 - 1 Flying Officer
 - 1 Air gunner/navigator
 - 1 Wireless operator



Douglas Boston A-20
bombed & sunk the
Taimei Maru.

It flew so close to the
ship, the Japanese
thought the A20's had
crashed into the deck.



What did Charles Learmonth say?

- *“We had no trouble finding the convoy, with ships burning to high hell and pillars of smoke going up 1000 feet”.*
- *“We could see them (Japanese troops) jumping into the sea in the hundreds”.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

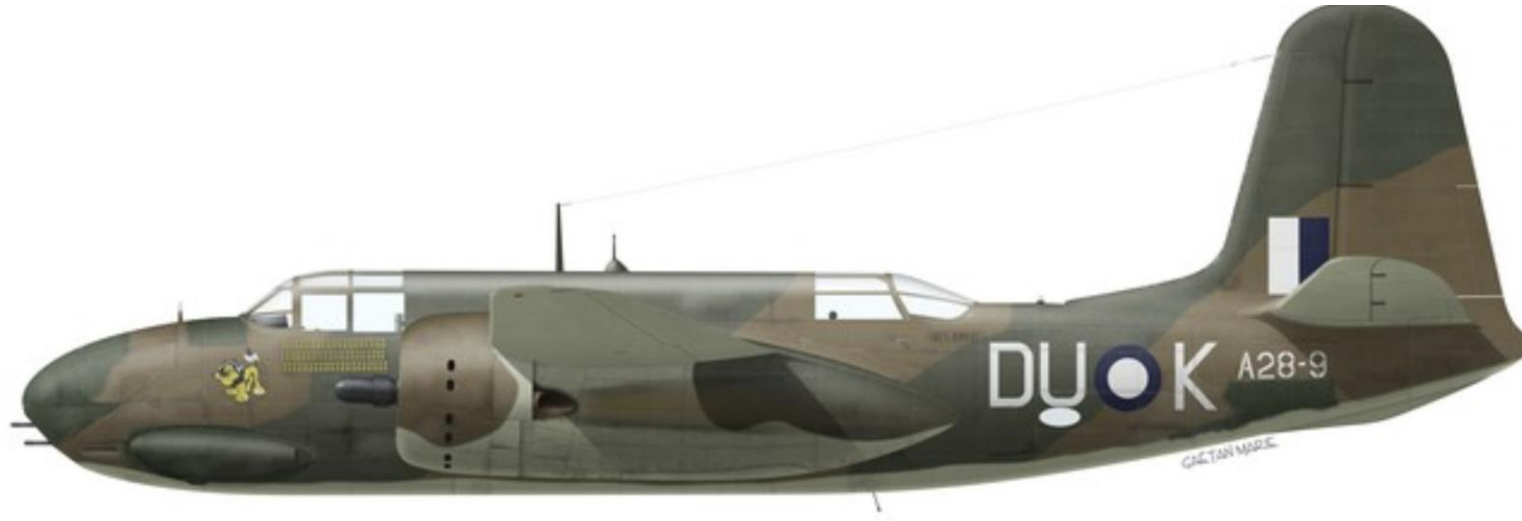
128965

What happened 3 March 1943?

- In Port Moresby, crew cheered as they listened over radios.
- The sea produced
 - dead bodies,
 - oil slicks,
 - pieces of ships & planes,
 - & survivors clinging to life-rafts surrounded by sharks.



Charles Learmonth's Douglas Boston A-20 was called She's Apples.



Douglas Boston Mk III A28-9 flown by Squadron Leader Charles Learmonth, No 22 Squadron RAAF, Port Moresby, spring 1943.

What was the outcome?

- 8 cargo ships & 4 destroyers sunk
- Thousands of soldiers vanquished.
- Japan's dream of capturing Port Moresby was lost forever.

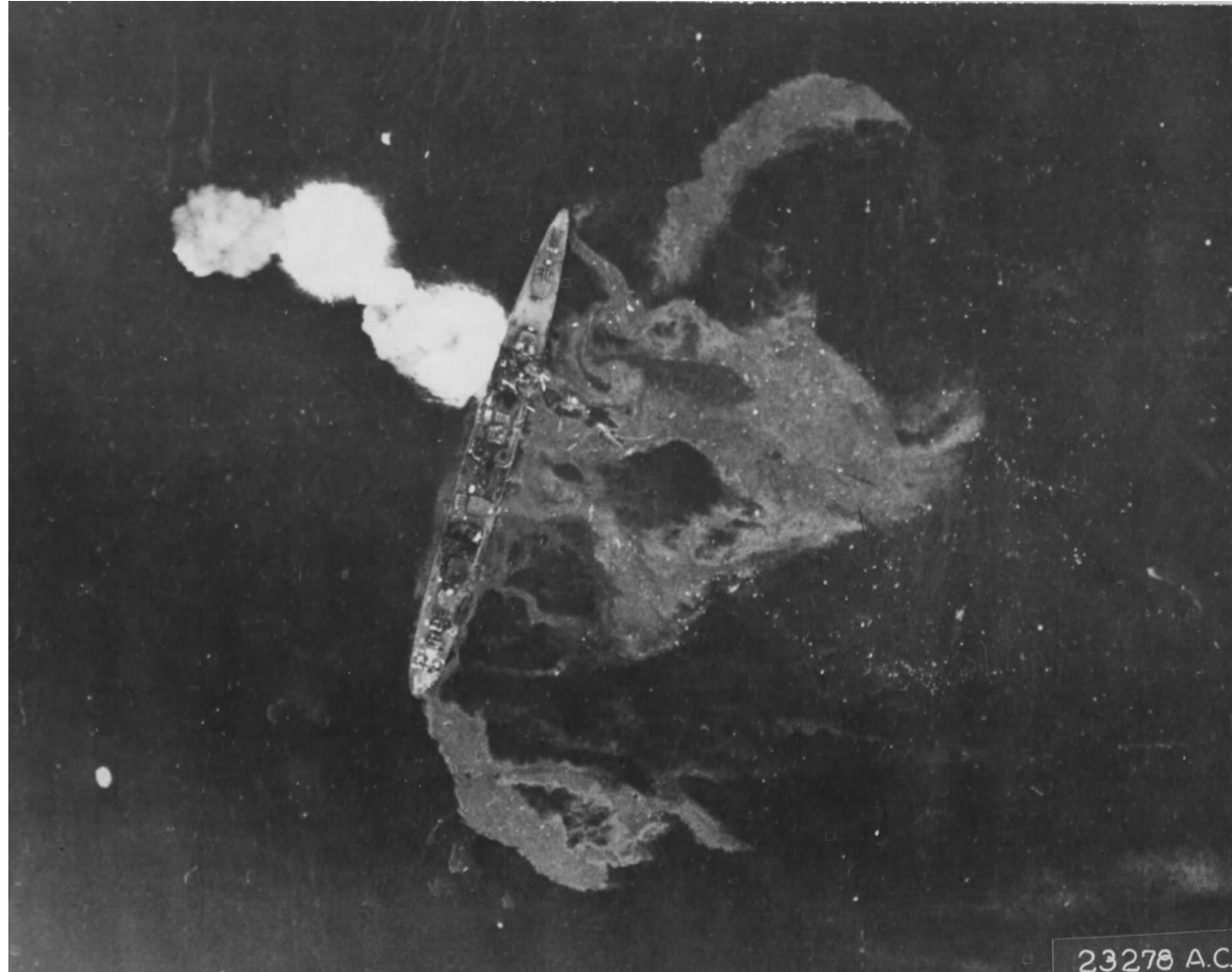


Was it a victory?

- “One of the most important chapters of Japan’s defeat in the Pacific”, **General MacArthur**.



Bombed Japanese Destroyer in Bismarck Sea.



Japanese destroyer Asashio before sinking



Japanese Destroyer



North American B-25 Mitchell



Skip bombing practice at Port Moresby



North American B-25 Mitchell



B-17 Flying Fortress – 4 engine USAAF bomber



B-17 Flying Fortress with four engines & 100 feet of wings



B-17 Flying Fortress



Boston A-20 light bomber



Battle of the Bismarck Sea



Bill Newton – RAAF Boston pilot - Victoria Cross recipient.

Recognised by his blue cricket cap.

Executed by Japanese 1943



Flight Lieutenant W.E. (Bill) Newton

Beaufighter patrolling Bismarck Sea, 1943



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

141998

An Allied Beaufighter aircraft heading out on patrol above the coast near the Bismarck Sea, 1943. AWM 141998

Flight Lieutenant Ronald 'Torchy' Uren flies back to base 3 March 1943.

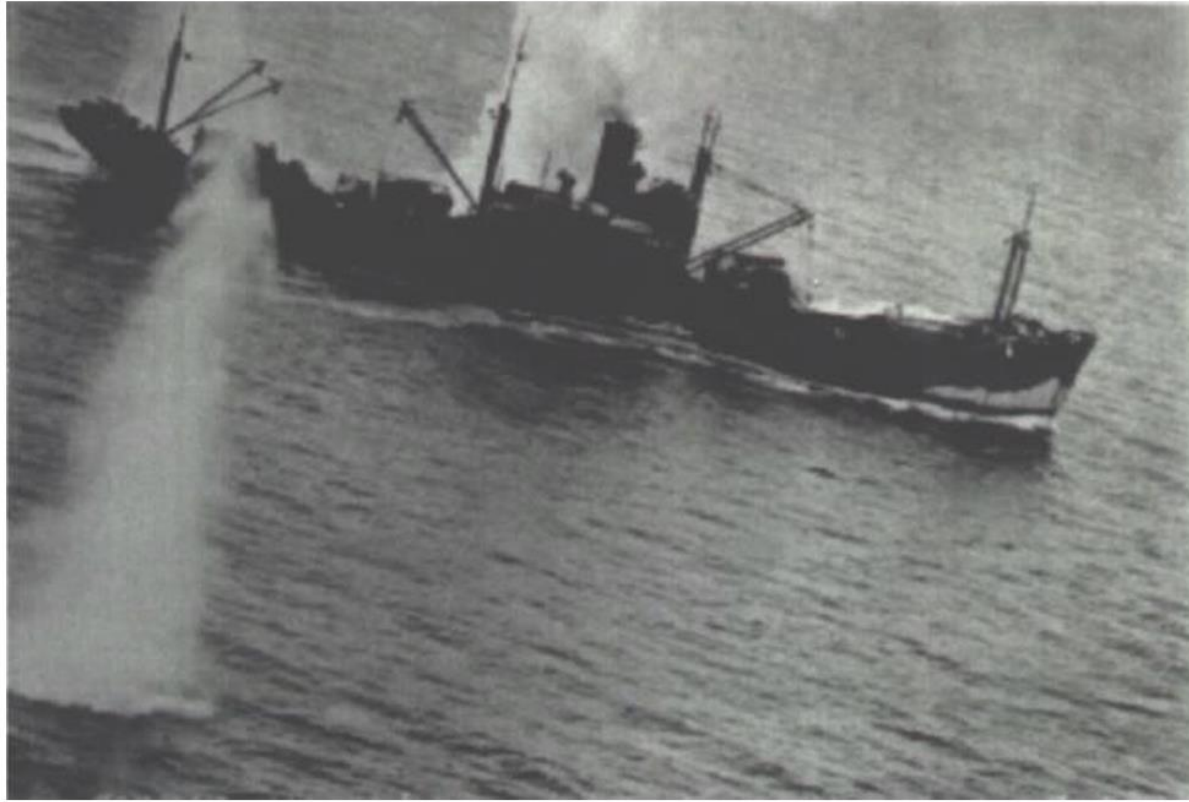


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

1 27968

Flight Lieutenant Ronald 'Torchy' Uren has a drink as he heads back to base in the Battle of Bismarck Sea, 3 March 1943. AWM 127968

Japanese vessel under attack.



Japanese vessel under attack. Credit: Department of Defence