

Resource Sheet #16

Source M:

This is an excerpt from the beginning of the full report.

<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq80-4a.htm>

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY -- NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE SE -- WASHINGTON NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON DC 20374-5060**

Port Chicago Naval Magazine Explosion on 17 July 1944:

Court of Inquiry: Finding of Facts, Opinion and Recommendations

The court, having thoroughly inquired into all the facts and circumstances connected with the allegations contained in the precept and having considered the evidence adduced, finds as follows:

FINDING OF FACTS

1. **GENERAL FINDING:** That explosions occurred at the U.S. Naval Magazine, Port Chicago, California, involving 429 tons of munitions (which contained 146 tons of high explosives and 10.75 tons of smokeless powder) on the ship pier, and 4,606 tons of munitions (which contained 1760 tons of high explosives and 199 tons of smokeless powder) on the S.S. E. A. BRYAN moored to the ship pier, at or about 2219, Pacific War Time, 17 July 1944, resulting in the total destruction of three vessels; namely, the S.S. E. A. BRYAN, valued at \$1,600,000; the S.S. QUINAULT VICTORY, valued at \$2,850,000; the US Coast Guard fire barge No. 60014-F of the value of \$34,691.44; and the constructive total loss of the US YP MIAHELO II, of the value of \$6,000, all the property of the US Government, and damage and destruction of other property of the US Government in the amount of \$5,401,343.30; the total damage to US Government property amounting to \$9,892,034.74; damage to the MS REDLINE owned by the Union Oil Company for which claim has been filed in the sum of \$221,121.25; damage to small craft for which claims have been filed in the sum of \$2,362.13, all of which original claims for damages to small craft have been delivered to the Board of Investigation for handling; the loss of 10 officers and 231 enlisted personnel of the US Navy and US

Naval Reserve, of which the bodies of 7 officers and 34 enlisted men have been identified, and of which 3 officers and 197 enlisted personnel are missing; the death of one enlisted man of the US Marine Corps Reserve, his body having been identified; the loss of 5 enlisted personnel of the US Coast Guard and US Coast Guard Reserve, of which the bodies of 2 have been identified and of which 3 are missing; the loss of 67 members of the US Maritime Service, of which the bodies of 3 have been identified and 64 are missing; the loss of 3 civil service employees of the US Navy, the body of one having been identified and 2 are missing; and the death of 3 civilians, their bodies having been identified; the total identified dead numbering 51 and the total missing numbering 269; and personal injuries to 4 officers and 233 enlisted men of the US Navy and US Naval Reserve, 6 enlisted personnel of the US Marine Corps and US Marine Corps Reserve, 4 enlisted personnel of the US Coast Guard and US Coast Guard Reserve, 5 members of the US Maritime Service, 22 civil service employees of the US Navy, and 3 civil service employees of the US Army; and personal injuries, superficial and permanent, to 113 civilians, of whom 69 have filed claims, 54 of the latter having designated damages in the total sum of \$121,999.04, all of which claims for death and personal injuries have been delivered to the Board of Investigation for handling pursuant to instruction of the Convening Authority.

2. INTENT - FAULT - NEGLIGENCE: That the evidence does not show that there was any intent, fault, negligence, or inefficiency of any person or person in the naval services or connected therewith, or any other person, which caused the explosions.