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VICE ADMIRAL BLANDY REPORTS ON TARGET SHIPS SUNK IN SECOND ATOMIC BOMB TEST

In a recapitulation of target vessels sunk in the second atomic bomb test, Vice Admiral W. H. P. Blandy, U.S.N., Commander of Joint Task Force One, reported a total of nine craft are resting on the silt and coral bottom of Bikini waters. Five of the ships went down as a result of the subsurface explosion while the others were so badly crippled that they were sent to the bottom by demolition and gunfire charges.

The famous old battleship ARKANSAS sank in the explosion and the aircraft carrier SARATOGA sank within eight hours from what apparently was progressive flooding. Four days later the former Japanese battleship NAGATO sank during the night. The LSM 60 (landing ship, medium), from which the bomb was suspended, disappeared in the bomb's blast. The YO 160, concrete oil barge, sank immediately.

A small concrete drydock and three landing craft were so badly crippled that they were later sunk by demolition at the hands of Operation Crossroads' salvage crews. The LCT 1114 (landing craft, tank) and the ARDC 13 (small concrete drydock), were sent to the bottom by demolition charges and the LCI 620 (landing craft, infantry) and the LST 125 (landing ship, tank) were sunk by gunfire.

"The ARKANSAS is upside down on the bottom of Bikini lagoon, the starboard deck edge in mud and port deck edge about ten feet off the bottom," Vice Admiral Blandy reported. The ship is all in one piece, underwater inspections have revealed. The hull is badly damaged with many open seams throughout the length of the ship, divers report despite poor visibility for inspection purposes.

Divers are continuing salvage operations on three submarines reported on the bottom of the lagoon, Vice Admiral Blandy stated. For a time, radioactivity handicapped divers in their effort to inspect and engage in salvage operations on the submarines APOGON, SKIPJACK and PILOTFISH. All are said to be resting at a considerable list in silt making diving operations difficult.

The Director of Ship Material for Joint Task Force One, Rear Admiral T. A. Solberg, U.S.N., is at Bikini in charge of the crews inspecting and salvaging the target ships.

Several compartments in both the submarines APOGON and SKIPJACK are flooded. The PILOTFISH shows hull endentures, the divers revealed. Every effort is being made to complete the recovery of scientific instruments from these craft without casualty to personnel or the instrumentation equipment.

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After a thorough scrutiny of still and motion pictures of the Test Baker explosion, Vice Admiral Blandy explained that it was definitely not the ARKANSAS that was heaved askew in the geyser of water and gas as first believed from a pictorial view. The ship-like silhouette gave the impression that the "Arky" was hoisted skyward like a toy craft and disappeared in the rising water spout.

It is believed the darkened area in the water spout was actually caused by a cloud of soot and debris from the stacks and boiler tubes of the ship, Vice Admiral Blandy explained. This was evident through detailed study of the picture material.

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