

FIRE ON ARMS SHIP SCARES CITY AREA

Navy Crew Quells Blaze Off
Harbor—Explosion Would
Have Periled Shore

By JACQUES NEVARD

The Navy ammunition ship Mauna Loa threatened for more than two hours yesterday to emulate the famous Hawaiian volcano in more than just name. The vessel, with 3,500 tons of explosives and a crew of 200 officers and men aboard, caught fire five miles south of Atlantic Beach, L. I., near the entrance to New York Harbor.

Before the flames were put out by the ship's crew after two hours and twenty-five minutes of desperate action, a fleet of rescue



The New York Times July 27, 1957

Where Navy munitions ship caught fire (1) and where she was later moored (2).

craft had been sent to the Mauna Loa's aid.

Two destroyer escorts, two Coast Guard cutters, four Navy fire-fighting tug boats and a New York City fireboat with three land-based fire companies were among the vessels that raced at full speed to the scene, five miles north-northeast of Ambrose Lightship.

The reason was made apparent by a spokesman for the Third Naval District. He said the 5,450-ton Mauna Loa and her crew would have been "obliterated" if the fire had reached the explosives. He added that damage to near-by shore areas would have been "terrific."

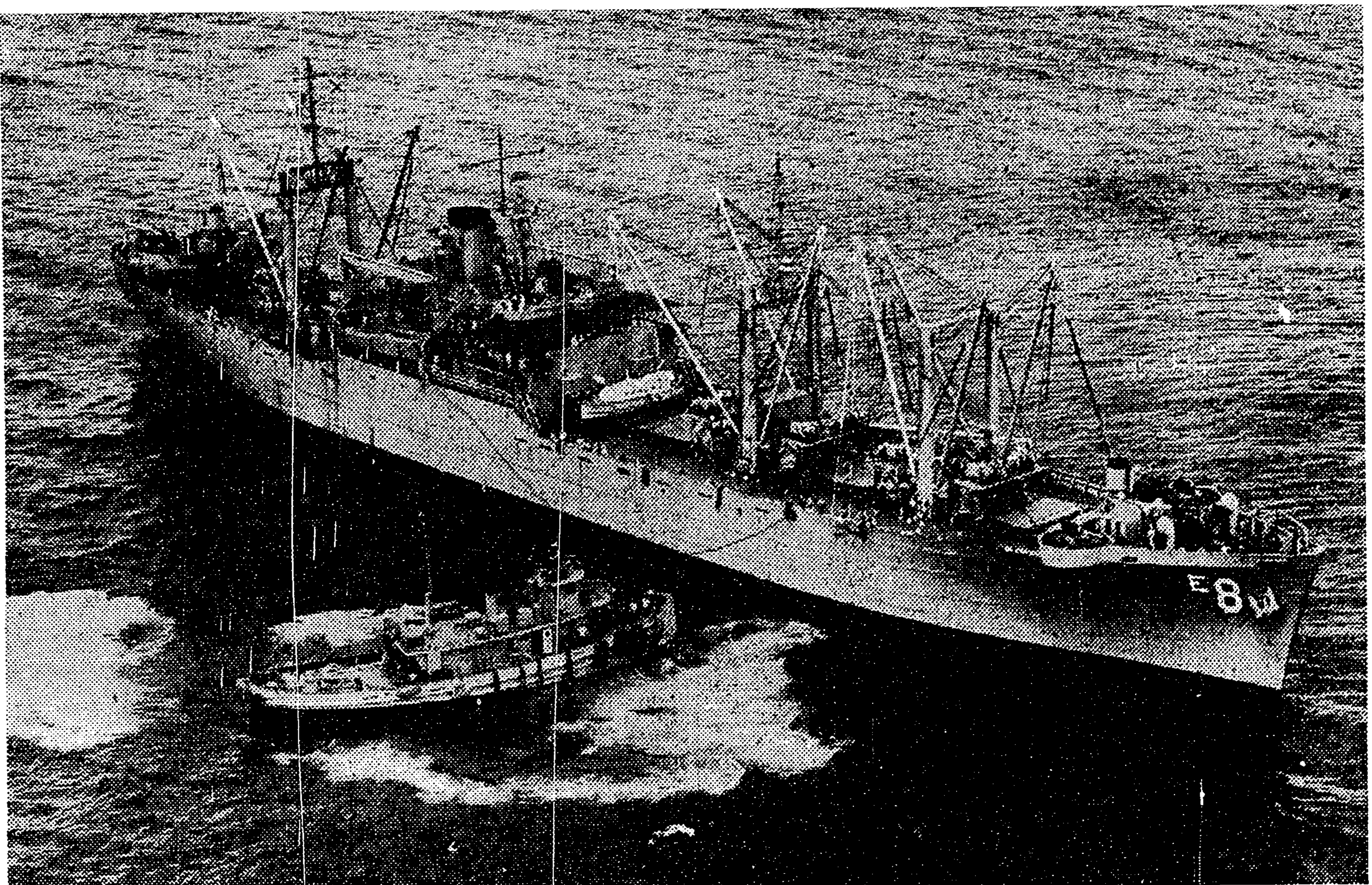
The fire was centered in the uppermost forty feet of the ship's diesel engine exhaust system, between the muffler and the top of the single midship smokestack. Sparks that shot up the stack during the blaze caused numerous minor fires on the decks, but these were quickly extinguished.

Once the main fire was out, three of the Navy tug boats took the stricken vessel under tow.

The vessel, her deadly cargo still aboard, was anchored last night in Gravesend Bay, Brooklyn, an area the Navy considers "safe" for ammunition laden vessels.

No injuries were reported and fire damage was said to be slight. It was said that repairs would be made while the ship was at anchor.

The ship is commanded by Capt. F. J. Harlfinger 2d.



Speed Hanzlik for The New York Times

MUNITION SHIP AFIRE: Tugboat stands by Navy's Mauna Loa off Long Island. Engine room fire was quenched.

The New York Times

Published: July 27, 1957

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