

# U.S.S. STEVENS

D.D. 479

## "BUCKETHEAD"

THE STEVENS HAD REPELLED MORE THEN ONE ATTACK... AND HAD ALWAYS COME OUT ON TOP! MAYBE A DENT OR TWO ON HER STEEL SKIN-- BUT--NONE ON HER CHARACTER! A WARSHIP IS MORE THAN METAL AND BOLTS... A CREW DIRECTS HER! AND-- THIS IS THE STORY OF ONE CREW-MEMBER... FLESH AND BLOOD.. AND HUMAN EMOTIONS...

G-GOSH... I-I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D BE LIKE... THIS!

HE WAS FRESH OUT OF "BOOTS"! A NEW REPLACEMENT... HIS G.Q. STATION WAS IN No. 2 FIREROOM...

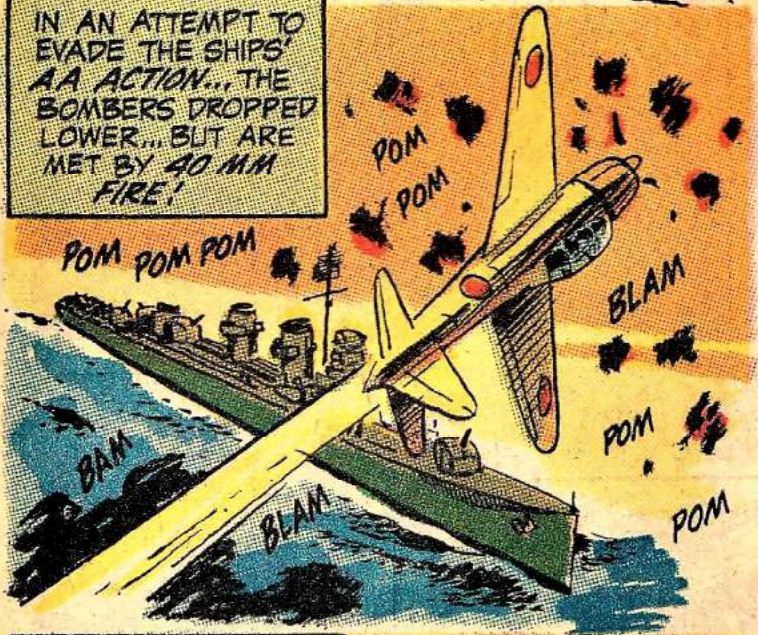
AT THE MOMENT, THE U.S.S. STEVENS WAS UNDER ATTACK FROM JAPANESE FIGHTER PLANES! AND SHE WAS IN HER GLORY.. ENGINES THROBBING LIKE SOME HUGE HEART! SHE WAS BUILT FOR BATTLE!

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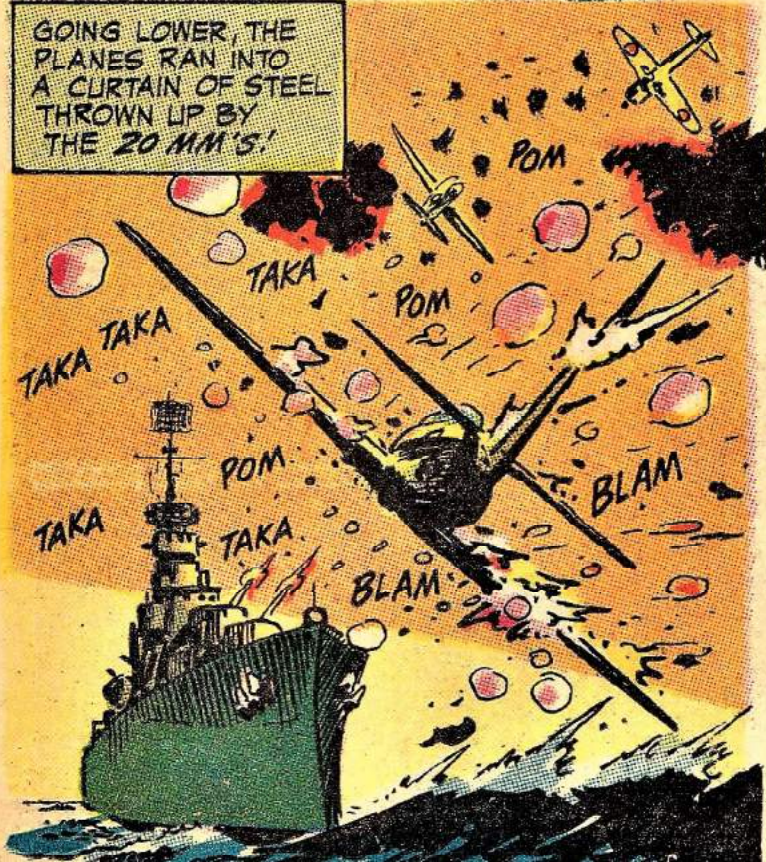
JAPANESE BOMBERS  
MILES ABOVE...  
FLYING STRAIGHT  
AND LEVEL... BECAME  
VICTIMS TO THE  
STEVENS' MAIN  
BATTERIES!



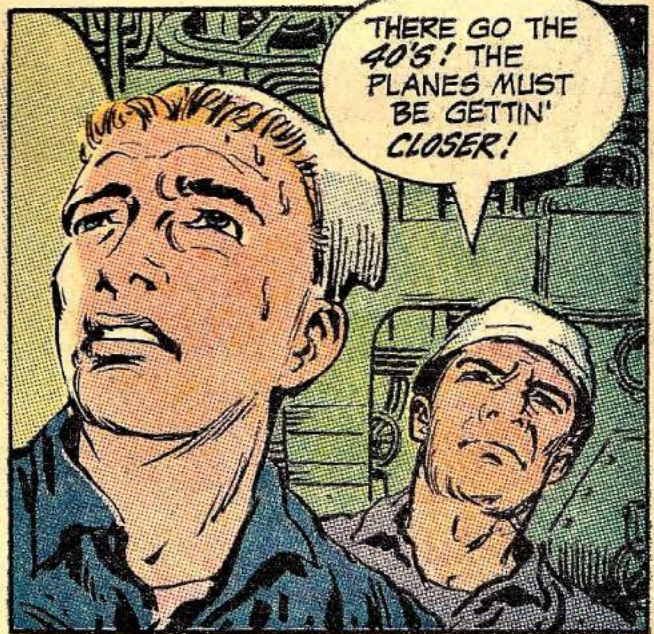
IN AN ATTEMPT TO  
EVADE THE SHIP'S  
AA ACTION... THE  
BOMBERS DROPPED  
LOWER... BUT ARE  
MET BY 40 MM  
FIRE!



GOING LOWER, THE  
PLANES RAN INTO  
A CURTAIN OF STEEL  
THROWN UP BY  
THE 20 MM'S!



WHILE BELOW... THE OLD HANDS KNEW  
HOW CLOSE THE PLANES WERE... BY THE  
CALIBER OF THE GUNS FIRING...



STANDING BELOW DECKS DURING AN AIR ATTACK IS A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE, LIKE BEING LOCKED IN YOUR CLOSET... WITH THE HOUSE ON FIRE... WHILE FIREMEN OUTSIDE ARE TRYING TO PUT THE FIRE OUT! JOHNNY WONDERED HOW THE "FIREMEN" WERE DOING...

SO HE DECIDED TO GO TOPSIDE AND FILL UP THE WATER PITCHER!



HE WIGGLED PAST THE CANVAS LIGHT BAFFLE-- THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT MOMENTARILY BLINDED HIM...

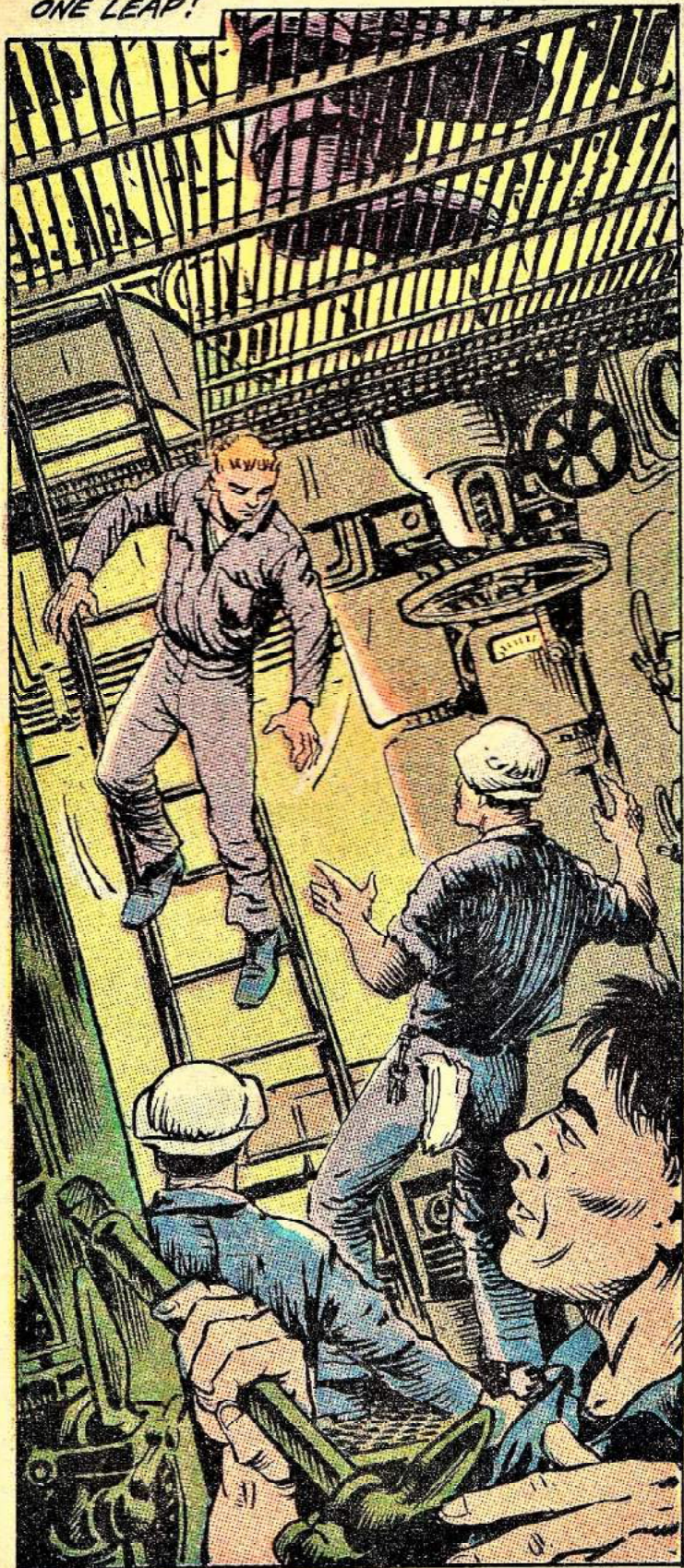


--AND CORDITE STUNG HIS NOSTRILS! WAVES OF HEAT AND SOUND SEEMED TO CRUSH AGAINST HIM! HE COULD SEE THE ENEMY PLANES... AND-- THEY WERE ALL AIMING AT HIM!

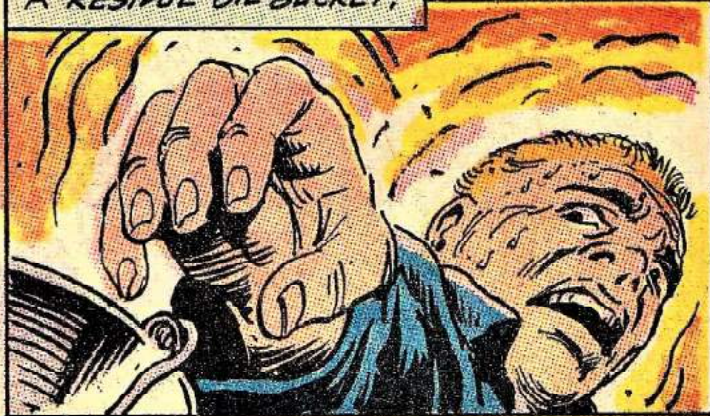


ED. NOTE: ATTACKING AIRCRAFT, WHEN VIEWED FROM THE REAR, APPEAR TO BE POINTING THEIR GUNS AT THE REAR OF THE SHIP.

HE CAME BACK DOWN THAT LADDER IN ONE LEAP!



THE NEAREST COVER HE COULD FIND-- A RESIDUE OIL BUCKET!



...AND HYSTERICALLY...TRIED TO CRAWL INTO THE BUCKET...



...WHILE HE CONTINUED TO SHIVER AND SHAKE!!



THE STEVENS CAME THRU UNSCATHED! AND JOHNNY?--WELL, HE CAME THROUGH HIS "ORDEAL BY FIRE"...AND WAS A GOOD SAILOR! HE ALSO EARNED THE NICKNAME "BUCKETHEAD" BUT THE BRAVE HERO THAT PINNED THE TITLE ON JOHNNY GOT A NICKNAME, TOO--HE'S KNOWN AS "CRYBABY"!

