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PANAY bombed and sunk

"BOMBS rained like hailstones and churned the waters all around the ship like geysers," said Earl Leaf, United Press correspondent in China and eye-witness of the sinking of the United States gunboat *Panay*, by Japanese aviators, in the Yangtze River about 26 miles above Nanking.

Three Standard Oil ships were huddling close to the gunboat for protection, he continued in an NBC broadcast from Shanghai. All were engaged in carrying refugees from Nanking.

Suddenly three bombing planes came out from nowhere. "Without warning they dived at the ships, unloosing their terrible burden of high explosives. All hands rushed for cover, but the bombs rained on them like a hailstorm and fires burst out on the American vessels. When the three planes had unburdened their explosives, six more took up the savage attack and one ship sank. When they departed, a half dozen other bombers renewed the attack. The *Panay* went down bow first just before she was abandoned. But two more huge Japanese bombing planes returned to the kill, and this time but one vessel remained afloat."

The British gunboats *Ladybird* and *Bee* also were fired on, and soon Foreign Minister Eden was telling an angry House of Commons that "His Majesty's Ambas-

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sador to Tokyo has made the strongest protest to the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs."

In the United States, President Roosevelt stressed the seriousness of the situation by stating, in a memorandum to Secretary of State Hull, that "the President is deeply shocked and concerned by the news of indiscriminate bombing of American and other non-Chinese vessels on the Yangtse, and that he requests that the Emperor [Hirohito] be so advised." He also demanded apologies, compensation and guarantees against any similar attack.

Apologies were immediately made, compensation was promised and guarantees were pledged by the Japanese Foreign Minister Koki Hirota, who declared that the bombing was "entirely due to a mistake" and regretted it "most profoundly."

Said the Tokyo newspaper *Asahi*: "The just, fair and neutral attitude the United States has taken in the present conflict has impressed the Japanese public. For this reason we regret from the bottom of our hearts that this unhappy incident occured. We approve the prompt expression of regrets conveyed to the United States authorities through various channels and hope further measures will be taken so that the unfortunate affair will be settled as quickly as possible."

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