

KAMIKAZE?

A mystery to solve. 1945 and you are at GQ, General Quarters. Your battle station for ASW Operations is the hedgehog mounts, just below the bridge. Hedgehogs are 55 pound, point detonating fuse bombs fired ahead of the destroyer. There were 18 – 24 bombs per side. Each contained 35 lbs of Torpex explosive. If a Kamikaze hit below the bridge and blew up, well, you would be on a short trip to heaven. Accompanying the Knox was her sister ship the USS Sutherland.

"We're messing with a submarine" according to the TM1 Gerald Harms. Behind the two-destroyer screen is either a cruiser or battleship. Suddenly, forward of the Knox and fine on the port bow a tiny, low flying airplane appears. The Knox and the Sutherland open fire. The plane was flying toward the Knox at over 260 knots, 300 mph. At that speed the plane would cover 5 miles in a minute; horizon to ship in less than 5 minutes. It is a Kamikaze. 5" guns, Twenty MM, 40 MM rounds from both ships arc toward the low flying plane. In the blink of an eye the Kamikaze flies over the Knox bridge and mast according to Harms who viewed the flyover from the forward hedgehog position. "We shot over 5000 rounds at the plane!". Some hit but the kamikaze kept flying right over the Knox and headed for the ship aft of us and crashed into the side of that ship. The identity of the ship is not known at this time. As other diaries and letters are received we may be able to say for sure what ship was behind the Knox and Sutherland on that fateful day. Over 400 ships were hit by Kamikaze attacks from 1944 until the surrender of Japanese forces in 1945. ED- The pictures in this story REPRESENT recollections by Gerald Harms. No pictures exist from this episode as far as I can determine at this time.