

shell-handling room were buckled by fouling the revolving shell ring. The unexploded 15-inch shell was found in the inner air space of the side protection system outside the diesel generator room. In order to remove the shell from the ship and the dockyard as soon as possible, extra holes were cut in the bottom plating. Six weeks were required to repair and return the ship to service.

Captain Leach noted in reports on the action that better communications were necessary for proper damage control in emergencies, better fittings were required for portable pumps, trunk accesses should be installed to all compartments outside the armored citadel, and ventilation to all four auxiliary machinery rooms needed improvements. The latter was a serious problem, with temperatures reaching 120°F. Other comments were:

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- If radar rooms were to be retained above the armor deck, they should be splinter proof.
- Boiler room air intakes, when near a funnel, were liable to gas the boiler room personnel if the funnel was damaged.
- High-angle directors were vulnerable to the lightest of splinters.
- Wooden boats were a potential fire hazard.
- Protection should be given to searchlight control cables and cables to the after emergency conning station.
- There was inadequate ventilation to diesel generator rooms, main switchboards, and ring main compartments.
- Fan casings and light fittings were unable to withstand shock damage.
- Because of high-speed steaming, seawater poured into "A" turret through its gun ports and joints of the gun house. Drainage of water was difficult, and loose water drenched machinery and caused extreme discomfort to the crew.
- The main machinery steamed at overload powers of 128,000 to 134,000 shaft horsepower with no difficulties. However, the fuel oil pumps would not feed well when drawing oil from distant tanks.

*Atlantic Charter meeting.* During August 1941, the ship carried Prime Minister Winston Churchill and a large staff from Scapa Flow to Newfoundland for the Atlantic Charter meeting with President Roosevelt. On 10 August 1941, President Roosevelt and a large staff came aboard the *Prince of Wales* for a Divine Service on the quarter-deck. In a few months, some of those present were to go down with the ship.

*Mediterranean duty.* After returning to Scapa Flow, she was assigned to the Mediterranean for convoy duty in company with the *Nelson*. On 27 September off Malta, the *Prince of Wales* shot down several attacking Italian aircraft with her 5.25-inch guns.

*Assignment to Singapore.* In October 1941, Churchill directed that a battleship and an aircraft carrier be sent to join the *Repulse* at Singapore. The Admiralty was reluctant to send a *King George V*-class ship, fearing German attacks on the Atlantic convoys. Even the fleet surgeon objected, pronouncing the ships unfit for tropical duty without changes to their ventilation systems. But Churchill insisted, and on 25 October the *Prince of Wales*, along with the destroyers *Electra* and *Express*, departed for Singapore to become the flagship of the Far East Fleet under Admiral Sir Thomas Phillips. The new carrier *Indomitable*, scheduled to join the force at Capetown, ran aground at Kingston, Jamaica, and had to be repaired. No replacement could be spared.

The *Prince of Wales* joined the *Repulse* in Ceylon; both ships arrived in Singapore