

# Ship wrecks train bridge

## Experts work to free freighter from wreckage

By C.D. MATTHEWS  
Staff Reporter

CHICAGO — Expert engineers Saturday began the difficult task of removing the twisted wreckage of the 92nd Street railroad bridge that was draped over a 590-foot Greek freighter.

The Cypriot-flagged freighter Pontokratis collided with the 100-year-old Baltimore & Ohio Railroad bridge Friday night, sending a crew of 27 on the ship fleeing. No one was injured.

The bridge accident occurred near the mouth of the Calumet River and was considered the worst in the history of the Illinois International Port of Chicago, causing several million dollars in damage.

Contractors including Bernie Vance of Vance Corp., Hammond, Ind., discussed how they would go

about removing the bridge that completely draped over the ship's pilot house and down into the water of the Grand Calumet River.

With two 80-ton cranes, five bulldozers and "about 20 men," Vance said his workers would use blowtorches to cut off sections of the bridge from the water up to the top of the boat's bridge.

These sections then would be pulled across the river with bulldozers. He estimated his part of the job would take "about two days."

However, an official from CSX Transportation said, "I think that's optimistic" and predicted the project could take more like "two weeks."

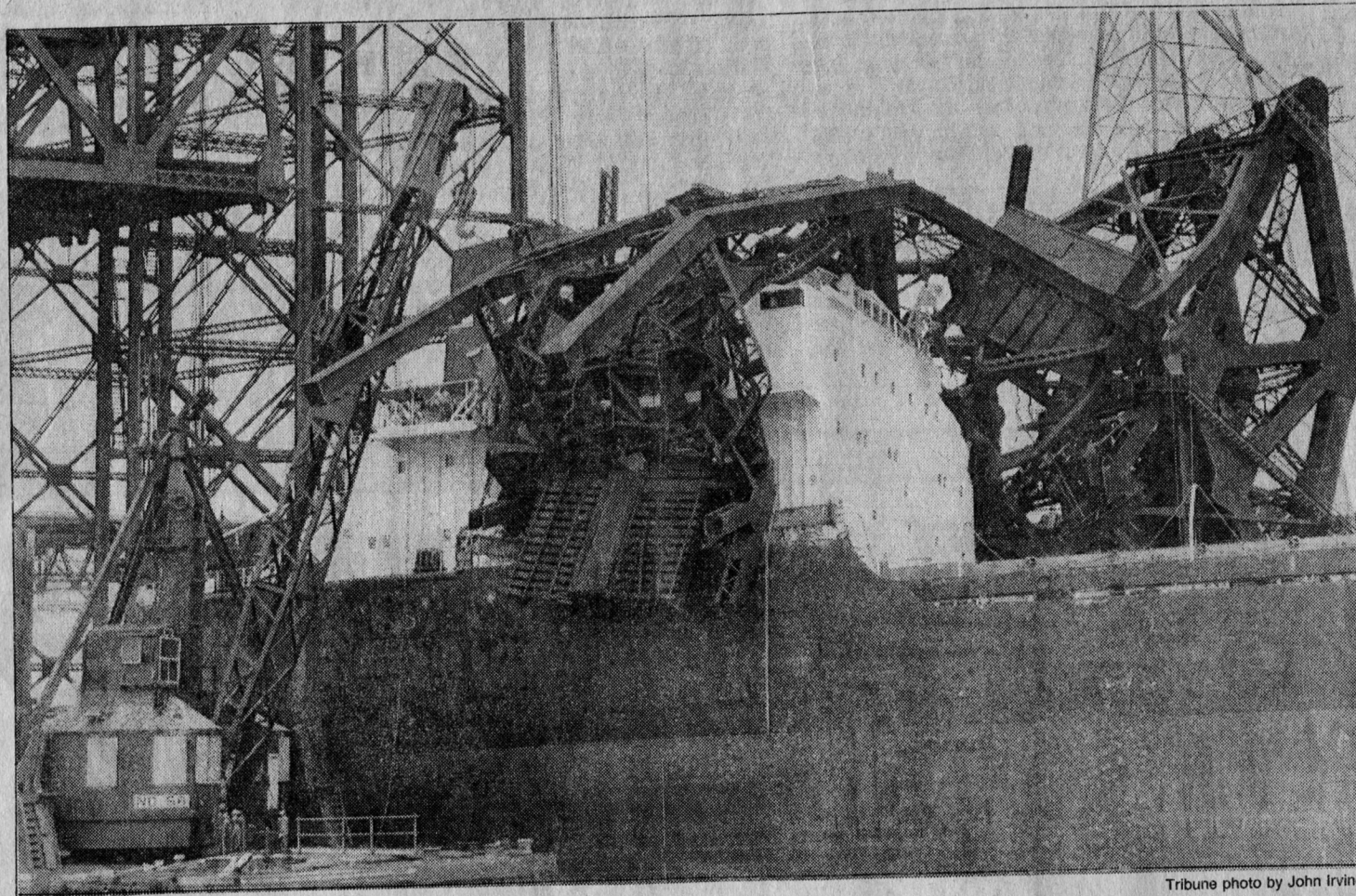
CSX owns the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad as well as the Chicago Shortline Railway, which travel over the electric bascule lift bridge.

Early Saturday morning, CSX trains were rerouted onto adjacent Conrail tracks that are also used by some 30 Amtrak passenger trains daily, a port official said.

"This bridge won't be rebuilt; it would be too expensive," said Helen A. Brohl, director of marketing for the International Port.

Brohl spoke with many contractors at the scene and arranged to keep local shipping traffic moving at O'Brien Locks, the southernmost entrance to the port where ships from all over the world enter the port.

Vance asked that officials at O'Brien Locks remain "in contact" with his crew, since the opening of the locks displaces such a large quantity of water and can cause "surges" in the Grand Calumet.

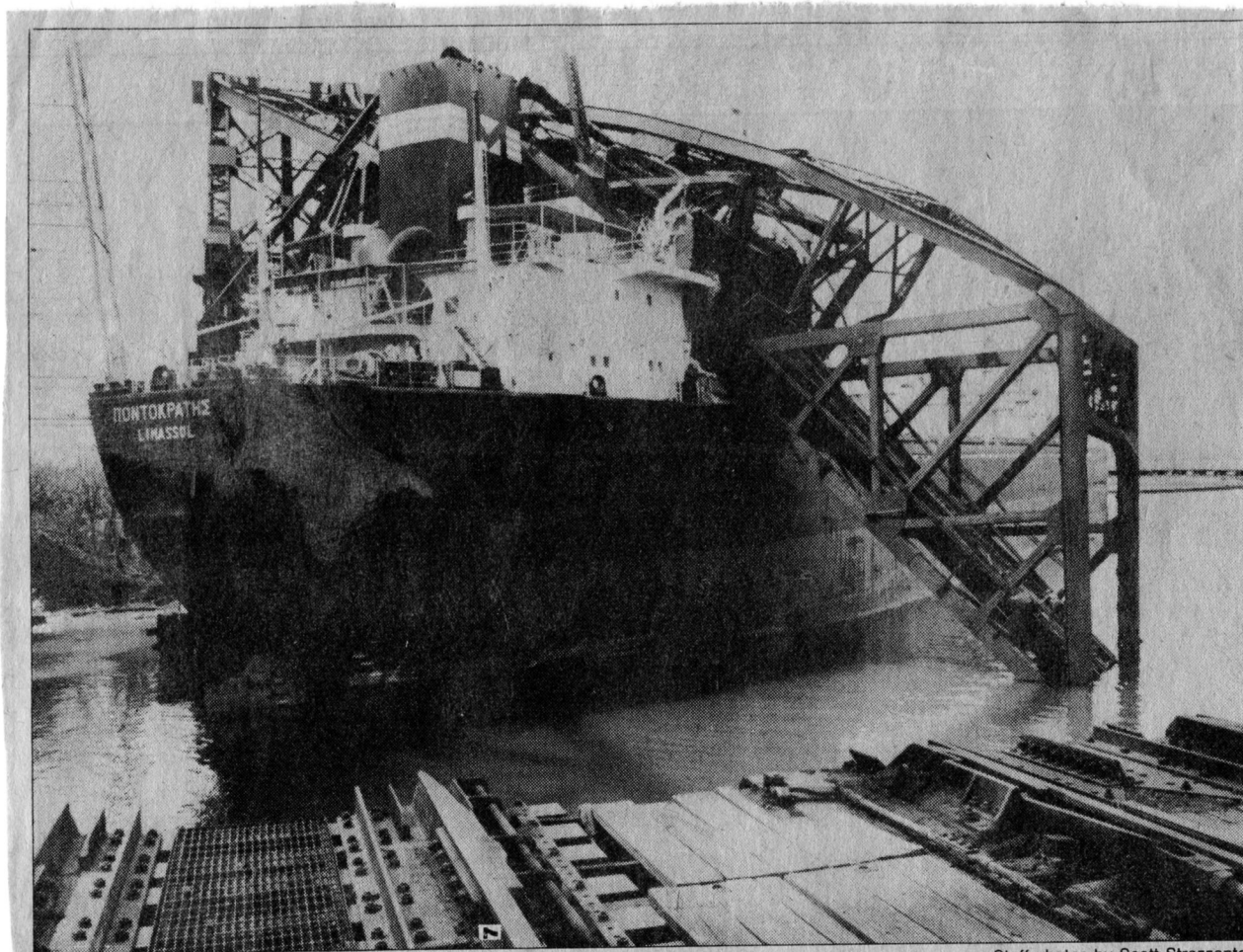


Tribune photo by John Irvine

Workers continue Tuesday to try to remove a bridge from a freighter at the Port of Chicago. The bridge's operator claimed the vessel rammed the structure Friday, while the ship's crew said the bridge dropped on the freighter.

I  
t  
a

By  
C  
sav  
T  
Bra  
who  
ced  
cor  
ins  
is  
wh  
Ne  
ass  
N  
new  
that  
Sav  
ove  
The  
Cor  
trou  
year  
B  
last  
cor  
T  
ing  
bur  
The  
the



Staff photos by Scott Strazzante

A Cypriot ship seems to have melded into one mass of metal with the bridge it struck over the Grand Calumet River at 92nd Street.





Staff photo by Scott Strazzante

A Coast Guard boat patrols the Grand Calumet River as workers begin the task of extracting the Greek freight ship which late Friday ran into the 92nd Street railroad bridge.