

SECRET

CA39/A16-3/
(004)/(hmc)

Declassified by authority of
U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL Classification
Schedule of Executive Order
Aboard U.S.S. AMERICAN LEGION,
August 16, 1942. April 1995

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: Lieutenant Commander Harry B. Heneberger, U.S.N.,
Senior Surviving Officer, U.S.S. QUINCY.

To: The Commander in Chief, U. S. PACIFIC FLEET.

Via: (1) The Commander Task Force SIXTY-TWO.
(2) The Commander, U. S. SOUTH PACIFIC FLEET.

Subject: Report of the Engagement the morning of August 9,
1942, off Guadalcanal Island in which the U.S.S.
QUINCY participated.

Reference: (a) U. S. Navy Regulations, Article 874(6).

Enclosure: (A) Diagram indicating probable disposition of
forces morning of 9 August, 1942.
(B) Location and amount of fuel oil, diesel oil,
and reserve feed water as of 0000, August 9,
1942.
(C) Statements submitted by individual officers
as indicated in enclosure.
(D) List of U.S.S. QUINCY Survivors on board the
U.S.S. AMERICAN LEGION, U.S.S. HUNTER LIGGET,
U.S.S. BARNETT, and U.S.S. NEVILLE.

1. The VINCENNES, QUINCY, and ASTORIA were steaming in column in order given with two destroyers as anti-submarine screen around a five mile square, the center of which was remembered as V-7729, speed 10 knots. Captain Frederick L. Riefkohl, Commanding Officer of the VINCENNES, was the Officer in Tactical Command of the Unit. The weather was overcast, wind light and sea calm. The first course was 045° (T) and was changed 90° to the right every half hour on the hour and half hour. Boilers #1, #2, #3, and #4 were in use. Boilers #5, #6, #7, and #8 were hot. The main steam lines were divided port and starboard, boilers #1 and #2 serving the port engines, and #3 and #4 serving the starboard engines. Electrical power, fuel oil system, feed system and fire mains were divided in accordance with standard cruising instructions as far as is known. The distribution of fuel oil, diesel oil and water as of 0000, August 9, 1942, is believed to be as is indicated in enclosure (A). The ship was in Condition of Readiness II, Material Condition "YOKE", Ammunition Condition of Readiness I set in Main and Anti-aircraft batteries. The Captain was in his emergency cabin on the Bridge and the Navigator in the Chart House.

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2. At about midnight, when the watches were changed, a radar contact with a plane coming in over Savo Island was reported to Control Forward by the Bridge. About five or ten minutes later the Bridge instructed Control Forward to disregard the contact. About 0100 a plane was heard passing to starboard going forward and again at about 0130 going aft, and shortly thereafter on the port quarter, none of these passings being close aboard. Reports to this effect were made to the Bridge. The Gunnery Control Stations had no information concerning the proximity of enemy surface vessels.

3. At 0120 the course was changed 90° to the right to 315° (T) upon signal by T.B.S. At 0145 a fix was obtained with the right tangent of Savo Island bearing 273° (T) and the left tangent bearing 240° (T). Orders were received by T.B.S. Radio for the formation to remain on course 315° (T) until the end of the hour.

4. About two minutes before General Quarters was sounded, star shell bursts were observed astern at a distance estimated at 9,000 yards by Control Forward and reported to the Bridge. It was thought at that time by Control Forward that these star shells had been fired by the destroyers in the vicinity of Tulagi in an endeavor to locate the plane previously heard. At about 0147 the following was received over the T.B.S. Radio on the Bridge: "Warning - warning - strange ships entering the harbor", simultaneously with which General Quarters was sounded, boilers #5 and #6 were immediately lighted off and Condition "ZED" set throughout the ship. This warning was never received in the Gunnery Control Stations. The first intimation the Gunnery Control Stations had that enemy ships were in the vicinity was when they turned searchlights on the formation immediately followed by a salvo falling just short of the U.S.S. VINCENNES. This occurred prior to the complete manning of the batteries. Just before the searchlights were turned on, silhouettes of three cruisers which had rounded the southern end of Savo Island were observed from the Bridge. These cruisers were observed to have three turrets forward, the middle turret being the highest. When the enemy searchlights were turned on, the order was received almost immediately by Control Forward from the Bridge to "Fire on the searchlights". These were abaft the port beam, distant about 8,400 yards.

5. The ship was hit in the 1.1" mounts main deck aft just before Plot reported ready. When the plot ready light came on immediately after this hit, a nine gun salvo was fired by the

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QUINCY turrets. The spot on this salvo was down two hundred, no change. The fire was opened with an estimated range of 6,000 yards, target angle of 60°, and a speed believed to be 15 knots. Just before the first salvo was fired, a radar range of 5,800 yards was obtained. Word was received in Control Forward from the Bridge that the ship was changing course to starboard. The ship must have begun to turn to starboard prior to this time as the bearing was drawing rapidly aft on the port side. Control of the Main Battery was shifted to Director II in order to fire Turret III since Director I would no longer bear. At this time Turret III reported being hit and jammed in train. Control of the Main Battery was shifted back to Director I which was training out to starboard to pick up the enemy as the ship swung around, Turrets I and II following in train. During this change of course to starboard the plane on the well deck burst into flames due to a hit, apparently an over from a salvo fired at an adjacent cruiser. From this instant the ship was repeatedly hit by large and small caliber shells throughout her length while still turning and unable to bear on the enemy with either the Main or Anti-aircraft Batteries. The starboard AA Battery was ordered to illuminate with star shells as soon as it would bear and fired three salvos before being put out of action. Two six gun salvos from Turrets I and II were fired to starboard before Turret II exploded and burned out in some manner and Turret I was out of action due to a fire in upper powder and a hit in the shell deck. During this period the following was received in Control Forward from the Bridge: "We're going down between them - give them hell". This was the last word received from the Bridge. Soon after this, communication was lost by Control Forward with all stations by ships service, primary and auxiliary telephones. Power was lost to the forward sky director. Director I was jammed in train. Investigation showed that the forestay had carried away and caught around the radar antennae and the right end of the spotting glass. The spotter was unable to clear this. Sky Aft, which had lost all power and communication, became untenable due to fire on boat deck and in Battle II.

6. In the meantime, other stations received hits and were damaged as follows:

(a) Bridge:- The first hit was received early in the action. It later was hit again, killing practically everyone in the Pilot House. Steering control was lost. Straffing punctured the 1.1" coaling water tank. Fires were started in the flag bags.

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(b) Battle II:- Battle II was hit killing nearly
all in the station and starting a fire there.

(c) Forward Battle Lookout:- The forward battle
lookout station was hit on the starboard side forward wounding
many of the lookouts and filled with smoke and flame from Turret II.

(d) The first hit received by the ship was on mount
#3 of the 1.1" battery which started a fire on the fantail. This
fire was fought successfully until the fire main pressure failed.
The after 1.1" clipping room was flooded. The forward 1.1" clipping
room was hit and burned, the flames enveloping Control Forward.

(e) Both the forward and after 20 mm clipping rooms
were hit and burned accompanied by numerous explosions. Guns on
the boat deck became untenable shortly after the planes were hit
because of fires in the planes and boats.

(f) Main Battery:- Turret III was jammed in train
by a hit on the face plate which dislodged a large piece of armor.
A short time later flame came from behind the upper powder hoists
and swept the trays causing the powdermen to immerse their powder.
Turret II exploded and burned out. Turret I was sprinkled due to
fire in upper powder and hits in the booth and shell deck. Turrets
I and II were hit on both the front and back substantiating the
belief that enemy ships passed both to port and starboard.

(g) The Port 5" Anti-Aircraft Battery:- Guns #6
and #8 received hits killing most of the crew and exploding the
ready service boxes. Shrapnel killed and wounded several men on
guns #2 and #4. The shells in the fuze pots on gun #4 were hit
cutting off the cartridge case bases, and causing them to burn
like a Roman Candle and killing all hands on the left side of the
gun. Gun #2 was practically out of action because of the explosion
and fire in Turret II and fire in the forward 20 mm clipping room.
After this battery was out of commission an enemy ship with mushroom
top stacks was observed passing to port, distance about 2,000 yards,
directing a high volumn of fire at the QUINCY.

(h) The Starboard 5" Anti-Aircraft Battery:- After
firing three star shells salvos the battery was hit almost simultan-
eously on guns #1, #5, and #7. The ready service boxes on guns #1

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and #5 exploded. All communication was lost on the battery. The remaining live men on the battery could not see the enemy ships due to the fire and the smoke from the forward superstructure, Turret II and the well deck. A heavy explosion somewhere below gun #3 knocked nearly everyone down on the gun. The sight-setter was thrown clear of the gun and landed inboard on deck. It is believed that this was a torpedo hit. The steam escaping from #1 Stack was deafening.

(i) Radio I :- Radio I was hit at about the same time that Turret II and the forward 20 mm's were hit. A hit in the Communication Office put the FC Radar out of commission. Fire from forward could be seen through holes in the forward bulkhead. All communications were lost at this station which was abandoned due to intense smoke. The Radar Officer, upon leaving this station, went up to the next deck to check the SC Radar in Radar I and found the transmitter laying on deck broken. All secret and confidential codes and ciphers in the Coding Room were reported to have been locked in the safes provided before the personnel left.

(j) Radio II :- The first indication of trouble here was when the telephone circuits went dead. Repeated hits were heard in the vicinity overhead. Then a shell entered the port after corner, close to the barbettes of Turret III and exploded damaging the work bench, test instruments and TAQ Transmitter.

(k) The Well Deck, Boat Deck and Hangar :- There was one plane on each catapult, one on the well deck and two in the hangar. The hangar curtain had been previously removed because it was inoperative due to blast damage received during the bombardment of Guadalcanal. A shell hit on the well deck set the plane secured there on fire spraying gasoline on the well deck, the boat deck and the planes on the catapults. The fire spread very rapidly throughout the well deck, hangar and boat deck brightly illuminating the ship so that the enemy turned off their searchlights. Flame and smoke made Sky Aft and Control Aft untenable and the glare made observation from other stations extremely difficult and in many cases impossible.

(l) Forward Repair Station :- The repair party personnel and equipment were distributed through compartments A-207-L, A-208-L, A-210-L, and A-212-L. A man reported a hit in the forward part of the ship and he was instructed by the assistant

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repair officer to break out the fire hoses in his compartment. The riser cut out valve in the forward 5" handling room for fire plug #2-36 was opened at this time. The next hit was in the compartment A-208-L which filled the compartment with smoke and started a fire in the forward port corner. An attempt was made to fight this fire using a hose from plug #2-36 but there was no pressure on the line. Another hit aft of A-210-L put all lighting and communications out of commission. The next hit occurred in A-212-L and before the door could be opened to investigate, there was a hit in the forward repair station (A-210-L) killing all but two persons. As the water coming in on the port side was then up to the level of the door coaming, the station was abandoned via the marine compartment (A-213-L) thence up the ladder at frame 53. The marine compartment had been hit on the starboard side and was full of smoke.

(m) Mid Repair and Second Deck 5" Ammunition Train:-

The first hit was received on the starboard side just abaft of frame 53. This was followed by hits in the supply office, log room, and library. These hits all started fires which soon filled this area with smoke, and in addition, many persons were wounded by shrapnel. Ammunition hoists were inoperative within a short time. In the vicinity of these hits small granular particles of incendiary material were noted. These particles were about the size of "Grape-Nuts" and were glowing and burned everything with which they came in contact.

(n) Number Two Mess Hall and After Repair Station:-

A large fire was started in number two mess hall by one or more hits. This fire was being fought successfully with water by both mid and after repair parties when pressure on the fire main failed. The fire then got out of control, the personnel evacuated, and the compartment closed up. Many hits were received in the 3rd, 4th, and "R" Division Compartments. These hits started fires, wrecked bunks and lockers, wounded many men and the compartments filled with smoke. The only life jackets stowed below decks were in the 3rd Division Compartment and proved useless since it was impossible to reach them due to fire and smoke when the ship was being abandoned. All other life jackets were stowed topside.

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(o) Plot, Central Station, and the I.C. Room :-

The last word received from Central Station was that there had been an explosion in the I.C. Room and that Central Station was filling fast. This is substantiated by several reports of a heavy explosion below by personnel on the second deck which explosion was followed by loss of lights and communications. This hit is believed to have been a torpedo (hit).

(p) Engineering Department:-

(1) Number One Fireroom:- A hit in the vicinity of #1 fireroom about 0150-0155 resulted in a minor flare back but the fires caught immediately. A second hit at about 0200 caused all fires to go out and fuel suction was lost. A few tubes in #2 boiler burst. The emergency feed pump located on the center line against the forward bulkhead at frame 53 was blown off by the force of an explosion forward.

(2) Number Two Fireroom:- A hit above #3 blower made it necessary to stop the blower. The fireroom started filling with smoke at about 0203 and the feed lines started leaking at all flanges. The port bulkhead of the fireroom started leaking at about 0206. Number four boiler was secured at about 0210 just before the water level reached the fire box. Number three boiler was secured at about 0217 when the water reached the fire box. Steam pressure had dropped to 150 pounds per square inch and all hands abandoned the fireroom at about 0220.

(3) Numbers Three and Four Firerooms:- No personnel were saved from either of these firerooms and nothing is definitely known as to what occurred there except that number four fireroom was on fire. It is believed that this was caused by a torpedo hit. This is substantiated by the following facts: (a) A man tried to enter B-4 uptake and saw the deck blown up about four feet and he could see into number four fireroom but could distinguish nothing due to fire and smoke. (b) As the ship rolled over a hole was observed in the port side of the bottom estimated to be three or four feet wide and fifteen to twenty feet long.

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(4) Enginerrooms:- Number one and two engine-rooms continued to function as long as there was steam, when, because of the list, number two engineroom was abandoned through the quarterdeck escape hatch. All supports for the steam lines in number two engineroom were broken loose from the overhead but the lines did not break in spite of the excessive vibration. It appears that number one engineroom did not realize what bad shape the ship was in as it is not believed that this station was abandoned prior to the ship's capsizing and no evidence of any damage to this area has been found. The only survivor from this station was a messenger who had been sent to the bridge by the Chief Engineer at about 0225 to tell the Captain that the ship would have to stop.

~~(q) No water was available topside, or below decks in the forward part of the ship, to fight fires except on the after part of the main deck aft where it was turned on and used to fight the fire in the 11 mount as long as the pressure lasted, as far as can be ascertained.~~

7. When the flames which engulfed the Forward Control Station subsided, an officer went to the Bridge to see what the orders were regarding further firing and maneuvering. He found a quarter-master spinning the wheel trying to turn the ship to port who said that the Captain had told him to beach the ship. He had no steering control. Just then the Captain rose up about halfway and collapsed, dead. No others were moving in the Pilot House which was thick with bodies.

8. Upon receipt of this information, the Control Forward and Sky Control Stations, which had been inoperative for several minutes, were ordered abandoned by the Control Officer. By this time the ship was no longer being fired on, was listing rapidly to port, the forecastle was awash, water coming over the gun deck to port and fires were blazing intermittently throughout the whole length of the ship. The party from aloft found nothing but carnage about the gun decks and dense smoke and heat coming from below decks, the ship nearly dead in the water and the list increasing rapidly to port. They assisted in cutting away life rafts, life nets, breaking out life preservers and throwing overboard floatable objects and were ordered to abandon ship by the senior officer present in that vicinity - the Gunnery Officer - as the

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water at this point was nearly all the way across the gun deck. About a minute later, the ship capsized to port, the bow went under, the stern raised and the ship slid from view into the depths. This occurred between 0235 and 0240 as nearly as can be determined.

9. During the period the survivors were in the water all types of life-saving equipment and other bouyant materials were used to keep afloat. Considerable difficulty had been encountered on board the ship in casting loose life rafts due mainly to their location high on the hangar bulkhead, searchlight tower, and forward superstructure. Knives carried by many of the men were extremely useful in cutting these rafts adrift. It was found difficult to get the floater nets free because these nets had been rolled up and lashed, then placed in canvas covers which were also lashed and the whole assembly was secured to the life lines. Considerable difficulty was experienced in the water with the life jackets. The tie-ties appeared to have been rotted by the material used in flame-proofing them and many carried away. There had been many 5" shell tanks on the well deck and on top of the vegetable locker which had either been thrown over the side or floated clear when the ship sank. These tanks made excellent life preservers and undoubtedly saved many lives.

10. The majority of the survivors of the QUINCY were recovered by the U.S.S. ELLET between 0400 and 0600. Others were recovered as late as 1000 by the U.S.S. WILSON. The ELLET went ahead with the recovery of the survivors in a very efficient manner and had apparently been well drilled in the conduct of such an operation. All hands were immediately sent below decks and provided with dry clothing, hot coffee, cigarets and turned in in bunks. All the ship's bunks were turned over to survivors. The wounded were quickly administered to by the medical department of this vessel, assisted by Lieutenant Commander C. F. Morrison, U.S.N., Lieutenant W. W. Forbes, U.S.N.R., and Cohen, F. P., PhM3c, U.S.N.R.; all of whom worked tirelessly despite having spent several hours under fire and in the water before being recovered by the ELLET. The officers and crew of the ELLET opened their lockers to the survivors, instructing them to take whatever clothes they needed. The Commanding Officer and Medical Officer of the ELLET are deserving of special credit.

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11. The survivors of the U.S.S. QUINCY who were recovered by the U.S.S. ELLET were transferred to the U.S.S. AMERICAN LEGION about noon, August 9, 1942. Here over five hundred men who were shoeless and clotheless, except for whatever they had picked up on the ELLET, were issued all the clothing available. Soon after arrival in port, shoes and olive drab shirts and trousers were given to officers and men by the Army. The crew of the AMERICAN LEGION exhibited a splendid spirit of helpfulness and in addition, on their own volition, collected a fund from among themselves and presented each man of the survivors with a carton of cigarettes, a carton of matches, a tooth brush and tooth paste, and a dollars worth of ships service coupons.

12. The conduct of the personnel during and after the action was excellent. No signs of panic or disorder were noted at any time in spite of the fact that many were suffering from severe pain. All hands remained at their battle stations as long as was physically possible or until no further benefit could be derived from remaining there. All hands abandoned ship in an orderly manner when so directed. Many men gave their life jackets to the wounded and assisted them to the life rafts.

13. The following are recommended for special commendation:

Ensign A. F. Cohen, U.S.N., is commended for his action in the water after the ship was abandoned. He organized a life raft convoy and repeatedly swam out to the aid of injured persons heard floundering in the water, and brought them to safety. His actions undoubtedly resulted in the saving of several lives which would have otherwise been lost.

Lieutenant W. A. Hall, Jr. (DC), U.S.N., is commended for his conduct aboard ship during the action. While severely wounded himself, he made his way around the gun deck trying to assist others who were wounded. He was seen sitting on deck propped up against the bulkhead holding the stump of the leg of his pharmacist's mate against his body in an attempt to prevent his bleeding to death.

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14. As a result of this action I am of the following
opinion:

(a) That five aircraft are too many for this type of cruiser to carry. The aircraft activities of the QUINCY enroute and at Guadalcanal could have been performed much better by a small carrier such as the "LONG ISLAND" Type. The wind was usually abaft the beam while enroute San Diego, California, to the South Pacific necessitating high speed and large fuel expenditures for each launching and recovery. The planes were used as an inner anti-submarine patrol or as an intermediate patrol even though there was a carrier present. During the bombardment of Guadalcanal three missions were assigned to the QUINCY Aircraft; (1) spotting own fire, (2) marine spotting plane, and (3) anti-submarine patrol. As a consequence, every two hours during the day planes were being launched and recovered. This activity would have seriously interfered with gunfire had the landing been opposed. During the night engagement these five planes only served as a torch to illuminate the ship for the enemy. It is believed that two planes for a cruiser of this type to be carried only when engaged in such activities as commerce raiding, or convoying with no carriers present, would be sufficient.

(b) That when in Condition II all men actually on watch should be stationed at their regular battle station. This is amply covered by "War Instructions" but current doctrine requires the complete manning of all anti-aircraft batteries at all times when in Condition II. In addition, it should be mandatory that no talkers at any station be changed during the transition period between Condition II and Condition I.

(c) That, inspite of the fact that most information about enemy movements is received via secret channels, this information should not be treated as secret aboard ship when engaged in an operation against the enemy - especially so when it indicates that contact with the enemy is probable.

(d) That, with respect to this particular action, the defensive position and tactics which permitted the enemy to select a short range should never have been accepted. All sources of information indicate that for cruisers of the QUINCY Class, ranges in excess of 15,000 yards should be used against Japanese cruisers. If information as to the position and composition of this force was available on August 8, 1942 - and investigation shows that several pertinent reports were received by some ships - offensive action taken against this force would have been the best method for defending our force and dealing the enemy a crucial blow.

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15. As far as can be remembered, there were seventy-
six (76) officers including four (4) marine officer observers and
nine hundred forty-four (944) enlisted men and marines attached
to the QUINCY when she sank. Of these, one officer and two
enlisted men were ashore on temporary duty with the Marine Landing
Force and have since rejoined the Unit.

16. A list of survivors is forwarded herewith as
enclosure (D).

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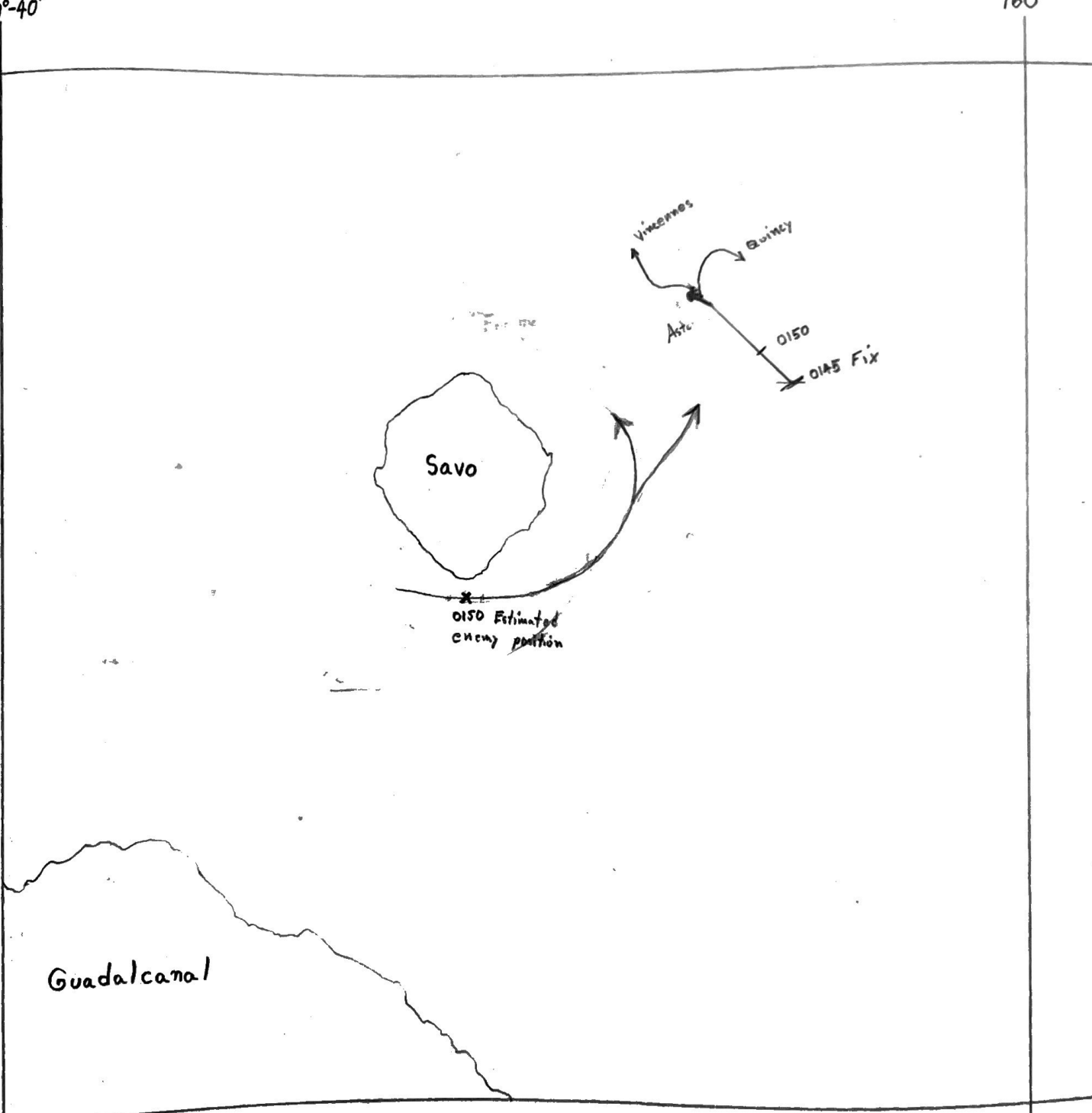
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159°-40'

160°

9°



Tracing made from chart # 2916

Diagram indicating probable disposition of forces morning

9 August 9, 1942.

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ENCLOSURE 'A'

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General
Schedule of

Location and amount, fuel oil, diesel oil, and reserve feed water on board U.S.S. QUINCY, as of 0000, 9 August, 1942.

The QUINCY had a total of 375,000 gallons of fuel on board distributed as follows:

A-503-F empty.
A-504-F empty.
A-901-F full.
A-511-F full.
A-512-F full.
A-514-F (diesel) full.
A-515-F full.
A-517-F full.
A-518-F full.
A-519-F in use as fwd. service suction (11,000 gal.).
A-520-F in use as fwd. service suction (11,000 gal.).
B-907-F overflow tanks empty.
B-908-F overflow tanks empty.
B-909-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-910-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-915-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-916-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-917-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-918-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-923-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-924-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-925-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-926-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-931-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-932-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-933-F ballasted to 18' level.
B-934-F ballasted to 18' level.
All "C" bed tanks were full.
C-905-F full.
C-906-F full.
C-912-F full.
C-913-F full.
C-914-F in use as aft. service suction.
C-915-F in use as aft. service suction.
C-921-F full.
C-922-F full.
C-927-F full.
C-928-F full.
C-929-F overflow tank empty.
C-930-F overflow tank empty.
All "D" tanks were full.

ENCLOSURE "B"

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Location and amount, fuel oil, diesel oil, and reserve feed
water on board U.S.S. QUINCY, as of 0000, 9 August, 1942.

(Continued)

The reserve feed water was distributed as follows:

B-901-W full.
B-902-W full.
B-911-W full.
B-912-W make up feed suction.
B-919-W full.
B-920-W full.
B-927-W full.
B-928-W full.

All emergency feed tanks (voids) were empty.

All eight boilers were at steaming level.

ENCLOSURE "B"

SECRET

S-E-C-R-E-T

Declassified by authority of
General Declassification
Schedule of Executive Order
12958 dated 17 April 1995

**STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS TO THE COMMANDING
OFFICER, U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL AS IS INDICATED BELOW:**

**Lieutenant Commander John D. Andrew, U.S.N.
Lieutenant Earl E. Ordway, U. S. N. R.
Lieutenant (jg) James C. Smith, Jr., U.S.N.
Lieutenant (jg) Thomas A. Chisholm, Jr., U.S.N.R.
Lieutenant (jg) Everett S. Hopkins, U.S.N.
Chief Radio Electrician W. R. Daniel, U.S.N.**

ENCLOSURE "G"

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U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL

Declassified by authority of
General Order 11650
Date August 15, 1942.

From: Lieutenant Commander John D. Andrew, U.S.Navy,
Executive Officer, U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL.
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL.
Subject: Report of the Battle Off Guadalcanal Island,
August 9, 1942.
Reference: (a) U. S. Navy Regulations, Art. 948.

1. As the second senior line officer surviving from the U.S.S. QUINCY, I herewith submit this report as required by reference (a).

2. On the night of August 8, 1942, the U.S.S. QUINCY was operating in Condition of Readiness II and as Assistant Gunnery Officer I was acting as Gunnery Control Officer on the twelve to four watch. At the time that I relieved Lieutenant Commander Harry B. Heneberger, about 2400, a contact, believed to be radar, had been made with an airplane flying in the vicinity. Some five or ten minutes later instructions came from the Bridge to the effect that we were to disregard that contact. About 0100 I heard the sound of an airplane flying somewhere off the starboard beam. The presence of this plane was reported to the Bridge. Again at about 0130 a plane was heard on the starboard side and again reported. At about 0140 star shells, later evidence indicated that these may have been airplane flares, were seen astern and slightly off the port quarter, estimated distance 10,000 yards. These star shells were reported to the Bridge. Up to this time, 0140, August 9, 1942, no information was received from the Bridge by any of the Gunnery Control Stations regarding the possible presence of enemy planes or ships and no apparent action was taken regarding any of the reports listed above. At the time the star shells were first seen I assumed that one or more of the ships protecting the transports off Tulagi had fired these shells in an effort to locate the airplane which when last heard had been proceeding in that direction. At about 0145 General Quarters was sounded but no word was received at the Gunnery Control Stations as to the reason for sounding General Quarters. Information gathered after the battle revealed that a warning had been received over TBS Radio in tenor as follows: "Warning - warning - strange ships entering harbor".

3. When Lieutenant Commander Heneberger arrived on the Control Platform I endeavored to acquaint him with the situation as I knew it but before I could turn over even the small amount of

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Douglas M. Coffey, authority of
General Headquarters
August 15, 1942. Order

Subject: Report of the Battle Off Guadalcanal Island,
August 9, 1942.

information I had, shells were landing just short of the ship ahead and off our port bow. During the general "hub-bub" of relieving Condition II crews with General Quarters crews we endeavored to identify the enemy positions and train the battery out to port. The only instructions which I recall with regard to fire control or target designation by the Bridge were as follows: "Fire at the ships with the searchlights on".

4. After not more than two salvos had been fired to the port, the ship swung rapidly to starboard thus preventing Turret I and II from bearing on the enemy and due to a casualty to Turret III, actually prevented the use of the Main Battery during this period. Turret I and II were trained out to starboard and fire resumed. However, in the interim they had received considerable damage and were only able to fire one or two partial salvos.

5. I was unable at any time to distinguish the type of ship of the enemy though they appeared to be heavy cruisers. Very shortly after the turrets were trained out to starboard, regular communications with them were lost and I then endeavored to establish auxiliary circuits but was unsuccessful. This failure in communication was believed due to a torpedo hit in or near the vicinity of the interior communication room. Since other means of communication had failed I went down to the Bridge to get instructions from the Captain and to inform him of the damage to the battery.

6. When I reached the Bridge level, I found it in a shambles of dead bodies with only three or four people still standing. In the Pilot House itself the only person standing was the signalman at the wheel who was vainly endeavoring to check the ship's swing to starboard and to bring her to port. On questioning him I found out that the Captain, who was at that time laying near the wheel, had instructed him to beach the ship and he was trying to head the ship for Savo Island, distant some four miles on the port quarter. I stepped to the port side of the Pilot House, looked out to find the island and noted that the ship was heeling rapidly to port and sinking by the bow. At this instant the Captain straightened up and fell back, apparently dead, without having uttered any sound other than a moan. The signalman told me that the Captain had ordered ship control transferred to Battle II but that communications with Battle II were no longer operative and that Battle II was believed to be wiped out. With this information I returned to the Control Platform and informed the Gunnery Officer of the circumstances. Since we no longer had communication with any gunnery station we layed below and assisted such personnel which we saw in preparing to abandon ship. As the ship commenced to sink, bow first and rolling to port, all personnel alive about the decks were instructed to abandon ship.

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7. In the water I was able to gather together several loaded rafts and floater nets. In this regard I wish to call attention to the work of Ensign A. F. Cohen, who several times swam out to bring in people heard shouting in the vicinity. Some of these were without life jackets or other means of support. Undoubtedly, Ensign Cohen, in his tireless efforts, managed to save several lives that would have otherwise been lost. The spirit of all personnel coming under my observation was excellent and I did not note, either on board ship or in the water, any case of cowardice or any other lack of discipline.

8. The lessons that I have personally learned from this action are as follows:

(a) War is still a matter of communications. Personnel charged with the responsibility of controlling guns in a high speed war such as the present must be kept posted with all pertinent information regarding enemy movements. On the evening of August eighth, subsequent information revealed, several reports of enemy movements were sent out by reconnaissance forces in the area and each of these reports indicated the possibility, even the probability, of an enemy attack on our forces. None of this information was made available to the officers controlling the guns.

(b) Battles can only be won by ships engaged in offensive actions. The original plan for the attack on Guadalcanal-Tulagi Area was carried out without a hitch until the problem of landing sufficient supplies slowed down the operation and placed our forces on the defensive. Then, in spite of the fact that we had numerically superior forces in the area, a bold attack by the enemy was partially successful. Doubtless a similar attack by our own forces on a Japanese stronghold would have been equally successful.

(c) In order to insure success in any venture all echelons of command must be thoroughly familiar with the general plan and capable of communicating information and instructions to all units engaged in the attack. The original operation order as written up provided all commanders with all necessary information, provided the plan was carried out as specified. The points in question are as follows: The location and activity of the carrier support groups were unknown and it was assumed that these carrier support groups were capable and were actually protecting the operation from any and all surface attacks. This assumption was obviously in error. The first day's operation however indicated that at least for the period originally contemplated, that is

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approximately thirty-six hours, the ships would have been safe in Guadalcanal-Tulagi Harbors with a possible exception of air attacks which were expected and which were successfully repulsed by the combined efforts of the ships and carrier based fighters. The supporting task forces had evidently not anticipated being required to protect the harbor for well over twice as long as was originally contemplated. Therefore, ships which left St. George's Channel between New Britain and New Ireland, shortly after the attack on Guadalcanal was started, were able to proceed the five hundred odd miles to inflict the damage they did on August 9, 1942.

(d) The Japanese are far from being the fanatical super-men they are sometimes pictured. During several of the bombing attacks made by the Japanese it was noted that the bombers only attacked the single outlying destroyers rather than the massed transports and cruisers and many times attacks failed to materialize when these same outlying destroyers detected the attack early enough and put up a few well placed shots, disbursting as many as seven or eight planes. One large attack by bombers was made practically harmless by the fact that the Japanese bombers released their bombs and torpedoes at the instant they were first fired on and well outside the effective torpedo range. The only damage resulting from this attack was caused by the accidental landing of one of the planes on a transport. In this particular attack the effective use of the eight-inch battery of one or two cruisers was noted in that the splashes evidently caused the bombers to release their torpedoes at their extreme range and in one instance one of the aviators captured was reported to have flown into one of the splashes and lost control of his plane.

(e) The effectiveness of radar searches is seriously reduced when the ship is surrounded by a large number of islands at relatively close range. This fact should be considered in posting radar outposts.

(f) The danger of stowing aircraft on cruisers has already been the subject of various despatch reports. However, I include it here in case such reports have not come to your attention. During the action I noted that the Japanese ships only required their searchlights for a very brief period since thereafter all ships, QUINCY, VINCENNES, and ASTORIA, were brightly illuminated by the flare of the planes on both sides which aided them to get a definite target angle.

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(g) "Night Vision" is an extremely important factor. Modifications of existing ships and changes in design of new ships should be made to allow the Captain of a ship to proceed from his emergency cabin to his battle station without requiring him to pass through any lighted compartments. He must be able to see clearly the second he arrives on his station. If he is unable to do so, it may easily result in improper handling of the ship.

(h) Condition of Readiness II is worse than useless when the stations manned are such as to require a shift of personnel when General Quarters is sounded. Absolutely no shifting of personnel from one station to another should be necessary. In most cases duplicate stations exist, as for example Control Forward and Control Aft. Where this is not true, as in Plot, half of the personnel regularly assigned should be alert the others sleeping on or near the station. Such a system would permit opening fire at any instant and fire would only be augmented not interrupted or delayed by going to General Quarters.

(i) The Nelsonian system epitomized by the phrase "A Band of Brothers" is as important today as ever. Realization of this fact is not general. Too often the spirit, best illustrated by the young coding board officers who slyly hint of knowing all but tell nothing is prevalent. At times it even appears as though some officers hope to increase their own importance by thus withholding information from even their seniors. This deplorable tendency extends even to restricting the information given commanding officers of ships.

J. D. ANDREW.

SECRET

U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL

Declassified by authority of
General Declassification
August 19, 1942, Order
100-1005

From: Lieutenant Earl. E. Ordway, U. S. N. R.
To: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL.
Subject: Report on the sinking of the U.S.S. QUINCY and other units of the Allied Nations.

1. In my opinion the sinking of the U.S.S. QUINCY, U.S.S. VINCENNES, U.S.S. ASTORIA, and H.M.S. CANBERRA, and the serious damage to the other units of the Allied Nations can be directly traced to five causes, as follows:

(a) The lack of adequate air support by the aircraft carriers. Reconnaissance flights should have located and reported the approaching Japanese fleet. Instead, after the first day's operations, very little was seen of the aircraft carrier airplanes even during the Japanese plane attacks, one of which included 20 torpedo planes and 8 high altitude bombers. During this attack, the ships of the fleet were left to fight off the Japanese planes almost entirely by themselves. Out of 12 planes shot down during the attack, at least 7 or 8 were accounted for by the anti-aircraft fire of the ships present.

(b) The transports should have been unloaded and all ships evacuated from that area within 36 hours at the very latest. According to information received, no cooperation was shown the Navy in getting these ships unloaded.

(c) The heavy ships of our fleet should not have been bottled up in the narrow Guadalcanal Harbor, which caused the radar equipment to become inoperative against surface ships. Had our ships been patrolling outside the harbor at night, they would have picked up the approaching Japanese fleet on the radar and we would not have been taken so completely by surprise. Instead, our ships used the same cruising plan each of the three nights spent in the harbor. This information could have been passed on to the Japanese fleet by their forces ashore on the islands.

(d) The Army should have cooperated more closely with the Navy in giving more adequate air coverage of the territory surrounding Guadalcanal. No Japanese fleet should have been allowed to approach the area undetected. Also, the Army should have followed up our occupation movement with planes and troops.

(e) Despatches which were received on the U.S.S. QUINCY and decoded by myself, reported a Japanese force on 7 August, course 140°, headed toward the Guadalcanal area, yet no definite action was taken to meet this force.

Earl. E. Ordway.

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U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL Declassified by authority of
General Declassification
c/o Bureau of Personnel, Department of the Navy,
Washington, D.C., Schedule of Executive Order
August 18, 1942. dated 17 April 1985

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: Lieutenant (junior grade) James C. Smith, Jr.,
U. S. Navy.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations.
Via: The Commanding Officer.
Subject: Floater Nets - recommendation concerning as
result of sinking of U.S.S. QUINCY.

1. It is recommended that floater nets be stowed
loosely - not tied up and not stowed in canvas bags.

2. When the QUINCY sank, I found myself with
about fifty men trying to support ourselves on a floater net
which was securely tied up in a roll and in a canvas bag. We
were unable to unroll the net and unable to get it out of the
canvas bag. As a result, some men that couldn't swim and were
unable to support themselves lost their lives.

J. C. SMITH, Jr.

SECRET

U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL

Classified by authority of
General Order 18, 1942.
Schedule of Executive Order
12958 of 11/25/77

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: Lt.(jg) T. A. Chisholm, Jr., A-V(N), U.S.N.R.
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL.
Subject: Statement Concerning Sinking of U.S.S. QUINCY
on 9 August 1942.

1. After serving for two years aboard the U.S.S. QUINCY as junior aviator and surviving the sinking of the U.S.S. QUINCY on 9 August, 1942, I have had occasion to observe some of the policies of the ship in drills and actual combat. Several of these policies, while having appearances of being efficient in drills, proved just the opposite in actual combat. I, hereby offer such criticism of these policies as I think and hope will be constructive and beneficial in the future.

2. Personnel abandon ship parades were not, in very many cases, in the immediate vicinity of their battle stations. Had personnel attempted to conform to the abandon ship policies which were in effect, a larger number of casualties would probably have occurred, due to the impossibility in some cases and greater delay in other cases of reaching abandon ship parades. I suggest that life rafts, floater nets, etc., be distributed throughout the ship and that personnel in the immediate vicinity of each in time of battle, be assigned to that or those particular rafts, etc., whosoever they may be.

3. Boats were entirely useless in our particular case as the ship sank so rapidly. The importance of life rafts and floater nets cannot be overemphasized but under other conditions boats might also have been very useful.

4. More personnel might have survived, had some rafts and nets been placed in more accessible positions. The floater nets secured on the outboard side of the 5" gun shields were very accessible. Some personnel in an engagement became very excited, dazed, and/or wounded. As a result of this, I had difficulty in finding men able to assist in removing the life rafts and nets from the searchlight platform. This, along with the fact that the floater nets were covered with canvas which was securely tied, resulted in a little delay in getting rafts and nets over the side. As several men had already commenced abandoning ship and the ship still had way upon it, they undoubtedly had nothing to cling to in the water.

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Classified by
On August 18, 1942.

Subject: Statement Concerning Sinking of U.S.S. QUINCY
on 9 August 1942.

5. The value of VSO aircraft aboard cruisers has been the subject of many heated arguments. After observing their use for two years aboard the U.S.S. QUINCY, it is my opinion that the value of the five planes aboard it, were not worth the hazard they presented. There is a possibility that on this type of ship two planes might be employed successfully to observe gunfire and carry out anti-submarine patrols but they still offer a definite hazard to the ship.

At the beginning of the battle on 9 August 1942, I saw the planes of either the U.S.S. VINCENNES or U.S.S. ASTORIA catch fire, thereby illuminating the entire ship to a point that the enemy had very little difficulty with such a target. Shortly thereafter, our planes were set afire, putting our ship in the same position. We were then hit so fast and so quickly by the enemy that we soon sank. Had it not been for this, our ship might have inflicted severe damage on the enemy and survived the battle.

The question is then brought up, "Why were the burning planes not thrown overboard?" The plane on the port catapult was set afire and shortly thereafter, fell off the catapult inboard to the well deck. This plane, in my opinion, was hit from the port side. The two planes in the hangar and the plane on the well deck caught fire about the same time as the plane on the port catapult. There were no means whatsoever of hoisting these planes over the side without first putting out the fires and by the time fire hoses with foamite could be rigged, there was no water available. An attempt was made to prepare the planes for catapulting at the beginning of the battle but they were set afire before this could be completed. The plane on the starboard side appeared to have only its fabric burned.

Another question may arise -- "Why were the gas tanks in the planes not drained at night?" There were five planes aboard the U.S.S. QUINCY. To drain 135 gallons of gas from each plane with the means we had, would require at least three hours, and to refill the tanks would require about one hour. This means that the planes would be temporarily out of commission during this period and during the entire night. It must be remembered, however, that oil must be removed from the planes also, and that a small amount of gas should be left to fill the carburetor and the lines from the gas tanks to the carburetor. The fact remains too, that the fabric on the planes is susceptible to fire. If the planes must be unavailable during such a great period of time, it is my opinion that they definitely should not be carried.

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Subject: Statement Concerning Sinking of U.S.S. QUINCY
on 9 August 1942.

The space and weight saved by removal of the planes could be used to some definite advantage such as an increased number of guns. I have yet to see cruiser planes used on a mission that could not have been accomplished by other planes (patrol or carrier) just as well.

6. There were nine Naval Aviators attached to the U.S.S. QUINCY for the past three months. If some of these pilots had been retained near a training center, they could have received training in other types of flying. As it is, there are nine aviators available for duty with only VO-VS training -- none are qualified for carriers or patrol planes without some period of instruction. Since we are almost certain that carriers will constitute a great part of our fleet, why not attempt to qualify pilots, who have had some experience in the fleet, with that type of work? When the time does come to form new squadrons for new carriers, then a pool of partially experienced pilots will be available to form the background of the new units -- not inexperienced pilots just out of flight school.

I do not think that nine aviators are needed aboard a cruiser equipped with five planes. If new construction will demand cruiser pilots, there are many pilots doing inner shore patrol that have had sufficient experience to be used satisfactorily. If pilots are in excess now, I think they should receive as extensive flight training as possible to ensure a sufficient number with some experience for any type of work demanded of them.

T. A. CHISHOLM, Jr.
Lt.(jg), A-V(N), USNR.

The undersigned officers, all Naval Aviators and survivors of the U.S.S. QUINCY, have read the above letter and are in agreement with the statements made.

R. D. COX, Jr.
Lieutenant, USN

H. W. SMITH,
Lt.(jg), A-V(N), USNR.

L. H. REAGAN,
Lt.(jg), A-V(N), USNR.

P. ROBERTS
Ens., A-V(N), USNR.

S-E-C-R-E-T

U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL
c/o Bureau of Personnel,
Washington, D.C.,
August 18, 1942.

SECRET

From: Lieutenant (junior grade) Everett S. Hopkins,
U. S. Navy.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations.
Via: The Commanding Officer.

Subject: Forestay, removal of from QUINCY Class CA's.

1. It is recommended that the forestay, and if possible, the afterstay be removed whenever practical from QUINCY Class CA's to prevent the fouling of topside directors.

2. During naval action on August 9, 1942, the forestay of the QUINCY carried away and fouled Director One putting it out of commission.

3. Such a casualty might easily foul both forward turrets.

E. S. HOPKINS.

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U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL

Classified by aut
Declassified
August 19, 1942.
17 Apr

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: Chief Radio Electrician W.R. Daniel, U.S.N.
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL.
Subject: Statement anent loss of U.S.S. QUINCY.

1. The following constitute the salient points in my opinion formed before, during and after the loss of the U.S.S. QUINCY on 9 August 1942, during operations on Guadalcanal-Tulagi Area.

2. In the premise that the U.S.S. QUINCY was an offensive weapon, she accomplished her offensive mission; then, her orders to continue her offensive operations around Santa Cruz Island were cancelled and she reverted to a defensive status. Had her original orders been adhered to, obviously she would not have been in that restricted area, following a regular circuitous course and passing a given point at regular intervals.

3. Some of the delay and subsequent cancellation of her orders to take Santa Cruz Island, was occasioned by a question as to whom should unload boats from the transports. Conversation with crew members of the U.S.S. AMERICAN LEGION indicate that Marines ashore returned boats to the ship fully loaded and an exchange of dispatches with ComSoPac was necessary to settle the issue.

4. Intelligence was ample, timely and accurate; yet, the Japanese ships were not sighted until 0150, August 9, 1942, at their battle stations and firing at us from the darkness. No force had intercepted them prior to their arrival, despite the fact that we had notice of their composition, speed, position and course as early as 1600, August 8, 1942.

5. Planes on the catapults, in the hanger, and inflammable material around the well deck, made us a vulnerable illuminated target and permitted fires to spread beyond control.

6. We survived every new form of attack, high-level bombing, dive bombing, torpedo bombing and strafing; yet, succumbed to an old-fashioned ship to ship action, because of two salient features:

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S-E-C-R-E-T

Declassified by author August 19, 1942.

General Declassification

Subject:

Statement re: anent loss of U.S.S. QUINCY.

1-000 dated 17 April 1955

- (a) The Japanese were in the dark, firing at us at close range during our transition from Condition II to General Quarters, while we were a well-lighted target.
- (b) We were better illuminated by our own fires from inflammable material than from the Japanese searchlights.

W. R. DANIEL,
Chief Radio Electrician, USN.