

DECLASSIFIED IAW DOD MEMO OF 3 MAY 1972, SUBJ:
DECLASSIFICATION OF WWII RECORDS

W A R

D I A R I E S

B A T T L E O F S A V O I S L A N D

8 - 9 AUGUST 1942

SECRET

CAPT. BATES
ROOM N-17

CINCPAC

CINCPAC WAR DIARY

August 1942

F
Excerpts from

August 1, 1942.

(COMAIRSOPAC) Airdrome near LUNGA bombed by B-17 with 500 and 100 pound bombs. Ineffective AA fire encountered; no VF seen; no ships in harbor.

(COMSWPAC) On night of 29th KUKUM bombed by 3 PBYS, fires started in supply dumps; 1 large ship possibly hit.

(COMSWPAC) Enemy sightings:

2315Z/31 - 1 cruiser, 1 large Maru in 06-38S, 149E, heading Southwest.

0200Z/31 - No shipping seen in Gona area.

0225Z/1 - 1 cruiser in 06-32S, heading 340° True.

August 2, 1942.

(EFATE) On 1 August TULAGI bombed with results as follows: 1 - 4 engine VF destroyed and 1 damaged; 2 zero VF's shot down; barracks and clubhouse set on fire by 7-300 lb. bombs; 14 of same type dropped in area south of LUNGA, and 21 on Government Wharf - Chinatown area; 4 - 500 pounder landed on LUNGA airfield.

(ComSWPacFor) At 1450Z/31, 3 PBYS started fires at KUKUM, by bombs dropped in landing and stores area and on AA positions.

(ComSWPacFor) Enemy sightings:

2340Z/1 - AK in 7-10 S, 147-05 E, heading southward.

0300Z/31 - 2 DD, 1 cruiser, 11 VP, 2 seaplanes in 4-45 S, 130-20 E, stopped. One near miss and one probable hit made on cruiser by allied planes.

0940Z/31 - 4 cruisers (probable), 9 AP or AK, 7VF at RABAU.

0100Z/31 - Considerable air activity in DILLI area.

Indications of enemy landings on KAI Islands (BANDA Sea).

0855Z/1 - Cruiser anchored in 04-31 S, 129-53 E bombed by one Hudson. No hits.

At 1630Z/1, 2 PBYS bombed AA positions at LAE.

At 2310Z/1, 4 Allied VF strafed and bombed KOKOKA area.

Fires were started.

Possible submarine bombed at 0220Z/2 in 37-47 S, 149-43 E.

At 0645Z/1, submarine bombed by plane in 34-16 S, 151-19 E, and another one in 33-36 S, 151-27 E. Indications of damage to the first one.

At 0700Z/1, 1 B17 obtained close misses on cruiser in 7-14 S, 148-20 E. Cruiser was accompanied by medium AP.

5 other B17's in same flight bombed GONA mission. At 1445Z/31,

2 PBYS attacked supply dumps and troops in same area. On return from patrol of INDO CHINA, SAILFISH reported 1 hit on 7,000 ton AK - possibly sunk.

3 August 1942.

(ComSWPacFor) Nine VF operating from TULAGI. Indications of Jap ~~aerial~~ reconnaissance to the southward thereof.

(Comairsopac) On 31 July fully loaded B-17s made successful takeoff from airfield at ESPIRITU SANTO.

(ComSWPacFor) Enemy sightings:

0600Z/2 - Submerged sub 2 miles SE of PORT FAIRY (VICTORIA).
 2145Z/2 - Medium AK in 9-35 S, 149-30 E, with some coming from bow.
 0110Z/3 - Small ship between SALAMOA and LAE.

Dummy periscope picked up off coast of N.S.W.

Strong enemy patrol repulsed near KOKODA.

In action over GONA area, 4 or 5 Jap VF were shot down and 2 P-40s failed to return. One of the Japs was similar to an ME 110. Bombs were dropped in stores area.

At 1445Z/2 fishing trawler damaged by gunfire from Jap sub in 35-40 S, 150-22 E.

On return from patrol off INDO-CHINA coast, SEADRAGON reports sinking 3 AKs of 7,000, 6,000, and 4,100 tons. The two latter were heavily loaded.

4 August 1942.

(CTF 8) At 2145Z/3 three Jap four-engined VP bombed KANE at ATKRA.

At 0015Z/4 another plane same type repeated the attack, no damage.

(COMSOPAC) OCEAN Island has been scouted each day for the past several days. MAKIN, LITTLE MAKIN and ABAING occupied by Japs and possibly MARAKEI. No other islands in the GILBERTS are occupied.

(COMSWPACFOR) Jap reconnaissance planes operated again from TULAGI to the southward.

(COMATR SOPAC) At 2200Z/3 TUCKER sunk at ESPIRITU SANTO after striking own mine. Total loss.

(Comsowespacfor) At 0200Z/2 one VB and 13 VF seen at DILLI.

On 1 August (photos) 2 CL, 4 AP, 1 large ship, 5 VB, 14 VF, 4 seaplanes in RABAUL area.

No shipping was found in COLLINGWOOD BAY, by six-B-25s on 3 August. That same afternoon huts were set on fire by strafing by 4 VF. Airdrome at LAE, SALAMOA ISTHMS, bombed by 4 PBV each that same morning.

Area from MORESBY to the S.W. has been reconnoitered by enemy VP.

Port Director NOUMEA, mine in BULARI Passage struck by BISHOPDALE, not seriously damaged, no casualties.

5 August 1942.

(S-31) 0415Z/5 - Unidentified VP flew over LITTLE SITKIN heading East.

(CTF 8) P38s shot down two 4-engined VB 30 miles Southeast of ATKA.

(ComSWPac) Jap planes flew over NAURU twice on both the 3rd and 4th. The first day the island was strafed. The next day one 250 lb. bomb dropped. No damage.

At 0315Z/4 - Submarine sighted in 16-50 S, 175-20 E.

(C.G. JOHNSTON) Landing strip 4,000 x 500 feet now ready.

(ComSWPac) Enemy sightings:

4 August (P.M.) - Fires at BUMA, heavy black smoke near GONA.

2 August (Photos) - 4 cruisers, 1 gunboat, 1 large ship escorted by 1 DD at KAVIENG area.

4 August (A.M.) - 2 seaplanes and 8 VF operating from LAE.

At 1100Z/4 S.S. KABOOMBA attacked by gunfire from Submarine in 36-53 S, 123-34 E. At 1315Z/4 same ship gave a similar report in 36-50 S, 124-25 E.

P40's intercepted 4 Jap Zeros near MILNE Bay. One zero possibly shot down. 1 P40 slightly damaged.

6 August 1942.

(S-35) At 0104Z/6 unidentified VP sighted in 51 N 173-10 E heading N.W.

(TRIGGER) At 0730Z/6 sighted 2 DD and 1 AK near north coast of ATTU heading west.

(ComSoPac) It is estimated that 1600 to 2000 Jap troops are in TULAGI area and 3000 on GUADALCANAL. Commander Yokahoma Air Group is at the latter place.

// (ComSWPacFor) It is estimated that there is a total of // 31 Jap planes in the TULAGI-GUADALCANAL area.

(CIMARRON) Three or four Jap submarines are operating about 80 miles west of NOUMEA.

(ComAirSoPac) On 5 August fires were started in stores at KUKUM landing by 20 100-lb bombs from a B-17. Forty-two 300-pounders were dropped on TULAGI by 3 B-17s. One of four Zero VF who intercepted was damaged. Airfield at LUNGA received 8 500-pounders from 2 B-17s. Four float plane VF intercepted. One B-17 was unable to locate his target a Jap camp on north end of MALAITA. Five VF were seen at TULAGI and two at LUNGA.

The following day 2 B-17s bombed AA positions at KUKUM. 28 300-pounders were dropped, results not observed. One fortress got lost on way home.

(ComSWPacFor) Enemy sightings:

0400Z/6 - 8 warships and 10 MARU'S at RABAU.
 0330Z/6 - 3 DD, 1 AV in 3-22 S, 150-30 E, heading N.W.
 5 August - 2 unidentified planes over ALBANY, AUSTRALIA.
 5 August - Patrol boat in 8-40 S, 147-50 E.

Jap air strenght estimated at 108 planes in NEW BRITAIN-NEW IRELAND area and 30 in NEW GUINEA.

7 August 1942.

(GREENLING) Reported sinking 24,000 tons of shipping on patrol near TRUK.

(ComTaskGrp 62.2) TANAMBOGA and TULAGI not taken at 1900 and unloading not yet commenced.

(C.G. FIJI) Jap plane operated over OCEAN ISLAND for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. One native seriously injured by indiscriminate, ^{STRAPPING}

(ComSoPac) At 0505Z/5 floating mine sighted in 25-12 S, 177-54 E.

At 0330Z/6 Jap CV in 3-22 S, 150-30 E, indented by photos.

(ComSWPacFor) Enemy sightings:

6 Aug. a.m. - Six unidentified ships in ST. GEORGES channel heading N.E. ✓
 6 Aug. a.m. - 14 small and 8 large vessels at RABAU. ✓
 0131Z/7 - 4 cruisers, 1 DD in 3-45 S, 151-56 E, heading west.
 0146Z/7 - 1 DD in 6-52 S, 154-20 E, heading south.
 2330Z/5 - 5000-ton AK in 2-55 S, 149-10 E, heading S.E.
 6 Aug. p.m. - 6 planes at DILLI.
 7 Aug. p.m. - 12 VF, 6 VB at LAE.

At 0021Z/6 runway and possibly ammunition dumps at SALANOA bombed by 7 B-25s. The same day 6 B-25s bombed LAE. Runway hit. No interceptions made on any of these attacks.

At 0129Z/7 Jap submarine attacked small ship in 9-11 S, 144-12 E.

8 August 1942.

(MIDWAY) Patrol plane attacked by type 97 Mitsubishi VB 500 miles bearing 241° from MIDWAY at 2226Z/7. Jap was driven off with no damage to PBV or crew.

(FANNING ISLAND) At 0200Z/8 unidentified ship sighted to the westward.

(C.T.G. 8.6) Kisks was bombarded according to plan with minor casualties to own forces. Three cruiser planes missing. Main body in retiring to the eastward.

(Smith) Two SS and 10 AK were seen by spotting planes in the harbor before the bombardment commenced.

Indications that operations are progressing in the SOLOMONS with considerable Jap air strenght being encountered.

(Comsowespac) Enemy sightings:

0120Z/8 - Small AK in 7-02 S, 156-25 E, heading west.
 0001Z/8 - 2 CL, 2 CA, and 1 small ship in 5-42 S, 156-05 E.
 2000Z/7 - 1 DD and 2 unidentified ships in 4-58 S, 152-50 E, heading southeast. At 0900Z/7 2 DDs and 2 large ships in same position, same course.
 0035Z/8 - 3 DD, 1 CA, 3 medium to large AK in 3-30 S, 148-25 E, heading east.
 0717Z/8 - Submarine in 7-35 S, 154-07 E, heading southeast.
 0027Z/8 - 3 DDs, 3 cruisers and 2 AVs in 5-49 S, 156-07 E, heading southeast.
 0105Z/8 - 2 small AKs in 2-05 S, 148-52 E, heading east.
 2245Z/7 - 1 cruiser in 5-40 S, 153-55 E, heading west.

2300Z/7 - 2 marue in 5-05 S, 154-40 E, heading east.
 0150Z/8 - Small warship in 6-55 S, 156-00 E, at anchor.
 0210Z/8 - Small warship in 7-35 S, 155-55 E, heading east.
 2340Z/7 - 3 DDs, 1 cruiser, 1 unidentified ship in 6-23 S, 153-20 E.
 0000Z/8 - 1 DD in 6-01 S, 154-07 E.
 2240Z/7 - 2 small marue in 3-30 S, 151 E.
 2340Z/7 - 1 PT in 4-10 S, 151-52 E, heading northwest.
 2242Z/7 - 40 large VB flew over BOUGAINVILLE heading southeast.
 0130Z/8 - Many planes heard over BOUGAINVILLE heading northwest.
 6 B25s bombed IAE afternoon of 7th. 7 planes sighted there.

At 0140Z/7 eight B17s bombed VUNAKANAU and shot down 7 VF and damaged others. 1 B17 destroyed, 4 others damaged. Some airdrome also bombed by 4 other B17s at 0130Z/7. 15 zero VF intercepted, 4 of which were shot down.

IAE bombed during night by 1 PBV.

9 August 1942.

BOISE reports mission completed. Gives no details.

(CPW 4) At 0635Z/9 CHALCEDONY depth charged sound contact 2 miles south of MIDWAY. Half an hour later submerged object in same area depth charged by SBD.

(CTF 63) 8 B17s searched entire coast of MALAITA^{AND}, SANTA ISABEL Islands but sighted no enemy ships. They dropped their bombs on south tip of SANTA ISABEL.

(CG FIJI) OCEAN Island reconnoitered on 7 August and MONOUTI, MAIANA and KURIA Islands on the 8th.

(Comsowespac) Enemy sightings:

2200Z/8 - Possibly CV in 5-30 S, 154-40 East.
 0420Z/9 - 1 DD, 1 cruiser in 17-18 S, 154-40 heading NW.
 0340Z/9 - 3 small and 1 large fishing vessels at KIETA.
 0230Z/9 - 1 armed ship in 5-29 S, 154-42 E at anchor.
 0025Z/9-- 3 medium marue with 1 unidentified escort vessel 2 miles NW of DUKE of YORK Island, heading SE.
 0025Z/9 - 19 unidentified ships in RABAU area.
 0700Z/8 - Small warship departed BUIN for WAISI.

P.M. 8th - 3 small and 2 large ships near KOEPANG. Again on 8th (P.M.) 2 small and 1 large ship at AMBOINA Bay.

Estimated total shipping BOUGAINVILLE area on the 8th: 5DD, 5 cruisers, 2 AV, 2 SS, 6 AP, and 4 patrol boats.

Jap positions near KOKODA bombed and strafed by 16 P38's. Machine gun fire silenced and fires started. On the morning of the 8th 17 medium bombers attacked airdromes at SALAMAUA and LAE. Direct hit made on 10,000 ton AK near SALAMAUA. Ship burning with heavy list. No enemy interception.

10 August 1942.

(COMTASKFOR 8) On the bombardment of KISKA 10 AK and 2 DD were in the harbor. Many hits were made at North Head. Main camp was not hit. Shore batteries were silenced. Cruiser planes were attacked by float VF but maintained station. Two 4-engine Jap bombers concentrated on DDs, made no hits. One cruiser plane missing with crew, pilot of one other plane wounded. No other casualties to own forces. Approach was made in fog which lifted in time for bombardment but low ceiling interfered with spotting.

At 0230Z/10 1 DD, 2 AK sighted by submarine 15 miles north of SEMICHI Island; sub was not able to dose for attack.

(TUMA) At 1155Z/9 Army pilot sighted a submarine on the surface 1 mile Northwest of Washington Island but did not attack as plane was not armed.

(COMAIRSOPAC) Due to operational loss of 26 PBVs reinforcement of this type requested from ComPatWingsPac.

(COMSWPAC) Enemy sightings:

0250Z/10 - 5,000 ton Maru escorted by DD or CL in 4-45S, 152-42E heading South.
 0238Z/10 - 23 ships in Rabaul area.
 2340Z/9 - 1 AK, 2 DD in 5-48S, 153-20E, heading 345°T.
 0337Z/10 - 2AP, 3 cruisers, 1 SS, 1 motorboat in 2-42S, 152-11E heading southerly.
 0745Z/9 - Surfaced submarine in 9-29S, 147E.
 2140Z/9 - 3 unidentified ships off BECO and 2 large ships off Cape SUAI.
 2340Z/9 - 10 or more 2-engine VB passed over MELBOURNE heading Southeast.
 2330Z/9 - Seaplanes conducting scouting operations from FAISI.
 2345Z/9 - One small Maru in 2-25S, 149-35E heading North.
 0750Z/9 - 28 ships including 2 DDs and 2 cruisers in Rabaul area.

On the afternoon of 9 August 8 B-26s made hits on beached ship and buildings at SABAMAUA and silenced on AA battery.

VUNAKANAU airdrome attacked by one PBV during the night; large fires started and one VB destroyed.

On the afternoon of the 9th one B-17 bombed GASMATA air-

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field and 4 more bombed that at LAKUNAI and a ship in SIMPSON Harbor, the latter was possibly hit. 4 or 5 out of 15 to 20 intercepting VF were shot down with loss of one B-17 destroyed and one missing.

CinCPac WD July 42

Genzan Air operating with 5th Air Attack at Rabaul, (July 7)

- July 11 Intelligence groups to-gether as the 8th Fleet
CruDiv 7, DesRon 3, Kamikawa Maru and Airon 7
- July 20 4 Air Attack corps at Truk
3 Air Attack corps at Bihoro Air
SubRon 7 assorialed with 4 and 8th fleets detached units.
- July 22 Com Tainan air at Vunakunau.
- July 23 S-37 reported 2 torpedo hits on Kiyokawa Maru near
Rabaul 8 July (apparently it was some other ship)
- July 22 ComDesRon 6 on board Yubari.
- July 22 Kamikawa Maru heading for Rabaul.
- July 24 Com Tainan air at Vunakunau.
- July 27 Com Genzan air now in northern area.
- July 28 CinC 8th Fleet arrived Rabaul
- July 29 Cdr. AirRon 11 is at Tateyama Air

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WAR DIARY

August 1, 1942

Operations:

Routine search and anti-submarine patrol.
Results: Negative.
Ten B-17's of the 11th Bombardment Group attacked enemy bases in Tulagi area, destroying one patrol plane (Serial 43) and damaging another; starting fires in Golf Club Buildings; and dropping four 500 lb. bombs on the Lunga Airport. The enemy intercepted with ϕ type fighter two of which were shot down with no damage to the B-17's.
U.S.S. BALLARD reported by despatch to Commander Aircraft, South Pacific for duty. Two PBY-5's of Patrol Squadron 23 indefinitely disabled due to grounding one reef at Roses.

August 2, 1942

Operations:

Routine search and anti-submarine patrol.
Results: Negative.

B-17's of 11th Bombardment Group bombed enemy installation on Lunga Point with twenty-one 500 lb. bombs and fourteen 300 lb. bombs.
Results: One hit AA position, one hit adjacent building, and many hits air field. Heavy AA fire was encountered by no damage was suffered. One ϕ type float plane intercepted doing slight damage to two B-17's before being shot down.
U.S.S. CURTISS with U.S.S. MCFARLAND as escort departed White Poppy for Button. Rear Admiral J.S. McCAIN and Captain M.B. Gardner remained aboard U.S.S. ARGONNE for conference with Commander South Pacific.

August 3, 1942

Operations:

Routine search and anti-submarine Patrol.
Results: Negative.
At 0300 U.S.S. MCFARLAND made possible sound contact with enemy submarine and attacked with depth charges. Results: Unknown.
Two B-17's of the 11th Bombardment Group attack enemy position in Tulagi.
Results: Unknown
Rear Admiral J.S. McCAIN and Captain M.B. Gardner arrived Roses, via air, for conference with General Rose.

APPROVED: M.B. GARDNER, Captain, Chief of Staff

ComAirSoPacFor

August (cont'd)

August 4, 1942

Operations:

Routine search and antip submarine patrol

Results: Negative.

In accordance with ComAirSoPac Operation Plan 1-42 nine PBV-5's were transferred from White Poppy to Button Basing aboard the U.S.S. CURTISS.

Four PBV-5's transferred from White Poppy to Havannah Harbor.

B-17's of 11th Bombardment Group attacked the Japanese airfield on Lunga Point dropping ~~fourteen~~ 300lb. bombs and scoring hits on the runway. Interception was made by one Ø type float plane which was shot down.

The U.S.S. TUCKER struck one of our own mines in the entrance to Segond Channel, Espiritu Santo and was beached in west end of Male Island. Six members of crew were reported missing.

The U.S.S. MACKINAC departed White Poppy for Maramasike Estuary.

Rear Admiral J.S. McCAIN and Captain M.B. GARDNER returned aboard the U.S.S. CURTISS.

August 5, 1942

Operations:

Conducted search in accordance with Annex (C' (Dog-2 Day) of ComAirSoPac Operation Plan 1-42.

Results: Negative from all sectors I from which no report was received. U.S.S. McFARLAND with five PBV-5's arrived at and seized Ndeni Island (Santa Cruz). B-17's of 11th Bombardment Group with Rear Admiral J.S. McCAIN attacked enemy positions in the Solomons, dropping forty-two 300lb. bombs in the area between Chinatown and Residency on Tulagi Island, twenty 100lb. and eleven 300lb. and eight 500lb. bombs on Lunga air field.

Results: Fires started on Tulagi; fires and violent explosions in the Kukum storage area; hits scored on the Lunga airfield. AA fire was light and inaccurate with the exception of that near Lunga field where AA fire was more accurate causing slight damage to one B-17. Interception was made by three type Ø float planes of which one was damaged.

One F4F of UAF-212 (Lt. Massey) reported down at sea off the west coast of Pentecost Island.

COMAIRSOPACFOR

August 6, 1942

Operations:

Search conducted in accordance with Annex "C" of ComAirSoPacFor Operation Plan 1-42 (D-1 day)

Results: Negative as reported - No report received from Sector I.

Western section of Secote III not reported due to failure of Plane (23-P-15) to return. Two B-17's of 11th Bombardment Group bombed AA positions in Kukum area Guadalcanal dropping twenty-eight 300lb. bombs. Results unknown. Light AA fire was encountered but no interception as attempted. One plane #419221 with Lieut.Col. D.C. Strother, U.S.A.A.C. missing due to navigational error.

One PBY-5 (11-P-13) operating in Sector V from U.S.S. McFARLAND down at sea. U.S.S. BREESE departed Button for Santa Cruz to escort S.S. Aldrich to Roses.

Enemy CV and three DD sighted by aircraft (ComSoWesPac) in position 03° 22' South, 150° 30' East.

August 7, 1942

Operations:

Search conducted in accordance with ComAirSoPacFor's Operation Plan 1-42 Annex "C" (Dog Day).

Results: Sector I Not covered due to weather.
Sector II Right half negative; left half not reported the failure of plane (B-17, Pilot - Major Pharr) to return.
Sector III Sixty-five percent coverage negative.
Sector IV, V Ninety percent coverage negative.
Sector VI, Eighty to hundred percent coverage negative.

One B-17 of 11th Bombardment Group operating from Kumac and searching southwest of Sector I missing. Crew of B-17 (#419221) found and recovered near Requine Bay, east coast of Espiritu Santo. Lt. Massey, pilot of F4F (VMF 212) recovered. U.S.S. MACKINAC (Task Force 63.5) arrived Maramasike Estuary, (east coast of Malaita Island). Nine PBY5's transferred from Button to Maramasike Estuary.

Two PBY5's transferred from Havannah Harbor to Button. S.S. NIRA LUCKENBACK and S.S. JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL escorted by U.S.S. DALE departed Button for Roses. The LUCKENBACK to unload 5300 drums of avgas and 240 drums of avluboil (sym. 1120) at Roses and await orders.

August 7, 1942 (Cont'd)

S.S. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES ordered to Pallikule Bay; unload one mat and await orders.

U.S.S. BALLARD ordered to be prepared to leave Fahtan on twenty-four hours notice after August 13 for purpose of relieving U.S.S. MACKINAC at Maramasike Estuary. The BALLARD to be loaded with avgas, fuel S.S. MORINDA and escort arrived Roses from Fantan two. U.S.S. NAVAJO arrived off entrance of Segund Channel, Espiritu Santo.

Four VF planes of VMF 212 arrived Button from Roses to reinforce fighter wquadron.

August 8, 1942

Operations:

Conducted search in accordance with ComAirSoPac's Operations Plan 1-42 (Day plus one Dog).

Results: Sector I - Not covered due to weather.

Sector II Left Half: coverage eighty percent to 650 miles; negative.

Right Half: not covered due to weather.

Sector III Coverage eighty-five percent; negative.

Sector V - coverage ninety-five percent; outer fifty miles not covered; negative.

Sector VI - coverage eighty-two percent; hundred percent; negative.

Sector VII - coverage eighty-five percent; negative.

One PBY-5 (14-P9) operating in Sector V down at sea in position 11° South 165° East, with bow stove in and leaking badly. U.S.S. McFARLAND proceeding to assistance.

One PBY-5 (23-P-2) struck reef in Maramasike Estuary and was beached to prevent sinking. Useful material being salvaged but plane damaged beyond recovery.

Planes of VMO-251 ordered transferred from Poppy to Button via Roses on August 9 or as soon thereafter as practicable.

Enemy seaplane tenders reported operating in Rekata Bay (Santa Isabel Island). B-17's of 11th Bombardment Group ordered to be prepared to attack this force about 1200 L August (. Task Group 63.5 ordered to make four plane night torpedo attack (Aug. 9) on

this same force.

CP, AORSP¹/₂ACFPR
COMAIRSOPACFOR

August 9, 1942

Operations:

Continued search as outlined in ComAirSoPac's Operation Plan 1-42 Annex "C" (Dog plus one Day).

Results; Sector I - Not covered; local search only.
Sector II - Coverage one hundred percent; negative.
Sector III - Coverage ninety-five percent; negative.
Sector IV - Coverage one hundred percent (outer fifty miles not covered); negative.
Sector V - No report.
Sector VI - Coverage seventy percent; negative.
Sector VII - Coverage ninety percent; negative.

In accordance with orders received from ComSoPac Task Group 63.4 with U.S.S. BREEZE and S.S. Aldrich ordered to return from Ndeni as soon as practicable August 10 reducing search to 450 miles with planes returning direct to Button. This is event. Second Marines have not started landing operations. If landing operations have commenced Task Group 63.4 will continue current searched.

On same authority Task Group 63.5 ordered to retire from Maramasike to Buttone August 10. Routine search for Monday (Aug. 10) to be reduced to 400 miles and rotated counter clockwise ten degrees with additional three plane search in sector 280° - 313° to depth of 210 miles from Maramasike all planes returning direct to Button.

Search in Sector II ordered cancelled for Monday (Aug. 10) and planes (B-17's) ordered held ready for striking force.

ComTask Force 62 advised that in lieu of search in Sector III and VII a search will be conducted (Monday Aug. 10) in sector 297° - 312° to depth of seven hundred miles from Button. Search planes to be abreast Guadalcanal at sunrise. A striking force of B-17's sent to hit reported enemy surface force off Santa Isabã found no target; dropped bombs on southern tip of Island. Task Group 63.1 ordered to be prepared to transfer, on short notice, six B-26's equipped with torpedoes from Poppy to Button. Because of operational losses (four to date) ComPatWingsPac requested to make ready for this command nine replacement PBY-5's four of which to be sent as soon as possible.

Due to lack of facilities and difficulties encountered in unloading S.S. Oliver Wendel Holmes it was suggested to ComSoPac that S.S. Aldrich be employed in transporting bombs and avgas and oil to Cactus. This would also permit unloading of required amount of mat at Button. In order to accomplish the urgent and necessary work of building dispersal pens at airfield and wharf in Second Channel it was requested of ComSoPac that an engineer battalion complete with equipment be transferred from Poppy to Button for temporary duty. This to be done as soon as possible. S.S. Alcyone departed White Poppy for Button, estimated time of August 11. S.S. Nina Luckenback ordered to ComSoPac to discharge all avgas, avlub, motor gas and motor lub at Roses and proceed independently to San Francisco.

August 9, 1942 (Cont'd)

Operations:

ComMinDiv 2 reported completion of mine field at Marmasike. S.S. Cimarron departed Fantan Two carrying fuel oil, 259,868 gallons avgas in bulk; two hundred drums avgas and fifty drums avlub oil.

U.S.S. HELENA and convoy ordered to Segond Channel, Espiritu Santo, by ComSoPac.

Possible enemy CV sighted by Coast watcher in approximate position 05° South, 154° 40' East.

Enemy landing forces reported proceeding against Cactus.

Crew of #BY-5 (14-P-9) rescued by U.S.S. McFARLAND; plane sunk.

August 10, 1942

Operations:

Continued search as outlined in ComAirSoPac's Operation Plan 1-42 as modified (see entry Aug.9).

Results: Sector I - Not covered due to weather.
Sector II Not covered (see entry Aug.9)
Sector III Not covered (see entry Aug.9)
Sector IV - Coverage ninety-eight percent to 400 miles; negative.
Sector V - Coverage ninety-five percent to 400 miles; negative.
Sector VI Coverage ninety to one hundred percent; negative.
Sector VII Not covered (see entry Aug.9)
Sector 292° - 316° - Coverage ninety-five percent to 600 miles from Button; negative.

ComAirSoPac's Operational Plan 1-42 modified by despatch. Copy of despatch attached as Enclosure (A).

11th Bombardment Group ordered to transfer all available planes from Poppy and Fantan to Button. USS McFARLAND, USS BREEZE and SS ALDRICH departed Ndeni for Button. USS McFARLAND to proceed via Indispensable Reef for purpose of rescuing crew of PBV-5 (11-P-13). Plane to be salvaged as practicable.

SS President Tyler departed Roses for Button. U.S.S. LONG ISLAND and U.S.S. KITTYHAWK with fighter plane replacements due to arrive Fantan August 13. ComAirSoPac will provide air coverage for these ships August 12-13.

Plans are underway for the construction of an additional bomber field and three fighter strips at Button.

Work on one fighter strip started. It is also proposed to establish two additional fields at Roses. One AK equipped with lighter directed by ComSoPac to Button to furnish unloading facilities for portion of Cub One.

Received an affirmative answer from ComSoPac to request to continue unloading of mat from SS Oliver Wendel Holmes.

Bombs not needed Button to remain aboard SS Morinda: all avgas and avlub to remain in S.S. Kopara.

August 11, 1942

Operations:

Conducted searches in accordance ComSirSoPac's Operation Plan 1-42 as modified by despatch.

Results: Sector I - Coverage ninety-five percent negative.

Sector II Coverage one hundred percent negative.

Sector III Coverage ninety-five percent negative.

Sector IV Coverage seventy percent negative.

Sector V - No report.

Special dawn search by B-17's in Buadalcanal - Tulagi area - negative.

Due to engine operating time ComPatWingsPac was requested to provide replacements for eight PBY-5's not operating Button; these planes in addition to those requested due to operational losses. As Aircraft Operational Groups to perform the normal services of base command (as per organization of Naval Air Stations) are urgently needed in this area, ComSoPac was requested to provide three such group; one for Espiritu Santo, one for Tulagi - Guadalcanal area and one in reserve for more advanced area when seized.

All aircraft Roses ordered to be maintained on thirty minutes alert until further notice. Air planes (13-F4F) of VMO-251 arrived Button. Crew of PBY-5 (11-P-13) rescued by U.S.S. STARCK, U.S.S. HELENA with convoy (WHARTON, PRESIDENT POLK, SANTA ANA, and DEL BRASIL) arrived Button.

U.S.S. BREESE with S.S. ALDRICH arrived Button. S.S. PRESIDENT TYLER arrived Button and was directed Pallikula Bay escorted by U.S.S. DALE. ComSoPac was requested to order S.S.S NIRA LUCKENBACK now at Roses to load radar and proceed Button with loading barge in tow.

APPROVED:

M.B. GARDNER,
Captain, U.S. Navy,
Chief of Staff.

TURNER

SECRET

#2

S-E-C-R-E-T

Admiral TURNERS Comments to Admiral CRUTCHLEY

1. The above enclosure are forwarded for your records. Together with the reports which you have forwarded, they constitute all the information available at this time. The reconstruction of the occurrences during this battle are set forth in the succeeding subparagraphs:

(a) From 2345 until about 0130 several vessels, particularly the BLUE and RALPH TALBOT, but including the QUINCY, heard and even saw some airplanes in the vicinity of SAVO ISLAND. The two destroyers attempted to forward the reports, and these reports were received by certain other vessels. None of these reports were received by Commander Task Force SIXTY TWO. No vessels appeared to have taken any special action to prepare against attack, but continued in the usual state of night readiness.

(b) At 0140 the CHICAGO and CANBERRA turned from a northwesterly course, as per routine, to course 115°. At this time to BAGLEY, and at 0146 the PATTERSON, screening the CHICAGO and CANBERRA, sighted ships ahead, and attacked. Apparently, one of these destroyers sent out a warning signal. The ships were going fast, estimated at 28 to 30 knots. (A speed of about 25 knots has been assumed in inclosure (B)).

(c) At 0150 the CHICAGO and CANBERRA engaged enemy cruisers and destroyers. Apparently there were three enemy cruisers present, and an unknown number of destroyers. The enemy ahead now turned eastward on passing the BAGLEY. The range seems to have been 3000 to 4000 yards. The CHICAGO was hit in the bow with a torpedo. The CANBERRA was heavily damaged and set afire by torpedoes and gunfire. At least four torpedoes passed the BAGLEY toward the cruisers.

(d) At 0155 the enemy engaged the VINCENNES, QUINCY, and ASTORIA, then on course 315°, speed 10 knots, screened by the WILSON and HELM. The range used by the ASTORIA was about 5000 yards and by the VINCENNES about 8000 yards. All three ships were heavily hit and wet on fire. The QUINCY and VINCENNES seem to have dropped out of the line. The enemy seems to have been hit at that time.

(e) The enemy formation now turned north, circled the rear of the VINCENNES division, and passed out of the Sound on a northwesterly course. They reengaged about 0210, passing out cruisers at a distance of 2000 to 3000 yards, firing rapidly and accurately. All three ships were put out of action. The VINCENNES Sank at 0245, the QUINCY AT 0240, and the ASTORIA at 1215, during daylight. The enemy was engaged by the WILSON and HELM with gunfire, but apparently not by torpedo fire.

(f) The RALPH TALBOT, from her patrol station, was proceeding toward SAVO ISLAND when, about 0210, she seems to have been fired on by our own vessels, using searchlights; these may have been the HELM

SECRET

S-E-C-R-E-T

and WILSON. The RALPH TALBOT received one hit. At 0218 the RALPH TALBOT was engaged by an enemy vessel or vessels, the engagement lasting until 0230, when the TALBOT retired toward SAVO ISLAND badly damaged. At 0221 the TALBOT fired torpedoes to starboard, then turned and fired torpedoes to port. The TALBOT believes she made at least one torpedo hit.

2. The objective of the enemy appears to have been the transports in both XRAY and YOKE areas. Enemy aircraft flares were dropped beginning about 0145 to the southeast of the XRAY transport area, in excellent position for silhouetting the transports. The transports, which were underway, unloading, left, going north and east out of this area. Flares continued in the XRAY area for about half an hour. After that, at 0235, several enemy flares were dropped to eastward of the YOKE transport area. None of the transports were attacked by the enemy surface forces.

3. On order from Commander Task Force SIXTY TWO to Commander Task Group SIXTY TWO POINT SIX, a screen was formed to the northwest of the XRAY transport area by the AUSTRALIA and HOBART. (The AUSTRALIA was in this area due to a conference between the Cdr. Task Force 62 and Cdr. Task Groups 62.6 and 62.8 concerning the situation). Cdr. Task Group 62.6 directed the vessels of the DD and DES screen to join the AUSTRALIA, but these vessels misunderstood and concentrated in the established DD Concentration area northwest of SAVO. These vessels arrived after conclusion of the action, but in time to rescue survivors. The SAN JUAN and the North Transport Screen continued on their station.

4. The individual reports differ as to the numbers and classes of the enemy. The opinion is held that the enemy force consisted of three cruisers and four destroyers. The fire was accurate and rapid, and apparently controlled by an excellent system of Radar. It is reasonable to deduce that the Japanese ships have a system of IFF Radar, in addition to scouting and gunnery Radar sets.

R. K. TURNER

S E C R E T

Task Force 62
U.S.S. McCAWLEY, Flagship
August 1, 1942

Task Force 62 underway in cruising disposition AC-3 (See Operation Order No. A5-42 attached).

Position (LCT) 0800 - Lat. 18° 41.5'S Long. 179° 35.5'E.
1200 - Lat. 19° 03'S Long. 179° 09'E.
2000 - Lat. 19° 39'S Long. 177° 40'E.

Weather: Blue sky, detached clouds, wind moderate, sea calm.

Average course and speed 1200 July 31, 1942 to 1200 August 1, 1942: courses variable clearing Fiji Island group, speed 7.0 knots.

Days operation: Zig-aggged in accordance with Plan 11, Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.

U.S.S. HULL on temporary duty delivering mail to Commander Task Force 61 with orders to rejoin formation on completion of assignment. U.S.S. DEWEY and MUGFORD to escort KANAWHA, RAINIER and PLATTE to Fantan TWO.

Changed Force course and axis to 205°T. Late fueling group rejoined this formation during forenoon. Force speed changed to 14 knots. Between 1630 and 1700 sighted and exchanged signals with Task Forces 11, 16, and 18. At 1830 changed Force course and axis to 280°T.

August 2, 1942

Task Force 62 underway in cruising disposition AC-3.

Position (LCT) 0800 - Lat. 19° 07'S Long. 174° 51'E.
1200 - Lat. 18° 58'S Long. 174° 00'E.
2000 - Lat. 19° 04'S Long. 172° 17'E.

Weather: Blue sky, detached coulds, wind light, sea calm.

Average course and speed 1200 to 1200, 306°T, 12.75 knots.

Days operations: Zig-zaggged in accordance with Plan 11, Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.

At 1100 U.S.S. SELFRIDGE, BLUE, HENLEY, BAGLEY, JAVIS, RALPH TALBOT departed for EFATE to fuel, At 1900 H.M.A.S. HOBART, MinRon TWO left for EFATE to fuel.

At 1730 changed Force course to 240°T. At 1800 set clocks to zone minus eleven time. At 2000 changed Force courst to 290°T, axis remained 280°T, changed speed to 11 knots.

August 3, 1942.

Task Force 62 underway in cruising disposition AC-3.

<u>Position (LCT)</u>	0800 - Lat. 18° 18'S	Long. 169° 53'E.
	1200 - Lat. 18° 09'S	Long. 169° 08'E.
	2000 - Lat. 18° 11'S	Long. 167° 29'E.

Weather: Blue sky, detached clouds, wind light, sea calm.

Average course and speed 1200 to 1200, 280°T, 11.5 knots.

Days operation: Zig-zagged in accordance with Plan 11, Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.

At 0400 Transdiv 12 left for EFATE to fuel.

At 0555 U.S.S. ZEILIN and MUGFORD sighted and joined formation. U.S.S. BETELGEUSE and WILSON joined during late forenoon. H.M.A.S. HOBART and Mine Squadron TWO and Destroyer Squadron FOUR rejoined about 2500. Transdiv TWELVE rejoined about 1600.

At 0830 Condesron FOUR reported SS ESSO LITTLE ROCK, the tanker due to fuel destroyers at EFATE, had failed to arrive and that he and his destroyers were returning to formation. U.S.S. WILSON reported he had sighted ESSO LITTLE ROCK during night and had diverted her to clear formation.

At 0905 signal made by CHICAGO indicated submarine contact bearing 260°T from flagship. Ships maneuvered by simultaneous 40° course change to right. Contact believed sound contact on large fish.

At 1800 changed Force course to 260°T, axis remained 280.

August 4, 1942:

Task Force 62 underway in cruising disposition AC-3.

<u>Position (LCT)</u>	0800 - Lat. 17° 25'S	Long. 164° 46'E.
	1200 - Lat. 17° 15'S	Long. 164° 05'E.
	2000 - Lat. 16° 58'S	Long. 162° 33'E.

Weather: Blue sky, detached clouds, wind light, sea calm.

Average course and speed 1200 to 1200, 280.5°T, 12.33 knots.

Days operation: Zig-zagged in accordance with Plan 11, Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.

At 0700 changed course to 280°T, speed 10 and took special disposition for fueling destroyers from transports at sea, fueling commenced 0800. Twenty four destroyers fueling from the CIMARRON.

August 4, 1942. (Cont'd)

At 0500 U.S.S. CIMARRON reported to assist with fueling. CIMARRON released at 1715 to proceed as directed by Commander Task Force 61.

At 1800 changed standard speed to 13.5 knots and resumed cruising disposition AC-3.

August 5, 1942.

Task Force 62 underway in cruising disposition AC-3.

<u>Position (LCT)</u>	0800 - Lat. 16° 45'S	Long. 159° 33'E
	1200 - Lat. 16° 34'S	Long. 159° 00'E
	2000 - Lat. 15° 04'S	Long. 158° 55'E

Weather: Blue sky with scattered clouds in morning, increasing to completely overcast, wind fresh, sea moderate.

Average course and speed 1200 to 1200, 296°T, 12.31 knots.

Days operation: Zig-zagged in accordance with Plan 11, Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.

At 0700 executed signal to form special disposition for transfer of passengers and baggage.

Task Forces 16 and 61 were sighted at 0730. Planes from Task Forces 61, 16, and 18 were over the formation.

At 1000 rotated axis 325°T.

At 1100 rotated axis 000°T.

At 1300 formed the Force in Attack Force Cruising disposition AA.

At 1400 formed the Force in Approach Disposition AR-3.

At 1700 formed Cruising disposition AC-3. Ceased zig-zagging at 1830.

August 6, 1942

Task Force 62 underway in cruising disposition AC-3 on axis 000°T, speed 11 knots.

<u>Position(LCT)</u>	0800 - Lat. 12° 47'S	Long. 158° 58'E
	1200 - Lat. 11° 52'S	Long. 158° 56'E
	2000 - Lat. 10° 32'S	Long. 159° 00.5'E

Weather: Sky completely overcast, heavy haze, visibility 4 miles. Sea and wind moderate.

W
A
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K
C
W
Aug 1942 page 4

August 6, 1942 (Cont'd)

Average course and speed 1200 to 1200, 000°T, 11.75 knots.

Transferred latest intelligence maps and mail to ships of the Force.

At 1200 Commander Destroyer Squadron FOUR in SELFRIDGE despatched to BELLONA ISLAND about 60 miles to northeast with orders to fix navigational position and rejoin disposition by 1800.

During morning friendly planes were sighted. During afternoon there were frequent radar contacts with planes, believed friendly.

Zig-zagging was omitted in order to simplify navigational dataa

At 1600 placed Operation Plan A3-42 into effect and went into approach disposition AR-3

At 1800 changed speed to 12 knots.

At 2250 (as nearly as could be observed) SAN JUAN (Leading ship) changed course to 040°T and initiated Approach Plan AR-11. This was 15 minutes behind scheduled time (2235).

August 7, 1942.

Task Force 62 underway in approach disposition AR-3. Approach plan AR-11 in effect. Weather was very favorable for the approach. There was sufficient moonlight to readily effect change of course and passage of SAVO ISLAND. Clouds and light rain followed and cloaked the advance of the Force.

At 0610 communications were established with supporting aircraft.

At 0614 Fire Support Group Love opened fire, followed at 0616 by Fire Support Group Mike.

The signal to land the Landing Force was made at 0652 when ships of Transport Group X-Ray reached transport area, and the time for ZERO hour (the hour for landing on GUADALCANAL) was set at 0910. At 0715 HYPO hour (the hour for landing on TULAGI) was announced as 0800.

First troops landed unopposed on TULAGI at 0800 and on GUADALCANAL at 0913.

In view of lack of resistance on GUADALCANAL, and absence of mines, transports were removed in and anchored within about 2,000 yards of the beach to expedite unloading.

August 7, 1942 (Cont'd)

The Beach Master on GUADALCANAL was established ashore and in communication with the Flagship at 1043.

A message was received from Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet that enemy submarines were enroute to attack the Force and that eighteen enemy heavy bombers were enroute to attack the Force.

Information was received at 1225 that fifteen enemy ~~sea~~-planes had been destroyed on the water during the early part of the attack. This number was later increased to nineteen.

At 1313 enemy planes were reported bearing 215°T. A formation of twenty-seven 2 engine bombers passed over the transport area at 1321 in line of shallow Vs, at between 8,000 and 10,000 feet. Anti-aircraft fire was opened and planes disappeared without change of formation. Bombs were dropped but did not damage. Two planes were shot down and two damaged by AA gunfire.

From 1458 until 1503 enemy dive bombers estimated at seven to ten attacked a destroyer and a cruiser of the screening force. One bomb hit was made on the MUGFORD who later reported shooting down three enemy planes.

Severe fighting ashore continued around TULAGI and GAVUTU and rendered unloading of equipment and supplies exceedingly slow in that sector.

Friendly dive bombers rendered effective air support during the day and supplied considerable information on enemy forces ashore.

Transports and auxiliary supply ships remained in their transport areas during the night and continued unloading using necessary lights. They were covered by the Screening Group plus the Minesweeper Group.

August 8, 1942.

At 0135, the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, reported that a message from the Assistant Division Commander on TULAGI stated the Raider Battalion had twenty-two percent casualties, and the Parachute Battalion fifty to sixty percent casualties and that reinforcements were needed, and requested that the Second Marines be utilized for this purpose.

Unloading at ships and on Beach was discontinued from 0230 to 0730 because of congestion.

At 0825 Marine forces on TULAGI resumed their attack.

August 8, 1942 (Cont'd)

At 0945 reenforcements from the Second Marines began landing on TULAGI. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions were landed.

At 1037 a message was received reporting forty large two engine bombers passing BOUGAINVILLE heading southeast.

Orders were issued at 1045 for Task Force 62 to move out of the transport areas and assume disposition CA-3/

At 1200 a Force of about twenty-seven enemy torpedo bombers, similar to Type 97 came in around the southeast end of FLORIDA ISLAND and carried out a torpedo attack on the Force. The GEORGE F. ELLIOTT was hit amidships, and set afire by a crashing torpedo bomber, and the JARVIS was hit forward by a torpedo. Fourteen enemy planes were known to be shot down including one attempting to strafe ships' boats. At the same time, enemy bombers, at least 8, supported by fighters, attacked.

At 1300 the DEWEY towed JARVIS to an anchorage in shallow water. JARVIS reported hull badly ruptured, but power was available.

Information was received at 1355 that another flight of enemy planes was enroute to the GUADALCANAL area. Orders were issued for Task Force 62 to form disposition CA-3.

The attack did not develop, Vessels returned to the transport and covering areas at 1650 and unloading was resumed.

At 1730 after efforts to control the fire on the GEORGE F. ELLIOTT proved unavailing, orders were given to sink her. The DEWEY fired three torpedoes which failed to sink the ELLIOTT. The ELLIOTT drifted eastward and grounded in shoal water.

Commanding General, First Marine Division reported capture of airfield and occupation of KUKOOM. Considerable construction machinery and material was captured intact. No contact yet established with the enemy.

The JARVIS was directed to proceed to NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA, escorted by the HOVEY, leaving by way of LENGU CHANNEL. The HOVEY was unable to make contact with the JARVIS.

About 1800 information was received that two enemy destroyers, three cruisers and two gun boats or seaplane tenders were sighted at 1025 Z at 5° 49'S, 156° 07'E, course 120, speed 15 knots.

At 2325 a conference was held with CTF 44 and Cdr.Gen., 1st Marine Division at which time, in view of the situation caused by withdrawal of TF 61, a decision was reached to move out the transport groups on August 9, 1942.

During the day the sea was calm, with a light breeze, blue sky with clouds becoming increasingly heavy toward night.

August 9, 1942.

At 0145 flares were dropped by an enemy plane or planes and intermittent dropping of flares continued until 0325.

Transports and auxiliary supply vessels maneuvered independently.

At 0145 heavy gunfire was heard and flashes were seen in channel north of SAVO ISLAND, continuing to 0230.

At 0552 gunfire was heard bearing 290°T. Firing ceased at 0557.

During the night action the following ships were sunk; U.S.S. QUINCY, VINCENNES, H.M.A.S. CANBERRA. The ASTORIA was damaged and afire and after explosion in magazine, survivors were ordered removed and the vessel sank at 1310. The CHICAGO was damaged by a torpedo hit in the port bow.

The PATTERSON and RALPH TALBOT WERE damaged by gunfire. Survivors from vessels sunk, and wounded from damaged vessels were evacuated to transports.

Warning of an impending air attack was received and was followed at 0916 by the report of a submarine operating in the vicinity. Transports in area X-Ray moved out and formed to repel an air attack. The attack did not materialize and transports returned to the transport area and at 1250 resumed unloading with instructions to be ready to get underway at 1800.

→ At 1500, the HULL sank an enemy motor schooner off KUKOOM.

OK Transport group X-Ray plus HEYWOOD, CHICAGO, Mine Squadron TWO, PATTERSON, DEWEY, and MUGFORD, less McCAWLEY, all under command of Captain Riefsnyder proceeded from LUNGA via LENGO CHANNEL at 1830 enroute to NOUMEA. Copy of order appended.

Transport group Yoke, modified, including McCAWLEY, PRESIDENT HAYES, PRES. ADAMS, PRES. JACKSON, ALCHIBA, NEVILLE, ZEILIN, with SAN JUAN, AUSTRALIA, HOBART, Transport Division TWELVE, HULL, WILSON, MONSSEN, BUCHANAN, SELFRIDGE, BAGLEY, HELM, BLUE, HENLEY, underway from TULAGI in APPROACH disposition AR-4 at 2024, to pass through LENGO CHANNEL which was cleared at 2145. At 2310 changed course to 118°T.

The following forces remained ashore:

TULAGI AREA:

Local Naval Defense For (70 officers and men) Total Force 6,075.

GUADALCANAL AREA.

August 10, 1942.

Underway with modified Yoke Squadron, with Squadron X-Ray about 40 miles ahead and 10 miles to westward.

<u>Position (LCT)</u>	0800 - Lat. 10° 22'S	Long. 162° 22'E
	1200 - Lat. 10° 45'S	Long. 163° 05'E
	2000 - Lat. 11° 39'S	Long. 164° 34'E

Weather: Blue sky, detached clouds, moderate breeze, sea calm, visibility 20 to 25 miles.

At daylight formed cruising disposition AC-3, course 118°T, speed 14 knots. Zig-zagged in accordance with Plan 11, Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.

At 0655, a torpedo wake was reported crossing bow of McSAWLEY.

Submarine contacts were reported at 0825 and again at 0852.

Sound contact with submarine at 1226. Disposition turned 90° to left. One depth charge dropped by SELFRIDGE. Resumed base course. At 1305 a second submarine contact was reported. WILSON delivered depth charge barrage. Radical change of course made 45° to right by Squadron. Base course and zig-zagging resumed. At 1333 another sound contact was reported on a submarine. WILSON again attacked with depth charges and squadron maneuvered to avoid possible attack.

CHICAGO Plane over disposition was instructed to signal Squadron X-Ray to take course to pass forty miles west of ESPIRITU SANTO.

At 1809 ceased zig-zagging, axis rotated to 157°T.

Five enemy submarines reported in GUADALCANAL-TULAGI area.

At 0552 gunfire was heard bearing 290°T. Firing ceased at 0557.

During the night action the following ships were sunk: U.S.S QUINCY, VINCENNES, H.M.A.S. CANBERRA. The ASTORIA was damaged and afire and after explosion in magazine, survivors were ordered removed and the vessel sank at 1310. The CHICAGO was damaged by a torpedo hit in the port bow.

The PATTERSON and RALPH TALBOT were damaged by gunfire. Survivors from vessels sunk, and wounded from damaged vessels were evacuated to transports.

Warning of an impending air attack was received and was followed at 0916 by the report of a submarine operating in the vicinity. Transports in area X-Ray moved out and formed to repel an air attack. The attack did not materialize and transports returned to the transport area and at 1250 resumed unloading with instructions to be ready to get underway at 1800.

At 1500, the HULL sank an enemy motor schooner off KUKOOM.

Transport group X-Ray modified, proceeded from LUNGA via LENGO CHANNEL at 1830 enroute to NOUMMA.

Yoke, modified, underway from TULAGI at 2024, via LENGO CHANNEL.

The following forces remained ashore:

TULAGI AREA

1st Raider Battalion.
1st Parachute Battalion.
2nd Battalion, 5th Marines.
1st 2nd and 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines.
3rd Defense Battalion (less detachments at GUADALCANAL).

Detachments Division Headquarters Company, Signal
Company, Company A, 1st Medical Battalion.
Company A, 2nd Eng. Battalion and 2nd Platoon Company A,
1st Eng. Battalion.
Company C, 2nd Tank Battalion.
Company A, 2nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion plus 2nd
Platoon Company A, 1st Amphibious Tractor Battalion.
Company D, 2nd Medical Battalion.
Company A, 2nd Pioneer Battalion, plus 2nd Platoon
Company A, 1st Pioneer Battalion.
Battery E, 11th Marines.
Company C, 2nd Service Battalion.

Local Naval Defense Force (70 officers and men).
Total Force 6,075.

GUADALCANAL AREA

Division Headquarter Company (less detachments).
Division Signal Company (less detachments).
5th Marines (less 2nd Battalion).
1st Marines.
11th Marines.
1st Tank Battalion (less detachments).
1st Engineer Battalion (less detachments).
1st Pioneer Battalion (less detachments).
1st Amphibious Tractor Battalion (less detachments).
1st Service Battalion (less detachments).
1st Medical Battalion (less detachments).
1st Military Police Company (less detachments).
2nd Platoon, 1st Scout Company.
Local Naval Defense Force (177 officers and men).
Total Force about 10,900 officers and men.

Sufficient food was landed at the TULAGI area for
about eleven days and at the GUADALCANAL area for about
thirty-six days.

At Sea,
August 10, 1942

Underway with modified Yoke Squadron, with
Squadron X-Ray about 40 miles ahead and 10 miles to west-
ward.

Position (LCT) 0800 - Lat. 10°22'S Long. 162°22'E.
1200 - Lat. 10

SUBS

WAR DIARY

COMMANDER TASK FORCE 51

EXCERPTS FROM

1 Aug 1942

SARGO lat. 27 south, long. 112 east enroute Fremantle; SEADRAGON off Geraldton enroute Fremantle; SPEARFISH lat. 10 north, long. 111 east enroute Fremantle; GAR South China Sea; GRAMPUS Luzon; PERMIT off Davoa; GRAYBACK South China Sea; TAUTOG Apo East Pass enroute patrol Indo China; SKIPJACK Ombai Strait; SALMON South of Sibutu enroute patrol Palawan Passage; SEAWOLF off Sibbalds Reef enroute patrol Sibutu; SWORDFISH lat. 11-30 south long. 115 east enroute patrol Hainan Island; SAURY off Geraldton enroute patrol Luzon; SAILFISH arrived Fremantle 1 August; SNAPPER, SEAL, Fremantle; SCULPIN, STURGEON at Albany.

*NOTE: SEE Cdr. Richardson book for USS-5-38, 5-44,
and details of Action.*

CURTISS
VP-11

Curtiss War Diary August

August 5

Tending planes for VP 23

11 - P - 12 reported for duty

August 6

Tending planes for VF 23 and 11

August 7

Same

August 8

Same

1 plane landed at sea. No contacts

August 8

6 planes at Ndeni

1 plane at Espiritu Santo

4 planes on search from Ndeni 325-002

No contacts

Flight crews transferred to Breeze

MacFarland underway to rescue downed plane

August 9

5 planes at Ndeni

1 plane at Espiritu Santo

3 planes conducted search

1 plane conducted reconnaissance
of Santa Isabel Island

MacFarland returned to anchorage

No contacts

August 10

5 planes at Ndeni

1 planes at Espiritu Santo

3 planes conducted search, thence to
Espiritu Santo.

All other planes returned to Espiritu Santo

No contacts

VP11 War Diary August

(117 - 43317)

August 1

Temporarily based at Suva

on land 12 PBY-5: 3 Noumea
9 Suva

3 planes on Suva patrol, No contacts
 3 planes departed for Noumea

August 2
 6 planes Noumea
 6 planes Suva
 3 planes on Suva Patrol. No contacts

August 3-4
 Same

August 5
 Same except 2 planes on patrol. No contacts

August 6
 Same as August 5

August 7
 6 planes Noumea
 6 planes Saweni
 3 planes on Saweni patrol. No contacts

August 8
 Same

August 9-11
 Same

117-43317

VP11
 War Diary (Curtiss Detachment) August

August 2
 6 PRY (5 at Noumea, 1 at Vila)
 2 PBV conducted long range patrol from Noumea
 2 PBV from VP14 joined

August 3
 8 PBV-5 (7 at Noumea, 1 at Vila)
 3 PBV conducted long range search from Noumea

August 4
 No remarks

August 5
 Placed operation orders into effect.
 Strength: 8 PBV-5
 7 at Noumea
 1 at Espiritu Santo

T.U. 63.4.2 (3 of VP11, 2 of VP14) total 5
PBV departed Noumea on patrols, then to
proceed to Ndeni, Santa Cruz Islands
2 PBV (VP11) proceeded to Espiritu Santo
T.U. 63.3.2 (MacFarland) arrived Graciosa Bay,
Ndeni

August 6

7 planes at Ndeni
1 plane at Espiritu Santo
1 planes conducted local patrol (Ndeni)
4 planes conducted search from Ndeni in
sector 308-332 No contacts

August 7

6 planes of Ndeni
1 plane at Espiritu Santo
4 planes on search from Ndeni, 333-002

Curtiss War Diary August

August 5

Tending planes for VP 23

11 - P - 12 reported for duty

August 6

Tending planes for VP 23 and 11

August 7

Same

August 8

Same

August 9

Same

(117-43317)

VP11 War Diary August

August 1

Temporarily based at Suva

on land 12 PBY-5: 3 Noumeaa
9 Suva

3 planes on Suva patrol, No contacts

3 planes departed for Noumea

August 2

6 planes Noumea

6 planes Suva

3 planes on Suva Patrol. No contacts

August 3-4

Same

August 5

Same except 2 planes on patrol. No contacts

August 6

Same as August 5

August 7

6 planes Noumea

6 planes Saweni

3 planes on Saweni patrol. No contacts

August 8

Same

August 9-11

Same

VP11 War Diary (Curtiss Detachment) August

August 2 6 PBY (5 at Noumea, 1 at Vila)
2 PBY conducted long range patrol from Noumea
2 PBY from VP14 joined

August 3 8 PBY-5 (7 at Noumea, 1 at Vila)
3 PBY conducted long range search from Noumea

August 4 No remarks

August 5 Placed operation orders into effect.
Strength: 8 PBY-5
7 at Noumea
1 at Espiritu Santo
T. U. 63.4.2 (3 of VP11, 2 of VP14) total 5
PBY departed Noumea on patrols, then to
proceed to Ndeni, Santa Cruz Islands
2 PBY (VP11) proceeded to Espiritu Santo
T. U. 63.3.2 (MacFarland) arrived Graciosa Bay,
Ndeni

August 6 7 planes at Ndeni
1 plane at Espiritu Santo
1 plane conducted local patrol (Ndeni) in 4
4 planes conducted search from Ndeni in
sector 308-332 No contacts

August 7 6 planes of Ndeni
1 plane at Espiritu Santo
4 planes on search from Ndeni, 333-002

1 plane landed at sea. No contacts

August 8

6 planes at Ndeni

1 plane at Espiritu Santo

4 planes on search from Ndeni 325-002

No contacts

Flight crews transferred to Breeze

MacFarland underway to rescue downed plane

August 9

5 planes at Ndeni

1 plane at Espiritu Santo

3 planes conducted search

1 plane conducted reconnaissance
of Santa Isabel Island

MacFarland returned to anchorage

No contacts

August 10

5 planes at Ndeni

1 plane at Espiritu Santo

3 planes conducted search, thence to Espiritu
Santo .

All other planes returned to Espiritu Santo

No contacts



ENTREPRISE

USS KASKASKIA

3 August 1942

Anchored in Suva Harbor, Fiji.

NOTE: ComSoPac Dispatch 020500 designates RAINER, PLATTE, KASKASKIA as T.G. 66.5 with PERKINS as escort.

4 August 1942

ComSoPac Despatch 031115: Delete KASKASKIA from T.G. 66.5.

5 August 1942

ComSoPac Dispatch 042348: KASKASKIA depart Fantan 2 with T.G. 66.5 pass through point Lat. 20° S, 175° East thence to pass 20 miles south Walpole Island.

1637 Underway from Suva with T.G. 66.5 (PLATTE PERKINS RAINER)

8 August 1942

1407 Anchored in Noumea, New Caledonia Harbor.

9 August 1942

ComSoPac Dispatch 081232: Addressees: PLATTE KASKASKIA PERKINS CLARK depart White Poppy at 19 hours ZED 8 August. Proceed to grid position George 7464 thence on course 325 speed of advance 15.

0614 Underway from Noumea with Platte, Perkins, Clark. Perkins returned to port.

10 August 1942

1503 Joined up and fueled T.F. 61.
2349 Left disposition.

11 August 1942

0717 Joined an fueled North Carolina, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Clark, Farenholt and MacDonough.

12 August 1942

0315 Joined T.F. 11 and fueled them.
1615 With PLATTE, CLARK and GWINN left disposition.

Kaskaskia

USS PLATTE

Same as USS KASKASKIA

PLATTE

USS SABINE

2 August 1942

1503 0803 Underway from San Pedro, Cal. in accordance with
ComSubOrdCommand SerFor Mov. Ord.

16 August 1942

0600 1800 Anchored in Harbor of Suva, Fiji Islands.

SABINE

USS KANAWHA

2 - 9 August 1942

Anchored in Suva Harbor, Fiji Islands.

10 August 1942

1642 Departed Suva with MANLEY and STRINGHAM as escorts.

14 August 1942

1300 Entered Espiritu Santo Harbor.

KANAWHA
6/11/42

USS CIMARRON

2 August 1942

0720 Underway from Noumea, New Caledonia with USS WORDEN.

3 August 1942

1000 Took position with T.F. 11.
USS WORDEN remained with T.F. 11 and USS AARON WARD
took up duties as fueling screen.

4 August 1942

1230 Left T.F. 11 with USS AARON WARD to join T.F. 62.

1505 Joined T.F. 62.

1758 Left disposition with USS AARON WARD for Noumea, New
Caledonia.

6 August 1942

0950 Anchored in Harbor at Noumea, New Caledonia.

7 August 1942

0646 Underway. USS AARON WARD escort.

9 August 1942

1232 Moored alongside tanker ESSO LITTLE ROCK in Suva Harbor.

10 August 1942

0913 Underway for a designated grid position in New Hebrides.
USS AARON WARD escort.

12 August 1942

0608 Sighted T.F. 62.

CIMARRON

USS RAINIER (AE)

5 August 1942

0403 1603 Underway from Suva to Noumea in company with USS
KASKASKIA, USS PLATTE and USS PERKINS.

8 August 1942

0247 1347 Anchored in Noumea Harbor, New Caledonia.

12 August 1942

Anchored as before.

Rainier

CRITCHLEY

SECRET

2

CRUTCHLEY REMARKS

All times are Zone -11.

At 0018 "BLUE" on patrol WEST OF SAVO ISLAND reported aircraft heading east.

At 0146 Air craft flares being dropped round XRAY anchorage. At this time "AUSTRALIA" was abreast X RAY and was about to start a close patrol inside the DD screening arc as I had decided not to attempt to rejoin my group ("CHICAGO, CANBERRA, PATTERSON and BAGLEY) in the dark and there were but a few hours to 0500 when we would reform screen on the transport group.

At 0150 A flare dropped in the direction of the Channel SOUTH-WEST of SAVO. There were a few rounds of what I took to be eerliken fire almost at once as though a ship was engaging the flare droppen and almost immediately a burst of heavy firing from the eastward of the ship.

At 0156 A general and very intense night action commenced somewhat to the eastward of the flashes observed at 0150. The gunfire was very heavy and I though it must have been the VINCENNES group (VINCENNES, ASTORIA, QUINCY, HELM AND WILSON) coming into action against an enemy being engaged by the AUSTRALIA group.

It should not have been possible for an enemy force to get inside SAVO ISLAND without being detected either visually or with RADAR by BLUE or TALBOT to whom I had allotted patrol boats with this express object in mind. There had been no contact report from these ships or from ANY SHIP and whilst being confident that our five eight-inch cruisers then on patrol could deal with any enemy cruiser force likely (from our intelligence) to be sent against our escort forces, I completely in ignorance of the number or the nature of the enemy force and the progress of the action being fought.

I ordered AUSTRALIA to patrol on courses 060-240 about 7 miles west of XRAY to await reports from our forces in contact and so as to intercept any enemy which got through our cruiser screen, before he could reach the transports. Also I ordered destroyers not in contact with the enemy, to concentrate on me in this position. However destroyers could not decypher the position given in my messages because it had been made from the General Signal Book recyphered by the signal cypher in force and the concentrated under Comdesron 4 in position five miles NORTHWEST of SAVO (which was the position arranged in my Special Instructions to Screening group for DD Concentration in the event of being ordered to form a STRIKING FORCE).

At 0226 I sent a message to CHICAGO, VINCENNES and Admiral Scott "Are your groups in action?"

SECRET

Replies came:-

"From CHICAGO "Were but not now."

From Admiral Scott "This force not in action. Appears to be surface force between FLORIDA ISLE and SAVO.

At this time VINCENNES COULD NOT BE RAISED NOR COULD I RAISE ASTORIA OR QUINCY when I subsequently tried them, though we heard VINCENNES working you.

At 0240 There were three ships in the force between SAVO and FLORIDA Islands and firing had stopped.

At 0242 I told CHICAGO - "Report situation".

At 0245 CHICAGO reported "We are now standing toward LENGO on course 100".

and

At 0249 In reporting the situation CHICAGO replied - CHICAGO SOUTH of SAVO ISLAND. Hit by torpedo slightly down by bow. Enemy ships firing to seaward. CANBERRA buring on bearing 250 five miles from SAVO. Two destroyers standing by CANBERRA.

At 0310 I reported to you "Surface action near SAVO. Situation as yet undetermined."

At 0315 There were several more flashes apparently from gunfire east of SAVO ISLAND. In answer to a question from me regarding state of CANBERRA, PATTERSON replied "Disabled on fire in position seven miles southeast of SAVO ISLAND."

A 0338 Comdesron 4 reported destroyers concentrated in position five miles northwest of SAVO ISLAND.

AY 0344 CHICAGO reported "Am now six miles from Area XRAY. Course 119 speed 10. Believe bulkheads will hold against high speed."

At 0410 PATTERSON reported CANBERRA is out of commission.

At 0515 RALPH TALBOT reported he was badly damaged near shore northwest SAVO ISLAND.

At 0525 PATTERSON reported CANBERRA is abandoning ship. Have entire crew aboard. Well destroy her.

0530 Another short burst of firing apparently south of SAVO ISLAND.

AY 0532 I ordered Comdesron 4 to investigate state of CANBERRA and PATTERSON reported 250 degrees five miles from SAVO ISLANDS and instructed her that they were to be abandoned and destroyed if they could not join the retirement plan 0730 (Your 081735 directed this step).

SECRET

I was in doubt about PATTERSON because having asked him earlier to report condition of CANBERRA I subsequently received a signal from him "Disabled on fire in position seven miles southeast of SAVO ISLAND." As the time of origin of my message had not been quoted I was in some doubt whether this message referred to the condition of CANBERRA or whether it was intended to report PATTERSON's condition.

- At 0547 Being still unaware of the nature or results of the night action, I sent a message to the Escort Forces "Situation obscure. Be prepared to give battle at dawn in vicinity transport groups."
- ✓ At 0622 CHICAGO reported "Standing by CANBERRA." "Have ordered BLUE alongside to take off remaining 400 men."
- At 0644 Comdesron 4 reported "American ASTORIA in flames position 0907 S. 159-47E. Four dog dogs picking up many survivors."
- ✓ At 0648 CHICAGO reported "BLUE, SELFRIDGE, PATTERSON standing by CANBERRA. Am proceeding to concentration area."
- At 0819 I reported to you that I had been unable to get VINCENNES or QUINCY by radio and that I had no real information of the night battle.
- At 0830 SELFRIDGE reported "CANBERRA is sunk."

3. For what it is worth, + reproduce the information gathered by one of my Surgeon Lieutenants when he was on board BULLER assisting in attention to CANBERRA's wounded.

"Ship was in first degree of readiness. At 0150 CANBERRA was astern of CHICAGO and when turning south of SAVO ISLAND was fired on by two cruisers lurking behind the Island. There were also remarks which indicated that the cruisers were accompanied by two to four destroyers.

The first salvo carried away the 4-inch gun deck (abaft the after funnel) and caused a fire amidships which burned furiously. Subsequently there was an explosion in the Regulating Officer Flat (Main deck 2/3rds way aft). The second salvo hit the bridge structure. A torpedo hit in the boiler rooms and the engines stopped. Light, power and water supply failed. Attempts were made to put out the fire with buckets of water, later reinforced by hoses from PATTERSON. PATTERSON took off survivors from after end and BLUE from forward end."

The Surgeon Lieutenant reports that casualties had very few burns and were caused mostly by shell splinters.

SECRET

Page 4 - Para 3 (6)

6. It appeared that the enemy in both encounters used aircraft flares to provide his illumination. This in two quick encounters shows considerable finesse but I suppose it would be possible by giving the aircraft by radio the bearing on which to drop the flare. The ship would require to have some identification light which only showed from above. In any case the enemy skill at night fighting, despite the general belief to the contrary, was shown to be of the highest order.
8. It is disappointing that apparently not one of our destroyers got his torpedoes into the enemy.
9. Damage inflicted on the enemy cannot be ascertained but judging by the apparent intensity of the gunfire on both sides when he was engaging the VINCENNES group, I cannot believe that his forces escaped unscathed.
10. I have reported to COMSOUWESPACBOR and Australian Commonwealth Naval Board (ACNB) the loss of CANBERRA and an estimate of the number of survivors. Copies of these signals are appended.

TO: AUSTRALIA

FROM: CHICAGO

CHICAGO SOUTH SAVO ISLAND. HIT BY TORPEDO SLIGHTLY DOWN BY BOW. ENEMY SHIPS FIRING TO SEAWARD. CANBERRA BURNING ON BEARING 250 5 MILES FROM SAVO. TWO DESTROYERS STANDING BY CANBERRA

T.O.R. 1607Z/8 August. T.O.O. 081549.

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: C.T.F. 62.

This is urgent. IF CANBERRA cannot join retirement in time she should be destroyed. Our departure urgent.

T.O.O. 081735.

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: C.T.F. 62

ASTORIA on fire Captain and some of the crew trying to save. Apparently QUIECY sunk. No news of VINCENNES. Believe TALBOT sunk. Believe ships ran into submarine and surface torpedo trap.

No. T.O.O.

SECRET

TO: C.T.F. 62(R) C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: Comdesron 4

At about 023L RALPH TALBOT in cross fire. At 0722L heard on 2058 urgent radio plain language from RALPH TALBOT quote Help apparently has lost authenticator cards or receiver is out as does not answer. At 0825L attempt was made to authenticate on another transmission by using voice call of quote Jimmy assigned RALPH TALBOT last seen about 7 miles north SAVO present position unknown.

TOR 2158Z T.O.O. 082132

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: CHICAGO

Have on killed fifteen wounded two seriously wounded at present.

T.O.R. 2125 No. T.O.O.

* * * * *

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: CHICAGO

Briefly engaged unidentified destroyer which did not answer challenge bearing 148 distance 2.4 miles from SAVO ISLAND. PATTERSON and BAGLEY were standing by CANBERRA. Received partial message they had completed transfer of wounded and were standing clear. My position 0545 southwest SAVO ISLAND distance three miles. Nothing in sight am proceeding to concentration area.

TO: C.T.F. 62 C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: CHICAGO

At 0150 formation before 5 miles S.E. SAVO on course 115 attacked by gunfire and torpedoes from port. CANBERRA turned to starboard CHICAGO to port to dodge torpedoes. Later when on course about 115 located CANBERRA about 2 miles astern. LOST SIGHT OF BAGLEY but thought identified her standing towards CANBERRA. Gunfire to port appeared to be on course approaching Xray. Firing became intermittent nothing appearing to seaward stood in toward Xray. Could make out no ships or movement toward Xray reversed course stood out toward SAVO, passing what I was sure was CANBERRA, BAGLEY AND PATTERSON. The latter illuminated this hip by searchlight and opened fire. Secondary battery opened fire contrary to orders when illuminated. Stopped fire almost immediately after illuminating with one star shell. Stood towards SAVO,. Area to seaward all directions no gunfire no ships sighted except BLUE and SELFRIDGE, these identified. Reversed course and stood for CANBERRA. She reported had 400 men still on board was preparing to close her when succeeded in bringing BLUE within hail directed her to take remaining men off. Then directed SELFRIDGE to assist. Received message to concentrate Xray at 030 subsequently delayed until 0730. Stood towards Xray en route fell in with SAN JUAN which ordered us proceed with her to YOKE. Reported action casualties damage to C.T.G. 62.4. Best estimated initial speed too high as 25. Now consider 15 knots a maximum at present hope to support bulkhead more effectively later. Do not know whereabouts of BAGLEY. Saw no ship damaged I thought could be BAGLEY. No other information. Shall prepare report in letter free from

SECRET

later. Partial report on damage and potentiality previously submitted 3 planes in commission port catapult out.

R.O.R. 0211Z/9 T.O.O.082350

TO: COMSOUWESPAC A.C.N.B. FROM: C.T.F. 44.

CANBERRA damaged night action heavily on fire. Following received from U.S.S. PATTERSON begins CANBERRA is abandoning ship. Have entire crew aboard will destroy her ends. COMSOUWESPACFOR requested inform A.C.N.B.

T.O.R. Unknown. T.O.O. 081927

TO: COMSOUWESPACFOR (R) A.C.N.B. FROM: C.T.F. 44.

My 081927 rough estimate based on reports from U.S. repeat U.S. destroyers 500 repeat 500 survivors many of them casualties. Now being embarked in troop ships BARNETT and FULLER. C.W.S.P.F. please pass to A.C.N.B. repeat A.C.N.B.

TO: C.T.F. 62.6 FROM: BLUE

HUSH. About 2345 while patrolling assigned line to westward of SAVO ISLAND noted unidentified aircraft flying over SAVO and CAPE ESPERANCE. 0149 sighted star shells behind SAVO to eastward followed by flashes of gunfire and later by searchlights intermittently until 0240. 0215 sighted small two masted auxiliary schooner nine miles west of SAVO on easterly course. About 0230 saw RABBIT TALBOT and unidentified ship at approximately UNIT 99 illuminated by searchlights from Eastward and Northwestward former surrounded by splashes and returned fire to Northwestward. 0230 TALBOT sighted strange ship rounding CAPE ESPERANCE to Southwest. Trailed until 0325 when identified as JARVIS. Resumed patrol until 0515 when proceeded vicinity CANBERRA at request of PATTERSON. Removed personnel from CANBERRA forecandle and transferred same to FULLER

T.O.R. 0448Z/9 T.O.O. 082357

TO: C.T.F. 62 FROM: C.T.G. 62.6

CHICAGO reports following damage to ship. "Bow shot away and doubled back to frame 4. Compartment flooded to frame 15. Frame spacing 4 feet. Am strengthening shores as rapidly as possible. Speed now limited to 10 knots. Main battery forward director partially disabled. One catapult out. Damage to fire control circuits in various degrees not all determined. Estimate main battery to about 85 percent efficiency. Five inch batteries appear without damage.

HENLY reported RADAR and T.B.S. equipment damaged beyond repair.

T.O.R. 0323Z T.O.O. 090202.

SECRET

TO: C.T.F. 62 (R) C.T.B. 62.6

FROM: Comdesron 4

RALPH TALBOT received five hits and fired on while on patrol south and west SAVO. Both RADARS sound gear main radio T.B.S. transmitter all electrical Fire Control Equipment out of commission. Holes in forecastle deck forward superstructure and interior structure structural damage. Shell plating pierced starboard quarter just about water-line level. Hole side plating plugged temporarily repeat temporarily manner. Starboard torpedo and tubes jettisoned. Compartments pumped out correcting 20 degrees list. Can proceed two boilers in good weather. First count, Medical Officer, 14 men dead including one survivor from MUGFORD. Injured, SELFRIDGE medical officer now in RALPH TALBOT.

T.O.R. 0610Z

T.O.O. 090330

NAVAL MESSAGE

TO: CTG 62.6

FROM: SELFRIDGE

100252 TOR 0535z 16 AUGUST Received by V/S

Desron 4 less JARVIS stationed accordance Para 6 COMTASKGROUP 62.6 Special Instructions. At 1506z received unauthenticated order from COMTASKGROUP 62.6 to concentrate. Proceeded with MUGFORD from Area XRAY toward point northwest of SAVO and was there joined by WILSON and HELM. Reported arrival to 62.6. Passed burning vessel enroute. Started back to Transport area one half hour before daylight and was diverted in rescuing ASTORIA, CANBERRA personnel and destroying CANBERRA. Shortly after 0200 heard RALPH TALBOT TBS reporting she was in searchlight beams. Well forward ships reports when received.

100252

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

10th August, 1942

My dear Admiral:

I am sending over this very tentative appreciation of what happened in the Cruiser action off Savo as combined with any other information which you may have, it may help you to make any preliminary report.

As you will see from the enclosures, CHICAGO's first report states his first action took place at 0115 - I think a phonic error must have been made and that he means 0150 for the first other record which I have of any alarm is 0146 when the flares illuminated the transport area. I had then just got onboard "AUSTRALIA" as we had great difficulty in finding the minesweeper for the General.

There is certainly a great deal to be cleared up such as:-

Why no warning from Radar of "BLUE" or "RALPH TALBOT"?

Why no enemy report from anyone?

The fact must be faced that we had adequate force placed with the very purpose of repelling surface attack and when that surface attack was made, it destroyed our Force. Why enemy did not come on and attack the convoy, I do not know.

The only thing that can be said is that the convoy was defended but the cost was terrific and I feel that it should have been the enemy who should have paid, whereas he appears to have got off free.

I know that at night, the odds are heavily in favour of the attacker and by the very nature of things, our people in this case had to be in the position of defenders; our only chance of reversing that position was warning of the attack by outlying Destroyers.

I should be grateful for guidance from you as to what procedure you wish followed to elucidate more facts.

I have asked for reports from those on the spot but, so far, the enclosures are all that I have received.

Yours very sincerely,

/s/V. CRUTCHLEY

Rear Admiral R.K. Turner, U.S.N.

Report of CTF 44 (CTG 62.6)

Excerpts from

6. (h) The screening group (which I commanded) would protect the transport groups whilst on passage and whilst in the combat area against enemy surface, air and submarine attack. The minesweepers and the fire support groups were added to my command for use in this respect whilst on passage and whilst in the combat area after they had completed their initial missions on D-DAY. In addition, I could, when in the combat area, call upon these units at any time for support against air and surface attack. My memorandum "Special Instructions to SCREENING GROUP and vessels temporarily assigned", copy of which is appended to Part TWO of this report contains the general orders I issued regarding the conduct of forces assigned to me.
- (i) Army aircraft in AUSTRALIA and Army and Navy shore-based planes in SOUTH PACIFIC (Task Force 63) would support the operation by reconnaissance and attack on enemy bases.
 - (j) Submarines of the SOUTH WEST PACIFIC FORCE would support the operation by interdicting enemy naval units in the RABAU area.
 - (k) Approximately five submarines of the PACIFIC FLEET would operate in the TRUK area against enemy naval units.
 - (o) It was expected that the SANTA CRUZ OCCUPATION FORCE (for Phase III) consisting of the cruiser "QUINCY", the destroyers "DEWEY", "HULL", "ELLET" and "WILSON", the transports "CRESCENT CITY", "PRESIDENT JACKSON", "PRESIDENT HAYES", "PRESIDENT ADAMS" and the supply ship "ALHENA" would leave the TULAGI area for NDIENI after dark on D-DAY.
 - (p) It was expected that the other 8 transports, escorted by the cruisers "SAN JUAN", "VINCENNES" and "ASTORIA", the destroyers "MONSSEN", "BUCHANAN" and the five minesweepers would be able to leave the area on the night of D-DAY plus one day and that they would withdraw to NOUMEA.
 - (q) It was expected that the remaining five store ships would have discharged by D-DAY plus four days and that they would then withdraw to NOUMEA escorted by "AUSTRALIA", "CANBERRA", "HOBART", "CHICAGO" and the 9 destroyers of DESRON 4.
14. At 1700, 1 August, when south of the FIJI ISLANDS the Carrier Groups forming the AIR SUPPORT FORCE were met and thereafter on passage this force proceeded in support of the AMPHIBIOUS FORCE and provided reconnaissance and patrols.

18. August 2, COMSOPAC, Vice-Admiral R.L. GHORMLNY, assumed command of the U.S. Army Forces in the South Pacific except for matters pertaining to supply and administration.
The dividing line between SOUTH PACIFIC and SOUTH WEST PACIFIC areas became the longitude of 159° E (where it had previously been 160° E).
29. August 4, "CURTISS" (Seaplane tender) and "MACFARLAND" arrived SECOND CHANNEL (Espiritu Santo) to act as an advanced patrol plane operating base.
"MACKINAC" (Seaplane tender) proceeded from NOUMEA towards MARAMASIKE ESTUARY (S.E. Coast MALAITA) to establish a similar base there.
Patrol planes based HAVANNAH HARBOUR (EPATE) were from this day included in the air reconnaissance scheme.
33. On 31st July "Intelligence" advised that there were indications of the RABAUL air forces being strengthened by additions from the MARSHALLS. To-day (August 4) there was a similar warning that additional air strength was moving towards RABAUL FROM the Mandates and it seemed that perhaps the Japanese had learned of our expeditionary force being on the way. However these increases in air strength together with a considerable increase in the ship traffic to RABAUL could also be explained by earlier intelligence reports that there were indications of an impending Japanese campaign.
36. August 5, during the day there was much cumulus clouds and a surface haze which probably rendered visibility from the air very poor. Our own reconnaissance aircraft were now operating from SECOND CHANNEL (Espiritu Santo) and HAVANNAH HARBOUR (EPATE) in addition to those operating from shore bases in FIJI, NEW CALEDONIA, AUSTRALIA and NEW GUINEA (MILNE BAY). In addition "MACFARLAND" was arriving NDENI (Santa Cruz Islands) to-day to form an advanced base for patrol planes and on D-DAY "MACKINAC" and attached patrol planes would arrive MARAMASIKE ESTUARY.
42. August 6, the day was most favourable for us and hopeless for enemy reconnaissance. The sky was overcast and a damp mist made even the surface visibility very poor. In view of these conditions I put "CANBERRA" on surface RADAR guard with her Type 271 and ordered the first degree of high and low angle readiness to be assumed by the escort force. I qualified this condition, however, by permitting small parties to leave their quarters in turn for meals. Our own air reconnaissances today included aircraft working from NDENI (Santa Cruz Islands).
53. The approach of the amphibious force had been a complete surprise to the enemy and no fewer than 18 enemy aircraft were destroyed on the water in this initial sortie of our carrier borne aircraft. No enemy naval surface vessels were encountered and despite previous reports of land based type Zero fighters being maintained in the area, none were met.

56. Squadrons "X" and "Y" reached their disembarkation areas at 0650 and 0720 respectively and remained underway but stopped, outside the 100 fathom line. The process of lowering manning and equipping attack boats at once began whilst the screening forces acted in accordance with the special instructions I had previously issued. Broadly, each transport group had an outer arc of screening destroyers and then cruisers between them and the destroyers. With this arrangement both the cruisers and the transports had had anti-submarine screen and against air attack, the enemy aircraft had to pass two outer circles of fire before reaching the transports which would obviously be their objective. In addition the cruisers were able to manoeuvre inside the destroyer screen and yet remain in close support of their transport group.

75. August 7 at 1830 (sunset 1816) I ordered the screening groups to take up night dispositions as laid down in my Memorandum "Special Instructions to Screening Group and Vessels Temporarily Assigned" (Appendix)

These dispositions provided:-

(a) Two destroyers seaward of SAVO ISLAND on short patrol beats, covering the entrances either side of SAVO ISLAND as RADAR and anti-submarine guard patrols.

(b) Two groups, each with three eight inch cruisers screened by two destroyers on patrol covering the approaches, from north of SAVO ISLAND and from south of SAVO ISLAND, to the transport groups.

(c) Close anti-submarine and anti-motor to

(c) Close anti-submarine and anti-motor torpedo boat screens of destroyers and destroyer minesweepers around the transports.

(d) "SAN JUAN" and "MOBART" screened by two destroyers, underway between the two transport groups as cover against enemy light forces entering the combat area from the eastward.

77. The very stiff resistance offered by the enemy on the TULABI side called for reinforcement of our forces on TULAGI and on GAVUTU. These reinforcements were necessarily drawn from the operation and thereby threw out of gear, the planned schedule.

79. August 7-8, the night passed without any form of interference from the enemy.

81. August 8, sunrise was at 0632. At 0500 I ordered the outer patrol groups and units to return to the transport areas and to reassume day screen.

82. The U.S. seaplane tender "MACKINAC" was now at MARAMASIKE

ESTUARY (South east end of MALAITA) acting as an advanced operating base for patrol aircraft.

83. As enemy submarines might reach the area today, I ordered the destroyer minesweepers to form an anti-submarine patrol westward of the SEALARK and LENGU Channels.

In addition I now had available all the cruiser-borne aircraft except for one or two still employed on liaison duties and so was able to maintain anti-submarine air patrols of at least three aircraft in the air.

84. At 1027 message from a coast watcher on BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND reported 40 heavy bombers proceeding south east. Shortly afterwards C.T.F. 62 ordered the transports to get under way. Both Squadrons "X" and "Y" were formed independently and manoeuvred between GUADALCANAL and FLORIDA ISLANDS awaiting the expected air attack.

88. At 1400 the transport groups were again got under way as warning had been received of another force of enemy bombers proceeding towards the area. No attack developed, however, and at 1630 the unloading operations were again resumed.

90. At 1830 I ordered the naval forces to take up night dispositions as for the previous night.

91. The situation at the end of this, the second day, was not quite as favourable as had been expected.

(a) Air raids and threat of air raids causing the transports to get under way to meet them had delayed the unloading operations.

(b) Part of a night's unloading had been lost because of the congestion on the beach on the GUADALCANAL side.

(c) On the TULAGI side the unloading had barely begun because the Island of TULAGI had not been in our hands earlier.

(d) Owing to the very stiff resistance offered by the enemy on the northern side, it had been necessary to employ additional marine forces and these had been drawn from the reserve which was intended to occupy NDENI (Santa Cruz Islands) in Phase III of operation.

- (e) (e) So far our losses due to enemy air attack had been one transport and heavy damage to two destroyers. However the enemy continued to receive air reinforcements to RABAU, seaplane tenders were moving south and one could expect as heavy and possibly more frequent attacks on our ships and with possibly not such lucky results for us.

(f) Commander Task Force 61 had said that the time had come for him to withdraw the carrier forces.

(g) Enemy submarines were known to be on their way to the area and could be expected daily.

Being second in command of the forces in the combat area, I was therefore not surprised when at 2045 I received a despatch from C.T.F. 62 recalling me to the transport area to attend a conference in his Flagship (the transport) "McCawley". At 2055 I ordered "CHICAGO" to take charge of the patrol of the "AUSTRALIA" group and ordered "AUSTRALIA" to close the transports of Squadron "X".

In "McCawley" I found that C.T.F. 62 was also disturbed over the question of keeping in the area, a large number of ships and that he intended to withdraw the surface forces the next day. The Commanding General attended the conference and he agreed with the proposed withdrawal of the surface forces as I did also. Details regarding an evolution unloading of certain specified items during the night were then issued.

During the day there had been a report of an enemy force of 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers and 2 seaplane tenders or gunboats, east of BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND and steering south east. I asked C.T.F. 62 what he thought this enemy force was up to. Admiral Turner replied that it was his opinion that the enemy force was destined for REKATA BAY possibly from there to operate torpedo carrying float planes against our forces and that we would have to expect two torpedo attacks a day instead of one. He also informed me that he had requested for the next day, full scale bombing of these ships which he felt sure would be in REKATA BAY.

92. It was 0115 (August 9) before I had rejoined my Flagship ("AUSTRALIA") and after 0130 when the ship had got clear of the transport area. I therefore decided not to rejoin my night patrol group for the short time before 0500 when units would resume screening stations round the transports, and accordingly I ordered "AUSTRALIA" to patrol in the vicinity of Squadron "X" keeping within the anti-submarine destroyer screen.
93. At 0145 green flares dropped by aircraft, began to show up to the southward and south-eastward of "X" transport area. Suspecting submarine or aircraft attack on the formation, "AUSTRALIA" proceeded keeping as nearly as possible end on to the flares and therefore to the northward and westward. I now learnt that a report of aircraft in the vicinity had been broadcast over the warning net at 0016 during my absence from the ship. After reading reports rendered after return to NOUMEA, it is evident that various units had heard aircraft since well before midnight.
94. At 0150 a flare was dropped in the direction of the channel

south west of SAVO ISLAND. Almost at once there were a few rounds of tracer fire which I took to be from the Oerlikons of a ship in "AUSTRALIA" group engaging the flare dropper and then immediately a burst of heavy surface fire from the eastward of the source of the tracers.

Then there began a general night action which at 0156 appeared to move to the right and to increase tremendously in intensity.

I had received no enemy report from either of our guard units or from any ship in our cruiser night patrols and although a fierce night action was being fought, I had absolutely no knowledge of the number or the nature of the enemy force, involved or of the progress of the action being fought. I conjectured that the "AUSTRALIA" group had made contact with an enemy force of some sort which would explain the firing in their general direction at 0150 and when at 0156 the action distinctly shifted to the right, I considered it probable that the enemy had been turned to the eastward by contact with "CANBERRA" and "CHICAGO" and had then run into our other patrol containing the three 8-inch cruisers "VINCENNES", "ASTORIA" and "QUINCY". Whilst this solution of what was taking place was pure supposition, I felt confident that our five eight inch cruisers (and four destroyers) then on patrol immediately inside SAVO ISLAND could effectively deal with any enemy force likely (from our intelligence and reconnaissance) to have been available to send against us.

95. I ordered "AUSTRALIA" to patrol on courses 060 - 240 about 7 miles west of "X" transport group to await reports from our forces in contact and so as to be well placed to intercept any enemy units which penetrated our patrols, before they could reach the transport group. Also I ordered destroyers not in contact with the enemy to concentrate on me in this position but owing to communication errors these destroyers concentration five miles north west of SAVO ISLAND which was a concentration point established in my memorandum "Special Instructions" and intended for use when good warning of enemy approach had been received.
96. Meantime I had sent messages to "CHICAGO" now in charge of the "AUSTRALIA" group, to "VINCENNES" and to Rear-Admiral SCOTT in "SAN JUAN" enquiring

"Are your groups in action?"

From "CHICAGO" I received "Were but not now". From Admiral SCOTT "this force not in action - appears to be surface force between FLORIDA ISLAND and SAVO".

At this time "VINCENNES" could not be raised nor could I communicate with "ASTORIA" and "QUINCY" when I subsequently tried them, though "VINCENNES" was heard working C.T.F. 62 (by W/T).

97. At 0240 there were three ships on fire between SAVO and FLORIDA Islands and firing had stopped. I then ordered "CHICAGO" to "Report situation".

"CHICAGO" replied, "CHICAGO" south of SAVO ISLAND. Hit by torpedo slightly down by bow. Enemy ships firing to seaward. "CANBERRA" burning on bearing 250 five miles from SAVO. Two destroyers standing by "CANBERRA".

So I reported to C.T.F. 62 - "Surface action near SAVO. Situation as yet undetermined."

98. Later there were more flashes from gun fire apparently east of SAVO ISLAND and at 0515 "RALPH TALBOT" reported he was badly damaged near shore west of SAVO ISLAND.

99. Since midnight there had been frequent heavy rain squalls and lightning and the visibility generally was no better than moderate and at times very poor.

100. Having received a despatch from C.T.F. 62 stating "This is urgent. If "CANBERRA" cannot join retirement in time she should be destroyed. Our departure urgent."
(Retirement had been planned to commence at 0730).

I ordered COMDESRON 4 in "SELFRIDGE" to investigate the condition of "CANBERRA" and instructed him that she was to be abandoned and destroyed if unable to take part in the retirement plan at 0730.

101. At 0547, being still unaware of the nature and results of the night action, I sent a message to the naval escort forces "Situation obscure. Be prepared to give battle at dawn in the vicinity of the transport groups" as it seemed a possibility that enemy units might still be in the area.

102. At 0644, COMDESRON 4 reported the American cruiser "ASTORIA" in flames and that destroyers were picking up many survivors.

103. At first light "AUSTRALIA" closed in towards transport group "X" - the transports had been under way during the night expecting attack and were now resuming position in the unloading areas.

104. The preceding paragraphs outline events after 0130 as they were seen from my Flagship and as they were reported to me. Since leaving the operational area and subsequent to arrival in harbour, I have analysed the reports rendered by ships involved in the night action and by survivors from ships sunk in that night action. Though no clear and really definite account of what actually happened, can be extracted from these reports, I reproduce my own interpretation of events based on the reports and on what I saw at the time.

THE NIGHT ACTION OFF SAVO ISLAND.

- AN ACCOUNT BASED ON REPORTS SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED.

105. At about 0145 "CANBERRA" leading "CHICAGO" and screened by "PATTERSON" (Port) and "BAGLEY" (Starboard) were in position about five miles south south east of the southern point of SAVO ISLAND steering 310° at 12 knots, when contact was made with an enemy force which had passed to the southward of SAVO ISLAND. "PATTERSON" sighted a ship about 5000 yards ahead steering easterly course, reported to "CANBERRA" and "CHICAGO" by blinker tube and passed a warning broadcast on T.B.S. "PATTERSON" turned to port to fire torpedoes and opened fire at range 2000 yards. Torpedoes were not, however fired as the order was drowned by the guns opening fire. The enemy was thought to be one "MOGAMI" type heavy cruiser and the light cruisers "KATORI" and "JINTSU". "PATTERSON" was illuminated and came under heavy fire but reports scoring several hits on the rear cruiser which was observed to fire eight torpedoes.
106. At probably a short interval after "PATTERSON'S" sighting the enemy, "BAGLEY" also sighted them, close on her port bow. She reports that the enemy altered course to port and opened fire with guns and torpedoes. "BAGLEY" altered to port, missed the opportunity of firing her starboard tubes, continued turning to port and got off four torpedoes from the port side. "BAGLEY" estimated the enemy force to consist of two "ASHIGARA" type heavy cruisers and two light cruisers.
107. In "CANBERRA" the alarm had been given torpedo tracks were sighted and before the armament could be got on to the target which it was thought consisted of two large destroyers or small cruisers on the port bow, she had sustained 24 hits by shell estimated at 5-inch and also one or two torpedo hits. Both boiler rooms had been put out of action, power and lighting were lost and the ship was heavily on fire. In "CANBERRA" the enemy force had not been identified but the Bridge Officer had seen the wakes of three ships proceeding at high speed.
108. "CHICAGO" had seen the dark shapes of three enemy vessels and then on sighting torpedo wakes, had altered course first to starboard and then to port. "CHICAGO'S" port battery opened fire at the left hand of two targets illuminated by "PATTERSON" and which she took to be two destroyers and saw two hits made by "PATTERSON" on these ships. It is believed that these two vessels were those identified by "PATTERSON" as being a "KATORI" and "JINTSU" type (5.5-inch cruisers).
109. The enemy force steaming easterly at high speed drew apart from the "AUSTRALIA" group leaving "CANBERRA" disabled, "CHICAGO" holed right forward on the stem and with other damage and "PATTERSON" with minor damage: "PATTERSON" had scored two gunfire hits on one of the enemy. The consensus of opinion assesses the enemy force as comprising one 8-inch cruiser (which I think might have been "CHOKAI") and two light cruisers of the 5.5-inch gun type.

110. To the eastward our other patrol group had had warning of the presence of the enemy given by the gunfire from "AUSTRALIA" group and some ships had received the warning broadcast on T.S.S. by "PATTERSON". The group was at this time about five miles north east of SAVO ISLAND. The cruisers were formed in the order "VINCENNES", "QUINCY", "ASTORIA". The screening destroyers were "HELM" on the port bow and "WILSON" starboard bow.

111. At about 0156 this group was illuminated and engaged by three enemy ships on their port quarter at ranges varying from 6000 - 8000 yards. Almost at once our cruisers, who soon began to return the enemy fire, were heavily hit with 8-inch and 5-inch projectiles and probably, it seems, also suffered torpedo hits. "VINCENNES" soon lost electric power but the turrets continued firing in local control and claims a hit on one of the enemy, causing an explosion. She then received two torpedo hits, several fires had broken out and her motive power was soon lost. "VINCENNES" claims she was then illuminated and fired on by destroyers on her starboard hand but as the heading of the ship is unknown it is impossible to place them. The enemy ceased fire at 0215. At 0230 with the ship listing heavily, the Commanding Officer gave the order to abandon ship and at 0245 "VINCENNES" Sank.

"QUINCY" had sighted three enemy cruisers rounding the southern end of SAVO ISLAND and reports that the cruisers were observed to have three turrets forward, the middle turret being the highest. This description fits a "CHOKAI" or "ASHICARI" type 8-inch cruiser but it is believed that only the leading enemy cruiser was of this type and that the rear two were the 5.5-inch type identified by "PATTERSON" and "BAGLEY".

"QUINCY" was hit by the enemy's opening salvoes but her own first broadside was nine guns, fired at estimated range 6000 yards. The ship soon suffered heavy topside damage, fires were blazing and a torpedo hit was also received for when the ship turned over at about 0235 a large hole was revealed in the port side of the bottom.

"ASTORIA" fired her opening salvo with range 5640 yards at the enemy on the port quarter. She too was immediately hit by enemy fire and continued to be hit repeatedly. Large fires had been started in her when the enemy ceased fire, she had lost all power. Her main armament had probably fired ten salvoes and "ASTORIA" claims that one enemy vessel was definitely hit and probably two. After attempts by destroyers and minesweepers to assist in fighting the fires in her, "ASTORIA" sank at 1215.

"HELM" screening on the port bow of the cruisers was confused by the action and was unable to identify any enemy forces.

"WILSON" on the starboard bow of the cruisers reports that three enemy ships opened fire on the cruisers from their port

side and that he expended 212 rounds in engaging the enemy searchlights at ranges 12,000 to 9,600 yards.

112. At about 0215 "RALPH TALBOT", who had turned south east from her guard patrol on observing gunfire in that direction, was illuminated and fired on by one of our own destroyers but before friendly identities were established "RALPH TALBOT" who had turned away to the west, had suffered a hit on No. 1 torpedo tube. At 1230 "RALPH TALBOT" was illuminated and engaged by a single funnel enemy cruiser described as probably "TONE" Class. In this engagement "RALPH TALBOT" suffered fairly extensive superficial damage but claims to have inflicted at least one hit on the enemy which caused him to cease firing.
113. At 0525 "CHICAGO" and "PATTERSON" had an encounter in which several salvos were fired before friendly characters were established.
114. The result of the night actions fought during the night 8th - 9th August proved indeed costly to our side. Four of our heavy cruisers - "VINCENNES", "QUINCY", "ASTORIA" and "CANBERRA" - had been lost. Another heavy cruiser, "CHICAGO" had been damaged, and will require dockyard repair. Two destroyers had been damaged, "RALPH TALBOT" fairly heavily and "PATTERSON" not seriously.

The enemy had also been damaged to some extent, but it would seem, not seriously.

However the object of the enemy attack had undoubtedly been the transports and he had failed to reach them.

115. It is fairly certain that the force which engaged "CANBERRA" "CHICAGO", "PATTERSON" and "BAGLEY" comprised one heavy cruiser and two light cruisers. It appears reasonably certain too that the same enemy force was in action with the "VINCENNES" and "ASTORIA" that they were engaged by two separate enemy forces and subjected to cross fire. "VINCENNES" suggests that the other enemy force consisted of destroyers. As the enemy had two separate transport groups ("X" and "Y") to attack, there seems to be good reason for dividing his force into two sections but if this were so, the enemy destroyer force apparently destined to be the one sent against Squadron "Y" at TULAGI, were not intercepted by any of our patrols and it becomes difficult to explain why they did not go on to attack their real objective.
116. It was most disappointing that "RALPH TALBOT" and "BLUE" failed to detect the enemy with RADAR. Their patrol beats had been arranged clear of the land to give warning and to avoid interference to RADAR and with an effective contact range of only 12,000 yards they should have detected an approaching force. This failure could be explained by the enemy, having detected them from the air, making a circuit to the westward and approaching close to the land by CAPE ESPERANCE.

117. The results of the night action are disappointing too, but one must remember that the enemy had very much in his favour. He knew that everything he met was bound to be an enemy. The aircraft flares, which were excellently placed, had probably silhouetted our forces for him. The enemy would have been on tip toe whereas our personnel had undergone the strain of forty-eight hours in the combat area closed up at action stations most of the time, had fought three enemy air attacks and had suffered the strain of false alarm. It must be admitted too that the enemy displayed a very high standard of night fighting and were probably more efficient and more practised at it than were our forces which were assembled together for the first time to carry out this operation.
118. At it happened, the destroyers concentrating at my prearranged concentration point north west of SAVO ISLAND and not on my Flagship north west of Squadron "X" as was my instruction, did not affect the issue of the night action and actually assisted greatly in the saving of life from our stricken cruisers.
120. The retirement planned for 0730 had not been proceeded with because the threat of surface attack on the transports during the night had caused them to get under way and the landing of essential stores and equipment had not been completed. At daylight the transports and store ships had returned to the disembarkation areas and unloading had been resumed.
121. At 0850 groups "X" and "Y" were again under way as the result of a warning received from a Coast Watcher on BOUGAINVILLE Island that enemy aircraft from RABAUL were headed towards us. By 1100 however no attack had arrived and the unloading operation was once more resumed.
122. At about 1530 group "X" transports and supply ships less McCRAWLEY" formed up and proceeded eastward through LENGO CHANNEL escorted by "CHICAGO", "MUGFORD", "PATTERSON", "RALPH TALBOT" and the five destroyer minesweepers.
123. At 1545 "AUSTRALIA", "HOBART" and our other eight destroyers screening the remaining ships of "X" transport group, moved across to the TULAGI area where at 1900 all units formed up and proceeded out through LENGO CHANNEL.
124. The day had passed without air attack and I consider that the losses suffered by the enemy in his air attacks on us during the previous two days was largely responsible for this. In addition to the aircraft which I had actually seen destroyed during these attacks there must have been a large number of others which would not reach RABAUL.

Operation WATCHTOWER - The Capture and Occupation by United Nations's Forces of TULAGI and GUADALCANAL.

PART FOUR - The retirement of the naval elements of the AMPHIBIOUS FORCE.

125. The naval elements of the Amphibious Force had left the combat area on Sunday, 9th August, in two groups and had proceeded eastward through LENGO CHANNEL.

The leading group comprised part of the transports escorted by the wounded vessels "CHICAGO", "PATTERSON", "MUGFORD", "RALPH TALBOT" plus "DEWEY" and the five destroyer minesweepers which were endamaged.

the second group comprised the remainder of the transports, ex-destroyer transports and store ships and was escorted by "AUSTRALIA", "HOBART", "SAN JUAN", "SELRIDGE", "HENLEY", "HELM", "BAGLEY", "BLUE", "ELLET", "WILSON", "HULL", "MONSSEN" and "BUCHANAN".

H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA"
11 August, 1942

NIGHT ACTION OFF SAVO ISLAND. (9th AUGUST, 1942 -
REMARKS BY C.T.G. 62.6

All times are Zone-11.

- At 0018 "BLUE" on patrol WEST OF SAVO ISLAND reported aircraft heading east.
- At 0146 Aircraft flares being dropped round X RAY anchorage. At this time "AUSTRALIA" was abreast X RAY and was about to start a close patrol inside the DD screening arc as I had decided not to attempt to rejoin my group ("CHICAGO, CANBERRA, PATTERSON and BAGLEY) in the dark and there were but a few hours to 0500 when we would reform screen on the transport groups.
- At 0150 A flare dropped in the direction of the Channel SOUTHWEST of SAVO. There were a few rounds of what I took to be cerliken fire almost at once as though a ship was engaging the flare dropper and almost immediately a burst of heavy firing from the eastward of the ship.
- At 0156 A general and very intense night action commenced somewhat to the eastward of the flashes observed at 0150. The gunfire was very heavy and I thought it must have been the VINCENNES group (VINCENNES, ASTORIA, QUINCY, HELM AND WILSON) coming into action against an enemy being engaged by the AUSTRALIA group.

It should not have been possible for an enemy force to get inside SAVO ISLAND without being detected either visually or with RADAR by BLUE or TALBOT to whom I had allotted patrol boats with this express object in mind. There had been no contact report from these ships or from ANY SHIP and whilst being confident that our five eight-inch cruisers then on patrol could deal with any enemy cruiser force likely (from our intelligence) to be sent against our escort forces, I was completely in ignorance of the number or the nature of the enemy force and the progress of the action being fought.

I ordered AUSTRALIA to patrol on courses 060-240 about 7 miles west of XRAY to await reports from our forces in contact and so as to intercept any enemy which got through our cruiser screen, before he could reach the transports. Also I ordered destroyers not in contact with the enemy, to concentrate on me in this position. However destroyers could not decypher the position given in my messages because it had been made from the General Signal Book recyphered by the signal cypher in force and the concentrated under Comderson 4 in position five miles NORTHWEST of SAVO (which was the position arranged in my Special Instructions to Screening group for DD Concentration in the event of being ordered to form a STRIKING FORCE).

At 0226 I sent a message to CHICAGO, VINCENNES and Admiral Scott
"Are your groups in action?"

Replies came: -

"From CHICAGO "Were but not now."

From Admiral Scott "This force not in action. Appers to
be surface force between FLORIDA ISLE and SAVO.

At this time VINCENNES COULD NOT BE RAISED NOR COULD I
RAISE ASTORIA OR QUINCY when I subsequently tried them,
though we heard VINCESSES working you.

At 0240 There were three ships in the force between SAVO and
FLORIDA Islands and firing had stopped.

At 0242 I told CHICAGO - "Report situations".

At 0245 CHICAGO reported "We are now standing toward LENGO
on course 100".

At 0249 In reporting the situation CHICAGO replied - CHICAGO
south of SAVO ISLAND. Hit by torpedo slightly down by bow.
Enemy ships firing to seaward. CANBERRA burning on
bearing 250 five miles from SAVO. Two destroyers stand-
ing by CANBERRA.

At 0310 I reported to you "Surface action near SAVO. Situation
as yet undetermined."

At 0315 There were several more flashes apparently from gunfire
east of SAVO ISLAND.
In answer to a question from me regarding state of
CANBERRA, PATTERSON replied "Disabled on fire in position
seven miles southeast of SAVO ISLAND."

At 0338 Comdesron 4 reported destroyers concentrated in position
five miles northwest of SAVO ISLAND.

At 0344 CHICAGO reported "Am now ~~Six~~ miles from Area XRAY. Course
119 speed 10. Believe bulkheads will hold against high
speed."

At 0410 PATTERSON reported CANBERRA is out of commission.

At 0515 RALPH TALBOT reported he was badly damaged near shore
northwest SAVO ISLAND.

At 0525 PATTERSON reported CANBERRA is abandoning ship. Have
entire crew aboard. Will destroy her.

At 0530 Another short burst of firing apparently south of SAVO ISLAND.

At 0532 I ordered Comdesron 4 to investigate state of CANBERRA and
PATTERSON reported 250 dgrrees five miles from SAVO ISLAND

and instructed her that they were to be abandoned and destroyed if they could not join in the retirement plan 0730 (Your 081735 directed this step).

I was in doubt about PATTERSON because having asked him earlier to report condition of CANBERRA I subsequently received a signal from him "Disabled on fire in position seven miles southeast of SAVO ISLAND." As the time of origin of my message had not been quoted I was in some doubt whether this message referred to the condition of CANBERRA or whether it was intended to report PATTERSON's condition.

- At 0547 Being still unaware of the nature or results of the night action, I sent a message to the Escort Forces "Situation obscure. Be prepared to give battle at dawn in vicinity transport groups."
- At 0622 CHICAGO reported "standing by CANBERRA." "Have ordered BLUE alongside to take off remaining 400 men."
- At 0644 Comdesron 4 reported "American ASTORIA in flames position 0907 S. 159-47 E. Four dog dogs picking up many survivors."
- At 0648 CHICAGO reported "BLUE, SELFRIDGE, PATTERSON standing by CANBERRA. Am proceeding to concentration area."
- At 0819 I reported to you that I had been unable to get VINCENNES or QUINCY by radio and that I had no real information of the night battle.
- At 0830 SELFRIDGE reported "CANBERRA is sunk."

2. This chronological table gives the essential details of observations made from AUSTRALIA and records the messages I sent and received. I have asked CHICAGO, PATTERSON, BAGLEY, BLUE, RALPH TALBOT, HELM, WILSON and Comdesron 4 to render brief reports (in cypher) from their knowledge of what took place. So far reports have reached me from CHICAGO, BLUE, and HELM and copies of their reports are appended.
3. For what it is worth, I reproduce the information gathered by one of my Surgeon Lieutenants when he was on board FULLER assisting in attention of CANBERRA's wounded.

"Ship was in first degree of readiness. At 0150 CANBERRA was astern of CHICAGO and when turning south of SAVO ISLAND, was fired on by two cruisers lurking behind the Island. There were also remarks which indicated that the cruisers were accompanied by two to four destroyers.

The first salvo carried away the 4-inch gun deck (abaft the after funnel) and caused a fire amidships which burned furiously. Subsequently there was an explosion in the

Regulating Office Flat (Main deck 2/3rds way aft). The second salvo hit the bridge structure. A torpedo hit in the boiler rooms and the engines stopped. Light, power and water supply failed. Attempts were made to put out the fire with buckets of water, later reinforced by hose from PATTERSON. PATTERSON took off survivors from after end and BLUE from forward end."

The Surgeon Lieutenant reports that casualties had very few burns and were caused mostly by shell splinters.

4. From what I saw and from reports I have subsequently received, I am of the opinion that the enemy force expected to carry out his attacks on ships in the transport areas and that the flares dropped were intended to silhouette ships for the attack. The fact that flares began to be dropped at about 0146 whereas the enemy was at SAVO ISLAND at this time could be explained by the surface force being about half an hour late or that the plan allowed a time overlap. It is possible that the enemy force consisted of cruisers and destroyers of the force reported by aircraft at 2325Z/7 in position 0549 S. 15607 E. (off DIETA) course 120 speed 15 knots. At 25 knots and passing through BOUGAINVILLE STRAIT these cruisers and destroyers could reach BUADAICANAL at the time an enemy force was actually there. The two seaplane tenders I suggest had the aircraft which dropped the flares and possibly it may have been intended to co-ordinate the surface attack with an aerial torpedo attack carried out by float plane torpedo droppers from the same base. An enemy force given as four cruisers was sighted yesterday (9th) at 0315Z, again off KIETA and this may have been the same returning from its raid on us.
5. I am most disappointed that neither RALP TALBOT nor BLUE detected the enemy approach to SAVO. On their patrol beats it required a surface RADAR range of only 6 miles to ensure that nothing could get by undetected. However the enemy entered undetected and then apparently met the AUSTRALIA group, then with PATTERSON and BAGLEY screening CHICAGO and CANNBERRA and results were rather disastrous to us. I feel that the enemy were somewhat surprised at meeting a cruiser force at the entrance and possibly they turned east after the first encounter and thereupon ran into VINCENNES group (VINCENNES, ASTORIA, QUINCY screened by HELM and WILSON the latter taking JARVIS place). Again the encounter was disastrous to us but I think the enemy withdrew to North as a result of - or even during the course of - this second encounter and that subsequently HELM must have been inside the enemy formation which by then was probably very disorderly.
6. It appeared that the enemy in both encounters used aircraft flares to provide his illumination. This in two quick encounters shows considerable finesse but I suppose it would be possible by giving the aircraft by radio the bearing on which to drop the flare. The ship would require to have some identification light which only showed from above. In any

case the enemy skill at night fighting, despite the general belief to the contrary, was shown to be of the highest order.

7. I am disappointed too that not a single unit reported contact with the enemy or subsequently briefly reported the situation and enemy forces involved. If a report of contact with the enemy had been made by one of the AUSTRALIA group it might well have given the VINCENNES group the opportunity of opening fire before the enemy had opened fire on them.
8. It is disappointing that apparently not one of our destroyers got his torpedoes into the enemy.
9. Damage inflicted on the enemy cannot be ascertained but judging by the apparent intensity of the gunfire on both sides when he was engaging the VINCENNES group, I cannot believe that his forces escaped unscathed.
10. I have reported to COMSOUWESPACFOR and Australian Commonwealth Naval Board (ACNB) the loss of CANBERRA and an estimate of the number of survivors. Copies of these signals are appended.

/s/ V. CRUTCHLEY
Rear Admiral

TO: AUSTRALIA

FROM: CHICAGO

CHICAGO SOUTH SAVO ISLAND. HIT BY TORPEDO SLIGHTLY DOWN BY BOW. ENEMY SHIPS FIRING TO SEAWARD. CANBERRA BURNING ON BEARING 250 5 MILES FROM SAVO. TWO DESTROYERS STANDING BY CANBERRA

T.O.R. 1607Z/8 August. T.O.O. 081549.

$\frac{11}{27}$ * * * * *

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

$\frac{24}{0307}$

FROM: C.T.F. 62.

This is urgent. If CANBERRA cannot join retirement in time she should be destroyed. Our departue urgent.

T.O.O. 081735.

* * * * *

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: C.T.F. 62

ASTORIA on fire Captain and some of the crew trying to save. Apparently QUINCY sunk. No news of VINCESSES. Believe TALBOT sunk. Believe ships ran into submarine and surface torpedo trap.

No. T.O.O.

* * * * *

TO: C.T.F. 62 (R) C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: Comdesron 4

At about 0230L RALPH TALBOT in cross fire. At 0722L heard on 2058 urgent radio plain language from RALPH TALBOT quote Help apparently has lost authenticator cards or receiver is out as does not answer. At 0825L attempt was made to authenticate on another transmission by using voice call of quote Jimmy assigned RALPH TALBOT last seen about 7 miles north SAVO present position unknown

T.O.R. 2158Z T.O.O. 082132

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: CHICAGO

Have one killed fifteen wounded two seriously wounded at present.

T.O.R. 2125

No. T.O.O.

* * * * *

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: CHICAGO

Briefly engaged unidentified destroyer which did not answer challenge bearing 148 distance 2.4 miles from SAVO ISLAND. PATTERSON and BAGLEY were standing by CANBERRA. Received partial message they had completed transfer of wounded and were standing clear. My position 0545 southwest SAVO ISLAND distance three miles. Nothing is sight am proceeding to concentration area.

TO: C.T.F. 62 C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: CHICAGO

At 0150 formation before 5 miles S.E. SAVO on course 115 attacked by gunfire and torpedoes from port. CANBERRA turned to starboard CHICAGO to port to dodge torpedoes. Later when on course about 115 located CANBERRA about 2 miles astern. LOST SIGHT OF BAGLEY but thought identified her standing towards CANBERRA. Gunfire to port appeared to be on course approaching Xray. Firing became intermittent nothing appearing to seaward stood in toward Xray. Could make out no ships or movement toward Xray reversed course stood out toward SAVO, passing what I was sure was CANBERRA, BAGLEY AND PATTERSON. The latter illuminated this ship by searchlight and opened fire. Secondary battery opened fire contrary to orders when illuminated. Stopped fire almost immediately after illuminating with one star shell. Stood towards SAVO. Area to seaward all directions no gunfire no ships sighted except BLUE and SELFRIDGE, these identified. Reversed course and stood for CANBERRA. She reported had 400 men still on board was preparing to close her when succeeded in bringing BLUE within hail directed her to take remaining men off. Then directed SELFRIDGE to assist. Received message to concentrate Xray at 0300 subsequently delayed until 0730. Stood towards Xray en route fell in with SAN JUAN which ordered us proceed with her to YOKE. Reported action casualties damage to C.T.G. 62.4. Best estimated initial speed too high as 25. Now consider 15 knots a maximum at present hope to support bulkhead more effectively later. Do not know whereabouts of BAGLEY. Saw no ship damaged I thought could be BAGLEY. No other information. Shall prepare report in letter free from later. Partial report on damage and potentiality previously submitted 3 planes in commission port catapult out.

T.O.R. ¹³¹¹ 0211Z/9 T.O.O. 082350

TO: COMSOUWESPAC A.C.N.B. FROM: C.T.F. 44.

CANBERRA damaged night action heavily on fire. Following received from U.S.S. PATTERSON begins CANBERRA is abandoning ship. Have entire crew aboard will destroy her ends. COMSOUWESPACFOR requested inform A.C.N.B.

T.O.R. Unknown. T.O.O. 081927

TO: COMSOUWESPACFOR (R) A.C.N.B. FROM: C.T.F. 44. ³⁰ 0627

My 081927 rough estimate based on reports from U.S. repeat U.S. destroyers 500 repeat 500 survivors many of them casualties. Now being embarked in troop ships BARNETT and FULLER. C.W.S.P.F. please pass to A.C.N.B., repeat A.C.N.B.

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: BLUE

HUSH. About 2345 while patrolling assigned line to westward of SAVO ISLAND noted unidentified aircraft flying over SAVO and CAPE ESPERANCE. 0149 sighted star shells behind SAVO to eastward followed by flashes of gunfire and later by searchlights intermittently until 0240. 0215 sighted small two masted auxiliary schooner nine miles west of SAVO on easterly course. About 0230 saw RALPH TALBOT and unidentified ship at approximately UNIT 99 illuminated by searchlights from Eastward and Northwestward former surrounded by splashes and returned fire to Northwestward. 0230 TALBOT sighted strange ship rounding CAPE ESPERANCE to Southwest. Trailed until 0325 when identified as JARVIS. Resumed patrol until 0515 when proceeded vicinity CANBERRA at request of PATTERSON. Removed personnel from CANBERRA forecandle and transferred same to RULLER

T.O.R. 0448Z/9 T.O.O. 082357

TO: C.T.F. 62

FROM: C.T.G. 62.6

CHICAGO reports following damage to ship. "Bow shot away and doubled back to frame 4. Compartment flooded to frame 15. Frame spacing 4 feet. Am strengthening shores as rapidly as possible. Speed now limited to 10 knots. Main battery forward director partially disabled. One catapult out. Damage to fire control circuits in various degrees not all determined. Estimate main battery to about 85 percent efficiency. Five inch batteries appear without damage.

HENLY reported RADAR and T.B.S. equipment damaged beyond repair.

¹⁰²³
T.O.R. 090323Z T.O.O. 090202.

TO: C.T.F. 62 (R) C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: Condesron 4

RALPH TALBOT received five hits and fired on while on patrol south and west SAVO. Both RADARS sound gear main radio T.B.S. transmitter all electrical Fire Control Equipment out of commission. Holes in forecandle deck forward superstructure and interior structure structural damage. Shell plating pierced starboard quarter just about water-line level. Hole side plating plugged temporarily repeat temporarily manner. Starboard torpedo and tubes jettisoned. Compartments pumped out correcting 20 degrees list. Can proceed two boilers in good weather. First count, Medical Officer, 14 men dead including one survivor from MUGFORD. Injured, SELFRIDGE medical officer now in RALPH TALBOT.

¹⁷
T.O.R. 090610Z T.O.O. 090330

NAVAL MESSAGE

TO: C.T.G. 62.6

FROM: SELFRIDGE

100232 TOR 0535z 10 AUGUST Received by V/S

Desron 4 less JARVIS stationed accordance Para 6 COMTASKGROUP 62.6 Special Instructions. At 1506z received unauthenticated order from COMTASKGROUP 62.6 to concentrate. Proceeded with MUGFORD from Area XRAY toward point northwest of SAVO and was there joined by WILSON and HELM. Reported arrival to 62.6. Passed burning vessel enroute. Started back to Transport area one half hour before daylight and was diverted in rescuing ASTORIA CANBERRA personnel and destroying CANBERRA. Shortly after 0200 heard RALPH TALBOT TBS reporting she was in searchlight beams. Will forward ships reports when received.

100252

<u>Originator and Gist of Despatch</u>	<u>Addressees</u>	<u>Received</u>
CINCPAC 062336 - 1036(-11)6th - Enemy subs are on move to attack Blue occupation force at TULAGI	COMSOPAC CTF 61,62,63	CTG 62.8 (Recd 1049(-11)7th CTF 62
Comsopac 071142 - 2242(-11)7th - Direction finder position of enemy submarines at 0500Z today position 10 S 162 E	CTF 61,62,63	CTG 62.6 (Recd 1158(-11)7th CTF 62
COMSOUWESPAC 071146 - 2246(-11)7th - Position 06-52 S 154 - 20 E, LDD, course 180		CTG 62.6 (Recd 0003(-11)8th
COMSOUWESPAC 071219 - 2319(-11)7th Fortresses sight 6 unidentified ships St. George's Channel course SE. At 0131 GCT in 03-45S 151-56 E sighted 1 cruiser 3 CL 1 DD course 270 Speed 20	CINCPAC All TF Cdrs PAC All TF Cdrs SWPAC	COMSOPAC CTG 62.6 (Recd 2360(-11)7th
COMSOUWESPAC 071930 - 0630(-11) 7th - Sub reports following ships Passed through 04-58S 152-50E course 140 high speed. 1000(210) 7th 1 DD 2 unknown. 1900 (-10) 2 DD 3 larger unknown.	CINCPAC All TF Cdrs PAC All TF Cdrs SWPAC	COMSOPAC CTG 62.6 (Recd 0738(-11)8th
CTF 62 - Enemy Submarine reported	TF 62	CTG 62.6

<u>Originator and Gist of Despatch</u>	<u>Addressees</u>	<u>Received</u>
near. May enter area today		Recd 0710(-11)8th
COMSOUWESPAC 080046 - 1146(-11)8th	All TFC, SWPAC CTG 62.6	
Our aircraft sighted 1 DD 06-52S	PACFLT	(Recd FOX 0032(-11)8th)
154-20E course 180 at 1546 K	CINCPAC	(Recd BELLS 2316
seventh Cerey		(-11)7th
ORANGE BASE 080107 - 1207(-11)8th	All Stations	CTG 62.6
There are possibly one or more		(Recd 1207(-11)8th
subs in the transport area.		
COMSOUWESPAC 0807 - 18--(-11)8th		COMSOPAC
FOX and BELLS schedule NPM 706Z		Recd 1845(-11)8th
FOX VHC NERK 0 aircraft reports		CTG 62.6
at 2325Z/7 3 cruisers 3 destroy-		(Recd FOX 1842(-11)8th)
ers 2 seaplane tenders or gunboats		(Recd BELLS 1817
0549S 156-07E course 120 true		(-11)8th
speed 15 knots at 0027Z/8 2 sub-		
marines 0735S 154-07E course		
150 true 0717Z/8.		
COMSOUWESPAC 080847 - 2047(-11)	All TF Cdrs PAC COMSOPAC	
8th - Air sighting 0001Z/8 po-		(Recd 2136(-11)8th
sition 05-42S 156-05E 2 CA CL		
1 small unidentified. 1 cruiser		
similar SOUTHAMPTON class.		
COMSOUWESPAC 081125 - 2225(-11)8th	CINCPAC	

<u>Originator and Gist of Despatch</u>	<u>Addressees</u>	<u>Received</u>
Plane reports 1 cruiser in 5-40S 153-55E at 2245 GCT/7 course 280 speed 25. 8000 Ton 2 stacks 3 turrets.	All TFC PACFLT All TFC SOPACFLT	

COMAIRSOPAC 081233²³³³(-11)8th ACTION CTF 61
 Search coverage 8 August. Sector INFO COMSOPAC
 1 not searched due weather. Sec- CTF 62
 tor 2 left half 80% to 650 miles,
 right half not searched due weather.
 Sector 3 - 85%. Sector 4 - 95%
 outer 50 miles not covered. Sector
 5 - 95%. FANTAN Sector 80% Hudsons
 100%. Sector 7 - 85%. All Sectors
 negative except unidentified plane
 reported 55V37 - 080445.

COMSOUWESPAC despatch 0807 -- (See NPM 706 above, also
 BELLS) was passed to CANBERRA for transmission on BELLS schedule,
 and from CANBERRA to Pearl Harbor for transmission on FOX schedule.
 Transmission was completed on BELLS at 0737/8 (1837/8 -11 ZONE) and
 on Pearl Harbor FOX at 0743/8 (1843/8-11 Zone). The sighting occurred
 at 2325/7 (1025/8 - 11 Zone) and was made by an R.A.A.F. Hudson
 plane, A16-218, on search mission FR 623 originating at Fall River.

Originator and Gist of Despatch Addressees Received

This despatch was received on the BELLS schedule by CTG 62.6 (Admiral Crutchley) and by CTF 62 (Admiral Turner) on the FOX schedule. It was also received by at least one of the carriers under CTF 61 and by other units of the Task Force. Whether the sighting plane made a report at time of sighting, or made the report upon return to its base, it has been impossible definitely to determine. It is the policy of R.A.A.F. radio stations in operational areas to destroy their files after one month. The pilot of the plane in question could not be identified.

Blue

SECRET

#2

DD387/A16
Serial (031)

Narrative Excerpts

S-E-C-R-E-T

U.S.S. BLUE (DD387)
At Sea, August 12, 1942

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commander Task Force Sixty-Two
(Cdr. Amphibious Force, South Pacific Fleet).
Subject: U.S.S. BLUE (DD387) - Operations in Solomon Islands
on Night of August 8 - 9, 1942; Action During Night
Engagement; Report of.

References: (a) Art. 874(6), U.S. Navy Regs., 1920.
(b) ComTaskFor 62 Operation Plan No. A3-42.
(c) ComRaskGroup 62.6 Special Instruction to
Screening Group.

1. On the night of August 8-9, 1942, this vessel was on assigned station as anti-submarine patrol and radar guard watch west of Savo Island, on line between position Latitude-09-05 S., Longitude 159-24 E., and position 09-09 S., 159-37 E., patrolling on courses 051° and 231° true, at 12 knots. Weather partly cloudy, wind 4 knots from NE, sea calm, visibility 3 miles, no moon.

2. About 2345, zone L time, heard U.S.S. RALPH TALBOT broadcast voice warning on 72.5 mc. reporting an unidentified aircraft north of Savo Island. Picked up plane with own radar and subsequently heard noise of engine as plane apparently circled over Savo Island and departed to southward. Some observers claim to have sighted running lights on plane.

3. About 0145 sighted four flares across Savo Island to the eastward, followed by flashed of gunfire to the north-eastward in the vicinity of Sandfly Passage, tracers, and the blast of heavy gunfire. The report of the third salvo was accompanied by a much heavier explosion and followed by a red glow from a position about six miles southeast of Savo. One or more aircraft were observed over Savo Island to the eastward, showing intermittent flashing red and white lights as though using them for signalling. Firing was noted to continue intermittently and mostly in the obscured area inside Savo Island until 0215, when the attention of this vessel was diverted.

SECRET

S-E-C-R-E-T

BLUE (DD387)(Cont'd)

4. At 0215, from position 9 miles west of Savo, made sound contact and sighted unidentified vessel to south-east. Vessel identified apparently as harmless small twomasted schooner with slow speed auxiliary engine, on easterly course.

5. About 0230 sighted burning ship about five miles northeast of Savo Island, and RALPH TALBOT and a second ship about 5 miles north of island, the latter two being illuminated by searchlight and fired on by white tracers from the northwest and by sporadic red tracers from the burning ship to the northeast. Searchlight was extinguished at 0232, almost immediately after ships under fire appeared to exchange emergency identification signal of two vertical red lights, but firing continued intermittently for several minutes.

6. At 0250 sighted unidentified ship rounding Cape Esperance to the southwest at about average speed. Trailed and closed until 0325, when ship was identified as U.S.S. JARVIS enroute for repairs. Returned to station and resumed patrol. Sky becoming overcast and visibility closing in.

7. At 0515, in response to request from Commander Destroyer Division Eight, left patrol area and proceeded to assistance of H.M.A.S. CANBERRA; light rain and visibility less than one mile. Lowered boat to recover personnel in water; went alongside port quarter of CANBERRA, in latitude-09-13 S., Longitude 159-55 E., at 0622; ship listing to starboard about 15 degrees and burning badly starboard side amidships. 0625 shifted forward to port bow, to permit PATTERSON to come alongside astern; commenced removing personnel. 0640 all personnel removed from forecandle; left from alongside, recovered boat, and proceeded to Transport Area Xray to Transfer CANBERRA personnel to FULLER.

8. This vessel took no active offensive measures, inflicted no damage to the enemy, and sustained no loss or damage. The entire action appeared to take place on the opposite side of Savo Island, with no enemy ships or aircraft coming ~~with in~~ ineffective striking distance from assigned patrol area.

H. N. WILLIAMS

RALPH
TALBOT

CONFIDENTIAL

USS RALPH TALBOT

#2

NARRATIVE EXCERPTS

At 2345 on August 8 while on picket duty between SAVO ISLAND and TULAGI ISLAND, this vessel sighted an unidentified aircraft over SAVO ISLAND flying low and heading East. It was a cruiser type plane, reported as follows on TEO and then on TBS, "WARNING WARNING PLANE OVER SAVO ISLAND HEADED EAST." This was repeated for several minutes on each transmitter. We then called the Task Force Commander and Commander Destroyer Squadron FOUR using calss "RAY" and "MONKEY" on TBS and TEO but could not get an answer. Commander Destroyer Division Eight then took the warning on the TBS and said he would try to get it through to the Task Force Commander. At about 0150 on 9 August observed gunfire near Area XRAY and at this time reported over TBS nothing in sight north of SAVO ISLAND. About 0217 when in center of patrol area northwest of SAVO ISLAND we were illuminated by searchlight from friendly ship from TULAGI Area at which time own forces commenced firing on us. We headed west at maximum speed, zig-zagged, flashed fighting lights and passed on TBS that we were being fired on by own forces. Own forces then ceased firing on us. Received one hit on number one torpedo tube killing two men and disabling the tube. Shortly thereafter sighted JAP cruiser headed approximately westerly and at close range. We were still silhouetted by searchlight from friendly forces. JAP cruiser and own ship opened fire on each other at approximately the same time. Radar range was 3000 yards. We came around with hard right rudder to bring starboard torpedo tubes to bear and fired three torpedoes. The others did not fire due to previous shell hit on torpedo tube. We were hit at this time under the bridge (in chart house), on the starboard quarter, on Gun No. 4, and in the wardroom. The JAP cruiser turned on his searchlight about this time and we attempted to turn ours on but could not do so as all electric cables to it had been severed. We came around with full left rudder to fire port torpedoes and when attempt to fire them was made we found that the torpedo firecontrol system was out of commission. Fired one torpedo by local control. At thistime one or more shells from our own main battery hit the cruiser and their searchlight went out. Did not fire remaining torpedoes as we could not see the JAP cruiser. Heavy fire broke out in chart house under the bridge and we began to list to starboard. We then headed towards SAVO ISLAND to gain cover and try to save ship. The JAP cruiser stopped firing after our shells were seen to hit. We slowed to one-third speed as bridge was becoming enveloped in flames and ship was listing 20 degrees to starboard. All radio transmitters were out of commission. Lost all power and steering control. Regained steam pressure on after boilers and headed in close to short of SAVO ISLAND where we remained repairing damage, putting out fire, and taking list off ship. Could not transmit or receive by radio until a temporary rig was made. About 1200 had made sufficient repairs to get underway on two boilers and stand in to harbor.

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2. We have recovered the bases of four shells with JAPANESE characters stamped on them and a large number of shell fragments.

GUNNERY REPORT

At about 0200 on the night of 8 -9 August, while on station as picket, heard over voice radio, "All ships, three ships coming in LENGO CHANNEL." Went to general quarters, At about 0210 observed star shells and floating flares over GUADALCANAL BAY. Immediately afterward observed gunfire and searchlights at about 28000 yards.

We went to 25 knots and stood to the south ^(west?) east toward SAVO ISLAND. In the next ten minutes observed a heavy exchange of gunfire. Three U.S. cruisers seemed to be silhouetted by red floating flares. One U.S. cruiser was hit and caught fire but continued to return the fire. Enemy ships used searchlights only while firing.

At about 0215 a single searchlight on our port bow silhouetted us at about 15000 yards. It stayed on for about 10 seconds and then swung away. At about 0217 a single searchlight on our port beam illuminated us and the ship commenced firing medium caliber shells at us at a range of about 7000 yards. He fired about seven salvos, all but two of which were short, hitting us on No. 1 torpedo tube and killing two men (Hit No. 1). We were convinced that it was a friendly ship because of the colored splashes, the single searchlight and his position; we identified ourselves by TBS and by recognition lights. He ceased fire. We were then heading away at high speed toward the western end of GUADALCANAL.

At about 0218 we observed the dim shape of an enemy ship, probably TONE class CL on our port quarter, heading to the westward and crossing our stern from port to starboard but were not able to pick it up with the director. About 30 seconds later the enemy cruiser, now on our starboard quarter, disclosed us with two searchlights and opened fire with secondary battery and after turret. We swung the director on him and opened fire with a rangefinder range of 9000 yards. Immediately after the first salvo had gone we obtained a radar range of 3300 yards and proceeded to fire with this range. The radar operator observed a pulse on the screen, rotating counterclockwise, similar to a CXAM pulse. We immediately attempted to counter illuminate but found that the searchlight was out of commission, a fragment from a short having cut all power and fire-control circuits to the light.

After our second salvo we received a hit in the after end of the chart house (Hit No. 2), destroying the SC and FD radars and cutting automatic gun train and elevation orders. The gun elevation motors drove up and the guns went to match pointer without orders.

We next received three hits in close succession; in the wardroom (Hit No. 3), in the starboard side after of No. 3 torpedo tube (Hit No. 4), and on the under side of the slide of Gun No. 4 (Hit. No. 5), the three hits killing twelve men. At this time we fired the starboard torpedoes from Mount 3 at the JAP. One

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torpedo failed to fire because of a faulty primer. We swung to port and brought the port tubes to bear, firing one torpedo before the JAP searchlights went out.

Since the port torpedo director was out of commission due to the hit in the chart house (Hit No. 1), the tubes were firing at local control using the searchlights as a point of aim. When the lights went out they had no point of aim.

Meanwhile we obtained a direct hit on or very near the JAP searchlights which suddenly flared up and went out. Fire had broken out in the chart house and we were listing to starboard. We ceased fire, since we could no longer see the enemy, and stood towards SAVO ISLAND. The action ceased about 0221. A heavy rain set in and the list increased to 20 degrees to starboard.

TORPEDO REPORT

The enemy was first sighted sharp on our port quarter. She appeared to be a one-stack cruiser, headed across our stern with a target angle of 275 degrees, and making high speed. Our ship, in the act of zig-zagging, was swinging right at the time, and before the port battery could be brought to bear, the cruiser was crossing our stern. We immediately switched to the starboard director. By this time the cruiser had illuminated us by searchlight. The signalman training the director was blinded by the searchlight and said he could not see the target. The Torpedo Officer took the director and, using the open sight, fired the after starboard tube mount, leading the searchlight 10 degrees in the direction in which the cruiser was last seen heading. The right torpedo in the No. 3 tube did not fire, either by electricity or percussion, due to a faulty primer. The No. 1 tube could not be fired due to a precious shell hit which killed the two torpedomen on the tube and blew off the instruments.

We then swung the ship hard to left to fire the port battery. Thirty degrees left gyro angle was set. Transmission between the director and tubes went out and the tubes were unable to match pointers. The tubes were immediately ordered to fire by local control at the searchlight. Tube No. 2 fired the torpedo in the right barrel at the searchlight just before it went out. When the searchlight went out, the tubes were ordered to cease firing.

Persons on the bridge, main deck, and engineering spaces reported feeling underwater explosions, similar to that of a depth charge, two to three minutes after the starboard battery was fired. It is not definitely known whether or not a torpedo hit was scored.

PATRIOT
CDD-8

SECRET

#2

USS PATTERSON

NARRATIVE EXCERPTS

USS PATTERSON with USS EAGLEY stationed as A/S Screen with Southwestern Screening Group consisting of HMAS AUSTRALIA, HMAS CANBERRA and USS CHICAGO in column in order named. This force patrolling line 125°(T) - 305°(T) between Savo Island and Lunga Point, Guadalcanal. Speed 12 knots. Course was reversed roughly each hour. PATTERSON screening western flank, EAGLEY eastern flank of cruisers. Group under Command of Commander Task Group 62.6, Rear Admiral V. Crutchley, R.N., in HMAS AUSTRALIA.

At 2110 the following message received from Commander Task Group 62.6: TO CHICAGO information to PATTERSON and EAGLEY -

"TAKE CHARGE OF PATROL X I AM CLOSING COMTASKFOR 62 AND MAY OR MAY NOT REJOIN YOU LATER X"

HMAS AUSTRALIA left formation and headed for transport area "Xray".

At 0146 (about) on course 305°(T) just prior to reaching northern end of patrol, (position about 4 miles south of western end of Savo Island) (Weather: Partly cloudy, scattered cumulus clouds, visibility fair and sea calm.), ship sighted dead ahead about 5000 yards close to western side Savo Island headed in general southeasterly direction. HMAS CANBERRA and USS CHICAGO notified by blinker and warning broadcast to all ships.

PATTERSON changed course to left to unmask guns and torpedo batteries.

At 0147:30 (about) "ship" (enemy) changed course to eastward close to south side of Savo Island. Two ships then seen which appeared to be one cruiser of Mogami type and one cruiser of Jintsu type. (NOTE: Three observers on bridge later reported they saw three cruisers - that second in column was a Katori type.)

Captain ordered "fire torpedoes". (At this instant "Something" was reported close aboard on port bow. Captain ran to port wing to investigate reported object.) Guns opened fire with two four gun starshell spreads (starshell illumination used in order to prevent possible silhouetting of own cruisers in searchlight beam) continuing starshell illumination with gun 3, other guns engaging with service projectiles, range 2000 yards bearing 70° relative. (Gunnery Officer observed rear enemy cruiser firing eight torpedoes.) During this period PATTERSON was illuminated (searchlight) by both ships and under heavy fire. Shell hit No. 4 gun crew shelter igniting several rounds of ready service powder and enveloping after section of ship in flames. Nos. 3 and 4 guns out of action. PATTERSON zig-zagged at high speed. (Assistant Gunnery Officer observed torpedo wake about 50 yards on starboard quarter.)

SECRET

Ship finally steadied on easterly course, guns continuing engagement on port side. Gun 4 resumed firing. Guns 1, 2 and 4 maintaining rapid and accurate fire. Several hits obtained on rear cruiser (Jintsu type) extinguishing searchlight and causing fire amidships. (At this point it was discovered that the order to "fire ~~xx~~ torpedoes" had not been heard by Torpedo Officer, apparently due to gun fire, and torpedoes had not been fired.)

At 0200 (about) ceased firing as enemy cruisers turned northeast around Savo Island and were lost to view. Proceeding in general northeastward direction to designated rendezvous. (Expended 20 rounds illuminating and 50 rounds service.)

At 0500 (about) received dispatch from Commander Task Force 62, "IT IS URGENT FOR THIS FORCE DEPART THIS AREA 0630". At same time another urgent dispatch from Commander Task Force 62, received, "IF CANBERRA CANNOT JOIN RETIREMENT IN TIME SHE SHOULD BE DESTROYED BEFORE DEPARTURE". This message read to Commanding Officer, CANBERRA who made decision to abandon ship. (This abandonment was held up due to removal of wounded, as none of CANBERRA'S crew would leave ship until all wounded were removed.)

At 0510 (about) radar contact port quarter, distance 8000 yards range slowly decreasing to 3000 yards. Challenged three times - no reply. All lights on CANBERRA extinguished; cast off all lines and left from alongside CANBERRA. Illuminated strange ship with searchlight and was immediately fired upon. Fire returned (3 salvos). As ship appeared somewhat like CHICAGO, fired emergency identification signal. Strange ship and PATTERSON ceased firing. PATTERSON returned to CANBERRA at daylight and completed removal of wounded and survivors. (PATTERSON took off total of approximately 400 survivors including about 60 wounded. BLUE Took off about 250 survivors.) Proceeded to transport area "Xray" and transferred all CANBERRA survivors and 8 wounded men from PATTERSON to USS BARNETT.

SECRET

COM DES DIV 8

August 9, 1942.

- 0146 Notified CHICAGO and CANBERRA by blinker, "Three enemy ships bearing 340° T". Same time broadcast over TBS to all ships, "Three enemy ships to southward of Savo Island.
- 0147 Changed course to left to bring guns and torpedoes to bear.
- 0148 Illuminated three enemy cruisers (one Mogami, one Jintsu and one Eatori) and engaged; continuing illuminating as per doctrine.
- 0149 PATTERSON illuminated by two enemy searchlights and under heavy fire.
- 0155 PATTERSON is hit at No. 4 gun shelter by 5.5" caliber shell.
- PATTERSON'S casualty report; Shell hit No. 4 gun crew shelter. Three killed seven missing, eight wounded and transferred to BARNETT. No. 3 gun operative manual control only. Gun inoperative from 40 to 75° relative. Large hatch No. 1-152 completely wrecked. Many shrapnel holes main deck and bulkhead No. 4 Shelter. Two small holes through tank Dog 11. Believe ship's force effect repairs to permit local power control gun 3. Personnel replacements and tender assistance for structural damage desired but believe ship fully ready for all operations.
- 0151 One unidentified ship hit and burning.
- 0153 Lost contact with enemy - ceased firing.
- 0200 RALPH TALBOT reported enemy cruiser to the north of Savo Island.
- 0216 BLUE reported that firing is originating directly east of Savo Island.
- 0225 Commander Destroyer Squadron 4 ordered Destroyer Squadron 4 to proceed to previously assigned rendezvous. Order not properly authenticated. Checked authentication which proved to be correct. Proceeding to rendezvous.
- 0228 Tried to raise RALPH TALBOT on TBS.
- NOTE: BLUE reported that RALPH TALBOT was last seen being illuminated and fired on about five minutes ago.
- 0240 From CANBERRA: Disabled, on fire in position seven miles southeast of Savo Island.
- 0300 Cruiser identified as CHICAGO passing to starboard on opposite course.
- 0302 Rejoined CHICAGO.

SECRET

0515

Radar contact on port quarter distance 8,000 yards, range slowly decreased to 3,000 yards. Ship challenged four times - no answer. All lights on CANBERRA extinguished, cast off all lines and left from alongside CANBERRA. (See note at end of report) Illuminated strange ship with searchlight and opened fire. Fire returned (3 salvos). As ship appeared somewhat like CHICAGO, fired emergency signal. Strange ship and PATTERSON ceased firing.

Backley

SECRET

USS.S.BAGLEY Narrative Excerpts

1. At 1850 August 8, 1942 BAGLEY assumed screening station in inner anti-submarine screen formed on AUSTRALIS, CANBERRA and CHICAGO. AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA and CHICAGO in column, BAGLEY 45° 1500-1800 yards on starboard bow of AUSTRALIA, PATTERSON in same relative position on port bow. AUSTRALIA guide. Formation patrolling in sector south of line 125°T through center of Savo Island and west of longitude 160°-04'E, approximate base courses for patrol 305° T and 125°T, base speed 12 knots. Sea smooth with light easterly winds, sky overcast with intermittent clouds and showers, no moon. Ship darkened and in material condition affirm. All armament manned. At 2130 AUSTRALIA left formation and proceeded toward transport area, CANBERRA assumed guide.

2. At 0144 August 9, 1942 sighted unidentified vessels slightly on port bow, distance about 3000 yards. BAGLEY on course 310°T, speed 12.5 knots, with left tangent of Savo Island bearing 310°T, distance about 1.7 miles. Unidentified vessels appeared to be very close to Savo Island and on approximate course 125°T at high speed. At this period visibility was very low, sky heavily overcast with intermittent light showers.

3. BAGLEY swung hard left to bring starboard torpedo battery to bear, speed 25 knots. Before primers could be inserted BAGLEY had swung past safe firing bearing. Swing was continued to left to bring port torpedo battery to bear. As soon as safe bearing was reached, steadied and fired four torpedoes from number two tube mount. Enemy formation very indistinct and lost to view as torpedoes were fired. No hits were observed by commanding officer or officer of the deck. The junior officer of the deck, Lt. (jg) John H. Gardiner, USNR observed an explosion in enemy area about two minutes after torpedoes were fired. Sound operator, RYAN Edward, TM3c 223-76-63, USN, followed torpedoes with sound gear and reported four explosions about two minutes after torpedoes were fired, followed by two intense explosions in the same area.

4. A few seconds after initial sighting CANBERRA turned hard right and opened fire with main battery. CANBERRA was hit amidships by second or third enemy salvo, an intense fire developed immediately.

5. CHICAGO appeared to turn right with CANBERRA and seemed to open fire at the same time.

6. PATTERSON not seen by BAGLEY during this phase of the engagement.

7. After firing torpedoes BAGLEY turned left and scanned passage between Guadalcanal and Savo. No vessels were sighted. At this time the gyro compass failed. BAGLEY then passed astern of CANBERRA and proceeded toward the designated destroyer rendezvous, five miles northwest of Savo Island. This was also the last known bearing of enemy force. No contact was established with own or enemy forces.

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8. BAGLEY then stood toward unidentified vessel which was afire, approximate position 5 miles northeast of Savo Island. Vessel was identified as ASTORIA. BAGLEY went alongside starboard bow of ASTORIA and removed approximately 450 survivors including about 185 wounded. The commanding officer ASTORIA was taken aboard at this time. After all survivors had been removed from forecastle BAGLEY backed clear and picked up additional survivors from water. Shortly before daylight lights were observed on after deck of ASTORIA. BAGLEY went alongside starboard quarter of ASTORIA. Commanding officer ASTORIA and repair personnel returned to ASTORIA. Lt. (jg) Donald S. Smith, (MC), USNR was placed on ASTORIA to care for injured. Additional wounded were placed on BAGLEY. Fire fighting equipment and rescue breathing apparatus transferred from BAGLEY to ASTORIA.

20. The force engaged by BAGLEY had been identified from sketches and silhouettes as follows:

- 2 2 Cast Love Tenyru type
- 2 Cast Affirm Ashigara type.

21. The following pertinent comments are made:

- (a) As seen from this vessel the enemy approach was made from the west, utilizing Savo Island to guard against radar and visual detection.
- (b) The approach was made at high speed, about 30 knots.
- (c) Units of the formation appeared to be very close together. No lights were observed. Maneuvering was apparently "follow the leader".
- (d) Estimated range at which BAGLEY passed abeam of enemy formation - 1500-2000 yards.
- (e) Estimated time between sighting and passing abeam - 30-60 Seconds.
- (f) Estimated time between sighting and firing torpedoes 3-4 minutes.
- (g) Estimated range when torpedoes were fired - 3000-4000 yds.
- (h) In the opinion of the commanding officer, the enemy force followed the coastline of Savo Island very closely and close in.
- (i) Enemy gunfire appeared to be radar controlled and very accurate. Few star shells were observed.
- (j) About 0145 several flares were observed over transport area, indicating the presence of at least one enemy plane.
- (k) Prior to initial sighting no radar contacts were made.
- (l) No radar or surface contacts were received other than a plane radar contact reported by RALPH TALBOT at 2345 August 8, 1942.
- (m) Ammunition expended - 4 torpedoes.

22. All time in this report are zone -11.

F. A. SINCLAIR.

NOTE: Sketch of relative movement of vessels in sight during engagement. (RED folder)

ANBARA

SECRET

112

S-E-C-R-E-T

CANBERRA -

Excerpts from Statements of Executive Officer, Engineering Officer, and a Lt.Cdr. WIGHT

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1.

2. At 0140 "CANBERRA" and "CHICAGO" were in column, "CANBERRA" the leading ship, with "BAGLEY" and "PATTERSON" in station on either bow. Speed 12 knots, course 310, visibility approximately 4,000 yards, weather clear with rain patches, calm, no sea. The course was to have been altered 180 degrees to starboard in succession at 0200 when the ship would have been about 5 miles to east south east of the southern tip of SAVO ISLAND.

3. "CANBERRA" was closed up in the Second Degree of Readiness but with "B" and "Y" fallen out sleeping in the vicinity of their quarters, leaving Communication Numbers awake in all turrets and sentries in Shell Handling Rooms. Two 4" guns were manned, one each side. Fore Control Crew was closed up. Tubes were in the First Degree of Readiness, with one Tube's crew asleep. All guns were empty.

4. An aircraft was heard at infrequent intervals from about 2300 onwards. Type 271 R.D.F. was in operation but interference from surrounding land minimized its efficiency.

5. At a little before 0143 the Port Look-out reported a ship dead ahead, which could not be seen by the Officer of the Watch or the Yeoman of the Watch. At the same time there was an explosion at some distance on the starboard bow. The P.C.O. called the Captain and the Officer of the Watch called the Navigating Officer.

6. Presumed Events.

At approximately 0143 two torpedoes either side were seen passing down on roughly parallel opposite courses to the line of ships. The alarm was immediately given and the armament was trained on by Evershed to the target which is thought consisted of at least two large destroyers or small cruisers on the port bow, distance under one mile. Before the guns could bear and in the next minute it appears probable that approximately 24 hits by shell estimated as 5", and one or two torpedoes, were sustained.

7. The effect of this was to put out of action both Boiler Rooms and consequently all power and lighting throughout the ship, and to start fires at various points. The 4" gun deck area in particular received heavy damage and the ship was thus left disabled

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and defenceless. It is believed that two of the port side torpedoes were fired at the enemy and that the port 4" guns fired one or two salvos before being put out of action. It is thought possible that one gun of "X" turret fired one salvo.

8. DETAILS OF SHELL HITS.

It appears that the following hits were sustained:-

- (1) One hit "A" barbette port side upper deck, putting "A" turret out of action for training only.
- (2) One hit in Torpedomen's mess deck.
- (3) Two hits in Foretop Mess deck, "B" turret undamaged.
- (4) One hit in the Stokers' Mess Deck.
- (5) One hit in the Plotting Office and one hit in the port foremost corner of the fore-bridge, incapacitating the Captain, killing the Gunnery Officer and causing many other casualties.
- (6) One hit foremast end of the Main Galley which penetrated to the Sick Bay Dispensary in the Sick Bay Flat.
- (7) Torpedo hit in starboard side, presumably on bulkhead 127, between the Boiler Rooms.
- (8) One hit penetrating through Stoker P.O's Mess Deck into "A" Fan Flat.
- (9) "B" Boiler room - unknown.
- (10) One hit 1st Motor Boat and starboard Pom Pom magazine (from aft).
- (11) At least 4 hits on the 4" gun deck.
- (12) At least 2 hits in the Torpedo space.
- (13) The aircraft and the aircraft catapult support were both hit.
- (14) One hit in the Regulating Office flat, penetrating to the forward Engine Room
- (15) One hit in the After Director.
- (16) One hit in the Gunroom Flat through the Gunnery Office, bursting on the starboard side of the Gunroom Flat.
- (17) One hit through the left Cabinet bursting between the guns of "X" turret.
- (18) One hit penetrating through Cyper Office (immediately forward of the C.Os. quarters) to the Shell Handling Room.
- (19) One hit in the Warrant Officer's Flat.

9. The position at the end of this minute appeared to be as follows:- The ship was listing approximately 10 degrees to starboard. Small fires from forward to the after end of the Sick Bay Flat had been extinguished. In "A" Boiler Room Flat and "B" Boiler Room Flat fires were raging and the Stoker P.O's Mess, Dental Surgery and both flats were filled with steam and smoke. The aircraft was alight, Torpedo Space alight, fires outside Warrant Officer's and Gunroom Galleys, ship stopped and no steam available.

10. At approximately 0148 I received word that the Captain was down and I proceeded from the starboard after waist where I was directing the Fire Parties to the Compass Platform and took over command.

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11. Subsequent events.

Orders had been given to commence efforts to quell the fires on the upper deck by means of bucket chains. Patrol tanks were slipped and the remaining torpedoes fired. The bucket chain proved sufficiently successful at controlling the fires to enable such 4" and small arms ready use ammunition that could be got at to be dumped overboard. All magazines were flooded and the wounded collected on deck. All wounded were collected in areas and the ship closed down amidship in the hope that the fire would smother itself. Both cutters and all available rafts were lowered and collected forward on the port side. As many wounded as possible were placed in the cutters.

12. At 0300 U.S.S. "PATTERSON" appeared and was asked to come alongside port side to supply fire hoses. As she was coming alongside the remaining ready-use 4" ammunition began to explode and she not secure until 0325 when it was considered safe for her to be alongside. One pump and four hoses were passed over and the fires, which in the meantime had gained ground were fought until about 0345 when I was informed by U.S.S. "PATTERSON" that if "CANBERRA" could not be made to steam in time to join the general retirement timed to commence at 0630, she was to be abandoned and destroyed. It was realized the position was hopeless and orders were given at approximately 0415 to stop efforts to save the ship and prepare for abandoning. The list at this time had increased to about 17 degrees and there had been internal explosions and rumblings. The hoses were passed back to "PATTERSON" and the transfer of the wounded was continued with all despatch and preparation made to abandon the ship.

13.

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Lt. Cdr. WIGHT, R.A.N., U.S.S. "BARNETT"

H.M.A.S. "CANBERRA" and U.S.S. "CHICAGO" in column screened by U.S.S. "PATTERSON" and U.S.S. "BAGLEY" course 310° speed 12 knots.

At 0100 (approx), P.C.O. reported to Commanding Officer sound of aircraft engines heard flying high overhead.

At 0150 P.C.O. observed explosion which appeared to be a torpedo hit bearing Green 40° distance approx. 6000 yards. Immediately informed Commanding Officer and sounded the action alarm.

U.S.S. "PATTERSON" stationed approx. 4 cables on Green 20° was observed to alter course to Port at about 0153 and commenced calling up.

The PCO observed the wakes of at least three ships bearing Green 10° against the blackness of the South end of SAVO ISLAND, put the Captain's E.B.I. on left hand ship, ordered "Alarm starboard", "Green 20", "Load Load Load". Relieved at E.B.I. by C Gunnery Officer PCO then gave order "Port 35". A few seconds later Gunnery Officer ordered "Starboard 35", "Full speed ahead together"

As "CANBERRA" was turning, PCO sighted and reported torpedo passing down starboard side.

Order was given to T.S. for turrets "Follow port".

As ship was swinging to starboard enemy illuminated with star shell and opened fire at approx. 5,000 yds. Ship was hit by several salvos immediately. Forward end after control, T.C. Platform port, 4" gun deck after funnel, plotting office, "A" and "X" turrets, were hit in that order. Simultaneously, both boiler rooms were hit and all steam and power were lost before guns could be brought to bear.

Ship was under fire for approx. three minutes and immediately listed about 5° starboard.

Fires were observed in After Control, Aircraft Store, Torpedo space, Starboard Pom Pom, Main Deck, and After Captains Flat.

All magazines and shell rooms were then flooded and attempts made to fight the fires with bucket brigades.

Both cutters lowered to take the wounded. Ready use 4" and cerlikon ammunition was thrown over side. Floats and rafters were cleared away, and lowered into the water when the order was passed "Prepare to abandon ship".

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Engineer Officer O. F. McMAHON. "CANBERRA"

1. Before Action Alarm sounded, the ship was steaming at 108 revs. on Unit System with all boilers connected. Bevs. were staggered. Action Watch was below in Engineerrooms and Boiler Rooms and Damage Control Parties were closed up between decks at second degree of readiness, i.e. One watch awake and one watch asleep at their stations.

2. Action Alarm sounded at approx. 0155, and approx. one minute later Full Speed Ahead was ordered on Eninge Room Telegraphs. At approx. 0158 ship was hit by salvoes. At this time engines had attained speed of approx. 250 revs. Smoke and fumes filled both engine rooms through supply trunks, and steam pressure was lost in both boiler rooms, causing all units to stop almost simultaneously. All main lighting and communications failed. Both Engine Room were evacuated.

3. I then proceeded to the upper deck, saw patrol tanks had been released, then reported to the Captain and Commander on Compass Platform that all steam and power had gone and no fire main pressure was available to fight fires which had broken out around After Control, and between decks.

Chicago

#2
USS CHICAGO

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NARRATIVE EXCERPTS

1. At 1930, August 8, 1942, USS CHICAGO was in column with a screening group composed of the HMAS AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA and CHICAGO in that order. Distance 600 yards with the USS BAGLEY and USS PATTERSON forming a close A/S screen ahead to starboard and port of the formation. This group was patrolling in its assigned night patrol area bounded on the north by a line 125° from the center of Savo Island, on the south by the North Coast of Guadalcanal and on the east by longitude 160°04" E. The OTC of this group was Commander Task Group 62.6 in AUSTRALIA which was guide. Various courses were steered by AUSTRALIA in a general east and west direction. Approximate reversals of course were made every hour by the AUSTRALIA, other ships conforming without signal. The night was dark, no moon, sky overcast with occasional rain and electrical storms in, and near the area. At 2123, the Commander Screening Group (CTG 62.6) left formation to close Commander Task Force 62, directing Commanding Officer of CHICAGO to take command of the formation and advising that he (CTG 62.6) did not know whether he would return to the formation that night. CHICAGO directed formation to remain as it was and for the CANBERRA, originally the second ship, to conduct the patrol and changes of courses as previously ordered by CTG 62.6.

2. At 0015, August 9, 1942, the screening unit being near the western extremity of the patrol area, course was reversed by column movement to 130°. At 0100, the screening unit being near the eastern extremity of the patrol area, course was reversed by column movement to the right to 310°. At 0145, flares, identified as of the type used by aircraft for illuminating areas, were observed approximately astern and over the Transport Area X-Ray.

3. Sequence of events:

- 0142 - Two flashes, orange in color, near the surface of the water were seen near SAVO Island. There appeared to be a fire on or near Savo Island at this time.
- 0143 - First of five aircraft flares reported bearing 160° to 170° relative (in direction of Transport Area).
- 0145 - CANBERRA was seen to swing to starboard.
- 0146 - Two dark objects between CANBERRA and PATTERSON and one dark object observed to right of CANBERRA. Forward five inch director trained on right hand object and prepared to fire star shell spread.
- Starboard bridge lookout reported torpedo wake to starboard, started to turn to starboard with full right rudder. A few seconds later the Main Battery Control Officer sighted two torpedo wakes passing from port to starboard bearing

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- 0146 (cont) - 345° relative. Since the first wake to starboard was not seen from the bridge and those reported on the port hand were seen, the ship was immediately turned to port with full left rudder to parallel wakes. Started to steady on course approximately parallel to wakes but ordered further turn to port because it appeared that what was then believed to be a destroyer was in a position to discharge torpedoes further to port, and to adjust course more closely parallel to wakes seen.
- 0147 - Talker in main battery control forward sighted wake of torpedo bearing 345° close aboard, headed for port bow. Almost simultaneously a torpedo struck port bow forward or exploded well forward under the bow. The forward part of the ship to amidships was deluged with a column of water which was well above the level of the foretop.
- Flashes of gunfire were observed close aboard bearing 320° relative.
 - Flashes of gunfire were ~~in~~ observed from two ships on starboard bow.
- 0147 - Port battery fired two 4-gun salvos star shell spread at 320° set for 9,200 yards.
- CANBERRA, now on starboard bow, commenced firing.
 - Starboard battery fired two 4-gun salvos star shell spread on bearing 045° set for 5,000 yards to illuminate a ship believed to be a cruiser which was about 5,000 yards beyond the CANBERRA and firing on that vessel, which was then about 1,200 yards, 045° relative from the CHICAGO.
 - There were two destroyers unidentified but believed to be enemy, to the left of the CANBERRA at ranges of 2,500 to 4,000 yards.
 - Shell hit starboard leg of foremast which detonated approximately over forward funnel and showered shrapnel over top side.
- 0148 - Ordered report on underwater damage, which did not cause perceptible change in trims at that time.
- All star shells fired on the first two spreads failed to function, apparently because of failure of candles to ignite. Main battery director was unable to pick up cruiser on starboard bow because of lack of visibility.
- 0149 - A ship ahead believed to be the PATTERSON illuminated with searchlight two targets which appeared to be destroyers on the port bow.

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- 0150 - Port battery opened fire on left destroyer on port bow, range 7,200 yards. Two hits observed on this target apparently made by destroyer believed to be PATTERSON. At the same time the five inch starboard battery had expended all ready illuminating projectiles. Main battery was still unable to obtain set-up on cruiser beyond CANHERRA.
- Destroyer believed to be the PATTERSON ceased illuminating and crossed line of fire of port battery at range of 3,000 yards heading on reverse course (relative to CHICAGO).
- 0150 - Director controlling port five inch battery lost target.
- Port battery ceased firing, having expended twenty-five rounds.
- Observed burst of one hit on target.
- 0151 - Opened shutters searchlights numbers two and four to illuminate targets to port. Swept left with searchlights as ship was swinging to port but notarget was ~~disclosed~~ closed. Closed shutters.
- A gun engagement to starboard drew to the northward. Eight inch gun director number two reported being on friendly destroyer bearing approximately 120° relative. Director One unable to train abaft beam due to interference between bent top mast and radar antenna.
- 0152 - A ship sighted bearing 270° was established as friendly.
- Investigation by Damage Control revealed flooding of compartments and hole in second platform deck forward of frame 15 and on the first platform forward of frame 10. Shoring of bulkheads and hatches was in progress. Speed of 25 knots reported safe.
- 0154 - Completed decoding message to withdraw toward Lengo Channel.
- Slowed to twelve knots.
- 0200 - Observed gun action between unidentified ships to westward of Savo Island. Ships disappeared behind that island. Increased to full speed, stood on to westward.
- 0205 - Fired star shell spread on approximate bearing 100° relative to burst at 11,000 yards to disclose ships engaged. Ships were beyond range, ceased firing. Obtained firing range of 18,000 yds on one ship which was burning, or which was then thought to be a fire on Savo Island.
- All firing ceased, no ships visible.

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- 0213 - Slowed to 12 knots.
- 0217 - A ship was sighted believed to be friendly destroyer on starboard bow on parallel course.
- 0225 - Radar made contact with a ship at 7,000 yards distance and reported it to be a small ship believed to be same ship as 0217.
- 0228 - Reversed course to 100°.
- 0229 - Gun action was observed between two ships bearing between 240° and 250° relative.
- 0232 to
- 0306 - Radar tracked ship to port, subsequently identified as PATTERSON, which took station on starboard bow.
- 0312 - Changed course to 119°.
- 0332 - CHICAGO nine miles from Area X-Ray, standing towards that area.
- 0335 - PATTERSON stood toward CANERRA.
- 0337 - Slowed to 10 knots.
- 0342 - Slowed to 5 knots.
- 0347 - Radar tracking target standing towards X-Ray.
- 0410 - Having observed heavy gunfire in the direction of Savo Island, changed course to 291° and proceeded in that direction.
- 0525 - Increased speed to 20 knots. Destroyer on starboard beam illuminated this vessel with searchlight. This destroyer had been tracked by radar for several minutes prior to that time. Orders were given not to open fire on that vessel but when she illuminated this ship, gun captains on No. 1 and 5 five-inch guns opened fire by percussion, without orders. The officer controlling the starboard battery ordered cease fire and sounded cease firing gong. The destroyer was observed to return the fire, where upon the starboard five inch and 1.1 control officers both ordered their batteries to commence firing. The Captain immediately repeated order to cease fire - fire ceased immediately. The destroyer then made the wrong emergency identification signal.
 - Destroyer (PATTERSON) ceased firing and illumination.

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ENEMY ORDNANCE MATERIAL - PERFORMANCE

1. Torpedoes - the wakes or bubble tracks of a total of three torpedoes were observed, all approaching from approximately 345° relative. The bubble track of the first crossed approximately 70 yards ahead of the bow; the second 20 yards ahead of the bow. The third was probably about 300 yards from the bow and had just been sighted in the foretop at the time of the explosion.

2. A shell hit was made by a projectile estimated as 6 inch on the forward inboard side of the starboard leg of the foremast at a level 110 feet above the base line. The projectile apparently came from approximate bearing 020° relative, range unknown, and detonated about 15 feet beyond the point of impact, showering the communication platform, funnels, port catapult, after portion of the well deck, hangars, gun deck over hangars and even the after portion of the boat deck with fragments.

3. A projectile, believed to be 47 mm. caliber, struck the gun shield between 5" guns Nos. 1 and 3 about 1 foot above the deck, penetrated the shield and apparently detonated a foot or two behind the ~~main~~ shield, spraying fragments in the vicinity of gun No. 3. It is estimated the projectile was fired from bearing 325° relative, range unknown.

DAMAGE TO NAVIGATION MATERIAL

1. Both gyros developed large errors due to loss of mercury as a result of shock of torpedo hit.

Note: Track chart taken from DRT used by Adm. HEPBURN extensively in his analysis.

Wilson

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S E C R E T

U.S.S. WILSON SAVO ISLAND

DD408/A16-3
Serial 008

Narrative Excerpts

- 1.
2. Continued screening on these courses until, at 0145 two flares or starshells were sighted on the port quarter. As the ship had been secured from Condition ONE at 1910 on the evening before, went to Condition of Readiness ONE. Immediately after, word was received over the T.B.S. that three enemy ships were entering the channel. It was not known who originated this message. At about 0150 three ships on the port side of the cruiser column illuminated the cruisers and commenced firing. Opened fire immediately with all four 5"/38 caliber guns, choosing the right hand searchlight as target, the range reported as 12,000 yards by control. Our Cruisers appeared to be enveloped in a plunging fire as soon as they were illuminated. After two salvos guns one and two would not bear so course was changed to the left to unmask them. Word came from the VINCENNES to increase speed to 15 knots, which was the last order received from the VINCENNES. In a few moments the three cruisers appeared to have fires started on board. The VINCENNES swung hard right at this time and the WILSON turned right unmasking the battery to starboard. Continued firing on this course for several minutes when the gun flashes disclosed a MONSSEN type destroyer close aboard the starboard bow on collision course. In order to avoid collision speed was increased to 30 knots and ship swung hard left. Continued this left turn until clear of the destroyer and the battery was unmasked to port. Re-opened fire as soon as possible. On arriving on the new course only one of our cruisers was visible. This later proved to be the ASTORIA, and was under heavy fire. The searchlight on the ship the WILSON was firing at went out so fire was shifted to the left hand light of the original three searchlights which was illuminating the ASTORIA and continued firing until this light was extinguished. Ceased firing as no more targets were visible. The whereabouts of our forces was not known by this time, so continued on towards Savo Island. Word came over the T.B.S. that one enemy cruiser was standing out north of Savo Island. Believing that the WILSON had been mistaken as an enemy ship course was changed to south to avoid fire from our own ships. Shortly thereafter word came over T.B.S. for all destroyers to rendezvous at the previously assigned rendezvous five miles northwest of Savo Island (Par.6(d) of reference (c)). Proceeded at 25 knots to this rendezvous where, at about 0300, joined the HELM and fell in astern of her, and reported over the T.B.S. that the ship was at the rendezvous. No orders were received so patrolled astern of the HELM, which worked its way around the north side of Savo Island. At 0530 word was received over the T.B.S. to return to Area XRAY.

3.

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U.S.S. WILSON (Cont'd)

- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. The times in the above narrative are approximate for the hands on the bridge clock fell off on our first salvo and it was not realized that the quartermaster was not making exact time records of the occurrences until some time later. The approximate track of the WILSON is shown on tracing of chart of Guadalcanal-Tulagi area, enclosure (E).
8. The guns performed satisfactory. All four were used in director control, master key fire. Salvo fire was used for the first few salvos, but this was shifted to continuous fire as there was no illumination to observe splashes. The fire was directed by tracers and a rocking ladder back and forth over the rangefinder range. No deflection spot was needed. The Stereo rangefinder was used. Attempt was made to use the RADAR but because of the close proximity of land in line with the target, it was not effective. The range-keeper solution appeared to be correct. Mechanically the battery functioned excellently. There was one casualty on gun four, the plug jamming, but as this occurred during a check fire, while the ship was being turned, and was cleared before fire was re-opened it did not affect the rate of fire. Gun four also failed to line up properly in automatic with the director after one of the shifts of the engaged sides. This was corrected after gun four fired two wild shots, about ten degrees to the left of the correct line of fire.
9. There was no definite proof of hits although the tracers would be followed seemingly into the target. During the last of the firing it appeared that two hits were scored and the searchlight on which fire was directed went out. A total of 212 rounds of A.A. common projectiles were expended, all with fuzes set on "safe".
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

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U.S.S. WILSON (DD408)

Report of EXECUTIVE OFFICER

August 9, 1942

At 0145 while steaming on course 315°, speed 10 as A/S screening vessel on starboard bow of VINCENNES, QUINCY, and ASTORIA, saw 2 star shells on port quarter and received word via TBS that enemy ships were coming in. Enemy searchlights went on and illuminated cruisers we were screening. Turned left to bring all guns to bear and opened fire on enemy. Continued turning left to close enemy but our cruisers were between. Continued fire, shooting over our cruisers as the range (12,000 yards) gave a high enough trajectory to our salvos to permit this. Several salvos of enemy "overs" burst between us and nearest cruiser, 1000 yards on the port beam. At this time all 3 cruisers were completely enveloped in flames. Made a turn to the right. Enemy searchlights were still on. Resumed fire, range 9600. Checked fire and swung left to avoid friendly destroyer close aboard. Opened fire again to port. Two of enemy searchlights went out. Continued firing at last enemy searchlight which was sweeping in an effort to illuminate the WILSON as no other ship was firing at this time. Apparently one of our salvos burst on the light and it went out. Could see all of our tracers, which were correct in deflection, but was unable to observe range errors as I was in a fairly low position (Secondary Conn). Total expended, 212 rounds.

Received orders via TBS to proceed to rendezvous Unit Complied.

47.

The performance of material and personnel was satisfactory. A high rate of fire was maintained.

After arrival at rendezvous about 0400, was directed by TBS about 0500 to proceed toward XRAY area and pick up any survivors encountered. 0640 Commenced picking up survivors in area 5 miles southeast of Savo Island and continued this work until ordered to screen ASTORIA which was drifting 3 miles southeast of Savo Island with turret 2, conning tower and lower bridge structure still burning. By this time had recovered 211 survivors, all that were visible. Received orders to fight fire on ASTORIA. 1100 went alongside forward with all fire hoses going and tired up. Put over working party to assist ASTORIA party.

1157 Relieved by BUCHANAN as fire fighting vessel. Proceeded to area XRAY in accordance with signal and transferred all survivors to HUNTER LIGGETT except one who was dead. Buried dead survivor later in the day at sea.

The morale and performance of duty by all hands was of a high standard, both when under fire during the engagement and while conducting rescue operations later. Lt. (jg) John C. Feick, USN, Lt.

SECRET

U.S.S. WILSON (Cont'd)

Report of EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(jg), Joseph C. Illick, USNR, Ensign Andrew T. Fischer, USNR and Ensign Arnold C. Mealy, USN, Dove into the water several times to rescue survivors although sharks had been seen and fired upon from the bridge. Lt. (jg) Leo C. Davison (MC), USNR, did a very quick and satisfactory job in administering emergency treatment to forty or more wounded survivors, most of them suffering from bad burns and shell splinters.

G. A. HILL,
Lieutenant, U. S. Navy.

HELM

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S E C R E T

U.S.S. HELM (DD388)

SAVO ISLAND

Narrative Battle

Subject: Night Engagement off SAVO Island - Preliminary report of.

1. Immediately prior to the beginning of the action, HELM was on screening station 1500 yards on port bow of VINCENNES, WILSON on starboard bow of VINCENNES. Cruisers were in column, order; VINCENNES, QUINCY, ASTORIA, course 315, speed 10 knots, steaming in a square five miles on a side with center in lat 9-07-15 S, Long. 159-57-30 E. Course was being changed at half-hourly intervals, the next change, to 045, being due at 0200.
2. At 0145, in approximate position Lat. 9-08 S, Long. 159-55 E., observed star shells and gunfire to the southward. It appeared that the AUSTRALIA night operating group was firing, as they were operating in that general direction. The plan of operation of the AUSTRALIA group was not known. The VINCENNES group continued on course. A few minutes later our force was under fire, the QUINCY apparently being hit almost immediately, with large fires amidships. One cruiser immediately opened fire, followed by the other two. The point of aim of the cruisers was not clear, as some fire was to port and some to starboard. The direction from which they were being fired upon could not be determined, nor could any ship of the firing force be made out. The enemy gun fire appeared extremely accurate; all three cruisers were hit early and all had to side fires raging.
3. The control officer commended firing when the cruisers opened fire. One salvo had been fired when cease fire was immediately ordered, since no target was visible and no clear picture of the situation was yet apparent. The best estimate of the situation was that we were being attacked from the southeast and that we were also being illuminated from that direction, although the source of the illumination could not be made out due to smoke from gunfire and burning ships.
4. Very shortly after the action started, orders were received by TBS from the VINCENNES for screening destroyers to attack. Although the picture was still obscure, HELM headed south. Very soon a ship was sighted on the starboard bow, partially illuminated by searchlight, distance about 8000 yards. It appeared to be headed to seaward passing close to the south side of SAVO Island. As the ship could not be clearly identified it was thought to be part of the enemy force headed out. HELM changed course to the southeast and headed for the unknown ship at full speed; orders were given to train torpedo tubes and prepare for attack. While closing the ship she was again momentarily illuminated, and her identity was established as one of our DDs'.
5. While on course south received orders from ComDesDiv SEVEN by T1 for destroyers to concentrate north of Savo Island. Examination of the radio log on 2058 Kcs after the action shows that at 0210 a mess was received from ComTaskGroup 62.6 for all destroyers not in contact to concentrate on him northwest of transport groups. This message di

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Narrative Battle of SAVO ISLAND

U.S.S. HELM

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not reach the Commanding Officer at the time of its receipt.

6. At about 0205 course was changed to northwest to pass north of Savo Island and thence to rendezvous area. Passed through line of cruisers between VINCENNES and QUINCY. The latter appeared to be stopped and to have suffered heavy damage. The VINCENNES had turned around and was firing in an easterly direction. The cruisers were then being illuminated by searchlight from the east. HELM remained in the vicinity of the VINCENNES for some time endeavoring to locate source of enemy fire. Orders were given to fire on the searchlight, but almost immediately the searchlight was extinguished. At about 0220, to the westward of Savo Island, observed a ship illuminated and firing. Headed for scene of action at 30 knots; after closing for about five minutes, identified the ship as a friendly destroyer when she was silhouetted by a flash of lightening. The firing lasted for only a few salvos.

7. At about 0230 all action had stopped. Continued toward rendezvous point 5 miles northwest of Savo Island. Joined unidentified friendly destroyer. At about 0430 was joined by WILSON. By TBS understood SELFRIDGE and MUGFORD were also in the area. At 0538 heard by TBS that SELFRIDGE and MUGFORD were returning to transport area. HELM and WILSON set course toward area via scene of cruiser action. At 0630 commenced rescuing survivors; MUGFORD and BAGLEY also in the area similarly occupied.

8. Four rounds of 5" ammunition were fired. No torpedoes were fired, HELM now has on board 1171 rounds of 5"/38 caliber AA ammunition, 199 rounds of 5"/38 caliber illuminating ammunition, and full allowance of torpedoes, and depth charges. 129 rounds of 5"/38 caliber AA and 1 round 5"/38 caliber illuminating ammunition are required to fill allowance.

C. E. CARROLL.

Note: see HELM track chart. Shows movement and illumination of RALPH TALBOT at 0215

at least 57 8" and 5" projectiles hit above
second deck. One, and possibly two torpedos hit
port side forward (summary of War Damage)

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Narrative Excerpts SAVO ISLAND

U.S.S. VINCINNES

5. During the afternoon of 8 August a report was received that 3 enemy cruisers, 3 DD's and 2 PG's or AV's had been sighted at 1025 Zone -11 time on course 120°(T), speed 15. The reported position was about 300 miles to the Northwest of our position. Another report apparently on the same force reported 2 CA's, 1 OL on ship of SOUTHAMPTON class, some DD's number not remembered and some unidentified at about 1200 (Zone -11) about 25 miles south of the first position. It was assumed that this group was escorting the AV's to some base where planes would be unloaded and be ready to attack us at dawn. The cruisers and DD's could then proceed at high speed and attack our force some time during the mid watch. Note was made of this in my NIGHT ORDERS and importance of being particularly on the alert was stressed.
6. At about 2350 (Z -11) RALPH TALBOT (JIMMY) sent out a report by TBS, that he had seen an airplane with running lights standing toward the Transport Area. At this time fire on GEO. F. ELLIOTT was burning brightly and the glow from the fire near TULAGI was clearly visible.
7. At midnight the Executive Officer, Commander W.E.A. Mullan, USN, was on the bridge to relieve me. Lt.Cdr. C.D. Miller, USN, relieved the Navigator, Cdr. A.M. Laker, USN, as Officer of the Deck. At about 0050 considering it necessary to get some rest I retired to the emergency cabin adjoining the pilot house, having given my NIGHT ORDERS to the Executive Officer and the Officer of the Deck. At 0120 change of course to 315° was ordered and at 0200 to course 045°. Ship was in condition of readiness II with 2 guns manned in each turret and all loaded. AA battery fully manned.
8. At about 0145 the Officer of the Deck called me and reported star shell and some firing on our port hand. Being fully clothed I immediately went into the pilot house. The general alarm was sounded. The Executive Officer reported seeing some firing and silhouettes of ships which he recognized as cruisers of our AUSTRALIA Group. The ship was about 3.5 miles West of SAVO ISLAND. I observed 3 or 4 star shell about on the Port beam at a considerable distance and a ship firing star shell toward the Southeast. Some ship about 30° to the left was firing toward the first ship. I saw no ships and no heavy gun fire or searchlights. I estimated that AUSTRALIA Group had made a contact with a destroyer. I received no report of the contact or orders to concentrate. I thought this contact probably a Destroyer and a ruse to draw off my Group while the main attack force passed through my sector to attack the Transports. If enemy heavy ships had been sighted I expected AUSTRALIA Group would illuminate and engage them, and the situation would soon be clarified. I considered turning right to course 045°(T), but felt I might be called on to support AUSTRALIA Group. I signalled speed 15 knots to the Group and decided to hold

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my course temporarily. Fired no star shell as I did not wish to disclose myself to an enemy approaching my sector from seaward. Took a look on Starboard hand but saw nothing. TBS signal for increased speed had just been sent, when about 0150, three searchlights bearing around 205° were seen and soon were on us. I ordered Group to fire on opportune targets. I had seen no ships and none had been reported other than AUSTRALIA Group. I particularly wanted to guard against firing on friendly vessels, but had to fire on searchlights. After action, Gunnery Officer reported seeing star shell bearing about 130° distance about 10 miles, at about 0145.

9. VINCENNES turrets fired on right hand searchlight and broadcast a 5" fired star shell, but not before enemy had fired and hit her with 8" and 5" projectiles. After the second salvo searchlights went out and an explosion was observed on target. Speed was increased to 20 knots and a turn made to the left with a view of closing the enemy and continuing around on a reverse course if he stood in toward the Transport area. Attempts to signal increase in speed failed due to loss of intership communication facilities after the bridge was hit. I intended to make my turns by simultaneous ship turns but could not do so as I was unable to send any signals. One five inch shell of the first salvo that hit us struck the port forward side of the bridge killing the Communication Officer. Fragments entered the pilot house killing or seriously wounding several men.

10. The ship had turned and was on course, 275° (T) when, due to being constantly hit, I swung to the right in hopes of throwing off enemy fire to some extent, and rang up flank speed 25 knots. Other turns to left and right were ordered, but were not effective. The speed signal was not answered and all efforts to communicate with the engine room or central were fruitless. All interior communication facilities in the pilot house failed after the first or second hit except the ship service telephone. When called on this line no reply was received from Engine room, Central or Main Battery Control. QUINCY was observed on fire aft, on our port hand. ASTORIA was not seen. HELM and WILSON were ahead and on starboard hand until we turned right. One destroyer was then observed crossing our bow from port to starboard while the other was crossing from starboard to port. The one crossing from port to starboard may have been an enemy, but as the two vessels barely missed colliding and did not fire on one another it is believed that they were both friendly. On DD, on our starboard hand, probably WILSON was observed firing star shell and what appeared as heavy AA machine gun fire.

11. The enemy was not illuminated and was not seen at any time except indistinctly by the Gunnery Officer, at about 0200 when he appeared to be on course about 115° (T). No report was made to Conn that enemy ships were seen at any time. The only points of aim available were enemy searchlights which were on for a short time when they commenced firing and some time later on our starboard hand

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as enemy was standing out. Fires which were started on VINCENNES first in the hangar, on planes on catapults, signal flags in bags and about the decks made it unnecessary for enemy to use searchlights. Counter illumination was not attempted as enemy searchlights was believed to be on a Destroyer, and illumination of enemy by our DD's was expected.

12. About 0208 ship had swung to a heading about 340° - two DD's illuminated her from bearings about 120° and 150° relative. Ship was being repeatedly hit by 8" and 5" shells on starboard side but had no guns that could fire and could not make smoke to cover herself. Messengers were sent to Main Battery Control, Central and Engineer room asking for gunfire on DD searchlights and to ascertain the situation in Central and Engineer room. My first impression was that these DD's might be our own as the bearing changed very slowly. We must have been swinging left at the time.

13. At least two and possibly four torpedo hits were received on the Port side. At about 0213 the enemy searchlights were turned off and firing ceased shortly thereafter. As the ship was listing badly life rafts were ordered put over and word passed to stand by to abandon ship. At about 0230 when the list had increased and it was apparent that ship could not remain afloat I gave the order to abandon ship, which was carried out in a quiet and orderly manner. The wounded were fitted with life jackets and assisted by their shipmates. At about 0240 I left the bridge with my Chief Yeoman, L.E. Stucker, USN, (JA Talker), and my Orderly, Corporal J.L. Patrick, USMC, and went down to the upper deck to expedite the crew abandoning ship as I realized the ship would soon go over. I passed the word along for all remaining personnel to get off immediately. As the water reached the part of the deck where I was standing I started swimming and was just clear of the mast when it hit the water. The ship sank about 0250. Rescue was started by Destroyers about 0615. The personnel on my raft were recovered about 0820.

14. It is believed that the enemy entered from the Westward of Savo Island and close by the Island where clouds are usually hanging and visibility is bad. He probably first observed our Group to the Eastward silhouetted by the glow of a fire on Tulagi, and later to the North Eastward in which direction due to low lying Islets I had noted the visibility was quite good. I saw nothing of the enemy except searchlights. It is believed that he passed under our stern and went out to the Northward of us about 0210 while we were illuminated and he was firing on our Starboard hand.

15. An accurate estimate of shell hits received is not obtainable but it is believed that between seventy-five and one hundred shells hit. There were 8", 4"7 and (or) 5"5 Three or four torpedo hits

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were received on the port side. Airplanes were reported over. I cannot tell whether or not bombs were dropped. Submarines were in the vicinity. One on the surface is reported to have been fired on and a hit registered at the base of the conning tower.

16. I have not yet received reports from other vessels in VINCENNES Group.

F.L. RIEFKOHL

CONFIDENTIAL

#2

From: Commander W. E. A. Mullan, U.S.N.
To: Executive Officer, U.S.S. VINCENNES.
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. VINCENNES.

Subject: Night Action of 9 August 1942 off Savo Island.

1. I was on the bridge and shortly before two o'clock I observed three flares in the direction of Florida Island whereupon I sounded General Quarters. Almost immediately there was a great display of light and silhouette of a group of ships south east of Savo Island could distinctly be seen and recognized as the southern group of a allied ships. They were, I believe, approximately the same course as the VINCENNES, which was north west.

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U.S.S. VINCENNES (CA44)

SAVO ISLAND

PART II

1. The course 315 degrees (t) speed rung up 15 knots and ship's position about 3.5 miles West of Savo Island, at 0150, were reported in Part I, Paragraph 8 of reference (a). Events that follow as well as can be determined occurred in periods of time intervals given.

Period 0145 to 0150

Surface lookout on Main Deck Aft saw a submarine surface on Port Quarter, distant about 600 yards, and then submerged. Reported to Pilot House but not certain that receipt was acknowledged. Report heard by operator on TBS (source undetermined) that strange ships were entering the harbor. This report not heard by Commanding Officer and no record of Executive Officer hearing it on the Bridge. Searchlights (3) illuminated ASTORIA, then QUINCY and then VINCENNES * bearing of right hand light 205 degrees (t) - Radar range 8250 yards.

Main battery ordered train out on sighting first light - training on right hand light. Ordered commence firing.

Enemy salvo (looked like 5") landed short.

Port battery fired star shell in direction of search light.

Arcs struck in our searchlights (power lost and went out after first salvo hit us)

Period 0150 to 0155

First enemy hits were on the Bridge (which killed the Communication Officer and killed or seriously wounded two men in the Pilot House), in the Carpenter Shop, the Hangar, Battle II, and Antenna trunks (appeared 8" and 5").

VINCENNES then fired full salvo from turrets.

All electrical power lost on turrets, 5" battery for about one minute - and on searchlights for remainder of action.

Increased speed to 20 knots and changed course to the left to about 275° (t). Intership communications by Radio and signal searchlights lost at this time. Blinker tubes knocked out or racks could not be located. Battle telephone circuits and sound power circuits except steering engine room and plotting room went dead. Ship service telephone on Bridge still operative.

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Fires started in Carpenter Shop and Hangar - planes in Hangar on fire (no gasoline in tanks).

Direct hit in Sky Forward and Sky Aft (believe Sky Aft Director blown overboard - only one man survived who was badly injured).

Attempts to extinguish fire by water unavailing due to rupture of fire mains. No pressure CO2 fire extinguishers used. Fire extinguished except on planes and in Carpenter Shop.

Fired second main battery salvo (9 guns). Explosion observed on target - searchlight went out. Target seen by the Assistant Gunnery Officer, Lieutenant Commander R.R. Craighill, USN to make a radical turn to the left as though out of control, then lost sight of.

Ship being continuously hit by what appeared to be 8" and 5" projectiles. Fires started in movie locker and cane fender storage on after end of searchlight platform.

Hits were made in port 5th ammunition passageway, Warrant Officers Country and Sick Bay. The last hit killing the Senior Medical Officer who was then treating a wounded man on the table.

There was no water available to fight fires as all mains had apparently been ruptured. Fire and bilge pumps were running. Auxiliaries had been shifted to steam.

Forward turrets reached limit of train.

Attempted to evade enemy fire by turning hard right and increasing speed to flank speed (25 knots). Speed signal answered by engine order telegraph, but not put on engines (maximum speed reached was 188 rpm, about 19.5 knots by revolutions).

During the turn ship was hit by 2 or 3 torpedoes on the port side, in A-313-L (under Sick Bay) and in vicinity of No. 4 Fire-room. No flash from torpedo tubes was seen prior to these hits. It is therefore assumed that they may have been fired by submarines. The ship shook and shuddered denoting an extremely heavy explosion at this time.

Hit in Main Battery Control Station Aft which is believed to have killed the Control Officer and most of the other personnel and seriously wounded the Spotter.

Hits were made on port side rangefinder hoods of Turrets

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Period 0150 to 0155 (Continued)

I and II. Part of shell entered officers booth in Turret II seriously wounded the Turret Officer and Junior Officer.

Period 0155 to 0200

Lost steering control in Pilot House. Shifted to Steering aft and commenced steering by white pointer.

Lost main battery power after torpedo hit. Diesels started which provided power for Turrets I and III but none available to Turret II.

Fire in vicinity of forward magazine and magazine floods. Operato Czirr (CGM) had been killed so Boatswain G.F. Baker, USN., Flooded forward group of magazines.

Large burst of escaping steam observed coming out in vicinity of No. 2 stack. About this time exhaust steam line in forward engine room carried away and flange on main steam line began leaking badly. Some of the personnel escaped.

Desired change course to left at time discovered loss of steering control. Attempted do so by stopping port engine, but no reply on engine order telegraph. Couldnot establish communication by any telephone, though ship service telephone heard to ring. Sent messenger to obtain information and to ascertain conditions in engine rooms. Found both engine rooms dark. Steam pressure had been lost in aft engine room.

No. 1 Fireroom No information is available regarding No. 1 Fireroom. The Chief Watertender, Walters, in charge is missing and there are no known survivors. It is believed this fireroom suffered a direct torpedo hit from the port side about 0157.

No. 2 Fireroom. Clothier, E.E., Chief Watertender in charge is a survivor on HUNTER LIGGET. Heavy concussions were felt in this fireroom from forward and aft, followed by a heavy explosion overhead. Oil suction was lost and could not be regained. Heavy smoke and debris came down both blowers.

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Period 0155 to 0200 (Cont'd)

No. 3 Fireroom. Pothier, Watertender First Class, in charge is missing. When torpedo hit No. 4 fireroom No. 1 HP air compressor went out of commission. Steam started to go down and could not be raised. Smoke and flames entered through blowers. Oil suction still available starboard side. Necessary abandon about 0215.

No. 4 Fireroom. Iwanicki, M.S., Chief Watertender, in charge, survivor. Hit by torpedo from port side about 0157. Water and oil entered No. 2 air compressor put out of commission also fire and bilge pump. Boilers in this fireroom not in use. Fireroom abandoned about 0205 when water was over the floor boards.

Turret III continued fire during the turn. Fire continued on us during the turn and after, on our starboard hand.

About this time another torpedo hit was felt, believed to have hit No. 1 Fireroom, port side. No survivors of this fireroom are on board and statements from survivors, if any, on other ships have not been received.

Period 0200 to 0205

Two six-gun salvos fired at ship with searchlight on, with turrets matching pointers and firing locally. All director firing circuits were dead. A hit was observed on the enemy. Searchlight on enemy ship did not go but. Enemy fire continued on us. Remaining effective guns of starboard broadside battery firing at enemy.

Forward side of Main Battery Control Station hit by shell. Director jammed in train. Director sight-setter killed. Turrets ordered to local control. About this time fire control tube hit and smoke coming up from fire inside. All communications out in Main Battery Control Station. Enemy continued fire from starboard hand.

Several hits received on starboard side in vicinity of starboard 5" ammunition passage, machine shop, forward mess hall, starboard catapult tower and plane on catapult set on fire. One plane on well deck (due to rupture of port catapult cable from bomb fragment during air attack 7 August) also on fire due to hit in well deck.

One hit in Radar room in which 4 ECM machines from APD's were stored.

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Period 0205 to 0210

Ship illuminated by two searchlights apparently from DD's on starboard hand bearing about 1200 relative, estimated range 3000 yards, and fired on. I had a feeling that these were friendly. Tried signal them but no means available. Ordered large st of colors hoisted on foremast and illuminated. After a few minutes they were hoisted on our one remaining halyard on the starboard signal yard, but were only illuminated by enemy searchlights.

Turret II was hit in face plate by 8" shell which penetrated without exploding and set exposed powder on fire. Another shell hit on top of No. II turret. No. I turret hit on starboard side of barbette jamming turret in train.

Turrets I and II ceased fire. Burning powder - without exploding - in ammunition train of turrets I and II. Several bags were thrown into immersion tanks. Water was waist deep in both handling rooms.

Only one gun of starboard 5" battery was still firing. This was No. 1 gun. A messenger was sent to the Gunnery Officer asking for fire on the two searchlights illuminating us. The Gunnery Officer, Lieutenant Commander R.L. Adams, U.S.N., appeared on the Bridge and informed me that he had no guns left with which to fire.

No. 1 5" gun, manned by Ensign R. Peters, D-V(G), USNR., and Platoon Sergeant R.L. Harmon, USMC, after crew had been killed or wounded, is reported to have fired on a submarine on the surface distance about 400 yards and to have scored a hit on the base of the conning tower. Ensign Peters is on the PRESIDENT JACKSON, so I have been unable to verify this report.

Being unable to get any gunfire against the enemy I asked for smoke to cover us, without avail. It is believed that all fires in boiler rooms were extinguished by this time. Ship had slowed down appreciably and barely had steerage way.

The starboard flag bag was on fire. This was partially put out by CO2 extinguisher. The flags in the port bag were thrown overboard. Fire was raging on hawser reel adjoining No. 3 5" ammunition ready locker. The Gunnery Officer went down and attempted to put it out without success as no water was available. Survivors of 5" gun crews had, under the supervision of Lt. R.J. Badger, USN., thrown over board 5" remnants and such ammunition as could be removed from ready lockers, when guns were no longer serviceable. All guns of the 5" battery were severely hit and suffered heavy casualties.

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From: Lieut-Comdr., R.R. CRAIGHILL, U.S. Navy
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. VINCENNES.
Subject: Night Action of August 9, 1942 - Report of.

1. In the early morning of August 9, 1942, the U.S.S. VINCENNES and cruisers in company were attacked by gunfire and torpedoes from the southwest.

2. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS: The following events were observed by me at the approximate times indicated, General Quarters being zero time:

(-) 30^m - 00^s While checking on the sky lookouts, one of them called my attention to a shape he thought he saw about broad on the port bow. I searched the entire area of the port bow, using binoculars and could see nothing but the left tangent of what I thought was SAVO ISLAND. At that time there seemed to be a rain squall over SAVO ISLAND and the visibility in that direction was not very good. I then made several sweeps through 360° and still could not make out anything except the barely visible silhouettes of the shore lines.

(-) 2 - 00 A flash which might have been gunfire lit the sky for an instant, followed a minute later by four star shell bursts broad on the port quarter, distant about eight miles. Immediately I called the Gunnery Officer's attention to the star shell bursts and ordered "Action on port" to the anti-aircraft battery, while he went into the control station to order the main battery to train out.

(-) 1 - 00 I ordered the switchboard to put the port battery in star shell control and sky aft to load the fuze pots with star shell.

0 - 00 General Quarters.

(x) 1 - 00 A searchlight, bearing about 240°(R), illuminated one of the ships astern and about 30 seconds later a salvo landed just short of that ship.

(x) 01 - 40 I ordered Sky Aft to illuminate (star shell), but before the port battery could get a salvo off, the VINCENNES was illuminated by a searchlight bearing about 245° (R).

(x) 01 - 45 Several flashes from bearing about 250° (R) were seen.

(x) 02 - 00 Port battery got off first salvo.

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(x)02 - 05 Enemy salvo landed about 500 yards short of VINCENNES. More flashes in the meantime were seen, it seemed, all along the port side from the port beam aft to about 210 (R).

It was at this time that I got the distinct impression that we were being fired at by shore batteries.

(x)03 -00 Enemy straddled and hagar was hit; planes in the hangar immediately burst into flames.

(x)04 - 00 First main battery salvo was fired, 5" battery continuing to do so. Immediately after this, enemy began hitting repeatedly.

(x)05 - 00 Sky Aft reported they had lost power and immediately afterwards Sky Forward reported the same thing. I ordered the battery then to shift to local control. By this time, the 5" battery had been hit repeatedly and only a few 5" guns were still in commission.

(x)07 - 00 After one of our main battery salvos the searchlight illuminating VINCENNES went out and there was a burst of flame where the searchlight had been. The flame seemed to go out very quickly. It appeared to be a ship that had been hit which staggered off or went down immediately. It definitely made a radical change of course to the left.

(x)08 - 00 VINCENNES was illuminated by searchlight from the starboard quarter.

(x)09 - 00 Felt two distinct, heavy shocks which felt like torpedo hits.

(x)12 - 00 By this time, there were numerous fires about the weather decks and many men had been killed and wounded. One 5" gun was still firing. Realizing that further firing would not damage the enemy and that as long as we continued to fire he would, also, I ordered cease firing and went down to the bridge to see what could be done.

(x)15 - 00 Enemy ceased firing, but one five inch gun, not having received my order to cease firing because of communication failure fired a few more rounds.

My station (Sky Control) had not been hit but upon arriving on the bridge I discovered the latter to be a mass of wreckage with many dead and injured lying about. I then went back up to Sky Control and saw that all hands in that station and in others in that vicinity got down below and ready to abandon ship, if that order should be given. Heat, smoke, and steam were coming up from below.

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U.S.S. BARNETT

From: Lieut-Comdr. R.L. ADAMS, U.S. Navy
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. VINCENNES.
Subject: Action of U.S.S. VINCENNES off SAVO ISLAND 9 August 1942.

1. I had the 20-24 watch (Condition 2) as gunnery control officer in Control Forward on 8 August 1942. At midnight I was relieved by Lt. Comdr. CRAIGHILL. As had been done at the beginning of my watch the word was passed out to all stations to be particularly alert as information had been received that 3 Jap cruisers and 3 Destroyers had been reported on 8 August headed our direction. After being relieved I laid down on the Sky Control platform and went to sleep.

2. I was called at what I was informed was 0140, 9 August 1942 and told that suspicious or strange things were happening on the portside. I arose and on looking out to port I saw a burst of 3 - 4 starshells bearing about 275 relative - this direction I judged to be in the direction of LUNGA POINT (GHADALCANAL ISLAND) and my first reaction was that some ship was firing at shore installations in that vicinity using starshells for illuminations. Very shortly after the starshell bursts I noted flashed of gunfire to the right of the starshell burst which was soon returned from just to the left of the starshell bursts.

3. At about 0145 General Quarters was sounded and before I had received any report that the main battery was manned and ready (8² already loaded) I saw a searchlight from relative bearing about 250° turned on the rear ship of our formation. I immediately ordered the main battery to train left and pick up this target - before the battery could be brought to beacon this target a second searchlight to right of first one was turned on the middle ship of our formation and almost immediately a third searchlight to the right of the first two was turned on the VINCENNES. The main battery was immediately brought on this target. Our target opened fire at us and the first salvo landed short some 75 - 100 yards. We then fired our first 8" salvo at a radar range of 8250 yards - the 5" battery simultaneously opening with starshells for illumination. Immediately after our first 8" salvo we were hit somewhere in the vicinity of the well deck and hanger and a fire started in that area. All gun control electrical power at once failed (except for communications) and a shift was made to auxiliary. In about, and probably less than, one minute power was restored and 8" battery resumed fire using director control, this I judge to have been at about 0148 and at this time I was informed by Control Aft that Batt 2 had been hit. The ship was at this time.

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being hit in many places. At about 0149 a terrific explosion on the port side, which appeared to come from the general area of the well deck, shook the ship violently and I at once knew that we had been torpedoed (as a result of later inquiries I believe we were hit by at least two torpedoes simultaneously). All power other than my own communication line seemed to fail at this time, turret 2 reported shifting to hand power. Either just before or just after this explosion the target was too far aft for the forward turrets and turret 3 continued to fire alone. At about this same time I heard and felt an explosion above me which I knew to be in Sky Forward - numerous sparks entering the M.B. Control Station from this hit. Very shortly after this hit dense clouds of smoke smelling of paint and rubber began to pour from the fire control tube under the main battery director (simultaneously all power was lost in Control Forward) forcing evacuation of the control station. I directed the turrets to go to local control but do not know whether or not they received this word (they went to local control anyway). I then went out on the Sky Control Platform which was also shrouded in smoke and with some difficulty due to crowded space made my way to the next lower level, there I found the same smoke and crowded conditions - the smoke seemed to contain steam and I believe this steam came from the 1"1 clipping room due to the sprinkling system having been turned on. On this platform due to smoke I was unable to proceed to the ladder leading to the bridge so making my way to the after side of the platform I climbed over the rail and dropped down to the signal bridge level and then reported to the Captain that I no longer had control of the ship's armament from Control Forward.

At this time which was probably about 0200 - 0215 the ship was still under fire by the enemy which however soon ceased. Many fires were raging in the vicinity of the 5" battery and when requested by the Captain to go down and see if I could put them out I left the bridge and proceeded aft. on my way I passed the 20mm clipping room and noted that there had been a hit in the fire control tube in that space (about 8") and that the tube was a seething mass of flames. I noted many hits in the vicinity of the 5" battery and that there were many dead and wounded at each gun. Early all of the fire fighting equipment was rendered useless by damage (torn hoses, damaged plugs) and there appeared to be no pressure on the fire main at the outlets on the weather deck. The only fire fighting equipment which could be found in the well deck were two CO2 extinguishers which were used without effect on a fire over the ship's galley (movie locker). At this time (about 0230) I noted that the list to port on the ship was increasing at a rather rapid rate. Lt. BARTON and I together with several men then attempted to release a life raft secured to the starboard catapult tower but without success and in a few minutes seeing the list to port still increasing I told the men in my vicinity to abandon ship, I followed them at about 0240 and after reaching a distance of possibly 75-100 yards from ship she rolled over to port turned turtle and sank.

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4. The following incidents I am unable to place chronologically:

- (a) Power was lost on both AA directors at a fairly early stage of the engagement.
- (b) One of our A/S patrol destroyers opened fire on our port bow at a target believed to be on our port quarter and I believe our destroyer was then on a course of opposite to ours.
- (c) We were hit from our starboard side at some time during the engagement - most of our hits were from port side.

5. I am informed that all members of 5" guns crew No. 1 except one man - Sgt. HARMON (USMC) were wiped out early in the engagement and that Sgt. HARMON and Ensign PETERS (Sgt. HARMON is on the BARNETT, wounded and Ensign PETERS is understood to have left the ship safely) manned this gun and fired at a submarine on the surface on our starboard bow - if this story can be verified these two deserve special commendation.

6. All men and officers who came under my observation during and after the action conducted themselves in accordance with the highest traditions of the Navy and with the exception noted in paragraph 5 no special commendation or censure is due.

R. L. ADAMS

Quincy

SECRET

S E C R E T

U.S.S. QUINCY Narrative of SAVO ISLAND

CA39

1.

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 TBS. 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 EBS Radio on the Bridge: "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 nice gun salvo was fired by the 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

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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 planes 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 ship's service, primary and auxiliary telephones. Power was lost to the forward sky director. Director I was jammed in train. Investigation showed that the foresay 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.

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USS QUINCY

#2

NARRATIVE EXCERPTS

6. (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 shellhit 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.

----(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 fire 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 about #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

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the port side of the bottom estimated to be three or four feet wide and fifteen to twenty feet long.

(4) Enginerrooms:- Number one and two enginerrooms continued to function as long as there was steam, when, because of the list, number two enginerroom was abandoned through the quarterdeck escape hatch. All supports for the steam lines in number two enginerroom were broken loose from the overhead but the lines did not break in spite of the excessive vibration. It appears that number one enginerroom 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.

--- (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 forecastly 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, lifenets, 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 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.

ANDREWS -

----- (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 information I had, shells were landing just short of the ship ahead and off our port bow. During the general "hub-hub" 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.

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(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~~ 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.

NOTE: 2. 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".

SECRET

2

S E C R E T

U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL

From: Chief Radio Electrician W. R. Daniel, U.S.S.
To: Commanding Officer, US.S. QUINCY DETAIL

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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.

W. R DANIEL

STATEMENT BY LT(jg) C. P. CLARKE, U.S.N.R.

August 10, 1942.

I relieved Lt. (jg) Rieve at 2300 on August 8 as O.O.D. 3 hour watches were being stood on order of the Captain. At that time Lt.(jg) Mee relieved the watch as J.O.O.D. The Executive Officer was supervisor, to remain in that capacity until 2400 when he was to be relieved by Lt. Comdr. Billings.

Shortly after the watch had been relieved before 2400 the control officer reported having heard a plane overhead. We told ship control radar to pick it up but they were unable to do so. The Executive Officer talked to me about the plane, but decided it was one of our own and that he would not go to general quarters because every one was tired after a full day of bombing raids. The ship was in condition two at that time.

At midnight Lt. Comdr. Billings relieved the executive officer and he went below. A short time later the Sky Control Officer again reported hearing the plane. Again radar did not pick it up. On the third time the plane was reported, Lt. Comdr. Billings went out on the signal bridge to see whether he could see it or hear it. He came back in and said he had heard nothing and seen nothing.

At this time we were on course 315° (T) the VINCENNES, QUINCY and ASTORIA were steaming in column in the above order around a 5 mile square with center at V-7729. Beginning on course 045° (T) we steamed for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. At the end of $\frac{1}{2}$ hour and on the half hour we changed course 90 degrees to the right continuing this throughout the hours of darkness. At 0120 however, we had orders to change course, the order coming by T.B.S. That made the next change of course at 0150 instead of 0200.

At 0145 Lt.(jg) Mee took a bearing on Savo Island, the tangent of which bore 240° (T) and the right tangent 273° (T). At approximately that time Lt.(jg) J.M.Baldwin came into the Pilot House to relieve me as O.O.D. I turned the watch over to him and as I did we received orders by T.B.S. to hold the course until 0200. I was talking to him when I heard over T.B.S., "Warning - warning - strange ships entering harbor".

As that came over, Lt.Cdr. E. Billings sounded the general alarm and Lt.(jg) Baldwin told the bugler to sound general quarters. I sent the quartermaster to wake the captain. At the same time I saw a flash and star shells burst illuminating the formation. In the illumination I also saw three cruisers and one destroyer. The cruisers had three turrets forward and two aft and had a high superstructure. The bow was high and the forecastle long.

The Captain had come out on the bridge by this time. As he came out we were illuminated by star shells. He ordered the recognition lights turned on and asked which way he could turn.

I told him to turn right. Again he asked which way he could turn and again I said right. Then the VINCENNES was hit and caught fire. As she caught she turned to the left and forced us on the port beam. Turrets #1 and #2 began firing then and the next thing I saw was the rangefinder ear on Turret #2 blown off.

I was handed a helmet by one of the quartermasters and went out on the starboard side of the bridge. I could see the shells splashing then and I told the signalmen to lie down on the bridge. I stumbled over to the port side of the bridge then and saw our port plane catch fire. I reported this to the Captain and he said, "Shoot it off". I came back out on the signal bridge and again told the men to lie down. As I turned to face forward I saw what must have been 20 or 40 mm commence firing at the bridge. I knocked down my chief signalman and went down myself, flat on my face on the signal bridge. As I did, the strafing started and bullets and splinters flew around the bridge. I glanced up and saw a hole appear in the shell and then was drenched with water from the 1.1 gun cooling tank. Then I got up and started toward the pilot house, but was knocked down again when the pilot house was hit. I got up again and walked aft. There I saw Lt. Cdr. Billings. He was badly wounded but was telling everyone to keep calm and that it was all right. I grabbed his arm and asked him if he wanted first aid. He said no that he was all right. Then my JX Talker was hit and went down by the pyrotechis locker. I pulled him away from the locker which I was afraid would explode. I think he was dead though, or at least unconscious. Then I went to the signal desk. I was standing there when Turret II blew up. When it went up I started back to the pilot house. As I entered the door, I was knocked down again to my hands and knees. My head was inside the door and all I could see were forms lying on the deck. I saw one man at the wheel and heard Lt. Comdr. Andrew's voice saying something about abandon ship.

I got up again and ran out to the ladder going below. I herded as many signalmen as I could together and pushed them down the ladder. Lt. (jg) Skaife was also standing at the head of the ladder. I pushed him down and turned to see if there was anyone else. One signalman was pulling burning flags from the flag bag. I yelled at him and he came. Then I followed down. I reached the hurricane deck and the flames were coming up the ladder so I jumped from there to gun #4. I landed in a cargo net, put there to catch 5" ammunition tanks and shell cases. I got out of the net and went to the searchlight platform to get a life raft down. I had no knife. I yelled for a knife but no one answered. They just stared at me. I tried to untie the line but couldn't.

Then I got down to the gun deck again and for the first time noticed how badly the ship was listing. I went up to gun #2 for a floater net. The canvas around the net caught fire though before I got to it. The deck was burning and everything seemed on fire. As I turned I was hit by a life jacket. I put it on and as I did stepped off into the water.

I swam as fast as I could to get away from the ship and when I looked back she was down as far as the hurricane deck. She went under then very rapidly. I swam for a minute and then noticed I still had on my 7 x 50 binoculars which were pulling my head down. I let them go. A man was screaming near me so I swam over to him. He said he couldn't swim so I gave him my life jacket, and put it on him. He still grabbed me until I had him tied into the Jacket. Then he floated away. I started for a 5" ammunition tank which I saw in a flash of lightning or firing, I don't know which, and clung to it until it sank. Then another life jacket came by and I put it on.

Then I saw one of my seaman and stayed with him. He was tiring and couldn't have gone much further when we heard a raft full of men swam to it and climbed aboard. I was senior on the raft which contained no other officers. We floated trying to paddle the raft until we saw the ELLET. I was in such a position so that I could not see the ship. Someone gave the seaman-signalman a flashlight and he called the ship. She came back with D-398 and said she would send a boat. I would not let the men yell which I thought was confusing to the ELLET. They obeyed me very well and did all I told them.

About one half hour later a boat came alongside the raft and we were taken to the destroyer. Once on the destroyer we were treated efficiently and with care. They could not have been more thorough in the way they handled the men.

It was light by this time and I went to the bridge. Up on the bridge I found several of my signalmen and quartermasters. We turned to and gave the bridge force as much help as we could. One quartermaster took the wheel and my signalmen took the watch.

DATA AT TIME OF CONTACT:

Course - 315° (T); Speed 10 knots (2/3 standard, 15 knots)
At 0145 Savo Island Left Tangent 240° (T), Right Target 273° (T)

C. P. CLARKE,
Lieut.(jg), USNR.

August 10th, 1942.

Statement of Lt.(jg) McElligott

I was on watch in Sky aft at the time of the attack. The first warning of any kind was the sound of a plane flying over the formation. It flew over three times and was reported to Sky Control. About twenty minutes later one of our screening Destroyers at the entrance fired a starshell spread and we went to General Quarters. I searched the spread with field glasses and made out three ships which were too indistinct of outline to discover their identity. My battery reported manned and ready. Same was reported to sky control. Apparently they were Japs because they opened on the destroyer and set her afire. I then ordered the ammunition train filled with starshells, the next thing I knew a searchlight was opened on the ship astern of us and salvos began falling about her. Then she went up in flames near the Well Deck, apparently the planes. By that time we had started to turn to the right. I noticed that the searchlight came from one ship and the gunfire from another. Searchlights were then turned on us. Previous to this I had gotten a range on the light and reported it to Sky Control. This time I reported another and reported the searchlights ready to open shutters. Both ranges were around 8400 yards.

We had turned about ninety degrees when one of the overs from the salvos on the ship astern hit our well deck and set the planes afire. The flames from the planes and gasoline covered the director and two hits put guns #2 and #6 out of action. I told the battery officer to check on the hits. Sky aft then became untenable and I told my crew to leave. Some then did. Ensign Lill, Walter FC1c, Tousley S2c, Garbinskey FC3c and Geho FC3c and I remained. I felt a heavy shock in the ship to port. By this time we were trained 000 having stayed on the searchlight. Also by this time, the enemy, (I saw a Jap ship with mushroom top stacks going past at about 2000 yards shotted all she had) had knocked all guns out and I told battery #2 (Ens. Tighe) that there was nothing else I could do up in Sky Aft. I sent the remainder of my crew below and saw them over the monkey line from the after machine gun platform. The 20 MM clipping room sounded like the 4th of July.

I took a turn around there and in Control Aft but they were all dead so I went down the line to main deck aft, port side. The firing on us had stopped. When I left Sky Aft the ship was listed about 6 or 8 degrees. When I reached deck she was way over and we could only get one life raft down. Geho FC3c climbed up and cut it down. Somehow or other I slipped, and slid into the water as the deck was steep and slippery. I eventually ended up on Ensign Cohen's life raft flotilla and was picked up by the Destroyer ELLET.

R. H. McELLIGOTT

Statement of Ensign A. F. COHEN, USN.

August 10, 1942.

I was officer of the watch in Main Control on the 0-4 watch. The engineering plant was set up as follows:-

- (a) #1 and #2 boilers were on the port steam line; #3 and #4 boilers were on the starboard steam line; #5 and #6 boilers were secured hot, with about 180#/sq. inch pressure on them. One fireroom crew was standing by at the top of #3 fireroom hatch. The engineering night order book contained definite orders to light off #5 and #6 boilers in case of any "alert."
- (b) #7 and #8 boilers had been boosted the previous morning and were secured hot.
- (c) Condition "Zed" was set in the main steam lines, the auxiliary steam lines, and the main feed lines.
- (d) The electrical load was split. One generator in the forward engine room furnished light and power on the forward distribution board. One generator in the after engine room furnished light and power on the after distribution board. The second generator in the after engine room was running idle in vacuum with no load. It was available to parallel in case of an emergency.
- (e) Standard speed was 15 knots, 144 r.p.m. We were steaming at 2/3 speed, 10 knots, 95 r.p.m. We were receiving minor changes of speed from the bridge. (1 to 4 r.p.m. up or down.)
- (f) #1 set of evaporators was in distilling to the ship's tanks.
- (g) #1 and #2 cruising feed pumps were in use.

The watch proceeded very quietly until about 0140. At that time I thought I heard a clanking metallic sound against the port side of the engine room. I could not identify the sound. I had my pump man check the main injections, believing that the flapper valves on the main injections might have caused the noise. Everything was reported operating satisfactorily. I assumed that I was just nervous and jittery and that my imagination had magnified the sound.

Less than a minute later, I heard the same type of noise in the same vicinity. This time the noise was much louder. I thought we had gone aground on a rock, or hit or lightly grazed a submarine. I called the bridge immediately and notified the Officer of the Deck (Lt.(jg) Baldwin) that something was "Definitely wrong outboard of #1 engine room that I had heard a loud metallic sound against the hull

on the port side." He answered, "I'll check on it now."

I then checked all my gauges, pumps, etc. Everything appeared normal, and no water was entering the engine room.

Several minutes later (about 0148 or 0150), I heard the General Alarm sound. I took the following action:-

- (a) I sent my messenger up to the top of the hatch of #3 fire-room with instructions to tell the standby watch to man #3 fire room and "light off" on the double.
- (b) I ordered the second generator in the forward engine room warmed up and started.
- (c) I ordered both engine rooms to put on a main feed pump and secure the cruising feed pumps. The standby fire-room watch reported by X3JV sound powered phone that they had lighted fires in #5 and #6 boilers. When I asked them how much pressure they had on the boilers when they lit off, the CWT replied "180 lbs/sq. inch.
- (d) I stood by to answer all bells until I was relieved of the watch by Machinist Brooks, about 0155.

I then proceeded to my battle station, "Emergency Five," which was located in #1 mess hall directly above the starboard hatch #0 #1 engine room. Material condition "Zed" was set about one minute later. A few seconds thereafter the Chief Engineer came into #1 mess hall. He asked me what was going on. I told him what had happened. In the middle of this conversation about 0158, we heard what I presumed to be our own guns firing (5" battery).

We broke condition "Zed" to let the Chief Engineer into #1 engine room. We reset condition "Zed".

I felt the ship get hit aft. Heavy debris or hits were almost overhead.

About 0205 there was a heavy explosion in #2 mess hall. I entered the port forward door to #2 mess hall to investigate extent of damage. The entire place was filled with dense acrid smoke, through which only flame could be seen. My flashlight and a battle lantern were of little or no use. The smoke drove me out of the mess hall in a few minutes. I sent a man to Repair II for rescue breathing apparatus. (our communications were completely dead.)

We broke out a fire hose and fought the fire for many minutes. Men arrived from Repair II with rescue breathing apparatus. I sent two of them into the mess hall with the fire hose to fight the fire. The fire main pressure was quite low.

I went over to my talker on the starboard side to check once more to see if we had communication. I noticed we had a list to port. The fire main pressure failed about this time. Someone opened the door on the starboard side of #1 mess hall leading to the passageway alongside the machine shop.

I felt a tremendous shudder a little forward of #1 mess hall and on the port side. (I believed this to be a torpedo hit between #3 and #4 firerooms) I went forward about ten feet into the passageway. Men came streaming aft toward me, several of them quite bloody -- seriously wounded. Two men were carrying Batten, F3c who was badly hurt in the chest and neck. They wanted to carry him to Battle Dressing Aft. I told them they couldn't get through #2 mess hall- to take him forward to sick bay. They replied that the Marine Compartment and Sick Bay and the forward passageway (near Log Room and 1st Lieutenant's Office were "all shot to hell"). I told them to get the wounded up on the well deck, via the escape hatch on the well deck hatch. Sullenberger, WTlc opened the escape hatch. He was immediately engulfed in flames. He ducked back down and closed the escape hatch, saying that the well deck was all ablaze, and he couldn't get through. I told the men to wait that I would try it. I went through the escape hatch onto the well deck. The well deck was afire, canvas, planes, etc. and the only reason I did not get burned was because of the sweat and water which covered me from fighting the fire in #2 mess hall. I noticed the extreme list of the ship (about 25'). I went up to gun #7 on the gun deck, noticing a great deal of carnage about the guns. I looked forward just as a tremendous explosion took place forward of the bridge on the port side.

The ship listed further to port (about 35°). I went back to the escape hatch and ordered all my men out.

Brown, MM2c and myself located several life jackets and passed them out to the men as they came through the escape hatch on to the well deck. I waved the men over the side as they got a life jacket.

By this time the ship was listing about 45° to port. I went up on the gun deck outboard of Gun #7. Many dead and badly wounded men were lying around. I looked for life rafts and life nets but they had all been taken.

I stood by Gun #7 a few minutes until the starboard side was deserted. When I left the ship I intended to jump into the water but I actually walked down the starboard side. The ship was lying practically on her port side but the bow was down about 20° or 25°.

The general conduct of the men below decks was commendable. To mark any one man's conduct for distinction is extremely difficult.

The aid and succor rendered by the Commanding Officer, Officers, and men of the U.S.S. ELLET is worthy of mention,

Likewise, the help and cooperation of the officers and men of the U.S.S. AMERICAN LEGION.

ENSIGN A. F. COHEN, USN.

Statement of Lt.(jg) E. S. HOPKINS, USN

August 10, 1942.

At the time of the general alarm for General Quarters, I was asleep in my room. The first thing that I noticed when I reached topside, was starshells off to port and a plane flying around about 4000-5000 yards, elevation 5°, off the port bow. The plane was of the low wing monoplane type.

When I reached control forward, Lt. Comdr. Andrew was ordering all turrets to train to port. Ammunition condition one was set in all turrets. Lt. Nielsen was in Spot I, trying to locate a target. When I relieved him, he had no information to pass on. I picked up a searchlight broad on the port quarter but could not make out any outlines of the ship. I sent down an initial set-up of target angle 60° estimated range 6000 yards, speed 15 knots, and the first salvo was fired. Just before firing I received a report from the FC radar operator that the range was 5800 yards. I observed the shells go over the ship for the Vincennes, then burning badly in the vicinity of her well deck and catapults, illuminated the vicinity of the Japanese ship, particularly around her bridge superstructure. I sent down a spot of D200,NC. At this time, the director reached its limit of train and control was shifted to director #2. Shells were coming in from all sides at this time. The Vincennes was entirely aflame and in our line of sight. I ordered the trainer to train around to the starboard side. Just then someone shouted, "There's a Jap ship off the starboard bow". The ship was swinging rapidly to starboard. We picked up the ship reported, which was illuminating us with two searchlights and immediately fired a salvo. The searchlights went out. I sent down a spot of "No observation." I still had communication with Plot, Spot #2, and control forward. After this salvo, there was no firing circuit from director #1. The director was still being trained to port until the trainer complained that ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ he could not move the director. Immediately, I went up through the hatch above Spot #1 position and found that the forestay had carried away and was caught around the radar antenna and starboard end of the spotting glass. About this time, there was a violent explosion under Turret #2.

The entire section around Turret II was a mass of flames and the heat was fast becoming unbearable. I attempted to clear the director but was unable to from any position. I shouted for the cross-leveler to help me but he had gone to aid a man who had been hit by a shell to starboard. By this time, it was humanly impossible to go topside to clear the director for the heat was too intense.

Realizing that the director was useless in this state, I ordered the director to be abandoned. (Turrets I, II, and III were out.) The firing from the Japanese ships had diminished. The heat in control forward was unbearable so we went out on the sky control platform and discovered that the ship was listing to port; the entire hangar and well deck area was aflame. Flames were belching from the starboard side adjacent to Turret II and all around Turret II, and flames were coming out at the foot of the ladder leading down from control forward from the 1.1" clipping room. I asked Lt. Comdr. Andrew, if there was any word about abandoning ship. He said that there was no word from the Captain. Finally, the fire at the foot of the ladder ceased and the Gunnery Officer ordered that the station be abandoned. I went on down to the Communication deck and found several men searching for life jackets. I went back up the ladder and noticed a shell hole in the port side of the "spare" stateroom. The hole was about 6" in diameter. From all personal observation, and reports, I believe that the ship illuminating us off the port quarter was of the Teneryu light cruiser class.

I went back up the signal bridge and attempted to gather up what appeared to be life jackets. It proved to be dead bodies and carnage. I went back down to the port side of the communication deck, cut off a floater net and then went back to the starboard side and located several life jackets piled near the ladder leading to the gun deck. The ship was listing badly, water was over the gun deck to the centerline.

I found several men clinging to a net just forward of gun #3 that was still made fast. I cut it clear, slid down the side, and very shortly the ship went under. I swam to the net and saw that Savo Island was in sight. We attempted to paddle toward it with our hands; picked up a few men in the water and two life rafts on the way before we were finally picked up by the ELLET.

E. S. HOPKINS
Lt.(jg), U.S.N.

STATEMENT OF R. L. LOPER, CMM, U. S. N.

August 10, 1942.

After Repair (Repair III)

I was asleep in my bunk. An explosion, which I believe was underwater, woke me up. Another similar explosion caused me to get up. When I was half dressed the general alarm sounded. As I ran out of our mess room I glanced at the clock which said about 0145. We set condition Zed. I spread out my gang, equipped. One of them ran in from 3rd division compartment saying a hole was in the side. Upon investigating, a piece of steel about 12" square had entered causing no damage. We reported it to repair III officer (Carp. Mayo) (About 3 minutes after general quarters).

A heavy explosion overhead caused a fire on the fantail deck. About one-half my gang (about 6 men) ran into 3rd division compartment to rig fire hose at Fr. 128 (about 4 minutes after general quarters). Thigpen, SF2c was hit in the right arm and Marx, S2c in the left shoulder and leg. We dragged Thigpen to the 4th division compartment for treatment and Marx to after battle dressing station. These men were the only casualties in the 3rd division that I saw.

When I was in the 4th division with Thigpen the only communication I heard came over the phones - "Our fantail is in the center of a searchlight beam" - (about 6 minutes after general quarters).

A fire broke out in the 4th division compartment and all party moved forward to "R" division. We dragged the wounded. The lights were out and smoke was so dense flashlights were of no use. In "R" division some steel flew hitting Bryan, CCM in the ankle, me in the foot, and Thigpen in the leg. (He was lying on the deck).

A violent explosion occurred in "2 mess hall knocking most of us down. Smoke rapidly filled "R" division. Bryan downed his rescue breather apparatus and we started carrying and leading men through escape scuttle to the main deck at Frame 110. (About 12 to 15 minutes after general quarters) The ship started to list to port.

We rigged a fire hose on main deck about Frame 132. We managed to control fire on 1.1" mount starboard and dragged injured aft. The firing had ceased but there were small explosions from small ammunition.

The ship had about a 25° list. Another man and I opened a hatch from 3rd division to main deck to let out 1.1" clipping room detail and after dressing station men.

We couldn't get lifejackets out of 3rd division for wreckage smoke and debris.

The ship had listed about 30° to 40° by now. There was no word to abandon ship but I noticed many men in the water. The ship lurched sharply and the main deck was too steep to keep footing. It threw all there into the water. When I broke the surface the ship had rolled completely on her side and the stern was directly over my head. #2 screw was still turning. This was about 30 minutes after general quarters. She disappeared bow down at about a 30° angle.

R. L. LOPER, CMM, USN.

NOTES

Most of the damage came from starboard in after part of ship. No damage was done below water line aft. All watertight doors and dogs held good but shrapnel or pieces of steel went through the doors and bulkheads in large pieces. Paint burned quickly and caused most of the smoke along with bedding. The firemain remained intact aft but there was little or no pressure after the first 10 minutes. Personnel behaved admirably. I believe more men were saved by the 5" powder cans in the water. And the cork nets served better than the life rafts if they could be unrolled.

R. L. LOPER, CMM, USN

Statement of Captain F. J. FRAZER, USMC.

August 10, 1942.

At 2345 on 8 August, 1942, Lt.(jg) Seal relieved me in Sky Forward. Just before he relieved me, Sky Control reported that an unidentified airplane had been sighted over Savo Island. Inasmuch as we had no FD radar on the AA directors, we were unable to pick up the plane in the darkness. I informed Lt.(jg) Seal of the plane's presence, and went below.

At 0145 on 9 August, 1942, I was awakened by the general alarm. As I came topside to my battle station in Sky Forward, I saw a ship off our port quarter firing star shells. I have no clear idea of the range of the firing ship, but it was quite some distance away as judged by the sound of the firing, and the light from the starshells.

I relieved Lt.(jg) Seal in Sky Forward and put on the 3JY telephones. The starboard 5" battery reported manned and ready, and Condition "ZED" set on the starboard side. Sky Control ordered us to fire starshells to illuminate the firing ships as soon as our ship swung and we could bear. I announced this to the crew and guns and L(jg) Seal moved over to the follow-up side of the director.

Suddenly, the planes on a cruiser of our type on our port quarter caught fire. It had been previously illuminated with searchlights by the enemy ships. Salvos began hitting near the QUINCY, but we were not illuminated by the firing ships. An apparent over fired at the cruiser on our port quarter struck one of our planes on the catapult and started a fire.

Immediately, the enemy turned searchlights on us, and salvos began hitting all around us.

The ship was swinging to starboard and the starboard battery could bear on the firing ships. The rangekeeper operator, J.F. Britt, FC3c, told me he had a solution and announced a range to the firing ship of 7000 yards. I ordered the guns to fire a salvo with the shell kept in the tray during the night condition of readiness. This shell was set for 8000 yards, with a fuse setting of 25.6. The first salvo burst above the low-hanging clouds and burned out before dropping below their overcast. I cranked the spot knobs down, and noticed that the illumination on the rangekeeper was not functioning. The next two salvos also burst above the clouds, and I found that the rangekeeper was not functioning.

At about this time, Merritt, GM2c, gun captain on Gun #5, announced that the rammer spade on his gun would not retract completely, and that he and michell, GM1c, were working on it. I ordered the other guns to shift to local control but got no answer from Guns #1 or #7. I felt a splinter get past my leg and my telephones went out. I checked and found that my lead had been cut. I called for another pair of phones from the follow-up side, received them, and plugged them in. I asked Gun #5 if the casualties had been remedied, and Merritt replied weakly that there were too many casualties and he could fire no longer. I looked down at Gun #5 and saw its ready boxes on fire and several wounded men attempting to crawl away from them. Gun #1 was still firing, but I had lost communication on all circuits except the 2JY with sky control.

The trainer announced that the director would not train, but I had him keep trying until I was sure that the training gear was useless.

I waited for further orders from sky control, and during this time the ship was being continually shelled by a ship on the starboard beam and one on the starboard quarter. It was impossible to see what type ships were firing at us because our starshells were not illuminating and we had no communication with the searchlights.

Suddenly the director was enveloped in a sheet of flame. Thinking that a shell had burst below us, and that the flash would soon die out, I had the crew crouch down. The heat and flame increased and knowing that the director was useless, I yelled for the men to bail out. The rangekeeper operator left first and went down a signal halyard. The control talker followed and swung over the side. I followed so the men in the rear of the director and on the follow-up side could get out. I jumped for the ladder on the starboard side of the mast, and was blown down to the Sky Control platform. I found Lt. Ovrom, the Air Defense Officer, and informed him that the director was useless.

About this time the ship listed to port several degrees, and Lt. Comdr. Heneberger, the Gunnery Officer, told us to go below.

As I went down past the bridge, I noticed that there were several dead there, and that the signal flags were burning. On the next deck below, the port signal searchlight was shot away completely and there was a large hole in the corner of the bulkhead of the spare stateroom on the port side. I moved over to the starboard side seeking life jackets, and saw that the radar room was still dimly illuminated and the equipment was humming.

There were no life jackets or wounded men on this deck, so I went down to the communication platform where I looked for 2nd Lieutenant Gutman and 1st Sergeant Grantham, both of whom had been on Gun #1. I did not find them, but I noticed a group of men standing about looking out over the water, and told them that they had better leave. As they left, I saw several shell holes in the shield and noticed that the coding room had been hit.

I went down the starboard ladder to the gun deck and found Lt. Hall (DC), lying against the bulkhead, he had a stump of the leg of Scott, his dental technician, pressed into his body and dragged Scott from the blazing Captain's Cabin (gun deck dressing station) and was waiting on the gun deck for assistance. We attempted to get Scott into a life jacket and over to the starboard side, which by now was high because of the list to port. We clung to the cargo net rigged to receive empty 5" tanks and hot shells and attempted to get Scott over the side; but the ship started to roll over and we were forced to fight our way through the net as the ship went down beneath us. We were unable to get Scott clear.

I found two empty ammunition tanks and swam about until I found a life raft with Dr. Hall, Ensign Carter, who was wounded, and several other men on it. I joined them, and learned that Dr. Hall had shrapnel wound in his groin when he asked for my handkerchief to stop the bleeding. We picked up several other wounded men, and found two other life rafts with six survivors and lashed the rafts together. We paddled toward land until picked up by the U.S.S. ELLET.

Dr. Hall's actions were heroic in his attempt to save his badly wounded assistant from the burning dressing station and the sinking ship, while he himself was badly wounded. While on the life raft he kept up the spirits of the men and refused any assistance.

Captain F. J. FRAZER, USMC.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Night Sea Battle
Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands
August 9, 1942

General quarters was sounded on the Quincy at approximately 0145. While I was hurriedly dressing I heard either gun fire or explosions at a distance. Evidently it was the Japs firing on the Canberra, as I understand the Canberra was attacked before the Jap force attacked the American Cruisers.

When I left my room which was on the starboard side #113, I went through the scuttle of the hatch behind turret two. When I got on top side I saw search lights shining. I did not know what was going on, whether the search lights were from our own ships or from the Japs. I ran aft on the port side to the gun deck and stopped in the vicinity of gun eight, at this time turret three opened fire on a search light that was off our port quarter. I do not know if they made a hit or not. I then continued down the latter to the quarter deck where I stopped when I heard shells going overhead and hitting in the water not over fifty feet from the side of the ship. Had these first shells gone fifty feet farther they would have hit on our port five inch battery. While standing there I saw another ship on our port beam, Vincennes I believe, get a hit on the quarter deck a hangar and immediately burst into flames. I then started for the starboard silo when our number one or number two turret opened fire on a search light that was off the Quincy's starboard bow. Relative bearing of about 35 or 40 degrees. There was definitely two ships firing on the Quincy, one from the port quarter and one from the starboard bow. At this time they hit our quarter deck and hanger setting our planes and hangar on fire. This gave the Japana perfect target to fire at. The same thing happened to all three cruisers, planes and hanger catching on fire and making the ships perfect targets. After this we must have been hit with every salvo the Japs fired. We were hit constantly with shells that I would say were of five inch caliber or larger. I saw holes in gun shields that were approximately 8 to 10 inches in diameter. While this terrific shelling was taking place I went back to the starboard side of the ship to gun seven, and with several other men I helped drag a hose down to the quarter deck, somebody connected it to a water main and turned it on. I was waving the nozzle and intended to fight the fire on the quarter deck and planes. Only a very small trickle of water came through. While waiting for water which never came, either one of the 100 pound bombs or the planes exploded or there was a shell hit on the quarter deck. This hit knocked me down and I was burned by some small flying particles. I crawled under the ladder leading to the gun deck port side and while sitting there another shell hit was made somewhere around the port silo. I immediately went to the gun deck again. Many men were dead on deck

Night Sea Battle, Guadal canal, Solomon Islands, August 9, 1942

and many very seriously wounded. Splinters and shrapnel accounting for most of the casualties. I tried to talk to some of the men but it was impossible to make anyone hear you or to hear them. I started looking for some first aid men or first aid kits. I could find only one first aid man, he was working around gun five and had more to do than he could possibly handle. There was no other first aid kits to be found. At this same time a shell evidently bursted the steam line leading to the whistle and siren or something around the stack causing hot water to spray the center section of the gun deck. Also there was extremely suffocating fumes and gases on the gun deck. I had to fight to get my breath and I ran to the port side of the ship to get away from the water and fumes. I do not know what the fures were. At first I thought it was gas from the Jap shells, but I do not think so now, rather it must have been powder fumes and gases from the lower decks.

At this time the Quincy was listing to the port and I thought she might roll over on her side, but just then a torpedo hit her on the starboard bow around turret two. It was a muffled explosion and did not bother anyone around gun eight, in fact I doubt very much if many of the men around there knew we were torpedoed. Several men and myself then started cutting down floater nets that were around the boatswains locker. Men were putting on life jackets and jumping over board alone and without floater nets. The first floater net I helped put over was by gun eight and I intended to jump in after it, but it floated away so fast that I decided to wait and help throw another one over. Many men did however, catch the first one. In putting the second net over I dove almost with it, when I came up I had to swim fast to catch up with it. I caught it and it passed directly under the stern of the ship over the screws. I thought the screws would get us but evidently they were not turning over. I did not notice any burbulent water astern of the ship, but the ship itself still had considerable momentum. When we were about 150 yards away from the ship she started going down bow and starboard side first, stern rising into the air.

I do not know how many men were on the floater net but after we were in the water for about one hour we found another group of men on another net. We lashed the two together and I then took a count of the men. There was 25 of us. One marine captain was aboard, but he was sick so I took command of the group. Of the 25 men we had two men that were rather seriously injured and 2 or 3 men that had minor injuries. These men were allowed to sit or lie on the nets while the rest of us held on and kicked to help keep the nets away from the burning Astoria. The Vincennes had gone under the waves in the meantime but I did not see her sink. By using the burning Astoria as a marker we were able to keep our location rather well. We knew we were close to Guadalcanal Island and that land was lear but we did not know in what direction.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Night Sea Battle, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, August 9, 1942

Destroyers were also cruising around, so with destroyers, land and the Astoria we were not worried about being picked up.

We were in the water for about 5½ hours, when we were picked up by the destroyer Wilson. Our injured men were given medical treatment.

I estimate the Quincy was under the waves within 20 to 25 minutes after the firing started. As well as I can sat the main battery fired about three or four salvos. Two from turret one or two. I do not know which, and one or two salvos from turret three. I do not know about our five inch battery, because the explosions were so fast and terrifying that you could not tell if our guns were firing or if it was Jap shells hitting our ship.

My battle station was the airplane on the starboard catapult. I was never able to man my plane. As I said I never got farther than the forward part of the quarter deck. It was impossible to get the planes off the ship as they were the first or second things to be hit.

While on the gun deck and during the heaviest shelling I looked up toward the bridge several times. I never saw any signs of life or activity. I did notice one large gaping hole in the port wing bulwork of the bridge.

The casualties on top side were extremely heavy, practically all the starboard battery was wiped out and a great percentage of the port battery.

I know nothing of what happened in the lower decks. Please bear in mind that all the things that I saw and did took place in a very small period of time. There was no minutes between happenings only seconds.

The Kopac life jacket that I wore proved very satisfactory in a buoyancy way, however when I jumped into the water the strings broke on the jacket and I had to hold it on during the night.

The moral of the men on my floater net was very good, not one of the men complained in any way. There was many comments about how they hated to see the "Mighty Q" go down.

I had my forty five on all night and at day break I fired it twice to see if it would fire. It was O. K.

Also while we were in the water there was several rumblings in the water, they sounded very tinney and metallic, as first I thought they were some sort of reactions from the Quincy's boilers

Night Sea Battle, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, August 9, 1942

or engine room as we were not too far from where she went down.
Later we heard them again and I then thought they were depth
charges, which I know think they probably were.

E. L. Kempf
Lieut.(jg), U.S.N.R.
A.V.(n)

BATTLE OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS
EARLY MORNING, August 9, 1942.

Statement of

H. L. BERG
U.S.S. QUINCY
BM BMLc

About two oclock Sunday morning August 9th I was on watch in turret three when all at once the Vincennes started shooting and the word came over the phones for us to train out to 270. General Quarters had been sounded in the mean time as we were training around I saw the Vincennes Boat deck and well deck afire and she was listed to port bad. I came down on the target and my pointers went out and I shifted to pointer fire I saw a strange ship and got three good salvos about midships and when I came back to load again we had got a hit on the one point one aft No. 3 mount the crew of the turret had loaded again and then we got a hit on the barbett even with the deck right under my set and all my instruments went out. The turret got dark and then the lights came on again and the upper powder crew said the handling room was afire. We cut in the sprinkling system and put the fire out. We couldn't train the turret by hand and the turret officer ordered all the men out of the lower powder and upper powder and shell deck. By the time they got up in the gun chamber the ship was listed to port bad. The turret officer said the ship is hit hard but not to get excited and to go out and see what we could do to help fighting fire. When we got out there not much of her was left. The starboard crane was hit and oil was everywhere the boat deck was afire. The well deck and hangar planes were all afire. ~~xxTheaxwllixdkek~~ and she had started to list real bad so we all left it. We started of by the turret hut - it was too hot - there the hanger bulkhead was all afire and men were playing hoses on the fire yet. So I left at No. 4 one point one mount three mount No's hit on the direction and the shell had down to the clipping room and it was afire. I remembered I didn't have a life jacket on so I ran back to the compartment to get one and while I was in there the ship rolled some more so I came out and met the doctor on the ladder and he wanted me to help get a dead man totop side and I told him to come on - the ship was sinking so we came to the top side and not one of us had life jackets on - we could not get them and bodies were all over the fan tail so I run to the stern and jumped over and when I come up the ship was nearly down. There were three large reports to forward and one under the hangar which I am positive were torpedoes, but the ship screws were turning over on the starboard side I would sat at the rate of about fifteen knots.

I would say all this happened in 20 or 30 minutes from the time we started shooting till the ship went down. There were lots of men never got to the General Quarters stations. They had lights on us.- started with the VINCENNES and when she caught fire they trained it on us but one of the anti-aircraft put it out and where this light came from there was not any shooting. Seems they had a ship to spot and the others were along side the one I fired at that wasn't over 5 or 6,000 yards away, from us. After I jumped in the water I swam around for quite some time before I come up to a floater net with about 30 onit and one wounded man with his foot nearly off. Then we come upon some life rafts and all my officers except a pay clerk left and went on the life raff and we put the wounded kid on top of the floater net and we hung on on with one hand. We floated around for nearly two hours and come up on four of my boys that was in my division with a Chief Turrent Captain who had a broken leg and hands were burned so bad he couldn't hold to nothing. They had him on a mattress with four powder tanks under it so we got them and him on top of the net some of the fellows started to fighting. I got a piece of board that was floating by and picket it up and got up in the middle of the raft and told them that the first man started to riding or fighting I would kill because we had to men that were wounded and the net would sink with them. They quited down and we got along fine. We were picked up about 0845 by the WILSON. This is my story as near as I can remember it.

H. L. BERG, BM1c
U.S.S. QUINCY, 3rd Div.

U.S.S. QUINCY DETAIL

August 21, 1942.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT R. J. OVROM, U. S. NAVY

1. When General Quarters was sounded, I was asleep in my room, #121, having come off the 20-24 watch shortly before. I immediately dressed and proceeded to my battle station, which was air defense officer, on the forward fire control platform. When I arrived, I relieved Lieutenant D. R. Levy, USNR, and he assumed his duties as Machine Gun Control Officer on the same station.
2. When I first sighted the enemy, I could see two sets of searchlights almost dead astern. Neither of the 5" Batteries could bear. The VINCENNES was between the QUINCY and the enemy and had been hit and was burning. The fire was particularly pronounced around the planes on the catapults and the hangar.
3. A few minutes after I arrived on my station, the ship was hit on the fantail. Very shortly after that, another hit set the planes on the catapults and the hangar on fire.
4. Shortly after that, the ship changed course to the right bringing the starboard battery to bear. At that time, I still had communications with Sky Forward but had lost communications with Sky Aft. The range to the enemy was approximately 4500 yards. I received orders from the bridge to illuminate with starshells which I transmitted to Sky Forward. The starboard battery fired about three salvos of starshells at the left hand enemy ship. At that time, the starboard battery received two hits, one forward and one aft. Sky Forward reported the starboard battery out of commission. At about that time, a hit near the bridge sprayed shrapnel over the Sky Control platform. Lt. Levy was hit in the left leg. He had lost all communication with his stations so I told him to go inside control forward. At this time, I could distinguish three sets of searchlights in the enemy formation approximately 1000 yards apart. The forward turrets had fired three salvos at the left hand ship. The deflection was good but I could not tell about the range.
5. Shortly after the third main battery salvo, I received a report from the forward 5" handling room, that the smoke there made it impossible for the crew to remain so I told them to abandon their station. Also the forward director was reported out of commission so I told the crew to come down. A heavy hit on the bridge rocked Control Forward and knocked the searchlight correctors off the starboard bulkhead. There were no further communications at my station.

S E C R E T

August 21, 1942

Subject: Comments Concerning the Sinking of the U.S.S. QUINCY.

6. By that time, we had assumed about a 10° list to port. There were several more hits on the ship but I could not tell where. I took off my phones and went out on the forward sky lookout station to look at the forecastle. Water was just then coming over the deck. I came back to the Sky Control platform and told the people remaining there to come down to the Gun Deck. We were no longer under fire. On the port side of the gun deck, I saw the Gunnery Officer and he asked me to see if the guns would train. Gun #4 would train but there was nothing in sight to shoot at. Shortly after that water started coming over the gun deck. We cast off two life rafts remaining on the searchlight tower and threw them overboard. Two men and myself tried to cut loose and throw overboard a large cane fender but we could not handle it. I told the two men withme to abandon ship. I looked around and did not see any other live people on the port side of the gun deck so I abandoned ship.

7. When in the water I realized that the ship still had some headway on and was turning to starboard. I swam away from the ship as fast as possible and was about 100 yards away when the ship heeled over to port and went down bow first.

R. J. OVRUM,
Lieutenant, U.S.N.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

NIGHT BATTLE - SOLOMON ISLANDS, 8 AUGUST 1942

On Saturday night August 8 at 1145 I relieved the watch on the lookouts on the bridge. I was waiting on the deck above at the 1.1 gun on the starboard side to go down after 15 minutes to relieve the lookout on the bridge. At 1200 I heard a plane fly overhead and reported it to the battery officer on the 1.1 gun who was standing near me. He told me that it was probably the noise coming from the No. 1 stack as the draft often sounded like an airplane overhead. Then the other men on the gun said that they also heard the plane. I do not know whether it was reported over the phones or not. At 1230 we were relieved by No. 2 gun on the 5 inch battery and took over the gun. At 0120 I got permission from my gun captain, who asked the battery officer over the phones, to go to the head. I was back on the gun at 0125. I sat down on the deck against the gunshield while another man laid down on the deck. At about 0145 I heard two sharp metallic sounds which sounded like two shells had hit the hull of the ship below the water line. I was immediately on my feet looking out over the gun shield. I then saw a flare in the sky and a lot of firing going on over near the edge of the island. Then I saw what looked to me like 5 or 6 star shells in the air all laid out one after the other setting up a long screen of light. These were not very high and from where I was at I would say the elevation was about 5°. General quarters was sounded at once and I waited around my gun until I was relieved by the third loader on the G.Q. gun crew. I started for my G.Q. station going aft on the port side. Just as I got to the quarter-deck our 5-inch battery on the port side let loose. At this time there was still no other hits on our ship. My G.Q. Station was lower powder handling room in turret 3. As I reached the turret there were other men from lower powder trying to get in the door that is on the under side of the chamber. We could not get in as the gun crew were already in and had condition ZED already set. We all went in where the hatch near the lower washroom is and went down to the 3rd division compartment. We opened the escape hatch and went down to lower powder through the second hatch which is the armor hatch on the armor deck. We closed all hatches and doors behind us. Our P.O. who was in charge of lower powder yelled as we opened the second hatch that we could not come down that way. We told him that the chamber was dogged down and that it was the only way to get down, so he let us in. The ship then picked up speed and we were passing powder as fast as we could. We fired one salvo. After that I felt a heavy jar which seemed to come from the forward part of the ship. I could hear shells hitting the hull one after the other. Then there was a terrific hit which seemed to be right beside us. All of a sudden water started coming down through the powder hoist. The turret had still not fired after the first salvo and we were standing by with six bags of powder. Then the siren started to scream and a few men got

hysterical. We then opened the hatch going up through to the shell deck and saw an awful lot of smoke. Four of the men that were standing by holding a bag of powder each had put them back in the magazine. All the men went up through the side pocket and up to the chamber. A ship's baker and I saw two bags of powder lying on the deck yet and we each put one in the two tanks of water that were in lower powder. He then went up through the hatch and I was the last one to leave the handling room. I came up through the hatch and set condition ZED again. The shell deck was filled with smoke but I could not see any fire. The siren was still screaming. When I reached the chamber I found that the turret was completely out of control. It could not be trained or elevated in any way. Our division officer told us to stay in the chamber. The water that came down in lower powder was from the sprinkler system. After we heard all firing stopped we all left the chamber and went on deck. Right beside the hatch that we tried to get in were two men who didn't make it down to lower powder lying dead. One was a colored mess attendant lying face down and the other one from our division with his guts blown out lying on his back. The deck was full of wood splinters and oil and blood. Men were sliding all over it. The starboard side aft of the hangar where we had some life rafts was all on fire. The ship was listing badly toward the port side. I went down to the 3rd division compartment and helped pass out a few life jackets that we found. The bunks in the compartment were all shot up and it was hard to get through to get life jackets. One wounded man was carried out on a stretcher from the chief's compartment. I came up on deck again and the ship was listing very bad. Our division officer gave the order to abandon ship and when I looked around there wasn't a life jacket left and no way possible to get a life raft off as they were all on fire and we were cut off by fire all over the hanger. The ship listed so badly then that I slid down on the deck in all the oil and blood and dove in the water. Just as I dove in the water a life net came by and I grabbed it and hung on. Men were swimming all around looking for something to keep them up. Some went down and never came up. We got our life net about 100 feet away from the stern of the ship when the whole fan tail went up in the air and the ship made a sudden plunge to the bottom. There was an awful hissing sound as she went down and a rumble after. Our division officer was on our life net and swam to another net or raft that had officers on it. We did not see him after that. We were struggling to hang on to our net as it was overcrowded. We were afraid to open it up as we didn't think it would hold us all up. I was choking and vomiting as I got my mouth full and lungs full of oil that was on the surface. I was ready to give up and let loose of the net to go down but someone grabbed me and I hung on. A destroyer passed right by us and we all yelled but they would not pick us up. All

the men were swearing because they wouldn't pick us up. We had one radio man with us and a flashlight. He was trying to signal for help but no help came. We drifted around all night until daybreak and after seeing a destroyer and trying to get their attention, we were finally picked up at 0830. We were all exhausted and they gave us hot coffee and cigarettes. The destroyer was the WILSON. All the crew aboard gave us dry clothing. First aid was given to all the wounded. Some were in pretty bad shape. We were all transferred to the HUNTER LIGGET later on. Some of the things I saw could have been avoided if greater care had been thought of before this disaster.

First, I believe that every battle station should be provided with life jackets as to the amount of men at that station.

Second, an officer should not underestimate the ability of the men under him when reporting the sound of a plane. Because he didn't hear it is no reason why it should be disregarded.

Third, it would be a blessing if the Navy could find a fire-proof paint, or scrape the paint from the ship if going into battle. Rust is a small item compared to losing a ship with all hands aboard.

Fourth, use steel decks instead of wood as wood splinters cause casualties.

Fifth, Mount all 5-inch guns in mounts. Protection against schrapnel. (hopping my experience may save the lives of others).

James Stanley Carleton

STATEMENT BY F. S. ALDRIDGE, 1st Lt. USMC

August 10, 1942.

At G.Q. went to the signal bridge. Coincident with the sounding of G.Q. I saw flames or star shells dropping several thousand yards off the starboard beam. I reached the signal bridge about 3 minutes after the first sounding. A searchlight was seen across the water and it spotted us. At this moment the QUINCY was pointing almost directly away from the searchlight. Then gunfire commenced on other ships. None seemed to fall toward us for a moment. Then I saw some shorts on our port; then heard and saw some fovers - not by more than 50 yards on our starboard. At about the same time I felt the first hit someplace on the ship and I heard someone say "They got the VINCENNES". Looking to the port I saw a flaming ship. Shrapnel began to hit about the bridge. Our forward turrets went off. I'm not all all certain of any 5" fire on crew part. I shifted to the portside and very soon afterward a hit on the starboard part of the bridge cleared out the pilot house. Mr. Billings came out of the port side of the pilot house and looked back aft toward the enemy, the left side of his face was blown away. I spoke to him and he said something and went back into the house. One of the people on our side (port) was hit by the almost continuous shrapnel and screamed. He was the only one I heard make a sound of pain. Then steam started to pour over us from the 1.1 above us. To avoid steam I entered the pilot house and saw no one in there alive. Very soon after this turret II went up enveloping the signal bridge in flames. I tried to go to the starboard side; then down the ladder; but flames forced me up. At this time I saw very few on the signal bridge, only 2 other marines and perhaps one or two others. I couldn't breath so I slid down the ladder on the starboard side that runs up to the starboard signal flag locker. Reaching the gun deck I found no guns in action and the fumes severe. I went to the starboard side and found clear air. The ship was listing considerably. On the port side I saw quite a few people putting off rafts. I went aft to just above the well deck and got some life belts and brought them forward to about gun #4.

Everything was orderly, almost leisurely. We put in one raft. I saw Messieurs Chisholm, Reagan and Smith. Mr. Smith (Aviator) said to me to help him; so we carried a man to the side even tho he didn't want to go much. (I think it was Simko). Then we put another raft in. By this time the water was pretty high and we just slid the raft off the rail at Gun #4. There was hardly anyone left on that side as I stepped off the side after Mr. Reagan left. I saw a raft ahead and caught it just at the ships propellor. Tho the ship was moving some the propellor was still.

We were about 100 yards aft when the ship went under. Discipline was perfect at all times. There was no panic.

Aldridge
F. S. ALDRIDGE
1st Lt., U. S. M. C.

Hits were occurring forward. I could hear thuds, long hisses like steam escaping, and see shrapnel fly. There is no recollecting of an explosion but a solid sheet of flame engulfed the director. All the men began to clamor to the other side. Shortly after the flames subsided and I went to the other side myself. From there I went down the ladder on the mast to the Sky Control Platform.

There were many people milling around on the platform. Mr. Ovrom said for them to lay below. I helped to start them down. Then I jumped down to the 1.1 platform. From here, down to the bridge, and then down the outside after ladder to the steel deck, thence to the gun deck.

Near the Captain's entrance, I saw Scott, dental corpsman. He said that his leg was gone and wanted a tourniquet. A man was lying with his leg against his stomach. This was Lt. Hall. I found a piece of line and gave it to Scott but couldn't find any morphine. I went to get life jackets up on the Communication deck. There was a steady stream of men coming down the ladder.

Later, I came back down to the gun deck. Then there was a decided list to port. I crawled up the deck and over the gun shield at Gun #3, then down the side to the water.

In the water, I met Lt. Cox. Together we joined a group who were under Lt.(jg) Rieve's leadership, clinging to a 4x4 and several 5" tanks. Once close by, we heard some sort of craft go close by under what sounded like Diesel Engines. Some time later, Rieve took a flashlight and called a destroyer close by. This was the ELLET and we were picked up by it.

J. D. SEAL
Lt.(jg), USN.

STATEMENT OF LT. H. H. Nielsen

I had the 00-04 watch in control forward the morning of the battle. When I relieved the watch the conditions were normal, condition two was set with turret two fully manned and turret three half manned. Ammunition, condition I was set in all three turrets.

Three times during the watch I heard an airplane. The first time it went by to starboard going forward then it went by to starboard going aft. The third time I heard it I believe it was on the port quarter. This was about fifteen minutes before the first firing was heard and the ship went to general quarters. I made a thorough sweep of the horizon at this time and noticed nothing.

As soon as the first shots were fired I took station as spotter on the director and trained out to pick up the enemy. Before we were on the enemy Lt.(jg) Hopkins, the regular spotter arrived and took his station. I remained in control forward as firing had started and I felt that it was better not to break material condition Zed in order to get to my battle station in plot. There was a heavy explosion which rocked the ship shortly after general quarters was sounded.

We were then hit aft by the first salvo that hit us. Soon thereafter we were hit amidships and the planes began burning. From that instant the ship was raked from stem to stern by shell fire. Turret 2 exploded, Turret 3 was jammed in train, communications were lost. Ready service lockers on the gun deck exploded starting fires. The 1.1 clipping room beneath control forward was set on fire and burned fiercely. When this fire died down I started down to abandon ship. Lt. Comdr. Andrew two men and myself cut loose a floater net and threw it overboard. I then abandoned ship. I estimate it was then about 0235. The ship sank about three minutes later.

The work of Ensign Cohen in the water was outstanding and in my opinion he deserves to be recommended for promotion at least. He swam out from the raft many times to bring men back to it. I saw no signs of panic at any time. Some men made up their phones and secured them before leaving their stations. The conduct of all hands who came under my observation was exemplary.

H.H. NIELSEN, LT., USN

Statement of Warren P. BAKER, Captain, USMC.

August 10, 1942.

About 0145, Sunday, August 9th, 1942, I was awakened by the General Quarters alarm. I reached the bridge at 0150 and noticed star shell illumination off the port beam. It appeared to be about 10,000 yards away. Also at about the same time, I noticed a ship's searchlight aimed in our direction. I went to the starboard side of the bridge and about 200 yards off the starboard bow, I saw a salvo hit the water. It was then that I realized that we were being fired on. The firing on QUINCY seemed to commence after that salvo. I dashed over to the port side to see who was firing at us and then our plane on the port catapult caught fire.

I thought that I heard a plane in the air over our ships and I did observe a destroyer off our port side fire tracer bullets into the air supposedly at the plane. I walked back to the starboard side of the bridge and soon the ship turned to starboard. Our main battery was fired at this time. Our 5" and 1.1's opened up before the main battery. As our ship faced the searchlight that was now directly aimed on us, I went over to the port side. As I got there, I heard a terrific explosion on the bridge. Apparently it was on the starboard side of the bridge, but I received a shower of falling shrapnel. The wings of the bridge were pierced and there were large holes there.

From the port side, several big explosions occurred, and the ship shook severely. I thought it was a torpedo. A mass of flames leaped up on the port side near the bridge. I tried to get down the ladder but flames and powder gas forced me back. I then went down the small ladder on the after end of the signal bridge when I reached the hurricane deck on the starboard side, I noticed the 5" gun #1, was abandoned, and I looked aft and all the 5" guns were in the same condition. Men were running around the decks with life jackets on and many were were going over the side.

I waited on the starboard side until I was unable to stand up due to the listing of the ship. I then grabbed a life jacket and jumped over the side. At that time my watch said 0240. Around 0300 the ship went down, the fantail sticking out of the water. I was picked up by a destroyer at 0420.

Warren P. Baker,
Captain, U.S.M.C.

STATEMENT OF R. RIEVE, LT.(jg) USN

I was the officer of the deck from 2000 to 2300 on the night of 8 August 1942 and was properly relieved by Lt.(jg) Clarke. I went below to the next deck and slept outside the "Yoke" door leading to the port spare stateroom and radar I. I was awakened by the warning buzzer and went immediately below to my battle station in Radio I one deck below the one on which I was sleeping. Condition "Zed" was set immediately, all phone circuits were manned and Radio I reported manned and ready. A few minutes later I felt a sudden shock as if something had hit the ship and the word came over the JB circuit "Radar I out". Chief radioman Dostal started for the communication office followed by Lt. Comdr. Bierer and myself. Before I got there and just before Dostal got inside the office something (probably shrapnel) went through the office, and there was a sharp crack as if high voltage were sparking across and the magnetic controller of the fire control radar was laying on the deck, making the whole radar useless. By that time we were feeling numerous shocks continuously and I felt a couple times as if our turrets had gone off. The forward twenty millimeters went off spasmodically then stopped. All hands were ordered to lay down on the deck except those on radio circuits. About this time we received our last word on any phones, the JS circuit, which was, "The fantail is on fire". We received no other words on any phone circuits thereafter. I tried the ship's service phone and attempted to call Radio II but the phone was dead. At this time we kept trying continuously to establish communication with stations on the JX and JB phones. I looked forward through the communication office and you could see fire burning outside through holes in the bulkhead. At this time the deck became very hot and smoke came pouring through the ventilator making it almost unbearable in the room. Lt. Comdr. Bierer suggested we see what was going on and if we could help so we started for the door. The inner door to the light lock unlocked but we were unable to get the outer door open, because it was jammed somehow, probably against the lighter door which we used during darkened ship and which had been put on the last time we were in the yards. Mr. Bierer forced the door open a little and by yelling continuously finally got someone to stop and get the door open. When I got outside there was nothing but dead men and flame on the communication deck. Mr. Bierer and myself started to have the men pulled out of the passageway leading athwartships and succeeded in clearing most of the men out of the immediate vicinity. From here I went up to Radar I and looked in. The door was open and the transmitter for the search radar was laying on the deck broken. The spare tube locker was wide open and tubes were laying all around. The FD transmitter seemed to be unharmed. I went back down to the communication deck where life jackets were beginning to be given out. I obtained one and then took

one to to a marine who was lying beside gun #3. Someone was beside him and put in on him. I returned to the radio shack where two talkers, Babb and Burgemeyer, were still there with their phones on. At this time the ship took a sudden list and I told them to put down their phones and get a life jacket and get ready to get over the side. I returned to the gun deck and people were already going over the side. I saw Lt. Comdr. Heneberger who was coming down the ladder to the gun deck. I asked, "What is the score?" He evidently did not hear me and I asked him "Are we abandoning ship?" He answered he did not know. At this time Dostal came down and he and a few others started to put over life raft #7 which was the life raft I was regularly assigned to. Dostal went over by Gun #3 after saying to me "Come on Mr. Rieve." I replied, "Coming", but did not go over at that moment. The ship took a large list again and at this time I went over by gun #3. I ran down the side slipped and skidded off into the water. I swam as hard as I could to get away from the ship and after a few minutes I turned around just in time to see the QUINCY's stern go up in the air and she took her final plunge. At this time I was fairly sure that I saw a ship ahead of the QUINCY laying on its side in the water and I presumed it to be the VINCENNES. The ASTORIA was in flames astern of where the QUINCY had gone down.

There were about 15 or 20 men in the near vicinity of myself so er slowly came together and formed a group, supported ourselves by empty five inch cartridge cans and some lunger, which was floating around. We stayed together this way until the destroyer ELLET came close by and we swam over and went aboard. In our group were Lt. Cox, Lt. (jg) Seal, myself four or five radiomen and various people totaling about 15 in number. There were no men badly wounded that I know of.

R. RIEVE,
Lt. (jg) USN.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

August 12, 1942.

Bryant, E. T., BMLc, U.S.S. QUINCY.

I had the 12 to 4 watch on AA Battery Gun #6 as gun captain. About 0200 my Gun crew was ordered to relieve the lookouts. I had just taken off the phones and sent the last man up. I looked up and saw one flare. I hollered to the Battery Officer. He reported to Sky Aft. Then there were four flares in the air. One of our ships astern started to fire star shells. Our ship then sounded General Quarters. I went to A.A. Gun #2 as Gun Captain. I tested with Sky Aft. He then gave orders to match pointers and fire star shells. I then had one star shell in the tray set on 25.6 seconds and the fuse pots loaded with common. I gave the first, second and third loaders orders to throw the common in the fuse pots over the side as we had the ready boxes full. I ordered the fourth loader and tank openers to load fuse pots with Star Shells at the same time ordering my pointer to fire. We fired star shells for about a minute. The plane on the port side caught fire and Sky Aft said, "Sky Forward take over, I can't control from here". About the same time Gun #6 reported to Sky Aft that that his crew had been hit and asked for five replacements. At the same time my crew was knocked off the gun by what seemed to me as a bomb hit near the gun. I went over and pulled two of the men clear of the gun. I had not received any more orders from Sky Aft or Forward, so I tested with Sky Forward and received no answer.

I went over to the ready boxes to some men that were there to see if I could get enough men out of them to man the gun and fire local control. I did get enough. Some were radiomen, the rest I don't remember. But as we were loading fuse pots with common there was a lot of shrapnel around the after part of the guns all the loaders fell down again. At the same time turret two gave a big flash out of her escape hatches. There was a big explosion forward. The Bridge was on fire. My rammer man and myself were the only ones left on the gun. I had him pull out the fire hose. I turned it on but there was no water. He came back to me and told me the ship was sinking and asked me had I gotten any word to abandon ship. I told him, no. I ordered him to load the gun and then take station in the pointers seat. I was going to set a range and deflection and train. We had the gun loaded but we took another hit forward and smoke came fast. I started choking. The ship was listing to port fast so I ordered my rammer man to abandon ship. I took off my phones and went towards gun #4. As I went by I saw a lot of men there with all there clothing blown off. None of them appeared to be alive. No. 1 stack had steam and hot water spraying all around. The whole Gun Deck seemed to be a fire. The centers of all the wooden life rafts were on fire.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

There were about ten men between Gun #4 and 6 trying to get the floater net loose. I jumped over the gun shield, took my knife out, cut the net loose and fixed it so it would open then told the men to jump. After I was in the water I saw only one man besides myself on the net but heard voices. I hollered out "Here we are", and soon picked up about ten men. Some destroyers were near us. It was so dark I couldn't make them out so I told the men, to keep quiet, because they may be Japans and if they saw us we would be machine gunned or taken prisoners.

About one hour later we saw a searchlight and saw what appeared to be ring buoys being thrown to men in the water near the destroyer that had the light on so I sent an S.A.S. to them, receiving one answer. "We will pick you up."

After sunrise we started picking up men from the ASTORIA that were badly wounded. I was still senior man so I had some of the men not wounded swim out and get some of the deck planks to put the wounded men on. The men brought the planks which we placed on the floater net and put the wounded men on. Everything was going fine. The wounded men were resting, the other men obeyed all orders. The destroyer picked us up about 0700.

E. T. Bryant,
BMLc, USN

STATEMENT OF H. T. MARTIN, ENSIGN, U.S.N.R.

The alarm for general quarters was sounded at approximately 0150. As I came on the gun deck from the starboard side, the ship was illuminated by a flare, or a star shell that was falling just forward of our port beam.

My general quarters station was on the 5" battery #3, which included guns #5 and #7, the after two of the four guns on the starboard side. My two guns were reported manned and ready and then we received orders from sky forward to match pointers and shift to power. The common projectiles had been removed from the fuse pots and from the tray. These were replaced by star shells.

Our guns were ready for action and we were standing by for several minutes. During this time I could hear that the ship was being hit on the port side, and I saw several splashes off of the starboard beam about twenty five yards out. There were two hits on the starboard side around #1 stack. The ship then made a sharp swing to starboard and we opened fire with the guns trained off of the starboard bow. After the second salvo, gun five had a rammer casualty and the gunners made and gun captain began working on it at once. Gun seven fired again and this was the last round fired off battery #3. We had no communication with sky forward and the guns did not move. The flare from the guns, the plane burning just above us on the starboard catapult, and the large fires on the well deck were so blinding that we could see none of the ships except when they fired at us.

A few seconds after gun seven fired her last round the ready service box on gun five was hit, and the box exploded. Several men on gun five were hit. I then went to get the first aid box off of the bulkhead, and as I lifted it off I heard a burst on gun seven and she was silenced too. I found the seal on the first aid box had been twisted in and out of the latch so many times and it was so tight that it was very difficult to break. I finally got it open and as I started back to the guns there was a huge explosion that demolished the box in my hands. I looked up the the starboard side of the bridge was engulfed in flames.

I started back to #2 stack then, and I found Michel, GMLc and Merrit, GM3, the captain of gun five, still working on gun five. Both of their backs were bleeding badly from hits they must have received when the ready service box went up. There was another hit about amidships, and all of the men who were still standing on the guns left them and got in a small group between the gun shack and #2 stack.

Many of the men were badly mangled particularly around the legs. Pharmacist's mate Schwitters did some wonderful work with what gear he had. The much too small supply of tourniquets was exhausted before a third of the men who needed them had them on.

Someone had passed out life jackets and the men seemed to be very cool under the circumstances. I gave the order to abandon ship when I saw she was listing badly. Most of the wounded men had to be rolled down the side because the list was so great. The water was soon up against the shield on the starboard side. There were about three of us that went over the side at this time and we could walk along the side which was almost horizontal. I went in the water after going about two feet past the armor plating.

There was a strong suction current back towards the ship. Later a large wave came over from the ship pushing me out safely. There were a large number of five inch cans in the water which seemed to be put to use by a large number of men.

I found a life net with Lt.(jg) Hopkins and about twenty men on it. Later Lieut. Comdr. Reneberger joined us. The net was badly tangled and it was impossible to open it.

One man by the name of Allen left the net and swam out for a man who was badly wounded and was holding on to a 5" case with his legs.

Sometime later we saw a destroyer, but let it pass because no one could identify her. About fifteen minutes later we saw a destroyer we knew was ours and she took us aboard.

It was impossible to tell what type of shells were being fired at us. The splashes that I saw were not very large and came only one at a time. I saw two even five inch holes and a half moon shape cut in the top of the splinter shield of gun seven. These holes were in the forward part of the shields.

None of the star shells fired from our guns were seen by me or any of the men on our battery.

H. T. MARTIN, Ens. U.S.N.R.

STATEMENT OF R. M. JACOBS LT(jg) USNR

On the morning of August 9, 1942 I was standing the mid watch in the plotting room as the plotting room officer. At 0145 I heard two shots that from past experience sounded like 5" gun fire. I mentioned this fact to the enlisted men on watch and they agreed with me. No sooner had I uttered these words than word came from control forward to man all stations. I put my phones on immediately, but at that moment the general alarm was sounded along with General Quarters. Lieut. C. P. Massey, USNR relieved me approximately two minutes later, no set up having been received at that time I then ascended the ladder leading from the plotting room to the Marine Quarters, second deck, and up the ladder aft of the wardroom pantry to the gun deck. Having been in the plotting room for almost two hours my eyes were not accustomed to the darkness and I made my way cautiously back through the ~~xxxxxx~~ hangar to Turret 3, my battle station. As I entered the turret I glanced over my shoulder and saw three star shells burst off the starboard bow. And then all hell let loose. Flashes of shells, and sounds of heavy gun fire rent the night air. As soon as I entered the turret I established communication with control forward.

The guns being in Ammunition Condition I (loaded but not primed). I received orders to prime and train 270° match pointers in train. Gunfire could be heard all around the turret. Five or six salvos could be felt hitting in the vicinity of the fantail. Approximately two minutes after matching pointers in train the order to commence firing was given and I managed to fire one three gun salvo. After loading the guns again ~~the~~ the turret received a terrific hit which almost knocked me to the deck, but I managed to keep my feet. The shell did not penetrate into the turret. The next word I received was that the turret was jammed in train. The motors were still running but the trainer was unable to move the turret in train. I reported to control forward the circumstances, but control aft acknowledged. The turret had jammed on bearing 190°. Unable to rain the turret and fearing that I might hit some of our own ships I unprimed the guns. At ~~powder handling room~~ that instant fire broke out, through the blower in the upper powder handling room. Word came to me through the voice tube of this casualty. Immediately thereafter fire broke out behind upper powder hoists. this fire was prolonged enough for me to decide to sprinkle. Unable to fire guns because the turret was jammed in train, and fire having broken out in the upper powder room I sprinkled the entire turret, except magazines and ordered everyone to evacuate to the gun chamber. Before leaving the electric the electrician cut off all power and electricity to the turret. When the crew had assembled in the chamber I noticed a decided list to port, but at that time had no idea of the hell that was happening topside nor that the ship was actually sinking.

I talked with my chief turret captain deciding the best course to take, whether to stay inside and avoid shrapnel flying or to chance it outside when the ship listed more heavily to port. I decided to abandon the turret and the men went through the hatch in orderly fashion. I took my flashlight, gun and dropped a stray primer belt in a bucket of water, then abandoned the turret myself. Once outside, the scene was two horrible for words. The hangar and boat deck was a mass of flames. Bodies half bodies, and thick oil covered the deck. A small fire was burning near Gun #3 of the after 1.1 group. My chief turret captain was standing near me and I mentioned to him that we ought to get the life raft on top of the turret. He remembered that it had been blown off. I saw men going down the ladder leading to the third division compartment which was filled with smoke, trying to drag mattresses out and told them to get out of there. At this time I still hadn't any idea what was taking place forward, or that the bow was probably already under water. Then I noticed that a chunk of the face plate of the turret had been blown off from the center gun to the star board side of the turret, a space of about six feet by four feet. This was probably the hit that jammed the turret in train.

I made my way to the starboard life line and looked over the side. For the first time I realized that the ship was sinking, for I saw hundreds of people in the water and the height from the main deck to the water appeared to be ten stories high. At that moment a terrific explosion occurred and turned toward the hangar and saw a great column of flame shoot skyward and a body was hurled into space. I then decided it was about time to abandon the ship. I turned and started to slide toward the port side, the ship lurched heavily to port, and I thought what the hell. Regaining my feet for a brief instance I ran across the fantail which appeared to have at least a 30° list and dove headlong into the sea. I might mention that someone still had a sense of humor left, for as I sailed through the air I heard a voice say "Abandon ship, cast method". It seemed an eternity until my head broke the surface. Glancing over my shoulder I saw the stern of the ship rolling over on top of me. Thinking that the ship would pull me under, I swam my very dammedest to get away Bromit. The next thing I knew a floating four by four drifted by and I managed to cling to it. I finally joined up with a raft brigade and approximately four hours later was rescued by the U.S.S. ELLET. Had it not been for the heroic action of Ensign A.F. Cohen, U.S.N., in organizing the raft brigade and actually swimming out to direct people toward the rafts, I and a lot of men would probably never have been rescued.

A few constructive criticisms and suggestions:-

Life rafts were placed too high on the hangar.
The ties on impregnated life jackets be renewed
after impregnation, as the ties had rotted and
came off in the men's hands.
That floater nets should not be enclosed in canvas
covers.

R. M. JACOBS

Statement of Ensign B. B. Plyer, Jr., D-V(G), USNR

August 10, 1942.

I was on watch at 1.1 mount #4 as spotter in the director when General Quarters was sounded. Before the alarm went off, I noticed three lights, on the beach at Guadalcanal which had evidently been used to guide the attacking ships. As well as I remember, a ship about two points abaft our port beam fired star shells before G.Q. was sounded. The attack started about 0150 August 9th. I was promptly relieved by Ensign E. I. Kohn and proceeded to the forward 20mm on the hurricane deck. When I arrived there, the enemy seemed to be firing at a ship on our starboard bow and two ships on our starboard bow were returning fire. I don't know which ships they were, but one looked like a destroyer and the other a heavy cruiser. After about one or two minutes, (which would make it about 0200), the searchlights played directly on the forward superstructure of the QUINCY. They stayed on only a few seconds and shortly afterwards we were being straddled by enemy fire. Number 2 turret then let out a three gun salvo aimed about three points abaft our port beam. I don't remember Turret I firing. At this time there were two men beside myself on the forward 20mm., one who was manning the phones and had not been relieved from the Condition II watch and one who had just put on the phones at 20mm gun #4 to man his regular G.Q. station. The others were on the searchlights. The word was then passed over the phones for all 20mm and 1.1 gun crews to take cover and I went below to the Communication Deck to get a life preserver. When I was on the communication deck, what seemed to be a direct hit, was scored on #1 5" gun which is also on the communication deck. The hit caused a fire that seemed like one an incendiary bomb would cause. There were numerous small hunks of flame playing around the gun and giving off a suffocating gas. Some men who were standing on the communication deck under shelter were hit and I went down on the gun deck to the Boatswain's locker to see if any first aid personnel was available, but no one was in there. At that time, the Boatswain's locker had not been hit. When I was on the starboard side of the gun deck, I didn't see anyone manning the guns, and they had evidently been put out of commission.

I then went back up to the hurricane deck and was trying to put on a life preserver on a man who had been knocked out when I first realized the ship was going to sink. She was listing badly to port, moreso in the forward part of the ship, than in the after section. I was on the hurricane deck when the water came up. I pulled myself to the starboard side and as I got there the water carried me free. I didn't have to jump as the water was already over the part of the hurricane deck on which I stood. This is further evidence that the bow of the QUINCY went down first.

As far as I know, the forward 20mm didn't fire during the engagement; however, one of my men said he went up to the guns after they had been abandoned and fired at a motor torpedo boat. I didn't see or hear a motor torpedo boat, or an airplane during the engagement

When I left the QUINCY, it was 0234 as my watch stopped at that time. The hood to my flash-proof clothing was pulled up over my steel helmet and I was unable to get the helmet off until I was actually on a life raft. There were eleven (11) men on the raft I was on, and we had four or five buoyant 5" ammunition cans in the raft. When we were floating around, we could see one heavy cruiser which was probably the ASTORIA, still burning. After a few minutes, of floating around in the raft, we met up with two other rafts and with line secured all of them together. We then saw a ship silhouetted against the burning ASTORIA and started to signal with a flashlight but decided not to, since it might have been an enemy vessel. About fifteen minutes later, the ship returned and a flash of lightning revealed it was one of our destroyers. We signalled it and she sent out a boat to tow the three rafts in. The destroyer was the U.S.S. ELLET.

B. B. PLYER, jr.
Ensign, D-V(G), USNR.

STATEMENT BY J. H. TIGHE, ENSIGN, USNR.

August 10, 1942.

When General Quarters sounded I was on watch on the starboard battery. I went to my battle station on the port side on battery 2 immediately. (Lt. Gutman was sleeping by gun #1). Sky aft called for all stations to report manned and ready. Four or five ships were already firing star shells from abaft the port beam. There was a flash from up around gun #2 which temporarily blinded me. Gun 2 reported a casualty and Sky aft called to fill the train with starshells and prepare to illuminate. Searchlights were on us from the port quarter and I saw shorts on the beam. After 3 or 4 salvos we were hit several times. I could not tell where. Gun 6 reported several casualties and went off the line. I called gun 2 to check on the casualties and he reported that everything was allright except one man was missing. He said he did not know if we had been hit or if turret 2 had fired. We were hit on the forward stack and I was showered with burning bits. Sky aft said he had no power and could do nothing up there and went off the line. The after part of the ship was a wall of flame. There was an explosion on my left I think which blew off my tin hat and phones and I found myself up by the forward bulkhead of the gun deck. There was another great explosion forward I saw a Jap light cruiser, the type with the three high fat stacks about 1500 yards on the port quarter on a course to pass astern. Either this ship or a plane strafed the port battery and blew up the stars in the fuse pots and the people on the left hand side of gun 4. There was nothing much left of the port battery by this time. There was another explosion on the gun deck and someone called for pressure on the fire main to fight a ready box fire. I was blinded by smoke and fumes and could not see which it was. I tried the valve on the fire main and made sure that it was open. There was no pressure. I knew that there was no possibility of getting word below to turn in on because there was terrific heat and smoke coming up the ladder by the officers galley, and from the people that had rushed up that way. I called to those who would fight the fire with the hose to duck because there was no water but I was too late. There was an explosion which I guessed was the box.

I was almost overcome with smoke and I went out to the shield by gun 4 and tried to get some air. A lot of people were trying to put the floater nets over, but I told them to wait a bit because we were no longer being fired upon, and the ship had quite some way upon her. After it slowed I told them to go ahead and abandon since it was obvious we were done for. I got a life jacket from up by gun 2. I told the rest of the people to start getting down life rafts and Mr. Ovrom came along and got some people to cut some more loose. We listed to port and took water over the gun shields.

I went to starboard and when Mr. Heneberger had a fender cut loose and thrown over I went over the side. I saw the ship was turning over and swam away. After a while I came on a couple of men holding on to a piece of lumber. They wanted to start swimming in the direction in which they thought land was.

I told them to stay put and listen until we heard people on a raft and then we would all get together. I figured a large group would be easier to see when it came to being picked up. After a while I heard Mr. Andrew and Mr. Cohen, who came over and guided us to the raft.

I believe life jackets should never be stowed with the ties tied. Also when treated to make them flame proof it seems to rot the ties. These should be replaced after the treatment. Rafts. I believe, should be stowed lower down to the deck.

J. H. TIGHE,
Ensign, U. S. N. R.

U.S.S. AMERICAN LEGION

AT SEA

August 10, 1942.

At the time of the sinking of the QUINCY I was Junior Officer of the deck under Lieut.(jg) Clarke. We were steaming in formation with the VINCENNES ahead about 600 yards. and astern of us the same distance was the Astoria. Ahead of us on each bow were two one stack destroyers acting as screening units and their position in relation to the formation was constantly changing. Regularly at 20 minutes after the hour and 10 minutes to the hour we changed course on our diamond shaped course. At the time the ships were reported via TBS as "3 strange ships entering the harbor" were very nearly the following bearings as I had taken checking bearings as follows:

Right tangent Savo Island bore approx. 270 degrees true.

Left tangent Savo Island bore approx. 240 degrees true.

When those two bearings were taken it was known that we were in right position, being astern of the aforementioned ship. We had been turning at the times indicated but at this time we were ordered to stay on our present course which was _____. Standard speed was 15 knots, we were making two thirds and adjusting by revolutions to keep out position in the formation. Lieut. Comdr. Billings was acting as supervisor and was sitting in the Captain's chair. Earlier in the evening we had a radar (SC) contact that a plane was nearby but could get no further information and it was dismissed from our mind.

My relief, Ensign Seawell had been called but was not up yet. and the time was 0145 at the time that the ships were reported. At that instant I was standing on the port side of the pilot house and immediately ran out on the signal bridge and shouted to the Boatswain's mate of the watch to pass the word for All hands man your battle stations and told the bugler, Davis, Sealc to sound double time. This was promptly done and at the same time star shells were observed. The captain came out on the pilot house as did the Navigator As I was not sure of the situation I delayed leaving my post. There was intense firing of starshells that illuminated the area and due to the cloudiness (high) there was a loom effect cast about. At one instant by the burst I saw at least three ships off our port quarter and at the same instant there were splashes of shell fire over the ship. About one minute ~~later~~ was a straddle directly astern. About two minutes ~~later~~ later there was a terrific explosion that knocked me down and either dazed me or knocked me unconscious as did it to Mr. Skaife who was near me. I had a pair of 6-30 power binoculars and tried to get a bearing on the ships. In a few minutes a ship turned their search light on us and then there was a series of terrific and in rapid succession explosions. I moved out to the signal bridge at a few minutes there was a hit in the pilot house and Mr. Billings came out bleeding profusely from the right side of the face and obviously very badly injured and on his last legs. He said to Skaife and me "Keep calm, everything will be all right, and that the ship would go down fighting". At this time the Capt. could be heard giving excited commands. and the plane on the starboard catapult caught fire. Before this the VINCENNES and ASTORIA were afire and the former was in a very bad way. Our safeties popped off at this time and we made a sharp turn to starboard. Then our starboard battery was brought to bear.

By this time the ship was being hit all over, the planes, the boat deck, and various other parts of the ship were afire and blazing furiously. I was unable to get to my battle station which was in Radio II so I went up to the next deck and in order to get to Sky Forward as it did not appear to be manned and I wanted to see if I could be of help.

When I got up there by the 1.1 guns there was a bad fire coming up over the forward part and, with another seaman we attempted to smother it with a heavy piece of canvas and at the same time I closed the door to the forward clipping room (1.1). We could not make any headway against the fire and were forced to leave. I then returned to the bridge and saw a bunch of men crowded at the head of the ladder and I urged them to go below. At this time there were big fires all around and then I ran into the pilot house to see what was there. Everyone was dead---lying around the wheel and the place was in shambles. But the Captain was sitting on the right side of the wheel, obviously badly hurt and I squatted down to the rear of him and the only thing he could say was to "Transfer control to Battle II" He then collapses in my arms and appeared to be dead. I tried to use the phones on the bridge but it was impossible to see, as the place was filled with smoke and burning all around. I walked out on the bridge (signal) and the port flag bag was afire, with one of the smaller signalman named --- we tried to put out the fire. I ran down to Radio I and tried to use the phone at the supervisors desk but all communication was out and the place was filled with smoke. I saw Dostal, CRM and told him the Captain was badly wounded and to come up with me and we would try and get him below but upon trying to get up the ladder from the Com. deck we were forced below by the flames, so I had to go below and then tried to open the quick closing door to the Captain's passageway (ladder) to get to the main deck to work my way aft to Batt. II but the lights were out and the lower decks were full of smoke and it was impossible. At this time the ship developed a severe list to port, which I first thought to be due to a turn at high speed, as we had gone ahead full speed. Then I realized the ship was sinking and already all the life jackets were gone from the overhead stowage from the Com. deck outside Radio I (one) so I tried to find some. The ship was heeling over very rapidly and the flames were everywhere. The shelling had ceased too. I went below to the gun deck, stepping over bodies all over and saw a man in flashclothing sitting up against the port galley bulkhead under the fire hose and I urged him to leave the ship but when I tugged at him he screamed and I believed he was dying. At this time the water was coming up to the gun deck and I just stepped over the empty 5 inch powder cans, kicked off my shoes and swam clear of the ship, swimming out directly and saw the stern rise up and swing to port. The ship evidently went down by the head and to port. I had to swim very hard to avoid getting in the way of the stern. There was a man swimming near me, and so we swam for some time until we came to a life raft on which were many people among whom I recognized eventually as Lieut. Levy, Lieut. Ovrom, Ens Lill, Duritza, BM2c. and several others whom I cannot recall. I imagine

#3

there were about 35 men on the raft or clinging to empty powder cans, timbers and anything that would float. We were in the water until about 0545 when the USS Ellet picked us up. I estimate the time that I abandoned ship was 0235. There seemed to be no fuel oil in the water through there was some light oil.

submitted, J. H. MEE, USRN

Night Sea Battle
Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
August 9, 1942

When General Quarters were sounded (around 0300 August 9, 1942) I was in my bunk asleep in the 4th division compartment. I proceeded to my battle station on the starboard catapult. Put on my flash proof clothing over my dungarees and also put on my metal helmet. Word came from catapult control talker to turn up the planes, but immediately afterword the talker said belay the word. About this time the ship directly astern of us, which was being fired upon, caught fire and I could see it was a cruiser of our type. Immediately a searchlight was trained upon our ship from the port quarter at close range and shells and shrapnel were hitting all around the gun deck and well deck. The starboard five inch battery fired three or four salvos in return and I heard the main 8 inch battery go off once. The plane on the port catapult was hit and burst into flames. I trained the starboard catapult out over the water to try to keep it from catching fire from the port plane. The planes on both catapults were in battery position. The plane in the center of the well deck caught fire about this time. The search light, still off our port quarter, shifted to the ship directly in front of our ship which I could see was a cruiser of our type. I could also see a cruiser directly in front of that one which was turning out of formation and it looked like a three stack English or Australian cruiser. About this time our starboard side was heavily shelled and I took cover on the inboard side of the catapult on top of the pile with E. G. Burke, Sea l/c whose battle station was also on the starboard catapult. It was too hot from the planes burning on the well deck and starboard catapult to stay there so I told Burke lets get off the catapult. I jumped off the starboard catapult into the spud deck which is directly over the movie shack. This deck was piled with 5 inch empty tanks from the bombardment of the beach on August 7, 1942, I looked back but couldn't see Burke any where on the catapult. I went down a ladder from the spud deck to the port side of the gun deck. Lieut. (jg) Chisholm, aviation unit, and Appling (ptr l/c) R division were rigging the hose from fire plug by ~~the~~ gun #6 to the well deck to fight the fire in the planes. I gave them a hand rigging the hose but when we turned it on there was no water. Chadwick sea l/c, 4th division was sitting by Gun #8 with a broken ankle so I dragged him up against the port side of # 2 stack which was the lee side as the starboard side was still being fired upon. Ringus BM2/c, gun captain of gun #6 was dead on Gun #8. I looked for first aid boxes but could not locate any on the port side of the gun deck at all. There was big rip in the deck by gun #6 and I could see into the compartment below. Lieut. (jg) Chisholm and I started casting off life nets from the gun shields of gun #4 and gun #6. Several men were jumping over the port side and the ship was listing heavily to port. I looked at the bridge several times but could not see any one up there at all. The forward director was also shot away. I obtained a life jacket from the locker by gun #6 and handed several

to other people around me. I went again to gun #4 and helped push over a life raft over the gun shield. Steam and hot water suddenly started spouting out of number 1 stack and a choking smoke was coming from forward around number one turret. I helped throw over another live net and jumped over after it. The ship was lost almost all headway at this time and was listing heavily to port. I floated aft very close to the screw guard and just as I cleared the fantail I caught hold of a floater net. There were perhaps ten men on this floater net. After a short time I could hear several people talking close to our net so I called out to Lieut(jg) Kempf aviation unit whose voice I recognized. The two nets were brought together and tied together. The wounded were placed on top of the nets and the other people who were not wounded stayed in the water and hung on to the nets. Lieut Kempf took charge and told us not to call out or flash any lights until it was light enough to see that they were our own ships. After day break we could see our own destroyers picking up survivors so we flashed flashlights and called to them. We saw a man in the water close by without a life jacket and he swam over to our life net, he was a marine sergeant from our ship. We were picked up by destroyer 408, U.S.S. Wilson.

R. D. Byers
GM 2/c
U.S.S. Quincy
4 th Division

Comments and Suggestions

1. Life jackets were not distributed thru out the ship or located in accessible places.
2. No life belts or jackets were worn on battle stations. This would have saved several men.
3. Flash proof clothing was not kept on most battle stations, this resulted in many casualties.
4. The life nets and life rafts were secured to well and there was no fast method of releasing them.
5. The wooden deck did not splinter when ripped by shells. This was a big help.
6. The 5 inch gun shields were not thick enough and were riddled by shrapnel.
7. No water was obtainable to put out fires.
8. The presence of planes amidships was the cause of heavy fires in that area.
9. Metal helmets and flash clothing saved many persons being casualties.
19. More first aid boxes were needed and a more protected place for storing them were needed.

STATEMENT OF ENSIGN E.F. SHANNON, JR.

I stood 1.1" watch on 1.1'S forward. I was on watch at the beginning of the attack. Soon after I had relieved the watch the officers in Sky Control thought they heard a plane. I cautioned my crews and lookouts to be particularly on the alert for a plane. Sometime later, I should judge very roughly about one o'clock (my watch had stopped so that I did not have the exact time), the sound of a plane was very definitely audible. I jumped into the director and stood by but could hear or see nothing more. As there is only one officer to the two mounts on Condition II, I usually move around between the two mounts on watch. I was at the pointer's side of the starboard mount when the alarm for general quarters went. I sprang to the director, took the phones from the man who was wearing them. I could see three star shells falling on the port quarter in a single line that looked as though they had been fired from three different spots, either three different ships or three guns. They appeared to be in the same salvo at any rate. Almost immediately three searchlights were on, off our port quarter and the two ships astern of us were picked out in their light. The searchlights did not seem to have us at first. I had had time to see that my mount and director was manned and ready and to report. I heard other mounts reporting. The shelling began almost immediately but did not seem to be directed on us at first. As well as I can remember, the ship furthestmost astern was badly hit immediately and burning furiously. The next astern was also hit. Then the light seemed to shift on to us. We were apparently hit by a stray shot which ignited the planes. I could only see the starboard one begin flaming. We were now the object of attack! I saw a number of splashes from the same salvo fall just off our starboard quarter. The first solid hit I thought we got was immediately after that to starboard just aft of the hangar. At the time I thought it was just about at the carpenter shop. I remained in the 1.1 director reporting the battle over the phones to the people in control forward. I thought; but as I look back I do not remember hearing anything over the phones after we had been hit aft and I imagine the phones were out.

I believe we turned to starboard and a searchlight was to be seen bearing about 45° relative. The main battery from turrets two and three opened at this light. The first and second salvos seemed to be overs. I could not see any splashes of course but the projectiles appeared somewhat luminous as they went out. The last salvo seemed very close and smoke came up around the light. I felt sure we had got a hit. On the last salvo, flames appeared around the center gun of turret one where the gun protrudes through the turret face.

I looked down to the 1.1 mount which appeared deserted and decided that I might as well have my director crew secure to what protection they could find on the side away from the firing. I crossed to the port side and climbed up on the side of the 1.1

director of #2 and talked to Ensign Carter. I returned to the starboard side but could see nothing. I came back to the port side and just as I climbed up on the director, a two stack ship appeared about two points forward of the port beam. She was not firing. Target angle was probably 250°. Ensign Carter was of the opinion that she was the Australian two stack cruiser. I thought that though it looked very much like her that if it were she, she would be firing on the enemy. She was quite plainly visible in the light from the blazing fire on our well deck, probably no more than 500 yards distant.

I determined to try to fire on her but the crew was all huddled down with their heads down and I succeeded in getting only about two or three men to stand up toward the guns. I doubt if I could be heard. Turret #2 was either hit or exploded from previous hits. There seemed to be a heavy jar of the entire ship about that time. The 1.1 platform was engulfed in flames and smoke. The crews scurried off the platform. It was impossible to make out anyone or anything. I reached the CoNN deck via the after end of the signal bridge. Men were already going over the starboard side. Gun #1 was completely deserted, and I could see no movement on the deck around the gun. The ship was listing badly to port. I waited for some word to abandon ship but realized that things were in such bad shape that it would be impossible for any word to be passed and that it was necessary to get as many men and rafts over as possible in the short time.

I got one group and a life raft over at Gun #3 but the shield was angling up so that it was with difficulty that we got it over. I got over two more parties and rafts to port. I left the ship over the port side.

After several minutes in the water I came upon a raft on which were Lt(jg) Chisholm and Ens. Hammersmith accompanied by a number of men. Lt Chisholm assumed command and ordered the wounded into the center of the raft. We joined other rafts and later the party with Mr. Andrew in command. The spirit of the men in the water was good and the wounded bore up without a whimper.

Ensign, E. F. Shannon, Jr.

Statement of Lt.(jg) J.C. SMITH, Jr., USN.

August 10, 1942.

When general quarters sounded, I was asleep in my room. I manned my battle station, Spot II, immediately. On arrival in control aft, I was unable to get any information from any station as to the reason for G.Q. I took my station on Director II, put on the JC phones, and established communication with Spot I and Plot. I felt an explosion on the ship and commenced searching for a target. Spot I reported on the target and gave a setup to Plot. I found a target on the port quarter-- a ship with two searchlights trained in our direction. Spot I reported that he was obscured. I reported on the target believing it was the same one Spot I reported he had been on. I believe we had fired two or three salvos at this time. Control was shifted to Director II. I called for Lt. Comdr. Andrew, the after control officer, and found he was not there, so I ordered the pointer, Church to shoot. He fired but we had no firing circuit. Someone in control aft reported to me that the boat deck was burning. There was an explosion nearby which I believed to be in Batt II. At the time, control was shifted aft, a burning cruiser went across between us and the target preventing us from firing -- this ship obscured us twice -- once when I had control, and once when Spot I had control.

Smoke was getting very thick in control aft. I put my head through my hatch to have a look around. The after part of the ship was being hit with regularity. I was able to see the "shorts" of the Jap salvos land about 20 yards from our port side. I went back down to the spotting glass and found the smoke very bad inside. Since we could do no good from there anymore, I gave the word to abandon the station and departed via the hatch over my side to the entrance to Batt II. There was an acrid smell in that area, many dead people, and much carnage about the deck and bulkhead. I went down the ladder to the boatdeck which was an inferno. The aft 20mm. clipping room was in the process of exploding -- that is, the bullets were popping off. I went aft on the port side of the boat deck. Strobel, CBM, showed me a ladder down the after face of the hangar to the fantail. I found turret three trained about 160° relative and jammed in train. I noticed a small fire inside the starboard 1.1" gun shield which burned out shortly. The turret crew was out on the fantail. The ship was turning to starboard and listing slightly to port, speed about 15 knots. I saw Ensign Lill leading out a deck hose to fight a fire on the starboard side of hangar, but there was no pressure on the firemain. The ship was listed about 5-10° to port and slowing down. The men on the fantail had taken down the port lifelines and laid out a life raft and about four floater nets near the port waterway. They requested permission from me, as senior officer present, on the fantail, to abandon ship because men were floating by on nets and rafts from forward. Because of the speed of the ship, I refused permission. I detailed about four men from topside to assist

in getting people out from Repair III. The ship started to list very badly so we abandoned ship aft. The port waterway near the hangar, was practically in the water.

Much later, I was on a 5" tank and a large spar in the water with three other men when I heard Ensign Cohen's voice calling us over. We swam over, found two life rafts, and about four floater nets lashed together with about 75-100 men there. Ensign Cohen saved many lives by swimming out and pulling drifting people over to his "convoy" of nets. About $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before sunrise, were picked up by the ELLET.

J. C. SMITH, Jr.
Lt(jg), USN

August 12, 1942.

BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS, THE MORNING OF AUGUST 9, 1942.

Statement of

Connaly, C.G.M., USS QUINCY

Between two and 2:15 General Quarters was sounded. I was sleeping out side of No. 1 turret. By the time I got in the turret star shells or flares were already falling over the ship, making us a perfect target. We manned the turret and fired three salvos, but I doubt very much if we hit anything as they were training the turret very fast, and we could not see the target. At that time we got a hit out side the turret which damaged the turret, so I went in the booth to see what the trouble was. Just as I went in the turret's booth we received a hit in the gun chamber, the turret officer and I began to sound the alarm and start the sprinkling system, but there was no pressure. As we did that we received another hit in the booth, the junior turret officer and turret officer and talker and range finder went out the escape hatch in the booth. I ran out in the gun chamber, which was a mass of flames, and jumped through the hatch hurting both my legs, and receiving burns on my arms and legs. As I crawled away from the turret I heard a heavy explosion and seen flames coming from No. 2 turret. Repair parties were trying to put out the fire but had no water. I crawled over several bodies on my way to gun No. 4. Then turret No. 2 went up and blew several men over the side. I then grabbed a 5" tank and jumped over the side.

I noticed the canvas covers on the floaters were burning, suggest they be left off in the future. Life jackets should be put all over the ship and not in one place only. Connaly, CGM, USS QUINCY.

STATEMENT BY L. M. SMITH, WTlc

No. 1 Fire room

August 10, 1942

General Quarters at 0145.

First hit about 0150 or 0155. Had minor flare back but fires started immediately. Second hit shortly after 0200. Fires out and fuel suction gone. Possible blower damaged. (Flash of fire came down blower). A few tubes in # 2 boiler burst and water getting in fire box. Secured oil pump and blower. Then all hands left fire room safely.

L. M. SMITH, WTlc, USN.

STATEMENT BY ~~XXXXXX~~ HENRY J. MONSIMER, WTlc.

August 18, 1942.

Stationed in #2 Fireroom

1. General quarters went at 0145.
2. No. 3 blower had to be stopped on account of a hit above at 0200.
3. Fireroom was filled with smoke at 0203.
4. Feed lines started leaking at all flanges at 0203.
5. Feed pressure dropped to 500 lbs. at 0204.
6. Port bulkhead sprung leak at 0206.
7. Secured No. 4 boiler just before water got to the fire box at 0210.
8. Secured No. 3 boiler when water got to fire box at about 0217, steam pressure had dropped to 150 lbs.
9. All hands left fireroom at 0219 safely.

HENRY J. MONSIMER,
WTlc, U.S. Navy.

Statement by Perry Roberts, Ensign, A-V(N), USNR.

August 10, 1942.

At General Quarters, I proceeded from my bunkroom to the gun deck, thence aft on port side to the well deck. Immediately I saw what appeared to be a parachute flare on our port quarter. Soon after, I saw a searchlight in the same direction and then ~~the starboard side~~ several salvos were fired by the ship using the light. I went to the starboard side to get my life jacket. While in the silo, I saw a cruiser burst into flames on our starboard quarter. By this light, I could see another cruiser closer to us in the same direction. Soon after, there were several explosion very close on our starboard side. Then, a searchlight was put on our ship, from the starboard side and almost immediately a salvo hit the starboard silo and well deck. The plane on the starboard catapult burst into flame and the fire seemed to break out all over the well deck and boat deck simultaneously. Previous to the first hit on the well deck, Lt.(jg) Webster had come into the silo to report a hit on the fantail. "V" Division men went to put some bombs which were in the hangar over the side just before the fire broke out. The heat was so intense that I went upon the gun deck on the starboard side. None of the guns were manned and the deck was strewn with dead and injured. As I started across to the port side, I met Lt(jg) Compton who was staggering up to his feet. I helped him to the entrance of the Captain's Cabin but gas and fumes chased us back. Then I helped him over to No. 1 stack and put him on some gun covers thrown into a pile. As I started to look at his leg, steam and hot water forced us away. He went to the port side and I lost track of him. Then I started to help cut down life rafts from the stacks. Soon Smith, Reagan and Chisholm came and helped. When the third one went over, I could not see where they went. I looked around but could find nothing more to put over the side. I went back to the starboard side but there wasn't anyone there. When I went back to the port side, water was coming over the deck. There were no more life rafts so I went over the side. I swam directly away from the ship. Then I spotted a life raft astern and swam for it. When I finally caught up, I was so "pooped" that I couldn't remember much for awhile. Finally a destroyer passed close by and hailed us -- later it came back and picked us up. My watch stopped at 0234 and must have stopped soon after hitting the water as it is not waterproof.

Perry Roberts,
Ensign, A-V(N), USNR.

STATEMENT OF GRICE, HENRY WYATT, CGM

I had the 8-12 watch and was sleeping underneath the overhang of turret 1. I was awakened by sound of gunfire and saw a flare over toward the longest island. Most of the 1st division were sleeping underneath and around the overhang. At the first sound of the alarm we manned the burret. The guns were loaded from the air attack the day before. The turret officer ordered "prime!" Turret 1 fired immediately after turret 2. Loaded second time but were at limit of train and trained over to port side and fired. Loaded and fired salvo #3. Training motor kicked out and the training stop alarm bell rang. Electrician immediately reset training motor and it started up o.k. There was a heavy explosion outside of turret on port side. Flames leaped up by pointers sight port.

Smoke and sickening smelling fumes came through the ventilation system. Sprinkling system started. Conolly CTC asked "Where is the fire?" My position is Master Gun Captain and I asked upper powder if they had a fire. Weak GM2/c said that he had no fire and I nodded my head to Connolly. He yelled at turret officer to cut sprinkling system and went into booth immediately. Sprinkling stopped. Order from booth to load. Fully loaded left gun and only one bag of powder each for right and center.

Sprinkling system started again. Closed plugs on right and center immediately. Men started out on port hatch. The Stbd hatch was difficult to open and I asked what was the trouble. The men said order from the booth to clean out. I went out, down stbd side and saw a bunch from Turret 1 standing on port side of Turret 2. I was about to the Captain's cabin outside door when I saw a flash and a hole appeared in back plate of Turret 1.

I made my way to A.A. gun #3. Lyons a marine was throwing ammunition from ready box over the side. Butson, 4th division and bellott, 4th division and someone I did not recognize were trying to make gun # 3 fire again. It fired once and then hot steam or water started coming down. I went to port side and stepped in shell hold aft of gun #6. We started throwing life rafts over. After life rafts were over I looked in lifejacket locker. A man came up the ladder and gave me one. Water was up in water way when the last joined a group around a raft. Ensign Lill gave his life jacket to a man that didn't have one and swam ahead and helped tow the raft.

Grice, Henry Wyatt, CGM

STATEMENT BY K. J. PERRY, Y2c

I was on watch when General Quarters sounded. I manned my phones (JA) in Control Fwd and waited for orders. The Bridge tested and all stations acknowledged. Word came from bridge to train on searchlights on our port quarter and fire when ready. Word was then received that we were making various turns to right and left. Battle Two reported that we were hit aft and the Bridge told Central Station to take care of it. Then Bridge told us to shoot at the searchlight on our bow. The next and last word I received from Bridge was "We are going through the middle, give them hell". I then lost all communications.

K.J. PERRY, Y3c, USN

Statement of J. R. ROSS, CSK(AA)

August 10, 1942.

General quarters was sounded about 0200, August 9, 1942. I was asleep at the time, the general alarm woke me.

I proceeded through the mess halls and on to the well deck and across the gun deck to the forward fire control station above the bridge. At that time, there were numerous star shells or flares in the air in the vicinity of the ship. The QUINCY was not firing at that time. I manned my station and had communication with all stations on phone circuit JW. Several salvos were fired at the target. Ranges commencing at about 9000 yards and the last range was about 5000 yards.

During the time the QUINCY was firing, several direct hits were made on the QUINCY, and the boat deck and vicinity of Batt II was on fire; I felt two distinct heavy hits and the ship (QUINCY) ceased to fire. The gunnery officer sent someone to the bridge as all communications were out. The party came back and the order was given to abandon the ship. By this time there was a heavy list to port, and the ship sank very soon after I left her.

J. R. ROSS,
CSK(AA)

Astoria

CONFIDENTIAL

USS ASTORIA

COMMUNICATION OFFICER

2. Prior to the engagement a contact report had been received from NPM (Honolulu) in plain language urgent, reporting 3 CA's and several other ships at a given position on cus 120° true speed 15 kts. This message was received during the 1800-2000 watch and was the only information received of enemy vessels in the Solomons Island Area before the engagement started. A coded rebroadcast of this report was being decoded when battle started.

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#2

USS ASTORIA

(EXCERPTS FROM REPORT OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER)

5 On the night of August 8th, as on the previous night, to cover the entrance assigned, Commander Task Group 62.3 selected a point between SAVO and FLORIDA Islands (Lat. $09^{\circ}-07'-00''$; Long. $159^{\circ}-57'-12''$ E.) and patrolled the perimeter of a square, five miles on a side, the corners of which were on North-South, East-West diagonals through this point. The Task Group passed through the Northwest corner of this square at 2000, and took course $045^{\circ}(T)$, speed 10 knots. Thus the group changed 90° to the right to an inter-cardinal course every thirty (30) minutes, with such adjustments of speed and intervals between changes as were necessary to pass through the corners on schedule. (Please see enclosure (A)).

7 During the day a general information despatch had been received that three enemy cruisers, three destroyers and a gunboat were North-east of Bouganville Island, about 400 miles away. No further information was received by ASTORIA regarding this force. Another despatch placed enemy submarines close to the area. Air attack was to be expected at daylight the following morning. With this information at hand and the general uncertainty of the situation in mind orders for the night were prepared. Patrol areas and location of forces were delineated on the chart and Commander Screening Group instructions for night action were laid out. Special emphasis was placed on the maintenance of an "all around" radar watch, alertness of lookouts, possibility of submarine attack, station keeping and general readiness. Surprise night action drills for the watch were not required. These drills were discontinued on arrival Guadalcanal and the word was passed the next ime night action was announced, it would be for action with the enemy.

(B) The action:

9 Weather Conditions. The night was very dark and overcast, with occasional light mists of rain. Light breeze from Southeast. Ceiling about 1500 feet. It is estimated that average visibility was about 10,000 yards. Heavy clouds surrounded SAVO Island and there were heavy clouds in the Guadalcanal area.

10 Captain's Narrative. At about 0155 I was called by the Junior Officer of the Watch who informed me that star shells or flares were on the port quarter; at the same instant the main battery fired to port and I heard the general alarm. I went to the pilot house via the port wing of the bridge. As I entered the pilot house the main battery fired to port again. The flares and searchlight were to the South of us well inside the bay, and my first reaction was that our vessels had spotted an enemy submarine on the surface, and we were firing into our own ships. I ordered cease fire and asked the Supervisor what we were firing at - almost instantly the word came back from Control, "Enemy Cruisers Sighted", and at the same time an enemy ~~salvo~~ salvo landed ahead of us and

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close to VINCENNES. Immediately I gave commence firing. All of this happened in a very short period of time, certainly not over sixty seconds from the time I left the emergency cabin. About this time I was advised that the cruisers were of NACHI class.

// In the meantime I had rung up full speed and swung the ASTORIA slightly to the left to bring the targets as far forward as possible and still not interfere with the fire of the QUINCY. It was about this time that Control advised me that turret II was at the limit of bearing to port and requested the ship swing left. It now appeared that all three ships of our group were heading from 10° to 15° to the left of the base course (315°T) in a line of bearing, and it was my impression that the Group Commander in VINCENNES intended to swing left to a Southerly course in such manner as to permit QUINCY and ASTORIA to come in astern, and at the same time keep the port batteries of all three ships bearing throughout the maneuvers. On this supposition I based my procedure and endeavored to regulate my course and speed accordingly. (See enclosure (A)).

12 At this time, we were firing regular main battery salvos to port, and both the port and starboard 5" batteries were firing. The enemy had found our range. I believe we were first hit forward in the bow; then in rapid succession, turret #1 was put out of action and a serious fire was burning in the hangar. Shortly after I noticed that the fire had spread to the well deck and the plane on each of the catapults was on fire. Next we were hit somewhere near the break of the gun deck on the port side and a bad fire was starting inboard of 6 and 8 5" guns.

13 Throughout this period, which lasted about six minutes, I was endeavoring to zig-zag the ship by using 10°- 15° of rudder as salvos were falling close. In the meantime I could see QUINCY and VINCENNES firing ahead of me slightly on my starboard bow. Each vessel was on fire amidships as was the ASTORIA. At this time the Navigator and the Chief Quartermaster were killed. Both had been assisting me in following a course which would maintain our fire to port.

14 At this point ASTORIA was found to be drawing ahead on QUINCY and we were almost in her line of fire. If I turned to the left, I would cross her line of fire, so I ordered right standard rudder to let her draw ahead. It was my intention to turn with left rudder as soon as QUINCY drew ahead. At this point we were hit on the starboard side of the bridge structure, and the signal officer, helmsman, and the boatswain's mate, who was beside the engine room telegraphs, were all knocked down. For a short instant there was no helmsman, then the boatswain's mate, although severely wounded, got on his feet and took the wheel. Immediately left rudder was put on the ship and she started swinging back to port.

15 With the turn to the right, the battery was swung to starboard and number two turret, and, I believe, the 5" battery, was now firing on the starboard quarter. I could not tell about number three because of the fire aft.

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16 I now realized that we were losing speed. Flank speed had previously been rung up. On inquiry the Engineer Officer advised that the after engineroom was being abandoned because of heat and smoke from the fires overhead. He also advised that he was having trouble in his boiler rooms and that he could not make over eight knots.

17 Returning to the time when ASTORIA turned right to avoid QUINCY fire which was about 0201. From this time until about 0206 the ship seemed to be under the heaviest concentration of enemy fire. Shells were falling on all sides and the ship was hit repeatedly from the foremast aft. After this time enemy fire gradually diminished and ceased about 0215. The situation within the ship from the Captain's position at about 0209 was as follows:

- (a) Steering control and engine control still on bridge.
- (b) Ship making about seven knots through the water, after engineroom abandoned. Chief Engineer reported trouble in boiler rooms and losing power.
- (c) In communication with Central Station, this station intact. No serious fires reported below decks.
- (d) No communication with Control Forward, Aft, or Battle II. No. 1 turret out, No. 2 in commission, No. 3 - no information. Fire burning above navigation bridge. Battle II obscured by fierce fire burning on boat deck and in the hangar and well deck.
- (e) Secondary battery port and starboard, with exception of No. 1 gun completely out of commission due to fires on gun deck port and starboard side.
- (f) All fire main risers to upper decks forward of hangar broken and no water to fight topside fires.

18 About the time of the above summary the QUINCY reappeared on the port bow, blazing fiercely from bow to stern. She seemed to have considerable way on and was swinging to the right. For a moment it looked as if we could not avoid a collision, but hard left rudder swung us clear. She passed ~~ast~~ to starboard and a short time after blew up.

19 As we swung by the QUINCY, we steadied on a course of 185°T. An enemy searchlight appeared just abaft the port beam. Some men on the deck under the bridge were directed to get word to turret #2 to train on the light. Lieut. Comdr. DAVIDSON, USN, the Communications Officer, climbed up to trainer's sight and coached the turret on the light. The turret fired and I saw the shells hit. This was the last shot fired by ASTORIA. The Boat-swain's Mate at the wheel now advised that he was weak from his wounds and couldn't hold on much longer. Shortly after the quarter-master of the watch appeared from the after part of the bridge

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where he had been tending the wounded and took the wheel. Almost immediately the quartermaster advised that ship had lost steering control. Steering was shifted to Central Station and the ship was conned from the bridge by telephone. At that time I told Central to steer South and zig-zag.

50 CORRELATION OF EVENTS JUST PRIOR TO THE ACTION:

Considerable difficulty has been experienced in correlating the events which transpired in the few minutes just prior to the time when the Captain was called and the ASTORIA opened fire. In this connection attention is invited to the statement of the Supervisory Officer of the Watch, (Enclosure (D)), and those of personnel on the bridge (Enclosure (G)). After careful consideration of all the statements, and information obtained from personal interviews with a large number of officers and men, the following conclusions are reached:

0140-0145 It is understood that some time in this period there was a TBS broadcast to the effect that three strange vessels were passing west of SAVO Island. This announcement was not received on ASTORIA due to use of TBS by the group commander in discussing changes of patrol courses with the vessels of the group, and acknowledgements by the Officers' of the Deck. See statements of Lieut. Comdr. TOPPER and Lieut (jg) BURKEY (Enclosures (D) and (G)).

0148 Heavy underwater explosions felt by the Supervisor of the Watch. These were thought to be depth charges by the Supervisor and he emphasized anti-submarine precautions accordingly. Captain not notified.

0148-0153 During this period it is definitely established that there was firing to the Southwest of our position, but due either to weather conditions or mist it appears that no firing was observed by the Supervisor, the Officer of the Deck, or the Control party until about the time the flares were sighted astern.

0153 Flares sighted astern - gun flashes observed just abaft the port beam. GAMBERRA observed on fire.

The Gunnery Officer, Lieut. Comdr. TRUESDELL only observed the flares. As the first flare appeared he alerted the battery to port and ordered the main battery guns loaded, then went outside the control station to observe more closely. Shortly, after this an enemy cruiser was silhouetted against the flares. When the flares were first sighted he requested the Officer of the Deck to go to General Quarters and later when the silhouette appeared he requested permission to open fire. When answer was not received he opened fire immediately and with most commendable promptness.

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0153
(cont)

The Ship's Spotter, Lieut(jg) C.A. SANDER, jr., USN, on the other hand, saw the CANBERRA on fire, and the firing to the Southwest at the time the battery was alerted and trained out. He then looked to the left and saw the flares. Shortly after he saw the silhouette of a Japanese cruiser and commenced firing on the word from the Gunnery Officer. It seemed that each thought the other was observing the same events.

The Officer of the Deck and the Supervisor were advised of the flares from many different sources. The Supervisor went to the port wing of the bridge to examine them more carefully and told the O.O.D. to call the Captain. He also gave instruction to stand by the General Alarm.

The Officer of the Deck was involved in answering the Group Commander over the TBS and for this reason did not immediately call the Captain.

The quartermaster of the watch saw the flares, saw the firing and rang the General Alarm without order to do so.

The J.O.O.D. Lieut(jg) MULLEN apparently realized the delay and called the Captain.

0155

Captain called. General Alarm sounded. Ship fired first salvo.

It is not desired to place any census on any individual for failure to act promptly during the period 0153-0155 but it must be observed that in excitement of the moment no check was made to see that the Captain was called promptly and there was some delay in sounding the General Alarm for Battle Stations.

It is noted and emphasized however, that at the first indication of enemy presence, the Gunnery Officer acted with most commendable promptness in having his battery alerted, trained in the direction of the target and guns loaded; and particularly is he to be commended for the fact that he opened fire at the instant an enemy cruiser was silhouetted against the flares and recognized as such. Furthermore, he is noted that he continued his fire, with all means at hand, until it was no longer possible to fight the battery. In this connection he acted within the battle plan of the ship which authorized the Gunnery Officer to open fire in case of a surprise attack and notify the Commanding Officer.

The quartermaster of the watch, Radke, R.A., QM2c, must also be commended for his promptness and

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0155 initiative in ringing the General Alarm without
(cont) orders when he saw action was imminent.

(D) Comment on the Situation that Existed at the Beginning of the Action:

⁵² The enemy was first sighted well on the port quarter silhouetted against the flares at a distance of about 5,600 yards, on course approximately east, speed at least 20 knots. Our course was 315° T., speed 10 knots. These relative positions and speeds placed our group under a severe disadvantage. The only move possible without disrupting fire was to the left. It has since been established that this was the plan of the Group Commander (See enclosure (A)). Although no signals were received to indicate such a plan, the situation and the observed movement of the leading vessel (VINCENNES) to the left made obvious the Group Commander's intention. It is regrettable that engine and fireroom casualties, early in the action, on all three ships, prevented acceleration of speed to hasten this turn to the left.

(E) Noteworthy Events:

⁵³ The following is a tabulation of noteworthy events during the action in the order of their sequence. Times are approximate.

0153 Sighted flares. Alerted battery to port. Guns loaded.

0153-0155 Enemy fired two salvos, both short. First landed port beam ASTORIA, second just short of VINCENNES. Enemy illuminated our group by two searchlights which were separated by a considerable distance.

0154-0155 Captain called. ASTORIA fired first salvo. Sounded General ~~xxxx~~ Alarm.

0155 $\frac{1}{2}$ ASTORIA fires second salvo. Enemy fired third salvo which landed between VINCENNES and QUINCY. No hits.

0156 ASTORIA third salvo. Enemy fourth salvo, landed just short ASTORIA. One 8" hit thru hull forward of No. I turret, which passed thru paint locker - no fire started.

0156 $\frac{1}{2}$ Enemy fifth salvo. Hit amidships started fire on boatdeck and in hangar. The next salvo, which followed almost immediately, hit No. I turret and put it out of action killing all in the gun chamber and upper powder room. From this time on the enemy was hitting with increasing rapidity with both large and small calibre guns.

0156-0201 ASTORIA fired salvos number 4, 5, 6 and 7 to port and No. 8 directly astern (See Gunnery Officer's report,

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- 0156-0201 enclosure (E)). Port and starboard 5" batteries were firing at enemy cruisers and searchlights. Also during this period two enemy vessels were observed to be hit and fires started. Fire spreads in hangar and well deck. Planes on catapults on fire. Tried repeatedly for fire fighting parties - eventually Central advised Mid-ship repair party killed, and all fire main risers to upper deck severed. No fires reported below. Group of engineers sent to fight fires.
- 0200-0201 Close to line of fire of QUINCY, turned right, shifted main battery fire to starboard. About this time gun deck port and starboard completely on fire and all secondary battery out of action with exception of gun No. 1. Gun No. 2 was placed out of action by shell which tore off about 18" of the muzzle. Entire well deck and hangar a mass of flames.
- 0201-0202 Helmsman shot down and shortly replaced. Noted ship not gaining speed altho flank speed was ordered. Engine room reported after fireroom suffering from smoke and heat and trouble in boiler rooms. Losing power. Lost communication with Control. Noted fire above the bridge.
- 0201-0203 Got left rudder on ship. Engine room reported after engine room abandoned. Noted turrets #2 and #3 were firing to starboard also 5" gun No. 1 and the 20 mm guns forward of it were firing. Also believe the forward starboard 1.1 and those on the after deck were firing. Forward 1.1 silenced shortly after this.
- 0204-0205 Vessel turning left. Turrets firing intermittently, apparently under local control.
- 0208 (About) Turning to left. Turret II trained to port and fired. Losing speed rapidly. QUINCY appeared on port bow turning right with considerable way on. Almost collided with her. She was on fire fore and aft and blazing terribly. Enemy fire decreasing rapidly. Steady on course 185°. Saw searchlight appear on port beam. Directed men outside turret #2 to get the turret on. Lieut. Comdr. DAVIDSON climbed up to trainer's window and coached turret on. It fired and landed in the searchlight. I myself followed the shells in flight and saw the flash when they hit.
- 0210-0211 Lost steering control and shifted to Central Station. Ordered course South and directed Central to continue zig-zag. Quartermaster reported the gyro repeaters were out on the bridge.
- 0215 Engine room advised all power gone and abandoning engineering spaces. Shortly after Gunnery Officer

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0215 appeared on bridge. Advised l.l clipping room above
(cont) bridge badly on fire and ammunition exploding. He
recommended going below. Passed word to clear lower
deck stations and move to forecastle.

0215-0445 Attempted to put out fires. Attended wounded.

0445 Apprehensive ship might blow up due to extensive fire
in wardroom and below which might reach magazines.
Embarked all wounded and able bodied men in BAGLEY
which came alongside. Did not know of part aft.

0600 Returned to ship, took off wounded from part aft.
Attempted further salvage operations.

1210 Finally abandoned the ship.

1215 ASTORIA turned over and sunk.

(EXTRACTS FROM STATEMENT BY GUNNERY OFFICER)

GENERAL SITUATION

1. The ship was in Condition of Readiness TWO with Gunnery Stations manned as follows:- One main battery control station forward, fully manned; three turrets, two guns in each turret manned with necessary powder and shell supply personnel. A.A. battery completely manned with 7 or 8 men on each gun; both A.A. Directors manned; four 1.1 mounts, each mount half manned; and one man on each 20mm gun. The forward main battery firecontrol Radar was manned and maintaining a continuous search. The after main battery firecontrol Radar was not in operation due to a shorted transformer. No replacement of this transformer has been available since the ship left Pearl Harbor and thus this Radar has been out of service for some time. The Plotting Room was manned with one half crew which is sufficient to carry on until the full crew arrives. The Main Battery was in primary collective with Director I controlling. The A.A. Battery was in the night ready position. All instruments were cut in. All firecontrol equipment and other material was in excellent condition. All turret guns were loaded with projectiles, these having been loaded during threatened air attack the previous day. Powder trains in all turrets were filled. All ammunition hoists on the five inch battery were filled, as well as fuze pots on the guns and ready boxes. 1.1 guns were ready to fire with clips in trays.

2. Watch AFIRM had the watch commencing at 2400 of the night in question. I was the Control Officer in the Main Battery Control Station Forward. Shortly after coming on watch I checked the main battery Radar and as it appeared to be operating unsatisfactorily I sent a man to call CRM Datko, the Radar material maintenance man. He came up to Control about 0120 or 0130 together with Ensign Herzberger, the Radar Officer. I heard mentioned that some tubes were probably defective and that these would be replaced with new tubes. I continued to watch the Radar and soon it was again in good operating order. The test was made on the ships ahead.

THE BATTLE.

1. Shortly after the Radar was ascertained to be repaired, I heard a report from the lookout (JL) talker, and from others outside on the Air Defense Control Station (Sky Control), "Starshells astern." I immediately went outside the Control Station to the Sky Control Station, noted the four "stars", which did not appear to me to be starshells, but aircraft flares. I immediately ordered "all stations alert" and went back into the Control Station. The Bridge asked if "stars" were "starshells" or "flares" and I told the talker to say "flares." I also told Bridge to sound "General Quarters" because I was sure they were "flares" and probably dropped by enemy planes which meant "Enemy Action". About the same instant that I entered the Control Station the enemy commenced firing on us. The Enemy's first salvos were short and ahead. I requested orders from

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Bridge to "Commence Firing," and, as General Quarters and still not been sounded, requested them to sound it. No order to "Commence Firing" or permission to open fire came from Bridge so I gave the spotter permission to open fire, which was done. The spotter had, an instant before, reported the ships as Japanese cruisers of the Nachi type which, I believe was reported to the Bridge as "Enemy Cruisers". Fire was opened and two salvos were fired when word came from the Bridge "What are you firing at? Cease firing." I ordered "Cease Firing" and replied "Japanese Cruisers", and again requested to resume fire. "Commence Firing" came from the Bridge. In the meantime we received our first hits amidships. I then ordered "Commence Firing" again and immediately another salvo was fired. Immediately after this salvo Turret I went off the line and someone reported that Turret I had been hit. The three previous salvos were on a bearing of about 240-225 relative as the ship initially turned to starboard.

Soon Turret II could not bear and repeated requests were made to the Bridge to "come left" to keep the forward turret bearing. The course was soon changed left and Turret II could again match in train and bear and one more salvo was fired. In the meantime I had ordered the director pointer to shoot on one or any ready lights. Turret III lost power intermittently but soon both were firing. The Enemy's course and high speed across our stern, and our change of course to the right about this time, made the bearing draw rapidly aft. Director I kept training aft and could not see because of the fire amidship. I then ordered Plot to shift control to Control Aft and Director II. Control Aft replied immediately that "they could not see a thing on account of the smoke and fire on the well and boat deck." Director I, in the meantime, had trained around to the starboard quarter and I ordered control to be shifted back to Control Forward and Director I. This had no sooner been done, and one or two salvos fired, when a hit was received in the near vicinity of the Control Station which filled it completely with hot gas and smoke and severed all communications with other stations. All phones were tested to no avail. The smoke and gas was so thick that the majority of the personnel had to leave their station. Director I also lost transmission and control. Director I fired about 6 or 7 salvos during the period it had control of the battery. I stayed in the Control Station and attempted to get communication on each circuit on my selector switch, the 17 MC circuit and via Ship's Service telephone but everything was cut. The enemy had ceased firing as no more salvos were falling on or near us. As there was nothing else I could do, I then left the Control Station.

Fires were raging on the upper deck. The A.S. battery was not firing. Fires were also raging on the well-deck and hangar deck. The planes on the catapults were on fire. There was a fire in the 121 clipping room under the Control Station and in the 20mm. ready boxes on the forward port side of Control platform. Many of these crews had been killed and wounded. I then took charge of clearing these areas of wounded and administering first aid, and to put out the fires in the 121 clipping room and the 20 mm. ready

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service boxes. I sent Ensign Middleton down for a hose as the 1#1 sprinkling system had been severed. There was no water by the time the hose was available. The fire was probably set by a direct hit from a 5" caliber shell and was too extensive even in the beginning to put out by other means than water. I then saw to it that all wounded were evacuated from these upper levels and the dead noted. These severely wounded were given first aid and morphine and carried below. After evacuation of topside levels I reported the situation to the Captain and advised him to leave the Bridge and get below on account of the danger of the 1#1 clipping room fire. I then assisted on the Bridge in getting the Navigation Bridge clear of personnel. We worked gradually down clearing each level on the way and had all men sent to the forecandle, well forward.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

1. The following sequence of events records each noteworthy event in what I think was the sequence in which they occurred. No attempt to give times is made as I had no idea of the time.

Event

4 Flares sighted astern.

Alerted all stations. Told Bridge to sound G.Q. Trained Director to Port. Turrets matched. A.A. Battery on Bearing.

Enemy 1st Salvo landed.
500 yds short; 200 yds ahead

Loaded main battery. Requested permission to "Commence Firing." Told Bridge to sound "General Quarters".

Enemy 2nd salvo landed.
500 yds short; 100 yds ahead.

Told Spotter to fire.

ASTORIA fired 1st salvo.

Bridge sounded General Quarters.

Fired second salvo.

A.A. Battery Commenced Firing.

Enemy 3rd salvo landed.
500 yds short.

Bridge ordered "Cease fire." Repeated by Control.

Enemy 4th salvo landed.
200 yds short.

Control ordered "Commence Firing".

Enemy 5th salvo hits amidships

Ship afire amidships. Turret III lost power.

Fired 3rd salvo (Turrets I and II)

Enemy hits again

Turret I out. Turret II loses power momentarily.

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Event

Fired 4th salvo (Turret II)

Fired 5th salvo (Turrets II and III)

Fired 6th salvo (Turrets II and III)

Turret II at limit of Train. Fired
7th salvo (Turret III)

Ship being hit
repeatedly
and burning.

Director I at limit of Train. Shifted
Control to Director II. Director I
and Turret II training to starboard
Director II fired 8th salvo. (Turret III)

Shifted Control back to Director I.

Fired 9th salvo (Turrets II and III)

Fired 10th salvo (Turrets II and III)

Control and Director I out.

Plot shifted control to Director II.

Director II fired 11th salvo (Turret III)

Turret III lost all power.

Fired Turret II in Local Control.

Enemy withdrew and out of sight.

All power lost.

FIRING DATA

1. Main Battery.

(a)

Salvo No	Director Controlling	#Rel. Bear.	#Range	Turrets Firing	No of guns
1	I	240°	5500	I, II, III	6-9*
2	I	245°	5700	I, II, III	6-9**
3	I	235°	6200	I, II	6
4	I	225°	6000	II	2
5	I	220°	5500	II, III	6
6	I	217°	5300	II, III	5
7	II	200°	5100	III	3
8	II	170°	5000	III	3
9	I	150°	4900	II, III	6
10	I	095°	4800	II, III	5
11	I	200°	4700	III	3
12	--	285°	4700	II	3

#Approximations only.

*Uncertain as to whether 6 or 9 guns were fired.

**Eight guns probably fired.

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(b) Salvos Fired by Turrets.

Turret I	- 3	- 12 Rounds
Turret II	- 9	- 23 Rounds
Turret III	- 9	- 27 Rounds

2. A.A. Battery - Rounds Fired.

(a) Port Battery.

Gun #2	- 1
Gun #4	- 10
Gun #6	- 7
Gun #8	- 10

(b) Starboard Battery.

Gun #1	- 12
Gun #3	- 6
Gun #5	- 6
Gun #7	- 7

(c) 1#1 Battery - Rounds Fired.

Mount #1	- 88
Mount #2	- 190
Mount #3	- 400
Mount #4	- 100

DISCUSSION AND NOTES.

1. The Flares.

(a) The initial bearing of the "flares" was 180° to 200° relative. The flares to the right, or bearing about 200° relative, were dropped first. I say that these "stars" or "flares" were aircraft flares because they were so evenly placed and came down with the right ones appearing first. Their interval of appearing was so short that it indicated that they could not have been fired by a single gun or pair of guns. Also, if fired simultaneously from one battery they should appear almost simultaneously. These flares were about 3000 or 4000 yards astern and may have been used for the following reasons: (1) To blind our own pointers so that they could not see the target, which would be behind the flares, or (2) to indicate a course at right angles to our course, or (3) both the above.

2. An estimate of the situation at 0152/

(a) The Range Plotting Office reports an initial range-finder range of 6800 yards. Various officers questioned report that we were on course 315° True, speed 10 and that Savo Island was approximately abeam, distant about 4 miles. The estimate of the initial relative bearing of the enemy is thought to be nearer 240 than 260 . The estimate of the enemy's speed averaged 25 knots or greater. The spotter estimated the enemy target angle to be 315° . Plotting these out shows that the enemy was initially on easterly courses and would cross out stern. The spotter reported

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three cruisers of the Nachi class and the Radar operator, when questioned the day after the battle, reports three distinct large pips on his Radar screen. I examined the Radar screen and thought I saw four. The initial Radar range was 7000 yards, which was obtained about a minute before the rangefinder range.

The leading cruisers were in column and at high speed. The initial True bearing of the leading enemy cruiser was 195°. It was this cruiser that the ASTORIA took under fire. Our course of 315 and slow speed place our forces under a very severe disadvantage as neither an immediate left or right turn could be made without sacrificing gunfire of the group. The VINCENTNES, although I did not see her, apparently turned left and was hit immediately. The QUINCY followed and the ASTORIA turned slowly left. All ships turned too slowly and the increase of speed by the leading ships was far too slow to clear the next astern. Our turn was too slow to take care of the rate of change of bearing so that soon our forward turrets were at their limit of train. The enemy apparently changed course to their left about the same time with the result that fire quickly shifted from our port quarter to our starboard quarter and we had to turn to starboard. As to whether or not the enemy concentrated on each ship from van to rear I can not say. I imagine, however, that this was the case, and the plan was to cripple first and then destroy. Their plan it seems to me, was to open up on the van with two ships concentrating on the leader and the third ship to fire upon the second in line. The destroyers ahead and astern to be used to illuminate and draw fire as the ASTORIA fired on the leading cruiser which at the time was to the right of a searchlight and did not have a searchlight on. When they obtained two hitting salvos, they apparently shifted fire to the next ship in line, and so on until ships were severely crippled. Why the enemy did not completely destroy the ASTORIA, that night, is a mystery to me as we had ceased firing, but for some reason they withdrew and did not come in for the kill.

The above is all conjecture but on the other hand it apparently is what happened. Whether or not the Japanese Admiral planned it that way I can not say. Tactics and firecontrol throughout were of the highest order on their part. The approach in the shadow of Savo Island, the crossing astern and the change of course to the right, and the rapidity of shifting their fire was brilliantly executed. Some of the above was undoubtedly planned beforehand for the brilliant execution showed that they knew beforehand exactly what we were doing or going to do and acted accordingly.

3. Pattern Sizes.

(a) The pattern sizes of the Japanese cruisers' 8" salvos were very small. The salvos that were short and on the bow appeared to be about 300 yards or less. Four 8" salvos were observed to land before the ASTORIA was hit. These fell as follows: Two ahead - short and to left (looking from the enemy firing ship),

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and two short, one about 500, the next 2 or 300 yards and the fifth (estimated) hit. The ship received at least four hits out of this salvo, amidships. It is believed that the ship might have been previously hit with smaller caliber shells, prior to this salvo. This hitting 8" salvo fired the planes and boats and thus gave the enemy not only a perfect point of aim, but also perfect ranging conditions. Each succeeding salvo seemed to hit. Prior to this the enemy appeared to be using an up ladder of two or three hundred yards, once he was on in deflection, until a hitting salvo was obtained. Once hitting they continued to hit. No information as to the size of the pattern of the small caliber batteries is available. It must have been small considering the tremendous number of 5" hits the ship received. The ship was also hit by small caliber stuff about the size of our 1 1/2" as one of the unexploded shells was found the next day on deck.

#2

STATEMENT OF RADKE, R. A., QM2c., U.S. NAVY, IN
CONNECTION WITH THE ACTION OF THE ASTORIA 9/9/42

I was the quartermaster of the 0001-0400 watch on the morning of August 9, 1942. I was occupied with my routine duties until flares were reported on the port quarter. I immediately went to the port wing of the bridge and saw one flare just dying out. In a very short space of time four others appeared. These flares were quite a distance astern of us, they were all about the same height and in a line about parallel to our course. This time was about 0154.

I started into the pilot house to stand by the general alarm. At that time I saw a ship on our port bow at some distance open fire and I rang the general alarm without orders. Just as I pulled the switch I heard an order "Stand by the General Alarm". Before the General Alarm stopped ringing we opened fire. This must have been about 0155. I then went into the chart house to record what had happened. I started to write when we received a hit through the emergency cabin and chart house. Shortly after a second hit in the chart house fatally wounded the Chief Quartermaster. After this I attended the wounded in the chart house and on the wings of the bridge until the Captain's Orderly told me that Young, BMlc., was on the wheel and should be relieved.

I immediately went to the pilot house and relieved the wheel. The rudder seemed to be about 10-15 degrees right and the heading was 185 (T). Young told me the order was to steady up on that course and I tried to steer but there was no control. I then reported to the Captain we had lost steering control. We were making about seven knots through the water at this time.

The Captain ordered steering control shifted to Central Station, this was done immediately.

When I gave up the wheel I manned the battle announcing circuit and tested with the engine rooms. I established communication with the forward engine room and told them to give us all speed possible. At this time word came back over the JA circuit that eight knots was the best they could give us and that the engines were losing power. A few minutes later the Captain's talker informed him that power was gone and the engines stopped.

About this time the Gunnery Officer came in the Pilot House and informed the Captain that the 1.1 clipping room above the bridge was badly on fire and advised clearing the bridge. At this time the ship was badly on fire from the bridge aft. All enemy firing had stopped.

Shortly after this the Captain passed the word to abandon the bridge and move the wounded to the forecastle. The Captain said he would take station on the Communication Deck.

I assisted in moving the wounded from the bridge.

R. A. RADKE, QM2c

STATEMENT OF YOUNG, J., BMLc., U.S. NAVY, IN CONNECTION
WITH THE ACTION OF THE ASTORIA AUGUST 9, 1942.

I relieved the boatswain's mate of the watch when general quarters sounded and took my station at the Engineer room annunciator system just alongside the helmsman. The ship was firing the main battery and the five inch. Full speed was rung up.

For the next few minutes the three ships seemed to be on a line bearing to the left and all firing to port. During this time there was a hit on the port side of the bridge just forward of the speaker system. I saw a hit on #1 Turret and one on the bow well forward. Then there was a hit in the water just forward of #1 Turret which threw water all the way up to the bridge. I also saw three searchlights on the starboard side. One was illuminating our bridge and the other two were on the quarter.

About this time I noticed that the QUINCY seemed to be firing almost at us and I heard the Captain order ten or fifteen degrees right rudder. I saw that the QUINCY was on fire amidships, but not badly, and was firing rapidly. Then we were hit on the starboard side of the bridge just forward of the door leading to the pilot house. The shrapnel from this hit knocked out the helmsman and hit me but didn't knock me out. I stepped over the helmsman and took the wheel. The ship had right rudder. Shortly after the Captain ordered left rudder and I put the wheel over. At this time the QUINCY appeared on our port bow heading across at considerably speed. She was on fire from bow to stern. It looked as if we would hit her. The Captain yelled hard left and I threw the wheel full left and we passed clear astern. Then the Captain ordered me to "Steadier" up. I then brought the rudder right and stopped the swing. I couldn't tell the ship's head because the lights were out and I don't think the compasses were working.

Shortly after this I heard the Captain calling to the Communication deck to train #2 Turret on a searchlight abaft the port beam. The Turret fired.

It was here that I nearly passed out from my wound and Radke, QM2c., took the wheel.

After this we lost steering control and the Captain gave it to Central Station. Not long after all power was lost and the ship was drifting.

Not long after the Captain passed the word to move to the fore-castle and I left the bridge assisting wounded as I went.

At this time the ship was on fire badly amidships and above the bridge. All firing had stopped.

J. YOUNG
BMLc, U.S. Navy

STATEMENT OF W. F. PUTNAM, YEOMAN SECOND CLASS
"JL" TALKER IN PILOT HOUSE THROUGH ACTION ON
NIGHT OF 9/9/42

I was the "JL" talker on the bridge during the 12-4 watch on the morning of August 9, 1942. Prior to 0130 planes were reported several times as passing over head by both forward and after battle lookout stations. I heard planes myself and reported them about 0115. I also observed gunfire on the port beam at a considerable distance away.

About 0152 I observed a flare on the Port Quarter which was followed almost immediately by several others. These flares were observed by Lt. Cdr. Topper, the Supervisory Officer of the Watch at the same time and for that reason made no report. For the first two or three minutes after the flares were sighted there seemed to be some question in the minds of the officers on watch to what the flares were coming from. About this time I went to the pilot house to look at the clock. The "JL" talker in Sky Control wanted to be told when it was 0155. Just before the clock showed 0155, the ASTORIA fired the Main Battery, and immediately after that I heard General Quarters sound. At this time my phones went dead and I went out on the port wind to the bridge. Shortly after this I re-entered the pilot house and about this time the ASTORIA fired a second salvo. I then noticed that the Captain was on the bridge. I heard him say "We are firing on our own ships, cease firing" and almost immediately after he gave "commence firing". At this time shots began to fall around us and the ship was firing rapidly from both main and secondary batteries. Some automatic weapons were also firing.

For the next five minutes or so, the Captain appeared to be zig-zagging the ship by using small amounts of right and left rudder. Then I noticed the QUINCY on our starboard bow apparently firing almost into us, and then the ship started to swing right and the QUINCY drew ahead of us. I noticed the QUINCY was on fire around the Well Deck, but was still firing rapidly. Just before I noticed the QUINCY firing at us, I saw Ensign Ferneding, the signal officer on watch, who was standing just inside the pilot house on the starboard side, fall with a wound and I moved him against the bulkhead and gave him a cigarette. Just after I saw the ship turn to get out of the QUINCY'S way of fire, I saw Williams, the helmsman fall and I took the wheel for a few minutes. When I took the wheel the ship was swinging right. During the short time I had the wheel orders were given for right and left rudder and amidships. I was relieved at the wheel by Young, BMlc, and at this time I reported to the Captain that I was unable to steer because the compasses were shot away. During this time the ship was hit repeatedly.

I next saw the QUINCY cross our bow from port to starboard completely on fire, and disappear astern.

The next thing I remember was the Captain trying to get Battle II. The "JA" talker reported that he could not get them and the Captain told him to get Central Station. Central Station seemed to report immediately and I heard the Captain tell Central Station to take steering control.

After this I heard the Captain calling to someone on the Communication deck to get Turret II trained on a searchlight abaft our port beam.

W. R. PUTNAM, (Cont'd)

During this time I heard the Captain inquire from the Chief Engineer about speed, and I heard the talker report eight knots was the most he could do.

It was not long after this that I heard the Captain give orders to move all wounded and able men to the forecandle. I assisted in moving wounded personnel off the bridge.

By this time firing had ceased. The ship was burning badly on the top side from bridge to the boatdeck and above the bridge in the foremast.

All the wounded and able bodied men were assembled on the forecandle. I assisted in helping the wounded until a destroyer came alongside about 0430 and took us off.

W. R. PUTNAM,
Yec2c U.S. Navy.

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Statements of Events Preliminary to 1st Savo ASTORIA

director
#1

Lt. (jg) C. L. ALAIR, U.S.N.R. Battle Station 1.1

I was on watch prior to the engagement as battery officer for the forward 1.1 mounts. The gun crews were in Condition II, watch Affirm. The guns were unloaded, clips not seated, breech mechanism forward, magazine cutout down, firing cutout forward.

At about 0145 I noticed what appeared to be starshells about 5,000 yards away bearing 190 relative on the port quarter but I could not see any targets being illuminated. I ordered my two forward mounts to load and also reported these flares to Sky Control.

I left the forward machine gun platform and started up the starboard ladder to the 1.1 director and heard our turrets open fire to port.

General Quarters was sounded soon after (0148 approx.). We had been hit on the boat deck and the plane on the starboard catapult was on fire. Several minutes later the ship was illuminated by a searchlight bearing 095 relative about 4,000 yards away. My director crew had not arrived so I ordered Mount 1 to fire with power motor in local control. We fired until the light went out. Each gun fired two clips of eight in the cradle. The left gun, left center gun and right center gun each fired eight rounds more. The first loader of the right gun was killed before loading his third clip. This makes a total of 88 rounds fired.

(1950)

The gun and clipping room were hit immediately after we ceased firing.

Lt. (jg) V. J. CHARELAIN, U.S.N.R. Battle Station 1¹.1
Mounts Aft. (OOD 20-24)

At about 2300, a warning was received over the TBS that an unidentified plane had been sighted heading east from Savo Island; this warning was received from the U.S.S. SAN JUAN and was repeated several times. I notified the Commanding Officer and Sky Control of this warning.

Ensign W.L. PETERSON. Battle Station Sky Forward

I had the midwatch as rangekeeper operator in sky forward. Several times during the watch I heard an airplane over head but could not see it. It was reported over all circuits. About 0200 three flares suddenly illuminated a ship. The flares paralleled the ship's course (about the same course as the Astoria's) but I could not identify the ship. The bearing was about 250 relative.

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STATEMENT (Cont'd)

and the range was anywhere from ten to fifteen thousand yards. I saw no gun flashes or tracers and the flares were in a straight line and evenly spaced. I cannot be positive but I believe they were airplane flares. Immediately afterward I saw gun fire and more flares which I could not identify as either star shells or airplane flares. The illuminated ship or ships were firing at another force bearing about 260 relative from us and even further out. Both forces were firing at each other. I took the battery phones and ordered the starboard battery to get ready in all respects, to fire. The 16 M.C. was ^{cut} in and all guns acknowledged as ready to commence firing. A ship burst into flames on our port beam. It was one of the ships engaged in that first duel. I heard Mr. Sander say that he had sighted 3 Jap CAs and about the same time the general alarm went. Mr. Willman was the first man in the director and about that time the VINCENNES came under fire.

J. J. DATKO, CRM USN.

I had made a repair on the forward R. C. radar about 10 or 11 in the evening and in my inspection afterward, I found a defect in the control indicator located in Control Forward. The equipment was functioning well except that the pattern on the screen was compressed to about half its horizontal size. I decided to leave it rather than dig into it during blacked out conditions. I wrote my observations out and left the note for the Radar Officer, Mr. Herzberger. About ten minutes after one, I was roused out by Barker, radar striker, (second call--the first one hadn't woke me) who told me that Mr. Truesdell had ordered the F.C. repaired at once. This without a doubt saved my life. I planned my steps with Mr. Herzberger and got spare tubes out of the half deck below, the signal bridge and we got to Control Forward to start the repairs about 1:45 or so. We found the trouble on the second try and the F.C. was in commission around 2 A.M. We heard shooting and were receiving strange echoes immediately. I turned the equipment over to the watch and went outside to watch gunfire being exchanged between two ships on our port side about six or seven thousand yards out. They must have been a thousand and not over two thousand yards apart. As the one on the left (the one aft on our port) burst into flames I heard G.Q. go. The last I remember as I started down the ladder to my battle station was Mr. Truesdell's order for turrets to load. Then hell broke loose. This was about 2:10.

J. J. DATKO.
Chief Radioman, USN

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#2

Composites of Statements of : Ensign McGRATH,
W. W. JOHNS FClc, M. DUNKELBERGER Slc, Ensign
ROGERS (Graphic Plotting Officer), and Lt. (jg)
MARZETTA

Lt. (jg) MARZETTA

The Plotting Room was in Condition II. At about 0150 Spot I reported three (3) Japanese cruisers of the Nachi type; estimated range 5500 yards; target angle 315. This set-up was made on the Mark VIII rangekeeper. Director I trained out about 250° relative and picked up a target. Spot I ordered "Fire" and all turrets fired.

Ensign ROGERS, USNR

Three range sent in the first range of 6800 yards before the firing began. Two range sent in their first range a few seconds less than one (1) minute after three range began ranging. Two range's first range was 5700 yards. After both two and three were ranging they were at no time farther apart than 50 yards. Range finder operatio's on two and three range checked their range finder very often to the best of their ability and found them performing properly. Ranges decreased rapidly until they were between 4500 and 4800 yards where they remained steady for a short time. Then shortly they decreased to 3930 yards which was in the last range Range three was able to get. Two range sent in their last range at 4800 yards.

Ensign R. C. McGRATH USN.

At 2350 I relieved the watch in Turret II as Turret Officer. At approximately 0155 the following came over the 2-JD telephone circuit from Main Battery Control: "Flares on the port quarter, the Australia is Firing." "All turrets match in train to port and load." Spot One then reported immediately "Its a Nati type cruiser estimated range 5500 yards." The Control Officer then ordered "Commence Firing." All three guns fired and were reloaded immediately. Turrets I, II, and III reported as having fired.

W. W. JOHNS FClc, USN.

Upon departing from forward battle look out I saw three searchlights from which I believed were three different ships bearing about 250° relative, distance about 7000 yards, and one of the lights was trained on the ASTORIA. At about the time I was passing through the forward 1.1 platform, the ASTORIA opened fire to port with the main battery and #2 1.1 mount. I believe the main battery fired a full 9 gun salvo. I heard the sound of shells passing over the ship. I did not hear General Quarters sounded. I took my station on the seat at Spot II. I ordered my director to match up with Director I, which they did, on relative bearing of about 210°. I manned the JC battle circuit and established communication with Spot I, Plot, Rangerkeeper forward and aft.

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M. DUNKLEBERGER, Slc USN

I saw flares on our port side. I also saw the Australian ship bearing about 250° relative, range about 10,000 yards, and at about this time they opened fire in a general direction of a point astern of ASTORIA. My director was trained to port being coached by Mr. Sander to about 240° to 250° relative and I am certain I saw a Jap ship. I caught a glimpse of the silhouette of this ship through the pointer's telescope, having moved over to pointer's station a few moments before. Dennery took train. The ship I saw was characterized by very heavy superstructure. Spot I (Lt. (jg) Sander) yelled down it was a Jap cruiser. Mr. Sander saw this through his spotting glass. Then Mr. Sander gave "Action Port, Load." This came over the 2JD phones. The Gunnery Officer was talking to bridge and had requested permission to open fire and to sound General Quarters. In a few minutes plot ready lights came on and Mr. Sander said "Fire." We fired first salvo about 250° relative on the Jap ship which I could still see. This first salvo was all turrets with Condition II crews. It appeared out ship was beginning to turn to starboard as the bearing went to about 230° relative. Mr. Sander gave a spot of Up?, and right or 6. We fired another salvo (plot ready lights on) but I believed this was turrets I and II only. I could not see our splashes.

Lt. (jg) D. R. MARZETTA, USN

Our ship speed at that time was about 12 knots. The General Alarm was then sounded and shortly afterwards the Gunnery Officer ordered "Cease Fire". We had not been hit yet. After only a brief interval, I'd estimate about two minutes, Control ordered "Commence Firing" again and all turrets fired with about same range as before. The ship had begun turning to starboard. We were now being hit and sharp concussions were felt above us, the blows did not appear to us to be exceptionally heavy. Our main lighting went out when this ship was first hit, but the auxiliary lighting came on and stayed on throughout the action. The third salvo (2nd one after General Alarm) was fired with the forward turrets practically at the limit of train to port, about 220° relative. Turret I was hit practically immediately after firing this salvo. Turret II reported a heavy jarring at this time. All Communications were lost with Turret I.

M. DUNKLEBERGER, Slc USN

Then I fired the third salvo at about 220° relative and I believe this was Turrets II and III. Turret II and plot ready lights were the only ones on at the time but Turret III said over my phones that they were ready. About this time I received "Cease Firing" over my phones and this came also from the Gunnery Officer. The spot given by Spot I for the third salvo was "No Change." At about this time Control was shifted to Director II. Then Mr. Sander directed the Trainer to train around to starboard. A little while later control was shifted back to Director I and I got a "Resume Fire" to Starboard. We fired then on about 090° relative on a ship with a searchlight which was trained on the ASTORIA. I don't know how many more salvos were fired to starboard. We had to train aft to starboard quarter

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M. DUNKLEBERGER, Slc USN (Cont'd)

to stay on target then the director jammed on bearing about 120° relative. A little before this I felt a hit on the ship under the director in the vicinity of forward battle lookout. A little later flames and smoke came up the director tube. A little later we vacated control.

W. W. JOHNS FC1c USN.

After manning spot II, I noticed two searchlights bearing about 210° relative, one of which was trained on ASTORIA. Another main battery salvo had been fired but I don't know how many guns. I estimated the set up as follows: Range 5500 yards, relative bearing 200°, target angle 300°. I did not actually see the target ship but I knew the range was closing and relative movement indicated the target angle to me. I noticed two enemy misses, one over and one short. The pattern appeared to be about 300 yards or less. At this time Spot I reported he was blocked out. My director was matched with director I and the bearing was about 200° relative. I reported to plot that Director II was on the target and I told my trainer to stay on the left hand searchlight. I plot that Director II has control, Spot II spot. Then Director II fired Turret III on orders from the Control Officer, Lt. Gibson, on bearing about 170° relative. Fired only one salvo at which time heavy smoke blocked out the director. I reported to plot Director II was blinded and the Control Officer, I believe, told plot to shift control back to Director I and it was done so. I felt several jars on the ship during this time. The trainer reported to Control Officer that director was jammed and that he could not train. Some order was given by the Control Officer but I did not hear it. I later found Control Officer gave orders for personnel to come down but trainer and I stayed on director not having heard this word directly. My trainer had been hurt but he stayed on station and I coached him on to a new target (searchlight) bearing about 150° relative. We were about 2° to the right of matching bearing with Director I. Plot reported over my phones that Director I was out. I reported to plot that Director II was still on the target and that we were able to train again. Instrument light were functioning. Plot gave control to Dir. II and they asked for a check. The bearing of target (searchlight) was 132° relative, range about 4000 yards. At this time I noticed that no one was on the director or in Control Aft except the trainer and myself. Slightsetter returned and took pointer. I ordered plot to cross JC and "JE" circuits which gave me communications to Turret II and III. Ready light were on and I ordered resume fire. We then fired, I believe, a 6 gun salvo. Another salvo was fired but I don't know how many guns. Then a ready light was noticed from Turret III only and another salvo was fired. I donot know if Turret II was fired on this salvo. A total of three salvos were fired. At about this time smoke cleared sufficiently so that I caught a quick glimpse of the silhouette of a Nachi type cruiser through my spotting glass. A close hit to Director II was felt and the director jammed. My communications were still good to plot and Turret II. Also indication was OK. I reported to plot that heat and smoke were to much. Turret III reported they had no power. Plot reported they had heavy smoke and were leaving station. I ordered my dir. personnel to leave their station then assisted in helping the wounded.

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Lt. (jg) D. R. MARZETTA, USN:

Director I could no longer bear on target now since it was blocked out on the port quarter. Control ordered Plot to shift control to Control Aft and the shift was made. The ship was still swinging to starboard. Director II had been matched in train and fired one salvo with Turret III almost directly astern. Control Aft was now full of smoke and Director II reported they could hardly see. The target was now on our starboard quarter and Control ordered Plot to shift Control back to Director I; Director I and Turret II had in the mean time trained around to starboard; this was done. Director I was on a target and resumed fire. A minute or so later Plot lost communication with Control and we noted no transmission from Director I. Plot then ordered Director II to take control again. The JA talker in Plot reported fires topside on the well-deck and boat-deck; we were being hit repeatedly now. Smoke began to seep into Plot.

When Control was shifted to Director II it reported that they could hardly see because of smoke and fire from the boat deck, however, they did fire 3 or 4 salvos. During the firing by Director II, Turret III lost power but had it back again within a minute. The director jammed in train at 210° relative but was freed and able to train to starboard; it fired at target as ship swung around and a target came into view aft of 210° . Only Spot II, the pointer, trainer and sight setter were still on the director; the others were engaged in fighting fires.

When Director II could no longer bear on the target, Plot attempted to give Turret II control in train, but Turret II could not see any targets in its periscope. Plot was now filling up with smoke and all personnel placed handkerchiefs over their noses. Both turrets now lost power. We were no longer shooting or being hit. Communications were still had with Turret II, III, gyro aft and Spot II.

Ensign R. C. McGRATH, US.:

Control again gave "Commence Firing" and a third salvo was fired. Almost immediately afterward I felt a terrific explosion in the near vicinity and the gun room filled with smoke. All communications were lost with Turret I and I reported to Control that Turret I had been hit. At this time the forward car of my lower powder hoist jammed midway between upper and lower powder rooms; and we lost pressure on sprinkling system. We continued to fire Turrets II and III. The turret again was at its limit of train to port and I heard Control order a shift to Control Aft and Control Aft saying they could not see. We started to train to starboard and soon, Control was shifted back to Director I which was training to starboard. We matched and continued to fire. At the end of the fourth salvo the shell hoist on my right gun ceased to function due to the loss of power or as a result of a hit on the barbette and the auxiliary hoist was put into operation. On the fifth salvo only the left and center guns were fired. On the sixth salvo a shell was

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Ehsign R. C. McGRATH, USN (Cont'd)

ready for the right gun and all three guns fired. Since the auxiliary hoist is slower than the main hoists the left and center guns were loaded before a shell was up for the right gun. The seventh salvo was two guns and the eighth was three guns. The ninth salvo was two guns and about this time Main Battery Control and director one ceased to function. The plotting room shifted control to director II but director II reported being jammed in train. Spot two then gave us a firing bearing and I fired on the bearing. All gas ejection air was lost on loading the eleventh salvo. After this director II was apparently abandoned and I attempted to find a target with my periscope. I ordered the trainer to train to port to bear on what I believed to be an enemy ship. It was later determined to be the QUINCY. On reaching the center line all power in the turret failed. I ordered all men to remain on their stations.