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Amplifying reports on the 2nd Battle of the Philippine Sea, although still subject to revision as more information is received, indicates an overwhelming victory for the 3rd and 7th United States Fleets. The Japanese Fleet has been decisively defeated and routed. The second battle of the Philippine Sea ranks as one of the major sea battles of World War 2 in the Pacific, together with the battle of the Coral Sea, 4-8 May 1942; the Battle of Midway 3-4 June 1942, and the first battle of the Philippine Sea, 19 June 1944. Movements of major Japanese Fleet units northward from the Singapore area were detected on 21 and 22 October (WLD). Submarine scouts sighted the enemy force, sank two Atago class heavy cruisers and severely damaged a third. Ships of the 3rd fleet were moved into position to the eastward of the Philippines off Surigao Straits, San Bernardino Strait and the Polillo Islands. On 23 October carrier searches discovered 2 strong enemy naval forces moving eastward, one through the Subuyan Sea and the other through the Sulu Sea. Photographs by carrier aircraft showed that the force moving eastward through the Sibuyan Straits included 5 battleships, 8 cruisers, and 13 destroyers. The force moving eastward through the Sulu Sea consisted of 2 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, and 7 or 8 destroyers. As soon as the presence of the 2 enemy fleet forces in the Philippine Islands was discovered on 23 October, hellcat fighters, avenger torpedo planes and hell diver dive bombers from the 3rd fleet carriers were launched to attack both forces. In the Sibuyan Sea, 1 battleship and 1 cruiser were severely damaged and set afire and may have sunk. 3 other battleships received bombs and torpedoes; 3 other heavy cruisers received bombs and torpedoes; and 1 light cruiser was torpedoed, capsized and sank in the Sulu Sea. Bomb hits were made on both battleships. Cruisers and destroyer were strafed with rocket fire and machine guns. Meanwhile to the eastward of the Philippines, enemy shore based aircraft were attacking our carriers. In the aerial battle that ensued, more than 150 enemy aircraft were shot down. Our losses, on which exact figures are not yet available, were light in this attack. The carrier PRINCETON was hit by a bomb which caused a bad fire; later the PRINCETON'S magazine blew up and the ship was so badly damaged that she had to be sunk by our own forces. Also on the afternoon of 23 October, a land based Navy search plane discovered the presence of an enemy carrier force approximately 200 miles off Cape Engano of northern Luzon, heading south. This force consisted of 17 warships, including a large carrier, believed to be of the Zuikaku class; 3 light carriers of the Chitose and Zuiho classes; 2 battleships of the class with flight decks aft; a heavy cruiser of the Mogami class a light cruiser of the Noshiro class; 3 cruisers of the Disco class; and 6 destroyers. To meet this serious threat, the commander of the third fleet, concentrated several of carrier task groups and started northward at high speed for a dawn attack. These units of the third fleet steamed north a full speed through the night and caught the enemy so completely surprised on the morning of the 24th that there was no effective air opposition. Later in the forenoon

enemy carrier aircraft which had been refueled ashore in the Philippines flow out to join their ships which had already met disaster. The enemy planes arrived too late to get into the fight and 21 were shot down by our combat patrols. In this action the following destruction was inflicted upon the enemy: One carrier of the Zuikaku class sunk by carrier aircraft; one light carrier of the Zuiho class crippled by aircraft and later sunk by the gunfire of cruisers and destroyers; 2 light carriers of the Chitose class sunk by carrier aircraft; 1 light cruiser or large destroyer sunk by gunfire; 1 destroyer sunk by carrier aircraft; 1 cruiser was severely damaged by carrier aircraft and was sunk during the night by a submarine; damaged 1 battleship hit by 2 to 4 torpedoes and many bombs; 1 battleship hit by bombs; 3 cruisers damaged by bombs and gunfire; 4 destroyers bombed and strafed by gunfire. None of the third fleet ships engaged with the enemy carrier force were damaged.

The third fleet in this phase of the action lost 10 planes, 8 pilots and 10 aircrewmembers, all shot down by anti aircraft fire. Before all the damaged enemy ships could be tracked down and destroyed, the engagement was broken off to proceed to the assistance of 7th fleet carrier escort groups then under attack off off Samar Island. Then enemy force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers which had been attacked in the Sibuyan Sea, had sortied through the San Bernardino Strait in spite of damage inflicted by our carrier aircraft, and had attacked units of the 7th fleet off Samar Island during the morning of 24 October. In the ensuing battle, most of the enemys heavy ships were badly damaged by 7th fleet units assisted by carrier aircraft from the 3rd fleet. 1 cruiser of the Mogami class was seen to sink, and 1 destroyer was left dead in the water. The enemy force ran northwest from the scene of the action, and during the early hours of darkness passed westward through the San Bernardino Straits. About 2 AM, a stragglng cruiser was sunk by gunfire of the third fleet. Meanwhile the southern enemy force had crossed the Sulu Sea and Mindanao Seas, and had attempted to pass through the Surigao Strait. It met the 7th fleet in a night action, 24 and 25 October, carrier aircraft of the third fleet were launched against the crippled and damaged enemy fleet fleeing westward through the Sibuyan Sea. Damage done to the enemy during the retirement of the 3rd and 7th fleets and shore based aircraft of the Southwest Pacific area, included 1 Mogami class cruiser sunk off Mindoro Island, 1 battleship possible sunk, and 3 other battleships and 3 other cruisers further damaged. The total damage inflicted on the Japanes fleet during the period 22nd to 27 October, 1944 included:

<u>SUNK:</u>	<u>SEVERELY DAMAGED</u>	<u>ESCAPED IN A DAMAGE</u>
Two battleships.	<u>AND MAY HAVE SUNK:</u>	<u>CONDITION:</u>
Four carriers.	One battleship.	Six battleships.
Six heavy cruisers.	Four cruisers.	Four heavy cruisers.
Three light cruisers.	Two light cruisers.	One light cruiser.
Three small cruisers, or	Seven destroyers.	Ten destroyers.
large destroyers.		
Six destroyers.		

During the same actions the losses sustained by United States Naval forces were bn light carrier (PRINCETON), two escort carriers, two destroyers, one destroyer escort and a few lesser craft. The following battleships seriously damaged at Pearl Harbor took part in these actions: WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, TENNESSE, CALIFORNIA, and PENNSYLVANIA. The new carriers LEXINGTON, WASP and HORNET also participated in these actions.