

Rumors had been circulating as to our next duty, as noted in my letter of 2 October. At that point it appeared that we might be sent to the Aleutian Islands, but this never materialized. Instead a few days later we received word that we were to proceed to Pearl Harbor. We had been in commission for a few days short of a year and were due for annual overhaul and modernization which would include the installation of 5" guns to replace our original 3". On the 4th and again on the 6th we received aboard passengers for transportation to Pearl Harbor.

Our emotions were mixed. There was, of course, the appeal of leaving the war zone to return to the pleasures of the backward area, a step toward home and probable reassignment to a new geared turbine 5" gun DE of the type which had made their appearance in increasing numbers assigned to fleet operations in the Pacific.

But overriding this, for me at least, was a feeling of let down. We had been on the fringes of action in an interesting area, but had never broken through the barrier surrounding our hum-drum duties of escorting merchant ships and service type naval vessels.

Suddenly, however, all this changed. Our orders for Pearl Harbor were cancelled and we were directed to proceed as quickly as possible to Scedler Harbor, Manus Admiralty Islands and report to Commander Seventh Fleet with operations based on USS Wasatch.

We had been to Manus on several occasions previously, but we were not prepared for the sight which greeted us this time. The harbor was crowded with battleships, cruisers, aircraft carriers, destroyers and DEs as well as many support types, transports and landing craft. There were hundreds of ships, but we were the only 3" DE.

We arrived on 10 October and time was of the essence. After fueling and transferring our passengers I reported aboard the flagship for briefing and to collect the

massive operation plan which detailed the part that we were to play in the upcoming invasion of Leyte and with which I must be fully familiar. This was to be the first return to the Philippines after the sad events at Corregidor almost three years before.

I also learned the reason for our last minute inclusion in the operation. We were to serve as the replacement for the USS Shelton, a new 5" DE which had been torpedoed and sunk off Morotai on 3 October.

Our task unit, 77.4.1, under Taffy 1 (R. Admiral T.L. Sprague) was to consist of the CVEs Sangamon (flag), Suwannee, Santee and Petrof Bay. The screen was to consist of the Fletcher Class destroyers McCord, Trathen and Hazelwood, and the DEs Richard S. Bull, Richard M. Rowell, Eversole and Coolbaugh.

Early in October the ships had begun to assemble at Manus and at various places along the coast of New Guinea. The 738 ships in the Seventh Fleet for this operation comprised 157 combatant ships, 420 amphibious types, 84 patrol, minesweeping and hydrographic types and 73 service types.

Let me quote from my letter home dated October 23, 1944:

"We have been having a most interesting and enjoyable time. A while back it looked as though we were headed for practically a home area, but enroute our orders were changed and I don't think anyone aboard has been disappointed. All along we were hoping to get a look-in at the war and now we have got it. About two weeks ago we were ordered to report to a certain task force to form part of the screen for their aircraft carriers. This was two days before they were to set out (on 12 October) and we had a mad scramble getting together necessary material and boning up on the operation and the part we were to play in it. However, all went off well and when we put to sea we were ready for anything which might develop."

And now let me quote from Samuel Eliot Morison, "Leyte":

"No one was sorry when the ships began to get under way. No one expected to cherish happy memories of Manus or Hollandia, yet, however unpleasant may be one's immediate recollections, something satisfactory sticks. Come now, you who were at Seeadler, New Guinea or Leyte; do you not feel a certain glow of pride that you were "there"? Men have always felt that way about wars they have been through, since ancient Rome, when Virgil had Aeneas say, as he spun his yarn of Troy to Dido: Quaeque ipse mi-serrima vidi, quorum pars magna fui - "These most lamentable events I witnessed, and a great part of them I was."

On 10 October the northward movement started, all aiming for a position called "Point Fin" off the entrance to Leyte Gulf (lat. 10°28'30" N, long. 125°56'20" E), 1250 miles from Hollandia, through which all units of the Expeditionary Force must pass. This table shows where each group was mounted, and its estimated time of arrival at Point Fin: -

	<u>Departed</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>ETA, Point Fin</u>
MINESWEEPING AND HYDROGRAPHIC GROUP	Manus	10 Oct.	0600, 17 Oct.
DINAGAT ATTACK GROUP	Hollandia	12 Oct.	0616, 17 Oct.
BOMBARDMENT AND FIRE SUPPORT GROUP (including 12 CVEs)	Manus	12 Oct.	1000, 17 Oct.
SOUTHERN LST GROUP	Manus	11 Oct.	2300, 19 Oct.
NORTHERN TRANSPORT GROUP	Hollandia	12 Oct.	0000, 20 Oct.
NORTHERN LST GROUP (including CLOSE COVERING GROUP)	Hollandia	13 Oct.	0030, 20 Oct.
SOUTHERN TRANSPORT GROUP	Manus	14 Oct.	0315, 20 Oct.
FLEET FLAGSHIP GROUP	Hollandia	15 Oct.	0340, 20 Oct.

The ocean passage was marked by constant alertness for air or submarine attacks that never materialized. Until nearing the Philippines the weather stayed clear but a following wind made the heat intense."

Again from my letter of 23 October:

"On our first day out our carrier group joined forces with

the battleships* and cruisers and all their supporting ships. It was an imposing show, in a formation of about 10 miles diameter. We had preliminary maneuvers which included a bit of target practice and supporting flight operation. On about the third day out in fairly rough weather, we topped off our fuel tanks by coming alongside another ship and fueling under way. This was a new experience for us, but it went off without a hitch and in exceptionally good time. Then, with everything in a top state of readiness we steamed on toward our objective.

The first day (17 October) we were to strike, the weather broke. The tail of a typhoon hit us and made operations for our particular group impossible. We had to lie off and wait for things to hush. The next day (18 October) was fine, and early in the morning we launched our first flight. Things for us started with a rush, for one of the first planes to be launched from the carrier we were covering failed to make the grade and crashed into the water. We headed back at full speed to the rescue and found that fortunately the four occupants had gotten out all right and had already inflated their rubber boat and were safe. We steamed down wind through a moderate sea to them, and in no time, had them, plus their rubber boat, aboard, all safe and sound.

Later that day we had the new experience of transferring our passengers (less the rubber boat!) back to their ship. This was done by means of a bosun's chair rigged as a breeches buoy. We took station under the quarter of the carrier and effected the transfer from there. Because of operations, we could only transfer the pilot the first trip, and later in the day repeated the performance for the three enlisted men. The interval between transfers gave us a chance to perfect our rig for the purpose."

* 6 battleships, 3 light cruisers, 3 heavy cruisers, 12 CVEs (Jeep Carriers) and 17 destroyers and destroyer escorts under Admiral J.B. Oldendorf.

Escort Carrier Group (TG 77.4), Rear Admiral Thomas L. Sprague
(As of 25 October 1944)

Taffy 1 (77.4.1)	Taffy 2 (77.4.2)	Taffy 3 (77.4.3)
R. Adm. T. L. Sprague	R. Adm. F. B. Stump	R. Adm. C. A. F. Sprague
CVE SANGAMON	CVE NATONA BAY	CVE FANSHAW BAY
SUWANNEE	MANILA BAY	ST. LO (EX-MIDWAY)
SANTEE		WHITE PLAINS
RETROF BAY	Cardiv 27	KALININ BAY
	R. Adm. W. D. Sample	Cardiv 26
	MARCUS ISLAND	R. Adm. R. A. Ofstie
	KADASHAN BAY	KITKUN BAY
	SAVO ISLAND	GAMBIER BAY
	OMMANEY BAY	
Screen	Screen	Screen
DD MCCORD	DD HAGGARD	DD HOEL
TRATHEN	FRANKS	HEERMANN
HAZELWOOD	HAILEY	JOHNSTON
DE RICHARD S. DULL	DE R. W. SUESENS	DE DENNIS
RICHARD M. ROWELL	ABERCROMBIE	J. C. BULLFR
EVERSOLE	LE RAY WILSON	RAYMOND
COOLBAUGH	W. C. WANN	S. E. ROBERTS

On the 17th of October the Task Force was divided into pre-arranged task groups and task units. Our unit, 77.4.1 was the southern carrier group of the three formed. The composition of the Escort Carrier Group (TG 77.4) under Rear Admiral Thomas L. Sprague is shown in the facing table.

During the storm of the 17th the Richard Rowell, rolling in the heavy seas lost her mast which meant the loss of her radar antennas. From that point on the other ships in the screen would have to direct her by TBS voice radio. We were frequently reminded, "Lady Bug (her voice call) is blind. She cannot see!"

Our voice call, incidentally, was "Pigsticker".

The gale abated during the mid-watch of the 18th and that day dawned fair and clear.

Our carrier groups operated in assigned areas east of Leyte Gulf and their primary task was to provide air support for the amphibious forces such as pounding enemy airfields in the Visayas and intercepting enemy strikes on the beachhead. In addition they had routine missions such as maintaining combat air patrol over the amphibious forces, anti submarine patrol for the whole Leyte area. And, owing to the absence of Army air forces at Leyte, they were assigned special tasks such as attacking Japanese truck convoys, bombing fuel concentrations and dropping supplies for the Army ashore.

Our forces in shore met surprisingly light resistance on the 18th of October, two days before the planned landing. The entrance to Leyte Gulf had been secured by noon. The minesweepers were clearing the areas off the landing beaches and the Underwater Demolition Teams were inspecting the beaches where they found few obstructions. Meantime a shore bombardment was being carried out against nebulous enemy positions in the Southern Landing Beach area. Bombardments ended at 1735 and owing to the small number of mines encountered by the sweepers Admiral Oldendorf brought the rest of his five support ships inside Leyte Gulf for the night.

For the three days October 18-20, the main responsibility of our carriers was the neutralizing of enemy airfields in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Again let me quote from my letter of 23 October:

"The next day (19 October), in the midst of routine operations, we received word that one of our planes was returning in trouble and would have to make a water landing. It was a toss up as to where he would come down, but again we hit the jackpot. We could see him trailing smoke and losing altitude over the formation and presently he hit the water about 250 yards off our starboard beam. The plane sank so quickly that when the splash had cleared, no part of it was visible, but fortunately the pilot got out all right. Even before he crashed, we had started turning, and in not more than three minutes afterwards, we had the pilot aboard uninjured. The pilot said later that he had been in a bad way for the cowling in his plane had jammed and would not open. With one last desperate effort he had managed to push it back far enough to get out.

The Admiral had evidently observed the performance, and in a few minutes we received a message saying "your rescues have been superb and are much appreciated." You can imagine that this made me and the whole ship feel pretty good. Shortly afterward we transferred our new passenger back to his ship, the flagship. After this we figured that probably things would settle down and get dull. No unusual activity had been observed and everything was going right as per schedule, and it was too much to expect a rescue job every day."

The two assault groups were to land on Leyte simultaneously at 1000 on 20 October. The Southern Group under Admiral Wilkinson was to land at Dulag and the Northern Group under Admiral Barbey was to land at Tacloban. The air support for the landing was primarily the responsibility of Rear Admiral T.L. Sprague.

Again let me quote from my letter:

"The next morning (20 October) was bright and beautiful, with no wind, and things were progressing in a most routine fashion. At a little after 8:00 a.m. a flight was returning and all was in order, when I, in the Chart Room, heard a call to us on the voice radio asking if we had seen a plane crash near the carrier near us. I rushed on deck just in time to see a Jap Zero winging away with two of our planes hot on his tail. It had sneaked in with our returning planes and had dropped four bombs near our carrier* and was trying to make good his escape. He caught all of us completely unawares. We all went to GQ immediately and not five minutes later we saw two more Zeros streaking in toward the formation low over the water. As soon as they were in range, all the ships which could bear, opened up. They both made for the flagship, strafing - one turned short and came past our port bow out of our range but in a hail from some of the other ships. As it seemed that he was about to head down toward us, he turned and made for the land, hotly pursued by our fighters. The other plane, meanwhile, had dropped a bomb very near the flagship, had turned through the formation and was headed down our starboard side. You have never seen such a hail of bullets as were flying. Though the range was not close, one of our guns opened fire and the tracers were seen to hit the plane. However, he was in a cross hail from two other ships as well, and so I doubt if we can claim the honors. In an instant orange flames broke out from the motor and the Zero crashed about 1500 yards away, just forward of our starboard beam. A cheer arose from all hands and in an instant there was only a patch of flaming water where so much had been going on only a split second before. The pilot came to the surface and was picked up by the ship nearest us to starboard, apparently severely injured. The damage sustained by our ships was practically negligible. We later learned that both of the

*USS Santee.

other planes had been caught by our fighters and shot down.

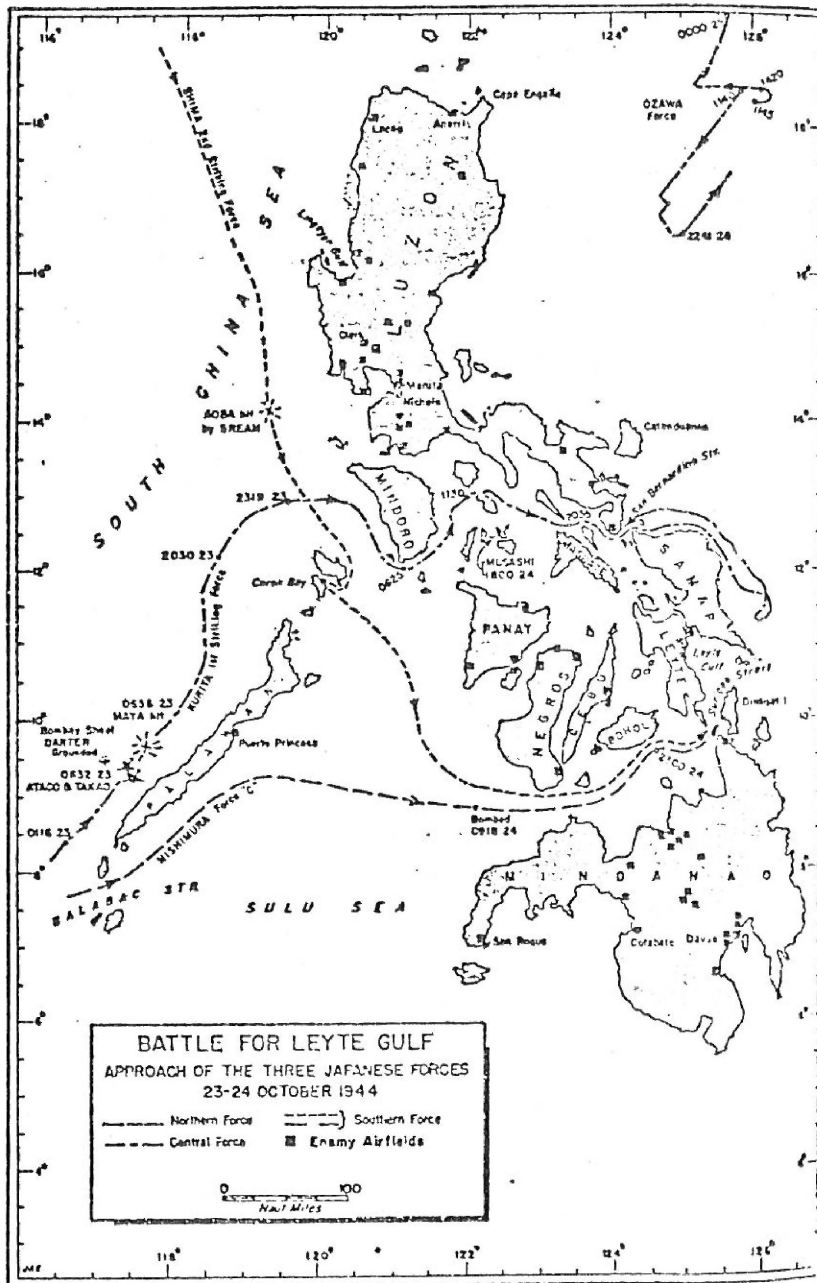
This happened about two days ago, and since then all has been very quiet and routine. The weather has been fine and apparently the boys have been having good hunting ashore. Occasionally one comes back with a wing partially shot away, and there have been a few that have not come back at all, but only a very few.

Our work now seems definitely to have settled down to routine. We have fueled once again - or you might say twice, for we were interrupted by an alert during the performance and had to get clear hurriedly. We have had several other alerts as well, but it appears that the good work the boys are doing ashore is depleting the Jap planes, and, alas, the Japs have got other things to worry about closer to their airfields.

All the reports have it that the natives ashore are completely on our side. They have had their own boats out to rescue downed planes, and fliers who have been captured ashore have been somehow extricated by the local guerillas and hustled away to safety.

Well, that is how the news stands to date and about all I can say that is not censorable. I am certainly pleased that we fell into the job, for it would have been very unsatisfactory to have come all the way out to these waters and never to have even been close to the war. Of course all this probably knocks out our previous plans indefinitely, but as yet we do not know and probably won't for some time to come. Actually, I don't mind for now I feel we are accomplishing something, and we are having an interesting time. We shall just have to wait and see what develops. With a large new field of this sort opened up, I guess they will want plenty of this type of ship out here.

I certainly miss getting mail. It has been weeks now since I have heard from you - last letter dated September 26th.



BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
 APPROACH OF THE THREE JAPANESE FORCES
 23-24 OCTOBER 1944

- - - - - Northern Force ····· Southern Force
 - · - · - Central Force ■ Enemy Airfields

0 100
 Nautical Miles

I wonder what the news is and how all is going, but I am just trusting that all is fine. By now the bird season must be in full swing and it is getting on toward time to think about getting out the decoy ducks and the pea-pod. I think this is the time of year I like the best at home."

The beachheads were being consolidated between 21 and 24 October. Things were going just a bit too easily.

Unknown to us at the time, on the 22 or 23 October the Japs after observing the strength of the American landings revised their plan. They now decided to make Leyte instead of Luzon the scene of the "general decisive battle". General Suzuki was told to expect support from the joint air forces on the 24th, a decisive sea battle on the 25th and on the next day to look for heavy reinforcement of his ground forces on Leyte.

The decision, however, to execute the SHO-1 plan had already been made on 18 October when the enemy had determined that Leyte was to be the objective for the landings.

The general outline of the SHO-1 plan was this. While Admiral Ozawa's Northern Force decoyed Halsey's Third Fleet up north out of the way, Admiral Kurita's Center Force, coming through San Bernardino Strait and the Southern Force under Admirals Nishimura and Shima, debouching from Surigao Strait would put a mighty pincer on our amphibious forces and fire support ships in Leyte Gulf and "annihilate" them.

The original plan called for the Center Force to sortie from San Bernardino Strait at sunset on 24 October. This force, however, suffered some delays. On 23 October our submarines torpedoed and sank two of their cruisers off the west coast of Palawan. On 24 October they suffered heavy air attacks from the carrier based planes of the Third Fleet which resulted in the sinking of the 18" gun battleship Musashi and the crippling of the heavy cruiser Myoko.

After a full day of air attacks, Halsey, then located

off San Bernardino Strait, headed north in search of Admiral Ozawa's Northern diversionary force, quite in accordance with the enemy plan. This left San Bernardino Strait clear for Kurita's Center Force to exit. The three task groups of the Third Fleet - 65 ships strong - went steaming north at 16 knots to engage the 17 ships of Ozawa's Northern Force.

Kurita's Center Force, still powerful, completed the transit of San Bernardino Strait at 0035 on 25 October, amazed to find nobody there to fight, and shaped a course for the rendezvous off Suluan with Nashimura.

Air surveillance of the Southern Force on 24 October was only sporadic, but Admiral Kinkaid correctly estimated that the Southern Force intended to break into Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait and made such disposition of his forces that only a miracle could have permitted the Japanese to attain their object. Admiral Kinkaid assumed in his operation plan "any major enemy naval force approaching from the north will be intercepted and attacked by Third Fleet covering force."

As 24 October merged into the fateful Wednesday the 25th Nishimura's Southern Force was already reported by motor torpedo boats to be approaching the southern entrance of Surigao Strait and Shima's Second Striking Force was catching up. Admiral Oldendorf had formed Battle Line and sent scouting destroyers down the Strait. There and off Samar mighty forces were about to clash in decisive battle, and the issue was far from certain.

Aboard Coolbaugh our view of the overall situation was somewhat myopic, but on the evening of 24 October the pattern was beginning to take form. In the combat information center as the sighting reports from submarines and planes came in I plotted them on the chart. In this way we could determine the progress of the Center Force and the Southern Force. We were also aware of the fact that Halsey was somewhere away to the north and was not taking further action against the

Center Force, which he believed he had turned back.

It seemed only logical that the objective of the Center Force would be to rendezvous with the Southern Force for the purpose of annihilating our Seventh Fleet ships in Leyte Gulf. However no further reports came in after about 2000, so they became an unknown quantity. The only obstacle in their way should they in fact be coming was our Task Group of "Jeep Carriers" with their escort of destroyers and DEs. It was a lonely feeling. With some concern we faced the prospect of being caught in the middle of the pincer.

Since our Task Unit, Taffy 1, was the southernmost of the CVE units, our operating area was just off the entrance to Leyte Gulf. Should any of the Southern Force of enemy ships get through we would be the first in line to take them on. Our 3" guns looked small indeed.

And so during the evening of 24 October as we carried out our now routine night retirement of formation steaming on various courses we eagerly kept track of incoming messages to keep abreast of developments. As the night wore on we were aware of great happenings in Surigao Strait, but it was only much later that we could piece together the entire story which I will now try to summarize from Samuel Eliot Morison's official history.

Admiral Oldendorf was well aware of the Japanese Southern Force, its make up, its progress and its probable objective. He also had time to arrange his forces to provide a proper reception for Admiral Nashimura's Force and for Vice Admiral Shima's Second Striking Force which followed about 30 miles behind. The balance was all in his favor both strategically and from the overwhelming superiority of his available fire power as listed here.

The opposing forces were as follows:

The main groups under Admiral Oldendorf's command, plus Desron 54, were as follows: —²

<p>Left Flank R. Adm. Oldendorf</p> <p>Heavy Cruisers LOUISVILLE PORTLAND MINNEAPOLIS</p> <p>Light Cruisers R. Adm. Hayler DENVER COLUMBIA</p> <p>Sec. 1, Desron 56 Capt. Smoot NEWCOMB RICHARD P. LEARY ALBERT W. GRANT</p> <p>Sec. 2, Desdiv 112 Capt. Conley ROBINSON HALFORD BRYANT</p> <p>Sec. 3, Cdr. Boulware HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS BENNING LIUTZE</p>	<p>Battle Line R. Adm. Weyler</p> <p>Battleships MISSISSIPPI MARYLAND WEST VIRGINIA TENNESSEE CALIFORNIA PENNSYLVANIA</p> <p>Desdiv "X-ray" Cdr. Hubbard CLAXTON CONY THORN AULICK SIGGURNEY WELLES</p>	<p>Right Flank R. Adm. Berkey</p> <p>Light Cruisers PHOENIX BOISE</p> <p>Heavy Cruiser H.M.A.S. SHROPSHIRE</p> <p>Desron 24, Capt. McManes HUTCHINS DALY BACHE H.M.A.S. ARUNTA KILLEN BEALE</p> <p>Picket Patrol Desron 54, Capt. Coward REMEY MCGOWAN MELVIN MERTZ</p> <p>Desdiv 108, Cdr. Phillips MCDERMUT MONSSEN MCNAIR</p>
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This was more than enough to take care of the Japanese Southern Force, for which Admirals Kinkaid and Oldendorf planned sudden death. Every old Pacific hand retained a grim memory of events centered around a certain little island in the Solomons which Hibuson unpleasantly recalled. As Admiral Oldendorf said, "We didn't want them to pull another Savo Island on us." His dispositions insured that they would not.

<u>Nashimura's Southern Force</u>		<u>Vice Admiral Shima's Second Striking Force</u>	
Yamashiro	BB (flag)	Nachi	CA
Fuso	BB	Ashigara	CA
Mogami	CA	Abukuma	CL (old)
Shigure	DD	and 4 DDs	
Michishio	DD		
Asagumo	DD		
Yamagumo	DD		

BB=Battleship, CA=Heavy Cruiser, CL=Light Cruiser, DD=Destroyer

As Admiral Oldendorf said later, "My theory was that of the old-time gambler - never give a sucker a chance. If my opponent is foolish enough to come at me with an inferior force I'm certainly not going to give him an even break."

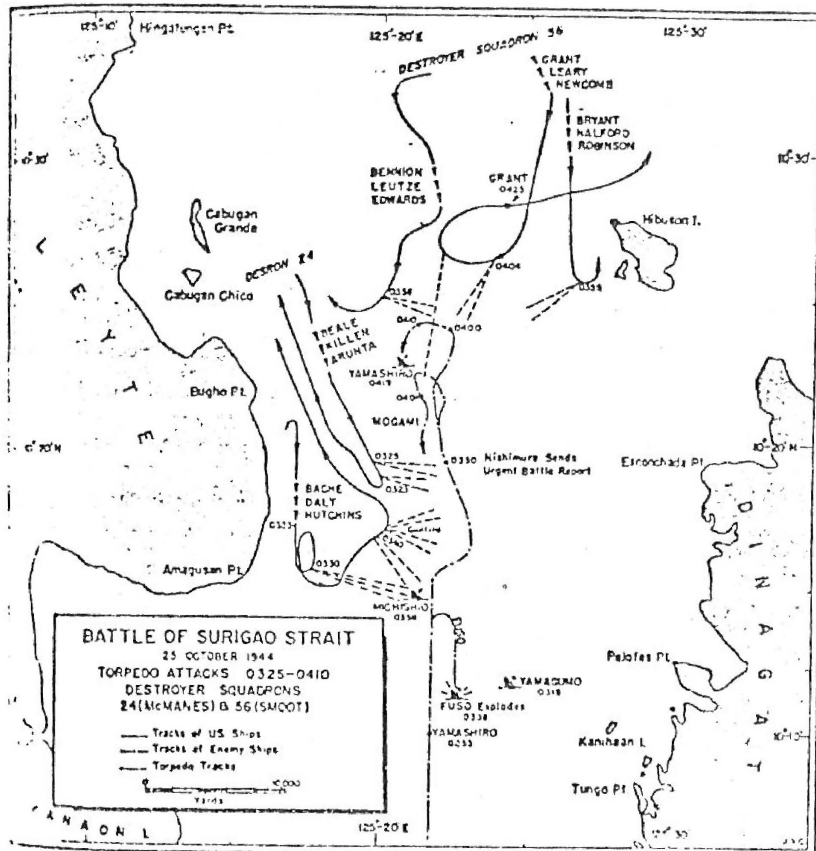
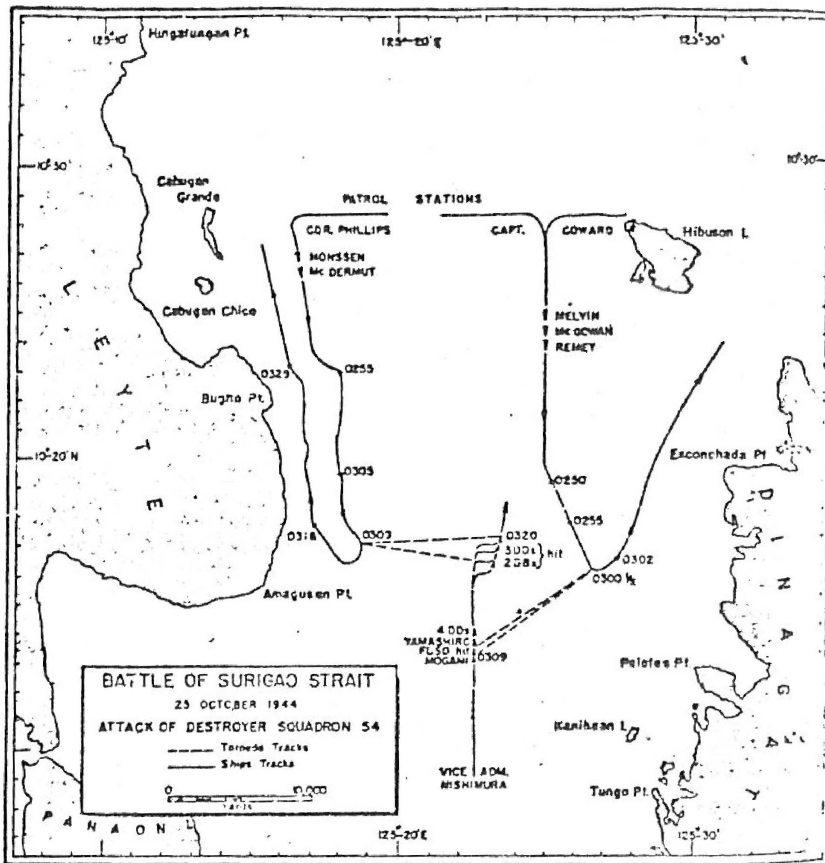
The Pacific Fleet had never been so well prepared with a flock of PTs to intercept, three destroyer squadron to deliver torpedo attacks and a Battle Line to cap the enemy's column.

The first sighting of the evening by PTs was at 2250 on 24 October and their phase of the action lasted until 0213 on 25 October.

Including later actions in the Strait on 25 October, 30 of the 39 PTs on patrol had got into some sort of fight. Altogether they fired 34 torpedos, all but two of which ran "hot, straight and normal", but obtained only the hit on "Abukuma" of Admiral Shima's Second Striking Force. They neither stopped nor confused the enemy and were chased away by his gunfire. They did, however, perform indispensable service through their contact reports which in addition to the fireworks they produced from the enemy, alerted Admiral Oldendorf's forces.

Of the 30 boats which came under enemy fire 10 were hit but only 1 expended. Total casualties 3 killed, 20 wounded.

The next phase was the brilliantly executed attack on the enemy by Desron 54 (Capt. Coward) which lasted between 0200 and 0315. The squadron was divided and attacked from both sides of the enemy. Although subjected to heavy fire and



the glare of searchlights their torpedo attack was one of the most successful of the entire war. With 47 torpedos they scored on 5 ships and sank 3, including Fuso which went down later.

Only ten minutes after the Japanese absorbed a spread of torpedoes from "Monssen" and "McDermut" of Desron 54 they were subjected to a similar attack from Desrons 24 and 56. This phase lasted from 0254 to 0420. During this the "Yamashiro" was hit by two torpedos.

The collective efforts of these destroyer attacks accounted for about 75% of the fire power in Nishimura's force.

The Major Gunfire Phase came next from 0351-0410.

By 0330 the enemy column, now reduced to one battleship, one heavy cruiser and one destroyer was steaming into a trap. It formed a very short verticle to a very broad T, but Oldendorf was about to cap it.

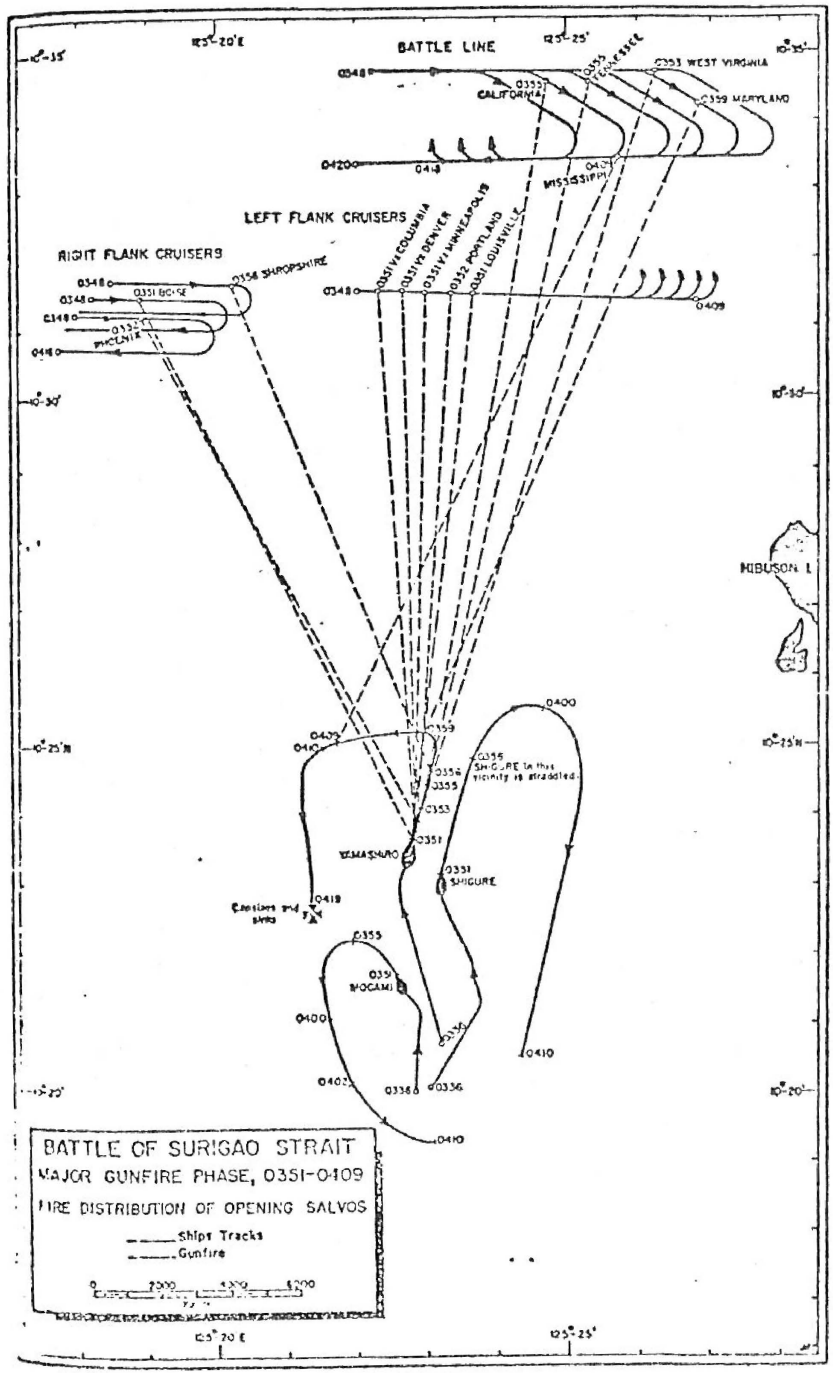
The cruisers opened fire at 0351, range 13,600 yards, and at 0353 the Battle Line joined in, range 22,800 yards with the battleships firing 16 inch and 14 inch armor piercing projectiles, with devastating results.

At 0409 Admiral Oldendorf ordered all ships to cease fire because the USS Grant of Desron 56, which had suffered a crippling hit from the enemy, and some of her sister destroyers were being hit by "friendlies". The cease fire lasted for 10 minutes, but this period of grace allowed the Shigure and Mogami to escape.

At 0419 the Yamashiro capsized and sank taking Admiral Nashimura with her.

The enemy had no consolation in having damaged the victors, for of Admiral Oldendorf's force only the destroyer Grant had been hit and that mostly by her own side. She was saved, however, and repaired in time to take part in the Okinawa operation.

While this was going on Admiral Shima's Second Striking Force was following along.



His first encounter was with the PT boats. At 0325 Abukuma was hit by a torpedo. The PT had fired at a destroyer and missed but the fish fortunately found Abukuma instead. As a result of this hit Abukuma retired.

About an hour later Shima observed on his radar scope what appeared to be two enemy ships. The two heavy cruisers were ordered to attack with torpedos. Each fired eight torpedos. The target was actually the two Hibuson Islands, which were not damaged. This was the Second Striking Force's only contribution to the battle.

At 0425 Shima very prudently decided to retire.

Just five minutes later Nachi collided with Mogami which was burning and retiring. Nachi's stern was badly damaged.

Thus, by five in the morning on 25 October, with an hour and a half to go before sunrise, the Japanese Southern Force was broken up and in retreat. Battleships Fuso and Yamashiro had been sunk in the middle of the Strait; destroyers Yamagumo and Michishio had gone the same way, and of Nishimura's force only lucky Mogami, swift Shigure and crippled Asagumo had so far escaped.

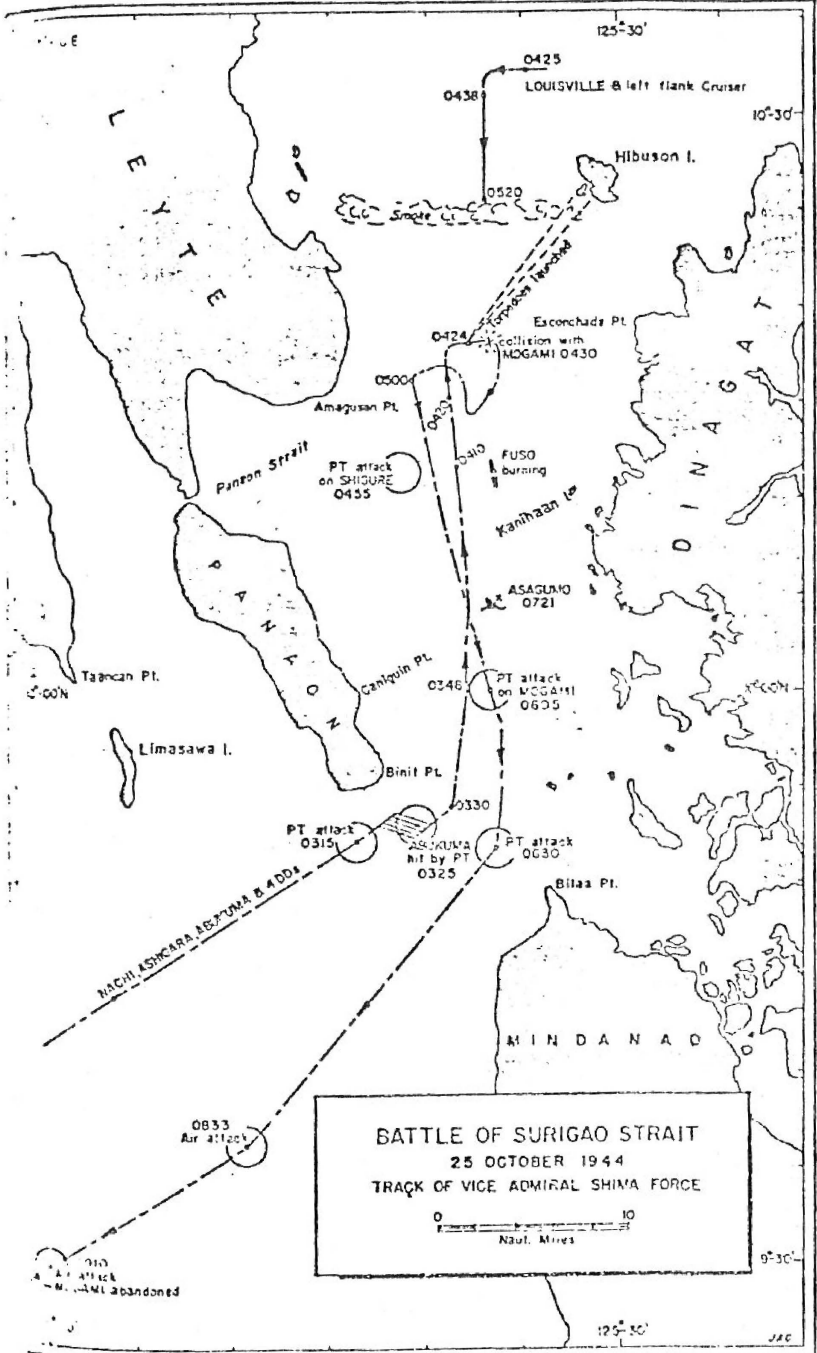
But Shima's two heavy cruisers and four destroyers, which had not been brought under American gunfire or torpedo attack, retired safely.

There were plenty of pickings left for the pursuit phase of the battle.

At 0617 Admiral Oldendorf directed Rear Admiral Hayler to take his two light cruisers and three destroyers southward to "polish off enemy cripples". They sank Asagumo at 0721.

At 1230 as a result of attacks by Admiral T.L. Sprague's "avengers" Mogami was sunk. This left only Shigure afloat from Nishimura's force.

The relentless pursuit was to continue for days afterward. On the morning of the 27th Abukuma was sunk by Army air attack (their first involvement in the battle), and on 5 November



BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
25 OCTOBER 1944
TRACK OF VICE ADMIRAL SHIMA FORCE

Nachi was sunk in Manila Bay by air attack from the Lexington. As of that date of the Southern Force that had entered Surigao Strait only the heavy cruiser Ashigara and five destroyers remained afloat.

Sunrise on the 25th came at about 0630. An hour before that Taffy 1 had returned to station after night retirement and at 0545 began to launch a strike for the pursuit of the Japanese ships fleeing from Surigao Strait. Taffy 2 and 3 launched routine air missions and by sunrise were relaxing into the usual morning routine.

Aboard Coolbaugh we knew that the enemy in Surigao Strait had been turned back, but details were sketchy. Not knowing what the new day would bring forth we fell into the pattern of operation which we had been carrying out for the past week.

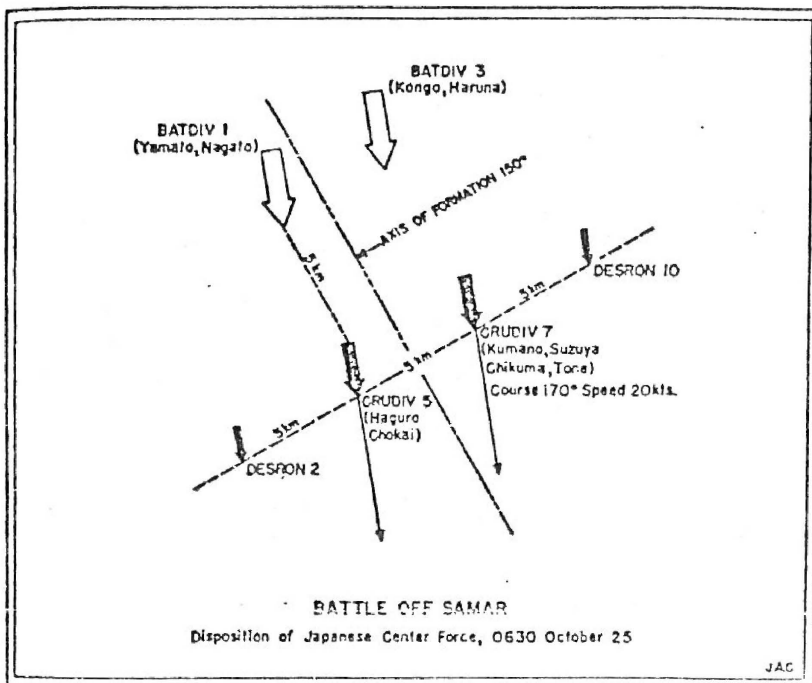
This state of euphoria did not last long, however. We were suddenly electrified by messages that started pouring in. Completely undetected until that time Kurita's Center Force was sighted by a plane from Kadashan Bay at 0647, and at 0648 when the Jap ships were still hull down their guns opened fire. One minute later colored splashes from their shells began rising astern of Taffy 3.

Many sailors could not believe their eyes or ears. Kurita's Center Force, in Admiral Halsey's estimation an aggregation of cripples, had covered 125 to 150 miles in the last seven hours completely undetected.

Complete surprise applied equally to Admiral Kurita. It seems to have deprived him of all power of decision, and the result was a helter-skelter battle. His ships, following the whims of their commanding officers were committed piecemeal and so in the end were defeated.

At 0701 Rear Admiral CAG Sprague broadcast an urgent contact report in plain language, giving his position and that of the enemy and asking all who could to send assistance.

KURITA'S CENTER FORCE



CRU DIV 7
HEAVY CRUISERS
Kumano
Suzuya
Chikuma
Tone

CRU DIV 5
HEAVY CRUISERS
Haguro
Chokai

BAT DIV 1
Yamato (9-18"guns)
Nagato (16"guns)

BAT DIV 3
Kongo (14"guns)
Haruna (14"guns)

Light cruisers Nashiro and Yahagi were the flagships of the two Desrons screening the van.

At the moment of attack, Admiral Tom Sprague's Taffy 1 lay about 130 miles S by E, and Admiral Stump's Taffy 2 between them, but much nearer to Taffy 3. The escort carrier group commander acted quickly. At 0702, within four minutes of Admiral Clifton Sprague's urgent plea for assistance, he had requested and received permission from Admiral Kinkaid to launch all available planes to strike the enemy fleet, and passed the word to Stump. Captain Whitehead, in flagship Wasatch, in San Pedro Bay, pulled planes away from other missions to assist. Thus, within ten minutes of the time the enemy opened fire, every available aircraft was flying to help, and the rest were in process of launching. But would they arrive in time? There was plenty of frantic worrying on board the ships in San Pedro Bay, not only about the escort carriers but about themselves, in case Kurita broke through.

This was a matter of concern to us too. Considering the battleships and cruisers of the Jap fleet it seemed almost inevitable that they would overwhelm our CVEs, DDs and DEs armed only with 5" guns and a handful of torpedos, and that they would soon be upon us as the third line of defense.

The flagship of Taffy 3, Fanshaw Bay, and White Plains on the exposed flank were the first to come under fire. "Wicked salvos straddled White Plains and their colored geysers began to sprout among all the other carriers from projectiles loaded with dye ... yellow and purple, the splashes had a kind of horrid beauty." Cried a seaman in White Plains, "They're shooting at us in technicolor!"

At that moment, 0706, remarked Admiral Sprague, "the enemy was closing with disconcerting rapidity and the volume and accuracy of fire was increasing. At this point it did not appear that any of our ships could survive another five minutes of the heavy-caliber fire being received." His task unit being surrounded by "the ultimate in desperate circumstances," the Admiral saw that counteraction was

urgently and immediately required. He ordered all escorts to attack the enemy with torpedoes.

Destroyers Counterattack, 0716-0830

This battle, so beautifully and bravely fought against overwhelming odds, was filled with gallant and memorable episodes; none more so than the torpedo and gunfire attacks by the screen. Admiral Clifton Sprague ordered his three destroyers to make the first counterattack on the Japanese heavy ships at 0716, just after his escort carriers had entered the rain squall. And one, at least, of the destroyers was already in the fight. The most admirable thing about this battle was the way everything we had afloat or airborne went baldheaded for the enemy. Kurita was bewildered by this superaggressiveness, and readily concluded that we had more there than met the eye.

The three destroyers of Taffy 3's screen were Hoel, flying the pennant of Commander W.D. Thomas, Heermann and Johnston - all 2100-tonners of the Fletcher class.

As Johnston bore in to a flanking position, she delivered rapid salvo fire from her main battery, aiming at Kumano, which was leading a heavy cruiser column. Over two hundred rounds were fired and numerous hits were observed. Since the angle of her approach brought all Japanese heavy ships in echelon, so that their forward guns could fire at her without fouling each other's range, many of them did; and splashes of four or five different colors began rising about Johnston in her mad, brave course.

At this moment Commander Evans passed the word which he had already received from Sprague, to deliver torpedo attack in conjunction with Hoel and Heermann. Nearest to the enemy, Johnston was the first to comply. Closing at 25 knots to within 10,000 yards of the heavy cruiser, she fired her ten torpedoes. They were observed to run "hot, straight and normal." Having expended her entire supply, Johnston whipped

around and retired behind her own heavy smoke. What happened next can best be told in the words of her senior surviving officer: -

"Two and possibly three heavy underwater explosions were heard by two officers ... at the time our torpedoes were scheduled to hit. Upon emerging a minute later from the smoke screen, the leading enemy cruiser was observed to be burning furiously astern.

At this time, about 0730, this ship got it. Three 14-inch shells from a battleship, followed thirty seconds later by three 6-inch shells from a light cruiser, hit us. It was like a puppy being smacked by a truck. These hits knocked out the after fire room and engine room, lost all power to the steering engine, all power to the after three 5-inch guns and rendered the gyro compass useless."

At this stage of the battle confusion reigned supreme. Smoke and showers rendered the location of escorts a matter of by guess and by God.

Hoel was the screen flagship. Her skipper, Commander L.S. Kintberger, reported she commenced an approach on the nearest battleship, Kongo, which was then about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles NE of the spot where Kumano was torpedoed. The range was then 18,000 yards. She opened gunfire at 14,000 yards, and so did the enemy. At 0720 she received a hit on the bridge which destroyed all voice radio communication. Two minutes later, at a range of 9000 yards, she launched a half-salvo of torpedoes at Kongo, then steering an evasive course of 140° at 20 knots. The results were unobserved, but Kongo's Action Report states that she avoided four torpedoes by turning sharp left at 0733. Before the "fish" had run their course Hoel received hits on her after fireroom and after turbine, knocking out three guns and the port engine and jamming the rudder hard right. Before steering control could be shifted aft, Hoel found herself headed straight for the battleship that she was engaging. "Guns Nos. 1 and 2

continued to fire on the targets of opportunity." Seldom has a destroyer encountered so many opportunities.

Hoel may have been Kurita's imaginary "cruiser observed blowing up and sinking at 0725," but she wasn't sunk yet. The one idea of her skipper, as of Commander W.D. Thomas (Comdesdiv 91) on board, was to inflict maximum damage on the enemy while she floated, in the hope of diverting major-caliber fire from the escort carriers and giving them a few minute's grace. So, undismayed by the loss of one engine, of her Mark-37 fire control director, of BD radar, of bridge steering control and of three out of five 5-inch guns (all shot out by Kongo), Hoel returned to the fray in the hope of getting the rest of her torpedoes into Haguro, which was leading the Japanese cruiser column. At about 0750, "using manual train and selective aim with the torpedo officer on No.2 mount due to the loss of communications with the torpedo mounts," a half salvo of torpedoes was launched at the leading cruiser at a range of about 6000 yards, target angle 50 degrees. All torpedoes ran "hot, straight and normal" and "large columns of water were observed to rise from the cruiser at about the time scheduled for the torpedo run." Japanese records indicate that these torpedoes missed, which is difficult to accept, as there were no bombers about at the time to create the geyser effect with their near-misses.

Hoel, minus one engine and three of her 5-inch guns, was not so lucky. She attempted to retire southwesterly, but could not get out of the box into which her commander's courage had led her. Kongo lay 8000 yards on her port beam and the heavy cruisers were 7000 yards on her starboard quarter. Her one engine turned up just enough speed to "string along" with the enemy, but not enough to pull clear. Every Japanese ship within range took a crack at her, but by fishtailing and chasing salvos she was able to keep afloat for an hour and five minutes after her first hit, and her two bow guns barked continuously at whatever enemy seemed the

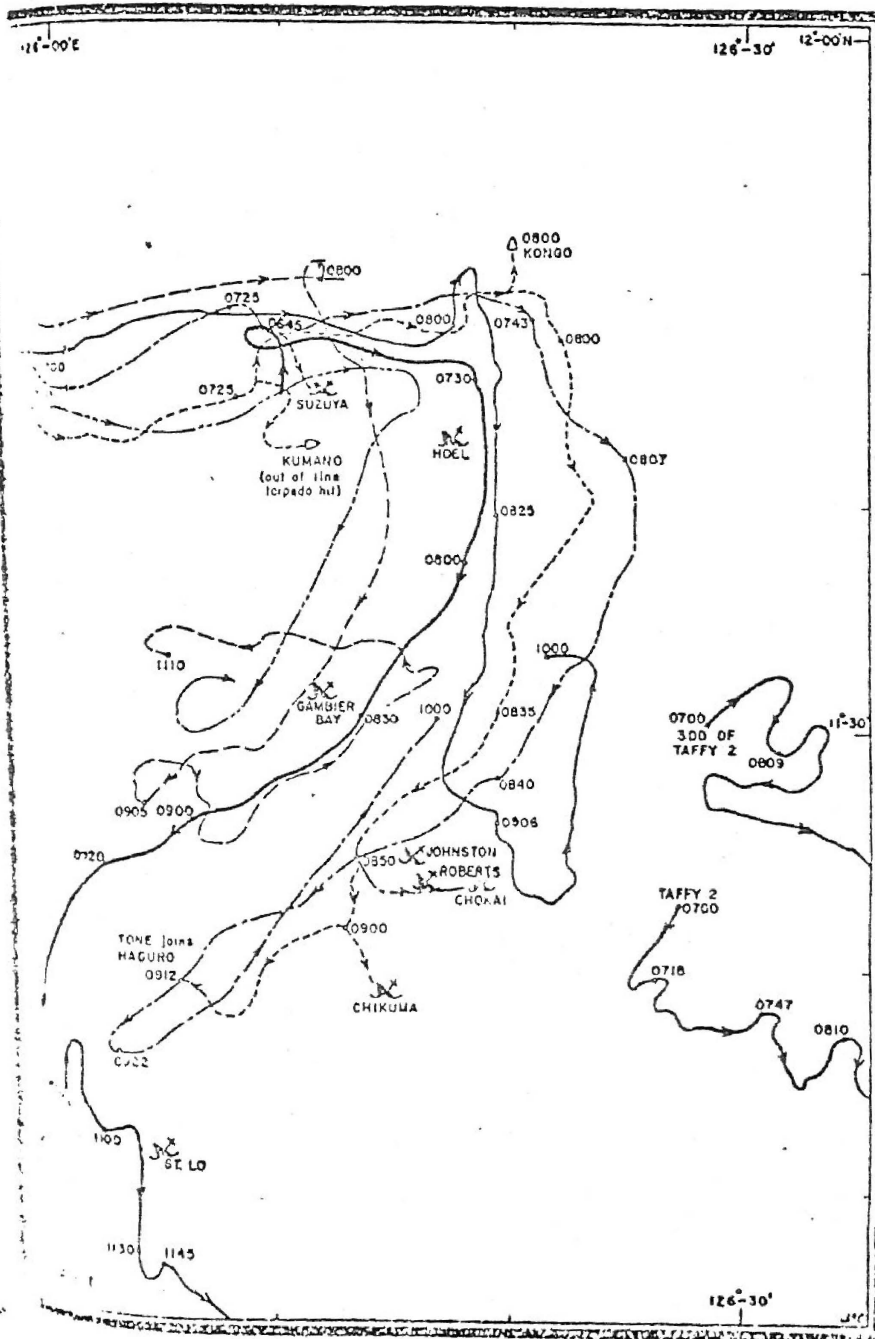
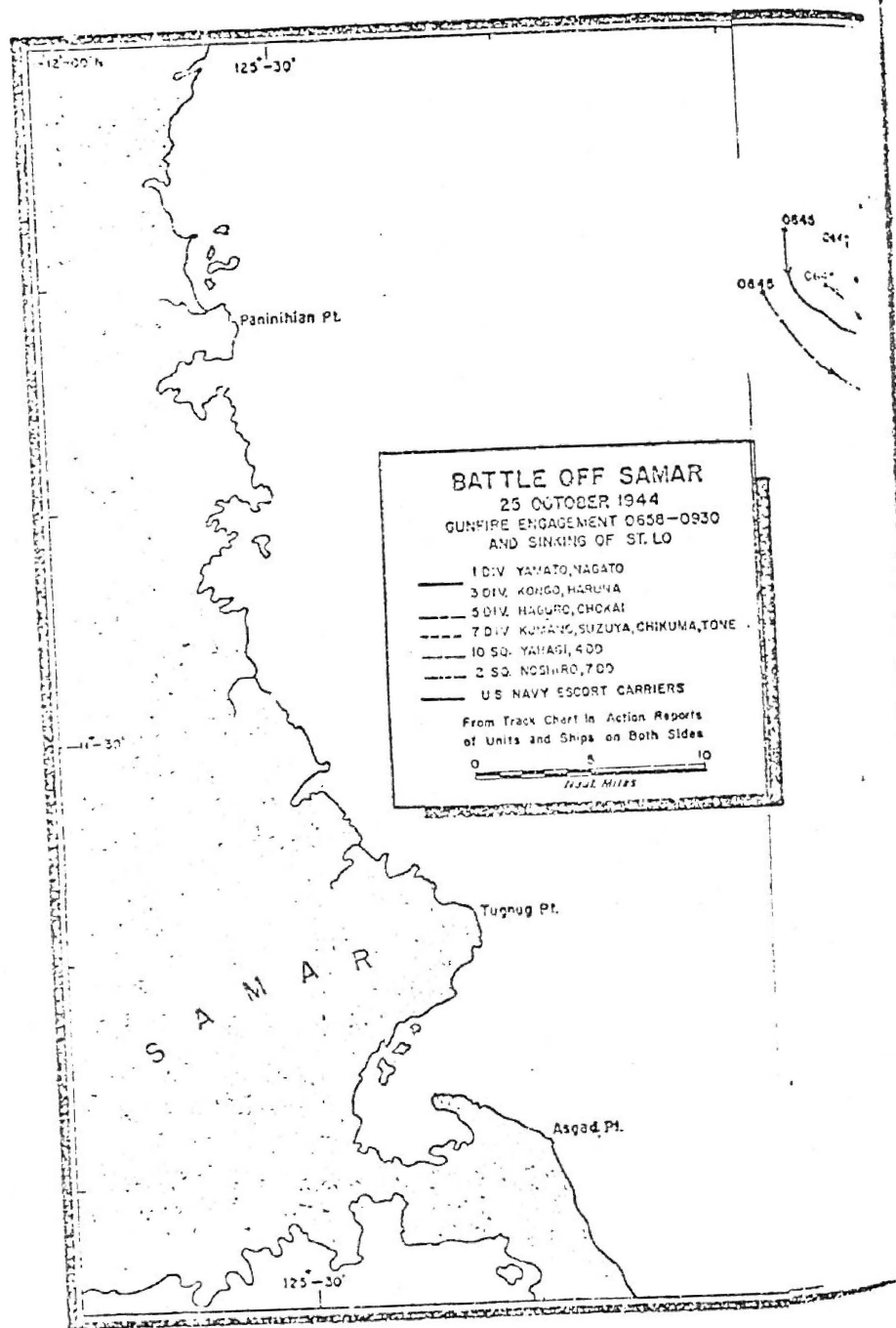
most menacing, expending some 500 rounds of 5-inch 38 between them. She took over 40 hits: 5-inch, 8-inch and even 16-inch. All those of major caliber were armor-piercing and went right through without exploding, but they were punching her full of holes below the water-line. The Japanese heavy ships passed so close that Hoel's crew observed their "pitiful" anti-aircraft fire, which they said resembled the "zone-barrage" system that the United States Navy had abandoned in 1942. Hoel's crew got a closer look at Yamato than did any other American bluejackets.

Finally at 0830 an 8-inch shell put the remaining engine and generator out of commission and Hoel went dead in the water. All engineering spaces were flooded, No.1 magazine was afire, the ship listed heavily to port and settled by the stern, and at 0835 the word passed: "Prepare to abandon ship." The firemen and water tenders went about their task preparing the engineering plant so that no explosions would occur, and Hoel was left to her fate. The Japanese continued to pump shells into her, and at 0855 she rolled over and sank in about 4000 fathoms.

Commander Thomas, the screen commander, was severely wounded, but recovered; Commander Kintberger, who also survived, wrote a seaman's epitaph to this memorable action: -
 "FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF ENGAGING SUCH VASTLY SUPERIOR FORCES, THESE MEN PERFORMED THEIR ASSIGNED DUTIES COOLY AND EFFICIENTLY UNTIL THEIR SHIP WAS SHOT FROM UNDER THEM."

"Little Wolves" Counterattack, 0750-0918

Hoel and Heermann were not alone in this second torpedo attack, nor was Hoel the only loss. When Admiral Clifton Sprague ordered the second torpedo attack at 0742 he used his code word for the destroyers, "Wolves make torpedo attack." The destroyer escorts were known as the "Little Wolves," and Lieutenant R.W. Copeland USNR of Samuel B. Roberts was so



eager to get into it that he signaled Commander Thomas, the screen commander: "Do you want Little Wolves to go in with Wolves?" Thomas replied "Negative," but quickly followed that discouraging word with "Little Wolves form up for second attack." That did not help matters much, as the DEs never had been taught to "form up" and had never delivered a torpedo attack. They were in somewhat the same situation as the motor torpedo boats, mounting torpedoes but with no chance to use them, as their employment in the Pacific had been almost entirely in antisubmarine work. But they flinched not; and Roberts, despite the clear intimation that she was not wanted in the destroyer column, tagged along 3000 yards behind Hoel and Heermann rather than seek out her fellows on the other flank of the carrier formation.

And so the Roberts, Raymond, Dennis and Butler got into the action too, closing the enemy, firing their torpedoes and five inch guns and laying the smoke screens which were such an important part of the action.

The Roberts was first hit at 0850 and later took two or three 14 inch HC shells which put her out of action. She sank at 1005. The others, though taking some hits, survived.

Johnston's final act was to take on five enemy destroyers and she managed to bluff the enemy into a premature torpedo attack. Under an avalanche of shells she finally sank at 1010. The Heermann, though badly holed and down by the bow, survived.

Despite the brave action of the escorts the enemy was able to close the carriers whose speed was only 17½ knots and sank Gambier Bay.

However the relentless assaults upon the enemy by the screen and by every available air craft which delivered torpedo, bombing and strafing attacks paid off. Haguro and Tone, two of the four heavy cruisers that endeavored to close the port flank, broke off at 0905 and 0920 respectively; the

other two, Chokai and Chikuma, were sunk by a combination of air and surface attacks. Admiral Kurita's final offensive thrust was the destroyer attack which went home at 0915 and was thwarted by Johnston. In Admiral Sprague's own words: -

"At 0925 my mind was occupied with dodging torpedoes when near the bridge I heard one of the signalmen yell, "Goddamit, boys, they're getting away!" I could not believe my eyes, but it looked as if the whole Japanese Fleet was indeed retiring. However, it took a whole series of reports from circling planes to convince me. And still I could not get the fact to soak into my battle-numbed brain. At best, I had expected to be swimming by this time."

The main action was over.

As previously noted, Admiral C.A.F. Sprague's urgent voice call for help was transmitted at 0701 and Admiral T.L. Sprague within four minutes had requested and received permission from Admiral Kinkaid to launch all available planes to strike the enemy fleet. Preparations for this were in progress when suddenly we came under attack from a different source.

Again let me quote from Samuel Eliot Morison:

Enter Kamikaze, 0740-1130 October 25

"Even after Kurita retired the battle was not over for the escort carriers. Other hostile forces had been released which had to be dealt with; some of them were already being fought during the main phase of the battle. Rear Admiral T.L. Sprague's Taffy 1, comprising three Sangamon class and one Kaiser class escort carrier, with a screen of three destroyers and five DEs, was having a tough fight to the southward. This group had the honor of receiving the first deliberate Kamikaze suicide plane attack of the war.

"Taffy 1, in its regular day operating area about 40 miles off Siargao Island, and some 130 miles to the southward of Taffy 3, had launched a strike of 11 Avengers and 17 Hellcats to join the chase down Surigao Strait, an hour

before the battle opened off Samar. As soon as word came through of the attack on Taffy 3, "Tommy" Sprague prepared to send assistance to his friend "Ziggy", and did. His carriers were in the process of recovering and rearming planes returning from other missions at 0740 when they were jumped by six Japanese planes from Davao.

"Santee had just finished launching five TBMs and eight FM-2s when a Japanese plane dove onto her out of a cloud, and so near that no guns could be brought to bear. It came in strafing, crashed the flight deck on the port side forward and continued on through the hangar deck. The explosion blew a hole 15 by 30 feet, and started fires in the immediate vicinity of eight 1000-pound bombs. Failure of these bombs to detonate is probably the most fortunate event in Santee's long and active career. The fire was brought under control by 0751, but the carrier sustained 43 casualties, 16 of them fatal.

"Half a minute after this suicide crash another Kamikaze circled Suwannee astern, and, when hit by her antiaircraft fire, spiraled down and rolled over into a dive, heading for Sangamon. One 5-inch shell fired by Suwannee hit the plane when it was about 500 feet from her sister flattop, causing it to swerve and splash at a safe distance. At the same time Petrof Bay was closely missed by a third Kamikaze which was knocked down by antiaircraft fire.

"Five minutes after the fire had been extinguished on Santee, she was hit on the starboard side between frames 58 and 60 by a torpedo, launched by Japanese submarine I-56. The explosion caused a certain amount of damage, but no casualties. I-56 had picked the wrong ship, for the large converted tankers of this class safely absorbed hits that would have been lethal to the Kaiser class. Santee, with a slight list from flooding, was making 16½ knots before eight bells struck.

"Suwannee, after shooting down two Zekes, spotted a third off her stern, circling in the clouds at 8000 feet. Her antiaircraft gunners were on it in a jiffy. It rolled over, smoking, toward the carrier's starboard side and then plummeted, hitting Suwannee about 40 feet forward of the after elevator, making a 10-foot hole in the flight deck. Its bomb exploded between the flight and hangar decks, tearing a 25-foot hole in the latter, injuring the main deck and causing numerous casualties. The fire on the hangar deck was promptly quenched but the after plane elevator remained inoperative. Within two hours the flight deck damage had been temporarily repaired so that landings could be made, and at 1009 air operations were resumed."

It was shortly after this time that the CVE St. Lo of Admiral CAF Sprague's group which had survived the attack of Kurita's Center Force was struck by a Kamikaze which crashed through the flight deck and burst into flames below. The resulting explosions of torpedoes and bombs on the hangar deck literally blew the ship apart and she sunk at 1125 under a cloud of dense smoke.

Again let us return to Sam Morison:

"Around noon on 25 October, and again at 1220, three or four enemy fighter planes carrying bombs attacked Taffy 1 and were driven off by ships' gunfire. Taffy 1 then steamed in a northeasterly direction to join Taffy 3, and at 1700 launched all remaining planes to attack Kurita's Center Force, which by that time was well out of range. Many planes of this group landed on Tacloban Field; others made night landings on Santee and Petrof Bay around 1945. At 2237, before rendezvous with Taffy 3 was effected, destroyer escort Coolbaugh (Lieutenant Commander S.T. Hotchkiss USNR) of the screen sighted a submarine periscope in the darkness. Admiral Sprague immediately ordered a 90-degree emergency turn. Just as it was completed, a torpedo passed along each

side of Petrof Bay. Coolbaugh promptly attacked the submarine with hedgehog, unsuccessfully.* Taffy 1, after sighting Taffy 3 and exchanging signals, turned southward again. Next morning, 26 October, destroyer escort Richard M. Rowell of the screen made a sound contact on a submarine. Within half an hour she had sighted the periscope and made a series of hedgehog and depth-charge attacks; but that I-boat, too, got away."

Let me say a little more about this submarine encounter.

The night of 25 October was bright and clear with a partial moon and about 15 knots of wind to produce a slight sea which sparkled with reflected moonlight. Our speed was about 15 knots and our position in the screen was off the starboard bow of the formation of CVEs. I was enjoying the night air and complacent in the knowledge that at least for a while we would have no more Kamikazes.

Suddenly and simultaneously reports came in from the Combat Information Center and from the sonar operator on the bridge, radar contact and sonic "ping" 1200 yards on the starboard bow.

Immediately we notified the flagship, set a shallow pattern on our depth charges, and proceeded for the attack. The scenario was entirely in accordance with the many practice sessions we had been through.

With attack speed of 15 knots and target speed of about four to five knots, approaching, the time involved was to be a short two minutes.

The sonar recorder traces came in at just the right angle of approach toward the point at which I would call "Roll one." But then, as the crucial moment drew imminent, something went wrong. The recorder, so crucial to the

*Rear Adm. T.L. Sprague Report p.31. "We saw it explode," said Lt. David Acheson USNR of Coolbaugh to the writer, "but only got an E assessment." German, Japanese and Italian Submarine Logs indicate that this submarine did not sink. It was probably I-352. Position was lat. 09°52'N, long. 127°30'E.

The mention of hedgehog here is incorrect, that came later.

X
TRATHEN
(DD-530)

North

X
ROWELL
(DE-403)

O PETROF BAY (CVP-80)

X
SOUTHARD
(DIS-10)

SANGAMON (CVE-26) 0-1000 Yds. 1000 Yds. O SUWANNEE (CVE-27)

zigzag-log 025° T

O SANTEE (CVE-29) Formation Base
Course 115° T.

X
MC CORD
(DD-534)

X
HAZELWOOD
(DD-531)

X
COOLBAUGH
(DE-217)

POSITION OF MC CORD, ROWELL, & TRATHEN
ARE APPROXIMATE. FORMATION HAD JUST
BEEN CHANGED TO 5-V.

operation, quit. My only recourse seemed to be to guesstimate our rate of convergence and roll the charges with hope and a prayer. To be effective the explosion would have to occur within a few feet of the target.

Looking off the starboard bow along the path of the moon in the direction of our quarry I was suddenly galvanized to see a periscope glinting in the moonlight. Its approach was such that it would about collide with our fantail.

A moment later one of the crew on deck saw the same thing. His reaction was immediate. Pointing his finger at it he ran aft toward the depth charges and in his excitement he swallowed the quid of tobacco he was chewing.

Forgetting the scientific approach I watched the periscope proceed toward the proper point and then called for the charges to be rolled.

Seconds that seemed like hours passed before the first depth charge exploded. Then almost simultaneously ^{after the third charge} there followed a shattering explosion. The ship shook like a mouse being shaken by a terrier as a vast column of flame and debris shot ^{a hundred} ~~fifty~~ feet into the air close on our port quarter.

My reflex was to give a great shout - a cheer of suddenly released tension and for the success of our attack. As a result I promptly lost my voice, an infirmity which almost drove me out of my mind for the next two days.

By this time Taffy 1 was some distance away and moving out. We were directed to remain in the area and search for debris, oil samples or human remains.

We were convinced that we had seen the submarine explode but none the less we carried out a retiring search plan in a half hearted way. Soon we were alone on the ocean with no targets on the radar screen.

An hour or two went by before the radar operator announced that he had two contacts approaching from the north. As we watched them they started to talk between themselves on the TBS voice radio. They were two Fletcher Class destroyers and their conversation went as follows: "Wolf one

from Wolf two, I have "skunk" (unidentified contact) on bearing 175 range 10,000 yards, over." (The exact range and reciprocal bearing of one of our radar contacts.)

"Wolf two from Wolf one, I see that skunk too, over."

Then there was a pause. I reached for our TBS to identify ourselves and set their minds at ease. After a day such as we had all experienced we were all apt to be a little trigger happy. I was suddenly dismayed to find that our TBS was dead. The shock of the recent explosion had jarred something out. Our ship, like myself, was voiceless.

"Wolf one from Wolf two, shall I open fire? over."

For a moment there was a pregnant silence, on our part filled with a few silent prayers.

Then, "Wolf two from Wolf one, negative, he shows slightly "friendly" to me, out."

Our IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) signal, though very faint (due no doubt to its recent shaking) saved the day.

With a sigh of relief I watched our friends disappear from the radar scope.

When morning came there was no debris to be found. Was there none, or was it due to having lost the spot of explosion due to our search and retirement from the two destroyers? Just after dawn we received orders from Taffy 1 to rejoin the screen, and for the rest of the morning we resumed our regular duties.

Now let me turn again to Sam Morison:

"Shortly after noon 26 October, the Kamikazes pulled off another attack on Taffy 1, then at lat. 09 37' N, long. 126 53' E. Her own combat air patrol saved Santee from twelve Judys. Sangamon and Petrof Bay were narrowly missed. A Zeke that chose Suwannee as the place to die crashed a torpedo-bomber which had just been recovered and was sitting on the forward elevator. Both planes exploded, both pilots and two crewmen were killed, nine more planes spotted on the

flight deck forward were ignited and exploded, lighting a fire that was only subdued after several hours of hard work. Despite this and her earlier mishap, Suwannee's luck held; the plane's depth charges burned but did not explode. But the carrier lost 85 killed, 58 missing and 102 wounded, some of whom subsequently died.

"The story of an unknown hero of Suwannee is told by Commander S. Van Mater, her executive officer. A number of men in the forecastle were cut off from the rest of the ship by flames.

"After several calls to have medical supplies brought to the forecastle for those seriously injured were unproductive of results, an enlisted man informed Chief Aviation Electrician's Mate C.N. Barr that he would try to get through the flames to get medical supplies because he could no longer stand the sufferings of the wounded. Despite Barr's efforts to stop him, the man climbed to the 20-mm mounts just forward of the flight deck. A second later a torpedo-bomber directly in his path exploded and the man was seen holding on the starboard side of the flight deck with one leg blown off. A moment later he fell into the water and was not seen again. Every effort to ascertain his name has proved unavailing.

"So it is in any battle. The efforts of many an unknown sailor save hundreds of his shipmates' lives and turn possible disaster into victory. Others, like the unknown hero of Suwannee, fail gloriously in the attempt, but their example is not lost. As Pindar wrote 2500 years ago: -

Across the fruitful earth and o'er the sea

Shoots a bright beam of noble deeds, unquenchable..."

We were the escort closest to Suwannee when she took this Kamikaze and so we were ordered to stand by and to pick up survivors.

Many of her crew were blown overboard at the time of

the initial explosions and many on the forecastle who were cut off by flames from the rest of the ship jumped overboard. The sea was everywhere dotted with figures floating in life jackets.

Fortunately the sea was almost flat calm so that from the bridge we had perfect visibility. We put over the whale boat and life rafts to pick men out of the water, and aboard the ship we strung every available boarding net over the side. In that way I could maneuver the ship to pick some up directly.

My problem was complicated by my lack of voice. I sat in my captain's chair in the starboard bridge wing and kept Dick Wernecke, my exec, at my elbow. In a hoarse voice I would whisper my orders in his ear for him to relay as required.

All hands available for the purpose lined the rails to help survivors aboard. Some were in good condition and could take care of themselves, but many were terribly burned and had other injuries.

One of the colored stewards' mates was aft helping. He grasped a nearby ankle to help bring the man aboard. Suddenly he turned to Mr. Smith.

"Mistah Smith, suh," he said, "dat leg am mighty still, suh!"

Smitty replied, "Of course it is, that man's dead!"

Johnson, who could deal with the live ones very well took off forward like a rabbit.

The Chief Pharmacists Mate, R.L. Wicks, took care of the burned and injured and saw that they were taken or conducted to the wardroom, the battle dressing station, for emergency treatment. Soon every available space was filled in the officers quarters and down below in the berthing spaces near the sick bay.

At last we had picked up 91 survivors and one

man who was so badly injured that he died as he was being taken aboard. That evening we conducted burial at sea for him.

Nine stretcher cases required assistance beyond the capabilities of our Chief Pharmacist's Mate and these we transferred, securely lashed into metal litters, to U.S.S. SANGOMON.

SUWANEE, having suffered Kamikaze hits forward and aft was now out of service. Nonetheless we remained in the area on night retirement until 0212 on 27 October when we received orders to depart T.G.77.4 and escort SUWANEE to Manus via Kossol Roads, Palau, where a hospital ship was anchored.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf, as far as we were concerned, was over.

One of the most heroic features of this last experience was the tireless ministrations to the burned and injured rendered by Wicks and his many volunteer assistants for which they all earned the enduring gratitude of the brave men they served. I recommended him for the Bronze Star Medal which I later had the pleasure of presenting to him.

October 30, 1944

So much has happened since I last wrote (though the letter has not yet been mailed) that I scarcely know where to start. And the censorship regulations are such that even if I did I scarcely know what I can say. In my last letter I described at some detail our first air attack. Now that is such ancient history that it is almost forgotten in light of the more recent and far more terrible things that have happened. First, though, I can say that the "fighting Coolbaugh" has so far come thru unscathed, and for all her experiences, has emerged a better ship than ever.

About a day or so after I last wrote, things began to really hot up. You undoubtedly read about what I am referring to in the newspapers, 25 but written in a far more optimistic vein than the one in which we actually lived through then. The losses which you read of occurred just over the horizon from us, and had it not been for the superb work of a few small ships there is no telling how many more losses there might have been. Our group, ^{THE 3-11-44} however, was far from unscathed, and got a good taste of the Japs from above and below - though fortunately not from surface craft. It is a revelation to see what suicidal maniacs they actually are, but it is also a revelation to see how infinitely superior our tactics, our damage control and our spirit is to theirs. One of our ships after receiving two crippling blows within a few minutes of each other, reported "ready for duty in all respects" within an hour and a half. The spirit of the men has also been superb. We have had men, taken aboard here, who have been so horribly burned that it was almost impossible to distinguish their features, but who never gave any hint as to their pain and could actually smile and say they were fine.

OF OUR GROUP

Fortunately for us the escorts did not take much of a pasting, and in our case we were able to dish it out in some small measure. One night when we were screening our formation, we picked up a submarine ^{NIGHT} contact and went in for the attack. We actually saw his periscope ²⁵⁻²⁶ close aboard and had the satisfaction of blowing him to small pieces in a very spectacular explosion. He had already fired one torpedo, which fortunately missed its mark, but he never had a chance to fire the rest of them.

26 OCT

(ABOUT 90 PICKED UP FROM USS SUNDANCE)

Not long afterward, as we had acquired a rather full passenger list, we were designated to escort one ship back to where we now are. This little rest has been very welcome to all hands, I can assure you. Although where we now are we can hear Japs firing away on the beach, it seems to us to be a very backward area. At least we have had the satisfaction of being on the spot when the going was toughest and things looked blackest. Now, as you have read in the papers, our little yellow friends have withdrawn and things are assuming a more routine aspect. I hope we shall be sent back in again, but at the moment I have no idea what they have in store for us.

It has been a dreadfully long time since we have received any mail, and it will be a much longer time before we get any I fear. When we left "Sleepy Hollow" (years ago it seems!) we directed our mail to be forwarded to what we then thought was to be our destination, so now I presume it is accumulating there and there is no telling when we shall see it. We just have to presume and hope that all the news is good news - and it will be all the more interesting when it finally catches up with us.

XXXY

FA DESTROYED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GROUP, 7:55 PM, AT 14:15 GOLF 24 1000 FT 1000 FT
XX USS SUNDANCE (CVC) X *R USS SUNDANCE (CVC)

I have never seen the spirit aboard the ship better than it is now. The boys have really been wonderful and some of them really deserve citations. The Chief Pharmacist's Mate for two days and nights never so much as sat down, and his spirit and organization of his more or less unskilled but supremely willing helpers, was wonderful, and has gained him the unfailing gratitude of the poor fellows he was caring for. Even the Stewards Mates (colored boys) whom we felt a little doubtful of under war conditions, performed nobly. The ones who did not have Bibles and Prayer Books of their own, lifted them from elsewhere and manned their guns like seasoned veterans, Bible in hand, and though much extra work was put on them by our passengers, they were always cheerfully ready and worked like beavers.

On the theory that a crew must be a coordinated team, and to work intelligently together, must know all (or almost all) of the facts, I have held daily newscasts on the speaker system and have kept them fully up to date on what has been going on and what we might expect. I was pleased to see how eagerly they looked forward to getting the dope from "Tokyo Hotchkiss" - (and later checking it with Tokyo Rose!)

Well I shall stop and write again later. You will probably get a whole bunch of my letters in a batch and read them all in the wrong order, but I guess you will make some sort of sense out of them. I wish I could tell you more and not just hint. However, if I wrote you everything then I wouldn't have much to tell you when I eventually get back - so perhaps censorship serves some useful purpose.

Please keep on writing just the same. I hope you are not worrying about me, but there is no way I can get word to you now until I can get these letters off. I long for news of you both and of East River. It will seem awfully good to get back.

Stu

NARRATIVE

This attack must be considered urgent. When sound contact was established definitely, the order was given to set a medium pattern and to man hedgehogs. The ship was at General Quarters expecting an air attack as enemy aircraft had been reported in the near vicinity. The position of this vessel in the screen required that we at least drop an embarrassing pattern. When radar reported a pip at the approximate range and bearing of sound contact the order was changed to set a shallow pattern. This was given at about 800-900 yards, and personnel began setting charges on the starboard rack to a shallow setting. At 50 yards the starboard lookout, Leo Spewack, SOm3c, reported a periscope at about 0300 relative in the edge of the moon's path. The ship's heading was 170° T. When the periscope was abreast of the bridge the Commanding Officer estimated its distance to be about 100 feet. Judging from the periscope's wake the submarine's course was about 020° T, speed 6 - 7 knots, and it appeared that the periscope would about collide with or just pass clear of the fantail. When the periscope was abreast of the bridge the order to "roll one" was given. Orders to roll succeeding charges were given at about two second intervals. The first three charges were heard to explode. The third charge was immediately followed by a large explosion estimated to be at about 75 yards fine on our port quarter. The explosion caused a tremendous concussion and threw a mushroom like black cloud vertically upward to a height of 80 to 100 feet and produced a deep red flame with what appeared to be numerous sparks or bits of flaming debris. The fourth depth charge was heard to detonate immediately afterward. The sonarman who had retained contact throughout stated that the returning echo, which previously had been sharp and clear, disintegrated with the explosion. Immediately after the fourth charge had detonated the ship was swung to port but all efforts to regain contact failed. A strong smell of oil was noted as the ship swung to leeward of where the explosion had taken place.

All the evidence seems to indicate that the third charge landed almost squarely on the bow of the submarine. The 50 foot setting on this charge would put its explosion well within lethal range of the submarine.

Prior to the commencement of the attack the carriers, which we were escorting, were formed on axis 000-180° equally spaced on circle 1. The base course was 115° T, speed 15, and the screen was oriented to the course. The zigzag leg then steered was 095° T. The range of this vessel from the nearest carrier at the time of the attack was approximately 6,000 yards, with the formation center bearing about 340° T. At about the time of dropping charges this formation executed an emergency 9 turn. The flash of the submarine's explosion was clearly visible from the carriers as evidenced by the enclosed statements.

The entire attack was completed in just about two minutes after the initial contact and hence it was impossible to obtain a DRT plot. It is felt, however, that no DRT solution could give more accurate evidence than that obtained visually. The visual information was carefully checked by interviews with all witnesses. The very proximity of the periscope left little room for divergence of opinion on all the pertinent facts. The information was then carefully plotted, and the results bore out the fact that the third charge should be and was the lethal one. The estimated distance from periscope to bow of the submarine, according to the latest ONI information, should be in the vicinity of 110-150 feet.

The submarine had evidently just fired a torpedo at the time of our attack, for about two minutes later one of the carriers, while completing her turn, reported a torpedo wake about parallel to her port. The submarine periscope when sighted was trained in the direction of the formation.

No debris was found after the attack, but as noted, a definite smell of oil was noticed when the ship circled back in an effort to regain contact, and what appeared to be an oil slick in the moonlight, seemed to be forming. At daylight the following day a broken oil slick of what seemed to be thin oil, such as diesel extended for about two miles in a downwind direction, the wind throughout the night was force 3.

27 October 1944.

STATEMENT OF HAROLD FISCHER, Slc, USNR, 669 01 09, U.S.S.
SUWANEE (CVE-27)

At 2230 on the night of October 25, 1944, I was standing on the catwalk of the signal bridge and was attracted by depth charge explosions on our starboard quarter. After the third underwater explosion I saw a gusher of black oil shoot up in the air about 75 to 100 feet in the air with sparks or flames around it. I feel certain that the submarine was destroyed.

HAROLD FISCHER, Slc, USNR
Service Number 669 01 09

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2
APR 1945

RECEIVED
U.S. AIR FORCE
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

27 October 1944

STATEMENT OF ENSIGN W. L. FARMER, USNR, FILE NUMBER 300942 -
RESCUED FLYER OF U.S.S. PENROF BAY (CVE-80) ON BOARD THIS
VESSEL

I was standing on the rangefinder platform on the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) when about 2230, 25 October 1944 I looked out about 30° on starboard bow and saw periscope at about 50 yards. It moved down starboard side as ship turned to starboard, and commenced dropping depth charges. Along with the third explosion I saw a violent detonation about 50 to 75 yards on the port quarter with resultant gusher of debris and flaming hot metal.

I am positive that the submarine was destroyed.

W. L. FARMER,
Ensign, USNR,
File Number 300942.

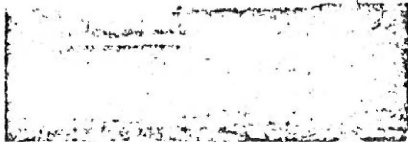
27 October 1944

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT EDWARD W. WENDT, USNR, FILE NUMBER 113115,
U.S.S. SUWANEE (CVE-27) GUNNERY OFFICER.

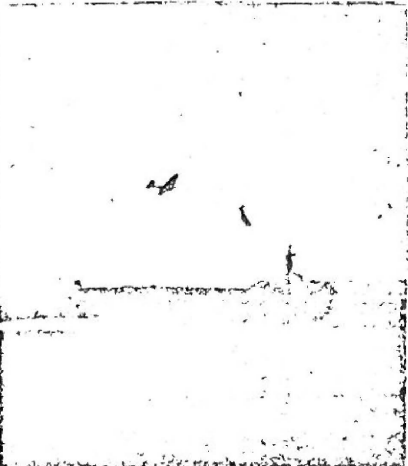
I heard the code name of the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) over the TBS call "I have seen periscope close aboard, I am attacking". After a short interval of a few minutes, during which time my vessel made an emergency 90° turn to port, a violent explosion was seen on the starboard quarter of my vessel approximately three miles distance. The explosion consisted of a tremendous upheaval of water followed by brilliant pyrotechnics. It was the impression of this observer that burning debris accounted for this picture.

EDWARD W. WENDT,
Lieutenant, USNR,
Gunnery Officer,
U.S.S. SUWANEE (CVE-27).

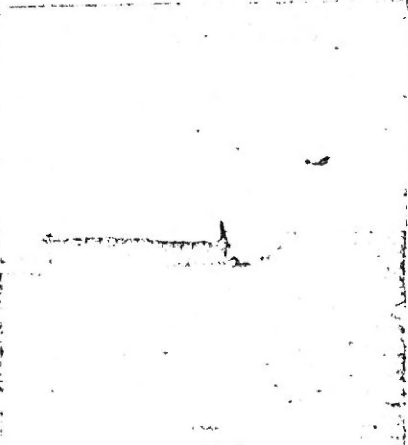
JAP Suicide Plane DIVES ON CARRIER



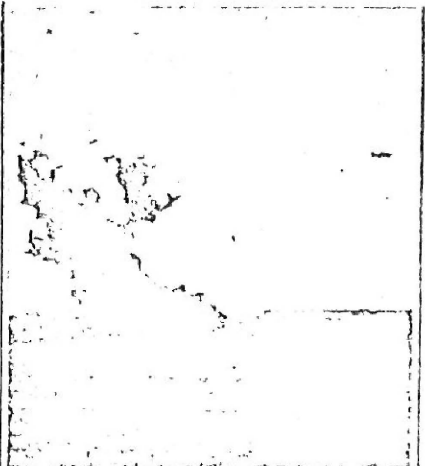
1. This is the beginning of the story of a kamikaze which died a suicide — and of a gallant escort carrier which lived on. The kamikaze (right) streaks toward the carrier, while a United States plane (left) comes in to land . . .



2. The U. S. plane (left), which is about to land on the carrier, the USS Suwannee, has seen the Jap and veers off. The kamikaze continues its dive on the carrier, hoping to blast it out of the action off Leyte . . . and sink it . . .



3. The Suwannee has been hit and flames are spreading on its deck. One of its own planes (right of flames) is still going away from the flaming ship, part of a covering force in invasion of the Philippines. Fight to live begins . . .



4. Smoke billows for the kamikaze scored a direct hit. But the Suwannee, which had been

Escort Carriers Broke Jap Trap

which dared not try to assist her. "Japanese cruisers and destroyers close to 2000 yards and had a regular target practice," the admiral related. "After she rolled over on her side, the enemy fired into her bottom until she sank." That was about 9 A. M. At 9:25 A. M., just as the CVE pilots launched their second torpedo attack on the Japanese, the enemy force surprisingly turned and sank her. An eight-inch shell hit the water line and flooded her engine room. That slowed her so that she fell behind the other CVEs, to sink. "I don't think any American admiral would have done that," Adm. T. L. Sprague said. "Ships are hard to sink. You can't sit at a desk and sink a battleship." But the Japanese had learned of the complete annihilation of the Surigao strait force. A number of their ships were damaged. One cruiser had been sunk. And they obviously had no stomach for the new torpedo plane assault. It was not until 10:30 A. M. that the St. Lo was hit—and then by a dive-bomber which fired planes on her flight and hangar decks. "She blew up with a terrific explosion," Adm. T. L. Sprague said. "It probably was her torpedoes. She sank in two or three minutes. She practically broke in two." It was not a pecking war of the St. Lo that the ten destroyers were sunk.

By CHARLES H. McMURRY
PEARL HARBOR, Nov. 24 (AP)—Rear Adm. Thomas L. Sprague let it be known today that his escort carrier force was surprised and one of his three divisions trapped by a Japanese battleship force off Samar Island in the second battle of the Philippines.

reorganized and shipped through San Bernardino strait north of Samar Island during the night. This was the situation: Adm. Halsey's fleet was busy sinking, damaging and routing every ship of the imperial carrier force in the greatest of the three-phased second battle of the Philippines northeast of Luzon Island.

range, it should have been. All but two were hit, but not one was lost. The little warships put up a heavy smoke screen to attempt to hide the CVEs, which also made as much smoke as possible, blowing their tubes. "A heavy squall gave the destroyers a seagoing foxhole," Adm. T. L. Sprague said.

"They stood off and continued to fire their eight and 16-inch guns. Once, however, after severely crippling the Gambier Bay, the Japanese moved to within 2000 yards—point blank range—and sank her. An eight-inch shell hit the water line and flooded her engine room. That slowed her so that she fell behind the other CVEs, to sink.

"We were in a pretty hot spot," the 50-year-old admiral told correspondents. However, planes from his 16 carriers, assisted by torpedo-firing destroyers, routed and turned back the force of five of Japan's newest and most modern battleships, eight of her latest type carriers and 13 destroyers.

TOO FAR AWAY
Vice-Adm. Jesse B. Oldendorf's battleship force had just sunk every one of eight Japanese ships—two battleships, two cruisers and four destroyers—in Surigao strait east of southern Leyte Island and was too far away to come to the CVEs (escort carriers) rescue. That battle was fought about 2:50 A. M. the morning of Oct. 24.

After the Japanese began to straddle the CVEs with big shells they laid down a deliberate 2½-hour bombardment, but made little effort to close the range further," Adm. T. L. Sprague said.

Three hours later planes from Adm. William F. Halsey's Third Fleet carriers joined the battle so that not one of the enemy ships escaped sinking or heavy damage. Adm. Sprague said his jeep carrier planes "sank quite a few" of the Japanese warships.

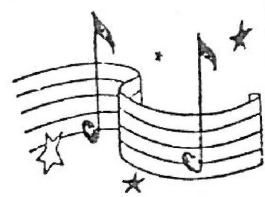
Adm. Sprague's carriers were dispersed east of the Philippines. One division of CVEs, under Rear Adm. C. A. F. Sprague, was due east of central Samar Island. A second under Rear Adm. Felix B. Stump was east of the southern tip of Samar. The third, under Adm. T. L. Sprague, was east of Leyte Gulf, almost due east of the northern tip of Dinagat Island. Each division was supported by a few destroyers and destroyer escorts—far too few for adequate defense. Adm. C. A. F. Sprague's carriers, for instance, were supported by only three destroyers and four little destroyer escorts.

Adm. Stump's CVEs remained in their original position until it appeared the Japanese might close to within gun range; then they, too, fled. Adm. T. L. Sprague's CVEs held their position.

The action began early the morning of Oct. 24 after the Japanese turned back once by carrier planes.

"The situation developed very rapidly," Adm. T. L. Sprague said.

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- rus and .. 2.10
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1,400 Rescued When Foe Sank 2 U. S. Carriers

The St. Lo and Gambier Bay Went Down Oct. 24 in Battle of the Philippines

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30 (AP).—Fourteen hundred men were rescued from two escort carriers sunk in the Battle of the Philippines on Oct. 24, the Navy reported Thursday in releasing a detailed account of how six of the baby flat-tops fought a big Japanese task force. The carriers sunk were the St. Lo and the Gambier Bay. "The losses on the St. Lo were low—we picked up 860 men," Rear Admiral C. A. F. Sprague said in a first-person report on the engagement. "Losses on the Gambier Bay were low too, considering that she dropped back into the middle of the Jap fleet. Approximately 600 of her crew were saved." (The complement of such ships has never been disclosed.) Sprague's report identified for the first time the other four carriers in his force of six which had an escort of three destroyers and

four destroyer escorts when it tangled with a Japanese force of four battleships, seven cruisers and nine destroyers. The other carriers were the Kalinin Bay, the Fanshaw Bay, the White Plains and the Kitkun Bay. All were damaged.

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UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
CARRIER DIVISION TWENTY TWO

(1j)

P20

Serial 0424

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
12 November 1944.

C-O-N-T-R-I-B-U-T-I-O-N

From: Commander Carrier Division TWENTY TWO.
To : The Chief of Naval Personnel.

Subject: Lieutenant Commander S.F. HATCHER, USNR,
Commanding Officer, U.S.S. COLLEGE (DD 217);
Letter report on performance of duty during
period 12 October 1944 to 1 November 1944.

Reference: (a) AFMav 171-43.
(b) Orders C/L 3-44.

1. Lieutenant Commander HATCHER served as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. COLLEGE on duty as a member of the screen for Task Group 77.4 during the period 12 October 1944 to 1 November 1944. He handled his ship well and performed all duties in a highly commendable manner. The COLLEGE assisted in shooting down numerous enemy aircraft that attacked the formation, and was believed to have definitely destroyed an enemy submarine during this period. The COLLEGE, under the able leadership of Lieutenant Commander HATCHER, contributed directly to the success of the Leyte operation.

E. H. S. [Signature]

cc:

ComNavPac
Lt-Comdr. HATCHER
ComSorbiv 69

- No. 3
- 1 Capt. W.M.
- 1 Exec. W.M.
- Gun.....
- 1st Lt.....
- Eng.....
- Comm.....
- ASW.....
- Stores.....
- Med.....
- All Off.....
- Yeoman.....

RECEIVED
NOV 29 1944
U.S.S. COLLEGE



8 Nov 44
Manus, Admiralty Bldg

Dear Mother + Dad

The time goes by so quickly it is hard to keep track of the days - and now it has been more than a week since I last wrote. It was good to get your letter of Oct 4, 11 + 14 when we arrived back here at the base. Fortunately the mail people evidently did not lose our letter of change of address too literally, and managed to catch up with us despite our unpremeditated expedition.

Well, hold on land + prepare for a big shock. I have been recommended for the Navy Cross by one recent task group commander, and I am flabbergasted. This is because of our affair with the Japs submarine. Ordinarily a sub is good for a

Bronze Star Medal I believe, but our Admiral, being an aviator, is not one to do things in half measures & so has put me and the COs of three other ships up for Navy Crosses. This decoration rates second only to the Medal of Honor, and I don't see how we can hope to attain it, but I guess that an Admiral's recommendation cannot be laughed off too lightly by the powers that be. So I am waiting with bated breath. We have received many compliments from all sides. I guess that being the only ship of our type up in the straits free sort of put us in the lime light a bit anyway. At any rate we have made a lot of friends & had a lot of fun.

I was certainly distressed to get the sad news about Helen's baby. It is a terrible thing to think of & I feel so sorry for her & Bill. It is a terrible thing to contemplate - and for perhaps years in the future.

After being detached from T.G.77.4 at 0212 on 27 October we had a quick run zig-zagging at 17 knots, escorting SUWANEE. Our screen had been augmented by U.S.S. MCGOWAN (DD-678) and U.S.S. HALE (DD-642) who had joined us the afternoon before. Together we arrived at Kossol Passage at about 1300 on the 28th of October.

Immediately after anchoring we transferred 24 of our survivors to the hospital ship U.S.S. BOUNTIFUL (AH-9) and the remaining 54 who were uninjured we returned to the SUWANEE. Having done that we fueled and anchored to await further developments.

And so we remained for the next three days. On the 30th we transferred to the harbor master ashore for return to their ship the three plane crash survivors from PETROF BAY whom we had rescued on the 25th. We also had a chance to visit aboard SUWANEE and to examine the damage inflicted by the Kamikazes.

At last on 1 November at 1105 we got underway with orders to escort SUWANEE to Seeadler Harbor, Manus. Again we followed a zig-zag plan at 17 knots with speed of advance 14.6 knots, but this time we were the only escort. Our trip was uneventful. The weather was fine with light winds and partly cloudy skies. Early on the morning of the 4th we arrived at Seeadler Harbor.

As we entered through the anti-torpedo nets the vast harbor stretching out ahead looked deserted in comparison to the time of our arrival a month before when nearly a thousand ships were gathered prior to our departure for Leyte. On this occasion about 200 ships, mostly service types, but including some DDs and DEs were scattered over the broad expanse. Many of the "jeep carriers" from Taffys 1, 2, and 3 had also returned, but otherwise there were no major combatant types.

Immediately upon arrival we moored alongside U.S.S. SILVER CLOUD (IX-143) to fuel. She was anchored in the midst of the 7th Fleet Service Force and not far from U.S.S. MOUNT HOOD (AE-11).

The area was a scene of activity. Alongside the MOUNT HOOD to starboard were moored, one outboard of the next, a division of LCIs. Having no paymaster of their own they were drawing on the paymaster aboard the MOUNT HOOD. Beyond them at some distance the U.S.S. MINDAKAO, a liberty type patrol craft tender lay at anchor. Other ships, nested or anchored singly lay further outboard from the MOUNT HOOD in all directions. Upon completion of fueling we moved out to clear the berth for the next ship and proceeded to our designated berth some three miles away to tie up alongside U.S.S. KANE (APD-18).

Nothing remained for us now but to settle into in-port routine and await our next orders.

During the next few days we took on ammunition and depth charges from lighters that came alongside. We also transferred and received replacement personnel, but life remained quiet with little to break the monotony. Most of the time the KANE lay alongside and I had my first introduction to an Underwater Demolition Team. Theirs was a rugged and dangerous assignment to clear submerged obstruction on enemy held beaches prior to a landing. I had much admiration for these superbly fit, courageous individuals.

On the morning of 10 November, six days after our arrival, the watch section having liberty was mustered at the gangway to await the LCI which was making the rounds of the anchored ships to collect the liberty parties for transportation to spend the day on the distant beach. Shortly before 0800 it came alongside and soon our boys were on their way, first toward the MOUNT HOOD to collect more men and then, when the LCI was loaded, for the recreation area ashore.

I had watched the party shove off and then returned to my desk to continue my attack on the paperwork which had accumulated during the past month.

I had so reely sat down when suddenly a rush of air sucked through my room and out the porthole. It was so intense it seemed to suck the breath right out of me. Seconds later

a deep resonant boom swept in from all sides. As I rushed to the bridge I could see a tremendous cloud billowing black and white engulfing the area where the MOUNT HOOD had been lying. As the cloud billowed upward and spread outward I could see debris showering from its fringes and splashing like projectiles around those ships which remained unobscured by smoke.

My first concern was for our liberty party. Fortunately they had not gone far and soon were returned on board unscathed.

At last the cloud which had climbed and spread to enormous proportions dispersed and drifted away. The MOUNT HOOD was gone but already rescue boats from ships nearer the scene were combing the area for survivors blown overboard from nearby ships and transporting the wounded. I wondered and hoped that the division of LCIs had gotten clear earlier.

A day or two later I saw the MIRDANAO close to. Her officer of the deck at the gangway on the side toward MOUNT HOOD had been cut in two by a flying steel plate. The ship was blown full of holes, like a piece of swiss cheese. I remember one large one especially toward the stern through which one could see daylight straight across. It is a wonder that anyone aboard survived.

Because of self-imposed censorship I did not mention this event in my letter of 17 November. Thanks to Capt. Fred Lawton, however, I have the following account of the incident by Commander Gile which expands my knowledge of the tragedy. Fred, who commanded the DANIEL JOY, another DE much closer to the scene, has also provided me with excellent photos.

The
Micronauti Hektoris
Exposition

by Chester A. Gile, Commander,
U. S. Naval Reserve (Retired)

*C*onversations must have been choked off in mid-word, gestures interrupted in mid-air, thoughts ended at mid-point. One moment she was a ship teeming with life, humming with activity. Seconds later, she was a vast, black, billowing bier which momentarily marked the spot where 350 U. S. Navy men perished without a trace.

USS *Mount Hood* (AE-11) blew up with 4,500 tons of explosives at 0803, 10 November 1944. The disaster occurred in Seeadler Harbor, Naval Base, Manus, Admiralty Islands. All of the 350 officers and men on board were killed instantly.

Mount Hood was anchored in approximately 35 feet of water. The force of the explosion blasted a trench in the harbor bottom, reported by divers as being 1,000 feet long, 200 feet wide, and 85 feet in maximum depth. In this trench was found the largest remaining segment of the ship's hull - a piece less than 100 feet in its largest dimension.

Destruction was complete. Nothing was found after the explosion except fragments of metal which struck other ships. There were no bits of human remains, no supplies of any kind, nothing that had been made of wood or paper, with the single exception of a few

tattered pages of a signal notebook, floating on the water several hundred yards away.

The flying fragments from *Mount Hood* smashed into some 30 other ships and harbor craft, bringing the total casualties to nearly 1,000 killed and wounded. Some of the harbor craft simply vanished with all hands.

Most seriously hurt of the ships lying nearby was the patrol-craft tender, USS *Mindanao*, riddled from stern to stern as though she had been under heavy gunfire. All *Mindanao* personnel who were topside at the time were killed outright. Dozens of men below deck were killed or wounded. Deaths on this ship numbered 82.

The unrehearsed response to the disaster by rescue boats quickly sent from undamaged ships, and by the base medical facilities, was truly remarkable. Every available ambulance sped to the small-boat pier, to receive the injured and take them to the base hospital. Many of the victims had been blasted from their vessels into the water, and were covered with oil when carried ashore. Dozens of them received first aid treatment, including blood plasma, even before being carried from the rescuing craft.

The only survivors from *Mount Hood's* complement were a junior officer and five enlisted men, who had left the ship just prior to the explosion. Two of these men were being transferred to the Base brig to await trial by court-martial. (Charges against the prisoners were soon dropped on higher authority; these men were not brought to trial.) The others comprised the mail party, who were at the Base post office to pick up mail for *Mount Hood*, mail which would never be delivered.

Questioning of these survivors revealed that there had been some instances of carelessness among the crew in handling explosives. It was admitted that on more than one occasion, a sling-load of ammunition had struck against the side of the ship.

On the afternoon of 9 November, the day before the disaster, a Japanese reconnaissance plane had passed over the Base at great height. The presence of this enemy had been entirely undetected, until Momote airstrip was sprayed with a burst of explosive machinegun bullets. Apparently this was purely a gesture of contempt on the part of the Japanese. There were no casualties and no dam-

age. But the presence of the plane did indicate that the enemy knew what shipping was in the harbor.

On the morning of 10 November, I had gone up the harbor in my capacity as Base Intelligence Officer, to the Aviation Supply Depot on Los Negros Island to get eye-witness accounts of the nuisance air raid on the preceding day. The Depot was about seven and one-half miles from the spot where *Mount Hood* was anchored.

My questioning was interrupted by a tremendous "BO-O-O-O-M." It sounded as though a single beat had been struck on a gigantic bass drum—a drum a mile in diameter. There was a violent shock. The ground quivered as though in an earthquake. Looking down harbor, I saw a pillar of blue-gray smoke expanding and rising to a height of a mile, against the cloudless sky.

As we looked, three planes came flying low over our heads, coming from the direction of the explosion, and heading out to sea. The planes were U. S. Navy-types and bore American markings. There was one bomber, with a fighter close on each wing. As the time between the blast and the appearance of the planes was about two minutes, just time enough for them to have been at the explosion and reach Los Negros, my first reaction was that they were captured planes manned by Japanese, and that they had bombed something in the harbor. I called on the photographer I had brought with me to photograph the planes. He snapped two quick exposures, which might have been very useful. But, in his excitement, he forgot to remove the cover from his lens. So, no pictures!

Mount Hood was anchored in a direct line from the sea through the entrance to Seadler Harbor. There was therefore the possibility that she might have been torpedoed by an enemy submarine lurking outside the harbor. A check was made at the harbor entrance control post on Ndrilo Island, with negative results. The sonic detection gear had not detected any unidentified object passing into the harbor on the morning of 10 November. Anti-torpedo nets had been stretched across the channel on the preceding night as usual.

But the control post supplied an interesting piece of information. The man on lookout in the tower saw a burst of light flash upward

from *Mount Hood* "like lightning striking up." He called the Officer-of-the-Day and reported: "I think there's a ship on fire in the harbor!"

The officer questioned: "What's that you say? What's that you say? Repeat."

The lookout replied: "I say I think there's a ship on fire in the harbor." Then, only after several seconds elapsed in this conversation, came the burst of the explosion.

I recall from reading that similar phenomena occurred twice in World War I. The explosions of the ammunition ships which wrecked *Halifax* and *Archangel* were each preceded by several seconds by an "upward lightning flash." During those final seconds between the flash and the blast, the ships appeared to be undamaged.

For some unknown reason, *Mount Hood* had been anchored in the midst of the ships of the

7th Fleet Service Force. Casualties to other vessels would have been minimized had the ammunition ship been spotted at an isolated location a few miles down harbor, off the ammunition supply depot at Lugos, the customary anchorage for ships of this type. Someone was at fault in designating an anchorage for *Mount Hood* so near the other ships.

There were no major combatant ships present in Seeadler Harbor on 10 November. However, there were about 200 other ships in the harbor—mostly auxiliaries such as cargo ships, transports, tankers, depot ships, etc., with a sprinkling of destroyers and destroyer escorts. It was fortunate that the disaster did not occur a month earlier, when the harbor was packed with vessels of the Seventh Fleet, staging for the invasion of Leyte. I have seen photographs showing some of the 995 ships

The USS *Mindanao* was riddled with flying fragments from the *Mount Hood*. All *Mindanao* personnel above deck were killed outright. All told, 82 *Mindanao* men died, and dozens more were wounded in the explosion.



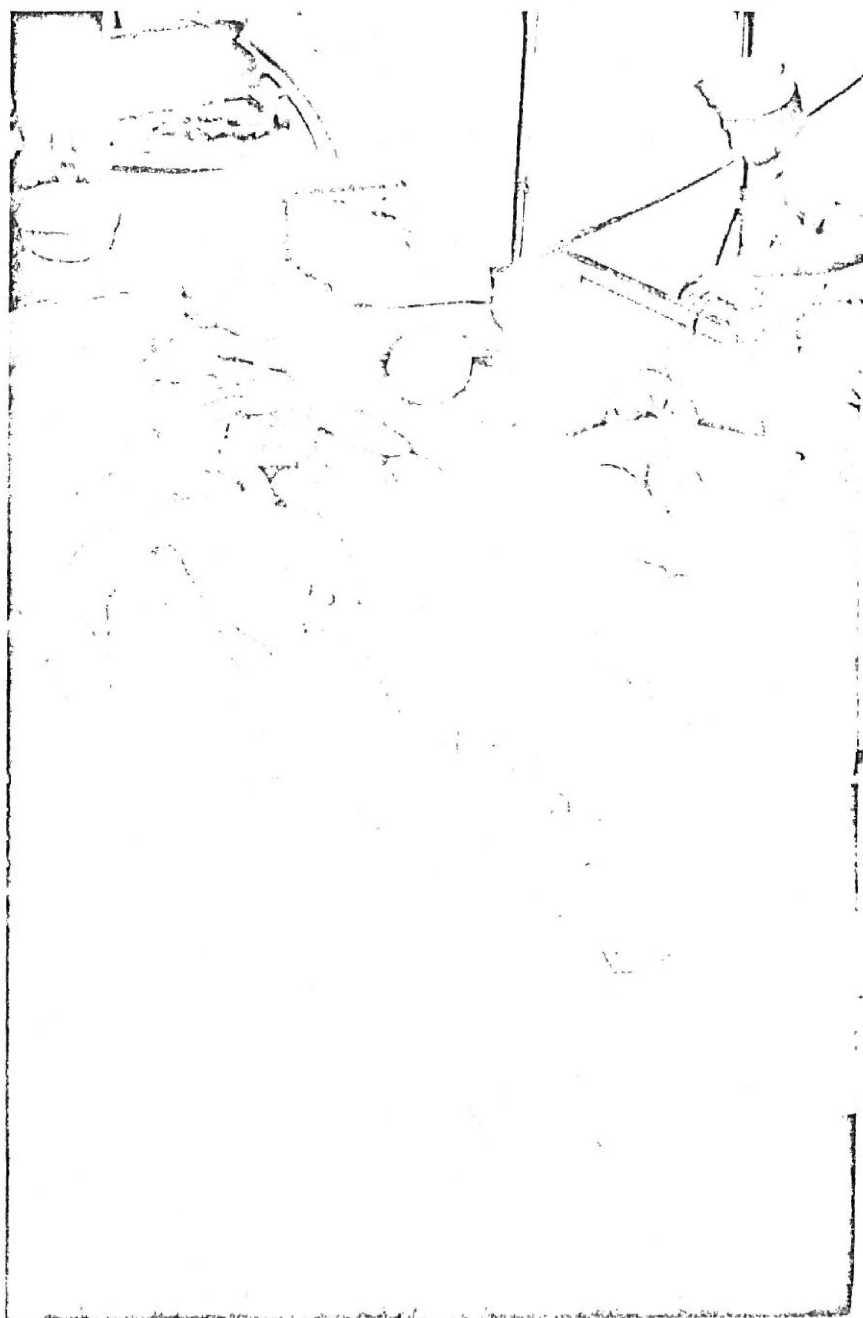
assembled in Seeadler Harbor in mid-October 1944. One shudders to contemplate the havoc that would have been caused had an ammunition ship blown up in the midst of this armada.

Although the enemy were supposed to have been eliminated from the Admiralties by October, they were certainly cognizant of what went on there. The Base Intelligence Office regularly monitored "news" broadcasts in English coming from Tokyo, each day at noon and at 1800. The noon broadcast, only four hours after the explosion, announced: "An

American battleship [sic] was blown up in Manus Harbor this morning!" The expression "was blown up," instead of "blew up," or "exploded," conveyed the implication that the Japanese had caused the disaster.

Then, on the 1800 broadcast the same day, Tokyo repeated the story, and added a list by name of several of the other ships which had been damaged, including *Mindanao*. Obviously, the Japanese had radio equipment in the near vicinity which picked up the plain language messages filling the air as damaged ships reported casualties and called for medi-

Aboard one of the rescue craft in Seeadler Harbor, blood plasma was administered to the walking wounded before they were transported ashore.



cal assistance, and transmitted this information to Tokyo.

Two days later, natives on the south shore of Manus reported that they had seen flashing green lights off the coast. This may possibly have been a Japanese submarine signalling coastwatchers.

There is a small island called Anabat, 30 miles southeast of Manus, on a direct line between Manus and the Japanese base at Rabaul, 365 miles away. Anabat is about one mile in diameter, and uninhabited. This island seemed to be a likely location for a Japanese radio outpost, so, on 17 November, I took a party there in a small coastal transport (APc), to investigate. We found no evidence of enemy activity, but we did find something else. This was a bullet-proof gasoline tank of 600 gallons capacity. Grass was still green under the tank, an indication that it had been lying there only a very brief time. Translation of name plates identified the tank as having been jettisoned from a four-engine bomber. No such bomber had been previously reported in the whole area, including Rabaul. And this particular bomber had not been detected at all. It was concluded that the tank had been dropped by the reconnaissance plane which had flown over Manus the day before the disaster.

Immediately after the *Mount Hood* explo-



COMMANDER GILE enlisted in the U. S. Navy in 1917 and served aboard the cargo ship *USS Kittery* until he was commissioned as an ensign in September 1918. Recalled to active duty in October 1942, he served successively as Training Officer, LION II (forward area Naval Operating Base) and LION IV. He

was assigned as Base Intelligence Officer, U. S. Naval Base, Manus, Admiralty Islands, from March 1944 until September 1945. He remained active in the Naval Reserve Intelligence Training Program from 1945 until his retirement in 1958.

sion, a Board of Investigation was convened in *USS Sierra* (AD-18). The Board gathered evidence and heard testimony for one month. The possibilities of attack by submarine were ruled out. Air attack was ruled out also. No connection was established between the disaster and the three American-marked planes flying away from the scene, mentioned in an earlier paragraph. Nor was any connection found with the Japanese reconnaissance plane which had jettisoned the gas tank on Anabat Island. The final decision of the Board was that the explosion had resulted from unknown accidental causes.

★

No Problems
Under Those
Circumstances

THE EXECUTIVE Officer of a large naval supply depot was conducting a weekly executive committee meeting while the Commanding Officer was on leave. After the usual run-down of the events of the week and comments thereon, the Exec asked each officer and senior civilian for reports on matters of interest and problems that might concern any of the departments.

After receiving negative reports from all present, the Executive Officer expressed amazement that there was not a single problem.

Finally, a junior grade lieutenant in the back of the room piped up and said, "Sir, we're all just enjoying the Captain's leave."

—Contributed by Commander WILLIAM A. JOHANNESSEN, SC, U. S. Navy

(The Naval Institute will pay \$10.00 for each anecdote accepted for publication in the PROCEEDINGS.)

After the MOUNT HOOD incident on the 10th life aboard COOLBAUGH relaxed into uneventful in-port routine. With the exception of getting underway twice for fueling we swung to our anchor until 0440 on 19 November when, in compliance with CarDiv 27 Op Plan 2-44, we got underway as a part of TU 77.4.6.

We were to be a unit in the screen for three CVEs, U.S.S. MARCUS ISLAND (CVE-77), U.S.S. SAVO ISLAND (CVE-78), and U.S.S. PETROP BAY (CVE-80). The other ships in the screen were U.S.S. HAGGARD (DD-555), U.S.S. FRANKS (DD-554), U.S.S. HAILEY (DD-556) and U.S.S. LE RAY WILSON (DE-414). Our destination was an operating area east of Leyte where we were to rendezvous with CarDiv 29.

The month of November was a rough one for all concerned at Leyte, and it was not until well into December before the island could be considered secured.

On 1 November the tactical situation at Leyte was serious. The Japs had virtually recovered control of the air and there were reports that their ships were returning to fight. The situation in the Gulf was considered critical because of the heavy damage being inflicted on our ships by Kamikazes.

Despite the extremely foul weather Japanese reinforcements were being landed at Ormoc Bay on the western shore of Leyte and planes were being staged in to enemy-held airfields.

Admiral Halsey's remedy was a series of strikes on Luzon airfields by three carrier groups which he estimated would be ready by 5 November. This, he hoped, would stop the Japanese air reinforcement program and achieve lasting results. These strikes were devastatingly effective. In two days 439 aircraft were destroyed and the heavy cruiser NACHI was sunk.

Foul weather and the nature of the ground slowed air

base development on Leyte. This limited the usefulness of the Army Air Corps and threw the burden of air support on the carriers.

On 11 November Halsey's planes literally destroyed a Jap convoy from Manila for Ormoc. All 5 or 6 transports with 10,000 troops were sunk, also 4 destroyers. This destruction materially shortened the Leyte campaign.

Despite all this the Japanese were determined to bitterly defend Leyte.

Between 12 and 25 November Task Force 38 struck hard at Luzon. Air attacks destroyed transports, destroyers and aircraft, materially interfering with the resupplying of Leyte.

The Japanese, however, observed the pattern of operation and the locations from which the carriers were launching their strikes. On the 25th of November the carriers, operating only 60 miles off Luzon, were badly hit by kamikazes. The resulting damage caused them to withdraw and thus concluded their support of the Leyte operation.

On land the fighting had been difficult in the worst possible weather. Despite their reverses the Japs made a bold bid to grasp the initiative. Beginning on 27 November and extending for two weeks thereafter they attempted a desperate plan to recapture Dulag and Tacloban groups of airfields. The plan flopped badly.

By 1 December the Sixth Army controlled most of Leyte except the San Isidro Peninsula west of Carigara Bay and a semicircular sector with a 12 mile radius from Ormoc.

On 25 November Task Group 77.2 composed of four battleships, MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA, COLORADO and NEW HAMPSHIRE, one heavy cruiser, MINNEAPOLIS, four light cruisers and sixteen destroyers were still in Leyte Gulf. There were no longer any fire support duties for these ships. The only reason for keeping them in Leyte Gulf was to protect reinforcement convoys from air attack with their anti-aircraft fire.

On the morning of 27 November the ships were heavily attacked by Kamikaze and torpedo planes. Two days later at sunset on the 29th the group was badly hit again.

Nothing could be done to counteract except to step up anti-aircraft defense all around. One thing could be done right away - get planes up to Leyte that could and would intercept enemy flights.

It was for this purpose that our task unit was being dispatched to the Leyte area.

No sooner had we cleared the nets at the harbor entrance and the escorts formed the anti-submarine screen than the "boss" put us through our paces.

The formation speed was 16 knots. Every few minutes a course change would be signalled which required the escorts to reorient the screen to a new axis. Using the manoeuvring board to plot relative speeds and courses we would call for flank speed to reach our new position, continuously checking range and bearing on the guide to assure our correct progress along the plotted line. This exercise lasted for about two hours.

Next we exercised at General Quarters for anti-aircraft and surface fire. One escort was directed to fire a starshell burst to serve as target for the practice. Each ship in turn had her chance to demonstrate her ability. This practice lasted for about two hours. At noon we secured from General Quarters.

The next few days passed uneventfully. The formation steamed at about 15 knots, zig-zagging according to plans which were changed from time to time. Each day we had firing practice. On the 21st, two days out, we fueled from the SAVO ISLAND. Her officers were very complimentary to us both as to our execution of the manoeuvre and the fine appearance of the ship.

The next day as we progressed on our westerly course we picked up Babelthau Island, Balau, on the radar at 0548.

That evening, near our operating area, we went to General Quarters for dusk alert.

Our operating area on this occasion was further east than it had been a month before. With Admiral Sprague's group our operations centered at approximately 10-30 N 126-10 E. Now, about 80 miles further south and about 125 miles further east we centered at 9-10 N 128-30 E. The Kamikazes who were so busy at this time in Leyte Gulf, as noted above, did not discover us in our offshore position for which we were duly thankful.

For five days we carried out flight operations during the daylight hours. Each change of course for flights and recoveries required the screen to reorient which kept us constantly on the run. Once each watch we exercised at sound contact stations in addition to our never ending sonar search. Each day we went to General Quarters for dawn and dusk alerts - those hours most favored for surprise air attacks. Each night we steamed various courses on night retirement.

We had no rescues to make, no submarines to attack and no planes to shoot down. In short, we had no opportunity to distinguish ourselves. The original Op Plan had called for us to rendezvous with CarDiv 29 off Leyte which promised a chance for more extensive action but this had been changed and as a result our Task Unit had been detailed to this more prosaic operation.

On the morning of the 26th we fueled from MERCUS ISLAND, the flagship of the Officer in Tactical Command (our boss). The following evening upon conclusion of flight operations the Task Unit headed eastward for Bossol Roads, Palau.

Our screen by now had changed. ELI RAY ELISON and ourselves remained, but our DDs had been replaced with U.S.S. HALLIHAN (DD-584), U.S.S. HARDELL (DD-585), U.S.S. TAMES (DD-591) and U.S.S. RADEH TALSOFF (DD-390).

At 1454 on the 28th we moored alongside U.S.S. SEBEC (AO-87)

in Kossol Roads to fuel. Another job was concluded.

Two days later we reported to ComCarDiv 28 (Admiral Henderson) in U.S.S. SAGINAW BAY (CVE 82) to escort that ship and PETROF BAY back to Seeadler Harbor, Manus. The other ships in the screen were U.S.S. WALKER (DD-517), U.S.S. CHAUNCEY (DD-667), and U.S.S. LE RAY WILSON (DE-414), later joined by U.S.S. BURNS (DD-588).

We arrived at Manus without incident on 3 December.

KOSSEL ROAD, PALAU

28 Nov/44

Dear Mother & Dad

(ON 17 NOV)

When I last wrote, I did not expect to be able to get another letter off for some time, but things broke a little unexpectedly & as now we are back in port again. Our trip the time was actually uneventful and quite pleasant. The type of job we have had keeps us moving around continuously - always trying to reach a new station just in time to have to change station again. But that is the inevitable lot of an escort work! The type of operation we have been ^(CVEs) The days have gone by very quickly & always there has been the presence of lurking danger which might materialize at any moment. What our next job will be we don't know, but there are several possibilities - some of which

and some not so much so. Now that we have
had a good taste of the big league it will be
difficult to be satisfied with the more prosaic
operation & I hope we shall not have to be!

Two more days to Thanksgiving. I wonder how it will
be at home - I hope just as good as ever & I imagine
it will be with Sister children there to enjoy it.
I wonder if Mr. Hopkins is still peddling his
white turkey. We have been doing quite well for turkey
recently - enough so that we could have some last
Thursday, but I made it understood that we were
not celebrating Thanksgiving & as there was no holiday
making. Johnson, whose old man is pretty violently
a G.W.F. man I guess, was a little peaked, but the
rest of the wagon is either sensible or non-
committal! Let us hope it be all postponed a few

* G W F = "Great White Father", a term used for
Franklin D. Roosevelt. Dave's father was Dean Johnson.

laughs & that is the main thing. I certainly wish
that I were to be at East River with all of you to
celebrate. I long for the fresh crispness ^{CRISPNESS} of good bread
England an after the more ^{airiness} tender heat of these
latitudes & the pleasure of a little tea ^{RUM} & min
before the fire ^{FIRE} in the late afternoon. It all seems
like something out of another world.

I have finally recommended Mumber as qualified
for CO as of Jan 1st 1841. I don't think he will make
the best CO in the world, but I think that he has
improved greatly in the past few months and is
up to the standard of some of the others who have
been recommended on other ships. Actually, qualifying
him for that date does not necessarily mean that
they will detach me immediately or even for a long
time to come, but it does make him eligible & also
it would be detrimental to his mind to not be

qualified after serving on *Exce* for nine years. And, as
I said, he is better suited to the job than any
I have seen get it on other ships. Personally I am in
no hurry to get detached, especially now that things
have really become active & interesting. I feel that
now, after having worked so much time in dull
days, that the situation is just beginning to pay off.
Well, there isn't much more news. We did not
have a chance to distinguish ourselves particularly at
today, in fact the only incident of note worked quite
the opposite. We were alongside the flagship to fuel
while underway at sea. *Excell* was practically set & we
were making the last speed adjustments to put us in
position when the *lead* in the engine room telegraph
rang up just 100 RPM too much & we walked out port
the boss like he was standing still! However we soon
got back into position *on* with the job. The ship we
had gone to previously had been very elaborate in their
point of view appearance & the manner in which we
carried out the maneuver - it was something of a soap.

FILE

SERIAL

CGD-28/720-2/10

054

COMMANDER CARRIER DIVISION
TWENTY-EIGHT

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

6 DEC 1944

From: Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-EIGHT.
To: The Chief of Naval Personnel.
Subject: Lieut-Comdr. Stewart T. HITCHCOCK, USN - Special report -
period 30 November to 3 December, 1944.
Reference: (a) ANNAV 171-43.

1. The following report is submitted in accordance with reference (a).
2. From 30 November to 3 December, 1944, the P.C.C. COLIBROSE (DE 217), commanded by Lieutenant Commander Stewart T. HITCHCOCK, USN, acted as a visit of the service for two carriers of Carrier Division TWENTY-EIGHT on the round voyage to a Southeast Pacific base.
3. During the period covered by this report Lieutenant Commander HITCHCOCK handled his ship in a capable manner and performed satisfactorily all duties assigned him.

G. R. BRIDGMAN,
Rear Admiral, USN.

Copy to:
✓ Commanding Officer
Lieutenant, U.S. HITCHCOCK, USN.

CARDIV TWENTY-EIGHT

SAGINAW BAY

PETROF BAY

From an operational standpoint the month of December for us was a complete hiatus. It did, however, serve a very necessary purpose. The ship had been operating constantly for 14 months. Seven months ago, in May, we had had a scheduled availability alongside a repair ship and now after several months of intensive operation we were in urgent need of another. Furthermore we very much needed dry docking to clean the growth which had accumulated on the bottom after months of operating in warm tropical waters.

We were disappointed that we were not included in the Mindoro operation.

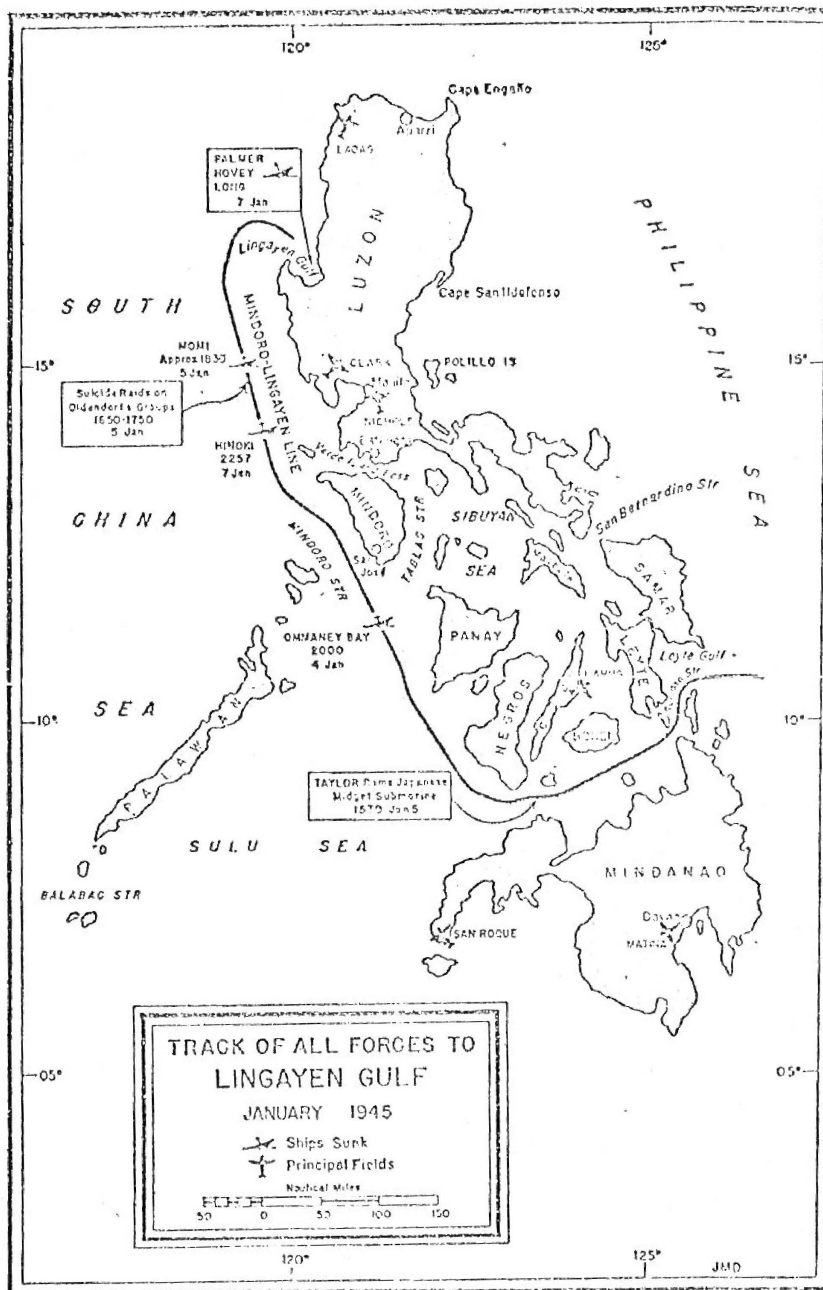
Mindoro is an island whose greatest dimensions are 58 by 110 land miles. It is just south and separated from Luzon by the 7½ mile wide Verde Island Passage. All sea traffic from Mindanao and from Leyte via the Surigao and San Bernardino Straits to central and northern Luzon must pass close aboard this island, whose northern point, Cape Calavite, lies only ninety miles from Manila by sea.

The move to Mindoro was one of the boldest during the Pacific War. To drive this wedge into the Central Philippines it would be necessary to bypass several important enemy-held islands, and, when established at the San Jose base, we would be almost surrounded by enemy airfields.

Owing to the retarded air base development in Leyte as previously noted Allied control of the air west and north of Leyte was far from complete on 5 December 1944. Because of this it was imperative to postpone the operation from 5 December, as originally planned, to the 15th.

The Mindoro Attack Group under the direct command of Admiral Struble in the light cruiser NASHVILLE consisted of 8 destroyer transports, 30 LSTs, 12 LSMs, 31 LCI's, 10 large and 7 small minesweepers and 14 other small craft with 12 escorting destroyers.

The Close Covering Group under Rear Admiral Berkeley consisted of two light cruisers, one heavy cruiser and seven destroyers.



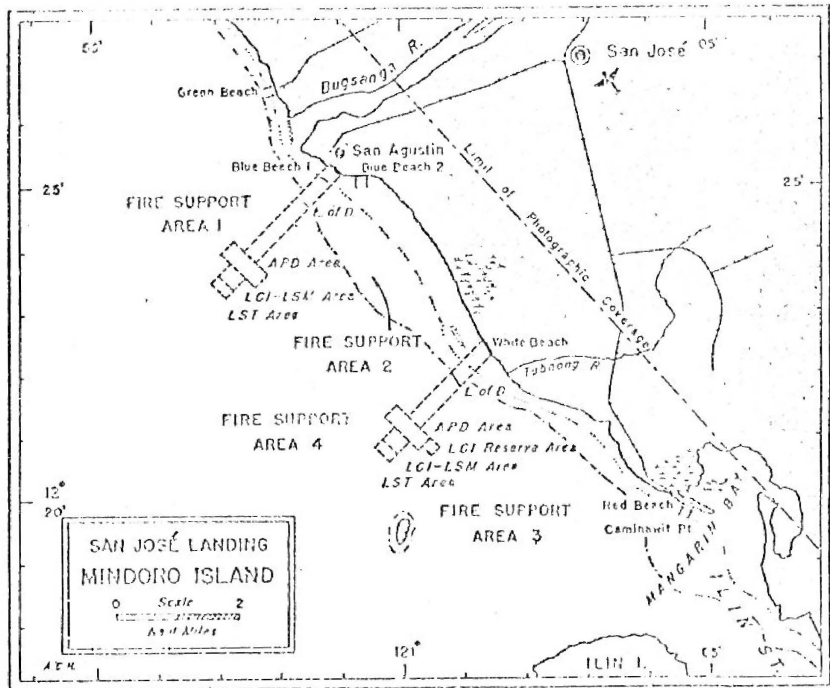
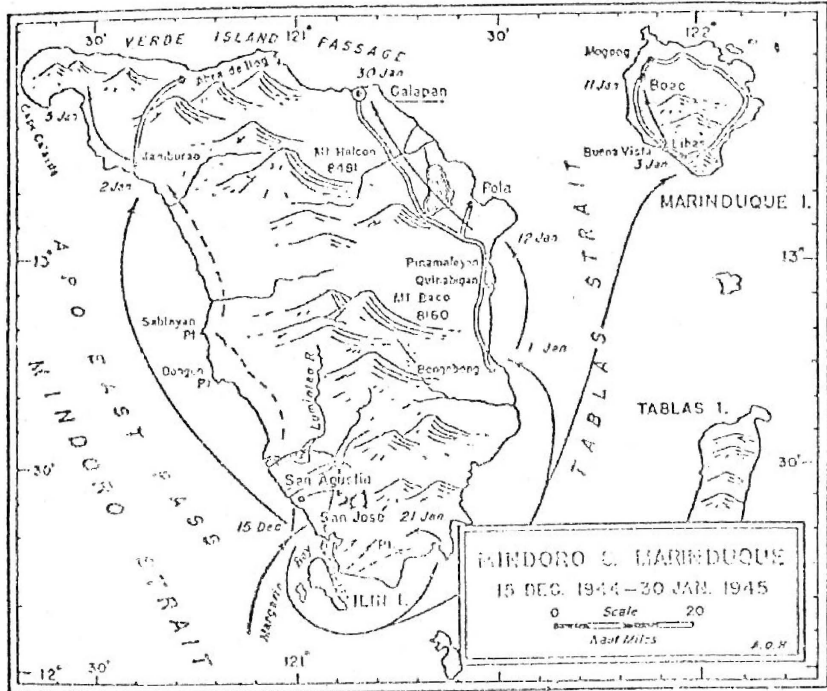
The Motor Torpedo Boat Group commanded by Lt. Cdr. N. Burt Davis consisted of 23 PT boats.

In addition, Rear Admiral T.D. Ruddock commanded a Heavy Covering and Carrier Group of battleships, cruisers, escort carriers and destroyers, to operate in the Sulu Sea in support. The inclusion of the CVEs was Admiral Kinkaid's idea, as the one means of protecting the convoy during hours when the A.A.F. could not be present. Postponement of the target date enabled this group to rendezvous at Kossol Passage, on 5 December. It comprised battleships WEST VIRGINIA, COLORADO and NEW MEXICO; light cruisers DENVER, COLUMBIA and MONTPELIER; escort carriers NATOMA BAY, MANILA BAY, MARCUS ISLAND, KADASHAN BAY, SAVO ISLAND and OHMANEY BAY; and 18 destroyers.

It was on 30 November that we had parted company with MARCUS ISLAND and SAVO ISLAND at Kossol Passage, also the destroyers HALLIGAN, HARADEN, TWIGGS and RALPH TALBOTT, all of whom were included in Admiral Ruddock's group. The TALBOTT, incidentally, was a sister ship of U.S.S. GRIDLEY (DD-380) which I was to command 11 months later.

The Japanese defenses of Mindoro were very inadequate. About 200 soldiers were in the San Jose area and not more than 500 on the entire island. But the Japanese air forces held good cards in the shape of a dozen or more airfields in Luzon and the Visayas, all within range. It was anticipated that the principal resistance to an Allied occupation of Mindoro would be offered by the Kamikaze Corps and this proved to be the case.

It was an unlucky 13th for the main convoy, the Mindoro Attack Force. Shortly before 1500 as the convoy was about to round the southern cape of Negros into the Sulu Sea, a Kamikaze Val sneaked in low from astern and crashed NASHVILLE on her port side abaft Admiral Strubles' cabin. That Japanese pilot was certainly loaded to kill. Besides crushing himself,



he carried two bombs, both of which exploded. The *NASVILLE* was badly damaged and put out of action. Admiral Struble, General Dunkel and some 50 staff officers and war correspondents transferred to destroyer *DASHIELL*. The damaged cruiser, escorted by *STANLY*, then returned to Leyte Gulf.

At 1705 December 13, shortly after Admiral Ruddock's group entered the Sulu Sea, bogeys appeared on radar screens closing from the northeast. These represented seven kamikazes with three fighter escorts which had taken off from Cebu at 1630. Combat Air Patrol intercepted them thirteen miles out, but three broke through. One was shot down by a screening destroyer, a second by *WEST VIRGINIA*; but the third bore in on *HARADEN*. Its right wing sheared the starboard end and after side of that destroyer's bridge; the fuselage, after clearing the starboard boat, struck the searchlight on No.1 stack and exploded with its bomb load. The stack was carried away and burning gasoline splashed over the after part of the ship. Numerous small fires sprang up and steam shot out from severed uptakes, making it difficult for sailors to move about; but they managed to bring everything under control. *HARADEN'S* casualties were 14 dead and 24 wounded, and she too had to return to Leyte Gulf.

For 14 December the Japanese high command planned an all-out attack with no fewer than 186 planes. This plan miscarried with much credit to carrier-plane sweeps from Task Force 38.

The landing on the beach near San Jose went off without a hitch and according to plan, the first wave landing at 0731 on the 15th.

Here we will again quote directly from Sam Morison's "The Liberation of the Philippines".

"For Admiral Struble, who had been through the Normandy operation in June, Mindoro was an amphibious group commander's dream. General Dunkel, who had been an artillery officer at

Bougainville, also had a pleasant surprise. Ninety minutes after landing, the infantrymen had pushed over a mile inland through dry sugar cane, rice fields and scattered coconut groves, encountering only a small Japanese detachment on Caminswit Point. San Jose was occupied by the 503rd Airborne at noon. The terrain looked beautiful to men who had been slogging through Leyte mud for weeks, and were now out of the typhoon rain belt on good dry land. Indeed, the landing was almost too good. Some of the seasoned campaigners smelled a rat. He was coming, on wings. A Japanese reconnaissance plane had spotted the landing operations at about 0530; and shortly after, some 15 to 18 Kamikazes with as many escorts took off from Davao and Clark Field.

"At 0800 A.A.F. planes arrived over the Mindoro beach-head to relieve the carrier-based aircraft, and Admiral Stump's unit, with Admiral Ruddock's group, started back to Leyte. Slow Tow Convoy was still coming up. Twelve minutes later the Kamikazes began to bore in. One, a torpedo plane, headed for the carrier group. When about 300 yards on the starboard beam of RALPH TALBOT, it disintegrated under her aircraft fire and flaming wreckage struck her deck. A few minutes later a second plane made a gliding approach out of the sun and was knocked down by C.A.F. At 0825 three more planes attacked. One came in low over the water through intense anti-aircraft fire, but escaped; two headed for escort carrier MARCUS ISLAND. The first, hit by machine-gun fire, splashed about 20 feet on the carrier's starboard bow after striking a lookout platform with its wingtip and decapitating the lookout. The other, which ten seconds later dove on her starboard quarter, met the same fate. Damage to the carrier was superficial. At 0900 three more planes approached; one was shot down by MARCUS ISLAND'S C.A.F. within sight of the ship, the others driven off. Forty minutes later, three more were shot down by ship's anti-aircraft fire."

The Kamikazes coming in force also struck at the landing ships. LST-738 and LST-472 after putting up heroic defenses and battles for survival after being hit were both abandoned as total losses. Despite this, however, the remaining landing ships were able to beach under ideal conditions and were soon unloaded.

At Caminawit Point, Lt. Cdr. N. Burt Davis had set up the advance base for his 23 P.T. boats by 1400. By nightfall 15 December every landing ship but one had been unloaded and Admiral Struble was ready to pull out for Leyte.

The Japanese did not give up their attack until the end of the month. The resupply convoys were heavily hit by Kamikazes. A surprise surface attack was also attempted by a force under Admiral Kimura which included the heavy cruiser ASHIGARA and several destroyers. The efforts of this force to shell the beaches and air fields proved ineffectual and the ships were turned back by our aircraft and PTs. The air surface battle was over by 0200 December 27, when the Japanese ships had retired beyond range. One destroyer had been sunk and almost every enemy ship sustained damage.

On the third of January the Japanese found more alluring targets in the convoys heading for Lingayen Gulf, and laid off Mindoro for good.

Immediately upon our arrival at Seeadler Harbor on 3 December we fueled from U.S.S. CACAPON (IE-52) and then proceeded to an anchorage berth to await developments. We replenished our ammunition from a lighter alongside and otherwise carried out the various in-port chores, including the transfer of Dave Miller. Dave, who had been gunnery officer for ten months was eager to get home. Instead, much to his disappointment he was transferred to U.S.S. BRIGHT (DE-747). We were sorry to see him go.

On the 9th we moved in to the dock at Lombrum Point where we berthed alongside U.S.S. WHITEHORSE (DE-634). The

next day the WHITEHURST departed and we nested between H.M.A.S. WARRAMUNGA (D-10) and U.S.S. McCALL (DD-400).

The water alongside the dock was so polluted that we had to shut down our evaporators. This provided an opportunity for scaling them and other maintenance work. On the 12th we took on 3500 gals. of fresh water from the dock to replenish our tanks in preparation for our departure the next day.

On the 13th, after fueling from U.S.S. LEOPARD (IX-122) we got under way for Humboldt Bay, Hollandia.

After ten days in port it was good to get to sea again. We set a zig-zag course with speed of advance of 17 knots. We exercised at General Quarters for dusk alert, and carried out sound contact drills to keep everyone on their toes. But the pleasure of being at sea again was short lived. Exactly twenty four hours after our departure we arrived at our destination.

From the 14th to the 19th we lay at anchor in Humboldt Bay. We had fueled on arrival and had received additional ammunition on the 16th. On the 19th we berthed alongside U.S.S. ACHILLES (ARL-41) to commence our repair ship availability, which was to last for 3 days until the 22nd.

On the 22nd we left the ACHILLES to tie up alongside ARD-12, the drydock which we were to enter on the 26th for one day in which to clean and paint the bottom.

While alongside ARD-12 we had the JAMES E. CRAIG (DE-201) moored outboard. She was commanded by Ed Andrews who was a year ahead of me at Yale.

Christmas was in the air in spite of the fact that the temperature was in the high eighties and the humidity stifling. Accordingly for Christmas eve we organized a combined party for the officers of both ships to take place on a nearby island in the harbor which was used for recreation. An accordion player was mobilized and a very nice party was enjoyed by all.

In fact the party was such a success that Ed and Dick Wernecke and I on Christmas afternoon returned to the island embracing a bottle of Black and White Scotch which Ed produced and a bottle of Demarara Rum which I had been carrying for such an occasion. One of my last recollections was of Wernecke, in a tropical rain shower, scrambling up the muddy side of a nearby hill in search of some mythical female. Later Ed and I returned to our ships. It was only the next morning when Wernecke, having cadged a ride, appeared on board that I was reminded that we had totally overlooked him the night before. Like a castaway, battling mosquitoes, wet and with a growing hangover he had spent the night on a picnic table. But all was soon forgiven!

It was with a dry mouth and aching head that I guided COOLBAUGH into the flooded dry dock at 0824 on the 26th. By 1210 we were receiving power and flushing water from the dock and the scrubbing of the bottom was commencing. At 1152 the following day, our work completed, we got underway again from the flooded dock and proceeded to an anchorage berth to await our scheduled departure on 3 January for Lingayen Gulf and the invasion of Luzon.

Up until our visit to Hollandia disciplinary problems had been few and infrequent. Not so here, however. The Navy had very limited recreational facilities. The Army, however, was well established and had imported a number of wives, nurses and Red Cross biddies. The presence of these females on the beach drew some of our crew members like filings to a magnet. The result was that we had a rash of AOs and AWOLs to deal with, the lesser cases at Captains Mast and the more serious ones at Deck Court. Even such sentences as solitary confinement on bread and water for 12 days with full ration every third day did not provide a complete deterrent. U.S.S. DOBBIN (AD-3) provided confinement facilities. The administration of punishment at Captains Mast and Deck Court was a responsibility which I did not enjoy.

Lombum Point dock

Manus, Admiralty House

11 Dec /44

Dear Mother + Dad -

Time has slipped by so quickly + uneventfully in the last few days that I was amazed to see that I had not written for almost two weeks. This whole time we have been sitting around in port. It has not been exciting, but it has given us a chance to get quite a lot of work done + a certain amount of new equipment aboard. There is a heavy ending amount of work to be done on these slips and especially after the period of time which we have spent out here. We have had a number of changes in personnel too - the usual number of colored men, and the time we lost Miller our gunnery officer. It is the first officer we have lost in a long time, and I was sorry to see him

go for he had contributed quite a lot in the way of good work + pleasant personality, despite the fact that he was a Jew. He was ordered as gunnery officer to another DE out in the general direction + he was greatly disappointed because he had been very anxious to get home.

I did all I could to help him + perhaps he will get a change of order when he gets to Pearl. There

are one or two others I would prefer to have lost, and one is a first lieutenant, who is the best presumption + not nearly enough on the 'ball' to qualify. When I received your letter about Joe B.

I immediately wrote to Bill Boyd who may still be in the Bureau + asked him to see what could be done, because if Joe would like to join us I would be delighted to have him.

Well, I must stop. I certainly wish that I
were to be at home for Christmas + I shall be
thinking of you all + of the tree with all the
nice old ornaments + of the stockings with
Kosakoff + the gold trolled things + with
more than usual interest of the big range in the
top. I hope there will be a good party in the
evening, complete with rum punch. I will
imagine it anyway. Greenland was full of
Christmas spirit + atmosphere, but by the time
Santa Claus gets down here he has acquired a
deep tan + his pulled down to a low cloth.

Well, perhaps next Christmas I shall
be at home again. I hope so!

Dear Mother + Dad -

22 Dec/44

Hollandia

Time has slipped by + I am late again in writing. When nothing is going on life becomes quite dull + there is not much to write about - and that is the case right now. We made one short run since I last wrote which has moved us a bit further up the line, but just as in the last place there is nothing but to sit + wait. Except here we are not receiving mail! There are also other things that make the place far less desirable.

Right now we are at a place in New Guinea (I am allowed to say!). It is rather large + rather dismal + very hot. There are practically no recreation facilities for the Navy here, and

so it is very poor for liberty parties. Then, & by
for the worst feature, there is a whole bunch
of Woacs & Nurses & Red Cross bidders on the
deck & these men they has done more to cause
trouble than rightly else combined - even including
the bootleg liquor which is circulating freely at
a high price ashore. Before there was here not but
a case of AOC or AWOC for almost a year, but now
we are big besieged by them. I don't think any
of our bidding lotteries have met with much
success but the very presence of females, has
had a hypnotizing effect on the weaker element
among the crew. I can't understand why they
big women out to a place like this. They are
nothing but a disturbing influence & a source of
trouble & it requires more men to guard them

& look after them than they are "free for
combat duty." It may be all right to have them
back in the States or in civilized & populated
places - but definitely they have no place out
here. I shall be really happy when we leave
this place & I hope we shall never have to
return. Funny, but women seem to be the cause
of almost all my trouble!

Well, enough of that. I am just blowing off
steam because of the fun men I have encountered
in the brig. This is the first time we have had
to use the brig & it is getting a liberal baptism!

It is now four days before Christmas & there
is nothing to remind us except the calendar
& the three pencils resting in my locker. There
just doesn't seem to be Christmas spirit anywhere.
I think I shall have to resort to making up a

wood & was Christmas tree for the winter
anyway if we can find some tinsel & things
to dress it up with - like the one we had in
Parna + again in Bowdoin. The Christmas outlook
is not good, however, for I think we shall
probably spend it in drydock + that means
work all day for all hands scrubbing + painting
the bottom. At least we should have a good
dinner. We had some menus mimeographed
up + they are the real Mc Coy - not just
window dressing.

I am very anxious for news from home. I
do hope that our air mail will catch up with
us in a day or two, which it should. I wonder
about Mung's baby + how Ma has survived all
by herself on Treasure Island, and how everything is

joy at Wyndham. I have now broken out my
winter pictures, to keep in season; taken
just two years ago with snow on the ground.
It just makes me feel cool to look at them.
And I have the picture taken a year ago
too. It certainly seems like a long time since
then. That was a bitter-sweet Christmas, but
the sweet far outweighed the bitter! Well,
even if I can't be with you I shall be thinking
of you all at Wyndham & by closing my eyes I
can practically imagine myself there & see all
the details of the old familiar scenes. I
wonder how the Christmas party will be this
year & who will get out. Remember how I just
did get there that Christmas when we fooled
up Bart's sweep free off New London? I
wish I could manage something like that this

you!

Well, I must stop & get the off. As you
have gathered we did not get in on the
(MINDORO)
last operation - but it is still a long way to
Tokyo! Our next job will not be quite the
same work as we were doing before as we will
be working with a different type of ships but
it should be interesting. By far the toughest
part of all this work is the periods of
inactivity between times.

Write often. We should be getting in air mail
any day now. Give my love to Dick & the children
*. I shall be thinking of you all at Weyburn
on Christmas. Perhaps we shall all be together
next year. Merry Christmas & lots of love
to you both.

John

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U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)

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* **MERRY CHRISTMAS** * **MERRY CHRISTMAS** *

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS DAY MENU

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- - ***** - -

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* FRUIT COCKTAIL *

* TURKEY AND NOODLE SOUP *

* ROAST TURKEY *

* SAGE DRESSING MASHED POTATOES *

* GIBLET GRAVI BUTTERED PEAS *

* CRANBERRY SAUCE OLIVES *

* BREAD BUTTER *

* LEMONADE - COFFEE *

* SPICE CAKE PUMPKIN PIE *

* MIXED NUTS *

* CIGARETTES CIGARS *

* * * * *

* * * * *

* **HAPPY NEW YEAR** * **HAPPY NEW YEAR** *

* * * * *

31 Dec /44

Dear Mother + Dad -

J. Alexander

It was good to get your last letter -
Mens of Dec 7 + Pops of the 18th. That is wonderful
news about young Freddie and it is especially
good news that Ma is home again + no longer
wrestling with a pair of weary oars on Mutton
Yingard. That was certainly a ^{HEROIC} heroic performance
in mid-winter.

I thought of you all on Christmas + missed so
much being at Wyndham with you. I could
practically picture it all in detail + with much
longing. Our Christmas here was good, but it lacks
the old zest + spirit + enthusiasm. I think it
was mainly because of the climate. It is hard to
believe it can be Christmas when one is stiffly in

The lady's humility of the place. We managed
to dig up a very pleasant party, with me of the
the ship in Christian care. It wasn't really
the spirit of old St. Michael that brought it up, but
it was good from the time I then was a part
there who played the violin almost like
Karl, which made it seem as if the man were
home. The whole thing was my informant's & her
in a letter which is the letter. On Christian
ning I found all my friends which I had
carefully read & was very pleasant with them.

The books are fine & I am especially pleased with
the "Son Peter's" I had read the "States & the
Glorious" not long ago & Mrs. Goussier's I had nearly
read in the last. For a year ago, but I don't
like this & it will be good to read the story in

completely & not on the installment plan at
all. The other package for you contained the
cigar for Pop, with which I am very pleased
& the nice bill fold & the candy. The "Horseback
boast" fresh for our kitchen on the premises
had sort of a hollow ring to it because, alas,
the poor chocolate had suffered somewhat of
a sea change. However, I am really there now
at a time & so far they have done me no harm!

Thanks a lot for all these things. I am
delighted with them & they made my Christmas.
I also got a very fine looking book for "Aunt
Elie," "Bring Me Together" which should be
excellent. Besides there were nice Christmas cards
for Mrs. Gross & for Terrie, both of which
arrived just in time. And also a notice of a
subscription to the New Yorker, for which again

may think. And then I didn't mention
all the nice little Christmas things in
the package such as the paper lei & the
house shoe for each (& the Whitfield outfit
for more earthly purposes!) These things all
made my Christmas & I was delighted with
them.

We had an excellent Christmas dinner of
turkey & all the fixings & in the afternoon
we again went to the island for another party.
This one was far more in the Gloucester style.
One had furnished a bottle of Black & White
(a almost unheard of commodity!) & I managed
to produce a bottle of "the blood of the lion"
(Demerara rum to you!) And then of course
piled them off with the result that we
had a lot of fun, but the sad part of it was

That we inadvertently lost Mr. Wheeler on
the island & only discovered our oversight the
next morning when he managed to hook a ride
back to the ship. Since then, however, the ill
constitution has been undergoing a rest cure.

We have been sitting right in the same place
since I last wrote, and, except for the Clinton
festivities, it has been pretty dull. We managed
to get a lot of work done on the ship & we have
had a few apprentice bottlers to deal with,
but otherwise there has not been much. The
state of affairs, though, is due to end soon & then
perhaps we will think back on these last few
days with a certain nostalgia.

I was pleased to get the news of my financial
holdings from Pop. The list is becoming quite
impressive & seems to be thriving in a very easy

manier. All the stock seem to be about as
sound as could be. It is a wonderful thing how
the money seem to pile up when one has no
big expenses to contend with. I was also interested
to hear about Pops new apt. in Boston. I hope
it is on Beacon Hill because that section has
an atmosphere all of its own which I find very
pleasant. It would be wonderful if I could be assigned
to a Boston ship next & we could set up house
keeping again. Incidentally there must have been
a lot of my stuff at 66 Chestnut St. One of the
things I am much interested in (aside from
my good sea going clothes) is a fine photograph of
the Obabian Rydberg which I am hoping
some day to have framed up. It is mounted on a
calendar at the present time. I hope that will
be safely preserved.

I got a letter from Bill Boyd the other day
& I find that he is right in our vicinity out
here. He finally left Washington in October, went
to San Diego for Amphib training & now is on
the staff of Admiral Fichtel. I am expecting to
run across him almost any time. It looks like
we may be more or less working together before long.

Well, there isn't much further news. I am
warily anxious to get the news of your church
& to find out what I gave to anyone & whether
they liked it. I am glad you decided to have
the party in the afternoon & I imagine that it
was the same success it always has been. I
have also forgotten to thank Dad for the
clipping he sent. The Westbrook Pyle one was
very good. There is one small item I should like
to have sent out - a note of Winchester (or Lexington)

RUST-REMOVER. It comes in a tube & is for taking
rust off guns. You might also include a bottle
of Stoppes #9 Powder Solvent - (also a gun cleaning
item).

Well, I must stop. Thank again for all
the nice Christmas things. It may be a while
before I write again, but don't worry. Give my love
to Dick & the children & please write often.

Lots of love to you both

Ma

P.S. Happy New Year!

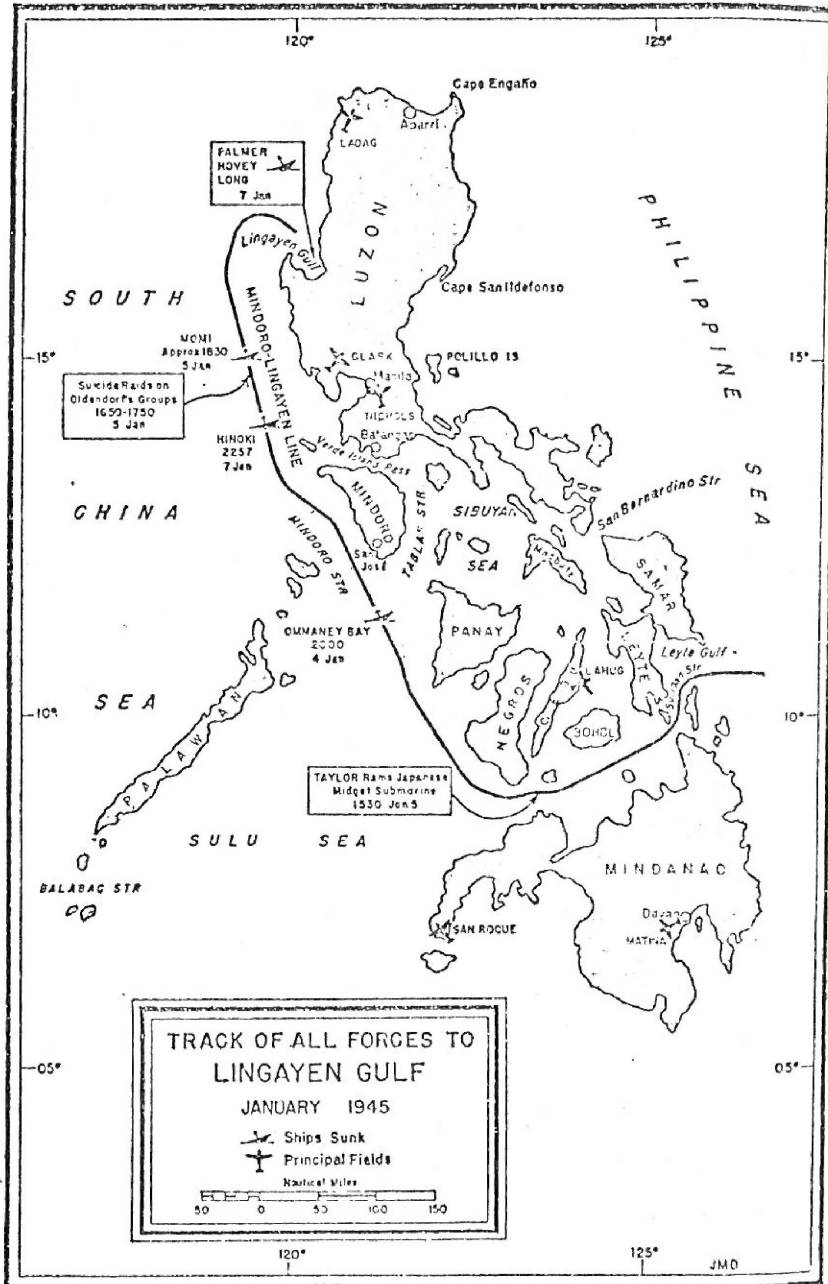
PPS. Am enclosing a picture taken of me not
long ago. Hope you like it.

We received our orders shortly after Christmas assigning us our part in the Invasion of Luzon. Another massive fleet movement had been organized with the objective of effecting a landing on the beaches at the very end of Lingayen Gulf. Landings had been made on Mindoro, the large island south of Manila, in December but this step would carry us north along the west coast of Luzon past Manila with the large air bases at Clark and Nichols Fields close by. As we faced this prospect it seemed only logical that this would be a tough operation -- one which would provide tougher challenges than we had already faced at Leyte.

As in the assault on Leyte, Admiral Oldendorf in battleship California took charge of all operations en route to Lingayen Gulf and until Admiral Kinkaid arrived with the amphibious forces. He commanded a fleet of 164 ships: four of the six battleships which had taken part in the Battle of Surigao Strait, together with Colorado and New Mexico, 6 cruisers and 19 destroyers, an escort carrier group of 12 CVE, 14 destroyers and 6 destroyer escorts, a minesweeping and hydrographic group of 72 miscellaneous ships, over half of them motor minesweepers; 10 destroyer-transport carrying the underwater demolition teams; 2 fleet tugs, a seaplane tender and 11 LCI gunboats. These made rendezvous at Leyte Gulf on or shortly after New Year's Day, to form cruising disposition for the final passage.

Admiral Oldendorf's departure from Leyte about coincided with our departure from Hollandia.

Admiral Oldendorf's main force passed through Surigao Strait into the Sulu Sea, where it formed two groups around a nucleus of escort carriers. These furnished a C.A.P. of 40 fighter planes, augmented by as many Army planes as could be maintained; at one time the total amounted to 68 aircraft. Fighter direction for the van was in escort carrier Makin Island, and for the rear in Natoma Bay. Yet this apparently



air-tight defensive formation failed to stop all suicide attacks, or even at times to give adequate warning. One kamikaze was splashed 500 yards astern of Makin Island at 1700 January 3. On that day, and the next two, between 15 and 20 enemy planes were destroyed near the formation.

Admiral Oldendorf's Task Group along with the mine-sweeper task groups experienced heavy kamikaze activity all the way to Lingayen Gulf which they reached on 6 January, three days before S-day on the 9th when the landing forces were to come ashore. Although many ships were hit during the passage through the Sulu Sea and north past Manila Bay only the CVE Ommanay Bay was sunk.

Just as the preliminary bombardment and minesweeping operations began on the 6th off of the landing beaches the first air attack struck with about 10 enemy planes. The rest of that day brought heavy attacks. The kamikaze toll was a serious worry to Admiral Oldendorf. On the 6th of January alone, three days before the landings one ship was sunk and eleven damaged. This was an effective score for 28 kamikazes and 15 fighter escorts. The number of ships sunk or damaged by the kamikazes between the 3rd and 6th of January totalled 25 of which three suffered two or more attacks.

Things took a turn for the better on the 7 - 8 January. The naval bombardment worked over the San Fabian and Lingayen areas and in the afternoon, under cover of the bombardment six underwater demolition teams began to go ashore.

Since sunrise on the 7th it had been a comparatively easy day for all hands and the few enemy planes that appeared were shot down before doing any damage. But at 1835 when the fire support ships were heading out of the Gulf for night retirement death came suddenly out of the air to the mine-sweeper Palmer. The Japanese seem to have picked on minecraft because they were usually isolated and had no good anti-aircraft support.

The 8th brought a few more air attacks. The shore bombardment was scarcely necessary as the Japanese had withdrawn from the beaches. More importantly Admiral Oldendorf's ships had sacrificially served the invasion by acting as bait for the kamikazes which had mostly expended themselves before S-day.

The Attack Force transport groups encountered some attacks from kamikazes and midget submarines on their voyage between Leyte and Lingayen, but nothing in comparison to those suffered by the attack forces.

The landings came off as scheduled on the 9th with little effective resistance.

We were assigned to TG 77.9 Reinforcement Group under Rear Admiral R.L. Conolly which was comprised of transport units joining in from various staging points in New Guinea and other points to rendezvous at Leyte, as shown in the accompanying list. Admiral Conolly in Appalachian departed Manus on 2 January accompanied by a small escort carrier group consisting of Saginaw Bay and Petrof Bay. We departed from Hollandia on 3 January (about the same time that Admiral Oldendorf was setting forth from Leyte) with the transport Winged Arrow (AP-170) and the attack transport Appling (APA-58) to rendezvous with the main group. Commander A.A. Ageton, the authority on celestial navigation, had sailed from Hollandia on 30 December with 50 LSTs and 10 Liberty ships. Our fast convoy was to overtake Ageton's slow one on 10 January in order to simplify air coverage on the run in to Lingayen Gulf for our scheduled arrival on 11 January.

Commander Ageton with his slow convoy apparently was subjected to many frustrations. My friends in U.S.S. Greenwood and U.S.S. Loeser, ships of our division who had escorted this group were deeply impressed by the strength of the language he used when rounding up his flock!

Our passage from Humboldt Bay, Hollandia was uneventful. The afternoon after our departure we rendezvoused with TG 77.9 which consisted of a vast group of transports and escorts

TG 77.9 REINFORCEMENT GROUP, Rear Admiral R. L. Conolly

Embarking U.S. 25th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. C. L. Mullins; 158th Reg. Combat Team, Brig. Gen. H. MacNider; 13th Armored Group, Col. M. E. Jones.

* Sunk in this operation.

Force flagship APPALACHIAN Capt. C. R. Jeffs; Destroyer REMEY Cdr. R. P. Fiala.

Nouméa Transport Unit, Commo. H. W. Graf in *Zeilin*: Attack transports PRESIDENT JACKSON (with Comtransdiv 23, Capt. W. S. Popham, embarked) Cdr. C. B. Hamblett USNR, PRESIDENT ADAMS Capt. M. C. Erwin, LA PORTE Cdr. M. C. Thompson, LATIMER Capt. J. P. Dix, OXFORD Capt. P. S. Crandell, ZEILIN Capt. T. B. Fitzpatrick, OCONTO Cdr. P. Jackson USNR, LAURENS Capt. D. McGregor, AUDRAIN Lt. Cdr. G. O. Forrest USNR; transports PRESIDENT MONROE Cdr. J. M. Payne USNR, COMET Lt. Cdr. J. B. Blee USNR; attack cargo ALGOL Lt. Cdr. A. T. Jones USNR; S.S. NAVAJO VICTORY, MANDERSON V., LAS VEGAS V., BEDFORD V., H. T. DODGE, SOLON TURMAN, WRANGELL, FOMALHAUT.

Screen, Cdr. M. L. McCullough: Destroyers MCNAIR Cdr. McCullough, NORMAN SCOTT Cdr. W. B. Porter, MELVIN Cdr. B. K. Atkins.

Bougainville Unit, Cdr. C. J. Ballreich: Transport PRESIDENT POLK Cdr. Ballreich; attack transport LIBRA Cdr. G. W. McCormick USNR; DE HARMON Lt. Cdr. T. U. Weekes USNR.

Milne Bay Unit: Attack transport WARREN Cdr. E. S. Stoker; DE DARBY Lt. Cdr. M. W. Martin USNR.

Oro Bay Unit: Attack cargo UVALDE Lt. Cdr. W. M. McCloy; DE J. DOUGLAS BLACKWOOD Lt. Cdr. J. L. Johnston USNR.

Lae Unit: Attack transport OLMSTED (with Comtransdiv 5, Capt. R. W. Abbott, embarked) Capt. C. L. C. Atkeson.

Finschhafen Unit: Hospital ship TRYON Cdr. W. G. Jones; attack cargo WARRICK Lt. Cdr. E. J. Grey.

Hollandia Unit: Transport WINGED ARROW Cdr. J. E. Shonier; attack transport APPLING Lt. Cdr. A. L. Stuart USNR; ~~high speed transport~~ COOLBAUGH Lt. Cdr. S. T. Hotchkiss USNR.
DESTROYER ESCORT

Noemfoor Unit, Capt. J. K. Davis: Attack transports LEON Capt. H. B. Southworth, ADAIR Capt. S. P. Comly, HASKELL Cdr. A. L. Mare; attack cargo DIPHDA Lt. Cdr. R. C. Willson USNR; high speed transports KILTY (with Comtransdiv 100, Cdr. R. A. Wilhelm, embarked) Lt. L. G. Benson USNR, SCHLEY Lt. Cdr. E. T. Farley USNR, CROSBY Lt. G. G. Moffatt USNR, HERBERT Lt. G. S. Hewitt USNR, LLOYD (with Comtransdiv 103, Cdr. W. S. Parsons, embarked) Lt. Cdr. P. N. Gammelgard USNR, NEWMAN Lt. Cdr. R. I. Thicme USNR, KEPHART Lt. Cdr. I. H. Cammarn USNR, COFER Lt. H. C. McClees USNR, TALBOT (with Comtransdiv 107-T, Lt. Cdr. C. C. Morgan USNR, embarked), TALBOT Lt. Cdr. Morgan, MANLEY Lt. Cdr. R. C. Foster USNR, COLDSBOROUGH Lt. C. E. Caton USNR.

Leyte Transport Unit, Cdr. H. B. Olsen USNR: Attack transport GILLIAM Cdr. Olsen; PC-1128; steamships BENNINGTON, BIRCH, COULIE.

LST Unit, Commander A. A. Ageton (ComLSTflot 3) ¹

Bougainville LST Unit, Cdr. R. D. DeKay USNR: Destroyer escort GREENWOOD Lt. Cdr. D. G. Bryce USNR, 3 LST; Oro Bay LST Unit, Cdr. G. R. Berner: Destroyer escort LOESER Lt. Cdr. J. Proctor USNR, 5 LST; Hollandia LST Unit, Cdr. Ageton: Destroyer escort MONSSEN Lt. Cdr. E. G. Sanderson, 7 LST, SC-735; 7 merchant ships; Noemfoor LST Unit, Cdr. N. W. Nelson USNR: 6 LST, PC-462, -463; Sansapor LST Unit, Lt. Roy Collier USNR: LST-219, PC-464; Morotai LST Unit, Cdr. L. A. Drexler: Destroyers MEDERMUT Cdr. C. B. Jennings, MCGOWAN Cdr. W. R. Cox, MIERTZ Cdr. W. S. Estabrook; 13 LST. Leyte LST Unit, Cdr. I. C. Parsons USNR: 15 LST.

¹ Day before departure from Hollandia, 24 merchant ships, *Kentwood*, *Athens* and LST-708 reported for passage to Leyte to Cdr. Ageton, whose screen was augmented by Cordiv 33 (*Allentown*, *Charlottesville*, *Machie's*, *Sandusky*, PC-476 and -1121, SC-732 and -741). *Tallah* joined off Mindoro 9 Jan.; S.S. *Peter Lassen* and FS-154, -173, -174 and -364 joined at Leyte.

which had been assembled from such diverse staging areas as Noumea, Bougainville, Milne Bay, Oro Bay, Lae, Finschhafen and Noemfoor. The O.T.C. was Rear Admiral R.L. Connolly in U.S.S. Appalachian (AGC-1) and the screen commander was ComDesRon 54 in U.S.S. Remy (DD-688). The convoy speed was 13 knots. An hour after joining up we went to General Quarters for gunnery practice.

And so for the next three days we progressed toward Surigao Strait. The monotony was broken by the usual alerts and sonar drills. On the 6th we fueled from U.S.S. Uvalde (AKA-88) and on the 7th we were detailed to receive mail from the Appalachian for delivery to U.S.S. Petrof Bay (CVE-80), U.S.S. Conner (DD-582), U.S.S. Charrette (DD-581), U.S.S. Libra (AKA-12), U.S.S. Laurens (APA-153), U.S.S. Oconto (APA-18), U.S.S. Audrain (APA-59), U.S.S. Cofer (APD-62) and U.S.S. Lloyd (APD-63).

On the afternoon of the 7th we entered Surigao Strait and picked up a few more ships to add to our convoy. Our position in this formation was screening the rear of the convoy. This to us was a great disappointment as it seemed to present little opportunity for submarine contacts and in fact reduced possibility for any sort of action. This reasoning in a later formation did not hold true, but at this time we could see little possibility for distinguishing ourselves.

Noon of 8 January found us just south of Negros heading northwest through the Sulu Sea toward Mindoro. We were now within easy range of Japanese held air fields and were constantly on the alert for expected enemy attacks. On the previous afternoon we had been alerted to an approaching enemy flight but this apparently was turned back by the shore-based Marine Corsairs which were flying cover for us in this area. For this we were duly thankful.

During the morning of the 8th we spent about 2½ hours transferring personnel from some of our attack transports to some of the merchant ships in our convoy before returning to resume station with the carrier unit consisting of

U.S.S. Saginaw Bay (CVE-82) and Petrof Bay (CVE-80), our old friends from previous operations.

Noon of the 9th found us a little south of Mindoro and still no enemy action had developed. At mid-morning we fueled from U.S.S. Winooski (AO-38) and shortly thereafter left the formation to screen flight operations first for Saginaw Bay and then Petrof Bay. These were completed at 1315 at which time we returned to the main formation and resumed station.

On the morning of the 10th we were off Manila Bay and close to the main Japanese held airfields, but still no action developed despite a red alert which was called at 0455. At 1600 off the entrance to Lingayen Gulf we left station to form T.U. 77.9.20 composed of three tankers, U.S.S. Winooski (AO-38), U.S.S. Tallulah (AO-50) and U.S.S. Schuykill (AO-76) with U.S.S. Harmon (DE-678), U.S.S. Goldsborough (APD-32), U.S.S. J. Douglas Blackwood (DE-219) and Coolbaugh as escorts. At 1950 ComCortDiv 36 (our Division Commander) joined as screen commander in U.S.S. Greenwood (DE-679) and shortly thereafter we proceeded to rendezvous with TG 77.4, the LST Unit under Commander Ageton, to steam the last few miles to the invasion beaches in Lingayen Gulf where we arrived at 1000 the following morning, two days after the initial landings.

All in all we had had a surprisingly uneventful passage. We had a number of red alerts but our air coverage was excellent and no enemy planes got through. A couple of torpedoes were fired at the formation but no hits resulted. These torpedoes were directed at leading ships in our widely spread out convoy and hence were several miles away from us. More strategically located escorts were detailed to track down the offending submarine but with no success.

Things seemed quiet enough at the time of our arrival and so for the most part they remained for us during our stay after the first day or so.

On the first evening we went to General Quarters. At 1855 some of the other ships opened fire on an enemy aircraft high

overhead which was out of our range but with negative results. This was followed fifteen minutes later by a similar ineffectual attack. At 1932 a third attack followed. This produced two bomb bursts on the beach before the aircraft escaped out of reach. Twenty minutes later we were directed to anchor.

Early the following morning as we lay at anchor maintaining a full war cruising watch another enemy plane came over. Shortly thereafter we got underway. We were soon to suffer our first and only casualties of the war.

At 0800 another high flying enemy aircraft came over, drawing the fire of all the ships even remotely in range. We ourselves expended 280 rounds of 1.1", 510 rounds of 20 m.m. and 83 rounds of 3"/50 cal.

What goes up, however, must come down and we were to feel the brunt of this. Shrapnel from a bursting 20 m.m. projectile fired by a friendly ship injured 6 of our men on the fantail, fortunately none too seriously. Another piece struck the bridge but again fortunately no one was injured there. This was the last action we were to see during our stay off the Lingayen beaches, though other ships in the Gulf were not as fortunate. On this same day, the 12th, the kamikazes returned, but further off the shore. The first ships to catch it were the DEs Gilligan and Richard W. Suesens. The former was part of the outer and the latter a unit of the inner submarine screen for Western Lingayen Gulf.

Also on the 12th a slow convoy bound for Leyte off Santiago Island was the target of an attack by several kamikazes, but suffered no serious damage. Elsewhere in the Gulf the destroyer transport Belknap was hit by two and though not severely damaged suffered fairly heavy casualties.

On the morning of the 13th the last successful kamikaze attack in Philippine waters was made on the CVE Salamau. The ship at the time was operating off the mouth of Lingayen Gulf. She was severely damaged but survived.

These attacks all occurred at considerable distance from us and although we were aware of them at the time of their

happening we did not see any of them. We had no way of knowing it but the Japanese had now shot their bolt. After 15 January only 10 Japanese planes were left on the entire island of Luzon.

Except for brief interludes for fueling and a few hours of patrolling on the inner screen to relieve U.S.S. Metivier (DE-582) we remained at anchor maintaining a full war cruising watch off San Fabian until 18 January. We received a visit from Dr. Estep, our division doctor, to check our wounded, and one of these we transferred to U.S.S. Rocky Mount (AGC-3) for treatment. For six long days at anchor we rolled and rolled under the broiling sun. Routinely we sounded General Quarters at dusk and again at dawn to confront the enemy who never showed up.

On the 18th it came almost as a relief to receive orders to patrol in the screen. Our screening group consisted of three vessels, all from our division, U.S.S. Harmon (DE-678), U.S.S. Looser (DE-680) and Coolbaugh. Being senior, I was O.T.C. The sector to be covered by each ship was approximately 3 miles long and so for the next four days we prowled like a tiger pacing his cage back and forth day and night. On one occasion we left station to investigate a native sailing canoe and on another occasion a floating human body. One evening we helped form a smoke screen in the transport area, but after each of these occasions we returned to our patrol station.

On the 21st we received welcome orders to fuel from U.S.S. Andrea Doria (IX-132) and replenish our ammunition from U.S.S. Indus (AKN-1) and on the following day we received even more welcome orders relieving us from the screen and to proceed to join T.U. 78.11.10, a lame duck convoy of LSTs heading back for Leyte. Despite the slow, pedestrian nature of our convoy we were elated to be getting away from the torid tedium of Lingayen Gulf.

The screen commander for this trip was ComDesDiv 10 in U.S.S. Smith (DD-378) and the O.T.C. was Commander LST Group 42 in LST 1015. The convoy speed was 8 knots and our station

was #8 in the screen, patrolling station. The trip which had taken us three and a half days outbound required five days at our present plodding gait on the return. Each day we sounded General Quarters for routine dawn and dusk alerts and exercised at sound contact drills but no enemy materialized to upset our placid progress. At 1427 on 27 January, having safely conducted our flock of lame ducks to Leyte Gulf we were detached from the Task Unit to proceed independently to an anchorage in San Pedro Bay.

That evening we moored alongside H.M.A.S. Kurumba R.A.N.R. for fueling. Fueling was completed at 0149 the following morning but we remained alongside for the rest of the night. This was in part due to the fact that I was enjoying a convivial evening with the Australian mate who had sailed in two four masted barques from Aland and was as much a sailing ship enthusiast as I, as noted in my letter of 31 January.

We left Kurumba at 0850 on the 28th and proceeded to an anchorage berth to lie until that afternoon when we went alongside S.S. Rolvaag where for two hours we replenished our ships stores. Provisioning was always popular with all hands because it brought a fresh variety to the menu which as time went on tended to gradually lose its lustre.

For the next four days we remained at anchor except for a brief return visit to Kurumba, this time to take on some diesel fuel. Some of the time at anchor we would act as mother ship to PT boats which would tie up or tail astern. At such times too I would visit other ships where I had friends aboard. There was always plenty to do on board, however. Ships work which could not be done under way occupied the crew, and paper work which deluged in on me whenever we reached port kept me submerged.

On the second of February we departed Leyte Gulf with a fast convoy bound to the eastward. Our destination was Hollandia.

Jan. 20, 1945
(Received Feb. 1st)

LINGAYAN, P.I.

Dear Mother and Dad:

I guess you have been doing a lot of wondering as to my whereabouts and you have undoubtedly guessed right. Again we were in on the big push,* but this time we followed up about two days late, which may have been a good thing from the standpoint of safety, but which did not give us quite as interesting a time as we might have had. As it all turned out, our experience was quite routine and uneventful. Our position in the formation coming up here was unfortunately the one that the Duke of Plaza toro (of G & S fame) would have preferred, and so we did not have a chance at another sub. However, except for a couple of ineffectual torpedos fired at the formation, not much developed in the line. When we started out I was convinced that this would be by far the toughest job to date, but despite our protracted sojourn in forward waters, we have had to date only two air raids anywhere near us. One plane we may have helped bring down as our fire was excellent, but he was so far away that it was impossible to tell for sure, and so it gave us no just satisfaction. AT LINGAYAN

It was during this raid that we suffered our first casualties. Lead was flying all over the place, and a 20 mm shell hit our fantail and exploded, giving some of the boys on one of the guns a lot of painful, though not serious (fortunately) shrapnel wounds. A lot of other shrapnel was flying around that morning - we received one solid chunk on the bridge, but (again fortunately) it did not hit anyone. That all took place just after we arrived, and now, except for the bombing and shelling on the beach, one would scarcely know there is a war on. In another week or so we shall probably be showing movies on deck!

The place we are in now is incredibly hot during the day - generally flat calm with a broiling sun, but the evenings cool off nicely. The temperature goes down to about 78 and it feels actually cold! It is remarkable what a year in the tropics will do to the human system! The anchorage is wide open and large swells roll in continuously. When the evening breeze sets in it is fine, for the ship takes the swells bows on, but for the remaining 20 hours of the day, we wallow in the trough and roll and roll. I don't know when we shall leave this spot, but we are all anxious to be on the go again.

The war situation out here, in my humble opinion, really looks good, though there is still a long way to go. From all indications the monkey men are really taking it in the back teeth and they are having a tough time keeping anything afloat in these waters. Since our experience of October, the whole picture has been brightening up by leaps and bounds - but there is still a long way to go, and lots more land which must be retaken.

* BATTLE OF LINGAYAN GULF, PHILIPPINES

It has been three weeks almost since we have received any mail and almost as long since we have been able to get any out, and so I feel way behind in all the news. And now I don't know if our mail will ever catch up with us. The farther along we go the more erratic the mail service becomes. I guess we shall just have to be patient.

I finally bumped into Pie Truesdale in his LSM the other day ^{at} ~~in~~ and had a good visit with him. He is Exec. and he seems just as enthusiastic as ever. He is talking of buying a fishing trawler after the war and going into business, which might not be a bad idea at all. We had a friend in Greenland who had owned one and had made a very good thing of it. I think the idea has a lot of merit. It takes a lot of hard work the first couple of years, but after that one can afford to hire a captain and things go along without much strain. I am rather taken with the idea - now that I have become a man of capital! Well, anyway, Pie was fine and I thought that if Pop saw the Soules, Anne would be interested to hear. He told me about a good book which I should like to get. It is by someone named Forbes, and is about Greenland. Forbes is a friend of Pie's and was in the Albatross, a mine sweeper, which was in Greenland when we were there. If you can get it, I would be delighted.

I wonder how things are at home. I guess that winter has set in in earnest now. I hope that Alec is keeping up the good work and has been taking care of things well. It wouldn't surprise me much if we were to get back sometime before too long. I have heard rumors that these ships were to get back in another two months or so, which would be fine. The way developments have been made in all our type of gear, we are relatively antiquated now and could do with much modernization. Also we could do with a good Navy Yard overhaul. So there may be truth in the rumor - I hope so! I am in no hurry to get transferred from this ship as I can see no especially good jobs ahead if I am, but I would like to bring her back to the States. However, in the Navy, "it isn't what you wants, it's what you gets" - and so we will just have to wait and see what develops. Now that Bill Loyd has left the Bureau, I have no one to turn to in that direction - so far as I know.

Well there isn't much more news. Several days have elapsed since I started this letter and we are still here. The weather has gotten cooler, however, and is really quite pleasant these days. Now instead of being anchored, we are patrolling - like a squirrel in a cage and just as interesting!

I haven't heard anything more on the Navy Cross. I really doubt if they will let it go through. I also haven't gotten a final official assessment on our submarine either - although there is no doubt in my mind that we got him. We should have something when the next mail comes through.

Write often. Give my love to everyone at home. I am still enjoying Pop's cigars! I carry the little Christmas horseshoe around in my pocket for good luck. Lots of love to you both -

San Pedro Bay
Faction, Leyte, P.I.

31 Jan/45

Dear Mother & Dad -

Well, we finally got away from the last place, though for a time I never thought we would. After our first two or three days there they completely forgot about us - a state of affairs which lasted for about three days. Finally, though, they rediscovered us, put us to work for a few more days and then sent us on down here with a slow collection of lame ducks. And so now we are in another jupping off spot and again awaiting developments. SAN PEDRO BAY, LEYTE.

We have had a few pretty jolly moments recently, however. Our first night here we lay alongside an Australian tanker and spent a very convivial evening aboard. The mate was an Aussie who had made a homeward trip in "Berzoin Cecilie" a few years ago, and later had made a round trip in "Moshblu". He was as much a sailing ship enthusiast as I, and so we had a wonderful time - talked sailing ships all evening until the small hours. He had gone so far as to marry a Finnish girl, whom he has not seen now for six years.

The next night I visited Pie Truesdale and had an even later party, and drank up practically all his good Scotch while cooking up schemes to operate a fishing fleet after the war. It is wonderful how Scotch mist will enliven the imagination!

We finally got a bit of mail, though none of it was personal. The official brought some good news and some bad. The bad was that the powers that be decided that we had only "slightly damaged" our submarine. They figured that we had merely countermined one of his torpedoes. Personally I feel sure that we got the sub, and so did the Admiral for whom we were working and who wrote a very complimentary statement for my record (including his opinion on the sub).

The good news arrived in a registered envelope addressed to me which enclosed a good citation and a beautiful Legion of Merit medal complete with ribbons and appurtenances, which was quite a thrill. I had never really expected a Navy Cross because it was not deserved by any means, and I seriously doubted whether I would receive any award. The citation reads as follows:

"For distinguishing himself by exceptionally meritorious service in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of a destroyer escort employed as a screening vessel for an Escort Carrier Task Unit during combat operations against the enemy from 18 October to 26 October 1944. The prompt and decisive action taken at all times by Lieutenant Commander Hotchkiss contributed to the success of the operation. His skill, determination and outstanding leadership throughout were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Navy of the United States"

Signed by Admiral Kinkaid

11. 2. 1955

It is very flattering and I am sure much more than I deserved. I have not let the word get around the ship yet because there will have to be a formal presentation when the Commodore comes aboard next, which should be in the very near future. In the meantime I merely gloat over the medal in a miserish way!

I am looking forward to the day when the rest of our mail will arrive. We have now been over a month without mail and it seems like a very long time. I keep longing for news of home and thinking of how things must be at East River now. I certainly wish we could get back soon. I think there may be a pretty good chance of it before long now. There are so many new DEs out this way now and with the developments in equipment in the last year, we are very much out of date - plus the fact that we could do with a rather complete overhaul - it seems logical to expect that they will send us back before long. But all we can do is to wait and see.

There really isn't much news these days. Things are quiet - the war is going very well indeed with more landings and not much opposition anywhere (according to the best reports). All aboard ship has been going well, though somewhat monotonously because even the few recreational facilities we had before are gone now. All we have now is movies every night, and these days they are punctuated by long intervals of darkness now and again each night. We like it best when we can keep moving and active.

Well, each day I keep hoping for the mail to come through and someday it will, so please keep right on writing. Give my love to Sister and her brood and all of Wyndham. How is Rollo? I haven't heard anything of him recently.

Lots of love to you both -

Stu

PL5

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
CARRIER DIVISION TWENTY TWO

(fj)

Serial 674

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
30 December 1944.

From: Commander Carrier Division TWENTY TWO.
To : Lieutenant Commander Stuart T. HOLMES, U.S.
Naval Reserve, (Commanding Officer, U.S.S.
COCKBURN (DD-17)).

Subject: Award, forwarding of.

Enclosure: (A) Legion of Merit Medal and Citation.

1. The Commander Carrier Division Twenty Two takes pleasure in forwarding herewith the enclosed Legion of Merit Medal and accompanying Citation.

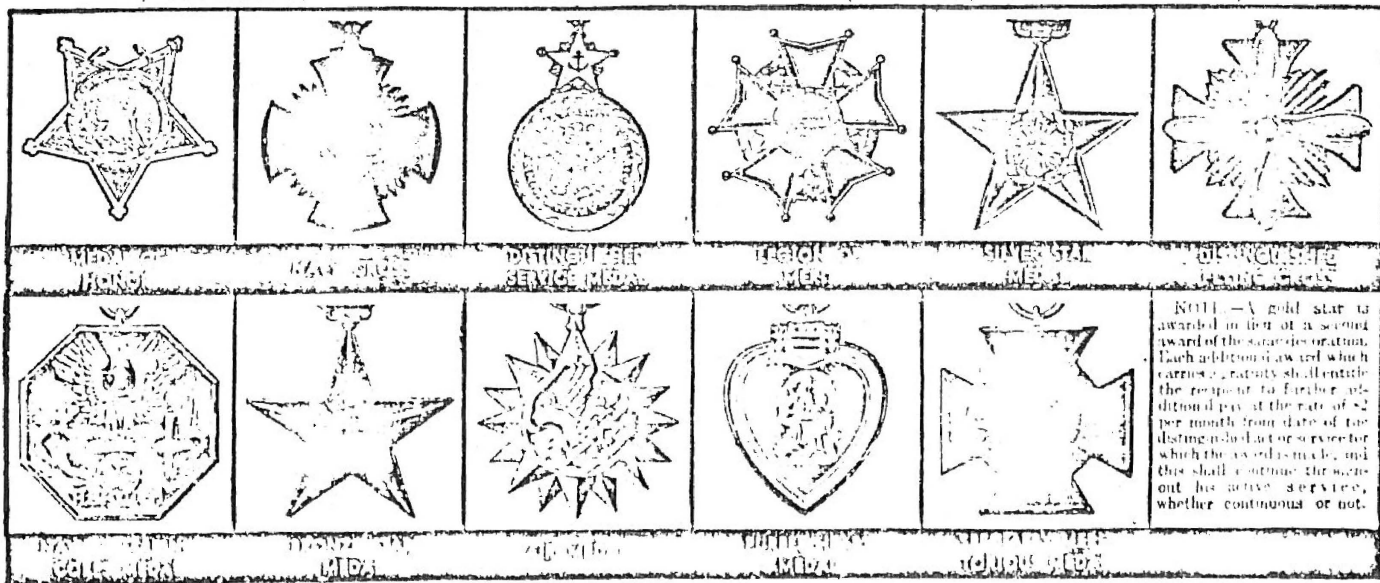
2. Commander SEVENTH Fleet has directed that they be presented with appropriate ceremony. Geographical considerations make an early compliance with these instructions impossible. In order not to delay the presentation, the enclosures are forwarded herewith with the request that, as the opportunity offers, you request your immediate superior in command to present the medal and citation with appropriate ceremony.

T. L. Holmes
T. L. HOLMES.

cc:
Com7thFlt

TABLE OF NAVAL DECORATIONS AND REGULATIONS

Name of medal and ribbon	Authorized by:	Awarded to:	Awarded for:	Time limits for recommendations or awards	Gratuity
Medal of Honor	Act of 21 Dec. 1891; act of 3 Mar. 1901; act of 3 Mar. 1915; act of 1 Feb. 1917; act of 7 Aug. 1942, which supersedes above acts.	Any person who, while in the naval service of the United States shall, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, or in the line of his profession, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty and without detriment to the mission.	Combat or noncombat.	Must be issued within 5 years from date of distinguished act, or recommended within 3 years of act or service.	\$2 per month from date of distinguished act, for enlisted men only.
Medal of Honor (1917-18) (no longer issued)	Act of 4 Feb. 1919	Any person who, while in the naval service of the United States shall, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty and without detriment to the mission.	Combat only.	do	Do.
Navy Cross	Act of 4 Feb. 1919; act of 7 Aug. 1942.	Any person serving with the naval service of the United States who distinguishes himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy.	do	do	Do.
Distinguished Service Medal	Act of 4 Feb. 1919; act of 7 Aug. 1942.	Any person who, while serving in any capacity with the Navy of the United States since 6 Apr. 1917, has distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the Government in a duty of great responsibility.	Combat or noncombat.	do	Do.
Legion of Merit	Act of 20 July 1942; Executive Order No. 9290 of 29 Oct. 1942.	Personnel of the armed forces of the United States and the Philippines; and personnel of the armed forces of friendly foreign nations who, since 8 Sept. 1939, shall have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services.	do	No time limit	No gratuity provided.
Silver Star Medal	Act of 7 Aug. 1942.	Any person who, while serving in any capacity with the Navy of the United States since 6 Dec. 1941, has distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity in action, not sufficient to justify the award of Medal of Honor or Navy Cross; also cases of persons previously submitted, recommended for Medal of Honor or Navy Cross or Distinguished Service Medal, and who were turned down, may be reconsidered, all cases to be considered on records now in Navy Department.	Combat only.	Must be issued within 5 years from date of distinguished act or service, or recommended within 3 years, except when awarded in cases previously submitted and turned down for Medal of Honor, DSM, or Navy Cross.	\$2 per month from date of distinguished act, for enlisted men only, since 6 Dec. 1941.
Distinguished Flying Cross	Act of 2 July 1926; Exec. Order No. 4576 of 28 Jan. 1927; Exec. Order No. 7786 of 8 Jan. 1938.	Any person who, while serving in any capacity with the Air Corps of the Army, National Guard, and Organized Reserves, or with U. S. Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard, subsequent to 5 Apr. 1917, has distinguished himself by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. Members of military, naval, or air forces of foreign governments, while serving with the United States.	Combat or noncombat.	Must be issued within 3 years from date of distinguished act or service, or recommended within 2 years from date of act or service.	\$2 per month from date of distinguished act or service, for enlisted men only.
Navy and Marine Corps Medal	Act of 7 Aug. 1942.	Any person who, while serving in any capacity with the U. S. Navy or Marine Corps, including Reserves, shall have, since 6 Dec. 1941, distinguished himself or herself by heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy, or to any person to whom the Secretary of the Navy has formerly awarded a letter of commendation for heroism, regardless of date, subject to approval of the Board of Decorations and Medals.	Noncombat only.	Must be issued within 5 years from date of distinguished act or service, or recommended within 3 years, except when awarded in lieu of a letter of commendation previously awarded for heroism.	No gratuity for services prior to 7 Dec. 1941; \$2 per month from date of distinguished act, after 7 Dec. 1941, for enlisted men only.
Bronze Star Medal	Exec. Order No. 9419 of 4 Feb. 1944.	Any person serving with Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard on or after 7 Dec. 1941 who distinguishes himself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service, not involving participation in aerial flight, in connection with military or naval operations against an enemy.	Combat or noncombat.	No time limit	No gratuity authorized.
Air Medal	Exec. Order No. 9153 of 11 May 1942; Gen. Order No. 175 of 27 June 1942.	Any person who, while serving with Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard of the United States in any capacity, subsequent to 8 Sept. 1939, distinguishes himself by meritorious achievement while participating in an aerial flight.	do	do	Do.
Commendation Ribbon	Alnav 11-44, 11 Jan. 1944.	All personnel of Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard who receive an individual letter of commendation signed by Sec. Nav, Cominch, CinCPac or CinCLant, or a Fleet Commander of rank of Vice Admiral or above, for an act of heroism or service performed since 6 Dec. 1941 (but ribbon may not be worn for letters received after 11 Jan. 1944 unless text so authorizes, or for any letters from Fleet Commanders prior to 13 Sept. 1944).	do	do	Do.
Purple Heart	Exec. Order No. 9277 of 3 Dec. 1942; Gen. Order No. 186 of 21 Jan. 1943.	Persons wounded in action against the enemy of the United States while serving with the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard of the United States or as result of act of such enemy, if wound necessitated treatment by medical officer. Also to next of kin of persons killed in action.	Combat only.	do	Do.
Specially Meritorious Medal, War with Spain (no longer issued).	Act of 3 Mar. 1901.	Officers and men of the Navy and Marine Corps who rendered specially meritorious service, other than in battle, during the War with Spain.	Noncombat only.	do	Do.
Presidential Unit Citation	Exec. Order 9050 of 6 Feb. 1942; Gen. Order 187 of 3 Feb. 1943.	Any ship, aircraft, or naval units, any marine aircraft detachment or higher unit for outstanding performance in action on or after 16 Oct. 1941.	Combat only.	do	Do.



Although the landings at Lingayen Gulf had been successfully completed much additional material was required. Four resupply echelons were to arrive at Lingayen Gulf between 14 and 27 January and three more between 8 and 18 February. We were assigned duty as a unit in the screen for the last of these which was designated as Task Unit 78.7.4, the Second LST Resupply Unit, transporting elements of the Sixth Army from Hollandia, Biak, Noemfoor, Sansapor and Morotai.

We were to pick up the Hollandia section, join up with the other sections of LSTs and then proceed to a convoy rendezvous point in Leyte Gulf where the entire convoy would assemble for the passage to Lingayen.

On the second of February we departed Leyte with a task unit comprised of 15 transports and a screen of four destroyers and ourselves bound to the eastward. It was a good 13 knot convoy and we stayed with them for two days before breaking off to proceed individually at 20 knots for Humboldt Bay, Hollandia.

We arrived at Hollandia on the morning of the 6th, fueled, and that afternoon departed with one group of LSTs. I was screen commander. The other escort was SC-1012. We set out on a northwesterly course at a leisurely speed of 8 knots geared to the capabilities of our charges.

After three uneventful days of formation steaming over quiet seas we effected rendezvous with the Noemfoor and Biak sections at 1645 on the 9th. My screen was augmented by PC-1120 and U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424). For another quiet day and a half we plodded along toward Leyte.

Like so many other days in those tropical latitudes the 11th of February came on fine and clear. As the stars faded in the warm morning twilight we shot them for position and suddenly the sun broke the rim of the horizon astern. Another beautiful day had dawned.

At 0819 a destroyer that had appeared on the horizon earlier approached the convoy. It was the ISHERWOOD (DD-520),

carrying Commander Destroyer Division 98, which was to join our screen and would take over the duties of screen commander from me.

The convoy continued onward. Under the cloudless blue sky the sea was a dark blue as one looked down into its clear depths. Looking astern its wind ruffled surface reflected the glinting sunlight as the smooth sea reached out for the horizon beyond. The LSTs in formation plodded along obediently behind us each with a sparkling white bone of foam in her teeth.

On the bridge I was looking aft surveying the peaceful scene spread out before me. Suddenly as I watched a great geyser of sparkling white water almost like a burst of steam glaring white in the sun against the blue background burst forth at the side of one of our LSTs. She had received a direct hit from a torpedo.

The time was 0906. LST 577 had been blown in half by a torpedo which had been fired from fairly close range. The after half sank almost immediately but the forward half remained afloat. The officer of the deck sounded the general alarm and we went to General Quarters immediately.

For the next three hours the escorts carried out an intensive submarine search with numerous submarine contacts reported and proved false. As each contact was reported the convoy executed turns and emergency turns the sum effect of which was to keep the convoy pretty much in the vicinity of the torpedoed LST 577.

At 1011 we received the report that all survivors of LST 577 had been picked up by PC-1120.

The ships log reports the following sequence of events:

- 1102 We rejoined the convoy following our submarine search.
- 1120 PC-1120 ordered to return to screening station.
- 1125 LST 571 carrying out salvage operations on 577.
- 1208 We secured from General Quarters.
- 1230 Convoy is in formation. ComDesDiv 98 in ISHERWOOD remaining with LST 577 to supervise salvage operations and continue search for enemy submarines.

I reorganized my screen and again we were plodding onward toward our destination.

At 1525 the Sansapor and Morotai Sections of T.U. 78.7.4 escorted by SC 729 joined the convoy.

At 1653 PC-1120, which had transferred survivors to LST 1027, was ordered to return to LST 751 and screen her while she was attempting salvage operations on 577.

And still we continued onward. Our fleet of LSTs by now was considerable, but my screen consisted of only two SCs, U.S.S. HAAS and ourselves which, considering the size of our formation, was hardly adequate. This fact was recognized by the powers that be and soon help was on the way.

At 0158 on 12 February U.S.S. LUCE (DD-522) and U.S.S. CHARLES G. BADGER (DD-657) arrived to augment our screen. Although senior to me they requested that I carry on as screen commander. Later in the morning PC-1120 returned to the screen. For the rest of that day and early the next until our arrival at Leyte I felt like a full admiral with seven ships at my command.

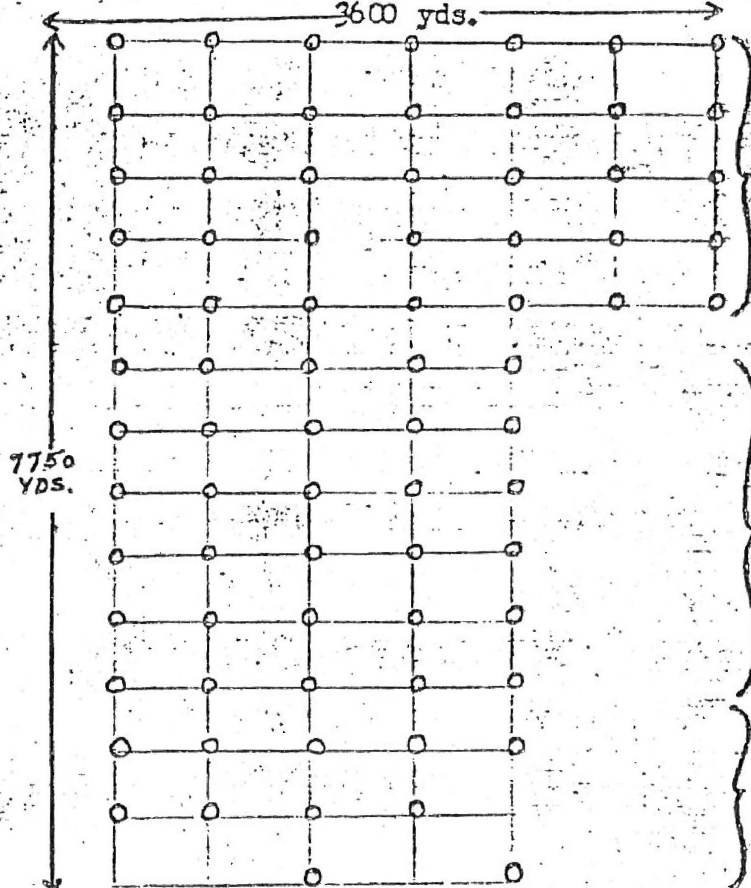
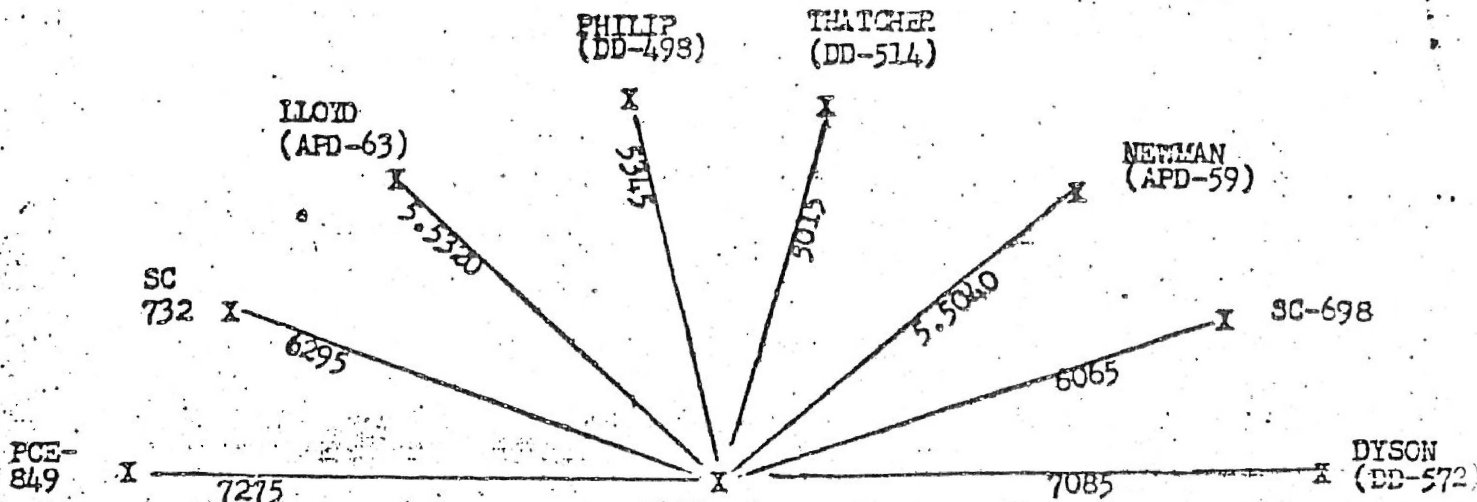
At 0600 on the 13th our convoy proceeded to the anchorage at Dulag, Leyte, while we went on to San Pedro Bay to fuel prior to resuming the journey to Lingayen.

When the entire convoy rendezvoused for departure that afternoon it had grown to a total of 94 ships which included 34 LSTs, 23 merchant ships, 5 naval auxiliaries, and a remainder of small types. There were 12 escorts.

No longer the "admiral" we were detailed to a screening station at the rear of the convoy - a seemingly ignominious come-down to a location which promised little chance to pick up a submarine contact.

Our slow and unweildy convoy dotted for 6 miles ahead over the calm expanse of ocean progressed at a pedestrian 8 knot pace as we patrolled astern.

Without incident we passed south of Negros and up the



LSTs

MERCHANT SHIPS

LCIs

FS

APCs

KEPHART (APD-61)

COFER (APD-62)

COOLBAUGH (DE-217)

HAAS (DE-424)

TASK UNIT 78.7.4
 As of 15 February 1945

4

Sulu Sea toward Mindoro. There were no air alerts and life aboard had settled into a routine with very little prospect for excitement as we followed along in the rearmost position in the screen.

My mental lethargy was suddenly broken in late afternoon of the 15th when at 1650 we were ordered to leave our screening station to assist U.S.S. COPER (APD-62) who had a sound contact. Immediately after we had verified the contact we were ordered to take over.

In this case I decided on the hedgehog as the most appropriate weapon. The hedgehog consisted of a whole battery of small bombs which were positioned on a launcher consisting of closely spaced spindles or fingers over which each bomb was nested. These fingers were angled in such a way that when the hedgehog was fired the projectiles would fly together like a covey of quail to produce a predetermined pattern on the water within a limited arc ahead of the ship. Sinking rapidly they would only explode on contact with the target.

This time the sonar and its recorder functioned perfectly and at the appropriate moment we fired the hedgehog.

With baited breath we watched our birds fly out ahead and splash down in a perfect pattern, and then - Hooray! - an underwater explosion twenty seconds after firing.

Almost immediately a great gusher of oil spurted to the surface. We passed over our quarry, maintaining sonar contact all the time and circled back. Even had we lost sonar contact the gusher of oil would continue to guide us back again and again. The water here was about 300 feet deep and setting our depth charges with appropriate settings we crossed and recrossed the motionless gusher rolling the "ash cans" as we passed. Several additional underwater explosions were noted.

Another DE, U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424) was detached from the screen to assist us.

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE217)
of the Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

NARRATIVE OF ACTION AGAINST ENEMY SUBMARINE - 15 FEBRUARY 1945

Sound contact was first made by U.S.S. DEETER (AM-62), while screening the flank of the formation of Task Unit 78.7.4, which extended for about six miles.

Immediately after contact was verified this vessel was directed to attack. Contact was made by this vessel at about 0503 G.M.T. time, and attack was carried out as shown on the attached ASW-1 chart. Twenty seconds after firing the first hedgehog pattern a large underwater explosion was felt throughout the ship, estimated to be caused by the explosion of two or three hedgehogs, at least. Immediately afterwards a great gusher of diesel oil arose to the surface. Four additional hedgehog attacks were carried out with negative results. Although contact was lost several times, it could always be readily regained because of the continuing stream of diesel oil rising.

At 0520 G.M.T. time, about twenty seconds after the last hedgehog attack, Engine Room personnel felt a distinct underwater explosion.

Six depth charge attacks were then carried out. About two minutes after the second depth charge attack, new gushers of oil came to the surface. About thirty seconds after the explosion of the last charge of the third pattern, an underwater explosion was felt throughout the ship. Results from further attacks were negative.

After this ship had completed the sixth depth charge attack, the operation was turned over to U.S.S. HMAS (DE-42), which ship had been standing by. This ship then returned to the formation, in accordance with previous orders from the Screen Commander to leave the contact at dark.

Samples of the submarine's oil were soaked up in a rag as the ship passed through the oil slick. The Engineering Officer determined these samples to be Diesel oil. The oil soaked rag is being forwarded in a glass container under separate cover. Due to the limited time allowed this vessel to stay on the scene, time was not taken to obtain a proper sample of the submarine's oil.

U.S.S. HMAS (DE-42) has later reported that she obtained additional explosions and picked up debris the following morning.

At sunset we were ordered to rejoin the convoy, leaving the HAAS to continue the attack. We were disappointed that our efforts had not resulted in that final grand explosion which would beyond a doubt prove the demise of the sub. We could only hope that our relief ship would eventually experience that satisfaction.

All in all we had fired 120 hedgehogs and dropped 68 depth charges during the attack.

(The action report and assessment of this attack are included as an Appendix).

The 16th and 17th of February passed uneventfully as, at 7 knots, we steamed northward past the north end of Mindoro and the entrance to Manila Bay. At 1855 on the 16th all the escorts except ourselves, U.S.S. PHILIP (DD-498) and two SCs left the formation for Subic Bay. Finally, just before midnight on the 17th the formation altered course to stand into Lingayen Gulf. We reached our destination at about 0735 the next morning.

For the next two days we divided our time between fueling, provisioning, patrolling and rolling at anchor until finally at 1700 on the 20th we got under way. This time we were blessed with a fast 13.5 knot convoy consisting of U.S.S. ROCKY MOUNT (AGC-3), a communications command ship, and two Australian Auxilliarities, HMAS EMPIRE BATTLEAXE and HMAS EMPIRE PLACE. The only other escort was U.S.S. ROBINSON (DD-562).

Before noon of the next day we were steaming various courses up the channel that led to Subic Bay where we fueled, replenished our ammunition and anchored until the following afternoon, when with the same ships, we got under way for Mindoro.

After steaming overnight we anchored in Mangarin Bay, Mindoro at 0928 on the 23rd of February.

Here I was delighted to find anchored nearby the U.S.S. FREEMONT, flagship of Rear Admiral W.M. Fechteler, recently

19 Feb. 45

Dear Mother & Dad -

We finally got some mail the other day, but my most recent letter is Ma's of Jan. 1. Christmas must have been a lot of fun. I got a letter from Sam Galpin, who gave more details of Christmas at Wyndham. It must have been a field day for the children. Mary's pony sounds wonderful, and I can imagine how thrilled she must be. I wonder what Rollo thinks of Mitzi, who must be just about his size. I certainly wish that I could have been there.

We have been kept very busy since I last wrote, but it has all been pleasant and much better than sitting around at anchor. We have had a couple of submarine adventures. On one occasion a ship like Joe's was blown in half. Unfortunately, I happened to be screen commander, but of course there is no blame attached. Later we were joined by more ships, and I had so many ships, including several destroyers, in my command, that I felt like a full Admiral. On the other occasion the sub situation was reversed. He did no damage and we and another ship did him in. I am only hoping that we shall receive proper credit this time and not just a "probably slightly damaged" such as they gave us before!

I must make this just a note, as I must get it into the mail in a few minutes.

I keep wondering what the news of Sydney is and where he has finally been sent to. I am glad that he was not over there in time for the great German counter offensive. Now I hope it will just be clear going and with a minimum of losses. The Russians are going so fast on the other front that it really seems that the Germans cannot hold out much longer. Never theless I guess Sister has plenty of anxiety.

I wonder what the latest news of Joe is and whether he is still hobnobbing with the Greeks on the Acropolis.

I forgot to mention your nice Christmas card. I think it is fine and a good picture of all and properly reflecting Christmas cheer. Also I thought Sister's card was very nice - one of the best I have seen this year.

I must stop and get this off. Sorry to make it such a rush job, but even a note is better than no letter at all. This is my one year anniversary in command of the Coolbaugh! Too bad we aren't somewhere where we could celebrate it!

Write often. Lots of love to all and especially to you both.

Stu
* LST EN ROUTE FROM MANUS TOWARDS KETTE
* * JAPANESE SUB IN THE SULU SEA. WE SCORED A DIRECT HIT WITH
HEDGEHOGS WHICH IMMOBILIZED HIM. THEN WE CROSSED BACK AND FORTH
THE

Convoy duty in the Philippines ceased on 28 February, at which time we left the area for Ulithi, Caroline Islands, and from there to proceed with a task group for Iwo Jima. The U.S.S. COOLBAUGH arrived at Iwo Jima early in March and remained in that area the entire month. After the Island was secured it proceeded with a convoy of the victorious Marines, departing on Easter Sunday, and arriving in Pearl Harbor, Hawaiian Islands, the day our late President died.

off Two Jims

7 Mar/45

Dear Mother & Dad -

It has been a long time since I last wrote and in the meantime I have fallen on evil days. The new Commodore⁴ has moved aboard bag and baggage and it looks like he is here to stay. Much of the last week I have been living in a state of subdued rage, but gradually I am becoming more used to having him around. Of course he has moved me out of my fine room and now I am back in the Execs room again, which has not helped my disposition. He is quite an old woman and has been trying to inflict some of his ideas upon me and the ship with little success. Finally I had things out with him a few days ago and now I think I have bullied him into a fair state of submission, but no one is especially happy. Incidentally, his name is de Kay - he comes from Port Washington and knows the Morses, though not well I gather. Actually, he is pretty much of a gentleman, but I still do not relish having him aboard. In view of a recent letter, it appears that we shall be more or less permanently afflicted with him.

Since last writing (and before the old gent showed up) we have had several interesting experiences. We came back from Lingayen with a very pleasant convoy and stopped off at a certain spot⁴ en route where I happened to bump into Bill Boyd. He was fine and very enthusiastic about being out here and about his job. We went off to a little island for a fine swim and a few beers and had a wonderful reunion. He is just the same as ever, but is getting noticeably bald! He was full of news of many of our old friends. Later he came back aboard for supper and movies. (MANGARIN BAY, MINDORO 23-24 FEB)

(25 FEB)

A day or two after I saw him we were steaming along and just at dusk I spotted a large piece of wreckage ahead. On careful inspection it appeared to be part of a wrecked vessel, with a broken wheel in evidence and a lot of wreckage strewn over the deck which was awash. On even closer inspection I saw what appeared to be a large monkey face, predominantly teeth, peering out from under a tarpaulin. We stopped immediately and circled toward our find. Presently there was movement under the tarpaulin and a figure came out on all fours - obviously a real live Jap monkeyman. We notified the OIC and asked him if he wished us to pick up our friend, or else! The answer was - pick him up. As we drew close we kept a careful eye on our quarry, whom we had well covered with a bristling battery of small arms, but he apparently had no ulterior motives, for all he did was to keep bringing out a white rag in a dazed manner. As we drifted closer, he picked up a plank, crawled to the edge of the wreck, launched himself in the water and started paddling toward us - so far so good. In a moment he was alongside and grasped a heaving line which we threw him. Then he seemed to have a change of heart for he let go, pushed off and pointed to his head saying - "Boon, Boon". The temptation was great, but we had orders to do a Frank Buck. Finally we persuaded him to again take a line and we brought him along to the coarding net which he scolded in the manner of a sluggish ape. On deck he started to reach behind him, but I had directed the boys to hold his hands and to strip him to the Jap equivalent of the buff. This was fortunate as he had a hand grenade stuck in his belt. This was promptly dumped

** MINDORO

* TROOPMASTER DEKAY

*** ON THE STAFF OF ADMIRAL FEETLOCK

NOT FAR FROM THE SHORE OF PANDAY

overboard and the rest was routine. The boys put him in the shower, gave him a good scrubbing and some dry clothes and we packed him off to the brig. Actually I think the idea of the hand grenade was no more appealing to him than it was to us, but he probably figured the ancestors would give him a for effort anyway. By the time he finally left the ship, he had given all the boys his autograph and had provided quite a bit of amusement. When the boys told him of the bombing of Tokyo - all with appropriate gestures, he wept, much to the gratification of all the spectators. Of course I had previously given orders that he was to be kept in strict isolation, but evidently the sightseers got in anyway and all the boys got a kick out of seeing a trapped Jap. We finally turned him over to the Army, who, he was quite convinced, would administer the delayed "boom-boom". Actually, after hearing the stories of so e of the American prisoners liberated from Manila, he undoubtedly richly deserved it. It is hard to think of Japs as human beings as judged by their actions and their appearance.

At about the time of the Jap's departure, the Commodore showed up and we haven't had much fun since then.

At our last port of call I bumped into our friend Brousseau and had a nice visit with him. He, too, has been having an interesting time and is looking forward to a lot more. He sent his regards to Pop and is a very nice fellow.

That is most all the recent news. These days now we are out of our usual sphere, and I am expecting to see George McLanahan very soon and perhaps will already have by the time this letter reaches you. Perhaps I shall see Rod too. It is even possible that one of these days we shall be getting some leave and I might get back to see you - but that is only mere speculation. The thought of Wyndham in the spring is pretty nice, though!

I don't know what has happened to our mail. My last letter from Ma is Jan. 1st, but Dad's of February 15th arrived two days ago. There must be a lot in between which has not shown up - or something. Pop's letter was all good news and so I presume the in-between ones are too, but I certainly feel way out of date on all the home doings.

Well I shall stop for now. Perhaps there will be more stories to tell in a few days. One never knows in this part of the world - or perhaps our dear Commodore will have completely driven me to distraction. He has more bothersome ideas about petty things than an old hen, but he gets precious little satisfaction out of me. Division Commanders are about as useful on these ships as two tails on a dog.

Write often - I long for news of you both and of Wyndham and all the family.

* AT LEYTE (TRULLING)
* * AT PEARL HARBOR Lots of love

Stu

The morning after picking up the Japanese soldier we arrived at San Pedro Bay, Leyte, and moored alongside USS BLACKWOOD (DE-219), a sister ship in our division. We departed fifteen minutes later, having acquired our division commander and his staff. Much of the light went out of my life as I moved my possessions down into the wardroom country, bumping the exec out of his room and forcing him to double up elsewhere.

For that day and the next we mostly swung at anchor, shifting berth once to fuel and again to replenish our ammunition. We also had to deliver our Jap prisoner ashore to the proper authorities.

We had had little to do with the army and its establishment ashore so when Wernecke with the Jap handcuffed to him stepped from the whaleboat at Tacloban he was in "terra incognita". He accosted the first GI he saw.

"Where's the Provost Marshal?" he said. "I have this guy to turn over to him."

The none-too-bright soldier, looking like Beetle Bailey, said, "Yeah? What's he done?"

"He's a Jap."

"Oh."

Wernecke finally accomplished his mission and returned.

The night of the 27th it blew hard. We rode comfortably enough in 8 fathoms of water with 50 fathoms of chain at the waters edge.

At 0103 LSM 267, dragging anchor and out of control, ran broadside into our starboard side, hitting our motor whaleboat which was hoisted to the rail and damaging the davits. The starboard side of the whaleboat was stove in. LSM 267's anchor fouled with ours, causing us to drag about 200 yards.

At 0135 we lit off our main engines. LSM 267 slipped her cable and proceeded to a clear anchorage.

Later that morning, 28 February, escorting a convoy of two fast cargo ships and with a screen consisting of USS DARRY

(DE-218), J. DOUGLAS BLACKWOOD (DE-219), HARBOR (DE-678) and GREENWOOD (DE-679), all of our division, we departed for Ulithi in the Caroline Islands. Our sonar gear had suffered a serious problem and would now be out of operation until our next availability period. Accordingly the commodore ordered a four ship screen with COOLBAUGH in a tailback position 1000 yards astern of the formation.

The C.O. of USS FOMALHAUT (AK-22) was O.T.C. The other ship in the formation was USS BEDFORD VICTORY (AK-631). Convoy speed was 13 knots. We were in one boiler operation for the first 24 hours before going to normal split plant.

For three days we zig-zagged to the eastward and in the pre-dawn hours of 4 March we made our landfall on Ulithi. The trip had been pleasant and uneventful with only routine dusk alerts to break the monotony.

Ulithi is a large atoll with a lagoon about 30 miles long, north and south. It had served as the Advanced Fleet Anchorage since 1 October 1944. It could accommodate a great number of ships and served as a logistical supply center.

Upon arrival we proceeded to the Southern Anchorage where we anchored at 0717 in 16 fathoms of water with Funaze Island bearing 155 T. Six hours later we got under way to fuel from USS MARIAS (AO-57) in the North Anchorage but upon completion we returned to South Anchorage and soon afterward received the LOSSER to berth alongside.

Many other ships were anchored in the lagoon and that evening I was able to do some visiting and catch up with old friends including Hank Brousseau and Joe Golinke.

The next morning, 5 March, we were underway at 0800 to pick up our orders before returning to lie alongside LOSSER again for about 2½ hours. Our orders directed us to screen T.U. 12.6.1, nine fast transports and two fast cargo ships, to Iwo Jima. Accordingly, at 1227 we were underway to steam out of the harbor. Two hours later the convoy had formed up and we were on our way.

The task unit consisted of: USS ZELLIN (APA-3), PRESIDENT MONROE (AP-104), PRESIDENT FOLK (AP-103), STORM KING (AP-171), THUBAN (AKA-19), WINGED ARROW (AP-170), ELESTERA (AKA-4), HERALD OF THE MORNING (AP-173), GOLDEN CITY (AP-169), JOHN LAND (AP-167) and GEORGE F. ELLIOTT (AP-105) with escorts: USS COOLBAUGH, DARBY, J. DOUGLAS BLACKWOOD, HARRISON, GREENWOOD and LOESER.

Our course was almost due north. Speed was set at 12.5 knots as we followed our zig zag plan toward Iwo Jima some 950 miles distant.

The first afternoon for about two hours at General Quarters we exercised at AA firing at a towed sleeve which was far more satisfactory than our more usual drills with gas filled balloons or star shell parachute flares. We expended 95 rounds of 3"-50 AA and 364 rounds of service 1."1. Finally at 1755 we formed into cruising disposition with the convoy formed in three columns, #1 and #2 of 4 ships and #3 of 3 ships. COOLBAUGH was in tailback position, 1500 yards astern.

For the three days after our departure we continued to steam north. The OTC, Commander Transport Squadron 20 in USS ZELLIN conducted flaghoist drills each morning, and each afternoon we exercised at tactical manoeuvres. The night of the 6th the GREENWOOD reported a submarine contact which identified itself as friendly and the following morning the J. DOUGLAS BLACKWOOD reported a similar one. Each evening we went to General Quarters for dusk alert.

Finally, at 0100 on the 9th of March, we arrived at our destination point in the middle of nowhere but in the area of Iwo Jima. It was then that we commenced formation steaming in a big circle marking time until we should be ordered to close the island to pick up our victorious Marines.

The marines had landed on this uninviting island dominated by Mount Suribachi on 19 February and it had been estimated that by early March it would be secured and the attacking forces could be released. Things, however, did not quite work

out that way. The island was entirely riddled with tunnels and caves in which the Japs had entrenched themselves. The Japanese garrison on this four mile long island numbered about 25,000 men and these had practically to be dug out one by one. The battle losses on both sides were enormous.

For the next 18 days we continued to steam in large circles. The log notes a radar contact on 13 March bearing 340 at 42 miles, identified as Minami, Iwo Jima which gives an indication of the area in which we operated.

Occasionally we would be called on to deliver mail between ships and occasionally the escorts would fuel from the transports, but apart from these diversions there was little to relieve the monotony of waiting.

After endless days of circling we were directed to close the island and patrol off the western transport area about two miles off shore between Kangoko Iwa Island and Hot Rocks Point. The length of patrol was $2 \frac{5}{8}$ miles at speed 5 knots. This was our condition when I wrote my letter of 23 March.

The weather off Iwo was quite a change from that we had been experiencing. Much of the time the wind was brisk and the temperature was as low as 65 F. We were so acclimatized to the tropic heat that this felt like the icy blasts of a Greenland winter!

One evening off of Iwo we had a remarkable experience. The TBS voice radio under normal conditions was supposed to have a "line of sight" range. Suddenly I was aware of familiar voice calls coming through which seemed entirely out of context.

Somewhat like one who wakes up from a deep sleep wondering for an instant where he is I did a "double take". The ships screening the transport and unloading area at Hagryen Gulf were communicating between themselves and their messager, thanks to skip, were reaching us off Iwo Jima about 1350 miles distant loud and clear.

THE ATTACK ON IWO JIMA

After the capture of the key places in the Philippines the Americans were eager to press on and strike at Japan herself, dropping earlier ideas on MacArthur's part of capturing Formosa or part of China's coast as air bases for the assault on Japan. But the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed in considering it necessary to take Iwo Jima in the Bonin Islands, midway between Saipan and Tokyo, and Okinawa in the Ryukyus, midway between the southwestern end of Japan and Formosa, as strategic stepping stones—close-up island bases to aid the air bombardment of Japan.

Iwo Jima, being regarded as the easier operation, was to be tackled first. Moreover it was wanted as an emergency landing place for the B.29 Superfortresses which had been bombing Tokyo from the Marianas since late November, and as a base for the fighter planes escorting them—as no fighters could fly the entire distance.

A volcanic island, only four miles long, Iwo was uninhabited except for its garrison. This had not been large until September, and could not have offered much resistance, but since then the garrison had been increased to some 25,000 men, and General Kuribayashi had developed the defences into a network of excavated caves, well-concealed and connected by deep tunnels. His aim was simply to hold out as long as possible, as there could be no later reinforcement because of the Americans' huge naval-air superiority, and he relied on the sheer defensive strength of his position, eschewing costly and characteristic Japanese counterattacks.

The attack on Iwo Jima was entrusted by Nimitz to Admiral Raymond Spruance, who took over command of the 3rd Fleet from Halsey in the last week of January, 1945—it was now for the time being renamed the 5th Fleet—and for the land part of the operation he was given three Marine divisions. The preparatory air and sea bombardment was the most prolonged hitherto in the Pacific war, with daily air strikes from December 8 on, day and night bombing from January 3 on, and a final three days of intense naval bombardment. But all this had disappointingly little effect on the deeply fortified Japanese defences. When the Marines landed on the morning of February 19, they were met with intense mortar and artillery fire, and for a long time were pinned down on the beaches, suffering 2,500 casualties on that first day out of 30,000 men who were landed.

In the days that followed the Marines slowly fought their way forward, almost yard by yard, with abundant and constant fire-support from air and sea, which was increased when Mitscher's fast carriers were brought back to reinforce, after their great raid on Tokyo. Not until March 26 was the conquest of the island achieved, after over five weeks' bitter fighting, and by then the Marine battle losses had risen to about 26,000—30 per cent of the entire landing force. The Japanese had fought so stubbornly that 21,000 had been killed, and barely 200 taken prisoner. The mopping up of pockets continued for more than two months longer, bringing the total of Japanese killed up to over 25,000, while only a thousand were taken prisoner. Before the end of March three airfields were ready for the American planes, and by the end of the war some 2,400 landings by B.29 bombers had been made there.

Off Two Jims

23 Mar / 45

Dear Mother & Dad

Time has sort of gotten away from me again, and again I am late in writing. The main reason for this is that in the last two weeks just about nothing has happened & we have lapsed into a monotonous routine which does not seem to stimulate ^{the} brilliant letter writing.

For a while we were making time in the middle of nowhere & now we are doing the same thing off the rather dismal shore of a small "island" recently ^{Two Jims} captured. Each day passes pleasantly enough in a quiet sort of way, which has allowed a good opportunity for the crew to work on the ship, with such materials as we have left aboard, and for us to run through a few exercises. Two

afternoon I have had the officer up for ship
handling drills in which they practice docking
alongside a floating crane, or practice picking up
survivors (the same crane). This is quite a lot of
fun & everyone enjoys it, except for the engineers.
Who are as busy as a one armed paper hanger answering
all the bells which are rung up. Otherwise I
spend my time in noising about the ship or in reading.

The Commodore is not as much of a one spot as
he was. When he had been aboard a day or two
he called me in and elaborated on with a lot of
insignificant points & ideas. It got me rather sore
& so I told him how about keeping his shirt on
for a week or ten days until he had had a
chance to really see how things went; then if
he had criticisms to make I might take them

more to heart. He has been aboard almost a month now & has not ventured any more criticism & as things have been coasting along smoothly. It is pleasant to talk to, but pretty much of a fifth wheel as far as our operation go. Alas I miss my nice big room & private bath!

Shall this time that we have been waiting around we still have not learned what is to come of us, but I think that the possibility that I mentioned in my last letter looks like a good bet. However we were bound from one day to the next what to expect & so we cannot plan too much.

At present I am reading Dr. Skinn's book - American Doctor's Odyssey - and find it very interesting. He has certainly had a very remarkable life.

On the 26th of March the island was finally secured, and soon afterward the Fifth Marines were being embarked on the waiting transports. It was not until then that we learned that our convoy was destined for Pearl Harbor, a straight line distance of about 3600 miles. We were, however, to make a logistical call at Eniwetok en route which would result in an additional 250 miles above the direct course.

The morning of Tuesday the 27th of March found us patrolling as usual off the Western Transport Area steaming under boiler #2 with the engineering plant in two motor operation. At 1035 however, we were detailed to pick up officer messenger mail from USS ZEILIN for delivery to the other ships that would form the screen for the departing task unit which would be getting under way later in the day. When this was accomplished we resumed patrolling, but this time happy in the knowledge that our long, tedious wait was about over.

At 1809 we commenced forming up in accordance with C.T.U. 51.29.6 Movement Order #44-45. The OTC was Commander Transport Squadron 20 in USS ZEILIN (APA-3) which was to be formation guide. The screen commander was our commodore in COOLBAUGH. The other escorts were USS IZARD (DD-589), J. DOUGLAS BLACKWOOD (DE-219), HARMON (DE-678), GREENWOOD (DE-679) and DARBY (DE-218). USS MCCALL (DD-400) was in picket station 8 miles ahead and we, with our inoperable sonar gear were in station 1500 yards astern of the last ship in column #2.

At 1922, with speed set at 12 knots, we commenced zig-zagging on our course for Eniwetok about 1500 miles away.

The next few days passed uneventfully. The day after our departure the OTC called for about forty minutes of tactical exercises and we conducted our own sonar drills. The following morning the GOLDEN CITY dropped out briefly for repairs. The DARBY and ourselves stood by, but an hour later we had all rejoined the formation.

On the morning of 2 April, a few hours before our arrival at Eniwetok, the JOHN BARD sighted a floating mine and we were detailed to find it and sink it. The ocean was like an undulating mirror and the mostly submerged mine scarcely broke the surface to make a challenging target. Our opening bursts of 20mm fire did not produce results, but soon a direct hit from a 3" shell set on safe detonated the mine with a vast explosion. I thought back then of the one I had sunk at one hundred feet with a 30 caliber rifle in Greenland waters from the deck of the BOWDOIN. Thankfully that one punctured and sank without exploding.

At 1437 we were proceeding independently into Eniwetok lagoon where eventually we moored starboard side to USS GEORGE F. ELLIOTT in Anchorage A. We had been ordered to provide her with 4000 gallons of fresh water which we completed pumping at 1815. This done we shifted berth to moor alongside the LOESER.

At ten minutes before midnight we were again under way to fuel from USS GEMSBOCK (IX-117). We commenced fueling at 0025 and ceased at 0240 having received 45,080 gallons of Bunker C. That done, we returned to berth alongside USS LOESER at 0302, secured main engines, and there we remained to await our departure.

As the sun rose in the sky the lagoon was a beautiful sight. Many ships rode on its smooth surface and in the background the scene was encircled by the white breakers rolling in on the barrier reefs. The low sandy islands, their palm trees battered and mutilated by shellfire, looked far more inviting than they actually were. Although the depth was 20 or more fathoms the white sand of the bottom reflected the strong sunlight upward through the clear water so as to give almost unlimited visibility below the surface. That afternoon with a face mask supplied by an air compressor on deck we dove and examined the ships bottom and propellers and marvelled at the beauty of the underwater world around us.

3

The following morning, Wednesday 4 April, we were off to an early start. At 0402 we lit off #1 boiler; 0450 lit off #1 and #2 main turbines; 0530 lit off #1 and #2 main generators; 0537 tested main engines, and at 0550 set the Special Sea Detail. At 0604 we were under way to proceed out of the harbor to screen outside the entrance while the transports sortied and formed up into columns off of Parry Island.

Our task unit, TU 51.29.6, comprised the following vessels: USS ZEILIN (APA-3), GOLDEN CITY (AP-169), GEORGE F ELLIOTT (AP-105), WINGED ARROW (AP-170), ELECTRA (AKS-4), HERALD OF THE MORNING (AP-173), STORM KING (AP-171), PRESIDENT MONROE (AP-172), JOHN LAND (AP-167), CAPE JOHNSON (AP-172), ASHLAND (ASD-1) and S/S SEA SURGEON (XAP), S/S CAPE FEAR (XAP), S/S LEGION VICTORY (XAK) and S/S BRITAIN VICTORY (XAK).

The OTC was Commander Transport Squadron 20 in USS ZEILIN, and the screen commander was our commodore ComCortDiv 36, in COOLBAUGH.

Other vessels in the screen were: USS ISARD (DD-589), USS MCCALL (DD-400) and the other ships of our division, USS DARBY, J. DOUGLAS BLACKWOOD, HARMON, GREENWOOD and LOESER.

At 0830 the unit was standing out and forming cruising disposition on course 080 T. Again we were in tailback position in the screen 500 yards astern of the last ship in column #2.

At 0950 we went to General Quarters for two hours of AA firing practice, and in the early afternoon we exercised for an hour at tactical drills signalled by the OTC. Finally, at 1430 we secured from exercises, resumed base course and commenced zig-zagging at 13.2 knots. We were now settling down for the voyage back to Pearl Harbor which would take about eight days.

The voyage was uneventful. The weather was fine and clear and our course took us well to the north of the Marshall Islands. When we were north of Kwajalein we were amused to

listen to a radio program put on by some enterprising GI who styled himself "Rock Happy Roger, Maitre D at Kwaj Lodge".

As we steamed over the calm seas I looked across the sunlit waters at USS ZELLIK now our flagship but formerly the S/S PRESIDENT JACKSON in which I had sailed some 13 years before. The PRESIDENT JACKSON, a relic of the World War I Shipping Board, had been a Dollar Liner on the orient run. In her I had sailed from New York via Havana, the Canal, San Francisco, Honolulu, Yokohama, Kobe, Shanghai and Hong Kong to Manila and then return via the same ports. Now seeing her in her drab grey paint it was hard to recall her sleek black hull, white superstructure and black and red stack with the white Dollar sign on each side. I thought of Capt. Griffith, Frank Dutton, the mate, second mate Joe Kozell, who had sailed in the 4-masted barque MOSHULU under the American flag, and many others -- different times, different places, but a host of memories.

And so we progressed. As each mile slipped astern the war seemed more remote and the anticipation of our homecoming became stronger until at last we arrived off Pearl Harbor where our convoy dispersed. The date was 12 April, 1945.

The day was beautiful with brilliant sunshine. White clouds billowed over the mountain tops of Oahu in the background and the fields of pineapples and sugar cane showed verdant green behind the grey rocks and white sand along the shore. The deep blue of the ocean shaded to lighter blue and aquamarine to terminate in a band of white surf where land and sea met.

As we took our turn to proceed up the channel leading to Pearl Harbor the TBS radio as usual was bringing in routine messages and conversations between ships. I listened to all of this in a detached way as I combed the ship on various courses from bow to bow as we headed in for the

berth to which we had been assigned at the Navy Yard.

Suddenly we were galvanized by an announcement which abruptly intruded. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died. I quickly scanned the bridge to observe the reactions of officers and men. There was an impassive silence.

For my part I had mixed emotions. From a human standpoint there was a pang of sympathy, but from a political standpoint I could feel no regrets. In my disappointment at his re-election I had written in my letter home dated 17 November 1944, "That is one man it doesn't look as though we ever will get rid of -- at least until the country has been entirely given away and someone has to start paying the piper."

The man didn't last, but the seed he planted did, and now, 30 years later, the piper approaches with hand outstretched.

Unrec'd & sent 2140 in from [unclear]

on 12 April 1945 having escorted
the transports carrying the Fifth Marine Battalion
back to Poot.

17 April/45

Dear Mother & Dad
Paul Horton

So much has been happening in the last
two or three days that I literally haven't had
a chance to write. I am sure you can guess where
I am now. I believe, it looks like the final hope*
I mentioned before is not going to come true. We
were all terribly disappointed, of course, but gradually
we are becoming more reconciled to a stay in the
area.

The minute we got in we immediately got started
on our overhaul problem and the ship has been
like a beehive ever since. Shortly after we arrived
I got in touch with both Rod^{Stephens} and George^{McLanahan} & so
have had a chance to get together with them,
and to get the letters which you wrote to me in
one of them. Also about 30 bags of back mail

* To return to the States.

came in at the same time and so I had a chance to catch up on what has been going on since January.

On Friday evening Phil & Bontillon + I got together with Rod + went with him for supper at the very attractive Army Officers club where he lives. He looks just the same + we had a fine time catching up on all the back news. He has been very busy with his job, but has been producing results everywhere.

On Saturday afternoon I went to George + Sallys, and got into a weekend of moving house - to the tune of adequate stimulants. Elroy Throsted and a friend showed up too + it was lots of fun. We had dinner at the Outrigger Canteen Club + later went on to Libby (Young) Stein's home where another party was in progress. Libby, who was with Dick at ^{Madame} Madame Bonis was very anxious for news of Dick.

Because of the curfew we returned to Ganga early,
but somehow or other it was quite late before we
finally got turned in, (on a cement floor!). Sunday
we concentrated on napping. In the afternoon Rod
came & joined us & afterward Rod & I went off for
supper, before I had to return to the ship. It
was all lots of fun & a good re-introduction to
civilization. Since Sunday, however, I have been
sticking strictly to business. Eugene wanted to
be remembered to you both. Elroy asked especially
to be remembered to you & said that he always
remembered you as one of the most beautiful
women he had known!

8 May 1945
Pearl Harbor

Quite a long time has elapsed since I last wrote on the letter. Somehow I don't seem to have been able to find a minute to write because life has been so busy. We have been in the Navy Yard from April 23 to May 5 and during the whole time there was never a dull moment. Workmen were all over the ship and there was always something which needed attention during the day. In the evening there was always something interesting on. The movies which we had aboard were brand new & excellent so not to be missed.

On the first there was a fancy party at the Deepen office club. Originally I was to go with the Commodore + some of his friends but just before it he was ordered out on another ship + so I fell heir to a ready made party, complete with guests. As it turned out it was lots of fun. I found a very lovely girl to take the Commodore's place. The Commodore's guests were not exciting, but Diane and I had a wonderful time and I think the McMillans enjoyed it.

The next night we went to another party, given by the Singlehursts at the Regent Club at Kailua, across the Pali. We drove over with George + Sally and it was lots of fun too, but I did not know quite so many people and the talk was mostly pretty local. However a good time was had by all as you can imagine.

The next day I took the afternoon off + we went

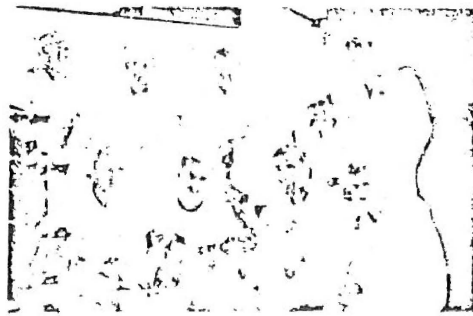
to Khabala for tennis and out to dinner later.

And so it has gone. I have been very busy around the ship each day & then at various times in the afternoon have branched off for tennis & swimming and parties. Life has been pretty free, and so far I have picked up no curfew violation tickets!

Now, however, the ship is back together again and we have been put to work again. It is a good change to get to sea again and get rested up.

This is VE day and it is wonderful to think of. The radio has been playing all morning with band music, GI music, & the ^{CHIN} tin music of the politicians & pressmen. It is the first big step to the end of the whole business, and I am sure the Japs must realize it as well as we do.

At Pearl Harbor we were attached to the Submarine Training Command. It was here that we had our second change of Command, when Lt. Comdr. Stanley E. Zimmerman, U.S.N.R, relieved Lt. Comdr. Hotchkiss, USNR.



The Band

With the training command this ship participated in the perfection of mail pick-up service at sea by airplane, and also new methods of warfare to increase the efficiency and safety of our Submarine Fleet.

During operations in this capacity the ship distinguished itself as the most effective of the anti-submarine units engaged in that work. Several weeks were also spent with various baby flattops providing plane guard services for the training and safety of new naval aviators.

Received Paul Atwater from Mrs. [unclear]
on 12 April 1945

Paul Atwater

May 18-21/45

Dear Martha & Bob

Time flies so quickly that I am always
surprised at how long - pop it is between my letter
Quite a lot has happened since I last wrote. The
Lansdowne family left before the relief arrived
which has been aweful for me as I know how she
to move back into my room again. Then came the

In a letter just in - about the relief because the
we originally ordered the brown side & as another
must be despatched - one of which will arrive
delay in the family coming up, and that of course
will well with me.

Bygone news, however, has turned up. I am to

be released so soon as my relief shows up. I
received the news the other day. Upon receipt
I am due to return to the West coast for fuel

assignment, and presumably a bit of leave as well. There is no word as to what the next job will be, but that is the way all orders are sent, due to the incalculable delays there are in reporting. I shall feel very sorry to leave the ship for, as you know I am very fond of her, but changes must come. The other skipper in the division who took over at about the same time I did are being relieved also with similar orders. My relief is a Lt. Comdr. Zimmerman who has been exec on a new DE under my good friend John Doyle. I believe I met him in Leyte when I visited John ships there the end of February, but I do not remember him too well. So, you can expect me home before very long. When I arrive I shall send you a wire right away. I imagine that I

shall have to wait in San Francisco for a few days for orders + then I expect to come on home. I don't know just what will become of Worcester, but I expect that he will probably remain aboard for a while and then perhaps be transferred to another ship. They generally don't seem to elevate officers who have served aboard in any other capacity than just exec to command the same ship they have been in. The DE operation officer here seems to think that they may give me shore duty, as that is the policy for officers who have had a long tour of sea duty. I don't think I am too keen on that, but possibly a trip to Washington may help the situation.

I finally made contact with Joe Blayden. He came aboard one afternoon when I was ashore, but

later on ships had exercises together & when we got in we got together for the afternoon & evening. He looks fine, but is far from pleased with his assignment.* Apparently it was my old Norfolk friend, Budge Todd, who handed him the works, and it sounded pretty shady to me. It looks like he is stuck for the time being at any rate, and I don't guess there is much anyone can do about it right now - though if I get to Washington I shall see what can be done.

At last we have gotten to sea again for a week** The type of operating we have had around here has been really hard on the organization. We have gotten lots of new men & lost lots of the old, and on top of that just going out for a day at a time has been very unsettling to them.

* Blackmarker on APA (attack transport).

"Westmoreland"

** Running ASW training exercises for submarines, and doing as usual to the aircraft carrier.

ship routine for each day we have left a part of the crew ashore for liberty. Also the pleasures of the beach are a little disconcerting from the main job at hand, and so the boat has given us a chance for a good shake down. Herse all hands are tending to in good fashion + we are getting the ship back into top notch shape. She really begins to look good now. We have been laying a new deck covering which is excellent, and below decks almost all the compartments have been freshly painted. Tomorrow I plan to have an inspection and I expect that everything will be in fine order by then.

The social life has certainly been active while we have been in port. There has been something going on almost every evening while we have been in port, and it has been lots of fun, though somewhat

wrangling on the constitution. The lack of transportation
and the curfew restriction make getting about
rather difficult at best + certainly add complications.
But I have managed to have quite a bit of fun
and have certainly enjoyed my stay out here.

Well, I must stop. This may possibly be my
last letter as I may be getting back shortly after
it arrives. It will seem wonderful to get back to
Hyndham after so long and to see you all again.
It must be wonderful there now with spring coming
along and everything in the first fresh greenness
of spring. I can hardly wait to get back to it
all and to be with you again. I hope Sister
will still be there with all the entourage. Give
her my love.

Lots of love to you both.

John

Dear Michael + Dad -

1 June 1945

I am sorry that I have not written to you since I came
up to you. I imagine that the vice is very busy
very long hours working from the reports of my
agents.

I have been very busy at present, and I have
been very busy since I last wrote, and I have

been very busy quite a lot of work. I have also
also quite a lot of work. On the other hand,
however, I am quite satisfied for in general it
is not so bad as when they are not actually working

on the job. They take a lot of pictures for us.

We get some good pictures of some of us up in the
hills, + in the way in we get them off in the

* I imagine the main pick-up operation
is done by the agents.

boat + got some really excellent pictures of the ship. We steamed by at full speed from various angles + they got some excellent shots. I was delighted because I had been afraid that I should have to leave with no good pictures of the ship.

The other evening as I was about to turn in my door opened + there was one old friend Budge Todd, now Co of the Madison. It was quite a surprise after having been talking with Joe about him some a short time ago. Inevitably the conversation got around to Joe and he gave as the reason for his actions that Joe had been having too much of a Party life in New York + was a bad example for the junior officer. This sounds a bit fishy to me because as Co he could very well have ordered

Your social life had it been so much of a problem. However he did say that he has not as yet sent in an unsatisfactory fitness report, though he will have to later to justify himself, on the theory that you should receive several good ones subsequently & then minimize the effect of his report. It all sounded like very much of an excuse to me, & of course it does not get you out of his backwater job. Too bad!

Well, I was delighted to hear that I was the drawer of the check was bond number. I am certainly glad you took Blossie's advice & hung on to it. It looks as though I am having a heavy winter in the US Govt - but I guess that there is nothing so much, for if the bond holders get let down they would never again be

able to sell was bonds in the future.

I was also very pleased to get the nice pictures of Sister's children. The picture of Betty is beautiful even if a little surprised. I certainly hope that I shall be back before they all leave for Petersburg. It would be wonderful if you should manage to get back around July first. We could have a real old fashioned Fourth!

And even a wedding to celebrate! Well, we will have to wait & see. It will certainly be wonderful to get back after all the time.

I am not just sure what Caroline's plans are. She apparently plans to drive out to Calif early in June & then plan to go to Reno I believe. It looks as though her ideas on the subject are pretty well settled, at any rate.

She seems to be much happier since she has returned, but she seems to favor the single life & I am inclined to agree with her. So I guess it is just a matter of time now.

I must push along. I have a heavy appointment for a swim & dinner with dancing afterward. Then tomorrow early off to work again. Life in the place is really tough!

I was certainly fascinated by the stories of the effects of the spinning class on Mehitabel! She doesn't seem to learn much by experience I gather!

Lots of love to you both & to Dick & the children. Tree River I shall see him soon.

Love

John

Twenty-three months after its commissioning, the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH returned to the United States of America for a major overhaul including repairs and alterations, and conversion to five-inch battery, and for subsequent duty in full commission with the Atlantic Fleet.

The U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) upon completion of repairs and alterations at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, departed from San Francisco, for San Diego, for a ten-day shakedown period on 17 November, 1945. The shakedown period was interesting and profitable, though the weather was bad, and the crew and officers, 85 per cent of whom had reported aboard only a month before, were welded into an effective unit.

Upon completion of shakedown exercises, the ship made preparations to join the Atlantic Fleet in an active status, and on 1 December, 1945, got underway for the Canal Zone in company with two other ships of Escort Division Thirty-Six. At Coco Solo, Panama, after reporting to Commander Destroyers, U. S. Atlantic Fleet for duty, the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) was ordered to proceed to New York Harbor for the holiday season until 8 January, 1946, and then report to the Commander Submarines, U. S. Atlantic Fleet for duty in connection with Submarine Training Services.

DE(TE)217/PI6-4/00
76796
Serial 93

U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217),
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

13 JUN 1945

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: Lieutenant Commander Stuart T. HOTCHKISS,
(D), USNR, 76796.

Subject: Change of Duty.

Reference: (a) BuPers restricted despatch of 8 May 1945,
to U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217).
(b) Comdespac restricted despatch of 13 May
1945, to U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217).

1. In compliance with references (a) and (b), which cannot be quoted herein, and upon reporting of Lieutenant Commander Stanley E. Zimmerman, (D), USNR, you are hereby detached from duty on board the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), and from such other duty as may have been assigned you, and will proceed, via transportation, orally designated, to the West Coast of the United States.

2. Upon arrival in the United States, you will proceed and report to the Commandant of the nearest Naval District for temporary duty, pending further assignment by the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

S. T. Hotchkiss

S. T. HOTCHKISS.

FIRST ENDORSEMENT
DE(TE)217/PI6-4/00

U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217).

13 JUN 1945

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: Lieutenant Commander Stuart T. HOTCHKISS,
(D), USNR, 76796.

1. Delivered, detached this date. Proceed and carry out basic orders.

S. T. Hotchkiss

S. T. HOTCHKISS.

Copy to:
BuPers (2)
Cincpac
Cincpac Adv. Hdqs.
Comserfor.
Comdespac.
FltRecOff. Navy 128.
Comcoortdiv 36.

Hotchkiss

13 JUN 1945

2nd

ENDORSEMENT
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
14th NAVAL DISTRICT, PEARL HARBOR, T. H.

REPORTED FOR TRANSPORTATION THIS DATE. FURTHER REPORT TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE YARD, NAVY YARD, PEARL HARBOR, T. H., FOR ASSIGNMENT OF PUBLIC QUARTERS.

J. B. Barrett
J. B. BARRETT,
BY DIRECTION

13 JUN 1945

3rd

ENDORSEMENT
OFFICE OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE YARD
U.S. NAVY YARD, PEARL HARBOR, T. H.

You are assigned quarters in Bachelor Officers' Quarters, Receiving Station, Pearl Harbor, T. H. No quarters are available for your dependents, if any.

E. L. Gray
E. L. GRAY

14 JUN 1945

4th

ENDORSEMENT
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
14th NAVAL DISTRICT, PEARL HARBOR, T. H.

DETACHED: PROCEED VIA TRANSPORTATION AS VERTICALLY ASSIGNED.

~~*J. B. Barrett*
J. B. BARRETT,
BY DIRECTION~~

15 JUN 1945

4th

ENDORSEMENT
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
14th NAVAL DISTRICT, PEARL HARBOR, T. H.

DETACHED: PROCEED VIA TRANSPORTATION AS VERTICALLY ASSIGNED.

J. B. Barrett
J. B. BARRETT,
BY DIRECTION

APA232/P16-4/00
EEB:ahc

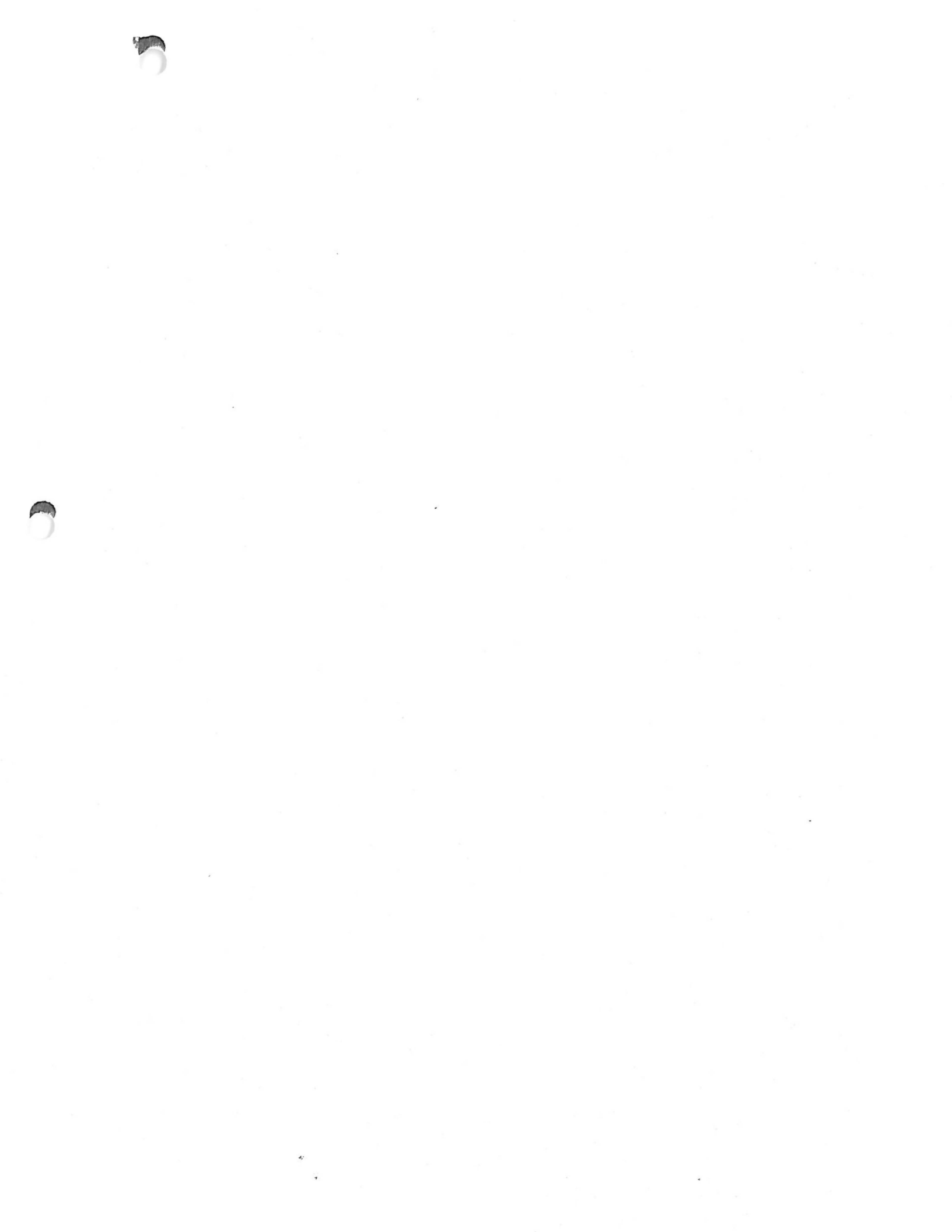
U. S. S. SAN SABA (APA-232)
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California
2/ June, 1945.

FIFTH ENDORSEMENT

- From: The Commanding Officer.
To : Lieutenant Commander Stuart T. HOTCHKISS, (D) USNR.
1. Reported aboard 15 Jun 45 for transportation.
 2. Detached this date.

E. E. Bertold
E. E. BERTOLD

Subsistence was Furnished At Government Expense.
F. W. Brogdon
F. W. BROGDON, Lt. SC, USN



11 ESCORT SHIPS (DE): "BUCKLEY" CLASS

Displacement, tons 1 400 standard, 2 170 full load
 Length, feet (metres) 306 (93.3) oa
 Beam, feet (metres) 37 (11.3)
 Draft, feet (metres) 14 (4.3)
 Guns, varies 3 ships have 2—5 in (127 mm) 38 cal DP; others have 2 or 3—3 in (76 mm) 50 cal AA up to 8—40 mm AA per ship (removed entirely from some ships)
 ASW weapons 1 hedgehog or trainable hedgehog (Mk 15) in ships with 5 inch guns depth charge racks
 Main engines Turbo-electric drive (General Electric turbines); 12 000 shp 2 shafts
 Boilers 2 (Babcock & Wilcox, Combustion Engineering or Foster Wheeler)
 Speed knots 23.5
 Complement 180

These ships were originally rated as Destroyer Escorts (DE). Forty-six ships of this type were transferred to the Royal Navy in 1944 under the Lend-Lease where they served as frigates; six of these ships were lost and the remainder were returned to the United States and scrapped. All surviving ships of this class are in reserve.

ARMAMENT. Designed armament for this class was three 3 inch guns, six 40 mm guns (three twin), several 20 mm guns, and one bank of three 21 inch torpedo tubes. During 1945, 11 ships were fitted with a 5 inch main battery in lieu of 3 inch guns. Torpedo tubes removed and 40 mm and 20 mm weapons reduced (With full armament the designed wartime complement was 15 officers and 198 enlisted men). The rearmed ships were DE 217-219, 678-680, 696-698, 700, and 701.

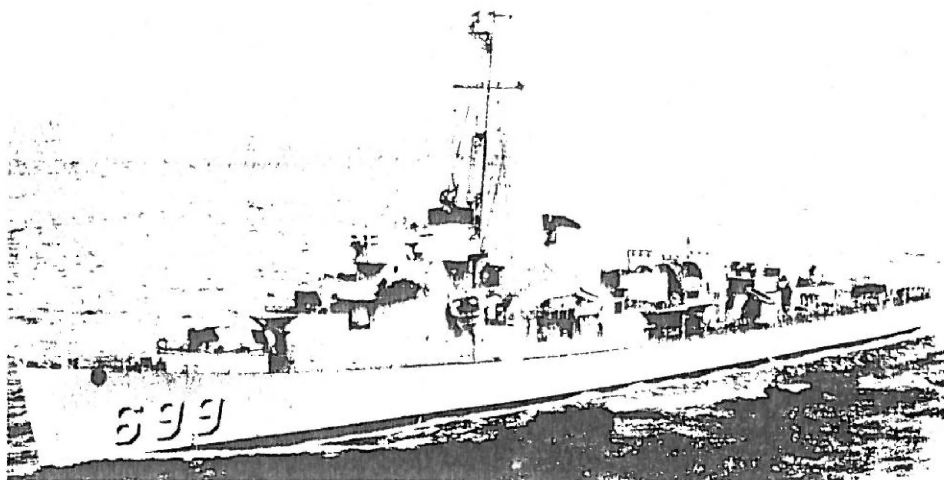
CONVERSIONS. Fifty ships of this type were converted to high speed transports (see Amphibious Warfare ships). The *Cronin*, *Frybarger*, and *Raby* were modified after World War II to direct boat waves during amphibious landings and were designated amphibious control vessels (DEC), all three were mothballed in 1953-1954 and reclassified DE on 27 Dec 1957.

Seven ships of this type were converted to radar picket ships in 1949-1950, they reverted to DE status in Oct 1954 and were mothballed as more efficient radar picket escorts became available. None of those modified to DER configuration remains on the Navy List.

DESIGN. This class is officially the TE design group, the TE symbol indicating turbine-electric drive with 3 inch guns.

ENGINEERING. The *Marsh* and *Wiseman*, have been

Name	No.	Builder	Launched	Commissioned
EICHENBERGER	DE 202	Charleston Navy Yard	22 July 1943	17 Nov 1943
FRYBARGER	DE 705	Defoe Co. Bay City, Mich	25 Jan 1944	18 May 1944
GENDREAU	DE 639	Bethlehem, San Francisco	12 Dec 1943	17 Mar 1944
GILLETTE	DE 681	Bethlehem, Quincy	25 Sep 1943	27 Oct 1943
GUNASON	DE 795	Consolidated Steel Corp, Orange	16 Oct 1943	1 Feb 1944
HOLTON	DE 703	Defoe Co. Bay City, Mich	15 Dec 1943	1 May 1944
MAJOR	DE 796	Consolidated Steel Corp, Orange	23 Oct 1943	12 Feb 1944
MARSH	DE 699	Defoe Co. Bay City, Mich	29 Jan 1943	12 Jan 1944
OSMUS	DE 701	Defoe Co. Bay City, Mich	4 Nov 1943	23 Feb 1944
VARIAN	DE 798	Consolidated Steel Corp, Orange	6 Nov 1943	29 Feb 1944
WISEMAN	DE 667	Dravo Corp, Pittsburgh	6 Nov 1943	4 Apr 1944



MARSH (DE 699) (Power transmission)

United States Navy

modified to provide electrical power to shore activities and each has two large reels for power cables amidships.

LOSSES. The *Fechtelor* (DE 157) and *Underhill* (DE 682) of this class were lost during World War II. The *Solar* (DE 221) was destroyed by internal explosion on 30 Apr 1946.

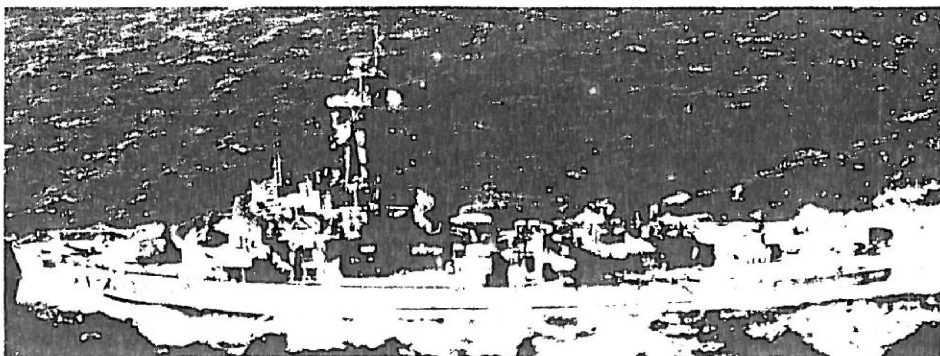
PHOTOGRAPHS. The *Marsh* is shown in the power transmission configuration with cable reels aft of funnel depth charge racks on fantail, and a single quad 40 mm mount aft; the *Coolbough* is typical of 5 inch gun configuration with trainable hedgehog in "B" position depth charge rack on fantail, and one twin and one quad 40 mm mounts.

"BUCKLEY" CLASS continued

DISPOSALS (since 1 Jan 1970)

J. Douglas Blackwood (DE 219) stricken on 30 Jan 1970; **Alexander J. Luke** (DE/DER 577) stricken on 1 May 1970 (target); **Cronin** (DE 704) stricken on 1 June 1970 (target); **Fieberling** (DE 640), **William C. Cole** (DE 641), **Damon M. Cummings** (DE 643), **Splanger** (DE 696) stricken on 1 Mar 1972.

Coolbough (DE 217), **Frank M. Robinson** (DE 220), **Jack W. Wilke** (DE 800) stricken in 1972.



COOLBAUGH (DE 217) (5 inch guns)

United States Navy

17 ESCORT SHIPS (DE): "EDSALL" CLASS

Displacement, tons 1 200 standard, 1 850 full load
 Length, feet (metres) 306 (93.3); oa
 Beam, feet (metres) 36.6 (11.3)
 Draft, feet (metres) 11 (3.4)
 Guns 3-3 in (76 mm) 50 cal AA
 (2 guns in *Peterson*)
 up to 8-40 mm AA
 (removed entirely from some ships)
 A/S weapons 1 hedgehog; depth charge rack
 (see *Conversion* notes)
 Main engines 4 diesels (Fairbanks Morse);
 6 000 shp 2 shafts
 Speed knots 21
 Complement 140

Name	No	Builders	Launched	Commissioned
CHATELAIN	DE 149	Consolidated Steel Corp	21 Aug 1943	22 Sep 1943
COCKRILL	DE 398	Brown SB Co Houston	29 Oct 1943	24 Dec 1943
DOUGLAS L. HOWARD	DE 138	Consolidated Steel Corp	25 Jan 1943	29 July 1943
FARQUHAR	DE 139	Consolidated Steel Corp	13 Feb 1943	5 Aug 1943
HAMMANN (ex <i>Langley</i>)	DE 131	Consolidated Steel Corp	13 Dec 1942	17 May 1943
HILL	DE 141	Consolidated Steel Corp	28 Feb 1943	16 Aug 1943
HURST	DE 250	Brown SB Co Houston	14 Apr 1943	30 Aug 1943
HUSE	DE 145	Consolidated Steel Corp	23 Mar 1943	30 Aug 1943
INCH	DE 146	Consolidated Steel Corp	4 Apr 1943	8 Sep 1943
KEITH	DE 241	Brown SB Co Houston	21 Dec 1942	19 July 1943
MOORE	DE 240	Brown SB Co Houston	21 Dec 1942	1 July 1943
PETERSON	DE 152	Consolidated Steel Corp	15 May 1943	29 Sep 1943
PETTIT	DE 253	Brown SB Co Houston	28 Apr 1943	23 Sep 1943
RICKETTS	DE 254	Brown SB Co Houston	10 May 1943	5 Oct 1943
STEWART	DE 238	Brown SB Co Houston	22 Nov 1942	31 May 1943
SWASEY	DE 248	Brown SB Co Houston	18 Mar 1943	31 Aug 1943
TOMICH	DE 242	Brown SB Co Houston	28 Dec 1942	27 July 1943

These ships were originally rated as Destroyer Escorts. Thirty six ships of this type have been converted to radar picket ships (DER) and are listed separately. None of these ships are in commission, all in reserve.

ARMAMENT Designed armament for this class was three 3 inch guns, eight 40 mm guns (one quad, two twin), several 20 mm guns, and a bank of three 21 inch torpedo tubes. Rearmament with two 5 inch guns in place of the 3 inch battery was planned but not carried out. Torpedo tubes removed after World War II and anti-aircraft guns reduced in some ships. (With full armament the designed wartime complement was 15 officers and 201 enlisted men)

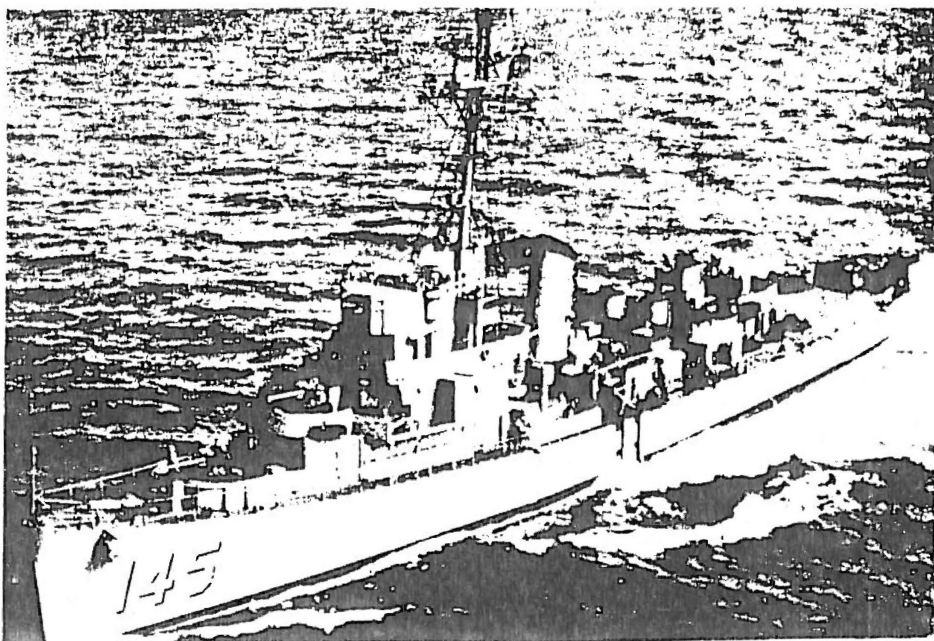
CONVERSIONS The *Peterson* was modified to a special ASW configuration in 1951-1952: two trainable hedgehogs fitted in the 'B' position forward of the bridge, additional sonar installed, and a short second mast fitted; all light AA guns were removed. She was decommissioned in April 1965.

DESIGN This class is officially the FMR design group, the FMR symbol indicating Fairbanks Morse diesel with reverse gear drive.

LOSSES The *Fiske* (DE 143), *Frederick C. Davis* (DE 136), *Holder* (DE 401), and *Leopold* (DE 319) were lost during World War II.

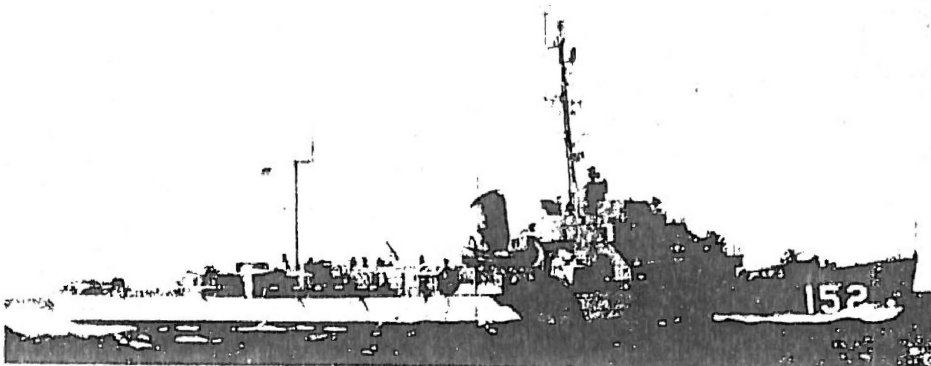
DISPOSALS (since 1 Jan 1970): *Stanton* (DE 247) stricken on 1 Dec 1970; *Jacob Jones* (DE 130), *Pope* (DE 134), *J. R. Y. Blakeley* (DE 140), *Poole* (DE 151), *J. Richard Ward* (DE 243), *Sloat* (DE 245), *Marchland* (DE 249), *Menges* (DE 320), *Mosley* (DE 321), *Pride* (DE 323), *Dale W. Peterson* (DE 337) stricken on 2 Jan 1971; *O'Reilly* (DE 330), *Daniel* (DE 335) stricken on 15 Jan 1971; *Merrill* (DE 392) stricken on 2 Apr 1972.

Herbert C. Jones (DE 137), *Neunzer* (DE 150), *Swenning* (DE 394), *Willis* (DE 395), *Janssen* (DE 396), *Stockdale* (DE 399) stricken in 1972.



HUSE (DE 145)

Skyphotos



PETERSON (DE 152)

United States Navy

5 ESCORT SHIPS (DE): "BOSTWICK" CLASS

Displacement, tons 1 240 standard; 1 900 full load
 Length, feet (metres) 306 (93.3) oa
 Beam, feet (metres) 36.6 (11.2)
 Draft, feet (metres) 14 (4.3)
 Guns 3—3 in (76 mm) 50 cal AA
 up to 6—40 mm AA (twin)
 several 20 mm AA
 A/S weapons 1 hedgehog; depth charges
 Main engines Diesel-electric (4 General Motors
 diesels); 6 000 bhp; 2 shafts
 Speed, knots 21
 Complement 150

Name	No	Builder	Launched	Commissioned
LEVY	DE 162	Federal SB & DD Co. Pt Newark	28 Mar 1943	13 May 1943
MCDONNELL	DE 153	Federal SB & DD Co. Pt Newark	28 Mar 1943	28 May 1943
OSTERHOUS	DE 164	Federal SB & DD Co. Pt Newark	18 Apr 1943	12 June 1943
STRAUB	DE 181	Federal SB & DD Co. Pt Newark	18 Sep 1943	25 Oct 1943
TRUMPETER	DE 180	Federal SB & DD Co. Pt Newark	18 Sep 1943	25 Oct 1943

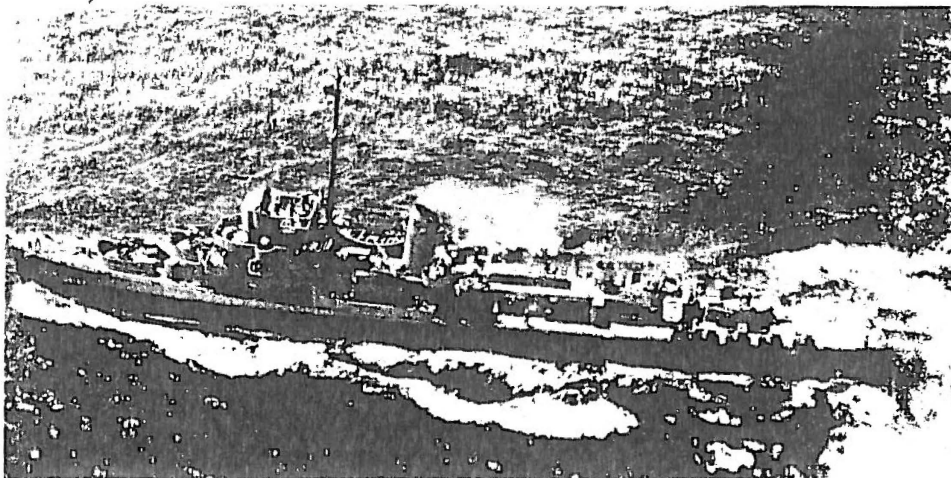
These ships originally were rated as Destroyer Escorts (DE). When built they were known as the "Cannon" class, but after the first three ships (DE 99 101) were transferred to Brazil upon completion in 1944 1945 and the fourth ship (DE 102) went to China in 1948 the design has been referred to as the "Bostwick" class for the DE 103, the "first" US Navy ship.

All surviving ships of this class in the US Navy are in reserve. See "Transfer" notes for the several navies that now operate ships of this class. See 1971-1972 and previous editions for disposals.

ARMAMENT. Designed armament for this class was three 3 inch guns six 40 mm guns (three twin) several 20 mm guns and a bank of three 21 inch torpedo tubes. Torpedo tubes removed and light AA guns reduced (With full armament the designed wartime complement was 15 officers and 201 enlisted men).

DESIGN. This class is officially the DE 1 design group the DE 1 symbol indicating diesel electric tandem motor drive.

TRANSFERS. Ships of this class currently serve in the navies of Brazil, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Peru, the Philippines, Taiwan China, Thailand, and Uruguay.



ACREE (DE 167)

United States Navy

PHOTOGRAPH. The *Acree* is shown with her triple torpedo tube mount, and two 40 mm AA guns and eight 20 mm AA guns in addition to her main battery of three 3 inch AA guns. This was her World War II armament

as the ship was decommissioned on Apr 1, 1946, and has been in reserve since that time; most of the other survivors of this class on the Navy List have been mothballed since 1946.



12 01327

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE217)

DE(TE)217/A16-3
Serial 031

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

27 October 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
 To: Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
 Via: (1) Commander Task Group 77.4.13
 (2) Commander Task Group 77.4
 (3) Commander Task Force 77
 (4) Commander Seventh Fleet

Subject: Action Report - Central Philippines Operation.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Art. 712, 874(6).
 (b) Cominch Ltr. FF1/A12-1/A16-3, Serial 7152 of 29 October 1943.
 (c) CinCPac PacFlt Conf. Ltr. 20L-44 of 1 Jan. 1944.

Enclosure: (A) Anti-Submarine Action By Surface Ship (Form ASW-1) (Revised Nov. 1942) with attachments.

1. In accordance with above references, enclosure (A) is submitted herewith.

S. T. HOPKINS

Advance copy to:
CinCPac
Cominch
Comdespac

7291

PC

CONFIDENTIAL

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE BACK OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 1 Date of report 25 October 1944 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE(TE) Nationality U.S. Command Lt. Cmdr. S.T. Potekhin
 Time Zone used in Report Minus 9 Time first contact 2231
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Moonlight Date first contact 25 October 1944
 Latitude 09-38 N Longitude 127-23 E Depth water 4,000 fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Good Sea Smooth Wind Force 3
 Mission Task Group 77.4.1 Convoy No. - Convoy course 095 Convoy speed 15
 Sound range of the day 2,500 - 3,000 Sub first reported by M.J. Loder, SoMlc, USN
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact (See enclosed diagram)
 How own contact first made Sound search
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making first contact M.J. Loder, SoMlc, USN, 221 62 22
On duty at time as operator on QCS
Sound Gear.

II. APPROACH

TIME	CONTACT	RANGE	TRUE BEARING	OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
2231	Sound	1500	120°	095	15	Inclination was closing moderate bearing was 120°—Sonar or sweep target and reported wake on the
2231½	Sound	1200	130	120	15	right cuton was given as 125° next right cuton was 140 and operator reported target bearing were moving right fast. Inclination reported as moderate to marked. Range rate called "preliminary" was 13; but immediately an increase was noted and reported as 19. Inclination close marked - echo very sharp. Range was closing very rapidly right
2232	Sound	900	140	130	15	until about 500 yds. It is presumed at about 600 yds submerg turned sharply right to come to firing heading, and steadied to 020° E. Echo still sharp & doppler marked up. After detonation & explosions there were no more
2232½	Sound	600	155	(Swinging 15)	15	
2233	Sound	400	170	(Right)	15	
2233½	Sound	100	170	Steady on 170	15	

At time of firing: Own course 170 Own speed 15 echos that could be classed as
 Range of first radar contact 1,400 Type radar SL submarine.
 Range of first visual sighting 50 yds Object sighted Periscopes
 Range of first sound contact 1,500 Type sound gear QCS-1
 Propeller noises Yes Type of echo Definite submarine echo
 Doppler: Amount Inclination closing moderate to marked Doppler inclination Closing moderate to marked
 Width of target 120 not including wake Target movement Rapidly right.

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

11 01937

III. ACTION

Dropping of charges commenced when periscope was abreast of bridge, distance 100 Yards.

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE NO.															
Seconds after first charge	0	02	04	06											
Depth setting	50	50	50	30											
Impulse charge															
Mark of DC	9	9	9	9											
Mark of pistol															
Duds															

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type Mark Failures

Projectiles: Number Mark Fuse: Mark

At firing: Range Tilt of projector (or roll of ship)

Detonations. Number Seconds after firing

Air temperature Water temperature Base range

Corrected range Was wake effect correction used? Erratic flight

Time of flight Sub bearing at time of firing

Gunfire:

Calibre Gun Rounds fired Estimated hits

Other Action:

Description:

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W 19 knots

At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed 6-7 knots Sub course 020 T

Sub depth Periscope Method of timing drop Sight dropping (Result of Recorder Casualty)

Length of search after last attack 10 hours Why search abandoned Ordered back to the formation

Marker buoy dropped Samples obtained

Forwarded to

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: Large underwater explosion which caused tremendous concussion and threw a mushroom like black cloud vertically upward to a height of 60 - 100 feet and produced a red flame with what appeared to be numerous sparks or hits of burning debris. This explosion was seen by ships about 3 miles distant.

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

(SEE ATTACHED SHEET)

NARRATIVE

This attack must be considered urgent. When sound contact was established definitely, the order was given to set a medium pattern and to man hedgehogs. The ship was at General Quarters expecting an air attack as enemy aircraft had been reported in the near vicinity. The position of this vessel in the screen required that we at least drop an embarrassing pattern. When radar reported a pip at the appropriate range and bearing of sound contact the order was changed to set a shallow pattern. This was given at about 800-900 yards, and personnel began setting charges on the starboard rack to a shallow setting. At 50 yards the starboard lookout, Leo Spevack, ScM3c, reported a periscope at about 0300 relative in the edge of the moon's path. The ship's heading was 170° T. When the periscope was abreast of the bridge the Commanding Officer estimated its distance to be about 100 feet. Judging from the periscope's wake the submarine's course was about 0200 T, speed 6 - 7 knots, and it appeared that the periscope would about collide with or just pass clear of the fantail. When the periscope was abreast of the bridge the order to "roll one" was given. Orders to roll succeeding charges were given at about two second intervals. The first three charges were heard to explode. The third charge was immediately followed by a large explosion estimated to be at about 75 yards fine on our port quarter. The explosion caused a tremendous concussion and threw a mushroom like black cloud vertically upward to a height of 80 to 100 feet and produced a deep red flame with what appeared to be numerous sparks or bits of flaring debris. The fourth depth charge was heard to detonate immediately afterward. The conman who had retained contact throughout stated that the returning echo, which previously had been sharp and clear, disintegrated with the explosion. Immediately after the fourth charge had detonated the ship was swung to port but all efforts to regain contact failed. A strong smell of oil was noted as the ship swung to leeward of where the explosion had taken place.

All the evidence seems to indicate that the third charge landed almost squarely on the bow of the submarine. The 50 foot setting on this charge would put its explosion well within lethal range of the submarine.

Prior to the commencement of the attack the carriers, which we were escorting, were formed on axis 000-1300 equally spaced on circle 1. The base course was 115° T, speed 15, and the screen was oriented to the course. The zigzag leg then steered was 095° T. The range of this vessel from the nearest carrier at the time of the attack was approximately 6,000 yards, with the formation center bearing about 340° T. At about the time of dropping charges this formation executed an emergency 9 turn. The flash of the submarine's explosion was clearly visible from the carriers as evidenced by the enclosed statements.

The entire attack was completed in just about two minutes after the initial contact and hence it was impossible to obtain a DRT plot. It is felt, however, that no DRT solution could give more accurate evidence than that obtained visually. The visual information was carefully checked by interviews with all witnesses. The very proximity of the periscope left little room for divergence of opinion on all the pertinent facts. The information was then carefully plotted, and the results bore out the fact that the third charge should be and was the lethal one. The estimated distance from periscope to bow of the submarine, according to the latest GHI information, should be in the vicinity of 110-150 feet.

The submarine had evidently just fired a torpedo at the time of our attack, for about two minutes later one of the carriers, while completing her turn, reported a torpedo wake about parallel to her port. The submarine periscope when sighted was trained in the direction of the formation.

No debris was found after the attack, but as noted, a definite smell of oil was noticed when the ship circled back in an effort to regain contact, and what appeared to be an oil slick in the moonlight, seemed to be forming. At daylight the following day a broken oil slick of what seemed to be thin oil, such as diesel extended for about two miles in a downwind direction, the wind throughout the night was force 3.

27 October 1944

STATEMENT OF HAROLD FISCHER, Slc, USNR, 669 01 09, U.S.S.
SUWANEE (CVE-27)

At 2230 on the night of October 25, 1944, I was standing on the catwalk of the signal bridge and was attracted by depth charge explosions on our starboard quarter. After the third underwater explosion I saw a gusher of black oil shoot up in the air about 75 to 100 feet in the air with sparks or flames around it. I feel certain that the submarine was destroyed.

HAROLD FISCHER, Slc, USNR,
Service Number 669 01 09

RECEIVED
OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF THE
NAVY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

27 October 1944

STATEMENT OF ENSIGN W. L. FARMER, USNR, FILE NUMBER 300942 -
RESCUED FLYER OF U.S.S. PETROF BAY (CVE-80) ON BOARD THIS
VESSEL

I was standing on the rangefinder platform on the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) when about 2230, 25 October 1944 I looked out about 30° on starboard bow and saw periscope at about 50 yards. It moved down starboard side as ship turned to starboard, and commenced dropping depth charges. Along with the third explosion I saw a violent detonation about 50 to 75 yards on the port quarter with resultant gusher of debris and flowing hot metal.

I am positive that the submarine was destroyed.

W. L. FARMER,
Ensign, USNR,
File Number 300942.

27 October 1944

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT EDWARD W. WENDT, USNR, FILE NUMBER 113115,
U.S.S. SUWANEE (CVE-27) GUNNERY OFFICER.

I heard the code name of the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) over the TBS call "I have seen periscope close aboard, I am attacking". After a short interval of a few minutes, during which time my vessel made an emergency 90° turn to port, a violent explosion was seen on the starboard quarter of my vessel approximately three miles distance. The explosion consisted of a tremendous upheaval of water followed by brilliant pyrotechnics. It was the impression of this observer that burning debris accounted for this picture.

EDWARD W. WENDT,
Lieutenant, USNR,
Gunnery Officer,
U.S.S. SUWANEE (CVE-27).

X
TRATHEN
(DD-530)

X
ROWELL
(DE-403)

North

O PETROF BAY (CVE-80)

X
SOUTHARD
(DE-10)

SANGAMON (CVE-26) 0--1000 Yds. --- 1000 Yds. --- O SUWANNEE (CVE-27)

Zigzag leg 095° T

O SANTEE (CVE-29)

Formation Base
Course 115° T.

X
MC CORD
(DD-534)

X
HAZELWOOD
(DD-531)

X
COOLBAUGH
(DE-217)

POSITION OF MC CORD, ROWELL, & TRATHEN
ARE APPROXIMATE. FORMATION HAD JUST
BEEN CHANGED TO 5-V.

COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE TO ENEMY SUBMARINES

INCIDENT NO. 7291

Member	Assm't.	Reason for evaluation
R. Adm. Low	E	
MOORE Capt. XXXXXXXX	E	
SÆDBERG Capt. XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	F	I believe explosion was caused by countermining of torpedo. Have seen torpedo explode near surface with just such an explosion as herein described.
Capt. Isbell	E	
Capt. MacIntyre	E	
Comdr. Heberton	F	While the "sub" may have suffered some damage, it is considered there is insufficient evidence to assume it.
Lt. Col. Martin	E	
COMMITTEE	E	Meeting No. <u>59</u> Date <u>1 Dec. 1944</u>

Comment:

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UNITED STATES FLEET

HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

NAVY DEPARTMENT

Incident No. 7291 WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

ANALYSIS OF ANTI-SUBMARINE ACTION BY USS COOLBAUGH (DE-217)

Employment.....Anti-submarine screen
 Time.....1331 GCT, 25 October 1944
 Position.....09-38N/127-23E
 Weather conditions.....Clear, moonlight; sea smooth; wind force 3
 Depth of water.....4000 fathoms
 Contact first made by....Sonar
 Range.....1500 yards
 Sonar conditions.....Good
 Number of attacks.....1

BRIEF OF NARRATIVE.

(a) While in screening station on the starboard bow of a CVE formation COOLBAUGH at 2231 (Zone minus 9) obtained a sonar contact at a range of 1500 yards. The ship was at general quarters as enemy aircraft had been reported in the near vicinity. A radar contact was obtained at 1400 yards and the depth charges were set for a shallow pattern. The range closed rapidly and at 50 yards the starboard lookout reported a periscope on the starboard bow visible on the edge of the moon's path. When periscope was abreast of bridge the commanding officer estimated that its distance was about 100 feet and that it would collide with or just pass clear of the stern. At this time the order to drop was given. Succeeding depth charges were dropped at about two second intervals. The explosion of the third depth charge was immediately followed by a large explosion about 75 yards on the COOLBAUGH's port quarter. The explosion caused a tremendous concussion throwing a mushroom like black cloud vertically to a height of 80-100 feet and producing a deep red flame with what appeared to be numerous sparks or bits of flaming debris. The flames of the explosion were visible from the carrier, the nearest of which was approximately 6000 yards away. The fourth and last depth charge exploded immediately afterward.

(b) The ship was swung immediately to port but all efforts to regain contact failed. A strong smell of oil was reported as the ship swung to leeward.

(c) The submarine may have fired a torpedo about the time of the attack for about two minutes later one of the carriers reported a torpedo wake close aboard.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~UNITED STATES FLEET
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
NAVY DEPARTMENT

(d) No debris was seen after the attack but what appeared to be an oil slick was visible in the moonlight. By daylight a broken oil slick of what seemed to be thin oil extended for about two miles in a down wind direction.

EVALUATION OF TARGET.

(a) Submarine.

EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE.

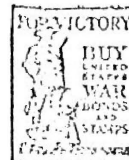
(a) Large explosion sufficiently near the surface to cause flame and smoke. A definite smell of oil was noticed to leeward at the point of attack. What appeared to be an oil slick forming was sighted in the moonlight. At daylight a broken oil slick of what appeared to be thin oil extended for about two miles in a down wind direction.

ANALYSIS OF ATTACK.

(a) The COOLBAUGH apparently suffered a recorder casualty during the attack. Due to this plus the fact that the periscope of the submarine was sighted close aboard the attack was completed "by eye", the commanding officer using the periscope as a reference point in dropping the depth charge.

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HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
NAVY DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
OPINIONS



Plotting Room.

At least four Japanese U-boats were estimated in general area of this attack, which strengthens evaluation of target as submarine. However, evaluation tracking evidence cannot be directly associated with this attack.

Tactical Analysis Officer.

The results of the depth charge attack in this case are considered to be unique. The heavy concussion together with the mushroom like black cloud, red flame and sparks are characteristic of a very shallow explosion, such as a shallow torpedo hit.

It is believed that an explosion with such characteristics must necessarily be on or very close to the surface of the water.

Visibility was good with bright moonlight. It is considered that an explosion within a submarine would have resulted in sufficient debris to have been sighted under the existing conditions. None was sighted either at the time or next morning. It is therefore believed that the explosion was not from within the submarine and that it was very probably a torpedo which had just been fired by the submarine and was counter-mined by the depth charges.

While indications are that this explosion was close to the submarine, the fact that it was on or near the surface would clearly reduce the underwater concussion effect, the major portion of the explosion being expended in the atmosphere.

As a broken oil slick of thin oil was observed next day it is considered that this submarine may have been slightly damaged by the explosion. It is therefore recommended that it be assessed "E".

F-01
F-02
F-05
F-07
F-015
F-0115

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

in his serial 60104 of 8 Nov 44 states that a

COMMENT.

was
Inasmuch as Commander, Task Group 77.4 has claimed a Japanese submarine sunk, ~~this~~ attack has been submitted to the CominCh Assessment Committee for assessment.

Committee concluded that the
The characteristics of the explosion indicate that it was on or very near the surface and that it was very probably caused by the counter-mining of a torpedo which had just been fired by the submarine. The only other evidence of damage was a broken slick of light oil sighted the next morning. This attack has been assessed "E - probably slightly damaged". *Just*

F-1
F-10
F-105
F-
F-
F-
F-2
F-205
F-20
F-
F-
F-
F-3
F-305
F-
F-
F-
F-34
F-4
F-405
F-
F-
F-
F-

As the result of this attack, the

FX-01
FX-05
FX-30
FX-
FX-37
FX-
FX-
FX-40
FX-
FX-
IG-00
IG-05
IG-
OP-
OP-
YFO.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, D. C. 20374

IN REPLY REFER TO

NHC/AR Ser 128
29 January 1976

Captain Stuart T. Hotchkiss, USNR (Ret)
Long Shore Lane, Box #843
Madison, CT 06443

Dear Captain Hotchkiss,

This is in response to your letter of 12 January to Mr. Kincaid requesting information on an anti-submarine action involving U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) and U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424).

Copies of your action report and the COMINCH Assessment Committee's analysis of the incident are enclosed. The Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee published in 1947 the results of their postwar analysis, which utilized sources, such as captured enemy records, not available to the COMINCH Committee during the war. Pertinent extracts from that publication are attached, along with the enclosures to your letter.

We hope that these materials will be of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. C. Allard".

D. C. ALLARD
Head, Operational Archives Branch



FF-9093

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE217)

A/6-3 (1)

DE(TE)217/A16-3
Serial 023

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

DECLASSIFIED

20 February 1945.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via: (1) Commander Task Unit 78.7.4.
(2) Commander Task Group 78.7.
(3) Commander Task Force 78.
(4) Commander Seventh Fleet.
(5) Supreme Commander Allied Forces, Southwest Pacific Area.

Subject: General Action Report covering operations of U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), during the period 6 February 1945 to 18 February 1945, inclusive.

References: (a) U. S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Art. 712, 874(6).
(b) Cominch ltr. FFL/A12-1/A16-3, Serial 7152 of 29 October 1943.
(c) Cincpac PacFlt. Conf. ltr. 1CL-45, dated 1 January 1945.

Enclosure: (A) General Action Report covering operations of U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), during the period 6 February 1945 to 18 February 1945, inclusive, enroute Hollandia, New Guinea to Lingayen, Luzon, Philippine Islands, with Special Report of Anti-Submarine Action by U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) on 15 February 1945, dated 16 February 1945, attached. P. 2

1. In accordance with references (a), (b) and (c), enclosure (A) is submitted herewith.

S. T. Hotchkiss
S. T. HOTCHKISS.

Advance copies to:
Cominch (1)
Cincpac (3)
Comdespac (1)

8 01112

143333

FILED

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE217)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

20 February 1945.

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

PART I - BRIEF SUMMARY.

This General Action Report covers operations of U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), during the period 6 February 1945 to 18 February 1945, inclusive. During this period this vessel attached to Commander Task Unit 78.7.4 (Captain L. J. MANEES, U.S.N., Commander IST Flotilla 15 (Temporary), in LST 574). This vessel is assigned to Commander Seventh Fleet for temporary duty.

During the period covered by this General Action Report, this vessel assigned to escort duty, screening ISTs, ICTs, LCIs, merchant ships, etc., transporting elements of the SIXTH Army from Hollandia, Biak, Noemfoor, Sansapor and Morotai to Lingayen, Luzon, Philippine Islands. Task Unit 78.7.4 is designated as the SECOND LST RESUPPLY UNIT, which is composed of the Hollandia, Biak, Noemfoor, Sansapor and Morotai Sections, plus additional merchant ships, LCTs, LCIs, FSS and APCs which joined the convoy at Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands. Also, additional escorts joined the convoy at Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands.

Action against enemy submarines encountered during the passage of Task Unit 78.7.4 to Lingayen, Luzon, Philippine Islands, is covered in Part III of this General Action Report. No enemy surface forces or aircraft were encountered.

PART II - PRELIMINARIES.

The Hollandia Section of Task Unit 78.7.4, escorted by SC-1012 and this vessel, departed Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea at 1635, 6 February 1945, in compliance with Commander Task Force 78 orders and Commander Seventh Amphibious Force Movement Order No. 1-45, dated 26 January 1945. 1645, 9 February 1945, the Hollandia Section effected rendezvous with the Noemfoor and Biak Sections of Task Unit 78.7.4, escorted by PC-1120 and U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424). 1525, 11 February 1945, the Sansapor and Morotai Sections of Task Unit 78.7.4, escorted by SC-729, joined the convoy. On 13 February 1945, additional merchant ships, LCTs, LCIs, FSS and APCs, plus escorts, joined the convoy at Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, and became a part of Task Unit 78.7.4. On departure from Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, at 1710, 13 February 1945, Task Unit 78.7.4 was composed of the following designated vessels:

LSTs 932(GF), 718, 630, 574, 578, 579, 751(GF), 721, 718, 742, 753, 927, 936, 720, 706, 699, 697, 696, 637, 626, 592, 67, 591, 590, 705, 1027, 748, 26, 68, 181, 465, 204, 462, and 471.

LCTs being towed by LSTs: LCTs 754, 755, 756, 753, 696, 697, 698, 795, 796, 878, 879, 1209, 1210, 1222, 1255, 1258, 1262 and 1259.

Merchant Ships: CLEMENT, LANE, COEN, CANBY, FREEMAN, BAYARD, HARD, VANZANDT, KOHRS, HALL, BRADY, DAVIS, JONES, YLI, VANHEUTS, WEYDEMEYER, BUTLER, MACON, NEWEL, MARKHAM, McDANAGH, EVERS, CAREY.

8 01112

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-- 1 --

ENCLOSURE (A)

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

San Francisco, California
c/o Fleet Post Office

SO REPUBLICA TAIPEI

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

20 February 1945.

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

PART II - PRELIMINARIES (Continued).

LCIs 686, 984, 607, 965, 972(FP), 778, 1014. LCC 25483 being towed.
FSs 151, 362, 144, 1651.
APcs 12 and 10.

HMAS MURKER, HMAS EMPIRE BATTLE AXE, HMAS EMPIRE MACE, U.S.S. DAWN (IX-186), U.S.S. ERIDANUS (AK-92).

SCREEN

U.S.S. THATCHER (DD-514)
U.S.S. PHILIP (DD-498)
U.S.S. NEWMAN (APD-59)
U.S.S. LLOYD (APD-63)
U.S.S. SC-698
U.S.S. SC-732

U.S.S. DYSON (DD-572)
U.S.S. PCE-849
U.S.S. KEPHART (APD-61)
U.S.S. COFER (APD-62)
U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424)

At 1855, 16 February 1945, designated ships of those listed above, escorted by U.S.S. NEWMAN (APD-59), U.S.S. DYSON (DD-572), U.S.S. THATCHER (DD-514), U.S.S. KEPHART (APD-61), U.S.S. COFER (APD-62), U.S.S. LLOYD (APD-63) and U.S.S. PCE-849 were detached from the convoy and proceeded to Subic Bay, Luzon, Philippine Islands. The remaining ships proceeded to Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippine Islands, arriving there on the morning of 18 February 1945. 1000, 18 February 1945, this vessel detached from Task Unit 78.7.4 and assigned to other duty.

PART III - CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF ACTION AGAINST ENEMY SUBMARINES.

0907, 11 February 1945, IST-577 torpedoed by enemy submarine, and this vessel went to General Quarters. 0915 Picked up sound contact and commenced making run, on course 285° T. Convoy's course is 300° T. 0920 Lost sound contact and changed course to 330° T. Contact identified as non-submarine. Convoy steered various courses and executed emergency turns. 0947.5 SC-1012 picked up sound contact bearing 340° T, at 1,500 yards. 0955 SC-1012 lost sound contact. 1010 U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424) picked up sound contact bearing 020° T at 1,200 yards and commenced making run. 1011 Received report that all survivors of torpedoed IST-577 picked up by PC-1120. 1015 U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424) fired hedgehogs, with negative results. 1034 SC-1012 picked up sound contact and commenced making run. 1038 SC-1012 made mouse trap attack, with negative results. 1051 PC-1120 picked up sound contact and commenced making run. 1102 This vessel rejoined convoy. 1117 PC-1120 evaluated sound contact as possible submarine, but did not fire. 1120 PC-1120 ordered to return to screening station. 1125 IST-577 is carrying out salvage operations on torpedoed IST-577. 1135 Convoy changed base course to 307° T. 1136 Torpedo wake reported on port bow of formation. Reported torpedo wake identified as green sea marker. 1150 SC-1012 picked up sound contact and commenced making a depth charge attack. 1208 This vessel secured from General Quarters. Base course of convoy is 307° T and speed is 10 knots. 1230 Convoy is in formation. Commander Destroyer Division 98, in U.S.S. ISHERWOOD

LEVEL II - CONFIDENTIAL (Continued)

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

San Francisco Office
c/o Fleet Post Office

SO REPUBLICA JAWA

U.S.S. COOPER

e/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

20 February 1945.

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

PART III - CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF ACTION AGAINST ENEMY SUBMARINES (Continued).

(DD-520), who joined the convoy at 0819, 11 February 1945, remained with torpedoed LST-577 to supervise salvage operations and to continue search for enemy submarines. SC-1012 lost sound contact and returned to screening station. 1410 PC-1120 arrived on screening station. 1422 PC-1120 closed LST-1027 and transferred survivors of torpedoed LST-577. After effecting transfers of survivors, PC-1120 returned to screening station. Convoy proceeded on base course 307° T.

1650, 15 February 1945, this vessel left screening station to assist U.S.S. COFER (APD-62), who had a sound contact. 1710 This vessel ordered to take over the sound contact, and commenced making attacks. (See Special Report of Anti-Submarine Action by U.S.S. COOIBAUGH (DE-217), on 15 February 1945, dated 16 February 1945, attached).

No enemy surface forces or aircraft were encountered during the passage of Task Unit 78.7.4 to Lingayen, Luzon, Philippine Islands.

Weather conditions throughout this operation were excellent.

Minus nine (9) time zone was in effect throughout this operation.

PART IV - ORDNANCE.

1320, 4 February 1945, Task Unit 78.7.4 conducted anti-aircraft firing practice. 1421 Secured from conducting anti-aircraft firing practice. The following ammunition was expended by this vessel:

- 3"/50 Starshell 20 rounds
- 1.1" Service 82 rounds
- 20 mm H.E.I. 1,362 rounds
- 20 mm H.E.T. 675 rounds

1452, 7 February 1945, Task Unit 78.7.4 conducted anti-aircraft firing practice. 1529 Secured from conducting anti-aircraft firing practice. The following ammunition was expended by this vessel:

- 3"/50 A.A. 24 rounds
- 1.1" Service 175 rounds
- 20 mm H.E.T. 343 rounds
- 20 mm H.E.I. 683 rounds

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

San Francisco, California
c/o Fleet Post Office

20 February 1945

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

20 February 1945

GENERAL ACTION REPORT

PART IV - ORDNANCE (Continued).

The performance of own ordnance material and equipment in anti-aircraft firing practices was excellent.

The performance of anti-submarine ordnance material and equipment in action against enemy submarine is fully covered in Special Report of Anti-Submarine Action by U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), on 15 February 1945, attached hereto.

Torpedo fired at IST-577 was estimated to be fired from enemy submarine at short range. As a result of the explosion, IST-577 was broken in half. The after half of IST-577 sank almost immediately.

PART V - DAMAGE.

This vessel suffered no battle damage as a result of enemy action during the period covered by this General Action Report.

Battle damage to enemy submarine is covered in Special Report of Anti-Submarine Action by U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), on 15 February 1945, attached hereto.

PART VI - SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION.

None.

PART VII - PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE AND CASUALTIES.

No casualties to personnel were suffered during the period covered by this General Action Report.

The performance of all personnel of this vessel throughout this operation was excellent.

PART VIII - LESSONS LEARNED, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

No comments.

5

In reply refer to

File No. LSTFLOT15/AL6-3

LST FLOTILLA FIFTEEN

Serial: 060

Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

CONFIDENTIAL

25 April 1945

1st Endorsement on U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE 217)
ltr. file DE(TE)217/AL6-3, serial 023, dated
20 February 1945.

From: Commander Task Unit 78.7.4.
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via: (1) Commander Task Group 78.7.
(2) Commander Task Force 78.
(3) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
(4) Supreme Commander Allied Forces,
Southwest Pacific Area.

Subject: General Action Report Covering Operations of U.S.S.
COOLBAUGH (DE-217), During the Period 6 February 1945
to 18 February 1945, inclusive.

1. Forwarded. The Task Unit Commander has no additional information to add to the basic letter.

2. From information contained in the Commanding Officer's report, it appears that the U.S.S. COOLBAUGH should be credited with at least a probable kill in her action against enemy submarine on 15 February 1945.

E. J. MANEES
E. J. MANEES.

Copy to:
Commanding Officer,
U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE 217).

8 01112

ISTF1ot22/A16-3
Serial: 083

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San Francisco, California

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

23 June 1945

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE 217)
lte DE(TE)217/A16-3, Serial 023 of 20 Feb 1945.

From: Commander Task Group 78.7.
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander Task Force 78.
(2) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
(3) Supreme Commander Allied Forces,
Southwest Pacific Area.

Subject: General Action Report Covering Operations of
U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE 217), During the Period
6 February 1945 to 18 February 1945, Inclusive.

1. Forwarded.



F. J. MEE

8 01112

SECRET: 003
SECRET-CONFIDENTIAL

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File No. FEZ/A16-3
Serial No. FF-0286

SEVENTH AMPHIBIOUS FORCE
Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

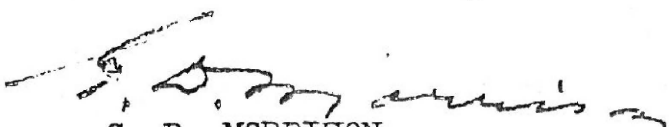
JUL 9 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

THIRD ENDORSEMENT to:
CO U.S.S. COOLBAUGH conf.
ltr., serial 023 of 20
February 1945.

From: Commander Task Force SEVENTY-EIGHT:
(Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force)
To: Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Via: Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
Subject: General Action Report covering operations of
U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217), during the period
6 February 1945 to 18 February 1945, inclusive.

1. Forwarded:


G. D. MORRISON,
Assistant Chief of Staff,
Operations.

8 01112

X

280 1 AUG 65 10 45 AM '45

A16-5(1) (F-5-4/whr)

REG. SHEET NO. 7

Serial 05045

CONFIDENTIAL

29 JUL 1945

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on:
CO, USS COOLBAUGH, Conf.
Ltr., serial 023, dated
20 February 1945.

From: Commander Seventh Fleet.
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Subject: General Action Report covering operations of
USS COOLBAUGH (DE-217), during the period 6
February 1945 to 18 February 1945 inclusive.

1. Forwarded.

2. The anti-submarine attacks by the USS COOLBAUGH,
five with ahead thrown weapons and six with depth charges,
extending over a two hour period followed standard procedure
and were well conducted.

T. C. KINKAID

Copy to:
Com7thPhibFor
CTG 78.7
Com1STFlot 15 (CTU 78.7.4)
CO, USS COOLBAUGH (DE217).

FILMED

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I

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3 - USS HAAS

Reg. No. 460
R. S. No. _____

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE217)
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

DE(TN)217/A16-3
Serial 016

3 6881

16 February 1945.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via: (1) Commander Task Unit 78.7.4.
(2) Commander Task Group 78.7.
(3) Commander Task Force 78.
(4) Commander Seventh Fleet.
(5) Supreme Commander Allied Forces, Southwest Pacific Area.

Subject: Anti-Submarine Action by U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217) on 15 February 1945.

References: (a) U. S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Arts. 712, 874 (6).
(b) Cominch ltr. FP1/A12-1/A16-3, Serial 7152 of 29 October 1943.
(c) Cincpac PacFlt Conf. ltr. 132-45, dated 1 January 1945.

Enclosures: (A) ASW-1 (Rev. Nov. 1942) forms "Anti-Submarine Action by Surface Ship", with attachments, dated 16 February 1945.
(B) Sound Recorder Traces and D.E.F. Track Chart. (Forwarded direct to COMINCH with advance copy of this letter).
(C) Sample of Diesel Oil obtained from Oil Slick. (Forwarded direct to COMINCH, under separate cover).

1. In accordance with references (a), (b) and (c), enclosures (A), (B) and (C) are being forwarded to Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET, as outlined above.

J. T. Houghkiss
J. T. HOUGHKISS.

Advance copies to:
Cominch (1) (with enclosures A and B).
Cincpac (3)
Comdespac (1)

77 73A

Was 7773B

DC
H

U. S. S. COOLBAUGH (DE217)
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

NARRATIVE OF ACTION AGAINST ENEMY SUBMARINE - 15 FEBRUARY 1944

Sound contact was first made by U.S.S. COFER (APD-62), while screening port flank of the formation of Task Unit 78.7.4, which extended for about six miles.

Immediately after contact was verified this vessel was directed to attack. Contact was made by this vessel at about 0805 G.C.T. time, and attack was carried out as shown on the attached ASW-1 sheets. Twenty seconds after firing the first hedgehog pattern a large underwater explosion was felt throughout the ship, estimated to be caused by the explosion of two or three hedgehogs, at least. Immediately afterward a great gusher of Diesel oil arose to the surface. Four additional hedgehog attacks were carried out with negative results. Although contact was lost several times, it could always be readily regained because of the continuing stream of Diesel oil arising.

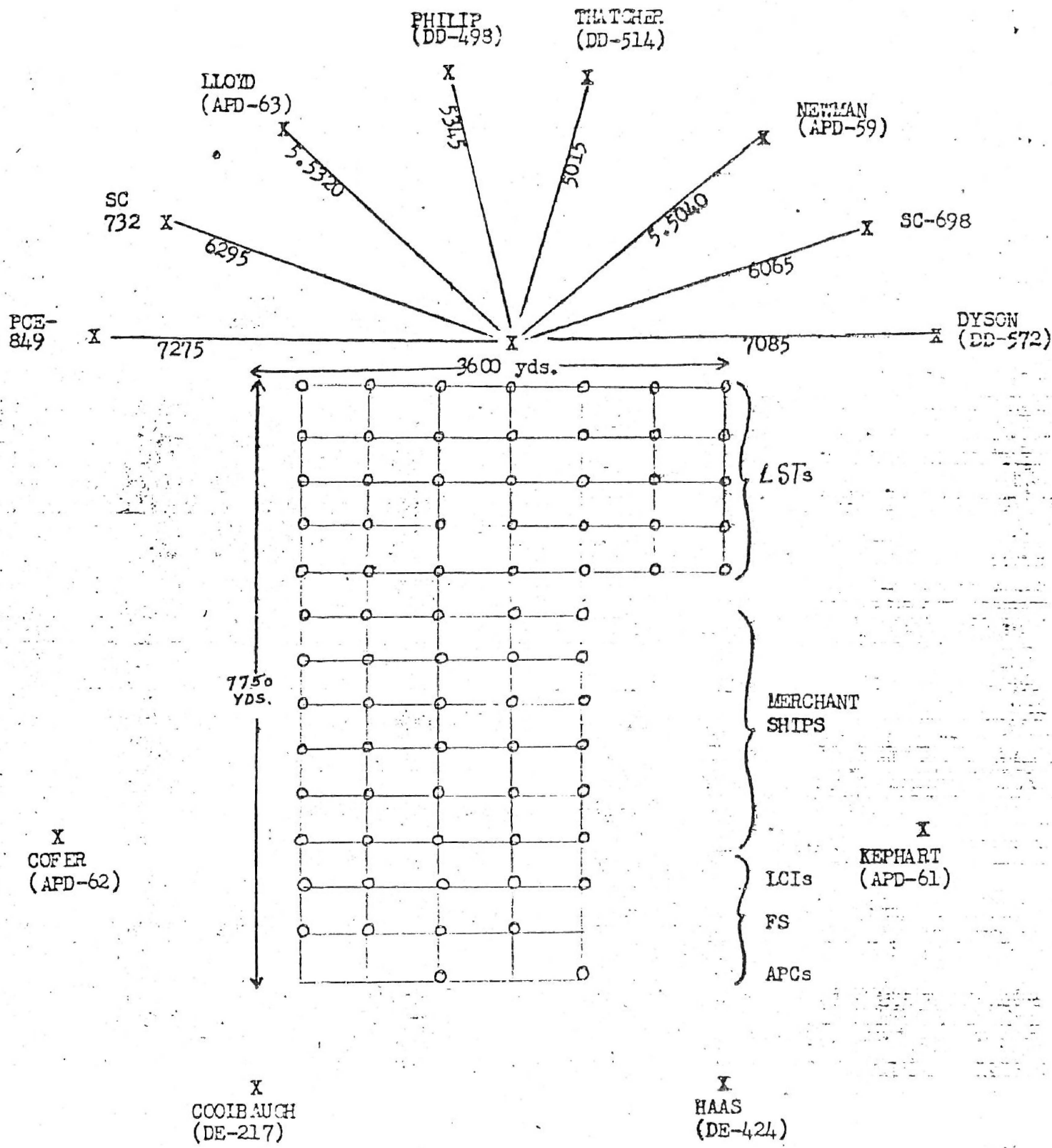
At 0920 G.C.T. time, about twenty seconds after the last hedgehog attack, Engine Room personnel felt a distinct underwater explosion.

Six depth charge attacks were then carried out. About two minutes after the second depth charge attack, new gushers of oil came to the surface. About thirty seconds after the explosion of the last charge of the third pattern, an underwater explosion was felt throughout the ship. Results from further attacks were negative.

After this ship had completed the sixth depth charge attack, the operation was turned over to U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424), which ship had been standing by. This ship then returned to the formation, in accordance with previous orders from the Screen Commander to leave the contact at dark.

Samples of the submarine's oil were soaked up in a rag as the ship passed through the oil slick. The Engineering Officer determined these samples to be Diesel oil. The oil soaked rag is being forwarded in a glass container under separate cover. Due to the limited time allowed this vessel to stay on the scene, time was not taken to obtain a proper sample of the submarine's oil.

U.S.S. HAAS (DE-424) has later reported that she obtained additional explosions and picked up debris the following morning.



TASK UNIT 78.7.4
As of 15 February 1945

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGE No.	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting															
Impulse charge															
Mark of DC															
Mark of pistol															
Duds															

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type Hedgehogs Mark 10 Failures Two (2) fired 5 seconds late
 Projectiles: Number 24 Mark 10 Fuse: Mark 136, Mod. A
 At firing: Range 350 yds. Recorder traces Seconds after firing 20 seconds
 Detonations: Number 2 of 3 (See Recorder traces)
 Air temperature 83° Water temperature 83° Base range 195 yds.
 Corrected range 159 yds. Was wake effect correction used? Yes Erratic flight No
 Time of flight 8 seconds Sub bearing at time of firing 214° T

Gunfire:

Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action:

DESCRIPTION: (See Recorder Traces)

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W 1-3 knots Sub course About 225° T
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed 300 feet Method of timing drop Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack Why search abandoned

Marker buoy dropped Yes - Green Samples obtained (See Narrative Attached)

Forwarded to COMINT

Evidence of Damage to Submarine:

Strong gusher of oil commenced rising to the surface. Submarine continued to trail oil throughout subsequent attacks. Samples of oil were obtained in rage, and are being forwarded under separate cover. Engineering Officer determined these samples to be Diesel Oil.

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

(See appended sheets).

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)
 SEE BACK OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 2 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0808
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind N.E.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200-1500 yards Sub first reported by U.S.S. COPEL (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact (See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy)
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making WALKER this run - SPEVACK, Lec (n), 856 92 98, Son2c(T), V-6, USNR

II. APPROACH

TIME G.C.T.	CONTACT	RANGE	TRUE BEARING	TRUE OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
0819	Sound	1,100	065°		10	Regained contact from plot search are at 065° T, range 1,100 yds.
		1,200	064			
		1,100	062			Doppler was opening slight to moderate. Target movement was very slowly
		1,100	063			right throughout the run and Doppler
0820		1,050	070	070		steadied to opening moderate. Wake
		1,000	072			appeared on left of target and at
			073			the left of recorder trace, indicating
0821		800	076	076		a deep quarter target. Recorder
		750	075			settings were left at 20 seconds
		700	075			sighting time, 10 knots speed, but as
		550	076			contact was held until 300 yds., this
		500	078			was assumed to be too deep. No
		450	081			detonations. Sharp echoes throughout
		350	084			the attack.
		325	083			
0824		300	086	086		
Firing time						

At time of firing: Own course 086° T Own speed 10 knots
 Range of first radar contact _____ Type radar _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____ Object sighted _____
 Range of first sound contact 1,100 yds. Type sound gear QC3-1
 Propeller noises No Type of echo Submarine - sharp
 Doppler: Amount Down - moderate Doppler inclination Opening - moderate
 Width of target 5° at 1,200 yds. Target movement Slowly right

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE No.															
Seconds after first charge #															
Depth setting															
Impulse charge															
Mark of DC															
Mark of pistol															
Duds															

Ahead Throwing Weapons: **Hedgehog** Mark **10** Failures **One (1) fired 7 seconds late**
 A/S Projector: Type **Hedgehog** Mark **10** Fuse: Mark **136, Bd. 4**
 Projectiles: Number **24** Mark **10**
 At firing: Range **300 yds.** Detonations: Number **None** Seconds after firing **None**
 Air temperature **83°** Water temperature **83°** Base range **176 yds.**
 Corrected range **187 yds.** Vent effect correction used? **Yes** Erratic flight **No**
 Time of flight **8 seconds** Sub bearing at time of firing **033° T**
 Gunfire: **None** Rounds fired **None** Estimated hits **None**
 Other Action: **None**

DESCRIPTION: **Low range rate - about 5 knots (See Recorder Traces)**
 Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W **3-5 knots** Sub course **Approximately 100° T**
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed **300 feet** Method of timing drop **Sound Range Recorder**
 Length of search after last attack **Why search abandoned**
 Marker **Yes - Green** Samples obtained **(See Narrative Attached)**
 Forwarded to **COMMCH**

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: **None**

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)
(See appended sheets)

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE NO.															
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting															
Impulse charge															
Mark of DC															
Mark of pistol															
Duds															

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type Hedgehogs Mark 10 Failures None
 Projectiles: Number 24 Mark 10 Fuse: Mark 336, Mod. A
 At firing: Range Lost contact 320° T
 Detonations: Number None Seconds after firing None
 Air temperature 83° Water temperature 83° Base range 196 yds.
 Corrected range 159 yds. Was wake effect correction used? Yes Erratic flight No
 Time of flight 8 seconds Sub bearing at time of firing Fired on wake

Gunfire:

Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action:

DESCRIPTION:

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth _____ Method of timing drop Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Marker dye dropped Yes - Green Samples obtained (See Narrative)
 Forwarded to COMINCH

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: _____

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

(See appended sheets)

CONFIDENTIAL

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 4 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship D3 Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0833
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind N.E.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200-1500 yds. Sub first reported by U.S.S. CORCH (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact (See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy)
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making ~~report~~ this run - SPEVACK, Leo (n), 856 92 98, Sol2a (T), V-6, USNH

II. APPROACH

Time G.C.T.	Contact	Range	Center True Bearing	True Own Course	Own Speed	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
0837		900	172°	290°	10	After coming to attack course, echoes were sharp, Doppler opening moderate to marked and range rate was very low. Target moved slowly left throughout the run. Settings on Recorder were for medium depth - 16 seconds, about 250 feet. Lost contact at 300 yds.
		800	165			
		1,000	160			
		1,100	148			
		1,150	150			
		1,100	148			
		1,100	120			
0840		1,100	123	120		
0841		1,000	125	120		
0842		900	123	118		Results negative.
		800	120			
		800	118			
		750	119			
0843		700	118	116		
		600	115			
		500	115			
		450	114			
0843.5		400	112	112		
(0844)		350	112			
(Firing time)						

At time of firing: Own course 110° T
 Range of first radar contact _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____
 Range of first sound contact 900 yds.
 Propeller noises No
 Doppler: Amount Down - moderate
 Width of target _____
 Range of last sound contact 300 yards

Own speed 10 knots
 Type radar _____
 Object sighted _____
 Type sound gear CCS-1
 Type of echo Good, sharp
 Doppler inclination Opening - moderate
 Target movement Left

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

III ACTION

DEPTH CHARGE NO.	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting															
Impulse charge															
Mark of DC															
Mark of pistol															
Duds															

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type Hedgehog Mark 10 Failures None
 Projectiles: Number 24 Mark 10 Fuse: Mark 136, Mod. A
 At firing: Range Lost contact about 200 yds. Gun train 110° T.
 Detonations: Number None Seconds after firing None
 Air temperature 83° Water temperature 83° Base range 196 yds.
 Corrected range 189 yds. Was wake effect correction used? Yes Erratic flight No
 Time of flight 8 seconds Sub bearing at time of firing 112° T
 Gunfire: None
 Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action:

DESCRIPTION:
 Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed None Sub course None
 Sub depth 300 feet Method of timing drop Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack None Why search abandoned None

Marker dropped Yes - Green Samples obtained (See Narrative)

Forwarded to COMINCH

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: None

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

(See appended sheets).

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE NO.															
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting															
Impulse charge															
Mark of DC															
Mark of pistol															
Duds															

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type Hedgehogs Mark 10 Failures None
 Projectiles: Number 24 Mark 10 Fuse: Mark 136, Mod. 4
 At firing: Range (Gun train) 912° T
 Detonations: Number None Seconds after firing: None
 Air temperature 83° Water temperature 83° Base range 196 yds.
 Corrected range 157 yds. Was wake effect correction used? Yes Erratic flight No
 Time of flight 8 seconds Sub bearing at time of firing 314° T

Gunfire: _____
 Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action: _____

DESCRIPTION:
 Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth 300 or more feet Method of timing drop Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Marker ~~dropped~~ Yes - Green Samples obtained (See Narrative)

Forwarded to COMINCH

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: _____

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

(See appended sheets).

CONFIDENTIAL

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 6 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DS-217)
 Type Ship DE Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0808
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-D N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind N.E.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200-1500 yds. Sub first reported by U.S.S. COFER (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact See attached sketch showing positions of other units of convoy.
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making observation (this run - BOFINGER, Harry William, (245 59 62, Soble (T), V-6, USNR.
 Opened on course 345° at 0907 ca 160° T; 0910 ca 150° T; 0916 ca 140° T; 0917 ca 130° T
 II. APPROACH 0920 T regained contact at 225° T and came to attack course.

Time	Contact	Range	Center True Bearing	True Own Course	Own Speed	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
<u>G.C.T.</u>		<u>1,150</u>	<u>222°</u>	<u>225°</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>No change of Doppler throughout the run - opening-moderate all the way.</u>
		<u>1,100</u>	<u>223</u>			<u>Recorder traces were clearly defined. Range rate low. Fired on range rate about 92. Settings on charges were all at 300 ft. It was presumed that submarine was at that depth, but on this run contact was held in to 100 yards. Target seemed to move slowly right during attack.</u>
		<u>1,000</u>	<u>230</u>			
		<u>900</u>	<u>230</u>			
<u>0922</u>		<u>800</u>	<u>233</u>			
		<u>700</u>	<u>234</u>	<u>234</u>		
		<u>600</u>	<u>235</u>			
<u>0922.5</u>		<u>500</u>	<u>236</u>			
		<u>450</u>	<u>242</u>			
		<u>350</u>	<u>248</u>	<u>260</u>		
		<u>200</u>	<u>240</u>			
<u>(0924</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>235</u>			<u>Labelled #1 Depth Charge run on Recorder Trace Paper.</u>
<u>(Firing time</u>						

At time of firing: Own course 260° T.
 Range of first radar contact _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____
 Range of first sound contact 1,150
 Propeller noises No
 Doppler: Amount Down - moderate
 Width of target 5 - 60 at 1,100 yds.
 Range of last sound contact 100 yds.

Own speed 15 knots
 Type radar _____
 Object sighted _____
 Type sound gear CCS-1
 Type of echo Sharp, clear
 Doppler inclination Coaming - moderate
 Target movement Right

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE NO.															
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting ft.	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300		
Impulse charge		2	2		2	2		2	2		2	2			
Mark of DC	All	Mark 9-1													
Mark of pistol	All	Mark 6													
Duds	* #4 X-Gun failed to fire.														

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type _____ Mark _____ Failures _____
 Projectiles: Number _____ Mark _____ Fuse: Mark _____
 At firing: Range _____ Tilt of projector (or roll of ship) _____
 Detonations: Number _____ Seconds after firing _____
 Air temperature _____ Water temperature _____ Base range _____
 Corrected range _____ Was wake effect correction used? _____ Erratic flight _____
 Time of flight _____ Sub bearing at time of firing _____

Gunfire:

Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action:

DESCRIPTION:

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W _____ (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth _____ Method of timing drop Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Marker ^{dye} dropped Yes (Green) Samples obtained _____ (See Narrative)

Forwarded to COMINCH

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: _____

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

Believed submarine was on the bottom or very close to it—depth of water being 55 fathoms (330 feet), which would make a "Medium" pattern too shallow and a "Deep" pattern too deep. Therefore, all depth charges were set at 300 feet.

(See appended sheets).

CONFIDENTIAL

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 7 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 787.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0803
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind E.S.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200-1500 yds. Ship first reported by U.S.S. COVER (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact U.S.S. COVER (APD-62) about 3,000 yds. on port bow.
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging) (See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy).
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making BOYINGER, Harry William, 345 59 02, Solic (T), V-6, USNA.

II. APPROACH 0931 e/s to 0150 T, still had contact, 0932 lost contact, 0936 regained contact bearing 227° T and came to that course.

TIME	CONTACT	RANGE	TRUE BEARING	TRUE OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS
		1,100	235°	227°	13	Opening moderate to marked Doppler
		1,000	230			Low range rate. Echo sharp at
		800	226			center of target, wide echo on both
		600	225			sides. Medium setting used on 13-
		400	222			charge pattern. Held contact in to
		650	222			a very close range. Recorder traces
		500	223			show stern chase—target moving left
		470	223	210		toward end of run. Range rate was
		400	217			steady at about 8-9 knots.
		300	214	20		
		250	210	190		Labelled #2 Depth Charge run on
		150	207			Recorder Trace Paper.
		100	215			
<u>(0936)</u>						
<u>(Firing time)</u>						

At time of firing: Own course 190° T Own speed 15 knots
 Range of first radar contact _____ Type radar _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____ Object sighted _____
 Range of first sound contact 1,100 yds. Type sound gear QCS-1
 Propeller noises No Type of echo Sharp and mushy at edges
 Doppler: Amount Down-moderate Doppler inclination Opening-moderate to marked
 Width of target 8 - 10° Target movement Slodly left
 Range of last sound contact 100 yds.

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

16-3111-3
3 6831

CONFIDENTIAL

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 8 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE 550 Nationality U.S. Command C.T.N. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0808
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind E.E.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200-1500 yds. Sub first reported by U.S.S. COFER (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact (See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy)
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making ~~first contact~~ this run - BOEINGER, Harry William, 245 59 02, Sonar (1), V-6, USNA.

II. APPROACH 0937 c/s to 110° T; 0939 a/c to 000° T; c/e to 340° T and regained contact at range 900 yds.

TIME G.C.T.	CONTACT	RANGE	TRUE BEARING	OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
0944		800	330°	335°	15	Opening Doppler - marked.
0944.5		700	331			Range rate low throughout the run.
		600	325	325		Used 15 charge pattern with "A" settings according to Article 1670-1, FTP 223A. Held contact until range of 150 yds.
0945		450	323			
		400	319	310		
		300	316			
		200	312			
		150	310			Labelled #3 Depth Charge run on Recorder Trace Paper.
(0947)	(Firing time)					

At time of firing: Own course 310° T Own speed 15 knots
 Range of first radar contact _____ Type radar _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____ Object sighted _____
 Range of first sound contact 800 yds. Type sound gear CGS-1
 Propeller noises No Type of echo Sharp
 Doppler: Amount Down - marked Doppler inclination Opening - marked
 Width of target _____ Target movement Slightly left
 Range of last sound contact 150 yds.

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGE No.	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting	250	200	250	200	250	300	250	250	300	300	250	250	300		
Impulse charge		2	2		2	2		2	2		2	2			
Mark of DC	All Mark 9-1														
Mark of pistol	All Mark 6														
Duds	* #1 and #4 K-Guns failed to fire.														

* According to 13-charge pattern (B) - FTP 223A, Article 1670-1.

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type _____ Mark _____ Failures _____
 Projectiles: Number _____ Mark _____ Fuse: Mark _____
 At firing: Range _____ Tilt of projector (or roll of ship) _____
 Detonations: Number _____ Seconds after firing _____
 Air temperature _____ Water temperature _____ Base range _____
 Corrected range _____ Was wake effect correction used? _____ Erratic flight _____
 Time of flight _____ Sub bearing at time of firing _____
 Gunfire: _____
 Calibre Gun: None _____ Rounds fired: None _____ Estimated hits: None _____
 Other Action: _____
 DESCRIPTION: _____
 Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W: (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth _____ Method of timing drop: Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Marker ~~dropped~~ Yes - Green Samples obtained (See Narrative)
 Forwarded to: COMUSCIB

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: _____

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

_____ (See appended sheets) _____

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGE No.	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting	100	50	100	50	100	150	100	100	150	150	100	100	150		
Impulse charge		1	1		1	1		1	1			1	1		
Mark of DC	All Mark 9-1														
Mark of pistol	All Mark 6														
Duds	* #6 and #8 K-Guns failed to fire.														

*According to Art. 1670-1, FTP 223A - 13 charge pattern, A settings.

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type _____ Mark _____ Failures _____
 Projectiles: Number _____ Mark _____ Fuse: Mark _____
 At firing: Range _____ Tilt of projector (or roll of ship) _____
 Detonations: Number _____ Seconds after firing _____
 Air temperature _____ Water temperature _____ Base range _____
 Corrected range _____ Was wake effect correction used? _____ Erratic flight _____
 Time of flight _____ Sub bearing at time of firing _____

Gunfire:

Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action:

DESCRIPTION:

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W: _____ (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth _____ Method of timing drop Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Marker Yes dropped Yes - Green Samples obtained (See Narrative)
 Forwarded to COMUSCIB

Evidence of Damage to Submarine:

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

On this attack an underwater explosion was heard 20 seconds after last depth charge had exploded. (See appended sheets for additional remarks).

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ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 9 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0803
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind N.E.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day: 1200 - 1500 yds. Sub first reported by U.S.S. COVER (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact (See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy)
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making ~~sonar~~ this run - KOLENDA, Edward Thomas, 821 28 7
SOM2c (1), V-6(SV), USNR.

II. APPROACH 0953 opened range on 050° T; 0955 c/c 205° T;
0957 regained contact bearing 200° T.

TIME	CONTACT	RANGE	Center TRUE BEARING	True OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
	G.C.T.	900	201°	205°	15	Doppler - opening.
		800	203			Echo - Sharp.
		650	204			Traces - Quarter, changing to stern.
		600	204			make effect on traces.
		500	205			
		350	200	195		13 charge pattern -B settings,
	(1000)	200	195	190		according to Art. 1670-1, FTP 223A.
	(Firing time)					
						Labelled #4 Depth Charge run on Recorder Trace Paper.

At time of firing: Own course 190° T Own speed 15 knots
 Range of first radar contact _____ Type radar _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____ Object sighted _____
 Range of first sound contact 900 yds. Type sound gear QCS-1
 Propeller noises No Type of echo Sharp, clear
 Doppler: Amount Dow-moderate Doppler inclination Opening
 Width of target _____ Target movement Slowly left
 Range of last sound contact 175 yds.

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGE No.	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting	250	200	250	200	250	300	250	250	300	300	250	250	300		
Impulse charge	2														
Mark of DC	All Mark 9-1														
Mark of pistol	All Mark 6														
Duds	* #6 and #8 K-Guns failed to fire.														

* - According to Art. 1670-1, FTP 223A - 13 charge pattern, B settings.

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type _____ Mark _____ Failures _____
 Projectiles: Number _____ Mark _____ Fuse: Mark _____
 At firing: Range _____ Tilt of projector (or roll of ship) _____
 Detonations: Number _____ Seconds after firing _____
 Air temperature _____ Water temperature _____ Base range _____
 Corrected range _____ Was wake effect correction used? _____ Erratic flight _____
 Time of flight _____ Sub bearing at time of firing _____

Gunfire:

Calibre Gun None Rounds fired None Estimated hits None

Other Action:

DESCRIPTION:

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W _____ (See Recorder traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth _____ Method of timing drop _____ Sound Range Recorder
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Marker dye dropped Yes - Green Samples obtained _____ (See Narrative)
 Forwarded to COMINCH

Evidence of Damage to Submarine:

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

(See appended sheets)

16-31711-1

CONFIDENTIAL

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 10 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0808
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind N.E.
 Mission Escort of convoy Convoy No. 000^G T Convoy course 000^G T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200-1500 yds. Sub first reported by U.S.S. COFER (APD-52) about 3,000 yds. on port bow.
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy.
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making first contact ROCKWELL this run - KOLEND, Edward Thomas, 321 28 74, Soz2c (1), V-6 (SV), USNR.

II. APPROACH: Opened on course 065° T; 1009 e/c 270° T; 1013 regained contact and e/c to 260° T.

TIME CONTACT	RANGE	Center TRUE BEARING	True OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
	900	265°	260°	15	Doppler - slight to no Doppler.
	750	269			Traces look like beam traces but do not agree with range rate or target movement. Submarine presumed to be dead in water and no lead taken.
	650	267			
	550	264			
	350	270	290		
(1013 (Firing time)	200	270			A 13-charge B setting pattern made, with an additional 5 charges on the port racks, set at 300 ft.
					Labeled #5 Depth Charge run on Recorder Trace Paper.

At time of firing: Own course 290° T Own speed 15 knots
 Range of first radar contact _____ Type radar _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____ Object sighted _____
 Range of first sound contact 900 yds. Type sound gear CCS-1
 Propeller noises No Type of echo Sharp, clear
 Doppler: Amount Slight Down to No Doppler Doppler inclination Opening - slight
 Width of target _____ Target movement Very little - to right
 Range of last sound contact 150 yds.

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE No.															
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting	** 250	200	250	200	250	300	250	250	300	300	250	250	300		
Impulse charge	2														
Mark of DC	All Mark 9-1														
Mark of pistol	All Mark 6														
Duds	#1, 6 and 8 K-Guns failed to fire. 3rd, 4th and 5th charges on starboard racks jammed.														
Ahead Throwing Weapons:	** According to Art. 1670-1, FTP 223A, 13 charge pattern, B settings, with 5 additional charges dropped off port rack, set at 300 ft.														
A/S Projector: Type	Mark					Failures									
Projectiles: Number	Mark					Fuse: Mark									
At firing: Range	Tilt of projector (or roll of ship)														
Detonations: Number	Seconds after firing														
Air temperature	Water temperature					Base range									
Corrected range	Was wake effect correction used?					Erratic flight									
Time of flight	Sub bearing at time of firing														
Gunfire:															
Calibre Gun	Rounds fired					Estimated hits									
Other Action:															
DESCRIPTION:															
Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W	(See Recorder Tapes)														
At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed	Sub course														
Sub depth	Method of timing drop					Sound Range Recorder									
Length of search after last attack	Why search abandoned														

Marker ~~dropped~~ **Yes - Green** Samples obtained (See Narrative)
 Forwarded to **COMUSCIB**

Evidence of Damage to Submarine:
 How the damage was done:
 Location of damage:
 Nature of damage:

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)
 (See appended sheets)

TO
 THE COMMANDER, U.S. NAVY, WASHINGTON, D.C.
 (ATTACH HERE - [unclear])

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1954

ANTISUBMARINE ACTION BY SURFACE SHIP

(ATTACK FIRST—Then collect data for this report)

SEE COVER OF PAD FOR INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL

Attack No. 11 Date of report 16 February 1945 Ship U.S.S. COLBAUGH (DE-217)
 Type Ship DE Nationality U.S. Command C.T.U. 78.7.4
 Time Zone used in Report Zebra (G.C.T. time used) Time first contact 0808
 Day/Night/Twilight/Moonlight Day (11th run in Twilight) Date first contact 15 February 1945
 Latitude 11-14 N Longitude 121-21 E Depth water Sixty (60) fathoms
 Weather Clear Visibility Excellent Sea Smooth Wind N.K.
 Mission: Escort of convoy Convoy No. _____ Convoy course 000° T Convoy speed 7 knots
 Sound range of the day 1200 - 1500 yds. Sub first reported by U.S.S. COFER (APD-62)
 Identity and position of other units at time of first contact U.S.S. COFER (APD-62) about 3,000 yds. on port bow
 How own contact first made Sound gear (echo ranging) (See attached sketch showing positions of other units in convoy)
 Name, rate, service number and duty of person making Asst. Comdr this run - KOLENDI, Edward Thomas,
821 28 74, Sol2c (T), V-6(SV), USNR.

II: APPROACH Opened on course 290° T; 1019 c/c to 055° T; 1023 c/c to 130° T;
1025 Regained contact at 145° T.

TIME	CONTACT	RANGE	CENTER TRUE BEARING	TRUE OWN COURSE	OWN SPEED	REMARKS (Include change of doppler, type of echo)
G.C.T.		850	145°	145°	15	Doppler opening-marked.
			142			Bearings widened as target was closed.
		500	150	150		Good sharp echoes.
		400	150			Used 13-charge pattern, A settings.
		300	150			
		200	150			Submarine again appeared to be dead in the water.
1029		100	150			Labelled #6 Depth Charge run on Recorder Trace Paper.
(Firing time)						

At time of firing: Own course 150° T Own speed 15 knots
 Range of first radar contact _____ Type radar _____
 Range of first visual sighting _____ Object sighted _____
 Range of first sound contact 850 yds. Type sound gear COSEA
 Propeller noises No Type of echo Sharp
 Doppler: Amount Down - marked Doppler inclination Opening - marked
 Width of target 10 - 12° - 850 yds. Target movement Bearings steady
 Range of last sound contact 100 yds.

SPECIFY TIME ZONE—USE GCT IF POSSIBLE 3 GCT

III. ACTION

DEPTH CHARGES	Seconds from Last Contact to Drop of First Charge														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DEPTH CHARGE No.															
Seconds after first charge															
Depth setting #	100	50	100	50	100	150	100	100	150	150	100	100	150		
Impulse charge #1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1			
Mark of DC: All Mark 9-1															
Mark of pistol: All Mark 6															
Duds: #6 and #8 X-Guns failed to fire.															

* According to Art. 1670-1, FTP 223A, 13-charge pattern, A settings.

Ahead Throwing Weapons:

A/S Projector: Type _____ Mark _____ Failures _____
 Projectiles: Number _____ Mark _____ Fuse: Mark _____
 At firing: Range _____ Tilt of projector (or roll of ship) _____
 Detonations: Number _____ Seconds after firing _____
 Air temperature _____ Water temperature _____ Base range _____
 Corrected range _____ Was wake effect correction used? _____ Erratic flight _____
 Time of flight _____ Sub bearing at time of firing _____

Gunfire: _____
 Calibre Gun: Nons Rounds fired: Nons Estimated hits: Nons

Other Action: _____
 DESCRIPTION: _____

Relative speed at last contact or firing A/T/W: (See Recorder Traces)
 At drop or firing A/T/W: Sub speed _____ Sub course _____
 Sub depth _____ Method of timing drop _____ Sound Range Recorder _____
 Length of search after last attack _____ Why search abandoned _____

Markers dropped Yes Green Samples obtained (See Narrative)
 Forwarded to COURIER

Evidence of Damage to Submarine: _____

IV. NARRATIVE (Use Additional Blank Page if Necessary.)

_____ (See appended sheets)

NAVY DEPARTMENT WASHINGTON, D. C. 20370

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UNITED STATES FLEET

HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



Incident No. 7773

ANALYSIS OF ANTI-SUBMARINE ACTION BY USS COOLBAUGH (DE-217)
AND USS HAAS (DE-424)

Employment.....A/S screen
 Time.....0805 GCT, 15 February 1945
 Position.....11-14N/121-21E
 Weather conditions.....Clear; visibility excellent; sea
 smooth; wind force 2
 Depth of water.....60 fathoms
 Contact first made by.....Sonar
 Range.....900 yards
 Sonar conditions.....Good
 Number of attacks.....24

BRIEF OF NARRATIVE.

(a) Sonar contact was first made by COFER (APD-62). Immediately after contact was verified COOLBAUGH was directed to attack. COOLBAUGH made first hedgehog attack at 1712 (Zone minus 9) 15 February. Explosions occurred 20 seconds after firing. A large amount of oil rose to the surface. Four additional hedgehog attacks were carried out with negative results. About 20 seconds after last hedgehog attack, engine room personnel felt distinct underwater explosion.

(b) Six depth charge attacks were then carried out. About two minutes after the second depth charge attack new gushes of oil came to the surface. About 30 seconds after explosion of the last charge of the third pattern, an underwater explosion was felt throughout the ship. Results of further attacks were negative. The last attack was made at 1929.

(c) The operation was then turned over to the HAAS, who had been standing by and COOLBAUGH returned to the formation.

(d) HAAS commenced attacks at 1940. Target showed little or no movement and was apparently on the bottom. Seven depth charge and six hedgehog attacks were conducted. Two very severe underwater explosions were felt one hour and 33 minutes after third depth charge attack. Oil was rising to the surface during all of these attacks. At 0715 debris and great quantities of brown colored oil were sighted rising at the scene of the attacks. Boat was lowered to recover samples of debris. At 1200 contact was abandoned.

EVALUATION OF TARGET.

(a) Probable wreck.

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CONFIDENTIAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
 NAVY DEPARTMENT
 WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE.

(a) Hedgehog hits on COOLBAUGH's first attack resulted in oil rising to the surface. Oil continued to rise throughout the remaining attacks. Two heavy underwater explosions occurred one hour and 33 minutes after HAAS' third depth charge attack. Large quantities of fuel oil resulted from the attacks and a strong odor of gasoline was evident in the vicinity. Debris recovered consisted of several pieces of wood and a fid. Nothing was sighted or recovered which would definitely indicate target was a submarine.

ANALYSIS OF ATTACKS.

Attacks by COOLBAUGH:

On all eleven attacks by COOLBAUGH a very low range rate was indicated by the recorder traces. On the last several attacks COOLBAUGH suspected that target was dead in the water despite the fact that range rate on recorder was still low.

Evaluation of the traces indicates that the recorder was not operating properly. The interval between individual traces is much too great and indicates erratic movement of paper. This condition can obtain if the spring on idler roll is too slack or if the idler roll is not hooked back in place, in which case the re-roll takes charge; moves the paper at a higher rate of speed. Range rates indicated on the recorder in this case would be much lower than the actual range rate. It is, therefore, very possible that target was on the bottom during all of COOLBAUGH's attacks.

Attacks by HAAS:

No doppler was evident during any of HAAS' 13 attacks. Slight target motion, which seemed apparent at first, was probably due to current. Fathometer traces indicate target on a hard sloping bottom. The underwater explosions may have been caused by depth charges rolled into deeper water by the current.

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NAVY DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.O P I N I O N SPlotting Room:

While several Jap U-Boats were estimated in general area of the above attacks, there is no tracking information which can be associated directly with these incidents. Hydro has no information of any wreck in vicinity of Incident 7773, although this is not conclusive as wreck information is not complete in these waters.

Commanding Officer USS COOLBAUGH:

Submarine sunk.

Commanding Officer USS HAAS:

Submarine sunk.

Tactical Analysis Officer.

It is believed that both vessels were attacking a wreck in 60 fathoms of water. In COOLBAUGH's attacks the illusion of target motion was apparently caused by recorder casualty. The absence of doppler and DRT plot indicates target was stationary. Debris resulting from attacks consisted of fuel oil, gasoline, pieces of unidentifiable wood and a wooden fid. A fid would be standard equipment of surface vessels but it is not believed that a submarine would be so equipped.

Commander, SEVENTH Fleet reports that an enemy destroyer was sunk by aircraft in position 11-30N/121-30E. This position is approximately 20 miles away, but the fact that the position is "rounded off" and was also determined by aircraft would indicate that it could quite possibly have been the target attacked by HAAS and COOLBAUGH. It is therefore recommended that this incident be assessed "I - Target not submarine."

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HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

UNITED STATES FLEET

MEMORANDUM

Date 4 June 1945

From: FX-413

To: FX-01

1. The attacks covered by the attached are believed to have been made on a wreck. However, due to the fact that both commanding officers claimed a submarine killed, the incident is submitted to the Board for assessment.

Very resp'y.

F. A. Brock
F. A. BROCK.

FX-40 *Levy*

FX-41 *Levy*

A42542

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <u>COM 7TH FLT</u>		ASTERISK (*) MAILGRAM ADDRESSEE COMINCH	PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE <u>25 MARCH 1945</u>			DEFERRED
FOR CODEROOM _____	INFORMATION USS HAAS USS COOLBAUGH COMCORTDIV 77	PRIORITY	
DECODED BY _____		ROUTINE	
PARAPHRASED BY _____		DEFERRED	
ROUTED BY _____			
UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE AND AS ADMINISTRATIVE.			IF OPERATIONAL CHECK BELOW <input type="checkbox"/>
	250255	NCR 5210	
ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME:	DATE	TIME	GCT

ON OUTGOING DISPATCHES PLEASE LEAVE ABOUT ONE INCH CLEAR SPACE BEFORE BEGINNING TEXT

COM 7TH FLT SENDS ACTION COMINCH INFO HAAS COOLBAUGH COMCORTDIV 77.

REF YOUR 202215.

NO SAMPLES OF DEBRIS HELD BY COM 7TH FLT. HAAS HAS BEEN ORDERED TO FORWARD ANY SAMPLES DIRECTLY TO YOU.

ENEMY DESTROYER SUNK BY AIRCRAFT ON 24 OCTOBER LAT 11-30 N LONG 121-30 E.

ACTION	
F-0	22
F-01	23
F-02	24
F-05	25
F-07	26
F-1	27
F-2	28
F-20	29
F-3	30
F-30	31
F-31	32
F-32	33
F-33	34
F-34	35
F-4	36
FX01	37
FX30	38
FX37	39
FX40	40
IG-00	41
VCNO	42
	43
	44
	45
	46
	47
	48
	49
	50
	51
	52

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SECRET

USS - HAAS - DE 424

Heading:

250345

REFERENCE COMINCH 202215 X

SAMPLES OF DEBRIS AND OIL RECOVERED FROM ATTACKS ON
FIFTEEN FEBRUARY WERE TURNED INTO INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
ON USS ROCKY MOUNT X

USS HAAS DOG EASY FOUR TWO FOUR SENDS

DEFERRED

From: USS HAAS - DE 424 Date: 3/25/45 Originated by: Released by:

Action To: COM 7TH FLEET Deferred Routine Priority Radio Visual Mailgm. Restricted Confidential Secret

Information To: DE 217 - COOLBAUGH - USS ROCKY MOUNT

Unit Comdr	Unit Eng	Unit Gun	Unit Comm	Capt	Exec	Repair	Eng	Nav	Gun	Ist Lt	Sply	Torp	Comm	OOD	Med	Disb	Office	Comsy	Mall Ord

RECEIVED

S. HAAS DE 24

Heading: S-4513 202215

DUE POSSIBILITY TARGET ATTACKED BY COOLBAUGH AND HAAS ON
 15 FEBRUARY WAS WRECK REQUEST SAMPLES OF DEBRIS RECOVERED
 BY HAAS TOGETHER WITH ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING WRECKS
 IN VICINITY BE FORWARDED DIRECT TO COMINCH X
 RDO LEYTE PASS ACTION COM SEVENTH FLEET X
 INFO ARE USS COOLBAUGH AND USS HAAS X
 COMINCH SENDS

TOR/1801/GEG

From: COMINCH	Date: 3-24-45	Originated by:	Released by:
Action To: COM 7TH FLEET	Deferred <u>XXX</u>	Radio <u>XXX</u>	Restricted _____
	Routine _____	Visual _____	Confidential _____
	Priority _____	Mailgm. _____	Secret _____
Information To: HAAS / COOLBAUGH			

Unit Comdr	Unit Eng.	Unit Gun	Unit Comm	Capt	Exec	Gun	Eng.	1st Lt.	Sply	Terp	Comm	O.O.D.	Med	Comsy	CQM	Yeo

DECLASSIFIED

No Number

~~SECRET~~

5 1897

USS HAAS (DE 424)
FLEET POST OFFICE

San Francisco, Calif.

FILE NO. DE-424 (WGT)/A16-3

30 March 1945

SERIAL NO. 021-44

From: Commanding Officer.
To: Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet,
Assessment Committee.

Reference: (A) Cominch Dispatch 202215.

1. Samples of debris received by USS HAAS (DE-424) after attacks on submarine on 15 February 1945, latitude 11° 12' north, longitude 121° 21' east.

J. A. Rector
J. A. RECTOR

1945 MAR 29 10 09

1200
OFFICE
RECEIVED

5 1897
7273

THE JOINT ARMY-NAVY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

JAPANESE NAVAL AND MERCHANT SHIPPING LOSSES
DURING WORLD WAR II BY ALL CAUSES



FEBRUARY 1947

B. F. CAVALCANTE

For Sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office,
Washington 25, D. C. - 70 cents

F O R E W O R D

In January 1943 the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy agreed that the formation of a joint committee to assess enemy Naval and merchant shipping losses during World War II would be desirable. Accordingly the JOINT ARMY-NAVY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE was appointed for this purpose. This committee consisted of representatives of the Navy, the Army, and the Army Air Forces, with a joint Army-Navy secretariat. The pertinent paragraph of the Joint Army-Navy directive forming the Committee is quoted:

"By agreement between Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief, a Committee comprised of 4 Navy and 3 Army members is appointed to meet from time to time at the call of the senior member to study and evaluate reports of loss or damage of enemy Naval and Merchant vessels from all causes, except those cases considered by the Anti-Submarine Warfare Assessment Committee of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet. Findings of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Assessment Committee will be included in the overall evaluation of enemy losses without further review. Periodic reports of the Committee will be submitted jointly to the Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief".

Sources used by the Committee for compiling information on Japanese vessel losses have included the following:


Prisoner of War Reports
Captured Enemy Documents
United States and Allied Intelligence Sources
Naval Shipping Control Authority for Japanese Merchant Marine (SCAJAP)
Ariyoshi's Final List (Japanese)
Ariyoshi's List (Japanese)
Shipowners' List (Japanese)
Naval Ministry List (Japanese)
United States Mine Warfare Report
United States and Allied Action Summaries
United States Photographic Intelligence
United States Strategic Bombing Survey Reports

The assessment of losses, unanimously agreed to by all members of the committee, are listed on the following pages. They include:

- (a) All Naval vessels known or believed to have been lost.
- (b) All merchant vessels of 500 or more gross tons known or believed to have been lost.

A negligible number of vessels have not been assessed because of insufficient information as to the cause of loss.

3 February 1947


Rear Admiral, USN,
Chairman
Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Vessel</u>	<u>Type of Vessel</u>	<u>Standard Tonnage</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Flag of Agent</u>	<u>Type of Agent</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
January 31 1945	UME	Destroyer	2,100e	22-30N, 120-00E	United States	Army Aircraft	Sunk
		35 Vessels	34,804				
February 1 1945	TRANSPORT NO 115	Tank Landing Ship	1,000e	20-00N, 121-00E	United States	Army Aircraft	Sunk
2	COAST DEFENSE VESSEL NO 144	Frigate	800e	4-32N, 104-30E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
7	RO 55	Submarine	889	15-27N, 119-25E	United States	Surface Craft	Sunk
7	COAST DEFENSE VESSEL NO 53	Frigate	800	12-04N, 109-22E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
9	I 41	Submarine	2,212	18-50N, 121-40E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
11	RO 112	Submarine	525	18-53N, 121-50E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
12	RO 113	Submarine	525	19-10N, 121-23E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
14	COAST DEFENSE VESSEL NO 9	Frigate	800e	34-48N, 125-58E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
14	SPECIAL SUBMARINE CHASER NO 4	Special Submarine Chaser	100e	8-20S, 115-45E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
14	SPECIAL SUBMARINE CHASER NO 114	Special Submarine Chaser	100e	8-20S, 115-45E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
16	NARIU	Special Minelayer	720	32-10N, 135-54E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
17	TRANSPORT NO 114	Tank Landing Ship	1,000e	23-04N, 120-30E	United States	Army Aircraft	Sunk
17	COAST DEFENSE VESSEL NO 56	Frigate	750e	33-53N, 139-43E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
20	NOKAZE	Destroyer	1,300	12-48N, 109-38E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
23	SUBMARINE CHASER NO 35	Submarine Chaser	440	10-15N, 107-31E	United States	Army Aircraft	Sunk
23	YAKU	Frigate	900e	12-39N, 109-29E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
24	RO 49	Submarine	965	32-40N, 132-33E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
25	I 370	Submarine	1,470	22-45N, 141-27E	United States	Surface Craft	Sunk
25	RO 43	Submarine	965	25-07N, 140-19E	United States	Navy Carrier-Based Aircraft	Sunk
25	SHONAN	Frigate	900e	17-08N, 110-01E	United States	Submarine	Sunk
26	I 368	Submarine	1,470	24-43N, 140-37E	United States	Navy Carrier-Based Aircraft	Sunk
		21 Vessels	18,631				
March 1 1945	WANAZURU	Torpedo Boat	527	26-17N, 127-35E	United States	Navy Carrier-Based Aircraft	Sunk
1	TSUBANE	Special Minelayer	450	24-23N, 124-12E	United States	Navy Carrier-Based Aircraft	Sunk
2	TRANSPORT NO 143	Tank Landing Ship	1,000e	23-35N, 121-35E	United States	Army Aircraft	Probably sunk
3	HARIO	Miscellaneous Auxiliary	4,000e	18-10N, 109-40E	Australia	Mine*	Sunk
4	SUBMARINE CHASER NO 8	Submarine Chaser	290	4-04N, 100-35E	Great Britain	Submarine	Sunk

*Probable Agent

