

the personnel at that. At that time I was in F division. I made gunners mate third on there and then I shifted to aviation shortly thereafter. Of course they were building up the aviation force.

[Had they put the planes on board yet?]

Not yet, they were over at Floyd Bennett, and the original aviation unit had gone ahead and formed over there, until we ran our test and so forth on our catapults. I was aboard when she was torpedoed and I was aboard, in fact I was a gunner on a twenty millimeter after the starboard catapult in the Eastern Solomons or Stewart Island Battle it was called then. During the attack on the twenty fourth of August, 1942, we were under high altitude bombing which no one had even noticed with very variable misses, dive bombing attacks, torpedo plane attacks, and strafing attacks. Of course we were protecting the Enterprise and the other ships of the force. One Makiuima 96 on the starboard quarter came in and strafed and Conlin who was the loader on Hinson's gun next to me took a seven point seven through his stomach. Luckily my loader had just leaned over to pick up another drum of my ammunition, and the same string of bullets came across my position and tore into the empty cartridge case retaining bag which I was straddling and dumped the hot shells on to my legs and my feet. But of course we kept firing. I was having my gun crew duck behind the shield each time the bomb splashes would appear to protect them from shrapnel, and especially if I didn't have a target. We made a very abrupt turn to port and a tremendous column of black water drenched that section of the ship. It was unknown to me that a bomb had fallen so close to the ship and sent up this tremendous column of water that no one actually realized it. To this date I can't remember hearing that bomb go off or anything. It was so close it did put a slight dent back there by the waterways and that gun. Conlan, George Conlan, who of course I knew