

UNITED STATES SHIP STACK (DD406)

Friday  
(Day)

6,  
(Date)

August, 1943  
(Month)

Zone description Minus 11

Position	0800	1200	2000
Lat.	Port Purvis	9-10.0 S	8-37.5 S
Long.		160-10.5 E	157-09.5 E

**OPERATIONAL REMARKS**

**(WAR DIARY)**

00-04 Anchored in 20 fathoms of water with 60 fathoms of chain to the port anchor in Berth #7, Port Purvis Anchorage, Florida Islands. Following ships present: USS DUNLAP (ComDesDiv 12 SOPA) and other ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

*R.C. Bitlan*  
R.C. BITLAN, Ensign, U.S.N.R.

04-08 Anchored as before.

*M.G. Granda*  
M.G. GRANDA, Ensign, U.S.N.R.

08-12 Anchored as before. At 1128 underway in accordance with orders of CTF-31 for a sweep in Vella Gulf in company with CTG - 31.2 (USS DUNLAP), USS MAURY, USS CRAVEN (Div A-1) and USS LANG (CDD-15), USS STERETT, USS STACK (Div A-2). At 1200 set course 250° T & pgc and speed 32 knots, proceeding to rendezvous with USS STERETT.

*G.A. Speer*  
G.A. SPEER, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.R.

12-16 Steaming as before. At 1248 alongside USS STERETT to deliver CTG 31.2 orders. At 1345 in AA formation with TG 31.2 on course 269° T & pgc, speed 25 knots. At 1505 changed course to 286° T & pgc, 269° psc.

*G.A. Speer*  
G.A. SPEER, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.R.

16-20 Steaming as before. At 1818 darkened ship. At 1908 changed course to 307° T&pgc and 292° psc.

*M. Ellison Jr.*  
M. ELLISON, Jr., Lieut. U.S.N.R.

20-24 Steaming as before. At 2014 changed speed to 238 knots. At 2015 went to general quarters. At 2125 changed course to 000° T & pgc, 350° psc. At 2147 changed speed to 15 knots. At 2205 changed course to 050° T & pgc, 049° psc, entering Gizo Strait. At 2230 passed through Gizo Strait, changed course to 124° T & pgc, 125° psc, making sweep in division formation along North Shore Gizo Island, no contacts. At 2301 changed course to 000° T & pgc, 350° psc, making sweep along West Shore Kolombangara Island, No contacts. At 2324 changed course to 030° T & pgc; changed speed to 25 knots; making sweep up East Side Vella Gulf. At 2345 Radar contact on four enemy rounding Bangara Point, Vella Lavella Island. Div A-1 moving in for torpedo attack, Div A-2 taking station for torpedo and gunfire attack. At 2346 Div A-1 fired torpedoes. At 2348 Div A-2 opened fire, this vessel firing 4 torpedoes (one hit) and engaging with 5-inch battery. Targets observed to be all hit by torpedoes with gunfire effective immediately. Some weak return gunfire. At 2351 one target believed cruiser exploded and sank; one large target completely on fire; ceased fire; maneuvering radically.

*G.A. Speer*  
G.A. SPEER, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.R.

Approved:

*R.A. Newton*  
R.A. NEWTON,

Lieut-Comdr., USN Commanding Officer.

Examined:

*P.K. Sherman*  
P.K. SHERMAN,

Lieut-Comdr., USN,

Navigator.

To be forwarded direct to the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, either at end of an operation or at the end of the calendar month.

UNITED STATES SHIP STACK (DD406)

Saturday 7, August, 19 43  
(Day) (Date) (Month)

Zone description Minus 11

Position	0800	1200	2000
Lat.	8-54.0 S	Tulagi	9-08.0 S
Long.	159-28.5 E	Harbor	158-48.5 E

**OPERATIONAL REMARKS**

**(WAR DIARY)**

00-04 Engaged with enemy force in company with own TG31.2 in Vella Gulf off Bangam Point, Vella LaVella Island. At 2403 resumed fire. Two small (DD) targets observed to sink; large ship target burning to water-line. At 2427 fired two torpedoes at burning target, (no hits). At 2445 ceased firing; 121 rounds 5"/38 Cal. expended, no casualties. Maneuvering in target area. Observed many survivors in water. At 0115 Div A-1 retiring to Purvis; this division searching area for survivors. Contacts made but survivors refused to be rescued. At 0230 Div A-2 retiring to Purvis on various courses and at various speeds, standard speed 30 knots. At 0340 secured from general quarters and set condition of readiness II-M.

*G.A. Speer*  
G.A. SPEER, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.R.

04-08 Steaming as before, on course 100° T & pgc at 31 knots. At 0450 changed course to 121° T & pgc, 123° psc. At 0540 general quarters for dawn alert. At 0725 secured from general quarters and set condition of readiness II-M.

*G.A. Speer*  
G.A. SPEER, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.R.

08-12 Steaming as before, on course 120° T & pgc, 120° psc at 30 knots. At 0932 made all preparations for entering port, proceeding on various courses and at various speeds. At 0935 made inspection of magazines and smokeless powder samples; conditions normal. At 1016 moored outboard of USS LANG alongside Fuel Barge in Tulagi Harbor, Florida Islands.

*R.C. Bitzan*  
R.C. BITZAN, Ensign, U.S.N.R.

12-16 Moored as before. At 1216 completed fueling, having received 53,360 gallons fuel oil. At 1242 underway. At 1249 anchored in Berth #4, Tulagi Harbor, Florida Island. At 1315 completed taking on ammunition, having received 200 rounds 5"/38 Cal. projectiles and 200 rounds Flashless powder. At 1400 received 4 Mk. XV Mod. 1 torpedoes, less warheads from Base Ammunition Depot.

*G.A. Speer*  
G.A. SPEER, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.R.

16-20 Anchored as before. At 1605 anchor aweigh. At 1609 all engines ahead 2/3 standing out of Tulagi Harbor. At 1617 changed speed to 20 knots (194 rpm). At 1622 changed speed to 30 knots (316 rpm); changed base course to 266° T & pgc, 249° psc. At 1649 changed base course to 265° T & pgc, 248° psc. At 1655 boiler #2 out in on main steam line. At 1656 changed speed to 32 knots (338 rpm); changed base course to 263° T & pgc, 246° psc. At 1707 changed speed to 35 knots (372 rpm); changed course to 270° T & pgc, 253° psc. At 1742 lost suction on #3 boiler, changed speed to 20 knots (194 rpm). At 1752 changed speed to 28 knots (292 rpm); engines making maximum speed, increasing as possible. At 1818 speed 33 knots (346 rpm). At 1820 sighted USS LANG and convoy bearing 269° T. At 1822 darkened ship. At 1825 maneuvering on various courses and at various speeds taking station ahead of LST convoy; relieving USS LANG on station. At 1840 passed Russell Islands abeam to starboard, distance 4½ miles. At 1840 changed speed to 12 knots (110 rpm); commenced patrolling on base course 283° T & pgc, 268° psc.

*J.M. Ellison Jr.*  
J.M. ELLISON, Jr., Lieut. U.S.N.R.

20-24 Steaming as before. At 2030 passed Buraku Island abeam to starboard, distance 7 miles. At 2350 SG Radar picked up contact bearing 018° T, distance 18,000 yards, zigzagging on course 030° T.

Approved: *A.A. Newton*  
A.A. NEWTON,  
Lieut-Comdr., USN, Commanding Officer.

Examined: *H.E. Shear*  
H.E. SHEAR, Lt.(jg), U.S.N.  
*P.R. Shearman*  
P.R. SHEARMAN, Lt.  
Lieut-Comdr., U.S.N., Navigator.

To be forwarded direct to the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, either at end of an operation or at the end of the calendar month.

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Change Over 644-57  
**SECRET**

When Replying Please  
Refer to No.

DD406/A16-1  
S-E-C-R-E-T  
Ser. No. (008)

U. S. S. STACK (406)

(PE)  
% Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.,  
August 14, 1943.

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To : The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Via : The Commander Destroyer Division FIFTEEN.  
The Commander Destroyer Division TWELVE,  
(Commander Task Group 31.2).  
The Commander Task Force THIRTY ONE.  
The Commander South Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report for Night of 6-7 August, 1943.

Reference: (a) PacFlt Conf. Ltr. 36CL-42.

Enclosures: (A) Narrative. - p. 2  
(B) Track Chart.

1. In compliance with reference (a), enclosure (A)  
and (B) are herewith submitted.

*R. A. Newton*  
R. A. NEWTON

Advanced Copy to: Com in Chief, U.S. Fleet.  
CinC Pac.

Copies to: CinCPac.  
ComSoPac.  
ComDesPac.  
ComTaskFor 31.  
ComTaskGroup 31.2.  
ComDesDiv 15.  
File.

[53456]



SECRET

-1-

NARRATIVE

1. COMMENTS AND SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

At 1130 Love 6 August, 1943 this vessel departed Purvis Bay, Florida Island in company with other destroyers of Task Group 31.2 in accordance with orders of Commander Task Force THIRTY ONE to Commander Task Group 31.2 to proceed to Vella Gulf and destroy any enemy encountered.

After entering Vella Gulf through Gizo Strait the course was changed at 2230 to 124° True at 15 knots speed to permit a close search of the shore of Gizo Island for any enemy barge traffic that might be moving along the shore enroute to or from Kolombangara Island. At 2301 course was changed to 000° True and at 2324 changed course to 030° True and speed to 25 knots. The search for enemy traffic along Gizo and Kolombangara Island was negative up to this time. Shortly after this, contact was made by S.G. Radar and tracking commenced. Solution of tracking gave four ships in column on course 175° True speed 27 knots. DIVISION ABLE ONE which was on the port bow of DIVISION ABLE TWO turned in to make a torpedo attack. After this attack was completed DIVISION ABLE TWO turned in to attack with torpedoes and/or gunfire. As the Stack was making her to turn to westward and then the southward following in the wake of the next ahead, the torpedoes from DIVISION ABLE ONE were observed to hit the target. One ship was immediately enveloped in flames and a small fire was observed on a second but this was quickly extinguished. It is believed that all four targets received one or more torpedo hits at this time. After steadying on the southerly course, the torpedo officer informed the Commanding Officer that he had an excellent target and orders were given to fire the starboard torpedo battery which was done. At the same time fire was opened with the main battery. This vessel continued following the movements of the Division leader firing on targets with guns and torpedoes as opportunity offered, until all enemy ships were destroyed. DIVISION ABLE ONE was engaging with guns at this time.

When it was determined that there were no more enemy ships in the area, DIVISION ABLE TWO made a search for enemy survivors and attempted to pick up some prisoners for intelligence purposes. There were many enemy found in the water but attempts to get any of them on board were unsuccessful. At 0208 commenced forming up on the Lang and retiring down the slot at 30 knots. Arrived Tulagi at 0950, 7 August, 1943.

2. PRELIMINARY EVENTS

At 0930, 6 August Commander Task Group 31.2 held a conference in the Dunlap of Division Commanders and Commanding Officers and explained to them the orders of Commander Task Force

-1-

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THIRTY ONE in regard to the projected operations and his (CTG 31.2) intentions and Battle Plan for carrying out the orders. As a result of this conference a complete and thorough understanding of the operations and the action to be followed was obtained by all hands.

Departure from Purvis Bay was taken at 1130 Love 6 August in company with USS DUNLAP, CRAVEN, MAURY, and LANG. The USS STERETT joined off Savo Island.

The six destroyers were organized into two divisions as follows:

COMMANDER TASK GROUP 31.2 Commander F. Moosburger, USN.

DIVISION ABLE ONE - Commander F. Moosburger, USN.

Dunlap  
Craven  
Maury

DIVISION ABLE TWO - Commander R.W. Simpson, USN.

Lang  
Sterett  
Stack

Course was set so that the Task Group would pass south of Russell and Rendova Islands and arrive at Point Option in Latitude 8-03 S, Longitude 156-41 E at about 2200. Daylight fighter coverage and Black Cat coverage at night was provided. This vessel had the TBL on the bridge set on the Black Cat frequency but heard no transmissions of any kind from them on this circuit between sunset and sunrise.

The passage from Purvis Bay to Point Option and through Gizo Strait was made without incident..

During the search for the enemy along Gizo Island and the early part of the run close in to Kolombangara, the sky was overcast but gave a surface visibility of 3,500-4,000 yards, after turning to course 030° True the sky became completely overcast, there were frequent rain squalls and the visibility was reduced to about 1,500 yards. The sea was calm.

### 3. CHRONOLOGICAL LOG OF BATTLE

- 2015 Sounded general quarters.
- 2125 Changed course to 000° T approaching Gizo Strait.
- 2147 Changed speed to 15 knots.
- 2211 Changed course to 050° T passing between Gizo and Vella Vavella Island. The S.G. Radar during this time was searching very carefully through 360° and also obtaining navigational fixes.

- 2230 Changed course to 124<sup>0</sup> T and commenced careful search for any barge traffic close inshore to Gizo Island and for any larger targets out in Vella Gulf.
- 2257 Changed course to 000<sup>0</sup> T and continued same search along Kolombangara Island.
- 2322 Changed course to 030<sup>0</sup> T and changed speed to 25 knots. The visual and S.G. Radar search up to this time was negative. The Commanding Officer feels that it is extremely fortunate that the search for barges was negative because we most certainly would have taken them under fire and thereby disclosed our position which would in all probability have caused the approaching enemy cruiser and destroyers to retire and prevented the victory which was ours in less than an hour.
- 2335 Received TBS transmission from Dunlap stating that she had a contact bearing 350<sup>0</sup> T, distance 19,000 yards. Picked up target with S.G. Radar and started tracking and shortly thereafter identified target as four ships in column on course 175<sup>0</sup> True speed 27 knots.
- 2342 DIVISION ABLE ONE fired torpedoes. Changing course to westward and then southward following in the wake of the ship ahead.
- 2346 Torpedoes fired by DIVISION ABLE ONE hit targets. Observed one ship to be completely enveloped in flames and a small fire on a second which was quickly extinguished. Believe that all four enemy ships were hit by torpedoes at this time.
- 2347 Torpedo officer reported that he had a good target near the burning enemy ship. Ordered starboard torpedoes fired at this target. This order was carried out and from the statement of numerous officers and men it is believed that at least one hit was obtained.
- 2348 Opened fire with main battery on the burning ship and then shifted to a target on the left of the burning ship. This target was observed by a number of people to roll over and sink. It was probably a destroyer.
- 2353 Ceased firing. Maneuvering following the division.
- 0000 After steading on course 090<sup>0</sup> True picked up target to right of burning ship and opened fire on it together with the other ships of DIVISION ABLE TWO. This ship disintegrated under the concentrated heavy fire of the ships of the Task Group and sank.
- 0005 Ceased firing.
- 0005 Maneuvering following the division and searching for any to targets other than the burning ship.
- 0020
- 0022 Received orders from Commander DIVISION ABLE TWO to fire two torpedoes at the burning cruiser.
- 0025 Fired two torpedoes from the port torpedo battery at the burning cruiser. Results of own torpedoes hitting uncertain.
- 0030 Continuing search for any other targets and attempting to pick up some enemy survivors for intelligence purposes.
- 0209 Commenced retiring down the slot at 30 knots.
- 0340 Having passed Visuvisu Point and the entrance to Kula Gulf, secured from general quarters.



4.

## SPECIAL COMMENT ON ENEMY FORCES

The enemy must not have been expecting an encounter with an opponent and it is most certain that he did not know of our presence until he was hit by torpedoes. The surprise and setting on fire of the cruiser with probable torpedo hits on all four ships so completely disorganized him that he did not have a chance to make any coordinated resistance.

There were so many men in the water that they could not have all been members of the crew of the ships, so in all probability the ships were carrying troops and supplies to Kolombangara as reinforcements for Vila.

5.

## SPECIAL COMMENT ON OWN FORCES

The torpedo attack delivered by DIVISION ABLE ONE was outstanding in every respect and should refute the belief that some people apparently have that "our torpedoes and torpedo control is not as good as it should be".

The attack from start to finish was carried out in a most determined and relentless manner. The enemy was kept under a heavy and continuous fire from the beginning to the end and until all ships were sunk.

The fire control and battery performance on this ship was excellent throughout. The Sugar George Radar came through in the usual high standard and C-I-C furnished the Commanding Officer and fire control continuous and accurate information of own and enemy ships throughout the action. The Fox Dog Radar gave satisfactory results at all times.

No damage or casualties to the ship or personnel of any kind was suffered.

6.

## COMMENDATIONS WERE MERITED

The Commanding Officer in separate correspondence has recommended the following commendations:

### LEGION OF MERIT

Lieutenant James Mc Mechan ELLISON, Jr., E-V(S), U.S. Naval Reserve, Officer-in-Charge and Evaluator in C-I-C.

### SILVER STAR MEDAL

Lieutenant Commander Philip Kingsland SHERMAN, U.S. Navy, Executive Officer, U.S.S. STACK (DD406).

Lieutenant (jg) Reuben Emil STRELOW, U.S. Navy, Gunnery Officer, U.S.S. STACK (DD406).

JONES, Charles Rex, #262-67-25, TM2c., U.S. Navy.

SECRET

-5-

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS. MEDAL

ROGOWAY, Donald Lionel, #413-21-18, RT2c. V-6, U.S. Naval Reserve.

All other officers and enlisted personnel are to be commended for their performance of duty during the above action. There is no one attached to this Command deserving of censure.

7. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If this ship is to continue duty in the Pacific where surface actions are highly probable, it is strongly recommended that torpedo tube mounts number three and four be reinstalled. This would give each torpedo battery eight torpedoes instead of the present four and make the ship more potent offensively against surface targets. All power and fire control circuits for these mounts are still in the ship and are dead ended in the after engine room.

ENCLOSURE (A) to C.O. STACK  
SECRET Ltr. Ser. No. (008) of  
August 14, 1943.

61



o 2336

C 175° T  
S 27 KTS

Targets Sink

0020

Burning Ship

① 2353

< - Torp #2 - - - 0025

② 2343  
< - Torp #1 - - -

2337  
2348  
MAIN  
BATT

2353

2358

2356

0015

2338

0000

0005

MAIN BATT  
#2

2336

0008

C 030° T  
S 25 KTS

Scale 1" = 1 Mile  
Wind: NE, Force 4  
Sea Cond. 2 SE  
Visibility 1500yds.  
Clouds 9  
Weather Sym. R

Enclosure B To  
C.O. Stack  
Sec. No. 008

COMMANDER DESTROYER DIVISION FIFTEEN  
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
U.S.S. WILSON, Flagship

FB4-15/A16-3  
RWS/clh  
Serial: 0020

C/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.,  
17 October 1943.

S-E-C-R-E-T

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to:  
CO USS STACK (406)  
Secret ltr. DD406-A16-1,  
Serial No. (008) of 14  
August 1943.

From: The Commander Destroyer Division FIFTEEN.  
To : The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet,  
Via : The Commander Destroyer Division TWELVE,  
(Commander Task Group 31.2)  
The Commander Task Force THIRTY-ONE.  
The Commander South Pacific Force.

Subject: Action Report for Night of 6-7 August 1943.

Reference: (a) CDD-15 Secret Serial 005 of 12 August 1943.

1. Forwarded.
2. Commander Destroyer Division FIFTEEN's comments on subject action are contained in reference (a).
3. Delay in forwarding basic report is due to mail going to U.S.S. LANG at Navy Yard, Mare Island, California, and then forwarded to this command.

  
RODGER W. SIMPSON



COMMANDER DESTROYER DIVISION TWELVE  
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
U.S.S. DUNLAP, Flagship

FB4-12/A16-3  
HPS/pfm  
Serial: 0039

C/o Fleet post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.,  
26 October, 1943.

S E C R E T

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:  
CO USS STACK (406)  
Secret ltr. DD406-A16-1  
Serial No. (008) of 14  
August 1943.

From: The Commander Destroyer Division TWELVE (~~STG-31.2~~)  
To : The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Via : The Commander Task Force THIRTY-ONE.  
The Commander South Pacific Force.

Subject: Action Report for Night of 6-7 August 1943.

1. Forwarded.

*Harold P. Smith*  
Harold P. SMITH.



File No. FE25/A16-3(3) THIRD AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

11/cpw

Serial 00619

Office of the Commander

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~  
**SECRET**

13 December 1943.

THIRD ENDORSEMENT to  
CO STACK ltr A16-1  
serial 008 dated  
14 August 1943.

From: Commander Task Force THIRTY-ONE.  
To : Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Via : Commander South Pacific.

Subject: Action Report for night of 6-7 August 1943.

Reference: (a) CTF 31 ltr FE25/A16-3(3) serial 00339  
of 3 September 1943.

1. Forwarded. Comments on this action were made in reference (a).

2. Attention is invited to paragraph 7 of the basic letter recommending the re-installation of torpedo tubes. With the evidence of successful use of torpedoes in this action, and with the probability of further night actions in the Pacific, in which actions opportunities for torpedoes arise may well arise initially (as in this engagement) or subsequently, the return of destroyers to their primary role, that of torpedo-carriers, is indicated. Hence, every measure practicable should, it is believed, be taken to increase the torpedo battery.

*T. S. Wilkinson*

T. S. WILKINSON.

Copy to:  
ComDesDiv 15  
ComDesDiv 12  
CO, USS STACK

COMSOPAC FILE

A16-3/(91)  
Serial 002811

S-E-C-R-E-T

*A16-3/AUB*

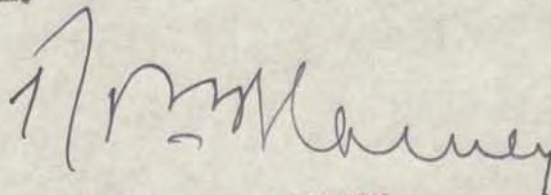
SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE  
OF THE UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT to  
CO STACK ltr. A16-1  
serial 008 dated  
14 August 1943.

11980  
RECEIVED  
DEC 30 A.M.  
CINCPAC  
44325  
27 DEC 1943

From: The Commander South Pacific.  
To : The Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.  
Subject: Action Report for night of 6-7 August 1943.

1. Forwarded.
2. The recommendation that torpedo tube mounts #3 and #4 be reinstalled is heartily concurred in.



ROBT. B. CARNEY,  
Chief of Staff.

Copy to:  
CTF 31  
Comdesdiv 12  
Comdesdiv 15  
Comdespac  
Repcomdespacsopac  
CO STACK



Cincpac File

Pac-3-Sn  
Al6-3/AUG

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS  
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Serial 00410

**SECRET**

SECRET

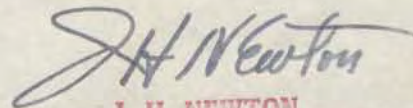
5th Endorsement on  
CO STACK ltr. Al6-1  
Serial 008 dated  
14 August 1943.

JAN 3 1944

From: Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.  
To : Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report for night of 6-7 August,  
1943.

1. Forwarded, for comment and return of all  
papers.



J. H. NEWTON  
Deputy Commander in Chief  
Pacific Ocean Areas

1521



795

A16-3/ang

A16-3

DESTROYERS, PACIFIC FLEET

Serial 088

~~SECRET~~



13 JAN 1944

SIXTH ENDORSEMENT on  
CO STACK ltr. A16-1  
serial 008 dated  
14 August 1943.

From: The Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet.  
 To : The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.  
 Subject: Action Report for Night of 6 - 7 August 1943.

1. Returned.
2. Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, concurs in the desirability of increasing the torpedo armament of this and similar ships. However, stability characteristics prevent the re-installation of these tube mounts without removing equivalent weights. No weights can be removed without reducing the firepower and this is not recommended.

J. L. KAUFFMAN