



Room 1728

DECK LOG BOOK

U. S. S. Sterett DD407

Month of July

19/

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II

HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE

MQ

ADDITIONAL SHEET

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OFFICERS ATTACHED:	RANK:	NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF I	XIN:
GOULD, Frank Gardner	Lt Cdr	Mrs. Jean Grenier Gould 131 High Street Santa Cruz, California	Wife
MILLER, David Charles	Lieut DE-V(G) USNR	Mrs. Minnie Barbara Miller 702 Gardenia Avenue Royal Oak, Michigan	Mother
JEFFREY, Joseph Daniel	Lt(jg)	Mrs. Virginia Lee Jeffrey 4304 Forest Lane, N.W. Washington, D. C.	Wife
MAY, Herbert Arthur Jr.	Lt(jg) D-V(G) USNR	Mr. Herbert Arthur May, Sr. 6530 Beacon Street Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Father
HANNA, Gordon Winfield	Lt(jg) D-V(G) USNR	Mrs. Carrie May Hanna Youngman Apartments Santa Cruz, California	Wife
SHIRLEY, Houston Iluf	*Lt(jg) D-V(G) USNR	Mrs. Gracie Idella Shirley Box 893 Tulsa, Oklahoma	Mother
DOLSON, Max Theodore	#Lt(jg) O-V(S) USNR	Mrs. Lola Fern Dolson 6767 Yucca Street Hollywood, California	Mother
HALL, Perry	Lt(jg)	Mrs. Florence Patricia Hall Youngman Apartments Santa Cruz, California	. Wife
HIBBEN, Carl Boone	Lt(jg) E-V(G) USNR	Mr. Frank Hibben Route #3 Chattanooga, Tennessee	Father
STEPHENS, Thomas Mattei	Lt(jg) E-V(RS) USNR	Mr. William Gaston Stephens 756 First Street Woodland, California	Father
HIGHTOWER, Robert Henry Jr.	Ensign D-V(G) USNR	Mr. Robert Henry Hightower, S Park Place Dublin, Georgia	r. Fathe
POOR, Daniel Sidney	Ensign D-V(G) USNR	Ensign Henry Varnum Poor 5729 Lambeth Road Bethesda, Maryland	Brother
POMERANCE, Sherman	Ensign D-V(G) USNR	Mrs. Carolyn Pomerance 1750 Maple Avenue Salt Lake City, Utah	Wife
RIFFIN, Omer Love	Ensign D-V(G) USNR	Mrs. Ruth P. Moore Griffin 3119 Eaton Avenue Berkeley, California	Wife
YCE, Harry Cope	Lieut. (MC) USNR	Mrs. Arlene Winifred Nyce 301 Emaus Street Middletown, Pennsylvania	Wife
TELD, Oliver Frederick Jr.	Lt(jg) (SC) USNR	Mr. Oliver Frederick Field, St. Prosper, Texas	r. Father

- * Transferred to U.S. Naval Mobile Hospital Unit No. 4 for hospitalization.
- # Transferred to U.S. Naval Advance Gunnery School, Noumea, New Caledonia for temporary duty under instruction.

Approved:

F. G. GOULD Lieut. Comdr., USN. Examined:

D. C. MILLER
Lieutenant .v. s..

U. S. N., Bravigator.

DD407/A7-3 SECRET

U.S.S. STER ""1' (7407) c/o Fleet Post Oralco San Francisco, California

10 August 1943.

From: ro : The Commanding Officer.

The Commander-in-Chief, First Fleet.

Via:

(1) The Commander Destroyer Division FIFTEEN.

(2) The Commander Task Group 31.2. (3) The Commander Task Force 31. (4) The Commander THIRD Fleet.

Subject:

Report of action, for night of 6-7 August, 1943.

Refere nce:

(a) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920; Art. 712

and 874(6). (b) PacFlt Conf. Ltr. No. 24CL-42.

Enclosure:

(A) Narrative. - P. 2

(B) Track Charts. - P. 8 - P. 9.

In compliance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (A) and (B) are forwarded herewith.

F. G. GOULD

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Advance copy to: Cominch. CincFirst Flt. v

Copy to:

CincFirst Flt. ComThird Flt.

ComTaskFor 31. 2) ComTaskGroup 31.2.

ComDesDiv 15. ComDesPac.

RepComDesPacSoPac.

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Enclosure A of DD407/A7-3 Secret 1tr. dated 10 August 1943

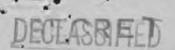
COMMENTS AND SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

- 1. Task Group 31.2, consisting of six destroyers on the night of 6-7 August, 1943 stood into Vella Gulf, Solomon Islands, from the southward on an offensive patrol searching for enemy shipping. The Task Group Commander, Commander Moosbrugger (CDD12) in the USS DUNLAP, USS CRAVEN and USS MAURY formed Division A-1. Commander Simpson, (CDD15) in the USS LANG. USS STERETT and USS STACK formed Division A-2. Our forces were disposed in a line of divisions in column, distance between divisions 4000 yards, distance between ships 500 yards.
- 2. At 2335 first radar contact was made on four enemy ships which were later identified as one cruiser and three destroyers. Division A-1 conducted a torpedo attack. As soon as torpedoes hit, both divisions opened gun fire. Division A-2 conducted a torpedo attack on the disabled and burning enemy. When all the enemy in the area had been sunk, Division A-1 left by the northern entrance of the Gulf to return to Guadalcanal. Division A-2 remained in the battle area for about a half-hour searching for prisoners, then followed.
- though seen to fire a few rounds, evidently did not know what he was firing at. The cruiser was enveloped in flames immediately and sunk by repeated torpedo and five-inch hits. The USS STERETT took under gun fire successively the burning cruiser, a destroyer with two stacks and well forward of bridge, and a square ended object with the appearance of a landing barge or deck house. The latter two targets exploded and sank after only a few hits. None of our force suffered any damage.
- from the number of men seen in the water and the large fires observed after hits. After the action there was a strong smell of oil and kerosene throughout the area.

II PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

- 1. Intelligence reports indicated that a Japanese force consisting of destroyers and possibly one cruiser would arrive at Volla Gulf area about midnight 6-7 August, 1943. Contact was first made on a group of enemy ships at 2325 by the USS PUNLAP by SG Radar.
- 2. At 2230 Division A-2 was bearing 150° T, distant 4000 yards from Division A-1, both divisions in column.
- 3. Wind from SE, force two. Sea smooth, gulf nearly land-locked. Visibility about 4000 yards, but varied with passing light rain squalls. Moonset 2223.

- 2030 Ship at General Quarters; Material Confident Affirm, Ships in column formation. Division One, composed of USS DUNLAP, (Commander Moosbrugger), USS CRAVEN, and USS HAURY, leading Division Two composed of USS LANG, (Commander Simpson), USS STERETT and USS STACK.
- 2200 Passing through Gizo strait on course 0500 True, speed 15 knots.
- 2230 Steadied on course 124° True, Division Two in column formed on bearing 150° True from Division One. Division One also in column. Passing Gizo Island distant about 3 miles.
- 2300 Executed 000 Corpon given on TBS. Passing along west coast of Kolombangara Island distant about 2.3 miles.
- 2320 Executed Corpen 030, and increased speed to 25 knots, given on TBS.
- 2335.5 Radar contact report made by ship of Division One on TBS.
- 2337 Made contact on SG Radar with target bearing 343° True, range 22,000 yards. Commenced tracking.
- 2340 Division One maneuvering to deliver torpedo attack in accordance with Battle Plan. Four ships now showing on SG screen, in column formation. Course as determined by CIC, 180° True; speed 30 knots. Enemy ships appeared to be zig-zagging, going from course 180° to course 175° and then to course 185° True.
- 2341 Division Two changed course to attack enemy force with gun fire, in accordance with Battle Plan. Division One launched torpedoes.
- 2346 Observed explosions on two enemy ships, USS LANG commenced firing.
- 2346-5 USS STERETT commenced firing, using full radar control on target designated by CIC, range 7000 yards. Target appeared to be enemy cruiser. Additional explosions were observed as our shells struck. Cruiser burning brightly illuminating area. Shifted to partial radar control.
- 2351 Checked fire. Gun #1 had a jammed breach after ninth salvo and did no further firing.
- 2352 Division Corpon 090.
- 2358 Division 270 Corpen.
- 0003 USS STERETT commenced firing on burning cruiser.



- 0007 Checked fire. C/C right to north, the 1000 True.
- 0015 USS STERETT commenced firing on burning cruiser.
- 0016 Shifted fire to Japanese destroyer with two stacks and well forward of bridge, which was observed close to and moving away to the right from the burning cruiser, being well illuminated by it. Target angle 120° range 4800 yards. One hit was observed on the destroyer's forecastle, followed by a salvo of three which struck it squarely amidships. A violent explosion followed immediately and this target up-ended and sank in less than one minute.
- 0018 Commenced firing at large barge or hulk observed near and being illuminated by burning cruiser, range 4300 yards. This object was hit by the fourth salvo which set off a large explosion. It sank immediately.
- 0020 Ceased firing.
- Fired two torpedoes at burning cruiser from 5000 yards, which apparently sank about the same time, as no hits were observed.
- 0032 Circling to right on various courses to head back toward burning objects.
- 0123 Completed sweep through area discovered no further targets.
 On various courses heading back to vicinity of sunken ships to search for Japanese survivors and attempt rescue of same.
- 0153 Circling area searching for Japanese survivors.
- 0213 Unable to get any Japanese survivors aboard, although they were heard in vicinity. Resumed division column, course north, speed 30 knots, departing area and proceeding Tulagi.
- 0219 Division Corpen 080, given on TBS.
- 0225 Division Corpen 100, given on TBS.
- 0244 Passing northern point of Kolombangara Island on starboard beam distant about 3.8 miles.



IV

SPECIAL COMMENTS ON ENEMY FORCES

- l. The enemy force consisted of four ships. One light cruiser proceeding in column with three destroyers following, is the belief of most observers. Tracking revealed them steaming at 26 29 knots, on course 180° True. The enemy was completely surprised and no noticeable tactics were attempted after they were hit. No enemy planes were encountered. One destroyer which up-ended and sank following gun fire by this vessel had two stacks, and some observers state they saw a well forward of bridge, and raised forecastle.
 - 2. Dim white flashing light signals noted.
- 3. No opportunity for enemy to employ smoke or deception.
- 4. Ene my gun fire consisted of a few salvos which were apparently fired at random at no definite target. This gun fire was entirely ineffective.
- destroyers mentioned in paragraph (1). It is believed that these ships were carrying troop reinforcements due to the large number of survivors in the water. Some of the personnel may have been picked up by enemy landing barges in the morning, but it is certain that practically no equipment was saved. From the way the large vessel burned, (from end to end), she may have had a deck load of oil or kerosene drums.

SPECIAL COMMENTS ON OWN FORCES.

Following material casualties were suffered:

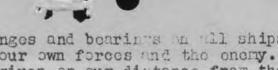
1. On about the twentieth salvo, gun #3 projectile and powder did not enter far enough to permit plug to close. Cork had to be cut to permit powder to enter chamber far enough for plug to close. Projectiles fired on this gun were in first class condition and powder case did not seem to be malformed. Only explanation seemed to be that cork was too long. Powder SPDN 3319. Further details lacking since case was lost in subsequent action. On the tenth salvo gun #1 plug jammed apparently due to brass scaling off a too thick powder case rim. Rim appeared to be seated snugly against rear of chamber. Scaling entered groove between housing and plug, making plug bind and causing heavy scoring of groove of housing and plug. When powder case was removed, plug would still not be closed by normal use of operating lever. Plug was finally closed by maul on bottom and three men on operating lever.



It was then reopened in the same manner, another powder case rammed, and then closed as before. The gun was unleaded through the muzzle. After firing, the plug operated in perfectly normal manner. Powder SPDN 3980, further details lacking since it was hot and thrown overboard on being removed from gun. No close examination was possible.

- 2. The first five salvos were fired with tracers plugged. Prior to the action each handling room was provided 25 projectiles with tracer element plugged with 1/8th inch asbestos disc. Since two ships were burning fiercely when we opened fire, it was not deemed necessary to continue the non-tracer fire. Subsequent targets were well-illuminted and tracers were advantageous to spot on. At any time further on in the action a shift could have been made to the non-tracer projectiles to insure that our position would not be given away.
- 3. Full radar control was employed in opening fire using data obtained from CIC. After first five salvos, partial radar control was used. Ranging was done by FD Radar throughout the battle.
 - 4. Following ammunition was expended:
 - 10 5"/38 Common Dye-loaded projectiles.
 - 142 5"/38 AA Common projectiles.
 - 153 Flashless Powder SPDN 3319 and 3980.
 - 1 MK 15 Torpedo with MK17 Warhead.
 - 1 MK 15-1 Torpedo with MK15-1 Warhead.
- Before any radar contact was made, an SG search had been conducted intermittently on both the long and short scales. The long scale was primarily used. Numerous rain squalls in the vicinity appeared on the screen throughout the evening. Contact was established on the target at a range of 22,000 yards bearing 3430. As the targets closed in swiftly, it became apparent at 17,000 yards there were four distinct ships. These targets were tracked into a range of around 7,000 yards at which time the firing began. Remote bearing indications were also given to the director to help coach them onto the target. When the firing began, close tracking of the targets ceased and 3600 sweeps on both the long and short scales were made. During the firing, our own salvos could be seen both on the range and PPI scopes. All of the observed salvos disappeared into the target pip and therefore needed no range or deflection correction. Projectile splashes from other ship's fire were also seen on the PPI scope as they hit in close proximity to the target.

· 上底且体88月日



- 6. CIC was given ranges and bearings in all ships in the vicinity including both our own forces and the enemy. Occasional ranges were also given on our distance from the beach. Three of the ships were seen to disappear from the screen of our PPI Scope as they sank during the engagement. -No other contacts were made on the SG throughout the night.
- The SG Radar worked admirably during the firing. It was out of operation a total of about 10 seconds as the overload relay was thrown out once by the shock of gunfire. Resetting the relay restored operation immediately. equipment remained in perfect tune throughout the entire engagement.
 - 8. No carrier aircraft involved.
- The Engineering Department answered all bells promptly and had no casualties. The Medical Department stood by, but had no customers.
 - No damage to own vessel. 10.
 - No casualties to personnel. 11.

COMMENDATIONS WHERE MERITED. VI

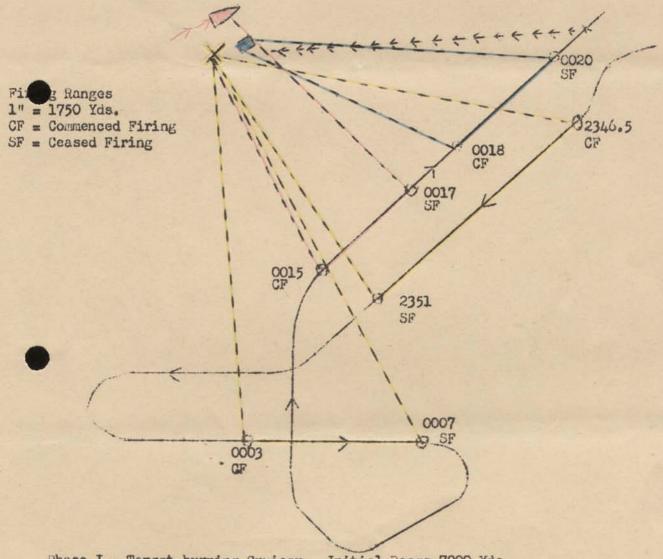
The morale of the crew was at its highest, and every officer and man performed his duty, cooly, efficiently, and in a highly creditable manner. Detailed commendations are covered in separate correspondence.

IESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS. VII

- 1. It is recommended that all 5"/38 caliber powder cases be carefully gauged prior to issue to forces afloat, to detect oversize corks and other defects. Destroyers did this gauging in peace time, but it is obviously impossible for them to do so when operating near the enemy in war time.
- It is recommended that the extra SG Radar PPI scope for the pilot house be installed as soon as possible, to assist the Commanding Officer in his estimate of the situation.
- It is recommended that all vessels of a night attacking force be repared to render tracers inoperative when secrecy of own position is paramount.

U.S.S. STERETT 5" Firing Thases Battle of Vella Gulf August 6-7, 1943

Including Torpedo Firing

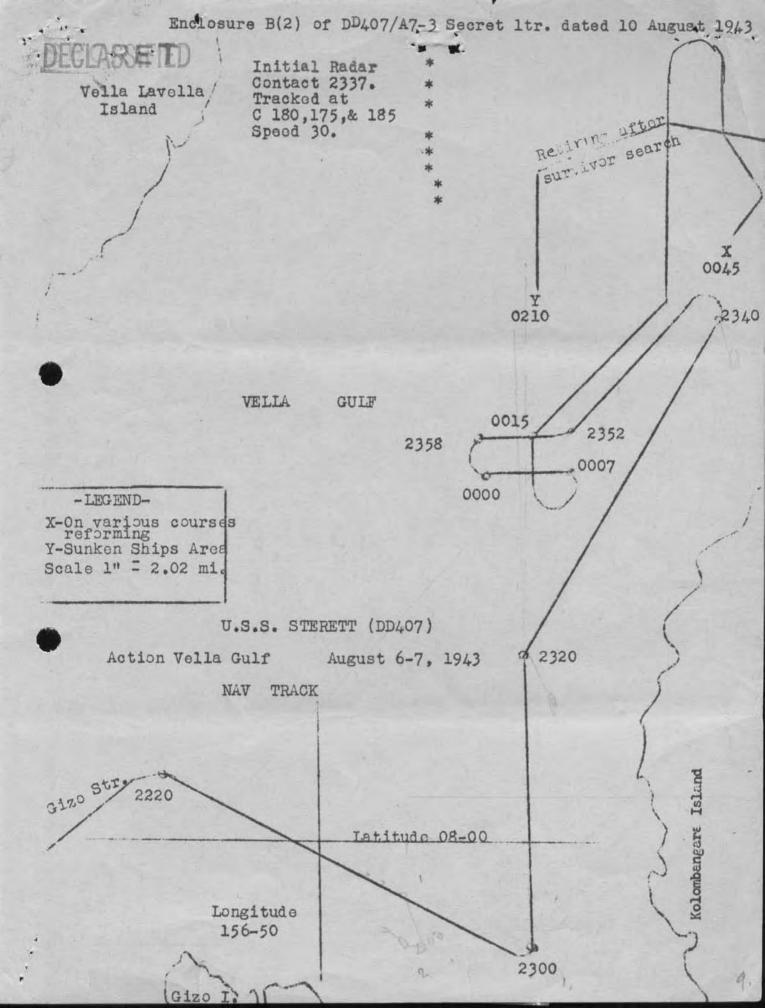


Phase I - Target burning Cruiser - Initial Range 7000 Yds.

Phase II - Target 2 stack DD tentatively identified as of the Kamikaze class. Also fired on burning cruiser - Initial range 4800 Yds.

Phase III - Target large Barge or Landing Craft - Initial Range 4300 Yds.

Torpedoes Fired.



16-18

Steaming as before; 1650 signted land bearing 252 to 25 motos (247 RPM). 1758 sighted land bearing 000 T, range 10 miles. Identified as Tetipari Island.

Ave. Steam 580

H. I. Shirley Lt(jg) D-V(G), U.S.N.R.

Ave. RPM 237.5

18-20

Steaming as before. 1800 took station 4180 on USS DUNLAP (Guide). 1827 observed sunset, darkened ship. 1840 passed Montgomery Island abeam to starboard bearing 000° T, distance about 6 1/2 miles. 1903 changed course to 317° T&G 296° psc.

Ave. Steam 565

Ave. RPM 256

P. HALL, Lt(jg), U.S.N.

20-24

2000 position Lat. 08° - 37'30" (S). Long 157° - 08'. Steaming as before. 2030 held general quarters, set material condition affirm. 2117 changed course to 000° T&G, 352° psc. 2145 changed speed to 15 kts (140 RPM). 2201 changed course to 050° T&G, 045° psc to enter Vella Gulf via Gizo Strait to conduct offensive patrol against Japanese Naval forces. 2215 Gizo Island abeam to starboard, distant 3 miles. 2230 changed course to 124° T&G, 132° psc. 2255 changed course to 000° T&G, 352° psc. 2320 changed course to 030° T&G, 030° psc. Changed speed to 25 kts (247) RPM; 2325 had SG radar contact on ships bearing 343° T, range 22,000 yards. 2330 four targets on screen course 180°, speed 30 kts. Division 1 (MAURY, CRAVEN, DUNLAP) manuevering to deliver torpedo attack. 2339 Division 2(LANG, STERETT, STACK) maneuvering to catack with gum fire. 2343 enemy hit by torpedoes. 2343 LANG opened fire. 2343.5 STERETT commenced fire. 2348 checked fire.

AVE. Steam 588

Aye. RPM 210
H. J. Shirley
Lt.(jg), D-V(G), U.S.N.R.

Approved:

F. G. GOULD

Lieut. Comdr., U.S.N.

Examined:

b. C. MILLER

Lieut. Condr., U.S.N.R., Navigator.

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