

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Editor

**The U.S.S. *Monssen* (DD-436) in World War II:
Documents, Photographs, Recollections**

Needham, Massachusetts
Privately published by the editor
First Edition 1995
Revised 2001



Scanned and electronically published by
Destroyer History Foundation
Bolton Landing, New York
2006

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U.S.S. MONSSEN

DESTROYER

NAMED FOR LIEUTENANT MONS MONSSEN U.S.N.

BUILT AT PUGET SOUND NAVY YARD

BREMERTON, WASHINGTON

AUTHORIZED

JULY 23, 1938

KEEL LAID

JULY 12, 1939

LAUNCHED

MAY 16, 1940

FIRST COMMISSIONED

MARCH 14, 1941

1210 Greendale Ave., #339
Needham, MA 02192-4622
August 30, 1995

Crewmembers of the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436),

I never served on the Monssen, and I did not attend either of your recent reunions.

So why have I put together this 93-page booklet on the Monssen and sent it to everyone on Chet Thomason's address list? I guess I'm still asking myself the same question. I learned how to produce such a book when I edited a similar one for my shipmates on the U.S.S. Douglas H. Fox (DD-779), recounting our Korean War adventures. Then, when I began doing volunteer work for the U.S. Navy Memorial a couple of years ago, I focused on the ships sunk off Guadalcanal because LCDR Fox was the C.O. of the U.S.S. Barton (DD-599) when she was sunk on the same night as the Monssen. I'm very proud of the fact that I located twenty Barton survivors and presented each of them with an 81-page booklet on their ship. It was truly a labor of love for me, and the expressions of gratitude I received motivated me to edit similar booklets for the other ships resting in Iron Bottom Sound.

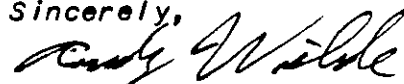
My Monssen booklet has been easier to prepare, because I could use some of the same pages and because Chet Thomason and Jack Pease had already assembled my "audience." I wish to thank them, along with Emajean Buechner and Dick McCombs who contributed important material.

Copies of my Monssen booklet will be sent to several museums and libraries, including: the U.S. Naval Institute/Annapolis, the Nimitz Library at the U.S. Naval Academy, the Naval Historical Center at the Washington Navy Yard and the Admiral Nimitz Museum at Fredericksburg, Texas; so future generations will know the Monssen story.

Regarding cost, you don't owe me anything. My main interest is in seeing that every survivor (or his family) receives a copy so that he can feel proud of his contribution to our country's victory in World War II. Hopefully, you will convey this pride to your children. Unfortunately, I can not supply you with additional copies for them, but others have had multiple copies made at a copying store such as Kinko's and been very pleased with the results. If you wish to make a modest contribution to help cover my costs, it will be appreciated.

Finally; maybe the reason I'm putting together these booklets is because in 1942 I was a Boy Scout on the home front, taught to "support our men in uniform" - and no one ever told me to stop!

Sincerely,



E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
Commander, USNR (Ret.)

The U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) in World War II
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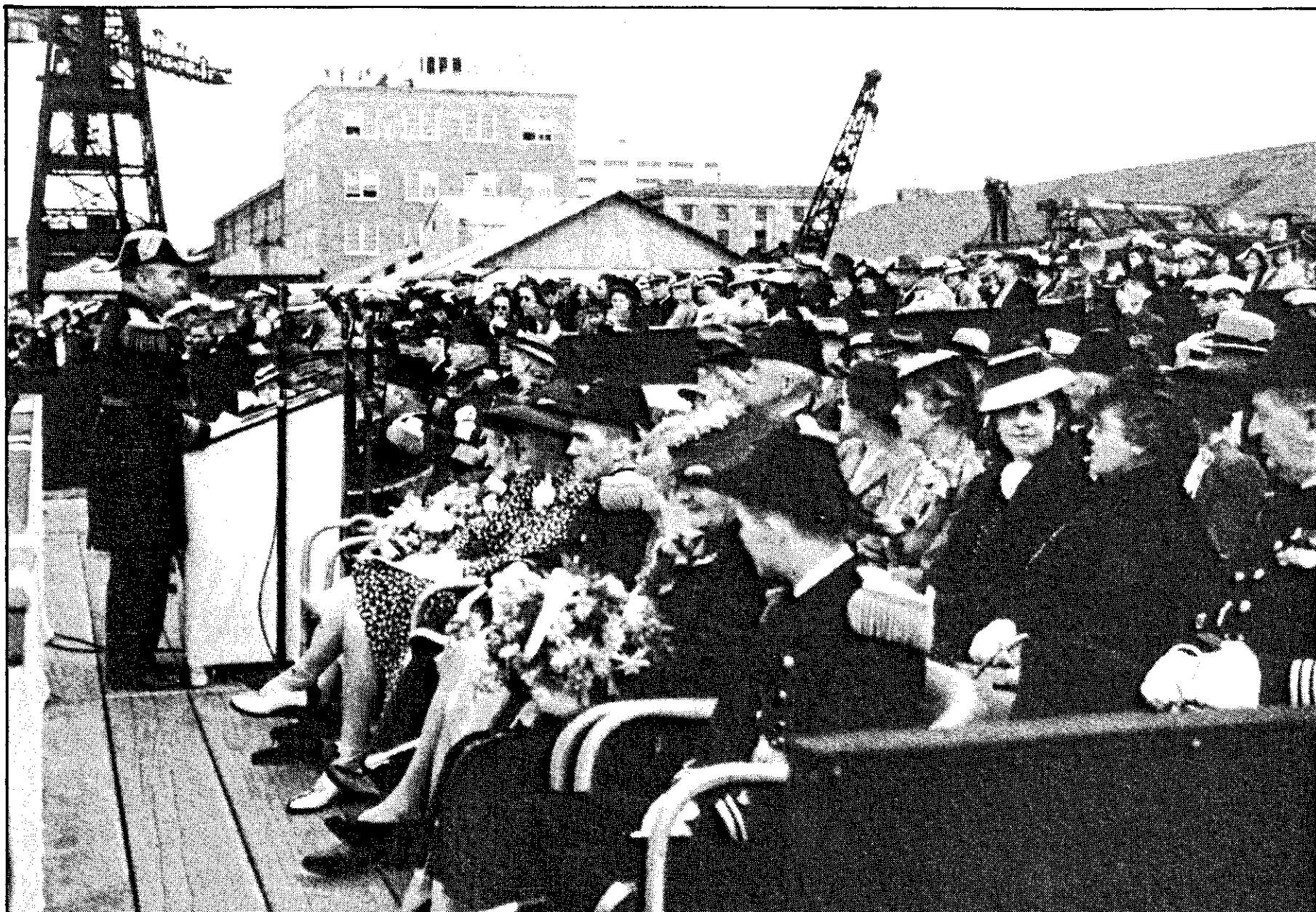
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Any man who may be asked what he did to make his life worthwhile can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, "I served in the United States Navy."

- President John F. Kennedy, 1963



Mrs. Mons Monssen (right), sponsor of the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436), named after her late husband Lieutenant Monssen, USN. With her is the sponsor of the U.S.S. Charles F. Hughes (DD-428). The two ships were christened on May 16, 1940, at Bremerton, Washington. (U.S. Navy photograph.)



Rear Admiral Edward B. Fenner, USN, addressing invited guests prior to the launching of the U.S.S. Charles F. Hughes (DD-428) and the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, on May 16, 1940. After she was commissioned ten months later the Monssen was attached to the Atlantic Fleet, operating first with the Central Atlantic Neutrality Patrol and then, beginning in October, 1941, with the Convoy Support Forces in the North Atlantic. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

U.S.S. MONSSEN

The destroyer MONSSEN, first vessel of the Navy to bear this name, was authorized by the Act of Congress March 27, 1934, and built at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington. When she was launched there on May 16, 1940, Mrs. Mons Monssen of Brooklyn served as sponsor of the vessel which was named in honor of her husband, the late Lieutenant Monssen, U.S.N. The MONSSEN was commissioned March 14, 1941.

The characteristics of the MONSSEN are as follows:

Standard displacement	1,630 tons
Complement	175 officers and men
Length at waterline	341 feet
Beam	35 feet 6"
Guns	5' 5" 38 cal.
Torpedo tubes	10-21"

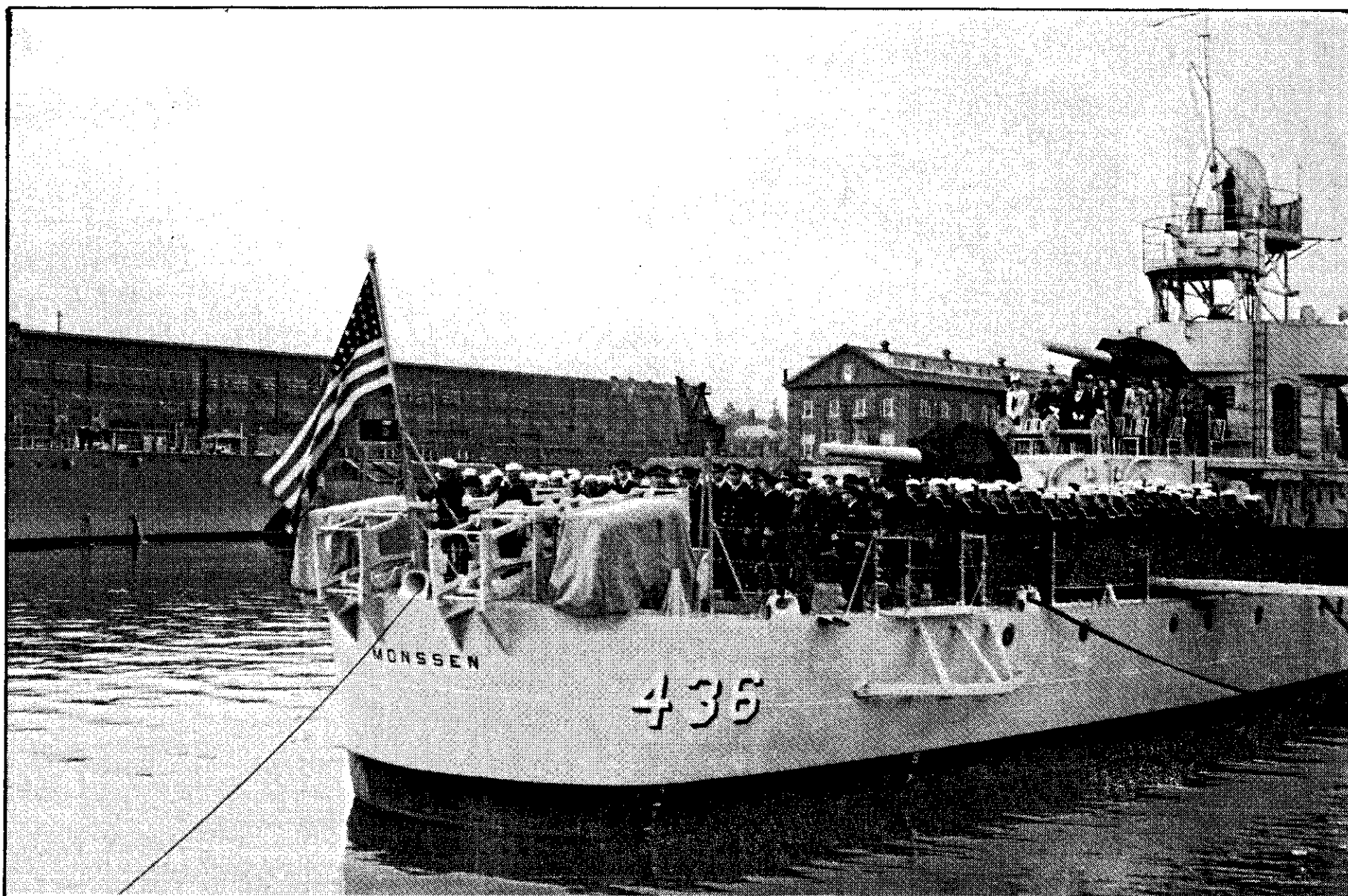
Lieutenant Monssen was born in Bergen, Norway, January 20, 1867, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy on June 3, 1889. He was warranted Gunner in 1904 and commissioned Lieutenant in July, 1918. He was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy on December 15, 1925, and died in the Naval Hospital, Brooklyn, New York, on February 10, 1930.

In April, 1904, Lieutenant Monssen, then in the rating of Chief Gunner's Mate, was attached to the U.S.S. MISSOURI. When that battleship was engaged in record target practice, an accident occurred through the ignition of a charge of smokeless powder while a 12-inch gun was being loaded, and four officers and fourteen men lost their lives.

For service during that disaster, Lieutenant Monssen received the Congressional Medal of Honor "for extraordinary heroism in entering a burning magazine through the scuttle and endeavoring to extinguish the fire by throwing water with his hands until a hose was passed to him, April 13, 1904."

He had the following medals: Spanish Campaign Medal; Philippine Campaign Medal; Cuban Pacification Medal, U.S.S. IOWA; Victory Medal.

* * * * *



The U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) was commissioned on 14 March 1941 at the Puget Sound Navy Yard by the Commandant of the 13th Naval District, Rear Admiral C. S. Freeman, USN, and received by her commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Roland N. Smoot, USN. During World War II the Monssen participated in the Doolittle Raid and the Battle of Midway as an escort vessel, and later she earned four Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal during the Guadalcanal Campaign. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

ZONE DESCRIPTION +8
Keel Laid - 7-12-39

REMARKS
Launched - 5-16-40

Commissioned - 3-14-41

The U.S.S. MONSSEN was commissioned at 1630, 14 March 1941 at her building yard, Navy Yard Puget Sound, by the Commandant, Rear Admiral C.S. FREEMAN, and received by her prospective Commanding Officer, Lieut. Comdr. R.N. SMOOT.

The U.S.S. MONSSEN is the first vessel by this name and was named after the late Lieut. Mons. Monssen, U.S.N. who enlisted in 1889, appointed Acting Gunner in 1904 and a Lieutenant in 1921. He was awarded a medal of honor in 1904 for entering a burning magazine on the U.S.S. MISSOURI and fighting the fire with his bare hands.

On commissioning the MONSSEN was moored to pier #6, Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, starboard side to with six one inch wire cables. Ships present: U.S.S. SARATOGA, ENTERPRISE, CALIFORNIA, PYRO, HEYWOOD, HENLEY, BAGLEY, BLUE, HELM, AURORA, GOSHAWK, TATNUCK, MAHOPAC, U.S. Coast Guard Cutters PERSUES, ARIDNE, HERMES and HAIDA. At 1530 received the crew aboard from the Receiving Station, Puget Sound. At 1600 formed the officers and crew on the main deck aft for the Commissioning. A company of Marines took station on the dock opposite to form the guard. A band was stationed forward of the guard. At 1615 guests were received aboard. 1617 The Captain of the Yard, Captain L.F. KILBALL, U.S. Navy, the Manager, Captain, A.M. CHARLTON and the Yard Chaplain were received aboard. At 1627 Rear Admiral, C.S. FREEMAN, U.S.N., Commandant 13th Naval District was received aboard. At 1630 with the ships prospective officers formed at frame 185 facing forward and the crew at quarters aft, the Admiral read the Commissioning order, "Commandants Office, Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Wn., 14 March, 1941, Commandants Special Order No. 5-41 Subject: Commissioning of U.S.S. MONSSEN. 1. As directed by the Chief of Naval Operations under date of 11 March, 1941, the Commandant by virtue of the authority vested in him by Art. 821, United States Naval Regulations, is this date placing in initial commission the U.S.S. MONSSEN and formally transferring her to the command of Lieutenant Commander, R.N. SMOOT, U.S.N. 2. The U.S.S. MONSSEN will operate under the immediate direction of the Chief of Naval Operations until further notice. C.S. Freeman, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Commandant." The Admiral ordered the Captain of the Yard to have the colors hoisted. The crew was faced aft, the guard came to present arms and with the first note of the National Anthem, all hands came to right hand salute and the colors, commission pennant and union jack were hoisted. A prayer was given by the Chaplain. The Captain of the Yard turned the ship over to her prospective Commanding Officer who read his orders from the Bureau of Navigation, Nav-31-J3 58232-72 dated Oct. 23, 1940. The Commanding Officer made an acceptance speech. The Commanding Officer had the Executive Officer set the watch. The following officers and crew were aboard and attached to the ship: Lieut. Comdr., R.N. SMOOT, U.S.N., Lieut. W.R. CARUTHERS, U.S.N., Lieut. P.L., de Vos, U.S.N., Lieut. J.L. KEMPER, U.S.N., Lt(jg), R.E. BABB, U.S.N., Ensign A.J. FROSH, U.S.N., Ensign J.B. ZULLINGER, U.S.N., Ensign H.S. TREBILCOX, U.S.N., Ensign H.W. WAGER, U.S.N., ABBOTT, Horace J., 360 26 28, AS, ADAMS, James Wallace 260 26 67, AS, ALLBEE, Robert V., 385 92 91, AS, ALLISON, Gerald J. 320 95 70, Y2c, AMBROSE, Robert J. 368 42 88, Sealc, APLEGATE, Thaine H. 393 43 36, AS, BAILEY, Edward I. 382 30 88, AS, BALAI, John 300 02 81, Sealc, BANTA, Ira D 292 95 66, Sealc, BARNES, Clifford M., 355 97 10, EM2c, BARNES, Henry M. 346 70 49, Sealc, BARNETT, Eugene 346 87 10, AS, BARTON, Dale F., 360 26 55, AS, BASTAIN, Henry E., 238 60 73, Sealc, BAYLOR, George E. 391 22 16, Flc, BECK, William J. 385 92 92, AS, BENDICK, Andrew 337 10 05, Sealc, BICKLE, August L. 250 31 62, CGM(AA), BLANTON, Joe C. 355 87 66, LM2c, BLEVINS, Richard G. 393 26 57, F2c, BOICE, Bethel W., 385 92 75, AS, BOOTH, Charles E., 267 58 54, WT1c, BOREN, Glenn R. 393 43 44, AS, BRALLIER, Warren E. 385 93 13, AS, BREJCHA, John C. 300 01 16, Sealc, BROOKS, Beverly E. 382 30 91, AS, BROWN, Homer H. 346 71 41, F2c, BROWN, Joseph A. 360 26 72, AS, BUFORD, William M. 280 61 77, GM1c, BURGESS, Ray F. 299 76 00, SCLc, BURKE, Joseph F. 283 135 98, RM3c, BURNS, John F. 381 16 92, FC1c, BURNS, Robert J. 382 31 33, AS, CARNATHAN, David A. 356 42 99, AS, CHUDLEIGH, Harry G. 414 04 31, ML1c, CLARK, Wilbur R. 372 11 49, F2c, CLIFTON, Erastus C. 268 21 77, WT2c, CLINEFELTER, Daniel H. 360 25 96, AS, COOPER, George W. 341 30 62, CLM(PA), CRAWFORD, George T. 346 88 00, AS, CRIDER, Arthur L. 342 11 95, F2c, CROFT, Thomas M. 321 38 13, Sealc, CUNNINGHAM, Thomas T. 368 53 85, AS, DAVENPORT, Elbert G. 380 87 54, LM2c, DAVIS, Clarence W. 351 88 47, MM1c, DAVISON, Edward H. 311 11 14, QM2c, DEANS, William J. 261 23 19, CGM(AA). (Cont).

Approved:

R. N. SMOOT,
Lieut. Comdr., U.S. Navy.
Commanding.

Examined:

W. R. CARUTHERS,
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy.

U. S. N., Navigator.

ADDITIONAL SHEET

U. S. S. NONSSEN (436)

Date 14 March, 1941

DELO, Gordon K. 234 08 03, MMlc, DE WALSCHE, Kenneth W. 368 53 90, AS, DINGLE, George R. 375 37 95, CWT(PA), DOERR, Gustave L. 336 23 42, EMlc, DOLES, John C. 265 64 62, Mattlc, DOMINGO, Meliton 487 98 96, OC2c, DRAKE, Lenox B. 356 43 17, AS, DuVAL, Robert T. 375 81 14, F2c, EADS, James H. 336 88 98, SK3c, EGGLESTON, Robert C. 372 20 76, AS, ELLIS, Benjamin C. 268 38 63, Matt2c, ELE, Charles L. 287 35 59, F2c, ESHELMAN, John W. 281 22 13, Flc, ESTES, Herbert F. 201 56 90, FC3c, EVERETT, Robert W. 393 43 73, AS, FORD, Robert E. 393 43 43, AS, FOSTER, William K. 382 31 47, AS, FRANCE, Marcel J. 274 19 14, WT2c, FRIEND, Morris C. 346 87 83, AS, FUQUA, Ralph K. 360 25 99, AS, GALIARDI, Raymond T. 207 22 33, FC3c, GARDNER, Howard W. 234 23 33, Sealc, GIBSON, Aubrey V. 355 97 92, Flc, GILMORE, Matt K. 346 87 86, AS, GLASMAN, Edwin E. 393 14 30, Bmkrlc, GLEAVES, Charles E. 381 22 55, EM2c, GOFFMAN, John A. 223 61 82, F2c, GOLNIK, Jerome J. 299 70 10, EMlc, GOODLOE, Raymond S. 371 98 50, MM2c, GUSTOFIK, John I. 253 23 95, CRM(PA), HARRIS, Jay V. 272 12 23, GM3c, HEINE, Erwin A. 360 26 29, AS, HENRICHON, Donald C. 212 42 15, CM2c, HIGBEE, Rodman R. 385 93 22, AS, HILL, Owen R. 212 49 14, TM3c, HOLLOWAY, William H. 274 26 93, TM2c, HOUGHTON, Wilbur S. 372 20 77, AS, HOWARD, Cecil 356 41 64, AS, HUBNER, William G. 291 61 73, F2c, HUDSON, Ralph L. 341 87 50, TM2c, HUGHES, Harry H. 295 13 03, CCStd(AA), HUGHES, Joe G. 360 26 65, AS, HUGHES, Leighton E. 267 82 11, MMlc, HULBERT, Howard W. 393 30 07, Sealc, HULSE, Andrew J. 382 31 53, AS, HUNTER, Oatis L. 371 98 90, Flc, ISERT, Raymond W. 375 65 98, BM2c, JENNINGS, George W. 341 35 73, SMLc, JENSEN, Theodore 316 08 72, TMlc, JOHNSON, Toliver A. 272 13 37, GM3c, JORDAN, Thomas R. 376 16 29, AS, KEEN, Alton C. 258 12 95, MMlc, KING, Charles J. 393 43 30, AS, KOWALSKI, Steven R. 250 31 11, BM2c, KYMBERG, Ronald E. 360 26 95, AS, LITTLE, Roy R. 356 21 69, Sealc, LOWE, Charles E. 328 36 25, SM2c, MACK, Adolph W. 258 04 72, WT2c, MAC INTOSH, James R. 201 58 48, WT2c, MALVORH, Joseph 300 00 96, Sealc, MANN, Roy B. 356 42 88, AS, MARTINEZ, Erwin 382 31 07, AS, MARZANO, Luigi 283 15 48, Sealc, MASON, Norman O. 385 74 52, Sealc, MATTHEWS, Ivam J. 368 53 78, AS, MATTHEWS, James C. 355 96 36, MM2c, MAY, Everett P. 324 11 85, F2c, MC CAULEY, Charley B. 360 26 66, AS, MC CRAY, Harlan L. 382 31 15, AS, MEADE, Howard E. 243 10 09, CFC(PA), MILLER, Ralph E. 383 62 87, EM3c, MILLER, Raymond P. 346 87 05, AS, MOJECK, Mike 250 18 23, CMM(PA), MONTGOMERY, Collin D. 380 25 75, AS, MONTGOMERY, Dewey P. 356 42 86, AS, MOORE, Franklin A. 336 41 56, BMlc, MURPHY, John J. 229 33 96, BM2c, MYERS, Edward A. 372 20 83, AS, NANCE, Glenn R. 341 34 95, CY(PA), NEIGHBROS, Elmo R. 382 30 93, AS, NJAA, Kermit E. 368 53 67, AS, NORTH, Robert H. 382 31 02, AS, OBERG, George A. 380 98 10, MM2c, ORAM, Orluff 368 53 72, AS, ORSIE, Charles J. 206 95 38, RMLc, ORTON, Raymond 321 08 29, LM2c, PANESI, Raymond C. 375 79 75, Flc, PARROTT, Arlo L. 385 92 89, AS, PAULSON, Carl D. 321 05 32, EM2c, PEASE, John A. 360 26 31, AS, PERKINS, Orie D. 286 99 27, PhMlc, PETTY, Harland H. 375 77 60, Sealc, PHILLIPS, Loyd G. 393 43 25, AS, PICOLORICH, Peter 212 38 10, MMlc, PLUMLEY, Leo D. 382 30 84, AS, PRICE, John 346 27 02, MMlc, QUINN, James P. 321 26 97, EM2c, RALUTIN, Narcisco 497 97 86, Mattlc, RAMEY, Herschel G. 356 38 78, AS, RATCLIFFE, William E. 337 20 81, F2c, HIDELOUR, David B. 227 97 48, GM3c, ROOKE, Warren R. 382 30 95, AS, ROSS, Malcolm A. 385 93 18, AS, ROWE, Cleo F. 371 78 64, SMLc, RUSEK, Bolseal 212 11 34, WTlc, RUSH, Frank J. 320 56 16, CMM(PA), SAMPLE, LeRoy S. 360 25 68, AS, SANDERS, Raymond M. 311 20 86, Flc, SAUCIER, Edwin W. 356 42 69, AS, SCHERPIK, William R. 360 25 29, AS, SCHILMEYER, Warren V. 385 85 10, Sealc, SEIG, Frederick W. 228 31 46, GMlc, SELL, James D. 295 01 47, MMlc, SELLERS, Milan 282 77 54, CBM(PA), SEQUESTRI, Peter L. 375 80 31, Flc, SHEETS, Arnold W. 261 96 02, Sealc, SHINN, George 287 11 71, WT2c, SLICHO, Joseph J. 273 95 24, LM2c, SMITH, Boyd L. 407 27 88, AS, SMITH, Clayton F. 385 75 22, Sealc, SMITH, Disque C. 383 21 14, RM2d, SPAETH, Alvis, 360 25 95, AS, SPURGEON, Leo F. 201 56 95, Sealc, STANFIELD, Harold L. 392 99 59, F2c, STEFFE, Merlyn M. 300 02 03, Sealc, STOREY, Clyde C. 283 19 04, Cox, STUART, Wesley E. 371 89 69, MMlc, SULLAR, John F. 194 68 59, CMM(PA), SULLIVAN, Ralph B. 337 24 52, F2c, TAMAYO, Honorio 497 94 55, OS3c, TELFORD, Norman C. 381 30 63, Sealc, THOMASON, Chester C. 376 16 17, AS, THOMSON, Frank K. 372 20 90, AS, TIPTON, Robert E. 360 26 70, AS, TOLIVER, William M. 360 26 59, AS, TROTTER, Ben C. 355 88 58, LM2c, VOGT, Edward N. 382 15 75, Sealc, WALTZ, Benjamin 371 89 81, MMlc, WARD, Lawrence E. 372 21 11, AS, WARDELL, James J. 385 92 73, AS, WATERS, William D. 385 92 72, AS, WATKINS, Jack B. 372 12 21, Sealc, WEAVER, Edgar E. 393 07 09, MMlc, WEIDENHAMER, Robert C. 372 21 31, AS, WELLS, Arvil H. 356 42 57, AS, WESTON, Arthur D. 380 96 76, BM2c, WHITE, James H. 360 26 60, AS, (Cont'd).

Approved:

R. N. SMOOT,
Lieut. Comdr., U.S. Navy,
Commanding.

Examined:

W. R. CARUTHERS,
Lieutenant, U.S. Navyg. S. N., Navigator.

ADDITIONAL SHEET

U. S. S. MONSIEENDate 14 March, 1941, 1941

WHITESIDE, Charles C. 393 13 86, SC3c, WIGGINS, George T. 346 87 95, AS, WILSON, Kenneth A. 372 21 21, AS, WOMACK, Ralph 374 19 54, MMlc, YATES, Curtis O. 321 31 10, Sealc, ZACHARY, Glenn R. 385 55 17, Sealc. The following provisions were received aboard from contractors indicated for use in the general mess, inspected as to quantity by Ensign H.S. TREDILCOX, U.S.N.R. and as to quality by O.D. PERKINS, PHMlc; 108 lbs. of rolled oats, type "B" from the Quaker Oat Co; 200 lbs. bananas, 240 lbs. grape fruit, 72 lbs lemons, 112 lbs squash, 303 lbs. lettuce, 300 lbs, onions, 4000 lbs. irish potatoes, 200 lbs. potatoes yams, 260 lbs. tomatoes from the Pacific Fruit and Produce Co; 48 tins of tomato juice No. 10 from National Grocery; 48 lbs. mustard prepared commercial from Schwabacker Bros. and Co. Inv.; 250 lbs. white bread from Safeway Stores Inc, Bakery Dept; 20 lbs. chili powder, 20 lbs. celery salt, 20 lbs. garlic salt, 20 lbs onion salt from Commerical Importing Co; 100 lbs. pearl barley No 2, 50 lbs. powdered sugar from Standard grocery Co.; 100 lbs. cornflakes, 100 lbs. rice flakes, 109.375 lbs shredded wheat from Kellogg Sales Co; 12 lbs. paprika from Crescent Manufacturing Co; 372 lbs oranges from Cascade Fruit Co.; 50 lbs. cheese type 1 grade A from Kraft Cheese Co; 360 lbs. butter grade B, 300 doz. eggs U.S. Class A, 318 lbs. chickens fryers, 314 lbs. turkeys from Washington Creamery Co.; 301 lbs. ham smoked, 297 lbs. bacon smoked, 299 lbs. pork loin, 598 lbs. beef hinds, 531 lbs. beed fores, 629 lbs. veal sides from Armour & Co.; 50 lbs. head cheese, 100 lbs. luncheon meat, 50 lbs. sausage franks, 200 lbs. pork sausage, 50 lbs. sausage liver from Frye & Co.; 206 lbs. celery, 43 lbs. bell peppers, 193 lbs. turnips from William Bros.; 312 lbs. carrots, 337 lbs. cabbage 245 lbs. cauliflower from Desimond Bros. and Co.; 40 lbs. cake from Sailor Jacks Bakery; 144 lbs. dried beef from the Rath Packing Co., 20 gal. fresh milk from Midway Dairy.

W. R. Caruthers
W. R. CARUTHERS,
Lieutenant, U. S. Navy.

1630 to 2000.

Moored as before. 1646 The Commandant 13th Naval District, the Captain of the Yard, The Manager and the Yard Chaplain left the ship. 1830 Pursuant to orders of Commanding Officer, U.S.S. BAGLEY (386), VAN WINKLE, James David, 279 58 22, TM3c reported aboard for duty.

J. L. Kemper
J. L. KEMPER,
Lieutenant, U. S. Navy.

20 to 24:

Moored as before.

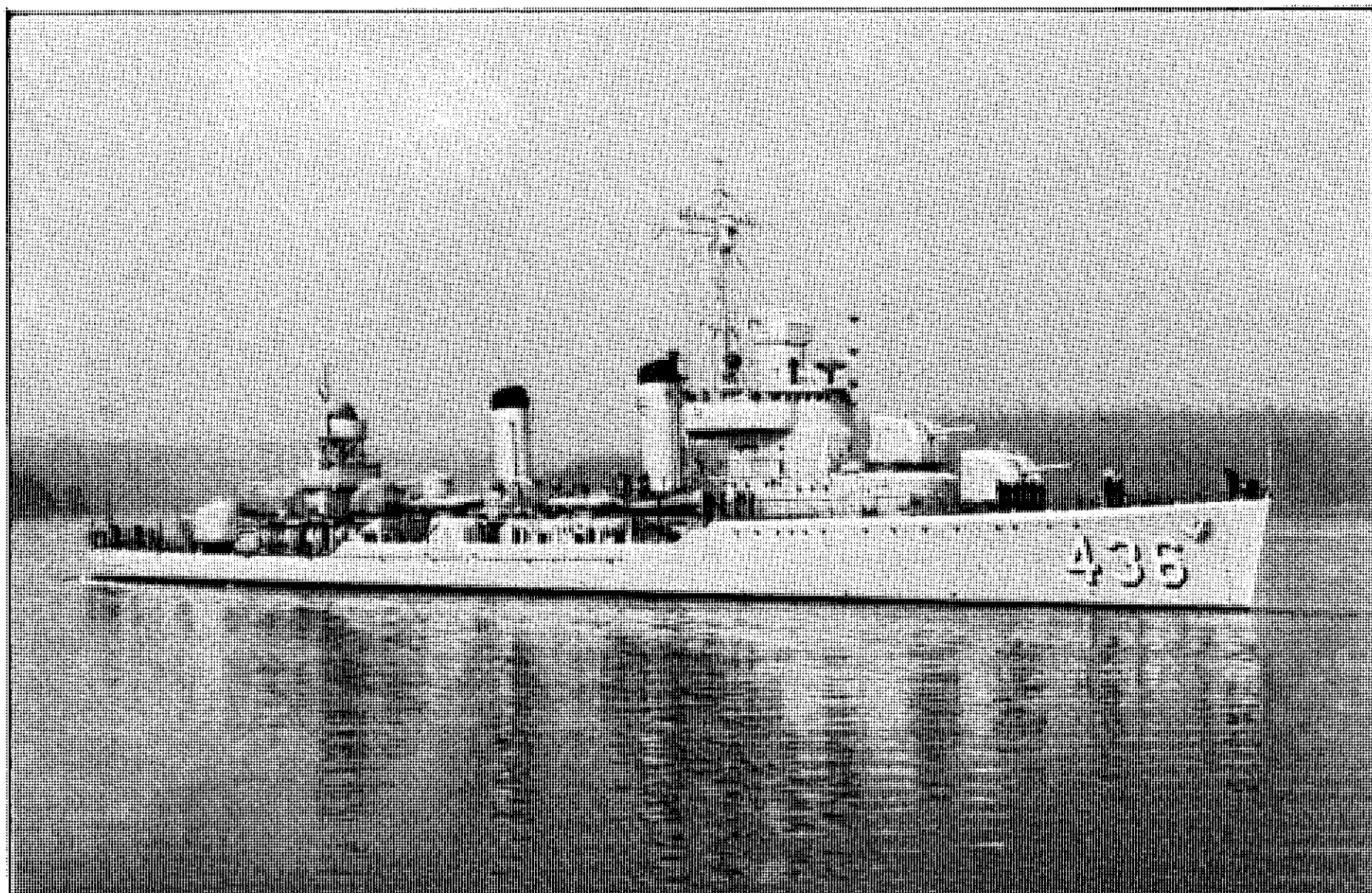
J. L. Kemper
J. L. KEMPER,
Lieutenant, U. S. Navy.

Approved:

R. H. Smoot
R. H. SMOOT,
Lieut. Comdr., U.S. Navy,
Commanding.

Examined:

W. R. Caruthers
W. R. CARUTHERS,
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy, S. V., Navigator.



The Gleaves-class destroyer U.S.S. Monaghan (DD-436) as commissioned on 14 March 1941, with five 5-in./38 dual-purpose guns and two quintuple torpedo-tube mounts. Early in 1942, her antiaircraft protection was improved by the addition of nine 20-mm. machine cannons, four of them on the after deckhouse in place of the forward-facing Mount 3 and the after searchlight tower. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

*Excerpt from Destroyers in Action
by Richard A. Shafter.**

"A Lovely Ship"

Destroyers! Mention the word and the layman's mind will conjure up a picture of a little ship steaming death-defying, head-on into the fire from an enemy battlewagon's heavy guns. In the heavy seaway the little ship is tossing like a cork, with the white water breaking high over her bows. Then suddenly she swerves hard to starboard. There are a couple of splashes on her portside and a moment later appear the bubbling wakes of the tin fish she has sent on their voyage of destruction. And a short while later there is a terrific crash. The enemy's sides and decks are clothed in sheets of smoke and flame from the explosions that tear her inwards apart. And another naval battle is won.

It is an inspiring picture that has adorned many a calendar sent by solicitous ship's chandlers and seed stores to their customers, to be remembered by for the rest of the year. The practice looks different. Whether it's even more romantic than the calendar artist envisioned, or just a drab, humdrum existence, depends very largely on the point of view of the individual man who crews a "tincan." One thing, however, can be said for it: it's most versatile. If Kipling's crack about the liner has of late found an officially sanctioned variation to describe the glamour girl of the Navy, "The Carrier, she's a Lady," then it can safely be varied once again: "The destroyer, she's a workhorse."

Pulling binder, hay rig, threshing machine or the "democrat" for the family on its way to church, it's all one to a farmer's workhorse. A Navy workhorse may be on antisubmarine patrol today: dropping depth charges in their prescribed pattern all over the spot where the cooperating Navy flier believes he has seen the underwater raider; tomorrow, she may be riding herd on a convoy of merchantmen: running breathlessly and tongue-lolling around her flock, shooin' stragglers into line, and then tackling, in the manner of good and faithful sheepdogs anywhere, all enemies regardless of size and number, whether aircraft, surface squadron, or wolf pack. Or they might install a pair of steel ovaries on her decks and give her a load of ugly horned eggs to drop in waters the enemy's fleet is certain to traverse. Then again, they might give her a

pair of paravanes to tow and send her out to sweep the channels leading to a new invasion beach clear of the mines which the enemy himself has sown there, and then the next day convert her into a fast transport and send her in with a deckload of Marine Raiders who are to establish the first beachhead foothold. And while weird landing craft are yet on their way with reenforcements, supplies, tanks and artillery, the destroyer that has landed them will stand by to give the Leather-necks who are digging themselves in on the narrow coral strip whatever fire support her 4- or 5-inch guns are capable of.

Then again, on duty with a task force, the destroyer is in the van and on the flanks of the capital ships, scouting, protecting, running interference and when the actual engagement begins, throwing a smoke screen around the carrier or battlewagon to spoil the enemy's gunnery. When disaster comes, when carrier, battleship or cruiser has received the deadly wound that causes the decks to buckle and burst with the explosion of magazines and fuel tanks, it's the destroyer that rushes in close, though the heat may blister what patches of paint are still left on her sea-bitten plates, and takes off the men still left alive after the unsuccessful battle to save their doomed ship. As the hull of the big capital ship slowly drifts down with the tide, a roaring inferno, yet still floating, it is the destroyer's job to come in and send the once proud craft to the bottom with a torpedo, to save her from the last ignominy of having her dead body defiled by the enemy's hands.

Rescue missions generally are hardly more than mere routine assignments among the manifold jobs that are a destroyer's lot. Many a flier, shot down by ack-ack, or forced down in a gale, later got back in the fight simply because some indefatigable DD would not give up the search. A quart of whiskey for her skipper and ten gallons of ice cream for her wardroom became the traditional price that any carrier gladly paid to a DD for each of its fliers delivered back aboard or safely landed in port.

"Let the DD's do it!" has almost become axiomatic with the Navy whenever there is a particularly unpleasant or difficult job under discussion. Their speed, their maneuverability, their relatively high firepower

for their size, and their comparatively low building price, have made destroyers not merely the most versatile, but ton for ton the most efficient, naval craft ever devised. They are the Navy's true "expendables."

The spirit of the little ships reflects itself in that of their crews. Destroyermen are a bit apart from the rest of our man-of-war men. On their small ships they have to do without many of the comforts the crews of carriers, battleships or even cruisers enjoy. They live in cramped quarters. There is no canteen or ship's service booth where a man might get a coke, an ice cream or western story pulp magazine. Yet the destroyer man, though he beefs about it all and swears it's a dog's life, in his innermost heart glories in the hardships his particular trade imposes upon him. He's inclined to look down on the men from the big ships as "softies." His walk is a "destroyer roll." His hat sits precariously on one eyebrow. He is the bane of the Shore Patrol.

He'll abuse his ship roundly as the most uncomfortable, leakingest, buckingest crate that ever went to sea. But let somebody else pass unfavorable comment on her and he's up in arms. Asked why he wasn't applying for a transfer after he had given a lengthy and extremely critical recital of his ship's famed action, a survivor of the *Borie* put it all in a nutshell. "Me? No, thanks! There's too much red tape on a big ship for me. On a destroyer you know everybody with their good sides and their faults. And everybody knows you. You can't sham on a DD. You gotta be a sailor, mister."

Destroyers get into the blood not merely of the men that serve in them, but of anybody who has been given a chance to get acquainted with them. Even a master of the hard-boiled school of writing like John Steinbeck can wax dithyrambic over a little ship. After spending part of his correspondent's tour of duty aboard a DD he wrote:

"A destroyer is a lovely ship, probably the nicest fighting ship of all. Battleships are a little like steel cities or great factories of destruction. Aircraft carriers are floating flying fields.

"Even cruisers are big pieces of machinery, but a destroyer is all boat. In the beautiful clean lines of her, in her speed and roughness, in her curious gallantry."

History of the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)*
(A 1,630-ton, Gleaves-class Destroyer)

(DD-436: dp. 1,630; l. 348'2"; b. 36'1"; dr. 17'5"; s. 33 k.; cpl. 276; a. 5 5", 4 40mm., 2 20mm., 10 21" tt., 6 dcp., 2 dct.; cl. Gleaves)

The first *Monssen* (DD-436) was laid down 12 July 1939, by Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Wash.; launched 16 May 1940; sponsored by Mrs. Mons Monssen, widow of Lieutenant Monssen; and commissioned 14 March 1941, Lt. Comdr. R. N. Smoot in command.

Following shakedown and training, *Monssen* reported to the Atlantic Fleet 27 June 1941 as a unit of DesDiv 22. For the next 5 months she operated in the northwestern Atlantic, from the coast of New England and the Maritime Provinces to Iceland, on neutrality patrol. Her escort and patrol duties changed from neutral to belligerent 7 December 1941, continuing until 9 February 1942 when she entered the Boston Navy Yard for overhaul in preparation for her transfer to the Pacific Fleet.

On 31 March she arrived at San Francisco, joined TF 16, and departed 2 April. Steaming west, she was in the antisubmarine screen for *Hornet* (CV-8) as the carrier headed for "Shangri-La" with Lt. Col. J. H. Doolittle's B-25's on her flight deck. In the early morning hours 18 April the force was sighted by the enemy and the Army pilots manned their planes, ignoring the bad weather, the daylight hours, and the additional 168 miles they would have to fly over the planned 500 miles to their targets, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe.

Following the launch, the force returned to Pearl Harbor, from which it sortied 30 April to aid *Yorktown* (CV-5) and *Lexington* (CV-2) in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Reaching the scene after the battle was over, the force returned to Pearl Harbor, arriving 26 May. Two days later they departed again, this time for Midway to repulse an expected assault on that advanced base. By 2 June, TF 16 had rendezvoused with TF 17 and was in position 350 miles northeast of Midway. On the 4th the Battle of Midway commenced as Japanese carrier planes flew against installations on the island. By the 7th, the American forces had won one of the decisive battles of history, sinking four carriers and one cruiser at the cost of destroyer *Hammann* (DD-412) and carrier *Yorktown*, and profoundly changing the course of the war.

After Midway the force remained at Pearl Harbor for a month before departing again for combat. Steaming via the Tonga Islands, they headed for the Japanese-held Solomons. By 7 August they were 40 miles from the targets,

* Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. 4.
Naval Historical Center, 1969.

Guadalcanal and Tulagi. On the 7th and 8th, *Monssen*, with *Buchanan* (DD-484) stood off Gavutu and Tanam-bago, circling those islands and providing fire support to units of the 2d Marine Regiment as the U.S. Navy struck with the first of its giant amphibious assaults. She was then assigned to the screening forces guarding the eastern approaches to Sealark, Lengo, and Nggela Channels.

She remained in the immediate area through the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, which prevented Japanese reinforcements from reaching Guadalcanal, and then took up duties patrolling the sea routes to Guadalcanal. At the end of the month *Saratoga* (CV-3) was damaged and *Monssen* was one of the ships designated to escort her to the Tonga Islands.

Monssen returned to Guadalcanal 18 September to insure the integrity of an Allied supply line and to block Japanese efforts at resupply. On 8 November, she departed Noumea with two cruisers and two other destroyers as TG 67.4, under Rear Admiral Callaghan, as escort for transports carrying reinforcements to the marines on Guadalcanal. At the same time, another convoy set out from Espiritu Santo, covered by one cruiser and four destroyers under Rear Admiral Scott. Arriving off Lunga Point on the 12th, a day after those from Espiritu Santo, they commenced unloading. By dusk as reports of Japanese ship movements from Truk increased, 90 percent of the transports had been unladen despite afternoon torpedoplane attacks, one of which had cost *Monssen* the use of her fire control radar. The transports were pulled out, escorted through Lengo Channel, and seen safely on their way to Espiritu Santo. Then Admiral Callaghan's force, heavily outnumbered even with the addition of Admiral Scott's ships, reversed course and steamed back to engage the enemy in the initial action of what would later be called the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal.

Shortly, after 0140, 13 November, they sighted the enemy fleet, under Vice Admiral Abe, 3 miles north of Kukum. The enemy was headed toward Henderson Field to bombard it and cripple Allied air operations long enough to sneak in 11 of their transports, then en route to relieve their beleaguered comrades fighting on the island.

Battle was given at 0150. At about 0220 *Monssen*, forced to rely on radio information and optics, was spotlighted, hit by some 37 shells, and reduced to a burning hulk. Twenty minutes later, completely immobilized in all departments, the ship was ordered abandoned. After daybreak *Monssen* was still a floating incinerator. C. C. Storey, BM2c, L. F. Sturgeon, GM2c, and J. G. Hughes, F1c, climbed back into the inferno and rescued eight men still aboard and alive, five of whom lived after reaching land. The survivors, 40 percent of the crew, were picked up at about 0800 and taken to Guadalcanal. The ship itself continued to blaze until early afternoon, when the waters of Ironbottom Sound closed over her.

Monssen was awarded four battle stars for World War II service.

Obituary for Vice Admiral Roland N. Smoot, USN (Ret.)
1901 - 1984*

*Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)
March, 1941 - October, 1942*

ROLAND NESBIT SMOOT '23

VAdm. Roland Nesbit Smoot USN (Ret.) died on 13 February 1984 in Santa Monica, California. Private funeral services were held in Santa Monica on 17 February.



Roland Nesbit Smoot

Appointed to the Naval Academy from the State of Utah, he was graduated with the Class of 1923 and joined CHASE for two years prior to going to submarine school and being ordered to S-7 and then S-26. Later he attended postgraduate school at Annapolis and then took his Master of Science degree from Pennsylvania State College before being assigned to NARWHAL.

In 1933 he returned to the Naval Academy as an instructor in engineering, then was assigned to MARYLAND before being ordered to the Navy yard in Pearl Harbor as shop superintendent. In 1939 he assumed command of AULICK in the Caribbean before the ship was transferred to the British.

After fitting out MONSSEN he took command of that ship and acted as an escort vessel for the carrier HORNET which transported MGen. James H. Doolittle's fliers for their famous strike on Tokyo in 1942. Under his command, MONSSEN also participated in the Battle of Midway, in the assault on Guadalcanal, the first battle of Savo Island, and the battle of the Eastern Solomons, for which he received a third Bronze Star Medal, with authorization to wear the Combat V.

In December 1942 he reported for duty with the West Coast Sound Training Squadron, San Diego, later becoming commanding officer of the

squadron and its training school, for which duty he received a second Navy Commendation Medal. In March of 1944 he returned to destroyer duty as ComDesDiv FOUR and ComDesDiv SEVEN, serving as well as ComDesRon FOURTEEN and as ComDesDiv TWENTY-SEVEN, and as representative of Commander Destroyers, Pacific, in the forward area. He later was named ComDesDiv FIFTY-SIX. In these assignments he was awarded the Navy Cross, the Legion of Merit with Combat V, a Gold Star in lieu of a second Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, a Gold Star in lieu of a second Navy Cross, an additional Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, and the Navy Unit Commendation. Among the many actions in which he participated during this period was sinking of the Japanese battleship YAMASHIRO.

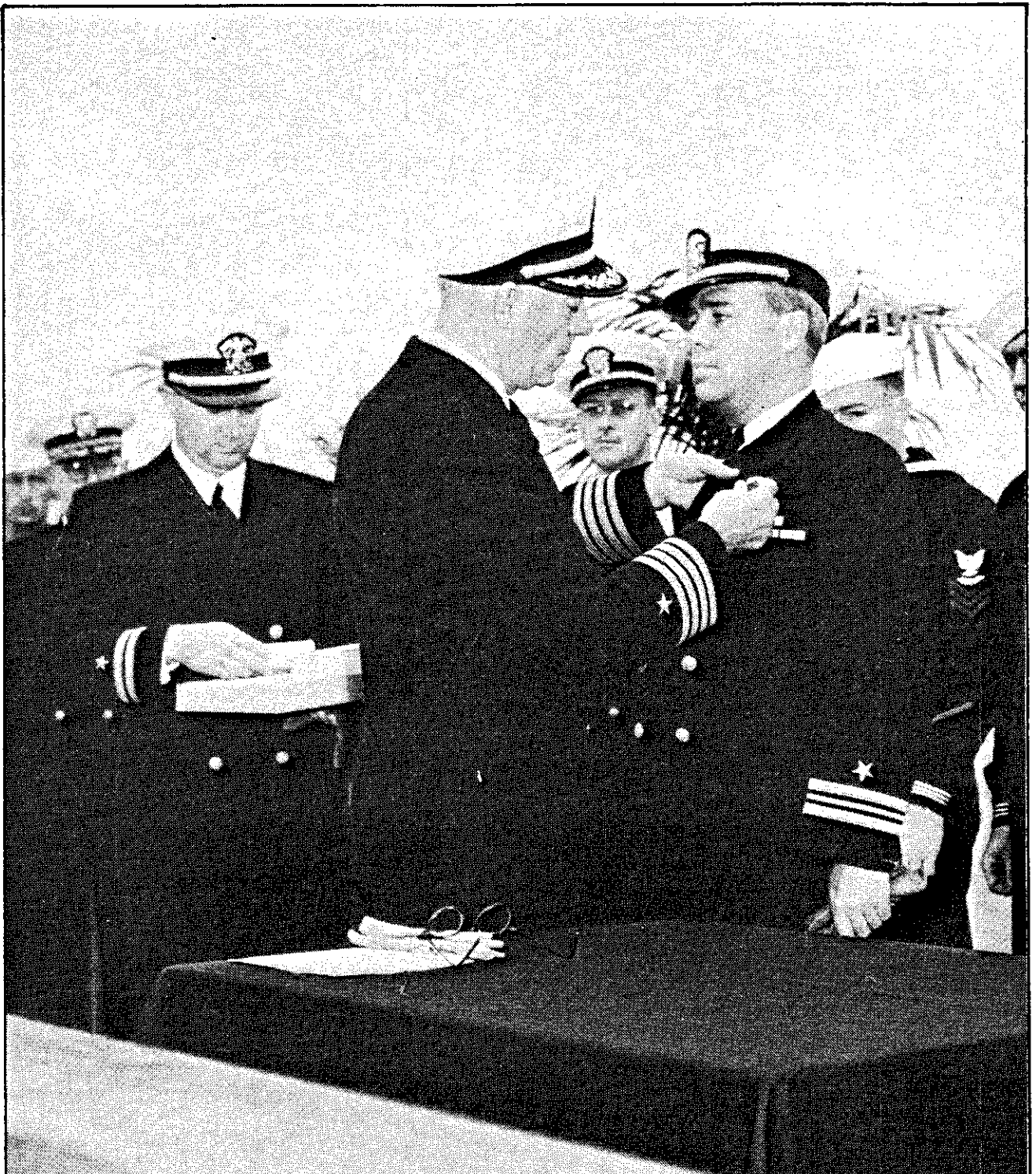
In July 1945 he assumed command of Task Flotilla FOUR, Destroyers, Pacific and acted as screen commander in fast carrier task force assaults on the Japanese homeland, later becoming port director and senior officer present in Yokosuka, Japan, for which duty he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit.

After the war he reported as director of officer personnel in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, then in 1948 was named Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Task Force EIGHT FOUR prior to taking command of NEWPORT NEWS. He later was Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Cruisers, Atlantic Fleet, then had duty in Washington with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Bureau of Naval Personnel once again. Other assignments included ComCruDiv THREE, Commander Mine Force, Pacific Fleet, and Commander United States Taiwan Defense Command, for which service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

He was transferred to the retired list in 1962. He was a member of the Naval Academy Alumni Association.

Survivors include his widow Sally, 615-A Avenida Sevilla, Laguna Hills CA 92653; a son and a daughter.

* Shipmate magazine; May, 1984



The Navy Cross is awarded to Lieutenant Commander Charles E. McCombs, USN, at Camp Pendleton, California, in the summer of 1943. Lieut. Comdr. McCombs was still an out-patient at this time, being treated for the shoulder injuries he sustained while commanding the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942. Rear Admiral Charles E. McCombs, USN (Ret.) died in 1991. (Photograph courtesy of his son, Richard L. McCombs.)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in
presenting the NAVY CROSS to

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CHARLES E. McCOMBS
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism in the line of his
profession during action with enemy forces on the night
of November 12-13, 1942, on which occasion the force
to which he was attached engaged at close quarters and
defeated a superior enemy force. His daring and
determination contributed materially to the victory
which prevented the enemy from accomplishing their
purposes."

For the President,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Frank Knox". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "F".

Secretary of the Navy.

CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

NAVY DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
1 November 1959

My dear Admiral McCombs:

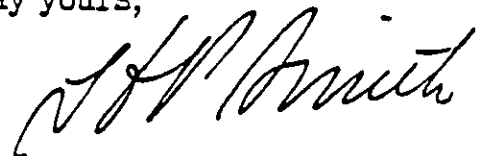
On the occasion of your retirement, I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation of your long and distinguished service to our Nation.

I note with pleasure the President of the United States awarded you the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. MONSEN during action with enemy forces on the night of 12-13 November 1942 when a superior enemy force was engaged at close quarters and defeated. Carrying out all your assignments with alert initiative and intensity of purpose as Executive Officer of the U. S. S. PROVIDENCE and as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. WYANDOT, you gained the respect and admiration of all with whom you served. While serving as Assistant Director and later as Director, Research Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, you represented the Navy Department on many joint committees in a most creditable manner.

As U. S. Navy Member, Military Standardization Agency, London, your professional knowledge, and your patience and tact in negotiations with representatives of other nations, enabled you to advance and safeguard the interests of the United States and the Navy. Due to your inspiring leadership as Commanding Officer, the U.S.S. HAMUL attained a high standard of performance. While assigned to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, you set standards of accomplishment that will be most difficult to emulate.

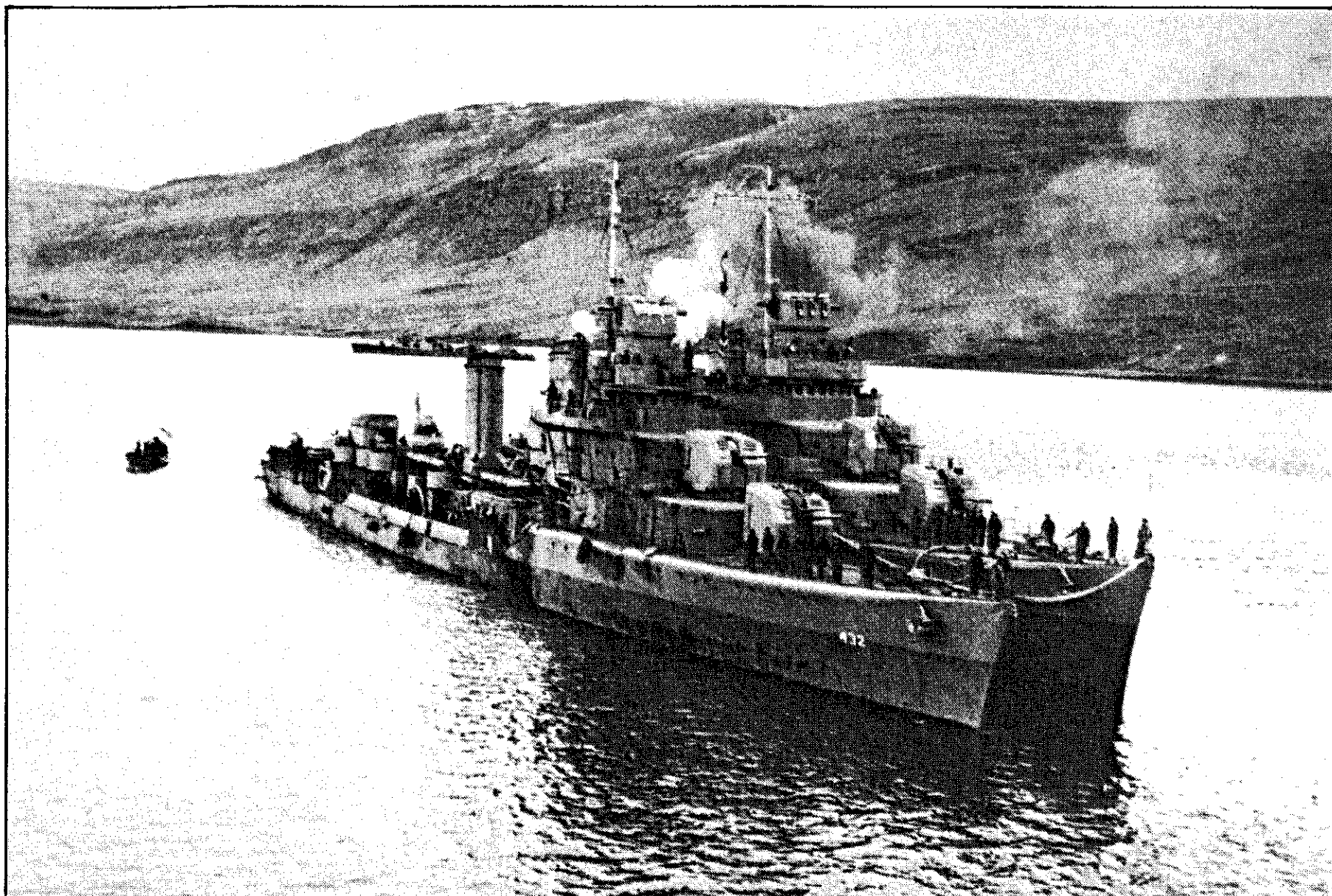
During your last active naval assignment as Commanding Officer, NROTC Unit, Ohio State University, you commanded and administered your staff and midshipmen in such manner as to provide an excellent source of officers for the Navy and the Naval Reserve. Your loyalty and devotion to duty have reflected the highest credit upon you and the Naval service. May it be a source of great pride and satisfaction to you to look back upon a job "Well Done".

Sincerely yours,

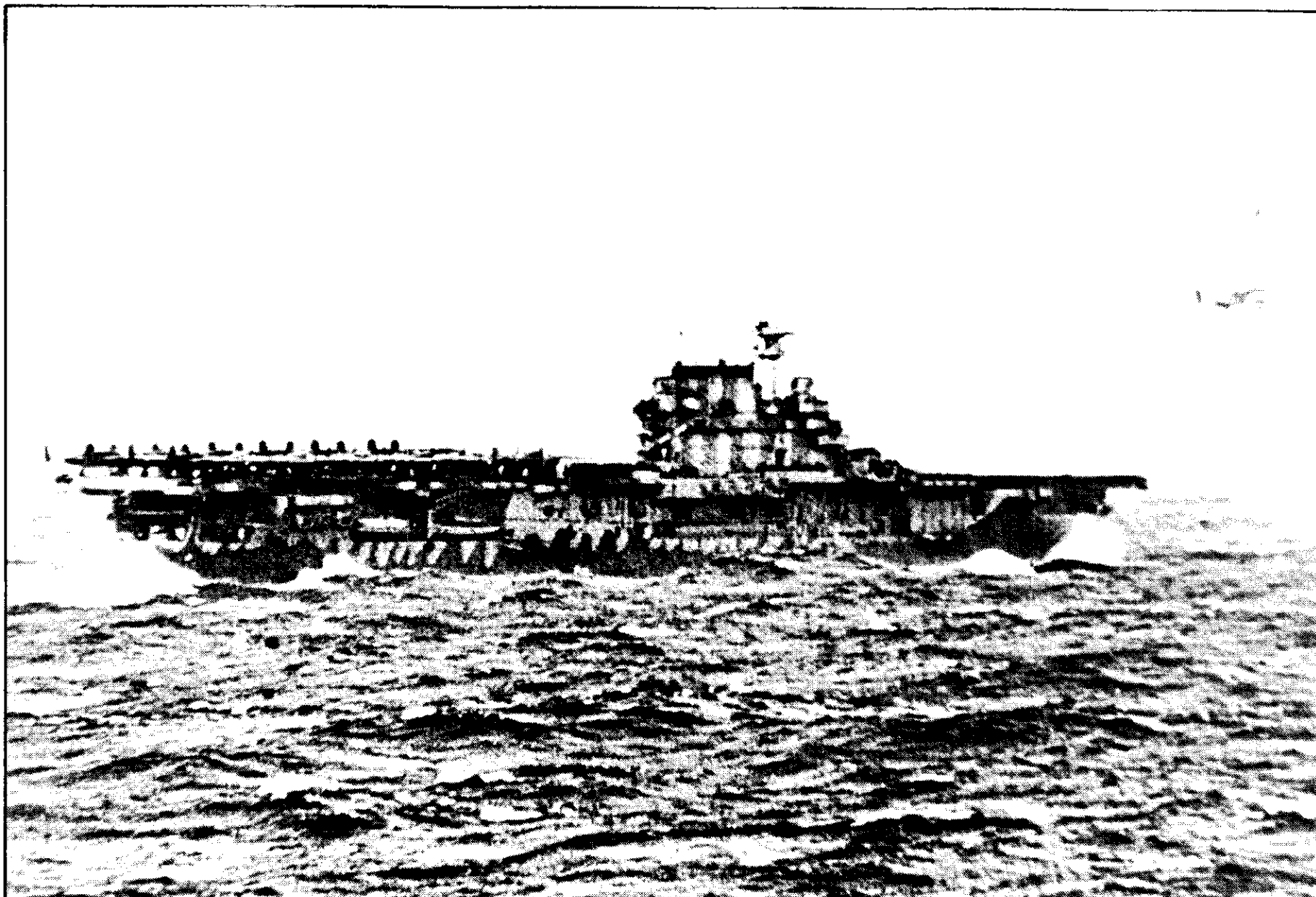
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H. P. Smith', written in a cursive style.

H. P. SMITH

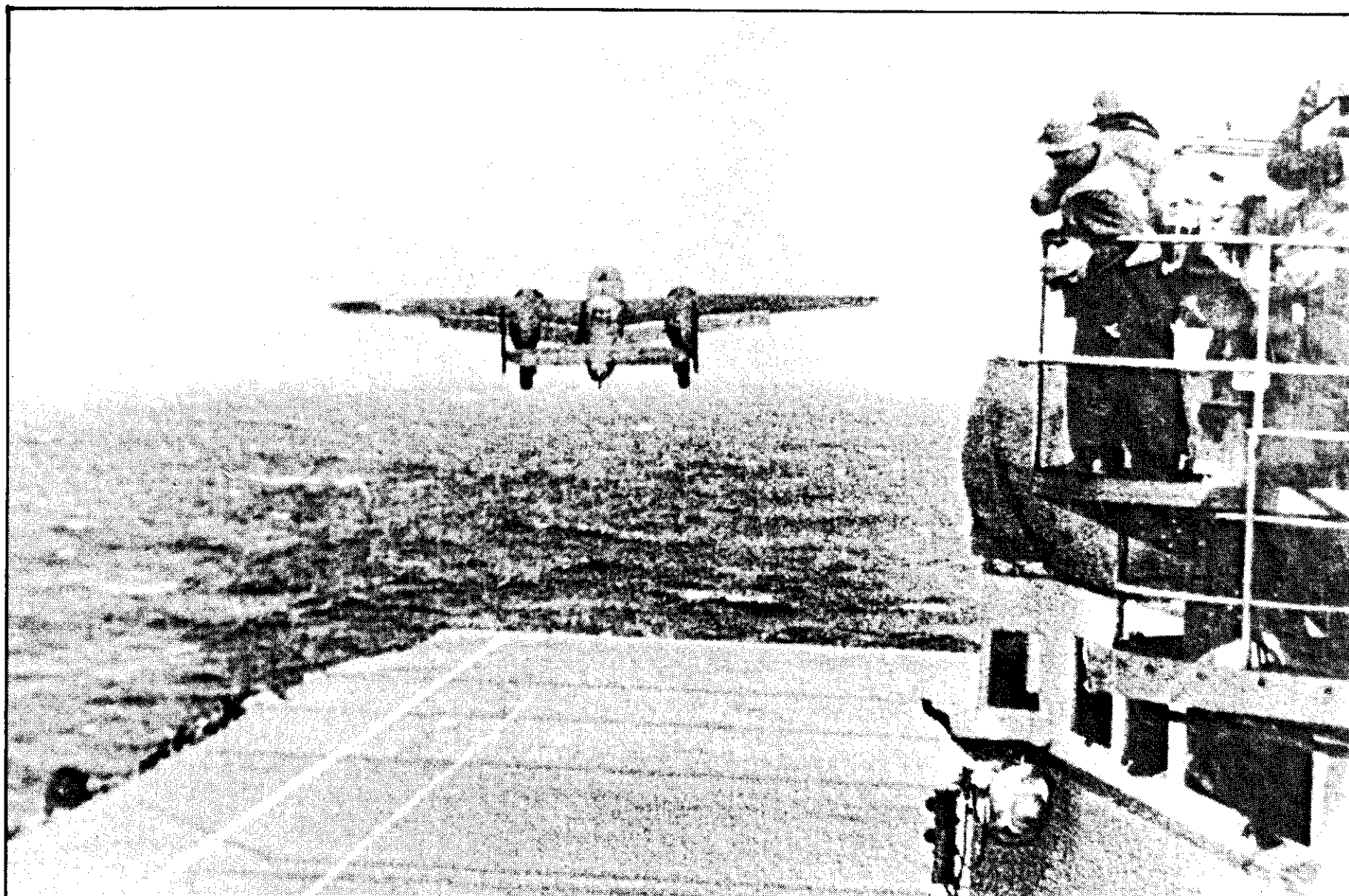
(Copy courtesy of Richard L. McCombs; July 1995)



The U.S.S. Kearny (DD-432) lashed to the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) to keep her from capsizing at Reykjavik, Iceland, on October 17, 1941. Torpedoed by a German U-boat, the Kearny was all but cut in two by the explosion which killed eleven of her crew, wounded seven and carried away the starboard wing of the bridge. During this period of undeclared war U.S. Navy vessels escorted convoys between North America and Iceland and were under orders to "shoot on sight" any German warships they encountered. (National Archives)



The U.S.S. Hornet (CV-8) launching the twin-engined Army B-25 bombers which raided Tokyo on 18 April 1942, under the command of Lt. Colonel Doolittle. The U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) was one of the destroyers in Task Force 16, which escorted the Hornet enroute to the launching position. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)



The sixteen B-25 Mitchell bombers launched from the U.S.S. Hornet (CV-8) flew 668 miles to their targets in Tokyo and then, because the Hornet's deck was too short to allow recovery, continued on to crash-land or bail out over China. Of the 80 pilots and crewmen in these planes, 71 survived. Due to wartime secrecy the Navy never received any credit for its role in this operation. It became known as "Jimmy Doolittle's Raid." In 1995 the Navy awarded all of the "1942 Task Force 16" sailors a Citation in recognition of their services.

(Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

Bert W. (BUD) Whited, ADRC USN Ret.
P.O. Box 626, 7 Mill Pond Lane
Grantham, NH 03753
Voice or FAX - 603-863-5330

TASK FORCE 16 & USS HORNET CV-8 ASSOCIATION

4 April 1995

To all of the "1942 Task Force 16" Sailors and Marines and the Doolittle's Raiders.

Dear Shipmates,

Asst. Sec. of the Navy, Bernard Rostker, through Senator Bob Smith & Tom Lankford, (Executive Assistant) has informed me that the Navy Department will, in Lieu of the "NAVY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE MEDAL", issue the crew members of TASK FORCE 16 a Navy Citation. This Citation is to be presented to myself and any other Task Force 16 Crew Members that wants to attend. This Citation will be presented by the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. John Dalton and will be held in his office at 1330 on Monday 15 May 1995. His office is located in the Pentagon Building, Arlington, VA. Access the Pentagon through the Mall entrance and ask to be shown to Secretary Dalton office. The ceremony will also be attended by Senator Bob Smith, (his Executive Assistant Mr. Tom Lankford) and Representative Dick Swett, all of New Hampshire. They were all very instrumental in getting this award issued and I could not have succeeded in this endeavor with out their support and contacts they have with the Navy Department personnel.

Any Crew member of Task Force 16 who will be attending, will have to Phone YN 2/C John Howard at 703-697-2427 (ASAP) before 1 May 1995. Give him your Name, Rank/Rate, Ship and Division, as of 18 April 1942, so the Navy can get their Citations made up in time for the presentation. Also, call or write me with the same information so I will know how many will be attending.

All Crewmembers (or one surviving relative) who cannot attend the ceremony, will be issued the Citation by writing to Ms. Jean Kirk, Navy Operations Awards & Special Projects, 1000 Navy Pentagon, Washington, DC 20350 with the same information as stated above, so the Citations can be made up and sent to them.

I apologize to all of you, that this is all I could accomplish. I started this campaign to get us our medal in September 1991, and it has taken me 3 years 7 Months, and a lot of expenses to get this far, but at least we will get something for our involvement in carrying Doolittle and his Bomber crews on their historic flight. I also want to thank all of you who have sent donations to me to help cover my costs over the past 3 plus years, it is really appreciated.

Very truly yours,



Bert W. (BUD) Whited, ADRC USN Ret.
USS HORNET, CV-8
Scouting Squadron Eight, VS-8



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000


IN REPLY REFER TO
Ser 09B33/5U518681
16 May 1995

Mr. Thomas R. Jordan
300 Cuddihy Dr.
Metairie, LA 70005-4144

Dear Mr. Jordan:

It is a pleasure to enclose the Special Secretary of the Navy Certificate commemorating your participation in TASK FORCE 16 on 18 April 1942.

Sincerely,


S. J. KIRK
Head, Awards and Special
Projects Branch
By direction
Chief of Naval Operations

Enclosure

Editor's Note:

Seaman Thomas R. Jordan went down with the Monssen in November 1942, so his certificate (next page) was issued posthumously and sent to his sister, Emajean Jordan Buechner. Mrs. Buechner has been very supportive of the Monssen's survivors, and she hosted their second reunion in 1993.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
August, 1995

Department of the Navy



The Secretary of the Navy
takes pleasure in recognizing the services of:

Seaman First Class
Thomas R. Jordan USN
USS Monssen (DD-436)

for participation in
TASK FORCE 16

USS Hornet CV-8
USS Northampton CA-26
USS Salt Lake City CA-25
USS Balch DD-363
USS Benham DD-397
USS Ellet DD-398
USS Fanning DD-385
USS Sabine AO-25

USS Enterprise CV-6
USS Vincennes CA-44
USS Nashville CL-43
USS Gwin DD-433
USS Grayson DD-435
USS Monssen DD-436
USS Meredith DD-434
USS Cimarron AO-22

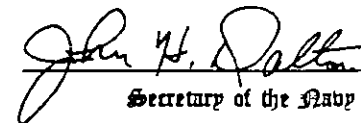
with Submarines, Pacific Fleet

USS Thresher SS-200

USS Trout SS-202

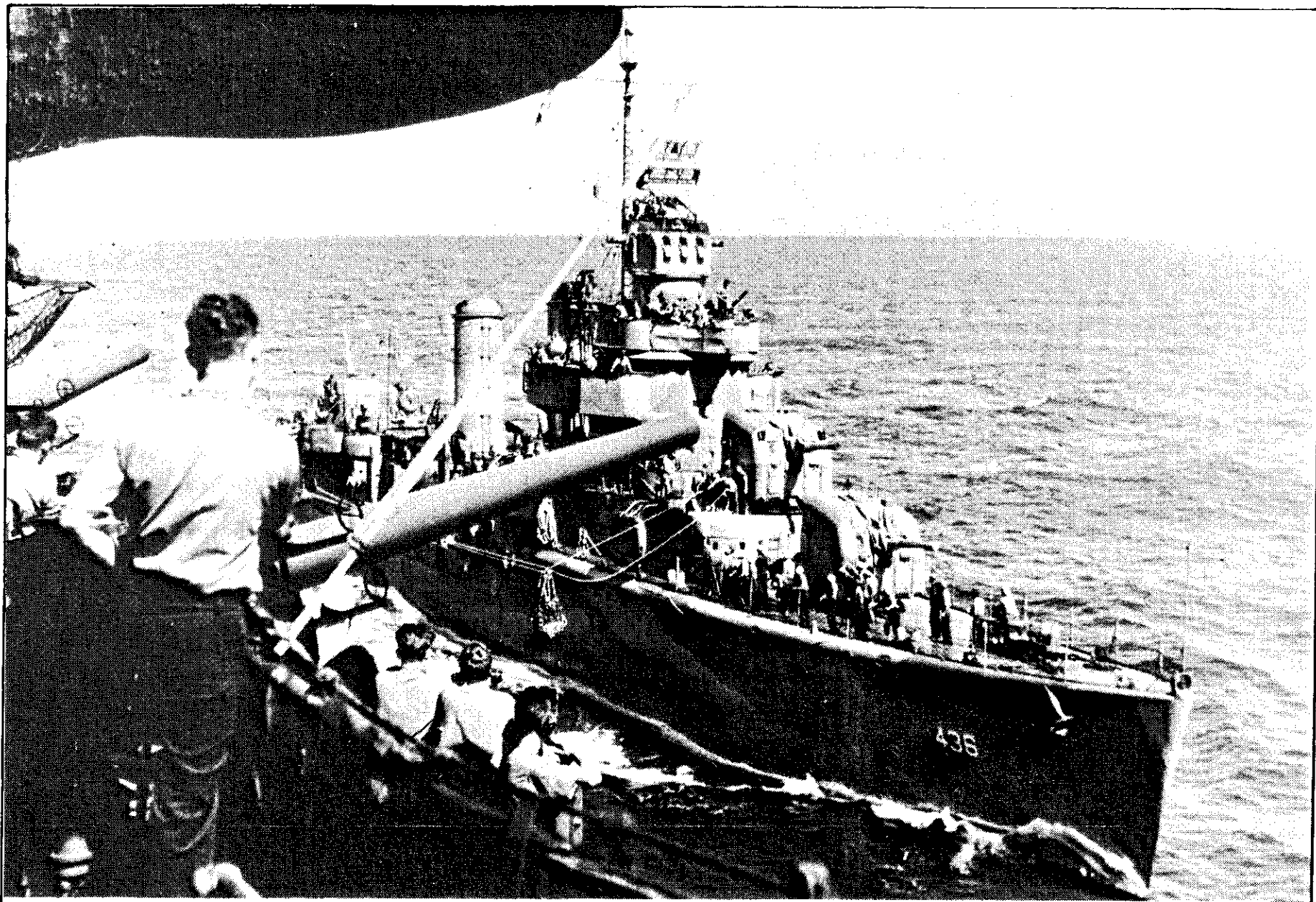
On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Second World War, it is appropriate that we take time to reflect on the unique and daring accomplishments achieved early in the war by Task Force 16. Sailing westward under sealed orders in April 1942, only four months after the devastating raid on Pearl Harbor, Task Force 16, carrying sixteen Army B-25 bombers, proceeded into history. Facing adverse weather and under constant threat of discovery before bombers could be launched to strike the Japanese homeland, the crews of the ships and LTC Doolittle's bombers persevered. On 18 April 1942 at 1445, perseverance produced success as radio broadcasts from Japan confirmed the success of the raids. These raids were an enormous boost to the morale of the American people in those early and dark days of the war and a harbinger of the future for the Japanese High Command that had so foolishly awakened "The Sleeping Giant." These exploits, which so inspired the service men and women and the nation live on today and are remembered when the necessity of success against all odds is required.




Secretary of the Navy

15 May 1995

Date



The U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) alongside the carrier U.S.S. Enterprise (CV-6) to exchange guard mail, 19 May 1942, while operating with Admiral Halsey's Task Force 16. Shortly thereafter (June 4th) the Monssen was a screening vessel for the oilers at the Battle of Midway. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

Right: These three congratulatory dispatches were sent to all the ships which participated in the Battle of Midway - a great strategic victory for the United States which changed the whole course of the Pacific War. The Monssen participated as a screening vessel for the Oiler Group which fueled both Task Forces (TF 16 and TF 17) on 31 May and 1 June.

6 JUNE 1942

FROM: COMINCH
TO: ALL TASKFORCOMS PACFLT

NPM 159 Ø62ØØØ

THE NAVY MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD JOIN IN ADMIRATION FOR THE AMERICAN NAVAL MARINE AND ARMY FORCES WHO HAVE SO GALLANTLY AND EFFECTIVELY REPELLED THE ENEMY ADVANCE ON MIDWAY AND ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEIR COMRADES IN ARMS WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE THE ENEMY REALIZE THAT WAR IS HELL UNQUOTE CINCPAC HEARTILY JOINS IN THE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED X

8 JUNE 1942

FROM: CINCPAC
TO: NAS MIDWAY: ALL T.F.COMS MY COMMAND

NPM NR 725 Ø8Ø433

THE FIRST LORD OF THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY, THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA, GENERAL MACARTHUR AND GENERAL DEWITT, COMMANDING GENERAL WESTERN DEFENSE*COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY HAVE ALL FORWARDED TO THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF PRIDE, ADMIRATION, AND HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE ARMY, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS ON THEIR DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY IN THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY X THIS FROM CINCPAC

9 JUNE 1942

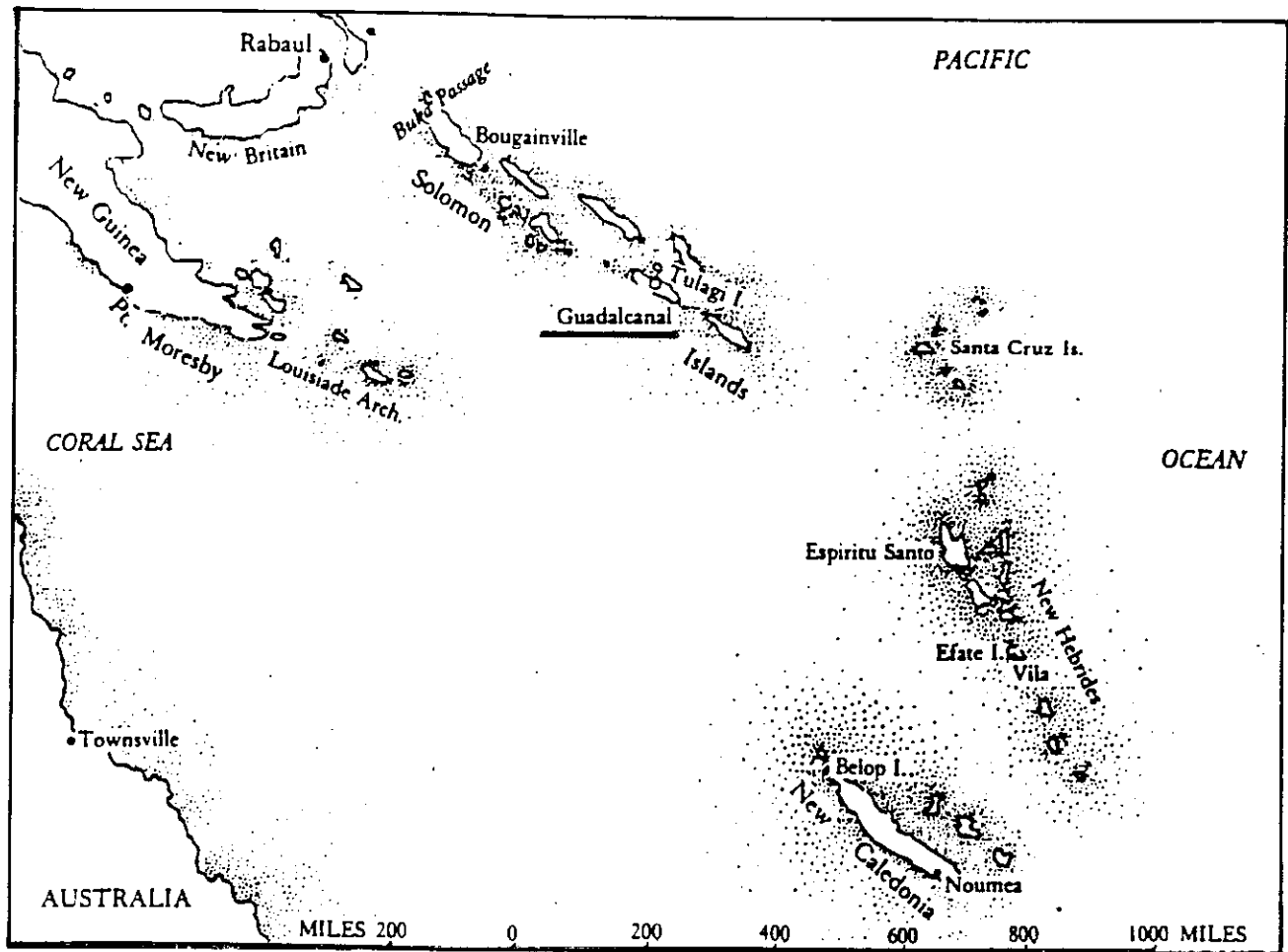
FROM: CINCPAC
TO: C.T.F. 16 C.T.F. 17
INFO: COMINCH COMCRUPACFLT C.T.F. 8

Ø91833

THIS IS A PARAPHRASED VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL DISPATCH AND IS TO BE PUBLISHED ON BULLETIN BOARDS AND TO THE CREW PER C.T.F. 16 Ø92141

THE SUPERB PERFORMANCE OF TASK FORCES 16 AND 17 IN THE MIDWAY BATTLE WAS IN CONSISTENCE WITH THEIR PREVIOUS RECORDS OF BRILLIANT BOLDNESS XX ORIGINATOR CINCPAC XX THEIR LOSSES IN PERSONNEL IS FAR MORE REGRETTED THAN THAT OF MATERIEL X THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN THE BATTLE WAS THEIR HEROIC AND RESOLUTE DETERMINATION AND THIS PRODUCED A GREAT VICTORY FOR THEIR COUNTRY X THE ENEMY MUST AGAIN BE ASSAILED AND TASK FORCE 16 IS CALLED X ENROUTE TO THE ALEUTIAN AREA IT IS HOPED THAT THEIR GALLANT VETERANS WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME WELL AND HARD EARNED REST X I HAVE FIRM BELIEF IN THE ABILITY OF TASK FORCE 16 TO DESTROY THE ENEMY THERE AS THEY DID SO OVERWHELMINGLY IN THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY, THEREBY COMPLETING THE REVERSAL OF HIS WAR EFFORT

Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands in World War II



Noumea to Rabaul. (Courtesy Australian War Memorial)

In the summer of 1942 the Solomon Islands, streaming 600 miles southeast from New Britain (upper left), assumed a great strategic importance. For the Japanese, their seaplane base at Tulagi (center) and the airfield they were completing on Guadalcanal formed part of a defensive perimeter for their principal base at Rabaul. For the United States, these bases in the lower Solomons threatened both her supply lines to Australia and her advance bases in the New Hebrides and on New Caledonia.

The decisive Guadalcanal Campaign began on August 7, 1942, when the U.S. Marines seized both Tulagi and the airfield across the bay. It ended six months later when the Japanese evacuated their remaining troops.

The victory was truly a turning point in the Pacific War. A captured Japanese document read, "Success or failure in recapturing Guadalcanal . . . is the fork in the road which leads to victory for them or for us." After the island was secured the Japanese offensive was over, and the Allies began their long island-hopping march to Tokyo Bay.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
February, 1996

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DECLASSIFIED

ACTION REPORT

COMMANDER, TASK GROUP 62.4
(COMMANDER, CRUISERS, TASK FORCE 18)

SERIAL 001

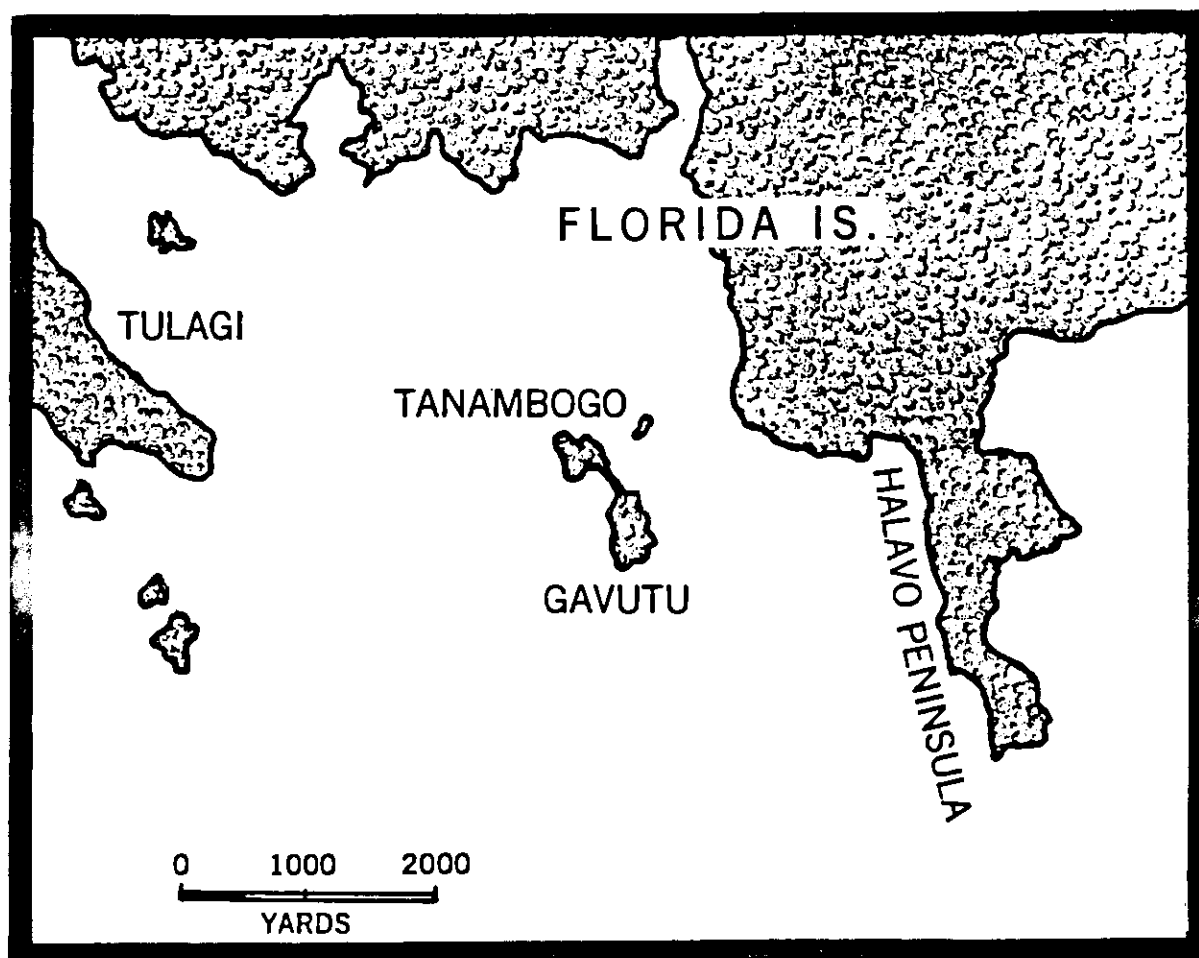
13 AUGUST 1942

REPORT OF ACTION; TULAGI-GUADALCANAL, 6-10 AUGUST
1942.

COVERS ACTIVITY OF FIRE SUPPORT GROUP
M (SAN JUAN, MONSSEN, BUCHANAN) AT
TULAGI DURING INITIAL LANDING.

47904

PHOTOSTAT



Editor's Note: The Monssen was attached to the Task Group (TG 62.4) which provided gunfire support for the initial landings of the Guadalcanal Campaign here on August 7, 1942. These islands were invaded because they ringed the only good harbor in the area, just 20 miles north of the airfield on Guadalcanal. The last paragraph on page 7 of this report comments on the Monssen's role in this action. (Map from The Campaign for Guadalcanal by Jack Coggins)

*E. A. Wilde
July 24, 1995*

FE24/A16-3(001)

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
FLAGSHIP OF COMMANDER TASK GROUP 62.4

~~SECRET~~

August 13, 1942.

From: Commander Task Group 62.4.
To: Commander Task Force 62.
Subject: Report of action, TULAGI-GUADALCANAL,
6-10 August, 1942.
Enclosure: (A) Subject report.

1. The report of action at TULAGI-GUADALCANAL,
6-10 August, 1942, as engaged in by Task Group 62.4 (Fire
Support Group MIK) is forwarded herewith.

Norman Scott
NORMAN SCOTT.

~~SECRET~~ **DECLASSIFIED**

ENCLOSURE "A"

COMMANDER CRUISERS, TASK FORCE EIGHTEEN (COMMANDER
FIRE SUPPORT GROUP MIKE, TASK FORCE 62).

REPORT OF ACTION AT TULAGI-GUADALCANAL 6-10 AUGUST, 1942.

6 August, 1942.

At 1611, Commander Cruisers, Task Force EIGHTEEN, under temporary orders with Task Force 62, as Commander Fire Support Group MIKE (Commander Task Group 62.4) consisting of SAN JUAN, MONSEEN, and BUCHANAN, with additional duty as Commander Squadron YOKE, which comprised the following units: CHICAGO, CANBERRA, Transdiv EASY (NEVILLE, ZEILIN, PEYWOOD, PRESIDENT JACKSON), Transdiv 12 (CALHOUN, GREGORY, LITTLE, McKEAN), Minesweeper Group (HOPKINS, TREVIER, ZANE, SOUTHARD, HOVEY), HENLEY, HAGLEY, HEMP, BLUE, in latitude 10° 50' South, longitude 159° 01' East, formed approach disposition AK-3, on signal from Commander Task Force 62; proceeding to TULAGI-GUADALCANAL area. The task of this squadron was the capture of the TULAGI area.

7 August, 1942.

At about 0630 Squadron YOKE arrived in position before TULAGI. The delay of one half hour was caused by the failure of transports to keep closed up. "H" hour (the time of first landing of troops on TULAGI) was designated by Commander Transport Group YOKE in NEVILLE (Commander Task Group 62.2) as 0800.

As Squadron YOKE approached its designated area, fighting and dive bombing planes of the Support Force were observed strafing at 0614 and dive bombing at 0618 objectives in the TULAGI-GAVUTU area. Many fires were observed resulting from this attack. Burning objects could not be clearly distinguished but it is believed that most of them were enemy aircraft.

The vessels of Fire Support Group MIKE assisted in screening the transports and then took their respective stations for the commencement of naval gunfire support (See diagram "A").

The planned support was executed as follows:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FIRING SHIP</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>APPROX. NO. OF ROUNDS FIRED</u>
0727-0732	MONSEEN	Hill on promontory on Florida Island west of TULAGI Island.	60 rds.

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<u>TIME</u>	<u>FIRING SHIP</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>APPROX. NO. OF ROUNDS FIRED</u>
0727-0732	BUCHANAN	Promontory east of HALETA.	100 rds.
0730-0735	SAN JUAN	Small Island south of HALETA.	100 rds.
0743-0748	SAN JUAN	Hill 208 TULAGI	560 rds.
0750-0755	MONSSEN BUCHANAN	Landing Beach southside of TULAGI.	200 rds. each
0759-0804	SAN JUAN	Hill 208 TULAGI	560 rds.
0810-0815	BUCHANAN	Radio Station TULAGI	100 rds.
0820-0825	MONSSEN	A.A. positions south of hospital, TULAGI	100 rds.
0834-0840	SAN JUAN	Prison, TULAGI	280 rds.
0854-0900	SAN JUAN	TANALBOGO (Target of opportunity - requested by DMS)	410 rds.
1004-1012 and 1017-1028	SAN JUAN	GAVUTU (Target of opportunity - requested by shore fire control party).	815 rds.
1152-1156	SAN JUAN	Northeast side, GAVUTU	280 rds.
1249-1256	SAN JUAN	Hill 281, TULAGI (Target of opportunity - requested by Shore Fire Control Party)	280 rds.

From the time of entry into the action area, until 1156, no enemy opposition to the operations of Fire Support Group MIKE was experienced.

Upon request from the minesweeping division the SAN JUAN between 1004 and 1028 silenced an enemy gun on GAVUTU Island which had interfered with sweeping operations.

At 1135 an explosion was heard in SAN JUAN's Gun Mount #1, followed immediately by the reporting of a fire in that mount. The fire was quickly extinguished. It was dis-

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closed that five men had been killed and thirteen men injured. A board of investigation was subsequently ordered to inquire into the circumstances of the accident.

At 1156 SAN JUAN reported unidentified aircraft approaching the area from bearing 170°T. This contact was lost about twenty minutes later. Preparations were made during this interval to repel enemy air attack in the vicinity of Squadron YOKE transports. At 1249 having lost the aircraft contact naval gunfire support schedule was resumed.

At 1220 the following report was made to CTF 62:

"HYPO hour half hour delayed caused by transports not closing up X NEVILLE reports eighteen Jap planes destroyed on water X Landing operations apparently successful X Very slight fire against our ships X No great opposition on shore X Casualties unknown X No mines discovered after forty minutes sweeping X Two submarines reported both believed in error X GAVUTU landing not yet underway X"

At 1315 CHICAGO reported radar contact on unidentified planes bearing 315°T, distant 43 miles, closing. Fire Support Group MIKE was again prepared to repel enemy aircraft. At 1323 enemy horizontal bombers were observed in the Squadron XRAY area off GUADALCANAL, at altitude estimated to be 14,000 feet. They were at ranges too great to be engaged by ships of Squadron YOKE. This group of planes dropped bombs in the Squadron XRAY area; results could not be observed. During this attack three planes whose identity could not be determined were observed to crash.

At 1500 Squadron XRAY was again observed under enemy aircraft attack, this time by dive bombers. Considerable A.A. fire was seen over the area but results could not be observed.

Throughout the later hours of the afternoon Fire Support Group MIKE continued to screen Squadron YOKE.

At 1803 formed SAN JUAN, HOBART and MONSSEN in column to patrol eastward of longitude 160°-04, with the mission of covering AP's and AK's against enemy light forces entering the area from the EASTWARD, in accordance with Commander Task Group 62.6 order: "Special Instructions to SCREENING GROUP and Vessels Temporarily Assigned." Other vessels of the screening group patrolling as follows: AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA, and CHICAGO screened by PATTERSON and BAGLEY, south of a line drawn 125°T from center of SAVO ISLAND and west of longitude 160°-04' E; VINCENNES, ASTORIA, and QUINCY, screened by JARVIS and HELM, north of the above line and west of Longitude 160°-04 E; Anti submarine patrols

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and radar guards as follows:

Between (08-59S) and (09-01S) RALPH TALBOT
 (159-55E) (159-49E)

Between (09-05S) and (09-09S) BLUE
 (159-42E) (159-37E)

At 2000 the following report was made to CTF 62:

"Much stiffer opposition encountered X Enemy concentrated at hill 281 TULAGI and TANAMBOGO where fighting continues X GAVUTU has been captured X Parachute Battalion suffered heavy casualties reinforcements have been landed X No enemy bombing attacks in YOKE X"

At 2325 the following dispatch was sent to CTF 62:

"Your 070925 situation reported in my 070900 X Since reporting landing on eastern Florida promontory reported successful, no opposition on beach X 5" service ammunition remaining on hand SAN JUAN 3806 X MONSSEN 889 X BUCHANAN will follow X"

August 8, 1942.

Patrols were continued until 0711 without incident.

At 0915, at the request of the landing force ashore, MONSSEN and BUCHANAN were sent to the TANAMBOGO Island area to render close fire support to the prospective landing on that island.

At 1039, forty (40) enemy VB were reported enroute this area; BUCHANAN was directed to return to the transport area to assist screening ships in repelling the impending air attack.

At 1156 about twenty-five (25) Japanese twin engined VB were sighted approaching the transport area from northward at altitude about five hundred feet. Before arriving in the vicinity the planes had decreased their altitude to about fifty feet. Without making any definite threat to the ships in the YOKE area, planes continued on a southwesterly course. A.A. fire of all ships in the area was opened as ranges became clear and effective. Nine enemy planes were observed from YOKE area to have been shot down. The planes were of the Japanese "97" heavy bomber type. This action ended at 1212.

At 1310 MONSSEN was again directed to proceed to TANAMBOGO area, observe conditions, and report back. At 1345

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BUCHANAN was directed to proceed to TANAMBOGO and join MONSSEN in accordance with a request of the landing force ashore for close fire support of destroyers on TANAMBOGO.

At 1358 radar contact was made on unidentified planes; all ships of the screen were alerted to prepare to repel the attack. This alert continued until 1640 during which time no attack developed. At the latter time contact was lost. Air raids and false warnings seriously interfered with unloading transports.

About 1500 MONSSEN returned to the transport area, reporting that the landing force in GAVUTU was preparing to assault TANAMBOGO. The BUCHANAN was standing by in that area. As the latter's ammunition was running low, at 1555 HENLEY was directed to circle TANAMBOGO to stand by to support this assault.

At 1620 the following report was forwarded to CTF 62.

"About sixty (60) enemy well dug in on TANAMBOGO X Few remaining in Fox holes on GAVUTU X Considerable cleaning up required X Have been using Dog Dog close inshore X TULAGI situation obscure X"

At 1802 these two destroyers returned to the screen, having been released by the landing force ashore.

At 1850 HOBART, SAN JUAN MONSSEN and BUCHANAN commenced patrol in the same area as last night.

At 2210 four wounded men of the First Raider Battalion were rescued from a landing boat by SAN JUAN.

At 2230 the following report was made to CTF 62:

"Will submit summary on Florida situation immediately upon return my officer from ashore tonight.

Dog Dog remained immediate vicinity Tanambogo all day, frequent close support fire. Although our troops on Tanambogo Island not completely in our hands at dark.

Two torpedo wakes no bombs in air attack today no casualties. Nine enemy planes sighted destroyed. Only one enemy torpedo plane sighted as getting clear in our direction. Bagley was fired on by Jap survivors on plane in water as ship approached Japs they shot themselves. Will deliver four prisoners and some material

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picked up from plane by Blue tomorrow morning to Astoria.

Submit that irregular formation of transports covered by high speed screen zigzagging used this morning is more effective against air attack than orthodox disposition used this afternoon. Explosion yesterday in number one five inch mount SAN JUAN five killed all wounded expected to recover. Breech plug blew out either because recoil did not function possibly from gun sticking in slide from excessive heat or AA shell exploded prematurely in gun. New gun and navy yard repairs required. Ammunition remaining San Juan 3500 Monssen 998 Buchanan 500."

The summary mentioned in paragraph one above was not sent because the Commander Transports interviewed the officer from the SAN JUAN upon his return to the NEVILLE and submitted the necessary report to the Task Force Commander.

August 9, 1942.

The CHICAGO has reported that at 0115 she, CANBIERRA, PATTERSON and BAGLEY were engaged in intermittent gunfire at targets not definitely established.

This action was neither observed or heard in the SAN JUAN.

At 0135, SAN JUAN, HOBART, and MONSSEN had reached the southern limit of the patrol line and were changing course to North. At this time a series of aircraft flares were observed just west of South followed about five (5) minutes later, by flares to the northwest. At about 0145, from bearing 300° distant about nineteen (19) miles, heavy gunfire was observed. It was believed that two columns of ships were firing at each other in the aforementioned location, on northwesterly or southeasterly courses at a range estimated to be four (4) to five (5) thousand yards. It appeared that one ship in the right hand column had guns of larger caliber than the other ships. It is believed that the ships of this column were enemy. About two minutes after this firing had started a large fire was observed in a ship of the left hand column. By the light of gunfire and the fire from the ship just mentioned splashes were observed to the right of the right column of ships and it is believed that some shell hits were seen on this column of ships.

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As the action subsided, a plane was seen to fly over our own formation and drop three flares in the TULAGI-GAVUTU area. No further action developed, and this formation continued to patrol the eastern approaches to the area. No reports of any kind including contact report, were received concerning the foregoing action prior to a dispatch from the CHICAGO at 0245.

At 0645 HOBART was directed to proceed on duty assigned; MONSSEN and BUCHANAN proceeded to YOKE area to screen transports engaged in unloading. At this time as it appeared likely that the enemy might again attack, the SAN JUAN proceeded a short way to seaward to contact the CHICAGO and then returned to the YOKE transport area. The CHICAGO was returning at good speed as reported but soon slowed down. At 0700 SAN JUAN made radar contact with group of unidentified planes; Fire Support Group MIKE was maneuvered at high speed to vicinity of Squadron YOKE transports. No attack developed and at 0743 radar contact was lost.

Throughout the remainder of the day Fire Support Group MIKE screened the transports of Squadron YOKE during their unloading. No further action of any kind developed and at 1917, on orders from Commander Task Force 62 the remaining ships in the area were formed in approach disposition AR-4 and retired from the area via LEMGO Channel, SAN JUAN leading.

It is recommended that suitable award or recognition for meritorious service be made in the cases of the following three officers:

During the operations of 6-10 August, 1942, reported upon above my flagship SAN JUAN, Captain J. E. Maher, was continuously on call for various duties. At all times the ship was on the alert and ready. During the assault on TULAGI and GAVUTU Captain Maher rendered excellent and timely support with his gunfire and especially in silencing a shore battery which threatened our mine sweeping operations. While protecting transports during two air attacks he showed very good tactical judgment and coolness in handling his ship.

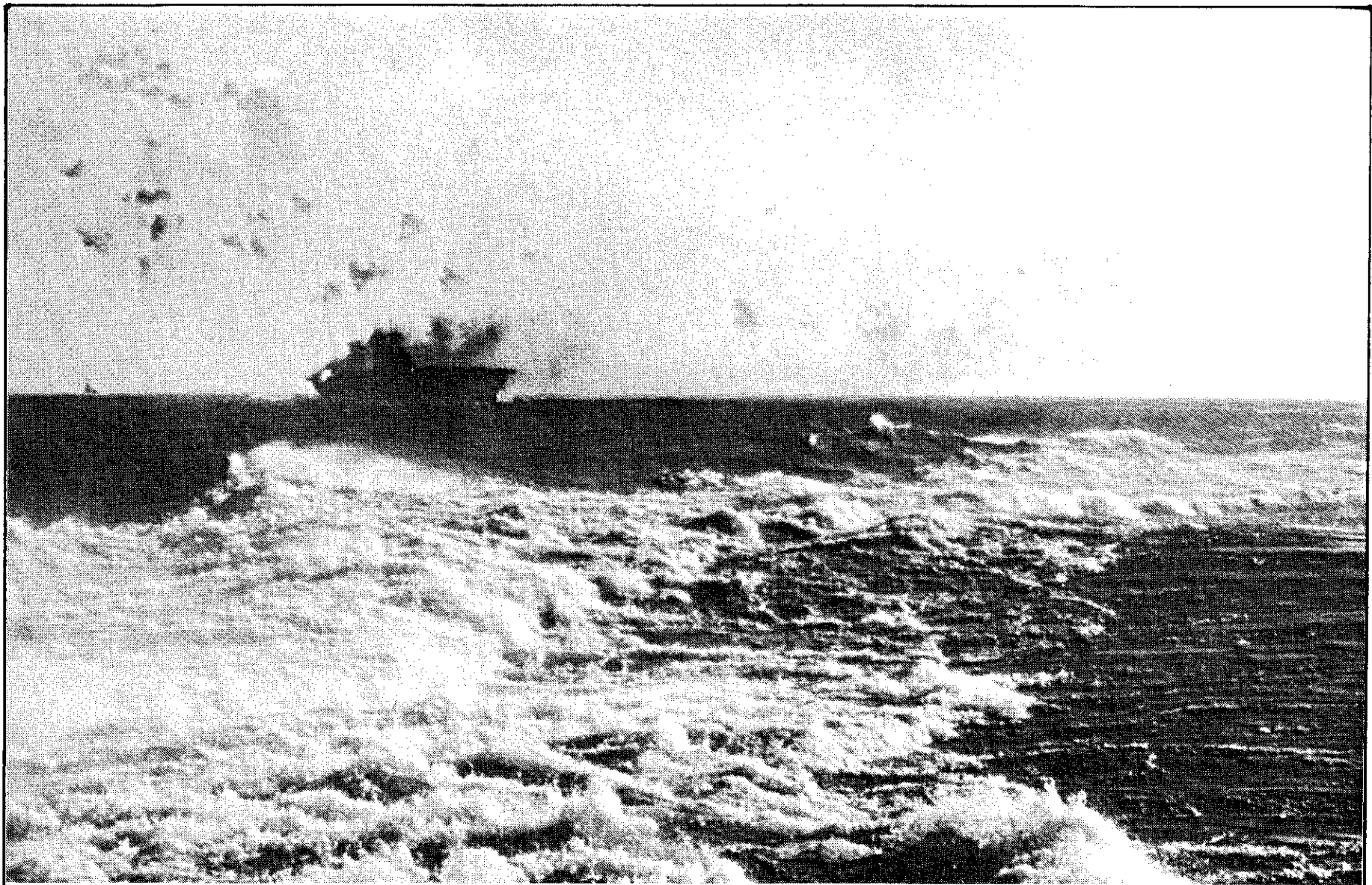
On August 7th and 8th I directed the MONSSEN - Commander R. N. Smoot to circle TANABOGO and deliver close fire support. As he had done on several previous assignments, Commander Smoot was prompt in coming within hail and most seamanlike and expeditious in taking his ship to the critical spot. Although the enemy was reported to have artillery on the Island Commander Smoot closed quickly to point blank range and rendered our troops much needed assistance.

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Lieutenant G. A. Howe, R.A.N.R. rendered valuable service while assisting in the piloting of the SAN JUAN, approaching the TULAGI area from the westward and when departing to the eastward. Both these occasions took place during darkness when SAN JUAN was the leading ship. I also sent Lieutenant Howe on board the MONSIEUR to assist in piloting when that vessel rounded and bombarded TANABOGO Island at point blank range. In the event of further operations in the Solomons I strongly recommend Lieutenant Howe for similar duty with our forces.

Norman Scott

NORMAN SCOTT,
Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Commander Task Group 62.4.



A starboard bow view of the carrier U.S.S. Enterprise (CV-6) under attack during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons on August 24, 1942. A secondary explosion from the bomb hits which started the fire on the starboard side, aft, showered the destroyer U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) (far left) with debris. During the battle the Monssen shot down an enemy plane with her 20-mm's, and later she rescued a pilot (Ens. John H. Jorgenson, USNR) and his crewman when their SBD dive-bomber ditched nearby. (Editor's Note: John Jorgenson died in 1981, but I have sent a copy of this booklet to his family.) (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

Gunfire Support Mission at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands

On 27 September 1942 the Monssen was assigned the mission of providing close gunfire support for the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines led by Lt. Col. Lewis B. ("Chesty") Puller, USMC, as they attempted to expand their perimeter westward in the area of the Matanikau River. Unfortunately, the official narrative describing the Marines' attack, "The Second Battle of the Matanikau," incorrectly identified the ship involved as the U.S.S. Ballard (AVD-10), and many historians have repeated this error.

Eric Hammel in his book, Guadalcanal: Starvation Island, correctly described the Ballard as an old destroyer converted to a seaplane tender, but then he referred to her "5-inch guns." In fact, the Ballard was armed with only two 3-in./50 guns!

To Samuel Eliot Morison's credit he corrected his error in Vol V of his History of United States Naval Operations in World War II when he compiled his Errata List in Vol. XV.

Jack Coggins in his The Campaign for Guadalcanal included an informative map (below), but he, also, misidentified the ship.

The complete deck log for the period 1200 to 2000 on 27 September 1942 and excerpts from the other sources follow:

Monssen's Deck Log:

12-16: Steaming as before. 1212 Major L. W. Wolf, USMC, came aboard to act as liaison officer. 1220 Proceeded to Pt. Cruz area for shore bombardment. 1245 Commenced fire on Japanese installations. 1255 Ceased fire. Fired 100 rounds of 5"/38 ammunition. 1320 Proceeded to patrol area. 1325 Major L. W. Wolf left the ship. 1340 Made preparations for air raid. General Quarters. Commenced zigzagging by signal. 1400 Sighted 17 enemy bombers. 1402 Commenced fire on enemy planes. 1410 Ceased fire having fired 59 rounds of 5"/38 cal. ammunition. 1455 Secured from General Quarters. Proceeded to patrol area. 1520 Commenced patrolling.

16-20: Steaming as before. 1603 Lt. Col. L. B. Puller, USMC, came aboard to act as liaison officer. Proceeded to Pt. Cruz area for shore bombardment. 1620 Commenced bombardment. 1630 Ceased fire. Fired 38 rounds of 5"/38 cal. ammunition. 1750 Steaming on various courses to screen U.S.S. Alhena. 1810 Lt. Col. L. B. Puller left ship. 1815 Darkened ship. 1831 Took station in A/S screen, 2,000 yards bearing 000 degrees relative from Alhena. 1912 Entered Lengo Channel. Set course 090T & PGC. Set speed 11 knots (110 rpm).

"The Second Battle of the Matanikau" (Official narrative)

"The time for landing the 1st Bn., 7th was set at 1300 and the USS Ballard was assigned to support the landing. Orders were hastily issued and the troops were hurriedly marched to the beach and embarked in landing craft. Major Otho L. Rogers was in command of the landing party; Captain Charles W. Kelly, Jr., second-in-command . . .

"As the boats put out from Kukum, a large bombing raid came over and the Division CP suffered severe damage, which disrupted communications. The "Ballard" took evasive action to escape bombing, and the landing was made without support.

"The boats hit the beach in two waves, the first landing at 1300, and the second ten minutes later. There was no opposition and the companies quickly reorganized and commenced pushing inland in the direction of a high grassy ridge, about 500 yards from the beach.

MATANIKAU ACTION **September 27, 1942**

0 500 1000 1500

YARDS

② U.S.S. Ballard
 supports withdrawal



Point Cruz

① U.S.S. Ballard
 fire support



Jap. encircling attack



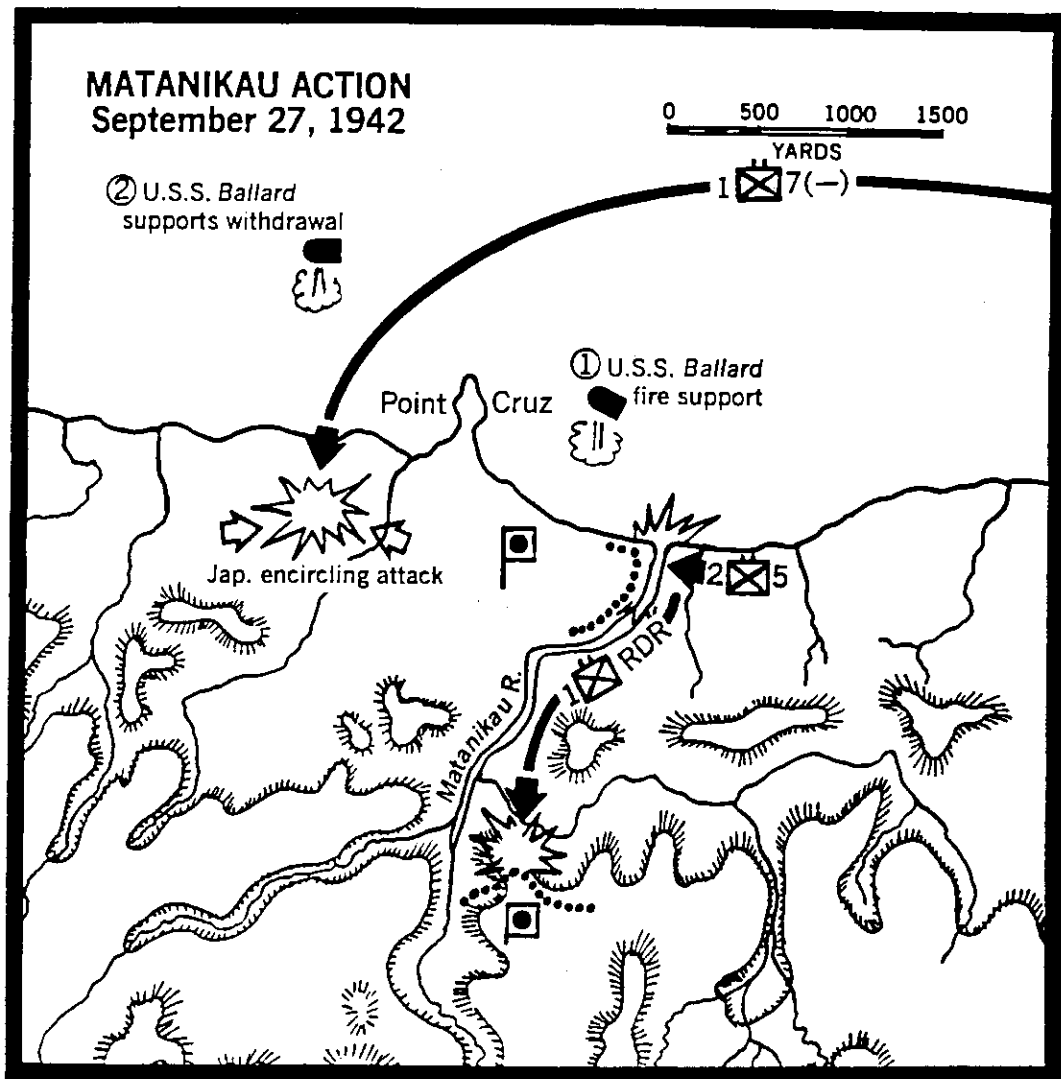
Matanikau R.

RDR

2 5

1 7(-)

(The Campaign for Guadalcanal by Jack Coggins)



"As the leading elements reached the top of this ridge, a knee mortar shell exploded near Major Rogers and Captain Cox, killing Rogers instantly and severely wounding Cox.

"Captain Kelly had no communication with either of these units and had no way of knowing what was happening, except from the sound of firing. The Japanese were working their way around the battalion on the ridge and were registering mortars on it.

"An SBD plane . . . flew over and circled the position. White undershirts were laid out, forming the word HELP, and it later developed that the plane was in radio contact with the 5th Marines.

"Lt. Col Puller, sensing that his battalion would be isolated, since the attack across the river was failing, proceeded to Kukum . . . and boarded the USS Ballard. This destroyer steamed down the coast accompanied by the landing boats . . .

"Visual communication was quickly established between the high ridge and the destroyer. Sgt. Robert D. Raysbrook sent and received by semaphore flags while exposing himself to enemy fire.

"The battalion received a message from the destroyer to withdraw to the beach, but advised that enemy forces were between them and the beach. The ship then asked for fire directions.

"The destroyer was told where fire could safely be laid, without hitting the battalion, and she proceeded to blast a path for the withdrawal, shelling the area between the beach and the ridge.

"The battalion finally succeeded in fighting its way to the beach and setting up a hasty defense there.

"As the boats came in, the wounded were loaded aboard first and then the other men were embarked. It was then late in the afternoon, and by the time the troops returned to Kukum it was full darkness.

"During this action the First Battalion, 7th Regiment lost 18 killed and 25 wounded. It was only through the excellent fighting spirit and ability of the men of this battalion that it succeeded in successfully withdrawing and escaping disaster. All the wounded men were brought out, and no material was left to the enemy."

Samuel Eliot Morison:

"Colonel Puller, suspecting that his men were in difficulties, boarded seaplane tender Ballard at Kukum and steamed right over to Point Cruz that afternoon. When the beleaguered Marines sighted her, Sergeant Raysbrook stood in full view of the enemy and arm-signalized their situation to the ship. Puller ordered them to move down to the coast while Ballard covered their withdrawal with a naval barrage."

Eric Hammel:

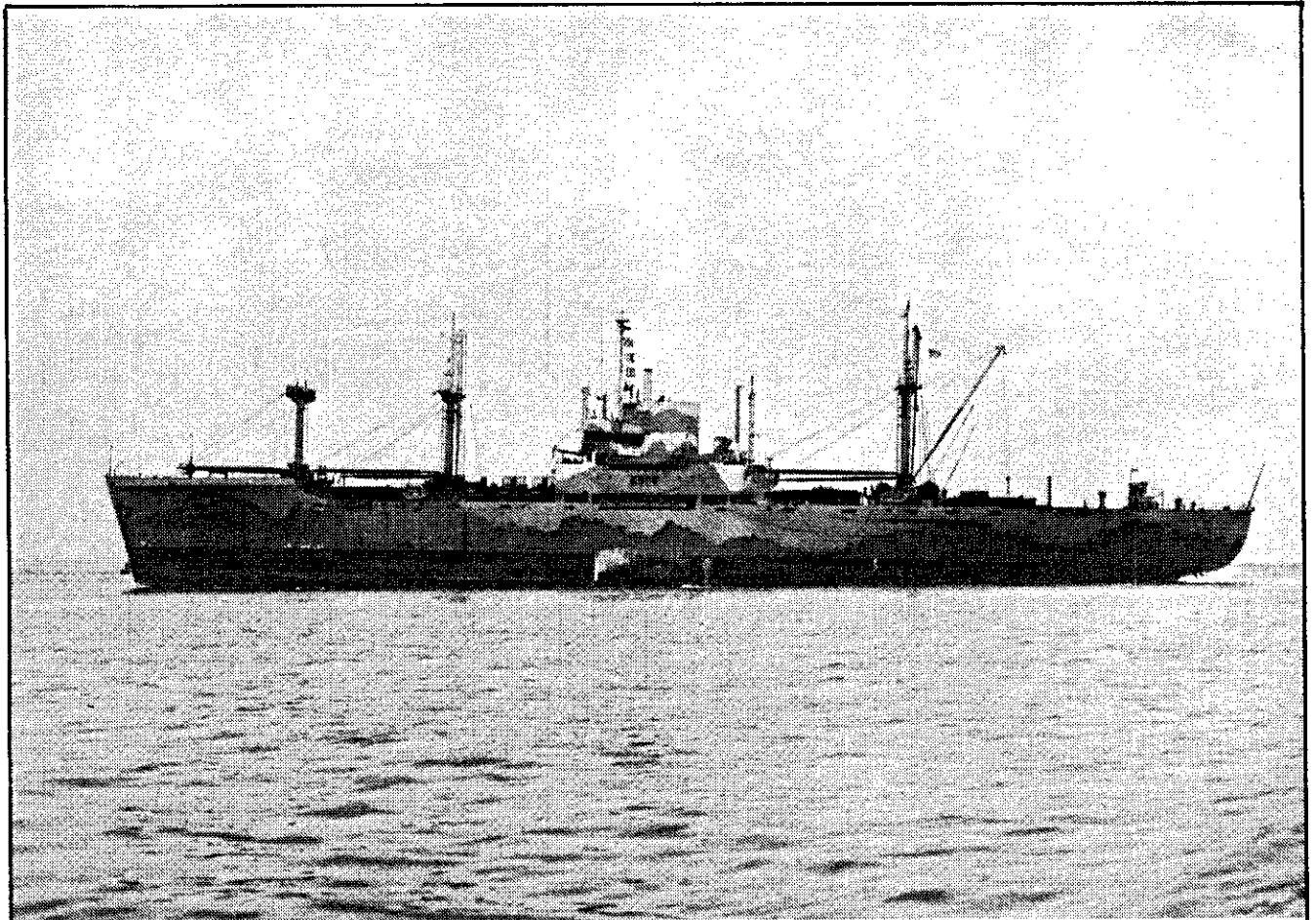
"The Japanese noon air strike hit the Perimeter just as Roger's boats were embarking in the company of Ballard. The destroyer was obliged to sail into open waters to evade the strike, but the landing craft wore on westward to maintain their schedule.

"Puller boarded Ballard at Kukum within the hour and the destroyer-turned-tender hastily beat up the coast . . .

". . . Kelly replied that his force was cut off from the beach. Ballard asked for fire directions, which Kelly relayed through Sergeant Raysbrook.

"While Ballard found the range and chewed up the attackers below the hill, Charlie Kelly ordered the D Company commander to lead the way to the beach with a mixed force of riflemen and gunners . . . Ballard's 5-inch guns fired into the coconut trees while leaving a path to the beach clear for the Marines."

* * * * *



The cargo ship U.S.S. Alhena (AK-26) was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine at 2354 on September 29, 1942 while enroute Guadalcanal to Espiritu Santo, escorted by the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)(Cdr. R. N. Smoot, USN). Five were killed; twenty wounded. After driving off the sub the Monssen went alongside to remove the wounded and then took the ship in tow until relieved by the fleet tug U.S.S. Nava jo (AT-64) about 36 hours later. The Alhena displaced 7,151 tons and was 480 feet long. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the GOLD STAR in lieu of the third BRONZE STAR MEDAL to

CAPTAIN ROLAND NESBIT SMOOT
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For meritorious achievement as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. MONSSEN, in action against enemy Japanese forces at Guadalcanal in September and October 1942. Engaged in escorting the U.S.S. ALHENA with her vitally important cargo of supplies, equipment and reinforcements for our forces, Captain (then Commander) Smoot courageously defied the threat of strong enemy surface forces and daily enemy high-bombing attacks to insure the success of of this hazardous mission. When the ALHENA was torpedoed on September 30, he drove off the attacking submarine, removed the wounded from the sinking vessel and, by his expert shiphandling and seamanship, contributed materially to the saving of the ship. His courage, initiative and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Captain Smoot is authorized to wear the Combat "V"

For the President,

Secretary of the Navy

Typed from a draft citation approved on
1 October 1946 and on file at the Naval
Historical Center, Washington, D.C..

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
November, 1995

Finally we received a garbled message from the ALHENA that she'd been hit, torpedoed, and that it was definitely from a submarine.

The series of events that followed are not awfully important, but in the light of subsequent events and questions that were later asked of me, I tried to analyze as closely as I could what I did and why I did it at the time.

The first thing I did was to head right back towards the ALHENA, and got as close as I could to her. I'm sure that my idea there was to be sure that if she was going to blow or was in any danger of having a fire, we could be in better position to assist.

Secondly we weren't too far from reefs. The wind was in such a direction that if she couldn't use her engines she was going to drift and we were going to be in serious trouble. And I would like to take her in tow as soon as I could.

Now those are the things that I remember. This is what went through my mind. That's why I went back to her as fast as I could.

We were alone with her this time, we'd left the other destroyer at Guadalcanal. There wasn't another destroyer with me, I was alone with her.

And I was quite severely criticized for doing what I did, because my main objective at that time should have been to go after that submarine, if there was a sub. That should have been the thing to do - go get her, get that submarine, and sink it. Which I didn't do. I took action to save our own ship, justified or not. I did.

But I soon found out that the ALHENA was all right - she had power, she could make a little headway, and there was no fire. Her Captain signaled that all he wanted was to be sure that he had air cover. And he asked me to get a message off to the Task Force Commander that he was in trouble and wanted air support in case of a raid. And he wanted a tug to come up and tow her and get her in a safer location as soon as possible. He would probably be a prime target for both enemy air and submarine. Once the Japs have a cripple they send off the word where the crippled one is so they can finish her off.

That was my main objective - to see if she could get underway, then protect her, and then go after the submarine if possible.

Of course it was probably too late then, I don't know whether I ever would have gotten her anyway to start with. However that's not the right thing to say, because I might have been able to destroy that submarine, if there was one. As I say, if I had it would have been fine. Nevertheless my main concern was with the ALHENA.

It ended up that we finally took that ship in tow, because it took almost thirty-six hours to get a tug up there, and some more of our destroyers to help screen the ship because I couldn't defend her against anything. We just had the luck of the gods with us, because the Japanese decided not to follow up on that, and they never did send in anything else after her.

We got the ALHENA back with no further incident. The only significant part of it - they made a great todo out of it because the matter of war and the matter of principle was involved there. Perhaps I should have gone after the submarine immediately, I don't know.

Q: The citation for which you received the third Bronze Star Medal says that you drove off the attacking submarine and removed the wounded and contributed to the saving of the ship.

Smoot: I did remove some of the wounded. And I did contribute to saving the ship, because I took her in tow. I sent my machinist over there, who helped the people with some material that I had that they didn't have - welding equipment and whatnot that would help them. I did all that, true.

Did I drive off the submarine? Not consciously, I drove her off because I was there and because I dashed back just as fast as I could and circled the ALHENA.

It could be that the submarine, if there was one, just took flight. He didn't make a second follow-up attack. He had a cripple that he might have sunk with a follow-up attack, but he didn't. I never saw him, I never got a ping on him, I never located him. He never came back. And I got the ALHENA back safely.

They can word the citation any way they want. The facts remain that I didn't consciously drive off any submarine. I went back to protect the ALHENA, that's what I did.

I went back just as fast as I could, I circled her fast. And it's probably that action that sent the submarine skyhooting somewhere over the horizon to get out of the way.

Q: What's that word "skyhooting" that you're using?

Smoot: That's an old western cowboy word. You hoot along towards the skyline, chasing cattle.

Q: Do you recall any other incidents in connection with your duty down in Guadalcanal? Were you at that time pretty much through with the duty down there?

Smoot: That just about did it, as far as I was concerned. Time is vague down there.

I was getting pretty sick at this time, in pretty bad shape. I finally had to be carried off the ship. The doctors knew it. I had hemorrhoids so badly that I couldn't sit down or do anything.

Somewhere along this time, after the ALHENA incident, we had a couple of more cruises up there, none incidental, nothing happened. One was a large convoy we took up, there was nothing about that.

Then finally the MONSSEN was given a little rest and recreation period down at the French island south of there - I forget what it was called.

It was down there that my Executive Officer went to the Task Force Commander and told him that he thought I was sufficiently bad physically that the medical authorities ought to take a look at me. Halsey was down there at the time, and Halsey's doctor came over. And I got off that ship that night.

They flew me home and I was in the hospital. I had lost over thirty pounds, I was down to skin and bones, had no appetite.

They were right, I should have left. But this was my ship, I had commissioned it. This was the only war the Navy had ever been in, as far as I was concerned, and I wanted to see it through.

But there comes a time when you're more harm to yourself and your crew than you are good. I think that was rapidly approaching with me. And if the Exec hadn't done it, I'm afraid I would have had to because I don't know whether I could have made another tour or not.

Q: Did you resent his going to the doctor?

Smoot: No, I didn't. He did it on his own. He was a fine young fellow, and I took it that he had only my best interest at heart, and perhaps the ship's best interest too. And he was probably right.

It turned out that he got Command of the ship by accident. The new skipper that had been ordered to it to relieve me was killed in an airplane crash on the way out there. So they didn't order another one. And he took command and took it into the big battle when the ship was lost in November at Guadalcanal.

Meanwhile I went back to the hospital. I was in the hospital about three months. They sent me all the way back to San Diego. My blood pressure was bad, I was in very bad shape. It took almost a year to come back.

Q: Was that one of the reasons why your next shore duty was in San Diego?

Smoot: Yes, that and propinquity. It was there, it was convenient.

* * * * *

Editor's Note:

These six pages are an excerpt from a transcript of Admiral Smoot's oral history recorded by the U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, in 1970.

*E. A. Wilde, Jr.
December, 1995*

DECLASSIFIED

S-E-C-R-E-T

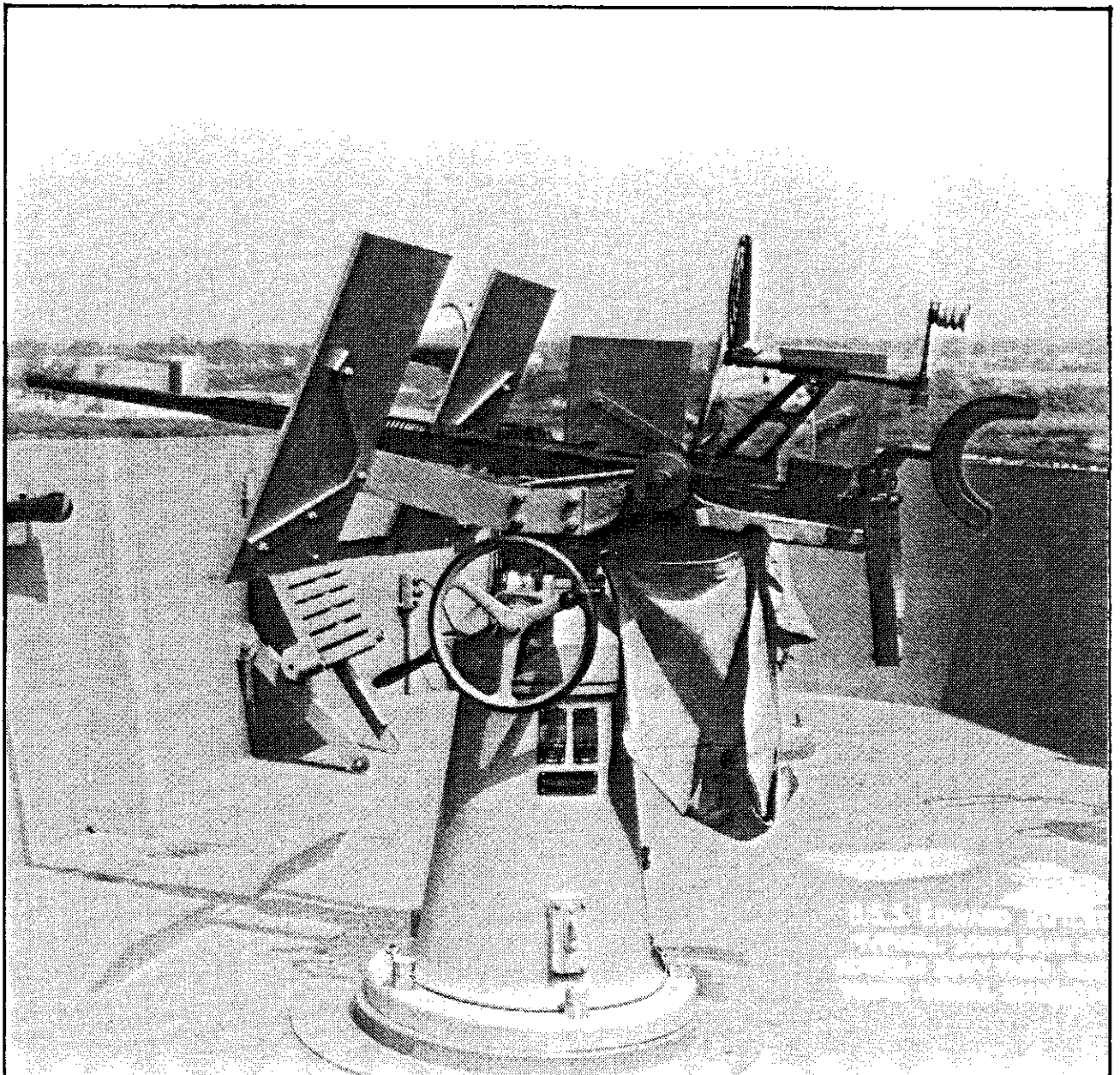
U.S.S. MONSSEN
c/o Postmaster San Francisco,
California.

12 November 1942

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. MONSSEN.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet.
Via : The Commander Task Group 67.4.
Subject: U.S.S. MONSSEN, Anti-aircraft action report.
Reference: U.S.N.R., 1920, Arts. 712, 784(6).

1. U.S.S. MONSSEN as a unit of Task Group 67.4 (Rear Admiral Callaghan) was patrolling the extreme western sector of an anti-submarine screen of radius 6,000 yards around Task Group 67.1 unloading at Lunga Point, Guadalcanal when word was received that an air attack was imminent.
2. General Quarters was immediately sounded at 1318 and MONSSEN closed TG 67.1 to 1,000 yards as had been previously ordered. At about 1340 TG 67.1 got underway and proceeded on base course 3400 T. TG 67.4 formed a circular screen about TB 67.1 at a radius of about 1200 to 1500 yards from center of formation. At 1407, 23 Japanese twin engine torpedo bombers appeared over the middle eastern section of Florida Island at a low altitude. These enemy planes were instantly recognized and tracked as they approached the formation.
3. At 1412 the MONSSEN main battery, followed shortly by the 20 MM battery opened fire on aircraft targets of opportunity. One attacking plane each was shot down in flames by the main and 20 MM batteries.
4. Of the 23 planes attacking, 21 were shot down by anti-aircraft fire. No hits or casualties were observed on any ship of the formation. MONSSEN received no personnel casualties and only material casualty resulting was the burning out and rupture of an oil filled transformer in the FD Radar. This casualty was reported to Immediate Superior in Command.
5. MONSSEN picked up no prisoners or survivors and salvaged no material following this engagement.
6. At about 1500, TG 67.1 returned to anchorage and MONSSEN resumed her position in anti-submarine screen.

Chas. E. McColebs
Chas. E. MCCOLEBS.



In 1941 the 20-mm Oerlikon air-cooled machine gun began to replace the .50-cal. water-cooled machine gun as the Navy's standard light antiaircraft weapon. (It was also called a machine cannon, because it fired explosive shells.) This early Mark 4 version with an open-ring sight required a four-man crew: the gunner, a trunnion operator (to adjust the height of the gun carriage) and two loaders. When fitted with the Mark 14 gyroscopic sight, introduced in 1943, a range setter was also required to enter range data. The Oerlikon had an effective range of 1,600 yards and fired at a rate of 450 rounds/minute. (Official USN photo.)

SECRET
UNCLASSIFIED

ACTION REPORT

USS MONSSEN

DD 436

NO SERIAL

16 NOVEMBER 1942

USS MONSSEN, REPORT OF BATTLE OF NOVEMBER 13, 1942.

REPORT OF LOSS IN CRUISER NIGHT ACTION
PHASE OF BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL.
(C.O. CHARLES E. MC COMBS)

44507

ORIGINAL

16 November 1942

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. MONSSEN.
To : The Commander-in Chief, Pacific Fleet.
Via : The Commander, Task Group 67.4.
Subject: U.S.S. MONSSEN, Report of battle of November 13, 1942.
Reference: (a) U.S.N.R., 1920, Arts. 712 and 874(6).
(b) Report of casualties and survivors of U.S.S. MONSSEN, dated November 14, 1942.

1. At about 1830 Love, November 12, 1942, MONSSEN took assigned position in battle formation of Task Group 67.4. Order of ships in column were as follows: CUSHING, LAFFEY, STERETT, O'BANNON, ATLANTA, SAN FRANCISCO (CTG 67.4 Rear Admiral Callaghan) PORTLAND, HELENA, JUNEAU, AARON WARD, BARTON, MONSSEN, FLETCHER. This formation proceeded East through Sealark Channel screening the retirement of Task Group 67.1 from Cactus area through Lengo Channel.

2. Formation made a sweep of Indispensable Straits and returned to Cactus area via Lengo Channel arriving at a point about three miles North of Kukum at about 0150 Love. At this time course was changed by column movement to 290° T, speed 15 knots. Shortly thereafter radar contact with two unidentified vessels was reported bearing 310° T, distant 30,000 yards. Course was again changed by column movement to 310° T and speed to 18 knots. Column leader was approximately 6,000 yards ahead of MONSSEN. At about 0200 Radar Contact with three vessels was reported as bearing 312° T, distant 23,000 yards, course 105° T, speed 20 knots. MONSSEN FD radar was out of commission as a result of a burned out transformer during an afternoon anti-aircraft action and had been so reported. No contacts were made by usually reliable SC radar. All contact information was received via voice radio. All hands were at their battle stations and alert, torpedoes were primed and depth charges were set on "safe". Material condition Afirm was set throughout the ship. Weather was calm but overcast with visibility to North and West estimated at 2,000 to 3,000 yards.

3. Upon receipt of radar contact bearing 312° T, formation course was changed by column movement to 000° T. This is estimated to have been about 0200.

4. At about 0212 and just after MONSSEN had turned to course 000° T gunfire was observed on port bow at a range of about 10,000 yards. It appeared that head of own column was engaged to port. A few minutes previously a TBS report had

been received that some enemy units had been observed crossing the head of the column from port to starboard. All torpedoes had been primed and tubes were ordered trained out to starboard and the Torpedo Officer was ordered to fire on any good enemy target to starboard giving preference to Capital ships if any should be sighted. At about 0215 at least one enemy torpedo was seen to pass under the after conning station, probably from starboard. No explosion of this torpedo was observed. At about the same time a large target was observed by the Torpedo Officer about 30° forward of the starboard beam. It appeared to be a battleship or large cruiser and appeared to be making little or no way, target angle about 320° range about 4,000 yards. A 20 MM gunner on the forward battery claimed to have seen a fair silhouette and later promptly and definitely identified it in the book of Japanese silhouettes as a battleship of the Kongo class. At about 0216 all five torpedoes in tube No. 2 were fired at this target singly, by precession, using target speed zero, torpedo speed intermediate, average depth setting 10 feet with 2½° gyro spread. The above mentioned 20 MM gunner reported two hits on this target between forward superstructure and mainmast. Several other survivors reported two heavy underwater explosions on this target. These hits were observed at about 3 minutes after the torpedoes were launched.

5. A few seconds before the above two hits were observed, another target was observed broad on the starboard beam and was believed to be a cruiser or destroyer, more likely the latter. It appeared to be making no speed relative to the previous target so another spread of 5 torpedoes were fired singly, by electricity from the forward tube using the same set up and torpedo speed and depth setting as was used on the previous target. This was about 0219. The range was again estimated at 4,000 yards. Before the last 5 torpedoes could reach the target, the 5" battery opened fire to port and no definite observations were made. The Chief Torpedoman, who is missing in action, told a surviving torpedo striker at the time, that he thought that there was a possible hit resulting from the second spread. During this period in which all torpedoes were fired, MONSSEN was not under fire but had been illuminated by star shells from port.

6. At about 0220 one of our own destroyers was observed about 30° on port bow being heavily hit by an enemy cruiser or destroyer at close range. Range to enemy vessel was estimated to be about 6,000 yards, target angle 330° or 150°. The 5" battery was ordered to open fire on this target and all four guns began firing in salvo, director controlled. There was no illumination at this time but several hits are believed to have been scored on this target. The target vessel ceased firing and MONSSEN ceased fire. This action is believed to have lasted 30-45 seconds. MONSSEN was still undamaged.

7. Almost immediately star shells began bursting above and slightly ahead. These appeared to be coming from port quarter. Course was changed with full rudder at full speed to about 0400T. During this maneuver and at about 0221 a destroyer was sighted close aboard to starboard, range about 500 to 1000 yards on course about 150° T and either stopped or making very slow speed. All starboard 20 mm guns (five) opened fire on this target and sprayed her entire upper works with 800 to 1000 rounds. Gun #4 seeing this target opened fire and expended about 5 or 6 rounds at point blank range, local control. None of this fire was returned by this enemy vessel. It was definitely described as being a destroyer with low superstructure and having two stacks, each having two white bands near the top of each stack. Still MONSSEN had not been hit.

8. Almost immediately after this action or at about 0223 MONSSEN was again illuminated by star shells from port. Thinking that stars from port were from a friendly vessel, recognition lights were flashed. Immediately MONSSEN was illuminated by two searchlights from starboard beam, lights being estimated to be 24" and range about 2500 yards. Starboard 20 mm battery immediately opened fire on both searchlights. At this instant MONSSEN began to be hit by medium caliber shells from starboard. No. 1 gun shield was hit almost immediately killing the gun crew. Two torpedoes were observed approaching close on starboard bow, perpendicular to own track and running on the surface. Hard right rudder was used and course changed about 50°. Flank speed was ordered but could not be answered because forward steam line had been hit in No. 1 fireroom and throttle manifold in after engine room had been ruptured. At this same time two torpedoes were observed by torpedomen aft to pass under the MONSSEN but did not explode. Torpedoes on bow passed close ahead.

9. The remaining 5" guns opened fire on the aftermost searchlight and it was soon extinguished. Numerous hits are believed to have been made on this target. This opinion was concurred in by the Commanding Officer of the SHAW, who observed what he believes to have been this engagement. A few shells from port were hitting and many hits were being received from starboard. There appeared to be some large caliber firing from the starboard bow but the type of vessel firing was not determined. One early hit was received in CPO quarters which started a fire in No. 2 handling room, putting that gun out of action. Shortly thereafter the bridge and director were hit and local control was ordered for the two remaining after guns. From this point on hits were too numerous to account for in order. Guns No. 3 and 4 continued to fire to starboard until a shell exploded in the crews head and killed the No. 3 handling room crew and putting the training mechanism out of commission. Gun No. 4 continued to fire a few more single shots, local control until train control was lost.

10. Steering control power/^{was}being taken from the after board until that board was hit. It was then shifted to the forward board. This was also hit shortly thereafter and control was shifted to hand pump. When the after steering station was abandoned the rudder was 26° right.

11. At about 0240 the general conditions prevailing were as follows:

All torpedoes fired.

All 5" guns and director out of commission.

All 20 MM guns or crews out of commission.

All Depth Charges set on safe.

Entire officer's country, main radio, Captain's and Executive Officer's cabins and level above burning fiercely. This was later fed by Pyrotechnics and 20 MM ammunition in forward clipping room.

There were many hits on bridge and superstructure and main deck as far aft as Gun No. 3.

There was no power on the ship, both enginerooms and fire-rooms had been holed. There was no pressure on the firemain or flooding systems. The small gasoline handy billy was out of commission, the crank case having been holed. There was no telephone communication from the bridge.

The proximity of other enemy ships was not known.

Both battle dressing stations had received direct hits.

MONSSEN was ordered abandoned at approximately 0240.

12. By testimony of all survivors it appears that MONSSEN received the following hits:

1 major cal. at stbd water line 3 feet aft of stem.

1 major cal. in stbd bow above water line at Gun #1

These two apparently passed through without exploding.

1 medium cal. from port on top of No. 1 gun shield killing gun crew.

2 medium cal. from port in CPO Quarters starting fires in No. 1 handling room.

1 medium cal. from port in after mess compartment.

1 medium cal. from port through No. 2 gun shield but did not burst.

5 or more medium cal. from port and stbd on bridge and director.

1 major cal. in vicinity of Captain's cabin, starting huge fires in vicinity of main radio. This spread quickly upward through superstructure.

- 10 or more medium cal. from stbd in vicinity of plot and galley above water line.
- 1 medium cal. from port near laundry.
- 4 medium cal. from port in No. 1 Fireroom.
- 3 medium cal., 2 from stbd, 1 from port in Forward Engineroom.
- 1 medium cal. from port in No. 2 uptake.
- 2 medium cal. from stbd in After Engineroom. The second of these struck the throttle manifold rupturing it.
- Unknown number medium cal. in vicinity of after stack and torpedo tubes.
- 1 medium cal. exploded in crews wash room (after battle dressing station) killing many personnel in No. 3 handling room.
- 1 medium cal. from port near after depth charge projector killing or wounding many men about to abandon ship.
- 1 medium cal. on after deck house just aft of search light.

13. Inasmuch as most engineers are missing very little information is known concerning engineering material casualties. It is known that the after board was hit early in the action and attempts to put it back in operation caused an electrical fire at the board. It appears that the major damage to the ship was done by medium caliber hits and from fires that resulted. There were very few members of the crew who were not struck by shrapnel. The ship's one boat was blown off and so badly holed by shrapnel that it soon sank. All rafts seem to have been hit by shrapnel and at least four forward rafts were blown clear of the ship. Rations and medical supplies on several rafts were struck and ruined after leakage of sea water. The fiber float life net alone seems to have been undamaged. All rafts, life nets and many powder cans were used to float survivors, particularly wounded.

14. Firing had ceased about 5 minutes after orders to abandon ship were given. Lt.(jg) George S. Hamm, USNR, First Lieut., was uninjured and he with all able bodied men on the main deck carried on heroically in attempts to give emergency first aid to the wounded and to launch life rafts and empty powder cans to which the wounded were secured. This group, without thought of safety for themselves searched the ship as thoroughly as conditions of fire and damage would permit to make certain that all living were got off the ship. Lt.(jg) Hamm left the ship only after he had been persuaded by his men that he could do no more good on board and that the fires would undoubtedly reach the magazines before long. The Commanding Officer and all bridge survivors were trapped on the bridge. The inside passage was all aflame and the outside ladder was shot away. Several tried jumping to the superstructure deck or torpedo deck. Four men survived in this manner. Two officers, followed at about 0300 by the Commanding Officer, jumped from the bridge rail to the water. One of these officers is believed to

have struck the boat davit on the way down. He, Ens. R.W. Kittredge, USNR, died later in the water as a result of injuries believed to have been received in his fall. Ens. R.W. Lassen, USNR, Torpedo Officer with a serious shrapnel wound in one leg suffered no additional injuries from his leap. The Commanding Officer only slightly wounded by shrapnel received broken bones in both shoulders as a result of his jump. All reached rafts. Ens. Kittredge disappeared during the night.

15. This report has been written entirely from memory and from testimony of survivors, all records and papers having been destroyed with the ship. Confidential publications and codes were made up with heavy weights attached and the coding machine was cast loose ready for destruction but since the entire area in which this material was located was a blazing inferno, there was no opportunity to reach it. It is not believed that any of it could have survived the fire and the depth of water which the ship rests makes any possible salvage and compromise almost impossible. Approximately 40% of officers and men survived and a complete report, reference (b) has been forwarded under separate cover.

16. It is believed MONSSEN was engaged by two and possibly three destroyers and one cruiser or battleship who inflicted the damage described above. It is the opinion of the Commanding Officer that MONSSEN inflicted damage to the enemy as follows:

Two torpedo hits amidships on KONGO class battleship.

One possible torpedo hit on a cruiser or large destroyer.

Several 5" hits on one cruiser or destroyer to port.

Many 20 MM and 3 or 4 5" hits on a destroyer at close range to stbd. This destroyer had two stacks with two white bands on each stack.

Numerous 20 MM and several 5" hits on a large destroyer to stbd at about 2000 to 2500 yards range.

The Gunnery Officer and control party are missing in action and the above statements are made from scanty information now available.

17. After daylight MONSSEN though burning from forward bulkhead of CPO Quarters to Torpedo Workshop was still afloat. At this time Storey, C.C., BM2c, Spurgeon, L.F., GM2c and Hughes J.G., Flc, returned to the ship and found eight more men alive. These they put on their raft. Five of these eight lived after reaching shore. The presence of the mind of these men, the utter disregard for own safety in the possibility of rescuing additional shipmates is most commendable. The actions of Storey, C.C., BM2c are reported to have been calm, determined and in many cases far beyond the call of duty.

but in accordance with the highest traditions of the Naval service. A supplementary report in the case of Storey will be submitted when more details are available. At about 0900 more heavy fires were seen to break out and during the late forenoon or early afternoon MONSSEN blew up and sunk at approximately Latitude 09-04-30 South, Longitude 159-54 East in about 500 fathoms of water.

18. All survivors reported in reference (a) were picked up by landing boats at about 0800 love, November 13th and put ashore at Guadalcanal about at 0930 where they were encamped or hospitalized. Seven critically wounded enlisted men died and were buried in the First Marine Division Cemetery at Guadalcanal. The moral of all survivors is high and they are most anxious to stay together. It is felt that the efficiency of the fleet and the moral of the men could best be served if the survivors of the MONSSEN, who prior to this action claimed the definite destruction of seven aircraft and four submarines, could be used as the nucleus crew for a new ship.

19. The Executive Officer is missing in action and no supplementary report will be available. It is believed that this report covers all the essential facts that are available.

Chas. E. McCombs
Chas. E. McCombs.

Copy to:
ComSoPac
ComDesPac

AL6-3/(90)
Serial 000531
SECRET
UNCLASSIFIED

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

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on
CO MONSSEN Secret Ltr.
of November 16, 1942.

FEB 5 1943

From: The Commander South Pacific Area and
South Pacific Force.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.
Subject: U.S.S. MONSSEN, Report of battle of November 13,
1942

1. Forwarded.
2. This report gives a vivid picture of an outstanding performance which is in no way discredited by the loss of the MONSSEN. Only after the vessel had been completely immobilized in all departments was the order given to abandon ship.
3. Failure of the SC radar to produce results may indicate damage resulting from the previous anti-aircraft firing.
4. The report in its present phrasing has a great potential morale value, and substantial extracts might well be given to the press in addition to wide distribution within the armed forces.

W.F. Halsey
W. F. HALSEN

Copy to:
Comdesdiv Nine

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)
The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, 12-15 November 1942

Interview of the Monssen's Commanding Officer,
Lieutenant Commander Charles E. McCombs, USN*

In the action in which the first Monssen went down, she was engaged in thirty minutes of gruelling broadside fire in the darkness of early morning, and accounted for severe damage to one Japanese battleship, two destroyers, and two ships identified as cruisers or large destroyers. Several of these vessels, including the battleship, were later reported as sunk.

Nicknamed the "Little Swede" by her crew, she did not go down until her torpedoes were gone, her guns had been silenced, and her decks were ablaze from the fire of a superior number of ships.

The story of the Monssen is told by her commanding officer, Lt. Comdr. Charles E. McCombs, USN. McCombs stayed aboard his ship until trapped by fire on the superstructure and forced to jump from the bridge rail through the darkness into the water below. He was in the water for some time before he realized he had broken bones in both shoulders and received several shrapnel wounds.

"The battle had just started when we observed the silhouette of an enemy battleship," McCombs said. "It was a rough free-for-all. One of the other commanding officers aptly described it as a 'barroom brawl after the lights had been shot out.' Within a few seconds we saw one of our destroyers or cruisers being fired upon by an enemy cruiser or battleship. We opened our guns on the new target, and within 30 or 45 seconds the enemy vessel had ceased firing. We maneuvered to keep from being illuminated by star shells. An enemy destroyer appeared close by, and we sprayed the entire superstructure with point-blank fire. It was punishing. No shots were returned, and the 'Little Swede' still had not been hit. Two searchlights suddenly beamed on us, and we fired at them.

"Soon the Monssen began to take hits by medium caliber shells. Lookouts reported several torpedoes heading at us. We maneuvered quickly, and two passed close to our bow. Two others passed directly under us! It was a narrow escape. Our remaining guns fired on the second searchlight and made numerous hits on the ship. We were being shot at from both sides by large and small vessels. Many of the shells were of large caliber. Fires were started and hits became too numerous to account for. Able hands continued to man guns until, one by one, each weapon was crippled. With the ship defenseless, stopped, and much of it aflame, I gave the order to abandon. Lt. George S. Hamm, USNR, of Charlottesville, Va., organized a party of uninjured men to aid the wounded. They worked heroically without thought of personal safety. They searched the ship for wounded thoroughly before leaving. While we were floating around we were 'entertained' by the brilliant fireworks of exploding ammunition on numerous burning ships. A few were our own; many were Japanese."

McCombs managed to stay afloat until he, with other survivors, had been rescued shortly before dawn.

The ship is included among the ships to which the Iron Bottom Bay plaque is dedicated.

* This interview is on file at the Ships' Histories Branch/Naval Historical Center/Washington Navy Yard, but the interviewer is not identified, and it is not dated. The reference to the Iron Bottom Bay plaque, dedicated in April, 1944, indicates that the interview was probably recorded several years after the Monssen was lost.

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

*Excerpt from United States Destroyer Operations in World War II, by Theodore Roscoe.**

Loss of U.S.S. MONSSEN

Destroyer MONSSEN (Lieutenant Commander C. E. McCombs) had been next to last ship in the American column. She was directly astern of the BARTON when that destroyer, first to go down in the pellmell battle, was fatally torpedoed.

Searchlights were blazing, shells were crashing, and BARTON was going down before MONSSEN could grasp the situation. To make matters worse, if that were possible, MONSSEN's fire-control radar had been damaged during the previous day's air attack; she had to depend on vision and radio data for fire-control.

Then BARTON was torpedoed, and MONSSEN herself was under fire. A torpedo wake whisked through the water and passed under her keel. Maneuvering at high speed to evade, McCombs sent his ship racing ahead. Tragically enough, she plowed through a drift of flotsam from BARTON, killing unseen swimmers. Everywhere the darkness was exploding, and the flashes of fire and livid shell bursts created a kaleidoscopic play of glare and shadow that frustrated the lookouts.

But HIE's silhouette was now plainly in view on MONSSEN's bow, about 4,000 yards to starboard. McCombs swung the destroyer, and five torpedoes were fired at the looming battlewagon. Another spread of five was launched at a target on MONSSEN's beam. Simultaneously her gunners were hurling 5-inch salvos at enemy ships dimly seen to port, and her 20 mm. batteries were flailing at a destroyer no more than a quarter mile distant to starboard.

Suddenly a swarm of starshells burst over MONSSEN, bathing her with brilliant light. Believing they had been fired by a friendly vessel which had fallen out of column, Commander McCombs flashed MONSSEN's recognition signals. Instantly a pair of searchlights fastened upon the destroyer. Within a matter of seconds she was reeling under a torrent of Japanese shells. A spread of torpedoes raced at her. The torpedoes missed, but the shells slammed home with deadly accuracy.

The destroyer's deck was torn up and her bridge was torn down. Shells crashed into her firerooms and engine-rooms. They wrecked her power lines and demolished her pumps. In the hurricane of explosions, 5-inchers were blown from their mountings,

* Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1953.

machine-guns were flung over the stacks, torpedo batteries were shattered, and depth charges were sent flying like bean cans. Altogether some 37 shells, at least three of them major caliber, struck the destroyer. When the firing subsided she was a total wreck, enveloped in searing flames.

The ship was abandoned at 0220. Trapped on the mangled bridge, the Commanding Officer and others of the conning party were compelled to leap overside from the rail. All were seriously injured.

Fighting their way out of the wreckage topside and the hell below, other officers and bluejackets escaped. But all too few survived this ship-slaughter. At least 130 of her crew perished in the MONSSEN.

Like CUSHING to the west of her, MONSSEN, a burning hulk, remained afloat. Clinging to life rafts and debris, the survivors in the water watched the flames chew their way through the abandoned ship. Then someone heard a cry for help. There were living men in that fiery ruin!

The cry reached across the water like an appealing hand. And it was grasped by a Bos'n's Mate and two seamen who contrived to put their raft alongside the ship at daylight. By that time the vessel was a crematorium. Any moment it might burst like a detonated mine, or make a sudden plunge under the water which boiled and steamed around its blistered hull. But men were trapped in the interior of that furnace. And C. C. Storey, Boatswain's Mate Second, and L. F. Spurgeon, Gunner's Mate Second, and J. G. Hughes, Fireman First, boarded the death-ship to get them.

Storey, Spurgeon, and Hughes—the Navy would remember their names. Would remember how they scaled the side of that oven-hot ship; how they clawed into the wreckage, and disappeared in a gulf of smoke. And how, after a wait that seemed beyond hope, they emerged from the gulf, bringing with them eight men—eight wounded shipmates who had been fastened in a compartment down below. No finer * action was performed in the crucible of Savo Sound.

The wounded men and their valiant rescuers got away with little time to spare. About noon of that day the MONSSEN blew up and sank.

* Joe Hughes has advised me that the men he helped to rescue were found in various locations throughout the ship; not in one compartment.

E. A. Wilde
July 24, 1995

65056

U. S. S. PROVIDENCE (CL 82)

10/Jer

c/o Fleet Post Office
New York, N. Y.
20 September 1945.

From: Commander Chas. E. McCOMBS, U.S. Navy.
To: Commander South Pacific Force.
Subject: Award, recommendation for in the case of HOWARD, Cecil,
CMC, 356 41 64, USN.
Enclosure: (1) Proposed Citation in the case of HOWARD, Cecil, CMC,
USN.

1. It has belatedly come to my attention through correspondence with members of the crew of the USS ROSSIGNOL (DM-26) of which, on 13 November 1942, I was in command when she was sunk by enemy action off Guadalcanal, that subject man, then a carpenter's mate third class, performed acts of heroism which I believe to be worthy of consideration for award.

2. During the progress of the battle above referred to Howard received multiple shrapnel wounds and lost considerable blood. When the ship was ordered abandoned, at approximately 0240, he obeyed, and in the water managed to find a piece of 5"x5" shoring by which he supported himself. Upon hearing the cries of one R. P. Miller, SeM3c, 346 37 05, USN, who had likewise received multiple shrapnel wounds, Howard located Miller and supported him and at the same time fought off one or more sharks with a knife which he obtained from Miller. Miller was bitten in three places by the shark, but not fatally. After a time a life raft was located, supporting one man, name unknown, who had lost a foot. Howard got Miller onto the raft and for three hours attempted to administer aid to both men in the darkness and to restrain Miller, who had become delirious. When all three were about to give up, Howard managed to attract the attention of an aircraft, which directed a landing craft to their position and they were rescued. Howard, upon release from the hospital, returned to active duty and is now serving aboard the USS SEREC (ACB-7), Pacific Fleet. Miller was hospitalized for more than a year and finally given a medical discharge. His present address is 2017 Fourteenth Avenue, Oakland, California.

3. In consideration of the heroic acts, disregard of self and devoted service to a shipmate in distress, herein described, subject named man is hereby recommended for the award of the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.

CHAS. E. McCOMBS,
Commander, U.S. Navy.

(Copy courtesy of Richard L. McCombs; July 1995)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL to

*CECIL HOWARD, CARPENTERS MATE FIRST CLASS
UNITED STATES NAVY*

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For heroism in rescuing and defending an injured shipmate who had been forced to abandon his ship as a result of enemy action at close quarters off Guadalcanal during the night of 12-13 November 1942. Under circumstances of great personal danger from attacking sharks and underwater detonations and with complete disregard for his own safety although severely wounded, he located, supported, defended and administered first aid to a seriously injured shipmate and thereafter sustained him until rescued. His heroic conduct performed in the face of great danger was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the President,

(Frank Knox)

Secretary of the Navy

This citation was proposed in 1945 by Comdr. C. E. McCombs, USN, when he recommended that Cecil Howard be awarded a medal for his heroism. The award was made by the Commander South Pacific Area and Force with a letter dated 25 OCT 1945.

(Typed in August, 1995, by E. A. Wilde, Jr..)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the SILVER STAR MEDAL to

*CLYDE C. STOREY, BOATSWAIN'S MATE SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES NAVY*

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Gun Captain of No. 3 gun aboard the U.S.S. MONSSEN during action against enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 13, 1942. While his ship was under tremendous bombardment, STOREY, maintaining strict discipline with his gun crew, kept up accurate and effective fire until a direct hit near the handling room put his gun out of action. Turning to first aid thereafter, he located and treated wounded personnel and, during abandonment of the vessel, directed their transfer to rafts and floats alongside. After daylight, with two volunteers, he returned aboard the MONSSEN while it was still burning fiercely, discovered eight injured shipmates who were still alive, rendered first aid, and evacuated them on his own raft. His heroic conduct, maintained above and beyond the call of duty, was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

(Frank Knox)

Secretary of the Navy.

*Typed from a copy of the original citation
courtesy of Clyde's son, Howard C. Storey.
E. A. Wilde, Jr.
August, 1995*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL to

*JOE G. HUGHES, FIREMAN FIRST CLASS
UNITED STATES NAVY*

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For heroic conduct aboard the U.S.S. MONSSEN following action against enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 13, 1942. After his ship had been severely damaged by hostile bombardment and abandoned, HUGHES, along with two others, returned aboard the fiercely burning vessel the following morning and assisted in the location and evacuation of eight wounded shipmates who were still alive. His courageous spirit of self-sacrifice, maintained at great risk in the face of grave danger, was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

(Frank Knox)

Secretary of the Navy

*Retyped from the original
on February 15, 1995 by
Cdr. E. A. Wilde, USNR (Ret.)*

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

Draft Citations For Additional Medals Awarded:¹

LIEUTENANT GEORGE S. HAMM, USNR

SILVER STAR MEDAL

CITATION:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving on board a ship which was badly damaged during the engagement with Japanese naval forces near Guadalcanal Island on the night of November 12, 1942. Fearlessly and with dogged determination under withering shellfire, Lieutenant HAMM supervised fire-fighting activities, which succeeded in putting out numerous small fires before they developed into serious conflagrations, though only hand fire extinguishers were used. When ordered to abandon ship, he paid no thought to his own safety, but sought out and administered first aid to all survivors, whose evacuation by improvised rafts he directed. Not until persuaded by his shipmates that all survivors had been evacuated and that the ship was in danger of an immediate explosion did he leave. His courageous conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

* * * * *

LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE ROBERT W. LASSEN, USNR

SILVER STAR MEDAL

CITATION:

"As torpedo officer, he was given complete discretion in the choice of targets at which to fire torpedoes. Despite numerous gun actions in the vicinity and without the aid of illumination, Ensign LASSEN maintained excellent fire discipline of his battery and by undivided attention was able to sight an enemy capital ship, later identified as a battleship, and fired five torpedoes, scoring two hits amidships and later sighting another target believed to have been a cruiser or large destroyer, and scoring a possible hit on this target. After being driven from his station by gunfire, he immediately returned to that station in an attempt to aid his wounded shipmates. It was during this attempt that he was severely wounded by flying shrapnel. His cool determined maintenance of discipline and accurate fire are believed to have been highly contributory to the sinking of one or more enemy combatant ships."

* * * * *

LEO FRANCIS SPURGEON, GUNNER'S MATE SECOND CLASS, USN

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL

CITATION:

"SPURGEON and HUGHES with utter disregard for their own safety accompanied STOREY, C.C., BM2c, USN, to the MONSSEN after daylight and assisted in the location and evacuation of eight (8) wounded shipmates of whom five (5) are still living. The action of these men in returning to a blazing ship after they themselves had safely escaped, is considered to have been in accordance with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

* * * * *

FRED WALLACE DAVIS, SIGNALMAN SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES NAVY

LETTER OF COMMENDATION (with RIBBON)

CITATION:

"For meritorious conduct in action while serving on board a ship which was badly damaged during the engagement with Japanese naval forces near Guadalcanal Island on the night of November 12, 1942. As a result of a severe wound, DAVIS was rendered unconscious for a period of time. Upon regaining consciousness, he made a careful inspection of the bridge, pilot-house and adjoining spaces, in a gallant effort to search out wounded shipmates in order to render assistance to them. Only after completing this mission did he leave the ship as ordered. His conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

* * * * *

- 1 Source: An index card file at Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard. These draft citations may have been reworded when they were formally issued.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
May, 2000

The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal¹
12-15 November 1942

Vice Admiral Edward N. "Butch" Parker's story² of the five weeks in the life of the U.S.S. Cushing (DD-376) when he commanded that ship in the fall of 1942 includes three congratulatory messages sent to all the participants in this battle. Unfortunately, those who most deserved the high praise and expressions of gratitude - the wounded survivors and those who died - never saw them.

From Commanding General 1st Marine Division (General Alexander A. Vandegrift):

"THE MARINES ON CACTUS (code name for Guadalcanal) LIFT THEIR BATTERED HELMETS IN DEEPEST ADMIRATION."

* * * * *

From Commander South Pacific Force (Admiral William F. Halsey):

"TO THE SUPERB OFFICERS AND MEN ON LAND, ON SEA, IN THE AIR AND UNDER THE SEA WHO HAVE PERFORMED SUCH MAGNIFICENT FEATS FOR OUR COUNTRY IN THE LAST FEW DAYS X YOU HAVE WRITTEN YOUR NAMES IN GOLDEN LETTERS ON THE PAGES OF HISTORY AND WON THE UNDYING GRATITUDE OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN X MY PRIDE IN YOU IS BEYOND EXPRESSION, NO HONOR FOR YOU COULD BE TOO GREAT X MAGNIFICENTLY DONE X GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU X TO THE GLORIOUS DEAD: HAIL HEROES! REST WITH GOD X SIGNED HALSEY"

* * * * *

From Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) (Admiral Chester W. Nimitz) to COMSOPAC (Admiral Halsey):

"WE HAVE ADMIRATION BEYOND EXPRESSION FOR THE UNSWERVING OFFENSIVE SPIRIT OF YOUR FIGHTING FORCES AND THEIR ABILITY TO STRIKE DOWN THE ENEMY WHILE ABSORBING HIS BLOWS X WE REGRET DEEPLY THE LOSSES YOU HAD TO TAKE, BUT THEY WERE GLORIOUSLY NOT IN VAIN."

* * * * *

¹ Earlier called "Third and Fourth Battles of Savo Island" or "Battle of the Solomons."

² Written by Adm. Parker in 1982 and revised in 1985. Forty copies of his pamphlet were distributed at the Cushing's 1985 reunion, and six additional copies were sent by him to widows and survivors for whom he had addresses. A copy is on file at the Ships' Histories Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C..

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal; November 12-15, 1942

U. S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION SERVICE
Cactus—Ringbolt Area

Channel No.

PARAPHRASE

~~SECRET~~

Precedence

CINCPAC WISHES TO CONGRATULATE ALL WHO TOOK PART IN THE BATTLE
OF LAST EVENING X ALSO ALL YOUR SHIPMATES IN THIS VICINITY
EXTEND THEIR CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ON YOUR GREAT FIGHT X YOU
HAVE DONE A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY AND MADE IT
FEASIBLE FOR OUR SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND AIRCRAFT NOT YET ENGAGED
TO MEET AND DELIVER MORE DAMAGING BLOWS ^{TO} THE ENEMY .

COPIES TO: ATLANTA

COMDESDIV 10

LAFFEY

MONSSEN ✓

BARTON; CUSHING

AUTHENTICATED

Daniel Harris
DANIEL HARRIS, ENSIGN, USNR.

TOR

DATE

14 NOVEMBER 1942

CWO

RELEASE

Originator

RDO
HONOLULU

Action

COMSOPAC

Information

Time Group 130217

Editor's Note:

This is a message from Admiral C. W. Nimitz (Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet) to Admiral W. F. Halsey (Commander South Pacific Force) following the surface action on the night of 12-13 November 1942. All five of the ships listed after "COPIES TO:" were lost in this battle. (Copy courtesy of Richard McCombs.)

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
August, 1995

The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal

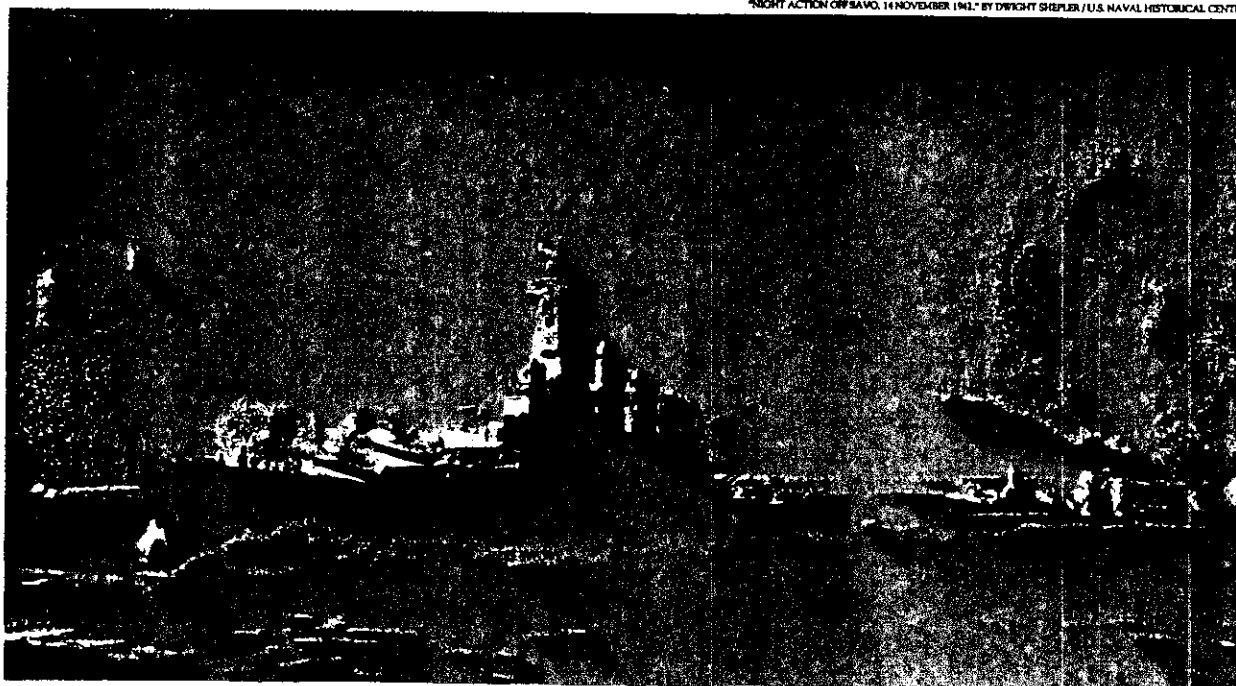
Since 7 August 1942, when U.S. Marines landed at Guadalcanal in the southern Solomons, Imperial Japanese General Headquarters had determined to eject the invaders—the first threat to the integrity of its defensive perimeter—and bring the island back under Japanese control. The resulting contest attained a duration, intensity, and cost that neither side could have foreseen. At stake, as both soon came to realize, was more than possession of a sweltering, disease-ridden, singularly inhospitable South Seas island; the real objective was no less than the strategic initiative in the Pacific.

For months, the outcome of the struggle hung in a precarious balance. Later in the war, when the U.S. Navy had won command of the sea, it could isolate islands on which

landings were made. This was not the case at Guadalcanal, where command of the sea changed at sunrise and sunset. During the day, U.S. aircraft exercised it from Henderson Field, the airstrip the Marines quickly established on the island. After dark, it belonged to what U.S. forces called the Tokyo Express—Japanese ships that streamed down the Slot through the Solomons to land troops and supplies and to bombard Henderson Field. U.S. surface forces challenged these nocturnal forays successfully at the Battle of Cape Esperance in October and the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal in mid-November, and less successfully at the Battle of Tasafaronga later that month.

But before and after these clashes, the Tokyo Express ran on schedule, subject only to interference from U.S. patrol boats and the need to be well on its way back up the Slot by daybreak. Besides night surface actions immediately offshore, two inconclusive fleet actions took place between carrier forces: the Battle of the Eastern Solomons in August and the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands in October. On more than one occasion, only a single carrier was avail-

In November 1942, successful U.S. cruiser, aircraft, and battleship actions represented a turning point in the Pacific.



"NIGHT ACTION OFF SAVO, 14 NOVEMBER 1942." BY DWIGHT SHEPHERD / U.S. NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER

UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTITUTE

Naval History - May/June 1995

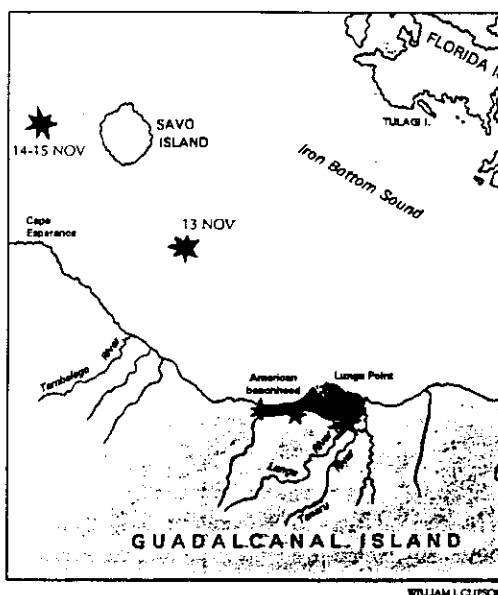
able to support the defense of Guadalcanal, and U.S. leaders considered the possibility that it might become necessary to evacuate the island.

Fortunately, the Japanese Army consistently underestimated the number of Marines and soldiers ashore by 50% to 70%. Consequently, the 30,000 troops landed in detachments fed three successive attempts to overrun Henderson Field—in late August, mid-September, and late October—rather than massing for one great attack. Psychologically, the turning point occurred on 18 October, when pugnacious Vice Admiral William F. 'Bull' Halsey took over as head of the South Pacific forces. an appointment applauded throughout his new command. Objectively, it came on 12-15 November, in the three interlocking actions that comprised the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

Like the majority of engagements in the Guadalcanal campaign, the naval battle had its origins in a Japanese plan to reinforce the island—in this case, with 10,000 men in highspeed transports escorted by a destroyer force led by Rear Admiral Raizo Tanaka, the Tokyo Express's indomitable engineer. These troops were to land on Guadalcanal during the night of 12-13 November, while a raiding force commanded by Vice Admiral Hiroaki Abe pounded Henderson Field and the Marine positions around it. By coincidence, two heavily escorted U.S. transport groups under Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner reached the island on 11 and 12 November. On the 12th, air patrols reported powerful enemy forces moving toward Guadalcanal, obviously with the intention of attacking the airfield and the transports, if present. Turner seized the opportunity to prepare a surprise. As soon as his transports had put to sea, he dispatched the cruisers and most of the destroyers in their support group to intercept the intruders off Guadalcanal. The enemy formation—correctly believed to include two battleships—presented the home team with heavy odds.

Cruiser Night Action, 13 November

The force Turner had deployed numbered 13 vessels: the heavy cruisers *Portland* (CA-33) and *San Francisco* (CA-38), light cruisers *Atlanta* (CL-51), *Helena* (CL-50), and *Juneau* (CL-52), and eight destroyers. In command in the flagship *San Francisco* was Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan. Also present, flying his flag in the *Atlanta*,



was Rear Admiral Norman Scott, the victor at the Battle of Cape Esperance. Abe's raiding group consisted of the battleships *Hiei* and *Kirishima*, light cruiser *Nagara*, and 14 destroyers. Radar contact was made at 0124. Firing began at virtually point-blank range—less than a mile—at 0145, and the opposing formations held head-on courses to pass through one another in the fiercest, most confused melee since Tegetthoff led his flying wedge into the Italian fleet off Lissa in 1866. Callaghan and Scott were killed early in the action, which lasted barely a quarter-hour. At its end, the Japanese withdrew without having shelled

Henderson Field, and Tanaka's transports were ordered back into the Shortland Islands, midway up the Slot. Sunk or sinking were the *Atlanta* and four U.S. and two Japanese destroyers. The *Hiei*, slowed by at least 30 large-caliber hits, was left behind with three destroyers attending her.

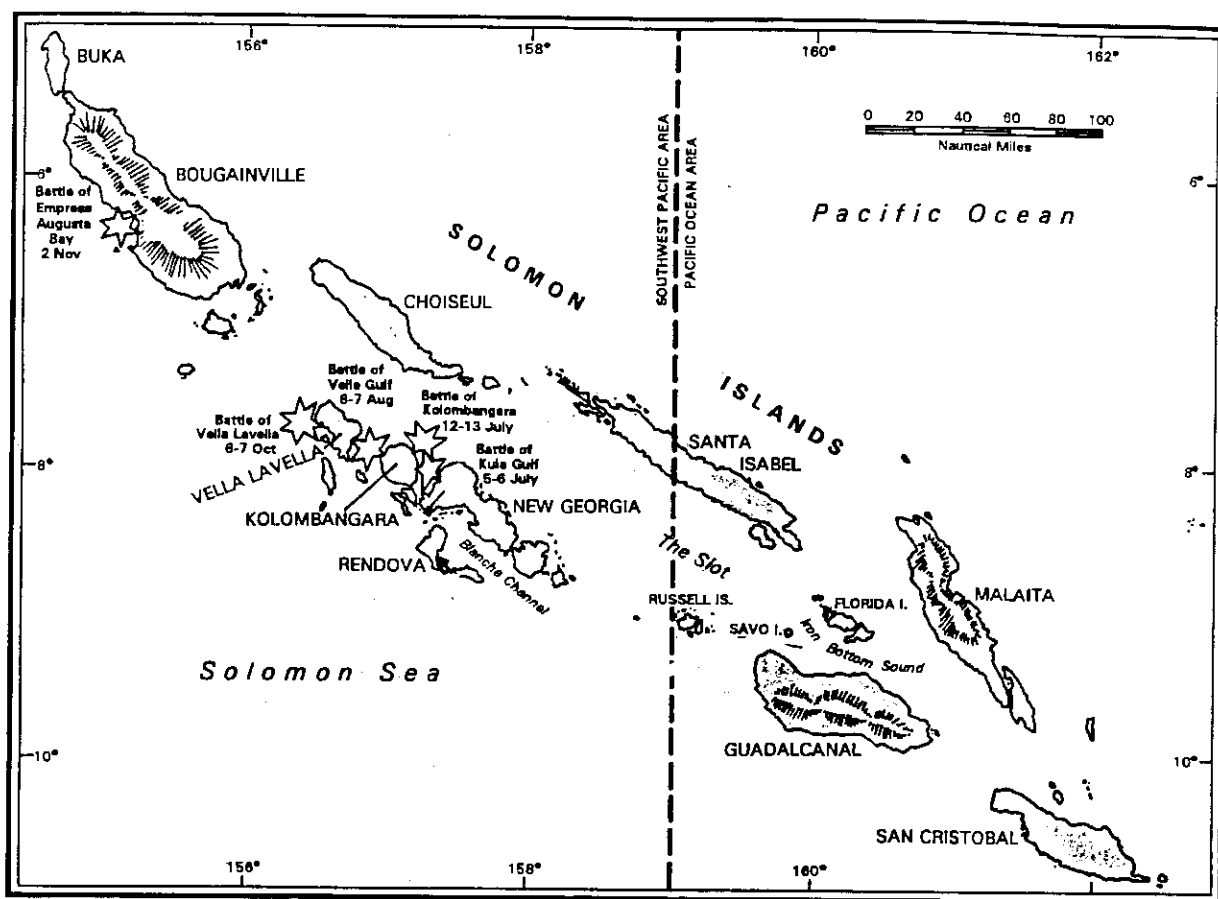
Dawn and U.S. aircraft found the *Hiei* only a few miles from Guadalcanal. Repeated bomb and torpedo runs added to her misery, and around sunset she became the first Japanese battleship to be sunk in World War II. The day's action was not entirely to the Imperial Navy's disadvantage, however. Torpedoes from the submarine *I-26* claimed the damaged *Juneau* as the U.S. force retired from the battle area, and shortly past midnight two heavy cruisers of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa's Eighth Fleet, called into play that morning, passed Henderson Field.

Air Action, 14 November

Tanaka's convoy set out for Guadalcanal for a second time at 1300 on 13 November. At first light U.S. reconnaissance flights spotted his transports and destroyers heading toward the island and Mikawa's cruisers moving away from it. In the ensuing air attacks one of Mikawa's six cruisers was sunk and three others damaged, one severely, while six of Tanaka's 11 transports were destroyed and another hit so badly that it had to turn back. His losses notwithstanding, Tanaka pressed on toward Guadalcanal.

Battleship Night Action, 14-15 November

Meanwhile, U.S. and Japanese commanders had been reaching decisions that precipitated the climax of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. Late on 13 November, Halsey ordered the carrier *Enterprise* (CV-6) task force to send its



heavy gunfire unit into the cauldron. The surface action group thus formed under Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee consisted of the new battleships *South Dakota* (BB-57) and *Washington* (BB-56) and four destroyers. On the Japanese side, Vice Admiral Nobotake Kondo, commanding the Combined Fleet's Advanced Force, made plans to support the landing of Tanaka's transports by attacking Henderson Field. The formation assembled under his personal command comprised the battleship *Kirishima*, heavy cruisers *Atago* (flag) and *Takao*, two light cruisers, and nine destroyers. These deployments set the stage for the first and next-to-last time in the Pacific war that battleships fought their own kind.

The action opened with 16-inch salvos from the U.S. dreadnoughts at 2317. By the time it ended approximately an hour and a quarter later, the *South Dakota* had been heavily damaged, two U.S. destroyers had been sunk, and a third was slowly sinking; but the *Kirishima* and a Japanese destroyer had taken such punishment that they had to be scuttled, and Kondo's force was retiring. Although it had not hammered the airfield, it had cleared the way for Tanaka, who ran his four surviving transports ashore on Guadalcanal at 0400. Of the 10,000 men intended to reinforce the island, 2,000 had reached it. In

view of the opposition encountered, the delivery of these troops is a testimonial to the fighting spirit of the Imperial Navy. At a cost of two battleships, a heavy cruiser, and three destroyers, however, this was a testimonial the Japanese could ill afford. Thereafter, the problem of conveying troops to Guadalcanal was overshadowed by the increasingly intractable one of supplying those already there. On 12 December, the navy formally recommended abandoning the struggle for the island, and on the last day of the year Imperial General Headquarters directed a staged evacuation, which took place on 1-8 February 1943. In the words of a Japanese document captured some time earlier, "Success or failure in recapturing Guadalcanal . . . is the fork in the road which leads to victory for them or for us." For Japan, the fork led to defeat. The U.S. Navy was about to begin its long march across the Pacific to Tokyo Bay. ⚓

For further reading: Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1941-1945* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1978); David C. Evans, ed., *The Japanese Navy in World War II: In the Words of Former Japanese Naval Officers*, second edition (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1986); Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Vol. V: *The Struggle for Guadalcanal* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975).

Death Comes to a Destroyer

By PHYLLIS KATHLEEN SMITH

A shudder ran down the battered hull of the once beautiful and sleek craft. She seemed to sense that her end was near and her thoughts raced back to a March day almost two years ago.

"It was," she thought, "to be exact, March 14, 1941, when I, the destroyer *Monssen*, with a splash of champagne was christened a member of the United States Fleet. I remember the awful feeling of uncertainty that prevailed in me when I was officially listed as the DD436 and shipped off to convoy duty in the Atlantic in much the same manner that a small child of a very large family is sent off to school. There was no fuss or bother for I was just one among many. My patrol area was in the North Atlantic near Iceland where lend-lease shipping and German submarines were giving the air a deadly tang. No, the United States was not officially at war, but we of the Atlantic patrol were already bearing the brunt of the fighting. Nationality or neutrality meant nothing to those prowling monsters of the deep, the submarines, one of which wounded and crippled my sister ship, the *Kearny*.

"After December 7, 1941, Germans and their U-boats were forgotten in the cold fury against the infamous acts of the Japanese. I was soon transferred to the Pacific war theater where action was so fast that it's hard to remember everything—the battle of Midway, the bombardment of Guadalcanal, the battle of ~~Santo Cruz~~ *Santo Cruz*, and now *Savo Island*.

"I remember well how black the night was when our tiny fleet knifed through the sulky waters bound for the pass at *Savo Island*, a small yet historic island located only a few miles off the northeastern end of Guadalcanal. The pass is between these two islands, and toward it we were headed to intercept and engage an enemy task force. The exact number of the enemy was unknown, but their mission was to land troops in great

strength and with large naval support to drive inland and force our troops into the interior and gradual defeat. It was a desperate situation and all those lives and equipment might be lost if the enemy successfully defeated our forces.

"Suddenly as observed the shadowed silhouettes of the enemy fleet crossing our bow, the crew launched torpedoes which caught a battleship and a light cruiser off guard. The battle became a rough free-for-all or bar-room brawl as suddenly under an umbrella of huge searchlights the enemy began to give back what it had taken. Like angry birds and vicious fish the shells and torpedoes crushed down upon us. One by one the valiant gun crews were knocked out; fires were started; hits became too numerous to account for. Wounded, defenseless, stopped, and aflame, I was abandoned by what now remained of the fighting crew that manned me.

"It has now become evident to me that I shall not survive this battle. The *Monssen* is being sacrificed, for had the enemy troop ships and naval vessels not been sunk, the United States would have lost the islands and thousands of marines and soldiers. Certainly this sacrifice is not in vain for the ideals for which my crew died and for which I will die are the same ideals for which the living will continue to fight until they are secure. I do not fear this watery grave because I have been a fighting ship with a magnificent reputation in a fighting fleet."

Another shudder shakes the destroyer as fierce fires lap up the melting iron structure. The ship seems to erupt as the fire reaches her vital spot—the magazine. Then with a sullen hiss she sinks haughtily beneath the churning waters seeking a well-earned rest for herself and her glorious crew.

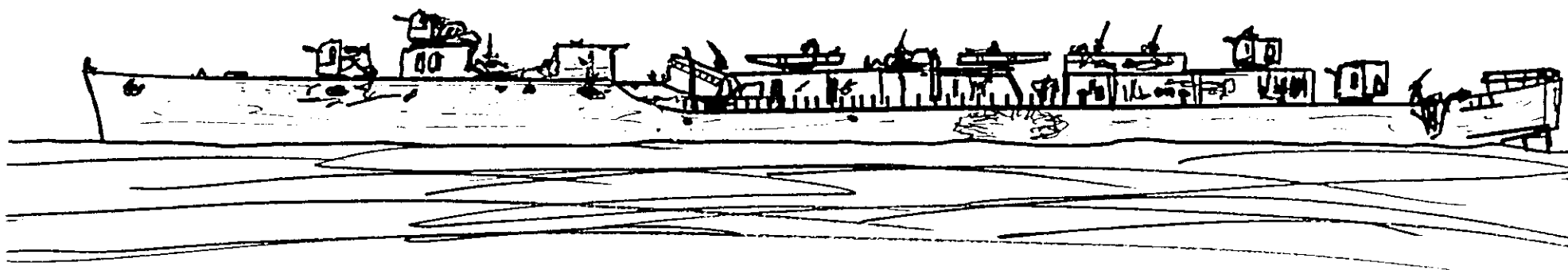
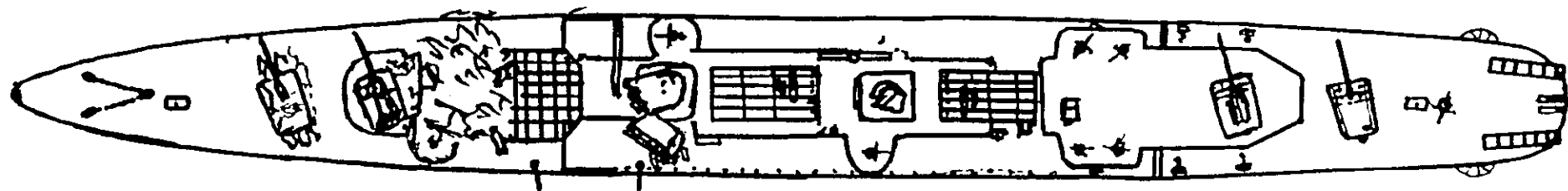
Naval Historical Center
Washington Navy Yard
901 M Street, S.E.
Washington, DC 20374-5060

USS MONSSEN

Approximate Configuration of Wreck

August 1992

Port Side & Deck Plan



Rough Scale: 1" = 30'

C.R. Haberlein Jr., 12/92

DESTROYER AT SAVO SOLD LIFE DEARLY

Wounded Skipper Relates Role
of Heavy-Hitting Little Craft
in Solomons Battle

TORPEDOED A BATTLESHIP

Hits on Three Enemy Cruisers
and Damage to Destroyer
Also Part of Claims

By FOSTER HAILEY

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

AN ADVANCED SOUTH PACIFIC BASE, Nov. 22 (Delayed)—Another piece in the jigsaw puzzle that is the story of the night naval battle off Savo Island in the Solomons on Nov. 13 was supplied today by the skipper of an American destroyer that was sunk in the action.

In the forty flaming minutes it was in the battle, the little American warship scored two and possibly three torpedo hits on a Japanese battleship of the Kongo class and another one or possibly two torpedo hits on a heavy cruiser, raked a Japanese destroyer with 20-mm. and five-inch gunfire and threw several five-inch broadsides and hundreds of rounds of 20-mm. shells into another enemy destroyer or light cruiser and several five-inch shells into an additional cruiser.

Commissioned only a little more than a year ago, the destroyer claimed credit for seven Japanese planes and three Japanese and one German submarine and the destruction of Japanese general headquarters on Tulagi before going into the night action on Nov. 13 with the late Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan's force of cruisers and destroyers.

"She certainly paid for herself, didn't she?" said a wounded young Marine officer who was listening to the story from an adjoining hospital cot at this advanced base.

Torpedo Hit Battleship

"We were next to the last of the destroyers to go into action," said the commander.

"We were next in line to the first ship you saw blow up out there.

"We saw our ships open fire up at the head of the column on the ships to port. Then we heard that the Japs were crossing over to starboard. I ordered all torpedo tubes trained to starboard and ordered them to fire without further command at any worth-while target, preferably a capital ship.

"The first ship we saw was what the torpedo officer thought was a battleship. He said she appeared to be stopped. We were coming up astern of her and when we had her almost on our beam fired a spread of torpedoes. She was about 3,000 to 4,000 yards away.

"Both the torpedo officer and the chief torpedo man believed they saw two of them hit her just about amidships. I didn't see them myself. Some of the other men thought they saw three explosions.

"Just before those two or three hits the men in charge of the forward torpedo tubes saw what they thought was another battleship or a heavy cruiser just forward of the other targets and they fired another spread at her.

"The chief torpedo man was killed, but he told a striker that he thought we also got a hit with the second spread."

The first ship at which they fired was a battleship, the skipper said, and one of the gunners unhesitatingly picked out a picture of the Kongo as the type of ship he saw.

"Since she appeared to be already damaged when we fired at her, she may have been the one on which another destroyer had scored three torpedo hits early," the commander continued. "I don't see how she could have stayed up if she got that many hits on one side. It may be she was the same battleship the fliers from Guadalcanal found north of Savo the next morning and attacked."

Not a shot had been fired at the destroyer as she steamed on in toward the Japanese force at high speed. Up ahead all the other ships of the American force were heavily engaged.

"Shortly after we fired our second spread of torpedoes," he said, "we opened up with our five-inch battery on what we thought was either a cruiser or a destroyer. It was firing at one of our ships. Whatever it was, it ceased firing,

so we knocked off, too."

"As we turned a Japanese destroyer crossed our bow about 1,000 yards away. All our 20-mm. guns opened up on her, sweeping her decks with about 1,000 rounds, and our five-inch guns turned around and threw a few shells into her.

"We still hadn't been hit. I had hopes of driving on through the Jap force and getting clear to the north of Florida Island.

Swerved Around Torpedoes

"Soon, however, starshells started bursting and by their glare I saw two torpedoes coming at us. I swung hard right and missed them, one by not more than five yards. Some of the crew claimed they saw three more that passed right under the ship.

"Then two searchlights hit us, probably from destroyers about 2,500 yards away. The 20-mm. opened up on them and we swung our five-inch battery around and opened fire on the after ship. The light went out, but whether we hit it or it was just turned off I don't know. Some of the men said they saw the ship sink.

"About that time all hell broke loose and we started getting hit on both sides. Either a battleship or heavy cruisers were firing at us, as we got several large-caliber hits. One hit the No. 1 gun, wiping out all the men there, and another went into the chief's quarters, setting a fire in the handling room. One went right into my cabin, starting a big fire under the bridge.

"We had fired all our torpedoes, all our guns now were out of action, the power was gone, and I saw nothing to do but abandon ship. This was at 2:40. The action had opened about 2 o'clock. We were afire in several places and I was afraid the magazine would go up.

"I didn't leave until 3 A. M. I went around the bridge trying to arouse people, but I couldn't get them up. When I was convinced there was no one else alive on the bridge I went over the rail. I imagine I fractured my shoulder when I hit the water, although I might have been hurt before. Some of the hits on the bridge were pretty close.

"At daybreak I got together with some of my people who had been floating around on what was left of the gig. They had some badly wounded. We patched up a raft and put the wounded on it. A few hours later we were picked up by the Higgins' boats and taken to Guadalcanal."

The skipper is waiting for transportation back to the States, where surgery will restore the use of his arms. He suffered fractures

of both shoulders and can use his arms only in a limited way. He hopes soon to see his wife in Long Beach, Calif., and their 11-year-old son.

The story of the first terrible ninety seconds off Savo Island early in the morning of Friday, Nov. 13, when an outnumbered, outgunned task force of American cruisers and destroyers drove in against a Japanese group that included at least one battleship, out-fought them and turned them back from their objective, which was to bombard and immobilize Hender-

son Airfield, was told by Captain Samuel Power Jenkins of an American light cruiser.

His cruiser, with Rear Admiral Norman Scott aboard, was leading the American cruiser force, preceded by destroyers. The Japanese force was divided, two or three vessels coming through the passage south of Savo and ten or twelve, among them the battleship, through the northern passage between Savo and Florida Islands. The American force headed first for the southern group.

"One of the Japanese vessel (he believed it was a light cruiser) illuminated us with searchlights and we opened fire on him almost simultaneously," Captain Jenkins said. He thought his own salvos went home, but he could not be sure.

"Almost immediately," he continued, "another Japanese vessel, a heavy cruiser, opened fire on us. His first hits were on the bridge with eight-inch shells and in a very short time we had lost control of the ship from there."

About the same time Captain Jenkins saw two Japanese destroyers crossing his bow, apparently screening the heavy cruiser, and then another salvo of eight-inch shells hit his ship on the starboard side.

"Shortly after this salvo hit us we were hit by a torpedo and shortly after that by another, which went into the plotting room, putting us completely out of action."

Then, Captain Jenkins said, the battle moved on north and west past Savo and his ship had no further part in the battle. The action had taken just a minute and a half, during which she had fired three salvos and had received fourteen eight-inch shell hits, several five-inch shell hits and two torpedoes.

Her admiral dead, only four of twenty persons on the bridge still alive and all of them wounded, the cruiser lay dead in the water, burning furiously amidships.

Excerpts from "The Way I Remember It,"
a Narrative by Chester C. Thomason*

"I was steering the ship from the after-steering compartment under the fantail -- taking directions from someone on the bridge with a telephone headset. "Stubby" Miller, EM2, on the switchboard in the after engine room, was on the same line. I heard Miller say that the forward fireroom and forward engine room were carried away. We were operating with just one screw. Then I heard an explosion and a loud hiss of high-pressure steam. A scream from Miller came over the headset. Then all went dark, and the screw stopped turning. I couldn't get an answer from anyone on my headset. I abandoned the headphones after being in total darkness belowdecks for about five minutes. I went up through the escape hatch and saw a raging fire. I met Storey, Spurgeon and Hughes. I asked them what had happened, and they told me quickly that all of the life rafts and lifeboats were either blown away or gone. We decided to see who we could help. Two went up the port side and the other two of us went up the starboard side to help anyone who needed it get over the side. After we did all that we could we met on the fantail and looked for something to use for ourselves. With my flashlight I spotted a piece of wood, 4"x4" and about 10 feet long, floating past the ship about 20 feet away. We all went over the side at the same time and made for it to keep us afloat. My watch stopped at 0313 when I hit the water. When we were about 1/4 or 1/3 of a mile away from the ship we could still see a big blaze and hear cries of pain and suffering coming from the ship.

"Just before daybreak we heard a plane flying towards us low over the water. It sounded like one of ours, so I took my flashlight and flashed an "S.O.S." in Morse code. He dipped his wings back and forth and kept going.

"When it was daylight tall shark fins started circling us. Storey, Spurgeon and Hughes didn't want any part of them, so they started back for the ship. At around 10 o'clock I caught up with a raft and a whaleboat which had a few of our men and some others in it. I didn't know that one of them was one of our officers. (He was a young new Reserve that I didn't know too well and who seemed pretty bashful on the ship. I forget his name.) He had his guts hanging out of his stomach, and he could barely talk He died about 10 or 15 minutes later.

"At about three o'clock that afternoon, when we were about a mile from the beach, a Higgins boat from Guadalcanal came up and asked us where we were going. We told him we were headed for the beach. He told us that was a Jap beach, so we climbed in and he took us and some other survivors to Guadalcanal. We stayed on Guadalcanal for 13 days. There were 19 of us off of the Monssen. We left there on Thanksgiving Day. What a contrast from dirty trenches to the Barrett, a transport ship, with turkey, baths, bunks and good food! That was the most thankful Thanksgiving Day I have ever had."

* * * * *

* Mr. Thomason was an Electricians Mate 3rd Class aboard the Monssen in 1942. In 1992 he compiled a history of the ship and included a narrative about his experiences in World War II. These edited excerpts relate to the sinking of the U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on November 13, 1942.

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

List of Officers; 13 November 1942¹

* <u>McCombs</u> , Charles Edward	LCDR	USN	Commanding Officer
** <u>Kemper</u> , James Lawson	LCDR	USN	Executive Officer
** <u>Frosch</u> , Andrew Joseph	LT	USN	Engineering Officer
** <u>Wager</u> , Hubert Warren	LTj.g.	USN	Gunnery Officer
** <u>Knaggs</u> , Dale Wesley	LTj.g.	USN	Communications Officer
* <u>Lewis</u> , Francis A.	LTj.g.	USNR	Ass't. Gunnery Officer
<u>Hamm</u> , George S.	LTj.g.	USNR	First Lieutenant
** <u>Eberlein</u> , Duane G.	Ensign	USNR	
** <u>Kittredge</u> , Robert W.	Ensign	USNR	
* <u>Lassen</u> , Robert W.	Ensign	USNR	Torpedo Officer
<u>Little</u> , John G.	Ensign	USNR	Machine Gun Officer
** <u>Nance</u> , Glenn W.	Ensign	USNR	
** <u>Pennell</u> , Lewis Edward	Ensign	USN	
* <u>Scott</u> , Paul T.	Ensign	USNR	
** <u>Jenkins</u> , Hilerd W.	LT(MC)	USNR	Medical Officer
* <u>Peters</u> , George B.	LTjg(SC)	USNR	Supply Officer

* * * * *

¹ Compiled from casualty reports, a letter by LCDR McCombs recommending citations and personal recollections. The last surviving officer, George S. Hamm, died recently.

* Wounded (** Killed) when the ship was lost due to enemy action on 13 November 1942, in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

Muster Roll of the Crew, November 13, 1942¹

*ABBOTT, Horace Junior	360-26-28	F1c
ACEVEDO, Daniel (n)	224-49-97	S2c
**ACKERMAN, Philip Wayne	238-81-82	S1c
**ADAMS, James Wallace	360-26-67	F1c
**ADAMS, Orville Eugene	652-04-38	AS
AIKEN, Thomas Henry	646-17-49	S1c
ALBINO, James Vincent	606-07-18	S2c
ALDRICH, William Reid	224-49-98	S1c
ALLEN, William Joseph, Jr.	606-07-35	S2c
*AMBROSE, Arthur John	600-03-22	S1c
AMBROSE, Robert Joseph	368-42-88	Cox
ANGELO, Charles (n)	666-05-56	F2c
ANSON, Harold Dawson	646-18-44	S2c
**ANTONOWICZ, John Stanley	224-49-88	F2c
*APPLEGATE, Thaine Henry	393-43-36	F1c
**ARA, Joseph Francis	642-04-11	F2c
**ARCH, Frank William	614-07-12	S1c
**ARNOTT, Charles Herbert	202-08-03	F2c
**ARSENAULT, Leo George	202-08-50	S1c
ASKIN, Joseph Patrick	646-18-34	S1c
**AUGUSTA, Matthew Joseph	202-07-90	S1c
**BABB, Richard Clemence	606-07-15	S1c
BACKUS, Donald Robert	212-75-07	S2c
**BAILEY, John Elwood	224-49-27	S1c
BAIRD, Arnold Benedict	606-02-95	S1c
**BAKER, Clifton Warren, Jr.	212-75-06	F2c
**BAKER, Remely (n)	202-03-01	S1c
**BALAI, John (n)	300-02-81	TM3c
BALL, Chester Elmer	368-52-73	RM2c
**BALUTES, Charles (n)	250-68-49	S2c
**BALWIERCZAK, Joseph Robert	224-49-99	S2c
BANTA, Ira Delmar	392-95-66	Cox
*BARANOWSKI, Edward (n)	642-04-08	F2c
**BARNES, Henry Malon	346-70-49	S1c
**BARNETT, Eugene	346-87-10	MM2c
**BARONAS, Stanley Tony	614-07-24	S2c
**BASTIAN, Henry Edward	238-60-73	PTR3c
**BECHT, Charles Joseph, Jr.	224-56-40	S1c
**BECK, William Jennings, Jr.	385-92-92	S1c
**BECKER, Fred	646-32-41	F2c
**BEFF, Robert Elwoos	238-81-10	F2c
BEGLEY, James Joseph	202-17-20	F3c
**BEILSTEIN, Theodore Charles	250-69-21	S1c
**BEITO, Jess (n)	664-42-75	S2c
**BELCHER, Daniel Arthur	642-06-23	S2c
**BENDER, John Michael	224-57-70	S1c
BENEWAIT, Joseph Patrick	652-08-89	S2c
**BENNETT, Johnnie Edward	668-59-33	S1c
**BENTZ, Henry Dale	668-58-77	S1c
*BERARDI, Nicholas Joseph	224-56-41	S1c
BERGEN, Edward Lawrence, Jr.	646-31-43	S1c

BERKELEY, Robert William	202-16-27	F3c
**BERSETH, Elmer Fritjof	638-50-68	S2c
BEVERIDGE, William Watson	646-32-43	S2c
**BEVIL, Glenn James	359-74-53	CSK
BICKEL, August Leopold	250-31-62	CGM
BICKEL, Clifford Arthur	646-30-59	F2c
**BIENKO, Bennie	224-55-85	S1c
**BIZUB, Peter Joseph	233-92-75	CCStd
**BLEVINS, Norman West	316-80-42	F2c
BOYSEN, Roland Chris	700-08-62	SK2c
BRANCH, Willie James	272-30-05	Matt1
BREJCHA, John Charles	300-01-16	SF2c
**BRESHEARS, Glenn Everett	654-26-29	S2c
BRIGGS, Irving Wilson	224-47-62	F2c
BROOKS, Beverly Eugene	362-30-91	F1c
**BRUBAKER, Lucian Sepherious	243-85-60	QM3c
**BURKE, Dennis Charles	283-49-34	RM3c
**BURKE, Joseph Francis	283-25-98	RM1c
*BURNS, Robert James, Jr.	382-31-33	F1c
**CARR, John Wesley, Jr.	265-87-16	BM2c
*CECIL, Charles Leonard	662-47-32	S2c
**CHAFFIN, Alve James	337-76-01	S1c
**CHAMBERS, Clifton Neal	355-58-61	Cox
**CLARK, Wilbur Russell	372-11-49	WT2c
**CLINEFELTER, Daniel Howard	360-25-69	EM2c
CLINEFELTER, Clarence Harold	360-37-18	EM3c
**COLE, Max Herbert	295-74-02	RM3c
**COLLI, Robert Victor	375-92-66	Msmth1
**CRAWFORD, George Thomas, Jr.	346-88-00	F1c
**CRIDER, Arthur Lee, Jr.	342-12-95	MM2c
*CROFT, Thomas Mortion	321-38-13	Cox
*DAVIS, Fred Wallace	360-03-45	SM2c
DAVISON, Edward Hamalton	311-11-14	QM1c
**DELO, Gordon Kenneth	234-08-03	GMM
DE WALSCHE, Kenneth William	368-53-90	S1c
**DINGLE, George Raymond	375-37-95	CWT
*DOUGHTY, Herbert David	662-64-55	S1c
**DOZIER, Spencer Boyd	618-27-57	F3c
**DRAKE, Lenox Brandon, Jr.	356-43-17	F1c
**DRISKILL, Malcolm Jessie	662-13-51	S2c
**DRURY, Claude Kenneth	654-34-26	S2c
**DUNCAN, Ernest Revis	680-10-51	S2c
**DUNN, Vernon Leland	644-29-45	S1c
**DURAN, Andrew (n)	632-51-16	S1c
**DURFEE, Paul George	660-07-12	S1c
**DUVAL, Robert James	375-81-14	Bmkr2
DYAR, Billy Bert	272-85-13	S2c
**EAGY, Ross Marvin	654-40-51	S1c
**EAST, Floyd Bernard	640-23-51	S1c
**EATON, Donald William	618-23-82	S2c
**EDGE, William Marchall	624-47-70	S1c
**EDWARDS, Francis Edward	376-58-26	S2c
**EGGLESTON, Robert Charles	372-20-76	TM3c

**ELLIS, Benjamin Charles	268-38-63	Matt1
**ESHELMAN, John William	281-22-13	MM1c
**ESTES, Herbert Fred	201-56-90	FC2c
EVERETT, Robert William	393-43-73	S2c
**FEARHEILEY, Otto "G", Jr.	626-36-39	S2c
**FEGLEY, Wayne Francis	638-48-36	S2c
*FORD, Robert Eynon	393-43-43	GM3c
**FOSTER, William Kempton	382-31-47	F1c
**FRANCE, Marcel Joseph	274-19-14	WT2c
FRIEND, Morris Cleveland	346-87-83	S2c
FUQUA, Ralph King	360-25-99	S1c
**GALIARDI, Raymond Tulio	207-22-74	FC2c
**GAVIN, Martin Joseph	224-34-70	Matt2
*GOFFIGAN, John Almer	223-61-82	MM2c
**GOODLOE, Raymond Sheldon	371-98-50	MM1c
**GOOLSBY, Donald Earl	613-21-04	S1c
**GRAHAM, Freelon Maurice	346-49-90	PhM1c
HAAS, Joseph Anthony	224-00-93	F2c
HALL, Thomas Monroe, Jr.	382-79-40	S2c
**HEINE, Erwin August	360-26-29	SOM3c
**HENRICHON, Donald Charles T.	212-42-15	CM1c
*HIGBEE, Rodman Ray	385-93-22	SC3c
**HILL, Owen Richard	212-49-14	TM2c
*HOWARD, Cecil	356-41-64	CM3c
**HOWARD, Robert Stockton	393-20-58	SC2c
HUBNER, William Glenn	291-61-73	Bmkr2
**HUFF, Arthur (n), Jr.	269-12-96	Matt2
HUGHES, Joe Gunn	360-26-65	F1c
HULSE, Andrew Jake	382-31-53	F1c
**JENSEN, Theodore	316-08-72	CTM
*JOHNSON, Toliver Andrew	272-13-37	GM1c
**JORDAN, Thomas Ross	376-16-29	S1c
**KING, Charles Junior	393-43-30	S1c
**KIRK, Marcus Clair	102-74-83	MM1c
**KRAEMER, Ernest Dillon	224-44-96	S1c
KYLEBERG, Roland Evert	360-26-95	MM2c
**LANE, Martin Elmer	662-44-91	S1c
**LEWIS, Charles Robert	243-44-05	SC3c
**LITTLE, Roy Robley	356-21-69	S1c
**MACINTOSH, James Robert	201-58-48	WT1c
**MACK, Adolph William, Jr.	258-04-72	WT1c
MARTINEZ, Erwin	382-31-07	S1c
*MASSON, Joseph Byron	300-33-33	S1c
**MATTHEWS, Ivan Joel	368-53-78	RM2c
MC CALL, Walter Duncan	385-56-06	S1c
*MCCAULEY, Charley Box	360-26-66	MM2c
*MCCRAY, Harlan Lloyd	382-31-15	S1c
**MCKESSON, Elmer Isaac	410-53-56	RM3c
MEADE, Howard Emanul	243-10-09	CFC
**MERRIT, Henry (n)	612-08-78	S2c
MIDGETT, Jack Edward	382-70-71	S2c
**MILLER, Ralph Edmond	385-62-87	EM1c
*MILLER, Raymond Patrick	346-87-05	SOM3c

**MONTGOMERY, Dewey Patton	356-42-86	S1 c
*MOORE, Frank Llyn	660-02-11	F2 c
**MOORE, James Albert	291-74-86	F2 c
**MOORE, Richard Ewing	620-06-53	F2 c
**MYERS, Edward Andrew	372-20-83	SC2 c
NATION, Nyle Noble	382-08-33	S1 c
**NEHER, Robert Joseph	386-12-34	S2 c
*NEIGHBROS, Elmo Robert	382-30-93	TM3 c
**NJAA, Kermit Elvin	368-53-67	FC3 c
**NOBLE, Hezie (n)	346-59-61	OC2 c
OLIVER, Eugene (n)	239-59-52	S1 c
**OLSZEWSKI, Vincent Peter Steve	224-50-45	S2 c
**OMAN, Charles Lee	654-28-00	S2 c
**ORAM, Orluff	368-53-72	F1 c
**ORNER, Fred (n)	600-03-35	S2 c
**ORSIE, Charles John	206-95-38	CRM
**ORTON, Raymond	321-08-29	MM1 c
**OUELLETTE, Wilfred Joseph	202-09-33	F2 c
*PAULSON, Carl Donald	321-05-32	CEM
*PEASE, John Arthur, Jr.	360-26-31	SM3 c
**PERKINS, Orie Dalton	286-99-27	CPhM
**PETTY, Harland Hugh	375-77-60	GM2 c
PHILLIPS, Loyd "G"	393-43-25	GM3 c
**PLUMLEY, Leo David	382-30-84	S1 c
**PORTER, Joseph Gideon	337-76-15	TM3 c
**PRICE, John	346-27-02	CMM
QUINN, James Phillip	321-26-97	MM1 c
RADCLIFFE, Eugene C.	446-06-58	OS2 c
**RATCLIFFE, William Edward	337-20-81	MM1 c
ROOKE, Warren Robert	382-30-95	GM3 c
ROW, Arthur Myrl	372-00-12	GM2 c
**ROW, Cleo Frank	371-78-64	SM1 c
*SAMPLE, LeRoy Shannon	360-25-68	SOM3 c
**SANDERS, Layman Morris	311-20-86	MM2 c
**SANFORD, Walter Edward	386-13-48	S2 c
**SATTERFIELD, James Anderson	346-95-17	F2 c
SAUNDERS, Lavette Ethelbert	654-09-40	S1 c
**SCHERPIK, William Rudolph, Jr.	360-25-29	Msmth2
**SCHROEDER, LeRoy (n)	299-52-17	CSK
**SELLERS, Milan	282-77-54	CBM
*SEQUESTRI, Pater Lee	375-80-31	WT2 c
**SHEETS, Lloyd	262-74-14	TM3 c
SHEKELL, Orcilla (n)	640-07-86	S1 c
**SHINN, George (n)	287-11-71	WT1 c
*SHUGREN, Frank August	376-13-08	RM3 c
*SLICHO, Joseph John	273-95-24	MM1 c
**SMITH, Clayton Fredrick	385-75-22	FC3 c
SMITH, Paul Odell	662-28-83	S1 c
SMITH, Sidney Robert	393-65-48	S2 c
**SPAETH, Alvis	360-25-95	S1 c
SPURGEON, Leo Francis	201-56-95	GM2 c
**STEFFE, Merlin Maynard	300-02-03	FC3 c
STORY, Clyde Carlisle	283-19-04	BM2 c

*SULLIVAN, Ralph Bennette	337-24-52	MM2c
SUTHERLAND, Robert Emery	316-20-61	S1c
**SUTTON, Donald Frank	234-30-96	RM3c
**TERPENING, Charles Everett, Jr.	238-81-87	S1c
TERPENING, Roger Frank	600-03-54	S1c
THOMASON, Chester Charles	376-16-17	EM3c
*THOMSON, Frank Kingsbury, Jr.	372-20-90	GM3c
**TIPTON, Robert Edward	360-26-70	SC3c
**WARD, Lawrence Edward	372-21-11	FC3c
WARDELL, James Joseph	385-92-73	GM3c
**WARDROP, Ivan Forest	662-45-32	S2c
WARGO, Joseph Frank	207-32-21	F2c
**WATERS, William Dale	385-92-72	GM3c
**WATKINS, Jack Barbee	372-12-21	Y2c
*WELLS, Arvel "H"	356-42-57	F1c
**WESTON, Arthur Dick	380-96-76	BM1c
*WIGGINS, George Terrell	346-87-95	MM2c
*WILSON, Marion Ford	371-83-78	MM1c
WOMACK, Ralph	274-19-54	CMM
YOUNG, Marion Julius	634-02-10	Y3c

* * * * *

Notes:

1 The muster roll on microfilm at the National Archives for 9/30/42 updated to reflect men received, transfers and changes in rate included on Report Of Changes sheets through 11/2/42.

* Wounded (** Killed) when the ship was lost due to enemy action on 13 November 1942 according to a computer-generated casualty report at the National Archives prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war.

Summary of Casualties:

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Not Wounded</u>	<u>Complement on 11/13/42</u>
Officer	9	5	2	16
Enlisted	<u>136</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>230</u>
TOTALS	<u>145</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>246</u>

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
May, 2000



The monument overlooking Purvis Bay, an inlet in Florida Island, about twenty miles northeast of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Dedicated on April 30, 1944, this bronze plaque reads: "In memory of the officers and men of the United States Navy and Allied Navies who gave their lives - - Iron Bottom Bay - - 1942-43 - - Dedicated by Members of the Iron Bottom Bay Club - - Port Purvis, Solomons Islands - - 20 March 1944." U.S. Navy ships lost in the vicinity include seven cruisers and fifteen destroyers. (Official U.S. Navy photograph taken in 1945.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT

HOLD FOR RELEASE
MORNING NEWSPAPERS
JUNE 5, 1944

PLAQUE DEDICATED TO OFFICERS AND MEN LOST IN "IRON BOTTOM BAY"

A bronze plaque, the first and only battle memorial so far erected in the Solomons Islands, was dedicated April 30, 1944, to the officers and men of the United States and Allied Navies who died in the fierce battles in "Iron Bottom Bay."

The plaque was unveiled on a small palm-studded hill overlooking Purvis Bay, inlet in Florida Island, British Solomons Islands. On the hill now stands the Iron Bottom Bay Club, an officers' recreation center built by the Seabees. In the bay below, approximately a half million tons of ships of the U.S. Navy, and of the enemy lie on the bottom. It was there that such noble men of war as the cruisers ASTORIA, VINCENNES and CHICAGO were sunk in battle. About 270,000 tons of Jap ships sank there.

The Reverend James Edwards, representing the Anglican Bishop of Melanesia, unveiled the memorial before a gathering of Naval officers and enlisted men on the hill, site of the original episcopal residence of the Bishop of Melanesia, which was dismantled by the Japs. The land is owned by the Church of England. A Protestant and a Catholic chaplain of the fleet gave the invocation and benediction.

Rear Admiral Robert W. Hayler, U.S.N., of 800 East Washington Street, Muncie, Indiana, who participated in the last sea action fought in Iron Bottom Bay -- the Battle of Tassafaronga, November 30, 1942 -- spoke briefly. He paid tribute to "all those members of the Allied land, air and sea forces who in the beginning fought against such fearful odds and in every case accomplished what they set out to do."

"Our enemy overran Tulagi early in April, 1942" Rear Admiral Hayler began. "On May 4, just two years ago, one of our carrier task forces struck Tulagi and sent to the bottom some four ships -- thus starting a series of actions which resulted literally in paving the bottom of the sea in this vicinity with ships.

"On July fourth of the same year, the Japanese landed in considerable strength on Guadalcanal and a little more than a month later, on August 7th, our troops landed here and at Guadalcanal. It was many months thereafter before we had forces and equipment really adequate for the tasks assigned us.

"It is altogether fitting," Rear Admiral Hayler continued, "that this tablet be erected in the Purvis Bay Area, because it was on this side where our troops first landed and where we suffered our greatest losses."

Addressing Reverend Mr. Edwards, Rear Admiral Hayler said:

"You and your associates will have no difficulty in remembering those early days. And since your work will continue long after ours is done, we give this memorial into your keeping. In so doing we know that it will remain a lasting tribute to those for whom it is dedicated, and a source of inspiration and courage for those who come hereafter."

Reverend Mr. Edwards said in reply that he was proud to accept in the name of his Bishop the "sacred duty of caring for the shrine. It will be cared for with respect love and dignity. God grant that we may always be inspired by their deeds."

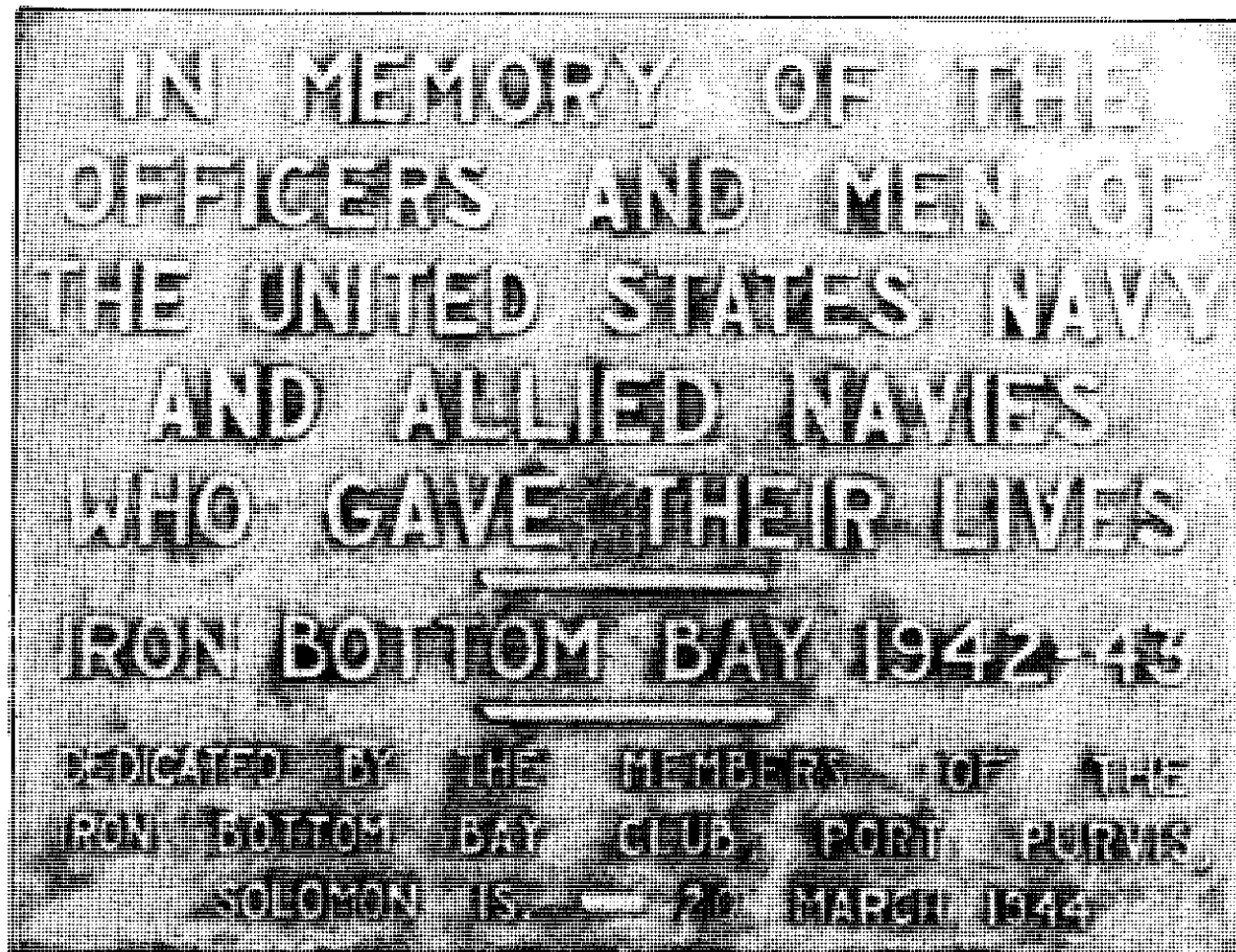
The plaque carries this inscription: "In memory of the officers and men of the United States Navy and Allied Navies who gave their lives -- Iron Bottom Bay -- 1942-43 -- Dedicated by Members of the Iron Bottom Bay Club -- Port Purvis, Solomons Islands -- 20 March 1944".

United States ships that went down in the Iron Bottom Bay and vicinity were: ASTORIA, QUINCY, VINCENNES, ATLANTA, JUNEAU, NORTHHAMPTON and CHICAGO, cruisers; JARVIS, USS BLUE, DUNCAN, BARTON, CUSHING, LAFFEY, MONSSEN, PRESTON, WALKE, BENHAM, DEHAVEN, and AARON WARD, all destroyers; the destroyer transports COLHOUN, GREGORY, LITTLE, the tanker KANAWHA; the transport JOHN PENN; fleet tug SEMINOLE; two cargo ships and four PT boats. The Australian cruiser CANBERRA also was lost there.

Japanese ships sunk in the area include two battleships, three cruisers, eleven destroyers, eight transports and seven other auxiliaries.

Captain Andrew G. Shepard, U.S.N., 235 Cobbs Hill Drive, Rochester, New York, first president of the Club, composed the words on the plaque. Frank Czajkowski, Quartermaster, Second Class, USNR, of 20 Milton Avenue, Amsterdam, New York, designed the lettering. A fleet tender made the plaque.

The Club was an outgrowth of several small and inadequate officers' recreation centers-- the Club Des Slot, the APD Beach and the PT base recreation center -- to which officers came between battles of the Solomons. Rear Admiral A. Staunton Merrill, U.S.N., of Natchez, Mississippi, formerly a Task Force Commander in the South Pacific, is credited with the initiative in the movement to build the club. He since has been ordered to Washington as Director of the Navy's Office of Public Relations. Captain Grayson B. Carter, U.S.N., El Cordova Hotel, Coronado, California, is currently president of the Club, and was present at the unveiling.



"For us who were there, or whose friends were there, Guadalcanal is not a name but an emotion, recalling desperate fights in the air, furious night naval battles, frantic work at supply or construction, savage fighting in the sodden jungle, nights broken by screaming bombs and deafening explosions of naval shells."

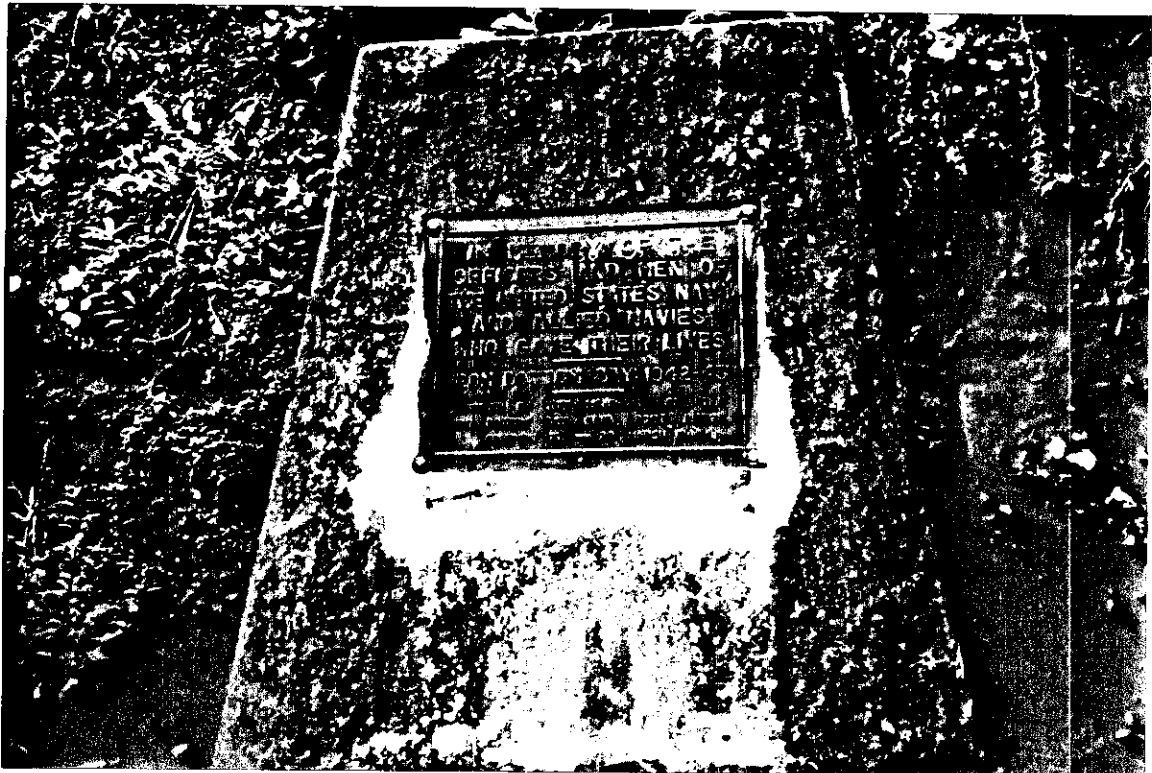
- Commander James C. Shaw, the major contributor to Volume V of Samuel Eliot Morison's History of United States Naval Operations in World War II: The Struggle for Guadalcanal (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1949). Rear Admiral Shaw, USN (Ret.) died on December 4, 1988.

Editor's Note: Rear Admiral Shaw's widow, Elizabeth R. P. Shaw, has graciously shared with me the letters her first husband, Commander Van O. Perkins, USN, wrote in 1944 relating how he arranged the dedication ceremony for this monument at Purvis Bay, Florida Island. The intent was "to make this a permanent part of America," in recognition of the hard fighting and great personal sacrifices which characterized the Guadalcanal Campaign. Commander Perkins was killed in action aboard the U.S.S. Birmingham (CL-62) on October 24, 1944, during the invasion of the Philippines.

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
March, 1995

November 15, 1994

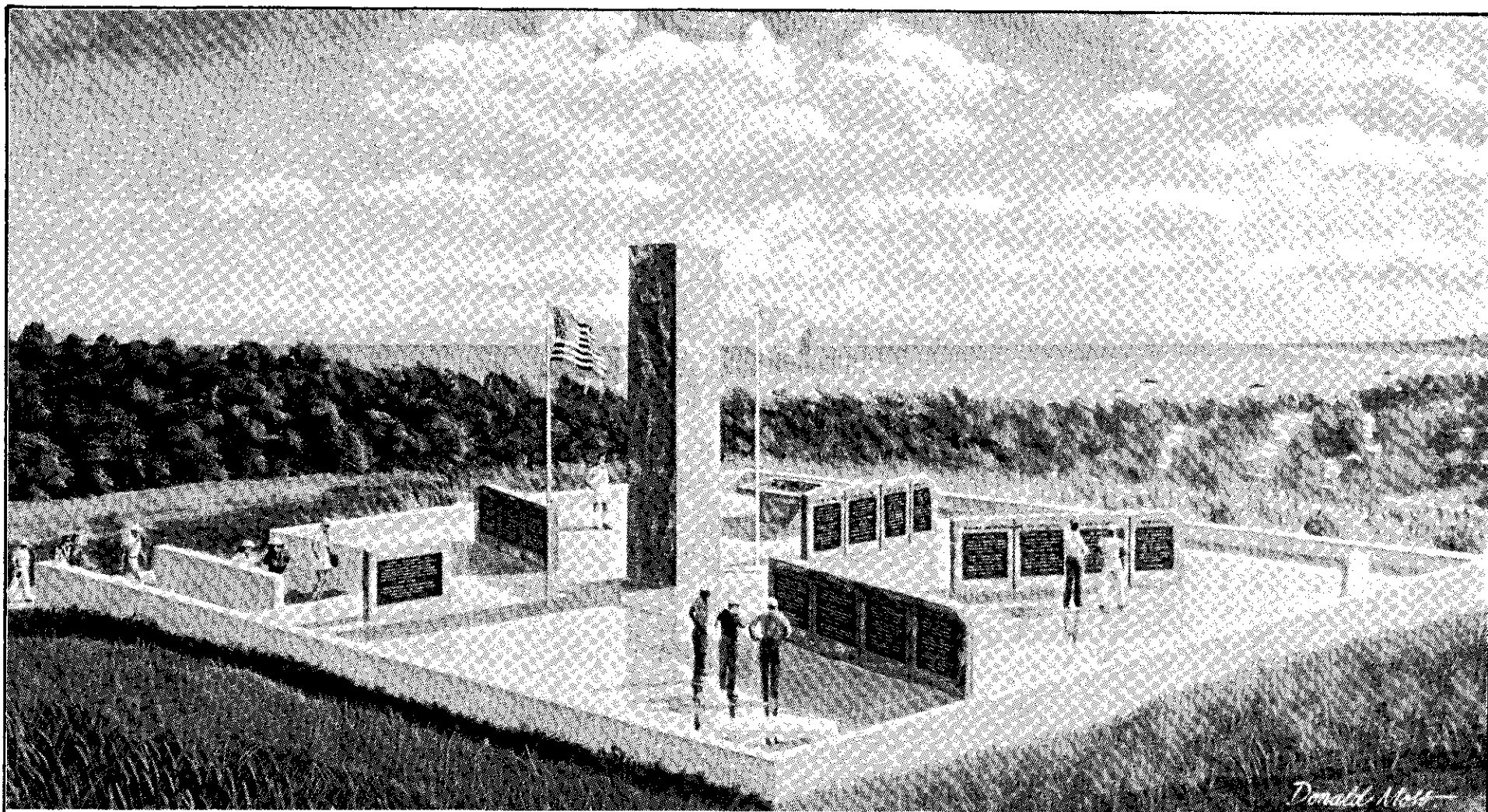
The Monument at Purvis Bay, Florida Island,
Solomon Islands, as it looked in August, 1993.
(Dedicated on April 30, 1944)



Photograph courtesy of Joseph G. Micek, AUS, treasurer of the Guadalcanal Solomon Islands War Memorial Foundation. Mr. Micek reports that the Officer's Club at the top of the small hill no longer stands, but that the area immediately around the monument is fairly well kept up. (EAW)

"They fought together as brothers in arms; they died together and now they sleep side by side. To them we have a solemn obligation - the obligation to insure that their sacrifice will help make this a better and safer world in which to live."

- Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, at The Surrender on board the U.S.S. Missouri (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945.



The American WWII Memorial overlooking Point Cruz and Iron Bottom Sound, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, was dedicated on August 7, 1992, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the landings there by the U.S. Marines in World War II. About 20,000 people attended the ceremony, including many service personnel and over 500 foreign visitors. Many of the local residents walked for days in order to witness the dedication. Panels list the U.S. and Allied ships lost or damaged in the campaign and describe the seven naval battles fought in nearby waters. The polished red granite used in the walls with the panels and in the 24-foot high pylon were delivered to the site by the Royal Australian Navy. The Guadalcanal-Solomon Islands War Memorial Foundation raised \$500,000 and the U.S. Government authorized \$750,000 to cover construction costs. (Picture and panel inscriptions courtesy of Joseph G. Micek, the Foundation's Treasurer and Project Manager.)

WALL: 2 - TITLE: VESSELS SUNK OR DAMAGED I
04/25/1991 PANEL 106 - TYPE D - FACE L

U.S. AND ALLIED NAVAL VESSELS
SUNK DURING THE GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN
7 AUGUST 1942 - 9 FEBRUARY 1943

AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

HORNET, WASP

HEAVY CRUISERS

ASTORIA, CHICAGO, NORTHAMPTON, QUINCY,
VINCENNES, CANBERRA (ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY)

LIGHT CRUISERS

ATLANTA, JUNEAU

DESTROYERS

BARTON, BENHAM, BLUE, CUSHING,
DE HAVEN, DUNCAN, JARVIS, LAFFEY,
MEREDITH, MONSSEN, O'BRIEN,
PORTER, PRESTON, WALKE

MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS

PT-37, PT-43, PT-44, PT-111,
PT-112, PT-123

TRANSPORTS

COLHOUN, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT,
GREGORY, LITTLE

FLEET TUG SEMINOLE

U.S. AND ALLIED NAVAL VESSELS
DAMAGED DURING THE GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN
7 AUGUST 1942 - 9 FEBRUARY 1943

BATTLESHIPS

NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH DAKOTA

AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

ENTERPRISE, SARATOGA

HEAVY CRUISERS

CHESTER, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS,
PENSACOLA, PORTLAND,
SALT LAKE CITY, SAN FRANCISCO

LIGHT CRUISERS

BOISE, HELENA, SAN JUAN,
ACHILLES (ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY)

DESTROYERS

AARON WARD, BUCHANAN, FARENHOLT,
GWIN, HUGHES, LA VALETTE, MAHAN,
MUGFORD, O'BANNON, PATTERSON,
RALPH TALBOT, SMITH, STERETT

DESTROYER MINESWEEPER ZANE

CORVETTE

KIWI (ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY)

MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT PT-59

TRANSPORTS

BARNETT, ZEILIN

CARGO SHIPS

ALCHIBA, ALHENA

SEAPLANE TENDER MC FARLAND

WALL: 1 - TITLE - THE NAVAL CAMPAIGN
04/25/1991 PANEL 104 - TYPE C - FACE R

THE NAVAL CAMPAIGN

FROM THE INITIAL LANDINGS ON 7 AUGUST 1942 TO THE JAPANESE EVACUATION OF GUADALCANAL IN FEBRUARY 1943, THE U.S. AND THE JAPANESE NAVIES WERE ENGAGED IN SEVEN SPECIFIC NAVAL BATTLES. IN ADDITION, THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN, NUMEROUS SMALLER NAVAL ACTIONS TOOK PLACE INVOLVING CRUISERS, DESTROYERS, NAVAL AIRCRAFT, MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS AND SUBMARINES IN WHICH PLANES AND SHIPS OF BOTH SIDES WERE DAMAGED OR SUNK. SO MANY JAPANESE AND AMERICAN SHIPS OF ALL CLASSES WERE SUNK, INCLUDING TRANSPORTS AND CARGO SHIPS, THAT THE WATER AREA BETWEEN GUADALCANAL AND FLORIDA ISLAND BECAME KNOWN AS "IRONBOTTOM SOUND."

THE FIRST SIX ENGAGEMENTS WERE MAJOR NAVAL BATTLES: FOUR OF THESE WERE NIGHT GUNFIRE ACTIONS AND TWO WERE CARRIER-AIR BATTLES. THE SEVENTH (RENNELL ISLAND) WAS A TYPICAL SEA-AIR BATTLE SIMILAR TO MANY OTHERS FOUGHT DURING THE GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN, BUT THE ONLY ONE OF SUFFICIENT MAGNITUDE TO BE RECORDED IN AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY WITH A NAME OF ITS OWN.

1. SAVO ISLAND, 9 AUGUST 1942
2. THE EASTERN SOLOMONS, 24-25 AUGUST
3. CAPE ESPERANCE, 11-12 OCTOBER
4. THE SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS, 26-27 OCTOBER
5. NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL, 12-15 NOVEMBER
6. TASSAFARONGA, 30 NOVEMBER
7. RENNEL ISLAND, 29-30 JANUARY 1943

WALL: 1 - TITLE - BATTLE OF EASTERN SOLOMONS
04/25/1991 PANEL 103 - TYPE D - FACE R

THE BATTLE OF THE EASTERN SOLOMONS
24-25 AUGUST 1942

FOR THIS BATTLE THE JAPANESE PLANNED TO LAND REINFORCEMENTS ON GUADALCANAL WHILE A LARGE PART OF THEIR COMBINED FLEET ATTACKED THE U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIERS. THE PLAN INCLUDED A DIVERSIONARY GROUP WHICH WOULD INVITE ATTACK BY AMERICAN NAVAL AIRCRAFT WHILE THE MAIN JAPANESE AIR ASSAULT WAS LAUNCHED AGAINST THE U.S. CARRIERS.

THE RESULTING BATTLE WAS INDECISIVE. A JAPANESE LIGHT CARRIER OF THE DIVERSIONARY GROUP WAS SUNK AND THE U.S. CARRIER ENTERPRISE WAS DAMAGED BY DIVE BOMBERS. ON 25 AUGUST U.S. MARINE DIVE BOMBERS FROM HENDERSON FIELD ATTACKED THE JAPANESE TRANSPORTS STOPPING THEM FROM LANDING REINFORCEMENTS. ALSO THAT DAY A JAPANESE DESTROYER WAS SUNK BY A U.S. ARMY HEAVY BOMBER.

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL
12-15 NOVEMBER 1942

12 NOVEMBER THIS GREAT BATTLE BEGAN ABOUT 1400 HOURS WITH JAPANESE AIR ATTACKS ON U.S. TRANSPORTS UNLOADING TROOPS AND SUPPLIES. THE ENEMY LOST A LARGE NUMBER OF PLANES BUT A U.S. HEAVY CRUISER AND A DESTROYER WERE DAMAGED.

13 NOVEMBER SHORTLY BEFORE 0200 HOURS 13 NOVEMBER A DEVASTATING NIGHT ACTION WAS JOINED SOUTHEAST OF SAVO ISLAND. THE FIGHTING WAS AT SUCH CLOSE RANGE THAT THE OPPOSING FLEETS BECAME INTERMINGLED. U.S. LOSSES WERE TWO LIGHT CRUISERS AND FOUR DESTROYERS SUNK. THE FLAGSHIP, A HEAVY CRUISER, DAMAGED THE AFTERNOON BEFORE BY ENEMY AIRCRAFT WAS STRUCK REPEATEDLY BY NAVAL GUNFIRE. ANOTHER HEAVY CRUISER WAS HIT BY A TORPEDO AND A LIGHT CRUISER AND THREE DESTROYERS WERE DAMAGED BY NAVAL GUNFIRE. THE JAPANESE LOST TWO DESTROYERS SUNK AND THREE DESTROYERS DAMAGED. THEIR GREATEST LOSS WAS A BATTLESHIP SO HEAVILY DAMAGED BY NAVAL GUNFIRE THAT U.S. CARRIER-BASED AIRCRAFT AND MARINE PLANES FROM HENDERSON FIELD WERE ABLE TO SINK IT LATE IN THE AFTERNOON.

14 NOVEMBER AFTER MIDNIGHT 13-14 NOVEMBER A JAPANESE NAVAL BOMBARDMENT UNIT SHELLLED HENDERSON FIELD. AT DAWN THE BOMBARDMENT UNIT WAS ATTACKED BY MARINE AND NAVAL AIRCRAFT FROM HENDERSON FIELD AND AIRCRAFT FROM THE APPROACHING U.S. CARRIER ENTERPRISE. THE ENEMY LOST A HEAVY CRUISER. ALSO TWO HEAVY CRUISERS, A LIGHT CRUISER AND A DESTROYER WERE DAMAGED.

IN THE AFTERNOON AN ENEMY REINFORCEMENT GROUP OF ELEVEN DESTROYERS AND ELEVEN TRANSPORTS WAS LOCATED STEAMING TOWARD GUADALCANAL. ALTHOUGH SEVEN OF ITS TRANSPORTS WERE SUNK, THE JAPANESE CONTINUED ON THEIR ASSIGNED MISSION AFTER TRANSFERRING THE TROOPS TO THE DESTROYERS. LANDING OF THE TROOPS AND SUPPLIES BEGAN ABOUT 0400 HOURS THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT 14-15 NOVEMBER A U.S. TASK FORCE OF TWO BATTLESHIPS, WASHINGTON AND SOUTH DAKOTA, AND FOUR DESTROYERS OPENED FIRE ON A SECTION OF THE ENEMY'S FLEET EAST OF SAVO ISLAND. TWO OTHER GROUPS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET WEST AND SOUTH OF SAVO ISLAND QUICKLY ENGAGED THE U.S. FORCE. A JAPANESE DESTROYER, SEVERELY DAMAGED, WAS SUNK THE NEXT DAY. OF THE FOUR U.S. DESTROYERS ENGAGED, TWO WERE SUNK. THE OTHER TWO WERE DAMAGED AND ORDERED TO RETIRE. ONE OF THESE WAS SUNK LATER BY U.S. FORCES.

15 NOVEMBER AT ABOUT MIDNIGHT 14-15 NOVEMBER THE TWO U.S. BATTLESHIPS MET THE FOURTH AND STRONGEST GROUP OF THE ENEMY FLEET. SOUTH DAKOTA WAS CAUGHT BY ENEMY SEARCHLIGHTS, WHEREUPON THE ENTIRE ENEMY FLEET CONCENTRATED ITS FIRE ON IT, IGNORING WASHINGTON. THIS WAS FATAL TO THE SECOND JAPANESE BATTLESHIP WHICH WASHINGTON PUT OUT OF ACTION IN SEVEN MINUTES. TWO ENEMY HEAVY CRUISERS WERE ALSO DAMAGED BY THE TWO U.S. BATTLESHIPS. DUE TO THE CONCENTRATED FIRE, SOUTH DAKOTA WAS FORCED TO RETIRE AND WASHINGTON TURNED NORTHWEST TO LURE ENEMY SHIPS AWAY FROM SOUTH DAKOTA. THE JAPANESE FLEET FOLLOWED BUT SOON WITHDREW. THE DAMAGED JAPANESE BATTLESHIP WAS ABANDONED AND SUNK.

AT DAYLIGHT ARMY, NAVY AND MARINE AIRCRAFT ATTACKED THE FOUR REMAINING TRANSPORTS OF THE REINFORCEMENT GROUP. A LONE U.S. DESTROYER FROM TULAGI APPEARED AND DESTROYED THE TRANSPORTS.

THUS ENDED THE GREATEST SEA BATTLE OF THE GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. NAVY LOST MORE COMBATANT SHIPS, THE ENEMY LOSS OF TWO BATTLESHIPS AND ELEVEN TRANSPORTS WAS FAR MORE SERIOUS. THE JAPANESE NEVER AGAIN SENT LARGE NAVAL FORCES INTO THE WATERS AROUND GUADALCANAL. THE BATTLE WAS DECISIVE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THAT ISLAND.

WALL: 2 - TITLE: VESSELS SUNK OR DAMAGED III
04/25/1991 PANEL 108 - TYPE C - FACE L

JAPANESE NAVAL VESSELS
SUNK OR DAMAGED DURING THE
GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN

<u>SHIP</u>	<u>SUNK</u>	<u>DAMAGED</u>
BATTLESHIPS	2	
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS		1
LIGHT CARRIERS	1	1
HEAVY CRUISERS	3	5
LIGHT CRUISERS	1	2
DESTROYERS	11	20
SUBMARINES	6	
TRANSPORTS	13	
CARGO SHIPS	5	

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

Photograph Credits

<u>Description</u>	<u>Source Code/Ident. No.</u>
<i>Historical plate</i>	NA 19-N-24705
<i>Sponsor Mrs. Mons Monssen, 5/16/40</i>	NA 19-N-23294
<i>Launching ceremony, Bremerton, WA</i>	NA 19-N-23293
<i>Commissioning ceremony, 3/14/41</i>	NA 19-N-24722
<i>Broad on stbd. bow, u/way, 3/14/41</i>	NA 19-N-24725
<i>Kearny (DD-432) w. Monssen 10/17/41</i>	NA 80-G-28788
<i>Hornet (CV-8) launching B-25's</i>	RWP N-121A
<i>Hornet, B-25 taking off, 4/18/42</i>	RWP N-122A
<i>Alongside Enterprise, 5/19/42</i>	RWP N-4622
<i>Enterprise (CV-6) u/attack 8/24/42</i>	NA 80-G-17471
<i>Alhena (AK-26), port beam</i>	NA 80-G-18024
<i>20-mm. Oerlikon mount, 1942</i>	NA 19-N-31965
<i>Monument, Purvis Bay, Florida Is.</i>	NA 80-G-275700
<i>Monument plaque (on above), 1944</i>	NA 80-G-240318

* * * * *

Key to Sources:

NA National Archives II
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
Still Picture ref.: (301) 713-6625, Ext. 234
(Request addresses/price lists of private vendors)
RWP Real War Photos
P.O. Box 728
Hammond, IN 46325

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
July, 1997

U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436)

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E. A. Wilde, Jr.
July, 1997

2006 ADDENDUM

Dedication in 1944 of the Monument at Purvis Bay, Florida Island, British Solomon Islands, to honor ". . the officers and men of the United States and Allied Navies who died in the fierce Battles in 'Iron Bottom Bay'" during the Guadalcanal Campaign, August 7, 1942 to February 9, 1943.

Editor's Note:

Around 1995 Elizabeth ('Bettsy') R. Perkins Shaw sent me copies of several handwritten letters she had received early in 1944 from her first husband, Commander Van Ostrand Perkins, USN (K.I.A.). In 2002 most of his letters were included in Bettsy Shaw's memoir, Beside Me Still, published by the Naval Institute Press shortly after she died. However, his letters regarding the dedication ceremony were edited out by the publisher.

This addendum consists of typed excerpts from these letters plus a remarkable photograph of the dedication ceremony which I discovered only a few years ago (National Archives II: 127-GW1008, #80929).

*E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
June, 2006*

Florida Island Monument on Purvis Bay
(Dedicated on April 30, 1944)

Excerpts from letters written to Mrs. Elizabeth R. P. Shaw by her first husband, Cdr. Van Ostrand Perkins, USN (KIA '44) in 1944:

Today was one of those days - in fact, it was the first busy one I've had in a long time. I was away from the ship all day and couldn't write more on this letter this morning and afternoon, as I expected to, and get it in the mail. It will go tomorrow.

Well, my busy day was about the memorial ceremony we plan to have. I went with a Captain Carter on what I thought would be an hour's visit with the Admiral to iron out the details. The Admiral set the date for this Sunday and indicated what he would like to have and who he wanted to have invited, etc.. Well, I am the "glad hand boy", so I got the list of guests typed up and arranged and started the dust flying on some of the details. Like getting the chaplains lined up and telling them what we want, getting the band arranged for and so forth. Then this afternoon Captain Carter gave me one of his fast boats and I went five miles or so up the line to another part of the naval settlement extending tidings and invitations to certain U.S. naval and New Zealand-Australian naval people. I didn't get back to the ship until after five. It was an interesting boat ride I had though, because I'd never been up to that part of the area before. There are no roads as I've said, and it's all jungle between here and there - so all communication has to be by boat and not by cars.

Tomorrow I have to go over to _____, about 20 miles across the bay, and call on more dignitaries and invite them, get a Vice Admiral to agree to make a speech and arrange for photographers and publicity from a Photographic Squadron. That will be another full day's job I fear.

I enjoy doing this, however, for many reasons, not the least of which is the fact that I get off the ship all the time and am getting a regular Cook's tour of this area, seeing it at close hand. Much of it is well known and famous which I've seen from the distance but have never really been close to. Of course it is all so built up now by us that it would be unrecognizable almost to those who first landed.

It is amazing what kind of people Americans are. We land in the middle of the jungle and in no time have a little area cleared, through which we build roads, put up piers, storehouses, shops, etc. - and where there are roads you must watch to see that you aren't run over by jeeps, giant trucks and everything on wheels. There is nothing permanent here, and I doubt if much money has been wasted, but we certainly do move in on a place with our machinery. I'll bet we have more trucks, steam shovels, tractors, etc. in a small area like this than all the contractors in the Philippine Islands had together, and if the Japs judged us by our efforts in the Philippines, how wrong they were.

There must be much consternation in Tokyo these days, because

in the Pacific the war is humming along at a great rate; probably even better than most of us realize.

* * * * *

We had a meeting of the Board of Governors of the Club, and I find that on the Board are a Captain, four Commanders, four Lieut. Comdrs. and two Lieuts.. I am glad I have the job, because this being in such a history-making area, they have plans to make it a sort of permanent part of America by erecting a suitable plaque and having the little monument dedicated with a large ceremony and so forth. So I, having a very personal interest in any dedication, volunteered to serve on the committee for the arrangements of this ceremony. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to know that they are going to do something to commemorate and make a permanent record of the achievements that resulted from the hard fighting and unimaginable hardships and work that has taken place in this area. You probably have to have fought over it and come back to get the feeling that I have. People who arrive today can't ever imagine what it was like "in the old days."

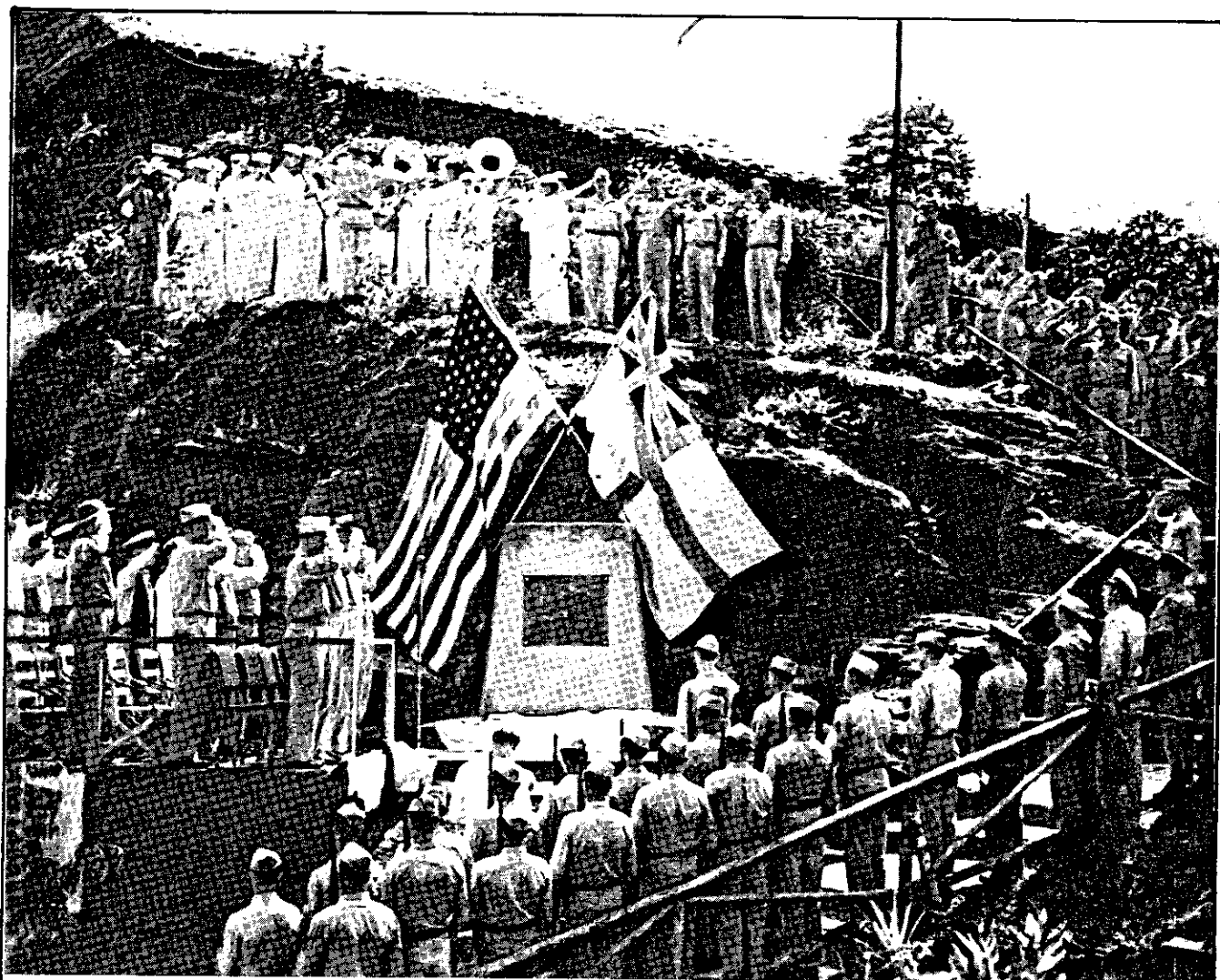
* * * * *

I've enclosed the little program for our ceremony which took place this morning. It went off very well and very smoothly I thought, and I had a front row place to stand - right where the activities were. There were numerous cameramen taking pictures, and I expect that they will send me a set in as much as I asked for it, organized them and gave them all some beer afterwards.

Friday I flew over to _____ in one of our planes to line up and invite the "big wigs" stationed there and the press. It certainly was a delightful trip. It was a beautiful day, and it was nice to fly and to see some of the country from the air, as scenically - and from a distance - it is very grand looking.

After we landed I got a jeep and driver from one of the officers, and in driving around inviting the guests I had a good chance to look things over and was duly impressed by the activity, accomplishments and mud.

I saw Ronnie Rankin this morning at the ceremony and expect to have a few beers with him later this afternoon. I also bumped into two people you don't know. One was the ex-Chief Boatswain's Mate of the Atlanta - he is now an officer - and the other, a lad who was on one of the destroyers that got sunk that unforgettable night. We were together in the hospital in New Zealand. It certainly was nice to see those two again. I always like to see old friends, and particularly when we have something great in common.



A bronze plaque, dedicated "In memory of the officers and men of the United States and Allied Navies who gave their lives at Iron Bottom Bay, 1942-43," was unveiled on April 30, 1944. The plaque overlooks Purvis Bay, an inlet in Florida Island, British Solomon Islands Protectorate, about twenty miles northeast of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. U.S. Navy vessels sunk by the enemy in the Bay and near vicinity included seven cruisers, twelve destroyers and three destroyer transports. (Archives II, College Park, MD)

About The Editor

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Commander, USNR (Ret.), received his commission through the NROTC Program at Dartmouth College in 1950. Following graduation he saw action off Korea aboard the USS Douglas H. Fox (DD-779) when this destroyer duelled with numerous North Korean shore batteries in the Sea of Japan. Many of the photographs he took during this period have been donated to the Naval Historical Foundation, and two of them appeared in the coffee-table book, The Navy, published by the Foundation in 2000. After completing three years of active duty he began a civilian career in public accounting and later in management positions at Raytheon Company in Waltham, Massachusetts.

In 1993 he developed a strong interest in naval history and began editing a series of illustrated ships' histories primarily of U.S. destroyers sunk in World War II. Primary source documents such as action reports, ships' war diaries, medal citations and muster rolls are included in these histories as well as many firsthand accounts. His booklets are not for sale, but he sends complimentary copies to the survivors and to the families of crewmembers killed on these vessels.

Commander Wilde is a life member of the Naval Historical Foundation and the U.S. Naval Institute.

Historical Compilations by the Editor:

(Destroyer/Destroyer Escort Hulls in World War II)

<u>United States Ship</u>	<u>Date Sunk/ (Damaged)</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Killed/ Wounded¹</u>
<u>Aaron Ward</u> (DD-483)	04/07/43	Guadalcanal	42/139*
<u>Barton</u> (DD-599)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	164/32
<u>Borie</u> (DD-215)	11/01/43	North Atlantic	27/00
<u>Colhoun</u> (APD-2)	08/30/42	Tulagi	51/18
<u>Corry</u> (DD-463)	06/06/44	Normandy	24/55
<u>Cushing</u> (DD-376)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	72/67
<u>DeHaven</u> (DD-469)	02/01/43	Guadalcanal	168/40
<u>Douglas H. Fox</u> (DD-779)	(05/17/45)	Okinawa	10/36
<u>Drexler</u> (DD-741)	05/28/45	Okinawa	158/54
<u>Duncan</u> (DD-485)	10/12/42	Guadalcanal	48/35
<u>Emmons</u> (DMS-22)	04/06/45	Okinawa	60/78
<u>Fiske</u> (DE-143)	08/02/44	North Atlantic	33/65
<u>Glennon</u> (DD-620)	06/10/44	Normandy	25/49*
<u>Halligan</u> (DD-584)	03/26/45	Okinawa	160/43
<u>Hammann</u> (DD-412)	06/06/42	Midway	84/63
<u>Laffey</u> (DD-459)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	59/114
<u>Lansdale</u> (DD-426)	04/20/44	Mediterranean	49/76
<u>McFarland</u> (AVD-14)	(10/16/42)	Guadalcanal	12/13
<u>Meredith</u> (DD-726)	06/09/44	Normandy	35/28
<u>Monssen</u> (DD-436)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	145/37
<u>Perry</u> (DMS-17)	09/13/44	Angaur/Peleliu	8/17
<u>Preston</u> (DD-379)	11/15/42	Guadalcanal	117/26
<u>Spence</u> (DD-512)	12/18/44	Luzon, P.I.	315/24
<u>Strong</u> (DD-467)	07/05/43	Cent. Solomons	45/61
<u>Walke</u> (DD-416)	11/15/42	Guadalcanal	82/48

* * * * *

Notes:

* Total for two engagements with the enemy

1 Including those presumed dead more than a year subsequent to the date they were reported missing either due to enemy action or by drowning.

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
Commander, USNR (Ret.)
June, 2005

Locations Where Historical Compilations by the Editor
Are Available For Researchers

¹ Air Zoo, Guadalcanal Campaign Collection, Potage, Michigan
ECU Manuscript Collection, Joyner Library, Greenville, NC
Louisiana Naval War Memorial Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

² Maine Maritime Museum Library, Bath, Maine
Mariners' Museum Research Library, Newport News, Virginia
Mystic Seaport's G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic, Connecticut

National Archives II Library, College Park, Maryland
³ National D-Day Museum Library Collection, New Orleans, LA
National Museum of Pacific War, War Studies, Fredericksburg, TX

Naval Historical Center, Navy Dept. Library, Washington Navy Yard
_____, Operational Archives Branch, Washington Navy Yard
_____, Ships' Histories Branch, Washington Navy Yard

Naval War College, Naval Historical Collection, Newport, RI
N.Y. Public Library, 42nd & 5th Ave., Room 315, New York, N.Y.
² Portland Public Library, Portland Room, Portland, Maine

⁴ Tin Can Sailors, Inc., Research Library, Somerset, Massachusetts
US Naval Academy, Nimitz Library Special Collections, Annapolis
U.S. Naval Institute, History Division, Beach Hall, Annapolis, MD

U.S. Navy Memorial's Research Library, Washington, D.C.
USS Slater (DE-766) Library, Albany, New York

* * * * *

Notes:


¹ Only ships which participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign:
Aaron Ward, Barton, Colhoun, Cushing, DeHaven, Duncan, Laffey,
McFarland, Monssen, Preston, Walke.

² Only Bath-built ships: DeHaven, Drexler, Emmons, Meredith,
Spence, Strong

³ Only ships sunk off the Normandy Beachhead: Corry, Glennon,
Meredith

⁴ By appointment only: (508) 677-0515

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
June, 2006



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Call # JFF 05-2267
Author Wilde, E. Andrew.
Title **The U.S.S. Monssen (DD-436) in World War II : documents and photographs / E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., editor.**
Imprint Needham, Mass. : The Editor, 2001.

LOCATION	CALL NO.	STATUS
Humanities- General Research- Rm315	<u>JFF 05-2267</u>	AVAILABLE

Location Humanities- General Research- Rm315
Edition Rev.
Descript 1 v. (104 p.) : ill., maps, plans, ports. ; 29 cm.
Note Cover title.
Includes bibliography.
Subject Monssen (Destroyer : DD-436)
Midway, Battle of, 1942.
Guadalcanal, Battle of, Solomon Islands, 1942-1943.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Naval operations, American.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives, American.
Alt title USS Monssen (DD-436) in World War Two

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AUSTRALIA

Commander E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., USNR (Ret).,
1210 Greendale Avenue,
Needham, MA 02192-4622
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

14th September, 1995

Dear Commander Wilde,

Received and greatly appreciated your fine histories on USS McFARLAND (DD-237/AVD-14) and USS MONSSEN (DD-436). They were read with great interest and have been included in the Museum library. I hope the small donation of US\$40.00 will cover some of the costs in preparation and postage.

I was particularly interested in the USS MONSSEN history. In August 1992, during the 50th Anniversary of the Guadalcanal Campaign, I spent some time talking with Bert Doughty, a survivor of MONSSEN's last battle. We sat in the garden of the Medana Hotel looking out at Iron Bottom Sound where his ship was lost. Bert told me about the night of the battle and how the crew of the MONSSEN always regarded Savo Island as something of a bad luck symbol -- for every time they sighted Savo they knew there would be yet another Naval battle round the corner! The ship was on its way to Brisbane when it was hurriedly ordered to return to Guadalcanal...

We would of course appreciate copies of your USS AARON WARD (DD-483), USS COLHOUN (APD-2), USS DUNCAN (DD-485), USS LAFFEY (DD-459), USS SEMINOLE (AT-65), USS STRONG (DD-467), and USS WALKE (DD-416) booklets. They would assist us greatly with research and would be an important addition to the library. As the researcher and compiler of these fine histories, we would request that you kindly sign each of the booklets on the inside page beneath the quote from President John F. Kennedy.

Would it be possible to give us some background (for inclusion in the Museum archives) as to your service in the United States Naval Reserve? Did you serve in the Navy during World War 2, and if so, could you give us some details as to ships you served aboard? You have done an excellent job in compiling these fine histories and any details as to your own Naval background would be of interest.

With Best Wishes,

Yours Sincerely,



Paul Morrison.

