

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Editor

**The U.S.S. *Aaron Ward* (DD-483) in World War II:
Documents and Photographs**

Needham, Massachusetts
Privately published by the editor
First Edition 1996
Revised 2001

1210 Greendale Ave., #339
Needham, MA 02192
July 9, 1996

USS Aaron Ward (DD-483) Crewmembers,

It is my pleasure to present you with a copy of the booklet I have compiled on your ship. It is one of several I have completed on destroyers sunk off Guadalcanal. In addition to the crew I also send copies to ten museums/libraries around the country (and one in Australia), so the Aaron Ward's story will be preserved for future naval historians.

You don't owe me anything for the booklet, but modest contributions will be appreciated. I'm really more interested in seeing that everyone who survived the sinking and the battle on November 13th, 1942, gets a copy than I am in breaking even.

I'm sorry that I can't supply you with extra copies, but I hope you'll have copies made at a copying store for your family. I want future generations to know what you went through in World War II. I was just a Boy Scout then - on the Home Front. We all did our best to "support our boys in uniform." Perhaps I'm doing what I do today because no one ever told me to stop!

I'm very happy to report that I sent a copy (75% complete) to Admiral Becton a few months before he died. He phoned to thank me for it just a few days before he was operated on.

I think you'll also be pleased to know that Ralph "Hutch" Hutchinson delivered copies of the page showing the USS Cofer (DE-208) to John Cofer's family.

Finally, I wish to thank Bob Imholte and Captain John Drew for their support and for the material they supplied.

Enjoy my booklet!



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

U.S.S. AARON WARD

DESTROYER

NAMED FOR REAR ADMIRAL AARON WARD, U.S.N.
 BUILT BY THE FEDERAL S.S. & M.A. CO. BOSTON, U.S.A.

ANNOUNCED	JULY 12, 1901
KEEL LAID	SEPTEMBER 11, 1901
LAUNCHED	NOVEMBER 22, 1901
TEST COMMISSIONED	MARCH 4, 1902

REAR ADMIRAL AARON WARD, U.S.N.
 BOSTON, MASS.
 1850-1901

The U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) In World War II

List Of Pages

<u>Sheets</u>	<u>Sides</u>	
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Historical plate
1	1	List Of Pages
1	1	Quote - President John F. Kennedy, 1963
1	1	News Release, launching and sponsor, 2/19/41
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Sponsor, Miss Hilda Ward
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Christening, 11/22/41
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Launching, Kearny, N.J., 11/22/41
2	4	History, Ships' Histories Section, 1946
1	1	Map, Southwest Pacific, showing Guadalcanal
3	6	History/Medal citations
1	1	Obituary, RAdm. O. F. Gregor (1903-1978)
1	1	Obituary, RAdm. F. Julian Becton (1908-1995)
1	1	Picture/Biography, RAdm. Becton
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Foc'sle, bridge, May 1942
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Searchlight platform, May 1942
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Main deck, portside, 'midships
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - After gun platform
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - 1.1-inch quad mount
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - 20-mm Oerlikon mount
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Port beam, anchored, 1942
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Port bow, u/way alongside, 8/17/42
2	3	Action Report, 10/18/42 (bombardment, Guadalcanal)
8	14	Action Report, 11/20/42 (Naval Battle of Guadalcanal)
1	1	List of Officers, 11/13/42
3	3	Muster Roll of the Crew, 11/13/42
1	2	Ltr. recommending medal for LCdr. J. G. Drew, USN
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - USS <u>Cofe</u> (DE-208), stbd. bow, christening
1	1	Messages, congratulatory
3	3	Article, "The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal"
1	2	Newspaper articles re. survivors
10	18	Action Report, 4/16/43 (air attack, loss of ship)
1	1	Newspaper article, 9/25/43, Lt. David W. Riesmeyer
2	4	Article, "The Mighty 483"
1	1	Newspaper article, Lt. John G. Drew, USN
2	2	Article, "Aaron Ward and the Midnight Brawl"
2	3	Article, "The Double A"
1	1	List of Officers, 4/7/43
6	6	Muster Roll of the Crew, 4/7/43
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Monument, Purvis Bay, Florida Island, 1944
1	2	News Release, dedication of Purvis Bay Monument, 1944
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Plaque, Purvis Bay Monument
1	1	<u>Photo</u> - Purvis Bay Monument, August 1993
6	8	<u>Photo</u> /panels - 50th Anniversary Monument, Guadalcanal
2	2	Honor Rolls: 11/13/42 and 4/7/43
1	1	Quote - Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, 1945
1	1	Photograph Credits
1	1	Bibliography
<u>85</u>	<u>113</u>	TOTALS

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

NAVY DEPARTMENT

IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

FEBRUARY 19, 1941

SPONSOR - U.S.S. AARON WARD

The Navy Department announced that the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Frank Knox, has designated Miss Hilda Ward, Hotel Wellington, Seventh Avenue at 55th Street, New York City, New York, as sponsor for the U.S.S. AARON WARD, Destroyer, named in honor of her father, the late Rear Admiral Aaron Ward, U.S. Navy.

The U.S.S. AARON WARD, second of that name, is under construction at the Federal Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey.

This vessel probably will be launched in October of 1941.

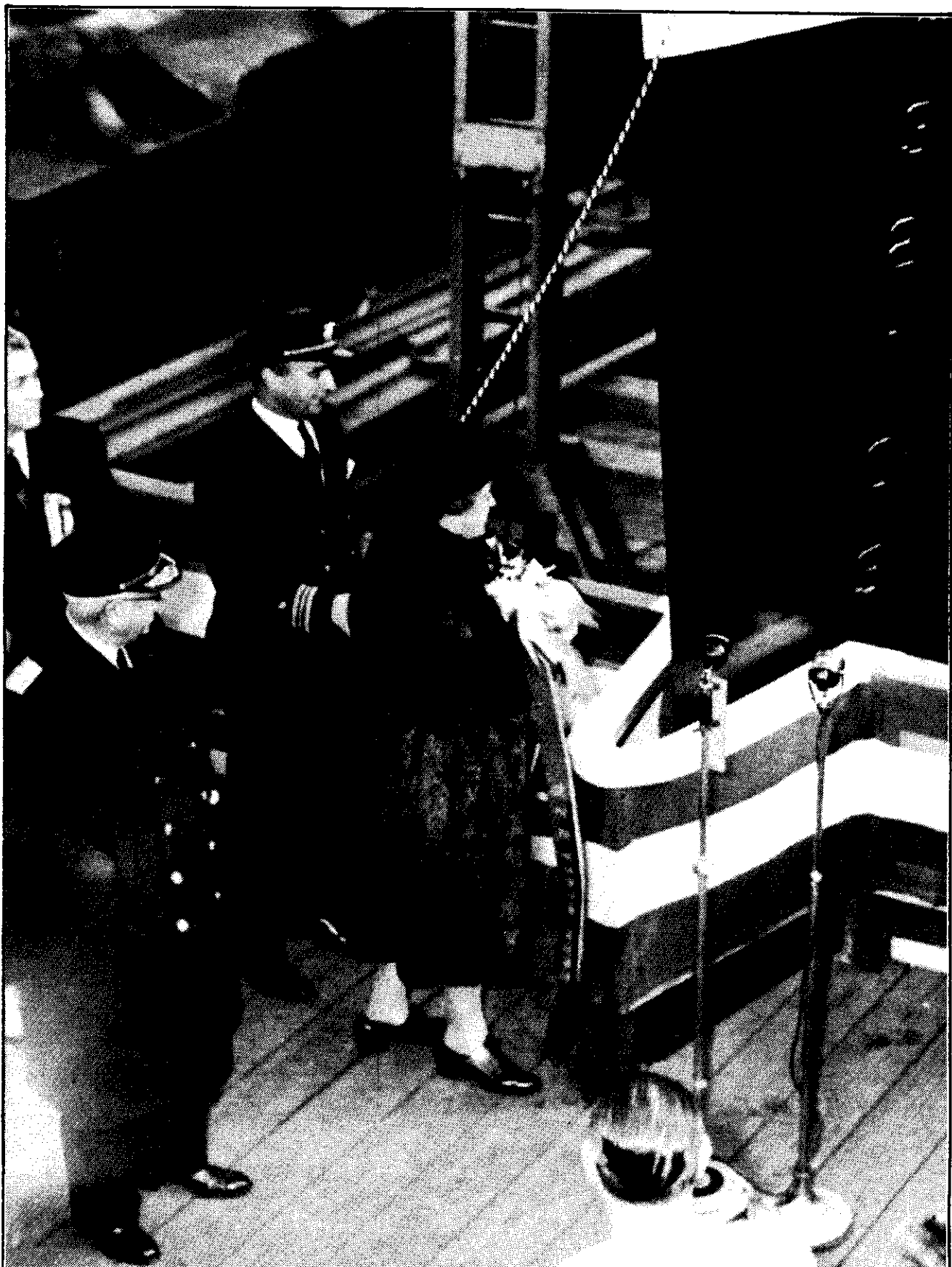
The U.S.S. AARON WARD was authorized by Act of Congress dated July 19, 1940.

* * *

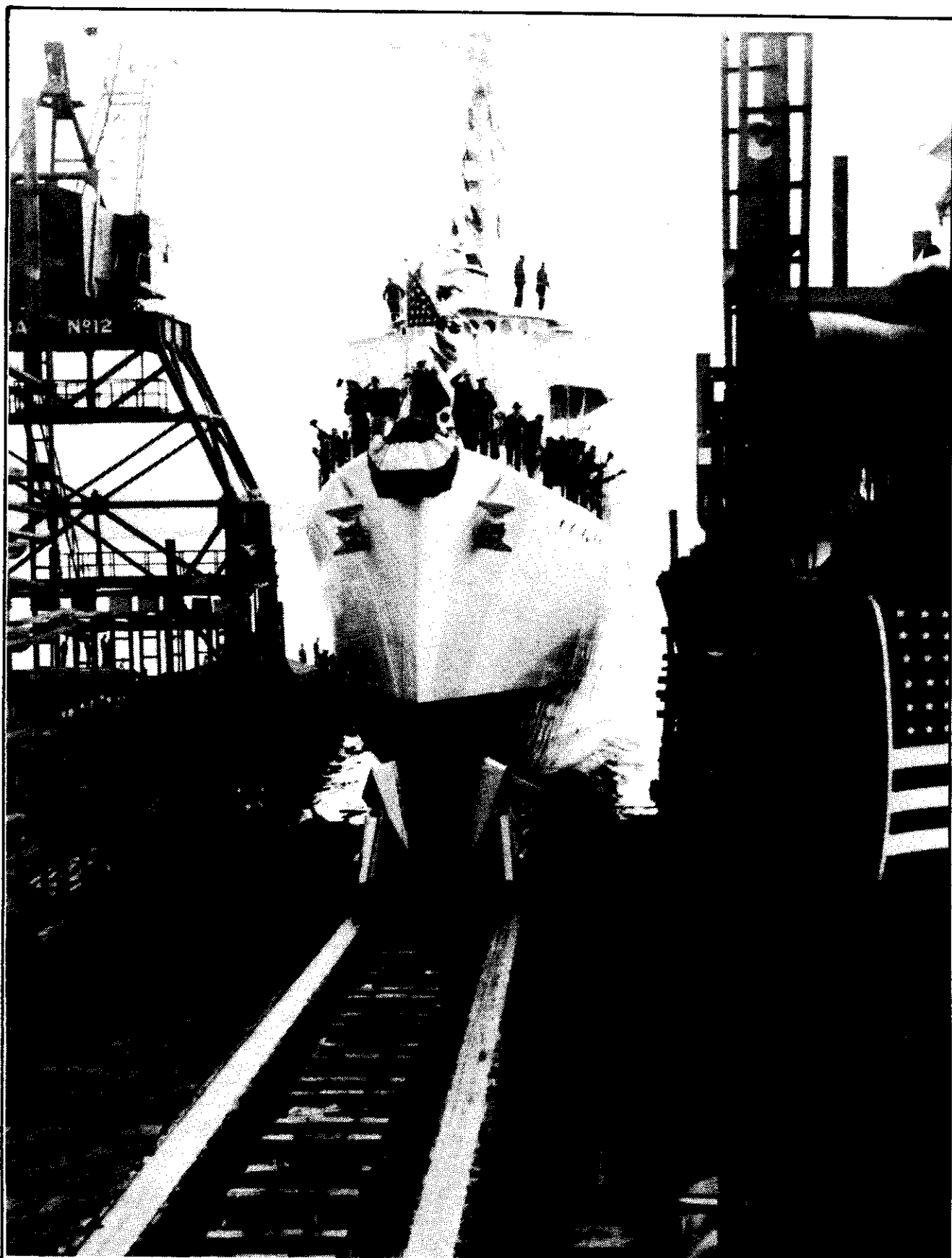


MISS HILDA WARD, SPONSOR,
USS AARON WARD
LAUNCHED NOV. 22, 1914
FEDERAL SHIPBUILDING & DRY DOCK CO.,
KENNY, N.J.
3-70

Miss Hilda Ward's father, Rear Admiral Aaron Ward, USN, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1871. He was cited for distinguished service during the Spanish-American War in 1898 when he commanded a former yacht, the USS Wasp. Admiral Ward died in 1918. (U.S. Navy photograph.)



The christening of the U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) at the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., Kearny, New Jersey, on November 22, 1941. Miss Hilda Ward, daughter of Rear Admiral Aaron Ward, was the ship's sponsor. (USNI photo)



The launching of the second U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) at Kearny, New Jersey, on November 22, 1941. The first vessel to bear that name, a Bath-built flushdecker destroyer (DD-132) commissioned in 1919, was transferred to the U.K. in 1940 and renamed HMS Castleton. She was finally decommissioned in 1945. (USNI photo.)

Office of Naval Records and History
Ships' Histories Section
Navy Department

HISTORY OF USS AARON WARD (DD 483)

The USS AARON WARD, gallant hero of the Third Battle of Savo Island, was sunk by an air attack on April 7, 1943, bringing to an end a colorful wartime career that was marked by numerous clashes with the enemy.

Five aerial bombs delivered the fatal blows to the fighting destroyer as she steamed on her screening station off Guadalcanal. Twenty of her crew were killed, seven were missing, and 8 seriously wounded. Eight officers and 43 men were slightly wounded.

Early months of the Pacific war found the AARON WARD just out of her building cradle. However, after a brief training period off Casco Bay, Portland, Maine, the new destroyer was on her way to fight the Pacific war. On May 26, 1942, she passed through the Canal Zone and set her course to San Diego, a preliminary stop to the Pacific combat area.

Her early duties consisted of escort work. During the beginning of August, the AARON WARD screened the USS CIMARRON (AO 22) enroute to Suva Harbor, Southwest Pacific. At least two excellent sound contacts were attacked by the new destroyer, each resulting in possible damage to the enemy submarines.

During the middle of August, the vessel joined a rather depleted American task force that was heretofore carrying the brunt of the Allied naval war. She steamed continuously with this fighting unit in its brave stand to protect what footholds the American forces had gained during those early days of the war. Fueling was necessarily performed at sea and only brief periods at Espiritu Santo were afforded for upkeep and rest.

During task force operations on September 15, the AARON WARD saw the carrier WASP (CV 7) take a torpedo and sink. The task force had previously assembled in full strength to meet an enemy naval force threat that did not materialize.

On October 17, the AARON WARD and the USS LARDNER (DD 487) steamed together on a bombardment mission at Guadalcanal. Before picking up liaison officers from the First Marine Division, the two destroyers weathered a Jap aerial bombing attack. Three bombs were evaded by the AARON WARD and the LARDNER likewise escaped the explosives, although both vessels were sprayed with shrapnel.

Possible shore batteries and other suspected Jap emplacements were raked by the two destroyers who continued on their planned mission despite threats of recurring air attacks.

Rejoining her task force, the AARON WARD steamed in the forward screen on October 20 when the cruiser CHESTER was sunk. Shortly after the explosion, the destroyer left her screening area and rushed to the aid of the CHESTER. A sound contact was gained and heavy pattern charges were laid upon the suspected enemy raider.

Another assault upon Jap positions on Guadalcanal was launched on October 30 with good success. On November 11, the AARON WARD was in the thick of things again, this time repelling a flight of 9 planes. One of the enemy fliers was shot down and two others were damaged. Two more were shot down the next day off Lunga Point, as enemy activity began to reach a tempo that was to bring on a full scale battle.

The head-on clash between Jap and American naval forces in what was to be known as the Third Battle of the Savo Island reached its full fury on the night of November 12-13. Repulsed in late October with heavy losses of troops on Guadalcanal and of aircraft in the carrier duel of October 26, the Japs began to assemble troops and ships for another offensive.

The Americans knew well enough what was brewing, but their situation, nevertheless, was critical. Only one carrier, the incompletely repaired ENTERPRISE could be counted upon to participate in the battle.

In spite of the odds, the small American task force, including the AARON WARD which led the destroyer force, steamed through the overcast night to meet the enemy force.

Shortly after midnight on November 13, the battle began to rage. The three-column Jap forces threw confusion into the Americans who had not fully grasped the strategy employed by the Japanese.

Sometime after 2 a.m., the AARON WARD, her guns blazing as fast as their crews could handle the ammunition, steamed through the entire enemy formation, scoring damaging blows as her guns kept hitting repeatedly.

Her fire sunk or helped sink one enemy cruiser and damaged two destroyers. However, she did not come through her daring escapade unscathed. Nine direct hits, four of them from major caliber projectiles, were received. The shells blew apart her director, rangefinder, radar antennae, searchlights, telephone cables, radar room, and even sheared the foremast off above the stay ring. Shrapnel holes were also spattered throughout the entire galley bulkheads.

Daylight the next morning found her dead in the water, unable to muster any steam. The USS BOBOLINK (ATO 131) took her in tow and headed for Tulagi. However, a KONGO class Jap battleship, which was slowly steaming in circles, let loose at the AARON WARD with two-gun salvos which straddled her on the third splash. Friendly aircraft came to the foundering ship's rescue, however, and sent the Nip battlewagon to the bottom.

Afternoon the next day was devoted to burial services for 14 crew members who were killed in the action. Six other men were seriously wounded. Fifty suffered less serious injuries.

Emergency repairs at Tulagi permitted the AARON WARD to get underway for limited operations; however, on December 20, 1942, the vessel put into Pearl Harbor for a thorough repair job.

By the end of January, 1943, the ship, was underway and conducted exercises off Pearl Harbor. A few weeks later, she sailed to join her task force.

On April 7, 1943, the AARON WARD was escorting three LCT's from Russel Island to Savo. As the small echelon neared Tulagi, a dispatch warning of a large-scale Jap plane attack was received.

As the AARON WARD drew in sight of Tulagi, she received orders to leave her convoy and go to the aid of the USS LST 449 which was reported off Lunga Roads. The destroyer reversed her course and joined the LST off Togoma Point, Guadalcanal.

Shortly after three o'clock that afternoon, the air attack began to develop. Three enemy planes swooped out of clouds near the sun and dropped three bombs on the AARON WARD, two of them missing close aboard and the third scoring directly. The second attack came a split-second afterwards. Two more bombs were dropped and these, also scored near-misses. None of the missiles landed farther than 5 yards away.

All electrical power was lost on the heavy caliber gun mounts, and small fires started. Hull plates were sprung by the terrific concussions, and both firerooms were soon flooded to within six inches of the main deck level. The forward engineroom athwartships bulkheads were sprung and water rushed through the leaks. The living compartment of the after engineroom was partially flooded through open seams in the skin of the ship on port side.

A few minutes after the attack, the USS ORTOLAN (ASR 5), joined by the USS VIERO (ATO 144), took the foundering vessel in tow. The battle to save the AARON WARD tetered on the brink of success and defeat for hours as every available means was employed to save the ship. Bucket brigades emptied some of the water in the lower compartments but the men could do no more than hold their own. However, a progressive list to starboard hampered the gallant operations and, despite last minute efforts to beach her, the AARON WARD sank in 40 fathoms of water at 9:35 p.m., April 7, 1943.

The AARON WARD was a member of the LIVERMORE Class destroyer. Built by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearney, New Jersey, the vessel was launched on November 22, 1941. Miss Hilda Ward, daughter of the ship's namesake, Rear Admiral Ward, christened the vessel. Admiral Ward commanded the USS WASP, a former yacht, in the Spanish American war. He was cited for distinguished service during this conflict.

- 4 - USS AARON WARD (DD 483)

three

USS AARON WARD (DD 483) earned ~~four~~ Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal, for participating in the following operations:

1 Star/Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal -- 10 August 1942 to 8 February 1943

1 Star/Guadalcanal (Third Savo) -- 12 to 15 November 1942

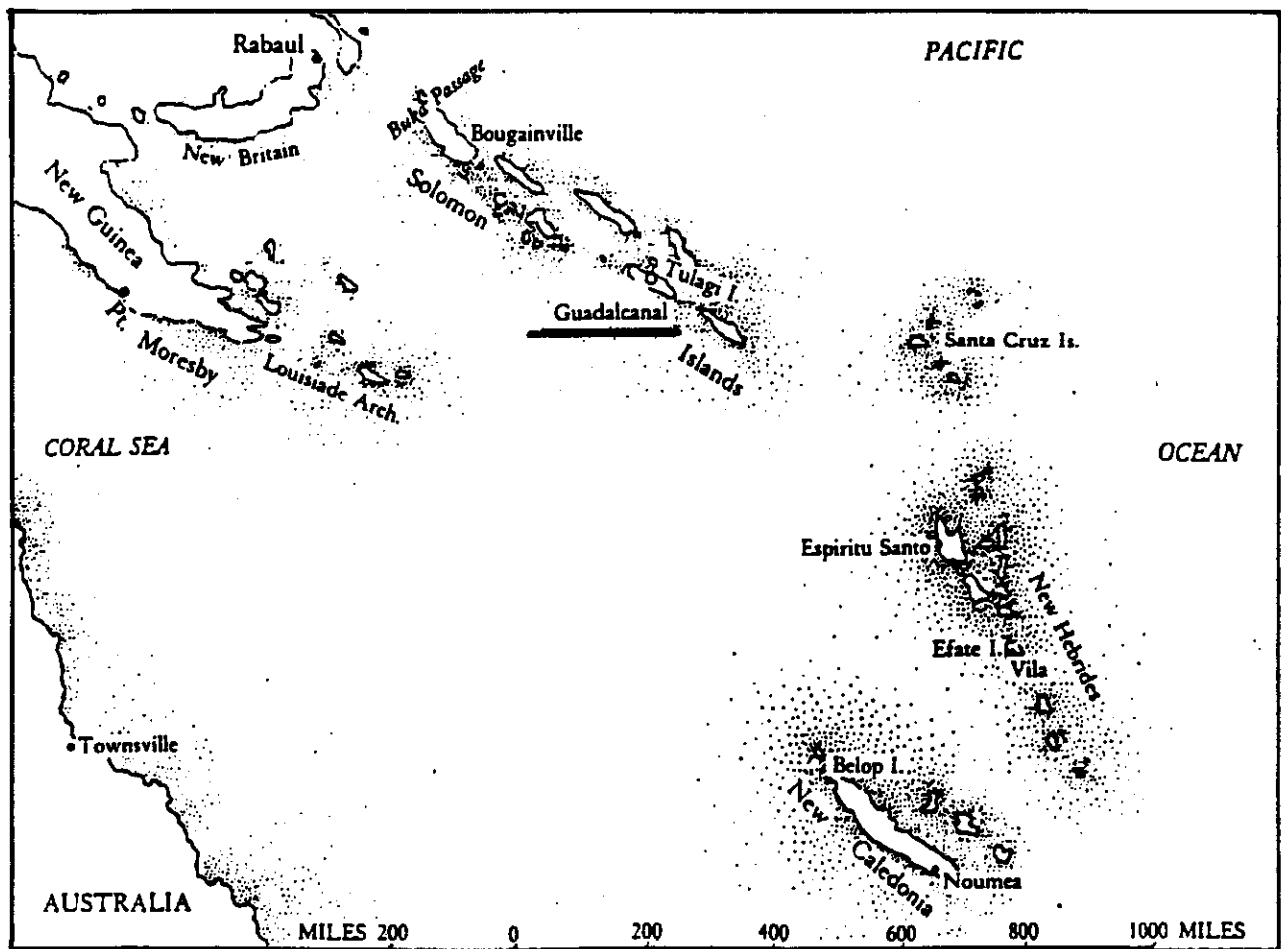
1 Star/Consolidation of Solomon Islands
Consolidation of southern Solomons -- 8 February to 20 June 1943

The vessel measured 348 feet in length; 35 feet in beam, had a standard displacement of 1,630 tons, and was credited with a speed in excess of 37 knots.

* * * * *

Stencilled July 1946
Restencilled June 1951

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

U.S.S. AARON WARD (second vessel so-named)

The U.S.S. AARON WARD, Destroyer (DD 483) second vessel named in honor of the late Rear Admiral Aaron Ward, U.S. Navy, was authorized by act of Congress July 19, 1940, and was built by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey. She was launched November 22, 1941, at which time she was sponsored by Rear Admiral Ward's daughter, Miss Hilda Ward, of Hotel Wellington, Seventh Avenue at 55th Street, New York, New York.

The characteristics of the AARON WARD were*:

Standard Displacement	1,700 tons
Guns	4 5-inch 38 caliber
Torpedoes	10 21-inch

*Jane's Fighting Ship's, 1938

The U.S.S. AARON WARD was placed in commission March 4, 1942, under the command of Commander Orville Francis Gregor, U.S. Navy, who continued command until February 18, 1943, (born April 1, 1903, at Doniphan, Missouri; graduated from the Naval Academy on June 4, 1924; now in command of a Landing Craft Flotilla; Home address, 212 Coast Boulevard, LaJolla, California).

The AARON WARD participated in an engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. Her commanding officer, Commander Orville Francis Gregor, U.S. Navy, was awarded the Navy Cross, with 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."

Her executive officer at the time of this action, Lieutenant Commander Frederick Julian Becton, U.S. Navy, (born May 15, 1908, Des Arc, Arkansas; graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy on June 4, 1931; later commanding officer

of the AARON WARD from February 18, 1943, until the time of her sinking; now Commander, in command of another Destroyer; home address, 130 Oriole Street, Hot Springs, Arkansas) was awarded a Letter of Commendation from the Commander of the South Pacific Area and Force, with the following citation:

"For meritorious service in the line of his profession as executive officer of a destroyer during the engagement with Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. Lieutenant Commander BECTON most ably performed his duties after his ship had been hit by enemy shellfire. In the face of this attack with utter disregard for his own personal safety, he traversed completely exposed positions to establish communications between the firerooms and engine rooms and the bridge. Immediately after the ship went dead in the water, he took complete charge of the engineering department. As a result of his exceptional devotion to duty, the ship regained power and opened the firing range of an enemy battleship. This action was vitally instrumental in saving the ship as the later shelling by the battleship was ineffective. His skillful conduct, technical ability, and the outstanding performance of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

Ten of the AARON WARD's Ship's company at the time of this engagement were decorated or commended, eight being awarded Silver Star Medals, and two being awarded Letters of Commendation by the Commander of the South Pacific Area and Force.

Lieutenant (junior grade) Robert C. Hagen, U.S. Naval Reserve, (now Lieutenant; now on duty at sea; home address, 4 Broadway, Brownsville, Texas) was wounded in this action and awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as assistant communications officer aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. Although painfully wounded, Lieutenant (junior grade) Hagen courageously remained at his battle station reporting situations beyond the view of his Commanding Officer, until he became so weakened by his injuries that he had to be evacuated. His loyal devotion to duty and outstanding seamanship were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Ensign William F. LeBaron, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve (now Lieutenant (junior grade)); now on duty at the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey; home address, 701 W. Russell Place, San Antonio, Texas) was also wounded in this engagement and was awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as gunnery officer aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. Skillfully executing all orders from the bridge and maintaining excellent fire discipline, Ensign LeBaron directed the coordinated fire throughout the action, sinking one enemy light cruiser and damaging several other Japanese ships. Although he was wounded, he valiantly continued to carry on his duties and subsequently inflicted additional damage on the hostile fleet. His fine skill and indomitable fighting spirit were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Ensign Joseph A. Westphall, U.S. Naval Reserve (now Lieutenant (junior grade)); now on duty at sea; home address, 330 South Spencer Street, Aurora, Illinois) was also awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a battery officer aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. When an enemy shell made a direct hit on his gun, starting fires, ripping open two depth charges, killing five men and wounding others, Ensign Westphall, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, rushed medical aid to his stricken comrades, called a repair party, and personally assisted in putting out the fires started by exploding ammunition. Immediately after the first phase of the night action was over, he helped materially in establishing communications and getting the engineering plant in operation, which enabled the AARON WARD to avoid possible sinking by a Japanese battleship the following morning. His quick initiative, exceptional skill and fearless devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

John J. Cofer, Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy, (Mother, Mrs. Mary Jane Cofer, Route #3, Louisville, Georgia) was killed in action while serving in the

AARON WARD. A Destroyer Escort vessel has been named in his honor and he was awarded the Silver Star Medal, posthumously, with the following citation:

"For extremely gallant and intrepid conduct as rangefinder operator and spotter on board the U.S.S. AARON WARD during action against enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. Manning his station with exceptional coolness and skill, Cofer zealously assisted the main battery in scoring numerous hits on the enemy with the result that one Japanese ship was sunk. Mortally wounded by shrapnel that riddled his body, his last words were, 'I can range no longer'. His courageous conduct and unwavering devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave up his life in the defense of his country."

Allen A. Eylar, Ship's Cook Second Class, U.S. Navy (now Ship's Cook First Class; now on duty at the Boston Receiving Station; home address, Seminole, Oklahoma) was wounded in action while attached to the AARON WARD. He was awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 13, 1942. Although painfully injured during the action, Eylar refused to leave his battle station, thereby helping to maintain his battery in readiness until the engagement was over. When he finally reported to the dressing station, he noticed a fire starting in the galley and heroically assisted in putting it out before going back to have his wounds treated. His great courage and aggressive fighting spirit were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Marion Green, Officer's Cook First Class, U.S. Navy, (now Chief Cook; now a patient at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Mare Island, California; home address, McClellanville, South Carolina) was severely wounded in action while serving in the AARON WARD. He was awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces on the night of November 12-13, 1942. After a shell had struck and badly damaged his station in

the galley, Green lifted a wounded shipmate to his back and attempted to evacuate him when a second shell struck the galley, killing the wounded man and piercing Green's body with innumerable pieces of shrapnel. Although suffering acutely, he, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, refused to leave his battle station and remained to care for another wounded comrade. His great personal valor and heroic devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Murray W. Reynolds, Chief Electrician's Mate, U.S. Navy, (now Ensign; now on duty at sea; home address, 126 Brook Street, Dorchester, Massachusetts) was wounded in action while serving in the AARON WARD. He was awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as senior chief electrician's mate aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces on the night of November 12-13, 1942. Although badly wounded, Reynolds continued issuing instructions to his men for effecting necessary repairs to the electrical system which had been put out of commission by enemy fire, until he became so weak from loss of blood that it was imperative to evacuate him to the battle dressing station. His courageous and skillful assistance in reestablishing communications to the bridge and utilizing handsteering control contributed in great measure to the prevention of further damage to his ship. His unyielding loyalty and heroic devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Charles Ritter, Chief Torpedoman's Mate, U.S. Navy, (now Torpedoman; now on duty at the Naval Torpedo Station, Alexandria, Virginia; home address, 11 Woodbine Street, Providence, Rhode Island) was also wounded while serving in the AARON WARD and was awarded the Silver Star Medal, with the following citation:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Torpedo Tube Captain aboard the U.S.S. AARON WARD during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal on the night of November 12-13, 1942. When a direct hit beneath the torpedo tubes killed his trainer, Ritter, although painfully wounded, courageously carried on the fight. After another shell tore away the radio antenna and fouled the tubes in train, he cleared them and assumed the duties of trainer until relieved by the torpedo officer. Ritter, with utter disregard for his own personal

safety, then made an inspection of damaged depth charges and assisted in clearing the ship of wreckage. His conduct throughout the entire engagement was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Lieutenant F.J. Johnson, U.S. Navy (now Commander; now has a command at sea; home address, 108 Chestnut Avenue, Waterbury, Connecticut), was awarded a Letter of Commendation by the Commander of the South Pacific Area and Force, with the following citation:

"For devotion to duty under adverse conditions while serving on board a destroyer which participated in the action against Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal Island on the night of November 12, 1942. As gunnery officer of a Destroyer Squadron, Lieutenant Johnson rendered valuable service to both the Commanding Officer and the Squadron Commander in the spotting and recognition of enemy targets. Throughout the action he performed his duties without regard for his personal safety. After the engagement he labored tirelessly in caring for the wounded. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

Lieutenant Robert A. Weatherup, U.S. Navy, (now on duty at sea; home address, 305 Myrtle Street, Redlands, California) was also awarded a Letter of Commendation by the Commander of the South Pacific Area and Force, with the following citation:

"For skillful and effective performance of duty while serving on board a destroyer which participated in the action against Japanese naval forces off Guadalcanal Island on the night of November 12, 1942. As communication officer of a Destroyer Squadron, Lieutenant Weatherup rendered invaluable service to both the commanding officer and the squadron commander in the spotting and recognition of enemy targets. Throughout the action he performed duties without regard for his personal safety. He labored tirelessly in caring for the wounded, and after the completion of the engagement he gave valuable assistance in obtaining steering control of the ship. His conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

The AARON WARD was sunk by Japanese air attack in the vicinity of Guadalcanal on April 7, 1943 (Navy Department Communique No. 375, May 13, 1943). Her commanding officer at this time, Lieutenant Commander Frederick Julian Becton, U.S. Navy, survived this disaster and now has another command at sea.

*Obituary for Rear Admiral Orville F. Gregor, USN (Ret.)**
1903 - 1978

*Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)
4 March 1942 to 18 February 1943*

ORVILLE FRANCIS GREGOR '24

RAdm. Orville Francis Gregor USN (Ret.) died on 24 February 1978 in Montgomery, Alabama. Funeral services were held on 28 February in San Diego, California, with entombment in the El Camino Mausoleum.

Born in Missouri and appointed to the Naval Academy from the State of Arkansas, he was graduated with the Class of 1924. Service in OMAHA for five years followed, whereupon he was assigned to the Asiatic Station, first as chief engineer of AUGUSTA, and then in command of GUAM. After postgraduate studies in engineering, he was at sea again during World War II and in command of the destroyer AARON WARD off Guadalcanal, for which service he was awarded the Navy Cross. He later received the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V for participation in the Battle of the Coral Sea. He later commanded WALKER, then was ordered to the Mediterranean area in command of LCI Flotilla 1 and as commander of this unit, landed assault troops from the Third Army Division at Anzio, Italy, and later in Southern France. He was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat V and a Gold Star in lieu of second award as well as the French *Croix de Guerre* with Silver Star for these engagements. His final active duty was in command of the base in Subic Bay, from which station he was retired in 1947. He had lived in the San Diego area for over 30 years.

He is survived by a sister, Mrs. Milton Roed, of Sausalito, California.

* Shipmate magazine; May, 1978.

Obituary for Rear Admiral F. Julian Becton, USN (Ret.)
1908-1995

Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)
February 18 - April 7, 1943

THE NEW YORK TIMES **OBITUARIES** SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1995

F. Julian Becton, 87, Admiral Whose Ship Repelled Kamikazes

By WOLFGANG SAXON

Adm. F. Julian Becton, who was at the center of a dramatic two hours of naval history when his destroyer survived a swarm of Japanese kamikaze planes off Okinawa in 1945, died on Monday at his home in Wynnewood, Pa. He was 87.

The 2,200-ton U.S.S. Laffey, guns blazing, battled an onslaught by 22 suicide planes, 6 of which struck the ship. Two bombs also hit the ship; one jammed the rudder of the Laffey, whose deck was a mass of flames.

The Laffey's crew shot down eight or nine of the planes, but it paid a high price: 31 crewmen were killed or unaccounted for, and 60 were wounded.

Admiral Becton, then a commander, escaped injury. His deft maneuvering and the skill of his engineers were credited with bringing the Laffey, riddled like a sieve above the waterline, back to Seattle for repairs. He received the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism.

It was not his first close call. He was in command of the destroyer

Aaron Ward when it was part of an Allied convoy that was attacked off Guadalcanal in April 1943. The Aaron Ward and two other vessels were sunk, but the enemy lost 39 planes.

Admiral Becton was also decorated for the Laffey's support role in the invasion of Normandy and other wartime action. He received four Silver Stars, two commendation ribbons, two Presidential Unit Citations and the Croix de Guerre.

Frederick Julian Becton was born in Des Arc, Ark., and graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1931. He served on battleships and destroyers, rising to the post of executive officer before being put in command of the Aaron Ward.

He retired in 1966 and told the story of the Laffey and her crew in a book, "The Ship That Would Not Die" (Prentice-Hall, 1980).

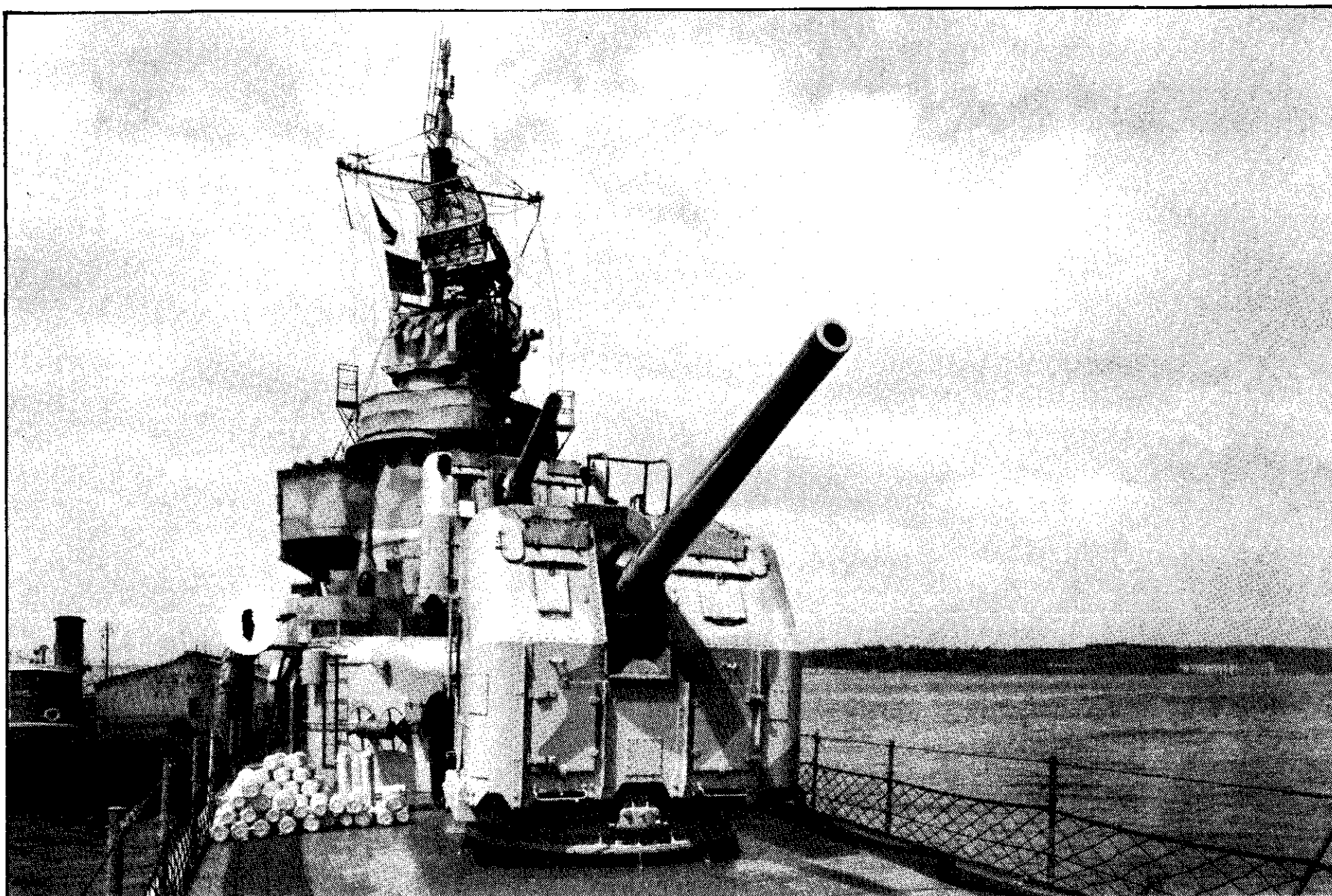
Admiral Becton is survived by his wife of 46 years, Elizabeth Reuss Becton; two daughters, Julie B. Becton of Wynnewood and Hilary B. Wagner of Warrington, Pa.; a brother, John, of Hot Springs, Ark., and two grandsons.

Frederick Julian Becton, 1908-1995

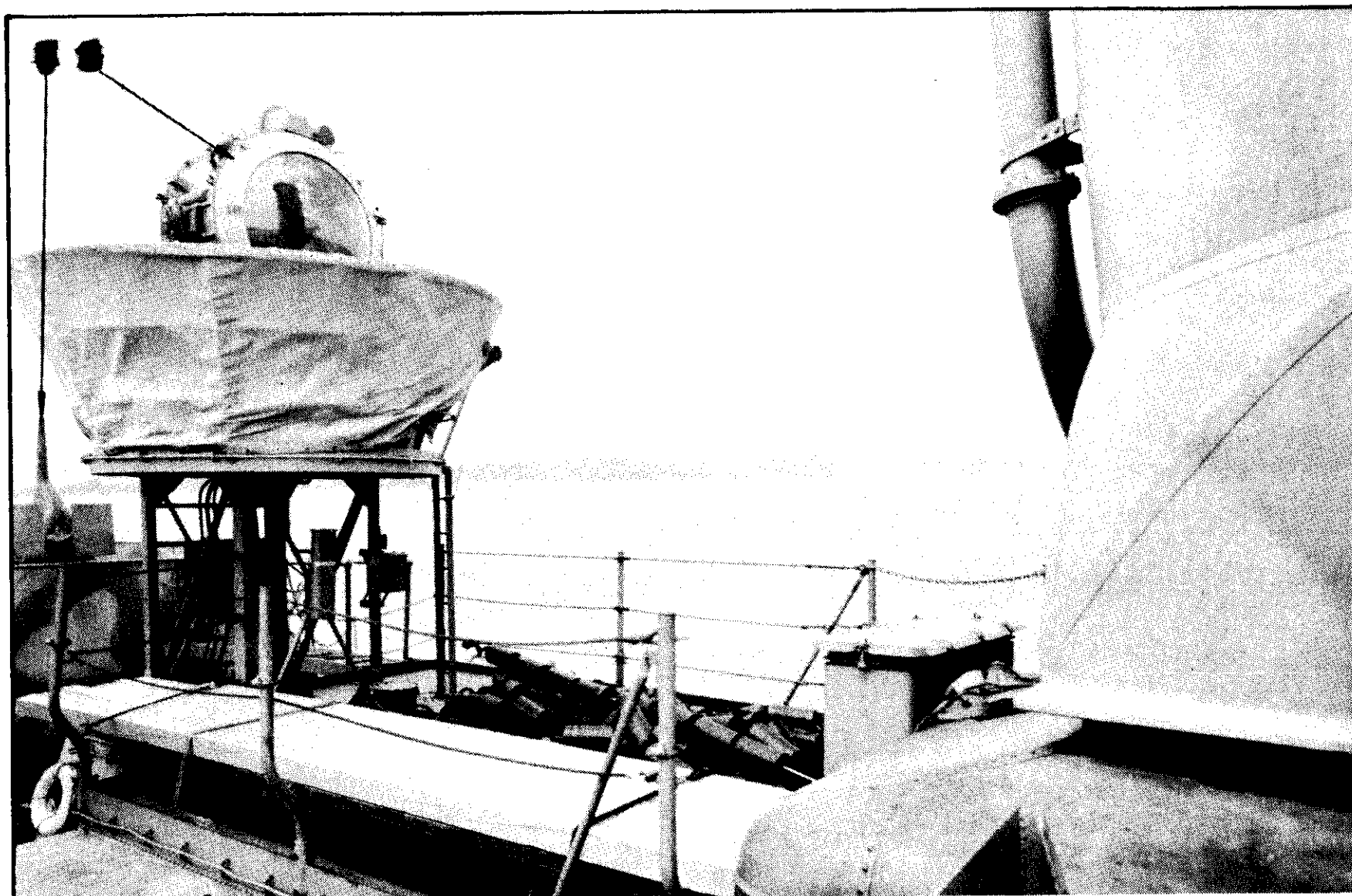


The late Admiral Becton was the Aaron Ward's Executive Officer when the ship was heavily damaged during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942. He was awarded a Letter of Commendation for directing efforts to keep the engineering spaces operating after the ship had received nine direct hits.

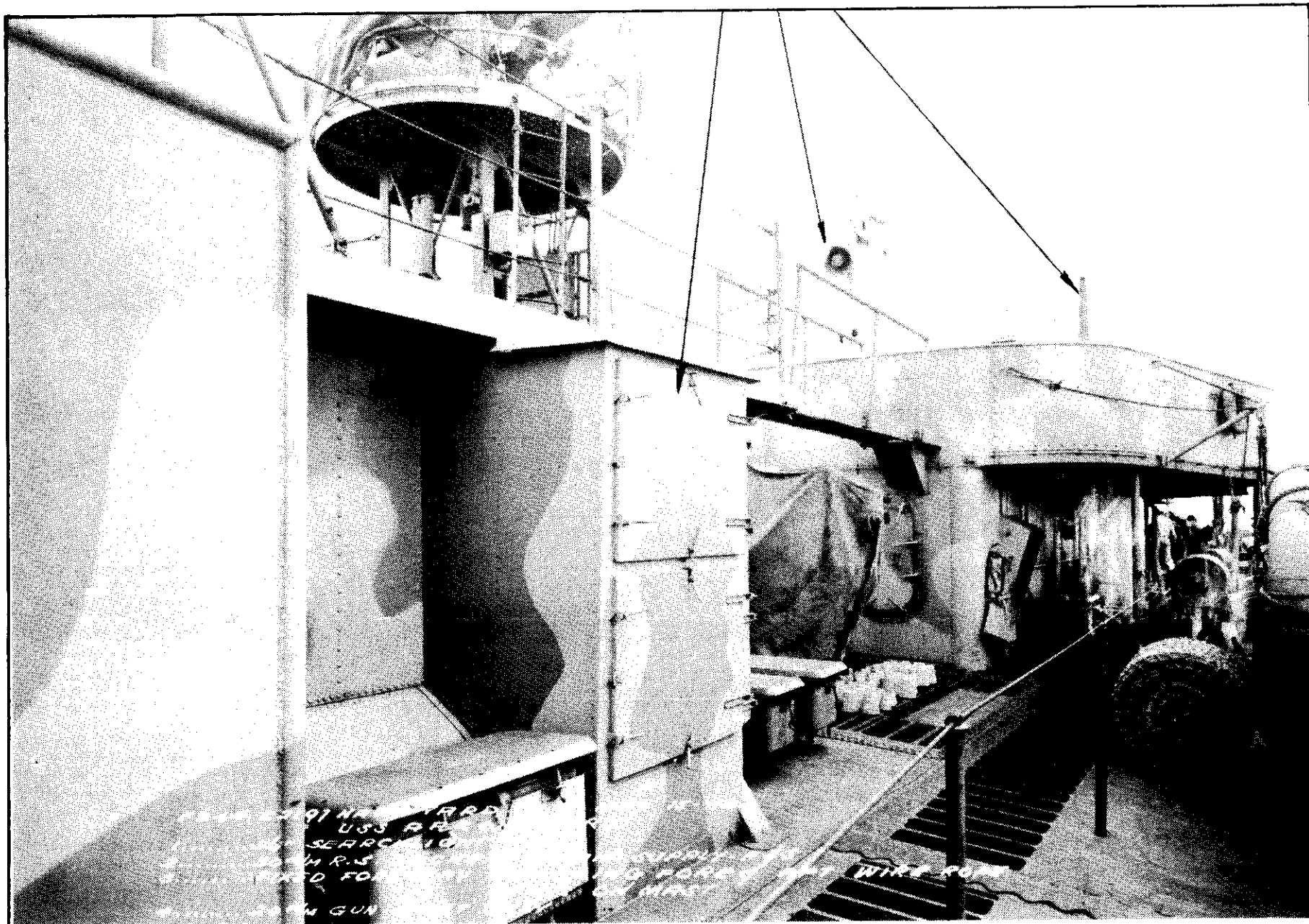
Commander Becton assumed command in February 1943, after the ship had been repaired, and returned with her to the Guadalcanal area. On 7 April 1943 the Aaron Ward was sunk by Japanese dive bombers in the same waters where she had been damaged five months earlier.



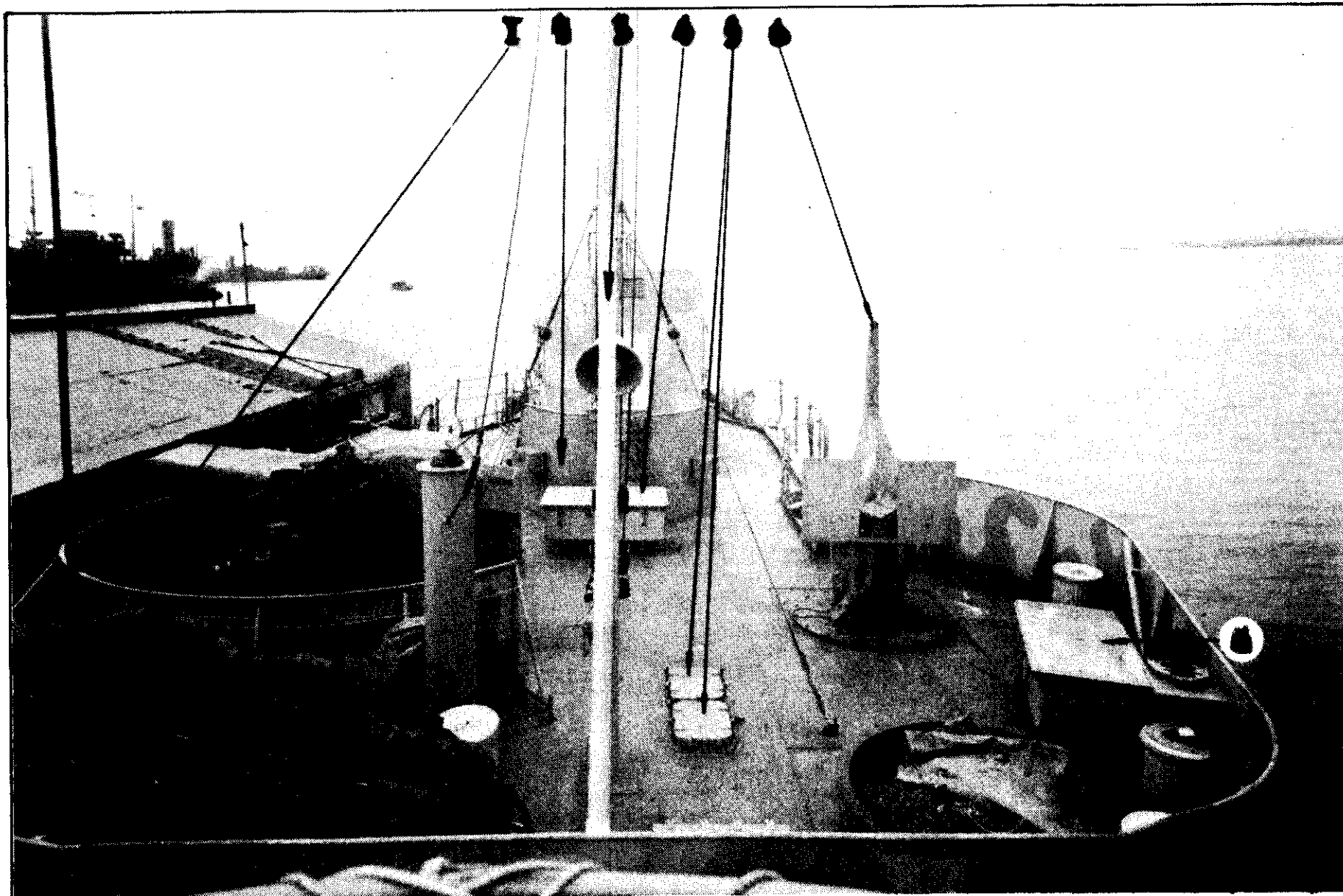
Looking aft from the foc'sle of the U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) at the New York Navy Yard in May, 1942, showing powder cannisters for the 5-inch guns on deck. Splinter protection for the 20-mm antiaircraft mounts, port and starboard, was added at this time. This is a good uncensored view of the two forward 5-in./38 dual-purpose gun mounts, the bridge and the Mark 37 fire-control director. (U.S. Navy photo)



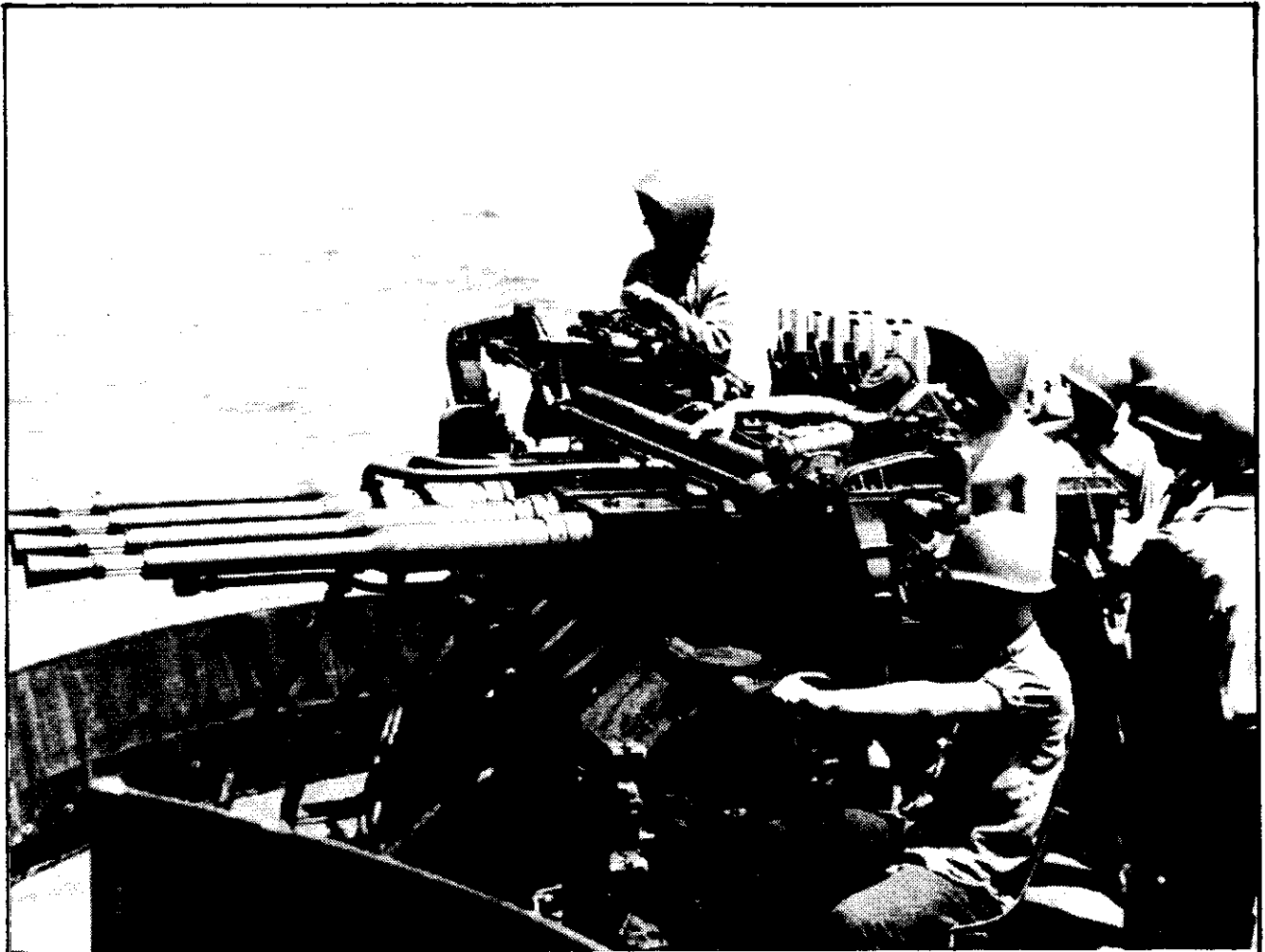
A view of the U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) taken on 15 May 1942 at New York, N.Y. showing from left to right: the 20-mm. anti-aircraft machine cannon on the port side of the after deckhouse, the 36-inch searchlight platform, a floater lifenet, a 20-mm. ready-service ammunition box and the after end of the funnel.
(U.S. Navy photograph.)



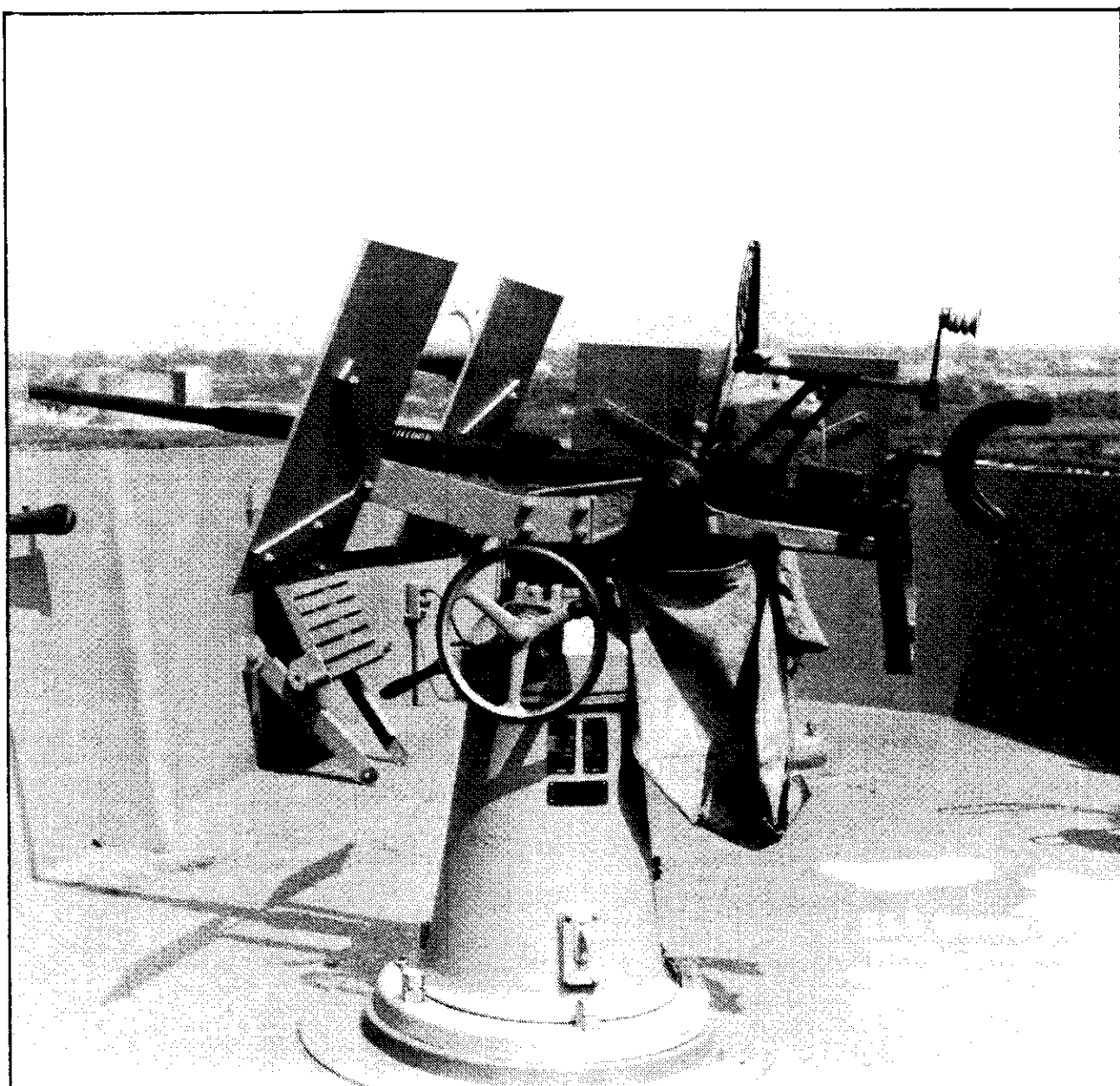
The main deck of the Aaron Ward, looking aft along the port side, amidships, showing 20-mm ready-service boxes, the 36-in. searchlight platform, the covered barrel of a 20-mm gun and a cane fender. Under canvas, just forward of the after deckhouse, is a loading machine. This was used to train the gun crews in the 5-inch mounts. With practice, a crew could fire up to 20 rounds/min. from these guns. (USN photo.)



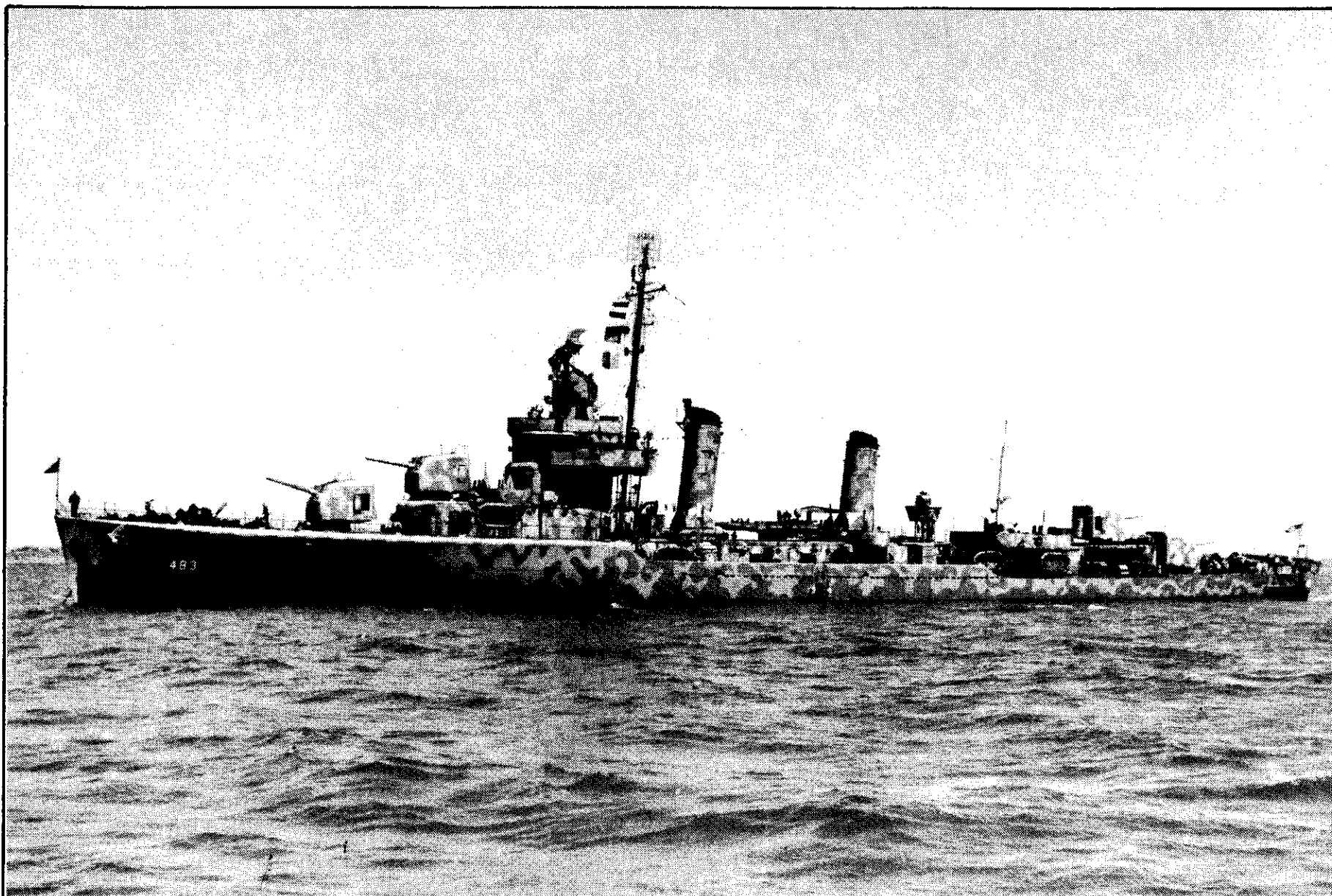
Looking aft from the Aaron Ward's searchlight tower showing the after gun platform with a quad 1.1-in./75 machine cannon (left) and a single 20-mm. Oerlikon mount (right). Ammunition for the "one point one" was passed up through two rectangular scuttles in the center of this platform. Two twin 40-mm. Bofors mounts replaced these weapons when the ship was repaired at Pearl Harbor following the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942. A floater life net can be seen at the lower left. (U.S. Navy photograph.)



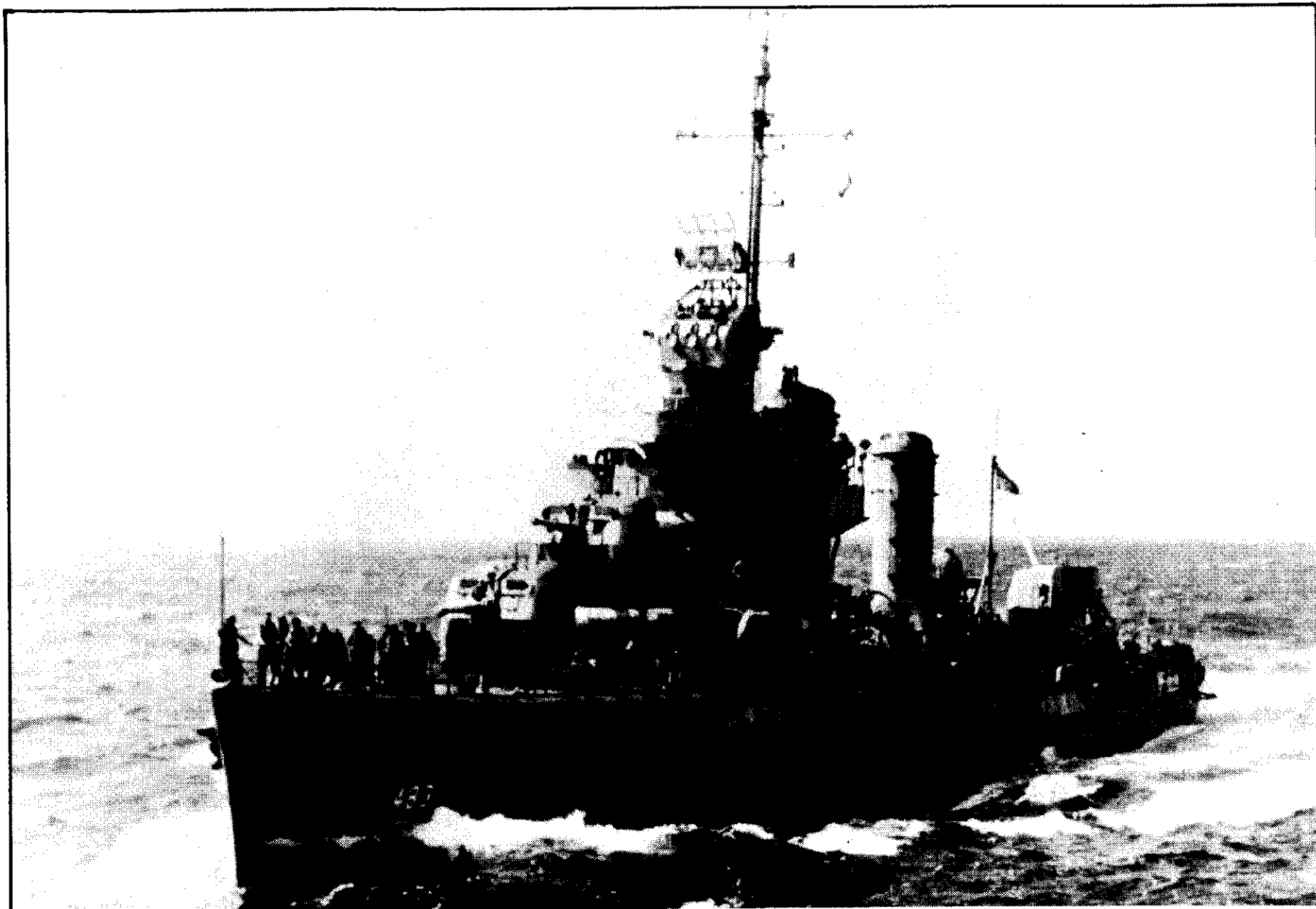
This view of a quad 1.1-inch/75 machine gun/cannon on a destroyer escort shows what the mount on the Aaron Ward's after gun platform looked like. Dubbed the "Chicago Piano" for the way it fired, this antiaircraft weapon was replaced on U.S. destroyers in 1942-43 with the much more effective 40-mm Bofors automatic gun. The "one point ones" could fire 150 one-pound high-explosive shells/minute/barrel. Ammunition in 8-round clips was passed up through two rectangular scuttles in the deck called "slots." Although this weapon's complex mechanism was unreliable and difficult to maintain, it remained in service on many older ships and auxiliaries until the war ended in 1945. (U.S. Navy photograph.)



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.)



The 1,630-ton Bristol-class destroyer U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) was armed with four 5-in./38 dual-purpose guns in single mounts and a quintuple 21-inch torpedo-tube mount between the stacks on the boat deck. For antiaircraft protection she had 20-mm Oerlikons forward of the bridge, by the after stack and on the after deckhouse. There was also a 1.1-inch/75 quad machine cannon on the starboard side of the after deckhouse. The Aaron Ward was 348 feet long and had a rated speed of 37 knots. (U.S. Naval Institute collection.)



The U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) (Lt. Cdr. O. F. Gregor) approaching another vessel in the South Pacific on 17 August 1942 to transfer guard mail or to refuel and replenish while under way. The Aaron Ward was assigned escort duties during this period and later, along with other ships of DesRon 12, joined the covering force for the Guadalcanal campaign. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)

DECLASSIFIED

ORIGINAL

ACTION REPORT

USS AARON WARD

DD-483

SERIAL 001

18 OCTOBER 1942

BOMBARDMENT OF JAPANESE POSITIONS ON GUADALCANAL
ISLAND - REPORT OF.

USS AARON WARD - BOMBARDMENT OF
JAPANESE POSITIONS ON GUADALCANAL
ISLAND, ON 17 OCTOBER 1942.

47072
44113
43868

OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY

SECRET

Care Postmaster,
San Francisco, Calif.,
October 18, 1942.

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commander DESTROYER SQUADRON TWELVE.
Subject: USS AARON WARD - Bombardment of Japanese Positions
on Guadalcanal Island - Report of.
Reference: (a) CDS-12 Desp. 170450 of October, 1942.

1. In compliance with reference (a) the following is
submitted:

Arrived Lunga Roads, Guadalcanal Island, at 0717,
17 October, and lay to awaiting Marine Liaison Officer to
come aboard.

At 0724 a formation of five enemy bombers launched an
attack on AARON WARD, coming in from the west. The Marine
shore battery shot down two of the planes but three of the
five planes dropped bombs. Opened fire on remaining planes
of formation. One plane shot down by combined fire from
ship's and shore battery. Went ahead flank speed when
planes started dive and maneuvered with radical swings to
right and left to avoid enemy bombs. Three bombs struck
the water one hundred to three hundred yards astern of ship
but caused no damage. One piece of shrapnel pierced No. 1
Stack. Other pieces fell on board.

At 0800 stood into Lunga Lagoon and picked up Major
C. M. Nees, USMC, Captain J. Clements, ex-British Consular
representative at Guadalcanal (present organization not known),
and Corporal R. M. Howard, USMC, photographer.

Commenced bombardment of enemy shore positions at 0840,
at 12,000 yards range. Targets fired on in their order were
as follows:

- (1) Gun emplacement at Kukumbono River;
- (2) Wrecked ship on beach to westward of Kukumbono near
Umasani River;
- (3) The huts along the beach on either side of the wreck;
- (4) A road about 150 yards inland from the beach;
- (5) An enemy gun emplacement near the beach;
- (6) Enemy ammunition dumps near the beach.

SECRET

DD483/A16-3(1)
Serial #001

NO-18-42)(Ts)

Subject: USS AARON WARD - Bombardment of Japanese
Positions on Guadalcanal Island - Report of.

The bombardment was completed at 1145, having expended 950 rounds of service ammunition and 62 starshells. The firing on the beach was continuous from 0840 to 1145 except for periods while reversing course. A ten-second firing interval was used and a speed of 15 knots maintained throughout the bombardment.

Fires along the beach were started about 0930 and the first explosion ashore was noticed at 0949. At 1010 another explosion occurred in the flaming area near the beach. At 1107 a much larger explosion than either of the previous ones occurred, emitting heavy white smoke. Shortly thereafter another explosion nearby, emitting heavy yellow smoke, was observed.

At 1155, after bombardment was completed, explosions were still occurring in the area where the largest fire was burning. At 1216 stood into Lengo Lagoon and dropped Major Nees, Captain Clements, and Corporal Howard, and proceeded toward Lunga Channel. At 1223 a formation of enemy bombers was reported on warning net from Guadalcanal airfield as diving on destroyers. Went ahead 21 knots and used radical course changes to avoid bombs, but attack did not materialize and bombers headed away from Guadalcanal. Increased speed to 30 knots to clear Lengo Channel. Changed speed to 20 knots at 1315, after passing out of Lengo Channel and proceeded on various courses enroute to rejoin task force.

O. F. GREGOR.

ACTION REPORT

USS AARON WARD

DD-483

SERIAL 003

20 NOVEMBER 1942

REPORT OF ACTION, NIGHT OF 12-13 NOVEMBER 1942.

REPORT OF PARTICIPATION IN CRUISER
NIGHT ACTION PHASE OF BATTLE WITH
THE ENEMY OFF SAVO ISLAND NIGHT
12-13 NOVEMBER 1942. SHIP HIT NINE
TIMES AND TOWED TO TULAGI FOLLOWING
THE ACTION WITH 12 KILLED AND 60
WOUNDED.

46756

DIVISION OF NAVAL RECORDS
AND HISTORY

ORIGINAL

DD483/A16-3(1)
Serial # 003

(Ts)

Care Postmaster,
San Francisco, Calif.,
November 20, 1942.

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commander SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE.
Via : (1) Commander Destroyer Squadron 12.
(2) Commander Task Force 67.

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

Enclosure: (A) Track of U.S.S. AARON WARD.

1. This action report is divided into the following headings:

- (a) Composition of Force.
- (b) Chronological order of events, as observed by this vessel.
- (c) Damage inflicted upon AARON WARD.
- (d) Casualties.
- (e) Comment.
- (f) Recommendations.

A. COMPOSITION OF FORCE.

1. This vessel was assigned to Task Force 67.4, and other vessels in the force were as follows: Group 1 - CUSHING, LAFFEY, STERRETT, O'BANNON, under Commander Stokes; Group 2 - SAN FRANCISCO (Admiral Callaghan), ATLANTA (Admiral Scott), PORTLAND, HELENA and JUNEAU; Group 3 - AARON WARD, BARTON, MONSSEN, and FLETCHER under Captain Tobin; entire Task Force under Admiral Callaghan.

2. Just before the action, vessels were in battle formation in the following order: CUSHING, LAFFEY, STERRETT, O'BANNON, ATLANTA, SAN FRANCISCO, PORTLAND, HELENA, JUNEAU, AARON WARD, BARTON, MONSSEN, FLETCHER.

B. CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF EVENTS AS OBSERVED BY THIS VESSEL.

1. The times given below are in some cases approximated, but it is believed that they are close to times at which events were observed:

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action, Night of
12-13 November 1942.

- 0125 - Vessels of Task Force 67.4 were in one single column, on course 280° T., speed 18, in order shown above.
- 0129 - Changed course to 310° T. Numerous radar contacts ahead were reported by other vessels of our formation.
- 0145 - Changed course to 000° T. Enemy ships reported on each bow ahead. This ship obtained radar range bearing 315° relative, distant 12,000 yards, by use of FD Radar.
- 0149 - Commenced firing on enemy vessel believed to be a battleship, bearing 310° relative, distant 7,000 yards. Observed many small fires and explosions, but it is not certain whether they were started by this vessel.
- 0153 - Checked fire as sky was illuminated and it appeared that our cruisers had changed course to the left. The area was fairly well illuminated for a short while. Ship had fired approximately ten salvos at this time.
- 0155 - Stopped and backed both engines. Immediately after checking fire, the director was trained ahead in order to get ranges so as to avoid collisions. This ship was closing in fast upon a vessel, and when the radar range became 1200 yards, the engines were stopped and backed.
- 0156 - Two torpedoes were observed by the men on the torpedo tubes to pass under this ship, from port to starboard.
- 0157 - A destroyer, apparently the BARTON, blew up and sank immediately. She was close on our starboard side, distance about 1000 yards, bearing about 130° relat
- 0158 - Another ship, forward of the starboard beam, appar a cruiser, rolled over on her side and sank, dist about 1,500 yards.

DECLASSIFIED

11/20/42 (Ts)

DECLASSIFIED

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action, Night
of November 12-13, 1942.

- 0159 - Everything clear ahead. Proceeded at 18 knots on course 000° T. Word was received over TRS for all of our ships to steam on this course at speed 18, at about this time.
- 0159 - Prepared to fire torpedo battery on a battleship or heavy cruiser to port, bearing about 265° relative, target angle 180° T., but did not fire due to sighting cruiser believed to be SAN FRANCISCO, bearing 280° relative, target angle 270° T., distance about 1500 yards.
- 0204 - Destroyer, believed to be STERRETT, was observed heading directly toward our port side. Went ahead flank and applied hard left rudder to avoid being hit. When clear, resumed course 000° T., speed 18.
- 0206 - Commenced firing on a large destroyer or light cruiser, distance 3,000 yards. This ship is believed to have been a cruiser of the "KATORI" class. Ship was showing fighting lights of a single cluster, white over red over green. On "commence firing", the relative bearing was 010. Course was changed to left to approximately 315 in order for battery to bear. Fired about 25 salvos before "check fire" in order to shift to new target. This ship definitely was seen to blow up and sink.
- 0209 - Immediately after the above ship was sunk, shifted to a searchlight bearing about 340° relative. Course was changed to right in order for guns to bear, and ship opened fire. This searchlight had been trained on us for about two minutes, and it appeared ship was distant about 3,000 yards. Four salvos were fired from the director control, which was then hit. Guns continued to fire in local control by manual, firing approximately seven salvos. This target was believed to be a destroyer. Fires were started, and small explosions were noted.
- 0213 - Guns 2 and 4 then opened fire on another searchlight bearing about 120° relative, range about 3,000 yards. This searchlight had been trained on us for about three or four minutes. Small fires were observed to start. Guns 1 and 3 continued fire on searchlight first observed.

11/20/42 (Ts)

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

Subject: U.S.S. ARRON WARD (DD423) - Report of Action, Night
of November 12-13, 1942.

- 0214 - Searchlights went out and guns ceased firing.
- 0215 - This vessel was brilliantly illuminated by star shells and a searchlight on the port quarter. More shells started falling close aboard us. We could not identify ships near us as our own, so went ahead flank speed to clear this immediate area as enemy had apparently identified us.
- 0218 - Observed torpedo crossing about 50 feet ahead, passing from port to starboard.
- 0225 - Lost steering control and attempted to change course to right, steering with engines.
- 0236 - Battle was over. No more firing was observed.
- 0235 - Lost all power; ship dead in the water.
- 0235 - During this period the ship was dead in the water. to The forward engine room was flooded with salt water and feed water was gone. Salt water was pumped into tanks by means of gasoline pump, and boilers were again lighted off.
- 0500 - Underway at about five knots, headed in the direction of Sea Lark Channel. This speed was maintained for about half an hour, at which time ship was dead in the water again.
- 0510 - Our PT boats came close and this ship signalled them by blinker tube to ask Tulagi for a tug to stand by us.
- 0600 - Sighted an enemy battleship between Savo and Florida Islands, distant about 26,000 yards. This ship was slowly steaming in circles. Also sighted ATLANTA, PORTLAND, CUSHING and MONSEN. These ships were still afloat and were in the direction of Guadalcanal. MONSEN and CUSHING were burning. There was also an enemy destroyer near Cape Esperance which was burning and which was later sunk by PORTLAND.

~~SECRET~~ DECLASSIFIED

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

- 0618 - Got underway again at about 5 knots.
- 0620 - BOBOLINK arrived and signalled to her to stand by to take us in tow.
- 0630 - Enemy battleship fired a total of four 2-gun salvos at us. Enemy was using an up-ladder and third salvo straddled the ship. After fourth salvo, friendly planes started working on battleship and she fired no more at this ship.
- 0635 - Lost power again, and BOBOLINK took us in tow.
- 0650 - BOBOLINK cast off and YP took us in tow.
- 0830 - Anchored in Tulagi Harbor near Makambo Island.

C. DAMAGE INFLICTED ON AARON WARD.

1. Nine direct hits were received in the following locations, principal damage incurred by each hit being listed below. Amount of damage as listed is not complete, as in all probability, as other equipment is placed in commission and further inspection made, other damage will be discovered:

(a) Director.

Shell came from port side, hitting director near radar antenna. Shrapnel holes torn through top, back and sides of director, rangefinder, range spot transmitter, PD radar antennae, PD control indicator, PD control unit, receiver unit and coaxial lines. Some cables cut. Fire started. Estimated size of shell - 5".

(b) Base of director.

Shell entered from port side, pierced cleanly through to starboard side and through lookout shield, exploding after passing through this point. Damaged 24" searchlight and cut some telephone cables. Size of shell estimated to be 5".

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET DECLASSIFIED

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DDLS3) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

(c) Frames 61-64, port side, at stateroom 0101.

A hole approximately 30" x 30" was scored in the outboard bulkhead. Furnishings in the room were demolished. Fire started. Shrapnel pierced chart storage, bulkhead of radar room, vent duct at frame 51, port and starboard bulkheads along passage A-0103-CL, transmitter trunks to Radio I, TBC and TBL transmitters, RBB and crew's broadcast receiver, and caused many shrapnel holes in deck of bridge. This hit cut the major portion of QCL and QCF power cables, fire control cables to main battery director, torpedo director, telephone circuits, and steering control circuits in trunk line. Estimated size of shell - 14" bombardment.

(d) Foremast.

Shell came from port side. The foremast was sheered off above stay ring; 30 radar antennae demolished, all antennae carried away. Damaged port 24" searchlight. Flag bags riddled with shrapnel. Estimated size of shell - 5".

(e) Frames 57-60, outboard of galley, port side.

Hole 30" in diameter between frames 57-60. Shrapnel holes in deck and all bulkheads of galley. Water lines were broken, causing plotting room to flood to 10". Shrapnel holes in galley sinks, galley lower half-door, inboard center-line galley bulkhead and through wardroom pantry door. Fire control cables to main battery director, telephone circuits, QCL and QCF cables in trunks were broken. Damaged galley control and wiring circuits. Estimated size of shell - 14" bombardment.

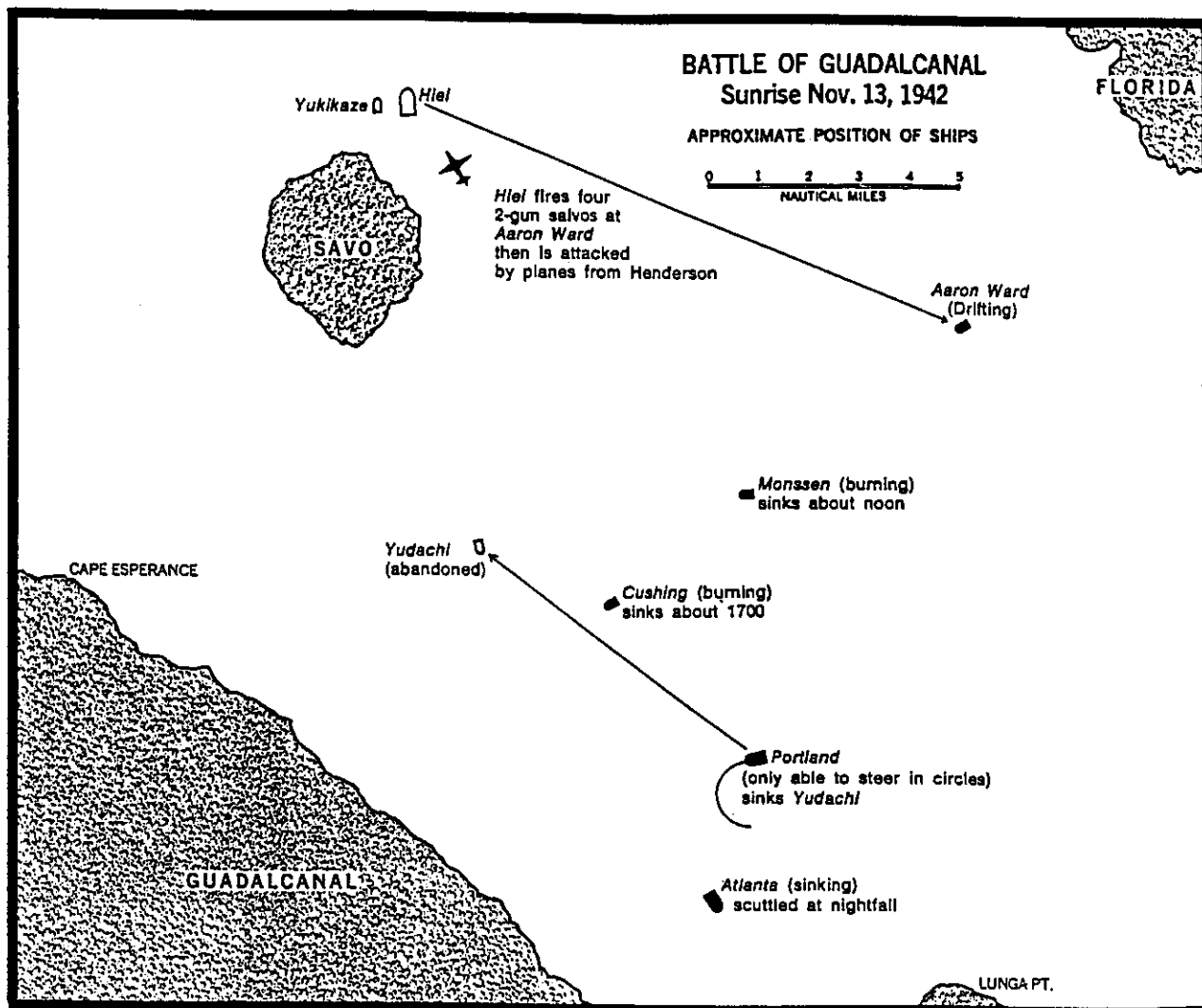
(f) Frame 67, port side, just aft of galley.

33" hole in weather bulwark aft of frame 67. Shrapnel holes in after bulkhead of galley, galley ranges, midships deck house, laundry extractor and drier. Wrecked potato locker. Broke hydraulic line for remote control gear to depth charge racks. Broke fire control cable to torpedo director. Estimated size of shell - 14" bombardment.

(g) Stern of Ois, port side.

Stern compartment demolished. Shrapnel holes in #1 stack and midships deck house. Estimated size of shell - 5".

DECLASSIFIED



Map from *The Campaign for Guadalcanal*, by Jack Coggins.
(Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972)

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

11/20/42 (Ts)

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action, Night
of November 12-13, 1942.

(b) Frame 95-100, port side, hitting main weather deck
above engine room and torpedo workshop.

This hit cut fire control cables to torpedo tubes, telephone circuits and firing circuits. Shrapnel holes were sustained in two torpedo tube barrels, dents in all barrels. Holes were made in watertight door to torpedo workshop, bulkheads of diesel generator room, and vent set 1-97-2 was demolished. In the engine room, rivet heads were driven inward against A.C. bus bars on forward distribution board, shorting out the forward boards. Small fires were started in mattresses in diesel generator room. Estimated size of shell - 8" high explosive.

(1) 151 Gun.

All four breech mechanisms and all ready service boxes were destroyed, shell coming from port side. Shrapnel holes were sustained in deck and shields, frames 130-136, starboard. Damaged TBL transmitter and control gear, carried away emergency transmitting and receiving antennae, and cut all cables to gun. Fire started around gun and on main deck. Estimated size of shell - 8" high explosive.

2. In addition, many items of equipment, too numerous to mention, were destroyed.

3. In the engine room, electric power was lost when the shell hit on top of the compartment. During the firing before this, three pipe plugs were blown out, one on the main condenser injection line, one on the outlet line to generator oil cooler, and one on suction line to evaporator feed pump. Salt water entered the forward engine room from these and flooded the engine room 3 feet above the floor plates. At the time of last hit before going dead in the water, the ship was making 30 knots. When steering failed, there was 15° right rudder applied, and ship was steaming in circles. Attempt was made to maneuver ship by engines. During these speed changes it was necessary to open atmospheric exhaust, thereby losing the feed water, as the auxiliaries were still running at maximum speed. After this, the ship lost all power and it was necessary to pump salt water into the feed system in order to attempt to move.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

DD433/AL6-3(1)
Serial #003

11/20/42

(Ts)

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD433) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

D. CASUALTIES.

1. Twelve men were killed in action; two died on way to hospital.

2. Seven men were seriously wounded, one of whom died after arrival at hospital.

3. Nineteen men were wounded and twenty-four had superficial wounds.

4. Among the officers, two were wounded and six had superficial wounds.

5. Total casualties -

Killed in action.. 12
Died as result
of wounds..... 3
Seriously wounded. 6
Wounded 21
Superficially
wounded..... 30

TOTAL - - - - - 72

6. The men were killed in the following locations:

1st Gun - 5	Emergency Radio - 1
Director - 2	Galley - - - - - 2
Torp. Tubes - 1	W.E. Pantry - - - 1
#2 20-mm. - 1	Repair Party - - - 2

7. Men were wounded as a result of every hit.

E. COMMENT.

1. General Situation. - Our force had been screening our own transports who had been unloading at Guadalcanal during the previous day. At 1830 on November 12, 1942, our forces retired to eastward through Sea Lark Channel. About 2217 reversed course and stood back through Lange Channel in order to intercept any Japanese force that might attempt to attack Guadalcanal that night. About 0130 our force received numerous radar contacts ahead. The Japanese force consisted of one or two battleships, several cruisers and destroyers.

DECLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
~~DECLASSIFIED~~

11/20/42 (Ts)

Subject:

U.S.S. ARRON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

2. It is believed that the enemy was taken completely by surprise.

3. This ship had no previous indication that the large enemy force was in the near vicinity.

4. The enemy force apparently used principally bombardment ammunition. It is believed they expected no opposition that night, and had this ammunition set up for bombardment of the Marine positions on Guadalcanal and other shore installations.

5. The enemy used both starshell and searchlights. Searchlights were kept on for comparatively long periods of time, which gave us an opportunity to get accurate ranges and a good point of aim.

6. The enemy firing was not as accurate as our own. Many near misses fell around the ship.

7. FD Radar only was used. The SC Radar was not used as ranges are not considered satisfactory below 2000 yards.

8. The use of the FD Radar, trained dead ahead during lulls in firing, was a large factor in avoiding damage by collision.

9. No torpedoes were fired. This vessel was in the after group of destroyers. During the first part of the action, no suitable target could be found. During the latter part of the engagement, the position of all our forces was not definitely known, and it was therefore considered inadvisable to fire torpedoes.

10. The torpedo officer, due to his location, is frequently blinded by flashes from the forward guns, and it is sometimes very difficult for him to identify targets.

11. This vessel went through the entire enemy formation. Many shells passed overhead, indicating the enemy ships were firing at each other.

12. While the enemy cruiser was being sunk by this ship, it is evident that we were recognized as unfriendly by others of the enemy, as we were brilliantly illuminated after this and then received a major part of the damage. Going ahead 30 knots at this time apparently saved the ship.

11/20/42 (Ts)

DECLASSIFIED

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD483) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

13. Another factor instrumental in saving the ship after the night action was the fact that the engineers force got the ship moving ahead slowly just before daylight. This increased the range from the enemy battleship, making her fire less effective.

14. Starshells are considered to be of little use if the range can be obtained by radar or other means. Hitting the other ship first not only creates confusion, puts some of their equipment out of commission, but also starts fires which provide the necessary illumination.

15. The volume of fire of our ships was much greater than that of the enemy.

16. During the action there was so much conversation coming over the TBS, and the noise was so great, that very little of the information reached the commanding officer. However, it is believed most all of the important information was obtained.

17. Communications on this vessel between different ship's stations was considered excellent.

18. The performance of the officers and crew during and following the action was considered excellent. Separate letters of recommendations for awards are being forwarded.

19. Our recognition lights are considered to be superior to the enemy lights.

20. After losing electric power below, the heat in the engine rooms was almost unbearable.

21. Kapak life jackets were some protection against shrapnel, but a few caught fire in spite of having previously been fire-proofed.

22. The need for two or three long telephone leads with handsets already made up was again evident.

23. The auxiliary ladder outside the bridge to the main deck was also found to be a necessity, as one of the

- 10 **DECLASSIFIED**

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

11/20/42 (Ta)

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD (DD451) - Report of Action,
Night of November 12-13, 1942.

ladders leading below was severely damaged, and it would have been practically impossible to get below any other way.

24. No major fires were started on this vessel. The few which were started were quickly extinguished by the repair parties before reaching any major proportions. The largest fires were located near the 151 gun, where some of the ammunition blew up and two depth charges were blown open.

25. Total rounds fired from 5" guns was 215.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. A radar should be installed for conning use only, capable of taking short ranges.

2. A splinter shield should be placed on torpedo tubes around the trainers seat and controls.

3. A suitable type of director should be mounted on the torpedo tubes for use in night action.

4. Any time night action may even be suspected, the ship should be at general quarters.

5. In the engine room, the electric motors on the lower level, which were under water, were all made inoperative by the flooding. It is recommended that all these motors be made watertight. Flooded motors were:

Evaporator system	4
Auxiliary Circulating Pump . . .	1
Aux. Condensate & Booster	1
Cruising Condens. & Booster . . .	1

6. It is recommended that emergency generators be reinstalled. There should be some method of supplying power to the engine room blowers; also steering gear, and other essential equipment.

7. It is recommended that the old system of bell-pulls be reinstalled. During the time in which the ship had power and steered by engines, word was passed to the gun room by forming a chain of men. The power cables were cut, and engine telegraphs were out of commission.

~~SECRET~~
DECLASSIFIED

11/20/42 (Ts)

Subject: U.S.S. AARON WARD - Report of Action, Night
of November 12-13, 1942.

8. Feed water manifolds should be in the engine room instead of the fire room. This will give the engine room control over the tanks. As it now stands, if a tank becomes dry and communication is lost, it is necessary to send a man to the fire room to cut in another tank.

9. Nearly all power cables for the bridge and director run up through a single trunk, near the center-line of the ship. Practically all of these cables were severed by hits (a) and (a) above. It is recommended that as many cables as possible be divided, or that trunk be armored.

O. F. GREGOR.

DECLASSIFIED

U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)

List of Officers; 13 November 1942¹

Destroyer Squadron 12:

<u>Tobin</u> , Robert Gibson	Capt.	USN	Commander, DesRon 12
* <u>Esslinger</u> , Robert John	LCdr.	USN	Chief-of-Staff
<u>Johnson</u> , Francis Joseph	Lt.	USN	Staff Gunnery Officer
* <u>Weatherup</u> , Robert A.	Lt.	USN	Staff Communicator

Ship's Officers:

<u>Gregor</u> , Orville Francis	Cdr.	USN	Commanding Officer
<u>Becton</u> , Frederick Julian	LCdr.	USN	Executive Officer
<u>Boquardus</u> , Robert Anthony	Lt.	USN	Engineering Officer
* <u>Molitor</u> , Carl M.	Lt.	USNR	
* <u>Truesdell</u> , Sidney S.	Lt.	USNR	Ass't. Engineering Off.
<u>Riesmeyer</u> , David W.	Lt.j.g.	USNR	Communications Officer
* <u>Conant</u> , Ernest R.	Lt.j.g.	USNR	First Lieutenant
* <u>Hagen</u> , Robert Cris	Lt.j.g.	USNR	Ass't. Communications
<u>Drew</u> , John Graham, II	Lt.j.g.	USN	Torpedo Officer
* <u>LeBaron</u> , William F., Jr.	Ensign	USNR	Gunnery Officer
* <u>Westphall</u> , Joseph A.	Ensign	USNR	Ass't. Gunnery Officer
* <u>Hill</u> , Fred Gregan	Ensign	USN	Ass't. Gunnery Officer

* * * * *

¹ Compiled from entries in the ship's personnel diary on microfilm at the National Archives and with the assistance of Captain John G. Drew, II, USN (Ret.).

* Wounded on 13 November 1942, according to the ship's War Diary, when the ship was heavily damaged in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. No officers were killed or seriously wounded.

U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)

Muster Roll of the Crew; 13 November 1942¹

ALBERS, Richard Eugene	MM1c	DANNER, Maynard Hughes	F2c
ALLAMAN, Durward B.	F2c	DAVIDSON, E. L. Trint	F2c
ALLEN, Joseph F.	FC1c	DAVIDSON, Robert William	S1c
ALLEN, Milton S.	CEM	DAY, George H., Jr.	S2c
ANDREWS, Joseph Thomas	FC3c	DEAN, James Alexander	S2c
*ASERCION, Anselmo (n)	OS1c	DECKER, Paul Clayton	S2c
AUER, Benedict Leo	Cox.	*DEITZ, William Baker	F2c
AUSTIN, Hilton (n)	GM2c	DESRUISSEAU, Edward R.	S2c
AUTEN, Donald Scott	RM2c	DEUMER, Ernest (n)	F1c
AYLWARD, William Gabriel	S1c	DEWEY, Lawrence Henry	F1c
BAGUET, Charles August	S2c	DIEFENBACH, Gilbert W.	S2c
BAKKE, Amos Theodor	S1c	DIEFENBACH, William C. Jr.	S1c
*BANE, Charlie Lee	CCStd	DIGIROLAMO, Damian E.	S1c
BARKLEY, James Falls	S2c	DIGNAN, Clarence Thomas	S2c
BARROW, Robert E. Lee, Jr.	S2c	DIROSA, Angelo Cristano	S1c
BAYER, Frank (n)	S1c	DODD, Kenneth Bertram	CM1c
*BECK, Fuell, Everett	RM3c	DORSETTE, Lesiel D.	TM3c
**BENEGAR, Ivory H.	CCStd	*DRISCOLL, Edward F.	F2c
BENJAMIN, John (n)	S1c	DUNCAN, Willard H.	MM1c
BENNETT, Albert Lester	S1c	DZIAMBA, Demetrius (n)	F2c
BERNARD, Thomas Joseph	SF3c	EARLS, Glenn E.	MM1c
BISHOP, Richard Phillip	S2c	ECKLES, Joe H.	BM2c
BLACKFORD, Earnest W.	F3c	ENGDAHL, Sidney Gilbert	S2c
BODROG, John (n)	Cox.	*ENGSTER, Alfred Howard	S1c
*BOWEN, James William	FC2c	*EWING, George Henry	F2c
BRENNAN, Francis J.	MM2c	*EYLAR, Allen A.	SC2c
**BRISSON, Kenneth C.	S2c	FAGAN, Thomas James	FC1c
BROCKWELL, Guy F.	Cox.	*FARNSWORTH, Melvin C.	GM2c
BRODY, H. Nathaniel	SOM3c	*FERGUSON, Roy William	MM1c
BROWN, Claude Reese	F2c	*FETZER, Ralph Albert, Jr.	S1c
BROWNING, Emmett (n)	Cox.	*FISH, Walter Gerard	F1c
BRUCE, William H.	S2c	FLANAGAN, Estie D.	SK1c
CARFLEY, Orlando (n)	F2c	FLINN, Frederick T.	S2c
CARTER, Leroy (n)	MAtt2	*FLUHART, Bernard Franklin	S1c
CASPERSON, Lloyd W.	S1c	FOLEY, Royce Calvin	SOM3c
CHINN, Donald Thornton	CY	FORMAN, Steven Joseph	EM3c
CLARK, Kenneth Allen	F2c	FORMES, George E.	WT1c
CLINE, John Joseph	S1c	*FOSTER, Antonio L.	S2c
*COFER, John J.	S1c	FOURNIER, Raymond Lionel	S1c
*COFFMAN, William Junior	TM2c	FRETWELL, Durwood Loraine	TM3c
COLEMAN, John Joseph	S1c	FRIGON, Roland Joseph	S1c
CONNOR, Raymond Edward	S1c	GAITHER, Ellsworth Cash	S1c
COOPER, William Wilson	S1c	GALLOWAY, William Glenn	S1c
*COWART, John Louis	SOM3c	GARNETT, Eskel Ree	CWT
COX, Robert H.	S2c	GIDDINGS, Harvey James	F2c
*COX, Thomas J.	S2c	GLOVER, Raymond (n)	OC3c
CUSHING, Ralph Walter	MM1c	GONZALES, Anthony R.	TM3c
CUTRIGHT, Cheslie Claude	F1c	GREEN, Kenneth Edward	S1c

*GREEN, Marion (n)	OC1c	MAYNER, Robert Lee	CRM
GREER, Robert George	S2c	McCLELLAN, David Laton	S1c
GREGORY, Alfred James	S1c	McCORD, Paul C.	MM1c
*GRIFFIN, Melvin R.	SM3c	McDOW, George Harold	F2c
*HAINES, George E.	RM1c	McDOWELL, Webster L.	S2c
HANIFAN, John Thomas	F2c	*McGINNIS, Thomas Edward	S1c
HANSEN, Clark Martin	QM3c	*McGRADY, John Sterling	CTM
HARMAN, Robert Keith	RM2c	McLAIN, Roger Sherman	WT1c
HARRISON, Thomas Patrick	EM2c	*McNULTY, Anthony J.	CMM
*HART, Frederick Thomas	SM1c	MEADER, Glenn Leroy	S2c
HAZEN, Cecil (n)	BM1c	MILLER, Irvin (n)	F2c
*HENSEL, Adelbert Walter	CMsmth	MILLION, Charles J., Jr.	F2c
**HESS, George Benton	F2c	MITCHELL, Elmer C.	S2c
HICKEY, Robert Charles	S2c	MONTGOMERY, George C.	F1c
HUTCHINSON, Ralph H.	BM2c	MONTOYA, Alfredo	OC2c
IMHOLTE, Robert Otto	GM3c	*MOODY, Theodore Joseph	S1c
INGRAM, Gordon G.	MM2c	MOONEY, Walter F.	S1c
INGRAM, Howard Kelly	Cox.	MOORE, William Ira	MM2c
INGRAM, Wilbert (n)	S1c	*MORRIS, Charles E.	RM3c
JAMES, John William	F2c	MUSARRA, Joseph Francis	S1c
JANICKI, Edward (n)	MM2c	NEWMAN, Johnie C.	S1c
JERRED, Howard Thomas	S1c	*NIGLIO, Albert Michael	SM3c
JOHNSON, Gustaf H.	CQM	PARKS, Robert Glenn	F2c
*JONES, Junius C., Jr.	S1c	PECOR, Timothy Edward	GM2c
KARPPPEL, Alvin Sumner	S2c	PENUEL, Ben Henry	GM1c
KEELER, James Russell	GM3c	PEST, John (n)	CMM
KELLEY, Lee Roy	CBM	PETTITT, Bobbie Lee	RM2c
KENT, Harold William	SM1c	*PICHETTE, Paul Emile	SC3c
KERR, Chester Mark	Y1c	PILLING, Waldo Leon	F2c
KIBBEY, Clifford Elmer	SOM3c	PINNEY, Lloyd Lester	F1c
KOSLOFSKUS, John (n)	BM1c	PORCARO, Pellegrino (n)	F2c
KRULEK, Alphonsus (n)	S1c	*POYTHRESS, Joseph E., Jr.	GM2c
*LANDRUM, Otis Hester	TM3c	PREVOST, Holland Joseph	PhM2c
*LASKOWSKI, Joseph Stanley	BM2c	PRICHARD, Wade Allen	S1c
LEATHERWOOD, Granville G.	SM1c	*QUINN, John H.	CWT
*LESNESKI, Martin Edward	SC3c	RABB, Richard Leon	Bmkr1
LITTLE, Lawrence Andrew	F2c	*RAVIN, John Crockett	TM1c
LOHMAN, Lindsey Warren	S1c	*REYNOLDS, Murray W.	CEM
LONG, James Joseph	CMM	*RITTER, Charles (n)	CTM
LUKOMSKI, Raymond Faustyn	S1c	*RIVERA, Timoteo (n)	OS2c
LYNN, Charles William	F1c	RODECKER, Nicholas E.	F1c
MABEN, Sim Edward	GM1c	RODES, Henry Albert	MM1c
*MacCORMACK, John E.	S2c	*ROY, Armand William	CPhM
MacDONALD, John J.	MM1c	*RUDOLPH, Henry Francis	F1c
MADDEN, James Thomas	CFC	RUSBULDT, Robert Paul	CMM
*MANGERIAN, Harry, Jr.	S2c	SALAMON, Daniel (n)	S1c
*MANN, Earl William	F1c	SCHARK, Allen Edward	EM3c
*MANSFIELD, Richard G.	SOM3c	*SCHLEHER, Paul A.	FC1c
*MARSHALL, Eugene Jerome	CRM	SCHLOMER, Thomas E.	Y1c
*MARSHALL, William Leo	F2c	*SCHNEIDER, Paul Bernard	S1c
MASON, Wiley Ray	S2c	*SEALE, James (n)	S2c
MATTHEWS, Leo (n)	MAtt1c	*SEHLER, Cecil T.	CY

SHUNSTROM, Albert C.	S2c	WALIC, John J.	MM2c
SIEGFRIED, LeRoy Glenn	F1c	WALKER, John Lewis	F2c
SIMMERS, Ferdinand J.	WT1c	**WALLNER, Frank L.	S2c
SIMMONS, Charles Marquis	SF3c	WALLWORK, John Julius	RM2c
SIMMONS, George Edward	S2c	WALSH, Edward Patrick	F2c
SIMONEAU, Peter Charles	S1c	WALTHER, Bruce Harry	S2c
SINGLETON, Herbert G.	MAtt3	WATSON, Clarence Robert	F2c
SITKO, Edward (n)	F1c	WATSON, George Alexander	RM3c
SMITH, Clarence Bailey	S1c	*WEBER, Norman M.	F3c
SMITH, Francis William	F2c	WEIHS, Alfred Peter	F3c
SMITH, Leland C.	SM2c	WEISS, John (n)	S2c
*SMITH, Luther Leon	TM3c	WELLS, Eugene (n)	F3c
SMITH, Robert Jackson	EM2c	WENSDOFER, John Anthony	S1c
SMITH, Willis I.	S1c	*WESPETAL, Oliver Stephen	S1c
SQUIRES, Ellis Monroe	EM3c	*WICHMAN, Ernest Charles	SF1c
STEGNER, Frederick A.	F2c	WILLIAMS, Marion G.	BM2c
STERLING, Charles T., Jr.	S1c	WILSON, William Russell	MAtt1
STEVENSON, Harry A.	MM1c	*WINGATE, Virgil Raymond	SOM3c
STORK, Edward Adam	S1c	WISEMAN, Oscar R.	WT2c
TALBOT, John Herbert	S1c	WOLF, Dewilton Dow	S1c
TEBBETTS, Henry Manfred	F2c	WOODMAN, Clinton Albert	S1c
TODHUNTER, Clifford J.	F2c	*WRAY, Alford K.	WT1c
TRAYNOR, Edward A., Jr.	F1c	YOTT, Gerald (n)	MM1c
TUTTLE, Alford Martin	MM1c	YOUNG, Raymond Archibald	S1c
TWAY, Robert Wilson	Y2c	*ZELIFF, Donald F.	F1c
VERONA, David Allison	F2c		

* * * * *

- 1 Source: The ship's personnel diary on microfilm at the National Archives. The muster roll for the quarter ending 30 September 1942 was updated to reflect transfers, men received and changes in rate reported prior to 13 November 1942.
 - 2 Officer complement includes the destroyer squadron commander and his three staff officers.
- * Wounded (** Killed) when the ship was heavily damaged during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942 according to the casualties listed in the ship's War Diary.

Summary of Casualties:

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Not Wounded</u>	<u>Complement² on 11/13/42</u>
Officer	0	9	7	16
Enlisted	<u>15</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>187</u>	<u>251</u>
TOTALS	<u>15</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>194</u>	<u>267</u>

COPY

58804

3768 10th Ave.

San Diego, 3. Calif.

June 10th, 1947.

From: Captain Orville F. Gregor, U. S. Navy

To: BUPERS (Medals and Awards)

Subject: Recommendation of award of Silver Star to Lieut. Comdr. John G. Drew,
USN and Marion Gene Williams, 283 12 70, CBM, USN.

Enclosure (A) Sample Citation for Lieut. Comdr. Drew.

(B) Sample Citation for CBM Williams.

1. It has just recently been brought to my attention that Lieut. Comdr. Drew and CBM Williams have received no recognition for their services during the period they served with me on The USS Aaron Ward (DD483) and particularly during the night battle of November 13th, 1942 off Guadalcanal.
2. Both were recommended previously by me to Comsopac for the Award of the SILVER STAR.
3. The following is a brief summary of the outstanding work performed by this officer and man.

(A) Lieut. Comdr. John G. Drew, USN.

During the Night Battle off Guadalcanal on November 13th, 1942, Lieut. Comdr. Drew (then Ensign) was torpedo officer. During the battle, Drew kept me informed constantly of conditions that I could not always see, as my station was on the Bridge, from which I could not see around at all times. During the progress of the battle at one time, orders had been issued to fire torpedoes at a Jap battleship. Just a few seconds before firing, Drew noticed that the U.S.S. San Francisco came between us and the Jap battleship. Due to his coolness he did not fire and informed me immediately. This quick action, without doubt, saved

the U. S.S. San Francisco from further damage. Drew kept me informed of approaching torpedoes. As the battle progressed further and our radar was shot off and fell on the whistle, causing it to blow constantly, he supervised removing the wreckage. During the whole battle, Lt. Comdr. Drew was cool, alert and was an inspiration to the men working under him. It is felt that Drew was very instrumental in helping us win this battle, and by his assistance, we were afloat the next morning instead of being sunk. Prior to and after this battle, Drew, although an Ensign, was one of the three principal OCD watch standers, and could always be trusted to carry out his duties. He stood top watch in the war zone during my tour of duty, almost constantly, for 9 months. During this time, the ship was in air raids, submarine attacks and bombardments.

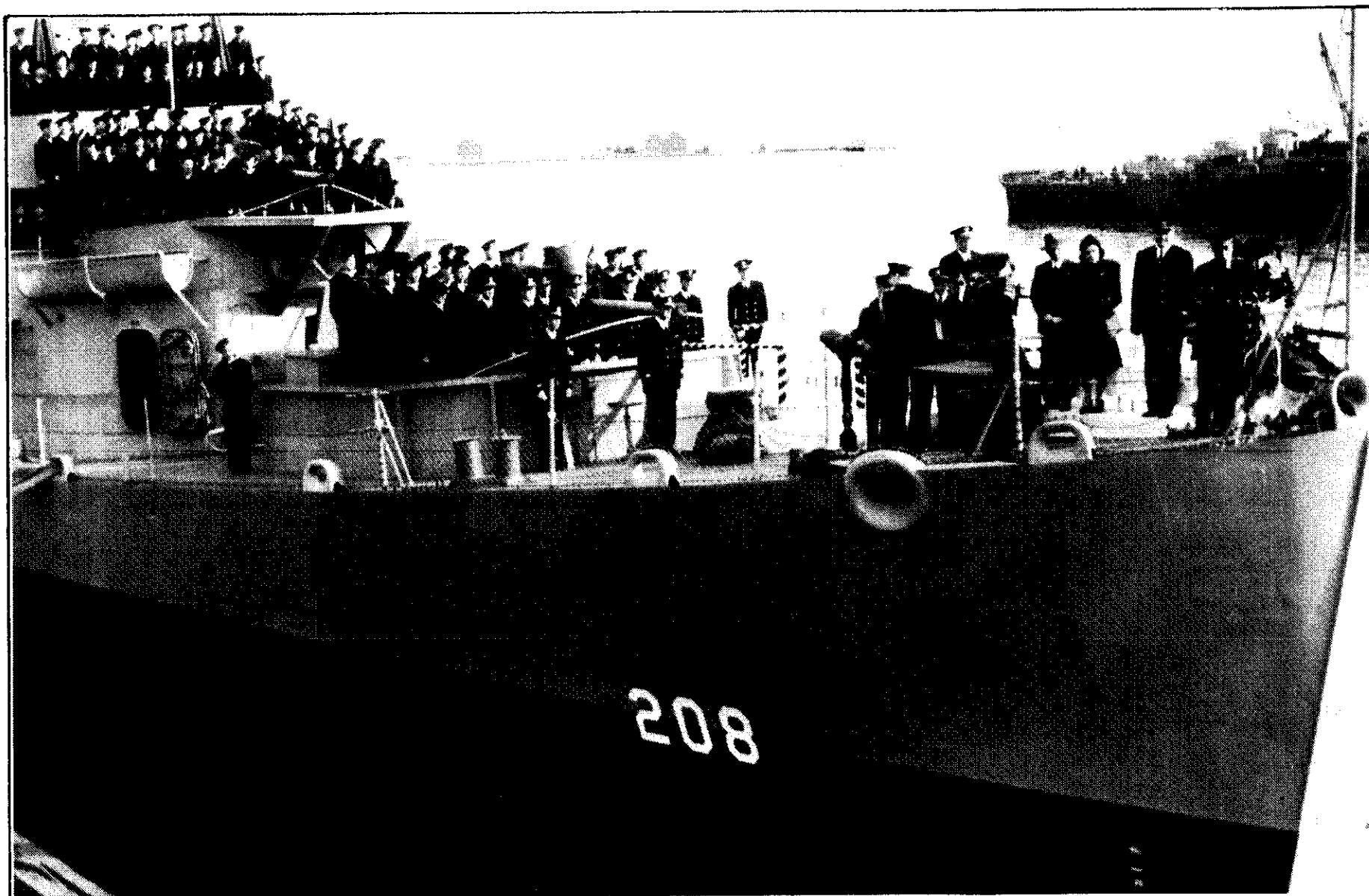
4. It is felt that both this officer and man, are very deserving of the Silver Star and it is therefore requested that consideration be given to awarding them this medal.
5. It is further requested that a copy of this letter be made a part of their official record.

C. F. GREGOR.

Editor's Note:

Lieutenant Commander Drew was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with a Combat "V" for his services aboard the U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483). He retired on 30 June 1972 as a Captain, USN.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
March, 1996



The christening of the destroyer escort U.S.S. Cofer (DE-208), named after the Aaron Ward's Seaman First Class John J. Cofer, USN, who was killed in action during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942. Seaman Cofer was awarded the Silver Star Medal posthumously for continuing to man his battle station as rangefinder operator even after he was mortally wounded by shrapnel. His last words were, "I can range no longer." The Cofer was commissioned at the Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina, on 19 January 1944. She was a 1,400-ton Buckley-class destroyer escort with three 3-in./50 guns. (USNI collection.)

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..

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 steamed 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 SHEPLER / U.S. NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER

UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTITUTE

Naval History - May/June 1995

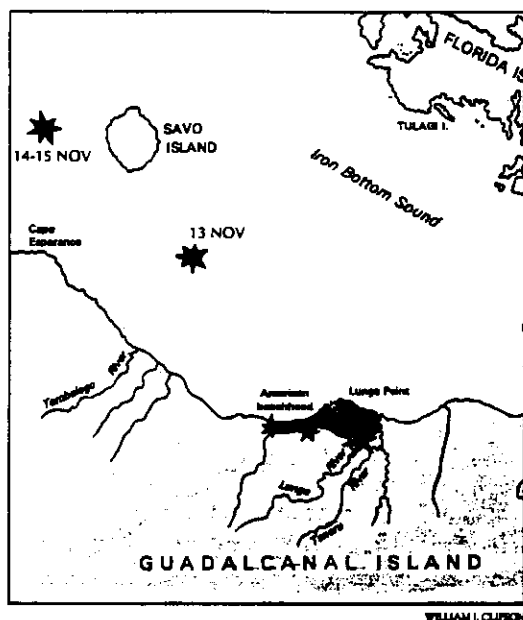
able to support the defense of Guadalcanal, and U.S. leaders considered the possibility that it might become necessary to evacuate the island.

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 Tegelthoff 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.

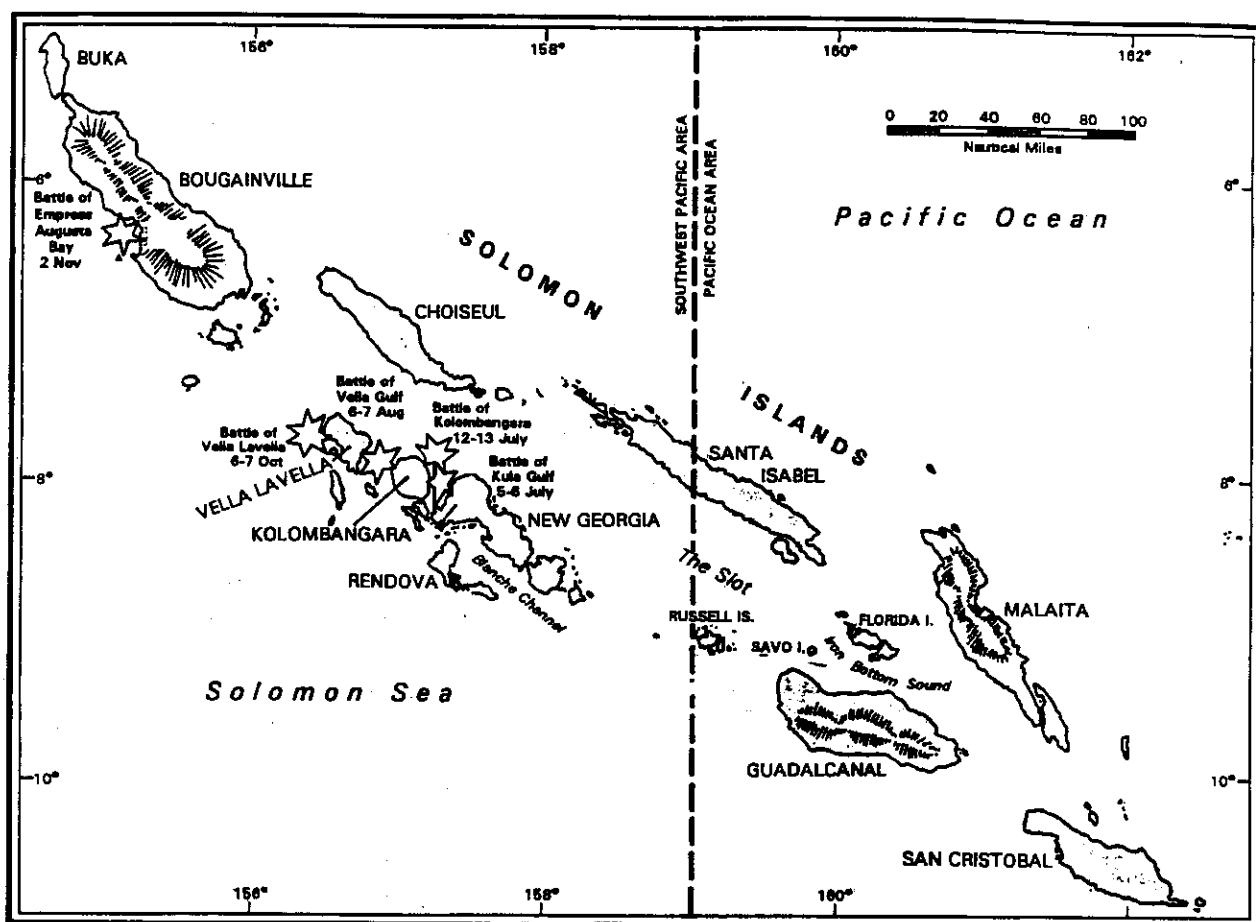
Dawn and U.S. aircraft found the *Hiei* only a few miles from Guadalcanal. Repeated bomb and torpedo runs added to her misery, and around sunset she became the first Japanese battleship to be sunk in World War II. The day's action was not entirely to the Imperial Navy's disadvantage, however. Torpedoes 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, pasted 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 Nobutake 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).



Ensign Fred C. Hill



A. J. McNulty



Roy Ferguson

Youngstown Shipmates to Get Medals for Helping to Sink Jap Cruiser and Damage Three Warships

Three Youngstown men who did not know each other a year ago are joined today by a common experience, none of them will ever forget. They are shipmates on the now-famous Aaron Ward, the spunky little destroyer which sank a light cruiser and damaged a Jap battleship and two destroyers during the naval engagement of Nov. 13, off Savo Island.

A. J. McNulty, chief machinist, a senior of 25 years' experience; Ensign Fred Hill, assistant gunnery officer, who was graduated from Annapolis only last June, and Petty Officer Roy Ferguson, machinist mate first class, in the navy since 1935, will receive silver medals for their part in the engagement. Ferguson, wounded during battle is probably back on duty again, his family says.

Ship Hit Nine Times

It was during the engagement near Guadalcanal that the Aaron Ward went between two lines of Japanese warships and fought as close as 2,000 yards. The little ship was hit nine times.

It was so dark that the Japs and Americans couldn't always tell which were their own ships, and the Japs were firing at their own. Commander Orville F. Gregor described the battle as "hell on wheels," when a report of it was read over the radio New Year's Day. After the battle, he said, ships were burning everywhere.

McNulty wrote his account of the battle in letters to his sister, Mrs. Albert Kaufman, 458 Lora Ave., after the story had been released through the newspapers and radio.

"Thirteen of our ships," he wrote, "took on 33 Jap destroyers, cruisers, battleships, and transports. The battle started at two minutes to 2 a. m. and finished at 35 minutes after 2 a. m. with 23 Jap ships sunk and the rest damaged and on the run, but on flyers from Guadalcanal and navy surface ships finished them off in short order in daylight."

Buried Dead at Tulagi

"The Aaron Ward is only a destroyer," he continued, "but she's a fighter and she steamed through a double line of Jap ships with her four-inch guns working like machine guns, firing on destroyers, cruisers, and battleships.

"Nobody can get in a fight without getting hurt, and the same goes for ships. The Aaron Ward had nine direct hits. The old baby took them all and not only stayed on top

of the water but her men were still looking for anything that would come in range of her guns.

"Our dead were buried at Tulagi and our wounded were for the most part transferred to various medical units on the islands. And the ship—well, it took 30 days to get her in first class shape again.

"Every ship in our task force that night did herself proud. Some of them went down, but they took plenty of Jap ships with them when they did."

McNulty said Jap dive bombers and torpedo planes attacked the fleet Nov. 12, and commented, "Believe me, if I live to be a thousand, I'll never forget Nov. 12 and 13."

"It's impossible for civilians to imagine what the U. S. Army, Navy, and Marines are going through," he says. The soldiers and marines in the fighting fronts "are living in the open in the jungles and are blasted by bombing planes and shells day and night. No regular meals or sleep."

Living aboard ship is more regular, he says, except when the ship is looking for trouble. Then there is no sleep or regular meals until

the task is complete, "provided, of course, your ship is on top when the job is over."

"The minute a ship leaves port—and it's little port we have seen since last June—she becomes bait for submarines, aircraft, and surface ships."

Praises U. S. Flyers

"I have watched the army, navy, and marine pilots flying from the same field to attack the Japs who

were dive bombing us," he wrote, "and believe me, we all thanked God for the skill and courage of our fliers. The U. S. has the best pilots in the world, and before this year is over the Japs and Germans will know it as well as we do.

"By the time you get this letter we will be hitting the high spots again. Say a little prayer once in a while. They sure pulled us through a while back."

McNulty says that in November the ship stopped at a place where there was a Catholic chaplain from Chicago and the Catholic crewmen received communion.

"There are no churches there," he said. "Everything took place out in the field with the blue sky for a roof and mud and burnt weeds for a floor. The blue sky reminded him of the dome over the altar at St. Ann's, where he went to school when he was a child in Youngstown."

Joining the navy when he was just out of school, McNulty became first machinist mate and was sent to officers' school at San Diego, Calif., five years ago. His wife, the former Marion Raatz of Youngstown, and a six-year-old child live in San Diego.

Hill, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Hill, 64 Bruce St., was graduated from Annapolis in June and was assigned to the Aaron Ward. The ship had already left port so he was sent chasing it on another vessel and was transferred to the Aaron Ward by basket, finding to his surprise two other Youngstown men aboard.

Ferguson, son of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Ferguson, of Stocker Ave., left the United States in May, but was assigned later to the Aaron Ward.

Eighteen men who took part in the engagement will receive silver medals. The commander has received the navy's silver cross.

Destroyer Damaged 4 Ships In Historic Savo Isle Fray

By CHARLES McMURTRY
WITH THE U. S. PACIFIC FLEET
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC—(Delayed)—(P)—Destroyers look insignificant alongside a battleship but the U. S. destroyer Aaron Ward damaged four vessels, including a battleship, in that historic November 13 naval engagement off Savo island.

Cmdr. Orville F. Gregor of La Jolla, Cal., and formerly of St. Louis, Mo., took the Aaron Ward between two lines of Japanese warships in that engagement, fought as close as 2,000 yards in 2 a. m. darkness.

The Aaron Ward was hit by three 14-inch shells, by 8-inchers and by 5-inchers. Three torpedoes passed under her bow. "I saw their wakes," said Gregor, her captain.

But the little warship made the Japanese pay heavily for her damage, and made port, to fight again.

"We possibly sank one light cruiser and damaged three other ships—a battleship, and two destroyers," Gregor said. "We saw fires and explosions on the light cruiser. Then she blew up. We put 40 or 50 shells into the other three ships."

(Gregor was awarded a Navy Cross January 1 at Hickam field.)

"Our first target was a battleship," Gregor related. "After we fired our first salvo it was so bright we could see her plainly. (Star shells and searchlights illuminated the scene.)

"We fired at that battleship until one of our own cruisers got into our line of fire. Then we proceeded through the entire Japanese force, firing at targets on both sides of us.

"We took nine direct hits. Our mast was knocked off. That shell burst downward and killed two men in our director room. We had seven hits in the vicinity of the bridge.

"The Japs finally were firing at their own ships. It was so dark we couldn't always tell where our own ships were.

"Then the Japs illuminated us very bright with star shells. We got the hell out of there at top speed.

"We had been firing almost point blank at 2,000 yards.

"The battle lasted about 35 min-

utes. We lost our electricity and last one third of that time. Finally we went dead in the water as the battle ended.

"Ships were burning all around us. A Jap destroyer blew up 1,000 yards away. A heavy cruiser keeled over nearby, apparently hit by torpedo.

"We got under way again under our own power, but couldn't make much speed. We broke down again just before daylight.

"There was a crippled Japanese battleship, just four or five miles away, at dawn. That Jap fired four salvos at us. One salvo straddled us with 14 inch shells. We were getting our range. We probably would have been sunk, but as he fired his fourth salvo United States bombers roared over. He limped away trying to escape.

(The navy reported the bombers finished that battleship, one of the Kongo class.)

"Then a tug came out and towed us into port."

Gregor described the battle as "Hell on wheels."

He praised his squadron leader, who commanded four destroyers in that group.

"Five star shells burst right over us. It was so bright you could read a newspaper," Gregor resumed his story of the battle.

"Then we saw shells coming. Each one looked like a big white light at a distance. We couldn't see them close, but heard 6 to 10 whistle overhead.

"Then there was one that we didn't hear. That one hit us. Fire broke out and ammunition was going off all around us. A fire control party immediately got the fire out."

Another shell struck the ship's galley, wounding some men.

"I heard those crippled boys praying aloud," he said. "I never heard anything like that and never hope to again. It was pitiful. They didn't yell or cry, just prayed."

One man was mortally wounded as shrapnel tore off his telephone headset.

"But he was so true to his job that he kept sending range messages until he died," Gregor concluded.

DECLASSIFIED



DECLASSIFIED

ACTION REPORT

U.S.S. AARON WARD

DD483

REPORT OF ENEMY ACTION RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF AARON WARD.

{ DURING ENEMY AIR ATTACK ON SHIPPING IN TULAGI-
GUADALCANAL, APRIL 7, 1943. }

SERIAL 0025
APRIL 16, 1943.

48919

OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY

Serial 0025

DECLASSIFIED - OPNAV INST 5580.30
BY ~~OP-09876~~ DATE ~~21 MAR 61~~

DECLASSIFIED

Cara Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.,
April 16, 1943.

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander South Pacific Force.
(2) Commander Task Force THIRTY-ONE.
Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.
Reference: (a) Art. 712, U.S. Navy Regulations.
(b) PacFlt. Confidential Ltr. 36CL-42 of
November 8, 1942.
(c) PacFlt. Confidential Memo. 39CM-42 of
November 29, 1942.
Enclosure: (A) Action report on Standard Form including
sketch of track during attack.
(B) Sketch showing track after being hit
until sinking.
(C) Sketch showing position of tows.
(D) Sketch showing loading of ship after
flooding.
(E) Sketch showing location of hits and near
misses.
(F) Executive Officer's report.

1. In accordance with reference (a), (b) and (c) the report of action with Japanese dive bombers and the events leading up to the loss of the AARON WARD on 7 April, 1943, are listed herewith in chronological order:

About 1245 received despatch warning of large enemy air raid that was to have struck at Guadalcanal area at 1230. The AARON WARD had escorted the WARD with 3 LCT's from Russell Islands to Savo and as they were not expected to arrive Tulagi until about 1400, went ahead at 25 knots and loaded for this group to give them air coverage until arrival Tulagi. About 1330 when near Tulagi in the vicinity of the 3 LCT's and WARD, AARON WARD received orders from CAPTAIN to cover 449.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED April 16, 1943

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

Reversed course and headed for vicinity of Lunga Point where LST was last seen, but enroute saw it heading eastward. 1419 Joined LST 449 off Togoma Point, Guadalcanal Island, and informed the LST that AARON WARD had been instructed to cover him, also to follow AARON WARD's movements and zig-zag at approach of enemy planes. Maneuvered in the vicinity of Togoma Point waiting for LST to proceed. It was proposed to retire to eastward thru Lengo Channel as all cargo ships and escorting destroyers were doing.

1505 LST 449, probably making 10 knots, following AARON WARD on course 090°. AARON WARD then commenced zig-zagging at 20 knots, shifting rudder from full right to full left and repeating process continuously ahead of LST.

1508 Sighted planes dogfighting in direction of Savo Island and a closer group of Japanese planes on a southerly course from Tulagi. The gun director and 5" battery were tracking this latter group.

1512 While swinging ship to starboard three enemy planes were sighted coming out of cloud formation near the sun bearing 225° relative (or about 290° true) position angle about 60° in a dive for the ship. Went ahead flank speed and swung left with full rudder. All 20-mm guns on port side and both 40-mm mounts opened fire at a range of 1500 to 2000 yards. The Gunnery Officer had now seen these planes, swung 5" guns to position

DECLASSIFIED

April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

and opened fired with director control. Bombs from the first three planes struck near and on the ship. All electrical power was lost on both the 5" and 40-mm mounts. The guns shifted to manual and local control and continued to fire. Power had also been lost on all Mark XIV sights on 20 and 40 mm guns.

1513 Sighted three more dive bombers heading for ship bearing about 250° relative with approximately the same altitude. Ordered full right rudder but power to rudder had been lost and ship continued to swing to left. None of the bombs struck the ship but landed very near the port side. It is believed that only two of these planes dropped bombs.

The condition of the ship following the action was as follows:

Both firerooms flooded to within about 6 inches of main deck level, through either sprung plates or holes torn in side by near misses.

After engineroom flooded by holes in side from explosion of bomb in engineroom.

Forward engineroom athwartships bulkheads sprung and water leaking through bulkhead fittings, notably around starboard shaft and all steam lines entering from forward fireroom.

Living compartment aft of after engineroom partially flooded with oil and water to a level of about 4 feet and flooding through

April 16, 1943.

Subject: ~~DECLASSIFIED~~ Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

open seams in skin of ship on port side, through the forward bulkhead, and through fuel oil tank vents opening into the compartment.

There was a small fire at the torpedo tubes that was quickly extinguished.

The 40-mm magazine flooded to about 10" when steam escaping from after engine room was mistaken for smoke and sprinkling system turned on for a short time.

1530 Ortolan came alongside, passed towline, and took AARON WARD in tow. Ship settled so that about 6" freeboard was remaining amidship and about 12" at the stern, ship on even keel.

1613 Vireo came alongside port side abreast bow. Transferred 300 lb. depth charges on top side to boat from Togoma which came alongside on the port quarter.

1630 Water commenced to enter forward messing compartment thru a scullery drain and a bucket brigade was started that kept abreast of the flooding.

1641 Changed course to 336° true.

1647 Vireo commenced taking suction on forward engine room with 2½" hose.

1732 Vireo took suction on forward engine room with 6" hose. Moving all loose gear in after part of ship to forecastle.

1800 Had slight list to port (about 2°) and had all hands

April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

move loose gear from after part of ship to starboard side and keep to starboard side of ship.

1825 Jettisoned all 600 pound depth charges in racks after detonators had been removed.

1840 Ship about on even keel and about 6" freeboard at stern. The sagging of the ship had now increased appreciably and there was about 8" of water on deck from above the after engine room to the break of the forecastle deck. The sag that developed shortly after initial settling covered the deck with water on both sides to a depth of about 2 inches amidships and about 3 inches above the after fireroom.

1903 The Ortolan ceased towing and signalled she was coming alongside AARON WARD's starboard side and requested that boat davits be swung in and side cleared for taking her alongside. 1913 Ortolan alongside.

1932 The Captain of the Ortolan came on board and offered the facilities of his suction pump but had an insufficient length of hose to be of any assistance, and the fittings on our own hose were such that they could not be connected to the Ortolan's. He stated that trying to steer the AARON WARD was extremely difficult, that the position of the Vireo on our port bow was such that she was of practically no assistance in steering and that he could control the steering better from the position alongside. He remained on the director platform of the AARON

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

WARD until she sank.

1940 Both Tugs went ahead again. Except for sagging amidships which was keeping the decks awash, towing proceeded normally with slight list to starboard (estimated at about $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2°) until turn was made to starboard around Bungana Island.

2044 Course was changed to 050° true. While working the ship around to this course the ship developed a progressive list to starboard estimated at first to be about 3 or 4 degrees. The time of this sudden increase in list was not noted. Started all hands moving topside gear on forecastle, amidships and after deckhouse, in vicinity of bridge and near mast to port side of ship. This consisted of 40 and 20-mm ammunition boxes and magazines, parts of loading machine, crates of potatoes, boxes of spare parts, gas cylinders, etc.

2058 The ship had begun settling by the stern and listing more to starboard, was now about 9° , with all hands still shifting gear to port side.

2104 As the list was steadily increasing and as the Ortolan's lines were now exerting such a pull as to increase the list, she was requested to clear the side. A great deal of difficulty was experienced with clearing the Ortolan's lines as our men were trying to work with them under water and making little progress. The Ortolan was also having difficulty

DECLASSIFIED 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

trying to cut the lines, but they were cut free at about 2115 with the clinometer logged as reading $11\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. This reading is undoubtedly incorrect for it would indicate only $\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ change of list in approximately eleven minutes when actually it was apparent to anyone on board that the list was steadily increasing. The clinometer was sticking because the officer observing it noted that when it swung back to 9° after the Ortolan's lines were clear and then moved to 10° and stayed there he tapped it and it swung to 14° where it again stuck. He tapped it shortly thereafter and it swung to 16° . There was an immediate increase in the settling by the stern and a momentary decrease in the list to 9° , as previously stated, probably caused by the pull from the Vireo's lines. When the list began to increase again, however, it became evident that there was little chance of saving the ship other than by beaching her and the Ortolan was called back along side and both tugs went ahead at best speed to try to ground the ship in the nearest shoal at Tinete Point.

From this time on the list and settling by the stern increased steadily. The last reading of the clinometer reported showed a list of 20° and shortly thereafter, at about 2135, the ship went down very rapidly stern first in about 40 fathoms of water in approximately Latitude $9-10^{\circ}$ N, Longitude $160-12^{\circ}$ E, only 600 yards from the shoal water at

DECLASSIFIED April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

Tinete Point.

As regards the action itself one of the enemy planes that attacked the ship was shot down after passing over the ship and the engine of one, and possibly two, of the others was hit and smoking during their dive. The hit and near misses are shown on enclosure (E). The position of the hits and near misses were as follows:

First bomb - near miss, port side, forward fireroom -either seams parted or holes torn in side below waterline, for fireroom shipped water rapidly.

Second bomb - direct hit in after engine room, port side, about 2 feet in from deck edge and near the after bulkhead of the engine room. The hole in the deck was about 18" in diameter and bomb between 250 and 500 lb. one. The bomb was a delay-action one and it raised the deck above the after engine room about 10 inches and riddled it with shrapnel holes.

Third bomb - near miss, port side of after fireroom -either seams parted or holes torn in side by near miss below waterline.

Fourth and Fifth Bomb - near misses along port side near after engineroom.

No fires were started except for a small one on the torpedo tubes caused as follows:

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

The explosion of the first bomb hit jarred the ship so violently that the number five torpedo was thrown forward in the barrel, breaking the tension link on the locking device. The torpedo in being thrown forward caused both the inertia starter and the mechanical trip to function thereby firing the torpedo and producing a hot run of the torpedo while still in the barrel of the tube. The forward motion of the torpedo was stopped when the warhead jammed into the after port corner of the number one stack.

The hot run of the torpedo in the barrel ignited the paint and grease on the barrel, which in turn set fire to the canvas covering of the torpedo tube control gear. The afterbody of the torpedo became fused to the inside of the port outboard barrel thereby making it impossible to move the torpedo aft to disengage it from the stack.

Some ammunition in the 40-mm clipping room exploded after the direct hit, possibly due to the flying shrapnel from the bomb.

The sprinkling system was turned on for a very short time in #3 lower handling room and 40-mm magazine C-302 $\frac{1}{2}$, when the escaping steam from the after engine room was mistaken for smoke, leaving about 10" of water in the 40-mm magazine and about 6" in the lower handling room of gun 3. All compartments aft of the partially flooded living compartment aft of the after engine room were inspected immediately after the action and found dry. This

DECLASSIFIED

April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

compartment filled through holes torn in the bulkhead, seams opened in skin of ship on port side, and oil vents from ruptured oil tanks below that forced oil and water into the compartment as the ship settled.

The after bulkhead of this compartment was shored up from the adjacent compartment. The bulkhead appeared to be in good condition all the way across except for the quick-closing door on the starboard side which appeared to be taking considerable strain due to the pressure of the water on it. There was a slight weep around the center column of the handwheel and a leak at the bottom of the door. This door was shored up using 4" x 4" shores braced from the overhead and the leak at the bottom stopped.

The C.O. of Ortolan and Vireo did all they could to get the ship pumped out and towed into port and tried to get it into shallow enough water to beach the ship when it became evident there was little time to save it. Their own and their personnel's ready assistance immediately after the action was over in taking the ship in tow and trying to keep her afloat and get her into port and their subsequent rescue operations after the ship sank were highly commendable.

The officers and crew performed exceedingly well all during the action. It is disappointing that some of the planes could not have been downed before dropping their bombs, and though one plane was definitely hit in its dive and two others smoking as if they

DECLASSIFIED

April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

had been hit, five of the six dropped bombs very close to the ship or on it. Two direct hits were reported in original despatch reporting the action and subsequent loss of the ship, but the dished in section where the bomb was thought to have struck is now believed to have been caused by a very close miss, probably 5 feet or less from the ship, abreast the forward fireroom, through which fireroom personnel observed water pouring that drove them from the fireroom.

The mining effect of the near misses on the ship was terrific, rocking it violently and seeming to practically lift it out of the water. The bombing was extremely accurate and the near misses seemed to be all less than 5 yards from the ship.

The radar screen prior to the attack indicated a large melee of planes in the direction of Savo Island and another large group towards Tulagi. There were so many pips on the screen that it was practically impossible to tell the enemy planes from the friendly ones and the planes that attacked the ship were not discernible on the screen until they were visible to the eye and consequently the radar was of no assistance except for giving the bearings of the large melees.

The performance of the ship's armament and engineering plant during the brief action was, with the following exceptions, excellent:

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED April 16, 1943

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

No. 3 - 20-mm gun jammed due to a broken extractor

No. 6 - 20-mm magazine was knocked off by the concussion from the bomb explosions and the longitudinal bars holding the barrel spring were sprung.

One serious fault in design was revealed in that the air vents from the fuel oil tanks in the living compartment just aft of the after engine room forced oil and water into the compartment from the tanks below that were undoubtedly split and filled with salt water.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (1) that oil vents from all compartments be vented above the main deck; (2) that a diesel generator be installed on the main deck in this type ship again to supply emergency power after all power has been lost; (3) that an auxiliary ring sight be fitted on the 20-mm guns for use when all power is lost. Even with tracer control the 20-mm gunners had difficulty getting on and keeping on the enemy planes during their dives and after they had passed over the ship.

As a result of the enemy action and the subsequent sinking casualties to personnel were as follows:

No. of Officers killed: None

No. of men killed: 20

No. of Officers missing: None

No. of men missing: 7

No. of Officers seriously wounded: None

~~DECLASSIFIED~~
April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

No. of men seriously wounded: 8

No. of Officers slightly wounded: 8

No. of men slightly wounded: 43

Much of the Radar, and Radio spares and navigational materials were transferred to the tugs, as were logs, service records, health records, government money, and confidential publications. Attempt was made to transfer the E.C.M. to the Vireo shortly before the ship sank but it was impossible. The E.C.M. and its wheels were thrown over separately, in about 40 fathoms of water. Some confidential publications were discovered on inventory to have been left in the ship and sank with it. A despatch report of those involved has been made to Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, and Commander South Pacific Force followed by a letter report. Transfer ashore of the radar and radio equipment was recommended to Comtaskfor 31 after the ship sank and it is to be put ashore in Tulagi. The navigational equipment was transferred to Advanced Naval Base, Tulagi, as well as the pistols of twelve of the officers who wore them when the ship went down.

After the action it was believed the ship had a good chance of standing a tow to Hutchinson Creek where she had been ordered to take shelter. Even with a very pronounced increase in sinking by the stern and sagging of the amidship section while

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

April 16, 1943.

Subject: Report of enemy action resulting in loss
of AARON WARD.

in tow the situation looked fairly favorable until the ever increasing listing after the turn to 050° could not be checked by shifting weights or personnel or clearing the Ortolan from the side.

The immediate impression after the settling by the stern and listing had begun to increase to such alarming proportions was that, despite a good shoring job on the quick closing door, the working of the ship in her weakened condition by the repeated striking of the ship's side, near the quick-closing door, by the Ortolan in her efforts to keep the ship on its course had worked the shores loose and the thin quick closing door had finally given away. This may have happened, but whatever the cause it was apparent the only chance to save the ship was to get her onto the nearest shoal. Despite the efforts of both the tugs to save her she sank before this could be accomplished.

The gallant crew and officers of the ship were splendid in their conduct during the action and in their later efforts to save the ship. They would make an excellent crew to put intact on a new destroyer. They are, with one accord, particularly desirous of staying together and of getting back on a fighting ship to soon avenge the deaths of their heroic shipmates.

F. J. BECTON.

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
ANTI-AIRCRAFT ACTION BY SURFACE SHIPS

Location of ship Lat. 9°23.7'N - Long. 160°16.3E U.S.S. AARON WARD
~~SECRETORY~~

213

~~DECLASSIFIED~~ Date 7 April, 1943

NOTES

- (a) Repel Attack First - Then collect data for this report!
- (b) Do not "gun deck" this report. -- if data cannot be estimated with reasonable accuracy enter dash in space for which no data is available.
- (c) These sheets are to be filled out immediately after action is completed with data available from ship's log, memory, and consultation with ship's officers. Information is essential in order that the effectiveness of our equipment can be determined. Where data is of doubtful accuracy fill in with general terms. The obtaining of this information must not be allowed in any way to adversely affect the handling of equipment during action.

- 1. Surprise attack (yes or no) Yes (Tracking other enemy planes)
- 2. Method picking plane up (Radar, binoculars, naked eye) naked eye
_____ (If by Radar state type of set) _____

(a) Lookout(s) or special equipment detector operator(s):

Name: _____ Rate _____ Ser.No. _____

made initial contact by _____
(sound), (radar), (SMSD), (MAD), (Sight)

- 3. Range plane was picked up (50 miles, 30 miles, 10 miles, less 5 miles) 2000 yards.
- 4. Number of planes 5 or 6:
- 5. Type of plane (Fighter, scout, dive-bomber) dive bombers Type of attack Dive
- 6. Speed & altitude (High and fast, intermediate and fast, low and fast, high and slow, intermediate and slow, low and slow) High and fast.
- 7. Guns firing 10 Size 5"/38, 40-mm, 20-mm No. 4, 2 twin, 20-mm per side 4, 20-mm Star.
Method of control Director & Local Method spotting Direct. side 3.
- 8. Ammunition expended 30- 5"/38, 100 - 40-mm, 1400 - 20-mm.
- 9. Percent service allowance expended _____ (A)

DECLASSIFIED

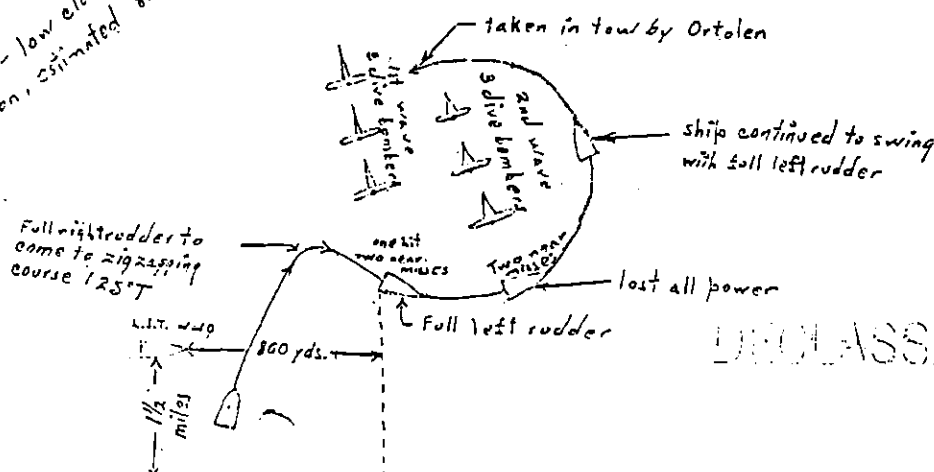
10. Approximate time tracking to first-shot - - -
11. Approximate time of first hits 30 seconds after sighting.
12. Approximate time first shot to last shot about 1 1/2 minutes
13. Approximate position angle open fire 60°
14. Approximate position cease fire 0° - 5°
15. Approximate bearing first shot 250°
16. Approximate bearing last shot Firing at planes on both sides of ship.
17. Approximate range first shot 1500 - 1800 yards.
18. Approximate range last shot 200 Ft.
19. Approximate altitude of bomb release 500 Ft.
Type bomb 250 - 500 Lb.
20. Approximate range torpedo release - - -
Size of torpedo - - -
21. Hits on ship 1 Was ship strafed No Size of gun - - -
22. Number near bomb misses 2 Casualties from same - - -
23. Planes shot down - sure 1 Possible 1 Damage 1
By what size gun 20-mm and 40-mm.
24. Details of damage to target by gunfire if available Engines set afire on 3 planes.
25. Performance of ammunition (Excellent, good, bad, poor) Excellent
26. Pattern sizes (Large, small excessive) Not observed.

SKETCH

- (a) Indicate direction of attack relative ship's head.
- (b) Show relative position of sun.
- (c) Indicate own maneuvers.

On 20. 288°

Overcast - low clouds formation, estimated 5000 ft



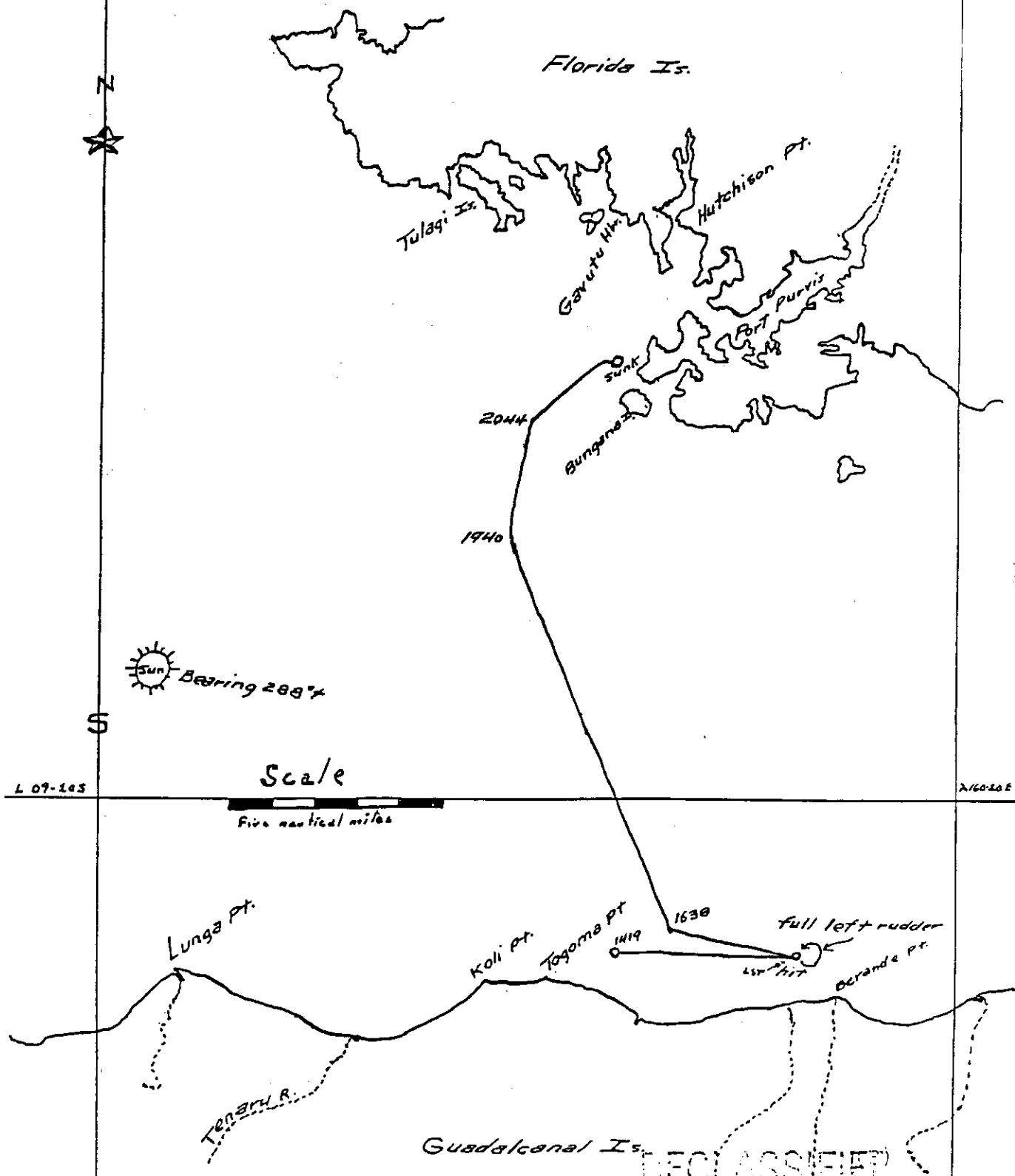
DECLASSIFIED

Track of USS Aaron Ward 4-7-43
Ref: H.O. Chart # 2916

DECLASSIFIED

160°E

09°S



09-143

160-20E

DECLASSIFIED

Destroyer Bombed, Crew Stuffed Up Holes in Futile Effort to Save It

How the crew of the American destroyer Aaron Ward worked frantically for two hours to keep the ship from sinking after it was struck by Japanese bombers off Guadalcanal April 7, was related here yesterday by Lieut. David W. Riesmeyer, 23, a survivor on leave at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick H. Riesmeyer, 1624 Pershing avenue.

"Two waves of bombers came over and scored direct hits," Riesmeyer recounted. "The ship started to take on water immediately but we worked below, stuffing mattresses, pillows, towels and anything we could get into the holes and shored them up with timbers, but it was a hopeless task, and the Aaron Ward went down about two hours later.

"Many of the crew escaped to an accompanying ship and the others jumped in the water and swam to life rafts. We were picked up shortly by another vessel."

Lieut. Riesmeyer, who recently has been traveling instructor on the staff of the Commander Destroyer, Pacific Fleet, has participated in all major engagements against the Japanese. In a November engagement off Savo Island the Aaron Ward damaged four enemy vessels, including one battleship. She was hit by three 14-inch shells and three torpedoes passed under its bow. Riesmeyer was injured by shell fragments. Another St. Louisan, Lieut. (j. g.) John Graham Drew II, was chief engineer of the destroyer.

Called to active duty in August 1941, as an Ensign after graduation from Yale in the R. O. T. C., Lieut. Riesmeyer, who has been in South Pacific service for 18 months, has been assigned for naval aviation training at Dallas, Tex., and later to Pensacola, Fla.



LIEUT. DAVID W. RIESMEYER

The Mighty 483

The Aaron Ward Filled her Short Span of Life with Some Terrific Action

By R.J.C. FAY

As Narrated by G. E. Formes

SO EAR, she has not received the Presidential Unit Citation, but Lord knows she did everything that could be demanded of a "tin can" during her short span of life. The men who served aboard her carry precious memories of their mighty little vessel. And if you want a slugging, death-defying, hell-roaring ship to nominate for everlasting glory—take the AARON WARD, DD483.

She's gone now, together with many of her crew. The Japs finally got her. The law of averages caught up with her at last. She'd dared destruction so many times and come out with colors flying that her finale seems anti-climactic—coming, as it did, on a quiet day with the tide of war running far to the northward. Strange, too, that it should come at Guadalcanal where she'd seen so much of roaring guns and sinking ships.

It was April 7, 1943, that the Japs made one last desperate marshalling of their air power and sent 98 suicide bombers and fighters in to Guad in the hopes of crippling our forces that were surging over their bastions to the north.

The attackers were met by a swarm of fighters from Henderson Field, and the ships in the harbor threw up a dense screen of fire. The formation was ripped apart, planes fell in burning wreckage—but they could not all be turned back.

They broke through, singly and in pairs, and they got their bombs away; then they headed back for their bases. They had paid for their temerity, and 39 of the attacking force were battered out of the air—but they got the KANAWAH, an old tanker, a New Zealand corvette, and the AARON WARD!

The last was certainly a blow over which the Japs could gloat, for the little DD had been a terror to the Nips.

I had come aboard the AARON WARD prior to her commissioning, March 4, 1942, at the Federal Yards, Kearney, New Jersey. In my 16 years of service I'd had

duty on almost every type of warship, and was one of the experienced men who were to form a nucleus for the new crew. I was Water Tender, First Class.

Less than two months after the commissioning pennant had been run up, the AARON WARD was at sea and headed for action. Her Skipper was Lt. Comdr. O. F. Gregor.

The long trip around to the West Coast was well spent in whipping that green crew into a fighting unit. And how those kids responded—reserves, many of them, boots from the training stations, most of them on deep water for the first time, they learned fast and by the time we hit Diego they could shoot and sail with the best afloat.

It was the Aleutians for us as a first assignment, with little action outside a sub scare or two, and much of monotony in the cold and dreary fogs of the north. That phase was short lived, and then the AARON WARD got the orders that we'd expected from the first. It was the South Pacific for us.

However, once in the war zone itself, we seemed slated for a role of Reluctant Dragon, and week followed week with patrols and escort duty that fringed the danger area but never brought us sight of an enemy. The Marines landed at Guadalcanal, and the four heavy cruisers were sunk in a luckless night. The Japs began their bombardments of the beach-head where the Leathernecks clung with desperate ferocity, unsupported, and without reinforcement. The "Tokyo Express" became a byword to our fleet.

We began to grouse. Whyinell don't we do something! we asked each other. When we gathered on the fantail of a sultry evening we fought a hundred battles and made a hundred thrusts at the enemies during the course of an hour's battling the breeze. But still our task force cruised, to our way of thinking, in aimless passage up and down the

Editor's Note: This narrative by Water Tender George E. Formes appeared in the Mid-July 1944 issue of Our Navy. It is included in my booklet courtesy of Robert O. Imholte.

*E. A. Wilde, Jr.
April, 1996*

Coral Sea. The WASP was with us, and a number of cruisers, and we thought we had more than enough ships in our outfit to give some sort of battle.

Tokyo Rose came on the air with her nightly communiques to the American fleet and stirred our blood to the boiling point. If she wanted to make us fighting mad, she certainly succeeded. If she wanted to sour us on the war, put us in a quitting mood, she was wasting her time. There never was a ship that wanted action more than the AARON WARD during those hours.

September came. Each day, during such periods of inactivity, is much like the last, so that it becomes hard to keep track of time. A man almost forgets what day of the week it is, what date of the month.

So I remember this night, not by date, but by what happened. I had had the evening watch in Number 2 fireroom, and when I was relieved at midnight I went up on deck for a blow and to look around before scrubbing up and hitting my bunk. It was a tranquil night, very dark, with a smooth sea running. I could just make out the carrier and the other ships with us, cruising without lights.

CSM Hart, a good shipmate of mine, sauntered down from the signal bridge and joined me. We stood there for a while, not saying anything. Finally Hart said, "George, we're going in for the business."

I looked up at him. "What do you mean?"

He waved his hand in the darkness. "Well, look around in an hour or two and see who we're with."

He turned on his heel and left me then, and I waited there on deck, feeling the excitement of his words. Sure enough, in about an hour I could see that we had been silently joined by other ships that had come out of the night and fallen into cruising formation. Then I felt the tremor of the AARON WARD as the ship kicked up speed. You get to know your ship after years of service, and you can almost tell by the feel of her just what speed she's making.

The dope was out now. We were making 27 knots and were due to arrive at Guadalcanal at 7 in the morning. We went into condition 2, four on and four off.

I had three kids on my watch, all new to the sea and new to battle. Swell kids, every one of them. Sure, they felt a little tight at that moment, like every man does, if he isn't a fool, when he knows that death is a very real possibility.

For my own part, I had had years of duty at sea, in which discipline had taught me to follow an order to the letter almost without thought of the consequences. And I had been under

fire aboard the CINCINNATI when that ship had gone up the Yangtze River in '27. We'd had casualties aboard before we had finally been relieved by the MARBLEHEAD. Even that experience helped me now.

"Don't be afraid of this," I told the kids. "Every man has to do this the first time."

Every man had his job to do, and there wasn't too much opportunity to sit around and discuss the prospects. A fireroom of a destroyer travelling at high speed isn't any social room, and though you may do some thinking to yourself, you haven't much opportunity to give way to any fears that may be plaguing you. Still-and-all, with the blackgang it's an entirely different proposition than with those who are on deck or above the waterline. The thin, half-inch plating of the hull is all that stands between you and a tin fish that might blast out of the sea at any moment. The boilers themselves are a source of sudden death, and live steam has trapped many a black gang far below decks. I did my best to relieve the tension of the men in my watch, and they came through like veterans.

The AARON WARD had been detached from the rest of the force and we were going to run right in to Henderson Field and pick up a spotting party. The Japs had been causing particular hell from positions across the river from our Marines, and it was decided the only way to get them out was to run a destroyer in to bombard them—give them a taste of their own tactics. The AARON WARD had been nominated for the job. The Marine spotting party would direct our fire, and on completion of the job we'd return them by Higgins boats to shore.

We came in through the slot on schedule and stood off to pick up the spotting party. From the fireroom we could see nothing of what was going on, of course, and only the brief words of the telephone system kept us at all informed. The clang of the telephone brought us the first indication that we were in for trouble: "The first bell on stop will be flank speed—give her all you've got." Things were tense up on deck and the Skipper was ready for a quick getaway. All boilers were lit off and the destroyer quivered like a race horse at the starting gate.

Pecora, one of the firemen, clattered into the compartment. His eyes were just a bit wide with excitement. "Form," he said, "there are eight Jap bombers up there."

We looked at each other. "Well, nothin' we can do about it." We could feel the ship heel over in sharp turns and we knew the AARON WARD was zig-zagging. Suddenly we got the bell for flank speed. The ship fairly leaped out from under

our feet. And then we heard her guns going, muffled booms down here. We waited then, tense and silent, our eyes on the gauges that meant everything to us if we hoped to keep up speed. Few people realize the delicate timing of the job the fireroom crews have, and how important it is to the ship.

We felt the ship quiver to something more powerful than her own guns—jump again. A little paint sifted off the overhead.

Then the guns ceased firing up on deck and the ship settled into a more even tempo. The raid was over. To us in the fireroom it had consisted entirely of a few tense orders, a distant booming of guns, and the shock of exploding bombs far off.

The gun crews on deck had had a more interesting time of it, and had knocked down at least one plane, perhaps others; the other tin can with us and the shore batteries had accounted for several more. No bombs had reached their mark.

~~That was our introduction to Guadal-~~
canal. We were to see more of the place—much more.

We went back to our rendezvous and got our spotting party, then cruised down the coast for three or four hours knocking out Jap guns and generally playing hell with their defenses. Palm trees hurtled skyward under the exploding shells, and one terrific blast indicated that we'd found an ammunition dump.

When the Higgins boats came alongside to take off the spotters we loaded the crew down with candy, cigarettes, and any other delicacy we could lay hands on. The boys ashore had been having a rough time of it, but we hoped that our party that morning had made things a little easier for them.

There ensued for the AARON WARD another of those long periods of boredom, when life was one monotony of early morning G.Q., long night watches, convoys, blistering sun, and confinement under hot steel decks. It was considered a good liberty just to go alongside another ship and see a few new faces.

We got ourselves a sub during one run, and on another occasion saw one of our cruisers catch a fish in the night. On September 15 we were just off the port bow of the WASP when she suddenly quaked under the blast of a torpedo.

But the month of November was marked as the hour of the AARON WARD's great triumph—as in the case of so many other of our ships.

We went into Guadalcanal with a task force running supplies and reefs

ments, and were in the thickest part of the great battle of Guadalcanal, November 12-13, 1942.

Again I can only tell how a battle seems from the depths of the engine room.

It is not an experience to be looked forward to with any enjoyment. Still, at the time, it is not particularly awful. For while we are faced with the thought of being trapped, we are at the same time spared the awesome sight of hit and burning ships, of the gleaming shells arching toward you and of the thunderous roar of the guns. If you keep busy and keep calm, that's all there is to it.

As usual my watch was in the fireroom as we pulled out to meet the overwhelming force the Japs were sending against us. We had no way of knowing how close we were to the enemy, and our first indication of the joining of action was the crash of our own guns. The destroyer was hit. We felt it jump under our feet, throwing us half off balance. Again she was hit, and again.

And then the sudden order, "Full ahead one engine, full astern on the other."

The deck plating slanted under our feet as the ship heeled over.

I understand that this maneuver saved the ship, that a big Jap battlewagon had her guns trained on us, but that as we made that turn, our bow dipped and the water almost covered us so that to the Jap it looked like we were headed for the bottom, and she looked for other targets.

Then orders were coming so thick and fast that I couldn't even keep the log. Full astern. Full ahead. I had to be everywhere in Number 2 fireroom, but the crew there never batted an eye. The burner man, Trainer, FIC, acted as though it was all a drill and never for one moment did I see him hesitate. The water in the gauge would be in sight for one moment, gone again the next, back again in another. And any destroyer man will realize what would happen if we lost our water completely.

We'd been badly hit in the first few moments of the battle. An 8-inch shell had hit on the 1.1 mount, killing five men there. A Third Class signalman on the after steering station had lost a leg. One man was killed outright at the rangefinder in the foremast and a Fire Controlman, First Class, was wounded so badly he died the next day. Part of the same salvo went down through the deck into the emergency radioroom, and killed a Third Class Radioman there. Still another 8-inch tore through the whaleboat, and the same shell killed a Torpedoman who was bent over the tubes.

A 14-inch shell from the battlewagon had smashed into the galley and had killed the Chief Commissary Steward. An Officer's Cook, hit in 72 places with shrapnel, picked himself up on the deck and carried the fatally wounded Chief out of the galley.

All this happened in a matter of seconds as the battle raged in fury around

us. The FRISCO, HELENA, JUNEAU, and ATLANTA were trading salvos with Jap battlewagons and cruisers, and our tin cans were attempting to attack with torpedoes at the close range.

The AARON WARD was hit again with a 14-inch on the port side of the deck. The shell burst as it ricocheted off, and part of it went down through the ventilation system and smashed the forward distribution board, setting it afire. That threw the entire load on the after generator, with the inevitable result that it tripped out—and we were in darkness.

It is at times like this that the guts of a crew shows itself. Guts—and training. The AARON WARD had plenty of both. It was only another second before the emergency lights came on. Nobody was excited. Every man was at his job as though nothing had happened. The fires were being fought, the wounded cared for, the guns were still talking.

But the ventilation system was out, and the booster pumps went out along with the evaporators. For the first time in all the hectic maneuvering we lost water out of the feed tanks and the AARON WARD stopped dead.

Fortunately the main tide of battle had swept past us. A Jap battlewagon burned fiercely a quarter mile off, and the ATLANTA, near the beach and burning, lighted up the water in another sector.

At any moment, however, the fierce fight may turn our way and we'd be exposed to the enemy fire again. We had to get up steam.

The executive officer, Mr. Becton, ordered the top yankers to a tank. Wrenches went to work, and then: "Form a bucket brigade." Every man not required at some other task was lined up, and salt water from the ocean itself was passed across deck and down to the tank. That tank, B12, had a 2000 gallon capacity and we filled it from five gallon buckets, passed hand to hand. But we got suction, just as daylight began, to spread a grey through the blackness. Pressure had never dropped below 400 pounds.

We could get under way now, but there were still plenty of difficulties. The heat was so terrific with the ventilation cut off that we could only stay afloat for ten or fifteen minutes at a time. It was impossible to use the main engine stops on the boilers and valving was accomplished from the top side fire room emergency valve. CWT Garnet stood by this valve with orders shouted by megaphone.

The ATLANTA was still burning, but she was also firing, lobbing shells into the Jap battleship that had been knocked out during the night.

Shortly after dawn a tug came out from Tulagi and helped us limp into the anchorage on that island. We were as battered

and torn a ship as ever came into any port, many of our crew dead, many more wounded. But we were still afloat and we had the scalp of a light cruiser on our belt as well as an assist on a battlewagon and probably torpedo hits on others. There will never be any certain crediting of all the damage heaped on the Japs that night. The fight was too furious, too changing.

There now began for us an ordeal only second in ruggedness to the action itself. We had to clean the boilers of the salt from the sea water we'd been forced to use, and we had to patch the holes, repair the electrical distribution board, run cables, and generally overhaul the ship—all done thousands of miles from repair facilities in a steaming jungle and with Jap bombers overhead a daily occurrence.

We built a pipe line to a jungle spring and ran fresh water into the Number 4 boiler, and rinsed out No. 1, 2 and 3 boilers. Working for five days almost without sleep we broke the boilers down and got them back in commission again. Then we lit them off and kept steady steam pressure for 72 hours. Nine times we repeated the boiling out process.

The Captain was getting impatient and finally the exec sent for me: "You ready to go on that Number 4 boiler?" he asked.

I was glad I could say, "All set. A couple nuts to put on the superheater doors and we're through."

We got out of Tulagi under our own steam, and that simple statement is as great a tribute as can be paid the crew of the AARON WARD. By all rights the ship should have been on the bottom, or at best towed out of there.

At the New Hebrides base we gave the boilers another going over, under more leisurely working conditions, and finally got her set for the long haul to Pearl Harbor.

I should like to be able to write that I went back with the AARON WARD, back to Guadalcanal and Torpedo Junction, and that I was with her the day the 98 bombers made their attack. I was transferred and sent back to the States for new construction before that time.

I have talked with some of the survivors of the ship since then, and they told me of the WARD's last fight—how the guns put up as beautiful a screen of fire as has ever been witnessed, how they fought, a second time, to save the ship.

On May 5 of this year a new AARON WARD took to the sea. She is the 2200-ton class of destroyer leaders, and the third vessel to bear the name. She is more powerful than the others—but she has a tradition to live up to that demands more than speed and armament. She carries the name of one of the fightingest ships in this war! May she sail and fight in all the glory of the little namesake, DD483!

St. Louisan Stuffed Mattresses In Holes Trying to Save Destroyer

**Lieut. John G. Drew II
Floated Off Sinking
Vessel and Was Picked
Up by Life Boat.**

Efforts to save the destroyer Aaron Ward after the ship had been struck by Japanese bombs in the South Pacific April 7 were described today by Lieut. (j. g.) John Graham Drew II, chief engineer and damage control officer aboard the vessel, who is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Drew, 227 Orchard avenue, Webster Groves.

Lieut. Drew told a Post-Dispatch reporter he was at his post in the forward engine room when the first of two waves of Japanese bombers struck while the ship was on convoy duty off Guadalcanal.

"The first I knew of the raid," he said, "was when I heard the machine guns and then the five-inch guns go into action and we got a signal for flank speed on the engine room telegraph. The first bomb, a near miss, blew a hole in a forward section. One man up there was knocked unconscious but the water that poured in revived him before it was too late and he swam to the ladder and escaped.

"We had about a half-minute of peace and the second wave came over. We got a direct hit in an after section and the ship went dead in the water and sank to the decks. We worked below decks stuffing towels, mattresses, and anything we could find into the holes, shoring them up with timbers. We thought we could save her."

Destroyer Sinks.

Two tugs were sent out from Tulagi, Lieut. Drew said, and took the Ward in tow. But despite efforts of the crew the ship sank a few hours after it had been hit. Lieut. Drew said he was on the after part of the deck and floated off into the sea. He was picked up 15 minutes later by a life boat from one of the tugs.

Lieut. Drew, who was graduated from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1941, was a member of the Ward's crew from the time the ship was com-



**LIEUT. JOHN GRAHAM
DREW II.**

missioned March 4, 1942. The ship saw service at Midway, convoyed Marines into Guadalcanal, was in the protective convoy for the carrier Wasp, and participated in the battle off Savo Island last Nov. 13.

In this fight the ship was commanded by Com. Orville F. Gregor, a former resident of St. Louis, who reported his ship damaged four enemy vessels, including a battleship, and was in turn damaged by shellfire. The communications officer on the ship was Lieut. (j. g.) David W. Riesmeyer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick H. Riesmeyer, 4624 Pershing avenue.

Satisfying Bombardments.

Lieut. Drew said his most satisfying experience was a series of bombardments of Japanese installations in the Solomons, carried out last October and November. *

"We got some ammunition and gasoline dumps and we could watch through the glasses the little yellow men running around after each hit," he recalled. "No, they weren't trying to repair the damage, they were looking for a place to hide."

Lieut. Drew, 22 years old, was married June 3 at Stockton, Cal., to Miss Marian Bartels, daughter of Capt. and Mrs. Henry C. Bartels of Stockton Field. He arrived home Wednesday night with his bride.

Aaron Ward And The Midnight

By Scot MacDonald

"The nighttime brawl of Friday the thirteenth (was) the most vicious half-hour of death and destruction ever recorded in the annals of naval sea fights," wrote Lawrence Cortesi in "Bloody Friday Off Guadalcanal."

A task force of five cruisers and eight destroyers (including Aaron Ward) commanded by RADM Daniel J. Callaghan, picked up on radar screens the "Volunteer Attack Force" led by RADM Hiroaki Abe, consisting of two battleships, a light cruiser and 14 destroyers. The sea battle that followed thwarted serious bombing of Henderson Field that, wrote Samuel Eliot Morison in "The Struggle for Guadalcanal," would have stopped the American air operations, which next day disposed of eleven Japanese troop-laden transports.

The battle came about when the Japanese realized that the airfield on Guadalcanal posed a serious threat to their major base on Raboul. They launched two massed infantry attacks against U.S. Marines holding the field, and failed. A planned third and overwhelming infantry attack was planned for November 1942, but did not materialize, largely because of Naval aircraft from USS *Enterprise* (CV 6) launching from Henderson, Marine Corps aircraft based there, and the surface ship gunfire battle that prevented the Japanese from shelling the airfield and landing their troops.

On that November night, Aaron Ward (DD 483) led four destroyers bringing up the rear of RADM Callaghan's column, steaming in the 20-sq. mi. body of water officially known as Skylark Channel but dubbed Ironbottom Sound by U.S. sailors. In the brawl that took place that night, "Japanese and American ships minnowed like minnows in a bucket," according to historian

Donner. After Aaron Ward began when she opened fire on what she took to be a Japanese battleship. A short

time later, Aaron Ward observed two torpedoes pass beneath her and an instant later USS *Barton* (DD 599), nearby, blew up. In the darkness of night with primitive radar, Aaron Ward delayed launching torpedoes when she sighted a ship she took to be San Francisco (CA 38). Suddenly, out of the darkness, she discovered Sterett (DD 407) heading directly toward her port side. At flank speed and with rudder hard-to-port, Aaron Ward nimbly avoided a collision.

A short time later, star shells illuminated Aaron Ward but the destroyer had located the Japanese destroyer Atatsuki. Commencing fire, Aaron Ward hurled 25 salvoes at the Japanese DD, which blew up and sank. Changing course to bear on a new target, a Japanese cruiser, Aaron Ward managed to get off four salvoes on director control before a Japanese shell put the director out of action and forced the destroyer's gunners to shift to local control. Under heavy fire, Aaron Ward took eight more hits and, by then badly damaged and unable to identify friend from foe, stood out to clear the area. At 0225, she lost normal steering control and began steering with her engines. Five minutes later, Aaron Ward went dead in the water, her forward engine room flooded with salt water. But the ship was not done. Crewmen doused most of the fires, sealed off most of the flooded areas, managed to light the boilers off, and Aaron Ward moved slowly ahead. A half-hour later, the struggling ship again went dead in the water, but the fighting apparently had ended.

CDR Orville McGregor, commanding the destroyer, was pushing toast and coffee into his mouth when XO LCDR Frederick Becton brought the good news that "Two Higgins boats (landing craft) are on the way to push us to Tulagi." Suddenly, Aaron Ward shook violently from two near-miss explosions. CDR McGregor moved into action, muttering "I thought this goddam fight was over!" Aaron Ward had been discovered by the Japanese battleship *Hiei* which attacked the destroyer with two four-gun 14" salvoes. At that time, Aaron Ward got lucky. American planes from Henderson Field on Guadalcanal arrived and began working over the Japanese battleship. The attack allowed the destroyer to escape to safety. Aaron Ward had survived nine direct hits. Fifteen crewmen were killed in action and 57 wounded.

Refitted and repaired, Aaron Ward rejoined the Pacific Fleet on 6 February 1943. LCDR Becton was now her captain.

~~~~~ Surface Warfare ~~~~~



# ht Brawl



The Pacific war was far from won and a hot time awaited every fleet combatant. Coastwatchers at Bougainville in the Solomons reported a dramatic buildup of Japanese aircraft and at noon on 7 April 1943, Guadalcanal broadcast "Air attack." Wrote Theodore Roscoe in "U.S. Destroyer Operations in WWII", "Down the 'Slot' were coming 67 Japanese 'Val' dive bombers and 110 'Zeke' fighters. . . . (ADM) Yamamoto had pulled the trigger on 'Operation I' and the biggest air raid since Pearl Harbor was bearing down on Guadalcanal and Tulagi.

"Up from Henderson (Field) soared a flock of 76 U.S. fighter planes to intercept the aerial armada. Then shortly after 1400 came the alarming broadcast 'Condition very Red!' A horde of 'Zekes' flew into a crowd of American fighters over 'Ironbottom Bay.' During the wild dogfight that ensued, a number of 'Vals' penetrated the American screen and struck at targets in the Sound."

Aaron Ward had been ordered to provide cover for LST-449. Wrote Roscoe: "As the destroyer and LST 449 ran eastward, tugs Vireo and Ortolan and several small craft tagged along, eager to avail themselves of the destroyer's anti-aircraft cover. The little group of fugitives were hurrying along the Guadalcanal coast when the air battle exploded. Then at 1512 three 'Vals' burst from a cloud bank and came plummeting down a blinding shaft of sunlight."

The destroyer went ahead flank speed and swung left with full rudder. All 20mm guns on port side and both 40mm mounts opened fire at range of 1500 to 2000 yards. "The gunnery officer had now seen these planes," wrote LCDR Becton, "swung 5" guns to position and opened fire with director control. Bombs from the first three planes struck near and on the ship."

The first bomb was a near miss on the port side but the ship still suffered significant damage from it. "The explosion," wrote LCDR Becton, "jarred the ship so violently that the number five torpedo was thrown forward in the barrel...thereby firing the torpedo and producing a hot run. . . . The torpedo was stopped when the warhead jammed into the after port corner of the number one stack."

The second bomb was a direct hit in the after engine room. It was a delayed action type and when it exploded it raised the deck above the after engine room almost a foot and riddled it with shrapnel holes.

The third bomb fell off the port side of the after fire-

room and the ship began to take on water. The fourth and fifth bombs were also near misses along the port side near the after engineroom. All of the near misses landed within five yards of the ship.

Aaron Ward was fatally injured, but fighting on. Wrote Roscoe: "All electrical power was lost on the 5" gun mounts. Shifting to manual and local controls, the gunners continued to bang away. The ship's hull plates were sprung by the blasting, and both firerooms were soon swamped. . . .

"The destroyermen fought the battle damage with every available means. . . . Six hours after the bombing, Aaron Ward was still afloat, but she was now far over on her starboard beam."

The crews of the tugs Ortolan and Vireo did all they could to get the Aaron Ward pumped out and towed into port or into water shallow enough to beach the ship. Aaron Ward sank in 40 fathoms of water that evening, less than three miles from Tulagi, her destination, and only 600 yards from shoal water. Down with the gallant destroyer went her 27 honorable dead. The remainder of her crew, including 59 wounded, were taken off by the accompanying tugs.

"The gallant crew and officers of the ship were splendid in their conduct during the action and in their later efforts to save the ship," wrote the CO, LCDR Becton. "They are, with one accord, particularly desirous of staying together and of getting back on a fighting ship to soon avenge the deaths of their heroic shipmates."

Exactly 46 years after the sinking of Aaron Ward, USS Flatley (FFG 21), CDR Robert V. Foley commanding, conducted a memorial service, commemorating those who had given their lives in the WW II destroyer. Aboard Flatley were some of the survivors and family members of those who had served aboard the sunken destroyer, brought together by retired BMCS Ralph Hutchinson, himself a survivor, invited by CDR Foley and his crew. The service, planned by the Flatley crew, came as a surprise to the survivors. "They were quite moved by it," said CDR Foley.

Following an invocation, and remarks by CDR Foley, CAPT Glynn Q. Lane, COMDESRON EIGHT, and a surviving crewmember, a floral wreath was cast overboard as Taps was played. The ship's bell was struck once for each man-of-war-men lost during those WWII sea battles.





# The Double A

*Her Crew Sang, "On Our Bow is 483, One of the Ships Japs Hate to See"*

By ROLAND PREVOST as told to DON TERRIO

**T**HE AARON WARD took part in many an action in the South Pacific until she was sunk April 7, 1943. Before that memorable night of November 13, 1942, we had operated in and out of the Guadalcanal area, convoy work mostly, and as bombardment ship in support of the marines on the island.

But that November night is one I, and thousands of others, will never forget. With a cruiser and several destroyers, we convoyed five ships loaded with troops and supplies to Guadalcanal.

We were told of a large Jap fleet that was headed our way, so our commander sent some of the destroyers off with the cargo ships. At 2:35 the next morning, our fleet of 13 ships faced a Jap force that looked to be three times our size, and we knew that things would soon be popping. We swiftly moved into battle formation.

I was in the crew's head back aft getting my little sick-bay ready in case we should have any casualties, joking with some fellows who had their battle stations in the handling room of gun three, as we had done before. When they asked me if I expected any patients I didn't reply "No," as I usually did. I had a feeling of dread that I never felt before when we thought we were going into battle.

Just as I finished setting up my first aid station, our guns opened up. I could hear the men above yelling, "Get those blankety-blank shells up here faster"—and meanwhile, the men were putting out the shells and sending them on the conveyor faster than I'd ever seen them do it before.

We ran full speed right in between the two columns of Jap ships, and our first target was a battleship. Star shells and flares lit up the entire horizon like a giant fireworks display. We fired at the battleship, setting its fantail ablaze until one

of our own cruisers got in our line of fire. Then we shot down through the Japs' planes, blasting away on both sides as fast as the boys could reload our guns. It was a heavy slug-fest at point-blank 2,000 yard range.

Only a few seconds after our guns opened up, I heard a sickening crash just outside my station. I ran into the after radio shack with my first aid bag and found a Radioman 3rd Class with his head blown off and Haines, Radioman 1st Class, wounded. His side was ripped open from his shoulder to his hip bone. I gave him a shot of morphine, stopped the bleeding, and washed out the wound with distilled water before sprinkling sulfanilimide powder over it. Pushing the flesh back into place, I applied adhesive stitches and a bandage.

As I helped Haines forward to a bunk in the officer's ward room, we noticed shells coming toward us like great white lights out of the night, and they whistled as they went overhead. We could even feel their heat. I saw a torpedo wake streaking toward us, and yelled, "Swing us around". Several torpedoes passed across our bow, and we expected to get hit again by either a shell or a torpedo at any moment.

We were up as far as the forward fire-room, Haines ahead of me, when a shell hit our director. I saw a big piece of very heavy equipment falling toward us, and I managed to pull Haines out of its way just in time. It probably would have killed him. His face was white as a sterile bandage, and my knees might have been knocking a bit too. Haines turned around and said, simply, "Thank you, Frenchy". I knew how much he meant by those few words.

I put Haines in a bunk, and wished him luck. By this time there was work for me all over the ship. We were in the thick of the battle and had already taken sev-

---

**Editor's Note:** Roland Prevost, who told this story of the U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483), was promoted from PhM2c to PhM1c (Pharmacist's Mate, 1st Class) for "Especially meritorious conduct" in the battle he described, now called "The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal." This article, dated "First of April, 1945," (publication unknown) is courtesy of Robert Imholte.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
April, 1996

eral 5-inch and 8-inch shells. Ships were burning all around us—a Jap destroyer blew up only 1,000 yards away and I could feel the blast of heat. A heavy cruiser keeled over nearby, apparently hit by a torpedo.

A 14-inch shell hit in the galley, killing four men and injuring many others—the Chief and I were too busy to count them. The only things I could see were fractured legs and arms and shrapnel wounds of all kinds. No time now for first aid “extras”—only the necessary jobs as quickly as possible, and on to the next injured man. A thorough job and fast. All hell had broken loose. Everywhere was smoke, noise and shouting.

My greatest shock came when I found one of my best friends, a Filipino boy named Jimmy Revera, steward 2nd class, lying with a broken leg and stomach concussion. He had often played his ukelele while I put on a grass skirt to do a “hula” number to entertain the boys.

After the battle, Jimmy died in my arms in the hospital on Tulagi, saying, “Doc, I don’t want to die, but I wouldn’t mind dying if I could only get a couple of those Japs.” Among all the blood and tears of battle, that was the only time I ever broke down. I bawled like a baby and I didn’t care who saw me.

I could hear the wounded boys in the galley passageway praying and cursing, and as long as I live I hope I never hear anything like that again. They didn’t yell or cry, just prayed and cursed that the yellow rats would pay and pay dearly.

Somehow, the Chief and I got all the patients to a comfortable spot. The Chief stayed with them, and I set off for other parts of the ship where I knew help was needed. As I went out the hatch, somebody said, “You’d better stay under cover, Doc. You’ll never get anywhere with all that firing going on.”

I knew I couldn’t stay under when wounded men were looking for me to do my job, so I went ahead.

Somebody else yelled, “Good luck, Doc.”

Guns were blazing away all around me when I went back to the after deck house, which had been hit hard. Another shell crashed into us as I was halfway up the ladder. It blew me off the ladder and took off most of my clothes, but I was only scratched and continued to go topside.

Somebody called from below, “They’re all dead up there.” But I had to make sure. I heard someone breathing, and I got down on my hands and knees in the blackness and blood to tug on the arms and legs of the dead men. I knew that sooner or later the man who was still

alive would moan when I pulled on him. Once I jerked an arm loose from its socket. Cursing the Japs for all I was worth, I hurled it off into the darkness.

The next tug brought me luck, and by the light, from the flares outside I could see one of the wounded man’s legs was badly mangled. It was utterly hopeless to try to save it, and his life hung in the balance. I quickly applied a tourniquet and performed an emergency amputation, giving him morphine at intervals. His shock condition was fair, and he let out just one whimper before I finished the job and brought him up forward to the ward room and comfort. That kid had more plain guts than I ever hope to see again, and I salute him sincerely.

I made sure that everything was well in the ward room, and then went up on the bridge and the director. The firing was over, and our ship had gone dead still in the water. I gave first aid treatment to four men on the bridge, where several more had been killed.

In all, the Chief and I had 73 injured men to treat, so we were kept jumping. Most of the wounded were hit by shrapnel or flying bits of metal. An officer’s steward had 72 pieces of shrapnel in him, and another man had 43. I didn’t remove shrapnel pieces during battle unless they were close to the surface. Chloramine T germicide solution, sulfanilimide powder and bandage were the usual treatment. It’s a good treatment too, and thanks to sulfa there wasn’t a single case of infection later.

Our little ship took a good number of direct hits from larger Jap vessels, three of them 14-inch shells, and our mast was knocked off. But our gunners knew their stuff. We were credited with sinking a light cruiser and damaging a battleship and two destroyers. We saw fires and explosions on the cruiser—then she blew up. The other ships caught 40 or 50 of our shells. In the confusion of the battle, the Japs were finally firing at their own ships.

The engagement lasted about 35 minutes, and we had no electricity during the last ten minutes of fighting. After standing dead for a while, we were finally able to get underway again under our own power. However, we broke down again just at dawn, with a crippled Jap battleship only four or five miles away.

The battleship straddled us with 14-inch shells, and we thought we were a cooked duck. She probably would have sunk us if some of our bombers hadn’t roared over just then to polish her off. They were mighty good to see, and somebody shouted, “Boy, that’s cooperation.”

A tug finally towed us into port.

We lost 15 men in that battle—their bodies lie honored in the soil on Tulagi.

Our next (and last) major engagement was on April 7 last year. Our ship had been repaired and put back in fighting trim—and this time we had a doctor aboard.

A low fog hung over the Solomons that afternoon, and we were on the lookout for 98 Jap bombers headed our way. Standing amidships, I was one of the first to spot them come out of the clouds just above us, twisting and turning to get out of the fire of our planes hot on their tails. Six of the Jap planes peeled off and dove straight down. At first I thought they were hit and were trying to land on us, but suddenly I realized... 6 dive bombers.

Three of the bombers came right for me—or so it seemed. The others headed for the front part of the ship. I didn't know what to do, so I just stood there.

Again I heard that sickening crash of steel, and I was blown 15 feet into the air. I remember saying to myself, "Damn, they got me." But I came down kicking in a 3-point landing, with three men on top of me. I yelled to the others to get the hell off, I had work to do. One of them did, but the other two were dead and I had to push them off.

A sharp pain shot through my left leg, and when I stood up I discovered I could not stand on my left foot. A piece of shrapnel had fractured my heel bone, and I caught another piece in my side. My first aid bag was blown away.

Somebody yelled, "The ship's going down" and two young sailors cleared the rail in one leap and landed in the water. I forgot all about my heel and ran up forward to get another first aid bag.

I found the doctor and the Chief up to their necks with wounded. The doctor asked me if I was hurt. I said, "No," grabbed some bandages, and went to work. We quickly filled a boat which came alongside with our patients.

The doctor noticed I was trying to keep my weight off my left foot. "What's

the matter?" he asked me.

I replied, "I must have hurt my foot during the excitement."

"That foot is as big as a balloon. Sit down and take it easy," the doctor said.

My heel was throbbing, but there was work to be done. Many of the engine room men were seriously burned when delayed-action bombs exploded. Others had fractured legs and arms which needed setting. I kept going until all the patients were cared for and put in a gig to be sent to hospitals on the beach, or on the tug which came out to tow us in.

I was looking after the patients on the tug when the call "Abandon Ship" rung out on the AARON WARD at 2130 that night. She was going down fast, and the men still aboard her jumped for the tug. Most of them were lucky and made it. A few less fortunate men missed, and I shall never forget their screams as they were caught between the tug and the destroyer. My doctor was on the AARON WARD, and was able to get aboard the tug with only a badly bruised leg.

The AARON WARD sank quickly, going down stern first. She had been home to many of the men, and they loved her. It wasn't a cheerful crowd that watched her final plunge from the tug. Most of us had tears in our eyes.

We had a song on the AARON WARD which some of our men had written titled, "The Double A" for the first two letters of her name. We stood at the rail of the tug singing this song to the tune of the "Notre Dame Victory March."

"Cheer, cheer, for the new 'Double A'.  
With plenty of ammunition we're  
underway.

Beware, you slant eyes, here we come,  
We're out to sink the Rising Sun.

"On our bow is 483  
One of the ships the Japs hate to see  
While our crew goes blasting onward  
Onward to Victory."



*U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)*

*List of Officers, 7 April 1943<sup>1</sup>*

|                                         |                               |             |                               |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| <i><u>Becton</u>, Frederick Julian</i>  | <i>LCdr.</i>                  | <i>USN</i>  | <i>Commanding Officer</i>     |
| <i>*<u>Hoolhorst</u>, Robert A.</i>     | <i>Lt.</i>                    | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Executive Officer</i>      |
| <i>*<u>Drew</u>, John Graham, II</i>    | <i>Lt.(jg)</i>                | <i>USN</i>  | <i>Engineering Officer</i>    |
| <i>*<u>LeBaron</u>, William F., Jr.</i> | <i>Lt.(jg)</i>                | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Gunnery Officer</i>        |
| <i><u>Riesmeyer</u>, David W.</i>       | <i>Lt.(jg)</i>                | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Communications Officer</i> |
| <i><u>Conant</u>, Ernest R.</i>         | <i>Lt.(jg)</i>                | <i>USNR</i> | <i>First Lieutenant</i>       |
| <i>*<u>Hill</u>, Fred Cregan</i>        | <i>Ensign</i>                 | <i>USN</i>  | <i>Ass't. Gunnery Officer</i> |
| <i>*<u>Allyn</u>, Burt C.</i>           | <i>Ensign</i>                 | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Deck Officer</i>           |
| <i>*<u>Berl</u>, Warren H.</i>          | <i>Ensign</i>                 | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Deck Officer</i>           |
| <i>*<u>Haughey</u>, Lawrence E.</i>     | <i>Ensign</i>                 | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Deck Officer</i>           |
| <i>*<u>Lawson</u>, Louis R., Jr.</i>    | <i>Ensign</i>                 | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Ass't. Eng. Officer</i>    |
| <i>*<u>Westphall</u>, Joseph A.</i>     | <i>Ensign</i>                 | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Ass't. Eng. Officer</i>    |
| <i>*<u>Sullivan</u>, Bernard J.</i>     | <i>Lt.(jg)</i><br><i>(MC)</i> | <i>USNR</i> | <i>Medical Officer</i>        |

*\* \* \* \* \**

*<sup>1</sup> Compiled by reference to the ship's casualty report of April 11, 1943, and with the assistance (in 1995) of Captain John G. Drew, USN (Ret.). This list may not be complete.*

*\* Wounded on April 7, 1943, when the ship was sunk by Japanese dive bombers off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. No officers were killed in this attack.*

*E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
October, 2000*



U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)

Muster Roll of the Crew, 7 April 1943<sup>1</sup>

|                               |           |       |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| ABBOTT, Carl Hurshell         | 604-90-68 | S2c   |
| ADY, Issac William            | 628-24-05 | S1c   |
| **ALBERS, Richard Eugene      | 368-39-64 | MM1c  |
| ALBERT, Elf (n)               | 730-02-98 | S2c   |
| ALLEN, Donald Earl            | 563-01-05 | S2c   |
| ALTIS, James Edward           | 658-94-99 | S2c   |
| ANDERSON, Herman Leslie       | 658-94-69 | S2c   |
| ANDREWS, Joseph Thomas        | 250-59-35 | FC2c  |
| ASHWOOD, Lannie "V"           | 624-34-51 | S2c   |
| *AUTEN, Donald Scott          | 337-08-04 | RM2c  |
| AYLWARD, William Gabriel      | 652-15-72 | S1c   |
| BAGUET, Charles August        | 250-71-91 | S1c   |
| BAKKE, Amos Theodor           | 638-08-48 | S1c   |
| *BALTUTAT, Julius James       | 623-51-83 | S2c   |
| BANE, Charlie Lee             | 355-55-16 | CGStd |
| BARKLEY, James Falls          | 656-06-79 | MM2c  |
| BARROW, Robert E. Lee., Jr.   | 406-16-50 | S1c   |
| BAYER, Frank (n)              | 300-76-28 | S1c   |
| BENJAMIN, John (n)            | 614-19-04 | FC3c  |
| BENNETT, Albert Lester        | 606-26-00 | M3c   |
| BERNARD, Thomas Joseph        | 606-27-03 | SF2c  |
| BETHKE, Wilfred Herman        | 328-62-90 | SM3c  |
| BISHOP, Richard Phillip       | 610-49-80 | S1c   |
| *BLACKFORD, Earnest William   | 632-20-26 | F2c   |
| BODROG, John (n)              | 224-04-61 | Cox   |
| *BOWEN, James William         | 266-18-22 | FC1c  |
| BRENNAN, Francis "J"          | 238-57-98 | MM2c  |
| **BRODY, "H" Nathaniel        | 602-07-61 | SoM3c |
| *BROWNING, Emmett (n)         | 295-80-21 | Cox   |
| *BRUCE, William Howell        | 634-11-23 | S2c   |
| *BUGEN, Phil (n)              | 646-98-56 | CSP   |
| **BURDOCK, Joseph Andrew      | 296-04-24 | F2c   |
| BURGER, George                | 296-04-24 | F2c   |
| *BURST, Walter George, Jr.    | 645-01-84 | S2c   |
| CAMPBELL, Roland Cecil        | 665-02-99 | S2c   |
| *CANADAY, Gordon Kent         | 336-41-52 | CTM   |
| *CARFLYE, Orlando (n)         | 652-14-77 | F1c   |
| CARLISLE, Garland Reed        | 614-99-95 | S2c   |
| CHAISSON, Henry Joseph        | 645-02-49 | S2c   |
| CHAMBERLAIN, John Chandler    | 655-04-44 | S1c   |
| *CHERRY, Charles Harmon       | 274-84-93 | S2c   |
| *CHRISTENSEN, Charles Everett | 563-00-86 | S1c   |
| CLARK, Rolan Randolph         | 382-67-83 | S2c   |
| *CLINE, John Joseph           | 652-15-36 | SoM3c |
| CLUTTER, Homer Edward         | 669-36-04 | S2c   |



|                               |           |       |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| COFFEE, Kenneth Woodrow       | 342-07-38 | SC1 c |
| COLEMAN, John Joseph Jeremiah | 606-25-58 | S1 c  |
| *CONDON, James William        | 669-32-92 | S2c   |
| *CONNER, William Henry        | 615-00-79 | S2c   |
| CORMANY, Harry Ernest         | 381-58-89 | S2c   |
| COX, James Madison            | 614-99-43 | S2c   |
| COX, Robert Hedrick           | 620-12-88 | S1 c  |
| CROUCH, Gerald Damon          | 626-25-87 | S2c   |
| CRUM, Clyde Edward            | 615-00-93 | S2c   |
| CRUSE, Joseph Richard         | 274-50-09 | S2c   |
| **CUTRIGHT, Cheslie Claude    | 658-01-84 | MM2c  |
| **DANNER, Maynard Hughes      | 268-92-50 | MM2c  |
| DAVIDSON, E. L. Trint         | 266-48-46 | F1 c  |
| *DAVIDSON, Robert William     | 202-16-09 | RM3c  |
| DAY, George H., Jr.           | 608-05-20 | F2c   |
| DEAN, James Alexander         | 224-60-71 | S1 c  |
| DECKER, Paul Clayton          | 614-17-17 | S2c   |
| DeCLUSIN, Lloyd (n)           | 376-77-04 | F2c   |
| DERTZ, Max Oliver             | 627-05-09 | S2c   |
| DEITZ, William Baker          | 212-59-50 | MM2c  |
| DENUSE, Rudolph (n)           | 562-01-06 | F2c   |
| DESRUISSEAU, Edward Romeo     | 606-26-14 | S1 c  |
| DEUMER, Ernest (n)            | 646-16-86 | F1 c  |
| *DEVER, Lowell Maurice        | 623-38-85 | F2c   |
| DIEFENBACH, Gilbert William   | 668-36-72 | S1 c  |
| DIEFENBACH, William Charles   | 668-36-15 | S1 c  |
| DIGIROLAMO, Damian E.         | 606-25-60 | S1 c  |
| DI GIOVANNI, Joseph (n)       | 651-20-15 | S2c   |
| DIGNAN, Clarence Thomas       | 283-67-35 | S1 c  |
| DI MAURO, Salvators           | 648-33-10 | F1 c  |
| DI ROSA, Angelo Cristano      | 606-25-61 | S1 c  |
| DISHMAN, Henry Smith, Jr.     | 658-95-35 | S2c   |
| *DODD, Kenneth Bertram        | 371-99-25 | CM1 c |
| DOMIRCOVITCH, George Robert   | 301-01-27 | S2c   |
| DUNCAN, Willard Harrison      | 381-12-17 | MM1 c |
| **DZIAMBA, Demetrius (n)      | 600-10-59 | F1 c  |
| *ECKLES, Joe "H"              | 267-92-51 | BM1 c |
| *ELAM, Carl Martin            | 670-76-78 | S2c   |
| *ENGDAHL, Sidney Gilbert      | 638-23-28 | S1 c  |
| *FAGAN, Thomas James          | 223-50-04 | FC2c  |
| *FARNSWORTH, Melvin Chester   | 606-20-71 | GM2c  |
| FERGUSON, Roy William         | 283-16-41 | MM1 c |
| FISH, Walter Gerard           | 214-77-36 | BT2c  |
| **FLANAGAN, Estel Donovan     | 291-17-79 | SK1 c |
| FLINN, Frederick Terence      | 610-49-27 | S1 c  |



|                             |           |        |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|
| *FLUHART, Bernard Franklin  | 614-16-85 | S2c    |
| FOLEY, Royce Calvin         | 670-01-41 | SoM3c  |
| **FORMAN, Steven Joseph     | 214-77-43 | EM2c   |
| FOSS, Reginal Dawson        | 262-59-44 | SC2c   |
| FOURNIER, Raymond Lionel    | 666-12-69 | S1c    |
| *FRETWELL, Durwood Loraine  | 274-54-85 | TM3c   |
| FRIGON, Roland Joseph       | 212-77-10 | GM3c   |
| GAITHER, Ellsworth Cash     | 634-11-59 | Cox    |
| GALLOWAY, William Glenn     | 283-68-09 | S1c    |
| *GARNETT, Eskel Ree         | 286-90-84 | CWT    |
| *GIDDINGS, Harvey James     | 614-20-10 | F1c    |
| *GONZALES, Anthony Romaldo  | 410-15-57 | TM3c   |
| GOODMAN, Merl Lee           | 618-74-32 | F2c    |
| GOODRICH, Lewis Martin      | 350-80-87 | Y1c    |
| *GREEN, Kenneth Edward      | 393-37-25 | Cox    |
| *GREER, Robert George       | 311-92-61 | S1c    |
| GREGORY, Alfred James       | 614-20-09 | S2c    |
| **HANIFAN, John Thomas      | 283-67-62 | F1c    |
| HANSEN, Clark Martin        | 316-52-96 | S1c    |
| HARMAN, Robert Keith        | 311-48-03 | RM2c   |
| *HART, Frederick Thomas     | 201-53-99 | SM1c   |
| HAUSE, James Van            | 370-83-57 | S1c    |
| HENSEL, Adalbert Walter     | 328-27-82 | CMsmth |
| HICKEY, Robert Charles      | ? -12-72  | S1c    |
| IMHOLTE, Robert Otto        | 328-72-51 | GM3c   |
| INGRAM, Howard Kelly        | 262-76-33 | S1c    |
| INGRAM, Wilbert (n)         | 646-36-80 | Cox    |
| JAMES, John William         | 202-16-90 | F2c    |
| **JANICKI, Edward (n)       | 600-10-55 | MM2c   |
| JANUSZK ACZ, William Thomas | 648-23-79 | S2c    |
| JERROD, Howard Thomas       | 620-13-28 | GM3c   |
| JONES, Junius Culbreth, Jr. | 262-63-54 | FC3c   |
| KARPEL, Alvin Sumner        | 666-12-77 | S1c    |
| KEELER, James Russell       | 295-77-32 | GM2c   |
| KEITH, Preston L.           | 604-86-19 | S2c    |
| *KELLY, Lee Roy             | 271-82-06 | CBM    |
| KENDALL, Frank Monroe       | 625-13-90 | S2c    |
| KIBBEY, Clifford Elmer      | 624-19-49 | SoM3c  |
| K , Harry Robert            | 670-18-69 | RM3c   |
| **KNIGHT, William Frances   | 654-78-63 | F2c    |
| KO R, Leonard (n)           | 628-93-92 | S2c    |
| KRULEK, Alphonsus (n)       | 622-48-29 | S1c    |
| LACHNEY, Fallis Joseph      | 644-61-75 | F3c    |
| LANDRUM, Otis Hester        | 265-97-14 | S1c    |
| *LASKOWSKI, Joseph Stanley  | 223-33-64 | BM1c   |



|                               |           |        |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| LAYNE, Howard Kessler         | 562-99-29 | S2c    |
| LEWIS, Edward                 | 291-61-38 | SC2c   |
| LITTLE, Lawrence Andrew       | 606-25-32 | F3c    |
| LOHMAN, Lindsey Warren        | 329-03-87 | S1c    |
| LONG, James Joseph            | 228-29-88 | CMM    |
| LO GURDO, Joseph J.           | 600-77-18 | S2c    |
| LUKOMSKI, Raymond Faustyn     | 610-43-42 | S1c    |
| LYNN, Charles William         | 297-23-31 | MM1c   |
| *MABEN, Sim Edward            | 336-93-53 | GM1c   |
| **MAC DONALD, John James      | 204-43-42 | MM1c   |
| MADDEN, James Thomas          | 267-38-62 | CFC    |
| MANGERIAN, Harry, Jr.         | 212-77-11 | S1c    |
| *MARSHALL, Eugene Jerome      | 385-59-77 | CRM    |
| MARSHALL, Jacob Lloyd         | 262-61-67 | Matt2c |
| MARSHALL, William Leo         | 400-95-86 | F1c    |
| *MASON, Wiley Ray             | 640-35-19 | S1c    |
| McCLELLAN, David Laton        | 287-26-43 | Cox    |
| **McCORD, Paul "C"            | 295-17-21 | MM1c   |
| *McDOW, George Harold         | 606-25-76 | F1c    |
| *McDONELL, Webster Lafayette  | 272-87-69 | SC3c   |
| McGINNIS, Thomas Edward       | 342-32-70 | Y3c    |
| McLAIN, Roger Sherman         | 341-95-13 | WT1c   |
| *MEADER, Glenn Leroy          | 316-75-12 | S2c    |
| MILLER, Irvin (n)             | 346-97-82 | F1c    |
| MILLION, Charles Joseph, Jr.  | 224-40-68 | F1c    |
| MINEAR, Thomas Franklin       | 670-47-18 | S2c    |
| *MITCHELL, Wayne              | 360-20-85 | FC2c   |
| *MONTGOMERY, George C.        | 652-14-46 | WT2c   |
| **MOORE, William Ira          | 650-22-28 | MM2c   |
| MULLER, Eugene Francis        | 563-90-36 | MoMM2c |
| *MUSARRA, Joseph Francis      | 223-93-26 | Cox    |
| *NIGLIO, Albert Michael       | 243-53-78 | S1c    |
| *NOBLE, Frank, Jr.            | 201-96-17 | S2c    |
| PARKS, Robert Glenn           | 652-15-19 | F1c    |
| **O'BRIEN, Raymond Hanley     | 663-14-86 | F3c    |
| O'NEILL, Kline Ferdinand, Jr. | 612-35-15 | F3c    |
| *PECOR, Timothy Edward        | 646-14-41 | GM2c   |
| PENUEL, Ben Henry             | 272-04-06 | GM1c   |
| **PERKINS, Earl Maurice       | 381-57-31 | S2c    |
| *PETTIT, Bobie Lee            | 385-82-32 | RM2c   |
| PILLING, Waldo Leon           | 202-13-71 | F2c    |
| PINNEY, Lloyd Lester          | 622-37-61 | F1c    |
| *PORCARO, Pellegrino (n)      | 606-25-91 | F1c    |
| *POWERS, James Presley        | 205-55-71 | EM1c   |



-----

|                                  |           |        |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| *PREVOST, Rolland Joseph         | 201-68-91 | PhM1c  |
| PRICHARD, Wade Allen             | 287-46-89 | GM3c   |
| PRICHETT, Jack Tesly             | 393-68-97 | S2c    |
| RABB, Richard Leon               | 360-04-84 | Bmkr1c |
| *RALPH, Robert James             | 311-47-07 | QM3c   |
| REYNOLDS, Murray Wynne           | 201-23-59 | CEM    |
| RHODEHALMEL, John Ray            | 553-54-24 | AS     |
| ROBERTO, J. Leon Guarroro        | 421-02-75 | OC3c   |
| ROBERTSON, Gerald Allen          | 342-17-65 | GM3c   |
| *RODECKER, Nicholas Edward       | 223-37-34 | WT1c   |
| RODES, Henry Albert              | 274-25-31 | MM1c   |
| *ROY, Armand William             | 212-21-48 | CPhM   |
| RUIDA, Peter Rodriguez           | 562-98-71 | S2c    |
| RUSBULDT, Robert Paul            | 234-12-16 | CMM    |
| *SALAMON, Daniel (n)             | 212-62-74 | S1c    |
| SCHARK, Allen Edward             | 300-50-99 | EM2c   |
| SCHWARZBACH, Ralph Owen          | 368-50-20 | SK2c   |
| **SEHLER, Cecil Thomas           | 267-78-35 | CY     |
| *SEWELL, David Eugene            | 616-67-25 | S1c    |
| SHUNSTROM, Albert Crane          | 201-83-47 | S2c    |
| **SIEGFRIED, Leroy Glenn         | 402-01-02 | WT2c   |
| SIMMONS, Charles Marquis         | 272-17-66 | S1c    |
| *SIMMONS, George Edward          | 207-11-49 | S2c    |
| *SIMONEAU, Peter Charles         | 666-08-39 | S1c    |
| SINGLETON, Herbert George        | 264-51-05 | Matt2c |
| *SITKO, Edward (n)               | 223-39-92 | WT2c   |
| SMITH, Clarence Bailey           | 666-10-22 | Y3c    |
| **SMITH, Francis William         | 646-31-21 | F1c    |
| **SMITH, Keith "E"               | 632-78-60 | F2c    |
| *SMITH, Luther Leon              | 337-44-98 | TM2c   |
| SMITH, Robert Jackson            | 262-56-90 | EM1c   |
| *SMITH, Leland Connor            | 375-74-64 | QM1c   |
| **SMITH, Willia I.               | 640-04-60 | GM3c   |
| **SPANGENBERGER, Carl Conrad Jr. | 300-31-18 | S2c    |
| SQUIRES, Ellis Monroe            | 224-35-70 | EM2c   |
| *STEGNER, Frederick Alfred       | 224-61-12 | F1c    |
| *STINGLEY, Francis Claire        | 206-29-42 | S1c    |
| **STORK, Edward Adam             | 652-09-68 | S1c    |
| *TALBOT, John Herbert            | 212-76-12 | S1c    |
| *TEBBETTS, Henry Manfred         | 201-98-34 | F1c    |
| *TODHUNTER, Clifford James       | 224-61-13 | F2c    |
| TRAYNOR, Edward Alfred, Jr.      | 652-14-24 | WT2c   |
| *TSOLAKOS, Sam John              | 724-65-23 | S2c    |
| *TUTTLE, Alford Martin           | 385-76-86 | MM1c   |
| VALIKAI,                         | 622-40-47 | RT2c   |



|                           |           |        |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------|
| VERDUGO, Ernest Fredrick  | 381-50-87 | S2c    |
| VERONA, David Allison     | 224-61-14 | F2c    |
| WALKER, John Lewis        | 606-12-59 | F2c    |
| WALKER, Nathaniel         | 575-76-17 | Matt3c |
| WALTHER, Bruce Harry      | 622-54-34 | SC3c   |
| *WALSH, Edward Patrick    | 646-42-49 | F2c    |
|                           |           |        |
| WATHEY, Jesse Roberts     | 632-93-00 | S1c    |
| WATKINS, Erwin (n)        | 337-93-45 | Matt3c |
| *WATSON, Clarence Robert  | 614-27-82 | F1c    |
| WATSON, George Alexander  | 262-89-67 | RM1c   |
| **WEIHS, Alfred Peter     | 620-39-83 | F1c    |
|                           |           |        |
| WEISS, John (n)           | 622-54-71 | S2c    |
| *WELLS, Eugene (n)        | 287-62-92 | F2c    |
| *WESPETAL, Oliver Stephen | 610-71-74 | S1c    |
| *WESSEL, Hubert Virgil    | 634-25-52 | S1c    |
| WICHMAN, Ernest Charles   | 375-70-41 | CSF    |
|                           |           |        |
| **WIESE, John George      | 299-87-11 | BM2c   |
| WILLIAMS, George B.       | 610-39-83 | F3c    |
| WILLIAMS, Marion G.       | 283-12-70 | BM1c   |
| WILSON, Edwin             | 368-04-21 | TM1c   |
| *WINGATE, Virgil Raymond  | 269-11-52 | SoM2c  |
|                           |           |        |
| WITI, Lawrence            | 311-46-96 | S1c    |
| WOLF, Dewilton Dow        | 610-74-82 | S1c    |
| WOODMAN, Clinton Albert   | 238-83-50 | S1c    |
| **YOTT, Gerald (n)        | 311-33-35 | MM1c   |
| YOUNG, Raymond Archibald  | 666-08-21 | SF3c   |

\* \* \* \* \*

1 Source: The final muster roll for the ship, dated 4/24/43, on microfilm at the National Archives. Due to poor image quality a few names are incomplete, and some may be misspelled.

\* Wounded (\*\* Killed) when the ship was sunk by Japanese dive bombers off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on 7 April 1943, according to the casualty report prepared by Chief Pharmacist's Mate A. W. Roy, USN, on 11 April 1943.

Summary of Casualties:

|          | <u>Killed</u> | <u>Wounded</u> | <u>Not Wounded</u> | <u>Complement on 4/7/43</u> |
|----------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Officer  | 0             | 10             | 3                  | 13                          |
| Enlisted | <u>27</u>     | <u>71</u>      | <u>152</u>         | <u>250</u>                  |
| TOTALS   | <u>27</u>     | <u>81</u>      | <u>155</u>         | <u>263</u>                  |

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
October, 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"

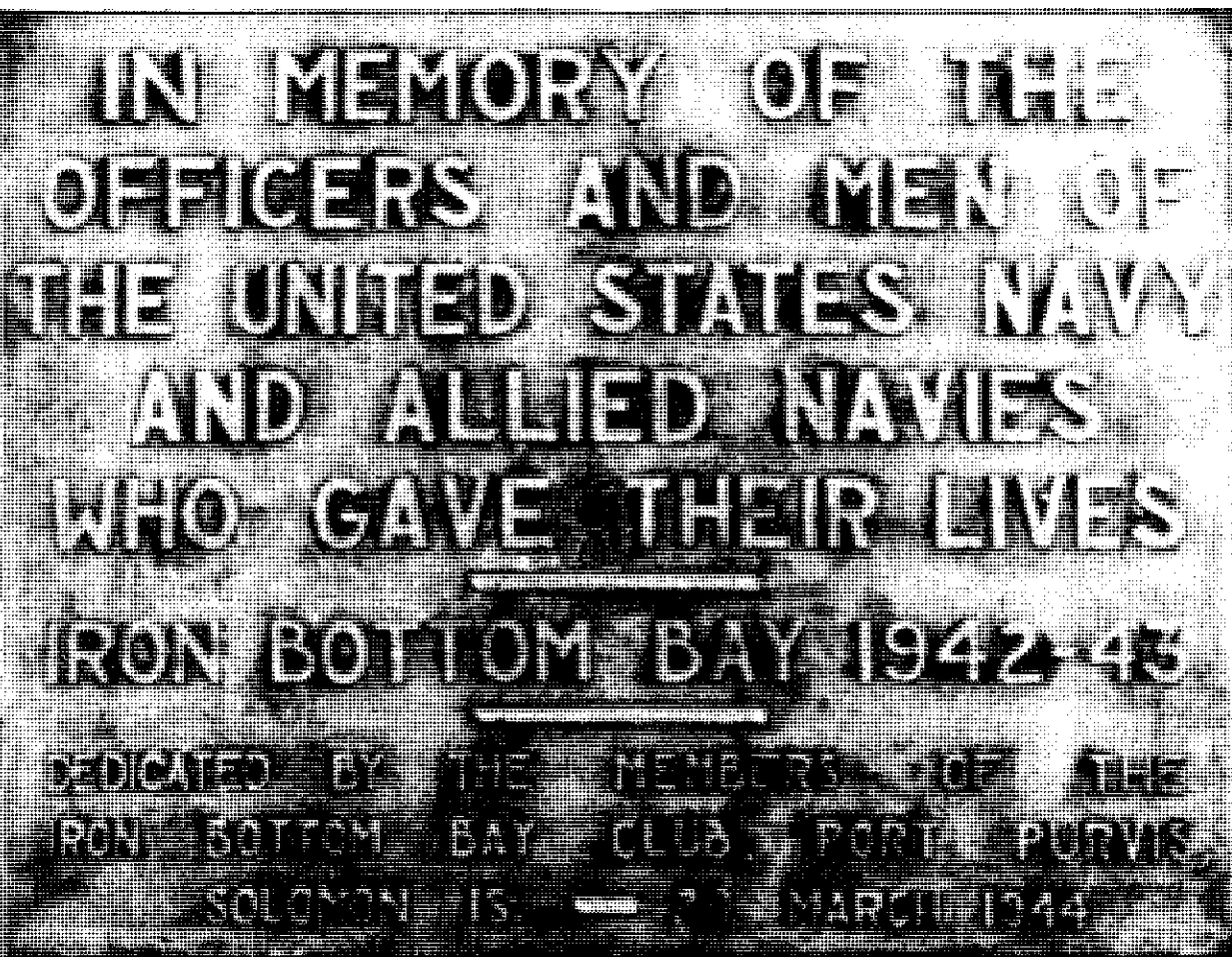
The plaque carries this inscription: "In memory of the officers and men of the United States Navy and Allied Navies who gave their lives -- Iron Bottom Bay -- 1942-43 -- Dedicated by Members of the Iron Bottom Bay Club -- Port Purvis, Solomons Islands -- 20 March 1944".

United States ships that went down in the Iron Bottom Bay and vicinity were: ASTORIA, QUINCY, VINCENNES, ATLANTA, JUNEAU, NORTHAMPTON 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 G. 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

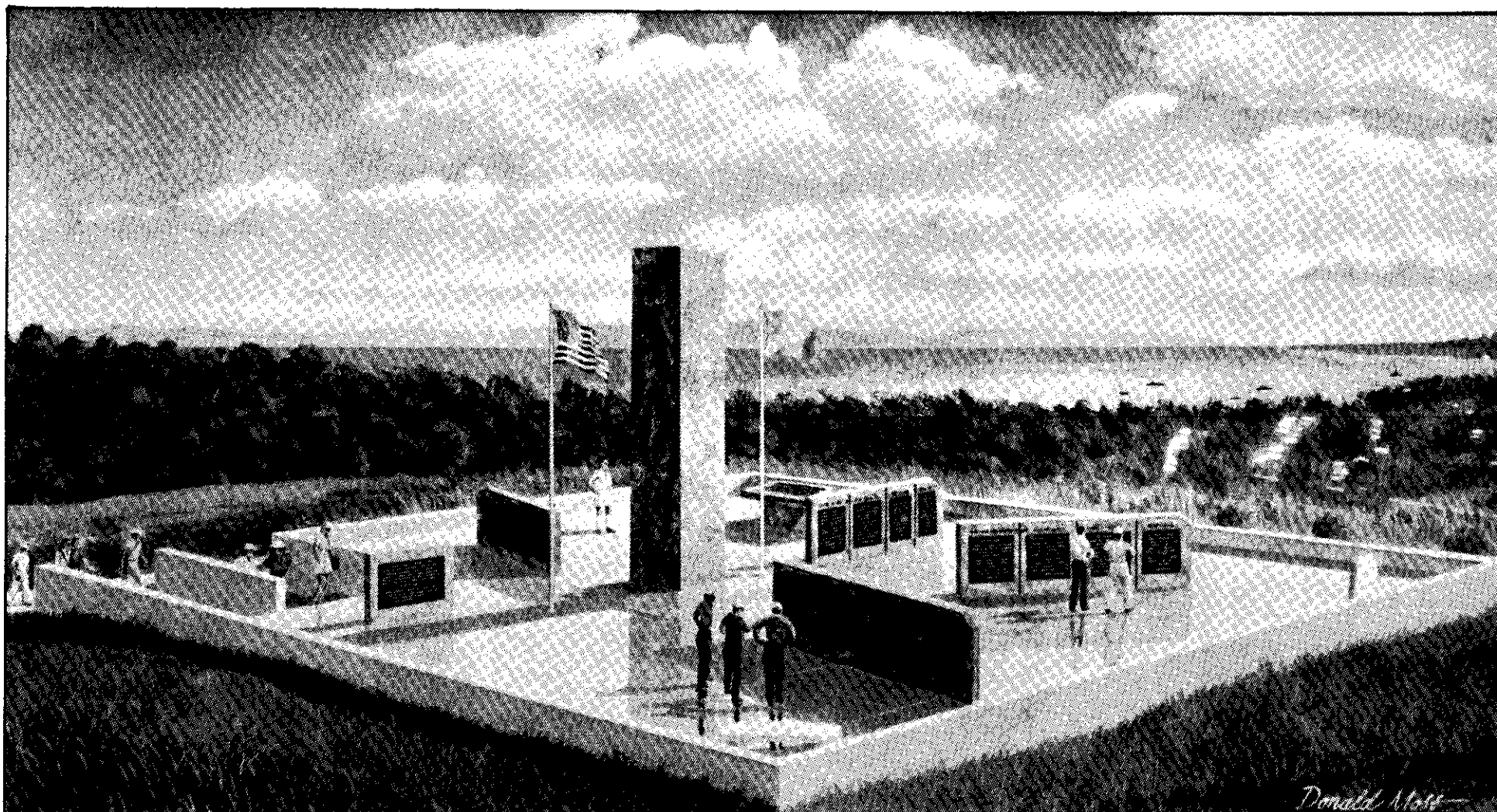


The Monument at Purvis Bay, Florida Island,  
Solomon Islands, as it looked in August, 1993.  
(Dedicated on April 30, 1944)



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)





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

WALL: 2 - TITLE: VESSELS SUNK OR DAMAGED II  
04/25/1991 PANEL 107 - TYPE D - FACE L

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. RENNELLS 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.

WALL: 2 - TITLE: GUADALCANAL NAVAL BATTLE II  
04/25/1991 PANEL 107 - TYPE D - FACE R

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. Aaron Ward (DD-483*

*Honor Roll (Page 1 of 2)*

*Killed in a surface action off Savo Island in the  
Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, 12-15 November 1942:\**

|                                  |              |             |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>BENEGAR, Ivory H.</i>         | <i>CCStd</i> | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>BRISSON, Kenneth C.</i>       | <i>S2c</i>   | <i>USNR</i> |
| <i>COFER, John J.</i>            | <i>S1c</i>   | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>HESS, George Benton</i>       | <i>F2c</i>   | <i>USNR</i> |
| <i>LESNESKI, Martin Edward</i>   | <i>SC3c</i>  | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>MANN, Charles William</i>     | <i>F1c</i>   | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>MORRIS, Charles E.</i>        | <i>RM3c</i>  | <i>USNR</i> |
| <i>POYTHRESS, Joseph E., Jr.</i> | <i>GM2c</i>  | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>RAVIN, John Crockett</i>      | <i>TM1c</i>  | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>RIVERA, Timoteo (n)</i>       | <i>OS2c</i>  | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>RUDOLPH, Henry Francis</i>    | <i>F1c</i>   | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>SCHLEHER, Paul B.</i>         | <i>FC1c</i>  | <i>USN</i>  |
| <i>SCHNIEDER, Paul Bernard</i>   | <i>S1c</i>   | <i>USNR</i> |
| <i>SEALE, James (n)</i>          | <i>S2c</i>   | <i>USNR</i> |
| <i>WALLNER, Frank L.</i>         | <i>S2c</i>   | <i>USNR</i> |

*\* \* \* \* \**

*\* The ship's War Diary. Total killed: 15*

*E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
March, 2001*



U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483)

Honor Roll (Page 2 of 2)

*Killed when the ship was sunk by enemy dive bombers  
off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on April 7, 1943:\**

|                             |       |      |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|
| ALBERS, Richard Eugene      | MM1c  | USN  |
| BRODY, "H" Nathaniel        | SOM3c | USNR |
| BURDOCK, Joseph Andrew      | S2c   | USNR |
| CUTRIGHT, Cheslie Claude    | MM2c  | USNR |
| DANNER, Raynard Hughes      | MM2c  | USN  |
| DEVER, Lowell Maurice       | F2c   | USNR |
| DZIAMBA, Demetrius (n)      | F1c   | USNR |
| FLANAGAN, Ester Donovan     | SK1c  | USN  |
| FORMAN, Steven Joseph       | EM2c  | USN  |
| HANIFAN, John Thomas        | F1c   | USN  |
| JANICKI, Edward (n)         | MM2c  | USNR |
| KNIGHT, William Frances     | F2c   | USNR |
| MAC DONALD, John James      | GMM   | USN  |
| MC CORD, Paul "C"           | MM1c  | USN  |
| MOORE, William Ira          | MM2c  | USNR |
| O'BRIEN, Raymond Hanley     | MM2c  | USNR |
| PERKINS, Earl Maurice       | S2c   | USN  |
| SEHLER, Cecil Thomas        | CY    | USN  |
| SIEGFRIED, Leroy Glenn      | WT2c  | USNR |
| SMITH, Francis William      | F1c   | USNR |
| SMITH, Keith "E"            | F2c   | USNR |
| SMITH, William I.           | GM3c  | USNR |
| SPANGENBERGER, Carl C., Jr. | S2c   | USN  |
| STORK, Edward Adam          | S1c   | USNR |
| WEIHS, Alfred Peter         | F2c   | USNR |
| WIESE, John George          | BM2c  | USN  |
| YOTT, Gerald (n)            | MM1c  | USN  |

\* \* \* \* \*

\* Source: Chief Pharmacist's Mate's casualty report dated  
11 April 1943. Total killed: 27

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
March, 2001



*"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 U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) in World War II

Photograph Credits

| <u>Description</u>                           | <u>Source Code/Ident. No.</u> |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Historical plate (at quarterdeck)            | NA 19-N-29712                 |
| Sponsor, Miss Hilda Ward                     | NA 19-N-29908                 |
| Christening, Kearny, N.J., 11/22/41          | NI Order with photocopy       |
| Launching, Kearny, 11/22/41                  | NI Order with photocopy       |
| Aft from foc'sle, N.Y. N. Yd., 5/42          | NA 19-N-30722                 |
| Searchlight platform, 5/42                   | NA 19-N-30723                 |
| Aft from midships, port side, 5/42           | NA 19-N-30721                 |
| After gun platform, 5/42                     | NA 19-N-30718                 |
| 1.1-inch quad mount                          | RWP N-11247                   |
| 20-mm Oerlikon mount, 1942                   | NA 19-N-31965                 |
| Port beam, anchored, N.Y., 5/42              | NI Order with photocopy       |
| Port bow, u/way approach, 8/17/42            | NA 80-G-12263                 |
| USS <u>Cofer</u> (DE-208), christening, 1944 | NI Order with photocopy       |
| Monument, Purvis Bay, Fla. Is., 1944         | NA 80-G-275700                |
| Monument plaque (on above)                   | NA 80-G-240318                |

\* \* \* \* \*

Key to Sources:

NA 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)

NI U.S. Naval Institute Photo Service  
Beach Hall  
291 Wood Road, Annapolis, MD 21402-5034  
(410) 268-6110; FAX: (410) 269-7940

RWP Real War Photos, P.O. Box 728, Hammond, IN 46325

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
October, 2000



The U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) in World War II

Bibliography/Sources

Books:

- Gunner's Mate 2c, Vol. 2, training manual. (NAVPERS 10011-B)  
Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1945.
- Coggins, Jack, The Campaign for Guadalcanal. Garden City, N.Y.:  
Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972.
- Fahey, James, The Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet, Victory  
Edition. New York: Ships and Aircraft, 1945.
- Hodges, Peter, and Friedman, Norman, Destroyer Weapons of World  
War 2. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot, The Struggle for Guadalcanal: August  
1942 - February 1943, Vol. V of, History of United States  
Naval Operations in World War II. Boston: Little, Brown &  
Company, 1949.

Articles:

- Schreier, Konrad F., Jr., "The Chicago Piano," Naval History,  
U.S. Naval Institute, July-August 1994, pp. 44-46.
- Sweetman, Dr. Jack, "The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal," Naval  
History, U.S. Naval Institute, May-June 1995.

Conversations with survivors:

- Capt. John G. Drew, II, USN (Ret.)  
Ralph H. Hutchinson  
Robert O. Imholte

Miscellaneous:

- Action reports, Aaron Ward (3). (National Archives)
- Casualty Report, Chief Pharmacist's Mate A. W. Roy, USN, of  
11 April 1943. (National Archives)
- Personnel Diary (muster rolls), Aaron Ward, on microfilm at the  
National Archives.
- Shipmate magazine, May 1978 issue, U.S. Naval Academy.
- Ships' Histories Branch file for Aaron Ward, Naval Historical  
Center, Washington Navy Yard.
- War Diary, Aaron Ward. (National Archives)

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
March, 2001



### 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.*

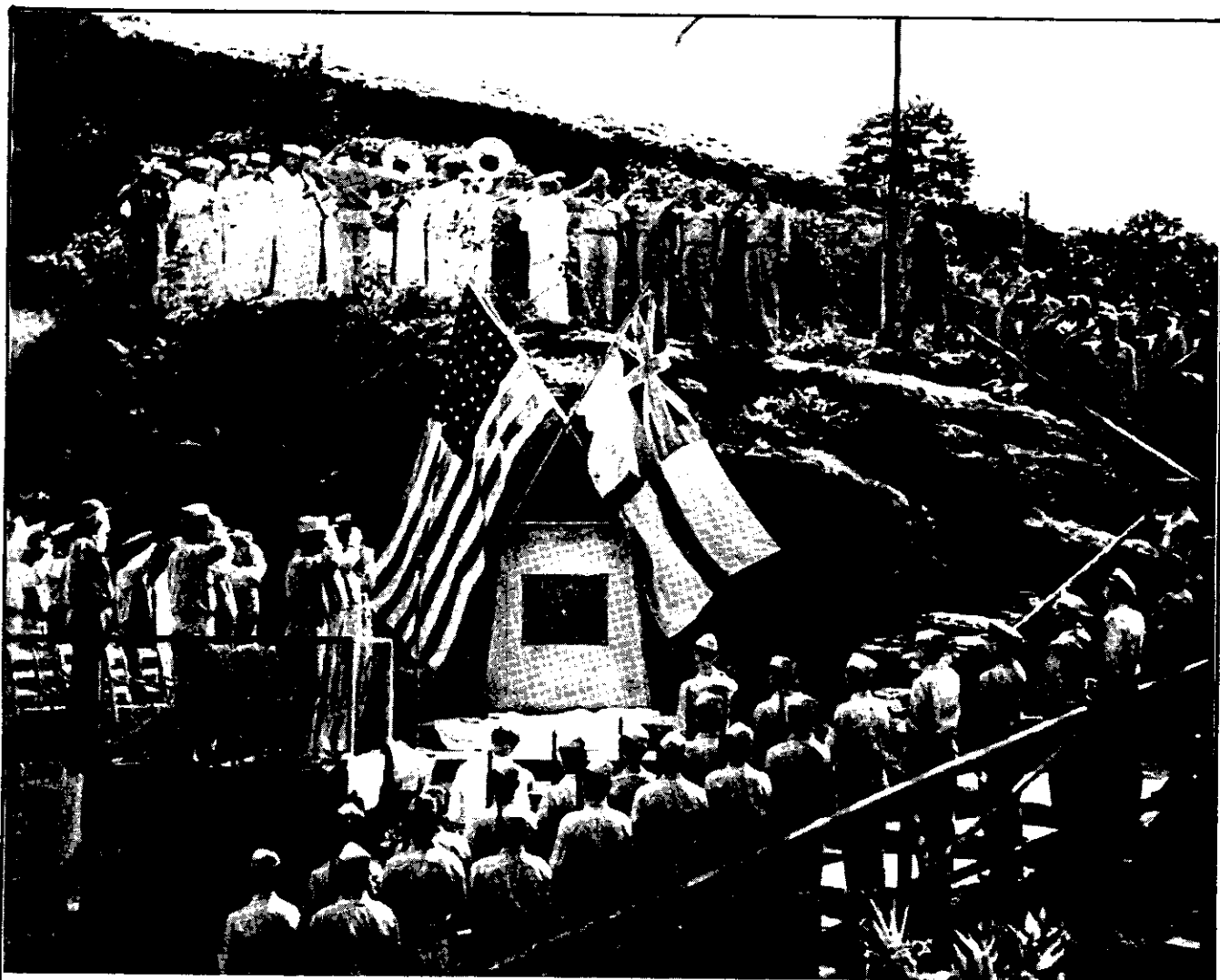
*Friday I flew over to \_\_\_\_\_ in one of our planes to line up and invite the "big wigs" stationed there and the press. It certainly was a delightful trip. It was a beautiful day, and it was nice to fly and to see some of the country from the air, as scenically - and from a distance - it is very grand 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 dueled 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/<br/>(Damaged)</u> | <u>Area</u>    | <u>Killed/<br/>Wounded<sup>1</sup></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

<sup>1</sup> 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





The New York Public Library  
CATNYP: The Research Libraries Online Catalog

[HELP](#) | [ABOUT CATNYP](#) | [CLASSES](#) | [ACCESS CARD](#) | [FINDING AIDS](#) | [LIS](#)

[Start Over](#)
[Save Records](#)
[Return to List](#)
[Another Search](#)
[\(Search History\)](#)





Record 1 of 25

Record: [Prev](#) [Next](#)

Call # JFF 05-2047  
 Author Wilde, E. Andrew.  
 Title **The U.S.S. Aaron Ward (DD-483) in World War II : documents and photographs / E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., editor.**  
 Imprint Needham, Mass. : The Editor, 2001 (2005 printing)

| LOCATION                                  | CALL NO.           | STATUS    |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Humanities-<br>General Research-<br>Rm315 | <u>JFF 05-2047</u> | AVAILABLE |

Location Humanities- General Research- Rm315  
 Edition Rev.  
 Descript 1 v. (113 p.) : ill., maps, ports. ; 29 cm.  
 Note Cover title.  
Includes bibliography.  
 Subject Aaron Ward (Destroyer : DD-483)  
Savo Island, Battle of, Solomon Islands, 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 Aaron Ward (DD-483)

Record 1 of 25

Record: [Prev](#) [Next](#)

[Start Over](#)
[Save Records](#)
[Return to List](#)
[Another Search](#)
[\(Search History\)](#)

Copyright © 1995-2005 by The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.



Locations Where Historical Compilations by the Editor  
Are Available For Researchers

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

<sup>2</sup> 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  
<sup>3</sup> National D-Day Museum Library Collection, New Orleans, LA  
National Museum of Pacific War, War Studies, Fredericksberg, 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.  
<sup>2</sup> Portland Public Library, Portland Room, Portland, Maine

<sup>4</sup> 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:

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

<sup>2</sup> Only Bath-built ships: DeHaven, Drexler, Emmons, Meredith,  
Spence, Strong

<sup>3</sup> Only ships sunk off the Normandy Beachhead: Corry, Glennon,  
Meredith

<sup>4</sup> By appointment only: (508) 677-0515

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
June, 2006

