

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Editor

**The U.S.S. *Seminole* (AT-65) in World War II:
Documents, Recollections and Photographs**

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1210 Greendale Ave., #339
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September 8, 1995

Crewmembers of the U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65):

This booklet is one of several I have edited recently on ships sunk during the Guadalcanal Campaign. Eventually I would have probably completed one on your ship, but when Ewan Stevenson announced that he had located the Seminole's wreck I "put it on the front burner." I am sending him all of your addresses so that he can correspond with you directly. He will send you a narrative describing the dive when he discovered the wreck and also a sketch of how the ship looks resting in Iron Bottom Sound. I hope you take the time to supply him with the details he wants - something similar to the write-ups I've included in my booklet by John Ambrose and John Evans. (Ewan has since questioned John Ambrose regarding the location of the Motor Room - and where one enters.) Please send me a copy of what you send him.

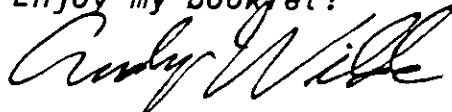
I'm enclosing some extra pictures of your ship. You may wish to frame them or send a copy to your children. I can not provide you with additional copies of my booklet, but others have been pleased with copies made by a copying store such as Kinko's.

I'm also enclosing membership applications for two groups you may wish to join. I have no connection with either of them, so it doesn't matter to me if you join or not. I must add that as a history buff I thoroughly enjoy the Guadalcanal Campaign Veteran's quarterly newspaper Echoes.

You don't owe me a thing for this booklet. I enjoy putting them together and "supporting our men in uniform" - something I was taught to do as a Boy Scout in 1942!

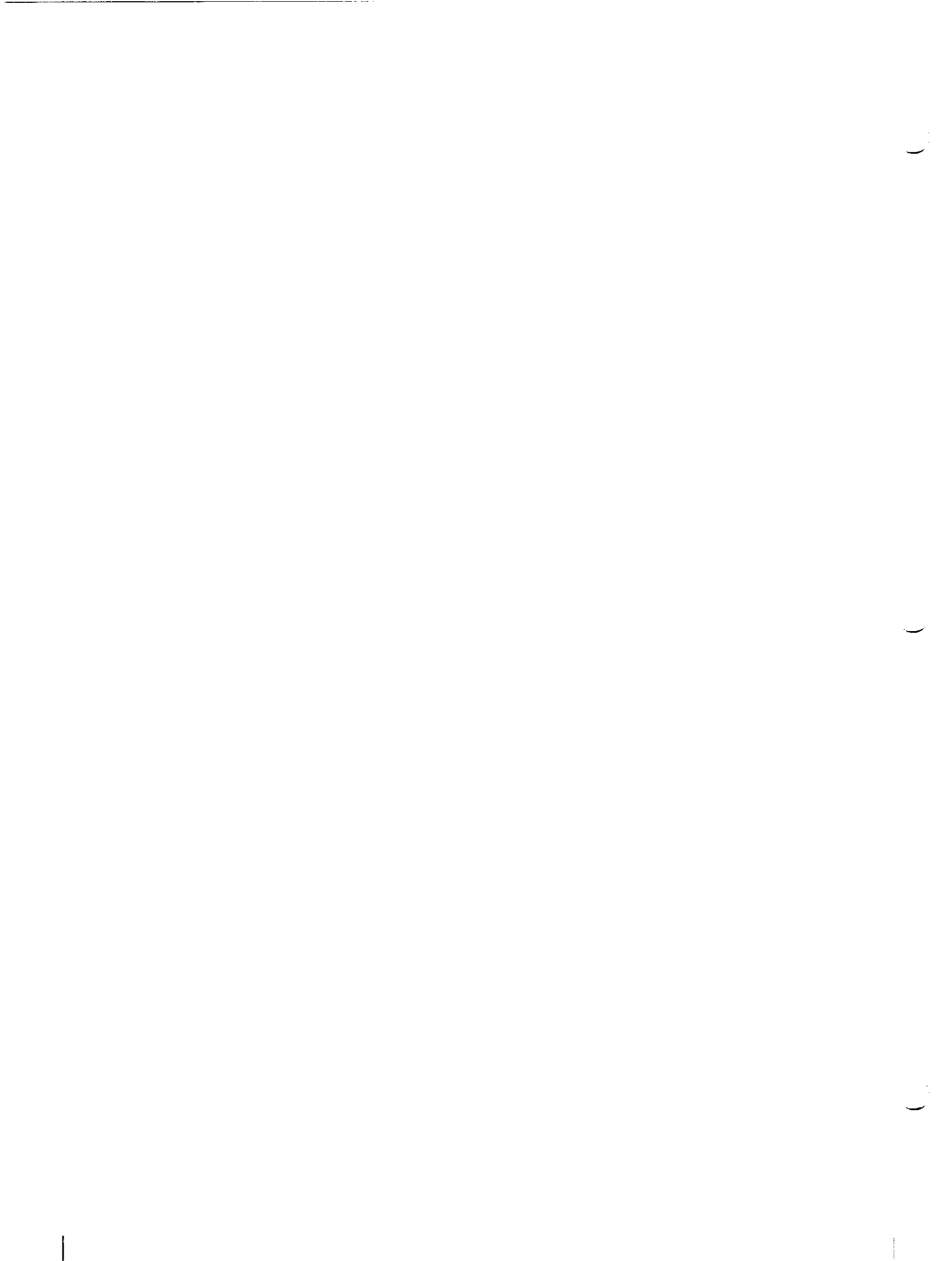
You may be interested to know that I'm 67 years old and a combat veteran of the Korean War aboard the U.S.S. Douglas H. Fox (DD-779).

Enjoy my booklet!



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

cc: Ewan M. Stevenson
11 Abraham Place
St. Johns, Auckland, New Zealand



The U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65) in World War II

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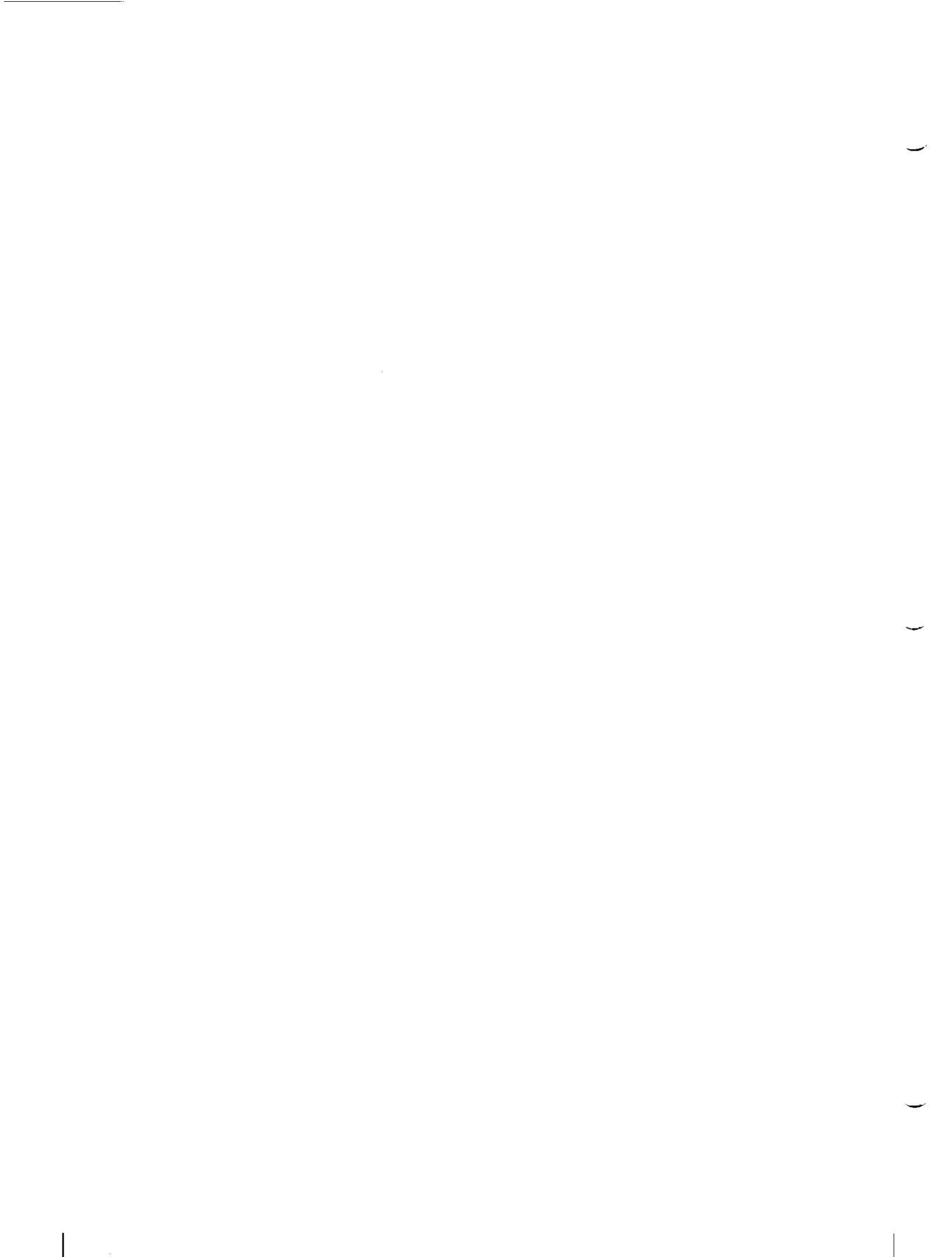
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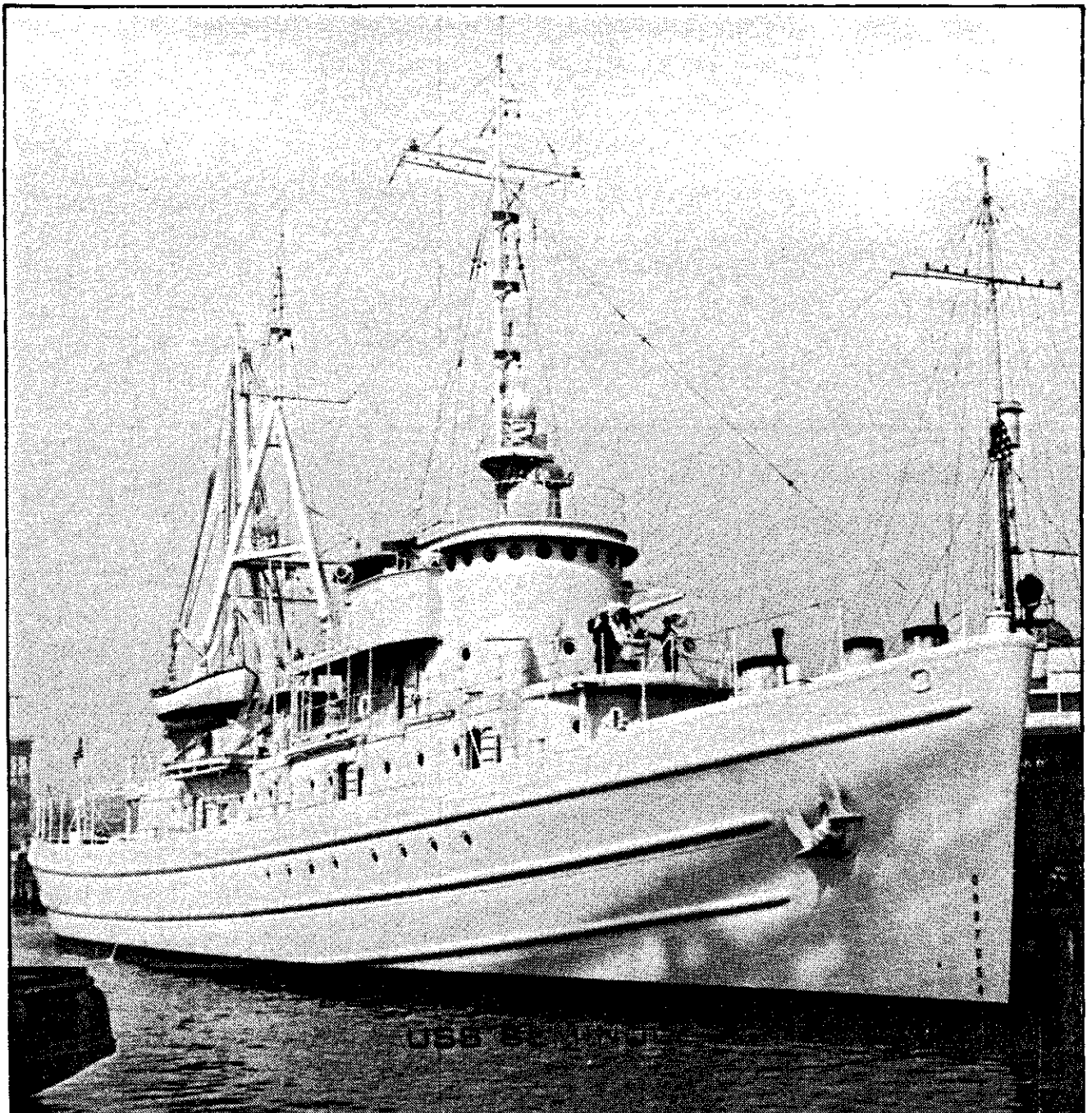
E. A. Wilde, Jr.
March, 2001



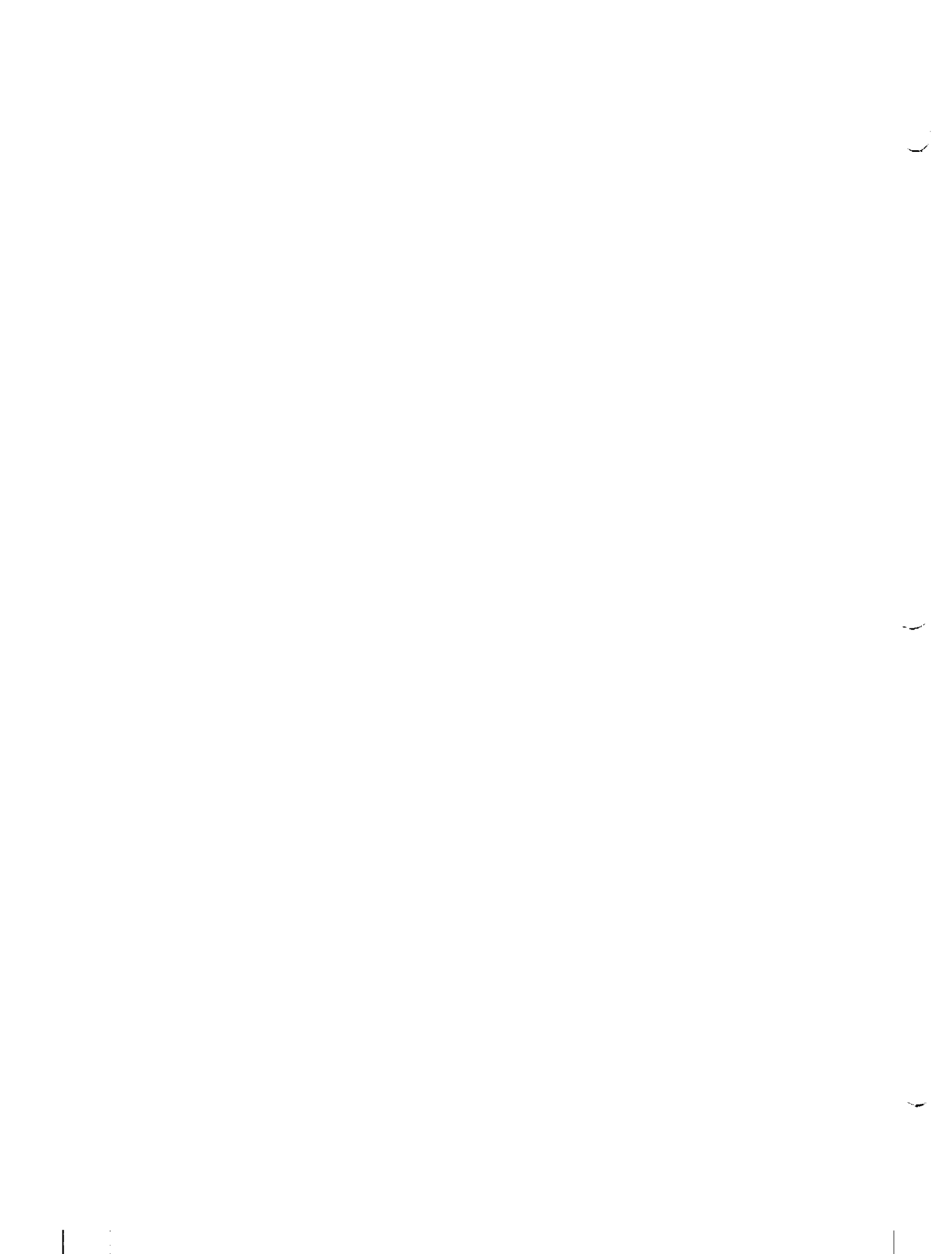
Any man who may be asked what he did to make his life worthwhile can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, "I served in the United States Navy."

- President John F. Kennedy, addressing the new class of midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy on August 1, 1963.





The ocean-going Navajo-class tug U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65) in March, 1940, after she was completed by the Bethlehem Steel Company on Staten Island, New York. These 205-foot steel-hulled vessels displaced 1,646 tons with a full load, and with their 3,000-h.p. diesel-electric machinery driving a single screw they had a top speed of 16 knots. (USNI collection.)



HISTORY OF USS SEMINOLE (AT 65)

Streaking out of the dawn of October 25, 1942, three Japanese destroyers sank the gasoline-laden ocean going tug USS SEMINOLE (AT 65) with three salvos while she was steaming independently a few miles off Guadalcanal.

Only one man was killed and two were wounded. Further loss of life was averted when Jap projectiles passed clear through the ship without exploding. However, the rapid succession of accurate salvos set the high octane gasoline aflame, making it impossible to save the ship.

On the morning of the 25th, the SEMINOLE and USS YP-284 had arrived at Catcus from Ringbolt with a load of ammunition, gasoline, and troops. Unloading operations were interrupted when enemy destroyers were detected outside of Catcus.

Both of the vessels left for the open sea in an attempt to elude the enemy. After bombarding the Ringbolt area, the faster destroyer turned southward to overtake the laden ships, which at best could not exceed 14 knots.

The SEMINOLE tried desperately to evade the speedier "cats" by seeking protection of shore batteries of the Marines of Guadalcanal, but the enemy's accurate fire sunk her just short of her objective. The YP had earlier met a similar fate.

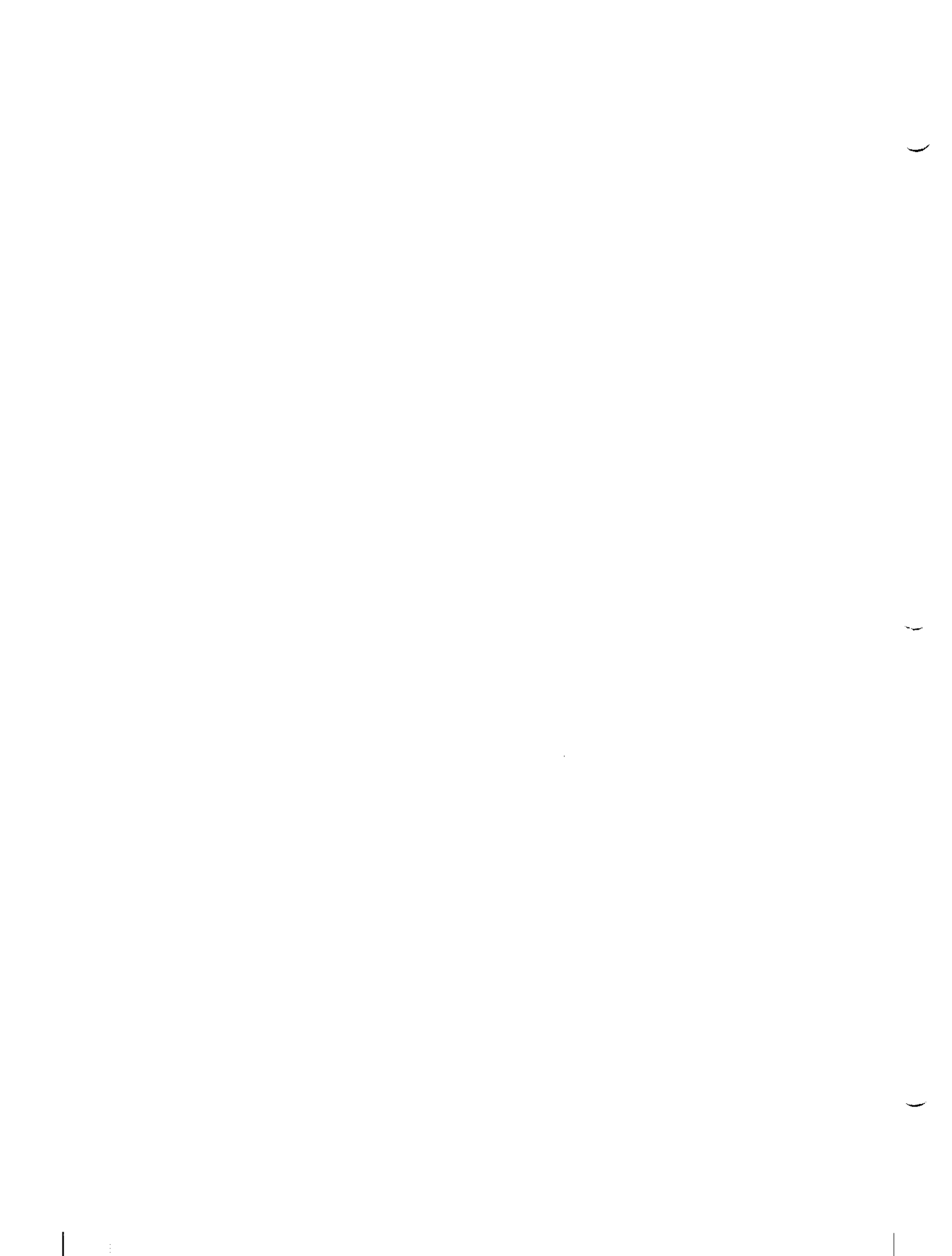
The big tug avoided the Pearl Harbor disaster only by a matter of days. She arrived at San Diego, California, from Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941. By the first of the year, the tug was on her way back to the war zone.

Performing many tasks hardly suited for a ship of her type, the SEMINOLE operated in the Southwest Pacific area, ferrying troops, cargo, and fuel among the islands.

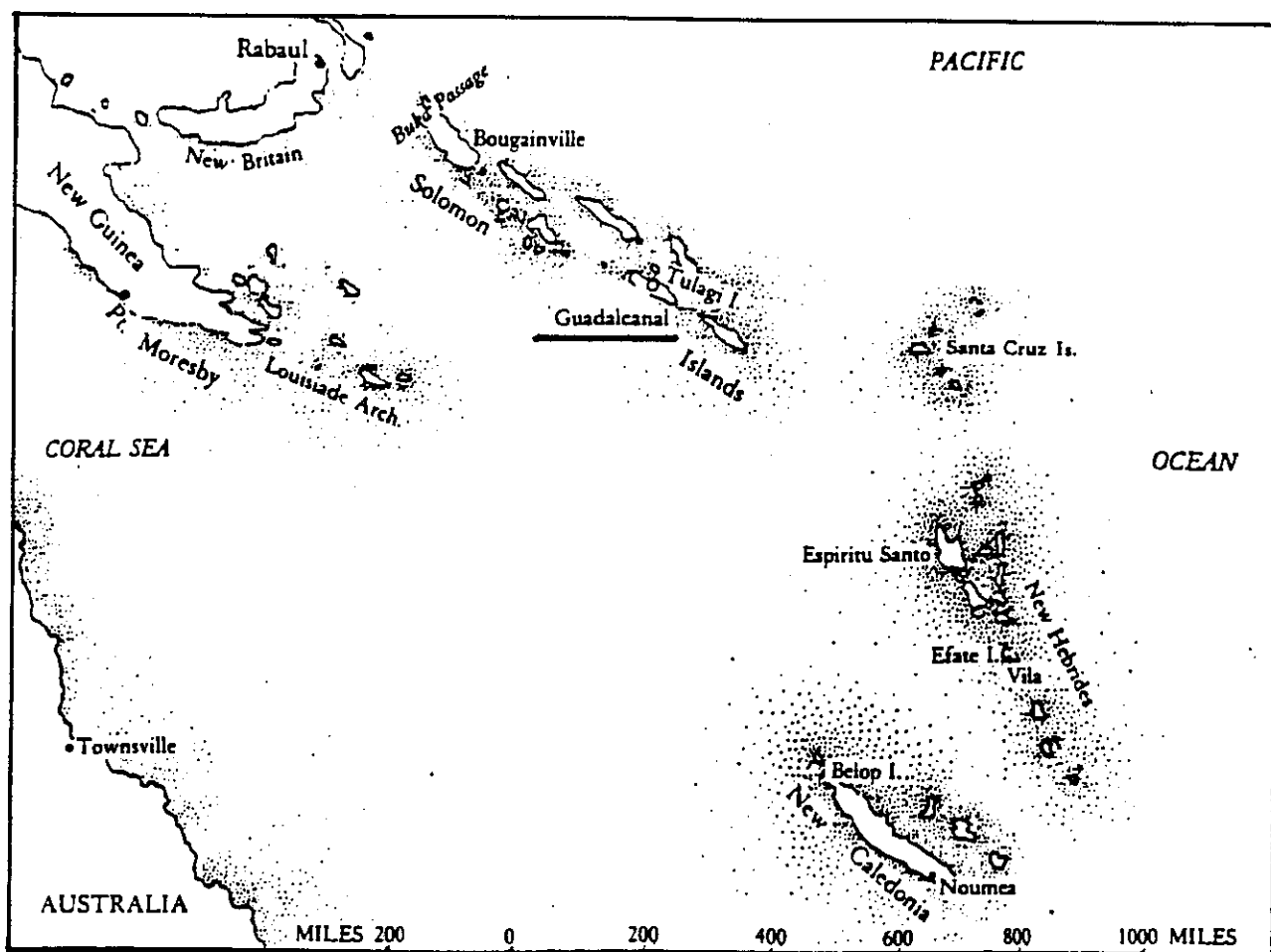
On October 17, the SEMINOLE led two destroyers in a search for survivors of the USS MEREDITH (DD 434) and its convoy which consisted of the USS VIREO (ATO 144) and a tow. The MEREDITH, thoroughly riddled by Jap bombers, was sunk but the VIREO and the tow were found on midnight.

While the destroyers rescued survivors and stood guard against further attacks, the SEMINOLE rigged a tow line on the VIREO's barge and removed it safely to Ringbolt. A skeleton crew of volunteers was later put aboard the VIREO and it, too, was salvaged.

The SEMINOLE was built by the Bethlehem Steel Company, Staten Island, New York. Completed in March, 1940, the vessel was 205 feet long, 39 feet beam, and had full load displacement of 1500 tons.



Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands in World War II



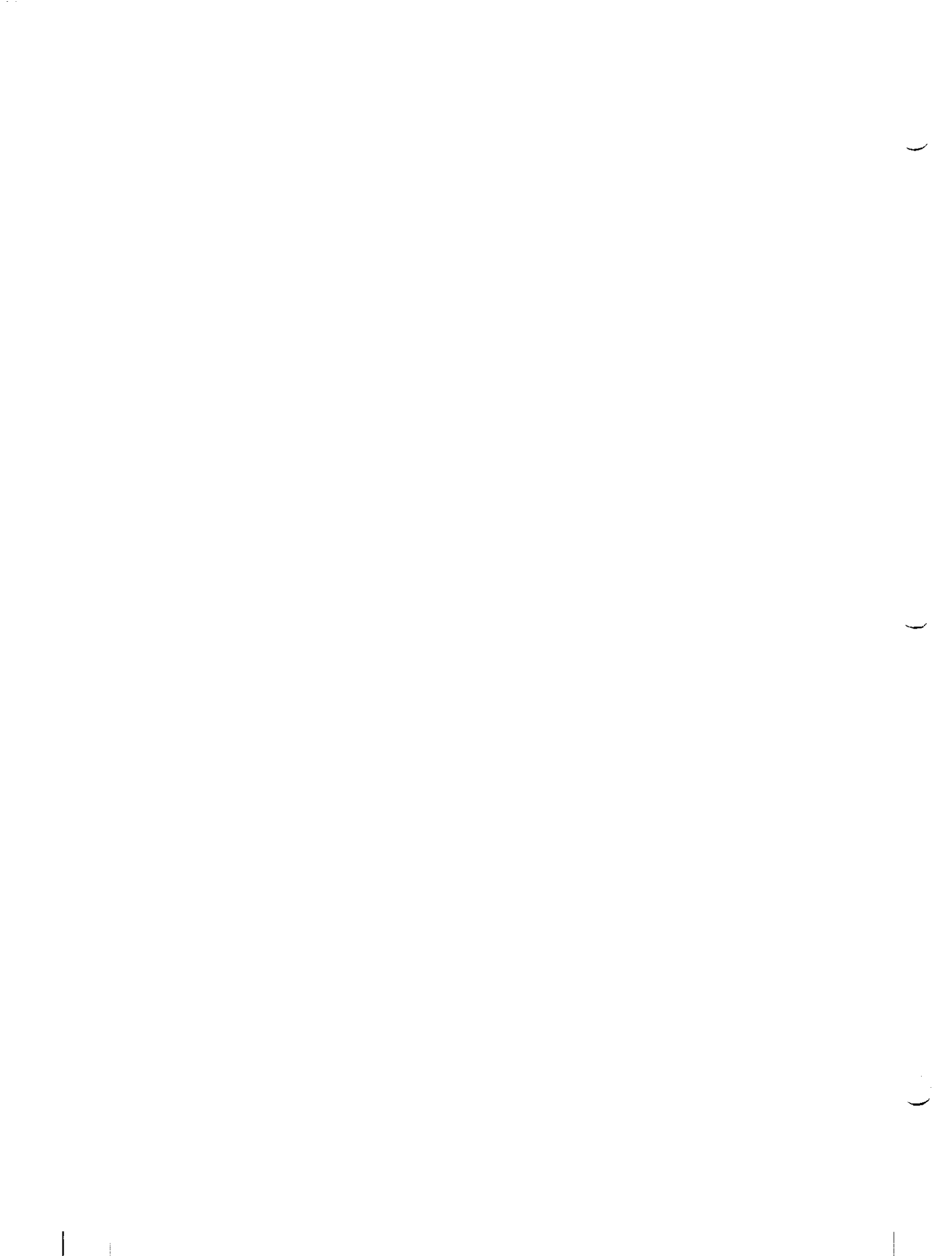
Noumea to Rabaul. (Courtesy Australian War Memorial)

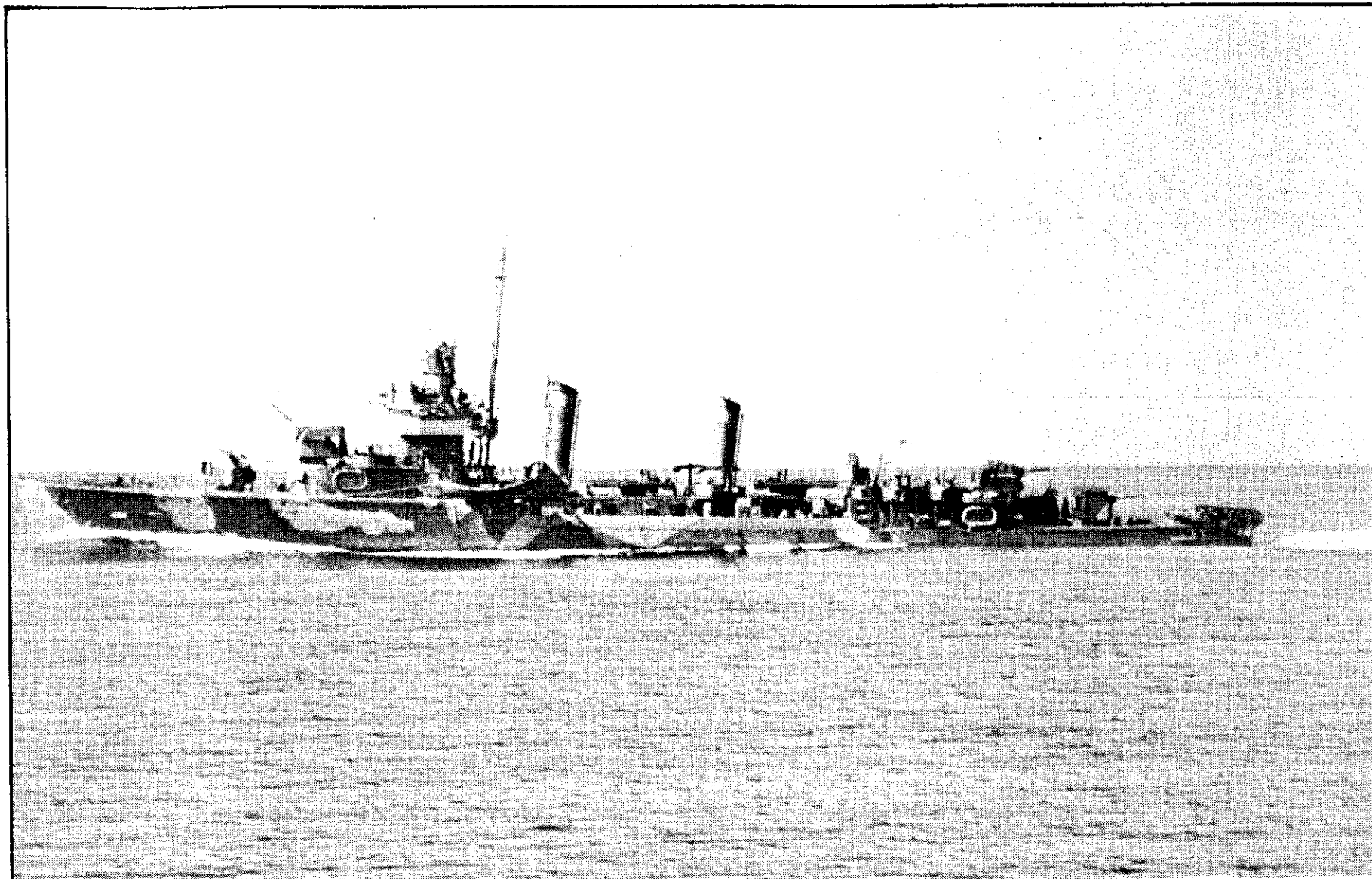
In the summer of 1942 the Solomon Islands, streaming 600 miles southeast from New Britain (upper left), assumed a great strategic importance. For the Japanese, their seaplane base at Tulagi (center) and the airfield they were completing on Guadalcanal formed part of a defensive perimeter for their principal 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.

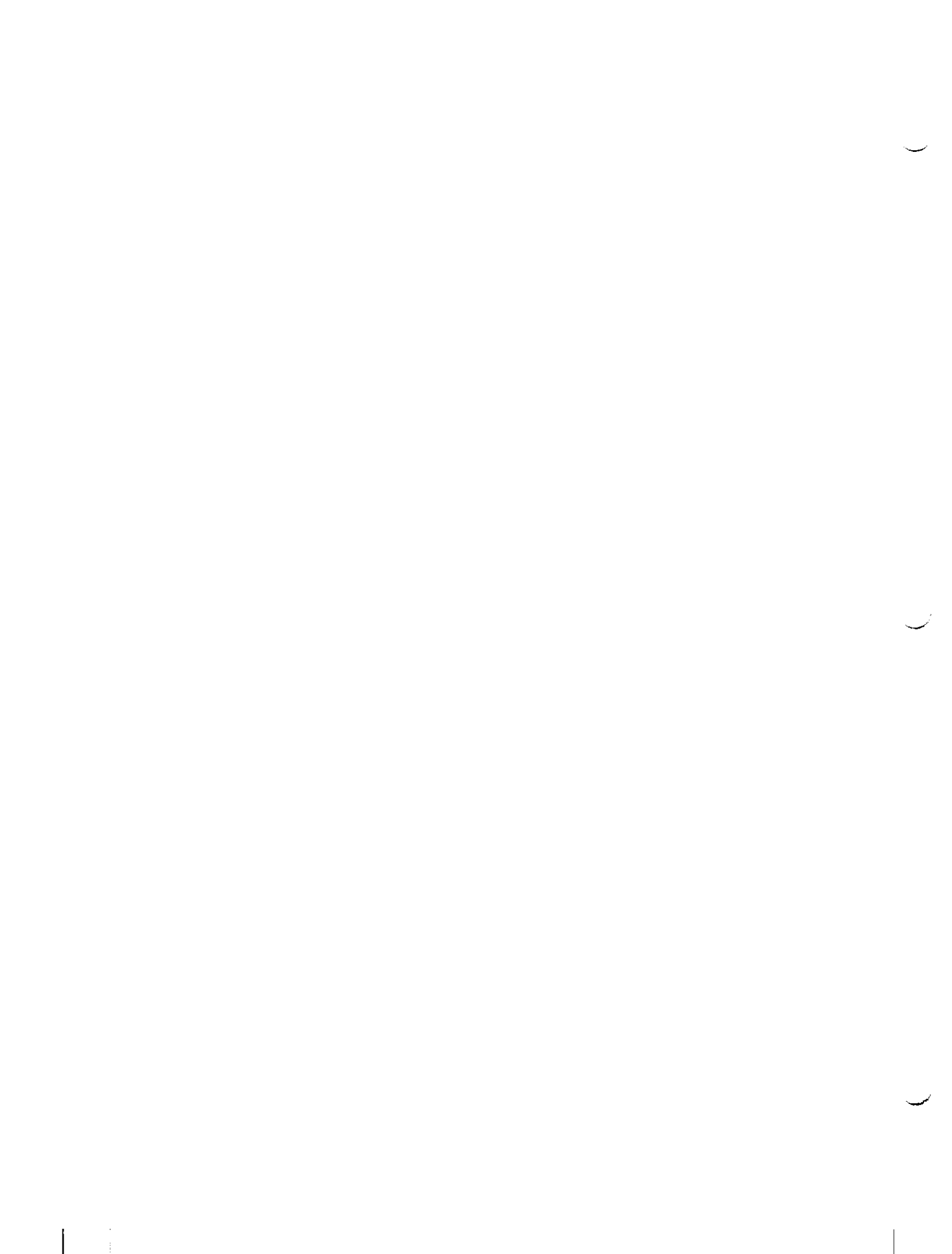
The victory was truly a turning point in the Pacific War. A captured Japanese document read, "Success or failure in recapturing Guadalcanal . . . is the fork in the road which leads to victory for them or for us." After the island was secured the Japanese offensive was over, and the Allies began their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

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
February, 1996





The 1,630-ton destroyer U.S.S. Meredith (DD-434) off Fiji in August, 1942. When the Meredith was sunk by Japanese planes on 15 October 1942, the Seminole (along with the destroyers Grayson and Gwin) formed part of the "Rescue Squad" directed to the scene by a PBY Catalina. The tug succeeded in rescuing eleven survivors from a raft and then took in tow a barge loaded with 1,000 bbl. of avgas and bombs for the Marines on Guadalcanal. One of the survivors died before the Seminole reached Tulagi. (U.S. Navy photograph.)



SHIPMATES FOREVER *

USS SEMINOLE (ATF 65)

The third ship of USS MEREDITH'S "RESCUE SQUAD" was the tug USS SEMINOLE (ATF 65). She had arrived at Espiritu Santo on 15 October and received orders on 17 October to join with USS GRAYSON and USS GWIN (Task Unit 63.10) to search for survivors of the MEREDITH and recover the gasoline then tow it to Guadalcanal. She was then assigned to Tulagi to transport our gasoline to Guadalcanal. While engaged in delivering the final load of our gasoline to Marines on Guadalcanal, the USS SEMINOLE was sunk on 25 October 1942, near Lunga Point on Guadalcanal. When she sank, her ROUGH DECK LOG was lost. Her part in the rescue is told through the words of Edward K. O'NEILL, Cecil R. WILLETT and Edward TRAVIS, all survivors of the USS SEMINOLE.

The SEMINOLE will always hold a special place in the hearts of the survivors and her part in the rescue will remain a bright part of their history.

It is most unfortunate that this episode in the her career is not included in the DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN NAVAL FIGHTING SHIPS. This excerpt does not even allude to her role in rescuing survivors of the USS MEREDITH and USS VIREO:

"Seminole continued her escort duties at Tongatabu until 8 October. She arrived off Tulagi on 18 October, where she was assigned to ferry ammunition, gasoline and troops."

No mention is made of her assisting in the rescue. Edward O'NEILL, Edward TRAVIS and Roy WILLETT have partially rectified this greivous ommission of history by recounting their experiences which have been combined for inclusion in this Documentary.

The SEMINOLE'S top speed of 16 knots slowed the ships in their haste to reach the area where the MEREDITH was believed to have sunk. The three ships formed a scouting line abreast and made all possible speed. When the PBY appeared and flashed the signal, "FOLLOW ME, MANY MEN IN WATER", the two destroyers raced ahead and reached the rafts first. The SEMINOLE was advised of a solitary raft some distance from the others so she headed in that direction. She found eleven survivors huddled inside the raft and quickly hauled them aboard. They had trouble getting one survivor aboard, so Ed O'NEILL reached over, grasped his arm and lifted him on board as though he were a small child.

The eleven survivors rescued by the USS SEMINOLE were:
Nine from the MEREDITH;

CHARLSON, R. I.	MM1	MCCARTHY, D.	MM2
CLOVER, W. B.	RM1	McCONNELL, W. J.	S2
GINTER, J. M.	HA1	POWELL, J. E.	S1
GRAY, N. D.	S1	WUNDER, F.	F2
KRATT, R. H.	MM2		

Two from VIREO;

CLARK, G. R.	GM1	WILLIAMS, Lee	S1
--------------	-----	---------------	----

* From the book "Shipmates Forever" by LCDr. Robert Robinson, USN (Ret.) in 1990. This excerpt consists of pages 146-49.

After vainly searching the immediate area for other possible survivors, they reported to the USS GRAYSON and were told that the next job was to salvage the barge the VIREO had been towing. The destroyers then would escort them to Guadalcanal at top speed. On the way to the barge, they tried to make the survivors as comfortable as possible. They could administer only first aid since they had no doctor on board.

SEMINOLE soon had the barge hooked to a tow line and, with her engines laboring, set out for Guadalcanal. The destroyers were zigzagging back and forth on each bow of the tow, ready to protect against planes or submarines.

A list of names of the survivors was made and sent to the Captain for entry in the Deck Log. One survivor had been more severely wounded than the others. As the list was being prepared, Ed O'NEILL asked him his name and the reply was "My name is WILLIAMS. I'm from ST. Louis." The injured man then became unconscious and died at 0600 Monday morning. O'NEILL helped carry him to the washroom where he was prepared for burial-at-sea. He was sewn up in a canvas shroud with a shell casing at his feet. As they carried him to the fantail for burial, the General Alarm sounded and several Japanese planes appeared over Tulagi. As many men as could be spared from their battle station, mostly the Damage Control Party, gathered on the fantail and, without slowing down, the Captain read the burial-at-sea ceremony and committed the body of Seaman Lee WILLIAMS to the sea. This was a traumatic experience for the SEMINOLE crew and the survivors.

The SEMINOLE and her tow arrived at Tulagi on Sunday evening, 19 October. It was a quiet peaceful sort of day as the Sailors and Marines from Tulagi swarmed on board to get a drink of cold chlorine-free fresh water and, if possible, a shower. They brought news of events which had transpired since SEMINOLE left Espiritu Santo, and dire predictions of what would happen to the SEMINOLE if she stayed on at Tulagi.

At daylight, SEMINOLE maneuvered her tow to the center of the channel and started for Guadalcanal. She had gone only a short distance when the alarm was sounded "AIR RAID-CONDITION RED." Japanese planes were over Guadalcanal. The SEMINOLE struggled to turn her tow around to rush back to Tulagi and tie the barge to a dock. SEMINOLE then went up the channel and moored close to the shore. The crew cut bamboo and palm fronds to camouflage the ship from the air.

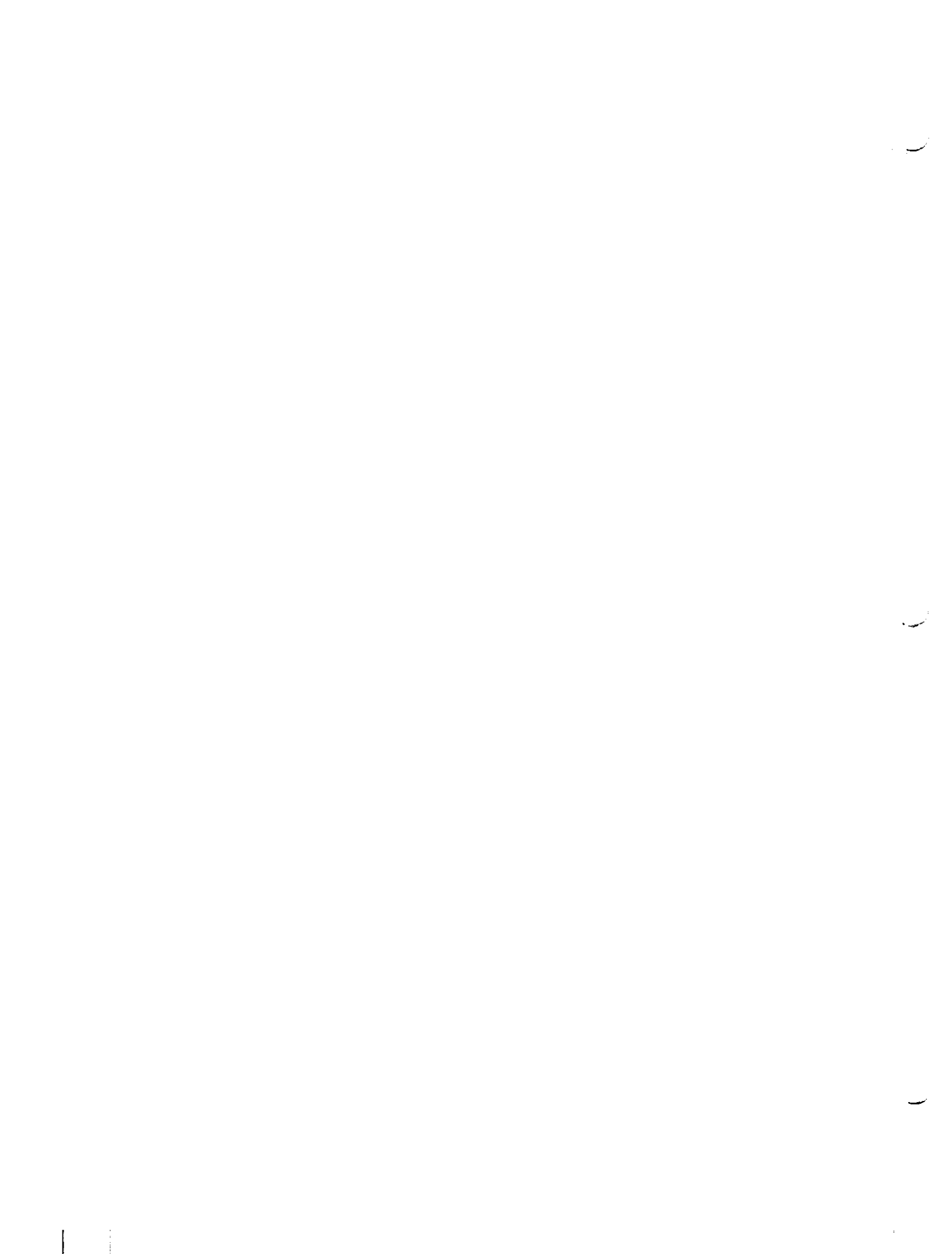
Soon the order came to strip the camouflage off and go alongside the barge. Hour after hour they loaded barrels of gas, end-on and side-by-side, until the SEMINOLE'S deck was completely covered. Off she raced for Guadalcanal to unload the gas into boats for transfer to the shore. The unloading was interrupted by shells from a Japanese shore battery. The

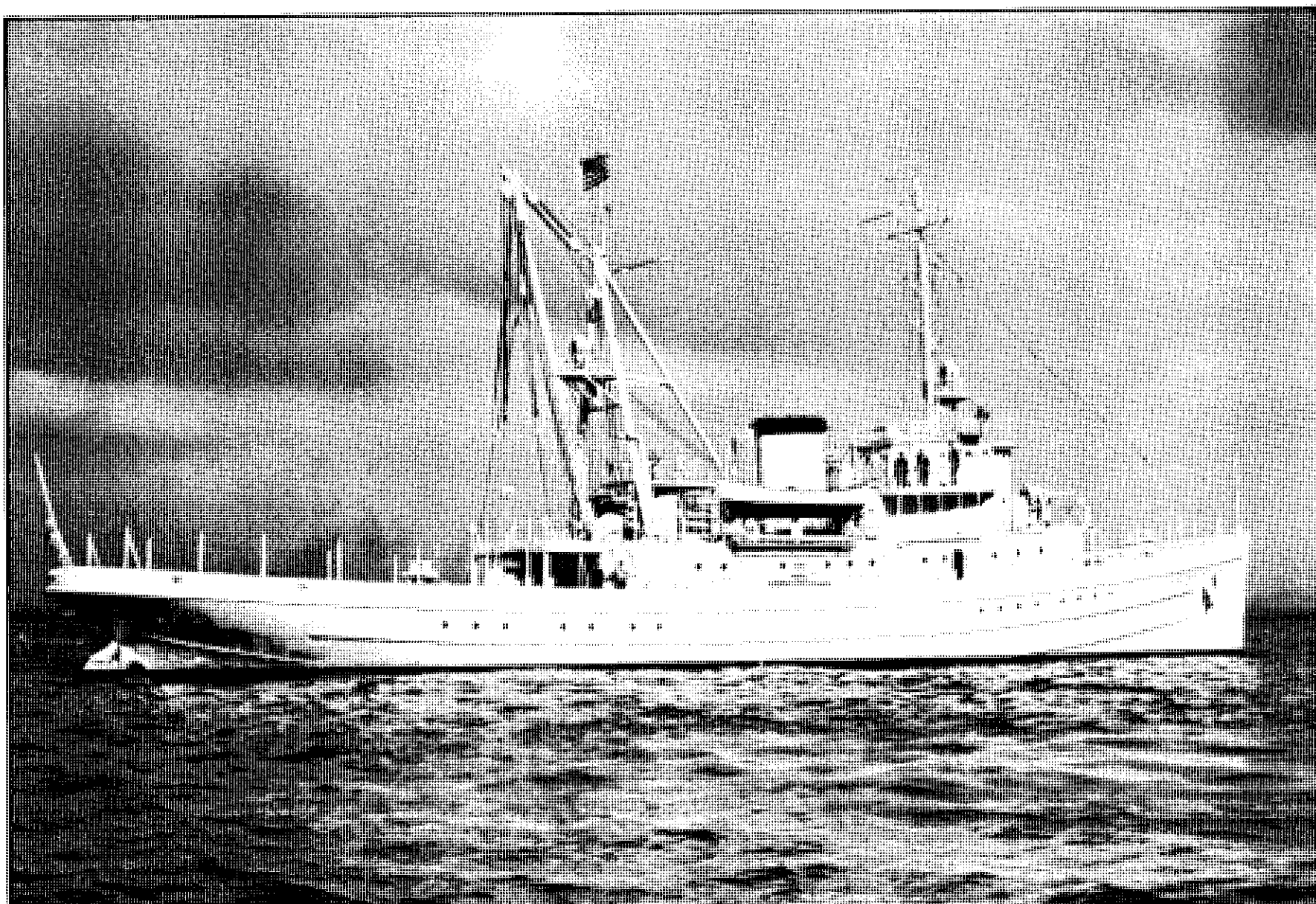
first shell struck SEMINOLE and did considerable damage. This was the hidden Japanese battery the Marines labeled "Milimeter Mike". Unloading was suspended as SEMINOLE cleared the area until Marines shelled the area and silenced the gun.

Unloading resumed and continued until, on Saturday night, they loaded the last drums on board the SEMINOLE and YP-284, a converted Tuna Clipper. A contingent of Marines, bound for "Bloody Guad", came on board, and at daylight the ship headed for open water. Unloading of Marines, gas and ammunition was going nicely when the alarm was sounded "AIR RAID ALERT". Many planes heading for Guadalcanal. Then came "CONDITION RED". The planes passed overhead without molesting the SEMINOLE. The tension had begun to relax, when suddenly three Japanese destroyers appeared on the horizon and the SEMINOLE began to run away. Two American destroyers took after the Japanese destroyers who had begun shooting at the SEMINOLE and the YP-284. Shells were falling all around both ships. The wooden Tuna Clipper was soon ablaze from stem to stern. After an explosion, she disappeared from sight. The SEMINOLE took several hits as the destroyers came closer and delivered devastating and deliberate fire. In spite of the pounding she took, only one man was lost. The crew abandoned ship and were swimming toward the beach when word went out, "The beach is inside enemy lines. Stay away from the beach. Our ships will soon be here to rescue us."

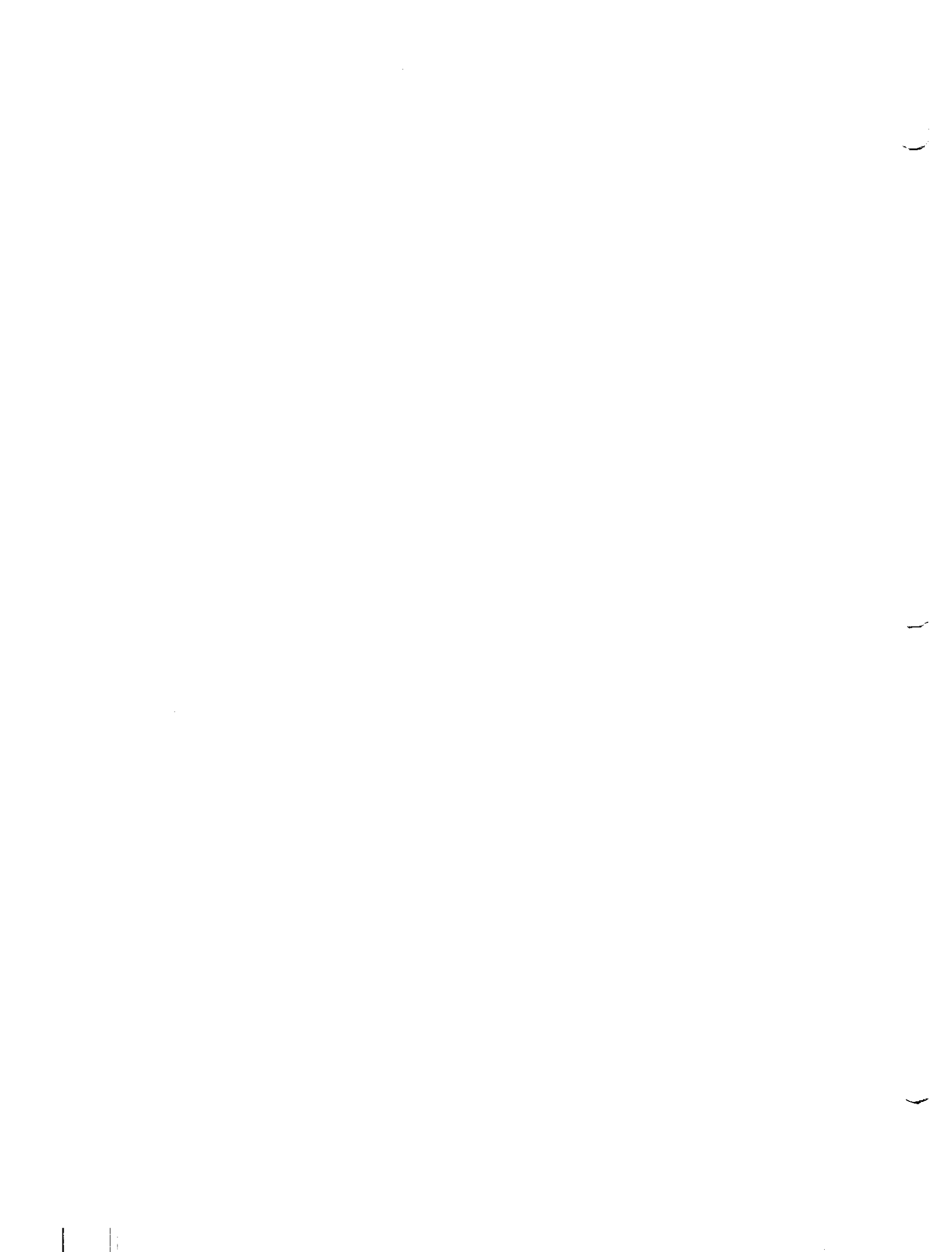
A tremendous explosion shot flames high into the air and the SEMINOLE began to settle by the bow while the stern began to rise. With her flag still flying, and with a deck load of flaming gasoline drums, she settled to the bottom of Lengo Channel.

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Salvage experts from the fleet tug U.S.S. Sealing (AT-65) helped to keep the McFarland afloat and to make her seaworthy for the long voyage back to Pearl Harbor. Unfortunately, the Sealing was sunk by gunfire from three Japanese destroyers on October 25, 1942, while ferrying gasoline and ammunition to the Marines on Guadalcanal, but miraculously, only one man was lost. (Official U.S. Navy photograph)



DECLASSIFIED

COMMANDER NAVAL ACTIVITIES
CACTUS - RINGBOLT

NO SERIAL

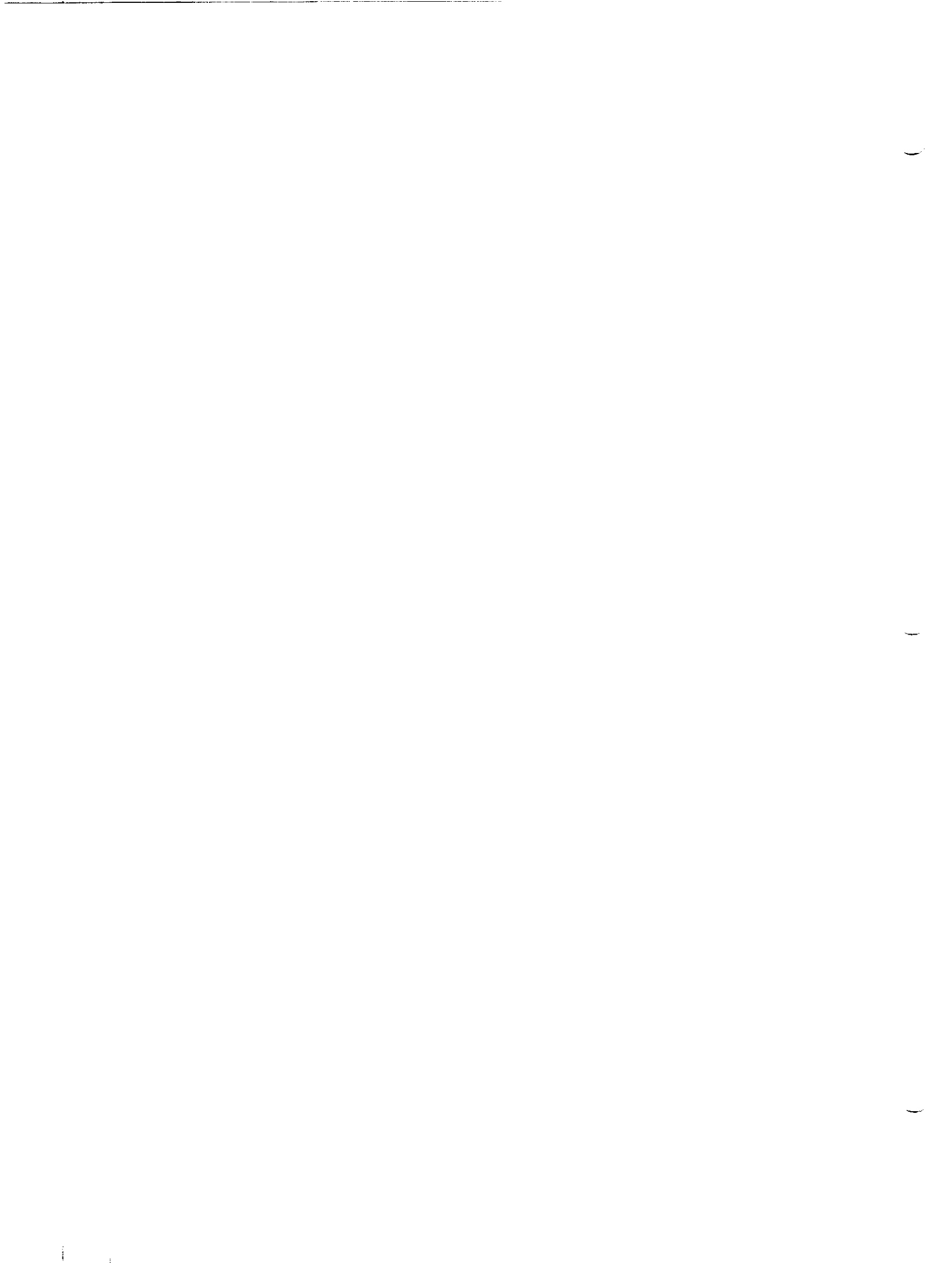
OCTOBER 27, 1942.

LOSS OF U.S.S. YP 284 AND U.S.S. SEMINOLE.

[OFF LUNGA POINT, OCTOBER 25, 1942.]

44813

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ADVANCED NAVAL BASE
Cactus - Ringbolt

27 October, 1942.

[GUADALCANAL-TVLPSI]

From: Commander Naval Activities Cactus - Ringbolt.
To : Secretary of the Navy.

Via : (1). Commanding General, Cactus - Ringbolt.
(2). Commander Task Force 62.
(3). Commander South Pacific Force.
(4). Commander-in-Chief Pacific.

Subject: Loss of U.S.S. YP284 and U.S.S. SEMINOLE.

Enclosure: (A) Report of Commanding Officer, U. S. S.
SEMINOLE on loss that vessel.
(B) Report of Commanding Officer, U.S.S.
YP284 on loss that vessel.

1. Attention is invited to enclosures (A) and (B).

2. Early in the morning of October 25, 1942, both SEMINOLE and YP284 departed Ringbolt on routine trips to Cactus for the purpose of ferrying ammunition, gasoline and troops. SEMINOLE arrived off her unloading station about three and one-half miles East of Lunga Point at 0700 and the YP284 at about 0930. Unloading operations were started on both vessels on arrival and continued until about 1000, when three enemy Destroyers appeared to the Northwestward, headed toward Cactus. At that time, our vessels were directed to get under way and proceed Eastward, in the general direction of Ringbolt, in the hope that they might avoid the enemy fire.

After standing in toward Cactus for some time, the enemy Destroyers headed for Ringbolt and bombarded that Area, then swung to the Southward and sank both the YP284 and the SEMINOLE with gun-fire. After this, the vessels turned to the Northwest, bombarded Cactus for a short time and then stood out to the Northeastward of Savo Island.

The detailed sequence of events concerning the sinking of the YP284 and SEMINOLE are covered by enclosures (A) and (B).

The YP284 sank in about 270 fathoms of water about five miles east of Lunga Lagoon and the SEMINOLE is on the bottom close in to KOLI POINT, in about twenty fathoms of water.

All confidential publications in the YP284 are in the ship on the bottom and are not recoverable.

FILMED The E.C.M. and other confidential codes and equipment in SEMINOLE were not destroyed but are in the ship in

(First of two pages)

DECLASSIFIED - OPNAV INSL 5500.30
BY: [Signature] DATE: 18 JUL 1960

approximately 20 fathoms of water. Effort is now being made to locate the ship and salvage or destroy this equipment. Further report will be made.

Attention is invited to the fact that but one man was lost and two wounded from SEMINOLE and that there were no casualties in the crew of YP284. One section of Battery "I" of the Tenth Marines, numbering about 45 Officers and men, were embarked in the YP284 for passage from Tulagi to Cactus. Of this group, three men were killed.

Separate report of Naval personnel casualties and survivors is being submitted to Commander Service Force, South Pacific.


W. G. GREENMAN

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. SEMINOLE Survivors.
To : ~~Commanding~~ Officer Naval Station Guadalcanal.

Subject: Loss of SEMINOLE, sequence of events.

The SEMINOLE departed Tulagi for Guadalcanal at 0510, October 25, 1942 and arrived off East Lunga at 0700.

We were carrying a load of 500 drums of Av-gas, four howitzers with their equipment and about 100 Marines and a portable derrick.

Unloading was interrupted by an enemy air-raid after the Marine howitzers and about two hundred drums of Av-gas had been unloaded.

Some time between ten and ten-thirty, the SEMINOLE was ordered to return to Tulagi. At this time, three enemy Destroyers were sighted apparently headed for Guadalcanal.

When the SEMINOLE was a little short of mid-channel, the enemy Destroyers changed course and it was evident that they would cut us off before we could find refuge in Tulagi Harbor. Hence, course was changed and the ship was headed for Lengo Channel. At this time, the three enemy Destroyers were shelling the TREVOR and ZANE (which were close in to Florida Island) and a YP which was still in mid-channel.

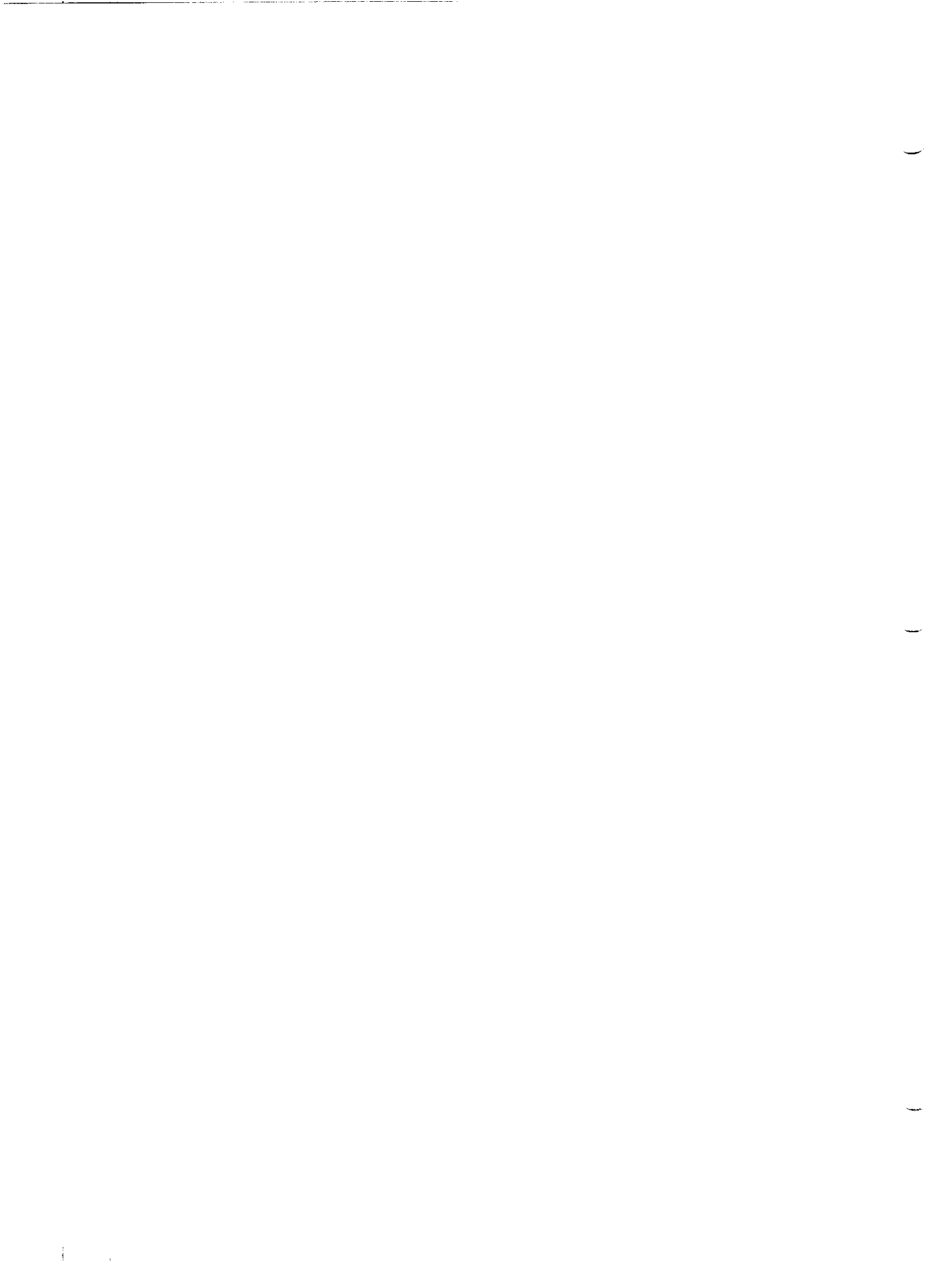
At about 1100 the enemy Destroyers ceased shelling our Destroyers and cut directly across the Channel towards the SEMINOLE. Course was again changed in the hope that we could get in under the protection of the Guadalcanal shore batteries. The exact time the enemy opened fire on us is unknown, but the first salvo to hit did so at about 1115, followed in rapid succession by two more hitting salvos.

The order to abandon ship was given at about 1120, the ship then being one mass of flames, with burning gasoline pouring into the interior through the shell-holes. The ~~Commanding~~ Officer's watch stopped at 1140.

The SEMINOLE sank about 1000 yards off-shore between Lengo and the point to the East. The fact that only one man was lost is attributed to the fact that the majority of the Japanese projectiles passed completely through the ship without exploding.

(Signed) W. G. FEWEL
Lt. Comdr., USN.

ENCLOSURE "A"



CACTUS

26 October 1942

From: Commanding Officer, YP-284.
To: Commanding Officer, N.O.B., Cactus.
Subject: Log--25 October 1942.

Time:

0740 Departure Tulagi for Cactus with 3600 rounds 75 mm. amm., 28 drums aviation gas, and 46 USMC passengers with personal gear.

0940 Arrived at Cactus--waiting for lighters to unload cargo.

1015 Received orders from N.O.B, Cactus to return to Tulagi with passengers and cargo.

1030 Sighted three unknown vessels heading towards Cactus from Savo area. Immediately radioed Tulagi if vessels were friendly. Reply was negative. At this time, two (2) USN destroyers left Tulagi bound eastward. Enemy vessels opened fire at once, and changed course to overtake U.S. vessels. Course and full speed were maintained for Tulagi as I figured that the Jap destroyers would keep up engagement with our destroyers.

1045 Enemy vessels changed course to intercept YP-284 and USS SEMINOLE. Changed course immediately towards Guadalcanal Isld. Five (5) miles east of Cactus.

1050 Jap destroyers opened fire upon us. YP-284 was hit on starboard quarter with second salvo starting fire to cargo.

1100 After several more salvos, we received direct hit in engine room, damaging ammonia receivers. Vessel filled with ammonia fumes. Stopped engines and ordered ship to be abandoned about five (5) miles from shore. Enemy vessels continued firing.

(Page One)

ENCLOSURE (B)

Subject: Log--25 October 1942.

1200 Survivors picked up by tank lighters.

On arrival at Cactus, check was made of survivors:

USMC	Passengers lost	3
	Crew lost	0

C. RASMUSSEN

August 26, 1995
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CMDR E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., USNR (Ret)
1210 Greendale Ave. #339
Needham, MA 02192-4622

Dear Commander Wilde:

I was very pleased to receive your letter today about the USS Seminole (AT-65). It has brought back many memories which I would like to share with you.

I reported aboard the Seminole in June, 1942 in Pearl Harbor. I was a Quartermaster First-Class with 5 years and 2 months service in the Navy. LCDR William G. Fewel, USN was the Commanding Officer and also acted as the ship's navigator. That brought Captain Fewel and I very close and I will always remember him as a fine officer and true gentleman. We worked many, many star sights together. Twenty years to the day after the ship was sunk at Guadalcanal, my wife and I called on Captain and Mrs. Fewel at their home here in Chula Vista, California. It was a bittersweet event as that was the last time I saw the Captain. Mrs. Fewel passed away a few years ago, having moved to Coronado, across the bay.

I recall our trying to get to Midway in time to assist the carrier YORKTOWN but were too late. Returning to Pearl we then set out for Suva, Fiji and Tongatabu in the South Pacific. The SARATOGA was in Tonga with a gaping hole in her hull from a torpedo hit. From there the Seminole was ordered to Guadalcanal. Enroute we learned the tug Vireo with a barge with aviation gas for Guadalcanal had been attacked. We found the barge adrift but no sign of the Vireo. With the barge in tow we proceeded on to Guadalcanal and on the way found 11 survivors of the Vireo adrift on a raft.....surrounded by sharks. Taking them on board we continued on to Guadalcanal. One survivor died and Captain Fewel conducted burial at sea services. Being a nice Catholic boy, I was the only one on board with a bible which the Captain used in the rites.

We arrived in Tulagi on or about the 22nd of October, 1942 and pulled up the narrow river (?) or inlet and covered the ship with tree boughs for camouflauge. Jap planes flew over but could not see us. The next day we started across the channel with the barge in tow astern. Halfway across we got orders to return to Tulagi and to load the drums of aviation gas on board. With the deck com-

pletely covered with 50 gallon drums of high-octane aviation gas we proceeded across the channel to Guadalcanal, anchored off the beach at Henderson Field and began unloading into LCVPs from the base ashore. I cannot recall how many trips we made...only that on the 25th of October we received a dispatch that three Jap destroyers were sighted at a certain latitude and longitude. I plotted the position and reported to Captain Fewel, "Sir, those Japs are right over the horizon!" It never phased him. We went right on unloading the gasoline drums. (The pilots on Guadalcanal at Henderson Field were down to one plane and cannabilizing parts and gas from other planes) Soon I sighted smoke to the west of Tulagi, then three stacks, then three enemy destroyers. In a few minutes they began firing ...one over and one under and the third one right on top of the Seminole. We took fourteen salvos and of course went up like a Roman candle with all that gasoline on board. When Captain Fewel ordered abandon ship I jumped from the bridge, no shoes and no glasses! One man in trick wheel and the Captain's big red setter went down with the ship. Treading water in oil and fire, we were glad to see some LCVPs come out from Henderson Field to pick us up. Where was the Captain? He and seven crewmembers had swam ashore...into enemy occupied ground. The LCVP that picked us up, went onto the beach and got the Captain and the seven men and took us all back to Henderson Field.

I was on Guadalcanal until after the Battle of Savo Island in November. We went through many air attacks and naval bombardments during that period. During that time Captain Fewel displayed great courage and leadership in holding our crew together. I left on or about the last week in November, aboard a DC-3 (my first flight!!!) and was evacuated to Noumea, New Caledonia. By January, 1943 I was back in San Francisco.... in a Chief's uniform. And a month later was back in Guadalcanal...this time aboard a Liberty ship...but that's another story.

I would be very pleased to have the addresses of the three shipmates you mentioned in your letter. Please send my address on to them. Thank you again for your letter to me about a ship in which I was most proud to serve in our great Navy.

Sincerely,



Jewel (aka "John") Evans

Lieut-Commander, USN (Ret)

Captain, U.S. Merchant Marine (Ret)

U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65)

List of Officers, 30 September 1942¹

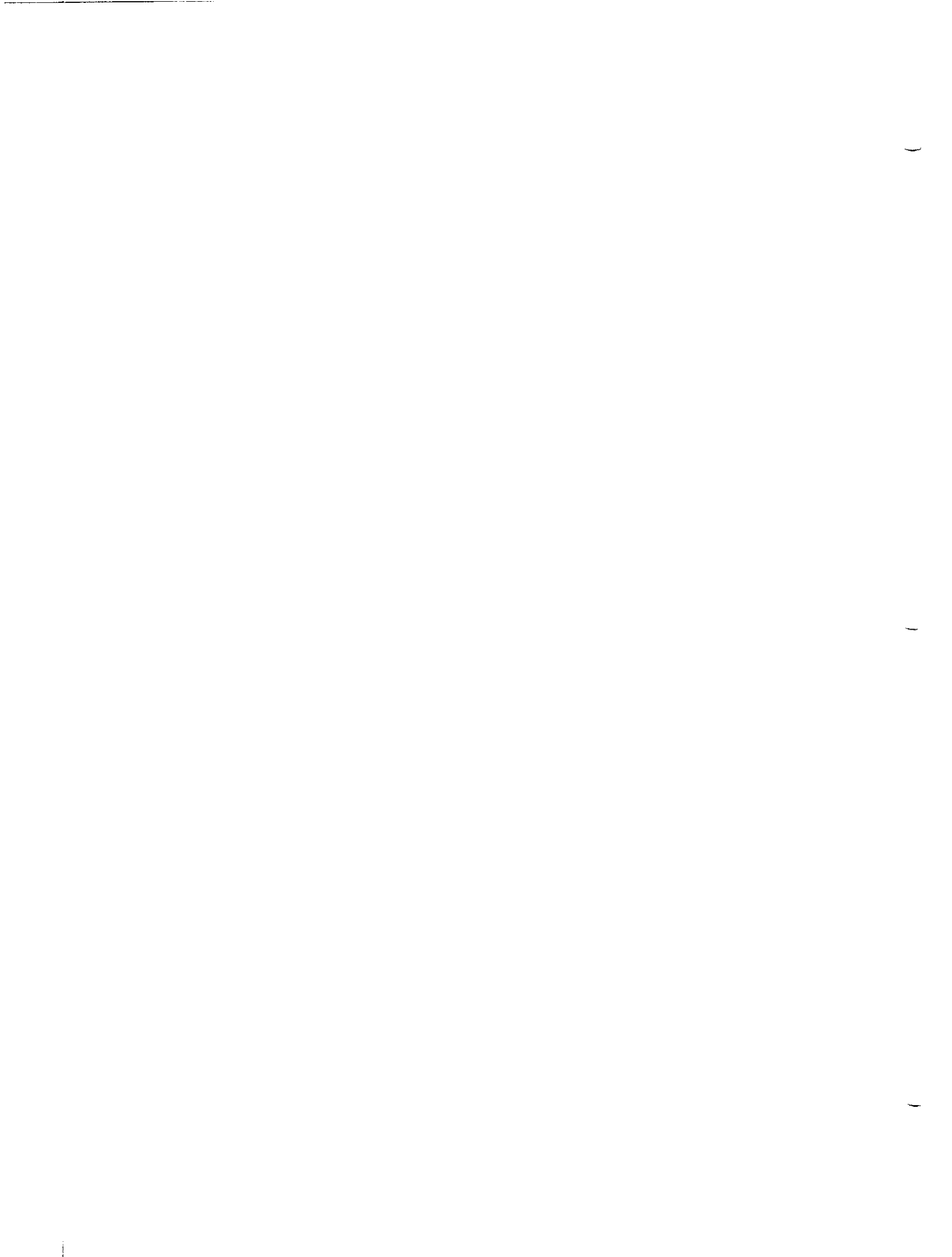
<i><u>Fewel</u>, William G.</i>	<i>Lt. Cdr.</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>Commanding Officer Navigator</i>
<i><u>Stebbins</u>, G. T., Jr.</i>	<i>Lt.(jg)</i>	<i>USNR</i>	<i>Executive Officer Communications Off.</i>
<i><u>Gunn</u>, Louis C.</i>	<i>Ensign (Boatswain)</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>Gunnery Officer First Lieutenant</i>
<i><u>Stewart</u>, C. M.</i>	<i>Ensign (Machinist)</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>Engineering Officer</i>
<i><u>Zito</u>, Anthony</i>	<i>Ensign (Boatswain)</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>Commisary Officer Ass't. Communications</i>

** * * * **

¹ Source: An examination of the ship's Deck Log through September 1942 at the National Archives.

Note: No officers were killed or wounded when the ship was sunk off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on 25 October 1942.

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



U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65)

Muster Roll Of The Crew, 1 October 1942¹

ABBOTT, Jesse Daniel	272-80-78	S1c
AMBROSE, John Patrick	662-21-73	EM3c
ANDERSON, George Conrad	385-78-69	RM1c
ARRANT, Leslie Herbert	262-53-91	F2c
BARR, George Alfred	283-18-14	SC1c
BELL, Hubert Aberton	504-12-62	S2c
BIRDWELL, Stanley J.	383-09-84	F2c
BLAIR, Zephyrinns Warren	311-06-48	CBM
BLANTON, Virgil Edward	382-29-21	SC3c
BORQUETA, Proceso	497-89-35	OC2c
BUHL, Henry Paul	214-48-48	CCM
BYRD, James Lowell	360-29-58	RM2c
*CARLQUIST, Howard Everett	207-18-59	SK2c
CHURCHWELL, Ralph Nero, Jr.	295-39-54	OS3c
CLINE, William Edward	372-39-85	S1c
COWAN, Fred Hayes	278-75-65	CBM
DILLARD, Wesley Allen	616-30-95	F2c
DUNN, Howard Milton	279-37-40	CPhM
ELWOOD, Ralph Dayton	411-29-93	S1c
EPPES, Wayne Elton	360-32-67	SC3c
EVANS, Jewel Martin	382-00-91	CQM
FERNANDEZ, Jacob William	385-52-79	MoMM1c
FERRARO, Robert John	212-52-98	Y1c
FRIEND, John	375-53-46	SF3c
FULLER, Vernon Luther	360-30-42	RM3c
GARDNER, Robert Ross	291-41-41	MoMM1c
GLOVER, John Edward	382-04-94	SM1c
*HASTINGS, Jack Vernon	393-56-25	SF3c
HORSTMAN, Arthur Henry	279-27-36	BM2c
HUNTER, Everett Allen	395-98-38	EM2c
JOHNSON, Winfred Randolph	636-09-21	Matt1c
KEEFE, Nylie Lionel	346-30-65	GEM
KLIPPSTEIN, Robert Albert	610-15-48	S2c
KOTARSKI, Stephen Jacob	311-26-03	MoMM1c
LANE, Harry Harlan	376-05-57	F2c
MAHAN, James Raymond	403-82-69	MM2c
McGOY, Robert Fremont	376-22-18	MoMM2c
MERCIEZ, William Desire	311-63-96	GM3c
MOERSCHHELL, Russell Casper	311-14-99	BM1c
MOORE, Caney Davis	265-06-61	CMoMM
MULLEN, Robert Franklin	201-61-73	SF2c
NICHOLS, Guy Lawrence	632-24-24	S1c
O'NEILL, Edward Kenneth	632-25-37	SF2c
OSTERLAND, Donald Louis	409-77-38	GM2c
OVER, George William	258-27-96	MoMM2c
PETERSON, James Peter, Jr.	324-92-10	SF1c
PETROSINO, Ernest	382-08-42	Cox
*PRATER, Walter Henry	376-45-16	RN3c
RASMUSSEN, Leo Lyle	321-50-58	Cox



RAYMER, Edward Charles	382-09-41	Msmth1c
RILEY, Gerald Ernest	372-42-59	S2c
SANDERS, Carl Raymond	311-63-97	Y3c
SHANNON, Willard Marion	626-34-51	S2c
SHELTON, Charles Wilson, Jr.	668-55-61	S2c
SHORT, James Albert	626-34-71	S1c
SHRYOCK, Paul Clayton	668-55-74	S2c
SHUFFETT, Chester Coby	634-18-72	S1c
**SLOUGH, William Richard	279-74-63	MoMM2c
SNOWDEN, Donald Leslie	212-41-85	MoMM1c
SNOWDEN, Pete Washington	406-90-47	BM2c
*STERNS, Charles Brewer	624-40-65	S2c
SYSAK, John	238-63-39	EM1c
TRAVIS, Eddie	342-31-01	MoMM2c
UNGER, Elroy Erich	305-25-20	EM1c
*WATSON, Harry Lee	360-52-37	S2c
WEBSTER, Robert Raymond	624-11-50	S1c
WHEELER, Ova Daniel	356-70-99	S2c
WILLETT, Cecil Roy	386-02-26	F2c
*WILLIAMS, J. T.	356-97-57	S2c
WILLIAMSON, James Edward	624-11-69	S1c
WILLIS, Walter John	622-47-44	CSF
WINFREY, Felix	360-49-48	Matt1c

* * * * *

* Wounded (** Killed) when the ship was sunk on October 25, 1942, by Japanese destroyers according to a machine-generated casualty report at the National Archives prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war.

Summary Of Casualties:

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Not Wounded</u>	<u>Complement²</u>
				<u>10/25/42</u>
Officers	0	0	5	5
Enlisted	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>72</u>
TOTALS	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>77</u>

1 Source: The ship's personnel diary on microfilm at the National Archives.

2 There were no entries in the ship's personnel diary after the muster roll on 10/1/42.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
October, 2000



IRONBOTTOM SOUND SHIPS

USS SEMINOLE (AT-65) CRH REVISION, 6 June 1992
SUNK by Destroyer GUNFIRE, off Tenaru River, 25 Oct. '42.

"NAVAJO" Class Fleet Tug. Launched 15 Sept. 1939.

Length: 205'; Beam: 38'6";
Hull Depth: (unknown)
Disp: 1500 tons

WRECK LOCATION:

(Morison-Chart) -- 09 24'S, 160 01.5'E (about 2 miles north of mouth of Tenaru River.)
(DANFS) -- about 1000 yards off-shore between Lengo and the point to the east.
(Action Report) -- As DANFS, but also: in 20 fathoms of water "close in to Koli Point".

DAMAGE DESCRIPTION: *

(Morison) -- Most shots passed through her without exploding.
(DANFS) -- First hits received about 1115. Ship abandoned 1120.
(Frank) -- Attacked by AKATSUKI, IKAZUCHI & SHIRATSUYU while returning from supply run. "SEMINOLE ... disappeared in a puddle of fire, but most Japanese shells simply punctured her flimsy hull without exploding. Only one man was lost.
(Action Report) -- When Japanese DDs approached, ship was headed for Lengo Channel. She then turned and ran for Lunga Point to get under protection of guns there. First hit received at about 1115, followed "in rapid succession by two more hitting salvos". Abandon ship ordered at 1120, "the ship then being one mass of flames, with burning gasoline pouring into the interior through the shell-holes". "the majority of the Japanese projectiles passed completely through the ship without exploding".

CASUALTIES: (Morison) -- 1 man lost.

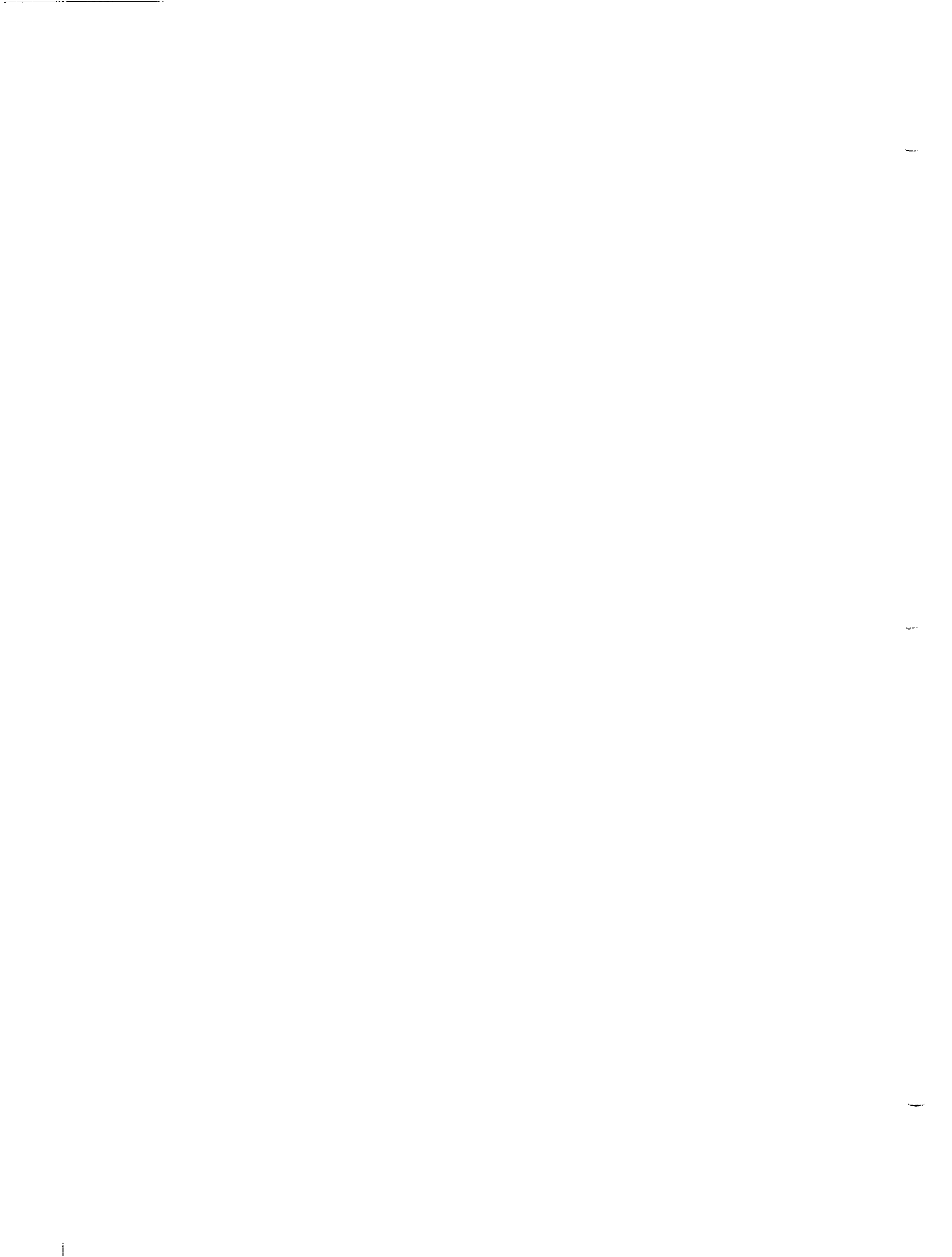
IDENTIFICATION POINTS:

SEMINOLE should be the only wreck of her size off the north shore of Guadalcanal east of Lunga Point. It is possible that she is one the wreck shown on charts just west of Koli Point and fairly near shore. She should be intact, as her construction was anything but "flimsy", and her damage appears to be punctures and some fire damage.

FUTURE EXAMINATION:

SEMINOLE is probably not a target of this expedition. She lies in what is likely to be "skin diving" water, and so could be safely left for others to investigate.

- * Sources: (Morison) Samuel E. Morison's History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II; (DANFS) Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships; (Frank) Richard B. Frank's Guadalcanal.



U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65)

Excerpts from Seminole survivor John P. Ambrose's letter to Ewan Stevenson dated March 27, 1995:*

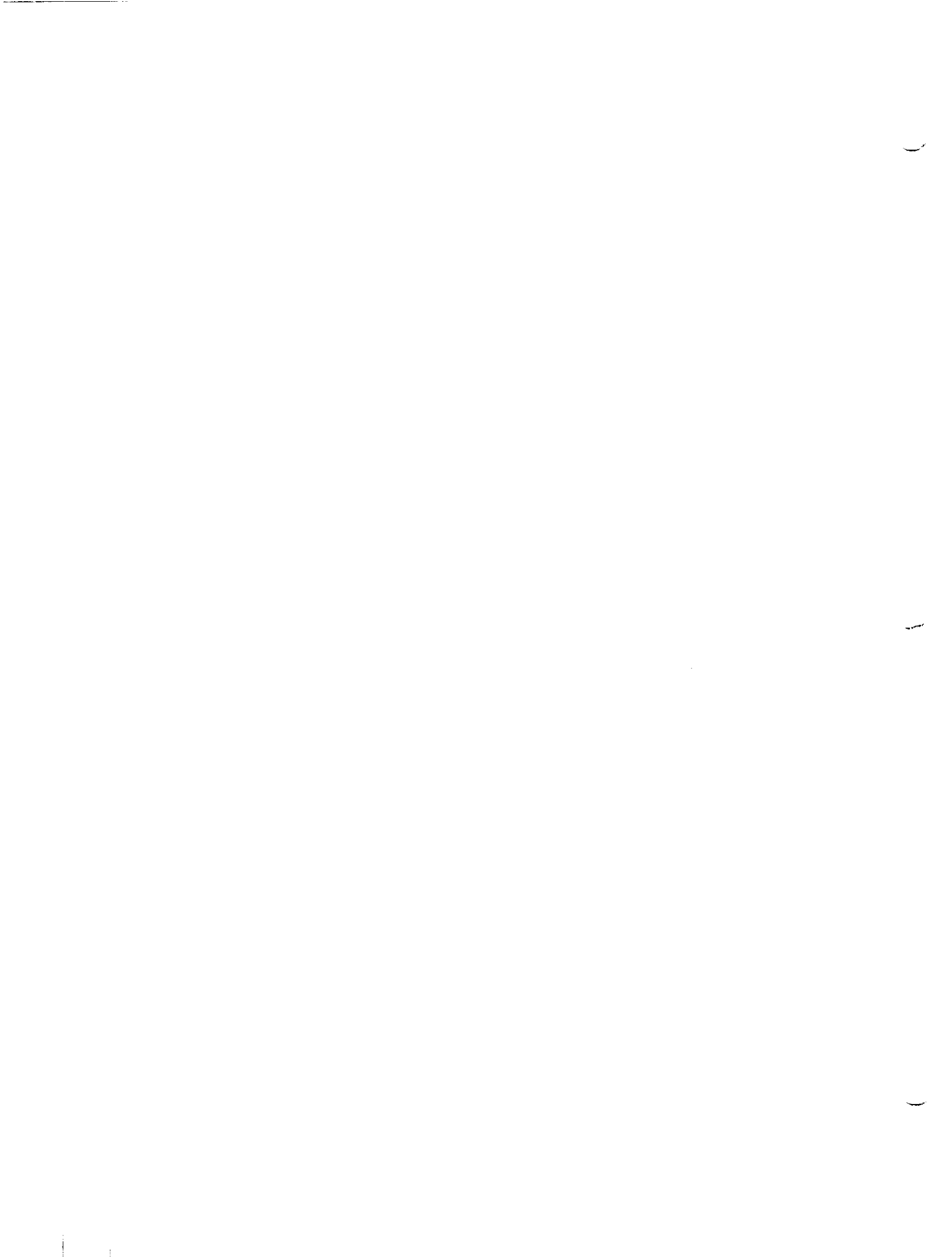
"As to the rescue of those (USS Meredith (DD-434)) survivors, we picked up eleven. One later died and was buried at sea.

"After picking up the survivors we took in tow one of the barges and brought it to Tulagi where it was secured up river. That night we loaded the Seminole's deck with 50-gal. drums of aviation gasoline, ammunition and guns. The next day we off-loaded at Guadalcanal and returned to Tulagi to reload. Took off again in the early morning for the Canal. Off-loaded and returned to Tulagi. We reloaded again and this time took on board 100 Marines. Early in the morning of the third day, October 25, we left for the Canal where we off-loaded the Marines, some avgas drums and guns. We then stopped unloading and got under way, because word was passed that Jap destroyers were heading our way. My General Quarters station was below decks in the Motor Room. On orders from the Bridge we controlled the ship's speed. At this time we were trying to outrun the Japanese destroyers, which had larger guns than our 3-inch pea-shooter. We were making about 21 knots. We removed the protective panels from the control board and turned the air ventilation blowers on the red hot resistors, trying to cool them down so they wouldn't trip the overload breakers.

"We did not know what was happening topside, but we heard on the intercom that we had been hit and that the avgas was on fire and exploding. Word was passed to abandon ship. The five of us in the Motor Room went topside where we saw men in the water and flames aft on the fantail. We all jumped over the side into the water and started to swim towards the beach. Someone yelled to us to turn back -- the Japs were on that beach! We swam hard to stay away from the avgas, aflame on the water. We were in the water some time before boats from Lunga Point picked us up and returned to Lunga. Later that afternoon we were strafed by Jap planes. I remember standing sideways by a tree for protection and listening to the bullets pass by. Luckily, none of us were hit.

"The one man lost, William R. Slough, MoMM2c, was at his duty station in the after steering room. That was below the fantail, which was loaded with the drums of avgas. He probably did not have a chance."

* Ewan Stevenson is a diver and author who has recently located the Seminole in 110 feet of water off Guadalcanal. He is preparing a book titled "World War II Wrecks of the Solomon Islands" and is soliciting firsthand accounts from survivors.



U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65)

*Guadalcanal Echoes; July, 1981**

FORGOTTEN SHIP

The Seminole Story is Told

by

D. L. Snowden

The USS SEMINOLE has been lost in a naval battle off the Solomon Islands."

Those few words, accompanied by a picture of the ship, were practically her entire obituary. True, she was not a glamorous, heroic capital ship; she fought no decisive battles; she battered no enemy stronghold into submission. Yet, in her last day the SEMINOLE was completing an important and vital operation, contributing materially in the capture and defense of Guadalcanal, at a time when many of our fighting ships were at anchor in the New Hebrides and New Caledonia, alert for any large-scale movements of the Japanese Navy.

A number of books and articles have been written describing the Solomon's campaign, but the hard-working SEMINOLE is not even mentioned in most of them, and, the ones that do, dismiss the part she played, and her loss, in a few brief words. It is perhaps, true that the sinking of a fleet tug was of no significance when compared with the passing of the magnificent combat ships sacrificed in securing those hot, humid, malaria-infested islands.

Built at Staten Island, NY., the SEMINOLE was second of the class now designated "ATF". Commissioned in March 1940, under command of LCDR William G. Fewel, she spent the remainder of that year in a variety of duties on the Atlantic seaboard and in the Caribbean. In February, 1941, she arrived in the Pacific, and from then until the autumn of '42 was kept busy at her trade, including a small part in the Battle of Midway.

Early October of that year found the SEMINOLE in Suva, Fiji, following a month spent at Tongataby. From Suva, she went to Espirito Santo in the New Hebrides, and thereby began the final phase of her career. Less than forty-eight hours after arrival there, orders were received to proceed to sea in company with the destroyers USS Gwin DD-433 and USS Grayson DD 435 - destination: the embattled Solomons.

* Published by the Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans. Original copy courtesy of Cecil R. Willett (Seminole survivor).

Some 36 hours after leaving the sanctuary of Espirito, our small force lay to and picked up survivors of the USS's Vireo and Meredith DD-434. The former, an old bird-class minesweeper, escorted by the latter, had been towing a deep sea barge loaded with a volatile cargo of aviation gasoline and 75mm ammunition for the Marines on Guadalcanal.

When our trio of ships arrived on the scene, the Meredith had been sunk. The Vireo abandoned, was drifting with wind and current. The barge, which had been cast loose, was also going its own way. The circumstances which brought about this situation are shrouded in mystery and an air of tragedy. Survivors of the two vessels, in pitiable condition, were picked up and cared for by the SEMINOLE and the two destroyers. The former took the barge in tow and continued on course for the Solomons.

Of the 11 survivors on board the SEMINOLE, one man passed away the following morning. For most of us it was our first experience with a death at sea, and its accompanying sad, sobering burial. The deceased was sewed up in canvas, the traditional shot at his feet in the form of a 3-inch shell and old iron, and carried to the main deck, draped with the colors. There was little time for appropriate ceremony. There was a slackening of speed while our Captain read the burial service, committing the body to the deep, and the ships steamed on.

The situation was quiet on Sunday, 18 October, when the 3 ships and barge arrived in Tulagi, but there was an ominous air about the place which belied the peaceful harbor and the dense tropical foliage. Marines and sailors stationed there crowded round as the SEMINOLE and barge were moored to Government Pier for the night. Our ten remaining survivors were transferred to the Gwin and Grayson for the trip back to Espirito and the hospital, while the Marines and sailors went aboard for the opportunity of enjoying cold, chlorine-free water. In return for this slight hospitality, they brought us up to date on local events, painting graphic pictures of the various actions in which our ships had been lost. They considered our ship's chances for survival to be very slim, and had no hesitation about telling us so. Such predictions did not exactly boost morale. Still, there was our mission to accomplish, and in spite of the predictions, it did not somehow, seem conceivable that the ship would be lost. Those predictions were 100 percent accurate.

Night in the Solomons, barring the moon's presence, was total, all-concealing darkness with an undercurrent of tension that spoke of watchful waiting. There was a hush, as through everyone was listening, and all the slight sounds of the night were magnified. The black waters rippled along the hulls of the tug and barge, and eddied around the pilings of the little pier. About the darkened decks, men spoke quietly, knowing that in the morning we would begin our gamble to deliver the gasoline and ammunition to the Marines waiting across the channel.

As the sun came up, the ship, barge in tow, slipped past the rocks at the harbor entrance and out into the bright blue channel, but due to intense enemy air activity was ordered back to Tulagi. The clumsy barge was a definite detriment to speed and maneuverability, but the haven of Tulagi was reached without undue incident.

The barge was left moored to the pier while the SEMINOLE moved up into Purvis Bay and alongside the USS MacFarland which was snugged in tightly against the bank where it rose steeply from the water. The former 4-piper, converted to an AVD, was minus most of her stern, including the steering engine, right down to the water's edge. She was complete draped in fresh greenery from the nearby jungle, a marvelous camouflage job. While our salvage gang went aboard to assist in repairs, the SEMINOLE'S crew was sent ashore to reap a harvest of branches and brush with which to disguise our own ship. The work of trying to look like part of the jungle was proceeding nicely when we were ordered to strip it all off and go back down along side of the barge.

All the rest of that day and well into the night, we swung drums of gasoline aboard, and upended them side by side all over the main and boat decks. Just before daylight, with morning mists still drifting across the harbor, we shot past the entrance at our best speed for Guadalcanal. Laying to a few miles north of Lunga Point, we began lightering our cargo into the LCVP's and LSMs coming alongside. The boat crews were ragged, bearded, sun-blackened, dressed in all sorts of nondescript clothing, including Japanese, and were unrecognizable as one-time natty sailors of the Navy and Coast Guard. Their appearances gave ample evidence of the tough going in these parts. If we could have seen but a few days into the future! We were but a short time removed from becoming members of that hard-bitten fraternity!

The work of getting the gasoline ashore was going as planned when that plan was disrupted by a Japanese gun cutting loose at us from its hidden position in the hills below Cape Esperance. At the first shot, a hit, the General Alarm sent us to our stations. There were more shots, fortunately all misses, as we pulled away to the south, around Lunga Point and out of range of "Millimeter Mike," as he was called, an obnoxious character well-known in the area until the Marines put him out of business.

Safe for the time being under the lee of Lunga Point, the unloading continued without further disturbance. That first shot had punched a few holes in the ship, causing negligible damage, but wounding one seaman. Slight as it was, ship and crew had received their baptism of fire, and back in Tulagi we curiously examined the damage, wondering how bad it would be the next time.

That night, while PT boats slipped their moorings and quietly sneaked past us to keep their vigil up and around Savo Island, we stacked cases of m5fa SN all along the main deck. This, too, we considered to be a touch cargo, and the next morning we began to feel better as it was passed to the waiting boats. Everyone kept a sharp lookout for planes that might dispute our right to be there, and when the last case had disappeared over the side, we breathe more easily. It was the only load of ammo we ferried over; it had cost lives, money, time and trouble, but I am sure the Marines used it to exact payment in full.

The next day, we did another dash across the channel with gasoline, very uneventful, but the following two days were spent in port while work on the MacFarland was continued. Word went around the ship that we would clear out the Solomons when the last of the gasoline was delivered - just one more deck-load. So, on Saturday evening we went alongside the barge for the last time, shipping the remainder of the gas. We were elated at the prospect of leaving. No one thought for a moment it would be otherwise. We were completing our job, and in a few more days we would be back in the New Hebrides, ready for our next assignment. It looked very good. But the sands were running out. Also loading gasoline that Saturday night was a YP Boat, an ex-tuna clipper from San Diego. With all the drums aboard, the two ships waited for daylight. Just before we sailed, Marines came on board for transportation back to the fighting front. At about 0600 we left Tulagi and arrived off Henderson Field shortly before 0800, the Marines were taken ashore, and we began to unload the cargo.

It was Sunday, 25 October, 1942. A beautiful day of sunshine, blue sky and blue water. The guns on shore were quiet and the forbidding mountains of the island were backdrop for a tropical scene, the aspects of which were spoiled by the machines of war that were in evidence. Boats rolled lazily in the ground swell, waiting for their turn alongside to take a load of the precious steel drums. But very little gasoline reached shore, for this was the day - the very last day.

The raucous squawking of the General Alarm interrupted the unloading. The ship got under way with 25,00 gallons of 100 octane gasoline still on board, and word was passed to men below decks that enemy planes had been sighted. They passed the ship, but made no attempt to attack. For reasons known, to themselves, the Japanese pilots ignored us completely. However, Condition Red continued, and we stayed at GQ. We even felt so relaxed down below that we made a pot of coffee--the cup that always cheers the Navy man. It was, as they say, the lull before the storm.

At about 1100, word was passed that the ship would make all possible speed. We watched the engines closely and critically, ears tuned for unusual sounds, as they began to develop

their full horse power to the last straining ounce. They were producing as never before, and it was evident that something was up - something unknown and unseen by the men below. Then, over the clamor of the diesels, I dimly heard the telephone. Turning, I watched the talker. His look grew anxious as he motioned to me. He gave me the word - three Japanese destroyers were after us! Three cans versus one ATF and one YP boat! Though we were there "fust" the Japs were there with the "mostest!"

The terrible trio opened fire, and though our Skipper was putting the ship through evasive zig-zag maneuvers, the Jap gunners began to score hits, mostly on the boat deck, the main deck and in the motor room. As each salvo struck, the shock tremors traveled throughout the ship. It seemed a cinch that the engine room would get it at any second. There was nothing to do by brace ourselves for what seemed to be inevitable. The engines roared on. We waited for the blast. But, it never came. Due to some miracle, no shot pierced the engine room, the largest compartment on the ship. Nevertheless, the rest of it was pretty well torn up. The motor room and shaft alley were flooding. Drums of gas were exploding and burning. The ship was losing way.

Then, word came to abandon the engine room, go up to the mess deck and lie flat. There, others of the crew were lying around. The compartment was filled with smoke. Decks were littered with debris, broken lagging pieces of metal, torn insulation and broken mess gear. We looked out at the door on the port side. There, a few miles away and steaming in column were the narrow, dark gray hulls of the enemy ships. Flashes of flame from their sides spelled more shells on the way, and we threw ourselves flat again. In a matter of seconds, the shells struck. The Japs had our range. It was a turkey shoot for them, for the SEMINOLE had lost all way.

The end was at hand. The words "Abandon Ship!" were passed. The crew began to hit the water. Out on the deck, the glance of a few seconds showed the entire after-section of the ship to be a roaring inferno. Drums of gas were blazing. The deck was burning. Paint on the superstructure and the main-mast was a mass of leaping, climbing flames. More drums of gas exploded. It was enough. It was time to leave her. A last look around, a step to the bulwarks, and then the drop into the sea. Everyone was swimming away from the side. A life raft drifted around the stern, carrying several men and the ship's dog, and other crew members clambered aboard. The rest of us just trusted to our life jackets. We were close inshore - close enough so that the sand on the beach was visible from our low sighting point in the water. We were in Lengo Channel, off Kaena Point - Japanese territory, for we were well south of the Henderson Field area.

Warning was given by the officers to stay well clear of the beach. The destroyers stood off, administering the coup-de-grace to the already-sinking SEMINOLE, dead in the water and going down by the stern. A mighty blast of detonating gasoline shot flames higher than the main truck, and falling patches of the blazing fluid started fresh little fires that grew rapidly.

Several miles away to the northward, the ex-tuna clipper was going down, her wooden hull blazing from stem to stern - another victim. American and Japanese planes fought it out high in the clear, cloudless sky while the destroyers, their work done, turned north and headed for the channel between Savo and Florida Islands. The SEMINOLE still blazing, was settling deeply by the stern, the bow lifting as weight increased aft. She swung as though on a pivot. The Colors fluttered as they disappeared beneath the sea in a smother of smoke and steam from the extinguishing fires. At last, she stood on her stern, the fore part of the ship pointing straight up, and slowly descended straight down for all time, into the care of the Keeper of Lost Ships.

Article submitted by Ed O'Neill crew member of the Seminole. Article written by Chief Engineman of the Seminole, D. L. Snowden.

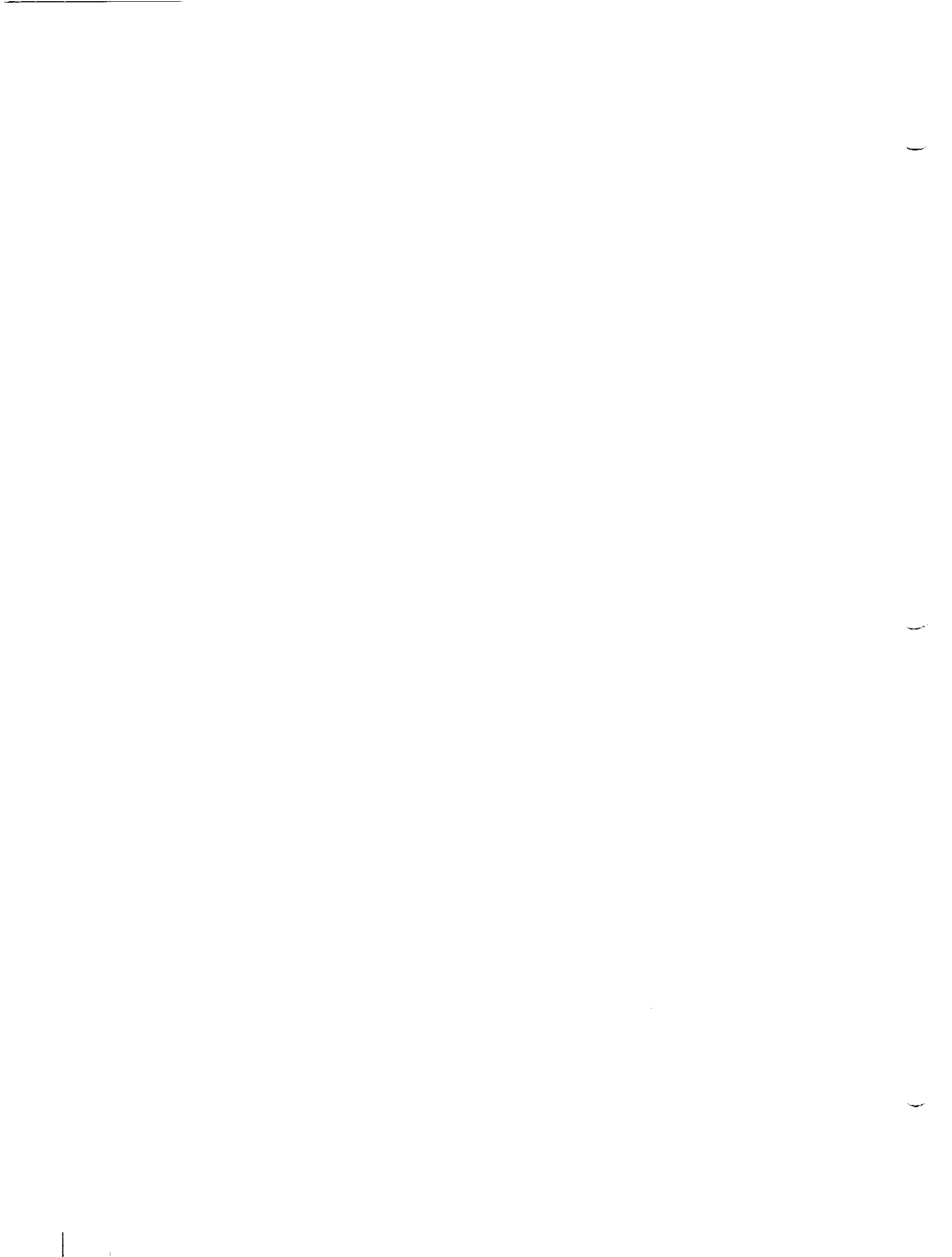
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Fred Cowan, at left and Ed O'Neill shipmates on the SEMINOLE taken on 11/5/80 in Sarasota, FL. 38 years 12 days after the Seminole was sunk. Story of Seminole submitted by O'Neill



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



NAVY DEPARTMENT

HOLD FOR RELEASE
MORNING NEWSPAPERS
JUNE 5, 1944

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Addressing Reverend Mr. Edwards, Rear Admiral Hayler
said:

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

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

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

United States ships that went down in the Iron Bottom Bay and vicinity were: ASTORIA, QUINCY, VINCENNES, ATLANTA, JUNEAU, NORTHHAMPTON and CHICAGO, cruisers; JARVIS, USS BLUE, DUNCAN, BARTON, CUSHING, LAFFEY, MONSSEN, PRESTON, WALKE, BENHAM, DEHAVEN, and AARON WARD, all destroyers; the destroyer transports COLHOUN, GREGORY, LITTLE, the tanker KANAWHA; the transport JOHN PENN; fleet tug SEMNOLE; 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.

IN MEMORY OF THE
OFFICERS AND MEN OF
THE UNITED STATES NAVY
AND ALLIED NAVIES
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IRON BOTTOM BAY 1942-43

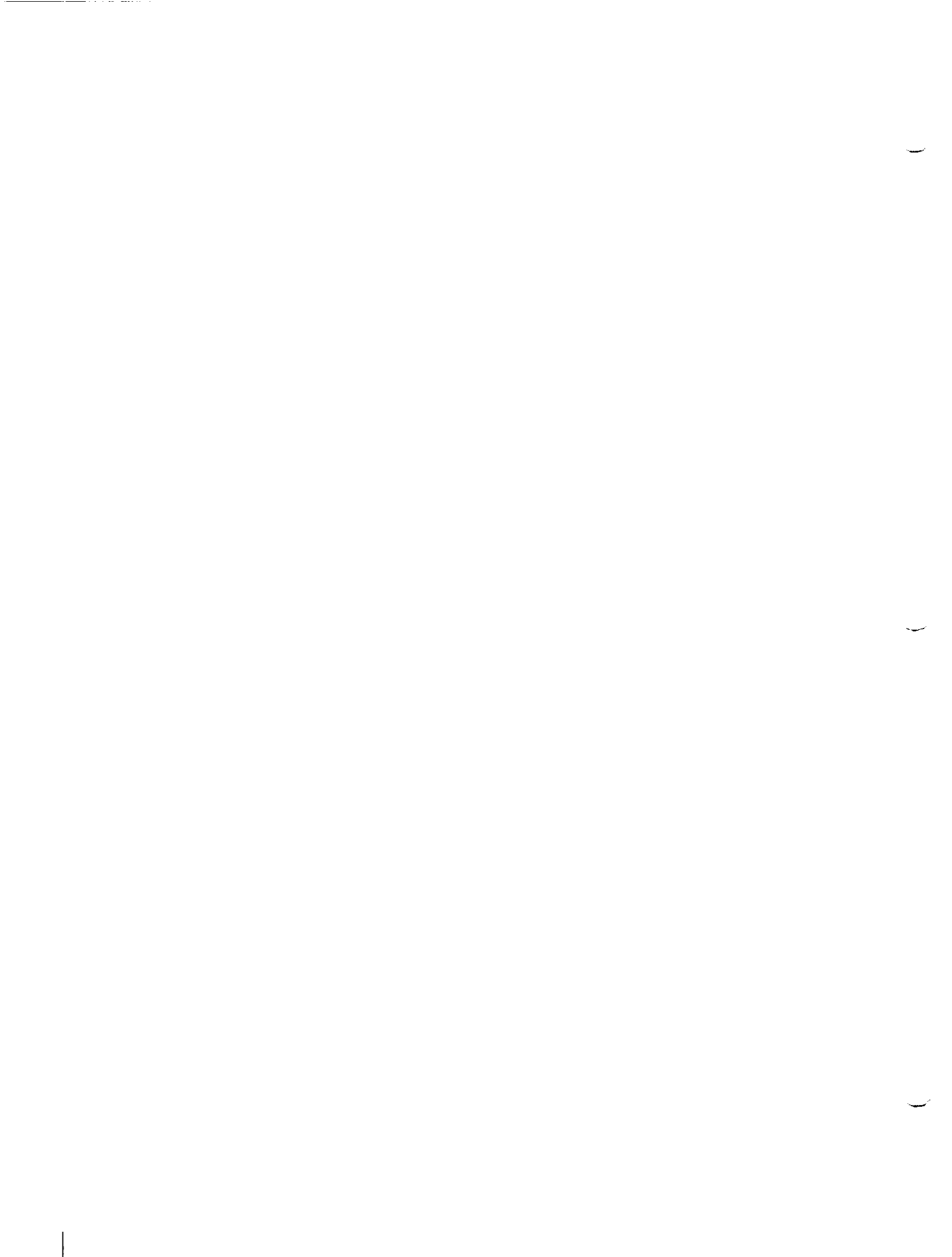
DEDICATED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE
IRON BOTTOM BAY CLUB, PORT PURVIS,
SOLICITORS IS. — THE MARINE ISLE

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

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

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

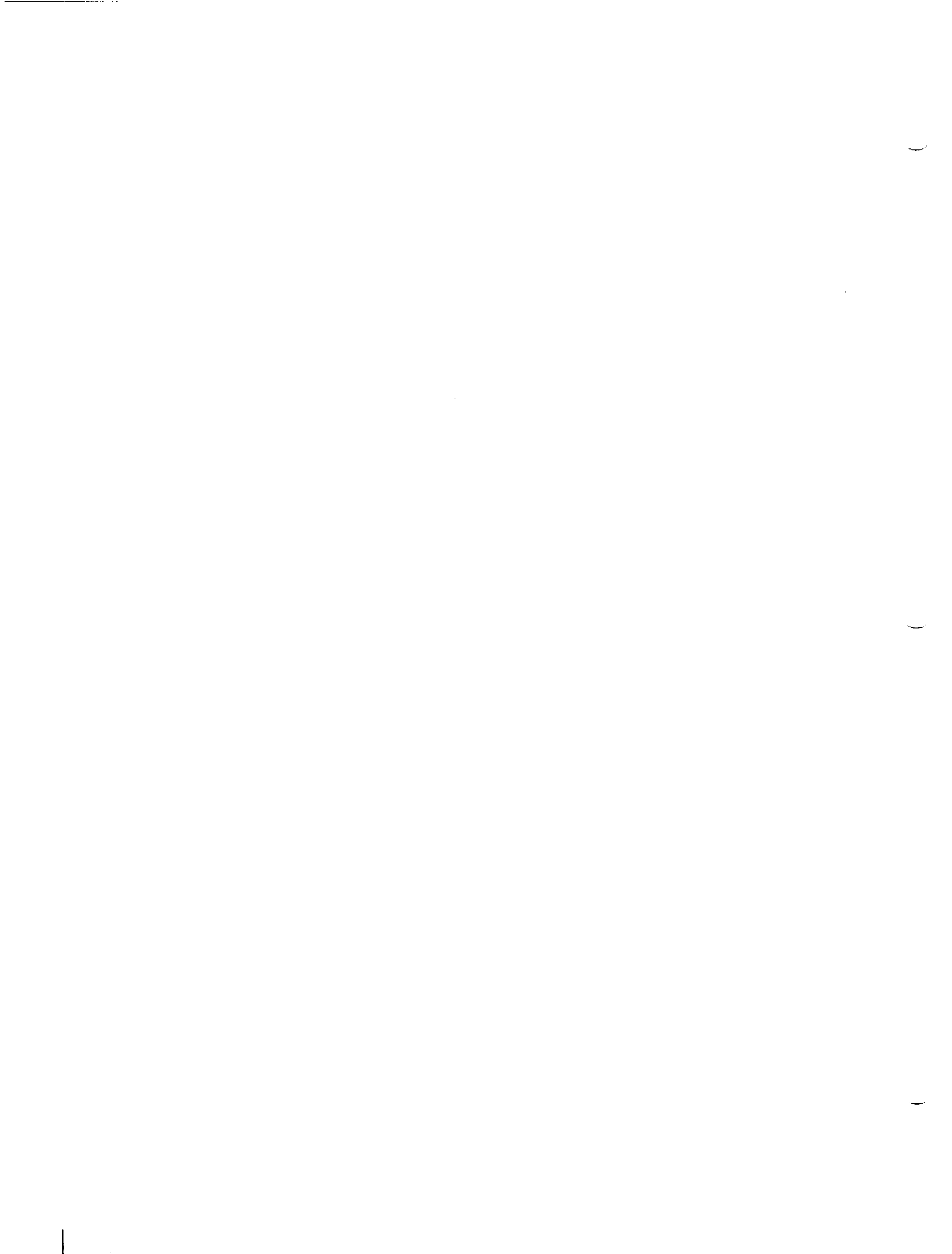
E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
March, 1995



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



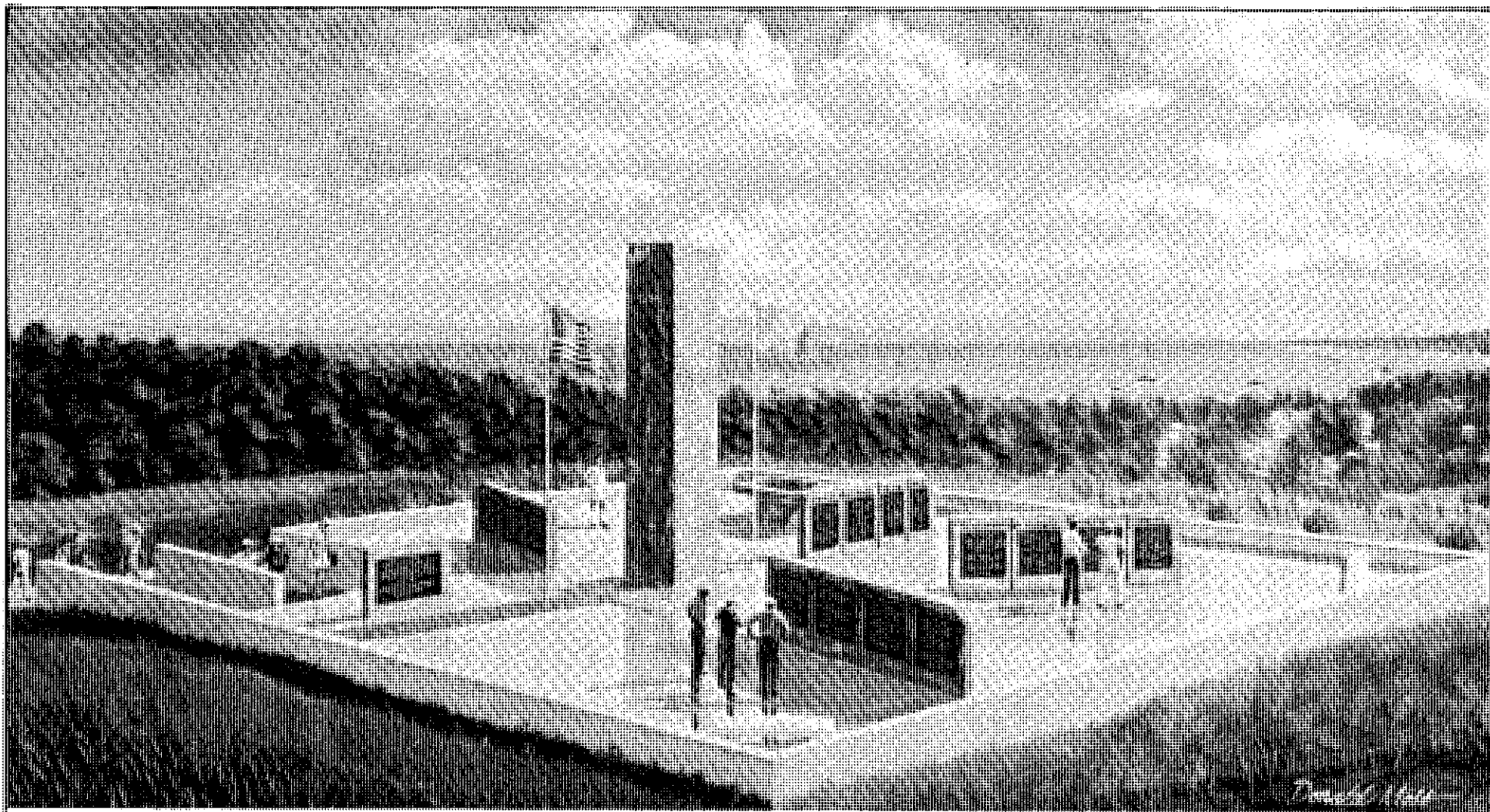
Photograph courtesy of Joseph G. Micek, AUS, treasurer of the Guadalcanal Solomon Islands War Memorial Foundation. Mr. Micek reports that the Officer's Club at the top of the small hill no longer stands, but that the area immediately around the monument is fairly well kept up. (EAW)



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

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





The American WWII Memorial overlooking Point Cruz and Iron Bottom Sound, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, was dedicated on August 7, 1992, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the landings there by the U.S. Marines in World War II. About 20,000 people attended the ceremony, including many service personnel and over 500 foreign visitors. Many of the local residents walked for days in order to witness the dedication. Panels list the U.S. and Allied ships lost or damaged in the campaign and describe the seven naval battles fought in nearby waters. The polished red granite used in the walls with the panels and in the 24-foot high pylons 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. Nisick, 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

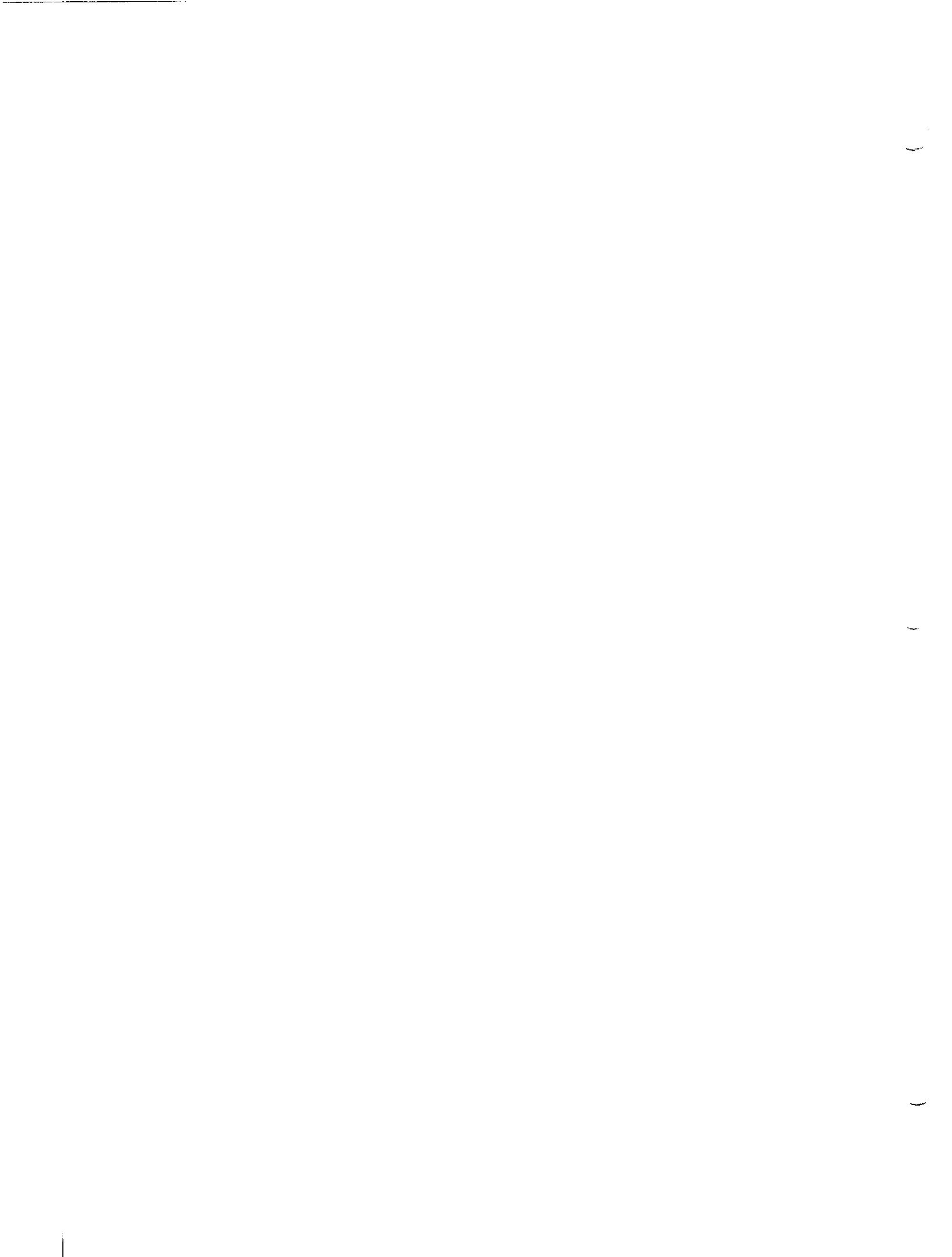
TRANSPORTS

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.

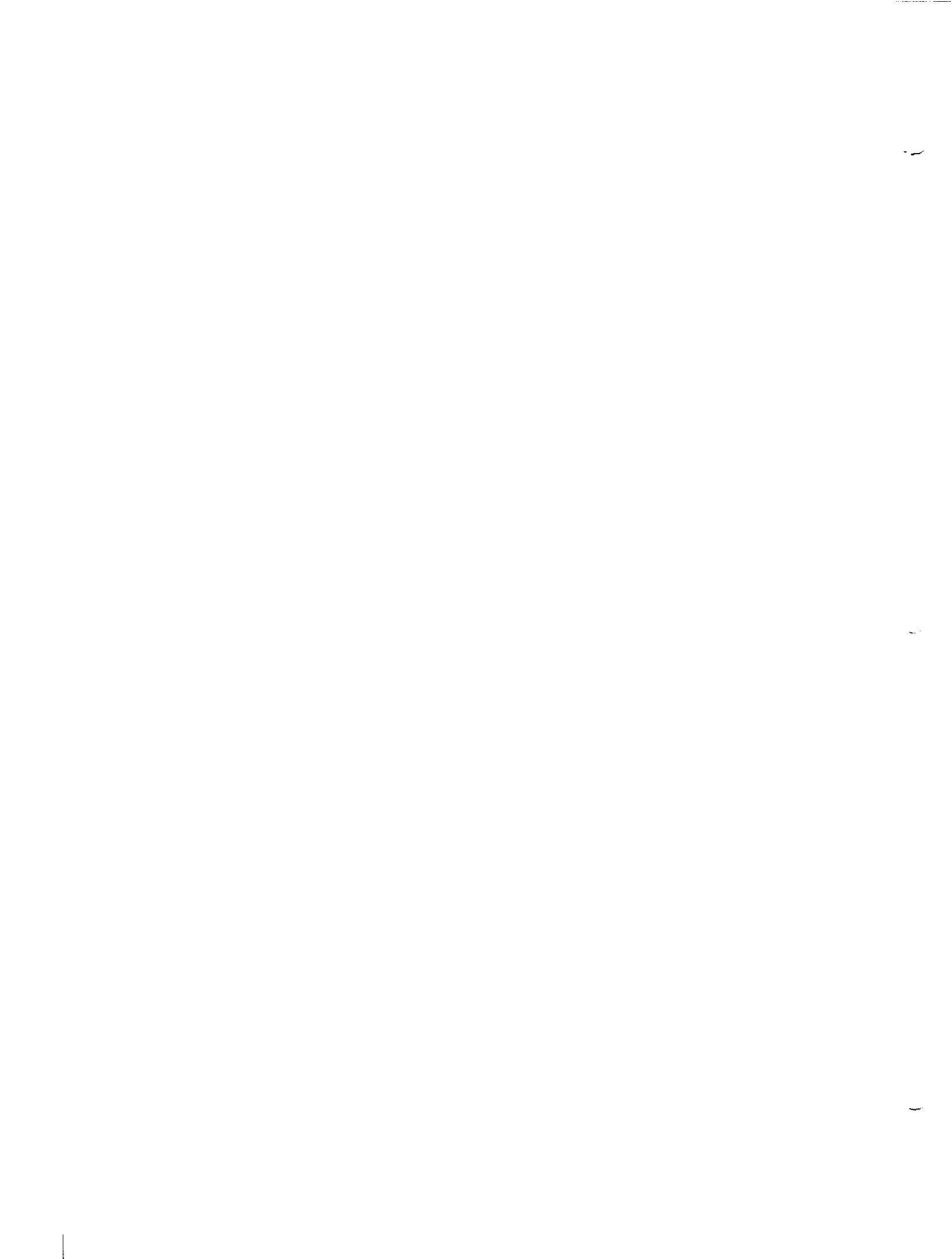
1. SAVO ISLAND, 9 AUGUST 1942
2. THE EASTERN SOLOMONS, 24-25 AUGUST
3. CAPE ESPERANCE, 11-12 OCTOBER
4. THE SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS, 26-27 OCTOBER
5. NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL, 12-15 NOVEMBER
6. TASSAFARONGA, 30 NOVEMBER
7. RENNEL ISLAND, 29-30 JANUARY 1943



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

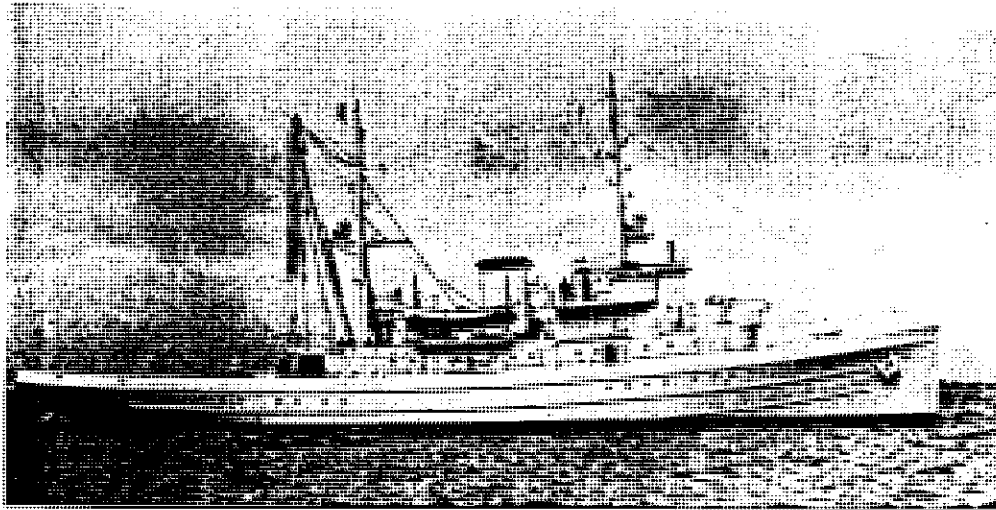
<u>SHIP</u>	<u>SUNK</u>	<u>DAMAGED</u>
BATTLESHIPS	2	
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS		1
LIGHT CARRIERS	1	1
HEAVY CRUISERS	3	5
LIGHT CRUISERS	1	2
DESTROYERS	11	20
SUBMARINES	6	
TRANSPORTS	13	
CARGO SHIPS	5	



sea CLASSICS

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 8
AUGUST 1994

DAY OF BATTLE IN SEALARK CHANNEL/Feuer *An insignificant encounter helped set the stage that won the Battle of Guadalcanal*



Fleet tug USS *Seminole* (AT-65) would be lost 25 October 1942 in the action at Sealark Channel.

DAY OF BATTLE SEATTLE

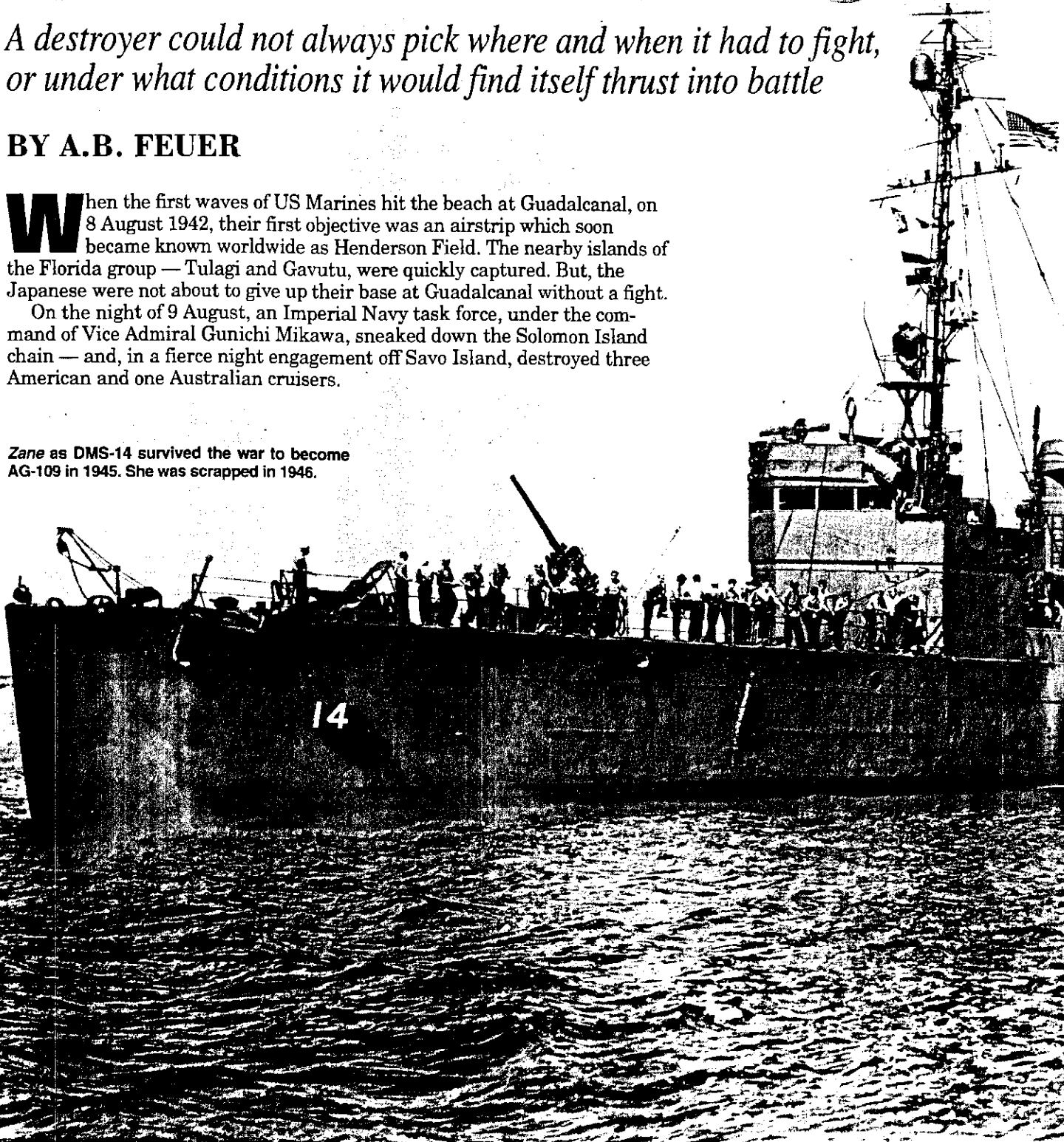
A destroyer could not always pick where and when it had to fight, or under what conditions it would find itself thrust into battle

BY A.B. FEUER

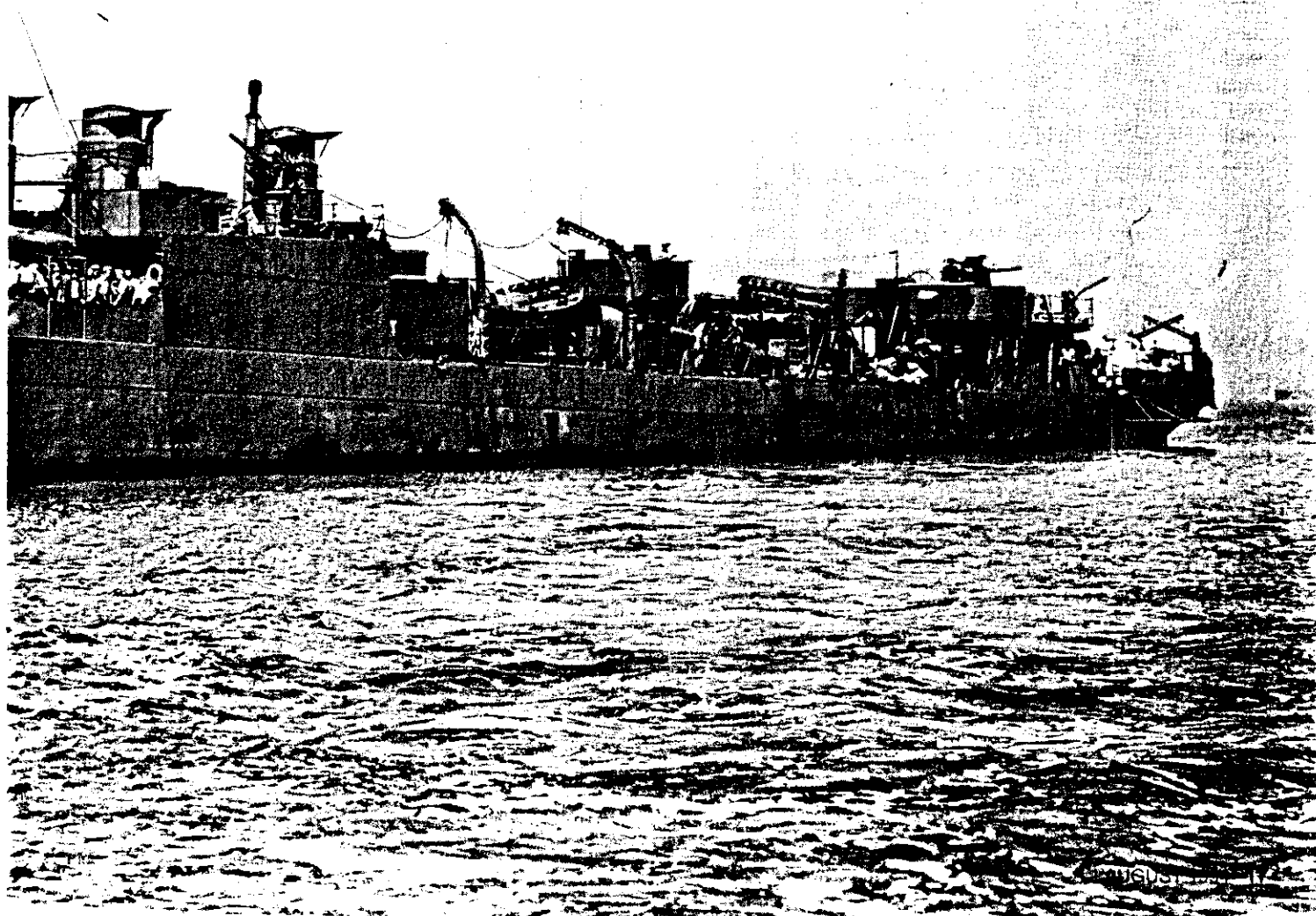
When the first waves of US Marines hit the beach at Guadalcanal, on 8 August 1942, their first objective was an airstrip which soon became known worldwide as Henderson Field. The nearby islands of the Florida group — Tulagi and Gavutu, were quickly captured. But, the Japanese were not about to give up their base at Guadalcanal without a fight.

On the night of 9 August, an Imperial Navy task force, under the command of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, sneaked down the Solomon Island chain — and, in a fierce night engagement off Savo Island, destroyed three American and one Australian cruisers.

Zane as DMS-14 survived the war to become AG-109 in 1945. She was scrapped in 1946.



IN CHANNEL



After its convincing victories at Pearl Harbor and Savo Island, the Japanese High Command became confident that its army and navy had the US Military on the ropes — and in no position to carry on a protracted war for any length of time.

But, the time-honored theory of logistics slowly began to nibble at Japan's strategy of conquest. Their troops had been trained to "live off the land." This concept worked well when conquering large metropolitan areas — such as Singapore, Shanghai and Manila. But, the malaria-ridden jungles of the Southwest Pacific islands soon began to disrupt the Japanese timetable of conquest.

In order to push the Americans off the beachhead at Guadalcanal, enemy ships and aircraft continually bombarded Henderson Field — often closing the landing strip for hours at a time.

On the night of 28 August, a Japanese destroyer flotilla under the command of Admiral Raizo Tanaka, began running badly needed provisions and fresh troops down the so-called "Slot" from Rabaul, New Britain to Guadalcanal.

Tanaka's Second Destroyer Flotilla soon became known as the "Tokyo Express." And, on 31 August, General Kawaguchi and 1200 soldiers were successfully landed. Two weeks later, the Japanese sent the battleships, *Kongo* and *Haruna*, down the Slot. They shelled Henderson Field and destroyed about 50 American aircraft on the ground. Taking advantage of the disruption to American air cover, Tanaka's destroyers dashed down from Rabaul and landed 4500 additional troops and large quantities of supplies.

In an attempt to counter the "Tokyo Express" and provide Henderson Field with a constant supply of aviation gasoline, a couple of World War I four-stack destroyers — which had been converted to minesweepers — were given a dangerous mission. The USS *Zane* (DMS-14) and the USS *Trever* (DMS-16) were assigned to tow four PT-boats from Espiritu Santo to Tulagi. In addition, their top decks were packed with more than 300 fifty-

five gallon drums of precious gasoline for the aircraft operating out of Henderson Field.

The voyage to the Solomon Islands was a nerve-wracking experience for the minesweeper crews. Even though the "smoking-lamp" was out topside at all times, there was always the nagging thought that a stray bullet or a spark would turn the vessels into fireballs.

Because of the bulky loads on deck, the ships were also very top heavy. And any encounter with heavy weather and rough seas would be disastrous.

Early on the morning of 25 October 1942, the *Zane* and *Trever* moored in the harbor at Tulagi. The minesweeper crews breathed huge sighs of relief, not realizing that their respite would only be brief and temporary.

The PT boats were quickly cut loose. And, by 0700, the gasoline drums had been successfully transferred to a large barge. The aviation fuel had no sooner been unloaded than Major General Vandegrift, commanding the First Marine Division, ordered the *Zane* and *Trever* to prepare to conduct a shore bombardment of Japanese positions on Guadalcanal.

However, at 0800, the Tulagi tower signaled that enemy planes were in the area. All ships went to General Quarters, as a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft, escorted by eight Zeros, flew over Henderson Field.

But the two little minesweepers were not out of the woods yet. About two hours later, another message was flashed from the Tulagi Tower: "Enemy ships in the straits!" Lieutenant Commander Dwight M. Agnew, commanding officer of the *Trever* stated in his Action Report: "We were advised to seek shelter in the Maliala River. But, this river was uncharted. We signaled Guadalcanal Control to advise General Vandegrift that we were retiring to sea to await further orders."

Meanwhile, Yusuke Yamada's Destroyer Division Six consisting of the *Akatsuki*, *Ikazuchi* and *Shiratsuyu* was heading for a bombardment mission off Koli and Lunga Points.

The *Zane* and *Trever* had just

departed Tulagi when they were sighted by the Japanese destroyers. The *Zane* was steaming in the lead with the *Trever* 900 yards astern. Armed with three-inch guns, which were no match for the enemy's larger caliber weapons, the minesweepers made a dash to try and escape by way of the Sealark Channel.

Suddenly, for some unknown reason, Yamada decided to hold off on his bombardment mission until he disposed of the two fleeing ships. The destroyers gave chase and opened fire at a range of five miles. The old, time-worn engines of the *Zane* and *Trever* managed to pound out 29 knots — but it was not enough. The Japanese vessels continued to close range. Within a few minutes, the *Zane* was blasted with a five-inch shell which destroyed Gun No. 2 and left three men dead and four wounded sprawled on the deck.

The minesweepers swung hard left into the dangerous Nggela Channel. Yamada, not willing to venture into the shallows and knife-edged reefs, turned back and headed toward Koli Point.

The *Zane* and *Trever* luckily survived the enemy onslaught. The three destroyers mounted a dozen five-inch guns having a range of

15,000 yards. The minesweepers carried a total of six three-inch guns with a range of about 10,000 yards. But, the marksmanship of Yamada's men left a lot to be desired. The destroyers fired approximately 450 rounds of five-inch ammunition with only one shell finding its target.

Various reports of the sea battle revealed other interesting information. As soon as Japanese lookouts sighted the minesweepers, Yamada swung his destroyer column hard left and dashed in pursuit. Because of converging courses, the range closed rapidly. The *Zane* and *Trever* frantically zigzagged. Japanese salvos splashed on all sides of the minesweepers as they cut a foaming swath through the Sealark Channel.

Although the enemy ships were beyond the range of the *Trever's* guns, Dwight Agnew shouted the order to commence firing. His gun crews jumped to the challenge — regardless of the fact that their shells would fall well in front of the fast approaching destroyers.

The captain of the *Zane*, Lieutenant Commander Wirtz, described the running battle: "During the



An LCI is tied alongside an LST at Tulagi in June 1943.

engagement, one Jap ship seemed to be firing about a thousand yards short. The shells from another destroyer missed us by a couple of hundred yards. However, the third ship in line got many straddles — but most of the rounds splashed from five to a hundred yards over.”

Aboard the *Trever*, however, Lieutenant Commander Agnew had a different view of the action: “At least four salvos landed, like a close fitting glove, on all sides of the *Zane* — and by feet, not yards. It seemed incredible that the shells could splash so close and not score a hit. Geysers of water from the near misses swamped the decks, and overshots sliced through the *Zane*’s rigging.”

The *Zane* was still in the lead as she raced for the entrance to Sealark Channel. But safe navigation quickly became a major dilemma. Existing charts of the coral reef had been compiled from British surveys taken in 1912 — and the coral had been growing for thirty years.

As their ships sliced through the unfriendly waters at top speed, Agnew and Wirtz faced three disturbing possibilities — ripping out the bottom of their ship’s hulls on an uncharted reef — having an outdated boiler explode — or being blown to pieces by the Japanese. Actual survival under conditions of this kind could be considered a small miracle.

Within the first ten minutes of action, approximately 50 salvos straddled the *Zane*. Then, suddenly, the inevitable happened — Gun No. 2, on the galley deckhouse, was hit. Gun No. 1 would not bear, and the defense of the minesweeper was left to Gun No. 3.

As the confident enemy ships came within range, a shell from the *Zane* struck the lead destroyer forward of the bridge. Additional hits from the *Zane* — and others from the *Trever* — raised cheers from the minesweepers.

At 1037, the Japanese called off the chase and turned toward their prime objective — Lunga Point and Henderson Field. Evidently, Yamada concluded that he had already spent

too much time and ammunition on a couple of antiquated ships that were not worthy opponents of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

However, other factors also influenced Commander Yamada’s decision to cancel his pursuit of the *Zane* and *Trever*. Bomb craters on Henderson Field had been hastily filled, and several Navy dive bombers managed to takeoff from the muddy, pock-marked airstrip.

Besides dodging stinging shells from the minesweepers, the Japanese destroyers now had their hands full fighting off attacking American planes. But, Yamada’s squadron still had a lot of punch left in it. As the enemy ships reversed course, and headed for Lunga Point, they lashed out at two small naval vessels — the Fleet Tug, USS *Seminole*, and the YP-284, a former tuna boat, towing a barge packed with drums of aviation gasoline.

The YP-284 became the first victim of Yamada’s anger. A flurry of shells quickly clobbered the tuna boat, killing three Marines, and turning the gasoline barge into a ball of flame. Another salvo ripped through the paper-thin hull of the *Seminole* — exploding the tug’s fuel tank — and sending the vessel to join many others resting in the depths of Iron Bottom Sound. Remarkably, only one man was lost aboard the *Seminole*.

The Japanese destroyers next lobbed a few salvos into Henderson Field and then, under cover of smoke, raced for home.

Marine shore batteries quickly went into action, scoring a hit on the *Akatsuki* and knocking out a gun turret. Wildcat fighters were also scrambled and attacked Yamada’s squadron as it fled north — inflicting additional damage and casualties.

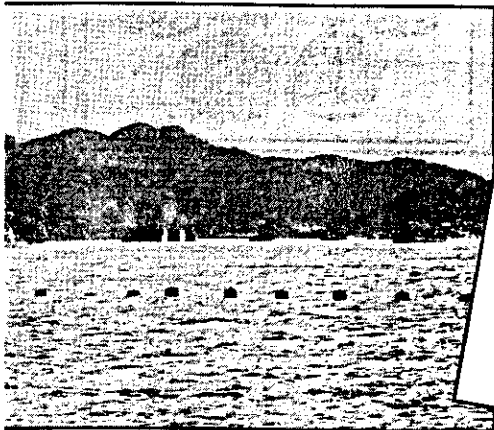
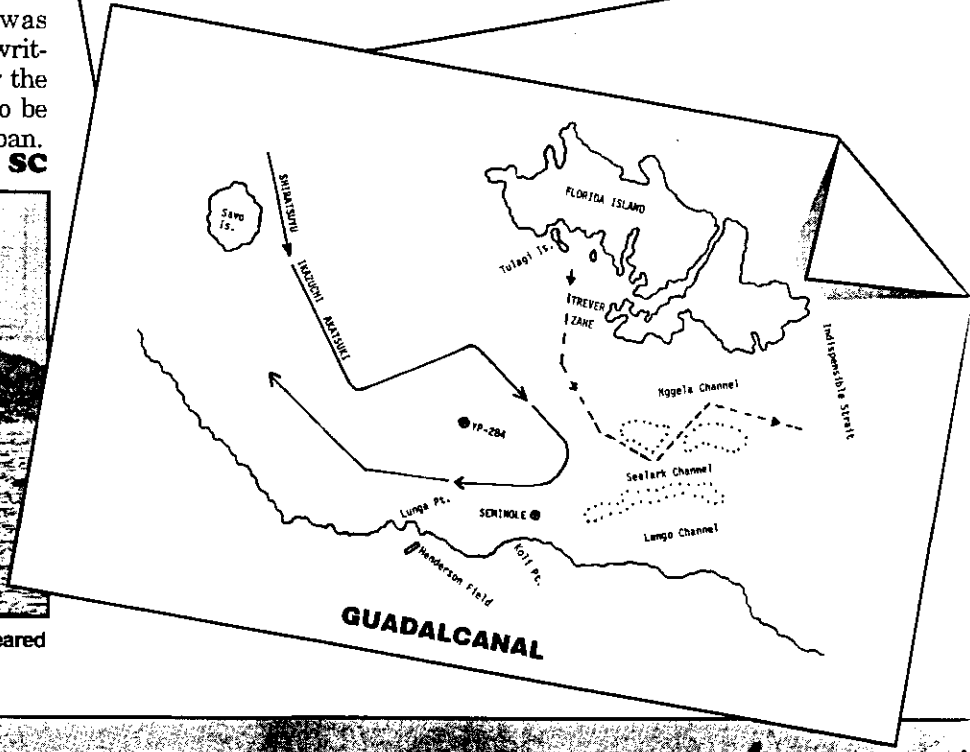
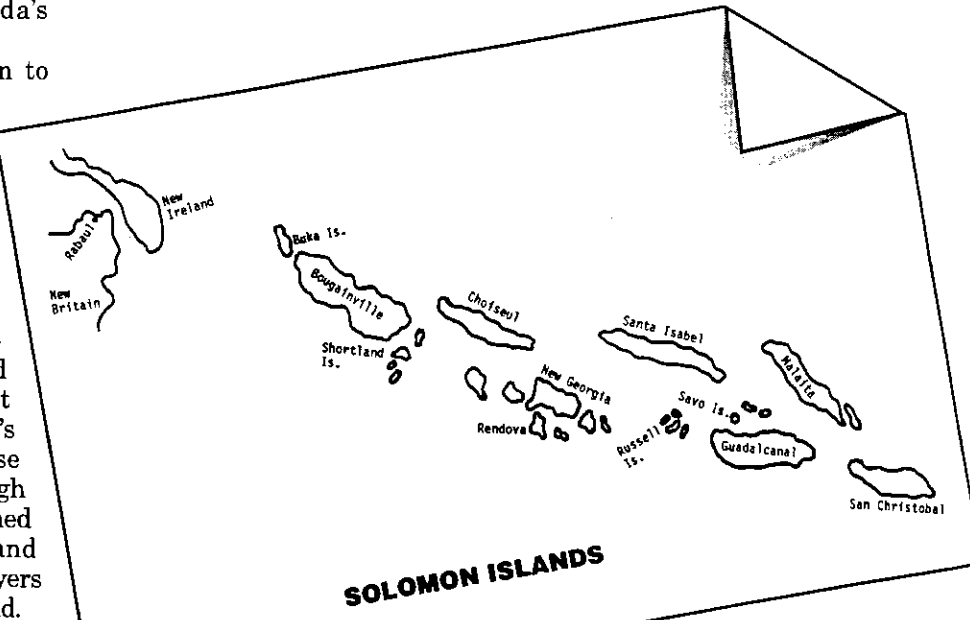
The short confrontation between the two minesweepers and the enemy destroyers had far-reaching implications. While Commander Yamada’s squadron wasted valuable time engaging the *Trever* and *Zane*, a Japanese task force, consisting of the cruiser *Yura* and five destroyers, had entered Indispensable Strait. Their

mission was to reinforce Yamada's bombardment of Henderson Field.

However, Yamada's decision to pick on the *Zane* and *Trever* disrupted the Japanese timetable. While waiting for the *Akatsuki* squadron to finish chasing the minesweepers, the *Yuri* flotilla left itself vulnerable from the air.

If both enemy naval units had stuck to their original assignments, Henderson Field would have been knocked out for at least a day. But, as a result of Yamada's error in judgment, the Japanese task group moving slowly through Indispensable Strait was swarmed on by American dive bombers and fighters — damaging the destroyers and forcing the *Yuri* to run aground.

The battle for Guadalcanal was still far from over, but the handwriting was on the wall. The fight for the Solomon Islands was not going to be another cakewalk for Imperial Japan.



The entrance to Tulagi Harbor as it appeared in 1943.



Wooden-hulled sub-chaser SC-641 returning from a patrol to Tulagi fleet anchorage in July 1943.



U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65)

Fate of the Japanese Destroyers Which
Sank the Seminole on 25 October 1942:

Akatsuki:

Sunk on 13 November 1942 during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal by gunfire from the light cruiser U.S.S. Atlanta (CL-51).

* * * * *

Ikazuchi:

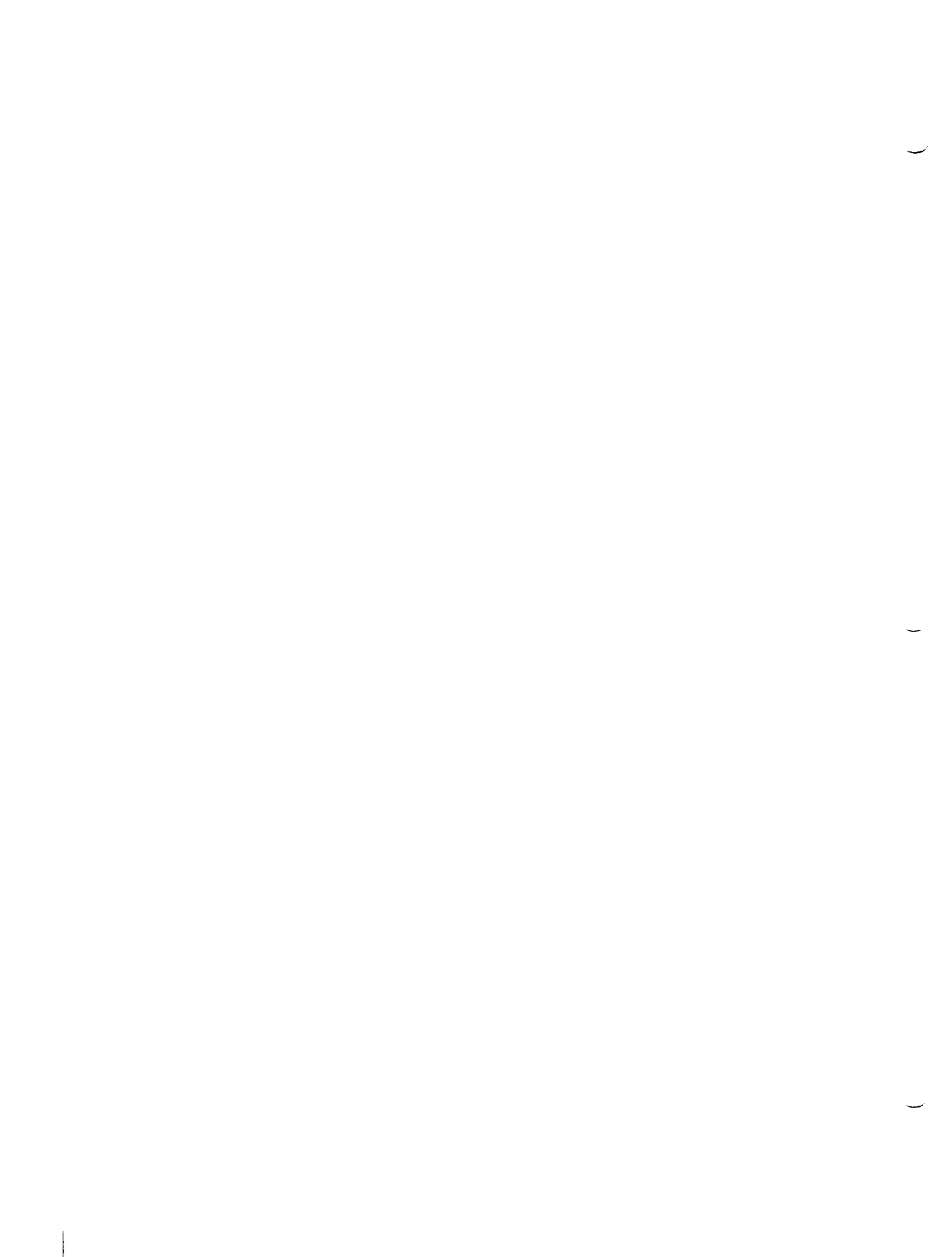
Sunk on 13 April 1944 off the Marianas by the fleet submarine U.S.S. Harder (SS-257). The Harder's log entry was: "Range 900 yards. Commenced firing. Expended four torpedoes and one Jap destroyer."

* * * * *

Shiratsuyu:

Sunk on 14 June 1944 during the Battle of the Philippine Sea when she collided with one of her own oilers, cutting off her fantail. Over a hundred of her crew were killed when her depth charges exploded.

* * * * *



U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65)

April-May 1995

GUADALCANAL ECHOES

SIGNIFICANT FIND!

Dear Ted,

I have a significant "find" to announce:

On the 23rd of July 1994, I located and dived the USS SEMINOLE (AT-65), an ocean-going fleet tug, sunk on 25 October 1942 by Japanese destroyers. On the 23rd, I was the first person in more than half a century to see the USS SEMINOLE. She lies on her starboard side in about 110 feet of water. The wreck is quite intact and is prolific in large fish which are not timid of divers. This wreck is significant because it is, I believe, the last major wreck sunk in Guadalcanal waters that is easily accessible to recreational scuba divers.

Finding this vessel was not easy but is the result of a great deal of research, local knowledge and sheer hard work! For me personally, it was a fantastic achievement to find this vessel which had been "lost" for so long.

As I mentioned in an earlier letter to you (I think!), I am preparing a book titled "World War II Wrecks of the Solomon Islands." This covers in detail the history of all those ships and aircraft sunk in the Solomons that are accessible to recreational scuba divers. As part of this pro-

ject, I am contacting all veterans of the relevant vessels so as to include their personal recollections. In my opinion, it is paramount that these veterans' accounts are recorded and some are published—after all, they witnessed the war!

Can you kindly help me in this respect?

In your next issue of "Guadalcanal Echoes" can you please announce the recent find of AT-65 by me and my desire to contact the veterans of this vessel and these ships as well:

USS YP-284

USS YP-346

USS KANAWHA (AO-1)

USS ORTOLAN (ASR-5)

USS MAJABA (AG-43)

USS ALCHIBA (AK-23)

USS JOHN PENN (AKA-23)

USS JOHN H. COUCH

I am at present continuing my gathering of data and information required for my book and this Saturday evening set off for the "Central Solomons" to survey the diving wrecks in that region.

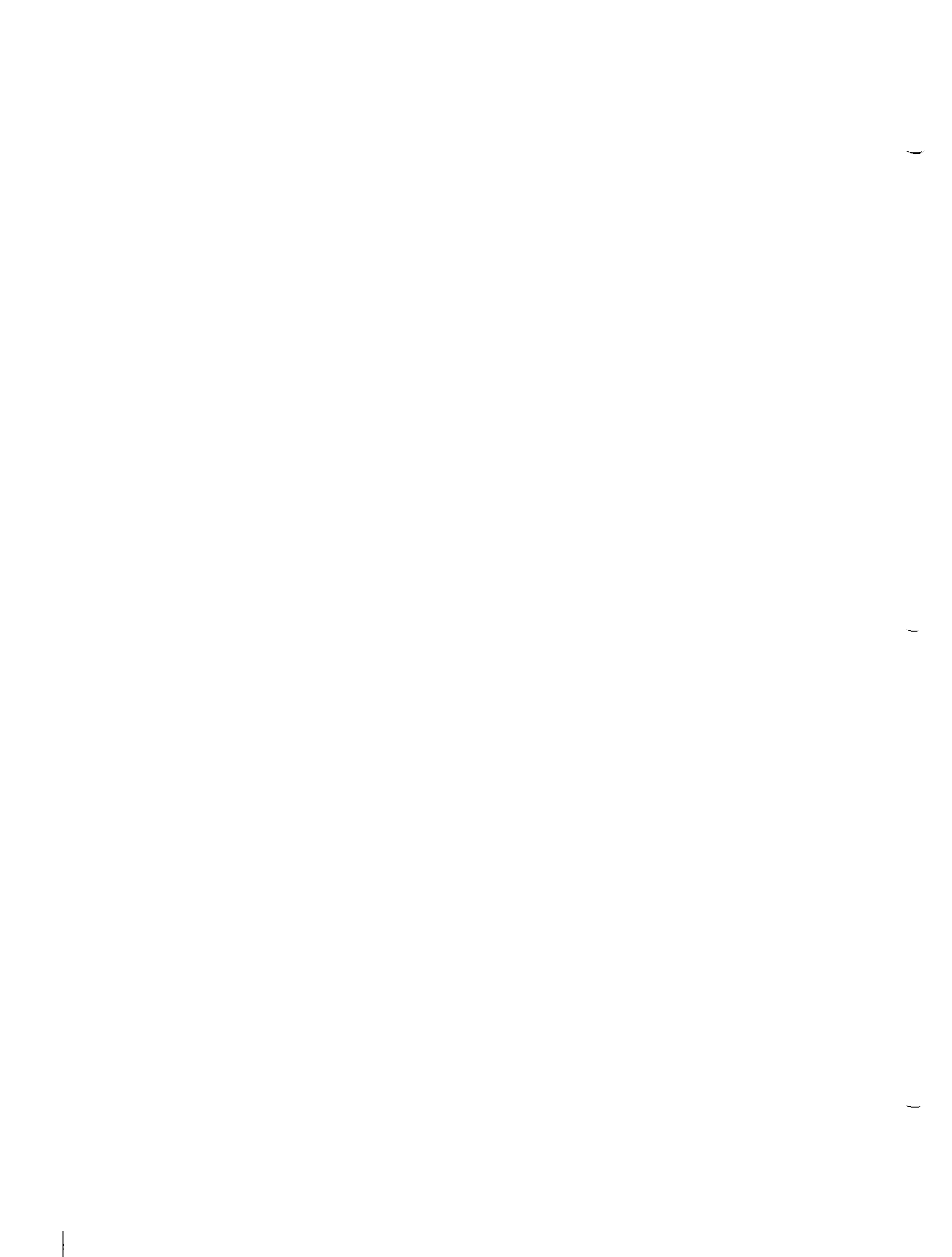
I wrote to Doug Rubb and Yoshi Sagai—they turned out to be excellent contacts. Thank you most sincerely for providing their addresses.

Regards,

Ewan Stevenson BSC

P.O.Box 282

Honiara, Solomon Islands



The U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65) In World War II

Photograph Credits

<u>Description</u>	<u>Source Code/Ident. No.</u>
Stbd. bow, tied up, Staten Is., N.Y., 3/40	NI Order w. photocopy
USS <u>Meredith</u> (DD-434) p. beam, u/way, 1942	RWP N-4610
Starboard beam, u/way, completion, 3/40	NA 19-N-22658
Purvis Bay Monument, Florida Is., 1944	NA 80-G-275700
Purvis Bay Monument plaque	NA 80-G-240318

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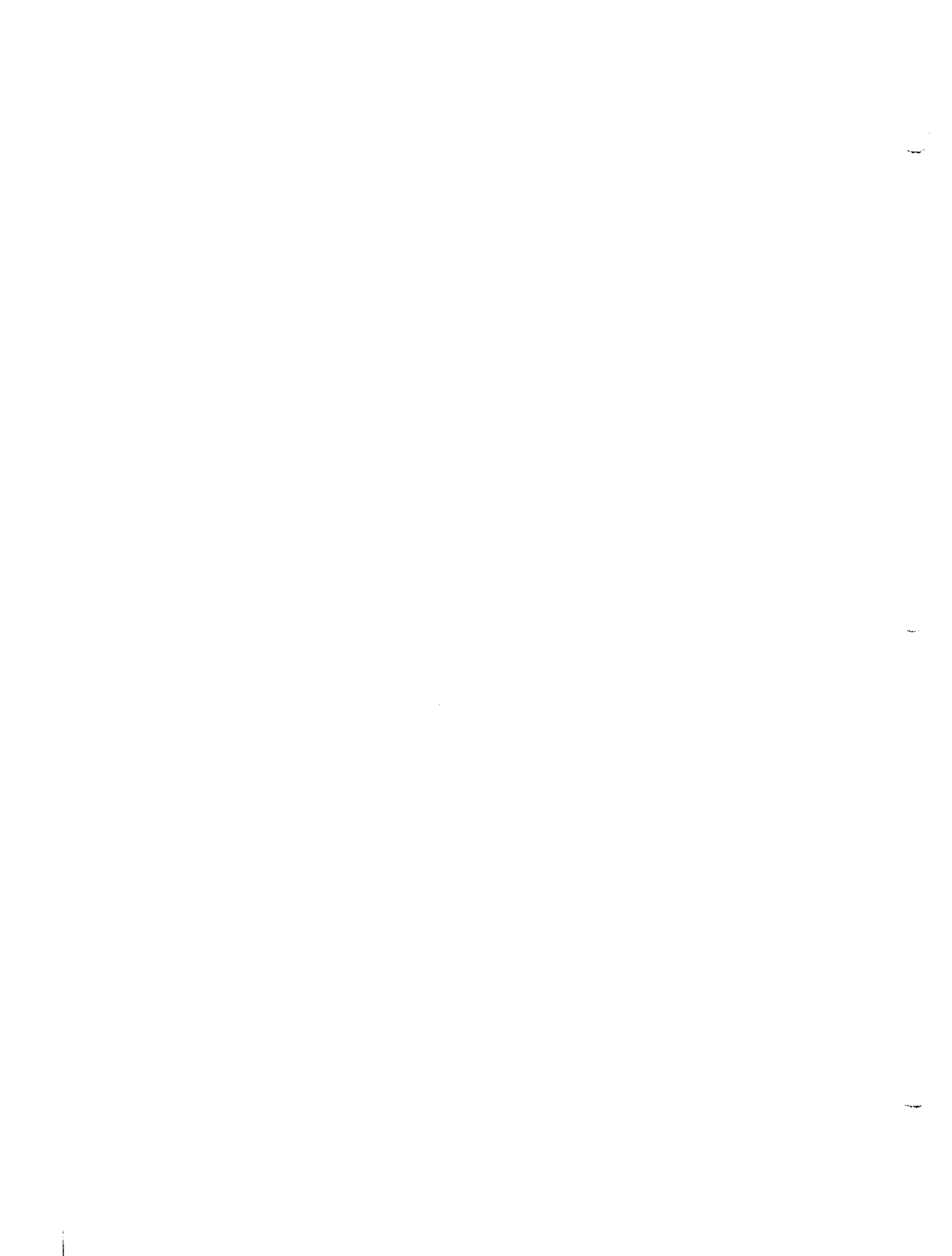
Key To Sources:

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

NA National Archives II
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
Still Picture ref.: (301) 713-6625, Ext. 234
(Request addresses/price lists of private vendors)

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
October, 2000



The U.S.S. Seminole (AT-65) in World War II

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- Fahey, James, The Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet, Victory Edition. New York: Ships and Aircraft, 1945.
- 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.
- Robinson, Robert, Lt. Cdr., USN (Ret.), Shipmates Forever. Limited Edition published by the author, 1990. 443 pp.

Articles:

- Feuer, A. B., "Day of Battle in Sealark Channel," Sea Classics, August 1994.
- Snowden, Donald L., "Forgotten Ship," Guadalcanal Echoes, July 1981 (Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans)
- Stevenson, Ewan, "Significant Find!" Guadalcanal Echoes, April-May 1995.

Conversations:

- Lt. Cdr. Jewel M. ("John") Evans, USN (Ret.), survivor
- Joseph G. Micek, AUS, Guadalcanal-Solomon Islands War Memorial Foundation

Miscellaneous:

- Action report, Commander Naval Activities, CACTUS - RINGBOLT, 10/27/42. (National Archives)
- "Battle Books" at the National Archives for a list of the Seminole's casualties on 10/25/42 (a machine-generated casualty report prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war c. 1946).
- Deck log, Seminole, 8/1-9/30/42. (National Archives)
- Letter by survivor John R. Ambrose to Ewan Stevenson, 3/27/95.
- Notes by Charles R. Haberlein, Jr., 6/6/92. Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard.
- Personnel Diary (muster rolls), Seminole, on microfilm at the National Archives.
- Ships' Histories Section file for the Seminole. (Naval Historical Center)

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
March, 2001



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

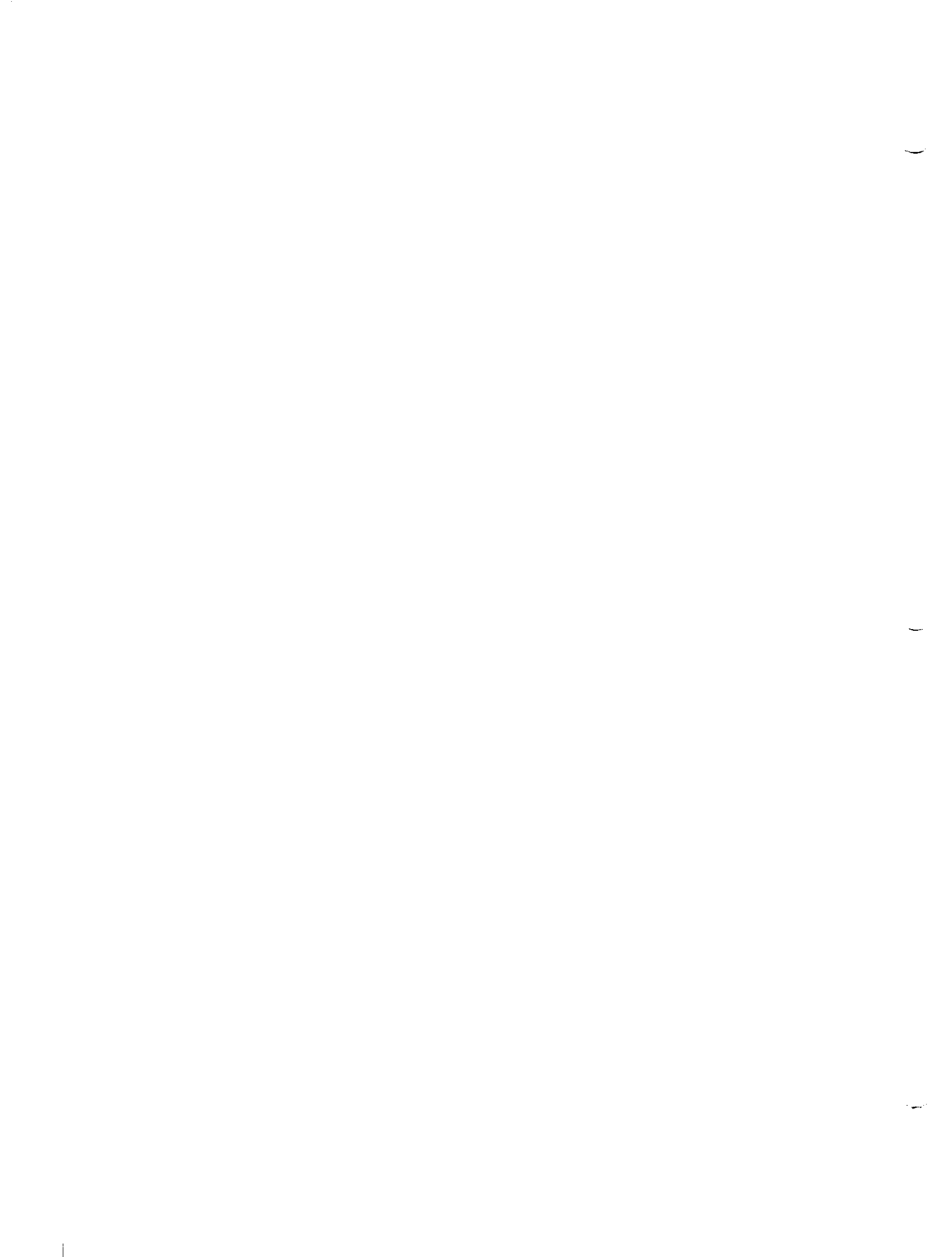
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Notes:

* Total for two engagements with the enemy

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

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



2006 ADDENDUM

Dedication in 1944 of the Monument at Purvis Bay, Florida Island, British Soloman 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."

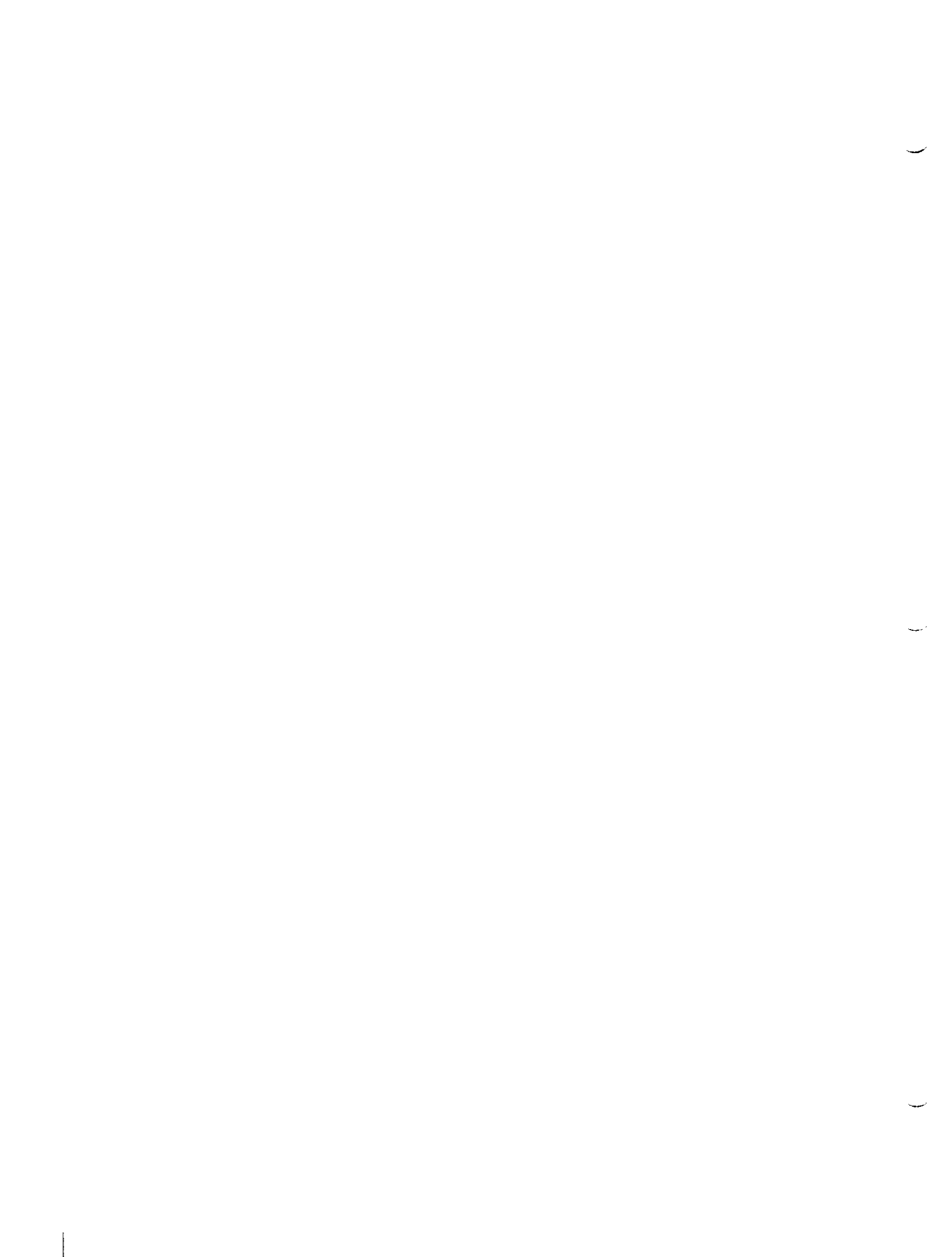
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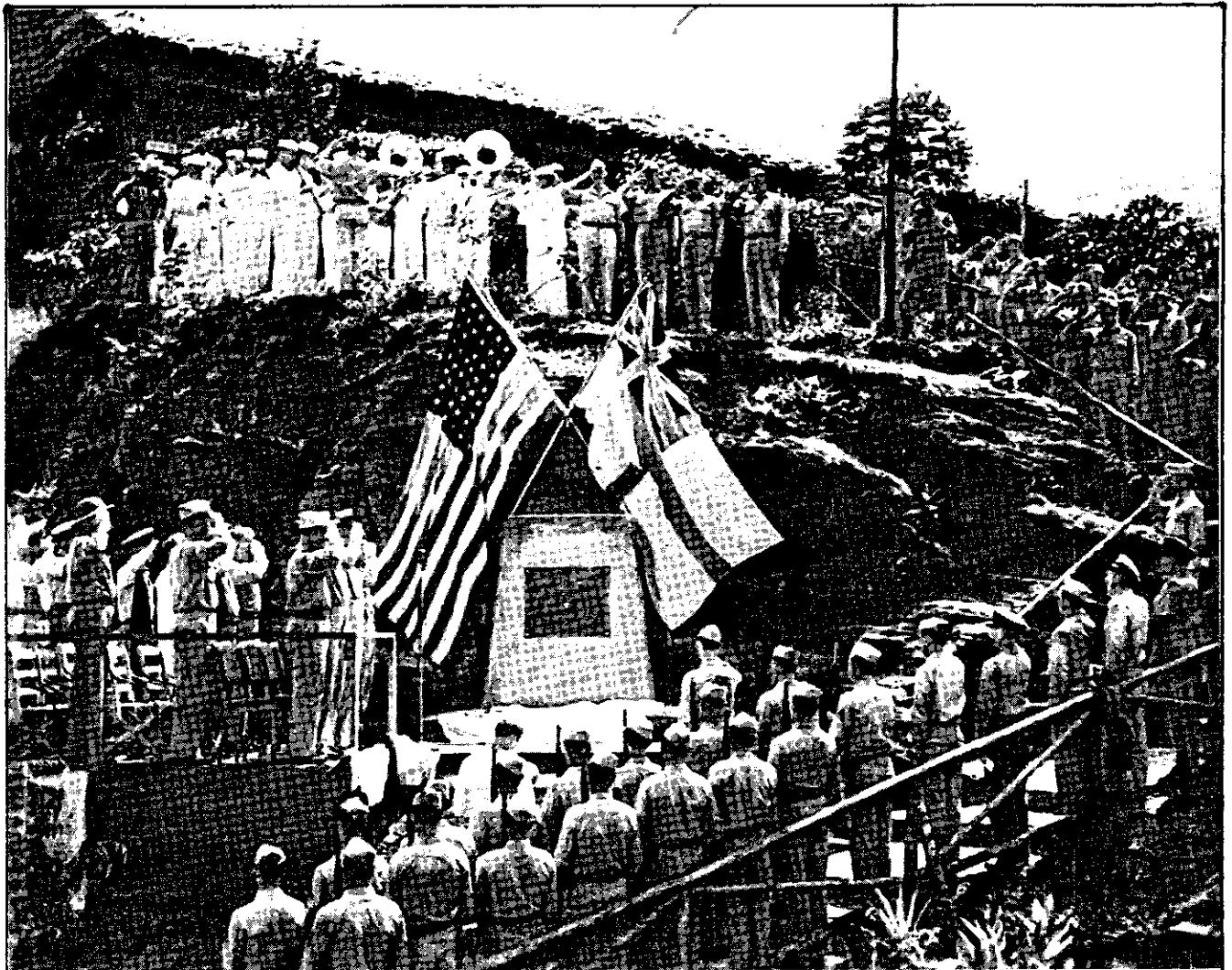
I've enclosed the little program for our ceremony which took place this morning. It went off very well and very smoothly I thought, and I had a front row place to stand - right where the activities were. There were numerous cameramen taking pictures, and I expect that they will send me a set in as much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

