

# ACTION REPORT

DD407/A16-3  
(005)

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**U.S.S. STERETT**

**November 20, 1942.**

**From: The Commanding Officer.**  
**To: The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.**  
**Via: (1) The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. HELENA (Senior Officer Task Group 64.7).**  
**(2) The Commander, South Pacific Force.**

**Subject: Report of Action on Night of November 12-13, 1942.**

**Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regs., 1920, Arts. 712 and 874(6).**  
**(b) PacFitConf.Ltr. #24CL-42.**

**1. As directed by references, the following is submitted:**

## **I. COMMENTS ON AND SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS:**

Task Group 67.4, consisting of thirteen ships listed below, on the night of November 12-13, 1942 stood in from the Eastward through Lengo Channel, Guadalcanal Island area to contact and destroy a Japanese force reported standing in from the Westward. The immediate mission of the enemy force was to bombard our forces on Guadalcanal Island, preparatory to landing large troop reinforcements and to recapture this vital air base.

The STERETT, equipped only with F.D. and S.C. radars made contact with only two enemy groups, estimated course about 110 speed 23 knots. These later proved to be the right and center units of three groups. Sight contact revealed two cruisers (probably both CL's) and three destroyers in the right wing. The center force was later estimated to consist of two battleships and two or three heavy cruisers.

During the battle, the STERETT engaged three enemy vessels; a light cruiser, a battleship and a destroyer. Numerous 5 inch direct hits were made on the bridge and forward structure of the cruiser. Fires were started. This cruiser was later destroyed by other unit or units of our force. The STERETT fired a salvo of four torpedoes at the battleship scoring two positive hits. Bridge structure of battleship was hit with several salvos of 5 inch. The enemy destroyer was blown up by two torpedoes and two 5 inch salvos. This destroyer did not get a chance to fire a single shot at STERETT and was seen to sink.

The explosion on the enemy destroyer illuminated the entire area. This occurred about 0220 and caused resumption of heavy cross-fire from sharp on our starboard bow and on our port beam. It was during the next few minutes that the STERETT received most of her damage. It is believed that all our units had started retirement prior to this last engagement and it is quite definitely established that the enemy ships at this time, were confused and fired at their own units. At 0230 the STERETT was burning fiercely aft, both after guns were disabled and when it was certain that the two remaining torpedoes could not be fired STERETT retired at high speed.

The STERETT had received eleven direct hits and fragments from several near misses. Serious fires had started in #3 and #4 handling rooms and up through the mounts; several compartments were on fire. Over twenty percent of our ship's company had been killed or seriously wounded. Yet the STERETT managed to retire at flank speed (a short time later boilers #1 and #2 had to be secured and speed was limited to 23 knots) and about 0615 joined up with remainder of our retiring force. This can be attributed only to the high state of training for battle; the prompt action on the part of the gunnery officer in flooding all magazines aft and ordering all power to mounts #3 and 4 cut; to the prompt and efficient action of the damage control officer and his repair parties and the coolness and efficient co-operation of every officer and man in the ship.

## **II. PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS:**

(a) Air reconnaissance indicated that a strong Japanese force from the West would arrive Guadalcanal area about midnight November 12-13, 1942. Contact was first made by S.C. radar in HELENA.

(b) See below.

(c) Wind was force 1. Sea was smooth (area nearly landlocked). Visibility about 5000 yards for ships; about 15,000 for prominent land objects. This was before any fires or firing. Moonset was at 0248 this morning, but the sky was 8/10 overcast.

## **III. CHRONOLOGICAL LOG OF BATTLE:**

### **November 12**

2000 - Ship at General Quarters; Material Condition Afirm.

2203 - Task Group 67.4 completed covering retirement of transports group. Reversed course through South and headed for Lengo Channel, course 270° T, speed 18 knots. In battle formation, in column in following order van to rear: CUSHING (Comdr. Stokes), LAFFEY, STERETT, O'BANNAN, ATLANTA, SAN FRANCISCO, (Admiral Callaghan, O.T.C.), PORTLAND, HELENA, JUNEAU, AARON WARD (Capt. Tobin), BARTON, MONSSEN, FLETCHER. Distance between D.D.'s 500 yards. Distance between types 700 yards. Distance between cruisers 700 yards.

**November 13.**

**Served hot soup and coffee to all hands in relays. Making transit of Lengo Channel.**

**0026 - Changed course to 275° T.**

**0028 - Changed course to 285° T. Received "Condition Red" over warning net from Guadalcanal. Enemy planes coming in from North, Distant 26 miles.**

**0130 - Received T.B.S. report of contact with enemy ships. Picked up enemy ships on our F.D. radar on our port bow, 14,500 yards, and began tracking nearest large unit.**

**0148 - Received order to commence fire, odd numbered ships to starboard, even to port. Had a complete fire control solution of heavy unit on port bow but immediately ordered action starboard in order to avoid any confusion or undue concentration of targets. Our course was then 000° T, speed 18 knots. We had sight contact of three ships on our starboard bow and one to port. One of the ships to starboard appeared to be the size of a cruiser. Shortly after sight contact ComDesDiv 10, in CUSHING, leading destroyer, turned to left apparently to parallel enemy track. LAFFEY followed and STERETT had started left when O.T.C. ordered ComdesDiv 10 to resume column formation. Some ships commenced fire immediately. One enemy ship to port played searchlight on our formation.**

**0149 - Opened fire on largest vessel in starboard group, range 4,000 yards, opening. This target was sharp on bow and silhouette too vague for torpedo attack, The order for leading destroyer to resume column prevented this unit from making a coordinated torpedo attack at this time. Shortly after STERETT opened fire to starboard, an enemy large ship on port hand began firing at our cruisers and opened a searchlight. This made it more difficult, to see our target. Fire control radar was of great assistance at this time. Thirteen salvos were fired at this target. Fire broke out on target illuminating forecandle of cruiser. Two turrets could be definitely seen forward. Several observers insist they saw three turrets forward. Only two stacks were sighted but there could have been three. Best estimate is that this was of the NATORI class.**

**0151 - Received hit on port quarter cutting starboard cable to steering gear and rudder was momentarily jammed. Ship was maneuvered by engines. During this period O'BANNON came up on our starboard hand and STERETT checked fire. The cruiser was burning fiercely forward at this time. Several minutes later there was a heavy explosion in this cruiser. It is believed she blew up, probably due to fire from some other ship in our group. The CUSHING and LAFFEY were under heavy cross fire during this period and sight contact of them was lost.**

**0155 - Received order over T.B.S. from O.T.C. to "Cease Fire".**

**0205 - Under heavy fire from port. Numerous near misses and many shells passed overhead. About this time foremast was hit disabling S.C. radar, emergency identification lights, and T.B.S. transmitting antenna, and wounding 1 officer and 2 men in gun director. Temporary emergency lights and antenna were rigged. Ordered action port and designated KONGO class battleship as target. This target was plainly visible, illuminated by starshells and by flare from a burning ship to the southward. Closed range to 4000 yards, then 2000 yards. Fired full salvo of four torpedoes, normal Spread shortly thereafter, and opened fire with 5"/38 on bridge structure. Two torpedoes were seen to hit, causing two explosions aft. A number of direct 5" hits were observed. This battleship had been under fire by other ships in our force. A few minutes later, saw men abandoning battleship going over the side fore and aft. STERETT was then within 2000 yards of battleship and under heavy cross fire.**

**0220 - (approx.). A Jap destroyer of the FUDUKI class was silhouetted, 1000 yards on STERETT's starboard bow, target angle 120°. Immediately ordered torpedo battery to fire two torpedoes and 5 inch battery to open fire on destroyer. Two torpedo hits were definitely scored. Only two salvos of 5 inch had been fired and were hitting squarely when the torpedoes hit the destroyer causing large explosions lifting ship out of water and starting fires forward and aft. This destroyer positively sank almost immediately.**

**0227 - Received numerous hits on port quarter. STERETT was thoroughly illuminated when enemy destroyer to starboard exploded. Enemy salvos from relative bearing 280° (approximate) struck port side of #3 handling room, gun shelter and #4 handling room. These hits started fires in each of the stations noted, causing detonation of several 5# ready service powder tanks in each handling room and inflicting severe casualties to both material and personnel. Both after guns were thus put out of action. Later inspection revealed two 4 or 5 inch shell hits in the hull which passed through #4 handling room, one hit of the same size in #3 gun shelter and three hits closely grouped in #3 handling room. These latter were of undetermined caliber, the holes made by their entry measuring 15 inches across the smallest diameter; only small fragments of these were recovered. A second salvo of 5 inch struck the ship in the quarterdeck area, one pierced the corner of the port inboard torpedo tube, while the others passed through the midships clipping room, causing 6 personnel casualties, but little material damage other than holes in the superstructure and damage to the starboard torpedo tube nest. This hit also caused a fire on the quarterdeck. Nearly complete 4 inch projectile was recovered in #4 upper handling room. Word was passed immediately to guns #3 and 4 to flood both magazines and handling room, and the repair party was dispatched to the scene of the fires. Power was ordered cut out to guns #3 and #4 in order to prevent fires and explosions from severed electrical leads. Ready service ammunition, much of it on the verge of explosion from the heat of the fires, was dumped overboard from both handling rooms. Hoses and CO2 extinguishers were quickly brought into action and the fires brought under control. Personnel casualties were then carried to the battle dressing station and turned over to the Doctor.**

**0230 - STERETT was burning fiercely aft and was at this time completely separated from own force. Colors and after part of ship were illuminated. Only two guns were serviceable. Two torpedoes were still in the starboard nest but one 5 inch hit had put this battery out of commission. When torpedo officer stated that it was impossible to fire this battery, STERETT retired at high speed, slowing from time to time to reduce 'draft' when fire appeared to be getting out of control. Remainder of our force had already retired. D.R.T. had been disabled during afternoon air attack. Ship was headed east to clear area then South until close to Guadalcanal shore.**

**0255 - Headed for Lengo Channel course 090° T.**

**0258 - Avoided what may have been a torpedo that crossed our bow port to starboard. Increased speed to 23 knots to clear area then maneuvered toward Lengo Channel running at 10 to 23 knots depending on condition of fire art. Boilers #1 and 2 were secured about this time due to failure of firemain forward and loss of cooling water to forced draft blowers and loss of ventilation blowers in this fireroom. Transformers had been grounded when firemain carried away. Temporary firemain jumper was quickly rigged.**

**0311 - Heard and sighted heavy explosion in large ship bearing 345° T. That ship was burning from stem to stern but did not sink at this time. Six or seven burning ships were in sight during our retirement.**

**0300 - Reported by T.B.S. to HELENA.**

**0327 - Rudder jammed at full right. Backed full both engines to avoid going ashore on Guadalcanal Island.**

**0332 - Went ahead using trick wheel and rudder director from bridge.**

**0345 - Entered Lengo Channel.**

**0415 - Proceeded at 23 knots to overtake own forces which had gone out Sealark Channel.**

**0425 - Crossed 100 fathom curve to eastward of Leugo Channel.**

**0600 - Joined HELENA, SAN FRANCISCO, JUNEAU, O'BANNON and FLETCHER.**

#### **IV. SPECIAL COMMENTS ON ENEMY FORCES:**

**(a) STERETT encountered two groups of enemy ships, on roughly easterly heading making twenty three knots. These groups consisted of two battleships, five cruisers, two or three were heavy, and about three or four destroyers. One or more searchlights were used first by the enemy, then several starshells or aircraft flares high over the area between the forces, and**

**thirdly a form of firecracker or sparkle effect with brilliant white flashes fired low between the two forces with apparent intention of blinding our cruisers.**

**(b) -**

**(c) -**

**(d) When STERETT was under heavy fire, the majority of shells fell over or short or astern. No hits were received below waterline. What hits were received were quite effective except for low order burst in one 4. inch projectile recovered (see above), and two 5 inch projectiles which went through ship without exploding.**

**(e) Unable to estimate total damage to enemy. A cruiser and a destroyer were seen to explode. Two battleships were seriously damaged. When STERETT left area seven ships were seen burning fiercely.**

#### **V. SPECIAL COMMENTS ON OWN FORCES:**

**(a) See paragraph 3 above for number and type.**

**(b) Communications were all via TBS. Our transmitter was disabled by hit on mast. Almost impossible to hear TBS on destroyer bridge during height of battle.**

**(c) No smoke was used.**

**(d) Torpedo battery functioned perfectly until disabled by enemy gun fire. All six torpedoes were fired with 45 knot speed setting. Gun performance was excellent. Fire control radar was of invaluable assistance against light cruiser. Also 5" ammunition was very effective.**

**(e) No criticism of gunnery.**

**(f) Following ammunition was expended:  
5"/38 common - 90 rounds  
Mk XV torpedoes - 6**

**(g) Radar search was with FD radar only as directed by Task Group Commander. Two groups at enemy ships were located, first at 14,500 yards.**

**(h) Engineering department answered every bell at once, including 1 emergency full astern to avoid ramming own destroyer. Performance of medical department was outstanding. Three leg amputations were performed, and one splint compound fracture treated shortly after the battle. Only one wounded man was lost after he had reached the doctor's care, and he had been nearly torn in two.**

**(i) Summary of own damage:**

**STERETT received eleven direct hits and fragments from several near misses.**

**Three hits were from major calibre shells set with instantaneous fuses, possibly for shore bombardment, Two or three hits were 4", source not known. All others are believed to have been 5". Two 5" shells pierced ship completely from port to starboard without exploding.**

**Hit #1 pierced the hull, port side, at frame 159 about one foot below the main deck and passed through ship diagonally and pierced the starboard hull at frame 166 just below the main deck without exploding. This shell severed the starboard steering gear cable which was then in use. Fragments from bulkheads pierced the starboard degaussing gear cable. Other damage was of minor nature to ventilating system and lockers.**

**The second shell hit the fore mast below the yard arm, gouging a 6 inch hole in mast. Fragments severed the main stays and cut the mast ladder in two. Several fragments hit the director and slightly wounded five of the personnel. This hit demolished the emergency recognition lights, the S.C. radar antenna and the TBS transmitting antenna.**

**The third shell, believed to be in the same slave, hit above the yardarm bending the ladder and flying fragments nicked the yardarm and stays.**

**The fourth shell went through the port side of the hull frame 160, through compartment C-203-L, damaging lockers and exploding 5 or 6 tanks of 5" ready service powder killing six men by burns, concussion and shrapnel. This hit also severed all power leads to #4 handling room, and fragments entered the power panel at the bottom of the shell hoist.**

**The fifth hit (a 15" hole) pierced the port bulkhead of the crews' washroom, frame 155, destroying the urinals, damaging the flushing system, and piercing the ventilation system, twisting and bending the forward frame to #3 handling room fragments pierced the prophylactic station and sheet metal partitions in head. This hit killed two men.**

**The sixth hit, a 15" diameter hole through port side #3 handling room, frame 157 caused the ignition of 5 tanks of 5" ready service powder creating fierce fires, bending and gutting the C-103-L bulkhead by the gun crews' passageway. Fragments and shrapnel tore and twisted a transverse frame, pierced holes in after deck house; severed battle, lighting general power and general lighting cables. The ammunition joist and bulkhead were pierced by numerous pieces of shrapnel. The center column cable trunk and projectile hoist were also pierced by fragments. This hit killed about five men.**

**The seventh hit shattered the port side superstructure deck after deck house piercing the armor shield of gun mount number 3 in numerous places, killing and severely burning several men.**

**The eighth hit pierced the port side of gun mount #3 and continued on through the starboard side, fragments damaging rammer motor and killing one man.**

**The ninth hit shattered the shield and O.D.D. desk destroying it and fragments hitting the starboard torpedo tube killing one man.**

**The tenth hit pierced the lower after corner of the amidships clipping room, making a hole about 14" in diameter, severed upright in clipping room, cut the sprinkling system pipe from #1 engine room, bent frame of WT door, fragments setting off numerous pieces of small caliber and 20 mm ammunition. Fragments passed through clipping room and carried away roller path shield to #1 torpedo tube.**

**The eleventh hit pierced door and adjacent section or inboard barrel of port torpedo tube, fragments piercing machine shop, #4 barrel and torpedo air flask in starboard tube, damaging trainer's seat of starboard tube, and severing gland exhaust line from forward engine room. It killed two men and seriously injured two men.**

**Many fragments or shrapnel also pierced the trainer's sight window on gun #4, shattering the telescope glass. Origin of these fragments is undetermined. Probably they came from a near-miss.**

**At the close of the action the conditions on board the ship were as follows:**

- 1. Gun #3 and 4 were out of commission.**
- 2. Fires burning in #4 handling room, compartment O-203-L, #3 handling room and -103-L.**
- 3. S.C. radar out of commission.**
- 4. Starboard torpedo tubes out of commission.**
- 5. Port torpedo tubes empty.**
- 6. Engineering plant was intact.**
- 7. Starboard steering gear cable severed.**
- 8. Degaussing cable starboard side severed.**
- 9. T.B.S. antenna severed temporarily out of commission.**
- 10. The emergency power cable to the steering motors was severed.**

**Following the battle, damage control measures as outlined below were taken:**

Fires were fought in C-203-L, #3 and #4 handling rooms with CO2 extinguishers and hose led into compartment C-203-L to extinguish burning clothing and mattresses. The after magazines had been flooded. The four holes in the ship's side were plugged and shored. The water was drained from compartment into magazine below and from here pumped out with a portable submersible pump to maintain proper level. About two inches of water was bailed out of compartment C-203-L and #4 handling room.

**(j) Casualties to Personnel:**

**DEAD**

Name & Rank	Name & Rank
JACKSON, George R. CTM (PA)	HARM, Harry H. S1c
KOPROSKI, Lawrence J. Sea2c	FRENCH, Loyd J. Sea2c
PETE, Leo J. F2c	NORMANDIE, Arthur N. Sea1c
STAPELTON, James P. Sea2c	WHITE, William J. Sea2c
KOSS, Clifford W. Sea2c	MARTIN, Veron R.E. GM2c
PORCHKE, Robert D. Sea2c	SMITH, Joseph RM3c
FLACK, Perry C. Sea1c	PERRY, Carmen S. S1c
ERBILICK, Kenneth L. Sea2c	KLEPACKI, Alphonse B. SC3c
KULA, Mathew A. SC1c	ROBINSON, "J" "E" Jr. SC2c
TYMAN, Joseph M. Jr. Sea1c	SMITH, Morris E. Sea2c
WALKER, William S. Matt2c	HAZARD, Edward S. F2c
SPAULDING, Ronald G. Cox	SMITH, Dale R. Sea2c
LANCZAK, Chester J. F2c	PIKE, Amos F. F2c
RUTH, Charles D. F2c	LACHAPELLE, Henry D. F2c

**SERIOUSLY INJURED AND TRANSFERRED TO HOSPITAL:**

Name/Rank/Injury	
NORCROSS, D.W., Sea2c	Multiple 2nd/3rd degree burns
SKUTLEY, R.L., Sea1c	Burns.
LAYTON, S.R., Cox	Burns.
RICH, J.E., S2c	Burns, shrapnel wounds
PARKIS, B.H., MM1c	Shrapnel wounds
RHODES, H.C., TM3c	Shrapnel wounds
TAPLA, C.N., F2c	Shrapnel wounds
SHRIEVES, D.F., S1c	Burns
TERRANO, R.R., EM3c	Shrapnel wounds
MARTIN, L.A., F2c	Shrapnel wounds, burns
HAWKINS, E.J., TM3c	Burns
SEYMOUR, H., S1c	Burns
KELLEY, D.W., S2c	Burns
Lt(jg) J.D. Jeffery, USN	Multiple small shrapnel wounds
HAMMACK, W.R., SF2c	Multiple small shrapnel wounds
SHELTON, J.W., FC1c	Multiple small shrapnel wounds
FORSMAN, C.L., Sea1c	Multiple small shrapnel wounds
BYERS, R.O., BM1c	Multiple small shrapnel wounds

**BURNED AND JUMPED OVERBOARD TO EXTINGUISH FLAMES:**

**GODECKER, Hubert T. RM2c  
SIMMONS, Clarence M. GM2c  
GRANN, James I. Jr, Sea1c  
CARTWRIGHT, William H. GM3c**

**VI. COMMENDATIONS WHERE MERITED:**

**During the entire action and subsequent fires all officers and men conducted themselves with the utmost coolness and bravery. There was no panic. There was no confusion, and every officer and man proceeded to do his own job regardless of personnel risk.**

**The medical department was remarkable for the efficiency with which it functioned under difficult conditions. The medical officer and his staff could not have done a better job. They were assisted by CONN, G.E., Y2c, HAMMACK, W.R., SF2c, LOVAS, C.R., MM2c, and BOUDREAUX, F.A., F2c, who cared for the wounded voluntarily in addition to their regular duties and watches until reaching port, getting no sleep for at least 48 hours.**

**THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS DESERVE SPECIAL COMMENDATION:**

**Lieutenant C.H. Calhoun, U.S.N., gunnery officer, for the accuracy of his control of the gun battery, and the fact that, as we were retiring from the battle area, he proceeded aft and personally checked the work of fire fighting parties. At great risk he entered the smoke filled handling rooms #3 and 4 and saw that the after magazines were properly flooded.**

**Lieutenant (jg) G.W. Hanna, USNR, first lieutenant and damage control officer, for the manner in which he directed the damage control parties and the removal of the wounded, without thought to his own safety.**

**Ensign P. Hall, U.S.N., assistant first lieutenant for his courage in personally supervising the fire fighting below decks, despite the dangers of smoke, gas, and overheated powder.**

**THE FOLLOWING MEN DESERVE SPECIAL COMMENDATION:**

**ROBINSON, J.A. SF1c - During action #3 handling room was hit and set on fire and 4 shell holes put in compartment C-203-L. ROBINSON led fire party to extinguish fire and later patched holes and shored up bulkheads. He worked continuously all night and the next day reinforcing shores and operating pumps. It is recommended that this man be advanced to Chief Shipfitter for his efficient work in handling men and directing the repair party under dangerous conditions.**

**MORRIS, D.B. MM2c - for heroic action under extremely hazardous conditions helping fight fire and shoring bulkheads.**

**BLANKENSHIP, H. CCM(AA) - for his cool and efficient work in fighting fires in #4 handling room and his leadership in directing the fire party to successfully extinguish the fire which helped the ship continue its fighting efficiency.**

**SPENCE, M.R. Sealc - for his assistance in removing casualties from gun #3 and getting #7 life raft into water for men from gun #4 who were thrown over the side.**

**MAYEFISKY, Josph, Sea2c - for assistance in removing casualties from gun #3 and getting #7 life raft over the side to men of gun #4.**

**KOEAK, J.J. Sea2c - for assistance in removing casualties from gun #3 to wardroom and assisting in getting life raft #7 overboard.**

**TALBOT W.W. CEM(AA) - for his tireless effort and continued excellent performance of duty which was responsible for repairing the sick bay and other electrical units necessary to carry on the fighting efficiency of the ship.**

**WELLER, L.A. Sea1c - for gallant action under extremely hazardous conditions. After #3 handling room was hit he led hose into #4 handling room and shoring bulkheads.**

**DEAN, J.D. MM2c - rendered valuable aid in putting out fire in compartment C-203-L and handling room or No. 4 gun.**

**KELLY, B.A. Sea1c - for fine assistance in handling casualties of gun #3 and getting life raft over the side.**

**WHOLLEY, J.B. F3c - for assistance in handling casualties of gun #3 and getting life raft over the side.**

**HODGE, H.J. CGM - for his immediate courageous and efficient action after the ship was hit by enemy shells. HODGE immediately ascertained the damage done, took charge in the vicinity of #3 and 4 handling rooms, fought the fire, removed wounded, and personally removed ready service ammunition which was sizzling hot and on the point of exploding (some of this powder did explode in mid-air after it was thrown overboard).**

**FRAY, V.W. WT2c - for his assistance in righting the fires in handling rooms #3 and 4, including his help in removing burning mattresses, clothing, and overheated ready-service powder.**

**BURRIS, G. Sea1c, LASTRA, L.J. Sea2c, and HOMER, F.A. Seac2c - for their assistance in running hoses into #1 handling room, for removing burning material from vicinity of fires, and for assisting HODGE in handling ready-service powder which was close to the point of explosion.**

**KENNUM, L.G. CTM(AA) - for his assistance in fighting the fire on gun #3 and in #3 handling room, and for his heroic action in entering the flames from this**

handling room in order to operate the magazine flooding valves, which operation doubtless saved the ship.

**SEYMOUR, H.A. Jr. Sea1c** - for his courageous and unselfish action when after being severely burned in gun #4. He immediately, with complete disregard for his own safety, broke out fire hose, coupled it together (judging from the present condition of his hands this was really remarkable) and fought fire on #3 mount. He also helped extinguish fires on clothing of SEUTLEY and NORCROSS, and assisted in removal of wounded from gun #3.

**SKELTON, J.W. FC1c** - for his cool and efficient performance of duty as rangefinder operator when after being painfully struck by shrapnel he (although he could in no way determine the extent of his wounds except to feel blood soaking his shirt) calmly identified silhouettes as they appeared, gave target angles and speeds, and ranged under the most trying conditions.

**BYERS, R..O. BM1c** - for his cool and efficient performance of duty as director trainer when after being struck in the neck by shrapnel he stuck to his post until ordered by the gunnery officer to leave during a lull in the action.

#### **VIII. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that: All TBS orders be paralleled by C.W. radio.

A spare temporary emergency identification light string be ready to run up with a halyard for night action.

A cease firing gong contact maker be installed on the bridge for use of the captain in stopping gun fire, with a sounder in the gun director in addition to those already mounted in gun shields.

The flagship must be equipped with the most modern radar.

Consideration should be given to locating remote control release to magazine flooding and sprinkling valves on the top aide. It is very difficult to operate them in smoke and flames.

**J. C. COWARD**

Copy to: Cominch (direct)  
Comdespac (direct)

**U.S.S. HELENA 10-s**

**FIRST ENDORSEMENT  
CL50/A16-3/(0011)**

**November 21, 1942.**

**From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. HELENA.  
To : The Commander south Pacific Force.**

**1. Forwarded.**

**/s/ GILBERT C. HOOVER**

**(Information source: National Archives. Compiled by Scott Davis, 2120 Sunset Avenue, Morro Bay, California 93442. See [www.geocities.com/Pentagon/5133/dd407.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/5133/dd407.htm))**