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THE BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF. OCTOBER 1944. STRATEGICAL AND TACTICAL ANALYSIS. VOLUME V. BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT, OCTOBER 24TH-25TH

Richard W. Bates

Naval War College

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OCTOBER 1944

STRATEGICAL

AND

TACTICAL ANALYSIS

VOLUME V

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By

Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret)

Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group

Naval War College

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13. ABSTRACT

Based on Allied and Japanese records and data, this volume recounts the chronology of the operations of both sides in the Battle of Surigao Strait. In this engagement, which was part of the major Battle for Leyte Gulf, the steps are shown whereby the Japanese Third Section was virtually destroyed and their Second Striking Force was compelled to withdraw. A section of diagrams with accompanying explanatory texts follows the main body of the analysis.

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In preparing this volume, Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), had as his principal assistants:

Captain Charles A. Marinke, USN, who collected the original basic data, prepared certain of the original plates and diagrams, and provided an initial draft of the early phases of the battle proper.

Captain Jack C. Titus, USN, who prepared most of the present plates and diagrams, corrected the basic drafts, provided initial drafts of the late phases of the battle proper, and who, upon the retirement of Commodore Bates, completed the volume.

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Commodore Bates, for his part, checked and evaluated the above data, personally collected all data other than the above, consulted ranking American officers who participated in the battle or in its planning, wrote the manuscript, and prepared all analyses and comments, resulting therefrom.

FOREWORD

This analysis of the Battle of Surigao Strait, Battle for Leyte Gulf, in which the Japanese THIRD Section was largely destroyed, and the Japanese SECOND Striking Force was forced to retire, was prepared by the Naval War College. It is based on information from both Allied and Japanese sources which is wider in scope and more complete than that available to writers on this subject up to this time. It endeavors to maintain at all times the viewpoint of the commanders of the units on both sides.

It follows directly the preceding series of volumes which include (a) preliminary phases of the Battle for Leyte Gulf including the Battle off Formosa, and the Japanese reactions thereto, which were analyzed in Volume I, (b) the next phase which embraced the operations of the SEVENTH Fleet Advance Forces in Leyte Gulf prior to D-day and the Japanese reactions thereto, which were analyzed in Volume II and (c) the third phase which embraced in general the Allied landing operations in the Leyte Gulf area of the Philippines and the Japanese reactions thereto, which were analyzed in Volume III.

It should have been preceded by Volume IV which was to have been a continuity volume and was to have covered the general operations of the Allied and Japanese forces from the end of Volume III until the completion of the Battle for Leyte Gulf. However, for reasons beyond the control of the Naval War College, the Chief of Naval Operations decided to conclude the battle analyses with the Battle of Surigao Strait and to discontinue all other planned volumes, i.e., Volume IV, Volume VI, Battle off Samar wherein the Japanese FIRST Striking Force (battleships) was turned back by the Allied Escort Carriers of the SEVENTH Fleet, and Volume VII, Battle off Cape Engano wherein the Japanese Main Force (carriers) was generally destroyed by units of the THIRD Fleet (Fast Carrier Force).

Complete information from all sources was not available to this analysis. This is especially true of the Japanese SECOND Striking Force, the data for which is surprisingly meager. It is also true concerning the thought processes which motivated the principal Japanese senior commanders. All known sources for obtaining information in the United States and in Japan have been examined and re-examined with only limited success on the Japanese side, but with somewhat more success on the Allied side since, during the past several years, some new material, largely in the form of dispatches, has been located. Notwithstanding, new facts and circumstances may come to light from time to time which may change some of the analysis produced herein.

In view of the critical nature of this analysis an effort has been made in certain important situations to place the critic in the position of the commander in order to obtain the latter's point of view. In employing this system it is realized that although the critic can often succeed in placing himself sufficiently near the position of the commander for any practical purposes, in many instances he may not succeed in doing so.

Because of the nature of this battle, because of certain controversies which have arisen concerning it--largely relating to the Japanese side--because of the fact that the Allied operations during the early phases consisted of numerous destroyer attacks some of which were not particularly effective, and finally because of the "crossing of the Tee", as complete a study as possible of this battle has been provided.

The Battle of Surigao Strait was a real test of existing Allied and Japanese night tactical concepts as well of the combat ability in night action of the various commanders on both sides. The pages of history have invariably revealed defects in command in similar situations and it would have been surprising had such defects not appeared in this action.

This battle reaffirmed the lesson so often forgotten--that the test of battle is the only test which proves the combat ability of commanders. The ability or lack of ability of the various commanders in the art of war became apparent. Valor alone was shown to be insufficient, for valor is not an attribute of only one race, but is an attribute and a heritage of many races. The indispensable qualification for command, the art of war, was shown to be the ability in combat to apply the science of war to active military situations.

The present senior officers of the Navy are well aware of the reasons for changes in established doctrines and in the developments of new ones. But this cannot necessarily be said of the commanders of the future, who very probably will be inexperienced in command in war.

Finally, all comments and criticisms, the more important of which are emphasized herein by the employment of capital letters, are designed to be constructive. By indicating what appear to be sound and unsound decisions, and the apparent reasons for arriving at them, it is hoped to provoke earnest thought among prospective commanders and thus to improve professional judgement in command.

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	Misunderstanding; BRYANT fires	506
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	Alters retirement plan	510
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	Learns DESRON FIFTY-SIX accounted for	571
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	Notes enemy cruisers retiring	571
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	Changes course to west	576
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	Informs his cruisers of situation	580
	Decides to support left flank force	580
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(a) Operations of COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR 582-586
(1) Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2 and COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR 582-583
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Slows to fifteen knots 582
Reports his armament situation to CTG 77.3 582
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Learns MTB's reported enemy headed south 582
Receives request for report on destroyers 583
Receives orders take station south of cruisers 583
Directs destroyers form screen 583
Queries CTG 77.3 as to base course 583
(2) Commander Attack Group 2.2 584-586
Waits for something to turn up 584
KILLEN tracks enemy ship 584
KILLEN contacts four ships by radar 584
ARUNTA contacts four destroyers 585
ARUNTA reports having five enemy ships to south 585
Informs CTG 77.2 that three ships contacted were his group 585
Receives orders to get out of channel 585
Informs CTG 77.3 of position 585
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Heads for station in screen 586
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(B) Operations of CTG 79.11 587
Operates north and west of Cabugan Grande Island 587
Eastern Attack Group at post-attack rendezvous 587
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Decides to attack enemy destroyer 587
Makes unsuccessful torpedo attack 588
Taken under fire 588
(2) Kanihaan PT's 588-589
Sights MOGAMI 588
Sights two burning portions of FUSO 588
Proceeds to regain station 588
Drifts with current 589
(3) South Amagusan PT's 589
Drifts with current 589
Fails to pick up SHIGURE 589
(4) East Amagusan PT's 589-590
(a) PT 328 589
Drifts with current 589-590
(b) PT 323 589-590
Proceeds south at four knots 589
Reports sighting destroyer by large burning ship 590
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Drifting with current 590
Sights PC 1130 590
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(5) Lower Surigao PT's 590-591
(a) PT 490 590-591
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Discussion thereon 591
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(6) Other PT's 591
Patrol uneventful 591

CHAPTER XX - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0520 - 0600, October 25th 592-600

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Discussion thereon 592
Realizes retiring units being taken under fire 593
Re-estimates situation; changes course to avoid gunfire 593
Discussion thereon 593
Recalls destroyers 593
(1) Operations of COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN 594-595
Proceeding toward southern entrance 594
Sights MTB's 594
Notices ABUKUMA under escort; reduces speed 594
Receives order directing destroyers rejoin cruisers 594
(a) USHIO 594-595
Proceeding to escort ABUKUMA 594
Sights PT's 194 and 150 595
Opens fire; MTB's retire under smoke 595
MTB fires torpedo; misses 595
Commences escorting ABUKUMA 595
Directed to rejoin cruisers 595
(2) ABUKUMA 595-596
In entrance rapidly closing USHIO 595
Reverses course 595
Sights PT's 194 and 150; opens fire 595
MTB attacks repulsed 595
Joined by USHIO 596
Fires starshells toward Sonok Point 596
(3) MOGAMI 596-597
Following NACHI but losing distance 596
Taken under fire and straddled 596
Takes evasive and preventive action 596
Endeavors to ascertain situation 596
Discussion thereon 596-597
Shelling ceases after ten direct hits 597
Sights PT's 490 and 491 597
Heads for southern entrance 597

(4) ASAGUMO 598
Attempting to follow MOGAMI 598
Notes gunfire and changes course to avoid 598
Enemy fire ceases after one hit started fire 598
Decides to abandon ship 598
(5) SHIGURE 598-599
Employing manual steering 599
Shifts to auxiliary power steering 599
Fails to fall in astern of NACHI 599
Discussion thereon 599
Heads for passage between Binit Point and Bilaa Point 599
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Bow section receives direct hit and sinks 600

CHAPTER XXI - ALLIED OPERATION, 0520 - 0600, October 25th 601-625

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Familiar with developing situation 601
Notes Right Flank Force following Left Flank Force 601
Notes Commander Battle Line remaining in position 601
Receives PT 490's contact report 601
Knows Commander Left Flank Force opened fire 601
Receives message that PT 194 sinking 601
Hears COMDESDIV XRAY's report on pass astern 602
Knows Commander Left Flank Force ceases fire 602
Concerned about whole command 602
(1) Operations of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX 602-604
a) Operations of Commander Attack Section ONE 602-603
Lying close alongside damaged ALBERT W. GRANT 602
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Exchanges class with MOGAMI 626
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Escorting ABUKUMA 627
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Directs BENNION rescue survivors, beware of torpedoes 636
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ALL TIMES IN THIS ANALYSIS, EXCEPT ALLIED DISPATCH TIMES ARE ZONE TIME (-9)

ALLIED DISPATCH TIMES ARE GREENWICH CIVIL TIME*

The time of receipt of many dispatches, both Allied and Japanese, has been generally unavailable to this analysis. In order to compensate for this, it has been assumed from an average time of receipt of a number of important dispatches that, unless otherwise stated, important dispatches concerning operations were received by action addressees in one-half hour when handled via direct circuits. Such assumed times of receipt are indicated by the phrase "at about", while actual times of receipt are indicated by the phrase "at (time inserted)". While this assumption may seem somewhat generous, a study of this analysis will show that where such assumptions are made the result of later receipt (such as one hour or more) would have caused little or no change in the basic study.

Often the time of receipt is known for one command but is not known for other commands. When this much information is available an analysis of the commander under discussion is made to determine whether or not it was likely he received the dispatch on the same transmission as the commander with the known time of receipt. Such items as location, command organization, importance of command and importance of the dispatch are considered. When appropriate it is therefore assumed that several commanders received a particular dispatch at the same time, in which case the assumption is so indicated in the text.

In order to summarize contact information each contact plate lists in tabular form time of contact, location and the time of receipt by the principal commanders. The abbreviation "Rec'd" in the time box indicates the report was probably received; exact time unknown. The time box left blank indicates either lack of information as to receipt or the contact was considered of lesser concern to the commander. Where applicable the one-half hour transmission time assumption explained above, has been applied to contact reports and those receipt times record .

* It will be noted that some Allied Air Force dispatches employ local zone time, in which cases the zone designating letter (I) is suffixed to the date-time-group.

PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS

JAPANESE

Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet	Admiral Toyoda, Soemu, IJN
Chief of Staff	Vice Admiral Kusaka, Ryunosuke, IJN
Commander Mobile Force	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Obayashi, Sueo, IJN
Commander Main Force	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Obayashi, Sueo, IJN
Commander FIRST Striking Force	Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Koyanagi, Tomiji, IJN
Commander SECOND Striking Force	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Matsumoto, Takeshi, IJN
Commander Advance Expeditionary Force	Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Nishina, Kozo, IJN
Commander Southwest Area Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi, IJN
Chief of Staff	Vice Admiral Nishio, Hidehiko, IJN
Commander THIRD Southern Expeditionary Force (Philippine Force)	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Shimamoto, Kyugoro, IJN

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Teraoka, Kimpei, IJN
Chief of Staff	Captain Odahara, Toshihiko, IJN
Commander SIXTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Sugimoto, Ushie, IJN
CinC Southern Army	Field Marshal Terauchi, Hisaichi, IJA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Iimura, Jo, IJA
CG FOURTEENTH Area Army	General Yamashita, Tomoyuki, IJA
CG FOURTH Air Army	Lt. General Tominaga, Kyoji, IJA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Terada, Seiichi, IJA
Southern Army	Field Marshal Terauchi, Hisaichi, IJA
(a) FOURTH Air Army	Lt. General Tominaga, Kyoji, IJA
(1) SECOND Air Division	Lt. General Kinoshita, Isamu, IJA
(2) FOURTH Air Division	Lt. General Kinoshita, Isamu, IJA*
(3) SEVENTH Air Division	

* Philippine Air Operation, Phase II, Page 40. It is believed Lt. General Kinoshita commanded both divisions after assuming command of the 2ND Air Division when its original commander was wounded on October 19th, 1944.

ALLIED

(a) Southwest Pacific Area

Commander Southwest Pacific Area (COMSOWESPAC)	General MacArthur, Douglas A., USA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Sutherland, Richard K., USA
Commander Allied Air Force SOWESPAC (COMAIRSOWESPAC)	Lt. General Kenney, George C.,(AC), USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Beebe, Royden E.,(AC), USA
Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commander SEVENTH Fleet (COMSEVENTHFLT)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commanding General SIXTH Army	Lt. General Krueger, Walter, USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Decker, George H., USA
Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commander Bombardment and Fire Support Group (CTG 77.2)	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Bates, Richard [illegible], USN
Commander Escort Carrier Group (CTG 77.4)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Carson, Joseph M., USN

Commander Dinagat Attack Group (CTG 78.4)	Rear Admiral Struble, Arthur D., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Abdill, Everett W., USN
Commander Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group* (CTG 77.5)	Commander Loud, Wayne R., USN
Commander Northern Attack Force (DTF 78)	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Noble, Albert G., USN
Commander Palo Attack Group (CTG 78.1)	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Noble, Albert G., USN
Commander San Ricardo Attack Group (CTG 78.2)	Rear Admiral Fechteler, William M., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Sprague, Albert T., Jr., USN
Commander Southern Attack Force (CTF 79)	Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Theodore S., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Powell, Paulus P., USN
Commander Attack Group ABLE (CTG 79.1)	Rear Admiral Conolly, Richard L., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Moore, Walter E., USN
Commander Attack Group BAKER (CTG 79.2)	Rear Admiral Royal, Forrest B., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Dugan, Paul F., USN
Commander Submarines SEVENTH Fleet	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Nichols, Philip G., USN

* Since no Chief Staff Officer was assigned CTG 77.5 this function was performed as additional duty by Lieutenant Roy E. Daly, USNR.

Commander Submarines West Australia (CTF 71)	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Nichols, Philip G., USN

(b) Pacific Ocean Areas

CinC Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA)	Admiral Nimitz, Chester W., USN
Chief of Staff	Vice Admiral McMorris, Charles H., USN
Commander Western Pacific Task Forces	Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr., USN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Carney, Robert B., USN
Commander THIRD Fleet (COMTHIRDFLT)	Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr., USN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Carney, Robert B., USN
Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force (CTF 38)	Vice Admiral Mitscher, Marc A., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Burke, Arleigh A., USN
Commander Forward Area Central Pacific Task Force (CTF 57)	Vice Admiral Hoover, John H., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Scull, Herbert M., USN
Commander Shore-Based Air Force Forward Area (CTF 59)	Major General Hale, Willis H., (AC), USA
Chief of Staff	Colonel Carr, Lawrence J., (AC), USA
Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC) (CTF 17)	Vice Admiral Lockwood, Charles A., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Comstock, Merrill, USN

(c) China-Burma-India Theater

CG Army Forces CBI	General Stilwell, Joseph W., USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Cannon, Robert M., USA
CG FOURTEENTH Air Force	Major General Chennault, Claire L., (AC), USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Glenn, Edgar E., USA
CG TWENTIETH Bomber Command	Major General LeMay, Curtis E., (AC), USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Upston, John E., USA

INTRODUCTION

Volume I of the study of the Battle for Leyte Gulf covers the preliminary operations of this battle on both the Allied and Japanese sides until 0719 October 17th, 1944. This was the moment when the Japanese lookouts on Suluan Island at the entrance to Leyte Gulf, made a contact report on Allied surface forces entering Leyte Gulf. These Allied surface forces were the advance forces of the SEVENTHFLT which had been ordered, commencing D-3* day (October 17th) to prepare the way for the seizure by the SIXTH Army of certain areas on Leyte Island preparatory to seizing the Philippines. (A thorough brief of Volume I is contained in the Introduction to Volume I--a limited brief in Volume II.)

Volume II of this study covers the three-day period of operations from D-3 through D-1 day (2400 October 19th). During this time the:

(a) Allied forces seized Suluan Island, positions on Southern Homonhon and Northern Dinagat Islands, cleared most of the objective area of mines, prepared by gunfire and aircraft bombing the enemy areas in the vicinity of the selected landing beaches, reconnoitered with UDT's the approaches to the above landing areas, hit Formosa (B-29's), Luzon and the Visayas by air strikes and reconnoitered with air and submarines certain crucial areas;

(b) Japanese forces, having estimated that all of the above presaged Allied landings in the Central and Southern Philippines, activated SHO ONE and commenced concentrating force movements to the Philippine area as follows: (1) the FIRST Striking Force at Brunei Bay, (2) the SECOND Striking Force at Mako, both commanders to arrive on October 20th, (3) the Main Force was to depart the Inland Sea on this same day (October 20th) and head toward Leyte, (4) the SIXTH Base Air Force in Formosa (about 395 operational planes), and (5) the submarines in the waters east of Leyte. At this time the FIFTH Base Air Force consisted of about forty operational planes out of about sixty-seven available; the FOURTH Air Army of about fifty-five out of ninety-two available.

Meanwhile the Army and Navy were in strong disagreement. The Navy had informed the Army that they were planning to have the Combined Fleet penetrate into Leyte Gulf and the Army had opposed this, desiring the Navy to conserve fleet strength; and,

(c) A thorough brief of Volume II is contained in the Introduction to Volume II; a limited brief in Volume III.

Volume III of this study covers the three and one-half day period of operations from 0000, D-day (October 20th) through 1042, D+3 day (October 23rd). During this time the:

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* Although COMSOWESPAC employed the term A-day rather than D-day, the latter is employed throughout this analysis to follow the more familiar military usage.

(a) Allied forces landed with limited or no opposition (1) on Leyte Island (a) the TENTH Corps (consisting of the TWENTY-FOURTH Division and FIRST Cavalry Division) in the vicinity of Tacloban, (b) TWENTY-FOURTH Corps (consisting of the SEVENTH Infantry Division and NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division) in the vicinity of Dulag and (2) on Panaon Island, the TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment. Progress ashore and the unloading of supplies was so successful that Army commanders assumed command ashore as follows: (a) on the 20th (1) at 1100 the Regimental Commander TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment, (2) at 1430 the C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division and C.G. FIRST Cavalry Division and (3) at 1730 the C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division, (b) on the 21st (1) at 1300 the C.G. SEVENTH Infantry Division and (2) at 1600 the C.G. TENTH Corps. (This left the C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps and the C.G. SIXTH Army who had not as yet assumed command ashore.) Meanwhile the THIRD and SEVENTH Fleet carriers conducted air strikes against Luzon and the Visayas and in support of the ground operation, while the submarines continued their attack and reconnaissance operations. The submarines made three important contacts, one on the SECOND Striking Force, one on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force and one on CRUDIV SIXTEEN, and succeeded in torpedoing the ATAGO, MAYA and TAKAO of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force and the AOBA of CRUDIV SIXTEEN, with results mentioned under (b) following,

(b) Japanese forces, being in limited strength, permitted the Allied ground troops to land with only limited or no opposition. Thereafter, owing to the power of the Allied offensive by ground, air and sea forces, the Japanese ground troops on Leyte were generally ineffective. Meanwhile, on October 20th the Chief of the Army General Staff decided to defend Leyte employing the maximum ground forces which could be brought into the area in a manner similar to that which had been originally planned for Luzon. This was a marked change from the basic SHO ONE plan which called for the defense of Leyte by the ground troops locally available.

Meanwhile, also on the 20th, the FIRST Striking Force and CRUDIV SIXTEEN arrived at Brunei Bay, the SECOND Striking Force arrived at Mako, the Main Force sortied Bungo Suido. Then, on the 21st, the SECOND Striking Force and CRUDIV SIXTEEN got underway for Manila and on the 22nd the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force and the THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force got underway for Leyte. On this day the SIXTH Base Air Force commenced moving to Luzon and the FOURTH Air Army received sixty-one reinforcement planes. On the 23rd (a) the Main Body was intercepted by the DACE and DARTER in Palawan Passage, and the ATAGO and MAYA were sunk, the TAKAO heavily damaged and (b) CRUDIV SIXTEEN was intercepted by the BREAM and the AOBA was torpedoed, (c) the SIXTH Base Air Force launched its general offensive (150 planes) but was turned back and (d) the FOURTH Air Army received sixty additional reinforcement aircraft. A thorough brief of Volume III is contained in the Introduction to Volume III.

Volume IV, which as point out in the FOREWORD, was to have been a continuity volume, was discontinued long before its completion. However since a portion of this Volume, i.e., the period from 1042 October 23rd to 1830 October 24th had been under analysis for sometime, it was available in lesser detail than that which characterized the earlier volumes. Therefore, since an understanding of the events which occurred during the period is essential to a proper understanding of the Battle of Surigao Strait, a limited discussion of these events is provided in Chapters I through IV.

In these limited discussions an effort has been made:

(a) on the Japanese side to discuss rather fully the operations of (1) Commander THIRD Section who fought the Battle of Surigao Strait and (2) Commander SECOND Striking Force who followed the THIRD Section into Surigao Strait and (3) much less fully the operations of all other Japanese commanders, and

(b) on the Allied side to discuss rather fully the operations of (1) CTF 77 who was the strategic commander in Leyte Gulf at the time of the Battle of Surigao Strait, (2) CTG 77.2 who was the tactical commander in the above battle, (3) CTG 70.1 who commanded the Motor Torpedo Boats in Leyte Gulf directly under Commander SEVENTH Fleet (CTF 77) and (4) much less fully the operations of all other Allied commanders.

Command relations are discussed in Volume I* (Allied in Chapter II and Japanese in Chapter III). This discussion will not be repeated herein although diagrams of the command relations existing at the time of the Battle of Surigao Strait are included as Plates I and II.

A Brief Narrative of the 1042 October 23rd - 0733 October 25th Phase of the Battle for Leyte Gulf

(1) Operations 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

(a) Japanese.

During this day CinC Combined Fleet watched with great interest the movement of his forces toward the battle areas. He also followed closely the contact reports on enemy forces although these were sparse due to bad weather east of the Philippines. At 1710 he issued his Estimate of the Situation which gave (a) a clear and fully correct explanation of Allied plans and (b) an explanation of own plans.

The Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, which temporarily was under the tactical command of Commander Battleship Division ONE continued northward in Palawan Passage. At 1623 Commander FIRST Striking Force, who since the sinking of the ATAGO had been in the KISHINAMI, transferred to the YAMATO and at 1630 resumed tactical command of the Main Body.

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* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1953.

Commander THIRD Section, who had passed through Balabac Strait at 1025, continued uneventfully across the Sulu Sea. He spent the day in planning and issuing instructions to his ships concerning the coming action in the Battle of Surigao Strait.

Commander Main Force, as yet undetected by the enemy, continued on toward the southwest in accordance with his mission to divert Allied task forces from the area east of the Philippines to the north. During the afternoon he continued planning for the following day, when he was to initiate air action at 0600.

Commander SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN and DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) continued on toward Coron Bay arriving at 1800. During the evening he fueled his destroyers from the cruisers.

CRUDIV SIXTEEN, in the damaged AOBA, was being towed into Manila Bay. At noon he became Commander Guard Force. After the AOBA had anchored safely inside Manila Bay he, at 2045, transferred his flag to the KINU and with the URANAMI, proceeded to Manila Harbor to fuel.

COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE arrived Manila at 1500, discharged SIXTH Base Air Force personnel and refueled. At 2125 he departed to rejoin Commander SECOND Striking Force off Negros Island.

Commander Advanced Expeditionary Force had eleven submarines en route to assigned stations east of the Philippines.

During the afternoon two contacts were made by radio direction finders on unknown forces east of Luzon. These contacts did not indicate any unusual activity.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, who had about twenty-four operational aircraft, deployed two Kamikaze Units to Mindanao airfields during the day.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, who had about 223 aircraft at the end of the day, continued his efforts to organize his units in the Clark Complex and to prepare for an all out effort the next day.

C.G. FOURTH Air Army, who moved his headquarters to Bacolod, Negros, during the day, continued to prepare for his all out attack the next day and accommodated the considerable number of newly arriving aircraft in the middle Visayan airfield complex. At the end of the day, although he had about 232 aircraft, only 128 were to be operational for the attack the next morning.

(b) Allied.

During this day COMSOWESPAC conducted the installation ceremonies for the Philippine Commonwealth Government at Tacloban, also C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps assumed command ashore as of 1200.

CTF 77, during the afternoon, received a contact report on the SECOND Striking Force and also one on a possible battleship, a light cruiser, a destroyer and several Sugar Charlies in Macassar Strait as well as the DACE and DARTER reports of their attacks on three battleships, three other heavy ships and four ATAGO's (FIRST Section of the FIRST Striking Force) in Palawan Passage. There is nothing to indicate that these reports caused him to revise his opinion that the Japanese intended to conduct magnified Tokyo Express operations against Leyte.

CTF 78, and CTF 79 as well, (a) followed unloading operations closely, as a result of which they were able to unload a large number of ships and to sail them before dark and (b) planned the unloading of the ships that were to arrive in the transport areas the next day.

After 1042 (a) the escort carriers provided about eighty ground support missions, about forty target CAP and twelve target ASP missions and forty-three airfield and shipping strike missions, with losses of one VF and two VT. Thus there remained at the end of the day 310 VF and 188 VT; (b) Allied submarines carried out their usual operations with (1) TF 17 submarines attacking a convoy and (2) TF 71 submarines (ANGLER and GUITARRO) contacting the Main Body, which was continuing northward despite the loss of the ATAGO and MAYA and the torpedoing of the TAKAO by the DACE and DARTER; (c) the PB4Y flying in Sector 312°(T) - 321°(T) from Morotai contacted the SECOND Striking Force shortly before 1220; (d) ten PBY's arrived in Leyte Gulf to search to the northward the next day; (e) no mines were swept by the minesweepers of TG 77.5.

COMTHIRDFLT continued his planning for the following day's operations which were to commence with a search to the westward covering southern Luzon and the Visayas. Although he gave his principal attention to his supporting capabilities he was also preparing his command for operation HOTFOOT--air strikes against the Japanese mainland. During the evening he ordered a search to the northward to cover sector 320°(T) to 010°(T) to a distance of 350 miles to be launched at midnight and also ordered that the bays along the northwest coast of Palawan be searched the following morning.

TF 38, during the remainder of the day, operated as follows:

(a) TB 38.1 continued on toward Ulithi.

(b) TG 38.2 finished fueling from TG 30.9 at 1057 and proceeded toward the next day's launching position astride the eastern exit to San Bernardino Strait.

(c) TG 38.3 continued toward the next day's launching position about ninety miles eastward of Polillo Island. Its afternoon searches, which included the Sibuyan Sea, were negative except for certain shipping in Manila Harbor.

(d) TG 38.4, in company with TG 38.1 en route to Ulithi, was fueling destroyers from the heavier ships. At 1118 in accordance with orders received from COMTHIRDFLT, it headed for the next day's launching position bearing 050°(T), distant fifty miles from the southeast tip of Samar.

The aircraft of TG 30.5 carried out the Central Pacific Search Plan and failed to contact the Japanese Main Force although that force was well within the limit of their search from Tinian. The FOURTEENTH Air Force's searches from China made no significant contacts this day.

(2) Operations 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

(a) Japanese.

During this day the various units of the Combined Fleet moved toward decisive battle areas and CinC Combined Fleet followed with intense interest the contacts and events reported by those units. The continuing contact reports showed large enemy carrier forces east of the Philippines and strong forces, including battleships and transports, in Leyte Gulf. In addition, the reports from his commanders indicated that (a) Commander Main Force planned to launch an attack against the enemy force east of Manila and the Main Force Advance Guard had been ordered to proceed south to destroy remaining enemy elements, (b) the THIRD Section had been lightly damaged in an attack by carrier aircraft, (c) the Main Body of the FIRST Striking Force had been heavily damaged in continuing air attacks with the MUSASHI and MYOKO out of action and (d) the SIXTH Base Air Force had made one hit on a carrier and one cruiser had been moderately damaged and set afire. He was concerned about the attacks on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, and, at 1813, sent a dispatch to all of his forces: "All forces to the attack trusting in divine aid."

Commander FIRST Striking Force, as he passed to the south of Mindoro Island about 0734 and headed for the Sibuyan Sea, made preparations to meet the expected air attack from the enemy task force east of Manila which began at 1026 and continued during the afternoon. By 1530, when the fifth Allied Air Attack was in progress, the MYOKO and MUSASHI had been so badly damaged that he had (a) ordered them to their bases and (b) temporarily reversed course while he re-estimated the situation. During the day he received numerous contact reports on enemy carrier forces east of the Philippines and knew that these enemy forces were grouped as follows: (1) Northeast of Polillo Island, (2) east of Cataduanes Island and (3) off Samar. In addition, he also received contact reports on the enemy forces in Leyte Gulf. He had not received reports of the results of friendly attacks on the enemy forces east of the Philippines although he knew that such attacks were to be conducted.

At 1714, after (a) receiving dispatches stating that the Main Force Advance Guard was being sent south to destroy remaining elements and that the SIXTH Base Air Force was to make a dusk attack against the enemy carrier forces, and (b) noting that there had been no additional air attacks since the fifth air attack, he reversed course and headed for San Bernardino Strait. During the day the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, had been reduced by one battleship, one cruiser and two destroyers.

Commander THIRD Section continued across the Sulu Sea. At 0905 he was attacked by carrier aircraft and the FUSO was hit by one bomb. His force escaped without serious damage. During the day he received reports on the enemy strength in Leyte Gulf, made plans and issued instructions to his ships for crossing the Mindanao Sea, and for the action to be fought in Surigao Strait.

Commander Main Force, still undetected by the enemy, continued on in a southwesterly direction toward an area to the northeast of Polillo Island. At 0600 he launched search planes and at 1114 ordered a full strength air attack against TG 38.3 which was some 150 to 160 miles away. The attack group, consisting of fifty-seven planes, proceeded to the target area in two units. The first unit encountered enemy fighters and after the ensuing fight failed to locate the enemy ships. The second unit found a hole in the clouds and conducted an attack, reported as successful, but failed to obtain any hits. A few of the surviving planes returned to the carriers but the majority of them proceeded to airfields on Luzon. At 1439, having no information of the results of the air attack and feeling that his force was still undetected by the enemy, he ordered the Advance Guard (ISE, HYUGA and four destroyers) to proceed southward to attack and destroy enemy remnants. This was in accordance with his mission to lure the enemy to the northward so that it could not interfere with the operations of the FIRST Striking Force. At 1635 an enemy carrier plane was sighted about the force and its radio report was intercepted by him. He now knew that the enemy knew of his presence and so advised all friendly forces.

Commander SECOND Striking Force was in Coron Bay refueling his destroyers from the cruisers. At 0200, having completed fueling, he departed for Surigao Strait. During the day he received numerous reports and planned his operations in Surigao Strait. He knew that the WAKABA of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE had been sunk as a result of air attack but he did not know that the other two ships of that DESDIV had returned to Manila. Although he was sighted by an Allied search plane he was unaware of the presence of this plane and believed that he was undetected. As a result of the temporary retirement of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, in the Sibuyan Sea due to air attack, he increased speed in order to effect close liaison with the THIRD Section.

Commander Guard Force, who was also COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, departed Manila at 0630 after issuing his orders for the troop transport operation. At 0700, just after clearing the harbor entrance, he was attacked by aircraft. This attack continued until 1000. The URAKAMI suffered machine gun and rocket hits which penetrated her fuel tanks and the resulting loss of oil reduced her cruising radius by one-half. After the attack he proceeded to the south on his troop carrying mission.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was to make a maximum effort this day against the enemy. One of his planes made contact with a large enemy force east of Manila at 0050 and he immediately ordered a general offensive. The attack, consisting of about 158 planes, reported obtaining a hit in a carrier and one cruiser set afire. The carrier hit was on the PRINCETON, one of the units of TG 38.3. Although he received many contact

reports during the day and made other attacks, these attacks were largely ineffective. In spite of a pointed query from Commander Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, as to what attacks had been made against the enemy he appears to have only sent two fighters to provide CAP for the Main Body.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force's four Kamikaze Units were scattered at airfields in Luzon, Cebu and Mindanao. Nothing significant was accomplished during the day.

C.G. FOURTH Air Army made an all out attack against enemy shipping in and around Leyte Gulf. It appears that he had 128 planes which were operational. The first wave of about eighty planes, of which about twenty were shot down, succeeded in sinking a tug (ATA SONOMA) and an LCI (1065) and damaging a destroyer (LEUTZE) and one liberty ship (THOMAS). Other attacks were unsuccessful.

(b) Allied.

During the day COMSOWESPAC followed with interest the intelligence reports and contact reports made by the various units in the area.

CTF 77, during the early morning hours, received ANGLER and GUITARRO contact reports on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, and also intelligence reports on the reinforcement of the Japanese air forces. He therefore directed CTG 77.4 to cancel strikes planned against the Visayan airfields and to augment the target CAP over Leyte Gulf. This arrangement proved effective for the enemy air attacks during the day were largely ineffective. He therefore reinstituted the fighter sweeps of the Visayan airfields. Having received contact reports on the THIRD Section and on the SECOND Striking Force he (a) arranged to transfer command of the forces ashore to C.G. SIXTH Army and (b) at 1215 and at 1219 issued his instructions for night engagement. He stationed the (a) heavier ships at the upper end of Surigao Strait in order to destroy those forces and (b) MTB's in the eastern Mindanao Sea and lower Surigao Strait to report and attack the approaching Japanese forces. During the afternoon he ordered three PBY searches to the north and two through the Mindanao Sea. At 1700 he intercepted COMTHIRDFLT's Battle Plan which indicated that TF 34 "will be formed" to engage the enemy (Main Body, FIRST Striking Force).

During the early morning hours TG 77.2 and TG 77.3 were in southern Leyte Gulf covering the transports and other noncombatant ships against night attack. With the advent of daylight the ships then returned to the fire support and logistics areas. By midafternoon, having received CTF 77's orders to prepare for night battle which orders assigned TG 77.3 to CTG 77.2, he prepared his battle plan, continued refueling and replenishing ammunition. The essential provisions of his battle plan were: (a) CTG 77.2 was OTC and would also command the Left Flank Force composed of five cruisers and nine destroyers, (b) CTG 77.3 would command the Right Flank Force composed of three cruisers and six destroyers, (c) CTU 77.2.1 (Commander Battle Line) would command the Center Force composed of six battleships and six destroyers, (d) these forces would steam slowly

back and forth at the northern end of Surigao Strait, and (e) destroyers would attack from the flanks using torpedoes and the heavy ships—owing to their limited AP—would hold their fire until the enemy had approached to between 17,000 yards and 20,000 yards from the battleships. Beginning at 1721 his units started south for the battle area and at 1725 he issued his battle plan.

CTF 78 and CTF 79 followed unloading operations closely. During the morning Reinforcement Group TWO arrived and unloading was commenced. During the day CTF 79 sailed two groups of unloaded ships from the area. At 1650 both commanders received CTF 77's supplement to his Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE which directed that all noncombatant ships be anchored in their respective areas with a close inner screen and that there would be no departure from or entry into Leyte Gulf during darkness.

During the morning CTG 77.4 maintained a strong TCAP over Leyte Gulf which proved effective in driving off strong enemy air attacks. He also maintained a CAP over his own CVE's and provided ground support. Shortly after noon he launched an air strike against the western Visayas. At 1643 he sailed two CVE's for Morotai to pick up replacement aircraft.

At the beginning of the day CTG 70.1 had two tenders and the majority of his MTB's in San Pedro Bay and one tender and eleven MTB's in Liloan Bay. Some of the MTB's were on patrol or special missions. After a morning conference with CTF 77 he, about noon, received that commander's order to station the maximum number of MTB's in lower Surigao Strait that night in order to detect and report enemy forces approaching. During the afternoon he prepared his battle plan, instructed and prepared the MTB's for the coming action and sent them to their selected stations.

During the morning CTF 71 received reports from his submarines. The ANGLER and GUITARRO made contact reports on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, while the DACE reported the grounding of the DARTER on Bombay Shoal, the rescue of her personnel and the subsequent attempts to destroy the DARTER. During the day he probably received most of the contact reports made by the various commands and rearranged his submarines in order to cover the various passages which the enemy might use in retiring as well as to provide for the destruction of the DARTER.

During the day CTG 73.4, who was under the operational control of C. G. FIFTH Air Force and who was operating his seach squadrons from Morotai, made contact on the THIRD Section and the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, as well as the SECOND Striking Force.

CTG 73.7, who had two seaplane tenders and ten seaplanes in Leyte Gulf, spent the day in preparing his aircraft for night searches in the Mindanao Sea and to the north.

At 0600 COMTHIRDFLT launched air searches from his three carrier groups (CTG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4) to cover the western Philippines from Minila south to the entrance to the Mindanao Sea.

Commencing at 0820 when he received a contact report from his search planes reporting the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, as rounding the southern tip of Mindoro, he advised CTG's 38.3 and 38.4 and directed (a) them to concentrate toward him, (b) both CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.3 to attack, (c) CTG 38.1, who had been proceeding to Ulithi, to reverse course and launch a search to the northward and northwestward the next morning, and (d) COMBATDIV SEVEN to be prepared to assume the duties of Commander Battle Line.

During the remainder of the day he (a) received contact reports on the various enemy forces both from his own aircraft and from the search planes of CTG 73.4, including a late afternoon report that the Japanese Main Body, heavily damaged, was retiring to the westward, and a contact report on an enemy force to the north composed of carriers and battleships (Japanese Main Force), (b) received some information on the attacks made by his aircraft, (c) learned of the damage by enemy air attack on the PRINCETON, as a result of which she was to be sunk, (d) learned of the enemy air attack on friendly forces in Leyte Gulf, and (e) had formulated a battle plan for surface action in anticipation of a possible sortie by the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, through San Bernardino Strait.

TF 38, during the day, operated as follows:

(a) CTG 38.1 continued on toward Ulithi until 1043 when he reversed course in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT's orders and headed for a fueling rendezvous to the northwest.

(b) CTG 38.2, with COMTHIRDFLT in one of his ships, continued toward his launching point off San Bernardino Strait and at 0600 launched a westward search. At 0746 one of his search planes had sighted the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, and at 0853 he launched his first attack against this force. During the day he continued to attack the enemy to the westward.

(c) CTG 38.3, with CTF 38 in one of his ships, continued toward his launching point about ninety miles east of Polillo Island. During the early morning hours he had contact on four enemy aircraft. At 0606 he launched his initial air strike.

His command was attacked first by a large group of enemy planes which was driven off by the CAP, the second enemy strike did not close and the third strike, although attacked by the CAP, heavily hit the PRINCETON. As a result of this hit he ordered the BIRMINGHAM, RENO and three destroyers to standby her.

During the day he launched two strikes against the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, and repelled two more enemy air attacks without additional damage. At 1409 he launched a search to the northward consisting of five VB without fighter escort. At 1523 the major portion of the PRINCETON's stern and after flight deck were blown off by a large explosion, killing and injuring many personnel on the BIRMINGHAM which was alongside.

At 1635 his search planes began reporting the Japanese Main Force to the north. Shortly thereafter he received a suggestion from CTF 38 that, in view of the contact to the north, the PRINCETON be sunk.

At 1746 the RENO fired two torpedoes into the PRINCETON which exploded and sank.

(d) CTG 38.4 continued toward his launching point off southern Samar. At about 0600 he launched a reinforced search toward the southwest and west. He attacked (a) at 0815 the three destroyers of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (SECOND Striking Force) off the western coast of northern Panay Island sinking the WAKABA, (b) at 0905 the THIRD Section (FIRST Striking Force) obtaining one hit on the FUSO, (c) about 1230 the remaining two destroyers of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE with but minor success and (d) at 1330 the Main Body (FIRST Striking Force) while en route north to concentrate with COMTHIRDFLT.

Late in the afternoon he could see TG 38.2 hull down and COMTHIRDFLT directed him to take tactical command of both groups and to keep them concentrated in the general vicinity.

CTG 30.5's aircraft carried out the Central Pacific Search Plan but made no significant contacts on this day. The FOURTEENTH Air Force aircraft flew the day search missions from China but no sightings were made.

During the day CTF 17 followed the developing situation closely by means of contact reports and other dispatches from the commanders in the active area. He was not informed of the results of the air attacks against the Japanese forces until 1938 and did not issue any instructions to his submarines concerning the likely retirement of Japanese forces to the northward, other than to warn them at 1830 to be alert for movement of additional enemy ships passing through Luzon Straits and toward the south and for cripples moving north. During the early morning his submarines stationed to the west of Luzon Straits were attacking the Harukaze convoy and sank several ships. During this action the SHARK was lost.

Also during the early morning the CROAKER sank a cargo ship off Cheju Do and the BESUGO sank the destroyer escort CD 132 off Bungo Suido.

(3) Operations from 1830 to 2400, October 24th.

(a) Japanese.

At 1830, October 24th, Commander THIRD Section was rounding Siquijor Island at the entrance to the Mindanao Sea. Despite the fact that the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force had resumed course to the westward he decided to continue on and therefore directed his FIRST Division, composed of the MOGAMI and DESDIV FOUR, to proceed ahead and conduct a sweep of the waters west of Panaon Island. This sweep, as of 2400, was uneventful.

Shortly afterward he (a) learned that the Main Body would penetrate into Leyte Gulf about 1100 the next day and (b) was directed to penetrate into Leyte Gulf as scheduled and to rendezvous with the Main Body off Suluan Island at 0900.

Meanwhile, with the SECOND Division (YAMASHIRO, FUSO and SHIGURE), he continued across the Mindanao Sea at eighteen knots until 2252 when he was attacked by MTB's which he drove off without damage to his ships.

Commander SECOND Striking Force continued on toward the Mindanao Sea at twenty-two knots. Although DESDIV TWENTY-ONE did not rendezvous he continued on and at 2110 passed to the south of Siquijor Island. Other than sighting starshells fired by the THIRD Section during their encounter with MTB's the period was uneventful and at 2400 he was some thirty-eight miles astern of the THIRD Section.

(b) Allied.

At 1830 CTG 77.2, who was OTC of the Allied forces involved in the Battle of Surigao Strait and also Commander Left Flank Force, and Commander Battle Line and Commander Right Flank Force, with their respective forces, were standing toward the battle disposition area east of Hingatungan Point.

He now received word from CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR) that in case of surface contact to the south, he (CTG 79.11) planned to make immediate attack with torpedoes, then to retire to clear TG 77.2 and requested approval. Since this attack would provide helpful and early information of the enemy and might also damage some of the enemy ships he (CTG 77.2) approved it.

By about 2021 the battle disposition was to all intents and purposes formed although the destroyers were not in their final positions.

During the remainder of this period the major Allied forces steamed back and forth across the northern end of Surigao Strait at five knots, awaiting reports of the enemy, but although contact had been made no reports were received. This was unfortunate because the (a) Bohol PT's had contacted (at 2236) the SHIGURE, YAMASHIRO and FUSO but could not get their contact report off to anyone because of communication difficulties. These Bohol PT's were forced by enemy gunfire to retire whereupon the OTC sent two of his MTB's to report the contact through the Camiguin PT's, and (b) Limasawa PT's had contacted (at 2330) the MOGAMI, MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO, but for similar reasons, like the Bohol PT's, had been unable to make a contact report.

(4) Operations from 0000 to 0100, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

At 0000 both the FIRST and SECOND Divisions of the THIRD Section were proceeding toward Surigao Strait. Commander THIRD Section learned shortly after midnight that the FIRST Division (a) would be delayed some forty-five minutes in reaching the rendezvous point, (b) was in the waters west of Limasawa Island, and (c) had made contact with enemy MTB's. The FIRST and SECOND Divisions now sighted each other and, at the same time, fired starshells in order to identify their sightings. Having identified themselves, Commander FIRST Division then maneuvered to rejoin without penetrating the waters west of Panaon Island (Sogod Bay).

Commander SECOND Striking Force continued on toward the entrance to Surigao Strait. Although he sighted the starshells fired by the THIRD Section, he did not sight, nor was he sighted by, any enemy forces.

(b) Allied.

The Allied battle forces continued to steam east and west at low speed across the northern end of Surigao Strait. At 0026 CTG 77.2 received PT 127's 2310 contact report on an enemy force ten miles southeast of Bohol Island and at 0038 he received a contact report on two targets ten miles northwest of Camiguin Island.

Meanwhile, as the Limasawa PT's approached the Japanese FIRST Division of the THIRD Section to fire torpedoes, the MOGAMI turned on a searchlight. Only two of the three MTB's succeeded in firing before they were driven off by gunfire. None of the torpedoes hit and none of the MTB's had been able to deliver a contact report.

(5) Operations from 0100 to 0245, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

Commander THIRD Section continued on toward the entrance to Surigao Strait. At 0125 he changed course to 040°(T) and headed into Surigao Strait. At 0126 he learned that the NACHI, which was the flagship of Commander SECOND Striking Force, had entered the radio telephone net although that commander did not take command. At 0202 he changed course to 000°(T) and headed up the strait at twenty knots. He was now attacked in succession by PT 134, the Lower Surigao PT's and by the Sumilon PT's. He avoided the torpedoes and drove off the MTB's by gunfire. After this series of encounters he informed Commander SECOND Striking Force that he had passed the lower entrance without damage although he had been attacked by MTB's.

Commander SECOND Striking Force continued on toward the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at twenty-two knots. At 0235, while in a severe rain squall, he stopped zigzagging and increased speed to twenty-six knots.

(b) Allied.

CTG 77.2, with his battle disposition, continued to patrol across the northern end of Surigao Strait at five knots. Although he received fragmentary reports on the THIRD Section it was not until 0204 that he began to receive relayed contact reports from PT 134 which placed the enemy force off the southern tip of Panaon Island. At 0231 he knew that CTG 79.11 had started down the strait to make a torpedo attack. At 0244 he knew that Commander Battle Line had increased speed to ten knots but he, as CTG, took no action, neither increasing speed nor directing Commander Battle Line to remain at five knots.

Having received several contact reports from PT 127, CTG 79.11 started down the strait to meet the enemy without issuing any specific instructions about coordinating the attacks of his two groups.

Meanwhile the MTB's, operating independently by groups or units, fired (a) one torpedo at the YAMAGUMO, (b) four torpedoes most likely at the YAMAGUMO, (c) three torpedoes probably at the FUSO, six torpedoes at the MOGAMI, (d) four torpedoes at the MICHISHIO and (e) two torpedoes at the ASAGUMO. All of the above twenty torpedoes missed. PT 493 was heavily hit by enemy gunfire with the result that she was beached and abandoned at Maoyo Point.

(6) Operations from 0245 to 0320, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

Commander THIRD Section continued up the strait at twenty knots. He soon received reports of targets to starboard which he took under fire. He took no evasive action with the result that the FUSO was torpedoed and dropped out of formation.

Soon after this he received reports of enemy ships on the port bow and his ships shifted fire to these targets. He now maneuvered to avoid torpedoes by a turn to starboard. In returning to the base course of 000°(T) he entered the torpedo water of the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN with the result that the YAMAGUMO sank, the MICHISHIO lost power and stopped, the ASAGUMO lost her bow and most of her speed, while the YAMASHIRO was forced to slow to ten knots for several minutes. Only the SHIGURE and MOGAMI escaped damage.

Commander SECOND Striking Force, who was in a heavy rain squall, continued on toward the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at twenty-six knots until 0311 when he slowed to twenty-two knots. A few minutes later he sighted the mountains of Panaon Island about seven kilometers on his port bow and noted that the USHIO was already turning away from the beach.

(b) Allied.

CTG 77.2 learned at 0256 from CTG 79.11 that the enemy consisted of two large ships and three small ones. At 0303 he changed course to 090°(T) and remained at five knots although the battle line continued to make ten knots. His radar now showed two large targets and three small ones.

CTG 77.3 (Commander Right Flank Force) at 0302 ordered his destroyers to commence their attack following CTG 79.11's attack. The destroyer commander, COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, who was proceeding at fifteen knots now, at 0317, directed Commander Attack Group 2.2 to attack using high speed and smoke. That commander immediately increased speed to twenty-five knots.

At 0248 Commander Eastern Attack Group (CTG 79.11) increased speed to twenty-five knots. He now reported to CTG 77.2 that the enemy consisted of two large ships and three small ones. At 0258 he changed course to 090°(T) but discovering that this was a poor course he promptly changed

course back to 120°(T) and at the same time increased speed to thirty knots. Between 0300:45 and 0301:42 his three ships fired a total of twenty-seven torpedoes, all of which missed except for one hit by the MELVIN in the FUSO. Immediately after firing each ship turned away, retired under the gunfire of the enemy and headed for their post-attack rendezvous.

At this same time Commander Western Attack Group was proceeding to his torpedo launching point at twenty knots. He soon increased speed to twenty-five knots and between 0307 and 0308 was illuminated and taken under fire but no damage resulted. Between 0310:15 and 0311:30 his two destroyers fired a total of twenty torpedoes and obtained hits in the MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO and YAMASHIRO. They then turned away to the west and later to the north.

Many MTB's in Surigao Strait had radar contact on the THIRD Section but made no effort to attack, probably because of the warning of friendly destroyer attacks and instructions to keep clear.

Between 0311 and 0312 the Madilao PT's and the Bilaa Point PT's made radar contact on two ships of the SECOND Striking Force. Their reports did not reach the responsible commanders further to the north.

(7) Operations from 0320 to 0348, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

Commander THIRD Section continued on to the north, although at a lower speed, but his ships were no longer conforming to his movements except in a most general way. The MOGAMI had changed course to 345°(T) and had slowed to ten knots while the SHIGURE had reversed course. At 0330 he sent a dispatch to Commanders FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces reporting (a) enemy motor torpedo boats and destroyers in the northern entrance to Surigao Strait, (b) two of his destroyers torpedoed and drifting and (c) the YAMASHIRO torpedoed but without impediment to her battle cruising. As he moved up the strait he maneuvered to avoid torpedoes from Attack Group 2.2 while the YAMASHIRO opened fire on that group. At 0331:18 the YAMASHIRO received her second torpedo hit which had been fired by the KILLEN. Meanwhile the SHIGURE, still at twenty-six knots, had reversed course to north. The YAMASHIRO, followed by the MOGAMI and SHIGURE in a general way, now steadied on course 340°(T) to head for Dulag Anchorage and, after completing the necessary damage control measures about 0336, made good a speed of eighteen knots. At about 0345 she opened fire against the units of Attack Group 1.2 and probably also against any other targets that she could see.

ASAGUMO, having lost her bow, proceeded north at very low speed and then to the west, taking such damage control measures as she could. She was now fired on by the HUTCHINS and changed course to the south. She was not hit.

The MICHISHIO drifted to the south where she was taken under fire by the DALY and the BACHE. She was hit and fires were started but she did not return the fire.

The FUSO, badly damaged and afire, was proceeding at very low speed attempting to put out the fires which were causing explosions. She first turned slowly to the south and then at 0345, as a result of a violent explosion, she blew apart into two sections.

Commander SECOND Striking Force, who had almost run aground on Panaon Island, changed course to 065°(T) and increased speed to twenty-four knots. The ABUKUMA now received a torpedo hit from PT 137. She fell out of formation to the south and gradually lost speed while Commander SECOND Striking Force increased speed to twenty-eight knots and, after changing course, headed up the strait.

(b) Allied.

CTG 77.2, with the Left Flank Force, was making five knots on course 090°(T) although the battle line was still making ten knots. He now intercepted a message from Commander Battle Line increasing speed to fifteen knots and ordering the battle line to open fire when the range was 26,000 yards. Learning that the right flank destroyers had completed firing he ordered COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX (left flank destroyers) to attack. At 0345 he received a delayed report from PT 523 that five destroyers and one large ship were passing in a northerly direction through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait (SECOND Striking Force).

COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX promptly launched his attack employing three attack sections to make a multiple attack, attacking from the port bow, from ahead and from the starboard bow on the enemy force.

Commander Right Flank Force, with the right flank cruisers, continued to maintain station on the battle line during which time he seems to have been concerned with the safety of his destroyers for on three separate occasions he either directed COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to get over to the west or to keep clear.

Commander Attack Group 1.2 continued his approach down the western side of the strait. At 0329, while at twenty-five knots and making smoke, he changed course to the north and ordered his ships to fire their torpedoes. His destroyers fired as follows: (a) HUTCHINS fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the SHIGURE which missed because the target reversed course, (b) DALY fired five low speed torpedoes at the MOGAMI which missed due to the target's changes of course and speed during the long torpedo run and (c) BACHE fired five low speed torpedoes at the SHIGURE which missed because she thought the target was making seventeen knots when it was actually making twenty-six knots.

After firing the DALY and BACHE reversed course to the south in order to follow the HUTCHINS. At 0339 the HUTCHINS changed course to 148°(T) and increased speed to thirty knots. She now opened fire on the ASAGUMO and shortly afterward changed course to the north. Then the DALY, followed by the BACHE, opened fire on the NICHISHIO and obtained some hits and started fires. At 0345 they were forced to check fire when the HUTCHINS crossed their line of fire, and Attack Group 1.2 was taken under fire. The enemy fire was ineffective. At 0346:30 the HUTCHINS changed course to

040°(T) and continued at thirty knots. The DALY and BACHE, which had just changed course to 050°(T), now resumed fire on the MICHISHIO. At 0347:30 the HUTCHINS ceased fire in order to conserve ammunition.

Attack Group 2.2 attacked as follows: (a) at 0323 the ARUNTA fired four forty-knot torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO. The target speed used was twenty-five knots, which had been obtained by tracking the SHIGURE, while the YAMASHIRO's actual speed was ten knots. As a result the torpedoes passed ahead. (b) At 0324 the KILLEN fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO and obtained one hit, and (c) at 0325:15 the BEALE fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the SHIGURE which was reversing course at the time of firing and all torpedoes missed.

The KILLEN now fired a second salvo of intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO but after firing two torpedoes observed that the target was turning away and ceased firing. Both torpedoes missed. At 0331 Attack Group 2.2 was illuminated and taken under fire but incurred no damage. At 0344:30 Commander Attack Group 2.2 changed course to 160°(T) and headed for the scene of action.

The MTB's operated as follows: (a) PT 137 (SE Panaon PT's) off Binit Village fired one torpedo at the NACHI which missed astern but hit the ABUKUMA, (b) PT 134 sighted the USHIO and fired her one remaining torpedo which missed, and (c) the Sumilon PT's made radar contact on five ships of the SECOND Striking Force and reported it.

(8) Operations from 0348 to 0420, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

At 0352, just as the first salvos from the Allied ships to the north had commenced landing on the YAMASHIRO, Commander THIRD Section asked the FUSO for her maximum speed but did not get a reply. This was his last radio transmission. The YAMASHIRO, however, continued to close the enemy firing as she advanced. Shortly after being taken under fire she started to burn. At 0356 she turned to the west and at 0405 she was hit by a torpedo fired by the BENNION. She now turned to the south. Between 0411 and 0412 she received a fourth torpedo hit which had been fired by the NEWCOMB. At 0419 she suddenly sank.

At 0351 the MOGAMI observed the Allied ships open fire and increased speed to twenty-five knots. At 0401:30 she launched four torpedoes on northerly courses in the general direction of the enemy gun flashes. Although no hits were obtained the torpedoes passed close aboard the RICHARD P. LEARY. At 0402 she was hit on the bridge, killing all of the bridge officers, including the Commanding Officer. The ship, burning, damaged and out of control, gradually slowed down.

The SHIGURE continued closing the YAMASHIRO, which she noted was under heavy fire, at twenty-six knots. She turned away and increased speed to retire without firing either torpedoes or guns. After completing the turn to the south she received her first hit which did not affect her speed or navigability. At 0415 she exchanged calls with the NACHI and shortly afterward increased speed to thirty knots in order to pass ahead of the SHIRANUHI.

The ASAGUMO, on course 180°(T) at seven to nine knots, turned to the east to move away from the approaching DALY and BACHE. This caused the HUTCHINS torpedoes to miss.

The MICHISHIO which, under the gunfire of the DALY and BACHE was afire, continued to drift to the south with the current At 0357:48 she was hit by a torpedo fired by the HUTCHINS at the ASAGUMO, and sank almost immediately.

Commander SECOND Striking Force at 0410 passed the two burning sections of the FUSO and concluded that they were the FUSO and the YAMASHIRO. About 0415 he sighted the MOGAMI afire and dead in the water. At this same time he exchanged calls with the SHIGURE but made no effort to obtain information of the enemy from her. About 0418 he obtained a radar contact on the enemy (likely Hibuson Island) and directed his destroyers, led by the SHIRANUHI, to proceed ahead and make a torpedo attack.

(b) Allied.

At 0351 CTG 77.2 opened fire with the left flank cruisers. The right flank cruisers, except for the SHROPSHIRE, then opened fire as well. At 0353 he observed that the WEST VIRGINIA had opened fire and shortly afterward he observed other battleships firing. At 0400, knowing that the battle line was making fifteen knots and was almost north of Hibuson Island, he suggested to Commander Battle Line that he reverse course to west, which that commander did shortly afterward.

The DENVER now commenced firing her secondary battery and then her main battery at the ALBERT W. GRANT making numerous hits. The LOUISVILLE likewise commenced firing her secondary battery at the ALBERT W. GRANT but seems to have obtained no hits. At 0406 CTG 77.2 received a voice radio message that the DENVER had been straddled. He immediately increased speed to fifteen knots. At 0408, having received a startling message that he was firing on COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the middle of the channel, he immediately ceased firing and directed COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to get out of the channel as soon as possible. Neither he nor COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX knew that the ALBERT W. GRANT was so badly damaged as to be unable to get out of the channel.

At 0419 he ordered Commander Right Flank Force to resume fire but none of the ships did so for the YAMASHIRO sank at this time and there were no other enemy ships within effective gun range.

At 0353 the WEST VIRGINIA, at the direction of COMBATDIV FOUR, opened fire on the YAMASHIRO at a range of 22,800 yards. About this time, because the MISSISSIPPI's forward turrets did not bear, Commander Battle Line changed course by individual ship turns to 120°(T). His battleships commenced firing as follows: CALIFORNIA at 0355, TENNESSEE at 0356 and MARYLAND at 0359. MISSISSIPPI and PENNSYLVANIA had not opened fire because of difficulties in obtaining a solution to the fire control problem with obsolete equipment.

He now turned to course 270°(T) by simultaneous ship turns but the CALIFORNIA interpreted the turn signal as a turn to 135°(T) rather than to 270°(T). By clever ship handling the TENNESSEE was able to avoid collision with the CALIFORNIA and also able to go ahead soon enough to avoid embarrassing the MISSISSIPPI. During this turn the battleships ceased firing. At 0413 he intercepted a message from the RICHARD P. LEARY reporting that she was proceeding through torpedo water as a result of which he directed COMBATDIV TWO to maneuver his division separately and to bring it into the battle line without delay and then, at 0418, changed course of the battle line, less BATDIV TWO, to 000°(T). At 0416 he directed COMDESDIV XRAY to comply with CTG 77.2's order to report for duty.

DESRON FIFTY-SIX attacked as follows: (a) at 0351 Commander Attack Section ONE increased speed to twenty five knots and at 0353 changed course to 210°(T). Observing that the target was turning to the west he also turned to the west and fired intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO as follows: NEWCOMB five and obtained one hit, RICHARD P. LEARY three which missed, and ALBERT W. GRANT five which also missed. Immediately after firing the ALBERT W. GRANT was straddled and hit by gunfire from both sides. Commander Attack Section ONE, observing that his command was being straddled, turned to the north and notified CTG 77.2 that TG 77.2 was firing on him in the middle of the channel. The ALBERT W. GRANT now fired her remaining five intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO but made no hits. She had been heavily hit, was not able to follow in column and was slowing rapidly on course 000°(T). Meanwhile, the RICHARD P. LEARY sighted two torpedo tracks on each side which had been fired by the MOGAMI. She was unable to report the torpedo tracks until 0413. About this time she increased speed to her maximum but was unable to close the NEWCOMB. At 0420 the ALBERT W. GRANT was dead in the water in the center of the channel and was in danger of sinking. The other two ships were practically clear of the line of fire.

(b) Commander Attack Section TWO continued toward his torpedo launching point. (1) At 0355:15 the BRYANT, mistaking a preparatory signal for a firing order, fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at what appears to have been splashes, all missed. (2) At 0356:30 the HALFORD fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO all of which missed because she had been tracking the target at zero speed, and (3) at 0358 the ROBINSON fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO all of which missed because the YAMASHIRO turned away. Commander Attack Section TWO now turned away and proceeded north along the west side of Hibuson Island.

(c) Commander Attack Section THREE passed astern of the cruiser column and increased speed to thirty knots. At 0357 the LEUTZE fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO. At 0358 the BENNION, which had narrowly missed being torpedoed by the LEUTZE's torpedoes, fired five intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO. At 0359:15 the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS fired four intermediate speed torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO. All of the above fourteen torpedoes missed due to the change of course of the YAMASHIRO to the west. At 0359:15 the BENNION fired a second salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes at what she thought was a second battleship, and made one lucky hit on the YAMASHIRO. Commander Attack Section THREE now retired under smoke.

Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), with his cruisers in line of bearing, was on course 090°(T) at fifteen knots. He was concerned over the safety of his destroyers and therefore ordered his destroyers out of the channel. In the meantime the PHOENIX and the BOISE had opened fire with the Left Flank Cruisers. The SHROPSHIRE had not opened fire because her fire control radar was limited to about 15,500 yards in range. When the range reached 15,800 yards the SHROPSHIRE opened fire on the YAMASHIRO. At this time a few splashes were noted around the PHOENIX. Commander Right Flank Force now commenced turning to the west in order to cover the western portion of the strait. At 0409 he received CTG 77.2's order to cease firing and immediately ordered his ships to cease fire.

Commander Attack Group 1.2, in the HUTCHINS, was on course 040°(T) speed thirty knots, while the DALY and BACHE, some 5,000 yards to the south, were making twenty-five knots in the same general direction. At 0349:30 the HUTCHINS fired her remaining five intermediate speed torpedoes at the ASAGUMO. The ASAGUMO turned away and the torpedoes passed harmlessly to the south but hit the MICHISHIO at the end of their run. The three ships proceeded on northerly courses with the DALY and BACHE together but following the HUTCHINS in only the most general way. The destroyers now opened fire on the YAMASHIRO, MOGAMI and MICHISHIO and, with perhaps some assistance from the PORTLAND, set the MOGAMI on fire. At 0405 Commander Attack Group 1.2, having been directed by CTG 77.3 to get in to the beach, proceeded to do so.

At 0349 the KILLEN fired her three remaining torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO using low speed due to the great distance that the torpedoes had to run. These torpedoes missed but appear to have come close to the ALBERT W. GRANT. Commander Attack Group 2.2 turned to the west to clear the channel. The ARUNTA and KILLEN now fired for a time at the YAMASHIRO and later the ARUNTA fired on the MOGAMI after which the Attack Group retired toward Pandan Point.

(9) Operations from 0420 to 0520, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

At 0430 the NACHI collided with the MOGAMI without serious additional damage to the MOGAMI. The MOGAMI, now still burning, followed as closely as she could with her maximum speed of fourteen knots, which she obtained with one untended engine.

At 0424 as the SHIGURE retired she suffered a steering casualty and, because of difficulty in shifting to hand steering, stopped. After receiving Commander SECOND Striking Force's order to follow behind the NACHI, she replied at 0445 that her steering engines were out of order. Passing ahead of the NACHI on westerly courses she turned to the south and experienced more steering trouble necessitating slowing to fifteen knots to assist in steering the ship.

The ASAGUMO, which had lost her bow, continued on course 090°(T) at six knots which she later changed to 238°(T) at nine and one-half knots, and followed in a general way the movements of the other ships.

The two burning sections of the FUSO continued to drift to the south.

Commander SECOND Striking Force was proceeding on course north at twenty-eight knots toward a radar target to the north. At 0424 he changed course to 090°(T) and directed his destroyers to attack. At 0427 the NACHI and ASHIGARA each fired eight high speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 025°(T) at the radar target which was probably Hibuson Island. After firing the NACHI collided with the MOGAMI and was so heavily damaged that she could only make eighteen knots after the collision. Commander SECOND Striking Force now decided to retire from the battle area and ordered (1) his destroyers to join and (2) the THIRD Section to follow behind the NACHI. At 0449 he sent a dispatch informing the battle report addressees that BATDIV TWO had been destroyed and that the MOGAMI had been severly damaged and set afire.

COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN proceeded to attack at twenty four knots but sighted nothing other than Hibuson Island through breaks in the smoke. At 0435, in accordance with orders from Commander SECOND Striking Force, he discontinued his attack. The USHIO increased speed and departed toward the south to escort the damaged ABUKUMA. Shortly after the other destroyer proceeded to escort the ABUKUMA.

(b) Allied.

CTG 77.2 now learned that the NEWCOMB and RICHARD P. LEARY were at the post-attack rendezvous point while the ALBERT W. GRANT was still proceeding north at about ten knots. At 0424 he directed his cruisers to resume fire when a solution was obtained, although at this time there were no targets within effective gun range. At 0428 he learned that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been hit and was lying dead in the water. At 0429 COMDESDIV XRAY reported to him for duty. At 0431 he learned that (a) PHOENIX had radar contact on five small targets on a northerly course bearing 160°(T), distant 20,000 yards (DESDIV EIGHTEEN of SECOND Striking Force), and (b) DENVER had radar contact on three enemy ships on bearing 190°(T), distant fourteen miles (NACHI, ASHIGARA and MOGAMI). At 0432 he directed COMDESDIV XRAY to attack the enemy and then clear the channel and retire to the northward hugging the coast.

At 0433 he headed south at fifteen knots and formed a cruiser column. At 0440 he advised CTF 77 that the enemy appeared to be retiring to the south and strongly recommended that an air attack be made in the early morning on any that might escape. At 0458 he directed COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to screen the Left Flank Cruisers from ahead. At 0501 he noted that the enemy cruisers, which he had contacted a few minutes earlier, had changed course to the west.

Due to communication difficulties it was not until 0432 that COMDESDIV XRAY received orders from CTG 77.2 to proceed south and make a torpedo attack. He thereupon directed his section at the western end to clear the battle line and form column on the CLAXTON and directed the eastern destroyers to clear the battle line to the north. The ships complied moving to the north and west to proceed around the western end of the battle line.

The eastern destroyers, without waiting for the western destroyers, now commenced moving south. They moved loosely so that all of his ships, excepting the CONY, were a considerable distance astern of the CLAXTON.

Commander Battle Line, in the MISSISSIPPI, and BATDIV FOUR was completing a turn to the north to avoid torpedoes while BATDIV TWO continued to the west. The two groups rejoined on westerly courses and at 0458 reversed course to the east by simultaneous ship turns.

COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the NEWCOMB arrived at the post-attack rendezvous point and slowed to fifteen knots. He thought that the ALBERT W. GRANT was proceeding north at about ten knots although that ship was actually dead in the water. When he learned the facts he proceeded to the ALBERT W. GRANT to assist her and at 0457:30 dispatched greatly needed medical assistance to that ship. At 0511 he directed the RICHARD P. LEARY to proceed to the vicinity of the ALBERT W. GRANT to assist in the anti-aircraft defense of that ship.

Commander Attack Section TWO was north of Hibuson Island re-forming his section in the general area of the post-attack rendezvous. At 0458 he advised CTG 77.2 that he was now in charge of DESRON FIFTY-SIX and would screen ahead of the Left Flank Cruisers. However, owing to a confusing signal, he delayed joining up.

During this period Commander Attack Section THREE proceeded to the north of the battle line in order to return to the post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island.

At 0422 Commander Right Flank Force slowed to ten knots and at the same time made radar contact on the NACHI and ASHIGARA on northerly courses. At 0430 his flagship, the PHOENIX, made radar contact on DESDIV EIGHTEEN also on northerly courses. Noting that his contacts had turned sharply to the eastward as if to fire torpedoes he turned to course 300°(T) to avoid them. At 0448 he commenced following the Left Flank Cruisers down the strait in order to be in a supporting position. At 0508 he commenced forming antiaircraft disposition. At 0510 he contacted the ASAGUMO by radar and at 0512 he increased speed to twenty knots.

Commander Upper Surigao PT's was taken under fire by the SHIGURE and at 0456 he headed toward her and fired three torpedoes which missed because the SHIGURE had turned away. A hot run torpedo on PT 321's deck attracted the attention of the ASAGUMO and caused her to open fire also. Having suffered damage to this MTB he therefore turned away to the south.

(10) Operations from 0520 to 0600, October 25th.

(a) Japanese.

Commander SECOND Striking Force was retiring from the scene of action at eighteen knots, which was the best speed that his flagship, the NACHI, could make after her collision with the MOGAMI. His destroyers were well ahead and proceeding to escort the ABUKUMA. Although he had ordered the remaining ships of the THIRD Section to follow the NACHI they had not done so. The SHIGURE was well ahead of him, the MOGAMI and ASAGUMO

were dropping behind due to lack of speed. At 0531, after seeing the Allied cruisers open fire on the MOGAMI and ASAGUMO, he changed course to 160°(T) apparently to throw off the enemy gunfire. At 0551, being approximately astern of his destroyers, he changed course to 180°(T) and at 0555 recalled his destroyers.

The ABUKUMA, having completed repairs, was now proceeding toward the USHIO at twenty knots. At 0532 she sighted PT's 150 and 194 and drove them off by gunfire.

At 0529 the MOGAMI was taken under fire by the cruisers of TG 77.2 from the north. She received ten direct hits which appear to have caused little additional damage for her speed was not reduced. When the firing ceased at 0540 she changed course to follow the NACHI.

At 0531 the ASAGUMO, on course 238°(T), observed that the Allied cruisers to the north had opened fire. She therefore turned to course 140°(T). Despite the turn she was taken under fire at 0533 by the MINNEAPOLIS, was hit on the stern and set afire, which fire gradually gained the upper hand. At 0600 she stopped.

The SHIGURE, which was using manual steering, at 0535 shifted to auxiliary power steering.

The two sections of the FUSO continued to burn and drift toward the south. The LOUISVILLE opened fire on what seems to have been the bow section at 0531 and at 0540 this section sank.

(b) Allied.

CTG 77.2 was proceeding south at twenty knots in order to destroy enemy cripples. At 0529, while on course 250°(T), the LOUISVILLE opened fire on the bow of the FUSO, the MINNEAPOLIS on the ASAGUMO, and the other ships on the MOGAMI. At 0533 and 0535 respectively the LOUISVILLE and the MINNEAPOLIS shifted fire to the MOGAMI. Hits were obtained in the MOGAMI and ASAGUMO, and probably in the FUSO bow which sank at 0540. At 0536 he directed COMDESDIV XRAY to join him and screen the cruisers. At 0537 he changed course by simultaneous ship turns to 010°(T), at 0539 ordered cease firing and at 0549 formed circular cruising disposition.

Commander Right Flank Force followed the Left Flank Force down the strait to help if need be. At 0538 he reversed course to keep clear of CTG 77.2 and formed an antiaircraft disposition.

PT's 150 and 194 contacted the USHIO and ABUKUMA and, before being driven off by gunfire, PT 150 fired one torpedo at the USHIO which missed. PT 194 was hit below the waterline and retired along the western shore of Panaon Island.

(11) Operations from 0600 to 0733, October 25th.

In view of the fact that the Japanese operations consisted largely of retirement and the Allied operations consisted largely of movements in Surigao Strait the detail employed in discussing previous operations is omitted here.

(a) Japanese.

Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the SECOND Striking Force, continued to retire down Surigao Strait and into the Mindanao Sea. The MOGAMI and SHIGURE also continued to retire in a similar manner although the SHIGURE remained well clear of the SECOND Striking Force.

(b) Allied.

CTG 77.2 continued to the north until he had formed his Left Flank Force into an antiaircraft disposition when, at 0618, he turned once more to the south and destroyed the ASAGUMO. After receiving information that the escort carriers, TG 77.4, were under attack by a strong enemy force he reversed course at 0733 to the northward in order to rejoin his battleships and re-form his forces and to be available for action as required.

During this time CTG 77.3 with the Right Flank Force followed the movements of CTG 77.2 and was prepared to support that commander if necessary.

THE STRATEGIC AREA

Although the general strategic area involved in the Leyte operation is discussed rather fully in Volume I it seems well at this point to emphasize certain factors mentioned therein. This seems so for while Volume V (the present volume) is designed to cover largely the Battle of Surigao Strait, it also covers in a limited way Allied and Japanese operations (land, sea and air) from 1042 October 23rd to 1830 October 24th through the entire area. This, as pointed out earlier, is because Volume IV has not as yet been written.

(a) GENERAL DISCUSSION

The strategic area involved in the combat and support operations of the three naval battles, Surigao, Samar and Cape Engano, which occurred during the Battle for Leyte Gulf, extended from the Japanese home islands on the north to the Malay Barrier on the south and from the Marianas on the east to the China Coast and Malay Peninsula on the west. The strategic area principally involved during the Battle of Surigao Strait was the Philippines Area.

The former strategic area was of vital importance to the Japanese in that once the South China Sea came under search and attack by land-based aircraft from the Philippine Islands the lifeline from the vast natural resources of Southeast Asia (Southern Resources Area) to the Japanese homeland, already damaged by Allied submarine attack, would be severed. This would deny vital oil and food to Japan and isolate her forces in the Netherlands East Indies and other parts of Southwest Asia. This danger was clearly recognized by the Japanese Navy from the beginning but not by the Japanese Army until the last minute and perhaps not fully recognized even then.

In addition, this area was the logical focus of the two Allied lines of attack, i.e. the attack (a) across the Central Pacific under Commander Pacific Ocean Areas (Admiral Chester W. Nimitz) and (b) through New Guinea under Commander Southwest Pacific Area (General Douglas MacArthur).

Psychological stakes were high since the capture of the Philippine Islands would result in the liberation of a large conquered population from Japanese domination and would thereby notify the many millions of Southeast Asia that they would also soon be liberated from Japanese domination.

The relative strengths of the two sides were such that a Japanese naval victory would not necessarily force the Allies to give up their former gains but would merely force a delay in the Allied plans. On the other hand, an Allied naval victory would result not only in the destruction of a large portion of the Japanese Navy but also in the loss of the Philippine Islands. This would sever the Japanese lifeline to Southeast Asia and might well immobilize most of the Japanese naval units remaining.

It should be clear then that the holding of the Philippines was of the utmost importance to the Japanese.

(b) THE SURIGAO STRAIT AREA

The Battle of Surigao Strait was fought in the strait of that name, which is the strait connecting the Pacific Ocean and the Mindanao Sea. This strait is one of the two straits which permit passage from the Pacific Ocean to the west through the central islands of the Philippines; the other is, of course, San Bernardino Strait. It was traversed by Magellan in 1521 when he discovered the Philippine Islands.

Leyte Gulf, where the principal Allied amphibious forces were operating and which is adjacent on the north, lies between the islands of Samar, Leyte and Homonhon. Its southern boundary is generally considered as a line between Homonhon and Leyte Islands.

The eastern entrance to Surigao Strait which is fourteen miles wide lies between Desolation Point, Dinagat Island and Homonhon Island and faces on the Pacific Ocean. The strait turns around Hibuson Island and extends some thirty miles to the south between Dinagat Island on the east and Leyte and Panaon Islands on the west. The strait then turns to the southwest around Bolobolo Point and Binit Point. The southern entrance to the strait lies between Binit Point, Panaon Island and Bilaa Point, Mindanao Island, and faces on the Mindanao Sea. Throughout its length the strait is deep and clear and the shores of the islands which border it are steep-to. The strait has a minimum width of nine miles near its southern end between Bolobolo Point and Sumilon Island.

With the exception of a few shoals having depths of fourteen to twenty fathoms the strait slopes from around thirty fathoms in the northern entrance to over 400 fathoms in the southern entrance. It should be noted, however, that starting about two miles north of Desolation Point depths of more than fifty fathoms can be carried through the strait. Currents are strong, reaching six knots or more at times, although dangerous tide rips and whirlpools are absent in the main channel due to the evenness of the bottom and the regularity of the channel. The tidal currents during the time of the battle are contained in Appendix II.

Hinatuan Passage, which runs from the southern entrance of Surigao Strait to the Pacific Ocean between Dinagat and Mindanao Islands, is narrow and tortuous particularly near the western end. It has tidal currents of seven or more knots and there are dangerous tidal rips and whirlpools. Although it is sometimes used by steamers trading in the vicinity, it is much more difficult to transit than Surigao Strait.

(c) WEATHER*

The weather in the Philippine Islands is controlled by three air masses. The Northeast Monsoon which begins in November and lasts until March brings greatly modified polar continental air which has its origin on the Asian continent. The Southwest Monsoon which lasts from July to October brings equatorial air. During the transition periods between these two seasons, the Northeast Trades bring maritime tropical air from the tropical regions of the North Pacific Ocean.

These changes in the air masses result from: (1) the seasonal migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (variously known as the 'equatorial front', the 'intertropical front', or the 'doldrums') which tends to follow the thermal equator, but which lags about two months behind it on the average. However, the lag between the two may vary from one to three months. (2) The seasonal variation in the strengths and locations of the Asiatic High and the North Pacific High.

The mean position of the Intertropical Convergence Zone in this area in February is about 05°-00'S Latitude, and in August it is about 15°-00'N Latitude.

The areas to the south of the Intertropical Convergence Zone are dominated by the Southwest Monsoon, and as the Zone moves to the north the Philippines come under the influence of equatorial air. This is the rainy season for the west coasts. If the southwest winds blow uninterruptedly for several days, overcast skies with low ceilings and poor visibilities result from the influx of humid equatorial air. When the winds are light to gentle southwesterly, or variable, the clouds are of the cumulus or cumulonimbus type and the rain is in the form of showers or occasional squalls. Most of these showers and squalls cover a small area and are of relatively short duration. Showers over the open water are most frequent in the late night and early morning hours and least frequent in the afternoon. Showers over the islands are more frequent than over the sea and occur most often from midafternoon to early evening. This season is also marked by maximum typhoon activity. Normally two to four typhoons influence the weather in the Philippines during each of these months (July to October), although few actually cross the islands.

Since the Southwest Monsoon ends in the Philippines in October the area north of the Intertropical Convergence Zone comes under the influence of the Northeast Trades until the Northeast Monsoon commences in November.

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* Data from United States Coast Pilot, Philippine Islands, Part I, Third Edition, 1939, pages 30-34; NIS 105, Part X, Southwestern Sector of the North Pacific, Marine Climate and Oceanography, June 1954, pages 2-1 to 2-31; Aerological Aspects of Night Photography, The Philippine Islands, NAVAER-IT-6, February 1944; Climate and Weather of the North and Central Philippine Islands, NAVAER 50-IT-21, June 1944. A somewhat shorter discussion of the weather embracing the Philippines is in Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf, NavPers 91973.

The Intertropical Convergence Zone is wider and its daily position is more variable in the Philippine area than it is farther east. In October its mean position lies between the northern end of Leyte Island and about 05°-00'N Latitude (a short distance south of the southern coast of Mindanao). In the region of the Northeast Trades (north and east of Samar) the weather, except for tropical cyclones, is conducive to naval operations during October and is characterized by fairly steady northeast winds, broken cloudiness, visibility at flying altitudes of five miles or less due to high level haze, temperatures of about 82 F., and high humidity.

Tropical cyclones, particularly those which develop into typhoons, bring dense cloudiness, violent precipitation and destructive winds and seas. During October in the Leyte-Samar area one typhoon occurs every one to two years, although in the area about 150 miles to the northeast of Samar the frequency increases greatly so that there is normally one or two during the month.

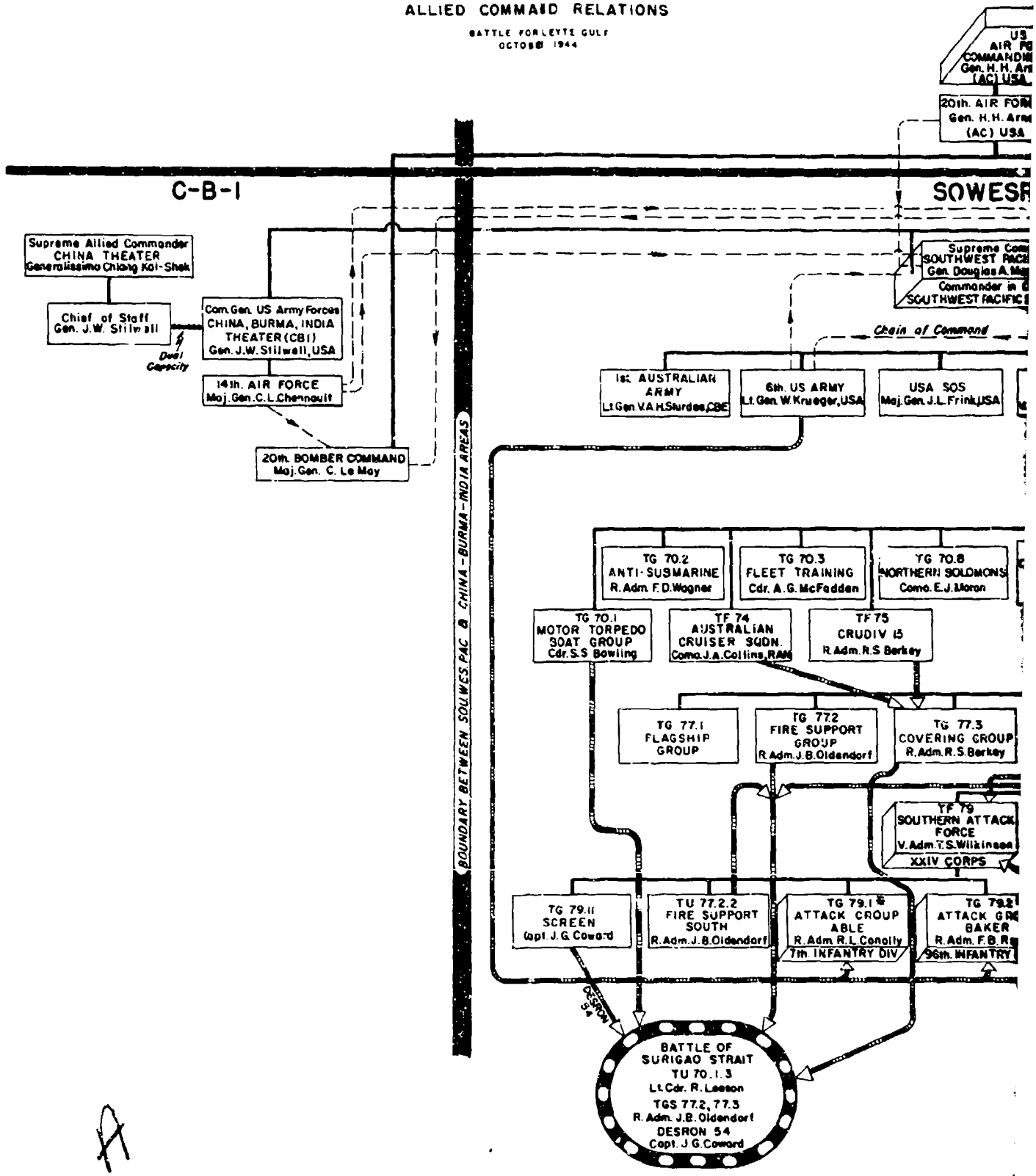
Within the Intertropical Convergence Zone the weather is usually characterized by high humidity, light and variable winds, low barometric pressure, considerable low cloudiness, poor visibility, and frequent intense showers and thundershowers. This type of weather, while not optimum for some kinds of naval operations, does not prohibit them.

(1) Weather in Surigao Strait

The weather in the Intertropical Convergence Zone or Equatorial Front--as it has been employed in previous volumes--has been stressed somewhat heavily here for this weather existed in the southern end of Surigao Strait during the night of October 24th - 25th. Repeated references--both Japanese and Allied--have been made in this volume relative to the poor visibility encountered there. Among other examples this caused (a) the Japanese SECOND Striking Force very nearly to run aground on Panaon Island--emergency turns to the right prevented a serious grounding there--and (b) Allied MTB's to (1) fail to observe illumination and gunfire (Madilao PT's about 0200 October 25th) and (2) become widely separated (SE Panaon PT's at 0124 October 25th.)

ALLIED COMMAND RELATIONS

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944



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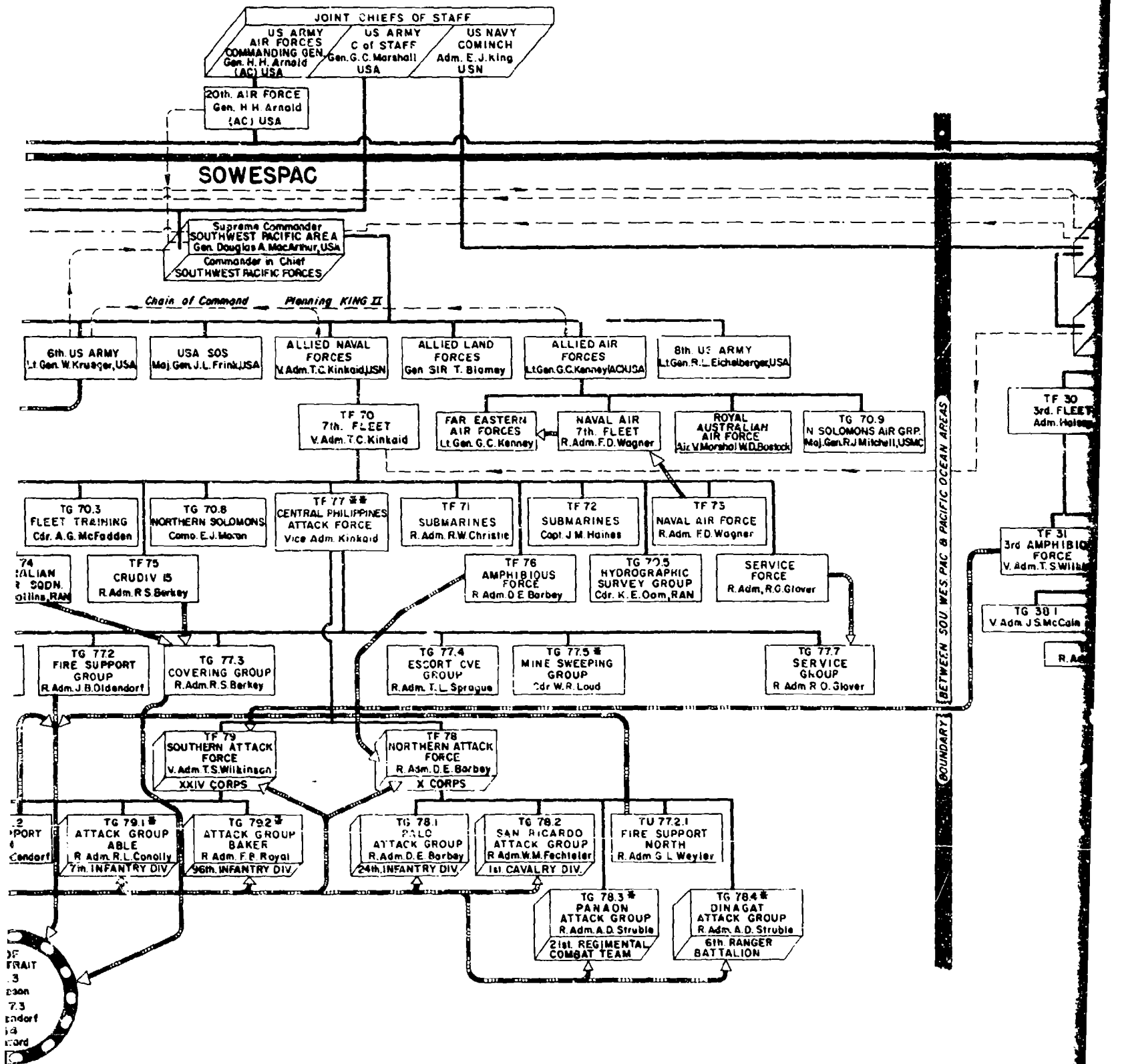
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
US ARMY AIR FORCES COMMANDING GEN. Gen. H.H. Arnold (AC) USA
US ARMY C of STAFF Gen. G.C. Marshall USA
US NAVY COMINCH Adm. E.J. King USN
20th. AIR FORCE Gen. H.H. Arnold (AC) USA
SOWESPAC
Supreme Commander SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur, USA
Commander in Chief SOUTHWEST PACIFIC FORCES
Chain of Command
Planning KING II
6th US ARMY Lt Gen. W. Krueger, USA
USA SOS Maj. Gen. J.L. Frink, USA
ALLIED NAVAL FORCES V. Adm. T.C. Kinkaid, USN
ALLIED LAND FORCES Gen SIR T. Blamey
ALLIED AIR FORCES Lt Gen. G.C. Kenney (AC) USA
8th US ARMY Lt Gen. R.L. Eichelberger, USA
TF 70 7th. FLEET V. Adm. T.C. Kinkaid
FAR EASTERN AIR FORCES Lt Gen. G.C. Kenney
NAVAL AIR 7th. FLEET R. Adm. F.D. Wagner
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE Air V Marshal W.D. Bostock
TG 70.9 N SOLOMONS AIR GRP. Maj. Gen. R.J. Mitchell, USMC
TF 30 3rd. FLEET Adm. Halsey
TG 70.3 FLEET TRAINING Cdr. A.G. McFadden
TG 70.8 NORTHERN SOLOMONS Comd. E.J. Moran
TF 77 CENTRAL PHILIPPINES ATTACK FORCE Vice Adm. Kinkaid
TF 71 SUBMARINES R. Adm. R.W. Christie
TF 72 SUBMARINES Capt. J.M. Haines
TF 73 NAVAL AIR FORCE R. Adm. F.D. Wagner
TF 31 3rd AMPHIBIOUS FORCE V. Adm. T.S. Wilkinson
TF 75 CRUDIV 15 R. Adm. R.S. Berkey
TF 76 AMPHIBIOUS FORCE R. Adm. D.E. Barbey
TG 70.5 HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY GROUP Cdr. K.E. Oom, RAN
SERVICE FORCE R. Adm. R.O. Glover
TG 30.1 V. Adm. J.S. McCain
TG 77.2 FIRE SUPPORT GROUP R. Adm. J.B. Oldendorf
TG 77.3 COVERING GROUP R. Adm. R.S. Berkey
TG 77.4 ESCORT CVE GROUP R. Adm. T.L. Sprague
TG 77.5 MINE SWEEPING GROUP Cdr W.R. Loud
TG 77.7 SERVICE GROUP R. Adm. R.O. Glover
BETWEEN SOU WES PAC & PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS
BOUNDARY
TF 79 SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE V. Adm. T.S. Wilkinson XXIV CORPS
TF 78 NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE R. Adm. D.E. Barbey X CORPS
TG 79.1 ATTACK GROUP ABLE R. Adm. R.L. Conolly 7th. INFANTRY DIV
TG 79.2 ATTACK GROUP BAKER R. Adm. F.B. Royal 96th. INFANTRY DIV
TG 78.1 PALO ATTACK GROUP R. Adm. D.E. Barbey 24th. INFANTRY DIV
TG 78.2 SAN RICARDO ATTACK GROUP R. Adm. W.M. Fechteler 1st CAVALRY DIV.
TU 77.2.1 FIRE SUPPORT NORTH R. Adm. G.L. Weyler
TG 78.3 PANAON ATTACK GROUP R. Adm. A.D. Struble 21st. REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM
TG 78.4 DINAGAT ATTACK GROUP R. Adm. A.D. Struble 6th. RANGER BATTALION

B

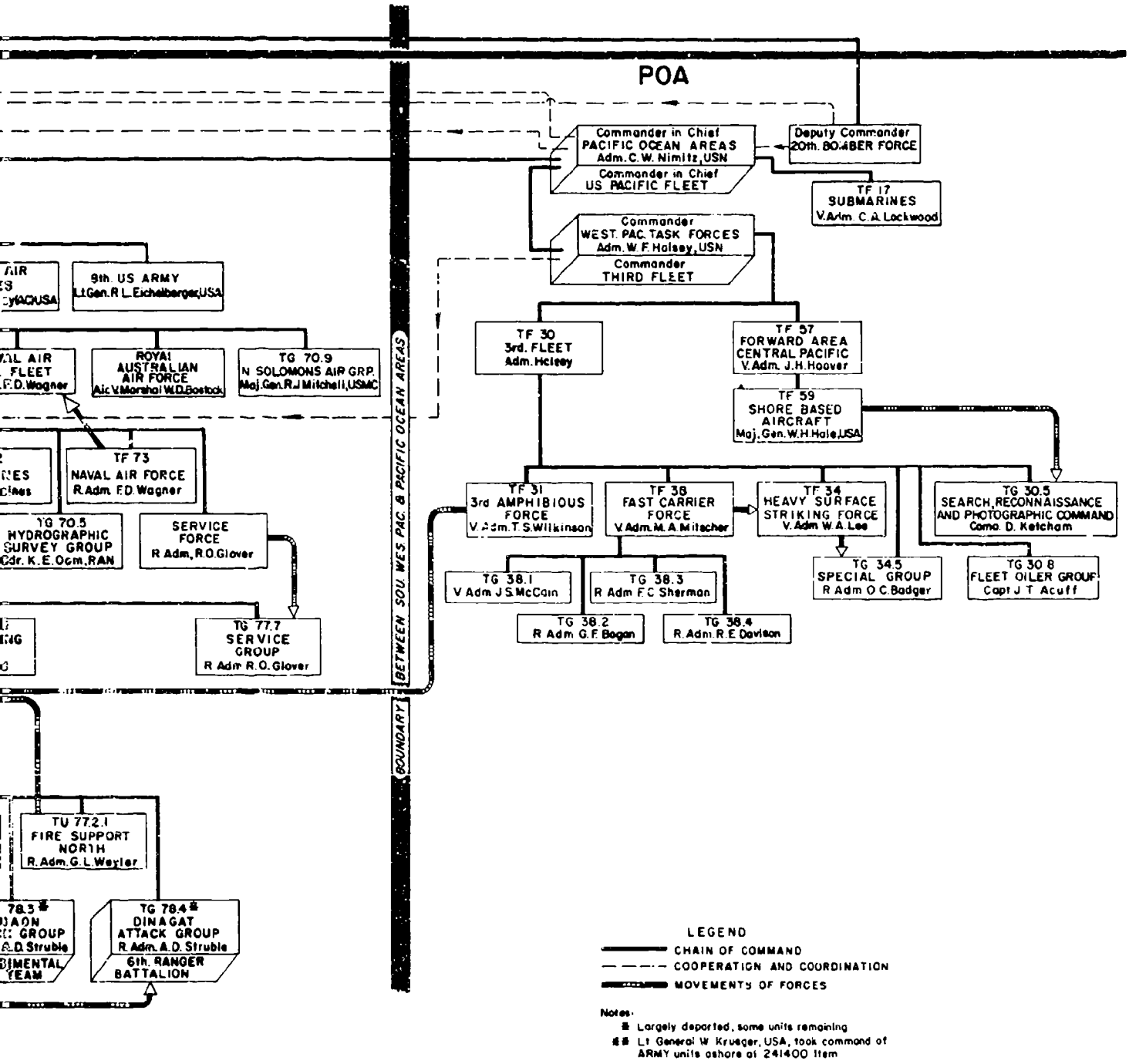

PLATE I

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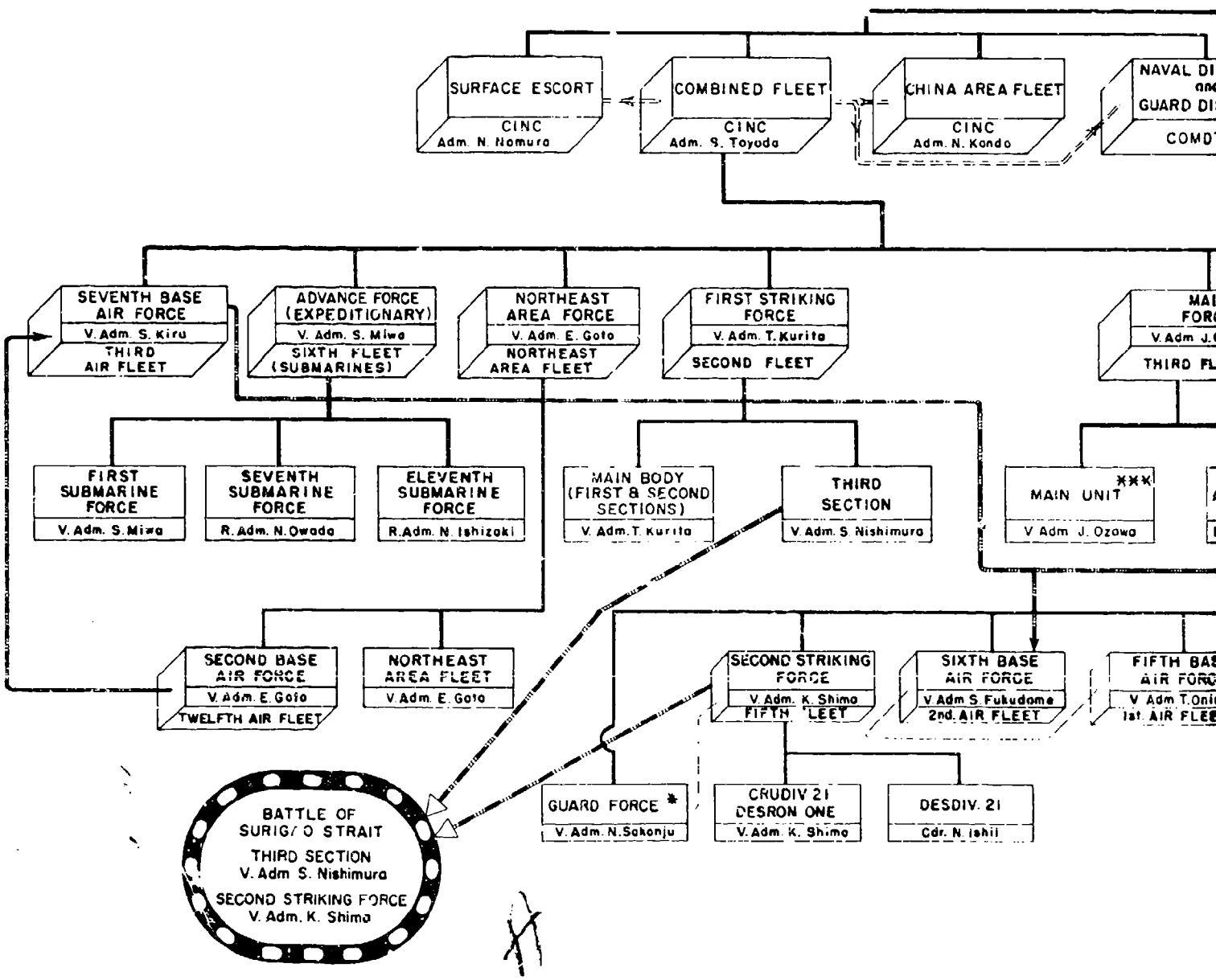
JAPANESE COMMAND RELATIONS
23–25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944



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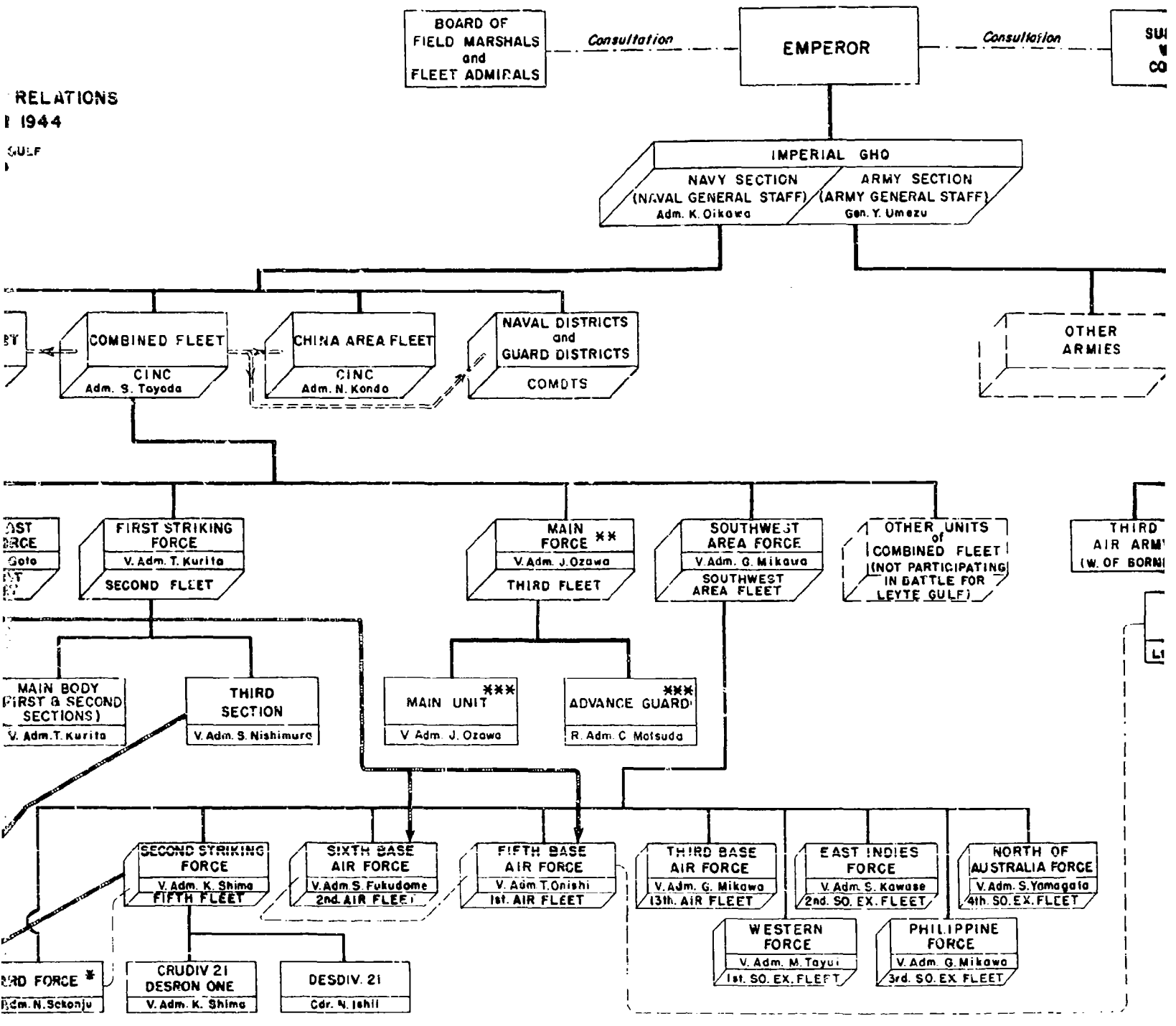
RELATIONS
1944
GULF



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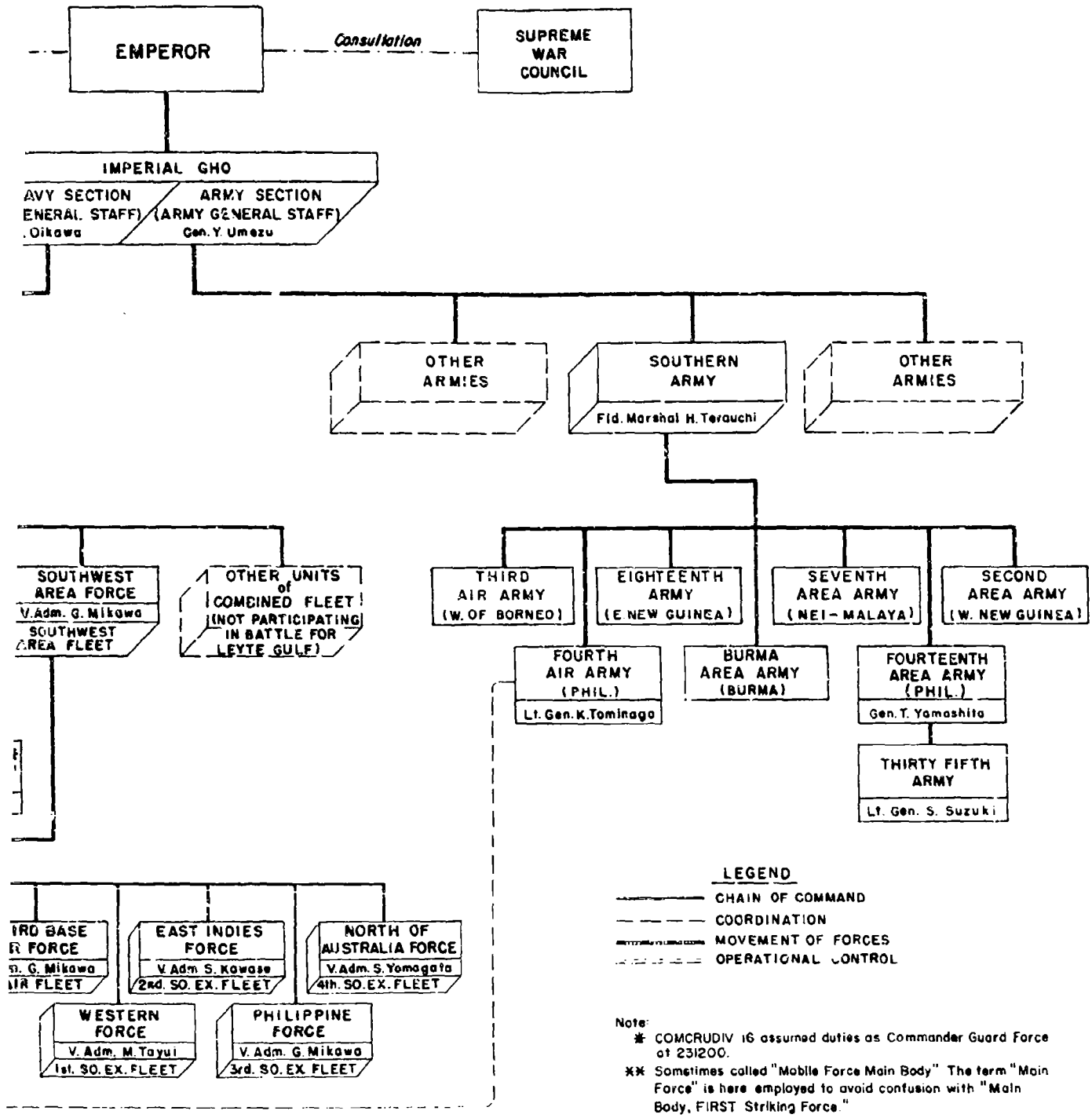

Note:

* COMCRUDIV 16 assumed duties as Commander Guard Force at 231200.

** Sometimes called "Mobile Force Main Body" The term "Main Force" is here employed to avoid confusion with "Main Body, FIRST Striking Force."

*** After 1439 October 24th, 1944.

PLATE II

CHAPTER I - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd

(A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

During the day CinC Combined Fleet who was in his Hiyoshi Headquarters, watched with great interest the movement of his forces.

As the penetration operation moved toward its climax he was particularly interested in enemy contacts in order to determine as soon as possible, enemy reaction to the discovery of his forces. The Naval General Staff recorded on this day however, that weather conditions east of the Philippines were bad and that the enemy situation could not be determined.* It seems probable however that he did receive several RDF fixes and that after 1042 he received (a) one on an "unknown force" at 1325, bearing 086°(T), distant 285 miles from Catanduanes Island** (Contact "C", Plate III) and (b) at 1550 an unknown force bearing 052°(T), distant eighty-five miles from Catanduanes Island** (Contact "D").

At about 1700 he learned that Commander FIRST Striking Force had hoisted his flag in the YAMATO.***

During the afternoon he had worked on an estimate of the situation to be transmitted to his commanders and at 1710 his chief of staff released the dispatch. This dispatch is interesting, not only because it was received by all his commanders and likely influenced their thinking, but also because it seems appropriate that at this time he should (a) give his commanders his estimate, presumably based on the best intelligence information available and (b) restate the plan so there would be no doubt that the operation was to be continued. Because of its importance this dispatch is quoted:

"1. Estimate of enemy plans.

Since it is very probable that the enemy is generally aware of the concentration of our forces, he will probably act as follows:

"(1) Concentrate submarines in great strength in the San Bernardino and Surigao Straits area.

"(2) Plan attacks on our surface forces, using large type planes and task forces, after tomorrow morning.

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* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216714 (Microfilm).

** Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions, October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 231630 October 1944 (addressees unknown but presumed to be all interested commanders), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

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"(3) Plan decisive action by concentrating his surface strength in the area east of San Bernardino Strait, and Tacloban where he has his transport group. He should be able to dispose himself in this manner by afternoon of 24th.

"2. Our plans.

"(1) Carry through our original plans.

"(2) In affecting the operations the following points are specially emphasized:

"(a) Make up for our inferior surface strength by making every effort to direct the enemy to the north towards the Main Body of the Mobile Force.

"(b) Maintain an even stricter alert against submarines and aircraft. Utilize every possible trick to keep enemy submarine under control, particularly while breaking through the narrow straits.

"(c) Destroy enemy task force carriers with our shore based planes, while his carrier-based planes are engaging our surface forces."*

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander FIRST Striking Force had been ordered in Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363 to penetrate to the Tacloban area at dawn on X-day (October 25th). His force would first attack and destroy enemy surface forces in the area and then annihilate the enemy landing forces. This endeavor was to be undertaken with the cooperation of the land-based air forces.**

It was for the accomplishment of this mission that he had divided the FIRST Striking Force into two forces, i.e., (a) the Main Body consisting of the FIRST and SECOND Sections to proceed through the Sibuyan Sea and San Bernardino Strait and to approach Leyte Gulf from the north and (b) the THIRD Section to proceed through Mindanao Sea and Surigao Strait and to approach Leyte Gulf from the south. The tasks assigned each of these groups are given under (a) "Operations of Commander Main Body, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd" and (b) "Commander THIRD Section, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd".

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* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 231710 October 1944 (addressees unknown), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Commander 1ST Striking Force Operation Order No. 4, October 1944, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

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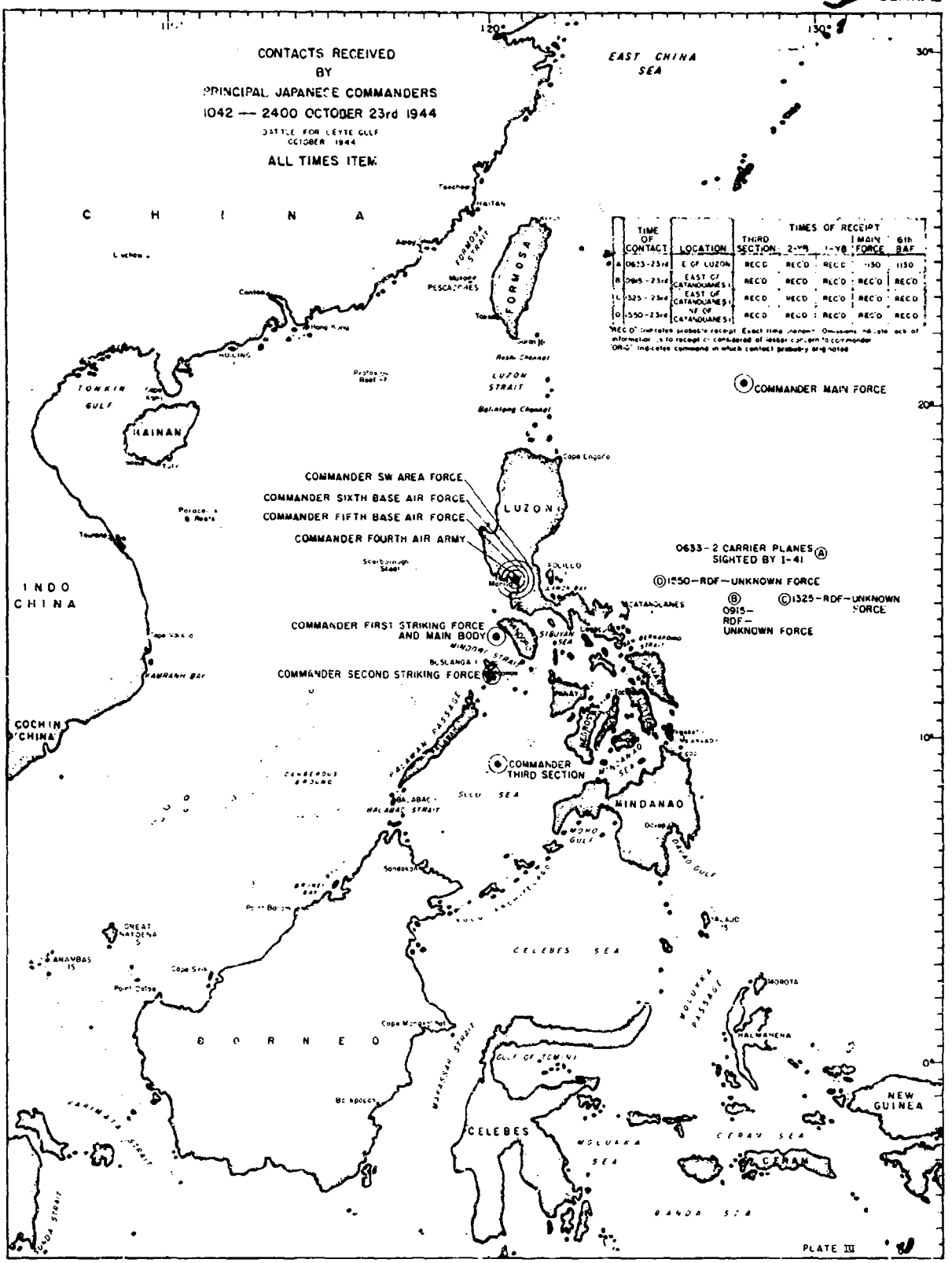

	TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT THIRD SECTION	2nd FLT	1st FLT	MAIN FORCE	6th BAF
A	0633-23rd	E OF LUZON	RECD	RECD	RECD	1150	1150
B	0915-23rd	EAST OF CATANDUANES	RECD	RECD	RECD	RECD	RECD
C	1325-23rd	EAST OF CATANDUANES	RECD	RECD	RECD	RECD	RECD
D	1550-23rd	NE OF CATANDUANES	RECD	RECD	RECD	RECD	RECD

"RECD" indicates probable receipt. Exact time unknown. Omissions indicate lack of information. Is to receipt considered of lesser caption to commander "ORG" indicates command in which contact probably originated

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2a

It will be recalled that at 1042 he was in the destroyer KISHINAMI awaiting an opportunity to transfer his flag to the YAMATO. This was because the Allied submarines DACE and DARTER had, earlier in the morning, (a) sunk his flagship the ATAGO and also the MAYA and (b) damaged the TAKAO to the extent that she was unnavigable. COMBATDIV ONE had then assumed tactical command of the Main Body.

Because of a series of submarine contacts he was unable to transfer to the YAMATO until 1623. He then at 1630 advised all interested commands by dispatch that his flag had been hoisted in the YAMATO.*

By 1940 (when it was received by COMDESRON ONE) he knew that Commander SW Area Force had ordered the 954th and 955th Air Groups to provide additional antisubmarine patrol protection to his forces as well as to the SECOND Striking Force and CRUDIV SIXTEEN.

At 2034 he received CinC Combined Fleet's 1200 estimate of the situation which has been quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd". It seems likely that he was in general agreement with this estimate and plan although that portion which estimated that the enemy would "Plan decisive action by concentrating his surface strength in the area east of San Bernardino Strait and Tacloban where he had his transport group",** may have caused him concern. This matter has been discussed under the "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd" and as his reaction was likely the same as that commander, it will not be discussed at this point.

Although COMBATDIV ONE recorded the comment that "today, the weather was bad in the Manila area and practically no searches were carried out", it seems likely however that Commander FIRST Striking Force did have the following contacts:

(a) At 0633 two carrier planes sighted by the submarine I-41 in Latitude 15°-35'N, Longitude 130°-12'E, 500 miles east of Lamon Bay*** (Contact "A", Plate III).

(b) At 0915 an RDF fix in Latitude 14°-02'N, Longitude 127°-32'E, bearing 083°(T), distant 200 miles from Catanduanes Island*** (Contact "B").

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* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 231630 October 1944 (addressees unknown but presumed to be all interested commanders), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944 WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 231710 October 1944 (addressees unknown), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

(c) That at 1200 one plane had returned from searching a bearing 095°(T) from Manila to a distance of 300 miles with negative results.*

(d) At 1325 an RDF fix on an unknown force in Latitude 14°-03'N, Longitude 129°-05'E, bearing 086°(T), distant 285 miles from Catanduanes Island** (Contact "C").

(e) At 1550 an RDF fix on an unknown force in Latitude 14°-34'N, Longitude 125°-08'E, bearing 052°(T), distant eighty-five miles from Catanduanes Island** (Contact "D").

(a) Operations of Commander Main Body, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander Main Body (who was also Commander FIRST Striking Force), with the Main Body, had been proceeding uneventfully northward through Palawan Passage during the night of October 22nd - 23rd. He was en route Leyte Gulf via San Bernardino Strait where his objective was the penetration of Leyte Gulf and, in coordination with Commander THIRD Section, the (a) destruction of enemy surface forces and (b) the destruction of the enemy transports, ground and landing forces.***

However between 0633 and 0656 on the morning of October 23rd he had been caught by surprise by two Allied submarines, the DARTER and DACE as a result of which the ATAGO and MAYA had been torpedoed and sunk. The TAKAO had been so heavily damaged at the same time that he had found it necessary to retire her to Brunei Bay with the NAGANAMI and ASASHIMO as escorts.

His command now consisted of the battleships YAMATO (FFF), MUSASHI, NAGATO, KONGO (FF), HARUNA; the heavy cruisers CHOKAI, MYOKO, HAGURO, KUMANO (F), SUZUYA, TONE, CHIKUMA; the light cruisers NOSHIRO (F), YAHAGI; and the destroyers SHIMAKAZE, HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO, KISHINAMI, OKINAMI, HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI, NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO, URAKAZE (F), HAMAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE.

By 1042, when Volume III ended, he was reorganizing the Main Body which was still in confusion as a result of this surprise attack and was rapidly departing the vicinity of the torpedoing by steering a northerly course. Meanwhile because of the sinking of the ATAGO he had transferred his flag temporarily to the KISHINAMI, and was now expecting to transfer it (at about 1300) to the YAMATO, presently the flagship of COMBATDIV ONE.

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* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

** Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Commander 1ST Striking Force Operation Order No. 4, October 1944, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

As this time approached, however, since several submarine contacts had been reported (actually all false) it became necessary to maneuver the force almost constantly until after 1409 when the last of this series of submarine contacts was made.*

Finally, at 1623, he succeeded in transferring to the YAMATO** and at 1630 announced by radio that he had "assumed command of the fleet".***

He now modified the movement plan to approach the Mindoro coast from a point fifty-five miles west of Talabasi Point, heading 090°(T) until close to the coast, thence southeastward along the coast on a course of 115°(T) to round the southern tip of Mindoro at dawn on October 24th.**** He also ordered radar silence during the night***** and continued on generally at eighteen knots.****** Little did he realize that at this time he was being trailed by the ANGLER which at 2130 had reported him as being on course 050°(T), speed eighteen knots.*******

At 2319 he changed course to 090°(T).********

(b) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander THIRD Section, with the THIRD Section, composed of the battleships FUSO and YAMASHIRO (FF), the heavy cruiser MOGAMI and the four destroyers MICHISHIO (F), ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO and SHIGURE, had commenced passing through Balabac Strait during the early morning of this day and by 1042 was well into the Sulu Sea. He was en route Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait and was to (a) arrive off Binit Point at 0100 October 25th (X-day) and (b) penetrate Tacloban Anchorage at dawn (0427) the same day.******** His objectives were (a) the destruction of the enemy

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* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

** Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 231630 October 1944 (addressees unknown but presumed to be all interested commanders), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** Ibid., COMBATDIV 1 (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 231827 October 1944 to Main Body.

***** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to Main Body, Detailed Action Report SUZUYA. SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

****** Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

******* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 0(10), November 9th, 1944.

******** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053, October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Main Force, Commander 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

transport group and landing forces and (b) a diversionary attack on enemy surface forces (a protection objective).* These objectives are more fully discussed in Volume III under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st".**

At about 1056 he likely intercepted COMBATDIV ONE's dispatch reporting (a) the torpedo attacks against the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, (b) the sinking of the ATAGO and MAYA and (c) the damaging of the TAKAO by submarine action.*** From this he could see that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's estimate concerning Allied submarines in narrow waters**** was remarkably accurate in this regard and likely caused him to examine his own antisubmarine dispositions.

At 1300 he had reason to believe that his presence was known to the enemy for at that time he received a message from the MOGAMI reporting that a group of four aircraft suspected of being enemy had been sighted at 1030 at a great distance.*****

At approximately 1355, he changed course to 050°(T)****** and proceeded generally in accordance with his previously announced movement plan.*******

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* Commander 1ST Striking Force Operation Order No. 4, October 1944, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter IV, (A)(1).

*** COMBATDIV 1 Dispatch 231026 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Main Force, SW Area Force, Chief of Naval General Staff, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, COMCRUDIV 16, COMBATDIV 2 (3RD Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11744.

***** MOGAMI Visual Dispatch 231300 October 1944 to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

****** Appended Chart 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, Movements of 3RD Section, 1ST Striking Force from 1500 October 22nd - 1700 October 27th, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

******* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

At 1645 (when it was received by COMDESRON ONE) he received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force which (a) set forth the organization of the SECOND Striking Force and (b) directed the penetration of the SECOND Striking Force as follows:

"The SECOND Striking Force, Main Body, operating as ordered by the force commander, will penetrate through Surigao Strait into Leyte Gulf at dawn on X-day. It will destroy the enemy invasion forces present in support of the operations of the FIRST Striking Force and at the same time will provide indirect cover for the movements of the Guard Force."*

Although the wording of this dispatch was of interest to him he had known for some time that the SECOND Striking Force was assigned to the operation and, as discussed in Volume III** under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd", he had already advised his command of the SECOND Striking Force schedule.

About this time he directed BATDIV TWO to (a) use main battery to repel air attack if necessary and (b) in case of an encounter with enemy surface ships (especially battleships) prior to penetration into the anchorage, fire would be opened with 0 type (HE) shells un the change over to armor-piercing could be effected.***

At about 1700 he likely learned that Commander FIRS g Force was aboard the YAMATO and that operations were being cor planned.****

At 1730 he instructed his forces by visual dispatch ws:

"Except as stipulated below gunfire against enemy trans at the time of penetration into the anchorage will be as ordered by p commanders.

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* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 3RD Section (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 689), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VIII, (A)(1)(b).

*** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch (date-time-group unknown) October 23rd, 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 6), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 231630 October 1944 (addressees unknown but presumed to be all interested commanders), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

"1. Allocation of targets:

BATDIV TWO from the south of the anchorage, the destroyer force from the north, and MOGAMI in the center.

"2. Order of ship targets:

Ships in process of unloading or loading, craft on the lee of large transports, craft on the inner side in case of a concentration anchored in depth.

"3. Standard firing ranges:

BATDIV TWO, 20-10 kms; MOGAMI, 15-13 kms; destroyers 7-4 kms.

In case of overlapping in lines of fire, units (ships) will keep a distance of 3-5 kms apart from each other.

"4. Firing outline:

"a. In the absence of special orders, BATDIV TWO will employ directed fire against enemy warships as required by the situation. (Main batteries alternating fire.)

"b. Main batteries will use 0-type HE shells and illumination shells as required. BATDIV TWO will issue special orders.

"c. In order to avoid over-concentration of fire, BATDIV TWO will follow the rule of every gun against a target indicated by the fire director.

"d. Aiming point will be the intersection of the waterline and bridge line.

"5. Targets will be shifted in the following cases:

"a. When the target has been heavily set afire.

"b. When a number of effective hits has been confirmed and it appears probable that the target ship will be abandoned.

"c. In cases other than a. and b., the standard gunnery doctrine will be followed."*

* Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231730 October 1944 to 3RD Section, (3RD Section SigOrd No. 7), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

THESE INSTRUCTIONS, WHILE SOMEWHAT LONG, ARE INTRODUCED HERE AS THEY INDICATE CLEARLY, AMONG OTHER ITEMS, THE MANNER IN WHICH COMMANDER THIRD SECTION PLANNED TO APPROACH THE TARGET ANCHORAGE IN THREE GROUPS BY TYPES, WITH THE DESTROYERS IN ONE GROUP FROM THE NORTH, THE BATTLESHIPS IN ANOTHER FROM THE SOUTH AND THE MOGAMI IN ANOTHER FROM THE EAST, THE TARGET PRIORITIES, AND THE FIRE DISTRIBUTION. SINCE (a) AT THE TIME OF OPENING FIRE IT WOULD STILL BE NIGHT AND THEREFORE QUITE DARK, AND (b) THE TACLOBAN ANCHORAGE, IN VIEW OF ITS LOCATION AND DANGERS TO NAVIGATION, SHOULD BE DIFFICULT TO APPROACH FROM THE NORTH AS WELL AS FROM THE EAST, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT COMMANDER THIRD SECTION HAD ESTIMATED THAT THE NORTHERN TRANSPORTS WOULD BE FARTHER SOUTH THAN THEY ACTUALLY WERE AND THAT THE SEA AREA NORTH OF THE TRANSPORTS WOULD BE DEEP ENOUGH, AND WIDE ENOUGH TO PERMIT HIS DESTROYERS TO OPERATE FREELY. ACTUALLY THE NORTHERN TRANSPORTS WERE IN SAN PEDRO BAY WHERE DESTROYER OPERATIONS WOULD BE DIFFICULT.

At about 1824 he may have received a report of a submarine in position Latitude 08°-34.5'N, Longitude 120°-21.5'E. Although there is no record in documents available that such a report was received by him, the submarine COBIA which was transiting the Sulu Sea in a southerly direction returning to Fremantle, reported that at 1754 she sighted a reconnaissance seaplane and submerged.* From whence came this plane is not known but it seems likely that it was a FIRST Striking Force aircraft.

At 1903 he directed "Anti-aircraft and Anti-submarine Alert will be especially tightened tonight" and "No. 2 Alert for radar search dispositions".**

At 1905 he issued his instructions for the use of his eight reconnaissance seaplanes (a) a single plane search of Leyte Gulf and vicinity to be launched at 0200 October 24th, (b) a single plane search of Mindanao Sea and Leyte Gulf to be launched at 1600 October 24th, (c) the FIRST Contact Unit to be launched at 2230 October 24th to make contact and guide the force, (d) an attack unit to be launched at 1600 October 24th to proceed to Cebu in order to carry out a strike in Leyte Gulf at dawn, October 25th and (e) in case of air attack all planes proceed to Cebu and carry out their assigned missions.***

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* War Patrol Report COBIA, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944.

** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231903 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 9), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231905 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 10), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

At 1950 (when it was received by COMDESRON ONE) he probably received a dispatch* from Commander SW Area Force assigning the 954th and the 955th Air Groups to antisubmarine patrols on October 24th. He noted that the "Main Strength" of the 955th Air Group had been assigned to screen the THIRD Section, while elements of the same force would screen the SECOND Striking Force.

At 2034 (at which time it was received by Commander FIRST Striking Force) he received the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet estimate of the situation.** As he studied this dispatch he noted that it contained no new ideas in the execution of the plan but emphasized the importance of (a) the diversionary effect of the Main Force, (b) strict antiair and antisubmarine alerts and (c) the destruction of enemy task force carriers by shore-based aircraft. He was particularly interested however in the estimate of enemy intentions as they affected his part of the operations. These estimates stated that the enemy would:

a. "Concentrate submarines in great strength in the San Bernardino and Surigao Straits area.

b. "Plan attacks on our surface forces using large type planes and task forces after tomorrow morning.

c. "Plan decisive action by concentrating his surface strength in the area east of San Bernardino Strait and Tacloban where he has his transport group. He should be able to dispose himself in this manner by afternoon of 24th".

ALTHOUGH INFORMATION AS TO WHAT ENEMY CONTACTS COMMANDER THIRD SECTION HAD RECEIVED DURING THE DAY IS MEAGER, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE HAD ESSENTIALLY THE SAME LIMITED INFORMATION AS DID COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE. IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT HE NOW CONSIDERED THE ESTIMATE OF ENEMY INTENTIONS IN LIGHT OF THIS INTELLIGENCE.

IN REGARD TO ITEM (a), IN VIEW OF THE UNHAPPY EVENTS OF THE DAY WHEREIN CERTAIN JAPANESE HEAVY CRUISERS HAD BEEN TORPEDOED BY ALLIED SUBMARINES IN PALAWAN PASSAGE AND APPROACHING MANILA BAY, HE HAD EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS ESTIMATE OF ENEMY INTENTIONS WAS ACCURATE AND MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED.

AS REGARDS ITEM (b), AIR ATTACKS WERE TO BE EXPECTED. SINCE HE HAD ALREADY ISSUED AN ORDER FOR ANTIAIRCRAFT AND ANTISUBMARINE ALERTS TO BE TIGHTENED TONIGHT HE UNDOUBTEDLY FELT THAT HE HAD TAKEN NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS.

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* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231254 October 1944 to Commanders 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, 2ND Striking Force info Commander 1ST Striking Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 688), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

** CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 231710 October 1944 (addressees unknown but presumably to all interested commanders), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

AS REGARDS ITEM (c) i.e., THE ENEMY WOULD, "PLAN DECISIVE ACTION BY CONCENTRATING HIS SURFACE STRENGTH IN THE AREA EAST OF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT AND TACLOBAN WHERE HE HAS HIS TRANSPORT GROUP", HE WAS EXTREMELY INTERESTED AND SOMEWHAT DISTURBED. AS DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH IN VOLUME III UNDER "OPERATIONS OF COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE, OCTOBER 21ST",* THE JAPANESE THOUGHT THAT (a) "KNOWLEDGE OF THE LARGER BODY (MAIN BODY, FIRST STRIKING FORCE) COMING FROM THE NORTH MIGHT DRAW AMERICAN SHIPS FROM THE GULF AND THUS LEAVE NISHIMURA FREE TO ENTER",** AND (b) THE ALLIED BATTLESHIPS SO DRAWN OUT OF THE GULF, AND PROCEEDING ALONG THE COAST OF SAMAR IN ORDER TO CLOSE THE MAIN BODY, WOULD BE DESTROYED IN NIGHT BATTLE.* THIS NEW ESTIMATE, ALTHOUGH NOT EXPLICIT, SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT CINC COMBINED FLEET WAS NOW OF THE OPINION THAT THE ENEMY WOULD COUNTER THE TWO PRONGS OF THE PENETRATION IN TWO SEPARATE SURFACE ENGAGEMENTS, i.e., OFF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT AND IN LEYTE GULF.

As he had received but two situation reports from Leyte Gulf in the past two days (one at 0907 October 22nd - eighty transports, and the other at 0930 October 23rd - four BB or CA/CL, thirteen large transports and four small transports) he was extremely anxious that the reconnaissance seaplane scheduled for launching at 0200 should make a successful reconnaissance.

He now proceeded uneventfully through the Sulu Sea until approximately 2328 when he changed course to 100°(T).*** Since this course change marked the beginning of a major deviation from his planned route it would be interesting to learn his reasons for it. However, there is no recorded reason nor is there any record that he reported the change.

At midnight the THIRD Section was in position Latitude 09°-11'N, Longitude 120°-04'E, on course 100°(T).

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander Main Force, with the Main Force, composed of the ZUIKAKU (FF), ZUIHO, CHITOSE, CHIYODA, the hermaphrodite carriers ISE, HYUGA, the light cruisers OYODO (FF), TAMA (F), ISUZU and the destroyers AKITSUKI, HATSUZUKI, WAKATSUKI, SHIMOTSUKI, KUWA, MAKI, KIRI and SUGI, had departed Bungo Suido on the evening of October 20th and had been moving in a generally southwesterly direction in order to reach a station off Luzon Strait. His objective was deception by which he hoped to

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* Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter IV, (A)(1).

** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 9, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, ex-IJN, Volume I, Page 36.

*** Appended Chart I, SHO No. 1 Operation, Movements of 3RD Section, 1ST Striking Force from 1500 October 22nd - 1700 October 27th, 1944, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

divert Allied task forces from the area east of the Philippines to the north thereby contributing to the success of the penetration attack of the FIRST Striking Force.*

The degree of success he obtained in accomplishing the above objective was of great importance to both Commander Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, who would be penetrating San Bernardino Strait, on the evening of October 24th, and to Commander THIRD Section, who would be penetrating Surigao Strait during early morning of October 25th.

Despite the fact he had been at sea for three days he had not as yet been contacted by the Allies despite the further fact that he had sent out a long dispatch on the afternoon of October 22nd.

At 1042 October 23rd, when this volume commences, he had succeeded in reaching the vicinity of Latitude 22°-30'N, Longitude 131°-00'E (about 550 miles east of Formosa).

During the day he continued in a southwesterly direction toward Latitude 19°-00'N, Longitude 126°-40'E from whence he expected to initiate air action at about 0600, October 24th.** He did not launch an afternoon search, but did maintain an ASP about the force. Although he made a number of submarine contacts during the day, they apparently were all false for the only Allied submarine in the area, the BONEFISH, as it headed eastward returning to Pearl Harbor,*** had crossed his track some hours earlier. Neither the BONEFISH nor the Main Force was aware of the presence of the other.

During this afternoon he estimated the developing situation and arrived at certain decisions concerning the operations of the following day (October 24th) as follows:

(1) To launch search planes at 0545 October 24th. If the enemy is spotted, to launch the initial air attack, otherwise, to launch another search at 1300 and an air attack.

To steer course 220°(T) and to operate to divert the enemy to the north.

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* Mobile Force Dispatch 200021 October 1944 to Mobile Force (Mobile Force DesOpOrd No. 62), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

(2) In case the air attack fails to have a diversionary effect, to send out the Advance Guard* to conduct diversionary operations.

(3) In case the above is unsuccessful and the enemy task force moves southward at time of penetration to attack the enemy task force off Samar.**

(3) Operations of Commander Advanced Expeditionary Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander Advanced Expeditionary Force had on this day eleven submarines en route to assigned stations east of the Philippines.

The placement of these submarines has been discussed in Volume III*** under the "Operations of Commander Advanced Expeditionary Force, October 20th" and shown on Plate XXVI of that volume. In brief, they were in a rectangular area approximately 200 by 400 miles to the eastward of the islands of Mindanao, Samar and southern Luzon. It was planned that all submarines would reach their stations by October 24th or 25th.****

During the day an additional submarine, the RO-109, completed preparations and got underway as ordered on October 20th. This submarine apparently reached its assigned station about October 27th.****

There appears to have been no contacts made by these submarines on Allied surface forces during the day.

(4) Operations of Commander SW Area Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander SW Area Force, with headquarters in Manila, in addition to other units, commanded the Naval Air Forces concentrated in the Philippines as well as the SECOND Striking Force.

During the morning, probably about 1056, he learned of the torpedo attacks against the Main Body, the sinking of the ATAGO and MAYA and the damage to the TAKAO.***** He also received a request from the

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* Advance Guard consisted of ISE, HYUGA, HATSUZUKI, AKITSUKI, WAKATSUKI, SHIMOTSUKI.

** Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter II (A)(2).

**** Submarine Operations in the THIRD Phase Operations, Part IV, September 1944, February 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 184, Compiled by the SECOND Historical Records Section of the Repatriation Relief Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, June 1944.

***** COMBATDIV 1 Dispatch 231026 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Main Force, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

Chief of Staff, FIRST Striking Force for immediate screening and towing services for the TAKAO.*

At 1200 in accordance with his DesOpOrd No. 687, COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN became Commander Guard Force and from this time forward operated under his direct command.

At 1254, realizing that some coordination of his antisubmarine patrol support was necessary, he issued a directive ordering the 954th and 955th Air Groups to screen the Main Body, the THIRD Section, the SECOND Striking Force and CRUDIV SIXTEEN and specified the division of effort.**

At 1323 he notified "All Commanders Seaplane Bases" of the plight of the TAKAO and directed them to assign aircraft to escort her and carry out neutralization attacks.***

By 1402 he had decided which surface units to send to the assistance of the TAKAO. He therefore ordered the torpedo boat HIYODORI and the MITSU MARU**** (probably an oiler) to the scene and directed that the MITSU MARU be prepared to take the TAKAO in tow.*****

During the remainder of the day he received reports from the various units within his area. His information of enemy contacts seems to have been generally the same as other commanders in the area and are listed under the "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd."

(a) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

(1) During the early morning Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the SECOND Striking Force, temporarily composed of the heavy cruisers NACHI (FF) and ASHIGARA, the light cruiser ABUKUMA and the destroyers AKEBONO (F), USHIO, KASUMI and SHIRANUHI, had been proceeding on a

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* CofS 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230830 October 1944 to CofS SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

** Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231254 October 1944 to Commanders 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, 2ND Striking Force, info Commander 1ST Striking Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 688), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

*** Commander 3RD Expeditionary Fleet Dispatch 231323 October 1944 to All Commanders Seaplane Bases, info Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** Two MITSU MARU's are listed, one an oiler of 5,682 tons, the other a cargo vessel of 404 tons; The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section Special Staff GHQ, Far East Command, February 1952, Page 268.

***** Commander Philippine Force Dispatch 231402 October 1944 to MITSU MARU, HIYODORI, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

generally southerly course toward Coron Bay and except for the information concerning the torpedoing of the AOBA had had an uneventful passage. CRUDIV SIXTEEN and DESDIV TWENTY-ONE which were on independent assignments were not with him.

His instructions were to penetrate into Leyte Gulf and to cooperate with Commander FIRST Striking Force. He had therefore determined (a) his objective to be an exploitation one wherein he was "to expand the battle results during the melee caused by the FIRST Striking Force's penetration attack"* and (b) to pass through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at 0600* or five hours after the THIRD Section.

At 1042 he was bearing 312°(T), distant 110 miles from Coron Bay, where he planned to refuel before proceeding toward Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf. At 1212 he sighted a B-24 type aircraft.** This was a search plane from Morotai which reported the force quite accurately.*** At 1645 he received instructions from Commander SW Area Force which (a) outlined for clarification the organization of the SECOND Striking Force, (b) established a Guard Force commanded by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, and (c) restated the mission of the SECOND Striking Force penetration as follows:

> "The SECOND Striking Force, Main Body, operating as ordered by the force commander will penetrate through Surigao Strait into Leyte Gulf at dawn on X-day. It will destroy the enemy invasion forces present in support of the operations of the FIRST Striking Force and at the same time will provide indirect cover for the movements of the Guard Force."****

At 1800 he entered Culion Anchorage near Coron Bay where he hoped an oiler might be present but to his disappointment none was there* so he commenced fueling his smaller ships from his heavy cruisers thus reducing, to a degree, the cruising radius of the cruisers.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the SW Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

*** 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to all concerned current operations SWPA.

**** Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, CinC Combined Fleet, etc., (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 687), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

(2) At noon COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN in the damaged AOBA, which was being towed by the KINU and screened by the URANAMI, became Commander Guard Force. From this time onward he operated under the direct command of Commander SW Area Force.*

Despite the fact that the AOBA was being towed through waters where Allied submarines were operating, she arrived safely in Manila Bay where at 2045 she anchored inside the entrance. At this time COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN transferred his flag to the KINU and then with the KINU and URANAMI proceeded to Manila Harbor to refuel.* (The KINU may, in addition, have loaded some troops and supplies.)

(3) During the day COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE arrived Manila about 1500, where he (a) discharged the SIXTH Base Air Force personnel he had been ordered to transfer from Takao and (b) refueled and departed about 2125. Although he had been ordered to rejoin Commander SECOND Striking Force during the morning of October 24th, but because of delays encountered in Manila Bay, he decided to rejoin that commander at 1800, October 24th, in the vicinity of the southern tip of Negros Island.**

(b) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force continued his efforts to organize his units in the Clark Complex and to prepare for an all out effort October 24th. His aircraft numbered approximately 223 planes at the end of this day.

(c) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, who had about twenty-four operational aircraft, deployed two Kamikaze Units to Mindanao, one to Davao No. 1 and the other to Cagayan.***

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* Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 21, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair Action South of Mindoro, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

*** War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.

(B) Operations of Commanding General FOURTH Air Army, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

C.G. FOURTH Air Army (1) moved his headquarters to Bacolod, Negros during the day, (2) prepared for his all out attack effort the following day and (3) accomodated, in the middle Visayan airfield complex, the considerable number of newly arriving aircraft. THERE IS A REPORT THAT HE HAD 232 AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT IN THE PHILIPPINES,* WITH ONLY ABOUT 128 OPERATIONAL FOR THE ATTACK THE NEXT MORNING, ** AND IT IS BELIEVED THAT BOTH OF THESE FIGURES HAVE VALIDITY. THE LOW PERCENTAGE OF PLANES OPERATING IS DUE TO (a) THE LACK OF ADEQUATE REPAIR AND SERVICE FACILITIES, (b) THE POOR QUALITY OF JAPANESE MAINTENANCE, WORKMANSHIP AND THE HAPHAZARD DISPERSAL OF VITAL PARTS AND ACCESSORIES, (c) THE FACT THAT THE TAXI STRIPS WERE USUALLY VERY ROUGH OR, WHERE THERE HAD BEEN HEAVY RAINS, SOFT AND MUDDY*** AND (d) POSSIBLY THE EFFECT OF ALLIED FIGHTER SWEEPS.

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* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the SW Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Documents from the file of Lieutenant Katsuo Sato, ex-IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

*** CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Volume No. 33, February 26th, 1945, Page 36; also George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports", (New York, 1949), Page 513; also General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the SW Pacific Area, Volume II, "Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, December 8th, 1944 to September 22nd, 1945" Chapter VII through XIV, Page 357.

CHAPTER II - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd

(A) Operations of COMSOWESPAC, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At the beginning of this period, COMSOWESPAC was primarily engaged in making final preparations for the installation ceremonies of the Philippine Commonwealth Government which were to occur about noon in the Philippine Commonwealth Building at Tacloban.*

It appears also that he had or was preparing a reply to COMTHIRDFLT's request for an estimate of the earliest date after which it would be safe to move into the South China Sea via Surigao and Mindoro Straits with well-escorted fleet oilers and major combatant ships, with the view that the China Sea might suddenly become a critical area.**

His reply addressed to CTF 77 and released at 1411 while he was off the NASHVILLE (he had departed the NASHVILLE at 1119) (a) revealed that he anticipated an operation against Mindoro between December 1st and 5th with land-based pursuit (aircraft) installed five days later and (b) requested that CTF 77 advise all addressees the estimated date Surigao Strait and other passages would be cleared for traffic.***

He departed the NASHVILLE for Tacloban at 1119.

After the installation ceremonies, he seems to have spent some time in Tacloban choosing his temporary headquarters. He then proceeded to the airfield and, after observing the unloading operations, returned to the NASHVILLE, arriving on board at 1426.****

While ashore he very likely learned that the C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps had assumed command ashore as of 1200.*****

At 1620 he got underway in the NASHVILLE, with the flagship group, for his usual night retirement in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.

He spent the remainder of the day maintaining close scrutiny of the developing situation.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 220814 October 1944 to CTF 79; also George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports", (New York, 1949), Page 453.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF 77, CTF 38, CTG 38.1.

*** COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 230511 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COM3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COM7THFLT.

**** George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports", (New York, 1949), Page 453; also War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.

***** C.G. 24TH Corps Dispatch 230330 October 1944 to CTF 77.

(1) Operations of Commander SEVENTH Fleet, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

COMSEVENTHFLT took no unusual action this day as COMSEVENTHFLT nor in his capacity as CANF SOWESPAC insofar as the Leyte operation was concerned. His deputy commander continued administrative control from his headquarters at Hollandia while he himself, as COMSEVENTHFLT and CTF 77, continued operational control of SOWESPAC naval forces associated with the Leyte operation from the WASATCH.

His headquarters at Hollandia (a) at 1209 issued the intelligence summary for the day (all of the important items in this summary have been or will be covered elsewhere), (b) received most, if not all, of the dispatches relating to the operation and acted as necessary on those items which fell to that headquarters and (c) at 2113, transmitted a compilation of ship sightings for this day which have been individually referred to elsewhere.* For some reason the most important contact of the afternoon, that on the Japanese SECOND Striking Force, was conspicuous by its absence.

It should be understood that since COMSEVENTHFLT was also CTF 77 he received all of the dispatches which he received as CTF 77; and therefore was familiar with the developing situation and of the actions being taken by all commands. He appears to have taken no direct action thereon but, instead, to have employed them in his running estimate.

(a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTF 77 was embarked in the WASATCH, which was anchored in the Northern Transport Area.

He had just released his latest estimate of the situation which included a request for assistance from COMTHIRDFLT and C.G. FIFTH and THIRTEENTH Air Forces. Because of its importance, as it reveals the thinking of CTF 77 and its possible impact on the thought processes of other principal commanders, it is quoted herewith:

"I regard the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of the build up of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte. Believe highly probable that a tanker group arrived Coron Bay area between 0200/I 23 and 0300/I 23 for purpose of refueling major task force of enemy fleet which has been assembling for several days in southern Formosa. Submarine reports indicate three probable battleships approaching from the southern position to arrive Coron Bay tonight Monday. Another group of 11 enemy ships with many radars could arrive about the same time. There are indications of a concentration of large number of enemy aircraft in the Luzon area. It is also very important that early preparations for enemy operations be disrupted. Commander FIFTH Air Force and THIRTEENTH Air Force requested continue thorough reconnaissance Coron Bay and approaching routes and to strike as practicable day and night. COMTHIRDFLT requested strike Coron Bay earliest practicable and extend search as far as practicable to westward and northwestward. Primary objective enemy combat ships and

* COM7THFLT Dispatch 231213 October 1944 to All Concerned Current Operations SOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, CTG's 38.2 and 38.3.

aircraft. It is possible that enemy carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan. TG 77.4 is striking in western Visayas twice daily."*

A comprehensive discussion of events leading up to the release of this dispatch and an analysis of the dispatch itself is contained in Volume III under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd".**

The basic conclusions derived as a result of this analysis are repeated herewith:

"IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT CTF 77 WAS CLEARLY DISREGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF (A) MAJOR FLEET ACTION AND (B) RAIDS BY SURFACE FORCES REFERRED TO BY COMSOWESPAC IN HIS 212240 AND BY HIMSELF AS COMSEVENTHFLT IN HIS 210526 MENTIONED LATER IN THIS DISCUSSION, BUT WAS INSTEAD, OPERATING ON THE CONCEPT THAT THE JAPANESE NOW CONTEMPLATED THE MOVEMENT OF GROUND TROOPS TO LEYTE BY TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS THROUGH THE VISAYAS EMPLOYING MAJOR FORCES AND POSSIBLY SUPPORTED BY CARRIERS OPERATING SOLELY FROM THE SOUTH CHINA SEA."

At about 1106 (when it was received by CTF 79) he learned that COMTHIRDFLT had changed his plans as regards TG 38.2. CTG 38.2 instead of proceeding with CTG 38.3 to a position off Polillo Island, was to (a) proceed to the vicinity of Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E (the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait), (b) arrive there by 0600, October 24th and (c) launch a reinforced search to the westward, to include Coron Bay, striking targets of opportunity.***

He likely viewed this dispatch with satisfaction as it showed that the commander of the covering force (COMTHIRDFLT) was fully alert to the responsibilities of a covering force and had acted independently and prior to receipt of his (CTF 77's) dispatch 230142.

At about this time, with CTF 79, he departed the WASATCH for Tacloban and the ceremonies relative to the installation of the Philippine Commonwealth Government.

He knew that commencing about noon, as a result of prior arrangements, the Target CAP over Leyte had been reduced to twelve VF which permitted heavier strikes to be conducted against northern Mindanao and western Visayan airfields and shipping.

At 1307, while ashore at Tacloban, he likely learned that C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps had assumed command ashore at 1200. He was pleased to hear this for now both corps commanders had assumed command ashore and this cleared the way for C.G. SIXTH Army to assume command.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces info all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CAAF SOWESPAC.

** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (A)(1)(a).

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230003 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

This would transfer the responsibility for the ground offensive from himself to that commander.

At 1321 his staff received CTF 79's daily situation report the tenor of which indicated unloading operations were proceeding satisfactorily and that operations ashore were continuing well, with swampy terrain impeding the advance more than was enemy resistance.*

Some time after 1400 he returned on board the WASATCH.

At about 1530 he learned the first ten PBY's of VPB's THIRTY-THREE and THIRTY-FOUR had arrived in Leyte Gulf.** Five sectors between 341°(T) and 041°(T) (Plate IX) were to be flown upon establishment of the two squadrons with their aircraft in the gulf. But, until such time as this occurred, reduced coverage of the sectors would have to be accepted.

At 1644 (when it was received by CTF 79), he received an aircraft contact report on four MUTSUKI class destroyers, two NACHI class heavy cruisers and one NATORI class light cruiser in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 118°-40'E on course 200°(T), speed twenty knots (Contact "5", Plate V).***

At approximately 1730 he learned that several important sightings had occurred in the vicinity of Makassar Strait: (a) a possible battleship on course 315°(T), speed thirty knots (the actual reported position was on North Watcher Island), (b) one light cruiser and one destroyer in southwest Makassar Strait on course 045°(T) and (c) seven Sugar Charlies (cargo vessel, 500-1,000 C.T.) northwest of Makassar Strait (Contact "3").****

It appears that the contact estimated to be a possible battleship was quite in error since Japanese records fail to show the presence of a battleship in this area at this time. Such a report could, however, have hindered efforts to determine with accuracy the number of battleships threatening the Allies in Leyte Gulf during the next two days.

At 1841 he approved CTG 77.4's proposal to send two carriers to Morotai to pick up replacement aircraft.*****

At 2000 he learned from CTG 77.5 that (a) for the first day since the commencement of mine-sweeping operations no mines had been swept and (b) Leyte Gulf was now considered safe from moored mines in all areas defined by the appropriate section of CANF SOWESPAC Plan 13-44

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* CTF 79 Dispatch 230216 October 1944 to CTF 77.
** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 230720 October 1944 to CFAW 17 (ADMIN), info CTF 77, C.G. 308TH BOMWING, CTF 73.
*** C.G. 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to All Concerned Current SOWESPAC Operations.
**** Troop Port Commander (probably C.G. 5TH Air Force) Dispatch 231410/I October 1944 to All Interested in Current Operations.
***** CTF 77 Dispatch 230941 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF 73, etc.

except for an unexplored danger area existing between Latitude 11°-00'N and Latitude 10°-41'N and between Longitude 126°-00'E and a line drawn from the west tangent of Homonhon Island to the west tangent of Manicani Island (Plate IV, Volume III).*

He likely knew that CTG 78.7, with TG 78.7 consisting of, among other units, twenty Liberty ships (XAK), thirty-three LST's and some important units of the Service Force was proceeding toward the northern transport area where it would arrive about dawn. It is of considerable interest that in permitting these vessels to enter Leyte Gulf at this time, he evinced no undue concern as regards a possible early enemy attempt to penetrate Leyte Gulf.

At 2133 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received authority from CINCPOA to retain CRUDIV FOUR less INDIANAPOLIS plus MINNEAPOLIS.** This was important for with the situation still fluid, it was desirable to retain not only the three cruisers but also COMCRUDIV FOUR who was, as CTG 77.2, the commander of his major combatant surface forces.

During the evening he intercepted at (a) 2031 (when it was received by CTF 79) the DACE's report of her attack on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force*** (Contact "2") and (b) 2153 (when it was received by CTF 79) the DARTER's report**** (Contact "1"). The gist of these two reports was that (a) it was the Japanese first team, (b) there were at least three battleships, three other heavy ships and four ATAGO's, (c) one KONGO class battleship was believed to have been sunk (actually it was the CA MAYA), (d) one ATAGO class heavy cruiser had been sunk and another heavily damaged all in Palawan Passage and (e) one probable carrier together with cruisers and destroyers.

Although it seems doubtful that he even suspected it, these submarine reports were only on the First Section Main Body, FIRST Striking Force. The Second Section, which was but a few miles astern, had not as yet been discovered by the DACE and DARTER.

It is not believed that these reports affected CTF 77's "Magnified Tokyo Express" concept in any way. This seems so for it was because (a) of the original reports by the DARTER that he had formulated this concept and (b) these later reports showed the enemy force to (1) have been of about the earlier reported strength but (2) owing to damage, be weaker. Certainly he had expected carriers, for had he not, in his dispatch 230142, referred to the possibility that "enemy carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan"?

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* CTG 77.5 Dispatch 230839 October 1944 to CTF 77.
** CINCPOA Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, CTF's 78 and 79.
*** DACE Dispatch 231115 October 1944 to CTF 71.
**** DARTER Dispatch 231240 October 1944 to CTF 71.

CONFIDENTIAL

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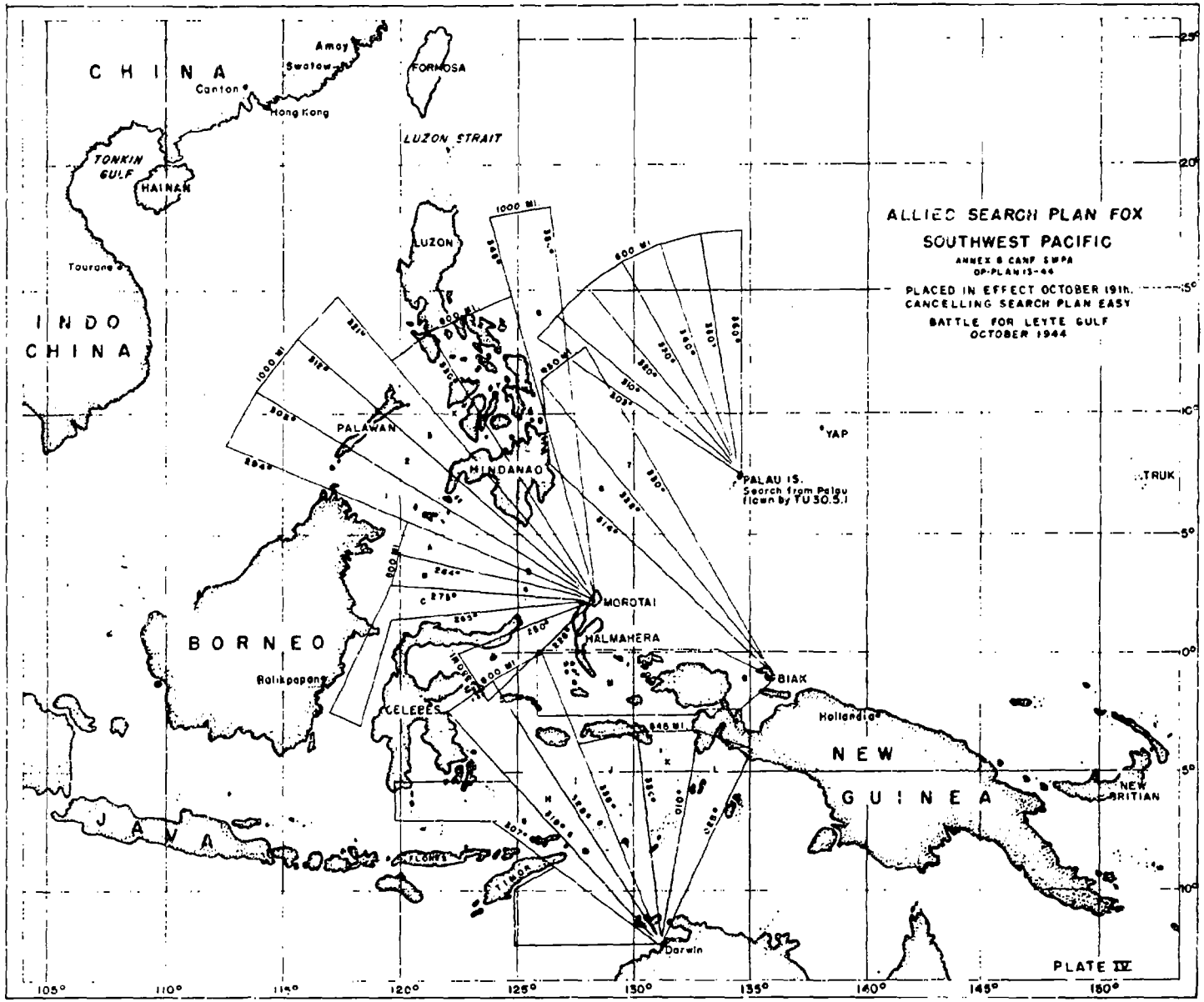

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(1) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force) and CTG 78.1 (Palo Attack Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

CTF 78, who was also CTG 78.1, in the BLUE RIDGE at anchor off RED Beach had been unloading his shipping. Since he had received certain contact reports which gave cause for concern he had been watching the unloading of his twenty LST's (fourteen with CTG 78.1 and six with CTG 78.2) and the JUPITER with considerable interest. However, since it was now clear that, except for LST 741 (which was aground), all would be unloaded and would depart the area that evening, he likely felt somewhat relieved.

It seems probable that as CTF 78 he attended the ceremony for the installation of the Philippine Government, which occurred at Tacloban at noon.

Shortly after noon he informed CTG 77.4 that COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE, with NICHOLAS, O'BANNON, TAYLOR and HOPEWELL, would arrive the next day and upon completion of fueling would report to CTG 77.4 on covering station.* These destroyers with a DESDIV from CTF 79 were to relieve DESRON FIFTY-SEVEN presently screening that task group, which was to then report to COMTHIRDFLT for duty.

At 1335 by TBS voice radio he requested CTF 79 to advise him when LST's 24, 471, 472(F) and 606, which had arrived at ORANGE and BLUE Beaches on October 22nd, had completed unloading, as he planned to sail them with the next returning echelon.**

Mindful of the importance of sending unloaded shipping out of the area, he at 1527 directed COMLSTGRP TWENTY-THREE in LST 1018 to form TG 78.11 consisting of the JUPITER, sixteen additional LST's and three escorts and at 1700 to depart Leyte Gulf for Kossol Roads and Hollandia.***

At 1700 he observed the departure of CTG 78.11 in LST 1018 with the JUPITER and twenty-two additional LST's (24, 170, 397, 465, 471, 472, 549, 606, 613, 623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 697, 740, 744, 751, 912, 986, 993 and 1017), and three escorts, CARSON CITY (FF), PC's 598 and 1129.****

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* CTF 78 Dispatch 230317 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF 77, CTF 38, COM3RDFLT.

** CTF 78 TBS Voice Radio Dispatch 230455 October 1944 to CTF 79.

*** CTF 78 Dispatch 230627 October 1944 to COMLSTGRP 23, info CTF 79, etc.

**** Action Report CTG 78.11 (COMLSTGRP 23), Operations While En Route from Leyte Island, Philippines, to Hollandia, New Guinea, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, Serial 001, November 2nd, 1944; also Action Report LST 24, Operations in the Invasion of Leyte Island, Philippines, October 23rd - 26th, Serial CG-63, November 3rd, 1944.

Prior to 2036 he had been estimating the situation to determine what instructions he should give to CTG 78.7 who, with Reinforcement Group TWO, would arrive in the Northern transport area on the following morning, for at that time he issued certain instructions thereon.* The prospective arrival of this group must have been of considerable concern to him for, among other units, it was composed of twenty Liberty ships, thirty-three LST's and some important units of the Service Force, TU 77.7.2.

Thus, at the end of the day, CTG 78.1 had remaining solely the BLUE RIDGE (FFF), LST 741 (which was aground), RUSSELL, JOHN RODGERS, LANG and a number of landing and patrol craft.

(a) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

CTG 78.2 in the FREMONT (FFF), at anchor off WHITE Beach, was observing the unloading of his units. He had the JUPITER, six LST's (170, 397, 549, 613, 912 and 993) and six XAK's to unload. However, since the latter were not expected to depart the area before D plus 9, (actually none appear to have departed before D plus 10 Day), he likely was not too concerned about them.

During the forenoon he received information that two of his gunboats, LCI(G)'s 64 and 69, with representatives of the FIRST Cavalry Division had successfully reconnoitered San Juanico Strait, passing through the entire strait with no signs of enemy action.**

At 1700 he observed CTG 78.11 with TG 78.11 consisting of the JUPITER, one frigate (CARSON CITY) and the six LST's mentioned above from his own command as well as seventeen LST's and two escorts from CTG 78.1 depart the area.***

Thus, with the departure of this convoy, he had remaining the FREMONT (FFF), one ARL (ACHILLES), six XAK's (THOMAS, FIELDS, SHORT, GIANELLA, KINNEY, JUDSON), and the ANDERSON and JENKINS. In addition he still had a number of landing and patrol craft.

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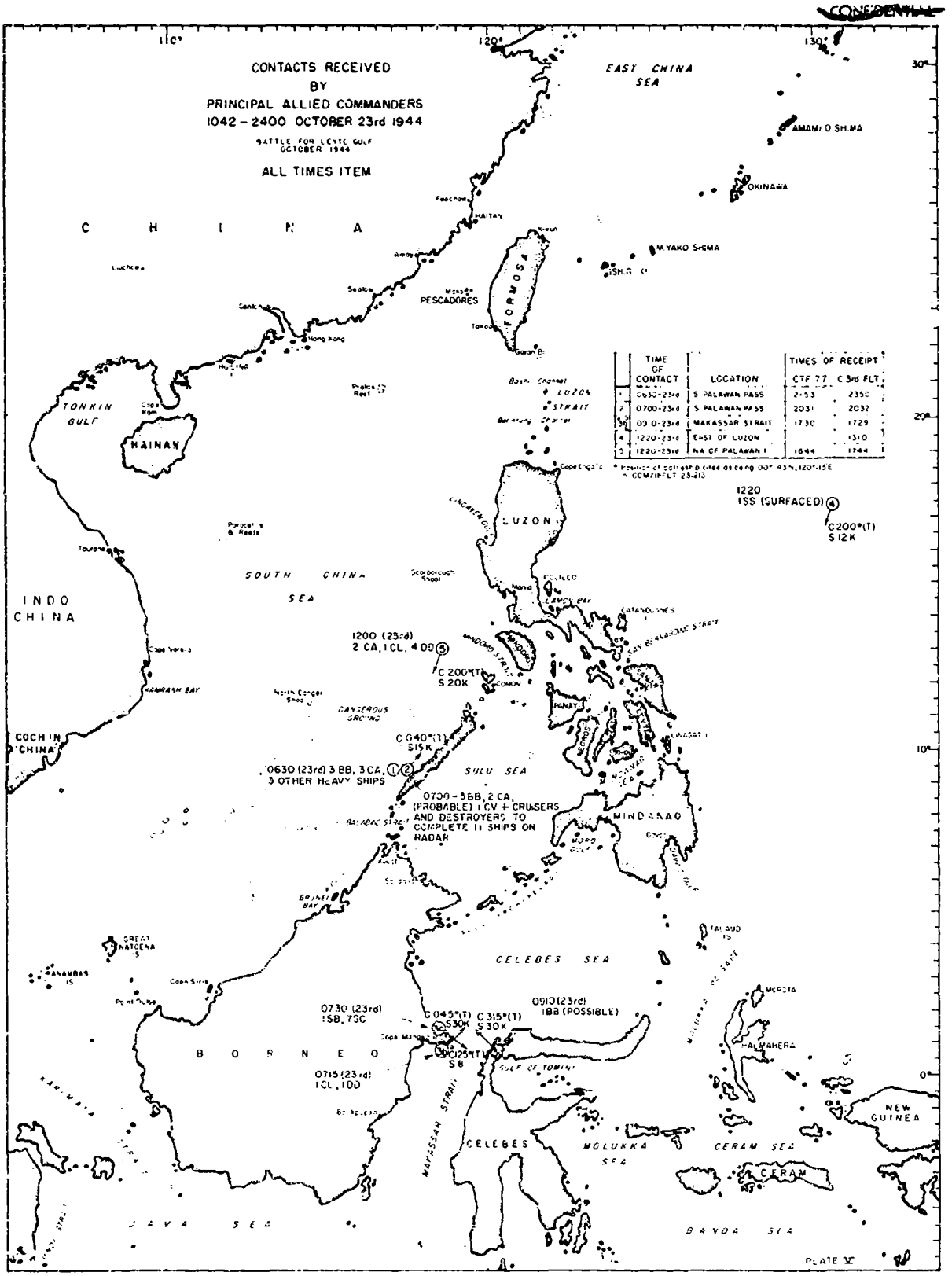
* CTF 78 Dispatch 231136 October 1944 to CTG 78.7, info CTF 79.

** Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 78.11, Operations En Route Leyte Island to Hollandia, New Guinea, Serial 0001, November 2nd, 1944.



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(b) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH) and CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

(1) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH).

At 1042 CTU 77.2.1, with TU 77.2.1, was at anchor in San Pedro Bay awaiting FS missions. During the day his three destroyers (AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY) refueled, returning to their anchorage by 1430.*

At 1700 he got underway for his assigned night screening station north of Tay Tay Point, in southern Leyte Gulf.**

At 1938 he arrived on station in Area DRUM*** where he was joined by COMBATDIV TWO with BATDIV TWO (TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA).**

As of 2400 this patrol had been uneventful.

(2) Operations of CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group).

At 1042 CTG 77.3, in the PHOENIX, with the SHROPSHIRE, BEALE, HUTCHINS, DALY and KILLEN, was at anchor in San Pedro Bay awaiting call fire assignments, while the BOISE, BACHE and ARUNTA were underway and available for FS as requested.

During the afternoon the destroyers refueled,**** while the SHROPSHIRE and later the BOISE, carried out FS missions.*****

By 1847, with TG 77.3, less BACHE which remained off RED BEACH, available for FS missions, he had commenced patrolling the area southeast of the transport area in accordance with CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan ONE.******

As of 2400 this patrol had been uneventful.

(c) Operations of CTG 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 78.7******* who was also COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE in the NICHOLAS, was bearing 108°(T), distant about 120 miles from Leyte Gulf.********

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* Deck Logs AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY, October 23rd, 1944.
** War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 23rd, 1944.
*** War Diary COMBATDIV 4, October 23rd, 1944.
**** Deck Logs BACHE, DALY, KILLEN, HUTCHINS, October 23rd, 1944; also War Diary BEALE, October 23rd, 1944; also Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Operations in the Invasion of Leyte Island, October 20th - 29th, 1944, No Serial, Undated.
***** Deck Log BOISE, October 23rd, 1944.
****** Deck Logs BOISE, DALY, October 23rd, 1944; also War Diary PHOENIX, October 23rd, 1944; also Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Operations in the Invasion of Leyte Island, October 20th - 29th, 1944, No Serial, Undated.
******* Captain John K.B. GINDER, USN.
******** War Diary NICHOLAS, October 23rd, 1944.

At 1930, with TG 78.7, he entered Leyte Gulf and headed for the northern transport area.* Some time after 2036 he received a dispatch from CTF 78 assigning eleven LST's to proceed YELLOW Beach.**

(d) Operations of CTG 78.8 (Reinforcement Group THREE), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 78.8 in the frigate EUGENE (FFF) and with TG 78.8 which was composed largely of seventeen Liberty ships and six LST's, was proceeding towards Leyte Gulf having departed Humboldt Bay at 0700 this day.***

(2) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

As this period began CTF 79 was aboard the WASATCH preparatory to attending the ceremony for the installation of the Philippine Commonwealth Government which was to take place at noon at Tacloban.****

At 1135 he queried CTG 79.2 as to what ships would be ready to sail this day.***** At this time he also learned that personnel of the 381st RCT had been landed at 0927, and now all BLT's had been landed.******

About noon he issued a dispatch designating the units which would compose TU 79.14.5, this dispatch also gave the departure time.*******

At 1303 he received word that of all the WHITE Beach LST's only two remained to be unloaded, and that these two LST's were scheduled to retract at 1400.********

At 1305 he was informed that TRANSDIV TEN had commenced general unloading.********* At the same time he became aware that unloading progress on BLUE and ORANGE Beaches was not proceeding as rapidly as desired.**********

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* Action Report CTG 78.7, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.
** CTF 78 Dispatch 231136 October 1944 to CTG 78.7, info CTF 79.
*** Action Report CTG 78.8, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.
**** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (A)(2).
***** CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 230235 October 1944 to CTG 79.2.
****** CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 230146 October 1944 to CTF 79.
******* CTF 79 Dispatch 230258 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, CTU 79.11.1, info All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, CNB Hollandia.
******** CTU 79.11.2 Voice Radio Message 230403 October 1944 to CTF 79.
********* CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 230354 October 1944 to CTF 79.
********** CTG 79.2 Voice Radio Message 230320 October 1944 to C.G. 96TH DIV., info CTF 79.

At 1312 he received CTG 79.1's dispatch in which that commander informed his units that those remaining in the area after his departure, at 1700 this day, would come directly under the command of CTF 79.*

Ten minutes later he received another dispatch from that commander informing him that the unloading of the MERCURY would delay her sailing and recommending that she be sailed at 1800 in order to overtake him regardless whether or not she had completed unloading.**

At 1346 he was informed by CTG 79.2 that only the WILLIAM P. BIDDLE would be able to sail this day.***

At 1356 he originated a dispatch giving the composition and departure time of TU 79.14.4.****

At 1418 he informed his command that command of all landing forces in his area had passed ashore at 1200 to C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps.*****

At 1419 he received CTG 79.1's sortie plan.****** At this time he also learned that CTF 78 intended to assign COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE to duty with CTG 77.4 upon his arrival in the gulf the following day.*******

At 1441 he received word from CTG 79.2 that four battleships and two destroyers were low on fuel.********

At 1450 he returned aboard the MOUNT OLYMPUS.*********

At 1515 he learned that CTG 77.2 intended to suspend replenishment operations at 1700 until 0700 the following morning.**********

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* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 230252 October 1944 to TG 79.7, 79.5, TU 79.7.1, CTU 79.7.5, 79.3.6, info CTG 79.3, CTF 79.

** CTG 79.1 TBS Voice Radio Message 230422 October 1944 to CTF 79.

*** CTG 79.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 230410 October 1944 to CTF 79, CTG 79.1, info CTU 79.4.1.

**** CTF 79 Dispatch 230456 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, etc., info CNB's Hollandia and Manus.

***** CTF 79 Dispatch 230518 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.

****** CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 230242 October 1944 to BIDDLE, CLAY, etc., info CTF 79, CTG's 79.2, 79.3, etc.

******* CTF 78 Dispatch 230317 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF's 38, 77, COM3RDFLT.

******** CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 230430 October 1944 to CTF 79.

********* Action Report SPROSTON, Capture and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 14th - 26th, 1944, Serial 060, October 30th, 1944.

********** CTG 77.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 230615 October 1944 to CTU 79.6.1, TU 72.2.2, info CTF 79, CTF 77.

At 1540 he received word of the destroyer's night screening composition.*

At about 1610 he received CTG 79.1's visual dispatch executing his sortie plan at 1700 and also modifying it. Among other things he learned that the CHARA might not be unloaded in time to depart for this dispatch directed her to join, if unloaded in time to get underway by 1800, otherwise she was to notify the appropriate commanders and remain in Leyte Gulf until ordered to depart by CTF 79.**

At 1638 he ordered CTG's 79.1 and 79.2 to direct all LST's seaward of the MOUNT OLYMPUS to close in toward the transport area.***

At 1719 he issued the night operating instruction to CTG 79.2 quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 79.2, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd".

At 1733 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he probably intercepted CTF 77's dispatch wherein that commander stated that he regarded the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of a build up of what he considered to be magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte.****

At 1746 he was informed by CTG 79.2 by TBS voice radio that his group was low on smoke.***** This may have caused him some alarm as heretofore the smoke screens had been an effective defense against Japanese aircraft.

(a) Operations of CTG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At the beginning of this period CTG 79.1, in his flagship APPALACHIAN, continued to remain at anchor off YELLOW and VIOLET Beaches. With three of his large ships unloaded (CAVALIER, MONITOR, PRESIDENT HAYES) and three (CHARA, THUBAN, ALSHAIN) of the remaining four almost unloaded he was preparing his departure plan.******

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* CTU 79.11.2 Visual Dispatch 230615 October 1944 to CTF 79.

** CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 230642 October 1944 to CTF 79, CTG 79.2, CTG 79.3, etc.

*** CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 230738 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFIT's, CINCPAC, CINCSWPA, COMINCH, COMFEAF.

***** CTG 79.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 230821 October 1944 to CTF 79.

****** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (A)(2)(a).

At 1142 he issued his sortie plan stating that (a) it was his intention to form the transports in three columns at close intervals of 700 yards, (b) stating the ships in each column and naming a TRANSDIV commander in command of each, and (c) he intended to get underway at 1700.*

At 1152 he sent a dispatch to his units stating that upon his departure about 1700 this day command of the remaining units would pass to CTF 79.**

About noon or shortly thereafter he no doubt received CTF 79's dispatch forming TU 79.14.5 and giving the sailing time of that unit.*** This was of special interest to him as the composition of this unit consisted of most of his remaining landing craft.

Since (a) his unloading was proceeding generally according to his present plans it was clear that if he could expedite the unloading of the MERCURY he would be able to sail all of his heavy ships, and (b) he was to command the departing convoy, he would be leaving few problems for CTF 79.

At 1322 he sent a dispatch to CTF 79 recommending that the MERCURY, whose sailing time would be delayed due to the progress being made in unloading, be sailed not later than 1800 regardless of the amount of cargo remaining on board in order to overtake him.****

At 1520 he received CTF 79's dispatch which gave the composition and sailing time of TU 79.14.4.*****

At 1542 he issued a visual dispatch which directed (a) the execution of his sortie plan at 1700, (b) omission of the TRANSDIV in the right hand column and rearranging the other two TRANSDIV's and (c) the CHARR to join if unloaded in time to get underway by 1800, otherwise she was to notify the appropriate commanders and remain in Leyte Gulf until ordered to depart by CTF 79.******

At 1643, in the APPALACHIAN, he took command of TU 79.14.4 and departed Leyte for Hollandia.******* In addition to his flagship he had with him the following ships: PRESIDENT HAYES,

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* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 230242 October 1944 to Ships Concerned, info CTF 79, CTG 79.2, CTG 79.3, etc.

** CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 230252 October 1944 to TG's 79.5, 79.7, CTU's 79.3.6, 79.7.5, TU 79.7.1, info CTF 79 and CTG 79.3.

*** CTF 79 Dispatch 230258 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, CTU 79.11.1, info All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, CNB Hollandia.

**** CTG 79.1 TBS Voice Radio Message 230422 October 1944 to CTF 79.

***** CTF 79 Dispatch 230456 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, 79.5, etc., info all interested current operations, etc.

****** CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 230542 October 1944 to CTF 79, CTG 79.2, CTG 79.3, etc.

******* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

CAVALIER (FF), THUBAN, ALSHAIN, WILLIAM P. BIDDLE, MONITOR, LUCE, STEMBEL, PREBLE, LONG, PALMER, ISHERWOOD and CHARLES J. BADGER. However, he did not have the CHARA which had been delayed in unloading and did not complete unloading until the following morning.

Thus, at the end of the day, there remained of the assault shipping in the area the MERCURY and CHARA, thirty-one LST's (34, 123, 125, 126, 169, 205, 207, 213, 219, 223, 242, 451, 461, 478, 482, 488, 565, 605, 608, 609, 611, 612, 617, 670, 686, 693, 733, 738, 739, 909, 1006), plus a number of landing and patrol craft. Command of these ships with the departure of the APPALACHIAN passed to CTF 79.*

(b) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At the beginning of this period CTG 79.2, in the ROCKY MOUNT, was anchored in the LST area off ORANGE Beach.

He was largely concerned with unloading his ships and with the departure of the unloaded ones. Because of this he evidenced considerable concern with the delay in the unloading operation on the beach where difficulties were so great as to require (a) sending ashore beach parties to assist in the unloading of the ship's boats** and (b) requesting C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Division "to improve paucity of active labor and vehicular equipment on BLUE and ORANGE Beach.***

About noon or shortly thereafter he no doubt received CTF 79's dispatch forming TU 79.14.5, and giving the sailing time of that unit.**** This was of special interest to him as the composition of this unit consisted of most of his remaining landing craft.

At 1310 in response to a query thereon, he notified both CTF 79 and CTG 79.1 that only the WILLIAM P. BIDDLE would be ready to sail (that evening).*****

At 1330 he notified CTF 79 that four of the battleships and two of the destroyers were low on fuel as of 0800.******

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* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

*** CTG 79.2 TBS Voice Radio Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to C.G. 96TH Division, info CTF 79.

**** CTF 79 Dispatch 230258 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, CTU 79.11.1, info all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, CNB Hollandia.

***** CTG 79.2 TBS Voice Radio Dispatch 230410 October 1944 to CTF 79, CTG 79.1, info CTU 79.4.1.

****** CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 230430 October 1944 to CTF 79.

Somewhere between 1520 and 1545 he received CTF 79's dispatch giving the composition and sailing time of TU 79.14.4.* His interest in this was not great for only the WILLIAM P. BIDDLE and the LUCE were included therein.

At 1719 he received CTF 79's instructions to (a) not retire tonight, (b) station smoke boats by 1800 and (c) station LCI's to windward of transport area.** In reply to this dispatch he immediately informed CTF 79 that his smoke supply was low.***

At 1750 he informed CTF 79 of the progress made in unloading.****

Thus, at the end of the day, CTG 79.2 had remaining the ROCKY MOUNT, CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT, AURIGA, CAPRICORNUS, RUSHMORE and twenty-four LST's (20, 117, 118, 269, 270, 277, 483, 486, 564, 567, 568, 615, 669, 671, 672, 698, 704, 745, 916, 917, 918, 999, 1013 and 1024), plus a number of landing and patrol craft.

(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit SOUTH), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTU 77.2.2, with TU 77.2.2, was awaiting FS and call fire missions. In addition, he was making preparations to replenish fuel and ammunition as scheduled.

Commencing at (a) 1119 the LEUTZE closely followed by the RICHARD P. LEARY and NEWCOMB commenced refueling from the ASHTABULA which refueling was completed at 1421,***** (b) 1310 the BENNION closely followed by the LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS and CLAXTON commenced replenishing ammunition from the MAZAMA and DURHAM VICTORY,****** and (c) 1323 the PENNSYLVANIA closely followed by the CALIFORNIA and TENNESSEE also commenced refueling from the oilers CHEPACHET, SARANAC and SALAMONIE.*******

During the afternoon, at about 1515, as CTG 77.2, he conferred with CTF 77 in the WASATCH.******** The matters discussed are not known.

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* CTF 79 Dispatch 230456 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, 79.5, info all interested in current operations.
** CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 230819 October 1944 to CTG 79.2.
*** CTG 79.2 TBS Voice Radio Dispatch 230821 October 1944 to CTF 79.
**** CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 230850 October 1944 to CTF 79.
***** Deck Logs LEUTZE, NEWCOMB, RICHARD P. LEARY, October 23rd, 1944.
****** Deck Logs LOUISVILLE, BENNION, MINNEAPOLIS, CLAXTON, October 23rd, 1944.
******* Deck Logs PENNSYLVANIA, CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, October 23rd, 1944.
******** CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 230630 October 1944 to CTF 79.

At 1700 all servicing activities were halted. At this time the servicing activities were not completed for (a) the CALIFORNIA and TENNESSEE had not as yet completed refueling, (b) the LOUISVILLE and CLAXTON had not completed replenishing ammunition and (c) the PORTLAND, seven remaining destroyers of DESRON FIFTY-SIX and three destroyers of DESDIV X-RAY had not as yet commenced replenishing ammunition.

Also at 1700 with TU 77.2.2, less the LEUTZE, ROBINSON and ALBERT W. GRANT, which were to be available for FS missions, he proceeded to his night covering station in accordance with CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan ONE.*

This completes his operations for the period 1042 - 1700. After this time and until 2400, since he operated as CTG 77.2, his operations during this time are discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd".

(3) Operations of CTG 77.2 (Combardment and Fire Support Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 77.2, in the LOUISVILLE, was making preparations to replenish fuel and ammunition and also to furnish FS and call fire support.

Since during the period 1042 - 1700 he operated largely as CTU 77.2.2 his operations during this time are discussed under "Operations of CTU 77.2.2, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd".

At 1700 having largely completed the day's operations as CTU 77.2.2, he, in the LOUISVILLE, with the PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, COLUMBIA, NEWCOMB, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, RICHARD P. LEARY, HALFORD, BRYANT, CLAXTON, TROUP and WELLES departed the FS area and headed for his night covering station as prescribed in CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan ONE.*

While en route, and likely at 1733, (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he intercepted CTF 77's dispatch wherein that commander stated that he regarded the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of a build up of what he considered to be magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte.**

He arrived on station at about 1851 at which time he commenced operating on an east-west line at various speeds*** off Tay Tay Point, while BATDIV's TWO, THREE and FOUR escorted by the AULICK, CONY

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* Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLTS, CINCSWPA, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMFEAF.

*** War Diary COMDESRON 56, October 23rd, 1944; Action Report LOUISVILLE, Seizure and Occupation of Leyte Area, October 17th - 24th 1944, Serial 0044, November 1st, 1944.

and SIGOURNEY lay to, north of Taytay Point in Area DRUM.* His remaining destroyers (LEUTZE, ROBINSON, ALBERT W. GRANT) remained behind in their FS area available for FS and call fire support missions.**

At 2400 his command was approximately in the above area. Up to this hour the patrol had been uneventful.

(4) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.***

CTG 77.4, in the SANGAMON with a total of 311 VF and 190 VT, continued to provide (a) air cover and support over the objective area, and (b) air protection for his own units, in accordance with his basic air plan,**** as modified by CTF 77's 220603 (quoted in full in Volume III under "Operations of CTF 77, October 22nd").

It will be recalled that during the forenoon he had launched his first and second direct support missions. Shortly after 1100 he commenced his third and at 1215 the fourth launch, which included both a direct support mission as well as strikes against the airfields on Negros Island and shipping in Bacolod Harbor. He claimed having damaged or destroyed twenty-five aircraft. While Japanese reports thereon are meager it is known that, although Commander FOURTH Air Army had planned to have 172 aircraft for strikes against the Allies on the following day, only 128 operational aircraft could be assembled. This may have been partly due to the Allied fighter strikes. The TCAP was now reduced to six VF and six VT.

He now launched his fifth direct support mission.

At 1631 having received authority to send the CHENANGO and SAGINAW BAY to Morotai to obtain aircraft replacements, a requirement for which no provisions had been made in the basic operation plans, he directed these two escort carriers to (a) transfer a total of eighteen VF and twenty VT to the other escort carriers of TG 77.4 and (b) receive four flyable duds. He also announced that he planned to detach the above two carriers at 1700 the following day.*****

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* Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 23rd, 1944; also Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.

** War Diaries LEUTZE, ROBINSON, ALBERT W. GRANT, October 23rd, 1944.

*** All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.

**** CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Annex "D".

***** CTG 77.4 Dispatch 230731 October 1944 to CTU's 77.4.2, 77.4.3, 77.4.12 and TU's 70.9.11 and 70.9.12.

At about 1732 (when it was received by CTU 77.4.2) he received CTF 77's dispatch 230142 which was discussed fully in Volume III under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd". What his reaction was to this dispatch is not known. However, since he had most of the information which had enabled CTF 77 to arrive at his estimate, it is quite probable that he agreed with the estimate. This seems so for despite the fact that his earlier intelligence estimate (a) discounted the likelihood of a major fleet reaction to the Leyte invasion and (b) suggested the possibility of a fast enemy task force launched from Okinawa as an advance force against Allied supply lines and supported by land-based air attacks,* the more recent enemy sightings indicated that the most likely direction from which the enemy might attempt penetrating raids would be from westward.

In reviewing the tasks currently assigned to his forces, he could see that if the situation so required he could significantly increase his local and target CAP effort. Therefore he quite likely did not view the present situation with alarm.

At 1925 he recovered his last flight of the day. Commencing with the third launch of the day, he had flown about eighty ground support missions, about forty target CAP and twelve target ASP missions and about forty-three airfield and shipping strike missions--totalling approximately 170 missions over the objective and western Visayas areas. Having lost one VF in combat and two VT operationally, he now had remaining 310 VF and 188 VT.

(5) Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd (Plate VI).

It will be recalled that at 0744 the WACHAPREAGUE with PT's 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 146, 150, 151, 152, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195 and 196 had departed San Pedro Bay and headed for Liloan Bay, Panaon Island. This left thirty MTB's and the WILLOUGHBY with CTG 70.1 in the OYSTER BAY in San Pedro Bay.

The WACHAPREAGUE group arrived in Liloan Bay during the early afternoon where the WACHAPREAGUE anchored at 1414.

Later (a) PT's 128 and 130 patrolled the Ormoc Bay area (Area 109) where they contacted at 2300 eight enemy small craft which they attacked immediately and succeeded in sinking a number of enemy barges,** (b) PT's 127 and 196 on a mission for the guerrilla forces shelled Japanese headquarters at Maasin** (Areas 101 and 102) Southern end of Leyte Island, (c) PT's 150 and 191 patrolled between Leyte Island and the Camotes Islands (Areas 109 and 114) and sank several enemy small craft,*** (d) PT's 491 and 495 departed San Pedro Bay for Homonhon Island

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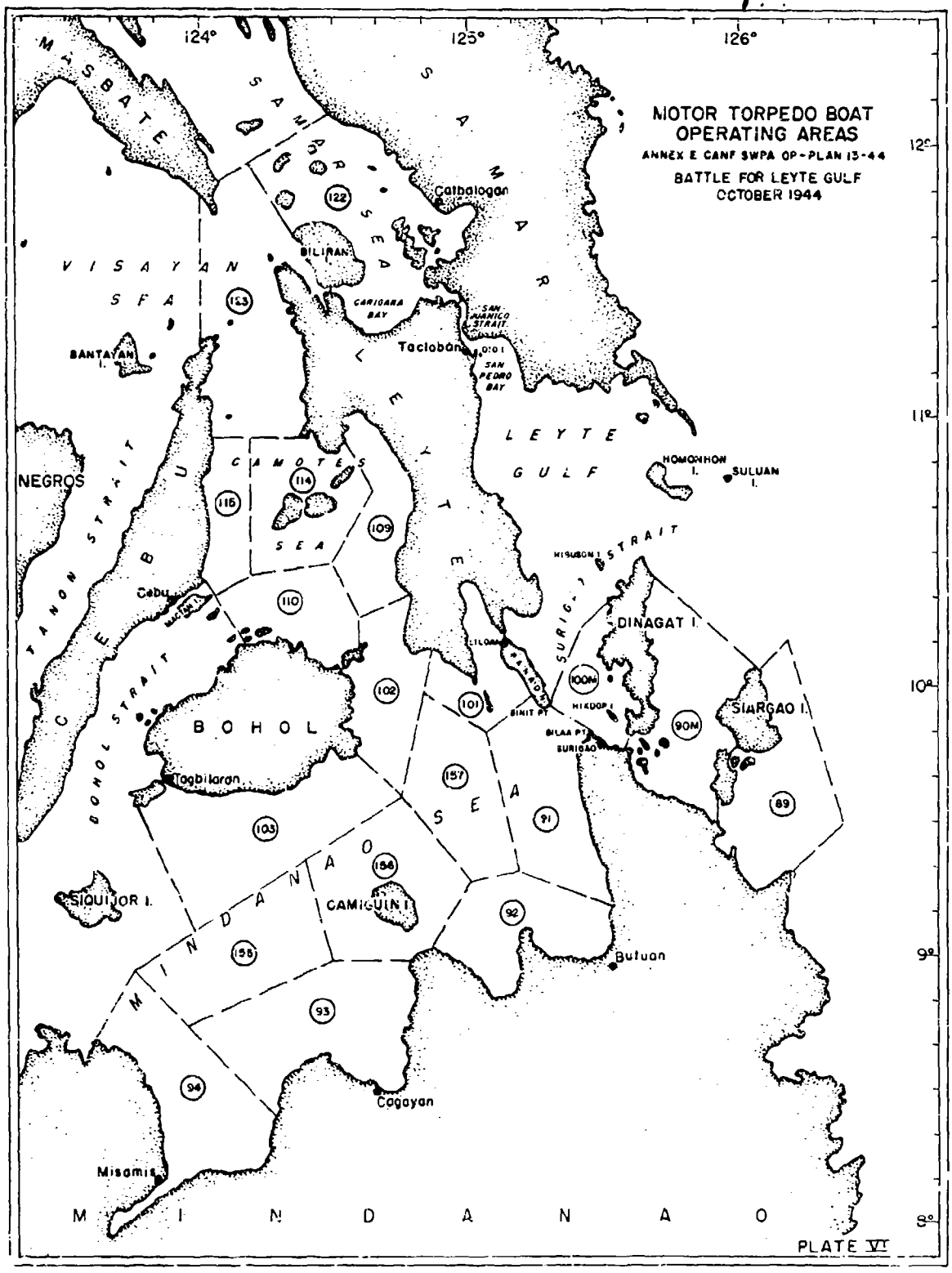
* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Annex "E".

** War Diary MTBRON 7, October 23rd, 1944.

*** War Diary MTBRON 12, October 23rd, 1944.


MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT
OPERATING AREAS
ANNEX E CANF SWPA OP-PLAN 13-44
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944
124°
125°
126°
12°
11°
10°
9°
8°
SAMAR SEA
SAMAR
MASBATE
VISAYAN SEA
BILIRAN
Calbalogan
CARIGARA BAY
SAN JUANICO STRAIT
Tacloban
SAN PEDRO BAY
LEYTE
LEYTE GULF
HOMONHON I.
SULUAN I.
BANTAYAN I.
NEGROS
CAMOTES SEA
TAÑON STRAIT
CEBU
Cebu
MACTAN I.
BOHOL STRAIT
BOHOL
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT I.
SILOP
SILOP PT
BINIT PT
HIXDOP I.
BILAA PT
SURIGAO
SIARGAO I.
Tagbilaran
SIQUIJOR I.
MINDANAO SEA
CAMIGUIN I.
Butuan
Cagayan
Misamis
MINDANAO
122
123
114
115
109
110
102
101
100M
90M
157
91
89
103
154
92
156
93
94
PLATE VI

on a mission to guerrillas* and (e) PT's 192 and 195 landed Alamo Scouts** at Madilao Point, Mindanao Island.*** (These scouts appear to have been part of the "Nellist Mission" commanded by Lieutenant William E. Nellist.)**

All other MTB's appear to have continued preparations for immediate service.

(b) Operations of CTF 71, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

Since (a) during the early morning as discussed under "Operations of CTF 71, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd" his submarines had contacted strong Japanese forces moving northward through Palawan Passage and (b) he had received contact reports by CTF 71 submarines on Japanese forces moving in a southerly direction and (c) the above Japanese forces seemed headed toward Coron Bay or Manila, it seems clear that CTF 71 watched the developing situation with considerable interest.

It seems likely that shortly after noon he received CTF 77's 230142 quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd" wherein that commander stated that he regarded the approach of the enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of the build up of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte.

He studied the situation and wisely decided that there should be a submarine (a) in the western approaches to the Mindanao Sea to provide early warning of enemy operations to Leyte. In accordance with this decision he at 1356 directed the BATFISH to cover these approaches between Negros Island and Mindanao Island with instructions "report movement enemy heavy forces eastward very important",**** and (b) guarding the southwest approaches to Brunei Bay for at 1401 he directed the GURNARD to cover the southwest approaches to Brunei Bay with instructions concerning reporting enemy movements the same as the BATFISH.*****

He also at 1744 directed the PADDLE in Makassar Strait to patrol as previously ordered--that the air strike on Balikpapan was cancelled.******

He now commenced re-estimating the situation. First he determined the location of his own submarines as of 0900 and having done so he at 1952 informed all interested commands by dispatch.******* His

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* War Diary MTBRON 33, October 23rd, 1944.

** Alamo Scouts were reconnaissance units from the 6TH Army which were designed to obtain essential information of hostile territory and dispositions, 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Page 159.

*** War Diary MTBRON 12, October 23rd, 1944.

**** CTF 71 Dispatch 230456 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (BATFISH).

***** CTF 71 Dispatch 230501 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (GURNARD).

****** CTF 71 Dispatch 230844 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (PADDLE).

******* CTF 71 Dispatch 231052 October 1944 to all interested commands.

determination was generally fairly correct, although there were certain glaring errors (Diagram "B"). These were the (a) DACE reported as being west of Balabac Strait when she was in fact in about the center of Palawan Passage, (b) GUITARRO reported as being northwest of Manila when she was in fact west of Mindoro Strait, (c) BATFISH reported as being in western approaches to the Mindanao Sea when she was in fact in southern Makassar Strait and (d) GURNARD off Brunei Bay when in fact she was off Point Datoe. It should be clear that these submarines were far removed from their assigned stations. In some cases, such as the BATFISH, this error amounted to as much as 700 miles.

As the day passed he awaited further reports from his submarines but especially from the DACE and DARTER. At about 2045 he received a report from the DACE to the effect that (a) she had made four hits in a KONGO class battleship believed sunk and (b) task force on course 040°(T), speed fifteen knots, composition doubtful but for sure three battleships (one ISE, one KONGO (sunk), third unknown); two ATAGO or NACHI heavy cruisers plus following probables; one carrier, plus cruisers and destroyers to complete eleven ships shown on radar.*

A short time later (at 2153) he received a report from the DARTER which largely confirmed the DACE report but was more explicit in that here the Commanding Officer DARTER stated that (a) he believed force was Jap first team, (b) dimly seen at dawn, (c) at least three battleships, (d) three other heavy ships, (e) four ATAGO's, (f) at 0530 he sank one ATAGO class heavy cruiser and made four hits in another, which was stopped in Latitude 09°-24'N, Longitude 117°-11'E.**

It seems likely that prior to midnight he received (a) a contact report from the BREAM to the effect that at 0430 in Latitude 14°-05'N, Longitude 119°-40'E, she had contacted two AOBA class cruisers, one large destroyer on course 070°(T), speed nineteen knots, and had made two hits in one cruiser,*** and (b) the ANGLER's first report on having contacted at 2130 in Latitude 12°-40'N, Longitude 115°-58'E a task force consisting of four large ships and escorts on course 050°(T), speed eighteen knots.****

As pointed out under ANGLER, this force was the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.

CTF 71 at 2354 advised all interested commands of the ANGLER's contact.*****

At the end of the day CTF 71 could feel that his submarines had been very effective in not only destroying some of the Japanese naval forces but also in trailing them.

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* DACE Dispatch 231115 October 1944 to CTF 71.
** DARTER Dispatch 231240 October 1944 to CTF 71.
*** BREAM Dispatch 231231 October 1944 to CTF 71.
**** Action Report CTF 71, Summary of Operations of TF 71 Submarines in Support of King II (Leyte) Operations, October 9th - 27th, 1944 Serial 00328, November 17th, 1944.
***** CTF 71 Dispatch 232354 October 1944 to all interested commands.

SUBMARINE OPERATING AREA CLASSIFICATIONS

SOUTHWEST PACIFIC & ADJACENT CENTRAL PACIFIC

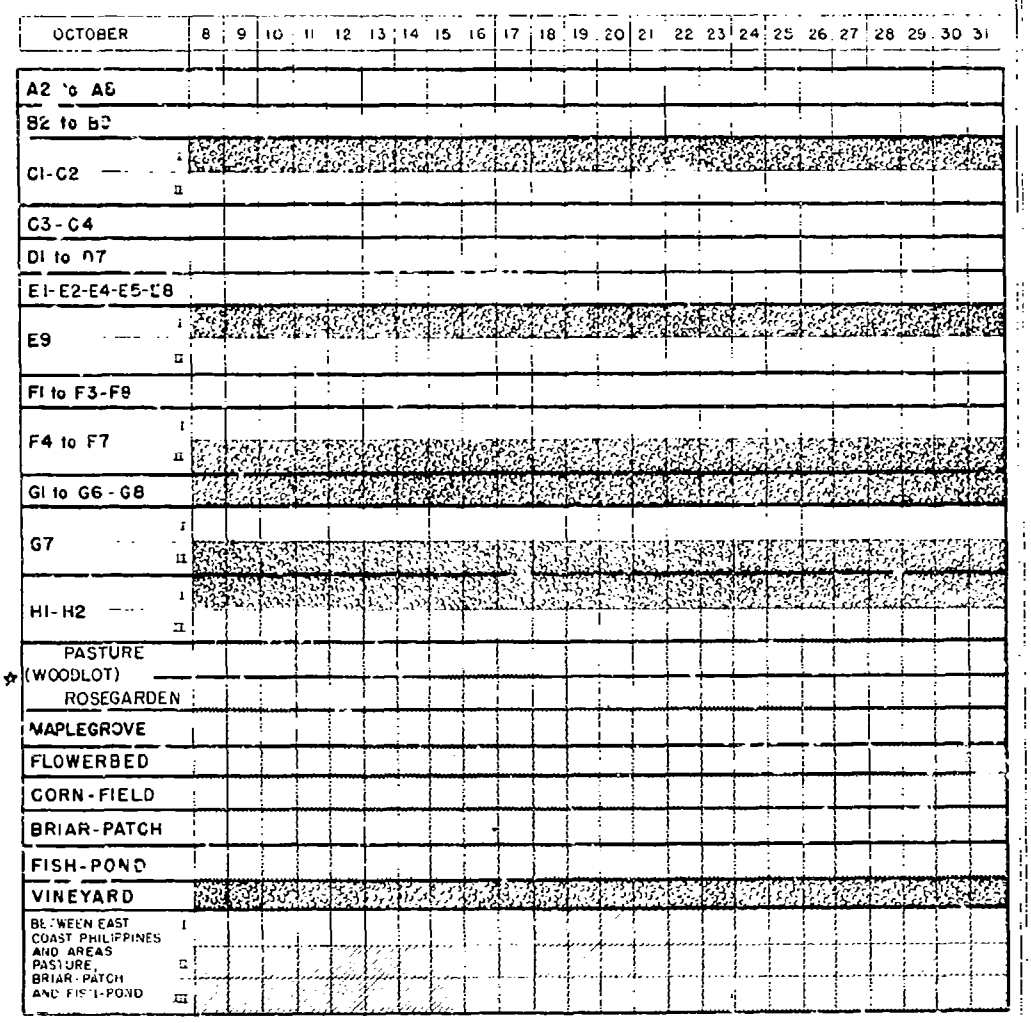
OCTOBER 8 th. – 31 st. inc 1944

(APPENDIX 5 TO ANNEX "C" TO CANF, SWPA OPLAN 13-44)

COMSOWESPAC ZONE NOTICES 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

All areas submarine patrol zones unless otherwise indicated.
Dotted areas indicate air surface zone
Hatched areas indicate joint zone
Mottled areas indicate blind bombing zone



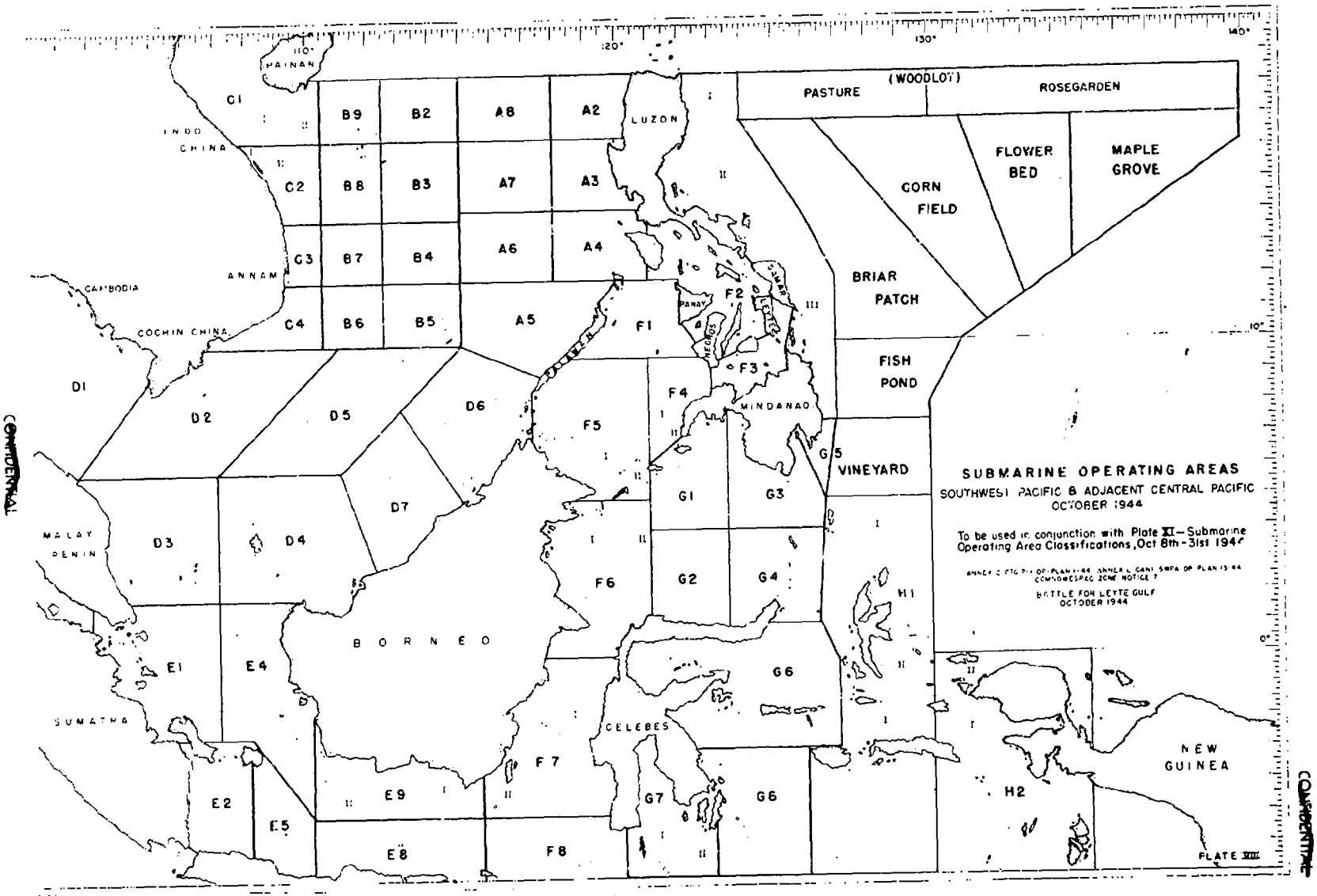
☆ Woodlot divided into Pasture and Rosegarden 0928 October 12th.

PLATE XII

495799 O - 59 - 11

36a

CONFIDENTIAL



36 b

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Since the operations of the submarines here were in general uneventful, comment will be confined solely to those submarines which contacted enemy units.

(1) BREAM and GUITARRO.

The BREAM, which had torpedoed the AOBA of CRUDIV SIXTEEN and had promptly submerged, at 1952 surfaced and reported her success to CTF 71.* Since the attack had been made on the southern edge of her assigned area (A-3 - A-7, Plate VIII) she continued her patrol in that area.

The GUITARRO which was endeavoring to close the force which the DARTER had contacted, finally made contact herself on what she thought were merchant ships. While trailing these ships she, at 2315, contacted another force which by midnight she had sighted and estimated consisted of fifteen to twenty ships including three battleships.**

(2) ANGLER.

The ANGLER which was patrolling across the northern entrance to Palawan Passage to intercept the DARTER's contact finally at (a) 1950 made radar contact on an enemy force which she commenced trailing in a northeasterly direction, (b) 2015, estimated composition as possible four large ships with six escorts*** and (c) at 2215 sent a contact report to CTF 71 reporting four large ships plus escorts at 2130 in Latitude 12°-40'N, Longitude 118°-56'E.**** Although ANGLER, while tracking this force also contacted a convoy, she decided to remain with her first contact which was headed for Calavite Passage. This was a wise decision for this was the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force which, despite the loss of three cruisers (ATAGO and MAYA (sunk), TAKAO, (damaged)) and two destroyers (NAGANAMI, ASASHIMO) as escorts, was continuing the penetration operation.

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* BREAM Dispatch 231231 October 1944 to CTF 71.

** War Patrol Report GUITARRO, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 044, November 16th, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 0(10), November 9th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTF 71, Summary of Operations of TF 71 Submarines in Support of KING II (Leyte) Operations, October 9th - 27th, 1944, Serial 00328, November 17th, 1944.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(3) DACE and DARTER.

The DARTER, while submerged, commenced closing the damaged cruiser but owing to the presence of the destroyers, decided to wait until darkness.* Because of the chain of events she had failed to obtain a navigational fix with the result that her dead reckoning position was about twenty-four hours old.** At 2015 the wolf pack commander in the DARTER learned that the DACE had contacted the cruiser.* At 2140 he reported by dispatch to CTF 71 concurring the composition of the Japanese force, quoted in full earlier under "Operations of CTF 71, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd".***

At 2200 he received word from the Commanding Officer DACE to the effect that at 2153 the damaged cruiser (TAKAO) was moving in a southwesterly direction at a speed of four to six knots and that he was trailing.**** He therefore decided to attack and directed the DACE to take attack position bearing 150°(T), distant ten miles from the cruiser while the DARTER took station bearing 050°(T), distant ten miles from the cruiser.***** Now feeling that the cruiser was definitely moving slowly, albeit erratically, down Palawan Passage he endeavored to close in order to make an attack.

The DACE remained submerged during the day. At 1355 she made a sonar contact and closed. At 1630 she sighted a damaged ATAGO class cruiser (TAKAO), escorted by two destroyers (NAGANAMI and ASASHIMO).**** At 1945 she surfaced and sent a contact report to CTF 71 relative to her morning attack.****** At 2015 she notified the wolf pack commander in the DARTER by voice radio of the presence of the damaged cruiser and was directed to rendezvous with DARTER.**** At 2200 she notified the wolf pack commander by voice radio that at 2153 the damaged cruiser was moving southwest at four to six knots,**** at which time she was directed by the wolf pack commander to assume an attack position bearing 150°(T), distant ten miles from the cruiser.***** She promptly headed for this position and, while en route, was advised at 2345 by voice radio by the wolf pack commander that the DARTER in about ninety minutes would make a surface attack from the starboard quarter and if the DARTER was forced down or chased off she (DACE) was to attack from the port bow.*******

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* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

** Personal Interview Commanding Officer DARTER (Commander D.H. MC CLINTOCK, USN), Naval Records and Library, CNO, March 9th, 1945, Microfilm No. 139963.

*** DARTER Dispatch 231240 October 1944 to CTF 71.

**** War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

***** War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

****** DACE Dispatch 231115 October 1944 to CTF 71.

******* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944; also War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

(2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

CAAF SOWESPAC was at this time embarked in the NASHVILLE while the operation of his aircraft in support of KING II continued to be controlled from Hollandia.

At 1119 he left the NASHVILLE with COMSOWESPAC to attend the installation of the Philippine Commonwealth Government at Tacloban, the capitol of Leyte. The party returned on board at 1426.*

Having viewed with concern the manner in which troop supplies were continuing to pile up on the Tacloban airstrip and impeding its construction, he made personal representation to both C.G. SIXTH Army and COMSOWESPAC to prevent additional offloading of supplies there.**

This matter is discussed in considerable detail in Volume III under "Operations of CTF 77, October 22nd".***

(a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

During the forenoon C.G. FIFTH Air Force who was at Biak (Owi) and who had assigned certain tasks to his subordinate commanders had been receiving reports of the results. This is discussed somewhat fully in Volume III under "Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd".****

Having received the DARTER's contact reports on the Japanese force in Palawan Passage he was likely awaiting amplification of the contact reports by his Morotai-based PB4Y's.

It seems probable that he learned in the early afternoon that his scheduled (a) strike against shipping in Tawi Tawi and (b) sweep against shipping in Cagayan, Karimai and Dijogo had been accomplished.*****

The shipping sweep against Zamboanga seems to have been diverted and resulted in a fighter bomber sweep against the Halmaheras.

At 1506 he issued orders for the provision of rescue services for bombing missions to be flown the following day. In addition he ordered a courier plane to be flown to Leyte Gulf.******

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* George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports", (New York, 1949), Page 454; also War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944

** Ibid., Page 454.

*** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter V (A)(1)(a)(i).

**** Ibid., Chapter VII (A)(2)(a).

***** C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 240058/I October 1944 to all concerned current SOWESPAC operations.

****** C.G. 5TH Air Force for 276th Rescue Group Dispatch 231506/I to 310TH BOMWING, 2ND Emergency Rescue Squadron, CTU 73.2.1, CTG 79.1, info TANGIER, Fighter Command.

(This was to transmit intelligence via courier planes from their headquarters in Hollandia that was not otherwise available except in dispatch form).

At about 1625 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT), he learned that the PB4Y in Sector 303°(T) - 312°(T) in passing Puerto Princesa at 1440 had observed some shipping in the harbor and fighters taking off which had not attacked.*

At about 1628 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) he learned that one of the Morotai-based PB4Y's flying in Sector 312°(T) - 321°(T) had sighted shortly before 1220, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 118°-40'E, on course 200°(T), speed twenty knots.** This was the Japanese SECOND Striking Force which reported having sighted a B-24 type aircraft at 1212.***

At about 1733 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he received CTF 77's dispatch 230142, which among other things, requested that the C.G.'s FIFTH and THIRTEENTH Air Forces continue thorough reconnaissance of Coron Bay and approaching routes, and strike as possible day and night. He began to ponder what action to take in order to best fulfill this request.

At 2121 he reported to COMSOWESPAC that the planes flying the two sectors out of Owi between 314°(T) and 330°(T) had completed their search with an average coverage of ninety-five per cent and negative results.****

At 2331 he advised his command that for October 24th he estimated no change in the enemy air strength from that for October 23rd. Exactly what this meant is not clear for he had issued an identical estimate on October 22nd for October 23rd. That it was incorrect is apparent since on the previous day about 258 planes had been flown into Luzon as reinforcements for the SIXTH Base Air Force and FOURTH Air Army.***** Evidently this fact was not available but might have been anticipated.

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* Aircraft in Sector II Dispatch 230700 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force.

** C.G. 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to all concerned current SOWESPAC operations.

*** War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

**** C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 232121 I October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COM7THFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.

***** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VI (A)(4).

(b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

CTF 73 in the CURRITUCK was at this time moored alongside the TANGIER in Morotai Harbor.*

Meanwhile CTG 73.4 (Search and Support Group), under the operational control of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, continued to execute his part of Search Plan FOX with his Morotai-based squadrons, VPB's 101, 115 and 146. His immediate operational senior was the Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing, who in turn was responsible to Commanding General FIFTH Air Force.

The contacts made by his planes are discussed under "Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd" and are not repeated here.

It should be emphasized that during this day the Morotai-based PB4Y's failed to locate either the THIRD Section or the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force although the enemy units were well within the search sectors flown. A discussion of the failure of these planes to locate either of these forces will not be undertaken herein but the most likely explanation based on all evidence available is that these searches were probably improperly flown.

(1) Operations of CTG 73.7 (Advanced Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

During this day the SAN CARLOS, which was the flagship of CTG 73.7, remained anchored in Hinunangan Bay.** Since the first elements of VPB's THIRTY-THREE and THIRTY-FOUR were to arrive this day he was quite likely closely supervising the preparations to tend them. The HALF MOON, also in TG 73.7, was apparently assigned this latter task.***

At 1530 ten PBY's arrived and at 1620 he reported their arrival to COMFAIRWING SEVENTEEN (Administration) and to CTF 77.****

At 2127 having, in all probability, (a) determined the expected availability of the seaplanes, and (b) discussed the matter over the TBS voice radio circuit with CTF 77, although there is no real evidence of this, he advised CTF 77 by dispatch that, among other things, his night seaplane searches would commence the following evening using three seaplanes to search three sectors between 341°(T) and 017°(T) and his day seaplane searches would commence the following morning using two seaplanes to search two sectors between 017°(T) and 041°(T)(Plate IX).*****

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* War Diary CURRITUCK, October 23rd, 1944.
** War Diary SAN CARLOS, October 23rd, 1944.
*** War Diary HALF MOON, October 23rd, 1944.
**** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 230720 October 1944 to COMFAW 17 (ADMIN), info CTF 77, C.G. 308TH BOMWING, CTF 73.
***** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 231227 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COM7THFLT, CTF 73, all interested in Catalina Operations, C.G. 5TH Air Force, C.G. 308TH BOMWING.

(B) Operations of CINCPAC-CINCPOA, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

A comprehensive discussion of Allied arrangements is contained in Volume I, Chapter II, and will not be repeated herein. However one arrangement is of sufficient importance to justify repetition. This is the fact that COMTHIRDFLT and COMSEVENTHFLT (or COMSOWESPAC) were designated coordinate commanders while having no common superior in the next echelon.

This placed CINCPOA, who was on the same command level as COMSOWESPAC, in the position of having to act as arbiter in those decisions of COMTHIRDFLT which had an impact on the strategic direction of the Leyte operation and which, by implication, might be at variance with the views of either COMSOWESPAC or COMSEVENTHFLT. CINCPOA had determined to act in this capacity on the previous day, when COMTHIRDFLT had requested COMSOWESPAC for information as to when he (COMTHIRDFLT) (a) might be able to pass through Surigao Strait and into the South China Sea* and (b) could expect to be relieved of his covering responsibilities.** These matters have been discussed in full in Volume III under "Operations of CINCPAC-CINCPOA, October 22nd". It will be recalled that CINCPOA at this time advised COMTHIRDFLT, among other things, that the restrictions imposed by the necessity for covering COMSOWESPAC's forces were accepted.***

At 1206 he advised certain of his subordinates that a Japanese plane for the second straight day had contacted a surface unit or units, possibly Japanese, most likely in Latitude 23°-20'N, Longitude 131°-38'E. He assigned low weight to this intelligence on the basis of the unlikelihood of such an occurrence on two consecutive days. A discussion of this is contained under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd" and also in Volume III under "Operations of CINCPAC-CINCPOA, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd".

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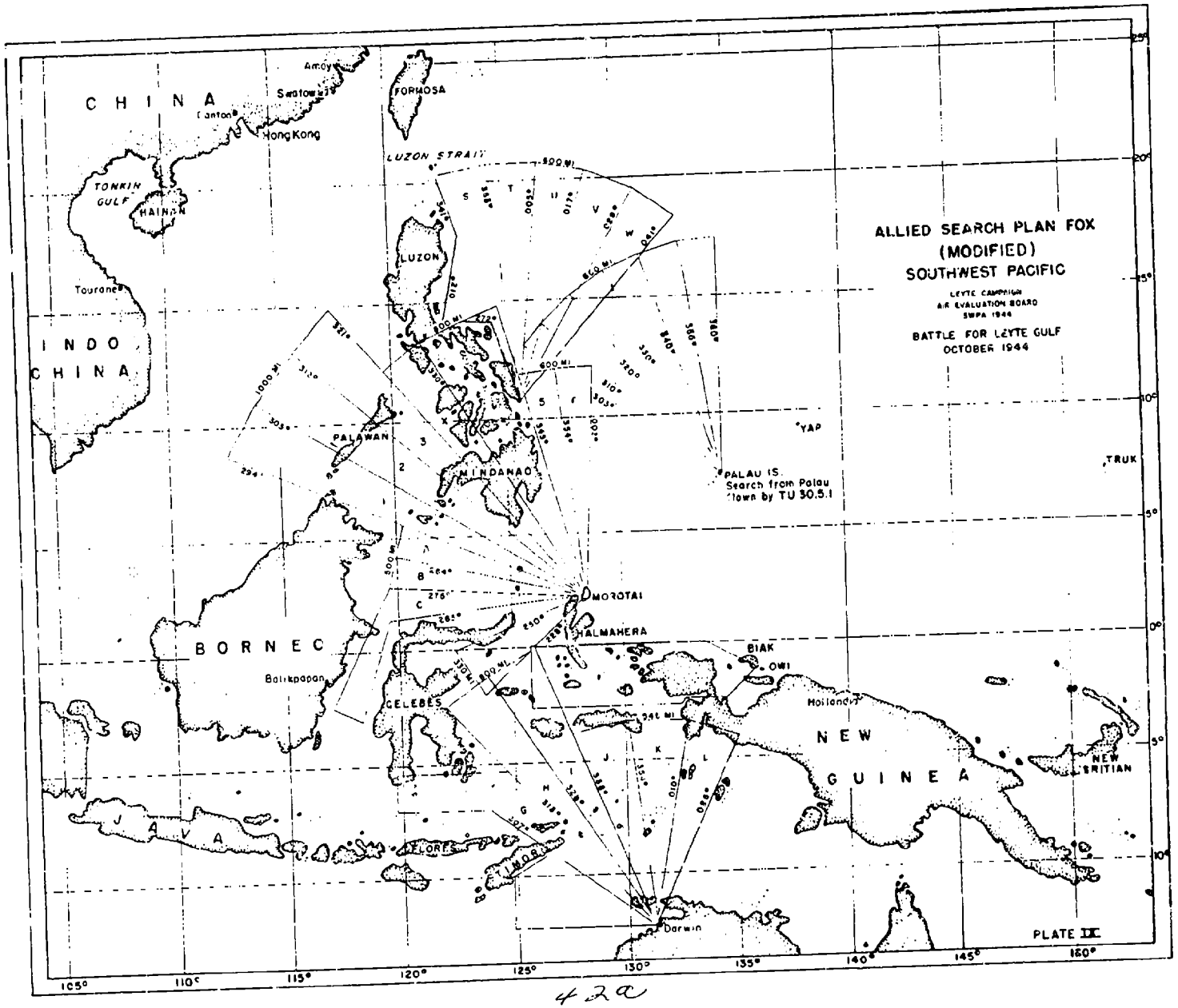
* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF's 38, 77, etc.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF's 38, 77, etc.

*** CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.


ALLIED SEARCH PLAN FOX
(MODIFIED)
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC
LEYTE CAMPAIGN
AIR EVALUATION BOARD
SWPA 1944
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944
CHINA
Amoy
Swatow
Canton
Hong Kong
FORMOSA
LUZON STRAIT
TONKIN GULF
HAINAN
LUZON
Tourane
INDO CHINA
PALAWAN
MINDANAO
YAP
TRUK
PALAU IS.
Search from Palau
flown by TU 30.5.1
MOROTAI
HALMAHERA
BIAK
OWI
BORNEO
Balikpapan
CELEBES
Hollandia
NEW GUINEA
NEW BRITIAN
JAVA
AZORES
TIMOR
Darwin
PLATE IX
105°
110°
115°
120°
125°
130°
135°
140°
145°
150°

42a

(1) Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

In order to better understand the operations of COMTHIRDFLT at this time it seems wise to inject here a brief summary of the situation. It will be recalled that earlier COMTHIRDFLT had received information from Allied submarines which reported (a) enemy forces including at least one carrier moving south toward Manila or Coron Bay (the SECOND Striking Force) and (b) enemy forces including battleships moving northeast through Palawan Passage. Because of these contacts and because, as pointed out under "Operations of CINCPAC-CINCPOA, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd", he had been advised by CINCPOA that the restrictions imposed by the necessity to cover COMSOWESPAC forces were accepted, he had reassigned his three carrier task groups (TG's 38.2, 38.3, 38.4) so that at 0600 on the following morning they would be positioned as follows: (a) TG 38.3 about ninety miles eastward of Polillo Island, (b) TG 38.2 astride the eastern exit from San Bernardino Strait and (c) TG 38.4 bearing 050°(T) distant fifty miles from the southeast tip of Samar.

He did this to cover the principal enemy capabilities of (a) attempting to reinforce the ground troops at Leyte by Tokyo Express runs, (b) making strong air and surface raids against the Leyte forces or (c) making a strong attack on the Leyte forces employing major forces.

Having issued these instructions and mindful of his logistics he called CTG 30.8 on board the NEW JERSEY. At 1110 he cancelled his previous orders to that commander and directed him, in part, (a) to maintain nine oilers and the CVE SARGENT BAY in Area ALCOHOL until further orders and (b) the remainder of THIRDFLT oilers with standard loads at Ulithi. These orders were a major departure from the October 22nd order which related largely to readying his forces for Operation HOTFOOT, they show clearly that COMTHIRDFLT was giving his principal attention to his covering responsibilities.

However, from the orders he issued at about this same time (a) to CTG 38.1 to launch a deck load strike against YAP en route Ulithi and (b) to CTG 30.9 at Ulithi to employ every means at his disposal to rearm, reprovision and refuel TG 38.1 on a twenty-four hour working basis it seems clear that, at this time, he saw no reason for diverting CTG 38.1 from Ulithi and was clearly continuing to prepare his command for HOTFOOT.*

At 1310 he received information from CINCPOA (a) suggesting that a Japanese plane had sighted earlier a surface force in Latitude 23°-20'N, Longitude 131°-38'E and (b) stating that since (1) a similar sighting had been made on the previous day and (2) the Japanese would not make this mistake on two successive days, it was doubtful if this was enemy. Actually, it was the Japanese Main Force which, in part because of this, was not detected by Allied planes until the following afternoon.

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* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230204 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, All TFC's 7THFLT, All TGC's 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, COMINCH; also COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230238 October 1944 to CTG 30.9, info CTG 38.1, ATCOM Ulithi.

Also at 1310 he received an aircraft sighting report on one enemy submarine in Latitude 17°-20'N, Longitude 130°-40'E, on course 200°(T), speed twelve knots* (Contact "4", Plate V).

Between this time and 1733 he issued several dispatches concerning the preparations of his command for the next scheduled major operation (Operation HOTFOOT). One of these, issued at 1325, related to the logistic requirements for increasing the fighter complement in his carriers;** another, among other things, related to transferring from TG 30.3 to TG 38.1 the BOSTON, CHARRETTE, BELL, BURNS, BOYD and COWELL and transferring in return from TG 38.1 to TG 30.3 the FARENHOLT, WOODWORTH, MC CALLA, GRAYSON.***

At 1648 realizing that his information concerning enemy operations to the westward of Luzon was very sketchy indeed, he advised CINCPAC to this effect and suggested that submarine observation of that area would be helpful during the current epidemic of Japanese movements.****

At 1733 he received CTF77's dispatch 230142 quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd" which gave that commander's estimate of the situation and requested certain searches be made by the THIRD Fleet.***** While his reactions to this dispatch are not known it seems likely that he was pleased in that his planned searches for the following day covered exactly those areas requested by CTF 77.

At 1744 he received a Morotai-based aircraft contact report on two NACHI class heavy cruisers, one NATORI class light cruiser and four MUTSUKI class destroyers in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 118°-40'E, on course 200°(T), speed twenty knots ****** (Contact "5", Plate V).

This contact was on the Japanese SECOND Striking Force and on evaluating it, he very likely estimated it to be the same force contacted by the ICEFISH northwest of Luzon on the previous day.*******

At 2032 he learned of the DACE's attack******** (Contact "2").

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* Plane No. 52 of Flight No. 223 Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to Any or All U.S. Ships.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230425 October 1944 to COMAIRPAC, info CINCPAC, CTF 38, CTG 38.1, COMAIR7THFLT Logistics.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230546 October 1944 to CTG's 30.3, 38.1, 30.9, CANBERRA, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, etc.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230748 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, CTF 77.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CAAF SOWESPAC.

****** C.G. 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to all concerned SOWESPAC Operations.

******* ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM7THFLT (Readdressed by COM7THFLT to CTF's 38 57, 71, 72, COM3RDFLT, All TGC's TF 38.

******** DACE Dispatch 231115 October 1944 to CTF 71.

During the early evening he undoubtedly continued to study the developing situation with keen interest and weigh his planned action in the light of new intelligence. It appears he decided that, despite the fact submarines to the north and air searches out of Tinian had revealed no significant enemy movements, the security of his northern flank was in doubt and that he must therefore be ready to institute northward searches. Accordingly at 2210, he ordered the INDEPENDENCE, among other things, to be prepared to launch at 2400 or as soon thereafter as possible a search to the northward to cover sector 320°(T) to 010°(T) to a distance of 350 miles.*

It also appears that during the late evening he continued to ponder the implications of the DACE's attack report. Anxious to leave as little as possible to chance--in particular to eliminate the bays along the northwest coast of Palawan as possible rendezvous or refueling points--he decided to launch a search the following morning to reconnoiter that section of the Palawan Coast. In addition, he seems to have been dissatisfied with the paucity of details in CTG 38.2's plan for the next day for at 2317 he sent a TBS voice radio message to CTG 38.2 which (a) mildly admonished him for the lack of details contained in his (CTG 38.2) earlier search instructions to TG 38.2, (b) based on a report just received (most likely the DACE's attack report) advised CTG 38.2 of the need for the bays along the northwest coast of Palawan from Imuruan Bay to Bacuit to be investigated and (c) stated his desire that despite the long distance involved, a sweep of that general area be launched as early as practicable.**

At 2350 he received the DARTER's report*** (Contact "1").

At the end of the day COMTHIRDFLT, in TG 38.2, was on course 249°(T), speed fifteen knots, zigzagging, about 110 miles east northeast from the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait.****

(1) Operations of CTF 38, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTF 38, in the LEXINGTON, with TG 38.3 continued on toward TG 38.3's assigned position about ninety miles east of Polillo Island.

As the day passed he made an estimate of the situation. While his thought processes are not known, it seems clear from the order he issued later that he was concerned about the 0600 position of TG 38.3 and felt that in addition to making its scheduled searches to the westward as directed by COMTHIRDFLT, TG 38.3 might well take what might be termed unusual security measures. This was so, for Luzon would be but ninety miles away and the aircraft from Luzon fields could be troublesome. Therefore he felt that action should be taken to prevent not only this but to prevent any unlocated attack from the north which area was not

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* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 231310 October 1944 to INDEPENDENCE, info CTF 38, CTG's 38.2 and 38.4.
** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 231400 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
*** DARTER Dispatch 231240 October 1944 to CTF 71.
**** Deck Log NEW JERSEY, October 23rd, 1944.

being covered by COMTHIRDFLT's orders. Finally he felt that since TG 38.3 was to be within air attack range of Manila, action should be taken against the shipping there.

Having completed this estimate he at 1547 issued instructions to CTG 38.3 to that effect.*

At 1646 he reported by TBS voice radio to COMTHIRDFLT who, with TG 38.2 had closed to TBS voice radio range, that his (TG 38.3's) afternoon searches (Diagram "B") had proved negative. It will be recalled that these searches had been ordered by COMTHIRDFLT at 0252 and were designed to cover as much of the Sibuyan Sea as practicable.**

At about 1733 he received CTF 77's alerting dispatch which has been discussed in detail heretofore. In carefully studying it he likely noted, among other things, that the combined searches of the three TF 38 groups would, except for the sea area west of Palawan, cover the areas considered important by CTF 77.

During the evening he received three reports of enemy combatant forces. One at 1744 from C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command reported two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and four destroyers about 120 miles west of Mindoro*** (Contact "5", Plate V), a second at 2031 from the DACE reported her successes against the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force**** (Contact "2"), and the third at 2153 from the DARTER reported her successes against the same force***** (Contact "1").

(a) Operations of CTG 38.1, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 38.1, in the WASP, with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 in company, was en route Ulithi which was about 530 miles away.

TG 38.1 consisted of the WASP (FFF), HORNET, HANCOCK, MONTEREY, COWPENS, PENSACOLA, SALT LAKE CITY, CHESTER (FF), SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, DUNLAP, FANNING, CASE, CUMMINGS, CASSIN, DOWNES, MC CALLA, WOODWORTH, FARENHOLT, IZARD (FF), CONNER, BROWN and GRAYSON with a total of 187 VF, 67 VB and 72 VT.

At 1047 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTG 38.4 cancelling the movement for that task group to Ulithi and directing that commander to (a) proceed to a position about fifty miles off the southeast tip of Samar and (b) launch westward searches the following dawn. Since he probably received this important dispatch

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* CTF 38 Visual Dispatch 230647 October 1944 to CTG 38.3, info COM3RDFLT, CTG 38.2.

** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 230746 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

*** C.G. 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 230320 October 1944 to all concerned current SOWESPAC Operations.

**** DACE Dispatch 231115 October 1944 to CTF 71.

***** DARTER Dispatch 231240 October 1944 to CTF 71.

earlier, i.e., at 1000, this fact is discussed in Volume III under "Operations of CTG 38.1 and CTG 38.4, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd".*

However, the fact that he, with TG 38.1, was not recalled as was CTG 38.4 must have indicated to him that COMTHIRDFLT did not consider the situation in the Coron Bay area to be so serious as to override the requirement to make adequate preparations for Operation HOTFOOT. Therefore having been informed by the HANCOCK that the radar equipped night fighters were highly effective he at 1228, among other things, invited COMTHIRDFLT's attention to this fact, pointed out that a number of these planes were at Pearl Harbor and recommended that they take part in the operation.**

During the remainder of the day nothing of particular importance occurred with relation to CTG 38.1 so he continued on toward Ulithi. No planes nor pilots were lost during the day.

At 2400 CTG 38.1 was bearing 299°(T), distant 370 miles from Ulithi and on course 125°(T), speed fifteen knots.

(b) Operations of CTG 38.2, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 38.2, in the INTREPID, with TG 38.2, which was fueling from the oilers of TG 30.9*** (TOMAHAWK, KENNEBAGO, MARIAS, PECOS, CACHE and SAUGATUCK) was on course 270°(T), speed ten knots and zigzagging. He was heading for his 0600 October 24th position (Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E). He had received orders to proceed to the latter position by visual dispatch an hour and one-half earlier and was awaiting detailed instructions in connection therewith.****

At 1057 his ships had completed fueling.

His command consisted, at this time, of the INDEPENDENCE (FFF), INTREPID, CABOT, IOWA (FF), NEW JERSEY (FFFFF), VINCENNES (F), MIAMI, BILOXI, MILLER, THE SULLIVANS, TINGEY (FF), OWEN, HICKOX (F), HUNT, LEWIS HANCOCK, MARSHALL, HAISEY POWELL (F), CUSHING, COLAHAN, UHLMANN, YARNALL (F), TWINING, STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN with a total of eighty-five VF, twenty-four VB***** and thirty-five VT.

At about 1106, he received the amplifying orders from COMTHIRDFLT he had been anticipating.****** He noted that in addition to proceeding to the previously ordered position off San Bernardino Strait,

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* Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (B)(1)(a)(1)(a).

** CTG 38.1 Dispatch 230358 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, CTF 38.

*** Deck Log INTREPID, October 23rd, 1944.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230017 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

***** This is one VB more than was reported in Volume III.

****** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230003 October 1944 to CTG 38.2, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, All concerned SOWESPAC Operations.

he was to (a) launch a reinforced search to westward at dawn the next day to include ron Bay and (b) to strike targets of opportunity.

At 1146 he changed course to 240°(T), speed sixteen knots.*

At 2210 he received COMTHIRDFLT's orders** to prepare to launch a search to the north as discussed earlier under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd".

At 2300 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMTHIRDFLT, discussed in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd", which (a) seemed to mildly reprove him for the paucity of details in his earlier search advisory (CTG 38.2 dispatch 230747) and (b) on the basis of recent intelligence requested that he sweep the northwest coast of Palawan from Muruan Bay to Bacuit.***

At 2400 CTG 38.2 was about eighty miles from his assigned 0600 October 24th position, on course 249°(T), speed fifteen knots.* He had lost no aircraft nor pilots during this period.

(c) Operations of CTG 38.3, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 38.3, in the ESSEX, with TG 38.3 on course 275°(T), speed twenty-three knots was heading for his assigned position about ninety miles east of Polillo Island.

His command consisted of the ESSEX (FFF), LEXINGTON (FFFF), PRINCETON, LANGLEY, MASSACHUSETTS, SOUTH DAKOTA, SANTA FE, BIRMINGHAM, MOBILE, RENO, CLARENCE K. BRONSON (FF), COTTEN, DORTCH, CATLING, HEALY, PORTERFIELD (FF), CALLAGHAN, CASSIN YOUNG, IRWIN, PRESTON, LAWS, LONGSHAW and MORRISON, with a total of 136 VF, fifty-five VB and fifty-four VT.

The afternoon search which was launched at 1212 was composed of eleven VF and seven VB.

Two sectors were flown (a) one from 280°(T) to 350°(T) with each ten degree sector being covered by one VF and one VB to a distance of 290 miles and (b) one from 250°(T) to 265°(T) through the Sibuyan Sea to a distance of 400 miles being flown by two pairs of VF.***

At 1725 when the afternoon search planes returned he learned that there had been no contacts on enemy warships although one VF had reconnoitered Manila Harbor and reported presence of eleven to twenty medium AK's but could not determine whether any warships were present.****

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* Deck Log INTREPID, October 23rd, 1944.
** COMTHIRDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 231310 October 1944 to INDEPENDENCE, info CTF 38, CTG's 38.2, 38.4.
*** COMTHIRDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 231400 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
**** War Diary CTG 38.3, October 23rd, 1944; also Deck Log LEXINGTON, October 23rd, 1944.

Since during the day he received most of the contacts received by COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 38 he was alert to the developing situation and likely made certain that the searches on the morrow would be effectively accomplished.

At 1908 he directed TG 38.3, among other things, to (a) at 0610 search to 300 miles between 225°(T) and 295°(T) with four VF and four VB in each ten degree sector, (b) employ (1) eight VF as radio relay planes and (2) twenty VF for a sweep of the Manila area.*

Owing to a collision in mid-air the PRINCETON had lost two VF. As a consequence there were 134 VF, fifty-five VB and fifty-four VT remaining in his carriers.

At 2400 CTG 38.3 was about 190 miles east of Polillo Island on course 280°(T), speed twenty-four knots.**

(d) Operations of CTG 38.4, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

At 1042 CTG 38.4, in the FRANKLIN, with TG 38.4 and in company with CTG 38.1 continued to (a) head for Ulithi and (b) top off his destroyers from his heavy ships.

TG 38.4 now consisted of the FRANKLIN (FFF), SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE (F), BELLEAU WOOD, WASHINGTON, ALABAMA, WICHITA (F), NEW ORLEANS, MAURY (FF), GRIDLEY, HELM, MC CALL, MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON, BAGLEY, WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON (F), COGSWELL (F), CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP with a total of 109 VF, forty-four VB and fifty-four VT.

At 1047 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT directing him to (a) proceed to a position about fifty miles, bearing 050°(T) from the southeast tip of Samar and (b) launch westward searches the following day. Since, as pointed out under "Operations of CTG 38.1, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd", this dispatch had probably been received at 1000 (when COMCRUDIV SIX reported receiving it), it will not be discussed here.

In accordance with these orders he at 1118 directed the formation to change course to 250°(T), speed eighteen knots.*** He continued flying routine CAP and anti-submarine patrols.

At 1248 he sent a dispatch to CTG 38.3 to direct the HELM, which had delivered mail to the LEXINGTON, to rejoin TG 38.4 in Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E, at 0600 October 24th.**** However, the HELM was already returning to TG 38.4.

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* CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 231008 October 1944 to TG 38.3 carriers.

** Deck Log LEXINGTON, October 23rd, 1944.

*** Deck Log ENTERPRISE, October 23rd, 1944.

**** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 230348 October 1944 to CTG 38.3, info HELM.

Having completed his fueling at 1452 he now increased speed which varied throughout the remainder of the day from twenty to twenty-six knots.

During the day he, of course, received much the same information regarding enemy contacts as did COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 38. He therefore realizing (a) the possible seriousness of the developing situation and the importance of the following day's searches and possible strikes, likely made certain that these searches and strikes would be effectively accomplished and (b) that his scheduled searches would fly over the western Visayas, at 1909 informed CTF 77 that at 0600 (the following morning) he was sending four search and attack teams, each team composed of eight VF and six VB to search sectors between 230°(T) and 270°(T) from Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E to a distance of 325 miles.*

At 1950 he observed the HELM rejoin.

At 2400 TG 38.4 was on course 245°(T), speed twenty knots** and heading for the above position which was but ninety-seven miles away. No planes nor pilots were lost during the day.

(2) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search, Reconnaissance and Photographic Group), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd

CTG 30.5, in the HAMLIN (AV 15) at Ulithi, on this day continued his air searches from Kossol Passage (TU 30.5.1), Saipan (TU 30.5.2) and Tinian (TU 30.5.3) in accordance with Commander Forward Area Central Pacific (CTF 57) Operation Plan No. 6-44 as indicated in Plate X, and in Diagram "B".

Shortly after 1100, the plane flying out of Tinian in Sector 290°(T) - 299°(T) should have closed to within visual or radar detection distance of the Japanese Main Force heading in a southwesterly direction. (The latter, at this time, was about seventy miles inside the 1,000 mile limit of the search and would remain inside the search arc until approximately 1700.***)

This plane failed to gain contact. Why, is not known since (a) the weather was reasonably good at this time--ISUZU in her War Diary reports cloudy weather during the day, visibility about twenty-seven miles at 0600, five point four miles at 1200 and twenty-seven miles at 1800,**** (b) the Main Force was well within the limit of the search sector and (c) the Japanese Main Force did not contact any Allied PB4Y planes on this day.

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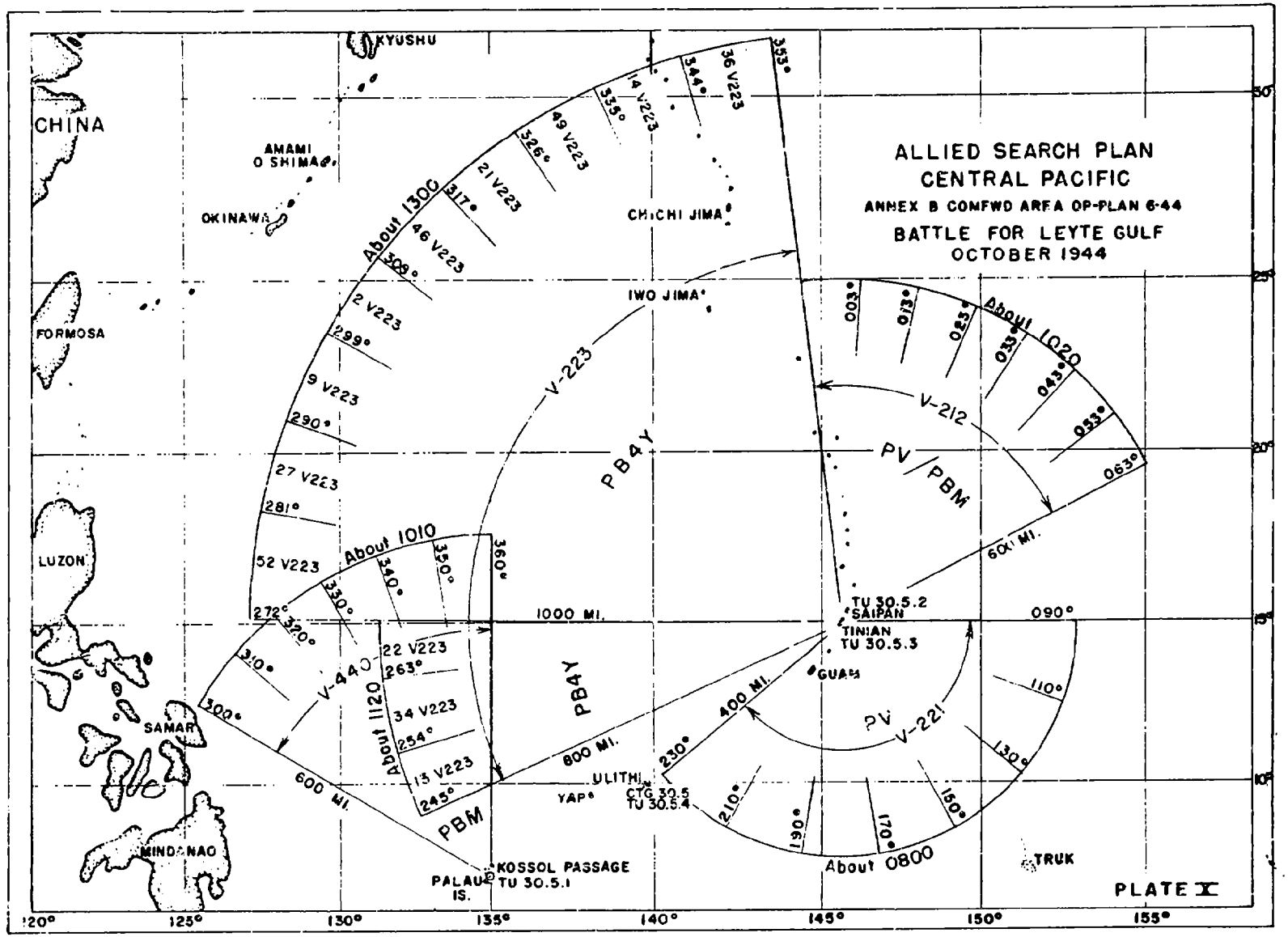
* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 231009 October 1944 to CTF 77.

** Deck Log FRANKLIN, October 23rd, 1944.

*** Appended Track Chart for Mobile Force Main Force, October 20th - 29th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.


ALLIED SEARCH PLAN
CENTRAL PACIFIC
ANNEX B COMFWD AREA OP-PLAN 6-44
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944
CHINA
KYUSHU
AMAMI O SHIMA
OKINAWA
CHICHI JIMA
IWO JIMA
FORMOSA
LUZON
SAMAR
MINDANAO
PALAU IS.
KOSSOL PASSAGE
TU 30.5.1
YAP
ULITHI
CTG 30.5
TU 30.5.4
GUAM
TINIAN
TU 30.5.3
SAIPAN
TU 30.5.2
TRUK
About 1300
About 1020
About 1010
About 1120
About 0800
V-223
V-212
V-440
V-221
PB4Y
PV/PBM
PBM
PV
1000 MI.
800 MI.
600 MI.
400 MI.
600 MI.
090°
PLATE X
120°
125°
130°
135°
140°
145°
150°
155°

However this failure to detect the Main Force, when within the search arc, was not a new phenomenon. Instead, exactly the same failure had occurred on the previous day. This failure is discussed under "Operations of CTG 30.5, October 22nd" and is important because it seems to show that the Allied searches in the critical sectors on this day, as on the preceding day, were either (a) improperly flown or (b) flown insufficiently far to gain contact.

Before the end of the day he learned that his searches had been completed as follows:

(a) CTU 30.5.1 (sector searches to northwest of Kossol Passage) negative with full distance and coverage,* and

(b) CTU 30.5.2 (sector searches to the northwest of Saipan) negative with ninety-five per cent coverage in some sectors.**

He did not receive a report on this day from his unit commander at Tinian (CTU 30.5.3) because that report was delayed in transmission. However, since he was on the AOIC (Aircraft Operational Intelligence Circuit) he not only knew that the search was being conducted but had in addition received all important contacts. Among these were (a) at 1200 a very large Japanese submarine on course 180°(T), speed twelve knots, in Latitude 17°-10'N, Longitude 130°-40'E (Contact "4", Plate V) and (b) at 1300 a SUKI class destroyer with three small destroyers and two SC's on course 150°(T), speed fifteen knots, in Latitude 26°-50'N, Longitude 141°-30'E.***

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* CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 230835 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59, CTG 30.5.

** CTU 30.5.2 Dispatch 230725 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59, CTG 30.5.

*** CTU 30.5.3 Dispatch 231040 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF 57, CTG 30.5.

(2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific), 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

CTF 17 during this period operated as heretofore. His submarines as shown on Diagram "B" were either on station, returning from station or heading toward their new stations. However, it is clear that he was not fully informed as to their actual locations for at 1152 he issued a dispatch advising those interested of the location of his submarines. That portion of this dispatch which applied to the submarines in the Western Pacific is quoted in full as follows: "TF 17 Subs 23rd. POMFRET, PINTADO, JALLAO, ATULE, BARBEL at Saipan. Eastbound. WHALE, SEAHORSE 22 North 156 East. BONEFISH 20 North 133 East. Westbound HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA 20 North 133 East. Patrolling vicinity Luzon Strait are ten subs."*

This dispatch is of considerable importance for it was quite in error as these examples will portray: (a) the PINTADO, JALLAO, ATULE, which were proceeding to their patrol stations, were not at Saipan but instead were about 300 miles to the northwest, (b) the BARBEL which was returning to Saipan was about 270 miles from there, (c) the WHALE and SEAHORSE which were approximately correct in Latitude were about 400 miles to the westward of their reported positions, (d) the BONEFISH was about 360 miles to the westward of the reported position, (e) the HADDOCK, HALIBUT and TUNA were about 250 miles to the eastward of the reported position and (f) instead of ten TF 17 submarines in the vicinity of Luzon Strait there were but seven (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRACON, SNOOK, SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM) most of which were over 100 miles to the westward of the strait proper.

Since he had received contact reports from CTF 71 reporting Japanese forces moving up through Palawan Passage toward Coron Bay or Manila and since he had reports from his own submarines about enemy forces moving south off the west coast of Luzon also heading in the direction of Coron Bay or Manila it is clear that he awaited amplification of these sightings. During the afternoon he received no further contact reports. However he received something perhaps more important. This was CTF 77's estimate of the enemy plans based on the above contacts wherein CTF 77 stated, among other items, that the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay was, in his opinion, the first phase of the buildup of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte.** He noted that, although submarine contact reports were responsible for CTF 77's estimate, there were no additional instructions to the submarines---the submarines were omitted. Instead CTF 77 had called upon those commanders charged with covering the Leyte forces to provide that coverage by reconnoitering Coron Bay and approaching routes by air and by making air strikes against forces discovered.

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* CTF 17 Dispatch 230252 October 1944 to All Stations Interested in Friendly Subs.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLTS, CINCSWPA, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMFEAF.

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBMARINE OPERATING AREA CLASSIFICATIONS

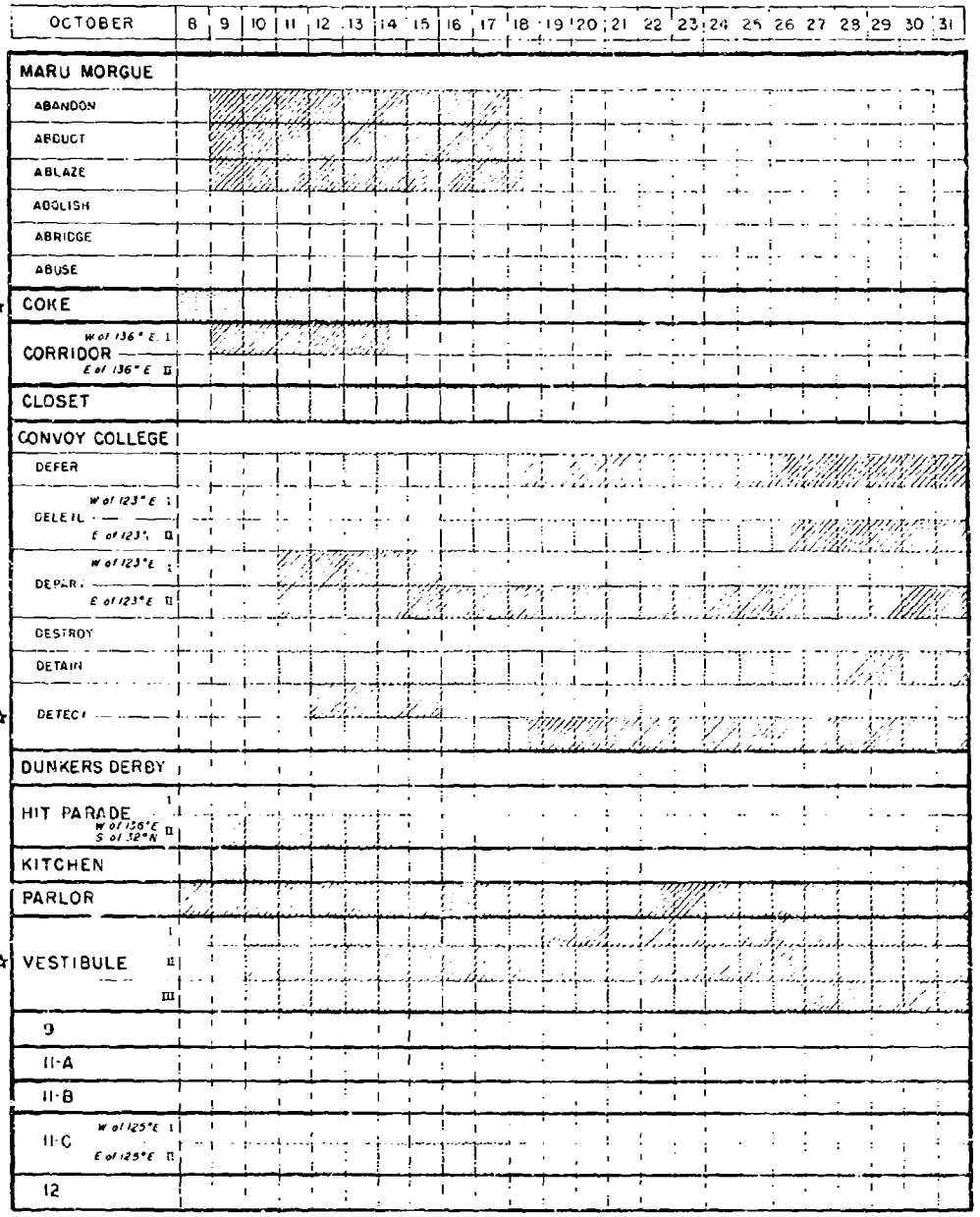
WESTERN PACIFIC

OCTOBER 8 th – 31 st, inc. 1944

CINCPOA ZONE NOTICES 35,38,40,42,44,45,47

All areas submarine patrol zones unless otherwise indicated
Dotted areas indicate air surface zone.
Hatched areas indicate joint zone

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944



☆ COKE is a fueling area (Lat 19° N, Long 139° E) Not shown on Plate XII

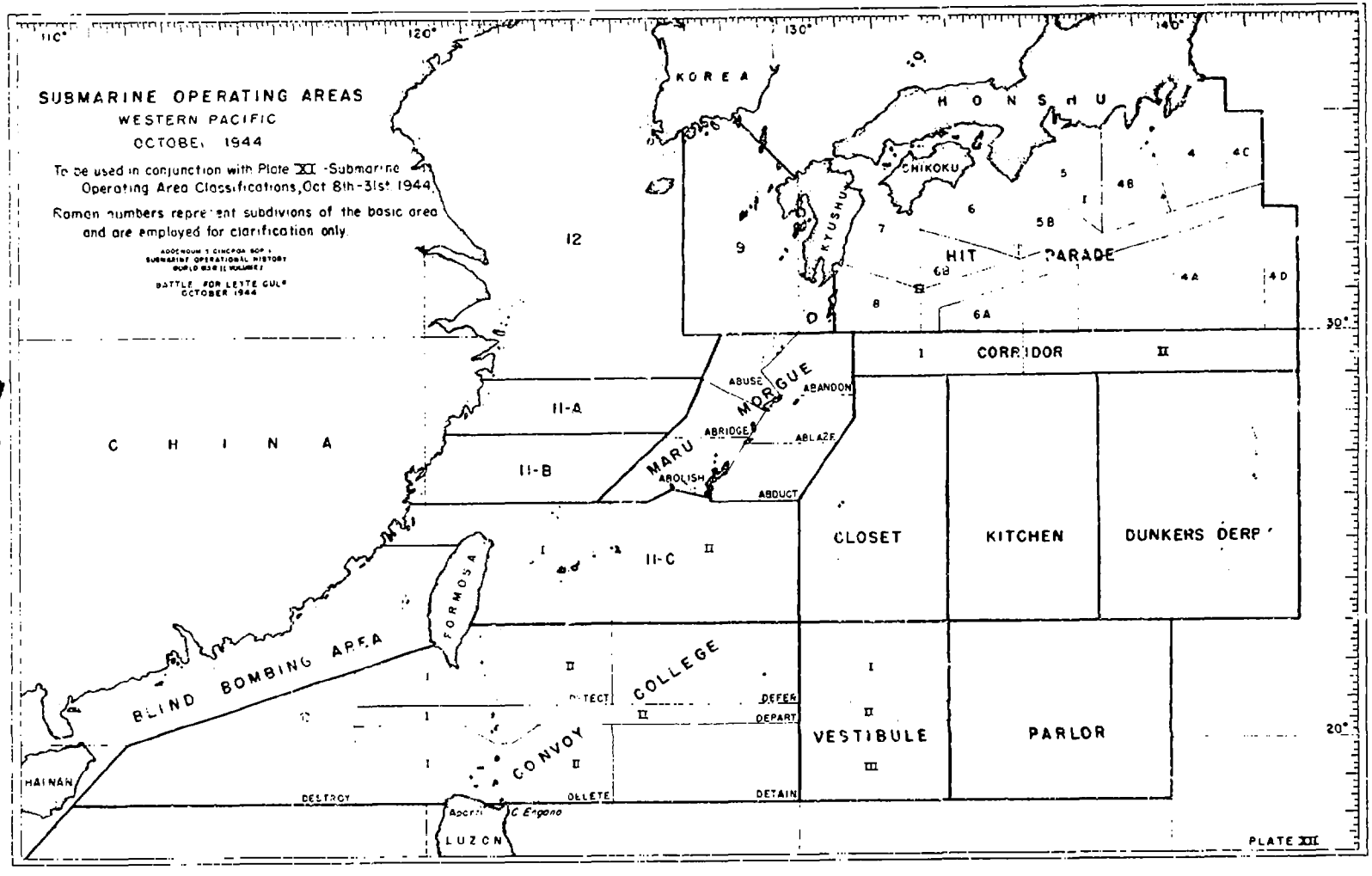
☆☆ Until 0001 October 16th DETECT divided at 122° E After that date divided at 123° E

☆☆☆ Until 0001 October 15th VESTIBULE divided at 21° N After that date Lane (II) established between 20° 30 N and 21° N

PLATE XI

CONFIDENTIAL

52a



CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

At 1809 he was likely surprised to learn that COMTHIRDFLT had noted the same omission for that commander at that time advised CINCPAC that since information concerning Japanese movements off Lingayan was sketchy, submarine observations would be helpful.*

Commencing at (a) 1857 he advised his command of events of interest and in particular he (1) referred to the SEA DOG's report of two hits in a freighter in a large southbound convoy and (2) informed the ICEFISH that her extension of patrol would be granted** and (b) 1914 directed ESCOLAR wolf pack to guard a China frequency for information on lifeguard assignments.***

At 1922 he advised the submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE (five water areas embracing Luzon Strait and extending westward to Hainan Island—Plate XII) that (a) China-based planes reported shipping along the boundary between the Blind Bombing area and the submarine patrol zone and (b) submarines in Areas DESTROY and DETECT should find good hunting near that line.**** The information in this dispatch appears to have been meant for (1) the HADDOCK, HALIBUT and TUNA which were en route to Area DESTROY and scheduled to arrive at sunset October 24th and (2) the SHARK, BLACKFISH and SEADRAGON which were now supposed to be patrolling Area DETECT but which had drifted into Area DESTROY. Otherwise Area DESTROY was unoccupied except for the SNOOK which was under orders to join the SHARK wolf pack after sunset October 24th and which was working her way toward Area DETECT.***** ACTUALLY THEN, THE ONLY SUBMARINES IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED WERE THE SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON AND SNOOK. IF THESE SUBMARINES ACTED ON THIS INFORMATION IT WOULD FURTHER WEAKEN THE ALREADY WEAK ALLIED SUBMARINE PATROL IN LUZON STRAIT BY MOVING THE NORTHERN GROUP OF SUBMARINES EVEN FURTHER TO THE NORTHWEST.

Why CTF 17 seemed more concerned at this time with the sinking of merchant shipping than with the obtaining of information regarding the movements of enemy combatant forces is not explained. Perhaps having received CTF 77's 230142, commented on above, and having concurred in the views therein expressed, he considered that this was largely a SOWESPAC responsibility.

Finally, at approximately (a) 2030 he probably received a contact report from the DRUM reporting a convoy of four ships and at least three escorts in Latitude 19°-08'N, Longitude 118°-31'E on course 350°(T), speed seven knots,****** and (b) 2320 he received a dispatch from the DARTER reporting having sunk one ATAGO class heavy cruiser and damaged a second.*******

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* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230748 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info CTF 77, CTF 17.
** CTF 17 Dispatch 230957 October 1944 to All Submarines.
*** CTF 17 Dispatch 231014 October 1944 to All Submarines.
**** CTF 17 Dispatch 231022 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE.
***** CTF 17 Dispatch 201952 October 1944 to All Submarines, info CINCPAC.
****** War Patrol Report DRUM, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 056 undated.
******* DARTER Dispatch 231240 October 1944 to CTF 71, CTF 17, info CINCPAC.

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE

The submarines SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM, SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON and SNOOK patrolled CONVOY COLLEGE as on the previous day. The weather in this area had not improved from the previous day with a rough sea still running from 060°(T).*

(1) SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack), with the exception of the ICEFISH, patrolled Area DELETE submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.** The ICEFISH had strayed into the eastern end of Area DESTROY and had spent most of the day in that area but by evening she had returned to Area DELETE.

The patrol of this group was uneventful until 1538 when the SAWFISH, in Latitude 18°-57'N, Longitude 118°-23'E, sighted tops and smoke of a convoy which she estimated consisted of one very large AP, in the van, with eight or nine other ships escorted by two destroyers. This was a fairly accurate estimate for the convoy appears to have been the HARUKAZE convoy consisting of twelve ships.*** This convoy, after dispersal had been ordered for Manila shipping, had departed that harbor for Takao on October 21st and reported having been under repeated submarine attacks commencing at 1730 this day.***

At 1724 the SAWFISH attacked the convoy, firing five torpedoes, and claimed sinking one cargo ship. At 1925 she cleared the area to the southward to send a contact report to the other submarines in the area, and by 2000 had returned to regain contact on the convoy.****

During the next few hours the remainder of the wolf pack plus the SNOOK had made contact on the convoy and all closed to attack. However, only the SAWFISH succeeded in getting in another attack before midnight and this time, at 2321, she fired her remaining torpedoes and recorded one hit.**** Actually in these two attacks (1724 and 2321) she sunk one ship--the converted seaplane tender KIMIKAWA MARU.*****

Although they had not succeeded in getting into attack position by midnight both the DRUM and ICEFISH had made contact by that time and the DRUM had made four reports, none of which are available to this analysis. She likely reported four ships and at least three escorts since that is recorded in her War Patrol Report. On the other hand the ICEFISH did not make a contact report but records in her War Patrol Report

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* Deck Log SAWFISH, October 23rd, 1944.
** Deck Logs SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM, October 23rd, 1944.
*** War Diary 1ST Escort Force, October 1944, WDC Document 161719, NA 11609.
**** War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944.
***** The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ FEC, February 1952.

that she had made radar contact on several large ships and several escorts. She also received a dispatch from CTF 17 granting her request for extension of patrol and stating that detailed instructions would be given the following night.*

(2) SNOOK

The SNOOK, in Area DESTROY, was proceeding submerged on a northeasterly heading in order to join the SHARK's wolf pack in Area DETECT. The day passed uneventfully and at 1914 she surfaced. At 2030 she intercepted the SAWFISH's contact on the northbound convoy seventy-five miles to the southeast of her and commenced closing the convoy. She notified the SAWFISH of her actions but by midnight she had not made contact.**

(3) SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON

This wolf pack, which was supposed to be patrolling Area DETECT, was actually patrolling along the northeast corner of Area DESTROY. The reason for this is not readily available. It patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.*** The day passed uneventfully. Upon surfacing at dark ninety per cent of the crew of the BLACKFISH again experienced illness with several serious cases.**** As pointed out in Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf, this was likely due to the leaking of carbon tetrachloride from cans with loose lids.*****

At 2030 the BLACKFISH (a) intercepted the SAWFISH contact on a convoy to the southward and (b) received the same information from the wolf pack commander in the SHARK.

No effort was made to close this contact for also at this same time the wolf pack commander directed his wolf pack to patrol the northern edge of the patrol area as reports received from China-based patrol planes indicated good hunting.****** As a consequence the submarines of the wolf pack proceeded to take up stations as ordered. No contacts of importance were made during the day.

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* CTF 17 Dispatch 230957 October 1944 to All Subs, info CINCPAC.

** War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.

*** Deck Logs BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON, October 23rd, 1944.

**** War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 1944.

***** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter III (B)(2)(a)(2).

(4) HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA

This wolf pack was in Area PARLOR proceeding westward to its patrol station in CONVOY COLLEGE. The units remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness,* except for trim and training dives. They made no contacts of importance, and at midnight were about to pass into the eastern edge of Area VESTIBULE.

(5) PINTADO, JALLAO, ATULE

This wolf pack continued westward en route to its patrol station in CONVOY COLLEGE. The units proceeded on the surface during daylight as well as darkness except for trim and training dives.** They made some contacts on friendly aircraft, but made no contacts of importance. By midnight they had entered Area PARLOR.

(6) BONEFISH

The BONEFISH was eastbound in the CONVOY COLLEGE Safety Lane returning to Pearl Harbor via Saipan. She remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness. Except for sighting, at 1218, a large unidentified aircraft on a westerly course, the day passed uneventfully.***

(b) Northwest Coast of Formosa.

The TANG patrolled, in northern Formosa Strait, submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.**** No contacts of importance were made this day.

(c) Northeast Coast of Formosa.

This area once again was patrolled by the three submarines, SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER and SALMON. The SALMON having departed on October 19th to see medical aid had returned to this area to take up her regular patrol station. These submarines patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.***** None of them made any contacts of importance, although they all sighted enemy aircraft. During the evening the SILVERSIDES made an unsuccessful sweep to the eastward in an attempt to pick up a convoy,****** previously contacted by the SEA DOG,******* while

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* Deck Logs HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA, October 23rd, 1944.
** Deck Logs PINTADO, JALLAO, ATULE, October 23rd, 1944.
*** War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.
**** War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 10th, 1945.
***** Deck Logs SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER, SALMON, October 23rd, 1944.
****** War Patrol Report SILVERSIDES, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 045, November 23rd, 1944.
******* SEA DOG Dispatch 220149 October 1944 to CTF 17, info MARU MORGUE.

the SALMON commenced moving to the north of the northwest tip of Ishigaki Shima for the next day's patrol.*

(d) MARU MORGUE

The submarines SEA DOG in Area ABANDON, SAURY in Area ABOLISH, BURRFISH in Area ABRIDGE, STERLET in Area ABUSE and BILLFISH in Area ABDUCT, continued to patrol MARU MORGUE as before. The weather was clear with good visibility and the submarines patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.** One area, Area ABLAZE, located eastward of Amami O Shima, remained unpatrolled due to the departure of the BARBEL and SKATE with only one relief (BILLFISH) provided.

This was an unfortunate situation for unknown to the MARU MORGUE submarines the Japanese FIRST Supply Group, which had departed BUNGO SUIDO at 0500 on the previous day had passed undetected through Area ABLAZE and entered Satsukawa Bay in southern Amami O Shima.

The SEA DOG sighted numerous planes during the day*** and the BILLFISH sighted several small trawlers and small patrol craft in the early evening.**** With these exceptions, none of the submarines of this area made any contacts of importance.

The BURRFISH at 2300 set course to close the convoy reported and attacked by the SEA DOG on October 22nd.*****

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo

The two submarines patrolling Areas NINE (CROAKER) and TWELVE (PERCH) were some 230 miles apart.

The PERCH was in southern Tsushima Strait where she was patrolling on the surface across the Nagasaki - Shanghai convoy route in a position to intercept a carrier force reported in Formosa Strait on a northeasterly course at 1530 October 21st and which she hoped to intercept on this day.****** While what this force actual was is not known, it seems possible that it was a convoy of merchant ships escorted by the SHINYO (CVE) en route Hainan Island to Mutsure (an island in the western approaches to Shimonoseki Suido) where it arrived at 0600 the following morning. The question of this convoy is discussed in Volume III.*******

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* War Patrol Report SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 0-16, November 10th, 1944.

** Deck Logs SEA DOG, BILLFISH, SAURY, BURRFISH, STERLET, October 23rd, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report SEA DOG, Report of 1ST War Patrol, No Serial, undated.

**** War Patrol Report BILLFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 088, November 27th, 1944.

***** War Patrol Report BURRFISH, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 024, December 2nd, 1944.

****** War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

******* Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter III (C).

At 2100, having failed to intercept this force, she proceeded towards her October 25th lifeguard station bearing 284°(T), distant 124 miles from Danjo Gunto.* About this time she received CTF 17's dispatch containing supplementary instructions pertaining to her lifeguard duties.** She made no contacts of importance.*

The CROAKER submerged was proceeding in a southerly direction toward her lifeguard station and planned to pass to the westward of Cheju Do (Quelpart Island). At 1348 she surfaced and remained on the surface during the remainder of the day.*** During the evening she also received supplementary instructions pertaining to her lifeguard duties from CTF 17.** She made no contacts of importance.****

(f) HIT PARADE (Approaches to Bungo Suido).

The submarines BESUGO and RONQUIL continued to guard the approaches to Bungo Suido with the former in the eastern approaches and the latter in the western approaches.***** (Diagram "B"). They patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.****** Although they sighted several aircraft and sampans during the day they made no contacts of real importance.******* At 2355 the RONQUIL received a dispatch from CTF 17, not available to this study, and immediately informed the BESUGO that she was entering her area.********

The GABILAN was guarding the approaches to Kii Suido although she was too far to the eastward of the Strait leaving the western approaches open to transit. THERE SEEMS TO BE CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO THE CORRECTNESS OF THIS STATION SINCE A POSITION ON THE 100 FATHOM CURVE EQUIDISTANT BETWEEN KAMATA SAKI (SOMETIMES CALLED GAMOTA ZAKI) AND HINO MISAKA, AS DISCUSSED IN VOLUME II, WOULD BE BETTER SUITED TO GUARD KII SUIDO.********* The above submarine patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight and made no contacts of importance.**********

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* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

** CTF 17 Dispatch 231014 October 1944 to ESCOLAR, PERCH, CROAKER, info CINCPAC.

*** Deck Log CROAKER, October 23rd, 1944.

**** War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944.

***** BESUGO Dispatch 221544 October 1944 to CTF 17.

****** Deck Logs BESUGO, RONQUIL, October 23rd, 1944.

******* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944; also War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.

******** War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.

********* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92914), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter V (B)(2)(f).

********** War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.

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(g) The Approaches to Tokyo Bay.

The TAMBOR continued to operate in the eastern approaches to Tokyo Bay to the southeast of O'Shima,* while the GREENLING continued to patrol in Enshu Nada about sixty miles distant from the westward approaches to Tokyo. These submarines which patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness made no contacts of importance.** The weather conditions in Enshu Nada were generally poor with fog*** while visibility in the vicinity of the TAMBOR was low.**

(C) China - Burma - India Theater, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd.

On this day the two-place search over the South China Sea was flown, as scheduled, by B-24 aircraft of the FOURTEENTH Air Force (Diagram"B").

At 1545 the west course plane sighted a single ship about 100 miles east of Hainan.****

At about 1800 the night searches took off. Between 2200 and 2230 the east course aircraft sighted three widely separated single ships from 300 to 380 miles northwest of Manila.****

The foregoing contacts were not significant.

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* War Patrol Report TAMBOR, Report of 12TH War Patrol, Serial 08019, November 30th, 1944.

** Deck Logs GREENLING, TAMBOR, October 23rd, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report GREENLING. Report of 11TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 23rd, 1944.

**** HQ Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base Alabama, AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of Leyte Campaign, Letter, No Serial, November 8th, 1944 to President, Naval War College.

CHAPTER III - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0000 - 1830, October 24th

(A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

This was a day of crucial movements and actions by units of the Combined Fleet engaged in the SHO Operation which was now approaching the climactic decisive stage. Early in the day, at about 0242, CinC Combined Fleet learned that a "large enemy force" had been discovered at 0050, bearing 090°(T), distant 250 miles from Manila* (Contact "A", Plate XIII). This was the first of a series of contacts on enemy forces east of the Philippines which, as later developed, consisted of three groups with an aggregate of about eleven carriers.**

During the day CinC Combined Fleet received numerous reports from his various commanders, the most important of which were: (a) from Commander Main Force reporting (1) that at 1145, the Main Force planned to launch a seventy-six plane attack against the enemy force east of Manila,*** (2) that at 1439 the Main Force Advance Guard had been ordered detached to proceed south to "take advantage of any favorable opportunity to attack and destroy remaining enemy elements"**** and (3) he may have learned that at 1545 the Main Force had finally been detected by enemy carrier aircraft,***** (b) the THIRD Section, at 0945, had been attacked and lightly damaged by carrier aircraft,****** (c) the Main Body of the FIRST Striking Force had been subjected to five air attacks totalling about 250 carrier planes******* and had suffered considerable damage

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* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 240212 October 1944 to SW Area Situation Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764.

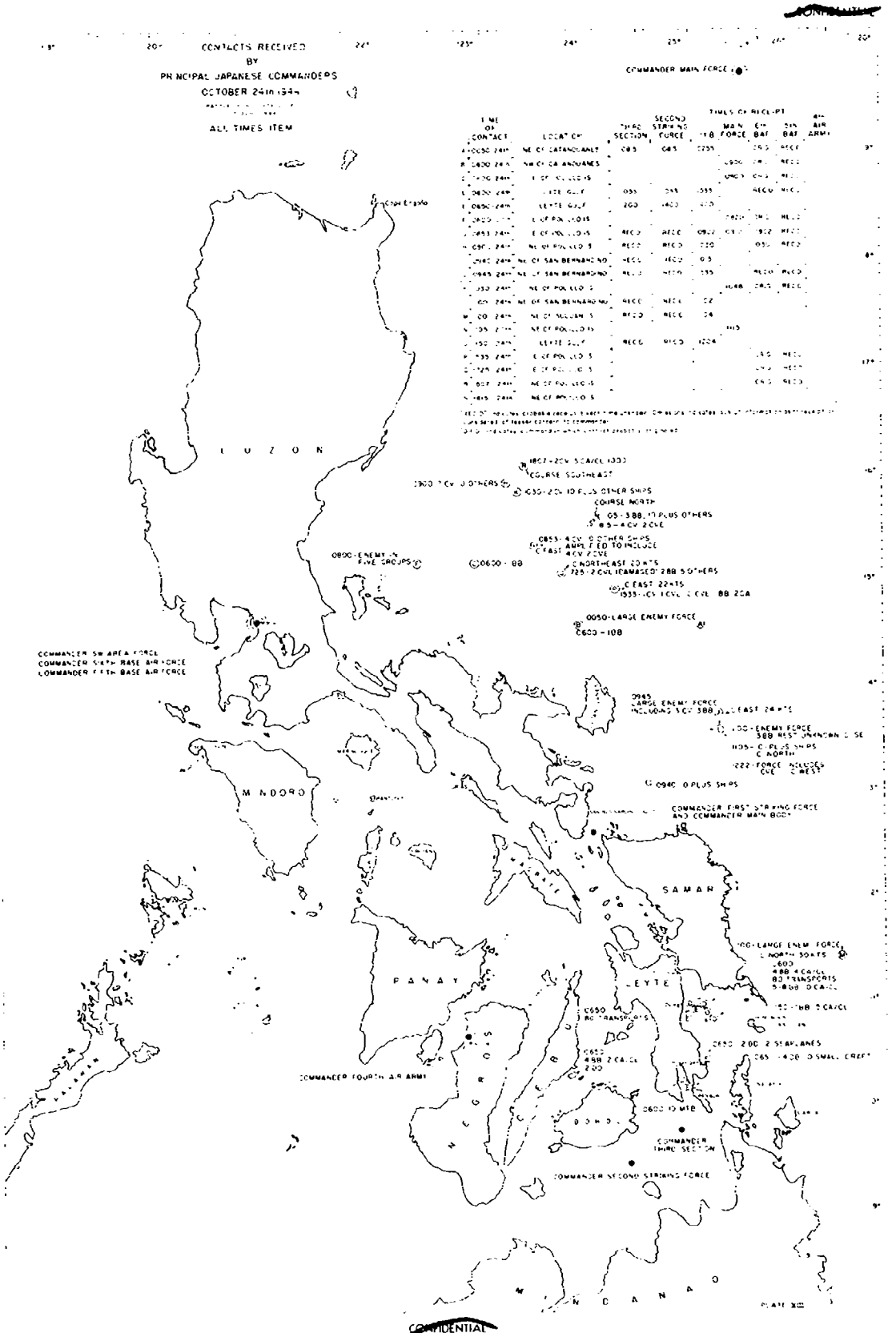
*** Commander Main Force Dispatch 241138 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 5TH Base Air Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** Commander Main Force Dispatch 241439 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Main Force, info to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., (Main Force SigDesOpOrd No. 2), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Commander Main Force Dispatch 241650 October 1944 to all interested Commanders, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

****** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241105 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

******* Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241600 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders Main Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Force, SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



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((1) the battleship MUSASHI heavily damaged and out of action, (2) the heavy cruiser MYOKO damaged and out of action, (3) the battleship NAGATO lightly damaged with speed reduced to twenty-one knots and (4) the battleship YAMATO lightly damaged) and (d) the SIXTH Base Air Force in its attack had scored one 500 pound bomb hit on a carrier and one cruiser had been moderately damaged and set afire.*

During the evening CinC Combined Fleet became concerned about the attacks on the Main Body. He later stated that, "If it became too unbearable Admiral Kurita might turn back, but even if he were to turn back, it would be difficult for surface ships to elude the pursuit of aircraft. Whether the force advanced or retired, there would be very little difference in the resulting damage. In addition, once we withdrew, it would be difficult to revive the operation, and the entire operation would have to be scrapped. This was how I reasoned, and finally, after much painful consideration I made up my mind and dispatched...",** "All forces to the attack trusting in divine aid."***

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

As pointed out in preceding volumes, Commander FIRST Striking Force "wore several hats". In addition to commanding the FIRST Striking Force he also commanded the Main Body; the FIRST Section of the Main Body; and, after hoisting his flag in the YAMATO, BATDIV ONE.

It is evident in the analysis of this commander that although he used the FIRST Striking Force title, by far the greater portion of his actions were those which concerned only the Main Body and actually were performed in his capacity as Commander Main Body. In this analysis under the heading, "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force" only those actions which are considered to be the function of the higher command level are discussed.

Commander FIRST Striking Force in his dual capacity was of course well aware of the operations of the Main Body.

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* Clark Air Base Dispatch 241145 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees (6TH Base Air Force Battle Report No. 1), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Admiral Soemu Toyoda, ex-IJN, "The End of the Imperial Navy" (Tokyo, April 1950), Pages 157-163.

*** CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 241813 October 1944 to SHO Forces, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 372), Detailed Action Report No. 15 MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Antiair Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.

At 1151 he learned that the THIRD Section had been subjected to air attack but that "combat effectiveness was unimpaired".*

At 1241 he received Commander Main Force dispatch 241138 which stated that commander's intentions to launch a full strength attack (sixty-seven planes) against the enemy task force in position Latitude 15°-35'N, Longitude 124°-15'E.**

During the day Commander FIRST Striking Force received the same contact reports as did Commander Main Body. These contacts are noted and discussed under "Operations of Commander Main Body, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".

By 1447 he had received Commander THIRD Section's 1400 position report*** which indicated that the THIRD Section was pretty well on schedule and could easily conduct the penetration as planned.

At 1530 he was aware that the Main Body had reversed course and at 1541 he ordered the NICHIEI MARU (oiler) and CD #32 (Coastal Defense Ship - Escort) to depart immediately upon completion of preparations for Coron Bay and upon arrival stand-by.****

At 1715 he knew that the Main Body had again resumed the advance and he began to consider the effect the delay of the Main Body would have on the overall Leyte penetration operation.

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* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241105 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Ibid., Commander Main Force Dispatch 241138 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 5TH Base Air Force, etc.

*** Ibid., Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241410 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces.

**** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 241541 October 1944 to NICHIEI MARU, CD #32, Commander Combined Escort Force, SW Area Force, CinC Combined Fleet, War Diary NICHIEI MARU, October 1944, WDC Document 160148, NA 11838.

(a) Operations of Commander Main Body, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

The Main Body commenced this day, a day of crucial operations for this force, some fifty miles west of Mindoro on course 090°(T). Shortly after midnight several of the ships of the force reported sighting submarines and evasive maneuvering was conducted.* No attacks on the force were made however.

Probably at 0255 Commander Main Body received information that the "enemy task force" had been contacted 250 miles east of Manila** (Contact "A", Plate XIII). As he plotted this contact he could see that as the Main Body rounded the southern tip of Mindoro at sunrise it would be about 280 miles from the contact and therefore within range of the enemy carrier planes. As a result preparations were commenced for the expected attack.

Shortly after clearing the narrow passage between Libagao Island and Masin Island south of Mindoro, about 0734, the force assumed antiaircraft disposition with each section in circular formation.***

Between 0700 and 0800 various ships of the force launched search aircraft in accordance with FIRST Striking Force SigOrd No. 193.**** These planes (seven) were ordered to search ten degree sectors to a distance of 300 miles with Banton Island as the point of origin and the "base line" 075°. It is known that at least six of these planes conducted searches and some gave Commander FIRST Striking Force considerable information.

At 1026 the air attacks began. The first attack which was reported to consist of about thirty planes but which actually numbered forty-five from TG 38.2, made coordinated bombing, torpedo and strafing attacks and succeeded in hitting the MYOKO and the MUSASHI with one torpedo each. The MYOKO was damaged so badly that COMCRUDIV FIVE transferred his flag to the HAGURO and the Commander Main Body ordered her proceed to Brunei Bay, if necessary putting in at Coron Bay for emergency

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* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

** CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 240212 October 1944 to SW Area Force Situation Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** The Main Body disposition was Y-20, the 1ST Section in Y-25 and the 2ND Section in B-3. These dispositions were to be discussed and diagrammed in Volume IV, Battle for Leyte Gulf.

**** Commander Main Body Visual Dispatch 232350 October 1944 to Ships Carrying Aircraft (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 193), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

repairs* without escort. The hit on the MUSASHI did not materially affect her operations.

At approximately 1207 the second air attack began. This attack which was also launched by TG 38.2, was reported by Commander Main Body as consisting of thirty** aircraft which was correct.*** During this attack the MUSASHI received three additional torpedo hits (total four) and her speed was reduced to twenty-two knots.**** In addition she received two bomb hits.*****

By 1315 Commander Main Body had contact reports indicating that he was opposed by the following forces:

(a) Two groups of ten ships each off the entrance to San Bernardino Strait, the composition of one group was unknown,****** while the other was reported to include three battleships and one small carrier,******* (Contacts "I" and "L"). These contacts were both on TG 38.2.

(b) Two groups some thirty miles apart, one group with four carriers and ten other ships******** about 100 miles east of Polillo Island (Contact "G"), the other with two carriers and ten other ships********* about 100 miles northeast of Polillo Island (Contact "H"). These contacts were both on TG 38.3.

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* Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 241125 October 1944 to MYOKO, Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Antiair Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.

** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report No. 3, NOSHIRO, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

*** War Diary INTREPID, October 1944, Serial 0195, November 9th, 1944.

**** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241250 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Detailed Action Report MUSASHI, Battle Off the Philippines, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

****** Number 1 Plane, 3RD Recco Unit Dispatch (date-time-group and addressees unknown), October 24th, 1944, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

******* Plane No. 3, 1ST Search Unit Dispatch 241100 October 1944 (addressees unknown), Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637.

******** 62ND Air Flotilla Aircraft Dispatch 240853 October 1944 to unknown addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

********* Ibid., 62ND Air Flotilla Aircraft Dispatch 240900 (presumed) October 1944 to unknown addressees.

(c) About ninety miles north of Catanduanes Island at 1105 a "Task Force" reported by Commander Main Force,* (Contact "N"). This contact was also on TG 38.3 being about eight miles northwest of the actual position.

(d) A "large force", composition unknown off the coast of Samar** (Contact "M"). This contact was about fifteen miles northeast of TG 77.4.3 and about fifteen miles southeast of TG 38.4. Which of the forces the pilot actually saw is not known.

(e) In Leyte Gulf at 0600, nine to twelve battleships, fourteen cruisers, eighty transports plus destroyers and ten torpedo boats in the Mindanao Sea to the south*** (Contact "D").

As he now had ample evidence of enemy forces east of the Philippines and as he had no word of friendly air attacks, he sent a dispatch to the air unit commanders stating that his force was under repeated attacks and requested to be advised immediately of "contacts and attacks" made on the enemy.****

At 1324 the third air attack commenced. This attack, which he reported consisted of eighty aircraft***** appears to have been the strike group from TG 38.3 recorded as fifty-eight aircraft.****** During this attack the MUSASHI received her fifth torpedo hit and reported that her maximum speed was estimated at twenty knots and the YAHAGI suffered near misses which reduced her speed to twenty-two knots.

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* Commander Main Force Dispatch 241138 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 5TH Base Air Force, etc., Detailed Action Report 2UIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

** Plane No. 7, 3RD Recco Unit (CRUDIV 7 Aircraft) Dispatch 241100 October 1944 (addressees unknown but probably 1ST Striking Force), Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637; also Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** 1ST Striking Force Search Plane Report (date-time-group unknown), October 24th, 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Commander 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241315 October 1944 to Commanders Main Force, SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

***** Ibid., Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body), Dispatch 241342 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees.

****** Deck Logs LEXINGTON and ESSEX, October 24th, 1944.

At 1400 he received another contact from Leyte Gulf. This was the report made by the MOGAMI search plane and which had been relayed by the Bulan Air Base.* This report which reported forces in the gulf as of 0650 was about the same as the previous report on Leyte Gulf except that the "five to eight battleships and ten cruisers" mentioned in the earlier report were not included in this one, (Contact "E").

During the fourth air attack which commenced about 1426 and which was conducted by a group of about twenty planes likely from TG 38.3,** the YAMATO received a bomb hit on the bow but her combat effectiveness was unimpaired.

Closely following this attack, at approximately 1500, the fifth air attack commenced. This was the largest attack of the day reported by Commander Main Body as "over 100 planes". These aircraft were from TG 38.4 which had launched its first strike of sixty-five aircraft at 1313*** and TG 38.2 which had launched its third strike of thirty-one aircraft at 1350.**** During this attack (a) the NAGATO received two bomb hits and several near misses which reduced her maximum speed temporarily to twenty-one knots,***** and (b) the MUSASHI which was now some distance from the Main Body and "putting up a desperate fight", started emitting black smoke and listing to port. She was apprently unnavigable.******

At 1510 he ordered the MUSASHI to retire to Mako via Coron Bay if necessary and the KIYOSHIMO to escort.*******

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* Bulan Seaplane Base Dispatch 241227 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Deck Log ESSEX, October 24th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations in Support of the Occupation of Leyte and Against the Japanese Fleet, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 00267, November 18th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 38.2, October 6th - November 3rd, 1944, Serial 0040, November 8th, 1944.

***** Detailed Action Report No. 2, NAGATO, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

****** Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744; also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, ex-IJN (COMBATDIV 1) Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppon Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

******* Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241510 to MUSASHI, KIYOSHIMO, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

By 1530, while the attack was still in progress, Commander Main Body, had become considerably alarmed over the situation and had apparently tentatively decided to temporarily reverse course while he re-estimated the situation for at this time he ordered the force to change course to 290°(T).*

At 1600, having apparently confirmed this decision to retire, he informed his superiors of his action and his estimate of the situation. Because of the importance of this dispatch it is quoted in full:

"In coordination with the attack operations of the air forces, the main strength (Main Body) of the FIRST Striking Force advanced so as to break through San Bernardino Strait one hour after sunset. However, from 0830 to 1530, the force underwent repeated attacks by waves of enemy carrier planes totalling about 250. These attacks were increasing both in frequency and intensity and it appeared improbable that search attack operations by our own air forces would be effective. If the force continued its advance in spite of these circumstances, it would become an easy prey and sustain mounting losses, which would jeopardize the accomplishment of its mission. It is therefore considered advisable to retire temporarily from the zone of air attacks and to resume the advance when the battle results of friendly units permit. 1600 position Sibuyan Sea, 13°-00'N, 122°-40'E, course 290°, speed eighteen knots."**

This action of Commander Main Body was of great interest to all the other commanders in the SHO Operation because of the close coordination required of the participating forces. This decision is therefore an important one to this operation and it was to have been discussed at considerable length in Volume IV, Battle for Leyte Gulf.

By this time (1600) Commander Main Body knew that he was opposed by enemy carrier forces grouped roughly, (1) some 90 - 100 miles northeast of Polillo Island and (2) approximately sixty miles east of Catanduanes Island. The northern force had been reported to be in two groups totalling six large carriers and two escort carriers (Contacts "G" and "H") while the southern group had been reported and amplified to include three large carriers (Contacts "L" and "J"). In addition, the "large enemy force" which he had received at 1104 (Contact "M") off Samar in which the presence of carriers was undetermined had been reported moving northward and might well be within carrier plane range (Plate XIII).

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* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241600 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commander Main Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

At 1603 Commander Main Body received Commander Main Force's order detaching the Advance Guard to proceed south to attack and destroy remaining enemy elements.*

At 1640 a dispatch was received from Commander SW Area Force in which that commander (a) expressed the belief that enemy aircraft attacking the FIRST Striking Force were from the carrier group in position Latitude 13°-45'N, Longitude 125°-25'E, and (b) that the SIXTH Base Air Force was scheduled to make a dusk attack against this force.** This force was the southern group (Contact "J") which had been reported to include three CV's and three BB's.

At 1714, with the above information at hand and noting that there had been no additional attacks since the fifth attack, Commander FIRST Striking Force ordered the Main Body to resume the advance.***

At 1830 the Main Body was in the vicinity of Latitude 13°-04'N, Longitude 122°-42'E on base course 120°(T) heading for Masbate Pass. Just before sunset the force passed not far from the MUSASHI, which was, at this time badly damaged, and in danger of sinking, with two destroyers, the KIYOSHIMO and the HAMAKAZE, standing by.

Thus, during the day, the striking power of the Main Body had been reduced by four ships; one battleship, one heavy cruiser and two destroyers.

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* Commander Main Force Dispatch 241439 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, etc., (Main Force SigDesOpOrd No. 2), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 241610 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

*** Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

(b) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

The THIRD Section, at the beginning of this day, was in position Latitude 09°-11'N, Longitude 120°-04'E.

At 0200 the MOGAMI launched her Number ONE reconnaissance seaplane for dawn reconnaissance of Leyte Gulf in accordance with Commander THIRD Section's SigOrd No. 10* of the night before.

At 0855 enemy aircraft were sighted** and at approximately 0905 an attack commenced. The attack group consisted of twelve SB2C's and sixteen F6F's, which had been launched from the ENTERPRISE (TG 38.4) at 0602. By 0940 the attack was completed. There had been one direct hit on the after deck of the FUSO which set her reconnaissance seaplanes afire and made a hole in the stern. There were some casualties from rockets and strafing but no other serious damage.*** The position of the attack was in the vicinity of Latitude 09°-02'N, Longitude 121°-35'E.

During the morning (likely at 1033 when it was received by COMBATDIV ONE) Commander THIRD Section may have received a reconnaissance report from a FIRST Striking Force search plane which reported that there was in Leyte Gulf at 0600: "four battleships and four cruisers five miles east of Dulag; eighty transports ten miles east of Dulag; five to eight battleships and ten cruisers in the vicinity (of the transports); destroyers cruising around inside the gulf, and ten motor torpedo boats in the Mindanao Sea sixty miles south of Tacloban."****

After receiving battle reports from his various ships, Commander THIRD Section, at 1105, reported the action to his superiors and other interested commanders.***** It is of interest that his position was not included. It will be recalled that just before midnight October 23rd he had commenced a major deviation from his planned route and at the time of the attack was some eighty miles south of the planned position at the same time.

At 1120 he designated (a) as reassembly point "Camiguin Island (Mindanao Sea) on bearing 030° from light, distance thirty-five miles"

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* Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231005 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 10), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 240855 October 1944 to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** 1ST Striking Force Search Plane Report (date-time-group unknown but TOR 241033), October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Commander 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Ibid., Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241105 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees.

and (b) as refueling and supply point, "Puerto Princesa (tentatively)".* This dispatch indicated that at this time it was the intention of Commander THIRD Section to retire after battle southward through Surigao Strait.

At noon the MOGAMI reconnaissance seaplane which had been launched at 0200 returned overhead and reported the reconnaissance results by message drop to MOGAMI and YAMASHIRO.** The information reported as of 0650 was:

"1. About eighty transports on bearing 100° from Dulag, distance seven miles. Disposed in several short columns of offset sections.

"2. Four battleships, two cruisers and two destroyers on bearing 157° from Dulag, distance eight miles.

"3. Two destroyers nearing Dulag landing point.

"4. Two destroyers and twelve seaplanes on bearing 241° from Suluan Island, distance forty-seven miles.

"5. Four destroyers and ten plus small craft in Panaon Strait.

"6. No aircraft carriers observed inside Gulf but four planes seen providing direct cover."***

After receipt of this information Commander THIRD Section ordered his Number ONE Attack Unit, which had proceeded to Cebu, to "attack the enemy light craft along the northwest coast of Panaon Island at dusk October 24th".****

By 1313 the THIRD Section was approaching Negros Island to the west of Casilan Point and at this time course was changed to 140°(T) to parallel the coast. Commander THIRD Section was now back on his original track and very nearly on schedule and it is of interest that shortly thereafter, at 1410, he reported his position.*****

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* Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231120 October 1944 (3RD Section SigOrd No. 11) to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** MOGAMI Visual Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to Cebu Air Base, San Jose Air Base; info Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

***** Ibid., Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241410 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces.

In the meantime, at 1400, Commander THIRD Section received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force stating that the areas designated by the Army as shore targets for naval bombardment were as follows:

"1. The area between [illegible] and a point 3.3 kms. to the south, and extending 2 kms. inland.

"2. Enemy beachhead area east of a line running from the coast 6.5 kms. south of Tacloban to a point 1 km. west of Tacloban. The Army will endeavor to bomb the principal targets within the above area so that the smoke will facilitate target identification."*

Also, at 1410, Commander THIRD Section directed "At about sunset upon order, the FIRST Division (MOGAMI, MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO) will break formation and move out about twenty kilometers in front of the SECOND Division (YAMASHIRO, FUSO, SHIGURE), sweeping the route of advance and clearing the waters on the west side of Panaon Island of enemy craft.** He also directed that the FIRST Division was not to penetrate deeply into Sogod Bay, was to rejoin about 0030 on a bearing of 250°(T), distance seventeen miles, from Binit Point and that after the FIRST Section had rejoined he intended to assume No. TWO search formation,** (Plate XIX). This action clearly indicates Commander THIRD Section's concern for the enemy small craft which might attempt to ambush him during the approach.

Almost immediately, at 1412, he released a dispatch to his aircraft contact unit now at Cebu (previously sent by visual to his ships***), prescribing the target priority as follows:

"1. Battleship group closest us

"2. If no battleships in Gulf, cruiser group

"3. Destroyer groups (surprise attack craft) capable of attacking us

"4. Notify position of transports."****

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* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch (date-time-group unknown but TOR 241400) October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 241410 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 13), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 241400 October 1944 to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241412 October 1944 to Cebu Air Base, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

CONFIDENTIAL

This dispatch is quoted because it offers the interesting thought that Commander THIRD Section felt there was a possibility that there would be no battleships in the Gulf when he arrived. This fact was to have been discussed at length in Volume IV, Battle for Leyte Gulf, and is also discussed under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 1830 - 2400, October 24th" in this volume.

Although there is no record of receipt it seems likely that Commander THIRD Section had received at least most of the battle reports Commander FIRST Striking Force had sent out during the day and he therefore knew that the Main Body had been heavily attacked and that the MYOKO and the MUSASHI were out of action.

It also seems likely that Commander THIRD Section received generally the same contact reports as did Commander FIRST Striking Force.

At 1830 the THIRD Section was in position Latitude 08°-56'N, Longitude 123°-37'E, and was ready to execute the order which directed splitting the force into two sections.

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

The Main Force, continuing according to plan, proceeded in a southwesterly direction during the early morning hours and at 0600 in position Latitude 19°-10'N, Longitude 125°-40'E the morning search was launched. At 1114 Commander Main Force ordered a full strength air attack on an enemy force which had been reported in position Latitude 15°-20'N, Longitude 123°-40'E at 0853* (Contact "G", Plate XIII). By 1155, in accordance with this order, the attack group, consisting of fifty-seven aircraft (thirty fighters, twenty fighter-bombers, five attack and two reconnaissance) was airborne and forming up preparatory to departure for the enemy which was "bearing 210°(T), distant 150-160 miles" (last reported at 1105 in position Latitude 15°-35'N, Longitude 124°-15'E (Contact "N")).**

Shortly after launching the attack group, the morning search was recovered and the force operated generally to the westward awaiting return of the attack group.

The Attack Group proceeded to the target area in two units. In the vicinity of Latitude 15°-10'N, Longitude 123°-50'E, the FIRST Attack Unit encountered enemy fighters. After the ensuing fight this unit, apparently somewhat disorganized, searched for the enemy force but could not find it due to low clouds and rain. Four of the thirty-two planes in this unit returned to their carriers and the remainder proceeded to bases in the northern Philippines.**

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* 62ND Air Flotilla Aircraft Dispatch 240853 October 1944 to unknown addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

CONFIDENTIAL

The SECOND Attack Unit of twenty-two planes (which had also been engaged by enemy fighters*) found a hole in the clouds at 1350 and sighted an enemy force consisting of two fleet carriers, two converted carriers and several other units. A "successful surprise attack" was made and the attack unit proceeded to bases in the Philippines.** This attack was on TG 38.3 which reported that the LEXINGTON, LANGLEY and ESSEX all experienced near misses but no hits. Two planes were shot down over the force.*

Although four planes returned to their carriers they had little to report for the ISE states in her report that the results of the attack were unknown until October 29th,*** and Commander Main Force, in his dispatch action report at the end of the day, reported the results of the attack unknown.**** However, in his summary of losses (written later) he states that a total of about fourteen planes from the Attack Units were lost although exact figures were not available.**

At 1439, having no information as to the results of the air attack and as his force was still apparently undiscovered, Commander Main Force ordered the Advance Guard (BB/XCV's HYUGA and ISE, DD's HATSUZUKI, AKITSUKI, WAKATSUKI and SHIMOTSUKI) detached to proceed southward to "grasp a favorable opportunity to attack and destroy enemy remnants".*****

At 1635 an enemy carrier plane was sighted about the force and the planes radioed contact report was intercepted as was the acknowledgement.** As a result Commander Main Force knew that at last his carriers had been discovered and at 1650 so advised his superiors and other interested commanders.******

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* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 24th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

**** Commander Main Force Dispatch 250014 October 1944 to Main Force Action Report Addressees (General Action Report No. 1), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Ibid., Commander Main Force Dispatch 241439 October 1944 (Main Force SigDesOpOrd No. 2) to CinC Combined Fleet, All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Main Force, info Imperial GHQ (Navy Section)etc.

****** Ibid., Commander Main Force Dispatch 241650 October 1944 to other interested commanders.

At 1830 the Main Force carriers were recovering the last of the CAP aircraft in the vicinity of Latitude 18°-50'N, Longitude 125°-25'E.* The Advance Guard at this time was some ninety-five miles to the southeast in the vicinity of Latitude 17°-15'N, Longitude 126°-00'E,** operating with the intention of attacking the enemy at moonset (2400).***

(3) Operations of Commander Expeditionary Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

During this day some of the twelve submarines ordered to stations east of the Philippines arrived on station while the remainder, with the exception of the RO-109, were expected to arrive October 25th.

Commander Expeditionary Force received during the day, the major contacts which were received by the other commanders. Apparently because these contacts indicated the enemy was operating closer to the coast than had been anticipated, he ordered his submarines redisposed to positions in the seas "extending from the east coast of Samar to the area east of the Surigao Strait and approximately sixty nautical miles off the coast" (Plate XIV). This redisposition was expected to be compiled by noon, October 25th.****

During the day there were apparently no contacts made by his submarines nor were they contacted by the Allies.

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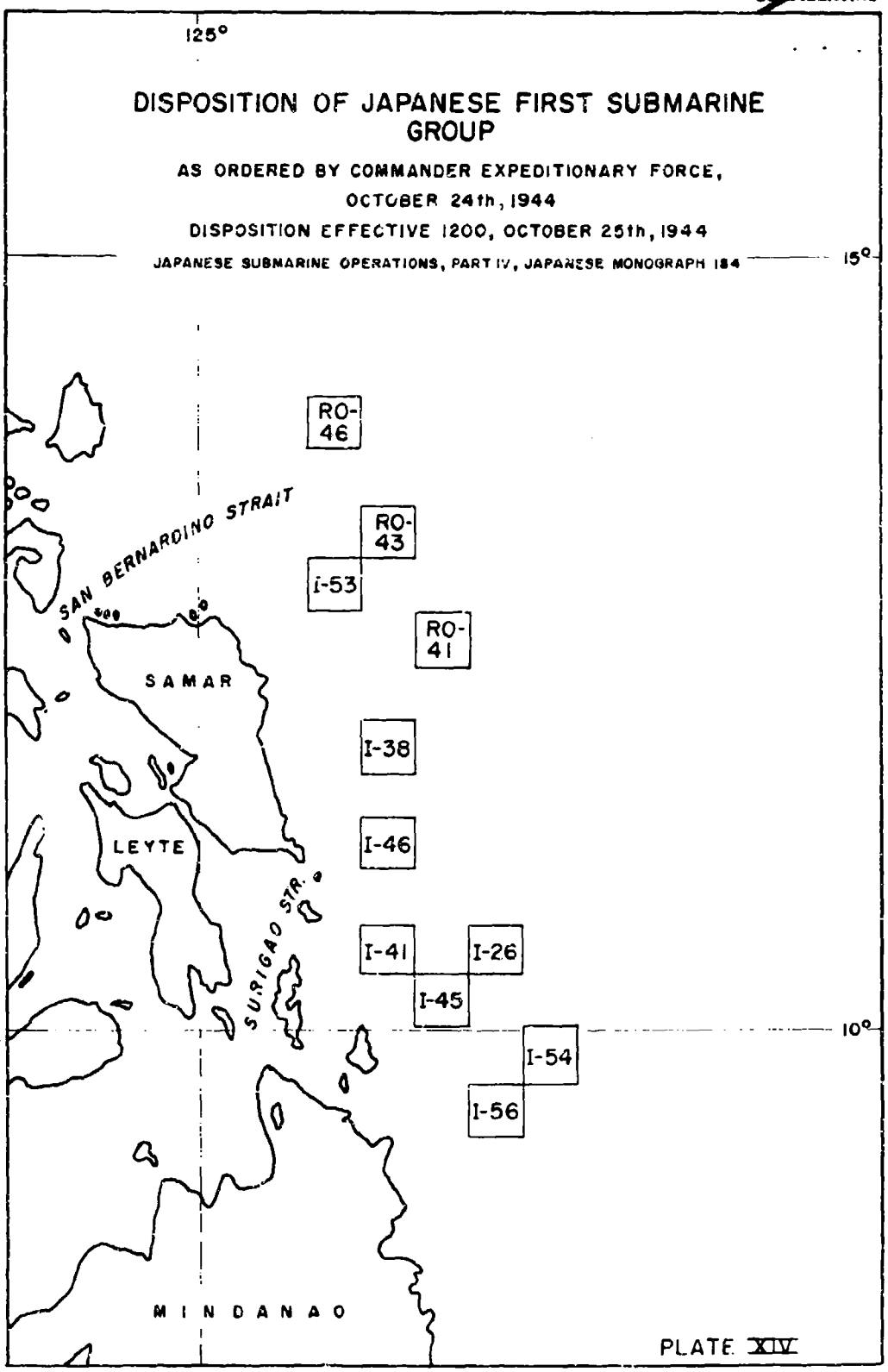
* Appended Track Chart, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944. WDC Document 161008.

** Appended Track Chart, Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

*** Detailed Action Report COMCARDIV 4 (Commander Advance Guard), SHO No. 1 Operation, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

**** Submarine Operations in the THIRD Phase Operation, Part IV, September 1944 - February 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 184, compiled by the 2ND Historical Records Section of the Repatriation Relief Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, June 1954.



DISPOSITION OF JAPANESE FIRST SUBMARINE GROUP

AS ORDERED BY COMMANDER EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,
OCTOBER 24th, 1944
DISPOSITION EFFECTIVE 1200, OCTOBER 25th, 1944

JAPANESE SUBMARINE OPERATIONS, PART IV, JAPANESE MONOGRAPH 184

PLATE XIV

(4) Operations of Commander SW Area Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

Commander SW Area Force, as senior air commander in the Philippines, watched with interest the unfolding situation. As he was in Manila, as were Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, it seems probable that he received generally the same reports as did these commanders.

At 0212 he passed on to interested commanders the 0050 contact on the enemy "task force" and warned of the likelihood of an air attack on Luzon and the waters west of Luzon * (Contact "A", Plate XIII).

During the morning he received reports that (a) the AOBA, which had been torpedoed the day before and had been towed into Manila Bay by the KINU, was leaking badly and that boats with pumps were required,** (b) DESDIV TWENTY-ONE had been attacked by aircraft off the west coast of Panay and the destroyer WAKABA had been sunk,*** (c) the THIRD Section had repulsed an air attack, suffering only minor damage to the FUSO,**** (d) the Main Body had been attacked by carrier aircraft and (e) in the above attack the MYOKO had been damaged and ordered to proceed to Brunei Bay.*****

In this latter report Commander SW Area Force was requested to arrange an escort for the MYOKO but at 1410 (when it was received by COMDESRON TEN) he received a dispatch from Commander Main Body which ordered the NAGANAMI to leave the TAKAO and proceed to the assistance of the MYOKO,****** so he apparently sent no additional escorts.

During the day, being in close contact with his two base air force commanders, he knew of the various contacts made as well as the results of friendly air attacks.

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* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 240212 to SW Area Force Situation Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** AOBA Dispatch 240850 October 1944 to CofS SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report No. 6 AOBA, Antisubmarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

*** HATSUHARU Dispatch 240900 October 1944 to Commanders DESRON 1, 2ND Striking Force, SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241105 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

***** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241135 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

****** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241316 October 1944 (1ST Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 58) to NAGANAMI, info MYOKO, TAKAO, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

Sometime during the afternoon he received a dispatch from Commander Main Body which stated that the Main Body was being subjected to repeated enemy carrier-based attacks and pointedly asked what "contacts and attacks" had been made on the enemy.* At 1610 Commander SW Area Force released a dispatch in reply which stated, "the enemy aircraft attacking the FIRST Striking Force (Main Body) are believed to be from a carrier group at Latitude 13°-45'N, Longitude 125°-25'E (Contact "J", Plate XIII). The SIXTH Base Air Force is scheduled to make a dusk attack against this enemy".** This carrier group was TG 38.2 which had not yet been attacked and was in fact the source of the majority of the attacks on the Main Body.

At about 1626 he received a message from the destroyer NAGANAMI. She had discovered the DARTER which had run aground the night of October 23rd - 24th. The NAGANAMI reported shelling the DARTER for three minutes and even attempting to pull it off the shoal but it was too high aground. She stated that she left the DARTER afire and would report later concerning documents and other items recovered.*** It is interesting to recall that the crew of the DARTER and the DACE had also done their best to sink the DARTER.

By 1830 Commander SW Area Force had received word that the second phase of the air attack which took off at 1400 had scored one hit on a WASP class carrier.**** He knew that dusk attacks were scheduled and he awaited the results of this attack with interest.

(a) Operations of Commander Guard Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

During the day Commander Guard Force (COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN), who was now operating directly under the command of Commander SW Area Force, continued his troop transport operation.

At 0556 he released his orders for the first operation. In accordance with SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684 he provided for:

(1) the organization (Unit designation--ships--commander)

(a) Main Body--KINU, URANAMI--direct command (of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN)

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* Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241315 October 1944 to Commanders Main Force, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 241610 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

*** NAGANAMI Dispatch 241556 October 1944 to TAKAO, Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

**** Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 241804 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report No. 3, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

(b) FIRST Transport Unit--Transports 6, 9, 10--Senior Ship Captain

(c) SECOND Transport Unit--Transports 101, 102--Senior Ship Captain

(2) Troop Loading Allocation--KINU 500, URANAMI 150, Transport Unit 400 per ship

(3) Landing point--Ormoc, Leyte

(4) Route--Via Bohol Strait and north side of Camotes Island to Ormoc

(5) Schedule--Ships to reach Ormoc at 0400 October 26th after departing Cagayan on October 25th: The Main Body at 1500 (two hours after arrival), FIRST Transport Unit at 0630, SECOND Transport Unit at 0530

(6) Anchorage assignments at Ormoc

(7) The use of all ships boats for the rapid disembarkation of troops upon anchoring.*

At 0630 Commander Guard Force, with the KINU and URANAMI, sortied from Manila Bay** en route to Cagayan.

At 0700, just after clearing the harbor entrance he was attacked by aircraft in three waves continuing until 1000.** During this attack which was conducted by search and fighter sweep aircraft from TG 38.3, the URANAMI received many strafing and rocket hits which punctured her fuel oil tanks reducing the cruising range by one half.***

By 1700 he had decided to allow the URANAMI to lay to in order to repair the holed tanks and at 1800 off the west coast of Semirara Island (southern tip of Mindoro) the operation commenced. The KINU screened while the URANAMI lay dead in the water.***

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* Commander Guard Force Dispatch 240556 October 1944 (Guard Force DesOpOrd No. 13) to Commander 2ND Striking Force, KINU, URANAMI, Transports 6, 9, 10, 101, 102, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Detailed Action Report URANAMI, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

(b) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At approximately 0200 Commander SECOND Striking Force, having completed the refueling in Culion Anchorage, departed the anchorage* on a course of approximately 193°(T) and when well clear of the area he increased speed to twenty knots, assumed No. One Alert Cruising Disposition and commenced zigzagging. At 0409 he changed course to approximately 167°(T) and continued toward Point "A", his planned noon position.

At about 0830 Commander SECOND Striking Force learned that the three destroyers of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, en route south from Manila to rejoin him during the day had been attacked by carrier aircraft east of Maniguin Island Light (off northwest coast of Panay) and that the WAKABA had sustained one direct hit and was unnavigable.** Shortly thereafter further information was received that (a) at 0900 the WAKABA had sunk, (b) the division commander and the Commanding Officer WAKABA were safe and (c) the HATSUHARU was acting as flagship.*** This attack was conducted by eight VF and six VB which had been launched as a search-strike group at 0602 from the FRANKLIN of TG 38.4.****

At 0935 he notified his force of the areas designated by the Army for ship bombardment as follows:

"1. Area centering on Dulag and extending 3.3 kms to the south.

"2. Enemy positions east of a line running from the coast 6.5 kms south of Tacloban to the coast 1 km west of Tacloban. As far as possible the Army will endeavor to indicate the more important targets within the areas defined above by air bombing."*****

This dispatch is the same as one received by Commander THIRD Section at 1400 on this day from Commander SW Area Force. The difference in time indicates that Commander SECOND Striking Force might have received this information directly from the Army on Leyte.

By 1013 the force had progressed ahead of the planned schedule and was in the vicinity of Point "A". At this time the course was changed to approximately 108°(T), and the force proceeded toward Point "B", a point at the entrance of the Mindanao Sea, which was to be passed at 2000.

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* War Diary DESDIV 7 (USHIO), October 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801; also War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

** HATSUHARU Dispatch 240800 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Ibid., HATSUHARU Dispatch 240900 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, SW Area Force, DESRON 1.

**** Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations in Support of the Occupation of Leyte and Against the Japanese Fleet, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 00267, November 18th, 1944.

***** Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 240935 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

At 1110 he informed his force that five B-24's had been sighted over Davao at 0952 heading northwest and that there was a strong possibility of air attack about 1200. He directed the force to enforce No. TWO Antiaircraft Alert from 1130 and be ready for 26 knots immediately.*

At 1140 he issued his Signal Order No. 145 to his force as follows:

"1. It is highly probable that enemy submarines are lying in wait at the western entrance of the Mindanao Sea (Area No. 1) and at the entrance of Surigao Strait (Area No. 2).

"2. In Area No. 1, the Fleet will cruise in No. 1 Alert Formation, and in Area No. 2 it will assume No. 3 Approach Formation. During the penetration (into the strait) two destroyers will fire depth charges.**

"3. COMDESRON 1 will designate the destroyers to drop depth charges and will decide their disposition. He will report his decisions to this command."***

At 1155 a Morotai search plane sighted the force and reported it quite accurately.**** The plane, however, was not detected by the force and Commander SECOND Striking Force continued his advance thinking his force was still undiscovered.*****

At about 1241 he learned that (a) the two remaining destroyers of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE were again under attack by enemy carrier planes, (b) one enemy plane had been shot down and (c) the 1211 position was Latitude 19°-30'N, Longitude 121°-20'E.****** It was obvious that the latitude was in error and was likely 11°-30'N. If such were the case it would be logical as it was twenty-eight miles to the southwest of the

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* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 241110 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

** Plate XX.

*** Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 241110 October 1944 (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 145) to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

**** 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 240100 (sic) October 1944 to All Commands this Circuit.

***** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operations, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

****** HATSUHARU Dispatch 241211 to Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, 2ND Striking Force, Main Force, etc., Detailed Action Report DFSDIV 21, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair Action South of Mindoro, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

last reported position. The planes conducting the attack were the planes of the FRANKLIN's strike Able which were launched at 0948 to follow up the attack of the search-strike group. The claim of one plane shot down is correct as one SB2C failed to return and was reported to have crashed near the target.*

By 1400 Commander SECOND Striking Force had likely received, among other reports, (a) the 0600 reconnaissance report of Leyte Gulf (Contact "D", Plate XIII), (b) the 0650 Leyte Gulf report of the MOGAMI search plane (Contact "E") (both of these reports have been quoted in full earlier in this narrative under the "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0000 - 1830, October 24th") and (c) that the Main Body had been heavily attacked by carrier planes during the day and that (1) the MYOKO had been damaged and retired (2) the MUSASHI had been damaged.

At 1445 COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, with the HATSUHARU and the HATSUSHIMO, changed course to 000°(T) and headed for Manila.** He failed, however, to inform Commander SECOND Striking Force (or anyone else) with the result that as late as 0101 the next morning Commander SECOND Striking Force was expecting him to rejoin. This expectation is shown by the commander's making him an action addressee in his dispatch giving his planned schedule of sweeping Leyte Gulf and departing through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at 0900.***

Probably at 1447 (when received by Commander FIRST Striking Force) Commander SECOND Striking Force received the 1400 position report of the THIRD Section.**** This was of interest to him as it was his responsibility to coordinate his movements with the THIRD Section. As he knew that the Main Body had been delayed by the air attacks and as the THIRD Section had not been ordered to slow down he decided that in order to "effect close liaison with the THIRD Section" to "move up the time of passage through the Surigao Strait" to 0500.***** He therefore, at about 1452, increased speed to twenty knots.

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* Action Report FRANKLIN, Operation against the Enemy in the Philippine Islands and in the Philippine Sea, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 0041, November 4th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 21, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair Action South of Mindoro, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

*** Ibid., Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250101 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, COMDESDIV 21, 2ND Striking Force, info all SHO Force Commanders.

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241410 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

***** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operations, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

At about 1726 he received a message stating that the KINU and URANAMI had repulsed three air attacks between 0730 and 1000 near the entrance to Manila Bay, claiming five aircraft shot down, with 72 killed and wounded in the two ships. While KINU had no significant damage the URANAMI had her fuel tanks holed by machine gun bullets and had lost about 200 tons of fuel.* This report of five aircraft shot down is in error for CTG 38.3 reports only one plane failed to return from the morning fighter sweep.**

By 1745 Commander SECOND Striking Force had received more reports on the actions of the Main Body and knew that (a) the MUSASHI had been hit by five torpedoes and had been ordered to return to Coron Bay, and (b) at 1600 Commander FIRST Striking Force had reported that because of the air attacks, he was temporarily retiring. As no orders had been issued delaying the THIRD Section, Commander SECOND Striking Force again decided that it was necessary to further close the distance between the two forces and therefore increased speed to twenty-two knots and issued his Signal Order No. 147 (which were actually night intentions) as follows:

"Unless special orders are issued today or tomorrow, the Fleet will, without orders, operate as outlined below and will penetrate Surigao Strait at 0300 tomorrow.

"1. Course at X-hour will be 80°, at Y-hour 60°. At 0230 speed will be increased to 26 knots and at Z-hour to 28 knots.

"2. Estimated X, Y and Z-hours are 1925, 2205 and 0245 respectively.

"3. At 0200 the Fleet will stop zigzagging and will assume No. 4 approach formation.

"4. At X-hour and 5 minutes after changing course at X-hour (sic) the Fleet will resume zigzagging.

"5. After 0230 the Fleet will be ready to make 28 knots immediately and maximum battle speed on 15 minutes notice. After 0400 the Fleet will be ready to make maximum battle speed immediately."***

No. FOUR Approach Formation is shown in Plate XX.

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* Commander Guard Force Dispatch 241656 October 1944 (Guard Force General Battle Report No. 1) to Commander SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 2ND Striking Force, AOBA.

** War Diary CTG 38.3, October 1944.

*** Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 241745 October 1944 (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 147) to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

In his postwar statement the staff torpedo officer stated that, "though it was our desire to shorten even more the time difference, it was impossible from the standpoint of fuel".*

Fuel was undoubtedly a major concern of Commander SECOND Striking Force in formulating this plan but it seems likely there were other factors which influenced his decision to an even greater extent. These appear to have been: (a) It seems logical that Commander THIRD Section would be ordered to delay his penetration in which case he could be closed at will and (b) the command organization which ordered him to operate "in support of" the FIRST Striking Force but did not place him under the command of Commander FIRST Striking Force seems to have been an ever present consideration which influenced him to keep such a distance that the SECOND Striking Force would be independent.

At approximately 1819 the force changed course to 090°(T) and continued into the Mindanao Sea at twenty-two knots.

At 1830 the SECOND Striking Force was in position Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 132°-54'E.

(c) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

October 24th was a day of utmost importance to the Japanese air forces for this was the day of maximum effort during which it was hoped to destroy the Allied task force carriers** and to annihilate enemy shipping in and around Leyte Gulf.***

The air activities of this day commenced at 0050 when a 901st Air Group patrol plane of the SIXTH Base Air Force made radar contact and reported "a large enemy force" in position Latitude 14°-35'N, Longitude 125°-15'E**** (Contact "A", Plate XIII). This contact was on TG 38.3 and the position some ten miles to the south. Commander SIXTH Base Air Force almost immediately ordered the opening of the general offensive.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operations, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 231710 October 1944 (addressees unknown), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** 4TH Air Army Operations Order A-518, 1000 October 21st, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

**** Plane L-18 Dispatch 240050 October 1944 to Canacao Air Base, Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

The FIRST Attack Group, which numbered about 158 planes*, began taking off about 0700, formed up in three waves and proceeded to the target area. At 0845 some of the force was intercepted by the Allied CAP and the attack group was considerably scattered, some of the aircraft did get through however. The THIRD Attack Unit, consisting of eleven attack planes and eighteen fighters, encountered bad weather and did not make contact with the enemy.** The results of this attack were reported as one carrier hit by a 500 pound bomb and a cruiser moderately damaged and set afire.***

By 1145 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had information that there were two carrier groups, (a) at 0853, Latitude 15°-20'N, Longitude 123°-40'E, four carriers and ten other ships**** (Contact "G") which an 0940 sighting amplified to four cariers and two special carriers in Latitude 15°-15'N, Longitude 123°-25'E***, and (b) at 0900 in Latitude 15°-55'N, Longitude 123°-25'E, two carriers and ten cruisers*** (Contact "H"). Actually all these contacts were on TG 38.3.

Shortly after noon Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the information from Commander Main Force that at 1145 he planned to launch a full scale attack against the enemy task force.***** Whether or not Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received another dispatch which followed shortly is not known. This second dispatch was sent to inform Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces that the Main Force Attack Group would arrive at Nichols Field about 1600.******

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* The total of 158 aircraft (93 fighters and 65 attack) is derived from a count of aircraft in the sources available to this analysis. This figure is somewhat lower than a Japanese postwar monograph which claimed 189 aircraft took part.

** Detailed Action Report No. 2, 263RD Attack Unit (653RD Air Group), SHO Operation, October 22nd - November 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

*** Commander Clark Air Base Dispatch 241145 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** 62ND (sic) Air Flotilla Aircraft Dispatch 240853 October 1944 to unknown addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Commander Main Force Dispatch 241138 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

****** Commander Main Force Dispatch 241151 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, SW Area Force, Nichols Air Base, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

The SECOND Attack Group, consisting of twenty-five carrier type bombers and eighteen carrier fighters, took off about 1400 to attack the carriers "east of Lamon Bay". This attack group encountered bad weather and by 1530 had returned to base.*

Sometime just prior to 1521 he received a contact report on a "large enemy force" including three carriers and three battleships sighted at 0945 in position Latitude 13°-45'N, Longitude 125°-25'E, course 090°(T), speed twenty-four knots** (Contact "J"). This was a contact on TG 38.2 although some thirty miles bearing 300°(T) from the actual position.

By 1530 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had received several of the battle reports from Commander Main Body as well as Commander Main Body's 241315 in which he emphasized the urgency of his situation and pointedly asked what attacks and contacts had been made by the air units.*** In this connection it is interesting to note that in postwar interrogation Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was asked about the air protection for the FIRST Striking force, to which he replied, "——although there were repeated requests for such support (presumably CAP) from KURITA, I turned a deaf ear to those requests and decided the best protection I could give to KURITA's force would be to concentrate my entire air force in attacking your task force which was waiting outside beyond the channel. I did send a few fighters to protect the surface units and to scout for submarines——".**** The "few fighters" appear to have been two in number, one of which was damaged during the afternoon while landing at Batangas.*****

THIS ACUTE SHORTAGE OF AIRCRAFT WAS NOT DUE TO ANY FAULT OF THE LOCAL COMMANDERS. DURING AND SINCE THE MARIANAS CAMPAIGN JAPANESE LOSSES OF AIRCRAFT AND TRAINED PILOTS HAD BEEN GREATER THAN HER ABILITY TO REPLACE THEM. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS AND THE TRAINING OF MEN TO USE THEM MUST KEEP PACE WITH THE NEED FOR THOSE WEAPONS AND MEN.

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* Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), Battle off the Philippines, October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.

** Dispatch 241207 October 1944 (originator unknown) to Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

*** Commander 1ST Striking Force (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 241315 October 1944 to Commanders Main Force and SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** USSBS Interrogations Nav No. 115, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 504.

***** Detailed Action Report No. 2, 164TH and 165TH Fighter Units (653RD Air Group), SHO Operation, October 23rd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

In reply to the request for information from Commander FIRST Striking Force, Commander SW Area Force at 1610 dispatched the information that it was his belief that the attacks on the FIRST Striking Force were from the carrier group in position Latitude 13°-45'N, Longitude 125°-25'E (Contact "J") and that the SIXTH Base Air Force was scheduled to make a dusk attack against that force.*

This dusk attack group, which consisted of three carrier type attack aircraft employed as a search unit and six carrier type attack aircraft with eighteen fighters as escort, commenced taking off about 1621. The search unit took off separately and proceeded independently to contact the enemy. Plane number TWO of this unit sighted TG 38.3 about 1720 but because of radio failure did not report until his return. This plane was present at 1750 when the PRINCETON sank and included the sinking of a carrier in his report.** The main strength of the attack group, however, failed to find the enemy and returned.***

By 1830 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that his attacks of the day had been largely ineffective. In summary reports issued later he listed the results as follows:

(a) Two large carriers damaged****

(b) One battleship and one cruiser moderately damaged and set afire****

(c) Sixty-seven Japanese aircraft failed to return.*****

Actually the light carrier PRINCETON was sunk. The light cruiser BIRMINGHAM and three destroyers were damaged in attempting to assist the PRINCETON.******

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* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 241610 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair and Surface Action, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

** Detailed Action Report No. 2, 263RD Attack Unit (653RD Air Group) SHO Operation, October 22nd - November 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

*** War Diary 653RD Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 160295, NA 12535.

**** Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 242244 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 3RD Section, 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

***** Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 250851 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

****** Action Report TG 38.3, Battle of the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0090, December 2nd, 1944.

(d) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force who was in his Manila headquarters had essentially the same information as Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. He was primarily interested in the operations of his Special Attack (Kamikaze) Units as much depended upon their success. As will be recalled his units had been dispersed and he now had them placed as follows:

(a) The SHIKISHIMA Unit at Clark (Mabalacat)

(b) The YAMATO Unit at Cebu

(c) The ASAHI and YAMAZAKURA Units at Davao No. 1

(d) The KIKUSUI Unit at Cagayan

These units, perhaps because of a lack of enemy information, were strangely inactive during the day. The KIKUSUI Unit moved up to Davao No. 1 and two single search-attack planes were launched by the units at that field—one failed to return.* A postwar account states that both the Mabalacat Unit and the Cebu Unit sortied during the day but failed to locate the enemy and returned.** Although official records available are silent on this matter, it seems likely that the account is accurate.

There were no successes during the day however and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, though likely disappointed, poised his units for full operations and better results on the following day.

Information as to his receipts and losses of aircraft on this day are missing but it is likely that he continued to operate approximately twenty-four aircraft.

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* War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.

** Roger Pineau, "Kamikaze", based on the Japanese book KAMAKAZE TOKUBETSU KOGEKITAI by Captain Nakajima and Commander Inoguchi.

(B) Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

For the FOURTH Air Army this was the day of the all-out offensive against the enemy shipping in and around Leyte Gulf.

Shortly after sunrise the first attack group commenced taking off and when formed up proceeded to Leyte Gulf. The Japanese records concerning the FOURTH Air Army activities on this day are sketchy and there is some disagreement as to the actual number of planes involved. As noted previously under "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd", a staff officer reported after the war that 128 planes were operational for the attacks on this morning.* As the initial attack was scheduled to be composed of all operational aircraft it would seem that the first attack consisted of that number. In a recently discovered dispatch however the SECOND Air Division reported the "first wave" consisted of eighty planes.** This group was intercepted between 0750 and 0825 by the Target CAP of TG 77.4. Allied sources reported the attack to number forty-eight planes of which fifteen to twenty were shot down.*** The Japanese accounts do not record the results of this attack but the Allies reported that the LEUTZE (DD) was strafed and damaged,**** the THOMAS (liberty ship) was damaged,***** the SONOMA (ATA) was bombed and sunk,****** the LCI 65 severely damaged after shooting down a plane which crashed on her fantail,****** and the LCI 1065 was struck by a plane which employed Kamikaze tactics and sunk.*******

The second attack was scheduled to take off at 1100 - 1120 and according to the above mentioned SECOND Air Division dispatch was composed of thirty-eight planes. This corresponds closely to the Allied report that the second attack commenced at 1120 and was composed of about forty planes.*** This attack was unsuccessful.

The third attack is recorded as consisting of twenty-nine aircraft,** but the time of take-off is unknown. Allied sources record only the two major attacks of the day and it is probable that these planes attacked in small groups.

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* Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, ex-IJA Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

** 2ND Air Division Dispatch dated October 25th, 1944, ADVATIS Bulletin No. 170.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 241057 October 1944 to CINCSOPA, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, etc.

**** LEUTZE TBS Voice Radio Message 232331 October 1944 to CTF 79.

***** CTF 78 Dispatch 240016 October 1944 to CTF 77; also Action Report BEALE, Assault and Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0236, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

****** Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.

******* CTF 78 Dispatch 232400 October 1944 to CTF 77.

The Japanese Army records indicate 147 sorties were flown on this day and as a result of the attacks claim (a) one cruiser and one landing craft sunk, (b) five transports set afire, (c) two cruisers damaged. FOURTH Air Army plane losses were recorded as forty-seven.*

At the close of his operations for this day he had, including replacements, 137 operational aircraft.*

* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

CHAPTER IV - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0000 - 1830, October 24th

(A) Operations of COMSOWESPAC, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

COMSOWESPAC in the NASHVILLE, with the flagship group, continued on his night retirement in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.*

At 0018 and 0019 respectively he received intelligence summaries from SEVENTH Fleet and his own headquarters.** In studying these summaries he likely became aware that the Japanese reaction to the Allied landings was building into something greater than originally anticipated.

It seems likely that during the next few hours he received the BREAM's report about torpedoing a cruiser*** (AOBA of CRUDIV SIXTEEN)(Contact "1", Plate XV), the ANGLER's report of four large plus escorts off Mindoro Island**** (Contact "2") and the GUITARRO's report on the Main Body giving its main composition of three battleships and two probable carriers***** (Contact "4").

He returned to San Pedro Bay and anchored at 0806 in the vicinity of RED Beach.*

He and CAAF SOWESPAC apparently became quite engrossed in the air battle in progress. It seems that three Japanese aircraft dove toward the NASHVILLE but were all destroyed, one by the TCAP, another by ship's antiaircraft fire and a third by crashing into the water near the NASHVILLE.****** This account by CAAF SOWESPAC is not related in the NASHVILLE's War Diary.*

During the afternoon he was requested by CTF 77 to move his headquarters from the NASHVILLE in order to release the NASHVILLE for impending night action. However, he did not desire to do so, but preferred to remain on board regardless of the ship's employment.* As it developed the NASHVILLE was not assigned to CTG 77.2 in the Battle of Surigao Strait which occurred early the following morning.

During the day whenever enemy air attacks were expected the NASHVILLE got underway to avoid and then reanchored.*

Also during the day, realizing the developing situation in the area of Palawan Strait and Coron Bay he followed the operations of CTF 77 and COMTHIRDFLT with interest. He therefore was fully familiar with several

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* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 24th, 1944.
** COM7THFLT Dispatch 230309 October 1944 to All Interested in COM7THFLT Intelligence Summary; also GHQ SWPA Dispatch 231256 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, C.G. 6TH Army.
*** BREAM Dispatch 231231 October 1944 to CTF 71.
**** CTF 71 Dispatch 231451 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, COM3RDFLT.
***** GUITARRO Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to CTF 71.
****** George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports", (New York, 1949), Pages 453 and 454.

contacts made by the search aircraft and with CTF 77's instructions regarding prospective night battle and that commander's estimates of enemy surface strength. Hewas also generally familiar with the operations of TF 38 carriers and the battle with the Main Body in the Sibuyan Sea. Since these matters are discussed more fully under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", they will not be further discussed here.

At 2120 he received his headquarter's recommendation as regards the kind of reply that should be made to COMTHIRDFLT's 210645 which has been covered elsewhere, wherein he was asked when the situation in Leyte would permit release of COMTHIRDFLT from his covering role. His headquarters suggested that, in view of the danger of possible enemy attack from the northeast, COMTHIRDFLT forces should remain in the area until medium bombers could be installed on Leyte which was estimated to be D plus 15 day.* However, since he had already replied to COMTHIRDFLT and had stated his position quite strongly to the effect that he considered COMTHIRDFLT's mission to cover the operation to be essential and paramount,** he did nothing further at this time. This matter is discussed in Volume III under "Operations of COMSOWESPAC, October 21st".***

(1) Operations of Commander SEVENTH Fleet, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

COMSEVENTHFLT took no unusual action this day as COMSEVENTHFLT nor in his capacity as CANF SOWESPAC insofar as the Leyte operation was concerned. His deputy commander continued administrative control from his headquarters at Hollandia while he himself, as COMSEVENTHFLT and CTF 77, continued operational control of SOWESPAC naval forces associated with the Leyte operation from the WASATCH.

(a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of the day CTF 77, embarked in the WASATCH, continued his usual night retirement in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf generally north of the swept channel with his flagship group (TG 77.1) consisting of the WASATCH, NASHVILLE (COMSOWESPAC embarked), AMMEN, MULLANY, BUSH and ANNER READ.****

At 0018 he received his headquarters' intelligence summary.***** In noting that this summary had been prepared prior to noon on the previous day, and comparing it with other intelligence he had received during the last twenty-four hours, he could see that it added little to what information he had by other means. He also noted, however, that it went

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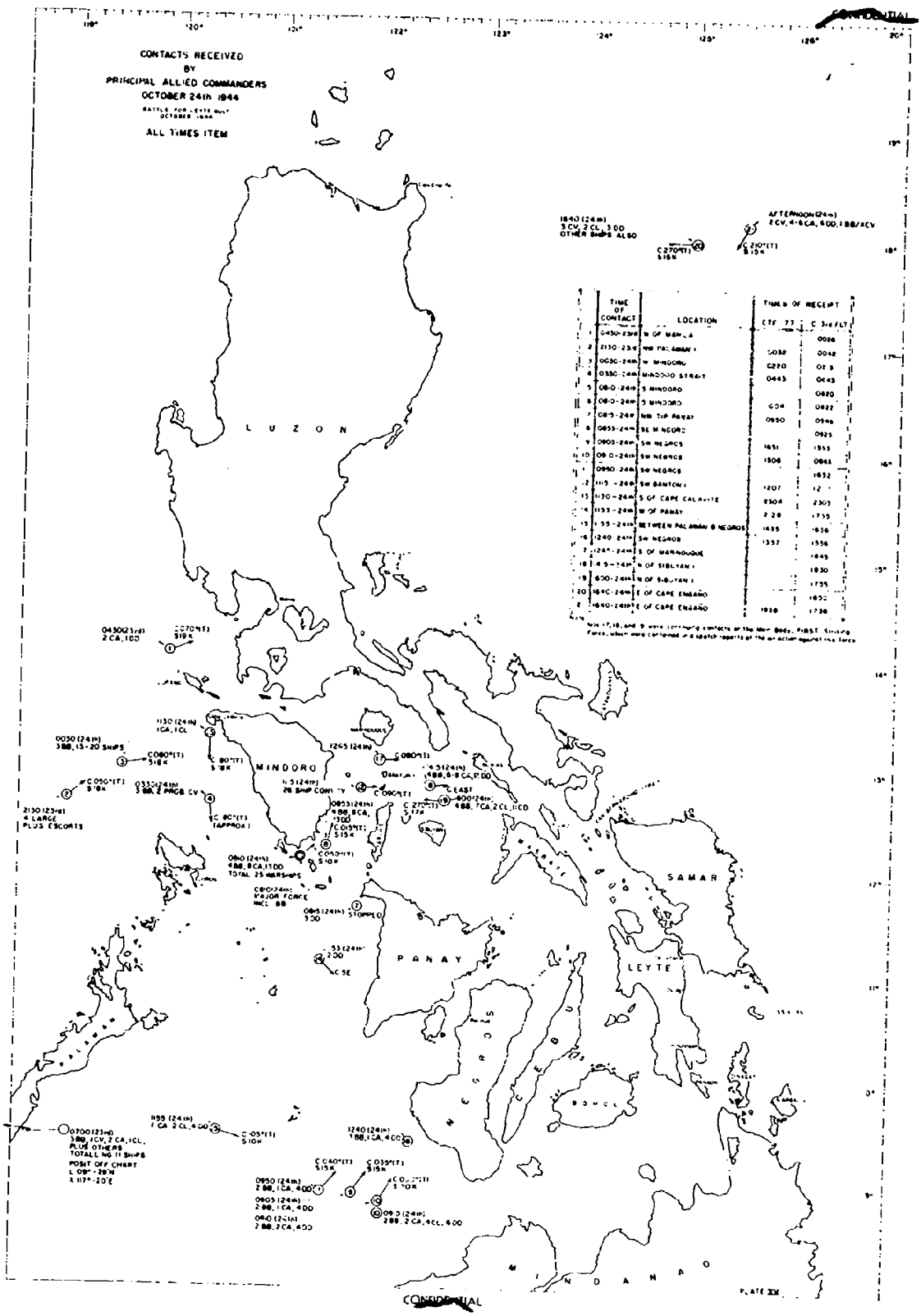
* GHQ Hollandia Dispatch 230250 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC and NASHVILLE.
** COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
*** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter III (A).
**** War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.
***** COM7THFLT Dispatch 230309 October 1944 to All Interested in COM7THFLT Intelligence Summary.



	TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT CTF 77	TIMES OF RECEIPT C 3rd FLT
1	0450-23rd	S OF MANILA		0026
2	2130-23rd	NW PALAWAN	SOM	0042
3	0030-24th	W MINDORO	0220	0218
4	0330-24th	MINDORO STRAIT	0443	0445
5	0800-24th	S MINDORO		0820
6	0800-24th	S MINDORO	604	0822
7	0815-24th	NW TIP PANAY	0930	0946
8	0855-24th	SE MINDORO		0925
9	0905-24th	SW NEGROS	1651	1653
10	0800-24th	SW NEGROS	1306	0841	1632
11	0850-24th	SW NEGROS		12 -
12	1115 - 24th	SW BANTON I	1207	
13	1130-24th	S OF CAPE CALAVITE	8504	2303
14	1153-24th	W OF PANAY	2 20	1735
15	1155-24th	BETWEEN PALAWAN & NEGROS	1635	1636
16	1240-24th	SW NEGROS	1357	1556
17	1245-24th	S OF MARINDUQUE		1645
18	1245-24th	S OF SIBUYAN I		1830
19	600-24th	S OF SIBUYAN I		1755
20	1640-24th	E OF CAPE ENGAÑO		1650
2	1640-24th	E OF CAPE ENGAÑO	1938	1738

Nos 17, 18, and 19 were containing contacts of the Main Body, First Striking Force, which were contained in 4 sketch reports of the air action against this force

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a step further than he had in sending out his dispatch 230142,* by identifying the second Japanese surface force assumed to be in Palawan Passage as a convoy. Although CTF 77 had also estimated two Japanese surface forces to be in Palawan Passage, he had not specifically designated them as being a convoy and its covering force. His headquarters' estimate may have had the effect of somewhat complicating his "Magnified Tokyo Express" concept by thus introducing a convoy.

At 0019, he received Headquarters, COMSOWESPAC Intelligence Summary, which, among other things, estimated that the Japanese proposed to stage two hundred aircraft to Luzon indicating a quickening air offensive.**

It is likely (since COMTHIRDFLT received it at that time) that at 0026 he intercepted a report from the BREAM to the effect that she had (a) contacted two AOBA class cruisers (CA's) and a large destroyer at 0430 October 23rd in Latitude 14°-05'N, Longitude 119°-40'E on course 070°(T), speed nineteen knots (Contact "1", Plate XV), and (b) scored two hits in one of the cruisers with two torpedoes.***

By comparing this contact with other more recent ones, he could see that it was distinct from them. This added further support to his estimate that a large number of enemy combatant ships were perhaps forming in the Manila-Coron Bay area. The force attacked was CRUDIV SIXTEEN, composed of three ships, AOBA (CA), KINU (CL), and URANAMI (DD). As has been discussed in Volume III under "Operations of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd", the AOBA was hit by one rather by two torpedoes. Shortly thereafter COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN proceeded t· Manila with the KINU towing the AOBA at seven point five knots whil URANAMI provided antisubmarine protection.

At 0032, he learned from CTF 71 that the ANGLER had, at contacted an enemy task force of four large ships plus escorts in Latitude 12°-40'N, Longitude 118°-56'E on base course 050°(T), speed eighteen knots**** (Contact "2").

Reviewing his preparations to insure the security of his force he weighed possible courses of action to improve his local defenses against enemy air attack. He had in mind the danger of possible carrier strikes from west of Palawan, these to be augmented perhaps by land-based air strikes. He had referred to both of these strikes in his 230142*****

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air forces, infor All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CAAF SOWESPAC.

** GHQ SWPA Dispatch 231256 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, C.G. 6TH Army, WASATCH.

*** BREAM Dispatch 231231 October 1944 to CTF 71.

**** CTF 71 Dispatch 231451 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLTS, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info COMINCH.

***** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter I (A)(1)(a).

wherein he had stated, among other things, (a) it is possible that enemy carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan and (b) there are indications of a concentration of a large number of enemy aircraft in the Luzon area. At this time he may have considered asking COMTHIRDFLT for assistance in connection with reinforcing the TCAP over Leyte Gulf--CTG 38.4 was sufficiently close to accomplish this (Diagram "C")--but probably for various reasons among which may have been (a) his failure to obtain post D-day fighter sweeps from COMTHIRDFLT and (b) the thought that TG 38.4, which was the nearest carrier group, might require these fighters for its own defense, he did not do so.

At this point he seems to have arrived at the opinion that air strikes emanating from carriers--the positions of which were unknown--and from air fields--the precise ones to be used being also unknown--required that he concentrate his limited fighter strength over Leyte Gulf and his own carriers. This thought is supported by the fact that at 0122 he sent the following dispatch to CTG 77.4: "Possibility large enemy air attack may be brewing. Until otherwise directed cancel western Visayas strike. Increase target CAP to thirty-six fighters with additional sixteen fighters in Condition ELEVEN (fighters capable of being launched on ten minutes notice)".*

THIS DECISION WAS SOUND FOR ALTHOUGH THERE WERE NO AIRCRAFT CARRIERS OPERATING IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA WHICH WERE TO STRIKE ALLIED FORCES AT LEYTE AS FORECAST BY CTF 77, THERE WERE IN FACT INCREASING NUMBERS OF LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT BEING FLOWN INTO THE PHILIPPINES. THESE REINFORCEMENTS WHICH FOR THE BASE AIR FORCES HAD ARRIVED LARGELY ON THE 22ND AND FOR THE FOURTH AIR ARMY LARGELY ON THE 22ND AND 23RD, WERE SHCEDULED TO BE EMPLOYED THIS VERY DAY IN A MAXIMUM EFFORT AGAINST ALLIED FORCES BOTH IN THE LEYTE AREA AND AT SEA EAST OF THE PHILIPPINES.

At 0220, he intercepted the GUITARRO's contact made at 0030 on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force** (Contact "3"). The report showed the force's composition to be probably three battleships, between fifteen and twenty ships total in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 119°-30'E on course 080°(T), speed eighteen knots. This report revealed a larger concentration of ships than had heretofore been reported.

At 0240 he received a dispatch from CTG 38.4 that the latter was launching four search and attack teams composed of eight fighters and six dive bombers each, from Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E in sectors between 230°(T) and 270°(T) to a distance of 325 miles.*** He could see that this search would pass over the principal airfields in the western Visayas.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 231532 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info TG 77.4, TF 77, CTG 77.13, TF 79, COM3RDFLT.

** GUITARRO Dispatch 231610 October 1944 to Radio PERTH, info CINCPAC, CTF 77, etc.

*** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 231009 October 1944 to CTF 77.

At 0425, he received his headquarters' report of several ship sightings made on the 23rd, none of which were of a serious threatening nature.* He had received this information earlier through other sources.

At 0443, he intercepted the GUITARRO's second report on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force** (Contact "4"). This report was very illuminating for it stated that at 0330 (three hours after her first contact) the Main Body consisted of three definite battleships and two probable carriers heading south through Mindoro Strait. Why the Commanding Officer GUITARRO estimated that there were two probable carriers in the force is not known but it seems likely that is was the result of (a) CTF 77's dispatch 230142 mentioned previously and (b) the DACE's attack report,*** both of which contained references to a carrier or carriers.

Whether or not CTF 77 thought that these were the only carriers in the operation is not clear but it seems unlikely for the fighter director destroyer BENNION in her war diary stated in part "Advance intelligence reported a large attack (carrier-based) was forming up to the northwest".****

As he studied the GUITARRO's contact, he realized if this were so it modified his previous estimate of the situation,***** in that aircraft carriers rather than operating from west of Palawan appeared to be moving into the Sulu Sea from whence they could directly support "Magnified Tokyo Express Runs".

It is likely that, in order to draw attention to this contact and to the implications of the change in the tactical situation if in fact enemy carriers along with the battleships were proceeding into the Sulu Sea area, he advised COMTHIRDFLT and all TFC's and TGC's of the THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets that the submarine GUITARRO had reported three battleships and two possible carriers in Mindoro Strait at 0330 on the 24th.******

Commencing at about 0831 the anticipated air attack developed.******* Reportedly eighty planes from the FOURTH Air Army participated,******** and were heavily repulsed by the CAP and the guns of the ships. However, the Allies did not escape entirely for (a) the LEUTZE was strafed and damaged,******** (b) one XAK (THOMAS) was

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* COM7THFLT Dispatch 221213 October 1944 to All Interested Current Operations SOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, CTG's 38.2 and 38.3.

** GUITARRO Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to CTF 71.

*** DACE Dispatch 231115 October 1944 to CTF 71.

**** War Diary BENNION, October 24th, 1944.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, etc.

****** CTF 77 Dispatch 232117 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLTS's.

******* LEUTZE TBS Voice Radio Message 232331 October 1944 to CTF 79.

******** 2ND Air Division Dispatch, October 25th, 1944, ADVATIS Bulletin No. 170.

damaged,* (c) the ATA SONOMA was bombed and sunk,** (d) the LCI 65 was severely damaged after shooting down a plane which crashed on her fantail* and (e) the LCI 1065 was struck and sunk by a plane which employed Kamikaze tactics.*** The action continued with varying intensity until about 0945.****

DESPITE THIS DAMAGE IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT CTF 77 WAS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS AS THEY INDICATED HIS ABILITY TO DEFEND HIS FORCES AGAINST AIR ATTACK EVEN UNDER THE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS OF RADAR DETECTION EXISTING IN THE WESTERN AREA OF THE GULF. THIS LATTER MATTER IS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH IN VOLUME III UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 77, OCTOBER 20TH".*****

At 0920 he intercepted COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch directing CTG's 38.3 and 38.4 to concentrate at best speed on CTG 38.2 (which was off San Bernardino Strait).******

Possibly at 0943 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he received a contact report relayed at 0910 by the PB4Y in Sector TWO of Search Plan FOX (Contact "10"). The pilot stated that he had intercepted a VHF transmission. He reported (a) two enemy battleships, two cruisers and four destroyers in Latitude 08°-50'N, Longitude 122°-05'E on course 030°(T), speed twenty knots, and (b) six miles south of the first force two battleships, two heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and six destroyers under attack by a carrier group.*******

As will be shown later, this report seems to have heavily influenced both CTF 77's and CTG 77.2's estimate of enemy forces approaching Leyte from the southwest.

It was, however, quite inaccurate in that there were in fact but two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers in the Japanese THIRD Section.

Why two groups rather than one were reported cannot be fully explained. One reasonable explanation is given under "Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force) and CTG 73.4 (Search and Support Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th".

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* CTF 78 Dispatch 240016 October 1944 to CTF 77; also Action Report BEALE, Assault and Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0236, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.

*** CTF 78 Dispatch 232400 October 1944 to CTF 77.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 240054 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, COMSOWFSPAC, etc.; also Aircraft Action Reports No. 60-44, VC-60; No. 22-44, VC-26; No. 20-44, 21-44, VC-27; No. 110-44, VC-3; No. 53-44, VC-5.

***** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter I (A)(1)(a).

****** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232327 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4.

******* Aircraft in Sector TWO Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations this Circuit.

At 0950 he probably learned that (a) a TG 38.4 search group had attacked three destroyers in Latitude 11°-40'N, Longitude 121°-50'E at 0815 (Contact "7"), (b) one of the destroyers was dead in the water smoking heavily, (c) the remaining two were standing by and (d) the original course had been 130°(T), speed fifteen knots.*

About this time, as shown in the following dispatch, he appears to have reinstituted fighter sweeps of the Visayan airfields probably because he had observed that the aircraft which had recently attacked his command were largely land-based planes and he desired to disrupt further attacks at their source.

Having done this and realizing that other commands would be interested in the nature and effectiveness of the enemy air attacks which he had warned them against that very morning he, at 0954, advised them that (a) at 0750 he had been attacked by a large number of planes including land-based fighters, two-engine land-based bombers, carrier-type fighters and carrier-type single-engine bombers, (b) damage had been minor, (c) interception employing a double fighter CAP had been effective and (d) sixteen fighters were now en route to sweep the western Visayan airfields.**

At 1004, he learned from COMTHIRDFLT that a TG 38.2 aircraft had sighted a major enemy force including battleships at 0810 just so th of Mindoro on course 050°(T), speed ten to twelve knots*** (Contact "6"). He was interested to learn what the composition of this force was relative to carriers and battleships. INFORMATION REGARDING THE CARRIERS WAS IMPORTANT AS IT COULD MEAN ADDITIONAL AIR ATTACKS ON THE LEYTE AREA; INFORMATION REGARDING BOTH TYPES OF SHIPS WAS IMPORTANT BECAUSE BY THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION HE COULD DETERMINE THE PROBABLE DISTRIBUTION OF ENEMY CARRIERS AND BATTLESHIPS IN THE PHILIPPINES AREA. HE CLEARLY EXPECTED COMTHIRDFLT TO LAUNCH MASSIVE AIR STRIKES AGAINST THIS FORCE.

At about 1028 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT which (a) advised him of the vital necessity for early coverage of the sea area northeastward of Leyte by seaplanes to protect this flank, and (b) requested information as regards the establishment of this search.****

Although CTG 73.7 had advised "All Interested in Catalina Operations" on the previous day that such searches would begin the evening of the twenty-fourth,***** COMTHIRDFLT had apparently not received this message, for it cannot be located in his dispatch files.

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* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 232355 October 1944 to CTF 38, COM3RDFLT, info CTG 38.2.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240054 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, All CTG's 3RDFLT, C.G. 5TH Air Force, etc.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232335 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COM7THFLT, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.

***** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 231227 October 1944 to CTF 77, info All Interested Catalina Operations, COM7THFLT, CTF 73, etc.

As will be shown later, it appears this request caused him to re-examine CTG 73.7's night PBY search planned for three aircraft.

At 1110 he received CTF 79's daily operational summary.* Noting with satisfaction the emphasis CTF 79 appeared to be placing on unloading and sailing his transports from Leyte Gulf, he turned to observe the progress of his defense against a new air attack developing. This second major enemy air attack of the day proved to be fairly large, approximating, according to CTF 77, forty attacking aircraft,** but was neither as large nor of such intensity as the morning attack. Japanese reports thereon are meager. The attack was unsuccessful.

At 1124 he intercepted COMTHIRDFLT's orders to CTF 38 and CTG 38.3 to strike the enemy force south of Mindoro composed of four battleships, eight heavy cruisers and thirteen destroyers.***

This dispatch interested him greatly for it showed (a) that (1) all of the vessels in the force were combatant types, (2) there were no carriers and (c) there were four battleships, (b) there was a total of eight battleships in the Sulu Sea and off Mindoro and (c) COMTHIRDFLT was already taking air action against the enemy force off Mindoro.

Item (b), if correct, was quite illuminating for it showed that the ISE and HYUGA were likely in the area--ISE had already been reported there by the GUITARRO--and therefore all eight remaining Japanese battleships had been contacted. It will be recalled that there had been nine battleships originally and since the DACE had reported sinking one KONGO class battleship there remained but eight. This would indicate that the 0910 contact report of four battleships in the Sulu Sea was likely correct.

Now at 1139, in conformance with his policy begun earlier, he sent COMTHIRDFLT a dispatch informing him of the most recent air attack as follows: "One large group of enemy planes, one medium sized group of enemy planes, one undetermined sized group approaching Leyte at 1130/I. Fighters intercepting."****

At 1200 he learned that COMTHIRDFLT had advised CTF 38 to keep the area to the north under observation since the enemy carrier strength was not yet located.*****

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* CTF 79 Dispatch 240110 October 1944 to CTF 77.
** CTF 77 Dispatch 241057 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.
*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232331 October 1944 to CTF 38 and CTG 38.3.
**** CTF 77 Dispatch 240239 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
***** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232355 October 1944 to CTF 38, info CTG 38.2.

This may have caused him to wonder how this order was related to COMTHIRDFLT's request to him earlier regarding the establishment of PBY searches to the north. He may have felt that based on CINCPOA's estimate of the location of the Main Force, COMTHIRDFLT had decided to institute northward searches as soon as possible feeling he could not wait upon the results of the night PBY searches.

At approximately 1207 he received a rebroadcast contact report on a twenty-six ship convoy of Japanese origin, comprising no carriers, observed twenty-six miles southeast of Mount Dumali (NE tip of Mindoro), on course 090°(T)* (Contact "12"). The time of contact was not included in the report, although it is known that the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, off Mindoro, changed course to 090°(T) at about 1026. He appears to have identified this contact with the one received at 1124.

During the morning, although paying close attention to the developing enemy situation, he had been completing arrangements with the C.G. SIXTH Army for the latter to assume command of all forces ashore on Leyte. Having finally agreed on the time, he, at 1211, with the C.G. SIXTH Army issued the following: "The Commanding General SIXTH Army assumes command of all forces ashore in the Leyte area twenty-four October 1400 ITEM. Kinkaid and Kreuger."**

This was a most satisfying development for it signified the completion of the amphibious assault phase of the operation insofar as he was concerned, and meant that the situation ashore was now deemed secure enough for the army commander to relieve him of the responsibility for the ground offensive. This was particularly important at this time for the Japanese were stepping up their naval operations and he desired more freedom of action as regards the purely naval factors.

As he estimated the situation it is not unlikely that he learned, through the procedure of monitoring appropriate VHF circuits, that TG 38.4 planes had broken off their attack against the Japanese THIRD Section with indecisive results some time before, in order to return to their parent carriers. He realized that this was necessary if CTG 38.4 was to comply as soon as possible with COMTHIRDFLT's orders to concentrate toward TG 38.2 off San Bernardino Strait.*** Therefore, he likely reasoned that the enemy force in the Sulu Sea, though it had been under attack still retained the several dangerous capabilities of (a) penetrating into Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait, destroying shipping therein and landing troops and (b) landing reinforcements somewhere on the southern or west coasts of Leyte without penetrating Surigao Strait.

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* Radio Holandia Dispatch 241115/I October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, info COM3RDFLT, All TFC's 3RDFLT.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240311 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COM7THFLT, All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, etc.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 23 2327 October 1944 to CTG 38.3 and CTG 38.4.

Now, weighing his own and the enemy's strength and weakness factors, based largely on the somewhat inaccurate report referred to previously,* he probably over-estimated the strength of the enemy in the Sulu Sea. Even So, he likely realized that his own forces were considerably stronger.

He now continued estimating the situation in order to prepare a general plan for the defense of Leyte Gulf based on the assumption that the enemy would attempt to force Surigao Strait sometime after 1900. This statement is based on the fact that from the enemy's last known position, at a speed of advance of twenty knots, which was the reported speed, the enemy could not pass Binit Point before 1900.

In preparing this plan he conferred with CTG 70.1 concerning the capabilities and numbers of the motor torpedo boats which would be available and discussed their stationing along the southern shores of Surigao Strait.**

At this point in order better to understand (a) the orders under which his forces were operating in connection with the defense of Leyte Gulf and (b) the type of enemy action anticipated by him and his plans to defend against them, several pertinent citations are quoted in the following:

"In the event of threatened attack, it is the present intention of Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77):

"(a) If an enemy naval force containing heavy units threatens our operations, to order Commander Bombardment and Fire Support Group (CTG 77.2) to concentrate, interpose between enemy force and Attack Forces and destroy the enemy force. Close Covering Group (CTG 77.3) may be ordered to reinforce Bombardment and Fire Support Group."***

On October 21st he had further clarified his plan for the defense of Leyte Gulf in his dispatch 210641 which is quoted in part: "Harbor Defense Plan 1. CTG 77.2, Withdraw from transport and fire support area and take position southern area Leyte Gulf. During darkness be underway and defend gulf against entry of hostile surface forces from either eastern or southern entrance of Surigao Strait. Be prepared to sortie from gulf and attack enemy hostile force if enemy force definitely located..."****

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* Aircraft in Sector TWO Dispatch 240010 to All Stations this Circuit.

** Letter from Vice Admiral (then Captain) R. H. Cruzen, USN (Ret), Operations Officer to CTF 77, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, dated May 27th, 1957.

*** CTF 77 Operation Plan CANF SOWESPAC No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 2, Annex "E".

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3, info All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.

As regards the motor torpedo boats, he apparently did not originally envision their employment as an integrated component of the major surface forces (TG's 77.2 and 77.3) charged with the defense of Leyte Gulf against enemy surface attack. His operation plan supports this view in stating: "The Commander Philippines Attack Force will control the operations of the Motor Torpedo Boats in the objective area."*

At 1215, having completed his estimate of the situation, he issued his general battle plan as follows: "Prepare for night engagement. Enemy force estimated two BB, four CA, four CL, ten DD reported under attack by our carrier planes in eastern Sulu Sea at 0910 ITEM October 24. Enemy may arrive Leyte Gulf tonight. Make all preparations for night engagement. TG 77.3 assigned to CTG 77.2 as reinforcement. CTG 70.1 station maximum number PT's lower Surigao Strait to remain south of Latitude 10°-10'N during darkness."**

This plan is particularly interesting in that CTF 77 had now reduced by two battleships the strength of the enemy forces (THIRD Section) as originally contacted in the Sulu Sea at 0910, and had decided that the cruisers of the first group were heavy cruisers. It is not clear why he made the decision to drop two battleships, but it seems likely that because of VHF or medium frequency interceptions not available to this analysis, he had gained new information concerning this section.

This decision was correct for there were but two battleships (YAMASHIRO, FUSO) in the THIRD Section.

Then four minutes later, at 1219, he directed CTG 70.1 as follows: "Station maximum number PT's lower Surigao Strait tonight. To remain south of 10°-10' North during darkness. Assigned task to report and attack enemy surface forces entering Leyte Gulf."***

These two dispatches indicate plainly that CTF 77 intended to retain direct control over the motor torpedo boats even under the situation of possible battle and did not intend to assign this responsibility to CTG 77.2. They also indicate plainly by "omission" that he either (a) overlooked the fact that DESRON FIFTY-FOUR was screening the northern end of Surigao Strait or (b) desired this DESRON to remain under the command of CTF 79.

THE QUESTION NOW ARISES AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THIS WAS WISE. AS REGARDS THE DESTROYERS IT WAS CLEARLY UNWISE FOR THEY WERE OPERATING IN THE AREA WHERE CTG 77.2 WOULD MOST LIKELY OPERATE AND THEREFORE MIGHT WELL CREATE CONFUSION. THAT THIS CONFUSION DID NOT OCCUR WAS DUE LARGELY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR WHO TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER, PLACED HIMSELF UNDER CTG 77.2'S DIRECT COMMAND.

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* CTF 77 Operations Plan CANF SOWESPAC No. 13-44, Serial 00029A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 5, Annex "E".

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG 77.3, CTF 79, CTF 78, CTG 77.2, CTG 70.1, All TFC's 3RDFLT, COMFEAF, info COM3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240319 October 1944 to CTG 70.1.

AS REGARDS THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS, WHILE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE TO HAVE HAD THEM OPERATE DIRECTLY UNDER CTG 77.2 THIS WAS NOT VITAL AS THEY WERE TO BE STATIONED IN LOWER SURIGAO STRAIT CLEAR OF THE AREA WHERE CTG 77.2 WOULD MOST LIKELY OPERATE.

It will be recalled that on the preceding day, CTF 77 had requested CTG 73.7 to come aboard the WASATCH about 0900, October 24th to discuss the operations of the PBY's.* Doubtlessly this meeting was somewhat delayed by the enemy air attacks and the various problems arising out of the contacts reported.

Also, as was cited earlier, he had received a request from COMTHIRDFLT at 1028 for information regarding the establishment of PBY searches out of Leyte Gulf, emphasizing the vital necessity for early coverage of the sea area northeastward of Leyte to cover his northern flank.**

Therefore, concurrent with his planning for the defense of Leyte Gulf by his local surface forces, he had been considering COMTHIRDFLT's requirement and accordingly decided to augment the planned night searches which were scheduled to commence this evening in accordance with earlier orders issued by CTG 73.7.*** Conscious of the presence of the Japanese THIRD Section located earlier in the Sulu Sea (so far as can be determined CTF 77 had not yet learned of the SECOND Striking Force's presence which at noon was about eighty miles west of the THIRD Section), at 1225 he sent the following dispatch: "Issue orders for planes take off earliest practicable. Search three west sectors of Plan FOX (Modified)**** from Leyte to return after sunrise. Three of our fast carrier groups will be in area. Two additional planes take off at sunset to search Surigao Straits, Mindanao Sea and Sulu Sea to locate Japanese Fleet, reported in 08°-50'N, 122°-05'E at 240010Z. Force reported consists of four BB, eight cruisers and ten DDs in two groups. Insure contact reports are transmitted by AOIC circuit Manus FOX and Honolulu FOX."*****

It will be noted that CTF 77 had now increased the number of battleships to four. This is interesting for in sending out his order to prepare for night engagement, cited earlier, he had estimated the presence of two battleships in the enemy disposition.****** What caused him to return to four battleships as contained in the original contact report (0910)******* is not explained but it could have been a realization that his only complete contact report was the 0910 report on two groups of ships.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 231235 October 1944 to CTG 73.7.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232335 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COM7THFLT, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.

*** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 231227 October 1944 to CTG 77, info All Interested Catalina Operations, etc.

**** Sectors "S", "T" and "U", Plate IX.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 240325 October 1944 to CTG 73.7, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, etc.

****** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3, 70.1, etc., info COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, etc.

******* Aircraft in Sector TWO Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations this Circuit.

At this time, the question likely arose in his mind as to whether or not the THIRD Section in the Sulu Sea was presently being tracked by either carrier or land-based aircraft. He knew, of course, that CTG 38.4 (whose planes had discovered and attacked this force) had been ordered to concentrate toward TG 38.2 off San Bernardino Strait at best speed. This would take TG 38.4 out of range of the THIRD Section. So far as the PB4Y's out of Morotai were concerned, he must have realized that because of their early take-off time (about 0530) it was quite doubtful that they would be able to track the force much after 1600 and still have sufficient fuel reserve to return to Morotai. Also, owing to the time factor, a request to C.G. FIFTH Air Force to order out additional planes to shadow the THIRD Section would probably be received too late for execution.

In view of the above it would be interesting to discover why he did not order CTG 73.7 to send out a PBY as soon as practicable to shadow the THIRD Section. This answer is not known. However, it would seem to have been largely due to low aircraft availability for, although ten PBY's were flown in, but three took off on this day in compliance with CTF 77's order 240325, previously quoted, which called for five planes.

Having carefully followed the developing situation, and having possibly re-estimated the earliest time by which the enemy could penetrate to lower Surigao Strait, he now decided that an attempt by the Japanese THIRD Section to penetrate Leyte Gulf was not only probable but was imminent. Therefore, despite the fact that but one hour earlier he had directed CTG 77.2 to prepare for night engagement, he (a) became concerned lest delays in transmission prevent adequate and timely preparations and (b) decided to warn CTG 77.2 by TBS voice radio. At 1312 he sent the following message: "Consider enemy night surface attack on Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait is imminent. Make all preparations. My dispatch orders are now being sent out."*

At 1343, apparently anxious to apprise COMTHIRDFLT of his reaction to the contact he had received at 1207, he advised that commander by dispatch, in part, as follows: "Probable enemy landing force in convoy of twenty-five ships including battleships and cruisers last reported at 1115 twenty-six miles southeast of Mount Dumali on course 090°(T)."**

THIS DISPATCH, WHILE NOT MENTIONING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS WAS A TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATION, NEVERTHELESS BY ITS INSERTION OF THE PHRASE "PROBABLE LANDING FORCE" WHICH WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE BASIC DISPATCH INDICATES THAT CTF 77 WAS STILL OF THE OPINION THAT THESE JAPANESE NAVAL OPERATIONS WERE PRIMARILY TO AUGMENT THE GROUND FORCES ON LEYTE.***

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* CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240412 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 78, CTF 79.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240443 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

*** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (A)(1)(a).

In this connection attention is invited to the discussion on Tokyo Express operations under "Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats), 0000 - 1830, October 24th" wherein it was pointed out that since CTG 70.1 had (a) commenced this battle plan with the phrase "expect Tokyo Express tonight" and (b) been in conference with CTF 77's Chief of Staff that morning, it was assumed that he had obtained this concept from the Chief of Staff.

DO NOT BOTH OF THESE DISPATCHES INDICATE CLEARLY THAT AT CTF 77'S HEADQUARTERS THE CONCEPT PERSISTED (DISCUSSED FULLY IN VOLUME III)* THAT THE JAPANESE OPERATIONS PRESENTLY UNDERWAY WERE FOR THE PURPOSE OF REINFORCING THE LEYTE GARRISON AND THAT THE IDEA OF MAJOR FLEET ACTION WAS STILL REMOTE?

At 1357 he intercepted a TANGIER dispatch (the TANGIER was at Morotai) reporting a new sighting (Contact "16") of three battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude 09°-25'N, Longitude 122°-23'E.** Although the time of sighting is not given it is clear that it was shortly before 1240.

At 1435 he learned that the Morotai-based PB4Y flying in Sector 312°-321°(T) had sighted at 1155, one ATAGO class CA, two NATORI class CL, four DD and one float type enemy fighter in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 120°-30'E on course 105°(T), speed ten knots*** (Contact "15").

This contact, which was on the Japanese SECOND Striking Force, was distinct from the VHF intercept relayed by the patrol plane earlier in the morning. CTF 77's interpretation of this contact is nowhere recorded. It can be assumed that in plotting the contact and estimating a speed of advance of twenty knots, he predicted this force could not arrive at the southern entrance to Leyte Gulf much before 0600 the following morning. This contact, though made almost three hours after the one upon which he had based his battle plan, was about 100 miles west northwest of the latter. If he accepted the positions of the two forces as having been reported with reasonable accuracy, he must have realized that the forces were separate and distinct.

Having completed his plans for the defense of Leyte Gulf he now, at 1443, advised interested commanders of his general strategic plan as follows: "Following supplements harbor defense plan contained my 210641. Able. RADM Oldendorf**** reinforced by TC 77.3. Take night position lower Leyte Gulf. Destroy enemy forces encountered. Baker. CTF 78 and 79 anchor all non-combatant ships in respective transport areas. Form close inner screen with escorts present. Other forces present seek refuge San Pedro Bay anchoring prior dark. No departures or entry Leyte Gulf during darkness."*****

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* Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (A)(1)(a).

** TANGIER Dispatch 240340 October 1944 (addressees unknown).

*** C.G. 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 240100 October 1944 to All Commands this Circuit.

**** Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf, USN.

***** COM7THFLT (likely CTF 77) Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

At 1447 he probably received (although CTF 79 did not) a 1000 contact report on two FUSO class battleships, one unidentified CA and four unidentified destroyers in Latitude 121°-25' (sic), on course 060°(T), speed fifteen knots.*

Although the position herein given was garbled he likely recognized it as on one of the two enemy groups reported earlier in the vicinity of Latitude 08°-50'N, Longitude 122°-05'E. This seems so since the composition of the latest contact was identical with one of the groups in the two reported.**

It seems he again examined his plan to defend Leyte Gulf and decided that there was one possible eventuality for which he had not specifically provided, namely, that of the enemy slipping undetected between Dinagat Island and Mindanao and then penetrating to the gulf via Surigao Strait East (the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf). Realizing the implications of this maneuver if successfully executed he sent the following message to CTG 70.1 at 1509: "Insure enemy forces do not, repeat, do not pass undetected through strait between Dinagat Island and Mindanao."***

It will be recalled that, in addition to his 230142 wherein he had estimated the Japanese intentions and had then requested Commanders of the FIFTH and THIRTEENTH Air Forces and COMTHIRDFLT to disrupt the enemy operations,**** he had informed COMTHIRDFLT of the enemy air attacks against Leyte Gulf as follows: (a) at 0954 of the early morning attack and its results***** and (b) at 1139 of the three groups of enemy planes approaching Leyte.******

Now, at 1549, having had an opportunity to analyze the first enemy air attack of the day, he advised COMTHIRDFLT, among other things, that (a) the morning air attack consisted of approximately forty aircraft which were apparently all shore-based, (b) the TCAP had destroyed fifteen to twenty-five of these, while ships' gunfire had destroyed several more, (c) damage to his ships had been one Liberty ship damaged, one LCI burning and sinking, and one destroyer strafed with minor damage and (d) HE BELIEVED THAT THE SHORE-BASED ATTACK WAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COVERING THE ENTRY OF SHIPS INTO MINDORO STRAIT AND CORON BAY.*******

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* C.G. 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 240215 October 1944 to All Interested Current Operations.

** Aircraft in Sector TWO Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations on this Circuit.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240609 October 1944 to CTG 70.1, info CTG 77.2.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT: also CTF 77 Dispatch 240443 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 240054 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, etc.

****** CTF 77 Dispatch 240239 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

******* CTF 77 Dispatch 240649 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, etc.

The body of the message, exclusive of his estimate of enemy intentions, was largely correct, although the attack appears to have been actually larger than estimated by CTF 77. This matter is discussed under "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, 0000 - 1830, October 24th". CTF 77's ESTIMATE OF ENEMY INTENTIONS IS SIGNIFICANT IN THAT IT INDICATES THAT HE CONTINUED TO ASSIGN, EVEN AT THIS LATE HOUR, LITTLE WEIGHT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF (a) MAJOR FLEET ACTION CALCULATED TO DISRUPT THE ALLIED STRATEGY OR (b) RAIDS BY SURFACE FORCES, BUT WAS INSTEAD CONTINUING TO OPERATE ON THE CONCEPT THAT THE JAPANESE CONTEMPLATED THE MOVEMENT OF GROUND TROOPS THROUGH THE VISAYAS TO LEYTE BY TOKYO EXPRESS OR SIMILAR OPERATIONS EMPLOYING MAJOR FORCES.

At some time prior to 1611 he received a message from CTG 70.1 advising him that certain motor torpedo boats had departed for Surigao Strait prior to the receipt of his instructions to remain south of Latitude 10°-10'N and that as a result some of them might be encountered as far north as Latitude 10°-17'N.* Therefore, at 1611, he advised his forces as follows: "Some motor torpedo boats proceeded to station prior to receipt of instructions to remain south of Latitude 10°-10'N and you may expect motor torpedo boats to be operating as far north as Latitude 10°-17'N." In addition he added this information: "There will be thirty PT's on station"**

It is possible that, at this time, in looking over his incoming dispatches for the day, he noted that COMTHIRDFLT's request for information regarding PBY searches to cover the latter's northern flank had not been answered. At 1616, therefore, he advised that commander that (a) the three western sectors of Search Plan FOX (Modified) would begin tonight as shown in his dispatch 240325, (b) the two eastern sectors would begin as soon as practicable and (c) the searches to the west sector would begin employing all planes available.***

From this dispatch it appears that, in CTF 77's conversation with CTG 73.7 earlier in the day, the problem of aircraft availability must have arisen and although ten PBY's had been flown in from Morotai, the availability was such that CTG 73.7 would be hard pressed to carry out his commander's orders. This statement is borne out in a dispatch sent later by the Commanding Officer of the HALF MOON to CTG 73.7 in which he said, "appears now that only three planes will take off tonight, the two specials and TARE."**** (The TARE mission likely referred to Sector TARE (353-005°(T)) of Search Plan FOX (Modified) (Plate IX).)

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* Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240711 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTG's 77.3 and 70.1.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240716 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF's 38, 57, COMSOWESPAC.

**** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 241003 October 1944 to HALF MOON with appended reference thereto. (Recorded as HALF MOON Dispatch 241925 (sic) October 1944 to CTG 73.7.)

At 1631 he received CTG 38.4's report of the morning air attack against the THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force. This dispatch revealed that (a) at 0905 two BB, one CA and four DD were attacked in Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 121°-50'E, on course 035°(T), speed fifteen knots, (b) each attacking flight group made two bomb hits on each BB, causing a good fire on one, (c) rocket hits made on the CA and two DD's, (d) the DD's were heavily strafed and (e) CTG 38.4 was now closing on TG 38.2 which would take him out of range of the contact.*

If he had had any doubts before as to whether aircraft attacks on this force by TF 38 planes had been broken off, they were now dispelled.

There is no indication that this report caused him to change his mind regarding the composition of the THIRD Section. He may have compared this dispatch with the PB4Y's erroneous report on the same force and estimated that this was simply the one surface group referred to by the PB4Y as being under attack.

At 1632 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT), he very likely received another report on the THIRD Section, this one made by the aircraft flying the Sector 302°-321°(T) out of Morotai, which was to the effect that at 0950 the aircraft had sighted two BB, one CA and four DD in Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 121°-32'E, on course 040°(T), speed fifteen knots** (Contact "11").

Again there is no indication that this information caused him to alter his estimate of the composition of the enemy force approaching Leyte Gulf from the southwest, or to analyze the threat as being in the form of two well separated formations, although he may well have.

At 1643 he received a partly garbled report on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force as follows: "Last position of convoy 120 degrees west (sic) Banton Island consists of three battleships type unknown."***

At 1700 he intercepted COMTHIRDFLT's Battle Plan (quoted and discussed in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1830, October 24th"). The plan, among other things, indicated that (a) certain heavy ships and destroyers from TG's 38.2 and 38.4 "will be formed as TF 34", and (b) "TF 34 engage decisively at long range".**** It also discussed certain air operations but did not explain them.

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* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240424 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF's 38, 77, COMSOWESPAC, etc.

** 5TH Bomber Command Dispatch 240330 October 1944 to All Concerned Current Operations.

*** Radio Hollandia Dispatch 240300 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, All TFC's SOWESPAC, etc.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to All TFC's 3RDFLT, All TGC's of TF 38, info COMINCH, CINCPAC.

SINCE THIS DISPATCH LATER BECAME A CENTER OF CONTROVERSY, IT SEEMS WELL AT THIS POINT TO DIGRESS SLIGHTLY IN ORDER TO COMMENT UPON THE INTERPRETATION WHICH WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN IT AT THIS TIME BY CTF 77. IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD THAT, ALTHOUGH THE MAIN BODY HAD REVERSED COURSE TO THE WESTWARD AT 1530, THIS FACT WAS NOT KNOWN TO HIM. THEREFORE, HE LIKELY WAS STILL OF THE BELIEF THAT THE MAIN BODY WAS EN ROUTE EASTWARD. WHETHER HE THOUGHT THAT THE MAIN BODY WOULD OR WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO PENETRATE SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT IS NOT IMPORTANT--WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT FROM THIS DISPATCH HE KNEW THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS READY AND HAD NOW MADE PREPARATIONS FOR NIGHT SURFACE ACTION WITH HIS HEAVY SHIPS SHOULD THE ENEMY DEBOUCH INTO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

THIS THIRDFLT BATTLE PLAN QUITE LIKELY HELPED TO JUSTIFY IN HIS MIND HIS OWN BATTLE PLAN WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO DEFEND AGAINST AN ENEMY SURFACE ATTACK PRINCIPALLY FROM THE SOUTH--A PLAN CLEARLY BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT AN ENEMY APPROACH FROM THE NORTH OR FROM THE DIRECTION OF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT WOULD BE INTERCEPTED BY THE COVERING FORCE (THIRDFLT).

At 1703 he received CTG 70.1's battle plan which, in anticipation of a night "Tokyo Express" operation, (a) assigned the motor torpedo boats to stations generally along the shores of Surigao Strait and the eastern Mindanao Sea (Plate XIX shows their approximate disposition prior to the Battle of Surigao Strait), (b) strongly emphasized their reconnaissance and reporting mission and (c) ordered them to attack after making their contact reports.*

Since he had discussed motor torpedo boat operations with CTG 70.1 prior to the issuance of this order it seems likely that he approved of it in principle.

At 1734 he learned that CTG 73.7 had directed the Commanding Officer HALF MOON, among other things, to send out the three routine patrols (three western sectors of Search Plan FOX (Modified)) as soon as practicable and the remaining two (to search the Surigao Strait, Mindanao Sea and Sulu Sea) at 1630.** This dispatch seems to have been garbled for since the basic dispatch called for the latter planes to take off at sunset*** this time of 1630 is more likely 1830.

He was well aware that preparations were proceeding rapidly within CTG 77.2's command for the forthcoming battle for earlier he had observed certain TG 77.2 ships loading ammunition and now he noted them departing southward to take night battle stations.****

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* CTG 70.1 Dispatch 240504 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, WACHAPREAGUE.

** SAN CARLOS Dispatch 240759 October 1944 to HALF MOON.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240325 October 1944 to CTG 73.7, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, etc.

**** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 24th, 1944.

What he did not know was that two events, now in the making, would in effect jeopardize the security of his forces: (a) The failure of the PBY searches (which had been reduced below the number ordered) to locate and shadow either (1) the THIRD Section or SECOND Striking Force penetrating Surigao Strait or (2) the Main Body now en route San Bernardino Strait and (b) COMTHIRDFLT's movement to the north to strike the Main Force thus leaving San Bernardino Strait unguarded except for a single PBY search which, as stated above, would fail to gain contact.

WHAT WAS CTF 77'S CONCEPT OF THE IMPENDING OPERATIONS AT THIS TIME? IT APPEARS FAIRLY WELL ESTABLISHED THAT (a) HE WAS WELL AWARE OF, AND WELL PREPARED FOR, THE JAPANESE SURFACE FORCES PENETRATING FROM THE SOUTHWEST, ALTHOUGH HIS ESTIMATE OF THEIR COMPOSITION AND HOW THEY MIGHT BE DIVIDED OR DISPOSED WAS ILL-DEFINED, (b) HE EXPECTED COMTHIRDFLT TO PREVENT THE MAIN BODY, FIRST STRIKING FORCE FROM INTERFERING WITH HIS OPERATIONS AND (c) HE WAS NOT YET AWARE THAT THE MOBILE FORCE HAD BEEN SIGHTED OFF CAPE ENGANO OR THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS NOW ON THE VERGE OF MAKING A CRITICAL DECISION AS TO WHAT THE CORRECT COURSE OF ACTION SHOULD BE IN VIEW OF THIS NEW AND PARTLY UNANTICIPATED THREAT.

(1) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force) and CTG 78.1 (Palo Attack Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTF 78, who was also CTG 78.1, remained at anchor off RED Beach in his flagship the BLUE RIDGE.

Commencing shortly after midnight and continuing throughout the day he received numerous reports of Japanese surface forces approaching Leyte Gulf and, therefore, was familiar with the developing situation.

He had at this time the BLUE RIDGE (FFF), LST 741 (which was aground), RUSSELL, JOHN RODGERS, LANG and a number of landing and patrol craft. In addition he was expecting the arrival later in the morning of Reinforcement Group TWO which, among other units, was composed of twenty Liberty ships (XAK), thirty-three LST's and some important units of Service Force TU 77.7.2.

During the day there were several attacks by Japanese aircraft. At 0900 he notified CTF 77 of the loss of the LCI 1065.* Shortly thereafter he also notified that Commander of an XAK having been damaged in the same air attack.**

At 0937 COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE, who was also CTG 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO), reported to him for duty.***

At 1001 he (a) requested CTG 77.2 to assume A/S patrol around TF 78 commencing at dawn the following day, (this request was in accordance with CTF 77's OpPlan 13-44) and (b) informed CTG 77.2 that the JOHN RODGERS and ANDERSON, on patrol in the vicinity of Suluan Island, were being withdrawn for fuel and then would report to CTG 78.2.****

At 1156 he directed COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE with the NICHOLAS (F), O'BANNON, TAYLOR and HOPEWELL to report to CTG 77.4 on the following day.*****

At 1312 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received CTF 77's dispatch 240412 wherein that commander (a) stated that an enemy night surface attack on Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait was imminent and (b) directed CTG 77.2 to make all preparations.******

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* CTF 78 Dispatch 232400 October 1944 to CTF 77.

** CTF 78 Dispatch 240016 October 1944 to CTF 77.

*** Action Report NICHOLAS, Report of Philippine Island Occupation, Serial 063, November 3rd, 1944.

**** CTF 78 Dispatch 240101 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 77, CTG 78.2.

***** CTF 78 Dispatch 240256 October 1944 to COMDESDIV 21, info CTF 77, CTG 77.4.

****** CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240412 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 78, CTF 79.

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At 1501 (when it was received by CTF 79) he again received a dispatch from CTF 77 which stated, in part, that an enemy force was under attack in the eastern Sulu Sea and might arrive Leyte Gulf that night. All units were directed to prepare for a night engagement.*

At 1650 he received COMSEVENTHFLT's supplement to the Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE wherein CTF 77, among other things, directed both CTF 78 and 79 to anchor all noncombatant ships in their respective areas with escorts forming a close inner screen, and that there would be no departures or entry Leyte Gulf during darkness.**

At 1830 he learned that CTG 70.1 intended to patrol across the lower part of Leyte Gulf to provide early warning of the arrival of enemy units in that area.***

At this time as CTF 78 he had remaining all of the shipping which (a) had arrived with CTG 78.7 with the exception of the eleven LST's diverted to YELLOW Beach TWO, (b) remained under the command of himself as CTG 78.1, i.e., LST 741 (grounded), RUSSELL, JOHN RODGERS, LANG, NICHOLAS, O'BANNON, TAYLOR, HOPEWELL, SAN PEDRO, MUSKOGEE and (c) remained under CTG 78.2 and listed under that commander.

(a) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTG 78.2, in the FREMONT, remained at anchor off WHITE Beach. Commencing shortly after midnight and continuing throughout the day he received numerous dispatches of Japanese surface forces approaching Leyte Gulf and therefore was familiar with the developing situation.

At 0347 COMMINDIV THIRTY-FOUR reported to him for duty.****

At 0700 he observed the arrival of TG 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO)***** and noted that most of the units had anchored in the northern transport area. Shortly thereafter seventeen LST's from this group reported in his area.****** It seems probable that

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, CTF's 78, 79, All TFC's 3RDFLT, COMFEAF, info COM3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COMINCH, CINCSWPA, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

** COM7THFLT Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, COM3RDFLT.

*** CTG 70.1 Dispatch 240504 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, WACHAPREAGUE.

**** COMMINDIV 34 Dispatch 231611 October 1944 to CTG 78.2, info CTG 77.5.

***** Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.

****** Action Report CTG 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO), Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.

these LST's reported to him for duty but there is no evidence to this effect.

Shortly thereafter the Japanese conducted their first air attack in force. This attack lasted until 0900. As a result CTG 78.2 reported that the attacks against his units had caused the Japanese to lose five planes; however they succeeded in damaging the XAK THOMAS and the LCI 65 and sinking the LCI 1065 and the ATA SONOMA.*

During the day he continued to unload his LST's.*

At 1312 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received as an information addressee CTF 77's dispatch to CTG 77.2 wherein CTF 77 stated, in part, that he considered that an enemy night surface attack on Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait was imminent and directed CTG 77.2 to make all preparations.**

At 1501 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received another dispatch from CTF 77, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", wherein that commander (a) stated, in part, that an enemy force estimated to consist of two BB, four CA, four CL and ten DD was under attack in the eastern Sulu Sea by Allied carriers and might arrive Leyte Gulf that night and (b) directed all units to prepare for a night engagement.***

At 1650 he received COMSEVENTHFLT's supplement to Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE wherein CTF 77, among other things, directed (a) both CTF's 78 and 79 to anchor all noncombatant ships in their respective areas with escorts forming a close inner screen and (b) that there would be no departures or entry Leyte Gulf during darkness.****

At 1830 he learned that CTG 70.1 intended to patrol across the lower part of Leyte Gulf to provide early warning of the arrival of any enemy units in that area.***** At this time he had remaining the FREMONT, ARL ACHILLES, JENKINS, ANDERSON and six XAK's (THOMAS, FIELDS, SHORT, GIANELLA, KINNEY, JUDSON). He may have had, in addition, the seventeen LST's previously referred to as having been sent to WHITE Beach.

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* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.

** CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240412 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 78, CTF 79.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, CTF's 78, 79, All TFC's 3RDFLT, COMFEAF, info COM3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COMINCH, CINCSWPA, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

**** COM7THFLT Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, COM3RDFLT.

***** CTG 70.1 Dispatch 240504 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, WACHAPREAGUE.

(b) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTU 77.2.1, with TU 77.2.1 plus BATDIV TWO, was lying to in Area DRUM north of Tay Tay Point. Commencing shortly after midnight and continuing throughout the day he received numerous reports of Japanese surface forces approaching Leyte Gulf and, therefore, was familiar with the developing situation.

At 0647, in accordance with orders from CTG 77.2,* he, with his unit less the WEST VIRGINIA and CONY which were proceeding independently, proceeded to the logistics area where he arrived at 0951.**

He immediately departed for a conference with CTG 77.2 aboard the LOUISVILLE, returning to the MISSISSIPPI at 1120.** The subject of this conference is not available to this analysis.

At 1312 he intercepted CTF 77's message, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", wherein that commander stated, in part, that he considered a night surface attack on Leyte Gulf tonight via Surigao Strait was imminent and to make all preparations.***

At 1452 the WEST VIRGINIA, closely followed by the MARYLAND, refueled from the CHEPACHET and SALAMONIE. This operation was completed by 1646.****

At 1501 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received CTF 77's dispatch which stated, in part, that an enemy surface force estimated to consist of two BB, four CA, four CL and ten DD was under attack in the eastern Sulu Sea and might arrive Leyte Gulf that night.*****

At 1535 he departed for the LOUISVILLE to confer with CTG 77.2 on CTG 77.2's battle plan wherein he was to be Commander Battle Line.****** The matters discussed in the conference are presented in "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th". He returned to the MISSISSIPPI at 1545.

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* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, P. I., October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.

** War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 24th, 1944.

*** CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240412 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 78, CTF 79.

**** Deck Logs WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, October 24th, 1944.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, CTF's 78, 79, All TFC's 3RDFLT, CAAF SOWESPAC, info COM3RDFLT, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, COMINCH, CINCSWPA.

****** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 1650 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received COMSEVENTHFLT's dispatch 240543 quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", in which that commander supplemented Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE. This dispatch stated, in part, that TG 77.2, reinforced by TG 77.3, was to take station in lower Leyte Gulf and destroy enemy forces encountered.*

Meanwhile, he prepared to depart the logistics area for his night battle station but it was not until 1848 that he was able to do so.

(c) Operations of CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTG 77.3 with TG 77.3, less BACHE which lay at anchor off RED Beach available for FS missions, was patrolling the area southeast of the transport areas in accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE.

Commencing shortly after midnight and continuing throughout the day he received numerous reports of Japanese surface forces approaching Leyte Gulf.

At 0458 he commenced returning to San Pedro Bay.**

About 0655 he detached the BEALE, DALY and SHROPSHIRE to carry out scheduled shore bombardment missions, while his remaining units stood by awaiting orders to fuel.***

At 1040 the PHOENIX, closely followed by the BOISE, commenced refueling from the SUAMICO. The fueling was broken off at 1113 due to an air raid which lasted until about 1339, but was recommenced at 1451 when the PHOENIX, BOISE and SHROPSHIRE refueled from the SALAMONIE, SUAMICO and ASHTABULA, respectively.

At 1501, when it was received by CTF 79, he received CTF 77's dispatch to the effect that (a) an enemy force was under air attack in the eastern Sulu Sea and might arrive Leyte Gulf that night, (b) all units were to prepare for night engagement and (c) his command was assigned to the control of CTG 77.2 as reinforcement.****

Upon receipt of this dispatch he terminated his FS missions without a formal release by CTF 78.*****

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* COM7THFLT Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, COM3RDFLT.

** War Diary PHOENIX, October 24th, 1944.

*** War Diary BOISE, October 24th, 1944.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, CTF's 78, 79, All TFC's 3RDFLT, COMFEAF, info COM3RDFLT, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, COMINCH, CINCSWPA.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3, Leyte Occupation, Serial 0359, November 3rd, 1944.

At 1620 he reported to CTG 77.2 for duty.

At 1642 having closed the LOUISVILLE, he departed for that ship by ship's boat to confer with CTG 77.2. The subject under discussion was CTG 77.2's Battle Plan wherein CTG 77.3 was to be commander of the Right Flank Force.

AT THIS CONFERENCE HE DECLINED CTG 77.2'S OFFER TO INCREASE THE RIGHT FLANK FORCE DESTROYERS IN THAT HE FELT, BECAUSE OF THE RESTRICTED AREA, CONSIDERABLE UNITY OF DIRECTION WAS INDICATED. FOR THIS PURPOSE HE EMPLOYED A TASK GROUP COMMON VOICE RADIO CIRCUIT WHICH ALL OF HIS SHIPS WERE EQUIPPED TO USE. HE STATES IN HIS ACTION REPORT THAT HE GAINED THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT "DEVELOPMENTS BEING PROPITIOUS IT WAS THE DESIRE OF THE OTC THAT GUNFIRE OF THE BATTLE LINE AND FLANK FORCE CRUISERS WAS TO BE HELD UNTIL IT COULD BE OVERWHELMINGLY DEVASTATING AND DEADLY. AMMUNITION AVAILABLE DID NOT PERMIT A DRAWN OUT ACTION AT LONG RANGES".*

At 1650 (when it was received by CTF 79) he likely learned, while on board the LOUISVILLE, of COMSEVENTHFLT's Supplement to Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE which, in part, ordered CTG 77.2 reinforced by CTG 77.3, to (a) take a night station in lower Leyte Gulf and (b) destroy enemy forces encountered.** At 1710 he returned to the PHOENIX.*

By 1742, when all of his units had rendezvoused, he proceeded in a southerly direction toward his battle station.

At 1757 he joined TG 77.2 and took station as Commander Right Flank Force.***

From this time onward he operated largely as Commander Right Flank Force and will be so referred to in later chapters.

(d) Operations of CTG 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTG 78.7, who was also COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE, in the NICHOLAS, with TG 78.7, was in Leyte Gulf proceeding to the northern transport area.

His task group at this time consisted of four DD's (NICHOLAS (F), O'BANNON, TAYLOR, HOPEWELL), two PF's (SAN PEDRO, MUSKOGEE) and one PG (TULSA) as escorts for one AO (SUAMICO), three IX(AO)'s (CARIBOU, MINK, PANDA), two AN's (TEAK, SILVERBELL), one AKN (INDUS (F)), one ARS (CABLE), one AO(W) (SEVERN (YOG 15 in tow)), thirty-three LST's (464, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 569, 573, 610, 619, 658, 663, 673, 687,

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** COM7THFLT Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, COM3RDFLT.

*** Deck Log PHOENIX, October 24th, 1944.

688, 694, 703, 734, 736, 737, 746, 749, 750, 908, 919, 990, 991, 1015, 1025, 1026) and twenty liberty ships (XAK) (GENERAL FLEISCHER, CAPE ROMANO, CAPE CONSTANCE, JOHN PAGE, SABIK, JANSSENS, LEO MERRITT, DAVID GAILLARD, FRANK CUHEL, MARCUS DALY, BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, JOHN FOSTER, VITUS BERING, SAMUEL BARLOW, BENJAMIN WHEELER, LOUIS WUELE, CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN, CASSIOPIA, CLARENCE DARROW, ESCALANTE).*

At 0332 he detached ten LST's (553, 558, 658, 687, 688, 734, 736, 737, 908, 991) to proceed to YELLOW Beach TWO in accordance with previous instructions.**

At about 0500 the remaining units were detached and proceeded to their various stations, as follows: Nine LST's to beach and eight to anchor off WHITE Beach, five LST's to RED Beach, one liberty ship and one LST to YELLOW Beach. Those not otherwise assigned proceeded to the Northern Transport Area to await further instructions.* Meanwhile, the MUSKOGEE and SAN PEDRO reported to CTF 78 for duty.

At 0937 TG 78.7 was dissolved and COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE also reported to CTF 78 for duty.***

(e) Operations of CTG 78.8 (Reinforcement Group THREE), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTG 78.8, in the frigate EUGENE, with TG 78.8 which was composed largely of seventeen liberty ships (XAK) and six LST's, was proceeding towards Leyte Gulf having departed Humboldt Bay the previous day.**** During the period until 1830 little of importance occurred and at 1830 the task group was bearing 125°(T), distant 820 miles from Leyte Gulf.

(2) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTF 79, in the MOUNT OLYMPUS, was anchored in the vicinity of the Southern Transport Area, observing the unloading of his units. During this period there were several air raid alerts. At this time he had with him only CTG 79.2, as CTG 79.1 had departed on the previous day.

Commencing shortly after midnight and continuing throughout the day he received numerous reports of Japanese surface forces approaching Leyte Gulf. These reports were of some concern to him as he still had the

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* Action Report CTG 78.7 (COMDESRON 21), Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.

** CTF 78 Dispatch 231136 October 1944 to CTG 78.7, info CTF 79.

*** Action Report NICHOLAS, Report of Philippine Island Occupation, Serial 063, November 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 78.8 (COMCORTDIV 29), Report of Reinforcement Group THREE, Central Philippine Operation, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.

APA's CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER; AP GEORGE F. ELLIOTT; AKA's CAPRICORNUS, CHARA, AURIGA; AK MERCURY; LSD RUSHMORE, fifty-five LST's and numerous landing and patrol craft remaining in the area.

At 0122 he received CTF 77's dispatch to the effect that a large enemy air attack might be brewing.*

At 0715 COMLSTGROUP FORTY with ten LST's (553, 558, 658, 687, 688, 734, 736, 737, 908 and 991) reported to him for duty from TG 78.8.**

At 0726 he requested CTU 77.7.1, by TBS Voice Radio, to designate one or more oilers to fuel eleven destroyers on the morning of the 25th.***

At 0831 he received word from the LEUTZE that she had been bombed and strafed by two Japanese planes, suffering minor damage.****

At 0933, by TBS voice radio, he directed CTU 79.11.1, who was also CTU 79.14.5, to commence his sortie.***** Shortly thereafter he queried (a) at 0945, CTG 79.2 as to what time the AURIGA would be unloaded,****** and (b) CTG 79.5 as to why he was not sailing his unloaded LST's, and ordered him to do so.******* Six minutes later he received a reply to the effect that all LST's, with the exception of LST 461 which was stuck on the beach, had been ordered to report to CTU 79.5.2.********

At 0959 he again ordered CTU 79.11.1 to commence his sortie, and told CTU 79.11.2 to disregard his 240033.********* Why he did this is not clear, as CTU 79.11.2 was not an addressee on this dispatch, and furthermore was not scheduled to depart until 1400.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 231532 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info TG 77.4, TF 77, CTG 77.13, COM3RDFLT.

** Action Report COMLSTGROUP 40, Leyte Island, Serial 040, November 3rd, 1944.

*** CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 232226 October 1944 to CTU 77.7.1, info CTF 77.

**** LEUTZE TBS Voice Radio Message 232331 October 1944 to CTF 79.

***** CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 240033 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.1.

****** CTG 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 240045 October 1944 to CTG 79.2.

******* CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 240049 October 1944 to CTG 79.5, info CTU 79.5.2.

******** CTG 79.5 TBS Voice Radio Message 240055 October 1944 to CTF 79.

********* CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 240059 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.1, info CTU 79.11.2.

At 1004 he learned that a major enemy force including a battleship had been sighted just south of Mindoro on course 050°(T), speed ten to twelve knots,* (Contact "5", Plate XV). A short time later the force was reported to consist of four BB, eight CA and thirteen DD** (Contact "6").

At 1010 he forwarded a summary report to CTF 77 which stated, in part, that he (a) anticipated sailing all transports, less the AURIGA, that afternoon and (b) with the exception of those units scheduled to remain in the area, would sail all unloaded landing and patrol craft that day and the following day.***

At 1015 he observed CTU 79.14.5 (CTU 79.11.1), with TU 79.14.5 depart. This unit consisted of DD ERBEN (F), ATF's POTAWATOMI and MENOMINEE, ARS PRESERVER, thirty-eight LST's (20, 34, 117, 118, 123, 125, 207, 213, 219, 242, 269, 270, 277, 451, 461, 478, 482, 483, 486, 488, 564, 567, 568, 615, 617, 669, 671, 672, 698, 704, 745, 916, 917, 918, 999, 1006, 1013, 1024), thirty-three LCT's, five LSM's and sixteen patrol craft.**** Immediately thereafter, at 1017, by voice radio, he requested CTG 77.5 to direct the BREESE, HAMILTON and HOWARD to report to CTU 79.11.2 in the PICKING who was scheduled to depart at 1400.***** He then designated the units that were to compose TU 79.14.8 and scheduled that unit to depart at 1400.******

At 1032 he learned that the AURIGA's estimated time of completion of unloading was 2400.*******

At 1312 he received CTF 77's TBS voice radio message wherein that commander (a) stated that he considered an enemy night surface attack on Leyte Gulf that night via Surigao Strait was imminent and (b) directed CTG 77.2 to make all preparations.********

At 1358 he learned that CTF 77 had ordered MTB's to patrol lower Surigao Strait in anticipation of the approach of the enemy.*********

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* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3, 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232331 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG 38.3.

*** CTF 79 Dispatch 240110 October 1944 to CTF 77.

**** Action Report COMDESRON 48 (CTU 79.14.5) (CTU 79.11.1), Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 080, October 30th, 1944.

***** CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 240117 October 1944 to CTG 77.5.

****** CTF 79 Dispatch 240124 October 1944 to CTG's 79.2, 79.4, CTU 79.11.2, CHARA, MERCURY, BREESE, HAMILTON, info CNB Hollandia, CNB Manus, All Interested Current Operations.

******* CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 240132 October 1944 to CTF 79.

******** CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240412 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 78, CTF 79.

********* CTF 77 Dispatch 240319 October 1944 to CTG 70.1.

At 1400 he observed the departure of CTU 79.14.8 (CTG 79.2) with TU 79.14.8.* The composition of this unit is given under "Operations of CTG 79.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".

At 1501 he again received a dispatch from CTF 77 which (a) stated, in part, that an enemy force was under attack in the eastern Sulu Sea and might arrive Leyte Gulf that night and (b) directed all units to prepare for a night engagement.**

At 1624 he originated a dispatch forming TU 79.14.9 consisting of thirteen LST's, six patrol craft and the WICKES, to depart at 0800 the following morning.***

At 1628 he directed CTU 79.11.3 to fuel his DESRON to seventy per cent the following morning when the CHEPACHET returned to the fueling area.**** About this time he informed CTG 77.2 that on the return of the fueling group the next day he intended to withdraw the antisubmarine and radar picket patrols and depart the area.*****

At 1650 he received COMSEVENTHFLT's supplement to Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE wherein, among other things, he was directed to anchor all noncombatant ships in their respective areas with escorts forming a close inner screen, and that there would be no departures or entry Leyte Gulf during darkness.******

At 1830 he learned that CTG 70.1 intended to patrol across the lower part of Leyte Gulf to provide early warning of the arrival of enemy units in that area.*******

At this time he had remaining in the area, the MOUNT OLYMPUS, AK AURIGA and seventeen LST's******** (126, 169, 205, 223, 565, 605, 608, 609, 611, 612, 670, 686, 693, 733, 738, 739 and 909). Although he apparently overlooks them in his action report, he also had an additional eleven (sic) LST's********* and an unknown liberty ship received from CTG 78.7.

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* CTU 79.14.8 Visual Dispatch 240500 October 1944 to CTF 79.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, CTF's 78, 79, All TFC's 3RDFLT, CAAF SOWESPAC, info COM3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COMINCH, CINCSWPA, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

*** CTF 79 Dispatch 240724 October 1944 to PC's 462, 464, etc., info CNB Hollandia, All Current Ops. SWPA.

**** CTF 79 Dispatch 240728 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.3, info CHEPACHET, CTG 77.2, CTG 77.7, TU 79.11.3.

***** CTF 79 Dispatch 240734 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 77, CTU 79.11.3.

****** COM7THFLT Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, COM3RDFLT.

******* CTG 70.1 Dispatch 240504 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, WACHAPREAGUE.

******** Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Report of Participation of Task Force 79, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

********* Action Report CTG 78.7 (COMDESRON 21), Report of Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.

The best evidence is that there were but ten LST's (553, 558, 658, 687, 688, 734, 736, 737, 908 and 991). If there was in fact an additional LST its bow number is not available to this analysis. This gave him a total of either twenty-seven or twenty-eight LST's.

(a) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At 0000 CTG 79.2, in the ROCKY MOUNT, remained at anchor off ORANGE Beach.

The morning passed uneventfully until 0755 when Japanese aircraft began a concerted prolonged air raid lasting until 1310.*

At 1018 he departed for a conference with CTF 79 aboard the MOUNT OLYMPUS.* While the subject matter of this conference is not known it likely was concerned with the formation of a convoy of which he was to be the commander.

At 1110 he witnessed the departure of TU 79.14.5.* He was interested in this convoy as all twenty-four of his LST's were departing with that unit and he would shortly be departing himself.

At 1125 he received a dispatch from CTF 79, quoted more fully under "Operations of CTF 79, 0000 - 1830, October 24th" which (a) formed TU 79.14.8, (b) designated him as commander, (c) set 1400 as the departure time, and (d) prescribed the routing.**

At 1146 he ordered some of the units which were to compose the task unit to be prepared to get underway on signal at 1400.***

At 1206 he returned to the ROCKY MOUNT and at 1212 issued his sortie plan.****

At 1410 as CTU 79.14.8, in the ROCKY MOUNT, accompanied by TU 79.14.8, consisting of APA's CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER; AP GEORGE F. ELLIOTT; AKA's CAPRICORNUS, CHARA; LSD RUSHMORE; AKA MERCURY, escorted by the PICKING (CTU 79.11.2), SPROSTON, HALE, BREESE, HAMILTON and HOWARD, he departed the area for Hollandia.*

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* Action Report CTG 79.2, Report of Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

** CTF 79 Dispatch 240124 October 1944 to CTG's 79.2, 79.4, CTU 79.11.2, BREESE, HAMILTON, CHARA, MERCURY, info CNB Hollandia, CNB Manus, All Interested in Current Operations.

*** CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 240246 October 1944 to MERCURY, CHARA, COMDESRON 49, ROCKY MOUNT, TRANSDIV 10, RUSHMORE, AURIGA, info CTF 79.

**** CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 240312 October 1944 to MERCURY, CHARA, AURIGA, RUSHMORE, ROCKY MOUNT, COMDESRON 49, TRANSDIV 10, info CTF 79, SPROSTON, HALE, HOWARD, HAMILTON, BREESE, PICKING.

(b) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit SOUTH), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

During the period 0000 - 0755 CTU 77.2.2 acted largely as CTG 77.2; therefore, his operations are discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".

At 0755 he directed the units of TU 77.2.2 to proceed to their various FS stations as previously directed which was done.*

At 0928 he was informed by the LEUTZE, by TBS voice radio, that she had been bombed and strafed by two Japanese planes and had suffered minor damage and a few casualties.**

At 1425 he learned that (a) the CALIFORNIA had commenced refueling from the SARANAC and (b) the LOUISVILLE closely followed by the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, CLAXTON and PORTLAND had commenced replenishing ammunition from the MAZAMA and DURHAM VICTORY.***

These operations which were completed by 1715*** were not satisfactory in the following particulars: (a) there was insufficient ammunition in the ammunition ships for the combatant ships to load to capacity with armor piercing ammunition, i.e., there were but forty-eight rounds of sixteen-inch ammunition available, (b) the MAZAMA, which was a navy ship (and which was well handled), did not carry any sixteen-inch ammunition whatsoever, while the DURHAM VICTORY, which was a commercial ship, carried nearly all of the heavy ammunition, i.e., six-inch and above,**** and (c) the DURHAM VICTORY rate of unloading was "slow, difficult and unsatisfactory".***** This was because (1) the DURHAM VICTORY had "a very small civilian crew, no winchmen and no previous experience with ammunition handling"***** and (2) of the indifference and lack of cooperation of the DURHAM VICTORY's officers and crew.*****

As regards the latter comment DESRON FIFTY-SIX stated, "with a serious enemy threat developing, with all ships greatly depleted, and with time a very potent factor, the commanding officer of this ship put every obstacle he could possibly think of in the way of replenishment operations. He was the most disagreeable, uncooperative individual it has ever been my misfortune to run up against. He refused to work through the noon hour. Ships would arrive alongside on schedule and his hatches

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* Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

** LEUTZE TBS Voice Radio Message 240928/I October 1944 to COMDESRON 56, CTG 77.2, CTF 79.

*** Deck logs CALIFORNIA, LOUISVILLE, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, CLAXTON, PORTLAND, October 24th, 1944.

**** COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2) Preliminary Action Report for the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Operations during seizure of Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0014, January 7th, 1945.

would still be battened down. He refused to handle lines. This would add from one to two hours to each day's operations. His disrespectable (sic) crew would sit around and pass disparaging remarks to the already overworked and tired enlisted men. He himself sat up on his bridge in his undershirt and cursed and yelled at our officers and men. Our replenishment program progressed in spite of him--not because of him. It cannot be too strongly recommended that regular navy ammunition ships be utilized in combat areas".*

WHILE THE ABOVE RECOMMENDATION AS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF ONLY REGULAR NAVY AMMUNITION SHIPS IS SOUND IT MUST BE POINTED OUT THAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY ARISE IN ANOTHER WAR WHEREIN THE EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT OF MERCHANT MANNED AMMUNITION SHIPS MAY BE NECESSARY. IN SUCH CASE CONSIDERABLE CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED TO INSURE THAT THE CHARACTER OF THE SHIP AND CREW APPROXIMATE AS NEARLY AS POSSIBLE THE REQUIREMENTS OF A NAVY AMMUNITION SHIP. THIS LESSON IS OF COURSE EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO MERCHANT SHIPS EMPLOYED IN OTHER LOGISTICS FUNCTIONS SUCH AS OIL TANKERS, ETC.

During the day the following ships of his unit furnished FS: ALBERT W. GRANT, LEUTZE, ROBINSON, COLUMBIA and DENVER.**

At 1721, as CTG 77.2, he ordered his units to form up*** and by 1735 he was heading for his night battle station.****

Since after this time he operated as CTG 77.2 his operations are discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".

(3) Operations of CTG 77.2 (Bombardment and Fire Support Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.*****

At 0000 CTG 77.2, in accordance with CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE, was operating with TG 77.2 in the southern portion of Leyte Gulf.

During the early morning hours, he received reports by the ANGLER and GUITARRO which had contacted the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force in the vicinity of Mindoro, discussed under "Operations of CTF 77,

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* Action Report COMDESRON 56, Operations during seizure of Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0014, January 7th, 1945.

** Deck Logs ALBERT W. GRANT, LEUTZE, ROBINSON, COLUMBIA, DENVER, October 24th, 1944.

*** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Participation in Bombardment of Leyte Island, P.I., October 18th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0212, November 1st, 1944.

**** Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

***** All information here except as otherwise indicated obtained from Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

0000 - 1830, October 24th" and therefore was familiar with the reported strength of the Japanese forces in that area at this time.

At 0634 he ordered CTU 77.2.1 to proceed to the fueling area at 0645 and to remain there until the battleships had completed fueling.* At 0755 he released his remaining ships and ordered them to proceed to their FS areas as previously directed. After this time and until 1721 he operated largely as CTU 77.2.2.

Probably around 0943 he learned of the presence of an additional Japanese surface force in the Sulu Sea. This was the THIRD Section off Negros Island (Contact "10", Plate XV). Although its reported composition was about twice that of its actual composition (the Japanese SECOND Striking Force at this time being still unlocated) CTG 77.2 by late morning had formed a not unreasonable estimate of the forces moving generally toward Leyte.

About 1000 he conferred with CTU 77.2.1 aboard the LOUISVILLE but what the subject was is not available to this analysis.

At 1312 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received CTF 77's TBS voice radio message to the effect that he considered an enemy night surface attack on Leyte Gulf tonight via Surigao Strait was imminent and to make all preparations.**

At 1505 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received a dispatch from CTF 78 (a) requesting him to assume antisubmarine patrol around TF 78 commencing at daylight the following day and (b) stating that the JOHN RODGERS and ANDERSON which were stationed on patrol in the vicinity of Suluan Island were being withdrawn for fuel and then would report to CTG 78.2.***

At 1513 he received orders from CTF 77 to prepare for night battle.**** These orders stated (a) that an enemy force estimated to consist of two BB, four CA, four CL and ten DD had been attacked in the eastern Sulu Sea by carrier planes and might arrive Leyte Gulf that night, (b) directed him to make all preparations for a night engagement and (c) advised him that (1) TG 77.3 had been assigned to him for reinforcement and (2) CTG 70.1 had been ordered to station a maximum number of MTB's in lower Surigao Strait to remain south of Latitude 10°-10'N during darkness.*****

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* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, P.I., October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.

** CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240412 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 78 and CTF 79.

*** CTF 78 Dispatch 240101 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF 77, CTG 78.2.

**** Preliminary Action Report CTG 77.2, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, CTF's 78, 79, All TFC's 3RDFLT, COMFEAF, info COM3RDFLT, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, COMINCH, CINCSWPA.

He now completed his battle plan. As this plan had already been formulated and as he had been keeping a thorough running estimate he was enabled to complete the plan rather speedily. He realized that time was passing and that some time would pass before the plan could be received and studied by his command. He, therefore, decided to call a conference of his Commander Battle Line and his Commander Right Flank Force to (a) acquaint them with the plan, (b) ascertain their views thereon and (c) make any changes deemed necessary prior to issue.

At about 1525 in accordance with this decision he requested the above two commanders to report on board to discuss the battle plan.

The first commander to report on board was CTU 77.2.1 (Commander Battle Line) who reported on board at approximately 1540.

Without waiting for CTG 77.3 to arrive CTG 77.2 now discussed the plan with his Commander Battle Line. The discussion lasted for some time and therefore it was not until about 1645 that Commander Battle Line returned to the MISSISSIPPI.*

A few minutes after this—at about 1647—CTG 77.3 who was to be Commander Right Flank Force reported on board for conference. CTG 77.2 immediately outlined the battle disposition and general plan of action for the night as he had done with CTU 77.2.1. Realizing the importance of the right flank, as this was the shortest route to the transport areas, he offered to augment the six destroyers of TG 77.3 but CTG 77.3 declined the offer for reasons discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.3, 0000 - 1830, October 24th". This discussion lasted only twenty minutes for at 1710 CTG 77.3 returned to the PHOENIX.**

At each of the two conferences CTG 77.2 pointed out that (a) (1) the amount of AP ammunition in all battleships was low and that there was likewise a shortage of ammunition of all types throughout the force, (2) it was, therefore, essential that the battleships fire at ranges where their percentage of hits and their fire effect would both be high, (3) this was settled as between 17,000 and 20,000 yards, (b) (1) it appeared as if a wonderful opportunity for using the torpedoes in the offensive role for which they had been designed would be presented and it was emphasized that each such opportunity would be immediately acted upon, (2) it was necessary for the destroyers to keep to the sides of the Strait in attacking and in retiring because it was thought that the enemy radar would probably be ineffective against the land, and because it was feared that any of our destroyer units retiring toward our battle line might be fired on by own forces.

Both Commander Battle Line and Commander Right Flank Force were very enthusiastic about the battle plan.

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* Deck Log MISSISSIPPI, October 24th, 1944.
** Deck Log PHOENIX, October 24th, 1944.

He now prepared to issue the plan but before he could do so he received several dispatches relating thereto. These were (a) at 1650 (when it was received by CTF 79) COMSEVENTHFLT's Supplement to Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", which, among other things, ordered him to take night station in lower Leyte Gulf and to destroy enemy forces encountered,* and (b) at 1716, CTF 77's instructions to CTG 70.1 to insure that enemy forces did not pass undetected through the Strait between Dinagat Island and Mindanao Island.**

He studied these dispatches with relation to his Battle Plan and noted that there was no clash.

During the late afternoon he decided to send all of the ship's planes which could not be stowed in the ships' hangars ashore for the night. After a series of voice messages, arrangements were made for the LST's at the southern beaches to tend these planes.*** As a result the battleships and the Right Flank Cruisers sent all of their planes, but the Left Flank Cruisers sent only those planes which could not be placed in the hangars, the exact number being unknown. This reduced the fire hazard during battle and prevented the planes from being damaged by the concussion of gunfire.

At 1721 he directed the units which were to comprise his Left Flank Force to form a circular disposition and proceed toward his night battle station.**** The various units concerned then headed for their stations in this circular disposition which was not completely formed until 1835.

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* COM7THFLT (likely CTF 77) Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TF and TG Commanders 7THFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240609 October 1944 to CTG 70.1, info CTG 77.2.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosures (B) and (D).

**** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Participation in Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 18th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0212, November 1st, 1944.

Now realizing that it was vital to issue the plan immediately he, at 1728, issued it as follows:

"General Situation: Enemy aircraft and naval forces seem to be assembling westward in the Visayas for an offensive strike against Leyte area. All today air attacks have been made against our naval forces in the Leyte Gulf. Attack tonight by enemy striking group of at least two BBs, four CA, four CL, ten DDs may occur after 1900.

"General Plan: This force will destroy by gunfire at moderate ranges and by torpedo attack enemy surface forces attempting to enter Leyte Gulf through either Surigao Strait east or Surigao Strait south.

"Tasks: Battleline Rear Admiral Wayler, BATDIV THREE less NEW MEXICO, IDAHO, FOUR less COLORADO, TWO plus destroyers as designated. Destroy or repel enemy battleline by gunfire closing rapidly to moderate range of from seventeen to twenty thousand yards. Left Flank Forces CRUDIVS FOUR less INDIANAPOLIS plus MINNEAPOLIS, TWELVE less MONTPELIER and CLEVELAND plus destroyers as designated. Defend Left Flank own battleline. Attack enemy battleline. Right Flank Force Rear Admiral Berkey CRUDIV FIFTEEN less NASHVILLE, RAN cruiser SHROPSHIRE, DESDIV FORTY SEVEN. Defend Right Flank own battleline. Attack enemy battleline. XRAY Battle disposition assumed will be similar to A-2 in USF 10(A) with battleships in initial station Latitude 10°-35' (east of Huntungan /Hingatungan/ Point), Longitude 125°-16'E and steaming in an easterly direction at five knots. Upon arriving at Longitude 125°-27'E, battleships should reverse course and operate back and forth within these limits of Longitude unless directed otherwise using destroyers as screen as desired.

"Flank Forces maintain stations on battleline. Destroyer attacks may be launched prior to engagement of battleline. All ships keep alert for enemy torpedoes and bear in mind possibility of passing through enemy torpedo water prior to attack.

"Use 3845 kilocycles as primary voice circuit designated channel ABLE. Use 3980 kilocycles as secondary voice designated channel BAKER. Use 575 kilocycles for CW communications. Use zone minus 9 time. Commander Task Group 77.2 in CA 28 with Left Flank Force."* (Plate XVII).

THIS PLAN AS REGARDS FORMAT ERRED IN NOT DESIGNATING A TIME AT WHICH THE PLAN WAS TO BE EFFECTIVE. HOWEVER, THIS WAS NOT A VITAL WEAKNESS FOR, IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION, IT WAS CLEAR TO ALL THAT IT WAS EFFECTIVE UPON RECEIPT.

It will be noted that the confusion existing in the minds of some of the commanders in the Leyte Gulf area as to the number of battleships in the Japanese force approaching in the Sulu Sea which is indicated in the disparity between (a) the 0910 contact report from a search plane in Sector TWO which stated that there were four battleships,** (b) CTF 77's battle order issued at 1215 which stated that there were two battleships,*** and (c) CTF 77's order to CTG 73.7 issued at 1225 which ordered a search of the Mindanao and Sulu Seas and stated that there were four battleships,**** also existed in the mind of CTG 77.2. This is indicated by his use of the phrase, "at least two BB's", rather than two BB's in his battle plan to his forces.

At 1752 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received a dispatch from CTF 77 quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th" advising him that motor torpedo boats could be expected to be operating as far north as Latitude 10°-17'N and that there would be thirty motor torpedo boats on station.*****

MEANWHILE HE BECAME AWARE OF THE FACT THAT IT WAS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT HIS DISPATCH BATTLE PLAN WOULD NOT BE DELIVERED TO THE FLAG AND COMMANDING OFFICERS OF HIS SHIPS FOR WHAT MIGHT WELL BE A LONG TIME SINCE, ONCE HAVING BEEN RECEIVED, IT HAD TO BE DECODED AS WELL. HE DECIDED TO TRANSMIT THE DISPATCH BY TWELVE INCH SEARCHLIGHT TO CERTAIN OF HIS SHIPS FOR RELAY TO THE RESPONSIBLE COMMANDERS. THEREFORE, COMMENCING AT 1800, HE BEGAN TRANSMITTING IT TO THE COLUMBIA IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.****** HE REALIZED THAT IN SO DOING HE WAS PERHAPS ENDANGERING

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* CTG 77.2 Dispatch 240825 October 1944 to TG 77.2, TG 77.3.

** Aircraft in Sector 2 Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations on this Circuit.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, CTG 77.3, CTG 70.1, etc.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 240325 October 1944 to CTG 73.7, info COM3RDFLT, etc.

***** CTF 77 Dispatch 240711 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTG 77.3 and CTG 70.1.

****** Action Report COLUMBIA, Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 17th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0012, November 1st, 1944.

SECURITY, BUT HE FELT THAT HE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO EVILS AND DECIDED THAT (a) IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT FOR HIS COMMANDERS TO HAVE THE PLAN THAN TO DENY IT TO THE ENEMY AND (b) THE CHANCE OF THE ENEMY PROFITING BY THE RECEIPT OF THIS DISPATCH WAS REMOTE FOR NUMEROUS REASONS, AMONG WHICH WERE (1) IT WAS NOT LIKELY THAT JAPANESE SOLDIERS WERE WAITING TO CATCH JUST SUCH A DISPATCH, (2) IF CAUGHT IT HAD TO BE TRANSLATED INTO JAPANESE, (3) IT HAD THEN TO BE COMMUNICATED TO THE JAPANESE NAVAL COMMANDERS CONCERNED VIA THE ARMY CHAIN OF COMMAND, WHICH IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION ASHORE IN LEYTE, WAS LIKELY TO BE A MOST LENGTHY UNDERTAKING, CERTAINLY MORE THAN A MATTER OF HOURS. HIS DECISION, THEREFORE, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CORRECT AND LOGICAL AND WAS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF A "COMMAND DECISION". ACTUALLY (a) THE COLUMBIA DID NOT RECEIVE THE DISPATCH TRANSMITTED BY RADIO UNTIL 0145 THE FOLLOWING MORNING AND (b) JAPANESE SOURCES OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THIS ANALYSIS DO NOT MENTION HAVING INTERCEPTED THE PLAIN LANGUAGE SEARCHLIGHT TRANSMITTED DISPATCH.

(4) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

CTG 77.4, with a total of 310 VF and 188 VT, continued to (a) provide (1) air cover and support over the objective area and (2) air protection for his own units, and (b) operate off southern Samar with TU's 77.4.1, 77.4.2 and 77.4.3 (Diagram "C").

It must have been before 0212 that he received CTF 77's dispatch instructions (which had been prompted by the possibility of a large enemy attack brewing) to (a) unless otherwise directed, cancel the western Visayas strike and (b) increase the TCAP to thirty-six VF with an additional sixteen VF in Condition ELEVEN* (fighters capable of being launched on ten minutes notice), for at that time he directed CTU's 77.4.2 and 77.4.3 to (a) cancel all special strikes, (b) increase the TCAP for each unit to twelve VF each and (c) keep six VF in Condition ELEVEN.** Since he himself was CTU 77.4.1 he had already taken this action for his own command.

During the early morning hours he likely learned of the ANGLER and GUITARRO contacts on the Main Body (Contacts "2", "3" and "4", Plate XV).

Shortly after 0500 he launched his TCAP so that it was on station over Leyte Gulf at about 0600, and at 0530 he launched his local patrols.***

At 0603 he advised CTF 73 that he expected to have two carriers (CHENANGO and SAGINAW BAY) at Morotai to pick up planes on October 26th.****

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 231532 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info TG 77.4, TF 77, CTG 77.13, TF 79, COM3RDFLT.

** CTG 77.4 Dispatch 231712 October 1944 to CTU's 77.4.2, 77.4.3.

*** War Diary CTG 77.4, October 24th, 1944.

**** CTG 77.4 Dispatch 232103 October 1944 to CTF 73, info CTG 73.4, CTF 77.

For about two hours the TCAP patrolled over Leyte Gulf without encountering enemy opposition although, during this time, a carrier-type bomber made a poor but unopposed (by the TCAP) attack against Leyte Gulf shipping, and a MOGAMI-based float plane made a thorough reconnaissance of Leyte Gulf without interference.*

Shortly before 0745 a large enemy air strike developed. At least thirteen additional fighters were launched from the CVE's to augment the TCAP.**

At this time the TCAP was being controlled by the CSACP (Commander Support Aircraft Central Philippines) in the WASATCH with the MC GOWAN (FD ship for southern area of Leyte Gulf)*** and BRYANT also controlling.**** Eighteen to twenty enemy aircraft were intercepted at 15,000 feet as they started down over San Juanico Strait.**** Other attack groups, some penetrating from north central Leyte, were also intercepted. The air battle was joined. TG 77.4 planes were successful in blunting the attack and destroying a large number of enemy aircraft. Upwards of forty enemy planes were claimed shot down by the TCAP, which claims were later revised downward by CTG 77.4.***** Japanese records available to this analysis do not disclose their losses for this specific attack although they do estimate that their first attack, and by far their largest of the day, was composed of eighty planes.******

The Allies did not entirely escape damage as (a) four ships were hit (discussed more fully under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th") and (b) three VF were shot down.*******

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* War Diaries PHOENIX, NEWCOMB, October 24th, 1944; also Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Aircraft Action Report Nos. 110-44, VC-3 and 53-44, VC-4; also Action Report PETROV BAY, Direct Air Support for the Landings at Leyte Island, Central Philippines, October 20th - 30th, 1944, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944.

*** War Diary BENNION, October 24th, 1944.

**** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for the Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, P.I., including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

***** Aircraft Action Report Nos. 60-44, VC-60; 22-44, VC-26; 20-44, 21-44, VC-27; 110-44, VC-3; 53-44, VC-5; also CTG 77.4 Dispatch 240803 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, All TGC's TF 77.

****** 2ND Air Division Dispatch dated October 25th, 1944, ADVATIS Bulletin No. 170.

******* Action Report SAVO ISLAND, Operations against Philippine Islands, October 13th - November 3rd, 1944, Serial 074, November 3rd, 1944; also Aircraft Action Report 110-44, VC-3 (KALINAN BAY) and Deck Log WHITE PLAINS, October 24th, 1944.

ALTHOUGH THE JAPANESE HAVE GIVEN NO REASONS FOR THIS FAILURE OF THE AIR ATTACK TO (a) ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL PENETRATION OR (b) DESTROY OR DAMAGE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF SHIPS IN LEYTE GULF THE FAILURE WAS LIKELY DUE TO THE FOLLOWING: (a) ADEQUATE AND TIMELY PREPARATION OF DEFENSES BY STATIONING THE TCAP OVER THE ENEMY OBJECTIVE (LEYTE GULF) WELL BEFORE THE ATTACK DEVELOPED AND IN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO REPEL THE ATTACK, (b) USE OF CONVENTIONAL TACTICS BY THE ENEMY IN APPROACHING AT MEDIUM TO HIGH ALTITUDE (TEN TO TWENTY THOUSAND FEET) IN WAVES THEREBY SIMPLIFYING THE CONTROLLING SHIPS' PROBLEM OF INTERCEPTION RATHER THAN ATTACKING FROM MANY DIRECTIONS IN SMALL, WELL DISPERSED ELEMENTS AT GREATLY VARYING ALTITUDES TO CAUSE SATURATION OF THE RADAR WARNING AND FIGHTER DIRECTION NETS, (c) THE LOW QUALITY OF THE JAPANESE PILOTS AS EVIDENCED BY THEIR WEAK DEFENSIVE FLYING AND (d) THE COPIOUS USE OF SMOKE BY LEYTE GULF SHIPS WHICH SERVED TO SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM OF TARGET SELECTION DURING THE ENEMY'S FINAL ATTACK RUN.

During the latter part of the morning, the CHENANGO and SAGINAW BAY completed transferring planes and recovering flyable duds from the other CVE's of the group, preparatory to their departure for Morotai.* The CHENANGO transferred seven VF and eight VT which left eleven VF on board while the SAGINAW BAY transferred all of her aircraft (fifteen VF and twelve VT) and received four flyable VT duds in return.

At about 1130 the second major attack against Leyte Gulf consisting of several groups of enemy planes commenced. CTF 77 reported them as being one large, one medium and one undetermined sized group.**

In the ensuing air battle the TCAP was augmented by fighters diverted from their ground support missions by the fighter director.*** The attack was not successful for it not only failed to damage any Allied shipping but, based on Allied records, TG 77.4 pilots claimed having destroyed at least sixteen enemy planes in air combat.*** Japanese records available to this analysis do not record their losses during this specific attack. The Allies lost two VF, one of which was lost in a mid-air collision with a Japanese carrier-type fighter.****

During the forenoon CTG 77.4 learned of Allied air attacks on the Japanese Main Body off Mindoro and on the THIRD Section in the Sibuyan Sea.

Because of the fact that at 1220 he launched a strike composed of thirty-two VF and twelve VT***** against the western Visayas and in particular against Bacolod Airfield and Bacolod Harbor in

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* Deck Log CHENANGO, October 24th, 1944; also Action Report SAGINAW BAY, Leyte Operation, October 14th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0127, November 4th, 1944.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240239 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

*** Aircraft Action Report Nos. 61-44, VF-60; 112-44, VC-3; 5-44, VC-61; 63-44, VC-21; 21-44, VC-27; 14-44, VC-70.

**** Action Report MANILA BAY, Operations in Support of Occupation of Leyte, P.I., October 12th - 30th, 1944, Serial 0103, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Aircraft Action Report No. 19-44, VF-26.

northwestern Negros Island, it is quite clear that sometime during the middle of the morning he had been ordered by CTF 77 to reinstitute sweeps against western Visayan airfields.*

This attack against Bacolod airfield and harbor struck at 1500. After evaluating his pilot's claims he reported to CTF 77 that his pilots destroyed on the airfield two enemy land-reconnaissance fighters, two carrier-type attack planes, two two-engine land-attack bombers and damaged one single-engine plane.** As before, Japanese records available to this analysis do not record their losses during this specific attack.

At 1324 he advised CTF 77 in part that CTU 77.4.14 in the SAGINAW BAY, in company with the CHENANGO, EDMONDS and OBERRENDER would (a) depart the area off Leyte Gulf at 1700 for Morotai to pick up replacement aircraft and (b) arrive off east coast Morotai at 0500 October 26th.***

During the afternoon numerous small groups appear to have attempted to penetrate Leyte Gulf with several of the enemy planes being shot down.****

As was discussed under "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", twenty-nine Japanese aircraft participated in an afternoon raid, but no mass attack of such size was recorded by the Allies.

At 1643 TU 77.4.14 composed of the SAGINAW BAY, CHENANGO, EDMONDS and OBERRENDER took departure for Morotai.*****

During the day, in addition to the TCAP, TASP missions and the special strike against Bacolod Airfield, TG 77.4 aircraft few reduced ground support missions****** and routine local patrols.

In assessing all claims for the day CTG 77.4 estimated that his planes had destroyed (a) seven two-engine bombers, one carrier-type reconnaissance plane, twenty two-engine light bombers, eighteen single-engine fighters, three two-engine fighters, (b) probably shot down eighteen two-engine bombers, (c) destroyed on the ground, one two-engine land-attack bomber, two land reconnaissance planes, one carrier-type bomber and one single-engine fighter and (d) possibly destroyed on the ground one

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 240054 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, All TFC's 3RDFLT, C.G. 5TH Air Force, etc.

** CTG 77.4 Dispatch 242322 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 79, info CTF 78, All TGC's TF 77.

*** CTG 77.4 Dispatch 240424 October 1944 to CTF 77.

**** Aircraft Action Report Nos. 22-44, VC-26 and 23-44, VC-27.

***** Deck Log SAGINAW BAY, October 24th, 1944; also War Diary COMCARDIV 22, October 24th, 1944.

****** Aircraft Action Report Nos. 24-44, VC-81; 67-44, VC-20; 43-44, VC-75; 44-44, VC-25; 111-44, VC-3 and 54-44, VC-5.

land-reconnaissance plane and one army-type fighter, for a total of fifty-four planes destroyed and twenty probably destroyed. The Japanese reported that forty-seven planes failed to return out of approximately 147 missions flown.*

During the day TG 77.4 had lost five VF in combat and four VF and one VT operationally. Also, with TU 77.4.14 there were eleven VF and four VT. Therefore, he had left in his sixteen carriers remaining in the vicinity of Leyte Gulf approximately 290 VF and 183 VT.

(5) Operations of CTG 70.1, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of the day CTG 70.1, in the OYSTER BAY with the WILLOUGHBY and twenty-eight MTB's, was at anchor in San Pedro Bay. At this same time (a) the WACHAPREAGUE with eleven MTB's was at anchor at Liloan Bay, (b) PT's 127, 128, 130 and 196 (from MTB RON SEVEN) and PT's 150, 191, 192 and 195 (from MTB RON TWELVE) were on patrol or special missions and (c) PT's 491 and 495 (from MTB RON THIRTY-THREE) were on a mission to guerrillas. All of these assignments and what they accomplished are discussed under "Operations of CTG 70.1, 1042 - 2400, October 23rd". These MTB's, with the exception of these in item (c), appear to have returned to the tenders shortly after daylight, in accordance with their basic instructions which were, in part: (1) to move to and from their patrol areas during daylight, (2) to be inside their patrol waters by thirty minutes after sunset, (3) not to leave their patrol waters until thirty minutes before sunrise, and (4) ordinarily to clear their patrol areas shortly after daylight.** The item (c) MTB's returned at 1320.***

Commencing at about 0831 he observed that an air attack had developed in force, as discussed under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", and he learned shortly that his MTB's and their tenders had escaped damage.

Immediately after breakfast he, with CTU 70.1.3,**** in accordance with orders from CTF 77's Operations Officer, reported on board the WASATCH for a conference with that officer. This conference was held because he had arranged with CTF 77 that "in view of the necessity for briefing boat officers early in the day to allow time for boats to arrive on patrol stations", "CTG 70.1 would be notified as early as possible (by CTF 77) voice radio when enemy movement toward Surigao Strait was anticipated".*****

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* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** CTG 70.1 Operation Plan No. 2-44, No Serial, October 5th, 1944, Annex F, Paragraph I-4.

*** War Diary MTB RON 33, October 23rd and 24th, 1944.

**** Lieutenant Commander Robert G. Leeson, USNR, who was the Senior MTB RON Commander in the area.

***** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

Matters discussed were largely (a) the readiness of the MTB's, (b) the number which could be made available and (c) their proposed deployment, as CTF 77 desired them to be so disposed as "to obtain the earliest possible information of the approach of any enemy forces attempting to pass through Surigao Strait that night with the intent of a hit and run raid on the transports in the Leyte Gulf area. The incidental purpose was to inflict early damage by PT torpedoes".*

(Note: This statement as to CTF 77's desires does not appear correct since CTF 77's dispatches discussed later refer to "lower Surigao Strait" and "to report and attack" rather than "to obtain earliest possible information of the approach of any enemy forces attempting to pass through Surigao Strait that night". It is believed that these errors are attributed to the passage of time and the consequent lapses in memory.)

During this conference he advised the Operations Officer that, owing to the long trip from Mios Woendi under their own power, several of the boats were in bad shape but that he would get a great majority in the lower part of the Strait that night.*

It also seems likely that he discussed with CTF 77's Operations Officer the various contacts received during the night and, therefore, was able to make a reasonably good estimate of the capabilities of the enemy surface forces.

Upon his return from the WASATCH he, with his staff and CTU 70.1.3, immediately commenced studying the situation to determine where best to station his MTB's should CTF 77 so direct.**

This was not too difficult to determine for, as pointed out above, he had discussed the prospective deployment with CTF 77's Operations Officer and therefore was cognizant with CTF 77's broad ideas on the employment of MTB's.

Nothing unusual appears to have arisen during the remainder of the forenoon.

About noon he received the expected order by TBS voice radio which directed him to station the maximum number of MTB's in lower Surigao Strait during the night. Fortunately this message was received (a) prior to briefing the MTB's for routine patrols and (b) in time to get all of the MTB's which were in operating condition ready and briefed for the special situation.***

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* Letter from Vice Admiral (then Captain) R. H. Cruzen, USN (Ret), Operations Officer to CTF 77, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, May 27th, 1957.

** Statement of Commander (then Lieutenant Commander) Robert G. Leeson, USNR, CTU 70.1.3 at the time of the Battle of Surigao Strait, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, July 14th, 1958.

*** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

He now completed his plan. He realized that it was particularly important that the Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE receive this plan as soon as possible for neither that officer nor the MTB's with the WACHAPREAGUE had any information concerning the planned disposition of the WACHAPREAGUE MTB's for this evening. He, therefore, in his plan, not only gave instructions to the Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE as to the manner in which he wished the WACHAPREAGUE MTB's to be deployed but also as a matter of information gave the deployment of the OYSTER BAY MTB's.

At 1404 he issued this plan, as follows:

"Expect Tokyo Express tonight. Before darkness station boats in sections of two or three each at following positions: Southwest tip of Panaon Island, south of Madilao Point, south of Limasawa Island, two sections patrol between Agio Point Bohol past Camiguin Island to Sepaca Point Mindanao. Vital repeat vital each section leader report contacts and that other section leaders and WACHAPREAGUE relay these reports to CTF 77. Twenty-one boats from OYSTER BAY stationed by sections as follows: southeast Panaon Island, Bilaa Point Mindanao; in Surigao Strait five sections: one off Sumilon Island, one midchannel off Kanhatid Point Dinagat Island, two off Kanihaan Island, one southeast Amagusan Point. WACHAPREAGUE inform LCI's last station. Sections attack independently after making contact report."* (Plate XIX).

THE FIRST LINE OF THE BATTLE PLAN--i.e., EXPECT TOKYO EXPRESS TONIGHT--IS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THIS ANALYSIS IN THAT IT SHOWS THAT AS LATE AS 1404 ON THIS DAY THE CONCEPT OF A TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATION WAS IN THE MIND OF CTG 70.1. SINCE, AS MENTIONED EARLIER, CTG 70.1 HAD BEEN IN CONFERENCE THAT FORENOON WITH CTF 77'S CHIEF OF STAFF IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO SAY THAT THIS MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN THAT CONFERENCE AND THAT THE CHIEF OF STAFF HAD ONCE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THE EXPECTED NATURE OF THE ENEMY'S OPERATION IN THIS FASHION, AS DISCUSSED IN VOLUME III UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 77 (CENTRAL PHILIPPINES ATTACK FORCE), 0000 - 1042, OCTOBER 23RD".

CTG 70.1 stated in his action report that the "PT's were stationed to give complete coverage of the approaches to Surigao Straits, to insure detection of the enemy by whatever route he approached, and to inform our heavier forces, with the sections inside Surigao Straits as striking groups, stationed to insure almost continuous contact by at least one group. Each section was instructed to report any enemy sighted, then attack, independently".**

WHAT HE MEANT BY THIS PARAGRAPH IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR FOR THE WORDING AFTER "TO INFORM OUR HEAVIER FORCES" SEEMS THOROUGHLY CONFUSED. WHETHER THIS WAS A CLERICAL ERROR OR AN ERROR OF SUBSTANCE IS NOT KNOWN. HOWEVER, THE GENERAL CONCEPT WAS THAT THE MTB'S WERE SO STATIONED BOTH IN

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* CTG 70.1 (OYSTER BAY) Dispatch 240504 October 1944 to WACHAPREAGUE, info All TFC's 7THFLT and All TGC's 7THFLT.

** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

THE APPROACHES TO SURIGAO STRAIT (SOUTH) AND IN THE STRAIT ITSELF AS TO INSURE DETECTION AND ALMOST CONTINUOUS CONTACT BY AT LEAST ONE SECTION.

THERE SEEMS TO BE CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO THE WISENESS OF THIS PLAN FOR THE MTB'S WERE WIDELY DISPERSED, AND THEIR RADARS WERE NOT PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE. THEREFORE IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR ENEMY FORCES TO PASS WITHOUT DETECTION. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE FAILURE OF THE CAMIGUIN PT'S TO DETECT THE THIRD SECTION AND THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE. WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN WISER HAD MORE MTB'S BEEN CONCENTRATED IN THE VICINITY OF LOWER SURIGAO STRAIT WITH A SCREEN ACROSS THE STRAIT TO DENY UNDETECTED PASSAGE? WOULD NOT THIS HAVE GIVEN AMPLE WARNING TIME TO CTG 77.2 (ABOUT TWO HOURS) AND WOULD IT HAVE NOT PERMITTED A MULTIPLE ATTACK BY NUMEROUS MTB'S? IN MAKING THIS COMMENT IT IS OF COURSE RECOGNIZED THAT THE CURRENTS WERE STRONG AND WOULD MAKE STATION KEEPING DIFFICULT.

He also stated in his action report that in order "to avoid any possibility of PT's attacking own forces, the sections stationed nearest own forces in the upper end of the Straits were positively instructed to get clear and stay clear if there were any indications of own forces moving into their areas. No ships moving down the Straits during or after the battle were to be attacked by any boats unless positively identified as enemy".* This was sound procedure.

IT IS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST THAT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT IN THIS PLAN THE NECESSITY FOR REPORTING THE CONTACTS PRIOR TO ATTACKING WAS GIVEN STRONG EMPHASIS, CTU 70.1.3 (COM MTB RON SEVEN) WHO WAS THE SENIOR MTB OFFICER IN THE SURIGAO STRAIT AREA STATED LATER IN HIS ACTION REPORT THAT HIS MISSION WAS "TO REPORT AND ATTACK ANY ENEMY CRAFT ENCOUNTERED". HE APPEARS TO HAVE OBTAINED THIS FROM CTF 77'S DISPATCH 240319 MENTIONED LATER WHEREIN THE ASSIGNED TASK WAS "TO REPORT AND ATTACK ENEMY SURFACE FORCES ENTERING LEYTE GULF". WHY HE ACCEPTED THIS TASK RATHER THAN THAT ASSIGNED BY HIS OWN TASK GROUP COMMANDER, I.E., "VITAL REPEAT VITAL EACH SECTION LEADER REPORT CONTACTS" AND "SECTIONS ATTACK INDEPENDENTLY AFTER MAKING CONTACT REPORT", IS NOT KNOWN. AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER IN THE DISCUSSIONS RELATIVE TO THE MTB'S, DURING THE BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT SOME OF THE MTB'S WERE CLEARLY MOTIVATED BY THE "REPORT AND ATTACK" DOCTRINE HEREIN MENTIONED. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT IN THE BRIEFINGS GIVEN THE MTB COMMANDING OFFICERS PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FOR THEIR STATIONS, THE NECESSITY FOR INSURING THAT THE CONTACT REPORTS WERE MADE BEFORE ATTACKING WAS NOT GIVEN THE PROPER EMPHASIS.

At 1501 the battle plan was received by the Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE, in Liloan Bay, who immediately informed the responsible MTB officers of the fifteen MTB's which he was tending.** He likely pointed out that all of them were to be stationed to the westward of a line joining Binit and Bilaa Points. Meanwhile COM MTB RON TWELVE had informed the commander of the LCI group in Liloan Bay of the (1) MTB's to be stationed off Amagusan Point and (2) the necessity for establishing a patrol off the entrance to Sogod Bay, since all MTB's would be on assigned patrol stations.***

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* Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

** War Diary WACHAPREAGUE, October 24th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTU 78.3.5, Central Philippines, Panaon Attack Group, No Serial, November 30th, 1944.

At 1520 CTG 70.1 noted that the MTB's based on the OYSTER BAY in Leyte Gulf had started south for their stations and at 1535 he noted that all leaving had departed. He was particularly pleased because he had succeeded in dispatching twenty-four MTB's,* which was not only more than he had promised CTF 77's Operations Officer but, as shown by his battle order, was three more than he had planned on using at the time of preparing the order. These extra MTB's allowed him to have three in each section and an extra section which he stationed off Amagusan Point. (Of the two sections off that point he stationed one east of the point and one south of the point.**)

Sometime before 1611 he received two important dispatches from CTF 77, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", (a) the first received was 240319 which not only directed him to station his MTB's in lower Surigao Strait but also directed that the (1) MTB's were to remain south of Latitude 10°-10'N during darkness and (2) assigned task was to report and attack enemy surface forces entering Leyte Gulf,*** and (b) directed his command to (1) prepare for night engagement and (2) the MTB's to remain south of Latitude 10°-10'N during darkness.**** These dispatches were of considerable concern to him for his MTB's had already departed for their assigned stations which meant that six of his MTB's in Surigao Strait (South Amagusan Point and East Amagusan Point) would be north of Latitude 10°-10'N. He, therefore, notified CTF 77 to this effect.*****

Meanwhile, down at Lilcan Bay the Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE had been busily engaged in assisting the fifteen MTB's there to prepare for action. At 1730 the first MTB's got underway and by 1830 all had departed.* This was a source of satisfaction for now there would be three MTB's in each section on each of his assigned stations.******

The motor torpedo boats from the OYSTER BAY and the WACHAPREAGUE were assigned to stations as shown in the following table******* and were en route at this time.

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* Various PT Action Reports, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 328, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944; also Action Report PT 320, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240319 October 1944 to CTG 70.1.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG 77.3, CTF 78, CTF 79, CTG's 77.2, 70.1 and all TFC's 3RDFLT.

***** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

****** War Diary WACHAPREAGUE, October 1944, Serial 073, October 31st, 1944.

******* Data in this table is from CTU 70.1.3 Report of PT Action, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, November 10th, 1944, to CTG 70.1.

SECTION	PT'S ASSIGNED*	LOCATION
Bohol PT's	152, 130, 131	North half of a line from Agio Point, Bohol Island, to Sipaca Point, Mindanao Island. Midpoint: 9°-33'N, 124°-38'E
Camiguin PT's	127, 128, 129	South half of a line from Agio Point, Bohol Island, to Sipaca Point, Mindanao Island. Midpoint: 9°-12'N, 124°-49'E
Limasawa PT's	151, 146, 190	South of Limasawa Island. 9°-52'N, 125°-04'E
Southwest Panaon PT's	196, 150, 194	Southwest tip of Panaon Island. 9°-54'N, 125°-15'E
Madilao Point PT's	192, 191, 195	Madilao Point, Mindanao Island. 9°-45'N, 125°-23'E
Southeast Panaon PT's	134, 132, 137	Southeast tip of Panaon Island. 9°-55'N, 125°-15'E
Bilaa Point PT's	494, 497, 324	Bilaa Point, Mindanao Island. 9°-49'N, 125°-25'E
Sumilon PT's	523, 524, 526	South of Sumilon Island. 9°-54'N, 125°-26'E
Lower Surigao PT's	490, 491, 493	Midway between Kanhatid Point, Dinagat Island and Panaon Island. 10°-05'N, 125°-22'E
Upper Surigao PT's	327, 321, 326	4 miles west of Kanihaan Island. 10°-10'N, 125°-24'E
Kanihaan PT's	495, 489, 492	South of Kanihaan Island. 10°-10'N, 125°-28'E
South Amagusan Point PT's	320, 330, 331	South of Amagusan Point, Leyte. 10°-14'N, 125°-15'E
East Amagusan Point PT's	328, 323, 329	2 miles east of Amagusan Point, Leyte. 10°-15'N, 125°-17'E

* OTC in first listed PT.

At some time prior to 1833 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 directing him to insure that enemy forces do not pass undetected through the strait between Dinagat Island and Mindanao Island (Hinatuan Passage)* for at that time he sent the following dispatch to the WACHAPREAGUE for relay to Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 36 (OTC of the Sumilon PT's) and to PT 494 (OTC of the Bilaa Point PT's on board): "Deliver following message to Comron 36 and to PeeTee 494. Plain Language. Keep watch on passage to east of you in addition to one to west."**

(6) Operations of CTG 78.3 (Panaon Attack Group) and CTU 78.3.5 (Control and Support Craft), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.***

At 0000 CTU 78.3.5 with TU 78.3.5 composed of PC's 1122, 1133, LCI(G)'s 68, 70 (F), LCI(R)'s 31 (F), 342, LCI(D) 29 remained in the Sogod Bay - Cabalian Bay area. Little of importance occurred until 1300. At that time he was notified by Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE that an attack by Japanese surface forces was expected that night. Later he was informed that he would be required to patrol over the mouth of Sogod Bay. He therefore deployed his units as follows: (a) LCI(G)'s 68 and 70 patrolled a line across the mouth of Sogod Bay from Santa Cruz to Ilijan Point, (b) PC's 1133 and 1122 patrolled on a line north and south from Calipian Point in Cabalian Bay and (c) LCI(R)'s 342 and 31 anchored in Cabalian Bay near Molopolo. In addition the LCI'G)'s were employed throughout the night relaying voice communications from the WACHAPREAGUE to PT boats and between PT boats. However all attempts to communicate with CTF 78, with one relay exception, were unsuccessful.

He feared that his patrolling units might be attacked by PT's which had been stationed in Surigao Strait. During the remainder of this period little of importance occurred.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 240609 October 1944 to CTG 70.1, info CTG 77.2.
** CTG 70.1 Dispatch 240933 October 1944 to WACHAPREAGUE, info CTF 77.
*** Action Report CTU 78.3.5, Central Philippine - Panaon Attack Group, No Serial, November 30th, 1944.

(b) Operations of CTF 71, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

Shortly after the beginning of this day CTF 71 received a dispatch from the BERGALL reporting her position in the South China Sea and requesting and extension of patrol.* He no doubt welcomed this request as the number of submarines on patrol was diminishing while the activities of enemy combatant ships was increasing. In this connection it will be recalled that he had committed himself on October 10th to provide for the period October 15th - 25th (a) fifteen U.S. submarines for patrol and (b) four additional submarines for lifeguard duty.** (The Allied submarines south of the equator are not included in this discussion.) (Volume III, Plate X.)

He now studied his running estimate to see what could be done about the situation. He could see that on this day only thirteen (BREAM, GUITARRO, ROCK, BERGALL, ANGLER, DACE, DARTER, GURNARD, COBIA, BATFISH, COD, BLACKFIN, PADDLE) out of the thirty-five submarines in his command could be depended upon to maintain patrol including one submarine (PADDLE) assigned to part time lifeguard duty. It will be noted that this number includes (a) the ROCK and BERGALL whose patrol had expired but which, due to a relatively uneventful patrol, were being retained in their designated areas for a few more days,*** and (b) (1) the DACE which had been authorized to remain on station until dark on this day,**** and (2) the DARTER which on the 21st had been ordered to remain on patrol a few more days.**** It also includes the COBIA which, although departing the area, still had considerable fuel on board and all twenty-four torpedoes.*

He realized that some of these submarines would have to be replaced where possible and that he would be forced to rely on the submarines on patrol for these replacements.

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* War Diary CTF 71, October 23rd, 1944.
** CTF 71 Letter, Serial 00328, November 17th, 1944, to CTF 77.
*** CTF 71 Dispatch 210536 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL, DARTER).
**** CTF 71 Dispatch 221043 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (DACE).

At 0041 he sent a summary dispatch to his submarines informing them of the DACE and DARTER attack and the contact report of the ANGLER, both events of the previous day.*

At about 0140 he received a contact report from the GUITARRO reporting an enemy task force at 0030 in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 119°-30'E, consisting of three probable battleships in a group of fifteen to twenty ships on course 080°(T), speed eighteen knots.**

Knowing that the DACE and DARTER were occupied in Palawan Passage with little patrol time remaining, at least for the DACE, and that Balabac Strait was now uncovered, he (a) at 0154 directed the BLACKFIN, upon arriving in her area D-6, to cover the western approaches to Balabac Strait, with early report of enemy heavy units important, (b) cautioned her not to enter any of the channels of this strait due to the possibility of enemy mines, and (c) advised her that the DACE would depart at sunset this day, but that the DARTER would be patrolling southern Palawan Passage for a few more days.***

IT IS NOT CLEAR WHERE HE ACHIEVED THIS CONCEPT OF "A FEW MORE DAYS", FOR AS INDICATED ABOVE, IT WAS ON OCTOBER 21ST THAT HE HAD ADVISED THE DARTER THAT HE PLANNED TO RETAIN HER ON PATROL FOR A FEW MORE DAYS, AND NOW NOT ONLY HAD SEVERAL MORE DAYS ELAPSED, BUT THE DARTER HAD BEEN IN ACTION AGAINST THE JAPANESE MAIN BODY AND HAD REPORTED BUT SIX TORPEDOES REMAINING AT 0140 THE PREVIOUS EVENING. WHILE ITEM (c) OF THIS DISPATCH SEEMS UNREALISTIC IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT IT WAS SO WORDED TO ADVISE THE BLACKFIN THAT SHE MIGHT ENCOUNTER THESE SUBMARINES IN MOVING TO STATION C. WHILE ON STATION.

At 0324 he advised interested commands of the contacts reported by the GUITARRO**** and BREAM***** on the previous day.

At about 0410 he received an amplifying report from the ANGLER reporting that at 0330 the force was heading south through Mindoro Strait, speed twenty knots.******

At 0457 (when it was received by CTF 79) he likely learned from the DACE that the (a) ANGLER was aground on Bombay Shoal, (b) DACE had discontinued her attack on the damaged cruiser in order to assist the DARTER and (c) estimated position of the damaged cruiser and two destroyers was Latitude 09°-13'N, Longitude 117°-02'E, course 210°(T), speed six knots.*******

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* CTF 71 Dispatch 231541 October 1944 to All Submarines.

** GUITARRO Dispatch 231410 October 1944 to CTF 71; also War Diary CTF 71, October 1944.

*** CTF 71 Dispatch 231654 October 1944 to BL[illegible], TG 71.1, info DARTER and DACE.

**** CTF 71 Dispatch 231824 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, C.G. 13TH Air Force, info CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, All CTG's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

***** CTF 71 Dispatch 241338 October 1944 to All Commanders, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, C.G. 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.

****** ANGLER Dispatch 231840 October 1944 to CTF 71.

******* DACE Dispatch 231850 October 1944 to CTF 71.

At about this time he received a surprising dispatch. This was from the GUITARRO reporting three definite battleships and two possible carriers headed south through Mindoro Strait at 0330.* Now, if not before, he knew that it was highly probable that the ANGLER and GUITARRO were in contact with the same force which now included carriers.

A short time later, about 0700, he received with satisfaction a DACE dispatch reporting that all DARTER personnel had been rescued and the boat demolished.** However, he likely became very concerned when, at 0915, he received another dispatch from the same submarine to the effect that (a) efforts to demolish the DARTER failed, (b) all torpedoes had been expended and she was now employing her deck gun, (c) she was standing by to make another demolition attempt that night and (d) she requested planes or another submarine to complete the job.***

He, no doubt, received a COMTHIRDFLT message, passed to him by CINCPAC, concerning activities along the west coast of Luzon north of Lingayan, recommending assistance from TF 71 submarines.**** Submarine observations in that area would be helpful during current epidemic of Japanese movements. There was only one submarine (COD) in this locality on patrol, although the CERO of TF 72 was transiting the area northbound.

Shortly after noon (at 1217) he directed the PADDLE, by dispatch, to return to Fremantle.***** In so doing he knew, from previous communications with her, that the COBIA would not be able to remain in this area for air strikes on the 26th, although not as yet ordered.

About this time he m[illegible]ave learned that a search plane had sighted a major enemy force at 0810 just south of Mindoro on course 050° (T).****** Now, if not before, he could estimate that this was probably the same force sighted by his submarines and that they were not headed for Coron Bay, but instead appeared to be headed toward the eastern Philippines.

Meanwhile, he had been estimating the situation to determine what he should do relative to the DACE's request for "another submarine to complete the job". Should he (a) divert a submarine from another patrol station and continue the destruction efforts, or (b) direct that the (1) more highly classified equipment such as the Torpedo Data Computer be destroyed and then (2) submarine concerned continue his patrols or retire from the area.

He decided the former and, at 1242, (a) directed (1) the ROCK, which was about fifty miles to northwestward of North Danger Shoal, to proceed at best speed to Bombay Shoal to destroy the DARTER, (2) upon

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* GUITARRO Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to CTF 71.
** DACE Dispatch 232130 October 1944 to CTF 71.
*** DACE Dispatch 232345 October 1944 to CTF 71.
**** CINCPAC Dispatch 232352 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, CTF 71, CTF 77, COM3RDFLT.
***** CTF 71 Dispatch 240317 October 1944 to PADDLE, TG 71.1.
****** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4, info COMINCH, ALL TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

destruction of the DARTER the DACE and ROCK to rendezvous and then take half of the rescued crew each and return to Fremantle via Karimata Strait, Java Sea and Lombok, and (3) the ROCK to acknowledge this dispatch and give her estimated time of arrival at Bombay Shoal,* and (b) advised that the DACE was standing by.

THE QUESTION NOW ARISES AS TO THE WISENESS OF THIS DECISION. CERTAINLY THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT ABOUT IT FOR CTF 71 HAD KNOWLEDGE OF STRONG JAPANESE FORCES IN THE AREA AND IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT INFORMATION BE CONTINUOUSLY OBTAINED REGARDING THE MOVEMENT OF THESE AND OF OTHER FORCES NOT AS YET LOCATED. THIS REQUIRED, INSOFAR AS THE TF 71 SUBMARINES WERE CONCERNED, THAT EACH SUBMARINE AVAILABLE BE PROPERLY EMPLOYED.

THEREFORE, DOES IT NOT APPEAR THAT A WISER DECISION WOULD HAVE BEEN TO HAVE: (a) DESTROYED THE HIGHLY CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT BEFORE LOYING THE DACE AND ROCK OR BOTH, (b) DIVIDED THE CREW OF THE DARTER BETWEEN THE DACE AND ROCK IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THE COMBAT EFFICIENCY OF THE ROCK WOULD NOT BE IMPAIRED? THIS WOULD LIKELY HAVE MEANT THAT ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE DARTER'S CREW WOULD BE IN THE ROCK. BY DOING THIS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE TO RETAIN THE ROCK IN THE AREA FOR SEVERAL MORE DAYS WHILE THE DACE RETURNED TO FREMANTLE. WHY THIS WAS NOT DONE IS NOT KNOWN BUT IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT CTF 71 FELT THAT THE HABITABILITY FACTORS WERE GOVERNING.

About this time he likely learned of an enemy force estimated to (a) consist of two battleships, two to four heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and ten destroyers reported under air attack in the eastern Sulu Sea at 0910 and (b) be able to arrive Leyte Gulf tonight.**

With one enemy force in the Sulu Sea and the other heading east, south of Mindoro, he now attempted to close the channels leading to these areas to intercept the return of these forces.

He studied the deployment of his submarines and quickly realized that it was highly important to cover the northern approaches to Palawan Passage. But, what submarines did he have available for this purpose? Not the ANGLER or GUITARRO, for they were already in good intercepting positions. Not the BREAM, for she was in position to obtain information concerning the movement of Japanese forces along the west coast of Luzon. This left the BLACKFIN which was en route to station off Balabac Strait. But if he changed the BLACKFIN's assignment how could he cover the western approaches to Balabac Strait?

He decided that this could be done only by shifting the BERGALL from the western China Sea to the Strait. Having made this decision he, at 1323, cancelled the BLACKFIN's latest orders and directed her to patrol north of Palawan Passage to cover routes from southward to Mindoro and Linapacan Straits. In the same dispatch he advised her the ANGLER was in A-4, the BREAM and GUITARRO in A-3 and the BERGALL west of Balabac Strait.***

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* CTF 71 Dispatch 240342 October 1944 to ROCK.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTG 77.3, CTF 79, CTF 78, etc., info COM3RDFLT, COMINCH, CINCPAC, etc.

*** CTF 71 Dispatch 240423 October 1944 to BLACKFIN.

His decisions in the matter seem correct, for certainly the major portion of the Japanese fleet was clearly in the Coron Bay - Mindoro Island area.

Shortly thereafter he informed CTF 77 of the DARTER's predicament and the action being taken.* He then, at 1334, directed the BERGALL to (a) cover the western approaches to Balabac Strait with early report of enemy heavy units important, (b) refrain from entering the Strait due to the probability of enemy mines and (c) at dark on October 28th return to Fremantle via Karimata Strait, Java Sea and Lombok Strait.**

At 1531 he sent a summary of submarine activities to COM3RDFLT, including the GUITARRO's report of ships heading south through Mindoro Strait.*** This dispatch was somewhat in error in that, among other items, it stated that "GUITARRO and ANGLER reported three definite battleships and two possible carriers headed south through Mindoro Strait at 0330 24th speed twenty".**** Actually it was the GUITARRO which made this report--the ANGLER merely reported that the force previously reported by her was heading south through Mindoro Strait at 0330 speed twenty.*****

This error, while it had no effect on the operations because it was not received by other commands until late the following day, nevertheless emphasizes the necessity for great care in analyzing contacts and in providing accurate information. Since CTF 77 had estimated on the previous day that it was "possible that enemy carriers will support surface forces and str[illegible] from west of Palawan" this error by CTF 71, had it been received earlier, might have adversely affected both CTF 77 and the Allied commanders' estimates.

IN THIS CONNECTION U.S. NAVAL DOCTRINE PROVIDES "WHEN THE PRESENCE AND EXACT LOCATION OF THE ENEMY ARE KNOWN THE COMPOSITION AND ACTION OF THE FORCE ARE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE".******

Later during the evening (at 1716) he assigned the COBIA to lifeguard duty for the strike on Tarakan (NE Borneo) at 1100, October 26th, and in the same dispatch provided her with the necessary information so that she might accomplish her mission effectively.*******

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* CTF 71 Dispatch 240432 October 1944 to CTF 77.
** CTF 71 Dispatch 240434 October 1944 to BERGALL.
*** CTF 71 Dispatch 240651 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
**** GUITARRO Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to CTF 71.
***** War Diary CTF 71, October 24th, 1944; also War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of FIFTH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.
****** Basic Fleet Operational Communication Doctrine (NWP 16), Chapter V, Operational Instructions, Paragraph 504(a).
******* CTF 71 Dispatch 240816 October 1944 to COBIA.

Meanwhile, he concerned himself with endeavoring to provide some intelligence concerning enemy activities along the west coast of Luzon as requested by COMTHIRDFLT. He knew that the COD was in that area and likely the CERO as well but since the CERO was on a special mission from CTF 72 (Submarines East Australia) he clearly (as COMSUBSOWESPAC) was reluctant to divert her. He therefore, at 1736, directed the COD, among other things, to continue to patrol area A-2 until further orders and to let him know if she was forced to depart.*

(1) BREAM and GUITARRO

It will be recalled that the BREAM had arrived in her assigned patrol area in Area A-3 which was to the westward of Subic Bay on the previous evening. She now patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.** During the forenoon she recovered six Japanese soldiers from life rafts which she thought were from the convoy which the BLUEGILL had attacked on October 18th.*** She appears to have obtained little pertinent information from these prisoners. However, her picking them up was in accordance with CTG 71.1's Operation Plan which stated in part, "as a great deal of information is frequently obtainable from enemy prisoners of war, submarines are encouraged to bring back an occasional prisoner".****

At 2200, when it was received by the GUITARRO, she received CTF 71's dispatch stating that friendly planes had sighted a large Japanese task force proceeding to the Sibuyan Sea via Mindoro Strait and directing the BREAM to patrol Area A-3.***** Since she was already in that area this dispatch required no movement.

It will also be recalled that at midnight the GUITARRO was in contact with an enemy task force estimated to consist of fifteen to twenty ships including probably three battleships. At 0110 she reported this to CTF 71 giving course as 080°(T), speed 18 knots.****** She endeavored to attack but was forced away by enemy ships operating on what the GUITARRO thought were radar bearings.

Finally, at 0400 she advised CTF 71 that the Japanese force, consisting of three definite battleships and two possible carriers, was headed south through Mindoro Strait at 0330.******* This was the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force composed of twenty-seven ships including five battleships. There were no carriers. Whence came the idea that there were likely carriers is not known but this incorrect report had an adverse effect on Allied planning.

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* CTF 71 Dispatch 240836 October 1944 to COD.
** Deck Log BREAM, October 24th, 1944.
*** War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021, November 22nd, 1944.
**** CTG 71.1 Operation Plan 1-44, September 1st, 1944, Annex B, Page 9.
***** CTF 71 Dispatch 241214 October 1944 to GUITARRO, ANGLER and BREAM.
****** GUITARRO Dispatch 231610 October 1944 to Radio Perth, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT.
******* GUITARRO Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to CTF 71.

At 0600 she closed Cape Calavite to about two miles and at 1125, while submerged, she sighted one light and one heavy cruiser unescorted which headed down Mindoro Strait.* These cruisers were not identified correctly for the larger ship was the light cruiser KINU and the smaller ship was the destroyer URANAMI comprising the remnants of CRUDIV SIXTEEN and were en route to Cagayan, Mindanao.** She did not report this until 2024 when, having surfaced at 1949, she reported it to CTF 71.***

Since the operations of many of the submarines were in general uneventful comment hereafter will be confined solely to those submarines which contacted enemy units.

(2) ROCK and BERGALL

These two submarines were in the South China Sea assigned to patrol along a line between Cape Varella and North Danger Shoal.

The ROCK patrolled her station on the eastern half of the patrol line. She patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.****

The BERGALL, on the other hand, was not on station but was instead returning to the patrol line after a sweep of the area south of Saigon. She generally remained on the surface during daylight as well as during darkness. Shortly after midnight she requested a five days' extension of patrol as she had 40,000 gallons of fuel and seventeen torpedoes.*****

These submarines are mentioned here because, although both of them as of 1830 had had uneventful patrols, they later received orders from CTF 71 to move elsewhere thus eliminating the patrol on the Cape Varella - North Danger Shoal Line.

The BERGALL at 2200 received orders to patrol the western approaches to Balabac Strait (thus replacing the DARTER) and to depart the area for Fremantle on the 28th,****** and sometime prior to 2301 the ROCK received order to proceed to Bombay Shoal to attempt destruction of the DARTER******* which was aground, for at that time she acknowledged these orders to do so.

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* War Patrol Report GUITARRO, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 044, November 16th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report URANAMI, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

*** GUITARRO Dispatch 241124 October 1944 to Radio Perth.

**** Deck Log ROCK, October 24th, 1944.

***** War Diary CTF 71, October 23rd, 1944.

****** CTF 71 Dispatch 240434 October 1944 to BERGALL.

******* CTF 71 Dispatch 240342 October 1944 to ROCK.

(3) ANGLER

At midnight the ANGLER, on the surface, was tracking the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force. She was well astern and was endeavoring to close. She correctly determined that the enemy force (a) at 0200 was on course 090°(T) and (b) at 0300 had entered Mindoro Strait, speed nineteen - twenty knots.* At 0330 she endeavored to make an amplifying report but owing to Japanese jamming and other interference she did not know whether or not she had succeeded. However, her attempt was successful as CTF 71 received the report about 0410.** She now, at 0340, decided to patrol the north entrance to West Apo Passage in case the force doubled back and later, at 0550, submerged to patrol northwestern Mindoro Strait.

THE COMMANDING OFFICER STATED THAT HE MADE THIS DECISION BECAUSE HE FELT BY DOING SO HE WOULD BE IN GOOD POSITION TO INTERCEPT SHOULD THE ENEMY DOUBLE BACK THROUGH THAT STRAIT. While this might well have proved to be correct it is of interest that later at 2130 he received a dispatch from CTF 71 addressed to the GUITARRO, ANGLER and BREAM wherein (a) they were advised that a large Japanese task force was proceeding to the Sibuyan Sea via south of Mindoro Island, (b) he was directed to patrol south of Lubang Island and to cover the southwest approaches to Verde Island Passage and (c) it was suggested that Admiral Halsey might send them back that way.*** It is also of interest that this was one of the two stations originally assigned the BLUEGILL and ANGLER on October 14th and from which the Commanding Officer ANGLER, after the BLUEGILL had left the area, had departed on October 21st on his own initiative to patrol off the northern end of Palawan Passage.

His patrol as of 1830 except for the above was uneventful.

(4) DACE and DARTER

It will be recalled that (a) these two submarines were approaching to attack the damaged TAKAO which was being escorted by the destroyers NAGANAMI and ASASHIMO, and (b) the DARTER was to attack first from the starboard quarter in about ninety minutes while the DACE was to attack from the port bow if the DARTER was forced down or chased off.

As the DARTER closed on the surface she detected two enemy radars sweeping and decided against a surface attack.**** This was correct for the ASASHIMO reported at this time that she had sighted by radar a suspicious object bearing 080°(T) which was probably a bearing on the DACE.***** The wolf pack commander (in the DARTER) now (a) directed

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* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.

** CTF 71 War Diary, October 24th, 1944, Serial 00341.

*** CTF 71 Dispatch 241214 October 1944 to GUITARRO, ANGLER and BREAM.

**** War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

***** Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

the DACE to attack and (b) advised that the DARTER was commencing an end run around to starboard in order to attack from ahead at radar depth. (On this end run the Commanding Officer DARTER planned to close no nearer to the TAKAO than 15,000 yards.)

By 0100 the DARTER, making seventeen knots, had opened to about 18,000 yards. At 0105 she grounded on Bombay Shoal with such force that all subsequent attempts failed to get her off. The Commanding Officer (who was also the wolf pack commander) attributed this grounding to the lack of navigational sights for about thirty hours.*

WHILE THIS FACT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE GROUNDING THE MOST LIKELY REASON APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT THE TAKAO WAS STEAMING MORE OR LESS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHANNEL AND WAS, THEREFORE, APPROACHABLE IN SAFE WATER AT A CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE FROM EITHER SIDE.

The Commanding Officer DARTER now informed the DACE that the DARTER was aground. Soon after this he detected by radar a Japanese destroyer closing and therefore, at 0115, commenced burning Secret and Confidential matter and destroying Confidential gear. He endeavored to lighten ship and with the arrival of the DACE endeavored to get off the shoal. Having failed he, at 0404, commenced transferring his crew to the DACE by rubber boats which was not completed until 0535,* after which time he attempted to destroy the DARTER employing demolition equipment which proved to be ineffective as regards the hull. Finally the torpedoes and gunfire of the DACE were utilized in an attempt to destroy the DARTER but with little effect.

Nothing now occurred until evening excepting that about 1136 a Japanese destroyer approached the DARTER.

The Commanding Officer DACE appears to have been taking his designated station bearing 150°(T), distant ten miles from the TAKAO. At 0030 he was directed by the wolf pack commander to attack when ready. As he continued closing his station he, at 0107, learned that the DARTER was aground. He therefore decided to delay his attack until he had more information but then, without waiting, he decided to close the DARTER and at 0240 contacted her aground on Bombay Shoal.** Why he chose to close the DARTER rather than to attempt to destroy the TAKAO is not explained. It would appear, however, that he felt that (a) since the cruiser was clearly heavily damaged and was screened by destroyers his chance of success there was not great unless the operation was conducted employing wolf pack tactics which, with the grounding of the DARTER, was no longer possible and (b) he had every hope of rescuing the crew of the DARTER and of assisting in her destruction.

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* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

** War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

IF THESE WERE HIS REASONS THEY SEEM OF DOUBTFUL CORRECTNESS FOR THE CRUISER APPEARS TC HAVE BEEN WIDE OPEN TO ATTACK FROM AHEAD SINCE THE DESTROYERS, INSTEAD OF SCREENING ON THE BOWS, WERE, IN THE OPINION OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER DARTER, SCREENING ON EACH BEAM AT A DISTANCE OF PERHAPS 4,000 YARDS.* (ACTUALLY THIS WAS INCORRECT FOR THE TAKAO, IN HER ACTION REPORT, STATES THAT THE NAGANAMI WAS SEVENTY DEGREES ON HER PORT BOW, THE ASASHIMO SEVENTY DEGREES ON HER STARBOARD BOW, BOTH DISTANT 2,000 YARDS FROM THE TAKAO.)** THIS WAS A DISPOSITION SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH HAD PERMITTED THE DACE AND DARTER TO ATTACK THE MAIN BODY SUCCESSFULLY ON THE PREVIOUS MORNING, AND WOULD MOST LIKELY HAVE PERMITTED A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK HERE, AND THEN A LATER RESCUE OF THE DARTER'S CREW AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DARTER.

HOWEVER, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN ANOTHER AND MORE PRESSING REASON. THE COMMANDING OFFICER DACE MAY HAVE FELT THAT IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME TO RESCUE IMMEDIATELY THE CREW OF THE DARTER AND THEN TO DESTROY HER, LEST THERE FALL INTO ENEMY HANDS (a) HER CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION AND (b) HER OFFICERS, WHO WERE LIKELY WELL INFORMED ON THE DISPOSITION OF TF 71 SUBMARINES AND OF ALLIED PLANS IN GENERAL.

By 0350 the Commanding Officer DACE reported to CTF 71 by dispatch that (a) the DARTER was aground on Bombay Shoal, (b) he had discontinued his attack to assist, (c) the damaged ATAGO (type) heavy cruiser plus two destroyers was, at 0200, in Latitude 09°-18'N, Longitude 117°-02'E on course 210°(T), speed six knots.***

At 0539 he cast off from the DARTER with the latter's crew aboard and waited the effect of the demolition charges which they had set. At 0600, the demolition charges having failed to destroy the ship, he attempted to destroy her by firing his last four torpedoes, two at 0610 and two at 0630.

Also, at 0630, he sent another dispatch to CTF 71 reporting the DARTER personnel as rescued and the submarine destroyed.**** This latter statement was, of course, erroneous.

At 0645, having no more torpedoes, he decided to employ four-inch shells and commenced firing but, after firing thirty rounds and making twenty-one hits, he was, at 0650, forced to submerge by a Japanese plane which then apparently bombed the DARTER.

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* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

*** DACE Dispatch 231850 October 1944 to CTF 71.

**** DACE Dispatch 232130 October 1944 to CTF 71.

At 0905 realizing that he had made an erroneous report to CTF 71 he surfaced and sent another report to that commander wherein he stated, in part, that (1) his efforts to demolish the DARTER had failed, (2) his torpedoes were expended, (3) he had hit with four-inch shells, (4) he was standing by, (5) would attempt to board that night and (6) requested planes and submarines.*

At 1050 he made radar contact upon a plane which was closing and submerged. At 1118 he heard echo ranging and at 1136, upon sighting a Japanese destroyer approaching the DARTER, he decided to clear the area. At 1830 he surfaced and commenced a slow approach on the DARTER.

(Note: The destroyer (NAGANAMI) above referred to appears to have shelled the DARTER for about three minutes; to have attempted to destroy her presumably by firing torpedoes, and by endeavoring to pull her off the reef, but to no avail. The NAGANAMI, which had the HIYODORI with her, now collected material from the submarine which she sent directly to SECOND Fleet (FIRST Striking Force) Headquarters.**

(5) GURNARD

This submarine which, at 1401 on the previous day, had been directed to cover the southwest approaches to Brunei Bay with instructions as follows, "Reporting movement of enemy heavy forces very important",*** was en route to this new station as shown in Diagram "C".

At 1141, while submerged, she made a contact by sight on top masts and smoke, distant about fifteen miles. The Commanding Officer GURNARD estimated the situation and decided that he should investigate the contact which was on a southwesterly course.****

WHILE THIS DECISION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INCORRECT IN THAT BY TRACKING THIS CONTACT HIS ARRIVAL OFF BRUNEI BAY MIGHT BE DELAYED OVERLONG THERE WAS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CONTACT MIGHT PROVE TO BE IMPORTANT. IN THIS CONNECTION THE COMMANDING OFFICER GURNARD STATED THAT HIS REASONS FOR TRACKING THE TARGET WERE THAT HE HAD HEARD OF THE ATTACKS BY THE DACE AND DARTER ON THE JAPANESE FORCE IN PALAWAN PASSAGE AND FELT THAT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS TOO EARLY TO EXPECT ONE OF THE SHIPS FROM THAT FORCE TO BE AT THIS POINT, THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER BATTLESHIP WAS NOT REMOTE. SOUND MILITARY DECISION STATES THAT IN SUCH CASE THE COMMANDER, "TAKES ACTION ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF HIS OWN JUDGEMENT, GUIDED BY THE KNOWN VIEWS OF HIS SUPERIOR".*****

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* DACE Dispatch 232345 October 1944 to CTF 71.

** Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

*** CTF 71 Dispatch 230501 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (GURNARD).

**** War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.

***** Sound Military Decision, U.S. Naval War College, 1942, Page 16.

He therefore headed in that direction and at 1250 determined the contact to be a battleship.

At 0330 he reported to CTF 71 that he had (a) sighted the tops of a probable battleship on base course 255°(T), approximate speed sixteen knots, in Latitude 03°-10'N, Longitude 109°-17'E, (b) six torpedoes forward and five aft and (c) his special mission had not yet been accomplished.

IN SENDING THIS DISPATCH THE COMMANDING OFFICER GURNARD WAS COMPLYING WITH DOCTRINE WHICH PROVIDES THAT WHEN A COMMANDER MODIFIES THE ORDERS GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS SUPERIOR HE SHOULD INFORM THAT SUPERIOR OF THIS FACT AT THE FIRST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY.*

He now continued on the surface to track the target and by 1830 had not closed sufficiently to identify it.

Actually this was not a battleship but was, instead, a small target which fooled the Commanding Officer, GURNARD, to the extent that, at 2024, he stated, "We knew we had been taken in."** The small ship opened fire, the GURNARD retired and, at 2134, once more headed for Brunei Bay having lost about ten hours.

(6) COBIA

The COBIA was en route to Fremantle and at this time was passing through the Sulu Sea. As of 1830 the day had passed uneventfully.

However, sometime before the end of the day she received orders from CTF 71 to perform lifeguard duty for an air strike by the THIRTEENTH Air Force against Tarakan on October 26th,*** which modified her orders temporarily.

(7) BLACKFIN

This submarine, which at midnight was northeast of Dangerous Ground, was proceeding toward her patrol area D-6 where she was to guard the western approaches to Balabac Strait. She proceeded on the surfact during darkness and submerged during daylight.

As of 1830 her movement had been uneventful.****

However, at 2129, she received by dispatch from CTF 71 a change in her orders. In this dispatch, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 71, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", she was directed to patrol Area A-5 north of Palawan Passage to cover the routes from southward to Mindoro and Linapacan Straits.*****

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* Sound Military Decision, U.S. Naval War College, 1942, Page 16.

** War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.

*** CTF 71 Dispatch 240816 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (COBIA).

**** War Patrol Report BLACKFIN, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 021, December 4th, 1944.

***** CTF 71 Dispatch 240423 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (BLACKFIN).

(8) PADDLE

This submarine was in Makassar Strait where she was patrolling between Cape Mangkalihat and North Watcher Island. Excepting for exchanging calls with a U.S. submarine, presumably the BATFISH, her patrol as of 1830 was uneventful.*

However, at 2111, she received orders from CTF 71 to return to Fremantle** and immediately commenced complying by heading down Makassar Strait.*

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* War Patrol Report PADDLE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 018, November 1st, 1944.

** CTF 71 Dispatch 240317 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (PADDLE).

(2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

CAAF SOWESPAC was at this time embarked in the NASHVILLE while the operation of his aircraft in support of the KING II Operation continued to be controlled from Hollandia.

He was concerned with the problem of supplies being off loaded next to the Tacloban airstrip. He had initiated action on the preceding day to rectify this situation. Again on this day he went ashore about 1000 to inspect the airstrip and upon arrival found off loaded supplies still impeding construction. He remained on the scene to expedite removal of these supplies and by nightfall he could see that enough had been moved to permit construction to proceed. About this time he returned to the NASHVILLE.* Since he was embarked in the NASHVILLE, as was COMSOWESPAC, he very likely received much the same information as did the latter and therefore was well aware of the developing situation.

(a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

C.G. FIFTH Air Force continued in overall control of his operations from his headquarters at Biak.

At 0207, in response to the request made in CTF 77's dispatch 230142 for thorough reconnaissance of Coron Bay and approaching routes and for strikes to be made as practicable both day and night, he directed CTF 73 to (a) extend Search Sectors TWO, THREE and XRAY (Plate IV) to 1100 miles, (b) to conduct a double search in Sector THREE concentrating on the Coron Bay area and (c) stated that the primary objective was enemy combatant ships.**

During the morning he undoubtedly learned of the contact on the Japanese Main Body off Mindoro. Also during the day, since his headquarters were at Biak with those of the C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command who received and retransmitted most of the contact reports made by the Morotai-based PB4Y's, he undoubtedly was aware of the following principle contact reports on enemy forces in the Sulu Sea: (a) the 0910 VHF intercept transmitted by the PB4Y reporting the THIRD Section and an erroneous second force nearby,*** (Contact "10", Plate XV) (b) two additional reports of sighting the THIRD Section, one at 0950**** (Contact "11") and one at 1000***** which should have clarified the composition of this force but which apparently did not for in his summary of sightings

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* George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports", (New York, 1949), Page 455.

** C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 240207/I October 1944 to CTF 73, info 310TH BOMWING, C.G. 13TH Air Force, VPB 10.

*** Aircraft in Sector 2 Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations this Circuit.

**** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240330 October 1944 to All Concerned with Operations.

***** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240215 October 1944 to All Interested in Operations.

at 1230 he gives the 0910 report and not the other two* and (c) the 1115 sighting of the SECOND Striking Force** (Contact "12"). (These contacts are discussed under "Operations of CTG 73.4, 0000 - 1830, October 24th").

At 1305 he received a reply from CTF 73 to his (C.G. FIFTH Air Force's) 240207/ITEM which is quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 73, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", and which, among other things, included the opinion that the extended searches were already too thinly covered and would require the assignment of more aircraft to make them effective.

At 1609 he incorporated these recommendations by CTF 73 in a dispatch to CAAF SOWESPAC and further recommended that a new sector be established from Palau covering the area adjacent to the Morotai-based Sector No. FIVE which extended to the east of Leyte.*** Although the dispatch actually modifying Search Plan FOX is not available to this analysis the War Diary of VPB 115 indicates that Search Plan FOX was modified and Sectors SIX and SEVEN out of Owi were discontinued on October 25th, 1944**** (Plate IV).

During the afternoon, based upon the sighting reports he received, he made plans to stage a bombing mission through Morotai to strike the enemy surface force in the Sulu Sea the following day.*****

(b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Forces), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

CTF 73 (also COMAIRSEVENTHFLT), in the CURRITUCK, was en route Mios Woendi having left Morotai the previous evening.******

At 0850 (when it was received by COMCARDIV TWENTY-FOUR) he received a dispatch, quoted in full under "Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", concerning the manner in which certain of his searches were to be conducted and gave as the primary objective enemy combatant ships.*******

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* C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 241230 October 1944 to All Interested in Current Operations, SWPA, AOIC, CAAF, COM7THFLT.

** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240100/I (sic) October 1944 to All Commands this Circuit.

*** C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 241609/I to CAAF SOWESPAC, info C.G. 13TH Air Force, CINCSWPA, COM7THFLT, CTG 73.4, 5TH Air Force Weekly Intelligence Review No. 48, October 22nd - 28th, 1944.

**** War Diary VPB 115, October 24th, 1944.

***** 5TH Air Force Fragmentary Field Order No. 229, October 25th, 1944; also CAAF SOWESPAC Operation Order No. 24-44.

****** War Diary COMAIR7THFLT, October 1944, no serial, undated.

******* C.G. 5TH Air Force 240207/I October 1944 to CTF [illegible], info 310TH BOMWING, C.G. 13TH Air Force, VPB 10.

At noon, after having studied C.G. FIFTH Air Force's dispatch 240207/ITEM, he replied to it, in part, as follows: "To make searches effective must assign more planes to the area. Extended searches already too thinly covered. Recommend immediate cancellation Sectors 6 and 7 and reduction of Sector 5 to 500 miles. If foregoing is approved can assign total 6 planes to cover Sectors 1, 2, 3, X and Y which should give more effective coverage."* (Plate IV).

During the afternoon nothing of sufficient importance to record in his war diary occurred.

(L) Operations of CTG 73.4 (Search and Support Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.**

Meanwhile CTG 73.4, under the operation control of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, continued to execute his part of the Search Plan FOX with his Morotai-based squadrons, VPB's 101, 115 and 146. His immediate operational commander was C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command.

Shortly before 0910 one of his planes in Sector TWO of Search Plan FOX (Plate IV) relayed a VHF intercept which was probably additionally relayed by C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command on the AOIC circuit. This message stated that (a) there were two enemy battleships, two cruisers and four destroyers in Latitude 08°-50'N, Longitude 122°-50'E, on course 030°(T), speed twenty knots, (b) six miles south of the first force there were two battleships, two heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and six destroyers, and (c) they were under attack by a carrier group*** (Contact "10", Plate XV).

ALTHOUGH THIS DISPATCH WAS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE COMMANDERS CONCERNED IN THAT IT INDICATED THAT THE JAPANESE MIGHT PENETRATE SURIGAO STRAIT THAT NIGHT, IT WAS, HOWEVER, QUITE INACCURATE IN THAT THERE WERE ACTUALLY ONLY TWO BATTLESHIPS, ONE HEAVY CRUISER AND FOUR DESTROYERS IN THE THIRD SECTION WHICH WAS THE ONLY FORCE IN THIS LOCATION. WHY TWO GROUPS RATHER THAN ONE WERE REPORTED CANNOT BE FULLY EXPLAINED. ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

The ENTERPRISE (TG 38.4) planes which had sighted the THIRD Section at 0905, and later reported the composition correctly as two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers,**** were likely experiencing difficulty in relaying their contact report. The pilot of

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* CTF 73 Dispatch 240300 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, info C.G. 13TH Air Force, CAAF, CINCSWPA, COM7THFLT, CTG 73.4, 5TH Air Force Weekly Intelligence Review, October 22nd - 28th, 1944.

** The operations of CTG 73.4 are discussed separately on this day because of the importance of the contacts made on the Japanese forces.

*** Aircraft in Sector TWO Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations this Circuit.

**** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240424 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, CTF 77, CINCSWPA, COMADVON 5, COMADVON 13.

the PB4Y plane flying Sector TWO (303°-312°(T) from Morotai), monitoring this VHF circuit, recognizing their difficulty decided to assist by relaying the reports to his own base. At this same time he was likely also monitoring the VHF circuit used by the TG 38.3 planes which were tracking the Japanese Main Body off Mindoro. In listening to the two sets of transmissions he somehow became confused and decided that the two separate contacts, i.e., the THIRD Section and the Main Body (which was in two groups of ships at this time) were two series of reports on the enemy forces in the Sulu Sea and therefore transmitted the composition as two groups of ships. (Actually there were three groups of ships, one group being the THIRD Section in the Sulu Sea which was on course 025°(T), speed fifteen - sixteen knots; the other two being the FIRST and SECOND Sections of the Main Body off Mindoro, which were on course 035°(T), speed eighteen knots.

At 0950 another of his planes also sighted the THIRD Section and reported two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 121°-32'E, on course 040°(T), speed fifteen knots and that he was proceeding on mission assigned* (Contact "11").

At 1000 this plane made a second report on the THIRD Section. It now reported that the two battleships were of the FUSO class, which was of course correct, the heavy cruiser and destroyers were unidentified. The position was garbled but he reported the course and speed as 060°(T) and fifteen knots. He also stated that he was returning to base.**

At 1115 one of his planes, probably the one flying Sector YOKE of Search Plan FOX (Plate IV), reported observing a twenty-six ship convoy of Japanese origin twenty-six miles southeast of Mount Dumali (northeast coast of Mindoro Island in Latitude 13°-06'N) on course 090°(T) and added that there were no carriers.*** (Contact "12"). This contact was on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.

At 1155 one of his planes (whether the same plane which reported the THIRD Section about 0910 or another is unknown) sighted one ATAGO class heavy cruiser, two NATORI class light cruisers and four destroyers, with one float plane escort in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 120°-30'E, on course 105°(T), speed ten knots and added that he was continuing his patrol**** (Contact "15"). The contact report was reasonably accurate since this was the Japanese SECOND Striking Force consisting of two heavy cruisers, NACHI class (NACHI, ASHIGARA), one light

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* C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240330 October 1944 to All Concerned with Operations.

** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240215 October 1944 to All Interested in Operations.

*** Unknown Aircraft (probably Aircraft in Sector YOKE) Dispatch 241115/I October 1944 to Radio Hollandia, info CINCSWPA.

**** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240100/I (sic) October 1944 to All Interested Commands AOIC Circuit.

cruiser, NATORI class (ABUKUMA) and four destroyers. It was about twenty-four miles east of the reported position. It is worthy of note that the pilot of this plane succeeded in making this contact without being detected.*

At about 1240 another of his planes, having contacted the THIRD Section, reported three battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude 09°-25'N, Longitude 122°-23'E** (Contact "16"). Although this was quite accurate as to location it was in error by one battleship.

During the remainder of the afternoon nothing of sufficient importance occurred to be noted in his war diary or in the war diaries of the searching patrol plane squadrons.

(2) Operations of CTG 73.7 (Advanced Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

On this day CTG 73.7, in the SAN CARLOS anchored in Hinunangan Bay, continued to supervise operations within his group. The HALF MOON, which appears to have been tending the advance elements of both VPB 33 and VPB 34,*** was also anchored there. It is not clear whether or not at this time the SAN CARLOS was also tending planes for there is no mention of it in her war diary.

The Commanding Officer HALF MOON was, at this time, preparing certain planes for flight, for CTG 73.7 had directed him beginning (a) this evening, to fly the three west sectors (341°(T) - 017°(T)) of Search Plan FOX (Modified) (that portion of Search Plan FOX operating from Leyte Gulf (Plate IX)) and (b) the following morning the two east sectors (017°(T) - 041°(T)) of the same Search Plan FOX (Modified).**** This would require three planes for the night searches and two for the day.

SINCE TEN PBY'S HAD BEEN FLOWN INTO LEYTE GULF THE PRECEDING AFTERNOON, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT AT LEAST HALF OF THEM WOULD BE READY IN ALL RESPECTS TO FLY A NIGHT MISSION. THE FACTS ARE, HOWEVER, THAT BUT THREE PLANES COULD BE MADE OPERATIONAL.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operations, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC, Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** TANGIER Dispatch 241240/I October 1944, Addressees Unknown, but presumably to All Interested Commands.

*** War Diaries SAN CARLOS, HALF MOON, October 24th, 1944.

**** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 231227 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COM7THFLT, CTF 73, C.G. 5TH Air Force, All Interested in Catalina Operations.

It has been difficult to determine with absolute assurance what caused this. Certainly the ten planes flown in from Morotai should have been in good material condition. What, then, caused the material failure of all but three planes? As is developed in the following, it is believed that this failure eventuated from a series of unfortunate events culminating in the HALF MOON's pumping salt water into the planes of VPB 34.

At 0821 the SAN CARLOS got underway to shift anchorage to San Pedro Bay.* It seems likely that CTG 73.7 was not on board but was instead en route in some fast craft to meet CTF 77 in the WASATCH at 0900 in accordance with instructions of the preceding day.**

It seems likely also that after this conference, he returned to the SAN CARLOS while that ship was en route to San Pedro Bay. This seems so for he began issuing orders relating to the afternoon searches soon after the probable time of his return.

At 1334 he apparently sent instructions to the Commanding Officer HALF MOON regarding the routine three-plane night search to be established this evening. (This order has not been located but CTG 73.7 refers to his own dispatch 240434 in a later message.)

Meanwhile, at Hinunangan Bay two enemy two-engine bombers made a surprise attack against the HALF MOON at approximately 1448 and were driven off by antiaircraft fire, but not before they had scored a near miss.***

Apparently, at this time, the PBY's of VPB 34 were being fueled. The fueling operations were immediately stopped and the gasoline lines of the ship were flooded with salt water to minimize the fire hazard.

After the raid fueling was resumed. However, for reasons unknown, but likely because of the disruptive effect of the air raid, ADEQUATE PRECAUTIONS WERE NOT TAKEN WITH THE RESULT THAT THE PLANES OF VPB 34 (SOME OR ALL) WERE FUELED WITH SALT WATER INSTEAD OF GASOLINE. This incident is referred to in retrospect by the Executive Officer of VPB 34 (at the time of the Leyte Campaign) in an interview held on October 10th, 1945.**** The account seems credible because (a) the pilot seems to have had no unusual motive for presenting this information and (b) the event sequence he establishes fits in well with the facts relating to this day.

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* War Diary SAN CARLOS, October 24th, 1944.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 231225 October 1944 to CTG 73.7.

*** War Diary HALF MOON, October 24th, 1944.

**** Personal Interview of Captain (then Lieutenant Commander) Vadym V. Utgoff, USN, Executive Officer VPB 34, Pacific Area Black Cats and Sea Rescues, recorded by Naval Records and Library, CNO, October 10th, 1945.

But, to return to CTG 73.7 who had now returned to the SAN CARLOS en route San Pedro Bay! Sometime before 1550 (at which time he sent implementing orders to the Commanding Officer HALF MOON) he received orders from CTF 77, as quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", directing him to search (a) the three west sectors of Search Plan FOX (Modified) and (b) with two planes, the Surigao Strait, Mindanao Sea and Sulu Sea areas.* This would require five planes for the night searches.

At 1550 he transmitted his implementing order to the Commanding Officer HALF MOON which, among other things, ordered (a) two special night "thorough" radar searches of the Mindanao and Sulu Sea and included the routes to be followed, (b) the planes to track the enemy force if located and (c) the searches to return after sunrise.** This order increased the maintenance problems of the Commanding Officer HALF MOON, for the planned searches now required seven planes--five for the night searches and two for the day.

At 1631, in his flagship (SAN CARLOS), he anchored in San Pedro Bay.***

It appears that after transmitting the above order he became quite concerned with the potentially dangerous location of the HALF MOON in Hinunangan Bay. Aware of CTF 77's preparations to defend Leyte Gulf against possible penetration by the enemy surface force in the Sulu Sea, he probably realized that (a) if the HALF MOON were to remain in her present anchorage she would be but several miles to the westward of the probable line of fire between opposing battle lines should a surface engagement eventuate and (b) if an enemy ship did penetrate into Leyte Gulf the HALF MOON would be quite vulnerable to attack.

Therefore, at 1659, he ordered the HALF MOON to "Send out three routine patrols as soon practicable. Remaining two at 1630 ITEM. Get underway immediately with crash boat proceed position bearing 053 degrees 21 miles Point Molly.**** Send remaining planes same position as soon as ready. All Planes call Halifax (CSA) when airborne. Check IFF. Leave all buoys moored."***** It is noted that the time of take off for the remaining two planes is given as 1630. (This could have been a technical error for this search was to take off at sunset which was at 1830.) (It is not known when the Commanding Officer HALF MOON received this dispatch but in the press of subsequent events, the HALF MOON was unable to get underway until 2206 at which time anchorage was shifted to the western side of Cabugan Grande Island, a few miles to the northwestward.)******

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 240325 October 1944 to CTG 73.7.
** CTG 73.7 Dispatch 240650 October 1944 to HALF MOON.
*** War Diary SAN CARLOS, October 24th, 1944.
**** Point Molly was Mt. Majuyag (Latitude 11°-01'N, Longitude 124°-48'-40'E).
***** SAN CARLOS Dispatch 240759 October 1944 to HALF MOON.
****** War Diary HALF MOON, October 24th, 1944.

At 1715 he was advised by TBS voice radio from CTF 77, among other things, that if practicable four VF would cover the take off's of the PBY's and escort them to the coast but that fighter cover was doubtful.*

What now occurred at Hinunangan Bay? Well, during the next few hours it would seem that strenuous efforts were made to make available the five planes required for the night searches but without success.** The dispatch files are not complete in this regard but it is clear that at 1925 CTG 73.7 received a TBS voice radio message from the Commanding Officer HALF MOON to the effect that but three planes would be ready for the night searches—the two specials (Sulu Sea searches) and a "TARE" mission (undoubtedly Sector 353°(T) to 005°(T).)***

IF THE "SEA WATER IN FUEL TANKS" EXPLANATION FOR CTG 73.7'S BEING UNABLE TO READY MORE THAN THREE PLANES ON THIS EVENING IS ACCEPTED, AND THERE IS LITTLE JUSTIFICATION FOR NOT ACCEPTING IT, THEN AN ISSUE WHICH HAS LONG BEEN A SOURCE OF CONTROVERSY HAS BEEN PARTIALLY CLARIFIED. ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS SUCH AS RADAR, STRUCTURAL, ENGINE OR OTHER GENERAL MATERIAL FAILURES MAY HAVE AGGRAVATED THE AIRCRAFT AVAILABILITY SITUATION, BUT THE MATTER OF PUMPING SALT WATER INTO THE PLANES OF VPB 34 SUPPLIES THE MAJOR FACTOR PREVENTING THE SEARCHES FROM BEING FLOWN AS ORDERED BY CTF 77.

The explanation of why but three of VPB 33's planes were ready is more difficult to determine. It seems likely that, since this squadron was apparently scheduled to fly the three-plane search originally ordered, its planes were fueled earlier than those of VPB 34 and, therefore, were properly fueled. Yet, if all of VPB 34's planes were out of commission because of the salt water in the fuel tanks, it seems likely that VPB 33 would then have been ordered to increase its efforts to fly all five missions assigned. It is conceivable that in view of (a) the confusion precipitated (1) by air attacks, (2) the fueling episode, and (b) additional maintenance difficulties, only three planes could be readied in time to make the search.

In response to this CTG 73.7, at 2003, among other things, (a) directed the HALF MOON to remain with the planes until all were in flyable condition and (b) authorized cancellation of the morning search.***

Rather than to drop the matter of the night searches at this point it seems appropriate to take judicial notice of what actually transpired. The two planes (the specials referred to above) went out

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* CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 240815 October 1944 to CTG 73.7.

** Events occurring subsequent to 1830 are included here for the purpose of completing the account of the maintenance problems of TG 73.7 and of stating the patrols flown.

*** CTG 73.7 TBS Voice Radio Message 241003 (sic) October 1944 to HALF MOON with referenced dispatch HALF MOON 241925 partially quoted. It seems probable that the time 241003 was garbled and was most likely 242003. This would follow the time sequence.

after sunset and searched Surigao Strait, the Mindanao Sea and the Sulu Sea but did not locate either of the two divisions of the Japanese THIRD Section or the SECOND Striking Force. This is so even though the pilot of one plane (about 2130) sighted the MOGAMI which, as discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Division, 1830 - 2400, October 24th", had at 1830, with DESDIV FOUR, separated from Commander THIRD Section and headed for Panaon Island. IN HIS POSTWAR STATEMENT THE PILOT STATED (a) HE DID NOT REPORT THE CRUISER CONTACT BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED TO MAKE NO REPORTS UNLESS THE JAPANESE FLEET WAS SIGHTED AND (b) HIS RADAR WAS INOPERATIVE AT THE TIME.* THIS IS QUITE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND OR TO RATIONALIZE SINCE, HAVING SIGHTED WHAT APPEARED TO BE AN ENEMY CRUISER, IT WOULD SEEM THE PILOT, KNOWING HIS RADAR WAS INOPERATIVE, WOULD HAVE MADE A THOROUGH VISUAL SEARCH OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA, RATHER THAN TO PROCEED ON HIS ASSIGNED MISSION.

The other pilot, assigned to search the southern Sulu Sea, was also unsuccessful in gaining contact on either of the two forces, although he too must have passed over or very close to them in his flight through the Mindanao Sea.**

THE SEARCH REFERRED TO AS THE "TARE" MISSION WAS APPARENTLY MODIFIED IN FAVOR OF SCOUTING THE COAST OF SAMAR.

While there are no orders available to this analysis directing this modification, in a letter written by the pilot of this flight it is shown that it must have been so for, apparently on orders, he (a) flew initially along the east coast of Samar, thence along the north coast and down the west coast to Maqueda Bay followed by a retracing of this same track back to Leyte Gulf and (b) hugged the cost of Samar flying about 500 yards off shore at an altitude of 800 feet, so that he could identify shipping visually.

It appears that he had difficulty in departing Leyte Gulf owing to Allied antiaircraft gunfire and in order to prevent being fired upon by friendly forces after his take off, he climbed, flying back and forth in the vicinity of his seaplane tender, to 10,000 feet before departing for Homonhon Island after which he let down to make the search.*** (This statement is, in part, supported by the destroyer MC GOWAN's account of a plane, reportedly friendly but with the wrong IFF showing, which cruised back and forth over southeastern Leyte in the vicinity of Cabugan Grande Island from about 2010 until about 2115 at which time the plane disappeared from the radar scope.)****

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* Letter written by Commander James F. Merritt, Jr., USN, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, dated October 17th, 1956.

** Ibid., Letter written by Lieutenant Maurice Moskaluk, USNR, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), dated January 3rd, 1958.

*** Ibid., Letter written by Commander C. B. Sillers, USN, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), dated April 13th, 1957.

**** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

WHY THIS PLANE FAILED TO CONTACT THE MAIN BODY, FIRST STRIKING FORCE IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DUE TO THE FACT THAT HAVING DEPARTED LEYTE GULF ABOUT 2115, THE PLANE PASSED THROUGH SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT SHORTLY BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE MAIN BODY, FIRST STRIKING FORCE AND LATER, RETRACING ITS TRACK, FLEW BY THE FORCE--THOUGH APPARENTLY NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLOSE FOR DETECTION--WHICH WAS CRUISING WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF THE COAST OF SAMAR UNTIL SUNRISE THE MORNING OF THE 25TH.

CONFIDENTIAL

(B) Operations of CINCPAC - CINCPOA, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

During this day CINCPOA continued to study closely the developing situation. At 0517 he sent his daily intelligence summary for October 23rd which, as will be discussed in greater detail under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", appears to have had a profound effect upon the decisions of the latter commander on this day.

During the day he received those contact reports (Plate XV) which have been hitherto discussed but did not act thereon, apparently feeling that COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 77 who were on the scene were quite capable of deciding upon the correct courses of action vis-a-vis known enemy surface movements.

(1) Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

On this day the tempo of transpiring events increased considerably with the result that COMTHIRDFLT made many decisions of major consequence. Yet no searching analysis of these decisions can be made for to do so would involve a thorough study of the factors leading to and deriving from these decisions. From this would evolve an analysis quite voluminous and not altogether pertinent to the study of the Battle of Surigao Strait. These matters were to have been fully discussed in Volume IV which, as pointed out in the Introduction, was discontinued.

At midnight COMTHIRDFLT in his flagship, NEW JERSEY, in company with TG 38.2, was operating off southern Luzon* steaming toward the entrance to San Bernardino Strait in preparation for the forthcoming days operations.** Although he had directed the INDEPENDENCE to have a night search ready for launching at midnight,*** for reasons not available to this analysis, the search was not launched.

At 0017 he received CTG 38.2's plan for the day's operations**** which was sent in response to his earlier query.*****

At 0019 he received an intelligence summary from GHQ SOWESPAC Area, principally reporting ground force intelligence. The air portion however was significant for it stated that the Japanese proposed to stage 200 aircraft to Luzon which suggested an intensification of the air offensive in the Leyte area.******

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* War Diary INDEPENDENCE, October 24th, 1944.
** War Diary COM3RDFLT, October 24th, 1944.
*** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 231310 October 1944 to INDEPENDENCE, info CTF 38 and CTG's 38.2 and 38.4.
**** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 231517 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
***** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 231400 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
****** GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 231256 October 1944 to CINC SWPA, C.G. 6TH Army.

CONFIDENTIAL

At 0020* he received CTG 38.4's plan for the search to be launched at 0600** in accordance with the instructions he had issued about 0900 the previous morning.***

At 0026 he intercepted BREAM's report of a Japanese force consisting of two AOBA class cruisers and a large destroyer in Latitude 14°-05'N, Longitude 119°-40'E at 0430 the previous morning**** and claiming two hits in a cruiser (Contact "1", Plate XV). The force was CRUDIV SIXTEEN, the cruiser the AOBA, which had received one hit.*****

At 0042 he received CTF 71's message relaying a contact report by the ANGLER on a task force of four large ships plus escorts at 2130 in Latitude 12°-40'N, Longitude 118°-58'E on base course 050°(T) at eighteen knots****** (Contact "2").

At 0215 he received the GUITARRO's first report of an enemy task force at 0030 consisting of between fifteen and twenty ships, including probably three battleships, in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 119°-30'E, at eighteen knots on course 080°(T)******* (Contact "3"). The implications of the report have been discussed under CTF 77 for this day.

At 0223* he received CTF 77's message to CTG 77.4 citing the possibility of a large enemy air attack developing and directing appropriate defensive measures; viz., cancellation of the Western Visayas strike and an increase of the TCAP to thirty-six fighters with sixteen additional fighters in condition ELEVEN.********

At 0443* he received GUITARRO's second report as it was being rebroadcast by Radio Honolulu, (Contact "4"). This reported three definite battleships and two possible carriers headed south through Mindoro Strait at 0330.*********

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* War Diary COM3RDFLT, October 24th, 1944.
** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 231009 October 1944 to CTF 77.
*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 222359 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info All Concerned SWPA Operations, All TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COMINCH.
**** BREAM Dispatch 231231 October 1944 to CTF 71.
***** COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230445 October 1944 to CINC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report COMCRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944 WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
****** CTF 71 Dispatch 231454 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, COMAF's 5 and 13, COMSUBPAC, CINCPAC.
******* CTU 71.1.25 Dispatch 231610 October 1944 to CTF 71.
******** CTF 77 Dispatch 231532 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info TG 77.4, TF 77, TF 79, COM3RDFLT and one unknown addressee.
********* GUITARRO Dispatch 231900 October 1944 to CTF 71.

At dawn the three operating carrier groups were in their launching positions (Diagram "C"), as follows: (a) TG 38.3 about ninety miles due east of the northern tip of the Polillo Islands, (b) TG 38.2 about sixty miles northeast of San Bernardino Strait and (c) TG 38.4 bearing 050°(T) distant fifty miles from the southeast tip of Samar Island (Sungi Point).

At about 0600 these carrier groups launched reinforced searches from each of the three groups to a distance of 300 miles or more, completely covering the western approaches to the Philippines, with a total coverage from north to south of about 1,000 miles. Relay planes were stationed from 100 to 200 miles from the task groups for prompt relay of contact reports.* The weather was favorable for search and strike operations.**

At 0750 he received CINCPOA's intelligence summary for October 23rd which, added to other information he had received, appears to have caused him to initiate a very important sequence of orders. Among other things this dispatch revealed that (a) CinC Combined Fleet appeared to be in Japan, (b) Commander Main Force was unlocated but was estimated, on the basis of several factors, to be in the Formosa-Philippine Sea area, (c) Commander FIRST Striking Force was probably in the Philippines on the 23rd and was evaluated as the combatant force sighted by the DACE and DARTER in Palawan Passage, (d) a force of which the SECOND Striking Force was a part, probably arrived in Coron Bay on the 23rd, (e) the FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces would likely be in Coron-Paluan Bay (Mindoro Island) area on the morning of the 24th and (f) there were indications of an advance of air reinforcements from Formosa to the Philippines although the movement did not appear to be on a large scale as yet.

At 0820 he intercepted a somewhat garbled VHF message from a CABOT plane reporting a major force, including three BB and many other units*** (Contact "5").

Almost simultaneously (at 0822) he intercepted a VHF message from an INTREPID aircraft which clarified the previous sightings by reporting the force as consisting of four BB, eight CA, thirteen DD, located south of the southern tip of Mindoro on course 050°(T), speed ten to twelve knots; included was the additional information that no transports were in the group and that there was a total of twenty-five warships**** (Contact "6").

How he evaluated this contact report is nowhere stated but it seems likely that he evaluated it as the same force which had been attacked by the DACE and DARTER on the preceding day in Palawan Passage and sighted by the GUITARRO at 0030 that morning. It was a most important contact for it showed that a powerful Japanese surface force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers, but without carriers, was already moving into the northern

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* War Diary COM3RDFLT, October 24th, 1944.
** Action Report COM3RDFLT, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, Serial 0088, November 13th, 1944.
*** CABOT 3V11 VHF Message 232320 October 1944.
**** INTREPID 5F VHF Message 232322 October 1944.

Sulu Sea. What the absence of carriers meant to him is not known. Perhaps he recalled CTF 77's dispatch (230142) of the preceding forenoon wherein that commander had estimated that "it is possible that carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan";* perhaps he was inclined to give more credence to CINCPOA's estimate of the Main Force being to the north of him.

He now advised CTG's 38.3 and 38.4 of this sighting and in addition he (a) indicated the time of the CABOT aircraft sighting as 0810, (b) directed them to establish a radio watch on 2642 kilocycles, (c) break radio silence to report any information and (d) to expedite report of morning searches.**

AT THIS POINT HE APPEARS TO HAVE REALIZED THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT DEVELOPING ALONG PREDICTED LINES. FOR HERE WAS A THREAT OF MUCH MORE SERIOUS NATURE THAN THE MAGNIFIED TOKYO EXPRESS CONCEPT WHICH CTF 77 HAD PROMULGATED ON THE PREVIOUS DAY. HE COULD SEE OF COURSE THAT (a) THIS MAGNIFIED TOKYO EXPRESS CAPABILITY WAS STILL OF HIGH PRIORITY AND WAS LIKELY OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY*** AND THAT (b) ITS IMPORTANCE WAS INTENSIFIED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF ENEMY CARRIERS OPERATING IN SUPPORT FROM THE NORTH. IT IS QUITE APPARENT FROM THE ORDERS HE ISSUED LATER, THAT HIS IMMEDIATE CONCERN WAS WITH THE ENEMY FORCE TO THE SOUTH OF MINDORO FOR, UNLESS THEIR MOVEMENT WAS DISRUPTED, THIS FORCE HAD THE CAPABILITY OF ENGAGING HIS FORCES IN NIGHT BATTLE IN THE VICINITY OF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT, POSSIBLY WITH THE ENEMY CARRIERS (ESTIMATED TO BE TO THE NORTH) OPERATING IN SUPPORT. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT WHILE HE CONCENTRATED ON THE MAIN BODY AS BEING THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT, THE POSSIBILITY OF CARRIERS TO THE NORTH ASSUMED IN HIS MIND AN IMPORTANCE BEYOND ANYTHING THUS FAR ANTICIPATED. HE COULD VISUALIZE THESE CARRIERS LAUNCHING AIR ATTACKS AGAINST HIS FORCE DIRECTLY OR BY EMPLOYING PHILIPPINE AIRFIELDS AS REARMING POINTS EMPLOYING THE TECHNIQUE OF SHUTTLE-BOMBING. HE CONCLUDED THAT IMMEDIATE ACTION WAS NECESSARY TO COUNTER THIS THREAT ALSO AND DECIDED THEN TO (a) CONCENTRATE HIS THREE FAST CARRIER GROUPS OFF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT, (b) STRIKE THE ENEMY FORCE SOUTH OF MINDORO WITH HIS THREE AVAILABLE CARRIER GROUPS, (c) REQUEST SEAPLANE COVERAGE OF HIS NORTHERN FLANK AND (d) RECALL CTG 38.1 WITH TG 38.1 FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEARCHING FOR THE CARRIERS. IN RECALLING CTG 38.1 HE REALIZED THAT THIS WOULD LIKELY INTERFERE WITH HIS PREPARATIONS FOR OPERATION HOTFOOT BUT THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT THREAT GAVE HIM NO ALTERNATIVE.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, COMINCH, CINCPAC.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4, info All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, COMINCH, CINCPAC.

*** This thought is supported in part by an excerpt from the daily news broadcasts on the SAN DIEGO for October 24th which stated in part, "Admiral Halsey believes that these ships--combatant, amphibious and in the train--will be used to conduct a glorified 'Tokyo Express' to reinforce the beseiged Japanese troops garrisoning Leyte."

At this point it seems wise to emphasize here the fact that at the time several events were occurring of which he was not yet aware. These were (a) powerful air attacks emanating from Luzon were beginning against TG 38.3 off Polillo Island, (b) the Japanese THIRD Section in the Sulu Sea was so far undetected but would within an hour be under attack by aircraft from TG 38.4, and (c) the SECOND Striking Force in the Sulu Sea was so far unlocated, having departed Coron Bay early this morning (0200).*

Commencing at 0827 he began implementing this decision for at this time he issued orders to TG's 38.3 and 38.4 to concentrate toward TG 38.2 at best speed.**

At 0831 he directed CTF 38 and CTG 38.3 by dispatch to attack the enemy force south of Mindoro and gave the location, composition and course and speed of that force.*** Although his war diary states that he directed CTG 38.3 and CTG 38.4 to attack the enemy,**** which indicates that it was his intention to attack with all three task groups, actually the message was not addressed to CTG 38.4 and hence that commander was not directed to attack. It appears that CTG 38.4 could not have mounted an attack immediately because he was still carrying out his reinforced searches to the westward including attacks on DESDIV TWENTY-ONE and the THIRD Section. In fact he did not launch his attack against the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force until 1313.*****

In less than a quarter of an hour after the INTREPID plane's report he received a TBS voice radio message from TG 38.2 advising that a forty-five plane strike consisting of twelve VB, thirteen VT and twenty VF,****** was ready for immediate launching.

At 0835 he sent an urgent dispatch to CTF 77 pointing out that early coverage of the sea area to northeastward of Leyte was vital to the protection of the flank of THIRD Fleet and requesting information concerning the establishment of planned seaplane searches.*******

At 0837 he ordered CTG 38.2 to strike the enemy force south of Mindoro.********

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* Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232327 October 1944 to CTG 38.3 and CTG 38.4.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232331 October 1944 to CTF 38 and CTG 38.3.

**** War Diary COM3RDFLT, October 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 38.4 (COMCARDIV 2), Operations in support of the occupation of Leyte and against the Japanese Fleet, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 00267, November 18th, 1944.

****** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 232335 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

******* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232335 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF 38, COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT.

******** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 232337 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

Continuing the actions derived from his morning estimate, at 0846 he directed CTG 38.1 to (a) reverse course and proceed to Point MICK at best speed and (b) launch a search to northwestward and northward at dawn on the following morning.* THE DECISION TO RECALL THIS TASK GROUP THEN EN ROUTE ULITHI FOR REPLENISHMENT WAS SOUND SINCE IT SUPPORTS THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN COMTHIRDFLT'S ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY'S REACTION TO THE LEYTE LANDINGS.

At 0855, feeling he could not wait for the results of the PBY searches out of Leyte Gulf, he ordered CTF 38 to keep the area to the north under observation as the enemy carrier strength was still not located.**

Also at 0855 he noted that CTG 38.2 was launching an air strike.

At 0903 he alerted COMBATDIV SEVEN*** to the possibilities of forthcoming surface action by advising him that TG's 38.3 and 38.4 were concentrating on TG 38.2 and directing him to prepare to assume the duties of Commander Battle Line.**** In a very short time the latter replied "ready and willing".*****

At 0925 he received a dispatch from CTF 38 relaying the report from an unidentified plane of the enemy force of twenty-five ships (four BB's, eight CA's and thirteen DD's) in Latitude 12°-15'N, Longitude 121°-32'E on course 015°(T), at fifteen knots and advising that TG 38.3 was launching its attack while many enemy planes were around the group (Contact "8").******

At 0943 he intercepted an enemy contact report being retransmitted on the AOIC by FIFTH Bomber Command at Biak from the search plane in Sector 303°(T) - 312°(T) of the Morotai Search (Contact "10"). The report was to the effect that (a) one force in Latitude 08°-50'N, Longitude 122°-05'E, consisting of two BB's, two CA's and four DD's on course 030°(T), speed twenty knots indicating this was a VHF intercept, (b) a second force six miles south of the first consisting of six DD's, two BB's four CL's and two CA's (Contact "10") adding they were under attack by a carrier group.*******

His reaction to this dispatch is not known. However it is known that he did nothing about it but instead decided to continue his concentration on TG 38.2 and to leave the problem of countering this new threat to CTF 77.

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* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232346 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info All TGC's of TF 38.
** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232355 October 1944 to CTF 38, info CTG 38.2.
*** Rear Admiral Oscar C. BADGER, USN.
**** COM3RDFLT Visual Message 240003 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 7.
***** COMBATDIV 7 Visual Message 240025 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
****** CTF 38 Dispatch 232353 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
******* Aircraft in Sector 2 Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations on this Circuit.

At 0945 (when it was received by CTF 79) he likely received the message from CINCPAC passing on to COMSEVENTHFLT* his own (COMTHIRDFLT's) earlier request for submarine reconnaissance along the northwest coast of Luzon.**

At 0946 he received the report of an attack by TG 38.4 search group on three destroyers (DESDIV TWENTY-ONE en route to rejoin Commander SECOND Striking Force) at 0815 in Latitude 11°-40'N, Longitude 121°-51'E which were originally on course 130°(T), speed fifteen knots (Contact "7"). One destroyer (which later sank) was reported as smoking heavily and dead in the water with the other two standing by.*** The attack had been made by planes from the FRANKLIN.****

At 1018 he noted that CTG 38.2 was launching a second air strike against the large enemy force near Mindoro.

At 1031 he learned from CTF 38 that at about 1000 the PRINCETON in TG 38.3 had been hit by a bomb amidships on the port side causing a number of serious explosions and a severe fire which was not yet under control.***** (As a matter of interest TG 38.3 had been subjected to intense air attack in force (over 150 planes) both from Luzon to the west and from 090°(T), the latter apparently being from carriers, and had claimed shooting down over 100 of them. These planes were from the SIXTH Base Air Force which had launched 158 planes that morning to attack TG 38.3. This is discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander, SIXTH Base Air Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".)

At 1133 he received a dispatch from CTF 38 which, referring to COMTHIRDFLT's earlier order for the groups to concentrate toward TG 38.2, advised him that (a) CTF 38, in company with TG 38.3, at 1100 was in Latitude 15°-32'N, Longitude 123°-45'E, (b) CTG 38.3 had been instructed to remain in company with the PRINCETON which still had severe uncontrolled fires, (c) TG 38.3 was still continuing to attack the enemy and finally, (d) CTF 38 would attempt to close COMTHIRDFLT if possible and report conditions later.******

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* CINCPAC Dispatch 232352 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info CINCSWPA, CTF's 71, 77 and COM 3RDFLT.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230748 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMSUBPAC, CTF 77.

*** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 232355 October 1944 to CTF 38, COM3RDFLT, info CTG 38.2.

**** Action Report CTG 38.4 (COMCARDIV 2), Operations in Support of the Occupation of Leyte and against the Japanese Fleet, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 00267, November 18th, 1944.

***** CTF 38 Dispatch 240103 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

****** CTF 38 Dispatch 240201 October 1944 to CTG's 38.4, 38.2, info COM3RDFLT.

At 1145 he learned, among other things, that a large number of Japanese planes had attacked shipping in Leyte Gulf during the period from 0750 to 0945 inflicting only minor damage.* These planes were from the FOURTH Air Army.

At 1207 he (a) was advised by TBS voice radio that the searches along the west coast of Palawan as far south as Imuruan Bay (on northwest side of Palawan, about fifty miles from the north end) and of Coron Bay (in the Calamian Group) were negative,** and (b) intercepted over the AOIC, a report being relayed by Radio Hollandia from the FIFTH Bomber Command, of a sight contact on a twenty-six ship Japanese convoy with no carriers present, twenty-six miles southeast of Mount Dumali (northeast Mindoro) on course 090°(T)*** (Contact "12"). What he thought this convoy consisted of is not known.

Shortly after noon having decided that it would be wise to inform the two theater commanders of his present operations, including contacts made, strikes launched and results claimed, he sent them a dispatch thereon as follows:

(a) On the basis of sightings of enemy forces he had moved three task groups on a broad front toward the Philippine coast to launch reinforced searches at dawn on the 24th and gave the assigned locations of the three groups as 38.3 east of Luzon, 38.2 off San Bernardino Strait and 38.4 off Surigao Strait.

(b) These searches had sighted a Japanese force of four BB's, eight CA's and thirteen DD's (and two CL's unconfirmed) south of Mindoro on a northeasterly course as a result of which the two northern groups had immediately launched strikes on this enemy force.

(c) He had then directed the flank groups (38.3 and 38.4) to concentrate toward the central group (38.2) and had recalled TG 38.1 (then en route to Ulithi

(d) He had also directed CTG 38.3 to conduct searches in order to keep the area to the north under observation. Several enemy planes were reported over the northern groups.

(e) Meanwhile, a reinforced search from TG 38.4 had attacked three destroyers west of Panay, seriously damaging and stopping one. The other two destroyers stood by the cripple.****

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 240054 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, All TGC's 3RDFLT, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, etc.

** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240307 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

*** Radio Hollandia Dispatch 241115/I October 1944 to CTG's 38.1; 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, info COM3RDFLT, All TFC's 3RDFLT.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240314 October 1944 to CINCPAC, CINCSWPA, info COMINCH, CTF 77, COM7THFLT, All TGC's 3RDFLT.

At 1223 he learned from CTG 38.1 that, with the BOSTON, the latter would arrive at Point MICK the following morning at 0700.*

At 1245 he received, by TBS voice radio from CTG 38.2, a summary report which included, among other things, that (a) an INTREPID plane had attacked one CL and one DD standing out between Corregidor and Bataan; and had possibly hit the CL. (This was the Guard Force of the SECOND Striking Force en route Cagayan (Mindanao). The cruiser (KINU) was not hit but the destroyer (URANAMI) was hit by rockets and machine gun fire),** and (b) FRANKLIN planes had attacked three DD's initially fourteen miles north of Maniguin Island off the northwest tip of Panay and had likely sunk one.*** (This was DESDIV TWENTY-ONE.)

At 1300 he received CTG 38.4's dispatch (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 38.4, 0000 - 1830, October 24th") informing him in part that (a) he was proceeding to close TG 38.2 at twenty-six knots and (b) would launch a strike against the Japanese force in the vicinity of Tablas Island.****

Now, having heard nothing from CTG's 38.3 and 38.4 about air strikes against the Main Body, he (a) at 1300 queried CTG 38.3, "assume CTG 38.3 is striking large enemy force near Mindoro", and requested that he be advised of the results of the strikes as soon as possible***** and (b) at 1303 he similarly queried CTG 38.4.******

At 1331 he received from CTF 38 a summary of forenoon events. This dispatch is quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 38, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".*******

At 1345 he received a flash report from CTG 38.2 of the results of the strike by that group on the Japanese Main Body quoted in part under "Operations of CTG 38.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".********

At 1353 he received another report from CTG 38.4 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 38.4, 0000 - 1830, October 24th") reporting, among other things, having contacted at 0905 in Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 121°-50'E another Japanese force (THIRD Section) consisting of two BB's, one CA and four DD's on course 035°(T), speed fifteen knots (Contact "9"), and having attacked same.*********

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* CTG 38.1 Dispatch 240155 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTF 38.

** Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240345 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

**** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240324 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, CTG 38.2.

***** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240400 October 1944 to CTF 38.

****** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240403 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTF 38.

******* CTF 38 Dispatch 240307 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTG's 38.2 and 38.4.

******** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240445 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

********* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240424 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, CTF 77, COMSOWESPAC, COM ADBOMCOM's 5 and 13.

At 1356 he intercepted an enemy contact report being retransmitted by the TANGIER at Morotai from the PB4Y search plane in Sector XRAY. This message stated that there were three battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude 09°-25'N, Longitude 122°-23'E.* (Contact "16".) Although he stated in his action report that this message was received at 1240 it seems more likely that it was actually received at this time when CTG 38.1 reported receiving it. He probably recognized this contact as being the same force (THIRD Section) that CTG 38.4 had just reported attacking.

At 1415 he directed CTG 38.2 to make arrangements for search planes from the INDEPENDENCE to be in the vicinity of the enemy force at evening dusk in order to shadow that force and to keep him informed of its movements.** In so doing, he revealed his preoccupation and concentration on disrupting the advance of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.

At 1430 he received CTF 77's directive to prepare for a night engagement wherein CTF 77 after giving the composition of the Japanese force (two BB's, four CA's, four CL's and ten DD's) in the eastern Sulu Sea, estimated that it might arrive Leyte Gulf that night,*** (night of October 24th/25th).

At 1445 he received a flash report from CTG 38.2 (a) giving the results of the second strike and claiming three bomb and three torpedo hits on a KONGO class BB of the leading group and (b) reporting that the rest of the Japanese units which were in Latitude 13°-05'N, Longitude 122°-01'E on course 090°(T) (Contact "17") were undamaged.****

At 1458 he received CTF 77's urgent relay of a contact report wherein CTF 77 surmised that there was a probable enemy landing force in the convoy of twenty-five ships, including battleships and cruisers, reported at 1115 to be twenty-six miles southeast of Mount Dumali (in the northeast part of Mindoro) on course east.***** (Contact "12".)

By midafternoon (1512), having carried forward his running estimate of the situation, he formulated a surface action plan in anticipation of a possible sortie by the Japanese Main Body through San Bernardino Strait. His battle plan stated that (a) BATDIV SEVEN (IOWA and NEW JERSEY) VINCENNES, MIAMI and BILOXI and DESRON FIFTY-TWO (less STEPHEN POTTER) from TG 38.2 and WASHINGTON, ALABAMA, WICHITA, NEW ORLEANS, DESDIV 100 plus PATTERSON and BAGLEY from TG 38.4 would be formed as TF 34 under Vice Admiral LEE as Commander Battle Line, (b) TF 34 would engage decisively at long range, (c) CTG 38.4 would conduct the carriers of

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* TANGIER Dispatch 241240/I October 1944 to Unknown Addressees (probably All Stations this Circuit).
** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240515 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 70.1, 77.2, 77.3, COMFEAF, All TFC's 3RDFLT, info COM3RDFLT, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCPAC, CINCSWPA, COMINCH.
**** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240[illegible]5 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
***** CTF 77 Dispatch 240443 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

TG's 38.2 and 38.4 clear of the surface fighting, (d) instructions for TG's 38.1 and 38.3 would be issued later and finally (e) HALSEY was OTC in NEW JERSEY.* This message, which was not transmitted by COMTHIRDFLT until 1640, was received by CTF 79 at 1700, by CTG 38.1 at 1712 and by COMINCH at 1709.

THIS BATTLE PLAN IS IMPORTANT TO THIS ANALYSIS AS MUCH FOR ITS OMISSIONS AS FOR ITS CONTENTS. AMONG ITS OMISSIONS ARE THE FAILURE TO (a) INCLUDE CTF 77 AND COMSOWESPAC AS INFORMATION ADDRESSEES, (b) GIVE THE TIME AND/OR MANNER OF PLACING THE PLAN IN EFFECT WITH THE NATURAL RESULT THAT THE PHRASE "WILL BE FORMED AS TF 34" COULD BE INTERPRETED AS (1) A STATEMENT OF SIMPLE FUTURITY INDICATING THAT THE PRESENT INTENTIONS OF THE ISSUING COMMANDER WERE TO MAKE THE PLAN EFFECTIVE AT A LATER TIME OR (2) AN IMMEDIATE DIRECTIVE EFFECTIVE UPON RECEIPT, AND (c) PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENEMY AND THE FAILURE TO SPECIFY AN OBJECTIVE. HOWEVER, IN THIS LATTER CASE, SINCE THE COMMANDERS CONCERNED IN TF 38 WERE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE SITUATION AND WERE FULLY (a) COGNIZANT OF THE ENEMY FORCE SOUTH OF MINDORO AND (b) AWARE THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF THIS FORCE SHOULD IT SORTIE WOULD BE THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF TF 34, THESE LATTER TWO OMISSIONS CANNOT BE CONSIDERED SERIOUS.

At 1540 he learned that at about four hours earlier three groups of enemy planes were approaching Leyte and were being intercepted by Allied fighters.**

At 1544 he issued new orders to CTG 38.4 to close TG 38.2. He (a) gave (1) the prospective 1700 position of TG 38.2 as Latitude 13°-15'N, Longitude 126°-05'E and (2) the point option course and speed as 165°(T), eighteen knots and (b) directed CTG 38.4 to set his course to intercept as early as practicable.***

At 1608 he received CTF 38's strike report and summary of the day's operation of TG 38.3. Since this summary is quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 38, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", it will not be quoted here except to state that this report gave the (a) composition of the enemy force as six to eight battleships, fourteen heavy cruisers and eight to nine destroyers and (b) results as two heavy cruisers or light cruisers and one battleship badly damaged.****

At 1632 he received an enemy contact report from the search plane in Sector THREE of the Morotai-based search, being relayed on the AOIC from the FIFTH Bomber Command of a force consisting of two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 121°-32'E at 0950 on course 040°(T), speed fifteen knots.***** (Contact "11"). This contact report may have (a) been linked with that received

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* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to All TFC's 3RDFLT, All TGC's of TF 38, info COMINCH, CINCPAC.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240239 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240644 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info All TGC's of TF 38, CTF 34.

**** CTF 38 Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG's 38.2, 38.4.

***** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240330 October 1944 to All Concerned our Operations.

earlier in the forenoon* in spite of the delay of nearly seven hours and, if so, (b) served to eliminate any confusion possibly engendered by the error in the numbers of ships in the earlier one.

Although CTF 38 and CTG 38.3 (who were in company but were a considerable distance from Commander THIRD Fleet) commenced receiving contact reports from the search planes to the northeast at 1635, Commander THIRD Fleet did not receive these reports. About an hour later he received a dispatch summary from CTF 38 which included this information in an evaluated form.** For this reason the first contacts made by the search planes from TG 38.3 have not been shown in Plate XV.

At 1636 he received an aircraft contact report from the plane in Sector THREE (312°-321°) of the Morotai-based search being relayed by FIFTH Bomber Command on the AOIC which was the first report of a force consisting of one ATAGO class heavy cruiser, two NATORI class light cruisers and four destroyers with one float plane at 1155 ITEM in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 120°-30'E on course 105°(T), speed ten knots (Contact "15"). The originating plane stated that she was continuing on patrol.***

At 1648 COMTHIRDFLT intercepted a carrier aircraft contact report (partially garbled) on an enemy force sighted at 1640 including three BB's and one DD at Longitude 125° but Latitude unheard in which the pilot stated that he saw twenty-eight ships.**** Two minutes later he intercepted another contact report from the same plane on an enemy task force consisting of three CV, two CL, three DD in Latitude 18°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots at 1640.***** (Contact "20"). THESE REPORTS WERE OF VITAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR THEY POSITIVELY DISCLOSED THE POSITION OF THE JAPANESE MAIN FORCE, COMPRISING THE CARRIERS, THE WHEREABOUTS OF WHICH HE HAD BEEN ANXIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH DURING MUCH OF THAT DAY. THIS FORCE HAD STEAMED FOR DAYS THROUGH WATERS UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY ALLIED SUBMARINES AND SHORE-BASED SEARCH PLANES AND HAD LAUNCHED AN AIR STRIKE AGAINST THE THIRD FLEET (TG 38.3) CARRIER FORCE BEFORE FINALLY BEING DETECTED BY A SEARCH PLANE FROM ONE OF HIS CARRIERS.

At 1710 he (a) directed CTG 38.4 to (1) assume tactical command of TG's 38.2 and 38.4, (2) keep the groups in company and (3) operate in the present general vicinity until otherwise instructed and (b) informed the commanders concerned that if the enemy sortied TF 34 would be formed when he directed.****** This order must have been written

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* Aircraft in Sector THREE Dispatch 240010 (240910/I) October 1944 to All Stations this Circuit.

** CTF 38 Dispatch 240817 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.4.

*** C.G. 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240100 (sic) October 1944 to All Commands this Circuit.

**** Plane 04V14 Contact Report TOR 240748 to MOHAWK (believed to be ENTERPRISE).

***** Plane 04V14 Contact Report TOR 240750 to MOHAWK (believed to be ENTERPRISE).

****** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240810 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTG 38.2, CTF 34, COMBATDIV 7.

up prior to his realization that the Main Force had been contacted. It is interesting in that it reveals his continued concentration on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.

At 1730* he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 38.2 stating that the ENTERPRISE reported that one of her planes had made contact at 1715 on a Japanese force of three CV, two CL and three DD in Latitude 18°-32'N, Longitude 125°-28'E on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots.**

Also at 1730 he received a summary report from CTF 38 which is quoted in full under that commander (a) giving the results of the strikes against the Japanese Main Body, (b) stating that the new contact in the north was three CV (one of which was an ISE class BB/XCV), four to six heavy cruisers and six destroyers in Latitude 18°-10'N, Longitude 125°-30'E on course 210°(T), speed fifteen knots (Contact "21") and (c) giving the condition of the PRINCETON and stating that in view of the new contact to the north she would be sunk.*** He now, at 1738, advised CTF 38 to use his discretion regarding the PRINCETON.****

At 1735 he was informed of the results of TG 38.4's strikes in which two destroyers were attacked at 1153 in Latitude 11°-38'N, Longitude 121°-28'E.*****

At 1755 he received a flash report from CTG 38.2 by TBS voice radio of the third strike on the Main Body delivered at 1530 and quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 38.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th" wherein that commander reported in part (a) having damaged two battleships of KONGO class, (b) that enemy had changed course to westward during attack but that he could not determine whether this was a real retirement or for protection of cripples and (c) one heavy cruiser and two destroyers listed in the morning report were missing****** (Contact "19").

At 1819 he directed CTG 38.4 (who had previously been designated OTC of TG's 38.2 and 38.4)******* to proceed westward at twenty knots.********

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* War Diary COM3RDFLT October 1944.

** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240830 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

*** CTF 38 Dispatch 240817 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG's 38.2 and 38.4.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240838 October 1944 to CTG 38, info CTG 38.3.

***** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240646 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, CINCSWPA, COMADVON 5 and 13.

****** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240855 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

******* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240810 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTG 38.2, CTF 34, COMBATDIV 7.

******** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240919 October 1944 to CTG 38.4.

At 1830 he received CTG 38.4's report of the strike against the enemy force in Latitude 12°-50'N, Longitude 122°-30'E, which force when first sighted, was on an easterly course but was last seen on a westerly course (Contact "18").

This report, which is quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 38.4, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", reported having inflicted at 1415 (likely in error, probably 1515) heavy damage on one YAMATO class battleship and on one KONGO class battleship and reported having damaged another battleship and having torpedoed and sunk one light cruiser.*

Since this report, and the report received previously from CTG 38.2, reported the enemy as now on a westerly course and heavily damaged, it seems clear that he now commenced re-estimating the situation to determine what, if any, course of action he should follow with relation to (a) this Main Body and (b) the enemy carriers contacted to the north of him at 1640.

Actually, although he did not know it, the Japanese Main Body had changed course to the westward at 1500 to reduce the damage from air attack, had reversed course to the eastward at 1510, had reversed course again to the westward at 1530, which reversal was maintained in a generally northwesterly direction until about 1715 when course was reversed once again to the eastward and this direction was maintained (Diagram "C").

BASED ON HIS LATER ACTIONS IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT FOR THE PRESENT HE HAD DECIDED TO REMAIN OFF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT FOR HE REMAINED IN THIS AREA FOR THE NEXT TWO HOURS.

* CTG 38.4 TBS Voice Radio Message 240930 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

(1) Operations of CTF 38, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of this day CTF 38, in the LEXINGTON, with TG 38.3, was about 190 miles east of Polillo Island on course 280°(T), speed twenty-four knots.*

The LEXINGTON's TBS and VHF voice logs for this period are available to this study thereby providing an unusual insight into the actions of CTF 38 on this day. Since, however, the introductory chapters of the Battle of Surigao Strait deal principally with those factors influencing the preparations for an execution of that battle, only a general analysis of his actions on this day will be made.

During the early morning hours CTF 38 received much the same sighting reports as did COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 77 and was well aware of the developing situation (Plate XV).

Receipt of a retransmittal of the GUITARRO's sighting of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, estimated to comprise fifteen to twenty ships including three battleships in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 119°-30'E, on course 080°(T),** prompted him to (a) invite CTG 38.3's attention to the dispatch and (b) order CTG 38.3 to instruct the search planes if sighting this group to report immediately, to delay their attack and track the force.***

As dawn approached he appeared quite concerned over the probability of enemy air attacks in strength. Snoopers had been shadowing his group--one had been shot down at 0229, another at 0340--and he realized that the enemy would have little difficulty in locating his task group preparatory to making early morning attacks. Therefore at 0530 he advised CTG 38.3 as follows: "Much enemy activity suggests heavy air attack this morning."****

The first major enemy air attack was detected coming in at about 0759.***** The CAP was effective in destroying the bulk of the attacking aircraft.

Shortly before 0847 he learned that an unknown plane had sighted four battleships, eight cruisers and thirteen destroyers in Latitude 12°-25'N, Longitude 121°-32'E and so advised CTG 38.3 and COMTHIRDFLT****** (Contact "8", Plate XV).

At 0939 he observed the PRINCETON bursting into flames having been hit by a bomb from a single plane that had dived down through a low cloud cover.*****

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* Deck Log LEXINGTON, October 24th, 1944.
** CTF 71 Dispatch 231824 October 1944 to C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT.
*** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 231945 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
**** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 232030 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
***** War Diary CTG 38.3, October 24th, 1944.
****** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 232347 October 1944 to CTG 38.3; also CTF 38 Dispatch 232353 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

At 1003 he advised COMTHIRDFLT that (a) the PRINCETON had been hit by a bomb, (b) the fire was not under control, (c) there had been several serious explosions and (d) he would report more to him later.*

Beginning about this time he noted that the PRINCETON was rocked by a series of large explosions causing her to lose all way.**

At 1029 (as recorded in his action report) having learned that COMTHIRDFLT had ordered CTG's 38.3 and 38.4 to concentrate toward TG 38.2 off San Bernardino Strait,*** he decided to have CTG 38.3 remain in the general vicinity of the PRINCETON.

At 1101 he sent a message to CTG's 38.2, 38.4 and COMTHIRDFLT which, in part, stated: "My position at 1100 ITEM, Latitude 15°-32'N, Longitude 123°-45'E. Have instructed CTG 38.3 to remain in the vicinity of PRINCETON who still has bad uncontrolled fire aboard. CTG 38.3 is continuing to strike. Will close you if possible and report conditions later."****

About 1125 (when it was received by CTG 38.3) he received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch advising him that the enemy carrier strength had not yet been located and ordering him to keep the area to the north under observation.*****

At 1140 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) he received orders from COMTHIRDFLT to strike the enemy force south of Mindoro.******

Since he had already advised COMTHIRDFLT that CTG 38.3 was continuing to strike he did not specifically reply to this order.

At 1207 he sent COMTHIRDFLT the following dispatch: "Morning search reports 2 Natori class cruisers. 1 dead in water just off shore northwest tip Mindoro. The other under attack off west shore Lubang Island. 1 damaged Nachi cruiser in Manila Bay. Enemy has been flying several large groups twin engine planes from Formosa to Luzon. About 100 enemy planes shot down. Now striking enemy fleet east Mindoro no reports yet of results. We have another large bogie heading ours from northeast. Launching search 350 to 040 at 1305. PRINCETON still afloat."*******

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* CTF 38 Dispatch 240103 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

** Action Report PRINCETON, Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232327 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4.

**** CTF 38 Dispatch 240201 October 1944 to CTG's 38.4 and 38.2, info COM3RDFLT.

***** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232359 October 1944 to CTF 38, info CTG 38.2.

****** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232331 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG 38.3.

******* CTF 38 Dispatch 240307 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTG's 38.2 and 38.4.

During the early afternoon he noted that strong enemy raids had attempted to penetrate the fighter defenses but although some were successful in breaching the TCAP, they failed to hit the ships of the task group.*

At 1405 having shortly before given permission to CTG 38.3 to launch the northern search without fighter escort, he observed the five VB take off.**

Earlier during the day he had learned of the enemy surface force in the Sulu Sea, and now at 1430 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he intercepted CTF 77's order "To prepare for night engagement".

At 1512 having (a) determined the results of the afternoon strike against the Main Body and (b) confirmed that the PRINCETON was without steering control and power, he sent his latest situation summary to COMTHIRDFLT which is quoted as follows: "Task Group 38.3 strike reports enemy main fleet at lat 12-50 long 122-30. Enemy fleet milling around aimlessly in several groups. Pilots report by radio 6 to 8 battleships 14 CA and 8 to 9 DD. Incomplete results 38.3 strike 2 CA or CL and 1 BB badly hit. Estimate of damage from air poor due to clouds at 6000 feet. PRINCETON dead in water with no power and no steering at 1345. Total Jap planes shot down by TG 38.3 about 150 up to 1500/I. No bogies now for first time today. 2nd strike on enemy fleet delayed due to attack. We are getting very short of fighters with loss of PRINCETON force and combat casualties. Correct my 240307. At 0720 1 NATORI CL dead in water off Termate Manila Harbor. At 0800 1 damaged NACHI CA southeast Corregidor. At 0945 1 NATORI CL and 1 DD between Fortune Island and Luzon, course 180, speed 20."***

At 1532 he learned that a large explosion aboard the PRINCETON had blown her stern off causing many topside casualties aboard the BIRMINGHAM.****

At 1635 he began receiving a series of messages from the northern search planes which had sighted the Main Force***** (Contact "17").

At 1645 realizing the seriousness of this sighting, he recommended to CTG 38.3 that in view of the contact to the north, the PRINCETON be sunk.******

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* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 24th, 1944.

** CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240442 October 1944 to CTF 38; also War Diary CTG 38.3, October 24th, 1944.

*** CTF 38 Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 38.4, CTG 38.2.

**** CTU 38.4.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240642 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.

***** LB BRONCHO (ESSEX) TBS Voice Radio Message 241635/I October 1944 to MOHAWK (LEXINGTON).

****** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 241645/I October 1944 to CTG 38.3.

At 1707 he advised CTG 38.3 by TBS voice radio as follows: "If composition of enemy fleet is confirmed, three carriers, one ISE class, two light cruisers and three destroyers, be prepared to detail your battleships, CRUDIV THIRTEEN less BIRMINGHAM and RENO and one squadron of destroyers to attack and sink enemy."* From this message it is clear that he (a) was preparing for unilateral action against the Main Force should he be ordered and (b) did not at the moment have a clear picture of the composition of enemy forces to the north. However, a few minutes later (at 1712) he advised CTG 38.3 that although he had received reports of two groups to the north, one at Longitude 123°-30'E consisting of three battleships; and one at Longitude 125°-00'E consisting of three carriers, he believed both groups to be one group in the latter position.**

Also at 1712 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) he received COMTHIRDFLT's battle plan.*** This plan has been discussed fully under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1830, October 24th".

He continued with CTG 38.3 and CTU 38.3.2 (Commander Heavy Support Unit) over the TBS voice radio, to prepare a plan in which CTG 38.3 would proceed northward intact, launching a strike at dawn against the enemy force and pending the results of that strike detach after dark the battleships and cruisers to follow up the strike.****

In pondering the effect such a course of action would have on his commander's plans, he apparently decided against it for at 1851 he ordered CTG 38.3 to proceed to join COMTHIRDFLT and to consolidate TG 38.3 on the way.*****

At 1815 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT advising him to use his discretion regarding the PRINCETON.******

From an examination of related aircraft transmissions, it is apparent that by this time he (a) was aware of the presence of at least one ISE (hermaphrodite) class battleship to the north in addition to the other carriers and (b) had received CTG 38.3's latest estimate of the group's attacks on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force off Mindoro.*******

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* CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 240807 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 240812 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to All TFC's 3RDFLT, All TGC's TF 38, info COMINCH, CINCPAC.
**** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Messages 240812 and 240824 October 1944 to CTG 38.3; also CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240823 October 1944 to CTF 38; also CTU 38.3.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240833 October 1944 to CTF 38.
***** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 240951 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
****** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240838 October 1944 to CTF 38, info CTG 38.3.
******* CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240903 October 1944 to CTF 38.

At this time feeling the situation had again significantly changed, he decided to so advise COMTHIRDFLT and at 1830 transmitted the following dispatch: "Results of strike on Jap fleet consisting of 4 battleships 3 heavy cruisers 4 light cruisers 12 destroyers east of Mindoro. 2 heavy cruisers and 1 battleship damaged. New contact afternoon search reports 3 CV's 4 to 6 heavy cruisers and 6 destroyers at Latitude 18-10 Longitude 125-30 east which is 180 miles east of Aparri. 1 of CV's was ISE class. On course 210 speed 15 knots. No major air attack on us since 1430 item. PRINCETON had heavy explosion about 1515 causing many casualties on BIRMINGHAM alongside. In view of our new Jap contact to north, CTG 38.3 is having PRINCETON sunk. No serious damage to other ships. Enemy planes showing intermittent IFF. My position at 1630 Item Latitude 15-32 North Longitude 124-23 East. Will close you after PRINCETON is sunk."**

(a) Operations of CTG 38.1, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.1 in the WASP was bearing 299°(T), distant 370 miles from Ulithi and on course 125°(T), speed fifteen knots.

During the early morning hours he very likely received much the same information as was received by COMTHIRDFLT and which has largely been discussed elsewhere.

At 0637 he detached the FARENHOLT, GRAYSON, MC CALLA and WOODWORTH to CTG 30.3 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch 230121.

At 0850 he was joined by the cruiser BOSTON and the destroyers BURNS, CHARRETTE, COWELL, BELL and BOYD. His task group consisted of the WASP (FFF), HANCOCK, HORNET, COWPENS, MONTEREY, BOSTON (FF), CHESTER (FF), SALT LAKE CITY, PENSACOLA, OAKLAND, SAN DIEGO, DUNLAP, FANNING, BROWN, CUMMINGS, CONNER, DOWNES, IZARD (FF), CASE, BURNS, CASSIN, CHARRETTE, COWELL, BELL and BOYD.**

He now received orders from COMTHIRDFLT as follows: (a) at 0948 to reverse course, proceed toward Point MICK at best speed and launch a search to the north and northwest at dawn October 25th*** as a result of which he at (1) 1030 cancelled the Yap Island strike** and (2) 1043 changed course to 300°(T), speed twenty knots and (b) at 1041 to fuel from the fueling group commencing daylight October 25th and to report completion by urgent dispatch.****

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* CTF 38 Dispatch 240930 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, RENO, info CTG's 38.2, 38.4.

** War Diary CTG 38.1, October 24th, 1944.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232346 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info All TGC's of TF 38.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240143 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, CTU's 38.8.4, 30.8.8, 30.8.11, info All TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

During the morning he learned of (a) the discovery of the Main Body off Mindoro, (b) the sighting of the THIRD Section in the Sulu Sea and (c) COMTHIRDFLT's request to CTF 77 for seaplane coverage of his (COMTHIRDFLT's) northern flank. Therefore, he was fully apprised of COMTHIRDFLT's reasons for recalling his command and his concern with covering the sea area to the north.

At 1055 he advised COMTHIRDFLT he was arriving Point MICK in accordance with the latter's orders and that the BOSTON was with him.*

A review of his dispatch file for this day reveals that he was well aware of all of the important events that transpired during the day and therefore that his understanding of the developing situation was quite clear.

At 1830 he was probably not aware of the contact on the enemy carriers to the north. At this time TG 38.1 was on course 295°(T), speed twenty-three knots, en route Point MICK about ninety-eight miles bearing 139°(T) from it.

Having incurred no aircraft losses during the day he had on board his carriers as of 1830 a total of 187 VF, 67 VB and 72 VT.

(b) Operations of CTG 38.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.2, in the INTREPID, with TG 38.2, was about eighty miles northeast of his assigned 0600 October 24th position off San Bernardino Strait, on course 249°(T), speed fifteen knots.**

During the early morning hours he (a) knew that the two VF(N) of the INDEPENDENCE had shot down two enemy snoopers, one at 0229 and one at 0340. In each instance the enemy snooper was a long range four-engine seaplane*** from the SIXTH Base Air Force operating from Manila,**** and (b) learned of the ANGLE's and GUITARRO's contacts in the vicinity of Mindoro and was therefore alerted to the probable area in which enemy surface forces should be located.

At 0600 he launched a westward search from the INTREPID composed of twelve VF, six VB, four special reconnaissance VF and two communication relay planes. The four special VF covered the west coast of northern Palawan from Imuruan to Bacuit Bays.*****

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* CTG 38.1 Dispatch 240155 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38.
** Deck Log INTREPID, October 24th, 1944.
*** War Diaries CTG 38.2, INDEPENDENCE, October 24th, 1944.
**** Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
***** War Diaries CTG 38.2, CABOT, October 24th, 1944.

As has been discussed earlier, INTREPID search planes sighted (a) the Main Body at 0746 and reported it shortly thereafter,* (b) a light cruiser and destroyer standing out between Corregidor and Bataan and (c) a bomb hit on the light cruiser.**

At 0829 he received COMTHIRDFLT's orders to relay the above contact via TBS voice radio to CTF 38.***

By 0853 he had launched his first strike against the Main Body consisting of twenty-one VF, twelve VB and thirteen VT from the INTREPID and CABOT.****

As a result of this strike he reported to COMTHIRDFLT as having damaged the enemy as follows: (a) three torpedo hits on two battleships of the leading force, (b) two bomb hits on a KONGO class battleship, (c) one possible torpedo hit on a NACHI class cruiser, (d) one probable bomb hit on KONGO class battleship and (e) one possible bomb hit on fantail of a YAMATO class battleship.*****

According to Japanese records the Main Body received limited damage at this time as follows: (a) the heavy cruiser MYOKO, one torpedo hit in the starboard after engine room which forced her at 1125 to be retired to Brunei Bay and (b) the battleship MUSASHI, one torpedo hit on the starboard side aft but her combat effectiveness was unimpaired. No other major combat damage was reported by Commander Main Body.******

Two INTREPID VT and one CABOT VT were shot down by enemy antiaircraft fire.*******

At about 1003 he probably overheard COMTHIRDFLT's order to COMBATDIV SEVEN to prepare to assume the duties of Commander Battle Line.********

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* INTREPID Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG 38.2; also CAG 18 Aircraft Action Report No. 54-44.

** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240345 October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

*** COMTHIRDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 232329 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

**** War Diaries INTREPID, CABOT, October 24th, 1944.

***** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240445 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

****** COMCRUDIV 5 TBS Voice Radio Message 241045 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force; also Commander Main Body Dispatch 241220 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

******* CAG 18 Aircraft Action Report No. 55-44: also War Diary CABOT, October 24th, 1944.

******** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240103 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 7.

At 1018 he advised COMTHIRDFLT that he was launching a second strike against the enemy consisting of eight VF, twelve VB and eight VT.*

At 1030 he launched his second strike consisting of nine VF, twelve VB and nine VT,** all from the INTREPID. The attack, executed just after 1200, was a coordinated one which concentrated principally on a battleship of the YAMATO class (actually the MUSASHI). Eight VB covered by fighters dove on the MUSASHI claiming three confirmed 1000-pound bomb hits and three possibles. Nine VT followed the bombers, claiming at least two torpedo hits in the port side of the ship and one possible hit on the starboard side. Photographs clearly confirm the two port side hits. Three VB and one VT were shot down by antiaircraft fire.*** Japanese records indicate that, in this attack, the MUSASHI received three more torpedo hits on the port side for a total of four, and two bomb hits. Her speed was reduced to twenty-four knots.****

During the morning CTG 38.2 learned, among other things, of (a) COMTHIRDFLT's orders to (1) CTF 38 and CTG 38.4 to concentrate on TG 38.2 and (2) CTG 38.1 to reverse course and proceed to Point MICK, (b) the enemy bombing of the PRINCETON and (c) the contact and attack by TG 38.4 aircraft on the enemy force in the Sulu Sea.

At 1207 he reported to COMTHIRDFLT that the special four plane fighter search had covered the western coast of northern Palawan and Coron Bay with negative results.*****

At 1345 he launched his third and last strike of the day against the Main Body.****** (This strike was part of the attack listed as the fifth air attack by the Japanese.) This strike composed of twenty-four VF, twelve VB and eight VT from the CABOT and INTREPID was executed commencing at 1530. Again coordinated attacks were made. After completion of the bomber runs the fighters strafed preparatory to torpedo attacks by the VT. The VB pilots claimed three 1000-pound bomb hits on a KONGO or YAMATO class battleship, while the VT pilots claimed one torpedo hit in a YAMATO and one in a MOGAMI class cruiser.****** Since the Main Body came under its heaviest attack commencing at about 1500, which attack included planes from TG 38.4, Japanese records are not conclusive as regards TG 38.2's claims. The Main Body sustained damage as follows: (a) NAGATO, two bomb hits and several near misses--speed reduced to twenty-one knots, (b) MUSASHI, ten bomb hits and eleven torpedo hits and (c) one destroyer KIYOSHIMO, received one bomb hit reducing her speed to twenty-one knots.******* Aircraft combat losses were one VB and one VT.

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* CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240118 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

** War Diary INTREPID, October 24th, 1944.

*** Ibid.; also CAG 18 Aircraft Action Report No. 56-44.

**** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 241250 October 1944 to Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744; also Detailed Action Report MUSASHI, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

***** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240307 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

****** CAG 18 Aircraft Action Report No. 57-44.

******* Detailed Action Report No. 2, KIYOSHIMO, Antiair Action in Sibuyan Sea, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

At 1445 he reported to COMTHIRDFLT, via TBS voice radio, the results of the second strike, claiming three torpedo hits and three bomb hits on a KONGO class battleship of the leading force. Included was the statement that the rest of the force was probably undamaged.* Why he stated a KONGO class battleship when the aircraft action report indicated that the torpedo attacks were against a YAMATO class battleship and did in fact result in hits against the MUSASHI, is not known.

At 1710 he received COMTHIRDFLT's orders to CTG 38.4, who was hull down on the horizon bearing 150°(T), to (a) assume tactical command of TG's 38.2 and 38.4, (b) operate in the general vicinity until further orders and (c) keep the groups concentrated. Included was the information that "if the enemy sorties (through San Bernardino Strait) TF 34 will be formed when directed by me."**

Since he was steaming in company with COMTHIRDFLT, he was very likely already aware of COMTHIRDFLT's plans to employ TF 34 in combat against the Main Body in the event it sortied from San Bernardino Strait although CTG 38.1 records 1701 as the time of receipt of COMTHIRDFLT's 240612 (Battle Plan).

At 1730 CTG 38.2 having intercepted a contact report from an ENTERPRISE plane off Cape Engano advised COMTHIRDFLT over the TBS voice radio that the contact was on three CV, two CL and three DD in Latitude 18°-32'N, Longitude 125°-28'E on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots.***

At 1755 he reported the results of the third and last strike by his planes together with a situation report of the Main Body. This report is quoted in full as follows: "Flash report 3rd strike enemy force reported at 1600 at 12-42 N 122-39 E. Course 270 speed 17. This force has been 14 miles to the east of this position but reversed course during the time attack was over target. 2 BB reported to be of KONGO class were damaged and circling. Apparently not controlled at 12-39 N 122-48 E. This first was listing and afire. The second less damaged. Course to west may be retiring or may be protection for cripples. In addition to 2 damaged second force lacks 1 CA it had this morning. First force lacks 2 DD. Composition of forces 1st force 2 BB, 4 CA, 1 CL, 5 DD. Second force 2 BB damaged, 3 CA, 1 CL, 6 DD. 3 bomb hits and 1 torpedo hit by third strike on worst damaged BB."****

At about this time the badly damaged MUSASHI, the cruiser TONE and two accompanying destroyers having earlier dropped out of formation were possibly about ten miles east southeast of the force and were likely the ships referred to in the report as being, "2 BB...damaged and circling."

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* CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240545 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240810 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTG 38.2, CTF 34 and COMBATDIV 7.
*** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240830 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
**** CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 240855 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

At 1830 he was still operating generally off San Bernardino Strait. His aircraft losses for the day were five VT and four VB from antiaircraft fire and one VB from operational causes. He now had remaining in his carriers approximately eighty-five VF, nineteen VB and thirty VT.

(c) Operations of CTG 38.3, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of this day CTG 38.3, in the ESSEX with TG 38.3, was heading for his assigned position about ninety miles east of Polillo Island.

At 0005 he made contact on an enemy plane bearing 270°(T) distant fifty-seven miles which by 0020 had closed to twenty-seven miles at which time it turned away.* This aircraft was a SIXTH Base Air Force patrol seaplane from Manila which reported a large enemy force in Latitude 14°-35'N, Longitude 125°-15'E at 0050.**

At 0100 he made radar contact on another plane bearing 230°(T) distant seventy-five miles on an easterly course.*

Both of these planes were shot down by the VF(N) of TG 38.2.***

By 0530 he had made two additional contacts as a result of which he received a TBS message from CTF 38 in the LEXINGTON to the effect that "much enemy activity suggests heavy air attack this morning".****

At 0610 he launched his initial air operations.***** These consisted of twenty-seven VF and twenty-six VB for search, eight VF for radio relay and eighteen VF for the fighter sweep.****** In addition twelve VF were launched for CAP and four VF and four VT for SNASP.*******

During the next several hours he noted that his CAP had shot down four enemy planes and that he was about to be attacked by two large groups of planes, one distant forty-nine miles consisting of about forty planes.******** His CAP intercepted the first group and drove

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* Deck Log ESSEX, October 24th, 1944.
** Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
*** War Diary CTG 38.2, October 24th, 1944.
**** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 242030 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
***** Action Report PRINCETON, Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.
****** Deck Logs LEXINGTON and ESSEX, October 24th, 1944.
******* Deck Log LANGLEY, October 24th, 1944; also Action Report PRINCETON, Battle off the Philippines and the Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.
******** Action Report ESSEX, Battle of the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0195, November 21st, 1944.

them away. The second group which had been contacted at fifty-five miles did not close. He now at 0800 ordered all available VF scrambled as a result of which forty-two additional VF were launched from all four carriers (ESSEX seven, LEXINGTON eleven, LANGLEY twelve, PRINCETON twelve).*

During the next few minutes a number of events occurred in relatively rapid succession:

(a) At 0805 he detected a third large raid, distant sixty miles.

(b) At 0820 he received a contact report originated by a search plane from the INTREPID reporting sighting "four BB, eight CA, thirteen DD, location south of southern tip of Mindoro, course 050°(T), speed ten-twelve knots. No transports in the group and in all a total of twenty-five warships** (Contact "6", Plate XV).

(c) At 0824 when it was received by CTG 38.1, he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT directing him to concentrate toward TG 38.2 at best speed.

(d) At 0833 he learned that his seven ESSEX VF had sighted a large group of fifty to sixty planes and had requested help. He therefore directed the twelve PRINCETON VF to assist but these VF failed to make interception.***

Meanwhile the seven ESSEX VF attacked the fifty-sixty enemy planes and claimed shooting down twenty-five planes with four probables and three damaged with only minor damage to themselves. However, despite this success, at 0938 the PRINCETON was hit by a bomb just forward of the after elevator and near the flight deck centerline.**** This started a fire on the hangar deck which made the hangar untenable.

CTG 38.3 then, at 0951, ordered the RENO and three destroyers (CASSIN YOUNG, GATLING and IRWIN) to standby the stricken ship but at 1002 he noted that an extensive series of explosions was occurring as a result of which he, at 1004, ordered the BIRMINGHAM and, at 1033, the MORRISON to standby also. Meanwhile the ship had been largely abandoned leaving on board a salvage party of about 240 officers and men.****

At 1046 he was directed by CTF 38 to remain in the vicinity of the PRINCETON.

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* Deck Logs ESSEX, LEXINGTON, LANGLEY, October 24th, 1944; also Action Report PRINCETON, The Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.

** INTREPID Aircraft Voice Message 232320 October 1944.

*** Action Report ESSEX, Battle of the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0195, November 21st, 1944.

**** Action Report PRINCETON, The Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.

By 1054 he had recovered and serviced enough VF to permit launching a strike (Striko Group ONE) against the enemy force in the Sibuyan Sea. By 1108 he had launched for this purpose sixteen VF, twenty VB and thirty-two VT.* Directly after this he recovered the fighter sweep launched at 0606. From these pilots he learned that a NATORI class CL (evidently the KINU) had been damaged just outside of Manila Bay.

At 1155 he was directed by CTF 38 to launch a search consisting of two VF and one VB in each sector between 350°(T) and 040°(T).**

At 1228 he directed that the search be launched about 1305 and further directed that a second strike (Strike Group TWO) be launched against the enemy force in the Sibuyan Sea at the same time.

However, before he had completed preparations a large group of enemy aircraft was detected at 1245 bearing (radar) 035°(T), distant 105 miles closing. He therefore cancelled the search and at 1305 launched twenty-three (LEXINGTON fourteen, LANGLEY nine) additional fighters as CAP. He also launched his Strike Group TWO which consisted of eight VF and twelve VB from the ESSEX.***

AT ABOUT 1315 STRIKE GROUP ONE ARRIVED OVER THE JAPANESE MAIN BODY AND AT 1324**** STARTED THEIR ATTACK BY AIR GROUPS. THE JAPANESE SHIPS IMMEDIATELY COMMENCED MANEUVERING BY SIMULTANEOUS MOVEMENT ALTHOUGH FROM TIME TO TIME SHIPS HERE AND THERE MANEUVERED ON THEIR OWN.**** BY THIS MEANS, AS WELL AS BY THE EMPLOYMENT OF HEAVY ANTIAIRCRAFT FIRE, THEY ENDEAVORED TO DEFEAT THE ALLIED AIR ATTACK. NO AIR COVER WAS OBSERVED BY THE ATTACKING PILOTS. THIS METHOD OF DEFENSE WAS FAIRLY EFFECTIVE FOR, ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE GROUP REPORTED TORPEDO HITS ON TWO BATTLESHIPS AND TWO HEAVY CRUISERS OF THE LEADING (EASTERN) GROUP, AND BOMB HITS ON ONE BATTLESHIP OF THE WESTERN GROUP,***** THEY ACTUALLY MADE (a) ONE TORPEDO HIT IN THE MUSASHI AND TWO NEAR MISSES,****** (b) ONE BOMB HIT (FORWARD) IN THE YAMATO WHICH DID NOT AFFECT HER COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS,******* AND (c) A NEAR MISS ON THE YAHAGI WHICH REDUCED HER MAXIMUM SPEED TO TWENTY-TWO KNOTS.********

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* Deck Logs LEXINGTON and ESSEX, October 24th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 38.3, Battle of the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0090, December 2nd, 1944.

*** Deck Log ESSEX, October 24th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operations, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11973.

***** CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240903 October 1944 to CTF 38.

****** Detailed Action Report MUSASHI, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

******* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

******** Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAHAGI, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

At 1327 another large incoming group of enemy planes was detected by radar bearing 040°(T), distant ninety miles and the CAP was vectored out to intercept.*

The appearance of these planes likely reminded him of CINCPOA's intelligence summary for October 23rd which indicated that the Japanese Main Force was likely in the Formosa - Philippine Sea area. If he was so reminded he likely felt that this contact tended to support this summary and that enemy carriers were in fact to the north and northeast of him. Mindful of the fact that no searches had been flown in that area during the day he now, by TBS voice radio, requested CTF 38's permission to launch the search originally scheduled, but without fighter escort.** This was immediately approved*** and therefore at 1409 the LEXINGTON launched the search now consisting of but five VB.

Although the CAP was successful in breaking up both enemy attacks some singles and small groups did attack the task group with bombs and torpedoes but all were ineffective.****

At about 1426 Strike Group TWO attacked the Main Body. The Japanese ships maneuvered and employed heavy antiaircraft fire. In this case they were more effective than before for, although the Allies claimed having made two or three direct hits on one battleship and one hit on one light cruiser,***** they actually made but one bomb hit, and this was on the forecastle of the YAMATO which did not affect her combat effectiveness.******

During all of this time efforts were being made to save the PRINCETON and the escorts, at various times, came alongside to put out the fires. At 1515 the BIRMINGHAM came alongside on such a mission. However, at 1523, a tremendous explosion occurred which (a) blew off the major part of the PRINCETON's stern and the after section of the flight deck and (b) took a heavy toll (241 dead or missing, 416 wounded)******* of BIRMINGHAM topside personnel******** and wounded her captain******* who at 1530 directed the Commanding Officer RENO to assume the duties of OTC of the BIRMINGHAM group.*******

CTG 38.3 who had been deeply concerned over the PRINCETON's condition now at 1532 received a TBS voice radio message from the Commanding Officer RENO********* reporting the situation as expressed in the preceding paragraph.

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* Deck Log LEXINGTON, October 24th, 1944.

** CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240442 October 1944 to CTF 38.

*** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 240442 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.

**** War Diary CTG 38.3, October 1944.

***** CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240903 October 1944 to CTF 38.

****** Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

******* Action Report BIRMINGHAM, Fleet Operations, October 24th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0053, October 31st, 1944.

******** Action Report PRINCETON, Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.

********* CTU 38.3.4 TBS Voice Radio Message 240632 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.

He now at 1635 began receiving a series of messages from the northern search planes which had sighted the Main Force*. Since these messages were also received by CTF 38 he was not surprised when at 1645 he received from that commander a suggestion that in view of the contact to the north, the PRINCETON be sunk.** Concurring in this suggestion he at 1658 directed the RENO, via relay, to take action.***

The contacts on enemy forces to the north were reported by the search planes through relay aircraft and considerable confusion existed as to what had been sighted. The first contact, which as mentioned above was received at 1635, reported the enemy as three BB, four - six CA and six DD at Latitude 18°-10'N, Longitude 123°-30'E, course 210°(T), speed fifteen knots, time 1540.*

There were apparently, however, other reports which were at variance with this one, for at 1707 he received word from CTF 38 that if the enemy composition of three carriers, one of ISE class, two CL's and three DD's, was confirmed he was to detail his battleships, CRUDIV THIRTEEN, less BIRMINGHAM and RENO, and one squadron of destroyers to attack and sink the enemy.**** Realizing that if this order were executed the surface group might be formed before the air battle had been settled, he, at 1723, recommended to CTF 38 that (a) single plane dawn searches be made, (b) the strike groups be held on deck until contact made and (c) TG 38.3 be kept intact until the air battle had been settled.***** He was gratified to receive a reply, in part, to the that CTF 38 did not propose to divide TG 38.3 until well after dark.

At 1746 the RENO fired two torpedoes into the PRINCETON which struck at 1749 causing a tremendous explosion after wh the PRINCETON sank in forty-five seconds.******

By 1809 he had landed his last strike and search plane.******* Interrogation of the search pilots soon revealed that contacts to the north were considerably greater than those previously reported and included (a) at 1640 in Latitude 18°-10'N, Longitude 125°-28'E two SHOKAKU CV's, one CVL, three CL's and three DD's on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots, (Contact "20"), (b) at 1540 in Latitude 18°-10'N, Longitude 125°-30'E, four BB's or CA's, five cruisers and six DD's on course 210°(T), speed fifteen knots, one of the BB's had flight deck aft and (c) at 1600 in Latitude 19°-40'N, Longitude 123°-00'E, two destroyers on course 240°(T), speed twelve knots.

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* ESSEX TBS Voice Radio Message 240735 October 1944 to LEXINGTON.
** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 240745 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
*** CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240758 October 1944 to CTU 38.3.3.
**** CTF 38 TBS Voice Radio Message 240807 October 1944 to CTG 38.3.
***** CTG 38.3 TBS Voice Radio Message 240823 October 1944 to CTF 38.
****** Action Report PRINCETON, Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON, October 24th, 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944.
******* Deck Log LEXINGTON, October 24th, 1944.

CTG 38.3 records enemy aircraft destroyed during the day as 162 planes shot down by aircraft and five by ships' gunfire or a total of 167. Losses were three VF, two VB and three VT in combat, two VB operationally, eleven VF and nine VT in the sinking of the PRINCETON and three VF jetisoned.

As a result, at the end of the day, CTG 38.3 had approximately 117 VF, fifty-one VB and forty-two VT.

(d) Operations of CTG 38.4, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.4, in the FRANKLIN, with TG 38.4, was heading for his dawn launching position off southern Samar. During the early morning hours he received much the same information received by other TF 38 commanders.

Since most of the dispatches received or sent by him have been discussed previously under other THIRDFLT commands, the greater part of them will be omitted from this discussion and instead emphasis will be placed on the description and results of attacks made on the Japanese surface forces by TG 38.4 aircraft.

At about 0600 he launched a reinforced search consisting of thirty-two VF and twenty-four VB from the FRANKLIN and the ENTERPRISE to cover the sector between 230°(T) and 270°(T). ENTERPRISE planes covered the two southern 10° sub-sectors while the FRANKLIN planes covered the two northern 10° sub-sectors.* Each sub-sector was flown by eight VF and six VB.

At 0815 three enemy destroyers (DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) off northern Panay Island were sighted by FRANKLIN aircraft. The VF attacked each destroyer claiming four rocket hits on one destroyer, two hits on another and estimating the third was heavily damaged. The VB planes which had not attacked at this time but had continued on to discover other enemy forces now returned and attacked, claiming several hits and near misses. No enemy air opposition was encountered over the target.**

At 0905 the THIRD Section, which was reported correctly as two BB, one CA and four DD, was located by ENTERPRISE planes in the Sulu Sea.*** The two ENTERPRISE search groups made a coordinated attack and claimed a minimum of three bomb hits on one battleship, four on the other and rocket hits on the cruiser and destroyers.**** CTG 38.4 later modified these claims to two bomb hits (500 pound) on each battleship, along with rocket hits on the heavy cruiser and two destroyers.***

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* War Diary ENTERPRISE, October 24th, 1944; also CVAG 13 Aircraft Action Report No. 89-44.

** CVAG 13 Aircraft Action Report No. 89-44.

*** CTG 38.4 TBS Voice Radio Message 240424 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

**** War Diary ENTERPRISE, October 24th, 1944.

One VF (ENTERPRISE) was shot down by antiaircraft fire. No enemy air opposition was encountered over the target.*

Japanese records indicate that these claims were excessive for while the FUSO received one bomb hit on the stern which destroyed her two scouting planes; the YAMASHIRO escaped damage. No damage of consequence was sustained by any of the ships as a result of strafing or rocket attacks.**

At 0951 a second strike was launched by the FRANKLIN against the three destroyers west of northern Panay. On arrival about 1230 the strike, consisting of twelve VF and eleven VB, found only two destroyers.*** This was because the heavily damaged WAKABA had finally sunk.**** The destroyers immediately started circling to the left in tight individual turns.*** CTG 38.4 in reporting the FRANKLIN claims to COMTHIRDFLT reported rocket and strafing damage to one destroyer and minor damage to the other.***** No enemy air opposition was encountered over the target.*** In view of the strength of the Allied attack and its limited success it would appear that the attacking aircraft failed to properly coordinate and press home their attacks. Japanese records indicate that although hits were scored, only one gun on one destroyer was put out of action and both destroyers were able to maintain full power.****** One FRANKLIN VB was shot down by antiaircraft fire.

At 1024 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) he received COMTHIRDFLT's orders to concentrate at best speed toward TG 38.2 (off San Bernardino Strait).******* Having learned earlier of the presence of the Main Body in the vicinity of Mindoro,******** he realized that COMTHIRDFLT had decided to regroup his three carrier groups in the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait and concentrate against this enemy force. He also realized that COMTHIRDFLT had made this decision before learning of the presence of the enemy surface force (THIRD Section) in the Sulu Sea.*********

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* Action Report ENTERPRISE, Report of Operations in the Philippines Area, including Attacks on the Japanese Fleet and AA Action, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 0056, November 3rd, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** CVG 13 Aircraft Action Report No. 90-44.

**** HATSUHARU Dispatch 240900 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, SW Area Force, DESRON 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240546 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, etc.; also CVAG 13 Aircraft Action Report No. 89-44.

****** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 21, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair Action south of Mindoro, October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

******* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232327 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4.

******** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3, 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

********* Aircraft in Sector 3 Dispatch 240010 October 1944 to All Stations on this circuit.

Whether he relayed any specific information to COMTHIRDFLT via aircraft VHF as regards the strike against this force is not known. He did not at this time recall the strike against the destroyers (DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) but neither did he launch a follow-up strike against the THIRD Section.

Finally, at 1224 he sent a message to COMTHIRDFLT (a) reporting his 1200 position as Latitude 11°-37'N, Longitude 126°-48'E, (b) explaining that he was delayed by recovery of the search and attack groups and (c) advising that he was proceeding to close TG 38.2 at twenty-six knots and would launch a deck-load strike against the "Jap fleet vicinity Tablas Island."*

At 1324 he advised COMTHIRDFLT by dispatch that, among other things, he had (a) contacted at 0905 in Latitude 08°-55'N, Longitude 121°-50'E another Japanese force (THIRD Section) consisting of two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers on course 035°(T), speed fifteen knots, (b) scored two bomb hits on each battleship and rocket hits on the heavy cruiser and two destroyers and (c) was now closing TG 38.2 which action was removing him from effective attack range on the above force.**

At 1330 he launched the strike. It consisted of sixteen VF, nine VB, eight VT from the ENTERPRISE*** and twelve VF, twelve VB and ten VT from the FRANKLIN**** for a total of twenty-eight VF, twenty-one VB and eighteen VT. At about 1500 the attack commenced. This strike was part of the attack listed as the fifth air attack by the Japanese. The Japanese ships endeavored to repel the attack by individual maneuver and by intense, but not particularly accurate, antiaircraft fire.**** Later, in reporting this attack he claimed, among other things, that in the attack made at 1415 (it actually commenced at about 1500) (a) a YAMATO class battleship was bombed, torpedoed and left afire down at the bow, (b) two bomb hits were scored on a KONGO class battleship, (c) another battleship was bombed but not seriously damaged, (d) one light cruiser was torpedoed and seen to roll over, (e) probably two or three torpedo hits were scored on one of the battleships that received the bomb hit and (f) the enemy was on an easterly course when first sighted and on a westerly course when last seen.***** In this strike the FRANKLIN lost two VT from antiaircraft fire. No enemy aircraft were encountered over the target.

In making the above attack the planes of this carrier group struck just before the planes from TG 38.2. Since the battle damage actually received by the Japanese ships is recorded under "Operations of CTG 38.2, 0000 - 1830, October 24th", it will not be listed here excepting to say that no light cruiser was sunk or damaged.

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* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240324 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, CTG 38.2.

** CTG 38.4 Dispatch 240424 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38.

*** Action Report ENTERPRISE, Report of Operations in the Philippines Area, including Attacks on the Japanese Fleet and AA Action, October 22nd - 31st, 1944, Serial 0056, November 3rd, 1944.

**** CVAG 13 Aircraft Action Report No. 91-44, Commander Carrier Air Group 13, Aircraft Action Reports October 24th - 28th, 1944, Serial 078, November 6th, 1944.

***** CTG 38.4 TBS Voice Radio Message 240930 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

During the afternoon he received the following instructions from COMTHIRDFLT: (1) at 1355 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) to advise COMTHIRDFLT of the earliest time he could join TG 38.2--Point OPTION 090°(T) speed fifteen knots,* (2) at 1710 to assume tactical command of TG's 38.2 and 38.4 and to operate in the general vicinity, keeping the groups concentrated until further orders,** (3) at 1714 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) to rendezvous with CTG 38.2 based on COMTHIRDFLT's new Point OPTION of 165°(T) speed eighteen knots to be effective at 1700,*** (4) at 1712 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) outlining COMTHIRDFLT's battle plan**** and (5) at 1819 to proceed westward at twenty knots.*****

During the day (a) enemy air activity over the force had been very light. Local patrols had been flown by the SAN JACINTO and BELLEAU WOOD and (b) TG 38.4, exclusive of these local patrols, had flown a total of seventy-two VF, fifty-six VB, eighteen VT and had lost one VF, one VB and two VT in combat with no operational losses. As a result at the end of the day CTG 38.4 had approximately eight VF, forty-three VB and fifty-three VT.

At 1830 CTG 38.4 was on course 285°(T), speed twenty-five knots.******

(2) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search Reconnaissance and Photographic Group), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

CTG 30.5, as on previous days, continued his air searches from Kossol Passage, Saipan and Tinian as shown on Plate X and Diagram "C".

During the morning while embarked in the HAMLIN (AV 15) in Ulithi he most likely received the various contact reports on the Japanese surface forces in the waters around the Philippines as well as COMTHIRDFLT's orders in connection therewith to his group commanders within TF 38.

Shortly before noon, he probably heard over the AOIC the second report of one of his planes flying in sector 335°(T) - 344°(T) out of Tinian on a large merchant ship and three destroyers in Latitude 28°-45'N, Longitude 141°-15'E, on course 300°(T) speed eighteen knots.*******

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* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240413 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info All TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240810 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTG 38.2, CTF 34, COMBATDIV 7.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240644 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info All TFC's of TF 38, CTF 34.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to All TFC's, TGC's of TF 38, info COMINCH, CINCPAC.

***** COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 240919 October 1944 to CTG 38.4.

****** Deck Log FRANKLIN, October 24th, 1944.

******* Plane 14 of Flight 223 Dispatch 240224 October 1944 to Any and all ships.

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During the afternoon he very likely learned of the actions decided upon by both COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 77 to disrupt the movement of enemy forces, but since the actions appeared to be developing beyond his area of responsibility, he appears to have made no unusual plans or preparations to assist.

By 1830 neither of his subordinate commanders searching (1) northwest out of Kossol Passage nor (2) west and northwest from Tinian had reported the results of the day's searches, although nothing of major significance had been sighted by either search exclusive of the contact described above.*

(2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific), 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

At the beginning of the day CTF 17 was still engrossed with the developing situation for he had been receiving reports from his own submarines and from CTF 71's submarines as well. He was, therefore, awaiting reports as to further contacts on enemy forces. He did not have long to wait for shortly after midnight, at 0032, he received a dispatch from CTF 71 which informed him that the ANGLER had reported a task force of four large ships plus escorts in Latitude 12°-40'N, Longitude 118°-58'E (about eighty miles northwest of Coron Island), on course 050°(T) speed eighteen knots, at 2130 on the 23rd,** and later, at 0220 (when it was received by CTF 79) he intercepted a dispatch from the GUITARRO to CTF 71 reporting an enemy task force, at 0030, consisting of fifteen to twenty ships including three probable battleships in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 119°-30'E (about thirty-five miles 055°(T) from the ANGLER point of contact or about seventy-eight miles northwest of Coron Island), on course 080°(T), speed eighteen knots.***

At 0430 he received a second dispatch from CTF 71 which informed him that the BREAM had reported two AOBA class cruisers and a large destroyer in Latitude 14°-05'N, Longitude 119°-40'E (southwest of Manila), on course 070°(T), speed nineteen knots and claiming two hits in one of the cruisers at 0430 on the 23rd.****

Just how he evaluated the above submarine contacts is not known, but it seems likely that even though the reported compositions were somewhat different he considered that they were all the same force. If this was his evaluation he would have been correct for this was the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.

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* CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 241216 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59, CTG 30.5; also CTU 30.5.3 Dispatch 240945 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59, CTG 30.5.

** CTF 71 Dispatch 231454 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info COMINCH.

*** GUITARRO Dispatch 231610 October 1944 to CTF 71.

**** CTF 71 Dispatch 231838 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.

Sometime after this, and most likely at 0443, he received the GUITARRO's second report on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, wherein the GUITARRO reported, "three definite battleships and two possible carriers headed south through Mindoro Strait at 0330."

During the forenoon he issued two separate submarine position reports. The first, at 0059, stated that six submarines in two wolf packs (HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA and PINTADO, ATULE, JALLAO) were proceeding westward at best speed to patrol Area DEPART and should arrive on station within twelve hours. Seven submarines (SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM, SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON, SNOOK), one (SAWFISH) out of torpedoes, patrolling Luzon Strait, three submarines (SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER, SALMON) off the northeastern tip of Formosa, and one (TANG) off the northwestern tip of Formosa.* The second dispatch, issued at 1137, stated that the POMFRET, SAILFISH, PARCHE, BARBEL, PINTADO, JALLAO and ATULE were at Saipan; the WHALE and SEAHORSE were north of Latitude 22°-00'N; the HADDOCK, TUNA and HALIBUT westbound were at Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 128°-00'E, while the BONEFISH eastbound was in Latitude 19°-00'N, Longitude 138°-00'E.** The information contained in this latter dispatch was incorrect. The PINTADO, JALLAO and ATULE had departed Saipan two days earlier (October 22nd) and, at this time, were transiting Area PARLOR en route their patrol station.

Also during the forenoon, but more likely around noon, he received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch reporting that a major enemy force including battleships had been sighted at 0810 just south of Mindoro on an easterly course.***

At 1335 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTF 38 and CTG 38.3 to the effect that he had not as yet located the enemy carrier strength and directing them to keep the area to the north under observation.**** He likely observed that this dispatch was not addressed to either CINCPAC or himself and therefore no particular action in this matter by his submarines was either expected or desired.

Whether or not he gave consideration at this time to disposing temporarily the two wolf packs en route to CONVOY COLLEGE along Latitude 20°-00'N as a scouting line and directing them to be particularly alert for the Japanese carrier force which was estimated to be in the Formosa - Philippine Sea Area is not known. While this is hindsight such a disposition although sound would have likely missed the carrier force as it would have passed by before the disposition could have been completed.

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* CTF 17 Dispatch 240059 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC COMINCH, 3RDFLT, CINCPAC, CTF 77, All TFC's 3RDFLT.

** CTF 17 Dispatch 240237 October 1944 to All Stations Interested in Friendly Subs.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232322 October 1944 to CTG's 38.3 and 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's 3RD and 7THFLT's.

**** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232355 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG 38.3, passed by Radio Honolulu 240405 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC.

IT IS LIKELY THAT HE FELT THAT (a) A DEPLOYMENT OF HIS SUBMARINES TO THE WESTWARD OF LUZON STRAIT WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE OF CONTACTS ON THE ENEMY, FOR ALL RECENT CONTACTS ON COMBATANT FORCES HAD BEEN TO THE SOUTH AND WEST OF LUZON, (IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE MAIN FORCE HAD NOT YET BEEN CONTACTED.) AND (b) SHOULD THE JAPANESE BE FORCED TO RETIRE THEY WOULD DO SO TO THE WESTWARD OF LUZON AND, IF HEADED FOR THE EMPIRE, WOULD LIKELY PASS TO THE WESTWARD OF LUZON STRAIT WHERE HE HAD A MAJOR CONCENTRATION OF SUBMARINES. THIS CONCEPT IS SUPPORTED BY THE FACT THAT AT THIS TIME HE MADE NO CHANGES IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS EITHER TO CONVOY COLLEGE SUBMARINES OR TO THE TWO WOLF PACKS REFERRED TO ABOVE EN ROUTE TO THAT AREA.

During the afternoon he awaited additional news of the movements of enemy forces and of Allied reaction against them for it was of course clear to him that the Japanese forces off Mindoro were within range of Allied aircraft and therefore some kind of air action could be expected.

Later in the afternoon he likely learned from CINCPAC of a dispatch from CTF 77 (a) reporting that an enemy force estimated to consist of two BB, four CA, four CL and ten DD had been discovered and was under attack in the eastern Sulu Sea and which might arrive Leyte Gulf this night and (b) directing the addressees to make preparations for a night engagement.*

At about 1700 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received a battle plan issued by COMTHIRDFLT to the THIRD Fleet to the effect that (a) certain units of his command "will be formed as TF 34" and (b) it was to "engage decisively at long range" and (c) carriers of TG 38.3 and 38.4 were to be conducted clear of surface fighting.** HE LIKELY WAS QUITE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT HE WAS NOT INCLUDED AS AN ACTION ADDRESSEE FOR IT WAS CLEAR THAT SHOULD AN ENGAGEMENT OCCUR WHEREIN THE JAPANESE WERE DEFEATED, ALLIED SUBMARINES MIGHT WELL BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY.

At 1816 he sent a dispatch to the ICEFISH that her patrol time had been extended until November 5th and directing her upon the arrival of the PINTADO wolf pack on October 27th or 28th to join that pack.***

At this time from the information he had gained from dispatches addressed to him or intercepted by him and from what he had learned at CINCPAC headquarters (his headquarters were also at Pearl Harbor) it was clear that although enemy forces had been contacted on easterly courses through the Philippines friendly surface units were being disposed to counter these movements.

He likely studied his running estimate of the situation to see what courses of action he might take to support these Allied movements should he be required to do so.

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* CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3, 70.1, All TFC's 3RDFLT, CAAF SOWESPAC, info COM3RDFLT, All TGC's 3RD and 7THFLT's, CINCSWPA.

** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 240612 October 1944 to All TFC's 3RDFLT, All TGC's TF 38, info CINCPAC, COMINCH.

*** CTF 17 Dispatch 240912 October 1944 to ICEFISH, info CINCPAC.

However, although he did not redeploy his CONVOY COLLEGE submarines he nevertheless decided that it would be wise to inform them of the situation and, therefore, at 1830 he sent them the following dispatch:

"It appears that enemy is assembling most of their available strength in vicinity of Coron Bay (located in group of islands to northward of Palawan). Subs in CONVOY COLLEGE should be particularly alert for additional units passing through Luzon Straits and for cripples heading north. Subs in Area DELETE pay particular attention to vicinity Cape Bojeador. Information concerning any southbound enemy units is particularly desired."*

It seems clear that as of this time he had not been informed of the results of the air strikes against the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force nor the air strikes against the THIRD Section. Actually the first summary of results was forwarded by CTF 38 to COMTHIRDFLT at 1830 and was received by CTF 17 at about 1938.

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE

The submarines SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM, SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON and SNOOK continued to patrol CONVOY COLLEGE as before. The weather in the area was moderate with wind and sea from the northeast.

(1) SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack) patrolled Area DELETE on the surface during darkness, except when attacking, and submerged during daylight. At the beginning of this day it conducted several attacks on an enemy convoy which had been originally contacted on the previous evening by the SAWFISH.

(a) The SAWFISH, which had expended the last of her torpedoes in an attack on the previous night, was now trailing the convoy and coaching the other submarines in the area into contact, namely ICEFISH, DRUM and SNOOK.**

The SAWFISH, learning that the SNOOK had completed an attack, commenced leaving the area so that other submarines would have a clear field to attack.**

At 0429 the wolf pack commander requested his submarines to inform him of the result of their attacks. The DRUM replied that she was being chased by four escorts but the ICEFISH did not reply. At 0605 the SAWFISH submerged to patrol the western edge of Area DELETE.**

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* CTF 17 Dispatch 240923 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE, info COMINCH.
** War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944.

After an uneventful day, at 1925, she surfaced and some time afterward the wolf pack commander communicated with the ICEFISH and DRUM once again requesting information as to (a) their attacks and (b) whether they both still desired an extension of patrol. Each submarine replied in the affirmative stating that she had sunk one ship of the convoy.*

At about this time the SAWFISH set course for Balintang Channel and shortly thereafter (2200) the wolf pack commander sent a dispatch to CTF 17 (a) reporting the results of the wolf pack attacks on the convoy claiming three ships sunk and four additional ships damaged and (b) requesting (1) routing for the SAWFISH and (2) extension of patrol for the ICEFISH and DRUM.**

Sometime prior to 2300 he received a dispatch from CTF 17 quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 17, 0000 - 1830, October 24th" directing the CONVOY COLLEGE submarines to be alert for (1) enemy units passing through Luzon Straits, (2) northbound cripples, and (3) southbound units in vicinity of Cape Bojeador,*** for at 2300, while departing the area, he directed (a) the ICEFISH and DRUM to patrol at discretion and (b) their attention to the above dispatch. He was not concerned about the Cape Bojeador area for if the original patrol schedule for this wolf pack was followed they would be in that area the next day.*

As a result of this dispatch the wolf pack was dissolved and the ICEFISH and DRUM commenced operating independently.

THE ACTION OF THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER SEEMS QUESTIONABLE FOR HIS WOLF PACK HAD BEEN ASSIGNED IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE CAPE BOJEADOR AREA AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THESE FUNCTIONS AS COORDINATED PATROL GROUP (WOLF PACK) THAN OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY. IN THIS CONNECTION, PRESENT DAY (1958) DOCTRINE POINTS OUT THAT IN GROUP PATROLLING THE PRIMARY ADVANTAGE IS THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY IS INCREASED.****

(b) The ICEFISH, with contact on the convoy, was preparing to attack from the port bow when she received a message from the DRUM indicating that the DRUM was attacking also from port. She commenced closing for the attack, detected aircraft and sent a message to the SAWFISH and DRUM that she was diving to attack from the port flank. At 0052 she fired four torpedoes at a large unidentified ship but all missed. One minute later she fired a second salvo of two torpedoes at an escort which also missed, but she believed that one of these had unexpectedly hit the ship fired at originally. At 0352 she surfaced with radar contact to the north and commenced closing while tracking. At 0413 she sent a

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* War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944.

** SAWFISH Dispatch 241338 October 1944 to CTF 17.

*** CTF 17 Dispatch 240923 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE, info COMINCH.

**** NWP 23 Submarine Operations, Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, February 1953, Chapter 6, Paragraph 621.

contact report to the DRUM and SAWFISH adding that her attack was completed. At 0420, aircraft having been detected, she submerged. She surfaced again at 0519 but, with the coming daylight and aircraft closing, she submerged for the day at 0555.*

In these attacks she is credited with sinking the cargo ship TENSHIN MARU (4236 tons).**

A patrol vessel was sighted at 1255 but otherwise the day's patrol was uneventful and she surfaced at 1955.* It appears that she had set course for northwestern Luzon (Diagram "C").

* * *

At 2300 she received orders from the wolf pack commander directing (a) the DRUM and ICEFISH to patrol at discretion and (b) attention to CTF 17's dispatch which, among other items, ordered this group to patrol in the vicinity of Cape Bojeador.***

(c) The Drum continued to gain attack position on the enemy convoy and at 0004 learned from the ICEFISH that there were enemy aircraft in the vicinity. She sent a message to the wolf pack that she had altered plans and at 0130, while observing the SNOOK attacking from the starboard flank,**** she commenced attacking from the port flank. At 0203 she fired a salvo of four torpedoes from her stern tubes with no recorded target designation and all torpedoes missed. She continued trailing from the port flank while the SNOOK again attacked from the starboard flank at which time she started in for a second attack but was detected by the escorts and at 0400 was driven away. At 0510 she advised the wolf pack of this development with the hope that another submarine might attack during the absence of her escorts. At 0619 she submerged for the day. At 0700 she commenced an approach on a convoy of four cargo ships and one destroyer on course 050°(T). At 0757 she fired four bow tubes at a cargo ship and recorded three hits while diving deep to evade.***** She is credited with sinking the passenger cargo ship SHIKISAN MARU (4725 tons) in Latitude 20°-27'N, Longitude 118°-31'E.**

* * *

At 1853 she surfaced and set course for her assigned area (presumably the area off Cape Bojeador) and at 2300 received orders from the retiring wolf pack commander in the SAWFISH to patrol at discretion.

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* War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944.

** Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U. S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

*** War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944.

**** War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.

***** War Patrol Report DRUM, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 056, undated.

(2) SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON

This wolf pack which was supposed to be patrolling along the northern edge of Area DETECT was actually disposed as follows: (a) the SHARK in the northeastern corner of Area DESTROY, (b) the SEADRAGON in the northwestern corner of Area DETECT and (c) the BLACKFISH in the Blind Bombing Zone just north of Area DETECT. These submarines patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.*

The wolf pack commander in the SHARK was aware of the SAWFISH's contact to the south but did not seem interested at this time, preferring the northern part of his area where good hunting was reported by China-based planes.**

Sometime during the day the SHARK was sunk, which reduced the wolf pack to two submarines.

(a) The wolf pack commander, proceeding northeastward, was apparently monitoring the action of the SAWFISH's wolf pack to the southward, but since his own wolf pack was largely in the northern part of Area DETECT he probably believed he could be of little assistance. However, at 0352, as the convoy continued northward, he apparently changed his mind, for at this time he ordered his pack to patrol along Latitude 20°-30'N,*** which was along the northern border of Area DELETE in which area the SAWFISH wolf pack was attacking the convoy.

At 0418, upon request, he was advised by the SNOOK that the convoy, now consisting of but three ships, was in Latitude 19°-54'N, Longitude 118°-14'E.***

Between 0500 and 0610 he made several contact reports on the convoy and at 0610 he reported his position as Latitude 20°-25'N, Longitude 118°-21'E, course 215°(T) reporting aircraft and directed his units to close the convoy submerging along the course line to conduct an attack.***

Since the 0610 report from the SHARK is her last recorded transmission it is assumed that she conducted an attack on the convoy. Some time during the day she was sunk, but where and how is not known, for no Japanese records available to this analysis made any claims, possibly due to the fact that they failed to realize their success.

(b) The BLACKFISH, northernmost submarine of this wolf pack, at 0300 was patrolling along the 100 fathom curve south of Formosa Bank. At about 0352 she received orders from the SHARK to proceed south and patrol along Latitude 20°-30'N,*** to cover the northbound convoy.

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* Deck Logs BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON, October 24th, 1944.

** War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report CTG 17.11, Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 composed of SHARK, BLACKFISH and SEADRAGON, Serial 0002, undated.

SHE CHANGED COURSE AND WHILE PROCEEDING SOUTH OVERHEARD MANY CONVERSATIONS ON THE WOLF PACK FREQUENCY FROM UNITS OF THE (a) ESCOLAR GROUP IN TSUSHIMA STRAIT, SOME 800 MILES TO THE NORTHEASTWARD WHICH, STRANGELY ENOUGH, WERE ALSO CONDUCTING AN ATTACK AT THIS TIME, (b) SAWFISH WOLF PACK AND (c) HER OWN (SHARK) PACK.*

At 0500 she received the first of several reports from the wolf pack commander in the SHARK concerning the convoy.** In accordance with orders she submerged at 0615.* Nothing of interest occurred until 1700. At this time the Commanding Officer, feeling that he should have contacted the convoy by this time, unless it had been completely destroyed, altered course to the north to shorten the run to overtake the convoy if it had passed undetected.* At 1917 he surfaced and proceeded eastward to his new patrol station within Area DETECT. The crew had improved in health with only a few sick upon surfacing.*

Commencing with sunset he endeavored at intervals to communicate with the SHARK but to no avail.** As a result of this he assumed command of the reduced wolf pack (BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON) as acting wolf pack commander,** presumably until such time as the SNOOK reported, as the Commanding Officer SNOOK was senior to him. THIS RAPID ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND WAS IN GREAT CONTRAST TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER CROAKER'S FAILURE TO ASSUME TEMPORARY COMMAND OF THE WOLF PACK EVEN AFTER HE HAD FAILED, OVER A PERIOD OF SIX DAYS, TO CONTACT THE ESCOLAR.

(c) Meanwhile the SEADRAGON was also following the activity in the vicinity on the wolf pack radio frequency and should have received the same information as the BLACKFISH. At 0352, although not mentioned in her war patrol report she should have received the order from the SHARK to proceed south and patrol Latitude 20°-30'N. At 0437 because of enemy aircraft she was forced to submerge but surfaced again at 0545.***

At 0615 she learned that the SHARK had radar contact on a single freighter and therefore increased speed to gain contact. At 0730 she sighted a ship through her periscope at a range of twelve miles but the target worked around to the south and she was unable to close. She submerged at 0850, and at 0920 sighted three freighters with a CHIDORI escort making seven knots. She immediately commenced her approach.*** At 1055 she fired four torpedoes at the leading ship and hearing two explosions dove deep to avoid the escort. At 1214 having previously returned to periscope depth she fired four torpedoes at another freighter which sank almost immediately. She again dove deep to avoid the escort.***

At 1404 after returning to periscope depth she fired four torpedoes at the freighter which sank almost immediately. She again underwent a depth charge attack by the escort but, having received a total of some forty-eight depth charges during these attacks, believed that the escort was getting low.***

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* War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 1944.

** War Patrol Report CTG 17.11, Report of Coordinated War Patrol TG 17.11 composed of SHARK, BLACKFISH and SEADRAGON, Serial 002, undated.

*** War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.

At 1447 she again returned to periscope depth but the only ship visible was the CHIDORI on the horizon.* In these attacks the SEADRAGON is credited with sinking two passenger-cargo ships (DAITEN MARU (4642 tons) and KOKURYU MARU (7369 tons)) and a third cargo ship (EIKO MARU (1343 tons)).**

(3) SNOOK

This submarine acting independently was attempting to contact the convoy reported by the SAWFISH on the previous night. At 0022 she contacted the convoy by radar and estimated it to consist of from seven to ten ships with at least three escorts, zigzagging on base course 345°(T), speed seven knots. At 0036 she fired (a) four torpedoes at a large merchant ship which she noted settling and (b) one torpedo by mistake.

At 0219 she notified the wolf pack by voice radio as to her own and the convoy's positions. At 0310 with the DRUM nearby she fired six additional torpedoes, three at a large cargo ship and three more at a following ship and observed one hit in each. She was trailed by the escorts and at 0318 fired four torpedoes from her stern tubes "down the throat" at the nearest escort, as a result of which the escort abandoned the chase.

At 0415 upon request she gave the position of the convoy and reported three ships remaining.

At 0519 having learned that the SHARK had dived for a dawn attack she fired five torpedoes at another large ship and claimed two hits.***

In these three attacks she sank three ships, viz. the passenger-cargo ship SHINSEI MARU (5863 tons), the oiler KIKUSUI MARU (3887 tons) and the cargo ship ARISAN MARU (6886 tons).**

At 0623 she submerged and at 0740 heard torpedo hits and depth charges which she thought were the result of the SHARK attacking. She now retraced the convoys route to look for cripples or survivors.***

* * *

At 1923 she surfaced and attempted to communicate with the wolf pack commander in the SHARK but was unable to make contact.*** About this time she sent a report to CTF 17 reporting the sinking of three freighters and the probable sinking of a fourth.**** The remainder of the day she continued to hear depth charges but patrolled uneventfully

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* War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.

** Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

*** War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.

**** War Diary CTF 17 (Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet), October, 1944.

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The convoy attacked by the submarines of CONVOY COLLEGE was the HARUKAZE convoy "of twelve ships which had speedily been organized when dispersal was ordered for Manila shipping" and departed that port on October 21st. The Japanese report thereon states that "between 1730 October 23rd and the evening of the 24th the convoy underwent repeated submarine attacks in the vicinity of Latitude 20°-00'N, Longitude 118°-00'E" and was broken up and destroyed with ten ships being sunk by torpedoes.* The escorts apparently escaped undamaged. Flying boats were dispatched to the area on the night of October 23rd and the destroyer UME was dispatched from Takao on the 24th to escort the remainder of the convoy and to neutralize the one or more enemy submarines.*

Post war records show that only nine ships were sunk by the surviving submarines, including one by the SAWFISH on the previous night.** It may be, then, that the SHARK heretofore not credited, may have sunk at least one ship of the convoy. At any rate the Japanese credit this group with an additional ship.*

(4) HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA

As the day began this coordinated attack group (wolf pack) was about to enter the eastern edge of Area VESTIBULE en route from Saipan to its patrol station in CONVOY COLLEGE. It proceeded on the surface during daylight as well as darkness except for short dives, evidently for trim and training purposes.*** It entered CONVOY COLLEGE safety lane at about 1700,**** and headed for Area DESTROY where it was to patrol until the end of the month.***** During the day one friendly and several unidentified aircraft were sighted.******

(5) PINTADO, ATULE, JALLAO

This wolf pack was proceeding westerly through Area PARLOR en route from Saipan to its patrol station in CONVOY COLLEGE. The units proceeded on the surface during daylight as well as darkness except for training dives or when necessary to avoid detection by aircraft.*******

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* War Diary 1ST Escort Force, October 1944, WDC Document 161719, NA 11609.

** Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

*** Deck Logs HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA, October 24th, 1944.

**** War Patrol Report TUNA, Report of 12TH War Patrol, Serial 014, December 2nd, 1944.

***** COMSUBPAC Submarine Operational History World War II, Volume 1, Page 74.

****** War Patrol Reports HADDOCK, Report of 10TH War Patrol, No Serial, December 10th, 1944; HALIBUT, Report of 10TH War Patrol, Serial 024, December 1st, 1944; TUNA, Report of 12TH War Patrol, Serial 014, December 2nd, 1944.

******* Deck Logs, PINTADO, ATULE, JALLAO, October 24th, 1944.

At 1047 the ATULE reported contact on an enemy submarine and at 1105 the JALLAO reported sighting a periscope.* However, unknown to them, both contacts seem to have been false as there appear to have been no enemy submarines in the area. During the day there were several aircraft contacts.** The wolf pack continued toward its patrol area and by midnight had entered Area VESTIBULE.

(6) BONEFISH

At midnight the BONEFISH, en route from patrol to Saipan proceeding on easterly courses, was about to depart the CONVOY COLLEGE safety lane. She proceeded on the surface during daylight as well as darkness. She made two contacts on unidentified flying boats and was forced to submerge for a short time to avoid detection by one of them.***

Since she is no longer participating in KING II operations she will be dropped from further discussion but will be carried on the diagrams for reference.

(b) Northwest Coast of Formosa.

The TANG patrolled on the surface in the northern part of Formosa Strait. Upon reaching deeper water she submerged at 0600 for the day's patrol. The day passed uneventfully and upon surfacing at dark, about 1900, she set course for Turnabout Island off the China Coast. When within about eighteen miles of the island, she made radar contact on a convoy of at least fourteen ships escorted by one fleet type destroyer and twelve destroyer escorts. She commenced closing for attack.****

She selected three targets and fired six torpedoes, two at each target, from an average range of about 1,000 yards. She recorded six hits. She then selected two more targets and fired three more torpedoes at them, one at a large modern tanker and two at a transport. One of the torpedoes directed at the transport appeared to have been intercepted by a destroyer.****

About an hour later after reloading the last two torpedoes forward and re-estimating the situation she started in to sink the already damaged ships. She selected a damaged transport as her target and fired her remaining two torpedoes at this target. The last torpedo fired was observed to broach and curve sharply to the left in a tight turn striking the TANG in her after torpedo room with the result that she immediately sank stern first in thirty fathoms of water.****

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* War Patrol Report PINTADO, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 01, January 1st, 1945.

** War Patrol Reports ATULE, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 013, December 11th, 1944; JALLAO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 015, December 10th, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

**** War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 10th, 1945.

This engagement is believed to have lasted until about 0200 October 25th, which is the approximate time of the TANG's sinking.*

As a result of these attacks she is credited with sinking the cargo ships KOGEN MARU (6600 tons) and MATSUMOTO MARU (7024 tons) in Latitude 25°-06'N, Longitude 119°-31'E.** (Also, the Japanese report gives these sinkings in Latitude 28°-07'N, Longitude 119°-45'E. This is clearly in error as this places the sinking on the Chinese mainland.)***

A small number of the crew, including the commanding officer, survived and were taken prisoners by the Japanese. The commanding officer, with the stories of the eight other survivors, prepared his report from memory about one year later upon release from a Japanese prisoner of war camp.****

Due to the nature of this report only general times and lists of events, subject to the fallacies of memory, are available. The attempt to reconstruct the movements of this submarine with conflicting information is difficult.

(c) Northeast Coast of Formosa.

This area, northeastward of Formosa, was being patrolled by the SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER and SALMON, which patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.***** The day was uneventful until 1500 when the TRIGGER sighted and photographed a hospital ship identified as the BUENOS AIRES MARU. Near the end of the day the SILVERSIDES and TRIGGER rendezvoused to exchange information.****** Although enemy aircraft were sighted this group made no contacts of importance.*******

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* Statement of Commander Lawrence Savadkin, USN, January 10th, 1957, which statement is supported by other references both Allied and Japanese.

** Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

*** The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ FEC, February 1952.

**** War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 10th, 1945.

***** Deck Logs SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER, SALMON, October 24th, 1944.

****** War Patrol Report TRIGGER, Report of 10TH War Patrol, Serial 033, November 3rd, 1944.

******* War Patrol Reports SILVERSIDES, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 045, November 23rd, 1944; TRIGGER, Report of 10TH War Patrol, Serial 033, November 3rd, 1944; SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 0-16, November 10th, 1944.

(d) MARU MORGUE

The submarines SEA DOG, BILLFISH, SAURY, BURRFISH and STERLET continued patrolling in the Nansei Shoto area as on the previous day. Area ABLAZE was still unpatrolled. They patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.* Except for the BURRFISH their patrols were uneventful.

It will be recalled that the BURRFISH had been heading to close the convoy attacked by the SEA DOG on October 22nd. At 1407 she sighted smoke and changed course to intercept. At 1945 she sighted a convoy which she later evaluated as consisting of three medium ships with five or more escorts. At midnight the BURRFISH was still tracking the convoy.**

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo

The CROAKER and PERCH, although members of a wolf pack, continued to operate independently and at the beginning of this day were some 120 miles apart. The CROAKER was some forty miles northwest of Cheju Do while the PERCH was some 100 miles south of that island.

(1) The CROAKER, on the surface, was proceeding southward to the vicinity of the lifeguard station assigned her for the following day. At 0315 she made radar contact on a convoy of at least eight merchant ships and five escorts. She sent a contact report to the ESCOLAR (which she did not know had been sunk on the 17th) and to the PERCH.***

At 0424 she fired five torpedoes (bow tubes), three at a large freighter and two at a second freighter which was lagging behind. At 0509 she fired her remaining four torpedoes (stern tubes) at two freighters. With all torpedoes expended she commenced clearing the area. At 0554 she submerged for the day. She is credited with sinking the cargo ship MIKAGE MARU (2741 tons).****

At 1834 she surfaced and proceeded towards her lifeguard station for the following day in Latitude 32°-00'N, Longitude 129°-00'E, about thirty-five miles due east of Danjo Gunto.

IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY, SINCE HE HAD HEARD NOTHING FROM THE ESCOLAR SINCE 2300, OCTOBER 17TH, THE COMMANDING OFFICER CROAKER PERSISTED IN SENDING HIS CONTACT REPORTS TO THAT SHIP RATHER THAN TO HAVE ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE REDUCED WOLF PACK AND TO HAVE ADVISED CTF 17 TO THIS EFFECT.

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* Deck Logs SEA DOG, BILLFISH, SAURY, BURRFISH, STERLET, October 24th, 1944.

** War Patrol Report BURRFISH, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 027, December 2nd, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944.

**** Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

THIS MATTER IS DISCUSSED MORE FULLY IN VOLUME III UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 17 (SUBMARINE FORCE, PACIFIC), OCTOBER 20TH" AS THIS SITUATION HAD OCCURRED EARLIER.* IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT THE FACT THAT HE HAD SENT A CONTACT REPORT TO BOTH THE ESCOLAR AND TO CTF 17 CREATED THE IMPRESSION AT CTF 17'S HEADQUARTERS, AS WELL AS AMONG THE SUBMARINES IN THE EMPIRE AREA, THAT THE ESCOLAR WAS STILL AFLOAT WITH THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER IN FULL COMAND, WHEN IN FACT SHE HAD LONG BEEN SUNK. CLEARLY THIS WOLF PACK WAS OPERATED IN AN UNUSUALLY LOOSE FASHION!

(2) PERCH**

The PERCH was patrolling as on the previous day across the Nagasaki - Shanghai shipping lane where she was hoping to intercept a convoy moving up from Formosa Strait. At 0415, while on the surface, having received the CROAKER's contact report she headed toward the reported position and at 0453 made radar contact on a convoy of six ships (three large and three escorts). At 0505 she sent a contact report thereon to both the CROAKER and ESCOLAR. The inclusion of the ESCOLAR as an addressee indicates that the Commanding Officer PERCH either thought that the ESCOLAR was still operating or, having noted that the CROAKER had included the ESCOLAR in her contact report, felt that he should do likewise.

By 0619 she had closed the target to four miles but owing to the light conditions submerged to complete the attack as a result of which, coupled with an enemy change of course, she was unable to attack and the convoy escaped. The rest of the day was uneventful excepting that she was spotted by a patrol craft but succeeded in avoiding it.

At 1820 she surfaced. Her patrol was otherwise uneventful.

* * *

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT DURING THESE ATTACKS ON SEPARATE CONVOYS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THESE TWO SUBMARINES WAS REPORTEDLY INTERCEPTED BY THE BLACKFISH SOME 800 MILES TO THE SOUTHWESTWARD.*** THIS INCIDENT TENDS TO ILLUSTRATE THE FACT THAT THE RANGE OF COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO CONTROL.

(f) HIT PARADE

(1) The approaches to Bungo Suido.

The BESUGO and RONQUIL as a reduced wolf pack continued to guard the approaches to Bungo Suido. At 0310 the BESUGO contacted by radar what she estimated to be a large ship with an escort on southwesterly courses at about twelve knots and advised the RONQUIL. The RONQUIL replied that she would be ready to attack at 0400. As a result of this dispatch

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* Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (Nav Pers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter I (B) (2) (e), Nagasaki - Sasebo.

** War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

*** War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 1944.

the wolf pack commander assigned the BESUGO to the port flank and the RONQUIL to the starboard flank. At 0345 she contacted the target visually and discovered it to consist of one large ship and one slightly smaller with three or four escorts. She endeavored to get into a favorable firing position but was unable to do so. Therefore, at 0413 she fired three torpedoes at a destroyer escort which blew up.* This ship appears to have been CD 132.** The BESUGO then submerged.***

At 0637 she returned to periscope depth and sighting nothing began clearing the area. She patrolled submerged during the remaining daylight hours. She sighted several aircraft.

At 1831 she surfaced and encountered radar equipped aircraft.

At the beginning of this day RONQUIL notified BESUGO that she was entering the BESUGO's area and promptly received orders to attack the BESUGO's contact from the starboard flank. She made radar contact at 0405 and at 0407 sighted a flash on the contact bearing followed by flames which she estimated was a result of the BESUGO's attack. At 0415 she received an alert signal from the BESUGO which meant that the submarine was being forced to submerge.

The RONQUIL now commenced her approach. At 0529 she fired six torpedoes at a large tanker but all missed. Shortly thereafter, at 0533, she fired four additional torpedoes down the throat at a destroyer but again all torpedoes missed.**** She surfaced several times during the morning to gain attack position on the convoy but enemy aircraft forced her to submerge. She remained submerged for the rest of the day until 2040 when she surfaced in poor visibility.

* * *

At about 2000 the wolf pack commander directed the RONQUIL to shift her patrol area to the southern half of Area SEVEN and the BESUGO to the northern part of Area EIGHT in order to cover the approaches to Van Dieman Strait (at the southern end of Kyushu) and the east coast of Kyushu.

(2) Approaches to Kii Suido.

The GABILAN patrolled uneventfully off Kii Suido on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight. She made no contacts of importance.*****

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* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.

** The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ FEC, February 1952.

*** Deck Log BESUGO, October 24th, 1944.

**** War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.

***** War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.

(3) Approaches to Tokyo.

The GREENLING and TAMBOR continued to patrol this area. The TAMBOR remained in the eastern approaches to Tokyo Bay while the GREENLING was further westward and appears to have been attempting to cover the approaches to the bays of southern Honshu. Both submarines patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight. Neither submarine made any contacts of importance during this period. The visibility in the vicinity of the TAMBOR continued to be low.

(C) China - Burma - India Theater, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, 0000 - 1830, October 24th.

On this day the two-plane search over the South China Sea was flown as scheduled by B-24 aircraft of the FOURTEENTH Air Force (Diagram "C") and was negative—no sightings were made.

The night searches were not flown presumably due to weather.*

* AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign, letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

CHAPTER V - MEANS AVAILABLE AND OPPOSED, OCTOBER 24TH - 25TH

(A) FORCES ENGAGED

(1) ALLIED FORCES

(a) BATTLE LINE

WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA	6 OBB
CONY, AULICK, CLAXTON, SIGOURNEY, WELLES, THORN	6 DD

(b) LEFT FLANK FORCE

LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS	3 CA
DENVER, COLUMBIA	2 CL
NEWCOMB, RICHARD P. LEARY, ALBERT W. GRANT, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, BENNION, LEUTZE, ROBINSON, BRYANT, HALFORD	9 DD

(c) RIGHT FLANK FORCE

PHOENIX, BOISE	2 CL
SHROPSHIRE (RAN)	1 CA
HUTCHINS, BACHE, DALY, BEALE, KILLEN, ARUNTA (RAN)	6 DD

(d) DESRON FIFTY-FOUR

REMEY, MC GOWAN, MELVIN, MC DERMUT, MONSSEN	5 DD

(e) MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS 39 MTB

(f) TOTAL: 6 OBB, 4 CA, 4 CL, 26 DD, 39 MTB

(2) JAPANESE FORCES

(a) THIRD SECTION, FIRST STRIKING FORCE

YAMASHIRO, FUSO	2 OBB
MOGAMI	1 CA
MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, SHIGURE	4 DD

(b) SECOND STRIKING FORCE

NACHI, ASHIGARA	2 CA
ABUKUMA	1 CL
SHIRANUHI, KASUMI, AKIBONO, USHIO	4 DD

(c) TOTAL: 2 OBB, 3 CA, 1 CL, 8 DD

(B) ARMAMENT

(1) ALLIED FORCES

(a) TG 77.2

1. WEST VIRGINIA
(eight 16"/45, sixteen 5"/38 DP)

MARYLAND
(eight 16"/45, eight 5"/51, eight 5"/25 DP)

TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA
(twelve 14"/50, sixteen 5"/38 DP)

MISSISSIPPI
(twelve 14"/50, six 5"/51, eight 5"/25 DP)

PENNSYLVANIA
(twelve 14"/45, sixteen 5"/38 DP)

LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS
(nine 8"/55, eight 5"/25 DP)

DENVER, COLUMBIA
(twelve 6"/47, twelve 5"/38 DP)

CONY, AULICK, CLAXTON, SIGOURNEY, NEWCOMB,
RICHARD P. LEARY, ALBERT W. GRANT, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS,
BENNION, LEUTZE, ROBINSON, BRYANT, HALFORD
(five 5"/38 DP, ten 21" torpedo tubes)

WELLES, THORN
(four 5"/38 DP, five 21" torpedo tubes)

2. TOTAL: Sixteen 16"/45, thirty-six 14"/50,
twelve 14"/45, twenty-seven 8"/55,
twenty-four 6"/47, fourteen 5"/51,
161 5"/38, forty 5"/25 and 140
21" torpedo tubes

(b) TG 77.3

1. PHOENIX, BOISE
(fifteen 6"/47, eight 5"/25 DP)

SHROPSHIRE
(eight 8"/50, eight 4", eight 21" torpedo tubes)

HUTCHINS, BACHE, DALY, BEALE, KILLEN
(five 5"/38 DP, ten 21" torpedo tubes)

ARUNTA
(six 4.7", two 4", four 21" torpedo tubes)

2. TOTAL: Eight 8"/50, thirty 6"/47, twenty-five 5"/38 DP, sixteen 5"/25 DP, six 4.7", ten 4" and sixty-two 21" torpedo tubes

(c) DESRON FIFTY-FOUR

1. REMEY, MC GOWAN, MELVIN, MC DERMUT, MONSSEN
(five 5"/38 DP, ten 21" torpedo tubes)

2. TOTAL: Twenty-five 5"/38 DP, fifty 21" torpedo tubes

(d) GRAND TOTAL: Sixteen 16"/45, thirty-six 14"/50, twelve 14"/45, twenty-seven 8"/55, eight 8"/50, fifty-four 6"/47, fourteen 5"/51, 211 5"/38, fifty-six 5"/25, six 4.7", ten 4", 252 21" torpedo tubes

(2) JAPANESE FORCES*

(a) THIRD SECTION

1. YAMASHIRO, FUSO
(twelve 14.2"/45, fourteen 5.91"/50, sixteen 5"/40)

MOGAMI
(six 8"/50, eight 5"/40, twelve 24" torpedo tubes)

MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO
(four 5"/50,** eight 24" torpedo tubes)

SHIGURE
(four 5"/50,** six 24" torpedo tubes)

2. TOTAL: Twenty-four 14.2"/45, six 8"/50, twenty-eight 5.91"/50, sixteen 5"/50, forty 5"/40, forty-two 24" torpedo tubes

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* Information on Japanese armament contained in U. S. Army JAPAN, Office of the Military History Officer letter USARJ MH 314.7 of December 30th, 1957 to President, Naval War College.

** Not anti-aircraft weapons but capable of 75 degree elevation.

(b) SECOND STRIKING FORCE

1. NACHI, ASHIGARA
(ten 7.87"/50, eight 5"/40, sixteen 24" torpedo tubes)

ABUKUMA
(five 5.5"/50, two 5"/40, eight 24" torpedo tubes)

SHIRANUHI, KASUMI
(four 5"/50,* eight 24" torpedo tubes)

AKEBONO, USHIO
(four 5"/50,* nine 24" torpedo tubes)

2. TOTAL: Twenty 7.87"/50, five 5.5"/50, sixteen 5"/50, eighteen 5"/40, seventy-four 24" torpedo tubes

(c) GRAND TOTAL: Twenty-four 14.2"/45, six 8"/50, twenty 7.87"/50, twenty-eight 5.91"/50, five 5.5"/50, thirty-two 5"/50, fifty-eight 5"/40, 116 24" torpedo tubes

(C) AMMUNITION AND TORPEDOES ON BOARD AT 0000, OCTOBER 25TH

(1) ALLIED

(a) BATTLESHIPS (16-inch)

1. WEST VIRGINIA	AP 200**	HC 176***
	Torpedoes	None
2. MARYLAND****	AP 240	HC 445
	Torpedoes	None
3. Average Projectiles Per Gun (16-inch)	AP 27.5	HC 38.8

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* Not anti-aircraft weapons but capable of 75 degree elevation.

** This information is found in a Headquarters 14TH Naval District letter of December 13th, 1945 signed by Rear Admiral (then Captain) John B. Hefferman, USN (Ret) to Commanding Officers of the Battleships at Leyte. It seems probable that the Commanding Officer WEST VIRGINIA had the information requested written in in pencil on the letter and returned directly to the sender.

*** Ibid.; also Action Report WEST VIRGINIA, Fire Support Leyte Island Operation, October 18th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0666, November 1st, 1944.

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Bombardment of Leyte Island, Serial 0208, October 31st, 1944; also Letter from Rear Admiral (then Captain) John B. Hefferman, USN (Ret) to Rear Admiral (then Captain) Samuel E. Morison, USNR (Ret) of January 23rd, 1946.

(b) BATTLESHIPS (14-inch)

1. MISSISSIPPI*	AP 201	HC 543
	Torpedoes	None
2. TENNESSEE**	AP 396	HC 262
	Torpedoes	None
3. CALIFORNIA	AP 276***	HC 78****
	Torpedoes	None
4. PENNSYLVANIA*****	AP 360	HC 93
	Torpedoes	None
5. Average Projectiles Per Gun (14-inch)	AP 25.7	HC 20.3
(c) Average Projectiles Per Gun (Battleships)	AP 26.1	HC 26.5
(d) CRUISERS, HEAVY (8-inch)******		
1. LOUISVILLE	AP 649	HC 564
	Torpedoes	None

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* Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944; Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Bombardment of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 19th - 20th, 1944, including collateral supporting actions during period October 21st - 24th, 1944, Serial 0139, November 23rd, 1944; also Letter from Rear Admiral (then Captain) John B. Hefferman, USN (Ret) to Rear Admiral (then Captain) Samuel E. Morison, USNR (Ret) of January 23rd, 1946.

** Action Report TENNESSEE, Fire Support Delivered during Leyte Operation, Serial 0110, October 31st, 1944; also Letter from Rear Admiral (then Captain) John B. Hefferman, USN (Ret) to Rear Admiral (then Captain) Samuel E. Morison, USNR (Ret) of January 23rd, 1946.

*** Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report CALIFORNIA, Operations off Island of Leyte, P. I., October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.

***** Action Report PENNSYLVANIA, Surigao Strait, Serial 0020, November 18th, 1944.

****** Data from Action Reports, War Diaries and Deck Logs of Ships Concerned.

2. PORTLAND	AP 327	HC 95
	Torpedoes	None
3. MINNEAPOLIS	AP 315	HC 165
	Torpedoes	None
4. SHROPSHIRE	AP 1134	HC 101
	Torpedoes*	
5. Average Projectiles Per Gun (8-inch)	AP 69.3	HC 26.7
(e) CRUISERS, LIGHT (6-inch)**		
1. DENVER	AP 1200	HC 1120
	Torpedoes	None
2. COLUMBIA	AP 1200	HC 120
	Torpedoes	None
3. PHOENIX	AP 975	HC 757
	Torpedoes	None
4. BOISE	AP 975	HC 546
	Torpedoes	None
5. Average Projectiles Per Gun (6-inch)	AP 80.5	HC 47.1
(f) Average Projectiles Per Gun (Cruisers)	AP 76.1	HC 39.1

* No Data.
** Data from Action Reports, War Diaries and Deck Logs of Ships Concerned.

(2) JAPANESE ALLOWANCE OF AMMUNITION AND TORPEDOES*

(a) THIRD SECTION

1. BATTLESHIPS

FUSO, YAMASHIRO (per ship)

14-inch - 1200**

6-inch - 1680

5-inch - 1600

Torpedoes - None

2. HEAVY CRUISER

MOGAMI

8-inch - 720**

5-inch - 1600

Torpedoes - 18

3. DESTROYERS

MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO (per ship)

5-inch - 600

Torpedoes - 16

SHIGURE

5-inch - 600

Torpedoes - 9

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* Since no information concerning actual amount of ammunition on board is available it has been necessary to employ normal ammunition allowances. This information was provided in HQ USAFFE Military History Section letter MH 314.8 of July 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

** Approximately 75% of 14-inch and 8-inch shells were armor piercing.

(b) SECOND STRIKING FORCE

1. HEAVY CRUISERS

NACHI, ASHIGARA (per ship)

8-inch - 1200*

5-inch - 1600

Torpedoes - 24

2. LIGHT CRUISER

ABUKUMA

5.5-inch - 600

5-inch - 400

Torpedoes - 12

3. DESTROYERS

SHIRANUHI, KASUMI (per ship)

5-inch - 600

Torpedoes - 16

AKEBONO, USHIO (per ship)

5-inch - 600

Torpedoes - 15

* Approximately 75% of 14-inch and 8-inch shells were armor piercing.

(D) STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS FACTORS

The following survey of pertinent strength and weakness factors of each force has been made to summarize the material for testing the feasibility and acceptability of possible courses of action.

ALLIED FORCE

STRENGTH FACTORS	WEAKNESS FACTORS
Overwhelming numerical superiority (a) More battleships (6 to 2). (b) More cruisers (8 to 4). (c) More destroyers (26 to 8). (d) More torpedo boats (39 to 0).	Lack of proper ammunition loading for surface battle (ships were loaded for shore fire support).
More 16" guns (16 to 0).	General shortage of ammunition in all ships but especially of armor piercing in the cruisers and battleships.
More 14" guns (48 to 24).	No torpedo reloads in any torpedo carrying ships.
More 8" guns (35 to 26).	Paucity of communications circuits which tended to overload existing circuits.
More 4", 4.7", 5" and 6" guns than enemy's 5", 5.5" and 6" (351 to 123).	Ships of battle line had no experience operating together as a battle line.
More destroyer torpedo tubes (244 to 64).	Allied forces had never operated together as a battle disposition.
Freedom of action.	Strong southerly currents would make station keeping difficult.
Ideal geographical location for defense.	
Single command of principal forces.	
Superior radar permitting operation in zero visibility.	
Forces concentrated.	
Employment of MTB's as advance scouting and harassing units.	
Rapid communications possible due to short distances between forces.	
Excellent information concerning strength and movements of Japanese forces.	

JAPANESE FORCES

STRENGTH FACTORS	WEAKNESS FACTORS
Superior torpedo which had long range (44,000 yards at 36 knots) and high speed (22,000 yards at 49 knots).	No battle plan.
Torpedoes were carried by all ships except the two battleships.	Japanese forces composed of two separate and entirely uncoordinated units.
All ships carrying torpedoes carried overloads of 50% to 100%.	Forces separated so could be destroyed piecemeal.
Better trained in night operations.	No unity of command.
Better night vision.	Ordered to make attack on strongly defended position.
Initiative.	Restricted courses of action and limited freedom of movement.
	Communications inadequate.
	Lack of correct intelligence concerning: (a) Allied strength in Leyte Gulf. (b) Allied probable courses of action.
	Radar generally ineffective.

This analysis indicates that insofar as guns and torpedo tubes, freedom of action, position, command, radar, communications, intelligence and concentration of forces were concerned the advantage lay with the Allies; that insofar as the quality of torpedoes, night vision and initiative were concerned the advantage lay with the Japanese. Thus the Allies had overwhelming superiority in practically all factors.

CHAPTER VI- JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 1830 - 2400, October 24th

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

As the THIRD Section rounded Siquijor Island in the Mindanao Sea at 1830, Commander THIRD Section in the YAMASHIRO directed Commander FIRST Division (MOGAMI and DESDIV FOUR) to execute his 24'410 of that date.* Commander FIRST Division, with the FIRST Division, immediately departed the formation and headed toward the west coast of Panaon Island. Upon the departure of the FIRST Division, Commander THIRD Section, who was also Commander SECOND Division, with the remaining three ships of the THIRD Section (YAMASHIRO, FUSO and SHIGURE) which he had designated as the SECOND Division, changed course to 050°(T) to pass close to Bohol Island and commenced his movement along the northern edge of the Mindanao Sea as laid down in his 221155.** While his reasons for his course are not explained it seems evident that they embraced one or more of the following: (a) he desired to avoid operating battleships in the middle waters of the Mindanao Sea in order to avoid possible Allied submarine attacks (it will be remembered that CinC Combined Fleet's estimate of the previous day had forecast strong concentrations of enemy submarines in the Surigao Straits area and had directed that all commanders were to utilize every trick to keep enemy submarines under control, particularly while breaking through the narrow straits),*** (b) he may have desired to avoid following in the track of the FIRST Division since, should he follow that track and the Allied scouting units contact the FIRST Division, contact on the SECOND Division would likely follow. (By following a circuitous route he might succeed in misleading these Allied scouting units by drawing them into a search astern of the FIRST Division and hence away from his own track), (c) he desired to check his course and speed at intervals by fixes on the land. (Strong westerly currents predominated in the Mindanao Sea at this time of the year and it may have appeared wise to Commander SECOND Division to maintain an accurate navigational plot by land fixes.)

In making the decision to separate his forces, Commander THIRD Section undoubtedly took into consideration the danger of mistaking friend for enemy in rejoining his forces during limited visibility in the presence of known enemy units. He probably reasoned that the weather in the Panaon area which had been good during the forenoon**** would remain so and, therefore, the danger of mistaking a friend for an enemy would be so lessened as to deny it priority over the other considerations above mentioned. Actually, as will be shown later, the weather commenced worsening about 2000.****

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* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241410 October 1944 to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

*** CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 231710 October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operations, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

A study of Diagram "D" will show that by taking the circuitous route referred to previously Commander SECOND Division automatically caused the distance between the FIRST and SECOND Divisions to increase beyond the twenty kilometers originally specified. This maneuver, while otherwise supportable, seems unwise because the two divisions became so separated as to be unable to provide mutual support. It seems probable that Commander FIRST Division was not entirely familiar with the movements of Commander SECOND Division during the passage through the Mindanao Sea, although he could hear his voice signals.*

Sometime in the late afternoon and possibly about this time (1830) Commander THIRD Section received Commander Main Body's dispatch 241600 to the Combined Fleet wherein that commander stated, in essence, that (a) he had originally planned to force his way through San Bernardino Straits about one hour after sunset but between 0830 and 1530 he had been heavily hit by waves of Allied carrier-based planes totalling about 250, which attacks were increasing in frequency and intensity, (b) Japanese air power had been highly ineffective, (c) he thought it best to retire temporarily lest he sustain additional losses which would jeopardize the accomplishment of his objective and (d) he was now in the Sibuyan Sea in Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 122°-40'E, on course 290°(T), speed eighteen knots.**

THIS MESSAGE, WHILE PROBABLY NOT UNEXPECTED IN VIEW OF HIS OWN EXPERIENCES, MUST HAVE BEEN HIGHLY DISCONCERTING TO COMMANDER THIRD SECTION SINCE IT INDICATED THAT THE COORDINATED EFFORT BETWEEN HIS FORCE AND THE MAIN BODY FOR DAWN ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE OF ATTAINMENT. WHAT SHOULD HE DO? SHOULD HE CONTINUE ON, OR SHOULD HE RETIRE TEMPORARILY AND AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS? HE OBVIOUSLY DECIDED TO CONTINUE ON, FOR HIS TRACK SHOWS NO CHANGE. THIS WAS THE CORRECT DECISION AT THIS TIME, SINCE MANY HOURS WOULD PASS BEFORE HE WOULD BE COMMITTED FINALLY TO THE PENETRATION OPERATION AND IN THAT TIME HE SHOULD RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS.

If he had any misgivings regarding the correctness of this decision they were soon dispelled. For, probably prior to 1900 (the time recorded by SHIGURE),* he received from CinC Combined Fleet a dispatch, and addressed to all forces engaged in the SHO Operation, directing: "All forces to the attack, trusting in divine aid."***

He immediately analyzed his situation with relation to the Main Body whose 1600 position was known. This position, providing the shortest route was taken, was about 370 miles from the Tacloban Anchorage. He

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944 WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander Main Body Dispatch 241600 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 241813 October 1944 to all SHO Forces (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 372), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

could plainly see that if Commander FIRST Striking Force had reversed course at 1313, which was impossible since that was the time group of CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch, he would require a speed in excess of thirty-six knots (413 miles/11.3 hours) to arrive off Tacloban at dawn (0427). This speed was in excess of that available within his command since the full speed of the NAGATO, for example, was but twenty-five knots, (24.98).* From this he could readily estimate that the Main Body would necessarily be many hours late in arriving at Leyte Gulf, since its cruising speed would be much below this, and would therefore be unable to arrive off Suluan Island at 0400 as scheduled. This supported his previous estimate.

It is likely that he expected to receive some coordinating orders from Commander FIRST Striking Force, who was his immediate superior in command, but failing in that he nevertheless felt that he was to continue on.

While there is no information available anywhere as to what went through Commander THIRD Section's mind at this time, since he and his entire staff were lost in the night action which followed, it seems reasonable to say that he now knew that if he continued on as scheduled and arrived off Tacloban Anchorage at dawn (which the Japanese considered to be two hours (0427) before sunrise (0527) for this operation)** he still had the best chance for success in that it would be dark when he arrived at the transport area. He realized, of course, that he would be without the support of the Main Body but he also realized that the alternative of facing the superior Allied forces both surface and air during daylight would be suicidal.

WHAT THEN SHOULD HE DO? FROM HIS ACTIONS AT THIS TIME AND FROM THE DISPATCH WHICH HE SENT LATER, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HE DECIDED THAT, UNLESS HE RECEIVED ORDERS TO THE CONTRARY, HIS BEST CHANCE FOR SUCCESS WOULD BE TO ADHERE TO HIS ORIGINAL SCHEDULE AND THIS HE PLANNED TO DO.

However, he decided to modify the basic orders in one regard. He changed the objective area from Tacloban to Dulag and therefore changed his time of arrival from 0427 off Tacloban to 0400 off Dulag.*** It seems likely that he made this change because he knew that Allied shipping in strength (eighty transports, four battleships, two cruisers and four destroyers)**** had been observed off Dulag that day, and that since Dulag Anchorage was about ten miles south of Tacloban Anchorage he would naturally encounter the Dulag forces prior to his arrival off Tacloban.

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* Japanese Naval Vessels at the End of War, April 25th, 1947, Administrative Division, Second Demobilization Bureau (Compiled by Shizuo Fukui, Constructor Lieutenant Commander, ex-IJN), Page 1.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 242013 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637.

**** MOGAMI Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to 3RD Section (No. 1 Search Plane Report of 0650), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

In view of the postwar comments by the Commanding Officer SHIGURE to the contrary* it should be pointed out here that this change did not constitute an advance in the time of arrival off Tacloban. Instead, it maintained the original schedule as closely as possible. The confusion may have arisen because the Commanding Officer SHIGURE did not differentiate between Dulag Anchorage and Tacloban Anchorage. It should be clear from a glance at the chart that at eighteen knots the THIRD Section would necessarily arrive in Dulag Anchorage one-half hour earlier than in the Tacloban Anchorage.

It is likely that in his estimate Commander THIRD Section gave consideration to the possibility of night action should he continue on as scheduled since he was much the weaker force. This was of serious concern but it is likely that he hoped to accomplish some of his objectives without complete destruction because, despite considerable evidence to the contrary--notably the defeats of the Solomon Island campaign--he felt with the Japanese High Command that the Japanese were superior to the Allies in night surface actions. This concept is obtained not only from the interrogations of the Chief of Staff, FIRST Striking Force, wherein it was shown that the FIRST Striking Force trained largely, if not entirely, for night battle,** but it is emphasized by the Fire Control Officer of the MOGAMI who stated as a principle reason for the Japanese failure at this battle that, "Also responsible was the virtually blind reliance placed upon the night fighting ability of the Japanese fleet".***

In addition, he realized that because night actions at close quarters often become melees and give numerically weaker forces advantages far in excess of those which would obtain during daylight, his command would likely gain an advantage through such night action.

HIS DECISION TO CONTINUE ON AND TO CHANGE HIS OBJECTIVE AREA FROM TACLOBAN ANCHORAGE AT 0427 TO DULAG ANCHORAGE AT 0400 WAS CORRECT FOR IN SO DOING HE WAS LOYAL TO THE INTENTIONS OF HIS SUPERIORS AS EXPRESSED IN THE GENERAL PLAN. HE HAD FOUND HIMSELF FACED WITH AN UNEXPECTED SITUATION WHICH HAD NOT BEEN FORESEEN OR COVERED IN HIS ORDERS, AND HE HAD TAKEN ACTION ACCORDINGLY TO INFORM HIS SUPERIORS OF HIS PLANS RESULTING THEREFROM. SHOULD HIS SUPERIORS DISAGREE WITH THESE PLANS THERE STILL REMAINED SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THE ATTITUDE OF THESE SUPERIORS TO BE MADE KNOWN TO HIM.

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* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, NAV No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, IJN, Volume II, Page 346.

** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, NAV No. 35, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, ex-IJN, CofS, 1ST Striking Force, Volume I, Page 147.

*** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

Having received no further orders from his superiors he radioed at 2013 that "The THIRD Section expects to penetrate to a point off Dulag at 0400 October 25th".*

At 2045 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet which, referring to Commander Main Body's dispatch 241600 about retiring temporarily,** directed that commander as well as himself to attack in accordance with Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 372,*** which it will be recalled ordered "All forces to the attack, trusting in divine aid".**** He could see from this dispatch that CinC Combined Fleet had issued the above OpOrd 372 prior to receiving Commander Main Body's 241600 and that this new attack directive had been issued to avoid confusion. He now knew that CinC Combined Fleet was fully alert to the situation and desired the attack order to stand.

At approximately 2155, or in about ten minutes after it had been transmitted (based on the fact that Commander Main Body received the above 2013 dispatch at 2020)***** Commander THIRD Section received the coordinating instructions from Commander FIRST Striking Force which he had expected. In these instructions he was advised in part that (a) Commander Main Body with four battleships, six heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and eleven destroyers, would pass through San Bernardino Strait at 0100 October 25th, arriving in Latitude 11°-36'N, Longitude 125°-46'E, at 0600 and would penetrate into Leyte Gulf at about 1100 the same day; (b) the THIRD Section would penetrate into Leyte Anchorage as scheduled and would then rendezvous with the Main Body at 0900 October 25th about ten miles northeast of Suluan Island.****** This would result in the re-formation of the FIRST Striking Force.

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* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 242013 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force and CinC Combined Fleet, info Commander 2ND Striking Force and Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Ibid., Commander Main Body Dispatch 241600 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet.

*** CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 241959 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Mobile Force, SW Area Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 3RD Section, CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

**** CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 241813 October 1944 to All Forces Engaged in the SHO Operation (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 372), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

***** Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

****** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 242145 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Main Force, SW Area Force, 6TH Base Air Force, 2ND Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 24th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

Whether or not he had expected orders in this form is not known. However, it seems likely that he was somewhat surprised as this order changed the original plan as regards the THIRD Section in two particulars. It ordered the THIRD Section, after it had penetrated Leyte Gulf as scheduled, to (a) retire to the eastward in order to rendezvous with the Main Body and (b) to make a second penetration into Leyte Gulf in company with said Main Body.

As regards item (a) it will be recalled that earlier this day, at 1120,* he had designated as reassembly point "after completion of combat", a point in the Mindanao Sea bearing 242°(T), distant eighteen miles from Binit Point. Since this order now directed him to withdraw from Leyte Gulf to the eastward following his first penetration and then to rendezvous with the Main Body, it seems clear that he realized that some modification of his designated reassembly point would most likely be necessary.

As regards item (b) it seems likely that he realized that since the Main Body had lost so many ships either by sinking (one battleship - MUSASHI; two heavy cruisers - ATAGO, MAYA), heavy damage (TAKAO, MYOKO), or assignment as escorts (NAGANAMI, ASASHIMO, KIYOSHIMO, HAMAKAZE), the THIRD Section was required as replacements.

What he thought of these new instructions is not known. However, since (a) he would now be required to remain largely unsupported in Leyte Gulf from the time of his original penetration (the new order reaffirmed this part of the original plan) until he rejoined Commander Main Body at 0900--a period of five hours,** and (b) the effectiveness of Allied air attacks and the ineffectiveness of friendly air forces to prevent such Allied attacks had been clearly demonstrated during the day, it seems likely that he viewed them with considerable concern.

THESE NEW ORDERS APPROVED WITHOUT QUALIFICATION THE DECISION OF COMMANDER THIRD SECTION TO CONTINUE AS SCHEDULED, REGARDLESS OF THE ABSENCE OF THE MAIN BODY.

If, as the result of these orders, Commander THIRD Section formulated any new plans for the penetration of Surigao Strait this fact is not available. His original plan called for passing the southern entrance of Surigao Strait at 0100 and taking course 350°(T) directly to the Tacloban Anchorage.*** If he did have a new plan, he did not indicate it to his ships, and therefore, it is concluded that he planned to adhere to the basic plan.

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* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241120 October 1944 to 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, (Part 4), NA 11801.

** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 35, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Koyanagi,Tomiji, ex-IJN, Volume I, Page 152.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

At 2255 when it was received by the KONGO, or perhaps later, he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force which changed that commander's time of passing Binit Point from 0600 to 0300 the next morning and which gave the SECOND Striking Force's penetration speed through Surigao Strait as twenty-six knots.* FROM THIS HE COULD SEE THAT THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE INSTEAD OF BEING FIVE HOURS BEHIND HIM WOULD NOW BE BUT TWO HOURS, AND THEREFORE WOULD BE CLOSING RAPIDLY AT THE TIME THE THIRD SECTION ARRIVED IN THE DULAG AREA.

He continued uneventfully toward the southern entrance to Surigao Strait until he encountered enemy torpedo boats between 2252 and 2310, as discussed under Commander SECOND Division. Having received no damage in this encounter, and having inflicted some damage on the enemy torpedo boats, he, at 2320, queried Commander FIRST Division by voice radio as to the enemy situation in the vicinity of the FIRST Division.** At 2324 he received a reply that no enemy ships had been sighted.** He then advised Commander FIRST Striking Force at 2330 that he was "Advancing as scheduled while destroying enemy torpedo boats."***

THIS WAS A VERY IMPORTANT DISPATCH AND INDICATED THAT COMMANDER THIRD SECTION WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONTACTS ON HIS COMMAND BY THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS. FOR COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE WOULD NOW KNOW THAT THE EASTWARD MOVEMENT DURING THE NIGHT OF HIS THIRD SECTION TOWARD SURIGAO STRAIT WAS KNOWN TO THE ENEMY, AND THEREFORE THE CONCEPT THAT THE THIRD SECTION MIGHT BE FREE TO ENTER THE GULF BECAUSE "THE ALLIED FORCES THERE WOULD BE DRAWN OUT OF THE GULF BY THE APPROACH OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE (MAIN BODY) FROM THE NORTH", AS HAS BEEN STATED BY COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE,**** WAS NOT NECESSARILY CORRECT.

What defensive disposition Commander THIRD Section expected to encounter in Leyte Gulf is anybody's guess. Forces much stronger than his own had been reported there. He knew that these forces could be expected to be fully informed concerning the strength of the Main Body in the Sibuyan Sea but he could not know whether or not they were also informed of the fact that the Main Body, which had commenced retiring at 1600, had reversed course and was once again heading eastward.

MOST OF THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE SEEMS TO POINT OUT THERE WAS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE EXPECTED ALLIED SURFACE FORCES TO BE IN THE DULAG AREA AS FORECAST ON THE PREVIOUS DAY BY CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET IN HIS 231200 ESTIMATE FOR, AS POINTED OUT EARLIER, THE MOGAMI SEARCH PLANE WHICH HAD MADE THE DAWN SEARCH OF THE LEYTE AREA HAD SO REPORTED. HOWEVER THERE IS ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE TO THE EFFECT THAT HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE ALLIED HEAVY SHIPS HAD DEPARTED THE GULF. THIS IDEA IS PROVIDED BY COMBATDIV ONE'S PERSONAL DIARY WHERE ON (A) OCTOBER 24TH HE WROTE "THE ENEMY FLEET IN LEYTE GULF HAD MOVED OUT AND THERE WERE

* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 242245 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 2 (3RD Section), COMDESDIV 21, Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 242330 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force and Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 9, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, ex-IJN, Volume I, Page 36.

NO LARGE SHIPS IN THE GULF",* AND (B) OCTOBER 25TH HE WROTE "ON THE BASIS OF THE SITUATION REPORTS OF THE PREVIOUS DAY, (OCTOBER 24TH), THAT THE ENEMY BATTLESHIP FORCE HAD SORTIED EASTWARD AND THAT NO POWERFUL FORCE REMAINED IN LEYTE GULF, THE THIRD SECTION CARRIED OUT ITS PENETRATION IN A HEADLONG RUSH."*

Where COMBATDIV ONE obtained this intelligence is not known as it has not been located in any other source. The interesting thing about it however is that it might well have been true. This is so for the Japanese on this day made dusk searches and dusk attacks on the invasion forces off Dulag and Tacloban** at which hour the battleships, cruisers and destroyers of TG 77.2 and the cruisers and destroyers of TG 77.3 were forming battle disposition to the eastward of Hingatungan Point, having left the invasion areas after completing fueling and ammunition replenishment operations in the late afternoon. Since the Hingatungan Point area is about twenty-five miles to the southeastward of Dulag it is quite possible that, owing to the decreasing visibility, these ships would not be sighted unless the planes happened to operate in that area.

It seems likely that, prior to midnight, he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's (a) dispatch 242046*** reporting contacts off Luzon on three Allied carrier task groups consisting of a total of nine large carriers and two small carriers with the usual surface ship support, and stating that these carriers were under night air attack, and (b) dispatch 242244**** reporting the results of these attacks and claiming having damaged two large carriers, one battleship and one cruiser and having shot down thirty-nine Allied planes. This latter dispatch also reported that afternoon air attacks had damaged two carriers and two other ships.

The dispatches were of considerable importance to him because they showed that the air forces were in heavy and successful combat with the Allied carrier forces with the likely result that the penetration operation might be facilitated.

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* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

** Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), Search Attack Operations against Enemy Task Force and Attacks on Enemy Shipping in Leyte Gulf, October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.

*** Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 242046 October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 242244 October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Anti-air and Surface Action, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Division, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

As pointed out previously, Commander FIRST Division was directed at 1830 to proceed independently to a position twenty kilometers ahead of the SECOND Division. He immediately assumed the course and speed necessary to accomplish this.* According to the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, who was not in the FIRST Division but who appears to have had some information thereon because of the frequent tactical use of voice radio by the Japanese, the FIRST Division went ahead at twenty-three to twenty-six knots.** Since there is no information other than the SHIGURE information available it is assumed that the FIRST Division increased speed to twenty-six knots in order to gain station expeditiously and appears to have headed directly for Binit Point (Panaon Island) on course 062½°(T). This assumption is supported by motor torpedo boat contacts to be discussed later.

Immediately after departing the SECOND Division, Commander FIRST Division directed the MICHISHIO and YAMAGUMO to take stations 30° relative on the starboard bow of the MOGAMI at a distance of 1500 meters and the ASAGUMO to take a similar station on the port bow as previously directed. The YAMAGUMO appears to have been in column some 700 meters astern of the MICHISHIO. It will be recalled that Commander FIRST Division had, at 1700, instructed his command as follows: "Upon reaching a point west of Limasawa, MOGAMI will take lead in a single line formation and the formation will pass through the strait north of the island. After passing through the strait the force will make a sweep southward in accordance with the outline for night maneuvers."*** This outline of night maneuvers referred to is not available to this analysis.

At about 1918 Commander FIRST Division, having obtained his assigned station in advance of the SECOND Division, slowed to the fleet speed which was eighteen knots. Since he could hear most of the voice radio communications within the SECOND Division it seems likely that he knew that his position was no longer ahead of the SECOND Division, but was instead well to the eastward.

At about 2227 when north of Camiguin Island the FIRST Division passed through the line of Allied motor torpedo boats, (Diagram "D"). In so doing it was not detected by the Allied motor torpedo boats nor were these detected by the FIRST Division. This was because the distances were excessive for reliable radar detection which at this time was, under good conditions, about four miles for a Japanese shipborne radar against a PT boat,**** and about ten miles for an Allied PT boat radar against a cruiser.*****

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, IJN, Volume II, Page 347.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** COM-ONI Technical Intelligence Bulletin 2, issued 5/45, Japanese Radar Equipment, Page 15.

***** RAD THREE, Radar Operators Manual, COMINCH Serial 01090, April 18th, 1945 (Reissue of earlier publication).

COM FIRST DIVISION
1830 - 2400, October 24th

Commencing at about 2252 Commander FIRST Division was aware that the SECOND Division had encountered enemy torpedo boats and had fired on them, because the two divisions were within voice radio of one another, and because messages in regard to such firing were being broadcast by units of the SECOND Division between 2252 and 2310.*

At 2320 Commander FIRST Division changed course to 035°(T), to head for Limasawa Island which he planned to pass to west and north.** At this moment he was interrogated over voice radio by Commander THIRD Section as to the enemy situation.* He promptly replied at 2324 "No enemy ships sighted".***

He continued on course 035°(T), speed eighteen knots. At 2334, entirely unknown to him, his ships were detected by radar by PT 151 which with PT's 146 and 190 had originally been stationed about two miles south of Limasawa Island. At this time the boats having drifted with the current were about nine miles bearing 236°(T) from the southern tip of Limasawa Island. This contact placed the motor torpedo boats some nine miles to the northward of the FIRST Division.**** Although the motor torpedo boats commenced closing the FIRST Division, the FIRST Division did not discover them for about one-half hour. This was because, as has been pointed out previously, Japanese radar was inefficient against motor torpedo boats and because weather conditions had commenced to deteriorate with visibility about two miles.****

At 2400 he again reported to Commander THIRD Section "Enemy not yet sighted".*

At this time the FIRST Division was bearing 212°(T), distant eight and seven-tenths miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11802.

** MOGAMI (Commander 1ST Division) Visual Dispatch 241700 to 1ST Division, info Flag YAMASHIRO (Commander 3RD Section), Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389, October 29th, 1944.

(2) Operations of Commander SECOND Division, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

It will be recalled that at 1834 when the FIRST Division departed the disposition to take station twenty kilometers ahead of the SECOND Division, Commander SECOND Division had directed the SECOND Division (YAMASHIRO, FUSO and SHIGURE) to change course to 050°(T).* The effect of this maneuver was to increase considerably the distance between the FIRST and SECOND Divisions. At about 1845 the SHIGURE took station 2000 meters ahead of the YAMASHIRO, changing the formation to a single column about 3000 meters long.**

Nothing unusual occurred for some hours and the division therefore continued on course 050°(T) at eighteen knots. At 2200, when about five and one-half miles south of Nauco Point, Bohol Island, Commander SECOND Division changed course to 065°(T) in order to pass close to Quinali Point, presumably for a navigational check, before heading for a position bearing 250°(T), distant seventeen miles from Binit Point (Panaon Island). This latter position was the 0030 rendezvous which had been designated by Commander THIRD Section at 1410.***

Commander SECOND Division's peaceful cruising suddenly came to an end when at 2252 he received a voice radio message from the SHIGURE reporting "three enemy motor torpedo boats sighted bearing 30°".**** These were PT's 130, 131 and 152 which had been stationed on a line between Bohol Island and Camiguin Island. Actually, from reconstruction of the plot using both the Japanese reports and the motor torpedo boat reports, this bearing of 30° must have been recorded in error since the actual bearing was more probably 130°(T). The motor torpedo boats were only about two or three miles from the ships at the time of contact. Commander SECOND Division immediately ordered the SECOND Division to make an emergency turn to course 110°(T) toward them. This was in accordance with Allied doctrine***** and appears to have been Japanese doctrine as well.******

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* Appended Chart No. 1, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 347.

*** 3RD Section Signal Order No. 13, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

***** Suggested Anti-Motor Torpedo Boat Tactics for Surface Ships, COMSOPAC Serial 00579, March 24th, 1943.

****** CinC Combined Fleet Standing Order 81 (1943), Combined Fleet Doctrine, 1943, Book I, Combat, Section H, Action Against Motor Torpedo Boat, ATIS Document 39, Part VII, June 3rd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

This quick turn, and the fact that the destroyer SHIGURE commenced firing within two minutes after the sighting, caught the motor torpedo boats unprepared to fire torpedoes, as they were beyond effective torpedo range,* which forced them to turn away. The Commanding Officer SHIGURE at 2254 by voice radio reported opening fire.** Whether or not he employed illumination at this time is not recorded but it is believed that he fired without any illumination. Furthermore, it is believed that the battleships had not as yet sighted the motor torpedo boats for, at 2256, the Commanding Officer SHIGURE reported one torpedo boat off the bow,** which indicates that he may have been trying to locate them to the battleships.

At 2300 Commander SECOND Division ordered the Commanding Officer SHIGURE to illuminate the torpedo boats,** which he did using searchlight. His beam caught PT 152. The battleships then began illumination fire (starshells) to locate the other targets and also commenced firing their secondary batteries shortly thereafter.* The searchlight and starshells were observed by the Limasawa motor torpedo boats, and the starshells by the ships of the SECOND Striking Force, which were about forty miles astern.*** It seems probable that Commander SECOND Division disapproved of the searchlights for at 2304 he ordered the SHIGURE to begin illumination fire.** One minute later, at 2305, he received word from the Commanding Officer SHIGURE that he had sunk one PT with a direct hit** (this was partially correct--the SHIGURE had succeeded, in fact, in making a direct hit on PT 152, but did not sink it).*

The Commanding Officer SHIGURE stated later that (a) he thought that the motor torpedo boats had fired torpedoes before retiring (this was not so, as no torpedoes had been fired) and (b) he had not seen any tracks.****

At 2307 Commander SECOND Division received a request from the Commanding Officer SHIGURE that the order to fire starshells be cancelled because (a) the range was excessive, possibly because smoke laid by PT 131 blanked off the boats, and (b) the SHIGURE was unable to fire illumination shells and continue gunfire at the same time.**

Commander SECOND Division did not reply to the above request but accomplished the equivalent when at 2310 he broke off the engagement and returned to the base course (065°(T)).**

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* Action Report PT 152, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0399, October 29th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11301.

*** War Diary DESDIV 7 (USHIO) October 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

**** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 341.

He now continued on toward the 0030 rendezvous. During this time voice radio transmission from Allied motor torpedo boats were heard but their location and number could not be determined. However, he believed that the boats were maintaining continuous contact.* Actually, this was not so as the Bohol motor torpedo boats had dispersed, even though PT 152 had unsuccessfully attempted for an hour to overtake the SECOND Division.**

At 2400 the SECOND Division was bearing 237½°(T), distant about sixteen miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

(B) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

As Commander SECOND Striking Force, on course 090°(T), and making twenty-two knots, approached the western entrance to the Mindanao Sea at 1830, he expected to encounter Allied submarines. He therefore retained his force in a daylight alert cruising disposition (Plate XVI) and continued zigzagging,*** (apparently employing the "X" method). Actually, there were no submarines in the Mindanao Sea, either Allied or Japanese.

Sometime before this, likely at 1227 when it was received by COMBATDIV ONE, he had received a dispatch from the Commanding Officer, Bulan Air Base (Luzon) informing him of the results of the morning search made by a plane from the MOGAMI which had landed at that base. The dispatch stated that there were (a) four battleships, two cruisers, two destroyers bearing 180°(T), distant fifteen miles from Dulag, (b) eighty transports bearing 090°(T), distant seven miles from Dulag, (c) four destroyers northeast of Panaon Island, (d) ten plus small craft (message drop showed these to be motor torpedo boats) and (e) twelve destroyers and twelve seaplanes off shore southeast of Dulag.****

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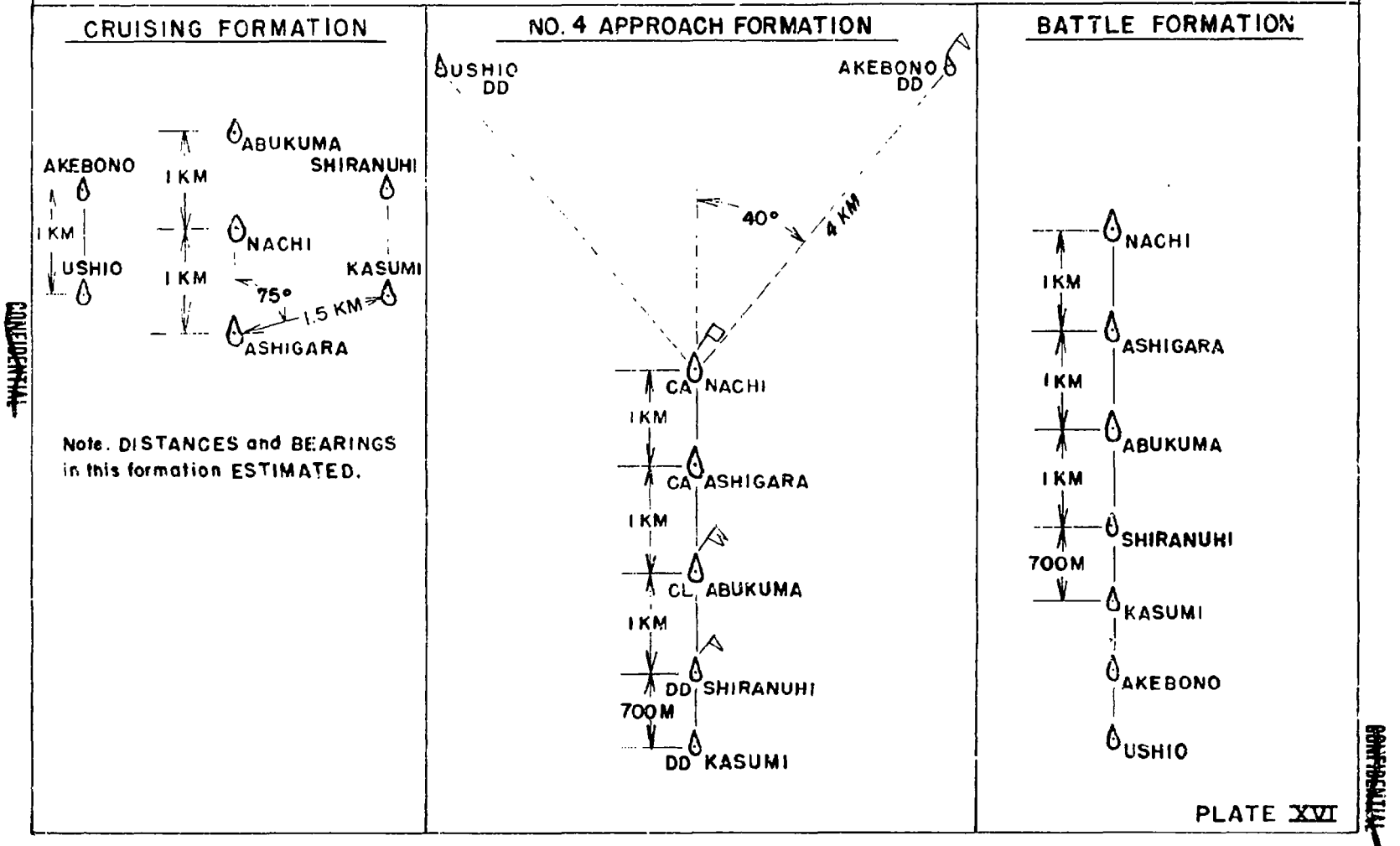
* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 341.

** Action Report PT 152, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0399, October 29th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007; also Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, Former 5TH Fleet Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC, Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

**** Bulan Air Base Dispatch 241227 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

JAPANESE FORMATIONS
SECOND STRIKING FORCE
BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT — BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944



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As a result of this dispatch he decided that it would be wise to give his individual ships the latest information of the composition and location of enemy forces which they might encounter during their penetration into Leyte Gulf. He therefore transmitted the substance of this message visually at 1850 to the SECOND Striking Force.*

That this message did not include all of the intelligence within the command seems clear, for at the same time that Commander SECOND Striking Force was transmitting the above message, COMDESRON ONE in the ABUKUMA was also transmitting to DESRON ONE a message which listed the above information plus additional information to the effect that there were five to eight battleships and ten cruisers in the Gulf near Dulag, and ten transports near Panaon Island.**

It seems probable that about this time or earlier he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet directing "All forces to the attack, trusting in divine aid."*** If, in view of Commander FIRST Striking Force's 241600,**** he now had any concern as to whether the penetration operations was to be delayed appreciably, or cancelled, this dispatch should have cleared it up--operations were to continue. It now became important to know what action would be taken by Commander FIRST Striking Force and by Commander THIRD Section because any change in plan by these commanders might adversely affect his own movement plan. He awaited action by these commanders.

At 1925 he changed course to 080°(T),***** and entered the Mindanao Sea in accordance with his SigOrd No. 147.******

At 2000 he noted that DESDIV TWENTY-ONE had not rendezvoused as scheduled.

At 2047 (when it was received by Commander FIRST Striking Force) he likely learned that Japanese planes operating out of the Philippines had made one direct hit on a carrier in Latitude 15°-30'N, Longitude 123°-40'E

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* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 241850 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

** Ibid., COMDESRON 1 Visual Dispatch 241850 October 1944 to DESRON 1, info 2ND Striking Force.

*** CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 241813 October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 241600 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

***** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle Off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

****** Ibid., Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 241745 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 147).

and that one cruiser had been moderately damaged and set afire.* This carrier appears to have been the PRINCETON which, at 0938, had been bombed successfully by a lone Japanese plane.**

It seems clear that by 2200 (since it was received by MOGAMI at that time) Commander SECOND Striking Force had received Commander THIRD Section's dispatch 242013, referred to by the torpedo officer as "a tragic dispatch",*** wherein that commander advised his immediate superiors that the THIRD Section expected to penetrate to a point off Dulag at 0400 October 25th.**** Commander SECOND Striking Force now re-estimated the situation. It was probably obvious to him, from this dispatch, that Commander THIRD Section was proceeding as scheduled and that the 0400 arrival off Dulag provided no change in the movement pattern.

At 2220 he changed course to 060°(T).***** This change of course was also in accordance with SigOpOrd No. 147, although the change was delayed fifteen minutes.

It seems likely that about this time he received the long awaited dispatch from Commander FIRST Striking Force giving that commander's plans for the ensuing operation.****** This dispatch basically stated that (a) the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force "will" pass through San Bernardino Strait at 0100 October 25th, "will" head south arriving in Latitude 11°-36'N, Longitude 125°-46'E, at 0600 and "will" penetrate into Leyte Gulf at 1100, and (b) the THIRD Section "will" penetrate into Leyte Gulf Anchorage as scheduled and will then rendezvous with the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force at 0900 about ten miles northeast of Suluan Island.*******

It seems to have come as a surprise to him for his torpedo officer states that "Since, judging from the position of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force at this time, the Leyte operation would be considerably

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* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Action Report PRINCETON, The Battle of the Philippines and Loss of USS PRINCETON 24 October 1944, Serial 020, November 24th, 1944, Page 1.

*** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 242013 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force and CinC Combined Fleet, info Commander 2ND Striking Force and Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

***** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

****** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 242145 October 1944 to All SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

delayed, it was expected that the THIRD Section, which was to coordinate its actions with those of the Main Body, would be issued an order to change its schedule but no such order was given."*

He now had the desired information concerning the THIRD Section's operation which was to the effect that Commander THIRD Section would proceed as scheduled and would penetrate independently into Leyte Gulf on the following morning arriving in the Dulag area at 0400.

He forthwith continued his estimate of the situation to determine whether, because of the demands of the situation, he would be required to make any changes in his 0300 planned time of passage through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait. (It will be recalled that at 1745 he had advanced the time of passage from 0600 to 0300 and had so informed his command.)** He appears to have realized that, without the presence of the Main Body, the THIRD Section might require assistance and therefore "even closer liaison"* was desirable. Despite this fact he decided that he would make no change. Whether he did this because (a) of a possible shortage of fuel--his torpedo officer stated later that "though it was our desire to shorten even more the time difference it was impossible from the standpoint of fuel"*--or (b) his desire to avoid closing the THIRD Section any more than the thirty-five miles which would separate them at 0400 if both commands continued as planned, is not known.

However, based on the assumption that the THIRD Section was proceeding up the strait at twenty knots (the distance from Binit Point to the Dulag Anchorage area--sixty miles divided by three hours) it seems clear that had he increased speed from twenty-two to twenty-six knots at 2300 he would have closed the THIRD Section at the rate of about six knots and have reduced the distance between the two at 0400 by thirty miles, thus placing them at that time about twelve miles apart.

While no specific information concerning the fuel consumption rates of the Japanese ships is available to this study, the increase in the fuel consumption for the five hours, based on similar American cruisers and destroyers, would have meant an increase of but between two and three per cent of the maximum capacity.*** This tends to support the view that Commander SECOND Striking Force did not desire further to close the THIRD Section.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Histo[illegible] Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual (Blinker) Dispatch 241745 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 147). Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

*** War Service Fuel Consumption of U.S. Naval Surface Vessels, FTP 218, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1945.

Commander SECOND Striking Force decided at this pcint to inform Commander THIRD Section and COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE of his present plans and therefore at 2245 he advised these commanders as follows: "The SECOND Striking Force is scheduled to pass through the southern entrance of Surigao Str. it at 0300 and penetrate at speed of twenty-six knots."*

The reason for including COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE in this dispatch was that that commander, with the HATSUHARU and HATSUSHIMO was supposedly en route to join the SECOND Striking Force and should have rendezvoused at 2000. He had failed to do so and Commander SECOND Striking Force did not know why, although he did know that DESDIV TWENTY-ONE had been attacked that morning by Allied carrier planes with the resultant sinking of the WAKABA. Actually, COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE was returning to Manila** and had failed to inform Commander SECOND Striking Force.

At 2300*** Commander SECOND Striking Force observed what appeared to be illumination flares ahead on the horizon on bearing 050°(T).**** This was the encounter of the SECOND Division of the THIRD Section with the motor torpedo boats south of Bohol Island, the flares being the starshells fired by the SECOND Division.

At 2315 he decided that it would be unwise to remain in his present cruising formation until 0200 as planned in SigOrd No. 147 and should instead assume an approach formation immediately. He therefore ordered No. 4 Approach Formation*** (Plate XVI). HIS ACTION IN SO DOING WAS SOUND BECAUSE AN APPROACH FORMATION IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLACING THE FORCE IN THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION FOR DEPLOYMENT FOR BATTLE, AND HE COULD NOT BE SURE WHEN HE MIGHT ENCOUNTER THE ENEMY FORCE. THE JAPANESE COMBINED FLEET INSTRUCTIONS FOR NIGHT ACTION IN NARROW WATERS STATED THAT "BECAUSE THE CHANCES OF A SUDDEN ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY ARE GREAT IN NARROW WATERS, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT, ALL FORCES MUST BE CONSTANTLY PREPARED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION AND MOVE UNDER THE STRICTEST ALERT."*****

At 2330 the approach formation was formed.*****

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* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 242245 October 1944 to Commander 3RD Section, etc., Detailed Action Report CARDIV 4, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 21, SHO No. 1 Operation, (AA Action South of Mindoro), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

*** War Diary DESDIV 7 (USHIO), October 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

**** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

***** CinC Combined Fleet Standing Order 81 (1943), Combined Fleet Doctrine 1943, Book I, Combat, Section E, Surface Action, Sub Head VIII, Engagements in Narrow Waters, Paragraph S4, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VII, June 3rd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

****** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, (Part 4), NA 11801.

At 2355 he directed his command to be ready to make twenty-eight knots immediately and maximum battle speed on fifteen minutes notice.*

The SECOND Striking Force continued on without incident. At 2400 it was bearing 289°(T), distant fifteen miles from the tip of Camiguin Island, and about thirty-eight miles astern of the SECOND Division.

* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

CHAPTER VII - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 1830 - 2400, October 24th

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2 (OTC), 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

Having completed the preliminary administrative measures for defense of Surigao Strait, the units of TG 77.2 were proceeding directly to their stations in the battle disposition in separate units. The battle line was proceeding to an initial station directly east of Hingatungan Point (Leyte) at the western end of its patrol which would permit rapid evolution of the flank forces on the battle line as it passed through the point on course 090°(T).* It was scheduled to patrol Latitude 10°-35'N between Longitude 125°-16'E and 125°-27'E.

The sun had set at about 1820. Therefore, the battle formation was being taken in evening twilight which lasted about one hour. Since only dim moonlight would temper the darkness at this time, CTG 77.2 was anxious to get his forces in position before complete darkness had set in. This was important because his forces had never operated together before. He felt that if he could form his battle disposition while some daylight still remained it would not be too difficult to maintain the disposition but if he had to form it after darkness had fallen it would probably be a long time before it was finally formed.

Enemy planes were in the area and an air alert was in effect, lasting until 1848. However, the alert was again sounded at 1858 as more enemy planes were reported. There was a mixture of friendly and enemy planes in and around Leyte Gulf and identification was questionable. The enemy planes near Surigao Strait did not attack TG 77.2 although some ships fired on the planes. It seems probable that the Japanese planes were search planes from the THIRD Section operating from bases at Cebu and Panay to carry out the dusk reconnaissance ordered by their commander.**

As he approached his patrol area, he noted that the five destroyers of CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR) were still deployed in an antisubmarine screen across the strait between Cabugan Grande and Dinagat Island in the same patrol stations they had occupied on previous nights since D-day. He once again wondered why it was that neither CTF 77 nor CTF 79 had ordered them to report to him for duty. However, since they had not been so ordered he had been unable to include them in his battle plan.

As he came within TBS voice radio range at 1950 he was queried by CTG 79.11, quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 79.11, 1830 - 2400, October 24th" to the effect that in case of surface contact to the south, CTG 79.11 planned to make immediate attack with torpedoes, then to retire to clear TG 77.2 and requested approval.***

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* All information here, unless otherwise indicated, obtained from Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231905 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 10), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 059, November 12th, 1944.

He then at 1951 inquired of CTG 79.11 as to whether or not the screen was composed of the same ships as the previous night. To this he received an affirmative reply.*

He was now faced with the problem of what to do with this force of destroyers. It was clear that if they remained in their present stations they might interfere with the attack of his own forces; on the other hand it was also clear that (a) if they launched an attack at first contact (which should be about 40,000 yards) they would contribute much to the success of the battle if they succeeded only in reporting the composition and disposition of the enemy, and (b) in addition to obtaining the above information, they should have a very disruptive effect on the Japanese disposition by sinking or damaging, or both, one or more Japanese ships. He understood that Japanese radar was relatively primitive and therefore destroyers attacking from the shores of the strait should be able to get within torpedo range of the enemy before being discovered. However, he felt that should Japanese radar and tracking devices prove more effective than had been anticipated, the factor of consequences as to cost, while possibly high as regards TG 79.11, would be low as regards TG 77.2. In other words the gain to CTG 77.2 in information concerning the characteristics of the Japanese force would more than compensate for the loss or disabling of one or more destroyers of TG 79.11.

During the above time, the battle disposition was gradually forming. The various units had been continually harassed by the presence of unidentified aircraft which had delayed the completion of the disposition. At about 2000 the battle line reached its initial point and turned east at five knots.

He now decided to permit the planned attack of CTG 79.11 and at 2010 informed that commander by TBS voice radio as follows: "Your 1950 Item approved. Retire to cover of Dinagat and pass between Hibuson and Dinagat. Show IFF. Inform me if enemy is in more than one group and composition if possible."**

This dispatch shows clearly that he (a) because he realized that it was possible that some enemy forces might slip by the motor torpedo boats without detection, was concerned about the Japanese attacking forces. He had received information from CTF 77 that the strength of the attacking force would probably consist of two battleships, four heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and ten destroyers, and it was vital that he learn at the earliest practicable time the disposition and composition of the forces actually located. He was particularly interested in the composition of

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

this force as his service ammunition was limited, (b) knowing that destroyer attack doctrine recommended that torpedo attacks of five or less destroyers be made from one sector,* expected CTG 79.11 to form a single attack group which would attack and then retire along the eastern shore of the Strait, and (c) mindful of the adverse effect nearby land had on radars wished to take advantage of the land effects which he expected Hibuson and Dinagat Islands would have on the Japanese radars.

This idea of the single attack group had not been contemplated by CTG 79.11, who expected instead to attack from both sides of the Strait rather than from one side. CTG 79.11 therefore, at 2012, advised CTG 77.2 to this effect by TBS voice radio as follows: "My plan would be to attack from two sides with two groups, one of three and one of two ships. I will give details later. That would require retirement with one group well to the west. I will take the other group well to the east. Would that be satisfactory?"**

At 2015 CTG 77.2 approved the plan but, in so doing, directed CTG 79.11 also by TBS voice radio to (a) keep close to the shore, (b) show IFF and (c) inform Commander Right Flank Force of the attack plan.**

Although he realized that CTG 79.11's plan was based on the expectation that the enemy would choose to operate in mid-channel, (i.e., on enemy intentions rather than on enemy capabilities) and had the weakness that if the enemy did not do so but instead chose to operate near the shore, the attacking destroyers would then be so divided that concentration might be difficult, he nevertheless approved the deviation from doctrine because (a) he felt that (1) the Japanese likely knew that they had to run the gantlet of motor torpedo boats and destroyers, (2) they would therefore require room for maneuver, (3) they probably had radar difficulties similar to these experienced by the Allies when in the presence of land masses and (4) the chance of their maintaining a mid-channel position therefore warranted this capability being given a high priority, (b) the strait, in view of its narrowness, lent itself to attacks by very small divided forces operating from both shores which, without too much interference from each other, could readily fade into the protection of the neighboring shores, (c) the enemy, by quick deployment along projected Allied torpedo tracks fired by a single strong attack group operating from one shore only, could avoid receiving torpedo hits and might, at the same time, succeed in trapping the firing destroyers against the shore since their retirement was limited by that shore line. Therefore, an "anvil" attack was more desirable than a simple attack from one bow and (d) since this plan had been conceived by CTG 79.11 it was likely in consonance with the destroyer attack training in DESRON FIFTY-FOUR. In this connection, it seems wise at this point to recall that the above DESRON consisted of two destroyer divisions and that in Surigao Strait

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* Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

at this time there were present two ships of DESDIV 108 (MC DERMUT, MONSSEN) commanded by COMDESDIV 108 and three ships of DESDIV 107 (REMEY, MC GOWAN, MELVIN) commanded by COMDESDIV 107 (who was also CTG 79.11).

At 2020 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 79.11 to TG 79.11 wherein that commander issued his attack plan* (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 79.11"). Since this attack plan conformed completely to the agreed attack plan, he was satisfied with it, although he was concerned with the fact that CTG 79.11 had failed to include therein any instructions regarding reporting composition of enemy or whether it was in more than one group. However, feeling confident that CTG 79.11 would make a contact report because it was doctrine to do so, he decided to issue no further instructions at this time.

At 2021 Commander Battle Line reported on station.** At this time, although his destroyers on both flanks were still out of position, the disposition was to all intents and purposes formed. At this time the destroyers on the left flank were in a special circular antiaircraft cruising disposition with the cruisers left flank, and those on the right flank were having difficulties with TG 79.11, and with navigation as their stations were close to the shore.

At 2118 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 79.11 inquiring as to whether any of the units of TG 77.2 were to operate south of his patrol line.** To this at 2121 he replied in the negative but, in doing so, he explained that it was possible that (a) four motor torpedo boats might operate near Latitude 10°-17'N and (b) certain units of TG 77.3 (Right Flank Force) might be close to patrol station seven.**

This statement was not entirely correct. It will be observed (Plate XVII) that the right flank cruisers in their western-most patrol intersected station seven and that the right flank destroyers operated south of a part of CTG 79.11's patrol line initially, and south of the entire line subsequently. Why, in view of the above situation, (a) neither he nor CTG 77.3 requested CTG 79.11 to move his patrol line farther south since its location in Latitude was not important or (b) CTG 79.11 did not move his destroyers farther south automatically in order not to interfere with the battle disposition, is not explained.

At 2150, by TBS voice radio, he directed the left flank forces to form Battle Disposition A-1*** with the cruisers in column natural order** and at 2155 advised that natural order was LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, COLUMBIA.** At this time the right flank cruisers, PHOENIX, BOISE

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* CTG 79.11 TBS Voice Radio Message 242020 October 1944 to TG 79.11.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

*** The designation of Battle Disposition A-1 here was to indicate that all of the units addressed were to be in the left flank as shown in Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine (USF 10A) United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Figure 7, Page 4-11. It was not designated to change in any way the basic Battle Disposition A-2, Figure 8, Page 4-12.

and SHROPSHIRE, were in a line of bearing 050°(T) from the PHOENIX which was the guide. Both flank forces maintained station on the disposition guide, MISSISSIPPI, while during the counter-marches the battle line guided on the van battleships,* which, on easterly courses, was the WEST VIRGINIA and on westerly courses was the PENNSYLVANIA.

IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT CTG 77.2 DID NOT DIRECT THE EMPLOYMENT OF ANTISUBMARINE SCREENS. WHILE HIS REASONS FOR THIS ARE NOWHERE STATED IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE FELT THAT THE ANTISUBMARINE PROBLEM WAS OF LITTLE CONCERN SINCE (A) THERE HAD BEEN NO ENEMY SUBMARINE ATTACKS ON ANY ALLIED UNITS IN LEYTE GULF AT ANY TIME, (B) ANTISUBMARINE SCREENS HAD BEEN GUARDING ALL ENTRANCES TO LEYTE GULF SINCE D-DAY, (C) ANTISUBMARINE DEFENSE AT FIVE KNOTS FOR THE COMPONENTS OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION WAS SCARCELY PRACTICABLE AND (D) THE LACK OF TRAINING OF THE ABOVE COMPONENTS IN MAINTAINING STATION IN A BATTLE DISPOSITION MADE SUCH STATION KEEPING DIFFICULT AND FURTHER COMPLICATIONS, WORSE THAN THE THREAT OF SUBMARINE ATTACK, MIGHT HAVE ENSUED HAD THE DESTROYERS BEEN ASSIGNED ANTISUBMARINE STATIONS.

CTG 77.2 was constantly studying the situation as his battle disposition moved back and forth at five knots along Latitude 10°-35'N, between Longitudes 125°-16'E and 125°-27'E.

Realizing the confusion that can occur in a night battle, and desiring to insure that (a) his own destroyers on their retirement from their attacks were not mistaken for enemy and (b) their rendezvous points were correctly chosen so as (1) to facilitate the concentration of the attack units and (2) to prevent their interference with the ships of the battle disposition, he at 2232 directed CTG 79.11 and COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to establish their post-attack rendezvous points and to advise him of their location.** Why he omitted COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR is not known. Perhaps he felt that this was more a province of CTG 77.3 who, at the time, was experiencing considerable difficulty in establishing a suitable patrol station for his destroyers.

As consequence of this message he received two messages, one at 2256 from CTG 79.11 to TG 79.11 advising that the post-attack rendezvous points were (1) Western Group at west end of screening station seven and (2) Eastern Group at west end of screening station three;*** and the other at 2256 from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to DESRON FIFTY-SIX advising that the post-attack rendezvous point was three miles north of Hibuson Island.***

The rendezvous points above designated were satisfactory to CTG 77.2 with the possible exception of "West end of screening station seven". However, feeling that CTG 77.3 would correct any interference with his forces he took no further action in the matter.

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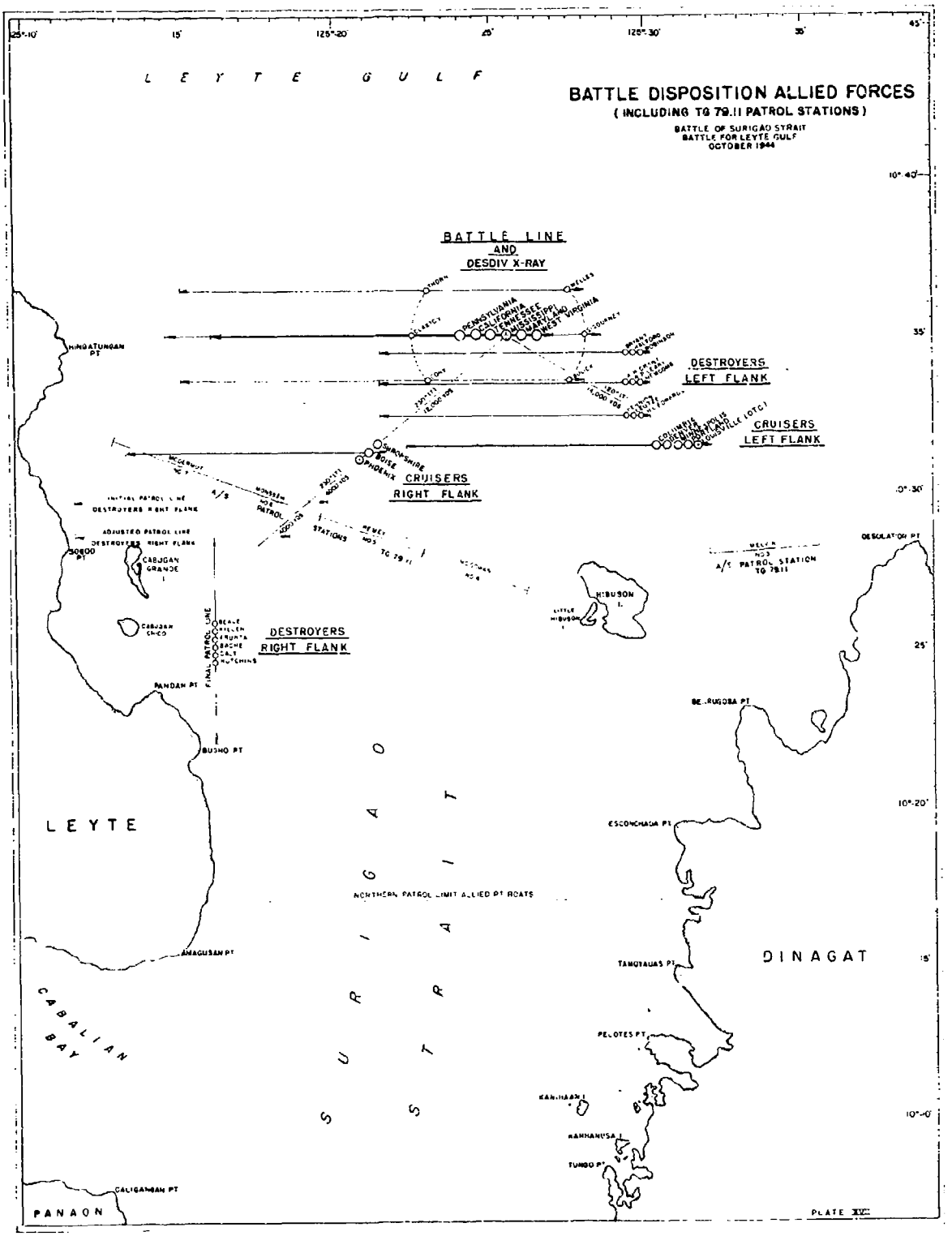
* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report McDERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061. November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.


BATTLE DISPOSITION ALLIED FORCES
(INCLUDING TG 79.11 PATROL STATIONS)
BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944
LEYTE GULF
BATTLE LINE
AND
DESDIV X-RAY
DESTROYERS
LEFT FLANK
CRUISERS
LEFT FLANK
CRUISERS
RIGHT FLANK
DESTROYERS
RIGHT FLANK
HINGATUNGAN PT
CABUGAN GRANDE I
CABUGAN CHICO
PANDAN PT
BUSHO PT
LEYTE
HIBUSON I
LITTLE HIBUSON I
DESOLATION PT
BERUGOBA PT
ESCONCHADA PT
SURIGAO STRAIT
NORTHERN PATROL LIMIT ALLIED PT BOATS
AMAGUSAN PT
CABALIAN BAY
TAMOYAUAS PT
DINAGAT
PELOTES PT
KANIHAAN I
KANHANUSA
TUNGO PT
CALIGANGAN PT
PANAON
PLATE XXV
10°-40'
10°-30'
10°-20'
10°-0'
125°-10'
15'
125°-20'
25'
125°-30'
35'
45'

At 2326 he set condition ONE EASY for all ships. This condition was "All hands at battle stations with key stations alert, and remaining personnel at ease or sleeping on station, and ships in their maximum condition of watertight integrity with the exception that essential ventilation and certain access fittings were open but tended."** He did this in order to relieve the fatigue and tension of the personnel at the guns as well as at other stations.

Up to midnight he had received no true contact reports of the enemy and had no knowledge of the present positions of the Japanese surface forces which had been contacted that day. (The only contacts he had received had proved to be either friendly or land.) However, he felt confident that if the Japanese attempted a penetration that night via Surigao Strait he would learn about it promptly because he understood that thirty-nine motor torpedo boats had been disposed across the southern entrance to the strait for that purpose. He did not know that such contacts had already been made and that, as early as 2236, certain of the Japanese forces had been contacted by radar by PT 131 in the eastern Mindanao Sea heading toward Surigao Strait.** This was, of course, because of the inability of the motor torpedo boats, which had made the contact, to get their reports through to the WACHAPREAGUE.**

(1) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

At 1830 Commander Battle Line had just completed forming his battleships in column--distance 1000 yards--as follows: WEST VIRGINIA (guide), MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA and PENNSYLVANIA. He was on course 170°(T), speed twelve knots and was proceeding to his initial station in Latitude 10°-35'N, Longitude 125°-16'E, at which point the battle line would become the base unit of Battle Disposition A-2*** with the MISSISSIPPI in the center of the column as the disposition guide. He was accompanied by six destroyers of DESDIV XRAY--CLAXTON, CONY, THORN, AULICK, SIGOURNEY, WELLES.

At 1947 he directed DESDIV XRAY to form two screens on the battle line, one at the van and one at the rear.**** COMDESDIV XRAY then directed the AULICK, SIGOURNEY and WELLES to form screen No. 53***** to the east of the leading battleship, and the CLAXTON, CONY and THORN to form an identical screen to the west of the trailing battleship.****

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* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Paragraph 2130.

** Action Report PT 131, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0931, October 29th, 1944.

*** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF10A), Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Figure 8, Page 4-12.

**** Action Report CLAXTON, Report of Action October 24th - 25th, 1944, The Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure(C).

***** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Table No. 1, Page 3-4 (Change No. 3).

Thus there would be three destroyers in the van of the battle line on either the east or west course.

At 1950, when the WEST VIRGINIA reached the initial point of the patrol line, he changed the course of the battle line to 090°(T) and reduced speed to five knots.*

IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT COMMANDER BATTLE LINE REALIZED THAT THESE DESTROYERS COULD GIVE LITTLE ANTISUBMARINE PROTECTION BECAUSE THE DISPOSITION SPEED WAS BUT FIVE KNOTS AND THE LENGTH OF THE BATTLE LINE WAS SOME 5000 YARDS. WHY THEN DID HE PLACE THEM AT THE VAN AND STERN OF HIS BATTLE LINE? WHILE HE GIVES NO REASONS THEREFORE, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE DID SO TO MAKE THEM READILY AVAILABLE FOR ANY URGENCY WHICH MIGHT ARISE SUCH AS INVESTIGATING A CONTACT, REPELLING ENEMY DESTROYERS WHICH MIGHT GET BY THE FLANK FORCES OR MAKING A TORPEDO ATTACK FROM BOTH FLANKS SHOULD DESDIV XRAY BE REQUIRED FOR THIS PURPOSE.**

At 2200, when the battle line had reached the eastern limit of its patrol line, Commander Battle Line changed course to 000°(T) by simultaneous ship turns, and then at 2217 changed course to 280°(T) by the same method.*** DESDIV XRAY conformed to the battle line signals. The effect of the southerly current was now being felt, and the battle line was forced to steer slightly northward (280°(T)) to compensate for it.

The currents and slow speed made station keeping for the battleships quite difficult. This was particularly so because the guide of the battle line shifted to the van at each reversal of course. The turns at five knots were especially slow and cumbersome.

At 2340 Commander Battle Line reversed course through north to 090°(T).***

At 2400 the battle line guide was bearing 090°(T) distant 17,000 yards from Hingatungan Point.

(2) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

At 1830 Commander Left Flank Force (CTG 77.2) in the LOUISVILLE, who was also OTC of the Left Flank Force, was proceeding with the left flank cruisers and destroyers toward his initial station on course 160°(T) at fifteen knots being at this time about fourteen miles from station.**** The left flank cruisers (CRUDIV FOUR and CRUDIV TWELVE) and the left flank destroyers (DESRON FIFTY-SIX) were in a special circular disposition with the cruisers equally spaced on circle four. This was due to the presence of enemy aircraft.****

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** War Instructions, United States Navy, (FTP 143), Navy Department, Office of Naval Operations, 1934, Chapter X, Section V, Paragraph 1053.

*** Deck Log CALIFORNIA, October 24th, 1944.

**** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 24th, 1944.

At 1942, as the LOUISVILLE reached her approximate initial point, CTG 77.2 changed the course of the left flank force to 090°(T) and reduced their speed to five knots.*

At 2142 he ordered (a) left flank cruisers to form column formation natural order on the LOUISVILLE at 2150.** This meant that the LOUISVILLE was to become the guide of the left flank force and that the cruisers were to form astern of her, from east to west as follows: PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER (COMCRUDIV TWELVE) and COLUMBIA, distance 700 yards.** Meanwhile the LOUISVILLE maneuvered to take station bearing 120°(T), distance 14,000 yards from the disposition guide (MISSISSIPPI) which was almost on station and (b) COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to take station in Formation A-2 which was between the cruisers and the battle line.

At 2150 the cruisers formed in column astern of the LOUISVILLE, and COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the NEWCOMB then formed his destroyers in three sections of three destroyers each, which he termed Attack Sections ONE, TWO and THREE and aligned them on a line of bearing of section guides 000°-180°(T)*** interval between sections 2000 yards.****

Attack Section ONE consisted of NEWCOMB (FF), RICHARD P. LEARY and ALBERT W. GRANT; Attack Section TWO of ROBINSON (F), HALFORD and BRYANT; Attack Section THREE of HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS (F), LEUTZE and BENNION.*****

COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX divided his squadron into three sections because if ordered to attack he planned to employ them in a coordinated torpedo attack in accordance with standard doctrine.******

IT IS NOT KNOWN EXACTLY WHY HE CHOSE THIS FORMATION BECAUSE IT IS PREFERABLE TO HAVE THE DESTROYER ATTACK SECTIONS ON A LINE OF BEARING NORMAL TO THE EXPECTED ATTACK DIRECTION. SINCE THE ATTACK DIRECTION WAS EXPECTED TO BE ALMOST DUE SOUTH THIS MEANT THAT THE DESTROYERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN COLUMN. IT SEEMS LIKELY HOWEVER THAT COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX REALIZING THAT IF ALL DESTROYERS WERE IN CORRECT POSITION IN COLUMN THE

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* Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 24th, 1944.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B); also Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Participation in Battle of South Surigao Strait, P.I., Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944; also Deck Logs BRYANT, LEUTZE, RICHARD P. LEARY, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, October 24th, 1944.

**** This interval (distance between division guides) of 2000 yards was correct for destroyers at this time. However it was full interval rather than natural interval. Full interval was standard distance (500 yards) multiplied by the number of destroyers in each section plus 500 yards; natural interval was standard distance multiplied by the number of ships.

***** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

****** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

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COLUMN WOULD BE 5000 YARDS LONG, DECIDED, AT LEAST WHILE AWAITING INFORMATION OF THE ENEMY WHICH HAD NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE THE FORENOON, TO KEEP HIS DESTROYERS IN THE 000°-180°(T) LINE OF BEARING IN ORDER TO FACILITATE MANEUVERING AND COMMUNICATIONS.

At 2231 Commander Left Flank Force changed the course of the left flank forces to 000°(T).*

At 2243 he received a surface contact report from the COLUMBIA which was evaluated as land.**

At 2245 he changed the course of the left flank forces to 270°(T).*

At 2400 the left flank force was in approximate station on the MISSISSIPPI as provided in Battle Disposition A-2.

(3) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

The right flank force under command of Commander Right Flank Force (COMCRUDIV FIFTEEN in the PHOENIX) was proceeding at 1830 to its assigned station in Battle Disposition A-2 as ordered by CTG 77.2. At this time it was about four miles northeast of Tay Tay Point (Leyte) (Plate XVIII). At 1843 Commander Right Flank Force formed the BOISE and SHROPSHIRE in that order on a line of bearing 050°(T) from the PHOENIX,*** distant 700 yards, so that the cruisers would be in formation to turn eastward to their patrol line when they arrived at their initial station.

At about 1952, the cruisers having arrived on station, he reduced speed to five knots and at 1956 changed course to 090°(T) to await the arrival of the battle line.***

At this time the right flank destroyers, commanded by COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR in HUTCHINS, were in column in the following order: HUTCHINS, DALY, BACHE, ARUNTA, KILLEN and BEALE, and were endeavoring to maintain station bearing 230°(T), distant 4000 yards from PHOENIX.**** COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR followed the movements of the OTC in the PHOENIX.

When, at about 2000, the battle line arrived in approximate station Commander Right Flank Force maneuvered the right flank force to take proper station on the disposition guide MISSISSIPPI. In general, after taking station, he with his cruisers followed the movements of the battle line. His right flank destroyers, however, were not always able to maintain station on the PHOENIX because (a) of shoal water and (b) the patrol line intersected with the patrol station of the MONSSEN of DESRON FIFTY-FOUR in Station SIX. Therefore, mindful of these difficulties at 2128 by voice radio he assigned COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR a new station,

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* Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 24th, 1944.
** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).
*** Deck Log PHOENIX, October 24th, 1944.
**** Deck Log HUTCHINS, October 24th, 1944.

bearing 290°(T), 8000 yards from the PHOENIX. This new station cleared the MONSSEN but it introduced new difficulties to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR in that his ships were forced to maneuver in even more restricted waters.

The tactical situation of the right flank destroyers now became quite unacceptable and therefore Commander Right Flank Force, at 2258 by TBS voice radio, ordered COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to maneuver as necessary to keep clear of the shore.* COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR then formed his destroyers in a column from south to north and took a final position about two miles east of the Cabugan Islands. He patrolled a north-south line from Bugho Point (Leyte) to the latitude of the northern tip of Cabugan Grande Island, and operated in this fashion until ordered to attack.** He made no attempt to follow the movements of the PHOENIX thereafter.

At 2220 Commander Right Flank Force changed course to 290°(T).***

At 2232 he intercepted CTG 77.2's TBS voice radio message to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX and CTG 79.11, directing them to establish their post-attack rendezvous points and to advise him of their location.**** He must have noted that COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR had been omitted. Since he expected his destroyers to attack does it not seem surprising that he did not order them to designate likewise their rendezvous points?

At 2340 he changed course to 090°(T)*** in order to maintain station on the MISSISSIPPI.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15) Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944; also Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4, (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Deck Log PHOENIX, October 24th, 1944.

**** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944. Enclosure (C).

(R) Operations of CTG 79.11, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

CTG 79.11 continued patrolling Antisubmarine Stations ONE to SEVEN (Plate XVIII). He had been on this duty since sunrise D-day.

He was familiar with the situation expected to develop in lower Surigao Strait that night for at 1640 (when it was received by COMDESDIV 108)* he had received CTF 77's dispatch reporting that an enemy attack force of two battleships, four heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and ten destroyers could arrive in Leyte Gulf that night** and at 1757 (also when it was received by COMDESDIV 108)* CTF 77's dispatch wherein CTG 77.2 was directed to defend lower Leyte Gulf and destroy enemy forces encountered.*** He was concerned because he had received no instructions relative to the employment of his command in the impending battle and therefore estimated that he was expected to continue to maintain the antisubmarine screen. He could see that his command, if it continued in its present station, would interfere with the battle operations of CTG 77.2 should the Japanese move up through Surigao Strait. He therefore decided that, unless he received other instructions, it would be necessary for his command to clear the area temporarily about the time of contact between TG 77.2 and the enemy. He also decided that it would be unwise to depart the area without making an effort to contribute to the night battle and determined to request authority to make a torpedo attack.

Because "the location of friendly PT boats made it highly desirable to launch the torpedo attack north of Latitude 10°-12'N" he prepared a plan of attack which would permit him to attack and retire without interfering with subsequent attacks by COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX.**** In this attack he planned to employ only the five destroyers stationed in Surigao Strait and to leave on station the other two destroyers (MC NAIR and MERTZ) which were patrolling between Homonhon Island and Dinagat Island. He considered the latter patrol an essential antisubmarine patrol.****

Having decided to employ only the five destroyers, he planned to employ these in a two-group attack with one group of two destroyers attacking from the west and one group of three destroyers attacking from the east. While he realized that such a two-group attack was not in accordance with standard destroyer doctrine in that that doctrine recommended a single attack of five ships from one bow he was determined to employ the two-group attack if he could gain the approval of CTG 77.2. He stated later in his action report that he made this decision because he believed that the advantages of striking the enemy from opposite bows are so great that the use of two attacking groups as employed by his command was more than justified.****

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** CTF 77 Dispatch 240315 October 1944 to TF 77.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to all TFC's 7THFLT.

**** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Surface Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

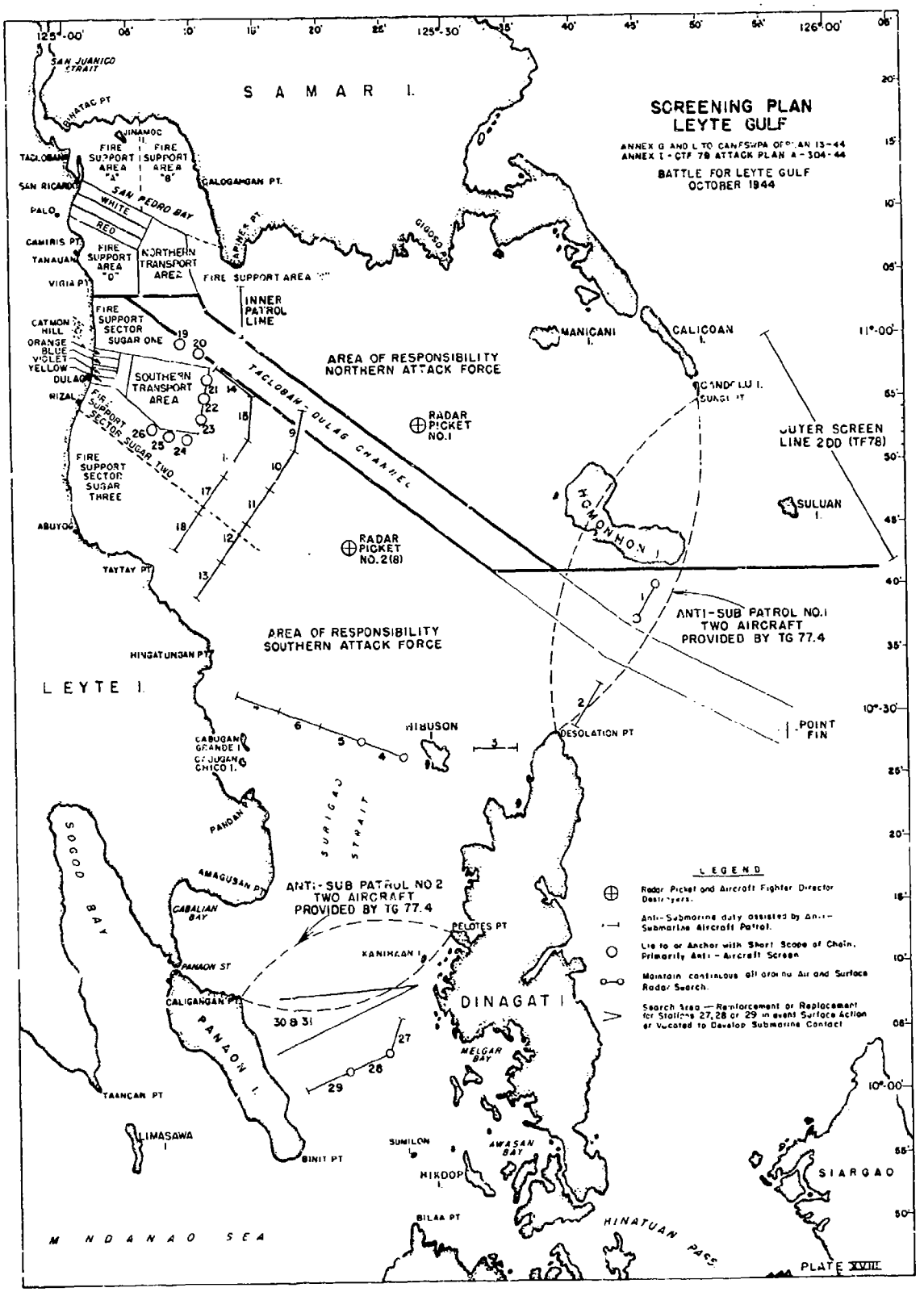

PLATE XVIII

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He felt that he was justified in requesting permission to make an attack because his basic orders directed him to defend the transports from any type of enemy attack.*

WHY HE FELT THAT HE REQUIRED JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTING THAT HE BE PERMITTED TO MAKE A TORPEDO ATTACK (IN ADVANCE OF THE ATTACKS WHICH WOULD BE MADE BY CTG 77.2'S DESTROYERS) IS NOT UNDERSTOOD, FOR HERE HE HAD AN INCENTIVE TO ACTION ORIGINATING FROM THE DEMANDS OF THE SITUATION.

HE WAS, OF COURSE, FAMILIAR WITH THE FACT THAT WHEN A SUBORDINATE COMMANDER FINDS HIMSELF CONFRONTED WITH A SITUATION WHICH HAS NOT BEEN COVERED IN HIS ORDERS FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY AND WHICH NECESSITATES ACTION ON HIS PART BEFORE HE CAN COMMUNICATE WITH HIS SUPERIOR AND RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS, HE SHOULD ANALYZE THE SITUATION TO SEE WHETHER HIS ASSIGNED TASK WILL PROPERLY MEET THE NEW SITUATION AND THEREBY FURTHER THE GENERAL PLAN OF HIS SUPERIOR. IF IT WILL NOT MEET THE NEW SITUATION HE SHOULD SELECT A NEW TASK WHICH WILL DO SO.**

In this case then he could see that his assigned task of patrolling Surigao Strait would not meet the demands of the new situation. It was therefore incumbent on him to choose a new task. This he did.

He also knew that timepermitting, he should communicate with his superior and request instructions.** However, he decided not to communicate with his immediate superior (CTF 79) because he appears to have felt that (a) such communication would necessitate the employment of radio with the ensuing delay incident to coding and transmission and (b) he could expect a long delay in such communications because his receipt of CTF 77's dispatches relating to the prospective battle had been delayed an average of some three and three-quarter hours.

INSTEAD, HE DECIDED TO REQUEST APPROVAL OF HIS PLANNED ATTACK FROM HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR IN THE AREA (CTG 77.2) WITH WHOM HE COULD COMMUNICATE BY TBS VOICE RADIO. HIS ACTION IN SO DOING WAS OF COURSE CORRECT.

With this in mind he contacted CTG 77.2 as soon as he came within voice radio range, which was at 1950, and advised him that "in case of surface contact to the southward I plan to make an immediate attack with fish, then retire to clear you. If you approve this I will submit my plan shortly."***

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 15th, 1944.

** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department 1944, Chapter 2, Section III, Paragraph 214.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

One minute later he received a query from CTG 77.2 as to whether his screen was the same as on the previous night. To this he replied in the affirmative.*

At 2010 he received a message from CTG 77.2 authorizing him to make the attack. He was directed in the same message to (a) retire to the cover of Dinagat Island, (b) pass between Hibuson and Dinagat, (c) show IFF and (d) inform CTG 77.2 if the enemy was in more than one group and its composition if possible.**

He could see from this dispatch that CTG 77.2 expected him to make an attack with a single attack group. Since this was not in accordance with his plans he, at 2012, advised CTG 77.2 that he (a) planned to attack from both sides with two groups, one of three destroyers and one of two, (b) planned to retire one group to the west, the other, which he would command, to the east and (c) would give the details later. He further asked CTG 77.2 whether this plan would be satisfactory.**

At 2016 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 wherein that commander approved the attack plan and directed that he (a) keep close to the shore, (b) employ IFF and (c) inform CTG 77.3, who commanded the right flank forces, of the above plan.**

He now estimated that if the enemy approached from the south he would come directly up the strait as far north as Kanihaan Island (Latitude 10°-10'N) and then change course to 340°(T) to head directly for the transport area. He further estimated, since his attack would be above Latitude 10°-12'N, that the enemy would be on that course when he launched his torpedoes.* Actually this estimate was quite accurate for Commander THIRD Section had planned to pass the southern entrance of Surigao Strait and take course 350°(T) directly to the transport area.***

At 2020 he transmitted by voice radio the following plan to his ships, CTG 77.2, CTG 77.3 and COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX: "If surface contact is made to southward, COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR will form two attack groups. Western Group COMDESDIV 108 in McDERMUT with MONSSEN, Eastern Group COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR in REMEY with McGOWAN and MELVIN in that order. Attack speed thirty knots. McNAIR and MERTZ will remain in vicinity stations One and Two. Will use individual target plan, intermediate speed setting. After delivery of fish retire normal to the axis to clear area for CTG 77.2 and CTG 77.3, and then north near coast line. Time 2020I."*

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 15th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** COM3RD Section Dispatch 221155, October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

The above plan indicated (a) a high speed (thirty knots) attack on both bows of the enemy, using intermediate speed (thirty-three and one-half knots) torpedoes which had a designed torpedo range of about 9200 yards, (b) an individual target plan wherein each destroyer, unless otherwise directed, was to select as her target her opposite number in the enemy formation and was to track this target and compute and use her own firing data. This firing plan could be modified as necessary when the number of the enemy targets became known.

SINCE THE ATTACK PLAN WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH DESTROYER DOCTRINE,* EXCEPT AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, AND INTERMEDIATE SPEED SETTING WAS THE NORMAL SPEED SETTING FOR NIGHT ATTACKS, THE ABOVE PLAN IS CONSIDERED SOUND AS A PRELIMINARY PLAN. HOWEVER IT IS NOT CLEAR, AS POINTED OUT UNDER CTG 77.2, THAT IF THE ENEMY MOVEMENT PROVED TO BE DIFFERENT FROM THE ESTIMATE--THAT IS, FOR EXAMPLE, IF HE MOVED NORTH ALONG THE SHORE LINE RATHER THAN IN MID-STRAIT--IT MIGHT BE INFEASIBLE TO MAKE AN ADEQUATE TWO-PRONG ATTACK WITH THE RESULT THAT A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE ABOVE PLAN WOULD BE REQUIRED.

Prior to 2102 (when it was received by COMDESDIV 108), and likely about 2030 when the MONSSEN received it, CTG 79.11 received CTG 77.2's battle plan which had been issued by dispatch at about 1730 that afternoon.**

Since this plan clearly showed the location of the principal forces of the battle disposition, notably the battle line and the right and left flank forces, CTG 79.11 could plainly see that there would be some interference with his destroyers in Station SEVEN. In fact it is likely that he had heard of the difficulties there because of the comments over the TBS voice radio.

He, therefore, at 2118 queried CTG 77.2 by TBS voice radio in this regard and asked whether part of TG 77.2 was to operate south of this patrol line.***

At 2120 he received a reply from CTG 77.2 to the effect that his units would not operate south of the patrol line except (a) four motor torpedo boats which might operate in Latitude 10°-17'N and (b) certain units of TG 77.3 which might be close to Station SEVEN.***

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* Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943; also Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-44, Destroyer Torpedo Doctrine and Manual of Torpedo Control, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01630, July 8th, 1944.

** CTG 77.2 Dispatch 240830 October 1944 to TG's 77.2 and 77.3, info CTF 77.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

During the evening a number of unidentified planes were being tracked by radar, notably by the MC GOWAN,* but by other ships as well. Although it was dim moonlight none of the planes were sighted. They seemed to be patrolling in the vicinity of Cabugan Grande Island. The MC GOWAN reported that one of these planes showed surface ship rather than aircraft identification code. They may have been, in part, Japanese planes of the THIRD Section operating from bases at Cebu** and, in part, Allied PBY's*** operating from the SAN CARLOS anchored in Hinunangan Bay.

At 2232 CTG 79.11 received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing him to establish his post-attack rendezvous points and to advise as to their locations.****

Therefore, at 2256, he designated the post-attack rendezvous points as follows: For western group at the west end of screening Station SEVEN, and for eastern group at the west end of Station THREE.*****

At 2332, in reply to a query from COMDESDIV 108, he directed that all contact reports were to be made by TBS voice radio.*****

At 2400 the units of TG 79.11 were in their patrol stations and patrolling not only against enemy submarines as heretofore but also against the approach of enemy surface forces from the south.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 1830 - 2400, October 24th.

(1) Bohol and Camiguin PT's.

It will be recalled that the westernmost Allied motor torpedo boats were to be stationed along a line between Agio Point, Bohol and Sipaca Point, Mindanao (Plate XIX), and that the (a) northern half of this line was to be patrolled by the Bohol PT's and (b) southern half by the Camiguin PT's.

At 1830 the motor torpedo boats were en route as follows: The Bohol PT's to initial station off Agio Point and the Camiguin PT's to initial station one and one-half miles north of Camiguin Island.

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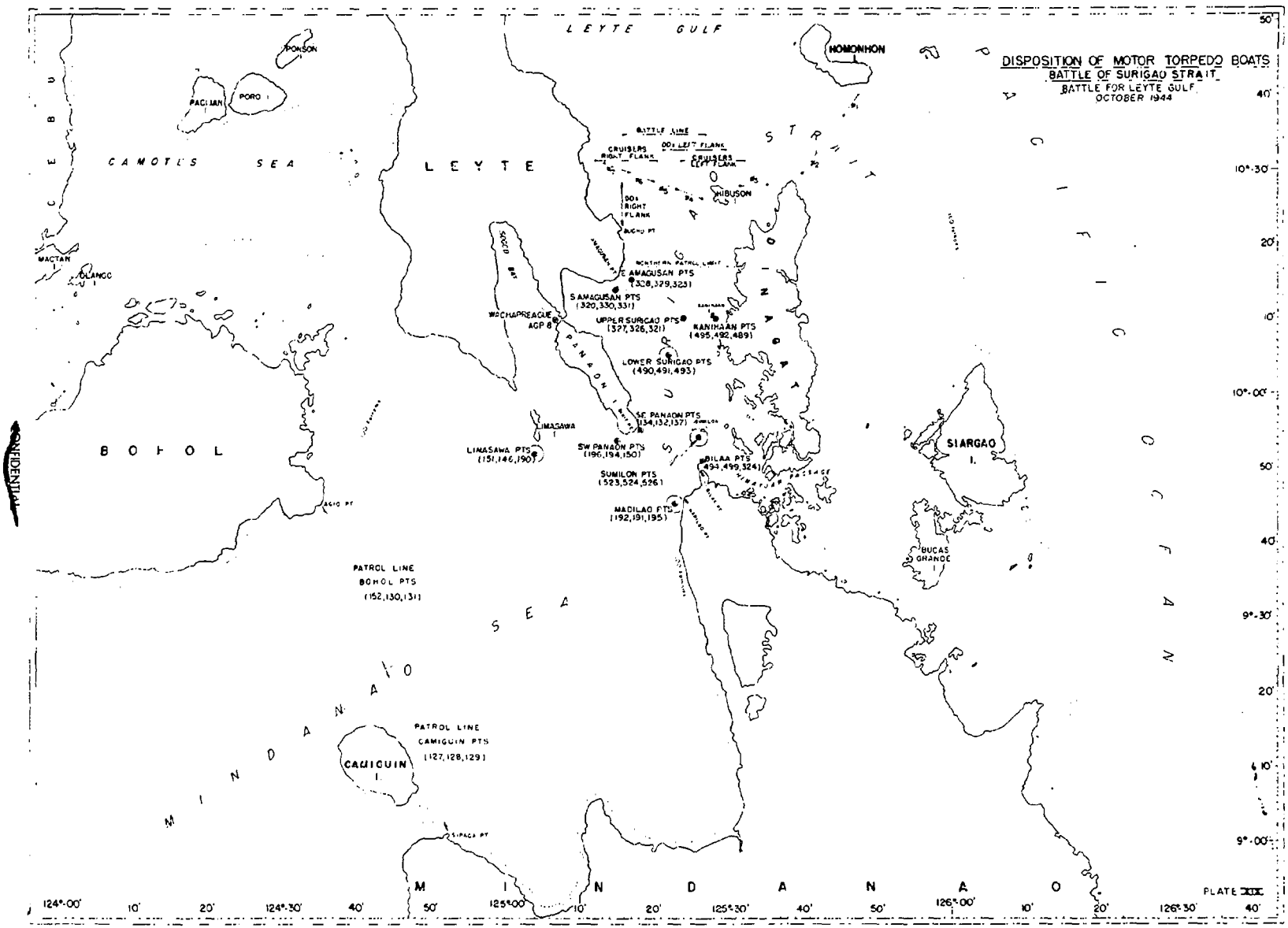
* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801; also Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to Cebu and San Jose Air Bases, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** War Diary Fleet Air Wing 10, October 24th, 1944.

**** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.



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It seems well to point out here that all motor torpedo boats employed a medium frequency voice net (3120 kcs) for intership communication. This circuit was called the PT common and since it was but five kilocycles off the LAW/ASP (local air warning/antisubmarine patrol) net, it provided a valuable source of information for the larger ships.*

(a) Bohol PT's.

En route to patrol station, the Bohol PT's at 1925 contacted, by radar, one unidentified plane in Latitude 09°-48'N, Longitude 125°-00'E,** but did not sight the plane nor were the motor torpedo boats sighted by the plane. It is believed that the plane was from the No. One Attack Unit, dispatched by Commander THIRD Section from Cebu to attack the motor torpedo boats on the west coast of Panaon at dusk.***

The Bohol PT's arrived at a position bearing 050°(T), distant three miles from Agio Point at 2135 and immediately commenced patrolling on course 169°(T), speed twelve knots employing radar (Diagram "D"). Commander Bohol PT's likely chose this course in order to (a) close the patrol line from Agio Point to Sipaca Point and (b) obtain a radar check of his course and speed using Camiguin Island. The motor torpedo boats were in left echelon and were therefore on a line of bearing on the port quarter of the guide (PT 152), distance between adjacent boats seventy-five yards.**** IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THIS WAS THE CORRECT FORMATION FOR PATROL BECAUSE RADARS WERE NOT RELIABLE ENOUGH TO COVER THE ENTIRE PATROL LINE, AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE ENEMY BE DISCOVERED AS HE CROSSED THE PATROL LINE. WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN MORE CORRECT HAD THE COMMANDER OF THE BOHOL PT'S PLACED HIS BOATS IN A LINEAR PATROL WITH EACH BOAT COVERING ABOUT FIVE MILES OF THE PATROL LINE? IN SUCH CASE THE CHANCE OF THE ENEMY CROSSING THE PATROL LINE UNDETECTED WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATLY REDUCED OVER THE FORMATION ADOPTED, AND THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS WOULD STILL HAVE REMAINED WITHIN RELIABLE VOICE RADIO RANGE OF ONE ANOTHER, WITHIN RADAR RANGE OF ONE ANOTHER, AND WITHIN EASY CONCENTRATION RANGE.

The patrol was uneventful until 2236 when PT 131 reported two radar targets on her starboard quarter, distance ten miles.***** These were the YAMASHIRO and FUSO, of the Japanese SECOND Division. The motor torpedo boats immediately changed course to 345°(T) to close the target, increased speed to twenty-four knots and endeavored repeatedly to make a

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report PT 152, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0399, October 29th, 1944.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to Commanders Cebu and San Jose Air Bases, info Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine Motor Torpedo Boats, U.S. Fleet, (USF 41), U.S. Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1945, Part II, Paragraph 2620, Page 2-13.

***** Action Report PT 131, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0391, October 29th, 1944.

contact report to friendly forces but especially to their base (WACHAPREAGUE at Liloan Bay just north of Panaon Island) but were unable to do so. At this time the two radar targets bore 292°(T). The motor torpedo boats were now about eleven miles south of Agio Point. As they closed the targets they tracked them and determined their course as 080°(T) (actually, it was 065°(T)), and their speed as twenty-five knots (actually, it was eighteen knots). At about 2252, having almost reached their attack position, they slowed to ten knots, took the collision course of 047°(T) and at 2254 sighted the enemy formation at a distance of from two to three miles. The recognition was poor however for the motor torpedo boats believed that they had sighted two enemy battleships, two - three cruisers and one destroyer.* This, of course, was incorrect because the SECOND Division consisted of but two battleships and one destroyer.

The motor torpedo boats now found themselves under fire by the Japanese ships which had turned toward them. They immediately deployed in order to close and fire torpedoes. However the enemy fire was accurate with the result that (a) PT 130 was hit by a dud five-inch shell and (b) PT 152 was hit in the starboard bow which knocked out both radios although this was not known for several hours.* (This latter hit probably was scored by the SHIGURE which claimed having made a direct hit.) About this time PT 152 observed two more "pips" on her radar screen in the same direction as the original target group.* Since the Japanese force, as pointed out earlier, consisted of but three units these were likely phantoms.

The Commander Bohol PT's, in PT 152, now realizing that he could not get into an attack position at 2255 changed course to 150°(T) and then retired. Although he increased speed to twenty-four knots he, at the same time, used a radical zigzag to avoid enemy gunfire with the result that he made good about nineteen knots. Since he could not contact any friendly forces by radio he directed PT's 130 and 131 to report enemy's position by radio.* As a result, about 2313, PT's 130 and 131 headed for the Camiguin PT's which they felt might be able to deliver the contact report.** This caused a separation between the above PT's and PT 152 which was attempting to close the enemy (Diagram "D").***

WHILE THE ACTION OF THE COMMANDER BOHOL PT'S IN SO DISPATCHING PT'S 130 AND 131 WAS SOUND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CORRECT HAD HE DISPATCHED THESE TWO MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS AT THE MOMENT WHEN, HAVING ESTABLISHED THE CHARACTER OF THE ENEMY FORCE, HE DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN A RECEIPT FOR HIS CONTACT REPORT. SUCH ACTION WAS CALLED FOR BY HIS ORDERS WHICH DIRECTED HIM "TO REPORT ANY ENEMY SIGHTED, THEN ATTACK, INDEPENDENTLY". HAD HIS BOATS BEEN SERIOUSLY DISABLED WHILE ATTACKING, THE POSSIBILITY OF NO INFORMATION THEREON REACHING CTG 70.1 WAS VERY GREAT.

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* Action Report PT 152, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0399, October 29th, 1944; also Action Report PT 130, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 5, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 130, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 5, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 152, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0399, October 29th, 1944.

At approximately 2350 PT's 130 and 131 sighted the Camiguin PT's* in position three miles north of Camiguin Island.

At 2400 they were about three miles north of Camiguin Island and PT 152 was bearing 221°(T), distant eighteen miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

(b) Camiguin PT's.

The Camiguin PT's arrived on station one and one-half miles north of Camiguin Island at 2145, lay to and carried out radar watch in rotation. PT 128 had the watch between 2200 and 2400.*

AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE BOHOL PT'S, THE ABOVE METHOD OF PATROLLING, WHILE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE BOHOL PT'S, WAS ALSO OF DOUBTFUL CORRECTNESS BECAUSE THIS PATROL DID NOT ADEQUATELY COVER THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE ASSIGNED PATROL LINE BETWEEN AGIO POINT AND SIPACA POINT. WHILE IT WAS EFFECTIVE FOR THE AREA NORTH OF CAMIGUIN ISLAND, IT LEFT THE FOUR MILE DEEP WATER PASSAGE SOUTH OF CAMIGUIN ISLAND ENTIRELY OPEN. WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE TO HAVE PLACED ONE BOAT IN THE LATTER AREA AND TO HAVE DIRECTED THE REMAINING TWO BOATS TO MOVE CLOSER TO THE MID-POINT OF THE AGIO POINT - SIPACA POINT PATROL LINE? THIS WOULD HAVE GIVEN A FULL COVERAGE OF THE DANGER AREA TO THE SOUTH BETWEEN THE "LIE TO" POSITION AND CAMIGUIN ISLAND AND WOULD HAVE COVERED ABOUT TEN MILES TO THE NORTH OF THE "LIE TO" POSITION WHICH WOULD HAVE GIVEN RADAR COVERAGE SOME MILES TO THE NORTH OF THE MID-POINT. WHILE THIS COVERAGE TO THE NORTH WOULD HAVE OVERLAPPED INTO THE AREA OF THE BOHOL PT'S, IT WOULD HAVE INCREASED THE PROBABILITY OF DETECTION OF ENEMY FORCES IN THE MIDDLE WATERS OF THE MINDANAO SEA, WHICH WATERS MIGHT WELL BE TRAVERSED BY APPROACHING ENEMY HEAVY FORCES.

The above comment is supported by the fact that the FIRST Division passed at 2227 about seven and one-half miles to the north of the mid-point of the patrol line (Diagram "D") without being detected.

It is of interest that the FIRST Division failed likewise to contact the Camiguin PT's but this was likely due to (a) the range, which at closest approach (2206), was about twelve miles and (b) the land effect of Camiguin Island.

The failure of the Camiguin PT's to locate the FIRST Division was not due to incorrect deployment in the patrol area alone. There were other contributary causes. Among these were (a) the failure of the motor torpedo boats to be on station sufficiently in advance of the expected earliest time of the arrival of this division based on the contact made in the Sulu Sea at 0905** (this would have called for the Bohol and Camiguin PT's to be on station as early at 1700 if the enemy speed were estimated as twenty-two knots and as early as 1900 if the enemy speed were estimated

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* Action Report PT 127, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 4, October 29th, 1944.

** Commander 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 240215 October 1944 to all interested in current operations.

as eighteen knots), (b) the fact that the motor torpedo boats arrived on station, but shortly before the time that the Japanese FIRST Division was passing Camiguin Island with the possible resulting confusion in establishing their navigational position and in establishing their radar watch, and (c) the fact that the above mentioned FIRST Division passed twelve miles to the north of the "lie to" position which distance seems to have been about the limiting range of the motor torpedo boat radars on cruiser type targets as reported in RAD Three.*

As will be shown later, the limiting ranges given in RAD Three were about two miles greater than those actually obtained by the motor torpedo boats.

At 2300 the Camiguin PT's sighted numerous starshells and gunflashes over the horizon to the northeast. This was the action between the Bohol PT's and the SECOND Division.

At about 2350 the Camiguin PT's sighted PT's 130 and 131 of the Bohol PT's which were closing in order to transmit a contact report.** It seems likely that these two motor torpedo boats had been discovered earlier since CTG 77.2 reported having received at 0038 a relayed contact report from PT 127 reporting two contacts bearing 310°(T), ten miles from Camiguin Island, closing.***

At 2400 the Camiguin PT's were about three miles north of Camiguin Island.

(2) Limasawa PT's.

The only other motor torpedo boats to observe anything unusual were PT's 151 (OTC), 146 and 190 which had taken station two miles south of Limasawa Island at 1830 and will hereinafter be called the Limasawa PT's. They appear to have maintained station until 1958 when visibility became poor. By 2300 they had drifted with the current about seven miles**** as shown in Diagram "D".

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* Radar Bulletin No. 3 (RAD 3), Radar Operators Manual, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, August 5th, 1944 (Reprint March 1945), Part 4, Page 4-SO-7.

** Action Report PT 127, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 4, October 29th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** While the PT boats concerned did not report this drift the Commander Limasawa PT's (then Lieutenant (jg) Dwight Owen, USNR) stated on October 31st, 1957 to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College that this drift could well have occurred as the PT's were lying to and concentrating on radar search to the SW rather than on accurate maintenance of position; also Action Reports PT's 151, 146 and 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 0389, October 28th; 0388, October 28th; 0398, October 30th, 1944, respectively.

At this time they sighted searchlight and flares and heard heavy gunfire to the south southwest at an estimated distance of fifteen miles. This estimated distance was incorrect since the action took place about twenty-three miles away. The fact that gunfire was heard indicates unusual atmospheric conditions.

Commander Limasawa PT's now endeavored to communicate with his base (WACHAPREAGUE) but, like the Bohol and Camiguin PT's was unsuccessful. He considered this failure to have been due to excessive radio interference due, in part, to the fact that the enemy was jamming the circuit.*

The remainder of the patrol was uneventful until 2330 when PT 151 made radar contact on an enemy force nine miles to the south. This contact was on the Japanese FIRST Division which at the time was on course 035°(T), speed eighteen knots. The division, after about ten minutes of tracking, was found to be on course 060°(T), speed fifteen knots.**

Commander Limasawa PT's now proceeded toward the target at a speed of seventeen knots muffled and at 2354 made visual contact at an estimated range of two miles. The visual sighting disclosed to PT's 151 and 190, one battleship, a probable light cruiser and three destroyers, and to PT 146, one large and three smaller ships. PT 146 was correct (MOGAMI and three destroyers). The fact that PT's 151 and 190 sighted units not present as well as reported incorrect times and positions is due to the fact that their reports were reconstructed collectively later from memory with the resulting errors.***

The motor torpedo boats tried to report the above contacts to their base as well as to other motor torpedo boats but without avail.****

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* Action Report PT's 146 and 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0388, October 28th, 1944 and Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944, respectively.

** Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389, October 28th, 1944.

*** Statement by Commander Robert Leeson, USNR, Commander TU 70.1.3 at Battle of Surigao Strait to Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, April 17th, 1954.

**** Action Reports PT's 151, 146 and 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 0389, October 28th; 0388 October 28th; 0398, October 30th, 1944, respectively.

Commander Limasawa PT's now slowed his section to nine knots and approached the large ship on her port quarter for the purpose of delivering a torpedo attack. This type of approach was permissible for motor torpedo boats against a medium speed target which was well screened.*

At 2400 the Limasawa PT's were bearing 220°(T), distant nine and seventenths miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

(3) SW Panaon PT's.

This section of motor torpedo boats (PT's 196 (OTC), 150, 194), hereinafter called SW Panaon PT's, reported on station at 1900 at which time they were between Sonok Point and Balongbalong and about 6000 yards from the latter.** They continued on course 177°(T) but slowed to five knots and at 2000 when 6000 yards bearing 221°(T) from Balongbalong stopped. Commencing about this time the visibility became very bad with rain and clouds, which poor visibility obtained throughout the night.*** After stopping they drifted to the westward with the current and by midnight had drifted about five and one-half miles from the 2000 position. The radar and radio of PT 196 were functioning badly.**** It is most likely that none of the group of MTB's realized that they had drifted so far to the west.

Just before midnight the Japanese FIRST Division moved into normal range for motor torpedo boat radars against a heavy cruiser--ten to twelve miles--but none of the SW Panaon PT's detected the Japanese force (Diagram "D") or were even aware of its presence.

At 2400 the SW Panaon PT's were bearing 129°(T), distant four miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

(4) SE Panaon PT's.

This section of motor torpedo boats (PT's 134 (OTC), 132, 137), hereinafter called SE Panaon PT's, was on station off Binit Village at the southeast tip of Panaon Island where it had arrived at 1910. At 2145 it contacted by radar an unidentified plane and at 2235 made a similar contact on two unidentified planes.*****

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* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, Motor Torpedo Boats, U.S. Fleet (USF 41), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1945, Part III, Paragraph 3333.

** Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 196, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0400, October 31st, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 134, Night Action of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

There is no information available as to what these planes were. They may have been Japanese planes of the THIRD Section operating from bases at Cebu* or Allied PBY's.**

The Commanding Officer PT 134 reports in his action reports that the above contacts were transmitted directly to the base (WACHAPREAGUE) or to the base through PT 523.*** Neither the WACHAPREAGUE nor PT 523 make any mention of having received the above reports.****

(5) Other PT's.

The operations of the motor torpedo boats other than the Bohol, Camiguin, Limasawa, SW Panaon and SE Panaon PT's were uneventful, excepting that at 2050 the Bilaa Point PT's (494 (CTC), 497, 324), in accordance with orders from CTF 77, changed their stations from one and one-half miles west of Bilaa Point (Mindanao) to a position one mile north of Bilaa Point.***** This was for the purpose of insuring that enemy forces did not pass undetected through Hinatuan Passage between Dinagat Island and Mindanao Island.******

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* Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch 231905 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 10), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161641 (Part 4), NA 11801; also Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 241225 October 1944 to Cebu and San Jose Air Bases, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippines, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (G).

*** Action Report PT 134, Night Action of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

**** Action Report WACHAPREAGUE for Period October 23rd - 26th, 1944, Serial 072, October 31st, 1944; also Action Report PT 523, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

****** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

CHAPTER VIII - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0000 - 0100, October 25th

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

Commander THIRD Section, who was also Commander SECOND Division, continued on toward Surigao Strait as planned. The situation appeared to be developing satisfactorily but he wondered what had happened to the Allied destroyers and motor torpedo boats which he had expected to encounter west of Panaon Island. He had just heard from Commander FIRST Division (at midnight) that the enemy had not been sighted* and yet he felt that if his estimates were correct that commander should now be in the area where enemy opposition of that nature was expected. He knew, of course that the FIRST Division was somewhat delayed because Commander FIRST Division had reported at 0004 that he expected to rendezvous at 0115, a delay of forty-five minutes.* He appears to have considered this message to be incomplete for, at 0008, he queried that commander as to the course of that division.* This seems to have been a subtle method of discovering the general location of the FIRST Division for, if the reply indicated a northerly course, he could estimate from Commander FIRST Division's sweep plans** that the FIRST Division was in the waters west of Limasawa Island.

At 0012 he received a reply to the effect that (a) the course of the FIRST Division was 010°(T), and (b) it was "penetrating from now".* From these two messages he could estimate that the FIRST Division (a) was approximately forty-five minutes behind schedule, and (b) had not yet passed between Limasawa Island and Taancan Point (Leyte) (for had it done so the course would have been about 090°(T)). What he thought of the "penetrating from now" portion of the message is not known but it is doubtful if he realized that the MOGAMI was about nine miles from the above passage. This seems so for a few minutes later considerable confusion arose in identification.

At 0015 he informed Commander FIRST Division that (a) he would pass the rendezvous point at 0035, (b) at 0043 his course would be 090°(T) and (c) his speed was eighteen knots.* (It will be recalled that the rendezvous point was seventeen miles, bearing 250°(T) from Binit Point). This information was furnished in order to facilitate the rejoining of the FIRST Division and to help in identifying the SECOND Division. It is of interest that at 0015 SHIGURE was six miles from the newly designated point and that at the speed being made (eighteen knots) she would pass the rendezvous point at 0035 if the current were disregarded (Diagram "E").

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 1ST Division Dispatch 241700 October 1944 to 1ST Division, info Commander 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

Commencing at 0018 he began to receive from Commander FIRST Division contact reports on enemy units.* He naturally was highly interested in the number of such units encountered. Since he had received intelligence information of destroyers in that area as well as motor torpedo boats, he was anxious to discover whether any of these had been located, and what the nature of their operations was, i.e., did their primary objective appear to be one of intelligence, or did they have an attack objective? These were essential elements of information for if the enemy was not attacking it was possible that he would encounter heavy action in the gulf, but if the enemy was attacking it was possible that he would encounter strong forces immediately, although from information received heretofore such action was improbable.

Between this time and 0023 he likely, despite the weather, (a) saw one or more searchlights on his port bow because, at that time, the YAMAGUMO, which was about seven miles to the northeast, was firing at certain of the motor torpedo boats, and (b) saw gun tracers.

At 0023, he received a message from Commander FIRST Division reporting a ship silhouette, apparently enemy.*

At 0025 he received a contact report from Commander FIRST Division sent to all ships of the THIRD Section that a ship had been sighted on bearing 200°(T).* He likely estimated that this contact was on one of his SECOND Division ships because, from the searchlight and tracer bearings, he had formed an approximate idea of the location of his FIRST Division.

This contact report was quickly followed by a contact report from a SECOND Division ship (SHIGURE), also sent to all ships of the THIRD Section, that an enemy destroyer had been sighted bearing 040°(T).*

Although he was certain of his identification of the FIRST Division, he saw that the SHIGURE report raised the possibility that, perhaps, the FIRST Division had mistaken his force for enemy. This possibility was confirmed by the appearance of starshells bursting to the south of him on bearing 200°(T) which had obviously been fired from the direction of the FIRST Division. He immediately directed that Commander FIRST Division be queried as to whether or not he had mistaken BATDIV TWO for enemy.* But, before his message could be transmitted he received word at 0028 from Commander FIRST Division that he was breaking off penetration and rejoining* thus showing that that commander had recognized the SECOND Division as friendly.

He now observed that the weather, which had heretofore been improving, was closing down with reduced visibility.* He, therefore, at 0039, in anticipation of the reforming of the THIRD Section, advised the THIRD Section that distance A in No. TWO Approach Formation (Plate XX) would be reduced to two kilometers* (it was normally four kilometers).

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

At 0057 he (a) advised his command that he planned at 0129 to change course to 040°(T) and at 0150 to 000°(T) and (b) intercepted a message from the MICHISHIO that she was making twenty knots.*

At 0100 the FIRST Division was close enough to the SECOND Division to consider her as having rejoined.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Division, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

By 0000, the weather encountered by the FIRST Division was quite squally and visibility was intermittently reduced.**

At 0003 Commander FIRST Division learned that the SECOND Division was on course 065°(T).*

Meanwhile Commander FIRST Division appears to have been studying the situation and to have arrived at the conclusion that he could not possibly make the search to Sogod Bay and arrive at the rendezvous at 0030 as ordered. He estimated instead that the would require as much as forty-five additional minutes to make the search and on that basis he thought it wise to so advise Commander THIRD Section. Therefore, at 0004, he advised that commander that he expected to rejoin at 0115* rather than at 0030 which had been originally designated. It seems probable that he expected Commander THIRD Section to issue a new rendezvous to conform with the 0115 time. Why he did not speed up earlier to insure his arrival at the 0030 rendezvous on schedule cannot be determined, but it appears likely that the restriction to remain about twenty kilometers ahead of the SECOND Division prevented him from moving ahead faster so that he might make the search into the waters west of Panaon Island sufficiently early to insure returning to the rendezvous point on time.

At 0008 he was queried by Commander THIRD Section as to his course.* Realizing by this query that Commander THIRD Section was interested in learning whether or not he was in the waters west of Panaon Island, he did not immediately answer but changed course at 0012 to 010°(T) and then answered the question, further stating that he was "penetrating from now" (sic).* In view of his intention to pass to the west and north of Limasawa Island, this statement was not particularly accurate for he was more than nine miles from the passage between Limasawa Island and Taancan Point on Leyte from whence he could penetrate Sogod Bay.

He had not as yet detected the motor torpedo boats approaching on his port quarter which had sighted the force visually at 2354 and were getting into torpedo attack firing position*** (The range of a motor torpedo boat torpedo Mark 13 was 5,500 yards at thirty-two knots).****

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

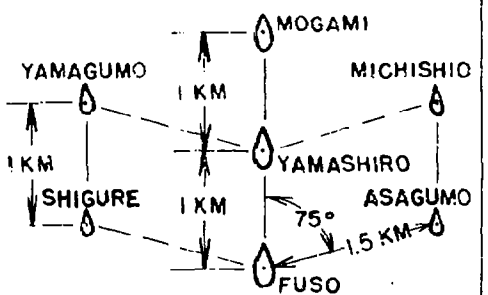
** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th-25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Action Reports PT's 151, 146 and 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 0389, October 29th, 0388, October 28th, 0398, October 30th, 1944, respectively.

**** Bulletin of Ordnance Information 4-44, BUORD, December 31st, 1944, Paragraph 129, Page 66.

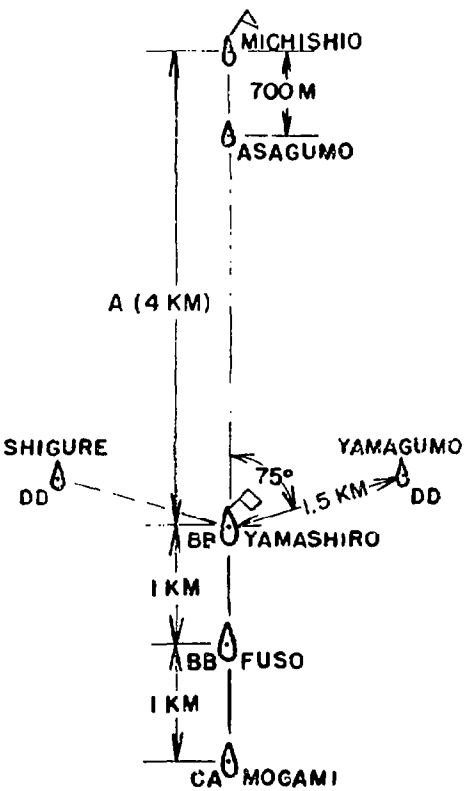
JAPANESE FORMATIONS
3RD SECTION
BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT — BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

CRUISING FORMATION



Note. DISTANCES and BEARINGS in this formation ESTIMATED.

NO.2 APPROACH FORMATION



BATTLE FORMATION

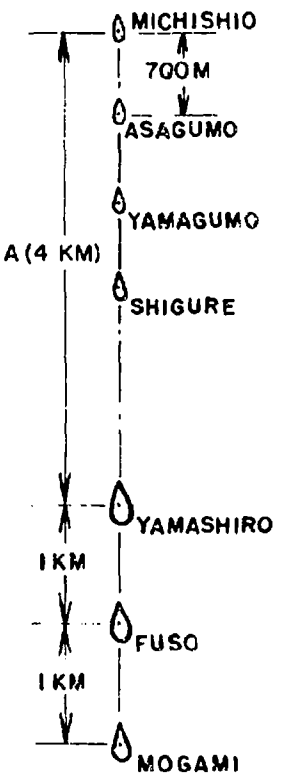


PLATE XX

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

260a

At 0015 he received a voice radio message from Commander THIRD Section that (a) he would pass the rendezvous point at 0035, (b) he would change course to 090°(T) at 0043 and (c) his speed was eighteen knots.* While he likely found this information advantageous, for it gave him a position and an intended movement line, known today (1958) in the U. S. Navy as PIM,** and unless he heard otherwise, he could rejoin along that line, he also likely regretted that Commander THIRD Section had not seen fit to change the rendezvous to conform to the new time of rejoining. Instead it was clear that Commander THIRD Section desired that he rejoin as soon as practicable.

At about this same time the YAMAGUMO reported sighting three torpedo boats bearing 030°(T), distant about ten kilometers.*** These were PT's 150, 194 and 196 which while "lying to" had drifted to the westward (Diagram "E").**** However, the bearing, in view of the MOGAMI bearing later, seems to have been in error and was more likely 080°(T). It is of interest that the above motor torpedo boats failed to detect the FIRST Division.

At about 0018 Commander FIRST Division advised the THIRD Section by voice radio that four enemy torpedo boats (actually there were three) had been sighted on bearing 100°(T).* Meanwhile his flagship (MOGAMI) employing a searchlight, commenced searching to the eastward from her starboard beam to her quarter. She sighted nothing because weather conditions to the eastward were not good and the visibility had for the moment decreased.***

In connection with the employment of searchlights by the MOGAMI against motor torpedo boats it seems wise at this point to digress from the narrative to discuss Japanese and American concepts thereon.

JAPANESE DOCTRINE WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT, ONCE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS HAD BEEN SIGHTED, (A) SPEED SOULD BE BETWEEN TWENTY AND TWENTY-EIGHT KNOTS AND (B) GUNFIRE SHOULD BE EMPLOYED WITHOUT SEARCHLIGHT OR STARSHELL

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** "PIM" consists of the reference position of the OTC at a given time and a forecast of the course and speed expected to be made good over the ground.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th-25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** While the PT boats concerned did not report this drift both the Commander Limasawa PT's (then Lieutenant (jg) Dwight Owen, USNR) on October 31st, 1957, and the Commander of the 39 PT's engaged in the Surigao Strait - Mindanao Sea Area (then Lieutenant Commander Robert Leeson, USNR) on October 29th, 1957, stated to Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, that this drift could well have occurred as the PT's were lying to and concentrating on radar search to the SW rather than on accurate maintenance of position.

ILLUMINATION.* THIS DOCTRINE, BY INFERENCE, WAS SIMILAR TO THE U. S. NAVAL DOCTRINE WHICH WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE EMPLOYMENT OF SEARCHLIGHT OR STARSHELLS IN NIGHT ACTION SHOULD BE AVOIDED WHEN POWERFUL ENEMY FORCES (RELATIVE TO OWN FORCES), WHICH IT WAS HOPED TO AVOID, WERE KNOWN OR SUSPECTED TO BE IN THE AREA, SINCE SUCH ILLUMINATION WOULD DISCLOSE THE PRESENCE OF ONE'S OWN FORCE.** Why then did he employ searchlights? While he has given no explanation it seems clear that he based the employment on the following analysis:

He had been directed, among other items, to sweep the route of advance in order to protect the approaching SECOND Division.*** He was, therefore, not endeavoring to avoid the enemy motor torpedo boats but rather to seek them out and destroy them. If, in so doing, he found the Japanese radar to be ineffective, (and it appears to have been ineffective because the contacts were made visually rather than by radar), it was his responsibility to employ any means--within limitations imposed by the OTC--to locate attacking enemy forces. HE HAD RECEIVED REPORTS THAT ENEMY TORPEDO BOATS HAD BEEN REPORTED TO THE EASTWARD TWICE WITHIN THREE MINUTES, BUT APPARENTLY WITH INSUFFICIENT ACCURACY TO PERMIT OPENING FIRE WITHOUT ILLUMINATION. THE TORPEDO BOATS, THEREFORE, BECAME A SERIOUS MENACE TO HIS FORCE AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT HE LOCATE THEM AT ONCE, OR FAILING THAT, TO TURN AWAY IMMEDIATELY. IF THIS WAS HIS ANALYSIS, AND IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT IT WAS, HIS ACTION IN EMPLOYING SEARCHLIGHTS SEEMS CORRECT.

While the MOGAMI was making the above searchlight sweep Commander FIRST Division decided to form column and therefore directed the destroyers to form column astern of the MOGAMI.**** It is assumed that the destroyers formed in natural order: MICHISHIO (F), ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO. While his reasons for so forming are not stated it seems clear that this column formation was standard within the Japanese Navy at this time for the maneuvers of fast ships such as cruisers and destroyers operating together. This view is supported by the statement of an officer on the staff of Commander SECOND Striking Force, who in discussing a similar formation for that force, stated: "It is the tradition of the Japanese Navy that the commander should be in the leading position".*****

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* CinC Combined Fleet Standing Order No. 81 (1943), Combined Fleet Doctrine 1943, Book One, Combat, Section H, Action Against Torpedo Boats. ATIS Document No. 39, Part VII, June 3rd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

** War Instructions U. S. Navy, 1944 (FTP 143(A)), Chapter 8, Section III, Use of Starshells and Searchlights, Page 37.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

***** USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 58, Interrogation of Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, Volume I, Page 244.

THIS FORMATION HAS ONE MARKED ADVANTAGE. IN NIGHT ACTION ESPECIALLY, FOLLOW-THE-LEADER TACTICS ARE ALWAYS A MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE, AND MAY BE THE ONLY RESOURCE OF THE COMMANDER OF A DETACHMENT TO IMPOSE HIS LEADERSHIP ON HIS GROUP.* IN THIS CASE, WHERE HIGH SPEED FOLLOW-THE-LEADER TACTICS WERE IN ORDER AGAINST THE TORPEDO BOATS, IS IT NOT APPARENT THAT THE COLUMN FORMATION, WITH THE COMMANDER IN THE VAN, WOULD FACILITATE THE MANEUVERS AND WOULD PRESENT ON INITIAL CONTACT MUCH GREATER FIRE POWER AGAINST THE ENEMY THAN WOULD A FORMATION WITH THE DESTROYERS IN A SCREEN, OR EVEN WITH THE DESTROYERS IN COLUMN AHEAD OF THE MOGAMI? IS THIS NOT PARTICULARLY SO SINCE THE CRUISERS AND DESTROYERS WERE CAPABLE OF APPROXIMATELY THE SAME HIGH SPEEDS?

As the destroyers took station astern of the MOGAMI, the last destroyer in the column, YAMAGUMO, sighted and illuminated the motor torpedo boats attacking on the port quarter of the MOGAMI. She opened fire on the boats which were about 300 to 600 yards on her port beam. Although the Commanding Officer PT 151 states in his action report that he had been illuminated and fired on by the battleship** (MOGAMI), this appears to have been in error, for the Commanding Officer MOGAMI, also in his action report, states that, "she sought to fire on the enemy craft without searchlight illumination but visibility was too poor for sighting and she was unable to fire".*** He also reported in the same action report having seen several torpedo wakes which he had successfully evaded. Actually but two torpedoes had been fired by the motor torpedo boats of which one was known to have been an erratic run.**** THE FIRST DIVISION FAILED TO MAKE ANY GUNFIRE HITS ON THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS, SHOWING THE DIFFICULTY OF HITTING A FAST MOVING AND HIGHLY MANEUVERABLE TARGET SUCH AS A MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT DURING DARKNESS.

It will be observed from the plot (Diagram "E") that the FIRST Division was to the southwest of Limasawa Island. This fact was confirmed by the Commanding Officer of the ASAGUMO who stated that at the time they were to the westward of Limasawa Island.*****

At 0023 Commander FIRST Division advised Commander THIRD Section that a ship silhouette, apparently enemy, had been sighted.******

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* Report of Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn, USN (Ret) to CINCPAC, May 13th, 1943, on Informal Investigation into the Circumstances Attending the Loss of the VINCENNES, etc., August 9th, 1944, Paragraph 142, Page 53.

** Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389, October 29th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 150463, NA 12653.

**** Action Reports PT's 151, 146 and 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 0389, October 29th; 0388, October 28th, 0398, October 30th, 1944, respectively.

***** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm MS-39A.

****** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

FROM HIS ACTION REPORT IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT COMMANDER FIRST DIVISION, NOTING THAT NO BEARING HAD BEEN GIVEN BUT PRESUMING THAT THE SHIP SILHOUETTED WAS IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF THE PREVIOUS REPORT (100°(T)), AND, HAVING FAILED TO SIGHT ANYTHING IN THAT AREA WITH HIS SEARCHLIGHTS, AT THIS POINT DECIDED THAT A TURN AWAY WAS URGENT SINCE ENEMY TORPEDOES MIGHT WELL BE HEADING TOWARD HIM. HE, THEREFORE, ORDERED AN EMERGENCY TURN TO PORT OF EIGHTY DEGREES BY SIMULTANEOUS SHIP TURNS.* THIS WOULD PLACE HIS SHIPS ON COURSE 290°(T) WHICH WAS WITHIN TEN DEGREES OF THE REVERSE BEARING OF THE PT BOAT CONTACT. WHILE THE JAPANESE DOCTRINE IN SUCH A SITUATION IS NOT AVAILABLE TO THIS STUDY IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THIS DOCTRINE WAS SIMILAR TO U. S. NAVAL DOCTRINE WHICH PROVIDED IN SUCH SITUATIONS, "THAT EFFECTIVE MANEUVERS SHOULD BE TAKEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS ASTERN OF THE DISPOSITION."**

Shortly after completing the turn away, Commander FIRST Division at 0025 (a) sighted a ship silhouette, apparently enemy, on bearing 200°(T) and promptly reported this contact by voice radio to the THIRD Section* and (b) received a voice radio message from the SHIGURE (with the SECOND Division) that she had sighted an enemy destroyer on bearing 040°(T).*

He now could see that, by his turn away, he had placed his command in an unsatisfactory position relative to the last reported enemy. This was so, not only as regards any torpedoes which may have been fired since the turn to the left placed him in the enemy's torpedo water, but also because his destroyers were now on a line of bearing 190°(T) from the MOGAMI which (a) would soon blank the gunfire by any of his ships excepting the YAMAGUMO and (b) would permit the enemy to cross the "Tee" through enfilade fire.

At this point the YAMAGUMO opened fire with starshells, presumably to illuminate the silhouetted ship in order to ascertain its character and to, at the same time, search the surrounding area for other enemy forces. At this moment the Commanding Officers of the YAMAGUMO and the MOGAMI, recognizing that the ship silhouetted had Japanese characteristics, temporarily withheld fire.*** Also at this moment starshells were observed bursting to the eastward (PT 151 reported that four starshells had burst between the FIRST Division and herself.)**** These were starshells fired by the SECOND Division, presumably by the SHIGURE. From the fact that Commander FIRST Division now queried Commander SECOND Division as to his speed,* it seems clear that he had recognized the SHIGURE as friendly and desired the speed information so that he could facilitate rejoining. Without waiting for a

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine U. S. Fleet (USF 10B), 1945, Paragraph 4463.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th-25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653; also Action Report PT 146, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0388, October 28th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389, October 29th, 1944.

reply and perhaps (a) feeling that his position was precarious if he were fired upon and (b) wishing to have his command in column to facilitate this rejoining, he decided to return to base course 010°(T). At 0028 he changed course eighty degrees to starboard by simultaneous ship turns*—which placed his ships in column on northerly course—and at the same time told Commander THIRD Section that he was (a) breaking off penetration (into the waters west of Panaon) and (b) rejoining the Main Body.*

Also about this same time he received a voice radio message from Commander SECOND Division (a) stating that illumination fire (starshells) had been observed on bearing 200°(T) from his flagship (YAMASHIRO) and (b) inquiring: "Are you mistaking BATDIV TWO (SECOND Division) for enemy?"*

He did not reply to this dispatch but instead made preparations to rejoin. Meanwhile, at 0030, he heard the SHIGURE report to Commander SECOND Division that the destroyer previously reported as enemy was friendly.*

He now changed course to port and headed on course of about 180°(T) to bring him in astern of the SECOND Division (the normal station of the MOGAMI was astern of BATDIV TWO). While on the southerly course he advised Commander THIRD Section at 0037 that there were three motor torpedo boats ahead.* Whether by this he meant the three motor torpedo boats which he had just engaged or whether he referred to motor torpedo boats which had been sighted between 0015 and 0018 off the southern tip of Limasawa Island is not known.

At 0037 he increased speed to twenty knots,* and then at 0039 he released his destroyers to form No. TWO Approach Formation.*

At this time he received a voice radio message from Commander THIRD Section changing the distance "A" in No. TWO Approach Formation (Plate XX) to 2,000 meters.* This was due to the weather which began to thicken, reducing the visibility in general to an estimated 3,000 meters and during squalls to "extremely poor".*

At 0045 he intercepted a voice radio message from Commander SECOND Division to the MOGAMI asking, "What is your course?"* to which query the MOGAMI, at 0048, replied, "We are following astern of BATDIV TWO".*

Then at 0049 he received a message from Commander SECOND Division stating, "Our course 090°(T)".*

At 0057 he received a voice radio message, sent by Commander THIRD Section, that the course at 0129 would be 040°(T) and at 0150 would be due north.*

Meanwhile, in the MOGAMI, he continued to close at twenty knots in order to reach his station (1,000 meters astern of the FUSO).

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

The numerous messages which passed between the commanders of the FIRST and SECOND Divisions at this time relating to course and speed, indicate that (a) the Japanese radar may have been ineffective for surface ship tracking, or (b) Japanese radar plotting was not comparable to the Allied CIC (Combat Information Center) plotting.

Since the FIRST Division was now sufficiently close to the SECOND Division to consider her for tactical purposes as having rejoined--at 0100 the MOGAMI was about 3,300 yards astern of the FUSO--the FIRST Division is herewith dissolved and the activities of its former units will be discussed under Commander THIRD Section.

(2) Operations of Commander SECOND Division, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

Commander SECOND Division continued on course 065°(T) at eighteen knots, still enjoying clear weather. Since the FIRST Division was not in sight and its position not well determined, he, at 0003, notified Commander FIRST Division that his course was 065°(T).* Since he was also Commander THIRD Section he knew that (a) the FIRST Division expected to rejoin at 0115,* (b) Commander THIRD Section had queried Commander FIRST Division as to the course of that division and (c) the latter commander had replied to the effect that (1) the course of the FIRST Division was 010°(T) and (2) it was "penetrating from now".* From these messages, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0000 - 0100, October 25th", he could estimate that the FIRST Division (a) was approximately forty-five minutes behind schedule and (b) had not yet passed between Limasawa Island and Taancan Point (Leyte) (for had it done so the course would have been about 090°(T)). What he thought of the "penetrating from now" portion of the message is not known but it is doubtful if he realized that the MOGAMI was about nine miles from the above passage. This seems so for a few minutes later considerable confusion arose in identification.

At 0015 he knew that Commander THIRD Section had informed Commander FIRST Division that (a) he would pass the rendezvous point at 0035, (b) at 0043 his course would be 090°(T) and (c) his speed was eighteen knots.* (It will be recalled that the rendezvous point was seventeen miles, bearing 250°(T) from Binit Point.)

This exchange of information was interrupted at 0018 when he commenced receiving a number of contact reports from Commander FIRST Division, the first of which reports was on four enemy torpedo boats bearing 100°(T).* The second, at 0023, was on a ship silhouette, apparently enemy.* This latter report was amplified two minutes later to include the bearing 200°(T).* Almost simultaneously he received a contact report from the SHIGURE of his own formation reporting an enemy destroyer on bearing 040°(T).* It will be recalled that the SHIGURE was about 2,000 meters ahead of the flagship (YAMASHIRO). While the destroyer reported by the SHIGURE may have been the YAMAGUMO (the southernmost destroyer of the FIRST Division) the bearing and the fact that the MOGAMI which was much larger was but one mile to the north, leads to the conclusion that the contact was likely on the MOGAMI.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

At this time the SHIGURE fired four starshells beyond the YAMAGUMO.* The YAMAGUMO in turn fired starshells beyond the SHIGURE.** Both destroyers were endeavoring to ascertain the character of their targets and to, at the same time, search the surrounding area for other enemy forces.

Commander SECOND Division now, at 0027, received a query from Commander FIRST Division as to his speed.**

Before he could answer he heard Commander FIRST Division, at 0028, order a simultaneous ship turn to starboard of 080°(T),** and immediately thereafter he knew that commander was breaking off his penetration (into the waters west of Panaon) and rejoining the SECOND Division to reform the THIRD Section.**

Promptly following receipt of the above information Commander SECOND Division, after advising Commander FIRST Division that he had observed starshells on bearing 200°(T) from his flagship (YAMASHIRO) inquired: "Are you mistaking BATDIV TWO FOR enemy?"**

Because of the starshell illumination it seems correct to say that Commander SECOND Division must (a) have observed the illuminated units turn to starboard in execution of the above eighty degree turn, (b) have recognized them as units of the FIRST Division and (c) have realized from the messages sent by Commander FIRST Division that that command had also recognized the SECOND Division as friendly. Why then the query? The answer seems to have been that immediately after having been illuminated by starshells and having recognized the FIRST Division as friendly, Commander SECOND Division had become concerned lest one or more units of the FIRST Division mistake the SECOND Division for enemy and had thereupon directed that the foregoing query be made.

However, before the query could be transmitted Commander FIRST Division began transmitting the above messages. This forced the query to follow rather than precede the FIRST Division messages.

At 0030 he was belatedly advised by the SHIGURE that the enemy destroyer previously reported was friendly.**

At 0033, in order to facilitate the rejoining of the FIRST Division by settling on the base course as early as possible, he changed the course of the SECOND Division to 090°(T).**

At 0037, since he was also Commander THIRD Section, he knew that Commander FIRST Division had reported "three enemy torpedo boats ahead of Main Body" (SECOND Division).** Immediately thereafter he intercepted a message from Commander FIRST Division to DESDIV FOUR that he was making twenty knots.**

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* Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389 October 28th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

At 0039 he intercepted Commander FIRST Division's instructions to DESDIV FOUR releasing the destroyers to proceed to their positions in No. TWO Approach Formation,* and finally also at 0039 he knew that Commander THIRD Section had changed the distance in the No. TWO Approach Formation to two kilometers.*

He now was probably pleased that he had settled on his course of 090°(T) earlier than planned because the sooner the THIRD Section was reformed the more prepared he would be to encounter enemy motor torpedo boats.

At 0045 he queried the MOGAMI as to her course,* and three minutes later received a reply to the effect that she was following behind BATDIV TWO.* It will be noted that she did not indicate her location except in a most general way.

He now, at 0049, advised Commander FIRST Division that the course of the SECOND Division was 090°(T).*

At 0057, since he was also Commander THIRD Section, he knew that that commander had advised the command that he planned to change course at 0129 to 040°(T) and at 0150 to 000°(T).*

IT SEEMS WORTHY OF MENTION THAT, AT LEAST IN THESE LAND ENCLOSED WATERS, JAPANESE RADAR WAS EVIDENTLY VERY POOR INDEED FOR NONE OF THE COMMANDERS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE THE LOCATIONS, COURSES OR SPEEDS OF THE VARIOUS UNITS ENCOUNTERED, EXCEPTING BY VISUAL SIGHTINGS, WITH OR WITHOUT ILLUMINATION, SUPPORTED ON OCCASIONS AS ABOVE, BY DIRECT QUERIES OVER THE VOICE CIRCUIT. JAPANESE RADAR ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INEFFICIENT FOR NAVIGATION PURPOSES SINCE IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT IT WAS NOT EMPLOYED FOR THAT PURPOSE BY THE UNITS OF THE THIRD SECTION. THE COMMANDING OFFICER SHIGURE STATED THAT HE DID NOT NAVIGATE BY RADAR BUT DEPENDED ON VISUAL SIGHTINGS OF PROMINENT LAND MARKS SUCH AS MOUNTAINS AND THAT, WITH THE VISIBILITY VARYING FROM ABOUT TWO AND ONE-HALF MILES TO FIVE MILES, HE WAS OFTEN UNABLE TO SEE THE MOUNTAINS.** ALL OF THIS AUGURED ILL FOR JAPANESE SUCCESS AGAINST ALLIED FORCES WHICH WERE EQUIPPED WITH EXCELLENT RADARS AND WERE PROFICIENT IN ITS USE.

At 0100 the SECOND Division (YAMASHIRO) was bearing 149°(T), distant approximately five miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

At this point, since the FIRST Division was close enough to consider her for tactical purposes as having rejoined the THIRD Section, the SECOND Division is herewith dissolved and the activities of its former units will be discussed under Commander THIRD Section.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Noshino, ex-IJN, Vol. II, Page 347.

(E) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

At 0000 Commander SECOND Striking Force was about thirty-eight miles astern of the SECOND Division on course 060°(T) at twenty-two knots and zigzagging. He was proceeding in accordance with his SigOrd No. 147 with the main exceptions that (a) he was in No. FOUR Approach Formation (Plate XVI) and (b) his command was ready for twenty-eight knots immediately and for maximum battle speed on fifteen minutes notice. Although his cruising speed of twenty-two knots exceeded that of the THIRD Section's eighteen knots, he continued to zigzag employing the "X" method (actual speed 19.58 knots) and, consequently, was not closing the THIRD Section materially.

At 0005 he made preparations for sudden gun and torpedo action.*

At 0025 he observed flares ahead.* These were starshells fired by the FIRST and SECOND Divisions against each other in the waters south of Limasawa Island.

At 0045 he passed the assigned patrol line of the Allied motor torpedo boats between Agio Point, Bohol and Sipaca Point, Mindanao.

Although at 0047 he passed within eleven miles of the Camiguin PT station, which was about one and one-half miles north of that island, he did not know that there were motor torpedo boats on patrol in this area because he did not make any radar or visual sightings at this time on any Allied ships. His presence was likewise unnetected by the five motor torpedo boats (PT's 127, 128, 129, 130 and 131) then operating in the vicinity of this station.**

It seems likely that during this hour he received the dispatch from Commander THIRD Section advising that he "was advancing as scheduled while destroying enemy motor torpedo boats".***

As a result of this dispatch and of Commander FIRST Striking Force's dispatch 242145, he re-estimated the situation. He realized that he had not made known his complete plans to any of those fleet commanders who were vitally interested in the penetration into Leyte Gulf. He, therefore, prepared a dispatch for release giving his planned operations from 0300 until 0900 the following morning.

At 0100 the SECOND Striking Force was about thirteen miles north of Camiguin Island and still about thirty-four miles astern of the THIRD Section.

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* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report PT 127, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 4, October 29th, 1944.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 242330 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces. Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

CHAPTER IX - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, (OTC), 0000 - 0100, October 25th.*

At midnight the weather in the northern part of Surigao Strait was clear. The moon, which was in its first quarter, was setting (it set at 0007). Since the sky was partially obscured by clouds and no stars were visible, the night was quite dark. Visibility without night glasses ranged from two to three miles over the open water to almost zero against the land. All ships were employing their radars to scan the strait in order to detect any enemy forces which might have slipped through the motor torpedo boat patrol areas farther to the south.

CTG 77.2 (who was also Commander Left Flank Force) in his flagship, LOUISVILLE, anxiously awaited the first contact report on those enemy forces which had been contacted and attacked by Allied aircraft that morning in the Sulu Sea. He was somewhat concerned because (a) he had received no information on them whatsoever and (b) he had originally estimated that they could arrive at the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at 1900 and now five hours had elapsed without any reports. Where were they? Had they decided not to give battle and retired?

At 0026 his anxiety was relieved to the extent that he received his first contact report. This report by PT 127, and which had been forwarded by CTG 79.11, was to the effect that a contact had been made at 2310 ten miles southeast of Bohol Island on three enemy destroyers and two large unidentified ships, heading north.**

From the plot of this contact he could see that the enemy at the time of contact was roughly ninety miles away. He had difficulty interpreting the course "north" because there was nothing to be gained by such a course unless (a) the motor torpedo boats had made an incorrect course estimate, which was quite possible, (b) the enemy employing Tokyo Express tactics (CTF 77 in his action report referred to "Probably troop carrying ships" in the THIRD Section)*** was moving troops into Leyte via the Camotes Sea, or (c) he was delaying his movement to the eastward in order to synchronize it with the movements of the force known to be in the Sibuyan Sea. He was not too concerned as it was clear that, should the enemy be heading for Surigao Strait, there was ample time to make any necessary changes in plans.

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* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** PT 127 TBS Voice Radio Message (date time group unknown) to WACHAPREAGUE. (Relayed by WACHAPREAGUE to CTG 79.11 and by that commander to CTG 77.2 and TG 79.11.)

*** CTF 77, Report of Operations for the Capture of Leyte Island including Action Report of Engagements in Surigao Strait and off Samar Island on October 25th, 1944, Serial 00302-C, January 31st, 1944; also CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

Therefore, he was not alarmed when the MC GOWAN at 0030 reported several unidentified contacts bearing 175°(T), distant eight miles. (Actually the bearing as sent was 193°(T).) Since the range of first contact was but eight miles, CTG 77.2 realized that either the contacts were false or were on something very small, probably on motor torpedo boats, since these craft were operating as far north as Latitude 10°-17'N. He awaited further evaluations.

At 0034 he intercepted a message from CTG 79.11 to COMDESDIV 108 directing that commander to form his group in the vicinity of Station SIX.

At 0038 he received another contact report, which he understood had been relayed from PT 127, to the effect that contact had been made on two targets bearing 310°(T), distant ten miles from Camiguin Island closing.*

The origin of the contact report cannot be fully determined. None of the motor torpedo boats in the vicinity of Camiguin Island reported having made it and none of them have recorded it in their action reports. Therefore, whether or not the report itself was actually made is not known. However, it seems correct to say that it was made but, rather than being an after midnight contact on enemy forces for relay to all comands, it was instead a prior to midnight report on PT's 130 and 131 which it will be recalled were closing the Camiguin PT's at that time in order to relay through them the original 2310 contact. Surprisingly enough, at the time (0038) CTG 77.2 received this report the SECOND Striking Force, consisting of two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and four destroyers, was passing about nine - ten miles to the north of Camiguin Island on course 065°(T), Diagram"D". Thus, through what seems to have been a fortunate coincidence, CTG 77.2 now had information of the presence of two enemy forces in their correct locations for the times given (2310 and prior to 0038), although he had actually contacted only one of them.

While the total composition of the above two forces was only four large targets and three destroyers whereas he had expected two battleships, four heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and ten destroyers he was able to estimate that there was a probability that more enemy forces were present in these two groups because the contact ranges were sufficiently great to prevent detection of smaller targets such as destroyers, and possibly even of light cruisers by motor torpedo boat radars.**

At 0040 he likely intercepted a message from CTG 79.11 to COMDESDIV 108 wherein CTG 79.11 (a) directed that commander to belay the order to form his group in the vicinity of Station SIX and (b) advised that the enemy was ninety miles away.***

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* PT 127 TBS Voice Radio Message (date time group unknown) to WACHAPREAGUE. (Relayed by WACHAPREAGUE to CTG 79.11 and by that commander to TG 79.11, CTG 77.2 and CTG 77.3.)

** Radar Bulletin No. 3 (RAD 3), Radar Operators Manual, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, August 5th, 1944 (Reprint March 1945), Part 4, Page 4-SG-12.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

At about 0045 he learned that the contact made earlier by the MC GOWAN was believed to be friendly because the contact answered promptly. (He therefore estimated that the contact was on an Allied motor torpedo boat which was correct.)

From this time until 0100 all was quiet. He was now alerted to the presence of the enemy in the Mindanao Sea; his command was also alerted; he awaited further reports.

(1) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

At 0000 the battle line was steaming on course 090°(T) at five knots.* The ships of the battle line were primarily concerned with station keeping during this time.

At 0029 the battle line turned to course 080°(T)* to compensate for the southerly current.

During this hour Commander Battle Line received all of the relayed contact reports made by the motor torpedo boats and therefore was familiar with the developing situation. He took no special action.**

(2) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

At 0010 Commander Left Flank Force (CTG 77.2, who was also OTC of the left flank forces) executed a turn of 180° to course 090°(T) to maintain station on the MISSISSIPPI.*** The speed remained at five knots. The left flank destroyers in turning followed the motions of the cruisers. However, COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was having difficulty in maintaining his formation due to the cramping action of the left flank cruisers and the battle line. Frequent adjustment of intervals between the three sections was necessary to keep from embarrassing the larger ships.****

Commander Left Flank Force at this time gave no new instructions to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX concerning his station other than those contained in his battle plan. Why this was so is not clear but it seems likely that he realized that the fault lay within the flagship and would be corrected when battle was imminent.

All contact reports were being repeated over the TBS voice radio circuit to keep all ships informed of the enemy situation.

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* Deck Log MISSISSIPPI, October 25th, 1944.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 02 0, November 4th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

(3) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

At 0000 the right flank cruisers were stopped and lying to on course 090°(T) in order to adjust position on the battle line.* The right flank destroyers were also lying to in their patrol station. At this time the right flank forces found themselves out of position to the south.

Commander Right Flank Force now at 0014 commenced maneuvering on northerly courses and at speeds varying from five knots to zero* in order to regain station on the MISSISSIPPI.

He received all of the relayed contact reports made by the motor torpedo boats and was therefore familiar with the developing situation. He took no special action during this time.

IT SEEMS WELL TO POINT OUT THAT, IN ADDITION TO THE PRIMARY VOICE CIRCUIT TBS, COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE HAD A MEDIUM FREQUENCY VOICE NET (2748 kcs) TO COMMUNICATE WITH ALL HIS SHIPS. THIS CIRCUIT, CALLED TASK GROUP COMMON, WAS EMPLOYED BY HIS CRUISERS AND DESTROYERS FOR ALL TACTICAL INFORMATION. WHILE THIS INCREASED THE NUMBER OF CIRCUITS TO BE GUARDED SINCE ALL SHIPS OF THE RIGHT FLANK STILL GUARDED TBS VOICE RADIO, IT (A) ALLOWED ALL SHIPS OF THE RIGHT FLANK TO HEAR THE ORDERS AND MANEUVERS OF THE RIGHT FLANK DESTROYERS WHEN LAUNCHING THEIR TORPEDO ATTACKS AND (B) REDUCED THE NECESSITY OF EMPLOYING THE ALREADY OVERCROWDED TBS VOICE RADIO EXCEPT ON THE HIGHER COMMAND LEVELS.**

At 0054 the right flank cruisers came right to course 075°(T).

At 0100 the right flank cruisers were in approximate position on the MISSISSIPPI as provided in Battle Disposition A-2. The destroyers were operating on a north and south line about two miles east of the Cabugan Islands.

(B) Operations of CTG 79.11, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

At 0010 CTG 79.11 intercepted a dispatch from the WACHAPREAGUE to PT 127 asking (a) the time of contact and (b) as to whether it consisted of two destroyers and a number of unidentified ships.*** This was the first information that CTG 79.11 had received concerning the eastward movement of enemy forces. He was now anxious to hear the reply of PT 127.

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* Deck Log PHOENIX, October 24th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

At 0015 he intercepted the reply which was to the effect that a contact had been made at 2310 about ten miles southeast of Bohol Island on three enemy destroyers and two large unidentified ships headed north.*

At 0021 he repeated the contact report to CTG 77.2 and to his own command.**

At 0030 he received a contact report from the MC GOWAN in Station FOUR, reporting several unidentified radar contacts bearing 193°(T), distant eight miles.*** At 0033 he received a second report from the MC GOWAN to the effect that the radar contacts, which had been tracked on course 310°(T), speed ten knots, had faded on bearing 188°(T), distant seven miles.***

He now grew concerned lest the enemy be nearer than he had estimated. Therefore, feeling that his two attack groups should be formed immediately, he, at 0034, directed COMDESDIV 108 to form his western attack group in the vicinity of Station SIX and await instructions.** He does not appear to have commenced forming his eastern attack group at this time presumably because the eastern destroyers were not being interferred with by friendly units and therefore concentration could be readily effected.

It seems likely that at about 0038 (when CTG 77.2 received it),**** he received a report of a contact on two targets bearing 310°(T), distant ten miles from Camiguin Island, closing in.***

At 0040, having re-estimated the situation and having decided that the enemy was ninety miles away, he informed COMDESDIV 108 of this opinion and directed him to return his destroyers to their assigned patrol stations** (SIX and SEVEN).

At 0043 he advised his command of the Camiguin Island contact, referring to it as the second contact report.**

At about 0045 he received word from the MONSSEN that, owing to an engineering casualty, (a) her maximum speed was restricted to twenty-seven knots until repairs could be effected and (b) she would require forty-five minutes to effect repairs.**

At about 0053 he received another contact report from the MC GOWAN reporting an unidentified radar contact on bearing 188°(T), distant eight miles.***

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Surface Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, P.I., including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (J).

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

He immediately directed her to challenge the contact and to amplify the report as soon as possible.*

The MC GOWAN challenged by voice radio procedure and was promptly answered but was unable to identify the call. By about 0045 the commanding officer had apparently decided that the contact was friendly.**

At 0100 the various units of TG 79.11 were in their patrol stations ONE to SEVEN inclusive.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0000 - 0100, October 25th.

(1) Bohol and Camiguin PT's.

Prior to midnight PT's 130 and 131 had closed the Camiguin PT's about three miles north of Camiguin Island. The Commanding Officer PT 130 went aboard PT 127 and at 0015 succeeded in having his contact report transmitted to the base (WACHAPREAGUE).*** This report was to the effect that three enemy destroyers and two large unidentified ships had been contacted at 2310 ten miles off the southeast tip of Bohol Island, heading north.**

It should be pointed out here that this contact report, which was the first report received by CTG 77.2 on Japanese forces moving eastward in the Mindanao Sea, was received by that commander at 0026.** Had PT's 130 and 131 not given this contact report to PT 127 it is likely that the report might never have been received by the combatant forces.

After making this report the two Bohol PT's remained with the Camiguin PT's and patrolled the area being patrolled by those motor torpedo boats.

During this hour PT 152 of the Bohol PT's, which had separated from PT's 130 and 131, continued at twenty-four knots to close the Japanese SECOND Division but, for some unknown reason, was unable to get nearer than five miles. Why this was so remains unclear for PT 152 did not report any loss of speed and the SECOND Division was making good less than eighteen knots. Could it have been (a) that PT 152 had contacted by radar the SW Panaon PT's which, because of drift, seem to have been returning to their station off Balongbalong or (b) a phantom? As PT 152 endeavored to close the enemy the commanding Officer at the same time endeavored unsuccessfully to transmit his contact report. Because of this and the need for medical aid for one of his men who had been seriously wounded, he headed for the base at Liloan Bay.****

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* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, P.I., including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (J).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 130, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 5, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 152, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0399, October 29th, 1944.

(2) Limasawa PT's.

At 0000 the Limasawa PT's were approaching the Japanese FIRST Division to launch a torpedo attack on the port quarter of the large ship (believed to be a battleship, but actually the MOGAMI), Diagram "E".

At 0015, when they had closed the range to 1800 yards, they prepared to fire torpedoes. At this moment they observed that the MOGAMI had turned on a searchlight and had commenced searching the sea to the eastward of the boats but had failed to illuminate them.*

Possibly as a consequence of this activity by the MOGAMI, the attack by the Limasawa PT's was poorly delivered. PT's 146 and 151 which fired at about 0018, launched but one torpedo each. PT 146's torpedo ran erratically; PT 151's made a normal run but missed, and PT 191 failed to fire at all.*

The motor torpedo boats now maneuvered to fire again but were driven off by a destroyer (YAMAGUMO) which was taking station in the rear of the Japanese column. They were illuminated by the YAMAGUMO's lights and reported later that they had been fired upon by both the YAMAGUMO and the MOGAMI* but this was incorrect—only the YAMAGUMO had fired.**

When the motor torpedo boats were illuminated by the YAMAGUMO they turned to the right to a southeasterly course and increased speed in order to evade her fire.

At about 0022, or approximately two minutes after steadying on the new course, they changed course to the left.

During this time they continued to be under fire from the YAMAGUMO which fire they returned.* Meanwhile (a) PT's 146 and 151 retired on easterly courses*** while (b) PT 190, in an endeavor to fire an overtaking shot with her torpedoes steadied on a northwesterly course. Although the commanding officer in his action report states that "an overtaking shot was not feasible due to the speed of the destroyers", this seems incorrect as the Japanese FIRST Division was making but eighteen knots. (The real reason was more likely the 0028 FIRST Division change of course to the north). PT 190 now continued on her northwesterly course until she had reached a position about four miles west of Limasawa Island.**** It appears that, as the motor torpedo boats retired, they observed both the starshell spreads fired by the Japanese FIRST and SECOND Divisions. PT 151 reported that the SHIGURE's spread was 400 yards astern of her. PT 146 thought that he had been fired on but this does not appear to have been the case.***

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* Action Reports PT's 151, 146 and 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 0389, October 28th; 0388, October 28th; 0398, October 30th, 1944, respectively.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Action Reports PT's 146 and 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 0388, October 28th and 0389, October 28th, 1944, respectively.

**** Action Report PT 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT NEITHER OF THE THREE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS ENGAGED IN THIS ACTION WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE SUCCESSFULLY A CONTACT REPORT EITHER (A) DIRECTLY TO A CONTROL SHIP OR (B) THROUGH A RELAY. PT 190 lost contact with the other two motor torpedo boats shortly after the action commenced and, moving to the westward of Limasawa Island, operated independently the remainder of the night. PT 146 did not have radio contact with his OTC (PT 151) during the action but was able to establish visual contact later with PT 151 and they patrolled together to the eastward of Limasawa Island. At this time Commander Limasawa PT's did not know the whereabouts of PT 190 nor did PT 190 know the whereabouts of PT's 146 and 151.

At 0100 the Limasawa PT's were widely dispersed as shown on Diagram "E".

(3) SW Panaon PT's.

This section of motor torpedo boats continued drifting to the westward in an area of occasional rain squalls during which time the visibility remained low.*

However, this visibility was not always low for, at 0015, the YAMAGUMO sighted the SW Panaon PT's and reported three of them on bearing 030°(T) at a range of five miles. As pointed out under "Operations of Commander FIRST Division, 0000 - 0100, October 25th", this bearing was more likely 080°(T). The SW Panaon PT's failed not only to sight the much larger Japanese ships at this time (MOGAMI and three destroyers) but failed also to make any radar contact on them whatsoever. It seems probable that this was due to too much reliance on radars with a corresponding decrease in visual alertness. At this point, from what occurred later, it seems correct to say that the Commander SW Panaon PT's realizing that he had drifted well to the westward--he may have got a radar range and bearing on Limasawa Island--started back for his station off SW Panaon Island.

The visibility in the vicinity of the SW Panaon PT's now obviously decreased again because (a) the Japanese were unable to sight them at this time even with searchlights and (b) the SW Panaon PT's failed to sight either the searchlights or the starshells which the FIRST and SECOND Divisions fired at one another between 0023 and 0028. This may have been due in part to the fact that the enemy was astern where the motor torpedo boat lookout coverage perhaps was not so thorough as ahead.

At 0100 the SW Panaon PT's were bearing 235°(T), distant three miles from Balongbalong, Panaon Island (Diagram "E").

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* Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944; also Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

(4) Other Motor Torpedo Boats.

The operation of the motor torpedo boats other than the foregoing were uneventful except for the following:

At 0027 PT 134 sighted what she thought were either flares dropped by a plane or starshells bearing 230°(T), distant ten miles from the southern tip of Panaon and reported this sighting through PT 523.* Actually, these were starshells which had been fired at each other by the FIRST and SECOND Divisions. In some manner, the report was so delayed that it was not received by CTG 79.11 until just prior to 0110.**

* Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

CHAPTER X - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0100 - 0245, OCTOBER 25TH

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

Commander THIRD Section continued on course 090°(T) at eighteen knots while the units which had comprised the FIRST Division were endeavoring to obtain the approximate stations they would occupy in No. TWO Approach Formation (Plate XX), scheduled to be formed presently.

Since he could plainly see that (a) the FIRST Division would soon rejoin the SECOND Division thus reforming the THIRD Section and (b) there was no necessity for radio silence because he had long since been discovered by Allied motor torpedo boats which he could expect had reported his location, course and speed, he decided that it would be wise at this time to inform Commander FIRST Striking Force and Commander SECOND Striking Force of his plans and problems. He did this because he had learned through navigational plots that he was already about one-half hour behind his original schedule and because he thought that the above commanders should know, in addition, that (a) he had encountered very weak enemy opposition--motor torpedo boats only--which indicated that the enemy was seeking information of his force rather than serious attacks at this time, (b) the weather had been poor but was now improving which gave promise of clearer weather in Surigao Strait and therefore he should not be delayed by navigational difficulties, and (c) he had received no late information concerning Allied forces in Leyte Gulf which implied a need for information thereon, if it was available, and also indicated that his own search planes had been unproductive.

At 0100 he advised both commanders of his plans as follows:

"Will pass through southern entrance of Surigao Straits at 0130 and penetrate into Leyte Gulf. Several torpedo boats sighted but enemy situation otherwise unknown. Weather: Some squalls but visibility gradually improving."*

THIS WAS A VERY IMPORTANT DISPATCH IN THAT IT ADVISED THE COMMANDERS OF THE SITUATION IN THE WATERS OF THE EASTERN MINDANAO SEA AND GAVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ANY CHANGES IN THEIR OWN PLANS THEY CONSIDERED NECESSARY IN LIGHT OF THE RELATIVELY UNOPPOSED, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT DELAYED, PROGRESS OF THE THIRD SECTION.

It was an excellent example of mutual understanding. Commander THIRD Section, although he had a fairly definite concept of the planned movements of (a) the FIRST Striking Force, in that Commander FIRST Striking Force expected to be off Suluan Island at 0900 that day** and

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* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 250100 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 242145 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

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(b) the SECOND Striking Force, in that Commander SECOND Striking Force expected to pass through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at 0300 that day,* realized that he was not familiar with what additional information these commanders had nor what changes in their plans they might be contemplating.

HE THEREFORE THOUGHT IT WISE TO KEEP THEM ADVISED OF HIS PROGRESS. PERHAPS, HAD HE NOT ENCOUNTERED ENEMY MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS, HE MIGHT HAVE DECIDED THAT IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN RADIO SILENCE THAN TO PROVIDE THE ABOVE INFORMATION. BUT SINCE HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HIS PRESENCE, COURSE AND SPEED WERE KNOWN TO THE ENEMY, HE WISELY CONCLUDED THAT RADIO SILENCE WAS UNNECESSARY.

Now, realizing that (a) he was approaching the southern entrance to Surigao and (b) his command was too loosely deployed to form it into No. TWO Approach Formation immediately, he endeavored to expedite the movements of his ships into their approximate positions in the above formation. He felt it unwise to enter the narrow waters of the southern entrance to Surigao Strait with his units out of position.

At this time the MOGAMI and DESDIV FOUR were rejoining separately. From the reconstructed plot (Diagram "F") the former was about 3,200 yards astern of the FUSO and the latter about 3,700 yards on the port quarter of the YAMASHIRO. He therefore at 0100, also in order to assist his ships in forming the new disposition, informed them by voice radio that his position at 0129 would be seven point seven miles bearing 161°(T) from Mt. Nelangcapan.** This position is roughly south of Binit Point. Since his original schedule called for the THIRD Section to reach a point south of Binit Point at 0100*** he was now approximately half an hour behind schedule due to the adverse effect of the westerly currents encountered in the Mindanao Sea. At 0103 he received word from COMDESDIV FOUR that DESDIV FOUR was obliquely behind BATDIV TWO.** At 0112 he received word from the MOGAMI that she was following astern of the FUSO** and was, by inference, in position. Actually the MOGAMI seems to have been somewhat behind station.

The visibility at this time, although improving, was still low, particularly in the rain squalls. COMDESDIV FOUR therefore, at 0114, alerted all destroyers to be prepared for torpedo action on short notice** (in case of surprise attack).

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* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 242245 October 1945 to Flag DESRON 2, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 5TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, info Sandaken Air Base, 33RD Guard Unit, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

Because of this low visibility Commander THIRD Section was unable to sight the destroyers. Therefore, at 0115, he requested COMDESDIV FOUR to report his position in relation to the formation.* At 0118 he received a reply from that commander that his flagship was bearing 350°(T) from the YAMASHIRO, distant three kilometers, which implied that the battleships were visible to the destroyers.*

At this same time (0118) COMDESDIV FOUR, who was steaming at twenty knots, appears to have decided to close the battleships so that he could keep them in sight in the event the visibility worsened. He therefore headed toward the 0129 estimated position of Commander THIRD Section on course about 104°(T), (Diagram "F").

At 0125, when the formation was about four miles west of the previously announced 0129 estimated position, Commander THIRD Section changed the formation course to 040°(T).* The new course would take the formation into Surigao Strait, passing Panaon Island about one and three-quarter miles abeam to port.

WHY HE DID THIS AT THIS TIME IS NOWHERE EXPLAINED BUT IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT HE HAD OBTAINED A RADAR RANGE AND BEARING ON MT. NELANGCAPAN AND HAD DISCOVERED THAT HIS NAVIGATION WAS IN ERROR. He then had to decide whether to continue on to his 0129 estimated position before he turned northward toward the strait or to turn toward the strait now. He clearly decided on the latter course of action, probably because the weather conditions being low he wished to be in position to obtain a navigational fix by bearings on Panaon Island.

At 0126 he intercepted a message from COMDESDIV FOUR to DESDIV FOUR reducing speed to eighteen knots.*

Also at 0126 he received word that the NACHI, which was the flagship of the SECOND Striking Force, had entered the radio telephone net.* He now knew that he could communicate directly by voice radio with Commander SECOND Striking Force. This was valuable information because Commander SECOND Striking Force, who was his senior, was now in position to assume overall command.

At approximately 0133 (the SHIGURE action report gives the time as 0130 but the plot, based on all factors, indicates that 0133 is more likely correct) he received a report from the YAMAGUMO which, with the MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO, was maneuvering to take station in No. TWO Approach Formation, that she had sighted a motor torpedo boat on bearing 010°(T).* This was PT 137 which had lost contact with her section, had strayed into the channel and was soon to encounter the YAMAGUMO.

Commander THIRD Section took no action in response to the above contact report. This seems to have been because he realized that (1) he was being tracked by the motor torpedo boats and (2) he could not afford to delay his advance by operations against enemy motor torpedo boats, unless their threat became serious.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

Also at 0133, since in the SHIGURE action report this item followed the one above, he heard COMDESDIV FOUR by voice radio inform the SHIGURE, which it will be remembered was leading the formation, that he was ready to assume position in the approach formation.* This meant, of course, that the SHIGURE was to vacate her station as it was to be occupied by the MICHISHIO. Commander THIRD Section then, at 0135, directed that the approach formation be formed.*

At 0137 he heard COMDESDIV FOUR increase speed of DESDIV FOUR to twenty-one knots presumably to gain distance ahead of the YAMASHIRO before taking station in the approach formation.*

While the above was progressing, PT 137 fired, at 0142, one torpedo at the YAMAGUMO, which torpedo missed.** That this attack was not observed seems clear for the YAMAGUMO does not appear to have made any report thereon.

Some few minutes before 0148, Commander THIRD Section received Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch 250101 which was addressed to all forces and gave in detail (a) the latter's schedule of penetration of Surigao Strait and plan of attack in Leyte Gulf and (b) the number of days he could steam at eighteen knots.*** He could see that this dispatch, which is quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0100 - 0245, October 25th", did not change Commander SECOND Striking Force's time of arrival at the southern entrance to Surigao Strait which, in his 242245 dispatch, had been given as 0300, but merely amplified that dispatch to include his subsequent actions.****

From this dispatch he could conclude that (a) he was to enter Leyte Gulf alone and (b) the Commander SECOND Striking Force, who was his senior, did not intend to assume command or to move his force into a gun supporting position with the THIRD Section, at least while penetrating into Leyte Gulf.

He now at 0148 sent a radio dispatch to the units of the THIRD Section advising them that the SECOND Striking Force would penetrate at 0300 following the THIRD Section.*****

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

*** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250101 to 2ND Striking Force, Commander SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

**** Ibid., Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 242245 October 1944 to 3RD Section.

***** Commander 3rd Section Dispatch 250148 October 1944 to 3rd Section, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHY HE DID NOT EMPLOY VOICE RADIO SINCE ALL OF HIS SHIPS WERE WELL WITHIN VOICE RADIO RANGE, AND SINCE, BY SO DOING, HE COULD HAVE RECEIVED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM EACH OF THEM LONG BEFORE ANY OF THEM COULD HAVE RECEIVED AND DECODED THE RADIO DISPATCH. PERHAPS, KNOWING THAT A RADIO DISPATCH WOULD BE INTERCEPTED BY THE PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS, HE WISHED THEM TO KNOW THAT HE WAS PENETRATING ALONE.

Also at 0148 he increased speed to twenty knots in order to endeavor to maintain his new schedule against the strong currents which, in view of the adverse currents which he had found in the Mindanao Sea, could be expected in Surigao Strait.* It was insufficient to recover the half hour he had lost but it was the best he could do under the speed limitations.

From this time on it is assumed that the formation was formed, although actually it was sometime before all ships were on station. This was, of course, due to the low visibility which made it necessary for all ships to proceed with caution.

At 0200 he (a) ordered a change of course to port to course 000°(T) to be executed at 0202* and (b) received a contact report from the MICHISHIO that a ship silhouette, apparently enemy, had been sighted bearing 320°(T), distant eight kilometers.* Since the Japanese in this operation referred to silhouettes as ships larger than motor torpedo boats, and since there were no Allied ships other than the motor torpedo boats in the general direction of the bearing, this must have been a false contact.

He took no action on this contact report but awaited amplification. Meanwhile, it seems clear that he executed the course signal because the motor torpedo boats in contact, reported him as being on a generally northerly course after 0200.**

During the execution of this change of course he received at 0205 a contact report from the ASAGUMO, second destroyer in column, that she had sighted an enemy torpedo boat on bearing 300°(T).* However, before he could take any action on this contact he observed that the SHIGURE, or one of the two larger ships astern of the YAMASHIRO, had illuminated a motor torpedo boat to the southwest and had opened fire. This was PT 134 which was attacking singly and had closed to about 2,500 yards.***

During this latter action Commander THIRD Section noted that the ASAGUMO, in illuminating her reported contact, had illuminated two additional motor torpedo boats attacking from the same sector. The three boats thus illuminated were PT's 490, 491 and 493 which were attacking in line of bearing, distant 200 yards between boats. He also observed that these boats were about 1,000 yards from the van destroyer, MICHISHIO, which had promptly opened fire.****

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, NDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11301.

** Action Report PT 493, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

After sighting these boats he changed course by two emergency ship turns to starboard of forty-five degrees; first, at 0207, to new course 045°(T), and second, at 0208, to new course 090°(T).* THIS ACTION WAS CORRECT BECAUSE, WITH ATTACKS BEING MADE ON HIS PORT BOW AND QUARTER, A TURN TOWARD THE ENEMY ON HIS PORT BOW WOULD TURN HIS FORCE INTO THE TORPEDO WATER OF ANY TORPEDOES WHICH HAD BEEN FIRED FROM HIS PORT QUARTER WHILE A TURN AWAY WOULD NOT ONLY INCREASE THE RANGE OF THE TORPEDO RUN AND THEREBY AID HIS SHIPS IN OUTRUNNING THE TORPEDOES BUT WOULD ALSO GAIN MORE TIME TO DRIVE OFF THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS BY GUNFIRE.

During these emergency turns Commander THIRD Section observed several torpedoes within the formation, all of which were evaded successfully. He also observed that under the gunfire of his ships all the torpedo boats were retiring at high speed, and that one of them had been damaged.** This was PT 493 which had received a direct hit.*** PT 490 had also been hit, but only superficially, by near misses and shell fragments.****

As the motor torpedo boats retired beyond visibility, Commander THIRD Section at 0211 changed course back to his base course of 000°(T) by simultaneous ship turns.* While his ships were still in the turn, they detected a third group of motor torpedo boats to the southeast which they promptly illuminated and took under fire. These were PT's 523, 524 and 526 which, at this time, were about 2,000 yards away.***** Commander THIRD Section then, at 0212, ordered an emergency turn of forty-five degrees to port in order to avoid any torpedoes.* This action was correct for the motor torpedo boats, just prior to being illuminated, had fired a total of six torpedoes at the MOGAMI, then in a change of course to 000°(T). It should be apparent that by this additional change of course of forty-five degrees to 315°(T) Commander THIRD Section would thereby comb the torpedo tracks of these torpedoes fired directly at him. Although it appears from Diagram "F" that the motor torpedo boats had anticipated a change of course by the MOGAMI to about 045°(T) rather than to 315°(T) and therefore the torpedoes would have missed anyway, there was no way for Commander THIRD Section to know this. At this time Commander THIRD Section observed that these motor torpedo boats, in a manner similar to those previously sighted, had commenced retiring at high speed as soon as they were illuminated and fired upon. He therefore, at 0213:30, returned the command to base course 000°(T).* No further attacks developed.

The Japanese did not claim having inflicted any damage against this group of motor torpedo boats. In this they were correct.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Action Report PT 493, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 523, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

ALTHOUGH THE JAPANESE REPORTS DO NOT INDICATE THE METHOD OF DETECTION OF THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS BUT IMPLY THAT THEY HAD BEEN SIGHTED VISUALLY, THE MOGAMI REPORTED THAT, BY USING THE TYPE-93 HYDROPHONE, THE PROPELLER NOISE OF ENEMY TORPEDO BOATS, TRAVELLING AT HIGH SPEED (TWENTY-SIX KNOTS) COULD BE DETECTED WITH CERTAINTY AT A DISTANCE OF THREE TO FOUR KILOMETERS, AND COULD BE HEARD MORE CLEARLY THAN THE JAPANESE TYPE-93 TORPEDOES.* HOW MUCH THE RANGE OF DETECTION BY HYDROPHONE WAS DECREASED (A) WHEN THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS REDUCED SPEED OR (B) WHEN THE LISTENING SHIP INCREASED SPEED IS NOT GIVEN BUT IT HAS BEEN OBSERVED THAT AT A LOW SPEED OF APPROACH THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS WERE NOT DETECTED EVEN WHEN THEY HAD APPROACHED AS NEAR AS 2,000 YARDS, AND IN SOME CASES AS NEAR AS 1,000 YARDS. IT IS KNOWN THAT, WHEN STEAMING AT OVER FIFTEEN KNOTS, THE JAPANESE ECHO RANGING APPARATUS COULD NO LONGER BE EMPLOYED AND RELIANCE WAS THEN PLACED ON THE HYDROPHONES WHICH WERE EFFECTIVE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS UP TO TWENTY-ONE KNOTS.**

The THIRD Section was now well into Surigao Strait, steaming on course 000°(T), at twenty knots, and was almost in the center of the channel. The ships were undoubtedly searching the darkness for further attacks.

During and after these encounters with the motor torpedo boats Commander THIRD Section not only maintained No. TWO Approach Formation but through silence, gave tacit approval to an order given by COMDESDIV FOUR to the YAMAGUMO that she remain in that formation.***

This opinion is based on the fact that at 0227 the Commanding Officer YAMAGUMO asked COMDESDIV FOUR whether or not he desired the YAMAGUMO to rejoin as she was in No. TWO Approach Formation.*** It is presumed by this that the Commanding Officer YAMAGUMO meant "should he form column astern of the ASAGUMO as called for in the projected battle formation, or remain where he was?" To this query COMDESDIV FOUR replied in the negative using the words "Hold present position."****

This fact, and the fact that he had issued no recent instructions concerning the expectancy of battle in Surigao Strait, shows clearly that he was not expecting to encounter opposition by major Allied naval forces at this stage of the penetration.

It will be recalled, however, that on October 23rd he had instructed his command that in case of encounter with enemy surface ships (especially battleships) prior to penetration into the anchorage they were to open fire with the present loading (high explosive shells).**** This implies that he realized that, at sometime before reaching Tacloban Anchorage, he might be intercepted by Allied heavy ships. Obviously that time had not yet arrived.

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Commander 1ST Striking Force Standing Order 21 (December 18th, 1943) Destroyer Doctrine and Procedure Part III, Torpedoes and Mines, Subparagraph D, Regulations for Underwater Ranging, ATIS Document 39, Part IX, August 11th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Ibid., Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 231730 October 1944 to 3RD Section (3RD Section SigOrd No. 7).

At 0235, mindful of the fact that Commander SECOND Striking Force was following some thirty miles astern of him and, if on schedule, would enter the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at about 0300, and also mindful of the fact that that commander probably had intercepted some, if not all, of the voice radio messages and was therefore wondering what effect the Allied attacks had had on the THIRD Section, he advised that commander by voice radio that he had passed the lower entrance without damage although he had been attacked by Allied motor torpedo boats.*

IN SO DOING COMMANDER THIRD SECTION INDICATED A HIGHLY COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE AND A COMPLETE RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT IN NAVAL OPERATIONS COORDINATE COMMANDERS SHOULD, IN SO FAR AS PRACTICABLE, (A) KEEP ONE ANOTHER INFORMED OF THEIR POSITIONS, MOVEMENTS, INTENTIONS AND OF CONTACTS WITH THE ENEMY AND (B) REPORT NEW INFORMATION OF THE ENEMY AND ANY DELAYS OR MODIFICATIONS IN THE EXECUTION OF THE DIRECTIVE.

At 0245 the THIRD Section was five and one-half miles bearing 270°(T) from Kotkot Island (off Dinagat Island) on course north at twenty knots and was proceeding along the north and south axis of the channel.

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* Commander 3RD Section Voice Radio Message 250235 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

(B) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

Commander SECOND Striking Force continued on course 060°(T), speed twenty-two knots and zigzagging, toward the southern entrance to Surigao Strait. His command was in No. FOUR Approach Formation,* (Plate XVI).

At 0101 he transmitted by dispatch the plan which he had been working on before midnight. This was to the effect that with the SECOND Striking Force consisting of two large cruisers, one light cruiser and four destroyers, he expected (a) to penetrate through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at 0300, (b) after passing the Dulag Area to operate generally in a clockwise manner within Leyte Gulf, (c) to annihilate the enemy during this sweep and (d) to retire arriving off the southern entrance of Surigao Strait at 0900, at which time he expected to have fuel remaining for forty-eight hours at eighteen knots.**

THIS DISPATCH IS OF INTENSE INTEREST IN THAT IT MAKES NO MENTION WHATSOEVER OF ANY INTENTION ON THE PART OF COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE (A) TO JOIN COMMANDER THIRD SECTION OR TO EVEN COOPERATE WITH THAT COMMANDER EXCEPTING PERHAPS TO LEND SOME SUPPORT SHOULD THAT COMMANDER'S OPERATIONS IN THE GULF BE DELAYED AND (B) TO JOIN OR COOPERATE WITH COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW THAT COMMANDER'S CONTEMPLATED 0900 POSITION OFF SULUAN ISLAND.*** THIS LATTER THOUGHT IS CONVEYED BY HIS CONTEMPLATED RETIREMENT THROUGH SURIGAO STRAIT PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE OFF SULUAN ISLAND. COULD IT HAVE BEEN THAT HE FEARED TO DO THIS LEST HE BE INCORPORATED IN THAT COMMAND BY COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE?

IN EXTENUATION OF HIS ACTIONS IT CAN BE SAID THAT (A) HE HAD RECEIVED NO ORDERS AT THIS TIME FROM CINC COMBINED FLEET DETACHING HIM TO THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE AND THEREFORE HE MAY HAVE FELT THAT CINC COMBINED FLEET INTENDED THAT HE CONTINUE TO OPERATE SEPARATELY AND (B) HE KNEW OF THE PLANS FOR MOVING TROOPS FROM MINDANAO TO THE WESTERN COAST OF LEYTE TO ARRIVE AT ORMOC AT 0400 ON THE FOLLOWING DAY (OCTOBER 26TH)**** AND ALTHOUGH HE HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS TO GIVE DIRECT SUPPORT HE DID KNOW THAT IN HIS MOVEMENT INTO LEYTE GULF HE WOULD PROVIDE INDIRECT COVER FOR THE MOVEMENTS OF THE GUARD FORCE***** AND LIKELY FELT THAT HE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE SHOULD HE BE NEEDED FOR DIRECT SUPPORT.

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* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250101 October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 242145 October 1944 to all SHO Forces, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

**** Commander Guard Force (COMCRUDIV 16) Dispatch 240556 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, KINU, URANAMI, etc.,(Guard Force DesOpOrd No. 13), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

At 0107 he passed the assigned patrol line of the Allied motor torpedo boats between Agio Point, Bohol, and Sipaca Point, Mindanao.

He continued on without incident until 0117 at which time the light cruiser ABUKUMA, third ship in column, reported a "probable enemy warship".* THIS WAS A POOR CONTACT REPORT SINCE IT DID NOT GIVE THE BEARING, RANGE, METHOD OF DETECTION, OR EVALUATION. WHILE COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE'S REACTION TO THIS CONTACT IS UNKNOWN, THE FACT THAT HE CONTINUED ONWARD WITHOUT DEVIATION INDICATES THAT HE HAD QUICKLY EVALUATED IT AS FALSE. HE LIKELY REALIZED THAT HIS LOOKOUTS WERE NERVOUS AND WOULD MAKE AND REPORT IMAGINARY SIGHTINGS.

It seems probable that prior to 0126 he had received Commander THIRD Section's dispatch advising that (a) that section would pass the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at 0130, (b) other than sighting torpedo boats the enemy situation was unknown and (c) the weather was somewhat squally but the visibility was gradually improving. SINCE IT TOOK HIM ALMOST ONE-HALF HOUR TO RECEIVE THIS DISPATCH HE APPEARS TO HAVE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE WISE TO ADVISE COMMANDER THIRD SECTION THAT HE COULD HEAR HIM ON THE RADIO TELEPHONE NET, WHICH BY INFERENCE, MEANT THAT ANY DISPATCHES OF IMPORTANCE COULD NOW BE MADE OVER THIS MUCH FASTER SYSTEM, FOR, AT 0126, HE NOTIFIED THAT COMMANDER THAT HIS FLAGSHIP (NACHI) WAS ENTERING THE RADIO TELEPHONE NET.**

From time to time as the ships of the SECOND Striking Force continued on they observed flares ahead in the vicinity of the THIRD Section,* and realized that that section was probably under attack.

At 0219 he issued orders to prepare for action.*

At 0235 he received a message from Commander THIRD Section by voice radio to the effect that the THIRD Section had been attacked by motor torpedo boats during the passage into Surigao Strait but had received no damage.*** From this he could estimate that on his approach to Surigao Strait he would likely meet no opposition other than motor torpedo boats.

At this same time he entered a severe rain squall in which the visibility was extremely limited. He now, in accordance with his previous plans, ceased zigzagging and increased speed to twenty-six knots.**** He also issued orders to prepare for action and to be ready for maximum speed at a moments notice.*

At 0245 the SECOND Striking Force was about thirteen miles southwest of the southern tip of Panaon Island.

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* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 2ND Striking Force Voice Radio Message 250126 October 1944 to Commander 3RD Section, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander 3RD Section Voice Radio Message 250235 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

CHAPTER XI - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0100 - 0245, October 25th

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.*

The wait for more information concerning the enemy's progress continued as the units, in a modified condition of readiness, patrolled lazily in their stations. The weather remained unchanged in this part of the strait, being relatively clear, but dark.

The currents in the strait were variable in strength at different locations but the southward direction was prevalent everywhere. These currents affected station keeping in the battle line which was endeavoring to maintain station along Latitude 10°-35'N.

At 0107 (actually it was 0110) CTG 77.2 received a report to the effect that PT 533 (actually it was PT 523) had reported sighting three starshells or flares bearing 230°(T), distant ten miles from the south tip of Panaon Island and believed they had been dropped by a plane. He then plotted this position and found that it was some forty-five miles nearer him than the 2310 reported position. From this he could infer that if the enemy surface forces were in the vicinity of the starshells or flares they likewise were some forty-five miles nearer him. Since it was an enemy capability to be in that area at this time, he was necessarily forced to consider this capability.

This report by PT 523 was actually the relay of a sighting made by PT 134 at 0027.** However, since no time was given in the report, CTG 77.2 had no way of knowing the time of contact. The location was quite accurate and was, in fact, the encounter of the Japanese FIRST and SECOND Divisions, which, as has been pointed out earlier, had fired starshells at one another at this time.

THE ABOVE REPORT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE FRAGMENTARY INFORMATION WHICH CTG 77.2 WAS RECEIVING AND INDICATES THE EXTENSIVE EVALUATION REQUIRED TO MAKE AN INTELLIGENT ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY.

At 0149 (actually it was at 0147) he received another contact report from a motor torpedo boat which reported the enemy at 0123 as bearing 140°(T), distant two miles from Taancan Point, Leyte.* This report was in error in that the contact had been made by LCI 70 rather than by a motor torpedo boat and the distance should have been eighteen miles instead of two.*** THIS WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE FOR THE CORRECT REPORT GAVE AN ACCURATE LOCATION OF THE JAPANESE, WHEREAS THE ERRONEOUS REPORT MEANT NOTHING TO CTG 77.2, EXCEPTING THAT IT INDICATED THAT PERHAPS SOME OF THE ENEMY UNITS WERE IN SOGOD BAY AT THIS TIME. WHETHER OR NOT HE CONNECTED THESE UNITS WITH THE STARSHELLS AND

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* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

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FLARES REPORTED AT 0101 IS NOT KNOWN, BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY. THE ABOVE ERROR WAS MADE ON THE LOUISVILLE FOR THE REPORT HAD BEEN TRANSMITTED CORRECTLY BY CTG 79.11* WHO WAS RELAYING IT FROM THE WACHAPREAGUE.

CTG 77.2 now observed that CTG 79.11 had commenced forming his two attack units preparatory to launching his torpedo attack in accordance with his previously announced plan. Although the reported enemy was apparently still far away CTG 77.2 had no objection to this because it removed this command from the middle waters of Surigao Strait through which the enemy was likely to approach.

At 0204 he received from CTG 77.3 an important contact report from the Commanding Officer PT 134 to the effect that one unidentified ship was proceeding up the strait abeam of the southern tip of Panaon, which placed it, therefore, less than forty miles away. This was evidently the van unit or units of the Japanese forces. At 0208 he received an amplifying report from the Commanding Officer, PT 134 who reported attacking a very large ship with undetermined results. By plotting the 2310 contact and the above 0204 contact he could see that they were fifty-five miles apart, which distance could be traversed at slightly less than twenty knots.

At 0210 he received a message from PT 134 wherein she reported that the enemy had driven her off by gunfire. The situation now began to develop rapidly. Just prior to 0225 he received a report (probably from a motor torpedo boat) that two large ships were coming up the strait and had passed the initial line of motor torpedo boats, for at that time, he notified Commander Battle Line of that fact.* The initial line of motor torpedo boats evidently referred to the first group at the southern entrance to Surigao Strait. The fact that two ships were present may have convinced him that the force now in Surigao Strait was the original contact. He was puzzled to note that the Japanese had their two larger ships in the van without a screen of lighter ships.

At about 0226 he received word from CTG 79.11 that TG 79.11 was going down (the strait) in a few minutes.

Upon hearing this he felt that it was very important to know as early as possible whether or not there were more enemy ships coming up the strait than the two reported. He, therefore, at 0229, requested CTG 79.11 to ask the motor torpedo boats "if any other targets are following the two ships up the strait".

THIS QUERY ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE TO THE OTC OF ADEQUATE RECONNAISSANCE AND ADEQUATE COMMUNICATIONS NEITHER OF WHICH UP TO THIS POINT HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE. This is shown by the fact that as early as 0026 he had received a report of two large ships and three destroyers off Bohol Island at 2310 and, now, over two hours later, only the two large ships had been reported. What had happened to the three destroyers? He appears, from his query to have been of the opinion that the destroyers, and possibly other ships were somehow astern of the large ships and had not been

* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

located as yet. Actually this concept was incorrect for the four destroyers with the THIRD Section were in the van. It was unfortunate that the motor torpedo boats, which had tracked the THIRD Section between 0205 and 0212, had not made more accurate contact reports for their information, even though still incomplete, would have given CTG 77.2 and CTG 79.11 a much clearer impression of the approaching enemy.

Also, at 0229, he received a report from the Commanding Officer PT 134, relayed by CTG 77.3, which stated that the boat had struck a heavy object in deep water, possibly an enemy submarine coming up the channel. This report, although somewhat surprising, was clearly recognized as an enemy capability. Its chief importance was that it alerted all commanders to the possibility of enemy submarines.

AT THIS POINT CTG 77.2, WHO, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT TORPEDO REPLACEMENTS WERE NOT AVAILABLE AND IN FURTHER VIEW OF THE DEVELOPING SITUATION ELSEWHERE IN THE VISAYAS AREA, HAD BEEN CONSIDERING WHETHER TO DIRECT HALF SALVOS IN TORPEDO FIRE, DECIDED AGAINST IT ON THE SOUND GROUND THAT THE DESTROYER COMMANDERS THEMSELVES WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO MAKE THIS DECISION IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO FIRING.

During this time he observed, from the voice radio, that the ships of the battle line were having difficulty in maintaining station. This was due, in general (a) to the slow speed and southerly current accentuated by the darkness, and (b) to a lack of training, since the Marshall Islands campaign, in station keeping in column or in lines of bearing within thirty degrees of column.* He was seriously concerned about this but realized that he could do nothing about it.

At 0231 he knew because of speed changes reported over the voice radio circuit that TG 79.11 had commenced its attack.

At 0236 he ordered all ships to set condition ONE.** This condition, known as General Quarters was assumed when action was imminent. All battle stations were manned and alert, ammunition was ready for instant loading, and the watertight integrity of the ship was as secure as possible.***

While this order may seem to have been issued prematurely since the ships were already in a modified condition of Readiness ONE (ONE EASY) this is not believed to have been the case. It must be remembered that (a) there were still some unlocated enemy ships which had been unreported since 2310 and (b) the command had been alerted some minutes earlier to the enemy capability of submarine action. While CTG 77.2 stated later that he deemed it improbable

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

*** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U. S. Fleet (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Part II, Paragraph 2120.

that such a fragile craft as a motor torpedo boat could strike as solid an object as a submarine without serious damage, it seems clear that he was unable to discount this capability.

Meanwhile he awaited reports from both CTG 79.11 and COMDESDIV 108 concerning the situation in the lower strait. At 0241 he received his first contact report from these commands. This was from the MC GOWAN which reported one unidentified target bearing 184°(T), distant eighteen miles.* This contact showed this ship to be about twenty-seven miles from the LOUISVILLE.

At 0244 he intercepted Commander Battle Line's order changing speed of the battle line to ten knots.** He probably puzzled over this, but since he knew, through interceptions of numerous battle line communications concerning station keeping, that Commander Battle Line was having great difficulty in maintaining his ships in correct formation, he decided to take no action at this time. He likely felt that Commander Battle Line had found it necessary to increase speed temporarily and would reduce speed once the situation had clarified.

Before this contact could be evaluated he received a report at 0245 from the LOUISVILLE that she had made radar contact on an enemy force bearing 183°(T), distant 53,600 yards. From this great range he could evaluate the contact as consisting of at least one large ship, probably a battleship. This confirmed the motor torpedo boat reports of from one to two large ships.

It will be noted from Plate XVII that the Left Flank Force was out of position in Disposition A-2 at this time. This matter will be discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force".

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* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, P. I., including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (J).

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

(1) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

AS STATED BEFORE, THE BATTLE LINE WAS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING STATION AT FIVE KNOTS. CONSIDERABLE TIME WAS BEING USED ON THE TBS VOICE RADIO TO TRANSMIT ROUTINE TACTICAL INFORMATION, BUT THE DANGER OF COLLISION WAS EVER PRESENT AND THE VOICE COMMUNICATIONS WERE NECESSARY.

At 0151 Commander Battle Line reversed course by turn movement to new course, 280°(T).*

The various reports of contact were received by Commander Battle Line. After the report that several large ships were passing through the strait had been received, he ordered his ships to General Quarters at 0233.**

At 0240 he changed course to 270°(T). The effect of the current seemed to be lessening as the battle line approached the western end of its patrol line.

At 0241 he received the first report of radar contact. This was made by the MC GOWAN by voice radio and placed the enemy about thirty-one miles to the south. Commander Battle Line then, at 0244, increased speed to ten knots presumably to assist his ships to gain their correct positions in the battle line.

At 0245 the guide of the battle line was bearing 090°(T), distant 14,000 yards from Hingatungan Point.

(2) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

At 0101 Commander Left Flank Force executed turn to course 070°(T) in order to maintain station on the battle line.

At this time he observed that his left flank destroyers (DESRON FIFTY-SIX), due to being squeezed between the left flank cruisers and the battle line, were having difficulty in maintaining their formation (line of bearing 000°-180°(T) of attack section guides with interval of 2,000 yards).

THIS WAS BECAUSE THE LEFT FLANK FORCES WERE NOT IN THEIR CORRECT POSITION FOR BATTLE DISPOSITION A-2. IT WILL BE SHOWN LATER THAT THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS WERE NEARLY ALWAYS OUT OF POSITION THROUGHOUT THIS ENGAGEMENT DUE, IN PART, TO THE FACT THAT THE TWO SEARCH RADARS ON THE LOUISVILLE (ONE OF WHICH WAS BEING EMPLOYED BY CTG 77.2, THE OTHER BY THE LOUISVILLE) WERE BEING CONCENTRATED DOWN THE STRAIT, AND STATION KEEPING, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, HAD BEEN FORCED INTO A SECONDARY ROLE;*** IN PART, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER,

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report COMBATDIV 4, Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0235, November 8th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

TO THE FACT THAT THE SPEED OF THE BATTLE LINE WAS NOT MAINTAINED AT FIVE KNOTS AS ORDERED; IN PART, TO THE SOUTHERLY CURRENTS WHICH TENDED TO SET THE CRUISERS TOWARD HIBUSON ISLAND, AND, IN PART, TO THE DESIRE OF COMMANDER LEFT FLANK FORCE TO REMAIN WEST OF HIBUSON ISLAND. WHILE THE REASONS FOR REMAINING TO THE WESTWARD OF HIBUSON ISLAND ARE NOWHERE EXPLAINED, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT WHEN THE DISPOSITION WAS IN THE EASTERN LIMIT OF ITS PATROL, COMMANDER LEFT FLANK FORCE WAS BOTHERED BY HIBUSON ISLAND AND DECIDED TO REMAIN TO THE WESTWARD IN ORDER TO FACILITATE HIS FUNCTIONS AS OFFICER IN TACTICAL COMMAND. THIS WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL TACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS WHICH PRESCRIBED THAT AT NIGHT AND DURING PERIODS OF LOW VISIBILITY STATION UNIT GUIDES SHOULD MAINTAIN STATION AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE.* WHILE THE REASONS FOR IT ARE UNDERSTANDABLE, THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY CORRECT FOR CTG 77.2'S BATTLE PLAN WAS DESIGNED, IN PART, (A) TO GIVE FREEDOM OF ACTION TO THE LEFT FLANK FORCES FOR RAPID MOVEMENT TO THE EASTWARD IN THE EVENT THE ENEMY ATTEMPTED TO ENTER LEYTE GULF FROM THE EAST AND (B) TO EXPEDITE INTERCEPTION SHOULD ENEMY FAST UNITS MOVE UP THE EASTERN SHORE OF THE STRAIT TO THE EASTWARD OF HIBUSON ISLAND. THE TENDENCY TO REMAIN TO THE WESTWARD OF HIBUSON ISLAND MIGHT DELAY SUCH INTERCEPTIONS AS MUCH AS TWENTY MINUTES. ALL OF THIS WAS WELL KNOWN TO CTG 77.2, WHO DECIDED THAT THEY WERE OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE WHEN COMPARED WITH HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS OTC.

As a result of this squeezing effect, COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX at 0105 formed the three attack sections into a single column, with Attack Section TWO (COMDESDIV 112) in the van, Attack Section ONE (COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX) in the center and Attack Section THREE (Commanding Officer HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS) in the rear.** He took station initially about 1,000 yards due north of the LOUISVILLE but, as is shown in Plate XVII, this relative position did not long obtain owing to the fact that the left flank cruisers did not maintain their correct station on the battle line, whereas COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX endeavored to do so. ACTUALLY THIS WAS AN ANOMALOUS SITUATION FOR THEORETICALLY HE SHOULD HAVE MAINTAINED STATION ON THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS SINCE THE BATTLE DISPOSITION WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF THE FLANK FORCES AND, IF THE RELATIVE POSITIONS AS PROVIDED IN DISPOSITION A-2 WERE NOT MAINTAINED, THE EFFICACY OF THE DISPOSITION MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

At 0144 Commander Left Flank Force, because he was being set down on Hibuson Island, changed course to 050°(T)*** to avoid the island and to regain correct station on the battle line. This change of course tended to crowd the battle line even more and shows the ill effects that currents in narrow waters can have on station keeping.

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* General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 188), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Division of Fleet Training, 1940, Chapter VII, Section 42, Paragraph 711.

** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

Commencing at 0149 Commander Left Flank Force began receiving contact reports on the enemy as recorded under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0100 - 0245, October 25th".

At 0216 he changed course to port to new course 280°(T), presumably choosing the latter course because the battle line was also on that course. Unfortunately the left flank forces were still out of position with relation to the battle line.

At 0234, realizing this, he changed course to 270°(T) to increase gradually the distance between his cruisers and the battle line. However, the maneuver was ineffective because, shortly thereafter, the battle line also changed course to 270°(T).

At 0236 his left flank forces set Condition ONE in accordance with orders from CTG 77.2.

At 0241 he received a TBS voice radio contact report from the MC GOWAN reporting one unidentified surface contact on bearing 184°(T), distant eighteen miles. This place the enemy about twenty-seven miles from the LOUISVILLE.

At 0244 he intercepted an order from Commander Battle Line to the battle line increasing speed to ten knots.

At this point he should have endeavored to regain the correct station on the MISSISSIPPI but, except for minor adjustments, he seems to have preferred to remain in his present position.

At 0245 the LOUISVILLE made the first radar contact in the left flank forces on bearing 183°(T), distant 53,600 yards.* The long range of initial detection indicated that this contact was one or more large ships, probably of the battleship type.

At this time the LOUISVILLE was bearing 109°(T), distant about eleven miles from Hingatungan Point and bearing 073°(T), distant eight and three-quarters miles from Cabugan Grande Island.

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* Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

(3) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

The right flank cruisers and right flank destroyers continued to operate independently of each other; the former maintained station on the battle line and the patter patrolled a north-south line east of the Cabugan Islands.

The various contact reports received and recorded under CTG 77.2 were being received by the right flank forces.

At 0226 Commander Right Flank Force was surprised hear over TBS voice radio that CTG 79.11 was about to attack. In his action report* he made the following statement: "This was the first intimation I had that additional destroyers were present. From calls used they appeared to be Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-FOUR in REMEY, MONSSEN, MC GOWAN and MC DERMUT with Commander Destroyer Division 108. I did not know where or in what disposition they were."* THIS WAS A REMARKABLE STATEMENT AND IMPLIES THAT CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION WAS PRESENT IN HIS FLAGSHIP AT THIS TIME.

Why this was so is nowhere explained, but the fact that it was so with relation to TG 79.11 seems astonishing. CTG 77.3 (as COMCRUDIV FIFTEEN) was (a) on the distribution list for CTF 79's Operation Plan which provided for destroyer screens in this area,** (b) his cruisers had passed on several occasions through Patrol Stations SIX and SEVEN forcing the MC DERMUT, which was not in his command, to maneuver to clear the cruiser formation,*** (c) he should have received CTG 79.11's battle plan by voice radio from CTG 79.11 as he was an information addressee,**** (d) he had heard CTG 79.11 discussing his plans and issuing orders via the voice radio during the period preceding the attack, and finally (e) HIS FLAG PLOT LIKELY MAINTAINED A CURRENT SUMMARY PLOT OF ALL FRIENDLY FORCES IN THE VICINITY SINCE THIS WAS NOT ONLY COMMON SENSE BUT ALSO DOCTRINE FOR COMBAT INFORMATION CENTERS. INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED THAT THESE CENTERS "WERE CHARGED WITH THE FUNCTION AND RESPONSIBILITY OF KEEPING THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND HIGHER COMMANDS EMBARKED INFORMED OF THE LOCATION, IDENTITY, AND MOVEMENT OF FRIENDLY AND/OR ENEMY AIRCRAFT AND SURFACE SHIPS WITHIN THE AREA."*****

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** COM3RDPHIBFOR Attack Plan No. A304-44, No Serial, October 2nd, 1944, Annex I.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

***** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U. S. Fleet (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Part VI, Paragraph 6142.

Once CTG 77.3 had learned that CTG 79.11 was attacking he evidently spotted by radar the attacking destroyers of the Western Attack Group moving south and thereafter plotted easily the progress of their attack for he made the paradoxical statement in his action report, "It was easy to follow movements of own and enemy forces and to maintain a comprehensive understanding of the developing situation."*

At 0240 he received a contact report from the MC GOWAN that she had contacted one unidentified surface ship bearing 184° (T), distant eighteen miles.**

At this same time, because the right flank cruisers were at the westernmost point of the patrol and were, therefore, just north of Cabugan Grande Island, he changed course to 075°(T) and then stopped in order to adjust position in relation to the disposition guide.*

At this time also the right flank destroyers under COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR in the HUTCHINS were approaching the southern end of their patrol.

COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, noting by radar and by TBS voice radio that the western attacking unit of TG 79.11 was heading southward to attack and was at 0242 but 8,200 yards to the north (from MC DERMUT to BEALE), decided that his squadron might interfere with this attack and, therefore, hoping to avoid this, changed course to the westward to 290°(T) and increased speed to ten knots.**

At 0245 the PHOENIX was bearing 035°(T), distant about four miles from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island and the HUTCHINS was two miles east of Bugho Point (Leyte).

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Force, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

(B) Operations of CTG 79.11, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

Probably due to his position farther south than most of the Allied forces, CTG 79.11 could now clearly hear the motor torpedo boat contact reports. HE DID NOT GUARD THE PT BOAT COMMON (3120 kcs), BUT LIKE ALL SURFACE UNITS, GUARDED THE LOCAL AIR WARNING NET (3115 kcs), AND IT WAS ON THIS CIRCUIT THAT HE HEARD THE REPORTS. IN SOME CASES, HE WAS ABLE TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS WITH THIS FREQUENCY ARRANGEMENT.*

At 0110 he relayed to CTG 77.2 a report, just received from PT 533 (actually it was PT 523 which was relaying a contact report made by PT 134), to the effect that she had sighted three starshells or flares, distant ten miles, bearing 230°(T) from the southern tip of Panaon Island, and that she believed the flares to have been dropped by a plane.* It is assumed that he, realizing that communication delays incident to voice radio relays were being encountered, estimated that this contact had been made some time earlier. Actually, it had been made at 0027, and was fairly accurate.

At 0147 CTG 79.11 forwarded to CTG 77.2 a contact report which he had received at 0130 from the WACHAPREAGUE to the effect that LCI 70 had reported having contacted at 0123 a surface unit bearing 140°(T), distant eighteen miles from Taancan Point, Leyte.** This contact which was on the THIRD Section was quite accurate.

As a result of these two contacts CTG 79.11 re-estimated the situation. While he does not explain his thought processes, it seems clear from his later actions that at this time he decided that the enemy, which was now some forty miles away, was en route to Surigao Strait, and shortly would pass the southern entrance. However, he did not know of the eastward movement of the FIRST Striking Force toward San Bernardino Strait.* He estimated that the enemy planned to annihilate the anchored transports and probably to bombard Allied shore installations and, in order to accomplish this effectively, would move up the strait to Kanihaan Island; would then change course to 340°(T) and would head directly for the transport area on this new course. He further estimated that the enemy would be on this course during his torpedo attacks.*

This was a surprisingly good estimate since Commander THIRD Section's original plan called for passing through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait and then, when he could head for Tacloban Anchorage directly, to change course to 350°(T).***

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to All SHO Forces, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

Whether or not CTG 79.11 considered the possibility that these ships might be attempting a "Tokyo Express" run is not known, but it seems probable that he gave this concept consideration for the MC GOWAN stated that this was a "Tokyo Express" run,* and CTF 77 later expressed the same idea.**

As a result of this estimate CTG 79.11 decided that he should prepare his command for this enemy attack and, therefore, at 0155, commenced forming his Eastern Attack Group by directing the MELVIN, in Station THREE, to form astern of the MC GOWAN in Station FOUR. This was an important decision because the MELVIN, if on station, could not at any time be nearer to the MC GOWAN than six miles and might even be as far away as twelve miles. Thus, she would require from about fifteen to thirty minutes to join the MC GOWAN.

Just after this, at 0157, CTG 79.11 received a contact report from PT 134; this one to the effect that an unidentified ship was proceeding up the strait and was abeam of the southern tip of Panaon Island.*** Although he did not know it, this contact had originally been made at 0116, but included information which was much more recent. The portion concerning passing abeam of the southern tip of Panaon Island must have been obtained between 0148 and 0154 because these times are those at which the MICHISHIO and the MOGAMI, respectively, passed abeam of the southern tip (Diagram "F").

At 0203 he received a second contact report from PT 134 to the effect that she had sighted a large ship and had attacked with undetermined results.

At 0206 he set Condition ONE and prepared to make maximum speed. He now decided to form both attack groups and, at 0209, issued preparatory instructions to the MC GOWAN and MELVIN to close the REMEY, which had commenced moving to a position about one mile south of Station FOUR,*** (Plate XVIII). Meanwhile, the MONSSEN took station astern of the MC DERMUT in Station SEVEN to form the Western Attack Group under command of COMDESDIV 108 in MC DERMUT.

CTG 79.11 NOW LIKELY CONDEMNED THE INCOMPLETENESS OF HIS INFORMATION CONCERNING THE ENEMY BECAUSE IT MADE HIS ATTACK PROBLEM MORE DIFFICULT THAN SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE CASE. WHILE THE DATA RECEIVED FROM THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS AND LCI 70 WAS OF VALUE IN THAT IT LOCATED A PORTION OF THE ENEMY, IT WAS OF LITTLE ATTACK VALUE, IN THAT IT OMITTED, IN GENERAL, THE COMPOSITION, COURSE, SPEED AND FORMATION OF THE ENEMY, EARLY RECEIPT OF WHICH

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* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103 November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report CTF 77, Report of Operation for the Capture of Leyte Island, including Action Report of Engagements in Surigao Strait and off Samar Island on October 25th, 1944, Serial 00302-C, January 31st, 1945.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

WOULD HAVE FACILITATED THE PRELIMINARY SOLUTION OF HIS ATTACK PROBLEM. HE WOULD NOW HAVE TO OBTAIN THIS ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ORIGINALLY FROM HIS OWN RADARS DURING THE LIMITED TIME OF HIS HIGH SPEED APPROACH.

At 0217 he directed his ships to report immediately by TBS voice radio any radar contact on the enemy.

At 0220 he received Commander Western Attack Group's torpedo attack plan which prescribed (a) broadside fire to port, (b) individual target plan and (c) column counter march retirement. Since the above torpedo firing plan was in accordance with his instructions, issued some six hours earlier (at 2018), and since he made no comment thereon to COMDESDIV 108, it is assumed that this plan was satisfactory.

In connection with this plan, Commander Western Attack Group stated later* that his basic attack plan, which he had made known to his flag captain as early as 2130, was as follows: (a) in order to gain protection against radar detection, to go down the strait remaining within 1500 - 2000 yards of the shore line, (b) in order to reach a firing point fifty degrees on the enemy's port bow, distant 7500 yards, to turn sharply toward the enemy at the time required by his own plot and fire from this point and (c) to retire to the west and north. He further stated that under no circumstances, other than the imminent danger of destruction, would he fire torpedoes until within intermediate range; however, he did not plan to approach any closer than this range.

THE ABOVE ATTACK PLAN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SOUND AND IN ACCORDANCE NOT ONLY WITH THE ACCEPTED DOCTRINE FOR NIGHT TORPEDO ATTACK, BUT ALSO WITH CTG 77.2's INSTRUCTIONS TO REMAIN CLOSE TO THE SHORE IN ATTACKING AND ON RETIRING. THE FIRING POINT OF FIFTY DEGREES WAS WITHIN THE AREA (50° to 80°) WHEREIN THE PROBABILITY OF HITS WAS GREATEST AND 7500 YARDS WAS WITHIN THE EFFECTIVE FIRING RANGE FOR A TARGET OPERATING AT SPEEDS UP TO TWENTY KNOTS. HOWEVER, THE RESERVATION, THAT COMMANDER WESTERN ATTACK GROUP DID NOT CONTEMPLATE CLOSING THE ENEMY CLOSER THAN 7500 YARDS, WAS NOT SOUND BECAUSE IT DID NOT TAKE COGNIZANCE OF THE FACT THAT (A) HIS COMMAND MIGHT NOT BE DETECTED BY THE JAPANESE AND (B) MIGHT FIND JAPANESE GUNFIRE INEFFECTUAL IN WHICH CASE THE ATTACK GROUP COULD CLOSE TO A HIGH SPEED TORPEDO (FORTY-FOUR AND ONE-HALF KNOTS) FIRING POINT (BELOW 6000 YARDS) WHICH WOULD HEAVILY INCREASE HIS PROBABILITY OF HITS.**

At 0225 CTG 79.11 advised CTG 77.2 that he was "going to start down in a few minutes".***

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

At 0226 he intercepted a report from CTG 77.2 to Commander Battle Line to the effect that two ships were coming up the strait and had passed the initial line of motor torpedo boats.

At 0228 the MC GOWAN and MELVIN, having closed the REMEY, he directed them to form column on the REMEY in that order, distance 500 yards, speed fifteen knots,* thus forming the Eastern Group.

At 0229 he was advised by Commander Western Attack Group, which was on course 170°(T), speed fifteen knots, that he was "starting down".** At the same time he received a directive from CTG 77.2 to inquire of the motor torpedo boats if any other targets were following the two ships up the strait.

At about this time it seems probable that both Commander Western Attack Group and Commander Eastern Attack Group received a report from the Commanding Officer PT 134 that he had hit a heavy metallic object with his screws which he thought was a submarine. Since there is no record of this message in either commander's log it seems correct to say that neither commander gave it serious consideration. This was the correct action for the possible presence of submarines in Surigao Strait had long been considered by the units of TF 79 and it was for that reason that CTG 79.11 had been given a screening assignment in that strait. However, despite this, he had been authorized to attack by CTG 77.2 and it was now the responsibility of that commander to change his orders.

AT 0230 HE DIRECTED THE MC GOWAN AND MELVIN TO MAKE TWENTY KNOTS AND TO FOLLOW HIM. THUS HE INDICATED THAT HE PLANNED TO EMPLOY FOLLOW-THE-LEADER TACTICS WHICH WAS STANDARD DESTROYER PRACTICE.*** THESE TACTICS, AS POINTED OUT UNDER " OPERATIONS OF COMMANDER THIRD SECTION, 0000 - 0100, OCTOBER 25TH", ARE ALWAYS A MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE AND MAY BE THE ONLY RESOURCE OF THE COMMANDER OF A DETACHMENT TO IMPOSE HIS LEADERSHIP ON THE GROUP. HIS EMPLOYMENT OF SUCH TACTICS IN THE PRESENT CASE WAS PARTICULARLY APPLICABLE IN THAT ENEMY INFORMATION WAS LIMITED, THE APPROACH TIME WOULD BE SHORT, AND, THEREFORE, TIME WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR SIGNALLING MANEUVERS.

At this time neither Attack Group Commander had as yet contacted the enemy.

At 0231 CTG 79.11 changed standard speed to twenty knots (it had been fifteen) and directed all ships to show IFF (electronic identification friend or foe). All ships commenced making twenty knots.

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

At 0233, in compliance with the instructions received at 0229, he broadcast a message over the local air warning net to all motor torpedo boats to determine other targets coming up the channel outside of the two reported.* Unfortunately, none of the above boats appear to have received this message; at least there were no replies.*

At 0238 TG 79.11 made its first contact on the enemy. This was an intermittent radar contact by the MC GOWAN on bearing 184°(T), range 39,700 yards.** Since only a single pip in the middle of the strait showed on the radar scope the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN delayed reporting the contact until it had become more clearly defined.

At 0240 CTG 79.11 received a contact report from the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN reporting one unidentified surface contact bearing 184°(T), range eighteen miles.***

Immediately after this he directed Commander Western Attack Group to take charge of his own group and advised that commander that he would keep him informed of his own course and firing.

THIS WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH DESTROYER ATTACK DOCTRINE WHICH PROVIDED THAT EACH DIVISION COMMANDER SHOULD ATTACK INDEPENDENTLY BUT THAT THE TWO ATTACKS SHOULD BE COORDINATED FOR MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT (a) INDEPENDENT TORPEDO ATTACKS NOT PROPERLY COORDINATED, EVEN THROUGH FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS, MAY BE HIGHLY INEFFECTIVE BECAUSE THEY MAY MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE ENEMY TO TAKE SUCCESSFUL EVASIVE ACTION AND (b) ATTACKS FROM MORE THAN ONE FIRING POINT, IN DIFFERENT SECTORS AND PROPERLY COORDINATED, SHOULD BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE BECAUSE THEY MAKE THE PROBLEM OF EVASION MUCH MORE DIFFICULT DUE TO CROSS FIRE. IN SUCH CASE WHAT MAY BE CORRECT ACTION AGAINST TORPEDOES FIRED FROM ONE FIRING POSITION MAY BE INCORRECT ACTION FOR TORPEDOES FIRED FROM ANOTHER.****

Whether or not CTG 79.11 planned to coordinate the attacks of the Eastern and Western Attack Groups is not clear for, as will be shown later, although he continued to give Commander Western Attack Group instructions concerning his own courses and speeds, target designations, and preparations for torpedo firing, he commenced the operation with the Western Attack Group some five miles behind its proper station for effective coordinated attack.

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944.

** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

**** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

Why he commenced his approach with his attack group so far out of position is not known, but it seems highly probable, since he makes no mention of the location of the Western Attack Group in his action report, and makes no mention of its position on his radar scope that he did not realize that it was five miles behind him. Instead it seems probable that he thought that it was more nearly 5,000 yards (the difference in latitude between Stations FOUR and SEVEN) behind him and expected Commander Western Attack Group to adjust station accordingly.

Commander Western Attack Group similarly failed, at this time, to maintain continuous contact on the Eastern Attack Group and likewise did not realize that he was five miles behind. He later stated that he had thought that he was about 5,000 yards behind.

While the failure of Commander Eastern Attack Group to maintain contact on the Western Attack Group is understandable since the latter group was, until 0259, intermingled near the western shore with the Right Flank Destroyers, the failure of Commander Western Attack Group to maintain contact on the Eastern Attack Group, which was in open water, distant about eight and one-half miles and well within radar range, is not understandable. Perhaps he concentrated on the enemy to the exclusion of the Eastern Attack Group; perhaps he expected to receive coordinating instruction from CTG 79.11; perhaps he gave no thought whatsoever to coordination.

WHATEVER THE REASONS, THE RESULTING SITUATION MADE THE POSSIBILITY OF A COORDINATED ATTACK UNLIKELY. IF CTG 79.11 HAD REALLY PLANNED TO MAKE A COORDINATED ATTACK SHOULD HE NOT HAVE INSURED THAT THE WESTERN ATTACK GROUP WAS APPROXIMATELY ON A 090° - 270°(T) LINE OF BEARING WITH THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP PRIOR TO COMMENCING THE APPROACH?

At 0242 both the REMEY and MELVIN made radar contacts on the approaching unknown force and the REMEY, the flagship, tracked the force on course 007° (T), speed eighteen knots.* This was an excellent track at such a long range. The enemy was actually on course 000°(T), speed twenty knots, but it seems likely, owing to the southerly set of the current, that he was making good only about eighteen knots. Thus, at this time, all three destroyers of the Eastern Attack Group were in radar contact with the enemy. None of the destroyers of the Western Attack Group had, as yet, made contact due to the fact that they still were beyond radar range.

By 0245 the torpedo attacks of the two Attack Groups of CTG 79.11 were well underway. The REMEY, leading the Eastern Attack Group, on course 180°(T), speed twenty knots, was about fifteen miles north of the YAMASHIRO; the MC DERMUT leading the Western Attack Group, on course 170°(T), speed twenty knots, was about twenty-one miles northwest of the YAMASHIRO which, by plot (Diagrams "F" and "G"), was bearing 259°(T), distant six and one-quarter miles from Tungo Point.

* Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

From this point on, since the torpedo attacks of TG 79.11 were conducted independently by the two attack groups, the attack as conducted by each group will be discussed separately.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0100 - 0245, October 25th.

(1) SW Panaon PT's.

During this period this section failed to make any contacts, either visual or radar,* despite the fact that at 0118, the entire THIRD Section passed close by, at a distance of from two to four miles (Diagram "F").

In addition to this apparent radar failure this section also experienced voice radio difficulties. The action reports of the three boats give no indication that they were aware of the actions between the Bohol PT's and the SECOND Division at about 2256, and between the Limasawa PT's and the FIRST Division at about 0025. THIS MEANS THAT NOT ONLY WAS THE VISIBILITY POOR IN THEIR AREAS BUT ALSO THAT THE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT OF THE ENTIRE SECTION WAS EITHER INOPERATIVE OR IMPROPERLY HANDLED. IF IT WAS INOPERATIVE THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN KNOWN EARLIER AND THE BOATS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SENT ON RECONNAISSANCE, EXCEPTING IN COMPANY WITH BOATS HAVING FULLY OPERATIVE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT. IF IT HAD BEEN OPERATIVE UP TO THIS TIME, IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT IT WAS BEING IMPROPERLY HANDLED.

(2) Madilao Point PT's.

PT's 192(OTC), 191 and 195, hereinafter called Madilao Point PT's, were on station one mile south of Madilao Point conducting radar search.**

Although they had observed earlier (about 0025), gunfire, starshells and searchlights at a great distance in the vicinity of Limasawa Island, they appear to have received none of the contact reports which followed nor any additional contact reports or voice radio interceptions during the period under discussion (0100 - 0245). This failure they attributed to radio interference.

At about 0130 the THIRD Section passed about eight - nine miles to the northwest of their stations, but none of the Madilao Point PT's made any radar contacts on them whatsoever. Whether this was due to poor radar performance or to the fact that the motor torpedo boats were south of their stations at this time is not known. Weather conditions must have been poor for none of these boats saw the illumination or gunfire which occurred just after 0200 and which was only about twelve miles to the north.

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* Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 192, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0395, October 29th, 1944.

(3) SE Panaon PT's.

Commander SE Panaon PT's, with PT's 134, 132 and 137, was lying to off Binit Point awaiting the arrival of the five large ships which had been reported by PT 127 as south of Bohol Island at 2310* (actually, PT 127 had reported two large ships and three destroyers). He had reason to expect them, as, but thirty-five minutes earlier (0025), he had sighted starshells which he had estimated to be ten miles southwest of his position.

He was not surprised, therefore, when, at 0116, PT 134 contacted by radar a group of targets bearing about 225°(T), distant eight to ten miles. He observed from his maneuvering board plot that the targets appeared to be zigzagging violently. Actually this was not the case. It merely happened that at this time the various units of the former FIRST Division were rejoining which naturally gave a confused picture on the relative plot.

He promptly directed the Commanding Officer PT 134 to report this contact which was done at 0116. For reasons unknown this report which, instead of reporting a group of targets, reported only a single unidentified ship opposite the southern tip of Panaon Island, appears to have been delayed in transit to CTG 77.2 until about 0200.**

Unknown to Commander SE Panaon PT's, at some time after 0124, when PT 134 started ahead, his boats became separated from each other. This was due to the fact that (a) because of low visibility, PT 137, which was without radio and radar, had been stationed between PT's 134 and 132 in order to facilitate both station keeping and follow-the-leader tactics and (b) PT 137 had then lost visual contact with both PT's 134 and 132, which caused PT 132 to lose contact as well. This resulted in independent action against the oncoming THIRD Section by each motor torpedo boat of this section.

(a) PT 134.

The Commanding Officer PT 134, through plotting, had determined that the enemy was on a northeasterly course. He, therefore, under verbal orders of Commander SE Panaon PT's, who it will be recalled was in PT 134, immediately proceeded toward the enemy on course 055°(T) at ten knots. At this time he discovered that PT's 132 and 137, which he had expected would follow him, had not done so, and he was, therefore, operating alone. He was then directed by Commander SE Panaon PT's to proceed independently.

By 0150 he had succeded in closing to within two miles of the enemy. His radar screen now showed the target to consist of five "pips" which indicated three ships (the leading one was the MICHISHIO) in a screen ahead of two larger ships. Unfortunately, he was unable to determine the types. Deciding that his previous estimate of heavy ships astern was correct and that they were probably battleships or cruisers, he prepared to change course toward them.*

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* Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

Why he did not fully report the information he had collected at this time and prior to his attack, is not known. He knew that there were at least three small and two larger ships in the formation, he knew the nature of the formation, its course, speed and approximate location. All of this information was essential to the proper conduct of the prospective action by CTG 77.2. U. S. Naval Instructions at this time prescribed that, when action is probable, "detailed accurate information of the enemy becomes increasingly important, such as information of the enemy's bearing, disposition or formation number and distribution of the enemy's units, course and speed".*

While it seems clear that he did forward some information, notably the enemy's speed, this information appears to have been lost between PT 134 and PT 523** for there is no record that it ever reached CTG 77.2 or CTG 79.11.

At 0200 he changed course to 105°(T) and headed for the center of the formation. At 0200:30 he found that he was slightly ahead of the desired bearing and changed course to 125°(T).

At 0205, when the range had decreased to 3000 yards, PT 134 was illuminated by a searchlight and taken under fire but, despite this, the commanding officer continued to close. Meanwhile, he returned the enemy's fire with his 37, 20 and 40 millimeter guns. When he had closed to 2500 yards he fired three torpedoes and immediately commenced retiring. While this range was excessive because motor torpedo boat doctrine recommended that the boats should close to ranges of 1000 yards or less in order to insure hitting,*** the fact that he was alone and, therefore, the target of all gunfire may have necessitated his firing from a greater range.

He likely had fired at the FUSO but since the Japanese did not report a hit, it is probable that the torpedoes passed astern.

At about 0208 he observed that the enemy appeared to be under fire from a northerly sector since the enemy searchlights were trained in that direction. He estimated that other motor torpedo boats were attacking. In this he was correct for the Lower Surigao PT's were attacking at this time.

During his retirement toward Binit Point he reported by voice radio that he had attacked a very large ship with undetermined results. This message was quickly received in good time by CTG 77.2.****

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* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143), Navy Department, Office of Naval Operations, 1934, Chapter VIII, Section V, Paragraph 821.

** Action Report PT 523, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, Motor Torpedo Boats, U. S. Fleet (USF 41), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1945, Part III, Paragraph 3335.

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

He claims that he also reported attacking five large ships east of Panaon on course north. This report was not recorded by anyone.

At 0229 he reported having struck, with his propellers, a heavy underwater object which he believed to be a submarine* approaching with the Japanese force. Postwar information discloses that this was not a submarine and to this day its nature remains undetermined. It seems likely that the Commanding Officer PT 134 soon evaluated this contact as other than a submarine and likely as driftwood or something similar for he completely omitted this incident in his action report.

At 0245 PT 134 was bearing 106°(T), distant 400 yards from Binit Point.

(b) PT 137.

It will be recalled that PT 137 did not have an operating radio or radar and that between 0100 and 0130 she had become separated from her section. She seems to have proceeded to the southwest after this (perhaps in an effort to follow PT 134, which had headed south for an interception), for at 0135, the commanding officer sighted visually two destroyers heading north, distant 1250 yards. These destroyers appear to have been the two trailing destroyers of DESDIV FOUR (ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO) which it will be recalled were endeavoring, with the MICHISHIO, to reach their stations in the van of the formation. It is of note that the YAMAGUMO, the trailing destroyer, reported at 0130 that she had sighted a motor torpedo boat on bearing 010°(T).** (Actually from the plot (Diagram "F") this bearing was more likely 030°(T), the time 0133.)

PT 137 then, at approximately 0142, fired one torpedo at the YAMAGUMO at a range of 1000 yards but the torpedo was observed to miss astern. Having lost visual contact shortly thereafter the commanding officer retired toward Binit Village. He made no further contacts during this period.***

(c) PT 132.

As stated previously, the Commanding Officer PT 132 had somehow become separated from the other two boats of his section at about 0124 and had strayed southward into the channel. While the exact movements of PT 132 are unknown and the track shown in Diagram "F" is only an estimate, it seems probable that it was at about 0142, rather than at 0200 as given in the action report, that the commanding officer detected a radar target at a range of two miles and on a bearing of 180°(T)**** rather than the 270°(T) given in the

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

action report. (This seems so for plotting factors from other sources tend to validate the tracks of the major forces). He then (a) closed the target to an estimated 1200 yards, (b) discovered by sight that it was an enemy destroyer which appeared to be lying to and (c) fired four torpedoes in single shots. He observed that all torpedoes had missed and that the destroyer which had failed to sight either PT 132 or the torpedoes had got underway on a southerly course. He now lost contact.

Although not mentioned in the Japanese action reports, it is believed that this was the YAMAGUMO, which was maneuvering to assume her station in No. TWO Approach Formation.

The Commanding Officer PT 132 now retired to his original station off Binit Point. He made no further contacts during this period.*

(4) Bilaa Point PT's.

PT's 494, 497 and 324, hereinafter called Bilaa Point PT's, were on station one and one-half miles northeast of Bilaa Point, Mindanao conducting radar search. The primary mission assigned this section was to insure that enemy forces did not pass undetected through Hinatuan Passage.

At about 0202 Commander Bilaa Point PT's detected several radar targets south of Binit Point at a range of eight - nine miles.** He tracked them by radar. The plot shows that they had been picked up at the closest point of approach after heading around the southern tip of Panaon Island into Surigao Strait. He decided not to attack as they were (a) heading up the strait and (b) away from the motor torpedo boats and he did not want to leave his station.

THIS DECISION WAS, OF COURSE, CORRECT. HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A PREVENTION OBJECTIVE IN THAT HE WAS TO INSURE THAT NO ENEMY FORCES PASSED UNDETECTED THROUGH HINATUAN PASSAGE. HE KNEW THAT SOME OF THE ENEMY FORCES ROUNDING PANAON ISLAND AND HEADING INTO THE STRAIT HAD BEEN LOCATED BY THE SW AND SE PANAON PT'S FOR HE HAD HEARD THEIR REPORTS ON THE VOICE RADIO. HOWEVER, HE ALSO KNEW THAT THESE REPORTS WERE NOT THE SAME AND INDICATED THAT ALL OF THE JAPANESE SHIPS HAD PERHAPS NOT BEEN LOCATED. HE REALIZED THAT THERE STILL WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT ONE OR MORE ENEMY SHIPS MIGHT ATTEMPT TO MOVE UP THE EAST COAST OF DINAGAT ISLAND VIA HINATUAN PASSAGE. THEREFORE, HE DECIDED THAT HE MUST REMAIN ON STATION. THE FACT THAT THERE WERE NO ENEMY PLANS TO MOVE THROUGH HINATUAN PASSAGE IN NO WAY INVALIDATES THIS DECISION.

He likely maintained radar contact on the THIRD Section as it moved northward through Surigao Strait.

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* Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

After 0205 he sighted gunfire "up in Surigao Strait" to the north. This was the action between the SE Panaon, Lower Surigao and Sumilon PT's with the THIRD Section.*

At about 0211 he made his final radar contact on it bearing 340°(T), distant eight miles, and proceeding in northerly direction.

No further contacts were made during this period.

During the latter portion of this period he appears to have drifted in a southwesterly direction.

(5) Sumilon PT's.

PT's 523, 524 and 526, hereinafter called Sumilon PT's were stationed one mile south of Sumilon Island conducting radar search.** Since 0100 they had been drifting with the current as shown in Diagram "F".

Since Commander Sumilon PT's had, at 0025, commenced intercepting voice radio messages from Commander SE Panaon PT's concerning the northward movement of enemy forces, and knew, therefore, their approximate course and speed, and since he had relayed some information*** to CTG 77.2, notably that PT 134 had reported that there were unidentified ships proceeding up the strait opposite the southern tip of Panaon Island, he was alert to detect the enemy on his radar.

At 0143 he made his first contact at a distance of eight to nine miles.** He did not make a contact report, presumably because he felt that CTG 77.2 was fully familiar with the situation. However, if this were his reason it was seriously in error for neither CTG 77.2 nor CTG 79.11 knew the course and speed of the enemy. This was because they were beyond the voice radio range of PT 134 and the only information they had received was that which had been relayed by the Sumilon PT's.

In view of his advance information of the approximate movements of the enemy, Commander Sumilon PT's, without waiting to track the target, immediately deployed his section on a line of bearing and changed course to intercept it.**

THUS, COMMANDER SUMILON PT'S, ACTING ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE AND BASING HIS ACTION ON HIS ESTIMATE OF ENEMY INTENTIONS RATHER THAN OF CAPABILITIES AND FURTHER FORGETTING THAT HE WAS A SMALL, BUT NEVERTHELESS VITAL, COMPONENT OF THE RECONNAISSANCE ELEMENTS OF HIS COMMANDER'S PLAN, HAD DECIDED TO CANCEL THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE ASSIGNED HIM, "THE PREVENTION OF THE UNDETECTED SORTIE OF ENEMY TASK FORCES THROUGH HINATUAN PASSAGE", AND TO REPLACE IT WITH A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE.

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* Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 523, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

THIS DECISION WAS OF DOUBTFUL CORRECTNESS. LIKE COMMANDER BILAA PT'S, HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A PREVENTION OBJECTIVE, AND, IN COOPERATION WITH THAT COMMANDER, WAS TO INSURE THAT ENEMY FORCES DID NOT PASS THROUGH HINATUAN PASSAGE UNDETECTED. SINCE HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THE BILAA PT'S WERE STILL ON STATION OFF BILAA POINT, FOR THAT COMMANDER HAD GIVEN NO INDICATION OF ACTION, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLEAR TO HIM THEN THAT WHILE HE WAS ATTACKING THE ENEMY HINATUAN PASSAGE MIGHT WELL BE UNGUARDED. THEREFORE, IN VIEW OF THIS SITUATION, IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO REMAIN ON STATION THAN TO DEPART STATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ATTACKING THE ENEMY.

WHILE IT IS THE DUTY OF A COMMANDER, IN THE ABSENCE OF A SUPERIOR AND IN THE FACE OF A CHANGING SITUATION, TO TAKE ANY ACTION HE DEEMS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT HIS COMMANDER'S PLANS, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF DEPARTING FROM HIS INSTRUCTIONS, THERE IS SERIOUS DOUBT THAT SUCH A SITUATION OBTAINED AT THIS TIME. THE ENEMY, AS HE MOVED NORTHWARD, WAS BEING DETECTED AND ATTACKED BY THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE STRAIT AND NO HELP WAS REQUIRED THERE; BUT WHAT ABOUT THE EASTERN SHORE? PERHAPS, IN THE EXTENUATION OF HIS ACTION, IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT THAT, SINCE THE BILAA PT'S HAD REPORTED NOTHING NEARER THAN EIGHT MILES, THERE WAS NOTHING ON THAT SIDE OF THE CHANNEL. BUT, WAS THIS A CORRECT ESTIMATE? COULD NOT ONE OR MORE OF THE JAPANESE SHIPS HAVE BROKEN OFF WHILE UNDER ATTACK BY THE SUMILON PT'S AND HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE PASSAGE WITHOUT DETECTION BY HUGGING THE NORTHERN SHORE? THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY TRUE HAD THE SUMILON PT'S BEEN DAMAGED IN THE ATTACK.

AS HE APPROACHED HE OBSERVED THAT THE ENEMY WAS BEING ATTACKED BY MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS FROM THE NORTHWEST AND FROM THE SOUTHWEST AND, IN RETURN, WAS ILLUMINATING THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS WITH SEARCHLIGHTS, AND HAD OPENED FIRE.*

The attacks from the northwest were being made by the Lower Surigao PT's and the attack from the southwest by PT 134.

As a result of this searchlight illumination to the westward he observed that (a) the enemy ships were being silhouetted to his position,** and (b) there were two cruisers and two destroyers*** on a zigzag course at a speed of

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* Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

** Commander Sumilon PT's stated later that, in his well-considered opinion, the force "consisted of two battleships and three small vessels of the size of destroyers or larger." (Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 36's 1st endorsement, November 24th, 1944 to Action Report PT 523, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.) This opinion is given no weight in this analysis because it appears to have been hindsight and because the section commander's opinion is very likely the opinion of the boat captain as well since both the section commander and boat captain in a motor torpedo boat are necessarily on the same tiny bridge. Therefore, the report of the boat captain has been accepted as the opinion of the section commander at the time of the action.

*** Action Report PT 523, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

twenty-five knots. Actually, the THIRD Section was maneuvering at this time at twenty knots to avoid the attacks from the SE Panaon and Lower Surigao PT's. It is of singular interest at this time to record that in their action reports the Commanding Officer PT 524* reported that he had sighted one battleship, one cruiser and one destroyer, and the Commanding Officer PT 526** that he had sighted one battleship, two heavy cruisers and two destroyers. Of course, none of these sightings were correct for there were two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers. The reasons for such inaccuracies are not known. It seems unlikely that it was due to the weather for, according to the SHIGURE, the visibility had improved and was now seven kilometers. Had this not been the case, it is doubtful if the Sumilon PT's would have been able to observe, so clearly, the action to the westward of the enemy formation.

IT IS NOT KNOWN WHY NEITHER COMMANDER SUMILON PT'S NOR HIS COMMANDING OFFICERS REPORTED THE RESULT OF THEIR VISUAL CONTACTS TO CTG 77.2. THEY KNEW, FROM THEIR INTERCEPTS AND RELAYS, THAT THERE WAS DOUBT AS TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE ENEMY FORCE, SINCE ALL REPORTS WHICH THEY HAD INTERCEPTED GAVE IT A DIFFERENT COMPOSITION, AND THEY ALSO KNEW THAT IT WAS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS INFORMED OF CHANGES IN THE COURSE, SPEED, COMPOSITION AND FORMATION OF THE ENEMY.

IT MIGHT BE WELL AT THIS POINT TO HAZARD A GUESS AS TO WHAT MOTIVATED COMMANDER SUMILON PT'S, AS WELL AS THE SECTION COMMANDERS OF MOST OF THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT SECTIONS ENGAGED IN THIS BATTLE, TO GIVE PRIORITY TO THE DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE. THIS GUESS IS THAT EACH OF THESE SECTION COMMANDERS HAD SOMEHOW FORMED AN OPINION THAT THEY WERE EXPECTED TO ATTACK AND DESTROY THE ENEMY AND THAT DESTUCTION WAS THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE DESPITE THEIR ORDERS WHICH DIRECTED THEM TO THE CONTRARY. SINCE THE DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE HAD THIS PRIORITY, IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE MATTER OF DESTRUCTION HAD BEEN STRONGLY STRESSED AT THE BRIEFING CONFERENCES, WHICH WERE HELD PRIOR TO THE DEPARTURE OF THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS FOR THEIR BATTLE STATIONS. CTG 70.1 DISCREDITS THIS THOUGHT IN HIS ACTION REPORT FOR HERE HE STATES, IN PART, THAT THE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS WERE POSITIONED "TO INSURE DETECTION OF THE ENEMY BY WHATEVER ROUTE HE APPROACHED, AND TO INFORM OUR HEAVIER FORCES, WITH THE SECTIONS INSIDE SURIGAO STRAITS AS STRIKING GROUPS STATIONED TO INSURE ALMOST CONTINUOUS CONTACT BY AT LEAST ONE GROUP. EACH SECTION WAS INSTRUCTED TO REPORT ANY ENEMY SIGHTED, THEN TO ATTACK INDEPENDENTLY."*** PERHAPS, THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE TERM "STRIKING GROUPS" WAS RESPONSIBLE, FOR IS IT NOT A RARE OCCURRENCE FOR A STRIKING GROUP TO BE GIVEN A PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF RECONNAISSANCE? IS NOT THE VERY TERM SYMBOLIC OF ATTACK? PERHAPS, THE EMPHASIS WAS NOT SO MUCH ON REPORTING THE ENEMY AS TO ATTACK HIM.

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* Action Report PT 524, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 526, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

Commander Sumilon PT's closed the target to a range of 2000 yards and ordered his section to fire torpedoes. At 0212 each motor torpedo boat then fired one torpedo at one of the cruisers, reportedly of the MOGAMI class, and at 0213 each boat fired a second torpedo at the same cruiser.* All torpedoes missed. This was probably due to the fact that the torpedoes were fired from 2000 yards on the starboard quarter of the cruiser which was then in a turn away making a hit most unlikely (Diagram "F").

IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY COMMANDER SUMILON PT'S FAILED TO CLOSE THE TARGET TO A FAVORABLE FIRING RANGE, I.E., 1000 YARDS OR LESS. HE HAD NOT BEEN DISCOVERED, THE ENEMY WERE ENGAGED TO THE WESTWARD, THE SITUATION WAS VERY FAVORABLE, INDEED.

Having completed his attack Commander Sumilon PT's commenced his retirement. At this time he was fired on by the enemy who likely observed the "rooster tail" (spray of water off the stern) which is shown by motor torpedo boats when travelling at high speed. By the employment of smoke he succeeded in escaping undamaged.

At 0245 he was "lying to" east of Sumilon Island and drifting in a southerly direction.

(6) Lower Surigao PT's.

PT's 490(OTC),491 and 493, hereinafter called Lower Surigao PT's were approximately on station in mid-channel in Latitude 10°-04'N, Longitude 125°-19:30'E, conducting radar search, and were gradually drifting southward with the current.

At 0147, Commander Lower Surigao PT's received a report from PT 490 that she had made radar contact at eight miles on four targets coming around the southern tip of Panaon Island, heading north.*** He did not report this contact, presumably because he knew that these units had already been reported by PT 134. He tracked the targets for several minutes and then deployed his section in a line of bearing, distance 200 yards, and proceeded on various courses at nine knots, making good a track to close them approximately as shown in Diagram "F". He closed to about 1000 yards, but due to a rain squall could not sight the Japanese ships although he could see their wakes. At 0205 he observed a searchlight to the south but was not illuminated by it. He continued closing and then, when the rain squall had passed, he sighted a Japanese formation consisting of three destroyers and one cruiser at a range of 650 - 700 yards which formation was heavily engaged in action against American torpedo boats attacking from the southwest. At 0207 he fired two torpedoes at the leading destroyer (MICHISHIO). At the same time PT 491

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* Action Reports PT's 523, 524, 526, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 523, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial October 26th, 1944.

fired two torpedoes at the second destroyer (ASAGUMO)* and PT 493 endeavored to fire one starboard torpedo, target not given, but the torpedo failed to launch.** All torpedoes missed.

Almost immediately after this, the boats were illuminated by searchlights from one of the two leading ships and were fired upon.*** They returned the enemy fire with all available guns and PT 490 fired her remaining two torpedoes at a range of about 500 yards at the MICHISHIO. At this time all three motor torpedo boats were under heavy enemy fire and, therefore, commenced retiring at high speed, making smoke. Despite this, PT 493 was heavily hit by three 4.7 shells, PT 490 was lightly hit, and PT 491 was undamaged. The Commanding Officer PT 493 found it necessary, at 0235, because she was leaking badly, to beach off Maoyo Point.**

As the boats retired toward the east coast of Panaon Island, they lost contact with each other.

(7) Other Motor Torpedo Boats.

(a) The operations of the motor torpedo boats in Surigao Strait, other than those hereafter discussed, were uneventful.

(1) Upper Surigao PT's.

PT's 327, 321 and 326, hereinafter called Upper Surigao PT's were stationed four miles west of Kanihaan Island, where they had arrived about 1830, conducting radar search.****

At 0205 the Commanding Officer PT 327 heard PT 493 report a contact (unidentified ships) and sighted gunfire to the south. He reported to CTG 79.11 at this time that the enemy was coming through the straits and that gunfire was observed. It is not known whether or not CTG 77.2 recieved this report, for it is not recorded in his action report, but he probably did for it is recorded in CTG 77.3's action report.*****

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* Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 493, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

About 0225* one of the Upper Surigao PT's, probably PT 326, made contact on an enemy force ten miles to the south and about 0230 reported it to the OTC in PT 327.** At this time the motor torpedo boats had completed moving to the north against the current and now were drifting to the south with the current toward Kanihaan Island, being about one mile north of the southern tip of that island.

About 0235 Commander Upper Surigao PT's reported this contact to CTG 79.11 who directed that the motor torpedo boats withdraw from the area as he was making an attack.***

Commander Upper Surigao PT's then, about 0238, withdrew on course 090°(T) at seven knots.** He made no preparation for attack, although by the time that the enemy force was passing abeam (0255) he had quite accurately tracked them on course 000°(T) at twenty knots.***

While his reasons for not doing so are not known it seems likely that he realized that, since CTG 79.11 was about to make an attack, and had directed him to clear the area, it would be unwise to make a motor torpedo boat attack as this might confuse the destroyer plot by (a) including friendly forces or (b) cause the enemy to make radical course changes.

At 0245 he was bearing 277°(T), distant 6,400 yards from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island.

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* The PT's list this time as 0300, the time of reporting the contact to the OTC as 0305 and the time of reporting to CTG 79.11 as 0310. These times are obviously in error as the YAMASHIRO passed Kanihaan Island at 0255. This error likely occurred because it was the practice of the motor torpedo boats to collectively reconstruct the events and write their reports from memory rather than to make notes of the events as they happened (statement by Commander Robert Leeson, USNR, CTU 70.1.3 at the Battle of Surigao Strait, to Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, April 17th, 1954). In this analysis it has been assumed that the range was correctly remembered as ten miles but that the time was not. It has also been assumed that the times were correctly listed about five minutes apart.

** Action Report PT 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 327, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

(2) Kanihaan PT's.

PT's 495, 489 and 492, hereinafter called Kanihaan PT's were, after 1815, on station one-half mile south of Kanihaan Island conducting radar search.*

During the period up to 0100, nothing was sighted and no radar contacts were made. It seems clear, however, that they were receiving the voice radio contact reports made by other PT boats as they report hearing PT 127 making a report at 0010.*

Shortly after 0205 Commander Kanihaan PT's sighted the gun flashes and the glare of searchlights as the THIRD Section engaged PT 134 and the Lower Surigao PT's. Although he reported the bearing correctly as 215°(T), which was the bearing of Bolobolo Point from his station at Kanihaan Island, he estimated that the action was behind the southern tip of Panaon Island when in fact it was really much closer.*

He sighted nothing else during this period.

(3) South Amagusan Point PT'S.

PT's 320, 330 and 331, hereinafter called South Amagusan Point PT's, were stationed about one mile south of Amagusan Point, Leyte, where they had arrived about 2000.** By 0100 they had drifted south with the current and were about four and one-quarter miles, bearing 134°(T) from Amagusan Point. It is not known whether or not they were receiving the voice radio contact reports made by the other PT's because their action reports are silent in this matter.

Commander South Amagusan PT's continued to drift to the southward with the current. About 0205, or shortly thereafter, he saw the exchange of fire between the Japanese THIRD Section and the Lower Surigao PT's.** He may also have seen the action between the THIRD Section and the Sumilon PT's although the action reports do not mention it, probably because it was considered to be a continuation of the previous action.

The action reports state that the radar equipment of PT's 320 and 330 were not functioning satisfactorily and that they depended on PT 331 for radar information.

About 0230 (when about seven miles bearing 153°(T) from Amagusan Point) PT 331 obtained radar contact on three targets bearing 150° (T), distant eight miles. These targets were moving north at twenty knots.**

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* Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 320, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

This was the Japanese THIRD Section and the solution of the enemy course and speed was accurate. Commander South Amagusan PT's immediately went ahead at twenty knots and changed course to 020°(T) in order to close the target track. He also began preparations for a torpedo attack.

About 0235 he heard CTG 79.11 direct Commander Upper Surigao PT's to clear the area so that his destroyers could make their attack.* He promptly complied changing course to 317°(T), to head for the shelter of Amagusan Point, and slowing to ten knots. In view of CTG 70.1's orders which provided, in part, that "the sections stationed nearest own forces in the upper end of the straits were positively to get clear and stay clear if there were any indications of own forces moving into their areas" and also that "no ship moving down the straits during or after the battle was to be attacked by any boats unless positively identified as enemy",** this decision is considered sound.

At 0245 the South Amagusan PT's were bearing 148°(T), distant four point eight miles from Amagusan Point.

(4) East Amagusan Point PT's.

PT's 328, 323 and 329, hereinafter called the East Amagusan PT's, were stationed about two miles east of Amagusan Point, where they had arrived about 1930.***

During the period of this report these motor torpedo boats made no radar contacts. PT 328 reported that she had sighted at 0230 gunfire south in Surigao Strait. This was the action between 0205 and 0212 when the THIRD Section was under attack by motor torpedo boats.

(b) The operations of the motor torpedo boats which remained in the Mindanao Sea were also uneventful. The Camiguin PT's, reinforced by PT's 130 and 131 of the Bohol PT's, continued to patrol north of Camiguin Island; PT 152 continued toward Liloan Bay to obtain medical aid for a wounded man; and the Limasawa PT's continued to patrol with PT 190 to the westward of Limasawa Island and PT 151 and 146 to the eastward of the same island. At this time, the location of PT 190 was still unknown to Commander Limasawa PT's.

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* Action Report PT 320, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944; also Action Report PT 327, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

CHAPTER XII - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

Commander THIRD Section, with that section, in No. TWO Approach Formation, continued on course 000°(T) at twenty knots up the axis of the strait. The visibility was now between seven and eight kilometers.*

At 0256 he received from the SHIGURE a report by voice radio "three ship silhouettes apparently enemy, sighted, bearing 10°(T) distance, eight kilometers".* These were the three ships of the Eastern Attack Group (REMEY, MC GOWAN and MELVIN) which were approaching down the middle of the strait. The bearing as reported was off about ten degrees, the composition exact, the range about half the actual range, which was about 15,000 yards. Considering the dark night and clouded conditions, this sighting indicates clearly the ability of the Japanese night lookouts, aided by the excellence of their wide aperture (twelve centimeter) binoculars, to discern targets with open water behind them at long ranges in darkness. The fact that they had been sighted at this time was not known by the Eastern Attack Group.

Commander THIRD Section was obviously prepared for such a contact for, within two minutes (0258), a searchlight sweep of the bearing was made by a high searchlight, presumably from the battleship YAMASHIRO, which swept for about thirty seconds.** The distance was too great for searchlight illumination and consequently, although the beam crossed the bearing of the Allied destroyers, it did not reveal them. Perhaps the Japanese were unsure of this sighting and had decided to await developments for they took no further action.

Two minutes later, at 0300, although it is not recorded in the reports available to this analysis, the Japanese again sighted something on the starboard bow in the direction of these silhouettes, for they quickly trained a searchlight in that direction. Since at this time the REMEY had been firing torpedoes and since some of the flash eliminators in certain torpedo tubes had failed,*** this "something" appears to have been a sighting of the flashes caused by these failures.

From Japanese records it appears that this searchlight illumination was generally ineffectual, probably due to the extreme range, but it was clear enough for the Japanese to open fire.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

THIS FREQUENT EMPLOYMENT OF SEARCHLIGHT ILLUMINATION WAS STANDARD DOCTRINE FOR JAPANESE NIGHT OPERATIONS IN NARROW WATERS WHICH PRESCRIBED THAT STARSHELLS AND OTHER ILLUMINATION (SEARCHLIGHT) WERE TO BE EMPLOYED TO FACILITATE FIRING BY THE HEAVY SHIPS.* THIS WAS AT COMPLETE VARIANCE WITH ALLIED DOCTRINE WHICH DIRECTED THAT, SINCE NIGHT CONTACT WOULD NORMALLY BE BY RADAR, WHICH WOULD LIKELY OBVIATE THE NEED FOR ILLUMINATION, NO ILLUMINATION (STARSHELLS OR SEARCHLIGHTS) WAS TO BE EMPLOYED UNLESS ORDERED BY THE OTC.**

THIS VARIANCE POINTS TO THE SUPERIORITY OF ALLIED RADAR FOR, THE ALLIES, HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THEIR RADAR (BOTH SEARCH AND FIRE CONTROL), WERE WILLING TO PLACE PRIMARY DEPENDENCE ON IT WHEREAS THE JAPANESE, HAVING LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN IT, WERE UNWILLING TO RELY ON IT.

One or more of the ships of the THIRD Section now commenced firing almost immediately, but due to incorrect range estimates, the first salvo was about 2,000 yards short of the REMEY. This was about thirty seconds after the searchlight was turned on.*** The salvo was reported as a beautiful pattern of about five splashes, estimated to be 4.7 inch caliber.*** Actually the salvo was of 5-inch caliber, since there were no 4.7 inch guns in the THIRD Section. It appears to have been fired by the SHIGURE which carried five 5-inch guns, and which later reported that she had opened fire at the moment of the searchlight illumination.**** Other ships had opened fire also. However, the firing was mainly done by the YAMASHIRO and the wing destroyers.*****

It will be recalled that the THIRD Section at this time was still in No. TWO Approach Formation, (Plate XX). This placed the two wing destroyers, SHIGURE and YAMAGUMO, in awkward positions during this attack since the destroyer on the engaged side (YAMAGUMO) on certain bearings fouled the line of fire of the large ships, and the large ships in turn on certain bearings fouled the line of fire of the destroyer (SHIGURE) on the disengaged side, (Diagram "G"). From his actions it seems probable that the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, even though he was able to open fire, disliked the difficulties incident to his position and, apparently on his own initiative, decided at this time (also 0300) to enter the column head of the YAMASHIRO, for he so informed Commander THIRD Section and COMDESDIV FOUR by voice radio.**** His action appears to have met with the approval of the above commanders for they took no contrary action, possibly because they expected him to return to his correct station once the enemy had been driven off.

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* Combined Fleet Doctrine, 1943, Night Operation Force Doctrine, Part IV, Night Operations in Narrow Waters, ATIS Document No. 39, Part II, June 3rd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

** War Instructions, United States Navy, (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Chapter 8, Section III.

*** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

***** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

At the time the distance "A" (Plate XX) between the leading destroyer (MICHISHIO) and the leading battleship (YAMASHIRO) which had been increasing since rounding Binit Point was now about 3,000 meters in order to permit the wing destroyers to form column, although the YAMAGUMO did not attempt to enter the column at this time. This seems so for the Allied radar scopes (Plate XXI) showed such spacing and the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO, who was second ship in column, also reported that this distance was now 3,000 meters.*

Between 0300 and 0302 the Japanese observed their line of sight obscured to a degree by black smoke which the Allied destroyers had commenced making at this time.**

At 0302, likely because of this smoke effect, they decided that their searchlight illumination was unsatisfactory and therefore secured the searchlight. At this moment the MOGAMI opened fire. Since she reports that she fired without searchlight illumination,*** she must have fired (a) from radar data, (b) from a computation being automatically generated by her fire control system based on estimates made during the searchlight illumination, or (c) by night observations, although this was unlikely because all three Allied destroyers were making heavy black smoke from their smokestacks.

The Japanese now shifted their source of illumination to starshells which were fired by one of the battleships. However, these shells were placed initially too far to the right and were too short to be effective. Although the Japanese were employing their search radars continuously to endeavor to track the Allied destroyers the fact that the gunfire ranges and starshell ranges were initially so short shows that this effort had been ineffectual. The view is supported by the Plotting Room Officer of the MOGAMI who stated that "WE USED OUR NO. 22 RADARS INTENSIVELY BUT DUE TO THE NARROW WATERS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH SHIPS AND LAND FEATURES ON THE RADAR SCREENS".**** This statement supports that of the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, who, as has been pointed out under "Operations of Commander SECOND Division, 0000 - 0100, October 25th", stated that he did not employ his radar for navigation.*****

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* Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

***** USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Noshino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 347.

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Between 0300 and 0302 the Japanese observed their line of sight obscured to a degree by black smoke which the Allied destroyers had commenced making at this time.**

At 0302, likely because of this smoke effect, they decided that their searchlight illumination was unsatisfactory and therefore secured the searchlight. At this moment the MOGAMI opened fire. Since she reports that she fired without searchlight illumination,*** she must have fired (a) from radar data, (b) from a computation being automatically generated by her fire control system based on estimates made during the searchlight illumination, or (c) by night observations, although this was unlikely because all three Allied destroyers were making heavy black smoke from their smokestacks.

The Japanese now shifted their source of illumination to starshells which were fired by one of the battleships. However, these shells were placed initially too far to the right and were too short to be effective. Although the Japanese were employing their search radars continuously to endeavor to track the Allied destroyers the fact that the gunfire ranges and starshell ranges were initially so short shows that this effort had been ineffectual. The view is supported by the Plotting Room Officer of the MOGAMI who stated that "WE USED OUR NO. 22 RADARS INTENSIVELY BUT DUE TO THE NARROW WATERS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH SHIPS AND LAND FEATURES ON THE RADAR SCREENS".**** This statement supports that of the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, who, as has been pointed out under "Operations of Commander SECOND Division, 0000 - 0100, October 25th", stated that he did not employ his radar for navigation.*****

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* Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

***** USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Noshino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 347.

The Japanese gunfire began improving as the spotters found the range and at 0303 the REMEY was straddled but suffered no hits. This was fortunate for the Japanese fall-of-shot patterns were very small. However, as the minutes passed, the effectiveness of the Japanese gunfire decreased due (a) to the smoke effect and (b) the rapid increase in range as the Allied destroyers retired. By 0308 the range had increased to almost 13,000 yards.

WHY AT THIS TIME COMMANDER THIRD SECTION FAILED TO TAKE ANY EVASIVE ACTION WHATSOEVER AGAINST TORPEDOES IS NOT KNOWN NOR UNDERSTOOD. HE HAD RECEIVED REPORTS OF A MAXIMUM OF THREE DESTROYERS WITHIN EFFECTIVE TORPEDO FIRING RANGE;* HE THEREFORE KNEW THAT IT WAS VERY PROBABLE THAT THESE DESTROYERS HAD FIRED TORPEDOES FOR THE PATTERN OF THEIR ATTACK HAD BEEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH WELL ESTABLISHED TORPEDO ATTACK DOCTRINES WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE SIMILAR FOR BOTH NAVIES, AND HE WAS A RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN DESTROYER TACTICS AND IN NIGHT OPERATIONS. THE ONLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION SEEMS TO BE THAT, REALIZING THAT (A) THE ALLIED DESTROYER ATTACK HAD BEEN DELIVERED FROM A POINT SHARP ON THE STARBOARD BOW (WITH A TARGET ANGLE LESS THAN THIRTY DEGREES), (B) THE RANGE HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN HIGH FOR AMERICAN TORPEDOES FOR THE ALLIED DESTROYERS COMMENCED RETIRING AT RANGES OVER 10,000 YARDS AND (C) EVEN THOUGH HE CONTINUED ON HIS BASE COURSE THESE TWO ITEMS GAVE A LOW PROBABILITY OF TORPEDO HITS, HE HAD DECIDED THAT HE COULD AFFORD TO TAKE A CALCULATED RISK AND CONTINUE ON HIS BASE COURSE WITHOUT MANEUVERING. THIS DECISION WAS PROBABLY AFFECTED, IN PART, BY HIS DESIRE TO MAINTAIN HIS ANNOUNCED TIME OF ARRIVAL OFF DULAG (0400).

IF THE ABOVE CONJECTURES WERE THE BASIS OF HIS REASONING THEY WERE NOT SOUND FOR (A) THE SMALL CHANGE OF COURSE NECESSARY TO COMB THE TORPEDO TRACKS AND THE LIMITED TIME REQUIRED TO DO THIS, BECAUSE THE ALLIED DESTROYERS WERE ALREADY RETIRING, WOULD NOT HAVE CAUSED MUCH DELAY AND (B) HIS FORCE WAS SO WEAK THAT HE COULD ILL AFFORD TO HAVE ANY UNITS PUT OUT OF ACTION BEFORE THEY HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSION IN LEYTE GULF.

Graphic analysis (Diagram"G") shows that at this time the YAMAGUMO had already sighted at least one of the approaching torpedoes and had turned to comb the tracks. In this she was successful. After making sure that his own ship was safely handled the Commanding Officer then, at about 0307, reported by voice radio the sighting of a torpedo track from bearing 040°(T).** This torpedo track was made by one of the torpedoes fired by the MELVIN. EVEN THIS REPORT DREW NO REACTION FROM COMMANDER THIRD SECTION, AS NO TACTICAL SIGNALS WERE MADE BY HIM.

Very shortly after the torpedo sighting, Commander THIRD Section likely received a message from Commander SECOND Striking Force requesting information of the enemy.** Since he did not reply to this request it seems probable that he either was not receiving all the messages recorded by the SHIGURE or, for reasons of his own, did not choose to answer this query.

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* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Noshino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 347.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

Meanwhile, about 0308:30, a disaster had hit the command. Unknown to him the battleship FUSO, only 1,000 meters astern, had received at least one torpedo hit in her starboard side which had caused her (a) to list to starboard and to lose speed* and (b) since there is no record thereafter of any communication,** to lose her ability to communicate by radio with the other ships of her unit. She turned slowly right out of column and fell back on the MOGAMI which ship, having sighted the torpedo hit in the FUSO, had taken individual evasive action to the westward.* In so moving off the course line MOGAMI avoided the torpedoes fired by the MC GOWAN and by the best of luck was in the gap caused by the failure to fire of the MELVIN's No. 6 torpedo. At 0310 she changed back to the base course of 000°(T) and at 0311 increased speed in order to move ahead of the FUSO. It is interesting to note that neither the FUSO nor the MOGAMI reported the FUSO torpedo hit to Commander THIRD Section.**

While the reason for the failure of the FUSO to report damage appears to have been due, in part, to the loss of power as pointed out above and may have been due also to the fact that she may not have been able to communicate even by blinker with Commander THIRD Section, the failure of the Commanding Officer MOGAMI to report the damage to the FUSO is less clear. Perhaps he felt that (a) since he had observed the torpedo hit it was likely that the YAMASHIRO had also observed it and (b) since the FUSO was gradually falling astern Commander THIRD Section was aware of it.

BECAUSE OF RADIO DISPATCHES SENT TO COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE AND VOICE RADIO MESSAGES SENT LATER TO THE FUSO BY THE YAMASHIRO,** IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT COMMANDER THIRD SECTION DID NOT KNOW THAT THE FUSO HAD FALLEN OUT OF FORMATION. WHILE THIS MAY SEEM SURPRISING IT WAS NOT NECESSARILY SO FOR IT WAS NIGHT AND THE FLASHES FROM THE GUNS, TOGETHER WITH THE INTENTNESS OF ALL HANDS TOWARD THE REPULSE OF THE TORPEDO ATTACK TO STARBOARD, LIKELY HAD TEMPORARILY PUT ASIDE THOUGHTS OF THE FORMATION. WHILE THIS SHOULD NOT APPLY TO WELL TRAINED LOOKOUTS IT OBVIOUSLY DID APPLY IN THIS CASE.

HOWEVER, IN APPRAISING THIS FAILURE OF COMMANDER THIRD SECTION TO KNOW THAT THE FUSO HAD BEEN TORPEDOED AND HAD FALLEN OUT OF FORMATION, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT A SIMILAR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OCCURRED DURING THE BATTLE-CRUISER PHASE OF THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND WHERE THE INDEFATIGABLE, THE LAST SHIP IN COLUMN OF THE SIX BRITISH BATTLE-CRUISERS, EXPLODED AND SANK IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WITHOUT THE BATTLE-CRUISER COMMANDER IN THE LION, WHICH LED THE FORMATION, BEING AWARE OF IT FOR SOME MINUTES.***

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Commander Holloway Halstead Frost, USN, The Battle of Jutland, Annapolis, 1936, Page 205; also Rear Admiral W. S. Chalmers, Royal Navy, Life and Letters of David Earl Beatty, London, 1951, Page 233.

At 0309, when the SHIGURE was just about to join the column of destroyers ahead of the YAMASHIRO, COMDESDIV FOUR decided that it would be well to form battle formation and therefore at this time, and seemingly on his own initiative, directed the YAMAGUMO to form column.* It is assumed that the YAMAGUMO, which had slowly been regaining station, immediately increased speed to about twenty-four knots and changed course to about 350°(T) to take station as the third destroyer in column and therefore between the ASAGUMO and the SHIGURE. Once she had taken her station the battle formation would be finally formed with ships in column as follows: MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, SHIGURE, YAMASHIRO and MOGAMI.* The FUSO was swinging out of column as shown on Diagram "G".

This appears to have been a deviation from Japanese doctrine which provided that the OTC would initiate changes in formation.

By 0311 the range to the attacking destroyers (MELVIN) had opened to about 13,600 yards but, despite this, and despite the smoke interference, the ships of the THIRD Section continued to fire. This gunfire, owing to the inadequacy of the radar and illumination, was highly ineffective, making no hits whatsoever.**

At this time Commander THIRD Section received a voice radio contact report from the SHIGURE that she had sighted two dark objects bearing 300°(T).* These were the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN of the Western Attack Group which, at the moment of sighting, were 9,000 yards away and were making their torpedo attack.*** The SHIGURE appeared to have had unusually capable lookouts, even by Japanese standards, for her sightings of both the Eastern and Western Attack Groups were at ranges greater than those to the leading destroyers, although less than those to the heavy ships.

The ships of the THIRD Section, hearing this contact report and realizing that the Allied destroyers which were retiring to starboard were, under the existing situation, beyond effective range, now decided that the new targets were more fruitful and dangerous than were the old targets and therefore checked fire preparatory to opening fire to port.

One of the ships of the THIRD Section now illuminated the two dark objects which were apparently illuminated sufficiently thereby to warrant opening fire against them. These were the two destroyers MC DERMUT and MONSSEN which comprised the Western Attack Group and which had already (0310:15 - 0311:30) fired their torpedoes and were now retiring while making heavy smoke.*** Certain of the Japanese ships promptly commenced firing.

At 0313 the YAMAGUMO reported a torpedo track bearing 350°(T).* This was likely a false sighting since no Allied torpedoes were in this area at this time. Almost simultaneously with the receipt of this report,

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

Commander THIRD Section observed a green tinted parachute flare on the bearing of, but beyond, the Allied destroyers, which flare illuminated some motor torpedo boats as well as the destroyers.*

These were PT's 323, 328 and 329 which were patrolling off Amaguson Point.**

The source of the flare is not known. Despite the fact that the Commanding Officer SHIGURE thought that it was Allied and was being employed for artillery spotting,*** it appears to have been one of the Japanese planes which had been ordered by Commander THIRD Section to make contact on the enemy and then guide the THIRD Section into Leyte Gulf. The pilot of this plane operating in complete darkness accomplished his task of contacting the enemy very efficiently, but not effectively, because the Allied destroyers had fired and had commenced their retirement prior to this illumination.

Although Commander THIRD Section at 0314 directed COMDESDIV FOUR to "carry out observation for torpedo action" he did not react otherwise to the sighting of the above ships or to the torpedo wakes. However, between these reports and 0316, he decided that it was possible that the enemy destroyers had fired torpedoes and that he should take immediate and drastic evasive action for at that time he ordered emergency simultaneous ship turns of ninety degrees*** to starboard to course 090°(T) which was executed promptly by all ships still in formation, including the YAMAGUMO, which had just entered column (Diagram "G").

It is believed that this radical maneuver caused the ships to check fire, as no firing was reported at this time by the Allied ships which were retiring behind smoke screens.

At this time he made his first report of ship sightings on other than motor torpedo boats to Commander FIRST Striking Force as follows: "Sighted what appear to be three ship silhouettes, apparently enemy".**** Why he did not report the five destroyers which he had already sighted is not explained but it seems likely that this dispatch had been prepared immediately after he had sighted the Eastern Attack Group, and before he had sighted the Western Attack Group, and had been delayed in transmission.

At 0317:30 he decided to return to base course (000°(T)) and changed course to the left to that course by emergency simultaneous ship turns of ninety degrees*** which ironically enough placed his ships in the path of the twenty torpedoes fired about eight minutes before by the MC DERMUT

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 250316 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

and MONSSEN. What prompted him to return to base course is not known, but a turn back before sighting the enemy torpedoes or before allowing a reasonable time for their passage is considered unwise, and is often a costly procedure. In this case, as will be shown later, it proved to be very costly indeed.

Graphic analysis of the tracks of the torpedoes fired and the tracks of the ships of the THIRD Section (see Diagram "G") show that, had Commander THIRD Section continued on his eastern course until after 0320, his ships would have undoubtedly outrun the torpedoes in the vicinity of the YAMASHIRO (which had been fired at extreme range for intermediate speed setting), and combed the tracks of the remainder.

During the time the THIRD Section was returning to her base course, the YAMAGUMO inquired, at 0318:30, as to the speed of COMDESDIV FOUR,* apparently to adjust station in the column or to insure that she had not missed a speed signal. Whether or not she heard the reply (our speed twenty knots)* is not known, but it is not believed that she did for at 0318 and 0319 the two torpedo spreads of the Western Attack Group struck the THIRD Section with stunning suddenness. The YAMAGUMO (observed by both the SHIGURE* and MOGAMI**) was hit by two or more torpedoes simultaneously which caused her to explode and sink almost instantly. The MICHISHIO received a hit in the port engine room,*** the ASAGUMO a hit below [illegible] One gun, severing the bow,*** and the battleship YAMASHIRO one torpedo which apparently did not cause much damage,**** but slowed her down to ten knots for the next eight minutes as shown by Allied radar ranges. Only the SHIGURE and MOGAMI escaped unharmed. This was because (a) the SHIGURE was in the gap between the torpedo spreads of the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN and (b) the MOGAMI was south of the torpedo spreads, not having entered the gap left by the FUSO, which was now drifting slowly southward about two miles south of the YAMASHIRO. The FUSO, because of this, escaped further damage at this time.

The explosion of the YAMAGUMO was sighted as far as the battle line, twenty miles to the north,***** was seen by most of the Allied ships, and was certainly seen by Commander THIRD Section. The MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO slowed down almost immediately. The SHIGURE turned out to port slightly to avoid the sinking YAMAGUMO.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 19[illegible] Navy Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

**** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 250330 October 194[illegible] to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO Go. 1 Operation, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

***** Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

Thus, at 0320, only three ships remained of the THIRD Section to continue to fight. That the formation was now completely disrupted seems clear for the remaining ships, with the single exception of the MOGAMI, no longer followed the tactical signals issued by Commander THIRD Section.

(B) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

Commander SECOND Striking Force, still in the heavy squall, continued on at twenty-six knots toward the strait without incident.

During this period he was monitoring the radio telephone net and likely heard reports of the various sightings of enemy silhouettes and torpedo tracks by ships of the THIRD Section. He was quite concerned about these sightings for, at 0308, he called Commander THIRD Section and requested that he "Notify situation".* No answer is recorded in the SHIGURE voice log or elsewhere; however, the voice log indicates that the inquiry was not pressed further.

At 0311 he changed course to 020°(T) as his dead reckoning navigation indicated he was at the entrance to Surigao Strait.** Actually, his force had been set to the west by the flood current flowing from the strait into the Mindanao Sea and, probably unknown to him, was still about five miles from the line joining Binit Point (Panaon) and Bilaa Point (Mindanao). The set caused him to make the turn too early (Diagram "I"). Whether or not he realized that he was near to land is not known but, since he now slowed to twenty-two knots,** the indications are that he was somewhat doubtful of his dead reckoning navigation, and was unable to rely on his radar.

About 0318 the USHIO, which at this time had regained her proper position on the port bow of the NACHI, sighted land close ahead and on the starboard bow. She immediately put her rudder full left and started to swing to the left to avoid grounding. It is of interest that her radio telephone was inoperable and she could not warn the other ships by this means.***

About 0319 his force emerged from the squall and he could see the mountains of Panaon Island (Mt. Nelangcapan) on his port bow seven kilometers away,** (Diagram "I").

At 0320, the flagship of Commander SECOND Striking Force was bearing 163°(T), distant approximately two miles from Binit Point.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

*** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

CHAPTER XIII - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0245 - 0320, OCTOBER 25TH.

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.*

Having established radar contact aboard his flagship, CTG 77.2 was now in a position to observe the progress of the enemy up the strait, although he was unable to evaluate the contact because, due to the long range, the picture was still quite indistinct. The enemy information had been fragmentary since 0026 and even now, with the enemy within radar range, he still did not know the composition of the force. The MC GOWAN now, at 0246, sent an amplifying report which increased the contact to three ships in column on course north.** This was one ship more than had been last reported by the motor torpedo boats at 0225.

At 0254 he received a report from his flagship that the target was bearing 181°(T), range 50,000 yards.*** From this he deduced that the enemy was continuing up the strait.

IT MIGHT BE WELL AT THIS POINT TO DIGRESS FROM THE ACTION TO POINT OUT THAT UP TO THIS TIME HE HAD RECEIVED NO CONTACT REPORTS FROM THE SHIPS OF TG'S 77.2 AND 77.3, AND BUT TWO FROM TG 79.11, AND THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE ABOVE SHIPS HAD ALREADY ESTABLISHED RADAR CONTACT AND HAD COMMENCED TRACKING. WHY WAS THIS SO? THE ANSWER IS NOT CLEAR CUT, BUT IT SEEMS THAT, IN GENERAL, THIS INFORMATION WAS HELD WITHIN EACH SHIP AND WAS EMPLOYED FOR THE SOLUTION OF THAT SHIP'S TRACKING PROBLEMS, WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO THE DISPOSITION OTC. PERHAPS, SINCE ALL MAJOR SHIPS WERE EQUIPPED WITH RADAR, IT WAS BELIEVED UNNECESSARY TO RELAY INFORMATION TO THEM WHICH SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ON THEIR RADAR SCOPES;**** PERHAPS IT WAS FELT THAT THIS INFORMATION WOULD BE REPORTED MORE FULLY BY THE ATTACKING DESTROYERS; PERHAPS, ALTHOUGH A PRIMARY VOICE CHANNEL IN ADDITION TO THE TBS VOICE RADIO HAD BEEN MADE AVAILABLE, A LACK OF PREVIOUS TRAINING IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE SYSTEM WAS RESPONSIBLE.

WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN THE REASON, THE FAILURE OF HIS MAJOR SHIPS TO TRANSMIT CONTACT REPORTS WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT DOCTRINE***** WHICH REQUIRED THAT A THOROUGHLY COMPETENT CIC BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FLAGSHIP (OR OTHER DESIGNATED UNIT) TOGETHER WITH A RELIABLE PROCEDURE FOR THE REPORTING OF CONTACTS AND THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN SHIPS. THIS WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE DECISIONS HAD TO BE MADE BY THE DISPOSITION OTC AND THESE DECISIONS COULD BE SOUND ONLY IF BASED ON COMPLETE INFORMATION.

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* All information here, unless otherwise indicated, obtained from Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

**** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

***** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Part VI, Paragraph 6100.

At 0255, realizing that TG 79.11 should presently be in position to obtain a much clearer definition of the enemy than was being received by the ships of his own command, he requested CTG 79.11 to report to him when he had the enemy on his radar scope and the number of ships.*

Immediately thereafter at 0256 he received CTG 79.11's reply to his query as to the number of ships in the enemy formation. This reply was to the effect the enemy was five and one-half miles west of Tungo Point and consisted of five ships of which two were large and three small.**

This was of interest in that it confirmed the 2310 motor torpedo boat report. He now had reason to believe that this was the total composition of this force. If this was so, his problem would be simple for he vastly outnumbered the enemy in both ships and gun power even though the two large enemy ships might be battleships.

At 0258 he likely intercepted CTG 79.11's message designating torpedo targets to his ships and indicating that at least three targets were present.*** At 0259 he intercepted CTG 77.3's order to his right flank destroyers to attack with torpedoes, following the attacks of TG 79.11. He now knew that torpedo attacks were in progress simultaneously although the first was well advanced. This was, of course, highly gratifying in that it indicated that all operations were proceeding smoothly and in accordance with plan.

At 0300 he observed flares and gunfire to the south. This was the commencement of the action between the Japanese THIRD Section and the Eastern Attack Group.

He now endeavored to estimate the enemy's plan. It seemed incredible to him that the enemy would proceed up Surigao Strait with such limited forces and in the face of strong opposition. He decided that (a) the enemy must have incorrect information as to the strength and location of the Allied defending forces in Leyte Gulf and (b) this was likely due to the fact that on previous nights he had left his battleships with the transports in the transport areas and had patrolled the northern entrance of Surigao Strait with the cruisers and some of the destroyers of TG 77.2.

This estimate was correct in its general concept but it was incorrect in fact. The Japanese concept, as discussed under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 1830 - 2400, October 24th", was that the movement of their FIRST Striking Force through the Sibuyan Sea would attract the Allied

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

major strength from Leyte Gulf to the waters east of Samar and would thereby make it possible for the THIRD Section to penetrate into Leyte with relative ease.*

At 0303, as Commander Left Flank Force, he (a) changed course to 090°(T) and (b) may have received word from CTG 79.11 that he was being straddled, had fired his torpedoes and was retiring northward.** Whether or not he knew at this time that this firing referred only to the Eastern Attack Group is not known.

At 0306 he intercepted a message from Commander Battle Line to the battle line ordering a similar change of course to the east.***

At 0308 he received a second dispatch from CTG 79.11 that "there was just one group; two large and one small. We are being straddled now. All headed north in one column".****

Also at 0308 he noted that the enemy had now closed sufficiently to make radar definition possible. At this time the enemy was bearing 176°(T), range 38,400 yards, and was estimated from his radar scope to consist of two large and three small ships on course 015°(T), speed twenty knots. This estimate, based as it was on a long range picture, was fairly correct. The enemy actually consisted of seven ships, viz., two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers.

Since he makes no comment in his action report concerning the movements of the destroyers of TG 79.11, it seems likely that he either did not have them on his radar scope or did not follow their attack.

At 0311 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 79.11 reporting two large targets and one small target, all heading north in column. What he thought of this report is nowhere stated but since it was in obvious disagreement with his own radar scopes it is probable that it had no effect on him except to confuse him.

At 0312 he observed a searchlight bearing 180°(T). This was a portion of the illumination being employed by the Japanese to drive off the attacking destroyers of TG 79.11.

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* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 47, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, CinC 2ND Fleet, Volume I, Page 32; also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953) Volume II.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** Ibid.; also Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0317 he believed that the enemy appeared to be maneuvering because his CIC had reported that the target was now on course 030°(T), speed eighteen knots. He was correct in this belief for the enemy in order to avoid the attack of the Western Attack Group had commenced evasive maneuvers. By this time, he had received reports from CTG 79.11 and COMDESDIV 108 that torpedo firing had been completed by these two attack groups.

He also received a report from CTG 79.11 to the effect that five targets were observed of which two seemed to be slowing down. This report again raised the total of enemy ships to five, but now two of them may have been hit and damaged, since they appeared to be slowing down. Actually, the FUSO had been hit with one or more torpedoes and had slowed down, falling back on the MOGAMI. This movement had created an illusion that both ships had slowed down.

This slowing down of one or more Japanese ships was observed in the LOUISVILLE, for the LOUISVILLE track chart shows that, at 0319, at least one large "pip" was some 6,000 yards south of the leading heavy ship.* The LOUISVILLE also showed four small ships in the vicinity of the damaged large ship* but, since no Japanese ships other than the FUSO had fallen back, this latter evaluation was erroneous.

At 0319 he intercepted a message from COMDESDIV 108 to CTG 79.11 that he had scored "a hit and a big flare on one ship".** This explosion, which had been observed from the flagship also, was the explosion of the destroyer YAMAGUMO. At this time the leading large enemy ship was bearing 190°(T), distant 22,000 yards from the LOUISVILLE* and tracked on course 030°(T) at fourteen knots.

Also at 0319, not being satisfied with the information he had received at 0317 from CTG 79.11 in that this information did not include the types of ships, he queried that commander as to the types.**

The battle line was now on course 090°(T) at ten knots, while the left flank forces remained at five knots. Why CTG 77.2 did not direct Commander Battle Line to slow to five knots is not known, but it is likely that he was too concerned with the approach of the enemy, which now was within gun range of his cruisers, to note that Commander Battle Line was not maintaining the fleet speed of five knots.

At 0320 the disposition guide (MISSISSIPPI) was bearing 304°(T), distant twelve and one-quarter miles from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island. At this same time his flagship, the LOUISVILLE, was bearing 133°(T), distant 9,700 yards from the MISSISSIPPI and 297°(T), distant seven point six miles from Kanhandon Point Light (Diagram "H").

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* Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

(1) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

At 0245 the battle line, in condition of Readiness ONE, was still on course 270°(T) at ten knots.

Since the battle line was the unit most distant from the enemy, no radar contacts had as yet been established by any of the ships. The MC GOWAN's contact at 0241 (bearing 184°(T), distant 36,000 yards)* had, however, been received and plotted and showed the enemy to be about thirty-one miles to the south.

At this stage, Commander Battle Line could only watch the developing situation as reported by the units of TG 79.11, which had already commenced their approach.

At 0248 the MARYLAND contacted a surface target on bearing 191°(T), range 55,000 yards.* This contact, which was not reported to Commander Battle Line, was quite accurate in range, but was somewhat inaccurate in bearing in that it placed the enemy nearly ten miles to the west of its actual track.

At about 0300 he observed gunfire and illumination to the south.* This was the commencement of the battle between the Japanese THIRD Section and the Eastern Attack Group. As has been shown previously, the Japanese initially employed searchlights to illuminate the attacking destroyers.

At 0302 the TENNESSEE made contact on the enemy on bearing 170°(T), range 43,700 yards,** and at 0304 the WEST VIRGINIA did the same on bearing 164°(T), range 44,000 yards.*** These contacts were not reported to Commander Battle Line nor to the ships of the battle line.

About this time Commander Battle Line likely intercepted a report from Commander Eastern Attack Group that he had fired his torpedoes and was retiring northward.

At 0305, having reached the western limit of his patrol, he commenced reversing course 180° to the right to course 090°(T).****

At 0306 he received his first contact report from the ships of the battle line. This report was from his flagship, MISSISSIPPI, on bearing 167°(T), range 43,000 yards.**** From this contact he could estimate that the enemy was about twenty-two miles to the south which was reasonably correct. He did not report this contact either to his command or to CTG 77.2.

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944; also Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944.

** Action Report TENNESSEE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0108, October 31st, 1944.

*** Action Report WEST VIRGINIA, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0538, November 1st, 1944.

**** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

The MISSISSIPPI now reported that the target appeared to be two or three large ships on various northerly courses at seventeen knots.* It is of interest that this evaluation, although confirmed by CTG 79.11 at 0309, who reported that he was being straddled by a group of two large ships and one small ship heading north, was incorrect in that the enemy force consisted of three large and four small ships. However, this was not known to Commander Battle Line, who, since this information was very similar to that recently given by the motor torpedo boats, likely was forced to the conclusion that the enemy force was small indeed.

At 0312 he heard a TBS voice radio report from Commander Western Attack Group that he had fired his torpedoes.**

At about this same time contacts were made on the enemy by the ships of the battle line as follows: (a) at 0310 by the TENNESSEE on bearing 165°(T), range 39,000 yards,*** (b) at 0312 by the CALIFORNIA on three ships in column on bearing 162°(T), range 42,000 yards,**** (c) at 0313 by the MISSISSIPPI on two large and three small targets which seemed to be forming a larger target from the northwestward on bearing 175°(T), range 36,500 yards,* (d) at 0314 by the MARYLAND at 43,000 yards***** and (e) at 0315 by the WEST VIRGINIA on two (large) targets at 42,000 yards.**

The variations in range as reported by the different ships were due, in part, to ranging on different targets in the same formation, in part, to ranging on different formations and, in part, (as discussed under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0245 - 0320, October 25th") to the fact that the THIRD Section at this time was shifting from a search formation to a single column battle formation and the destroyers in the van were forming column on the battleships which were already in column. The battle formation being formed was to consist of four destroyers in column in the van, distance 700 meters, followed by the two battleships and the heavy cruisers, also in column, distance 1,000 meters. The leading battleship was to be about 2,000 meters astern of the last destroyer when the formation was complete (Plate "XX").

Commander Battle Line received only two of the above contacts, namely that by the MISSISSIPPI and that by the WEST VIRGINIA.****** Since these contacts differed by as much as 5,500 yards, he probably wondered

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* Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

*** Action Report TENNESSEE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0108, October 31st, 1944.

**** Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944.

***** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944.

****** Action Report COMEATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

why the ranges were so divergent and why he had heard nothing from his other ships. In reality these two contact reports were on entirely different forces; one friendly, one enemy. The MISSISSIPPI's contact appears to have been on the Western Attack Group whereas that of the WEST VIRGINIA, while on the enemy, did not indicate on what part of the enemy.

In this connection it should be pointed out that at the very time (0315) the WEST VIRGINIA was reporting "two targets at 42,000 yards", her Combat Information Center was reporting the composition as three small, one medium and one large pip at a range, presumably on the large ship, of 39,000 yards.* At 0315, from plotting, the leading battleship, YAMASHIRO, was bearing 168°(T), distant 38,100 yards from the WEST VIRGINIA.

It is not known here, any more than it was known in the case of CTG 77.2, why the ships of the battle line, with the single exception of the WEST VIRGINIA, failed to report their early contacts either to Commander Battle Line or to one another. It was important information, particularly to the battle line OTC who was responsible for making the tactical decisions.

IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT COMMANDER BATTLE LINE REMAINED AT TEN KNOTS DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD HEREIN DISCUSSED. THIS WAS NOT SOUND PROCEDURE. THE FLEET SPEED PROVIDED IN CTG 77.2'S (THE OFFICER IN TACTICAL COMMAND) BATTLE PLAN WAS FIVE KNOTS WHICH SPEED SHOULD HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED UNLESS THE OFFICER IN TACTICAL COMMAND GAVE ORDERS TO THE CONTRARY.** THIS HE HAD NOT DONE. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT IF THE GUIDE DOES NOT MAINTAIN A STEADY COURSE OR A UNIFORM SPEED OTHER SHIPS WILL ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES IN ATTEMPTING TO MAINTAIN ACCURATE POSITION*** AND, AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT ELSEWHERE, THIS HAD ALREADY OCCURRED.

During the foregoing, at 0312, Commander Battle Line observed gunfire, searchlights and starshells to the south, and heard over the TBS voice radio that the Western Attack Group had fired all torpedoes. At 0314 he intercepted an intelligence estimate from CTG 79.11 to CTG 77.2 to the effect that the enemy force consisted of a total of five ships, two of which were slowing down.****

At 0320 the WEST VIRGINIA was bearing 306°(T), distant eleven point four miles from Kanhandon Point Light and the closest enemy battleship, the YAMASHIRO, which was in the van of the heavy units, was approximately 37,000 yards from the WEST VIRGINIA (Diagram "H").

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* Action Report WEST VIRGINIA, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0538, November 1st, 1944.

** General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 183), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1942, Chapter I, Section 9, Paragraph 1110.

*** Ibid., Chapter II, Section 13, Paragraph 222.

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

(2) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

At 0245 the Left Flank Forces were on course 270°(T) at five knots. The LOUISVILLE, which had made the first radar contact at 0245 on bearing 183°(T), range 53,600 yards, was tracking the target.

At 0246 Commander Left Flank Force received an amplifying report from the MC GOWAN which reported that the earlier contact which she had reported had now become three or more ships in column on course 000°(T).* The LOUISVILLE, as yet, had not been able to make any target evaluation.

At 0247 the DENVER made radar contact on what appeared to be three ships on approximate bearing 180°(T), estimated range 55,000 yards,** but did not report it. Likewise the PORTLAND made radar contact at 0251 on bearing 175½°(T), range 54,000 yards, but also failed to report it.***

At 0254 Commander Left Flank Force received a report from the flagship that the enemy was now on bearing 181°(T), distant 50,000 yards.**** The long range evidently made such a poor track that it was not possible to make any target evaluation other than that the range was closing.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT, OTHER THAN FROM HIS FLAGSHIP, COMMANDER LEFT FLANK FORCE, LIKE COMMANDER BATTLE LINE, WAS NOT RECEIVING TARGET INFORMATION FROM THE SHIPS OF HIS FORCE. HERE TOO, THE COMMANDER AND THE SHIPS HAD FAILED TO UTILIZE A COMBAT INFORMATION NET TO EXCHANGE TARGET INFORMATION.

At 0255 he knew, because he was also CTG 77.2, that CTG 79.11 had been requested to report when he had the enemy on his screen and the number of his ships.* At 0300 he received a reply to the effect that there were five targets, two large and three small, about five and one-half miles west of Tungo Point.* The reported location verified the position of the enemy being tracked by the LOUISVILLE.****

At this same time, he observed gunfire and illumination to the south. This was the commencement of the battle between the Japanese THIRD Section and the Eastern Attack Group.

At 0302 he intercepted an order from CTG 77.3 to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to commence his torpedo attack.

At 0303 he received a report from CTG 79.11 that TG 79.11 was being straddled, had fired torpedoes and was retiring to the northward.

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

*** Action Report PORTLAND, Surface Engagement in Leyte Gulf, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 064, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

At this time, he increased speed to ten knots and, at 0304, executed a reversal of course to the left to 090°(T). The speed increase was temporary to facilitate the course reversal; the turn to the left (battle line reversed by turn to the right about two minutes later) was made, presumably, to open distance on the battle line.

At 0304, he observed that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX (Commander Left Flank Destroyers) had executed a course reversal, following the orders of Commander Left Flank Force.

At 0308 he was informed that the enemy, bearing was 176°(T), range 38,400 yards and consisting of five ships, at least two of which were large, had been tracked on course 015°(T), speed twenty knots.* Actually, the THIRD Section was on course 000°(T) and making good about eighteen knots.

At 0311 he reduced speed to five knots. About this time he received a message from CTG 79.11 reporting that the enemy now consisted of but three ships, two large and one small, in column on a northerly course.*

Also about this time he intercepted a message from Western Attack Group to the effect that he had fired his torpedoes and was retiring to the north.*

At 0312 he observed searchlights bearing 180°(T).*

At 0317 he received another message from CTG 79.11 to the effect that there were now five targets of which two may have been hit and were dropping back,* and word from the LOUISVILLE that the target appeared to be making good a course of 010°(T) with speed varying between fourteen and eighteen knots and that it appeared to be zigzagging.** The plot of Commander Left Flank Force indicated that the enemy was on course 030°(T) at a speed of eighteen knots.*

At 0319 he noted a large explosion in the enemy force bearing 190°(T), distant 22,000 yards,** at which time Commander Western Attack Group was heard to report that he had scored a hit on one of the ships.*

At 0320 the LOUISVILLE was bearing 297°(T), distant seven point six miles from Kanmandon Point Light, Hibuson Island (Diagram "H").

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

(3) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), 0245 - 0320, October 25th.*

Commander Right Flank Force, in his flagship, was now awaiting amplification of the MC GOWAN's 0240 contact report. It will be recalled that, except for motor torpedo boat reports previously received, he had received no other contact reports. Owing to the range, his own command had not as yet been able to make radar contact. At 0246 he intercepted the amplifying report expected which was to the effect that the 0240 contact had become three ships in column on course 000°(T).

At this time he was on station in the flag plot where he had the information and communication facilities at hand to give him a comprehensive picture of the developing situation. Through use of the Dead Reckoning Tracer (DRT) plot, the Summary Plot, and a remote radar scope, he easily followed the movements of own and enemy forces.

At 0247 he received his first report from his own command. This report, received via the Task Group Common, was from the Commanding Officer KILLEN, who stated that he had made radar contact on two or three targets bearing 170°(T), range seventeen miles.** He then received, likewise over the Task Group Common, an additional report at 0250 from the DALY reporting a radar contact bearing 162°(T), range 30,500 yards.** He may also have received at 0252 a report from the BOISE reporting a radar contact bearing 164°(T), range 47,900 yards.*** HE DID NOT FORWARD THESE REPORTS TO THE OTC, WHOM HE LIKELY KNEW WAS NOT GUARDING THE TG 77.3 TASK GROUP COMMON. THIS RESULTED IN THE DISPOSITION OTC'S NONRECEIPT OF THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

THE PERFORMANCE, AT THIS POINT, OF THE UNITS OF THE RICHT FLANK FORCE AS REGARDS THE REPORTING OF INITIAL CONTACTS, AND THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THEMSELVES, WAS CONSIDERABLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE UNITS OF TG 77.2. BUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE UNITS OF THE RIGHT FLANK FORCE WITH RELATION TO THE DISPOSITION OTC WAS INFERIOR TO THAT OF THE UNITS OF TG 77.2, BECAUSE, IN TG 77.2, SOME REPORTS HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE DISPOSITION OTC FROM THE UNITS OF THAT TASK GROUP, WHEREAS NONE HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE. THIS WAS PROBABLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE UNITS OF THE RIGHT FLANK FORCE HAD BEEN OPERATING TOGETHER FOR SOMETIME PRIOR TO THE LEYTE OPERATION AS UNITS OF THE COVERING FORCE, AS WELL AS BOMBARDMENT UNITS, OF THE SEVENTH FLEET, AND HAD BEEN OPERATING IN GENERAL UNDER THE DIRECT COMMAND OF COMCRUDIV FIFTEEN (CTG 77.3), WHO WAS USUALLY AN INDEPENDENT COMMANDER.**** THEY HAD, THEREFORE,

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* All information here, unless otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, morning of October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

**** COMCRUDIV 15, Report of the Bombardment of and Occupation of Momote Airdrome for Negros Island, Serial 0017, March 11th, 1944; also COMCRUDIV 15 Report of Covering Operations during landings in the Cape Sansapor Area, New Guinea, July 28th - 31st, 1944, Serial 0200, August 6th, 1944.

BUILT UP A GOOD INTERNAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM WHICH FUNCTIONED EXCELLENTLY WITHIN THE TASK GROUP BUT DID NOT FUNCTION ADEQUATELY WITH RELATION TO THE DISPOSITION OTC.

At 0252, feeling that DESRON TWENTY-FOUR was gradually easing to southward preparatory to attacking, he directed COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR not to advance* until he had been given orders to do so. Since DESRON TWENTY-FOUR was at this time on course 290°(T), this message indicates that the picture on Commander Right Flank Force's scope at this time was confused in that he was unable to distinguish his own destroyers from those of the Western Attack Group.

In compliance with this order COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, at 0254, changed course to 000°(T).*

Commander Right Flank Force now reestimated the situation. He knew, as a result of his pre-battle conference with CTG 77.2, that it was that commander's plan to initiate destroyer attacks prior to engaging the battle line, and that these attacks were to be unsupported by the gunfire of the cruisers or the battleships. Instead, they were to be made from positions close to shore where they would enjoy the protection afforded by the effect of land masses on radar. He knew also that developments being propitious, he was to launch the attacks of the right flank destroyers since CTG 77.2 had delegated to him that task. He had felt that this type of attack was somewhat dangerous in that the destroyers might run into a "blasting defense", and he had planned holding them back until they were within supporting gun range of his cruisers. However, he had noted that TG 79.11, in advancing to the attack, had, up to this moment, met no opposition whatsoever, and he realized that, even if his destroyers did encounter serious opposition, DESRON FIFTY-SIX and DESDIV XRAY, were available as reserves.

HE THEREFORE DECIDED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE PREFERRED TO LAUNCH HIS DESTROYERS AT A TIME WHEN HE COULD SUPPORT THEM WITH HIS CRUISER GUNFIRE, HE WOULD DISREGARD THAT PREFERENCE AND LAUNCH THE UNSUPPORTED ATTACK. HE NOW AT 0255 ISSUED PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTIONS TO COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR AS FOLLOWS: "WHEN RELEASED ATTACK IN TWO GROUPS AND BE PREPARED TO MAKE SMOKE. UNTIL THEN STAY CLOSE TO LAND."*

HIS CONCEPTS ABOVE, AS RELATED TO THE DESIRE OF CTG 77.2, WERE CORRECT. CTG 77.2 FELT THAT, OWING TO THE LIMITED ARMOR PIERCING AMMUNITION AVAILABLE, IT WAS NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH AS MUCH DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY AS POSSIBLE WITH THE TORPEDOES PRIOR TO THE GUN ENGAGEMENT, SO THAT, WHEN THE ENEMY HAD CLOSED TO THE PREDETERMINED GUN RANGE, THE GUNFIRE ON THE REMAINING OR DAMAGED ENEMY SHIPS WOULD BE OVERWHELMINGLY DEVASTATING.**

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ATTACK IN TWO GROUPS WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH DESTROYER ATTACK DOCTRINE WHICH RECOMMENDED THAT TORPEDO ATTACKS BY SIX DESTROYERS BE MADE FROM TWO ATTACK SECTORS IN ORDER TO GAIN THE ADVANTAGE OF CROSSFIRE.*

At 0257 he received an amplifying report from the DALY that the target was on course 005°(T), speed eighteen knots.

At 0258 he received CTG 79.11's target designation for the destroyers of his attack group.

Also at 0258, as a precaution prior to launching his destroyer attack, he queried COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR as to whether he had the ships of TG 79.11 on his radar scopes. To this he received an affirmative reply.**

Having now verified in his own mind that the destroyers of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR had both the enemy ships and the ships of TG 79.11 on their radar scopes, he, at 0302, ordered COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR by TBS voice radio to "Proceed to attack, follow down west shore line. Follow other groups in, retire to northward. Make smoke."**

It seems likely, from this order, that Commander Right Flank Force was still holding to his concept that it was possible that destroyers making unsupported attacks against the THIRD Section might be blasted by heavy gunfire. Therefore, knowing that his units were near the Western Attack Group, he desired to insure that they "followed" rather than "preceded" that group, in which case, the enemy gunfire, because of the previous destroyer attacks, might be less destructive. He seems to have felt that his destroyer commander was in a highly offensive state of mind and might choose to be in the van of the destroyer attacks.

At 0303 he knew that the PHOENIX had made radar contact of one large pip and two small pips, bearing 161°(T), range 42,800 yards.*** This was extremely gratifying to him because he could now watch the progress of the attacks, could keep a close check on the identity and movements of all forces, and could support his destroyers if they met ships of opposition. At this same time, after noting gunfire and starshells to the south, he remarked in his action report that it was comforting to him to observe the absence of reports of damage to the units of TG 79.11. This clearly meant to him that (a) the Japanese gunfire was inefficient, based on American standards, or (b) the destroyer attacks, shielded as they were supposed to be by the land mass, had achieved a measure of surprise.

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* Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

At 0307 he intercepted COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR's instructions directing the ARUNTA, with her three destroyers (ARUNTA (F), KILLEN and BEALE), to follow the east group (Eastern Attack Group) down the strait, while COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, in the HUTCHINS with the DALY and BACHE, followed the west group (Western Attack Group) down the strait.* SINCE HE TOOK NO EXCEPTION TO THIS MESSAGE IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE HAD DETERMINED TO GIVE FREEDOM OF ACTION TO HIS SQUADRON COMMANDER, EVEN THOUGH BY SO DOING, HE PERMITTED ATTACK GROUP 2.2 (ARUNTA) TO CROSS THE STRAIT IN OPEN WATER, AND THEREFORE MADE LIKELY HER EARLY DETECTION BY JAPANESE RADAR, WITH THE ENSUING POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED DAMAGE. WHY HE DID THIS IS NOT EXPLAINED BUT IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE RELATIVELY UNOPPOSED ATTACK BY CTG 79.11 HAD LESSENED HIS APPREHENSIONS CONSIDERABLY.

At 0308 he intercepted CTG 79.11's report that (a) the enemy consisted of but one group of ships, two large and one small, (b) they had straddled him, and (c) his ships were firing torpedoes.* At this time, the BOISE had a contact report on two groups, one of which was 2,000 yards astern of the other;** however, she did not report this fact to CTG 77.3.

At 0312 he again heard CTG 79.11 report that there were five enemy ships, with two battleships present and that two of the ships appeared to be slowing down as a result of his attack.* At this time the radar picture of the PHOENIX had not improved materially and still showed the original contact of one large and two small pips.***

At this time also, he intercepted the report of Commander Western Attack Group that all torpedoes were away and that he was coming back* (retiring northward).

At 0314 he heard COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR caution Commander Attack Group 2.2 "there's another group of destroyers ahead of us to fire yet. We must stay behind them".* This cautioning may have confused him somewhat, because both units of TG 79.11 had completed firing and had so reported by TBS voice radio at 0312. Suspecting that perhaps COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR had another enemy group on his scope, he, at 0315, queried that commander as to whether he had the targets on his scope, and, if so, the range and bearing from him. He received a reply about one minute later to the effect that the target on course 003°(T), speed nineteen knots, was bearing 146°(T), range 18,000 yards.* Since this clearly was the same enemy force that had just been attacked, he realized that it was highly probable that COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR had failed to receive Commander Western Attack Group's 0312 report of all torpedoes away. If this was his belief, it was correct.

At 0317 he heard COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR order Commander Attack Group 2.2 to "boil up, make smoke. Let me know when you have fired. Retire to northward."* From this, he knew that the destroyers of the right flank were attacking.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, morning of October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

At 0319 he noted an explosion and large flash in the enemy area and, at the same time, (a) intercepted Commander Western Attack Group's report by TBS voice radio of having observed hits from his torpedoes,* and (b) noted on his radar scope that some enemy ships seemed to be falling behind. The range to the nearest target (MICHISHIO) was about 32,000 yards.

At this time he intercepted a message from CTG 77.2 to CTG 79.11 requesting information as to the types of ships in the enemy formation.*

At 0320 the flagship was bearing 014°(T), distant two point seven miles from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island (Diagram "H").

(a) Operations of Commander Right Flank Cruisers, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

At 0245 the Right Flank Cruisers were stopped on course 075°(T) to adjust position on the battle line which was still on a westerly course.

No radar contacts had been made in the Right Flank Force; however, Commander Right Flank Cruisers had a fair idea of the movement of the enemy since he had plotted the earlier contacts received over the TBS voice radio. At 0247 he received from the KILLEN a radar contact bearing 170°(T), range 34,000 yards and at 0252 he may have received a contact report from the BOISE of a radar contact, bearing 164°(T), range 47,900 yards. At 0254 the BOISE noted that there appeared to be a second group of targets about 2,000 - 4,000 yards astern of the first group but she did not report it.

At 0303 he learned that the PHOENIX (flagship) had made an initial radar contact bearing 161°(T), range 42,800 yards on what appeared to be one large pip and two smaller pips.**

At 0303 he increased speed to ten knots and changed course to 270°(T) to conform to the movements of the battle line.*

At 0313 he may have received the SHROPSHIRE's initial radar contact bearing 161°(T), range 34,300 yards.***

At 0319 all three cruisers of the Right Flank sighted a large explosion in the direction of the enemy. Actually, this was the explosion of the YAMAGUMO.

At 0320, he could see from his radar scope that (a) some enemy ships appeared to be dropping behind and (b) three large ships and one small ship were still closing, the range to the nearest being about 32,000 yards. At this time the PHOENIX was bearing 014°(T), distant two point seven miles from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

*** Battle Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action October 25th, 1944, Serial SC1123/194, November 4th, 1944.

(b) Operations of COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.*

At 0245 COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, awaiting orders to attack, was turning to course 290°(T), speed ten knots, in order to avoid the Western Attack Group which was still a few miles to the north of his command and heading directly toward him (Diagram "C"). As yet no radar contacts had been made by any of his ships, nor had he made any interceptions of such contact reports from any of the units of the battle disposition.

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT HERE THAT COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, INSTEAD OF BEING ON THE BRIDGE AS WERE THE COMMANDERS OF THE EASTERN AND WESTERN ATTACK GROUPS, WAS IN THE HUTCHINS' CIC WHERE HE HAD EXCLUSIVE USE OF ONE REMOTE RADAR SCOPE. BY BEING IN THE CIC HE WAS ENABLED NOT ONLY TO OBSERVE HIS OWN SCOPE BUT TO CHECK HIS DATA WITH THAT OF THE HUTCHINS. WHILE THERE WAS NO DEFINITE DOCTRINE AT THIS TIME AS TO THE CORRECT LOCATION OF THE DESTROYER ATTACK COMMANDER, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT CERTAIN ADVANTAGES WERE INHERENT IN THE CIC LOCATION, NOTABLE, (A) HE WAS IN AN ADMIRABLE POSITION TO GET FIRST HAND, WITHOUT TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION, ALL OF THE INFORMATION HE REQUIRED TO CONDUCT SUCCESSFULLY, AN APPROACH TO THE FIRING POSITION AND THEN TO CARRY OUT THE ATTACK ITSELF AND (B) HE WAS NOT DISCONCERTED OR BLINDED OR HIS MIND DIVERTED FROM THE TASK AT HAND BECAUSE OF THE NOISE AND FLASH OF OWN AND ENEMY GUNFIRE.

At 0247 he received, over the Task Group Common, a contact report from the KILLEN, reporting two or three enemy ships, bearing 170°(T), range seventeen miles.** A minute later at 0248, he observed the enemy on his radar scope, bearing 159°(T), range 30,000 yards.*** At this same time he received, also over the Task Group Common, a contact report from the DALY reporting two or more targets, bearing 162°(T), range 30,500 yards.** He noted that, although the above ranges were consistent, there was some disparity in the bearings but it is doubtful if he was concerned about this at this long range. It was not important now to have more accurate bearings but would be vital later.

At 0251 he knew, from TBS voice radio intercepts and from his radar scope, that the ships of the Western Attack Group had turned eastward to avoid his ships.

At 0252 he received an order from Commander Right Flank Force directing him not to advance.

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* All information here, unless otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

This probably astonished him because he was on a westerly course, 290°(T), and was endeavoring to clear the approach water for the Western Attack Group. It indicated to him that Commander Right Flank Force's radar scope picture was somewhat confused. He therefore, at 0253, changed course to 000°(T) in order to identify his group to the Right Flank Force.*

At 0255 he received instructions from Commander Right Flank Force over the Task Group Common (2748 kcs) as follows: "When released, attack in two groups, and be prepared to make smoke; until then stay close to land."

This order was not unexpected because doctrine recommended that torpedo attacks by six destroyers should be made from two attack sectors.** Anticipating this, he had already advised his command that should there be a torpedo attack they would attack in two groups, one consisting of the ARUNTA, KILLEN and BEALE and to be led by the Commanding Officer ARUNTA; the other of the HUTCHINS (F), DALY and BACHE to be led by himself. The assignment of the Commanding Officer ARUNTA, who was an Australian, as the leader of the ARUNTA group, which consisted of one Australian and two American destroyers, was in accordance with the agreement made with the Australian government in 1942 which provided that when the naval forces of the two powers were operating together and no carrier operations were involved the senior officer of either power would be in command.***

Meanwhile, the HUTCHINS had tracked the enemy on course north at seventeen knots. While this was quite accurate as to the movement of the enemy, COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR still was unable to discern the composition of the enemy on his radar scope. Fortunately, at this time, 0256, he intercepted CTG 79.11's reply to a query from CTG 77.2 which reply gave the enemy composition as five targets, two large and three small, four miles west of Kanihaan Island. Targets are all in column.****

At 0258 he intercepted CTG 79.11's target designation. Immediately after this he received a message from Commander Right Flank Force inquiring as to whether he had the ships of TG 79.11 on his screen. He replied in the affirmative.**** At this time the Eastern Group was only 20,000 yards away. By this reply he meant that he had both groups of TG 79.11 on his radar scope.

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* Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

*** War Diary CINCPAC, April 16th, 1942.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0302 he received orders from Commander Right Flank Force to "Proceed to attack. Follow down west shore line. After attack retire to north. Make smoke going down."*

He now commenced his attack and at 0303:30, with the enemy bearing about 151°(T), he commenced changing course to 180°(T). At this time he received another message from Commander Right Flank Force directing him again to make smoke.

At 0305 he increased speed to fifteen knots.** At this time the ARUNTA, through mistake, increased speed to twenty-five knots. This caused her to (a) move 1,500 yards ahead of the KILLEN which had only increased speed to fifteen knots and (b) endanger thereby the BACHE. However, no damage ensued and she quickly slowed to the correct speed of fifteen knots,* while the KILLEN endeavored to close her.***

At approximately 0307:30 he completed his turn and settled on course 180°(T). Somehow, during the above turn, the DALY and BACHE fell behind the HUTCHINS to a distance which gradually increased to about 1,000 yards. For reasons unexplained, they made no effort to close this distance at this time, although it was doctrine that they keep correct station on the leader.

As he moved to the south he watched, on the radar scope, the two ships of the Western Attack Group make their approach. He estimated from their actions that they would pass inshore of him on their retirement. Therefore, in order not to lose time, for he had some distance to travel to reach his torpedo attack point, he decided to start his approach with both attack groups.

At 0307 he directed Commander Attack Group 2.2 (ARUNTA (F), KILLEN, BEALE) to follow the Eastern Attack Group down, and stated that he would follow the Western Attack Group down with Attack Group 1.2 (HUTCHINS (F), DALY, BACHE).**

THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING OF HIS INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED ONLY A FEW MINUTES BEFORE WHICH GAVE THREE BASIC ATTACK RESTRICTIONS ON HIS ATTACKS. THESE WERE (A) TO ATTACK FROM THE WESTERN SHORE LINE, (B) NOT TO ATTACK UNTIL THE PRECEDING DESTROYERS HAD COMPLETED THEIR ATTACKS AND (C) TO RETIRE TO THE NORTHWARD MAKING SMOKE. DOES IT NOT SEEM CLEAR THAT, BY ORDERING HIS COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 2.2 TO FOLLOW THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP DOWN, HE THEREBY WAS ORDERING THAT GROUP TO CROSS THE STRAIT TOWARD THE EASTERN SHORE AND PRESUMABLY AHEAD OF THE ENEMY? THIS WOULD NOT ONLY PREVENT IT FROM ATTACKING FROM THE WESTERN SHORE AS ORDERED, BUT WOULD ALSO, AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT UNDER "OPERATIONS OF COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE", MAKE LIKELY ITS EARLY DETECTION BY JAPANESE RADAR.

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* Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

WHILE THERE WAS SUFFICIENT TIME FOR COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 2.2 TO HAVE CROSSED THE STRAIT AHEAD OF THE ENEMY, AND TO HAVE THEN FOLLOWED THE APPROXIMATE TRACK OF THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP, THIS WOULD HAVE REQUIRED CONSIDERABLY MORE TIME THAN WAS REQUIRED BY COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 1.2 TO REACH A SUITABLE TORPEDO FIRING POSITION ON THE BOW AND WOULD FORCE THE LATTER COMMANDER (A) TO DELAY HIS ATTACK IN ORDER TO INSURE A COORDINATED ATTACK OR (B) TO ABANDON ENTIRELY THE CONCEPT OF A COORDINATED ATTACK ON BOTH BOWS.

WHAT HE HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH BY THIS ORDER IS NOWHERE FULLY EXPLAINED BUT HE STATED LATER THAT HIS PLAN OF ATTACK FOR ATTACK GROUP 1.2 WAS NOT TO ATTACK ON THE BOW BUT INSTEAD TO TRY TO PROCEED SOUTHWARD BELOW THE APPROACHING ENEMY FORCE SO THAT HE WOULD BE BETWEEN THE ENEMY AND HIS AVENUE OF ESCAPE, SHOULD THE JAPANESE DECIDE TO RETIRE FROM THE SCENE OF ACTION.

IF THIS WAS HIS PLAN IT WAS QUITE COURAGEOUS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS UNSOUND BECAUSE THE JAPANESE, IF THEY DECIDED (A) TO RETIRE, WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ISOLATE HIM FROM THE ALLIED FORCES TO THE NORTH AND DESTROY HIM SEPARATELY AND (B) TO CONTINUE ON, WOULD NOT BE IN SERIOUS DANGER BECAUSE TORPEDO ATTACKS, FIRED FROM THE QUARTER, EVEN WHEN FIRED IN COORDINATION WITH AN ATTACK ON THE BOW, OFFER A LOW PROBABILITY OF HITS AND DEMAND A VERY SHORT EFFECTIVE RANGE. THIS MEANS THAT HIS DESTROYERS, IF THEY HAD ATTACKED FROM THE QUARTER AND HAD EMPLOYED INTERMEDIATE SPEED TORPEDOES, WOULD HAVE HAD TO CLOSE THE ENEMY TO AS NEAR AS 4,500 YARDS TO BE WITHIN EFFECTIVE RANGE OF A TARGET MAKING EIGHTEEN KNOTS, WITH THE RESULTANT INCREASED DANGER OF HEAVY DAMAGE FROM ENEMY GUNS.

WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN MORE CORRECT HAD HE ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS FOR A COORDINATED ATTACK BY BOTH OF HIS ATTACK GROUPS ON THE ENEMY'S PORT BOW SINCE BOTH ATTACK GROUPS WERE IN EXCELLENT POSITION TO REACH, AT ABOUT 0320, THEIR CORRECT DOCTRINAL LAUNCHING POSITIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SPEED TORPEDO FIRING? WOULD NOT THIS ACTION, WHICH WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH DESTROYER DOCTRINE, HAVE CONTRIBUTED MORE COMPLETELY TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS SUPERIOR'S PLAN?

IN THIS ORDER COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR OMITTED ANY PROVISION FOR A COORDINATED ATTACK AND MADE NO DESIGNATION OF ATTACK SECTORS.

HE PARTIALLY EXPLAINED THIS BY SAYING THAT HE HAD OMITTED THE ABOVE INFORMATION BECAUSE HIS CAPTAINS HAD BEEN EXERCISED, DRILLED AND FOUGHT AS A TEAM FOR EIGHTEEN MONTHS, KNEW HIS TACTICS AND APPROACH PROCEDURES, AND, THEREFORE, IT WAS UNNECESSARY FOR HIM TO PROVIDE THEM WITH ANY PARTICULAR INSTRUCTIONS OTHER THAN IMMEDIATE TACTICAL SIGNALS.

THIS VIEW WAS NOT THE VIEW OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER ARUNTA WHO STATED THAT THE DESTROYERS ARUNTA, KILLEN AND BEALE HAD NEVER WORKED TOGETHER AS A UNIT.*

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* Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

Between 0310 and 0312 he twice directed Commander Attack Group 2.2 to commence his attack and in the second transmission cautioned him to keep clear of returning destroyers.* Since this was an independent attack, the operations of that group will be discussed separately, following the discussion of the "Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2."

(1) Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2 (COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR), 0310 - 0320, October 25th.

Commander Attack Group 1.2, with Attack Group 1.2, continued on course 180°(T) at fifteen knots. At this time the DALY and BACHE were about 1,000 yards astern of the HUTCHINS.

At 0313, as COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, he received a message from Commander Attack Group 2.2 that that group was on course 140°(T), speed twenty-five knots.** (Actually, ARUNTA's track chart shows course 145°(T).) He could see on his radar scope that Commander Western Attack Group had not as yet cleared. He, therefore, at 0314, informed Commander Attack Group 2.2 that there was "another group ahead of us to fire yet. We must stay behind them".* This of course was in error since the Western Attack Group had reported firing torpedoes at 0312.

It must have been clear to him from his radar scope and from the fact that Attack Group 2.2 was reportedly on course 140°(T), that Commander Attack Group 2.2 was not planning to cross the strait. Inasmuch as he (a) made no effort to correct this action and (b) directed Commander Attack Group 2.2 to remain behind the group ahead of them which had not as yet fired, it can be inferred that he realized that his original order to his destroyer squadron to attack from both the east and west had not been in accordance with Commander Right Flank Force's directive, and since the actions of Commander Attack Group 2.2 were in accordance with that directive, he had decided to accept the new situation. COMDESRON 24 stated in a postwar statement that the above inference was correct.***

At this point, 0315, he received an inquiry from Commander Right Flank Force who desired to know whether he had the enemy on his scope and, if so, what was the range and bearing of the enemy formation. He promptly replied that the enemy, on course 003°(T), speed nineteen knots, was bearing 146°(T), range 18,000 yards.* (Actually, as of this time, this report was in error, since from the HUTCHIN's track chart, the above data was approximately correct for about 0312 rather than 0315.) This seemed to satisfy Commander Right Flank Force for he received no further queries from him.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Statement of COMDESRON 24 (Rear Admiral K. M. McManus, USN, then Captain) to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, June 7th, 1954.

At 0317 when the Western Attack Force was crossing inshore of his track, as COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, he ordered Commander Attack Group 2.2 to attack at high speed making smoke, to inform him upon completion of firing, and to retire to northward.* He himself did not increase the speed of Attack Group 1.2 nor make smoke at this time but continued south at fifteen knots.**

It was interesting to note that up to 0318, which was after the torpedo attacks had been completed by the two attack groups of CTG 79.11, no reports of any sightings, such as gunfire, searchlights or starshells were made by the ships of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR. It will be recalled in this connection that during the period since 0300 the Japanese had been firing starshells and projectiles with tracers, and employing searchlight illumination to counter the attacks of TG 79.11 from either side of the strait. This failure to report anything was likely due to the heavy smoke screen laid down by the Western Attack Group during its attack and retirement which lay between Attack Group 1.2 and the enemy. However, this was changed at 0319 when the YAMAGUMO blew up and sank, because the resulting explosion was sighted and reported by all three ships of Attack Group 1.2. This was due to the fact that low hanging smoke was not dense enough to screen the brilliance of such an explosion.

At 0320, to his great relief he observed the retiring Western Attack Group would pass to the westward on opposite course. His approach course to the enemy was now clear of friendly units.***

At this time the closest enemy ship (ASAGUMO) bore 109°(T), range 13,000 yards from the HUTCHINS, which, in a very loose column with the DALY and BACHE about 1,000 yards astern, was about 2,000 yards off the east coast of Leyte in Latitude 10°-20'N. The ARUNTA, leading Attack Group 2.2, was bearing 074°(T), distant 4,000 yards from the HUTCHINS.

(2) Operations of Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0310 - 0320, October 25th.

At 0311 Commander Attack Group 2.2 received orders from Commander Attack Group 1.2 to commence his attack. Therefore, he increased speed to twenty-five knots and changed course to 145°(T) to head for his torpedo firing point. From graphic analysis it can be shown that this course and speed would, if the enemy remained on present course and speed, bring him to a selected firing point on the port bow of the enemy. Commander Attack Group 2.2 stated later that since the attack was not to be supported by gunfire, it was his intention to reach a position 6,000 - 7,000 yards on the enemy's port bow to fire torpedoes.**** This was obviously the selected firing point.

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* Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** Statement of COMDESRON 24 (Rear Admiral K.M. McManus, USN, then Captain) to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, June 7th, 1954.

**** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

SINCE HIS PLAN WAS NOW CLEARLY IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THAT OF COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, WHO IT WILL BE RECALLED HAD ORDERED AN ATTACK FROM THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE STRAIT (ON THE ENEMY'S STARBOARD BOW), IT SEEMS WISE AT THIS TIME TO SPECULATE ON WHAT IT WAS THAT HAD CAUSED THIS CONFUSION. IT IS KNOWN, OF COURSE, THAT HE HAD RECEIVED COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE'S ORDER DIRECTING THAT THE TORPEDO ATTACK WAS TO BE MADE BY BOTH GROUPS OPERATING FROM THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE STRAIT AND HAD MADE PREPARATIONS TO THAT END. IT IS ALSO KNOWN THAT, HAVING COMPLETED THESE PREPARATIONS, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DOCTRINES DEVELOPED WITHIN DESRON TWENTY-FOUR FOR COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR STATED THAT IT WAS UNNECESSARY TO ISSUE ORDERS SINCE HIS SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS KNEW HIS POLICIES AND DOCTRINES, HE HAD RECEIVED COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ATTACK FROM THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE STRAIT. SINCE THIS (A) DID NOT CONFORM TO COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE'S BASIC ORDER, (B) DID NOT CONFORM TO SQUADRON DOCTRINES AND (C) WAS VERY DIFFICULT OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND LIKELY WOULD PREVENT A COORDINATED ATTACK, HE DECIDED THAT HIS COMMANDER HAD MISUNDERSTOOD COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE'S INSTRUCTIONS AND THAT IN LOYALTY TO THE PLAN HE SHOULD CONTINUE HIS ATTACK FROM THE WESTERN SHORE AND ON THE PORT BOW OF THE ENEMY. BY DOING THIS, HE HOPED THAT HIS ATTACK WOULD BE IN COORDINATION WITH THAT OF COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 1.2. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HE WAS IN COMPLETE IGNORANCE OF THE LATTER COMMANDER'S PLAN TO MOVE WELL SOUTH AND, THEREFORE, TO ATTACK ON THE ENEMY'S BEAM OR QUARTER.

THE DECISION OF COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 2.2 TO CONTINUE HIS ATTACK AS PLANNED ON THE PORT BOW RATHER THAN TO CROSS THE STRAIT SEEMS SOUND BECAUSE, APPARENTLY UNKNOWN TO COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 1.2, HE WAS ONLY MINUTES AWAY FROM HIS CHOSEN FIRING POSITION AND WAS ATTACKING AS PLANNED WITHOUT ANY ENEMY INTERFERENCE WHATSOEVER. IF HE SHOULD PERMIT HIMSELF TO BE DIVERTED FROM THIS HE MIGHT NEVER AGAIN HAVE SUCH A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY.

IT IS OF INTEREST THAT THE DECISION OF COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 2.2, WHO IT WILL BE REMEMBERED WAS AN OFFICER OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY, WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.S. NAVAL PRACTICE WHICH STATED: "IF A SUBORDINATE COMMANDER RECEIVED AN ORDER EVIDENTLY GIVEN WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION CONFRONTING HIM, AND WHICH, IF RIGIDLY OBEYED, WOULD NOT FURTHER THE PLAN OF HIS SUPERIOR, HE USES DISCRETION IN OBEYING THIS ORDER. IF TIME PERMITS, HE ACQUAINTS HIS SUPERIOR WITH THE SITUATION AND OBTAINS NEW ORDERS. IF TIME DOES NOT PERMIT, HE SELECTS A TASK WHICH HE BELIEVES THE SENIOR WOULD ASSIGN WERE HE COGNIZANT OF ALL THE FACTS. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD COMMON SENSE."*

ALTHOUGH HE WAS CLOSING HIS FIRING POINT HE DID NOT ISSUE A FIRING PLAN TO THE SHIPS OF HIS GROUP. THIS WAS BECAUSE HE WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATING WITH THE KILLEN AND BEALE OVER THE TASK GROUP COMMON. HE HAD ATTEMPTED TO TRANSMIT TACTICAL SIGNALS BY BLINKER TUBE, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. THEREFORE, HIS SHIPS, FROM NECESSITY, WERE FORCED TO ATTACK IN FOLLOW-THE-LEADER FASHION WITHOUT SIGNALS.**

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* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 2, Section III, Paragraph 215.

** Action Report ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

At 0314 he received a message from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to the effect that (a) there was another group of destroyers ahead of them to fire and (b) the units of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR were to stay behind the firing group. If he had had any concern over the correctness of his decision to continue his attack on the port bow this concern must now have been dispelled for this message clearly showed that, since the unit which had not fired (Western Attack Group) was on the western side of the strait, COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR was expecting Attack Group 2.2 to be on that side also, and had in effect approved his decision.

At 0317 he received orders from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to "boil up and make smoke. Let me know when you have fired. Retire to northward." At this time the enemy (YAMASHIRO) was bearing about 138°(T), range 13,600 yards from him. The KILLEN and BEALE had been roughly following the motions of the ARUNTA although the latter two ships were on course 150°(T) in order to close slowly the ARUNTA's track. All three ships continued on toward the planned torpedo launching point on the port bow of the enemy (Diagram "C"). The KILLEN and BEALE commenced making smoke* but the ARUNTA did not do so at this time.

He observed that the radar picture continued to improve as the range closed. He noted that the original two targets had now become five with one large ship believed to be a battleship.** The battleship was obviously the YAMASHIRO since the FUSO had been torpedoed and had fallen well behind.

During the approach his ships tracked the enemy on a northerly course at speeds of twenty-five (ARUNTA), eighteen (KILLEN) and seventeen (BEALE). These variations were likely due to the fact that the ARUNTA tracked the leading ship, which was a destroyer (MICHISHIO), and the KILLEN and BEALE tracked the largest ship which they correctly believed to be a battleship (YAMASHIRO).

At 0319 Commander Attack Group 2.2 broke through the smoke screen laid down by the Western Attack Group. He observed the large explosion in the direction of the enemy and noted that they were firing starshells in his general direction. The explosion was the YAMAGUMO.

Also at this time the BEALE asked COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR how many torpedoes to fire.***

At 0320 the ARUNTA was about 5,800 yards east of the Leyte shore in Latitude 10°-20.5'N.

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* Action Report KILLEN, Surigao Straits Surface Engagement, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

(B) Operations of CTG 79.11, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

(1) Commander Eastern Attack Group (CTG 79.11).

Commander Eastern Attack Group (CTG 79.11) was on the bridge of the REMEY, leading the Eastern Attack Group to its torpedo launching point and was, at 0245, on course 180°(T) at twenty knots,* in mid-strait about two miles north of Esconchada Point, Dinagat Island.

He noted, as the range closed, that the radar picture continued to improve. The original contact was a single pip, but the pip had now enlarged as the distance decreased, which indicated that it would soon separate into two or more pips.** All of these destroyers were displaying electronic IFF continuously to aid the discrimination of friend or foe as the two forces closed.*

At 0246 he received a TBS voice radio report from the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN that his radar scope now showed that the enemy consisted of three or more targets in column, bearing 184°(T), range fifteen miles. He knew, from his own plot, that the enemy speed continued to approximate eighteen knots.*

AT 0248 HE COMMENCED BUILDING UP TO THE ATTACK SPEED (THIRTY KNOTS) BY INCREASING SPEED TO TWENTY-FIVE KNOTS.* HE HAD NOW COMMITTED HIMSELF TO AN APPROACH FROM A NORTHERLY RATHER THAN FROM AN EASTERLY POSITION, AND HAD ACCEPTED THEREBY TWO SERIOUS DISADVANTAGES INHERENT IN AN ATTACK FROM AHEAD: (A) HE WOULD DENY HIMSELF THE PROTECTION AFFORDED BY THE LAND EFFECT ON THE JAPANESE RADARS AND (B) HE WOULD BE APPROACHING FROM A DIRECTION WHERE JAPANESE RADARS, AS WELL AS VISUAL SIGHTINGS, COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE. WHY, THEN, DID HE APPROACH FROM THIS POSITION?

HE GIVES THE ANSWER IN HIS ACTION REPORT.* THERE HE STATED THAT HE HAD EXPECTED THAT THE ENEMY, UPON REACHING THE LATITUDE OF KANIHAAN ISLAND, WOULD CHANGE COURSE TO THE WESTWARD TO 340°(T) AND HEAD DIRECTLY FOR THE TRANSPORTS. ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT EXPAND ON THIS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HE EXPECTED THAT IF THE ENEMY DID THIS, THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP WOULD AUTOMATICALLY FIND ITSELF IN A FAVORABLE ATTACK POSITION FROM THE EASTWARD, AND THE WESTERN ATTACK GROUP WOULD CONTINUE TO BE IN A FAVORABLE ATTACK POSITION FROM THE WESTWARD.

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

THIS DECISION WAS SOUND IF THE ATTACK FROM THE NORTH WAS TO BE COORDINATED WITH THE ATTACK FROM THE NORTHWEST, BECAUSE THE TORPEDOES FIRED FROM THE AHEAD POSITION MIGHT BECOME HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SHOULD THE TARGET MANEUVER TO AVOID THE TORPEDOES FIRED FROM THE NORTHWEST. HOWEVER, IF THE ATTACK WAS NOT TO BE SO COORDINATED, THE ATTACK FROM THE NORTH WAS UNSOUND NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE EASE WITH WHICH THE TARGET COULD AVOID SUCH AN ATTACK, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THE TARGET MIGHT THEN TURN ON THE GROUP ATTACKING FROM THE NORTHWEST AND DESTROY IT AGAINST THE SHORE.

At 0250:30 he directed the REMEY to change course to the left to 150°(T), informed the MC GOWAN and MELVIN that he had done so, advised them that he planned to fire torpedoes only, and at the same time directed them to form echelon so that they would be clear for firing torpedoes.* From this it is clear that Commander Eastern Attack Group hoped to attack and to retire undetected. The echelon referred to was a line of bearing of about fifteen degrees on the starboard quarter of the guide, and was often employed in destroyer attacks.** For some unexplained reasons the MC GOWAN and MELVIN formed echelon on the port quarter.

He has given no reasons for changing course to 150°(T) at this time. However, assuming that he still expected the enemy to change course at Kanihaan Island, there are two possible reasons which present themselves; one, that he realized that he was approaching in column and could be readily enfiladed should the enemy change course as expected to 340°(T); the other, that he did not approve of the target angle which at this time was less than twenty degrees and realized that (a) if he continued on course 180°(T) this target angle would not improve greatly, and (b) by changing course to the eastward he could improve it, although this would result in a longer and less effective torpedo firing range.

Whether or not up to this time he had given any consideration to the enemy capability of continuing on a northerly course after passing Kanihaan Island is not known but the evidence is to the contrary.*** If he had given consideration to this capability, does it not seem likely that he might have commenced his approach from a position more to the eastward so that the disadvantages inherent in an approach from ahead would be lessened or completely erased?

At 0252 he intercepted a message from Commander Western Attack Group to the MONSSEN to the effect that he was "coming left" and then "coming right" t avoid the right flank destroyers.***

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* Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

At 0253 he intercepted a report that the MC DERMUT had made radar contact on the enemy bearing 158°(T), range 38,000 yards.* From the above two interceptions he could have readily seen from his plot, even if he could not locate it by radar, that the Western Attack Group was well behind its expected position.

If he had any thought of coordinated attack it was at this point that he should have learned that if the MC DERMUT's range was correct (actually the range was not correct for this time (0253); instead it was a range which had clearly been taken about four and one-half minutes earlier) such coordinated attack was now impossible unless he (Commander Eastern Attack Group) maneuvered radically to obtain the correct relation between the two attack groups for, at this time from his own plot, the enemy was but 19,000 yards away. Had the two attack groups retained the same expected relative position in latitude (5,000 yards) the above range, instead of being 38,000 yards, should have been more nearly 26,000 yards. This meant that the Western Attack Group was about 12,000 yards behind the expected position in range at this time. From his later actions it seems clear that he either did not plot the MC DERMUT's range or having plotted it decided to await confirmation.

At 0254 he changed course farther to the east to 135°(T).* Since, if the enemy should change course to 340°(T), this new course would place his group beyond the effective torpedo range of intermediate speed torpedoes, IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO CONCLUDE THAT AT THIS POINT HE HAD DECIDED THAT THE ENEMY, INSTEAD OF CHANGING TO THE WEST OF NORTH, AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT, WAS GOING TO CONTINUE COURSE AND SPEED. THEREFORE A CHANGE OF COURSE TO THE EASTWARD WAS ESSENTIAL IF A MORE FAVORABLE TARGET ANGLE WAS TO BE OBTAINED WITHOUT UNDUE RUSH. BASED ON THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS THE DECISION TO CHANGE COURSE MORE THE THE EASTWARD SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CORRECT.

While the REMEY changed course promptly at 0254 the MC GOWAN and MELVIN delayed for several minutes in order to form a rough column.

Also at 0255 he was requested by CTG 77.2, by TBS voice radio, to advise when he had the enemy on his radar scope and the number of ships.

At 0256 he replied "Targets are five, two large ones and three small ones, five and one-half miles west of Tungo Point."**

It appears from an examination of the voice logs of the heavy ships that this report did not get through to CTG 77.2. However, at the same time or shortly after, he also broadcast this message on the PT common with one important change. In the rebroadcast he stated that the

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report REMEY. Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 003, November 5th, 1944.

Japanese force was four miles west of Kanihaan Island.* This was probably a correction to the original message for at 0256 the YAMAGUMO was four point four miles west of Kanihaan Island (she had been five and one-fourth miles west of Tungo Point at 0249 and YAMASHIRO had been six miles west of Tungo Point at this time) (Diagram "G").

The above 0256 message was CTG 79.11's first report, although the REMEY (his flagship) had been tracking the enemy for some time and, as early as 0250, had had a relatively clear radar picture of the enemy formation. This picture was not the picture reported above. The REMEY believed that the enemy consisted of "two very large ships in column, two large 'pips' on the bows of the leading very large 'pips', and three smaller 'pips' arranged ahead in screen formation...there was a possible 'pip' astern of last heavy ship"** (Plate XXI). The REMEY's estimate of the enemy composition was almost exactly correct except that (a) there were seven ships, (b) the "possible 'pip' astern" was the MOGAMI, and (c) there were only four "pips" ahead of the heavy ships. Why Commander Eastern Attack Group did not have this information or, if he did, why he evaluated it as but five ships is not known unless he had been influenced by PT 127's 2310 report, received at 0015, that there were two large unidentified ships and three destroyers in the enemy group.

At this time (a) the MC GOWAN estimated the enemy to consist of "a column of three to five ships with two or three ships screening ahead in a narrow wedge shape or short T-bar",*** and (b) the MELVIN, to consist of three small pips ahead of two large pips followed by one small pip, and a possible fourth pip ahead and to the left of the formation.**** Thus the MC GOWAN estimated a maximum of eight ships and a minimum of five; the MELVIN a total of seven.

Also at this same time he received two contact reports from the Western Attack Group, one from the MC DERMUT reporting the enemy bearing 160°(T), range 29,700 yards, the other from the MONSSEN reporting the enemy bearing 160°(T), range 32,000 yards.***** These ranges were a considerable decrease from his previous 0253 range of 38,000 yards but they were still excessive based on the expected position of the Western Attack Group and should have indicated again that the Western Attack Group continued to be well behind position.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

**** Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

Commander Eastern Attack Group now observed that the range between his command and the enemy continued to drop rapidly and, at about 0256, had decreased to below 15,000 yards. This was helpful from the SG radar viewpoint because at 15,000 yards it was possible to shift from the "long scale" to the "short scale" which gave a better target definition and a larger and clearer picture.* From this time onward it is considered that all ships of the eastern group were operating on the "short scale" and that the enemy composition should have been clearly defined.

At 0257 he decided that the enemy's main body consisted of two very large ships, possibly battleships, led by a cruiser. He also decided that these three ships were screened ahead by four small ships and astern by one small ship.** Since this was not the correct formation at this time in that the THIRD Section was still in its approach formation, it is difficult to understand the impressions gained by Commander Eastern Attack Group. Perhaps the impressions reported in the action report were prepared after the battle and the time sequence, with respect to the relative locations of the Japanese ships was lost; perhaps the Japanese destroyers failed to maintain accurate stations.

At this time Commander Eastern Attack Group, as CTG 79.11, decided that, since he had not as yet definitely identified battleships, he would (a) retain his depth setting of six feet and (b) as a consequence, change his firing plan.**

THE DECISION TO RETAIN THE DEPTH SETTING AT SIX FEET WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH BASIC TORPEDO DOCTRINE WHICH PROVIDED THAT UNLESS BATTLESHIPS WERE DEFINITELY IDENTIFIED THE TORPEDO DEPTH SETTING WOULD BE SIX FEET;*** THE DECISION TO CHANGE THE FIRING PLAN, WHILE NOT SPECIFICALLY OUTLINED IN BASIC TORPEDO DOCTRINE, WAS, NEVERTHELESS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT DOCTRINE WHICH PROVIDED THAT THE TARGETS OF A TORPEDO ATTACK WERE NORMALLY THE MOST IMPORTANT SHIPS OF THE ENEMY FORCE.*** SINCE THE MOST IMPORTANT SHIPS WERE OBVIOUSLY THE TWO VERY LARGE SHIPS AND THE CRUISER, AND SINCE, IF THE VERY LARGE SHIPS WERE BATTLESHIPS AND THE SIX FOOT SETTING WAS RETAINED, THEY WOULD "REQUIRE SEVERAL GOOD TORPEDO HITS TO STOP"** IT WAS CLEARLY NECESSARY TO CONCENTRATE ADDITIONAL TORPEDOES ON THE TWO VERY LARGE SHIPS WHILE RETAINING THE NORMAL CONCENTRATION ON THE CRUISER.

He, therefore, decided to modify his torpedo firing plan to accomplish this and, at 0258, issued his instructions as follows: "Am coming to 090° to fire torpedoes. Will take third target, you both (MELVIN and MC GOWAN) take second. COMDESDIV 108 the small one and number three".** By doing this he planned to concentrate two destroyers on each of the very large ships, and one destroyer on the cruiser.

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* Radar Bulletin No. 3 (RAD 3), Radar Operators Manual, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Part 4, Page 4-SG-7.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-44, Destroyer Torpedo Doctrine and Manual of Torpedo Control, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01630, July 8th, 1944.

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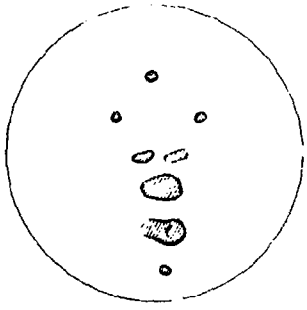
THE RADAR SCOPE SKETCHES SEEN BY THE SHIPS OF TG 79.11 AT TIME OF FIRING TORPEDOES

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

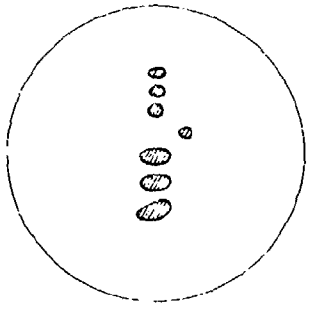
EASTERN ATTACK GROUP-TIME 0301

RANGE ABOUT - 11,000 YDS

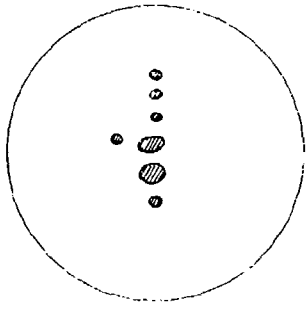
REMEY (F)



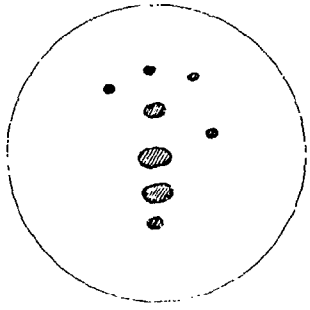
MCGOWAN



MELVIN



CTG 79.11

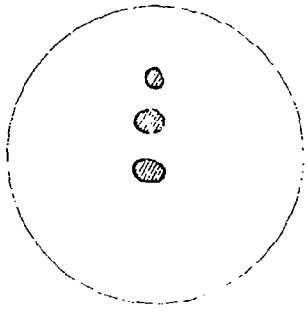


Note: These pictures are not reproductions of actual radar scopes, but are instead rough sketches by the commanders concerned of their impressions of the enemy dispositions as they appeared on their radar scopes at the reported times.

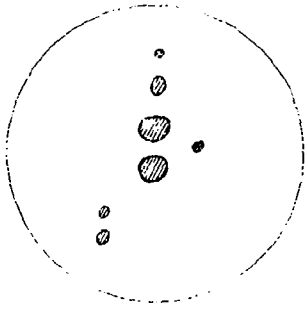
WESTERN ATTACK GROUP-TIME 0311

RANGE ABOUT - 9,000 YDS

COMMANDER W.A.G.



MCDERMUT (F)



MONSSEN

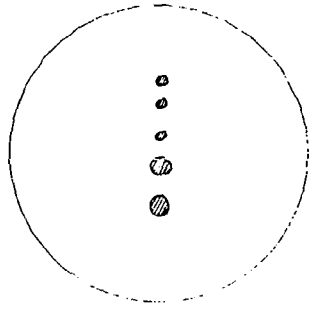


PLATE XXII

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This indicates that he was not aware of the fact that COMDESDIV 108 was so far behind as to preclude a coordinated attack.

IN ISSUING THESE INSTRUCTIONS HE FAILED TO DESIGNATE THE TARGET AS THE THREE LARGER SHIPS, INFERRING THEREBY THAT THIS FACT WOULD BE CLEAR TO HIS DESTROYER COMMAND. ACTUALLY, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER, IT WAS NOT CLEAR WITH THE RESULT THAT THE DESIRED TARGET DESIGNATIONS WERE NOT EFFECTED. THIS FAILURE BRINGS FORTH THE FACT THAT A DIRECTIVE WILL BE MOST EASILY UNDERSTOOD IF IT IS CLEAR, BRIEF AND POSITIVE. CLARITY DEMANDS THE EMPLOYMENT OF PRECISE EXPRESSIONS SUSCEPTIBLE OF ONLY THE DESIRED INTERPRETATION; BREVITY CALLS FOR THE OMISSION OF SUPERFLUOUS WORDS AND OF UNNECESSARY DETAILS BUT SHOULD NEVER BE SOUGHT AT THE EXPENSE OF CLARITY; POSITIVENESS OF EXPRESSION SUGGESTS THE SUPERIOR'S FIXITY OF PURPOSE WITH CONSEQUENT INSPIRATION TO SUBORDINATES TO PROSECUTE THEIR TASK WITH DETERMINATION.*

At this same time he observed that his Eastern Group, when he was about 12,500 yards from the enemy (YAMASHIRO), had been illuminated by a high searchlight for about fifteen seconds.** He did not know that he had already been sighted visually at 0256 by the SHIGURE*** and that this searchlight was most likely designed to be confirmatory of the visual sighting. The Japanese do not report having sighted the destroyers by searchlight. Why he thought that he had been illuminated is not understood for the effective range of a searchlight beam varies between 4,000 - 10,000 yards depending on the types and sizes of searchlights, and he was well beyond the effective range.****

As the Eastern Attack Group turned to course 090°(T), its commander soon noted that this course was opening the range and, while it was advantageous in that it tended to increase the target angle, it was disadvantageous in that, if it were maintained, it would prevent his closing to the range of his intermediate speed torpedoes.

While it is not clear what was in the REMEY Combat Information Center Evaluator's mind when he recommended a change of course to 090°(T), it is possible that he desired to improve the target angle after which he would recommend a change of course to close the enemy.

However, whatever his reasons, he failed to inform the bridge thereon and, consequently, Commander Eastern Attack Group, who now realized that he was on a course at almost right angles to the enemy's course and was opening the range, decided that the change of course to 090°(T) was

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* Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, 1942, Pages 186-187.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Gunnery Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 134), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, November 23rd, 1933, Chapter 11, Paragraph 1102.

"obviously wrong".* He, therefore, at 0259:30 directed the REMEY to change course to 120°(T) and to increase speed to thirty knots, which was done.**

At this same time the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN, who had already changed course to 090°(T), changed course to 125°(T). He stated later that his reason for so doing was to obtain sufficient sea room when the REMEY turned away after firing.*** Meanwhile the Commanding Officer MELVIN, who was just about to change course to 090°(T), heard COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR inform the MC GOWAN of the change of course to 120°(T).**** He therefore steadied on that course. These actions by the two commanding officers placed their ships correctly in echelon on the starboard quarter of the REMEY and also enabled them to close the distance between ships.

While Commander Eastern Attack Group's decision to change course to 120°(T) was sound, the change was not sufficient in that it did not materially improve his situation and was probably the result of an estimate employing the method of "seaman's eye". A return to course 135°(T), or greater, would have improved the target angle gradually and closed the range more rapidly.

It is clear from graphic analysis that course 120°(T) would not take the Eastern Attack Group within effective range (eighty percent of designed torpedo range) of the intermediate speed torpedoes.***** However, the majority of the ships of the Eastern Attack Group were tracking the target on courses greater than 000°(T)—REMEY 007°(T),** MC GOWAN 010°(T)*** and MELVIN 000°(T)******—which automatically decreased the target angle and indicated to the ships that the effective range was greater than it actually was. In reality, since the target was on course 000°(T) the ships were well beyond the effective range, but remained within the maximum range (one hundred percent of the designed torpedo range) for intermediate speed torpedoes.***** Either Commander Eastern Attack Group did not realize this or did not consider it necessary to close any nearer.

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

**** Ibid., Enclosure (J).

***** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-44, Destroyer Torpedo Doctrine and Manual of Torpedo Control, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01630, July 8th, 1944.

****** Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944.

Although the Japanese appeared to be taking no offensive action against his command, his destroyer commanders grew concerned lest they be fired on by the Japanese ships and, therefore also at 0300, the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN, who from his action report had probably been tracking the YAMAGUMO, but who about this time had probably shifted to the leading heavy ship (YAMASHIRO), requested permission to fire torpedoes.* Since this request was obviously in accordance with his own views he immediately directed his Eastern Attack Group to "Fire when ready".** At this time the target angle was about thirty degrees and the target range from the flagship REMEY to the third large ship (believed to be a battleship) was about 12,000 yards. This firing range, while within the maximum range of intermediate speed torpedo, was beyond the effective range, which, in this case, was about 10,500 yards.*** (Plate XVII).

BY AUTHORIZING HIS COMMAND TO FIRE AT THIS TIME COMMANDER EASTERN ATTACK GROUP THEREBY ACCEPTED THE LOW PROBABILITY OF HITS INCIDENT TO A SHARP TARGET ANGLE AND AN EXTREME FIRING RANGE.*** WHY HE RELEASED HIS DESTROYERS AT THIS TIME IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR HIS COMMAND WAS NOT BEING ILLUMINATED BY THE JAPANESE, NOR WAS IT UNDER FIRE. THEREFORE, WAS IT NOT INCUMBENT UPON HIM TO PRESS THE ATTACK HOME TO THE CLOSEST FIRING POINT WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE ATTACK TO BE DELIVERED SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE LOSSES? THIS WAS CLEARLY EXPRESSED IN POSTWAR DESTROYER INSTRUCTIONS WHICH STATED THAT AN ATTACK SHOULD BE PUSHED HOME UNLESS THE SHIP IS RECEIVING DAMAGE TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT THE DESTROYER CANNOT REACH THE OPTIMUM FIRING POSITION WHILE STILL CAPABLE OF FIRING TORPEDOES.****

In addition to the above does it not seem surprising that he made no effort at this time to insure that the Western Attack Group was also in position to fire its torpedoes in coordination in order to gain the advantages of cross fire?

Immediately after the receipt of the order to fire torpedoes the REMEY, at 0300:45, commenced firing torpedoes at her designated target which she reported was bearing 211°(T), range 11,600 yards, target angle twenty-four degrees and tracked on course 007°(T), speed eighteen knots. While the Commanding Officer REMEY thought that he was firing at the "rear very large pip", believed to be a battleship,***** an analysis of his torpedo data indicates that he fired using the range of the YAMASHIRO and

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait. October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

**** Tactical and Operational Instructions Destroyers and Destroyer Escorts, United States Fleet (USF 68), Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1948, Chapter 5, Paragraph 571.

***** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 003, November 5th, 1944.

the bearing of the YAMAGUMO. Although unexplained or even hinted at in his action report, this was probably due to the difficulty in getting the SG radar (normally used by the CIC) and the Mark 4 radar (used by both gunnery and torpedo control) on the same target. Thus, although the Commanding Officer REMEY planned to fire at the FUSO since that was the second very large ship, he actually fired at the YAMAGUMO, which, at the time, was slightly forward of the beam of the YAMASHIRO and some 1,500 yards closer to the firing group. The Commanding Officer MC GOWAN, who encountered similar difficulties in his own firing, commented thereon in his action report as follows: "it is believed that the main battery director might very well have been on the next vessel astern of the one the SG was tracking."*

Why the above occurred is not known, but it probably resulted from the lack of clarity in Commander Eastern Attack Group's target designation message referred to earlier and to the fact that the interpretation of the pictures on the radar scopes varied between the bridge and the CIC.

The REMEY fired on base torpedo course 224°(T) using broadside fire to starboard, three second intervals, one degree torpedo spread, six foot depth setting and intermediate speed. She attempted to fire a full salvo of ten torpedoes but, because the sixth and ninth torpedoes misfired, succeeded in launching only eight. Except for this, all torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.**

In firing on such a sharp track angle the spread was insufficient to compensate for the errors in determining the enemy course and speed. The result of this was that none of the REMEY's torpedoes, all of which passed astern of the YAMAGUMO, reached the track of the heavy ships.

She also had the misfortune, during the above firing, to have several torpedo tube flash eliminators fail with the resultant bright red flashes incident thereto. These flashes were observed by the MC GOWAN* and, although not mentioned in Japanese reports, were probably likewise observed by the THIRD Section for, immediately thereafter, Commander Eastern Attack Group noted that the enemy had illuminated him and had opened fire with the first salvo about 2,000 yards short.*** As a consequence, he increased the speed of the Eastern Group to thirty knots, ordered the ships to make smoke, and after the REMEY had completed firing, changed course ninety degrees to port to course 030°(T) and commenced retiring, making all possible speed.***

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* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

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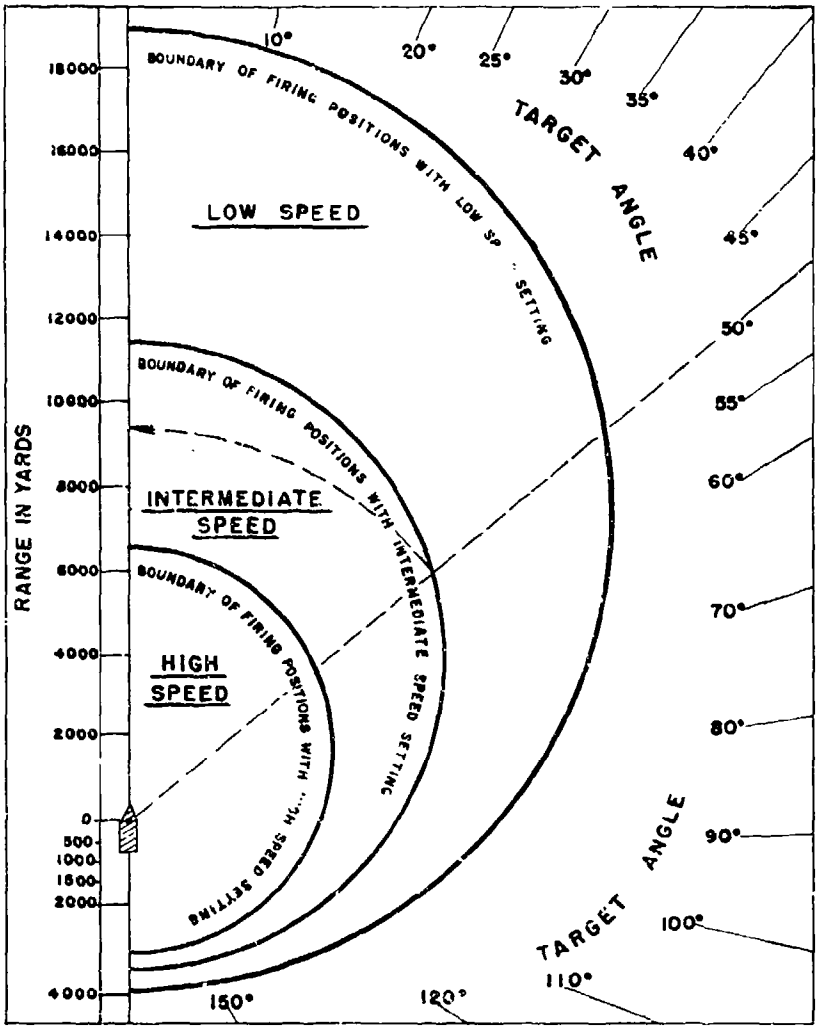
EFFECTIVE RANGE DIAGRAM FOR MULTI-SPEED TORPEDOES (USN)

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

FOR TARGET SPEED OF 18 KTS



EXAMPLE: To find effective range for a target angle of 50° (or 310°), draw a line from the zero point to the 50° mark, as shown; the point of intersection of this line with each boundary of firing positions is the effective range for that speed torpedo. The effective range is read in yards by swinging an arc to the left to the direct reading scale.

SOURCE: Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943, Diagram 301.

PLATE XXII

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Why, having been discovered, he did not direct his ships to open fire is not explained, but his action in not doing so seems illogical. The enemy was within easy range, the gun directors were on the target and in radar control with the guns trained out, the firing would not have interfered with the torpedo attack which was already underway, considerable damage might have been inflicted on the Japanese ships, and the morale effect on his own command would have been electrical.

Following the REMEY's firing, the MC GOWAN, at 0301, commenced firing a full salvo of ten torpedoes on base torpedo course 222°(T) at a target which she reported was bearing 212°(T), range 10,950 yards,* on course 010°(T), speed eighteen knots** (indicated target angle of twenty-two degrees). Although the commanding officer thought that the CIC and the main battery director were on the leading heavy ship, the YAMASHIRO, his later analysis led him to believe that the director was on the second heavy ship or the FUSO. Graphic analysis shows, however, that the bearing was on the FUSO and the range, presumably from CIC, was on the YAMASHIRO. This occurred for the same reasons that the REMEY's range and bearing were on different ships. Thus he actually fired at the FUSO, which was the second heavy ship and fortunately enough was the target which had been designated. Since the commanding officer had intended to fire at the first heavy ship or, as he phrased it, "the leading ship of the main column" he could not have understood the message from Commander Eastern Attack Group designating the targets. This misunderstanding of the target designation was a natural consequence of Commander Eastern Attack Group's basic order which, as pointed out earlier, was ambiguous.

Although all ten of the MC GOWAN's torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal they actually all missed astern of the FUSO for the same reasons that the REMEY's torpedoes missed the YAMAGUMO. These reasons were (a) the sharp track angle, (b) a ten degree error in the track angle and the target course (used 010°(T), actual 000°(T)), (c) a two knot error in target speed (used eighteen, actual twenty) and (c) the extreme range at the time of firing (10,950 yards). Although the first two torpedoes reached the track of the heavy ships the remainder, barring overrun of the designed range of 9,200 yards, did not. The MOGAMI, 2,500 yards astern of the FUSO, was too far astern to be endangered by the two torpedoes which crossed her track (Diagram "G").

In spite of the Commanding Officer's claim that his torpedo officer had seen torpedo explosions at 0309, the time that the torpedoes should have crossed the track, he could not have been too strong in his belief because of the following two factors: (a) his statement that the main battery director could have very well been on the next vessel astern of the one that the SG was tracking*** and (b) the torpedo run shown on

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* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Track Chart.

** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

his torpedo firing chart which was 9,300 yards* whereas the designed range of the torpedoes at medium speed was 9,200 yards. In regard to item (b) above, it is of interest that (1) 9,300 yards is the only distance shown on the torpedo firing chart and (2) nowhere else is the firing range or the torpedo run mentioned.

The MELVIN, at 0301:20, commenced firing a full salvo of ten torpedoes on base torpedo course 227°(T) at her designated target, bearing 212°(T), range 11,480 yards, target angle thirty-two degrees and tracked on course 000°(T), speed seventeen knots.** It is of interest that the MELVIN was on her correct target, the second of the three larger ships, and was the only one of the above three destroyers which correctly interpreted the target designation order and fired at the correct target. Owing to a misfire, only nine of the ten torpedoes launched, and these nine appeared to run hot, straight and normal,** making one hit in the FUSO.

Of interest is the fact that her only error was in determining the target speed. She used a target speed of seventeen knots when in fact the target, the FUSO, was making twenty knots. Because she was exactly on the target in both range and bearing and used the exact course the torpedo spread was sufficient to compensate for this error in speed. Actually all but the last two of her torpedoes appear to have crossed the track of the YAMASHIRO and FUSO. While the effect of the failure of one torpedo to be fired is not known with certainty, it seems probable from Diagram "G" that the MOGAMI may have escaped being hit because of this failure.

During the above torpedo firing, the Japanese continued their search-light illumination and gunfire, which continued to be short, but grew closer with successive salvos.***

Immediately upon completion of torpedo firing at 0301:37, the MC GOWAN and MELVIN, at 0302, each changed course radically to port and paralleled roughly the course of the REMEY. It will be noted (Diagram "G") that these destroyers did not follow the REMEY in column but turned independently. This was the correct method of accomplishing this phase of the retirement because, had the destroyers followed in column, they would have tended to form a "knuckle", in which case the enemy gunfire might have been highly effective through enfilade. During this turn away both the MC GOWAN and MELVIN increased speed to thirty knots and shortly afterward increased speed to all possible.

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* Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (E).

** Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action In Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

About this time, Commander Eastern Attack Group probably intercepted a dispatch (it was recorded in MC DERMUT's voice log) from Commander Right Flank Force directing COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to "Proceed to attack. Follow down the west shoreline. Follow other groups in and then retire to northward. Make smoke."* This message was of little concern to him, as Commander Eastern Attack Group, because the attack was being delivered from the western shoreline, but it was of concern to him as CTG 79.11 because he realized that difficulties could occur between the units of his Western Attack Group and the units of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR. However, since there was nothing that he could do about this he left it to the competence of Commander Western Attack Group.

A few seconds at 0302, he observed that the Japanese had shifted their means of illumination from searchlight to starshells, maintaining three stars in the air continuously.** These starshells were generally to the east of the destroyers showing***that they had been placed to illuminate the destroyers on their firing course 120°(T), in which case it seems correct to say that the Japanese determination of the destroyer's firing course and speed had been accurate.

As the seconds passed the Japanese firing improved and finally, at 0303, the REMEY was straddled. Commander Eastern Attack Group then reported to CTG 77.2 "We are being straddled now. We have fired our fish and are retiring northward."**

While this was an important message, and one which should have been reported at this time because it advised CTG 77.2 that the CTG 79.11's destroyer attack had been completed and that the area would soon be clear of friendly ships, it was incorrect and could have had serious consequences. This was so because only the Eastern Attack Group had fired and the Western Attack Group was still closing the enemy. (It appears from CTG 77.2's action report and from the voice logs of CTG 77.3 and the MARYLAND that his message did not get through for there is no mention of it. It does appear in the MC GOWAN and MELVIN voice logs however.)

At 0305 the MC GOWAN changed course to 018°(T)****in order to close the track of the REMEY which was still on course 030°(T). By 0306 the Japanese salvos appear to have come closer to the REMEY for commencing at that time, as shown on the track chart, she alternated between courses of 010°(T) and 030°(T). At 0309 she steadied on course 025°(T), and then headed for the rendezvous point in Station THREE.*****

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* Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

**** Ibid., Enclosure (E).

***** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

In the meantime the MELVIN, which had commenced making smoke with the turn away at 0302, steadied on course 018°(T) at 0304. At this time she was about 1,000 yards on the port quarter of the REMEY. (The HC GOWAN at the same time was about 800 yards on the starboard quarter of the REMEY.) The Commanding Officer MELVIN decided to remain on the port quarter to avoid enfilade fire and to help screen the REMEY with smoke. At 0308 he swung sharply to port and about half a minute later came back to course 045°(T) in order to place the smoke between himself and the enemy. At 0313 he changed course to 025°(T) and followed astern of the other two ships.*

At 0307 CTG 79.11 intercepted a message from his Commander Western Attack Group directing that command to standby torpedoes.**

If he did not know by this time that his western group had not fired in coordination with the eastern group this message should have alerted him, as well as CTG's 77.2 and 77.3 to that unhappy fact.

Meanwhile at 0308, mindful of the fact that some hours earlier he had been requested by CTG 77.2 to "report if enemy is in more than one group and composition if possible", CTG 79.11 reported his estimate of the situation as follows: "There was just one group, two large and one small. We are being straddled now. All headed north in one column." This transmission, however, did not get through to CTG 77.2 and, after asking at 0309 if CTG 77.2 had received his last transmission without getting a reply, CTG 79.11 asked COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to relay the message to CTG 77.2. COMCRUDIV FIFTEEN (CTG 77.3) intercepted the message and, realizing its importance, retransmitted it to CTG 77.2 at 0310.***

This was a surprising report since it was incorrect. As Commander Eastern Attack Group, he had already reported five enemy ships and, since the REMEY had observed, at the time of firing torpedoes that there were about eight pips on her radar scope, it is not clear what motivated him to make this report. As has been shown under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0245 - 0320, October 25th" at 0311, this message served only to confuse CTG 77.2, who wondered what had become of the other Japanese ships.

In view of the fact that the original seven ships were still in the Japanese formation, does it not seem clear that CTG 79.11 not only failed to comply adequately with CTG 77.2's request for information of the composition of the Japanese force, but, in addition, provided that commander with information which was definitely misleading? This was due, in a large part, to the fact that CTG 79.11, as Commander Eastern Attack

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* Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

Group, did not close the enemy sufficiently to insure better target definition, since the importance of correct information was vital. Would he not have been in accordance with the best destroyer traditions had he, at the very least, fired starshells to endeavor to silhouette the Japanese ships, especially so, once he had been discovered?

Commander Eastern Attack Group reported in his action report that at 0309 his ships observed three to five explosions, not gunfire, in the enemy formation.* He considered, of course, that these explosions resulted from his own torpedoes because this was the calculated time when these torpedoes should have crossed the enemy track, and because he knew that the torpedoes of his western group, even if fired, could not have reached the target at this time.

It is of interest that all three destroyers--REMEY, MC GOWAN and MELVIN--also reported in their action reports having observed certain of these explosions whereas the two destroyers of the Western Attack Group (MC DERMUT and MONSSEN) did not report any explosions at this time nor any underwater detonations. This is surprising since the destroyers of the eastern group, which were shielded by heavy smoke with limited visibility, were some 14,000 yards away and opening, whereas the destroyers of the western group, in clear visibility, were about 12,500 yards away and closing. It will be shown later that these hits were not actually observed and were not officially reported as having been observed. Instead, the report came from the radar scopes and gave only conjecture.

The Japanese continued to fire at the eastern group. By about 0310 Commander Eastern Attack Group noted that their salvos were falling shorter and shorter and that the starshell illumination had deteriorated.**

At 0311, he intercepted a message from Commander Western Attack Group to the MONSSEN to the effect that the MC DERMUT had fired her torpedoes and that she (MONSSEN) was to fire when ready.**

At 0312 he intercepted a message from the MONSSEN that she had fired. He now knew that TG 79.11 had completed firing.*

By 0313 he observed, from his radar scope, that the two rear enemy ships appeared to fall behind the leaders, with one large ship sheering to the right and slowing. This was gratifying because it showed that his firing had been effective.* Actually, in this firing only the FUSO had been hit. The appearance that the two ships were dropping behind resulted from the fact that as the FUSO slowed and sheered to the right, out of column, she naturally closed the MOGAMI which was attempting to close the YAMASHIRO.***

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

TO SUMMARIZE THE ABOVE TORPEDO ATTACK BY THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP, A TOTAL OF TWENTY-SEVEN TORPEDOES HAD BEEN FIRED; REMEY (EIGHT), MC GOWAN (TEN) AND MELVIN (NINE). COMMANDER EASTERN ATTACK GROUP REPORTED AT THE TIME THAT HE MAY HAVE MADE HITS ON TWO SHIPS BUT HE LATER CHANGED THIS IN HIS ACTION REPORT TO A CLAIM OF THREE TO FIVE HITS ON THE TWO LARGEST SHIPS. EXCEPT FOR THE FUSO, WHICH THE MOGAMI* REPORTED AS HAVING BEEN TORPEDOED ONCE ON HER STARBOARD SIDE AND WHICH THIS ANALYSIS ALSO INDICATES RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE HIT, NO HITS WERE MADE ON ANY OF THE OTHER SIX SHIPS. THIS WAS A HIT PERCENTAGE OF ABOUT THREE AND SEVEN-TENTHS PER CENT.

As a result of these firings these destroyers had torpedoes remaining as follows: REMEY (two), MC GOWAN (zero) and MELVIN (one).

At 0320 the Eastern Attack Group was about three miles south of Hibuson Island on course 025°(T), speed twenty knots and heading for its post-attack rendezvous.

(2) Commander Western Attack Group.

At 0245 Commander Western Attack Group, in the MC DERMUT with the MONSSEN in column about 600 yards astern, was leading the Western Attack Group on course 170°(T), speed twenty knots, to its torpedo launching point. He had not as yet made radar contact with the enemy.**

At this time his group was about six miles farther north than the Eastern Attack Group and was bearing about 312°(T), distant eight and six-tenths miles from that group.

Also, at 0246, he intercepted a contact report from the MC GOWAN to Commander Eastern Attack Group reporting three or more unidentified ships on course 000°(T) in column, bearing 184°(T), range fifteen miles.**

At 0249, having received orders from CTG 79.11 at 0248 to do so, he increased speed to twenty-five knots.**

At 0250 he likely intercepted Commander Eastern Attack Group's instructions to the Eastern Attack Group to fire torpedoes only.

As he headed south he encountered DESRON TWENTY-FOUR (the six right flank destroyers) which was moving to the westward to close the shoreline and, by so doing, to avoid interference with the Western Attack Group. At this time DESRON TWENTY-FOUR was on course 290°(T) and on a line of bearing 000°-180°(T).***

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

Also at 0313 he (a) noted that the enemy had ceased firing at the eastern group.* Whether or not he noted that the enemy had shifted fire and illumination to his western group is not known but it seems improbable because none of his ships reported these facts. At this time the REMEY ceased making smoke but apparently he did not direct the other two ships to cease making smoke for there is no entry in the voice logs of such an order; and (b) he reduced speed of the eastern group to twenty-five knots and then queried the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN by TBS voice radio as to whether he saw any indications of a hit, to which the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN at 0317 replied that he thought that he had observed one hit, and possibly one more, but was not sure.**

At 0316 he reported the results of his firing to CTG 77.2 as follows: "Total of five (targets). Two may have been hit. They are slowing down and dropping back."*** This message, which was not finally received by CTG 77.2 until 0317, was not complete in that it failed to give any information other than numbers. It did not give the composition, the types, the formation or the course and speed. While he may have felt that CTG 77.2 was able to track the enemy and thereby obtain his course and speed, he must have well known that he could not obtain from that source the composition and actual formation or the types.

The above two messages are in contrast to the statement previously reported that three explosions had been sighted.

At 0317 the MELVIN asked permission to terminate smoke which was granted.****

At 0318 Commander Eastern Attack Group reduced the speed of the group to eighteen knots.

At 0319 he observed one large explosion in the target area* and received a message from Commander Western Attack Group claiming that he had just scored a bit hit on the enemy. This was believed to have been the "blowing up" of a Japanese destroyer by the torpedoes of the Western Attack Group.***** It was correct in that the YAMAGUMO exploded and sank almost instantly at this time.******

At this time he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 requesting information as to the types of enemy ships reported at 0317.

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* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (J).

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

****** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

Commander Western Attack Group could see, not only on his radar scope but also by visual sighting, that this westward movement would invite collision unless he took immediate action. Therefore at 0252 he changed course to 090°(T) to clear the northernmost ship of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR (BEALE), which at this time was about 1,000 yards to the south (Diagram "G"). Since "follow-the-leader" tactics were in effect the MONSSEN followed in column.*

At 0253 his flagship (MC DERMUT) reported** the first radar contact on the enemy made by the Western Attack Group. This report was to the effect that the enemy was bearing 158°(T), range 38,000 yards. Since this range was, at this time, some 6,000 yards too great it was probably made earlier (i.e., 0248) but not reported. While this had no adverse effect in this case it points out clearly the necessity for exactness in contact reports as to "time".

At 0254, having cleared DESRON TWENTY-FOUR, he came right to course 190°(T) to head for the enemy, while working slightly westward toward the shoreline. He was, at this time, over 6,000 yards from the shoreline and felt that this was too great a distance to receive any protection from the land mass against radar detection.***

Also, at 0254, he may have intercepted a message from CTG 77.2 requesting CTG 79.11 to report to him when he had the enemy on his radar scope and the number of ships, but this is doubtful because (a) CTG 79.11 did not receive the message on TBS voice radio but did receive it on the PT Voice Common**** and (b) COMDESDIV 108 does not mention it in his action report.

At 0255 the MONSSEN made radar contact on a single pip bearing 160°(T), range 30,000 yards, but did not report it.*

At 0256 he intercepted Commander Eastern Attack Group's report to CTG 77.2 that there were two large targets and three smaller ones five and one-half miles west of Tungo Point.

Also at 0256 he received a second range from his flagship locating the enemy on bearing 160°(T), range 29,700 yards.***

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* Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

Surprising as it may seem, he made no effort at this time to locate himself with relation to the Eastern Attack Group because, as he stated later, he "believed that DESDIV 108 (Western Attack Group) was not more than 5,000 yards to the north of DESDIV 107 (Eastern Attack Group)".* Although he infers that the Eastern Attack Group was not on his radar scope at this time it is probable that it was there for it was observed later, when a need for it arose, at almost exactly the same range.

This failure of Commander Western Attack Group to maintain contact on the Eastern Attack Group and to make every effort to insure that his attack was coordinated with that of the Eastern Attack Group was unsound in that it violated the very principle of multiple attacks, i.e., that the separate salvos of torpedoes arrive nearly simultaneously at the target.** In making this comment it is, of course, realized that the blame for this failure was not the responsibility of Commander Western Attack Group alone but was largely the responsibility of CTG 79.11, as has been pointed out under "Operations of Commander Eastern Attack Group, 0245 - 0320, October 25th".

At 0258 he received CTG 79.11's message designating targets and assigning the first and third targets to the western group. He was not confused by this target designation because it coincided exactly with the picture he had on his radar scope "of three large pips in column heading north with the leading pip smaller than the other two".* Since, just three minutes before, the MC DERMUT radar scope had shown but one small pip*** and two minutes before the MONSSEN's scope also had shown but one small pip,**** it is not clear how the picture of the three large pips in column could have developed so rapidly.

At 0259 he directed the MC DERMUT to take the third target and the MONSSEN to take the one to the north, and asked the MONSSEN whether she had the targets on her radar scope.*

At 0300 (a) having received an affirmative reply from the MONSSEN* and (b) since the CIC was busy tracking the enemy, he decided not to close the shoreline any farther and therefore changed course to 180°(T).

At this same time he heard the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN request permission to fire torpedoes, and Commander Eastern Attack Group's reply to "Fire torpedoes when ready." He was mystified by these messages for he believed the eastern group to be only about 5,000 yards to the south.

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

*** Action Report MC DERMUT Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944.

**** Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation of the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

Since his range to the target at this time was over 21,000 yards, and since he knew that the maximum firing range for intermediate torpedoes should be about 11,600 yards, he decided that the Eastern Attack Group must be firing at targets other than those he was tracking. On checking his radar scope on the bridge for other targets, he noted a small group of two or three ships to the southeast which he had not seen before. (These ships were also sighted visually by the Gunnery Officer MONSSEN* from his battle station, presumably through his optics.) He requested CIC to give him a range and bearing on this target which at 0301:30 was given as 116°(T), 19,700 yards.** He concluded from this that these targets were the ones the Eastern Attack Group was attacking. However, since he had already decided to attack the southern group of targets he continued his attack because the southern targets were large and definitely enemy. Actually, the small group of targets which were to the northeast of his present targets comprised the Eastern Attack Group but he did not know this until much later.**

THIS DECISION TO ATTACK THE SOUTHERN TARGETS WAS OF COURSE CORRECT. WHILE IT CLEARLY AND IRREVOCABLY REJECTED THE CONCEPT OF A COORDINATED ATTACK THIS HAD NOW BECOME UNAVOIDABLE ANYWAY SINCE THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP WAS IN FIRING POSITION WHILE HIS OWN GROUP WOULD NOT BE IN FIRING POSITION (FIFTY DEGREES ON THE ENEMY'S PORT BOW, RANGE 7,500 YARDS)** FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES.

In rejecting the concept of a coordinated attack Commander Western Attack Group was conforming to doctrine which stated: "IN A DELIBERATE ATTACK, COORDINATION IN TIME OF TORPEDO CROSSINGS IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE, SO THAT THE ENEMY CANNOT EVADE EACH SPREAD IN SUCCESSION. HOWEVER, WHEN ORDERED TO ATTACK, DESTROYERS SHOULD ATTACK WITHOUT DELAY WITH HIGHEST SPEED SETTING POSSIBLE. PERFECT COORDINATION IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE AND IF DESTROYERS DELAY, ENEMY HAS MORE TIME TO AVOID THREAT AND INFLICT DAMAGE ON ATTACKING UNITS."***

In the meantime, he observed far away on his port bow an enemy searchlight which swept around for a short time and then was extinguished. He also observed gunfire off the port bow and a little later observed starshells which he thought were bursting between his group and the enemy,** as a result of which he stated "this gave one a wonderful feeling of relief and security at being thus protected from their sight".** Actually, this was not so and shows the difficulty often experienced in estimating, from a distance, the position of starshells. These starshells were being fired by the THIRD Section against the Eastern Attack Group.

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* Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

At 0302 he likely intercepted a message from Commander Right Flank Force to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR which, in part, directed that commander to attack and to follow down the west shoreline.* This information was of considerable importance because his retiring destroyers would likely encounter these attacking destroyers and it was imperative that they not interfere with the attack.

At 0304 he received, from his CIC, a new course of 150°(T) which would take him directly to his firing point.* He accepted this solution of his attack problem and at 0305 changed course thirty degrees to port to the new course.

However, after one minute, he decided that it would be unwise to continue on this course too long lest the enemy be tracking him and obtain a good firing solution. He, therefore, at 0306, when the range to the YAMASHIRO was 13,500 yards (and the target angle from Diagram "G" was 321° or thirty-nine degrees on the enemy's port bow) changed course thirty degrees to the right and returned to his previous course of 180°(T) and increased speed to thirty knots.** He stated that he did this to "break the mean range line and offer some protection if the Japanese had fired torpedoes".**

This decision does not appear to have been sound, because even if the enemy had fired torpedoes, the short time which had elapsed during the above changes of course would have been insufficient to have removed his two ships from enemy torpedo water. In fact, would not the course of 150°(T) have made the likelihood of torpedo hits less in that this course more nearly paralleled possible enemy torpedo tracks? Does it not, therefore, seem correct to say that his proper course should have been to continue on course 150°(T) and head for his chosen firing point?

Commander Western Attack Group stated that at 0307 starshells burst between his destroyers and the enemy. He also stated that the enemy was making periodic searchlight sweeps in his direction** but apparently the illumination was not effective. The Commanding Officer MONSSEN stated that the MONSSEN had been taken under fire at 0308 before being effectively illuminated*** and the Commanding Officer MC DERMUT stated that, although illumination was poor, enemy shells could be heard whistling overhead as if the enemy knew that "we were out here somewhere" and that illumination did not become effective until just after firing.* Although the SHIGURE recorded that fire was opened on the Western Attack Group at 0311**** it is considered that this time was in error as was her

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* Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Statement of Gunnery Officer MONSSEN, Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

recorded time of opening fire on the Eastern Attack Group. It appears that at least one of the Japanese ships opened fire on the Western Attack Group between 0307 and 0308 but that this firing did not become general until 0311 when illumination became effective.

At 0307:30 Commander Western Attack Group ordered "Standby your torpedoes". At this time the range to the target was about 12,000 yards, the target angle about 312°.*

At 0308 he intercepted a report from CTG 79.11 to CTG 77.2 to the effect that (a) there was just one group of enemy ships, consisting of two large and one small, heading north in one column and (b) he was being straddled. This picture of enemy ships coincided exactly with his own picture;** however, it did not coincide with the pictures in the CIC's of the MC DERMUT*** and MONSSEN.**** The MC DERMUT saw four small pips in addition to the three large ones, which information apparently did not reach the bridge, and the MONSSEN saw five targets (three small pips and two large ones) in column. From the voice logs of the above ships it seems clear that none of this target information was exchanged between the ships of this attack group. This can probably be attributed to (a) failure to appreciate the need of this interchange, (b) inexperience in making torpedo attacks, and (c) lack of training.

Also, at 0308, he changed course once again toward the enemy, this time through fifty degrees to course 130°(T) to close the range while maintaining a good target angle, which target angle he believed to be 310°.** From Diagram "G" it was more nearly 313°.

At 0309:30, in order to fire torpedoes, and on recommendation of his CIC, he returned to course 180°(T), which placed him about 9,700 yards from the YAMASHIRO, and 9,200 yards from the SHIGURE which was now the third ship in column.

At this same time the MONSSEN changed course to 160°(T) in order to be on the port quarter of the MC DERMUT when firing torpedoes and thus avoid any possibility of being blanked off or delayed at the firing point through a casualty to the MC DERMUT and also to close the range somewhat which was desirable at the time.****

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* Statement of Gunnery Officer MONSSEN, Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944.

**** Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

Since the commanders reported as follows: (a) COMDESDIV 108 that starshells were fired in his direction at 0307,* (b) the Commanding Officer MONSSEN that he was under fire at 0308** and (c) the Commanding Officer MC DERMUT that shells were whistling overhead for some time before firing,*** it is most probable that throughout the laters periods of the approach to the torpedo firing station, the destroyers were fired at by the enemy but without adequate illumination or control.

In view of this it is not understood why Commander Western Attack Group did not open fire with guns. Perhaps he felt that Japanese radar capabilities were very poor and therefore their knowledge of his position was also poor; perhaps since (a) they did not train their searchlights or starshells on him continuously and (b) they ceased their illumination after a short period of time, he felt that they did not see him; and by opening fire with guns would give the enemy a better point of aim.

About this time Commander Western Attack Group directed the MC DERMUT to fire torpedoes.

The MC DERMUT than, at 0310:15, commenced firing a full salvo of ten torpedoes on base torpedo course 082°(T) at her designated target bearing 118°(T), range 9,170 yards, target angle 298°, and tracked on course 000°(T), speed twenty-two knots.*** The target fired at appears to have been the destroyer SHIGURE which, because the YAMAGUMO had not as yet entered the column, was the third ship in column.**** All torpedoes were launched successfully, using broadside fire to port, three second intervals, one degree spread, six foot depth setting and intermediate speed, and all appeared to run hot, straight and normal.***

Shortly after the MC DERMUT had commenced firing torpedoes Commander Western Attack Group, at about 0310:30, ordered the MONSSEN to "fire torpedoes and let me know when they are out".*

At 0311 Commander Western Attack Group observed that his command was being illuminated by an enemy searchlight, followed by gunfire.*

Also at this time the MONSSEN commenced firing a full salvo of ten torpedoes on base torpedo course 094½°(T) at her designated target, bearing 110°(T), range 8,750 yards, target angle 290 degrees and tracked on course 000°(T) at twenty-three knots.** The target fired at was the second destroyer, the ASAGUMO. All torpedoes were launched successfully using the same firing plan as the MC DERMUT.

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation of the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands and in the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

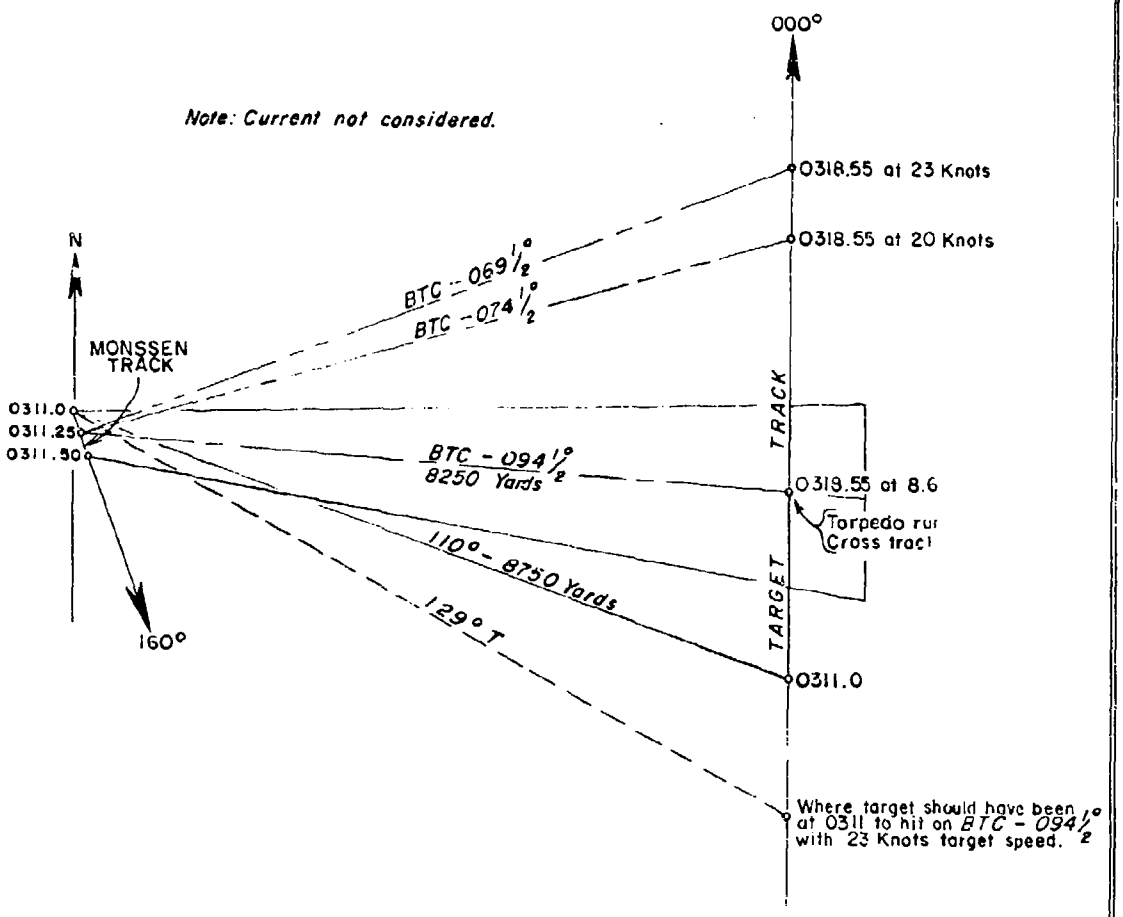
The Commanding Officer MONSSEN, in the torpedo section of his action report, states that the torpedoes were launched on a base torpedo course slightly aft of the intended aiming point due to the failure to get the last bearing on the torpedo director. This was explained as follows: Failure of the lighting on the torpedo director target bearing indicator from the gun director made it impossible for the gun director to generate target bearing for the torpedo director and hence it was necessary to apply target bearing to the torpedo director by telephoning the radar bearings from CIC to the torpedo control party.* This procedure resulted in an undetermined dead time which, at the high bearing rates caused by the relative speed of fifty knots, produced a considerable error in the bearing on which the torpedo tubes were laid. This lighting failure was aggravated at the crucial moment by CIC use of the telephone to inquire if the torpedoes had been fired.*

In addition to the above, Diagram "G" indicates that the target bearing at the time of firing was actually 107°(T) compared to the radar bearing at the time of firing of 110°(T).* This radar error of three degrees was of course not included in the errors discussed above for the last bearing did not get on the torpedo director. Graphic analysis of the ranges and bearings recorded by the MONSSEN* gives the impression that (a) from 0256 to 0305 she was tracking the YAMASHIRO, (b) from 0305 to 0308 she was tracking the ASAGUMO, (c) from 0306 to 0311 she was ranging on the SHIGURE and taking bearings on the ASAGUMO and (d) the range taken at 0311:30 as the last torpedo was being fired was on the YAMASHIRO (8,750 yards) while the bearing was taken on the SHIGURE (106°(T)). The ranges taken on the SHIGURE produced the speed of twenty-three knots for she, it will be remembered, was moving up to take station astern of the ASAGUMO. Aside from the speed error introduced, any bearing error in the last radar bearing applied would, of course, be applied.

Graphic solution of the torpedo firing problem (Plate XXIII) shows that with a target speed of twenty-three knots, no current and a base torpedo course of 094½°(T) the firing bearing should have been 129°(T) or that using the firing bearing of 110°(T) the base torpedo course should have been 069½° (T). In a similar solution using the actual Japanese speed of twenty knots the base torpedo course should have been 074½°(T). From the above it can be seen that it was particularly fortunate for the MONSSEN that (a) the YAMASHIRO was about 2,500 yards astern of the ASAGUMO, (b) she was making three knots lower speed than the tracking party had determined and (c) she turned away and then came back to the base course of 000°(T) during the torpedo run. In fact the distance astern of the ASAGUMO, the lower speed and the distance lost during the turn away, roughly compensated for the error in tube laying.

At 0312 Commander Western Attack Group, learning that MONSSEN had launched all torpedoes and observing that she was now being straddled (actually she was not being straddled but shells were landing near the bow),

* Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.



TORPEDO ANALYSIS - MONSSEN

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 25th. 1944

PLATE XXIII

directed that speed be increased to maximum and that retirement be made to the westward.* As a result of this order (a) the MC DERMUT increased speed to thirty-three knots and changed course to 290°(T)** while (b) MONSSEN changed course also to 290°(T), but n[illegible] in column.***

Immediately after completing the turn, the Commanding Officer MC DERMUT sighted two (actually there were three) motor torpedo boats dead ahead. He put his rudder hard right and steadied on course 350°(T). After clearing the motor torpedo boats he, at 0314:30, changed course to 325°(T) in order to clear the firing area.** (These motor torpedo boats were the friendly PT's 328 (F), 329 and 323.)

While avoiding these boats COMDESDIV 108 at 0312:30 called them on the PT Common Voice Circuit telling them who the destroyers were and warning them to leave the destroyers alone. At this time he was startled to hear one of the motor torpedo boats request permission from the senior boat to fire torpedoes, obviously having mistaken the destroyers for enemy. As this transmission was on a separate circuit, CIC replied informing the boats that the two destroyers were friendly.*

It was to avoid just this situation that CTF 77 had directed CTG 70.1 to station motor torpedo boats south of Latitude 10°-10'N during darkness but, unfortunately, the motor torpedo boats had already been stationed as far north as Latitude 10°-17'N. CTG 70.1 had been unable to reassign these boats because of his inability to communicate with them. THIS INCIDENT, WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN SERIOUS, PLAINLY INDICATES THE INADVISABILITY OF OPERATING MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT TYPES WITH LIMITED COMMUNICATION FACILITIES IN WATERS WHERE OWN HEAVIER SURFACE FORCES AS WELL AS ENEMY FORCES ARE TO BE EXPECTED.

IT ALSO EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF INSURING THAT ALL UNITS REQUIRED FOR AN OPERATION AND WHICH ARE TO OPERATE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ONE ANOTHER, ARE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, RECOGNITION, AND IDENTIFICATION. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT IN OPERATING MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS OR OTHER SIMILAR CRAFT IN AREAS ADJACENT TO LARGE FRIENDLY VESSELS, POSITIVE AND TIMELY MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO AVOID MUTUAL INTERFERENCE. WHERE ACTUAL COORDINATION OR COOPERATION OF SUCH DIVERSE TYPES IS REQUIRED, THERE CAN BE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DIRECT ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS CONCERNED PRIOR TO THE OPERATION.

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Track Chart, Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

As he headed northwestward he suddenly observed at 0313:30 a bright green flare between his destroyers and the shoreline which was ideally placed to silhouette his command to the Japanese. The MONSSEN, which had been illuminated by enemy searchlight during her turn, and was farther to the south, immediately made smoke which obscured her from the enemy,* and changed course to 325°(T).** This flare appears to have been dropped by planes from the THIRD Section which had been ordered launched some hours earlier, at 2230, with instructions to search Leyte Gulf, contact and guide the Japanese forces.*

Not all of the Japanese commanders realized that this flare was friendly for the SHIGURE thought it was some sort of new Allied flare for artillery (gunnery) spotting.*

As the destroyers retired they observed that, as late as 0314, the enemy was still employing searchlights and starshells.**

At 0316, as discussed under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0245 - 0320, October 25th", Commander THIRD Section, having sighted the destroyers of the western group, commenced changing course by emergency ship's turn to starboard to course 090°(T) in order to avoid the torpedoes which he realized might well have been fired since one possible wake had already been reported. This large change of course by ship's turn was not observed by Commander Western Attack Group but the fact that the enemy track showed a tendency to the eastward was observed.

At 0316:30 Commander Western Attack Group, having moved as far westward as he considered necessary to gain any advantage which might accrue from the effect of shore masses on the enemy's radar and also to clear DESRON TWENTY-FOUR which was now attacking, changed course to north.***

Fortunately for the Allies, Commander THIRD Section, at 0317:30, returned to his base course of 000°(T)* before he had succeeded in removing his command beyond the maximum torpedo range.

At 0319 Commander Western Attack Group, as well as the MC DERMUT*** and the MONSSEN,** observed three explosions, one of which was quite large, and not associated with gunfire, in the direction of the targets. He immediately informed CTG 79.11 that a big "flare" had been scored in the target area. Since (a) the time of these explosions coincided with the calculated time of arrival of the torpedoes at the target, and (b) the Japanese reported that at this time the YAMASHIRO and three destroyers

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944.

(MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO) had been torpedoed almost simultaneously,* it is concluded that these torpedoes had been fired by the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN. The Japanese reported later that (a) the YAMAGUMO had been hit by at least three torpedoes, and had sunk almost immediately,* (b) the YAMASHIRO had been hit by one torpedo but her combat efficiency had not been impaired,** (c) the MICHISHIO had received one hit which caused her to fall out of column,***and (d) the ASAGUMO had received one hit which had severed her bow and which caused her to fall out of column also.****

TO SUMMARIZE, THE DESTROYERS OF THE WESTERN ATTACK GROUP FIRED A TOTAL OF TWENTY TORPEDOES, MC DERMUT (TEN), MONSSEN (TEN), AND MADE A MINIMUM OF SIX HITS FOR A HIT PERCENTAGE OF THIRTY PERCENT.

THE VAST SUPERIORITY OF HITS MADE BY THIS TORPEDO ATTACK OVER THAT OF THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO SEVERAL FACTORS OF WHICH THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT: SHORTER FIRING RANGES (9,000 YARDS VERSUS 11,000 YARDS AND OVER); GREATER AND, THEREFORE, MORE EFFECTIVE TARGET ANGLE (TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY DEGREES VERSUS THIRTY DEGREES); WIDER SPREAD PLACEMENT AT THE TARGET WHICH RESULTED FROM BETTER FIRE DISTRIBUTION (ALL BUT ONE SHIP (MOGAMI) WAS WITHIN THE SPREAD OF THE WESTERN ATTACK GROUP'S TORPEDOES, WHEREAS ONLY THREE SHIPS (YAMAGUMO, FUSO, MOGAMI) CAN BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN WITHIN THE SPREAD OF THE EASTERN ATTACK GROUP'S TORPEDOES).

In addition to the above tactical factors it appears that (a) COMDESDIV 108 and his ships had been more thorough in preparing for the action which is evidenced by the following: (1) No misfires; (2) MC DERMUT had checked torpedo gyro alignment before the action;****(3) MC DERMUT had charged torpedo air flasks to 3,000 pounds per square inch pressure to get extra range****(about 800 yards*****as shown on Diagram "G"), and (b) this thoroughness carried over to the records in that they submitted very complete and accurate action reports and track charts.

At 0320 Commander Western Attack Group (MC DERMUT) was in Latitude 10°-19'N and about 1,800 yards off the shore of Leyte Island. The MONSSEN was about 1,200 yards astern, and on the port quarter.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 250330 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

**** Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944.

***** Manual of Destroyer Torpedo Control, Destroyer Tactical Bulletin No. 4-45, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific, August 22nd, 1945, Section 2.3, Page 14.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0245 - 0320, October 25th.

(1) Upper Surigao PT's.

At 0245 Commander Upper Surigao PT's, in PT 327, with PT's 321 and 326 in company, was proceeding toward the shelter of Kanihaan Island at seven knots. He had radar contact on the Japanese THIRD Section, which was approaching him from the south.

At 0255, at a distance of about 6,500 yards,* he sighted the contact visually as it passed six miles due west of the southern tip of Kanihaan Island. He evaluated it as one battleship, three destroyers and one other large ship but did not make a contact report** perhaps because he had reported its presence to CTG 79.11 at 0235. Actually there were two battleships, one cruiser on course 000°(T), speed twenty knots, which was quite accurate.

At 0310 he stopped and commenced drifting with the southerly current.

At 0320 the Upper Surigao PT's were bearing about 193°(T), distant 2,000 yards from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "G").

(2) Kanihaan PT's.

Commander Kanihaan PT's, with PT's 495, 489 and 492, was on station one-half mile south of Kanihaan Island conducting radar search.

At approximately 0250 he made radar contact on a large ship bearing about 260°(T), range six miles.*** He seems to have gone ahead at this point at about twenty knots and to have changed course to about 316°(T). By 0255 he had cleared Kanihaan Island and settled on approximate course 341°(T) in order to close his target without losing too much bearing.

Although their action reports do not mention it, the motor torpedo boats must have seen the Japanese searchlight illumination and firing at the Eastern Attack Group after 0300. At this time they were within four and one-half miles of the Japanese formation. That their action reports do not mention the torpedo hit in the FUSO is not surprising for the commander of the Japanese force did not know it either.

At approximately 0311:30, at a range of three miles he sighted the target visually and identified his target as a battleship which he realized had slowed and which he stated was still proceeding in a northerly direction.*** This was the battleship FUSO, which had been torpedoed at

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* Action Report PT 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 327, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

0308:30 and was at this time making about twelve knots, on course 030°(T). He continued on, but before he could make an attack, he received a warning from Commander Western Attack Group at 0313* to all motor torpedo boats to the effect that friendly destroyers were approaching down the strait which were not to be attacked.** He, therefore, retired toward Kanihaan Island to his patrol station without any further action.

Since he (a) had recognized this ship as a battleship, which was alone, (b) had undoubtedly recognized it as enemy because the FUSO and YAMASHIRO had enormous pagoda-like foremast structures which bore no resemblance to Allied battleships or cruisers, (c) knew that only Allied destroyers were attacking down the strait at this time, (d) knew that the action was proceeding northward and away from his present position, (e) was in an excellent approach position for a torpedo attack against a slow target and (f) had apparently not been discovered since no enemy action had been taken against him, his decision to retire his motor torpedo boats without making a contact report or an attack on the enemy battleship was unsound.

In all fairness, however, it seems likely that Commander Kanihaan PT's had interpreted too literally his orders which, according to CTG 70.1, were, in part, "the sections stationed nearest own forces in the upper end of the straits were positively instructed to get clear and stay clear if there were any indications of own forces moving into their areas."*** Also that "no ship moving down the straits during or after the battle was to be attacked by any boat unless positively identified as enemy."***

At 0320 the Kanihaan PT's were about three and one-half miles, bearing 332°(T) from Kanihaan Island.

(3) South Amagusan PT's.

At 0245 Commander South Amagusan PT's, with his motor torpedo boats, was proceeding toward the shelter of Amagusan Point at ten knots. PT 331, which had the only radar functioning satisfactorily in the group, was conducting radar search and tracking the enemy.

At approximately 0306:30 the Japanese THIRD Section heading north and the Allied Western Attack Group heading south were on the radar screen and approaching each other. The Western Attack Group was about six miles away, while the THIRD Section was about seven miles away.**** PT 331 stated that the friendly ships were four miles east of Amagusan Point while the enemy ships were four miles west of Kanihaan Island.*****

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0330, December 1st, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 320, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 331, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

Although the enemy was passing about five miles west of Kanihaan Island and the Western Attack Group was somewhat north of Amagusan Point (Diagram "G"), this picture otherwise was fairly accurate and indicated that Commander South Amagusan PT's maintained an unusually good summary plot despite the inadequate facilities of a motor torpedo boat.

At this same time, being well clear of the coming action, he stopped and started to drift with the current.

At 0311 he observed the searchlight and gunfire directed at the Western Attack Group* which he, and his command thought were directed at themselves.**

According to PT 329 of the East Amagusan PT's, PT 320 at this time, informed the motor torpedo boats, that friendly destroyers were in the area. Whether PT 320 obtained this information from COMDESDIV 108 or determined it himself is not known.

At 0320 he was bearing about 182°(T), distant about two point six miles from Amagusan Point.

(4) East Amagusan PT's.

Commander East Amagusan PT's, with PT's 328 (OTC), 323 and 329, was patrolling his station about two miles east of Amagusan Point. At 0245 he had completed a move to the north against the current and was now drifting south from a position about two miles north of Amagusan Point. The radar in his flagship, PT 328, was inoperative. It appears that the radars in the other two motor torpedo boats were operating satisfactorily although there is no mention of radar contacts during this period.

Around 0300 he sighted searchlights and starshells to the southeastward.*** This was the action of the THIRD Section and the Eastern Attack Group. Between 0310 and 0311 he sighted the searchlights, starshells and firing of the THIRD Section at the MC DERMUT and the MONSSEN**** and at the same time sighted these two FLETCHER class destroyers passing fairly close aboard on southerly courses. Shortly afterward he saw them turn and pass close aboard on a northerly course.***

At 0312:30 he either heard COMDESDIV 108, in MC DERMUT, warning the motor torpedo boats on voice radio that he was friendly and not to attack or as stated under South Amagusan PT's, may have received the warning from PT 320. He immediately warned his section that the destroyers were friendly.**** At this same time the units of his section became separated.*****

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Reports PT's 330 and 331, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 328, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

(a) PT 328.

As a result of the warning of friendly destroyers received from COMDESDIV 108 at 0312:30 and the close passage of the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN about the same time, PT 328 then, at 0313, closed Amagusan Point in order to get out of the destroyer attack area.

At 0313:30 the Commanding Officer (a) likely saw the bright green flare reported by most ships although he does not mention it in his action report and (b) observed that he had been picked up by an enemy searchlight but had not been fired on.*

At 0320 PT 328 was bearing 073°(T), distant 2,900 yards from Amagusan Point (Diagram "G").

(b) PT 323.

After (1) sighting the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN passing close aboard on a northerly course and (2) receiving the OTC's warning that the destroyers were friendly, the Commanding Officer PT 323, went ahead on a southerly course in order to clear the destroyer attack area.

At 0313:30 he sighted the blue (green) flare which was sighted by both friend and foe alike.**

Since there is no mention of the blowing up of the YAMAGUMO at 0319, it seems likely that this was due to the fact that the THIRD Section was obscured by the smoke laid by the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN.

At 0320 PT 323 was bearing 100°(T), distant 3,700 yards from Amagusan Point.

(c) PT 329.

Sometime around 0312 the Commanding Officer PT 329 sighted a destroyer coming toward him which he clearly mistook as an enemy ship for he requested permission from the Commanding Officer PT 328 (OTC) to fire torpedoes. Meanwhile he maneuvered to obtain a favorable firing position. At 0312:30 he either (a) heard COMDESDIV 108 advising the motor torpedo boats of the presence of the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN and warning them not to fire or (b) received this message from PT 320. He did not open fire because he recognized the destroyer as friendly since (a) it came from the northeast and (b) he had received word from PT 320 that friendly destroyers were in the target area.*** This statement seems to have been a post-battle rationalization for otherwise no request to fire would have been made.

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* Action Report PT 328, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

He did not report this contact because he could not get through to anyone on either the VHF or the TCS radio circuits.*

At 0313:30 he probably sighted the bright green flare reported by the other ships in the vicinity but he did not mention this matter in his action report.

About 0316, judging that he was close enough to the Leyte shore, he stopped and commenced drifting with the current.

At 0320 PT 329 was bearing 050°(T), distant 3,000 yards from Amagusan Point.

(5) SE Panaon PT's.

At 0245 these PT's were off the southeast coast of Panaon Island between Binit Point and Bolobolo Point. It will be recalled that they had become separated prior to the transit of the THIRD Section due to radio and radar failure in PT 137. At this time they had not yet regrouped and were operating independently.

They continued to operate about as shown on Diagram "I" making no contact either on the enemy or each other.

(6) Sumilon PT's.

At 0245 Commander Sumilon PT's was drifting with the current south of Sumilon Island as shown on Diagram "I". About 0318 he commenced returning to his station off Sumilon Island.

At 0320 he was bearing 175°(T), distant 4,000 yards from the southern tip of Sumilon Island.

(7) Bilaa Point PT's.

At 0245 Commander Bilaa Point PT's, with his PT's separated about 1,500 yards, was drifting with the current about one mile northwest of Bilaa Point (Diagram "I"). At this time he had stopped.

At approximately 0312 PT 497, in position about two and six-tenths miles southwest of Bilaa Point,** made radar contact on targets bearing 300°(T), distant five to seven miles. These targets were actually the AKEBONO bearing 290°(T), distant five miles and the NACHI bearing 288°(T), distant seven miles. They had just completed a turn to 020°(T) and were heading for Binit Point.

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* Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 497, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

Although he stated that he reported this contact as three large targets (which was correct) through PT 523,* there is no indication that the report reached the responsible commanders further up the strait.

At 0320 he was 6,000 yards bearing 240°(T) from Bilaa Point.

(8) Madilao Point PT's.

At 0245 Commander Madilao Point PT's, with his PT's, was about one mile south of Madilao Point on course about 180°(T), at slow speed (probably about seven and one-half knots), patrolling to a point five miles south of Madilao Point.** PT 195 was using her radar on the five mile scale for navigational purposes.***

At 0311 Commander Madilao Point PT's made radar contact on two targets to the southwest of Binit Point at a distance of about ten miles. He experienced difficulty in recognizing them as enemy for some time due to their being "such a short distance from Binit Point".****

These two targets were probably the NACHI and the ASHIGARA. Since the NACHI was nearly five miles from Binit Point at this time it is not clear how the land interferred with the detection or the identification of the targets (Diagram "I").

Commander Madilao Point PT's did not report this contact presumably due to radio interference.****

At 0320 he appears to have been about four point seventy-five miles bearing 191°(T) from Madilao Point.

(9) Lower Surigao PT's.

At about 0245 the Lower Surigao PT's were operating separately about as shown in Diagram "I". Commander Lower Surigao PT's, in PT 490, was proceeding north along the eastern coast of Panaon Island toward Caligangan Point (Panaon Island). En route he passed PT 493 which was aground on Maoyo Point without sighting or being sighted by that boat; PT 491 was well off shore and returning to patrol station off Kanhatid Point (Dinagat Island); and PT 493 had been beached on Maoyo Point.

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* Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 191, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0394, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 195, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0393, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 192, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0395, October 29th, 1944.

CHAPTER XIV - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

It seems clear that at this time Commander THIRD Section, in the YAMASHIRO on course 000°(T), signalled speed twenty knots, (although the master plot (Diagram "H"), which is based on Allied radar ranges, shows that she had slowed to ten knots and did not regain eighteen knots until 0328), did not realize the magnitude of the disaster which had struck his force for, at 0320, he ordered a turn to port of forty-five degrees (to course 315°(T))* in order to avoid Allied torpedoes. It is possible that he did not know that the YAMASHIRO had just been hit by a torpedo, for she was continuing on without much difficulty. However, he soon learned of the torpedoing and, realizing that the Allied torpedoes had passed and that his present course provided maximum gunfire against the retiring destroyers, decided to continue on that course without turning to the new course. Owing to the possible confusion on his bridge due to the torpedo attack, he failed to advise his command of this decision. This failure had no adverse effect on his ships since they were following his movements only in a general way.

He passed the disabled MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO to starboard several minutes later and noting their condition sent, at 0330, a dispatch to Commanders FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces as follows:**

"Urgent Battle Report No. 2: Enemy destroyers and torpedo boats present on both sides of the northern entrance to Surigao Strait. Two of our destroyers torpedoed and drifting. YAMASHIRO sustained one torpedo hit but no impediment to battle cruising."

THIS REMARKABLE DISPATCH, WHICH WAS THE LAST DISPATCH TRANSMITTED BY HIM, MUST HAVE BEEN HURRIEDLY COMPOSED IN THE CONFUSION WHICH NATURALLY ENSUES WHEN A SHIP IS HIT FOR, ACTUALLY, THE THIRD SECTION WAS STILL SOME TEN MILES SOUTH OF THE LINE CONNECTING THE NORTHERN TIPS OF CABUGAN GRANDE AND HIBUSON ISLAND, (DIAGRAM "H") WHICH AREA, IT IS PRESUMED, COMMANDER THIRD SECTION HAD REFERENCE TO IN HIS DISPATCH. ALSO, JUDGING FROM THIS DISPATCH, IT CAN BE CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION IN THE FLAGSHIP ABOUT THE FUSO AND YAMAGUMO FOR AS LATE AS 0330, COMMANDER THIRD SECTION DID NOT KNOW THAT (A) THE FUSO HAD BEEN FATALLY DAMAGED AND HAD FALLEN OUT OF FORMATION AND (B) THE YAMAGUMO HAD SUNK.

THIS LACK OF INFORMATION IS APPARENTLY NOT UNUSUAL IN NIGHT ACTION FOR IN AN ALMOST IDENTICAL SITUATION DURING THE NIGHT BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL, NOVEMBER 14TH-15TH, 1942, THE AMERICAN BATTLESHIPS WASHINGTON AND SOUTH DAKOTA HAD BECOME LOST TO EACH OTHER, SO THAT FOR SOMETIME THE TASK GROUP COMMANDER HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHEREABOUTS OR CONDITION OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA.***

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 250330 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Action Report WASHINGTON, Night of November 14th - 15th, 1942, Serial 0155, November 27th, 1942.

In the meantime, having observed Attack Group 2.2 (consisting of ARUNTA (F), KILLEN, BEALE) almost on his port beam and realizing that this group had probably fired torpedoes, he, at 0327:30,* ordered a forty-five degree change of course by simultaneous ship turns to starboard to 045°(T)** to avoid these latter torpedoes. At the same time his flagship, the YAMASHIRO, illuminated the KILLEN and BEALE by searchlight and opened fire*** with her five-inch and six-inch batteries. A short time later she commenced firing starshells**** at which time she secured the searchlight.

Although he must have realized that this firing was not too effective because the enemy destroyers which were retiring were protected by smoke screens, and because his own radar was ineffective, he nevertheless continued firing (a) at the last destroyer in column (BEALE) which soon disappeared into the smoke and (b) after this for some minutes in the general direction of the BEALE's retirement.****

At 0330, based on Allied radar plots about one and one-half minutes after he had settled on his new course, he changed course back to north by simultaneous ship turns to port.** Why he did this is not understood for, if his earlier change of course to the right to 045°(T) had been based on the possible danger from Allied torpedoes—and he had reason to fear Allied torpedoes since he had already received one torpedo hit on his port side and had seen the YAMAGUMO destroyed, and the MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO damaged as well—his proper change of course would have also been to starboard. It should be clear from Diagram "H" that an additional change of course of forty-five degrees to starboard would have more nearly paralleled the Allied torpedo wakes. Whether or not he made an error in his order by calling the wrong color (the Japanese maneuvered over their voice circuit by employing names of colors, i.e., "green green" meant 45° turn to starboard, and "red red" meant 45° turn to port)**will never be known. However, even had he called the correct color it seems probable that the turn would not have been in time for at 0331:18 the YAMASHIRO received a second torpedo hit on her port side***** which, from graphic analysis of Allied radar plots, slowed her temporarily to about five knots. This torpedo had been fired by the KILLEN at about 0324.

His action in turning away and then returning to the base course shortly afterward is remarkably similar to his action at 0316 when he turned away from the attack of the Western Attack Group and then turned back into the torpedo water of this group in returning to the base course. In this second attack however, his initial turn of forty-five degrees was only half as great as that at 0316 and was not sufficient to protect his command by

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* Time based on Allied radar ranges and bearings.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report BEALE, Night Torpedo Attack on Japanese Naval Forces at Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0230, October 29th, 1944.

***** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

paralleling the torpedo tracks. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT (A) HALFWAY MEASURES SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AND (B) WHEN MEASURES ARE TAKEN, SUFFICIENT TIME MUST BE ALLOWED FOR THEM TO BE EFFECTIVE.

Shortly after receiving this second torpedo hit, he ordered, at about 0333, another 45° emergency ship's turn to port.* However, it seems clear from Allied plots that the YAMASHIRO (a) finally steadied on course 340°(T) instead of 315°(T), which had been ordered and (b) having completed the necessary damage control measures, increased speed to eighteen knots.

While the reasons for settling on this course are nowhere given it seems clear that he felt that the most recent Allied torpedo attack--that by Attack Group 2.2--was now over and that he should therefore head for Dulag Anchorage. It will be observed that the new course of 340°(T), from his 0336 position, would have placed him in a location very similar to that which he would have been in had he turned to his planned course of 350°(T) upon entering the strait.**

At about 0336, he was pleased to note that the YAMASHIRO was making good about eighteen knots. At this time he was probably steering 345°(T) to offset the effect of the current.

Whether or not at this time he knew the various locations of his ships or could see any of them is not known. As a matter of interest, since the MOGAMI was only about 3,300 yards astern and the SHIGURE about 6,200 yards astern, it seems correct to say that he not only knew their locations but, in view of the excellence of Japanese night glasses, could seem them as well. It seems probable, therefore, that about this time he realized that the FUSO was not in sight and was likely damaged or had suffered some engineering casualty.

Why he took no action to determine the status of his ships, and especially that of the FUSO which was half of his major strength, is not known.

WHILE THE JAPANESE DOCTRINE, IN CASES SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE, ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THIS STUDY THEY WERE PRESUMABLY SIMILAR TO AMERICAN DOCTRINE*** WHICH PROVIDED THAT (A) UNLESS THE OTC DETERMINED OTHERWISE, WHEN A FLEET (AND PRESUMABLY FORCE OR GROUP) WAS PROCEEDING INTO BATTLE AND A BATTLESHIP WAS DISABLED, A SHIP FROM THE BATTLE LINE SCREEN GROUP ASTERN WAS TO PROCEED AT ONCE, WITHOUT WAITING FOR ORDERS, TO DEFEND THE DISABLED BATTLESHIP AGAINST SUBMARINE AND AIR ATTACK, (B) NO AID WAS TO BE PROVIDED AUTOMATICALLY

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 2ND Air Fleet (6TH Base Air Force), CRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 13 DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** War Instructions, United States Navy, (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Chapter 12, Section XVIII, Paragraphs 12201 and 12202.

FOR CRUISERS, BUT INSTEAD SUCH AID WAS TO BE PROVIDED BY THE COMMANDER OF THE GROUP TO WHICH THE DISABLED SHIP BELONGED OR BY THE COMMANDER OF THE DESTROYERS ATTACHED TO THE SAME GROUP ONLY IF THE STATE OF THE ACTION PERMITTED AND IF SHIPS WERE AVAILABLE AND (C) NO AID WAS TO BE PROVIDED SMALLER SHIPS SUCH AS DESTROYERS UNLESS SO ORDERED BY THE OTC.

TODAY, 1958 DOCTRINE STATES, "IF A SHIP IS DISABLED DURING AN ENGAGEMENT AND IS UNABLE TO KEEP STATION, THE OTC SHALL BE NOTIFIED AND THE SHIP ASTERN SHALL BE WARNED. IF POSSIBLE, THE DISABLED SHIP SHALL HAUL OUT ON THE DISENGAGED SIDE AND CONTINUE TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY TO THE BEST OF HER ABILITY. IF THE FLAGSHIP IS DISABLED, THE TWO CLOSEST DESTROYERS SHALL CLOSE HER AND BE PREPARED TO EMBARK THE OTC AND HIS STAFF. HELICOPTERS MAY BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE IF CONDITIONS PERMIT. AFTER THE ENGAGEMENT THE NEAREST SCREENING DESTROYER OR OTHER DESIGNATED SHIP SHALL CLOSE THE DISABLED SHIP TO GIVE PROTECTION AGAINST AIR AND SUBMARINE ATTACK. SURVIVORS SHOULD NOT NORMALLY BE RESCUED UNTIL AFTER THE ENGAGEMENT. LIFE RAFTS AND LIFE PRESERVERS, HOWEVER, SHOULD BE DROPPED BY PASSING SHIPS."**

However, since (a) there was no destroyer screen astern and (b) two of the three Japanese destroyers had now been disabled it was not possible to provide a protective destroyer except possibly one of those which had been disabled and was astern with the FUSO. Anyway, it seems clear that Commander THIRD Section took no action for the voice log is silent in this matter.**

WHAT HIS ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY SITUATION WAS AT THIS TIME IS NOT KNOWN. HE HAD AT FIRST ENCOUNTERED ONLY MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS, AND MORE RECENTLY DESTROYERS AS WELL, AND HAD RECEIVED NO INFORMATION OF OTHER ENEMY FORCES FROM ANY SOURCE. HE HAD OBSERVED ABOUT THREE DESTROYER ATTACK SECTIONS, CONSISTING OF BUT TWO TO THREE DESTROYERS EACH, AND HAD NOTED THAT THESE DESTROYERS HAD APPROACHED FROM THE SHORES OF THE STRAIT, HAD FIRED TORPEDOES UNSUPPORTED BY ANY GUNFIRE WHATSOEVER, AND HAD RETIRED BEHIND SMOKE. HE REALIZED, OF COURSE, THAT THESE WERE ATTRITION TACTICS AND, THEREFORE, PROBABLY WONDERED WHETHER, AFTER ALL, THE JAPANESE ESTIMATES HAD BEEN CORRECT AND THAT THE ALLIED OPPOSITION, WHICH HE HAD EXPECTED TO ENCOUNTER, HAD BEEN LARGELY DRAWN OUT OF THE STRAIT BY THE OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE IN THE SIBUYAN SEA. HE CERTAINLY HOPED SO. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE ABOVE SUSTAINED HIM IN HIS DECISION TO CONTINUE ON WITHOUT DELAY AND TO HEAD DIRECTLY FOR DULAG ANCHORAGE.

Between 0340 and 0345 he probably noted the gunfire engagement between the Right Flank Destroyers and the ASAGUMO and MICHISHIO, and also knew of the large explosion to the south (FUSO) at the latter time. (This explosion was sighted as far north as the battle line.)*** However, what action he took in this matter is not recorded.

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* Striking Force Operations, (NWP 20), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, May 1953, Chapter 7, Paragraph 732.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

Also at 0344 he was informed by Commander SECOND Striking Force by voice radio that the latter was penetrating through the strait.* From this he could see that Commander SECOND Striking Force was about forty-five minutes behind schedule and therefore was about thirty miles behind his force. (Actually he was about twenty-two miles behind.) If he had hoped for any support or cooperation within the immediate future from the SECOND Striking Force he could now see that this was highly improbable.

At 0345 the YAMASHIRO turned, without signal, to course 020°(T), presumably to parallel the probable torpedo tracks from the Allied destroyers on her port quarter who were engaging the damaged ASAGUMO and MICHISHIO and, in doing so hoped to comb the wakes of any torpedoes which these destroyers may have fired. If this was the reason for this change of course it was sound because the new course was almost exactly the correct torpedo course. Allied radar ranges and bearings show that after this turn the YAMASHIRO reduced speed to about fifteen knots.

At this same time the YAMASHIRO opened fire perhaps (a) against both Attack Groups 1.2 and 2.2 or (b) as the DALY, after reporting three round balls of dull orange flame in succession on bearing 045°(T), stated, "...immediately opened fire with major and minor caliber guns, frantically throwing steel through 360°, and initiating general gun action between both forces."** The MOGAMI stated that the YAMASHIRO was firing intermittently without searchlight illumination but that the targets and results were not clear.***

At 0348, despite her two torpedo hits, the YAMASHIRO continued on course 020°(T) at fifteen knots. At this time she, when about 17,000 yards south of the LOUISVILLE, was bearing 227°(T), distant 15,100 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

Although Commander THIRD Section continued to issue orders to his command, it should be clear that his formation had been, for all intents and purposes, abandoned and that each commanding officer was operating independently. Therefore, the operations of the commanding officers of each of the ships of the THIRD Section will be discussed separately.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

(1) Operations of Operational Ships of THIRD Section, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

(a) MOGAMI.

By 0320 the Commanding Officer MOGAMI had made up the distance lost during the evasive maneuvering between 0207 and 0213 (Diagram "F") but he had not yet made up the distance lost in turning out to pass the FUSO at 0309 (Diagram "G") nor had he moved up to the position formerly occupied by the FUSO. At this time Allied radar plots indicated that he was about 2,500 yards astern of the YAMASHIRO (Diagram "H") and had commenced a turn to port in compliance with Commander THIRD Section's 0320 emergency forty-five degree turn to port.* His track shows that he steadied on course 345°(T) and slowed to ten knots. This was probably for the purpose of letting the situation ahead of him clarify before steaming into the area where the ships ahead had been torpedoed.

From the Allied radar data it is clear that he did not turn to course 045°(T) when the YAMASHIRO turned at 0327:30 but continued on course 345°(T). Whether this was because (a) Commander THIRD Section did not send his order to turn until 0330 (as indicated by the SHIGURE Action Report) or (b) he did not received the order or (c) he had decided to wait until he had sufficient room to clear the MICHISHIO cannot be determined, but it was probably the latter.

At 0329 he increased speed to twenty knots, and at 0329:30 he passed the SHIGURE which was on opposite course about 1,100 yards to the westward (Diagram "H").

At 0330 he seemed to have a better knowledge of events than did Commander THIRD Section. He knew that (a) the FUSO had been disabled and had dropped out of formation,**(b) the ASAGUMO and MICHISHIO had been damaged and the former was out of action,**(c) the YAMAGUMO had been sunk** and that (d) only three ships, namely the YAMASHIRO, his own ship the MOGAMI, and one destroyer, which he thought was the MICHISHIO but actually was the SHIGURE, were operational.**

At 0330:30 he changed course to 045°(T) and paralleled the course of the YAMASHIRO. Since the YAMASHIRO was at this time turning to port to course 000°(T) it appears that he decided to follow roughly the track of the YAMASHIRO and at the same time move away from the two attack groups to the west.

About 0332 he observed a direct torpedo hit being made on the YAMASHIRO, apparently near the bow.**

He did not turn at 0333 when Commander THIRD Section ordered an emergency turn of 45° to port* but continued on, probably wishing to follow

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

approximately in the wake of the YAMASHIRO and move further away from the two Allied destroyer groups in the west. He continued on course 045°(T) until 0337 when he changed course to 000°(T) which paralleled the earlier track of the YAMASHIRO.

He likely noticed (a) that at approximately 0340 he had closed the YAMASHIRO somewhat, for at this time he slowed to eighteen knots, (b) between 0340 and 0345 the gunfire attack of the Allied destroyers (DESRON TWENTY-FOUR) against the damaged ASAGUMO and MICHISHIO, and (c) at 0345 the YAMASHIRO open fire, for about twenty-five seconds later he changed course to 320°(T) in order to close the YAMASHIRO track and to unmask his port battery. He implied that he was not firing at this time because it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe, although he did state that the YAMASHIRO was firing intermittently without searchlight illumination but that the targets and results were not clear.*

At this same time he likely noted the explosion in the FUSO about eight miles south.

At 0348, still unharmed by torpedoes or gunfire, the MOGAMI, continuing on course 320°(T) at about eighteen knots, was about 3,700 yards astern of the YAMASHIRO and about 20,700 yards from the LOUISVILLE.

(b) SHIGURE.

By 0320 the SHIGURE had succeeded in passing through the torpedo spreads of the Western Attack Group without a single torpedo hit—in fact, she was the only ship within the spreads so fortunate—actually she was between the torpedo spreads fired by the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN as shown in Diagram "G". Her commanding officer attributed his escape to the fact that he was adjusting his course and speed to take his proper station in the battle formation.** He, of course, being only about 700 meters astern of the YAMAGUMO, observed the explosion in that ship and likewise observed the torpedoing of the MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO and YAMASHIRO.

He noted that (a) all four ships had been hit almost simultaneously,** (b) the YAMAGUMO had blown up and had sunk and (c) the MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO and YAMASHIRO had fallen out of formation.*** In this he was in error for it was the FUSO which, having been torpedoed at about 0308-0309, had fallen out of formation some minutes earlier; the YAMASHIRO had continued on. He also noted that the YAMASHIRO had a list to port** which was likely correct since she had received a torpedo hit on that side.

In his postwar interview he state that having witnessed these unfortunate events he increased speed to twenty-six knots and proceeded northward*** to clear the damaged destroyers. Meanwhile he had endeavored

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 346.

to communicate with the damaged YAMASHIRO, but receiving no reply he had reversed course, so that he was heading on a southerly course while the FUSO and MOGAMI continued onward on a northerly course. From the plot it appears that he settled on course 186°(T) at 0325:30 (Diagram "H").

At about this same time he intercepted a message from the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO to COMDESDIV FOUR in the MICHISHIO reporting that the ASAGUMO had received a torpedo hit in her bow.*

Why he was unable to communicate with the YAMASHIRO is not known for this ship, although somewhat damaged by a torpedo hit, was still heading north. Perhaps she was too busy to answer; perhaps his memory is at fault and he actually never queried either her or Commander THIRD Section at all. Had he queried the latter he would certainly have received a reply for at 0320 Commander THIRD Section had issued orders via voice radio to the THIRD Section, which orders are recorded in the SHIGURE voice log.

The Commanding Officer SHIGURE further stated that since he was unable to establish communications with the YAMASHIRO he had reversed course (a) to learn, if possible, what had happened to her, (b) to receive instructions from Commander THIRD Section and (c) if necessary, to transfer Commander THIRD Section to the SHIGURE.**

HIS ACTION IS NOT CONSIDERED SOUND. SINCE THE SHIGURE WAS THE ONLY DESTROYER WHICH HAD SURVIVED THE TORPEDO ATTACKS DOES IT NOT SEEM CORRECT TO SAY THAT SHE SHOULD PROPERLY HAVE REMAINED WITH THE ONLY BATTLESHIP WHICH HAD SURVIVED THE TORPEDO ATTACKS SO THAT THE BATTLESHIP MIGHT BE PROVIDED WITH A SCREEN, ALBEIT A VERY LIMITED ONE? WHAT JAPANESE DOCTRINE WAS IN THIS MATTER IS NOT KNOWN BUT, SINCE THE JAPANESE WERE OFFENSIVE MINDED, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE DOCTRINE PROVIDED FOR THE SHIGURE REMAINING ON STATION AHEAD OF THE YAMASHIRO. SHE COULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING OFFENSIVE IN A TURN TO THE SOUTH.

DOES IT NOT SEEM MORE LIKELY, THEREFORE, THAT HIS REAL REASON FOR TURNING TO THE SOUTH WAS THE FACTOR OF "PRUDENCE"? HAVING OBSERVED WHAT HAD OCCURRED TO THE OTHER THREE DESTROYERS AND TO THE YAMASHIRO, HE THOUGHT IT PRUDENT TO RETIRE TEMPORARILY FROM THE VAN POSITION. THE FACT THAT, IN TURNING AWAY, HE HAD RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM COMMANDER THIRD SECTION TO REMAIN ON STATION IS NOT CONSIDERED OF IMPORTANCE FOR THE COMMANDER AT THE MOMENT, IN VIEW OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED, WAS SO OCCUPIED WITH HIS OWN IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS THAT HE HAD LITTLE TIME TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE SHIGURE.

It seems clear, at this point, that the Commanding Officer SHIGURE thought that it was the YAMASHIRO which had been seriously torpedoed and had fallen out of formation and that the FUSO, believed undamaged, was continuing onward to the north. He also thought that the Commanding Officer FUSO had assumed command of the formation because he was next senior in command.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 376.

At about 0327 he passed the ship which he considered to be the FUSO but which actually was the YAMASHIRO, still on a northerly course. At this same time he intercepted a message from the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO (to COMDESDIV FOUR in the MICHISHIO) reporting that the ASAGUMO had received a torpedo hit in her bow.*

Shortly after this, still moving south at about 0329, he passed the MOGAMI continuing north. At 0330, not having located the YAMASHIRO, he commenced a second reversal of course to the northeast. As he reversed course one of his lookouts reported that he had sighted what he believed to be the YAMASHIRO sinking** (actually it was the FUSO, which did not sink until much later). At this time the damaged FUSO, which was still to the south of him was but 5,200 yards away. He continued north and did not attempt to close her to pick up survivors.**

HIS ACTION IN SO DOING WAS CORRECT, FOR HE WAS GOING INTO BATTLE AND COULD NOT AFFORD TO PICK UP SURVIVORS SINCE THIS WOULD NOT ONLY CAUSE UNACCEPTABLE DELAY, BUT WOULD ALSO SO LOAD HIS DECKS AS TO EFFECT SERIOUSLY, IF NOT FATALLY, THE BATTLE EFFICIENCY OF HIS SHIP.

During the next few minutes, at 0330, 0332 and 0333, he received emergency 45° turn signals from Commander THIRD Section* but he ignored all of them as he was still in his turn to course 000°(T). At 0336 he changed course to 030°(T) to pass between the damaged MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO and to rejoin the FUSO and MOGAMI and to reassume his station in the van.** He did not realize that these turn signals were from COMBATDIV TWO in the YAMASHIRO and not from the Commanding Officer FUSO.

About 0343:30 he changed course to 340°(T) in order to close the MOGAMI track. At this time the MOGAMI was about 1,700 yards to the northwest and was on course 000°(T), speed eighteen knots. He probably could not see the YAMASHIRO at this time because she was on very nearly the same bearing as the MOGAMI and was about 5,300 yards away (Diagram "H"). He continued on at twenty-six knots in order to reach the van. About 0344 he noted that the enemy gunfire (presumably from DESRON TWENTY-FOUR) had gradually grown more intense and that one ship, which had been stopped by a torpedo hit (MICHISHIO), was receiving concentrated gunfire.* He probably saw the explosion aboard the FUSO at this time.

At 0344 he intercepted a message from Commander SECOND Striking Force to Commander THIRD Section that the former was entering Surigao Strait.*

At 0348 the SHIGURE, still closing, was now only about (a) 4,000 yards on the starboard quarter of the YAMASHIRO which was on course 020°(T) and (b) 700 yards on the starboard quarter of the MOGAMI, which was on course 320°(T).

Being under the impression that this battleship was the FUSO, he informed her by voice radio that he was following behind her. Naturally, he received no acknowledgement* for the FUSO had long since lost all communications.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 346.

(2) Operations of the Damaged Ships of THIRD Section, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

(a) ASAGUMO.

At 0320, having lost her bow* forward of the No. One gun mount, the ASAGUMO** continued to proceed northward at very slow speed, attempting to control her damage. At this time the commanding officer sighted the damaged MICHISHIO on the starboard bow. At 0325 he notified COMDESDIV FOUR, who was in the MICHISHIO, that he had received a torpedo hit forward.**

At 0334, finding that he could increase speed and realizing that he could accomplish nothing further, he decided to retire and therefore began a slow turn to the left. He settled on course 285°(T) at nine knots, (Diagram "H").

At 0341 the HUTCHINS opened fire in his direction, and a little less than a minute later he commenced changing course to 178°(T). He undoubtedly noted the DALY open fire at 0342 and the BACHE at 0344. Fortunately for him the latter two destroyers were firing at and hitting the more distant MICHISHIO which was 3,000 yards to the southeastward. The HUTCHINS did not obtain hits** most probably because of the long turn his ship was making. The gunnery section of the HUTCHINS action report describes hits and fires, and states that the target was dead in the water after the tenth salvo. It is concluded from this that the spotter was observing the fall of shot from the DALY and BACHE. From the HUTCHINS track chart it is evident that the ASAGUMO was tracked in CIC although imperfectly. Whether or not the HUTCHINS gunnery radar was tracking the ASAGUMO cannot be established but it probably was not.

At 0347 he steadied on course 178°(T) at eight knots and at 0348 the HUTCHINS ceased fire.

During his turn and afterward, the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO did not open fire with either guns or torpedoes and, in addition to observing the gunfire on the MICHISHIO, undoubtedly saw the gunfire of the YAMASHIRO to the north.

At 0348 the ASAGUMO, in the middle of the channel, was bearing 323°(T), distant 19,200 yards from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island.

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* Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944; also Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Chibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

(b) MICHISHIO.

The MICHISHIO, which had sustained a torpedo hit in her port engine room at 0318:18* and had immediately sheared out of column to starboard, had by 0320 lost her power and was drifting with the current on course 180°(T) at a speed of about two point twenty-three knots (Diagram "H").

At 0342 she was taken under fire by the DALY, and at 0344 by the BACHE. Both ships obtained hits which could be seen and caused one or more fires.** This is confirmed by the SHIGURE which stated that "farther astern another ship was stopped and receiving concentrated enemy shellfire,"*** which ship appears to have been the MICHISHIO.

Since she apparently did not return this fire, it seems clear that she was in very serious condition indeed for Allied experience heretofore had indicated that Japanese ships in action could be expected to fight to the end.****

At 0348 while (a) still under fire by the ships of Attack Group 1.2, (b) afire and (c) in a sinking condition, she was bearing 324°(T), distant 15,500 yards from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island and, was about 3,600 yards to the southeast of the ASAGUMO.

(c) FUSO.

No direct information of any consequence is available concerning the FUSO. Therefore, it has become necessary to reconstruct her track and narrative through the employment of (a) Allied radar tracks, (b) the voice log and action report of the SHIGURE, (c) the interrogation of the Commanding Officer SHIGURE by the Strategic Bombing Survey, (d) the report of Lieutenant Fukushi***** and (e) the sightings reported by (1) the MOGAMI, (2) the Allied destroyers and (3) the Allied motor torpedo boats.

It will be recalled that, between 0308 and 0309, the FUSO had sustained at least one torpedo hit on her starboard side****** which had

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* Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Report of Participation in Truk Air and Surface Action, February 16th - 17th, 1944, Serial 024, February 24th, 1944, Part V(2), Japanese Military Character.

***** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December, 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

****** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

disabled her sufficiently to cause her to fall out of column and to retire to the southward. Since no further radio transmissions were received* from her after that time it seems clear that all communication equipment had been disabled also.

At 0323 she commenced a turn to the southward at very slow speed (Diagram "H"). During this time she was evidently fighting internal fires and employing every damage control measure possible. However, she was clearly unsuccessful for, commencing at 0338 she suffered internal explosions,** and at 0345 she blew up and commenced burning heavily*** with a large flame seen as far away as the battle line.**** As a result of these incidents she apparently lost power and drifted slowly with the current. She was now entirely enveloped in flames from her waterline to her masthead.***** Whether it was at this time, as a result of the large explosion at 0345, that she broke into two sections, or whether it was later, cannot be determined but it likely occurred about this time, and certainly before 0400.

In this connection the torpedo officer stated later that as the SECOND Striking Force approached closely a large fire he could see that it was the YAMASHIRO and FUSO which were completely afire and burning furiously with their hulls silhouetted****** and the Commanding Officer SHIGURE stated later on interrogation that during his retirement he saw two burning hulks but that he was not sure whether they were the two halves of the FUSO or the destroyers MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO.******* Since the YAMASHIRO had already sunk far to the north, the MICHISHIO had sunk prior to the SHIGURE's retirement and the ASAGUMO was not burning at the time of the SHIGURE's retirement, the two burning hulks must necessarily have been the two sections of the FUSO.

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* Voice Log, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report PT 524, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

***** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December, 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

****** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operations, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, Former 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

******* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, NAV No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 351.

Diagram "H" is plotted on the assumption that she broke into two sections at 0345, with the stern* swinging slowly to the left until 0400, since this fits later radar data.

At 0348 the FUSO stern was bearing 293°(T), distant 7,700 yards, while the bow was bearing 291°(T), distant 8,000 yards from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island.

NOTE:

The question as to the possibility of a battleship exploding into two sections as above stated was referred to the Chief of the Bureau of Ships, who replied, in part, as follows:

"It is our conclusion that it is well nigh impossible for the FUSO to have broken into nearly equal parts because of her very rugged and damage resistant structure. The USS ARIZONA did not show any evidence of hull failure in the area enclosed by the armor belt, even though a massive magazine explosion occurred.

"It is however considered possible that the FUSO may have lost her bow as a result of torpedo damage. Although our war experience does not include this type of failure in battleships, several cases exist where cruisers suffered this type of damage. In the case of the USS HELENA (CL 50) the bow section remained afloat for more than twelve hours.

"It is probable therefore that if other evidence indicates the presence of two floating bodies this can best be explained by the separation of the bow from the main hull of the battleship."**

* Based on the concept that the explosion alone was not sufficient to cause the separation of about 2,000 yards, which the radar data indicates, and that, therefore, the stern must have continued under power for an appreciable time after the explosion.

** Letter from Rear Admiral Albert G. Mumma, USN, Chief of the Bureau of Ships to Rear Admiral Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), December 2nd, 1958.

(b) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

It will be recalled from "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0245 - 0320, October 25th", that Commander SECOND Striking Force, on course 020°(T), speed twenty-two knots, had just emerged from the very low visibility of a severe rain squall and had sighted Mt. Nelangcaban on the port bow seven kilometers away. About this time he could also make out the coast line* (about two miles away) and likely observed the USHIO swinging to port. Realizing that his navigation was seriously in error and that some of his units might run aground, he immediately ordered a simultaneous ship turn of forty-five degrees to starboard* to a new course of 065°(T) and changed speed to twenty-four knots.** This was an excellent change of course for, if continued, it would place him squarely in the strait (Diagram "I").

Meanwhile (a) at 0318 the USHIO, upon sighting the beach ahead and on the starboard bow, had started to swing to the left in order to clear the beach. At approximately 0321 she steadied on course 110°(T) and, about one minute later, at 0322 she changed course to 050°(T) and increased speed to twenty-eight knots in order to regain her proper position in the formation and (b) at 0324:30 the Commanding Officer ABUKUMA sighted a torpedo wake on his port hand about 500 meters away. He immediately endeavored to turn away to starboard but before the turn could be effected he received a torpedo hit under the bridge on the port side which slowed the ABUKUMA to ten knots. He continued turning south, and when he had swung about twenty-eight degrees to a heading of 093°(T) he sighted the MTB bearing 150° relative to port (303°(T)), distant three kilometers. He then opened fire with his machine guns*** as did the SHIRANUHI (the next ship) which also employed machine guns.** He steadied on a course of about 150°(T)**** at which time the SHIRANUHI and KASUMI maneuvered to avoid him (Diagram "I").

It is probable that at least one of the ships of the SECOND Striking Force opened fire with starshells as well, for this is reported by PT 137.*****

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

**** Action Chart (0230-0830, October 25th), Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

***** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

At this point Commander SECOND Striking Force, who had noted the ABUKUMA fall out of formation, increased speed to twenty-eight knots.* Shortly thereafter he received word that (a) the ABUKUMA had been torpedoed in the port side, abeam of the forward radio room, (b) was down by the bow and (c) had been slowed to about ten knots.**

HE NOW DECIDED THAT HIS LIMITED NUMBER OF SHIPS AND THE STATE OF THE ACTION--HE COULD HEAR THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE AND COULD SEE OCCASIONAL FLARES--REQUIRED HIM TO PROCEED AHEAD WITH HIS REMAINING SHIPS. HE, THEREFORE, APPARENTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH DOCTRINE, DECIDED THAT THE ABUKUMA WOULD HAVE TO DEFEND HERSELF AGAINST ADDITIONAL MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT ATTACKS AS BEST SHE COULD WHILE HE PROCEEDED NORTH TO BATTLE.** BASED ON THE CONCEPT THAT A SHIP SO DISABLED THAT SHE IS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN THE REQUIRED BATTLE SPEED MAY INTERFERE GREATLY WITH THE COMMANDER'S FREEDOM OF ACTION, HIS ACTION IN LEAVING THE ABUKUMA BEHIND WITHOUT ANY ESCORT AND IN PROCEEDING ONWARD AT TWENTY-EIGHT KNOTS IS CONSIDERED CORRECT.

About 0330, by which time had cleared Panaon Island, he returned to his former course of 020°(T) and entered the strait. At this same time he directed the screening destroyers (USHIO and AKEBONO) to form column astern of the SHIRANUHI and KASUMI*** thus forming his planned battle formation (Plate XVI).

Immediately after this the ABUKUMA commenced swinging to the westward and after steading momentarily on that course changed course to the north, which with current then running, resulted in the movement as shown on Diagram "I".

Command of the destroyers, which had been in the ABUKUMA, now shifted to COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN in the SHIRANUHI.****

At 0338, while still at twenty-eight knots, he changed course to north and headed up the strait.

At approximately 0340 the ABUKUMA stopped and lay to for emergency repairs.*****

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* Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair and Surface Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN,2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

*** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

***** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

At 0343 he sighted, also up the strait, in the direction of the THIRD Section a number of ships on fire, heard gunfire, and observed gun flashes.* At the same time, although not so stated, it seems clear that he had been receiving the voice radio transmissions of the units of the THIRD Section and, therefore, knew that (a) he was observing some of the action which had been reported over the voice radio and (b) Commander THIRD Section was continuing the penetration.

Whether or not he had received by this time Commander THIRD Section's dispatch which reported that (a) two destroyers had been disabled and (b) the YAMASHIRO had been torpedoed but was continuing on,** is not definitely known but it seems unlikely. Although the Commanding Officer ABUKUMA implies in his action report*** that this information was available in the ABUKUMA, he does not indicate when it was received.

At 0344 he informed Commander THIRD Section by voice radio that he was penetrating through the strait.**** Since the SECOND Striking Force had entered the strait at 0330 this report was about fourteen minutes late. It, therefore, incorrectly indicated to Commander THIRD Section that the SECOND Striking Force was about seven miles farther astern than, in fact, it was.

At 0348 the SECOND Striking Force was bearing 038°(T), distant eight and three-tenths miles from Binit Point.

Meanwhile, at 0345 the ABUKUMA went ahead at seven knots and commenced swinging to the right to a course of about 125°(T).***** At 0348 she was still swinging to the right and was bearing 154½°(T), distant three and three-quarter miles from Binit Point (Diagram "I").

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* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 250330 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces (Urgent Battle Report No. 2), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

*** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

***** Appended Charts, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

CHAPTER XV - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.*

The sighting of the large explosion in the enemy area at 0319, followed by the receipt of Commander Western Attack Group's TBS voice radio report to the effect that he had at that moment scored a (torpedo) hit, was gratifying to CTG 77.2 for he knew from this that CTG 79.11's destroyers had achieved considerable success without receiving any damage. He now awaited with less concern than heretofore the reports which he expected to receive presently from the destroyers of the Right Flank Force, which were about to attack.

At 0320 he received CTG 79.11's reply to his message, transmitted but one minute earlier, requesting information as to enemy types. This reply was to the effect that there were possibly two battleships present but that he would check further.

He now awaited the results of CTG 79.11's investigation and at 0324 was advised by that commander that it was the general opinion of his commanding officers that (a) the enemy force consisted of two battleships, one or two cruisers and one destroyer, (b) some of the enemy ships had been definitely hit, and (c) the enemy had fired several torpedoes at his group.**

Although he did not know it, this report was not entirely correct. It was correct in that at the time of TG 79.11's attack there were two battleships (YAMASHIRO and FUSO) and one cruiser (MOGAMI) in the Japanese formation but it was incorrect in that instead of one destroyer there were four destroyers (MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO and SHIGURE) present.***

At 0325 he noted from plots in his flagship that the enemy was maneuvering but maintaining speed. The range from the LOUISVILLE to the leading Japanese ship was 26,900 yards.****

At about this time he intercepted a report from the KILLEN that she had fired torpedoes. From this he correctly assumed that the Right Flank Destroyers were now conducting their attack.

At 0329 he intercepted Commander Battle Line's order changing the speed of the battle line to fifteen knots. ALTHOUGH HE REALIZED THAT, SINCE (A) THE ENEMY WOULD SOON BE NEAR ENOUGH TO OPEN FIRE WITH THE GUNS, (B) COMBATLINE

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* All information here, except otherwise indicated, obtained from Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

WAS OPERATING (1) AS THOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW THAT HE WAS DISPOSITION GUIDE AND (2) AS AN INDEPENDENT COMMANDER, (C) THE BATTLE LINE WAS NOW NEARLY DUE NORTH OF THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS, AND, THEREFORE, WAS NEAR THE EASTWARD END OF ITS RUN WHICH MIGHT FORCE IT, AND, HENCE, THE ENTIRE DISPOSITION WHICH WAS SUPPOSEDLY GUIDING ON IT, TO REVERSE COURSE TO THE WESTWARD AT A MOST CRUCIAL TIME, AND (D) THIS WOULD FORCE THE GUN ACTION TO BE FOUGHT ON WESTERLY COURSES RATHER THAN ON EASTERLY COURSES WHICH, BECAUSE OF THE NEARNESS OF THE WESTERN SHORE, WOULD BE HIGHLY UNSATISFACTORY, HE DECIDED, FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN, TO TAKE NO ACTION. WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD HE TEMPORARILY DESIGNATED THE LOUISVILLE AS DISPOSITION GUIDE AND THEN DIRECTED COMBATLINE (A) TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY CORRECT STATION ON THE LOUISVILLE AND (B) UPON ARRIVING ON STATION TO (1) RESUME FLEET SPEED OF FIVE KNOTS AND (2) ASSUME DISPOSITION GUIDE, INFORMING HIM AND ALL UNITS OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION THAT HE HAD DONE SO, SO THAT THE GUIDE MIGHT BE RETURNED TO THE BATTLE LINE?

He, himself, because (a) of his difficulties with Hibuson Island and (b) his desire to be in a suitable position to cross the enemy's "Tee", at least with the left flank cruisers, decided to remain at five knots (Diagram "H").

At 0330 he advised CTF 77 that the enemy consisted of two battleships, one or two cruisers and one destroyer and that he believed that several hits had been scored.*

At 0331, not having heard any more reports of the torpedo attacks by the right flank destroyers, he inquired of Commander Right Flank Force if he had any news of his destroyers.** He received a reply promptly to the effect that the group that went down the right side had fired and that the other group was going to fire presently.**

SINCE NONE OF THESE REPORTS MADE ANY REFERENCE TO BATTLE DAMAGE AND SINCE HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OVER THE VOICE CIRCUITS WHICH INDICATED THAT HIS DESTROYERS WERE SUFFERING ANY DAMAGE, HE WONDERED WHY THIS WAS SO. HE KNEW THAT THE JAPANESE BELIEVED THEMSELVES TO BE MASTERS OF NIGHT ACTION AND YET HERE THEY SEEMED TO BE COMPLETELY IMPOTENT. ALTHOUGH HIS ACTION REPORT MAKES NO MENTION OF THIS PROBLEM, IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT HE REALIZED IT WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT HIS DESTROYERS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS PLAN, WERE ATTACKING FROM THE PROXIMITY OF THE SHORE AND THAT, THEREFORE, THE JAPANESE RADAR, AS HAD BEEN HOPED, HAD BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE LAND MASS. IF THIS WAS SO, AND HE HAD EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE IT TO BE SO, IT AUGURED WELL FOR THE SUCCESS FOR HIS SUBSEQUENT ATTACKS.

At 0332 he intercepted a message from COMBATLINE ordering the battle line to commence firing when the range to the enemy had reached 26,000 yards.

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

THIS SURPRISED HIM BECAUSE IT WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BASIC PLAN WHICH CLEARLY SPECIFIED THAT THE BATTLELINE WOULD OPEN FIRE WHEN THE RANGE HAD DECREASED TO THE RANGE BAND 17,000 - 20,000 YARDS. HE WAS QUITE CONCERNED OVER THIS BECAUSE HE COULD SEE THAT COMBATLINE, BY HIS INCREASE OF SPEED TO TEN AND THEN TO FIFTEEN KNOTS, AND NOW BY HIS ORDER TO OPEN FIRE AT 26,000 YARDS, CLEARLY INTENDED TO OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY. HOWEVER, BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO REACT EITHER TO MODIFY OR CANCEL THE ORDER OF COMBATLINE, HE RECEIVED, AT 0334, FROM COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE, THE INFORMATION THAT THE LATTER'S WESTERN GROUP OF DESTROYERS HAD FIRED TORPEDOES AND HAD REPORTED THAT THE ENEMY WAS NOW RETIRING. THIS FACT, OF COURSE, CHANGED THE SITUATION ENTIRELY AS REGARDS THE COMMENCE FIRE RANGE, FOR, IF THE RETIREMENT WAS GENERAL, THE ENEMY NOT ONLY WOULD NOT "CLOSE" TO THE DESIGNATED RANGE BAND BUT WOULD NOT CLOSE EVEN TO THE 26,000 YARDS.

He realized that it was necessary to take immediate action. He studied his flagship radar plot and discovered that, although some of the Japanese ships were maneuvering radically and some had slowed, the principal units were still standing north.

He concluded that, despite this, the chances were that the destroyers on the scene were better able to judge the movement of the Japanese units than was radar, which necessarily required some minutes to detect a change of course. He decided that since (a) it was essential to prevent any of the enemy ships from escaping and (b) it was likely that he would not be able to accomplish this by the gunfire of his larger ships, he would be forced to employ his destroyers again. He therefore, at 0335, ordered COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to attack with torpedoes and to "get the big boys" indicating that the large ships were the primary targets.

In doing this he realized that some of these destroyers would, because of the widening of the strait, at its northern end, be forced to attack in relatively open water with but limited land mass protection against enemy radar.

IN VIEW OF THE NECESSITY FOR ANNIHILATING THE ENEMY THE DECISION OF CTG 77.2 IN ORDERING THIS DESTROYER ATTACK IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN CORRECT.

Immediately after issuing this order he intercepted COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's instructions to his destroyers (a) to turn south and work up to speed in making attack, (b) that Attack Section THREE was to attack in sector 230°-315°(T) and Attack Section TWO in sector 090°-045°(T) and (c) to employ individual target plan, with intermediate speed torpedoes.* He noted that Attack Section ONE was missing from this order but assumed that from doctrine this was sector 315°-045°(T). He was satisfied with these instructions since they clearly indicated a coordinated multiple attack by three sections.

Meanwhile, he continued his plotting and, from this, felt that, at least for the present, some units were still heading in a northerly direction for, at 0337, he advised COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that the enemy was on course 010°(T),

* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

speed twelve knots.* Actually, the enemy was on course 345°(T), having changed course from 340°(T) at 0336, speed eighteen knots.

He now, in order to insure that his ships did not fire into DESRON FIFTY-SIX, informed the units of TG 77.2 and Commander Right Flank Force that DESRON FIFTY-SIX was launching a torpedo attack. His reason for notifying Commander Right Flank Force, instead of the units of the right flank force, appears to have been his failure to have the task group call.

At 0339, becoming convinced that the enemy was retiring, he informed COMBATLINE to this effect and ordered him to "close the battle line."**

It is not clear what he meant by this order for "to close the battle line" meant absolutely nothing, especially when addressed to COMBATLINE. It is believed that what he meant to order COMBATLINE to do was "to close the range" but whether the mistake was made by himself or by his internal organization is not known. However, he promptly discovered his error and at 0341 cancelled the order and added for clarification "do not close battle line".**

At 0345 he observed a large explosion far to the south of the flagship.*** This explosion is believed to have been in the battleship FUSO which at this time was burning furiously and exploding.****

At 0345 he received a relayed report from PT 523 to the effect that five destroyers and one large ship (SECOND Striking Force) were passing in northerly direction through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait.* His reaction to this message is nowhere recorded but since (a) the enemy force was only a relatively light force and was twenty miles away and (b) his plot showed that the leading enemy group was still standing northward at twelve to sixteen knots and would soon be within the medium range band he did not think much about it for the present. At this time the range to the leading enemy ship from his flagship was about 18,900 yards and from the battle line about 25,000 yards.

Shortly thereafter he received a message from Commander Right Flank Force that his right flank destroyers reported (a) hitting the enemy steadily with 5-inch shells and (b) one of the enemy ships was dead in the water.* This was the MICHISHIO which at this time was very badly damaged.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report CTG 77.2, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

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At 0347 he intercepted an order from Commander Attack Section TWO to his section to fire half salvos followed by a statement that he was making thirty knots.* This order, which might have been confusing, was not so because the location of Attack Section TWO (Diagram "H") was such that it clearly indicated that this was a preparatory signal.

At 0348 the situation was as follows: TG 77.2 was nearly due north of the leading enemy ship. The disposition guide in the battle line, since the battle line was making fifteen knots and the left flank cruisers but five knots, had overtaken the left flank cruisers and was at this moment slightly farther east than the LOUISVILLE and was about 24,000 yards north of the leading enemy ship. The disposition guide was bearing 328°(T), distant 16,000 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

(1) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0320 the battle line was on course 090°(T), speed ten knots.**

Commander Battle Line was closely following the operations down the strait. He had received and was still receiving TG 79.11's reports regarding their torpedo attacks, and of the enemy composition. At 0324 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 79.11 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 79.11, 0320 - 0348, October 25th") which stated in part that at least two enemy battleships were present in the enemy formation.***

AT 0329, FOR SOME UNKNOWN AND UNRECORDED REASON, BUT PROBABLY BECAUSE OF HIS FEAR OF ENEMY TORPEDOES, HE INCREASED THE SPEED OF THE BATTLE LINE TO FIFTEEN KNOTS.** IN DOING THIS HE WELL KNEW (A) FROM THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN HIS FLAG PLOT, THAT THE OTC, IN THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS, WAS STILL AT FIVE KNOTS AND THAT THE BATTLE LINE WAS OVERTAKING THE CRUISERS, (B) THAT AT THIS SPEED HE WOULD ARRIVE AT THE EASTERLY END OF HIS RUN (LONGITUDE 125°-27'E) MUCH SOONER THAN HE WOULD AT FIVE KNOTS AND THEREFORE MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY (1) TO REVERSE COURSE AT A MOST CRUCIAL TIME, (2) IF HE DID NOT REVERSE COURSE WOULD LIKELY FIND IT NECESSARY TO MOVE BEYOND THE EASTWARD END OF HIS RUN WHICH MIGHT PREVENT CROSSING OF THE "TEE" BY THE BATTLE LINE, (3) MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY TO CHANGE COURSE TO THE SOUTHEAST SO THAT HIS GUNS MIGHT BEAR. AND (C) THAT HIS INCREASE OF SPEED WAS CONTRARY TO THE GENERAL TACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS WHICH DIRECTED THAT THE FLEET SPEED (THE SPEED OF THE DISPOSITION GUIDE) WAS TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE OTC AND THAT THE FLEET GUIDE WAS TO MAINTAIN A UNIFORM SPEED.**** DOES IT NOT

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial C201, November 24th, 1944.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 183), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1942, Sections 9 and 13.

SEEM CORRECT TO SAY THEN THAT HIS ACTION WAS UNSOUND BECAUSE BY HIS ACTION HE (A) SERIOUSLY DIMINISHED THE ADVANTAGES INHERENT IN THE BATTLE DISPOSITION, (B) ASSUMED AUTHORITY WHICH PROPERLY BELONGED TO THE OFFICER IN TACTICAL COMMAND, AND (C) THEREBY UNNECESSARILY ENDANGERED THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF CTG 77.2's BATTLE PLAN?

At 0330 he noted in his radar scope that the enemy consisted of two or three cruisers or destroyers in the van, followed by two battleships in column which were on course north at sixteen knots.* This was the correct number of ships but only one battleship (YAMASHIRO) and one cruiser (MOGAMI) remained in any formation at all. Of the remaining three destroyers, two (MICHISHIO and ASAGUMO) were disabled, and moving at slow speed, and one, the SHIGURE, was circling and at this time was on a southerly course.

At 0332 the SIGOURNEY obtained a radar range of 42,600 yards on a target bearing 174°(T).** This was the damaged FUSO, which at this time was moving slowly south and is shown on Diagram "H" as bearing 175½°(T), range 42,500 yards from the SIGOURNEY.

COMBATLINE NOW OBSERVED THAT THE ENEMY RANGE WAS CLOSING RAPIDLY. HE THEREFORE, BY TES VOICE RADIO, AT 0332, DIRECTED THE BATTLE LINE TO OPEN FIRE WHEN THE RANGE HAD CLOSED TO 26,000 YARDS.* SINCE (A) THIS RANGE WAS CONTRARY TO CTG 77.2'S BATTLE PLAN WHICH SPECIFIED OPENING FIRE RANGES FOR THE BATTLE LINE AS 17,000 TO 20,000 YARDS,*** (B) THESE OPENING FIRE RANGES HAD BEEN CHOSEN BECAUSE CTG 77.2 FELT THAT DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF AMMUNITION OF ALL TYPES BUT ESPECIALLY TO THE SHORTAGE OF ARMOR PIERCING PROJECTILES, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE BATTLE LINE GET A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF ARMOR PIERCING HITS AT RANGES WHERE THEIR EFFECT WOULD BE HIGH,*** AND (C) COMBATLINE SHOULD HAVE BEEN FULLY COGNIZANT OF THIS FACT BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY CTG 77.2 AT THE LATTER'S CONFERENCE ON THE BATTLE PLAN HELD ON THE PREVIOUS AFTERNOON ON BOARD THE LOUISVILLE,*** IT SEEMS PERTINENT TO DISCUSS THE REASONS WHICH PROMPTED HIM TO MAKE THIS SUDDEN CHANGE IN FIRING PLAN.

COMBATLINE STATED LATER THAT HIS REASONS WERE (A) HE FELT THAT IF HE WAITED UNTIL THE RANGE HAD DECREASED TO 20,000 YARDS HE WOULD LOSE SOME OF THE RANGE ADVANTAGE HE POSSESSED IN FIRING AT A LONGER RANGE USING ARMOR PIERCING PROJECTILES—HIS FIRST FIVE SALVOS WERE TO EMPLOY THESE PROJECTILES—AND DELIBERATE FIRE, AND (B) THAT CTG 77.2 HAD CHOSEN THE RANGE BAND (17,000 - 20,000 YARDS) BECAUSE OF THE PREDOMINANT BOMBARDMENT LOADING OF THE BATTLE LINE WHICH LIMITED ITS EFFECTIVE FIRE TO THAT RANGE IN A PROLONGED ENGAGEMENT.*

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report SIGOURNEY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 055, October 30th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4(CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

IT IS NOT KNOWN WHENCE CAME THE LATTER IDEA FOR, AS POINTED OUT EARLIER, THE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN CTG 77.2'S MIND WAS TO MAKE ARMOR PIERCING HITS AT THE EARLIEST TIME WHEN, BASED ON ALL FACTORS, THE PERCENTAGE OF HITS AND THEIR EFFECT WOULD BE HIGH, AND THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF ENEMY SHELLS ON OWN UNITS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. THIS WHOLE MATTER HAD BEEN ANALYZED DURING THE PLANNING PHASE AT HOLLANDIA AND IT HAD BEEN DETERMINED THERE AND SO STATED IN THE NIGHT BATTLE PLAN ISSUED BY CTG 77.2 THAT "LONG RANGES ARE GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE TO OWN BATTLE LINE OWING TO THE RELATIVELY POOR PATTERNS AND LOW AMMUNITION ALLOWANCE OF ARMOR PIERCING PROJECTILES (WITHIN THE COMMAND)".* BECAUSE (A) THE THIRD FLEET WAS EXPECTED TO INTERCEPT ANY THREATENING ENEMY SURFACE FORCE AND (B) ALL PREPARATORY FIRE HAD TO BE PROVIDED BY TG 77.2 AND TG 77.3, THE AMMUNITION ALLOWANCE OF ARMOR PIERCING PROJECTILES HAD BEEN SET AT BUT TWENTY PER CENT OF THE POSSIBLE LOADING. HIGH CAPACITY PROJECTILES FOR BOMBARDMENT COMPRISED THE REMAINDER.*

BASED ON THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT COMBATLINE'S DECISION TO OPEN FIRE AT 26,000 YARDS RATHER THAN AT 20,000 OR LESS WAS UNSOUND.

COMBATLINE now intercepted two messages, one at 0334 from Commander Right Flank Force to the effect that the enemy appeared to be retiring, the other at 0335, from the OTC launching the torpedo attack of DESRON FIFTY-SIX.**

At 0338 he noted that the range to the enemy was closing steadily.*** Since he planned to open fire in a few minutes he decided that, in order to avoid any possible interference which might arise, it would be wise to station his van and rear destroyer screens (DESDIV XRAY) in a column ahead and astern of the battleships.** He therefore immediately ordered COMDESDIV XRAY, in the CLAXTON, to concentrate his screens, van and rear, 4,000 yards from the nearest battleship.***

At 0339 COMBATLINE was advised by the OTC that the enemy seemed to be retiring and was directed to close the battle line.**

Although this order, as worded, meant precisely nothing, COMBATLINE understood it to mean to close the range of the enemy**which was correct. However, before he could execute it, it was cancelled by CTG 77.2.

COMDESDIV XRAY now, at 0342, directed the CONY and the THORN to take station 500 yards astern of the CLAXTON in that order.**** At this same time the AULICK and the WELLES headed for the head of the battle line where they formed column on the AULICK***** 4,000 yards ahead of the WEST VIRGINIA.

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* CTG 77.2 Operation Plan 2-44, Serial 0008, October 5th, 1944, Annex "Q".

** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMBATDIV 4, Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0235, November 8th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report WELLES, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 016-44, October 30th, 1944.

The time now drew near when COMBATLINE would reach his designated open fire range of 26,000 yards, and he was making preparations to do so. His target at this time, although he did not know it, was the YAMASHIRO. However, at 0340, the commanding officer of his flagship, MISSISSIPPI, notified him that since (a) there was an enemy group consisting of two or three large ships (MOGAMI, SHIGURE and perhaps one of the damaged destroyers, although the latter were not really in this group) bearing 175°(T), range 31,500 yards, which was approaching the leading enemy ship now at a range of 28,000 yards, and (b) this new group seemed more important than the group which the flagship was presently tracking, he, the commanding officer, had decided to withhold fire until he was better informed on the enemy composition and formation.* Meanwhile, the four battleships (WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, CALIFORNIA and TENNESSEE) which were also tracking the YAMASHIRO—the PENNSYLVANIA appears to have been confused—passed the open fire range of 26,000 yards at about 0344. NONE OF THEM OPENED FIRE AT THIS TIME, POSSIBLY BECAUSE EACH COMMANDING OFFICER, REALIZING THAT COMBATLINE'S OPENING FIRE RANGE WAS IN EXCESS OF THAT ORDERED BY CTG 77.2,** (A) HAD DECIDED TO AWAIT A DIRECT ORDER FROM COMBATLINE SINCE COMBATLINE MIGHT WANT TO DELAY OPENING FIRE, (B) PREFERRED TO FOLLOW THE MOTIONS OF THE SENIOR OFFICER IN OPENING FIRE, AND (C) THOUGHT IT UNWISE TO OPEN FIRE AT END OF EASTERLY RUN AND THUS REVEAL PRESENCE OF ALLIED FORCE AT MOMENT WHEN NECESSARY TO REVERSE COURSE. THEIR ACTIONS IN SO DOING, WHILE UNDERSTANDABLE, DO NOT APPEAR CORRECT FOR THEY (A) HAD ORDERS TO OPEN FIRE, (B) DID NOT KNOW THE REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE FLAGSHIP TO DO SO, AND (C) HAD, EXCEPT AS COMMENTED ON BELOW, RECEIVED NO INFORMATION EITHER BY VOICE RADIO OR RADAR WHICH INDICATED ANY CHANGE IN OWN OR ENEMY SITUATION WHICH MIGHT CAUSE THEM TO WITHHOLD FIRE.

IN FAIRNESS TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER MISSISSIPPI FOR HIS FAILURE TO OPEN FIRE, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT HERE THAT IN ADDITION TO HIS DIFFICULTY IN IDENTIFYING HIS TARGET AND OBTAINING AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION, HE STATED LATER THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE, SOURCE UNKNOWN, TO THE EFFECT THAT "WATCH OUT FOR SHIPS ASTERN; THEY MAY BE THE REAL TARGET",*** AND COMBATDIV FOUR, IN THE WEST VIRGINIA, ALSO STATED LATER THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE, SOURCE UNKNOWN, "DO NOT FIRE"**** OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT. SINCE THESE MESSAGES WERE NOT RECEIVED ELSEWHERE IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT THEY WERE LIKELY COMMENTS FROM WITHIN THE SHIP CONCERNED, WHICH, ON TRANSMISSION TO THE BRIDGE, RECEIVED THE CHARACTER OF AN ORDER.

WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN THE ACTUAL REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE BATTLE LINE TO OPEN FIRE IT WAS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE ALLIED COMMAND THAT IT DID NOT DO SO FOR, AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY, THE CORRECT FIRING RANGE WAS IN THE RANGE BAND 20,000 - 17,000 YARDS.

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report WEST VIRGINIA, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0538, November 1st, 1944.

*** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

**** Action Report COMBATDIV 4, Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0235, November 8th, 1944.

At 0345 he intercepted the relayed report from a motor torpedo boat which stated that another force of five destroyers and one large ship was proceeding up the strait.*

At this time he observed an explosion in the target area.** This was the damaged battleship FUSO.

At 0346 Commander Battle Line intercepted a report from Commander Right Flank Force to CTG 77.2 that the right flank destroyers were hitting the enemy regularly with 5-inch gunfire and that one ship was dead in the water.*

At 0348 the guide of the battleline (WEST VIRGINIA) was bearing 334°(T), distant 15,000 yards from Kankandon Point Light, Hibuson Island. The AULICK, the leading destroyer of the eastern, or van, destroyers, was 4,000 yards ahead of the WEST VIRGINIA and the THORN, the last destroyer of the western, or trailing, destroyers, was 4,000 yards astern of the PENNSYLVANIA (Diagram "H").

(2) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0320 the Left Flank Force was on course 090°(T), speed five knots. Although the left flank destroyers (DESRON FIFTY-SIX) were still operating as a unit of the left flank force, they commenced their torpedo attack during the time covered by this section and therefore, their operations will hereinafter be discussed separately. As a consequence, under the title "Commander Left Flank Force", the operations of the left flank cruisers only will be discussed.

Commander Left Flank Force was quite anxious to receive a late report of the enemy composition, for his unit was the closest major unit to the enemy, and this information was therefore of the utmost importance. If the enemy continued on its most recently reported course and speed, he would be squarely in its path. However, he did not have long to wait for, at 0324, he intercepted CTG 79.11's report that the enemy force consisted of two battleships, one or two cruisers and one destroyer, but that some of the enemy ships had been definitely hit.

This report, although incorrect at the time that CTG 79.11 made his torpedo attack, now corresponded with the present number of ships (five) shown in the LOUISVILLE radar scope. The LOUISVILLE noted that these ships were maneuvering and that the leading ship (YAMASHIRO) was bearing 174°(T), at a range of 26,900 yards. She tracked it at a speed of fifteen knots.***

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

*** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

At 0329 Commander Left Flank Force intercepted Commander Battle Line's order changing speed to fifteen knots. His reactions to this have been discussed previously under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0320 - 0348".

At 0331 he intercepted a report from Commander Right Flank Force to the effect that some of the right flank destroyers were firing torpedoes. At this time the leading enemy ship (YAMASHIRO) was bearing 175°(T), range 25,100 yards.

At 0332 he intercepted the order of Commander Battle Line directing them to open fire at 26,000 yards. He could see from his plot that the range was nearing that now. At 0334, as CTG 77.2, he received the information from Commander Right Flank Force that one of his destroyer groups had fired torpedoes and that the enemy was retiring.* His reactions to this situation are also discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0320 - 0348".

At 0335, as CTG 77.2, because he felt that his destroyers were better able to judge an immediate enemy change of course than was the radar, he decided that perhaps all of the enemy were retiring and, therefore, ordered COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to launch his torpedo attack, and "get the big boys".

At this same time he observed from his radar tracking that the leading enemy group (YAMASHIRO) had changed course to 340°(T) and was at speed sixteen knots. This was a fairly correct estimate.

Meanwhile, he had tracked a second enemy group which, at 0338, was bearing 178°(T), range 28,000 yards. He determined that this group was on course 345°(T), speed fifteen knots, and that it consisted of four ships; one medium the others small. This estimate was fairly correct as regards composition for in this area at this time were the MOGAMI, SHIGURE, MICHISHIO and ASACUMO. The course and speed were in error. None of these four ships were on the above course and speed but were instead on different courses and speeds as shown on Diagram "H", although at this time, with exception of the MOGAMI, they were almost in a north and south line. It seems probable that the ship being tracked was the SHIGURE which was settling on course 030°(T) at a speed of about twenty-six knots and which, at this time, was bearing 179°(T), range 27,700 yards from the LOUISVILLE. Actually the mean range of these four ships was about 26,600 yards.

At about 0340, if the LOUISVILLE, as seems likely, made the information available to him, he knew that the LOUISVILLE tracking had revealed (a) three ships (two large and one small) bearing 178°(T), range 20,700 yards, on course 000°(T), at speed thirteen knots, and (b) three large pips bearing 183°(T), range 40,000 yards which appeared to be retiring.

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0345 he observed a large explosion far to the south (FUSO). At this same time he received a report relayed by COMCRUDIV TWELVE from PT 523, that a large ship and five destroyers were proceeding in a northerly direction through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait.*

The above report was followed by a message from Commander Right Flank Force to the effect that the right flank destroyers were hitting the enemy steadily with 5-inch shells and that one of the enemy ships was dead in the water.

At 0348 the three enemy ships continued north. The leading ship was bearing 186°(T), range 17,500 yards from the LOUISVILLE, which, at this time, was bearing 307°(T), distant 11,700 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

(a) Operations of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0320 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the NEWCOMB, with DESRON FIFTY-SIX, was in position about 4,200 yards north of the LOUISVILLE and was about 4,200 yards southwest of the WEST VIRGINIA. His destroyers were in a single column from east to west--Attack Section TWO, Attack Section ONE, Attack Section THREE--on course 090°(T), speed five knots. (It seems clear--from the plots of the movements of units--that Attack Section ONE at this time had closed somewhat on Attack Section TWO.)

Owing to the fact that the destroyers were not equipped with a separate maneuvering voice circuit COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was forced to employ TBS voice radio for transmission of all information.** He stated later that he considered this an acute handicap because he felt that the TBS voice radio was already overloaded and he was reluctant to use it as often as he desired.**

At this time his flagship made its first radar contact. This contact consisted of but one small pip bearing 185°(T), range 33,000 yards. He commenced tracking this pip and in a few minutes evaluated its course as 000°(T), its speed as twelve knots, and, based on the various contact reports and amplifying reports he had received over the TBS voice radio, estimated it to consist of three ships.***

At 0324 he likely intercepted a message from CTG 79.11 reporting (a) the enemy as composed of two battleships, two cruisers and one destroyer and (b) that some of the above ships had been damaged.****

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

**** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944, Enclosure (B).

Except for reports that the right flank destroyers were firing their torpedoes and were receiving no damage in return and that the battle line, at 0329, had increased speed to fifteen knots,* nothing of direct bearing on these operations occurred until 0332. Meanwhile, he observed that Commander Left Flank Force had not increased speed but was continuing at five knots. He, therefore, also remained at five knots.

At 0332 he likely intercepted a message from Commander Battle Line to the battle line directing the battle line to open fire at 26,000 yards.* This likely concerned him somewhat for he could readily see that if he continued on at five knots and the battle line continued on at fifteen knots the battleline would be about 2,500 yards to the north of him at about the time the range from the battleline to the nearest enemy ship had decreased to 26,000 yards, in which case he would be in the line of fire.

However, he did not have long to worry for, at 0334, he (a) likely intercepted a message from Commander Right Flank Force to CTG 77.2 reporting that the western group of destroyers had completed firing and that the enemy appeared to be retiring* and (b) at 0335, received orders from CTG 77.2 to launch his attack and "get the big boys".**

Since he had been expecting this order for some time, he had divided his squadron into attack sections for this very purpose and had prepared his attack orders for a coordinated attack, he was able to issue the order immediately. This order, which he issued also at 0335,* directed his attack sections to (a) execute a section column movement to 180°(T) and work up to attack speed, (b) attack from sectors as follows: Section TWO, sector 045° to 090°(T); Section THREE, sector 270° to 315°(T), (c) employ individual target plan and (d) fire intermediate speed torpedoes.** He did not give the attack sector for his own section (Section ONE) because, since it was squadron doctrine, it was clear to his attack groups that he would attack in the sector 315° to 045°(T).

In compliance with this order the leading ships of the three attack sections turned about as follows: (a) NEWCOMB at 0335, turned to course 160°(T) but only increased speed to ten knots in order to allow the other two sections to move ahead, (b) HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, at 0336, turned to course 180°(T) and increased speed to fifteen knots, and (c) ROBINSON, at 0339, turned to course 180°(T) and increased speed to fifteen knots (Diagram "H").

THE ABOVE ATTACK PLAN IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN SOUND BECAUSE IT CONFORMED, IN GENERAL, TO DESTROYER DOCTRINE AND TO CTG 77.2'S DESIRE TO ATTACK FROM THE PROTECTION OF THE LAND MASSES. HOWEVER, THIS LATTER FACTOR WAS NOT SO IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME BECAUSE (A) OF THE DAMAGE WHICH REPORTS INDICATED HAD BEEN DEALT TO SOME OF THE JAPANESE SHIPS AND (B) THE STRAIT, AT ITS NORTHERN END, WIDENED APPRECIABLY MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN MUCH LAND MASS PROTECTION AGAINST ENEMY RADAR ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN SECTORS.

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* Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

THE FACT THAT HIS PLAN HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR SOME TIME AND HAD, THEREFORE, BEEN ISSUED IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIVING THE ORDER TO ATTACK SHOWS THAT, IN HIS OPINION, HE CONSIDERED THE PLAN STILL TO BE SOUND EVEN THOUGH HIS ATTACK WOULD PROBABLY BE SUPPORTED BY THE GUNS OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION, RATHER THAN UNSUPPORTED, AS HAD BEEN THE CASE IN THE ATTACKS MADE EARLIER BY OTHER UNITS.

IF THIS WAS HIS OPINION IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CORRECT FOR MOST OF THE DESTROYERS WOULD BE ATTACKING THROUGH RELATIVELY OPEN WATER AND WOULD, THEREFORE, LIKELY BE DETECTED BY ENEMY RADAR WITH THE ENSUING PROBABILITY OF HEAVY GUN OPPOSITION, WHICH OPPOSITION WOULD BE GREATLY LESSENED BY THE EFFECT OF MAJOR ALLIED GUNFIRE. WHILE IT IS REALIZED THAT THE FIRE OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION ON THE JAPANESE SHIPS MIGHT HAVE CAUSED THEM TO TURN AWAY AND THEREBY LESSEN THE PROBABILITY OF TORPEDO HITS, THIS IS NOT CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO WARRANT A CHANGE IN THE ATTACK PLAN. A MULTIPLE SECTOR ATTACK FROM THREE SECTORS IS DESIGNED TO COVER JUST SUCH A SITUATION.

ALTHOUGH HE HAD ISSUED NO ORDERS TO HIS ATTACK SECTION COMMANDERS ON THE METHOD TO BE EMPLOYED IN CROSSING THE LINE OF ADVANCE OF THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS, THESE COMMANDERS, THROUGH EXPERIENCE, DOCTRINE, AND GOOD COMMON SENSE, KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WISHED TO DO, AND DID IT WITHOUT HESITATION. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE COMMANDERS OF ATTACK SECTIONS ONE* AND TWO** BEGAN MANEUVERING AT THIS TIME TO CROSS TO THE EASTWARD OF THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE WHILE COMMANDER ATTACK SECTION THREE*** BEGAN MANEUVERING IN SIMILAR MANNER TO CROSS TO THE WESTWARD.

THE DECISION OF THE VARIOUS ATTACK SECTION COMMANDERS TO OPERATE IN THIS MANNER WAS SOUND FOR TIME WAS OF THE ESSENCE SINCE, (A) IF THE ENEMY WERE RETIRING IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT HIM FROM ESCAPING, (B) THE BATTLE LINE WAS ABOUT TO OPEN FIRE, AND (C) IF ATTACK SECTION THREE HAD ROUNDED TO THE EASTWARD OF THE CRUISERS INSTEAD OF TO THE WESTWARD IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CROSS THE STRAIT FROM EAST TO WEST IN ORDER TO REACH ITS APPROACH POSITION, AND WOULD, BECAUSE OF THE ADDITIONAL TIME REQUIRED TO REACH ITS TORPEDO FIRING POSITION, HAVE EITHER DELAYED THE COORDINATED ATTACK BY ALL THREE SECTIONS OR FORCED THE THIRD SECTION TO ATTACK INDEPENDENTLY.

OTHER THAN THE ABOVE HE DID NOT GIVE ANY INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS ATTACK GROUP COMMANDERS BUT RELIED ON THEM TO APPROACH THEIR CORRECT FIRING POINTS FROM THE LEAST VULNERABLE POSITIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE RESTRICTIONS OF A COORDINATED ATTACK.

At 0337 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 informing him that the enemy's course was 010°(T), the enemy's speed twelve knots.****

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* Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

*** Action Report H. L. EDWARDS, Surface Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944. Enclosure (D).

Since each of the attack sections was to attack in separate sectors the operations of each attack section commander will be discussed separately.

(1) Commander Attack Section ONE, 0337 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0337 Commander Attack Section ONE (who was also COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX), with Attack Section ONE in column, NEWCOMB (FF), RICHARD P. LEARY and ALBERT W. GRANT, was on course 160°(T), at speed ten knots. In order to get his three sections into position for a coordinated attack he, as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, ordered Attack Section ONE to remain at ten knots until Attack Sections TWO and THREE had cleared the left flank cruisers.* This was necessary because, if he was to make a coordinated attack, it was vital for all three sections to arrive at their firing points at such time as would permit their torpedoes to arrive at the target together.

In view of this, at 0339, he notified DESRON FIFTY-SIX that Attack Section ONE would remain at ten knots until the other attack sections had cleared.**

It will be recalled that at 0320 he had made radar contact on a "pip" which he had estimated consisted of three ships. He had continued tracking this pip on northerly courses at a speed of about twelve knots* and had received a confirmation of his estimate at 0337 when CTG 77.2 informed him that the enemy's course was 010°(T), speed twelve knots. From this data, from his knowledge of the probable movements of his other two sections, and from the location of his planned firing point, which is nowhere listed on the information available to this study but which should have been within the range of his intermediate speed torpedoes, he could plan his approach in order to (a) comply with the basic instructions and (b) assist in making the coordinated attack effective.

Although he has left little information as to how he planned to approach his firing point it seems clear, from this little information and his later track, that he planned, (a) to make an almost direct approach from the northeast part of his sector, obtaining, if possible, the land mass effect of Hibuson Island--it will be observed that he was in his own sector at this time, albeit beyond torpedo range--(b) to turn left and fire torpedoes to starboard and then (c) to retire to the eastward towards his post-attack rendezvous.*** While he realized that this was somewhat dangerous in that he would be approaching the enemy through open water, he appears to have felt that the enemy was somewhat confused and damaged*** owing to the previous torpedo and gun attacks and that, therefore, his attack plan for his section was sound. His views in this matter seem correct.

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* Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

At 0339 he found it advisable to maneuver his section farther to the eastward in order not to interfere with the leading cruiser LOUISVILLE.* During his approach he, as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, closely followed the movements of his attack groups. He knew that Commander Attack Section TWO, at 0344, had ordered speed increased to twenty-five knots and, at 0346, had directed his command as follows: "This has to be quick. Standby your torpedoes."*** What he thought of this latter message is nowhere stated but it is clear that he took no action.

He heard nothing from Commander Attack Section THREE, presumably because that commander operated his section by MN voice radio which was not installed in the ships of the other sections.

At about 0345 he received a report (a) from PT 523 (relayed by COMCRUDIV TWELVE) that five destroyers and one large ship were passing in a northerly direction through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait** and (b) from Commander Right Flank Force that his destroyers were hitting the enemy steadily with 5-inch shells and that one of the enemy ships was dead in the water.**

It is not believed that he was concerned about the enemy at the southern entrance to the strait since (a) they were relatively far away and (b) his present objective was the destruction of the enemy forces in the northern end of the strait. On the other hand, it seems probable that he was reassured by the success of the destroyers now in the strait for their reports indicated that they were suffering no damage whatsoever.

At 0347 he returned to course 170°(T) and increased speed to fifteen knots.***

At 0348 the NEWCOMB was bearing 335°(T), distant four point sixty-five miles from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

(2) Commander Attack Section TWO, 0337 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0337 Commander Attack Section TWO, in ROBINSON, with HALFORD and BRYANT in column astern, was still on course 090°(T) at a speed of five knots.**** Why he did not turn and increase speed when the other two sections did is nowhere explained, although radar ranges and the plotting of the courses and speeds in Diagram "H" and "J" verify the track chart submitted by the ROBINSON.

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* Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations Against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

**** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944, Enclosure (C).

He noted that (a) the night visibility with binoculars appeared to be about 7,000 yards (the enemy had previously discovered Allied destroyers attacking from the eastern shore at a range as great as 14,000 yards or twice the Allied expected range of visual visibility), (b) he could operate within several hundred yards of Hibuson Island and (c) presumably based upon enemy course of 010°(T) and speed of twelve knots, the southern tip of that island would be within his attack sector and within effective firing range of his intermediate speed torpedoes.*

He, therefore, decided that, in view of this, he would (a) approach along the western shore of Hibuson Island, hoping to gain thereby any advantage the adverse effect of its land mass on enemy radars and visual detection might give, (b) fire at a range of about 8,000 yards, and (c) retire to the east of Hibuson Island where he would be protected against enemy gunfire.*

THIS PLAN APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOUND AND IN ACCORDANCE NOT ONLY WITH THE ACCEPTED DOCTRINE FOR NIGHT TORPEDO ATTACK BUT ALSO WITH CTG 77.2'S INSTRUCTIONS TO REMAIN CLOSE TO THE SHORE IN ATTACKING AND RETIRING. HOWEVER, HIS PLAN TO FIRE AT A PREDETERMINED RANGE OF ABOUT 8,000 YARDS, WHICH RANGE WAS NEAR THE OUTER LIMIT OF THE EFFECTIVE RANGE OF INTERMEDIATE SPEED TORPEDOES, INDICATED THAT HE CONSIDERED THE POSSIBLE LAND MASS PROTECTION OF HIBUSON ISLAND TO BE MORE IMPORTANT IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS ATTACK THAN OTHER FACTORS, SUCH AS CLOSING THE ENEMY TO A FIRING RANGE WHICH WOULD OFFER A GREATER PROBABILITY OF HITS.

At this time (0337) Commander Attack Section TWO was necessarily highly interested in his radar picture of the approaching enemy. He had made his initial contact at 0255 on a single enemy pip, bearing 180°(T), range 48,800 yards, which he had continued to track.** By 0326 he had observed that (a) this "pip" had resolved into three "pips", bearing 184°(T), range 31,400 yards, and tracked on course 345°(T), speed twelve knots** and (b) this did not agree with CTG 79.11's report at 0324 that there were five targets. He likely attributed this difference to the long range. At 0337, the enemy was bearing 186°(T), range 27,400 yards and was on course 330°(T), speed fifteen knots.**

At 0339 he changed course to 180°(T) and increased speed to fifteen knots.*** This turn was completed at 0341 at which time the ROBINSON reported three enemy ships bearing 189°(T), range 24,600 yards, on course 340°(T) at a speed of fourteen knots.**

Although COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX had directed him to increase speed to twenty knots at 0339, the ROBINSON track chart and radar ranges show that he did not do so until about 0345. This delay was probably due to the short distance that he had to run to reach his chosen firing position in the radar shadow of Hibuson Island and the necessity, if he was to use the island as his background, of allowing sufficient time for the enemy to approach the firing point.

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

*** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

At 0345 he changed course to 170°(T), increased speed to twenty knots and ordered his section to standby to make smoke.*

Meanwhile, he had received several messages; one was a report relayed from PT 523 that five destroyers and one large ship were passing in a northerly direction through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait; another was from Commander Right Flank Force to the effect that his destroyers were hitting the enemy steadily with 5-inch shells and that one of the enemy ships was dead in the water.**

The fact that the Allied destroyers were being so successful in damaging the enemy by both guns and torpedoes without damage to themselves probably did not pass unnoticed by Commander Attack Section TWO.

About this time he observed a dull glow on the horizon.* It seems probable that his attention was directed to this glow because of the explosion and fire on the FUSO which occurred at this time. He attributed this glow to the numerous gun flashes from the enemy ships which were evidently firing at a very rapid rate at the Allied destroyers in the area.* He appears to have decided that he would soon be under gunfire also and would be forced to fire his torpedoes possibly long before arriving at his planned firing position for, at 0346, he directed his commanding officers as follows: "This has to be quick. Standby your fish (torpedoes)."**

WHAT HE MEANT BY THIS ORDER IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR FOR, AT THIS TIME, THE RANGE WAS OVER 20,000 YARDS. DOES NOT THIS ORDER GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT (A) HE HAD DECIDED THAT ONCE HE CAME UNDER ENEMY FIRE, HE WOULD FIRE HIS TORPEDOES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE EVEN AT MAXIMUM RANGE FOR LOW SPEED TORPEDOES AND WOULD IMMEDIATELY RETIRE AND (B) HE WOULD DO THIS EVEN TO THE DETRIMENT OF A COORDINATED ATTACK SINCE HE WAS CLOSER TO THE ENEMY THAN THE OTHER TWO ATTACK SECTIONS? IF THIS WAS HIS PLAN IT SEEMS UNSOUND FOR ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF HIS DESTROYERS WAS AS TORPEDO CARRIERS. THEY HAD BEEN LAUNCHED TO THE ATTACK AND THEIR ATTACK MUST NOW BE PRESSED HOME TO INSURE ITS SUCCESS. WHILE IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT SHOULD THE ENEMY FIRE BE SO INTENSE AS TO PREVENT AN EFFECTIVE ATTACK BEING DELIVERED AT THE OPTIMUM FIRING POINT, THE ATTACK MUST THEN BE DELIVERED AT THE CLOSEST FIRING POINT WHICH WILL PERMIT AN EFFECTIVE ATTACK TO BE DELIVERED WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE LOSSES, SUCH DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN HIS PLAN, AT LEAST AT THIS TIME.

Meanwhile, he closely observed the radar scope and, at 0346, noted that the three enemy ships were much more clearly defined than heretofore and had resolved into one very large target bearing 194°(T), range 20,100 yards, followed by two large targets.***

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

At 0347 he increased speed to twenty-five knots.

At 0348 he evaluated the radar picture of one very large and two large ships to be one battleship bearing 196°(T), range 17,800 yards and tracked on course 325°(T), speed eighteen knots, followed by two cruisers.* This was fairly accurate as regards composition and speed since the battleship was the YAMASHIRO and the two cruisers were the MOGAMI and the destroyer SHIGURE. It was somewhat inaccurate as regards course since the YAMASHIRO had changed course to 015°(T) at 0345.

At this same time he directed his destroyers to fire half salvos and to increase speed to thirty knots.*

At 0348 the ROBINSON was bearing 322°(T), distant 8,200 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island, (Diagram "H").

(3) Commander Attack Section THREE, 0337 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0337 Commander Attack Section THREE, with Attack Section THREE in column in order HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS (F), LEUTZE and BENNION, was changing course to 180°(T) and increasing speed to fifteen knots preparatory to heading for his firing position in attack sector 270°-315°(T).

At this time he was necessarily highly interested in his radar picture of the approaching enemy. He had made his initial contact at 0314 on a single enemy pip bearing 181°(T), range 34,000 yards, which he had tracked on northerly courses at twenty knots.** Now the enemy speed was reported by his flagship as fifteen knots.*** There is no information as to what radar definition he had of the target at this time but from the reports of his other two ships it seems probable that the single pip of 0314 had by now (0337) resolved into one large and two medium size ships.** Naturally, all three ships of the attack section were tracking the leading large ship which was bearing about 181°(T), range 26,700 yards.**

ALTHOUGH THE MANEUVERING VOICE LOGS OF THE THREE SHIPS OF THIS SECTION ARE NOT AVAILABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE OPERATING BY MN VOICE RADIO,** WHICH HAD OUTLETS ON THE BRIDGE ONLY AND COULD NOT BE RECORDED DURING DARKEN SHIP CONDITIONS, THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A CONTINUOUS FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THEM. THIS WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT DOCTRINE**** WHICH REQUIRED A RELIABLE PROCEDURE FOR THE REPEATING OF CONTACTS AND THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN SHIPS SO THAT THE ATTACK SECTION COMMANDER MIGHT HAVE ALL OF THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE. NONE OF THIS INFORMATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE DISPOSITION OTC.

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* Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

** Action Report H. L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Ibid., Enclosure (A) to Part II.

**** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Part VI, Paragraph 6120.

As he turned he had to decide quickly whether he should follow Attack Sections ONE and TWO to the eastward and then, having cleared the LOUISVILLE, depart for his firing point, or whether he should change course to the westward and pass astern of the COLUMBIA, which was the last ship of the left flank cruisers. He decided on the latter course of action.* His decision was, of course, correct for time was essential since the leading enemy units were continuing to close the battle line which would soon open fire. If he had decided on the former course of action he would not only have lost time, because of the longer distances involved, but would have placed himself directly in the line of fire of the left flank cruisers which might--and did--open fire before the battle line.

He therefore, at 0341, increased speed to twenty knots and turned westward to 250°(T) to facilitate the maneuver.*

Whether or not, as he commenced his approach, he had a definite predetermined firing position in mind is unknown. He stated later that his plan was to attack on the port bow of the enemy, within effective range of intermediate speed torpedoes and in coordination with the other two attack sections.*

At 0345 he likely intercepted a report relayed from PT 523 that five destroyers and one large ship were passing in a northerly direction through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait; and another was from Commander Right Flank Force to the effect that his destroyers were hitting the enemy steadily with 5-inch shells and that one of the enemy ships was dead in the water.**

Also at 0345, because he seemed to be about to foul the cruisers, he changed course to 290°(T) and then one minute later, at 0346, having cleared the cruisers, he came left to 230°(T) and increased speed to twenty-five knots to commence his approach.*

At 0348 the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS was bearing 299°(T), distant 15,100 yards from Kanhandon Point, Hibuson Island, and was also bearing 279°(T), distant 1,000 yards from the COLUMBIA which was the last ship in column of the left flank cruisers.

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* Action Report H. L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

(3) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0320 Commander Right Flank Force intercepted a voice radio message from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR directing Attack Groups 1.2 and 2.2 to stand by to fire a half salvo to starboard.*

Since these attack groups were heading in a southerly direction with the enemy on the port bow, with the direction of firing torpedoes clearly to port, he was likely confused somewhat by this order. However, he wisely took no action perhaps feeling that the matter would be straightened out by later events.

He now observed on his radar scope the two right flank destroyer attack groups conducting their approach about eleven miles to the south. He knew that the two attack groups of CTG 79.11 had completed their torpedo attacks and were returning.* However, in view of the fact that the enemy situation still remained somewhat unclear and since CTG 77.2 had requested information from CTG 79.11 as to enemy types, he requested COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, at 0321, to get as accurate a picture as possible, especially as to types of ships.*

Since, as has been pointed out previously, he was concerned over the attacks now underway by his right flank destroyers, although not so concerned as he had been before CTG 79.11 had attacked successfully and without injury, he watched the movements of his destroyers on his radar scope, listened to their reports as they advanced, and watched closely for enemy reaction.

At 0323 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from Commander Attack Group 2.2 directing the BEALE to standby to fire a half salvo to port.*

At 0324 he recorded in his action report that (a) COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR reported that there were two battleships, one or two heavy cruisers and one destroyer in the enemy group and (b) DESRON TWENTY-FOUR was then firing torpedoes in its first attack.**

At 0328 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from Commander Attack Group 2.2 to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR reporting that his group had completed firing torpedoes and was retiring to the north.* Upon hearing this report, he asked COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR for an estimate of enemy speed, to which the Commanding Officer ARUNTA replied, "Speed twenty knots."*

It appears however, that Commander Right Flank Force did not hear this reply for about a minute later he asked ARUNTA for an estimate of the enemy speed to which the Commanding Officer ARUNTA first replied, "Wait" and then, at 0330 replied, "My speed is twenty-five knots."* This illustrates the communication difficulties experienced by ARUNTA.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

Meanwhile, at 0329 he intercepted a voice radio order from Commander Attack Group 1.2 to Attack Group 1.2 that he was coming left to north to fire torpedoes and for the group to fire when ready.* He could expect from this that these destroyers would commence firing torpedoes in a few minutes. At this same time he intercepted Commander Battle Line's order to the battle line to increase speed to fifteen knots.

At 0331 he received a message by TBS voice radio from CTG 77.2 requesting information concerning the operations of the right flank destroyers to which query he replied that the group that went down the right side had fired and were retiring (to their post battle rendezvous) and that the other group would report presently when they had fired.* At this same time he increased speed to fifteen knots to maintain station on the battle line which he knew had increased speed about two minutes earlier.

At 0332 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from COMBATLINE to the battle line directing them to open fire at 26,000 yards.* This concerned him considerably for, at this moment, his radar ranges indicated that the leading enemy ship (YAMASHIRO) was about 31,000 yards from the battle line which meant that the battle line was likely to open fire in a few minutes. This was an unsatisfactory situation because one group of his destroyers had yet to complete its attack and, therefore, might accidently become a target. Since the opening range, prescribed in CTG 77.2's battle plan,** was to be between 17,000 and 20,000 yards, he likely expected CTG 77.2 to direct Commander Battle Line to cancel this order and to conform to the battle plan, but he could not be sure. Therefore, he realized that it would be wise to have his destroyers clear the area once they had completed firing.

At 0333 he was relieved to receive a report from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that Attack Group 1.2 had fired and that the enemy appeared to be retiring.* He knew from this, and from the earlier report of Commander Attack Group 2.2, that (a) the squadron had now completed firing and (b) the enemy appeared to be retiring. Therefore, he so advised CTG 77.2.*

SINCE, FROM THE RADAR PLOT THE ENEMY APPEARED TO CONTINUE TO CLOSE, HE LIKELY MAINTAINED A CLOSE WATCH IN ORDER TO DISCERN THE REPORTED RETIREMENT, AND DIRECTED COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR TO KEEP TRACK OF THE ENEMY AND TO REPORT ENEMY COURSE AND SPEED.*

THIS WAS A SOUND ORDER FOR IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DESTROY THE JAPANESE SHIPS AND, SHOULD THEY BE RETIRING IN FACT, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO TAKE IMMEDIATE COUNTER-ACTION IN ORDER TO INSURE THAT NONE ESCAPED. THIS WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH DOCTRINE WHICH DIRECTED THE EXPLOITATION OF IMMEDIATELY FAVORABLE SITUATIONS TO THE COMPLETE ANNIHILATION OF THE ENEMY.***

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 2, Section VII, Paragraphs 233 and 234.

At this moment he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR stating that he was going to "chase" the enemy.* Since the term "chase" has the naval connotation of "pursuing a disorganized enemy force that is withdrawn from action",** he realized that by this message COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR was reaffirming his statement that the enemy was retiring. In such case his destroyers would be in the attack waters of DESRON FIFTY-SIX. On the other hand, he realized that, should the enemy not be retiring, his destroyers would be in the target area and subject to attack by Allied gunfire from the battle disposition. In either case, he felt it wise to remove his destroyers from the target area and, therefore, immediately directed COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to "get over to the west".***

THIS ORDER BY COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE WAS SOUND FOR THE DESTROYERS RIGHT FLANK HAD NOW PROBABLY FIRED MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THEIR TORPEDOES AND HAD ONLY THEIR GUNS LEFT. IT WAS, OF COURSE, CLEAR THAT DESTROYER GUNFIRE COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO BE PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST ENEMY HEAVY SHIPS WHEREAS THE TORPEDOES OF DESRON FIFTY-SIX COULD BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AND, THEREFORE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THEIR DELIVERY AGAINST THE ENEMY NOT BE INTERFERED WITH IN ANY WAY.

At 0335 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, directing that commander to launch his attack and "get the big boys".**** This probably confused him because of Commander Battle Line's order to commence firing at 26,000 yards. He could see that, unless this order were cancelled or modified, DESRON FIFTY-SIX might be in jeopardy. He realized, however, that CTG 77.2 was fully cognizant of the situation and that his fears were probably groundless. Perhaps he felt that the reported retirement of the enemy had caused CTG 77.2, who would naturally be fearful lest any of the enemy get away, to launch this attack since the enemy might never be within the planned open fire gun range of the battle line.

Between 0334 and 0338 he intercepted several TBS voice radio transmissions between COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR and the DALY and BACHE concerning the firing of torpedoes* and he could conclude from these transmissions that that commander, despite his earlier report that his squadron had fired torpedoes, was still engaged in making a torpedo attack.

Despite the report of COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that the enemy ships were retiring, Commander Right Flank Force noted, at 0338, that the leading Japanese ship was continuing northward with little decrease in speed,*

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 13, Section II, Paragraph 1304.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

and that the other Japanese ships had either slowed down or had been damaged. The leading ship was the battleship YAMASHIRO which had sustained one torpedo hit at 0319 and another at 0331 which had left her fighting ability generally unimpaired. At this same time COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR reported that the enemy (meaning the SHIGURE) had reversed course and was heading northward.*

Also at 0339 Commander Right Flank Force advised COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was launching his torpedo attack and again directed him to stay clear of the targets.**

At 0340 he noted that (a) the range from the PHOENIX to the nearest enemy ship was about 26,000 yards and (b) the distance to the MISSISSIPPI from the PHOENIX was about 13,000 yards. From this he could estimate that the distance of the enemy from the MISSISSIPPI was about 28,000 yards. This range indicated that the battle line was, therefore, about to open fire. Since the right flank cruisers were somewhat out of position with relation to the MISSISSIPPI, he decided to correct his position and turned to course 120°(T) for this purpose.***

At the same time he received a report from PT 523, over the Local Air Warning Circuit, reporting five destroyers and one large ship on a northerly course passing the southern entrance to Surigao Strait.*** This caused him considerable concern because it indicated that another enemy attempt to penetrate the strait was underway.*** His concern was probably due to the shortage of torpedoes in his destroyers which he could estimate had been largely expended.

About 0342 he received a voice radio report from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that the enemy (SHIGURE) was then on course 020°(T), speed twenty-three knots.** At this time the SHIGURE was actually on course 030°(T), speed twenty-six knots (Diagram "H").

At 0343 he received a report from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that he was attacking the enemy with (5-inch) gunfire.**** This was probably a great surprise for he had ordered COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to retire to the western shore.** He immediately directed that commander to stay clear.***

At 0344, having arrived in his approximately correct position, and desiring to be on the base course when the battle line opened fire because his after turrets were near the limit of their forward train, he changed back to the base course 090°(T).***

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* Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

**** Ibid., Enclosure (C); also Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

At this time he observed that (a) the range to the leading Japanese ship had decreased to about 22,000 yards and (b) this ship was persistently moving northward despite the torpedo and gunfire attacks of the Allied destroyers. In addition, his radar scope showed that there were three enemy groups; the first group looked like the one heavy ship above leading two large ships (cruisers) in column, with the other two groups of small ships (destroyers) astern.* It is of interest that the BOISE also showed (a) two heavy ships, at least one of which was believed to be a battleship in a rough column heading northward, accompanied by what was believed to be a destroyer possibly waiting for an opportunity to launch a torpedo attack, and (b) a group of small ships milling around to the southward.** The SHROPSHIRE's radar scope showed two groups each of two large ships about 5,000 yards apart heading northward, but the destroyer accompanying the leading two large ships was not discovered until a few minutes later.***

Actually, at this time the YAMASHIRO was leading the Japanese group, with the MOGAMI following about 4,000 yards astern; the SHIGURE, about 1,800 yards astern and to the eastward of the MOGAMI, was approaching at high speed and was about to pass the MOGAMI en route to the YAMASHIRO, the three ships being very nearly in line of bearing of 140°(T) from the YAMASHIRO which was bearing about 150°(T) from the PHOENIX giving the indication of the three ships in a rough column; about 6,000 yards astern of the YAMASHIRO was the ASAGUMO and about 3,000 yards further away was the MICHISHIO, both under attack by the destroyers of the right flank; five miles farther to the south was the disabled FUSO**** (Diagram "H").

Commencing at 0345 he began receiving in succession a number of reports***** from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to the effect that (a) the enemy was still headed north, (b) one of the enemy ships was dead in the water and (c) DESRON TWENTY-FOUR ships were (1) hitting the enemy regularly with their 5-inch guns and (2) going to attack the enemy with torpedoes.

Realizing that this was very important information since it showed that the enemy was completely demoralized he, at 0347, relayed the information to the OTC (CTG 77.2).*****

At 0347 he heard one of the attack section commanders of DESRON FIFTY-SIX direct his section to fire half salvos of torpedoes and thought from this that DESRON FIFTY-SIX was firing torpedoes.***** Actually, this was merely a preparatory order from Commander Attack Section TWO. No torpedoes had as yet been fired.

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* Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial SC 1123/194, November 4th, 1944.

**** The track charts of the LOUISVILLE, HUTCHINS, DALY and MC GOWAN showed this target which was either too distant for the other ships to record or their CIC's were not concerned about it.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0348 the PHOENIX, which was 18,800 yards northwest of the leading enemy ship (YAMASHIRO), was bearing 062°(T), distant 9,800 yards from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

(a) Operations of Commander Right Flank Cruisers, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

The right flank cruisers were now north of the Cabugan Islands. At 0324 CTG 77.3, on course 270°(T), speed ten knots, executed a reversal of course to the right by turn movement to 090°(T).*

At 0331 the cruisers had just completed their turn. Commander Right Flank Cruisers ordered speed increased to fifteen knots.

At 0340 the range to the nearest enemy ship was approximately 26,000 yards from the PHOENIX. At this time CTG 77.3 changed course to 120°(T) in order to close the enemy, and to correct his position with relation to the disposition guide.

At 0342 the Commanding Officer BOISE noted that COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR had opened fire with his 5-inch guns.** Although he does not indicate whether this was a visual sighting or the result of a radio message, it appears to have been the latter because at this time COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR reported to CTG 77.3 that he had opened with gunfire.***

At 0344, having closed the enemy sufficiently, he changed course of the cruisers back to 090°(T). The range to the leading Japanese ship had now decreased to about 22,000 yards. This was so despite the torpedo and gunfire attacks of the Allied destroyers and must have been an impressive demonstration to Commander Right Flank Cruisers (CTG 77.3) of either (a) the lack of hits being made by the Allied destroyers or (b) the toughness of the Japanese ships. At this time, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3)", (a) the PHOENIX had three groups of ships on her radar screen; the first group looked like one heavy ship leading and two large ships (cruisers) in column, and two small groups of small ships (destroyers) astern,* (b) BOISE radar screen showed two heavy ships in a rough column headed northward, accompanied by what was believed to be a destroyer waiting for an opportunity to launch a torpedo attack** and (c) SHROPSHIRE had two groups each of two large ships 5,000 yards apart heading northward.****

Also at 0344 he, as well as many of his units, observed the terrific gunfire of the YAMASHIRO when she commenced return fire on the destroyers, which gunfire appeared to many observers as explosions.

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* Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial SC 1123/194, November 4th, 1944.

The three cruisers of the right flank, however, were preoccupied with the tracking of the leading Japanese ship, the YAMASHIRO. As the range decreased below 20,000 yards, the gunners of the PHOENIX and BOISE awaited the order to commence fire; the radar and fire control equipment of the SHROPSHIRE was not effective beyond 15,500 yards.*

(b) Operations of Commander Right Flank Destroyers (COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR), 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

Since Commander Right Flank Destroyers operated throughout this period almost entirely as Commander Attack Group 1.2 and only rarely as Commander Right Flank Destroyers, all matters connected with Commander Right Flank Destroyers are discussed under the operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2.

(1) Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

Commander Attack Group 1.2, with Attack Group 1.2, on course 180°(T) at speed fifteen knots, continued his approach. He was still in a loose column formation with the DALY and BACHE about 1,000 yards astern of the HUTCHINS. At this time he was forward of the beam of the enemy, continuing south to get behind him, and had noted four ships in column advancing to the north.** Actually, there were five ships in rough column, MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, SHIGURE, YAMASHIRO and MOGAMI, in that order.

As yet he had not signalled any torpedo firing plan to either attack group.**

WHILE THIS WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE CONSIDERED THAT HIS DESTROYER COMMANDING OFFICERS WERE SUFFICIENTLY INDOCTRINATED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO IN A SITUATION OF THIS NATURE,** IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT IT WAS UNWISE NOT TO HAVE DONE SO BECAUSE (A) THERE WAS AMPLE TIME AVAILABLE, (B) EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS IN ACTION ARE ENHANCED IF THE DESTROYERS ATTACK ACCORDING TO A PREARRANGED PLAN, AND (C) THE RAPIDITY AND ACCURACY OF UNIT TORPEDO FIRE WILL BE INCREASED IF THE COMMANDING OFFICERS ARE INFORMED OF THE NATURE OF THE ANTICIPATED METHODS OF FIRE, AND MANEUVERS FOR FIRING.***

None of his ships except the BEALE in Attack Group 2.2 seemed concerned at the non-receipt of a firing plan, which shows that the squadron was familiar with the squadron commander's doctrines. The BEALE, on the other hand, wished information as to the number of torpedoes to be

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* Action Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial SC 1123/194, November 4th, 1944, CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15) 1ST Endorsement, Serial 0403, November 15th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

*** Current Tactical Orders Destroyers (USF 32) Rev., United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1940, Chapter 10.

fired, and therefore, at 0319, had requested instructions* thereon. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT ITEM TO HAVE SETTLED IMMEDIATELY FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF TORPEDOES WAS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE, AND THE DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO FIRE ALL TORPEDOES, EXCEPT IN AN EMERGENCY, WAS THEREFORE ONE OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE.

Commander Attack Group 1.2, as COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, at 0320, in replying to the BEALE, directed his destroyers to "standby to fire half salvos to starboard. BEALE acknowledge."** This message was not received clearly by the BEALE who asked the ARUNTA to repeat it** which was promptly done.*

Why COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR directed Attack Group 2.2 to standby to fire torpedoes to starboard when they properly should have been fired to port is nowhere explained. Perhaps he had hopes that it might be possible to make a coordinated attack. However, he must have seen on his radar scope that to accomplish this he would have to turn his own group radically toward the enemy. Since he did not do this but continued on, it seems probable that he had not as yet decided on his course of action.

At 0321 he received a message from Commander Right Flank Force directing him to report as accurately as possible as to types of enemy ships encountered.**

At 0323, as Commander Attack Group 1.2, he increased speed to twenty-five knots, and ordered all ships to make heavy smoke.** As COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR he, at 0324, directed Commander Attack Group 2.2 to report when torpedoes had been fired.

At this time the DALY* and BACHE,*** but apparently not the HUTCHINS,**** observed starshells burst well ahead of them to starboard. This starshell firing was probably a continuation of the Japanese firing against the Western Attack Group but its effects were dissipated by the heavy smoke. Three minutes later a flare, obviously dropped by a plane, illuminated the area in the vicinity of the DALY.* No enemy gunfire was observed at this time.

By 0327 he had noted on his radar scope that the enemy ships were abeam of the HUTCHINS.*****

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

***** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

It now likely appeared to him that at least one of the enemy ships had commenced retiring. Since he believed that he was in an excellent position to fire torpedoes,* he decided to commence his attack. Therefore, at 0327:36, he changed course to 090°(T) and at 0329 to 000°(T).**

Just before this, at 0328, he received a report that Attack Group 2.2, which was about 7,000 yards to the northeast, had completed firing torpedoes.***

From this report he could see that any chance for coordinated attacks had now been lost and that his own attack would necessarily be conducted independently. Perhaps this did not surprise him because, as was pointed out earlier, it seems probable that he had not contemplated any specific coordination. This thought is inferred from his view, expressed later,* that, in order to prevent the Japanese from retiring, it was more important for him to work to the southward of the enemy than to attempt to execute a coordinated attack. He then, at 0329, advised his group over the Task Group Common that he was "Coming left to north, fire your fish when you wish."***

Why he directed his destroyers at this time to fire their torpedoes is not understood for his command was not being illuminated by the Japanese nor was it under gunfire. In fact, he stated later that the enemy appeared to be unaware of his presence.*

Since the enemy, with the exception of the SHIGURE, had continued on northerly courses Commander Attack Group 1.2's belief that he was in a good firing position, would have been correct had he continued on course 090°(T) or slightly to the north of this course, for by so doing, he would have closed the enemy to a point where he could have employed intermediate speed torpedoes and thereby increased markedly his probability of hits. However, his change of course to north placed him in a position where it was necessary to employ low speed torpedoes**** with the consequent decreased probability of hits owing to the fact that (1) the enemy would have more time for maneuvering and (2) the density of the torpedoes in the target area would be low.

At this time, 0329, the range to the nearest enemy ship (SHIGURE) was 9,100 yards, and the range to the leading enemy ship (YAMASHIRO) was 12,000 yards.

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* Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-44, Destroyer Torpedo Doctrine and Manual of Torpedo Control, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01630, July 8th, 1944, Paragraph 3-46, Page 27.

Somehow, at this time, the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS, who had been tracking the fourth pip from the north,* which analysis reveals was likely the MOGAMI, suddenly shifted to the SHIGURE, which he had observed to be retiring, and at 0329:30, using broadside fire to starboard, fired a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 120°(T) at this target bearing 093°(T), range 8,200 yards (her track chart indicates a range of 8,750 yards and a bearing of 096°(T) which appears to have been correct) and tracked on course 200°(T), speed fifteen knots.* Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, and torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal. By firing at the SHIGURE, which he had not planned to fire at since she was a detached ship but which he considered a large "pip", he was enabled to employ intermediate speed torpedoes because the target angle of seventy-three degrees on her present course and her range of 8,200 yards was 525 yards beyond the effective range of the torpedoes but well within the maximum range.**

The DALY and BACHE, following roughly in the wake of the HUTCHINS on course north, both turned late and as a result, lost some distance. At this time (a) the DALY was tracking a pip,*** which later proved to be the MOGAMI and (b) the BACHE was tracking the circling destroyer SHIGURE.****

THE FACT THAT BOTH THE HUTCHINS AND THE BACHE WERE TRACKING THE SAME PIP (SHIGURE) INDICATES THE NEED FOR A DEFINITE TARGET DESIGNATION PRIOR TO FIRING TORPEDOES. IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT HAD ATTACK GROUP 1.2 CLOSED THE ENEMY RELATIVE SIZE OF THE TARGETS WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CLEARLY DEFINED ALLOWING A MORE CAREFUL SELECTION OF TARGETS.

It was quite difficult at this time for Commander Attack Group 1.2 to understand thoroughly what was transpiring in the Japanese formation for all the Japanese ships were on different courses and speeds. It was also difficult for the Japanese to discern what was happening, and whence came the attacks, for they had apparently failed to detect Attack Group 1.2 on their radars or, because of smoke, to sight it.

At 0331 he may have intercepted (a) a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 to Commander Right Flank Force requesting information concerning the operations of the right flank destroyers***** and (b) Commander Right Flank Force's reply that the group which had gone down the right side had fired and were retiring and that the other group would report when they had fired.*****

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* Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-44, Destroyer Torpedo Doctrine and Manual of Torpedo Control, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01630, July 8th, 1944, Paragraph 3-46, Page 27.

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0332 he received a report from the Commanding Officer DALY that two torpedoes had crossed from starboard to port* about fifty yards ahead of him. Although no Japanese records available to this study substantiate this sighting, does it not seem surprising that the wakes were not observed by the BACHE which was following about 500 yards astern of the DALY? If they were, in fact, Japanese torpedoes, they were likely fired either accidentally or intentionally, as a jettison measure by either of the damaged destroyers MICHISHIO or ASAGUMO and were probably fired into the smoke in the general direction of the retiring Western Attack Group rather than at Attack Group 1.2, the presence of which appears to have been unknown to the Japanese.

It is not known whether or not he intercepted Commander Battle Line's TBS voice radio order issued at this time directing the battle line to open fire at 26,000 yards.** If he did, it probably emphasized in his mind the necessity for remaining sufficiently clear of the Japanese formation to insure that the units of the battle disposition might not confuse his units with those of the enemy.

At 0332:42 HUTCHINS, at the direction of Commander Attack Group 1.2, started a wide turn to port and continued around to course 180°(T).***

At 0333 Commander Attack Group 1.2 advised Commander Right Flank Force that he had fired his torpedoes.** This report, which was in error, must have surprised the commanding officers of the DALY and BACHE for they had not as yet fired.**** He followed this message with another to the effect that the enemy was retiring.** Why he sent this latter message is not explained for, from his radar scope, he should have been able to see that the major portion of the enemy ships were still on a northerly heading. Unfortunately the HUTCHINS track chart***** which presumably he consulted for he was in the HUTCHINS CIC, shows that at this time she was plotting only the track of the circling SHIGURE and had not yet detected that ship's reversal of course to north which had started at 0331:30.

He now, as COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, received a message from Commander Right Flank Force to keep track of the enemy and to report enemy course and speed.** He decided that the best way of accomplishing this task was to trail the enemy and, therefore, he advised Commander Right Flank

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944; also Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

Force that he was going to "chase" the enemy.* This was an unhappy choice of words for, instead of chasing them, which, as has been pointed out under "Operations of Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), 0320 - 0348", has the connotation of a retirement by the enemy, he would have to trail rather than chase, for at this very time the enemy was moving north again. However, the HUTCHINS track chart shows that the SHIGURE turn to the north was not detected at this time.**

However, this plan did not meet with the approval of Commander Right Flank Force, who directed him to "get over to the west".*** Since he was already turning to the left and would end the turn about 2,000 yards offshore and on course 180°(T), he likely felt that he was complying with the order from his commander. He continued his turn to the south.**** While his reason for heading south rather than north is not known it seems probable it was based on his desire to remain in such a position that, should the enemy retire, he would be better able to intercept them. If this was his reason it seems logical in view of his orders.

Meanwhile, the DALY and BACHE, which had lost some distance in turns, were now about 1,200 and 2,500 yards, respectively, astern of the HUTCHINS (Diagram "H").

At 0335 the BACHE changed course to 345°(T)***** and headed for the point at which the HUTCHINS had started her turn.

At 0335 Commander Attack Group 1.2 knew that the BACHE had not as yet fired for, at this time, she requested permission to fire a half salvo of torpedoes before retiring.*

This message appears to have alerted him to the fact that neither the DALY nor the BACHE had fired and he, therefore, authorized both of them to fire before retiring and directed them to inform him upon completion of firing.* The DALY immediately replied in the negative* in order that the commander would know that she had not as yet fired her torpedoes.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

**** Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

The DALY, now at 0335:30,* changed course to 350°(T) and, using broadside fire to starboard, fired a half salvo of five low speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 055°(T)** at the largest "pip" which she believed to be a battleship and which was bearing 093°(T), range 10,700 yards and tracked on course 010°(T), speed sixteen knots. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.*** Actually, from the analysis, she fired at the MOGAMI which at this time was on course 045°(T) at twenty knots. She reported having fired to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR at approximately 0337.**** From her track chart** she apparently started tracking the crippled ASAGUMO, which was at the same range and only three degrees away in bearing, shortly after firing.

At 0336 the BACHE, using broadside fire to starboard, fired a half salvo of five low speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 068°(T) at a target which he did not identify but which, from analysis, was the SHIGURE, bearing 109°(T), range 10,200 yards and tracked on course 018°(T) at seventeen knots.***** Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.

At 0336:30 the DALY commenced a turn to 200°(T)** and at 0337:30 the BACHE commenced a turn to 180°(T).*****

Commander Attack Group 1.2 now observed that the radar scope showed three targets continuing north with three small ones lagging behind and possibly retiring.****** He concluded from this that the undamaged Japanese units were continuing their attack and therefore reported to Commander Right Flank Force that the enemy had reversed course and was headed north.**** At the same time he queried the DALY as to whether she had fired her torpedoes.****

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* Although the DALY stated in her action report that she fired torpedoes at 0332 a study of the voice radio logs of CTG 77.3, PHOENIX and DALY reveals that she reported to COMDESRON 24 at 0336 that she had not yet fired and about a minute later reported that she had fired torpedoes. The DALY's track chart shows a similar confusion as to times, having an error of about three minutes (negative) until 0336 and then gradually decreasing to an error of about one minute at the time of opening gunfire at 0342.

** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

****** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

Also at 0338, at the approximate end of the HUTCHINS torpedo running time, the commanding officer and other observers on the bridge visually sighted one to three explosions slightly on the port bow. The sound operators heard two faint and one loud snap in the sonar equipment.*

From this it is assumed that he thought that it was likely that he had made a hit. However, he did not make a hit, because the SHIGURE had reversed course long before the torpedoes could have reached her** and no other Japanese ships were within the torpedo spread. Since the Japanese did not report any torpedo hits at this time it seems probable that these explosions were those occurring in the damaged FUSO as a result of the original torpedo attack by DESRON FIFTY-FOUR. The FUSO was approximately 14,000 yards away and on a bearing sufficiently close to permit this error.

Commander Attack Group 1.2, observing that he had fired his torpedoes without having been fired on or even illuminated, decided to increase speed and to close the enemy somewhat, presumably to clear the smoke and to bring the enemy more on his beam so that he might fire his guns.

At 0339 the HUTCHINS increased speed to thirty knots and changed course to 148°(T);*** the DALY changed course to 175°(T)**** and the BACHE, just completing her turn, steadied on course 180°(T).***** Commander Attack Group 1.2 endeavored to notify the DALY and BACHE of the change of speed to thirty knots****** but they failed to receive the message and remained at twenty-five knots.

At this time, owing largely to the firing maneuvers of the three ships of this section, the HUTCHINS was some 4,400 yards ahead of the DALY.

Also at 0339 he (a) was advised by Commander Right Flank Force that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was launching his torpedo attack and was directed to stay clear (of the target area), (b) received a report from the

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* Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A); also Appended Chart 2 (Chart of Night Battle, 3RD Section, 1ST Striking Force, 0030 - 0530, October 25th, 1944), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

****** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

BACHE that she had completed firing and (c) advised Commander Right Flank Force that the enemy base course was 020°(T), the enemy speed twenty-three knots.* Actually, the track of the YAMASHIRO was 345°(T), speed eighteen knots; the track of the MOGAMI 000°(T), speed twelve knots; the track of the SHIGURE 030°(T), speed twenty-six knots. From this it seems correct to say that he had tracked the SHIGURE rather than the YAMASHIRO or MOGAMI.

At 0341, realizing that the enemy was still continuing north, albeit in a very loose column,** and that his present course of 148°(T), if maintained, would remove him completely from action, he decided to change course to north. He therefore directed the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS to change course to north and to open fire at the nearest enemy ship.***

The HUTCHINS immediately opened fire by full radar control on a target which she believed to be a destroyer*** bearing 060°(T),** range 12,000 yards*** and at 0341:30 changed course to 008°(T).** This target was the damaged ASAGUMO which was changing course to port in order to retire from the strait.

At 0342 the DALY, following the lead of the HUTCHINS, also opened fire employing full radar control. The DALY fired on a destroyer target bearing 085°(T), range 11,000 yards which appeared to have reversed course.**** This was the MICHISHIO which was proceeding southward at slow speed.

At 0343 Commander Attack Group 1.2, observing that two of his ships had opened fire with their guns, advised Commander Right Flank Force to this effect.* At this same time DALY***** and BACHE***** both changed course to 150°(T) in order to parallel the track of the HUTCHINS and make up some of the lost distance (Diagram "H").

At 0344 (a) the BACHE, employing full radar control, opened fire on the MICHISHIO bearing 086°(T), range 11,800 yards,****** (b) Commander Attack Group 1.2 observed that (1) the enemy had responded vigorously to the above firing employing starshells which were initially short, (2) enemy salvos of 5-inch, 6-inch and 8-inch shells were landing in the vicinity of the HUTCHINS and (3) no hits were being made on the ships

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

***** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

****** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

of his group,* (this was his indication that the enemy knew of the presence of his attack group), and (c) the DALY, observing that the HUTCHINS had changed course back to the north and would soon cross her bow, changed course to 135°(T),** presumably in order to continue firing as long as possible.

At 0345 so much was happening around the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 that some erroneous impressions were created, leading to false reports and overoptimistic claims. The HUTCHINS reported early hits on the ASAGUMO and fires started.*** The DALY and BACHE were forced to check fire at 0345 as the HUTCHINS crossed their line of fire,**** but the DALY reported "three large explosions unmistakably torpedo hits"**** and again that "each explosion was a round ball of dull orange flame"**** on bearing 045°(T),**** and claimed them as three torpedo hits from the five low speed torpedoes she fired at 0333.**** She further stated "the ship, which was hit by three torpedoes, immediately opened fire with major and minor caliber guns".**** The BACHE reported that (a) she had made gunfire hits on her target after three salvos and (b) eye witnesses had stated definitely that fires had been started as the target became dead in the water.*****

GRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE JAPANESE AND ALLIED ACTION REPORTS INDICATES THAT AT 0345 THE FOLLOWING OCCURRED; (A) THE HUTCHINS TARGET (ASAGUMO) WAS NOT HIT NOR SET AFIRE BY GUNFIRE AT THIS TIME,****** (B) THE MICHISHIO WAS DEAD IN THE WATER AND BEING HEAVILY HIT BY THE DESTROYERS GUNFIRE,******* AND (C) THE THREE BALLS OF FLAME REPORTED BY THE DALY AS TORPEDO HITS WERE LIKELY THE YAMASHIRO'S GUNFIRE RESPONSE TO THE DESTROYERS GUNFIRE, SINCE SHE WAS THE ONLY TARGET IN THE VICINITY INDICATED BY THE DALY TRACK CHART.** ACTUALLY, THE DALY TORPEDOES (27 KNOTS) COULD NOT HAVE ARRIVED IN THE TARGET AREA UNTIL FOUR MINUTES LATER, AT 0349, AT WHICH TIME THE TORPEDO RUN WAS ABOUT 11,500 YARDS.

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* Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

****** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

******* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

Also at 0345 Commander Attack Group 1.2 advised Commander Right Flank Force that the enemy was headed north toward the battle disposition.*

The BACHE, at 0345:48, changed course to 050°(T)** and at 0346 the DALY also changed course to 050°(T).*** It appears that the two commanding officers arrived at a decision to change course independently for there is no record of any communication in the various voice logs. It is likely that both decided to turn at this time because their fire had been blanked by the HUTCHINS and they desired to follow her in a general way, and too, at the same time, to close the enemy.****

At 0346, observing that the enemy gunfire, although on occasions rather close, was ineffective, Commander Attack Group 1.2 authorized the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS to close the enemy more radically.***** He did this despite the fact that he had been directed by Commander Right Flank Force to remain clear of the area because of the torpedo attacks by DESRON FIFTY-SIX then underway.****** His decision was clearly correct for (a) the units he was presently attacking, i.e., ASAGUMO and MICHISHIO, which were slowly retiring, were well behind the larger enemy units which were still advancing and which were being attacked by DESRON FIFTY-SIX and (b) he would, therefore, be well clear of the torpedo water of the attacking DESRON which, it is assumed, he could clearly track on his radar scope.

IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW WHAT HE THOUGHT OF HIS PRESENT SITUATION FOR THE ROLE OF THE GUN AND TORPEDO HAD BEEN REVERSED. HE KNEW THAT THE PRINCIPAL FUNCTION OF HIS DESTROYERS WAS TO DELIVER THEIR TORPEDOES AGAINST THE ENEMY. HE ALSO KNEW THAT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS SUCCESSFULLY HE SHOULD LAUNCH THEM FROM THE MOST EFFECTIVE FIRING POINT EMPLOYING THE GUNS, AS NECESSARY, TO ASSIST HIM IN ARRIVING AT THIS FIRING POINT, WHICH MEANT THAT HE SHOULD CLOSE THE ENEMY SUFFICIENTLY TO INSURE THE MOST EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF HIS ATTACK EVEN THOUGH, IN SO DOING, HE WOULD TAKE HEAVY DAMAGE. THIS HE HAD NOT DONE. INSTEAD HE HAD FIRED HIS TORPEDOES AT A LONG RANGE, WITH A RELATIVELY POOR TARGET ANGLE AND AT A TIME WHEN HE HAD EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAD APPROACHED UNDETECTED. NOW THAT HE

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Island, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

**** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

***** Ibid.; also Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement, Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

****** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

WAS CLOSING THE ENEMY HE HAD DISCOVERED THAT THE ENEMY GUNFIRE WAS INEFFECTIVE AND THAT HE COULD AND PROPERLY SHOULD HAVE CLOSED THE ENEMY TO A MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE RANGE AND TARGET ANGLE. IT MUST HAVE BEEN CLEAR TO HIM THEN THAT HE HAD UNNECESSARILY ACCEPTED A LOW TORPEDO HIT FACTOR.

The Commanding Officer HUTCHINS, having decided that a course of 040°(T) would be correct, at 0346:30 changed course to 040°(T)* and continued thirty knots. While it is not known why he chose this course it seems probable that it was a collision course with the northern Japanese ships provided by his CIC. About this time the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS noted that the DALY and BACHE were not in sight.*

At 0347 the DALY, having steadied on course 050°(T), resumed gunfire on the MICHISHIO. It is assumed that the BACHE resumed fire as well.

At approximately 0347:30 the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS observed that the ship which he believed to have been his target appeared to burn brightly with an occasional explosion on board.* He therefore, not desiring to expend all of his ammunition on this ship—he had fired 130 rounds of 5-inch AA common—ceased firing at this target. At this time the gun range was 7,300 yards.*

Commander Attack Group 1.2, who was still in the HUTCHINS CIC, reported to Commander Right Flank Force as follows: (a) at 0347 that he was "hitting again regularly with our five inch";** and (b) at 0348 "we got one dead in the water. Going to present him with five fish".**

The ship dead in the water was the MICHISHIO. However, the above message was in error for the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS was planning to fire five torpedoes at the ASAGUMO which was steaming southward at seven to nine knots*** rather than at the MICHISHIO.

About this time he received from Commander Attack Group 2.2, who was about ten miles to the northward, a message to the effect that Attack Group 2.2 was coming down (the strait) again.** As COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, he ordered Commander Attack Group 2.2 to come down between the shore and his ships.** While he gave no reasons for this restriction it seems probable that it was done to insure that Attack Group 2.2 which was well to the north (a) did not interfere with the attack of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX and (b) did not interfere with the firing of his own group.

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* Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A; also Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

During this period each of the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 had fired five torpedoes and each of them had five torpedoes left. Since the torpedoes fired by the DALY and the BACHE did not cross the YAMASHIRO track until about 0349 the results of the torpedo attacks will be discussed under "Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2, 0348 - 0420".

At 0348 Attack Group 1.2, with the HUTCHINS on course 040°(T) at thirty knots and the DALY and BACHE on course 050°(T) at twenty-five knots, continued to close the enemy. At this time the HUTCHINS was bearing 050°(T), distant four point six miles from Amagusan Point (Leyte) and the DALY and BACHE were about 5,300 yards to the south (Diagram "H").

(2) Operations of Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

At 0320 Commander Attack Group 2.2, who was also the Commanding Officer ARUNTA, on course 145°(T) at twenty-five knots, was proceeding to his torpedo launching point in a very loose formation with the KILLEN and BEALE still about 1,500 yards behind. Unknown to him, the Commanding Officer BEALE had, at 0319, requested COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to inform him as to the number of torpedoes to be fired. However, the latter did not answer the BEALE directly but instead addressed Attack Groups 1.2 and 2.2 to "Standby to fire half salvo to starboard, BEALE acknowledge".* The Commanding Officer BEALE did not receive the message clearly and therefore at 0322 asked Commander Attack Group 2.2 to repeat the message.*

Meanwhile, at approximately 0322, Attack Group 2.2 commenced making stack smoke.**

It is not known whether or not Commander Attack Group 2.2 received the above message from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR because he had been having difficulty in communicating which had forced him to employ follow-the-leader tactics entirely.*** However, it appears likely that he did receive it and was concerned lest the BEALE make preparations to fire to starboard when, in his opinion, she should fire to port following the actions of the flagship. It was for this reason that, at 0323, he directed the BEALE to standby to fire a half salvo to port.****

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Deck Log KILLEN, October 25th, 1944; also Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944; also Action Report BEALE, Night Torpedo Attack on Japanese Naval Forces at Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0230, October 29th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

SINCE THIS ORDER TO THE BEALE WAS IN OPPOSITION TO THAT ISSUED BY HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR IT SEEMS WISE AT THIS TIME TO SPECULATE AGAIN AS TO WHAT IT WAS THAT CAUSED HIM, FOR THE SECOND TIME, IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, TO ACT IN THIS FASHION. THE ANSWER SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THAT HE HAD EITHER (A) COMMITTED HIS COMMAND TO AN ATTACK ON THE ENEMY'S PORT BOW WITH THE PORT TORPEDO BATTERY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SQUADRON DOCTRINE AND, BEING NOW AT HIS CHOSEN FIRING POINT (6,000 - 7,000 YARDS) ON THE ENEMY'S PORT BOW,* THOUGHT IT WISE TO CONDUCT HIS ATTACK AS PLANNED AWAITING AN ORDER WHICH, IF DELAYED, MIGHT CAUSE HIM TO PASS HIS CHOSEN FIRING POSITION, OR (B) FELT THAT HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR, NOT KNOWING HIS FIRING PLAN, HAD ERRED IN INCLUDING HIS ATTACK GROUP AND THAT, OUT OF LOYALTY TO HIS COMMANDER, HE SHOULD FIRE TO PORT WHICH SHOULD GIVE HIM THE MOST EFFECTIVE ATTACK.

WHILE HIS DECISION TO FIRE TO PORT AT THIS TIME WOULD LIKELY RESULT IN A VERY SATISFACTORY ATTACK FOR A SINGLE GROUP, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT (A) HIS GROUP WAS BUT ONE OF TWO GROUPS, THE ATTACKS OF WHICH SHOULD PROPERLY HAVE BEEN COORDINATED FOR THE BEST RESULTS, (B) BY FIRING AT THIS TIME WITHOUT COORDINATING HIS ATTACK WITH THE OTHER GROUP HE MIGHT BE ENDANGERING THE SUCCESS OF HIS COMMANDER'S PLAN AND (C) HE WAS THE SUBORDINATE, NOT THE COORDINATING COMMANDER. SINCE A SINGLE ATTACK HAS MUCH LESS CHANCE OF SUCCESS THAN A MULTIPLE ATTACK FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS WHEREIN THE ATTACK UNITS ARE PROPERLY COORDINATED** AND SINCE THE COORDINATING COMMANDER, BY HIS ORDER TO THE BEALE "TO STANDBY TO FIRE STARBOARD TORPEDOES", HAL GIVEN INDICATIONS THAT HE MIGHT BE PLANNING A COORDINATED ATTACK, DOES IT NOT SEEM CORRECT TO SAY THAT COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 2.2 SHOULD HAVE QUERIED THE COORDINATING COMMANDER PRIOR TO FIRING? TIME WAS STILL AVAILABLE.

It will be observed that he did not issue orders to the Commanding Officer KILLEN, who was with the BEALE. This was because he appears to have felt that there was no misunderstanding on that officer's part and that the KILLEN would launch her port torpedoes in accordance with squadron doctrine.

During the above period the ARUNTA had, for some time, been tracking the leading ship of the Japanese formation.* Now, at 0323, Commander Attack Group 2.2, in his capacity as Commanding Officer ARUNTA, having arrived at his previously chosen firing point, launched a full salvo of four torpedoes at what he reported as the "only large ship sighted in the enemy formation."*

Graphic analysis shows that his fire control party had likely been tracking the SHIGURE, which was the leading Japanese ship, but that, when at the moment of firing, the YAMASHIRO was sighted to the southeast, the latter was actually used as the target.

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* Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-44, Destroyer Torpedo Doctrine and Manual of Torpedo Control, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01630, July 8th, 1944.

The torpedoes fired were British and were set to run 11,000 yards at forty knots.* They were fired when the target was bearing 120°(T), target angle 305°, course 355°(T). Although the tracking showed the range to the target to be 6,900 yards, the course 350°(T) and the speed twenty-five knots,* these latter items clearly pertained to the SHIGURE for the actual values for the YAMASHIRO were range 8,300 yards, course 000°(T), speed ten knots (increased to eighteen knots at 0327, before the arrival of the torpedoes). Depth setting was six to eight feet, alternated between torpedoes.* This differed from the American naval practice wherein all torpedoes were fired at the same depth.** The torpedo spread was three and one-half degrees between torpedoes, or a total of fourteen degrees,* whereas American naval practice was a spread of one degree between torpedoes or a total of four degrees between five torpedoes.**

Graphic solution of the torpedo firing problem using a torpedo speed of forty knots, a target speed of seventeen knots,*** an inclination**** of 125° left (target angle 305°) and a target bearing of 120°(T) gives a base torpedo course of 099°(T) which was in fact the base torpedo course employed.

IT IS OF INTEREST AT THIS POINT TO DIGRESS A MOMENT TO COMPARE THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN DOCTRINES FOR TORPEDO FIRING UNDER CONDITIONS SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE.

THE AMERICAN DOCTRINE, WITH ITS GREATER DENSITY OF TORPEDOES, PRODUCED A GREATER PROBABILITY OF HITS BUT REQUIRED A MUCH MORE ACCURATE SOLUTION OF THE TORPEDO PROBLEM. THE BRITISH DOCTRINE, WITH ITS WIDER TORPEDO SPREAD, DID NOT REQUIRE AS ACCURATE A SOLUTION OF THE TORPEDO PROBLEM BUT REQUIRED FIRING FROM A MUCH SHORTER RANGE IN ORDER TO EXPECT HITS, EVEN WITH A CORRECT SOLUTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE AMERICAN TORPEDOES, BEING BOTH SLOWER AND MORE CONCENTRATED, WERE EASIER TO AVOID BY MANEUVER AND, THEREFORE, REQUIRED, IF DETECTED, A FIRING POINT POSSIBLY AS NEAR TO THE ENEMY AS THE BRITISH REQUIREMENT.

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* Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October, 1943.

*** Based on the deflection used of 14 knots left. Deflection is the component of target speed across the line of sight expressed in knots and designated right or left in accordance with the target motion across the line of sight. Oral statement by Commander L.R.P. Lawford, RN, DSC, (then Commanding Officer HMS VERYAN BAY) to Captain J.C. Titus, USN, Naval War College, June 16th, 1955.

**** Ibid., Inclination is defined as the angle between the line of sight and the course of the target measured on the far side of the target toward the bow and designated as right or left depending on whether the bow of the target is to the right or left of the line of sight.

Immediately after the ARUNTA had completed firing, Commander Attack Group 2.2 turned right to course 338°(T) to retire, and commenced making smoke.*

At 0324 he was directed by COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to report when his attack group had completed firing torpedoes.**

During the above operations of the ARUNTA, the Commanding Officer KILLEN prepared to fire torpedoes.

While it is probable that he knew that he was to fire to port since the enemy was on the port hand and the group commander had given no indication of any intention to turn around, it is also probable that COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR's message to standby to fire to starboard had confused him. Therefore, his interception of his commander's instructions to the Commanding Officer BEALE to standby to fire to port*** must have been received with satisfaction.

He had observed that the enemy formation had now separated into two groups of four ships each. In the leading group, which he had been tracking—he had discontinued tracking the rear group—was one very large ship which he estimated to be a battleship, two either cruisers or large destroyers and one destroyer.*** This picture of the leading group was reasonably accurate. There were, at this time (a) in the leading group, one battleship (YAMASHIRO) and three destroyers (MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, SHIGURE) and (b) in the rear group, one battleship (FUSO) and one cruiser (MOGAMI).

He decided to attack the very large ship and set his torpedo depth at twenty-two feet.*** This was the correct setting provided he was definitely sure that it was a battleship.**** The fact that he employed twenty-two feet shows that he was convinced that it was a battleship despite the fact that he employed the word "estimated".

As he prepared to fire--he evidently wished to fire intermediate speed torpedoes since this was basic doctrine for firing torpedoes at night--he noted that the range to the battleship was greater than that required for such speed. From his track chart*** at this time (0323) the range to the YAMASHIRO was 9,800 yards with a target angle of 308°.

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* Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

**** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

WHILE WHAT PASSED THROUGH HIS MIND AT THIS TIME IS NOT KNOWN, SINCE HIS ACTION REPORT IS SILENT ON THIS MATTER, IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO SAY THAT SINCE HE WAS NOT BEING FIRED ON HE DECIDED TO CLOSE THE RANGE UNTIL HE WAS WITHIN THE RANGE OF HIS INTERMEDIATE SPEED TORPEDOES HOPING THEREBY TO IMPROVE THE TARGET ANGLE SOMEWHAT. THIS WAS THE CORRECT DECISION FOR IT IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY THE PROBABILITY OF HITS.

At 0324 he arrived within the desired effective range and, using broadside fire to port, fired a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 101°(T) at the battleship, bearing 125°(T), target angle 305°, range 8,700 yards and tracked on course 000°(T), speed eighteen knots.* Depth setting was twenty-two feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.** From Diagram "H" this target was clearly the YAMASHIRO.

Upon completion of the above firing the KILLEN followed in the wake of the ARUNTA as well as she could, and commenced retiring.**

Meanwhile, the BEALE, which destroyer was about 1,200 yards astern of the KILLEN, had been making preparations to fire to port in accordance with instructions received at 0323 from Commander Attack Group 2.2.***

At 0325:15 she fired a half salvo of five torpedoes at the leading enemy ship, which she reported was a battleship, bearing 115°(T) (actual bearing was 104°(T)), range 6,800 yards, torpedo track angle 270°(T) and tracked on course 347°(T) (giving a base torpedo course of 077°(T)) and at a speed of seventeen knots.**** All torpedoes were launched successfully using broadside fire to port, three second intervals, one degree spread, six foot depth setting and intermediate speed, and all appeared to run hot, straight and normal.****

Actually the BEALE fired at the SHIGURE. That this is correct is shown by the following analysis, (Diagram "H"):

(a) The SHIGURE was in fact the leading Japanese ship at the time and was about 2,000 yards in a northwesterly direction from the second Japanese ship, the ASAGUMO.

(b) Just seventy-five seconds before the BEALE commenced firing torpedoes or at 0324, the SHIGURE, which had been on course 347°(T),

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* Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

**** Action Report BEALE, Night Torpedo Attack on Japanese Naval Forces at Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0230, October 29th, 1944.

had commenced changing course to port. Since the BEALE makes no mention of this, it seems clear that she still considered the SHIGURE to be on course 347°(T). Also, at 0324 the range from the BEALE to the SHIGURE was 7,300 yards, the bearing 112°(T). (Twenty-five seconds before firing (or at 0324:50) the range had decreased to 6,800 yards, the bearing to 112°(T) while at the time of firing the range had decreased to 6,000 yards, the bearing to 110°(T).)

(c) At this same time (0324) the YAMASHIRO was bearing 125°(T), range 9,700 yards and was about 3,000 yards from the SHIGURE in a southerly direction.

(d) It is important to note that had the SHIGURE continued on course 347°(T) and had she been making seventeen knots as tracked (she was actually making twenty-six knots) she would have been embraced by the BEALE's torpedo spread.

(e) Since the BEALE stated that this same target was clearly seen in the optical range finder at a minimum range of 5,470 yards* and since the minimum range from the BEALE to the SHIGURE (at about 0325:50) was 5,500 yards this appears to be a further confirmation of the belief that the target at which the BEALE fired was the SHIGURE.

Although Commander Attack Group 2.2 did not receive the reports that the KILLEN and BEALE had completed firing since neither ship made any reports thereon he, nevertheless, at 0328, reported to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that his group had fired torpedoes** adding that the enemy was on course 000°(T). It is likely that he had noticed that the two ships astern of him had changed course to follow him and had correctly concluded that they had fired. Immediately after making this report, he received a query from Commander Right Flank Force concerning enemy speed and, after communication difficulties, finally succeeded at 0329 in informing that commander that the enemy speed was twenty-five knots.** This was correct for the SHIGURE but it was in error for the other Japanese ships since they were all making eighteen knots or less.

At about this time the ARUNTA torpedoes likely crossed the target track passing well ahead of the leading ship YAMASHIRO.

The Commanding Officer KILLEN was now fully convinced that his target was a battleship.*** He therefore decided to fire another half salvo to starboard. To accomplish this, he changed course at 0327 to 000°(T), and at 0328:30, using broadside fire to starboard, commenced firing another

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* Action Report BEALE, Night Torpedo Attack on Japanese Naval Forces at Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0230, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 086°(T) at the same battleship, bearing 112°(T),* target angle 282 degrees, torpedo track angle 266 degrees, range 8,100 yards and tracked on course 000°(T), speed eighteen knots.** Firing interval was three seconds and torpedo spread one degree. Since he had detected--whether by radar or by sight is not stated--another target almost on the same bearing--probably the ASAGUMO--he wisely decided to employ a six foot depth setting so that he might obtain hits on one or both of these targets.** Just as he was firing his first torpedo of this spread he received word from his CIC that the target had begun a change of course. He immediately ordered his torpedo battery to check fire, as a result of which only the first two torpedoes were fired which appeared to run hot, straight and normal.**

WHILE THE DECISION OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER KILLEN TO CHECK TORPEDO FIRE UNDER THE ABOVE CONDITIONS IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN SOUND SINCE THE KILLEN WAS NOT UNDER FIRE AND SINCE, ONCE THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE OF COURSE HAD BEEN DETERMINED, AN OPPORTUNITY WOULD LIKELY BE OFFERED TO RESUME FIRE, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT A TORPEDO SPREAD WILL COMPENSATE FOR SOME EVASIVE MANEUVERS. BECAUSE OF THIS, IT IS NOT GENERALLY WISE TO CEASE FIRING BEFORE ALL TORPEDOES WHICH WERE TO BE FIRED HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS GENERALLY CORRECT TO COMPLETE FIRING IF THE TRACK ANGLE IS IN THE VICINITY OF 80° TO 100° AND IF THE SOLUTION IS CONSIDERED ACCURATE. THIS IS SO BECAUSE THE ENEMY MANEUVERS TO EVADE SUCH A SPREAD WOULD HAVE TO BE QUITE RADICAL.***

Although Commander Attack Group 2.2 stated in his action report that at 0330 he had slowed to twenty knots and ceased making smoke,**** graphic analysis (Diagram "H") shows that he did not slow to twenty knots until 0336. This is supported by his voice radio report to CTG 77.3 at 0330 that his speed was twenty-five knots.*****

At 0331 Commander Attack Group 2.2 observed that his command had been discovered by the enemy for his ships were being illuminated with starshells and searchlights and were being fired on accurately in range.****

No units of his attack group returned the enemy fire. ARUNTA continued on course 338°(T) at twenty-five knots, KILLEN at 0331 changed course to 300°(T)* in order to move away from the enemy and close the ARUNTA's track, and the BEALE, although she reported being straddled at

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* Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

*** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

**** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0C117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

this time,* appears not to have changed course but to have followed the KILLEN on course 000°(T).** Why the commanding officer did not turn away, as did the KILLEN, is nowhere explained, but it seems clear that he would have reduced the enemy's ability to hit by making the enemy fire control problem more difficult.

At about 0331 the KILLEN and the BEALE torpedoes crossed the enemy's target track and one torpedo hit the YAMASHIRO, which was now the leading ship, on the port side.*** This hit has been credited to the KILLEN as the BEALE's torpedoes crossed about 3,400 yards ahead.

At 0334 the KILLEN changed course to 338°(T)**** in order to follow the ARUNTA, and at approximately 0335 the BEALE changed course to the left to possibly 300°(T) to follow the KILLEN. At approximately 0335:40 the KILLEN's second salvo of two torpedoes crossed the YAMASHIRO's track some 500 yards ahead. Hits could not have been expected under the conditions prevailing because the target, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0320 - 0348", had not only changed course but had also slowed to about five knots after being hit at 0331:18.

TO SUMMARIZE THE TORPEDO ATTACKS DURING THIS PERIOD (0320 - 0348) THE DESTROYERS OF ATTACK GROUP 2.2 FIRED A TOTAL OF SIXTEEN TORPEDOES--ARUNTA (FOUR), KILLEN (SEVEN) AND BEALE (FIVE)--AND MADE ONE HIT FOR A PERCENTAGE OF ABOUT 6.25 PER CENT. THIS WAS BY THE KILLEN AT ABOUT 0332 AGAINST THE YAMASHIRO. THE REASONS FOR THIS LOW PERCENTAGE OF HITS WERE:

(A) THE ARUNTA FIRED AT THE LEADING TARGET WHICH SHE TRACKED ON COURSE 350°(T), SPEED TWENTY-FIVE KNOTS. THIS WAS THE SHIGURE WHICH, AT THE TIME OF FIRING, HAD COMMENCED A RADICAL TURN SOUTHWARD. THIS CAUSED THE TORPEDOES TO MISS THIS TARGET. THE NEXT SHIP IN FORMATION, THE YAMASHIRO, WHICH HAD NOW BECOME THE LEADING SHIP, WAS MAKING ONLY EIGHTEEN KNOTS WHICH WAS TOO SLOW TO CAUSE HER TO BE WITHIN THE ARUNTA SPREAD EVEN THOUGH IT WAS FOURTEEN DEGREES WIDE.

(B) THE BEALE ALSO FIRED AT THE LEADING TARGET (SHIGURE) WHICH SHE TRACKED ON COURSE 347°(T), SPEED SEVENTEEN KNOTS. SINCE THE BEALE FIRED TWO MINUTES AFTER THE ARUNTA, THE SHIGURE HAD TWO ADDITIONAL MINUTES IN WHICH TO REVERSE COURSE. THIS CAUSED THE BEALE TORPEDOES TO MISS THIS TARGET. HER TORPEDOES PASSED WELL AHEAD OF THE YAMASHIRO WHICH AT THIS TIME WAS IN THE TORPEDO SPREAD OF THE KILLEN.

AS A RESULT OF THESE FIRINGS THESE DESTROYERS HAD TORPEDOES REMAINING AS FOLLOWS: ARUNTA (ZERO), KILLEN (THREE), BEALE (FIVE).

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* Action Report BEALE, Night Torpedo Attack on Japanese Naval Forces at Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0230, October 29th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

**** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 23th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

At 0336 the leading Japanese ship (YAMASHIRO) was bearing 117°(T), range 12,400 yards from the ARUNTA which now slowed to twenty knots. About forty seconds later the KILLEN also slowed to twenty knots in order to remain about 500 yards astern of the ARUNTA. At this time the BEALE had completed her turn and was about 3,300 yards on the KILLEN's starboard quarter (Diagram "H").

At approximately 0336 the Commanding Officer BEALE noted that the starshell illumination was now short; however, the ship was again straddled at 0338* shortly after changing course to follow the ARUNTA and KILLEN. After this time no further enemy gunfire was reported by the BEALE or other ships of Attack Group 2.2

Regarding the above firing, Commander Attack Group 2.2 reported having observed one or two salvos land near the ARUNTA and one salvo land between the KILLEN and the BEALE.** These observations were confirmed by the Commanding Officer KILLEN, who reported having sighted three salvos land near the BEALE,*** and by the Commanding Officer BEALE sho reported that he had been straddled twice by 5-inch or 6-inch salvos.* Despite the fact that the Japanese salvos were small in pattern, no hits were made although some shells passed over the BEALE.

At 0338 Commander Attack Group 2.2 noted that the leading pip (battleship) was on course 335°(T) at about seventeen knots.**** This should have been discouraging to him for it indicated that his torpedo attacks, insofar as the large pip was concerned, had been ineffective.

At 0343 the BEALE slowed to twenty knots in order to remain about 500 yards behind the KILLEN.

At 0344:30 Commander Attack Group 2.2 changed course to 160°(T)** in order to return to the scene of action and to assist Attack Group 1.2 and at 0346, while still in the turn, he slowed to fifteen knots.***** At 0348 he advised COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that he was coming down that way again and received an immediate reply directing him to come down between the shore and the ships of Attack Group 1.2.******

At 0348 the ARUNTA was bearing 136°(T), distant four point eight miles from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island, the HUTCHINS was bearing 166°(T), range 13,600 yards and the YAMASHIRO was bearing 114°(T) range 12,100 yards from the ARUNTA (Diagram "H").

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* Action Report BEALE, Night Torpedo Attack on Japanese Naval Forces at Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0230, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

**** Track Chart, Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

***** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

(B) Operations of CTG 79.11, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

The Eastern and Western Attack Groups were retiring toward their respective post-attack rendezvous. Since these two attack groups were no longer engaged in independent attacks, their operations will be discussed together under "Operations of CTG 79.11."

At 0320 the Eastern Attack Group (REMEY, MC GOWAN, MELVIN) was proceeding toward the channel east of Hibuson Island on course 025°(T) at twenty knots.

The Western Attack Group (MC DERMUT, MONSSEN) was also retiring but was on the western side of Surigao Strait near the Leyte shore and was on course 000°(T), at thirty knots (Diagram "H"). At 0320:30 the (a) MC DERMUT changed course to 330°(T)* in order to avoid the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 which were slightly on her starboard bow and on a southerly course and (b) MONSSEN steadied on course 345°(T)** in order to close the MC DERMUT track.

A few minutes before this (0319) CTG 79.11, in the REMEY, had received a TBS voice radio request from CTG 77.2 to report, if possible, the types of enemy ships encountered during his torpedo attack (at 0301).*** He seemed unable to give CTG 77.2 this information immediately because he wanted to check with his commanding officers, adding that he believed two battleships were present.*** However, he appears to have consulted with the commanding officers of the Eastern Attack Group only.***

He received replies from his commanding officers as follows: (a) immediately from the Commanding Officer REMEY who gave his estimate as eight ships,**** (b) at 0321 from the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN, who stated that he had not had a good look, and gave his radar estimate as six targets***** of which three or possibly four were small ships****** and (c) at 0322 from the Commanding Officer MELVIN, who gave his estimate as two battleships******* and later at 0324, included one light cruiser which

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* Action Report MC DERMUT, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 061, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report MONSSEN, Participation in the Operation for the Initial Attack and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, and in the Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 060, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

***** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

******* Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (E).

he had seen explode.* (This MELVIN estimate differs considerably from her action report estimate as of 0301. In the action report and as shown in Plate XXI, the MELVIN reported sighting seven ships. Perhaps, in making this estimate, the Commanding Officer MELVIN, despite the instructions of CTG 79.11, reported only the larger ships.)

CTG 79.11 now, also at 0324, replied by TBS voice radio to CTG 77.2's request as follows: "General opinion seems to be two battleships, one or two cruisers and one destroyer; some targets definitely hit. We saw large burst of fire. Couldn't tell what type of ship."**

How he arrived at this conclusion is unknown, for the data provided gave an indication of three or four small ships rather than one destroyer. Had he included these small ships in his estimate he would have been entirely correct for the THIRD Section at this time was in full strength which included two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers, a total of seven.

Meanwhile, as Commander Eastern Attack Group in the REMEY, he had at 0322 changed course to 030°(T) and at 0326 being clear of the enemy and of the area likely to be used for subsequent attacks, had slowed to fifteen knots.***

Similarly, Commander Western Attack Group having cleared Attack Group 1.2, had at 0323 changed course to 030°(T) not only to get further offshore, but also to confuse the enemy fire control for at this same time he recorded that at 0321 a starshell had burst close on his starboard quarter.**** At 0327, being far enough offshore, he changed course to 350°(T).****

At this time CTG 79.11 amplified his report to CTG 77.2 with the TBS voice radio message that several torpedoes had been fired at his group.***** The basis of this report is unknown as (a) neither he nor any of his ships mention any enemy torpedoes in either their action reports or show it on track charts nor (b) do the Japanese mention firing torpedoes (perhaps the Japanese destroyers had fired their torpedoes rather than be sunk with them). The MC GOWAN, however, recorded the message as: "Several hits were seen by our group."****** This may have been the correct version although this is doubtful since of the several voice logs which record the message, only the MC GOWAN has this version.

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* Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (E).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

***** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (E); also Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Action Report MC GOWAN, Operation for Capture, Occupation and Defense of Leyte, Philippine Islands, including the Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 00103, November 5th, 1944.

At 0328 he should have received a TBS voice radio message from Commander Western Attack Group to the effect that that group had fired at a group astern consisting of three ships, "one small and two large"* and that, at the time the torpedoes should have hit, they saw a large burst of fire but were unable to distinguish what it was.** CTG 79.11 does not seem to have received this message for it does not appear in the voice log of his group of destroyers.

At 0330 as Commander Eastern Attack Group he informed his command that upon arrival in the vicinity of Station THREE, the group would cruise back and forth in column formation with REMEY guide, and no signals over the present circuit.***

At 0332 Commander Western Attack Group, since the MONSSEN had fallen in astern and since he was now well clear of the scene of action, slowed to fifteen knots and changed course to 338°(T),** to head for the rendezvous area north of Cabugan Grande Island.

At 0334 Commander Eastern Attack Group arrived in the vicinity of his post-attack rendezvous which was the west end of Station THREE, northeast of Hibuson Island.**** During the remainder of this period, with the Eastern Attack Group, he remained in the vicinity slowly working up the channel on easterly and westerly courses.

At 0342 he queried his command by TBS voice radio as to the number of torpedoes remaining and learned that the MELVIN had one and the MC GOWAN had none.*** Since he was in the REMEY he knew that that destroyer had two. Therefore, he now knew that he had but three torpedoes within the Eastern Attack Group.

At 0348 he was bearing 061°(T), distant two point two miles from the southeastern tip of Hibuson Island. At this same time Commander Western Attack Group, who was still proceeding toward his post-attack rendezvous at the western end of Station SEVEN, which was about three and one-half miles away, was bearing 085°(T), distant one point six miles from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

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* There is some question as to the accuracy of this message in that some ships received it as "two small and one large". However, since COMDESDIV 108 was the originator it is assumed that his version is correct, "one small and two large".

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (E).

**** Action Report REMEY, Assault on Leyte Island and the Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 008, November 5th, 1944.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0320 - 0348, October 25th.

(1) SE Panaon PT's.

At 0320 these MTB's were off the southeastern coast of Panaon Island and, with the exception of PT 134 (OTC) which was slightly to the north, were between Binit Point and Bolobolo Point. It will be recalled that they had become separated prior to the transit of the THIRD Section due to radio and radar failure in PT 137. At this time since they had not yet regrouped and were operating independently and since each one encountered the enemy they will be discussed separately.

Their actions cannot be completely reconstructed due to the (a) incomplete action reports submitted and (b) lack of Japanese data concerning them. It appears that only one of them (PT 137) was sighted by the Japanese and that, only momentarily, after her torpedo had struck the ABUKUMA.

(a) PT 134.

At 0320 the Commanding Officer PT 134 was proceeding as shown on Diagram "I" and was slightly north of Bolobolo Point. At about 0323, judging that he had gone far enough, he commenced drifting with the current which in this locality was setting to the south.

He states in his action report that shortly thereafter "a column of four destroyers passed 1,000 yards outboard."* Since (a) the evidence from Japanese sources is that the major portion of the SECOND Striking Force (which was the only force passing Binit Point at this time) was not nearer to that point than 5,000 yards, and (b) the USHIO did pass about that close to the Point, it seems probable that the Commanding Officer PT 134 at this time only sighted the USHIO.

Why then did he state that he had sighted four destroyers? The answer seems to be that just after this he likely saw three (NACHI, ASHIGARA, SHIRANUHI) of the five ships remaining in the SECOND Striking Force formation, and, when writing his report later, included the USHIO with these three.

At approximately 0326 he received a contact report from the Commanding Officer PT 132, quoted in full under "Operations of Commanding Officer PT 132" to the effect that "three enemy destroyers and two unidentified vessels" were standing up the strait.

At approximately 0328 he fired his one remaining torpedo at the USHIO but missed astern.* (There is no indication that USHIO sighted either PT 134 or the torpedo.)

After firing he changed course and continued on toward Binit Village. At 0338, being about 200 yards from the shoreline, he stopped and commenced to drift with the current.

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* Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 27th, 1944.

He now decided to modify the message he had received from PT 132 for at 0339 he sent a message for relay to the Commanding Officer PT 523 as follows: "See if you can get the word passed up the line five destroyers and possibly other larger craft have come up."*

Whence came the idea of the larger craft is not known since none of the SE Panaon PT's make any mention of larger ships at this time but do mention "other large ships were sighted towards the middle of the strait during the next hour, etc."**

At 0348 he appears to have returned to his basic station near Binit Village.

(b) PT 137.

At 0320 the Commanding Officer PT 137, whom it will be recalled was moving slowly into the strait because he had sighted gunfire to the north of Panaon Island at 0305, believed that he was off Binit Village.***

About this time, while so operating, he sighted what appeared to be an enemy destroyer moving down the strait. This is believed to have been the cruiser NACHI, which had turned to course 065°(T) to avoid Panaon Island. He did not report this contact because, as has been pointed out before, neither his radar equipment nor his radio communications were operative.

Why he sighted only one ship of a formation of five ships is not known. However, it seems probable that this was due to the fact that the SECOND Striking Force was in a line of bearing 020° - 200°(T) and all ships in column, except the NACHI, were obscured to PT 137 which was approximately on the line of bearing and to the northward. The other two destroyers (AKEBONO and USHIO) were not in sight due to their positions.

He commenced closing the enemy and at 0323, having apparently closed undetected since the enemy did not open fire on him, he fired one torpedo at the NACHI at an estimated range of 700 - 900 yards. Shortly thereafter, he heard an explosion, was immediately taken under fire by (a) the machine guns of the ABUKUMA and SHIRANUHI which had not sighted her until that moment and (b) starshells from at least one of the Japanese ships.*** The Commanding Officer PT 137 immediately retired, approximately as shown on Diagram "I", and succeeded in avoiding any damage whatsoever.

Like the Commanding Officer DARTER who, as pointed out in Volume III,**** ("Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines West Australia), 0000 - 1042,

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 27th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944; also Action Report PT 497, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

**** Volume III, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92510), Naval War College, 1957, Chapter VII (A)(b)(5).

October 23rd, (5) DACE and DARTER") had made a most fortunate contact on the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force at 0116, October 23rd, this experience of the Commanding Officer PT 137 can also be classified as a remarkable example of the fortunes of war. The latter commander had (a) no radar, (b) lost his section, (c) moved into the strait without fore-knowledge of the enemy's presence in that area of the strait, (d) immediately encountered the nearest ship of a Japanese formation, which formation was formed on a line of bearing 020° - 200°(T) this being the approximate bearing of the force from him, (e) due to conditions of visibility, sighted only this ship of a formation of five, (f) fired one torpedo at this ship at a range of 700 - 900 yards, which torpedo passed astern of both his own target (NACHI) and the next ship in the line of bearing (ASHIGARA) and (g) finally struck the third ship in line of bearing (ABUKUMA) about 3,000 yards away. (This fortuitous torpedo hit was the first made by a motor torpedo boat in this engagement and was one of two credited to the motor torpedo boats during this action.)

Therefore, since based on Napoleon's concept that certain generals are lucky (Augereau) and certain unlucky (Sauret) it was stated in Volume III that the Commanding Officer DARTER would likely have been characterized by Napoleon as being one of the lucky ones, can it not also be stated that the Commanding Officer PT 137 would likely have been included as one of that happy band?

At 0348, although his exact position is not known, it seems likely that he was bearing 108°(T), distant 700 yards from Binit Point (Diagram "I").

(c) PT 132.

At 0320 PT 132 was drifting with the current in a southwesterly direction off Binit Point (Diagram "I").

About 0323 the commanding officer sighted three enemy destroyers and two smaller unidentified vessels, range 1,700 yards, course northeast, speed twenty to twenty-five knots. He relayed this information to PT 134.*

The ships he sighted were the NACHI, ASHIGARA, ABUKUMA, SHIRANUHI and KASUMI of the SECOND Striking Force. He likely did not sight the (a) USHIO, which passed him on the reverse bearing about 0325, probably because his attention was taken by the five ships to the south nor (b) AKEBONO, which was further to the east, for he does not mention these ships in his action report.* Likewise he does not mention the torpedoing of the ABUKUMA and probably missed it because of the absence of a flash as reported by PT 137.**

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* Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

About 0330 he sighted the ABUKUMA and reported it as one destroyer on course 195°(T), range 2,000 yards.* The ABUKUMA at this time was turning to the west making the estimate of her course difficult. The range was considerably in error thus accounting for his error in calling her a destroyer and undoubtedly his radar had failed, although he does not mention it in his action report, for the range at this time was more likely 8,000 yards (Diagram "I"). Although he records in his action report that he reported this destroyer to CTF 77* it must have failed to get through during this busy time, since there is no mention of it in the various voice logs or action reports.

Having expended all of his torpedoes prior to this time (he had expended them at about 0142) he took no action but instead at approximately 0330 headed for Bolobolo Point. At 0348 he was lying to between Binit Point and Bolobolo Point.

(2) Bilaa PT's.

It will be recalled that at 0312 Commander Bilaa PT's, in PT 494, who with his section, was drifting slowly in a southwesterly direction from Bilaa Point, had made radar contact on the SECOND Striking Force which contact he continued to hold.

At approximately 0327 the units of his section sighted what (a) he thought were three large ships,** (b) the Commanding Officer PT 497 thought were two cruisers and two destroyers*** and (c) the Commanding Officer PT 324 thought were one cruiser and three destroyers.**** He promptly reported this contact to PT 523** of the Sumilon PT's, which were farther up the strait, but the message apparently failed to get through since it is not reported anywhere.

These ships had been silhouetted by the starshells fired by one or more units of the SECOND Striking Force against the SE Panaon PT's which had attacked them from the west. The sightings were quite accurate with that of the Commanding Officer PT 497 being the more accurate, for these units were clearly the NACHI, ASHIGARA, SHIRANUHI and KASUMI.

He did not attack because "all targets were at least seven miles away to the northwest and an attack would have left the strait east of Bilaa Point unguarded, particularly against ships escaping through that strait from Surigao Strait."**

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* Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 497, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 324, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

As discussed previously under "Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0100 - 0245, October 25th, Sumilon PT's", his decision in this matter was correct for the reason therein given, i.e., he was to guard Hinatuan Passage and should he attack the enemy that passage might be left unguarded since he did not know what the Sumilon PT's were doing. Actually the strait was unguarded at this time, for the best evidence is that both the Sumilon PT's and the Bilaa PT's were tracking the enemy in the center of the strait with little, if any, attention being paid to the passage itself and the Bilaa PT's had drifted well to the southwest as shown on Diagram "I".

Sometime after this he seems to have made radar contact on the damaged ABUKUMA, which contact he held throughout the remainder of this period.

At 0348 he appears to have been off Madilao Point (Diagram "I").

(3) Sumilon PT's.

At 0320 Commander Sumilon PT's, with his section (PT's 523 (OTC), 524, 526), was returning toward Sumilon Island from the south (Diagram "I").

At approximately 0332 all motor torpedo boats of this section contacted five more targets reportedly following three miles astern of the targets (THIRD Section) they had fired on at 0212.

Since the (a) Sumilon PT's were near Sumilon Island it can be stated with complete accuracy that this contact was on the SECOND Striking Force, which at this time had just passed through the southern entrance to Surigao Strait, and (b) the THIRD Section and the SECOND Striking Force were roughly thirty miles apart at this time. It is of interest to speculate as to whence came the distance of three miles referred to above? The answer seems to be that all three commanding officers made the same error in their action reports—they wrote three for thirty miles. The reason for this is not known. However, it seems likely that it was due to the fact that either (a) all three reports were drawn up at the same time, perhaps in conference as they are very similar, and this mistake was made at that time, or (b) since all three reports were typed by the same yeoman in the same office, as shown by their identification symbols, the same error was made in all three.

It is likely that the contact was first made on the AKEBONO, which was about 5,600 yards away rather than on the NACHI, which was about 8,900 yards away.

About 0339 he received a message from Commander SE Panaon PT's asking him to relay PT 132's contact on five destroyers and possibly other larger craft moving up the strait.* However, in view of his own contacts he seems to have decided that this contact report could be improved on by firming the number of larger ships to "one". (Why he did this is not

* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

explained for certainly the NACHI and ASHIGARA should have appeared larger on the radar scope.) Therefore at 0340, he reported to CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR) that there were five destroyers and one larger ship passing up the strait in a northerly direction.*

About 0345, being slightly north of Sumilon Island, he stopped and commenced drifting with the current. At this same time he sighted two burning ships to the north,** apparently the two halves of the FUSO.

At 0348 he was bearing 280°(T), distant 1,700 yards from the center of Sumilon Island.

(4) Madilao Point PT's.

At 0320 Commander Madilao Point PT's, with PT's 192 (OTC), 191 and 195, was near the southern end of his patrol. He decided to reverse course and therefore, at about 0321, he changed course to 000°(T) and continued to patrol at slow speed (Diagram "I"). At this time he maintained his radar contact on the NACHI and the ASHIGARA.***

At 0326 he observed gunfire and starshells in the vicinity of Binit Point.*** (This ammunition was being fired by units of the SECOND Striking Force at PT 137 which had just torpedoed the ABUKUMA.)****

At 0348 he was bearing approximately 223°(T), distant one point five miles from Madilao Point.

(5) Kanihaan PT's.

At 0320 Commander Kanihaan PT's, with PT's 495 (OTC), 489 and 492, was proceeding toward Kanihaan Island (Diagram "H").

While his exact movements are not known it seems likely that at about 0325 he judged that he was clear of any likely action and therefore changed course to north. At the same time he reduced speed so as to move slowly north toward the scene of the coming action.

At approximately 0345 he sighted the battleship (FUSO) again. Apparently the battleship exploded at this time for the MTB's reported that she "caught fire at 0345 and burned until morning."*****

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PT 524, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 192, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0395, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944; also Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

***** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

Why he did not attack her at this time is not clear. Perhaps she was burning so fiercely that he thought it a waste of torpedoes as she would likely destroy herself. However, since War Instructions at the time stated "VICTORY IS NOT COMPLETE UNLESS THE ENEMY FORCE IS ANNIHILATED. EVERY ENEMY UNIT, IF POSSIBLE, IS DESTROYED"* it was clearly incumbent on him to insure that, if possible, the battleship was sunk.

This was particularly important at this time for war experience had shown that, in many cases, ships which appeared to have been damaged beyond saving were often saved because the personnel had been well trained and put forth the same determined efforts toward saving her that they exercised in fighting her.

Whether or not he operated with this destructive objective in view is not clear from the action reports.

At 0348 he was bearing 338°(T), distant two and one-half miles from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "H").

(6) South Amagusan PT's.

At 0320 Commander South Amagusan PT's, with PT's 320 (OTC), 330 and 331, was drifting with the current in a southerly direction while he continued his patrol (Diagram "H").

Since the radar equipment in PT's 320 and 330 continued to operate in an unsatisfactory manner reliance necessarily continued to be placed on that of PT 331.

The MTB's report nothing of importance during this period of the patrol. This was a correct report for no Japanese forces were within radar range. The nearest enemy ship (FUSO) was about 17,500 yards due east.

At 0348 he was bearing 179½°(T), distant three point five miles from Amagusan Point.

(7) East Amagusan PT's.

Since the East Amagusan PT's had become separated just before 0320 they will be discussed separately.

(a) PT 328.

At 0320 the Commanding Officer PT 328 was slowly closing Amagusan Point in order to get out of the destroyer attack area.

At 0340 he sighted an unidentified ship proceeding south. He prepared to fire torpedoes, but since there were friendly ships in the area he decided not to attack. This was a wise decision for the unidentified ship was the HUTCHINS, which at the time was about 5,000 yards to the northeastward.

* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143(A)), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 13, Section II, Paragraph 1305.

His failure to sight the BACHE and DALY at this time was due to the fact that these destroyers were about 4,500 yards to the north of the HUTCHINS and therefore about 9,000 yards away and obscured somewhat by smoke.

At 0342 he appears to have changed course to approximately 315°(T) in order to retire around Amagusan Point.

At 0348 PT 328 was bearing 200°(T), distant about 2,400 yards from Amagusan Point.

(b) PT 323.

At 0320 the Commanding Officer PT 323 was heading on a southerly course in order to clear the destroyer attack area.

At approximately 0326, being well south of Amagusan Point, he changed course to about 325°(T) to head for Amagusan Point.

He apparently did not sight the HUTCHINS for there is no mention of it in his action report. It seems likely that at approximately 0340:30 he changed course to 030°(T) in order to head up against the current and to move off shore.

At 0345, when about one mile northeast of Amagusan Point, he noted that a shell had passed overhead and had struck a hill off his port quarter, which hill was about three-quarters of a mile away. About five seconds later he noted that a second shell had landed about fifty or sixty yards also off his port quarter which lifted his stern out of the water.*

While he does not say so it seems clear that he thought that these shells, which were most likely from the YAMASHIRO, were being fired at him. Actually this was not the case. Instead they were intended for the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 which were attacking with gunfire and which were in the vicinity of PT 323, although somewhat to the eastward.

At 0348 PT 323 was bearing 063°(T), distant 2,800 yards from Amagusan Point (Diagram "H").

(c) PT 329.

At 0320 PT 329, which was drifting with the current, was in the vicinity of Amagusan Point.

At 0348 she was likely bearing about 080°(T), distant 1,800 yards from that point.

(8) Upper Surigao PT's.

At 0320 Commander Upper Surigao PT's, with PT's 327 (OTC), 321 and 326, was about a mile south of Kanihaan Island drifting south with the current. He drifted south without incident during this period.

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* Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

At 0348 he was about two point one miles south of Kanihaan Island.

(9) Lower Surigao PT's.

(a) PT 490.

At 0320 PT 490 was bearing 094°(T), distant two point nine miles from Caligangan Point and was proceeding on course 000°(T) at ten knots. At 0323 she stopped and commenced drifting with the current.*

At 0348 she was bearing 092°(T), distant three point four miles from Caligangan Point

(b) PT 491.

At 0320 PT 491 was bearing about 123°(T), distant seven miles from Caligangan Point and was proceeding on course 330°(T) at five knots.

At 0348 she was bearing 114°(T), distant five point four miles from Caligangan Point.

(c) PT 493.

PT 493, damaged and abandoned by her crew, was beached on Maoyo Point. Sometime around 0345 one officer and one man returned on board and destroyed the classified equipment.**

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* Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 493, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

CHAPTER XVI - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0348 - 0420, OCTOBER 25th.

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

At 0348 Commander THIRD Section, on course 020°(T) at speed of about fifteen knots, continued toward the awaiting Allied battle disposition. Up to this time his flagship had suffered two torpedo hits but no gunfire damage. Other than the destroyer and torpedo boat attacks, he had not encountered any Allied opposition and was now nearing the northern part of the strait from which he planned to penetrate to a point off Dulag to accomplish his assigned mission. Whether or not he felt optimistic about his ability to do so is, of course, not known but he would, in a few minutes, know that he had walked into a trap and that his section was likely doomed to destruction.

At this same time he undoubtedly intercepted the message from the SHIGURE to the FUSO informing the latter that the SHIGURE was following behind him.*

This was probably very reassuring to him because he had not heard from the FUSO since she had fallen out of formation. He now knew that she was still afloat and clearly underway. Perhaps his losses were not so bad as he had feared.

At about 0352, just as the first salvos of the battle disposition had commenced landing on the YAMASHIRO, he called the FUSO and requested that she notify him of her maximum speed.* The FUSO did not reply.* At this time the Commanding Officer SHIGURE called Commander THIRD Section requesting that he be notified of the situation, but he likewise received no reply.* This appears to have been due to the Allied gunfire which apparently had knocked out the YAMASHIRO's voice communication system. No further transmissions from Commander THIRD Section are recorded either by voice or by CW radio.

Whether or not this was because all radio communications had been put out of action at this time or whether it was due to the disorganization of the staff caused by the death or wounding of the principal members thereof, including Commander THIRD Section, is not known but it is known that Commander THIRD Section failed to inform Commander SECOND Striking Force, as well as his ships presently out of formation, of the nature of the Allied trap and gave no instructions thereafter to any of his units whatsoever.

At 0352 the YAMASHIRO began to slow to about twelve knots but continued on course 020°(T). Whether or not the SHIGURE, which had overtaken the YAMASHIRO and was about 1,000 yards abeam momentarily at 0355, was sighted is not known. The Commanding Officer SHIGURE stated that he had observed the YAMASHIRO receiving fierce concentrated gunfire from enemy battleships and cruisers which set her afire.*

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

The YAMASHIRO continued on course 020°(T) at twelve knots until 0356, at which time she commenced a turn to the westward. During this time she fired on any targets which were visible to her gunners.* The large radius of the turn and the time taken to make it give indications that she may have been on hand steering at this time.

WHILE THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S REASONS FOR TURNING TO THE WESTWARD ARE NOT EXPLAINED IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HE REALIZED THAT HE HAD RUN INTO A TRAP, THAT HIS CHANCE OF SURVIVAL WAS SMALL INDEED AND THAT HIS ONLY HOPE OF ESCAPING WOULD BE TO CHANGE COURSE TO THE WESTWARD (OR TO THE EASTWARD) AND THENCE TO THE SOUTH WHERE HE MIGHT RECEIVE SOME PROTECTION FROM THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE. IT IS PRESUMED THAT HE CHOSE TO SWING TO THE WESTWARD RATHER THAN TO THE EASTWARD BECAUSE THE YAMASHIRO HAD ALREADY SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE UNDERWATER DAMAGE ON HER PORT SIDE FROM TWO TORPEDO HITS AND HE DID NOT CHOOSE TO EXPOSE THIS DAMAGED SIDE TO FURTHER DAMAGE. HIS ACTION IN SO DOING APPEARS CORRECT AND LOGICAL.

At 0401, having settled on course 260°(T), and now accelerating to twelve knots, the YAMASHIRO continued valiantly to fight back, despite the tremendous concentration of gunfire which she was receiving. Explosions and fires racked her from stem to stern but as late as 0407 she was still able to direct accurate fire at the left flank cruisers** and at the ALBERT W. GRANT.***

Between 0405 and 0408 she slowed temporarily for a few minutes, likely due to a torpedo hit (her third) which she received at this time. (This torpedo had been fired by the BENNION about 0359:15 (Diagram "J").) However, just prior to 0408 she commenced increasing speed and by about 0409 was once again making about twelve knots.

At 0409 the Commanding Officer YAMASHIRO observed that propitiously the Allied gunfire had now suddenly ceased and likely wondered to what occurrence he owed this surprising event. He, of course, did not know that the cease firing had been ordered by the Allied OTC because Allied ships were firing on the ALBERT W. GRANT. What a relief this cease fire must have been to him and to his crew! They had been able to see only destruction before them; now perhaps they might succeed in extricating themselves and their ship.

The Commanding Officer YAMASHIRO decided to retire to the southward immediately and at 0409 commenced a turn in that direction. It seems likely that between 0411 and 0412, as the YAMASHIRO steadied on this southerly course, she received a fourth torpedo hit from the torpedo spread fired by

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

*** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations Against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action Against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

the NEWCOMB at 0404. (A warrant officer survivor from the YAMASHIRO reported that she had received four torpedo hits.)* Surprising enough, despite this possible additional hit, she succeeded (from Allied tracking) in increasing speed to about sixteen knots. However, this burst of speed was short lived for at 0419 she abruptly disappeared from the Allied radar scopes, indicating that she had sunk rapidly, probably by capsizing first,** in Latitude 10°-22.2'N, Longitude 125°-21.3'E.

THIS SINKING MARKS THE END OF THE OPERATION FOR THE THIRD SECTION WHICH HAD BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED AS A FIGHTING UNIT WITH BUT FOUR SHIPS, FUSO, MOGAMI, SHIGURE AND ASAGUMO, REMAINING AFLOAT. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER FUSO, BECAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION WHICH HAD CAUSED HER TO BREAK INTO TWO SECTIONS AND THE HEAVY FIRES WHICH NOW COMPLETELY ENGULFED HER, WAS MOST LIKELY DEAD, OR IN THE WATER, IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE SENIOR SURVIVING OFFICER WAS EITHER THE GUNNERY OFFICER OF THE MOGAMI, WHO WAS NOW COMMANDING OFFICER, OR THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF EITHER THE SHIGURE OR ASAGUMO. HOWEVER, ALL THREE OF THESE COMMANDING OFFICERS WERE CONCENTRATING ON INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL OR RETIREMENT, AND NOT ONE OF THEM ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE RETIRING UNITS OR EVEN ATTEMPTED TO DO SO.

(1) Operations of Operational Ships of the THIRD Section, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(a) MOGAMI.

The Commanding Officer MOGAMI had probably not detected the change of course of Commander THIRD Section to 020°(T) at 0344, for at 0348 he was still on course 320°(T), speed about eighteen knots.*** Both the YAMASHIRO and SHIGURE were visible, and the SHIGURE was observed to move up as flank guard for the YAMASHIRO.****

At about 0351, observing that the "enemy group lying in wait to the north in enveloping formation (range 15 - 20 kilometers)", was directing a fierce concentrated (radar-directed) shellfire at the THIRD Section**** he increased speed to twenty-five knots. He noted that this gunfire was effective for the YAMASHIRO, which was firing intermittently without searchlight illumination, had been set on fire.**** Since his own radar was ineffective and since he did not see the enemy by direct observation he decided to fire torpedoes at the gunflashes and, at 0353, he turned westward to fire broadside fire to starboard. As he did he was taken under fire and his ship began receiving hits astern and, at 0356, was set afire.*****

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computor Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

*** Courses and speeds of MOGAMI have been determined by Allied radar ranges and bearings for the period 0348 - 0420.

**** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

***** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

This gunfire, which was from Attack Group 1.2 (HUTCHINS, DALY, BACHE), apparently interfered with the torpedo launching for the torpedoes do not appear to have been fired at this time. The gunfire was probably noted as coming from the southwest instead of from the north and, since the destroyer situation had been confusing and the radar inoperative, the Commanding Officer MOGAMI appears to have decided that the firing ships were friendly destroyers and therefore turned toward them, making visual identification signals with flashing lights and red flares.* However, he soon realized his error for the shellfire intensified. He now decided to retire and at 0357 steadied on a southerly course, increased speed, and began to make smoke. However, this smoke was not particularly effective for he continued to receive repeated shell hits which resulted in heavy fires. Some of these hits probably came from the PORTLAND which, at 0357, had opened fire on the second target (MOGAMI) bearing 194°(T), range 19,300 yards and on course 180°(T), speed twenty-five knots.**

Does it not seem surprising that the Commanding Officer MOGAMI, observing the YAMASHIRO under heavy fire from the north and realizing that she had run into a trap from which she was not likely to escape, and further realizing that Commander THIRD Section had failed to report this unhappy situation to anyone, did not immediately advise the commanders of both the FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces of the above developments?

At this time (0400) he was queried by the Commanding Officer SHIGURE by voice radio as to the situation*** but does not appear to have received this message.

During this retirement, at about 0401:30, he fired four torpedoes from his port torpedo tubes to the northward.**** No torpedo firing data is available. However, from the fact that the RICHARD P. LEARY passed through torpedo waters at about 0411***** it can be surmised that these torpedoes were set at high speed (forty-nine knots) with a designed torpedo run of 22,000 yards.******

At 0402 at least two shells hit the bridge killing all officers in that area (including the commanding officer, the executive officer and the navigator), leaving only a chief petty officer to keep the ship on a southeasterly course until the senior officer (the gunnery officer who was

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* Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

** Action Report PORTLAND, Surface Engagement in Leyte Gulf, October 25th, 1944, Serial 065, October 28th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

***** Action Report RICHARD P. LEARY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 103, November 7th, 1944.

****** Summary Report, U.S. Naval Technical Mission, November 1st, 1946, Page 118.

busy fighting the ship) could take command. The steering mechanism also had been knocked out requiring the ship to be steered by hand steering. Hits were scored in the engine rooms which, due to smoke and heat, necessitated stopping both starboard engines and the port after engine. The MOGAMI now operated on but one engine--the port forward engine.*

The ship, burning, damaged, and out of control, now gradually slowed down.

Meanwhile at 0404 (when the BACHE ceased firing) and probably to the great surprise of the Commanding Officer MOGAMI (who was the Gunnery Officer) all gunfire against him ceased.

At 0420 the MOGAMI, still without a commanding officer on the bridge, was bearing 199°(T), distant ten point one miles from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

(b) SHIGURE.

The Commanding Officer SHIGURE, on course 340°(T), speed twenty-six knots, continued closing the YAMASHIRO which he thought was the FUSO.

At 0350, or shortly afterward, he sighted the tracks of three torpedoes which he stated passed under the ship.** From Diagram "J" the torpedoes passed ahead although the bubble tracks may well have been rising as he turned to parallel the track of the YAMASHIRO. These torpedoes had been fired by the DALY at 0335:30 (Diagram "H").

At 0351 he was undoubtedly surprised and puzzled to hear Commander THIRD Section call the FUSO by voice radio inquiring as to her maximum speed.** Evidently this message did not change his opinion that the ship ahead was the FUSO. He probably thought that Commander THIRD Section was still afloat, though well astern, and was inquiring as to the FUSO's maximum speed, perhaps with the idea of determining future action. However, since he had been concerned about Commander THIRD Section earlier and had believed the YAMASHIRO sunk, he immediately called Commander THIRD Section requesting that he be informed of the situation.** He received no reply for at this time the shells of the Allied battle disposition had begun landing on and around the YAMASHIRO and apparently had disabled her voice radio communication system.

He now observed that the YAMASHIRO was being heavily hit and had begun to burn.** He continued to close on a course nearly parallel to her course. He was soon caught in the shellfire directed at her. He stated later that, because of these shells, he had been unable to retire. However, he had been able to take evasive action by maneuvering his ship with the happy result that he did not receive any direct hits but did receive some damage from near misses.** He passed within one thousand yards of the YAMASHIRO at 0355 and continued northward. At 0356 he observed the MOGAMI, to the south, receive a direct hit which set her afire.**

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

He was now confronted with the necessity of making a vital decision. He knew that there were at least four enemy battleships present in the Allied battle disposition.* He had received this information from the MOGAMI. The MOGAMI had obtained it from her search plane which had reported to both the MOGAMI and YAMASHIRO by message drop at 1200 the previous day that there were, among other units, four battleships inside Leyte Gulf.** From his later actions it appears that he considered but three courses of action. These were (a) to remain with the battleship, (b) to close the enemy in order to make his torpedo firing as effective as possible, (c) to retire completely from the strait.

While the mental process he went through at this time to determine which course he should select is nowhere explained, it seems likely that he reasoned as follows:

(a) The first course of action was suitable, feasible and acceptable since he belonged with that ship. However, he rejected this course of action presumably because he believed the battleship to be unnavigable.*

(b) While the second course of action was suitable because, if it were successful, it would contribute somewhat to the objective of the penetration operation by damaging or even sinking one or more Allied capital ships, and while such an attack was in accordance with the Japanese concepts of the "banzai" attack,*** it was not feasible because Allied gunfire was very effective and the chance of his being heavily hit before he could reach an effective firing position was very great indeed.

(c) The third course of action was suitable, feasible and acceptable, in that his destroyer, if it escaped, would be available for later operations. He probably realized that in so doing he was accepting a code of honor far removed from the Japanese "Bushido" concepts of the honor of a warrior but he clearly was not of this heroic mold.

He therefore accepted the latter course of action as the selected course and at 0356, when the intensity of the Allied gunfire appeared to lessen, he began a turn to starboard and therefore away from the area of Allied shells.

Why he apparently gave no consideration to a fourth course of action, i.e., to attempt to join Commander SECOND Striking Force, who he knew had been heading up the strait since 0344, is not understood. Would he not thereby have contributed much more effectively to the success of the

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

*** Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, Military History Section, GHQ, FEC, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in GHQ, FEC, Military History Section letter to President, Naval War College, March 30th, 1954.

Japanese operations in the strait, and therefore to the accomplishment of the Japanese objectives, than he would have contributed by following any of the other courses of action?

This seems so for it must be remembered that the fact that the THIRD Section had been caught in a trap by the Allies and had been generally destroyed, was not known to Commander SECOND Striking Force. Therefore, it was imperative that that Commander be informed of this disaster and of the Allied dispositions so that he might take intelligent action.

It will be noted that at the time of his turn away the Commanding Officer SHIGURE did not fire his torpedoes at the Allied left flank cruisers which were distant about 12,100 yards at closest approach. He stated that he did not do so because he had been unable to locate any enemy ships. Why this was so is not entirely clear for the YAMASHIRO, although suffering heavily from Allied gunfire was still able to locate the Allied left flank cruisers and to straddle the DENVER, COLUMBIA and MINNEAPOLIS.* While it is probably true that the YAMASHIRO had better radar and optical equipment it must be remembered, on the other hand, that at this time the SHIGURE had not as yet been hit although heavily straddled.

During the turn away he increased speed to full battle speed** (he made about thirty-two knots) and about 0358 he steadied on course 185°(T).

He now, at 0400, queried the Commanding Officer MOGAMI by voice radio for information concerning the situation. However, he thought that, because his voice radio had been knocked out temporarily by a near miss, he had failed to receive the MOGAMI's reply. Actually no reply had been made.

Shortly after this, he received a direct hit, believed to have been an 8-inch projectile,** in the after part of the ship but the hit did not affect speed or navigability.

At 0408 he passed about 1,800 yards to the eastward of the MOGAMI, which was observed to be burning and apparently heavily damaged.** He continued on course and speed.

Why he did not remain with the MOGAMI to assist her to retire is not known but it seems likely that he had no intention of doing so on his own initiative. Perhaps he felt that if the Commanding Officer MOGAMI wished him to remain he would advise him by visual signal.

At 0409, being clear of the enemy gunfire, he changed course to 215°(T) and slowed to twenty-four knots.

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* Action Report DENVER, Operations Against the Enemy, October 17th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0032, November 10th, 1944; also Action Report COLUMBIA, Bombardment Report, Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 17th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0012, November 1st, 1944; also Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

At about 0415 he exchanged calls with the NACHI. He stated later, on interrogation, that he employed blinker "because the telephone was broken."* It is of interest that there is no mention of this exchange of calls in his action report which, by the way, lists all messages as being by telephone (voice radio).**

Shortly after 0418 he commenced increasing speed to thirty knots in order to pass ahead of the SHIRANUHI, which had just turned to a northwesterly course (Diagram "J").

At 0420 the SHIGURE was bearing 303°(T), distant 15,000 yards from the northwestern tip of Kanihaan Island.

(2) Operations of Damaged Ships of the THIRD Section, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(a) ASAGUMO.

The ASAGUMO, having suffered a severed bow, continued southward at seven to nine knots, likely hoping to retire from the battle area. The sound of gunfire of the YAMASHIRO was heard from the north,*** although this was probably the sound of Allied as well as Japanese gunfire.

At 0349 the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO decided to turn away, probably because he could see that the DALY and the BACHE were rapidly approaching and that his ship would soon become a more inviting gun target than the hapless MICHISHIO. As luck would have it he started his turn at the same time that the HUTCHINS--unbeknown to him--fired her torpedoes at him.

At 0353 he steadied on course 090°(T), speed about six knots. The result of this change of course was that at about 0354:30 the HUTCHINS torpedoes passed harmlessly to the south. Since he makes no mention of these torpedoes or their wakes, it is assumed that he did not observe them.

Although it is not mentioned in his account of the action he undoubtedly witnessed at 0358 the torpedoing of the MICHISHIO, which was about 3,000 yards on his starboard bow. After this he continued to the eastward at about six knots making good a course of 108°(T) in the soutnerly current.

About 0400 he sighted the MOGAMI astern, proceeding on a southerly course and observed that she was on fire.***

At 0420 the ASAGUMO was bearing 334°(T), distant 14,300 yards from the northwestern tip of Kanihaan Island.

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* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 350.

** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

(b) MICHISHIO.

At 0348 the MICHISHIO was under fire by both the DALY and the BACHE. She was dead in the water and was most likely in a sinking condition. Suddenly, at about 0353, she noted that the gunfire against her had lessened (the DALY had shifted fire to the MOGAMI) and at 0356 had ceased altogether, (the BACHE had also shifted fire to the MOGAMI). Once the firing had ceased the MICHISHIO appears to have been able to extinguish fires resulting from this gunfire since the HUTCHINS torpedo control party apparently did not know of her presence in this area.

At 0357:48, by a lucky combination of circumstances, she was hit by the HUTCHINS' torpedoes which had been fired at the ASAGUMO. She sank almost immediately in Latitude 10°-16.4'N, Longitude 125°-23.1'E.

(c) FUSO.

The two sections of the FUSO which were about 2,000 yards apart continued to burn furiously and appeared to be white hot. They continued to drift to the south with the current (Diagram "J").

(B) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the SECOND Striking Force less the ABUKUMA, on course 000°(T) at speed twenty-eight knots, in battle formation with the cruisers in the van and the destroyers trailing, was proceeding toward the battle area.

As he passed up the strait he observed two fires which appeared to be two large ships afire.*

At 0405 as he approached the two burning ships, he concluded that he had entered the battle area--actually, he was still south of Kanihaan Island and therefore about 35,000 yards from the YAMASHIRO--and radioed a message to all forces engaged in the SHO Operation that the SECOND Striking Force had reached the battle area.**

At 0410, as he passed about one and one-half miles west of the two large fires, he decided that these two large ships were the two battleships of the THIRD Section, FUSO and YAMASHIRO,* which had been destroyed by the Allied forces. (Actually, this was only the FUSO which by this time, as mentioned earlier, had broken into two sections.) Since he did not observe the MOGAMI anywhere, and could see firing to the north he believed that the MOGAMI and the destroyers were attacking. About this time he noted that all firing had ceased. He probably wondered what success the MOGAMI attack had achieved.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250405 October 1944 to SHO Operation Forces, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

The situation was not clear as the smoke prevented any enemy sighting.* Commander SECOND Striking Force now estimated the situation as follows: (a) the enemy is concentrated in strength to the north, (b) he is laying smoke to conceal the movements of his forces, (c) he will employ radar directed fire at the approaching Japanese units, and (d) he will launch simultaneous gun and torpedo attacks as soon as the SECOND Striking Force had penetrated.*

This estimate was almost exactly correct. The Allied strength (a) was concentrated as indicated, (b) it was prepared to employ, as it had already employed against the THIRD Section, radar directed gunfire against the SECOND Striking Force, and (c) it was prepared to launch, as it had already launched against the THIRD Section, simultaneous gun and torpedo attacks against the SECOND Striking Force once that force had come within gun range. It was slightly incorrect in that, while it is true that the Allied destroyers in attacking and retiring were employing smoke screens to conceal their movements, such screens had not as yet been employed by the battleships and cruisers.

In order to counter this situation, Commander SECOND Striking Force planned, upon sighting or detecting the enemy by radar, (a) to execute a torpedo attack by his cruisers, (b) send the destroyers ahead for a torpedo attack on the enemy, supported by the gunfire of the cruisers and (c)re-form his battle formation with the destroyers in the van and launch his assault.

This plan was surprisingly similar to Allied doctrine for night attack at this time although Allied doctrine provided that the minimum force which could be expected to enjoy any chance of success was two cruisers and one squadron (nine) destroyers.**

While it is clear, therefore, that Commander SECOND Striking Force's plan had little chance of success it cannot be seriously criticized because the Japanese forces were recognizedly inadequate and no other course of action, other than retirement, was available to Commander SECOND Striking Force. Whether or not he had any hope for the success of the above plan is not stated, but this seems doubtful because the heavy damage to the battleships of the THIRD Section, which he had already observed, indicated that the powerful forces lying in wait at the northern entrance to Surigao Strait consisted in part of battleships.

About 0415, or slightly before, he sighted, on the starboard hand, a ship which was completely afire and which appeared dead in the water. Friendly or enemy character was unknown.* This was the MOGAMI, which was damaged and slowing down, but was not yet completely stopped. She was about 10,000 yards away at this time (Diagram "J").

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Appendix Three.

Although not mentioned in this fashion in any of the reports--all of which are most indefinite--it seems probable that it was also at about 0415 when Commander SECOND Striking Force first sighted the SHIGURE heading south and exchanged calls with her.* This matter is discussed under "SHIGURE, 0348 - 0420, October 25th".

Why he did not question the Commanding Officer SHIGURE at this time as to (a) the nature of the operations to the north, i.e., what forces opposed him; what had happened to the THIRD Section, etc., and (b) why the SHIGURE was heading south and out of action, is not explained.

HIS FAILURE TO DO SO IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR HE HIMSELF WAS HEADING NORTH AND INTO BATTLE AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO OBTAIN ANY INTELLIGENCE WHICH WOULD ASSIST HIM IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS OBJECTIVE. WHAT BETTER SOURCE WAS AVAILABLE THAN THE COMMANDING OFFICER SHIGURE?

According to his torpedo officer he now (at about 0420) made radar contact on an enemy group of ships bearing 025°(T), range eleven kilometers, and thereupon directed the cruisers and destroyers to prepare for torpedo attack.** Actually this radar contact must have been made shortly before 0418 because, at this time, the SHIRANUHI,*** the leading destroyer, commenced increasing speed to thirty-four knots and started to move out of column on course 330°(T).

What this contact was on is not known for there were no forces, either friendly or enemy in this location. Hibuson Island was on this bearing, distant about twelve miles (at 0418) and there is a possibility that this island was mistaken for an enemy force. However, for this to be so the range would have had to be eleven to twelve miles rather than eleven thousand meters. Perhaps the record in this connection is in error and the range was in fact eleven miles. Commander SECOND Striking Force decided to carry out his attack plan.

During this time the ABUKUMA continued making repairs--she was shoring up her watertight bulkheads--while she slowly steamed in a generally southeasterly direction presumably to clear the motor torpedo boats. At intervals she would stop her engines and lay to. At 0415 she got underway again at ten knots and headed on course 200°(T).

At 0420 (a) the NACHI was bearing 088°(T), distant seven point three miles from Amagusan Point, (b) the SHIRANUHI, leading the destroyers, was bearing 095°(T), distant six point seven miles from Amagusan Point and (c) the ABUKUMA was bearing 304°(T), distant four point two miles from Madilao Point.

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* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 350.

** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

*** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

CHAPTER XVII - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

CTG 77.2 (OTC) carefully watched the approach of the enemy. The enemy situation had not changed materially in the last few minutes, as their leading units, although maneuvering, continued to close. He noted at 0348 that the range was about 16,600 yards (actually, from the corrected plot it was about 17,200 yards) to the nearest enemy ship,* which he had tracked on course 015°(T), speed sixteen knots.**

At this time he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from Commander Battle Line that he had a "group of small ones, followed by heavy group. When large group reaches 26,000 yards I will open fire."*** By observation on the radar scope, he likely noted that the battle line was but 6,500 yards to the north of him and, since his range to the leading group was but 16,000 yards, he may have been puzzled as to which target Commander Battle Line had reference. However, he took no action on this message.

At 0350 he decided to open fire with his cruisers, and, therefore, sent a TBS voice radio message to warn them that he was about to open fire.*** He would have liked to delay opening fire until the time that the DESRON FIFTY-SIX torpedoes were about to reach the target in order to obtain a concentration of shells and torpedoes on the target—but this could not be done because of the rapidly decreasing range. Instead, he decided to delay until the destroyers were approaching their firing positions at which time he would open fire in order to divert the enemy from the attacking destroyers.** He realized, of course, that this had an inherent weakness in that the enemy could be expected to maneuver to throw off the Allied gunfire which maneuvering might affect adversely the Allied torpedo fire. However, he hoped that any errors thus introduced by this maneuvering would be compensated for by the torpedo spreads of the three attacking sections of DESRON FIFTY-SIX.

A minute later, at 0351 when the range was 15,600 yards, by TBS voice radio he ordered all cruisers of TG 77.2 to "open fire".**** His flagship opened fire immediately followed a little later by the MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER and COLUMBIA. The PORTLAND was delayed and did not open fire until a minute or so later. The BOISE, of the right flank cruisers, also opened up, followed a little later by the PHOENIX.

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* Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

As a result of the firing by the LOUISVILLE, CTG 77.2, who was on the starboard wing of the bridge, was temporarily blinded. Fortunately, this had no adverse effects.*

At 0353, as the left flank cruisers continued firing--he did not as yet know that the right flank cruisers had commenced firing--he heard the Commanding Officer WEST VIRGINIA inform Commander Battle Line that the WEST VIRGINIA was about to open fire,** and shortly afterward he observed her open fire.*** The LOUISVILLE, at this time, was fairly close to the line of fire between the CALIFORNIA and the enemy.

At this time the LOUISVILLE detected another small enemy group "coming up fast bearing 190°(T), possibly friendly".**** This estimate of bearing and identification was correct for it was Attack Group 1.2 (HUTCHINS, DALY and BACHE). Fortunately, this group was not taken under fire.

At this time also, CTG 77.2 intercepted a TBS voice radio broadcast from Commander Right Flank Force to the effect that "these three little ones in front are friendly trying to get into shoreline".**

At 0355 he intercepted an order to fire torpedoes from Commander Attack Section TWO of DESRON FIFTY-SIX. From this he knew that the left flank destroyers had commenced launching torpedoes.

Also at 0355, feeling that the right flank force had not opened fire he directed, by TBS voice radio, Commander Right Flank Force to commence firing.**

He did this because, although the BOISE and the PHOENIX were firing-BOISE employing rapid fire--he could not see them; his line of sight to right flank force was obscured by the gunfire of the ships of the left fl force. Therefore, since his order had been to the cruisers of TG 77.2, an not to the cruisers of TG 77.2 and TG 77.3, he thought it well to make sure that this order which was intended, per se to include the cruisers of TG 77.3, was so understood by CTG 77.3. This order was promptly answered by Commander Right Flank Force, who replied by TBS voice radio, "we opened fire with you".** This reply was apparently delayed in its delivery to CTG 77.2 for at 0356 that commander repeated his order.** Since no further messages thereon are recorded it seems correct to say that CTG 77.2, by this time, either had received the reply or knew from other sources that the right flank cruisers were firing.

He now observed that more battleships of the battle line had opened fire, for the CALIFORNIA and TENNESSEE commenced firing at 0355.

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* Hawthorne Daniel "As Seen From the Bridge", Blue Book Magazine, March 1949.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

At 0356 he observed from his radar scope that the group of enemy ships (actually, this group consisted solely of the MOGAMI), astern of the leading ship (YAMASHIRO), had turned westward and at 0358 had started retiring at high speed*--twenty five knots. At this latter time, he also observed that the leading enemy ship had likewise commenced a turn to the westward.

At 0400, knowing that the battle line, which at this time was north of Hibuson Island, was still making fifteen knots and was still heading on course 090°(T),* and feeling that it was already too far to the east he suggested to Commander Battle Line by TBS voice radio that he reverse course to 270°(T).** He did not know that the battle line, in a line of bearing 090° - 270°(T), was now on course 120°(T). If he had known this, does it not seem likely that, instead of suggesting, he would have ordered Commander Battle Line to change course, for the battle line would now pass well ahead of the left flank cruisers which were also on course 090°(T) but still at five knots?

Also at 0400 he observed from his radar scope and radar tracking that the leading enemy ship had changed course to the westward and seemed to be retiring.*

At 0402 he knew that Commander Battle Line had executed a change of course to 270°(T) by simultaneous individual ship turns.**

At 0403 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX directing Attack Section ONE to fire torpedoes when ready and to retire with smoke.*** This was pleasant news for it indicated not only that DESRON FIFTY-SIX should soon be retiring from the battle area, but that Attack Section ONE, which was in the center of the strait, would soon be clear.

At 0406 he began receiving TBS voice radio reports from COMCRUDIV TWELVE in the DENVER that the enemy was firing at the left flank cruisers and that the DENVER had been straddled.* He immediately changed speed to fifteen knots.****

At this same time, he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from Commander Battle Line that the CALIFORNIA had missed the last turn signal and for other ships to watch out for her.**

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C)

**** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

This message was of considerable concern to him but was not entirely unexpected for, as pointed out previously in this analysis, he knew that his battleships had had little opportunity to practice station keeping in column or in line of bearing. He could only hope that this error of the CALIFORNIA was not so serious as to endanger the operations of the battle line, but this hope did not long survive for he now noted that the fire of the battle line had ceased. The WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, CALIFORNIA and TENNESSEE had checked fire, and the PENNSYLVANIA and the MISSISSIPPI had not as yet opened fire.

At 0408 he received a startling message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that "You are firing on COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX. We are in the middle of the channel."* Then, before he could take action, he received a second message as follows: "You are firing at us."* Without delaying, he, at 0409, ordered "All ships cease firing."* This order was quickly complied with and the entire battle disposition ceased firing.

THIS ACTION BY CTG 77.2 WOULD HAVE BEEN SOUND, DESPITE THE FACT THAT A FEW JAPANESE SHELLS HAD STRADDLED THE DENVER AND MINNEAPOLIS ABOUT TWO MINUTES EARLIER, HAD HE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED THIS ORDER BY A SECOND MESSAGE DIRECTING THAT FIRE BE RESUMED PROMPTLY BY EACH SHIP ONCE THE LOCATIONS OF COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX AND THE ENEMY HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED.

This is so for, while it was desirable to lift fire from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, it was essential to expedite the resuming of fire on the three Japanese ships (YAMASHIRO, MOGAMI, SHIGURE) in order to destroy them. As pointed out earlier under "Kanihaan PT's, 0320 - 0348", War Instructions were emphatic on this point.

Unfortunately, he did not issue instructions to resume fire but instead directed COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to get his ships out of channel as soon as possible.* He did this, of course, to insure that no friendly ships were in the area between the battle disposition and the Japanese ships so that he could safely resume fire. However, he did not know that the ALBERT W. GRANT was so heavily disabled that she would not leave the area for some time. On the contrary, he had reason to believe that all ships were not only able to clear the area but were doing so, for, also at 0409, he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to the effect that DESRON FIFTY-SIX was getting out at full speed.* Clearly, COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was as uninformed of the plight of the ALBERT W. GRANT as was CTG 77.2.

IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THROUGHOUT THIS PHASE OF THE OPERATIONS, CTG 77.2, AS OTC, DID NOT ISSUE ANY INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING FIRE DISTRIBUTION. IT THEREFORE SEEMS WISE, AT THIS POINT, TO DIGRESS A MOMENT FROM THE DISCUSSION OF THE BATTLE TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF FIRE DISTRIBUTION (SEE PLATE XXIV). SINCE (A) TACTICAL DOCTRINE, WITH WHICH HE WAS FULLY FAMILIAR, ASSIGNED HIM THIS RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS: "FIRE DISTRIBUTION NORMALLY IS ORDERED BY THE TASK GROUP COMMANDER...",** (B) HE WAS (1) LONG EXPERIENCED

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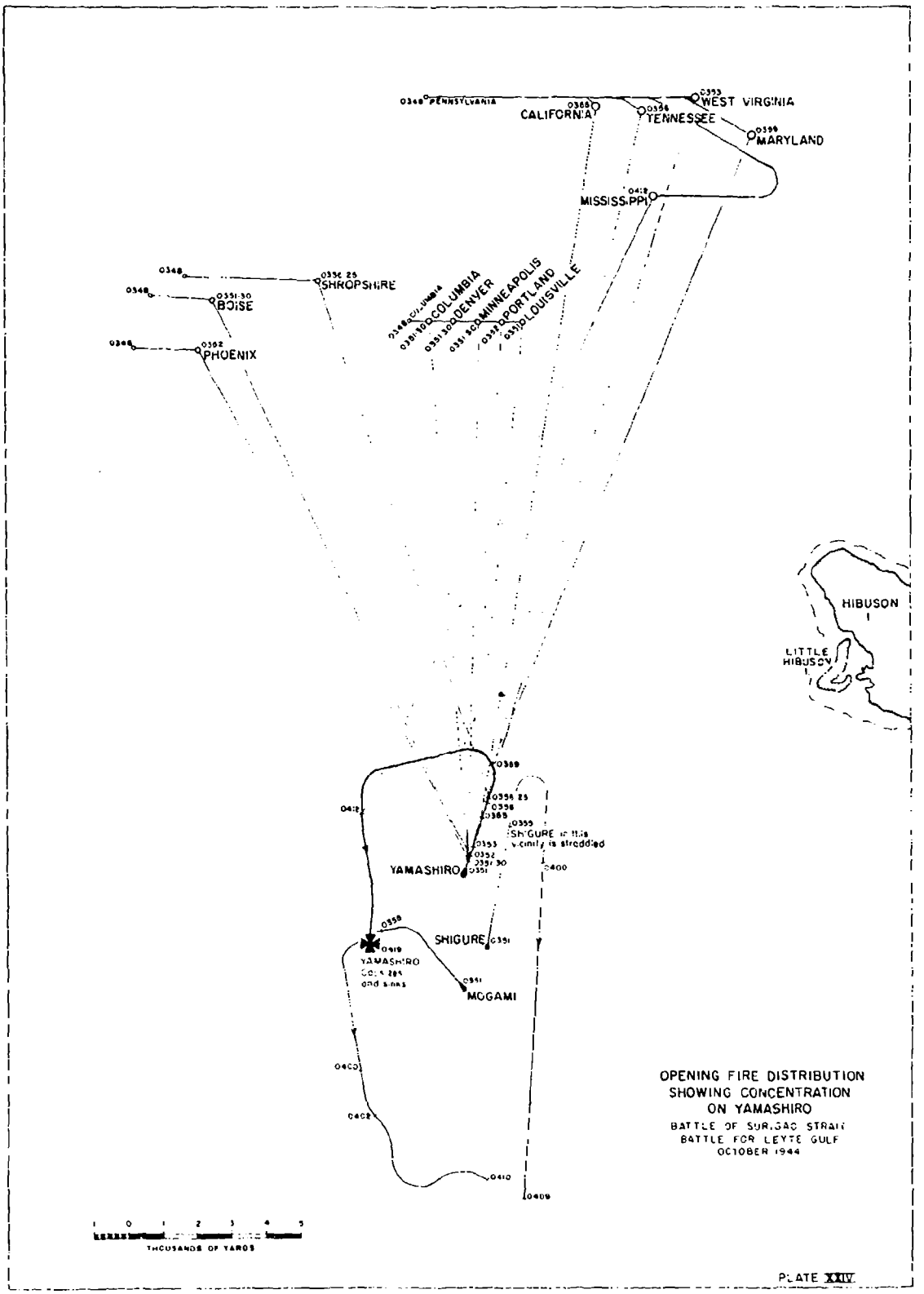
* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 12, Section XI, Paragraph 12163.



OPENING FIRE DISTRIBUTION
SHOWING CONCENTRATION
ON YAMASHIRO

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

PLATE XXIV

IN FLEET MANEUVERS, (2) A GRADUATE OF THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE WHERE FIRE DISTRIBUTION WAS THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED AND EXPLAINED IN MANEUVER BOARD PROBLEMS, (3) THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR, THEREFORE, WITH THE ILL EFFECTS OF OVER CONCENTRATION AND (C) HE HAD PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH COMMANDER CRUISERS PACIFIC FLEET THE QUESTION OF FIRE DISTRIBUTION EMPLOYING RADAR (NO DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS HAD BEEN ARRIVED AT),* IT IS LOGICAL TO BELIEVE THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN INTELLIGENT EXPLANATION FOR HIS ACTION.

HE GIVES THIS EXPLANATION IN HIS ACTION REPORT AS FOLLOWS: "FIRE DISTRIBUTION FOR THIS ACTION WAS DIFFICULT BECAUSE, WHILE THE SHIPS ON THE LEFT FLANK WERE CROSSING THE "T" AND, THEREFORE, WERE FIRING AT A MORE OR LESS COMMON TARGET, THOSE ON THE RIGHT FLANK COULD CLEARLY DESIGNATE THEIR TARGETS. FIRE DISTRIBUTION WAS, THEREFORE, LEFT TO THE INDIVIDUAL COMMANDERS AND SHIPS, AND, AS A WHOLE, FUNCTIONED REASONABLY WELL."*

IN AMPLIFICATION OF THE ABOVE EXPLANATION, THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS, ALTHOUGH NOT MENTIONED IN HIS ACTION REPORT, CLEARLY INFLUENCED HIS JUDGEMENT:

(A) (1) THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF THE ENEMY AT THE TIME OF OPENING FIRE WAS NOT KNOWN. THIS WAS SO FOR MOST OF THE ALLIED TARGETS WERE RADAR "PIPS" RATHER THAN "VISUAL" TARGETS, AND, THEREFORE, THE ALLIED COMMANDERS WERE NOT ALWAYS SURE WHETHER THEIR RADAR "PIPS" REPRESENTED ONE ENEMY SHIP OR MORE THAN ONE. HE THOUGHT AT THIS TIME THAT THE LEADING GROUP CONSISTED OF TWO BATTLESHIPS IN COLUMN FOLLOWED PERHAPS BY ONE OR MORE SMALLER UNITS. ACTUALLY, AT 0351, (TIME OF OPENING FIRE) THERE WAS BUT ONE BATTLESHIP IN THE VAN FOLLOWED AT A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 2,400 YARDS BY THE SHIGURE AND AT 3,400 YARDS BY THE MOGAMI.

(2) DOCTRINE STATED THAT "THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SEEING THAT THEIR VESSELS ARE FIRING AT THE CORRECT TARGETS RESTS WITH THE DIVISION COMMANDERS AND THE COMMANDING OFFICERS. SUCH OFFICERS, HAVING REGARD FOR PRESCRIBED DOCTRINE OR INSTRUCTIONS, SHOULD USE INITIATIVE IN SELECTING TARGETS:

"(A) IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRE DISTRIBUTION ORDERS FROM A SENIOR AT THE TIME ACTION IS JOINED.

"(B) WHEN, DUE TO LOW VISIBILITY, CONFUSION OF BATTLE OR OTHER CONDITIONS, THE CONTROL OF FIRE DISTRIBUTION BY THE SENIOR IS IMPRACTICABLE."**

(3) THEREFORE, HE FELT THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DOCTRINE, EACH DIVISION COMMANDER AND COMMANDING OFFICER WOULD FIRE AT THE TARGET OR TARGETS WHICH FULFILLED THE REQUIREMENTS OF DOCTRINE MOST EFFECTIVELY.

(B) ALL OF HIS SHIPS, EXCEPT THE SHROPSHIRE, WERE EQUIPPED WITH LONG RANGE FIRE CONTROL RADAR AND HE HOPED THAT RADAR SPOTTING WOULD PROVE EFFECTIVE EVEN IN THE FACE OF A SITUATION WHICH, BEFORE-RADAR, WAS CONSIDERED "OVER CONCENTRATION". DOCTRINE IN THIS MATTER PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 12, Section XI, Paragraph 12163.

"IN CONCENTRATION FIRE, THE COMBINED FIRE POWER OF THE CONCENTRATING SHIPS IS USUALLY LESS THAN THE SUM OF THEIR FIRE POWERS WHEN FIRING SINGLY. THE LOSS OF FIRE POWER THROUGH CONCENTRATION INCREASES RAPIDLY WITH THE NUMBER CONCENTRATING ON ONE TARGET. WITH TWO SHIPS CONCENTRATING ON ONE THE LOSS MAY BE SLIGHT; WITH THREE THE LOSS MAY BE GREATER BUT STILL PERMISSIBLE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. THE CONCENTRATION OF MORE THAN THREE SHIPS ON ONE USUALLY INVOLVES SO GREAT A REDUCTION OF FIRE POWER AS TO RENDER ITS USE PROHIBITIVE."*

(C) HIS COMMANDERS WERE EXPERIENCED AND IN THE ABSENCE OF INSTRUCTIONS HE EXPECTED THEM TO ISSUE ANY FIRE DISTRIBUTION ORDERS NECESSARY. THE WEAKNESS OF THIS ITEM IS THAT, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER, HE DID NOT ISSUE ANY FIRE DISTRIBUTION ORDERS TO HIS OWN IMMEDIATE COMMAND--THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS.

THIS DECISION LATER MET WITH THE APPROVAL OF HIS SUPERIORS IN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AS FOLLOWS:

(A) CTF 79.

"THIS WAS THE LARGEST ACTION WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN THE WAR TO DATE IN WHICH RADAR FIRE CONTROL WAS USED EXCLUSIVELY. UNDER THE CONDITIONS WHICH EXISTED IT WAS CLEARLY IMPRACTICABLE TO ASSIGN TARGETS. THE "T" BEING CROSSED, FULL ADVANTAGE OF ENFILADE FIRE WAS INDICATED AND WAS TAKEN AS PROVED BY THE RESULTS. CERTAINTY OF HITTING COULD ONLY BE ASSURED BY OCCASIONALLY LIFTING THE RANGE AND IT APPEARS THAT, WITH THE IDEA OF CONSERVING AMMUNITION SUPPLY CERTAIN SHIPS, WHEN IN DOUBT AS TO THE EFFICACY OF THEIR FIRE, WISELY CEASED FIRE ALTOGETHER,"** AND

(B) COMMANDER SEVENTH FLEET INCORPORATED IN THE SEVENTH FLEET PRELIMINARY ACTION REPORT, CTG 77.2'S REASONS FOR LEAVING FIRE CONTROL DISTRIBUTION TO HIS INDIVIDUAL COMMANDERS AND SHIPS,*** AND STATED LATER THAT THE "INCORPORATION OF MANY OF THE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN CONTAINED CONSTITUTE APPROVAL OF BASIC REPORT."****

IT ALSO MET WITH THE APPROVAL OF CINCPAC-CINCPOA IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

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* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 12, Section XI, Paragraph 12165(e).

** CTF 79 First Endorsement February 10th, 1945, to COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2) Preliminary Action Report for Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77 and COM7THFLT) Report of Operation for the Capture of Leyte Island including Action Report of Engagements in Surigao Straits and off Samar Island on October 25th, 1944, Serial 00302-C, January 31st, 1945, Part V, Conclusions, Comments and Recommendations, Naval Gunfire, Item B, Fire Distribution.

**** COM7THFLT Second Endorsement March 5th, 1945, to COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2) Preliminary Action Report for Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

"THAT THE MOGAMI AND A DESTROYER SURVIVED WHEN TWO BATTLESHIPS WERE SUNK IS NOT ILLOGICAL. EVERYBODY IN OUR FORCES FROM THE OBB'S DOWN TO PT'S FIRED AT THE BIG ONES NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPORTANCE (SINCE INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION WAS GENERALLY LACKING) BUT BECAUSE THEY GAVE THE BEST "PIPS" OR VISUAL POINTS OF AIM AT WHICH GUN OR TORPEDO FIRE COULD BE DIRECTED. A FIRE DISTRIBUTION PLAN TO COVER ALL OF THE ENEMY'S VESSELS WAS IMPOSSIBLE UNDER THE EXISTING SITUATION."*

DESPITE THE ABOVE OPINIONS, DOES IT NOT SEEM PRIMARILY FROM HINDSIGHT, BUT ALSO FROM THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THIS ANALYSIS, AND FROM THE FACT THAT CTG 77.2 AS OTC BELIEVED THAT THE NEAREST GROUP CONSISTED OF TWO BATTLESHIPS IN COLUMN FOLLOWED BY SOME SMALLER UNITS, THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD HE ISSUED SOME GENERAL FIRE DISTRIBUTION INSTRUCTIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT (A) THE TWO BATTLESHIPS IN THE VAN WERE ASSIGNED TO COMMANDER BATTLE LINE AND (B) THE SMALLER UNITS WERE ASSIGNED TO THE COMMANDERS OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT FLANK FORCES AS TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY? THIS WOULD HAVE TENDED (A) TO REDUCE "OVER CONCENTRATION" AGAINST THE ENEMY BATTLESHIPS, (B) TO SAVE AMMUNITION WHICH WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY IN THE AREA, (C) TO ALERT COMMANDER BATTLE LINE AND THE COMMANDERS OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT FLANK FORCES TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS MATTER, AND (D) TO KEEP ALL TARGETS WITHIN GUN RANGE UNDER FIRE.

Now to return to the battle!

Commencing at about 0409, and confirmed at about 0412, CTG 77.2's plots gave indications that the enemy was retiring, for one ship had steadied on course 180°(T) (YAMASHIRO), some ships were apparently dead in the water and one ship (SHIGURE), at least, was retiring at twenty-four knots.**

At 0411 he intercepted a TBS voice radio request from the CALIFORNIA and one from the MARYLAND to Commander Battle Line for authority to unload hot guns at the enemy. At 0412 he intercepted the latter's reply directing all battleships with loaded hot guns to unload at the enemy.*** He noted that this authority was followed by the unloading salvos.

Whether or not he, at 0413, intercepted the TBS voice radio report from the RICHARD P. LEARY that she was passing through torpedo waters is unknown but it seems unlikely for he took no action. Instead, at about this very time (0414) he, as Commander Left Flank Force Cruisers, executed a simultaneous individual ship turn of 180° to new course 270°(T). He states in his war diary that he made this reversal of course "to avoid enemy torpedoes as the enemy was turning so that torpedoes might be fired."**** This statement seems to have been in error for he knew at this time that the Japanese ships, at which he had been firing, were retiring. Does it not

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* CINCPAC-CINCPOA Operations in the Pacific Ocean Area, October 1944, forwarded to CINCUS by serial 002393, May 31st, 1945.

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** War Diary COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), October 25th, 1944.

seem fair to say then that, had he been aware of torpedoes he would have ordered an immediate battle disposition change of course by ship turns to parallel the likely general direction of the enemy torpedoes rather than have ordered a change of course for the left flank cruisers only?

As a matter of interest, at this very time the question arose as to the advisibility of changing course to the south in order to close the enemy but, because of his respect for Japanese torpedoes, he decided against it.* Instead, realizing that (a) some of the enemy ships were likely to escape, (b) an enemy force consisting of five destroyers and one larger ship had been reported by PT 523 at 0342 as entering Surigao Strait on a northerly course at that time, and (c) except for the battle line destroyers (DESDIV XRAY) there were no other destroyers available which had not as yet been launched to the attack, he decided that it would be wise to detach DESDIV XRAY from the battle line and make it available to himself as OTC for immediate employment should he desire to use it. He therefore, at 0415, directed Commander Battle Line to direct COMDESDIV XRAY to report to CTG 77.2 for duty.

Whether or not he heard Commander Battle Line direct COMBATDIV TWO to maneuver his division separately and order the remaining battleships to turn away to the north at 0418 is unknown.

Between 0418 and 0419 he received two TBS voice radio messages from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to the effect that the NEWCOMB, followed by the RICHARD P. LEARY, was out of the channel but that the ALBERT W. GRANT was due west of Hibuson Island and was slowly proceeding north.**

From this he had reason to believe that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been damaged for he had ordered DESRON FIFTY-SIX to clear the channel as soon as possible, which all units, except the ALBERT W. GRANT, had succeeded in doing. As yet he did not know that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been riddled by friendly and enemy shells and was in danger of sinking.

He now felt that it was safe for the right flank force to resume fire and therefore, at 0419, he issued the order for Commander Right Flank Force to resume fire.** (He could not order the left flank force to open fire because Attack Section ONE was still in the line of fire.) However, at this moment, the one target within range (YAMASHIRO) disappeared from the radar screen and was presumed sunk.*** None of the ships of the battle disposition, therefore, opened fire.

At 0420 the LOUISVILLE was bearing 339°(T), distant 8,800 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

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* Statement on February 24th, 1955 by Commodore R. W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, who was Chief of Staff to CTG 77.2 at the Battle of Surigao Strait.

** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

(1) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

At 0348 Commander Battle Line continued on course 090°(T) at speed fifteen knots.

It will be noted that he issued no instructions concerning fire distribution. He, of course, realized that, failing to receive any orders in this matter from the OTC, it became his responsibility to determine whether or not he should issue orders thereon to the battle line or allow the division commanders and commanding officers, who had the ultimate responsibility, to handle this as they thought best. He decided on the latter plan saying later that "With an undetermined enemy battleline array, advance fire distribution signals were considered unwise. For normal action fire distribution is adequately covered in current battleship doctrine which gives necessary instructions for division commanders and commanding officers when OTC or COMBATLINE do not designate otherwise."*

HIS ACTION IN SO DOING APPEARS UNWISE UNLESS HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HIS BATTLESHIPS COULD SPOT GUNFIRE WITH RADAR DESPITE THE NUMBER OF SHIPS FIRING. SINCE THIS WAS A VERY DEBATABLE QUESTION DOES IT NOT SEEM CORRECT TO SAY THAT HE SHOULD HAVE GIVEN FIRE DISTRIBUTION INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS DIVISION COMMANDERS OF SUCH NATURE AS TO PREVENT "OVER CONCENTRATION", PERHAPS TO ALLOW NO MORE THAN THREE BATTLESHIPS TO FIRE AT THE SAME TARGET AT THE SAME TIME? IN SUCH CASE ALL OF HIS BATTLESHIPS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY HAVE FIRED AT THE SAME TIME, WITH THE RESULTANT SAVING OF AMMUNITION.

At 0349, observing that none of his ships had opened fire and realizing that (a) they were probably waiting for him to open fire and (b) CTG 77.2 was likely wondering why he had not opened fire, he decided to clarify the matter for all and therefore advised CTG 77.2 by TBS voice radio of his intentions as follows: "I have a group of small ones followed by a group of large ones. When large ones reach 26,000 yards I will open fire."*

This dispatch shows that he had an erroneous evaluation of the enemy disposition. Whether this evaluation had been formed by himself or by his flagship is unknown but it appears that the flagship CIC was not confused as they produced one of the better battleship track charts of the action. In commenting on the enemy disposition a short time before this he stated: "The picture which was forming now required much interpretation. Basically, Commander Battle Line had a PPI track from the SG radar which was interpreted for size and formation of units involved by consideration of previous and current reports of units in contact."** Perhaps this method of evaluation was still being used.

About 0340 the radar had picked up a new contact at a range of 31,500 yards which was evaluated as two or three large ships.** This new contact was the MOGAMI (Diagram "H"). Why the two contacts were now

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

evaluated as a group of small ones followed by a group of large ones is nowhere explained. The radar pip of the nearest ship, YAMASHIRO, should have been much larger than that of the more distant MOGAMI, not only because the YAMASHIRO was larger than the MOGAMI but also because the YAMASHIRO was nearer than the MOGAMI. In addition the track chart of his flagship shows that she made initial contact on the YAMASHIRO at a range more than 12,000 yards greater than the range at which she had picked up the MOGAMI.* At this time, however, the SHIGURE was only about 800 yards on the MOGAMI's beam so that this pip may have appeared larger than it actually was.

In the meantime the range had been closing and at 0349 was 23,600 yards to the YAMASHIRO and 26,600 yards to the MOGAMI (Diagram "J"). Although he does not state why he had not opened fire when the range to the YAMASHIRO was 26,000 yards (as he had intended to do) the Commanding Officer of his flagship stated that a warning had been received to "Watch out for ships astern, they may be the real target."** Curiously enough, COMBATDIV FOUR reported that at some time prior to the range closing to 26,000 yards the battle line commander reportedly ordered "Do not fire", or words to that effect but that the WEST VIRGINIA did not receive this order.*** Since none of the other ships report this and there is nothing of this nature in any of the voice radio logs it appears that in both cases it was generated internally and reported over the telephone system. It seems likely, however, that his reason for not opening fire when the range to the YAMASHIRO was 26,000 yards was that he was not sure which of the two leading targets was the more important. The other two battleship division commanders and their ships were waiting for the flagship to open fire.****

At 0350 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 informing the cruisers of TG 77.2 that he was about to open fire.*****

At 0351 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 to the cruisers to commence firing.****** Shortly after this order, he witnessed the left flank cruisers open fire, followed by the right flank cruisers.*****

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* Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944, Track Chart.

** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

*** Action Report COMBATDIV 4, Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0235, November 8th, 1944.

**** Action Report COMBATDIV 2, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00149, November 7th, 1944.

***** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

****** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

At 0353 he received a message from Commander Right Flank Force that the three little ones out in front were friendly, trying to get into shore.* What consideration he gave to this message is not recorded.

Meanwhile, COMBATDIV FOUR, in the WEST VIRGINIA (F), observing that the range to the enemy leading ship had closed to 24,000 yards, ordered the Commanding Officer WEST VIRGINIA to inform Commander Battle Line that he was about to open fire, and then to commence firing.** The Commanding Officer WEST VIRGINIA therefore reported at 0353 over TBS voice radio that he was ready to open fire and very shortly thereafter he commenced firing with an opening range of 22,800 yards, using salvo fire, at the leading enemy large ship.***

About this time Commander Battle Line was notified by his flagship that her forward turrets were trained too far aft.**** He must now have realized the unhappy situation which was developing because, instead of remaining at five knots as ordered, he had persisted in operating at fifteen knots. He could plainly see that his guns would soon no longer bear and it would be necessary to change course toward the enemy to improve the bearing and, at the same time, to reduce the range. He, therefore, at 0354, changed course by simultaneous ship turns thirty degrees to starboard to course 120°(T).*****

At this time his flagship CIC was still having difficulty tracking the enemy and designating a target. Although the leading target (YAMASHIRO) was now at a range of but 21,800 yards, the MISSISSIPPI did not commence firing for, apparently because of the second group, this target had not been designated to the main battery. The second group (MOGAMI) now seemed to have commenced reversing course, having reached a minimum range of 25,000 yards. A new target, a single unidentified ship, was picked up, bearing 197°(T), range 31,000 yards and tracked on course 307°(T), speed twenty-eight knots.****** This was the HUTCHINS which had just turned to course 310°(T).

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report COMBATDIV 4, Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0235, November 8th, 1944.

*** Action Report WEST VIRGINIA, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0538, November 1st, 1944.

**** Commander Battle Line's 1ST Endorsement Serial 0199, November 23rd, 1944, to Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

***** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

****** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

At 0355 Commander Battle Line observed the CALIFORNIA commence firing on the leading large ship (YAMASHIRO) which she had tracked on course 342°(T) at fifteen knots. Her opening range was 20,400 yards, bearing 188°(T).* From Diagram "J" the range at this time was 20,900 yards and the bearing 189°(T). This error in range either represents an error in time of approximately forty-five seconds or it is an advance range (the range at which the target would be when the projectiles landed). Since other times in the action report are generally correct it is believed to be more likely that she recorded the advance range. In this respect it is of interest that the range of 20,400 yards corresponds very closely to the distance from the ship's 0355 position to the target 0356 position, that the bearing between the two positions is 188½°(T) and that the time of flight is approximately thirty-one seconds.

At 0356 the TENNESSEE opened fire on the same large ship (YAMASHIRO) which she had tracked on course 000°(T), speed sixteen knots. The opening range was 20,500 yards, the bearing was not stated.** Although the TENNESSEE's action report states that fire was opened at 0355 the actual time of opening fire is considered to have been 0356 for the following reasons: (a) her track chart shows that after completing the turn to 120°(T) at 0355 she proceeded along the new course for about 700 yards before opening fire which distance would take about one minute, (b) this time error agrees with the time errors established for other events recorded in this action report and (c) her deck log gives 0356 as the time of opening fire.***

At 0356 the range from Diagram "J" was 20,500 yards and the bearing was 192°(T).

At 0359 he observed the MARYLAND commence firing. The MARYLAND had opened fire on the leading large ship (YAMASHIRO), which at this time was also under fire by the right and left flank cruisers.**** His opening range was 20,800 yards, bearing 210°(T).

It seems clear that the range and bearing given by the MARYLAND was either incorrectly reported in the action report or was incorrectly obtained within that ship for a check of Diagram "J" shows that the YAMASHIRO at this time was bearing 202°(T) rather than 210°(T) and the range was 19,800 yards rather than 20,800 yards. In fact, there were no enemy forces whatsoever in the area indicated by the 210°(T) bearing.

Between 0400 and 0401 he noted that the leading target had changed course to the westward and had reduced speed to ten knots. At this time the target bore 201°(T), range 18,800 yards. He now received a message from CTG 77.2 suggesting that he reverse course to 270°(T).*****

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* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944.

** Action Report TENNESSEE, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 0108, October 31st, 1944.

*** Deck Log TENNESSEE, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944.

***** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

In compliance with this suggestion, at 0401, by TBS voice radio, he ordered and, at 0402, executed simultaneous individual ship turns of 150° to starboard to course 270°(T).* He requested and received an acknowledgement from COMBATDIV FOUR only.

SINCE THE CORRECT EXECUTION OF THIS MESSAGE WAS OF EXTREME IMPORTANCE, DOES IT NOT SEEM SURPRISING THAT COMMANDER BATTLE LINE FAILED TO INSURE ITS CORRECT RECEPTION BY THE UNITS OF HIS COMMAND BY PARALLELING THE TBS VOICE RADIO MESSAGE WITH A CW RADIO DISPATCH?

At about this time the CALIFORNIA checked fire having fired forty-three 14-inch shells and the WEST VIRGINIA, owing to a desire to retain some of her AP ammunition, ceased firing having fired ninety-one 16-inch shells. The CALIFORNIA had fired a total of six salvos, none of which were full gun (twelve gun) salvos. The WEST VIRGINIA had fired a total of fourteen salvos of which five were full (eight gun) salvos.

During the execution of the above turn, it became apparent to COMBATDIV TWO in the TENNESSEE, and to the latter's commanding officer, that the CALIFORNIA, which was the next ship ahead of the TENNESSEE, was not turning to the new course.** This was, in fact, the case for the Commanding Officer CALIFORNIA had (a) received the signal as a fifteen degree turn to course 135°(T) instead of a 150° turn to course 270°(T), (b) already steadied on that course and (c) at 0403, resumed fire.*** COMBATDIV TWO, therefore, at 0404, queried the latter over TBS voice radio "Did you receive turn signal?" He received a prompt affirmative**** reply, for the Commanding Officer CALIFORNIA naturally believed that he was referring to the fifteen degree turn which he had just executed.

Meanwhile, the Commanding Officer TENNESSEE, who had checked fire during the turn, having fired sixty-three 14-inch shells, noted that he was unable to resume fire because the CALIFORNIA was fouling the range. Realizing that the danger of collision was imminent, for he was closing the CALIFORNIA rapidly, he, at 0404, quickly backed his engines and by some clever ship handling succeeded in avoiding the collision.***** As the CALIFORNIA passed across his bow, he resumed speed in order not to embarrass the ship astern of him.

The prompt and correct manner in which he acted to avoid this collision indicates that he was fully alert to the developing situation.

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report COMBATDIV 2, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00149, November 7th, 1944.

*** Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

***** Action Report TENNESSEE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0108, October 31st, 1944.

At 0405 the CALIFORNIA checked fire again after having fired two additional 14-inch salvos (her seventh of nine guns and her eighth of eight guns).

The error of the CALIFORNIA had also become evident to Commander Battle Line, for that commander at 0406 warned his ships over TBS voice radio to watch out for the CALIFORNIA which apparently had not received the turn signal.* It was not until the receipt of this signal that the error was detected by the Commanding Officer CALIFORNIA, who immediately commenced his turn to starboard to course 270°(T).** However, he was now out of position south of the battle line and in the line of fire. Fortunately, no battleships were firing at this time for, at some point during the turn, the MARYLAND also had checked fire after firing forty 14-inch projectiles in five full gun (eight gun) salvos.

Just prior to 0408, observing that the line of sight was clear, the Commanding Officer TENNESSEE resumed fire and fired his thirteenth 14-inch salvo. This was a salvo of six guns and was his last salvo. He had fired a total of sixty-nine 14-inch shells in thirteen salvos as follows: Nine six gun, one five gun, one four gun, and two three gun salvos.

At 0408 Commander Battle Line intercepted a message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to CTG 77.2 that friendly units were firing on DESRON FIFTY-SIX in the middle of the channel. Since no battleships were firing, he knew that this message did not involve his ships. He also intercepted the message from COMBATDIV TWO ordering the CALIFORNIA, which had just resumed fire and had fired one salvo (her ninth) of two 14-inch guns, to fall in astern of the TENNESSEE.* He was interested in this signal because it was in effect an exchange of station by two ships of the battle line.

At 0409 he received the order from CTG 77.2 to all ships to cease firing, and he promptly repeated this order to the battle line. All ships immediately ceased firing. At this time the YAMASHIRO was bearing 210°(T), range 19,000 yards from the MISSISSIPPI.***

Between 0410 and 0411 the WEST VIRGINIA fired two one gun salvos (her fifteenth and sixteenth), and then ceased firing having fired a total of ninety-three 16-inch shells. These had been fired in sixteen 16-inch salvos as follows: Five full (eight gun) salvos, five seven gun salvos, one six gun, one five gun, one three gun, one two gun and two one gun salvos.

At 0411 the CALIFORNIA and MARYLAND reported that they had loaded hot guns and requested authority to unload them in the direction of the enemy. At 0412 Commander Battle Line ordered all ships with loaded hot guns to fire them at the enemy. The CALIFORNIA then fired one one gun salvo (her tenth) and the MARYLAND fired one eight gun salvo (her sixth).

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944.

*** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

At this time, 0412,* his flagship, the MISSISSIPPI, which at long last had finally obtained a solution to the fire control problem fired a single twelve gun salvo on the large leading target (YAMASHIRO), range 19,790 yards, bearing 205°(T),** course 155°(T).*** Target speed at this time was not stated although the track chart indicates an increase in speed over the ten knots recorded at 0400. Diagram "J" shows that the range was 19,800 yards, bearing 205½°(T), target speed fourteen knots, on course 165°(T).

The CALIFORNIA had fired a total of sixty-three 14-inch shells in ten salvos as follows: three nine gun, two eight gun, two six gun, one five gun, one two gun and one one gun salvo.

The MARYLAND had fired a total of forty-eight 16-inch shells in six full (eight gun) salvos.

A recapitulation of the above firing follows:

Time	Order in Formation	Opening Fire Range	Opening Fire Range**** Diagram "J"	Opening Fire Bearing	Opening Fire Bearing Diagram "J"
0353	WEST VIRGINIA	22,800	22,700	197	196
0359	MARYLAND	20,800	19,800	210	202
0412	MISSISSIPPI	18,700	19,800	205	205½
0356	TENNESSEE	20,500	20,500	193	192
0355	CALIFORNIA	20,400	20,900	188	188½
----	PENNSYLVANIA	did not fire			

The opening fire ranges and bearings of the WEST VIRGINIA, TENNESSEE and CALIFORNIA advance range with their Mark VIII fire control radars were approximately correct; those of the MARYLAND were incorrect, possibly due to the fact that (a) she may have opened fire on a phantom and (b) she was having difficulty with her Mark III fire control radar and, since she finally

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944; also Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

** Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

*** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

**** The difference in range between the opening fire ranges and the Diagram "J" ranges can be attributed generally to the fact that the battleships are plotted as in column whereas it is likely that they often were not in true column.

picked up her target from the WEST VIRGINIA's fall of shot,* she may have ranged on a WEST VIRGINIA splash; the bearing of the MISSISSIPPI's target was correct but her time of opening fire was long delayed because she had difficulty in identifying her target and obtaining an acceptable solution; and finally the PENNSYLVANIA's failure to open fire at all was likewise due to her failure to identify her target or to obtain an acceptable solution. The MISSISSIPPI and PENNSYLVANIA difficulties were attributed by Commander Battle Line to material (Mark III fire control radar) and to personnel.*

At 0413 he intercepted a message from the RICHARD P. LEARY that she was passing through torpedo waters.* He, of course, knew that the RICHARD P. LEARY was in DESRON FIFTY-SIX but, considering the confusion which existed in his flagship CIC relative to the targets, it seems doubtful, if he knew her present location at this time.

At 0415 he intercepted a second order from COMBATDIV TWO directing the TENNESSEE to move ahead and take station on the PENNSYLVANIA and once again directing the CALIFORNIA to take station astern of the TENNESSEE.** At this time (a) the TENNESSEE, which had increased speed to seventeen knots at 0408*** in order to regain distance lost during her maneuvering to avoid collision, was about 1,600 yards astern and slightly on the starboard quarter of the PENNSYLVANIA while (b) the CALIFORNIA, which had lost distance by failing to turn to the west, was about 3,700 yards astern of the PENNSYLVANIA and 1,200 yards south of the battleship track**** (Diagram "J").

At 0416 he received an order from CTG 77.2 to detach COMDESDIV XRAY and have that commander report to him. He directed COMDESDIV XRAY to comply.*****

Commander Battle Line was concerned about the RICHARD P. LEARY report for the Japanese were well known to have long range and highly effective torpedoes. He felt, from the RICHARD P. LEARY transmission, that the Japanese had fired their torpedoes to the northward and that it was necessary to take immediate action to safeguard the battle line. However, this he was unable to do because the CALIFORNIA, which was trying to move back into column between the TENNESSEE and the MISSISSIPPI, was interfering with his action. He, therefore, ordered COMBATDIV TWO to maneuver his division separately and to bring it into the battle line without delay.* Then, at 0418, by simultaneous individual ship turns to the right of ninety degrees, he changed the course of the battle line, less BATDIV TWO, to 000°(T), which change of course was followed by DESDIV XRAY.

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* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Track Chart, Action Report TENNESSEE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0108, October 31st, 1944.

**** Track Chart, Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

His action in so doing was in accordance with the doctrine at the time which provided in part:*

"However, when our battle line is threatened with dangerous salvos of approaching torpedoes or with heavy air attack, the commander of the battle line, unless specifically directed by the officer in tactical command, decides whether to accept the menace of the torpedoes or air attack in order to keep the enemy battle line under gunfire or to initiate evasive maneuvers by the battle line as a whole. The situation existing at the time governs his decision."

He stated later that he turned away rather than toward the enemy because he knew that (a) the stronger enemy force in the Sibuyan Sea had not been completely eliminated from the picture and (b) the OTC in the LOUISVILLE did not want to bring the battle line into the close waters in which the OTC was going to pursue the enemy remnants.**

BUT WAS HIS DECISION CORRECT? IT WOULD APPEAR NOT, FOR EVEN HAD HE RECEIVED ALL DISPATCH INFORMATION ON THE MAIN BODY, FIRST STRIKING FORCE HE WOULD NOT, AT THIS TIME, HAVE KNOWN MORE THAN THAT AT 2030 A PART OF THE ABOVE MAIN BODY HAD BEEN SIGHTED BETWEEN BURIAS AND MASBATE, COURSE NOT REPORTED.*** FROM THIS HE COULD ESTIMATE THAT SHOULD THE MAIN BODY PENETRATE SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT AND HEAD FOR LEYTE GULF AT TWENTY-FIVE KNOTS (MAXIMUM SPEED OF THE NAGATO) (THE SPEED ACTUALLY EMPLOYED WAS TWENTY KNOTS)**** THE MAIN BODY COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE OFF SULUAN ISLAND BEFORE 0730, AND PROBABLY MUCH LATER, AND THEREFORE A MOVEMENT TOWARD THE ENEMY, WHICH WAS NOW RETIRING, COULD HAVE BEEN MADE WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE STRATEGICAL SITUATION. HOWEVER, IT MUST BE STRESSED HERE THAT SINCE COMMANDER BATTLE LINE WAS A TACTICAL COMMANDER HIS DECISIONS SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE ON THE BASIS OF TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN THIS INSTANCE HIS COMMENT CONCERNING THE ENEMY FORCE IN THE SIBUYAN SEA RELATED TO A BROADER OBJECTIVE THAN THAT PRESENTLY ASSIGNED--THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY FORCE IN SURIGAO STRAIT--AND THEREFORE SUCH A DECISION WAS PROPERLY A FUNCTION OF THE OTC.

IN ADDITION (A) THE WATERS WELL SOUTH OF HIM, EXCEPT FOR THE DISABLED ALBERT W. GRANT, WERE CLEAR OF FRIENDLY FORCES, (B) BECAUSE OF BETTER SHIP CONTROL IT WAS EASIER TO AVOID ENEMY TORPEDOES BY HEADING TOWARD THEM THAN AWAY FROM THEM, AND (C) IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN SUITABLE GUN RANGE SHOULD THE OTC REOPEN GUNFIRE WHICH WAS LIKELY. THEREFORE, DOES IT NOT SEEM

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* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 12, Section X, Paragraph 12100.

** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

*** COM3RDFLT Dispatch 241215 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's and TGC's 3RD Fleet.

**** Average speed from YAMATO track chart for period 250037 (time of passage of San Bernardino Island) October 1944 to 250644 (time of contact on TU 77.4.3).

CORRECT TO SAY THAT HE SHOULD HAVE TURNED TOWARD THE ENEMY, SINCE BY TURNING AWAY AT THIS CRITICAL TIME HE MIGHT HAVE PLACED AN UNNECESSARY LIMITATION ON HIS COMMANDERS' FREEDOM OF ACTION.

In making this analysis it is realized that by heading south some confusion might have resulted because of (1) the movement to the westward of the Left Flank Force, (2) the position of the CALIFORNIA and (3) the position of the DENVER (Diagram "J"). However, it was incumbent on these units to remain clear.

During the above firing period the battleships fired main battery ammunition, and had ammunition remaining as follows:

		Total Salvos Fired*	Fired AP	Fired HC	Remaining AP	Remaining HC
16"	WEST VIRGINIA	16	89	4	111	172
16"	MARYLAND	6	48	0	192	445
14"	MISSISSIPPI	1	12	0	189	543
14"	TENNESSEE	13	69	0	327	262
14"	CALIFORNIA	10	63	0	213	78
14"	PENNSYLVANIA	0	0	0	360	93
	TOTAL	45	281	4	1392	1593

Average rounds per gun remaining:

(a) AP = 1392 divided by 64 = 21.75

(b) HC = 1593 divided by 64 = 24.89

At 0420 the MISSISSIPPI was bearing 323°(T), distant 14,100 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

* These salvos varied from one gun to full salvos which were twelve guns with the 14-inch ships and eight guns with the 16-inch ships.

(2) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

At 0348 Commander Left Flank Force, on course 090°(T), speed five knots, was awaiting the opportunity to open fire with his cruisers. The range to the nearest enemy ship was now 17,200 yards and closing. His cruisers were in an ideal position to cross the "T" of the leading Japanese group which he believed consisted of two battleships followed perhaps by one or more smaller units and which was almost due south of his flagship at this time. In addition to this group, he observed that there were other groups of enemy ships present to the south (MOGAMI and damaged ships).* A new group of fast moving ships had been detected to the west of the Japanese and were reported as possibly friendly.** This was Attack Group 1.2, led by the HUTCHINS.

At 0350 he (as CTG 77.2) decided to open fire and sent a warning over TBS voice radio to all TG 77.2 cruisers and destroyers that he was about to open fire.*** A minute later he ordered all TG 77.2 cruisers to open fire.***

The LOUISVILLE immediately opened fire on the leading Japanese ship (YAMASHIRO). She was followed by the other four cruisers of the left flank force, which also fired on the YAMASHIRO, about as follows:

Time	Order in Formation	Opening Fire Range	Opening Fire Range Diagram "J"	Opening Fire Bearing	Opening Fire Bearing Diagram "J"
0351	LOUISVILLE**	15,500	15,800	187°(T) (track chart)	186°(T)
0352	PORTLAND****	15,500	15,500	186°(T)	184°(T)
0351:30	MINNEAPOLIS*****	15,800	15,600	192°(T) (track chart)	181°(T)
0351:30	DENVER******	15,500	15,600	182°(T)	179°(T)
0351:30	COLUMBIA*******	15,450	15,600	189°(T)	176°(T)

* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** Action Report PORTLAND, Surface Engagement in Leyte Gulf, October 25th, 1944, Serial 065, October 28th, 1944.

***** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Battle of South Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

****** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

******* Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

The opening fire ranges of all ships and the opening fire bearings of the LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND and DENVER were approximately correct. The reported open fire bearing of the COLUMBIA, and the open fire bearing of the MINNEAPOLIS, were clearly incorrect.

What happened in these latter two cases was as follows:

(a) Although the COLUMBIA reported the open fire bearing to have been 189°(T), her track chart shows it to have been 179°(T). Since, based on Diagram "J", the bearing was more likely about 176°(T) and, since there were no enemy units on the bearing 189°(T), it seems probable that the track chart bearing (179°(T)) was the actual open fire bearing employed. This track chart bearing is therefore accepted as the actual firing bearing rather than the 189°(T), and on this basis it can be said that the COLUMBIA was firing at the YAMASHIRO rather than at a phantom.

(b) The MINNEAPOLIS did not report her opening bearing but, from her most incomplete and very smoothed out track chart, her opening fire bearing was about 192°(T). Since, as in the case of the COLUMBIA, there were no enemy units on this bearing it seems likely that the MINNEAPOLIS either fired on a "phantom" or submitted an incorrect track chart.

All left flank cruisers were now firing salvo fire and all were firing at the leading Japanese large ship (YAMASHIRO). Explosions and fires were noted by the MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER and COLUMBIA, indicating that hits were being scored immediately.

IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT COMMANDER LEFT FLANK FORCE, AS THE OTC OF THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS, DID NOT ISSUE ANY FIRE DISTRIBUTION ORDERS. WHY THIS WAS SO IS NOT EXPLAINED ALTHOUGH IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE SAME FACTORS WHICH MOTIVATED HIM AS OTC OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION MOTIVATED HIM IN THIS SITUATION AS WELL. BUT WERE THESE FACTORS EQUALLY APPLICABLE IN THIS CASE? IT WOULD APPEAR NOT FOR, SINCE HE BELIEVED THAT THE ENEMY FORCE CONSISTED OF TWO BATTLESHIPS FOLLOWED BY SOME SMALLER UNITS, HE MIGHT WELL HAVE DESIGNATED HIS CRUISERS TO FIRE AT THE SMALLER UNITS AND HAVE LEFT THE LEADING LARGE SHIPS (BATTLESHIPS) TO THE BATTLE LINE.

He noted that the gunnery target (YAMASHIRO) continued to close despite the hits that were being made on her. At 0353 he observed the battle line commence firing.* Actually, this was not entirely so for only the WEST VIRGINIA had opened fire at this time.

Whether or not the left flank cruisers had a good picture of the locations of the three attack sections of DESRON FIFTY-SIX is unknown, for no destroyer tracks appear, except sporadically, on the cruisers' track charts. The absence thereof does not mean that the locations were not charted on the Summary Plots in their CIC's but it is possible that the cruisers, in concentrating on the enemy ship that was under fire and watching for other targets nearby, did not concern themselves too much about friendly forces.

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0353 the DENVER, which appears to have had trouble maintaining station in column at five knots, changed course to 070°(T).*

At 0355, the COLUMBIA opened fire with her secondary (5-inch) battery on a target which she had tracked for some time bearing 190°(T), range 14,000 yards.** This target cannot be identified for, as plotted, it was about 3,000 yards to the westward of the YAMASHIRO and in an area where there were no targets, either friendly or enemy. (Although she called this target "B" it is clearly not the "B" on her track chart. The latter appears instead to have been the SHIGURE and is shown to the eastward of the YAMASHIRO track.) Since, when she ceased firing about nine minutes later, her cease firing range and bearing were essentially the same as her opening fire range and bearing, it seems clear that the targets' course and speed were the same as the COLUMBIA's. Therefore, the target was most likely a "phantom".

Also at 0355 Commander Left Flank Force, from the gun flashes and the tracers, observed that more battleships had commenced firing and, at 0356, that the second large target (MOGAMI) had commenced retirement.***

At this latter time the Commanding Officer PORTLAND, having observed that the present target was under fire from many ships and burning brightly, checked fire to seek another target. At 0358, having noted a target farther south and retiring at high speed, he commenced firing on bearing 194°(T), range 19,300 yards.**** This was the MOGAMI, which was retiring and under fire by the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2. From the data submitted by other ships, it appears that this range was obtained one minute earlier, or at 0357 (about the time that the MOGAMI completed her turn to the south), at which time Diagram "J" shows a range of 19,300 yards and a bearing of 197°(T).

THIS ACTION BY THE PORTLAND WAS CORRECT, AND WAS DISTINCTLY UNUSUAL DURING THIS BATTLE IN THAT THE PORTLAND AND THE DENVER WERE THE ONLY SHIPS WHICH SHIFTED MAIN BATTERY FIRE FROM THE YAMASHIRO TO ANOTHER TARGET. WHY THE OTHER SHIPS FAILED TO DO SO REMAINS A MYSTERY AS SPOTTING FOR MANY OF THE SHIPS WHICH WERE FIRING AT THE YAMASHIRO, WAS VERY DIFFICULT.

At 0400 the leading heavy target was observed to be turning westward. Some firing had been noted on it.

The DENVER in her action report states that just before this--at 0358--she picked up a "pip" which appeared to come from astern of the main battery target (YAMASHIRO) and to head directly for the DENVER at twenty

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* Track Chart, Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

** Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Action Report PORTLAND, Surface Engagement in Leyte Gulf, October 25th, 1944, Serial 065, October 28th, 1944.

knots.* However, it appears from her track chart that she had (a) picked it up about three minutes earlier, at about 0355,** and (b) probably tracked it for not more than two or three minutes. This pip was very likely the SHIGURE, which (Diagram "J") was in the above position. However, the SHIGURE had already commenced swinging to starboard and by this time (0358) was on a southerly course. It seems highly probable, therefore, that the DENVER lost the SHIGURE as the latter ship turned to starboard. At 0402 the DENVER picked up another "pip", this one bearing 163°(T), range 9,300 yards and, for some unexplained reason, appears to have assumed that the 0358 "pip" and the 0402 "pip" were one and the same "pip". However, if the plotter had divided the distances between these two plots by four minutes, he would have discovered that they could not be the same because the speed, instead of being twenty knots, was more likely about fifty knots (6,600 yards divided by four minutes). He might then have given more thought to the possibility that this new (0402) "pip" might be friendly because he well knew that DESRON FIFTY-SIX was attacking in that very area.

The DENVER now commenced firing her secondary battery at the 0402 target. It is not clear at what she was firing unless it was the destroyer ALBERT W. GRANT, of Attack Section ONE of DESRON FIFTY-SIX, which was fast approaching her torpedo firing point. However, since at this time the ALBERT W. GRANT was bearing 149°(T), range 6,000 yards and since the DENVER soon (0403) lost this target, it seems likely that she was either firing at with an incorrect solution or was firing at a "phantom". At this time her track chart shows that she changed course to 030°(T).**

At 0404:30 the DENVER shifted her main (6-inch) battery from the YAMASHIRO to the secondary battery target now bearing 165°(T), range 8,000 yards, which bearing she appears to have obtained from the secondary battery director. However, within thirty seconds she corrected the bearing to 172°(T) and at 0406 commenced firing. Although she did not report her 0406 opening fire range or bearing, from Diagram "J" the bearing was about 177°(T), the range 7,700 yards. That her target was the unfortunate ALBERT W. GRANT seems clear for that ship later reported having been hit by 6-inch projectiles commencing at 0407. No other 6-inch cruisers were firing at the ALBERT W. GRANT.

Meanwhile, the LOUISVILLE noted that a "pip" which she stated she had first tracked at 0354 on course 330°(T), range 14,000 yards, was now much nearer and was approaching the formation at high speed. Actually, from the LOUISVILLE track chart, she did not track this target. She merely appears to have (a) plotted something at 0354 and something else again at about 0404, (b) concluded that both plots were on the same target, and (c) then drawn a line between these two plots and have called that an indication of the enemy course and speed. What the first target was is not known. Perhaps it was a phantom; perhaps it was one of the low flying Japanese planes in the vicinity which had given, at times, weak target indications to certain units. For example, Attack Section TWO had noticed this at 0351. The second target, as will be discussed presently, was an Allied destroyer.

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* Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (B).

The LOUISVILLE now trained her secondary (5-inch) battery on her new target and, at 0404:30, commenced firing on bearing 183°(T), range 7,000 yards. This was the bearing and range of the destroyer ALBERT W. GRANT which, at this very moment, was launching her first salvo of torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO.

Thus, commencing at 0404, two Allied cruisers were firing at the ALBERT W. GRANT.

Although the LOUISVILLE reported hits on this target (ALBERT W. GRANT), it is very doubtful that she made any, for (a) she had tracked the target on course 250°(T), speed twenty-two and one-half knots* (the target was actually on course 270°(T), speed twenty-five knots),** (b) the ALBERT W. GRANT reported that, except for the 6-inch hits which had entered her starboard side, all other hits had entered her port side,** (c) any hits made by the LOUISVILLE would necessarily have entered from the starboard side and (d) the LOUISVILLE was firing 5-inch projectiles.

The foregoing was unknown to Commander Left Flank Force, who, as has been mentioned previously, had made no target designation.

At 0406 Commander Left Flank Force began to receive reports from the Commanding Officer DENVER, first, to the effect that enemy shell splashes were landing nearby, and secondly, at 0407, that the DENVER had been straddled.*** In order to throw off the enemy fire he immediately increased speed to fifteen knots.****

At 0408 he received two urgent messages in succession from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to the effect that friendly units were firing on DESRON FIFTY-SIX in the middle of the channel.*****

Whether or not he had located DESRON FIFTY-SIX in the middle of the channel—the LOUISVILLE track chart shows a brief plot of the NEWCOMB commencing at 0407*--is not known, but as CTG 77.2, at 0409, he ordered all ships to cease firing.****** He then ordered COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to get his ships out of the channel.***** He received the reply that DESRON FIFTY-SIX was clearing the channel at full speed.***** It is clear from this that neither COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX nor Commander Left Flank Force were aware that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been heavily hit.

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* Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

**** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf. Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

***** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

****** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

During the above period the cruisers fired main battery ammunition and had ammunition remaining as follows:

	FIRED		REMAINING	
	AP	HC	AP	HC
LOUISVILLE	243	0	406	564
PORTLAND	162	0	165	95
MINNEAPOLIS	237	0	78	165
DENVER	931*	37	269*	1083
COLUMBIA	844	0	356	120
TOTAL	2417	37	1274	2027

At 0412 it became apparent to him that the leading enemy ship was retiring, which meant that all enemy ships were now retiring. He was anxious to resume fire to prevent the escape of these ships. However, he believed that the left flank cruisers were too far to the east and he decided to reverse course to be in a better position to take the enemy under fire. He, therefore, at 0414, commenced a turn by simultaneous individual ship turns to port to 270°(T).**

While his reasons for changing course to the westward are clear in that he was already far to the east and wished to regain station on the battle line which had been on a westerly course for some twelve minutes, his reasons for changing course to port rather than to starboard are not clear. There were no apparent reasons for changing course to port; there were several for changing course to starboard. Among these latter were (a) the enemy was retiring and it was necessary to keep them within gun range and (b) the left flank force, which properly belonged 14,000 yards, bearing 120°(T) from the guide of the battle line (MISSISSIPPI), was now only 5,000 yards from that guide.

At 0419, as he (CTG 77.2) issued the order to CTG 77.3 to resume firing, the leading enemy ship suddenly disappeared from the radar screens and was assumed sunk.*** There were now no enemy targets within gun range.

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* Estimated. The DENVER reported having on hand after Battle of Surigao Strait 113 rounds of 6-inch AP. However, as will be shown later, the ammunition expended by the DENVER embraced the 6-inch AP fired during the period (a) 0351:30 - 0404 and 0406 - 0409 and (b) fired during the period 0531 - 0538. The amount of ammunition fired during the latter period is not known but since the COLUMBIA at this time fired 200 rounds in nine minutes, it is assumed that the DENVER, which fired for seven minutes, fired at the same rate and therefore fired seven-ninths of 200 rounds or 156 rounds. This added to the 113 rounds which the DENVER had remaining at the end of the battle would give 269 rounds remaining at 0409.

** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0420 the LOUISVILLE was bearing 339°(T), distant 8,800 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island.

(a) Operations of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(1) Operations of Commander Attack Section ONE, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

Commander Attack Section ONE, with Attack Section ONE, continued to approach the enemy on course 170°(T), speed fifteen knots. At 0348 he observed that the leading Japanese ship was about 20,000 yards from the NEWCOMB.

At 0350 he intercepted a message from CTG 77.2 advising the cruisers of TG 77.2 that he was about to open fire.* At this moment his attack section was about to cross the line of advance of the left flank cruisers about 5,000 yards eastward of the LOUISVILLE. A minute later, at 0351 he intercepted CTG 77.2's order for the cruisers to open fire.** He then noted that these cruisers had opened fire shortly thereafter.***

At the moment of opening fire it is highly probable that he checked the locations of his other two attack units. If he did so he noted that Attack Section TWO was about 3,000 yards directly ahead of the NEWCOMB and Attack Section THREE had crossed astern of the COLUMBIA. It was important to know the above locations and to follow the movements of the attack groups thereafter in order that proper coordination might be maintained between all three sections.

THE SITUATION WAS DEVELOPING AS ANTICIPATED. HIS DESTROYERS WOULD NOW LAUNCH THEIR TORPEDOES AT A TARGET WHICH WAS UNDER HEAVY GUNFIRE. HE COULD SEE THAT HIS ATTACK SECTION TWO WOULD BE CLEAR OF THIS GUNFIRE BUT THAT ATTACK SECTIONS ONE AND THREE WOULD ULTIMATELY BE IN THE LINE OF FIRE. HOWEVER, HE SAW NO REASON FOR CHANGING HIS PLAN, EVEN THOUGH THE GUNFIRE CAUSED THE ENEMY TARGETS TO MANEUVER, FOR HIS MULTIPLE SECTOR ATTACK WAS DESIGNED TO COVER ANY ENEMY MANEUVERS RESULTING FROM THE GUNFIRE OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION. THIS DECISION TO CONTINUE HIS ATTACK PLAN IS CONSIDERED CORRECT.

At this same time (0351) he increased speed to twenty-five knots.****

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0353 he intercepted a message from Commanding Officer WEST VIRGINIA to Commander Battle Line that the WEST VIRGINIA was about to open fire. At this time he noted from a position considerably removed from the line of fire that Allied cruiser shells were already hitting the enemy with devastating accuracy and that their "arched line of tracers in the darkness looked like a continual stream of lighted railroad cars going over a hill".*

Also at 0353, since (a) he had tracked the enemy on course 000°(T) at a speed of twelve knots and (b) both of his other attack sections appeared to be well on their way, he decided that it was now necessary to commence his approach and, therefore, changed course without signal to 210°(T).* At this time the leading enemy ship was bearing 205°(T), range 15,500 yards.

The Commanding Officer of the ALBERT W. GRANT, which was the trailing destroyer of the section, now, for unexplained reasons, decided to steer course 200°(T)** instead of the 210°(T) being steered by the other two ships of the section. Perhaps this was because the RICHARD P. LEARY had not increased speed to twenty-five knots at 0351 but instead, for unexplained reasons, had remained at fifteen knots.

At 0354, over the TBS voice radio, he heard Commander Attack Section TWO order his section to standby to fire torpedoes. This likely alerted him to the fact that that section was about to fire torpedoes for, from the radar scope, he could see that it was rapidly approaching a suitable firing position and might fire some minutes before Section ONE. Why he, as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, did not slow down Section TWO somewhat is not known.

Except for the picture on the radar scope, he knew nothing at this time of the actions of his Commander Attack Section THREE because, as has been mentioned earlier, that commander was controlling his section by the use of MN voice radio. However, since that commander appeared to be in good position for a coordinated attack, he was probably not concerned over their relative positions.

HE DID NOTHING TO COORDINATE THE OPERATIONS OF HIS ATTACK SECTIONS WITH THOSE OF HIS OWN SECTION, AND APPARENTLY EITHER (A) LEFT IT TO THE DISCRETION OF THEIR COMMANDERS TO EFFECT COORDINATION, (B) CONSIDERED THAT, IN VIEW OF THEIR PRESENT RELATIVE POSITIONS, A COORDINATED ATTACK WOULD BE MADE, OR (C) IGNORED THE MATTER ENTIRELY.

At 0356, when he heard Commander Attack Section TWO order his section to fire torpedoes,* he knew that unless (a) he fired as soon as he came within the effective range of his intermediate speed torpedoes,

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* Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action, October 24th - 25th, 1944, against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

which should be in a matter of several minutes since the range to the target was now about 13,700 yards,* and (b) Commander Attack Section THREE did likewise, the chance of a three section multiple attack would quickly pass.

However, before he could take any action in this matter, he was faced with a problem even more serious that that of coordination. His radar now began showing indications that the target might be friendly.** This caused considerable confusion and required immediate checking because he feared that his target instead of being Japanese might well be one or more ships of DESRON FIFTY-FOUR (he likely meant DESRON TWENTY-FOUR), the position of which was unknown to him. This checking took a few minutes and may account for the fact that he did not increase the speed of his own section to endeavor to reduce the time which would elapse between the torpedo firing by Attack Section TWO and that of his own section, as well as of Attack Section THREE.

Actually, COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR's two attack groups were no longer in the combat area of Surigao Strait having already arrived in the vicinity of their post-attack rendezvous,*** and COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR's two attack groups were attacking by gunfire from a position about 10,000 yards to the westward of the enemy, and were not in a position to interfere with DESRON FIFTY-SIX (Diagram "J").

As he approached his target he observed that the shells fired by the battleships and cruisers of the battle line were passing overhead and were heavily hitting the enemy.**

He now, at 0357, intercepted Commander Attack Section TWO's orders to make smoke and, at 0358, to (a) change course by emergency turn to 000°(T) and (b) watch out for the beach.**** From these orders and from his radar scope, he could see that Commander Attack Section TWO was apparently turning to retire up the west side of Hibuson Island.

At this time he knew that the ships of Attack Section THREE had commenced firing torpedoes, for the LEUTZE had reported, at 0358, over TBS voice radio, that her torpedoes were away.***** This fact assured him that at least the two flank sections had delivered a coordinated attack. At this time he changed course to 200°(T), presumably preparatory to firing starboard torpedoes.******

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* Track Chart, Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Night Action in Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 055, November 12th, 1944.

**** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

***** Deck Log NEWCOMB, October 25th, 1944.

****** Action Report RICHARD P. LEARY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 103, November 7th, 1944.

Although the range had now fallen to about 9,200 yards* the question as to the friendly or enemy character of the target being tracked by him had not as yet been finally settled. Conditions were reassuring, however, since (a) he had tracked this target for a long time and had definitely recognized it as a large ship,** (b) he stated later that at this time he could see "the devastating accuracy of the cruiser fire",** and certainly could see that his target was the target being fired upon and was therefore enemy, and (c) he knew that if, somehow, an Allied destroyer had come into his line of fire it was a simple matter to set his torpedoes at twenty-two feet which would pass under such a destroyer without danger.

Meanwhile, he wisely decided to continue on his present course and speed to close the enemy until such time as he had cleared up the above confusion relating to the friendly or enemy character of the target. He was not too concerned about this since the delay would improve the range and possibly track angle.

At 0359, when he had finally decided that the target was enemy, he noted that the enemy was firing guns and that the leading enemy ship was slowing down and turning to the westward.** The range was closing rapidly, and by 0400, as the target continued to turn, the range had decreased to about 7,000 yards.***

While it would have been possible, shortly after this time, to have fired his intermediate speed torpedoes to starboard as originally planned, since Attack Section ONE would have arrived within the effective range of such intermediate speed torpedoes (roughly 6,000 yards), it would have been unwise to have done so because such an attack was likely to be highly ineffective. The reasons are (a) the target was turning radically and its new course could not be estimated with any degree of certainty, (b) the range to the target at this time, while within the effective range of the intermediate speed torpedoes, was the maximum permissible by doctrine, and (c) even if the target should steady on a westerly course, which would be a change of course of about ninety degrees, the probability of hits would be low since long range overtaking torpedoes have the lowest hit factor of any target angle.****

Up to this time, it had been his intention to (a) turn to the eastward and to fire torpedoes to starboard***** and (b) retire toward his post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island. However, he now decided to turn to the westward and, therefore, at 0400, by TBS voice radio ordered (a) a 90° course change to right and (b) "get ready to fire".*****

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* Track Chart, Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

**** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943.

***** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (?).

HIS DECISION WAS OF COURSE CORRECT FOR HE WAS THERE TO DELIVER AN EFFECTIVE TORPEDO ATTACK WHICH COULD ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY OBTAINING A SUITABLE FIRING POSITION WHERE THE TARGET ANGLE AND THE RANGE WOULD BE FAVORABLE. THIS CLEARLY REQUIRED A CHANGE OF COURSE TO THE WEST. IN MAKING THIS DECISION HE UNDOUBTEDLY REALIZED THAT HE WOULD BE IN THE CENTER OF THE STRAIT FOR A MUCH LONGER PERIOD THAN HE HAD ANTICIPATED AND WOULD, THEREFORE, BE MORE EXPOSED THAN EVER TO POSSIBLE ENEMY GUNFIRE.

By this time the Commanding Officer of the SHIGURE, who at 0356 had commenced reversing course to starboard, had completed his turn. It is not clear whether or not Commander Attack Section ONE had observed the movements of this destroyer on his radar scope for he makes no mention of her in his action report. However, since he refers to the enemy column it seems likely that he was aware of her presence but had decided that his correct physical objective was the large ship since he had been ordered to "get the big boys".

At 0401 he observed that the enemy was steadying on a westerly course and, therefore, he steadied the NEWCOMB on course 270°(T).* At this time he planned, upon completion of firing, to cross to the western shore and to retire up the western shoreline where he would be joined by Commander Attack Section THREE.

By about 0402 having determined that (a) the present course of the enemy ship was about 290°(T), speed nine knots,* (b) the range to the target was well within the effective range of his intermediate speed torpedoes, and (c) he had succeeded in reaching a good firing position although not the optimum--he issued a preparatory signal to standby torpedoes and at 0403 ordered "fire when ready, and retire with smoke".**

HIS DECISION TO FIRE BEFORE REACHING THE OPTIMUM FIRING POSITION, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN FORWARD OF THE BEAM OF THE ENEMY SHIP, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOUND DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE WAS NOT UNDER FIRE AND MIGHT HAVE DELAYED FIRING UNTIL AN EVEN BETTER FIRING POSITION HAD BEEN OBTAINED. THIS SEEMS SO BECAUSE THE MOVEMENTS OF THE TARGET, ALTHOUGH UNCERTAIN, SEEMED TO BE REASONABLY FIRM, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, AND THEREFORE, IT WAS BETTER TO FIRE WITH A GOOD SOLUTION THAN TO DELAY FOR A BETTER SOLUTION AND PERHAPS LOSE THE PRESENT GOOD FIRING OPPORTUNITY.

In the meantime, the Commanding Officer (a) RICHARD P. LEARY realizing that he was now about 2,500 yards astern of the NEWCOMB and continuing to fall farther behind had at 0358 increased speed to twenty-five knots and (b) ALBERT W. GRANT likewise had increased speed to twenty-five knots. Now at 0403 the Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY followed very shortly by the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT commenced changing course to starboard to course 270°(T) to follow in the track of the section leader (NEWCOMB).

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* Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

At this time the ALBERT W. GRANT was about 400 yards on the port quarter of the RICHARD P. LEARY and therefore about 300 yards south of the NEWCOMB's track.

At 0404 the NEWCOMB, using broadside fire to port commenced firing a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 213°(T) at the battleship (which she had recognized as a FUSO class battleship)* bearing 200°(T), target angle 90°, range 6,200 yards and tracked on course 290°(T), speed nine knots. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree, and in addition, because the base torpedo course was beyond the limit of torpedo tube train, about 40° right gyro angle was set on the torpedoes.** All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal. The NEWCOMB now continued on course 270°(T) at speed twenty-five knots.

As previously discussed, the Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY had lost distance on the NEWCOMB. Noticing this, he had increased speed to twenty-seven knots during the turn to 270°(T).*** After completing the turn he, at 0404:01, using broadside fire to port, commenced firing a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 223°(T) at the large target (which he believed to be a FUSO class battleship but which was probably the splashes from the shorts of the Allied heavy ships) bearing 223°(T), target angle 101°, range 7,200 yards and tracked on course 302°(T) at speed zero.**** Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds and torpedo spread one degree. A gyro angle of 33° right was set on the torpedoes. (See summary of Torpedo Attacks of Attack Section ONE at 0420.)

He quickly learned that (a) only three torpedoes had left the ship, as two of the five had misfired electrically and could not be immediately fired by percussion because the man assigned to "ride the breech" had fallen to the deck, (b) when ready to fire by percussion a short time later, fire had been withheld "because the ALBERT W. GRANT following was by this time in line of fire",**** and (c) the three torpedoes fired were observed to run hot, straight and normal.**** He now forgot to advise his section commander that he had completed firing.

At 0404 the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT observed that a large explosion had occurred in the Japanese Main Body***** (this explosion was in the YAMASHIRO). Since no torpedoes were crossing the YAMASHIRO track at that time, the explosion must have been caused by shellfire.

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* Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

*** Torpedo Track Chart, Action Report RICHARD P. LEARY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 103, November 7th, 1944.

**** Action Report RICHARD P. LEARY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 103, November 7th, 1944.

***** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

At 0404:18, just as he was completing his turn to 270°(T), using broadside fire to port, he commenced firing a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 209°(T) at the large target bearing 209°(T), target angle 129°, range 6,900 yards and tracked on course 260°(T) at speed zero.* Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds and torpedo spread one degree. A gyro angle of 24° right was set on the torpedoes. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.**

At 0404:30 the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT observed that he was being fired on by friendly ships in the Allied battle disposition as well as by the enemy and that he was being straddled by both. He expressed this in his action report as follows: "0404:30 Ship began to be straddled by gunfire", "from both sides."** He promptly increased speed. This firing from the Allied side was by the LOUISVILLE which at this very time had opened fire with her 5-inch battery.***

At this time a torpedo wake was observed about twenty feet astern of the ALBERT W. GRANT which led the commanding officer to believe that the torpedo had probably passed under his ship. What ship fired this torpedo remains unknown since there is no data which shows the direction from whence it came. It could have been a lone torpedo fired earlier by one of the damaged Japanese destroyers; it could also have been one of the KILLEN's torpedoes which had been fired at 0350 employing low speed and a twenty-two foot depth setting. Diagram "J" shows this possibility clearly although this torpedo would necessarily have had to run beyond its designed range (14,000 yards) and possibly beyond its designed speed.

At about 0405:30, when the torpedoes of the BENNION which were headed for another target should have crossed the track of the enemy battleship, a second large explosion followed by flames on the battleship were observed by the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT who noted at the same time that this same battleship was being heavily hit by Allied shells.** What caused the above explosion then cannot be completely evaluated for a BENNION torpedo may have hit the battleship, or the gunfire may have caused the explosion.

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* Since (a) the ALBERT W. GRANT track chart shows that from 0356 to 0404 the YAMASHIRO had run 700 yards on a course of about 260°(T) and (b) it takes about three minutes to establish speed zero, it was assumed in the above plotting that she fired at the YAMASHIRO in its 0400 position rather than its actual 0404 position. This is verified by the 0404:30 ranges and bearings from the DENVER and the LOUISVILLE which accurately locate the ALBERT W. GRANT.

** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

*** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

At 0406 (a) Commander Attack Section ONE received a message from the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT reporting that she had fired torpedoes,* and (b) the DENVER commenced firing with her main battery on the ALBERT W. GRANT.**

About this time Commander Attack Section ONE observed that the enemy had now located him for enemy shells began straddling his command. This concerned him for he could expect that one or more of his ships would likely be hit presently.

HE WAS NOW CONFRONTED WITH A DIFFICULT SITUATION. HE HAD FIRED HIS TORPEDOES AND IT WAS VITAL THAT HE RETIRE IN SUCH MANNER AS TO RECEIVE THE LEAST DAMAGE FROM ENEMY GUNFIRE. HE DECIDED THAT HIS BEST COURSE OF ACTION WAS TO CHANGE COURSE TO THE NORTH BECAUSE HE WISHED "TO PRESENT THE SMALLEST TARGET ANGLE AND PRODUCE THE GREATEST OPENING RANGE RATE",*** AND SO ADVISED THE COMMANDING OFFICER NEWCOMB, WHO IMMEDIATELY COMPLIED BY CHANGING COURSE TO THE NORTH AND AT THE SAME TIME INCREASING SPEED TO THIRTY-TWO KNOTS.****

THIS DECISION TO RETIRE TO THE NORTH BY COLUMN MOVEMENT IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN OF DOUBTFUL CORRECTNESS FOR IT (A) WOULD PERMIT THE ENEMY TO CROSS THE "T" OF HIS SECTION, AND (B) MIGHT CAUSE FRIENDLY UNITS TO MAKE THE LOGICAL ERROR OF MISTAKING THE SECTION FOR AN ENEMY TORPEDO ATTACK ON THE BATTLE DISPOSITION. HE STATED LATER THAT IN MAKING THIS DECISION HE HAD REJECTED THE WESTERLY COURSE ON THE GROUND THAT HIS SHIPS WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE VERY HEAVY AND UNACCEPTABLE GUNFIRE DAMAGE*** AND, THEREFORE, A RADICAL CHANGE OF COURSE AND SPEED WAS NECESSARY IF THE ENEMY GUNFIRE WAS TO BE REDUCED IN EFFECTIVENESS.

WHILE IT IS ACCEPTED THAT SUCH A RADICAL CHANGE OF COURSE WAS PROBABLY URGENT AT THIS TIME, IT IS NOT ACCEPTED THAT THE CHANGE OF COURSE TO THE NORTH BY COLUMN MOVEMENT WAS CORRECT. WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN WISER HAD HE ORDERED A CHANGE OF COURSE MORE TO THE NORTHEASTWARD BY EMERGENCY SHIP TURNS SINCE THIS WOULD HAVE PREVENTED FORMING A "KNUCKLE" OF MORE THAN ONE SHIP AT THE POINT OF TURNING? IN THIS CONNECTION IT SEEMS WISE AT THIS TIME TO POINT OUT THAT IT IS A RECOGNIZED TACTICAL ERROR TO CHANGE COURSE BY COLUMN MOVEMENT IN SUCH MANNER AS TO FORM A "KNUCKLE" WITHIN EASY GUN RANGE OF A POWERFUL ENEMY. SUCH A "KNUCKLE" HAS OCCURRED IN NUMEROUS NAVAL BATTLES, AND NOTABLY AT THE BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA IN 1904 WHERE THE JAPANESE BATTLE LINE REVERSED COURSE BY COLUMN MOVEMENT WITHIN EFFECTIVE GUN RANGE (UNDER 10,000 YARDS) OF THE RUSSIAN BATTLE LINE AND ESCAPED HEAVY DAMAGE, AND POSSIBLY THE LOSS OF THE BATTLE, BECAUSE THE RUSSIANS, WHO HAD IMMEDIATELY ENDEAVORED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS ERROR BY OPENING FIRE, (THE RANGE WAS 8,000 YARDS OR LESS) HAD SUFFERED THE TWIN MISFORTUNES OF POOR AMMUNITION AND EQUALLY POOR GUNNERY.

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

A CHANGE OF COURSE BY SHIP TURNS WOULD ALSO (A) HAVE INTERFERED GREATLY WITH THE ENEMY GUNFIRE, (B) HAVE PREVENTED ENFILADE ON RETIREMENT, (C) LIKELY HAVE IDENTIFIED THE UNIT MORE CLEARLY TO OWN FORCES, (D) HAVE HEADED THE SECTION TOWARD ITS DESIGNATED POST-ATTACK RENDEZVOUS (THREE MILES NORTH OF HIBUSON ISLAND) AND (E) REDUCED THE TIME INVOLVED IN CLEARING THE AREA.

In connection with item (E), the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT commented as follows: "In addition, it is an opinion held by this command that after launching torpedoes the 'turn away' from the enemy battle line should be by simultaneous ship movements instead of by column movement in order to further reduce the time involved in clearing the enemy."*

About 0406:30 the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT swung his ship to the right and back to the left,** probably for the purpose of interfering with the enemy's solution of the gunfire problem. During these maneuvers he commenced laying "funnel smoke".* Shortly after falling in astern of the RICHARD P. LEARY (about 0407:30) he started to swing to the right to 310°(T).** While he gives no reason for this it seems probable that he did it to (a) avoid the use of gyro angle and (b) close the distance to the NEWCOMB by "cutting the corner". As he commenced swinging he received his first shell hit which landed among the empty powder cases stacked across the fantail and disabled the after 5-inch gun. Fortunately it did not affect his speed or steering.

He immediately ordered the remaining five torpedoes which were in the forward mount fired.* He presumably did this because (a) he was in a good firing position, (b) enemy gunfire was accurate and he was planning therefore to clear the area immediately and (c) mindful of doctrine that "a sinking cruiser or destroyer fires her torpedoes at the best available enemy target...",*** he desired to insure that his torpedoes were launched before increased damage made it impossible.

In the meantime, the Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY did not follow the track of the NEWCOMB but continued on to the west at twenty-seven knots.**** He did not increase speed to thirty-two knots because neither the section commander nor the Commanding Officer NEWCOMB had advised him of this change in speed.

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* Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

*** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944, Chapter 12, Section XII, Paragraph 12173 (d).

**** Action Report RICHARD P. LEARY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 103, November 7th, 1944.

In the meantime, Commander Attack Section ONE appears to have realized that his change of course to the north was unwise in that his section would now be enfiladed by Japanese gunfire for, at 0407 his flagship (NEWCOMB) changed course to 030°(T), commenced zigzagging and began making smoke.*

At about 0408 Commander Attack Section ONE noted that salvos from the Allied battle disposition were falling in the vicinity of the NEWCOMB.* He immediately changed course to the right to 060°(T),* presumably to avoid the gunfire, and informed CTG 77.2 over the TBS voice radio that TG 77.2 was firing on DESRON FIFTY-SIX in the middle of the channel.** He quickly repeated the message and was pleased to hear CTG 77.2, at 0409, order all ships to "cease firing".** He then received an order from CTG 77.2 to get his ships out of the channel as soon as possible.** To this he replied that he was getting out of the channel at full speed.** At this time he did not realize that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been heavily hit and was not following in column. It seems clear that his failure to know this was due to the fact that he had not kept his destroyers closed up, but rather permitted them to straggle badly with the result that the ALBERT W. GRANT, at 0408 was about 1,700 yards astern of the NEWCOMB instead of the normal 1,000 yards.

At about this time (0408:12) the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT, using broadside fire to port, fired a second half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes, on base torpedo course 203°(T) at the battleship target. No information concerning the bearing, target angle, range or target course and speed is available. The depth setting was six feet, the firing interval three seconds, and torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.***

Upon completion of firing, the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT continued turning farther to the right to course 000°(T)***in order to follow the preceding two ships of his section in column.

At 0409 the Commanding Officer NEWCOMB, while making full speed, changed course to 075°(T)****in order to head for the post-attack rendezvous, which it will be recalled, was the west end of Screening Station THREE. At this time the (a) RICHARD P. LEARY was still making twenty-seven knots on a westerly course and (b) ALBERT W. GRANT, which had been badly damaged, was swinging slowly to a northerly course and slowing rapidly, due to loss of power.

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* Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

**** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944, Enclosure (A).

At 0410 the RICHARD P. LEARY also changed course to 000°(T).* About this same time the ALBERT W. GRANT's first half salvo of five torpedoes crossed the track of the YAMASHIRO but passed well astern of her and therefore missed.

Shortly after this (at 0411) the RICHARD P. LEARY steadied on course 000°(T). At this moment the commanding officer suddenly observed four torpedo wakes, two on the starboard side and two on the port side, which paralleled his course.* These were clearly the MOGAMI torpedoes which had been fired at about 0401:30.** He endeavored to report these torpedoes but, owing to the congestion on the TBS voice radio circuit, was unable to do so until about two minutes later.*** After the torpedoes had passed he changed course to 075°(T) in order to follow the NEWCOMB.

At 0411 Commander Attack Section ONE observed that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been hit and was slowing.**** His flagship immediately commenced tracking the damaged ship while he, with deep concern, awaited word from her as to the nature of her damage.

At this time, because he had heard fragmentary portions of her report about torpedo wakes, he was also concerned about the RICHARD P. LEARY which was 4,400 yards astern. He, therefore, at 0412 queried the commanding officer of that destroyer as follows: "Are you all right? Clear the channel as soon as you can."*** At 0413 he received a message that the RICHARD P. LEARY was passing through torpedo water.*** It seems likely that at this time the Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY increased speed to maximum.

Between 0411 and 0412 the NEWCOMB's torpedoes also crossed the track of the target. It seems likely from graphic analysis that at least one torpedo hit was scored on the YAMASHIRO. (A warrant officer survivor of the YAMASHIRO reported that she had received four torpedo hits.)***** This analysis confirms the report of the Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY who reported later having observed two large explosions in the target at 0411:30.

Between 0412 and 0413 the RICHARD P. LEARY's torpedoes crossed well astern of the target and therefore all missed.

Between 0413 and 0415:30 the ALBERT W. GRANT's second half salvo of five torpedoes crossed the track of the YAMASHIRO but passed well astern.

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* Action Report RICHARD P. LEARY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 103, November 7th, 1944.

** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

**** Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

***** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

Meanwhile, the NEWCOMB and RICHARD P. LEARY were rapidly clearing the channel and by 0415 the NEWCOMB was to the northwestward of Hibuson Island. The NEWCOMB, which had been tracking the ALBERT W. GRANT, noted her to be making slow speed in the center of the channel.*

TO SUMMARIZE THE TORPEDO ATTACK OF ATTACK SECTION ONE, DURING THIS PERIOD (0348 - 0420) THE DESTROYERS FIRED A TOTAL OF EIGHTEEN TORPEDOES--NEWCOMB (FIVE), RICHARD P. LEARY (THREE) AND ALBERT W. GRANT (TEN)--AND MADE ONE HIT FOR A HIT PERCENTAGE OF FIVE POINT FIVE PER CENT. THESE DESTROYERS HAD TORPEDOES REMAINING AS FOLLOWS: NEWCOMB (FIVE), RICHARD P. LEARY (SEVEN), ALBERT W. GRANT (ZERO).

THE RICHARD P. LEARY'S HALF SALVO AND THE ALBERT W. GRANT'S FIRST HALF SALVO OF TORPEDOES MISSED BECAUSE:

(A) THE RICHARD P. LEARY FIRED AT A PHANTOM TARGET (BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN FAIL OF SHOT). THIS SEEMS SO FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: (1) SHE REPORTED THE TARGET TO BE BEARING 223°(T); (2) THE NEWCOMB REPORTED THE SAME TARGET TO BE BEARING 200°(T) AND THE ALBERT W. GRANT 209°(T); THEREFORE, THE CORRECT BEARING FOR THE RICHARD P. LEARY SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETWEEN 200°(T) AND 209°(T); (3) NO ENEMY SHIPS WERE ON OR NEAR THE BEARING REPORTED; (4) SHE REPORTED THE TARGET SPEED AS ZERO WHEN, IN FACT, IT WAS ABOUT TWELVE KNOTS; AND (5) SHE REPORTED THE RANGE AS 7,200 YARDS WHEN, IN FACT, IT WAS ABOUT 6,200 YARDS.

(B) THE ALBERT W. GRANT TRACKED THE TARGET ON COURSE 260°(T) AT SPEED ZERO WHICH ALSO INDICATED THAT SHE HAD LOST THE TARGET IN THE EXTENSIVE FALL OF SHOT AROUND THE TARGET AND SINCE HER TORPEDO PROBLEM SOLUTION WAS OTHERWISE CORRECT, HER TORPEDOES NECESSARILY MISSED ASTERN.

At 0416 Commander Attack Section ONE informed CTG 77.2 over the TBS voice radio that the ALBERT W. GRANT was due west of Hibuson Island and was proceeding slowly on course north. At 0418 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 asking whether he was now clear, or was he still in the channel. He replied to the effect that the NEWCOMB and RICHARD P. LEARY were clear of the channel bu that the ALBERT W. GRANT was proceeding slowly northward (in the channel).**

At 0419 he intercepted CTG 77.2's TBS voice radio message to Commander Right Flank Force to "Resume Fire".**

At 0420 the ALBERT W. GRANT was dead in the water and in danger of sinking. She was bearing 287°(T), distant 11,000 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island. The NEWCOMB, with RICHARD P. LEARY about 6,000 yards astern, was bearing 004°(T), distant 5,200 yards from the same point.

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* Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

(2) Operations of Commander Attack Section TWO, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

Commander Attack Section TWO in ROBINSON with HALFORD and BRYANT continued his approach on course 170°(T) at thirty knots.

At 0349 he ordered the ROBINSON to change course to 158°(T).* The other ships were following the flagship in follow-the-leader tactics.

This change of course was to head Attack Section TWO toward the firing point which Commander Attack Section TWO had previously chosen and which was to be no nearer the enemy than 8,000 yards. The original course of 170°(T) would have taken the section inside this limiting range. At this same time he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from Commander Battle Line that he would open fire at 26,000.*

At 0350 he received a TBS voice radio message from the OTC that the cruisers were ready to open fire.** At 0351 he received a second message from the OTC to commence firing** and then noted that the left flank cruisers had opened fire shortly thereafter. He realized now that his torpedo attack would be delivered against a target already under fire from the guns of the battle disposition. This did not concern him particularly because (a) he was well to the eastward of the line of fire and (b) DESRON FIFTY-SIX's multiple attack would cover any enemy maneuvers resulting from the cruiser gunfire.

Also at 0351 he detected a weak pip with aircraft characteristics* bearing 209°(T), range 9,700 yards.*** This is believed to have been a low flying plane since there were no Japanese targets in this immediate area. He then broadcast the range and bearing of this target over the TBS voice radio to his section and cautioned them to watch it.** HIS ACTION IN BROADCASTING THIS INFORMATION WAS CORRECT, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL IN THIS BATTLE WHERE THE LARGER PART OF THE INFORMATION OBTAINED BY INDIVIDUAL SHIPS WAS RETAINED WITHIN THESE SHIPS AND NOT DISSEMINATED TO THE OTC OR TO THE OTHER UNITS.

During the above, the executive officer of the ROBINSON observed enemy gunfire being directed at Attack Section TWO.* Splashes were seen on the starboard bow about 500 yards short, but on in deflection. Subsequent salvos moved ahead of the ROBINSON. One starshell was also observed.*** Since the SHIGURE did not fire any guns at this time these shells were obviously from the 5-inch and 6-inch batteries of the YAMASHIRO. This gunfire was not observed by the BRYANT but the Commanding Officer HALFORD observed a few scattered shots off both bows, but nothing in quantity.****

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944.

Commander Attack Section TWO, believing that the enemy fire control solution was poor did not open fire with his guns because he felt his gun flashes would reveal his actual position.*

It is not believed that this is an adequate explanation, for it is improbable that the enemy would have been firing had they not had knowledge of the location of the attack section. Would not a more adequate explanation have been that the enemy battleship, which was firing at them, was under heavy fire from the battle disposition and was surrounded by splashes making spotting difficult indeed? Therefore, the addition of his 5-inch salvos not only would have contributed little or nothing to the destruction of the battleship but would have tended to increase the already complex spotting difficulties of the battle disposition.

At 0352 the ROBINSON reported that the target was bearing 205°(T), range 13,000 yards and tracked on course 025°(T), speed fifteen knots.**

At 0353 he changed course to 165°(T) probably to move along his relative movement line to the firing point.

He noted that the range to the target was decreasing rapidly. Therefore, at 0354, when the range to the enemy battleship had fallen to about 11,400 yards from the flagship he directed his command by TBS voice radio as follows: "Steady around...island, standby to fire when ready".*** It will be recalled that he had previously, at 0345, directed his section to standby their torpedoes.

The Commanding Officer BRYANT construed the preparatory signal just received to be a firing order and ordered his torpedoes fired. In the meantime he had experienced some difficulty in tracking the target, stating in his action report that at 0351 he had tracked the target on course 030°(T), and between 0352 and 0354 on course 058°(T), and that the target speed had increased to eighteen knots.**** From his track chart it appears that he was alternately tracking the YAMASHIRO and the SHIGURE. He now decided that he had the correct target course and speed and therefore, employing course 058°(T), speed eighteen knots he set up the torpedo problem on the director. However, at 0355, which was just before firing, he obtained another range and bearing which showed that the target had not changed course to the right to 058°(T) but was instead still on course 030°(T). Unfortunately there was insufficient time to get this on the torpedo director.****

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report ROBINSON. Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report BRYANT, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 048, November 1st, 1944.

He now, at 0355:15, using broadside fire to starboard, fired a half salvo of intermediate speed torpedoes on base course 212°(T) on a target tracked on course 058°(T), speed eighteen knots. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree, and gyro angle 312°. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.* At 0356:09, when the torpedoes were reported fired to the bridge, the target was bearing 222°(T), range 8,800 yards. Since the reported target angle was 342°,* the Commanding Officer BRYANT must have considered the bearing at the time of firing to have been 220°(T). From Diagram "J" the bearing of the SHIGURE at 0356:09 was 220°(T) and the range was 8,800 yards.

Although the actual bearing at the time of firing is not known, the range and bearing after firing are known and check closely with Diagram "J". From the BRYANT's track chart, as nearly as it can be scaled, the range at 0355 was 10,400 yards, the bearing 220°(T). This is clearly a just before firing range on the SHIGURE, for the YAMASHIRO, at this same time, was 11,400 yards away. The bearing at 0355 was either poor or was taken on the YAMASHIRO for from Diagram "J" the bearing of the SHIGURE was 213°(T) and the YAMASHIRO was 217°(T). Since the YAMASHIRO was under heavy fire from the Allied battleships and cruisers to the north it is likely that the bearing at 0355, and the firing bearing as well, were taken on splashes.

The BRYANT in firing her torpedoes on a base torpedo course of 212°(T) (target course 058°(T)) necessarily missed to the east of the YAMASHIRO track, and since the SHIGURE reversed course at 0356 missed her as well although the torpedoes reached the water in which she had turned.

COMMANDER ATTACK SECTION TWO HAD NOT INTENDED TO HAVE THE BRYANT FIRE AT THIS TIME BUT HAD MERELY ISSUED THE ABOVE PREPARATORY INSTRUCTIONS TO ADVISE HIS COMMAND THAT HE WOULD ORDER TORPEDOES FIRED PRESENTLY. WHY THEN DID THE BRYANT MISUNDERSTAND? THE COMMANDING OFFICER BRYANT HAS OFFERED NO EXPLANATION BUT IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE FAULT LAY LARGELY WITH COMMANDER ATTACK SECTION TWO, WHO IT WILL BE RECALLED HAD EARLIER, AT 0345, ORDERED HIS SECTION TO STANDBY TO FIRE TORPEDOES AND HAD EMPHASIZED THE FACT THAT THE FIRING WAS IMMINENT, AND WHO HAD NOW, FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN, ISSUED A SECOND PREPARATORY WARNING SIGNAL. IT SEEMS CLEAR THEN THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER BRYANT UNDER THE STRESS AND TENSION OF THE SITUATION, THOUGHT THAT THIS SECOND PREPARATORY ORDER WAS THE ANTICIPATED FIRING ORDER.

THE ABOVE COMMENTS ARE NOT DESIGNED IN ANY WAY TO EXCUSE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER BRYANT, WHO WAS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW THE DEVELOPING SITUATION SO CLOSELY THAT HE WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED IMMEDIATELY THAT THE FIRING RANGE WAS EXCESSIVE FOR INTERMEDIATE SPEED TORPEDOES AND THAT THE TARGET ANGLE OFFERED A LOW PROBABILITY OF HITS.

* Action Report BRYANT, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 048, November 1st, 1944.

At 0356 Commander Attack Section TWO directed his section to standby to fire. Shortly thereafter he directed the section to fire torpedoes.*

In accordance with these orders, at 0356:30, the HALFORD, using broadside fire to starboard, fired a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course of 224°(T) at her target bearing 224°(T), track (target) angle 22°, range 9,000 yards and tracked on course 025°(T), speed zero. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree and gyro angle 340°. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.**

Although the target angle should have been stated as 19° for a course of 025°(T) it is considered that the target angle was recorded in error since (a) if it was actually 22° the course would have been 022°(T) and (b) on her track chart the course is marked 025°(T) in spite of having been plotted as 045°(T). It seems clear that the target course used was 025°(T).

The HALFORD fired at the YAMASHIRO which at the time of firing was bearing 227°(T), range 9,000 yards. This seems so for although the bearing of the SHIGURE was 225°(T) the range was but 8,200 yards. Also the SHIGURE was making twenty-six knots which should have been readily noted by the plotters in the HALFORD's CIC.

In this firing the basic factors of target angle and range made the possibility of hits remote for (a) a target angle of 19° lies in the low probability of hits zone*** and (b) the range of 9,000 yards with a target speed of zero was at the maximum limit of the designed torpedo range (9,200 yards),*** and would not permit any error whatsoever.

Actually, the YAMASHIRO was continuing onward on course 020°(T) speed about twelve knots. The error in the base torpedo course appears to have been due to the estimated "zero" speed which had been determined incorrectly by the HALFORD. The HALFORD's CIC had become temporarily confused by the presence in the radar scopes of the pips of (a) the SHIGURE and (b) the splashes resulting from large caliber shells which were falling in the vicinity of the YAMASHIRO. These splashes, naturally, if tracked, gave "zero" speed.

The flagship track shows that confusion referred to above was not confined to the HALFORD alone for the flagship also, at 0355, had tracked the target as stopped. However, by 0356, this error had been

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944.

*** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 1943.

discovered for at this time the target was tracked on course 322°(T), speed fifteen knots, and at a range of 9,340 yards.*

At 0356:30 Commander Attack Section TWO ordered his section to make maximum speed and immediately thereafter the HALFORD reported that her torpedoes had been fired.** He may not have heard this report because he does not mention it and it does not occur in the ROBINSON voice radio log which is otherwise quite complete. At 0357 he ordered his section to make smoke.**

At 0357 the ROBINSON changed course to 150°(T)*** and commenced increasing speed to thirty-five knots.*

At 0358 the ROBINSON, using broadside fire to starboard, fired a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 250°(T) at the battleship (YAMASHIRO), bearing 222°(T), target angle 80° (computed), range 8,300 yards and tracked on course 322°(T), speed fifteen knots. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.*

It will be noted that the Commanding Officer ROBINSON had fired his torpedoes (a) beyond their effective range but within their maximum range and (b) with a depth setting of six feet although he had definitely decided that his target was a battleship* in which case a deep setting of twenty-two feet should have been used.

The bearing reported by the ROBINSON is in error for her track chart shows a bearing of 227°(T) at the time of firing and Diagram "J" shows that the bearing of the YAMASHIRO was 242°(T) at this time. The SHIGURE was bearing 229°(T), although the range was 7,300 yards, hence the bearing of 227°(T) shown on her track chart was probably taken on the SHIGURE. Graphical analysis of her torpedo firing problem, however, shows that she used the bearing of 222°(T) as the firing bearing.

The YAMASHIRO, at 0356, commenced swinging slowly to the left and steadied on course 260°(T) about 0401. While the ROBINSON's torpedoes reached the YAMASHIRO track at the end of her turn they arrived there about four minutes after the YAMASHIRO, and therefore all missed astern.

Commander Attack Section TWO conducted this torpedo attack from the bridge.**** He stated later that, since the commanding officer was stationed in the outer open bridge, he had for his exclusive use a

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* Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Track Chart, Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

radar scope which was "sufficient to give an adequate picture of the situation in general and of the relative movements of friendly and enemy forces".* From this it is assumed that he knew the relative positions of Attack Sections ONE and THREE and could see that he was well advanced toward the enemy in relation to them. He further stated that the "geographic setup allowed him to deliver a sneak attack almost undetected and under such circumstances that this section was relatively safe from enemy gunfire".* If these facts are correct it would be interesting to know why he (a) did not make a better attempt at coordinating his attack with that of the other two attack sections, (b) led his own attack section to a firing point which was outside of the effective range of intermediate speed torpedoes and was therefore unacceptable, and (c) did not press the attack to its optimum advantage by closing the range.

It will be recalled that Commander Attack Section TWO had planned to retire by passing south of Hibuson Island and then to the north along the eastern side.* At 0358 his flagship changed course to 118°(T)** in order to pass close to the southern side of Hibuson Island. Immediately after steadying on the new course he incorrectly received information from his CIC that there was dangerous water ahead* and promptly ordered an emergency turn to course 000°(T), warning the HALFORD and BRYANT to watch out for the beach.*** All three ships promptly commenced their turns and, in so doing, in order to utilize their radars for navigational safety, discontinued tracking the target.

This was unfortunate because the SHIGURE, which at this time had changed course to south through east, was at 0400 bearing almost due west distant 8,500 yards from the ROBINSON and was a very desirable target for the gunfire of this section. At this time the SHIGURE was under fire by one or more ships of the battle disposition but since no ships admit having fired at her she may have received some of the gunfire directed at the battleship.

During the turns to the north Commander Attack Section TWO asked the HALFORD if she had fired her torpedoes and obtained an affirmative reply.****

All ships completed their turns safely although the ROBINSON came within 600 yards of Little Hibuson Island despite the use of the engines to shorten the turn.* However, on completion of the turns, the units of the section became somewhat separated and for the next few minutes (Diagram "J") operated independently.

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Track Chart, Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

*** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

**** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944.

They all assumed northerly courses while still making smoke. At this time, as they were closing their own forces, Commander Attack Section TWO directed them to turn on their IFF. Since the wind continued to be from the northeast this smoke did not interfere with the piloting.

Between 0402 and 0405 the HALFORD observed what she considered to be six torpedo hits stating that she believed that two of them were from her own torpedoes.* The ROBINSON also observed two explosions about the latter time which she also claimed as hits.** This, of course, was not quite true for the BRYANT and HALFORD torpedoes, while reaching the water in which the SHIGURE had turned to the south some seven minutes earlier, did not cross the YAMASHIRO's track and the ROBINSON's torpedoes, which started to cross the YAMASHIRO's track about one-half minute later, were (at 0406) about 1,500 yards astern of that ship and did not run far enough to overtake her.

The explosions observed likely were occasioned by the torpedoes of the BENNION.

TO SUMMARIZE THE TORPEDO ATTACKS DURING THIS PERIOD THE DESTROYERS OF ATTACK SECTION TWO FIRED A TOTAL OF FIFTEEN TORPEDOES AND MADE NO HITS. THIS WAS LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE YAMASHIRO'S TURN TO 260°(T), AND BECAUSE OF THE POOR AIMING CAUSED BY THE CONFUSING RADAR PICTURE OBSERVED FROM THE MANY SPLASHES AND THE DUAL TARGETS.

The destroyers of this section had torpedoes remaining as follows: ROBINSON (five), BRYANT (five), HALFORD (five).

Commander Attack Section TWO intercepted (a) at 0408 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's report that he was being fired on by friendly units, (b) at 0409 the OTC's (CTG 77.2) order to all ships to cease firing, (c) the OTC's order to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to get his ships out of the channel*** and (d) COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's reply that he was clearing at full speed. At 0410 Commander Attack Section TWO changed course to 090°(T), reduced speed to twenty-five knots, and stopped making smoke.**

At 0415 he again reduced speed to fifteen knots and headed for the post-attack rendezvous two miles north of Hibuson Island.**

At 0420 ROBINSON was bearing 058°(T), distant 6,700 yards from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island. The HALFORD and BRYANT were in the same vicinity (Diagram "J").

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* Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

*** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944, Enclosure (B).

(3) Operations of Commander Attack Section THREE, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

At 0348 Commander Attack Section THREE (Commanding Officer HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS) with LEUTZE and BENNION, on course 230°(T), at twenty knots, was rounding the COLUMBIA to begin his approach.

At 0350 he intercepted a message from CTG 77.2 advising the cruisers of TG 77.2 that he was about to open fire. From this message he now knew that his torpedo attack would be supported by cruiser gunfire. At 0351, as he received the OTC's order to commence firing, he changed course to 180°(T) and increased speed to thirty knots. He observed the right flank cruisers firing over his section and noted that hits on the target were made almost immediately.

At this time (0351) the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS was tracking the leading large target, bearing 162°(T), range 15,000 yards, on course 017°(T), speed thirteen knots.* The LEUTZE was tracking the same target but on course 035°(T) at speed twenty-five knots.** The BENNION, however, was tracking as many as four targets, all proceeding northward. She, like the other two ships of her section, had designated the leading large target, which she was tracking on course 020°(T) at speed fourteen knots,*** as her torpedo target.

Judging from the above differences in tracking, and notably in the case of the LEUTZE, it seems clear that the information being compiled in each of the three destroyers was not being exchanged with the other destroyers of the same section. The HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and the BENNION tracking results were reasonably accurate for best evaluation indicates that the battleship was on 020°(T), speed about fifteen knots.

For some reason the Commanding Officer LEUTZE steadied on course 190°(T) instead of 180°(T), which caused him to diverge westward from the track of the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS. Whether or not Commander Attack Section THREE noted that his attack section was not following in column is not known, but the course (190°(T)) of the LEUTZE, which her track chart shows she continued to steer, gradually placed her on the starboard quarter of the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and opened the distance between the ships,**** (Diagram "J").

At about 0353 Commander Attack Section THREE noted that some gunfire was being directed in his direction. At least two salvos were observed near the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS.***** The Commanding Officer LEUTZE also observed gunfire as well as starshells.******

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* Track Chart, Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Track Chart, Action Report BENNION, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0418, October 28th, 1944.

**** Track Chart, Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944.

***** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

****** Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944.

At 0355 he changed course to 210°(T).

While his reasons for changing course to the westward at this time are not explained since his present course of 180°(T) would have closed the enemy more quickly, it shows that he was probably planning to fire torpedoes almost immediately and desired to unmask his torpedo battery in order to fire torpedoes without gyro angle.

It seems likely that at this time he intercepted Commander Attack Section TWO's order to fire torpedoes for, immediately thereafter, at 0356, he also ordered "Fire torpedoes."* At the time of the issuance of this order, the range to the target from the flagship was 9,700 yards, which was beyond the effective range of intermediate speed torpedoes.

WHILE HE HAS GIVEN NO EXPLANATION FOR THE ISSUANCE OF THIS FIRING ORDER AT THIS EARLY TIME WITHOUT EVEN A PREPARATORY SIGNAL, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT (A) KNOWING (1) THE VALUE OF A MULTIPLE ATTACK AND (2) THAT COMMANDER ATTACK SECTION ONE WOULD LIKELY FIRE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, HE ENDEAVORED, THEREBY, TO COMPLETE THE MULTIPLE ATTACK BY AUTHORIZING HIS COMMANDING OFFICERS TO FIRE, RELYING ON THEM TO WITHHOLD FIRE UNTIL WITHIN THE EFFECTIVE RANGE OF THEIR INTERMEDIATE SPEED TORPEDOES.

The Commanding Officer LEUTZE, having completed his change of course to 210°(T), now, at 0357, from a position on the starboard quarter of the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, commenced firing torpedoes.* Using broadside fire to port, he fired a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 120°(T) at the leading large ship, believed to be a battleship, bearing 142°(T), range 9,900 yards and tracked on course 020°(T) at fifteen knots. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degres. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.*

From the above firing data it is clear that the Commanding Officer LEUTZE fired his intermediate speed torpedoes beyond their effective range (torpedo run to target track was 8,500 yards while the effective range of the torpedoes was 7,360 yards) but within their maximum range of 9,200 yards. However, on his present course of 210°(T) and present speed of twenty-five knots, delay would not have reduced the torpedo run materially (a delay of thirty seconds would have reduced the torpedo run about fifty yards and a delay of one minute would have produced the same torpedo run of 8,500 yards). This shows that his change of course from 190°(T) to 210°(T) just before firing was in error for had he continued on course 190°(T) he would have achieved a better firing position because of a reduction in range.

The Commanding Officer BENNION, at 0357, having passed beyond the track of the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, commenced changing course to 210°(T). At this moment, probably unknown to him, he was very nearly torpedoed by the LEUTZE! Graphic analysis of the freak incident shows that the LEUTZE's torpedoes, which were launched at 0357 nearly 1,000 yards to the northwest, had passed fully armed (500 yards is the arming distance for destroyer torpedoes), just astern (only eighteen seconds or 280 yards) of the BENNION.

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* Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944.

At 0358, having steadied on course 210°(T), the Commanding Officer BENNION, having identified the target as a battleship* and using broadside fire to port, fired a half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 131½°(T) at a large ship observed optically to be a battleship, bearing 146°(T), target angle 315°(T), range 8,800 yards, and tracked on course 011°(T), speed twelve knots. Depth setting was twenty-two feet,* in accordance with destroyer doctrine,** firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree and the torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.* These torpedoes were fired within their effective range.

Since the BENNION's action report gives the firing bearing as 146°(T) and the track chart gives the firing bearing as 139°(T) the question arises as to which firing bearing was the one actually employed. This is easily resolved in favor of 146°(T) for the torpedoes were fired with a base torpedo course of 131½°(T) which, a graphical solution of the firing problem indicates, would be the correct torpedo course for a firing bearing of 146°(T).

Although Commander Attack Section THREE knew that both the LEUTZE and BENNION had fired he did not fire at this time, even though he was within the effective firing range of his intermediate speed torpedoes and had a good target angle. Instead, he continued on to obtain an even better firing position.

HIS DECISION TO DELAY HIS FIRING WAS OF DOUBTFUL CORRECTNESS SINCE IT TENDED TO WEAKEN THE MULTIPLE ATTACK. HIS TORPEDOES WOULD NOW ARRIVE AT THE TARGET ABOUT TWO MINUTES LATER THAN THOSE OF THE LEUTZE AND BENNION AND ABOUT FOUR MINUTES LATER THAN THOSE OF ATTACK SECTION TWO.

WHILE THESE TIME DIFFERENTIALS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT WHERE THE TARGET WAS NOT UNDER FIRE, IN THIS CASE THEY WERE HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE THE TARGET WAS UNDER VERY HEAVY FIRE AND COULD BE EXPECTED TO MANEUVER RADICALLY. DOES IT NOT SEEM LOGICAL, THEREFORE, TO SAY THAT THE NECESSITY FOR HAVING THE TORPEDOES ARRIVE AT THE TARGET ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY IN ORDER, THROUGH THEIR CROSSFIRE EFFECT, TO PREVENT THE TARGET BY SUCH MANEUVERS FROM AVOIDING BEING HIT, REQUIRED THAT THE ENTIRE SECTION FIRE THEIR TORPEDOES TOGETHER, AND AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AFTER ATTACK SECTION TWO HAD FIRED?

Finally, at 0359, using broadside fire to port, he (HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS) fired a half salvo of four intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 104°(T) at the leading heavy ship, bearing 121°(T), target angle 281°, range 7,800 yards, and tracked on course 010°(T), speed ten knots. Depth setting was six feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. The four torpedoes launched--one torpedo tube failed to fire--appeared to run hot, straight and normal.***

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* Action Report BENNION, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0418, October 28th, 1944.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions, issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 1943.

*** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

The above target angle shows that by his delay he had succeeded in improving his target angle from about 300° at 0357 to 291° at 0359. Luckily the change in the target course used, from 017°(T) to 010°(T), made the torpedo run 7,350 yards and hence he fired his torpedoes within their effective range.

In the meantime, the Commanding Officer BENNION had tracked a second target to the south of her first and evaluated it as another battleship. He, therefore, ordered the remaining half salvo of torpedoes fired at this battleship.* At 0359:15, using broadside fire to port, he fired a second half salvo of five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 143°(T) at the second battleship bearing 155°(T), target angle 323°, range 9,800 yards, and tracked on course 012°(T), speed twelve knots. Depth setting was twenty-two feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.*

The identity of the BENNION's second target is hard to determine for there appears to have been no ship, either friendly or enemy, in this position. Careful analysis of the target tracks submitted by the BENNION indicates that in attempting to track many targets--as many as four at one time--BENNION's CIC became somewhat confused and fired at a phantom target. This confusion may have resulted from (a) making two tracks from one, (b) joining the plots of two targets into a single track or (c) from dead reckoning a previously tracked target and firing on the estimated position. Furthermore, it has been noted that the BENNION's CIC, in tracking this target, made only one plot at 0356 and one at 0359 and none after the latter time. From this information, it has been concluded that in tracking the MOGAMI, whose track resembles the one in question, the BENNION's CIC had, during its concentrated effort in firing the first half salvo, not detected the reversal of course by that ship at 0356 and had, at 0359, obtained a range and bearing on short splashes from the PORTLAND's gunfire which gave an indication that the target was on a northerly course. (It will be recalled that the PORTLAND had opened fire on the MOGAMI at 0358.) Of course, this was actually about 180° in error since the MOGAMI was retiring.

Upon completion of the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS' firing Commander Attack Section THREE, at 0400, correctly changed course by simultaneous individual ship turns to 300°(T) to retire, and ordered his ships to make smoke. At this time he observed two single enemy projectiles land near his ship.** The Commanding Officer BENNION also noted some near splashes.*

At 0401 Commander Attack Section THREE reported over TBS voice radio that he had completed firing torpedoes.***

At 0404 he changed course to 340°(T) by simultaneous individual ship turns.

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* Action Report BENNION, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0418, October 28th, 1944.

** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

By this time Commander Attack Section THREE,* as well as the Commanding Officers LEUTZE** and BENNION,*** could see from their plots of the track of the [illegible]my battleship that she had turned to a westerly course and was continuing in that direction, which naturally indicated that all of their first salvos of torpedoes would pass well to the north of this target and therefore miss. However, the Commanding Officer BENNION observed that the target had turned toward his second half salvo which had been fired at the second ship. He, therefore, knowing that his torpedoes should arrive between 0405 and 0406 in the target area, watched the target closely. He then, at the correct time, observed explosions in the leading battleship, which he believed were hits from his torpedoes.

In this he may have been correct for graphic analysis indicates that the BENNION's second half salvo of torpedoes, although fired at a different target, likely scored a hit at this time on the YAMASHIRO. This seems so, not only because these explosions were sighted by others (Attack Section TWO) but because evidence indicates that the target temporarily slowed further after this time, indicating possible additional underwater damage. This hit is considered to be one of the four hits reported by a warrant officer survivor of the YAMASHIRO.****

At 0408 he intercepted a message over TBS voice radio from an unknown station reporting that "You are firing on DESRON FIFTY-SIX in the middle of the channel."* This was followed at 0409 by the orders from the OTC (a) to all ships to cease firing and (b) to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to get his ships out of the channel as quickly as possible. He continued on course and speed to comply.

At 0414, since he was well clear of the channel, he slowed speed to twenty-five knots and ordered the LEUTZE and BENNION to form column on the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and to cease smoking.*

At 0418 he succeeded in re-forming column and headed on course 020°(T).**

To summarize the torpedo attacks during this period the destroyers of Attack Section THREE fired a total of nineteen torpedoes and made one hit for a hit percentage of five and three-tenths per cent.

The destroyers of this section had torpedoes remaining as follows: HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS (six), LEUTZE (five), BENNION (zero).

At 0420 the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS was bearing 020°(T), distant 11,300 yards from the northeast tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

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* Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944.

*** Action Report BENNION, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0418, October 28th, 1944.

**** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

(3) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

At 0348 Commander Right Flank Force was on course 090°(T), speed fifteen knots. As he awaited the order to commence firing, he became concerned, and probably confused, regarding the position of his destroyers and especially the position of Attack Group 2.2 (ARUNTA, KILLEN, BEALE), because he had just intercepted a message over the Task Group Common wherein Commander Attack Group 2.2 had informed Commander Attack Group 1.2 that he was coming down his way again. The latter replied by directing the former to come down between the shore and himself.

Since Commander Right Flank Force was clearly under the impression that Commander Attack Group 2.2 had attacked down the eastern shoreline, he became alarmed lest Attack Group 2.2, in order to rejoin Attack Group 1.2, be forced to cross the strait ahead of the enemy. This alarm was greatly increased when he intercepted at this same time a TBS voice radio message from Commander Battle Line to the OTC as follows: "Have group of small ones followed by heavy group; when large group reaches 26,000 yards I will open fire."*

Since he knew at this time that the Japanese force in the upper strait now consisted of but three ships (one large well ahead* followed by two heavy--probably cruisers**) he realized that Commander Battle Line's evaluation of his radar picture was in error and that the "small ones" in the van were not only friendly but likely were units of his own Attack Group 2.2 returning from the eastern shore. He, therefore, immediately (at 0349) directed Commander Attack Group 2.2 "If you have not reached the middle of the channel stay to the eastward as fast as you can"* which message was promptly acknowledged. this moment he received over the Task Group Common two messages in rapid succession from Commander Attack Group 1.2 to the effect that he (a) had a target dead in the water, (b) was going to fire five torpedoes into it, and (c) there were three ships between him (Attack Group 1.2) and the right flank cruisers.*

From the above messages, from his radar scope and radar tracks, and because he thought that (a) DESRON FIFTY-SIX had commenced firing torpedoes at 0347 and therefore these torpedoes were approaching the Japanese column, and (b) knew that the battle disposition was about to open fire, he concluded that his destroyers were more confusing to the general situation than helpful. Therefore, at 0350 he directed both attack group commanders (Commander Attack Group 1.2 and 2.2) to retire to shore as soon as possible.*

As this order went out over the Task Group Common, he received the order over the TBS voice radio to all TG 77.2 cruisers--which included his cruisers--that TG 77.2 was about to open fire, and at 0351 he received the long awaited order from the OTC "Cruisers, open fire."* He immediately,

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

over his Task Group Common, ordered all right flank cruisers, which appeared to have been in correct station with relation to one another, except the BOISE which was about 500 yards north of her proper track, to open fire.*

At 0351:30 he noted that the BOISE had opened fire followed at 0352 by the PHOENIX.

Both the BOISE and the PHOENIX opened fire at the leading Japanese ships, with opening fire bearings and ranges as follows: BOISE, 153°(T), 18,100 yards; PHOENIX, 152°(T), 16,600 yards. The opening fire ranges and bearings of the above two cruisers show that they both opened fire on the YAMASHIRO.

Unfortunately, the SHROPSHIRE, which was the northernmost right flank cruiser, and therefore farthest from the enemy, was unable to open fire due to the limitations of her fire control radar which did not permit satisfactory radar bearings for accurate gunfire beyond 15,500 yards on even the largest target.**

COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE, WHO WAS THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THIS SITUATION,*** APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED THAT THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING HIS FLAGSHIP IN A LEADING POSITION SO THAT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY HE COULD OPERATE BY FOLLOW-THE-LEADER TACTICS OUTWEIGHED THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING THE SHROPSHIRE NEAREST THE ENEMY WHERE SHE MIGHT OPEN FIRE EARLIER. HIS DECISION WAS OF COURSE CORRECT BECAUSE OF (1) THE VAST SUPERIORITY IN ALLIED GUNPOWER OVER THE JAPANESE AND (2) THE FACT THAT IN NIGHT ACTION FOLLOW-THE-LEADER TACTICS MAY BE THE ONLY MEANS AVAILABLE FOR THE COMMANDER OF LIGHT FORCES TO GUIDE HIS COMMAND IN WHICH CASE THE COMMANDER SHOULD BE IN POSITION NEAREST THE ENEMY.

Meanwhile, Commander Right Flank Force, who had been concerned over the small "pips" in the middle of the channel*** referred to previously by Commander Battle Line and who had been evaluating the radar picture, had reached the conclusion "that they were definitely friendly destroyers retiring from their torpedo attack."*** Anticipating that they might be mistaken for the enemy he broadcast, also at 0352, "Believe those three little ones in front are friendly trying to get into shoreline."* It seems likely that these three pips were one of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's attack sections which were proceeding to the attack since these sections were much nearer to the enemy than any other Allied attack units, and were the only units of three which were in the middle of the channel.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial SC 1123/194, November 4th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

The BOISE fired full gun salvos at the battleship and, seeing that hits were being scored, went to rapid fire at 0353.* Commander Right Flank Force, who knew that spotting was next to impossible with this type of fire and ammunition was low, at this same time, ordered his cruisers to fire slowly and deliberately.** The BOISE immediately complied.

The PHOENIX, which had commenced firing with half salvos, alternating between the forward and after gun groups and employing high capacity shells, observed visually, after firing four salvos, that hits were being made. She therefore shifted to full fifteen gun salvos, still using high capacity projectiles. After having fired nine high capacity salvos, she shifted to armor piercing projectiles.***

ALTHOUGH EARLY EFFECTIVE HITS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE OPTIMUM AIM OF NAVAL GUNFIRE, THE DECISION TO USE HIGH CAPACITY PROJECTILES FOR THE EARLY SPOTTING ROUNDS, IN ORDER TO CONSERVE ALREADY LOW LEVELS OF ARMOR PIERCING PROJECTILES, IS CONSIDERED SOUND. HOWEVER, OWING TO THE FACT THAT THERE WAS A HEAVY OVER CONCENTRATION OF FIRE AT THE YAMASHIRO, IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THE PHOENIX'S FIRING PLAN WAS REALLY EFFECTIVE.

At 0354 Commander Right Flank Force received a message from Commander Attack Group 1.2 informing him that Attack Group 1.2 was heading toward the cruisers and requesting that he watch out for it.**

This message seems to have confirmed in his mind the fact that Attack Group 2.2 had not reached the western shore of the strait and therefore, might have been the "group of small ones" which had been reported earlier (at 0348) by Commander Battle Line. Deeply concerned lest this group be under fire, since the whole battle disposition had now opened up, he immediately asked Commander Attack Group 2.2 if he was under fire. He was relieved to receive a prompt reply to the negative.

At 0355 he received an order from CTG 77.2 to "open fire". He promptly replied, "We opened fire with you."****

At 0356:25, as the range reached 15,800 yards to the leading enemy battleship from the SHROPSHIRE, he observed that ship open fire with her 8-inch guns. The SHROPSHIRE employed deliberate full salvo fire and in every case but one her fall-of-shot was observed and corrected each time before succeeding salvos were fired.***** As a matter of fact the Commanding Officer stated in his action report that the 8-inch salvos were followed out to the target and spotted by radar. How this was accomplished is a

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* Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

**** Ibid., Enclosure (D).

***** Action Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial SC 1123/194, November 4th, 1944.

mystery due to the numerous splashes around the YAMASHIRO.* However, these splashes did not seem to bother the SHROPSHIRE spotter, for there is no mention of any difficulties relating thereto in the action report. At this time enemy shells were observed falling ahead and astern of the PHOENIX.

Commander Right Flank Force, (a) noting at this time that his cruisers were fast approaching mid-channel and the battle line was continuing to the eastward and (b) realizing that if he continued on to the eastward at fifteen knots with the battle line he would soon leave a large portion of the western part of the strait with only limited destroyer protection, (Plate XVII) decided to reverse course to cover that area. Therefore, in accordance with this decision, he at 0358 commenced changing course to the west by simultaneous ship turns to starboard. At this time both the PHOENIX and the BOISE checked fire,**while the SHROPSHIRE continued firing.

WHILE THE REASONS FOR CHECKING FIRE HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT AT THIS POINT THE COMMANDING OFFICERS PHOENIX AND BOISE REALIZED THAT SINCE (A) THE ACCURACY OF GUNFIRE GENERALLY DIMINISHED DURING A LARGE TURN OWING TO THE FACT THAT CERTAIN VARIABLES REQUIRED FOR THE CORRECT SOLUTION OF THE FIRE CONTROL PROBLEM SUCH AS (1) OWN SHIP SPEED AND (2) THE RETARDATION IN OWN SHIP SPEED CAUSED BY THE TURN COULD NOT BE ACCURATELY DETERMINED, AND (B) THE ENEMY WAS UNDER SUCH HEAVY FIRE THAT THE TEMPORARY LOSS OF FIRE FROM THE RIGHT FLANK CRUISERS DURING THE CHANGE OF COURSE WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE BATTLE SITUATION, IT WOULD BE WISE TO LIFT FIRE TEMPORARILY IN ORDER TO CONSERVE AMMUNITION WHICH MIGHT BE NEEDED LATER. IN EITHER CASE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT (A) DOCTRINE REQUIRED THAT ALL SHIPS FIRING MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE FIRE AGAINST THE ENEMY IN ORDER TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN A FAVORABLE SITUATION, (B) THIS REQUIRED GUNFIRE BE MAINTAINED EVEN DURING BATTLE MANEUVERS UNLESS TO DO SO MIGHT UNNECESSARILY ENDANGER OWN SHIPS, AND (C) RIGHT FLANK CRUISERS WERE IN AN ECHELON FORMATION WHICH THEORETICALLY MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO MANEUVER AND FIRE WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH ONE ANOTHER, THE DECISION TO CHECK FIRE FOR THE REASONS ABOVE APPEARS SOUND.

While it seems likely that the same problems in control of fire during a turn which affected the American cruisers also affected the SHROPSHIRE, it is assumed that her commanding officer desired to maintain fire during the turn because he had only fired two salvos at the time the turn was commenced and therefore felt that the necessity for conserving ammunition was not at the moment of pressing importance.

THIS DECISION WAS ALSO SOUND SINCE CTG 77.2 HAD STATIONED THE BATTLE DISPOSITION IN THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE STRAIT IN ORDER TO PREVENT ENEMY FORCES FROM MOVING TOWARD THE TRANSPORT AREAS OFF DULAG AND TACLOBAN UNDER

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* Commander L.R.P. Lawford, RN, DSC, Commanding Officer HMS VERYAN BAY, stated to Captain J.C. Titus, USN, on June 16th, 1956, that radar equipment of the type installed in the SHROPSHIRE had the capability of following 8-inch projectiles out to the target.

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

THE PROTECTION OF THE WESTERN SHORE. COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE'S ACTION SHOWS THE EXCELLENT UNDERSTANDING WHICH, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE CONFERENCE HELD ON BOARD THE LOUISVILLE THE PRECEDING AFTERNOON, EXISTED BETWEEN HIMSELF AND CTG 77.2. THIS ACTION WAS, THEREFORE, A FINE EXAMPLE OF THE FACTOR OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, THE FINAL AIM OF WHICH IS ATTAINED WHEN, WITHOUT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION, EACH SUBORDINATE COMMANDER IN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND ACTS INSTINCTIVELY AS HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR, IF PERMITTED, WOULD HAVE HIM ACT.

During the turn he observed that the PHOENIX and BOISE had checked fire, and that the SHROPSHIRE was continuing to fire with her forward turrets.

PRIOR TO AND DURING THE GUNFIRE OF HIS CRUISERS HE DID NOT ISSUE ANY INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING FIRE DISTRIBUTION. WHY THIS WAS SO IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR HE KNEW FROM HIS RADAR PLOT THAT THE THREE JAPANESE SHIPS WERE NOT IN A CLOSE FORMATION BUT WERE INSTEAD IN A VERY LOOSE FORMATION WHERE EACH OF THE THREE SHIPS WAS ON A DIFFERENT COURSE AND OR SPEED.

THEREFORE, NORMAL FIRE DISTRIBUTION WAS NOT PRACTICABLE AND A SPECIAL FIRE DISTRIBUTION WAS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO PREVENT OVER CONCENTRATION AND TO INSURE THAT ALL THREE SHIPS WERE TAKEN UNDER FIRE. THAT COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE CONCURS WITH THESE COMMENTS SEEMS CLEAR SINCE HE STATED LATER THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD THE PHOENIX AND BOISE, WHICH WERE EQUIPPED WITH THE MARK VIII FIRE CONTROL RADAR, FIRED AT THE MORE DISTANT TARGETS AND THEREBY PREVENTED OVER CONCENTRATION ON THE LEADING SHIP.*

Before he could complete his change of course to the west he appears to have noted in his radar scope that the enemy battleship was turning gradually to the westward. Not knowing what course the enemy might finally decide to steer and realizing that at the present moment he was about to cross the Tee, he decided to settle temporarily on course 250°(T) which would permit this maneuver and therefore, at 0401, directed his command to steer this course.**

At this time enemy salvos were falling near the SHROPSHIRE. The first salvos landed short and then the later salvos all landed over. These salvos were fired by the forward turrets of the YAMASHIRO.

Also at this time he noted that the BOISE and PHOENIX had resumed fire. All three of his cruisers were now firing again and all three were firing at the battleship, which had caught fire and was burning fiercely. He now identified the battleship as a FUSO or ISE Class.

He noted that the battleship was still being hit and was continuing her turn to the westward. He also noted that the other two targets were likewise burning away.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

At 0402 he noted that the SHROPSHIRE had commenced firing rapid salvos despite orders to the contrary. Since he had directed all cruisers to fire slowly and deliberately, does it not seem surprising that he did not caution the SHROPSHIRE on this for she continued to fire rapid fire for some five and one-half minutes. Also at 0402 he intercepted a message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX reporting that that DESRON had completed firing torpedoes* and therefore would be retiring toward the flank of the battle disposition.** This was in error since only Attack Section TWO and THREE had completed firing. Attack Section ONE was preparing to fire.

At 0404 he appears to have decided that the enemy was settling on a generally westerly course. He therefore completed his original turn to 270°(T).** At this time he received a report from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that (a) he was now due south of the right flank cruisers and (b) the ships of his attack group had ten torpedoes remaining, distributed as follows: DALY (five), BACHE (five). From this he could see that the HUTCHINS was without torpedoes. He then advised COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR that the location given was approximately correct and directed him once again to close the beach.

At 0407 he noted that the PHOENIX had commenced firing her 5-inch battery at the battleship which was still moving westward and still returning fire. While he does not say so in his report he must have been impressed with the ability of the Japanese battleship to survive the many hits which she was undoubtedly sustaining.

At 0408 he intercepted a TBS voice radio report from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that his command was being fired on by units of the battle disposition. As pointed out earlier he had feared that this might happen to his own destroyers and had made every effort to prevent it. He had thus far succeeded. But now the very thing he had feared for his right flank destroyers had occurred to the left flank destroyers!

Whether or not he had planned to order cease firing within his own cruisers is not known for, within a minute, he received orders from CTG 77.2 to cease firing. He immediately, over the task group common, directed his command to cease firing, which order was promptly complied with by all ships. At this same time he intercepted CTG 77.2's instructions to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to get his ships out of the channel as soon as possible.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

A recapitulation of the above firing follows:

Time	Order in Formation	Opening Fire Range	Opening Fire Range Diagram "J"	Opening Fire Bearing	Opening Fire Bearing Diagram "J"
0352	PHOENIX	16,600	16,600	152	152
0351:30	BOISE	18,100	17,800	153	153
0356:25	SHROPSHIRE	15,800	15,600	162	162

During the above period the right flank cruisers fired ammunition and had ammunition remaining as follows:

	Fired AP	Fired HC	Remaining AP	Remaining HC
PHOENIX	424	104	551	653
BOISE	439	0	536	546
SHROPSHIRE	214	0	920	101
	1077	104	2007	1300

At 0412 he noted (a) visually that two of the three enemy ships were burning fiercely (MOGAMI and YAMASHIRO) and (b) by radar scope that the battleship had now changed course to south and that all three enemy ships were retiring.

At 0414 he intercepted, over TBS voice radio, Commander Left Flank Force's order to his cruisers to change course to 270°(T).

He now re-estimated the situation. He clearly (a) perceived that unless something was done shortly the Japanese ships might escape and (b) realized that his group might be ordered down the strait in chase. He therefore changed course at 0416:30 to 090°(T) to close the OTC and turned on his IFF so that Commander Left Flank Force would realize that the force closing him was friendly. At the same time he realized that it might be necessary to make additional destroyer torpedo attacks, and therefore, at 0418 he directed his destroyers to "lie to along the shore and await another run."

HIS ACTIONS AT THIS TIME WERE CORRECT. IT WAS ADVISABLE (A) TO ALERT HIS DESTROYERS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL TORPEDO ATTACKS SO THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED FOR IMMEDIATE SERVICE, AND (B) TO CLOSE HIS SUPERIOR SO THAT HE MIGHT BE BETTER PREPARED TO COORDINATE HIS ACTIVITIES AS DIRECTED BY THAT SUPERIOR.

At 0417 he intercepted Commander Battle Line's order to BATDIV FOUR and the MISSISSIPPI to change course to 000°(T).*

At 0419 he received orders from CTG 77.2 to resume fire and at this moment noted that the battleship had disappeared from the radar scope. This was because the YAMASHIRO appears to have sunk at this time.

He repeated this order to his force but none of the ships opened fire because there were no targets within range at this time.**

At 0420 the PHOENIX was bearing 073°(T), distant 6,000 yards from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

(a) Operations of COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(1) Commander Attack Group 1.2 and COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR.

At 0348 Commander Attack Group 1.2, who was still in the HUTCHINS CIC, was on course 040°(T) at speed thirty knots. The HUTCHINS was preparing to fire a second half salvo of five torpedoes*** while the DALY**** and BACHE,***** which were now about 5,000 yards south of the HUTCHINS and still making twenty-five knots, were firing at the same destroyer target (MICHISHIO).

He noted that the HUTCHINS was tracking a target (ASAGUMO) within intermediate speed torpedo range which was proceeding southward at seven to nine knots and believed to be a large ship (cruiser***). He therefore directed the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS to fire torpedoes.

At 0349 the DALY's torpedoes, which had been fired at 0335:30, likely crossed the YAMASHIRO track. Based on the analysis of the composite plot (Diagrams "H" and "J") and on Japanese action reports none of the torpedoes hit but, instead, appear to have passed between the YAMASHIRO, in the van, and the second ship, the MOGAMI which were about 4,000 yards apart. This view is supported by the SHIGURE which reported having passed over three torpedo wakes. The time given by the SHIGURE (0330) was obviously in error since at this time she was on a southerly course and no torpedoes could have possibly been in her vicinity unless the spread had been in general erratic, which was not the case. However, later (after 0344) she had returned to northerly courses which had taken her into the DALY's torpedo water. Also, her track as developed from Allied heavy ship's

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

radar data, shows that she changed course to 010°(T) at 0351 in a position where the torpedoes had passed about 0350:15. The torpedo wakes should have been sighted. It is therefore believed that the three torpedo wakes reported by the SHIGURE were the DALY's and that the time of crossing the YAMASHIRO track was 0349.

The BACHE torpedoes also likely crossed the YAMASHIRO track at 0349, the MOGAMI track about 0350:30, and the SHIGURE track at 0351. Since the MOGAMI and the SHIGURE were about 3,000 yards to the north, the YAMASHIRO was 2,500 yards beyond the SHIGURE and the ASAGUMO and MICHISHIO were about 7,000 yards to the south none of the Japanese ships reported sighting the torpedo wakes or any torpedo hits at this time.

At 0349:30 in compliance with this order and employing broadside fire to starboard the HUTCHINS fired the remaining five intermediate speed torpedoes on base torpedo course 121½°(T) at the target bearing 110°(T), target angle 110°, range 6,200 yards,* and tracked on course 180°(T), speed eight knots.** Depth setting was six feet, firing interval about eight seconds and torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.**

WHILE THE FACT THAT THERE WERE STILL THREE ENEMY SHIPS ATTACKING TO THE NORTH, AND THE FURTHER FACT THAT FIVE ENEMY DESTROYERS AND ONE LARGER SHIP HAD BEEN REPORTED PASSING THROUGH THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SURIGAO STRAIT, MAY CAUSE STUDENTS OF WARFARE TO CONSIDER THAT COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 1.2'S ACTION IN ORDERING THIS TORPEDO ATTACK WAS UNSOUND, THIS IDEA IS NOT CONSIDERED VALID FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: (A) COMMANDER ATTACK GROUP 1.2 HAD BEEN DIRECTED BY HIS SUPERIOR (COMMANDER RIGHT FLANK FORCE) TO ATTACK THE ENEMY MOVING NORTHWARD IN THE UPPER END OF THE STRAIT, (THIS WAS A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE. HE AND THE DESTROYER ATTACKS WHICH HAD PRECEDED HIM HAD PARTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED THIS AND HAD DISABLED SOME OF THE ENEMY. HE HAD NOW BEEN DIRECTED TO CLEAR THE AREA WHICH WAS A SAFETY OBJECTIVE. THIS MEANT THAT HE COULD NOT APPROACH THE THREE TARGETS TO THE NORTH SUFFICIENTLY CLOSE TO MAKE AN EFFECTIVE TORPEDO ATTACK ON THOSE UNITS.), (B) THE PROBLEM OF THE SHIPS ENTERING SURIGAO STRAIT WAS PROPERLY A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OTC WHO HAD ISSUED NO INSTRUCTIONS THEREON, (C) DOCTRINE PROVIDED THAT NO DISABLED SHIP SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ESCAPE UNLESS THE CONDITIONS AND THE SITUATION AT THE TIME MADE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION IMPOSSIBLE,*** (D) HE CONSIDERED HIS TARGET TO BE A LARGE SHIP (CRUISER**) WHICH HE COULD ATTACK WHILE STILL COMPLYING WITH THE SPIRIT OF HIS TWO OBJECTIVES.

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* Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, Chapter 12, Section XVI, Paragraph 12195.

COM ATTACK GROUP 1.2
0348 - 0420, October 25th

At 0350 Commander Attack Group 1.2 likely intercepted over TBS voice radio CTG 77.2's message stating that the cruisers were about to open fire.*

At this same time, he received a message from Commander Right Flank Force wherein that commander ordered both attack group commanders to take their groups shoreward as soon as possible.**

At 0351 the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS changed course to 010°(T)*** in order to unmask the gun battery and at the same time opened fire on the leading ship bearing 041°(T),*** range 10,000 yards,**** which he correctly judged to be a heavy ship. This target was the YAMASHIRO, which was under fire not only by the HUTCHINS, but also by the left and right flank cruisers. Since the commanding officer could see two targets and since he felt that the range was excessive he asked his CIC if there was not a nearer target than the one being fired on. His CIC then replied in the affirmative and designated a new and closer target which was the MOGAMI.

Commander Attack Group 1.2 now directed the HUTCHINS, at 0352, to change course to 310°(T)***** in order to close the beach. In so doing he did not comply with the spirit of CTG 77.3's orders for to clear the area as quickly as pos ible required a change of course to 270°(T).

WHILE HIS ACTION INDICATED AN OFFENSIVE STATE OF MIND AT THIS TIME, IT WAS NOT SOUND FOR THE LITTLE EFFECT HE COULD HOPE TO ACHIEVE FROM HIS GUNFIRE COULD NOT COMPENSATE FOR THE CONFUSION AND EVEN IRRITATION HIS FAILURE TO MOVE HIS FORCES OUT OF THE COMBAT AREA MIGHT HAVE PROVOKED IN THE FLAGSHIP. HE DID NOT SEEM TO REALIZE THAT THE ENEMY FORCE WAS BEING EASILY TRACKED BY THE BATTLE DISPOSITION AND THAT HIS PRESENCE (A) MIGHT CONFUSE THE RADAR PICTURE AND (B) INSTEAD OF HELPING TO WIN THE BATTLE EXPEDITIOUSLY, MIGHT TEND TO AFFECT ITS PROGRESS ADVERSELY. ACTUALLY THIS HAD, IN FACT, OCCURRED FOR ALREADY THE FLAGSHIP OF THE BATTLE DISPOSITION AND THE FLAGSHIP OF THE BATTLE LINE HAD COMMENCED TRACKING ATTACK GROUP 1.2 WHICH THEY HAD DESIGNATED AS ENEMY.******

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

*** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

**** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement, Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

****** Track Chart, 0305 to 0416, October 25th, 1944, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944; also Track Chart, Action Report MISSISSIPPI, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0141, November 21st, 1944.

At 0352:30, about the time of completing the turn to 310°(T), the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS, ordered cease firing in order to shift targets. He had expended 100 rounds of 5-inch ammunition at the YAMASHIRO. This was a wise decision for the new target, the MOGAMI, was only about 6,500 yards away and was not under fire.

At this same time, 0352:30, the Commanding Officer DALY, who decided to shift targets, ceased firing at the MICHISHIO* leaving this target to the BACHE and at 0353 changed course to 000°(T)** in order to close the range to the enemy ships to the north. He had fired seventy-five rounds of 5-inch ammunition at the MICHISHIO.

Shortly after this the Commanding Officer BACHE, judging that his target was sufficiently damaged and having fired seventy-five rounds of 5-inch ammunition, decided to shift targets and ceased firing on the MICHISHIO. In this he was correct for (a) the MICHISHIO was dead in the water and not firing her guns and (b) the MOGAMI to the north was a much greater threat. He now changed course to 000°(T),*** and followed the DALY.

At 0354 Commander Attack Group 1.2 realizing that, since he was not closing the shore as ordered but instead was closing his own cruisers, he might be mistaken for enemy, informed Commander Right Flank Force to this effect and requested that they keep watch for him.****

At 0354 the DALY changed course to 295°(T) in order to unmask her gun battery and, shortly after completing this turn, changed course to 310°(T).**

At 0354:30 the HUTCHINS opened fire on a target, believed to be a cruiser, at a range reported to be 6,700 yards***** but which from her track chart was 6,100 yards.****** This latter range agrees closely with the range indicated on Diagram "J". This target was the MOGAMI, which shortly afterward replied to the HUTCHINS gunfire. The HUTCHINS action report states that the MOGAMI was smoking but not on fire.*****

At about 0355 the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS noted in his action report that the machine gun crews reported explosions on the starboard quarter on the approximate bearing of the last torpedo target.***** This could not have been so for the ASAGUMO, which was the target for

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

**** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippines, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

***** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

****** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

these torpedoes and which reported no torpedo hits at this time,* had turned away, very fortuitously, at the moment of firing and was well clear of the torpedo tracks (Diagram "J"). By rare good luck the torpedo spread, at 0358, struck the MICHISHIO, which was drifting to the south, almost at the end of their run. The MICHISHIO then sank.

Since the HUTCHINS stated that the explosions had been observed at about 0355 and the actual time of hitting based on Diagram "J" was more likely 0358 the question arises as to why the three minute difference. The answer seems to be contained in the qualifying word "about". The observers, who claimed sighting the explosions, were members of the machine gun crews. These crews were in exposed stations on the top side of the destroyer where there were no lights. Therefore, it seems probable that the reported time was more of a guess.

The torpedo firing by the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 was now completed.

TO SUMMARIZE THESE FIRINGS THESE DESTROYERS HAD FIRED A TOTAL OF TWENTY TORPEDOES—HUTCHINS, TEN; DALY, FIVE; BACHE, FIVE, AND HAD MADE ONE HIT FOR A HIT PERCENTAGE OF FIVE PER CENT.

IN SUMMARY THE FAILURE TO MAKE MORE HITS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY DUE TO THE FOLLOWING: (A) THE HUTCHINS FIRED AT A TARGET (SHIGURE) WHICH HAD REVERSED COURSE SHORTLY AFTER THE TORPEDOES HAD BEEN FIRED; (B) THE DALY TORPEDOES WERE FIRED AT LONG RANGE AND LOW SPEED AT THE MOGAMI WHICH WAS TRACKED ON COURSE 010°(T), SPEED SIXTEEN KNOTS BUT WHICH WAS ACTUALLY ON COURSE 045°(T) AT A SPEED OF TWENTY KNOTS. DURING THE TIME OF THE TORPEDO RUN (0335:30 - 0351) THE MOGAMI CHANGED COURSE TO NORTH AT 0337 AND TO 320°(T) AT 0345:30, AND DURING THE TORPEDO RUN SHE SLOWED TO TWELVE KNOTS AND THEN INCREASED SPEED TO EIGHTEEN KNOTS; AND (C) THE BACHE TORPEDOES WERE FIRED AT LONG RANGE AT LOW SPEED AT THE SHIGURE WHICH WAS TRACKED ON COURSE 018°(T), SPEED SEVENTEEN KNOTS, BUT WHICH WAS ACTUALLY, AT THE TIME OF FIRING, ON COURSE 030°(T), SPEED TWENTY-SIX KNOTS, WHICH SPEED WAS MAINTAINED ALTHOUGH COURSE WAS CHANGED TO THE WESTWARD TO 340°(T), A CHANGE OF FIFTY DEGREES (DIAGRAMS "H" AND "J").

Also at 0355 the Commanding Officer BACHE changed course to 295°(T)** in order to unmask the gun battery and to follow, in a general way, the movements of the HUTCHINS. At 0356 he opened fire on a target (later identified as a MOGAMI class cruiser) bearing 020°(T), range 8,200 yards.*** This target was, in fact, the MOGAMI which was starting a turn to the south.

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* Composite report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

As the MOGAMI's salvos commenced coming closer to the HUTCHINS, it appeared that she might obtain the hitting gun range. The Commanding Officer HUTCHINS, therefore, changed course twenty degrees toward the enemy to 330°(T) at 0356.* During this turn he reached a minimum range to the MOGAMI of 5,400 yards.*

About 0356:15 the BACHE changed course to 315°(T) and shortly afterward to 342°(T)** in order to more nearly parallel the course of the MOGAMI and also to follow the general track of the HUTCHINS.

At 0357 the Commanding Officer DALY opened fire on the MOGAMI bearing 032°(T), range 7,500 yards and reported hits on the first salvo.*** Immediately after opening fire he changed course to 355°(T)**** in order to roughly parallel the MOGAMI track and to follow the HUTCHINS in a general way.

Because of the accurate gunfire of the above three destroyers--assisted perhaps by the PORTLAND--the MOGAMI caught on fire, which heartening fact was noted by the destroyers.

Commander Attack Group 1.2 had observed that, as the target moved southward (making smoke) and as the Allied attack group moved northward, the range continued to decrease as the forces approached their probable nearest point.

ABOUT THIS TIME THE DESTROYERS OBSERVED THAT THE TARGET WAS ENDEAVORING TO IDENTIFY HERSELF TO THEM EMPLOYING DIRECTIONAL FLASHING LIGHTS AND RED FLARES WHICH WERE TWO OF THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY THE JAPANESE FOR NIGHT IDENTIFICATION.***** THE OTHER METHODS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN THE EMPLOYMENT OF (A) SLEEVE (WINDSOCK) DISPLAYED GENERALLY ON BOTH YARDARMS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, (B) HOISTED COLORED SIGNAL LIGHTS, AND (C) PYROTECHNICS (SUCH AS STARSHELLS AND FLARES). THIS SURPRISED THE COMMANDING OFFICER BACHE WHO CHECKED HIS GUNFIRE TEMPORARILY TO VERIFY HIS IDENTIFICATION OF THE TARGET.****** HOWEVER, AS HE CHECKED GUNFIRE, HE NOTED THAT THE TARGET WAS BURNING SO BRIGHTLY AS TO SILHOUETTE HER PLAINLY AND HE CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED HER THEN AS A MOGAMI CLASS CRUISER. THE DALY, AT THE SAME TIME, INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED HER AS A FURUTAKA CLASS CRUISER.***

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* Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

**** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

***** Navy Minister Military Serial 1183, January 24th, 1944, War Time Regulations for Identification of Friendly Forces, ATIS Document No. 39, Part X, August 12th, 1945. (NACHI Document).

****** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

At about 0358 he noted that Allied cruisers were now firing at the MOGAMI and that the first salvo had hit.* He therefore, realizing that he must not be in the area while his own battle disposition was firing and must now obey his previous orders to clear the area, directed the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS to clear the area.

At 0359 the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS, in compliance with these orders, changed course to 350°(T)** in order to pass to the eastward of Attack Group 2.2 which was heading in a southerly direction.

Commander Attack Group 1.2 now advised Commander Right Flank Force of his course, and again requested that they keep watch for him. Through some mistake the course transmitted to Commander Right Flank Force was given as 300°(T)*** whereas the course actually being steered was, from the track charts, 350°(T). This latter course has been accepted as the correct course because a course of 300°(T) would have clearly interfered with the operations of Attack Group 2.2.

At 0359:30 the Commanding Officer HUTCHINS, on instructions from Commander Attack Group 1.2, who knew that the HUTCHINS ammunition was low and was interfering with the "spotting" of the Allied cruisers, ceased firing, having expended 246 rounds at the MOGAMI.** At this point, because he had been fighting a "reverse" action and had already passed the nearest point to the MOGAMI, the range had commenced increasing and was now 8,200 yards.

At 0402 Commander Attack Group 1.2 observed that Attack Group 2.2 was on a southerly course about a mile to the west. At this time he asked the DALY and BACHE how many torpedoes they had and was promptly informed "five each".***

At 0403 the Commanding Officer DALY became aware of a target further north, bearing 043°(T), range 11,000 yards.**** The range was decreasing while that to the MOGAMI was increasing. He therefore checked fire on the MOGAMI, having expended eighty-two rounds of 5-inch ammunition changed course to 330°(T) and, in view of his distance behind the HUTCHINS, increased speed to thirty knots.**** At 0404 he opened fire on the new target--a large enemy ship--now bearing 047°(T), range 10,200 yards. This target was the YAMASHIRO. Also at 0404 the Commanding Officer BACHE ceased firing on the MOGAMI, having expended 134 rounds of 5-inch ammunition. At this time the MOGAMI was afire and none of her gun batteries were active.*****

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* Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement, Surigao Strait, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129 October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report HUTCHINS, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944.

Immediately after opening fire on the YAMASHIRO the Commanding Officer DALY noticed that ship was firing secondary battery gunfire at the DALY and further noticed that the enemy projectiles were tracer type and were landing over about 200 to 500 yards.* In order to upset the enemy spotting he changed course to 305°(T) and at 0405 changed course again to 341°(T).** He was not hit.*

Also at 0405 Commander Attack Group 1.2 over the Task Group Common informed Commander Right Flank Force that he believed that the right flank cruisers were due north of him.*** In a matter of seconds he received Commander Right Flank Force's reply advising him that this was correct and directing him once again "to get in to the beach".*** He immediately changed course to 325°(T) and commenced slowing down in order to allow his other two ships to close the distance to the flagship.**** About 0406 he received an inquiry, also from Commander Right Flank Force, as to the number of torpedoes left in Attack Group 1.2. He replied that the BACHE and DALY each had five.***

Also at 0406 the Commanding Officer DALY ceased firing on the YAMASHIRO, having expended twenty-five rounds of 5-inch ammunition on that target.*

At 0408:36 the Commanding Officer DALY changed course to 000°(T),** presumably to remain clear of Attack Group 2.2. The BACHE followed in column,***** and about this time increased speed to thirty knots.

At 0409 Commander Attack Group 1.2, in the HUTCHINS, received the order from Commander Right Flank Force to "cease firing." He immediately directed his destroyers to cease firing.***

At about 0411 the Commanding Officer DALY changed course to 325°(T) and followed the track of the HUTCHINS.** The DALY and BACHE were now closing the HUTCHINS due to their greater speed.

At 0418 Commander Attack Group 1.2 received a message from Commander Right Flank Force directing him to lie to along the shore and standby for another run.*** He therefore continued on his course heading toward a lie-to point north of Cabugan Grande Island.*

At 0420 he was bearing 050°(T), distant 1,800 yards from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island. The DALY and BACHE had now closed to about 3,500 yards.

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944.

** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosures (A) and (B).

***** Action Report BACHE, Engagement of Enemy Surface Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, October 25th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

(2) Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

As Commander Attack Group 2.2, in the ARUNTA, on course 157°(T), speed fifteen knots headed toward the YAMASHIRO to make a gunfire attack,* the KILLEN and BEALE followed in very loose column. The Commanding Officer KILLEN at this time was preparing to fire his remaining three torpedoes at the leading ship (YAMASHIRO) as soon as he was in position to fire.**

At 0349 the Commanding Officer KILLEN, who was now about 1,500 yards astern of the ARUNTA and on course 180°(T), fired his three remaining torpedoes using broadside fire to port and a low speed setting, on base torpedo course 072°(T), at the enemy battleship bearing 106½°(T), target angle 286½°, range 12,450 yards and tracked on course 000°(T), speed fifteen knots. Depth setting was twenty-two feet, firing interval three seconds, torpedo spread one degree. All torpedoes appeared to run hot, straight and normal.***

IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER KILLEN HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH BY THIS PARTIAL SALVO OF THREE TORPEDOES SET AT LOW SPEED FOR (A) THE PROBABILITY OF HITTING A SINGLE TARGET WITH THREE LOW SPEED TORPEDOES AT SUCH A RANGE (12,000 YARDS) WAS LOW, (B) THE LEAD ANGLE NECESSARY (BASE TORPEDO COURSE 072°(T)) TO FIRE THESE TORPEDOES MIGHT WELL HAVE ENDANGERED THE DESTROYERS OF DESRON FIFTY-SIX WHICH THE COMMANDING OFFICER KILLEN KNEW WERE ATTACKING AT THIS TIME, AND (C) THE BATTLE DISPOSITION WAS ABOUT TO OPEN FIRE. THIS WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE THE TARGET TO MANEUVER LONG BEFORE THE TORPEDOES COULD POSSIBLY ARRIVE AT THE TARGET WHICH, WITH THE SMALL SPREAD (TWO DEGREES), WOULD LIKELY INSURE THAT ALL TORPEDOES MISSED.

Also at 0349 Commander Attack Group 2.2 received an order from Commander Right Flank Force as follows: "If you have not reached middle of channel stay to eastward as fast as you can."**** Although he acknowledged the order, he likely did not understand it for, at this time, he was fairly close to the western shore. However, (a) mindful of the fact that this was a safety objective and that it was Commander Right Flank Force's desire to get him close to shore regardless of whether it was the east or the west shore and (b) believing that a nearby patch of smoke contained one or more friendly destroyers which he should avoid, he turned westward to course 270°(T) to get closer to the shore.* The correctness of his decision was confirmed a minute later, at 0350, when he received Commander Right Flank Force's order directing Commanders Attack Groups 1.2 and 2.2 to "take your group to shore as soon as possible." His statement that "it was necessary to make a detour around smoke that apparently contained one of our own destroyers" shows that his radar picture was incomplete. Certainly the movements of Attack Group 1.2, since this group

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* Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

*** Ibid., Enclosure (A).

**** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

was under the command of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR (his squadron commander), should have been more closely followed and accurately recorded on the summary plot. Actually, at this time the HUTCHINS, which it will be recalled was the flagship of Attack Group 1.2, was about six and one-quarter miles to the southward and there were no ships, either friendly or enemy, in the smoke.

Also at 0350 he likely intercepted, over TBS voice radio, CTG 77.2's message stating that the cruisers were about to open fire.*

At 0352:30, having closed the shore about a mile, Commander Attack Group 2.2 again turned south to conduct his gunfire attack.** At this time he observed the battle disposition open fire.

At 0354, with an opening range of 13,300 yards, his flagship likewise opened fire at a target which was visible to the gun director operator and appeared to be a destroyer.***

Actually, it was not a destroyer but was instead the battleship YAMASHIRO. The nearest destroyer, the SHIGURE, was about 1,000 yards beyond the battleship and on approximately the same line of bearing. The ARUNTA fired eleven salvos of 4.7-inch projectiles and attempted to employ visual spotting. However she soon realized that that visual spotting was not practical because the target area was obliterated by the splashes from the battle disposition projectiles.***

In the meantime the KILLEN and BEALE followed the ARUNTA in a general way, for they were employing follow-the-leader tactics. This was necessary because, as pointed out earlier, the ARUNTA had encountered difficulty in communicating with the KILLEN and BEALE over the Task Group Common Voice Radio Circuit, as well as by blinker tube. Having heard Commander Right Flank Force's 0349 order and seeing the ARUNTA start to turn to the west, the Commanding Officer KILLEN, immediately after firing, also turned to the west and steadied on a course of 265°(T).**** It appears that the BEALE followed closely.

The smoke which confused the ARUNTA, probably handicapped the KILLEN likewise, for that destroyer continued on to the west and well past the turning point that would have put her astern of the ARUNTA.

At 0354 (perhaps she could see the ARUNTA at this time) she turned toward the south.**** At 0355 she opened fire on the battleship bearing 092°(T), range 12,500 yards.***** Her track chart shows 14,500

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* Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

** Track Chart, Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

**** Track Chart, Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

***** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944

yards,* which agrees closely with Diagram "J". At 0357, as she steadied on course 090°(T), she turned to starboard and steadied on course 175°(T) in order to follow the ARUNTA.*

About 0356 the Commanding Officer ARUNTA checked fire on the YAMASHIRO, having fired eleven six-gun salvos at her. He gave as his reason for checking fire that "the HUTCHINS passed in the line of fire laying smoke"** although at this time the HUTCHINS was still about three miles to the southeast. Although he implies that he promptly shifted fire to the MOGAMI there must have been a delay of several minutes in order to (a) satisfy the range and bearing reported and (b) to allow the HUTCHINS to pass.

The KILLEN found that she was unable to spot by radar because the splashes from the gunfire of the cruisers and the battle line made her own splashes unrecognizable. Therefore, at 0359, she ceased firing having expended fifty-nine rounds of 5-inch ammunition.*** Shortly after this the commanding officer noted to his disappointment that the battleship had changed course to the west,* which meant that the three torpedoes fired at 0349 would miss.

At approximately 0400 the HUTCHINS passed the ARUNTA on opposite course and about a mile to the eastward. About 0402 the ARUNTA resumed fire on the other large target (MOGAMI) bearing 300° relative, range 11,400 yards.** At 0403 she changed course to 155°(T)**** and changed speed to twenty-five knots***** in order to keep the range from opening. Shortly afterward she ceased firing, having expended ninety 4.7-inch projectiles in fifteen salvos,** probably because of the near approach of the BACHE to the line of fire although she appears to have been firing over the DALY, which was about 1,000 yards further away.

At 0405 the ARUNTA changed course to 330°(T)**** and commenced retiring.

At 0409 Commander Attack Group 2.2, as well as his commanding officers, received orders from Commander Right Flank Force to cease firing. At this same time he changed course to 000°(T).****

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* Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

** Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

**** Track Chart, Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

***** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0412 Commander Attack Group 2.2 received an inquiry from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR as to the status of torpedoes on board ships of Attack Group 2.2. After several minutes he replied that the BEALE had five torpedoes left and that he could not communicate with the KILLEN.*

At 0413 he slowed to fifteen knots and changed course to 010°(T).**

At 0416 he received an order from Commander Right Flank Force to lie to along the shore and await another run.* He therefore turned to course 241°(T)** to head for Pandan Point while the KILLEN and BEALE changed course to 260°(T).***

At 0420 the ARUNTA was bearing 058°(T), distant one point nine miles from Pandan Point and the KILLEN and BEALE were about 1,300 and 2,100 yards respectively to the northeast (Diagram "J").

(B) Operations of CTG 79.11, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(1) Commander Eastern Attack Group.

With his group in column formation with REMEY as guide, Commander Eastern Attack Group was patrolling the post rendezvous area in the vicinity of Antisubmarine Patrol Station No. THREE. Over the MN voice radio circuit, which he had directed would not be employed for maneuvering, he was gathering the battle readiness and attack results of his group. He was concerned lest his Western Attack Group, which was heading for its post rendezvous point (Antisubmarine Patrol Station No. SEVEN), be mistaken for enemy by the Allied battle disposition.

At 0349 he received a report from the MELVIN that she had received no material or personnel casualties. At 0350 he received a similar report from the MC GOWAN. At about this same time he noted that the battle disposition was experiencing difficulties in separating friend from foe and in selecting targets upon which to open fire. Growing even more concerned over the safety of his Western Attack Group he advised CTG 77.2 by TBS voice radio that the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN were still retiring.

At 0353 he received a report from the Commanding Officer MC GOWAN to the effect that he had observed a large explosion in the direction of the MONSSEN. Since Commander Eastern Attack Group took no action on this message and did not query the MONSSEN thereon, it seems clear that he realized that what the MC GOWAN had observed was the opening fire of the right flank cruisers.

At 0406 he was relieved to receive a TBS voice radio message from the MC GOWAN relaying a report from the MC DERMUT that the Western Attack was at the post attack rendezvous and would remain there until further orders.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosur (C).

** Track Chart, Action Report HMAS ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

*** Track Chart, Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

At 0409 he overheard COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX report to CTG 77.2 that DESRON FIFTY-SIX, in the middle of the channel, was being fired upon by friendly ships. One minute later he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing DESRON FIFTY-SIX to clear the channel and immediately thereafter he heard Commander Attack Section TWO (COMDESDIV 112) report, also by TBS voice radio, that Attack Section TWO was turning east at twenty-five knots.*

From his plot he now knew that his Eastern Attack Group might be endangered by this change of course. He therefore immediately informed Commander Attack Section TWO by TBS voice radio that a portion of DESRON FIFTY-FOUR was northeast of Hibuson Island. He further reported by TBS voice radio to CTG 77.2 that the REMEY, MELVIN and MC GOWAN were northeast of Hibuson Island.

At 0420 Commander Eastern Attack Group was patrolling in the vicinity of Antisubmarine Patrol Station No. THREE.

(2) Commander Western Attack Group.

With the MONSSEN following in column astern Commander Western Attack Group in MC DERMUT continued his retirement.

At 0359 being in the vicinity of his rendezvous, he commenced steaming along a polygon figure to remain in the vicinity as shown on Diagram "J".

At 0400, when in position about two and a half miles north of Cabugan Grande Island, he made radar contact on an unidentified ship bearing 270°(T), range 4,500 yards. He challenged this contact by TBS voice radio and quickly learned that this was the HALSEY POWELL (AVP 26) which was heading north to get out of the battle area.**

At about this same time, being unable to communicate with Commander Eastern Attack Group, he, at 0405, asked the MC GOWAN in the Eastern Group to relay to Commander Eastern Attack Group the fact that the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN had arrived at their rendezvous station where they planned to remain until further orders.

At 0420 the Western Attack Group was on northwesterly course 315°(T) in a position bearing 008°(T), distant about seven miles from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMDESDIV 108, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 038, November 5th, 1944.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0348 - 0420, October 25th.

(1) Upper Surigao PT's.

At 0348 Commander Upper Surigao PT's, with PT's 327, 321 and 326, was about two point one miles south of Kanihaan Island and was drifting south with the current.

At approximately 0403 he went ahead at six knots and changed course to 352°(T) in order to return to the vicinity of Kanihaan Island.

At approximately 0406 he sighted four burning ships which he recorded as being four to ten miles bearing 200°(T) to 330°(T) from Kanihaan Island.* One of these ships was the MOGAMI bearing 329°(T), distant ten miles from Kanihaan Island; one was the ASAGUMO; the remaining two were the two sections of the FUSO.

At 0420 he was about one point three miles south and slightly west of Kanihaan Island.

(2) Lower Surigao PT's.

(a) PT 490.

At 0348 PT 490 was bearing 092°(T), distant three point four miles from Caligangan Point. She was drifting with the current which was setting 155°(T) at about two point two knots.

At approximately 0400 the commanding officer made radar contact on four unidentified ships (actually there were six) at a range of about 12,000 yards moving north up the middle of the strait. These units comprised the SECOND Striking Force.

He promptly reported this contact to CTG 77.2.** Although there is no mention of this message in the various voice logs, CTG 77.2 in his preliminary action report, states that the PT's reported at 0520 that four large ships were coming up the strait.*** What caused the delay is not known but it was most likely due to the (a) numerous relays normally required and (b) fact that heavy ships were in action.

At 0420 PT 490 was bearing 106½°(T), distant four point one miles from Caligangan Point.

(b) PT 491.

At 0348 PT 491 was bearing 114°(T), distant five point forty-three miles from Caligangan Point and was proceeding on course 330°(T) at five knots.

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* Action Reports PT's 327 and 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

Although she was passed at approximately 0358 about four point eight miles to the eastward by the NACHI leading the SECOND Striking Force, there is no mention of any contact thereon in her action report.*

At 0400 she stopped and commenced drifting with the current.

At 0420 PT 491 was bearing 116°(T), distant five point six miles from Caligangan Point.

(c) PT 493.

PT 493, damaged and abandoned by her crew, was beached on Maoyo Point.

(3) East Amagusan PT's.

Since the East Amagusan PT's continued to operate separately they will be discussed separately.

(a) PT 328.

At 0348 PT 328, with Commander East Amagusan PT's on board, was proceeding toward the Leyte shore on a northwesterly course at about five knots.

At approximately 0400, when close to the Leyte shore, he stopped and commenced drifting slowly eastward with the current.

At 0420 PT 328 was bearing approximately 244°(T), distant 2,000 yards from Amagusan Point.

(b) PT 323.

At 0348 PT 323 was on course 030°(T) at slow speed.

At 0413 she changed course to 180°(T) in order to clear the area in which friendly destroyers had been making their attacks on the enemy.

At 0420 PT 323 was bearing 071°(T), distant 4,500 yards from Amagusan Point (Diagram "J").

(c) PT 329.

At 0348 PT 329, off Amagusan Point, was drifting with the current on a course of about 200°(T).

Around 0410 the commanding officer sighted three fires which were the two halves of the burning FUSO and the ASAGUMO (Diagram "J"). Although he reported these fires as bearing 150°(T), distant nine miles, the bearing of the southernmost half was around 115°(T). Since the ASAGUMO was

* Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

a considerable distance to the north at this time and since the Commanding Officer PT 329 implied that the three fires were close together, the memory of those on board must have referred to a much later time (about 0534) when the ASAGUMO had moved to the vicinity of the FUSO.

At 0420 PT 329 was bearing 151°(T), distant 2,000 yards from Amagusan Point.

(4) Other PT's.

The operations of the motor torpedo boats, other than the Upper Surigao, Lower Surigao and East Amagusan PT's were uneventful.

CHAPTER XVIII - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0420 - 0520, October 25th

(A) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

Commander THIRD Section and the Commanding Officer YAMASHIRO were likely lost when at 0419 the YAMASHIRO sank. This fact was, of course, not known to the commanding officers of the remaining ships, i.e., FUSO, MOGAMI, SHIGURE and ASAGUMO, although it might well have been surmised by them because of the heavy gunfire to the north. However, the SHIGURE, and possibly the MOGAMI and ASAGUMO, knew that (a) the SHIGURE had not received a reply to her message at 0352 addressed to Commander THIRD Section and (b) Commander THIRD Section had not issued any additional instructions to the units under his command since that time. As regards the FUSO, it seems correct to say that the Commanding Officers of the MOGAMI, SHIGURE and ASAGUMO knew that a battleship had fallen out of formation (she had been torpedoed at 0308) and had not been heard from on the voice circuits since, although the heavy fires in the area where she most likely was gave strong indications that she was in serious difficulties.

WHY, IN VIEW OF THESE FACTS, THERE WAS NO EFFORT MADE BY THE COMMANDING OFFICERS, MOGAMI, SHIGURE AND ASAGUMO TO DISCERN WHO THE SENIOR SURVIVING COMMANDING OFFICER WAS, IS NOT KNOWN.

However, if they had any concern in this matter it was quickly dispelled for at 0441 they were directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force to "follow behind NACHI", who, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0420 - 0520, October 25th", had commenced retiring at about 0430. Since all of the units of the THIRD Section still afloat in the battle area, with the exception of the FUSO, were already retiring these instructions were likely welcome indeed.

Because of the fact that these four units were operating independently throughout the major portion of this period they are discussed separately.

(1) MOGAMI

At the commencement of this period the MOGAMI, burning, damaged and out of control, and with a chief quartermaster as the navigator, was heading in a southeasterly direction at slow speed. She continued to be free of enemy gunfire.

At about this time, although her action report makes no mention of it, she was moving so slowly as to appear "dead in the water" to the staff of Commander SECOND Striking Force in the NACHI.* She also must have appeared

* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

stopped to certain of the Allied ships for those ships, which plotted her show no change in location. Soon after this she seems to have gathered headway again for, at about 0425, when she sighted the NACHI on her starboard bow, she was making about four knots.

Suddenly, at about 0428, the chief quartermaster noted that the NACHI was changing course to starboard. Realizing that the danger of collision was real he endeavored to avoid it. However, owing to her slow speed and to the manual steering required, the MOGAMI was unable to respond adequately.

As a result, at 0430, in position bearing 198°(T), distant ten point seven miles from Hibuson Island light, the ships collided striking in the bows, after which they immediately separated. Fortunately the resulting damage was not heavy, consisting, as regards the MOGAMI, solely of slight dents on the starboard side and on the side of her forward gun turret.*

She now, partially as a result of this collision, settled on a course of about 156°(T), speed five point seven knots.**

The Gunnery Officer, who was now the Commanding Officer, realizing that he had not been under fire for about one-half hour, and further realizing that only limited responsibility should be placed on the chief quartermaster for navigating the ship through the lower strait, proceeded to the bridge and at 0440 took over the navigation of the ship.*

About one minute later—at 0441—he received Commander SECOND Striking Force's order directing the units of the THIRD Section to "follow behind NACHI".***

Meanwhile the MOGAMI made every effort to jettison her remaining torpedoes (it will be recalled that she had fired four torpedoes at 0401:30 leaving eight in her torpedo tubes). She had succeeded in jettisoning four of these eight, when, also at about 0441, a large fire broke out amidships. This fire exploded the remaining four torpedoes in the tubes as well as certain antiaircraft and machine gun ammunition in the area of the fire and of the torpedo explosions.**** This left six torpedoes (reloads) in storage somewhere in the ship, but likely in the vicinity of the mounts.

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

About this time the sole remaining operating engine room, the forward port engine room, became untenable due to smoke and high temperature. Because of the heavy smoke pouring through the engine room ventilators from burning boats and punts on deck, breathing became very difficult, the visibility became zero, and the temperature reached 140°(F) (60°(C)) in the control room. All personnel withdrew to No. SIX fireroom leaving the main engine operating.*

The Commanding Officer MOGAMI now, at 0445, attempted to follow the NACHI as ordered. This view is supported by the DENVER track chart which shows that the MOGAMI was bearing 169°(T), range 29,400 yards and that at this time she changed course to 190°(T).**

At about 0446 she sighted a destroyer on the port bow with her bow severed.*** At 0450, noting that this destroyer had turned toward him, the commanding officer signalled by blinker light, "This is the MOGAMI. We are using hand steering", and received a signal back, "This is ASAGUMO".*

WHILE IT MAY SEEM SURPRISING THAT NEITHER THE MOGAMI NOR THE ASAGUMO ASKED FOR NOR OFFERED ANY HELP THE ONE TO THE OTHER, THEIR ACTION IN THE MATTER SEEMS CORRECT FOR THEY WERE BOTH DAMAGED AND RETIRING UNDER THEIR OWN POWER WITH THE MOGAMI NOW INCREASING SPEED TO FOURTEEN KNOTS AND THE ASAGUMO TO BUT NINE POINT FIVE KNOTS. SINCE THE MOGAMI WAS MUCH MORE VALUABLE TO THE JAPANESE EFFORT THAN WAS THE ASAGUMO IT BECAME IMPORTANT THAT SHE SURVIVE IF POSSIBLE AND SINCE THE ENEMY SHIPS COULD BE EXPECTED TO CONDUCT A "CHASE" NO DELAY WAS WARRANTED.

Around this time the MOGAMI appears from the Allied radar plots to have increased speed to about fourteen knots. The MOGAMI track shows sixteen knots. How, under the emergency conditions reported, she accomplished this is not explained.

At about 0455, probably because he observed the SHIGURE open fire on the Upper Surigao PT's and did not wish to cross the line of fire, the Commanding Officer MOGAMI changed course to 304°(T)** (Diagram "K").

At 0500 he changed course to 270°(T) to parallel the course of the NACHI and increased speed to fifteen knots. About 0505 he changed course to 230°(T).**

At approximately 0510 bridge steering was restored by the installation of emergency wiring.*

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944. Enclosure (B).

*** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

At 0514 the MOGAMI, still making fifteen knots, steadied on course 192°(T). At 0520 she was bearing (a) 274°(T), distant six point sixty-five miles from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island and (b) 318°(T), distant 2,700 yards from the NACHI.

(2) SHIGURE

At 0420 the SHIGURE, having cleared the SHIRANUHI, changed course to about 189°(T) in order to pass Binit Light close aboard (Diagram "K").

She was working up to thirty knots in order to clear the strait as rapidly as possible. However, just as all seemed well, she suddenly, at 0424, suffered a steering engine casualty as a result of which she commenced shifting to manual steering.*

Although she does not mention it in her action report, it seems clear that she encountered difficulties in so shifting for her 0426 position was plotted by the KILLEN as bearing 155°(T), distant 27,700 yards from the KILLEN, her 0438 position was plotted by the PHOENIX as "dead in the water" in position bearing 159°(T), distant sixteen point four miles from the PHOENIX and her 0438:30 position by the Upper Surigao PT's as bearing about 323°(T), distant about 9,200 yards (Diagram "K"). Since it takes about three minutes for CIC to establish a speed zero she must have actually been dead in the water about 0435. From the Allied radar data her course from 0426 to 0435 appears to have been 040°(T).

At 0440 she sighted the NACHI, and perhaps also the MOGAMI, on a southerly course* some 5,200 yards to the north and east. It is likely that she was sighted by the NACHI at about the same time for at 0441 Commander SECOND Striking Force ordered the THIRD Section to "follow behind NACHI". At 0445 she replied that her steering engines were out of order.*

At approximately 0455, while still on a northeasterly heading, she sighted the Upper Surigao PT's bearing about 120°(T), distant about 5,400 yards. She immediately opened fire at the PT's,** went ahead at twenty-four knots and changed course to 300°(T).*** (The MTB's reported that the firing

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report PT 321, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** SHIGURE's movements until after her change of course at 0522 are based on (a) Track Chart, Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, (b) Appended Chart 2, Chart of Night Battle, THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force, 0030 - 0530, October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801, and (c) the statement of her Commanding Officer that he retired at 24 knots contained in USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 350.

was not accurate until after 0459 at which time PT 321 had a hot run on deck while attempting to fire torpedoes. This hot run was sufficiently bright to attract the attention of the ASAGUMO which also opened fire. The gunfire, probably from the SHIGURE, was accurate enough to seriously wound one man and to make a shrapnel hole in the radar mast of the PT 321.* This action is discussed more fully under "Operations of Upper Surigao PT's, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

About 0501 he changed course to 240°(T) and at 0509 to 196°(T). At the latter time she was bearing 157°(T), range thirteen point eight miles from the PHOENIX.**

Starting at approximately 0513 she appears to have had more steering difficulties as both her action chart and the PHOENIX track chart show her on a sinuous course. Then at approximately 0515 she slowed to fifteen knots presumably for the purpose of assisting in the steering of the ship.

At about this same time Commander SECOND Striking Force, in NACHI, once again sighted the SHIGURE on his starboard bow,*** distant 4,400 yards.

Several minutes later (0517) the SHIGURE settled on course 195°(T) and appears to have corrected the worst of her steering difficulties although she did not report her steering restored until later.

At 0520 the SHIGURE was proceeding on course 195°(T), speed fifteen knots, and was bearing 256°(T), distant seven point seven miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island. (Diagram "L").

(3) ASAGUMO

The damaged ASAGUMO continued on course 090°(T) at a speed of about six knots. Due to the current, which was setting south, she was making good a course of about 108°(T).

At 0441 she most likely received Commander SECOND Striking Force's order to "follow behind NACHI".****

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* Action Report PT 321, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Track Chart, Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operations, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

At 0447, probably realizing that the MOGAMI was attempting to follow the NACHI, she changed course to 238°(T) and increased speed to nine point five knots.* The commanding officer stated later that he had sighted the MOGAMI afire about 0400 and had attempted to follow her but did not have enough speed.** At 0450 he exchanged calls with her.***

At about 0459 he sighted PT 321 which had had a hot torpedo run on deck and promptly opened fire on her.**** Although the SHIGURE was also firing at this MTB and was probably the more accurate of the two ships since she (a) was not as badly damaged as the ASAGUMO, (b) had been firing at the MTB's for several minutes and (c) was closer, it is possible that the ASAGUMO assisted in making the Upper Surigao PT's turn to the south.

At 0518 the ASAGUMO was bearing 174°(T), range 16,100 yards from the LOUISVILLE***** and at 0520 she was bearing 294°(T), distant four point eight miles from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island.

(4) FUSO

The two sections of the FUSO, which remained about 2,000 yards apart, continued to drift to the south with the current. (Diagram "L").

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* ASAGUMO track based on Allied radar plots.

** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

*** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Dcoument 160463, NA 12653.

**** Action Report PT 321, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

***** Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

(B) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At the commencement of this period Commander SECOND Striking Force, in his flagship NACHI, followed by the ASHIGARA, was on course 000°(T) at twenty-eight knots. DESDIV EIGHTEEN (SHIRANUHI, KASUMI, AKEBONO, USHIO) was moving to the northwest at thirty-four knots on course 330°(T). All ships were preparing to fire torpedoes* against an enemy group of ships which had been located by radar.

At this time he likely noted that the SHIGURE, which had just crossed ahead of the SHIRANUHI, was about 3,100 yards to the southwest (Diagram "K") and was continuing to retire.

Since, at this time, DESDIV EIGHTEEN was operating largely on its own, the operations of this command will be discussed separately.

When Commander SECOND Striking Force had determined that all ships had completed preparations for firing torpedoes, he (a) at 0424, changed course to starboard, apparently to about 090°(T), in order to fire torpedoes to port and (b) at the same time directed the destroyers to attack.** This was in accordance with his battle plan discussed under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0348 - 0420, October 25th", wherein upon contacting the enemy, he planned to launch separate torpedo attacks, first by his cruisers and then by his destroyers.

WHILE THE CONCEPT OF MAKING TORPEDO ATTACKS AS ABOVE STATED WAS SOUND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE QUESTION AS TO THE ADVISABILITY OF LAUNCHING (A) ATTACKS AGAINST A FORCE, THE CHARACTERISTICS AND MOVEMENTS OF WHICH ARE UNKNOWN AND (B) UNCOORDINATED TORPEDO ATTACKS.

SINCE HIS RADAR HAD NOT PROVEN PARTICULARLY GOOD--IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT ABOUT ONE HOUR EARLIER HE HAD VERY NEARLY RUN AGROUND ON PANAON ISLAND--WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN A BETTER COURSE OF ACTION HAD HE CHANGED HIS PLAN AND SENT THE DESTROYERS AHEAD TO INVESTIGATE THE RADAR CONTACT AND TO ATTACK IF WARRANTED?

THIS SEEMS THE PROPER COURSE FOR HE HAD ALREADY OBSERVED NOT ONLY THAT HIS COMMAND WAS NOT UNDER FIRE BUT THAT THE GUNFLASHES AHEAD HAD CEASED.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC,Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Ibid.; also Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

WHILE THE JAPANESE INSTRUCTIONS AT THIS TIME ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THIS ANALYSIS, IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEY WERE SIMILAR TO U. S. NAVY INSTRUCTIONS WHICH STATED THAT "THE NUMBER OF TORPEDOES CARRIED BY ANY SHIP IS LIMITED AND THE REPLACEMENTS OF EXPENDED TORPEDOES MAY BE DIFFICULT, UNCERTAIN OR LONG DELAYED. TORPEDOES ARE FIRED ONLY WHEN THERE IS REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF OBTAINING RESULTS WHICH JUSTIFY THE EXPENDITURE".*

At 0427 both cruisers, using radar contact, fired eight high speed** (forty-nine knots),*** short range (22,000 yards)*** torpedoes per ship on base torpedo course 025°(T), with a torpedo spread of one degree.** Since neither of the cruisers reported to the contrary it is assumed that all torpedoes ran hot, straight and normal. What they were firing at is not known for there were no Allied nor Japanese ships in the area referred to. However, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0348 - 0420, October 25th", it seems likely that the target was Hibuson Island for the western shoreline of that island was embraced in each spread (Diagram "K").

At about this time he decided that the ship sighted in the water at 0415 was the MOGAMI. He further decided that he was not clearing her and, therefore, changed course to the right to about 110°(T). (Actually this ship which was in fact the MOGAMI and which had been moving so slowly as to appear stopped was gathering headway.) He now recognized this fact and realized that there was danger of collision. The Commanding Officer NACHI, who by now was also fully alert to this, endeavored to avoid collision by employing full right rudder but he was unsuccessful--the ships collided at 0430 in the bows. The damage to the NACHI was serious; her stem was heavily damaged, her speed reduced to eighteen knots, her anchor windlass room was flooded and there appeared to be seepage into the steering room.**

Meanwhile the ASHIGARA continued on course 090°(T) and passed astern of the MOGAMI.

Commander SECOND Striking Force now decided to head south in order to survey the situation. Therefore, he settled on course 180°(T) at five knots.

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* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, Chapter 12, Section XII, Paragraph 12169.

** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Foot-locker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

*** U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan Summary Report, November 1st, 1946.

He now re-estimated the situation and decided that in view of the NACHI's reduced speed, the destruction of the greater part of the THIRD Section and the possibility of coordinating his activities with Commander Main Body it would be unwise to proceed further up the strait and therefore directed his destroyers to "Reverse course to the south and rejoin".* He also notified CinC Combined Fleet and Commander SW Area Force that "This force has completed its attack and is temporarily retiring from the battle area in order to plan subsequent action".**

WHILE HIS ACTION IN DECIDING TO RETIRE SEEMS SOUND FOR THE REASONS STATED, AND FOR THE FURTHER REASON THAT HIS CRUISERS HAD LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS WHERE THE BATTLESHIPS HAD FAILED, HIS ACTION IN SENDING THIS DISPATCH WAS NOT SOUND FOR IT STATED THAT HE HAD COMPLETED AN ATTACK, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT IT WAS AGAINST A SUITABLE TARGET, WHEN AS A MATTER OF FACT HE DID NOT KNOW (A) WHAT THE TARGET THAT HE HAD FIRED AT WAS NOR (B) WHAT FINAL ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE DESTROYERS. WOULD HE NOT HAVE BEEN MORE CORRECT HAD HE (A) REPORTED TO CINC COMBINED FLEET THE DISASTER TO THE THIRD SECTION WHICH HE HAD CLOSELY OBSERVED AND (B) STATED THAT IN CONSEQUENCE THEREOF HE HAD FIRED HIS TORPEDOES AT AN ENEMY DISCOVERED ONLY BY RADAR AND HAD THEN RETIRED.

Certain of the Japanese officers disagreed with Commander SECOND Striking Force's decision to retire without further closing the enemy. One of them, the Control Station Officer of the MOGAMI, stated later, "Most deplorable in this connection was the action of the SECOND Striking Force which despite the fact that it succeeded in penetrating into Leyte Gulf then failed to carry out a thorough action against the enemy. This is indeed indisputable. Considerable dissatisfaction on this score was felt among the personnel both of AKEBONO and of the flagship NACHI".***

This comment by the Control Station Officer is interesting in that it shows either (a) the looseness of the Japanese concepts as to what constituted Leyte Gulf or (b) the lack of knowledge among some of the THIRD Section survivors as to the distance the SECOND Striking Force actually penetrated into Surigao Strait. Diagram "K" shows that even the destroyers did not penetrate beyond Esconchada Point (Dinagat Island) and, that at the time of their greatest penetration, they were no nearer to the nearest Allied major units (right flank cruisers) than about 20,000 yards.

In view of this the Control Station Officer's disagreement is not considered correct, for while to have "carried out a thorough action against the enemy" was suitable in that, if successful, it would have contributed

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operations, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250435 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, info SHO Operation Forces, Detailed Action Report CARDIV 4, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

*** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

to the accomplishment of the objective based on the disaster to the THIRD Section it was clearly infeasible in which case the consequences as to cost would be unacceptable. Such an attack would necessarily be classed as a "Banzai" attack but, in this case the possibility of success which Banzai attacks often had had, was so low as to be negligible.

At 0434 the ASHIGARA, which had slowed to fifteen knots, changed course to 223°(T) and further decreased speed to ten knots in order to fall in astern of the NACHI.

At 0440, since the SHIGURE recorded that at this time she had sighted the SECOND Striking Force on a southerly course,* it seems likely that Commander SECOND Striking Force had likewise sighted the SHIGURE, for at 0441 he ordered the THIRD Section to "follow behind NACHI".* At 0445 he received the SHIGURE's reply that her steering engines were out of order.*

At 0449 he sent a dispatch, presumably to all battle report addressees to the effect that BATDIV TWO had been destroyed and that the MOGAMI had been severely damaged and set afire.**

At about 0451, having learned from the NACHI the extent of her damage, he directed her to increase speed to eighteen knots. At 0455, when the SHIGURE opened fire on the Upper Surigao PT's, he reversed course to the north*** in order not to cross the line of fire.

At about 0458, as this turn to the north was completed, he changed course to 270°(T). At 0500, when he steadied on the new course, the DENVER track chart shows that the radar bearing was 179°(T), range 25,300 yards. At 0504 he changed course to 230°(T).***

At 0506 he ordered a change of course to 180°(T).*** The MOGAMI, doing her best to follow NACHI, as ordered at 0441, was about 1,300 yards on the NACHI's port quarter and at this same time had just changed course to 230°(T).**** ASHIGARA, seeing that there was not sufficient room to safely pass ahead of MOGAMI, continued the turn, steadied on course 150°(T),*** and passed astern of MOGAMI (Diagram "K"). At about 0511 ASHIGARA changed course to 185°(T) and increased speed to twenty knots in order to fall in astern of NACHI at 0520.

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* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250449, October 1944 to Unknown Addressees, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

*** Track Chart, Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

**** Ibid.; also Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944; also Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At about 0515 Commander SECOND Striking Force sighted SHIGURE on the starboard bow.* She was proceeding on southerly courses toward the southern entrance to Surigao Strait.

At 0520 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in NACHI with ASHIGARA astern, was five point fifty-eight miles, bearing 268°(T) from Kanihaan Island. MOGAMI was on the starboard quarter, distant 3,000 yards, and was closing the NACHI track on course 155°(T), but was gradually dropping behind.

(1) Operations of COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

As mentioned under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0420 - 0520, October 25th" at 0420 COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN, in SHIRANUHI with KASUMI, AKEBONO and USHIO in column astern, was proceeding on course 330°(T) to clear NACHI and ASHIGARA, and was increasing speed to thirty-four knots. At this time he was about eight miles, bearing 092°(T) from Bobon Village (Leyte). (Diagram "K").

At 0424:51, being well clear of the cruisers, he changed course to 000°(T), and headed toward the enemy's probable location.

As he moved to the northward he likely knew that the cruisers had fired their torpedoes, but at what target he did not know, for he seems to have had nothing on his radar scopes. He realized at this time that since the cruisers had turned to the eastward some minutes earlier he was, at 0429, some distance ahead of them in the direction of the enemy. Therefore, it seems likely that, having nothing on his radar scope, he decided to change course also to the east to endeavor to contact the targets fired at by the cruisers, for, at 0429:54, he changed course to 090°(T).**

As he moved to the eastward he seems to have continued to contact nothing other than Hibuson Island--about eight miles away--and which he sighted from time to time through breaks in the smoke screen which persisted from the actions between THIRD Section and the Allied ships.

At about 0435 or shortly before he was directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force to,"Reverse course to the south and rejoin". Having sighted nothing and having nothing on his radar screen he immediately changed course to 145°(T) and commenced retiring.

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* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

** Track Chart, Action Report CALIFORNIA, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0024, November 3rd, 1944; also Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

At 0440:42, observing that both the NACHI and ASHIGARA were on a course of 180°(T), he changed course to 180°(T) in order to parallel their track.*

At about this time he observed that the USHIO, under instructions from Commander SECOND Striking Force, was heading toward the southern entrance to Surigao Strait in order to escort the ABUKUMA which had been torpedoed at 0325 that morning** by PT 137.

At 0444 he slowed to twenty knots in order to avoid closing the cruisers too rapidly. However, it appears that at about 0503 the remaining three destroyers were directed to proceed down the strait.

At 0520 COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN, still on course 180°(T) at twenty knots, was bearing 275°(T), distant five point ninety-three miles from the northern tip of Sibanoc Island. (Diagram "L").

(2) Operations of ABUKUMA, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 the damaged ABUKUMA, which was about four miles northwest of Madilao Point, had just come to course 200°(T) and increased speed to ten knots.

At 0445 having completed her first emergency repairs, including strengthening bulkheads, she reversed course to 020°(T)*** and increased speed to twenty knots in order to follow the SECOND Striking Force.

THIS ACTION BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER ABUKUMA WAS OF COURSE CORRECT. SINCE HIS OWN FORCES WERE PROCEEDING UP THE STRAIT AND INTO BATTLE, IT WAS INCUMBENT UPON HIM TO FOLLOW AND TO ENDEAVOR TO REJOIN, OR TO BE AS NEARLY IN SUPPORT AS POSSIBLE. WHILE THE JAPANESE INSTRUCTIONS IN SUCH CASE ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THIS STUDY, BASED ON THE ACTION OF THE ABUKUMA IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THEY WERE SIMILAR TO THE U.S. NAVY INSTRUCTIONS AT THE TIME, WHICH STATED THAT OWN SHIPS DISABLED IN ACTION "SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY AS LONG AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO INFLICT DAMAGE ON THE ENEMY OR TO DIVERT ENEMY FIRE WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE DIRECTED AGAINST MORE EFFECTIVE UNITS. IF THE DISABLEMENT IS TEMPORARY THE VESSEL SHOULD ENDEAVOR TO FOLLOW IN THE REAR OF HER FORMATION. IF UNABLE TO REJOIN HER FORMATIONS SHE SHOULD JOIN A FOLLOWING UNIT OF AN APPROPRIATE TYPE OR TAKE SUCH PART IN THE ACTION AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT."****

At 0515 she reported sighting CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and its escorting destroyers approaching on opposite course.*** Since the USHIO was eleven point five miles away and the other units were even farther away, and since

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* Track Chart, Action Report PORTLAND, Surface Engagement in Leyte Gulf, October 25th, 1944, Serial 065, October 28th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 24th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

*** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

**** War Instructions, United States Navy, 1944 (FTP 143A), Chapter 12, Section XIV, Paragraph 12188.

it was still dark with poor visibility* it seems very doubtful indeed if she actually sighted any of these units at this time. In view of the fact that the range was closing rapidly it seems probable that there was a time of sighting error of at least five minutes.

At 0520 the ABUKUMA was bearing 123°(T), distant three point six miles from Binit Point.

* Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

CHAPTER XIX - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0420 - 0520, October 25th

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 CTG 77.2 (OTC), having just completed simultaneous 180° individual ship turns with his left flank cruisers, was on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots. His flagship, LOUISVILLE, because of this maneuver, was the last ship in column.

With the completion of this turn he had to decide what further action he should take since none of the enemy ships were within gun range and all others were retiring.

At this point he was aware that certain members of his staff were recommending that he chase the enemy with his cruisers.* However, he did not accept this recommendation but instead decided not to pursue the enemy at this time. How he arrived at this decision is not fully explained, but there are indications that he was concerned over enemy torpedoes. However, this concern could not have been too great for he also decided to continue the battle disposition on its westerly course rather than to turn it to a new course parallel to the expected enemy torpedo tracks. It seems more likely that, knowing that (a) additional enemy forces (one large ship and five small ones) had been reported at 0342 by PT 523 as passing Surigao Strait on a northerly course, he was determined to await further reports thereon before advancing down the strait with his heavy ships and possibly subjecting them to torpedo attacks by these new units as well as possibly by other as yet undiscovered units and (b) at 0415 he had directed COMDES-DIV XRAY to report to him for duty and had as yet heard nothing from that commander, he desired to delay his pursuit of the enemy until that commander had reported. This was important as he planned to have DESDIV XRAY precede his heavy forces if and when he decided to pursue the enemy.**

At 0420:30 he received a message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that the NEWCOMB and the RICHARD P. LEARY were at the post-attack rendezvous point (three miles north of Hibuson Island), and that the ALBERT W. GRANT was still proceeding on a northerly course at about ten knots.*** Unfortunately the latter information was in error for the ALBERT W. GRANT was at this time dead in the water.

At 0423 he slowed to ten knots and at 0424 he directed the Left Flank Force to resume fire when a solution was obtained.**** Why he issued this order when no enemy targets were within effective gun range is not known but it is assumed that he hoped thereby to give his ships freedom of action to open fire should an enemy target appear.

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* Oral Statement of Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret)(Chief of Staff to CTG 77.2 at the Battle of Surigao Strait), October 20th, 1957.

** Hawthorne Daniel, "As Seen From the Bridge", Blue Book Magazine, March, 1949.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0426 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMCRUDIV TWELVE to the effect that there were four additional targets bearing 184°(T), distant fourteen to seventeen miles,* (Diagram "K"). This contact was on the SECOND Striking Force which at this time was bearing 183°(T), distant thirteen point eight miles (to the NACHI). COMCRUDIV TWELVE stated in his action report that this contact was reported, inferring that someone had reported it to him, but he does not say who reported it.** Since his track chart shows no trace of the above contact and since the DENVER and COLUMBIA do not mention it, it seems clear that it came from the DENVER CIC, for the DENVER track chart shows the track of this group starting at 0423.*** He took no immediate action on this report presumably preferring to wait for more information on the situation.

At 0427 he received a message from CTG 77.3 to the effect that the MTB's had sighted some ships heading south.**** This likely was a relay of PT 132's contact report on the ABUKUMA.*****

At 0428 he received a TBS voice radio message from the Commanding Officer COLUMBIA reporting that the GRANT had been hit and was lying dead in the water.****** He immediately retransmitted the substance of this message and included therein a directive to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to have a destroyer stand by.******

At 0429 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV XRAY reporting for duty and stating that three of his destroyers (CLAXTON, CONY, THORN) were in the van of the battleships and three (AULICK, SIGOURNEY, WELLES) were in the rear.*

Since at 0415 he had instructed Commander Battle Line by TBS voice radio to direct COMDESDIV XRAY to report to him (CTG 77.2) for duty he likely wondered what had caused the fourteen minute delay. Actually the delay was largely due to communication difficulties between the commands concerned for COMDESDIV XRAY had first reported at 0421. This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of COMDESDIV XRAY, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations of CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

*** Track Chart, Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

****** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0430 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX reporting that NEWCOMB was standing toward the ALBERT W. GRANT and would render all assistance required.*

Just one minute later at 0431 he received a contact report from CTG 77.3 to the effect that the PHOENIX had contacted by radar five fairly small targets on a northerly course bearing 160°(T), distant 20,000 yards. He promptly relayed this report to COMDESDIV XRAY.* This contact was on the four destroyers (DESDIV EIGHTEEN) of the SECOND Striking Force. The range was correct but the bearing was somewhat incorrect being more nearly 166°(T) (Diagram "K"). Peculiarly enough this contact is not shown on the track charts submitted by CTG 77.3, the PHOENIX, or by the SHROPSHIRE. It is shown on the BOISE track chart from 0429 to 0435, and on the KILLEN track chart from 0429 to 0438.**

Also at 0431 he received a report from COMCRUDIV TWELVE that a group of three enemy ships was bearing 190°(T), distant fourteen miles.* These were the NACHI, ASHIGARA and MOGAMI (Diagram "K"). The composition of this group and the range were correct but the bearing was incorrect being more nearly 172°(T). (This report was repeated by COMCRUDIV TWELVE at 0434.)*

At 0431:30 he (a) warned his command that the ALBERT W. GRANT was badly hit, was dead in the water in the channel and (b) directed all ships to take precautions not to hit her.***

At 0432 he directed COMDESDIV XRAY by TBS voice radio to (a) proceed south, (b) engage and fire torpedoes at the enemy and (c) then clear the channel and retire to the northward hugging the coast.****

By this time (0432) his radar screen indicated that all enemy units were either dead in the water or retiring to the southward.*****

At this point he commenced re-estimating the situation to determine (a) whether he should now pursue the enemy and (b) if so, with what forces. He decided that he should proceed south with his left flank cruisers leaving his battleships and his right flank force to operate independently.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Track Chart, Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, Morning of October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944; also Track Chart, Action Report KILLEN, Surigao Straits Surface Engagement, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944; also Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

***** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0433 in accordance with his decision he changed course to 190°(T) by individual ship turns.* Surprising enough he did not issue any instructions thereon to either Commander Battle Line or Commander Right Flank Force, excepting to advise the latter that he was heading on course 190°(T).**

WHILE HIS DECISION TO PROCEED SOUTH WITH THE LEFT FLANK CRUISERS WAS SOUND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO HIS WISDOM IN DEPARTING WITHOUT GIVING ANY INSTRUCTIONS WHATSOEVER TO THE ABOVE COMMANDERS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE WHEN IT IS REMEMBERED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT THEY HAD BEEN ASSEMBLED IN A BATTLE DISPOSITION AND THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING NECESSARY IN CASES OF THIS NATURE MIGHT NOT OBTAIN. FORTUNATELY THIS DID NOT PROVE DISADVANTAGEOUS FOR, AS IS SHOWN LATER, BOTH COMMANDERS OPERATED EXACTLY AS DESIRED.

At 0433:30 he received a TBS voice radio message from the ARUNTA reporting a contact on five enemy ships five miles to the south** (since this contact is discussed under "Operations of Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th" it will not be discussed here). His radar scope now showed that the enemy units were circling or maneuvering radically but by 0437 they were again retiring on southerly courses.*** (This reflects the normal confusion that appears in the plot immediately following a large change of course and in this case was probably magnified by the collision of the NACHI and the MOGAMI and by the separate tracks followed by the ASHIGARA and the USHIO (Diagram "K").)

At this same time (0437) he ordered his left flank cruisers to form column on the flagship, LOUISVILLE, and increased speed to fifteen knots.**

At 0438 he sent a message via the PT common circuit to COMMTBRON THIRTY-SIX and certain other MTB's informing them that friendly cruisers and destroyers were proceeding south and requesting them to notify all PT's.**

At 0440 he sent a message to CTF 77 via the local air warning net reporting that (a) the enemy appeared to be retiring to the south, (b) they were being strongly pursued by the cruisers and destroyers and (c) strongly recommending an air attack in the early morning on any that might escape.****

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Ibid.; also Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

SINCE THE CRUISERS AND DESTROYERS WERE MAKING BUT FIFTEEN KNOTS THE STATEMENT THAT THEY WERE PURSUING STRONGLY SEEMS SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED. ON THE OTHER HAND THE REQUEST FOR A MORNING AIR STRIKE ON THE ESCAPING ENEMY SHIPS WAS A VERY WISE ONE AND SHOWS A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COORDINATION NECESSARY COMPLETELY TO DESTROY THE ENEMY.

THIS IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. AS SOUND MILITARY DECISION STATES, "TO ESTABLISH AND TO CULTIVATE A STATE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING FROM WHICH WILL FLOW MUTUAL LOYALTY BORN OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE ARE PRIME OBLIGATIONS OF COMMAND. WITHIN THE LIMITS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND RESULTANT AUTHORITY, INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE WILL FOLLOW. ON A FOUNDATION OF INTELLIGENT COOPERATION AND RESOLUTE DETERMINATION, THE ACTS OF THE LOWEST COMMANDER WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DESIRES OF THE HIGHEST."*

At 0442 he may have intercepted a TBS voice radio message from the AULICK to COMBATDIV THREE reporting that he was proceeding around the battleships on their unengaged side in order to join COMDESDIV XRAY.** However, the evidence appears to be very much to the contrary for it seems unlikely that he would later have queried COMDESDIV XRAY as to his speed. It seems far more likely that at this time he thought that DESDIV XRAY was already en route south.

At 0442 he received a TBS voice radio message from the COLUMBIA addressed to him and to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX stating that she had intercepted a message to the effect that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been hit, had no power and was taking water.*** He noted that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX had acknowledged indicating that he would furnish help, and that about two minutes later the TENNESSEE had repeated to him the basic message.**** Because of this, at 0447:30 he asked COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX if all of his ships were present or accounted for.***

At 0450, his cruisers being approximately in formation, he ordered his left flank cruisers to change course by column movement to 180°(T),*** which headed them directly toward the enemy.

At 0451 he received two TBS voice radio messages (a) one from CTG 77.3 reporting that all of his ships were together and on his (the west) side of the channel,*** and (b) the other from the WEST VIRGINIA reporting that a plane had just passed her.**

Meanwhile, since he had not contacted DESDIV XRAY either by sight or by radar, he became concerned as to its location. He realized that it should be somewhere in the vicinity but where? Feeling that it was most likely to the north of him he, at 0453, queried COMDESDIV XRAY also by TBS voice radio as to what speed was being made and promptly received a reply of twenty knots.**

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* Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, Newport, R. I., 1942, Chapter I, Page 15.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

At 0456:30 he contacted by radar a group of enemy ships on a northerly course bearing 175°(T), distant 25,500 yards. This contact is discussed fully under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

Since he was also Commander Left Flank Force he knew that (a) at 0457 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX had reported that all of his destroyers were present or accounted for, and that all were at the rendezvous except the NEWCOMB which was assisting the ALBERT W. GRANT,* (b) Commander Left Flank Force had directed COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to screen the left flank cruisers from ahead, stating that he was about five miles to the west of Hibuson Island** and that his course was 180°(T),* and (c) at 0459 COMDESDIV 112 had replied for COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX stating that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was in the NEWCOMB which was screening the ALBERT W. GRANT, and that he (COMDESDIV 112) was in charge and would screen ahead of the cruisers.**

At 0501 he noted that the enemy cruisers had changed course to the west and that the burning enemy ships were moving to the south.***

At 0508 he was informed by COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR by TBS voice radio that his destroyers would remain in the previously designated post-rendezvous point until after daylight and then resume normal screening stations.**** Then, at 0509, he noted that the enemy cruisers had changed course to south southwest and appeared to be retiring. At the latter time he further noted that the other enemy ships had scattered and "appeared to be operating independently, and trying to retire to the southward".***

At 0511 he likely intercepted COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's order directing the RICHARD P. LEARY to proceed to the vicinity of the NEWCOMB and ALBERT W. GRANT to render assistance against air attack.*

At about 0512 he directed COMDESDIV 112 to (a) retain destroyers in former stations until daylight and then (b) regain regular screen.***** He apparently made an error in the call for these instructions clearly pertain to DESRON FIFTY-FOUR. It appears that this latter message confused COMDESDIV 112 for, at 0515, that commander, in the ROBINSON, changed course to the west and delayed his arrival in the vicinity of the cruisers.

At 0514 he likely received a message from PT 490, discussed under "Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0420 - 0520, October 25th, Lower Surigao PT's, PT 490", which reported certain gunfire in Surigao Strait

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** TBS Voice Log, Action Report MELVIN, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 079, November 5th, 1944.

***** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

and the movement northward of three targets.* Since the data contained therein was quite confusing it seems likely that he gave it relatively slight attention.

At 0517, since he was Commander Left Flank Force as well, he knew that that commander had asked COMDESDIV 112 if his division was coming down at thirty knots and had received an immediate reply of "Affirmative".** Actually the division was making fifteen knots at the time and did not increase speed to twenty knots until 0530.***

While he does not explain his reasons for querying COMDESDIV 112 in such fashion the evidence seems to point to the fact that he did not realize that his 0512 message had gone to that commander rather than to COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR and he was now wondering what was delaying the arrival of the DESRON FIFTY-SIX destroyers.

At 0518 the LOUISVILLE track chart shows that the MOGAMI was about 18,000 yards away, bearing 193°(T), heading away and that the ASAGUMO was about 16,100 yards away, bearing 174°(T) on a crossing course. She appears not to have been tracking the NACHI and ASHIGARA at this time although they were within radar range.****

Several minutes later at 0519, since the air warning net was of almost the same frequency as the PT common, he likely intercepted a message from PT 494 to PT 526 reporting that of the three targets off Panaon Island at least two had proceeded in a northerly direction and one was south of Panaon Island.* It seems likely that (a) both the 0514 and 0519 messages referred to the three cruisers (NACHI, ASHIGARA, ABUKUMA) operating with Commander SECOND Striking Force and (b) since the ABUKUMA had been torpedoed and had fallen out of formation much earlier, both of these messages had clearly been greatly delayed in transmission. Had the time of sighting been included in those messages the above delays would have been unfortunate, but not serious, but without the time of sighting they might well have become both serious and confusing.

IN THIS CONNECTION COMMUNICATION DOCTRINE STATES, IN PART, UNDER THE HEADING "FAILURE TO OBTAIN OR TO STATE FULLY THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE", "CONTACT REPORTS MUST INCLUDE WHAT IS SIGHTED, WHERE IT IS SIGHTED, WHAT DIRECTION AND SPEED IT IS GOING AND WHEN IT IS SIGHTED."*****

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

**** Track Chart, 0412 to 0540, October 25th, 1944, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

***** Basic Fleet Operational Communications Doctrine (NWP 16), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 1953, Chapter 5, Paragraph 501(b).

At 0519 he ordered his left flank cruisers to increase speed to twenty knots.*

At 0520 CTG 77.2, in LOUISVILLE, was seven point nine miles, bearing 274°(T) from Esconchada Point (Diagram "K").

(1) Operations of COMDESDIV XRAY, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0421 COMDESDIV XRAY reported to CTG 77.2 (OTC), stating that one section was east of the battle line (eastern destroyers) and one was west of the battle line (western destroyers). However, due to communication difficulties it was not until 0432 that he received orders to proceed south and make a torpedo attack.** At this latter time, since they were conforming to the movements of the MISSISSIPPI and BATDIV FOUR as ordered by Commander Battle Line (Diagram "K"), his destroyers were on course 270°(T), speed ten knots. Upon receiving CTG 77.2's order to proceed south he immediately directed his division to clear the battle line and to form column natural order on the CLAXTON.*** He stated later that, at the same time, he had directed the eastern destroyers (SECOND Section) under the Commanding Officer AULICK, to clear the battle line to the north because he expected the battle line to turn to the south****--presumably to close the enemy.

The individual ships immediately commenced heading on various courses; the eastern destroyers to the westward and the western destroyers to the northwest as shown in Diagram "K" (based on their track charts and deck logs). In accordance with this plan, and since they were in reverse order also, the second commanders commenced re-forming their individual sections. At 0433 the CLAXTON changed course to 325°(T) and increased speed to twenty knots while the AULICK changed course to 300°(T) and increased speed to twenty knots.

The question now arises as to whether or not this decision to re-form north of the battle line was sound. The answer seems clearly in the negative for: (a) CTG 77.2 had directed the division commander to attack,***** (b) this meant to attack without delay for the Manual of Torpedo Control stated, "Once the decision is made to attack, approach

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Letter of Captain Miles H. Hubbard, USN (COMDESDIV XRAY at the battle of Surigao Strait) to Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, March 30th, 1949; also Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 15th, 1944.

**** Letter of Captain Miles H. Hubbard, USN (COMDESDIV XRAY at the battle of Surigao Strait) to Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, March 30th, 1949.

***** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action, Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

should be made to the firing point at the highest possible speed, subject to considerations of concealment and of maintaining the attack unit formation,"* (c) attack doctrine recommended that torpedo attacks of six destroyers be made from two sectors** which meant that the six destroyers should normally be divided into two attack sections of three destroyers each, (d) the division was presently divided into two such sections which were separated by about 13,000 yards and were therefore in excellent attack position to make a two sector attack on the enemy, (e) as regards the (1) eastern destroyers, the sea area toward the enemy was clear. This should have been apparent from the radar screens. At this time (0432) the left flank cruisers which had been moving in a westerly direction and were now changing course to 190°(T)*** were well clear while the ALBERT W. GRANT and the NEWCOMB were also well clear, although the NEWCOMB was headed toward the ALBERT W. GRANT and might interfere, but not seriously, (2) western destroyers, the sea area toward the enemy was not clear in that (a) the battleships PENNSYLVANIA and TENNESSEE which were changing course to the north to rejoin COMBATDIV THREE in the MISSISSIPPI and (b) the cruisers of CRUDIV FIFTEEN were almost due south. Therefore, as regards item (a) it is clear that COMDESDIV XRAY would have found it necessary to clear these two battleships either by passing to the westward of them or by passing between them, either of which maneuvers would have been easy to accomplish. As regards item (b) he would have found no difficulty for the three cruisers which comprised this division were changing course to the westward. Whether or not he knew this is not important, the fact would have been clearly evident on his radar scopes in a matter of minutes.

WHY, THEN, IN VIEW OF ALL OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN FURTHER VIEW OF THE DOCTRINE IN EFFECT, DID HE DECIDE THAT PRIOR TO ATTACKING IT WAS FIRST NECESSARY TO RE-FORM HIS DIVISION AND TO ENDEAVOR TO DO SO TO THE NORTH OF THE BATTLE LINE EVEN THOUGH HE MUST CLEARLY HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT THIS WOULD ENTAIL A MOST UNACCEPTABLE DELAY AT A CRUCIAL TIME IN THE BATTLE? THE ANSWER IS NOT READILY APPARENT BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT IT WAS LARGELY DUE TO (A) HIS OWN INEXPERIENCE (HE WAS BOTH COMMANDING OFFICER CLAXTON AND ACTING DIVISION COMMANDER), AND (B) THE FACT THAT HIS DIVISION WAS NOT A COMPLETE TACTICAL UNIT BUT WAS COMPOSED OF UNITS FROM OTHER DIVISIONS(i.e., CLAXTON, AULICK FROM DESDIV FORTY-FIVE, WELLES FROM DESDIV THIRTY-EIGHT, THORN FROM DESDIV THIRTY-SEVEN, CONY, SIGOURNEY FROM DESDIV THIRTY-FOUR).

IN OTHER WORDS COMDESDIV XRAY AT THIS TIME FELT A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO BRING HIS SHIPS INTO BATTLE UNTIL HE HAD FIRST ASSEMBLED THEM IN A CLEAR AREA TO THE NORTHWARD AND GIVEN THEM HIS BATTLE ORDERS.

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* Manual of Destroyer Torpedo Control, Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-45, issued by Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, August 22nd, 1945, Part I (Torpedo Attack Doctrine), Paragraph 1.13, Page 1.

** Destroyer Tactical Bulletin 4-43, Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions issued by Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet, Serial 01264, October 24th, 1943, Part IV, Paragraph 402D.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0434 he was advised by COMBATDIV TWO that the battleships were to make a left turn and to keep clear.* Since his three destroyers had just completed a turn to the right (or away from the battleships) this required no action on his part.

At 0438, being well clear of the battleships, he changed course to 270°(T)** and at 0439:30 the AULICK also changed course to 270°(T).*** At this time the AULICK was about 10,000 yards astern of the CLAXTON.

At 0441:24 the CONY increased speed to twenty knots, changed course to 270°(T) and took her proper position astern of the CLAXTON,**** and at 0442 COMDESDIV XRAY changed course to 220°(T)** to proceed around the battleships and toward the enemy.

At this same time (0442) the Commanding Officer AULICK informed Commander Battle Line by TBS voice radio that he was proceeding around the Battle Line's unengaged side to join COMDESDIV XRAY.***** It is assumed here that he meant with the SECOND Section.

HIS DECISION AT THIS POINT TO COMMENCE ROUNDING THE WESTERN END OF THE BATTLE LINE PRIOR TO HIS RE-FORMING HIS DIVISION SEEMS AT VARIANCE WITH HIS ORIGINAL PLAN TO RE-FORM HIS DIVISION NORTH OF THE BATTLE LINE PRIOR TO MOVING TO THE ATTACK. THIS SEEMS SO FOR IN THIS CASE, WHEREAS HIS OWN SECTION (WESTERN DESTROYERS) WAS APPROXIMATELY FORMED, THE EASTERN DESTROYERS WERE STILL FAR TO THE EASTWARD AND STILL UNFORMED. EVIDENTLY HE REALIZED THAT MUCH VITAL TIME WAS PASSING AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT HE PROCEED TO THE ATTACK EVEN WITHOUT THE EASTERN DESTROYERS. THIS WAS A SOUND DECISION AND ONLY REAFFIRMS WHAT HAS BEEN STATED EARLIER, i.e., THAT HE SHOULD HAVE PROCEEDED TO THE ATTACK AT 0432 WITH EACH SECTION PROCEEDING SOUTH SIMULTANEOUSLY. IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT HE LIKELY NOW REALIZED THE ERROR OF HIS ORIGINAL DECISION TO FORM HIS DIVISION NORTH OF THE BATTLE LINE.

At 0444 the Commander SECOND Section (eastern destroyers) increased speed to twenty-five knots.******

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Track Chart, Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

*** Track Chart, Action Report AULICK, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 147, October 29th, 1944.

**** Track Chart, Action Report CONY, Night Battle, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944.

***** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Action Report SIGOURNEY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 055, October 30th, 1944.

At 0445 the Commanding Officer THORN who was making fifteen knots changed course to 270°(T)* having, for reasons unknown, failed to turn to the track of the CLAXTON. It appears likely that he missed the turn to 220°(T) (made by the CLAXTON at 0442) for, from his track chart he proceeded a considerable distance to the westward before turning to the south.*

At 0452 COMDESDIV XRAY changed course to 120°(T)** At 0453 he received an inquiry from CTG 77.2 as to his speed to which he promptly replied that he was making twenty knots,*** and at 0455 he changed standard speed to twenty knots.*** It appears that this latter message was misinterpreted by the AULICK for her deck log states that she slowed to twenty knots at this time.****

At 0458 he intercepted a message from CTG 77.2 to the CONY wherein the CONY was requested to give her present course and speed.*** Since the CONY failed to reply it is assumed that he felt that she had not received the message. While likely wondering why it was that CTG 77.2 had queried the CONY rather than himself, or even his flagship (CLAXTON), he realized that action was necessary and, therefore, at 0502, he changed speed to twenty-five knots.*** Then, also at 0502, he intercepted a second message from CTG 77.2 to the CONY requesting DESDIV XRAY's course and speed.*** Although he likely noted that the CONY once again had failed to reply he also failed to take action himself to answer CTG 77.2's query.

WHY THIS WAS SO IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR HE MUST HAVE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS INFORMATION TO THE OTC WHO HAD DIRECTED HIM TO ATTACK, AND WHO HAD NOW QUERIED THE CONY TWICE THEREON. CERTAINLY THE FACT THAT HE HAD INCREASED SPEED AFTER INTERCEPTING CTG 77.2'S FIRST TRANSMISSION TO THE CONY GIVES INDICATIONS THAT (AS MENTIONED EARLIER) HE REALIZED THAT HE HAD DELAYED MOVING TO THE ATTACK FOR A MUCH LONGER PERIOD THAN SHOULD PROPERLY HAVE OCCURRED AND THEREFORE HAD INCREASED SPEED.

IT IS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST THAT IN ADDITION TO FAILING TO KEEP CTG 77.2 INFORMED OF HIS MOVEMENTS HE ALSO FAILED TO KEEP HIS OWN UNITS SO INFORMED. PERHAPS PART OF THE CONFUSION WITHIN HIS DIVISION CAN BE TRACED TO THIS FACT FOR, BASED ON THEIR TRACKS, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL IF THE VARIOUS UNITS EVEN EMPLOYING RADAR, WERE IN ALL CASES FAMILIAR WITH HIS MOVEMENTS.

Since the eastern destroyers did not succeed in concentrating with the western destroyers it seems well at this time (0458) to discuss the operations of each section separately.

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* Track Chart, Action Report THORN, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 034, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

*** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

**** Deck Log AULICK, October 25th, 1944.

(a) Western Destroyers.

These consisted of the CLAXTON (F), CONY and THORN. There were few difficulties with the first two destroyers which continued on a southeasterly course (120°(T)) at twenty-five knots until 0507 when they changed course to 160°(T).* At 0513 the CONY made radar contact on the ASHIGARA, bearing 169°(T), distant 31,700 yards on course 190°(T), speed thirteen knots** and at 0515 the CLAXTON likewise made radar contact on the ASHIGARA bearing 179°(T), distant 30,000 yards.* The CONY range and bearing were almost exactly correct; the CLAXTON range was correct, the CLAXTON bearing was incorrect; the correct bearing being about 173°(T).

The THORN, as pointed out earlier, did encounter serious difficulty having, at 0445, while on a course of 270°(T) at fifteen knots, failed to turn to course 220°(T) and follow the CLAXTON. Since there were no ships of his section in the area to the westward it is not clear why the commanding officer continued in that direction for about thirteen minutes and thereby failed immediately to rejoin his section as he properly should have done.

He may have mistaken the MC DERMUT and MONSSEN which were operating near the Leyte shore for the CLAXTON and CONY, but this seems doubtful for he well knew that the enemy were to the southward and not to the westward and therefore his basic course should be in a southerly or southeasterly direction.

At this time (0458) finally realizing this fact, he changed course first to 180°(T)*** and then at 0505 to 135°(T), increased speed to twenty-five knots**** and followed in the general direction of the CLAXTON and CONY.

At 0520 the CLAXTON, with the CONY about 600 yards astern, was bearing 252°(T), distant seven point thirty-five miles from Kanhandon Point Light (Hibuson Island) and the THORN (12,000 yards astern of the CLAXTON) was bearing 284°(T), distant ten point six miles from the same light.

(b) Eastern Destroyers.

At this time (0458) the eastern destroyers were closing the CLAXTON to re-form the division. However, they were not in formation but appeared to be planning to re-form when they had rejoined. At 0500 the AULICK (based on the track charts of the SIGOURNEY and WELLES) changed

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

** Action Report CONY, Night Battle Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944

*** Track Chart, Action Report THORN, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 034, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report THORN, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 034, October 30th, 1944.

course to 205°(T). At this point the SIGOURNEY, which was almost in position, suffered engine trouble, reduced speed to between twenty and twenty-two knots,* and made a wide turn to the north, as shown on Diagram "K".**

Meanwhile the WELLES, at 0500, increased speed to thirty-two knots to close the AULICK.***

The AULICK continued on course 205°(T), speed twenty-five knots until 0508 when, being well clear of the battleships, she changed course to 120°(T).** Then, at 0514, she changed course again to 145°(T) presumably to close the CLAXTON, and at 0518 to 150°(T) and increased speed to thirty knots.****

The Commanding Officer SIGOURNEY seems to have decided that his engine casualty would not permit him to join his division for, at 0510, he changed course to 180°(T).* The vibration of his starboard engine soon ceased, as a result of which he increased speed finally to thirty-two knots but continued to head south and made no effort to rejoin. Why is not apparent for the right flank cruisers were now steaming on southerly courses and were well clear. What the SIGOURNEY had actually d[illegible]s to close the BACHE and DALY.

At 0505 the Commanding Officer WELLES changed cours[illegible] 250°(T); at 0506 to 230°(T) and finally having suffered an engi[illegible]ty he changed course to 205°(T) which paralleled the AULICK at tha[illegible] At 0511 he changed course to 160°(T); at 0513 to 115°(T) and at 135°(T).*****

Thus, at 0520 the AULICK (about 12,000 yards astern of [illegible] CLAXTON) was bearing 282°(T), distant 22,000 yards from Kanhandon Point Light (Hibuson Island); the WELLES was bearing 288°(T), distant 24,000 yards from the same light and the SIGOURNEY was bearing 025°(T), distant 2,900 yards from Cabugan Grande Island.

* * *

A large part of the difficulties experienced by this division seems to have been due to the fact that this was a division made up, as pointed out earlier, of destroyers from four different divisions, which had rarely, if ever, trained together as a unit. Although it had been formed on August 25th in Tulagi Harbor****** and consisted at that time of four destroyers (CLAXTON, CONY, SIGOURNEY, AULICK) there had been no

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* Action Report SIGOURNEY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 055, October 30th, 1944.
** Ibid., Track Chart.
*** Action Report WELLES, Battle of Surigao Straits, Serial 016-44, October 30th, 1944.
**** Deck Log AULICK, October 25th, 1944.
***** Deck Log WELLES, October 25th, 1944.
****** War Diary CLAXTON, August 1944.

opportunity to train for night battle because the ensuing time had been spent in escorting the gathering forces through the Solomons to Leyte Gulf. Later the division was increased to six destroyers, the THORN joining on September 30th,* and the WELLES on October 12th.**

This provides the battle lesson--first enunciated in the Naval War College Analysis "Battle of Savo Island" that:

"ALL SHIPS SHOULD BE SO TRAINED AS TO READILY PERMIT THEIR BEING SHIFTED FROM ONE ORGANIZATION TO ANOTHER WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE LOSS OF EFFICIENCY. HOWEVER, WHENEVER THE MILITARY SITUATION PERMITS, THE EXISTING TACTICAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE MAINTAINED, AND THE DESIGNATED TACTICAL COMMANDERS SHOULD BE EMPLOYED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, AS WELL AS TO INSURE THAT WELL INDOCTRINATED TACTICAL GROUPS ARE AVAILABLE AGAINST THE ENEMY, THIS IS PARTICULARLY APPLICABLE WHEN NIGHT OPERATIONS ARE ANTICIPATED."***

(2) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

It will be recalled that (a) at 0420 Commander Battle Line, in the MISSISSIPPI, was northwest of Pibuson Island in which position, with BATDIV FOUR (MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA), he was completing a turn to the north to avoid enemy torpedoes reported by the RICHARD P. LEARY at 0413. At 0420:18 he completed the turn and steadied on course 000°(T), and (b) he had allowed BATDIV TWO (PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA) to continue on westerly courses in order to re-form, during which time that BATDIV operated more or less independently.

He now directed (a) at 0422, COMBATDIV TWO to rejoin the battle line when BATDIV TWO had been re-formed**** and (b) at 0424:30, BATDIV FOUR and MISSISSIPPI to turn to course 270°(T) and to change speed to ten knots.***** He issued this latter order because he considered that the torpedoes reported by the RICHARD P. LEARY had now passed even though they had not been sighted.

Then he observed that at (a) 0435, CTG 77.2 (OTC) with the left flank force had departed to the southward in pursuit of the enemy,**** and (b) 0439 COMBATDIV TWO had rejoined the battle line with BATDIV TWO.**** Since he was now no longer in the leading ship he, therefore, at 0440, designated the PENNSYLVANIA as guide.****** (At this time the MISSISSIPPI (his flagship) was about 2,300 yards astern of the CALIFORNIA.)(Diagram "K").

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* War Diary THORN, September 1944.

** Action Report WELLES, Bombardment and Landing in the Philippine Islands, Serial 015-44, October 30th, 1944.

*** The Battle of Savo Island, August 9, 1942 (Navpers 91187), Naval War College, 1950, Page 365, Lesson 25.

**** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

***** Action Report COMBATDIV 4, Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0235, November 8th, 1944.

****** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

At 0442 he received TBS voice radio messages from (a) COMBATDIV TWO reporting his course as 270°(T), speed ten knots, and giving the order of ships as PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA,* and (b) the Commanding Officer AULICK that the AULICK was proceeding around the battleships on their unengaged sids to join COMDESDIV XRAY.**

At 0451 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from the WEST VIRGINIA to CTG 77.2 reporting that a plane had just passed over her.* Since none of the battleships reported this plane in their action reports it would seem likely that it was sighted visually only and therefore came in at a very low altitude. He was likely alerted by the presence of this plane to the fact that dawn would arrive at 0519 at which time the probability of Japanese air attacks on his battle line would increase. He realized that it would be well to increase his antiaircraft defense by the addition of destroyers but which ones was the problem.

He likely felt that DESRON TWENTY-FOUR, since it was actually attached to CTG 77.3, was not available. If this was his conclusion it was correct for CTG 77.3 at 0455:30 ordered COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to screen ahead of the right flank cruisers.**

It also seems likely that he concluded that, since (a) DESRON TWENTY-FOUR would be with CTG 77.3, (b) DESDIV XRAY was attacking and (c) DESRON FIFTY-FOUR was likely unavailable as it was attached to CTG 79, DESRON FIFTY-SIX was all that remained.

Any thought of employing this latter destroyer division was shattered when at 0458 he intercepted a TBS voice radio dispatch from CTG 77.2 to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX directing that commander to screen the left flank cruisers from ahead.*

With the receipt of this message he could plainly see that he would be forced to defend himself against air attack with the battleships alone and, therefore, he now studied the situation to determine the best formation to assume under these adverse circumstances.

At this point, being sufficiently far to the west, he reversed course to due east by simultaneous ship turns of 180° to the left.***

At 0507 the turn was completed. The ships were now in column from the east as follows: WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, PENNSYLVANIA.

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

At 0516 he received a contact report from the WEST VIRGINIA reporting an unidentified ship bearing 183°(T), distant 42,400 yards from that battleship. Two minutes later at 0518 he received an amplified report that the ship was now bearing 182°(T), distant 43,500 yards, course 180°(T), speed ten knots.* This contact which was fairly accurate in range but somewhat off in bearing, was on the heavy cruiser MOGAMI which actually bore 176°(T), distant 43,980 yards. It seems likely that the second range given had been obtained at about 0516:30 although the bearing at this latter time was also about 176°(T).

With the arrival of dawn he seems to have decided that since his major danger at this point was from enemy aircraft his present formation of column was satisfactory. This seems so for he maintained this formation for some time.

At 0520 the MISSISSIPPI was bearing 048°(T), distant 16,000 yards from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island.

(3) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

It will be recalled that at 0420 Commander Left Flank Force had just completed a simultaneous 180° turn with his cruisers and was on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots. Therefore his flagship, the LOUISVILLE, was the last ship in column.

At 0423 he slowed to ten knots.**

At 0424, judging that his Attack Section ONE (NEWCOMB, RICHARD P. LEARY and ALBERT W. GRANT) was clear of the line of fire, he ordered the left flank cruisers to resume fire when they had a solution.** At this time, however, since the MOGAMI, which was the nearest enemy ship, was some 28,000 yards away and the range was opening slowly, (Diagram "K"), none of his ships opened fire.

At this same time the LOUISVILLE made radar contact on an additional enemy target bearing 192°(T), range 28,000 yards.*** This was the NACHI which at this time was bearing 191½°(T), range 28,600 yards (Diagram "K"). It is not known whether or not this contact was reported to Commander Left Flank Force but most likely it was not for it does not appear in his action report nor on his track chart.

He now commenced receiving TBS voice radio messages as follows:

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Track Chart, 0412 to 0540, October 25th, 1944, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

(a) at 0426 he received a report from COMCRUDIV TWELVE that there were four additional targets bearing 184°(T), distant fourteen to seventeen miles.*

(b) at 0427 a report from CTG 77.3 that the PT boats had seen some ships headed south.**

(c) at 0428 a message from the COLUMBIA stating that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been hit and was lying dead in the water.***

(d) at 0430 a report from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that he (COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the NEWCOMB) was standing toward the ALBERT W. GRANT and would render the assistance required.*

(e) at 0430 a report from CTG 77.3 that there were five fairly small targets on a northerly course bearing 160°(T), distant 20,000 yards,* and

(f) at 0431 a report from COMCRUDIV TWELVE that a group of three enemy ships was bearing 190°(T), distant fourteen miles.*

Most of the above reports are discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

Meanwhile, since he was also CTG 77.2, he knew that that commander had decided to send the cruisers of the left flank force down the strait in pursuit of the enemy and therefore, at about this time, he issued a preparatory signal to the cruisers to turn to 190°(T). He then, mindful of the fact that such a course would pass near the ALBERT W. GRANT, in which case it was possible that one of his ships might mistake her for enemy, warned the Left Flank Force at 0431:30 to that effect by TBS voice radio saying that (a) the ALBERT W. GRANT had been heavily hit, (b) was dead in the water in the channel and (c) directed all ships to take precautions not "to hit" her.*** In fact, in his action report he employed the term "to avoid"** rather than "to hit" which seems to indicate that he was thinking of collision as much as of gunfire.

At 0433 he executed the signal to change course to 190°(T) basing his decision on the fact that all enemy units were either dead in the water or retiring.** Why he gave these reasons is not clear for he had previously received several reports (a) at 0420 and 0431 from COMCRUDIV TWELVE and (b) at 0430 from CTG 77.3 to the effect that enemy units had been observed coming up the strait on a northerly course.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

He now watched the situation developing in the lower strait with considerable care and quickly discovered from his radar scopes that the enemy units were circling or maneuvering radically and that by 0437 they were again retiring on southerly courses. He therefore at this time ordered his left flank cruisers to form column on the LOUISVILLE and increased speed to fifteen knots.*

EXACTLY WHY HE FORMED COLUMN RATHER THAN TO PROCEED SOUTH ON A LINE OF BEARING IS NOT EXPLAINED. CERTAINLY THE LINE OF BEARING MADE IT POSSIBLE TO BRING MORE GUNS, i.e., THE FORWARD TURRETS OF THE FIVE CRUISERS, AGAINST ANY ENEMY ENCOUNTERED AND MADE IT EASIER TO AVOID TORPEDOES. ON THE OTHER HAND IT WAS STILL DARK WITH NO MOON AND IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE FELT THAT IN COLUMN HE WOULD HAVE BETTER CONTROL OVER HIS CRUISERS AND THAT THIS HAD PRIORITY OVER THE ABOVE ADVANTAGES.

As mentioned under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th", he now, as CTG 77.2, (a) in order to safeguard his forces from friendly attack sent a message at 0438 over the PT common voice circuit to MTBRON THIRTY-SIX and certain other MTB's that friendly cruisers and destroyers were proceeding south and to notify all PT's* and (b) at 0440 over the local air warning circuit to CTF 77 that (1) the enemy appeared to be retiring to the south, (2) they were being strongly pursued by the cruisers and destroyers and (3) strongly recommending an air attack in the early morning on any that might escape.**

At about 0449 he should have (a) passed the damaged ALBERT W. GRANT to starboard about 800 yards and (b) observed by radar the NEWCOMB on his port quarter rapidly closing the ALBERT W. GRANT. The term "should have" is used advisedly as none of the various reports available to this study submitted post battle by any of the cruisers mention the above.

At this point he seems to have decided that (a) his ships were perhaps too close to the ALBERT W. GRANT, (b) his present course was carrying him too far to the westward and away from the retiring Japanese units which at this time were more nearly to the south of him and (c) he wanted more maneuvering room, for at 0450 he changed course by column movement to 180°(T).*

At 0451, since he was also CTG 77.2, he knew that CTG 77.3 had reported that all TG 77.3 forces were together and on the west side of the channel.* This was a gratifying report for now all the attacking destroyers with the exception of DESDIV XRAY and certain units of DESRON FIFTY-SIX--he had not as yet received a position report from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX--were near their designated post-attack rendezvous points and the cruisers of TG 77.3 were on the west side of the channel. Therefore it was probable that any forces encountered ahead of the left flank cruisers were either destroyers from DESDIV XRAY or enemy destroyers with the latter far the more likely.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Ibid.; also Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

Nevertheless, as Commander Left Flank Force the question as to the location of DESDIV XRAY was of continuing concern to him. Therefore, at 0453, he queried COMDESDIV XRAY by TBS voice radio as to his speed and promptly received a reply of "twenty knots".* Why he did not also ask for DESDIV XRAY's present position is not understood for the question as to whether they were ahead of him was of considerable importance.

However, it seems likely that at this point, because of the "twenty knots" speed and because he had no radar contacts nearer than 25,500 yards, he realized that they were most likely behind him.

At 0456:30 he contacted by radar a group of enemy ships on a northerly course bearing 175°(T), distant 25,500 yards.** He thought that this was a new group of five or six ships, one medium, the others small, and refers to it in his action report as the third group.** Actually it was the NACHI, ASHIGARA and MOGAMI which had reversed course back to north a short time before. At this time the NACHI bore 172°(T), distant 24,400 yards from the LOUISVILLE (Diagram "K").

At 0457 he was advised by COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that all of his destroyers were present or accounted for and that all were at the rendezvous except the NEWCOMB which was assisting the ALBERT W. GRANT.* He now (a) at 0458 having heard nothing from COMDESDIV XRAY other than the "twenty knots" asked the CONY to give him present course and speed,* (b) directed COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to screen the left flank cruisers from ahead* and (c) gave his own position as about five miles to the west of Hibuson Island*** and his course as 180°(T).*

At 0459 he received a reply from COMDESDIV 112 to the effect that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was in the NEWCOMB, which was screening the ALBERT W. GRANT and that he (COMDESDIV 112) was in charge and would screen ahead of the cruisers.***

At 0501 he noted that the enemy cruisers had changed course to west.**

At 0502 having received no reply from the CONY he repeated his 0458 query but this time requested COMDESDIV XRAY's course and speed.*

Why he chose to query the CONY rather than DESDIV XRAY is not explained nor is it understood for the voice logs show previous communications with COMDESDIV XRAY and none with the CONY.

At 0509 he noted that the enemy cruisers had changed course to south-southwest and appeared to be retiring. At the latter time he noted that other enemy ships had scattered and appeared to be operating independently and trying to retire to the southward.**

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

At 0511 he likely intercepted COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's directions to the Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY to proceed to the vicinity of the NEWCOMB and the ALBERT W. GRANT to render assistance against air attack.* He could quickly estimate that this left COMDESDIV 112 in ROBINSON with five other destroyers to screen his cruisers.

Since he was also CTG 77.2 he likely received (a) at 0514 a message from PT 490 reporting certain gunfire in Surigao Strait and the northward movement of three targets** and (b) at 0519 a message from PT 494 to PT 526 commenting on the three targets off Panaon Island.** Both of these messages are discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

At 0517 he asked COMDESDIV 112 if his division was coming down at thirty knots and received an immediate reply of "Affirmative".* Actually this division was making fifteen knots at the time and did not increase speed to twenty knots until 0530.*** It seems probable that COMDESDIV 112 did not hear the thirty knot portion of the query because only the first part of the question appears in the DALY voice log.**** Thus, because of both the turn to the west and the low speed this group of destroyers was to be later than he expected them to be.

At 0518 the LOUISVILLE track chart shows that the MOGAMI was about 18,000 yards, bearing 193°(T) and was heading away, and the ASAGUMO was about 16,100 yards, bearing 174°(T), on a crossing course. She appears not to have been tracking the NACHI and ASHIGARA at this time although they were within radar range.*****

At 0519 he ordered his cruisers to increase speed to twenty knots****** in order to prevent the escape of the enemy cruisers since the range would increase upon changing to the firing course.

At 0520 Commander Left Flank Force, in LOUISVILLE, was seven point nine miles, bearing 274°(T) from Esconchada Point (Diagram "K").

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Track Chart 0412 - 0540, October 25th, 1944, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

****** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

(4) Operations of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX (Commander Attack Section ONE), 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 Commander Attack Section ONE (who was also COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX) who had been proceeding in the NEWCOMB on course 070°(T), speed thirty-two knots, having arrived at his post-attack rendezvous point (three miles north of Hibuson Island) changed course to 000°(T)* and slowed to fifteen knots.** The RICHARD P. LEARY which was about 6,000 yards astern of him and which had been clearing the area at thirty knots also slowed to fifteen knots. The ALBERT W. GRANT which was about 11,000 yards astern was now dead in the water and was so heavily damaged as to be in danger of sinking.***

He clearly did not know this for at 0420:30 he reported to CTG 77.2 that the NEWCOMB and the RICHARD P. LEARY were at the post-attack rendezvous point and that the ALBERT W. GRANT was still proceeding on a northerly course at about ten knots.****

At 0425 he changed course and speed to 245°(T),* ten knots,** and at 0427 he directed the RICHARD P. LEARY to fall in astern of the NEWCOMB and to conform to her movements.*****

Meanwhile the Commanding Officer ALBERT W. GRANT seeing the cruisers to the north and having no means of communicating excepting by blinker gun, since his flagship, owing to the temporary loss of power, had no other means of communicating, now decided to request help. Therefore, he endeavored to attract attention by repeating the following message several times to a friendly cruiser (it was the COLUMBIA): "We are dead in the water. Tow needed."****** As discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th" the Commanding Officer COLUMBIA at 0428 retransmitted the substance of this message to CTG 77.2 and to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX.

At 0429 Commander Attack Secton ONE, as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 giving the above information and directing him to provide one destroyer to assist the ALBERT W. GRANT. He promptly (at 0430) advised CTG 77.2 that the NEWCOMB was designated.*****

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* Track Chart, Action Report NEWCOMB, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0044, October 31st, 1944.

** Deck Log NEWCOMB, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log ALBERT W. GRANT, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (B).

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY HE DESIGNATED THE NEWCOMB RATHER THAN THE RICHARD P. LEARY UNLESS, SINCE HE WAS SOME MINUTES NEARER, HE MAY HAVE FELT THAT THIS WOULD SAVE TIME IN REMOVING THE DAMAGED DESTROYER FROM THE CENTER OF THE STRAIT. HIS ACTION IN SO DOING SEEMS QUESTIONABLE FOR HE WAS THE SQUADRON COMMANDER, THE BATTLE WAS STILL UNDERWAY AND HIS SQUADRON WAS EVEN NOW CONCENTRATING AT THE RENDEZVOUS POINT NORTH OF HIBUSON ISLAND. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE SQUADRON HAD COMPLETED ITS TORPEDO ATTACK IT WAS NEVERTHELESS THE FUNCTION OF THE SQUADRON COMMANDER TO REASSEMBLE IT AND TO DETERMINE ITS FIGHTING CAPACITY, i.e., ARE ALL SHIPS READY FOR FURTHER ACTION: HOW MANY TORPEDOES DO THEY HAVE, ETC., AND TO ADVISE CTG 77.2 THEREON. CERTAINLY THE SQUADRON, EVEN WITHOUT TORPEDOES, WAS STILL A FORMIDABLE FIGHTING UNIT AND COULD BE WELL EMPLOYED IN BOTH ANTISUBMARINE AND ANTIAIRCRAFT DEFENSE OPERATIONS AS WELL AS IN GUNFIRE AGAINST THE RETIRING ENEMY.

Now, at 0432, in accordance with the above, he stood toward the ALBERT W. GRANT to aid her. At this time he thought that the RICHARD P. LEARY was conforming to his movements.* Unfortunately the commanding officer of the latter destroyer seems to have become confused for although, at 0433, the RICHARD P. LEARY acknowledged COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's instructions to conform to the movements of the NEWCOMB** she did not do so. Instead she moved to the eastward presumably heading toward the HALFORD, which she seems to have mistaken for the NEWCOMB.

Meanwhile, at 0442, he received a second TBS voice radio message from the COLUMBIA stating that she had intercepted a TBS voice radio message from COMBATDIV THREE (Commander Battle Line) to the effect that the ALBERT W. GRANT had been hit, was taking water and had no power.**

At 0447 he (COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX) received a visual message from the ALBERT W. GRANT requesting medical assistance,*** and at 0447:30 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 inquiring as to whether all of his ships were present or accounted for.**

Meanwhile the RICHARD P. LEARY arrived at the post-attack rendezvous point and, not contacting the NEWCOMB, headed on course 270°(T) at ten knots. It is not clear what the commanding officer was contemplating at this time but since he had received instructions to follow the NEWCOMB it seems likely that he was awaiting further information as to the location of that ship.

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* Action Report COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

At 0453 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the NEWCOMB, having passed astern of the COLUMBIA which was heading south and was the last ship in column, headed directly for the damaged ALBERT W. GRANT. This was fortunate for the latter ship, at 0455, lost all light and power.*

At 0457 he replied to CTG 77.2's query of about ten minutes earlier saying that all of his ships were present and accounted for and that all of them were at the post-attack rendezvous point except the NEWCOMB.**

At 0457:30, having closed the ALBERT W. GRANT, he dispatched medical assistance which was greatly needed since the medical officer and one of two hospital corpsmen had been killed.*

At 0458 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing him to screen the left flank cruisers from ahead and giving his (a) position as five miles west of Hibuson Island and (b) course as 180°(T).** Before he could reply to this message he was likely relieved to hear his second in command, COMDESDIV 112, reply to the effect that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was in the NEWCOMB with the ALBERT W. GRANT and that he (COMDESDIV 112) was in charge of DESRON FIFTY-SIX and would screen from ahead as ordered.***

THIS WAS ANOTHER EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WHEREIN THE SUBORDINATE ACTED EXACTLY AS HE FELT HIS SUPERIOR DESIRED HIM TO ACT.

At 0505 he likely learned that the ALBERT W. GRANT had lighted fires under No. FOUR Boiler.*

At 0511, as Commander Attack Section ONE, he directed the RICHARD P. LEARY to proceed to the vicinity of the ALBERT W. GRANT to assist the NEWCOMB in antiaircraft defense of that ship.** The Commanding Officer RICHARD P. LEARY immediately complied.****

At 0520 Commander Attack Section ONE, in the NEWCOMB, was bearing 276°(T), distant five point four miles from Kanhandon Point Light (Hibuson Island). The ALBERT W. GRANT was close alongside and the RICHARD P. LEARY was about 7,600 yards to the northeast.

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* Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

**** Deck Log RICHARD P. LEARY, October 25th, 1944.

(a) Operations of Commander Attack Section TWO, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 Commander Attack Section TWO (COMDESDIV 112), in the ROBINSON, with the HALFORD and BRYANT, was north of Hibuson Island and was proceeding on easterly courses at fifteen knots.

At 0422 he changed course to 000°(T) by simultaneous ship turns* and apparently directed his ships to form line of bearing 090°(T) for at 0430 the BRYANT recorded that the division was formed in line of bearing of 090°(T) from the ROBINSON.**

At 0437 he slowed to ten knots.***

At 0448 he changed course to 270°(T), which placed his ships in column, and directed the ships to report any casualties* in order to comply with CTG 77.2's query to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX at 0447:30 asking if all of the ships of DESRON FIFTY-SIX were present or accounted for.**** All of the ships reported no casualties.*

At 0453 he changed course, by column movement, to 180°(T).***

At 0458 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to screen the left flank cruisers from ahead. He immediately, and on his own initiative, replied at 0459 to the effect that (a) COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was in the NEWCOMB assisting the ALBERT W. GRANT, (b) COMDESDIV 112 was in charge of DESRON FIFTY-SIX and (c) he would screen ahead.*****

At 0504 he changed course to 230°(T) and increased speed to fifteen knots.****** At 0506, knowing that Attack Section THREE was fast approaching, he directed that section to form column astern, interval 2,000 yards, course 230°(T), speed fifteen knots,* and at 0512 he was pleased to note that the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, leading Attack Section THREE, was in proper position astern.

At about 0512 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing him to retain the destroyers in their former stations until daylight and then to regain their regular screening stations.*******

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Deck Log BRYANT, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

****** Action Report ROBINSON, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 076, November 3rd, 1944, Enclosure (B).

******* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

Although this message should properly have been addressed to COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR, as discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th", he did not realize this and therefore at 0515 changed course to 270°(T).*

At 0517 he received a query from CTG 77.2 inquiring as to whether his destroyers were coming down the strait at thirty knots. He was likely confused by this query for, but five minutes earlier, he had been directed to retain the destroyers in their former stations. However, he now seems to have realized that there was a mistake somewhere and that despite the previous message he was expected to close the TG 77.2 cruisers. He therefore immediately replied in the affirmative.** However, since he was only making fifteen knots at this time and did not increase speed to thirty knots until about 0530 and since the DALY did not receive the thirty not portion of this message, it seems highly probable that he likewise did not receive the thirty knot portion of the query.

At 0520 the ROBINSON was bearing 343°(T), distant three point eight miles from Kanhandon Point Light (Hibuson Island).

(b) Operations of Commander Attack Section THREE, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 Commander Attack Section THREE (Commanding Officer HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS) with LEUTZE and BENNION astern was on course 000°(T), speed twenty-five knots, proceeding via north of the battle line toward the designated post-attack rendezvous point north of Hibuson Island.

At 0430, being well north of the battle line, he changed course to 090°(T); at 0444 to 110°(T),*** and at 0506 having received an order from COMDESDIV 112 (Commander Attack Section TWO) to form column astern, interval 2,000 yards, course 230°(T), speed fifteen knots,* he immediately changed course to 180°(T) and slowed to fifteen knots.**** At 0511 he changed course to 230°(T) and, at 0512, completed the turn in his assigned position.

Later operations of the ships of this section are discussed under the operations of Commander Destroyer Division 112.

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report BENNION, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0418, October 28th, 1944.

**** Deck Log LEUTZE, October 25th, 1944.

(5) Operations of Commander Right Flank Force, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3), in PHOENIX, was on course 090°(T), speed fifteen knots. His other two cruisers, BOISE and SHROPSHIRE, were generally disposed on a line of bearing 045°(T), distance 1,000 yards, although the SHROPSHIRE was somewhat behind in bearing and beyond in distance. Despite the fact that he had received at 0419 an order from CTG 77.2 to resume firing and had passed it to his force, none of the ships had opened fire. This was because the YAMASHIRO had sunk at this same time and there were no other targets within effective range.

Meanwhile he continued to endeavor to track the enemy and at 0422, having obtained a track on enemy forces moving on a northerly course at twenty-three knots, he advised his command of the contact.* This contact appears to have been on the NACHI and ASHIGARA of the SECOND Striking Force which at this time were also on a northerly course but at twenty-eight rather than twenty-three knots.

Also at 0422 he received a report over the task group common from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR advising that (a) only three ships (BEALE, BACHE and DALY) had any torpedoes left, each had five, and (b) the ammunition was very low.** This report meant, in part, that of his six destroyers only three had torpedoes, the three others (HUTCHINS, KILLEN, HMAS ARUNTA) having none. It is of interest that as regards ammunition the HUTCHINS had but fifty rounds per gun.*

At this same time (0422) he reduced speed to ten knots.***

At 0427 he reported to CTG 77.2 by TBS voice radio that the MTB's had seen some ships headed south.*** This was probably a report of the ABUKUMA which had been (a) sighted by PT 132 about 0330 and (b) reported to CTF 77 about 0335.****

At 0430, learning that his flagship (PHOENIX) had contacted by radar five small targets in a group bearing 160°(T), distant 20,000 yards,***** he promptly reported it by TBS voice radio to CTG 77.2.*** Therefore it is discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

At 0431 he intercepted a TBS voice radio contact report from COMCRUDIV TWELVE to CTG 77.2 (OTC reporting three enemy ships bearing 190°(T), distant fourteen miles.* It seems likely that he became somewhat concerned because he now had two reports on enemy forces moving up the strait, one on five small targets and one on three targets. He also seems to have felt that the enemy ships which had turned sharply to the right were maneuvering to fire torpedoes and therefore he decided to make a radical change of course to the westward. This was of course the correct decision for not only were the enemy ships maneuvering to fire torpedoes but the NACHI and ASHIGARA had already (at 0427:00 - 0427:21) each fired eight torpedoes.

Therefore, at this time he executed an order to his cruisers for simultaneous ship turns to course 300°(T).** As shown by the PHOENIX voice log, some confusion had arisen over the basic signal but by this time it had been cleared up so that the turn was executed without difficulty.

At 0432 he received (a) contact report from the KILLEN on four destroyers bearing 128°(T), distant 11,640 yards** and (b) a request from the ARUNTA to open fire on these targets.*** Since the KILLEN appears to have felt that these destroyers were friendly--actually they were DESDIV EIGHTEEN (SHIRANUHI, KASUMI, AKEBONO, USHIO)--the request of ARUNTA seems to have been designed to obtain a verification of the enemy character from Commander Right Flank Force. Due to an exchange of signals regarding "our position" to quote the KILLEN, CTG 77.3 did not authorize opening fire and therefore the ARUNTA quite properly did not open fire.*** This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

At 0433 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 stating "My course 190°(T), acknowledge".* Knowing that the left flank destroyers had recently completed a destroyer attack and were even now assembling at their rendezvous point, he could readily interpret from this dispatch that CTG 77.2 was heading south with the left flank cruisers. Since he had received no instructions thereon he, at this point, commenced estimating the situation to determine what action he should take.

At 0434 he changed course by simultaneous ship turns to 270°(T).**** It is not clear why he made this additional change of course unless he felt that, owing to his large change of course, the danger of enemy torpedoes, properly fired, was now remote, and he therefore desired to steer the same course as the fleet guide. It will be recalled that the

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

**** Action Report HMAS SHROPSHIRE, Night Action, October 25th, 1944, Serial SC 1123/194, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure No. 4.

fleet guide was steering 270°(T). Actually he would have been wiser to have remained on course 300°(T) for a little longer since that course, while not the reverse of the original enemy bearing (160°(T)), was within forty degrees thereof. In so doing he would have more nearly paralleled the most likely enemy torpedo tracks.

Also at this time he received a surprising message from the ARUNTA to the effect that the three ships which had been reported by COMCRUDIV TWELVE at 0431 were Attack Group 2.2 (ARUNTA, KILLEN, BEALE).* He immediately acknowledged the message over the task group common and directed the ARUNTA to "get out of the middle of the channel and stay near the land".* When he had finished the transmission of this message he repeated it, adding "stay near land. You'll get sunk".*

At 0437 he increased speed to fifteen knots.*

At 0441, in reply to an 0436 query as to her geographical position, he received a message from the ARUNTA to the effect that Pandan Point was bearing 251°(T), distant "035". Since this latter distance was not understood two repetitions were necessary, and the distance was finally given as one-half mile from Pandan Point.* (The plot (Diagram "K") shows that at 0436 the ARUNTA was actually 3,500 yards from Pandan Point.) He acknowledged the message and added that Attack Group 2.2 should "stay into land".*

At 0443, (a) desiring to keep his cruisers informed of the changing situation and (b) realizing that the enemy might change course back to the north, he informed his cruisers over the task group common that there were some destroyers going down to attack, adding that otherwise they were to open fire on anyone they were sure was enemy.* This message pertained to DESDIV XRAY which had been ordered to attack by CTG 77.2 at 0432.

At 0445 he slowed to ten knots in order not to close too closely his destroyers which were operating about 6,000 yards to the westward.

At 0448 having decided to parallel the left flank force and support it as necessary he changed course to 180°(T).**

THIS DECISION TO FOLLOW DOWN THE STRAIT AND TO BE IN A POSITION TO SUPPORT IF NECESSARY WAS OF COURSE CORRECT. IT IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF AN INCENTIVE ORIGINATING FROM THE DEMANDS OF THE SITUATION. IN SUCH CASE THE COMMANDER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE (A) RECOGNITION OF THE NECESSITY FOR ACTION AND (B) CORRECT SELECTION OF AN APPROPRIATE OBJECTIVE TO BE EMPLOYED AS A BASIS FOR HIS OWN ACTION EXACTLY AS IF IT HAD BEEN ASSIGNED BY HIGHER AUTHORITY.***

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

*** Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, Newport, R.I., 1942, Page 50.

At 0450, in a series of messages over the task group common, he asked COMDESDIV TWENTY-FOUR for a quick report as to whether (a) all of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR's destroyers were there and (b) if all of them were operational.* This information was of considerable importance since it appeared that the force might be in action ere long. He promptly received a reply from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR over the task group common that all of his destroyers were present.* He now, at 0453, directed that commander not to report details of damage on the task group common circuit.* This was a wise provision for it would prevent serious overloading of the circuit used to control his right flank force. However, he now, at 0454, seems to have negated the advantages gained by keeping these reports off the task group common for at this time he directed that reports of casualties were to be reported over TBS,* the circuit used to control both the Left Flank Force and the Center Force of battleships. It did have the advantage, however, of enabling the OTC to hear the reports as they came in.

At 0451 he reported to CTG 77.2 that all of his ships were together and on his side of the channel.*

At 0455 he changed course to 160°(T) by simultaneous ship turns,** in order to parallel the general trend of the coast and retain sufficient sea room for maneuver.

At 0455:30, in order to interpose his destroyers between his cruisers and the enemy, he ordered his destroyers to take station 6,000 yards south of the cruisers.*

At 0459, realizing that dawn would break at 0518, he modified this order to the extent that the destroyers were directed to form an antiaircraft screen around the cruisers.*

At 0507, in reply to an inquiry from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR asking for his base course, he gave the base course as 160°(T).*

At 0508 he increased speed to fifteen knots,** and commenced forming antiaircraft disposition VICTOR, axis 180°(T).*

At 0510 his flagship (PHOENIX) contacted by radar an enemy target bearing 146°(T), distant 31,400 yards.*** This was the ASAGUMO which was moving to the southwest at about eight knots. From Diagram "K" the bearing was more nearly 137½°(T).

At 0512 he ordered the Right Flank Force to increase speed to twenty knots.**

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

*** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

(a) Operations of COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

(1) Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2 and COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR.

At 0420 Commander Attack Group 1.2, who was COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, in HUTCHINS, had just received instructions to lie to along the shore for another run and was proceeding on course 330°(T), speed twenty knots, heading for an open area north of Cabugan Grande Island. DALY and BACHE, in that order, were following well astern, there being about 3,300 yards between the HUTCHINS and the DALY (Diagram "K"). The latter two ships were making twenty-five knots in an effort to close.

At 0420:45, as Commander Attack Group 1.2, he slowed to fifteen knots,* and about a minute later he asked the DALY and the BACHE if they had executed the change of speed to fifteen knots, receiving an affirmative reply from the BACHE.* Actually these two ships were still in the process of catching up with the flagship and did not slow down until later.

At 0422, as COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, he reported to CTG 77.3 that of his DESRON only three ships (BEALE, BACHE, DALY) had any torpedoes left, each having five, and that the ammunition was very low,** with the HUTCHINS having about fifty rounds per gun left.***

During the next minute, also as COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, he was queried several times by CTG 77.3 as to whether he had contact on any of the large targets to which he replied in the negative.*

At 0426 he (a) learned from CTG 77.3, over the task group common, that the MTB's had reported that the enemy ships were heading south,*** and (b) slowed to thirteen knots and changed course to 350°(T).

At 0428:30, as Commander Attack Group 1.2, he changed course to 170°(T) by simultaneous ship turns.* This order could not be carried out as signalled because the DALY was still in her turn to the old course of 350°(T) and the BACHE had not yet started her turn to that course. However, both destroyers maneuvered to get into proper station.

At 0435 he undoubtedly heard (a) Commanding Officer ARUNTA inform CTG 77.3 that his section was the three ships reported by COMCRUDIV TWELVE at 0431 and (b) CTG 77.3's reply directing the ARUNTA to get out of the middle of the channel and stay near the land lest she be sunk.*

At 0436:30 he changed course to 350°(T) by simultaneous ship turns.* At this same time the DALY, being in proper position astern of the BACHE, also changed speed to thirteen knots.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0443 he likely heard CTG 77.3 inform his cruisers that "there are some destroyers going down to attack. Otherwise open fire on anyone you are sure is enemy".*

At 0446 he changed speed to ten knots.**

At 0450 he received a request from CTG 77.3 over the task group common for a quick report on the condition of his destroyers. This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.3, 0420 - 0520, October 25th". After replying that they were all present he proceeded to obtain the details of any damage from the individual ships.

At 0455:30 he was directed by CTG 77.3 to take station with his destroyers 6,000 yards south of the cruisers. He then changed course by simultaneous ship turns to 170°(T).**

At 0500, in accordance with 0459 instructions from CTG 77.3, he directed his destroyers to form an antiaircraft screen around the cruisers.**

At 0501 he completed his turn to 170°(T). As shown in Diagram "K", his ships were now in reverse order and, apparently without signal, commenced maneuvering to reverse the order of ships.

At 0506, as Commander Attack Group 1.2, he queried CTG 77.3 as to the base course and was told that it was 160°(T).**

At 0508 he received CTG 77.3's order to TG 77.3 increasing speed to fifteen knots and at 0509 to the cruisers to form immediately an antiaircraft cruising disposition.** From this and the base course his ships could readily form the antiaircraft screen.

At 0512 he received CTG 77.3's order to increase speed to twenty knots.***

At 0520, in the HUTCHINS, he was bearing 048°(T), distant 2,200 yards from the southern tip of Cabugan Grande Island while the DALY and BACHE, on courses nearly parallel to the HUTCHINS course but at ten knots, were north of the flagship at distances of 3,000 and 3,700 yards respectively.

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* Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

(2) Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

At 0420 Commander Attack Group 2.2, who was also Commanding Officer ARUNTA, was on course 241°(T), speed fifteen knots, and in his own words was waiting for something to turn up. The KILLEN and the BEALE were not following in column but had steadied on course 260°(T) with the result that at this time the KILLEN was about 038°(T), distant 1,300 yards on the ARUNTA's starboard quarter (Diagram "K").

Also at this time (0420) the KILLEN started tracking an enemy ship (SHIGURE) and obtained an estimated track of 190°(T), speed twenty-seven to thirty knots.* This was very nearly correct as plotting (Diagram "K") shows the SHIGURE on course 189°(T), speed twenty-eight knots. Whether or not this information reached CTG 77.3 is unknown as it does not appear in any of the voice logs. As discussed under the operations of that commander, CTG 77.3 at 0422 advised his command that the enemy was on a northerly course at twenty-three knots.**

At 0420:30 the ARUNTA, followed at varying times and distances by the KILLEN and BEALE, commenced maneuvering in order to pass well clear of Bugho Point.

About 0425 the KILLEN contacted by radar four ships which she believed to be friendly although they had no IFF showing.* She reported the contact as bearing 128°(T), distant 11,640 yards. Actually the report was in error for the bearing and range at this time, from Diagram "K", should have been 146°(T), distant 18,800 yards. It was not until later (0429) that the range on her own track chart had dropped to approximately those given above as the initial ranges. The accuracy of Diagram "K"'s plot in this case is supported by the action reports of the LOUISVILLE, BOISE and DENVER.*** As mentioned under "Operations of CTG 77.3, 0420 - 0520, October 25th" these destroyers were DESDIV EIGHTEEN (SHIRANUHI, KASUMI, AKEBONO, USHIO).

Also at 0431 he likely intercepted a report from CTG 77.3 to CTG 77.2 on five fairly small targets bearing 160°(T), distant 20,000 yards and on a northerly course.****

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* Track Chart, Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Track Chart, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944; also Track Chart, Action Report BOISE, Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944; also Track Chart, Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0432 Commander Attack Group 2.2 intercepted a report by the KILLEN to CTG 77.3 on four destroyers bearing 128°(T), distant 11,640 yards.* Evidently this is a repeat of the KILLEN's 0425 contact but why she changed the range and bearing is not explained. The ARUNTA soon contacted these destroyers on her radar scope for her commanding officer promptly requested permission to open fire.** However, likely to his surprise, CTG 77.3 did not approve this request immediately.

At 0433:30 the Commanding Officer ARUNTA, as Commander Attack Group 2.2, reported to CTG 77.2 that he had five enemy ships five miles to the south of him.* It is not clear to what he referred for the only ships to the south of him were five friendly MTB's (329, 323, 320, 330, 331, approximately in that order, and from seven to eleven miles away). Therefore it seems more likely that he was really reporting DESDIV EIGHTEEN, which was to the southeast, the four units of which at this time were changing course to the eastward. If this is accepted, the question then arises, "whence came the fifth ship"? Perhaps he was affected by CTG 77.3's report relative to five small ships mentioned above? Perhaps he miscounted the three cruisers MOGAMI, NACHI and ASHIGARA? However, in such case, should there not have been at least six ships?

Meanwhile he had been studying the 0431 contact report from COMCRUDIV TWELVE to CTG 77.2 and had now arrived at the conclusion that the three ships contacted were the ships of his own attack group and at 0434 so informed CTG 77.3 over the task group common. This was an incorrect conclusion for the three ships were likely NACHI, ASHIGARA and MOGAMI, although the latter cruiser was on a southerly course.

At 0435 he was directed by CTG 77.3 to get out of the middle of the channel and to stay near the land or he would be sunk,*** and at 0436 he was requested to give his geographical position.

Meanwhile he changed course to 333°(T)**** presumably in order to close Attack Group 1.2, which at this time was north of Cabugan Grande Island.

Having now determined his position as correctly as possible he advised CTG 77.3 that Pandan Point was bearing 251°(T), distant 035 yards.*** Since, as mentioned under "Operations of CTG 77.3, 0420 - 0520, October 25th", the range as given was obviously in error, the message was challenged several times with the result that the range from Pandan Point was finally given as one-half mile from Pandan Point.*** How this confusion arose is not clear for at this time he was actually bearing 071°(T), distant 3,500 yards from Pandan Point.

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* Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (D).

** Action Report KILLEN, Surface Engagement Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0075, October 28th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Track Chart, Action Report ARUNTA, Night Action Report, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 1/41, October 29th, 1944.

At 0443 he (a) executed speed fifteen knots* and (b) heard CTG 77.3 (1) inform his cruisers that there were some destroyers going down to attack and (2) directing them to open fire on anyone that they were sure was enemy.**

He now likely intercepted (a) the communications between CTG 77.3 and COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR relative to the readiness of the destroyers of that DESRON, discussed more fully under "Operations of CTG 77.3, 0420 - 0520, October 25th", and (b) at 0455:30 CTG 77.3's instructions to his destroyers to take station 6,000 yards south of the cruisers.**

At this time he changed course to 090°(T)*** presumably to clear the waters likely to be used by Attack Group 1.2 in moving south and to be in position to pass the cruisers on either side depending on developments. CTG 77.3 had not yet given either the course or the speed of the cruisers.

While moving toward the east he, at 0459, (a) intercepted CTG 77.3's additional instructions to COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR wherein the above screening orders were modified to form an antiaircraft screen** and (b) received orders from COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR to form the screen.**

At 0507 he headed on course 160°(T) at twenty-five knots for his station in the TG 77.3 cruiser antiaircraft screen.***

At this same time he received a contact report from the KILLEN on four unidentified targets bearing 120°(T), distant 10,600 yards and a query as to whether he could identify them.** He did not reply but it seems likely that he realized that this was a phantom for, except for the PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS in the vicinity of the bearing but well beyond the range, there was nothing there.

At 0509 he intercepted CTG 77.3's orders to his cruisers to form antiaircraft disposition VICTOR, axis 180°(T).** At this time the cruisers were on course 160°(T).

From this time until 0520 the units of Attack Group 2.2 were rapidly taking station in the above disposition.

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Deck Log KILLEN, October 25th, 1944.

(B) Operations of CTG 79.11, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

During this period Commander Western Attack Group, with the Western Attack Group, operated in an area some seven - eight miles north and slightly to the west of the northern tip of Cabugan Grande Island. This area was about four miles farther north than the designated post-attack rendezvous (the western end of Antisubmarine Patrol Station No. SEVEN) and was chosen in order to avoid the destroyers of CTG's 77.2 and 77.3.

Meanwhile, Commander Eastern Attack Group, with the Eastern Attack Group, operated in the vicinity of his designated post-attack rendezvous (the western end of Antisubmarine Patrol Station No. THREE).

Since these two attack groups took no further part in the action and were, in addition, largely clear of other units they will be dropped from further discussion.

(C) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0420 - 0520, October 25th.

(1) Upper Surigao PT's.

At 0420 Commander Upper Surigao PT's, with PT's 327, 321 and 326, was about one point three miles south and slightly west of the center of Kanihaan Island and was proceeding on course 352°(T) at six knots.

At about 0438 he contacted through PT 321's radar, since the radars of both PT 326 and 327 were inoperative, two enemy ships both of which he believed to be destroyers. One of these ships was burning and the other appeared to be lying to, covering the burning ship. Although PT 327 reported that both ships were six miles northwest of Kanihaan Island* the other two PT's reported them as six miles and four miles southwest of Kanihaan Island.**

At this time the ASAGUMO was bearing 350°(T), distant five point seventy-five miles; the MOGAMI was bearing 337°(T), distant six point five miles; and the SHIGURE was bearing 315°(T), distant four point nine miles from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "K"). It appears therefore that PT 327 had contacted the ASAGUMO and the MOGAMI, while PT's 321 and 326 had contacted the MOGAMI and the SHIGURE.

Commander Upper Surigao PT's now decided that, in accordance with his orders, he would attack the undamaged destroyer employing all three MTB's and therefore at approximately 0439 he increased speed to ten knots and headed toward the target. As he neared the destroyer (SHIGURE) he was fired upon by her at 0455 when the range was about three miles.*** Fortunately for him the enemy fire was wild.****

* Action Report PT 327, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Reports PT 321 and PT 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 321, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

He now, at 0456, seems to have increased speed to about twenty-five knots and have changed course to 300°(T) in order to reach his firing position on the SHIGURE. At about 0458 PT 327 fired two torpedoes, at least one of which exploded prematurely about ten seconds after firing;* PT 321 attempted to fire one torpedo but had a hot run on deck;** and PT 326 fired one torpedo.*** No hits were obtained because the SHIGURE was now proceeding away at high speed.***

Immediately after firing he turned away to the south but, because of PT 321's hot run on deck which illuminated that MTB, the SHIGURE's gunfire became quite accurate. This illumination also attracted the attention of the ASAGUMO which promptly opened fire. PT 321 was now caught in a heavy crossfire and received a shrapnel hole in the radar mast. Also, one man was severely wounded before the burning torpedo could be rolled overboard.**

At 0520 he was bearing 207°(T), distant 2,100 yards from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island. (Diagram "L").

(2) Kanihaan PT's.

At 0420 Commander Kanihaan PT's, with PT's 495, 489 and 492, was about four miles north of Kanihaan Island and was still proceeding north at four and one-half knots.

At 0423 he sighted a ship on fire bearing 300°(T), distant four miles, which he evaluated as a destroyer.**** This ship was the MOGAMI which was stopped and burning heavily.

At 0428 he sighted two destroyers burning on bearing 240°(T), range four miles.**** These two ships were actually the two halves of the burning FUSO which, by this time, had separated enough to appear as two separate ships (Diagram "K").

At this same time (0428) he seems to have changed course to 330°(T) in order to close the burning MOGAMI**** and notified CTG 79.11 that he was going out to investigate the burning ship.***** He hadn't gone far however when, at 0439, he heard CTG 79.11 warn all MTB's that friendly ships were coming down the strait.**** This was apparently a rebroadcast of CTG 77.2's 0438 warning to that effect.****** After acknowledging the message he reversed course to what seems to have been about 160°(T) and increased speed to possibly ten knots in order to regain his station off Kanihaan Island.****

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* Action Report PT 327, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 321, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 326, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report MARYLAND, Night Action Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

At 0458, judging that he was close enough to Kanihaan Island, he stopped and commenced drifting with the current. At 0520 he was bearing 308°(T), distant 1,300 yards from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "K").

(3) South Amagusan PT's.

At 0420 Commander South Amagusan PT's, with PT's 320, 330 and 331, was bearing 179°(T), distant four point fifty-five miles from Amagusan Point and was drifting in a southerly direction with the current.

Since the radar equipment in PT's 320 and 330 continued to operate in an unsatisfactory manner, reliance necessarily continued to be placed on that of PT 331.

During the period nothing was noted in the action reports of the MTB's.

Why this was so is not entirely clear for, based on RAD THREE,* the SHIGURE was within the ten - twelve mile range band and therefore should have been contacted. The answer seems to be, as mentioned under "Camiguin PT's, 1830 - 2400, October 24th", that the limiting ranges given in RAD THREE were about two miles greater than those actually obtained by the MTB's in this operation.

(4) East Amagusan PT's.

Since the East Amagusan PT's (328, 323, 329) continued to operate separately they will continue to be discussed separately.

(a) PT 328

At 0420 PT 328, with Commander East Amagusan PT's on board, was bearing about 244°(T), distant 2,000 yards from Amagusan Point and was drifting very slowly eastward with the current. His radar continued to be inoperative. Where he thought his other MTB's were is not known. Certainly the evidence is that he not only did not know where they were, but seems to have made no effort to reassemble them despite the inadequacy of his radar. Perhaps he expected them to rejoin him in the basic station to the east of Amagusan Point. Whatever his reasons may have been the facts are that the MTB's did not assemble but operated independently and well separated.

(b) PT 323

At 0420 PT 323 was bearing 071°(T), distant 4,500 yards from Amagusan Point and was proceeding south at four knots. Although during this period she noted no contacts, this seems to have been in error for, based on Diagram "K" and on her own action report, it seems highly probable that between 0511 and 0520 she sighted the SHIGURE and MOGAMI, as these ships were well within range.

* Radar Bulletin No. 3 (RAD 3), Radar Operator's Manual, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, August 5th, 1944 (Reprint March 1945), Part 4, Page 4-SO-7.

It also seems highly probable that it was these two ships which she reported at 0630 as "a destroyer was sighted standing by a large ship that was burning furiously eight miles northeast of Caligangan Point".* Since at 0511 the SHIGURE was bearing 064°(T), distant eight point one miles from that point and the MOGAMI was nearby it seems clear that the time of 0630 is in error.

At 0520 she was bearing 156°(T), distant five point four miles from Amagusan Point.

(c) PT 329

At 0420 PT 329 seems to have been bearing about 151°(T), distant 2,000 yards from Amagusan Point and was drifting with the current.

At 0430 she sighted a target close inshore and west of Amagusan Point** which upon closing she learned was PC 1130. This PC was drifting slowly eastward off the barrio of Sua,*** a small village west of Amagusan Point (Diagram "K").

At 0501 she decided to return to base** and promptly increased speed to about fifteen knots and steered various courses to round Amagusan Point close inshore.

At 0516 she appears to have settled on course about 354°(T).

At 0520 she seems to have been bearing about 021°(T), distant three point six miles from Amagusan Point.

(5) Lower Surigao PT's.

(a) PT 490

At 0420 PT 490 was bearing 106½°(T), distant four point one miles from Caligangan Point. She was drifting with the current which was setting 155°(T) at about two point twenty-five knots. Her patrol was, in general, uneventful until 0514 when the commanding officer, mindful of the fact that he had seen ships on fire, tracer firing and three ships moving north advised CTG 77.2 to that effect as follows:

"I am viewing the fire from a point fourteen miles north of Bobon on the tip of Leyte Island. Light tracer is very clear. The heavy fire over the horizon is in the middle of the strait. Three large targets east of southern tip are proceeding north through strait."****

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* Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PC 1133, Surigao Strait Battle, October 24th - 26th, 1944, Serial 205, December 3rd, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

It seems highly probable that the Bobon referred to was actually meant to be Binit Point and was somehow garbled in transmission or reception, for the only Bobon in the area was to the west of Amagusan Point and therefore miles out of position. Certainly PT 490 was at no time during the period of battle north of Bobon--in fact she was generally about half-way between Bobon and Binit Point.

This message, in addition to being confusing because of the above, was also confusing for (a) there had been no gunfiring for some time and therefore the "light tracer" is not identified unless it was connected with the action between the Upper Surigao PT's and the SHIGURE and ASAGUMO which occurred at about 0455 and (b) the three ships to which he refers are not identified unless they were the NACHI, ASHIGARA and MOGAMI, the first two of which were momentarily, about 0458, on a northerly course. However it seems far more likely that this was a considerably delayed report on the SECOND Striking Force which had passed north about 0400 and had been sighted when they were silhouetted against the FUSO fires, in which case the "light tracer" fires were probably the tracers from Attack Group 1.2 which had been firing at the MOGAMI and YAMASHIRO between 0353 and 0406, and the heavy fire was the fire of the heavy ships.

At 0520 she was bearing 090½°(T), distant three point fifty-five miles from Maoyo Point.

(b) PT 491

At 0420 PT 491 was bearing 116°(T), distant five point six miles from Caligangan Point and was drifting with the current. At 0520 she was bearing 105½°(T), distant four point eighty-seven miles from Maoyo Point.

(c) PT 493

PT 493, damaged and abandoned by her crew, was boached on Maoyo Point.

(6) Other PT's.

The operations of the motor torpedo boats other than the Upper Surigao, Kanihaan, South Amagusan, East Amagusan and Lower Surigao PT's were uneventful excepting that at 0519 PT 494 of the Bilaa Point PT's, over the PT common, advised PT 526 that of the three targets east of Panaon Island, at least two had proceeded in a northerly direction and one was south of Panaon Island.* As discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th", it seems likely that this report referred to the SECOND Striking Force and that the two targets moving in a northerly direction were the NACHI and ASHIGARA and the target south of Panaon Island was the ABUKUMA. Since the evidence available to this analysis indicates that the ABUKUMA had fallen out of formation much earlier it seems likely that the message was long delayed in transmission. This would not have been too confusing had the time of sighting been included, but since it was omitted, the omission likely was serious.

* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

CHAPTER XX - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0520 - 0600, October 25th

(A) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in his flagship NACHI, followed in column by the ASHIGARA, on course 180°(T), speed eighteen knots was bearing 268°(T), distant five point fifty-eight miles from Kanihaan Island.

His four destroyers were well ahead on his port bow, and were moving down the strait, the SHIRANUHI, KASUMI and AKEBONO at twenty knots; the USHIO at thirty knots (Diagram "L"), in order to escort the damaged ABUKUMA.

At this point the developing situation was about as follows: Commander SECOND Striking Force was rapidly retiring from the scene of the battle and was moving southward, as were all ships of his own direct command, as stated above, as well as those remaining from the destroyed THIRD Section. He had assumed command over the latter and had directed them to follow him in column. This they had not done for one reason or another, i.e., (a) the damaged MOGAMI which was 2,600 yards on his starboard quarter and which was making fifteen knots could not make the fleet speed (eighteen knots) and was gradually falling astern, (b) the slightly damaged SHIGURE which was 4,700 yards on his starboard bow was retiring at twenty-four knots, and (c) the damaged ASAGUMO which was 5,600 yards on his port quarter at seven point three knots was rapidly falling astern.

Thus, his various units were widely separated, and were becoming more so giving the appearance of a rout. What was he doing about it? The answer seems to be "nothing".

Why, for example, he seems to have taken no action to direct the SHIGURE to remain with his two heavy cruisers, or at least to escort the MOGAMI, is nowhere explained nor is it explained why he failed to dispose some of his units around her so that she might have the maximum chance of escaping. The fact that he sent his four destroyers to escort the damaged ABUKUMA rather than the damaged MOGAMI seems to provide a clue; i.e., that he had determined to insure the safe retirement of the ships of the SECOND Striking Force and to give little if any protection to the three damaged units of the THIRD Section above referred to, or even to give them further orders.

WHILE SUCH ACTION MAY HAVE BEEN CORRECT BASED ON JAPANESE DOCTRINE, WHICH SEEMS EXCEEDINGLY DOUBTFUL, IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT CORRECT BASED ON ALLIED DOCTRINE FOR ALLIED DOCTRINE STATED "WITHDRAWAL MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A DEFINITE PLAN IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE ORDERLY AND NOT A ROUT."*

This then was the disposition of the Japanese forces at this time. All of this was well known to Commander SECOND Striking Force. But whether or not that Commander knew that the Allied cruisers were moving down the strait at twenty knots in order to close his units is not known. Although it is quite possible that he did not know this, it seems quite logical to say that he should have expected pursuit by fast forces.

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* War Instructions, United States Navy, 1944, (FTP 143A), Chapter 12, Section XXVI, Paragraph 12310.

Therefore it cannot be said that he was taken by surprise at 0529 when he saw the flash of Allied guns and realized that the retiring units of the THIRD Section were being taken under fire.

He now likely re-estimated the situation to determine whether to (a) turn back and engage the enemy in order to protect the MOGAMI which was on his starboard quarter bearing 321°(T), distant but 4,000 yards, or (b) continue his retirement leaving the MOGAMI to escape if possible. He clearly decided on the latter course of action for, instead of turning back, he changed course at 0531 to 160°(T) apparently in order to throw off the enemy gunfire.

HIS DECISION IN SO DOING SEEMS UNSOUND SINCE THE SAFETY OF THE MOGAMI WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE JAPANESE NAVY. THEREFORE IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT HE SHOULD HAVE TURNED BACK TO DEFEND THE MOGAMI, AT LEAST UNTIL HE HAD OBTAINED AN IDEA OF THE STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY FORCE. SINCE DAWN HAD COMMENCED BREAKING AT ABOUT 0518 HE WELL KNEW THAT EVEN IF HIS RADAR WERE NOT FUNCTIONING WELL HE WOULD SHORTLY HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF LIGHT AND THE ENSUING VISUAL OBSERVATION. AS A RESULT OF THIS VISUAL OBSERVATION HE MIGHT THEN RE-ESTIMATE THE SITUATION AND THEREUPON TAKE THAT ACTION WHICH SEEMED WISEST ON THE PREMISES.

At 0551, being approximately astern of his destroyers and well clear of the Panaon coast, he changed course to 180°(T),* (Diagram "L").

At 0555 he recalled his destroyers** which at this time were in the Mindanao Sea with the ABUKUMA, (Diagram "M"), and directed them to screen the NACHI and ASHIGARA. Within a matter of minutes the four destroyers departed the ABUKUMA and headed in a generally northeasterly direction to rejoin him.

At 0600 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in NACHI, with ASHIGARA following astern, was 6,700 yards bearing 312°(T) from the northern tip of Sumilon Island (Diagram "M").

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* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 58, Interrogation of Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, Volume I, Page 241 (Annex C, Track of 5TH Fleet - Surigao Strait).

** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

(1) Operations of Commander Destroyer Division EIGHTEEN, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander Destroyer Division EIGHTEEN, in SHIRANUHI, with KASUMI and AKEBONO in column astern, was proceeding toward the southern exit from Surigao Strait on course 180°(T) at twenty knots. (Since the USHIO was about 4,500 yards ahead and was proceeding at thirty knots to escort the ABUKUMA (Diagram "M") she is discussed separately.)

At 0525 he changed course to 215°(T) and at 0530 he increased speed to twenty-four knots.*

At 0535:30 despite poor visibility** he sighted two motor torpedo boats (PT's 150 and 196) bearing 235°(T), distant 5,000 meters* (5,468 yards), which were "withdrawing and laying smoke under illumination (star-shell**) by friendly (ABUKUMA) ships."* Actually these MTB's had been driven off by gunfire.

At 0544, having noticed that the USHIO had the ABUKUMA under escort, he slowed to eighteen knots* in order temporarily to remain behind ABUKUMA.*** At 0548 he slowed to sixteen knots.*

At 0555 he received an order from Commander SECOND Striking Force directing the destroyers to rejoin.**** Based on the USHIO track chart it appears that the SHIRANUHI promptly changed course to approximately 059°(T) and increased speed to approximately twenty-six knots in order to take position on the port bow of the NACHI, while the AKEBONO changed course to approximately 035°(T) in order to take a similar station on the starboard bow of the NACHI.***** The KASUMI seems to have followed in column.

At 0600 the SHIRANUHI was bearing 162°(T), distant four miles from Binit Point while the AKEBONO was 3,000 yards to the north (Diagram "M").

(a) USHIO

At 0520 the USHIO, which had been on course 180°(T) at thirty knots, changed course to approximately 213°(T)***** in order to head for the ABUKUMA (about 15,000 yards away). The latter ship which had sighted the USHIO about five minutes earlier was on course 020°(T) at twenty knots.***

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* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

**** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

***** Ibid., Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944.

At approximately 0532 either the USHIO or the ABUKUMA, or both, sighted PT's 194 and 150 to starboard.*

The ABUKUMA immediately opened fire with star shells. Having illuminated the MTB's both ships opened fire.* This caused the MTB's to retire under a smoke screen.

Meanwhile, one of the MTB's - PT 150 - had fired one torpedo at her which missed.**

Whether or not the USHIO sighted this torpedo is not known for there is no mention of it in her action report. However it must be emphasized here that this is not necessarily conclusive since the gunfire is not mentioned either.

At 0540 she passed out of Surigao Strait and at the same time commenced escorting the ABUKUMA as ordered by Commander SECOND Striking Force.*** Her movements were as shown in Diagram "M" which is based on her action chart.****

At 0555 she was directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force to rejoin.*** However she did not depart from the vicinity of the ABUKUMA until after making another circle around that ship.****

At 0600 she was bearing 198½°(T), distant six point four miles from Binit Point.

(2) ABUKUMA

At 0520 the ABUKUMA, which was in the entrance to Surigao Strait and on course 020°(T), speed twenty knots, was rapidly closing the USHIO which was proceeding south. She was also firing starshells from time to time.*****

At 0525 she reversed course to 200°(T)****** at which time she was contacted by radar by PT 150.** About 0532 either she or the USHIO, or both, sighted PT's 150 and 194 to starboard and opened fire.* Although she repulsed these attacks she did not seem to think that she had made any hits for she failed to mention the action in her action report. (Actually, as mentioned under "Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0520 - 0600, October 25th", her gunfire was quite accurate and made several effective hits on PT 194.)

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* Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

*** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

**** Ibid., Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

****** Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

At 0540 she was joined by the USHIO which commenced escorting her.* About 0542 she fired starshells toward Sonok Point** in order to see what might be lurking along the western shore of Panaon Island.

At 0544, based on the USHIO's action chart, she changed course to 260°(T)*** and slowed to ten knots.* It is likely that some of the emergency repairs completed earlier carried away about this time for the USHIO reports that the ABUKUMA's maximum speed was ten knots.* In fact the USHIO's action chart shows that her speed was more nearly seven knots until after 0600.***

At 0600 the ABUKUMA, escorted by the USHIO, was bearing 193°(T), distant six point seven miles from Binit Point.

(3) MOGAMI

At 0520 the MOGAMI was proceeding on course 192°(T) at fifteen knots and was no longer trying to follow the NACHI except in a most general way. She was gradually losing distance due to the NACHI's superior speed (Diagram "L").

At 0529 the Commanding Officer MOGAMI (who was the Gunnery Officer) was surprised by being taken under fire by forces to the north in the strait. He was not sure whether this firing came from enemy or friendly ships. However, since he had been straddled at a range of 19,500 yards on the first enemy salvo—which, as a matter of interest, had been fired by the PORTLAND—it became necessary to take some evasive, and some preventive action. He therefore immediately took (a) evasive action by making a sharp turn to starboard and then a more gradual turn back to the south and (b) preventive action by making the recognition signal.****

Meanwhile he endeavored to ascertain the situation which was rapidly growing more serious as other ships commenced firing at the MOGAMI with equally effective results. In this connection the Control Station Officer stated that they had (a) received about twenty salvos, (b) been heavily straddled, and (c) received over ten hits from heavy and medium caliber guns.*****

The making of the recognition signal and the fact that this was the second time in this action that the MOGAMI had questioned the enemy

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* Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

*** Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

**** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

***** Report on SHO Operation, Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

nature of the gunfire being directed at her--the first time was at 0356 when the MOGAMI was being attacked by the destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 at which time the commanding officer--who was the captain--had decided that these were friendly destroyers and had turned toward them making visual identification signals with flashing lights and red flares, discussed under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force (MOGAMI), 0348 - 0420, October 25th"--reminds students of history that at the Battle of Savo Island the Commanding Officer VINCENNES had behaved similarly. In this latter case the Commanding Officer VINCENNES, when he had been illuminated and fired on by the Japanese cruisers (CHOKAI, AOBA, KAKO, KINUGASA), had at first thought that they were friendly and later, when he was fired on by the FURUTAKA, he had, after great difficulty, hoisted a U.S. Ensign at his masthead to indicate his friendly nature.*

THESE TWO EXAMPLES SHOW THE NECESSITY, ESPECIALLY DURING NIGHT ACTION, FOR (A) THE COMMANDING OFFICERS OF SHIPS TO BE AS FAMILIAR AS POSSIBLE WITH THE DEVELOPING SITUATION, (B) FOR THEM TO AVOID HAVING PRECONCEIVED IDEAS AS TO THE CHARACTER OF CONTACTS, (C) FOR THE CIC'S OR OTHER COMMAND CENTERS TO MAINTAIN AN ACCURATE PLOT OF OWN AND ENEMY FORCES, AND (D) FOR A RELIABLE PROCEDURE FOR THE REPORTS OF CONTACTS AND THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN SHIPS.

About 0533 she steadied on a course of about 180°(T) and at 0535 changed course to about 200°(T).

By 0540 the shelling had ceased and she then changed course to 150°(T). During this period the ten direct hits which she had received apparently did little if any additional damage to her main engines, for she continued to move in a southerly direction at fifteen knots.

Sometime between 0540 and 0543 she was sighted by PT 490 and 491 which were operating independently.** Whether or not she sighted these two PT's at this same time is not known but it is known that she must have sighted at least PT 491 prior to 0601 for at that time she opened fire on that MTB which had changed course to close her.***

About 0558:30, being near the middle of the channel, she changed course to 180°(T) and headed for the southern exit to Surigao Strait.****

At 0600 the MOGAMI was bearing 271°(T), distant eight point fifteen miles from the northern tip of Sibanoc Island (Diagram "L").

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* Battle of Savo Island (NavPers 91187), Naval War College, 1950, Page 234.

** Action Reports PT's 490 and 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Chart, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

(4) ASAGUMO

At 0520 the damaged ASAGUMO was proceeding on course 238°(T) at a speed of about nine point five knots* in an attempt to follow the MOGAMI** (Diagram "L").

About 0525 she succeeded in increasing speed to fourteen knots.

At 0531 the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO noted the gunfire on her starboard quarter and realized that the enemy were in pursuit of the retiring Japanese forces. Since the tracers passed almost directly overhead he also realized that this was radar controlled fire** and that the ASAGUMO was a likely target. Therefore, presumably to throw off the enemy gunfire, he made a radical change of course to port to 140°(T).***

As he completed the turn, and despite the turn, he was fired on at 0533 by the approaching enemy with the unfortunate result that he was hit on the stern which resulted in a fire. The enemy fire was quite accurate and therefore he was likely astonished when the enemy at 0535 ceased firing at him. This hit was made by the MINNEAPOLIS which had fired with an open fire bearing of 178°(T), an open fire range of 14,600 yards, and had at 0535 shifted her fire to the MOGAMI.****

As a result of this hit the ASAGUMO slowed down even more and, from radar tracking, appears to have been reduced to about seven point three knots.

The fire gradually obtained the upper hand and the Commanding Officer ASAGUMO decided to abandon ship.** Therefore he changed course to 180°(T) at 0359 and at 0600 stopped.

At 0600 the ASAGUMO was bearing 235°(T), distant five point two miles from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island.

(5) SHIGURE

At 0520 SHIGURE was on course 195°(T), speed fifteen knots, and was bearing 256°(T), distant seven point seven miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island. She was about 5,000 yards on the starboard bow of the NACHI (Diagram "L").

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* The track of the ASAGUMO is based on Allied radar data.

** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

*** Track Chart LOUISVILLE, 0412 to 0540, October 25th, 1944, Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

**** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Battle of South Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

It will be recalled that at this time she was employing manual steering and had not fallen in astern of the NACHI as ordered by Commander SECOND Striking Force because of this fact.

At 0521 she increased speed to twenty-four knots and at 0522 changed course to 155°(T)* in order to regain the center of the channel.

At 0532:30, being close enough to the center of the channel, she changed course to 180°(T).**

At 0535 she shifted to auxiliary power steering*** which was not entirely satisfactory,**** probably because of damage to the telemeter lines.***

It is not clear why, having restored his auxiliary steering, the Commanding Officer SHIGURE did not fall in astern of the NACHI, particularly so since in such case the SHIGURE would have been the last ship in column and therefore would have had considerable freedom of action. Failing in this he might well have notified Commander SECOND Striking Force of the improvement in his steering system and (a) asked whether or not he was now to fall in astern of the NACHI or (b) thus given the commander an opportunity to issue any new instructions.

WHY HE FAILED TO DO SO BUT INSTEAD CONTINUED ON AT TWENTY-FOUR KNOTS, WHEREAS THE NACHI AND ASHIGARA WERE MAKING BUT EIGHTEEN KNOTS, IS NOT EXPLAINED. COULD IT HAVE BEEN THAT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE BY HIS ORDER TO FALL IN ASTERN OF NACHI HAD ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE REMNANTS OF THE THIRD SECTION, HE (COMMANDING OFFICER SHIGURE) CONSIDERED HIMSELF TO BE WHOLLY INDEPENDENT OF THAT COMMANDER PERHAPS BY VIRTUE OF HIS STEERING DIFFICULTIES. WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN HIS REASONS THEY DO NOT APPEAR SOUND AND INDICATE THAT HE DID NOT HAVE AN OFFENSIVE NOR A COOPERATIVE STATE OF MIND.

At 0549 she changed course to 185°(T)** and headed for the passage between Binit Point and Bilaa Point.

At 0600 SHIGURE was bearing 122°(T), distant four point nine miles from Binit Point (Diagram "M").

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* Track Chart, Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

** Appended Chart 2, Chart of Night Batt e, 3RD Section, 1ST Striking Force, 0030 - 0530, October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, ex-IJN, Volume II, Page 350.

(6) FUSO

The two burning portions of the FUSO continued to drift to the south with the current. The LOUISVILLE opened fire on what seems to have been the bow section at 0531.* The CONY recorded that she lost radar contact with what also seems to have been the bow of the FUSO at a range of 20,000 yards about 0536:30** and the CLAXTON recorded that she had lost radar contact with this target by 0540.*** It is considered that this section sank at this latter time in Latitude 10°-09'N, Longitude 125°-24'E (Diagram "L").

* Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

** Action Report CONY, Night Battle, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

CHAPTER XXI - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0520 - 0600, October 25th

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

During this period CTG 77.2 operated largely as Commander Left Flank Force and, therefore, most of his operations are discussed under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0520 - 0600, October 25th".

It will be recalled that at 0520, in the LOUISVILLE, he was heading south with the left flank cruisers. Therefore, since he was also Commander Left Flank Force, he was thoroughly familiar with the situation developing down the strait as the left flank cruisers headed in that direction.

He noted that (a) Commander Right Flank Force, with the cruisers of that force, was following the left flank cruisers down the strait to render assistance if necessary, and was now 11,600 yards on the LOUISVILLE's starboard quarter (Diagram "L"), and (b) Commander Battle Line was remaining in his present position and awaiting developments.

At 0527 he received a TBS voice radio message from the MINNEAPOLIS asking him if he had PT 490's report of three large targets, two of which were headed north, while the third remained in the south.* This message appears to have been a combination of the information contained in PT 490's message to CTG 77.2 at 0514 and PT 494's message to PT 526 at 0519.** A discussion of this stale and confusing information is contained under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

At 0529 he knew that Commander Left Flank Force had ordered his left flank cruisers to "Open fire when the target bears".***

At 0530 he received a message to the effect that PT 194 had reported that she was sinking and trying to beach on southern Leyte Island.****

As will be shown later under "Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0520 - 0600, October 25th", this MTB was rapidly sinking but was eventually saved.*****

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944; also Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Forwarding letter COMMTBRON 12, Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0406, October 29th, 1944.

He likely heard (a) at 0532 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX's order to the RICHARD P. LEARY to screen at fifteen knots around the NEWCOMB and the ALBERT W. GRANT,* and (b) at 0534 the WACHAPREAGUE's message to all PT boats to the effect that PT 194 had requested that all firing at the south end of Leyte Island cease as the fire was approaching PT 194.**

At 0536, hearing COMDESDIV XRAY report that he would pass astern of the cruisers,* he now knew, within reasonable limits, the location of that division.

At 0537, since he was also Commander Left Flank Force, he knew that that command had (a) directed his cruisers to change course to 010°(T) by simultaneous ship turns,*** and (b) just as the turn was being completed, ordered cease firing.***

He seems to have been concerned about his whole command for at 0549 he directed CTG 77.3 and TG 77.3 to change course to 350°(T),**** likely to give thereby searoom to TG 77.2. He included in the list of addressees (probably as information addressees) Commander Battle Line and COMDESDIV 112 (who was acting as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX in the absence of that commander with the disabled ALBERT W. GRANT). It would appear therefore that he desired that all of his commanders know that the Right and Left Flank Forces were now returning up the strait toward Leyte Gulf.

At 0600 the LOUISVILLE was bearing 077°(T), distant three point nine miles from Bugho Point, Leyte. The PHOENIX was bearing 319°(T), distant 4,800 yards from the LOUISVILLE (Diagram "L").

(1) Operations of Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-SIX, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

(a) Operations of Commander Attack Section ONE, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander Attack Section ONE (COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX), in the NEWCOMB, was lying close alongside the damaged ALBERT W. GRANT, and the RICHARD P. LEARY, about 7,600 yards to the northeast, was closing him at fifteen knots.

At 0529 he heard Commander Left Flank Force over the TBS voice radio direct the Left Flank Cruisers to open fire on the enemy remnants.*****

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3, Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report COMDESRON 56, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0013, October 29th, 1944.

At 0532 he directed the RICHARD P. LEARY to screen around the NEWCOMB and the ALBERT W. GRANT,* which the RICHARD P. LEARY commenced doing at 0534.**

At 0536 the WEST VIRGINIA informed the RICHARD P. LEARY that she had sighted an aircraft with lights burning bearing 190°(T), range nine miles.*** This aircraft was in the vicinity of Attack Section ONE.

At 0540 the RICHARD P. LEARY's medical officer reported on board the NEWCOMB**** after which (0543) the NEWCOMB went alongside the ALBERT W. GRANT to receive the wounded, and to furnish electric power, electric submersible pumps and gasoline handy-billies to that destroyer in order to combat flooding.*****

At 0547 the ALBERT W. GRANT was able to put her No. 4 boiler on the auxiliary steam line and immediately afterwards began to use her after pumps to combat flooding.*****

At 0600 Attack Section ONE was about five miles west of Hibuson Island.

(b) Operations of COMDESDIV 112, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander Destroyer Division 112, in ROBINSON, who was acting as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, with Attack Sections TWO and THREE astern, was on course 270°(T), speed fifteen knots, and was operating in the approximate vicinity of the post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island.

It will be recalled that at 0517 CTG 77.2 had asked him if his destroyers were coming down the strait at thirty knots to which he had replied in the affirmative.* He now at 0520 queried CTG 77.2 as to his position. At 0522 he received a reply to the effect that CTG 77.2 was seven miles southwest of Point HYPO.* (As discussed under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0520 - 0600, October 25th", Point HYPO is considered to be Hibuson Island.)

At 0523 he changed course to 210°(T) and increased speed to twenty knots.*

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Deck Log RICHARD P. LEARY, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Deck Log NEWCOMB, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

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At 0527 he likely heard the MINNEAPOLIS inquire if CTG 77.2 had received PT 490's report on three large targets off Panaon Island, two of which were heading north and the third remaining in the south.*

At 0535 he changed course to 180°(T).** The HALFORD recorded this course as 185°(T)*** but the plot (Diagram "J.") shows that the course was more nearly 183°(T).

At 0540 he increased speed to twenty-five knots.**

At 0546 he likely intercepted Commander Left Flank Force's TBS voice radio message to COMDESDIV XRAY, and at 0549, a somewhat similar message to the Left Flank Cruisers, to form circular cruising disposition on course 010°(T), speed fifteen knots.****

At 0557 he likely intercepted COMDESDIV XRAY's message concerning survivors to Commander Left Flank Force.****

At approximately 0559 realizing that (a) the Left Flank Cruisers were to the north of him and on a northerly course, (b) the picking up of survivors by DESDIV XRAY might well leave those cruisers without an adequate screen and (c) there was little reason for him to proceed to the south by himself, he reversed course to 000°(T)***** and slowed to twenty knots.****

At 0600 the ROBINSON was bearing 309°(T), distant eight point three miles from Pelotes Point, Dinagat Island.

(2) Operations of Commander Destroyer Division XRAY, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 COMDESDIV XRAY, in the CLAXTON, was proceeding on course 160°(T) at twenty-five knots to make a torpedo attack on the retiring Japanese forces. The CONY was about 600 yards astern of him but the rest of his division were scattered from 12,000 to 16,000 yards behind the flagship (Diagram "K").

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* Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944. Enclosure (A).

** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

*** Deck Log HALFORD, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** This change of course is not recorded in the action reports or deck logs. However, the ROBINSON Deck Log on the page of columnar data records that at 0600 the ships head was 260°(T) indicating that course was changed at 0559.

It will be recalled that the WELLES had slowed to about twenty knots at 0506 due to loss of a feed pump. However, the repairs were soon completed so that at 0523 she increased speed to thirty-one knots* and followed the AULICK which was now making thirty knots. A few minutes later (0528) she advised COMDESDIV XRAY that her top speed was thirty-two point five knots.**

At 0525 COMDESDIV XRAY learned that the CLAXTON, which shortly after regaining radar contact on the ASHIGARA had commenced tracking the MOGAMI, had made radar contact on two more targets moving slowly southwest.*** About 0527 the CONY also made contact on these two additional targets recording them as one large and one small,**** bearing 165°(T), distant 22,200 yards, but whether or not this was reported to COMDESDIV XRAY is not known. Actually this range was on the ASAGUMO, which was moving toward the southwest at the time while the bearing appears to either have (a) been recorded in error or (b) taken on the FUSO bow. This seems so for the FUSO bow was bearing 170°(T) while the ASAGUMO was bearing 179°(T) (Diagram "L").

At 0531 the CONY recorded that the larger of these two targets had disappeared from the radar scope at a range of 20,000 yards.***** It is considered that this time is in error for (a) the CONY action report has a variable time error of several minutes, (b) the LOUISVILLE had been firing at the FUSO (bow) between 0531 and 0533, (c) at 0536:30 the range from the CONY to the FUSO (bow) was 20,000 yards (Diagram "L"), and (d) the CLAXTON recorded loss of both contacts at 0540.***

At 0536 COMDESDIV XRAY reported to Commander Left Flank Force that he was passing astern of the cruisers. At 0537 he received that commander's order to join the cruisers as their screen.****** He therefore changed course back to the north and at 0538 notified his division that the CLAXTON was slowing in order to comply with Commander Left Flank Force's order.******

At 0539 the SIGOURNEY made radar contact on a target bearing 158°(T), range fifteen miles.******* This contact was on the FUSO (stern) which at this time was at that range although the bearing was actually 166°(T).

At 0546 COMDESDIV XRAY received an order from Commander Left Flank Force to form a circular screen around the cruisers,****** and promptly changed the CLAXTON's course to 300°(T),******* while the other destroyers of the division maneuvered about as shown on Diagram "L".

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* Deck Log WELLES, October 25th, 1944.

** Action Report SIGOURNEY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 055, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

**** Action Report CONY, Night Battle, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944.

***** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 25th, 1944.

******* Deck Log CLAXTON, Columnar Sheet, October 25th, 1944.

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At 0547 the SIGOURNEY passed through a heavy oil slick.* She did not report this to anyone.

At 0549 he received Commander Left Flank Force's order to the cruisers to form circular cruising disposition on course 010°(T), speed fifteen knots, axis 000°(T) and that the destroyers were to form on Circle TWO.** He therefore, at 0553, assigned his destroyers as follows: "WELLES 000; THORN 060; CONY 120; CLAXTON 180; SIGOURNEY 240; AULICK 300."**

At 0554 he noticed a strong odor of fuel oil and sighted survivors in the water.*** At 0557 he reported to Commander Left Flank Force that there were numerous survivors in the water abeam of the cruisers and asked if he should pick them up. That commander then inquired as to whether the survivors were friendly or enemy. To this he replied that he could not tell, whereupon he was directed to pick up survivors.**

At 0600 the AULICK**** and at 0606 the THORN***** sighted Japanese survivors in the water. They continued on to reach their assigned stations in the screen. The THORN also sighted oil and debris.**

At 0600 the CLAXTON was bearing 100°(T), distant five point seven miles from Bugho Point, Leyte Island. The other destroyers of the division were maneuvering to form a screen around the cruisers as shown in Diagram "L".

(3) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander Left Flank Force, in LOUISVILLE, with his cruisers in column astern at varying distances as shown in Diagram "L", was on course 180°(T) at twenty knots. (At this time the ASAGUMO, bearing 176°(T), range 15,000 yards, was on a southwesterly course at nine point five knots, while the MOGAMI, bearing 191°(T), range 18,500 yards, was on a southerly course at fifteen knots.)

At 0520 he was queried as to his position by TBS voice radio by COMDESDIV 112, who, by a communication error, had been delayed in reaching his assigned screening station. He replied at 0522 that he was seven miles southwest of Point HYPO.** (This point is not defined in the records available to this analysis, but since a point seven miles southwest of the southwestern tip of Little Hibuson Island coincides with the LOUISVILLE 0517 position, it is likely that this was the point intended and that the CLAXTON recorder did not understand the name and wrote down "H" or HYPO.)

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* Action Report SIGOURNEY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 055, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

**** Deck Log AULICK, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report THORN, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 034, October 30th, 1944.

At 0522 he changed course by column movement to 250°(T)* preparatory to opening fire on the enemy remnants to the south. At this time the LOUISVILLE master gyro compass follow-up failed,** which probably accounts for the confusion as to the time of commencing the turn (LOUISVILLE action report states that she turned at 0520 and only COMCRUDIV TWELVE gives the correct time that the individual ships turned). This casualty made it necessary to set own ship's course into the range-keepers by hand.**

At 0529 he ordered his cruisers to, "Open fire when the target bears".*** The PORTLAND opened fire immediately at a smoking target bearing 185°(T), range 19,500 yards and tracked on southerly courses at seventeen knots.**** This target was the MOGAMI which reported being straddled on the first salvo.***** The other ships opened fire on the FUSO, ASAGUMO and MOGAMI as indicated in the table below:

TIME	FIRING SHIP	OPENING FIRE RANGE	OPENING FIRE BEARING	TARGET	DIAGRAM "L" OPENING FIRE RANGE	DIAGRAM "L" OPENING FIRE BEARING	REPORTED TARGET COURSE (T) (Remarks)	REPORTED TARGET SPEED (knots)
0529	PORTLAND	19,500	185	MOGAMI	19,500	185	186@	17
0531	DENVER	20,000	190	MOGAMI	20,100	189½	235@ (CA or BB)	—
0531	LOUISVILLE	18,900	160	FUSO (bow)	18,900	158	--- (very large fire)	—
0533	COLUMBIA	21,200	191	MOGAMI	21,250	192	218 (large burning ship, believed to be BB)	16
0533	MINNEAPOLIS	14,750	178	ASAGUMO	14,700	176	--- (DD, no bow)	--
0533@	LOUISVILLE	18,900	180	MOGAMI	18,800	179	180 (afire, believed to be original BB target)	17
0535	MINNEAPOLIS	22,250	179	MOGAMI	20,000	180	--- (afire and retiring)	20

@ From track charts

* Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigac Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

** Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report PORTLAND, Surface Engagement in Leyte Gulf, October 25th, 1944, Serial 065, October 28th, 1944.

***** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944. WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

In connection with the above it is to be noted that the LOUISVILLE shifted fire from the FUSO to the MOGAMI at 0533* and the MINNEAPOLIS shifted fire from the ASAGUMO to the MOGAMI at 0535.**

The ASAGUMO reported that she was hit in the stern and set afire*** which was confirmed by Allied observers.**** The MOGAMI reported receiving over ten hits.***** The CONY and the CLAXTON which were coming down the strait reported that a target had disappeared from the radar scope, the former at about 0536:30****** and the latter at 0540.******* This appears to have been the bow of the FUSO which as shown above was fired on by the LOUISVILLE only.

Why the MINNEAPOLIS fired against the MOGAMI with a range of about 2,250 yards in excess is not explained. It could have been due to ranging on splashes which were well over, but it more likely was due to recording the range after she had ceased firing and had turned away. It is of interest that at about this time (0539:23) the range, from Diagram "L", was exactly 22,250 yards.

It will be recalled that the LOUISVILLE experienced a failure of the master gyro compass follow-up which made it necessary to set own ship's course into the rangekeepers by hand. Judging from the firing bearings obtained this casualty did not detract from her shooting ability.

At 0536 Commander Left Flank Force received word from COMDESDIV XRAY that DESDIV XRAY would pass astern of the cruisers, whereupon he, at 0537, directed that commander to join him and screen his cruisers.********

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* Action Report LOUISVILLE, Night Surface Engagement off Surigao Strait, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0045, November 7th, 1944.

** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Participation in Battle of South Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

**** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944; also Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

***** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

****** Action Report CONY, Night Battle, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944.

******* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

******** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

Also at 0537 he ordered a change of course to 010°(T) by simultaneous ship turns.* Although he gives no reason for this turn away it was most likely due to the fact that he had noted the MOGAMI's change of course to the westward at 0529 which gave every indication of firing torpedoes.

It is not clear why he (a) did not turn toward the enemy rather than away in that (1) the necessary course change would have been much smaller, (2) it would have been easier to avoid the torpedoes by heading toward them rather than away and (3) the danger of interference from TG 77.3 would have been avoided, and (b) did not turn back and continue the pursuit of the Japanese ships once he had determined that the enemy torpedoes, if fired, had likely passed. Had he done so it is hardly likely that the MOGAMI would have escaped.

Although he stated later that he had turned to the north at this time to look for DESDIV XRAY,** this seems to be incorrect since he had heard from COMDESDIV XRAY but one minute earlier (at 0536) that DESDIV XRAY was passing astern of the left flank cruisers and had promptly replied, "Join me as screen".***

THEREFORE IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT HIS BASIC REASON FOR TURNING NORTH WAS HIS BELIEF THAT HE WAS NOW IN ENEMY TORPEDO WATER AND THAT, SINCE HE HAD ALREADY ALERTED CTF 77 TO THE FACT THAT SOME ENEMY SHIPS WERE ESCAPING AND HAD STRONGLY RECOMMENDED AN EARLY MORNING AIR ATTACK ON ANY THAT MIGHT ESCAPE, HE THOUGHT IT WISE NOT TO ENDANGER UNNECESSARILY HIS SHIPS AT THIS TIME.

At 0539, just as his ships were completing their turns, he ordered cease fire.* Although both the MOGAMI and the ASAGUMO were in flames they were not sunk. The Commanding Officer DENVER recognized this fact and stated that it was probable that the MOGAMI had made good her escape to the southward.****

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Personal Interview of Vice Admiral (then Rear Admiral) Jesse B. Oldendorf, USN, CTG 77.2, recorded by Naval Records and Library, CNO, February 19th, 1945.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

After cease fire at 0539 his ships had ammunition left as shown in the table below:

	ON HAND AT 0529		FIRED			REMAINING AT 0539	
FIRING SHIP	AP	HC	AP	HC	TARGET	AP	HC
LOUISVILLE	406	564	18	0	FUSO		
			72	0	MOGAMI		
			90	0		316	564
PORTLAND	165	95	71	0	MOGAMI	94	95
MINNEAPOLIS	78	165	9	0	ASAGUMO		
			54	0	MOGAMI		
			63	0		15	165
DENVER	269*	1083	156*	0	MOGAMI	113	1083
COLUMBIA	356	120	200	0	MOGAMI	156	120

From the above table it can be readily seen that the supply of armor piercing ammunition ammunition was very low particularly when the high rate of fire of the ships is considered.

At 0541 the LOUISVILLE changed course to 350°(T)** in order to give the PHOENIX more room to complete her turn to the north, and after a short time changed back to base course of 010°(T).**

Also at 0541 he received a message from CTG 77.3 informing him that the PHOENIX was going to unload one gun through the muzzle.***

At 0546 he directed COMDESDIV XRAY to form a circular screen around his cruisers*** and at 0549 he ordered his cruisers and destroyers to form circular cruising disposition as follows:

"Form cruising disposition on LOUISVILLE in position 1000. Heavy ships on circle one in order from LOUISVILLE: PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, DENVER, MINNEAPOLIS. Present course 010°(T), speed 15 knots, axis 000°(T). Destroyers form on circle two".***

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* Estimated. The DENVER reported having on hand after the Battle of Surigao Strait 113 rounds of 6-inch AP. The ammunition expended by the DENVER embraced the 6-inch AP fired during the periods (a) 0351:30 - 0404 and 0406 - 0409, and (b) fired during the period 0531 - 0538. The amount of ammunition fired during the above periods is not known, but since the COLUMBIA, during the latter period, fired 200 rounds in nine minutes it is assumed that the DENVER, which fired for seven minutes, fired at the same rate and therefore fired seven-ninths of 200 rounds or 156 rounds. This added to the 113 rounds which the DENVER had remaining at the end of the battle would give 269 rounds on hand at 0529.

** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

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Also at 0549, as CTG 77.2, he directed CTG 77.3 and TG 77.3 to change course to 350°(T), including Commander Battle Line and COMDESDIV 112 in the call (probably as information addressees).* It appears that he desired to open the distance between TG 77.2 and TG 77.3 more rapidly for at this time the distance between the LOUISVILLE and the PHOENIX was only about 800 yards in spite of CTG 77.3 having increased speed to twenty-five knots at 0546. It also appears that he changed course to 015°(T) at 0551 for the same reason.**

At 0557 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV XRAY to the effect that there were numerous survivors in the water abeam of the cruisers and asking if he should pick them up. He then requested information as to whether the survivors were friendly or enemy. After receiving a reply that COMDESDIV XRAY could not tell, but that there were strong oil fumes in the vicinity, he directed that commander to pick up survivors.***

At 0600 the LOUISVILLE and the PORTLAND were in their assigned stations in the disposition while the SIGOURNEY was fast approaching hers. At this time the LOUISVILLE was bearing 077°(T), distant three point nine miles from Bugho Point, Leyte Island.

(4) Operations of Commander Battle Line, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

Commander Battle Line, with his battleships but without a screen, continued to steam east and west along a line some six miles north of Hibuson Island. He was able to follow the actions of Commander Left Flank Force in a general way by intercepting that commander's voice radio messages and thus knew that Commander Left Flank Force had ceased fire and turned to the north at 0539.****

Since Commander Battle Line took no part in the remaining operations of this battle his operations are not discussed further.

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (Commander Battle Line), Battle of Surigao Strait, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0201, November 24th, 1944.

(5) Operations of CTG 77.3, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 CTG 77.3 was on course 160°(T), speed twenty knots and, with his three cruisers, was standing by to render assistance as necessary to CTG 77.2. At this time, in anticipation of dawn, he was forming Antiaircraft Disposition VICTOR (Diagram "L").

He was watching the movements of Commander Left Flank Force with care for, since that commander had issued no instructions nor plans, he would have to be alert not to embarrass him and yet be in a supporting position.

At 0522 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message to the left flank cruisers to change course to 250°(T).* Since he had several targets on his radar screen he could estimate from this signal that Commander Left Flank Force would be opening fire shortly.

At 0526 he intercepted a message from PT 194 to the WACHAPREAGUE saying, "Sinking, send help".**

At 0528 he slowed to ten knots*** in order not to approach the left flank cruisers too rapidly while they were on their firing course.

At 0529 he (a) intercepted a TBS voice radio message from Commander Left Flank Force to his cruisers to open fire, (b) changed course by simultaneous ship turns to 180°(T) in order to give the Left Flank Force more sea room, and (c) directed his force to submit their damage and casualty reports to him by visual signal after sunrise.** He issued this latter order to insure that the voice circuits which were primarily command circuits and were employed for maneuvering and control would not be overloaded with extraneous matter at this crucial time.

Also at 0529 he observed the left flank cruisers opening fire.

At 0533 he intercepted a message from the WACHAPREAGUE to all MTB's to the effect that PT 194 requested that firing at the south end of Leyte Island cease as fire was approaching her.**

At 0536 he received a message to the effect that PT boats had reported a ship afire and heading south, bearing 135°(T) from Amagusan Point. He states in his action report that this placed this ship bearing 162°(T), distant 19,000 yards from the PHOENIX.*** Although this range is about 1,000 yards beyond the range to the ASAGUMO, the bearing checks,

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

and, since there were no other ships nearby, it seems clear that he had hurriedly taken a range and bearing on the ASAGUMO. At this time the ASAGUMO was bearing 131°(T) from Amagusan Point (Diagram "L").

At 0538, after hearing Commander Left Flank Force order a change of course by simultaneous ship turns to 010°(T), he reversed course, also by simultaneous ship turns, to 000°(T),* and at 0539 he increased speed to twenty knots.** While he stated in his action report that his reason for so doing was to close the battleships*** it seems more likely that his real reason was to avoid embarrassing CTG 77.2 who was turning toward him.

At 0540 having heard from the DALY that she could not turn to the right but would have to turn to the left, he directed her to keep clear as best she could.****

At 0541 having received word that an MTB was in need of help he so advised his destroyers, as a result of which the DALY, at 0542, replied that she had one 1,200 yards on her starboard bow. He then directed her to investigate.** Which MTB was in need of help is not clear, but since (a) PT 194 was known to be sinking and (b) the fact that PT 493 had been beached on Maoyo Point was not known until later, it can be assumed that it was PT 194.

At 0544 he (a) designated SHROPSHIRE as guide, (b) received a message from the DALY that she had two friendly MTB's off her starboard bow which she was investigating, and (c) directed the DALY to inform the friendly MTB's of the damaged MTB.****

At 0546 he increased speed to twenty-five knots**** in order to increase the distance between himself and the left flank cruisers. This was important as the two commands were unusually close, the distance from the PHOENIX to the LOUISVILLE being about 600 yards at this time.

At 0549, among others, he was directed by CTG 77.2 to execute, "Turn 350."*** However he did not execute this order as he felt he required more sea room before turning. Finally, when at 0553 this objective had been accomplished, he changed course by simultaneous ship turns to 350°(T).**** Also at this time he directed the PHELPS to take guide.****

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C); also Action Report PHELPS, Surigao Strait, Morning of October 25th, 1944, Serial 069, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

**** Ibid., Enclosure (C).

At 0555, when the BACHE had finally succeeded in gaining station,* his Antiaircraft Disposition VICTOR was complete with the exception of the DALY. Due to the time taken to investigate the MTB's as well as to her failure to speed up and follow the HUTCHINS closely, the DALY was not to enter formation until 0759.**

At 0559 he informed his destroyers that, when so directed, DALY, BEALE and BACHE were to constitute a special torpedo attack group to be designated as DALY's boys. DALY promptly replied, "Roger". Each of these three destroyers had five torpedoes remaining, whereas the other three destroyers (HUTCHINS, KILLEN, ARUNTA) in TG 77.3 had none.

At 0600 CTG 77.3, in PHOENIX, was bearing 041°(T), distant 7,100 yards from Bugho Point, Leyte Island.

(a) Operations of COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

(1) Operations of Commander Attack Group 1.2 and COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander Attack Group 1.2, who was COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, in HUTCHINS, was on course 150°(T) at twenty-five knots. The DALY and BACHE, on course 155°(T) at ten knots, were some 3,000 yards to the north. All were proceeding to their screening stations in Antiaircraft Disposition VICTOR being formed by CTG 77.3.

At 0520:48 the DALY, noticing that the HUTCHINS was gaining in bearing and now bore nearly due south, changed course to 178°(T) in order to close the HUTCHINS' track. She held her speed of ten knots, however. Why she did this is nowhere explained, although from the record, she knew that the cruisers were now making twenty knots*** and it was obviously impossible to overtake at ten knots. In fact she did not increase speed to fifteen knots until 0537 when she was some 9,000 yards astern of the HUTCHINS.

Why this condition occurred is not explained. It appears that the maneuvers to re-form the section in proper order were undertaken without signal and that since the section had been at ten knots speed when the maneuver was commenced the DALY and the BACHE had continued at that speed. Under these conditions it would be logical to expect the HUTCHINS to increase speed to pass the other two ships and then, when she was ahead, to resume the original speed or make a speed signal to indicate a change of speed for the division as a whole. However, there is no record of any speed signal being made and the HUTCHINS had increased speed to twenty-five knots in order to reach her screening station with the right flank cruisers.

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* Deck Log BACHE, October 25th, 1944.
** Deck Log DALY, October 25th, 1944.
*** Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

DOES IT NOT APPEAR THAT, IN THIS CASE, A SPEED SIGNAL FROM EITHER COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR OR FROM THE HUTCHINS WOULD HAVE PREVENTED CONFUSION AND KEPT THE GROUP CONCENTRATED AND BETTER ABLE TO PERFORM ANY DUTIES WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED?

There were other instances during the battle where the policy of not communicating appears to have been a handicap. Some of these were the blanking of the gunfire of the DALY and the BACHE by the HUTCHINS at 0345 and the increased distance from that time until about 0430 which resulted in the HUTCHINS being isolated (5,300 yards from the DALY at 0348 and 3,500 yards at 0420) and precluded the obtaining of mutual support from the DALY and BACHE during the gunnery phase of the action.

FROM THE ABOVE IT APPEARS THAT DURING AN ENGAGEMENT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO COMMUNICATE THOSE COURSE AND SPEED CHANGES NECESSARY TO OBTAIN COORDINATED ACTION AND CLOSE MUTUAL SUPPORT EVEN THOUGH OPERATING IN GENERALLY FOLLOW-THE-LEADER TACTICS.

The DALY and BACHE followed the HUTCHINS in a general way as shown on Diagram "L".

At 0529 COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR received a message from CTG 77.3 directing that the damage and casualty reports be submitted by visual signal after sunrise.*

At 0540 (two minutes after TG 77.3 had been ordered to reverse course to the right) the DALY reported to CTG 77.3 that she could not turn to the right but would have to turn to the left.** Presumably this was due to the presence of PT 329 which had just been picked up on the port bow. CTG 77.3 then replied directing the DALY to keep clear as best she could.**

At 0541 CTG 77.3 informed his destroyers that one of the MTB's was in need of help and asked if any of them had an MTB which was in need of help. The DALY replied at 0542 that she had one that was 1,200 yards off the bow.** This was the PT 329.*** CTG 77.3 then directed the DALY to investigate.**

At 0544 the DALY reported to CTG 77.3 that she had two friendly MTB's off her starboard bow and that she was investigating.** The identity of the second MTB could not be established from the information available to this analysis. The movements of the DALY after this are unknown but presumably she turned to the west to inform the PT 329 of the damaged PT to the south.

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* Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

At 0550 the HUTCHINS took her proper station in the formation* and at 0555 the BACHE, having been saved by CTG 77.3's reversal of course and increase of speed to twenty-five knots, did likewise.**

Since all of the destroyers of DESRON TWENTY-FOUR were now, with the exception of the DALY, in formation with the cruisers of TG 77.3 the actions of these destroyers and their commander will be discussed under the operations of CTG 77.3.

(2) Operations of Commander Attack Group 2.2, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

At 0520 Commander Attack Group 2.2, who was the Commanding Officer ARUNTA, was on course 160°(T) at twenty-five knots proceeding toward his screening station in Antiaircraft Disposition VICTOR being formed by CTG 77.3. The KILLEN was already in position, but the BEALE, being 4,500 yards behind the KILLEN, would not be able to take her proper station for some time, (Diagram "L").

Both the ARUNTA and the BEALE now maneuvered as necessary to take their proper stations in the above antiaircraft disposition. In a matter of minutes (at 0522) the ARUNTA was on station but it was not until 0535 that the BEALE succeeded in arriving there.***

Since all units of Attack Group 2.2 were now in their proper stations in Antiaircraft Disposition VICTOR with CTG 77.3, their ensuing actions will be discussed under the operations of the Commander.

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* Action Report COMDESRON 24, Night Surface Engagement, Surigao Straits, Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0129, October 30th, 1944.

** Deck Log BACHE, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log BEALE, October 25th, 1944.

(B) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0520 - 0600, October 25th.

(1) Upper Surigao PT's.

At 0520 Commander Upper Surigao PT's, with PT's 327, 321 and 326, was proceeding toward the Dinagat shore at fifteen knots on course 040°(T) and was bearing 207°(T), distant 2,100 yards from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island.

At 0527, judging that he was close enough to the shore of Dinagat Island, he stopped and commenced drifting with the current. From this time until 0600 his operations were uneventful.

At 0600 he was bearing 098°(T), distant 1,800 yards from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "L").

(2) Kanihaan PT's.

At 0520 Commander Kanihaan PT's, with PT's 495, 489 and 492, was drifting south with the current and was bearing 308°(T), distant 1,300 yards from the northern tip of Kanihaan Island. Nothing of importance occurred during this period.

At 0600 he was bearing 282°(T), distant 900 yards from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "L").

(3) South Amagusan PT's.

At 0520 Commander South Amagusan PT's, with PT's 320, 330 and 331, was bearing 180°(T), distant six point thirty-five miles from Amagusan Point and was drifting with the current in a southerly direction. Only PT 331's radar was operating satisfactorily. During this period his operations were uneventful. At 0600 he was bearing 180°(T), distant seven point two miles from Amagusan Point (Diagram "L").

(4) East Amagusan PT's.

(a) PT 328.

At 0520 PT 328, with Commander East Amagusan PT's on board, was bearing 237°(T), distant 1,500 yards from Amagusan Point. She was alone and was drifting slowly eastward with the current. At 0600 she was bearing 226°(T), distant 1,300 yards from Amagusan Point (Diagram "L").

(b) PT 323.

At 0520 PT 323 was bearing 156°(T), distant five point four miles from Amagusan Point and was proceeding south at approximately four knots.

Although she does not mention it in her action report it seems from her subsequent actions that at approximately 0530 she changed to an easterly course with the intention of investigating the burning FUSO which she could undoubtedly see.

At 0600 she was bearing 148°(T), distant seven point eight miles from Amagusan Point (Diagram "L").

(c) PT 329.

At 0520 PT 329 was bearing 021°(T), distant three point six miles from Amagusan Point and was proceeding along the Leyte Shore to her base in San Pedro Bay, at approximately fifteen knots, on a northerly course (Diagram "L").

At 0534 she seems to have changed course to about 324°(T).

At 0542* off Pandan Point** she was challenged by the DALY, which had presumably sighted her about 0540. After some delay she proceeded toward Cabugan Chico Island** on a course of approximately 300°(T).

At 0552 she seems to have changed course to 345°(T) and at 0556 to 020°(T) in order to pass close to the western shore of Cabugan Chico Island. At 0600 she was bearing 004°(T), distant 1,800 yards from the western tip of Cabugan Chico Island.

(5) Lower Surigao PT's.

(a) PT 490.

At 0520 PT 490 was bearing 090½°(T), distant three point fifty-five miles from Maoyo Point. She continued to drift with the current which was setting 155°(T) at about two knots.

About 0540 she sighted the MOGAMI which was heading south at low speed and on fire.*** At this time the MOGAMI was bearing 038°(T), range about 5,400 yards (Diagram "L"). She made no effort to attack the MOGAMI because she had no torpedoes left on board.***

At 0600 PT 490 was bearing 104½°(T), distant four point twenty-five miles from Maoyo Point.

(b) PT 491.

At 0520 PT 491 was bearing 105½°(T), distant four point eighty-seven miles from Maoyo Point and was drifting with the current.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C); also Action Report DALY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 078, October 30th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

About 0543 she sighted the MOGAMI, on fire, proceeding south at low speed.* At this time the MOGAMI was bearing approximately 012°(T), range 6,200 yards (Diagram "L"). The commanding officer attempted to report this contact but could not get his message through to anyone due to overloading of the voice radio circuit.* He also tracked the MOGAMI for a time and at 0548, when the range had decreased to about 4,800 yards, he seems to have gone ahead at ten knots on course 172°(T) in order to reach a firing position and then, at 0555, noticing that he was losing bearing, he seems to have increased speed to about fifteen knots.

At 0600 he was bearing 083°(T), distant two point nine miles from Caniguin Point.

(c) PT 493.

PT 493, damaged and abandoned by her crew, was beached on Macyo Point.

(6) SW Panaon PT's.

At 0520 Commander SW Panaon PT's, in PT 194, with PT's 150 and 196 in company, was about one mile southeast of Binit Village and was proceeding in a northeasterly direction at about seven and one-half knots. But a short time before, because of communication and radar failures in PT 196, he had transferred from that MTB to PT 194. He had not made contact with any forces during the night and was probably curious as to what was taking place in the strait.

At 0525 he sighted a large fire up the strait which was too far away to estimate the distance. Therefore, in order to make a better observation, he changed course to about 065°(T), and increased speed to about ten knots.**

It appears from the plot that at this time the MTB's deployed with PT 194 in the center and PT's 196 and 150 a short distance to the north and south respectively (Diagram "M").

At approximately 0528 (a) PT 150 contacted the USHIO and ABUKUMA by radar and obtained a range to the former of about 6,000 yards. The commanding officer immediately changed course to about 144°(T) and increased speed to about thirty knots in order to intercept her,*** and (b) PT 194 sighted the ABUKUMA visually as that ship was completing her turn to 200°(T).** The commanding officer then, at about 0528:30, changed course to 163°(T) and increased speed to twenty-three knots in order to intercept her. Unfortunately, the OTC in PT 194 failed to inform PT 196 of the two contacts with the result that PT 196 continued on course and speed. Whether this was through oversight or communication failure is not indicated in the action reports.

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* Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

Since his three motor torpedo boats became separated their operations will be discussed separately.

(a) PT 194.

Shortly after completing her turn to intercept the ABUKUMA, the commanding officer sighted the USHIO visually. He made no radar contact with either target. He continued on to intercept the ABUKUMA. At 0532 when the range had closed to about 1,200 yards and he had tentatively identified the two targets as destroyers, he noted that both the ABUKUMA and the USHIO had opened fire. He immediately changed course to parallel the ABUKUMA's track and opened fire with all of his guns. After getting off one round from the 40MM gun it was damaged and rendered useless by the accurate enemy fire,* presumably from the ABUKUMA.

He immediately turned away to course 296°(T), increased speed and commenced making smoke. About this time he noted that his MTB had been hit below the waterline in the vicinity of the lazarette and had commenced taking on water.* As a result of this damage he (a) at 0533 sent a message stating that PT 194 was sinking and requesting help,** and (b) requesting that all firing at the south end of Leyte (Panaon) Island cease, as it was endangering PT 194. At 0534 the WACHAPREAGUE relayed this second message to CTG 77.2.**

As PT 194 retired under smoke she was hit at least once more in the cockpit. This hit (a) exploded the spare 20MM ammunition and (b) resulted in considerable damage as well as in rendering the OTC unconscious and in wounding two officers and six enlisted members of the crew.*

About 0537 she started to slow because of the water entering the hole below the waterline. As she approached the shoreline of Panaon Island the enemy gunfire ceased. About 0543 she was close inshore near Balongbalong.

She now seems to have proceeded along the western shore of Panaon Island at about ten knots, so close inshore that other motor torpedo boats, which were searching for her to render assistance, did not sight her when they passed (Diagram "M").

Shortly before 0600 she sighted PT 196 which had been searching the shoreline for her in order to render assistance.***

At 0600 she was bearing 124°(T), distant one mile from Sonok Point. (Diagram "M").

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* Action Report PT 194, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0397, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report PT 196, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0400, October 31st, 1944.

(b) PT 150.

Shortly after completing her turn to 144°(T) to intercept the USHIO, PT 150 sighted visually both the USHIO and the ABUKUMA. He estimated that they were both destroyers on course 210°(T) at twenty knots.* Actually the USHIO appears to have been on course 213°(T) at thirty knots, and the ABUKUMA on course 200°(T) at twenty knots.

About 0531:30 he turned toward the USHIO, seems to have steadied on course about 045°(T), and at 0532 with a range of about 1,800 yards, fired one torpedo at the USHIO. At this time he noted that both the USHIO and the ABUKUMA had opened fire. He continued his turn to 000°(T), increased speed to about thirty-four knots, and opened fire with twenty and thirty-seven millimeter guns.* His torpedo missed, probably because of his ten knot error in the enemy's speed and the sharp track angle (Diagram "M").

He now continued on to the north and at 0535:30 was sighted by the KASUMI.** Why he did not sight the KASUMI and the two other destroyers as well is not known.

He now, having lost contact with the other two MTB's in his section, changed course to about 255°(T) and headed for Balongbalong to look for PT 194.*

At 0545, being off Balongbalong, he slowed to about nine knots and commenced a more careful search.* However the search was ineffective, even though he passed fairly close to her, likely because the latter was so close inshore as to not to be easily seen from seaward.

At 0600 he was bearing 145°(T), distant about 1,800 yards from Sonok Point.

(c) PT 196.

At 0529 the Commanding Officer PT 196, having failed to observe that PT's 194 and 150 had turned to the south to close the enemy, continued on course 065°(T) at ten knots. At 0532, observing the gunfire from the USHIO and ABUKUMA, he immediately headed on a southerly course and increased speed to fifteen knots. However, when several large caliber projectiles landed nearby, and he had observed that he could not distinguish the targets through the smoke laid down by the other MTB's, he, at about 0534, changed course to 300°(T), increased speed to twenty-five knots, commenced laying smoke and headed for the shore.***

At 0535:30 he was sighted by the KASUMI.** Why he did not sight the KASUMI and the other two destroyers is not known.

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* Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

*** Action Report PT 196, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0400, October 31st, 1944.

In the meantime, having heard PT 194 ask for help, he slowed to about fifteen knots and headed around the southern tip of Panaon Island looking for that MTB.*

At 0600 he contacted by sight PT 194 and prepared to go alongside and render assistance. At this time he was bearing 130°(T), distant one point one miles from Sonok Point (Diagram "M").

(7) SE Panaon PT's.

It will be recalled that the three motor torpedo boats in this section had been separated since 0124. Since (a) on the one hand (1) PT 134 recorded nothing after sighting four destroyers proceeding south off Panaon Island at approximately 0430,** and (2) PT 132 recorded nothing after sighting the ABUKUMA at approximately 0330,*** and (b) on the other hand (1) PT 137 recorded that she was under starshell illumination from about 0326 until about 0543, and (2) other events occurring off Binit Village,**** it is concluded that PT's 134 and 132 were not in the area between Binit Point and Bolobolo Point. For this reason, and for the lack of other data, the operations of PT's 134 and 132 are not discussed and their tracks are not shown on Diagram "M".

(a) PT 137.

At 0520 PT 137 was drifting with the current between Binit Village and Binit Point. Her radio transmitter was not functioning.

At 0533 she heard PT 194's message asking for help and proceeded toward Sonok Point**** at about thirty knots to render assistance.

At 0540 she sighted two destroyers (USHIO, ABUKUMA) on a southerly course**** (Diagram "M").

At approximately 0543 she sighted starshells ahead which illuminated her. She stated that these starshells, and also heavy caliber gunfire, came from a ship or ships in Latitude 10°-05'N, Longitude 125°-22'E,**** which is in the center of Surigao Strait. Although this position is fairly close to the position of the MOGAMI at that time, neither PT's 490 and 491 (which were nearby) recorded any firing at this time nor did the MOGAMI record firing. In addition it seems most unlikely that such firing would be done over mountainous Panaon Island which varies from 1600 to 2300 feet in elevation in this vicinity. It seems clear then that this firing was by either the USHIO or ABUKUMA, and was for the purpose of illuminating the west side of Panaon Island to see anything that might be lurking there.

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* Action Report PT 196, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0400, October 31st, 1944.

** Action Report PT 134, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-33, October 27th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 132, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial H-34, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

As a result of being illuminated, PT 137 changed course to 150°(T) and retired south and east around Binit Point. Just after steadying on the new course she sighted PT 150 on a northerly course along the shore.*

At 0600 she was bearing 256°(T), distant 2,400 yards from Binit Point.

(8) Sumilon PT's.

At 0520 Commander Sumilon PT's, with PT's 523, 524 and 526, was lying to about two miles southeast of Sumilon Island.

About 0530 he sighted four fires about twelve miles to the north.**

At 0545, in his capacity as COMMTBRON THIRTY-SIX, he directed Commander Bilaa Point PT's to join him.***

At 0600 he was bearing 154°(T), distant two miles from the western tip of Sumilon Island.

(9) Bilaa Point PT's.

At 0520 Commander Bilaa Point PT's, who had been returning to his station off Bilaa Point, was about one-half mile north of Bilaa Point. He continued on course 060°(T) at about five knots with PT's 494, 324 and 497 in company.

About 0530 he lost contact with the ABUKUMA,**** which contact he had maintained continuously since about 0327.

At 0545 he received instructions from Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron THIRTY-SIX (Commander Sumilon PT's) to join him.*** He therefore changed course to about 013°(T) and increased speed to about eight knots in compliance (Diagram "M").

At 0600 he was bearing 159°(T), distant three point six miles from the western tip of Sumilon Island.

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* Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 524, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report PT 526, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 497, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

(10) Madilao PT's.

At 0520 Commander Madilao PT's, with PT's 192, 191 and 195, was about two miles south of Madilao Point and was patrolling toward the south at five knots.

About 0559 he decided to return to base via Sogod Bay* and changed course to 315°(T), increasing speed to about twenty-three knots.**

At 0600 he was bearing 192°(T), distant four point seven miles from Madilao Point (Diagram "M").

(11) Limasawa PT's.

After 0100 Commander Limasawa PT's, with PT's 151 and 146, continued the unsuccessful search for PT 190 in the vicinity of Limasawa Island. The operations of PT 190 will be discussed separately.

At 0533 he received PT 194's message requesting help and headed toward Sonok Point to render assistance.***

At 0600 he was bearing 249°(T), distant three point one miles from Sonok Point (Diagram "M").

(a) PT 190.

At 0520 PT 190 was operating alone, well to the west of Limasawa Island, having become separated from PT's 151 and 146 after the attack on the MOGAMI and her destroyers about 0019.

At 0533 she received PT 194's message requesting help but did not respond to this call for help until later.****

At 0600 she was about seven miles southwest of Limasawa Island.

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* Action Report PT 192, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0395, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 195, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0393, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389, October 28th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944.

(12) Camiguin PT's.

Commander Camiguin PT's, with PT's 127, 128 and 129, had left PT's 130 and 131 to patrol in the vicinity of Camiguin Island and at 0520 was lying to halfway between Camiguin Island and Bohol Island to detect any enemy movements.* He had observed gun flashes to the northeast from the battle in Surigao Strait.*

About 0535 he proceeded south toward PT's 130 and 131, which at this time were about three miles west of Camiguin Island.*

About 0600 he joined PT's 130 and 131, about three miles west of Camiguin Island and headed for his base at Liloan Bay.*

PT's 130 and 131 observed nothing of sufficient importance during this period to record in their action reports.

* Action Report PT 127, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 4, October 29th, 1944.

CHAPTER XXII - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0600 - 0700, October 25th

(A) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

At 0600 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in NACHI, followed closely by the ASHIGARA, was on course 180°(T) at eighteen knots. His four destroyers which were in the Mindanao Sea escorting the ABUKUMA had just been recalled to escort the NACHI and ASHIGARA. (Diagram "M").

At 0602 he changed course to 240°(T)* in order to pass south of Binit Point and enter the Mindanao Sea.

He now noted that (a) at 0607 the AKEBONO had taken station on the NACHI's starboard bow,** (b) at 0615 the SHIRANUHI and KASUMI had taken similar stations on the NACHI's port bow,*** and (c) the USHIO was rapidly closing.*

At 0614 he exchanged calls with the MOGAMI.**** The two ships were about 6,200 yards apart at this time (Diagram "M").

At 0620 he noted that the KASUMI had left the disposition and was heading at moderate speed (twenty-two knots) toward the ABUKUMA which was about 16,000 yards ahead (Diagram "M"). This was in compliance with COMDESRON ONE's order directing her to come alongside the ABUKUMA (flagship) for the purpose of transferring the squadron flag.*** It is assumed that he (Commander SECOND Striking Force) had authorized this maneuver.

At 0622 his flagship sighted an object which appeared to be a submarine periscope and opened fire with machine guns. His units immediately prepared to make a depth charge attack. However, at 0623, when the apparent periscope proved to be a bamboo pole, the attack was stopped.**

Also at 0623, noting that the ASHIGARA had opened fire on a motor torpedo boat,** he, at about 0624, turned away from this contact (which is assumed to have been PT 150) to course 231°(T).*****

At 0627 he noted that the USHIO had also opened fire** on an MTB. This, as pointed out under "Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats (PT 150), 0600 - 0700, October 25th", was PT 150 which had sighted the SECOND Striking Force

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* The tracks of the ships in the 2ND Striking Force are based on Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944. Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

*** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

***** Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

destroyers at 0624 and had turned away. He also noted that the AKEBONO, and perhaps other ships as well,* had likewise opened fire about this time.

At 0639 he noted that the USHIO was retiring towards the disposition in order to take her position in formation, and likely ceased fire shortly afterwards.**

About 0643 he changed course to 252°(T) in order to clear the ABUKUMA.

At 0700 he informed his command that (a) the KASUMI would go alongside the ABUKUMA, (b) the squadron flag would be speedily transferred and (c) the ABUKUMA with the USHIO as escort would then proceed to Cagayan (Mindanao Island) and effect emergency repairs.*** He noted that, upon receipt of this dispatch, the USHIO had left the disposition and was proceeding toward the ABUKUMA.****

At this same time he informed the MOGAMI that he was dispatching an escort and requested a report of the MOGAMI's damage.***** Since this escort was to be the AKEBONO****** it seems clear that this destroyer had been so ordered at the same time by another dispatch.

At 0700 the NACHI was bearing 231°(T), distant twelve miles from Binit Point. ABUKUMA, with KASUMI preparing to go alongside, was about 7,000 yards to the southwest.

(1) USHIO.

At 0600 the USHIO, escorting the damaged ABUKUMA, was on course 260°(T) at twelve knots. Her movements were in general as shown in Diagram "M" which is based on her action chart.**

About 0607 she completed her second circle of the damaged ABUKUMA and departed to rejoin the NACHI and ASHIGARA.** At this same time she observed the AKEBONO assume station to the right of the cruisers.****

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* Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

*** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250700 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

**** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

***** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

****** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

At 0622 she observed the NACHI open fire with machine guns on an apparent submarine periscope. She immediately assumed battle stations and prepared to make a depth charge attack. At 0623, when the periscope proved to be a bamboo pole, she discontinued her attack preparations.*

Also at 0623 she observed the ASHIGARA open fire on a motor torpedo boat.*

At 0624, being about 3,000 yards ahead of the NACHI and on the reverse of the NACHI's course, she turned to the left** in order to cross the NACHI's track and take position on that ship's starboard bow.

At 0625 she sighted PT 150. Although she recorded that this MTB was twenty-five degrees to starboard* her action chart shows that the contact was to port** and that probably the bearing was obtained later. She promptly turned toward the contact and steadied on course 280°(T) at twenty knots. At 0627, just after completing the turn, and when the target was bearing 283°(T), distant 8,000 meters (8,748 yards), she opened fire. At 0637, when the target bore 326°(T), distant 10,700 meters (11,700 yards), she ceased firing.** She made no hits*** which was probably due to the high speed zigzag employed by PT 150.

At this point, she, and most likely the AKEBONO as well, after flashing the numeral one by blinker as a recognition signal,**** opened fire at another MTB. This MTB was PT 190 which had been lying to about 12,000 yards to the west. PT 190 now turned away and retired to the northwest. (Diagram "M").

At 0639 she changed course to 190°(T)** in order to resume her position in formation and likely ceased firing shortly afterwards. Although PT 190 recorded that her gunfire was extremely accurate, bracketing the MTB with eight or ten salvos, there were no hits, probably because PT 190 zigzagged at high speed and used smoke to cover the retirement.****

At 0650 she changed course to 252°(T)** and took station although she was about 5,500 yards astern of the AKEBONO (Diagram "M").

At 0700, in obedience to the orders of Commander SECOND Striking Force to escort the ABUKUMA to Cagayan,***** she left the disposition and proceeded to the ABUKUMA.*

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* Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 151717, NA 11807.

** Ibid., Action Chart 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944.

***** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250700 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

(2) ABUKUMA.

At 0600 the ABUKUMA, under escort of the USHIO, was proceeding on course 260°(T) at a speed of about seven knots (Diagram "M").

At 0605 she changed course to 249°(T) and changed speed to about nine knots.*

Although not mentioned in her action report, the commanding officer undoubtedly knew that the KASUMI had been ordered** to come alongside at 0620 in order to take off COMDESRON ONE.***

At 0700 he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force directing the (a) KASUMI to come alongside ABUKUMA and take off COMDESRON ONE and his staff and (b) ABUKUMA, with USHIO as escort, to proceed to Cagayan and effect emergency repairs.****

At this time he noted that the KASUMI was rapidly approaching.

At 0700 the ABUKUMA was bearing 228°(T), distant fifteen point two miles from Binit Point. The NACHI was about 7,000 yards to the northeast.

(3) MOGAMI.

At 0600 the MOGAMI was bearing 271°(T), distant eight point fifteen miles from the northern tip of Sibanoc Island and was on course 180°(T) at fifteen knots.

Plotting shows (Diagram "M") that at 0600 she slowed to fourteen knots. This was probably due to some change in the condition of her machinery since her engines continued to be untended.*****

She undoubtedly had sighted PT 491 sometime before 0600 because she opened fire at 0601 when the MTB changed course toward her track.****** It may have been as early as 0550 for this is the time listed in her action

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* Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

** Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ FEC Special Historical Collection Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

*** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

**** Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 250700 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report ABUKUMA, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

***** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

****** Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

report at which she engaged and drove off enemy motor torpedo boats.* The exact time cannot be determined from the reports available to this analysis.

At 0605:39, immediately after PT 491 had fired two torpedoes, she changed course toward the MTB** and steadied on course 222°(T). The torpedoes passed on her port hand about 300 yards away and at 0607 she changed course to 177°(T) and continued on toward the exit of Surigao Strait. She was still making fourteen knots.

At 0610 she sighted the SECOND Striking Force to the south.* This must have been a most welcome sight. At 0614 she identified herself to the NACHI* using the light source of her infra red signalling device, since all other signalling equipment had been destroyed.***

At 0620 she changed course to 180°(T) in order to proceed to the southern exit from Surigao Strait without approaching too close to Binit Point, where it was likely that MTB's would be waiting.

At 0625 she was observed by the KASUMI firing toward the land**** —the Leyte shore (Panaon Island).*** In this firing she repulsed two motor torpedo boats near the exit of Surigao Strait.* This fire likely was not very effective for none of the motor torpedo boats mention it in their action reports.

At 0645 she was sighted by PT 137 in Latitude 09°-50'N, Longitude 125°-21'E, making a speed estimated to be between twelve and fourteen knots, and steering a southerly course. She was smoking badly abaft her stack.***** About this time she changed course to 240°(T)****** in order to follow the SECOND Striking Force. Noting that PT 137 had turned toward her, had increased speed and that the range was closing rapidly, she, just before 0700, opened fire with her secondary battery. This fire also could not have been very effective because PT 137 stated that she had been driven off by a destroyer which had headed toward her and opened fire.***** This destroyer was likely the AKEBONO and the time after 0700, for about this time Commander SECOND Striking Force directed the AKEBONO to escort the MOGAMI.

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* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

** Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

**** Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

***** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

****** Track Chart, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

At 0654 she was sighted by PT 150 which noted that she (a) was severely damaged and smoking heavily from the vicinity of the after stack and (b) moving southwest at from ten to fifteen knots. She opened fire at this MTB with her secondary battery commencing about 0700.*

In the meantime with the arrival of full daylight, (a) fire fighting became more effective than during darkness and therefore some progress was being made toward control of the fire and (b) the morale of the crew rose now that the ship was closer to the SECOND Striking Force.**

At 0700 the MOGAMI was bearing 172°(T), distant six point nine miles from Binit Point.

(4) SHIGURE.

At 0600 the SHIGURE, on course 185°(T) at twenty-four knots, was bearing 122°(T), distant five miles from Binit Point. As shown in Diagram "M" this position was nearly in the center of the exit from Surigao Strait. She appears to have been operating so as to remain clear of the SECOND Striking Force.

At 0615 she was sighted by PT 137 in Latitude 09°-46'N, Longitude 120°-20'E (four miles west of Madilao Point). PT 137 stated that the SHIGURE turned toward her and opened fire.*** It appears that the PT 137 was in error for the SHIGURE did not open fire against PT's until 0648.**** At this time, however, she did change course to 244°(T) to pass between Camiguin and Bohol Islands.*****

At 0648 she sighted six motor torpedo boats on the horizon and opened fire.****** This contact was on the three Camiguin PT's, with two of the Bohol PT's which had joined them. It is of interest that Commander Camiguin PT's thought that this gunfire came from a submarine to the west of them, while only one of the MTB's (PT 129) conceded that it might have been from a retiring destroyer. Actually she was to the eastward of the MTB's which, at 0658, had turned away. The SHIGURE now ceased firing.*******

At 0700 the SHIGURE, still on course 244°(T) at twenty-four knots, was bearing 220°(T), distant twenty-two miles from Binit Point.

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* Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

** Report on SHO Operation by Lieutenant Fukushi, ex-IJN, Control Station Officer and Fire Data Computer Officer, MOGAMI, December 1945, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

*** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

***** Ibid., Track Chart (Appended Chart I).

(5) ASAGUMO.

At 0600 the ASAGUMO, badly damaged and with fires raging out of control, had just stopped in order to abandon ship. At this time she was about five point two miles southwest of Kanihaan Island. It appears that she did not abandon ship immediately, but instead spent considerable time trying to save the ship after preparations had been made to abandon her.*

At 0630 she was sighted by PT 323 which immediately commenced making an approach but she did not sight PT 323 until about 0646, for at that time, with a range of 3,000 yards, she opened fire--somewhat inaccurately--with one gun.** She continued to fire throughout the remainder of this period.***

At 0656 she was observed by PT 495, which was passing about one and one-quarter miles north of her, to have two small boats alongside,**** which were likely receiving some members of the crew.

At 0700 she was bearing 230°(T), distant five point five miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island. PT 323, which at this time was ready to fire torpedoes, was about 1,000 yards to the northwest (Diagram "N").

(6) FUSO.

The burning stern section of the FUSO continued to drift to the south. At 0630 PT 323 reported the stern as a large ship burning furiously.** About 0652 the Kanihaan PT's reported that the fire was still burning furiously although there was no ship left when they passed within 700 yards of the fire.**** From the above it is concluded that the stern of the FUSO sank about 0640, approximately in Latitude 10°-08.7'N, Longitude 125°-24.6'E (Diagram "N").

It seems clear that some time before the sinking the crew abandoned ship, for the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS sighted two groups of survivors totalling from 300 to 400 men floating in the water. Apparently the survivors off Tungo Point were from the ASAGUMO, while those off Kanihaan Island were from the FUSO. None of the survivors would accept rescue.***** This matter is discussed under "Operations of COMCRUDIV TWELVE, 0700 - 0733, October 25th".

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* Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kasuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944 and of Subsequent Operations of Cruiser Division 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944 Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

CHAPTER XXIII - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

Since during this period, as during the preceding period, CTG 77.2 operated largely as Commander Left Flank Force, most of his operations are discussed under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0520 - 0600, October 25th". However, it seems well to emphasize once again that since he was both CTG 77.2 and Commander Left Flank Force he likely found it difficult to separate the two commands in his mind. Therefore, in order to adequately appreciate his command difficulties, it is wise to read the operations of Commander Left Flank Force as well. Suffice it to say that at 0600 he was in the LOUISVILLE heading on course 015°(T) at a speed of fifteen knots, and was forming an antiaircraft disposition.

At 0607 he received a message from COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR (CTG 79.11) stating that three of his destroyers were in Station THREE and the other two in Station SEVEN, the post-attack rendezvous points, and that he would leave these stations in a few minutes for his normal screening stations.*

Although COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX sent a message to unknown addressees at 0612 reporting many casualties in the ALBERT W. GRANT and requesting that medical officers, hospital corpsmen and medical supplies be sent to the NEWCOMB,* it appears that CTG 77.2 did not receive this message for he took no action and did not mention it in his action report.

At 0613 he directed COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR (CTG 79.11) to close up his force and resume normal screening.*

At 0620 he received a warning from CTF 77 stating that there were many enemy aircraft in the area and releasing the antiaircraft batteries.**

At 0625 he directed Commander Battle Line to dispose the battle line between Taytay Point (Leyte Island) and Hibuson Island.** Taytay Point lies about nine miles northwest of Hingatungan Point. It will be recalled that Hingatungan Point was the point he had employed in the original positioning of the battle line (Plate XVII), and that Taytay Point was the point from which he had operated on the nights preceding the battle.

From this time until 0700 he was familiar with the fact that his cruiser force was pursuing the Japanese cripples.

(1) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

At 0600 Commander Left Flank Force, in the LOUISVILLE, was on course 015°(T), speed fifteen knots. His cruisers and DESDIV XRAY, less CLAXTON which was picking up survivors, were forming a circular cruising disposition as shown in Diagram "N".

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0602 he intercepted a message from COMDESDIV XRAY which directed the destroyers of that division to expedite forming the screen on Circle TWO.*

At this same time he slowed to ten knots* presumably to facilitate the formation of the disposition.

At 0603 he received a message from an unknown commander (probably COMDESDIV 112) stating that he was trying to join with six destroyers and asking for his course and speed. At 0606 he replied stating that he was bearing 260°(T) and was on course 010°(T) (actually 015°(T)) at ten knots.* Although he did not state from what position the bearing was taken it seems clear that it was from Hibuson Island (Diagram "M").

At 0609 he received a message from COMDESDIV 112 that he had just passed a large group of survivors. After (a) inquiring as to their identity and (b) receiving a reply that they appeared to be Japanese, he directed that commander to pick them up.*

At 0613 he noted that all of his cruisers were in their proper stations on Circle ONE, and all of his destroyers of DESDIV XRAY, with the exception of the CLAXTON, were in position on Circle TWO.

Although he states in his action report that he had temporarily abandoned the pursuit until dawn** and in his post battle interview in Washington later, that he had turned north at this time to look for DESDIV XRAY*** the evidence seems to indicate that while these factors were important they were not all important, for at 0618 for example it was daylight with sunrise about to occur (in twelve minutes). Does it not seem more likely that the dominant factor was antiaircraft defense and, therefore, he had decided to wait until his antiaircraft disposition had been formed at which time he would head south again for the purpose of destroying enemy cripples and any enemy ships which endeavored to defend them?

Therefore, also at 0618, he changed course to 190°(T) by simultaneous ship turns** thus maintaining the VICTOR disposition.

At 0620 he received a message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX (a) reporting (1) that the ALBERT W. GRANT had many casualties, (2) she had no power and (3) was dead in the water, and (b) requesting the immediate services of a tug. As CTG 77.2 he readdressed this message to CTF 77 requesting compliance.**

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

*** Personal interview of Vice Admiral (then Rear Admiral) Jesse B. Oldendorf, USN, CTG 77.2, recorded by Naval Records and Library, CNO, February 19th, 1945.

Also at 0620 he received a warning from CTF 77 stating that there were many enemy aircraft in the area and releasing the antiaircraft batteries.*

At 0621 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV XRAY that all survivors were Japanese and that, so far, they had refused to take the lines thrown to them.**

At 0625 he noted that the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS had taken the screening station left vacant by the CLAXTON.*** It is of interest that the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS recorded in her action report that at this time there were five columns of smoke visible on the horizon, as well as the superstructure of an enemy destroyer dead in the water.****

At 0630 he observed sunrise.*

At 0632 he heard from COMDESDIV XRAY that the Japanese survivors had changed their minds and were now accepting lines from the destroyers.**

At 0633 he increased speed to fifteen knots.*****

At 0635 he heard from COMDESDIV 112, who was clearly now in the survivor area, that (a) there were several hundred survivors in the area, (b) four destroyers under COMDESDIV 112's tactical command were picking up survivors, (c) the HALFORD was intercepting a boat, and (d) most of the survivors would not accept lines from the destroyers.**

At 0636 he received a motor torpedo boat report that the enemy was retiring in Latitude 10°-02'N.****** This was probably a delayed receipt of PT 491's report made just before 0600.******* (The MOGAMI, which was the last of the retiring Japanese ships, passed through Latitude 10°-02'N at 0557 (Diagram "L").)

At 0638 he increased speed to twenty knots and at 0640 changed course to 175°(T).*****

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Deck Log HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 25th, 1944.

****** Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Battle of South Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

******* Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

At 0644 he directed COMCRUDIV TWELVE in the DENVER to proceed with the COLUMBIA and three destroyers designated by COMDESDIV 112 to destroy the cripples, warning the cruiser commander to beware of torpedoes while he was engaged in this task.* (The action taken by COMCRUDIV TWELVE will be discussed separately.)

At this same time he heard from the BENNION that she could see men in the water on her port beam and asked if she should pick them up. He authorized her to do so, but directed her not to waste time if they were Japanese, and added a warning to beware of torpedoes.*

As he issued this warning his mind likely reverted to World War I and that unhappy day in British history (September 2nd, 1914) when the two British light cruisers HOGUE and CRESSY were torpedoed by the German submarine U-9 while endeavoring to recover survivors from the British light cruiser ABOUKIR which had been torpedoed some minutes earlier, also by the U-9.**

He now noted that COMCRUDIV TWELVE in DENVER with COLUMBIA, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and LEUTZE was (a) at 0648 in accordance with his 0644 instructions, moving out of the disposition, and (b) was forming column on a southerly course.***

Since he had not been attacked by Japanese aircraft he now seems to have decided that the aircraft menace had largely passed for at 0651 he ordered the PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS, in that order, to form column astern of the LOUISVILLE.****

At this same time he received a report from the BENNION that the objects she had sighted previously were rubbish.*

He now, at (a) 0652, intercepted a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV 112, informing COMCRUDIV TWELVE that COMDESDIV 112 would proceed with ROBINSON, HALFORD and BRYANT to join the two cruisers and asking for their present position* and (b) 0653, received a TBS voice radio message, also from COMDESDIV 112 that (1) CLAXTON had recovered three survivors, (2) there were no more takers of the offers of assistance, (3) unless otherwise directed, COMDESDIV 112 would join the cruisers and (4) would then direct the CLAXTON to give up rescue as being of no further use.*

He then, at 0654, directed COMDESDIV 112 not to waste any more time on the rescue of Japanese survivors.*

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Sir Julian S. Corbett, Naval Operations, (New York, 1920), Volume I, Page 179.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C); also Deck Log DENVER, October 25th, 1944.

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

At 0657 he recorded in his action report that a large enemy destroyer (ASAGUMO) had opened fire on the DENVER and COLUMBIA and that the Allied destroyers had returned the fire.* COMCRUDIV TWELVE recorded that despite the above firing no hits had been sustained by his ships and no splashes had been observed.** It seems possible that this was because the ASAGUMO had been firing at PT 323*** rather than at the cruisers. As will be discussed later, none of the Allied ships opened fire until after 0700.

At 0700 the LOUISVILLE was bearing 094°(T), distant five point six miles from Amagusan Point, Leyte Island

(2) Operations of COMCRUDIV TWELVE, 0644 - 0700, October 25th.

At 0644 COMCRUDIV TWELVE received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing him to (a) proceed in the DENVER, with the COLUMBIA and three destroyers designated by COMDESDIV 112, and destroy Japanese cripples, and (b) to beware of torpedoes.****

Immediately after this he received a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV 112 designating the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION.

At 0648 he changed course to 170°(T) and with the COLUMBIA,***** HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and LEUTZE**** departed the disposition. The BENNION which had departed but three minutes earlier to investigate survivors was not available.

At 0651 he was queried by COMDESDIV 112 as to whether he desired three more destroyers in the screen additional to the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION. Before he could reply he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from the BENNION to CTG 77.2 reporting that (a) the objects previously sighted had turned out to be rubbish**** and (b) she was now available to screen CRUDIV TWELVE.

At 0652 he replied to COMDESDIV 112 stating: "Negative, we have only three."**** Although this reply was ambiguous he was promptly (a) informed by COMDESDIV 112 that he (COMDESDIV 112) would proceed with the ROBINSON, BRYANT and HALFORD and (b) queried as to his (COMCRUDIV TWELVE) present position.****

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations of CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Deck Log DENVER, October 25th, 1944.

After intercepting (a) a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV 112 to CTG 77.2 reporting that (1) CLAXTON had three survivors, (2) there were no more takers of offers of assistance, (3) unless directed otherwise COMDESDIV 112 would join the cruisers and would direct the CLAXTON to give up the rescue attempt as of no further use,* and (b) CTG 77.2's reply not to waste any more time on the Japanese survivors, he informed COMDESDIV 112 that he was eleven miles southwest of the Island* (Hibuson Island). Diagram "N" indicates that the DENVER likely passed through that position at 0649 or some six minutes earlier.

At 0657 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message from COMDESDIV 112 to the BRYANT and HALFORD (a) directing them to follow the ROBINSON and join COMCRUDIV TWELVE,* and (b) asking the HALFORD if she had completed the job of chasing small boats. He also intercepted the HALFORD's affirmative reply and COMDESDIV's order to her, at 0658, to sink the boat and depart.*

At 0700 the DENVER was bearing 102°(T), distant five point eight miles from Amagusan Point. The BENNION, on a southerly course to join, was about 4,000 yards to the eastward.

(3) Operations of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

(a) Operations of Commander Attack Section ONE, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

At 0600 Commander Attack Section ONE, in the NEWCOMB, was close alongside the damaged ALBERT W. GRANT rendering assistance and the RICHARD P. LEARY was screening the two ships.

At 0610 he observed that the NEWCOMB had moored to the ALBERT W. GRANT and had continued (a) transferring the wounded, the classified publications and the electrical coding machines to the NEWCOMB and (b) furnishing fresh water and all possible assistance.**

At 0612 he sent a TBS voice radio message to unknown addressees requesting a doctor, hospital corpsmen and medical supplies for the ALBERT W. GRANT adding that there were many casualties.*

At 0615 he was relieved to learn that the ALBERT W. GRANT had commenced generating her own electricity by cutting in her main generator in the after engineroom.***

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Deck Log NEWCOMB, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against Central Philippines, Leyte Area and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

At 0620 he sent a TBS voice radio message to CTC 77.2 (a) reporting that (1) there were many casualties in the ALBERT W. GRANT, (2) she had no power (presumably meaning propulsion), (3) was dead in the water, and (b) requesting immediate services of a tug.*

Also at 0620 he noted that the NEWCOMB had commenced doubling her lines in preparation for towing the ALBERT W. GRANT.**

At 0628 he noted that the RICHARD P. LEARY had sent her motor whaleboat with a doctor, two hospital corpsmen and medical supplies to assist on board the ALBERT W. GRANT.***

At 0633 he was pleased to note that the NEWCOMB had commenced towing the ALBERT W. GRANT toward the Southern Transport Area in Leyte Gulf and after turning to her new course (330°(T)) the two destroyers were making good six point six knots. The RICHARD P. LEARY continued screening operations.***

At 0700 the three destroyers were still in the same general area about five miles west of Hibuson Island.

(b) Operations of COMDESDIV 112, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

At 0600 COMDESDIV 112 who was acting as COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, in the ROBINSON, with the destroyers of Attack Sections TWO (ROBINSON, HALFORD, BRYANT) and THREE (HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE, BENNION) in column, had just reversed course to the north and had slowed to twenty knots in order to take station as screen for the Left Flank Cruisers.

At 0603 he asked CTG 77.2 for his course and speed stating that he was trying to join that commander. At 0606 he received CTG 77.2's reply to the effect that the LOUISVILLE was bearing 260°(T), course 010°(T), speed ten knots.**** Although CTG 77.2 did not identify the point from which his bearing was taken it was clearly Hibuson Island.

He immediately directed his two sections to proceed independently to join the cruisers and changed the course of Attack Section TWO to 300°(T), speed twenty knots.***** Meanwhile Attack Section THREE continued on to the north at twenty knots as shown in Diagram "N".

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Deck Log NEWCOMB, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log RICHARD P. LEARY, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

***** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

At 0609 he reported to CTG 77.2 that he had just passed by a large group of survivors. The commander immediately inquired if he could identify the survivors and to which he replied that they appeared to be Japanese survivors. He was then directed by CTG 77.2 to pick them up.*

Therefore, at 0611, in accordance with these orders he directed the three destroyers in Attack Section TWO to standby to pick up survivors* and, at 0612, reversed course to return to the survivor area.**

At 0618 he issued directions for picking up survivors as follows: (a) do not overload, at the most take sixty to seventy-five, (b) search each man carefully for weapons, (c) kill anyone that shows violent resistance and (d) be very careful against suicidal damage to your ships.*

He then, at 0620, directed his ships to proceed independently to pick up survivors.*

At 0621 he intercepted a message from COMDESDIV XRAY to CTG 77.2 stating that all of the survivors were Japanese and so far they had refused to take the lines thrown to them. At 0632 he intercepted another message from COMDESDIV XRAY to CTG 77.2 reporting that the Japanese had changed their minds and were accepting lines.*

He now assumed command of the rescue operation with the result that COMDESDIV XRAY in the CLAXTON fell under his tactical command.

At 0632 he noted that with his ships lying to in the vicinity of several hundred survivors, the Japanese, with few exceptions, refused all offers of rescue.**

At 0635 he received a message from the HALFORD reporting that she (a) had sighted a boat containing men who were trying to paddle toward the beach and (b) would try to intercept it.*

At 0637 he reported by TBS voice radio to CTG 77.2 that (a) there were several hundred survivors in the area, (b) four destroyers under his tactical command were picking up survivors, (c) the HALFORD was intercepting a boat and (d) most of the survivors would not accept lines from the destroyers.*

By this time the CLAXTON had picked up three Japanese survivors.***

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944.

At 0644, having intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTG 77.2 directing COMCRUDIV TWELVE in the DENVER, to (a) proceed with the COLUMBIA and three destroyers to designated by COMDESDIV 112, (b) polish off Japanese cripples and (c) beware of torpedoes,* he designated the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION.

He then, at 0645, repeated the warning to look out for torpedoes to the destroyers engaged in the rescue operation.**

At 0651 he sent a message to COMCRUDIV TWELVE stating that since the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION were already with that commander he wondered if three additional destroyers were desired. To this query COMCRUDIV TWELVE replied, "Negative, we have only three".* Although this was an ambiguous reply, he promptly replied (at 0652) that he would proceed with ROBINSON, HALFORD and BRYANT to join the cruisers, and requested their position.*

At 0653 he informed CTG 77.2 by TBS voice radio that (a) the CLAXTON had three survivors, (b) there were no more takers of offers of assistance and (c) unless otherwise directed, he would join the cruisers and would direct the CLAXTON to give up rescue attempts as being of no further use. CTG 77.2 promptly replied that he was not to waste any more time on rescuing the Japanese.* About this time the CLAXTON left the survivor area to rejoin the cruisers.***

At 0655 he received a message stating that COMCRUDIV TWELVE was eleven miles southwest of the island.* Although it did not state the name of the island it clearly referred to Hibuson Island for the DENVER had passed through a position eleven miles southwest of Hibuson Island but six minutes previously (Diagram "N").

He then, at 0657, directed the HALFORD and BRYANT to follow the ROBINSON in rejoining the cruisers and asked the HALFORD if she had completed chasing the small boat. The HALFORD immediately replied that she had and that the survivors had jumped overboard and had refused her offer of rescue. He then, at 0658, directed the HALFORD to sink the boat and depart.*

At 0700 the ROBINSON and the BRYANT were still in the survivor area while the HALFORD was occupied with the small boat above referred to.

(4) Operations of COMDESDIV XRAY, 0600 - 0632, October 25th.

At 0600 COMDESDIV XRAY, who was also Commanding Officer CLAXTON, was preparing to rescue Japanese survivors. The other five destroyers in his division were maneuvering to take their assigned positions in the Left Flank Cruiser screen (Diagram "N").

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 043, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

*** Deck Log CLAXTON, October 25th, 1944.

At 0602 he directed his division to expedite forming the screen on Circle TWO.* Since this was his last order to his division during this period only the actions of the CLAXTON will be discussed here since the actions of the other destroyers of the division have already been discussed under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0600 - 0700, October 25th".

* * *

At about 0603 the CLAXTON reversed course in order to head back into the survivor area. By about 0615 she had stopped and had commenced attempting to pick up survivors.

At 0621 COMDESDIV XRAY reported to CTG 77.2 that all of the survivors were Japanese and, up to that time, had refused lines. At 0632 he reported further to CTG 77.2 that the Japanese survivors had changed their minds and were accepting lines.*

At this latter time, with the arrival of COMDESDIV 112, in the ROBINSON, he was relieved by that Commander as OTC in the survivor area.**

His operations from henceforth are discussed under "Operations of COMDESDIV 112, 0600 - 0632, October 25th" and "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0600 - 0700, October 25th".

(5) Operations of CTG 77.3, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

At 0600 CTG 77.3 (Commander Right Flank Force), in the PHOENIX, with BOISE, SHROPSHIRE and DESRON TWENTY-FOUR, less the DALY, which was still investigating MTB's near Cabugan Chico Island, was on course 350°(T) at twenty-five knots. His force was in a circular cruising disposition with the cruisers on Circle ONE and the destroyers on Circle TWO (Diagram "N").

Knowing that CTG 77.2 had slowed to ten knots at 0602 he, at 0603, slowed to fifteen knots*** and at 0605 slowed to ten knots.****

Further knowing that CTG 77.2 had changed course to the south at 0618 and not wishing to get too far away from that commander, whom he was supporting, he, at 0625, changed course to 175°(T).***** He then (a) at 0628 increased speed to fifteen knots,**** and at 0650 to twenty knots and (b) at 0655 changed course to 150°(T).****

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

*** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report PHOENIX, Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 091, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

At 0700 the PHOENIX was bearing 101°(T), distant three point nine miles from Bugho Point, Leyte Island.

(a) DALY.

It will be recalled that at 0545 the DALY had been directed by CTG 77.3 to inform the friendly MTB's which she was investigating of the damaged MTB to the south. There is no indication in either her action report or deck log of how long this took her, but presumably she remained in the vicinity of Cabugan Chico Island during this period for she did not rejoin TG 77.3 until 0759.

It will also be recalled that at 0559 CTG 77.3 had sent a message to the DALY, BEALE and BACHE (the destroyers with torpedoes remaining after the torpedo action) as follows: "When directed to form, DALY, BEALE and BACHE will constitute a special attack group to be designated DALY's boys. Over to DALY," which message was immediately acknowledged by the DALY.*

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THIS MESSAGE WAS CLEARLY SENT IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED FOR EVENTUALITIES, AND IN FURTHER VIEW OF THE FACT THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL TORPEDO ATTACK WHEN THE PARTICIPATING SHIPS ARE WIDELY SEPARATED, AS IN THIS CASE, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO LEARN WHY THE DALY HAD NOT AS YET REJOINED.

* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

(B) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0600 - 0700, October 25th.

(1) Upper Surigao PT's.

Nothing of sufficient importance occurred to be noted in the action reports of these PT's.

(2) Kanihaan PT's.

At 0600 Commander Kanihaan PT's, with PT's 495, 489 and 492, was drifting south with the current and was bearing 282°(T), distant 900 yards from the southern end of Kanihaan Island.

At approximately 0638 he heard PT 491 call for help over the PT common voice circuit. He immediately went ahead at moderate speed and changed course to round the FUSO fire and head for Maoyo Point.*

At 0652 he passed about 700 yards south of the spot where he had last seen the battleship (FUSO) and now saw nothing but a burning oil slick.** This indicates that the stern of the FUSO had sunk earlier, probably about 0640.

At 0656 he passed within two miles of the ASAGUMO which at this time had two small boats alongside.**

At 0700 he was bearing 244°(T), distant six miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island.

(3) South Amagusan PT's.

At 0600 Commander South Amagusan PT's, with PT's 320, 330 and 331, was bearing 180°(T), distant seven point two miles from Amagusan Point and was drifting with the current in a southeasterly direction. At this same time he was bearing 072°(T), distant two point five miles from Caligangan Point (Diagram "N").

At 0640 he decided to return to base*** and went ahead on approximate course 003°(T) at about fifteen knots.

At 0654 he was sighted by PT 328**** which immediately stood out from the Leyte shore west of Amagusan Point to meet him. Since PT 328 was close inshore he probably did not sight her until she was clear of the shore.

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* Action Report PT 489, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Reports PT's 330 and 331, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 30th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 328, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

At 0700 he was bearing 164°(T), distant three miles from Amagusan Point and was about 3,000 yards from PT 328.

(4) East Amagusan PT's.

This section of MTB's was widely separated with PT 328 south of Amagusan Point, PT 323 southeast of the same point but much farther away and PT 329 about twelve miles to the north, off Cabugan Grande Island. Therefore, each of the MTB's will be discussed separately.

(a) PT 328.

At 0600 PT 328, with Commander East Amagusan PT's on board, was bearing 226°(T), distant 1,300 yards from Amagusan Point. She was operating alone and was drifting slowly eastward with the current.

At 0654 she sighted the South Amagusan PT's (PT's 320, 330, 331) about four miles to the south and headed north. She immediately changed course to about 145°(T), at about fifteen knots in order to join them* (Diagram "N").

At 0700 she was bearing 162°(T), distant 3,000 yards from Amagusan Point and was about the same distance from the South Amagusan PT's.

(b) PT 323.

At 0600 PT 323 was bearing 148°(T), distant seven point eight miles from Amagusan Point and was proceeding on an easterly course at about four knots.

At 0630 the commanding officer sighted a destroyer at a range of about two and one-half miles, which destroyer was standing by a large ship which was burning furiously. This destroyer was dead in the water and was heading about 045°(T).** This was the damaged ASAGUMO which was preparing to abandon ship. The large ship was the stern of the burning FUSO. (Although he did not mention it in his action report and probably did not know it, the FUSO stern sank shortly after this time, the bow having sunk earlier.***)

He promptly changed course to about 125°(T) and prepared to attack. As he closed the enemy he was challenged at 0635 by two friendly TBF's, which left the area upon receipt of the correct reply.**

At 0646, at a range of 3,000 yards, he was fired on with a single gun by the ASAGUMO. Her gunfire was not particularly accurate.**

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* Action Report PT 328, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

However, for reasons unknown, he now wondered whether or not this destroyer was friendly and therefore queried Commander Left Flank Force thereon. Upon receiving a reply that she was enemy he announced that he was closing in for an attack.*

At 0700 he was 1,000 yards from the ASAGUMO and was ready to fire torpedoes. At this same time he was bearing 235°(T), distant five point six miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island (Diagram "N").

(c) PT 329.

At 0600 PT 329 was about 1,600 yards west of the southern tip of Cabugan Grande Island and was on course 020°(T) at about fifteen knots.

At 0603, being close to the western shore of Cabugan Grande Island, the commanding officer seems to have decided to seek shelter from enemy aircraft by lying to, close inshore.**

At 0700 he was bearing about 205°(T), distant about 1,500 yards from the northeastern tip of Cabugan Grande Island (Diagram "N").

(5) Lower Surigao PT's.

(a) PT 490.

At approximately 0600 PT 490 commenced her return to San Pedro Bay making good about twenty point five knots on a direct course. Nothing else of sufficient importance to record in her action report occurred during this period.

(b) PT 491.

At 0600 PT 491 was bearing 083°(T), distant two point nine miles from Caniguin Point and was making about fifteen knots on course about 172°(T) in order to reach her firing position on the MOGAMI, which cruiser was about 5,000 yards on his port quarter at this time.

At 0600:30 he changed course to about 135°(T) in order to close the MOGAMI's track. When, about 0601, the MOGAMI opened fire and some of her shells landed about twenty-five yards away, he changed speed to twenty-five knots.***

At 0604:30 he changed course to about 045°(T) and at 0605, at a range of about 3,000 yards he fired two torpedoes. As he retired under smoke he received heavy fire from the MOGAMI, which was seen to turn to starboard allowing the torpedoes to pass harmlessly ahead** (Diagram "N").

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* Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944; also Action Report MARYLAND, Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0210, November 4th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report PT 329, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

He now maneuvered about as shown on the above diagram in order to pass Caniguin Point close aboard.

At approximately 0636 he sighted PT 493 beached on Maoyo Point. He stated that the camouflage coloring of a dark green vertical stripe and a light green stripe was so good close inshore that the MTB could only be sighted from two miles away by the use of binoculars.*

He decided to close the MTB and therefore headed in that direction. He was alongside her at 0646.*

Shortly after sighting this MTB he called for help. This radio call was heard by the Kanihaan PT's** but it appears not to have been heard by his own OTC in PT 490 for it is not mentioned in his action report.***

He then picked up the survivors of the PT 493. Since he remained in this area until about 0800 it seems probable that this task took considerable time, due to difficulties in (a) locating the party and (b) moving the five wounded and the two bodies of those killed.

(c) PT 493.

PT 493, damaged and abandoned by her crew, was beached on Maoyo Point.

At 0646 PT 491 came alongside and picked up the survivors including five wounded and the bodies of two men killed.**** How long this took is unknown but, as pointed out above under PT 491, it was quite long.

(6) SW Panaon PT's.

It will be recalled that (a) PT 194 had been hit by gunfire from the USHIO and ABUKUMA and at 0533 had requested help, (b) PT 196 had commenced looking for her, and (c) at 0600 had sighted her in the vicinity of Sonok Point (western Panaon Island). Because of this the operations of these two MTB's will be discussed together, while PT 150, which continued to operate independently, will be discussed separately.

(a) PT's 194 and 196.

At 0601 PT 196 went alongside PT 194 and transferred a hospital corpsman and two other men in order to help with the casualties and repairs.*****

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* Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 490, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 493, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 196, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0400, October 31st, 1944.

At 0610 when the transfer had been completed these two MTB's were joined by PT's 151 and 146* which had also received the 0533 message requesting help, above referred to, and had closed Sonok Point to render assistance to PT 194. The four motor torpedo boats, now under the command of Commander SW Panaon PT's in PT 194, continued on toward Liloan.**

At 0700 Commander SW Panaon PT's was bearing 318°(T), distant seven and one-half miles from Sonok Point.

(b) PT 150.

It will be recalled that PT 150 had continued her search for PT 194 until she was about one mile southeast of Sonok Point. In this search she had been unsuccessful.

About 0605 she changed course to the south and increased speed to about fifteen knots in order to continue the search farther off shore.

At 0624 she sighted to the south four destroyers, distant 7,500 yards.*** These were the AKEBONO, USHIO, SHIRANUHI and KASUMI, (Diagram "M"), which, with the exception of the KASUMI were screening the NACHI and ASHIGARA. The KASUMI was proceeding to aid the damaged ABUKUMA.

PT 150 must have been sighted about the same time for one or more of these Japanese ships, probably the AKEBONO and ASHIGARA, opened fire.**** PT 150 now seems to have changed course to about 305°(T), increased speed to thirty knots, and reported the contact to her base. At 0627 the USHIO also opened fire, recording the range as 8,000 meters (8,748 yards) and the bearing as 283°(T).*****

PT 150 changed course to 330°(T) and made good about thirty knots as she headed up Sogod Bay toward Ilijan Point, Panaon Island. At 0637, when the USHIO ceased firing, PT 150 was bearing 326°(T), range 10,700 meters (11,700 yards).*****

She continued to the north and about 0639 changed course to 130°(T), to head for San Ricardo Point,*** and slowed to twenty-five knots.

At 0654 she sighted a damaged cruiser (MOGAMI) smoking heavily from the vicinity of the after stack, moving southwest at about ten to fifteen knots. She changed course to 160°(T), increased speed to thirty knots and reported the contact to her base.***

About 0700 she was fired on by the MOGAMI.******

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* Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0389, October 28th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 146, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0388, October 28th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

***** Ibid., Action Chart, 0540 - 0950, October 25th, 1944.

****** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

At 0700 PT 150 was bearing 190°(T), distant two and one-half miles from San Ricardo Point and PT 137 was about a mile ahead (Diagram "M").

(7) SE Panaon PT's.

Since (a) there are no entries in the action reports of PT's 134 and 132 for this period and (b) their locations are unknown, their operations are not discussed.

(a) PT 137.

At 0600 PT 137 was proceeding on an easterly course at about five knots to round Binit Point in a second search for PT 194. Her radio transmitter was not functioning.

About 0615 she sighted an enemy destroyer (SHIGURE) seven miles southeast of Binit Point* (Diagram "M").

About 0630, having gone beyond Binit Point, she reversed course in order to continue her search for PT 194 from west of Binit Point to Sonok Point.

At 0640 she sighted two very large ships and approximately eight smaller vessels which she recorded as being about fifteen miles away.* This sighting was made on the SECOND Striking Force and the SHIGURE--a total of two large and six smaller ships. Although the SHIGURE was about fifteen miles from PT 137, the rest were much closer with the ASHIGARA but five miles away (Diagram "M").

At 0645, when about one mile southwest of Binit Point in Latitude 09°-50'N, Longitude 125°-21'E, she sighted an enemy heavy cruiser on a southerly course at approximately twelve to fourteen knots. This cruiser which was smoking badly from abaft the stack, and which she identified as a TONE class cruiser* was the MOGAMI.

At this time she seems to have changed course to about 180°(T) and increased speed to about ten knots in order to intercept the MOGAMI. About 0700, with PT 150 also attempting to intercept the MOGAMI and closing PT 137 rapidly, the MOGAMI opened fire on the two MTB's with her secondary battery.*

At 0700 PT 137 was bearing 198°(T), distant three point six miles from Binit Point. PT 150 was about one mile to the northwest (Diagram "M").

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* Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

(8) Sumilon PT's.

At 0600 Commander Sumilon PT's, with PT's 523, 524 and 526, was lying to about two miles southeast of Sumilon Island waiting for the Bilaa Point PT's to join him. Shortly afterwards he sighted these MTB's approaching and went ahead at about five knots on a northeasterly course to intercept them.

At 0630, having been joined by the Bilaa Point PT's,* he continued on through the passage east of Satan Rock at fifteen knots and headed toward his base in San Pedro Bay.

At 0700 he was bearing 004°(T), distant about six miles from the northern tip of Sumilon Island (Diagram "M").

Since these MTB's arrived at their San Pedro Bay base after an uneventful trip, they will be dropped from further discussion.

(9) Bilaa Point PT's.

At 0600 Commander Bilaa Point PT's, with PT's 494, 324 and 497, was heading toward Sumilon Island to join Commander Sumilon PT's.

Shortly after 0600 he sighted the Sumilon PT's and at 0630 he joined these MTB's.*

Further operations of Commander Bilaa Point PT's are discussed under Commander Sumilon PT's.

(10) Madilao PT's.

At 0600 Commander Madilao PT's, with PT's 192, 191 and 195, was about four and three-quarters miles south of Madilao Point and was proceeding to base via Sogod Bay on course 315°(T) at twenty-three knots.

At 0610 he sighted two columns of black smoke ahead in the mouth of Sogod Bay.** These columns of smoke were from the USHIO and the ABUKUMA (Diagram "M"). At this same time he sighted four or five destroyers five miles south of Panaon Island.** These were the SHIRANUHI, KASUMI, AKEBONO and SHIGURE. Since (a) the SHIGURE was only about four miles away and was closing him rapidly and (b) the SHIRANUHI and KASUMI had just reversed course (to the southwest), he realized that he was likely to be caught in a trap. He therefore changed course to 060°(T) and headed for Madilao Point.***

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* Action Report PT 494, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 195, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0393, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 192, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0395, October 29th, 1944.

About 0623, after passing Madilao Point, he changed course to about 030°(T) to head for Bilaa Point and slowed to about five knots in order to let the situation work itself out. He stated in his action report that he was advised to remain in the patrol area due to the presence of enemy forces to the west but he does not state who advised him to do this.* Presumably it was Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron THIRTY-SIX (Commander Sumilon PT's) who, it will be remembered, had directed Commander Bilaa Point PT's to retire at 0545.

At 0700 he was bearing 224°(T), distant one point four miles from Bilaa Point.

Since he arrived at Liloan Bay at about 1030* via lower Surigao Strait and Panaon Strait after passing through heavy rain squalls** and after an uneventful trip, these MTB's will be dropped from further discussion.

(11) Limasawa PT's.

At 0600 Commander Limasawa PT's, with PT's 151 and 146, continued toward Sonok Point at fifteen knots on course 060°(T) to assist the damaged PT 194.

At 0610 he joined PT's 194 and 196 off Sonok Point*** and all four MTB's continued on toward their base at Liloan arriving about 0730.****

At 0700 he was bearing 318°(T), distant seven and one-half miles from Sonok Point.

(a) PT 190.

About 0615 PT 190, which was about seven miles southwest of Limasawa Island, proceeded to the aid of PT 194 on course 085°(T) at thirty-three knots.*****

At 0630 she sighted six large ships about twelve miles away and closed to identify them. At 0634, when she had closed to about eight miles, she stopped and identified the ships as one battleship or heavy cruiser, one heavy cruiser, on fire, and four destroyers.***** This was the SECOND Striking Force (Diagram "M"). Why one of these cruisers was reported as burning is not clear, but since the MOGAMI was about seventeen miles from the MTB it seems doubtful if that ship was sighted sufficiently well to identify it as a heavy cruiser.

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* Action Report PT 192, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0395, October 29th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 195, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0393, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 151, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0385, October 28th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 146, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0388, October 28th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944.

About 0636 she noted that two destroyers (probably the USHIO and AKEBONO) were headed toward her and that after flashing a recognition signal consisting of the numeral one by blinker, had opened fire. She promptly went ahead at maximum speed, turned away and laid smoke. Thus she avoided being hit although she was straddled eight or ten times. She zigzagged toward Sogod Bay and by 0705 had succeeded in eluding the destroyer. She now made a contact report through PT 152 and headed for Liloan Bay where she arrived about 0745.*

(12) Camiguin PT's.

About 0600 Commander Camiguin PT's, with PT's 127, 128, 129, 130 and 131, the latter two from the Bohol PT's, was three miles west of Camiguin Island and was en route to Liloan Bay on course 030°(T), speed about twenty-seven knots.**

At 0643 he observed two shell splashes in his vicinity which he thought were fired from a submarine hull down to the west of his position, although he stated that the position of the firing ship was Latitude 09°-10'N, Longitude 125°-00'E,** which was to the southeast of his position. PT 129, however, stated that this firing might have come from a destroyer retiring to the southwest at high speed.*** This was the correct assumption for the firing was done by the SHIGURE which had opened fire at this time on six motor torpedo boats on the horizon.****

About five minutes after the first salvo Commander Camiguin PT's turned to the west to search for the imaginary submarine,*** and at 0658 the firing stopped.**** The search for the submarine proved fruitless and at approximately 0715 he resumed course for Liloan Bay, arriving about 0955.**

Because nothing of importance connected with the Battle of Surigao Strait occurred thereafter, the Camiguin PT's and PT's 130 and 131 will be dropped from further discussion.

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* Action Report PT 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report PT 127, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 4, October 29th, 1944.

*** Action Report PT 129, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0390, October 28th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

CHAPTER XXIV - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0700 - 0733, October 25th

(A) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

At 0700 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in NACHI, with ASHIGARA and SHIRANUHI, was proceeding on course 252°(T) at eighteen knots. The USHIO and AKEBONO had just departed to escort the ABUKUMA and MOGAMI respectively (Diagram "P").

At 0705 the KASUMI went alongside the ABUKUMA and commenced transferring COMDESRON ONE and his staff to the KASUMI.* Things proceeded smoothly until 0715 when carrier-type aircraft were sighted.**

These aircraft were from TU 77.4.1 and consisted of eleven VT armed with torpedoes escorted by seventeen VF with 500 pound SAP bombs.*** They had been directed to destroy the remnants of the enemy fleet in Surigao Strait, presumably in accordance with CTG 77.2's recommendation thereon to CTF 77 at 0440.

At 0717 the KASUMI opened fire.**** Meanwhile at 0718 COMDESRON ONE succeeded in completing the transfer***** and at 0719 the KASUMI cleared the side of the ABUKUMA and proceeded to rejoin the NACHI.*

At 0733 the air attacks were still continuing. At this time the NACHI was bearing approximately 208°(T), distant twelve point five miles from the southern tip of Limasawa Island.

(1) ABUKUMA and USHIO.

At 0700 the ABUKUMA, which was on course 249°(T), speed about nine knots, was some fifteen miles southwest of Binit Point. She was awaiting the (a) KASUMI which was coming alongside in order to remove COMDESRON ONE and his staff, and (b) USHIO which had just departed the NACHI and ASHIGARA in order to escort her.

At 0705 the KASUMI having come alongside, she commenced transfer operations.* At 0715 she sighted carrier-type aircraft** and noted that at 0717 the KASUMI had opened fire.****

At 0719, COMDESRON ONE and his staff having transferred to the KASUMI,***** that ship then cleared and proceeded to rejoin the NACHI.*

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* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 18 (KASUMI), Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

** Ibid.; also Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

*** Action Report COMCARDIV 22 (CTG 77.4), Leyte Operations from October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.

**** Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11807.

***** War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

At 0724 she observed the USHIO open fire on aircraft which moved out of range almost immediately.* These attacking aircraft were from the CVE's of TG 77.4.**

At 0733 the ABUKUMA was approximately eleven miles bearing 191°(T) from the southern tip of Limasawa Island and the USHIO was about two miles to the southwest of her (Diagram "P").

(2) MOGAMI and AKEBONO.

At 0700 the MOGAMI, which was about seven miles south of Binit Point, was on course 240°(T) at about fourteen knots. She had just opened fire on PT's 137 and 150 which were approaching about four miles to the northwest. At this same time the AKEBONO, which had been directed to escort her, was reversing course in compliance with these orders.

Shortly thereafter the AKEBONO, noting the MTB's (PT's 137 and 150), opened fire on them. Although her gunfire was short of her targets and consequently no damage resulted, the motor torpedo boats were nevertheless driven off by 0715.***

At this time COMDESDIV SEVEN in the AKEBONO sent a visual dispatch to the MOGAMI inquiring as to the extent of her damage, to which the MOGAMI replied at 0716 that (a) her maximum speed was twelve knots and (b) she had 800 tons of fuel which would enable her to continue for forty hours.****

At 0727 she was bombed and strafed by four enemy aircraft which carried out a persistent attack but were driven off by gunfire from her forward turrets, her remaining dual purpose gun and her machine guns. There were no bomb hits.***** These aircraft were from the CVE's of TG 77.4.**

At 0733 the MOGAMI was approximately thirteen miles, bearing 211°(T), from Binit Point. The AKEBONO, coming up from astern, was about two miles to the northeast.

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* Detailed Action Report USHIO, Antiair Action in the Mindanao and Sulu Seas, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 118C7.

** War Diary COMCARDIV 22, October 1944.

*** Action Reports PT's 137 and 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 11 and 0396, November 4th, 1944, and October 29th, 1944, respectively.

**** Dispatch Log, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

***** Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

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(3) SHIGURE.

At 0700 the SHIGURE was on course 244°(T) at twenty-four knots and was approximately twenty-two miles southwest of Binit Point.

It appears that she escaped attack by the aircraft of TG 77.4 as there is no mention of any aircraft during this period.

At 0733 she was approximately twenty-six miles, bearing 211°(T) from the southern tip of Limasawa Island and about fourteen miles southwest of the NACHI.

(4) ASAGUMO.

At 0700 the ASAGUMO, badly damaged and afire, was dead in the water and was firing at PT 323 which was approaching to make a torpedo attack. At this same time she was preparing to abandon ship and had two small motor launches alongside for this purpose.

Shortly after 0700 (estimated to be about 0705) the third torpedo fired by PT 323 hit her in the stern,* the first two having missed.** By this time the ASAGUMO had abandoned ship since it was apparent that she was endangered not only by the torpedoes of PT 323 but also by the gunfire of the Left Flank Force which was rapidly closing her. The two motor launches headed toward Tungo Point.***

About this same time her fear of the Left Flank Force proved correct for at 0705 she was fired on, first by a destroyer (CONY) and then during the next six minutes by eight other destroyers (THORN, WELLES, AULICK, SIGOURNEY, CLAXTON, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, BENNION and probably LEUTZE), as well as by the DENVER and COLUMBIA.

At 0719 she rolled over**** and at 0722 sank***** in Latitude 10°-06.4'N, Longitude 125°-23.4'E (Diagram "O").

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* Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

*** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

**** Deck Log COLUMBIA, October 25th, 1944.

***** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

CHAPTER XXV - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0700 - 0733, October 25th

(A) Operations of CTG 77.2, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

CTG 77.2 during this period, as during the two preceding periods, operated largely as Commander Left Flank Force. Therefore, most of his operations are discussed under that commander rather than under CTG 77.2. However, as pointed out in the preceding period, it is likely that, since he was both CTG 77.2 and Commander Left Flank Force, he found it difficult to separate both commands in his mind. Therefore, in order to adequately appreciate his command difficulties, it is wise to read the operations of Commander Left Flank Force as well as those of CTG 77.2.

At 0727 he received his first word from CTF 77 relative to his victory. This was a TBS voice radio message which stated, "Congratulations to you and your noble cohorts. Well done. Kinkaid".

Actually it was not until 0728 that he received any information which was important to him as CTG 77.2. This was CTF 77's dispatch reporting that the escort carriers of TG 77.4 were under attack by enemy surface units composed of battleships, cruisers and destroyers, twenty-five miles northeast of Samar Island.*

Although it is believed that this dispatch may have been garbled either in transmission or in recording it seems more likely that it was written loosely to give the general idea only, for clearly, since Samar is a fairly large island, twenty-five miles northeast of it is not particularly definite. It seems likely that this is a portion of the plain language dispatch sent by CTF 77 at 0727. The actual wording of this latter dispatch was, "Enemy force attacked our CVE's composed of four BB's, eight cruisers and other ships. Request Lee** proceed top speed cover Leyte. Request immediate air strike by fast carriers."***

* * *

Note: To digress for a moment, this was not CTF 77's first information relative to the above attack. The facts are that he had received information thereon:

(a) Prior to 0707 (or about twenty minutes earlier) for at this time he had advised COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 34** by dispatch that CTU 77.4.3 (Northern Carrier Group) was under attack by enemy battleships and cruisers, and gave the enemy position.****

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee, USN, COMBATPAC, who was to have commanded TF 34.

*** COM7THFLT Dispatch 242227 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT and 3RDFLT.

**** CTF 77 Dispatch 242207 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT and CTF 34 (TOR COM3RDFLT 242322).

(b) At 0715 from CTU 77.4.3. This is based on the fact that the PHOENIX intercepted such a report to the effect that the carriers were under attack by Japanese battleships and other vessels.

(c) At 0720 CTG 77.4's voice radio message stating that TU 77.4.3 was under attack by an enemy force consisting of battleships and cruisers bearing 060°(T), distant 100 miles from Point MOLLY.* This message was received by CTF 79 at 0720 and by the COLUMBIA at 0723.

This later message appears to have caused him to send two dispatches to COMTHIRDFLT (a) at 0725, an urgent, confidential dispatch stating:

"About 0700 CTU 77.4.3 reported under fire from enemy battleships and cruisers in Latitude 11-40, Longitude 126-25. Evidently came through San Bernardino during the night. Request immediate air strike. Also request support from heavy ships. My OBBs low in ammunition"**, and

(b) at 0727, in order to avoid the loss of time due to coding and decoding, an urgent plain language dispatch stating:

"Enemy force attacked our CVE's composed of four BBs eight cruisers and other ships. Request Lee proceed top speed cover Leyte. Request immediate strike by fast carriers."***

This was the dispatch referred to earlier as received by CTG 77.2 at 0728.

WHY HE MADE NO EFFORT UNTIL 0727 TO ACQUAINT CTG 77.2 WITH THIS NEW SITUATION EITHER DIRECTLY OR AS AN INFORMATION ADDRESSEE, AND WHY, WHEN HE FINALLY DID SO INFORM THAT COMMANDER, HE DID NOT ISSUE HIM ANY INSTRUCTIONS WHATSOEVER IS NOT EXPLAINED.

* * *

Now to return to CTF 77's 252227!

As the receipt of this dispatch presented a new and perhaps unexpected development CTG 77.2 immediately commenced re-estimating the situation. Since he wore what was termed "two hats", i.e., he was both CTG 77.2 and Commander Left Flank Force, he was now forced to estimate the situation on the basis of both commands. His basic decision as Commander Left Flank Force is discussed under "Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0700 - 0733, October 25th". Suffice it to state here that, as the latter commander, he had decided largely to discontinue the pursuit of the retiring enemy forces and to return to Leyte Gulf.

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* Point MOLLY was a standard radar reference point for the Leyte area and was in Latitude 11°-00'N, Longitude 124°-48'E (Diagram "C").

** CTF 77 Dispatch 242225 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT (TOR COM3RDFLT 250022).

*** COM7THFLT Dispatch 252227 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info All TFC's and TGC's 7TH and 3RDFLT's (TOR COM3RDFLT 250000).

But, what was his estimate as CTG 77.2? Certainly his decision as stated above as Commander Left Flank Force must have been based in part on the fact that he was also CTG 77.2 and therefore it was satisfactory to himself as that commander. Why, then, knowing that the left flank force was returning to Leyte Gulf did he not issue any instructions thereon so that his principal subordinate commanders, i.e., Commander Battle Line and CTG 77.3 (Commander Right Flank Force) would know what he planned to do?

Strangely enough he issued no instructions whatsoever at this time but instead seems to have relied on his subordinate commanders to take any action they considered necessary. Perhaps (a) (1) having directed Commander Battle Line at 0625 to dispose the battle line between Taytay Point (Leyte Island) and Hibuson Island and (2) knowing that CTG 77.3 had followed him down the strait and could be expected to follow him on his return up the strait, he considered that no further orders from himself were necessary or (b) he was awaiting orders from CTF 77.

In either case the fact that he did not issue any instructions does not appear wise. This seems so for other Allied commanders in the area were most likely wondering what action he was going to take since this knowledge was important in the formulation of their own decisions. This applied largely to COMSEVENTHFLT, CTF 77, and CTG 77.4, but it was also applicable to COMTHIRDFLT.

The lesson which this emphasizes is commented on under "Operations of CTG 77.2, 0420 - 0520, October 25th".

At 0732 he knew that the left flank force had changed course to 355°(T) and that CTG 77.3 with the right flank force had also changed course, the latter to about 020°(T). Since this movement by CTG 77.3 was exactly what he had expected it can be assumed that he was pleased.

Meanwhile, as he moved northward, he awaited further (a) details on the battle between the escort carriers and the FIRST Striking Force and (b) orders from CTF 77.

At 0733 he was bearing 232½°(T), distant eight point seven miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island.

(1) Operations of Commander Left Flank Force, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

At 0700 Commander Left Flank Force in the LOUISVILLE was on course 175°(T) at twenty knots. He had divided his force sending COMCRUDIV TWELVE, in DENVER, with the COLUMBIA, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION ahead, in order to finish off the crippled ASAGUMO. This group, which was forming ahead of the LOUISVILLE (the DENVER being about 1,600 yards ahead of the LOUISVILLE), will be discussed separately. The PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS were forming column astern of the LOUISVILLE and were very nearly in position at this time. There is not sufficient data to determine the positions of his screening destroyers during the period 0700 - 0733 but it is assumed that they maintained their previous relative positions.*

About 0702 he noted that the CLAXTON was about 4,000 yards astern of the LOUISVILLE.**

At this same time he received a message from the CONY reporting that the ASAGUMO had opened fire.*** This firing seems to have been directed at PT 323 since both COMCRUDIV TWELVE and the SIGOURNEY recorded they had observed no splashes and COMCRUDIV TWELVE also recorded that there were no hits.**** At 0703 he received a request from the CONY to open fire which he granted at 0704.***

SINCE HE HAD ALREADY ASSIGNED TO COMCRUDIV TWELVE NOT ONLY THE TASK TO DESTROY THE ASAGUMO, BUT ALSO ADEQUATE FORCES (TWO LIGHT CRUISERS AND THREE DESTROYERS), IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHY HE GRANTED THE CONY PERMISSION TO OPEN FIRE AT THIS TIME. CERTAINLY, BASED ON A GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF GUNFIRE CONCENTRATIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS, HER GUNFIRE WAS NOT NEEDED, WHEREAS HER AMMUNITION AS A RESERVE, WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. PERHAPS IT WAS A MATTER OF MORALE, IN THAT THE CONY (A) (A UNIT OF DESDIV XRAY) HAD NOT FIRED AT ANY TARGET, AND HE THOUGHT IT, THEREFORE, WELL TO PERMIT HER TO OPEN FIRE OR (B) WAS NOW BEING FIRED UPON, AND SHOULD PROPERLY BE PERMITTED TO REPLY TO REDUCE THE DANGER TO HERSELF.

About 0704:30 the CONY opened fire on the ASAGUMO. She did not record the range or bearing,***** and at 0705 the BENNION opened fire at a range of 12,000 yards, bearing 175°(T).******

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* Diagram "O" shows the positions of these screening destroyers. Their tracks are not shown.

** Deck Log CLAXTON, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations o CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

***** Action Report CONY, Night Battle, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944.

****** Deck Log BENNION, October 25th, 1944.

Also at 0705 the MINNEAPOLIS sighted three ships, hull down, on bearing 165°(T).* These three ships were the Sumilon and Bilaa Point PT's which were about fourteen miles away.

At 0706 (a) the AULICK opened fire on the ASAGUMO at a range of 11,000 yards,** and (b) the SIGOURNEY at a range of about 12,000 yards*** (bearings were not recorded). It is of interest to note, at this point, that three DESDIV XRAY destroyers, which were screening the left flank cruisers, had already opened fire whereas none of CRUDIV TWELVE's group, which had been directed to destroy the destroyer, had as yet done so. The fact that he permitted these DESDIV XRAY destroyers to open fire supports the view above expressed that he felt that the morale requirement had a priority over the limited ammunition expenditure such firing would entail.

Also at 0706 he directed Commander Battle Line to form the battle line between Hibuson Island and Cabugan Grande Island.****

At 0707 he changed course to 210°(T)***** in order to give the DENVER and COLUMBIA more sea room for firing.******

At 0708 he observed the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and the THORN commence firing at the ASAGUMO. The ranges and bearings were not recorded, although the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS noted that the target's bow was blown off, and that she was settling in the water.*******

At 0709 he observed the DENVER and COLUMBIA, which had just steadied on their firing course, open fire.

At 0711 he received CTF 77's warning of approaching enemy aircraft which had been addressed to all commands.******

At 0715 he observed the LEUTZE open fire.********

Also at 0715 he received a TBS voice radio contact report from the MINNEAPOLIS to the effect that she had sighted on bearing 275°(T) what appeared to be an enemy destroyer near the beach.******** By 0719 he had

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* Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Battle of South Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0215, November 2nd, 1944.

** Deck Log AULICK, October 25th, 1944.

*** Action Report SIGOURNEY, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 055, October 30th, 1944.

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 25th, 1944.

****** Deck Logs HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and THORN, October 25th, 1944.

******* Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Straits, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944.

******** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (G).

identified this ship as the friendly PC 1122* although it was most probably PC 1133 which was close inshore off Sua while PC 1122 was close inshore off Calapian Point about six miles to the south.**

Meanwhile a discussion had arisen as to whether or not any Japanese ships other than those which had been reported later, i.e., one cruiser and four destroyers, had succeeded in retiring safely. He, therefore, directed the Commanding Officer LOUISVILLE to launch one of his ship's planes to scout the Surigao Strait, Sogod Bay and Bohol Island areas.

In accordance with these orders the LOUISVILLE, at 0716, launched one SOC aircraft with orders to scout the above areas.*

Also at 0716 he intercepted a TBS voice radio message to the HALFORD from COMDESDIV 112 who was now proceeding south in the ROBINSON to rejoin the formation (a) inquiring if the MTB near her was friendly or enemy and (b) her prompt reply that it was friendly.*** This was PT 323 returning to her base.

At 0717 he observed the CLAXTON open fire. She recorde the range was 12,000 yards, the bearing 195°(T).**** This bearing considerably in error, probably by more than thirty degrees.

At 0719 he ordered all ships to turn left to course 15 * While COMCRUDIV TWELVE's group executed this turn by simultaneo turns, his own three cruisers executed it as a column movement. s time the DENVER***** and COLUMBIA ceased firing and the COLUMBI ied in her action report that the ASAGUMO had rolled over.****** Du ie next two minutes the destroyers also ceased fire.

At 0720 he asked COMCRUDIV TWELVE if he could see anything else worthwhile, and at 0721 that commander replied that he could see a small destroyer or PC beyond the smoke on bearing 270°(T).***** This was probably PC 1122 which had been ordered to hide close inshore off Calapian Point** (Panaon Island—shown in Diagram "F").

At 0722 he observed the ASAGUMO sink.*

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report PC 1133, Surigao Strait Battle, Serial 205, December 3rd, 1944.

*** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944. Enclosure (A).

**** Deck Log CLAXTON, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

****** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

******* Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

At 0722 the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS reported to him that there were numerous survivors in the water and two boats full of survivors on the port bow.*

At 0723 he changed course to 170°(T)** in order not to follow the DENVER and COLUMBIA too closely.

At 0727 he directed the AULICK and SIGOURNEY to finish off the cripples and then to rejoin his force.* While he did not designate any specific target the objective was (a) clear to the SIGOURNEY, for the SIGOURNEY deck log contains the 0730 entry, "proceeding in direction of large columns of smoke"*** and (b) unclear to the AULICK for the commanding officer of that destroyer, at 0731, asked for a confirmation of this order.*

At the same time he received a report from a MTB that an enemy force consisting of two battleships, two or three cruisers and destroyers had been sighted fifteen miles south of Panaon Island.**** The THORN recorded this message as two battleships, two cruisers and four destroyers south of Bohol Island.***** Although the evidence is inconclusive, it seems logical to consider that this report was a garble of PT 190's 0705 contact report on an 0630 sighting of one battleship or heavy cruiser, one cruiser afire, and four destroyers.******

At 0728 he directed the LOUISVILLE to change course to 155°(T)** so as to more nearly parallel the track of COMCRUDIV TWELVE in the DENVER.

Up to this time things had been progressing most favorably. He had largely destroyed the Japanese ships which had ventured up the strait, he had requested that any escaping ships be destroyed by aircraft (which he presumed was about to occur), he had just sunk the ASAGUMO, he had launched a plane to locate any retiring enemy units for the purpose of destroying them by gunfire, and he had not been attacked by Japanese aircraft, although he knew it was likely that such aircraft at this very time were attacking allied shipping off the landing beaches.

Suddenly at this point (0728) he received a message from CTF 77 reporting that the Task Force's CVE's were under attack by enemy surface units composed of battleships, cruisers and destroyers twenty-five miles northeast of Samar Island.**** This message was CTF 77's retransmission of a message from CTU 77.4.3 (a CVE group off Samar Island) stating that

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 25th, 1944.

**** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Action Report THORN, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 034, October 30th, 1944.

****** Action Report PT 190, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0398, October 30th, 1944.

he was under attack by a Japanese force. The PHOENIX intercepted an earlier message at 0715.* The Japanese force was the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, which had sortied undetected through San Bernardino Strait.**

As this presented a new and perhaps unexpected development he immediately commenced re-estimating the situation. Exactly what his thought processes were at this point are not explained. However, it is clear that two principal courses of action presented themselves: (a) to continue his present operations and endeavor to destroy any additional stragglers or (b) to return to Leyte Gulf where, as CTG 77.2, he could re-form his command.

He decided to execute the latter course of action leaving behind the two destroyers (AULICK and SIGOURNEY) which he had directed to destroy the cripples.

His decision in this case was of course correct for the following reasons: (a) His basic instructions from CTF 77 had been promulgated in Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE issued by CTF 77 at 1541, October 21st, wherein he had been directed in part, "during darkness be underway and defend the gulf against the entry of hostile surface forces from either the eastern or southern entrance to Surigao Strait",*** (b) his basic instructions for the Battle of Surigao Strait had been promulgated by CTF 77 at 1443, October 24th, wherein he had directed, "to take night position lower Leyte Gulf. Destroy enemy forces encountered",**** and (c) this had been largely accomplished, and now, based also on Harbor Defense Plan No. ONE, he was expected to return to his respective fire support areas during daylight.

Therefore, he had only to determine which enemy force presented the greater danger to the Allied forces in Leyte Gulf (a) those enemy units remaining in lower Surigao Strait and the Mindanao Sea or (b) those presently engaging TG 77.4. This presented no problem for (1) as mentioned earlier, he had requested air attacks against the above remaining enemy units which, failing to destroy them, should force them to retire even farther to the westward, (2) his presence in the lower gulf would permit him to interpose should any of those units attempt to enter the gulf and (3) the danger from the enemy forces off Samar was clearly greater.

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** The Battle off Samar was to have been written as Volume VI of the Battle for Leyte Gulf.

*** CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2 and 77.3.

**** COM7THFLT (likely CTF 77) Dispatch 240543 October 1944 to All TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

HIS DECISION TO RETURN TO LEYTE GULF WAS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING FOR HERE, IN THE ABSENCE OF HIS SUPERIOR AND FACED WITH A CHANGING SITUATION, HE HAD INSTINCTIVELY ACTED AS HIS SUPERIORS WOULD HAVE HIM ACT AS WAS DEMONSTRATED LATER (0754) WHEN AS CTG 77.2 HE WAS ADVISED BY CTF 77 THAT ALL AVAILABLE DESTROYERS, PLUS NASHVILLE, WERE BEING SENT TO HIM FOR SORTIE (PRESUMABLY TO DEFEND THE ESCORT CARRIERS NOW UNDER ATTACK).

At 0730 he directed his destroyers to form an antisubmarine screen around the cruisers* and at the same time directed the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS to investigate the survivors** which she had previously reported.

At 0732 he changed course to 355°(T), followed at 0733 by COMCRUDIV TWELVE, in order to proceed north through Surigao Strait and assist the friendly CVE's which were under attack off Samar. He reported that at this time he could see four enemy ships dead in the water and burning fiercely.* It is more likely that these were merely four columns of smoke, for the CONY, at this time, recorded that she could see four ships, hull down, to the south.*** Also, it is likely that he had seen these ships earlier during his movement down the strait, for at 0730 all of the Japanese ships to the south, including the MOGAMI, had passed beyond the limiting bearing on the eastern edge of Panaon Island, and the COLUMBIA recorded at this time that only one column of smoke remained (FUSO fire) and that all masts had disappeared.**** The CONY likely saw the MTB's engaged in the rescue of the personnel of PT 493 at Maoyo Point, Panaon Island.

Subsequent operations are contained in the Epilogue. At 0733 Commander Left Flank Force was bearing 232½°(T), distant eight point seven miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island.

(2) Operations of COMCRUDIV TWELVE, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

At 0700 COMCRUDIV TWELVE, in the DENVER, followed by the COLUMBIA, and preceded by the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and LEUTZE in that order, was proceeding on course 170°(T), speed twenty knots to sink the ASAGUMO, which was about 16,500 yards away. At this time he was about 1,600 yards ahead of the LOUISVILLE. The BENNION, which had been investigating rubbish, was about 4,000 yards to the east of the DENVER.

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* Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

*** Action Report CONY, Night Battle, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 039-44, October 29th, 1944.

**** Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

At 0701 he recorded that the Japanese ship (ASAGUMO) was firing on the ships assigned to him but that no hits had been sustained and no splashes were noted.* Actually this firing seems to have been directed against PT 323, which was making torpedo attacks, rather than against the ships of CRUDIV TWELVE.

At 0705, immediately after the CONY had opened fire at 0704:30, he observed the BENNION open fire on bearing 175°(T), range 12,000 yards.**

At 0706 he changed course to 180°(T) by simultaneous ship turns. (This placed the COLUMBIA 1,000 yards directly astern of the DENVER.)***

At 0708 he changed course to 210°(T) to unmask the cruisers' after batteries, slowed to fifteen knots*** and ordered his ships to open fire.* The HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS opened fire immediately,**** the DENVER***** and COLUMBIA****** at 0709, after completing the turn.

It is of interest that the DENVER employed her secondary battery (5-inch) while the COLUMBIA employed her main battery of 6-inch guns. Although the DENVER did not give the range and bearing, the COLUMBIA did, having recorded an opening fire range of 11,650 yards and a bearing of 166°(T).****** It is of interest that both her track chart******* and Diagram "O" show the bearing to have been 156°(T). It therefore seems likely that the COLUMBIA bearing of 166°(T) was correctly taken but improperly logged.

The LEUTZE delayed firing until 0715.******** Although she did not state the range or bearing it appears from Diagram "O" that the ASAGUMO was bearing 129°(T), distant about 7,800 yards.

It is not clear why COMCRUDIV TWELVE did not issue some sort of fire distribution instructions, for he had with him two light cruisers and three destroyers, the latter three most likely as a screen. Certainly the gunfire from either one of the cruisers, or one or more well directed torpedoes from one of the destroyers, should have sufficed. At this time, although the BENNION had expended all of her torpedoes there were six in the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and five in the LEUTZE. Perhaps COMCRUDIV TWELVE realized that although there was some ammunition replacement in the area in the ammunition ships, there were no torpedo replacements.

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* Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations of CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

** Deck Log BENNION, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log COLUMBIA, October 25th, 1944.

**** Deck Log HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

****** Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

******* Ibid., Track Chart.

******** Action Report LEUTZE, Battle of Surigao Straits, Serial 00335, November 5th, 1944.

At 0719 he received a TBS voice radio message from Commander Left Flank Force directing all ships to turn left to course 155°(T).* While the LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS executed this turn as a column movement, the DENVER, COLUMBIA, and the three destroyers with the DENVER, executed it by simultaneous ship turns.

At this time he noted that (a) the DENVER** and COLUMBIA had ceased firing, and (b) the ASAGUMO roll over.*** He also noted that within the next two minutes all of the destroyers had ceased firing.

During this firing the COLUMBIA expended main battery ammunition (6-inch) and had main battery ammunition remaining as shown below:

	ON HAND AT 0707		FIRED		REMAINING AT 0722	
FIRING SHIP	AP	HC	AP	HC	AP	HC
DENVER	113	1083	--	--	113	1083
COLUMBIA	156	120	103	--	53	120

Although the DENVER did not fire 6-inch she is listed above in order to better to appreciate the main battery ammunition situation in this cruiser division at this time.

At 0720 he was queried by Commander Left Flank Force as to whether he could see anything else that was worthwhile. At 0721 he replied that he could see a small destroyer or PC beyond the smoke and off the point, on bearing 270°(T).* This was probably PC 1122, which had been ordered to hide close inshore off Caligangan Point.****

At 0722 he observed the ASAGUMO sink at a range of four miles.***** The COLUMBIA recorded at this time that all masts of enemy vessels had disappeared and that only one column of smoke remained.****** This column of smoke was presumably from the FUSO fire. At this point the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS reported to Commander Left Flank Force that there were (a) numerous survivors in the water and (b) two boats full of survivors on the port bow.*

At 0724 he (COMCRUDIV TWELVE) changed course to 150°(T) and increased speed to twenty knots.*** At this time the Commanding Officer

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* Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

** Action Report DENVER, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0031, November 4th, 1944.

*** Deck Log COLUMBIA, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report PC 1133, Surigao Strait Battle, Serial 205, December 3rd, 1944.

***** Deck Log DENVER, October 25th, 1944.

****** Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

COLUMBIA intercepted a message from CTU 77.4.3 reporting that she was under attack by enemy forces,* but he apparently failed to inform COMCRUDIV TWELVE of this contact report for that commander did not receive this information until 0738.**

By 0726 all CRUDIV TWELVE ships were in column as shown in Diagram "O".

At 0730 Commander Left Flank Force directed the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS to investigate the survivors*** which she immediately did. Upon approaching she discovered that there were two groups of survivors, one off Tungo Point and one off Kanihaan Island.**** The first group was composed of survivors from the ASAGUMO and the second of survivors from the FUSO. The two boats were motor launches from the ASAGUMO.*****

At 0733 COMCRUDIV TWELVE changed course to 355°(T), following Commander Left Flank Force and momentarily slowed to fifteen knots****** in order to enter the formation from astern.

At 0733 the DENVER was bearing 230°(T), distant seven point eight miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island. The HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, on course 055°(T) at twenty knots, was bearing 224°(T), distant seven point twenty-five miles from the same point.

(3) Operations of COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX and Commander Attack Section ONE, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

At 0700 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX (Commander Attack Section ONE), in the NEWCOMB, was still in the general area about five miles west of Hibuson Island. His flagship was towing the ALBERT W. GRANT alongside, and the RICHARD P. LEARY was screening. He was making good a course of 330°(T) at about six point six knots.*******

At 0710 he received a warning of imminent air attack.*******

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* Action Report COLUMBIA, Surigao Straits, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0010, November 1st, 1944.

** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations of CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

*** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

**** Action Report HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, Battle of Surigao Straits, October 25th, 1944, Serial 0102, November 2nd, 1944.

***** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

****** Deck Log COLUMBIA, October 25th, 1944.

******* Deck Log NEWCOMB, October 25th, 1944.

At 0725 he likely learned with satisfaction that the ALBERT W. GRANT had cut in No. FOUR boiler on the main steam line.* This boiler had heretofore (since 0547) been cut in on the auxiliary steam line only.

At 0733 the group of three destroyers was about ten miles northwest of Hibuson Island.

(4) Operations of COMDESDIV 112, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

At 0700 COMDESDIV 112, in the ROBINSON, with the BRYANT, was still in the survivor area trying to pick up Japanese survivors. At this time the BRYANT decided to abandon the attempt to pick up survivors, and headed instead for the cruisers to the south.**

The HALFORD which was about two miles east of this area was preparing to sink a small boat which had been attempting to escape. At 0703 she succeeded and at 0705 she also headed south to join the cruisers.***

Apparently COMDESDIV 112 was determined not to depart until he had recovered at least one Japanese survivor, for he continued in the area until he had done so. Then, at 0712, he also headed south to join the cruisers.****

The total number of Japanese survivors picked up to this time was four, three by the CLAXTON and one by the ROBINSON.*****

About 0715 he sighted a MTB (PT 323) about eight miles to the south and on a northerly course. Whether he or the HALFORD, which was considerably closer, challenged PT 323 is not stated but it was probably the ROBINSON for PT 323 stated that the destroyer apparently could not see her reply.******

At 0716 he asked the HALFORD if those were enemy motor torpedo boats and if she was engaging them to which the HALFORD promptly replied that they were friendly. At 0717 he asked the HALFORD who had been firing and received the reply that the MTB's had been firing.******* Although there is no statement concerning any firing at this time by PT 323 this MTB might well have been firing at the ASAGUMO or at her two boats.

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* Action Report ALBERT W. GRANT, Operations against the Central Philippines, Leyte Area, and Night Surface Action against Japanese Task Force in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0106, November 11th, 1944.

** Deck Log BRYANT, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log HALFORD, October 25th, 1944.

**** Deck Log ROBINSON, October 25th, 1944.

***** Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

****** Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

******* Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

At 0730, probably because Commander Left Flank Force had ordered an antisubmarine screen at this time, COMDESDIV 112 noted, a little prematurely, that his division had joined that commander and had formed an eleven ship screen.*

At 0733 the ROBINSON was bearing 025°(T), distant 13,800 yards from the LOUISVILLE.

(5) Operations of CTG 77.3, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

At 0700 CTG 77.3 (Commander Right Flank Force), in the PHOENIX, with BOISE, SHROPSHIRE and DESRON TWENTY-FOUR, less DALY, which was still investigating MTB's near Cabugan Chico Island, was following Commander Left Flank Force down the strait at twenty knots on course 150°(T). He was about seven miles behind the LOUISVILLE and was following the same general track.**

At 0701 he changed course to 180°(T).***

At 0710 he observed the cruisers and destroyers of the Left Flank Force opening fire on a target to the south.****

At 0715 his flagship (PHOENIX) intercepted a TBS voice radio message from CTU 77.4.3 (Northern Carrier Group--a CVE group off Samar) to CTF 77 reporting that the carriers were under attack by Japanese battleships and other vessels.**** Apparently he did not relay this message to CTG 77.2 for, based on his action report, that commander did not receive this information until it was relayed by CTF 77 at 0728.*****

OWING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DISPATCH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY CTG 77.3 DID NOT QUERY CTG 77.2 AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THAT COMMANDER HAD RECEIVED THIS INFORMATION. CERTAINLY THE INFORMATION WAS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO CTG 77.2 FOR IT SHOWED THAT THE JAPANESE FORCE (MAIN BODY FIRST STRIKING FORCE), WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER HEAVY AIR ATTACK ON THE PREVIOUS DAY IN THE SIBUYAN SEA, HAD PASSED THROUGH SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT DURING THE NIGHT AND WAS EVEN NOW MOVING TOWARD LEYTE GULF. IN THIS CONNECTION IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED THAT FAILURE TO (A) FORWARD VITAL INFORMATION PROMPTLY EVEN THOUGH IT MAY BE INCOMPLETE AT THE TIME OR (B) APPEARS INCONSEQUENTIAL, MAY HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE OPERATIONS OF THE COMMANDER FOR WHAT MAY APPEAR UNIMPORTANT TO ONE COMMANDER MAY BE VITALLY IMPORTANT TO ANOTHER.******

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* Action Report COMDESDIV 112, Battle of Surigao Strait, Serial 040, October 31st, 1944.

** Since (a) CTG 77.3 took no part in the sinking of the ASAGUMO and (b) his track lies along the track of CTG 77.2, the track of TG 77.3 is not shown on Diagram "O".

*** Deck Log PHOENIX, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

***** Preliminary Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

****** Basic Rapid Communication Plan for the U.S. Fleets (FLTCOM)(USF 70 (B)), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Division of Naval Communications, June 1947, Chapter ONE, Section 130, Paragraph 133.

At 0722 he noted the sinking of the ASAGUMO.*

At 0729 he directed his cruisers to form column.**

At 0732, knowing that CTG 77.2 was turning to the north, he changed course to 020°(T) and after completing the change of course, anticipating that there would be orders to proceed to the aid of the CVE's which were then under attack,* increased speed to twenty five knots at 0736.***

At 0733 he was bearing 276°(T), distant seven point six miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island and was about six miles north of the LOUISVILLE.

(B) Operations of Motor Torpedo Boats, 0700 - 0733, October 25th.

The operations of the Motor Torpedo Boats which were returning to their bases are not discussed and, in general, their tracks are not shown on Diagrams "O" and "P".

(1) PT's 137 and 150.

It will be recalled that at the end of the last period (0600 - 0700) (a) PT 137 (SE Panaon PT's) and PT 150 (SW Panaon PT's) were simultaneously, but independently, closing the MOGAMI in order to attack her and (b) these MTB's had been taken under fire by the MOGAMI. This fire was not particularly accurate for the two MTB's were not driven off until the arrival of the AKEBONO which at this time departed from her screening station with the SECOND Striking Force in order to escort the MOGAMI.

At approximately 0700, when about 7,500 yards south of Balongbalong,**** PT 150 caught up with PT 137 and the two motor torpedo boats then continued on toward the MOGAMI. They were now taken under fire by the AKEBONO as well. However, the enemy gunfire was short and no damage resulted.*****

About 0715, after having received permission to return to their base, PT's 137 and 150 abandoned the attack and retired to the northwest.****** At 0733 they were approximately four and one-half miles, bearing 272°(T), from Balongbalong (Diagram "P").

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* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Surface Engagement with Japanese Forces, Surigao Strait, Philippine Islands, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00117, November 10th, 1944.

** Deck Log BOISE, October 25th, 1944.

*** Deck Log PHOENIX, October 25th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 0396, October 29th, 1944.

***** Action Report PT 137, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 11, November 4th, 1944.

(2) East Amagusan PT's.

(a) PT's 328 and 329.

At this time PT's 328 and 329 were en route to their base and are, therefore, no longer discussed herein nor are their tracks shown on Diagram "O".

(b) PT 323.

At 0700 PT 323 fired the first of three torpedoes* at the damaged ASAGUMO which was firing at her without much effect with one gun.** Observing that this torpedo had missed, the Commanding Officer PT 323 made a second torpedo firing run, and fired a second torpedo which also missed. He then made a third torpedo firing run, and fired a third torpedo which hit the ASAGUMO in her after section.***

It seems likely that during this torpedo firing PT 323 had also fired her guns at the ASAGUMO, for at 0717 COMDESDIV 112 queried the HALFORD as to what ship had been firing and was informed that the MTB's had been firing.****

About 0705 she seems to have steadied on course 045°(T) and to have increased speed to about twenty-five knots in order to clear the area CTG 77.2 was likely to use when he opened fire against the ASAGUMO (Diagram "O"). At approximately 0710 she changed course to about 000°(T) and commenced her return to base.

At 0715 she was challenged by a destroyer steaming south* (as discussed under "Operations of COMDESDIV 112, 0700 - 0733, October 25th", this was probably the ROBINSON). Since it appeared that the destroyer could not see her reply the Commanding Officer PT 323 informed CTG 77.2 to this effect and requested that commander to notify the destroyer that she was friendly.* (There is no record of these messages in the voice logs, but there is a record of a message from COMDESDIV 112 to the HALFORD asking if the PT boats were friendly or enemy, and of the HALFORD's reply: "Friendly".*****)

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* Action Report PT 323, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.

** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations of CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

*** Composite Report on Surigao Strait Action by Commanding Officers ASAGUMO (Commander Kazuo Shibayama, ex-IJN) and MICHISHIO (Commander Kazuo Tanaka, ex-IJN), March 15th, 1946, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-39A.

**** Action Report HALFORD, Night Action in Surigao Strait, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 048, October 26th, 1944, Enclosure (A).

***** Action Report CLAXTON, Battle of Surigao Straits, Philippine Islands, October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 007, November 5th, 1944, Enclosure (C).

(3) Kanihaan PT's.

At 0700 Commander Kanihaan PT's, with PT's 495, 489 and 492, was proceeding toward Maoyo Point on course 253½°(T) at a speed of seventeen knots and was bearing 244°(T), distant six miles from the southern tip of Kanihaan Island.

At 0702, when about halfway from Kanihaan Island to Maoyo Point, he saw, at a range of seven miles, a cruiser of the MOGAMI class on fire aft. This cruiser was rounding the southern end of Panaon Island on a southwesterly course at high speed.*

Since at this time the MOGAMI (a) was well to the southwest at a distance of about nineteen miles, (b) under the visibility conditions existing and the rules for visibility** could not be seen except under mirage conditions and (c) was to the westward of the MTB's while the sun had just risen in the east, it seems correct to say that there was a mistake in the time of contact as reported by the MTB's. This conclusion is supported by (a) PT 491 which states that the Kanihaan PT's arrived at Maoyo Point at 0800*** whereas the Kanihaan PT's say that they arrived there at 0700,* and (b) that both PT's 137 and 150 reported that at this time the MOGAMI was smoking badly abaft the stack with no reference to an observable fire**** whereas earlier (0543) a fire had been noted on her stern.***

Therefore, it seems likely that Commander Kanihaan PT's in writing up his report more or less guessed at the times and that the fire he saw in the stern of the MOGAMI at a range of seven miles had actually been sighted much earlier.

Except for these matters the remainder of the report was correct as the ship seen was in fact the MOGAMI which was on a southwesterly course rounding the southern end of Panaon Island (Diagram "P" shows MOGAMI track).

At 0728 he slowed to five knots and at 0730 went alongside PT 491. At this time he noted that PT 493, which had been badly damaged, was beached on Maoyo Point.*****

At 0733 the Kanihaan PT's were still at Maoyo Point.

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* Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Bowditch, American Practical Navigator, Revised Edition, 1938, Part II, Table 8.

*** Action Report PT 491, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Reports PT 137 and PT 150, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serials 11, November 4th, 1944, and 0396, October 29th, 1944, respectively.

***** This MTB appears to have sunk about 0745 although PT 493 gave the sinking as 0630 and PT 495 as 0715.

At 0735 he felt an underwater explosion which he believed to be the ASAGUMO as she had disappeared when he passed her location on his way back to his base.* This was undoubtedly the explosion reported at 0734 by the DENVER and COLUMBIA to COMCRUDIV TWELVE.**

(4) Lower Surigao PT's.

(a) PT 490.

PT 490 was returning to her base and therefore her operations are not discussed further.

(b) PT 491.

At 0700 PT 491 was still alongside the damaged PT 493 which was beached on Maoyo Point and was receiving on board the survivors of that MTB including the five wounded and the bodies of the two who had been killed.

At 0730 the Commanding Officer PT 491 noted that the Kanihaan PT's had arrived and had come alongside but he does not state for what purpose. Whether it was to transfer some of the survivors to his own command, to help pull the PT 493 into deep water, or merely to confer is not stated,*** although the latter reason seems the more likely.

At approximately 0745 he observed the PT 493 slide off the reef and sink in deep water.*** Whether this was due to natural causes and her damaged condition or to action by the other MTB's is not stated.

At 0733 PT 491 continued to remain alongside the damaged PT 493 at Maoyo Point.

(c) PT 493.

At 0700 PT 493 was still beached on Maoyo Point with PT 491 alongside. She was continuing to transfer the survivors to PT 491.

By 0730 the Commanding Officer PT 491 observed the arrival of the Kanihaan PT's on the scene.

Shortly after this at approximately 0745 he observed PT 493 slide off the reef and sink in deep water.****

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* Action Report PT 495, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

** Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, and Subsequent Operations of CRUDIV 12 in Leyte Gulf, October 25th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0147, November 7th, 1944.

*** Action Reports PT's 495, 489, 492, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serials, October 26th, 1944.

**** Action Report PT 493, Night of October 24th - 25th, 1944, No Serial, October 26th, 1944.

CHAPTER XXVI - EPILOGUE

(A) Concluding Events.

The concluding events of the Battle of Surigao Strait consisted mainly (a) of the continued retirement through the Mindanao and Sulu Seas toward a safer haven to the westward of those units of the SECOND Striking Force and THIRD Section (cruisers and destroyers) which had escaped destruction in Surigao Strait and (b) the continued movement northward to lower Leyte Gulf of those Allied units (cruisers and destroyers)(largely units of TG's 77.2 and 77.3) now in lower Surigao Strait. These latter units were to rejoin the battleships off Taytay Point and were then to (a) take up a position to defend Leyte Gulf against the expected assault of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, which was at this time attacking the CVE's off Samar Island or (b) proceed to sea to succor the CVE's.

(1) Japanese Operations.

The SECOND Striking Force with the MOGAMI and SHIGURE from the THIRD Section continued its retirement through the Mindanao Sea. The attack by Allied aircraft against the relatively undamaged units continued until about 0905, although it continued longer against the damaged MOGAMI and ABUKUMA. During the afternoon of October 25th and the morning of October 26th there were several air attacks but despite this the SECOND Striking Force, less the ABUKUMA, USHIO, AKEBONO, MOGAMI and SHIGURE, arrived and refueled at Coron Bay during the afternoon of October 26th. The operations of the latter three units were as follows:

(a) The ABUKUMA, escorted by the USHIO, continued her retirement toward Cagayan for repairs. At 0933, she was attacked ineffectively by Grumman fighters. At 0940, because of information from Commander SW Area Force to the effect that Cagayan was unsuitable for repairs, she changed her destination to Dapitan (Mindanao Island) which was about seventy miles to the westward. After making overnight emergency repairs there she headed for Coron Bay. During the morning of October 26th she was attacked by land-based B-24's from the FIFTH Air Force. As a result of the additional damage sustained, with the ensuing fires and internal explosions, it became necessary to abandon ship. She sank at 1242 in Latitude 08°-54.4'N, Longitude 122°-47.5'E. Her crew was rescued by the USHIO which took them to Coron Bay where they arrived 0917, October 27th.

(b) At 0830 the MOGAMI, which had stopped because, owing to the fire and intense heat, her engines could not be tended, was under air attack until about 0930. She received hits in her after section and also additional hits on her bow, which started a big fire forward. Since her No. ONE magazine could not be flooded due to the pumps being damaged, the danger of explosion made it necessary to abandon ship. She was then torpedoed with one torpedo by the AKEBONO and sank at 1307 in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 124°-56'E. Her survivors were carried by the AKEBONO to Cavite, arriving at 2400, October 26th.

(c) The SHIGURE continued on ahead of the SECOND Striking Force and at a higher speed (twenty-four knots). She was under attack by land-based planes on the morning of the 25th and of the 26th. (The FIFTH Air Force launched fifty-six B-24's and twenty-eight P-38's for this attack and three B-24's for the attack on the morning of the 26th.) She did not enter Coron Bay because she observed the SECOND Striking Force under air attack to the south and, therefore, headed for Brunei Bay, Borneo, passing west of Palawan Island, arriving at 1700, October 27th.

(2) Allied Operations.

As CTG 77.2 (Commander Left Flank Force) and CTG 77.3 proceeded northward to rejoin the battleships, the Allied forces in Leyte Gulf, at about 0814, came under enemy air attack, likely from planes of the FIFTH Base Air Force and of the FOURTH Air Army. (On the way CTG 77.2 detached the CONY and WELLES to remain behind as additional pickets in Surigao Strait.)

This air attack, which was largely directed against those amphibious forces remaining off the beaches, and against the battleships off Taytay Point, was ineffectual, primarily because it was made in piecemeal fashion and in very limited numbers against effective opposition. It was followed by similarly ineffectual attacks around 1100 and by others later in the day.

At 0846 CTF 77 directed CTG 77.2 to proceed with his entire force to a point about twenty-five miles west of Point FIN. (This newly assigned point was bearing 072°(T), distant three point five miles from Kanhandon Point Light, Hibuson Island, and was seven point twenty-five miles west of Desolation Point, Dinagat Island.)

As CTG 77.2 proceeded towards this station CTF 77 at 0953 further directed CTG 77.2 to (a) send immediately one division of battleships, one division of heavy cruisers and about half of his destroyers to the assistance of TU 77.4.3, and (b) re-form the remainder of his force inside the Gulf.

Although the majority of his heavy ships were dangerously low on ammunition to meet a force as strong as the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force, and the majority of his destroyers were short of torpedoes, CTG 77.2, at 1015, in accordance with these instructions (a) formed a special force consisting of the three battleships with the most armor-piercing projectiles (TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA), one heavy cruiser division embracing all the heavy cruisers under his command including the SHROPSHIRE from TG 77.3 (LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, SHROPSHIRE) and twenty destroyers consisting of five units from DESRON FIFTY-SIX (ROBINSON, BRYANT, LEUTZE, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, HALFORD) each armed with five torpedoes; all six units of DESDIV XRAY, of which four (CLAXTON, AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY) were each armed with ten torpedoes and two (THORN, WELLES) were each armed with five torpedoes; five units from DESRON TWENTY-ONE (NICHOLAS, O'BANNON, TAYLOR, LONG, RUSSELL) each armed with ten torpedoes; and four units from DESRON FIFTY-ONE (HALLIGAN, HARADEN, TWIGGS, WICKES), each armed with ten torpedoes to go to the aid of the escort carriers, and (b) directed the remaining ships to protect Leyte Gulf and to obtain fuel and ammunition as opportunity permitted.

With this special force, and after a delay ordered by CTF 77, CTG 77.2, at 1127, departed the Gulf and headed for sea and the CVE's. However, at 1257, he was recalled by CTF 77 and directed to concentrate at the entrance to the Gulf. Here he remained during the remainder of the day while certain of his ships fueled and replenished ammunition.

Meanwhile CTF 77 reinforced TG 77.2 with the NASHVILLE and three destroyers (ABNER READ, BUSH, MAC DONOUGH), plus all destroyers present in TF's 78 and 79.

(B) General Situation, October 25th.

While the southern prong of the Japanese attacking forces (THIRD Section and SECOND Striking Force), having been defeated in the Battle of Surigao Strait, were retiring, the central prong of the Japanese attacking forces (Main Body, FIRST Striking Force) had passed through San Bernardino Strait without detection. Then, with the break of day, this force had encountered, to the surprise of both sides, the Allied Escort Carrier Force (CTG 77.4), which was slow and vulnerable and no real match for the fast, hard-shooting, heavily-armored Japanese ships.

Meanwhile the northern prong of the Japanese force (Main Force) had succeeded in drawing to the north the Allied covering force (THIRD Fleet) so that this force was not available to support directly the escort carriers.

A strange battle now ensued, largely between aircraft and guns, which was terminated when Commander Main Body, FIRST Striking Force decided to recall his units. This eventuated in the retirement of the Main Body through San Bernardino Strait that night.

LEYTE GULF WAS SAFE FOR THE PRESENT!

APPENDIX I

MAIN BATTERY AMMUNITION (ARMOR-PIERCING AND TORPEDOES)

REMAINING IN TG'S 77.2 AND 77.3 AS OF

0733 OCTOBER 25TH

			ARMOR-PIERCING PROJECTILES			
	SHIP	GUNS	ON BOARD	PER GUN	CAPACITY*	PERCENT CAPACITY*
16"	WEST VIRGINIA	8	111	13.9	1000	11.1
	MARYLAND	8	192	24.6	1000	19.2
	SUB-TOTAL	16	303	18.9	2000	15.15
14"	TENNESSEE**	12	327	27.2	1200	27.2
	CALIFORNIA**	12	213	17.8	1200	17.8
	PENNSYLVANIA**	12	360	30.0	1200	30.0
	MISSISSIPPI	12	189	15.7	1500	12.6
	SUB-TOTAL	48	1089	22.7	5100	21.4
	BATTLESHIPS	64	1392	21.7	7100	19.6
8"	LOUISVILLE**	9	316	35.2	1305	24.2
	PORTLAND**	9	94	10.5	1125	8.4
	MINNEAPOLIS**	9	15	1.7	1215	1.2
	SHROPSHIRE**	8	920	115.0	1840	50.0
	SUB-TOTAL	35	1345	38.4	5485	24.5

* Capacity as used herein does not indicate the ship's total capacity to carry main battery projectiles but is the sum of the AP and HC projectiles that each ship was directed to have on hand by CTF 77 OpPlan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, 1200 ITEM.

** Designated to go to the aid of the escort carriers at 1015 October 25th, 1944.

	SHIP	GUNS	ON BOARD	PER GUN	CAPACITY*	PERCENT CAPACITY*
6"	DENVER	12	113	9.4	3360	3.4
	COLUMBIA	12	53	4.4	3360	1.6
	PHOENIX	15	551	36.7	3225	17.1
	BOISE	15	536	35.7	3225	16.6
	SUB-TOTAL	54	1253	23.2	13170	9.5
	CRUISERS	89	2598	29.2	18655	13.9

			TORPEDOES			
	SHIP AND SQUADRON	TORPEDO TUBES	ON BOARD	PER TUBE	ALLOWANCE	PERCENT ALLOWANCE
21"	SHROPSHIRE	8	8	1.0	8	100
	DESRON FIFTY-FOUR					
	REMEY	10	2			
	MC GOWAN	10	0			
	MELVIN	10	1			
	MC DERMUT	10	0			
	MONSSEN	10	0			
	SUB-TOTAL	50	3	.06	50	6
	DESRON TWENTY-FOUR					
	HUTCHINS	10	0			
	DALY	10	5			
	BACHE	10	5			
	KILLEN	10	0			
	BEALE	10	5			
	ARUNTA	4	0			
	SUB-TOTAL	54	15	.28	54	28

* Capacity as used herein does not indicate the ship's total capacity to carry main battery projectiles but is the sum of the AP and HC projectiles that each ship was directed to have on hand by CTF 77 OpPlan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, 1200 ITEM.

	SHIP AND SQUADRON	TORPEDO TUBES	ON BOARD	PER TUBE	ALLOWANCE	PERCENT ALLOWANCE
	DESRON FIFTY-SIX					
21*	NEWCOMB*	10	5			
	R. P. LEARY*	10	7			
	H. L. EDWARDS*	10	6			
	BENNION*	10	0			
	LEUTZE*	10	5			
	ROBINSON*	10	5			
	BRYANT*	10	5			
	HALFORD*	10	5			
	SUB-TOTAL	80	38	.475	80	47.5
	DESDIV XRAY					
	CLAXTON	10	10			
	CONY	10	10			
	AULICK	10	10			
	SIGOURNEY	10	10			
	THORN	5	5			
	WELLES	5	5			
	SUB-TOTAL	50	50	1.0	50	100

SUMMARY

ARMOR-PIERCING PROJECTILES

SHIPS	GUNS	ON BOARD	PER GUN	CAPACITY**	PERCENT CAPACITY**
14	153	3990	26.1	25755	15.5

TORPEDOES

SHIPS	TORPEDO TUBES	ON BOARD	PER TUBE	ALLOWANCE	PERCENT ALLOWANCE
26	242	114	.47	242	47

* Designated to go to the aid of the escort carriers at 1015 October 25th, 1944.

** Capacity as used herein does not indicate the ship's total capacity to carry main battery projectiles but is the sum of the AP and HC projectiles that each ship was directed to have on hand by CTF 77 OpPlan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, 1200 ITEM.

APPENDIX II

TIDAL CURRENTS IN SURIGAO STRAIT*

The current in Surigao Strait is made up of the tidal component and a weaker drift to the west and south caused by the westward flowing North Equatorial Current. In this area, as in San Bernardino Strait, when the moon is near its extreme declination, either north or south, the diurnal inequality in the ebb current is so pronounced that one ebb entirely disappears and instead of two floods and two ebbs there are but one flood and one ebb in a day. Since the flood is greatly prolonged under these conditions and since the flood tide rises in the Pacific and enters the Mindanao Sea through the strait it follows that the current was setting to the south in most of Surigao Strait and to the west in the Mindanao Sea and in the northern entrance to Surigao Strait during the approach to and during the Battle of Surigao Strait.

Since the conditions producing tidal currents and the maximum velocities of the currents in San Bernardino Strait and Surigao Strait are roughly the same it was assumed that the difference in time between high tide and maximum flood and between low tide and maximum ebb in the two straits would be about the same. In San Bernardino Strait maximum flood follows high tide by 1 hour and 36 minutes while maximum ebb follows low tide by 1 hour and 29 minutes. For ease in calculations 1 hour and 30 minutes has been used for both the flood and ebb tides in Surigao Strait.

Since the time of duration of the flood and ebb tides, the conditions producing the tides and the maximum velocities are so similar, it follows that the envelope of velocities of the tidal currents would be the same shape in both straits. (See sketch page 70, Current Tables Pacific Coast.)

The effective current capacity of the various portions of the strait, the Mindanao Sea between Bohol Island and Camiguin Island, and between Siquijor Island and Mindanao Island was determined principally by the relative widths of the channels. Using these parameters a table of currents was calculated.

Current direction was determined by a consideration of the lines of stream flow. These indicate that between Desolation Point, Dinagat Island and Homonhon Island the flood current would set to the west, circle around Hibuson Island and set to the south in Lower Surigao Strait. Similarly

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* This appendix is based on data contained in the following: United States Coast Pilot, Philippine Islands, Part II, 1939, pp. 34 - 36, Current Tables Pacific Coast, 1944, pp. 70-77; Tide Tables Pacific and Indian Oceans, 1944, pp. 297 and 299; CincPac-CincPOA Bulletin 114-44, Tables of Tides, Currents and Daylight and Dark for Selected Points, July 15th, 1944, pp. 7, 8 and 49; letter from Hydrographer to President, Naval War College, Serial 7399, November 25th, 1953; Current Charts, Northwestern Pacific Ocean, 1944, H.O. Misc. No. 10,058A; U.S.C.&G.S. Charts 4220 and 4719; H.O. Chart 14424.

at the southern end of the strait the current turns around Binit Point and moves toward the channel between Bohol Island and Camiguin Island on a mean course of 243°(T).

In the various bays, such as Cabalian, Sogod and Butuan Bays, the current forms a large eddy which moves clockwise in bays to west or north of the main channels and counterclockwise to east or south of the main channels.

CURRENT TABLE SURIGAO
(All Times ITEM)

	OFF BINIT	OFT KANIHAAN	ESCONCHADA -LEYTE	HIBUSON-BUGHO PT.	10°-30'N	BOHOL-CAMIGUIN	OFF SIQUIJOR
Time:	241815 MAXF	241705	241645	241615	241500	241800	241745
Current:	3.50	2.80	2.80	2.45	1.16	1.75	1.92
	1900					1845	1830
	3.3					1.65	1.82
F	2000			241815		1945	1930
	3.1			2.17		1.55	1.70
	2100			1915		2045	2030
	2.9			2.05		1.45	1.60
	2200			2015	241845	2145	2130
L	2.7			1.90	0.9	1.35	1.48
	2300			2115	1945	2245	2230
	2.5			1.75	0.83	1.25	1.38
	2400			2215	2045	2345	2330
	2.3			1.60	0.77	1.15	1.27
O	250100			2315	2145	250045	250030
	2.1			1.45	0.70	1.05	1.15
	0115 MINF	250005	242345	2330	2200	0100	0045
	2.10	1.70	1.70	1.45	0.70	1.05	1.15
O	0130	0020		2345	2215	0115	0100
	2.1	1.7		1.45	0.70	1.05	1.15
	0230	0120		250045	2315	0215	0200
	2.4	1.9		1.70	0.80	1.20	1.32
	0330	0220		0145	250015	0315	0300
D	2.7	2.2		1.90	0.90	1.35	1.48
	0400	0250	250230	0200	0045	0345	0330
	2.9	2.3	2.3	2.00	1.00	1.45	1.60
	0430 MAXF	0320	0300	0230	0115	0415	0400
	3.0	2.4	2.4	2.10	1.00	1.50	1.65
	0500	0350	0330	0300	0145	0445	0430
	2.8	2.2	2.2	1.95	0.90	1.40	1.54
	0600	0450	0430	0400	0245	0545	0530
	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.50	0.70	1.05	1.15

	OFF BINIT		OFF KANIHAAN	ESCONCHADA -LEYTE	HIBUSON-BUGHO PT.	10°-30'N	BOHOL-CAMIGUIN	OFF SIQUIJOR
Time:	250700		250550	250530	250500	250345	250645	250630
Current:	1.4		1.1	1.1	1.00	0.50	0.70	0.77
	0800		0650	0630	0600	0445	0745	0730
	0.7		0.6	0.6	0.50	0.25	0.35	0.48
	0900		0750	0730	0700	0545	0845	0830
	0.00	S	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
E	1000		0850	0830	0800	0645	0945	0930
	1.30		1.00	1.00	0.90	0.40	0.60	0.66
	1100		0950	0930	0900	0745	1045	1030
B	2.00		1.60	1.60	1.40	0.60	1.00	1.10
	1200		1050	1030	1000	0845	1145	1130
	2.50		2.00	2.00	1.70	0.80	1.30	1.43
B	1300		1150	1130	1100	0945	1245	1230
	2.70		2.10	2.10	1.80	0.90	1.40	1.54
	1400		1250	1230	1200	1045	1345	1330
	2.80	ME	2.20	2.20	1.90	0.90	1.40	1.55

MAXF - Maximum flood (two for each flood tide)

MINF - Minimum flood

S - Slack water

ME - Maximum ebb

CURRENT TABLE SURIGAC
(All Times ITEM)

SUMMARY

		OFF BINIT	OFF KANIHAAN	ESCONCHADA -LEYTE	HIBUSON-BUGHO PT.	10°-30'N	BOHOL-CAMIGUIN	OFF SIQUIJOR
Time:		241815	241705	241645	241615	241500	241800	241745
Current:	MAXF	3.50	2.80	2.80	2.45	1.16	1.75	1.92
		250115	250005	242345	242330	242200	250100	250045
	MINF	2.10	1.70	1.70	1.45	0.70	1.05	1.15
		250430	250320	250300	250230	250115	250415	250400
	MAXF	3.00	2.40	2.40	2.10	1.00	1.50	1.65
		250900	250750	250730	250700	250545	250845	250830
	S	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		251400	251250	251230	251250	251045	251345	251330
	ME	2.80	2.20	2.20	1.90	0.90	1.40	1.55

MAXF - Maximum flood (two for each flood tide)

MINF - Minimum flood

S - Slack water

ME - Maximum ebb

APPENDIX III

ORGANIZATION OF COMBINED FLEET

1042 October 23rd - 1830 October 24th

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMBINED FLEET	Admiral Toyoda, Soemu
(a) Main Force	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo
CARDIV 3	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo
CV ZUIKAKU (FFF)	Rear Admiral Kaizuka, Takeo*
CVL ZUIHO	Captain Sugiura, Kuro
CVL CHITOSE	Captain Kishi, Yoshiyuki
CVL CHIYODA	Captain Jo, Eiichiro
Air Group 601, elements of 653, elements of	
CARDIV 4	Rear Admiral Matsuda, Chiaki
BB/XCV HYUGA (F)	Rear Admiral Nomura, Tomekichi*
BB/XCV ISE	Rear Admiral Nakase, Noboru*
XCV JUNYO**	Captain Shibuya, Harumi
CVL RYUHO**	Captain Matsuura, Yoshi
Air Group 634***	
DESRON 10, elements of	Captain Amano, Shigetaka
DESDIV 41 less FUYUZUKI	Captain Wakita, Kiichiro
DD SHIMOTSUKI	
DESDIV 61 less SUZUTSUKI	Captain Amano, Shigetaka
DD's HATSUZUKI (F), AKITSUKI, WAKATSUKI	
CORTRON 31, elements of	Rear Admiral Edo, Heitaro
CL OYODO (FF)	Captain Mudaguchi, Kakuro
CL ISUZU	Captain Matsuda, Gengo
DESDIV 43, elements of	
MAKI, KIRI, KUWA	
DESRON 11	Rear Admiral Takama, Tamotsu****
CL TAMA (F)	Captain Yamamoto, Iwata
DD's SUGI, MOMI,** KAYA,** KASHI,** HINOKI (F)**	
931st Air Group, elements of	
Supply Force, Main Force**	
AO JINEI MARU	
AO TAKANE MARU	
DD AKIKAZE	
Escort Vessels 22, 29, 31, 33, 43, 132	

* Promoted to Rear Admiral October 15th, 1944.
** Did not sortie with Main Force.
*** It seems probable that no elements of Air Group 634 were embarked in CARDIV's 3 or 4 since all of them had been transferred to the 6TH Base Air Force.
**** Rear Admiral Takama in HINOKI did not sortie.

(b) FIRST Striking Force	Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo
FIRST Section	Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo
BATDIV 1	Vice Admiral Ugaki, Matome
BB YAMATO (FFF)*	Rear Admiral Morishita, Mobuei**
BB MUSASHI***	Rear Admiral Inokuchi, Toshihei**
BB NAGATO	Rear Admiral Kobe, Yuji**
CRUDIV 5 less MOGAMI	Vice Admiral Hashimoto, Shintaro
CA MYOKO (F)****	Rear Admiral Ishihara, Itsu**
CA HAGURO	Captain Sugiura, Kajyu
CA CHOKAI*****	Captain Tanaka, Jyo
DESRON 2 less SHIGURE, KIYOSHIMO	Rear Admiral Hayakawa, Mikio
CL NOSHIRO (F)	Captain Kajiwara, Sueyoshi
DD SHIMAKAZE	
DESDIV 2 less KYOSHIMO	Captain Shiraishi, Nogoyoshi
DD's HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO	
DESDIV 31 less NAGANAMI****** and ASASHIMO******	Captain Fukuoka, Tokujiro
DD's KISHINAMI, OKINAMI	
DESDIV 32	Captain Oshima, Ichitaro
DD's HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI	
SECOND Section	Vice Admiral Suzuki, Yoshio
BATDIV 3	Vice Admiral Suzuki, Yoshio
BB KONGO (FF)	Rear Admiral Shimazaki, Toshio**
BB HARUNA	Rear Admiral Shigenaga, Kazue**
CRUDIV 7	Vice Admiral Shiraishi, Kazutaka
CA KUMANO (F)	Captain Hitomi, Soichiro
CA SUZUYA	Captain Teraoka, Masao
CA TONE	Captain Mayuzumi, Haruo
CA CHIKUMA	Captain Norimitsu, Saiji
DESRON 10 less DESDIV's 4, 41, 61, plus NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO	Rear Admiral Kimura, Susumu
CL YAHAGI	Captain Yoshimura, Matake
DD's NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO*******	
DESDIV 17	Captain Tanii, Tamotsu
DD's URAKAZE (F), HAMAKAZE,******* YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE	

* Became Force Flagship after sinking of ATAGO.
** Promoted to Rear Admiral October 15th, 1944.
*** Damaged and dropped out 241510, October 1944.
**** Damaged and returned to Brunei 241200, October 1944. Flag transferred to HAGURO.
***** Assigned to CRUDIV 5 by 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230739.
****** Screen for TAKAO, 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 231035, October 1944.
******* Escorts for MUSASHI.

THIRD Section	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
BATDIV 2	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
BB YAMASHIRO (FF)	Rear Admiral Shinoda, Katsukiyo*
BB FUSO	Rear Admiral Ban, Masami*
CA MOGAMI	Captain Toma, Ryo
DESDIV 4 less NOWAKI, plus SHIGURE	Captain Takahashi, Kameshiro
DD's MICHISHIO (F), ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, SHIGURE	
Service Force	
FIRST Supply Force	
YUHO MARU	
HAKKO MARU	
ITSUKUSHIMA MARU	
MANEI MARU	
NIPPO MARU	
OMUROSAN MARU	
CHIBURI**	
YURISHIMA	
Escort No. 19	
SECOND Supply Force	
NICHIEI MARU	
RYOEI MARU	
KURAHASHI	
MIYAKE	
MANJU	
(c) Advanced Expeditionary Force	Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi
FIRST Submarine Force	Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi
A Submarine Division	
I-26, I-45, I-53, I-54, I-56	
B Submarine Division	
I-38, I-41, I-46, RO-41, RO-43, RO-46	
C Submarine Division	
RO-109, RO-112	
XAS TSUKUSHI MARU	
(d) Southwest Area Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi
(1) SECOND Striking Force	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CRUDIV 21	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CA NACHI (FFF)	Captain Kanooka, Empei
CA ASHIGARA	Captain Miura, Hayao

* Promoted to Rear Admiral October 15th, 1944.

** Escort for TAKAO, Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230905, October 1944.

DESRON 1	Rear Admiral Kimura, Masatomi
CL ABUKUMA (FF)	Captain Hanada, Takuo
DESDIV 7	Commander Iwagami, Jiichi
DD's AKEBONO (F), USHIO	
DESDIV 18	Captain Inoue, Yoshio
DD's SHIRANUHI (F), KASUMI	
DESDIV 21	Commander Ishii, Hisashi
DD's WAKABA (F), HATSUSHIMO, HATSUHARU	
CRUDIV 16 less KITAGAMI*	Vice Admiral Sakonju, Naomasa
CA AOBA**	Captain Yamazumi, Chusaburo
CL KINU	Captain Kawasaki, Harumi
DD URANAMI	
(2) SIXTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru
(a) Western Attack Force ZERO	Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru
(b) Western Attack Force ONE	Vice Admiral Yamada, Sadayoshi
(c) Western Attack Force TWO	Rear Admiral Kikuchi, Tomozo
(d) Western Attack Force THREE	Rear Admiral Joshima, Takatsugu
(e) Western Attack Force FOUR	Major General Yamamoto, Kenji
(3) Philippine Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi
31st Special Base Force (Manila)	Rear Admiral Arima, Kaoru
32nd Special Base Force (Davao)	Rear Admiral Doi, Naoharu
33rd Special Base Force (Cebu)	Rear Admiral Harada, Kaku
954th Air Group	Commander Nakagome, Yoshimasa
955th Air Group	Commander Imagawa, Fukuo
Attached Forces 3rd Southern Expeditionary Fleet	
(4) THIRD Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi
28th Air Flotilla	Rear Admiral Kogure, Gunji
381st Air Group	Captain Nakajima, Daizo
(5) FIFTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Onishi, Takijiro
23rd Air Flotilla (North of Australia Air Base Unit)	Rear Admiral Furukawa, Tamotsu
26th Air Flotilla (Philippine Air Base Unit)***	
61st Air Flotilla (West Caroline Air Base Unit)	Vice Admiral Ueno, Keizo
153rd Air Group	Captain Takahashi, Nobukichi
201st Air Group	Captain Yamamoto, Sakae
761st Air Group	Captain Maeda, Kosei
1021st Air Group	Captain Keito, Keiroku
331st Air Group	Captain Shimoda, Hisao

* Assigned to counterlanding operations.

** Torpedoed 230425 October 1944 and did not sortie with remaining ships.

*** Commanded temporarily by a Senior Officer after death of Rear Admiral Arima Masafumi, October 15th.

(e) Antisubmarine Patrol Force

CORTRON 31, elements of

DESDIV 30 less AKIKAZE
UZUKI, YUZUKI

DESDIV 43, elements of
MOMO, TAKE, UME

933rd Air Group — Captain Mita, Kunic

(f) "T" Attack Force — Captain Kuno, Shuzo

752nd Air Group, elements of
762nd Air Group
801st Air Group, elements of
7th Heavy Bomber Regiment (Army)
98th Heavy Bomber Regiment (Army)

APPENDIX IV

ORGANIZATION OF ALLIED FORCES AT

1042 October 23rd - 1830 October 24th

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

ALLIED NAVAL FORCES	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(a) TF 77 CENTRAL PHILIPPINES ATTACK FORCE	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(1) TG 77.1 Flagship Group*	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
(a) TU 77.1.1 Fleet Flagship Unit	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
AGC WASATCH (FFFFF)	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
DD's AMMEN, MULLANY	
(b) TU 77.1.2 Cruiser Unit	Captain Coney, Charles E.
NASHVILLE**	Captain Coney, Charles E.
DESDIV 48 less AMMEN, MULLANY	Captain McLean, John B.
ABNER READ (F), BUSH	
(2) TG 77.2 Bombardment and Fire Support Group	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
(a) TU 77.2.1 Fire Support Unit NORTH***	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
BATDIV 3 less NEW MEXICO, IDAHO	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
MISSISSIPPI (FF)	Captain Redfield, Herman J.
BATDIV 4 less COLORADO	Rear Admiral Ruddock, Theodore D., Jr.
WEST VIRGINIA (F)	Captain Wiley, Herbert V.
MARYLAND	Captain Ray, Herbert J.
DD's AULICK (F), CONY, SIGOURNEY	Commander Andrew, John D.
(b) TU 77.2.2 Fire Support Unit SOUTH****	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
BATDIV 2 less NEVADA	Rear Admiral Chandler, Theodore E.
TENNESSEE (F)	Captain Heffernan, John B.
CALIFORNIA	Captain Burnett, Henry P.
PENNSYLVANIA	Captain Martin, Charles F.

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* War Diary WASATCH, October 23rd, 1944; also War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.

** General Douglas A. MacArthur (COMSOWESPAC) embarked.

*** Action Report CTU 77.2.1 (COMBATDIV 3), Bombardment of and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, Serial 0166, October 20th, 1944.

**** Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

CRUDIV 4 less INDIANAPOLIS,	
plus MINNEAPOLIS	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
LOUISVILLE (FFF)	Captain Hurt, Samuel H.
PORTLAND	Captain Settle, Thomas G. W.
MINNEAPOLIS	Captain Slocum, Harry B.
CRUDIV 12 less MONTPELIER,	
CLEVELAND	Rear Admiral Hayler, Robert W.
DENVER (F)	Captain Bledsoe, Albert M.
COLUMBIA	Captain Curts, Maurice E.
DESRON 56	Captain Smoot, Roland N.
DESDIV 111	Captain Smoot, Roland N.
LEUTZE, NEWCOMB (FF), BENNION,	
HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, RICHARD P. LEARY	
DESDIV 112 less ROSS, plus	
HALFORD	Captain Conley, Thomas F., Jr.
ROBINSON (F), ALBERT W. GRANT,	
BRYANT, HALFORD	
DESDIV XRAY less AULICK, CONY,	
SIGOURNEY	Commander Hubbard, Miles H.
CLAXTON (F), THORN, WELLES	
(3) TG 77.3 Close Covering Group*	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
(a) TU 77.3.1 Light Cruiser Group	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
CRUDIV 15 less NASHVILLE	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
PHOENIX (FF)	Captain Duncan, Jack H.
BOISE	Captain Roberts, John S.
DESDIV 47 less BEALE	Captain McManes, Kenmore M.
HUTCHINS (F), BACHE, DALY, KILLEN	
(b) TU 77.3.2 Heavy Cruiser Group	Captain Nichols, Charles A. G., RN
HMAS SHROPSHIRE	Captain Nichols, Charles A. G., RN
DD's BEALE, HMAS ARUNTA	
(4) TG 77.4 Escort Carrier Group	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
(a) TU 77.4.1 Panaon Carrier Group**	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
(1) TU 77.4.11 CARDIV 22	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
CVE SANGAMON (FFF)	Captain Browder, Maurice E.
CVEG 37 (19 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Hindman, Stanley E.
CVE SUWANNE	Captain Johnson, William D.
CVEG 60 (22 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Feilbach, Harvey O., USNR

* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Leyte Occupation, Serial 0359, November 3rd, 1944.

** Action Report CTU 77.4.1 (COMCARDIV 22), Leyte Occupation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.

CVE CHENANGO*	Captain Van Deurs, George
CVEG 35 (18 VF, 8 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Moore, Frederick R., Jr.
CVE SANTEE	Captain Blick, Robert E.
CVEG 26 (22 VF, 8 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Funk, Harold N.

(2) TU 77.4.12 CARDIV 28 less CVE's SARGENT BAY, RUDYERD BAY — Rear Admiral Henderson, George R.

CVE SAGINAW BAY (FF)*	Captain Sutton, Frank C.
VC 78 (15 VF, 12VT)	Lieutenant Commander Hyde, John L.,Jr.
CVE PETROF BAY	Captain Kane, Joseph L.
VC 76 (18 VF, 12 VT)	Commander McCauley, James W.

(3) TU 77.4.13 Screen — Captain Nunn, Ira H.

DESDIV 93 less HEERMANN, HOEL — Captain Nunn, Ira H.
MC CORD (F), TRATHEN, HAZELWOOD

CORTDIV 63 less SHELTON, DENNIS — Commander Bewick, James V.
EDMONDS,* RICHARD S. BULL, COOLBAUGH, EVERSOLE, RICHARD M. ROWELL, OBBERENDER**

(b) TU 77.4.2 Southern Carrier Group*** — Rear Admiral Stump, Felix B.

(1) TU 77.4.21 CARDIV 24 less CVE's ANZIO, CORREGIDOR — Rear Admiral Stump, Felix B.

CVE NATOMA BAY (FF)	Captain Morehouse, Albert K.
VC 81 (16 VF, 11 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Barnes, Robert C.
CVE MANILA BAY	Captain Lee, Fitzhugh
VC 80 (17 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Stubbs, Harry K., USNR

(2) TU 77.4.22 CARDIV 27 — Rear Admiral Sample, William D.

CVE MARCUS ISLAND (FF)	Captain Greber, Charles F.
VC 21 (15 VF, 10 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Murray, Thomas O., USNR
CVE KADASHAN BAY	Captain Hunter, Robert N.
VC 20 (15 VF, 12 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Dale, John R., USNR
CVE SAVO ISLAND	Captain Ekstrom, Clarence E.
VC 27 (17 VF, 12 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Jackson, Percival W.
CVE OMMANEY BAY	Captain Young, Harold L.
VC 75 (17 VF, 11 VT)	Lieutenant Smith, Allen W., Jr.,USNR

* Departed October 24th for Morotai, Deck Log SAGINAW BAY, October 25th, 1944.
** Joined and departed for Morotai October 24th.
*** Action Report CTU 77.4.2 (COMCARDIV 24), Reoccupation of Leyte Island, October 18th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00114, November 2nd, 1944.

(3) TU 77.4.23 Screen	Captain Reynolds, Luther K.
DESDIV 94 less JOHNSTON HAGGARD (F), FRANKS, HAILEY	Captain Reynolds, Luther K.
CORTDIV 69 less STAFFORD, SAMUEL B. ROBERTS plus	
LE RAY WILSON RICHARD W. SUESENS (F), ABERCROMBIE, LE RAY WILSON, WALTER C. WANN	Commander Phifer, Thomas C.
(c) TU 77.4.3 Northern Carrier Group*	Rear Admiral Sprague, Clifton A. F.
(1) TU 77.4.31 CARDIV 25	Rear Admiral Sprague, Clifton A. F.
CVE FANSHAW BAY	Captain Johnson, Douglass P.
VC 68 (15 VF, 10 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Rogers, Richard S.
CVE ST. LO	Captain McKenna, Francis J.
VC 65 (17 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Jones, Ralph M., USNR
CVE WHITE PLAINS	Captain Sullivan, Dennis J.
VC 4 (17 VF, 12 VT)	Lieutenant Fickenscher, Edward R., Jr.
CVE KALINAN BAY	Captain Williamson, Thomas B.
VC 3 (18 VF, 12 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Keighley, William H., USNR
(2) TU 77.4.32 CARDIV 26	
CVE's HOGGATT BAY, NEHENTA BAY	Rear Admiral Ofstie, Ralph A.
CVE KITKUN BAY	Captain Whitney, John P.
VC 5 (15 VF, 12 VT)	Commander Fowler, Richard L.
CVE GAMBIER BAY	Captain Vieweg, Walter V. R.
VC 10 (18 VF, 12 VT)	Commander Huxtable, Edward J., Jr.

* Action Report CTU 77.4.3 (COMCARDIV 25), Leyte Operation, October 12th - 27th, 1944, Serial 00110, November 6th, 1944; also CTG 77.4 Operation Plan 2-44.

(3) TU 77.4.33 Screen	Commander Thomas, William D.
DESDIV 93 less MC CORD, TRATHEN, HAZELWOOD	
plus JOHNSTON	Commander Thomas, William D.
HOEL (F), HEERMANN, JOHNSTON	
DE's RAYMOND, DENNIS (F), JOHN C. BUTLER, SAMUEL B. ROBERTS	Lieutenant Commander Hansen, Sigurd, USNR
(5) TG 77.5 Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group*	Commander Loud, Wayne R.
(a) TU 77.5.1 Minesweepers	Commander Loud, Wayne R.
(1) Sweep Unit ONE**	Commander Loud, Wayne R.
MINDIV 5	Lieutenant Brennan, John E., USNR
DMS's SOUTHARD (F),*** CHANDLER,** HOVEY (FF),** LONG****	
MINDIV 19 (Modified)	Lieutenant Commander Clague, John, USNR
DM's PREBLE,**** BREESE*****	
DMS's HAMILTON (F),***** HOWARD,**	
PALMER******	Lieutenant Olson, Louis C., USNR

* Action Report CTG 77.5 (COMMINRON 1), Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.
** Departed October 24th, 1944.
*** Joined TG 77.4 on October 24th, 1944.
**** Departed October 23rd, 1944 with TU 79.14.4.
***** Departed October 24th, 1944 with TU 79.14.8.

(2) Sweep Unit TWO — Lieutenant Commander Woodhouse, Ernest W., USNR
MINDIV 14
AM's ZEAL (F), VELOCITY, TUMULT, TOKEN

(3) Sweep Unit THREE — Lieutenant Commander Pierce, Herbert R., Jr., USNR
MINDIV 13 plus AM SENTRY
AM's REQUISITE (F), PURSUIT, REVENGE, SAGE, SENTRY

(4) MINDIV 34 less SCUFFLE, SENTRY — Lieutenant Commander Keefer, James R., USNR
AM's SAUNTER, SALUTE, SCRIMMAGE, SCOUT

(5) Sweep Unit FOUR — Lieutenant Staehli, Ralph J., Jr., USNR
YMS's 1, 81, 140 (F), 311, 319

(6) Sweep Unit FIVE — Lieutenant Latta, William A., USNR
YMS's 238, 243, 286, 293, 335, 389,* 398 (F)

(7) Sweep Unit SIX — Lieutenant Schminke, Paul, USNR
YMS's 39, 49, 52, 340 (F), 342

(8) Sweep Unit SEVEN — Lieutenant Burns, Thomas W., USNR
YMS's 71, 73, 176, 314, 341 (F)

(b) TU 77.5.2 Hydrographic Unit — Commander Hunt, Robert B. S., RAN
HMAS GASCOYNE, YMS's 316, 393, HMAL 1074

(6) TG 77.7 Service Group — Rear Admiral Glover, Robert O.

(a) TU 77.7.1 Fueling Unit** — Captain Beard, Jefferson D.
AO's ASHTABULA (F), SALAMONIE, SUAMICO,***
SARANAC, CHEPACHET, AE MAZAMA, SS DURHAM VICTORY,****
AOG KISHWAUKEE***

CORTDIV 40 less FOREMAN, ENGLAND plus MANNING, LOVELACE*** — Commander Thorwall, Charles A., USNR
BOWERS, WHITEHURST, WILLMARTH, WITTER, MANNING, LOVELACE

(b) TU 77.7.2 Task Unit Leyte***** less ARETHUSA — Captain Hylant, Emory P.
IX (AO's) CARIBOU, MINK, PANDA; AN's TEAK
SILVERBELL, SATINLEAF;****** AKN INDUS (F),
ARL ACHILLES; ARS CABLE, AO(W) SEVERN, AE MURZIN******

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* Departed October 24th, 1944 with TU 79.14.5.
** War Diary CTU 77.7.1, October 1944.
*** Joined on October 24th (War Diary SARANAC, October 1944).
**** Employed as ammunition ship.
***** War Diary INDUS, October 1944 (arrived Leyte with TG 78.7 October 24th).
****** Enroute Leyte with TG 78.8

(b) TF 78 NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E.
(1) TG 78.1 Palo Attack Group	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E.
(a) TU 78.1.1 Group Flagship* (Also Flagship Unit)	Commander McDowell, Lewis R.
AGC BLUE RIDGE (FFF)	Commander McDowell, Lewis R.
TU 78.1.2 Relief Group Flagship* DD RUSSELL	Lieutenant Commander Wicks, John E., Jr.
(b) TU 78.1.5 LSM Unit** LSM's 19 (F), 21, 257	Lieutenant McComb, Edward L., USNR
(c) TU 78.1.6 Escort and Fire Support Unit***	Captain Crommelin, Henry
DESDIV 49 less STEVENS, MURRAY, HARRISON, MC KEE	Captain Crommelin, Henry
JOHN RODGERS (F)	
(d) TU 78.1.7 Control Unit**** PC's 598,***** 623 (F), 1129,***** SC 726	Captain Brantly, Neill D.
(e) TU 78.1.8 LCI Support Unit****** LCI(R)'s 71 (F), 72, 73, 74, 331	Lieutenant Sargent, Robert E., Jr., USNR
(f) TU 78.1.9 Demolition Unit LCI(D)'s 227, 228	Lieutenant (jg) Sibigtroth, Joseph C., USNR
(g) TU 78.1.10 LCI Smoke Unit******* LCI(L)'s 28 (F), 361, 363, 364, 429, 447, 448	Captain McGee, Homer F.
(h) TU 78.1.11 Salvage Unit******** AT QUAPAW	Lieutenant Commander Castle, Northrup H., USNR
(i) TU 78.1.12 Army Headquarters Unit PCE(R)'s 848 (F), 849, 850, SS APACHE, FP 47	Lieutenant Gunby, D. Kirk, USNR

* Action Report BLUE RIDGE, Leyte Operation, Serial 00530, November 15th, 1944.
** War Diary LSM 21, October 1944.
*** Action Report CTU 78.1.6, Serial 0114, November 5th, 1944.
**** Action Report CTU 78.1.7, No Serial, November 1st, 1944.
***** Departed 1700 October 23rd with TG 78.11.
****** Action Report CTU 78.1.8, Serial 160, November 22nd, 1944.
******* Action Report CTU 78.1.10, Leyte Operation, Serial 0122, November 20th, 1944.
******** Action Report QUAPAW, Philippine Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, Serial 033, October 20th, 1944.

(j) TU 78.1.13 Beach Parties	Lieutenant Zinser, Eugene J., USNR
Beach Party No. 1	Lieutenant Walter, Raymond C., USNR
Beach Party No. 4	Lieutenant Zinser, Eugene J., USNR
(k) LST Unit (Red Beach)*	Commander Linthicum, Theodoric C.
LST's 623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 697, 740, 741, 744, 751, 986, 1017, 1018 (F)	
(2) TG 78.2 San Ricardo Attack Group**	Rear Admiral Fechteler, William M.
(a) Group Flagship APA FREMONT (FFF)	Captain Conlan, Clarence V.
Relief Group Flagship DD ANDERSON	Lieutenant Commander Benson, Ralph H., Jr.
(b) Headquarters Support Aircraft	Commander Spangler, Earle S., USNR
(c) TU 78.2.5 LSM Unit LSM's 18 (F), 20, 22, 23, 34, 136, 139, 258, 311	Commander Weintraub, Daniel J.
(d) DD JENKINS***	Commander Gallery, Philip D.
(e) TU 78.2.7 Control Unit PC's 1134 (F), 1119, 1120, SC 991	Lieutenant Commander Holt, William J., Jr., USNR
(f) TU 78.2.8 Support Unit LCI(R)'s 34, 230 (F), 337, 338, 340, 341; LCI(G)'s 64, 69 (F)	Commander Day, Dwight H.
(g) TU 78.2.9 Salvage Unit ATA SONOMA****	Lieutenant Wurzler, Walter R., USNR
(h) TU 78.2.10 Beach Parties*****	Lieutenant Commander Halloran, Edward R., USNR
Beach Party No. 3	Lieutenant Commander Halloran, Edward R., USNR
Beach Party No. 8	Lieutenant Nordyke, Ted, USNR
(i) WHITE Beach Unit LST's* 170, 397, 549, 613, 912, 993 AK JUPITER,* ARL ACHILLES****** XAK's THOMAS, GIANELLA, KINNEY, JUDSON FIELDS, SHORT	

* Departed 1700 October 23rd with TG 78.11.

** Action Report CTG 78.2 (COMPHIBGRU 8), Leyte Operation, Serial C085, November 29th, 1944.

*** Unit of TU 78.2.6 remaining.

**** Sunk October 24th, 1944.

***** Action Report CTU 78.2.10, Report of Operations, Force Beachmaster, October 13th - November 16th inclusive, No Serial, November 20th, 1944.

****** Unit of TU 77.7.2.

(j) LCI Group 44 (Temporary) — Commander Tucker, James F.
LCI's 683, 684, 685, 693, 977, 978 (F), 979, 980, 981, 982, 1064, 1065*

(3) TG 78.3 Panaon Attack Group**

(a) TU 78.3.5 Control and Support Craft*** — Captain Murphey, Charles D.
PC's 1122, 1133
LCI(G)'s 68, 70 (F)
LCI(R)'s 31 (F), 342
LCI(D) 29

(b) TU 78.3.6 Beach Party No. 7 — Lieutenant O'Neill, Thomas F., USNR

(4) TG 78.5 Harbor Entrance Control Group**** — Captain Benson, Francis W.
PF's BISBEE (F), GALLUP
LCI's 343, 344, 430 (F), 432

(5) PF CARSON CITY*****

(6) TG 78.7 Reinforcement Group TWO Convoy Unit****** — Captain Ginder, John K. B.

(a) Liberty Ships
GENERAL FLEISCHER, CAPE ROMANO, CAPE CONSTANCE, JOHN PAGE, SABIK, JANSSENS, LEO MERRITT, DAVID GAILLARD, FRANK CUHEL, MARCUS DALY, BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, JOHN FOSTER, VITUS BERING, SAMUEL BARLOW, BENJAMIN WHEELER, LOUIS WUELE, CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN, CASSIOPIA, CLARENCE DARROW, ESCALANTE

(b) Service Force TU 77.7.2 less AE
MURZIM,******* AN SATINLEAF*******
IX (AO) ARETHUSA,******** ARL
ACHILLES********* — Captain Hylant, Emory P.
IX(AO)'s CARIBOU, MINK, PANDA
AN's TEAK, SILVERBELL, AKN INDUS (F)
ARS CABLE, AO(W) SEVERN, (YOG-15 in tow)

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* Sunk October 24th, 1944.
** Units remaining at 1042 October 23rd.
*** Action Report CTU 78.3.5, Central Philippines-Panaon Attack Group, No Serial, November 30th, 1944.
**** Action Report CTG 78.5, Report of Operations of the Harbor Entrance Control Group, October 18th - 24th, 1944, No Serial, November 22nd, 1944.
***** Departed 1700 October 23rd with TG 78.11.
****** Action Report CTG 78.7 (COMDESRON 21), Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.
******* En route Leyte with TG 78.8.
******** Broke down October 18th, returned Hollandia.
********* Arrived Leyte with TG 78.6 October 22nd.

(c) LST Unit — Captain Seay, Erskine A.
LST's 464, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 569, 573, 610 (FF), 619, 658, 663, 673, 687, 688, 694, 703, 734, 736, 737, 746, 749, 750, 908, 919, 990, 991, 1015, 1025, 1026
AO SUAMICO, PG TULSA

(d) Screen — Captain Ginder, John K. B.
DESDIV 41 less HOWORTH — Captain Ginder, John K. B.
NICHOLAS (F), O'BANNON, TAYLOR, HOPEWELL, PF's SAN PEDRO, MUSKOGEE

(7) TG 78.8 Reinforcement Group THREE (Convoy Unit)* — Commander Steinmetz, John L., USCG

(a) Service Ship Unit — Lieutenant Commander Kapuscinski, John S., USNR
AE MURZIM, AK's HYPERION, ZAURAK (F), APC 17, AN SATINLEAF

(b) Liberty Ship Unit
FLOYD B. OLSON, THOMAS NELSON, PRINCE L. CAMPBELL, JOE C. S. BLACKBURN, AMERIGO VESPUCCI, MATTHEW P. DEADY, VAN NUYS, CAPE JUDY, CAPE CUMBERLAND, SEAMAN A. KNAPP, MORRISON R. WAITE, JOHN ALDEN, ATWATER, A. BAILEY, JOHN BARTRAM, JUAN CABRILLO, CARL G. BARTH

(c) LST Unit
LST's 22, 206 (F), 220, 454, 618, 922

(d) Screen
CORTDIV 29 less CORPUS CHRISTI, HUTCHINSON — Commander Steinmetz, John L., USCG
PF's EUGENE (FFF), EL PASO, VAN BUREN, ORANGE

(c) TF 79 SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE** — Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Theodore S.

Force Flagship
AGC MT OLYMPUS (FFFF) — Captain Shultz, John H.

Commander Support Aircraft — Captain Taylor, Herbert W., Jr.

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* Action Report CTG 78.8, Reinforcement Group 3, Central Philippine Operation, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.

** Action Report CTG 79.1 (COMPHIBGRU 3), Leyte Operation, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

(1) TG 79.1 Attack Group ABLE	Rear Admiral Conolly, Richard L.
Group Flagship APPALACHIAN (FFF)*	Captain Jeffs, Charles R.
(a) TG 79.3 Transport Group ABLE	Captain Richardson, Clifford G.
(1) TU 79.3.1 TRANSDIV 7 APA CAVALIER (FF),* AKA THUBAN*	Captain Richardson, Clifford G.
(2) TU 79.3.2 TRANSDIV 30 AKA CHARA**	Commander Clark, John P., USNR
(3) TU 79.3.3 TRANSDIV 38 AKA ALSHAIN*	Captain Krause, Roland E.
(4) TU 79.3.4 TRANSDIV XRAY APA PRESIDENT HAYES,* AK MERCURY,*** LSV MONITOR*	Captain Schieke, Herman E.
(5) TU 79.3.6 LCT Unit**** LCT's 667, 738, 739, 740, 772, 781, 819, 820, 861, 863, 864, 990	Lieutenant Wassell, Meyer, USNR
(6) TU 79.11.1 Transport Group	
ABLE Screen	Captain Marshall, William J.
DESRON 48	Captain Marshall, William J.
DESDIV 95 less STEMBEL,* WALKER,***** ABBOTT***** DD's ERBEN (F),**** HALE***	
(7) BLUE-ORANGE Beach Unit****** LST's 24, 471, 472 (F), 606	Lieutenant Talley, William O.
(b) Tractor Group ABLE	Captain Webb, Richard C., Jr.
(1) TG 79.5 LST Unit	Captain Webb, Richard C., Jr.
(a) TU 79.5.1 LST's 608, 609, 611, 612 (FF), 693, 738, 739 (F), 909	Commander Shivley, Joshua C.
(b) TU 79.5.2 LST's 126, 169, 205, 223, 242,**** 565 (F), 605, 670, 686, 733	Commander Parsons, Edwin C., USNR

* Departed October 23rd with TU 79.14.4.
** Departed October 24th, 1944.
*** Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.8.
**** Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.5.
***** Departed October 22nd with TU 79.14.1.
****** Departed 1700 October 23rd with TG 78.11.

(c) TU 79.5.3* LST's 34, 123, 125, 207, 213, 219, 451 (F), 461, 478, 482, 488, 617, 1006	Lieutenant Commander Harlan, James L.
(2) TG 79.7 Control Unit DD STEMBEL (F),** PC's 462, 464, 470, 563, PCS's 1391,* 1418,* 1429,* SC's 631,* 632,* 1004, 6 LCC's	Commander Busck, Vilhelm K.
(3) TU 79.7.1 Gunboat Support Unit	Commander Montgomery, Alan R.
(a) TU 79.7.2 Rocket Unit* LCI(G)'s 365, 366, 407, 422, 439, 440, 442, 475, 558 (F), 559, 560, 561, 565 (FF), 567, 568, 580, 751, 752	Commander Montgomery, Alan R.
(b) TU 79.7.3 Mortar Unit* LCI(M)'s 1056 (F), 1057, 1058, 1059 LCI(A)'s 975, 1055	Lieutenant Commander Robison, Carl F., USNR
(c) TU 79.7.4 Salvage and Fire Fighting Unit* LCI(L) 564 (F), 676	Lieutenant Commander Starkus, Charles J., Ret.
(2) TG 79.2 Attack Group BAKER	Rear Admiral Royal, Forrest B.
Group Flagship AGC ROCKY MOUNT (FFF)***	Captain Patten, Stanley F.
(a) TG 79.4 Transport Group BAKER	Captain Morrison, George D.
(1) TU 79.4.1 TRANSDIV 10 (Temporary) APA's CLAY (F),*** ARTHUR MIDDLETON,*** BAXTER,*** WILLIAM P. BIDDLE,** A GEORGE F. ELLIOTT,*** AKA's AURIGA,**** CAPRICORNUS,*** LSD RUSHMORE***	Captain Morrison, George D.

* Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.5.
** Departed October 23rd with TU 79.14.4.
*** Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.8.
**** Remaining from TU 79.4.2 and TU 79.4.3.

(2) TG 79.11 Commander Screen*	Captain Coward, Jesse G.
DESRON 54	Captain Coward, Jesse G.
DESDIV 107 less WADLEIGH, NORMAN SCOTT	Captain Coward, Jesse G.
REMEY (FF), MERTZ, MONSSEN	
DESDIV 108	Commander Phillips, Richard H.
MC DERMUT (F), MC GOWAN, MC NAIR, MELVIN	
DESRON 49	Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.
DESDIV 97 less WILLIAM D. PORTER, YOUNG	Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.
PICKING (F),** SPROSTON,** WICKES	
DESDIV 98 less KIMBERLY, LUCE***	Captain Cooper, William G.
ISHERWOOD (F),*** CHARLES J. BADGER***	
DESDIV 101 less HALL, PAUL HAMILTON plus MAC DONOUGH	Captain Martin, Hugh J.
HALLIGAN (F), HARADIN, TWIGGS, MAC DONOUGH	
(b) TG 79.6 LST-LCI Transport Group BAKER	Captain Rimer, Theodore W.
(1) TU 79.6.1 LST-LSM Transport Unit	Commander Ageton, Arthur A.
Unit Flagship DD LUCE (FF)***	Commander Owens, Hinton A.
(a) TU 79.6.11 Assault Unit BLUE****	Lieutenant Commander Reith, George, USNR
LST's 20, 483, 486, 568, 671, 745, 918, 999, 1013, 1024	
(b) TU 79.6.12 Assault Unit ORANGE****	Lieutenant Commander Drexler, Louis A., Jr.
LST's 117, 118, 277, 564, 567, 669, 672, 698, 916, 917 (F)	

* Although CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54) was nominally in command of the screen composed of DESRON's 48, 49 and 54, he, from his station in the outer screen, was too far away to effectively control the intermediate and inner screens. CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESRON 49) therefore took control of the inner and intermediate screens and due to the requirements for gunfire support from the destroyers forming the two screens combined the two squadrons into one inner screen on October 20th, 1944. Action Report CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESRON 49), Assault on Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0121, October 30th, 1944; also Action Report COMDESRON 48 (CTU 79.11.1), Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 080, October 30th, 1944.

** Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.3.

*** Departed October 23rd with TU 79.14.4.

**** Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.5.

(c) TU 79.6.13 Reserve Unit
ONE* — Lieutenant Barber, Oliver W.
LST's 269, 270 (F), 615, 704, LSM's 134, 135

(d) TU 79.6.14 Reserve Unit
TWO — Lieutenant Commander Blanche, John G., Jr.
LSM's 24 (F),* 29,* 136, 233

(e) TU 79.6.15 LCT Unit** — Lieutenant Franklin, Gordon P., USNR
LCT's 688, 747, 821, 822, 830, 898, 992, 1016, 1296, 1298

(2) TU 79.6.2 LCI Unit — Captain Rimer, Theodore W.

(a) TU 79.6.21 Mortar Unit*** — Lieutenant Commander Hannett, George W., USNR
LCI(M)'s 658, 659, 660 (F), 754
LCI(A)'s 775,* 994*

(b) TU 79.6.22 Rocket Gunboat Unit** — Lieutenant Giliberty, Frank R., USNR
LCI(G)'s 366,* 372,* 373,* 439,* 440,* 451,* 461,* 462, 464, 465, 467, 472, 475

(c) TU 79.6.23 LCI Salvage Unit* — Captain Rimer, Theodore W.
LCI(L)'s (S&FF) 738 (F), 598

(3) TU 79.11.3 Landing Craft Screen****
PCE(R)'s 851, 852, 853

(c) TG 79.19 Salvage Group less GRAPPLE — Commander Foss, Henry O., USNR
ARS PRESERVER,* ARL EGERIA, ATF's POTAWATOMI,* CHOWANOC,* CHICKASAW,* MENOMINEE*

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* Departed October 24th with TU 79.14.5.

** Action Report CTG 79.2 (COMPHIBGRU 6), Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

*** Action Report CTU 70.6.21 (COMLCI(L)GRP 17), Serial 114, November 4th, 1944.

**** Units remaining October 23rd. CTU 79.11.3 (COMDESRON 54) assumed CTG 79.11 October 20th.

COMMANDER ALLIED NAVAL FORCES SOWESPAC	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(a) TG 70.1 Motor Torpedo Boats	Commander Bowling, Selman S.
(1) TU 70.1.3 Leyte Group	Lieutenant Commander Leeson, Robert USNR
(a) MTB RON 7 MTB's 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 134, 137, 138	Lieutenant Commander Leeson, Robert USNR
(b) MTB RON 12 MTB's 146, 150, 151, 152, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 196	Lieutenant Pullen, Weston C., Jr., USNR
(c) MTB RON 21 MTB's 320, 321, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331	Lieutenant Gleason, Carl T.
(d) MTB RON 33 MTB's 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497	Lieutenant Preston, Arthur M., USNR
(e) MTB RON 36 MTB's 522, 523, 524, 525, 526 U.S. Army QS 13, 1 Crash Boat	Lieutenant Commander Tappaan, Francis D., USNR
(2) TU 70.1.6 Advance Tender Unit AGP's WACHAPREAGUE, WILLOUGHBY, OYSTER BAY	Lieutenant Commander Holroyd, Walter W., USNR
(b) TF 71 Submarines, West Australia	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.
(1) TG 71.1 U.S. Patrol Group	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.
(a) On Patrol ANGLER, COD, DARTER, BERGALL, DACE, PADDLE, ROCK, GURNARD, BREAM	
(b) En route Patrol BATFISH, GUITARRO, MUSKALLUNGE, GROWLER, HAKE, HARDHEAD, GUNNEL, BLACKFIN	
(c) En route Base RATON, BLUEGILL, HAMMERHEAD, LAPON COBIA	
(2) TG 71.7 British and Netherlands Patrol Group	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.
(a) On Patrol TANTIVY, STOIC, SIRDAR, STORM	

(b) En route Patrol TANTALUS	
(c) En route Base SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS, ZWAARDVISCH	
(c) TF 72 Submarines, East Australia	Captain Haines, John M.
(1) TG 72.1 Special Mission Group NAUTILUS, NARWHAL, CERO	Captain Haines, John M.
(d) TF 73 Naval Air Forces	Rear Admiral Wagner, Frank D.
(1) TG 73.1 Flag Group CURRITUCK (FF), 1 AVR	Captain Evans, William A.
(2) TG 73.2 Strike and Rescue Group*	Captain Oliver, Richard M.
(a) TU 73.2.1 Rescue Unit ORCA VPB 11 (8 PBY), 1 AVR	Commander Fleming, Morton K., Jr.
(b) TU 73.2.2 Strike Unit TANGIER, VPB 29 (8 PBY), 2 AVR's	Captain Oliver, Richard M.
(3) TG 73.3 Manus Group** HEDRON 10 Patrol Planes Present Manus Carrier Replacement Pool Patrol Plane Replacement Squadrons	Captain Lambrecht, John O.
(4) TG 73.4 Search and Support Group Patrol Planes Present Woendi	Captain Jones, Carroll B.
(a) TU 73.4.1*** HERON, VPB 52 Detachment (4 PBY)	Lieutenant Norcott, John M., USNR
(b) TU 73.4.2**** VPB 146 (15 PV)	Lieutenant Commander Robinson, Jesse P., Jr.
(c) TU 73.4.3**** VPB 101 (12 PB4Y)	Commander Compton, James R.
(d) TU 73.4.4****	Commander Compton, James R.
(5) TG 73.7 Advanced Group	Commander Renard, Jack

* Based at Morotai.
** 15 VSB (VS 61) employed for offshore patrol not included.
*** Based at Hollandia.
**** Operating from Morotai.

(a) TU 73.7.1	Commander Bandy, Jack I.
HALF MOON	Commander Bandy, Jack I.
SAN CARLOS	Lieutenant Commander Mills, DeLong
VPB 33 (15 PBY)*	Lieutenant Commander Anderson, Fernald P.
VPB 34 (12 PBY)*	Lieutenant Commander Utgoff, Vadym V.
1 AVR	
(b) TU 73.7.2**	Lieutenant Commander Dodds, Charles R.
VPB 130 (15 PV)	
(6) TG 70.2 Antisubmarine Group***	Rear Admiral Wagner, Frank D.
(a) TU 70.2.1 Hunter-Killer Unit	Commander Pickering, Samuel M.
SAN PABLO, VP 11 Detachment (4 PBY)	
CORTDIV 33 less MACHIAS	Commander Ryssy, John W., USCG
ALLENTOWN (F), CHARLOTTESVILLE, SANDUSKY	
ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC****	Lieutenant General Kenney, George C. (AC), USA
(a) Far East Air Forces	Lieutenant General Kenney, George C. (AC), USA
(1) FIFTH Air Force (Assault Force)	Lieutenant General Whitehead, Ennis C., (AC), USA
(a) FIFTH Fighter Command	Brigadier General Wurtsmith, Paul E. (AC), USA
8th Fighter Group (52 P38)	
35th Fighter Group (65 P-47)	
49th Fighter Group (69 P-38)	
58th Fighter Group (73 P-47)	
348th Fighter Group (104 P-47)	
475th Fighter Group (68 P-38)	
418th Night Fighter Squadron (11 P-61)	
421st Night Fighter Squadron (12 P-61)	
547th Night Fighter Squadron (12 P-61)	

* Commenced movement to Leyte October 23rd.

** Operating from Manus.

*** Operating from Morotai throughout October 1944.

**** Data regarding the organization, disposition, and strength of Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC was obtained from the following sources and estimated as of October 23rd.

(1) Air Evaluation Board, Leyte Campaign, June 1945.
(2) Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC Operations Report No. 23, October 14th - 25th, 1944.
(3) Letter from Director, Historical Division, USAF Air University Library to President, Naval War College, February 25th, 1953.
(4) Letter from Research Studies Institute, USAF Air University to President, Naval War College, November 3rd, 1952.
(5) THIRTEENTH USAAF Letter of Instructions No. 2, October 6th, 1944.
(6) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Operations Instruction No. 71, September 24th, 1944.
(7) War Diary Commander Aircraft Northern Solomons (CTG 70.9), October 17th, 1944.

(b) FIFTH Bomber Command — Brigadier General Crabb, Jarred V., (AC), USA
3rd, 312th, 417th Light Bomb Groups
(210 A-20)
38th, 345th Medium Bomb Groups
(113 B-25)
22nd, 43rd, 90th, 380th Heavy Bomb Groups
(164 B-24)

(c) FIFTY-FOURTH Troop Carrier Wing — Brigadier General Carter, Warren R., (AC), USA
317th, 374th, 375th, 433rd Troop Carrier Groups (271 C-47)

(d) NINETY-FIRST Photographic Reconnaissance Wing — Colonel Sams, William C., (AC), USA
6th Photographic Group (61 F-5, F-7)
71st Reconnaissance Group (16 B-25, 43 P-40, 12 L-5)

(2) THIRTEENTH Air Force (Supporting Force) — Major General Streett, St. Clair, (AC), USA

(a) THIRTEENTH Fighter Command — Brigadier General Barnes, Earle W., (AC), USA
18th, 347th Fighter Groups
(121 P-38)
419th Night Fighter Squadron
(11 P-51)

(b) THIRTEENTH Bomber Command — Brigadier General Matheny, William A., (AC), USA
42nd Medium Bomb Group
(83 B-25)
5th, 307th Heavy Bomb Groups
(78 B-24)
868th Heavy Bomb Squadron
(11 LAB-24)

(c) Troop Carrier Group — Colonel Sands, Harry J., Jr., (AC), USA
403rd Troop Carrier Group
(48 C-47)

(b) TG 70.9 Aircraft Northern Solomons — Major General Mitchell, Ralph J., USMC

(1) FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing — Major General Mitchell, Ralph J., USMC

(a) Air Group 12 — Colonel Willis, William A., USMC
VMF 114, 211, 218, 313
(62 F4U, 19 FG)
VMSB 142, 243 (41 SBD)

(b) Air Group 14 — Colonel Hopkins, Zebulon C., USMC
VMF 212, 222, 223 (63 F4U)
VMSB 244 (21 SBD)
VMO 251 (21 F4U)

(c) Air Group 24 VMSB 133, 236, 241, 341 (87 SBD)	Colonel Meyer, Lyle H., USMC
(d) Air Group 61 VMB 413, 423, 433, 443 (46 PBJ)	Colonel Smi , Perry K., USMC
(e) Air Group 25 VMR 152, 1[illegible] (32 R4D)	Colonel Koonce, Allen C., USMC

(2) 79th RAAF Fighter Squadron (14 Spitfire)

(3) Royal New Zealand Air Units
3rd Squadron, RNZAF (17 PV)
17th, 22nd Squadrons, RNZAF (36 F4U)

(4) 17th Photographic Squadron (5 F5A, 1 RA-24B)	Captain Bartman, Walter M., (AC), USA
(5) Attached Naval Squadrons	
VPB 148 (9 PV)	Lieutenant Commander Jakeman, Lloyd F.
VPB 130 (14 PV)	Lieutenant Commander Dodds, Charles R.
VPB 44 (15 PBY)	Lieutenant Commander Bogard, Gerald S.
VPB 52 (11 PBY)	Lieutenant Commander Isner, Rennis, Jr., USNR
VS 61 (15 SBD, 1 J2F)	Lieutenant McGowan, William I.
(c) Royal Australian Air Force Command 378 VF, 96 VB(L), 36 VB(M), 12 VB(H), 42 VPB(MS)	Air Vice Marshal Bostock, W.D., RAAF

CINCPAC - CINCPOA

(a) Western Pacific Task Forces	Admiral Nimitz, Chester W.
(1) THIRD Fleet	Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr.
(a) TF 38 Fast Carrier Force	Vice Admiral Mitscher, Marc A.
(1) TG 38.1	Vice Admiral McCain, John S.
(a) TU 38.1.1 Carrier Unit CARDIV 5 less BATAAN plus HANCOCK, COWPENS	Vice Admiral McCain, John S.
WASP (FFF)	Captain Weller, Oscar A.
CVG 14 (49 VF, 22 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Blitch, John D.
HORNET	Captain Doyle, Austin K.
CVG 11 (50 VF, 22 VB, 18 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Smith, Lloyd A.
HANCOCK	Captain Dickey, Fred C.
CVG 7 (42 VF, 23 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Lamade, John D.
MONTEREY	Captain Ingersoll, Stuart H.
CVLG 28 (24 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Mehle, Roger W.
COWPENS	Captain Taylor, Herbert W., Jr.
CVLG 22 (22 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Jenkins, Thomas H., USNR
(b) TU 38.1.2 Support Unit	Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.
CRUDIV 5	Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.
CHESTER (F)	Captain Hartley, Henry
PENSACOLA	Captain Mullinnix, Allen P.
SALT LAKE CITY	Captain Busbey, Leroy W., Jr.
CRUDIV 11 less SAN JUAN, FLINT, RENO, TUCSON	Captain Mullan, William E. A.
SAN DIEGO (F)	Captain Mullan, William E. A.
OAKLAND	Captain Reed, Kendall S.
BOSTON*	Captain Herrmann, Ernest E.
(c) TU 38.1.3 Screen Unit	Captain Espe, Carl F.
DESDIV 7 plus CASSIN, DOWNES	Captain Smith, Harold P.
DUNLAP (F), FANNING, CASE, CUMMINGS, CASSIN, DOWNES	
DESDIV 23 less LANSDOWNE, LARDNER	Captain Burford, William P.
MC CALLA (F),** WOODWORTH, FARENHOLT**	
DESDIV 91 less CHARRETTE, BELL, BURNS* plus BROWN, GRAYSON	Captain Espe, Carl F.
IZARD (FF), BROWN, GRAYSON, CONNER	

* Joined October 24th.
** Detached October 24th.

(2) TG 38.2	Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F.
(a) TU 38.2.1 Carrier Unit	Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F.
CARDIV 4 less BUNKER HILL	Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F.
INTREPID (FFF)	Captain Bolger, Joseph F.
CVG 18 (48 VF, 23 VB, 19 VT)	Commander Coleman, Wilson M.
CABOT	Captain Michael, Stanley J.
CVLG 29 (22 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Eder, Willard E
INDEPENDENCE	Captain Ewen, Edward C.
CVLGN 41 (15 VF(N), 7 VT(N))	Commander Caldwell, Turner F., Jr.
(b) TU 38.2.2 Support Unit	Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
BATDIV 7	Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
IOWA (FF)	Captain McCann, Allan R.
NEW JERSEY (FFFFF)*	Captain Holden, Carl F.
CRUDIV 14 less VICKSBURG, HOUSTON plus BILOXI	Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.
VINCENNES (F)	Captain Brown, Allen D.
MIAMI	Captain Crawford John G.
BILOXI	Captain McGurl, Daniel M.
(c) TU 38.2.3 Screen Unit	Captain Womble, John P., Jr.
DESRON 52	Captain Womble, John P., Jr.
DESDIV 103 less STEPHEN POTTER	Captain Womble, John P., Jr.
THE SULLIVANS, MILLER, TINGEY (FF), OWEN	
DESDIV 104	Captain Kenny, William T.
HICKOX (F), HUNT, LEWIS, HANCOCK, MARSHALL	
DESRON 53	Captain Jarrett, Harry B.
DESDIV 105 less BENHAM	Captain Jarrett, Harry B.
HALSEY POWELL (F), CUSHING, COLAHAN, UHLMANN	
DESDIV 106	Captain Tompkins, Benjamin F.
YARNALL (F), TWINING, STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN	
(3) TG 38.3	Rear Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.

* Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., (COM3RDFLT) embarked.

(a) TU 38.3.1 Carrier Unit	Rear Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.
CARDIV 1 less ENTERPRISE, COWPENS plus LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, LANGLEY	Rear Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.
ESSEX (FFF)	Captain Weiber, Carlos W.
CVG 15 (54 VF, 25 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Mc Campbell, David
LEXINGTON (FFFF)*	Captain Litch, Ernest W.
CVG 19 (36 VF, 30 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Winters, Theodore H., Jr.
PRINCETON**	Captain Buracker, William H.
CVLG 27 (23 VF, 9 VT)	Lieutenant Commander Bardshar, Frederic A.
LANGLEY	Captain Wegforth, John F.
CVLG 44 (23 VF, 9 VT)	Commander Wordell, Malcolm T.
(b) TU 38.3.2 Heavy Support Unit	Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.
BATDIV 8 less INDIANA	Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.
MASSACHUSETTS (F)	Captain Warlick, William W.
BATDIV 9 less ALABAMA	Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.
SOUTH DAKOTA (FF)	Captain Riggs, Ralph S.
(c) TU 38.3.3 Light Support Unit	Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.
CRUDIV 13 less BILOXI	Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.
SANTE FE (FF)	Captain Wright, Jerauld
BIRMINGHAM	Captain Inglis, Thomas B.
MOBILE	Captain Miller, Christopher C.
RENO	Captain Alexander, Ralph C.
(d) TU 38.3.4 Screen Unit	Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
DESDIV 99	Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
CLARENCE K. BRONSON (FF), COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY	
DESRON 55	Captain Jarrell, Albert E.
DESDIV 109	Captain Jarrell, Albert E.
PORTERFIELD (FF), CALLAGHAN, CASSIN YOUNG, IRWIN, PRESTON	
DESDIV 110 less PRITCHETT	Commander Edsall, Warren R.
LAWS (F), LONGSHAW, MORRISON	
(4) TG 38.4***	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.

* Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher (CTF 38) embarked.

** Sunk October 24th.

*** Action Report CTU 38.4.2 (COMCRUDIV 6), Operations with TG 38.4 for the periods October 21st - 31st, 1944, Serial 0065, November 6th, 1944.

(a) TU 38.4.1 Carrier Unit	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
CARDIV 2 less HANCOCK	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
FRANKLIN (FFF)	Captain Shoemaker, James M.
CVG 13 (34 VF, 27 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Kibbe, Richard L.
SAN JACINTO	Captain Martin, Harold M.
CVLG 51 (22 VF, 9 VT)	Commander Moore, Charles L., Jr.
(1) TU 38.4.11	Rear Admiral Sallada, Harold B.
ENTERPRISE (F)	Captain Glover, Cato D.
CVG 20 (30 VF, 17 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Smith, Daniel F., Jr.
BELLEAU WOOD	Captain Perry, John
CVLG 21 (23 VF, 9 VT)	Commander Casey, Vincent F.
(b) TU 38.4.2 Light Support Unit	Rear Admiral Joy, Charles T.
CRUDIV 6 less MINNEAPOLIS, SAN FRANCISCO	Rear Admiral Joy, Charles T.
WICHITA (F)	Captain Spencer, Douglas A.
NEW ORLEANS	Captain Hurff, Jack E.
(c) TU 38.4.3 Screen Unit	Captain Long, Victor D.
DESRON 6	Captain Long, Victor D.
DESDIV 11 less CRAVEN MAURY (FF), GRIDLEY, HELM, MC CALL	Captain Long, Victor D.
DESDIV 12 MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON, BAGLEY	Captain Poehlmann, Karl F.
DESDIV 24 less GRAYSON WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON (F)	Captain Greenacre, Alvord J.
DESDIV 100 COGSWELL (F), CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP	Captain Miller, Wallace J.
(d) TU 38.4.4 Heavy Support Unit	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A.(COMBATPAC)
BATDIV 6 less NORTH CAROLINA plus ALABAMA	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A.(COMBATPAC)
WASHINGTON (FFFF)	Captain Cooley, Thomas R.
ALABAMA	Captain Murphy, Vincent R.
(5) TF 34 Heavy Surface Striking Force*	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.

* Since TF 34 and TG 34.5 were made effective October 25th, the tentative task organization for these groups as issued by Commander Battleships Pacific Fleet in COMBATPAC Operation Order No. 13-44, Addendum No. 1, Serial 00080, October 16th, 1944, is included herewith. The actual organization made effective October 25th differed somewhat from the above organization.

(a) TG 34.1 Battle Line	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.
(1) TU 34.1.1	Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
BATDIV 7	Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
IOWA (F)	Captain McCann, Allan R.
NEW JERSEY (FFFFF)*	Captain Holden, Carl F.
(2) TU 34.1.2	Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.
BATDIV 8	Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.
MASSACHUSETTS (F)	Captain Warlick, William W.
WASHINGTON (FFFF)**	Captain Cooley, Thomas R.
(3) TU 34.1.3	Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.
BATDIV 9	Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.
SOUTH DAKOTA (F)	Captain Riggs, Ralph S.
ALABAMA	Captain Murphy, Vincent R.
(b) TG 34.2 Right Flank	Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.
(1) TU 34.2.1	
(2) TU 34.2.2	Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.
CRUDIV 14 less VICKSBURG, HOUSTON plus BILOXI	Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.
VINCENNES (FF)	Captain Brown, Allen D.
MIAMI	Captain Crawford, John G.
BILOXI	Captain McGurl, Daniel M.
(3) TU 34.2.3	Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
DESDIV 99	Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
CLARENCE K. BRONSON (F), COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY	
(4) TU 34.2.4	Captain Kenny, William T.
DESDIV 104 less MARSHALL	Captain Kenny, William T.
HICKOX (F), HUNT, LEWIS HANCOCK	
(c) TG 34.3 Center	
(d) TG 34.4 Left Flank	Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.
(1) TU 34.4.1	Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.
CRUDIV 5	Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.
CHESTER (FF)	Captain Hartley, Henry
PENSACOLA	Captain Mullinix, Allen P.
SALT LAKE CITY	Captain Bushey, Leroy W., Jr.
(2) TU 34.4.2	

* Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., (COM3RDFLT) embarked.
** Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee (COMBATPAC & CTF 34) embarked.

(3) TU 34.4.3 — Captain Espe, Carl F.
DESDIV 91 less CHARRETTE, BURNS, BELL plus — Captain Espe, Carl F.
PRESTON, UHLMANN — Captain Espe, Carl F.
IZARD (F), CONNER, PRESTON, UHLMANN

(e) TG 34.9 Supporting Carrier Group

(1) TU 34.9.1 Carrier Unit ONE
1 CVL, PATTERSON, BAGLEY — Commander Shea, William H., Jr.

(2) TU 34.9.2 Carrier Unit TWO
1 CVL
DESDIV 12 less PATTERSON, BAGLEY — Captain Poehlmann, Karl F.
MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT

(6) TG 34.5 Special Group* — Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.

(a) TU 34.1.1 — Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
BATDIV 7 — Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
IOWA (FF) — Captain McCann, Allan R.
NEW JERSEY (FFFFF)** — Captain Holden, Carl F.

(b) TU 34.2.2 — Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.
CRUDIV 14 less VICKSBURG, HOUSTON plus BILOXI — Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.
VINCENNES (F) — Captain Brown, Allen D.
MIAMI — Captain Crawford, John G.
BILOXI — Captain McGurl, Daniel M.

(c) TU 34.2.3 — Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
DESDIV 99 — Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
CLARENCE K. BRONSON (F), COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY

(d) TU 34.9.2 Carrier Unit TWO
1 CVL
DESDIV 12 less PATTERSON, BAGLEY — Captain Poehlmann, Karl F.
MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT

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* Since TF 34 and TG 34.5 were made effective October 25th, the tentative task organization for these groups as issued by Commander Battleships Pacific Fleet in COMBATPAC Operation Order No. 13-44, Addendum No. 1, Case 1, Serial 00080, October 16th, 1944, is included herewith. The actual organization made effective October 25th differed somewhat from the above organization.

** Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., (COM3RDFLT) embarked.

(b) TG 30.3	Rear Admiral Wiltse, Lloyd J.
(1) TU 30.3.1 Towing Unit	Rear Admiral Wiltse, Lloyd J.
BOSTON (FF)*	Captain Herrmann, Ernest E.
HOUSTON (CURRENT-ZUNI towing)**	Captain Behrens, William W.
CANBERRA (ATR 50-WATCH HILL towing)**	Captain Early, Alexander R.
DESDIV 92 less BRADFORD, BROWN, plus BURNS, BELL, CHARRETTE	Captain Sweetser, Willard M.
BOYD (F),* COWELL,* BURNS,* BELL,* CHARRETTE,* DMS TREVER, FARENHOLT,*** MC CALLA,*** GRAYSON,*** WOODWORTH***	
(2) TG 30.7 Hunter-Killer Group	Captain Saunders, William V.
CVE HOGGATT BAY (FF)	Captain Saunders, William V.
DE's BEBAS (F), SEID, STEELE, SAMUEL S. HINDS	
(c) TG 30.5 Air Search and Reconnaissance	Commodore Ketcham, Dixwell
(1) TU 30.5.1 Seaplane Squadrons and Tenders Kossol Passage	Captain Goodney, Willard K.
CHANDELEUR (F), POCOMOKE, MAKINAC, YAKUTAT	
VPB 16 (13 PBM)	Lieutenant Commander Scarpino, William J.
VPB 202 (13 PBM)	Commander Leeman, Robert W.
VPB 216 (14 PBM)	Commander Cook, Harry E., Jr.
VH1 Detachment (5 PBM)	
(2) TU 30.5.2 Seaplane Squadrons and Tenders, Saipan	Commander Lyons, Raymond R.
KENNETH WHITING (F), COOS BAY, SHELIKOF	
VPB 4 (16 PB2Y)	Lieutenant Commander Curtis, Frederick L.
VPB 18 (12 PBM)	Lieutenant Commander Brower, Charles M., USNR
VH1 Detachment (5 PBM)	

* Departed October 24th to rejoin TG 38.1.

** COMCRUDIV 10 Report of Salvage of USS CANBERRA and USS HOUSTON, Serial 0032, November 30th, 1944.

*** Reported October 24th.

(3) TU 30.5.3 Land Plane Search Group Tinian	Commander Rigsbee, Everett O., Jr.
VPB 102 (15 PB4Y)	Lieutenant Commander Pearson, Gerald R., USNR
VPB 116 (15 PB4Y)	Commander Gumz, Donald G.
VPB 117 (15 PB4Y)	Commander Rigsbee, Everett O., Jr.
VPB 150 (16 PV)	Commander Riddell, Robert S.
VPB 151 (15 PV)	Commander Masterton, Paul
(4) TU 30.5.4 Seaplane and Tender Detachment Ulithi	Captain McLean, Gordon A.
HAMLIN (F), CASCO, ONSLOW	
VPB 17 (13 PBM)	Lieutenant Commander Kuehner, Kenneth A., USNR
(d) TG 30.8 Fleet Oiler and Transport Carrier Group	Captain Acuff, Jasper T.
7 CVE, 6 DD, 15 DE, 24 AO	
(2) TF 59 Shore-Based Aircraft, Forward Area, Central Pacific	Major General Hale, Willis H., (AC) USA
(a) TG 59.1 Marianas Air Defense Command	Brigadier General Cushman, Thomas J., USMC

(1) Army
318th Fighter Group (82 VF)
Detachment 6th Night Fighter Squadron (6 VF(N))
Detachment 28th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron (4 F5B)

(2) Marine
VMF 216, 217, 225, 321 (82 VF)
VMF(N) 534 (14 VF(N))
VMTB 131, 242 (40 VTB)
VMO 1, 2, (20 VO)

(b) TG 59.2 Bomber Command	Brigadier General Landon, Truman H., (AC), USA

Army
30th, 494th Bomber Groups (109 VBH)

(c) TG 59.5 Transport Air Group	Colonel McQuade, Thomas J., USMC

Marine
VMR 253 (16 VR)

(d) TG 59.6 Garrison Force Western Carolines	Major General Moore, James T., USMC
(1) TU 59.6.2 Air Defense Command Palaus	Colonel Bailey, Caleb T., USMC

(a) Army
Detachment 28th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron (3 F5B)

(b) Marine
VMF 114, 122 (42 VF)
VMF(N) 541 (13 VF(N))
VMTB 134 (24 VTB)

(b) TF 17 Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet — Vice Admiral Lockwood, Charles A.,Jr.

(1) TG 17.1 Empire Patrol Group

(a) On Patrol, Single Submarines
BURRFISH, STERLET, SAURY, SEA DOG, TAMBOR, GREENLING, APOGON, SNOOK, SEA FOX, BILLFISH, SEAL, GABILAN, KINGFISH

(b) On Patrol, Coordinated Attack Groups

(1) TG 17.11 — Commander Blakely, Edward N.
SHARK (F),* SEADRAGON, BLACKFISH

(2) TG 17.14 — Commander Lee, John E.
CROAKER (F), PERCH

(3) TG 17.15 — Commander Banister, Alan B.
SAWFISH (F), ICEFISH, DRUM

(4) TG 17.17 — Commander Wogan, Thomas L.
BESUGO (F), RONQUIL

(5) TG 17.19 — Commander Coye, John S., Jr.
SILVERSIDES (F), TRIGGER, SALMON, TANG

(c) En route Patrol

(1) Single Submarines
PILOTFISH, SARGO, POGY, SKIPJACK, SCAMP

(2) Coordinate Attack Group

(a) TG 17.12 — Commander Roach, John P.
HADDOCK (F), HALIBUT, TUNA

(b) TG 17.16 — Commander Clarey, Bernard A.
PINTADO (F), ATULE, JALLAO

* Presumed lost October 24th.

(d) En route Base
ASPRO, SNAPPER, TILEFISH,* SEAHORSE,
SEA DEVIL, WHALE, PARCHE, SAILFISH,**
BONEFISH, BARBEL,** SKATE

(2) TG 17.2 Mandate Patrol Group

(a) On Patrol
PERMIT

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER***	General Stilwell, Joseph W., USA
(a) FOURTEENTH Air Force	Major General Chennault, Claire L., (AC), USA
308th Heavy Bomb Group (26 B-24, 20 LAB-24)	
341st Medium Bomb Group (23 B-25)	
51st Fighter Group (55 P-40, 19 P-51)	
23rd Fighter Group (47 P-40, 25 P-51)	
(b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command	Major General LeMay, Curtis E., (AC), USA
FIFTY-EIGHTH Bomb Wing****	
40th Bomb Group (35 B-29)	Colonel Blanchard, William H., (AC), USA
444th Bomb Group (35 B-29)	Colonel Harvey, Alva L., (AC), USA
462nd Bomb Group (34 B-29)	Colonel Kalberer, Alfred F., (AC), USA
468th Bomb Group (36 B-29)	Colonel Faulkner, Ted S., (AC), USA

* Arrived Midway October 24th.
** Arrived Saipan October 24th.
*** Data regarding the organization, disposition and strength of China-based Allied Air Forces supporting the Leyte campaign was obtained from the following sources:
(1) Letters from the Director, Library Division, USAF Air University to President, Naval War College, November 8th 1950 and February 23rd, 1951.
(2) Letter from the Research Studies Institute, USAF Air University to President, Naval War College, November 3rd, 1952.
(3) TWENTIETH Bomber Command Tactical Missions Reports Nos. 1, 10, 12, October 14th, 16th, 17th, 1944.
**** Headquarters discontinued October 12th, 1944.

APPENDIX V

ORGANIZATION OF ALLIED FORCES

1830, October 24th, 1944

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

ALLIED FORCES (CTG 77.2)*	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
(a) BATTLE LINE	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
(1) BATDIV 2 less NEVADA	Rear Admiral Chandler, Theodore E.
TENNESSEE (F)	Captain Hefferman, John B.
CALIFORNIA	Captain Burnett, Henry B.
PENNSYLVANIA	Captain Martin, Charles F.
(2) BATDIV 3 less NEW MEXICO, IDAHO	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
MISSISSIPPI (FF)	Captain Redfield, Herman J.
(3) BATDIV 4 less COLORADO	Rear Admiral Ruddock, Theodore D.
WEST VIRGINIA (F)	Captain Wiley, Herbert V.
MARYLAND	Captain Ray, Herbert J.
(4) DESDIV XRAY	Commander Hubbard, Miles H.
CLAXTON (F)	Commander Hubbard, Miles H.
CONY	Commander Moore, Allen W.
THORN	Lieutenant Commander Schneider, Frederick H., Jr.
AULICK	Commander Andrew, John D.
SIGOURNEY	Lieutenant Commander Hale, Fletcher
WELLES	Lieutenant Commander Slaughter, John S.
(b) LEFT FLANK FORCE	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
(1) CRUDIV 4 less INDIANAPOLIS plus MINNEAPOLIS	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
LOUISVILLE (FFF)	Captain Hurt, Samuel H.
PORTLAND	Captain Settle, Thomas G. W.
MINNEAPOLIS	Captain Slocum, Harry B.
(2) CRUDIV 12 less MONTPELIER, CLEVELAND	Rear Admiral Hayler, Robert W.
DENVER (F)	Captain Bledsoe, Albert M.
COLUMBIA	Captain Curts, Maurice E.

* Preliminary Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4) for Battle of Surigao Strait, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00141, November 2nd, 1944.

(3) DESRON 56	Captain Smoot, Roland N.
DESDIV 111	Captain Smoot, Roland N.
NEWCOMB (F)	Commander Cook, Lawrence B.
LEUTZE	Commander Robbins, Berton A., Jr.
BENNION	Commander Cooper, Joshua W.
HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS	Commander Boulware, Joe W.
RICHARD P. LEARY	Commander Habecker, Frederic S.
DESDIV 112 less ROSS plus HALFORD	Captain Conley, Thomas F., Jr.
ROBINSON (F)	Commander Grantham, Elonzo B., Jr.
ALBERT W. GRANT	Commander Nisewaner, Terrell A.
BRYANT	Commander High, Paul L.
HALFORD	Commander Hardy, Robert J.
(c) RIGHT FLANK FORCE (CTG 77.3)	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
(1) CRUDIV 15 less NASHVILLE plus HMAS SHROPSHIRE	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
PHOENIX (FF)	Captain Duncan, Jack H.
BOISE	Captain Roberts, John S.
HMAS SHROPSHIRE	Captain Nichols, Charles A.G., RN
(2) DESRON 24 less DESDIV 48 plus HMAS ARUNTA	Captain McManes, Kenmore M.
HUTCHINS (F)	Commander Laning, Caleb B.
DALY	Commander Visser, Richard G.
BACHE	Commander Morton, Robert C.
HMAS ARUNTA	Commander Buchanan, A. E., RAN
KILLEN	Commander Corey, Howard G.
BEALE	Commander Coffee, Doyle M.
(d) SPECIAL ATTACK FORCE (CTG 79.11)	Captain Coward, Jesse G.
(1) DESRON 54	Captain Coward, Jesse G.
DESDIV 107 less WADLEIGH, NORMAN SCOTT, MERTZ	Captain Coward, Jesse G.
REMEY (FF)	Commander Fiala, Reid P.
MONSSEN	Commander Bergin, Charles K.
DESDIV 108 less MC NAIR	Commander Phillips, Richard H.
MC DERMUT (F)	Commander Jennings, Carter B.
MC GOWAN	Commander Cox, William R.
MELVIN	Commander Atkins, Barry K.
(e) MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS (CTG 70.1)*	Commander Bowling, Selman S.
(1) MTB RON 7 less MTB 138 MTB's 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 134, 137	Lieutenant Commander Leeson, Robert, USNR
(2) MTB RON 12 MTB's 146, 150, 151, 152, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 196	Lieutenant Pullen, Weston C., Jr., USNR

* Action Report CTG 70.1, Report of Action Motor Torpedo Boats, Surigao Straits, P. I., Night of October 24th - 25th, Serial I-0330, December 1st, 1944.

(3) MTB RON 21 less MTB 325 MTB's 320, 321, 323, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331	Lieutenant Gleason, Carl T.
(4) MTB RON 33 less MTB 488 MTB's 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497	Lieutenant Preston, Arthur M., USNR
(5) MTB RON 36 less MTB's 522, 525 MTB's 523, 524, 526	Lieutenant Commander Tappaan, Francis D., USNR

APPENDIX VI

ORGANIZATION OF JAPANESE FORCES

1830, October 24th, 1944

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

JAPANESE FORCES*	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
(a) THIRD Section	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
(1) BATDIV 2	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
BB YAMASHIRO (FFFF)	Rear Admiral Shinoda, Katsukiyo
FUSO	Rear Admiral Ban, Masami
(2) CA MOGAMI	Captain Toma, Ryo
(3) DESDIV 4 less NOWAKI plus SHIGURE	Captain Takahashi, Kameshiro
DD MICHISHIO (F)	Commander Tanaka, Tomoo
ASAGUMO	Commander Shibayama, Kazuo
YAMAGUMO	Commander Ono, Shiro
SHIGURE	Commander Nishino, Shigeru
(b) SECOND STRIKING FORCE less CRUDIV 16, DESDIV 21	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
(1) CRUDIV 21	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CA NACHI (FFF)	Captain Kamboka, Eupei
ASHIGARA	Captain Miura, Hayao
(2) DESRON 1	Rear Admiral Kimura, Masatomi
CL ABUKUMA (FF)	Captain Hanada, Takuo
(3) DESDIV 7	Captain Iwagami, Jiichi
DD AKEBONO (F)	Lieutenant Commander Yoda, Shiro
USHIO	Commander Araki, Masaomi
(4) DESDIV 18	Captain Inoue, Yoshio
DD KASUMI (F)	Commander Yamana, Hiroo
SHIRANUHI	Commander Ara, Teisaburo

* Military History Officer, U. S. Army Japan 1st endorsement to President, Naval War College letter serial 289-58 dated February 11th, 1958, Enclosure (2).

APPENDIX VII

JAPANESE AIRCRAFT*

Type	Japanese Designation or Name	U.S. Code Name
NAVY:		
Carrier-Type Fighter	Type 0 carrier-based fighter	Zeke
Carrier Type Fighter	Reppu	Sam
Interceptor Fighter	Raiden	Jack
Interceptor Fighter	Shiden	George
Seaplane Fighter	Kyofu	Rex
Carrier-Type Attack	Type 97 carrier-based attack	Kate
Carrier-Type Attack	Tenzan	Jill
Carrier-Type Attack	Ryusei	Grace
Carrier-Type Bomber	Type 99 carrier-based bomber	Val
Carrier-Type Reconnaissance	Suisei	Judy
Carrier-Type Reconnaissance	Saiun	Myrt
Land Reconnaissance (and night VF)	Gekko	Irving
Land Attack	Type 1 land attack	Betty
Two Engine Land Bomber	Ginga	Frances
Two Engine Land Bomber	Type 96	Nell
Observation Seaplane	Type 0 observation seaplane	Pete
Reconnaissance Seaplane	Shiun	Norm
Reconnaissance Seaplane	Zuiun	Paul
Reconnaissance Seaplane	Type 0 reconnaissance seaplane	Jake
Patrol Seaplane	Type 2 flying boat	Emily
Patrol Seaplane (and transport)	Type 97 flying boat	Mavis
ARMY:		
Fighter	Type 1 fighter	Oscar
Fighter	Type 2 fighter	Tojo
Fighter	Type 3 fighter	Tony
Fighter	Ki 84	Frank
Heavy Fighter	Type 2 heavy fighter	Nick
Reconnaissance	Type 99 Military recco or assault	Sonia
Land Reconnaissance	Type 100 Hq. recco	Dinah
Light Bomber	Type 99 light bomber	Lily
Heavy Bomber	Type 97 heavy bomber	Sally
Heavy Bomber	Type 100 heavy bomber	Helen
Heavy Bomber	Ki 67	Peggy**

* Enclosure to CINCPAC/CINCPOA "Weekly Intelligence", Vol. 1, No. 19, November 17th, 1944.
** CINCPAC/CINCPOA "Weekly Intelligence", Vol. 1, No. 14, October 13th, 1944.

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APPENDIX VIII

CERTAIN ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

A-20	Fighter-Bomber (Havoc)
AE	Ammunition Ship
AGC	Amphibious Force Flagship
AGP	Motor Torpedo Boat Tender
AK	Cargo Ship
AKA	Attack Cargo Vessel
AM	Minesweeper
AN	Net Layer
AO	Oiler
AO(W)	Distilling Ship
AP	Transport
APA	Attack Transport
APD	High Speed Transport
APH	Transport for Wounded Evacuation
ARL	Repair Ship, Landing Craft
ARS	Salvage Ship
ASP	Antisubmarine Patrol
AT	Ocean Going Tug
ATO	Old Tug
AV	Aircraft Tender
AVP	Small Seaplane Tender
AVR	Aircraft Rescue Vessel
B-24	Heavy Bomber (Liberator)
B-25	Medium Bomber (Mitchell)
B-29	Heavy Bomber (Superfortress)
BATDIV	Battleship Division
BB	Battleship
BB/XCV	Hermaphrodite Battleship
BOGEY	Unidentified Aircraft
C-47	Transport (Skytrain)
CA	Heavy Cruiser
CAP	Combat Air Patrol
CARDIV	Carrier Division
CD	Coast Defense Ship (Escort)
CL	Light Cruiser
CLAA	Antiaircraft Cruiser (Light)
CM	Mine Layer
CORTDIV	Destroyer Escort Division
CORTRON	Destroyer Escort Squadron
CSA	Commander Support Aircraft
CV	Aircraft Carrier
CVE	Escort Aircraft Carrier
CVEG	Air Group Assigned to an Escort Aircraft Carrier
CVG	Air Group Assigned to an Aircraft Carrier
CVL	Light Aircraft Carrier
CVLG	Air Group Assigned to a Light Aircraft Carrier
CVLGN	Air Group Assigned to a Light Aircraft Carrier (Specializing in night operations)
D-day	The term used to designate the unnamed day on which an operation commences, or is to commence (Allied)
DesOpOrd	Dispatch Operations Order
DM	Light Mine Layer
DMS	Fast Minesweeper
ex-IJA	Was Imperial Japanese Army prior to September 1945
ex-IJN	Was Imperial Japanese Navy prior to September 1945
F4U	Carrier Based Fighter (Corsair)
F-5	Army Reconnaissance (Photographic)(P-38 Lightning)
F-7	Army Reconnaissance (Photographic)
FEC	Far Eastern Command
FG	Fighter (Corsair)
FWDAREA	Forward Area
GHQ	General Headquarters
HEDRON	Headquarter Squadron
HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship
HS	Historical Section
J2F	Utility Transport
JS	Japanese Study

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L-5	Liaison Aircraft (Sentinel
LCC	Landing Craft, Control
LCI	Infantry Landing Craft
LCI(A)	Infantry Landing Craft (Ammunition)
LCI(D)	Infantry Landing Craft (Demolition)
LCI(G)	Infantry Landing Craft (Gunboat)
LCI(L)	Infantry Landing Craft (Large)
LCI(M)	Infantry Landing Craft (Mortar)
LCI(R)	Infantry Landing Craft (Rocket)
LCPR	Landing Craft (Personnel)(with ramp)
LCT	Landing Craft (Tank)
LSD	Landing Ship (Dock)
LSM	Landing Ship (Medium)
LST	Landing Ship (Tank)
LSV	Landing Ship (Vehicle)
MTB	Motor Torpedo Boats
MTBRON	Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron
NA	National Archives
NAVGRP	Naval Group
OBB	Old Battleship
OTC	Officer in Tactical Command
P-38	Fighter (Lightning)
P-40	Fighter (Warhawk)
P-47	Fighter (Thunderbolt)
P-61	Fighter (Aircobra)
PAC	Pacific
PBM	Patrol Bomber (Mariner)
PBY	Patrol Bomber (Catalina)
PBJ	Patrol Bomber (Mitchell)
PC	Submarine Chaser
PCE(R)	Patrol Vessel Escort (Rescue)
PCS	Patrol Vessel (Submarine Chaser)
PF	Frigate
PG	Gun Boat
PV	Patrol Bomber (Ventura)
R4D	Transport (C-47)(Skytrain
RDF	Radio Direction Finder
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
SBD	Carrier Based Dive Bomber (Dauntless)
SC	Submarine Chaser
SigDesOpOrd	Signal Dispatch Operations Order
SigOrd	Signal Order
SOA	Speed of Advance
So. Ex.	Southern Expeditionary
SUASP	Antisnooper Patrol
SS	Submarine
TCAP	Target Air Patrol
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
VB	Carrier Bomber Squadron
VB(H)	Bomber Squadron (Heavy) Land
VB(L)	Bomber Squadron (Light) Land
VB(M)	Bomber Squadron (Medium) Land
VB(MS)	Bomber Squadron (Medium Seaplane)
VC	Composite Aircraft Squadron (various missions)
VF	Fighter Squadron (Carrier)
VMB	Marine Bomber Squadron
VMF	Marine Fighter Squadron (Land or Carrier Based)
VMO	Marine Observation Squadron
VMR	Marine Transport Squadron
VMSB	Marine Scout Bomber Squadron
VMTB	Marine Torpedo Bomber Squadron
VPB	Patrol Bomber Squadron (Land or Sea)
VR	Transport Squadron
VT	Torpedo Squadron (Carrier)
VTB	Torpedo Bomber Squadron
WDC	Washington Document Center
YMS	Motor Minesweeper

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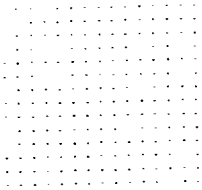
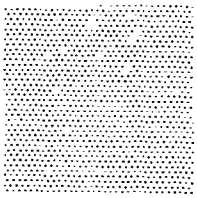
LEGEND



REPORTED SCATTERED SHOWERS AND VARIABLE CONDITIONS.



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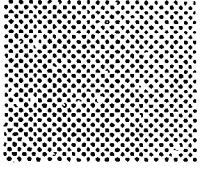
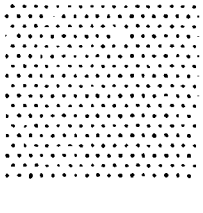
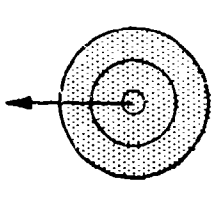


FOG, MIST OR HAZE.



APPROXIMATE POSITION OF THE INTER-TROPICAL FRONT.



APPROXIMATE CENTER OF TROPICAL STORM AND DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT.

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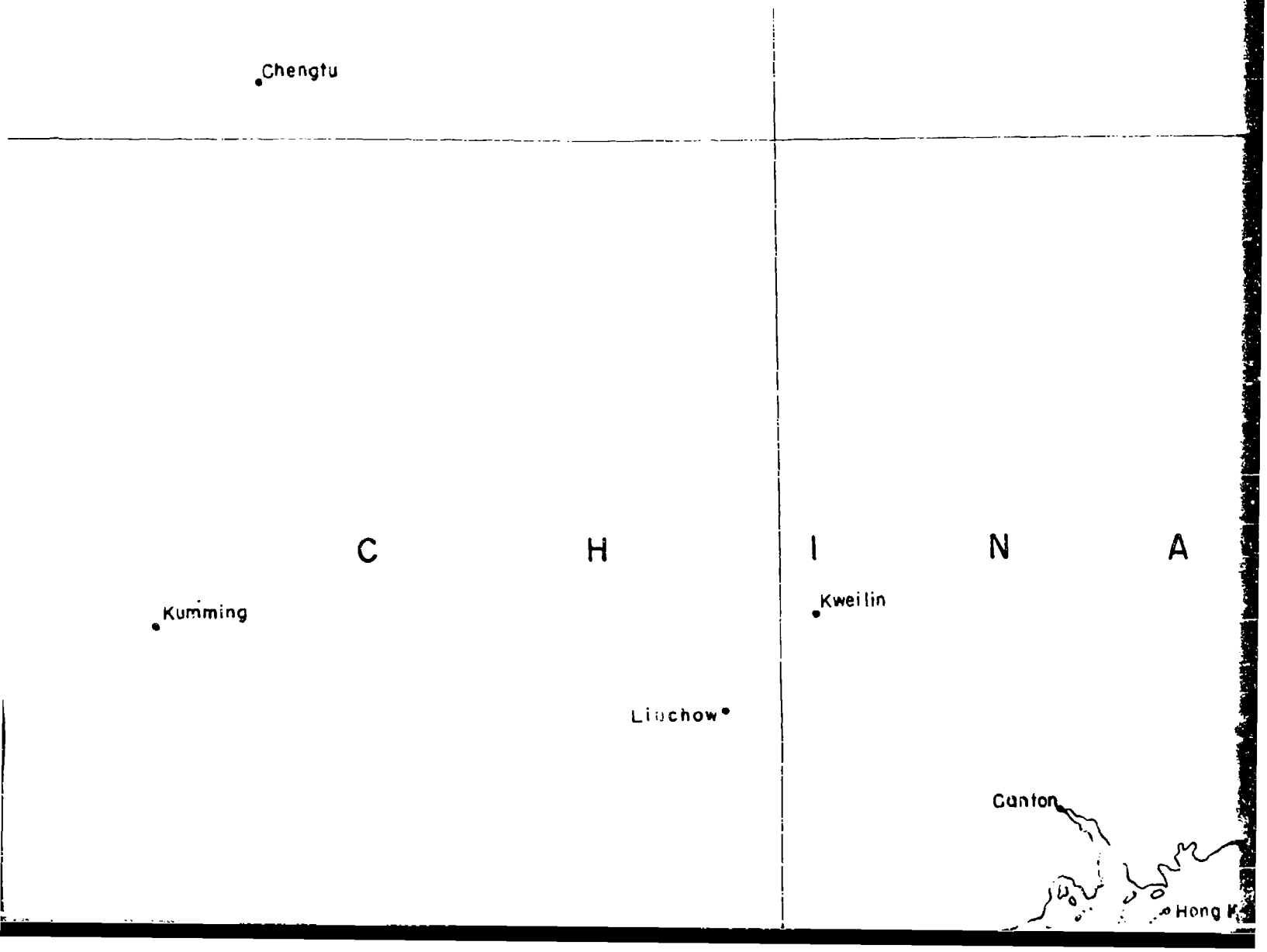
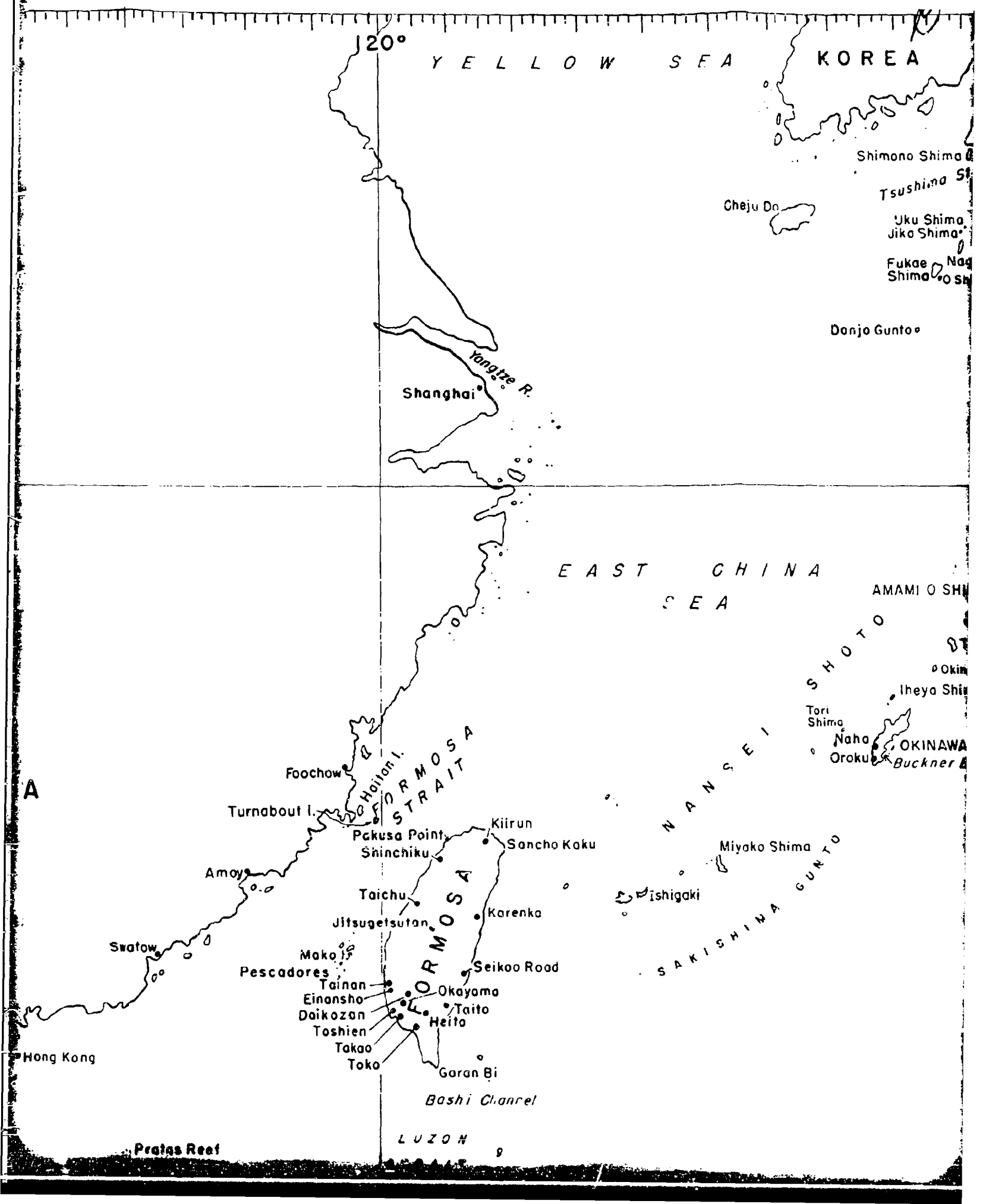
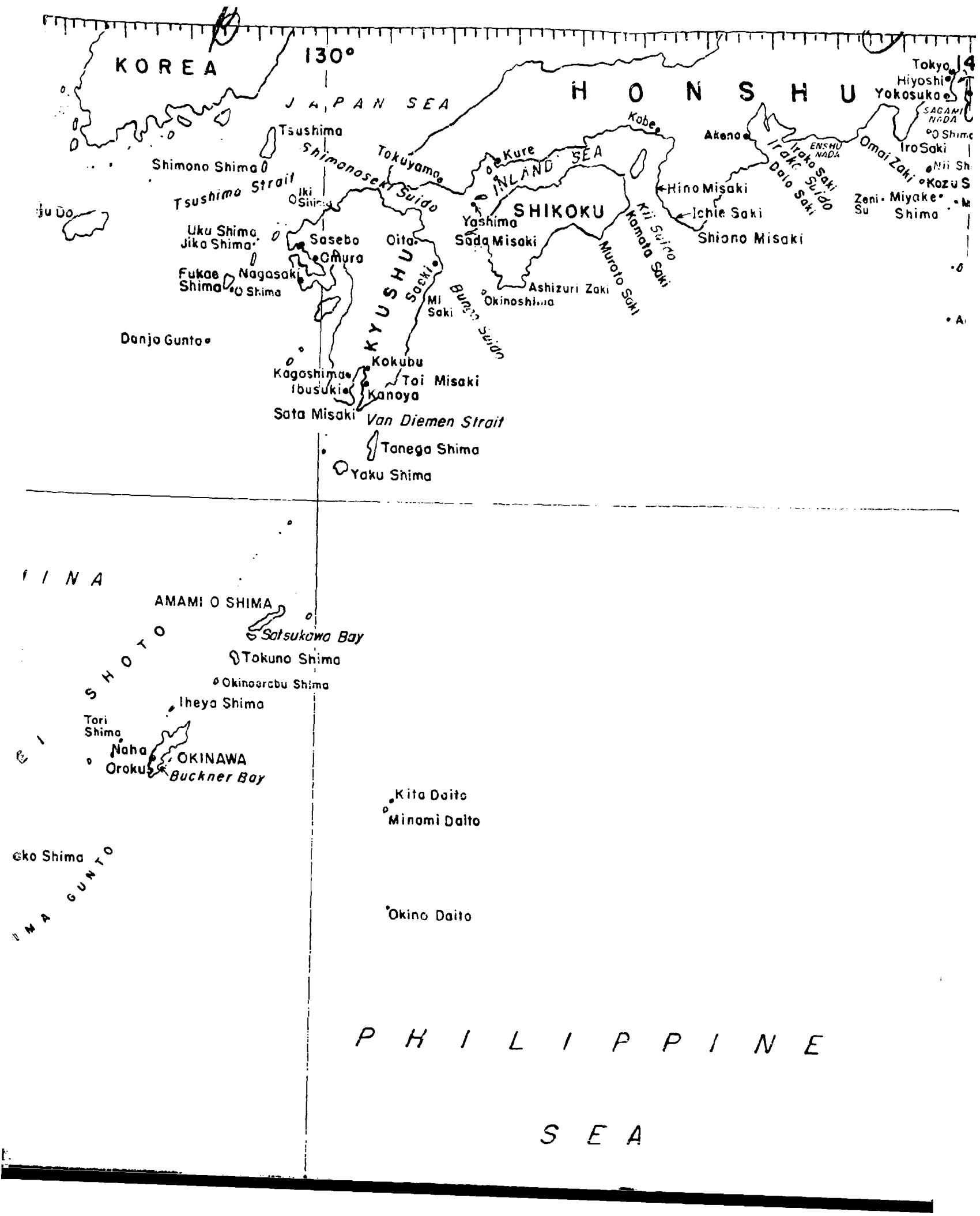
110°

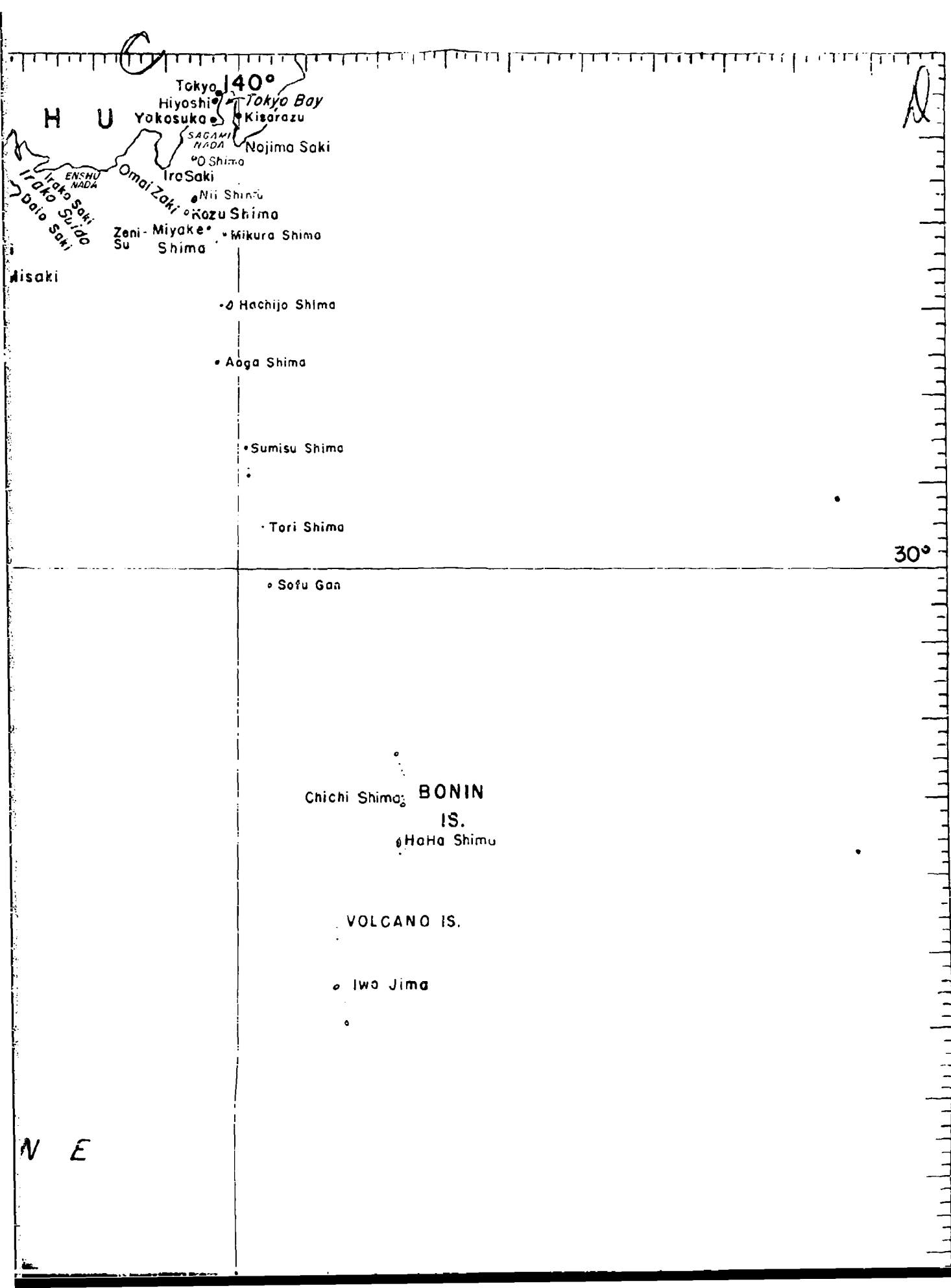
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

STRATEGIC AREA CHART

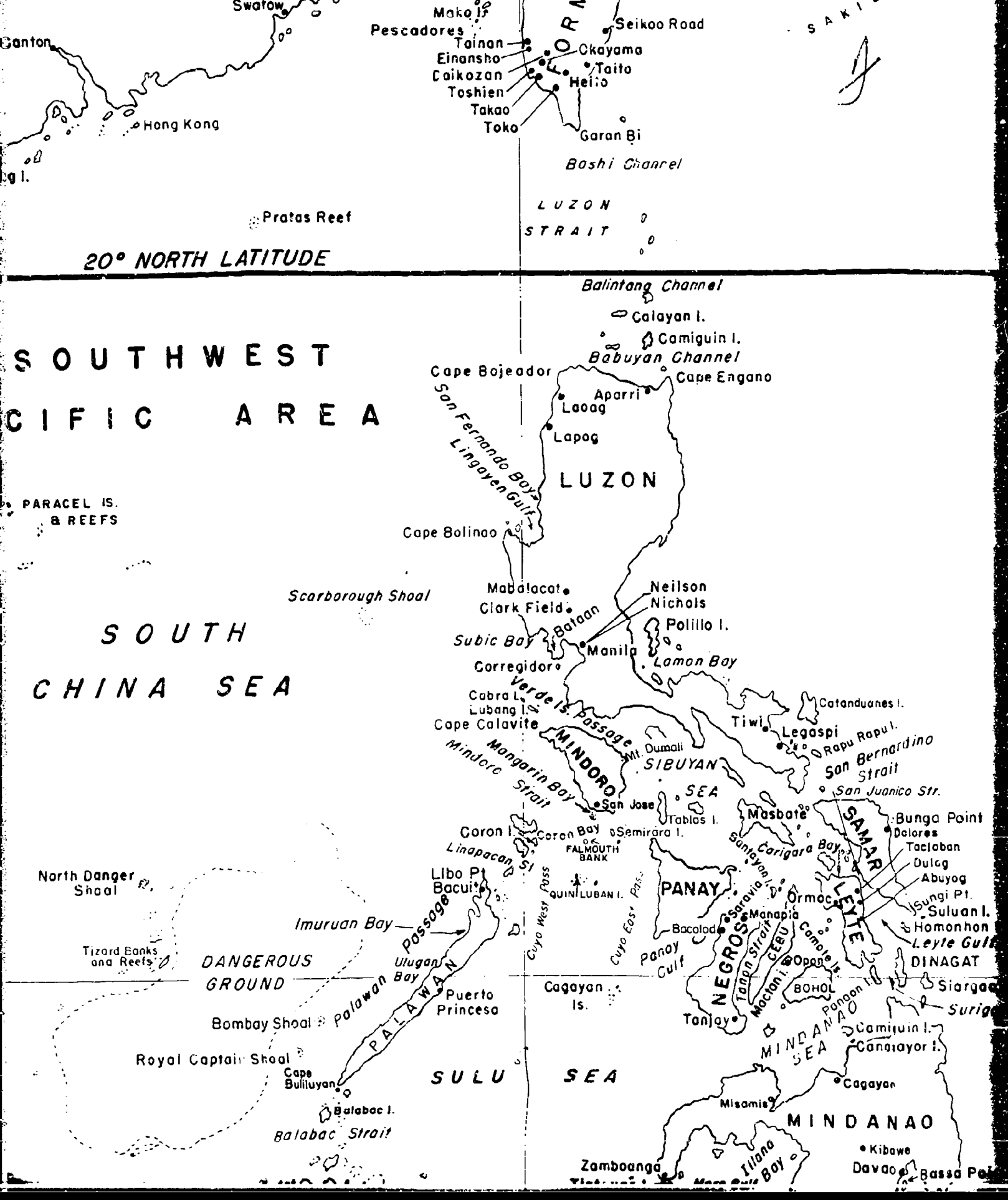


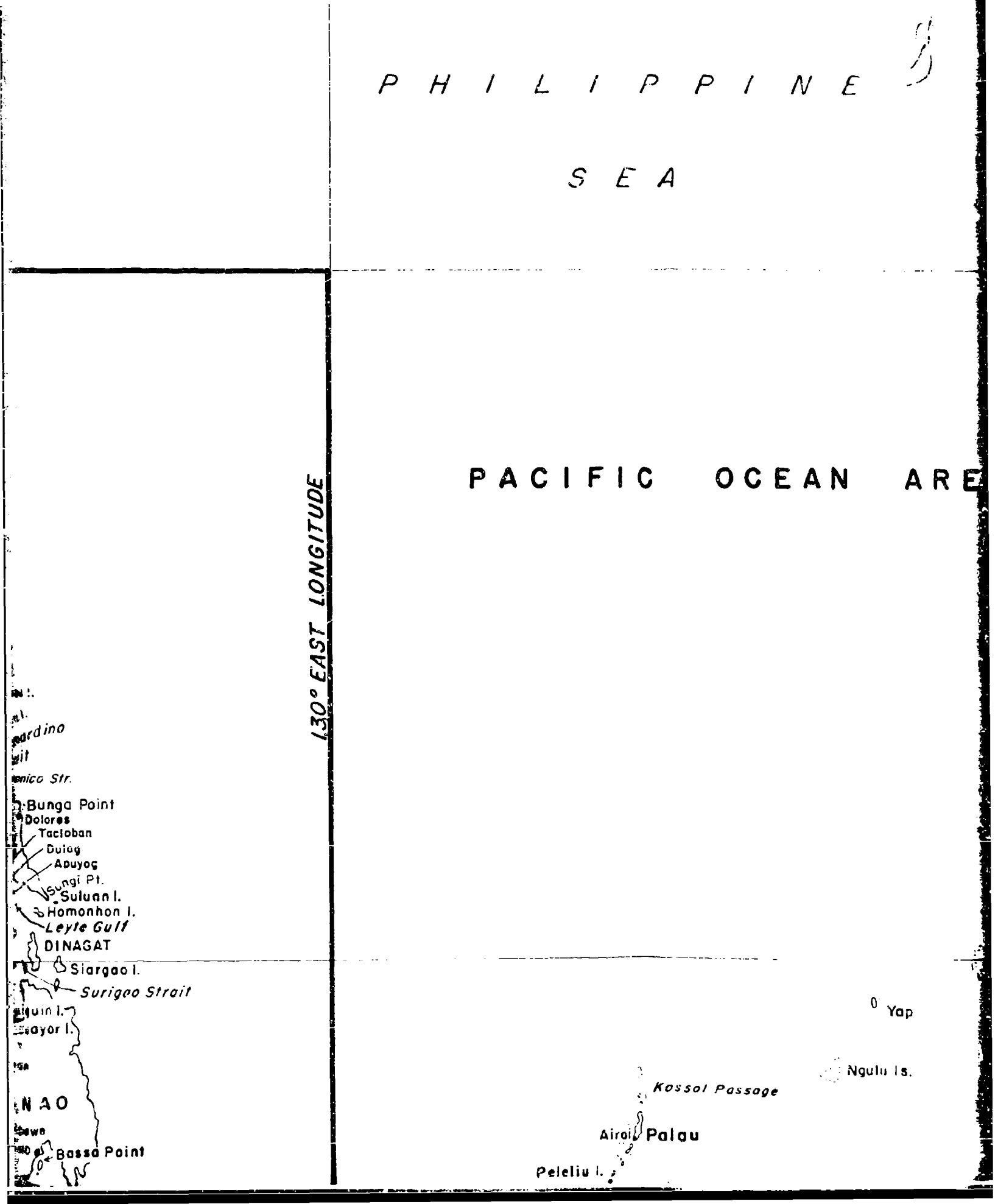

120°
YELLOW SEA
KOREA
Shimono Shima
Tsushima
Cheju Do
Uku Shima
Jiko Shima
Fukae Shima
Nag
Donjo Gunto
Yangtze R.
Shanghai
EAST CHINA SEA
AMAMI O SHI
NANSEI SHOTO
Okin
Iheya Shi
Tori Shima
Naha
OKINAWA
Oroku
Buckner
A
Foochow
Haitan I.
FORMOSA STRAIT
Turnabout I.
Pakusa Point
Kiirun
Sancho Kaku
Shinchiku
Amoy
Miyako Shima
Taichu
Ishigaki
Karenka
Jitsugetsutan
FORMOSA
SAKISHINA GUNTO
Swatow
Mako
Pescadores
Seikoo Road
Tainan
Okayama
Einansho
Taito
Daikozan
Heito
Toshien
Takao
Toko
Garan Bi
Hong Kong
Bashi Channel
LUZON
Pratas Reef

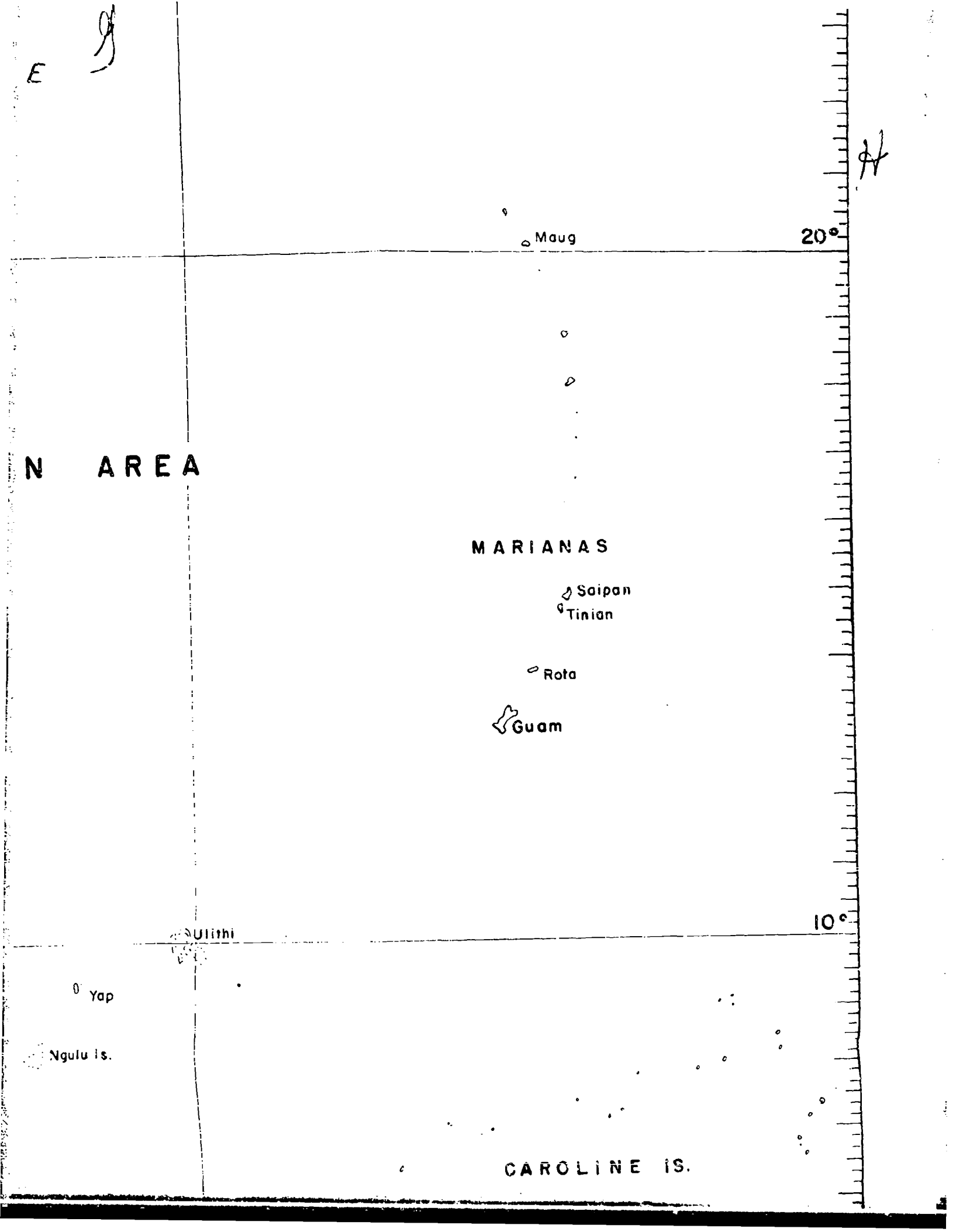

KOREA
130°
JAPAN SEA
HONSHU
Tokyo
Hiyoshi
Yokosuka
SAGAMI NADA
Tsushima
Shimonoseki Suido
Tokuyama
Kure
INLAND SEA
Kobe
Akeno
ENSHU NADA
Iro Saki
Omai Zaki
Kozu S
Shimono Shima
Tsushima Strait
Iki Shima
Hino Misaki
Ichie Saki
Shiono Misaki
Miyake Shima
SHIKOKU
Yashima
Sada Misaki
Kii Suido
Kamata Saki
Uku Shima
Jika Shima
Sasebo
Oita
Omura
Fukae Shima
Nagasaki
O Shima
KYUSHU
Saeki
Mi Saki
Bungo Suido
Ashizuri Zaki
Okinoshima
Muroto Saki
Danjo Gunto
Kokubu
Kagoshima
Ibusuki
Toi Misaki
Kanoya
Sata Misaki
Van Diemen Strait
Tanega Shima
Yaku Shima
AMAMI O SHIMA
Satsukawa Bay
Tokuno Shima
Okinoerabu Shima
Iheya Shima
Tori Shima
Naha
OKINAWA
Oroku
Buckner Bay
Kita Daito
Minami Daito
Okino Daito
PHILIPPINE
SEA

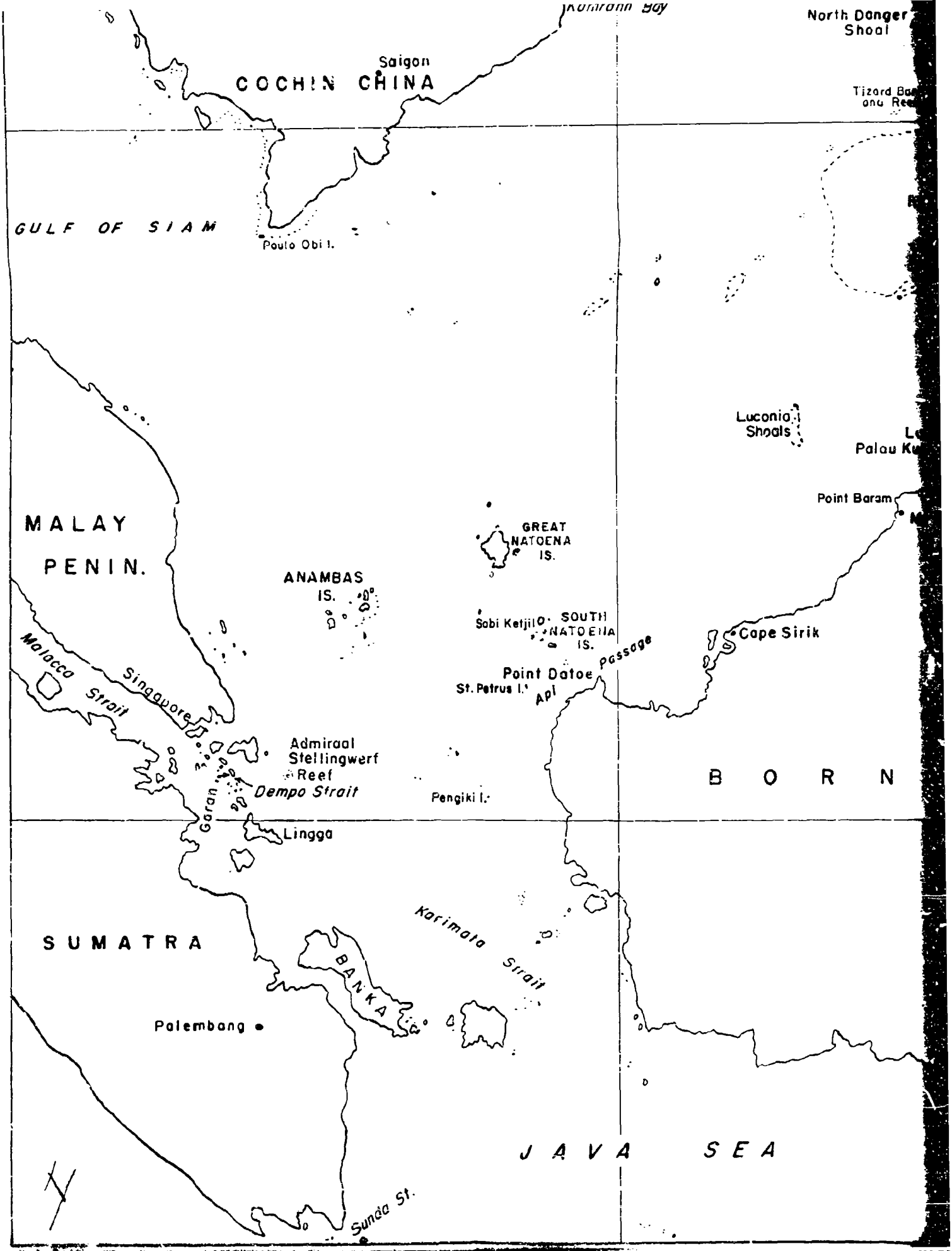

140°
Tokyo
Hiyoshi
Yokosuka
Tokyo Bay
Kisarazu
H U
SAGAMI NADA
Nojima Saki
O Shima
Ira Saki
ENSHU NADA
Irako Saki
Irako Suido
Daio Saki
Omai Zaki
Nii Shima
Kozu Shima
Zeni-Su
Miyake Shima
Mikura Shima
Misaki
Hachijo Shima
Aoga Shima
Sumisu Shima
Tori Shima
30°
Sofu Gan
Chichi Shima
BONIN IS.
HaHa Shima
VOLCANO IS.
Iwo Jima
N E

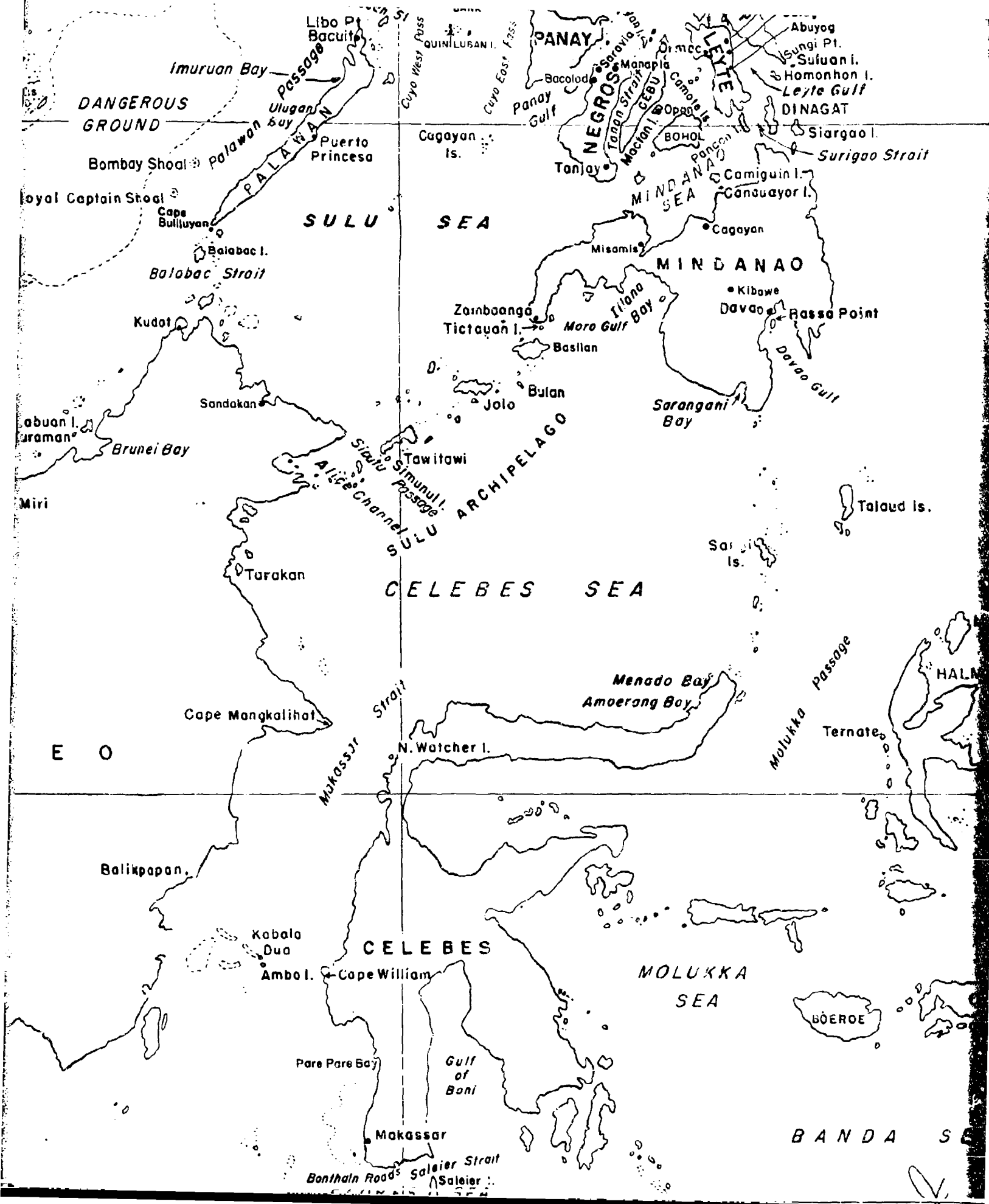

Canton
Hong
Huiling I.
TONKIN
GULF
Cape
Kami
20° NOR
HAINAN
Sama
Yulin
SOUTH
PACIFIC
INDO
CHINA
PARACEL IS.
& REEFS
Tourane
Cape Batangan
SOU
CHINA
Cape Varella
ANNAM
CAMBODIA
Kamranh Bay
North Danger
Shoal
Saigon
COCHIN CHINA
Tizard Banks
and Reefs
GULF OF SIAM
Poulo Obi I.
Royal


Swatow
Canton
Hong Kong
g I.
Mako
Pescadores
Tainan
Einansho
Caikozan
Toshien
Takao
Toko
Seikoo Road
Okayama
Taito
Heito
Garan Bi
Bashi Channel
Pratas Reef
LUZON STRAIT
20° NORTH LATITUDE
SOUTHWEST
CIFIC AREA
PARACEL IS. & REEFS
SOUTH CHINA SEA
Balintang Channel
Calayan I.
Camiguin I.
Babuyan Channel
Cape Bojeador
Cape Engano
Aparri
Laoag
Lapog
San Fernando Bay
Lingayen Gulf
LUZON
Cape Bolinao
Scarborough Shoal
Mabalacat
Clark Field
Bataan
Subic Bay
Manila
Neilson
Nichols
Polillo I.
Lamon Bay
Corregidor
Verde Is. Passage
Cabra I.
Lubang I.
Cape Calavite
Mindoro Strait
Mangarin Bay
MINDORO
Mt. Dumali
SIBUYAN SEA
San Jose
Tablas I.
Coron I.
Coron Bay
Semirara I.
FALMOUTH BANK
Linapacan St.
North Danger Shoal
Libo Pt.
Bacuit
Imuruan Bay
Passage
Tizard Banks and Reefs
DANGEROUS GROUND
Ulugan Bay
Palawan Bay
PALAWAN
Puerto Princesa
Bombay Shoal
Royal Captain Shoal
Cape Bulilluyan
Balabac I.
Balabac Strait
SULU SEA
QUINILUBAN I.
Cuyo West Pass
Cuyo East Pass
PANAY
Catanduanes I.
Tiwi
Legaspi
Rapu Rapu I.
San Bernardino Strait
San Juanico Str.
Masbate
Bunga Point
Delores
Tacloban
Dulag
Abuyog
Sungi Pt.
Suluan I.
Homonhon
Leyte Gulf
DINAGAT
Siargao
Surigao
SAMAR
LEYTE
Ormoc
Saravia
Manapla
Bacolod
NEGROS
Tanon Strait
CEBU
Camotes Is.
Opon
Mactan I.
BOHOL
Panglao I.
Panay Gulf
Cagayan Is.
Tanjay
Camiguin I.
Canotayor I.
MINDANAO SEA
Cagayan
Misamis
MINDANAO
Kibawe
Davao
Bassa Pe
Zamboanga
Illana Bay

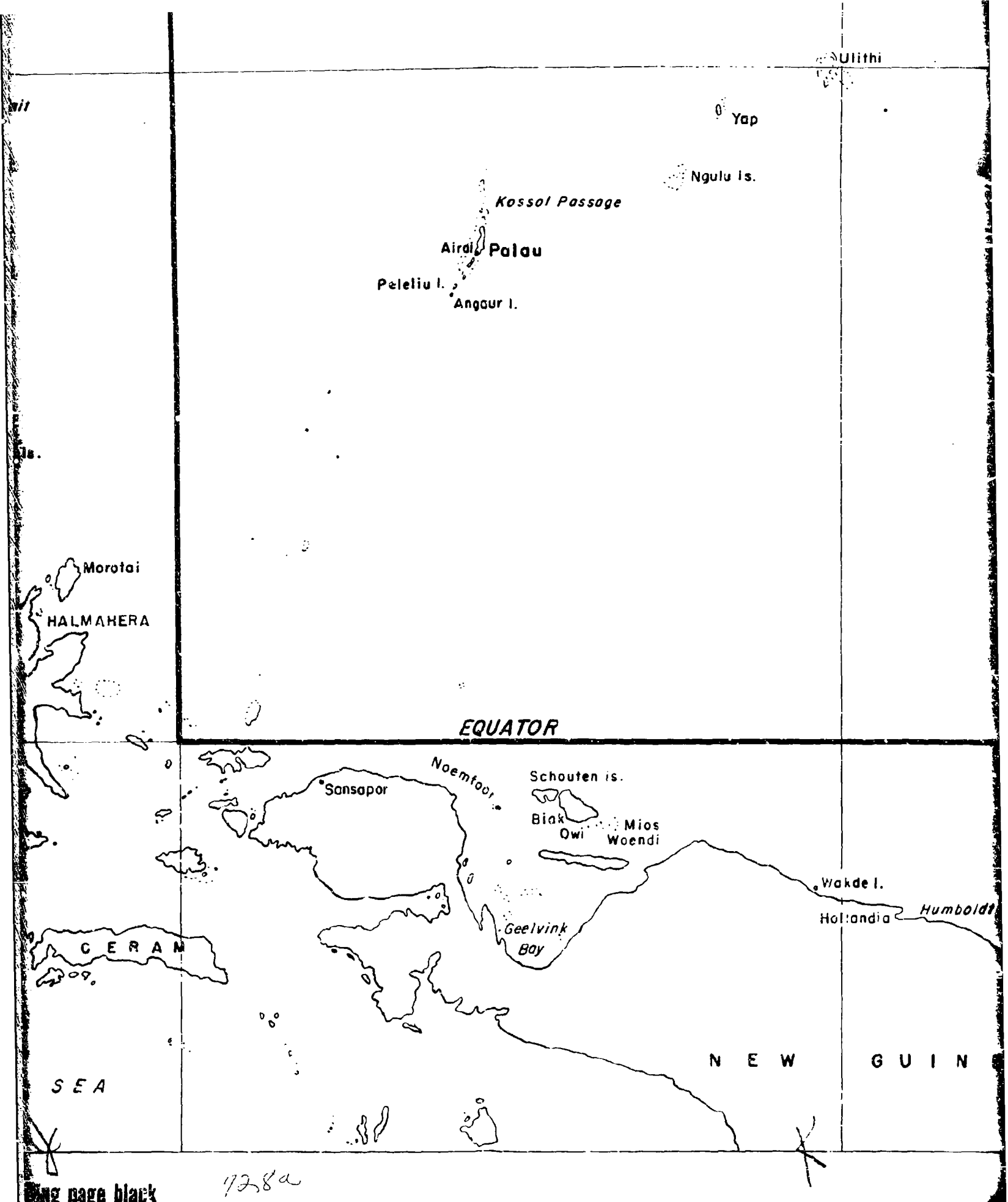

PHILIPPINE
SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN ARE
130° EAST LONGITUDE
Bunga Point
Dolores
Tacloban
Dulag
Abuyog
Sungi Pt.
Suluan I.
Homonhon I.
Leyte Gulf
DINAGAT
Siargao I.
Surigao Strait
Bassa Point
Yap
Ngulu Is.
Kossol Passage
Airai
Palau
Peleliu I.


E
N AREA
Maug
20°
MARIANAS
Saipan
Tinian
Rota
Guam
10°
Ulithi
Yap
Ngulu Is.
CAROLINE IS.


Kamranh Bay
North Danger Shoal
Saigon
COCHIN CHINA
Tizard Ba
and Ree
GULF OF SIAM
Poulo Obi I.
Luconia Shoals
Palau Ku
Point Baram
MALAY PENIN.
GREAT NATOENA IS.
ANAMBAS IS.
Sabi Ketjil
SOUTH NATOENA IS.
Cape Sirik
Malacca Strait
Singapore
Point Datoe
St. Petrus I.
Api Passage
Admiraal Stellingwerf Reef
Dempo Strait
Pengiki I.
B O R N
Garan
Lingga
Karimata Strait
SUMATRA
BANKA
Palembang
J A V A S E A
Sunda St.



Libo Pt.
Bacuit
Imuruan Bay
Passage
Ulugan Bay
DANGEROUS GROUND
Palawan
PALAWAN
Puerto Princesa
Bombay Shoal
Royal Captain Shoal
Cape Bulliluyan
Balabac I.
Balabac Strait
Kudat
Sandakan
Brunei Bay
Miri
Tarakan
Cuyo West Pass
Cuyo East Pass
QUINILUBAN I.
Cagayan Is.
SULU SEA
PANAY
Panay Gulf
Bacolod
Saravia
Manapla
NEGROS
Tanon Strait
CEBU
Macton I.
Camote Is.
Opon
BOHOL
Tanjay
LEYTE
Abuyog
Sungi Pt.
Suluan I.
Homonhon I.
Leyte Gulf
DINAGAT
Siargao I.
Surigao Strait
Pancan I.
Camiguin I.
Canauayor I.
MINDANAO SEA
Cagayan
Misamis
MINDANAO
Kibawe
Davao
Bassa Point
Davao Gulf
Tilana Bay
Zamboanga
Tictauan I.
Moro Gulf
Basilan
Bulan
Jolo
Sarangani Bay
Tawitawi
Simunul I.
Siaulu Passage
Alice Channel
SULU ARCHIPELAGO
Talaud Is.
Sangi Is.
CELEBES SEA
Menado Bay
Amoerang Bay
Molukka Passage
Ternate
HALM
Cape Mangkalihat
Makassar Strait
N. Watcher I.
E O
Balikpapan
Kabala Dua
Ambo I.
Cape William
CELEBES
MOLUKKA SEA
BOEROE
Pare Pare Bay
Gulf of Boni
Makassar
Bonthain Roads
Saleier Strait
Saleier
BANDA SE



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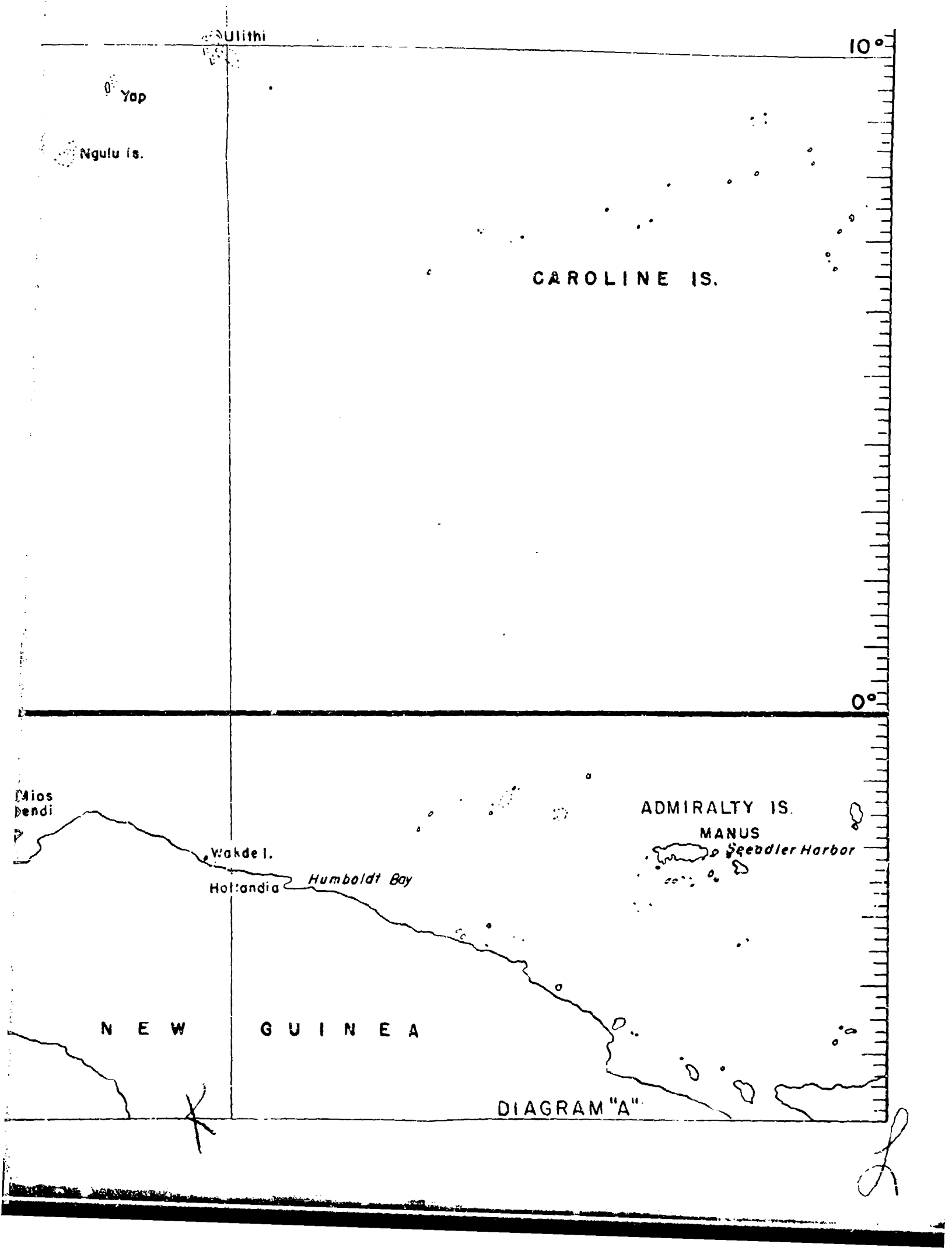
Ulithi
Yap
Ngulu Is.
CAROLINE IS.
10°
0°
Mios
Dendi
Wakde I.
Hollandia
Humboldt Bay
ADMIRALTY IS.
MANUS
Seeadler Harbor
N E W G U I N E A
DIAGRAM "A"

Events Depicted on Diagram "B"

October 23rd, 1944

1042 - 2400

1.	1057	TG 38.2 completed refueling and at 1146 changed course to 240°(T), speed sixteen knots, to head for the dawn launching position.
2.	About 1100	Tinian-based search planes failed to contact the Main Force.
3.	1118	CTG 38.4 changed course to 250°(T), speed eighteen knots to head for the dawn launching position. At 1452 he completed fueling and increased speed.
4.	1200	COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN became Commander Guard Force. AOBA being towed by KINU, arrived in Manila Bay at 2045.
5.	1220	A morotai-based PB4Y sighted the SECOND Striking Force (Contact 5, Plate V.)
6.	About 1300	Morotai-based PB4Y's failed to sight Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.
7.	About 1400	Morotai-based PB4Y's failed to sight THIRD Section.
8.	1500	COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE arrived Manila, discharged SIXTH Base Air Force personnel, refueled and departed about 2125.
9.	1538	SAWFISH contacted the HARUKAZE convoy of twelve ships. SAWFISH made two torpedo attacks and notified the other submarines of the convoy's position, course and speed.
10.	1623	Commander FIRST Striking Force transfered his flag to the YAMATO.
11.	1645	Commander SECOND Striking Force received Commander SW Area Force's orders which established the Guard Force and restated the mission of the SECOND Striking Force.
12.	1730	Commander THIRD Section issued gunnery instructions for the Battle of Surigao Strait.
13.	1738	TG 38.3's search of the Sibuyan Sea disclosed no contacts. One fighter reconnoitered Manila Bay and reported eleven to twenty freighters.
14.	1800	Commander SECOND Striking Force entered Culion Bay and commenced refueling his destroyers from the cruisers.

15.	About 1800	Commander Main Force decided to attack the enemy on the following day.
16.	1903	Commander THIRD Section issued orders to tighten anti-aircraft and antisubmarine alerts.
17.	1930	TG 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO) entered Leyte Gulf and headed for Northern Transport Area.
18.	1950	ANGLER contacted Main Body, FIRST Striking Force (Contact 2, Plate XV.)
19.	2210	COMTHIRDFLT ordered the INDEPENDENCE to launch a night search at 2400 to the northward to cover sector 320°(T) to 010°(T) to a distance of 350 miles.
20.	2315	GUITARRO contacted Main Body, FIRST Striking Force (Contact 3, Plate XV.)
21.	2317	COMTHIRDFLT ordered CTG 38.2 to search the bays along the northwest coast of Palawan from Imuruan Bay to Bacuit.
22.	2345	DARTER and DACE prepared to make another attack on the TAKAO which was moving toward the southwest at four to six knots.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Events within Leyte Gulf

(Not Depicted on Diagram "B")

1.	1042	CTF 77 issued an estimate of the situation concerning the concentration of Japanese forces in the Coron Bay area.
2.	1119	COMSOWESPAC proceeded to Tacloban to conduct the installation ceremonies of the Philippine Government.
3.	1200	C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps assumed command ashore.
4.	1530	First ten PBY's of TG 73.7 arrived in Leyte Gulf.
5.	1643	CTG 79.1 took command of TU 79.14.4 and departed Leyte Gulf for Hollandia.
6.	1739	CTG 77.5 reported no mines swept on this day and most of Leyte Gulf was considered safe from moored mines.

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A

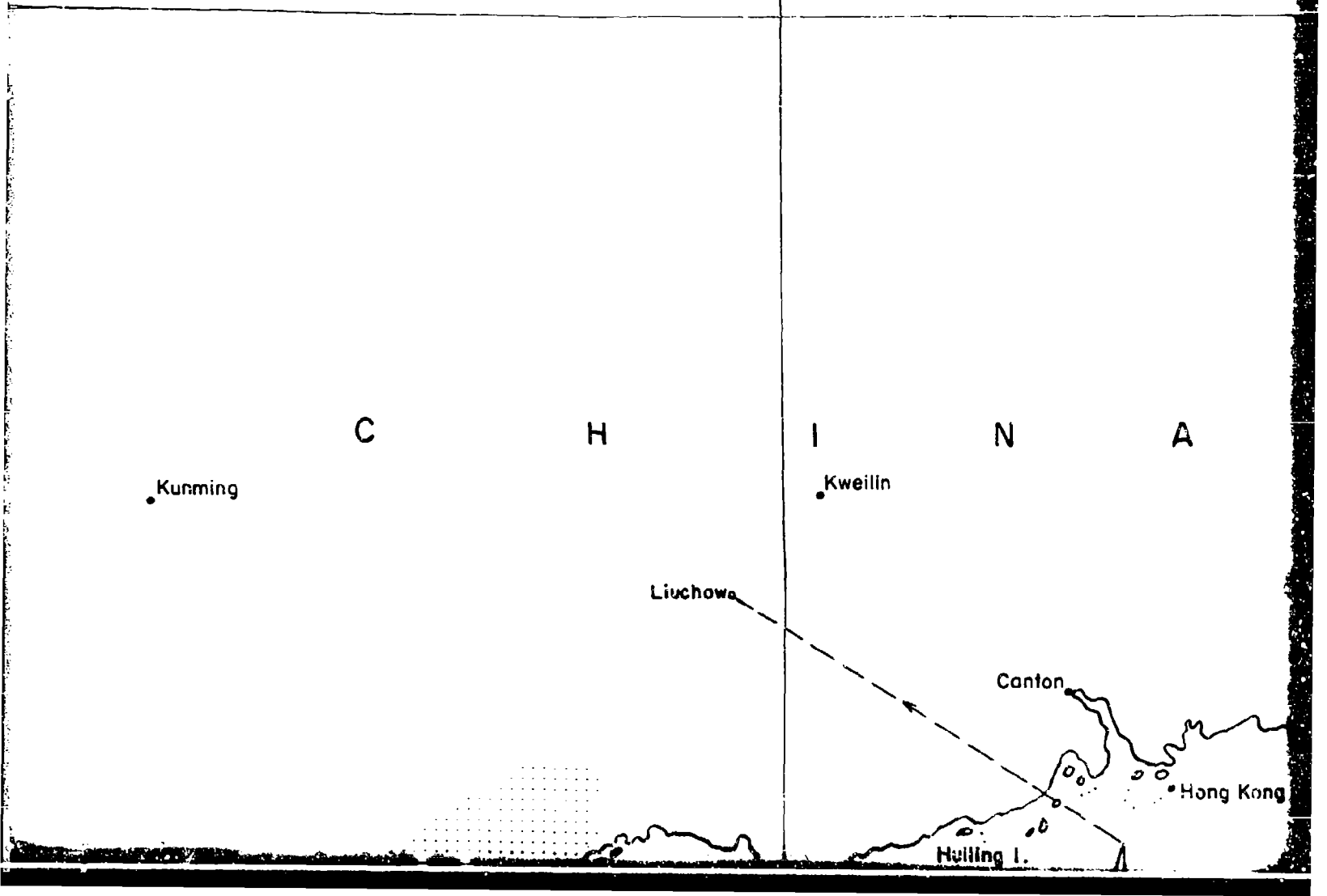
110°

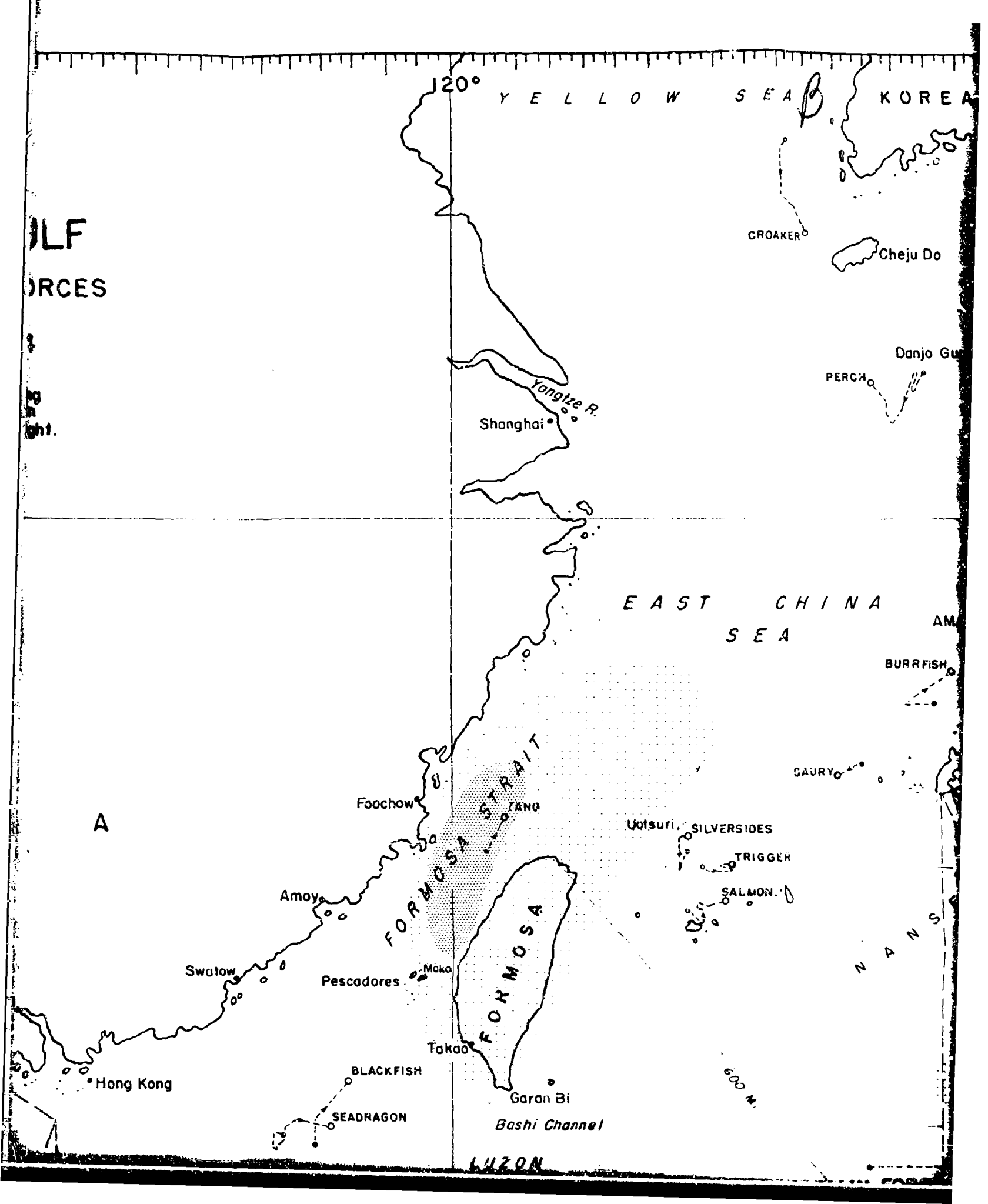
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

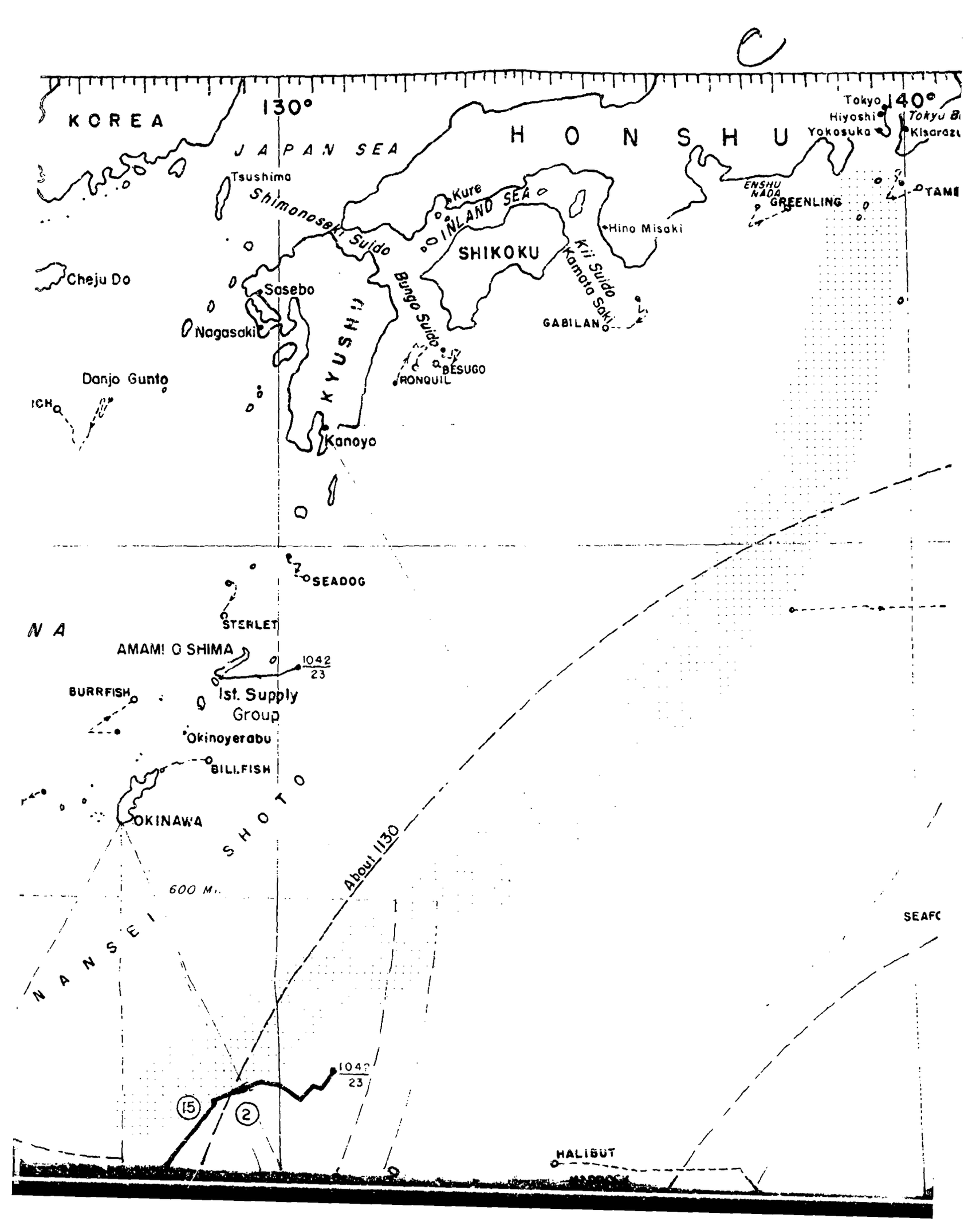
AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

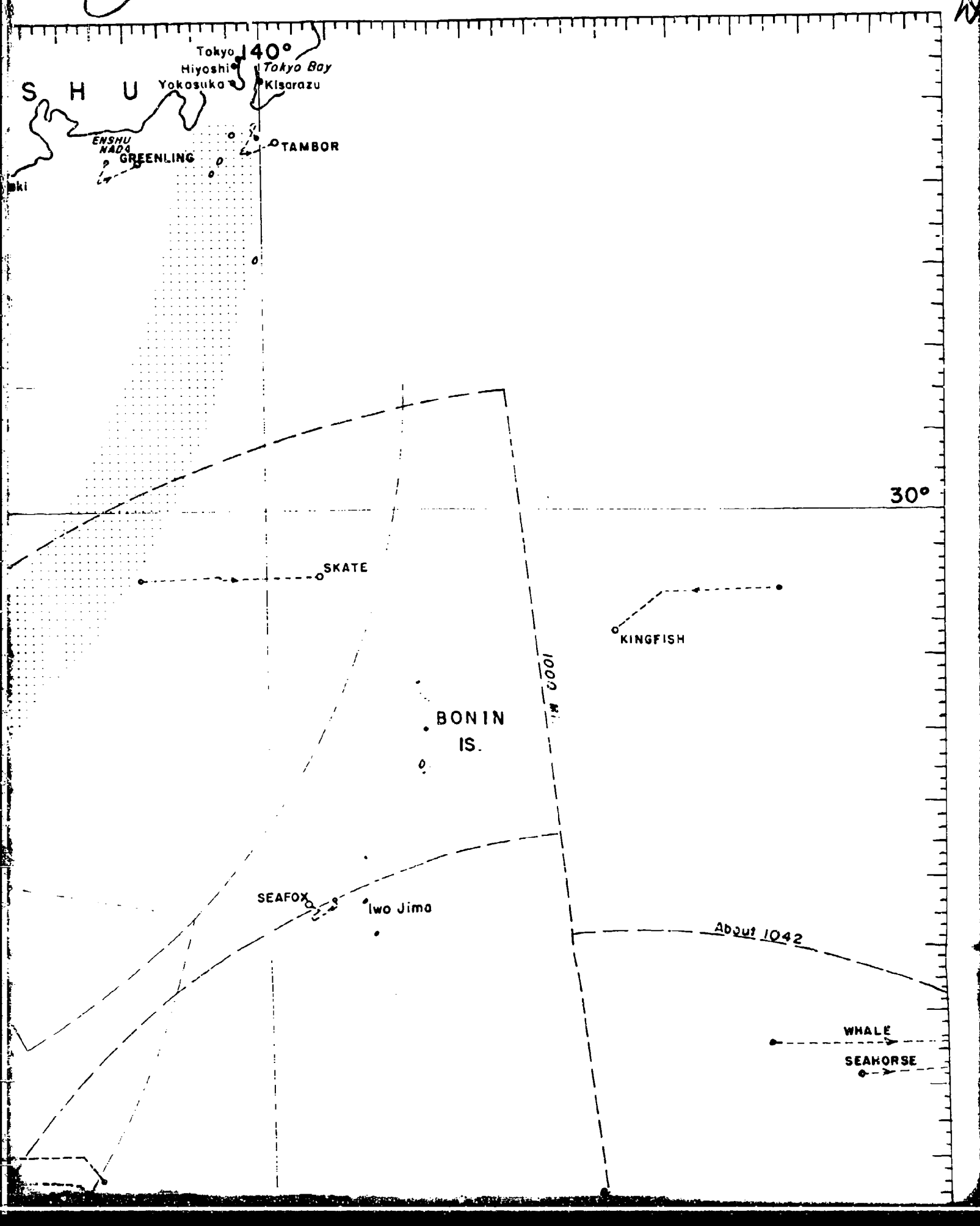
1042 TO 2400 23 OCTOBER 1944

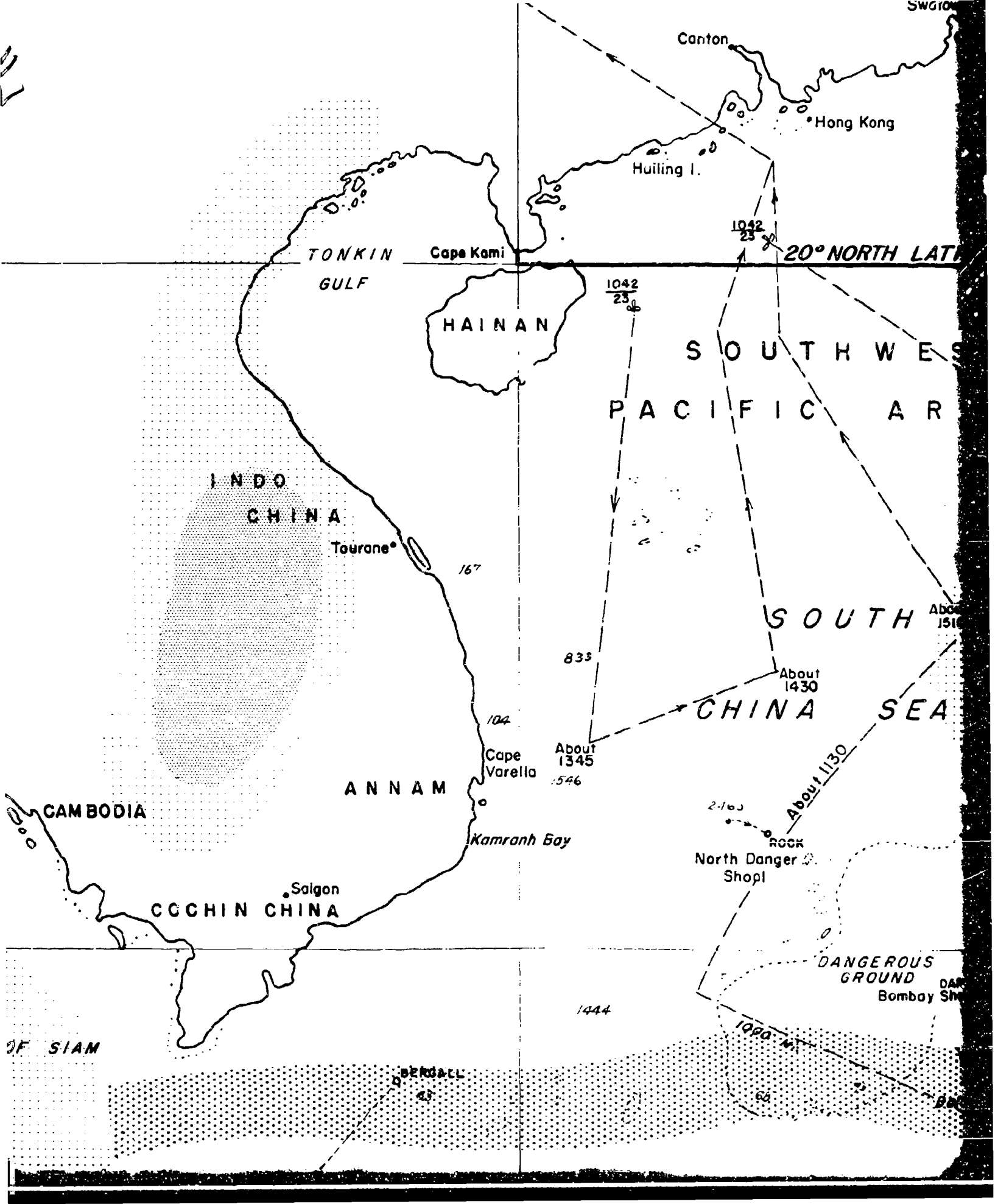
Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.

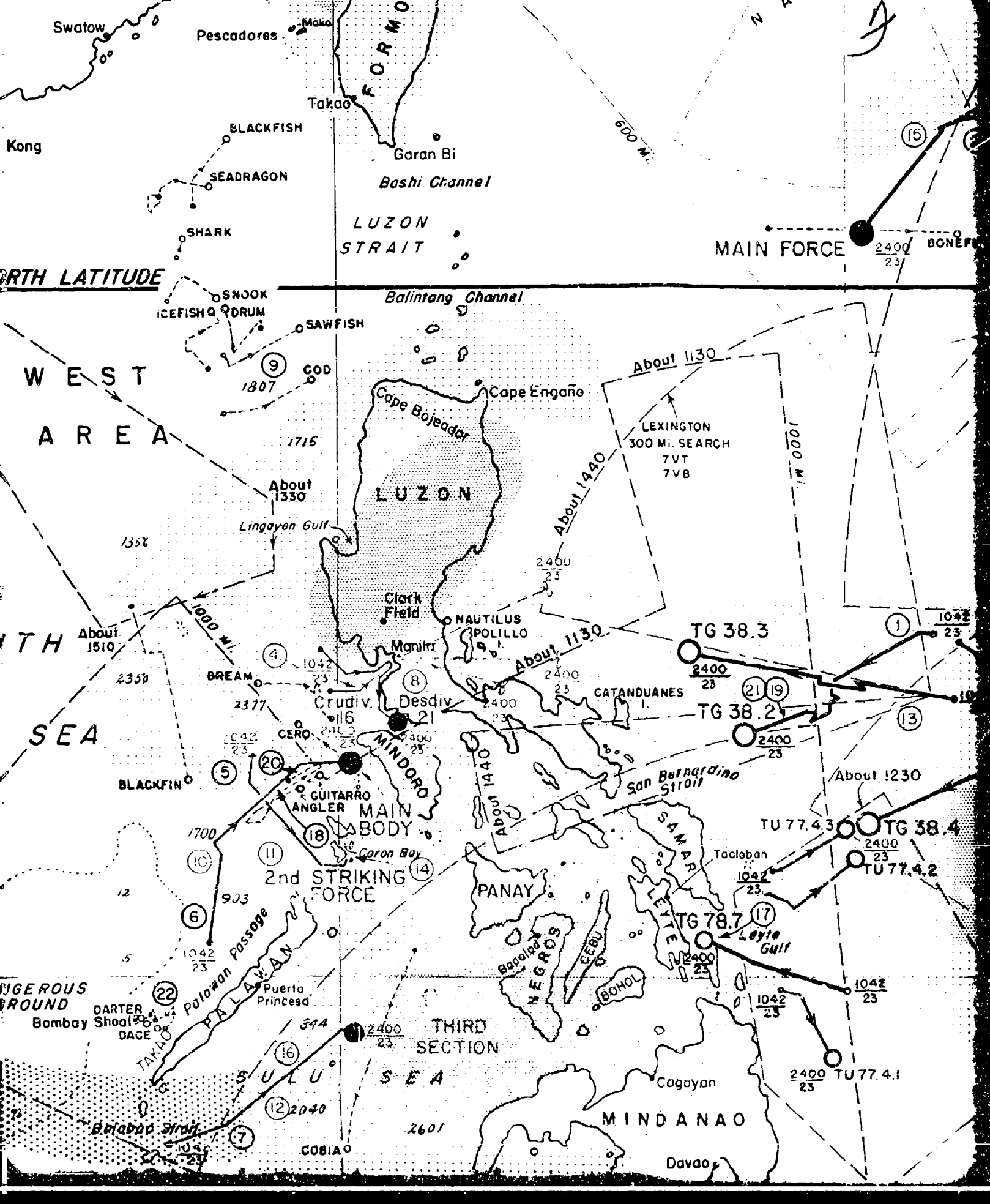



120°
YELLOW SEA
KOREA
CROAKER
Cheju Do
Danjo Gu
PERCH
Yangtze R.
Shanghai
EAST CHINA SEA
BURRFISH
GAURY
FORMOSA STRAIT
Foochow
TANG
Uotsuri
SILVERSIDES
TRIGGER
SALMON
Amoy
FORMOSA
Swatow
Pescadores
Mako
Takao
Hong Kong
BLACKFISH
SEADRAGON
Garan Bi
Bashi Channel
LUZON
600 M

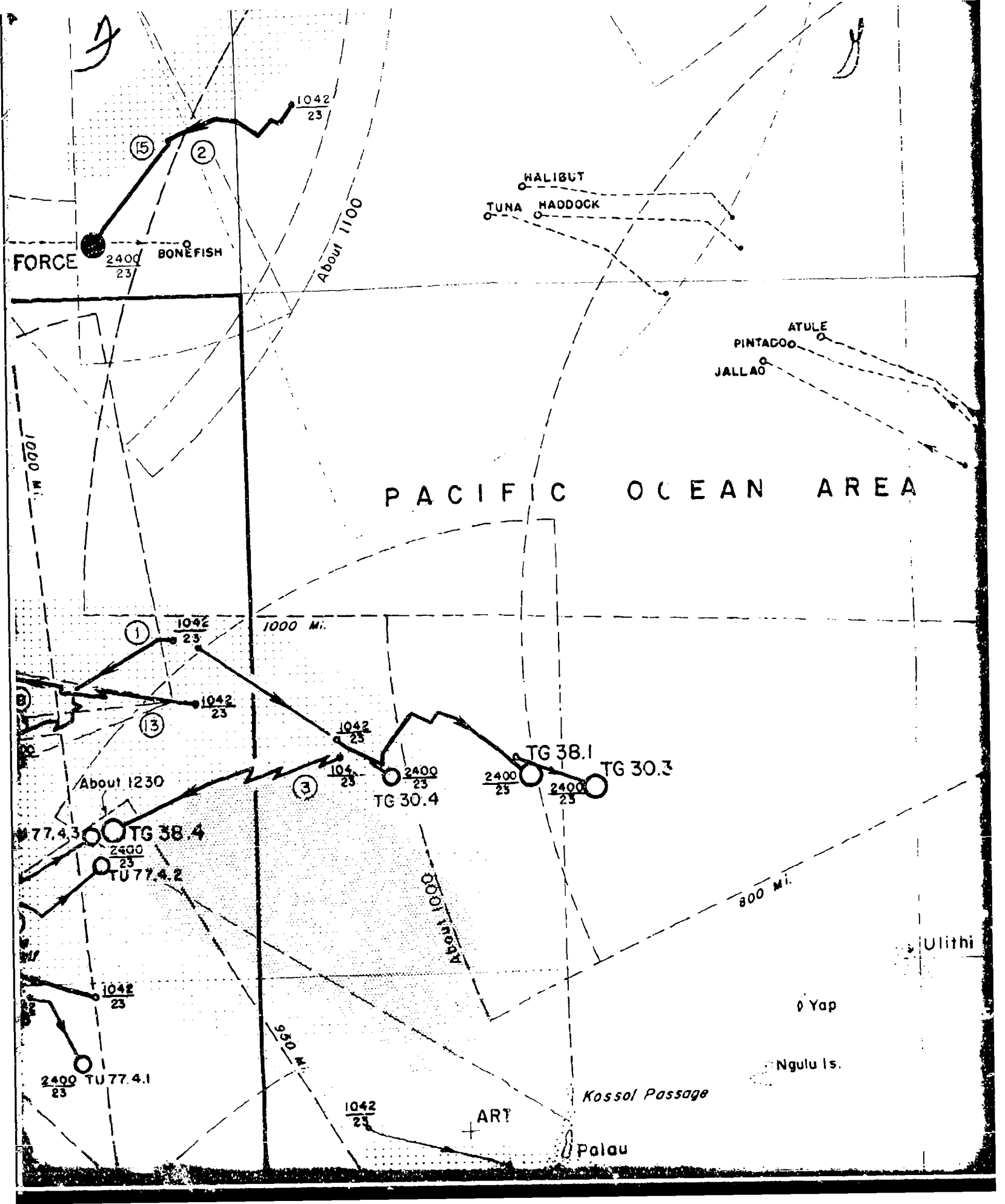

KOREA
130°
JAPAN SEA
HONSHU
Tokyo
Hiyoshi
Yokosuka
140°
Tsushima
Shimonoseki Suido
Kure
INLAND SEA
ENSHU NADA
GREENLING
Hino Misaki
SHIKOKU
Kii Suido
Kamata Saki
Cheju Do
Sasebo
Nagasaki
KYUSHU
Bungo Suido
GABILAN
BESUGO
RONQUIL
Danjo Gunto
Kanoyo
SEADOG
STERLET
AMAMI O SHIMA
1042/23
BURRFISH
1st. Supply Group
Okinoyerabu
BILLFISH
OKINAWA
SHOTO
About 1130
600 Mi.
NANSEI
1042/23
15
2
HALIBUT


Tokyo
140°
Hiyoshi
Tokyo Bay
Yokosuka
Kisarazu
S H U
ENSHU NADA
GREENLING
TAMBOR
30°
SKATE
KINGFISH
100 M.
BONIN IS.
SEAFOX
Iwo Jima
About 1042
WHALE
SEAHORSE

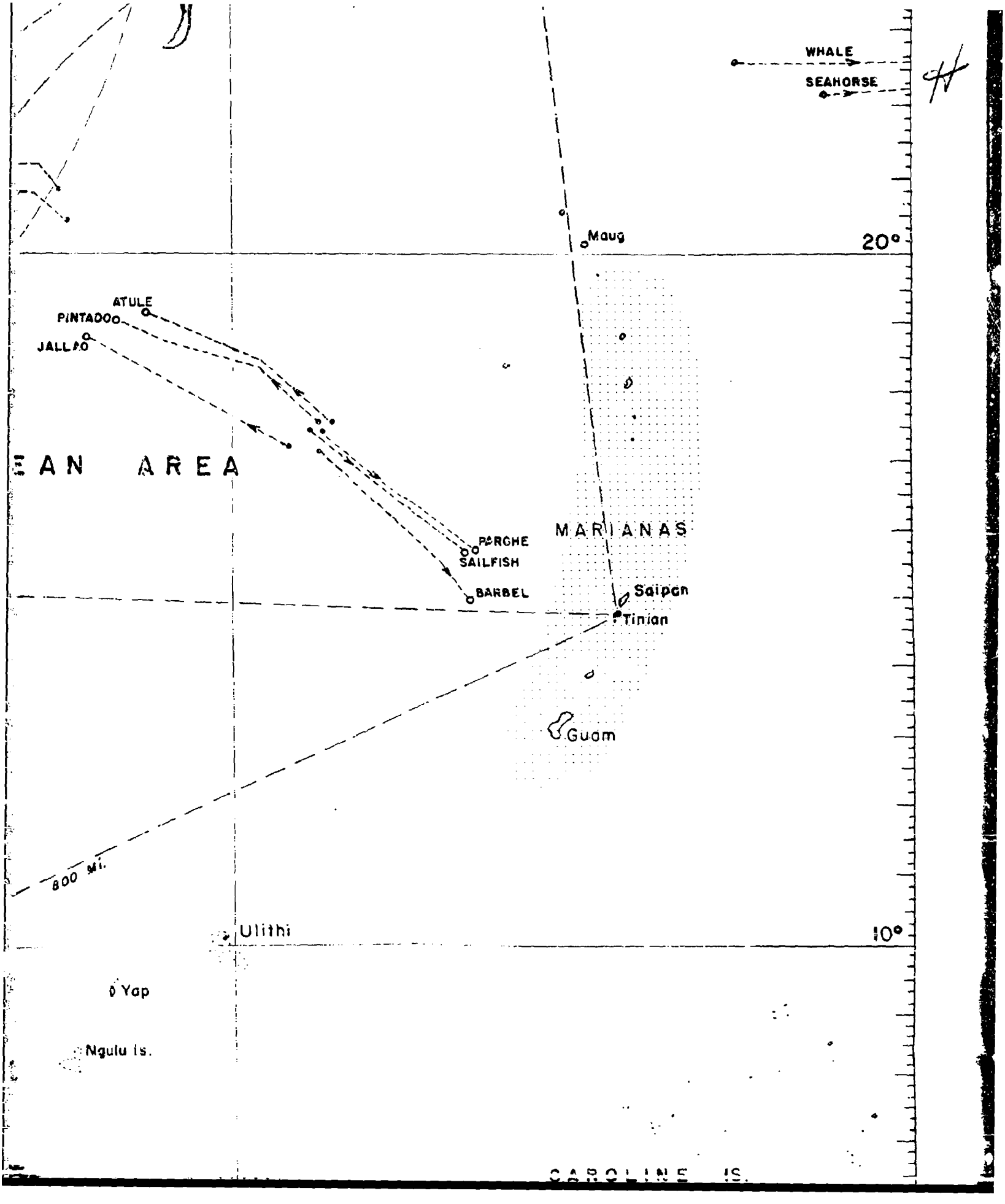

Canton
Hong Kong
Hailing I.
1042/23
20° NORTH LAT
TONKIN GULF
Cape Kami
HAINAN
1042/23
SOUTHWES
PACIFIC AR
INDO CHINA
Tourane
167
SOUTH
Abo 151
835
About 1430
CHINA SEA
104
About 1345
Cape Varella
546
ANNAM
About 1130
CAMBODIA
Kamranh Bay
North Danger Shoal
Saigon
COCHIN CHINA
DANGEROUS GROUND
Bombay
1444
OF SIAM
68

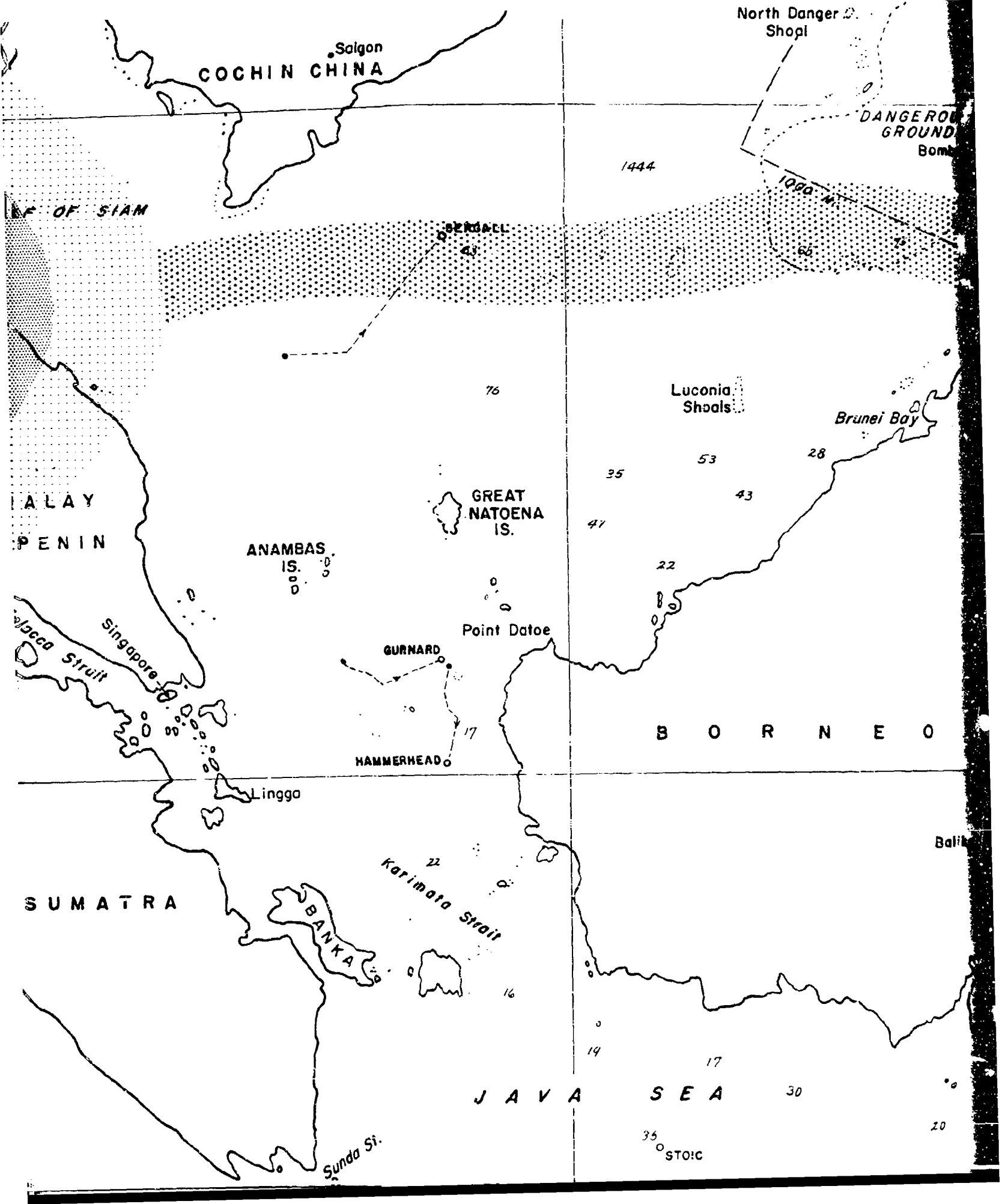


Swatow
Pescadores
Mako
FORMO
Takao
Kong
BLACKFISH
SEADRAGON
Garan Bi
Bashi Channel
600 Mi.
LUZON STRAIT
SHARK
MAIN FORCE
2400/23
BONEF
RTH LATITUDE
SNOOK
ICEFISH
DRUM
SAWFISH
Balintang Channel
WEST AREA
COD
1807
Cape Engaño
Cape Bojeador
About 1130
LEXINGTON
300 Mi. SEARCH
7VT
7VB
1000 Mi.
1715
About 1330
LUZON
About 1440
Lingayen Gulf
2400/23
Clark Field
NAUTILUS
POLILLO I.
About 1510
1000 Mi.
Manila
About 1130
TG 38.3
2400/23
1042/23
BREAM
2350
2377
Crudiv. 16
Desdiv. 21
CATANDUANES I.
TG 38.2
2400/23
SEA
CERO
MINDORO
BLACKFIN
GUITARRO
ANGLER
MAIN BODY
About 1440
San Bernardino Strait
About 1230
TU 77.4.3
TG 38.4
2400/23
TU 77.4.2
1700
Caron Bay
2nd STRIKING FORCE
SAMAR
Tacloban
1042/23
PANAY
LEYTE
TG 78.7
Leyte Gulf
903
Palawan Passage
PALAWAN
NEGROS
CEBU
BOHOL
Bacolod
1042/23
1042/23
GEROUS
ROUND
DARTER
Bombay Shoal
DACE
TAKAO
Puerta Princesa
344
2400/23
THIRD SECTION
SULU SEA
2400/23
TU 77.4.1
Cagayan
2040
2601
MINDANAO
Balabac Strait
COBIA
Davao

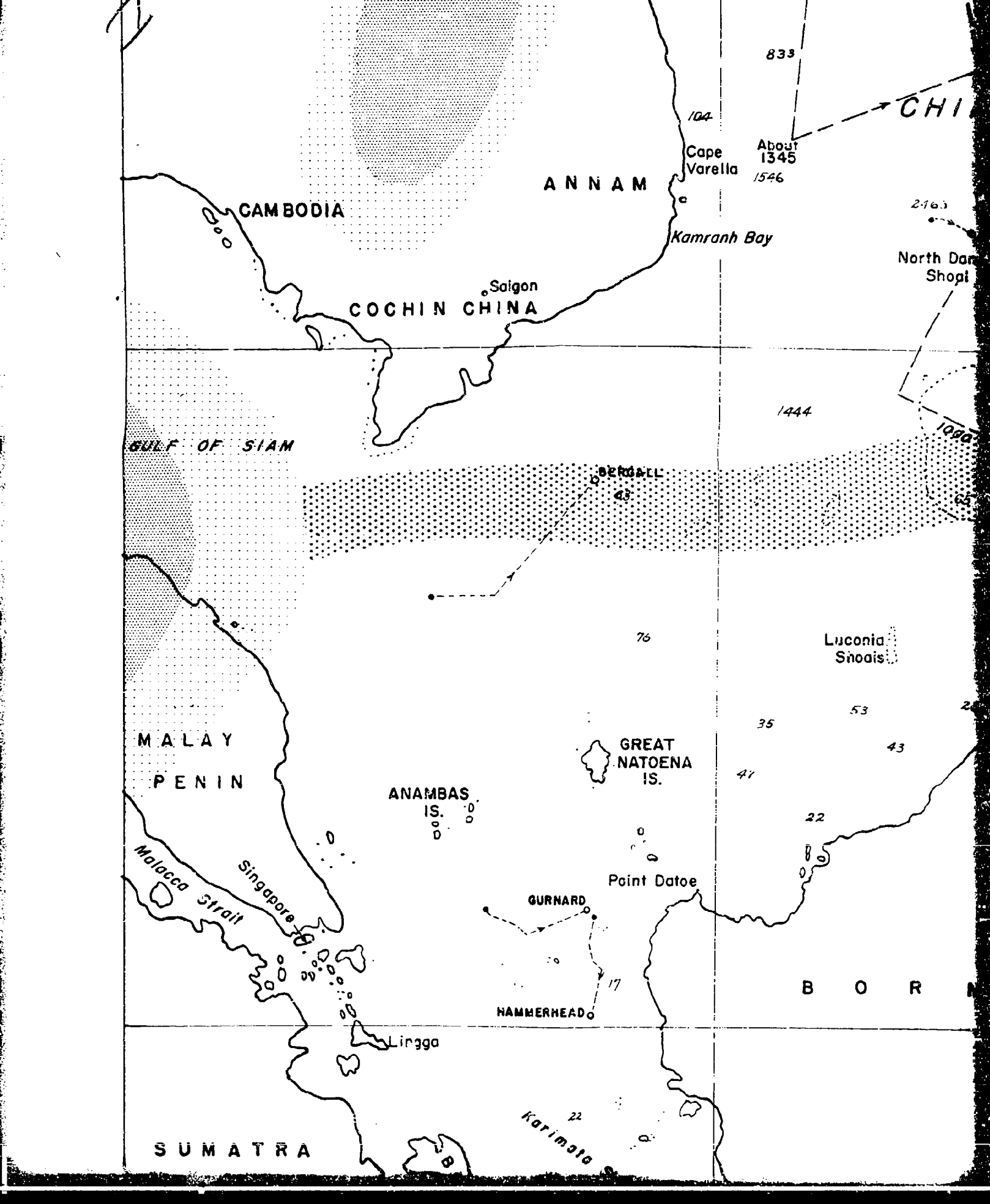


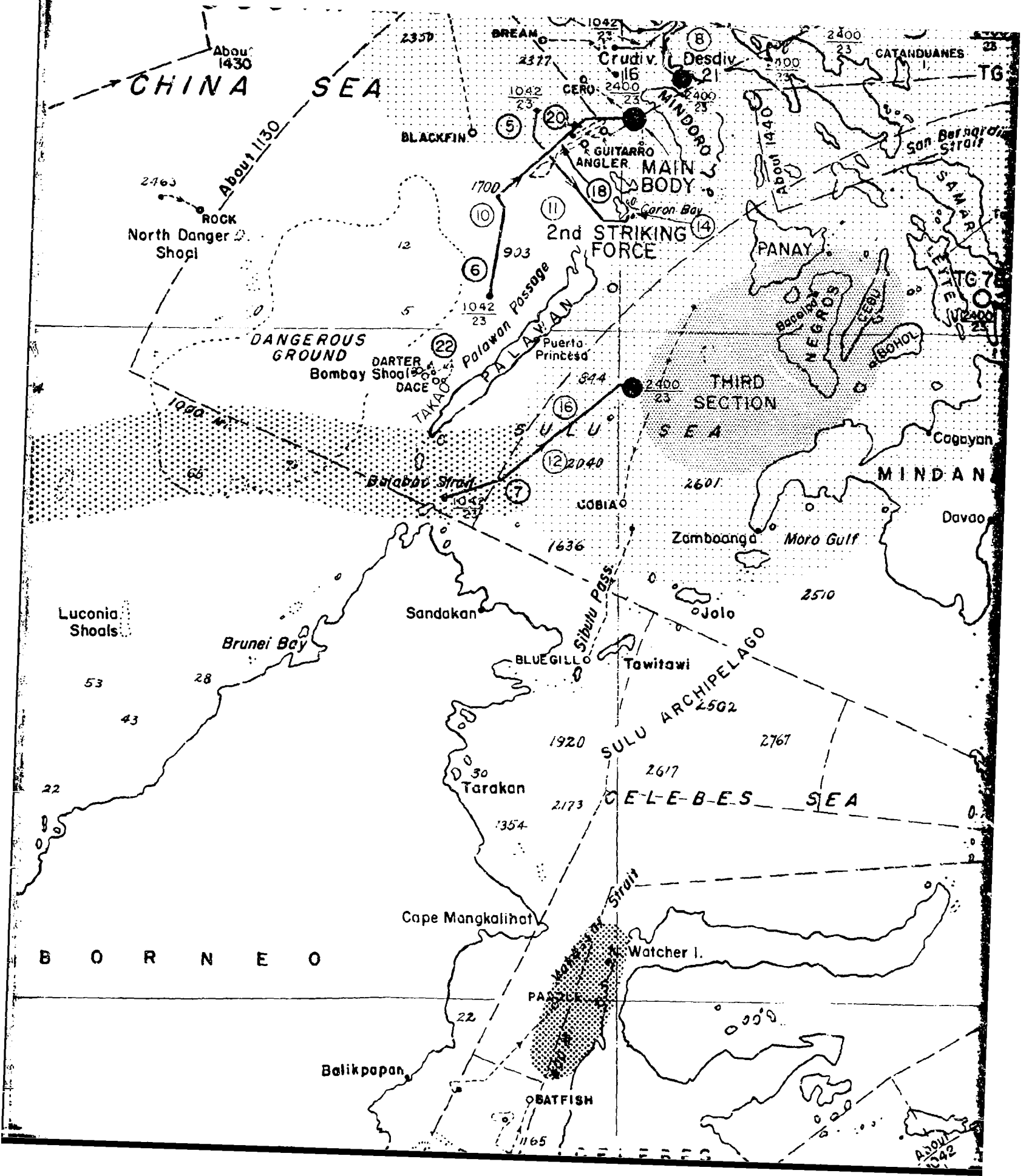
1042/23
15
2
FORCE
2400/23
BONEFISH
About 1100
HALIBUT
TUNA
HADDOCK
ATULE
PINTADO
JALLAO
1000 Mi.
PACIFIC OCEAN AREA
1
1042/23
1000 Mi.
1042/23
13
1042/23
104/23
3
2400/23
TG 30.4
TG 38.1
2400/23
TG 30.3
2400/23
About 1230
TG 38.4
2400/23
TU 77.4.2
About 1000
800 Mi.
Ulithi
1042/23
Yap
950 Mi.
2400/23
TU 77.4.1
Ngulu Is.
Kossol Passage
1042/23
ART
Palau


WHALE
SEAHORSE
Maug
20°
ATULE
PINTADO
JALLAO
EAN AREA
PERCHE
SAILFISH
BARBEL
MARIANAS
Saipan
Tinian
Guam
800 mi.
Ulithi
10°
Yap
Ngulu Is.
CAROLINE IS.

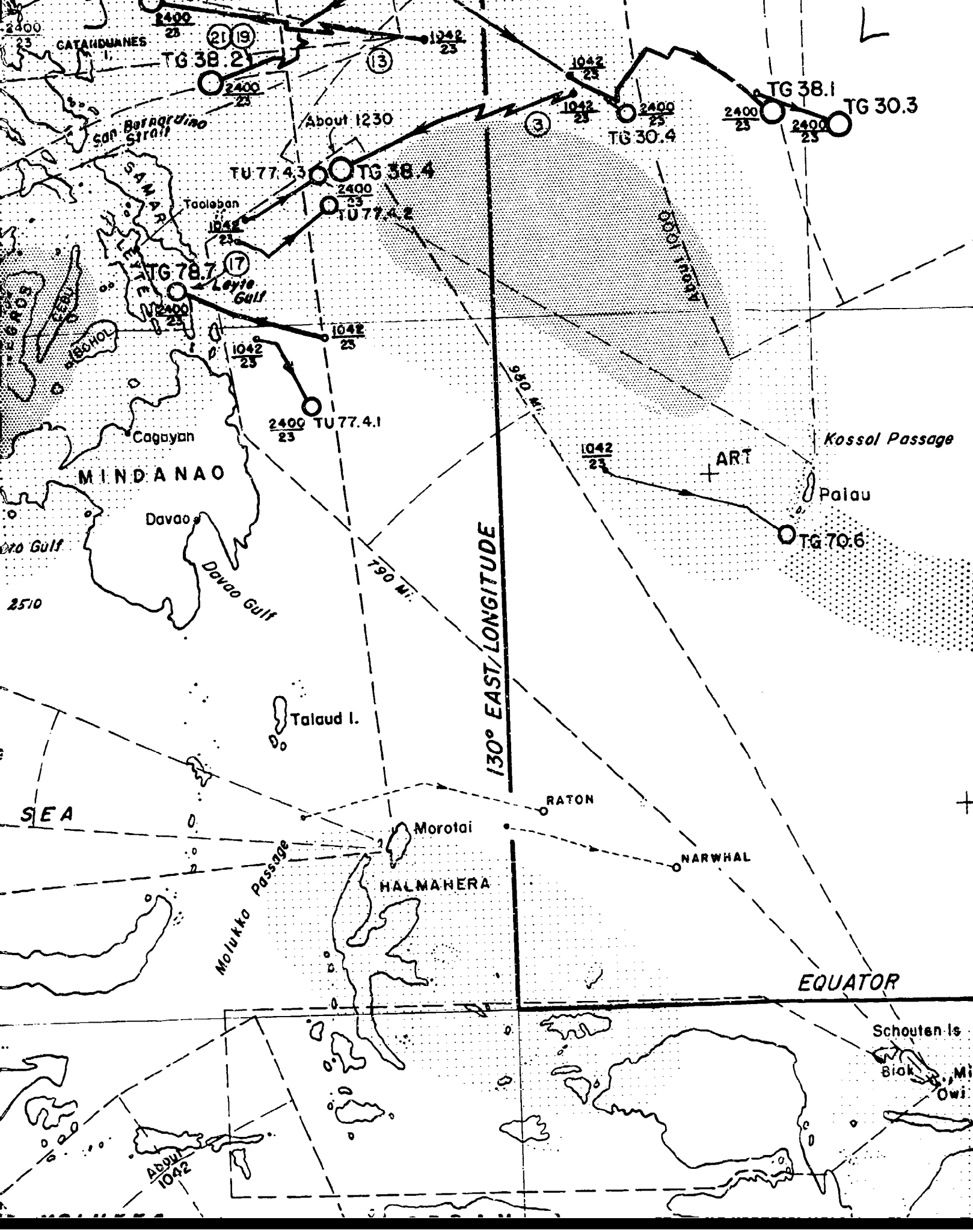


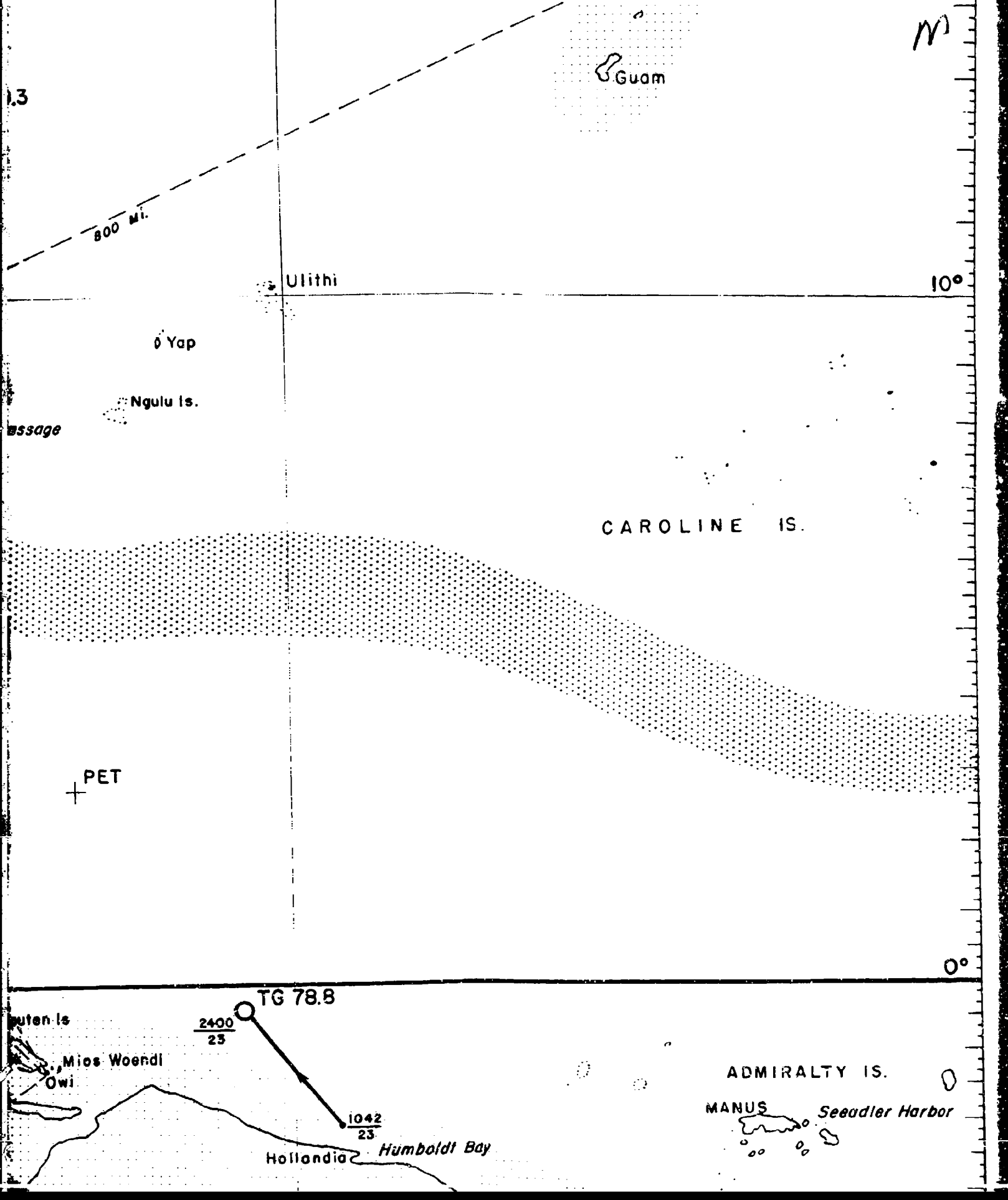
North Danger Shoal
Saigon
COCHIN CHINA
DANGEROU GROUND
Bomb
1444
1000 M.
OF SIAM
BERGALL
43
66
76
Luconia Shoals
Brunei Bay
28
53
35
43
GREAT NATOENA IS.
47
ALAY
PENIN
ANAMBAS IS.
22
Point Datoe
Singapore
Strait
GURNARD
17
B O R N E O
HAMMERHEAD
Lingga
Bali
22
Karimata Strait
SUMATRA
BANKA
16
19
17
J A V A S E A
30
20
35
STOIC
Sunda St.

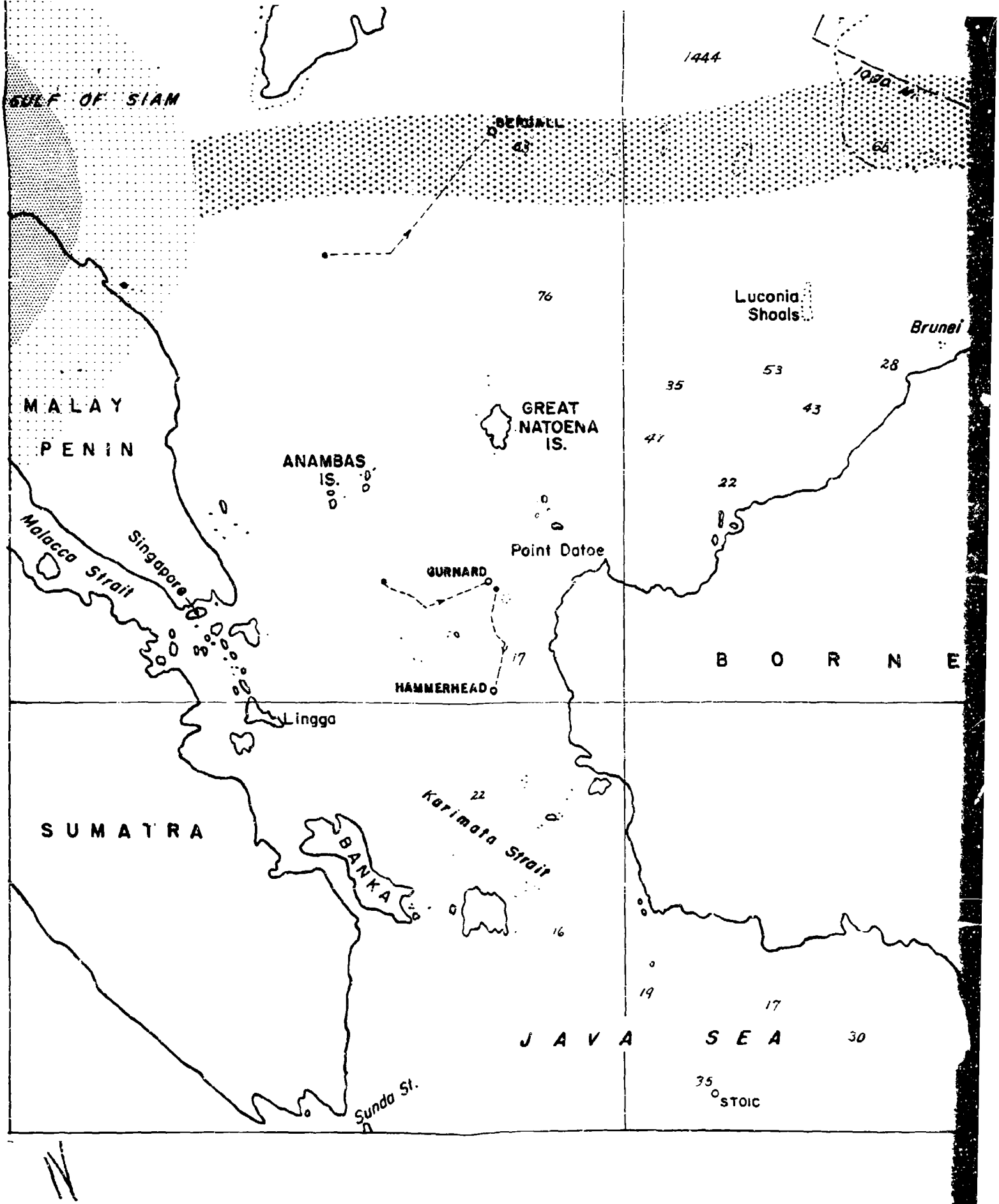

833
104
Cape Varella
About 1345
1546
ANNAM
CAMBODIA
Kamranh Bay
2163
North Dan
Shoal
Saigon
COCHIN CHINA
1444
1000
GULF OF SIAM
BERKALL
43
76
Luconia Shoals
53
35
43
41
MALAY PENIN
GREAT NATOENA IS.
ANAMBAS IS.
22
Malacca Strait
Singapore
Point Datoe
GURNARD
17
B O R
HAMMERHEAD
Lingga
22
Karimata
SUMATRA



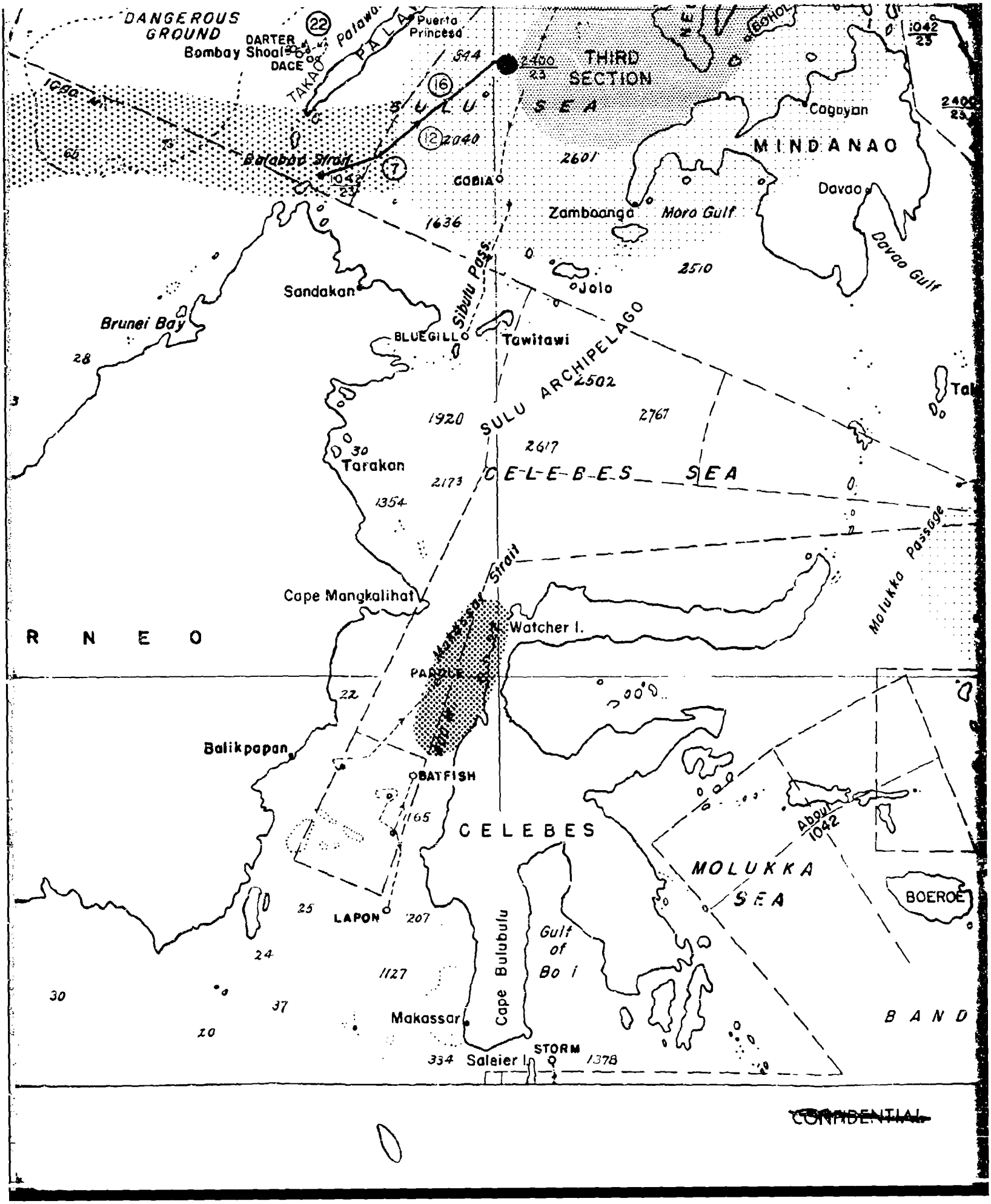
CHINA SEA
About 1430
About 1130
About 1440
BREAM
CERO
BLACKFIN
GUITARRO
ANGLER
MAIN BODY
Caron Bay
2nd STRIKING FORCE
Crudiv. 16
Desdiv. 21
MINDORO
CATANDUANES I.
San Bernardino Strait
SAMAR
LEYTE
PANAY
NEGROS
CEBU
BOHOL
ROCK
North Danger Shoal
DANGEROUS GROUND
DARTER
Bombay Shoal
DACE
TAKAO
Palawan Passage
PALAWAN
Puerto Princesa
THIRD SECTION
SULU SEA
Balabac Strait
COBIA
Cagayan
MINDANAO
Davao
Zamboanga
Moro Gulf
Jolo
Sibutu Pass
Sandakan
Luconia Shoals
Brunei Bay
BLUEGILL
Tawitawi
SULU ARCHIPELAGO
Tarakan
CELEBES SEA
Cape Mangkalihat
Makassar Strait
Watcher I.
BORNEO
PADDLE
Balikpapan
BATFISH

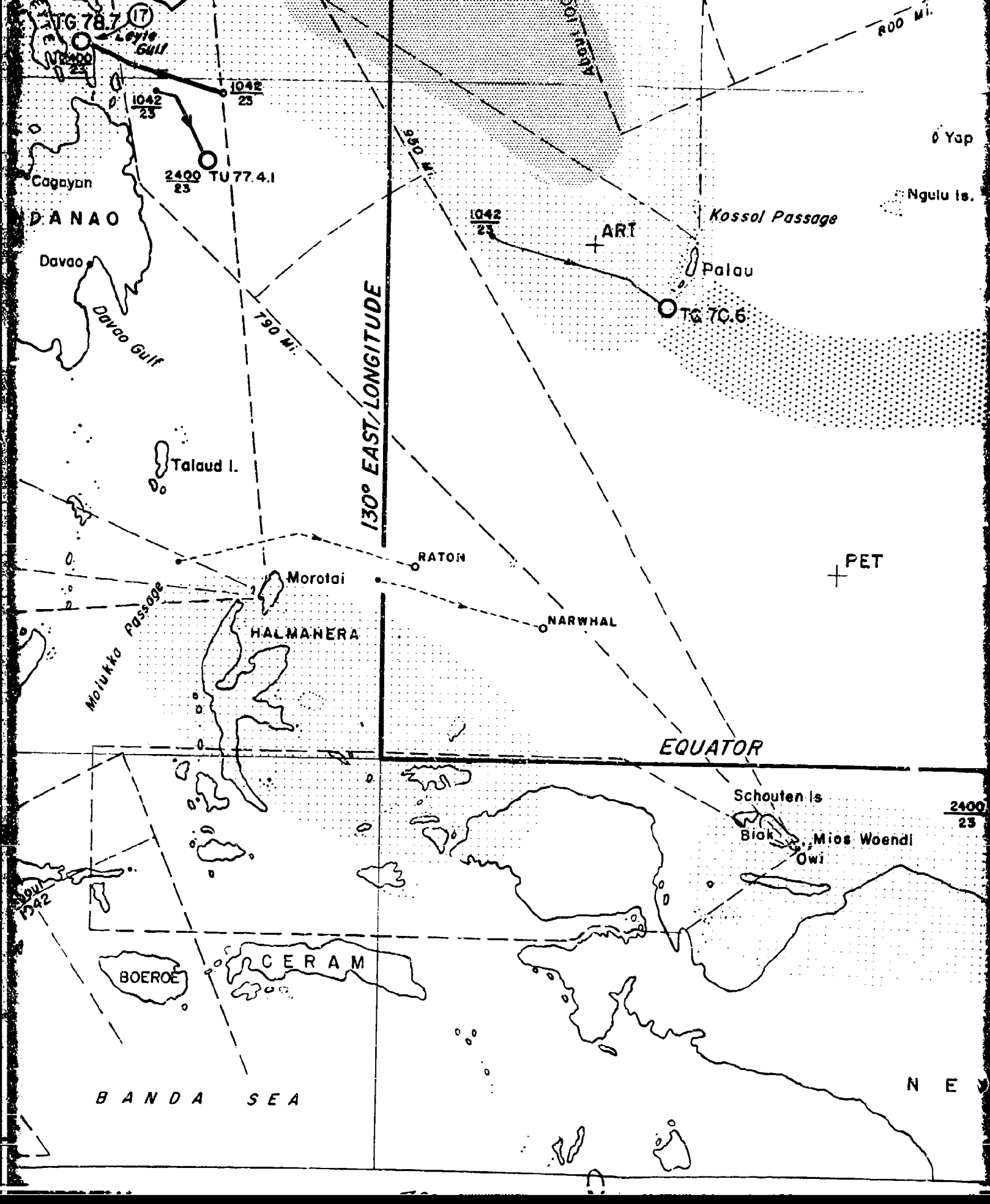

CATANDUANES I.
TG 38.2
San Bernardino Strait
About 1230
TU 77.4.3
TG 38.4
TU 77.4.2
Tacloban
SAMAR
LEYTE
TG 78.7
Leyte Gulf
CEBU
BOHOL
TU 77.4.1
Cagayan
MINDANAO
Davao
Davao Gulf
2510
Talaud I.
130° EAST LONGITUDE
190 Mi.
SEA
Morotai
RATON
NARWHAL
HALMAHERA
Molukka Passage
EQUATOR
TG 38.1
TG 30.3
TG 30.4
ART
Palau
TG 70.6
Kossol Passage
Schouten Is
Biak
Owi
About 1042

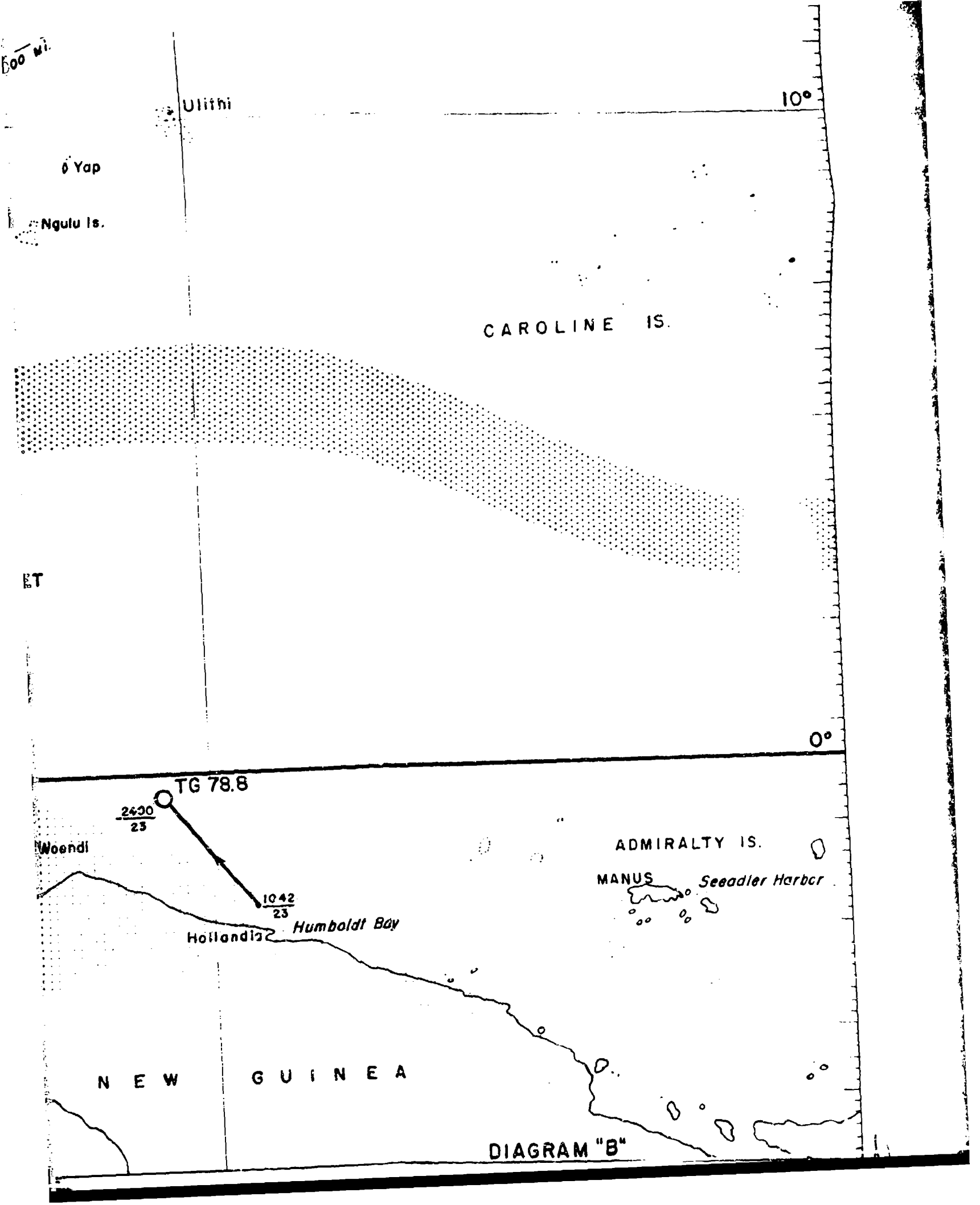

Guam
800 Mi.
Ulithi
10°
Yap
Ngulu Is.
CAROLINE IS.
PET
0°
TG 78.8
2400
23
1042
23
Mios Woendi
Owi
Hollandia
Humboldt Bay
ADMIRALTY IS.
MANUS
Seeadler Harbor



456799 O - 59 (Face p. 716)


DANGEROUS GROUND
DARTER
Bombay Shoal
DACE
TAKAO
Palawan
Puerta Princesa
THIRD SECTION
SULU SEA
Balabac Strait
COBIA
Zamboanga
Moro Gulf
MINDANAO
Cagayan
Davao
Davao Gulf
Jolo
Sibutu Pass
Sandakan
Brunei Bay
BLUEGILL
Tawitawi
SULU ARCHIPELAGO
Tarakan
CELEBES SEA
Cape Mangkalihat
Makassar Strait
Watcher I.
Molukka Passage
R N E O
PARDUE
Balikpapan
BATFISH
CELEBES
MOLUKKA SEA
BOEROE
LAPON
Cape Bulubulu
Gulf of Bo i
Makassar
Saleier I.
STORM
B A N D
About 1042
CONFIDENTIAL


TG 78.7
Leyte Gulf
1042/23
2400/23
TU 77.4.1
Cagayan
DANAO
Davao
Davao Gulf
790 Mi.
950 Mi.
800 Mi.
130° EAST LONGITUDE
Yap
Ngulu Is.
Kossol Passage
ART
Palau
TG 70.6
Talaud I.
RATON
PET
Morotai
NARWHAL
HALMAHERA
Molukka Passage
EQUATOR
Schouten Is
Biak
Mios Woendi
Owi
BOEROE
CERAM
BANDA SEA
N E


600 mi.
Ulithi
10°
Yap
Ngulu Is.
CAROLINE IS.
ET
0°
TG 78.8
2400
23
Woendi
1042
23
Humboldt Bay
Hollandia
ADMIRALTY IS.
MANUS
Seeadler Harbor
N E W G U I N E A
DIAGRAM "B"

Events Depicted on Diagram "C"

October 24th, 1944

0000 - 1830

1.	0050	A SIXTH Base Air Force patrol plane made contact on TG 38.3. (Contact "A", Plate XIII).
2.	0052 to 1404	Convoy College submarines sank nine ships from the HARUKAZE convoy. During this day the SHARK was lost.
3.	0105 to 0650	DARTER ran aground on Bombay Shoal. Failing to get off she transfered her crew to the DACE and attempted to destroy the ship. The demolition charges failed and the DACE attempted to destroy her using torpedoes and gunfire. This attempt failed also. DACE was driven off by a Japanese plane.
4.	0200	Commander SECOND Striking Force departed Coron Bay for Surigao Strait.
5.	0200	MOGAMI launched one search plane for a dawn reconnaissance of Leyte Gulf.
6.	0400	GUITARRO reported to CTF 71 that the Main Body, composed of three definite battleships and two possible carriers, was headed south through Mindoro Strait. (Contact "4", Plate XV).
7.	0413	BESUGO sank a small escort, CD 132.
8.	0431	CROAKER sank MIKAGE MARU.
9.	0500	CTG 77.4 launched TCAP to protect Leyte Gulf against air attack. The TCAP was able to blunt the enemy air attack which commenced about 0745.
10.	About 0600	COMTHIRDFLT's three carrier groups launched searches to the westward.
11.	0600	Commander Main Force launched the morning air search.
12.	About 0700	C.G. FOURTH Air Army launched the first air attack against enemy shipping in Leyte Gulf. One ATA and one LCI were sunk and three other ships damaged.
13.	0700	Commander SIXTH Base Air Force launched his first air attack of the day against TG 38.3. This attack hit the PRINCETON and set her afire.

14.	0700 to 0800	Commander Main Body launched seven search planes to search in ten degree sectors from Benton Island to a distance of 300 miles with "base line" of 075°(T).
15.	0700 to 1000	Guard Force (KINU and URANAMI) under attack by planes from TG 38.3 and suffered minor damage.
16.	0754	TG 38.3 was under intermittent air attack during most of the day.
17.	0810	INTREPID search plane made contact on Main Body south of Mindoro and reported four BB, eight CA, thirteen DD, no transports, total of twenty-five ships. (Contact "6", Plate XV).
18.	0900	WAKABA sunk as a result of air attack by planes from TG 38.4. COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE informed Commander SECOND Striking Force of the attack and the sinking.
19.	0905	THIRD Section attacked by planes from TG 38.4. Minor damage resulted.
20.	0910	One of CTG 73.4's search planes relayed a contact report on two groups of enemy ships totaling four battleships, four heavy cruisers, four light cruisers and ten destroyers. (Contact "10", Plate XV).
21.	0930	PRINCETON was hit by a bomb and caught fire.
22.	1026	First air attack made by planes from TG 38.2 against Main Body, FIRST Striking Force. MYOKO was badly damaged and ordered to return to Brunei Bay.
23.	1043	CTG 38.1 reversed course to head for Point MICK.
24.	1100	C.G. FOURTH Air Army launched the second air attack against enemy shipping in Leyte Gulf.
25.	1115	One of CTG 73.4's search planes sighted the Main Body and reported no carriers present. (Contact "12", Plate XV).
26.	1125	GUITARRO sighted KINU and URANAMI headed south toward Mindoro Strait.
27.	1155	One of CTG 73.4's search planes sighted the SECOND Striking Force. The search plane was not detected by the SECOND Striking Force. (Contact "15", Plate XV).
28.	1155	Commander Main Force launched the first air attack against TG 38.3. The first attack unit did not locate the enemy carriers. The second attack unit located the enemy carriers and attacked but no damage was done.

29. 1200 Commander THIRD Section received the report of air reconnaissance of Leyte Gulf by message drop from the search plane.

30. 1207 Second air attack made by planes from TG 38.2 against Main Body, FIRST Striking Force. MUSASHI's speed reduced to twenty-two knots.

31. 1211 Second air attack on DESDIV TWENTY-ONE by planes from TG 38.4. No serious damage was incurred.

32. 1220 CTG 77.4 launched an air attack against western Visayas and, in particular, Bacolod Airfield and Bacolod Harbor.

33. 1224 CTG 38.4 explained to COMTHIRDFLT that he had been delayed by the recovery of his search and attack groups and advised that he was proceeding to close TG 38.2 and would launch a deck-load strike against the enemy force off Tablas Island.

34. 1240 Another of CTG 73.4's search planes contacted the THIRD Section. (Contact "16", Plate XV).

35. 1324 Third air attack made by planes of TG 38.3 against the Main Body. MUSASHI's speed reduced to twenty knots and YAHAGI's speed reduced to twenty-two knots.

36. 1400 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force launched his second air attack of the day against TG 38.3. This attack encountered bad weather and returned to base.

37. After-noon C.G. FOURTH Air Army launched his third air attack against enemy shipping in Leyte Gulf.

38. 1409 CTG 38.3 launched a search to the north composed of five VB.

39. 1426 Fourth air attack made by planes of TG 38.3 against the Main Body. No serious damage was incurred.

40. 1445 COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE reversed course and headed for Manila. He failed to inform Commander SECOND Striking Force of his action.

41. 1452 Commander SECOND Striking Force increased speed to twenty knots in order to effect closer liason with the THIRD Section.

42. 1500 Fifth air attack made by planes of TG's 38.2 and 38.4 against the Main Body. MUSASHI became un-navigable as a result of this attack.

43. 1523 A tremendous explosion blew off PRINCETON's stern and injured a large number of the BIRMINGHAM's crew, including her captain. The RENO took charge of the rescue efforts.

44. 1530 Commander Main Body reversed course while he re-estimated the situation.

45. 1621 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force launched a dusk attack against TG 38.3. Although one of the search planes witnessed the sinking of the PRINCETON the attack planes failed to find the enemy and returned to base.

46. 1635 A search plane from TG 38.3 made contact on the Main Force. (Contacts "20" and "21", Plate XV).

47. 1650 COMTHIRDFLT received a report of an enemy force to the north consisting of three CV, two CL and three DD. (Contact "20", Plate XV).

48. 1714 Commander Main Body, after receiving word that the Advance Guard, Main Force, was proceeding south to destroy enemy remnants and that the SIXTH Base Air Force was scheduled to make a dusk attack against one of the enemy carrier groups, resumed the advance.

49. 1745 Commander SECOND Striking Force issued his night intentions and increased speed to twenty-two knots in order to further close the distance to the THIRD Section.

50. 1749 PRINCETON torpedoed by RENO and sank.

51. 1800 Commander Guard Force stopped while URANAMI repaired damaged fuel tanks.

52. 1809 CTG 38.3 learned from returning pilots that the enemy force to the north was composed of two groups, (a) two CV, one CVL, three CL, three DD, and (b) four BB or CA including one BB/XCV, five cruisers and six DD.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Events within Leyte Gulf

(Not Depicted on Diagram "C")

1. 0122 CTF 77 decided to concentrate his fighter planes over Leyte Gulf and to cancel strikes against western Visayas.

2. 0831 First air attack against shipping in Leyte Gulf by planes of FOURTH Air Army. One ATA and one LCI were sunk and three other ships damaged.

3. About 0950 CTF 77 decided that since (a) he had repulsed the first air attack of the day and (b) most of the planes were land planes, he should reinstitute attacks on the Visayan airfields.

4.	Fore-noon	CTG 70.1 conferred with CTF 77 concerning readiness and proposed deployment of MTB's in case of night action.
5.	1015	CTU 79.14.5 (CTU 79.11.1) departed Leyte Gulf for Hollandia.
6.	1110	The second air attack was made by planes of the FOURTH Air Army against shipping in Leyte Gulf. This attack was unsuccessful.
7.	1215	CTF 77 directed his forces to prepare for night battle.
8.	1225	CTF 77 ordered night searches by three PBY's to the north and two PBY's in the Mindanao Sea.
9.	1400	C.G. SIXTH Army assumed command of all forces ashore in the Leyte area.
10.	1404	CTG 70.1 issued his battle plan for night action.
11.	1410	CTU 79.14.8 (CTG 79.2) departed Leyte Gulf for Hollandia.
12.	1443	CTF 77 issued supplementary orders to his harbor defense plan to the forces which would defend Leyte Gulf.
13.	1509	CTF 77 directed CTG 70.1 to insure that enemy forces did not pass undetected between Dinagat Island and Mindanao Island.
14.	1520 to 1535	MTB's departed OYSTER BAY which was anchored in San Pedro Bay for stations in Surigao Strait.
15.	1540	CTU 77.2.1 (Commander Battle Line) reported on board the LOUISVILLE for a conference with CTG 77.2.
16.	1647	CTG 77.3 (Commander Left Flank Force) reported on board the LOUISVILLE for a conference with CTG 77.2.
17.	1700	CTF 77 intercepted COMTHIRDFLT's battle plan which indicated that TF 34 would be formed of certain heavy ships and destroyers.
18.	Late After-noon	CTG 77.2 directed that all ships' planes which could not be stowed in hangars be sent ashore for the night.
19.	1725	CTG 77.2 issued his battle plan for the coming night action.
20.	1730 to 1830	MTB's departed WACHAPREAGUE which was anchored in Liloan Bay for stations in the Mindanao Sea.
21.	1830	CTG 73.7's search planes did not start their search as scheduled although later three PBY's got off, two searching the Mindanao Sea and one the coast of Samar.

CONFIDENTIAL

A

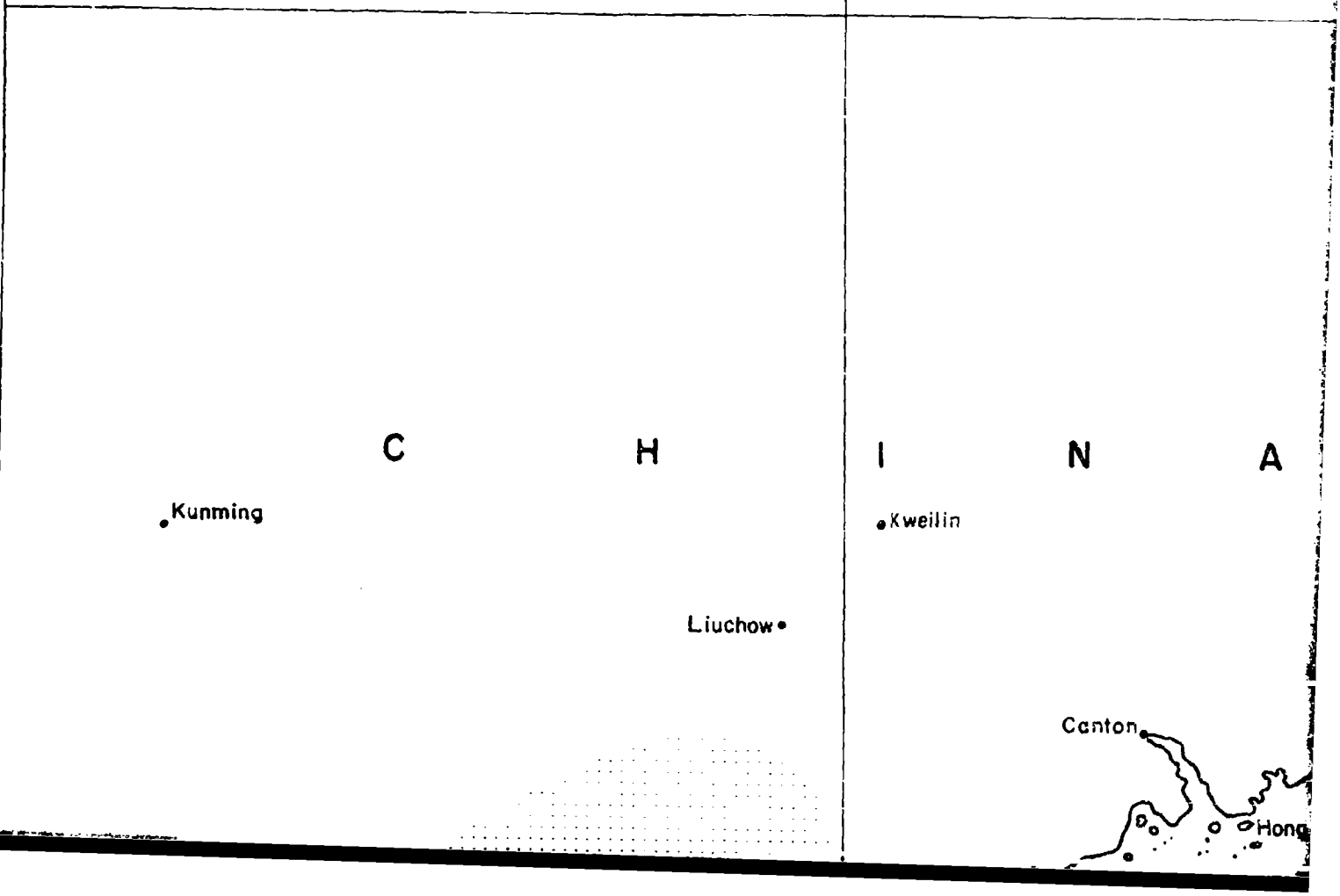
110°

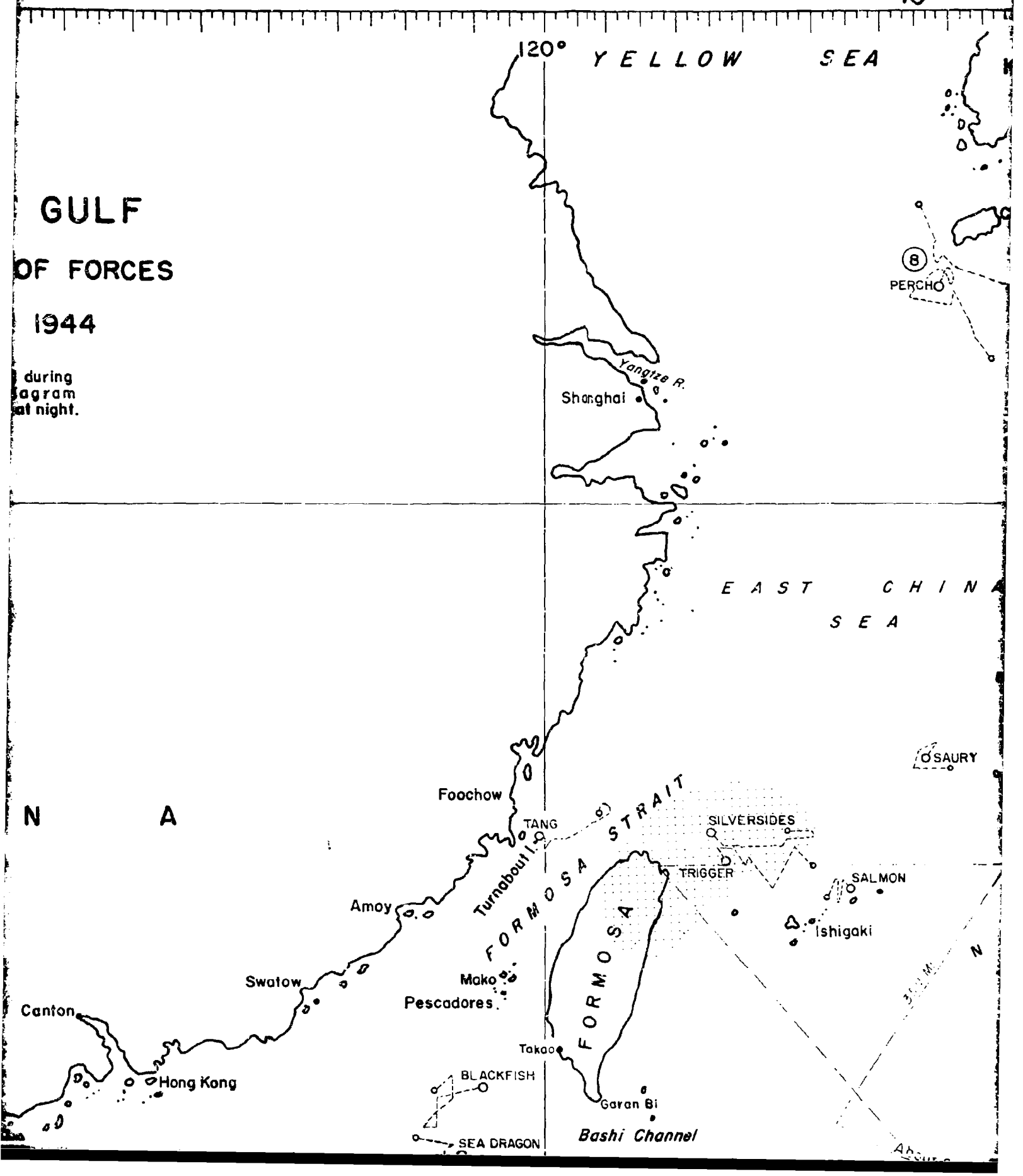
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

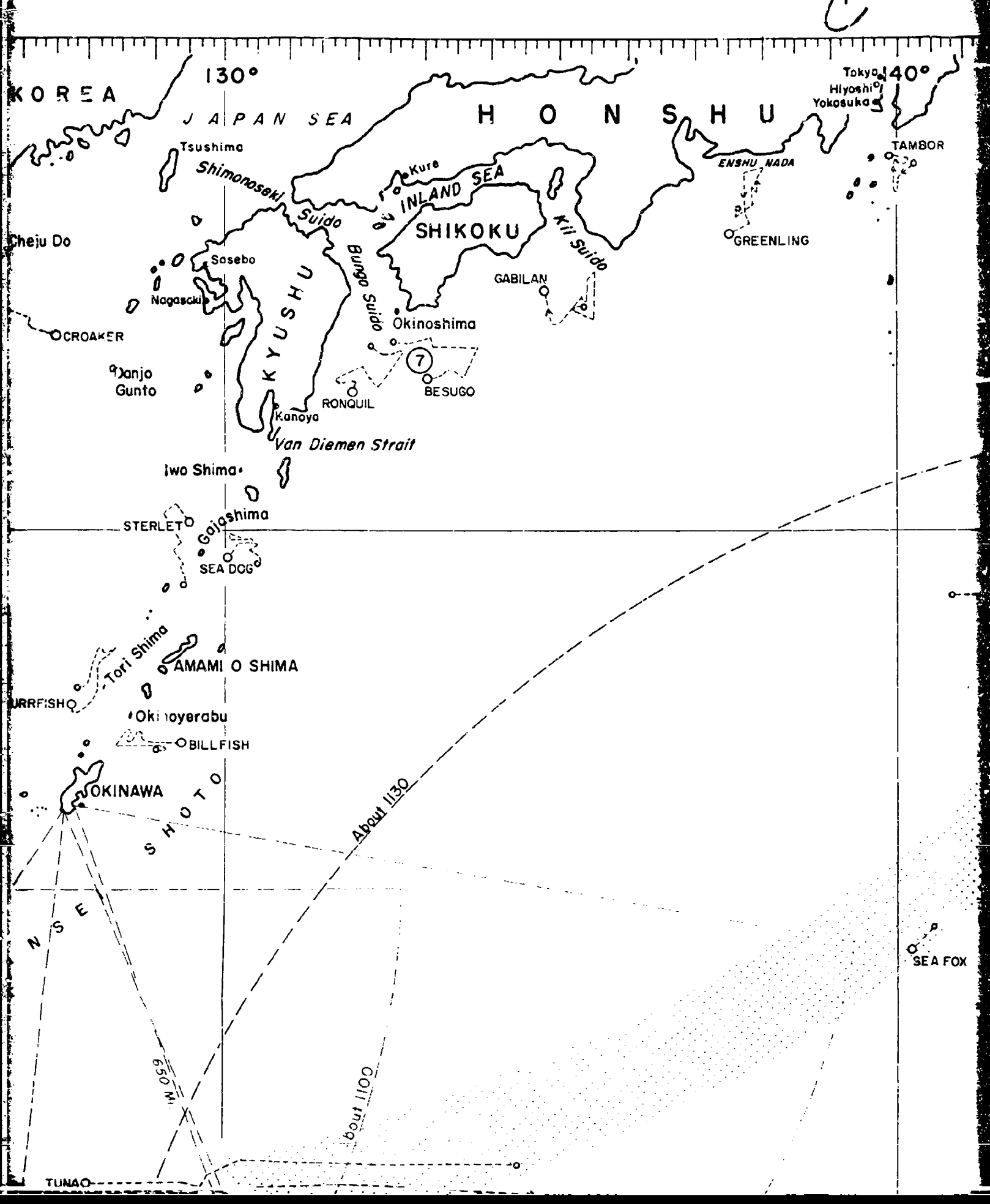
AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

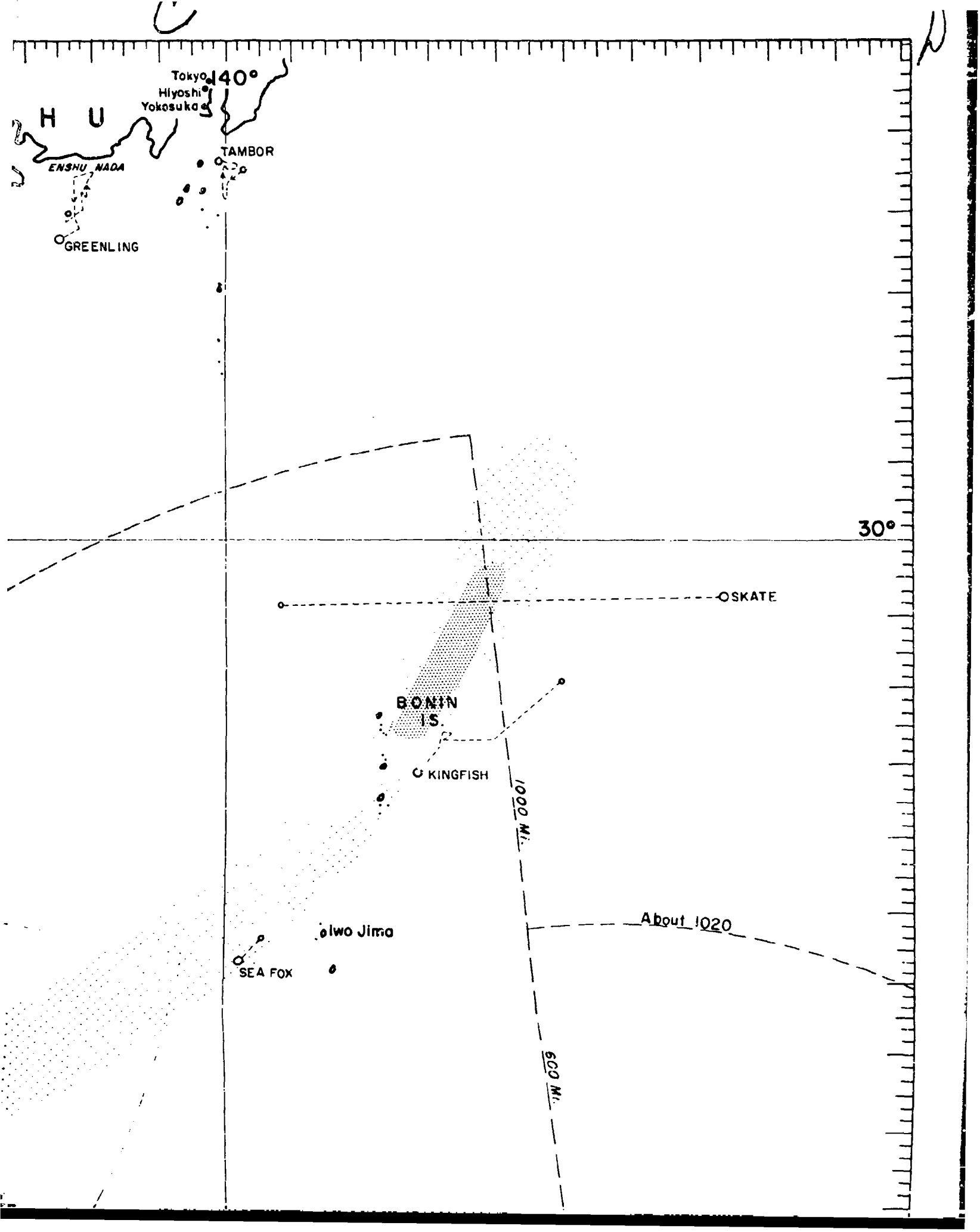
0000 TO 2400 24 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.

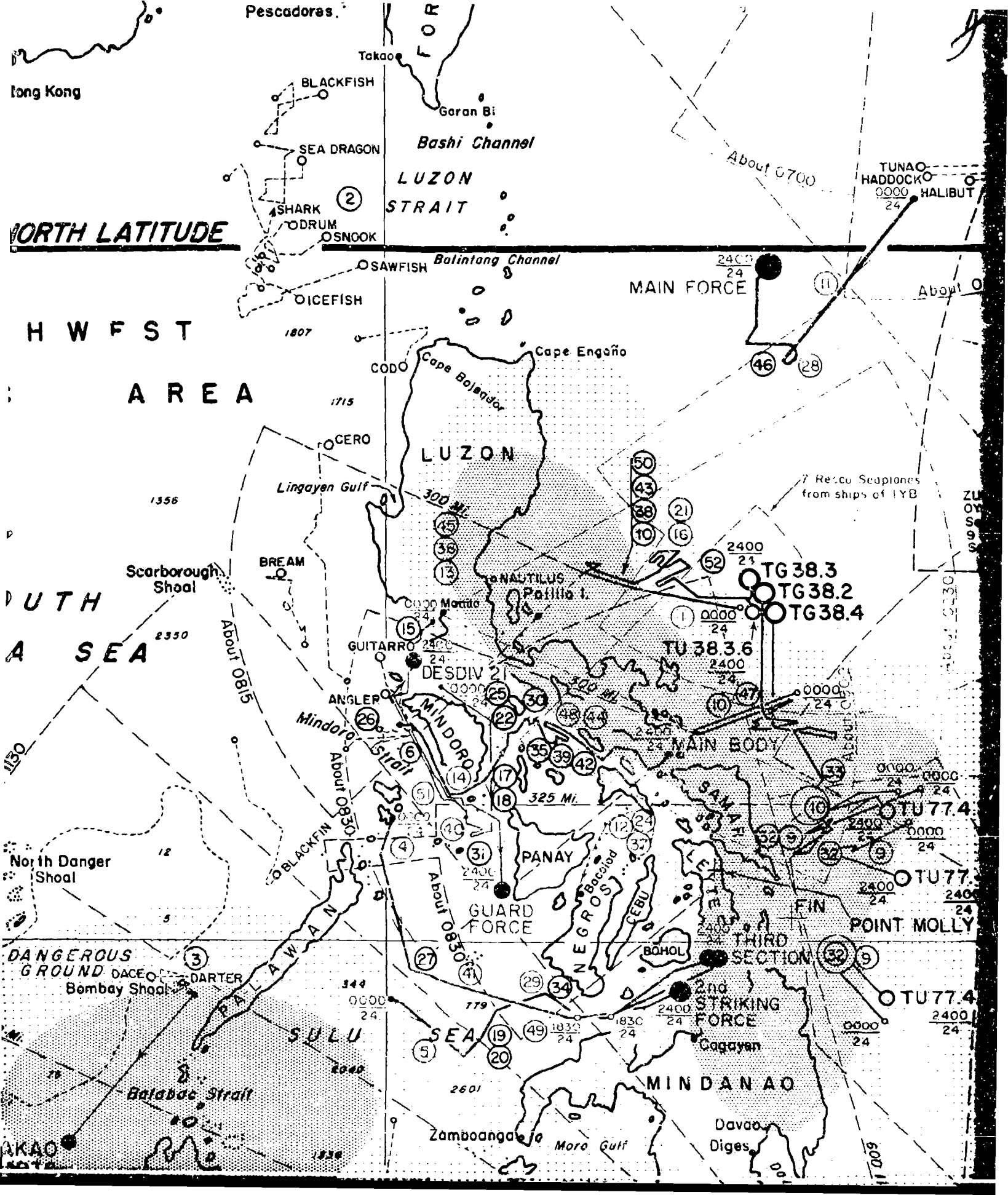



GULF
OF FORCES
1944
during
agram
at night.
120°
YELLOW SEA
EAST CHINA SEA
N A
PERCHO
Yangtze R.
Shanghai
Foochow
TANG
Turnabout
FORMOSA STRAIT
FORMOSA
SILVERSIDES
TRIGGER
SALMON
Ishigaki
OSAURY
Amoy
Swatow
Mako
Pescadores
Canton
Hong Kong
Takao
BLACKFISH
SEA DRAGON
Garan Bi
Bashi Channel

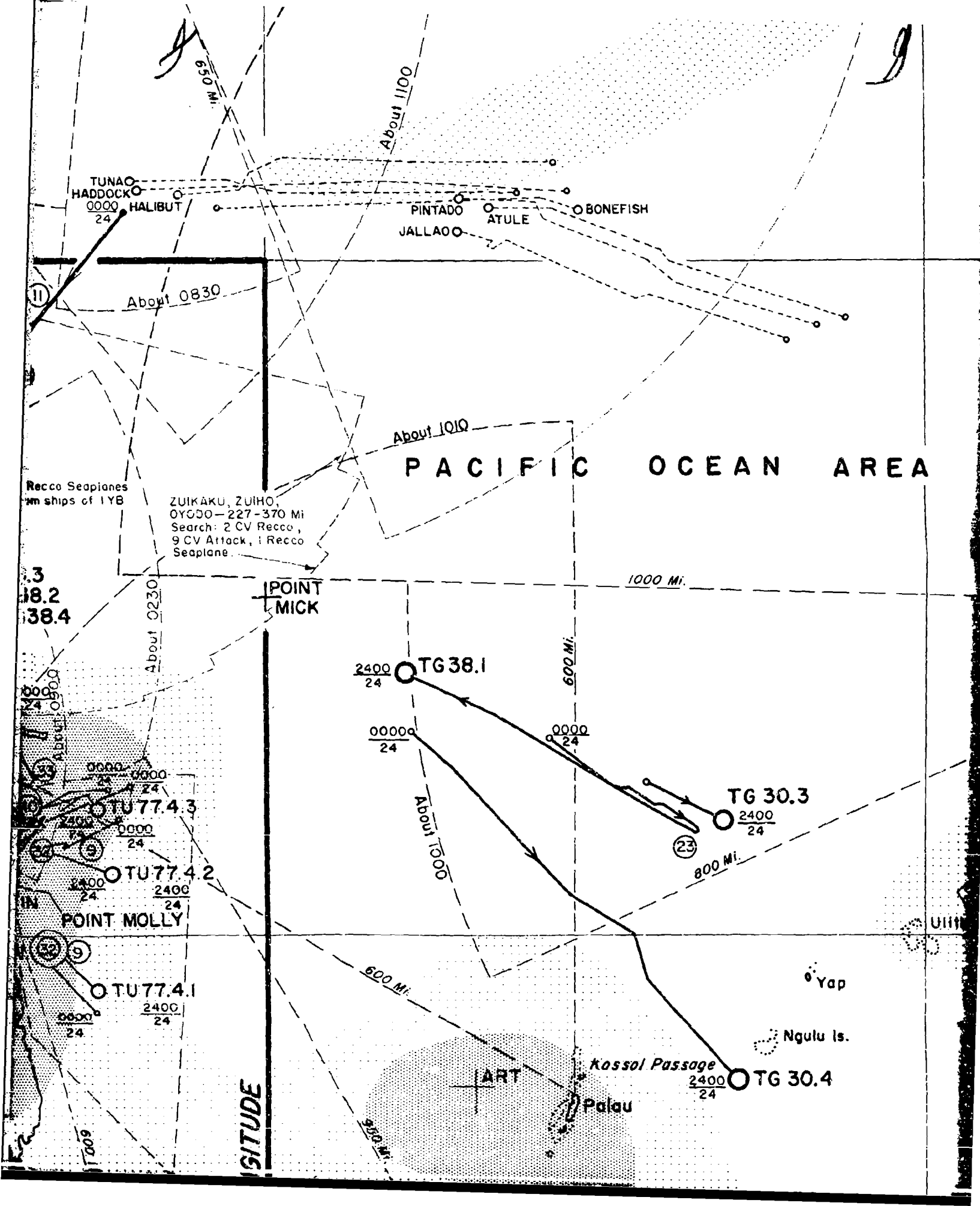

130°
140°
KOREA
JAPAN SEA
HONSHU
Tokyo
Hiyoshi
Yokosuka
Tsushima
Shimonoseki Suido
Kure
INLAND SEA
SHIKOKU
Kii Suido
ENSHU NADA
TAMBOR
GREENLING
Cheju Do
Sasebo
Nagasaki
KYUSHU
Bungo Suido
GABILAN
CROAKER
Okinoshima
7
Yanjo Gunto
RONQUIL
BESUGO
Kanoya
Van Diemen Strait
Iwo Shima
STERLET
Gajashima
SEA DOG
Tori Shima
AMAMI O SHIMA
URRFISH
Okinoyerabu
BILLFISH
OKINAWA
SHOTO
NANSEI
About 1130
650 M.
About 1100
SEA FOX
TUNAO

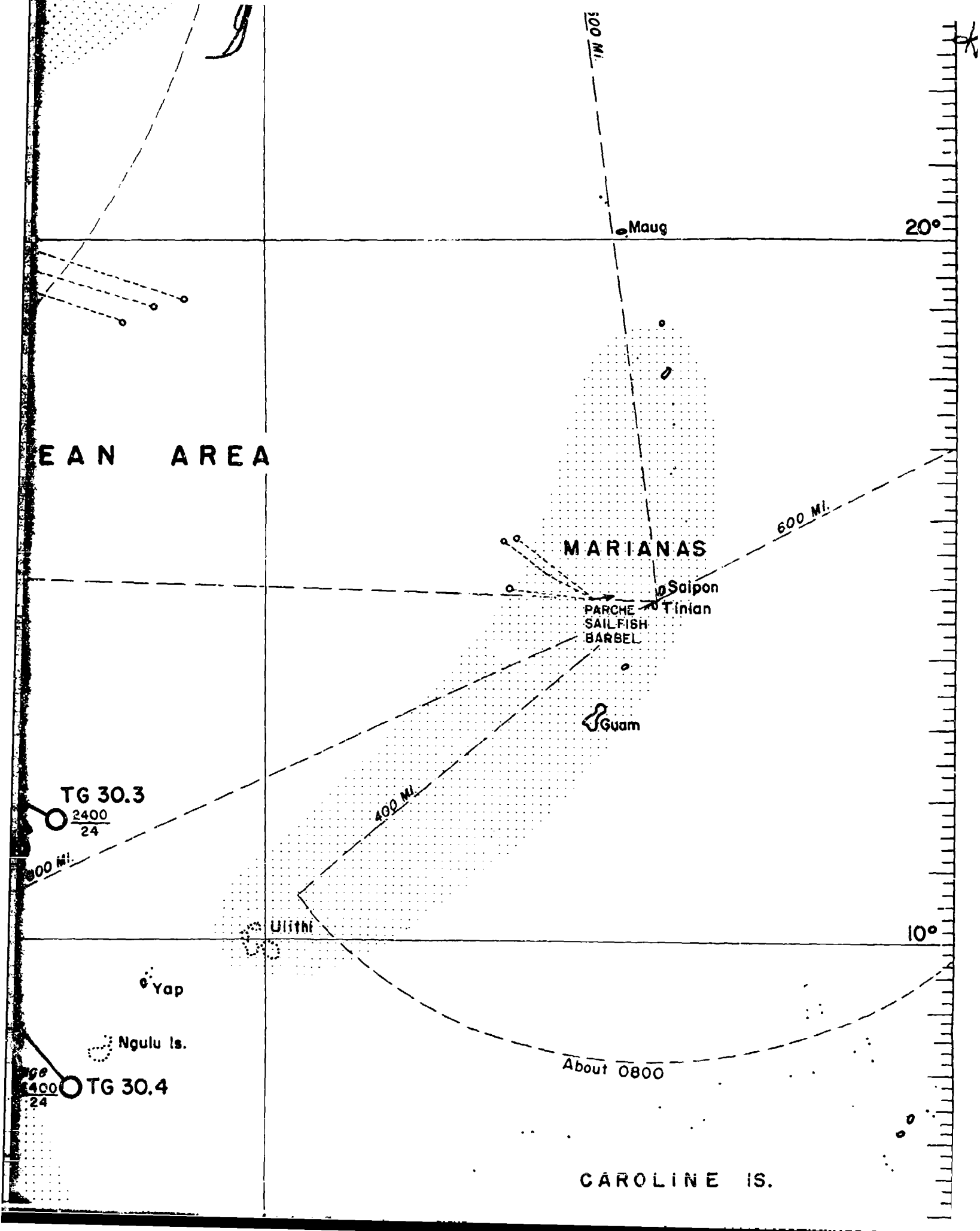

140°
Tokyo
Hiyoshi
Yokosuka
H U
TAMBOR
ENSHU NADA
GREENLING
30°
OSKATE
BONIN
I.S.
KINGFISH
1000 Mi.
Iwo Jima
About 1020
SEA FOX
600 Mi.

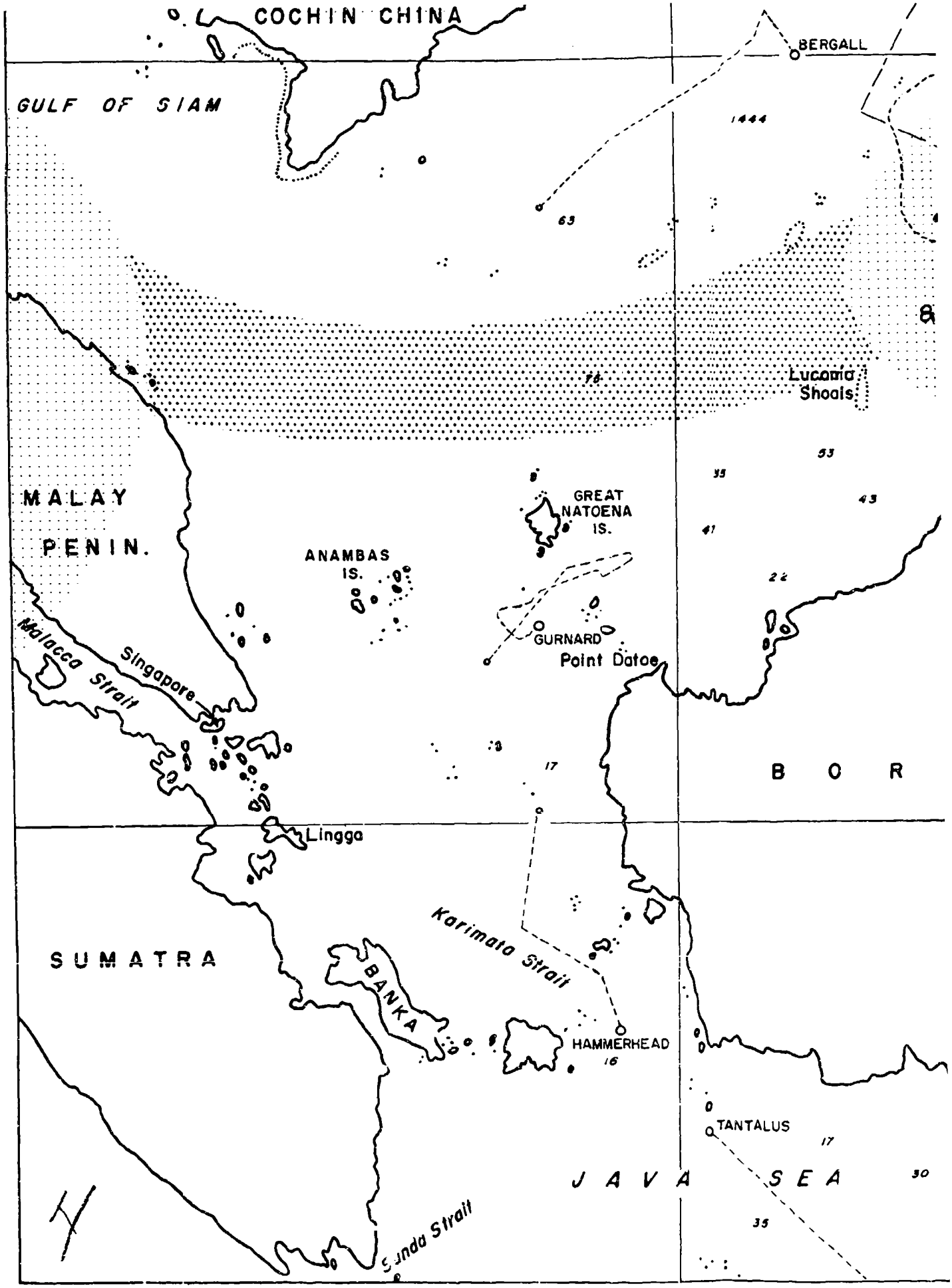

E
Canton
Hong Kong
Hulling I.
TONKIN GULF
Cape Kamil
20° NORTH LATITU
HAINAN
SOUTHWEST
PACIFIC AR
INDO CHINA
Tourane
167
1356
SOUTH CHINA SEA
333
104
Cape Varella
15-6
ANNAM
CAMBODIA
Kamranh Bay
Saigon
COCHIN CHINA
2463
ROCK
About 1130
North Danger Shoal
BERGALL
DANGEROUS GROUND
Bombay Shoal
F SIAM
1444
1000 Mi.
63
65
TAKAO
8 ESCORTS



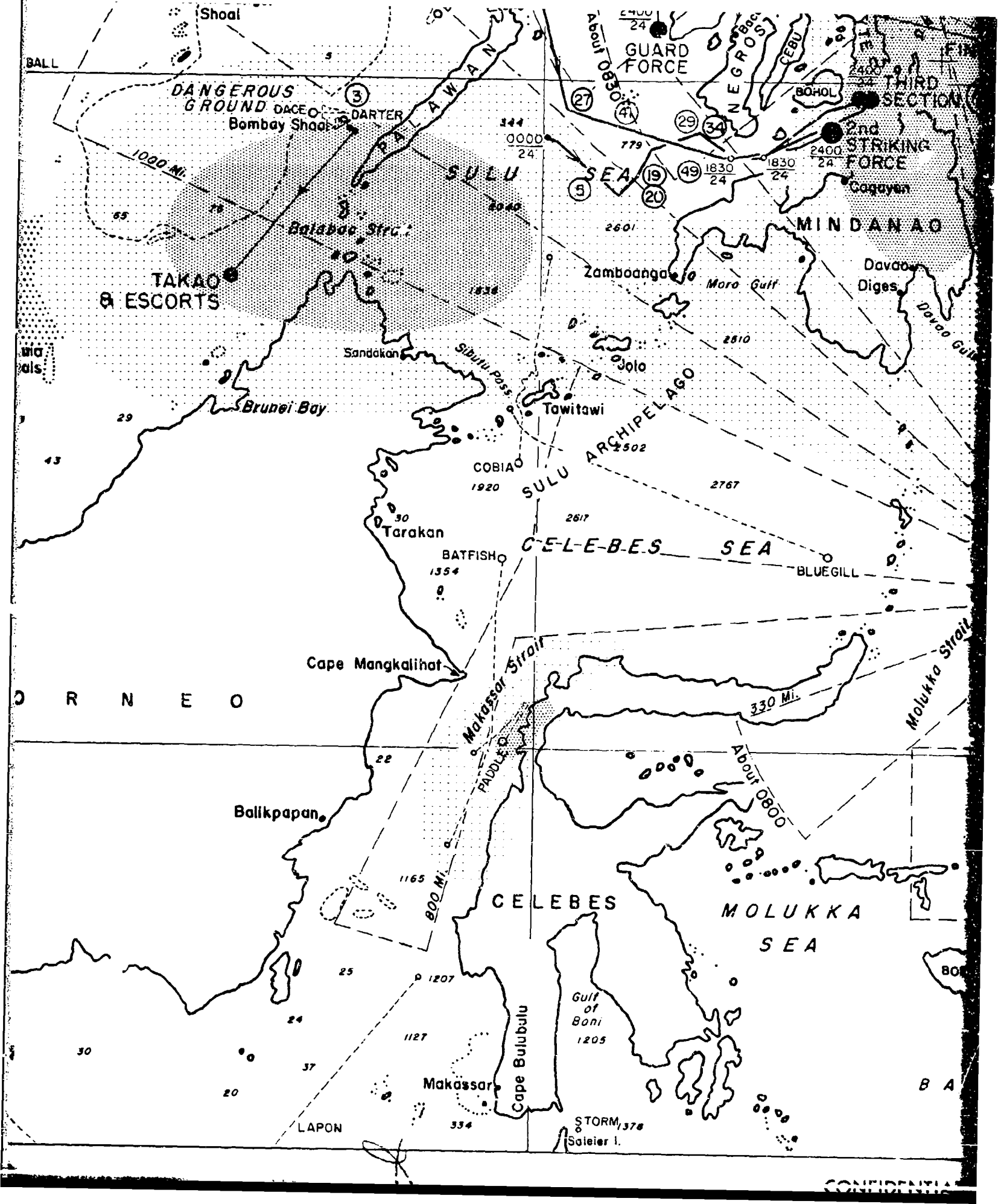
Pescadores
Takao
Garan Bi
Bashi Channel
LUZON STRAIT
BLACKFISH
SEA DRAGON
SHARK
DRUM
SNOOK
SAWFISH
ICEFISH
NORTH LATITUDE
Balintang Channel
About 0700
TUNA
HADDOCK
HALIBUT
MAIN FORCE
Cape Engaño
Cape Bojeador
CODO
CERO
LUZON
Lingayen Gulf
300 Mi.
7 Recco Seaplanes from ships of TYB
TG 38.3
TG 38.2
TG 38.4
TU 38.3.6
NAUTILUS
Pollilo I.
Scarborough Shoal
BREAM
GUITARRO
DESDIV 21
ANGLER
MINDORO
Mindoro Strait
About 0815
About 0830
MAIN BODY
325 Mi.
SAMAR
LEYTE
PANAY
GUARD FORCE
NEGROS
Bacolod
CEBU
BOHOL
THIRD SECTION
2nd STRIKING FORCE
Cagayan
FIN
POINT MOLLY
TU 77.4
North Danger Shoal
BLACKFIN
DANGEROUS GROUND
DACE
DARTER
Bombay Shoal
PALAWAN
SULU SEA
Balabac Strait
MINDANAO
Zamboanga
Moro Gulf
Davao
Diges

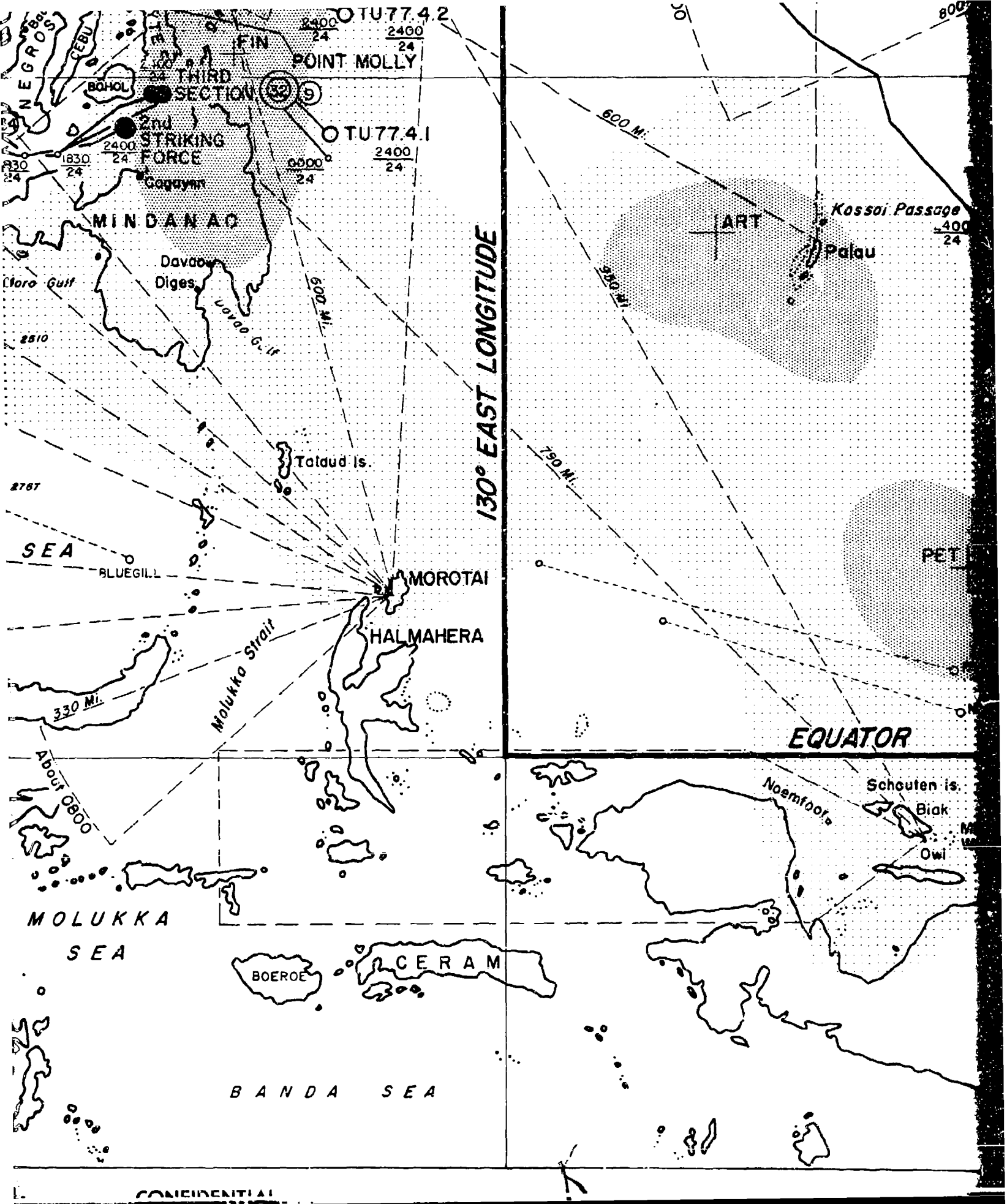

650 Mi.
About 1100
TUNA
HADDOCK
0000
24
HALIBUT
PINTADO
ATULE
BONEFISH
JALLAO
About 0830
About 1010
PACIFIC OCEAN AREA
Recco Seaplanes
m ships of TYB
ZUIKAKU, ZUIHO,
0Y000—227-370 Mi
Search: 2 CV Recco,
9 CV Attack, 1 Recco
Seaplane
1000 Mi.
POINT
MICK
About 0230
2400
24
TG 38.1
600 Mi.
0000
24
TG 30.3
2400
24
About 1000
800 Mi.
TU 77.4.3
TU 77.4.2
POINT MOLLY
TU 77.4.1
600 Mi.
Yap
Ngulu Is.
Kossol Passage
TG 30.4
Palau
950 Mi.

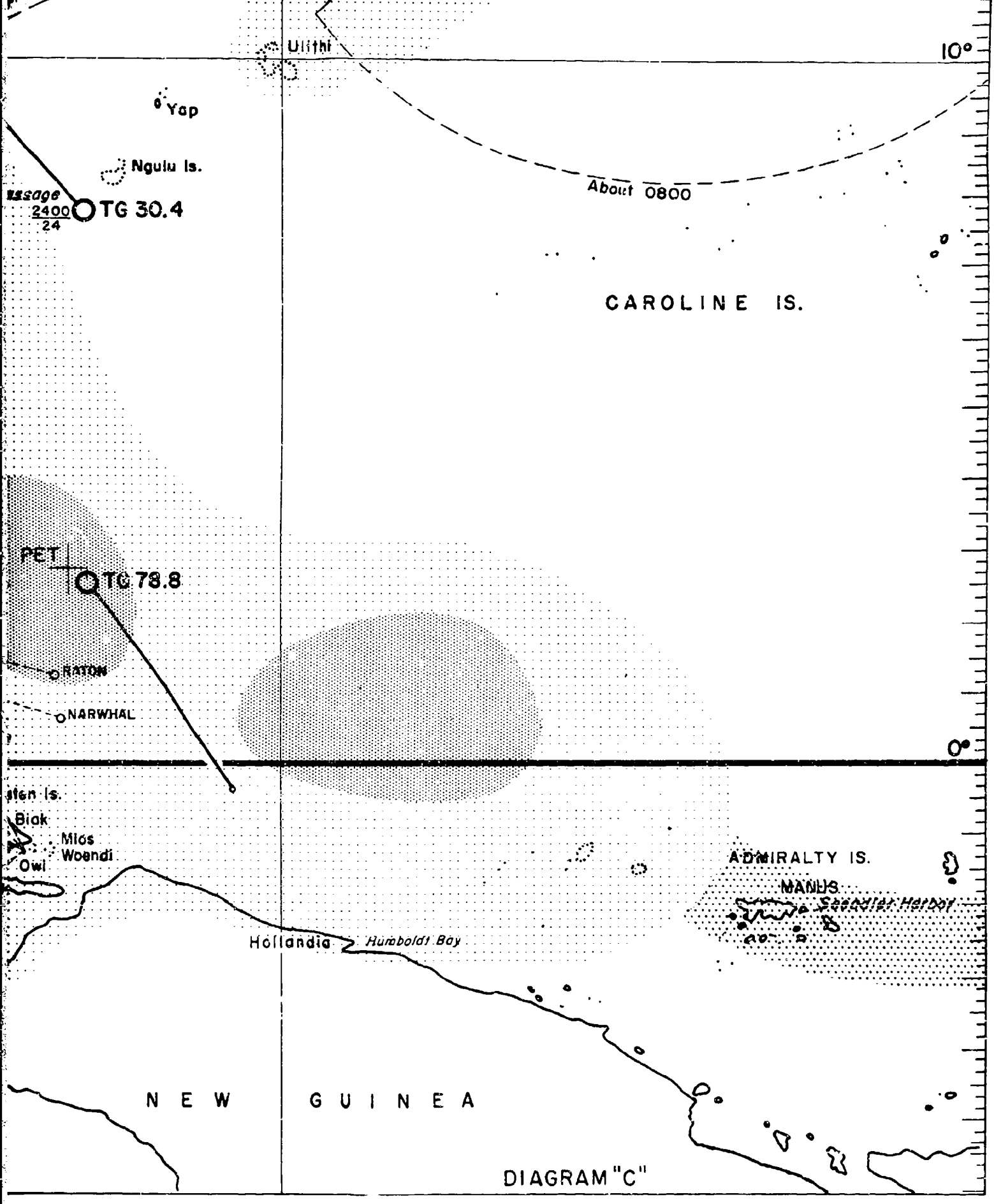

500 MI.
Maug
20°
EAN AREA
MARIANAS
600 MI.
Saipon
Tinian
PARCHE
SAILFISH
BARBEL
Guam
TG 30.3
2400
24
400 MI.
00 MI.
Ulithi
10°
Yap
Ngulu Is.
TG 30.4
About 0800
CAROLINE IS.



496799 O - 59 (Face p. 736)


Shoal
BALL
DANGEROUS GROUND
DACE
DARTER
Bombay Shoal
PALAWAN
SULU SEA
1000 Mi.
Balabac Strait
TAKAO & ESCORTS
Sandakan
Sibutu Pass
Brunei Bay
Tawitawi
SULU ARCHIPELAGO
COBIA
Tarakan
BATFISH
CELEBES SEA
BLUEGILL
Cape Mangkalihat
BORNEO
Makassar Strait
330 Mi.
Molukka Strait
PADDLE
Balikpapan
800 Mi.
CELEBES
MOLUKKA SEA
Gulf of Boni
Cape Bulubulu
Makassar
LAPON
STORM
Saleier I.
GUARD FORCE
NEGROS
CEBU
BOHOL
THIRD SECTION
2nd STRIKING FORCE
Cagayan
MINDANAO
Zamboanga
Moro Gulf
Davao
Digos
Davao Gulf
Jolo
About 0830
About 0800
0000/24
1830/24
2400/24


TU 77.4.2
2400
24
FIN
POINT MOLLY
NEGROS
CEBU
BOHOL
THIRD SECTION
32
9
2nd STRIKING FORCE
Cagayan
TU 77.4.1
1830
0000
MINDANAO
Davao Gulf
Davao
Diges
600 Mi.
130° EAST LONGITUDE
ART
Kossoi Passage
Palau
950 Mi.
800
2510
2767
Tataud Is.
790 Mi.
SEA
BLUEGILL
MOROTAI
HALMAHERA
Molukka Strait
330 Mi.
About 0800
EQUATOR
Noemfoor
Schouten Is.
Biak
Owi
MOLUKKA
SEA
BOEROE
CERAM
BANDA SEA
CONFIDENTIAL



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136-C

Events Depicted on Diagram "D"

October 24th, 1944

1830 - 2400

1. 1830 Commander FIRST Division in MOGAMI, with MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO, moved ahead of the SECOND Division in order to make a sweep of the waters west of Panaon Island.

2. 1834 Commander SECOND Division changed course to 050°(T) in order to pass close to Bohol Island.

3. 2135 Bohol PT's 152, 130, 131 had commenced patrol across Mindanao Sea on course 169°(T) from Agio Point, Bohol Island, speed twelve knots.

4. 2145 Camiguin PT's 127, 128, 129 arrived on station and commenced a radar watch with the duty rotated among the boats. PT 128 assumed the radar duty from 2200 to 2400.

5. 2155 Commander THIRD Section received a revision of Commander FIRST Striking Force's plan which stated that he would pass through San Bernardino Strait at 0100, penetrate Leyte Gulf at 1100, October 25th, and directed Commander THIRD Section to rendezvous with the Main Body ten miles northeast of Suluan Island at 0900.

6. 2200 Commander SECOND Striking Force received Commander THIRD Section's dispatch relating his plans of penetration to a point off Dulag at 0400, October 25th.

7. 2227 FIRST Division of Japanese THIRD Section crossed the patrol line of Allied PT boats. Neither of the forces were aware of the other's presence.

8. 2236 PT 131 of the Bohol PT's made radar contact on two targets at a range of ten miles. The PT's changed course to 345°(T) and commenced closing at twenty-four knots attempting unsuccessfully to make a contact report. (This was the YAMASHIRO and FUSO.)

9. 2245 Commander SECOND Striking Force advised Commander THIRD Section and COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE that he planned to pass through southern entrance of Surigao Strait at 0300 and penetrate at twenty-six knots.

10. 2252 Commander SECOND Division was informed by the SHIGURE that she had sighted three enemy torpedo boats, which she later took under fire.

11. 2252 Commander FIRST Division was aware that Commander SECOND Division had encountered enemy torpedo boats and had opened fire on them.

496799 O - 59 - 52

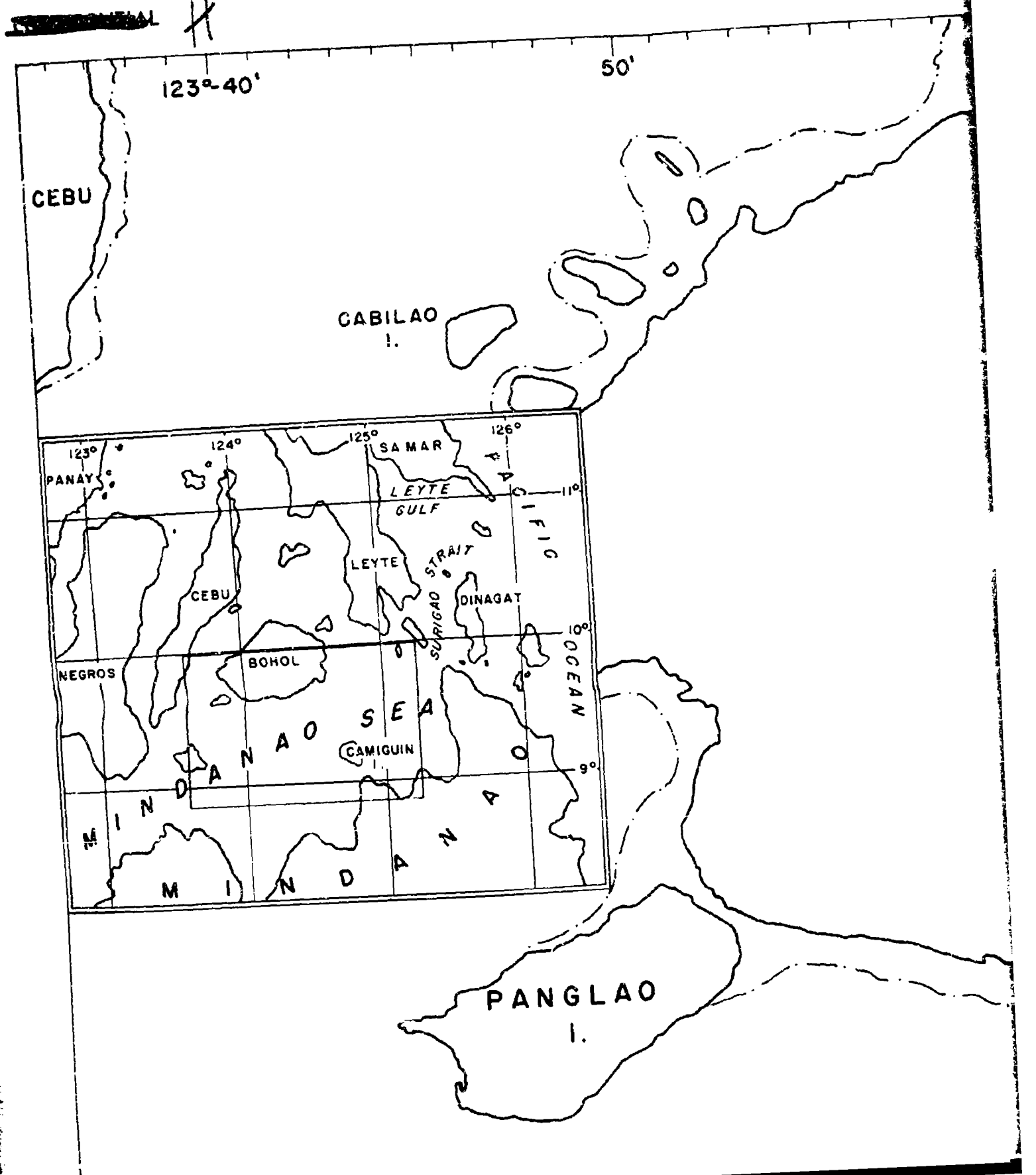
12. 2254 Bohol PT's after closing their contact to within two miles sighted two battleships, two cruisers and one destroyer and deployed for attack. However, before they could launch torpedoes they were sighted by the Japanese and taken under fire resulting in damage to PT's 130 and 132. (The composition was incorrect as the force consisted of only two battleships and one destroyer.)

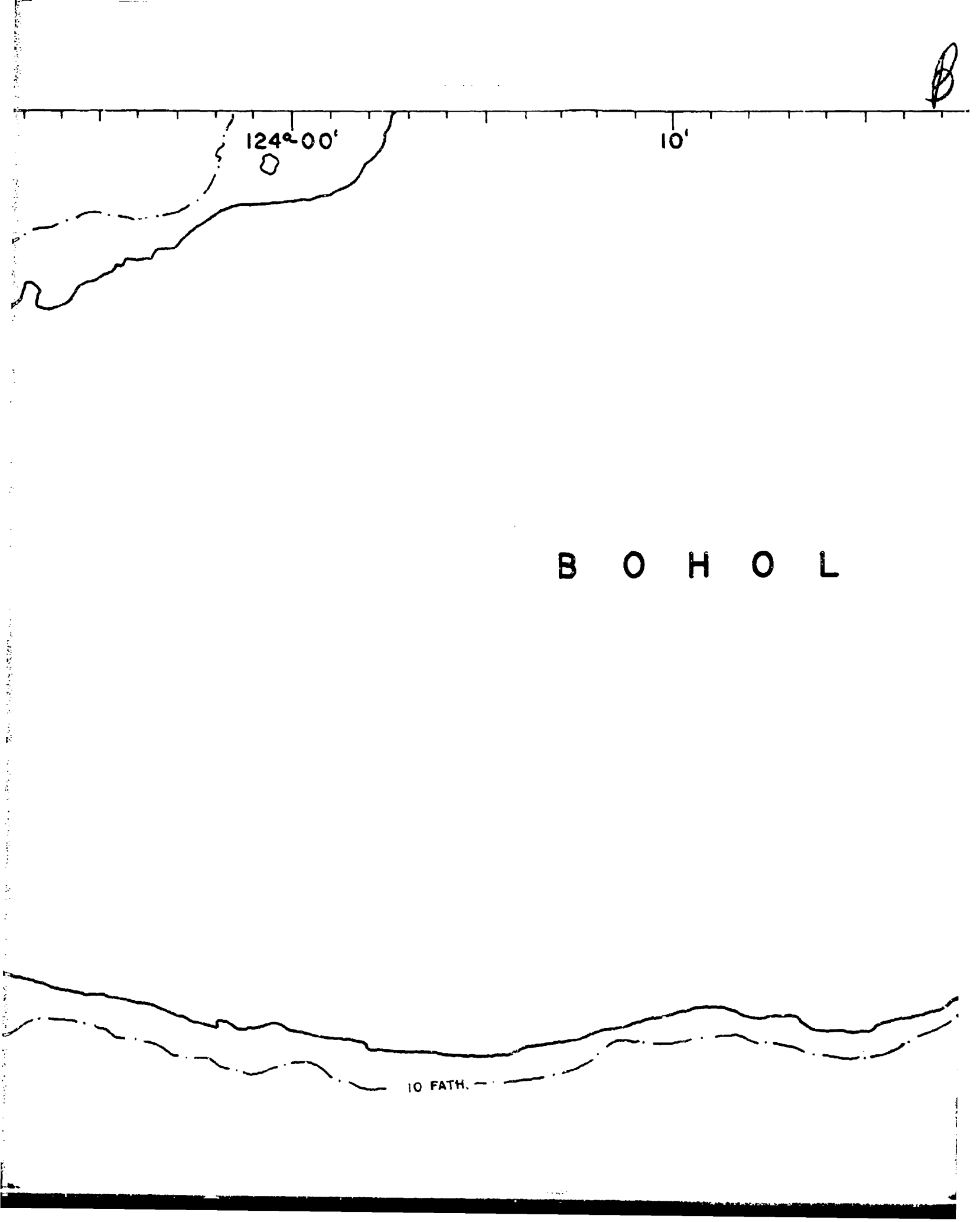
13. 2310 Commander SECOND Division broke off action against motor torpedo boats.

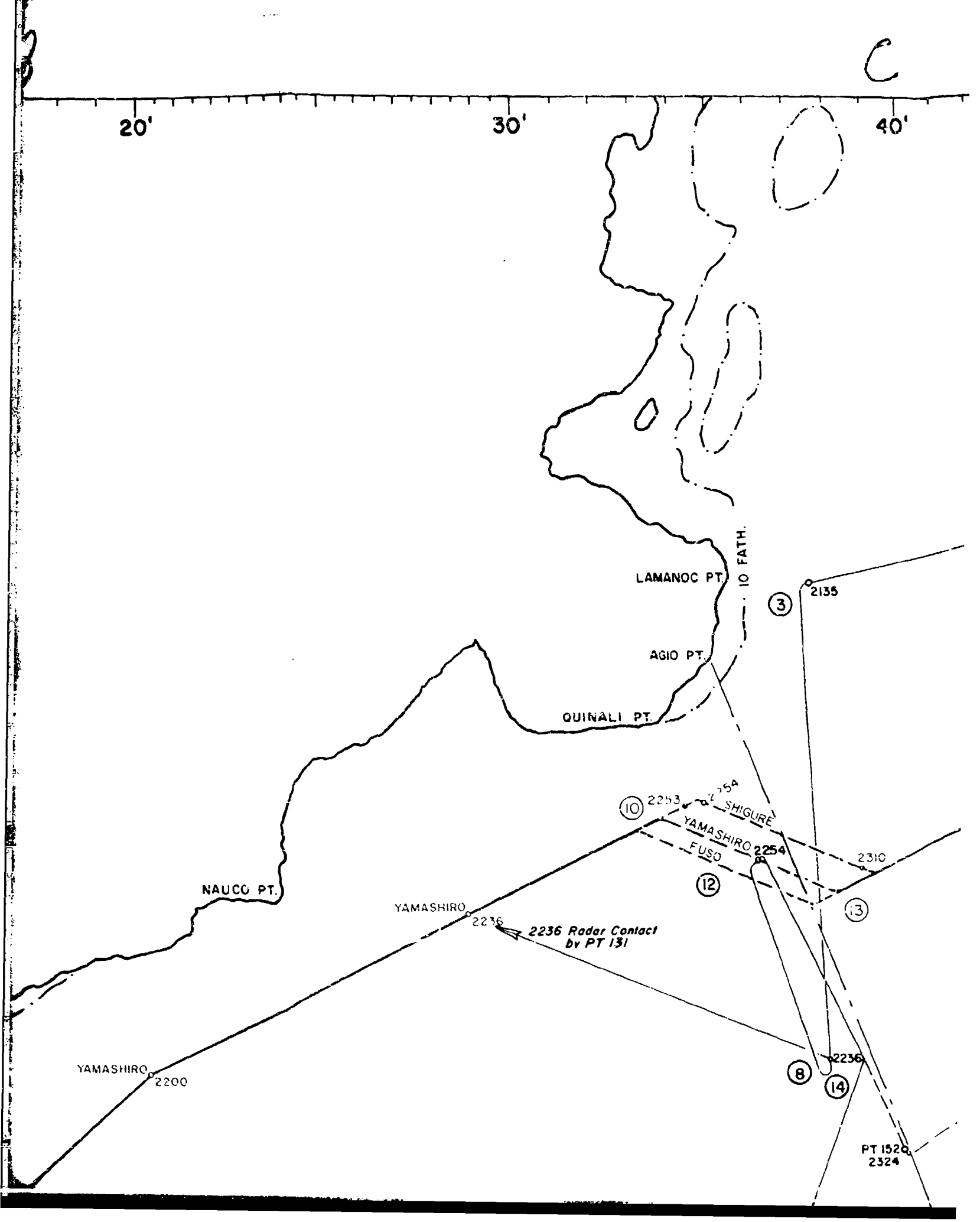
14. 2313 PT's 130 and 131 proceeded to the Camiguin PT's in order to report the contact on the Japanese SECOND Division.

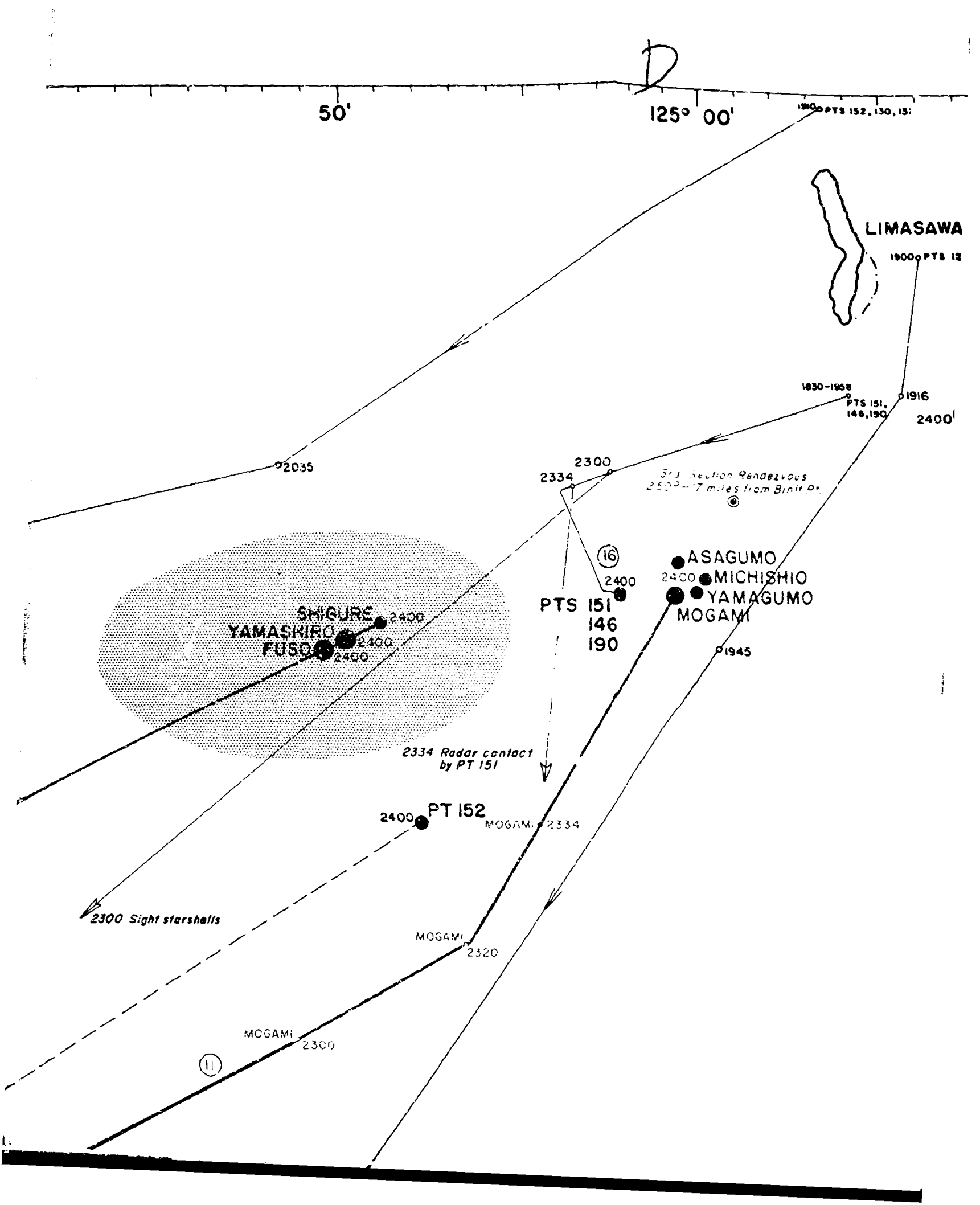
15. 2315 Commander SECOND Striking Force formed No. FOUR Approach Formation.

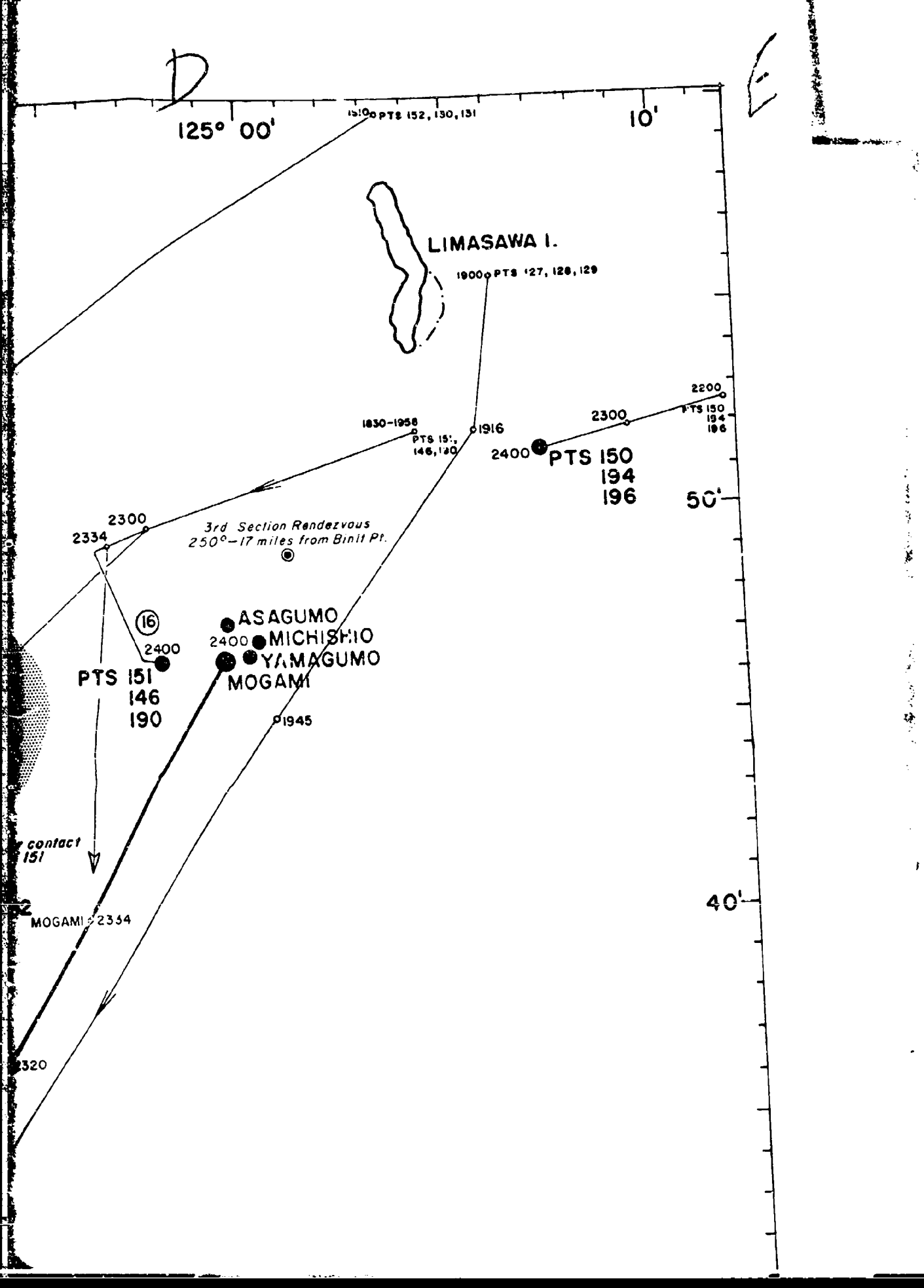
16. 2354 Limasawa PT's made visual contact on the Japanese FIRST Division.

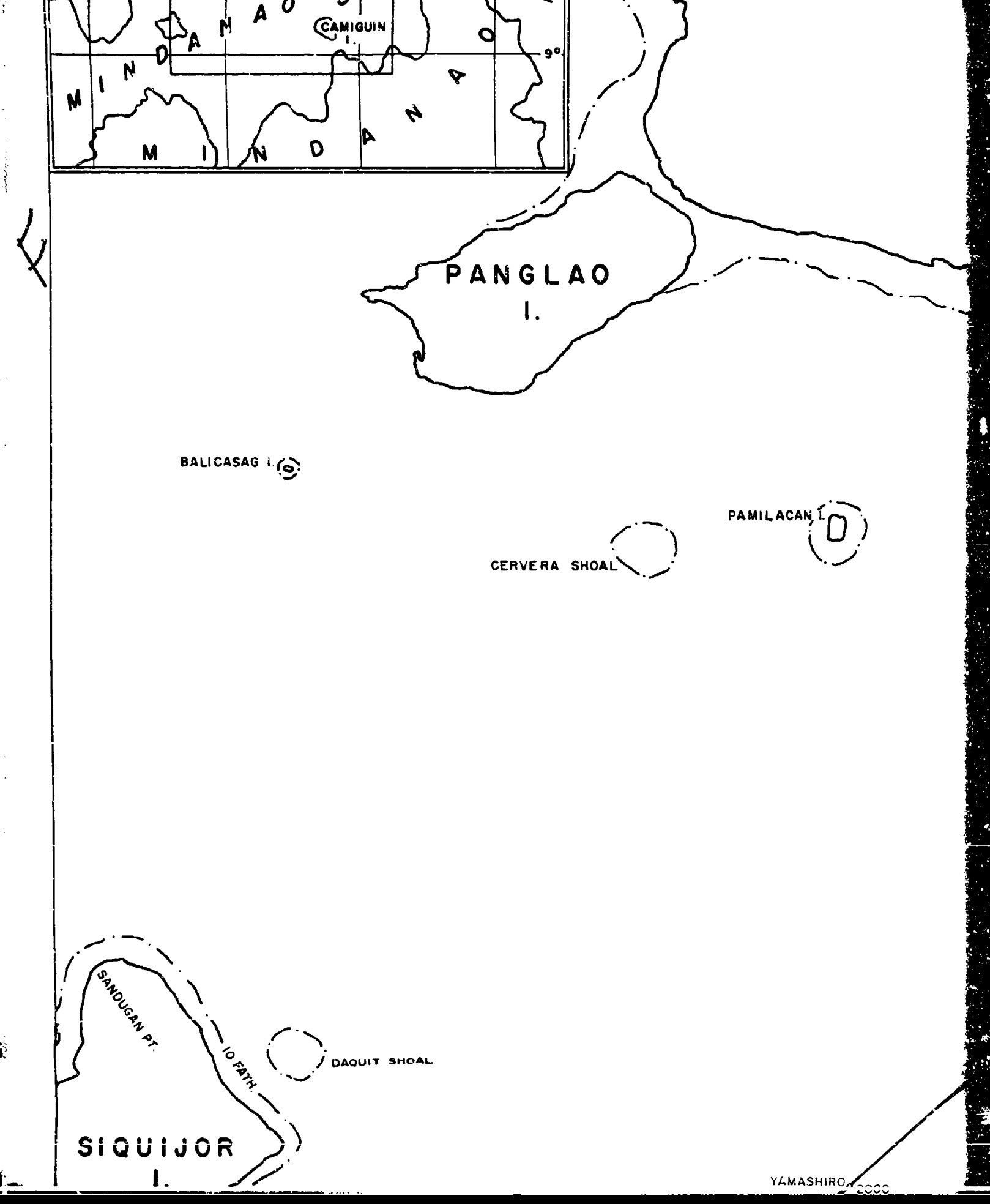

123°-40'
50'
CEBU
CABILAO
I.
123°
124°
125°
126°
SAMAR
PANAY
LEYTE
GULF
11°
PACIFIC
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
CEBU
DINAGAT
10°
OCEAN
NEGROS
BOHOL
MINDANAO SEA
CAMIGUIN
9°
MINDANAO
PANGLAO
I.

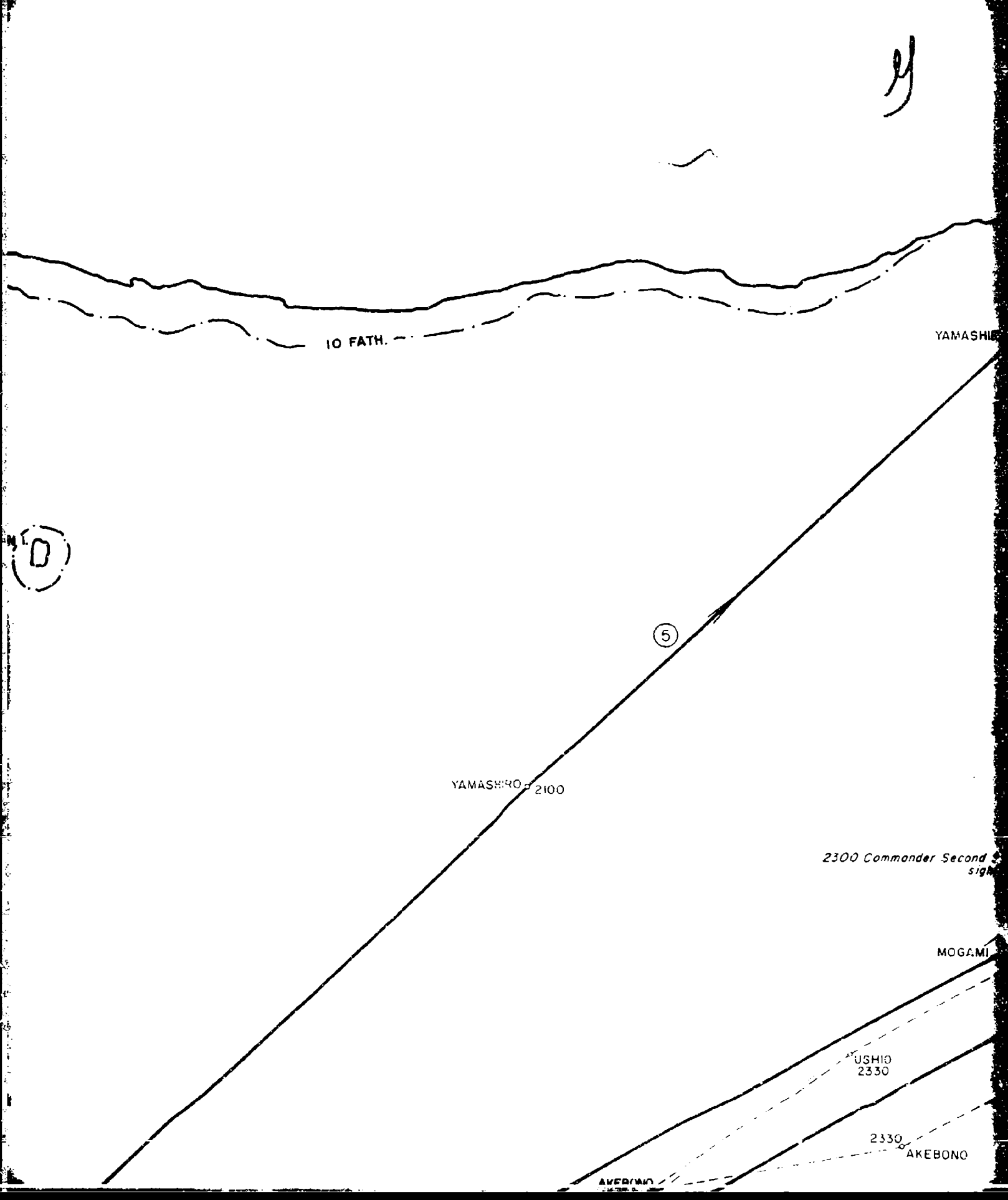

124°00'
10'
B O H O L
10 FATH.

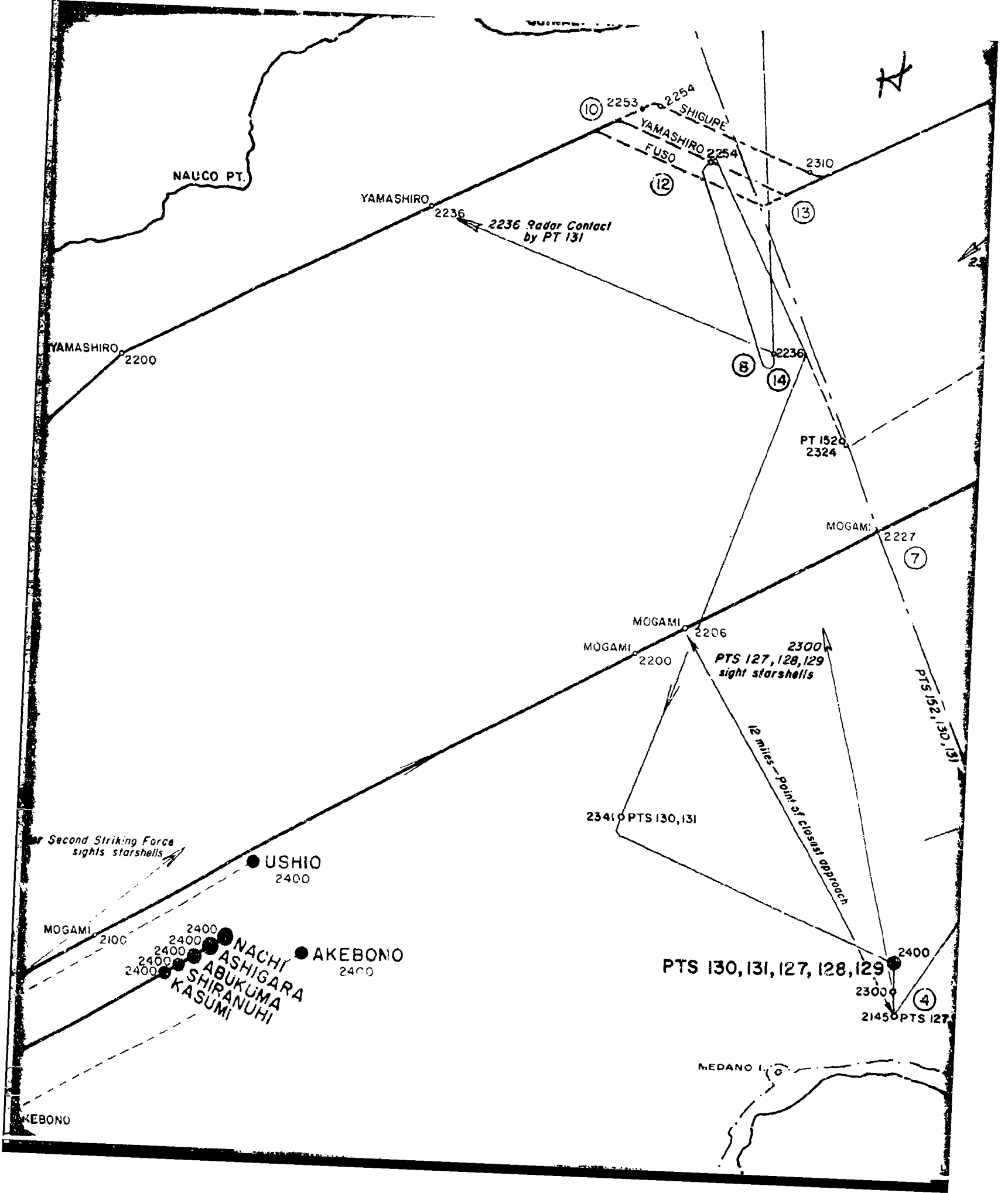

C
20'
30'
40'
10 FATH.
LAMANOC PT.
AGIO PT.
QUINALI PT.
NAUCO PT.
2135
3
2310
13
12
10
2253
2254
SHIGURE
YAMASHIRO
FUSO
2254
YAMASHIRO
2236
2236 Radar Contact
by PT 131
2236
8
14
YAMASHIRO
2200
PT 152
2324

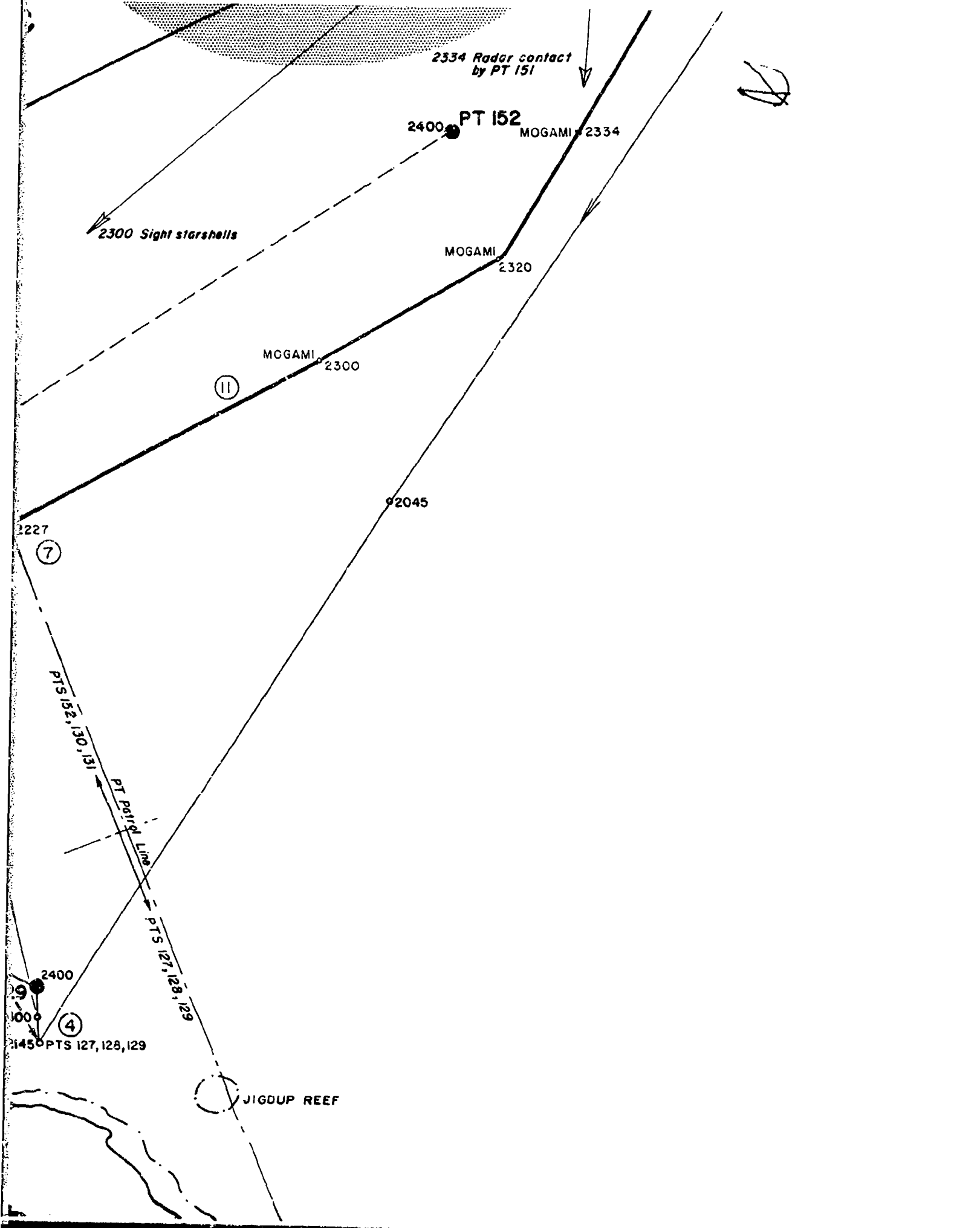

50'
125° 00'
PTS 152, 130, 13
LIMASAWA
1900 PTS 12
1830-1958
PTS 151, 146, 190
1916
2400
2035
2300
2334
3rd Section Rendezvous
ASAGUMO
2400 MICHISHIO
YAMAGUMO
MOGAMI
1945
16
2400
PTS 151
146
190
SHIGURE 2400
YAMASHIRO 2400
FUSO 2400
2334 Radar contact by PT 151
2400 PT 152
MOGAMI 2334
2300 Sight starshells
MOGAMI
2320
MOGAMI
2300
11

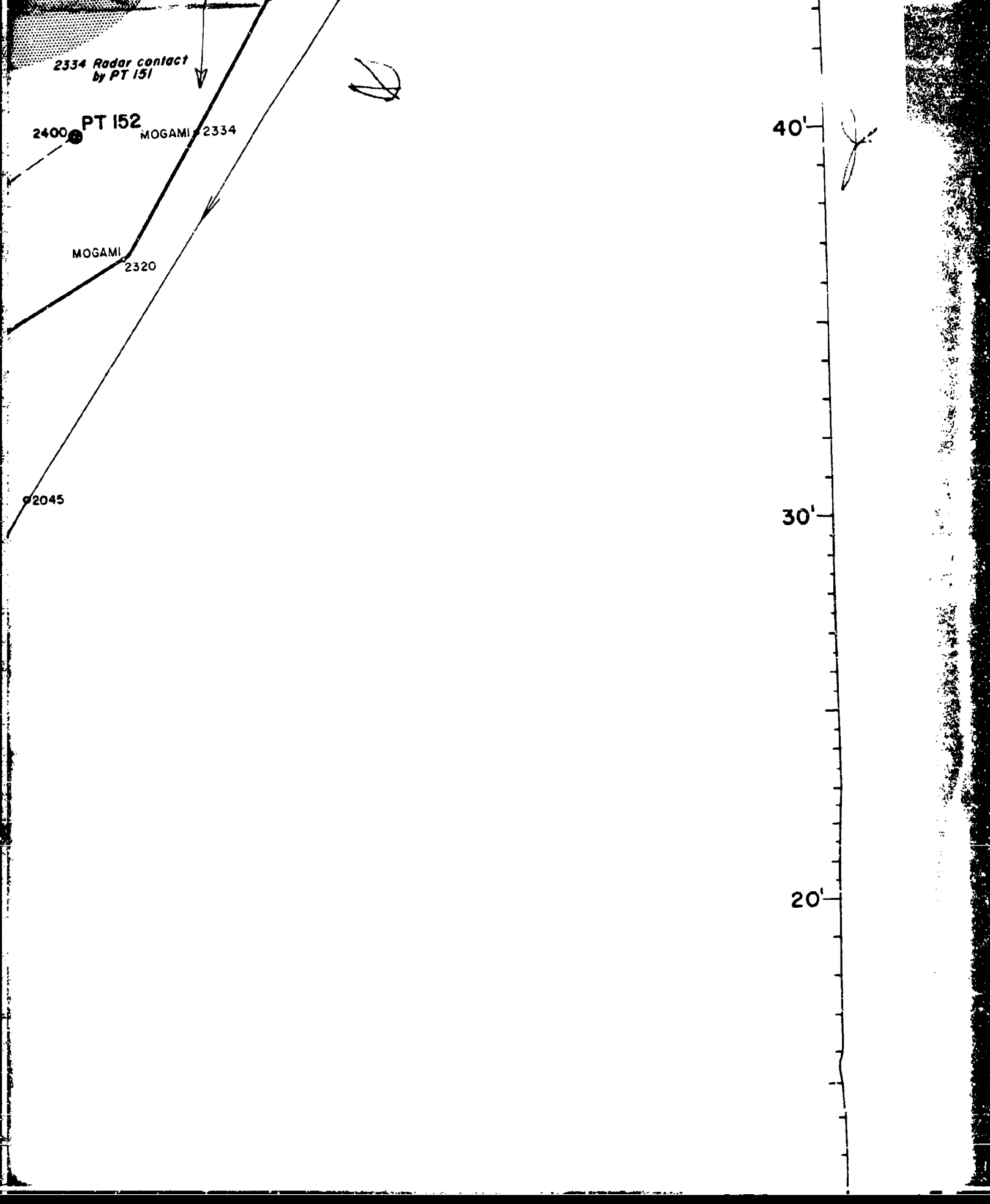

D
E
125° 00'
10'
50'
40'
1910 PTS 152, 130, 131
LIMASAWA I.
1900 PTS 127, 128, 129
1830-1958
PTS 151, 146, 130
1916
2300
2200
PTS 150 194 196
2400 PTS 150 194 196
2300
2334
3rd Section Rendezvous
250°—17 miles from Binit Pt.
16
2400
PTS 151 146 190
ASAGUMO
2400 MICHISHIO
YAMAGUMO
MOGAMI
1945
contact 151
MOGAMI 2334
2320

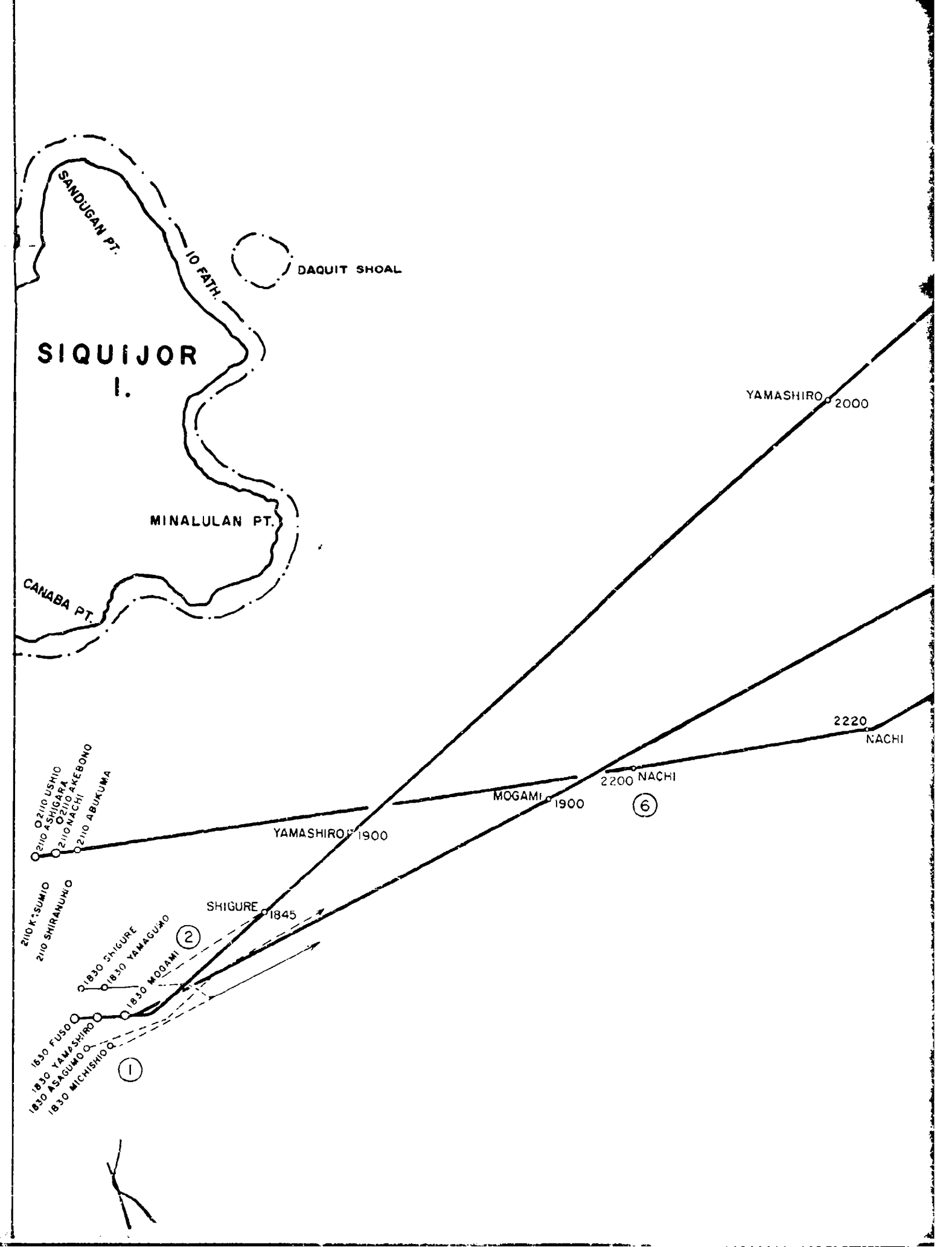

MINDANAO
CAMIGUIN I.
9°
PANGLAO I.
BALICASAG I.
PAMILACAN I.
CERVERA SHOAL
SANDUGAN PT.
10 FATH.
DAQUIT SHOAL
SIQUIJOR I.
YAMASHIRO

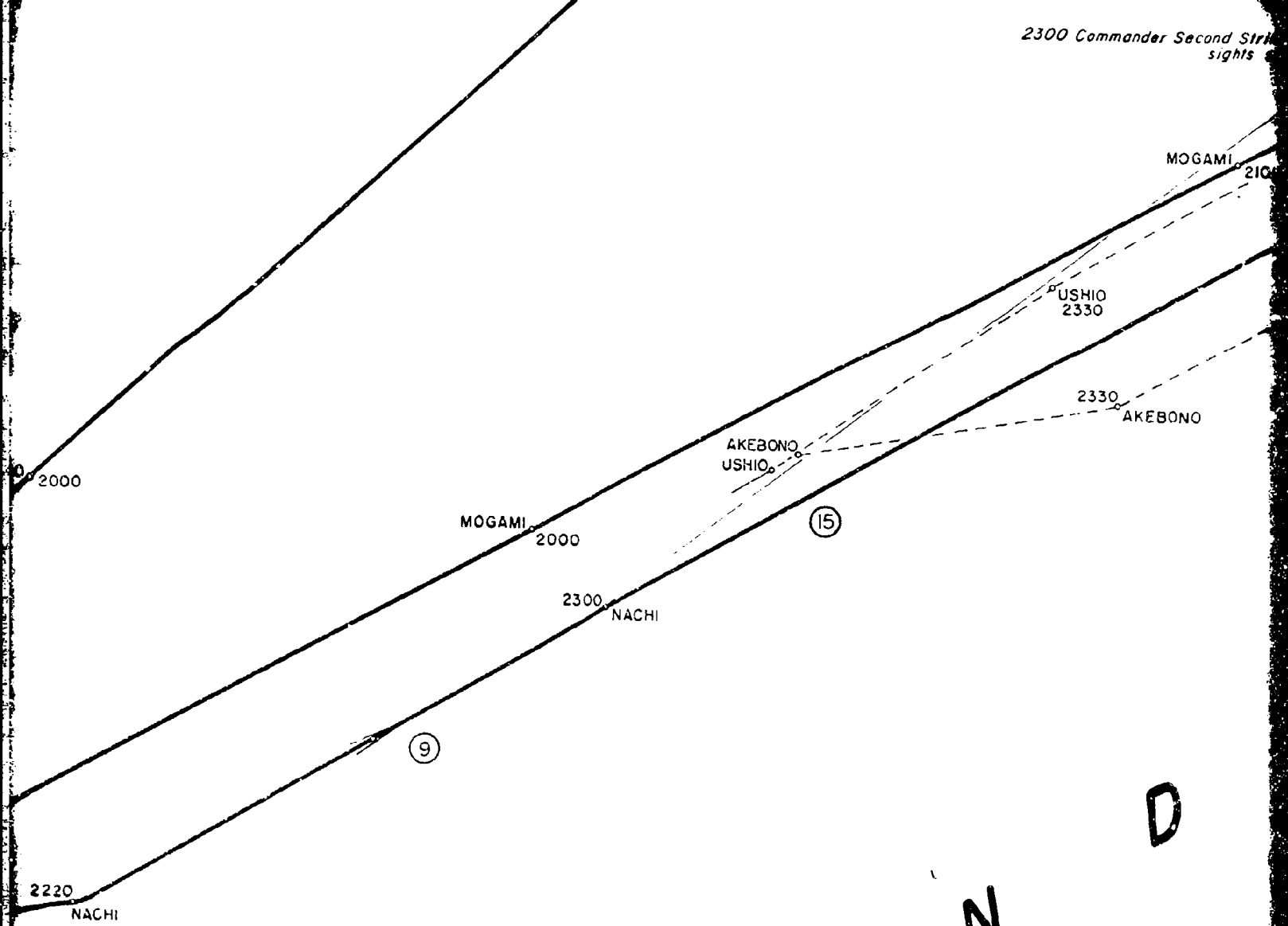

10 FATH.
YAMASHI
5
YAMASHIRO 2100
2300 Commander Second
MOGAMI
USHIO
2330
2330
AKEBONO


NAUCO PT.
YAMASHIRO
2236
2236 Radar Contact by PT 131
YAMASHIRO
2200
10
2253
2254
SHIGURE
YAMASHIRO
FUSO
2254
2310
12
13
8
2236
14
PT 152
2324
MOGAMI
2227
7
MOGAMI
2206
MOGAMI
2200
2300
PTS 127, 128, 129
sight starshells
PTS 52, 130, 131
12 miles—Point of closest approach
2341 PTS 130, 131
Second Striking Force
sights starshells
USHIO
2400
MOGAMI
2100
2400
2400
2400
2400
2400
NACHI
ASHIGARA
ABUKUMA
SHIRANUHI
KASUMI
AKEBONO
2400
PTS 130, 131, 127, 128, 129
2400
2300
4
2145 PTS 127
MEDANO I.
AKEBONO


2334 Radar contact by PT 151
2400
PT 152
MOGAMI
2334
2300 Sight starshells
MOGAMI
2320
MOGAMI
2300
11
2045
2227
7
PTS 152, 130, 131
PT Patrol Line
PTS 127, 128, 129
2400
9
100
4
2145
PTS 127, 128, 129
JIGDUP REEF


2334 Radar contact by PT 151
PT 152
2400
MOGAMI
2334
MOGAMI
2320
2045
40'
30'
20'


SANDUGAN PT.
10 FATH.
DAQUIT SHOAL
SIQUIJOR I.
MINALULAN PT.
CANABA PT.
YAMASHIRO 2000
2220 NACHI
2200 NACHI
MOGAMI 1900
YAMASHIRO 1900
SHIGURE 1845
2110 USHIO
2110 ASHIGARA
2110 AKEBONO
2110 NACHI
2110 ABUKUMA
2110 KUMANO
2110 SHIRANUHI
1830 SHIGURE
1830 YAMAGUMO
1830 MOGAMI
1830 FUSO
1830 YAMASHIRO
1830 ASAGUMO
1830 MICHISHIO
6
2
1



M I N D

BATTLE

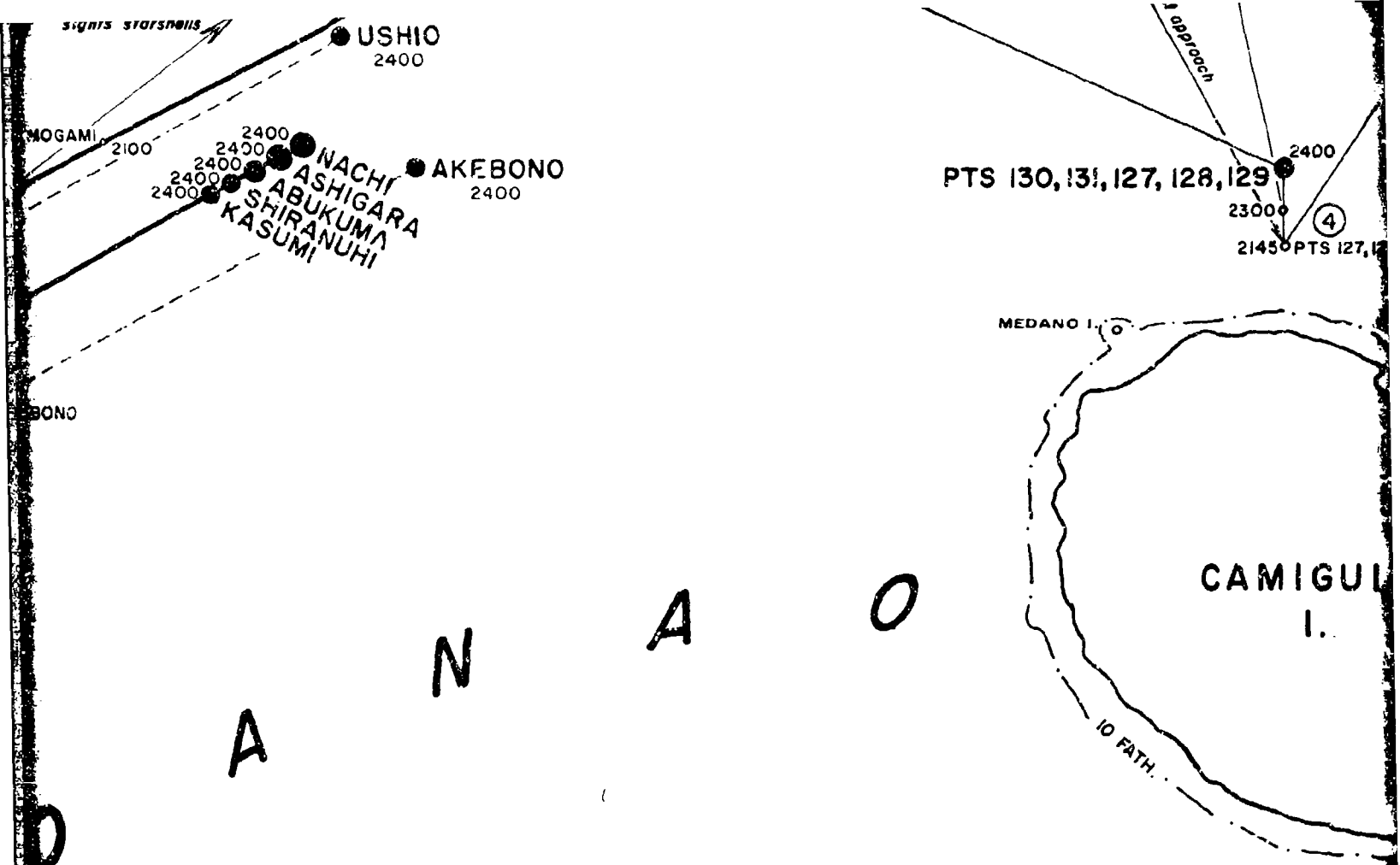
JAPANE

1830 – 24

BA

Notes:

1. Current used THIRD



TLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

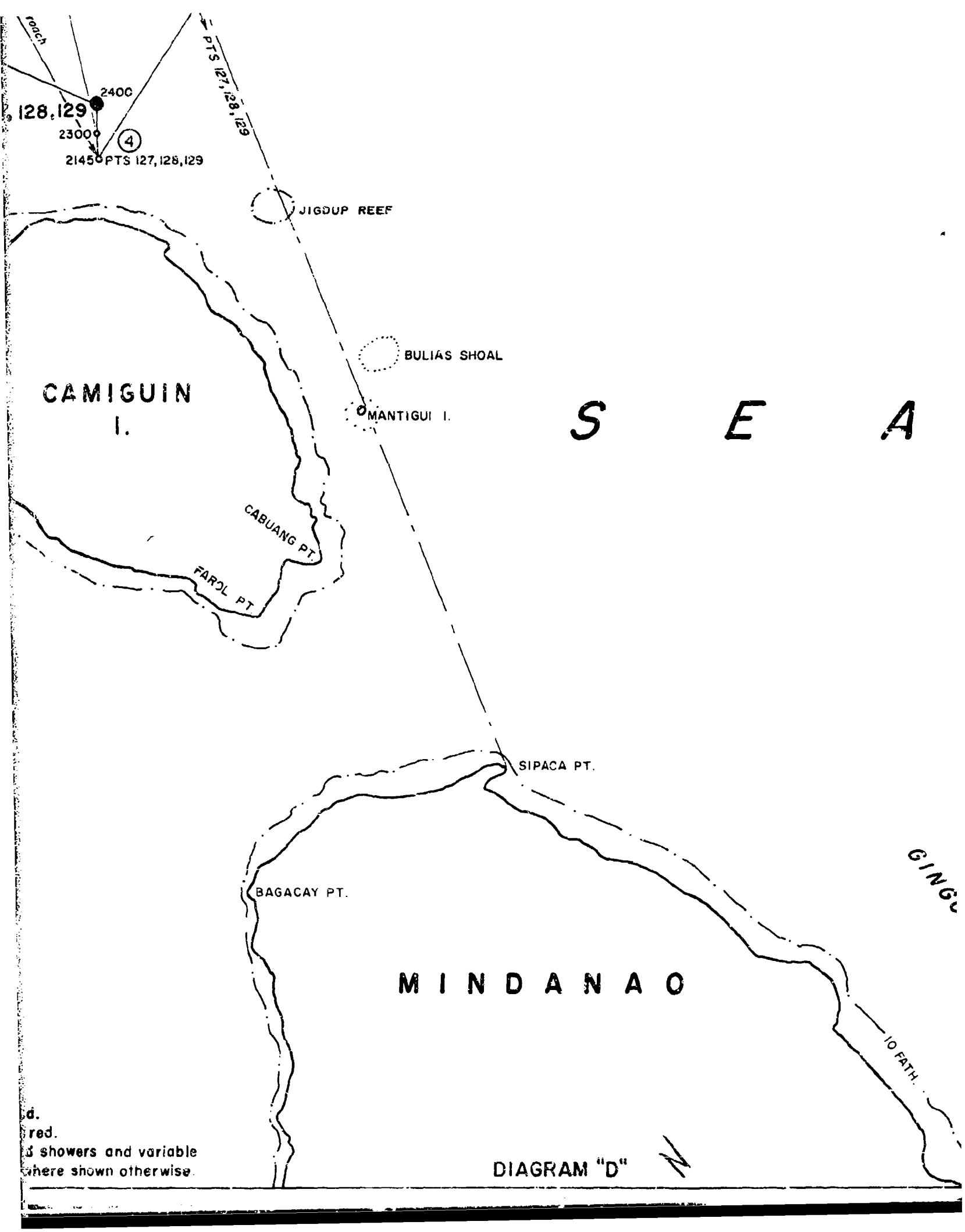
APANESE APPROACH PAST PT BOATS

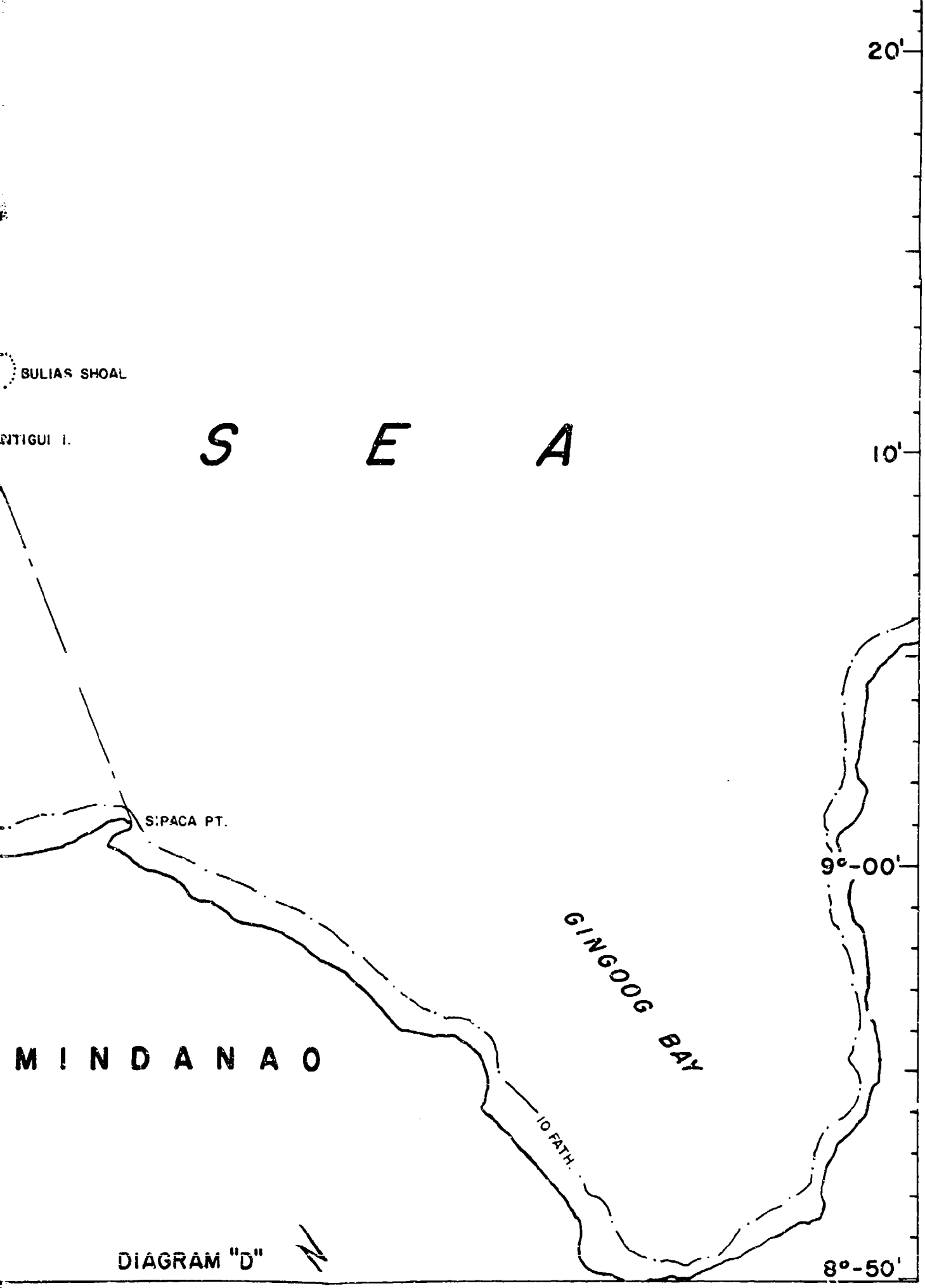
0–2400, 24 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

ed THIRD Section – 1.8 to 1.25 knots, set 260°(T) to 246°(T)
ed SECOND Striking Force – 1.5 to 1.2 knots, set 260°(T) to 255°(T)

3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Weather – scattered showers and variabl


roach
2400
128,129
2300
4
2145
PTS 127,128,129
PTS 127,128,129
JIGDUP REEF
BULIAS SHOAL
CAMIGUIN
I.
MANTIGUI I.
S E A
CABUANG PT.
FAROL PT.
SIPACA PT.
BAGACAY PT.
MINDANAO
10 FATH.
DIAGRAM "D"
N
d.
red.
showers and variable
here shown otherwise.


20'
BULIAS SHOAL
NTIGUI I.
S E A
10'
SIPACA PT.
9°-00'
GINGOOG BAY
M I N D A N A O
10 FATH.
DIAGRAM "D"
N
8°-50'

Events Depicted on Diagram "E"

October 25th, 1944

0000 - 0100

1. 0000 Limasawa PT's 151, 146 and 190, having sighted the Japanese FIRST Division at 2354, continued approach on port quarter of large ship for torpedo attack.

2. 0012 Commander FIRST Division changed course to 010°(T) and informed Commander THIRD Section that he was "penetrating from now."

3. 0015 SW Panaon PT's commenced return to their assigned station off Balongbalong.

4. 0018 MOGAMI detected motor torpedo boats on bearing 100°(T) and made a voice radio report. Commander FIRST Division ordered DD's into column astern as previously planned and searched area from starboard beam to quarter with searchlight but did not pick up MTB's visually.

5. 0019 MTB's closed to 1800 yards on port quarter of MOGAMI for torpedo attack. PT's 151 and 146 fired one torpedo each and attempted to get into position to fire a second torpedo. PT 190 did not fire. No hits were made.

6. 0020 As DD's were maneuvering to take station in column astern of MOGAMI, the MTB's were detected, illuminated with searchlights and taken under fire by YAMAGUMO. The MTB's turned right and returned the fire. PT's 146 and 151 retired on easterly courses while PT 190, in an endeavor to fire a torpedo, turned back to the northwest.

7. 0023 Commander FIRST Division sighted a ship silhouette, apparently enemy, and so advised Commander THIRD Section. Assuming that this sighting was on the same general bearing as the MTB sighting on bearing 100°(T) he turned away.

8. 0025 Commander FIRST Division sighted a ship silhouette on bearing 200°(T) and so reported to Commander THIRD Section. He now realized that his division was in danger from enfilade fire.

9. 0025 SHIGURE sighted a destroyer bearing 040°(T) and so reported to Commander THIRD Section.

10. 0026 Both divisions of the Japanese THIRD Section fired star-shells to illuminate each other. Visual identification was later established without damage to either group.

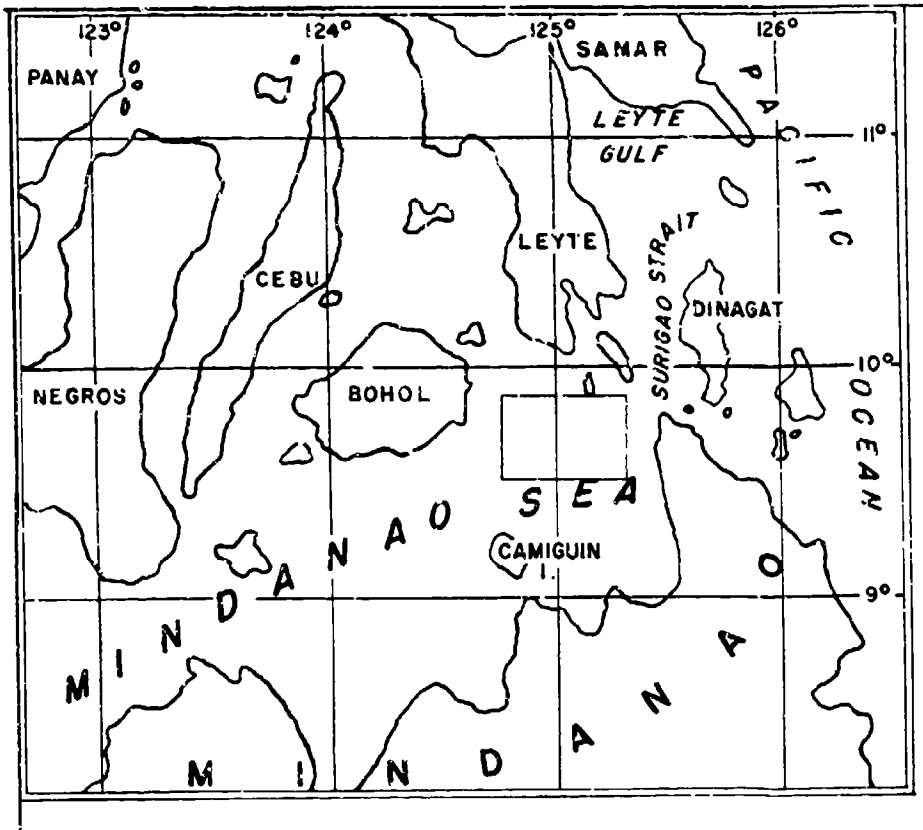
49679 O - 59 - 56

11. 0030 Commander FIRST Division returned to a southerly course, having decided to break off the sweep of the waters west of Panaon and rejoin the SECOND Division.

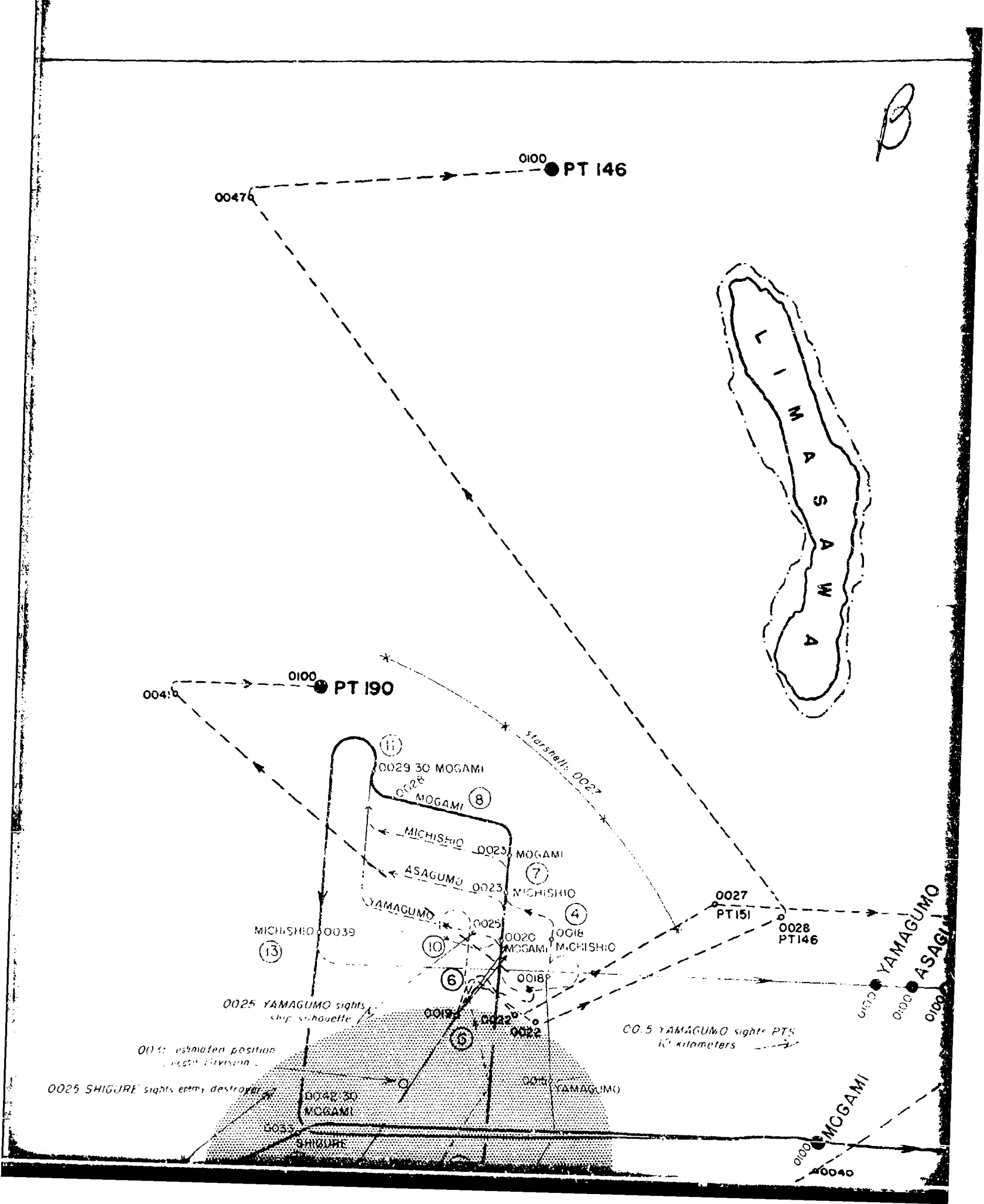
12. 0033 Commander SECOND Division executed course 090°(T).

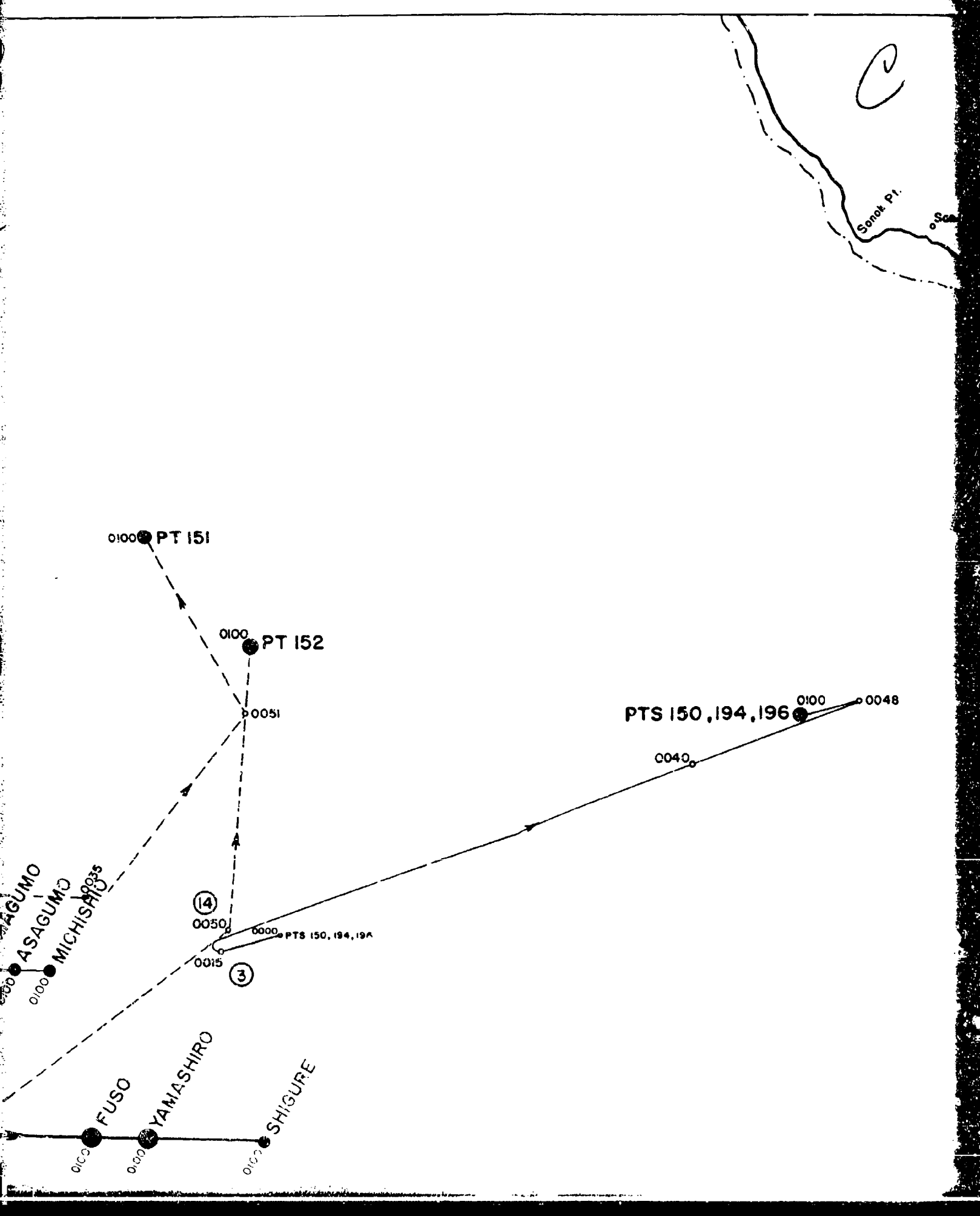
13. 0039 Commander FIRST Division released his destroyers to form No. TWO Approach Formation.

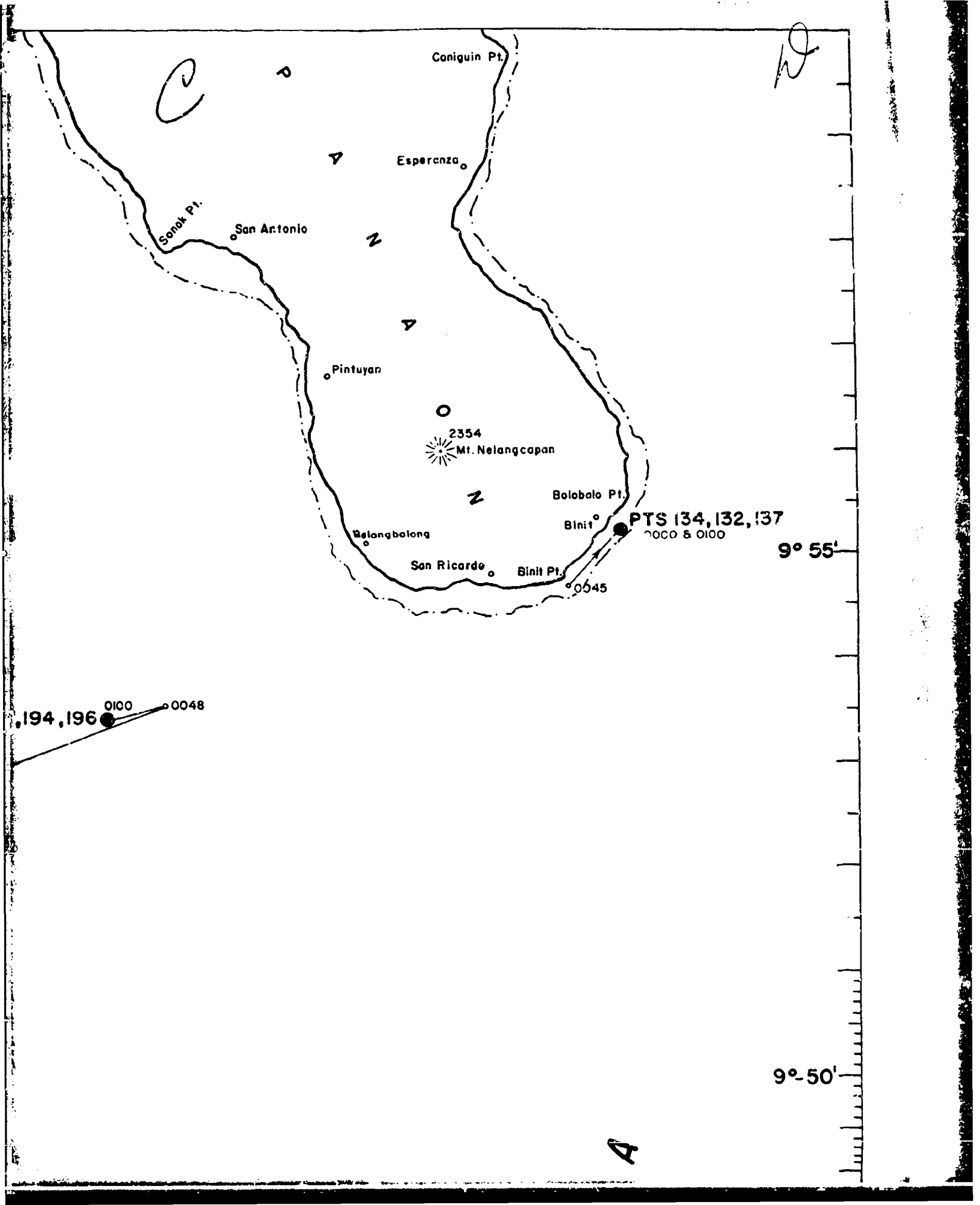
14. 0050 PT 152 commenced return to base in order to transmit a contact report and obtain aid for a wounded man.

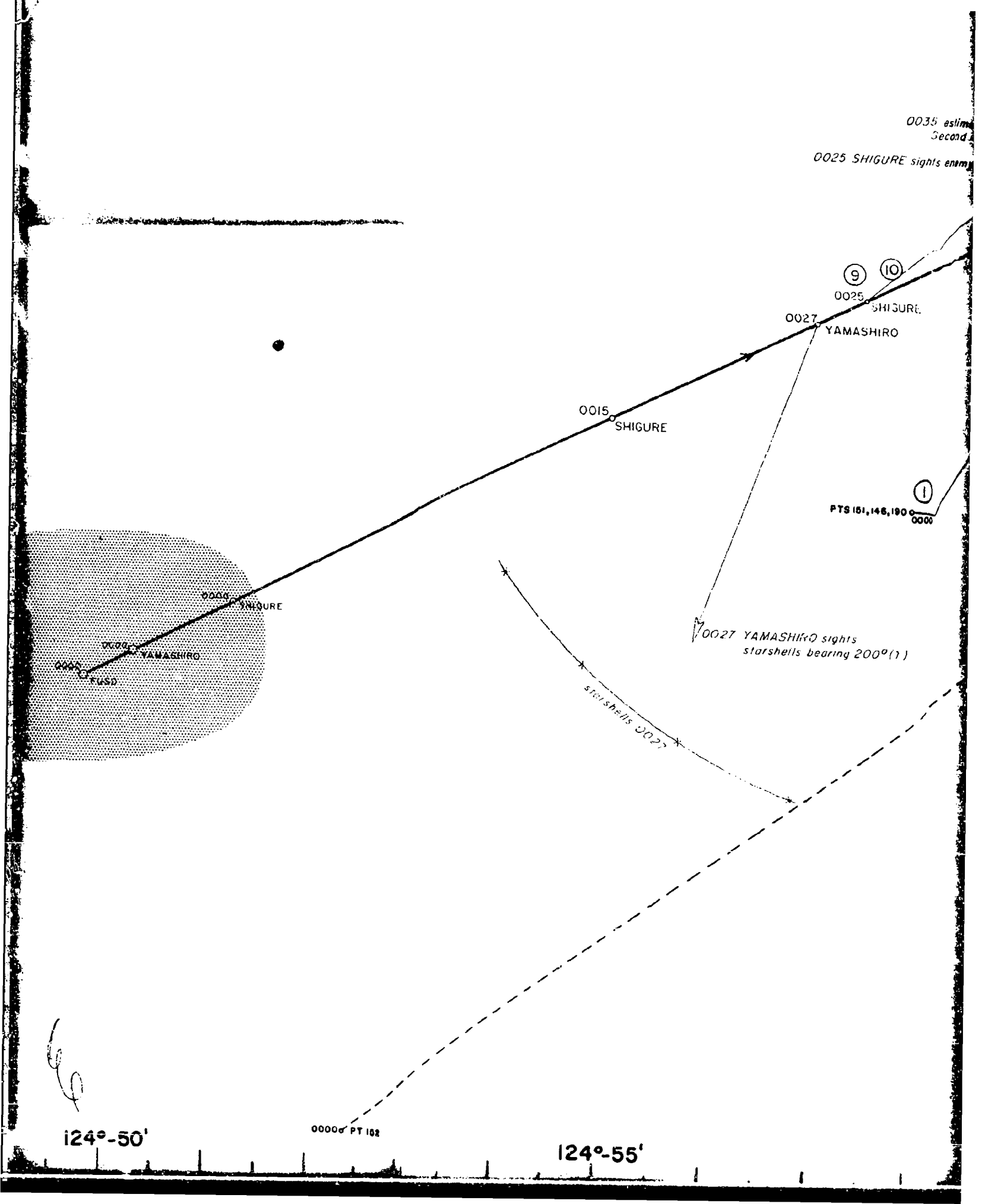

123°
124°
125°
126°
SAMAR
PANAY
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC
11°
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
CEBU
DINAGAT
10°
NEGROS
BOHOL
OCEAN
SEA
CAMIGUIN I.
MINDANAO
9°
MINDANAO

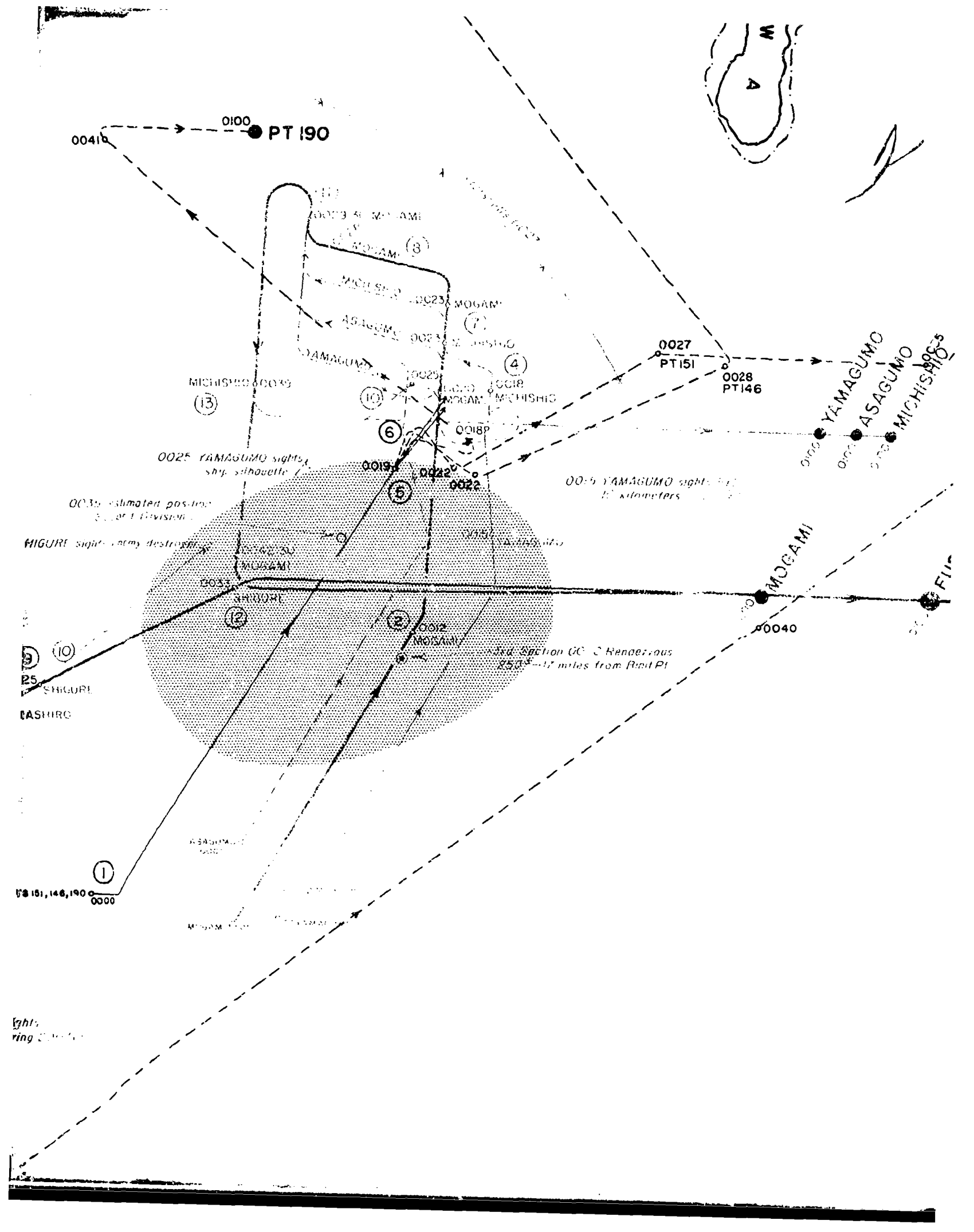
A


0100
PT 146
0047
LIMASAWA
0100
PT 190
0041
starshell 0027
0029 30 MOGAMI
0028
MOGAMI
MICHISHIO 0025 MOGAMI
ASAGUMO 0023 MICHISHIO
YAMAGUMO
0025
MICHISHIO 0039
0020 MOGAMI
0018 MICHISHIO
0018?
0025 YAMAGUMO sights
ship silhouette
0019?
0022
0022
0027
PT151
0028
PT146
YAMAGUMO
ASAGUMO
0100
0100
0100
CO 5 YAMAGUMO sights PTS
kilometers
0041 estimated position
recte division
0025 SHIGURE sights enemy destroyer
0042 30
MOGAMI
0035
SHIGURE
0025 YAMAGUMO
MOGAMI
0100
0040

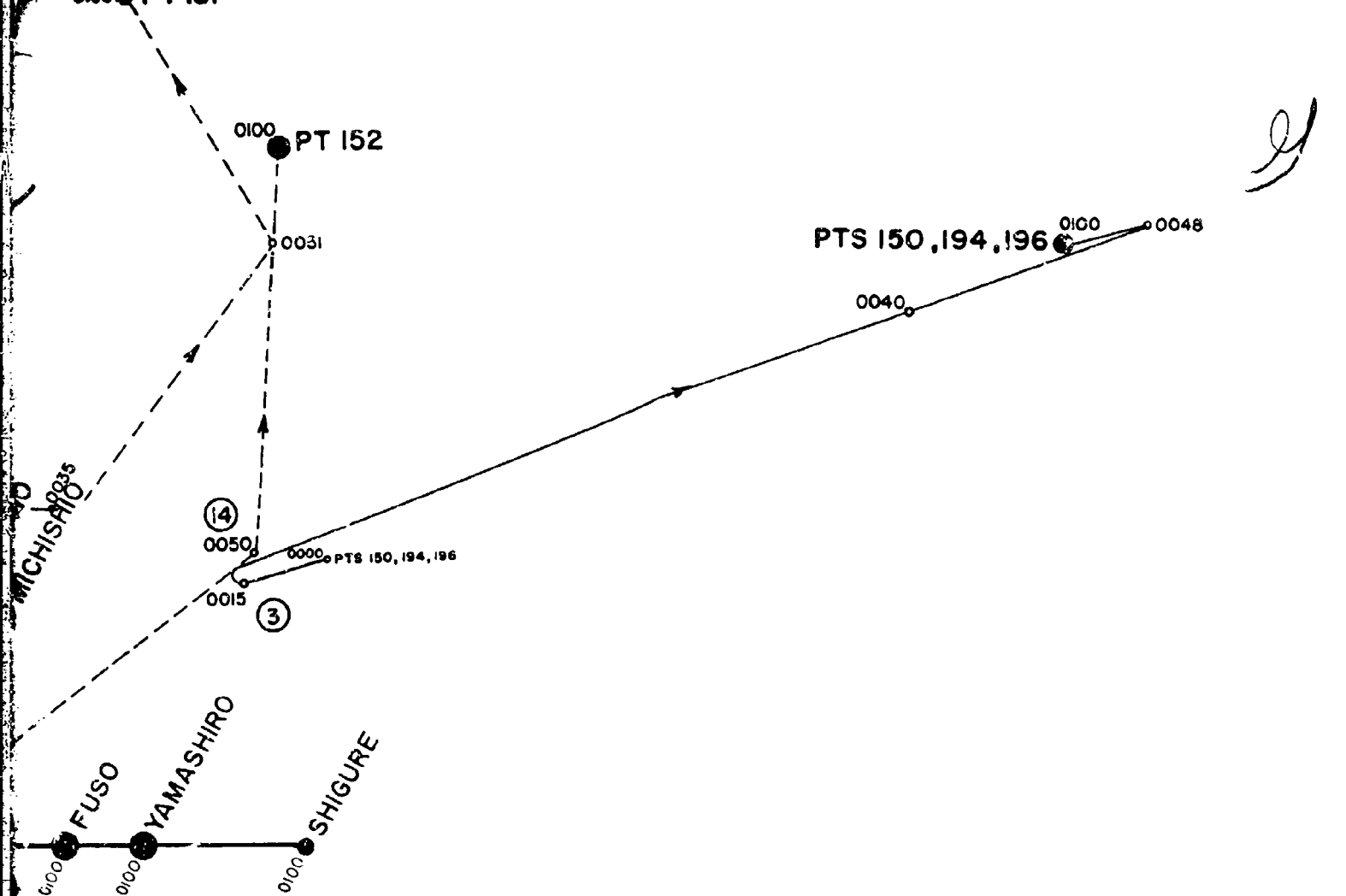

C
Sonok Pt.
0100 PT 151
0100 PT 152
0051
PTS 150, 194, 196
0100
0048
0040
AGUMO
ASAGUMO
MICHISHIO
0035
0100
14
0050
0000
PTS 150, 194, 196
0015
3
FUSO
YAMASHIRO
SHIGURE
0100
0100
0100


Caniguin Pt.
Esperanza
Sonak Pt.
San Antonio
Pintuyan
2354
Mt. Nelangcapan
Bolobalo Pt.
Binit
PTS 134,132,137
0000 & 0100
Belongbolong
San Ricardo
Binit Pt.
0545
9° 55'
,194,196
0100
0048
9°-50'

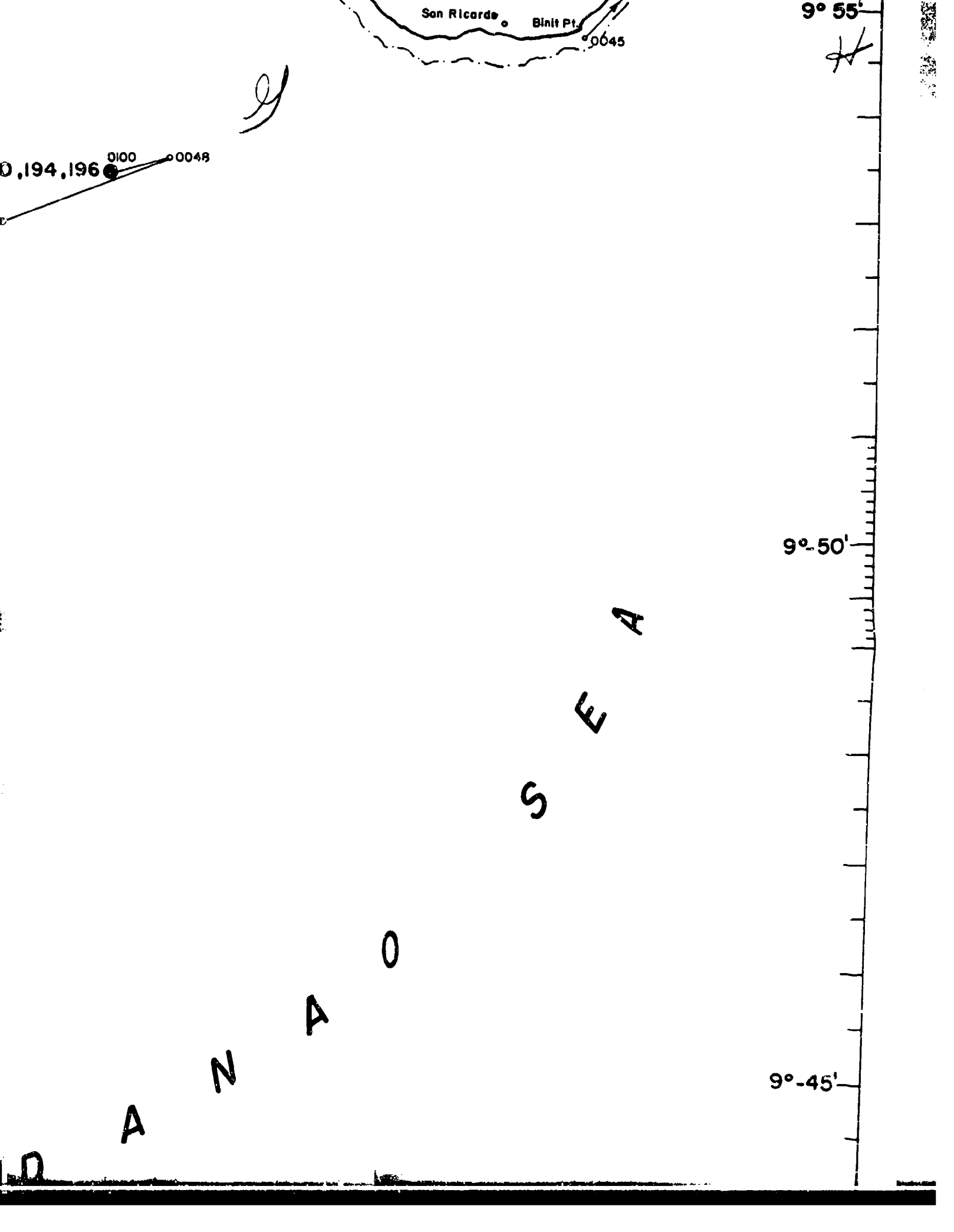

0035 eslim
Second
0025 SHIGURE sights enem
9
10
0025
SHIGURE
0027
YAMASHIRO
0015
SHIGURE
1
PTS 151, 146, 190
0000
0000
SHIGURE
0000
YAMASHIRO
0000
FUSO
0027 YAMASHIRO sights
starshells bearing 200°(T)
starshells 0027
0000 PT 102
124°-50'
124°-55'



0100
PT 190
0041
0027
PT151
0028
PT146
YAMAGUMO
ASAGUMO
MICHISHIO
MOGAMI
0040
0025 YAMAGUMO sights ship silhouette
0019
0022
0018P
0012
0033
SHIGURE
0000


0100
PT 152
0031
PTS 150, 194, 196
0100
0048
0040
MICHISHIO
0035
14
0050
0000
PTS 150, 194, 196
0015
3
FUSO
YAMASHIRO
SHIGURE
0100
0100
0100

D A N A


San Ricardo
Binit Pt.
0045
0100
0048
0,194,196
9° 55'
9°-50'
9°-45'
SEA
ANAO

BATTLE OF SU

FIRST DIVISION S
WEST OF PAN

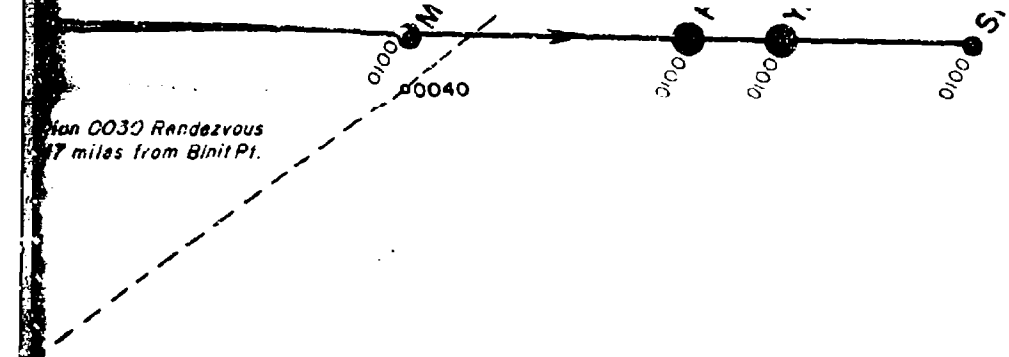
0000-0100, 25

BATTLE FOR

OCTOBE

Notes:

1. Current used THIRD Section-17
2. Current used PTS 150, 194, 196-



BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

FIRST DIVISION SWEEP OF WATERS WEST OF PANAON ISLAND

0000-0100, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

N

M

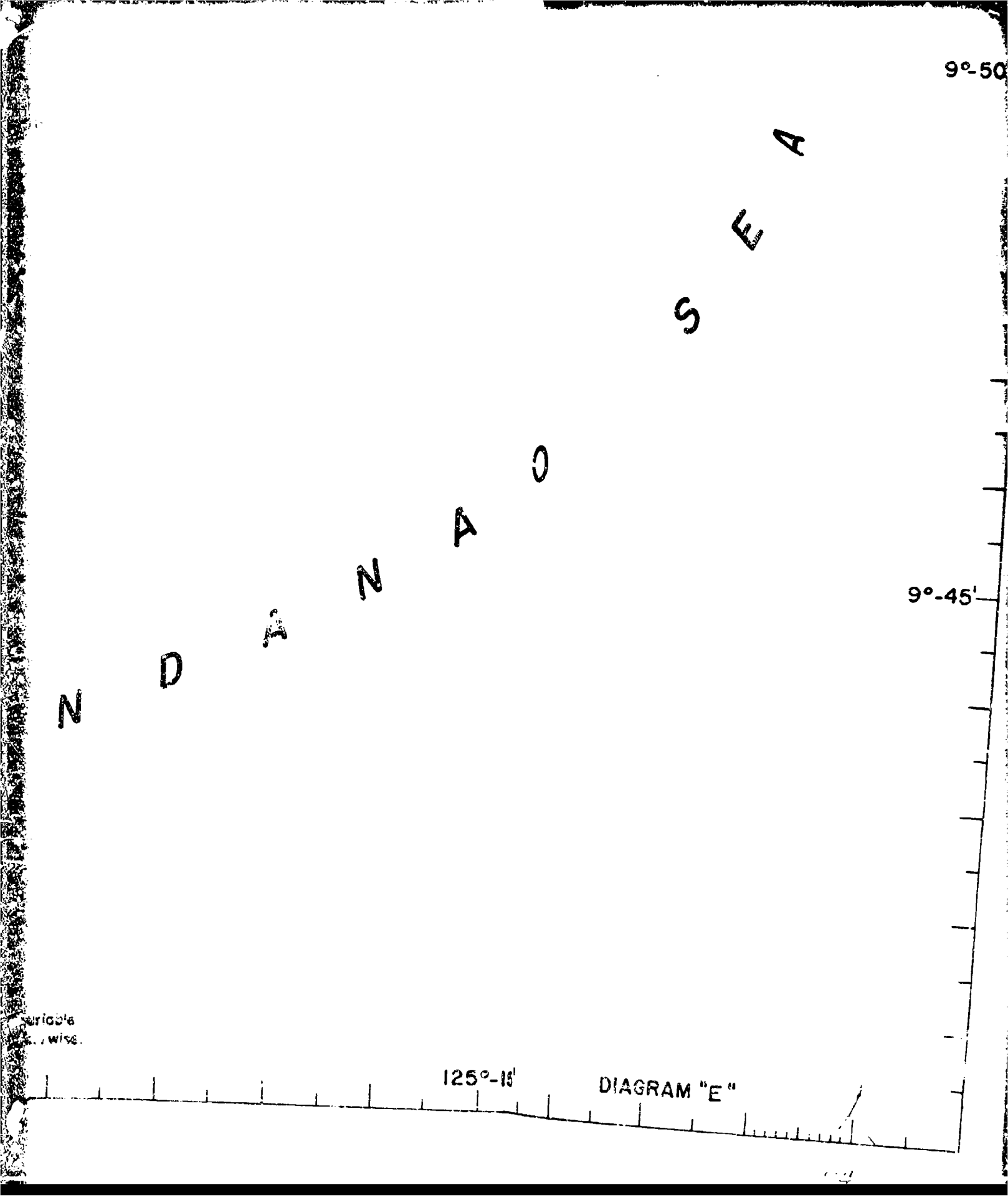
rrent used THIRD Section—1.7 to 1.86 knots, set 255°(T) to 250°(T).
rrent used PTS 150, 194, 196—2.04 knots, set 256°(T).

3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Weather—scattered sh and variable conditions except wherwn otherwise.

125°-05'

125°

CONFIDENTIAL


9°-50
SEA
MINDANAO
9°-45'
125°-15'
DIAGRAM "E"

Events Depicted on Diagram "F"

October 25th, 1944

0100 - 0245

1. 0100 Commander FIRST Division with MOGAMI and DESDIV FOUR continued rejoining Commander THIRD Section to form Approach Disposition No. TWO. Due to squalls and rain in this area visibility was reduced to less than 3,000 yards.

2. 0118 SW Panaon PT's failed to detect the THIRD Section which passed at a range of from two to four miles. MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO likewise failed to detect the MTB's.

3. 0124 Commander SE Panaon PT's in PT 134, having tracked the Japanese force since 0116, ordered his MTB's to attack. The MTB's became separated which resulted in independent attacks.

4. 0125 Commander THIRD Section changed course of formation to 040°(T) by column movement.

5. 0142 PT 137 (SE Panaon PT's) launched a torpedo at two destroyers sighted visually at 1,250 yards. The torpedo missed and shortly thereafter PT 137 lost contact.

6. 0143 Sumilon PT's 523, 524 and 526 made radar contact on Japanese surface force. Commander Sumilon PT's ordered his MTB's to attack.

7. 0147 Lower Surigao PT's 490, 491 and 493 made radar contact to the south at eight miles. Commander Lower Surigao PT's ordered his MTB's to attack.

8. 0148 DESDIV FOUR destroyers of the FIRST Division rejoined and formed Approach Disposition No. TWO. Commander THIRD Section changed speed to twenty knots.

9. 0148 PT 132 (SE Panaon PT's) sighted a single destroyer and attacked independently by launching four torpedoes, apparently at the YAMAGUMO. All torpedoes missed.

10. 0200 PT 134 (SE Panaon PT's) evaluated the radar targets as a main body with a van of destroyers and turned to intercept.

11. 0202 Bilaa Point PT's 494, 497 and 324 made radar contact on enemy ships but did not attack as they were guarding Hinatuan Passage to prevent undetected passage by the Japanese.

12. 0202 Japanese THIRD Section changed formation course to 000°(T) by column movement.

13. 0205 PT 134 (SE Panaon PT's), while attacking, was illuminated by searchlight and taken under fire as he reached a range of 3,000 yards. He returned the gunfire, closed to 2,500 yards, launched three torpedoes and then retired. (All torpedoes missed and PT 134 received no damage.)

14. 0205 ASAGUMO reported sighting MTB's to the northwest and SHIGURE illuminated PT 134 and opened fire on her.

15. 0207 Lower Surigao PT's had closed to about 700 yards when they were illuminated with searchlights while launching torpedoes. PT 490 launched two more torpedoes while under fire from Japanese ships. (Japanese ships evaded and all torpedoes missed. PT 493 was damaged by three 5" shell hits in the hull.)

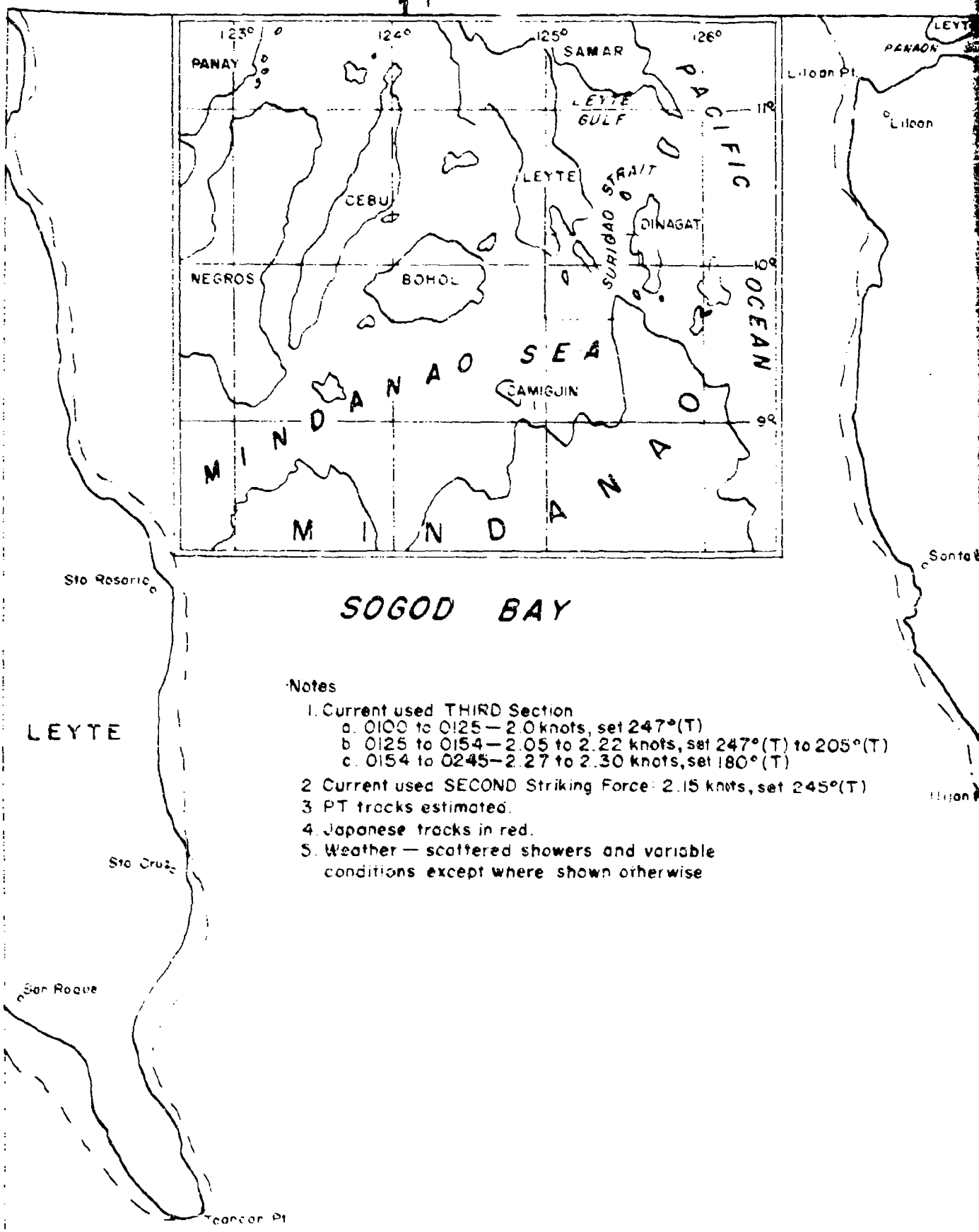
16. 0211 Since the MTB's to the northwest had retired Commander THIRD Section ordered a return to the base course of 000°(T). During the turn he sighted additional MTB's attacking from the southeast and ordered a turn away to 315°(T) and opened fire.

17. 0212 While Japanese ships were repelling the Lower Surigao PT's, the Sumilon PT's 523, 524 and 526 had closed undetected to less than 2,000 yards and launched torpedoes. The PT's were later taken under fire but escaped without damage, having launched a total of six torpedoes. Since the THIRD Section was turning away at the time of firing all torpedoes missed.

18. 0213:30 Japanese THIRD Section, having successfully repelled MTB's, returned to course 000°(T) to continue north into Surigao Strait.

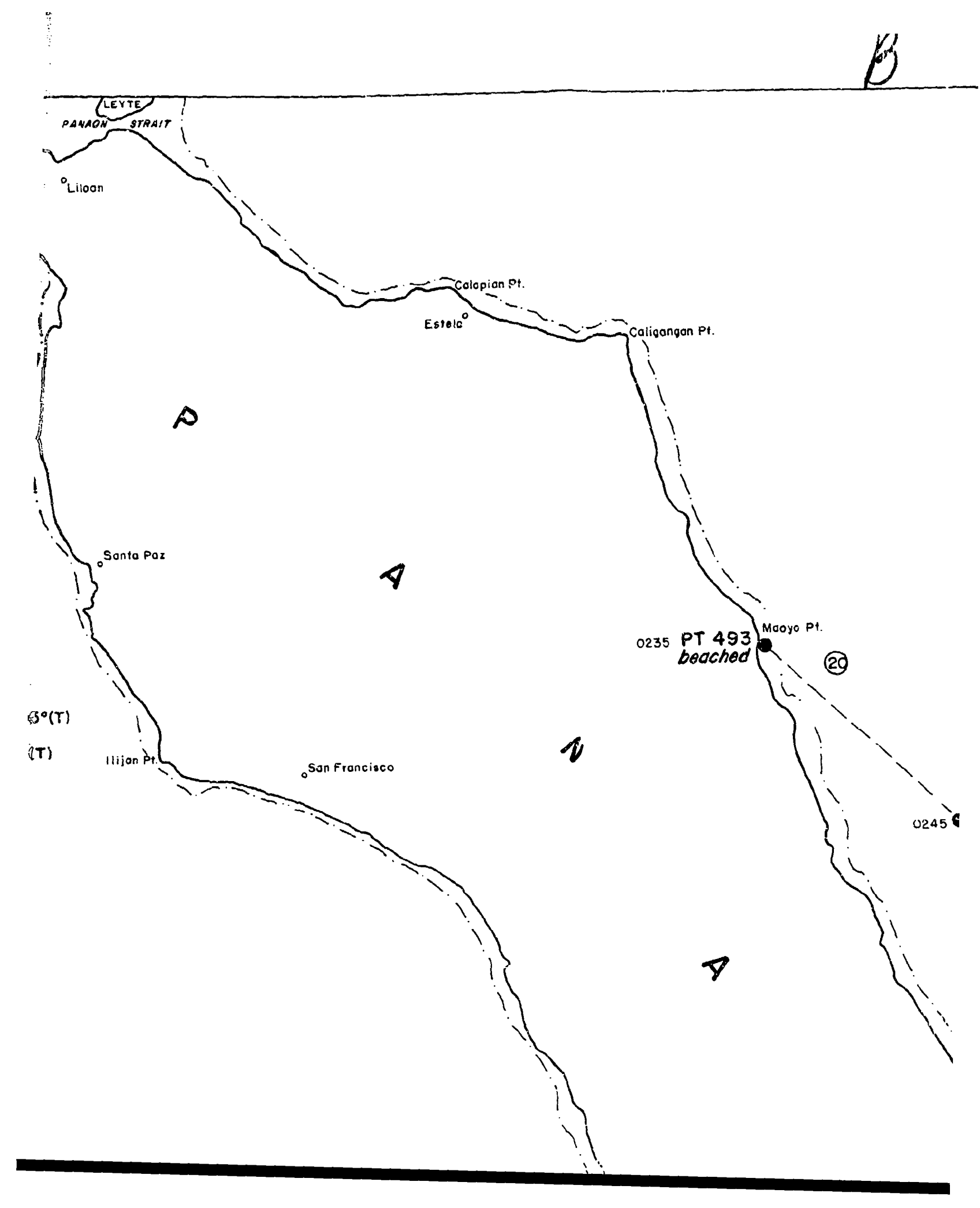
19. 0235 Commander THIRD Section advises Commander SECOND Striking Force that he had passed the lower entrance to Surigao Strait without damage although he had been attacked by Allied MTB's.

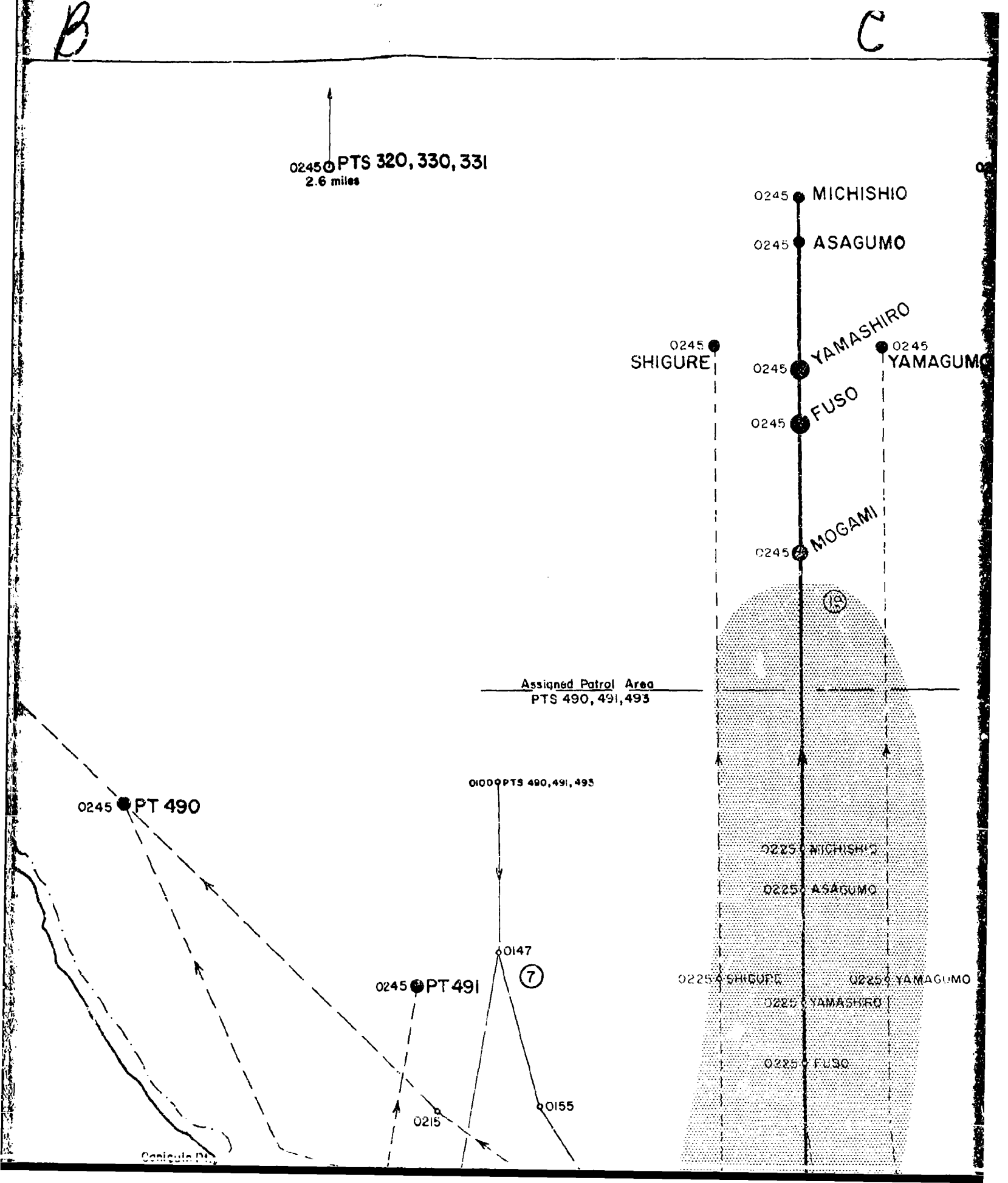
20. 0235 Lower Surigao Strait PT 493, seriously damaged during attack at 0207 and separated from other boats of the section, beached off Maoyo Point, Panaon Island.

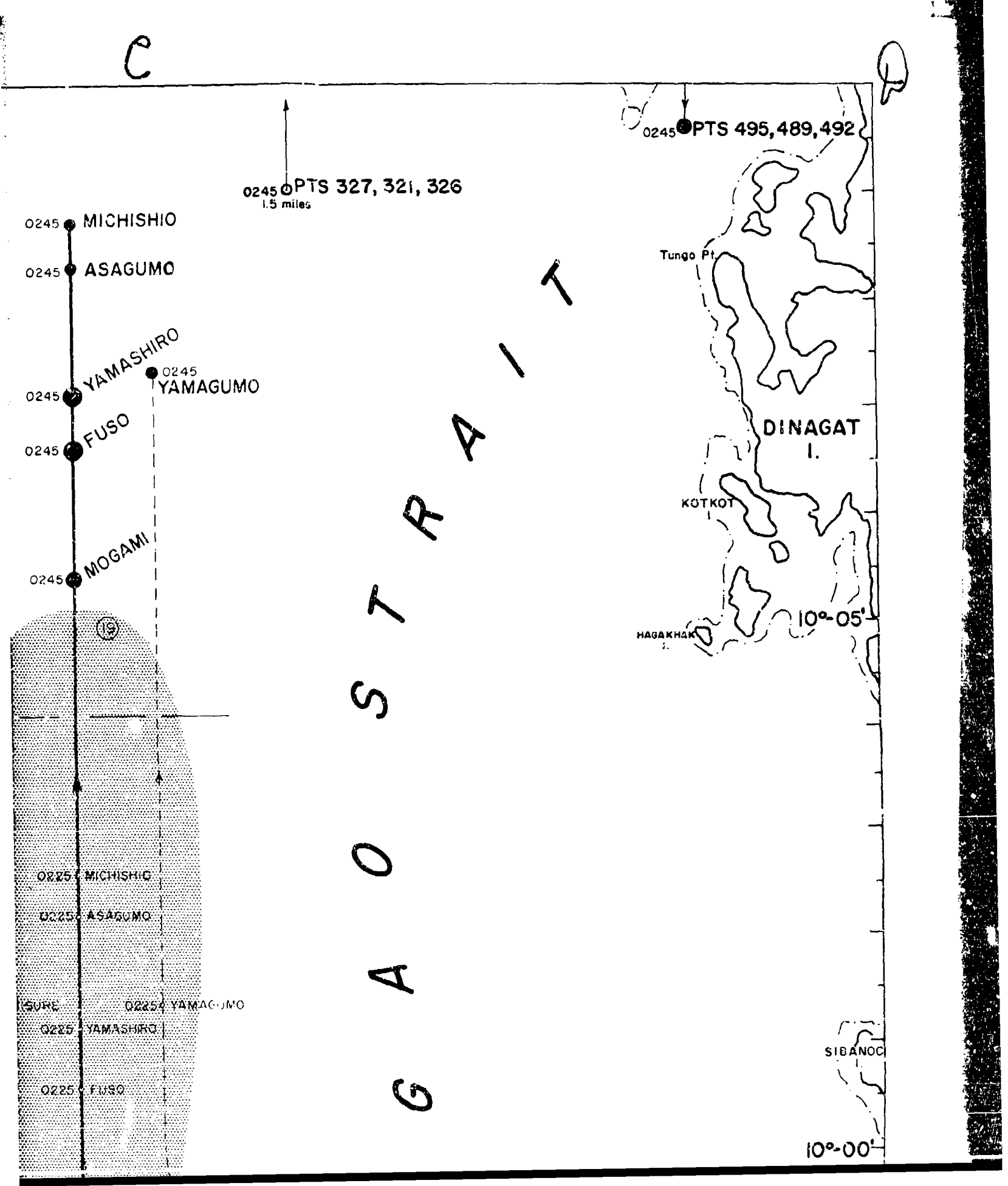


Notes

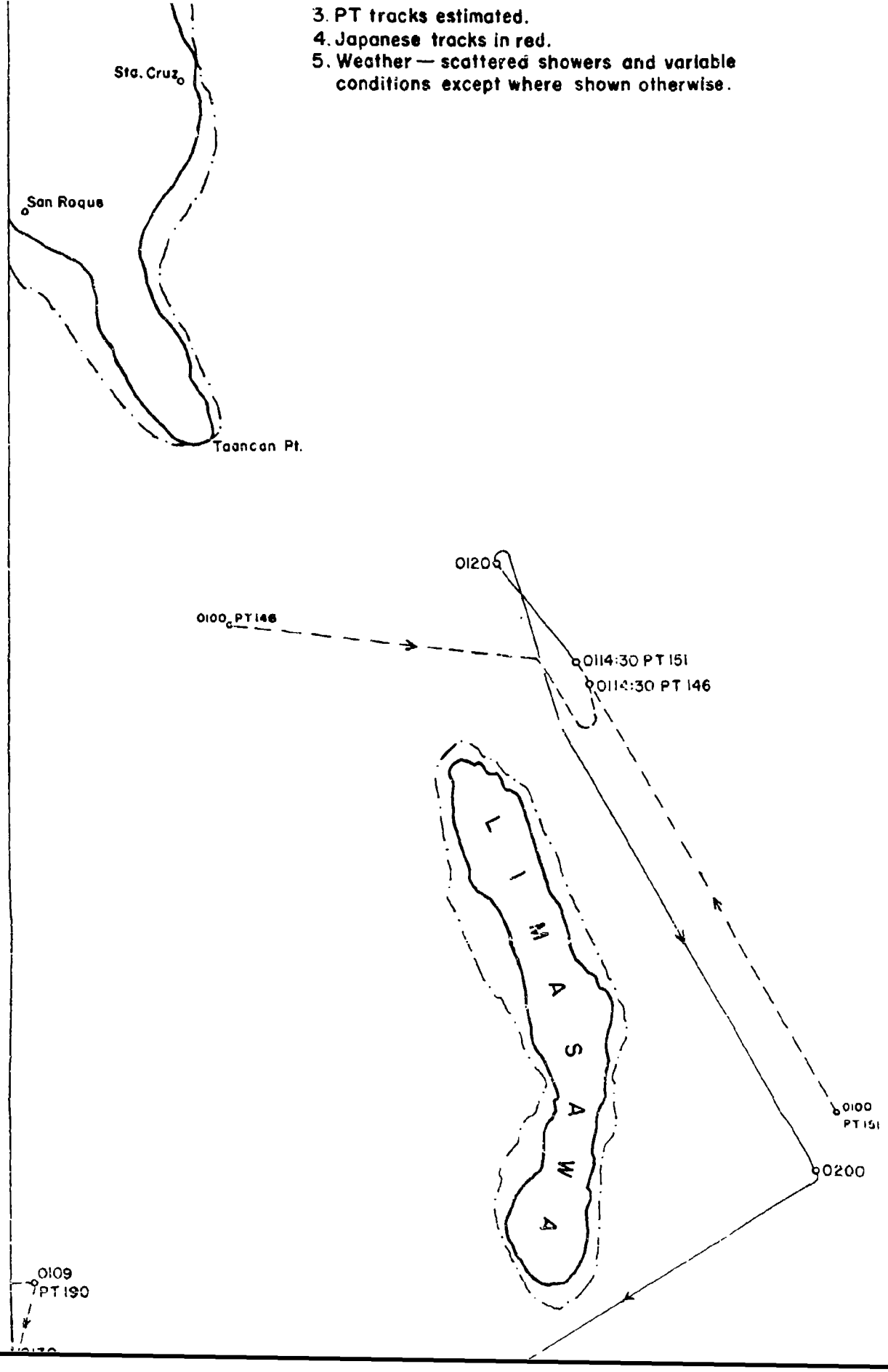
1. Current used THIRD Section
   a. 0100 to 0125 — 2.0 knots, set 247°(T)
   b. 0125 to 0154 — 2.05 to 2.22 knots, set 247°(T) to 205°(T)
   c. 0154 to 0245 — 2.27 to 2.30 knots, set 180°(T)
2. Current used SECOND Striking Force: 2.15 knots, set 245°(T)
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Weather — scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise

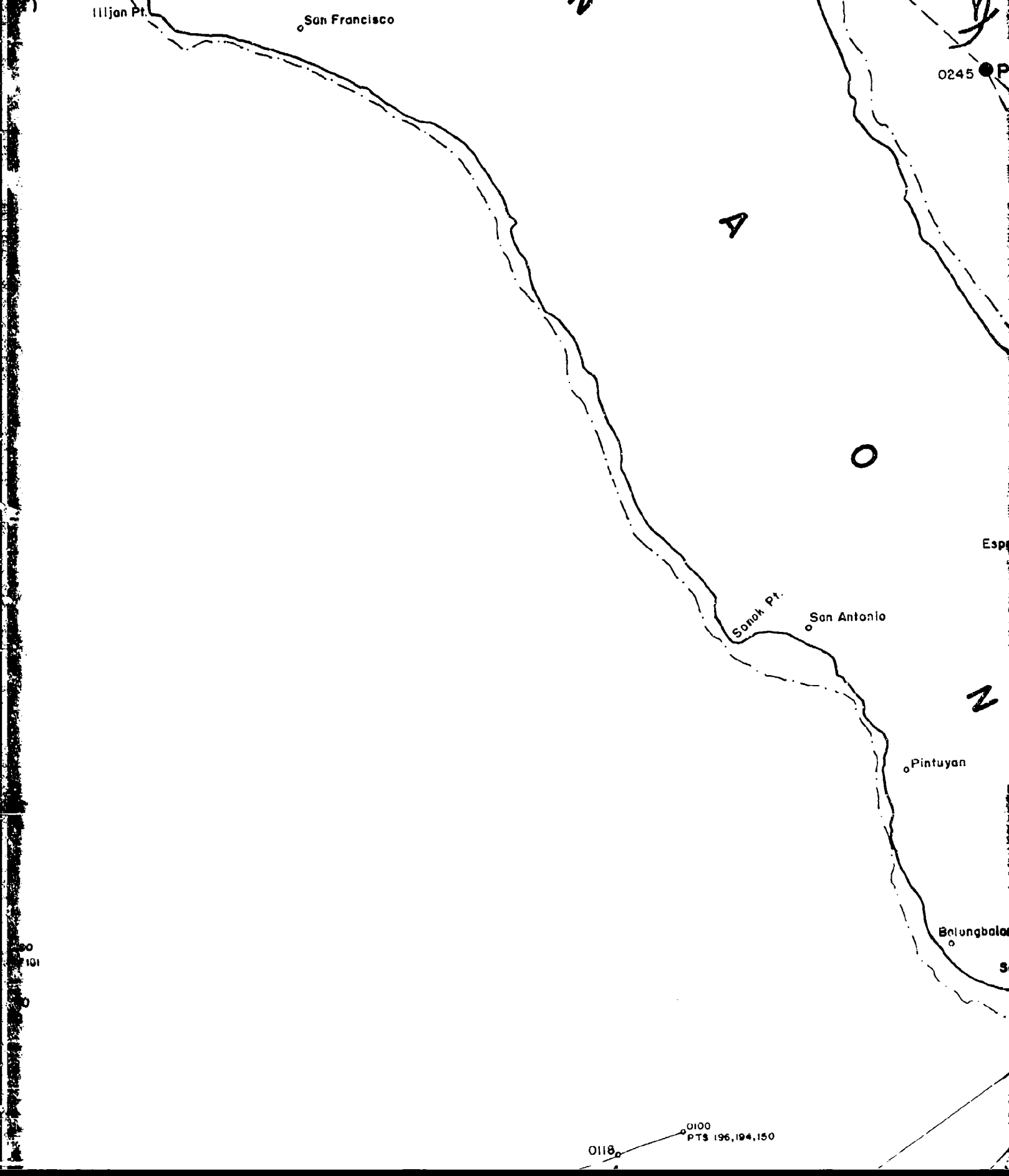

LEYTE
PANAON STRAIT
Liloan
Calapian Pt.
Estela
Caligangan Pt.
Santa Paz
Maoyo Pt.
0235 PT 493
beached
29
5°(T)
(T)
Iliian Pt.
San Francisco
0245

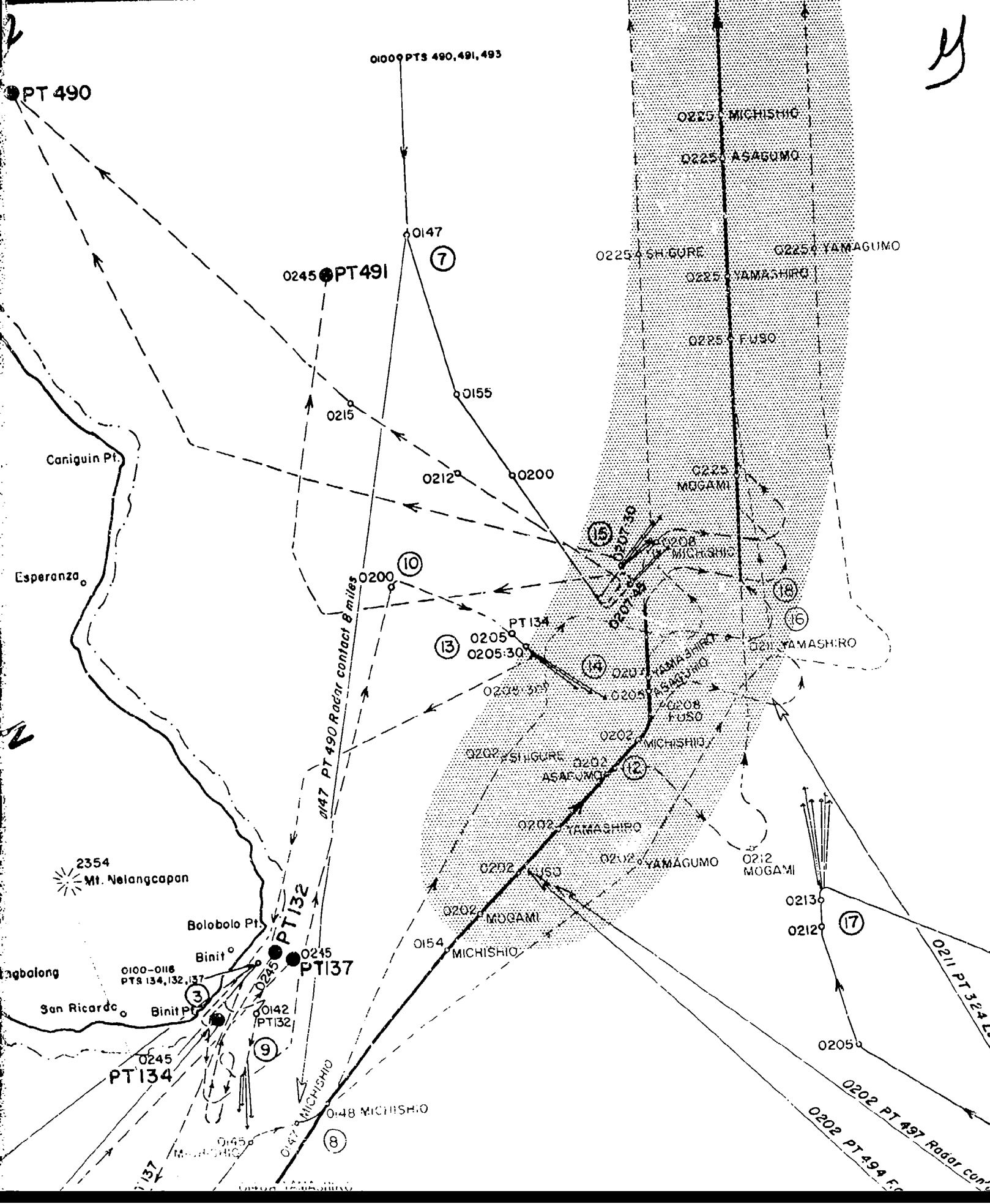

B
C
0245 PTS 320, 330, 331
2.6 miles
0245 MICHISHIO
0245 ASAGUMO
0245 YAMASHIRO
0245 FUSO
0245 MOGAMI
0245 SHIGURE
0245 YAMAGUMO
Assigned Patrol Area
PTS 490, 491, 493
0245 PT 490
0245 PT 491
0100 PTS 490, 491, 493
0147
0155
0215
0225 MICHISHIO
0225 ASAGUMO
0225 SHIGURE
0225 YAMAGUMO
0225 YAMASHIRO
0225 FUSO

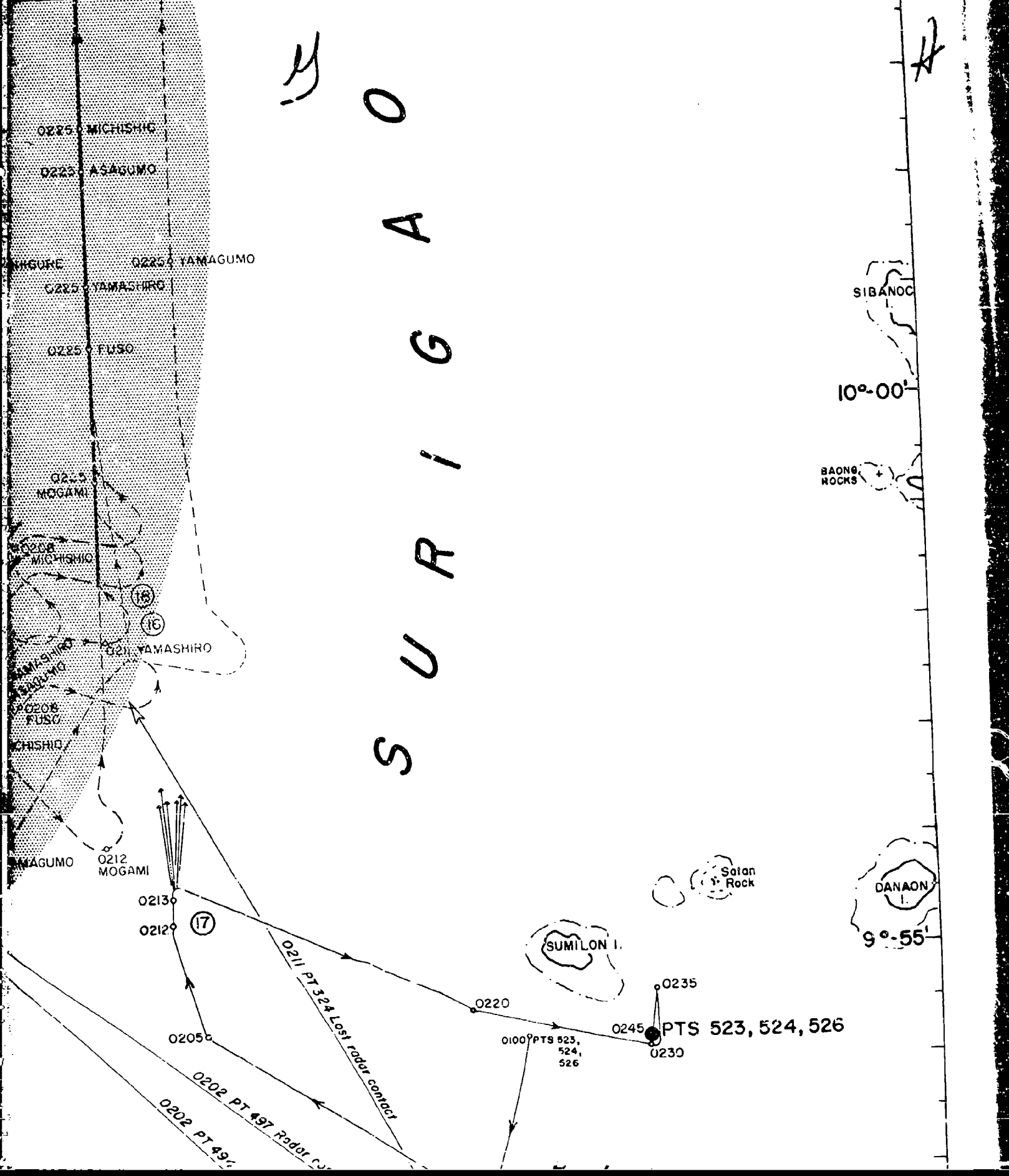

C
D
0245 PTS 495,489,492
0245 PTS 327, 321, 326
1.5 miles
0245 MICHISHIO
0245 ASAGUMO
0245 YAMASHIRO
0245 YAMAGUMO
0245 FUSO
0245 MOGAMI
Tungo Pt.
DINAGAT I.
KOTKOT
HAGAKHAK
10°-05'
GAOSTRAIT
0225 MICHISHIO
0225 ASAGUMO
SURE
0225 YAMAGUMO
0225 YAMASHIRO
0225 FUSO
SIBANOC
10°-00'

3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Weather — scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.

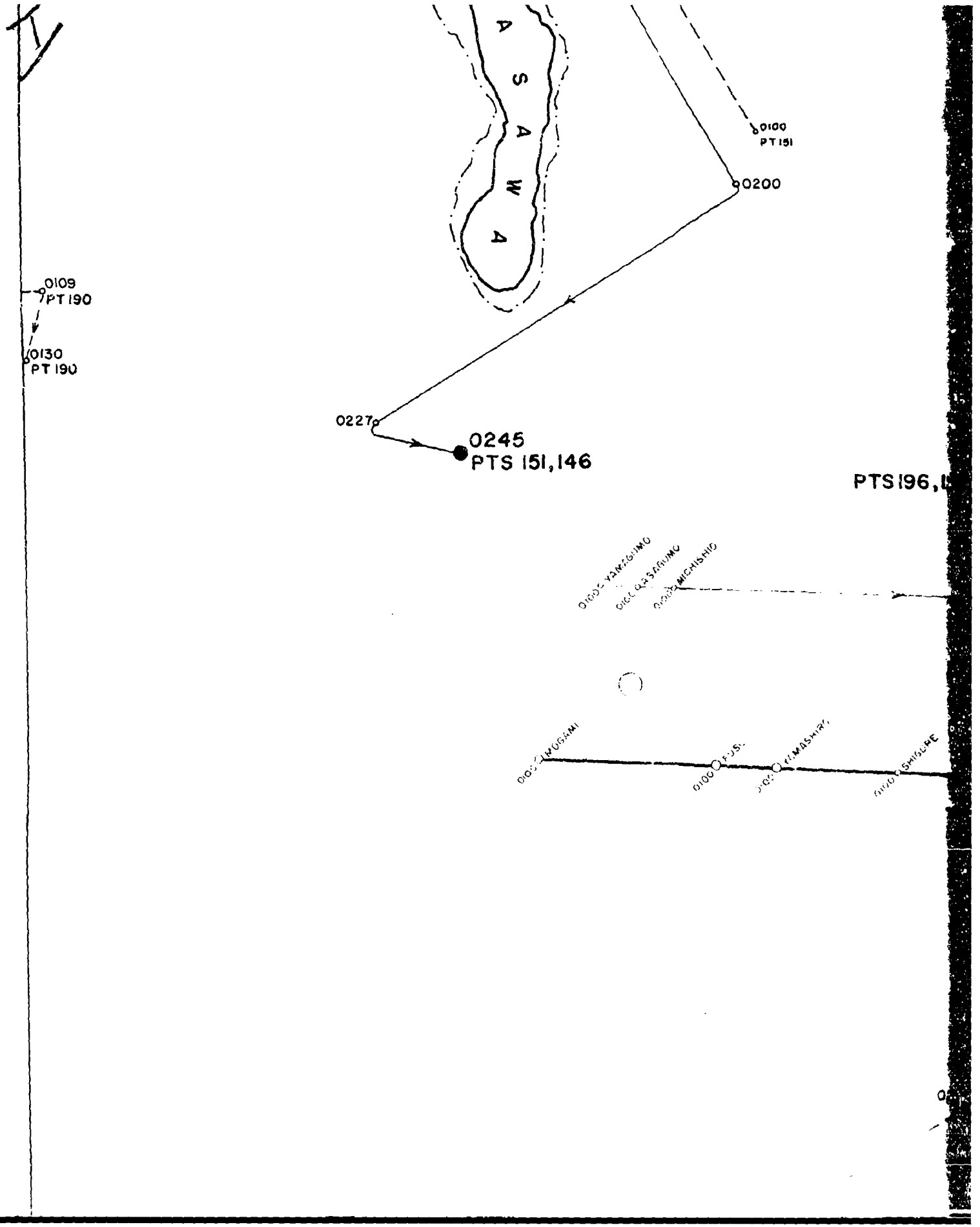



Iliijan Pt.
San Francisco
0245
Somok Pt.
San Antonio
Pintuyan
0118
0100
PTS 196,194,150

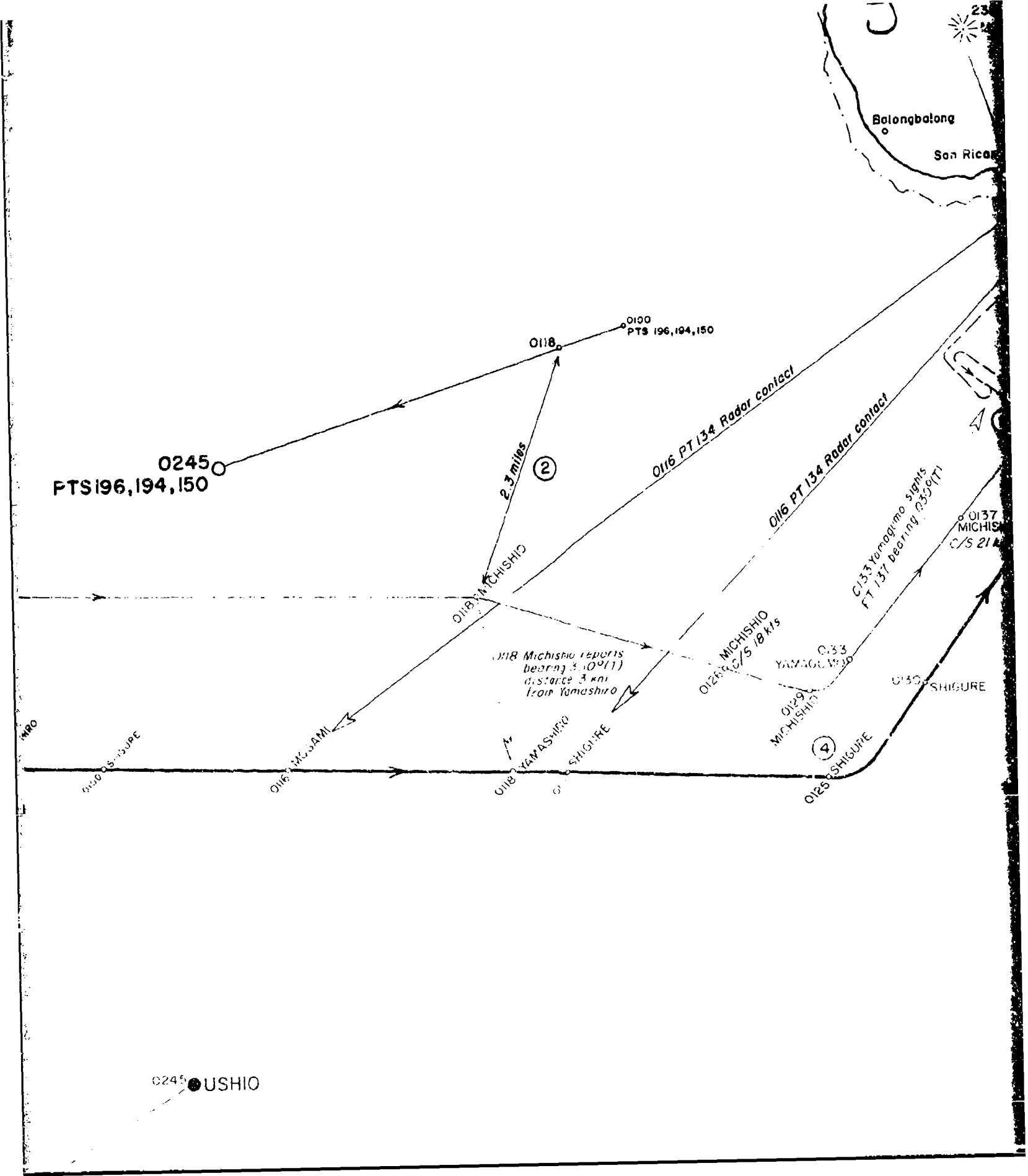

0100 PTS 490, 491, 493
PT 490
0147
0245 PT 491
7
0225 MICHISHIO
0225 ASAGUMO
0225 SHIGURE
0225 YAMAGUMO
0225 YAMASHIRO
0225 FUSO
0155
0215
0212
0200
Caniguin Pt.
0225 MOGAMI
15
0207:30
0208 MICHISHIO
Esperanza
10
0200
0147 PT 490 Radar contact 8 miles
0207:45
18
16
PT 134
0205
0205:30
13
14
0211 YAMASHIRO
0205 ASAGUMO
0208 FUSO
0202 MICHISHIO
0202 SHIGURE
0202 ASAGUMO
12
0202 YAMASHIRO
0202 YAMAGUMO
0202 FUSO
0212 MOGAMI
2354
Mt. Nelangcapan
0213
0212
17
Bolobolo Pt.
PT 132
Binit
0245
PT 137
0100-0116
PTS 134, 132, 137
0245
0154 MICHISHIO
San Ricardo
Binit Pt.
3
0142
PT 132
9
0245
PT 134
0205
0211 PT 324
0148 MICHISHIO
8
0147 MICHISHIO
0202 PT 497 Radar
0202 PT 494 F



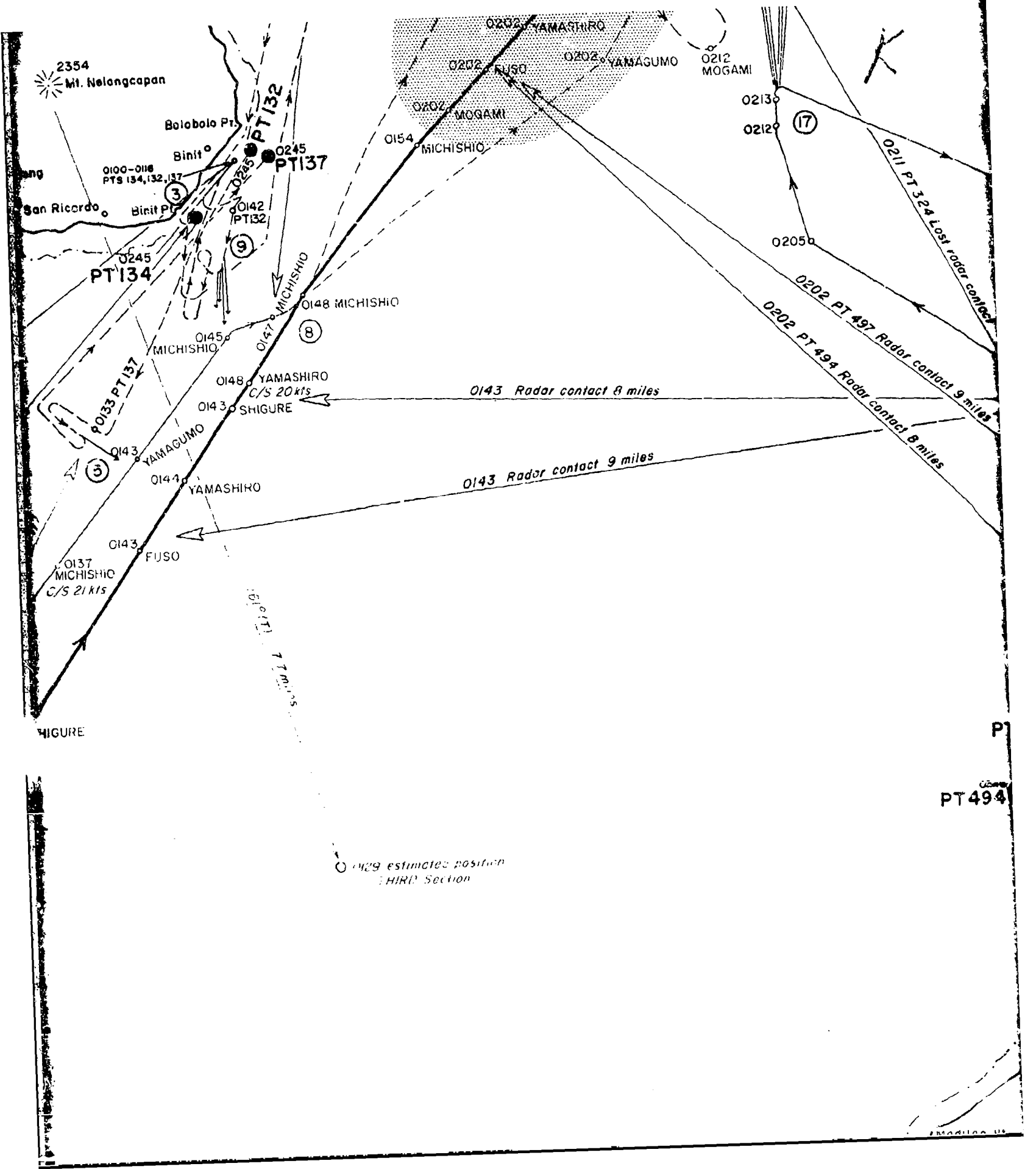
SURIGAO
0225 MICHISHIO
0225 ASAGUMO
0225 YAMAGUMO
0225 YAMASHIRO
0225 FUSO
0225 MOGAMI
0208 MICHISHIO
18
16
0211 YAMASHIRO
0208 FUSO
0212 MOGAMI
0213
0212
17
0211 PT 324 Lost radar contact
0205
0202 PT 497 Radar
0220
0100 PTS 523, 524, 526
0245
0235
0230
PTS 523, 524, 526
SUMILON I.
Satan Rock
DANAON I.
9°-55'
SIBANOC I.
10°-00'
BAONG ROCKS

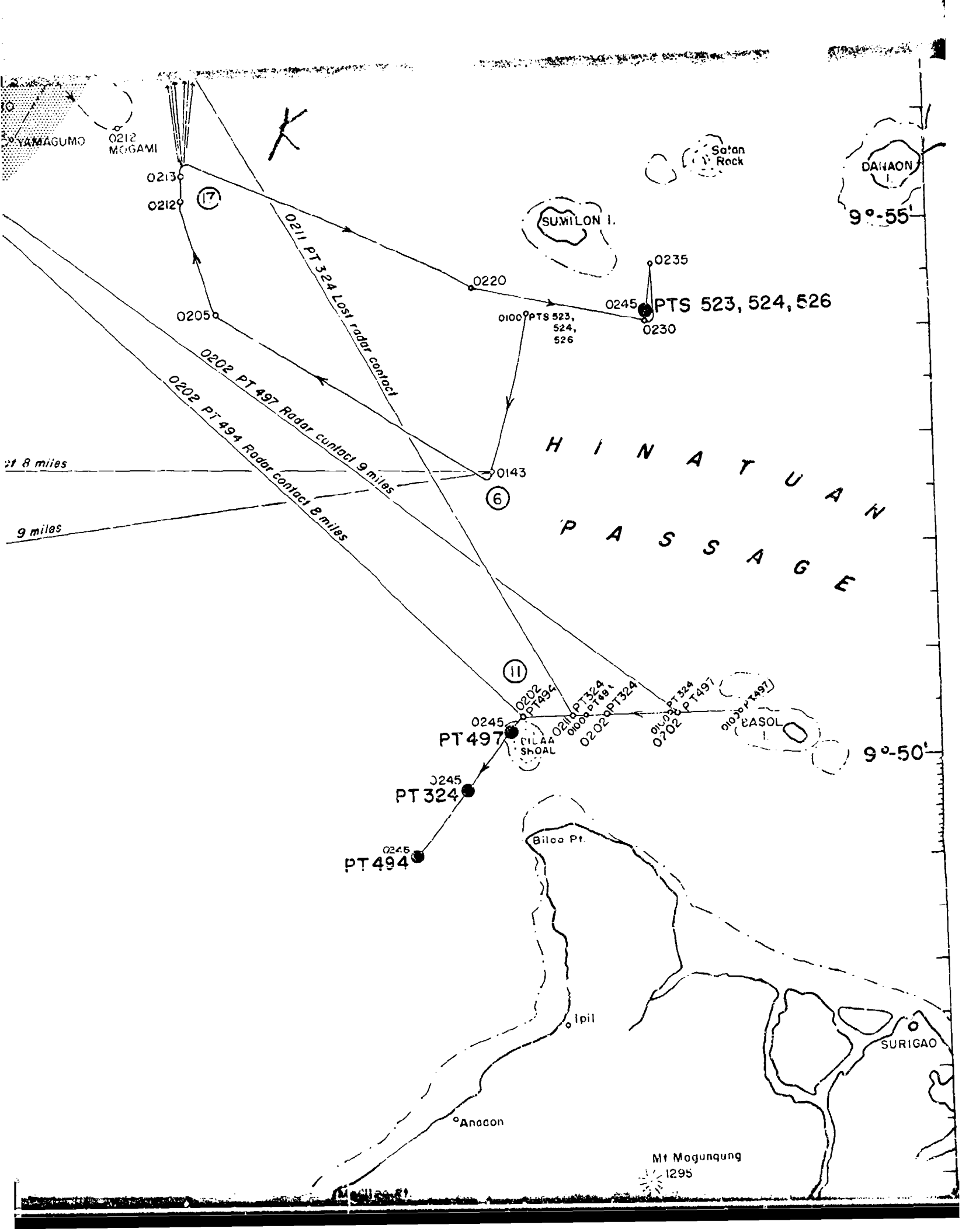


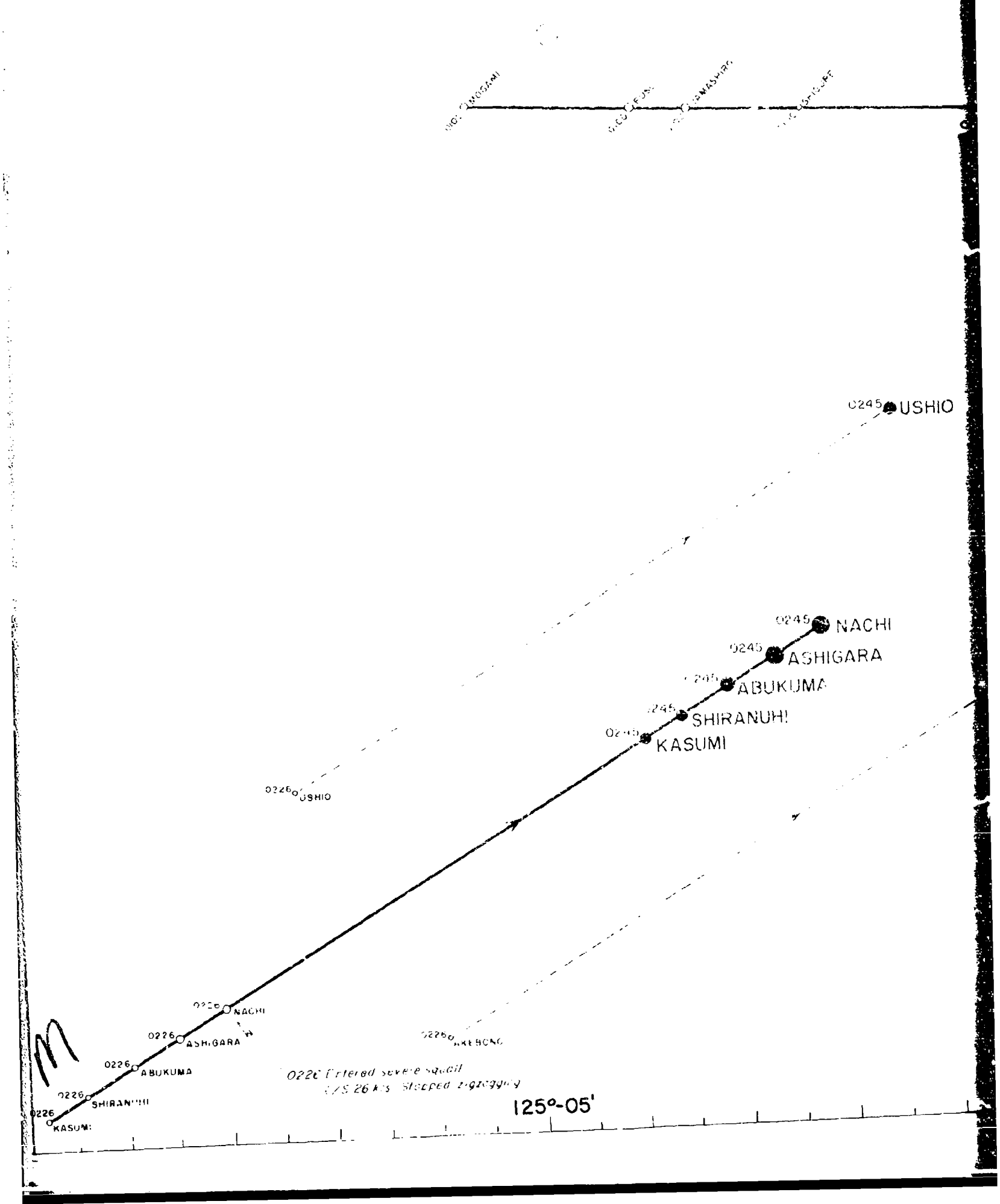
A S A W A
0100
PT 151
0200
0109
PT 190
0130
PT 190
0227
0245
PTS 151,146
PTS 196,
0100 YAMAGUMO
0100 OASAGUMO
0100 MICHISHIO
0100 MOGAMI
0100 FUSO
0100 YAMASHIRO
0100 SHIGURE



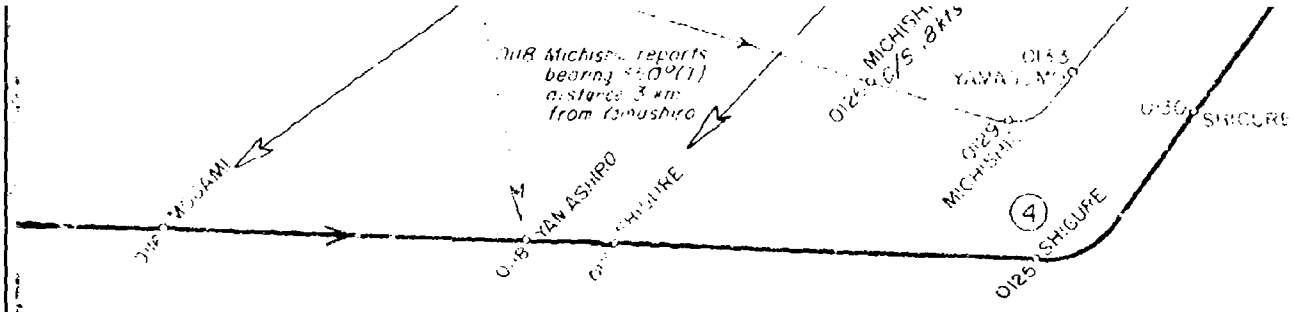
Balongbalong
San Rica
0100
PTS 196,194,150
0118
0245
PTS196,194,150
2.3 miles
2
0116 PT 134 Radar contact
0116 PT 134 Radar contact
0133 Yamagumo sights
PT 137 bearing 030°(T)
0137
MICHIS
C/S 21
0118 MICHISHIO
0118 Michishio reports
bearing 3.0°(T)
distance 3 km
from Yamashiro
MICHISHIO
C/S 18 kts
0126
0133
YAMAGUMO
0129
MICHISHIO
0130
SHIGURE
4
0125
SHIGURE
0116 MOGAMI
0118 YAMASHIRO
SHIGURE
0245
USHIO


2354
Mt. Nelangcapan
Bolobolo Pt.
PT132
Binit
0245
PT137
0100-0116
PTS 134,132,137
San Ricardo
Binit Pt.
0142
PT132
0245
PT134
0245
0202 YAMASHIRO
0202 FUSO
0202 YAMAGUMO
0212
MOGAMI
0202 MOGAMI
0154 MICHISHIO
02130
02120
0211 PT 324 Lost radar contact
02050
0202 PT 497 Radar contact 9 miles
0202 PT 494 Radar contact 8 miles
0148 MICHISHIO
0147
0145
MICHISHIO
0148 YAMASHIRO
C/S 20 kts
0143 Radar contact 8 miles
0143 SHIGURE
0133 PT137
0143 YAMAGUMO
0144 YAMASHIRO
0143 Radar contact 9 miles
0143 FUSO
0137
MICHISHIO
C/S 21 kts
SHIGURE
PT494
0129 estimates position
HIRO Section


YAMAGUMO
0212
MOGAMI
0213
0212
17
0211 PT 324 Lost radar contact
Satan Rock
DANAON
9°-55'
SUMILON I.
0235
0220
0245
PTS 523, 524, 526
0230
0205
0100 PTS 523, 524, 526
0202 PT 497 Radar contact 9 miles
0202 PT 494 Radar contact 8 miles
8 miles
9 miles
0143
6
HINATUAN PASSAGE
11
0202 PT494
0245
PT 497
PILAR SHOAL
0210 PT324
0100 PT497
0202 PT324
0100 PT324
0702 PT497
0100 PT497
EASOL
9°-50'
0245
PT 324
0245
PT 494
Bilao Pt.
Ipil
SURIGAO
Anacon
Mt Magunqung
1295



0245 USHIO
0245 NACHI
0245 ASHIGARA
ABUKUMA
SHIRANUHI
KASUMI
0226 USHIO
NACHI
0226 ASHIGARA
0226 ABUKUMA
0226 SHIRANUHI
0226 KASUMI
0226 Entered severe squall
125°-05'



USHIO

0145 AKEBONO

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

THIRD SECTION ENTERS THE STRAIT
PT BOATS ATTACK

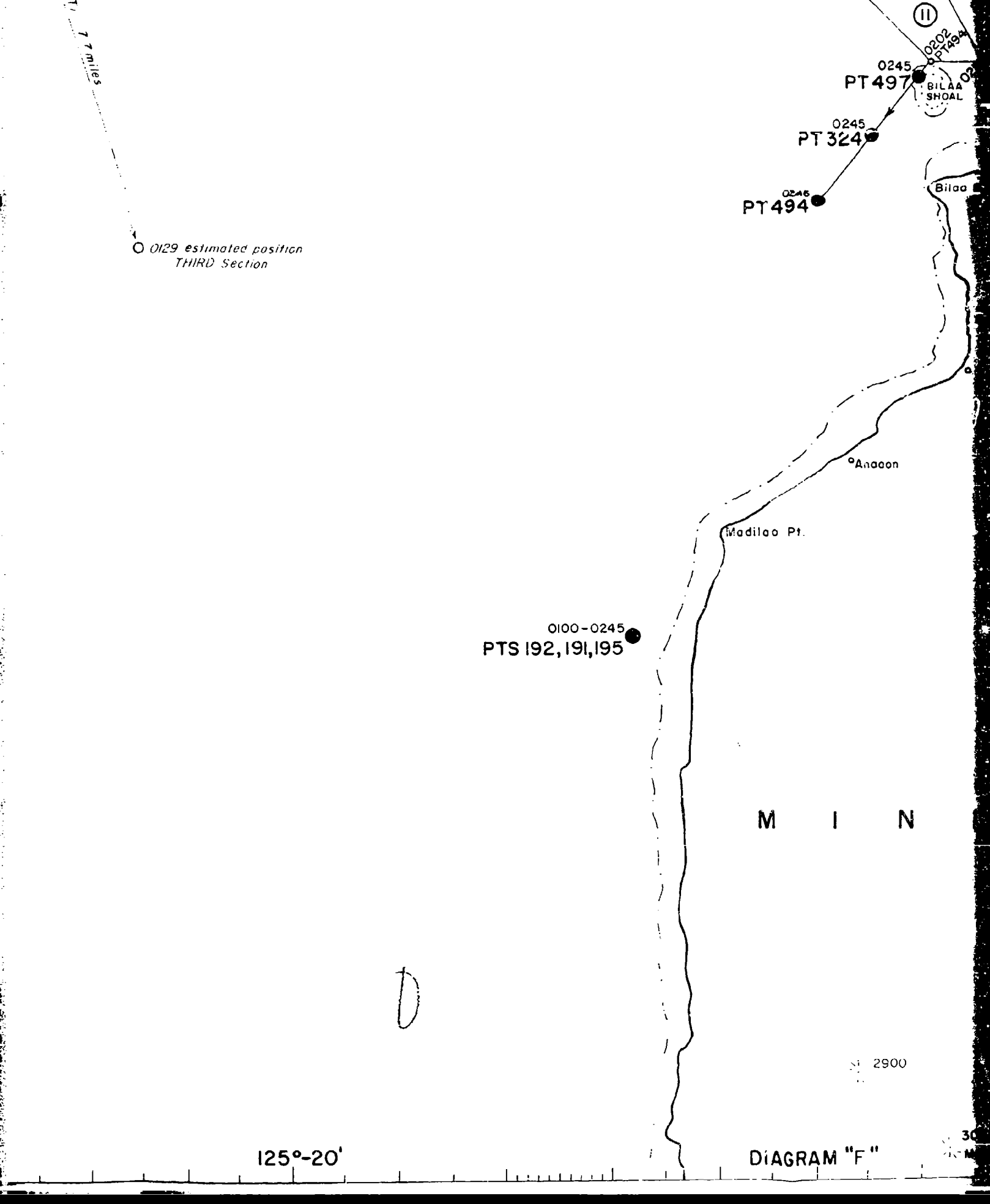
0100 - 0245, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

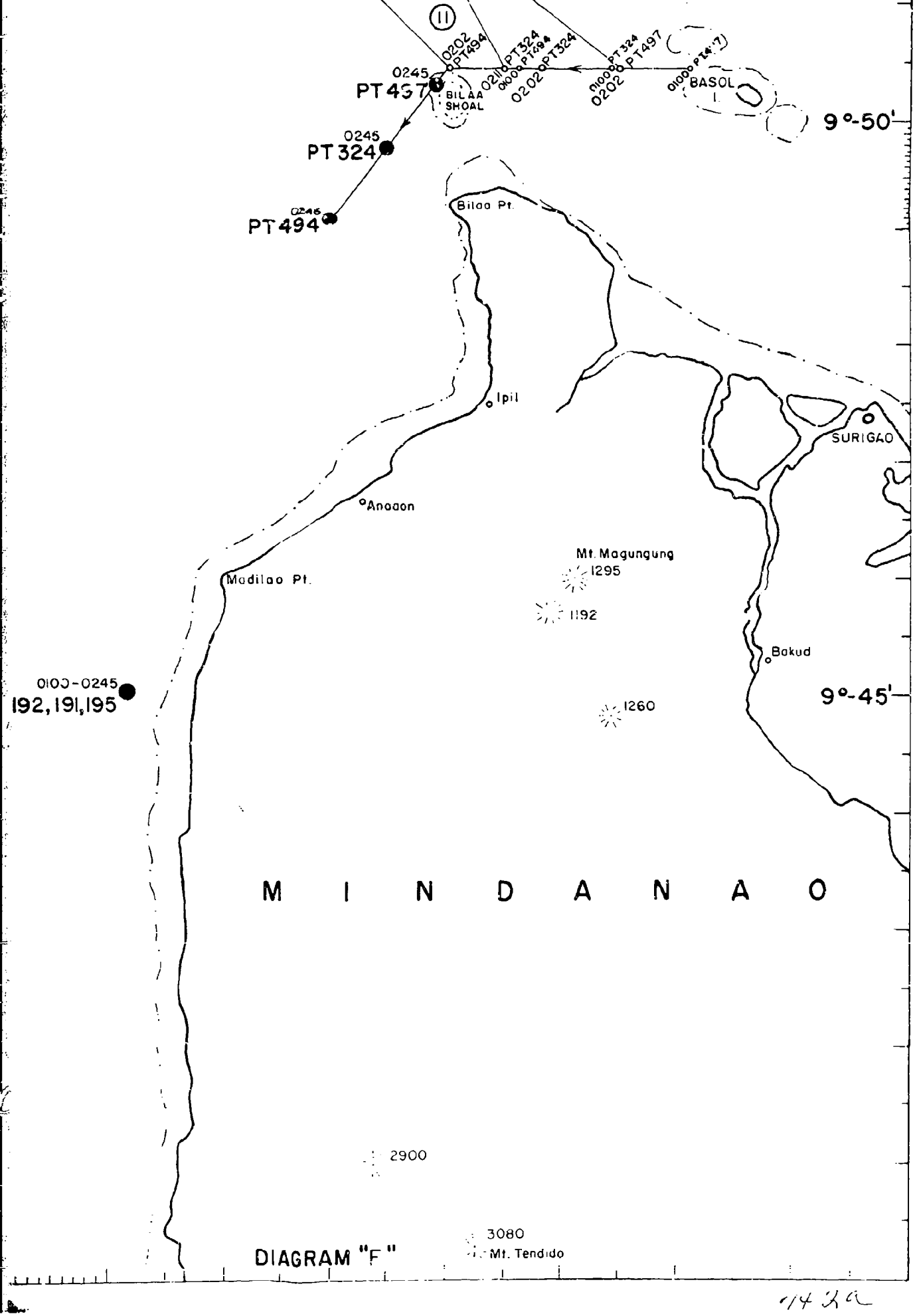
N

125°-10' 125°-15'

CONFIDENTIAL



7.7 miles
0129 estimated position
THIRD Section
11
0202
PT494
0245
PT497
BILAA
SHOAL
0245
PT324
0246
PT494
Bilaa
Anaaon
Madilao Pt.
0100-0245
PTS 192, 191, 195
M I N
2900
125°-20'
DIAGRAM "F"


(11)
0202 PT494
PT324
0210 PT494
0900 PT324
0202
0100 PT324
0202 PT497
0100 PT497
0245
PT497
BILAA SHOAL
BASOL
9°-50'
0245
PT324
0245
PT494
Bilaa Pt.
Ipil
SURIGAO
Anagan
Mt. Magungung
1295
Madilao Pt.
1192
Bakud
0100-0245
192,191,195
9°-45'
1260
M I N D A N A O
2900
3080
Mt. Tendido
DIAGRAM "F"

Events Depicted on Diagram "G"

October 25th, 1944

0245 - 0320

1. 0245 Eastern Attack Group of COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR (CTG 79.11) was proceeding to the torpedo attack point on course 180°(T), speed twenty knots. All three ships were in radar contact with the enemy and tracking.

2. 0245 Western Attack Group of COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR was proceeding to the torpedo attack point on course 170°(T), speed twenty knots. Neither ship had radar contact with the enemy.

3. 0245 The Japanese THIRD Section was in Approach Disposition No. TWO, steaming on course 000°(T), speed twenty knots and was continuing the penetration. It was not in contact with enemy ships.

4. 0245 Upper Surigao PT's (327, 326, 321) made radar contact to the south. Having heard that COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR was making an attack, the PT boats withdrew toward Kanihaan Island.

5. 0245 COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, in HUTCHINS, with DESDIV FORTY-SEVEN and ABUNTA, was maneuvering to the westward to clear DESDIV 108 and was awaiting orders to launch a torpedo attack.

6. 0246 MC GOWAN reported to Commander Eastern Attack Group, three or more ships, in column, on course 000°(T), speed eighteen knots, range 31,000 yards, bearing 184°(T).

7. 0255 Upper Surigao PT's (327, 326, 321) sighted Japanese force visually but did not attack due to the presence of friendly ships. PT's continued retirement to Kanihaan Island.

8. 0256 SHIGURE sighted three ship silhouettes, bearing 010°(T), distant eight kilometers and reported the contact to Commander THIRD Section.

9. 0257 Commander Eastern Attack Group evaluated the enemy force as a main body of two large ships which were led by one or more smaller ships. On this basis he ordered torpedo fire distribution.

10. 0258 YAMASHIRO made a searchlight sweep on her starboard bow.

11. 0300 SHIGURE started to enter column.

12. 0301 Japanese commenced fire with searchlight illumination which was followed by starshell illumination a short time later.

13. 0301 During the REMEY torpedo launching, enemy searchlights again illuminated the group for about a minute. COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR ordered "make smoke." REMEY increased speed to maximum and turned northward to retire.

14. 0302 Having completed torpedo launching, destroyers of Eastern Attack Group ordered maximum speed and retired northward. Enemy salvos began falling close to group and enemy star-shells began bursting near the ships.

15. 0302 Commander Attack Group 1.2, in HUTCHINS, was ordered by CTG 77.3 to attack. He then ordered his group to attack.

16. 0305 ARUNTA prematurely executed speed twenty-five knots and nearly overran BACHE who was third ship in column.

17. 0308 Japanese ships continued gunfire aided by starshell illumination.

18. 0308:30 Japanese battleship FUSO was hit by one or more torpedoes causing her to slow and turn out of column to the right.

19. 0309 YAMAGUMO was ordered to enter column by COMDESDIV FOUR. YAMAGUMO speeded up to take station as No. 3 ship in destroyer van.

20. 0310 MC DERMUT observed enemy salvo close off the starboard bow. Upon launching torpedoes, MC DERMUT and MONSSEN were illuminated by searchlight and heard salvos whistling overhead and observed one salvo in the wake of the MC DERMUT.

21. 0311 Commander Attack Group 2.2 in ARUNTA ordered to attack from east with KILLEN and BEALE. (Actually attacked from west.)

22. 0311 SHIGURE reported two dark objects bearing 300°(T). The ships of the THIRD Section now ceased fire on the Eastern Attack Group and prepared to open fire to port.

23. 0311 East Amagusan PT's (328, 329, 323) sighted two destroyers heading south. The destroyers later turned northward.

24. 0311:30 Kanihaan PT's (495, 489, 492) closed a large radar target and sighted a battleship at three miles distance proceeding slowly north. Complying with the orders of COMDESDIV 108 to remain clear, retired toward patrol station without attacking.

25. 0312 Japanese force directed gunfire at MC DERMUT and MONSSEN, using searchlight and starshells for illumination.

26. 0312 MC DERMUT sighted two small craft dead ahead. Craft identified as friendly PT boats. COMDESDIV 108 communicated with them and warned them not to attack.

27. 0316 Commander THIRD Section ordered emergency turn to starboard to evade torpedoes. His ships checked fire at this time.

28. 0317:30 Commander THIRD Section ordered emergency turn to port to return to original course of 000°(T).

29. 0319 MICHISHIO was hit by one torpedo causing her to lose speed and turn out to starboard. ASAGUMO was hit by one torpedo below No. 1 gun, severing her bow and causing her to lose speed. YAMAGUMO was hit by two or more torpedoes, blew up and sank immediately. This explosion was sighted by most Allied ships, even as far away as the battle line. YAMASHIRO was hit by one torpedo but battle condition was unimpaired and ship continued on course and speed.

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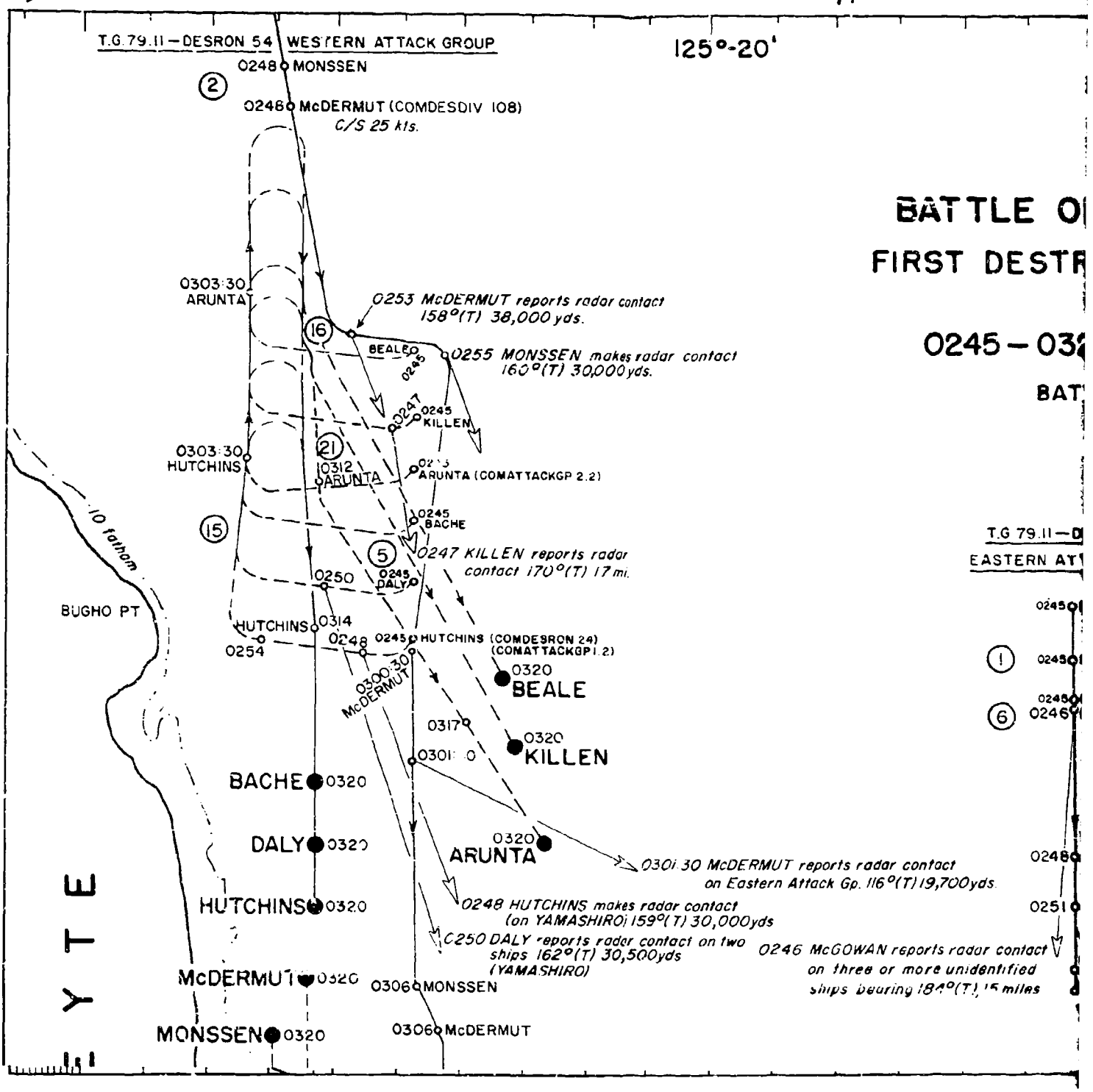
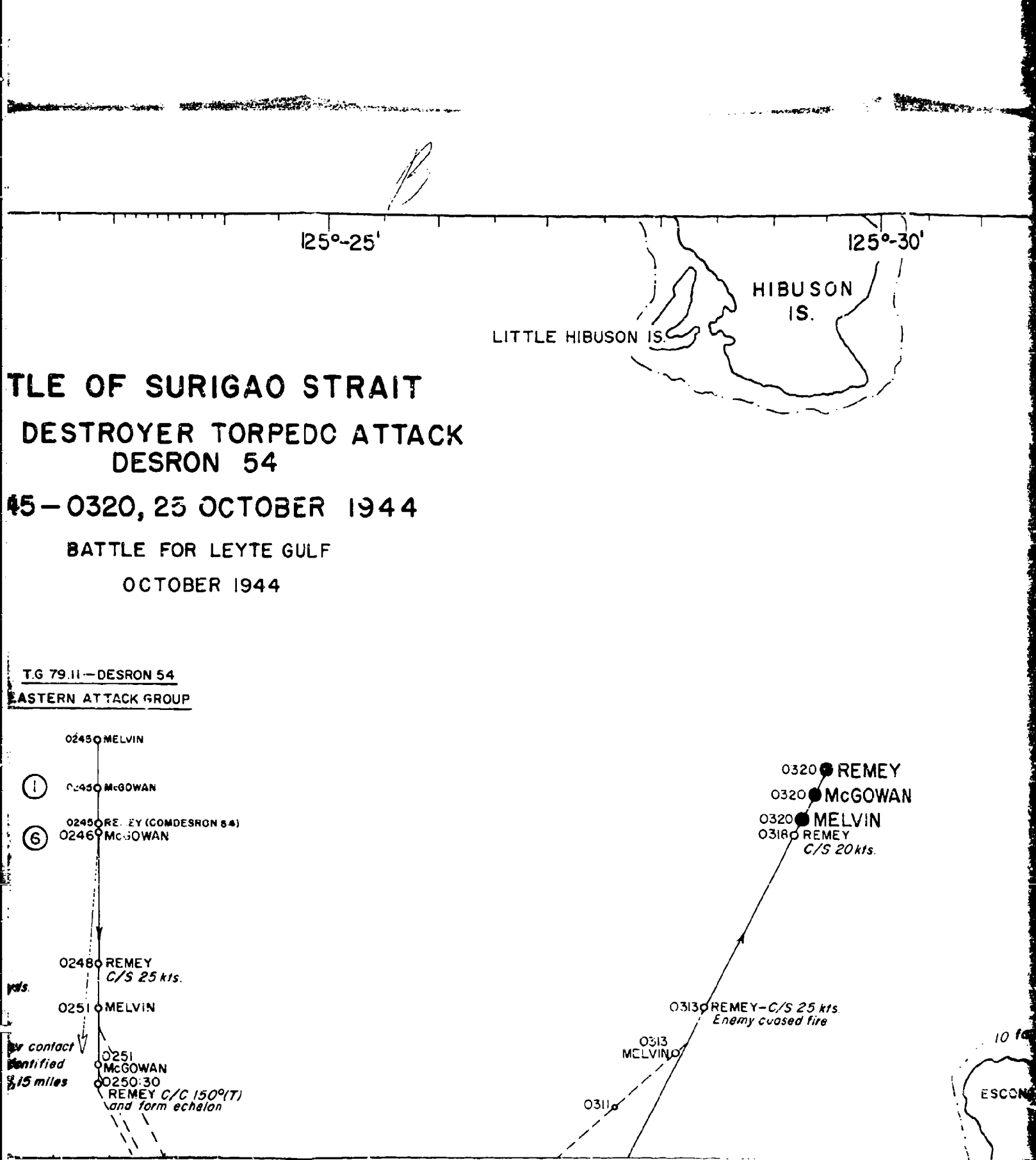
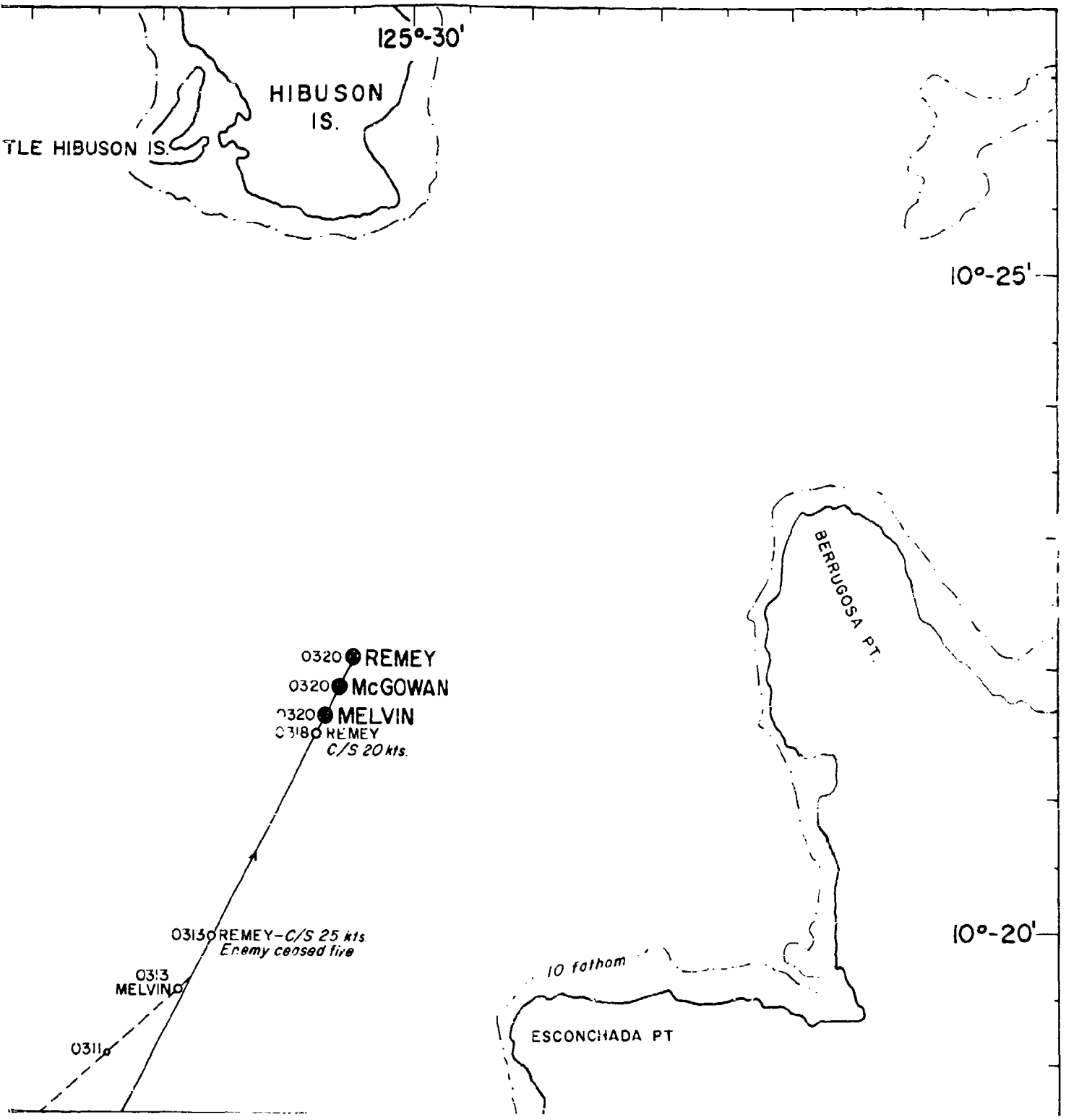
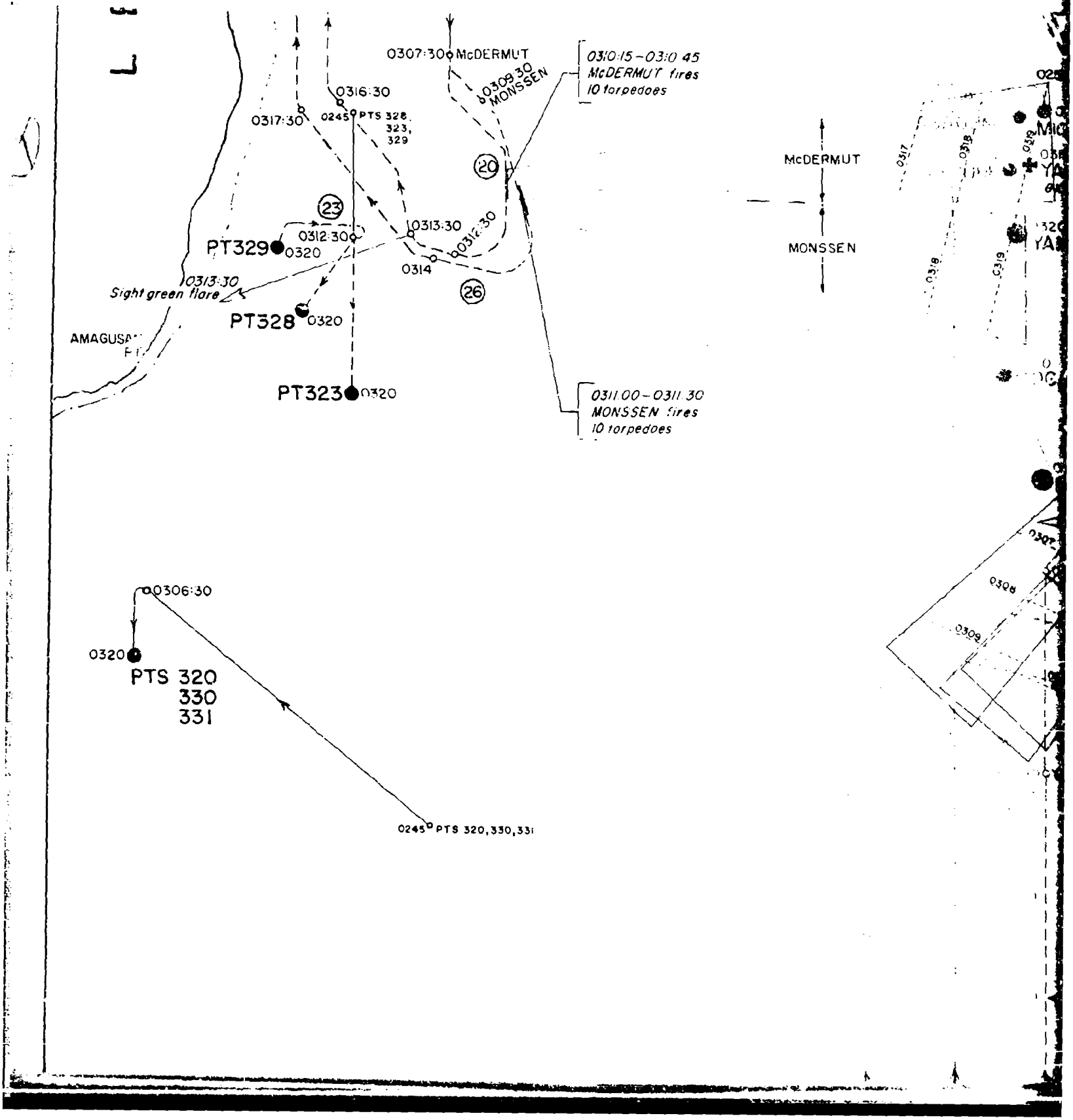
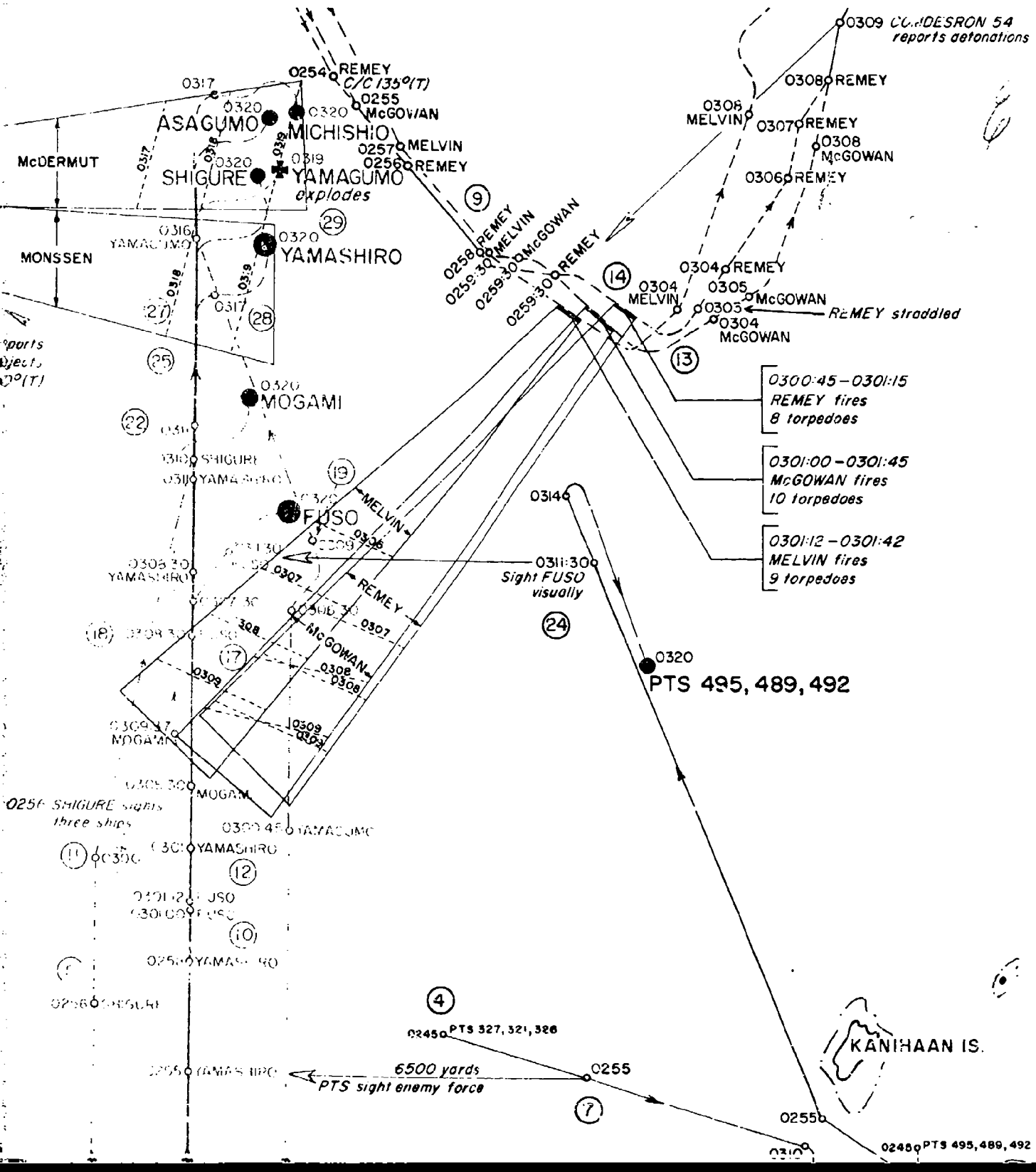
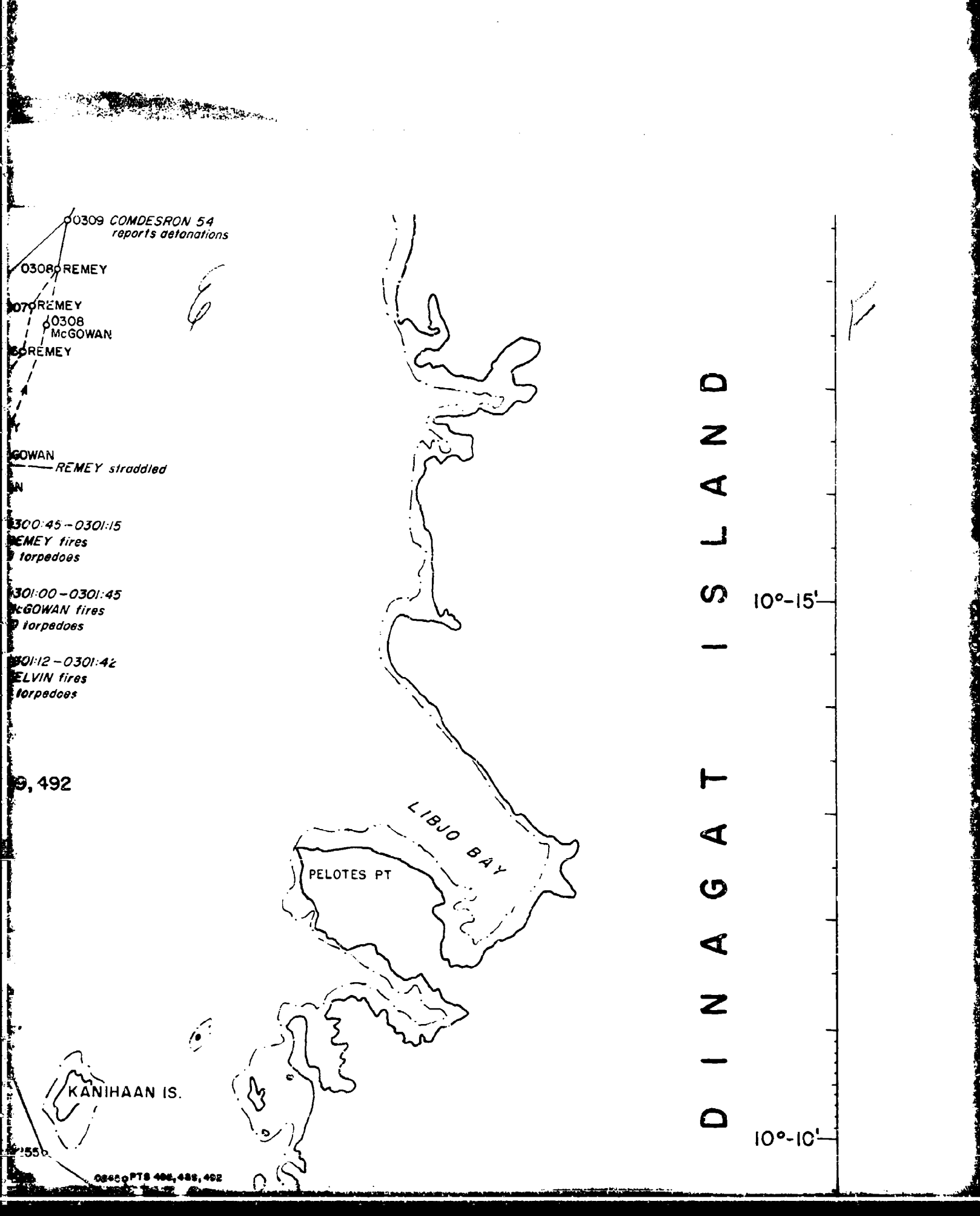


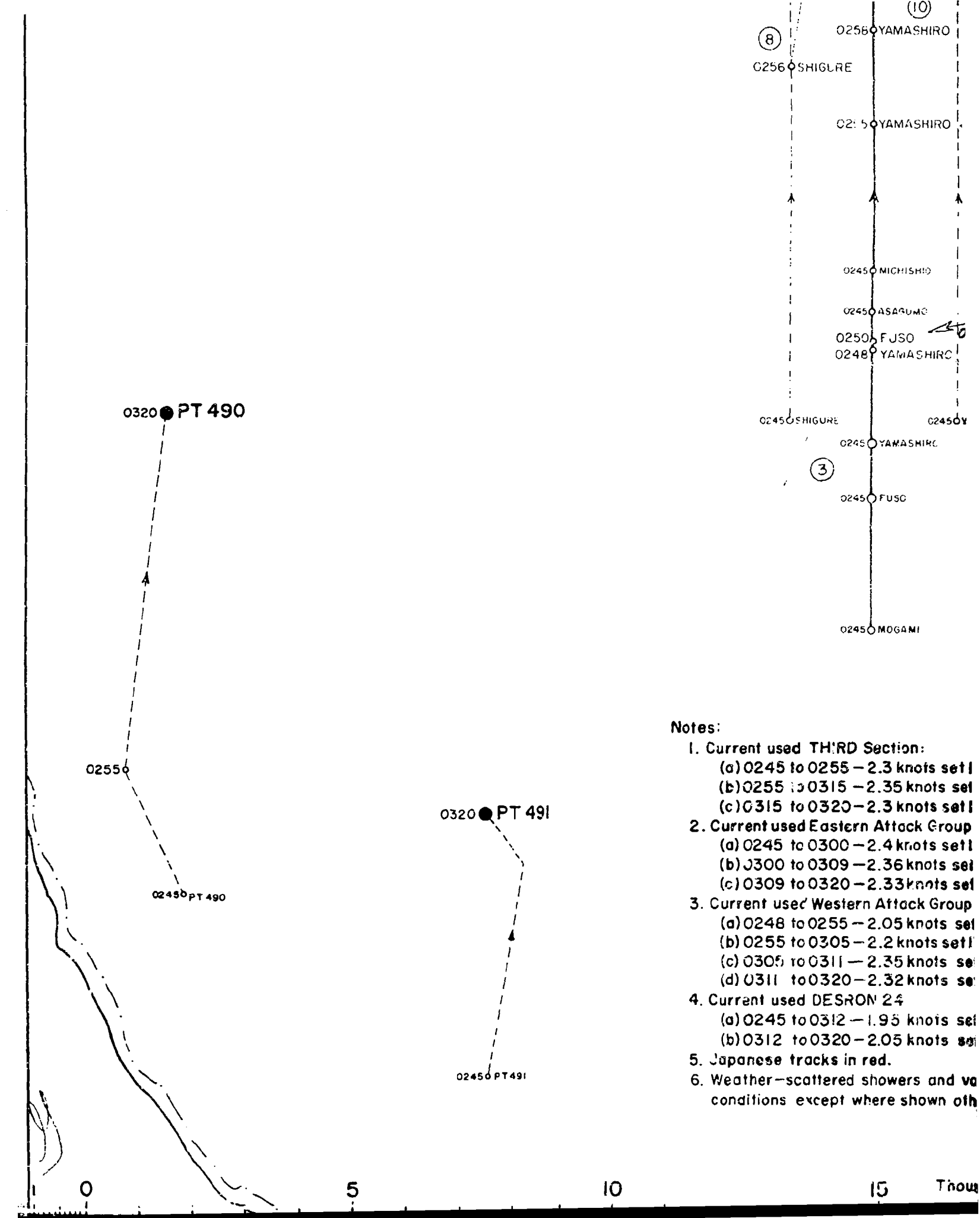

125°-25'
125°-30'
HIBUSON IS.
LITTLE HIBUSON IS.
TLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
DESTROYER TORPEDO ATTACK
DESRON 54
45—0320, 25 OCTOBER 1944
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944
T.G 79.11—DESRON 54
EASTERN ATTACK GROUP
0245 MELVIN
0245 McGOWAN
0245 RE. EY (COMDESRON 54)
0246 McGOWAN
02480 REMEY
C/S 25 kts.
0251 MELVIN
0251
McGOWAN
0250:30
REMEY C/C 150°(T)
and form echelon
0320 REMEY
0320 McGOWAN
0320 MELVIN
0318 REMEY
C/S 20 kts.
0313 REMEY—C/S 25 kts.
Enemy ceased fire
0313
MELVIN
0311
ESCON

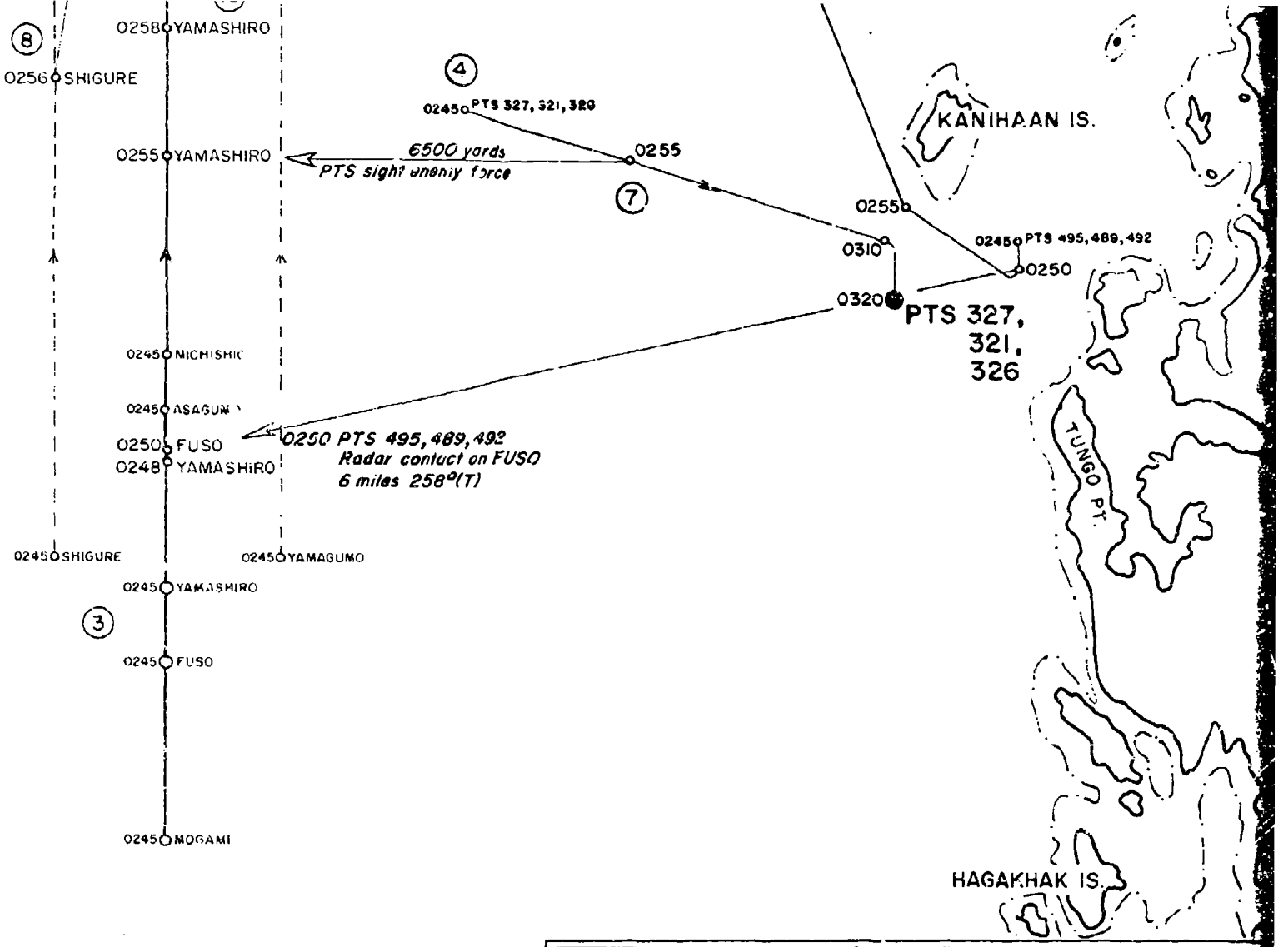

125°-30'
HIBUSON
IS.
TLE HIBUSON IS.
10°-25'
BERRUGOSA PT.
0320 REMEY
0320 McGOWAN
0320 MELVIN
0318 REMEY
C/S 20 kts.
0313 REMEY-C/S 25 kts.
Enemy ceased fire
0313
MELVIN
0311
10°-20'
10 fathom
ESCONCHADA PT


0307:30 McDERMUT
0309:30 MONSSEN
0310:15–0310:45
McDERMUT fires
10 torpedoes
0316:30
0317:30
0245 PTS 328, 323, 329
20
23
0312:30
0313:30
PT329 0320
0314
26
0313:30
Sight green flare
PT328 0320
AMAGUSA
PT323 0320
0311:00–0311:30
MONSSEN fires
10 torpedoes
McDERMUT
MONSSEN
0306:30
0320
PTS 320
330
331
0245 PTS 320, 330, 331


0309 CORDESRON 54 reports detonations
0254 REMEY C/C 135°(T)
0255 McGOWAN
0256 REMEY
0257 MELVIN
0258 REMEY
0259:30 MELVIN
0259:30 McGOWAN
0259:30 REMEY
0308 REMEY
0308 MELVIN
0307 REMEY
0308 McGOWAN
0306 REMEY
0304 REMEY
0304 MELVIN
0305 McGOWAN
0305
0304 McGOWAN
REMEY straddled
0300:45 – 0301:15
REMEY fires
8 torpedoes
0301:00 – 0301:45
McGOWAN fires
10 torpedoes
0301:12 – 0301:42
MELVIN fires
9 torpedoes
0311:30
Sight FUSO visually
0314
0320
PTS 495, 489, 492
ASAGUMO
MICHISHIO
SHIGURE
YAMAGUMO
explodes
YAMASHIRO
MOGAMI
FUSO
McDERMUT
MONSSEN
6500 yards
PTS sight enemy force
KANIHAAN IS.
0255
0245 PTS 327, 321, 328
0248 PTS 495, 489, 492


0309 COMDESRON 54
reports detonations
0308 REMEY
REMEY
0308
McGOWAN
REMEY
REMEY straddled
0300:45 – 0301:15
REMEY fires
torpedoes
0301:00 – 0301:45
McGOWAN fires
torpedoes
0301:12 – 0301:42
ELVIN fires
torpedoes
9,492
LIBJO BAY
PELOTES PT
KANIHAAN IS.
PTS 486, 488, 492
DINAGAT ISLAND
10°-15'
10°-10'


(10)
0256 YAMASHIRO
(8)
0256 SHIGURE
02: 5 YAMASHIRO
0245 MICHISHIO
0245 ASAGUMO
0250 FUSO
0248 YAMASHIRO
0245 SHIGURE
0245 Y
0245 YAMASHIRO
(3)
0245 FUSO
0245 MOGAMI
0320 PT 490
02550
02450 PT 490
0320 PT 491
02450 PT 491
Notes:
1. Current used THIRD Section:
(a) 0245 to 0255 – 2.3 knots set
(b) 0255 to 0315 – 2.35 knots set
(c) 0315 to 0320 – 2.3 knots set
2. Current used Eastern Attack Group
(a) 0245 to 0300 – 2.4 knots set
(b) 0300 to 0309 – 2.36 knots set
(c) 0309 to 0320 – 2.33 knots set
3. Current used Western Attack Group
(a) 0248 to 0255 – 2.05 knots set
(b) 0255 to 0305 – 2.2 knots set
(c) 0305 to 0311 – 2.35 knots set
(d) 0311 to 0320 – 2.32 knots set
4. Current used DESRON 24
(a) 0245 to 0312 – 1.95 knots set
(b) 0312 to 0320 – 2.05 knots set
5. Japanese tracks in red.
6. Weather – scattered showers and va
conditions except where shown oth
0
5
10
15
Thous



s:

Current used THIRD Section:
- (a) 0245 to 0255 – 2.3 knots set 180°(T)
- (b) 0255 to 0315 – 2.35 knots set 180°(T)
- (c) 0315 to 0320 – 2.3 knots set 180°(T)

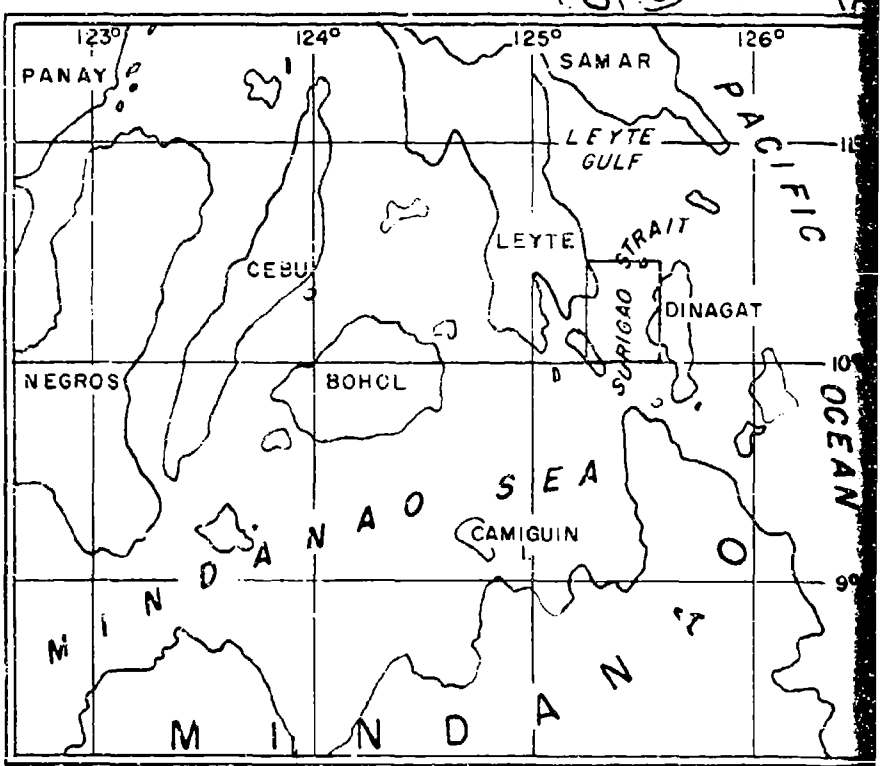
Current used Eastern Attack Group
- (a) 0245 to 0300 – 2.4 knots set 180°(T)
- (b) 0300 to 0309 – 2.36 knots set 180°(T)
- (c) 0309 to 0320 – 2.33 knots set 180°(T)

Current used Western Attack Group
- (a) 0248 to 0255 – 2.05 knots set 165°(T)
- (b) 0255 to 0305 – 2.2 knots set 170°(T)
- (c) 0305 to 0311 – 2.35 knots set 180°(T)
- (d) 0311 to 0320 – 2.32 knots set 180°(T)

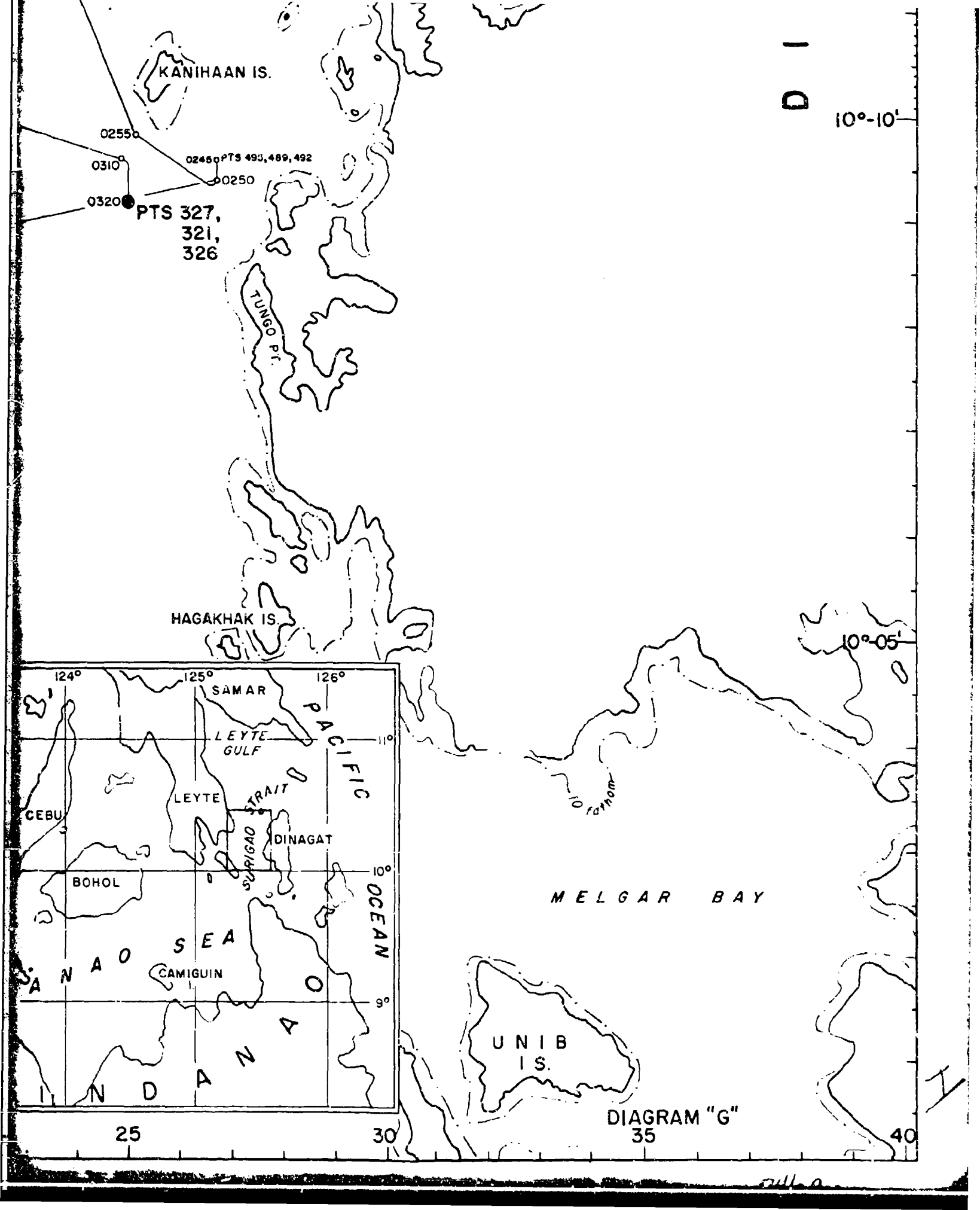
Current used DESRON 24
- (a) 0245 to 0312 – 1.95 knots set 160°(T)
- (b) 0312 to 0320 – 2.05 knots set 180°(T)

Japanese tracks in red.

Weather – scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.



15 Thousands of Yards 20 25


KANIHAAN IS.
0255
0310
0320
0245
0250
PTS 493, 489, 492
PTS 327, 321, 326
TUNGO PT.
HAGAKHAK IS.
10°-10'
10°-05'
10 fathom
MELGAR BAY
UNIB IS.
DIAGRAM "G"
124°
125°
126°
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
CEBU
DINAGAT
BOHOL
SULU SEA
MINDANAO
CAMIGUIN
11°
10°
9°
25
30
35
40

Events Depicted on Diagram "H"

October 25th, 1944

0320 - 0348

1. 0320 Attack Group 1.2 was proceeding to torpedo launching point on course 180°(T), speed fifteen knots.

2. 0320 Attack Group 2.2 was closing the ARUNTA which was about 1,500 yards ahead. ARUNTA's course was 145°(T), speed twenty-five knots.

3. 0320 Eastern Attack Group continued retiring northeastward to post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island.

4. 0320 Western Attack Group continued retiring northward along the coast of Leyte Island.

5. 0320 CTG 77.2 in LOUISVILLE as OTC and Commander Left Flank Force, with Left Flank Cruisers in column, was on course 090°(T), speed five knots. All cruisers were in radar contact with the enemy.

6. 0320 CTG 77.3 in PHOENIX as Commander Right Flank Force, with Right Flank Cruisers in line of bearing, was on course 270°(T), speed ten knots. All cruisers were in radar contact with the enemy.

7. 0320 The formation of the Japanese THIRD Section had been broken by Allied torpedo hits at 0319, but the YAMASHIRO, MOGAMI and SHIGURE continued northward in a straggling manner.

8. 0320 The BATTLE LINE was in column on course 090°(T), speed ten knots and was in radar contact with the enemy formation.

9. 0320 COMDESDIV XRAY in the CLAXTON had three destroyers on the east and three on the west of the BATTLE LINE assigned screening duties.

10. 0320 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX with his squadron in column on course 090°(T), speed five knots, in three groups of three ships each, was awaiting orders to make a torpedo attack.

11. 0320 FUSO, having earlier suffered a torpedo hit, was proceeding slowly eastward. No outward appearance of damage was visible, but she had been seriously damaged internally. A short time later she turned to the south.

12. 0323 Commander Attack Group 1.2 ordered his group to increase speed to twenty-five knots and to make smoke.

13. 0323 ARUNTA launched four torpedoes to port at a large leading target bearing 115°(T), range 6,900 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

14. 0324 SHIGURE, having passed two friendly damaged destroyers to starboard, increased speed and turned to the south.

15. 0324 KILLEN launched five torpedoes to port at a ship identified as a battleship bearing 125°(T), range 8,700 yards. (YAMASHIRO). She made one hit.

16. 0325:15 BEALE launched five torpedoes to port at a target bearing 115°(T) (actually 104°(T)), range 6,800 yards. (SHIGURE). All torpedoes missed.

17. 0327:30 Commander THIRD Section ordered a forty-five degree change of course to the right to avoid torpedoes fired by Attack Group 2.2. He ordered a return to the base course of 000°(T) at 0330.

18. 0328:30 KILLEN commenced launching torpedoes to starboard at same target as at 0324, now bearing 112°(T), range 8,100 yards. (YAMASHIRO). Target was observed to be maneuvering after launching second torpedo and fire was checked. All torpedoes missed.

19. 0329 Commander Battle Line ordered the battle line to increase speed to fifteen knots.

20. 0329:30 HUTCHINS launched five torpedoes to starboard at an enemy ship which had just turned south bearing 093°(T), range 8,200 yards. (SHIGURE). This target reversed course and all torpedoes missed.

21. 0330 MICHISHIO, damaged by a torpedo hit in the port engineroom, was drifting southward and attempting to control the damage.

22. 0331 Attack Group 2.2 was taken under fire, most likely by the YAMASHIRO. This fire was ineffective.

23. 0331:18 YAMASHIRO received additional damage from a second torpedo hit launched by the KILLEN at 0324. She slowed temporarily but was making eighteen knots at 0336.

24. 0331:30 SHIGURE again reversed course and proceeded to the north at twenty-six knots.

25. 0335 CTG 77.2 ordered COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX (left flank destroyers) to launch torpedo attack and to "get the big boys." COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX ordered section leaders to make coordinated torpedo attacks from assigned sectors.

26. 0335:30 DALY launched five torpedoes to starboard at the largest radar target, believed to be a battleship, bearing 093°(T), range 10,700 yards. (MOGAMI). All torpedoes missed.

27. 0336 BACHE launched five torpedoes to starboard at a target bearing 109°(T), range 10,200 yards. (SHIGURE). All torpedoes missed.

28. 0338 Explosions occurred in FUSO which were heard by HUTCHINS on her sound gear.

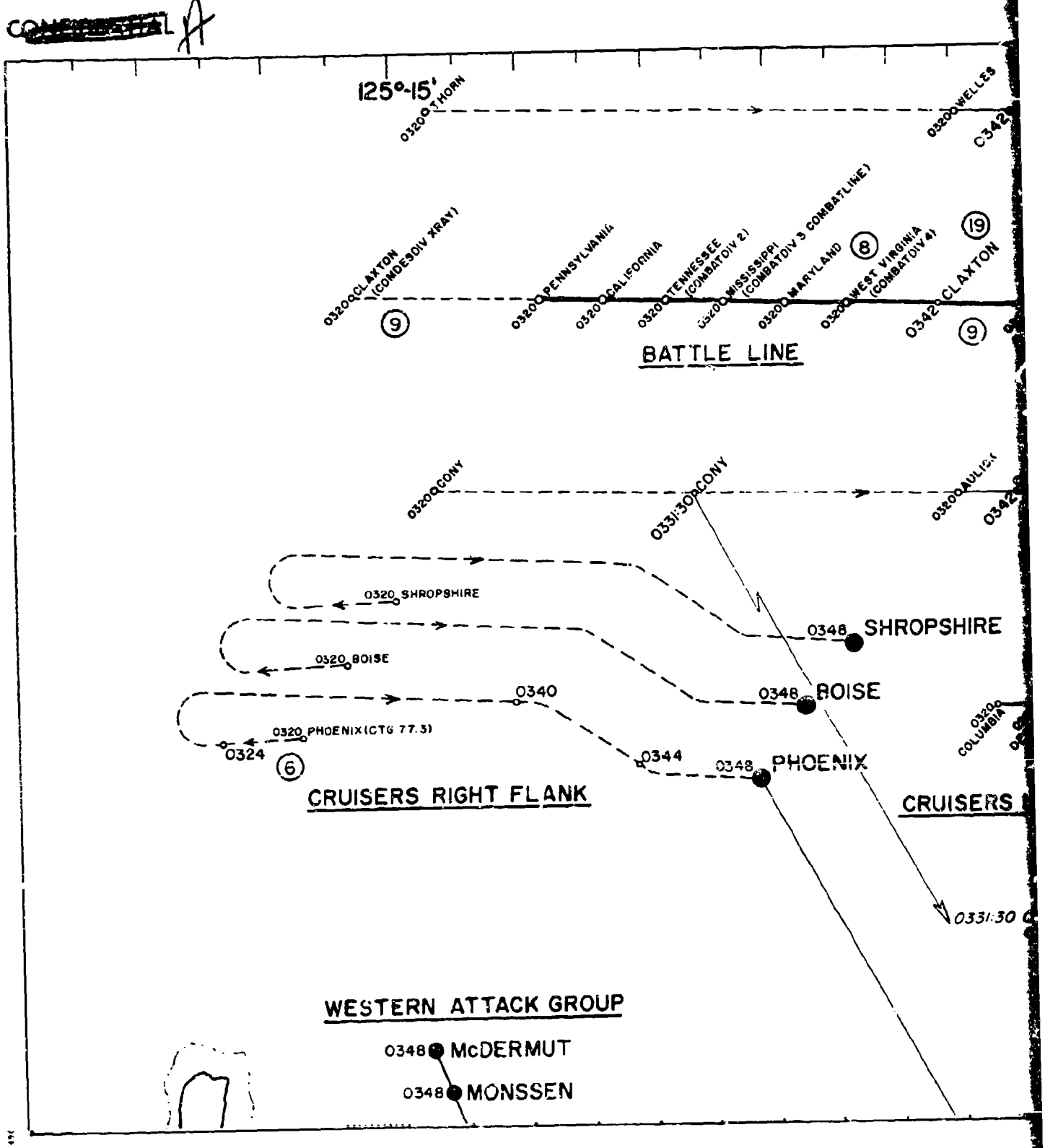
29. 0340 Commander East Amagusan PT's in PT 328 sighted an unidentified ship about a mile away heading south making heavy black smoke. The ship sighted was the HUTCHINS, followed at 2,800 yards by the DALY and BACHE which were apparently not sighted.

30. 0342 ASAGUMO, damaged by torpedo hit at 0319, turned southward at about nine knots after being taken under fire by the HUTCHINS.

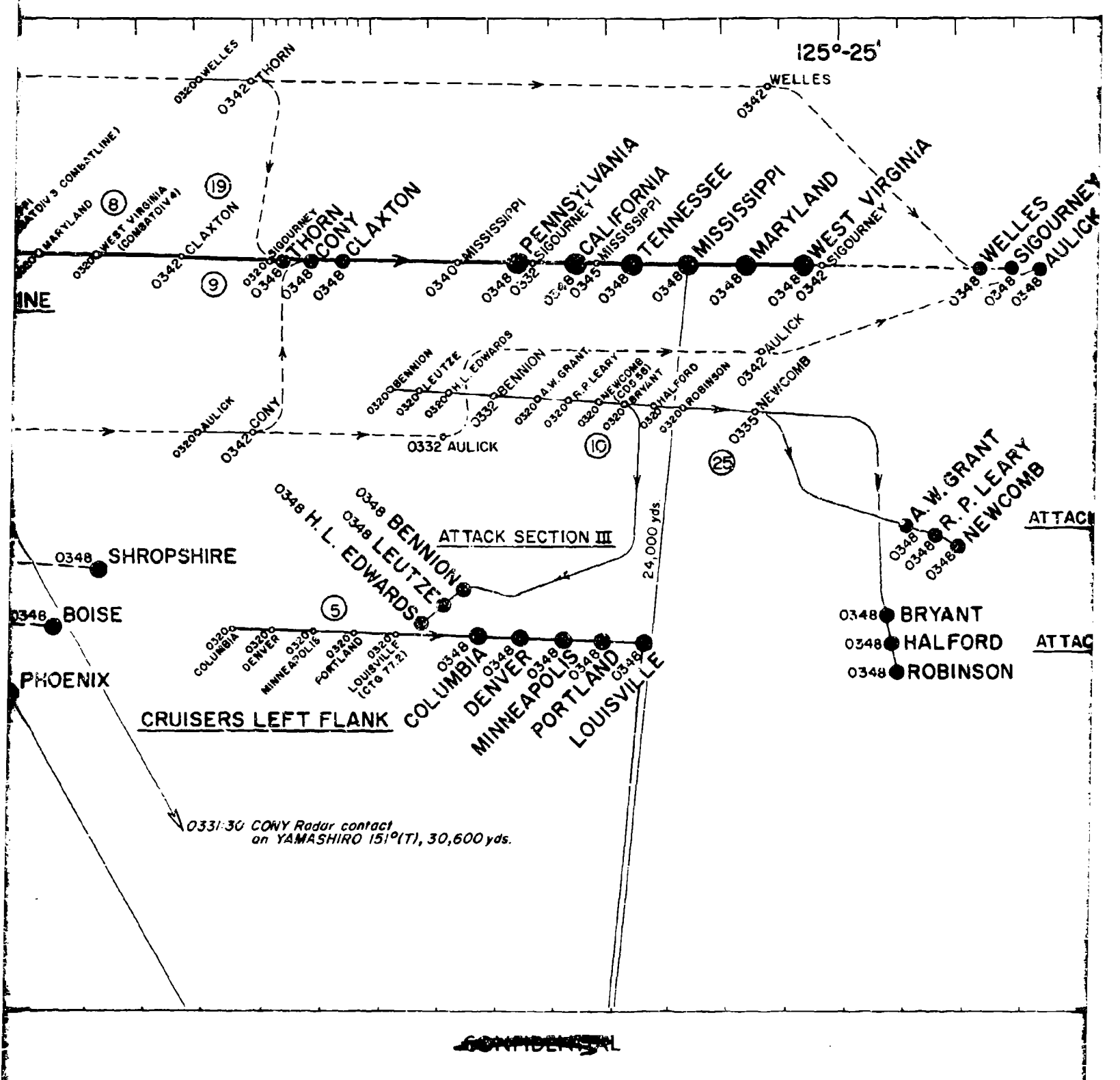
31. 0345 The YAMASHIRO turned to course 020°(T), presumably to avoid any torpedoes fired by Attack Group 1.2, and reduced speed to about fifteen knots.

32. 0345 FUSO exploded and broke into two sections. This explosion was seen as far away as the battle line. She was now enveloped in flames from her waterline to her masthead.

33. 0348 MICHISHIO, dead in the water after being torpedoed at 0319, was burning and settling lower in the water. She was now taken under fire by the DALY and BACHE.


125°-15'
0320 THORN
0320 WELLES
0342
0320 CLAXTON (COMDESDIV XRAY)
0320 PENNSYLVANIA
0320 CALIFORNIA
0320 TENNESSEE (COMBATDIV 2)
0320 MISSISSIPPI (COMBATDIV 3 COMBATLINE)
0320 MARYLAND
0320 WEST VIRGINIA (COMBATDIV 4)
0342 CLAXTON
9
8
19
9
BATTLE LINE
0320 CONY
0331:30 CONY
0320 SHROPSHIRE
0348 SHROPSHIRE
0320 BOISE
0348 BOISE
0340
0320 PHOENIX (CTG 77.3)
0324
6
0344
0348 PHOENIX
0320 COLUMBIA
CRUISERS RIGHT FLANK
CRUISERS
0331:30
WESTERN ATTACK GROUP
0348 McDERMUT
0348 MONSSEN

B



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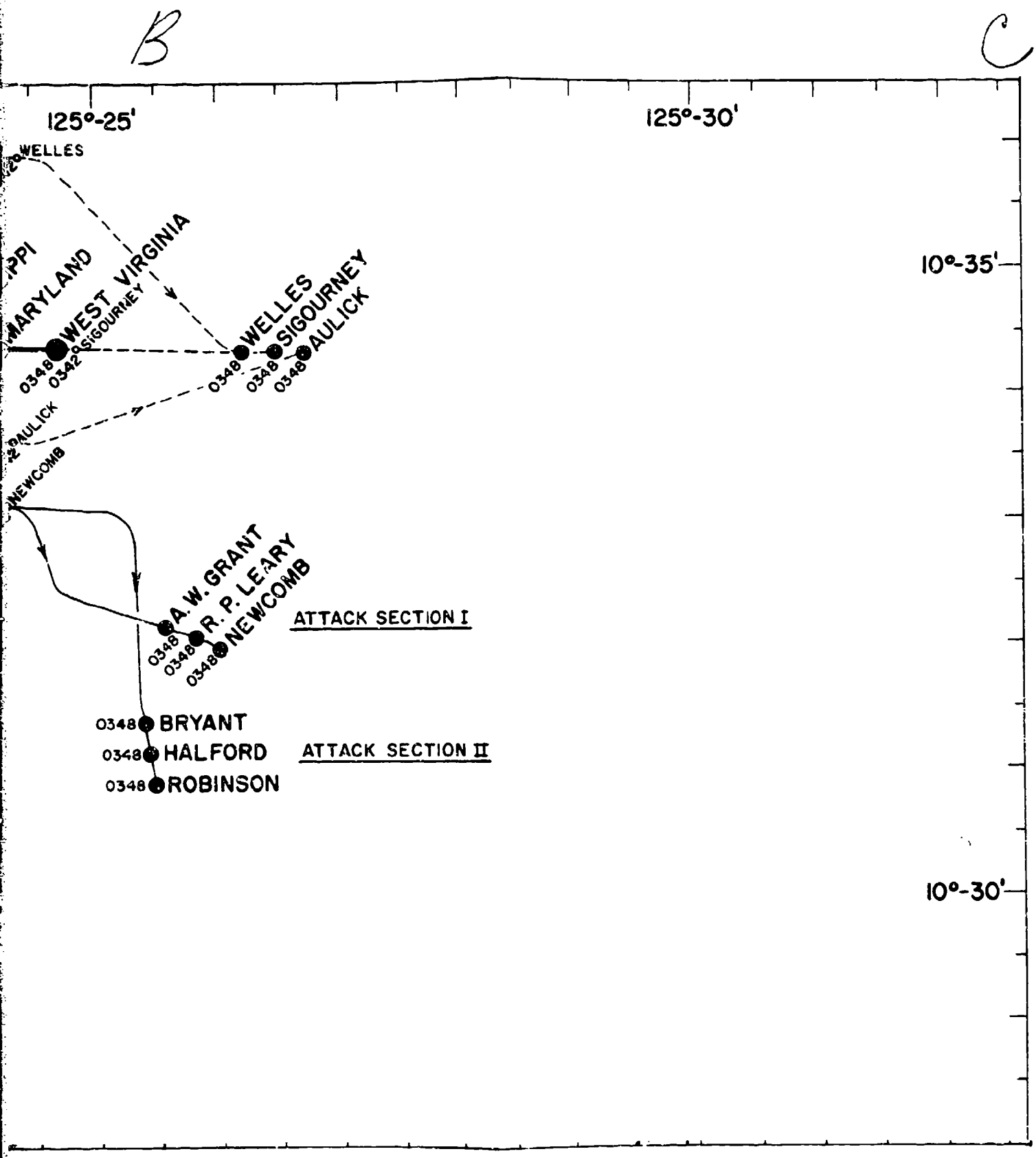
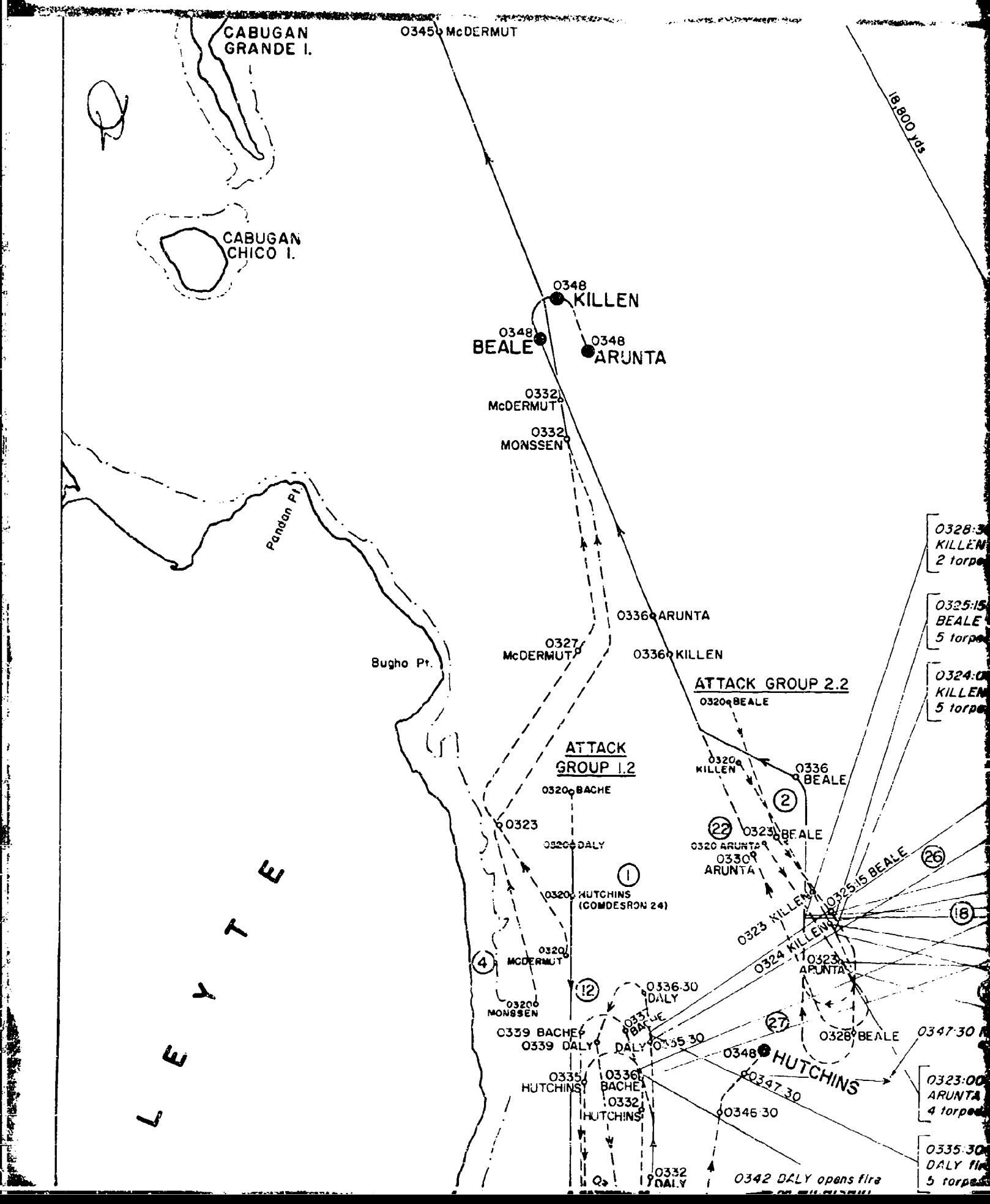
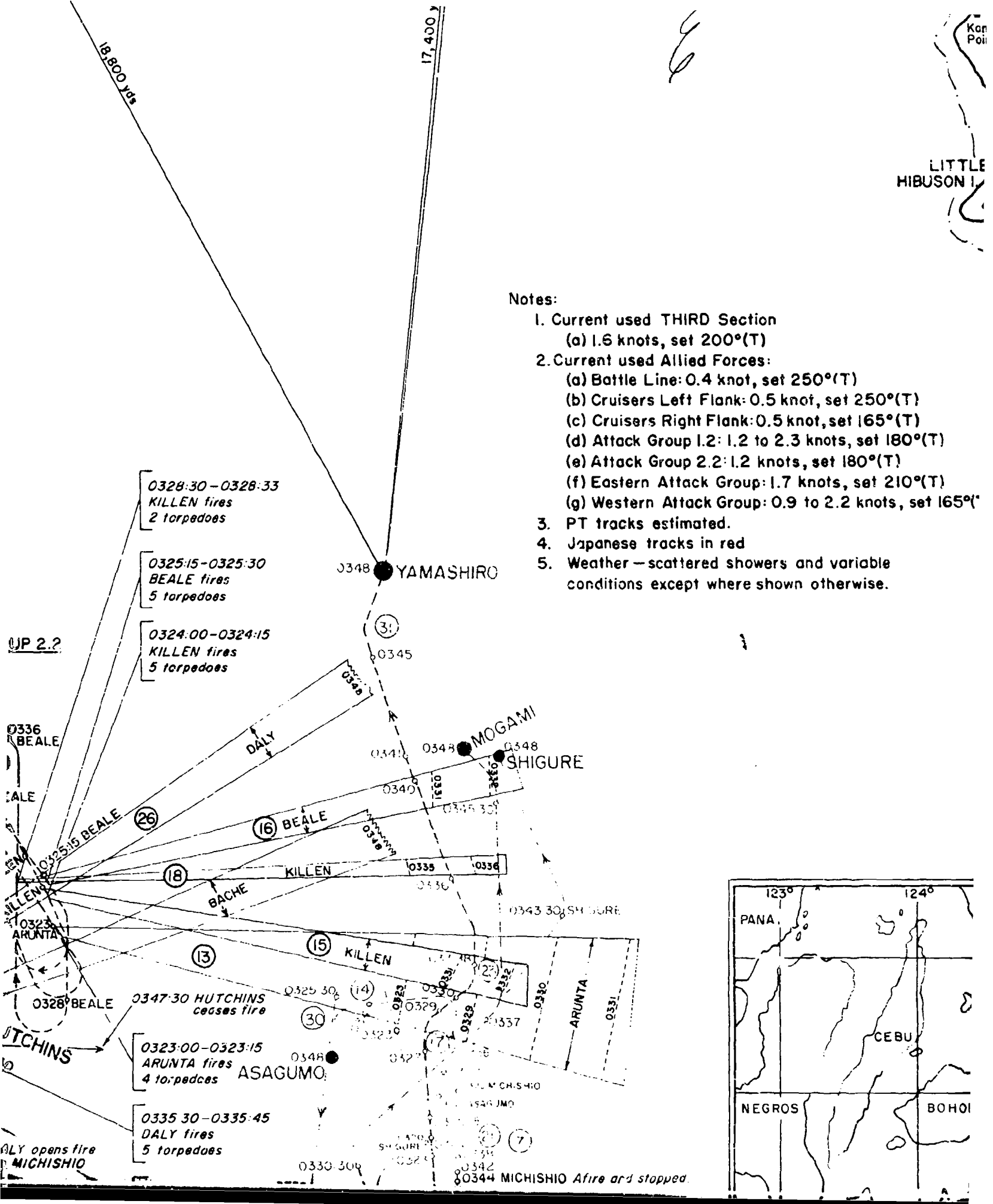

B
C
125°-25'
125°-30'
10°-35'
10°-30'
WELLES
VIRGINIA
MARYLAND
WEST SIGOURNEY
0348
0342
WELLES
SIGOURNEY
AULICK
0348
0348
0348
AULICK
NEWCOMB
A.W. GRANT
R.P. LEARY
NEWCOMB
0348
0348
0348
ATTACK SECTION I
0348 BRYANT
0348 HALFORD
0348 ROBINSON
ATTACK SECTION II

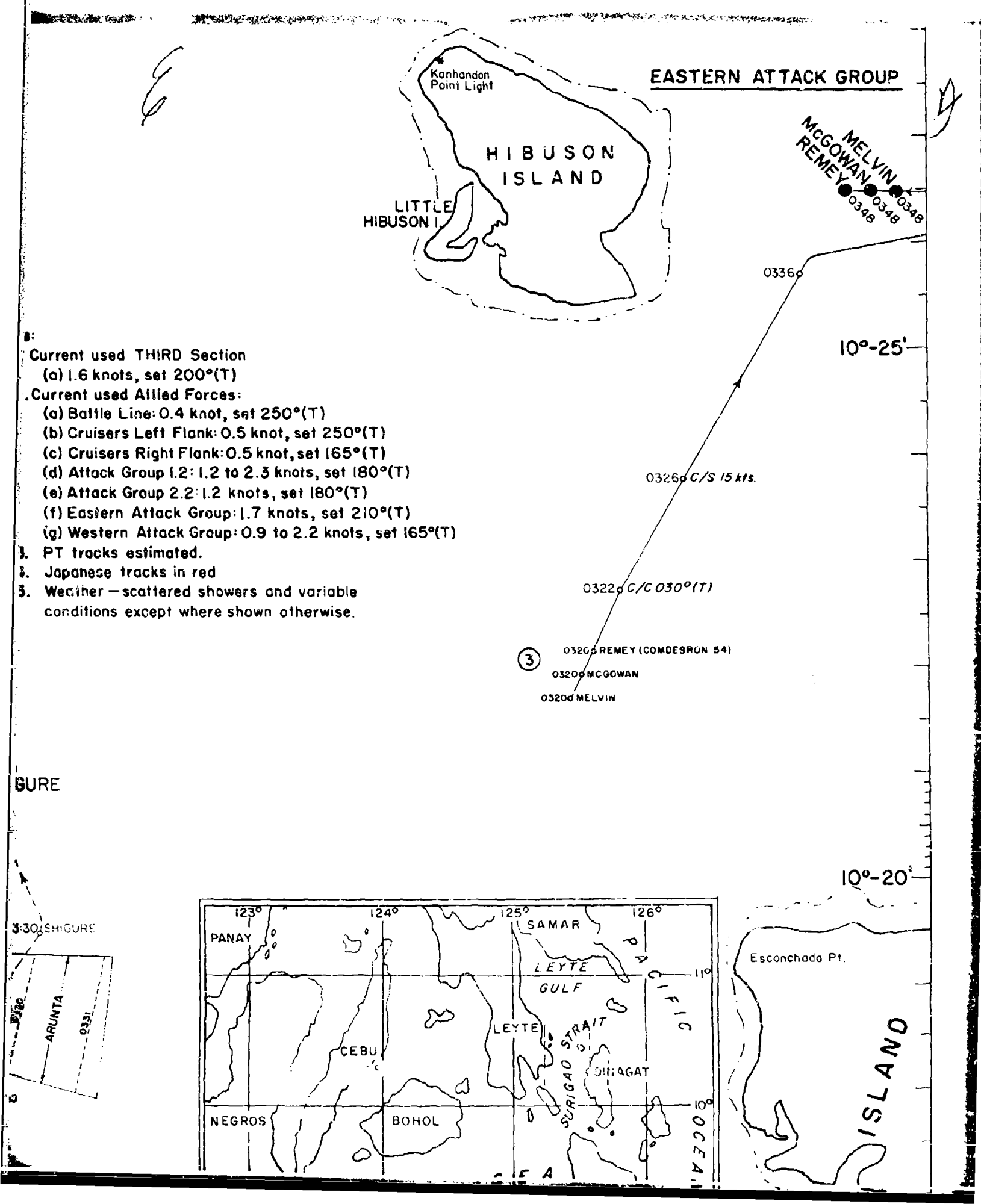
1500

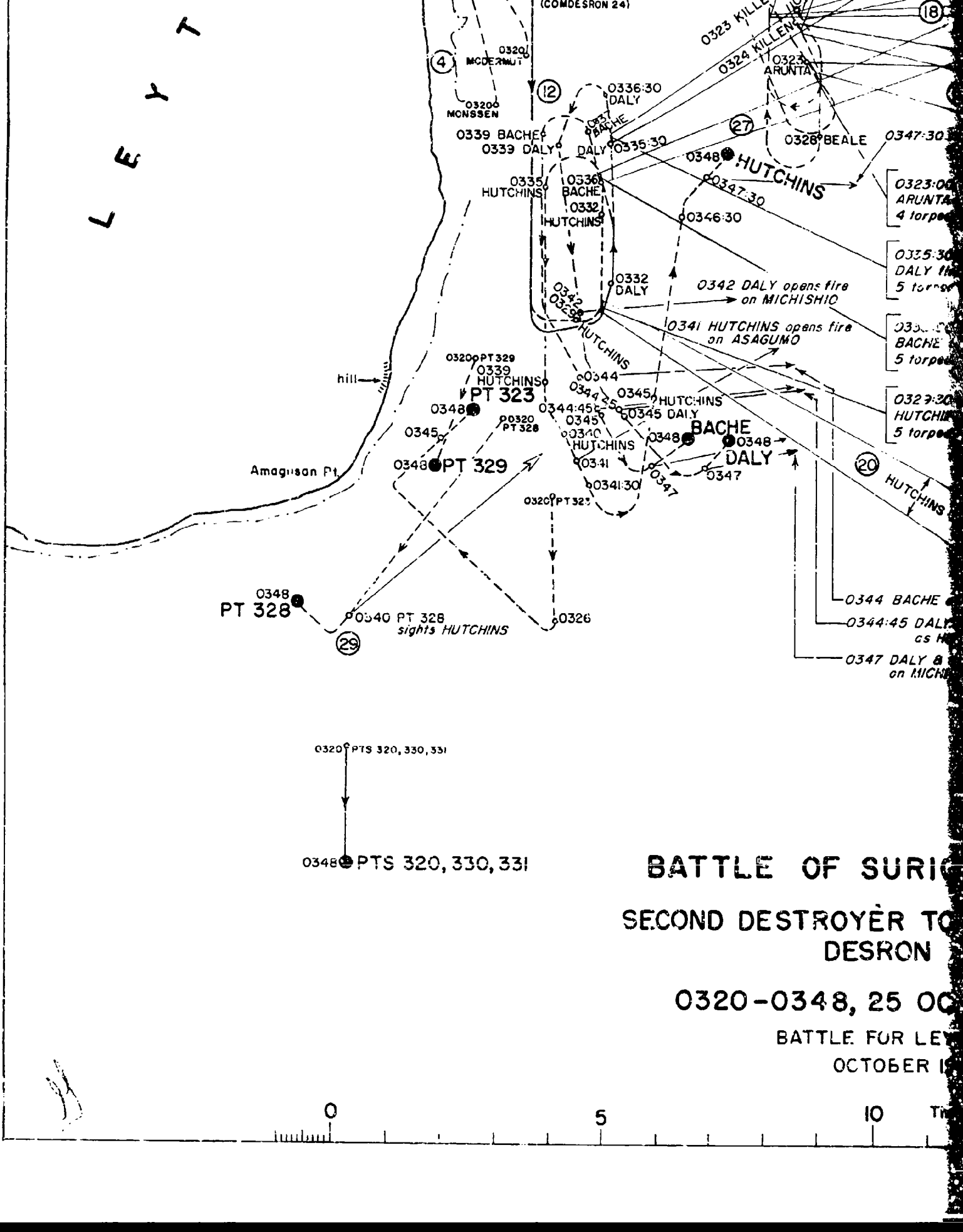

CABUGAN GRANDE I.
CABUGAN CHICO I.
0345 McDERMUT
18,800 yds
0348 KILLEN
0348 BEALE
0348 ARUNTA
0332 McDERMUT
0332 MONSSEN
Pandan Pt.
Bugho Pt.
0336 ARUNTA
0327 McDERMUT
0336 KILLEN
ATTACK GROUP 2.2
0320 BEALE
ATTACK GROUP 1.2
0320 BACHE
0323
0320 DALY
0320 HUTCHINS (COMDESRON 24)
0320 McDERMUT
0320 MONSSEN
0320 KILLEN
0336 BEALE
0323 BEALE
0320 ARUNTA
0330 ARUNTA
0325:15 BEALE
0323 KILLEN
0324 KILLEN
0323 ARUNTA
0336:30 DALY
0339 BACHE
0339 DALY
0337 BACHE
0335:30 DALY
0328 BEALE
0347:30
0348 HUTCHINS
0335 HUTCHINS
0336 BACHE
0332 HUTCHINS
0346:30
0332 DALY
0342 DALY opens fire
0328:3 KILLEN 2 torpe
0325:15 BEALE 5 torpe
0324:0 KILLEN 5 torpe
0323:00 ARUNTA 4 torpe
0335:30 DALY fir 5 torpe
LEYTE



Notes:

1. Current used THIRD Section
   (a) 1.6 knots, set 200°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces:
   (a) Battle Line: 0.4 knot, set 250°(T)
   (b) Cruisers Left Flank: 0.5 knot, set 250°(T)
   (c) Cruisers Right Flank: 0.5 knot, set 165°(T)
   (d) Attack Group 1.2: 1.2 to 2.3 knots, set 180°(T)
   (e) Attack Group 2.2: 1.2 knots, set 180°(T)
   (f) Eastern Attack Group: 1.7 knots, set 210°(T)
   (g) Western Attack Group: 0.9 to 2.2 knots, set 165°(
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red
5. Weather – scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.


EASTERN ATTACK GROUP
Kanhandon Point Light
HIBUSON ISLAND
LITTLE HIBUSON I.
MELVIN
McGOWAN
REMEY
0348
0348
0348
0336
10°-25'
0326 C/S 15 kts.
0322 C/C 030°(T)
3
0320 REMEY (COMDESRON 54)
0320 McGOWAN
0320 MELVIN
Current used THIRD Section
(a) 1.6 knots, set 200°(T)
Current used Allied Forces:
(a) Battle Line: 0.4 knot, set 250°(T)
(b) Cruisers Left Flank: 0.5 knot, set 250°(T)
(c) Cruisers Right Flank: 0.5 knot, set 165°(T)
(d) Attack Group 1.2: 1.2 to 2.3 knots, set 180°(T)
(e) Attack Group 2.2: 1.2 knots, set 180°(T)
(f) Eastern Attack Group: 1.7 knots, set 210°(T)
(g) Western Attack Group: 0.9 to 2.2 knots, set 165°(T)
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red
5. Weather — scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.
URE
10°-20'
3:30 SHIGURE
ARUNTA
0331
123°
124°
125°
126°
PANAY
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC
11°
LEYTE
CEBU
SURIGAO STRAIT
SURIGAO
NEGROS
BOHOL
10°
OCEAN
SEA
Esconchada Pt.
ISLAND



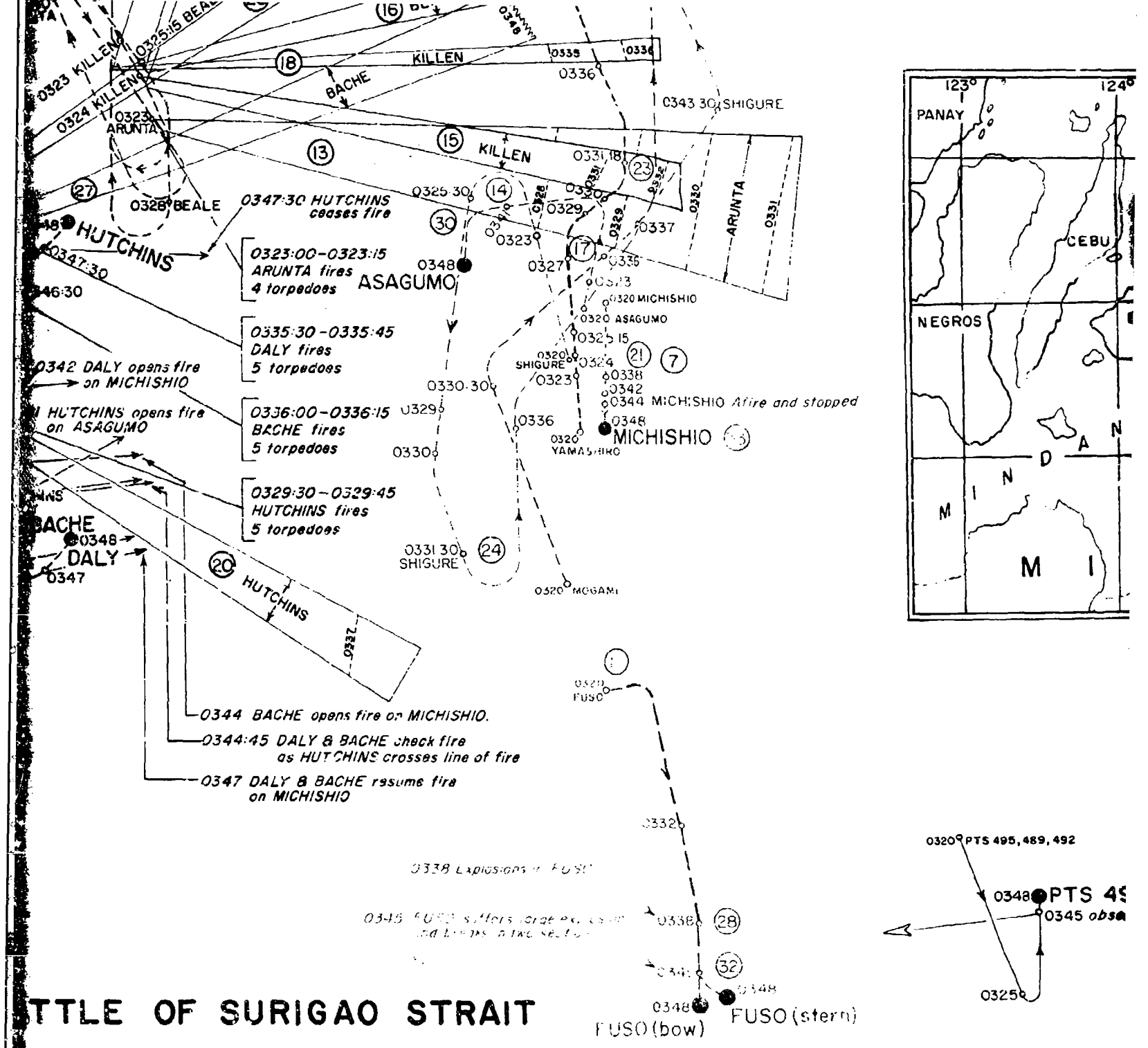
BATTLE OF SURI

SECOND DESTROYER TO
DESRON

0320-0348, 25 OC

BATTLE FOR LE

OCTOBER 1



TTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

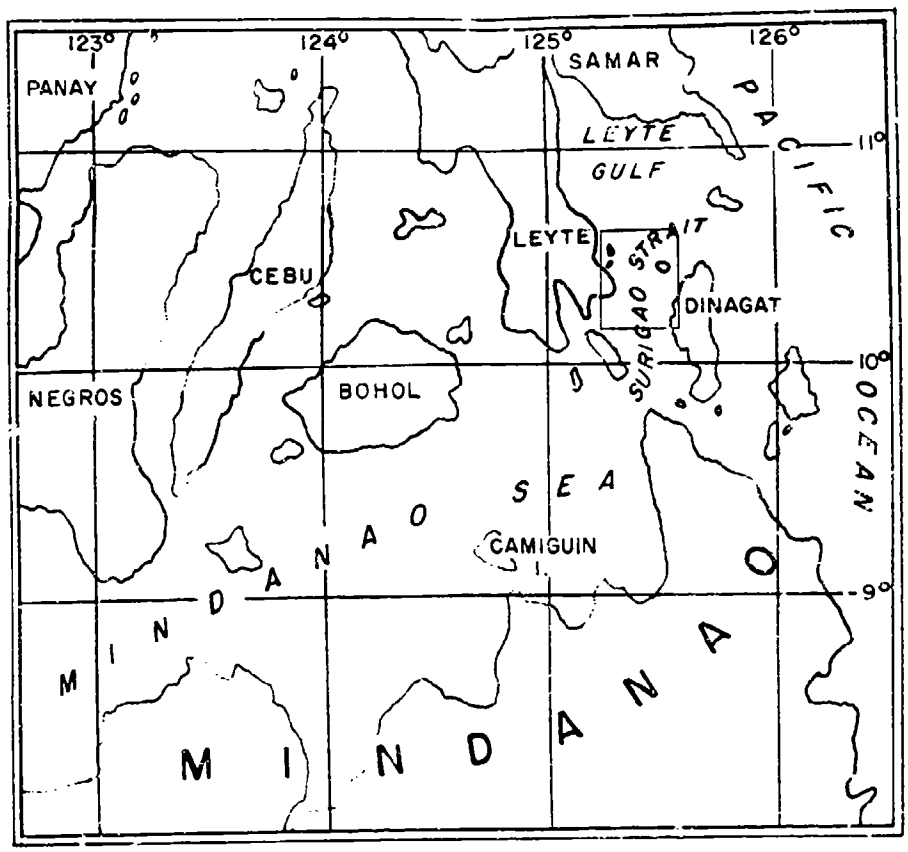
ND DESTROYER TORPEDO ATTACK
DESRON 24

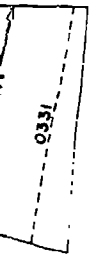
320–0348, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

10 Thousands of Yards 15 20

0.9 MILE



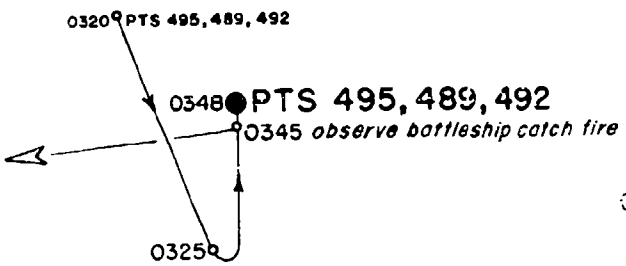


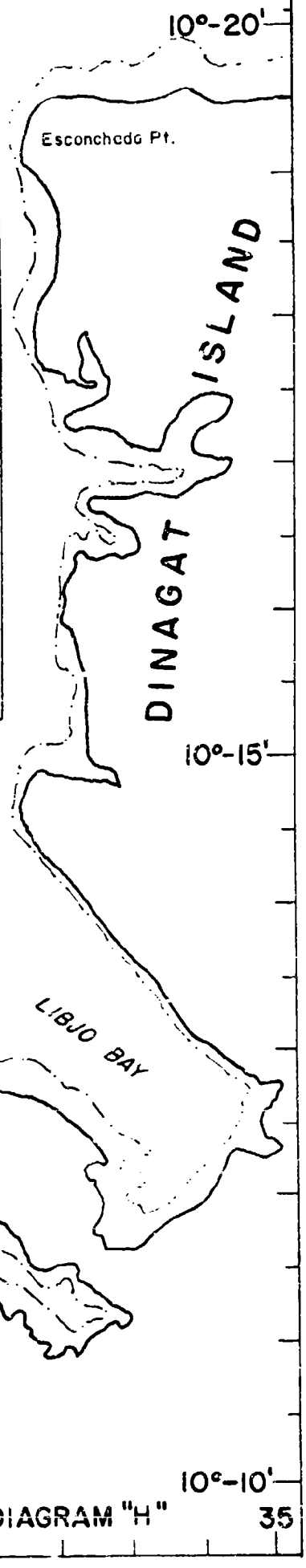
GURE

fire and stopped

0348

USO (stern)





Events Depicted on Diagram "I"

October 25th, 1944

0245 - 0348

1. 0245 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in a heavy squall, continued on toward Surigao Strait at twenty-six knots on course 060°(T).

2. 0311 Commander SECOND Striking Force changed course to 020°(T) and reduced speed to twenty-two knots, which may have indicated that he was doubtful of his navigational position.

3. 0320 Commander SECOND Striking Force, emerging from the squall, sighted the mountains of Panaon Island almost dead ahead and ordered an emergency turn of 45° to starboard. USHIO maneuvered independently.

4. 0322 SE Panaon PT 137 sighted what appeared to be a destroyer (probably the NACHI) and commenced approach for attack.

5. 0323 SE Panaon PT 137 closed the target sighted at 0322 and while still undetected, fired a single torpedo at an estimated range of 700 - 800 yards. (Target was actually the NACHI, but the torpedo hit the ABUKUMA, the third ship in a line of bearing, whose presence was not known to the PT.)

6. 0323 SE Panaon PT 132 with no torpedoes remaining, sighted three destroyers and two smaller ships on northeasterly course at twenty-five knots, estimated range 1,700 yards.

7. 0325 ABUKUMA sighted a torpedo wake to port and almost immediately received a torpedo hit in the port side below the bridge. This torpedo had been launched by PT 137 at 0323. The resulting damage slowed her to ten knots and forced her to drop out of the formation. ABUKUMA and SHIRANUHI opened fire on PT 137.

8. 0325 Commander SECOND Striking Force increased speed to twenty-eight knots.

9. 0327 SE Panaon PT 134, lying to off Binit Village, sighted the USHIO and, when the target was passing about 1,000 yards away, fired a single torpedo which missed.

10. 0327 Bilaa Point PT's (491, 497, 324) made radar contact on three to four targets bearing 300°(T) moving up the strait, range five to seven miles, and reported the contact to PT 523.

11. 0330 Commander SECOND Striking Force, having cleared Panaon Island, ordered his destroyers to form column on course 020°(T) thus assuming his planned battle formation.

12. 0332 Commander Sumilon PT's in PT 523 made radar contact on one large ship and five destroyers on a northerly course. He reported this contact to CTG 79.11 at 0540.

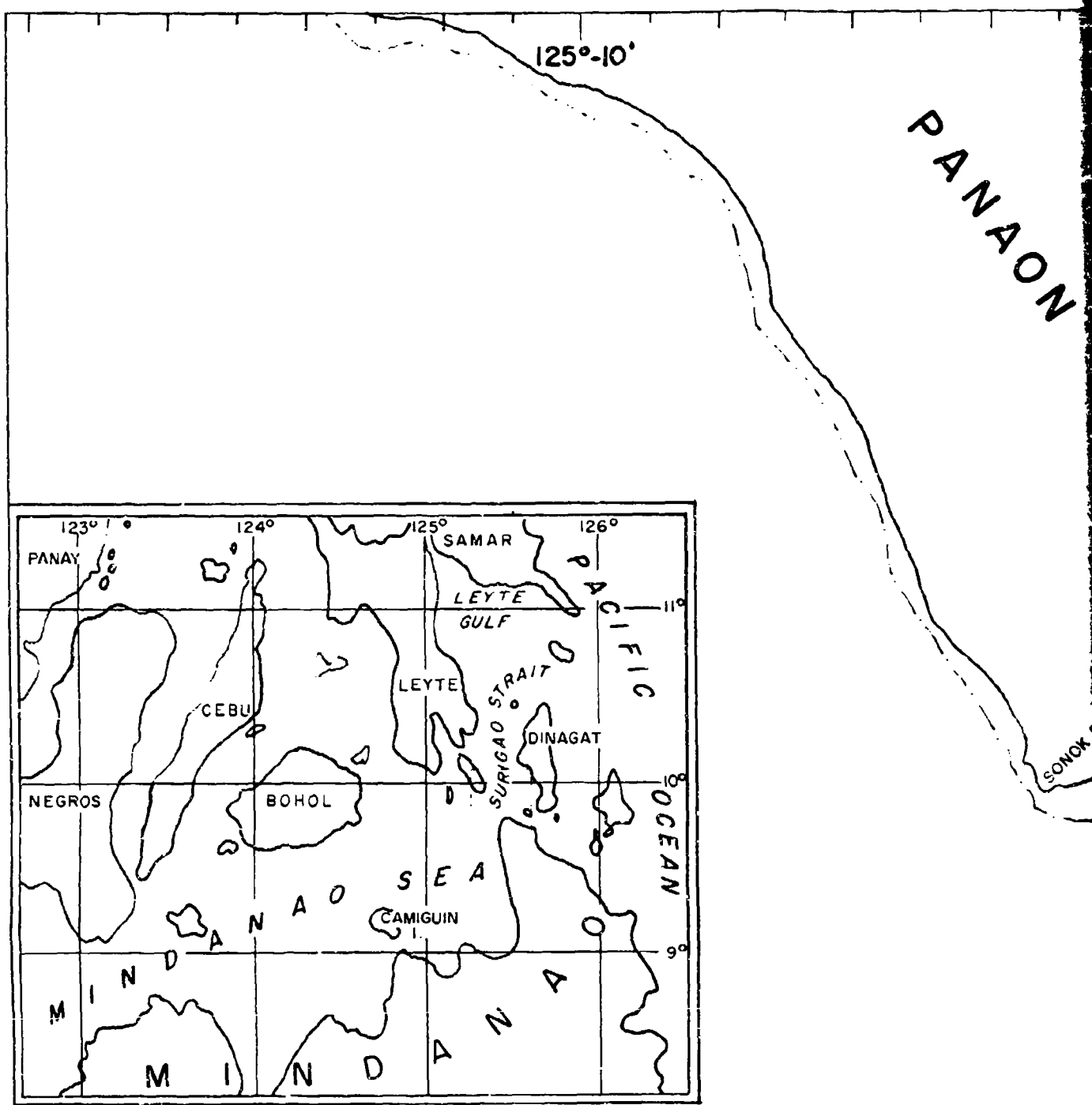
13. 0338 Commander SECOND Striking Force changed course to 000°(T).

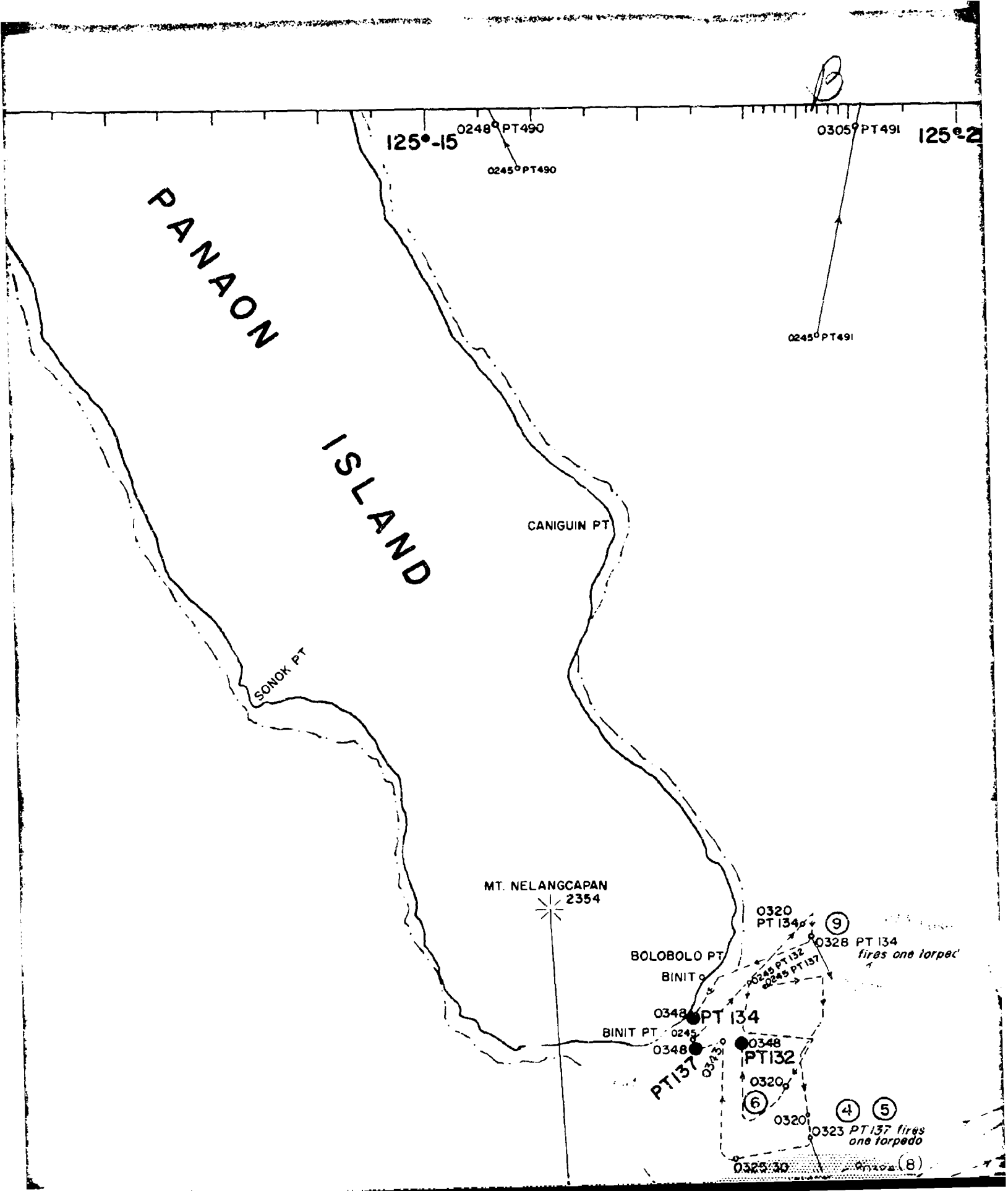
14. 0343 Commander SECOND Striking Force sighted ahead a number of ships afire, heard and observed gunfire.

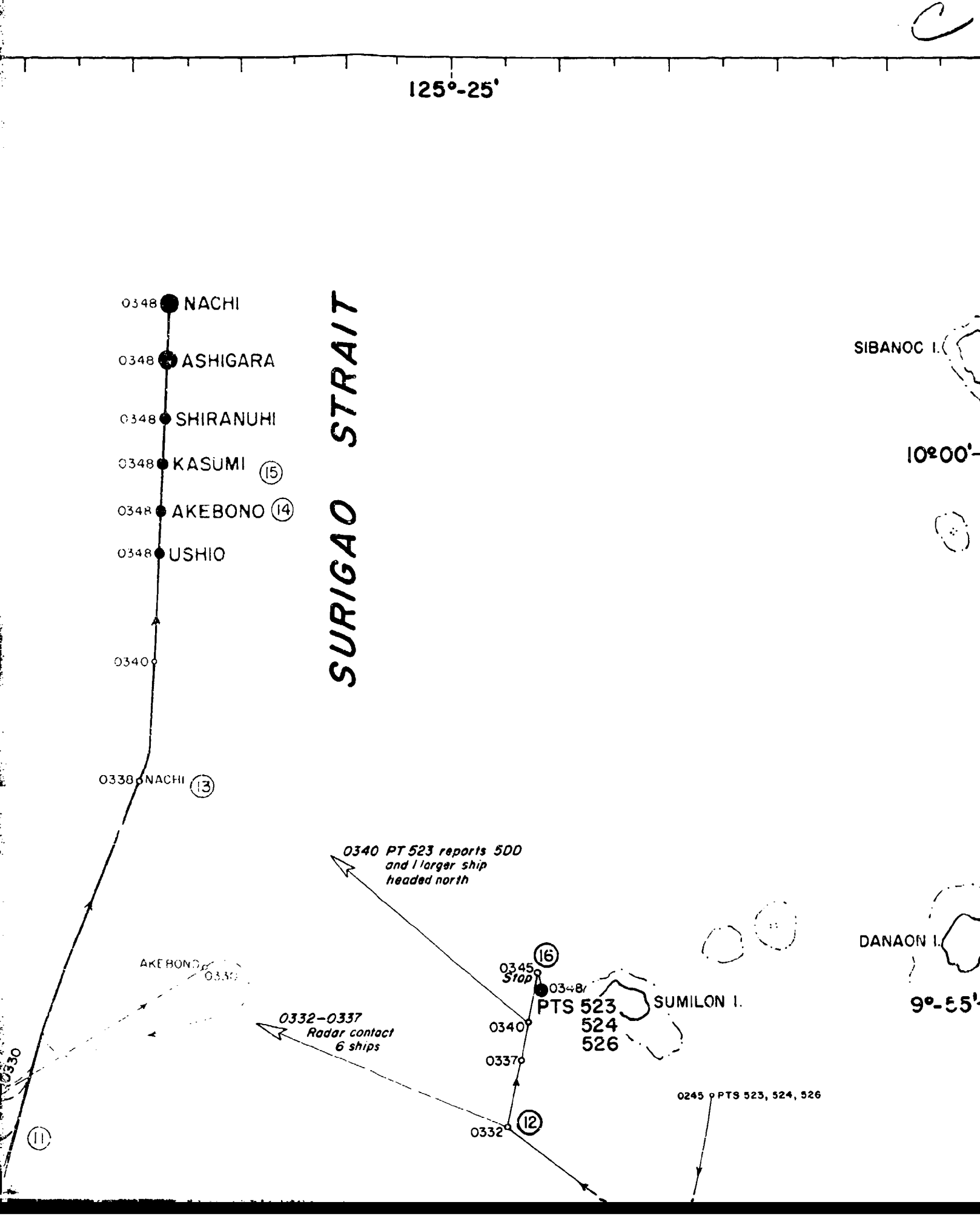
15. 0344 Commander SECOND Striking Force informed Commander THIRD Section by voice radio that he was penetrating through the strait.

16. 0345 Commander Sumilon PT's in PT 523 sighted two burning ships about twelve miles to the northward. (Probably the two burning sections of the FUSO.)

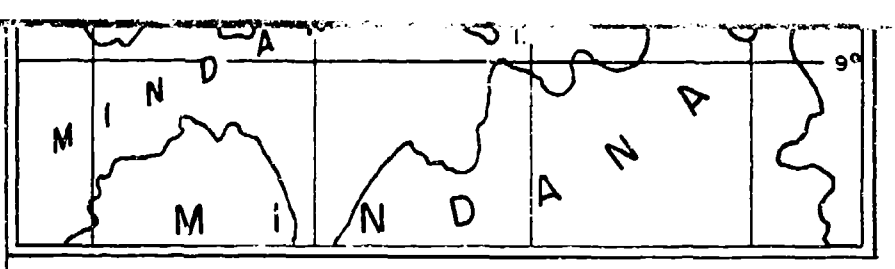
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



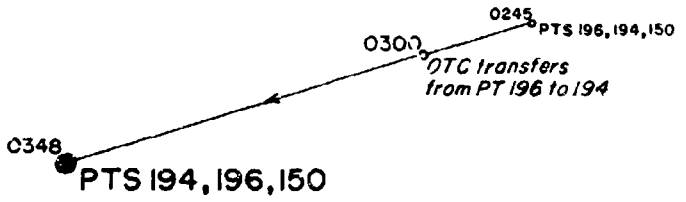

125°-15
0248° PT490
0245° PT490
0305° PT491
125°-2
0245° PT491
PANAON ISLAND
CANIGUIN PT
SONOK PT
MT. NELANGCAPAN
2354
0320
PT 134
9
0328 PT 134
fires one torpedo
BOLOBOLO PT
BINIT
0245 PT 132
0245 PT 137
0348
PT 134
BINIT PT
0245
0348
0348
PT 132
PT 137
0343°
0320
6
0320
4
5
0323 PT 137 fires one torpedo
0325 30
(8)

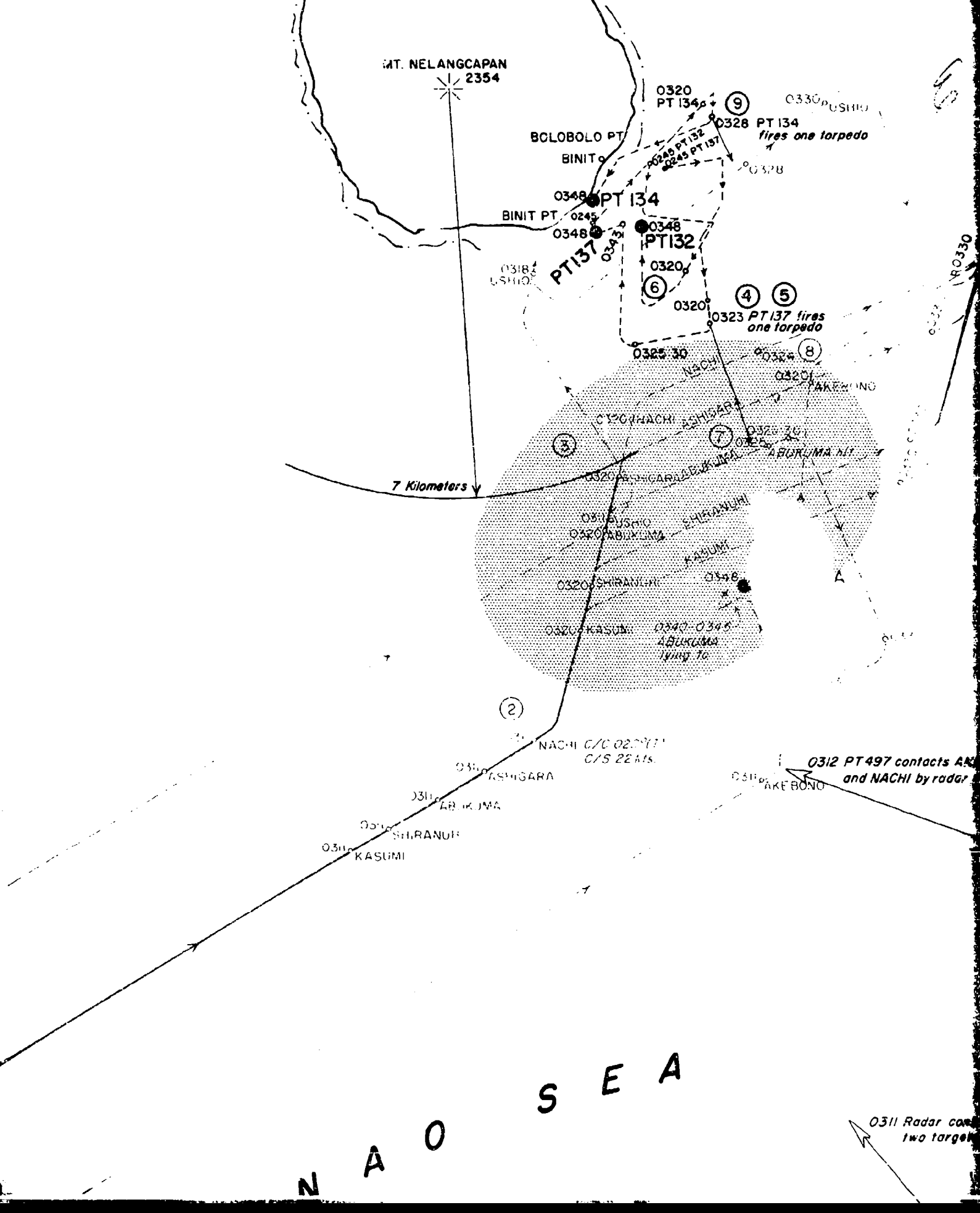


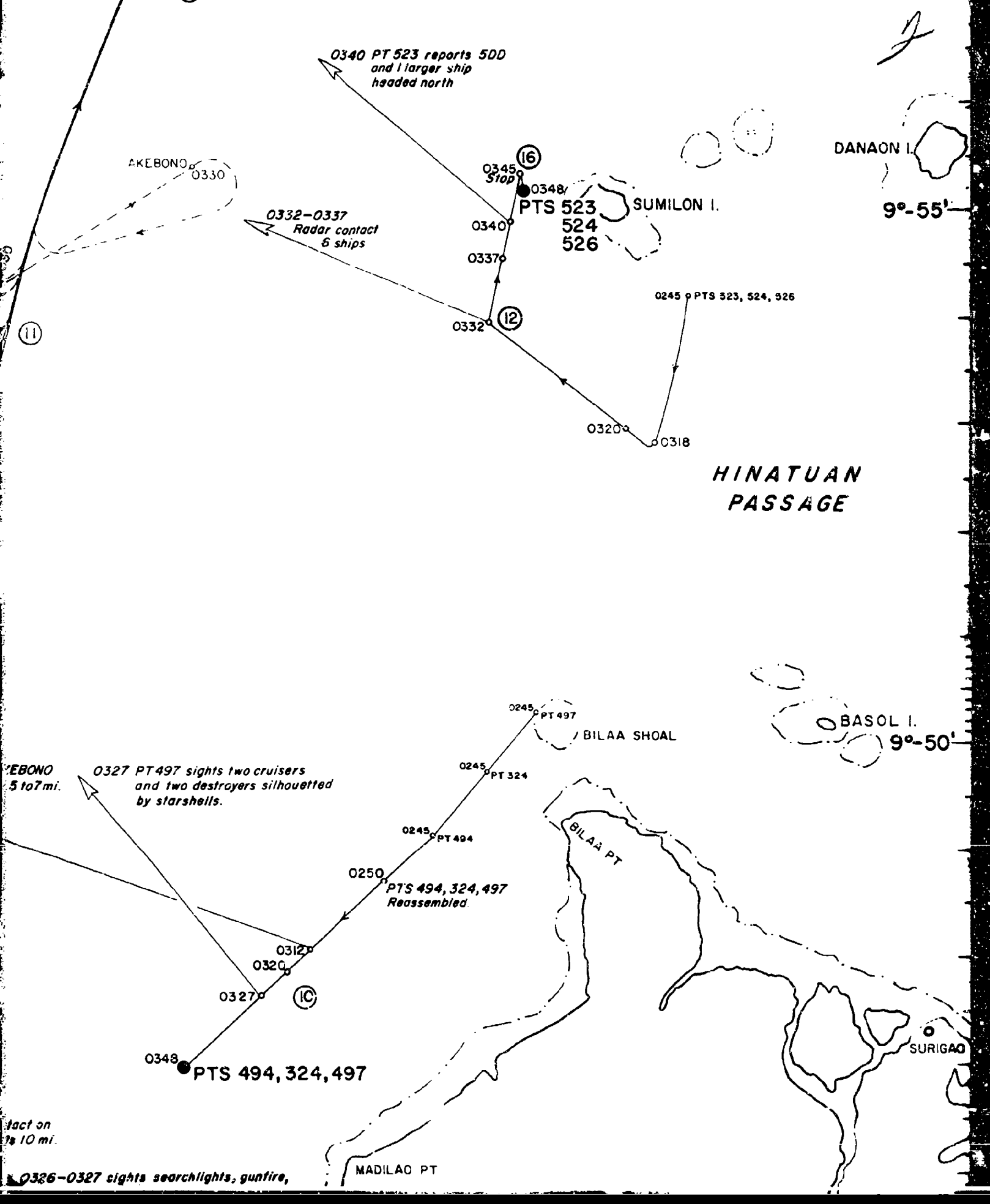
125°-25'
SURIGAO STRAIT
0348 NACHI
0348 ASHIGARA
0348 SHIRANUHI
0348 KASUMI (15)
0348 AKEBONO (14)
0348 USHIO
0340
0338 NACHI (13)
AKEBONO
0330
(11)
0340 PT 523 reports 5DD and 1 larger ship headed north
0332–0337 Radar contact 6 ships
0345 Stop (16)
0348
PTS 523
524
526
SUMILON I.
0340
0337
0332 (12)
0245 PTS 523, 524, 526
SIBANOC I.
10°00'-
DANAON I.
9°-55'

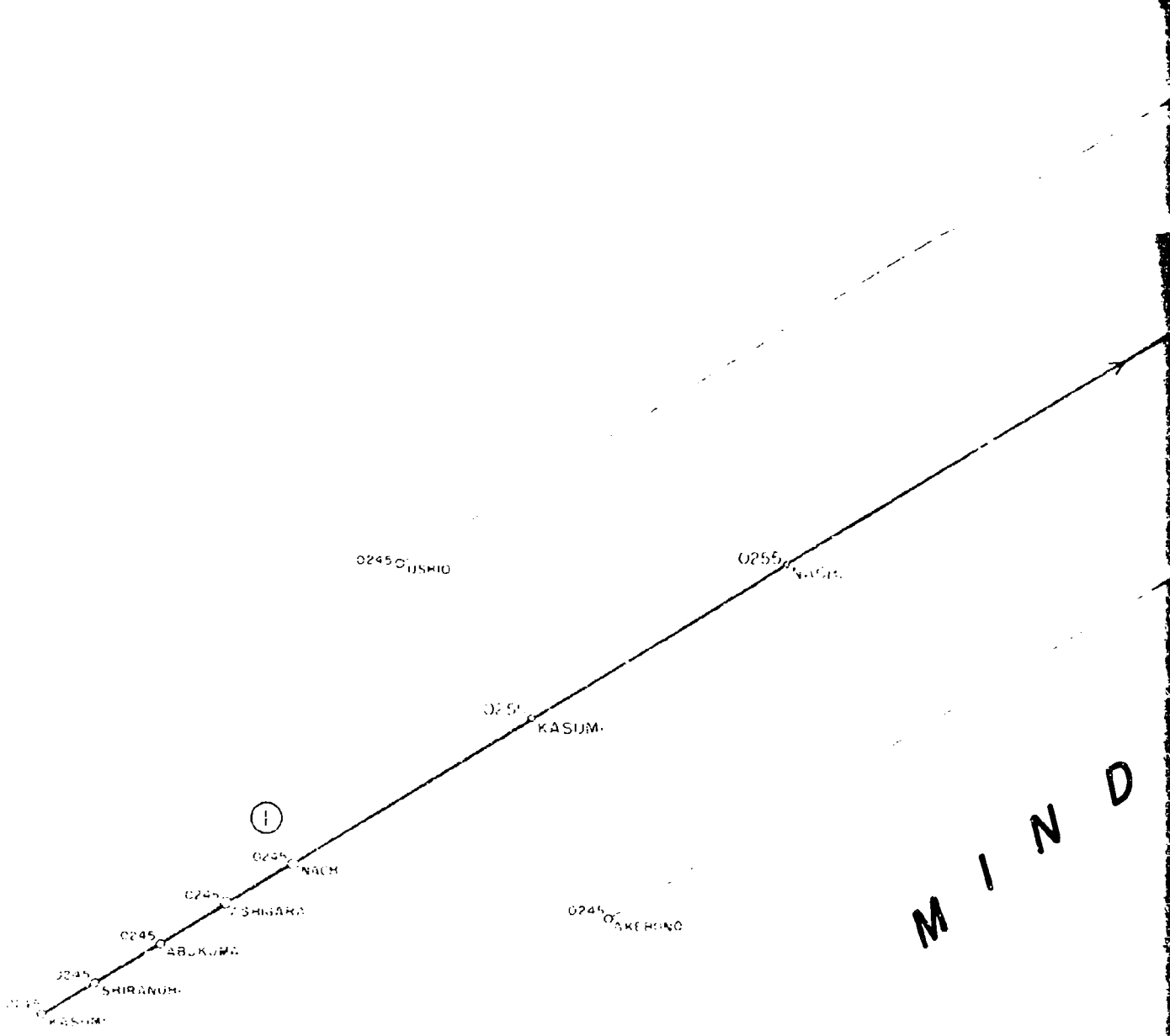

MINDANAO
MINDANAO
9°




0245
PTS 196, 194, 150
0300
OTC transfers
from PT 196 to 194
0348
PTS 194, 196, 150


MT. NELANGCAPAN
2354
0320
PT 134
9
0328 PT 134
fires one torpedo
BOLOBOLO PT
BINIT
0245 PT 132
0245 PT 137
0348
PT 134
BINIT PT
0245
0348
0348
PT132
PT137
0343
0320
6
0320
4
5
0323 PT 137 fires
one torpedo
0325 30
8
NACHI
0320
AKEBONO
ASHIGARA
7
3
ABUKUMA
7 Kilometers
SHIRANUHI
KASUMI
0320 SHIRANUHI
0348
0320 KASUMI
0340-0346
ABUKUMA
lying to
2
NACHI
ASHIGARA
ABUKUMA
SHIRANUHI
KASUMI
0312 PT 497 contacts AK
and NACHI by radar
AKEBONO
NAO SEA
0311 Radar con
two targe


0340 PT 523 reports 500 and 1 larger ship headed north
AKEBONO
0330
0332–0337 Radar contact 6 ships
0345 Stop
0348
PTS 523 524 526
SUMILON I.
DANAON I.
9°-55'
0340
0337
0332
0245 PTS 523, 524, 526
0320
0318
HINATUAN PASSAGE
0245 PT 497
BILAA SHOAL
BASOL I.
9°-50'
0245 PT 324
0245 PT 494
0250
PTS 494, 324, 497 Reassembled
0312
0320
0327
0348
PTS 494, 324, 497
0327 PT 497 sights two cruisers and two destroyers silhouetted by starshells.
BILAA PT
SURIGAO
MADILAO PT

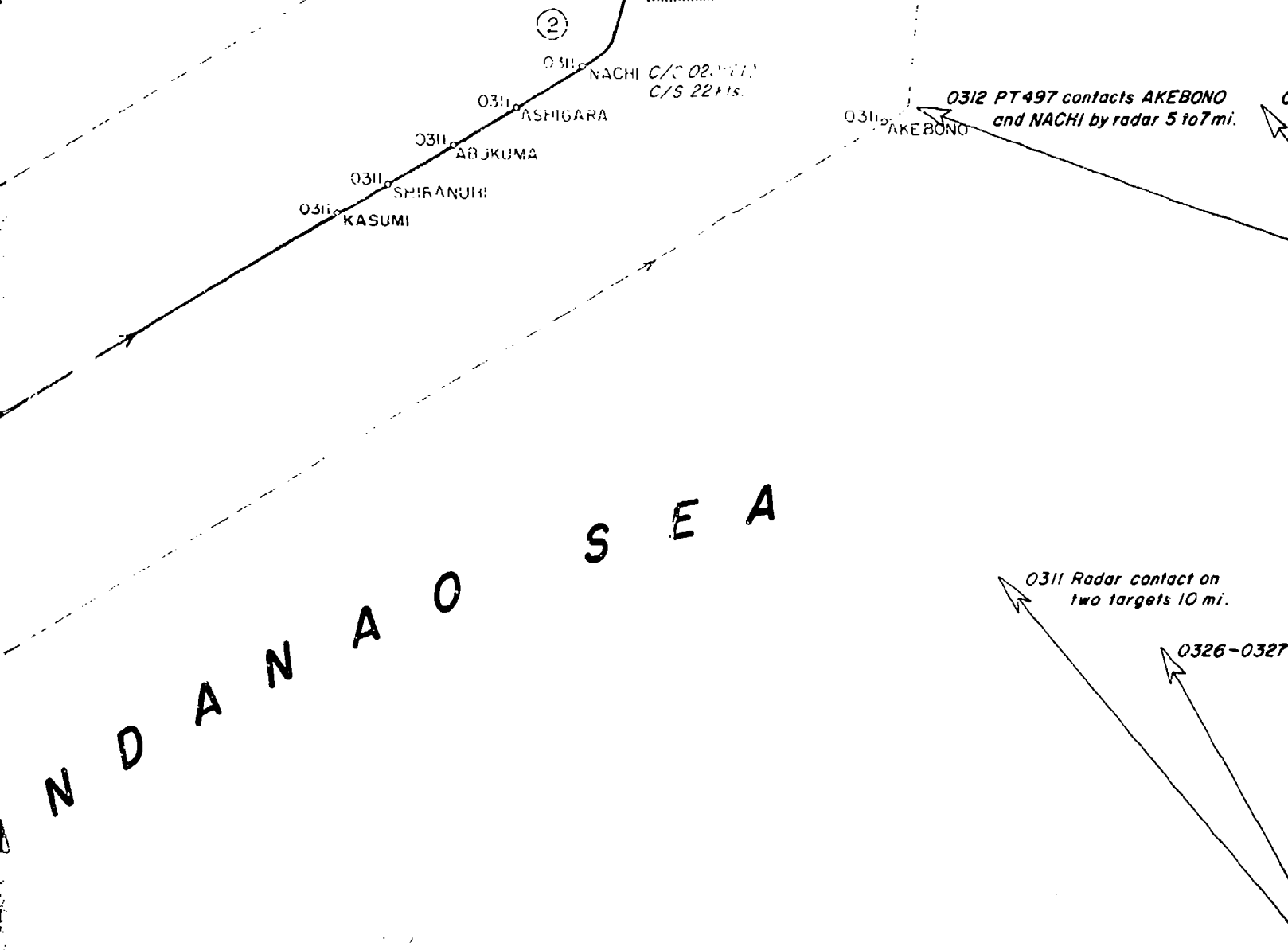


Notes:

1. Current used SECOND Striking Force:
   (a) 0245 to 0311 – 2.45 knots, set 246°(T)
   (b) 0311 to 0320 – 2.63 knots, set 248°(T)
   (c) 0320 to 0330 – 2.70 knots, set 214°(T)
   (d) 0330 to 0338 – 2.73 knots, set 192°(T)
   (e) 0338 to 0348 – 2.0 knots, set 150°(T)
2. Current used PTS 196, 194, 150 – 2.35 knots, set 253°(T)
3. Current used PTS 494, 324, 497 – 2.75 knots, set 228°(T)
4. PT tracks estimated.
5. Japanese tracks in red.
6. Weather – scatterered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.

0 5 10 Thousands of yards

496799 C - 59 (Face p. 152)



(T)
(T)
(T)
(T)
(T)
ots, set 253°(T)
ots, set 228°(T)

ble
).

BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

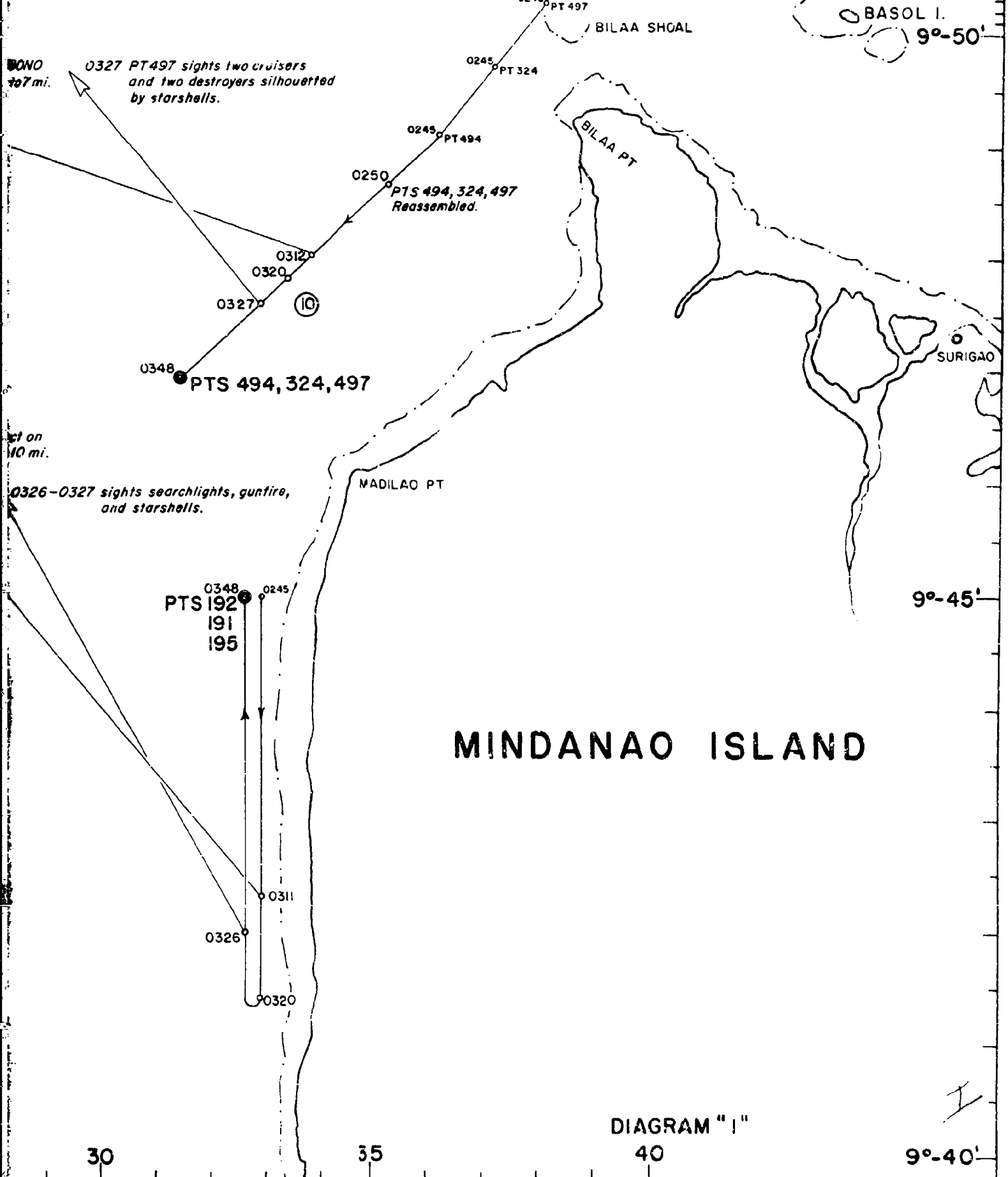
SECOND STRIKING FORCE ENTERS THE STRAIT

0245-0348 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

nds of yards 15 20 25 3

CONFIDENTIAL


PT 497
BILAA SHOAL
BASOL I.
9°-50'
0327 PT497 sights two cruisers and two destroyers silhouetted by starshells.
0245 PT 324
0245 PT 494
0250 PTS 494, 324, 497 Reassembled.
BILAA PT
0312
0320
0327
10
0348 PTS 494, 324, 497
SURIGAO
0326-0327 sights searchlights, gunfire, and starshells.
MADILAO PT
0348 PTS 192 191 195
0245
9°-45'
MINDANAO ISLAND
0311
0326
0320
DIAGRAM "I"
30
35
40
9°-40'

Events Depicted on Diagram "J"

October 25th, 1944

0348 - 0420

1. 0349 KILLEN launched three torpedoes to port at a battleship bearing 106½°(T), range 12,450 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

2. 0349:30 HUTCHINS launched five torpedoes to starboard at a target bearing 110°(T), range 6,200 yards. (ASAGUMO). The torpedoes missed ASAGUMO but hit MICHISHIO at the end of their run.

3. 0349:30 ASAGUMO turned to the eastward to avoid gunfire from Attack Group 1.2 and the HUTCHINS torpedoes passed harmlessly to the south of her.

4. 0350:30 SHIGURE sighted torpedo wakes from the torpedoes fired by the DALY at 0335:30.

5. 0351 CTG 77.2 ordered Left Flank Cruisers to open fire.

6. 0351 CTG 77.3, following CTG 77.2, ordered the Right Flank Cruisers to open fire.

7. 0351 Commanding Officer MOGAMI observed the enemy group lying in wait to the north and the concentrated gunfire directed at the YAMASHIRO. He increased speed to twenty-five knots.

8. 0352 Allied gunfire commenced hitting the YAMASHIRO which appears to have crippled her communications as well as inflicting other damage causing her to slow to about twelve knots. She was also set afire.

9. 0353 DENVER, apparently as a result of station-keeping troubles, moved out of column.

10. 0353 WEST VIRGINIA, having notified Commander Battle Line she was ready to open fire, did so shortly thereafter. She was the first battleship to open fire.

11. 0354 SHIGURE, continuing northward, was being straddled by gunfire directed at the YAMASHIRO. She avoided direct hits by a fishtail maneuver, but suffered some damage from near misses.

12. 0354 MOGAMI, having turned to the westward to launch torpedoes, commenced receiving gunfire from destroyers of Attack Group 1.2 and by 0356 was afire.

13. 0355:15 BRYANT launched five torpedoes to starboard at a target bearing 220°(T), range 8,800 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

14. 0356 ARUNTA checked fire on YAMASHIRO in order to allow HUTCHINS to cross the line of fire.

15. 0356 SHIGURE, when the intensity of Allied gunfire diminished, turned to starboard to retire.

16. 0356:36 HALFORD launched five torpedoes to starboard at a target bearing 224°(T), range 9,000 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

17. 0357 MOGAMI, now on a southerly course, was taken under fire by the PORTLAND.

18. 0357 LUTZE launched five torpedoes to port at a target believed to be a battleship bearing 142°(T), range 9,900 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

19. 0358 Commander Right Flank Cruisers turned to the west.

20. 0358 ROBINSON launched five torpedoes to starboard at a target believed to be a battleship bearing 222°(T), range 8,300 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

21. 0358 MICHISHIO sank after being hit by a HUTCHINS torpedo which had been fired at 0349:30.

22. 0358 BENNION launched five torpedoes to port at a large target observed optically to be a battleship bearing 146°(T), range 8,800 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

23. 0358 SHIGURE, on a southerly course, increased speed to thirty-two knots. A short time later she received a direct hit by an eight-inch projectile but it did not affect her navigability.

24. 0359 HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS launched four torpedoes to port at a target bearing 121°(T), range 7,800 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

25. 0359:15 BENNION launched five torpedoes to port at a second battleship bearing 155°(T), range 9,800 yards (target unidentified). She made one hit in YAMASHIRO.

26. 0400 Commander Attack Section ONE ordered a turn to 270°(T) and directed his destroyers to get ready to fire.

27. 0400 Commander Attack Section THREE turned away and commenced his retirement.

28. 0401 YAMASHIRO steadied on course 260°(T) and continued to fight back by returning gunfire which straddled the Left Flank Cruisers. Her secondary battery later scored hits on the ALBERT W. GRANT.

29. 0401:30 MOGAMI, while retiring, launched four torpedoes to the northward in the general direction of the enemy. All torpedoes missed.

30. 0402 MOGAMI received several hits from gunfire from Attack Group 1.2 and the PORTLAND causing extensive damage to main and steering engines.

31. 0404 CALIFORNIA, having misinterpreted a turn signal at 0402, nearly collided with TENNESSEE.

32. 0404 NEWCOMB launched five torpedoes to port at a target believed to be a battleship bearing 200°(T), range 6,200 yards. She made one hit in the YAMASHIRO.

33. 0404:01 RICHARD P. LEARY launched three torpedoes to port at a target believed to be a battleship bearing 223°(T), range 7,200 yards (probably splashes). All torpedoes missed.

34. 0404:18 ALBERT W. GRANT launched five torpedoes to port at a large target bearing 209°(T), range 6,900 yards. (YAMASHIRO). All torpedoes missed.

35. 0405 YAMASHIRO was forced to slow temporarily, likely due to a third torpedo hit which was launched from the destroyer BENNION at 0359:15.

36. 0406 DENVER was straddled by YAMASHIRO gunfire. Commander Left Flank Force increased speed to fifteen knots.

37. 0406 Commander Attack Section ONE, observing that his command was being straddled, directed the NEWCOMB to change course to the north in order to avoid the gunfire.

38. 0406:30 ALBERT W. GRANT swung to the right and back to the left in order to throw off the gunfire.

39. 0407 ALBERT W. GRANT commenced receiving hits from gunfire which came from friendly as well as enemy ships.

40. 0408 MOGAMI, as a result of damage from enemy gunfire, was slowly losing speed.

41. 0408 CTG 77.2 received a startling message from COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, "you are firing on COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, we are in the middle of the channel."

42. 0408:12 ALBERT W. GRANT launched five torpedoes at the YAMASHIRO, torpedo course 203°(T). She made no hits.

43. 0409 CTG 77.2 ordered all ships to cease firing and all ships immediately complied.

44. 0410 Commander SECOND Striking Force decided that the two burning sections of the FUSO were the remains of the FUSO and YAMASHIRO.

45. 0411:30 YAMASHIRO, after swinging to a southerly retirement course, received a fourth torpedo hit launched from the NEWCOMB at 0404.

46. 0413 RICHARD P. LEARY reported passing through torpedo water. These torpedoes had been fired by the MOGAMI at 0401:30.

47. 0416 CTG 77.2 ordered Commander Battle Line to direct COMDESDIV XRAY to report to him for duty.

48. 0417 Commander Right Flank Cruisers changed course to 090°(T) to close the Left Flank Force in preparation for the chase down the strait.

49. 0418 Commander Right Flank Force directed his destroyers to lie along the shore and await orders for another torpedo attack.

50. 0418 The Battle Line, less BATDIV TWO, changed course to the right to 000°(T).

51. 0418 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in the NACHI, made radar contact on the enemy, bearing 025°(T), range eleven kilometers. (More likely eleven miles.)

52. 0419 YAMASHIRO, having received damage from four torpedo hits and a great number of projectiles from Allied gunfire, sank in Latitude 10°-22.2'N, Longitude 125°-21.3'E.

53. 0419 CTG 77.2, believing that COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX was clear of the line of fire, issued orders to resume fire but no ships complied because there were no targets within gun range.

54. 0420 ALBERT W. GRANT was dead in the water and in danger of sinking from damage received by gunfire commencing at 0407.

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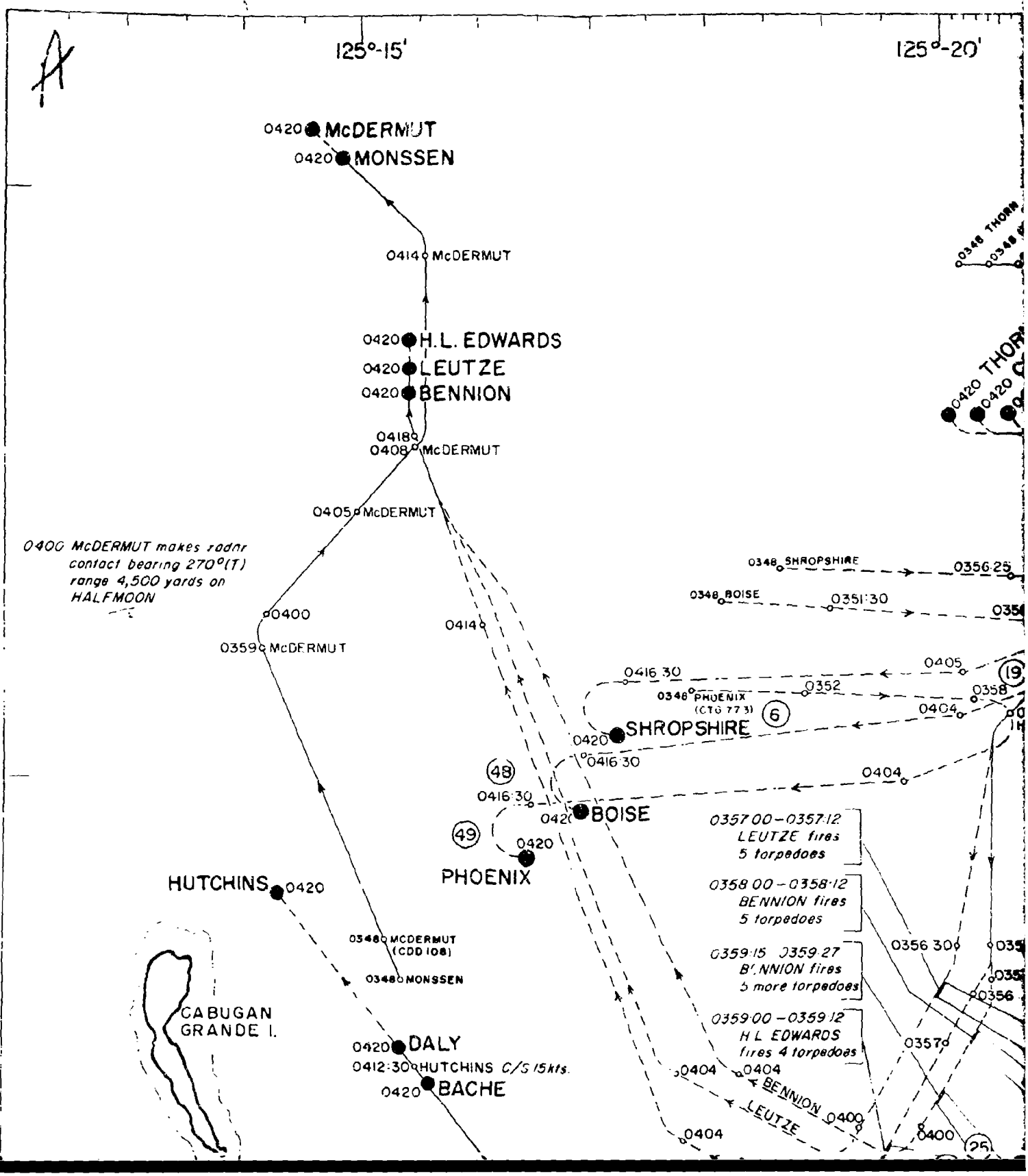
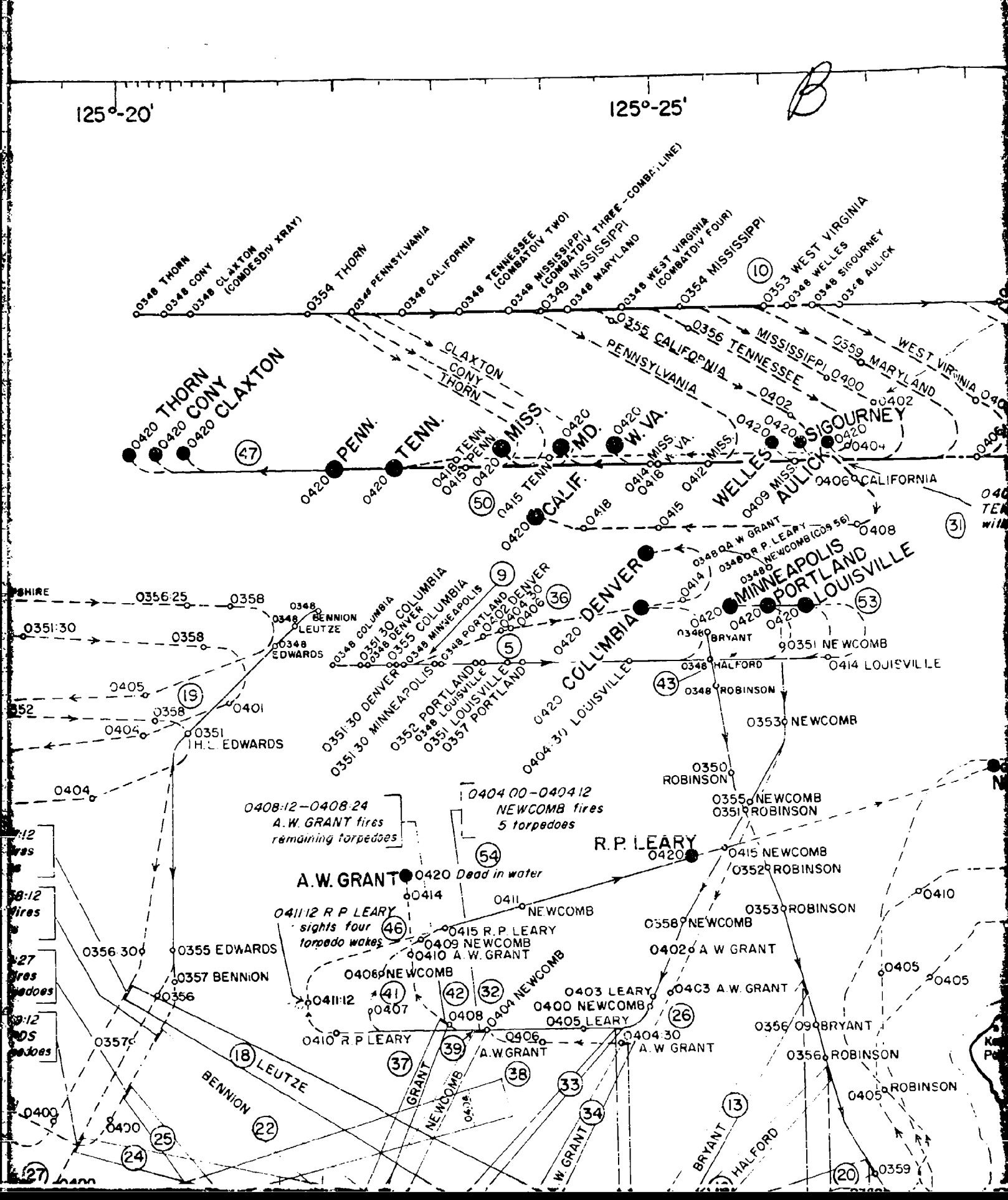
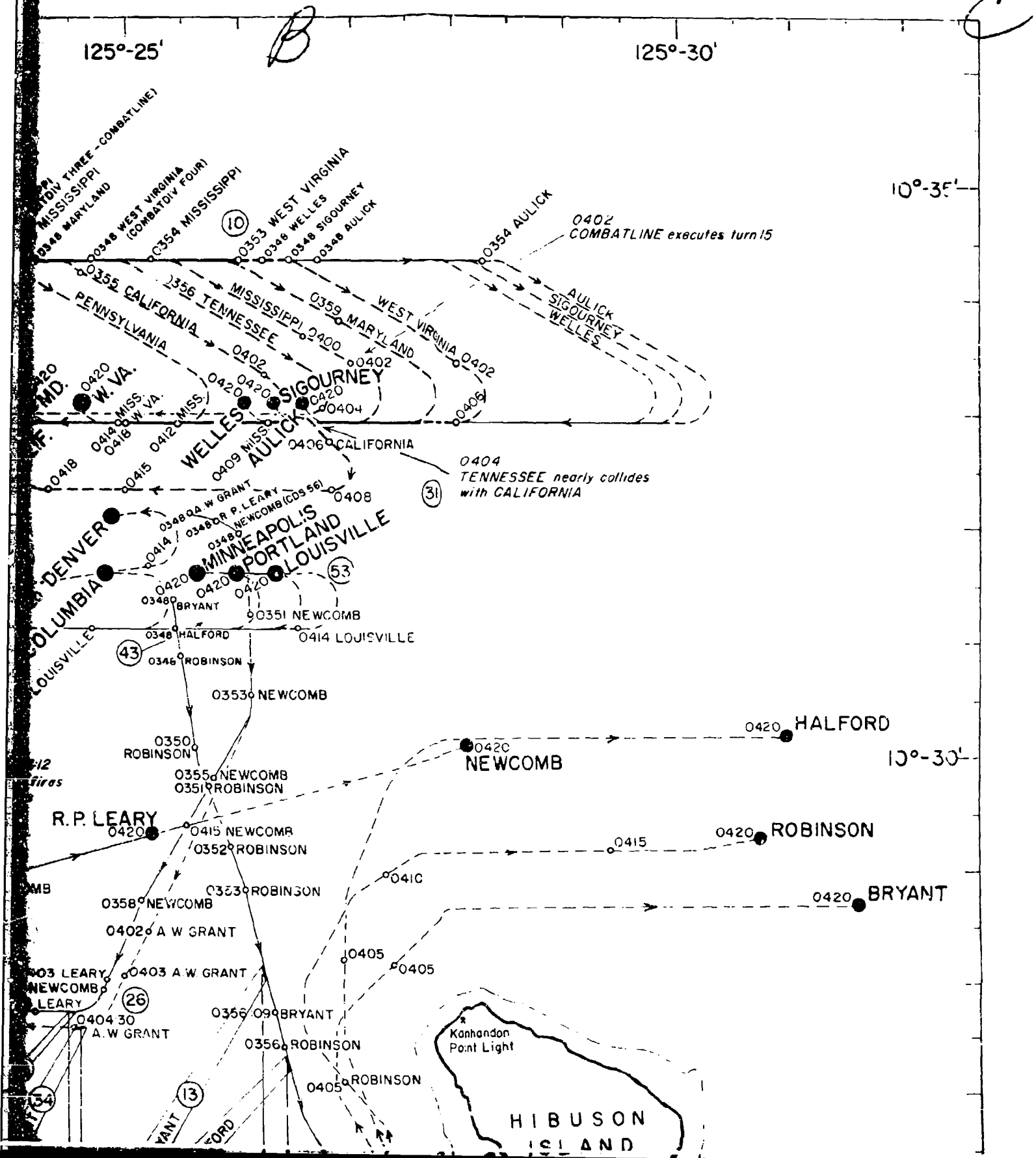
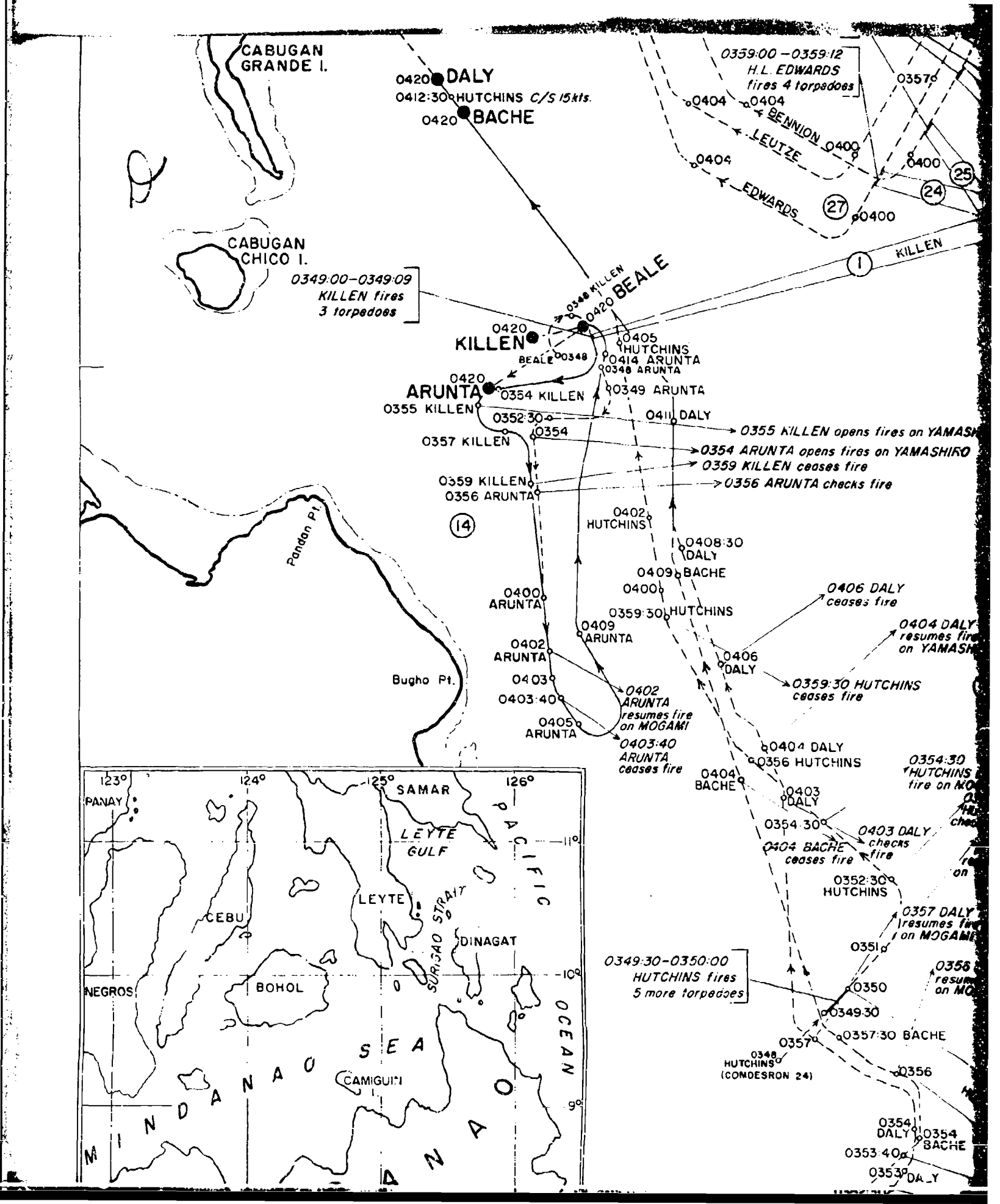


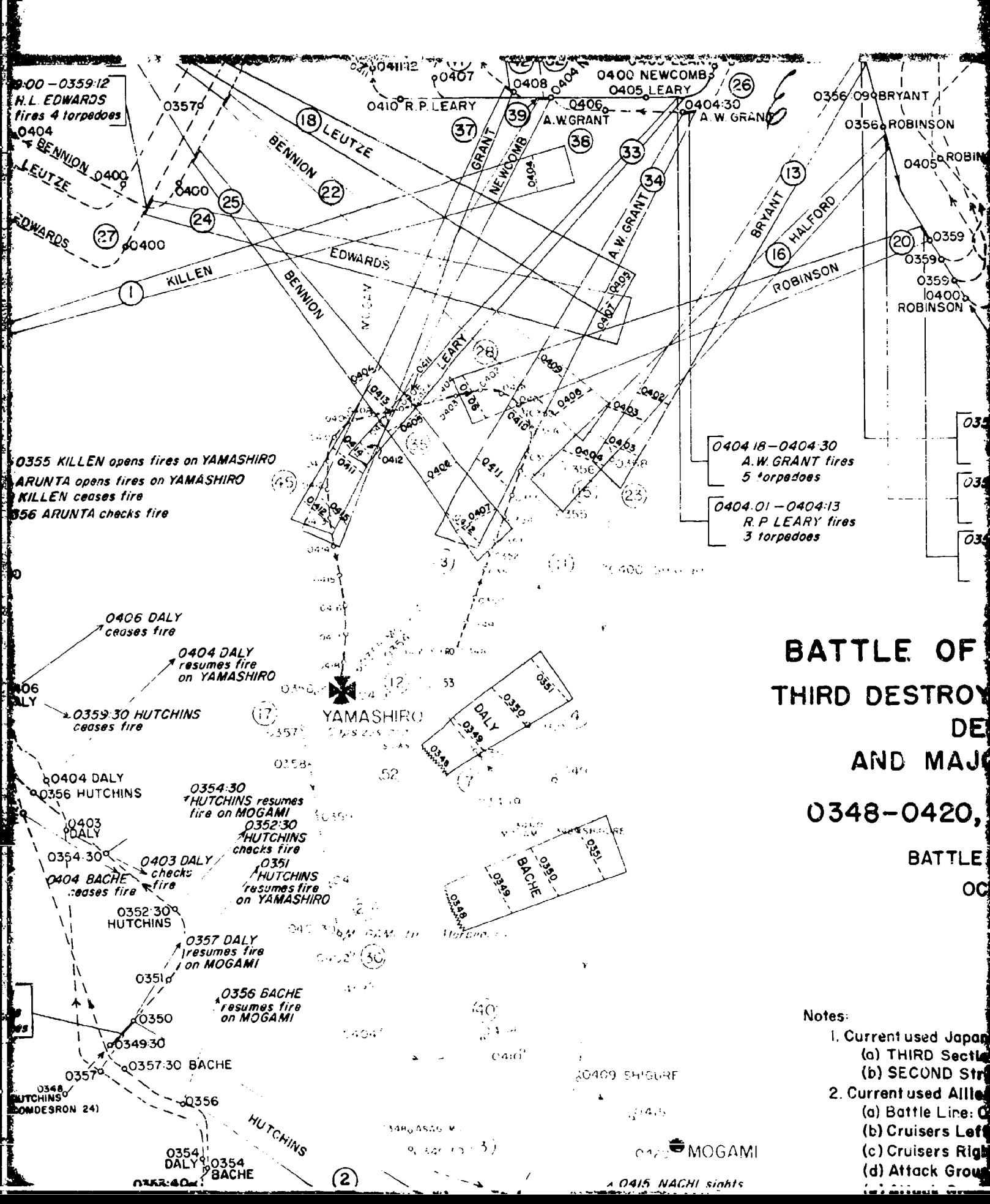


125°-20'
125°-25'
B
0348 THORN
0348 CONY
0348 CLAXTON (COMDESDIV XRAY)
0354 THORN
0348 PENNSYLVANIA
0348 CALIFORNIA
0348 TENNESSEE (COMBATDIV TWO)
0348 MISSISSIPPI (COMBATDIV THREE-COMBAT LINE)
0349 MISSISSIPPI
0348 MARYLAND
0348 WEST VIRGINIA (COMBATDIV FOUR)
0354 MISSISSIPPI
0353 WEST VIRGINIA
0348 WELLES
0348 SIGOURNEY
0348 AULICK
0355 CALIFORNIA
0356 TENNESSEE
MISSISSIPPI 0400
0359 MARYLAND
WEST VIRGINIA
CLAXTON
CONY
THORN
PENNSYLVANIA
0420 THORN
0420 CONY
0420 CLAXTON
0420 PENN.
0420 TENN.
0418 TENN
0415 PENN
0420 MISS.
0420 MD.
0420 W. VA.
0414 MISS.
0418 W. VA.
0412 MISS.
0415 TENN
0420 CALIF.
0418
0415
0420 WELLES
0420 SIGOURNEY
0420 AULICK
0404
0409 MISS.
0406 CALIFORNIA
0408
0348 A. W. GRANT
0348 R. P. LEARY
0348 NEWCOMB (COD 56)
0414
0420 DENVER
0420 COLUMBIA
0420 MINNEAPOLIS
0420 PORTLAND
0420 LOUISVILLE
0348 COLUMBIA
0351:30 COLUMBIA
0348 DENVER
0355 COLUMBIA
0348 MINNEAPOLIS
0348 PORTLAND
0402 DENVER
0404:30
0406
0351:30 DENVER
0351:30 MINNEAPOLIS
0352 PORTLAND
0348 LOUISVILLE
0351 LOUISVILLE
0357 PORTLAND
0404:30 LOUISVILLE
0348 BRYANT
0351 NEWCOMB
0348 HALFORD
0414 LOUISVILLE
0348 ROBINSON
0353 NEWCOMB
0350 ROBINSON
0355 NEWCOMB
0351 ROBINSON
0415 NEWCOMB
0352 ROBINSON
0353 ROBINSON
0358 NEWCOMB
0402 A W GRANT
0403 LEARY
0403 A.W. GRANT
0400 NEWCOMB
0405 LEARY
0404:30 A. W GRANT
0356 09 BRYANT
0356 ROBINSON
0405 ROBINSON
0359
0356:25
0358
0348 BENNION
LEUTZE
0348 EDWARDS
0351:30
0358
0405
0401
0358
0404
0351 H.L. EDWARDS
0404
0408:12–0408:24
A.W. GRANT fires
remaining torpedoes
0404 00–0404 12
NEWCOMB fires
5 torpedoes
R.P. LEARY
0420
A.W. GRANT
0420 Dead in water
0414
0411 NEWCOMB
0411:12 R P LEARY
sights four
torpedo wakes
0415 R.P. LEARY
0409 NEWCOMB
0410 A.W. GRANT
0406 NEWCOMB
0411:12
0407
0408
0404 NEWCOMB
0410 R P LEARY
0406
A.W. GRANT
0356:30
0355 EDWARDS
0357 BENNION
0356
0357
LEUTZE
BENNION
GRANT
NEWCOMB
W. GRANT
BRYANT
HALFORD
0410
0405
0405
0400
0400



125°-25'
125°-30'
10°-35'
10°-30'
0402
COMBATLINE executes turn 15
0404
TENNESSEE nearly collides
with CALIFORNIA
0354 AULICK
0353 WEST VIRGINIA
0348 WELLES
0348 SIGOURNEY
0348 AULICK
0354 MISSISSIPPI
0348 WEST VIRGINIA
(COMBATDIV FOUR)
0348 MARYLAND
0355 CALIFORNIA
0356 TENNESSEE
0359 MARYLAND
0400
0402
0404
0406
0408
0409
0412
0414
0415
0418
0420
0351 NEWCOMB
0414 LOUISVILLE
0348 HALFORD
0348 ROBINSON
0353 NEWCOMB
0350 ROBINSON
0355 NEWCOMB
0351 ROBINSON
0415 NEWCOMB
0352 ROBINSON
0353 ROBINSON
0358 NEWCOMB
0402 A W GRANT
0403 A.W. GRANT
0404 30
A.W GRANT
0356 09 BRYANT
0356 ROBINSON
0405 ROBINSON
0410
0415
0420 HALFORD
0420 NEWCOMB
0420 ROBINSON
0420 BRYANT
0420 W. VA.
0420 SIGOURNEY
0420 WELLES
0420 AULICK
0420 MINNEAPOLIS
0420 PORTLAND
0420 LOUISVILLE
0420 COLUMBIA
0420 DENVER
0420 R.P. LEARY
0348 A.W. GRANT
0348 R.P. LEARY
0348 NEWCOMB (CDS 56)
0348 BRYANT
0403 LEARY
NEWCOMB
LEARY
Kanhandon
Point Light
HIBUSON
ISLAND


CABUGAN GRANDE I.
CABUGAN CHICO I.
0420 DALY
0412:30 HUTCHINS C/S 15kts.
0420 BACHE
0359:00–0359:12
H.L. EDWARDS
fires 4 torpedoes
0404
0404
BENNION
LEUTZE
0404
EDWARDS
0357
0400
0400
25
24
27
0400
1
KILLEN
0349:00–0349:09
KILLEN fires
3 torpedoes
0348 KILLEN
0420 BEALE
0420
KILLEN
0405
HUTCHINS
BEALE 0348
0414 ARUNTA
0348 ARUNTA
0420
ARUNTA
0354 KILLEN
0349 ARUNTA
0355 KILLEN
0352:30
0411 DALY
0355 KILLEN opens fires on YAMASH
0357 KILLEN
0354
0354 ARUNTA opens fires on YAMASHIRO
0359 KILLEN ceases fire
0359 KILLEN
0356 ARUNTA checks fire
0356 ARUNTA
14
0402
HUTCHINS
0408:30
DALY
0409 BACHE
Pandan Pt.
0400
ARUNTA
0400
0406 DALY
ceases fire
0359:30 HUTCHINS
0409
ARUNTA
0404 DALY
resumes fire
on YAMASH
0402
ARUNTA
0406
DALY
0359:30 HUTCHINS
ceases fire
Bugho Pt.
0403
0403:40
0402
ARUNTA
resumes fire
on MOGAMI
0405
ARUNTA
0403:40
ARUNTA
ceases fire
0404 DALY
0356 HUTCHINS
0354:30
HUTCHINS
fire on MO
0404
BACHE
0403
DALY
0354:30
0403 DALY
checks
fire
0404 BACHE
ceases fire
0352:30
HUTCHINS
0357 DALY
resumes fire
on MOGAMI
0351
0349:30–0350:00
HUTCHINS fires
5 more torpedoes
0350
0356
resum
on MO
0349:30
0357
0357:30 BACHE
0348
HUTCHINS
(CONDESRON 24)
0356
0354
DALY
0354
BACHE
0353:40
0353
DALY
123°
124°
125°
126°
PANAY
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
11°
CEBU
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
NEGROS
BOHOL
10°
SEA
MINDANAO
CAMIGUIN
9°
MINDANAO

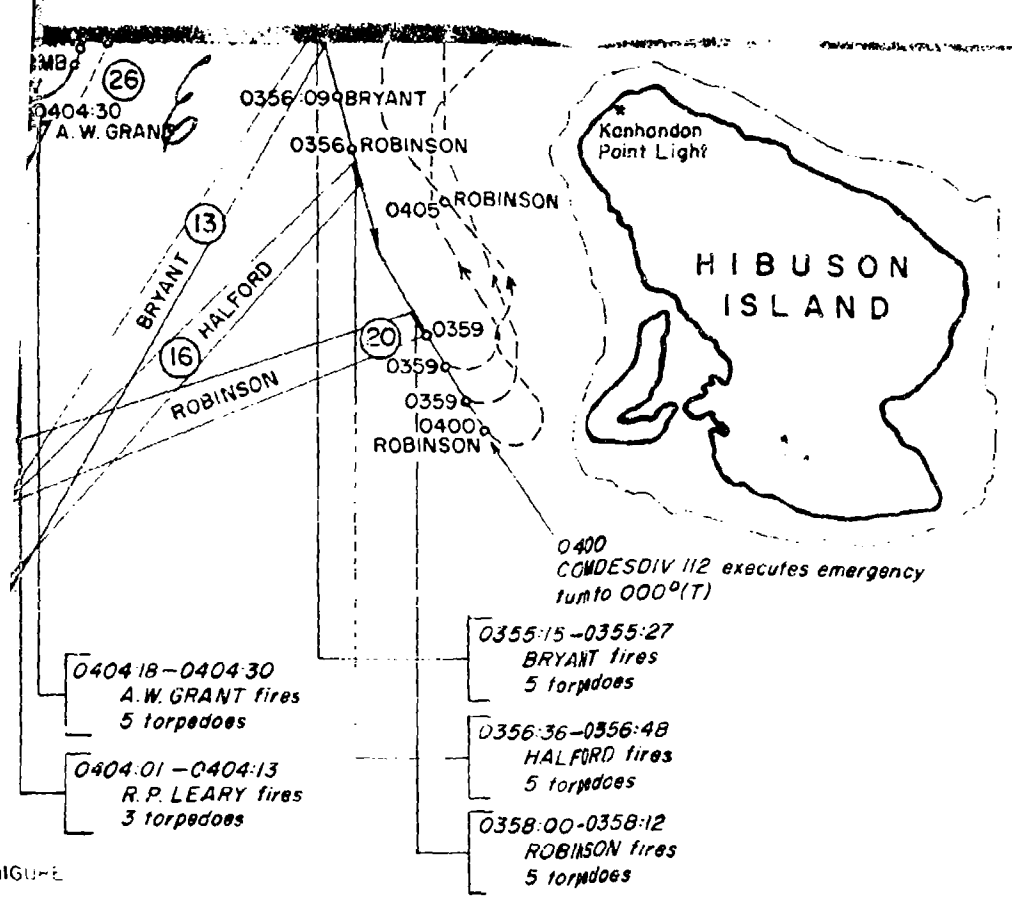


BATTLE OF
THIRD DESTROY
DE
AND MAJ
0348–0420,

BATTLE
OC

Notes:

1. Current used Japan
   (a) THIRD Sectl
   (b) SECOND Str
2. Current used Allie
   (a) Battle Line: C
   (b) Cruisers Left
   (c) Cruisers Righ
   (d) Attack Grou



BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

THIRD DESTROYER TORPEDO ATTACK
DESRON 56
AND MAJOR GUN ACTION

0348–0420, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

10°-25'

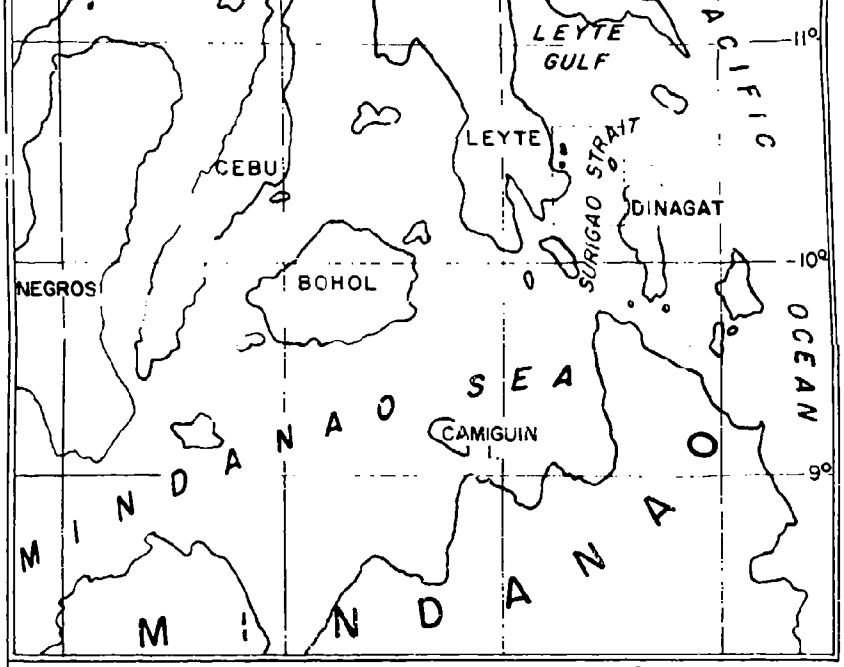
10°-20'

Esconchada Pt.

Notes:

1. Current used Japanese Forces:
   (a) THIRD Section: 1.6 knots, set 180°(T)
   (b) SECOND Striking FORCE: 1.75 knots, set 180°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces
   (a) Battle Line: 0.9 knot, set 235°(T)
   (b) Cruisers Left Flank: 0.9 knot, set 235°(T)
   (c) Cruisers Right Flank: 0.75 knot, set 150°(T)
   (d) Attack Group 1.2: 2.0 to 1.2 knots, set 180°(T) to 150°(T)
   (e) Attack Group 2.2: 1.1 knots, set 150°(T)
   (f) DESRON 56: 1.1 to 0.6 knots, set 180°(T) to 270°(T)

* DT tracks estimated.



0354:30

0404 BACHE ceases fire

0349:30–0350:00
HUTCHINS fires
5 more torpedoes

0357

0348
HUTCHINS
(COMDESRON 24)

0413

0348 PT 323

0420 PT 323

0350

0348
BACHE

0348
DALY

Amaguson Pt.

0348 PT 329

0400

0420
PT 328

0410

0410 PT 329 sights
burning FUSO and ASAGUMO

0420 PT 329

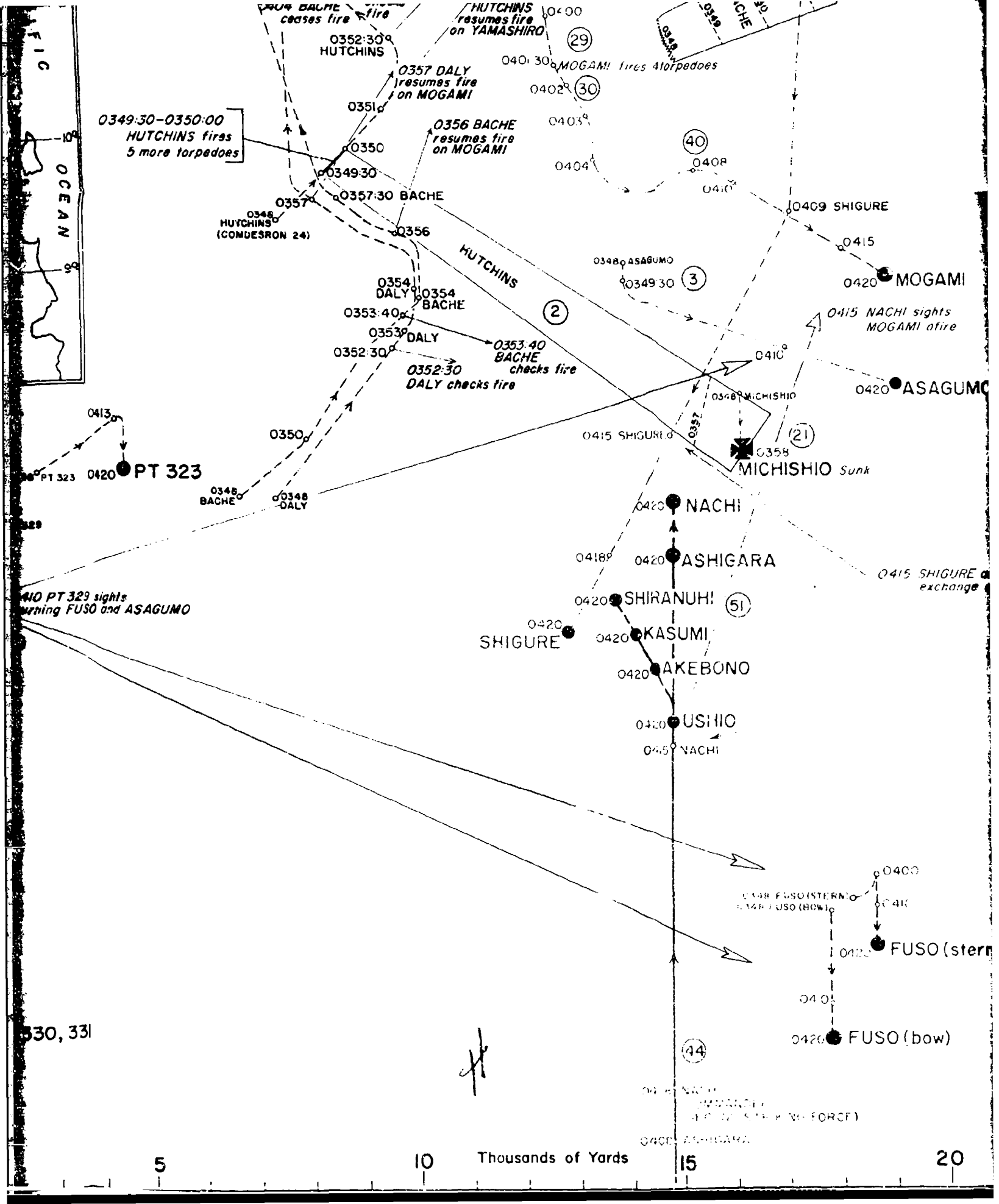
0348 PT 328

0348 PTS 320, 330, 331

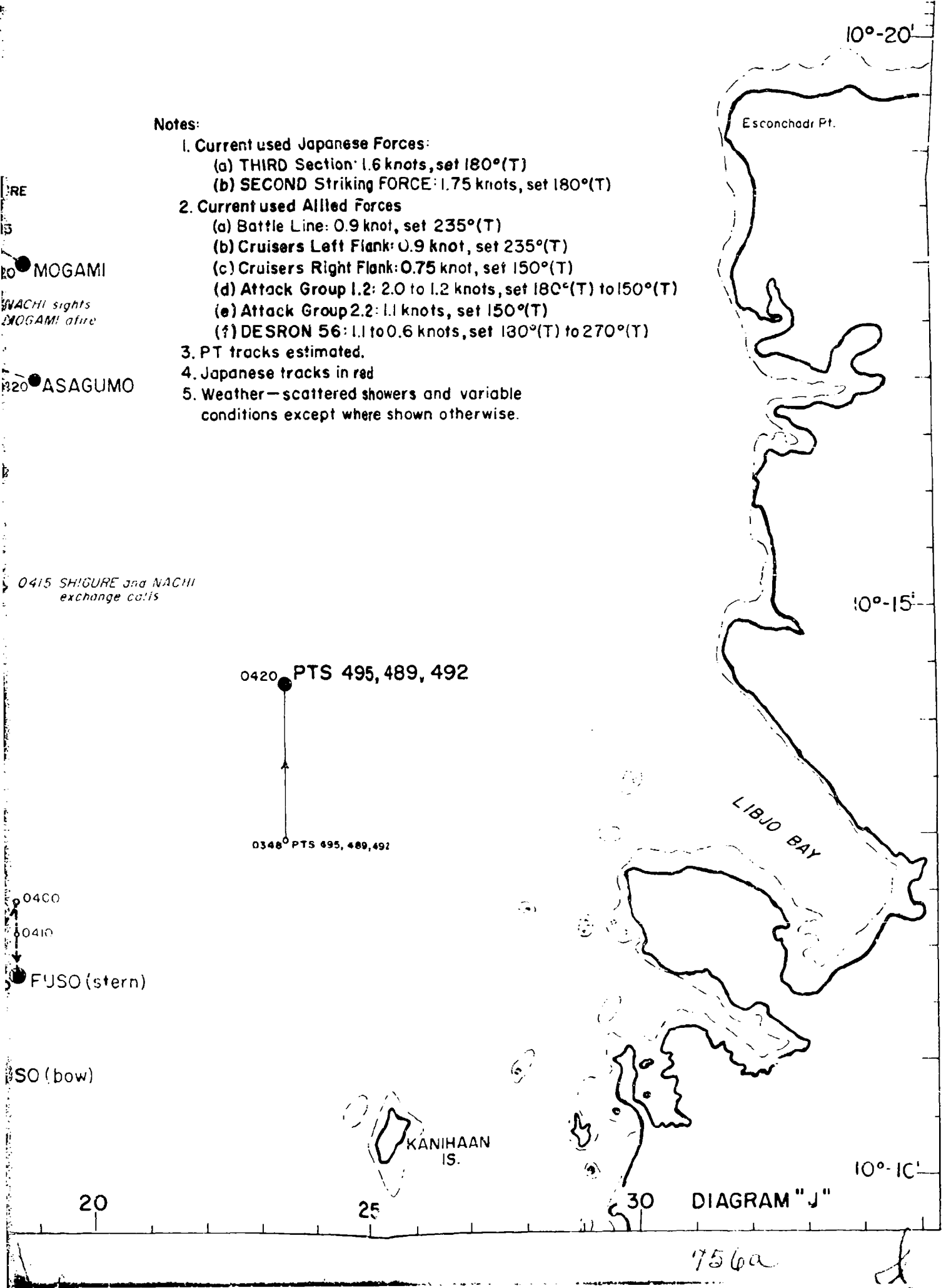
0420 PTS 320, 330, 331

0 5

O-59 (Face p. 756)



HUTCHINS resumes fire on YAMASHIRO
0352:30 HUTCHINS
0357 DALY resumes fire on MOGAMI
0349:30–0350:00 HUTCHINS fires 5 more torpedoes
0356 BACHE resumes fire on MOGAMI
0357:30 BACHE
0348 HUTCHINS (COMDESRON 24)
0354 DALY
0354 BACHE
0353:40
0353 DALY
0352:30
0353:40 BACHE checks fire
0352:30 DALY checks fire
HUTCHINS
MOGAMI fires 4 torpedoes
0409 SHIGURE
0415
0420 MOGAMI
0348 ASAGUMO
0349:30
0415 NACHI sights MOGAMI afire
0410
0420 ASAGUMO
0348 MICHISHIO
0415 SHIGURE
0358
MICHISHIO Sunk
0413
0420 PT 323
0350
0348 BACHE
0348 DALY
0420 NACHI
0418
0420 ASHIGARA
0415 SHIGURE
exchange
0420 SHIRANUHI
0420 SHIGURE
0420 KASUMI
0420 AKEBONO
0420 USHIO
0415 NACHI
0400
FUSO (stern
0420 FUSO (bow)
0420 ASHIGARA
Thousands of Yards
5
10
15
20
OCEAN


Notes:
1. Current used Japanese Forces:
(a) THIRD Section: 1.6 knots, set 180°(T)
(b) SECOND Striking FORCE: 1.75 knots, set 180°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces
(a) Battle Line: 0.9 knot, set 235°(T)
(b) Cruisers Left Flank: 0.9 knot, set 235°(T)
(c) Cruisers Right Flank: 0.75 knot, set 150°(T)
(d) Attack Group 1.2: 2.0 to 1.2 knots, set 180°(T) to 150°(T)
(e) Attack Group 2.2: 1.1 knots, set 150°(T)
(f) DESRON 56: 1.1 to 0.6 knots, set 130°(T) to 270°(T)
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red
5. Weather—scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.
10°-20'
Esconchadr Pt.
MOGAMI
NACHI sights MOGAMI afire
ASAGUMO
0415 SHIGURE and NACHI exchange calls
10°-15'
0420 PTS 495, 489, 492
0348 PTS 495, 489, 492
LIBJO BAY
0400
0410
FUSO (stern)
SO (bow)
KANIHAAN IS.
10°-10'
20
25
30
DIAGRAM "J"
756a

Events Depicted on Diagram "K"

October 25th, 1944

0420 - 0520

1. 0420 Commander Left Flank Cruisers was on course 270°(T) at fifteen knots.

2. 0420 Commander Battle Line, in MISSISSIPPI, with MARYLAND and WEST VIRGINIA, was proceeding north at fifteen knots. DESDIV XRAY was also proceeding north at fifteen knots. COMBATDIV TWO, in PENNSYLVANIA, with TENNESSEE and CALIFORNIA, was proceeding to the west at fifteen knots re-forming his division.

3. 0420 Commander Right Flank Cruisers was on course 090°(T), speed fifteen knots. His cruisers were still in a line of bearing.

4. 0420 Commander Attack Section ONE, in NEWCOMB, with RICHARD P. LEARY some distance behind, was proceeding toward the post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island. The ALBERT W. GRANT was seriously damaged and dead in the water in the center of the channel.

5. 0420 Commander Attack Section TWO, in ROBINSON, with HALFORD and BRYANT, was re-forming his section in the vicinity of the post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island.

6. 0420 Commander Attack Section THREE, in HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, with LEUTZE and BENNION astern, was proceeding north of the battle line to return to the post-attack rendezvous north of Hibuson Island.

7. 0420 Commander SECOND Striking Force, in NACHI, with ASHIGARA astern, was on course 000°(T), speed twenty-eight knots. His four destroyers were passing him on his port side. All ships were making preparations to fire torpedoes.

8. 0420 COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR, with Attack Sections 1.2 and 2.2 well separated, was waiting along the western shore for orders to make another attack if necessary.

9. 0427 NACHI and ASHIGARA launched eight torpedoes each on base torpedo course 025°(T). These torpedoes appear to have been fired at Hibuson Island.

10. 0428 NACHI changed course to the right in order to pass ahead of the MOGAMI which was at this time gathering headway on a southerly course.

11. 0430 Although the NACHI used full rudder she was unable to avoid collision with the MOGAMI. The resulting damage to the NACHI reduced her speed to eighteen knots. NACHI proceeded on course 180°(T) at five knots while surveying the damage.

12. 0430 COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN, in SHIRANUHI, changed course to 090°(T) in an attempt to locate the enemy at which the cruisers had fired. Only Hibuson Island was sighted.

13. 0431 Commander Right Flank Cruisers turned to the west in order to avoid torpedoes from the enemy forces to the south which had turned sharply to the east as if maneuvering to fire torpedoes.

14. 0432 CTG 77.2 ordered COMDESDIV XRAY to proceed south and make a torpedo attack on the enemy.

15. 0432 COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, in NEWCOMB, proceeded to the assistance of the damaged ALBERT W. GRANT.

16. 0433 CTG 77.2 turned to the south with his Left Flank Cruisers to pursue the enemy.

17. 0433 COMDESDIV XRAY directed his division to form to the north of the battle line.

18. 0435 Commander SECOND Striking Force decided to retire and so informed the interested commanders.

19. 0435 COMDESDIV EIGHTEEN was directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force to reverse course to the south and rejoin. He immediately complied.

20. 0435 SHIGURE was dead in the water having stopped in order to repair her steering engine.

21. 0437 Commander Left Flank Cruisers formed column.

22. 0438:30 Upper Surigao PT's increased speed to ten knots and commenced an approach on the SHIGURE which they had just contacted by radar.

23. 0439 COMBATDIV TWO rejoined the battle line on a westerly course. PENNSYLVANIA was designated guide.

24. 0439 Commander Kanihaan PT's (495, 489, 492) who was proceeding toward the burning MOGAMI, reversed course upon receiving a warning of friendly ships coming down the strait.

25. 0441 Commander SECOND Striking Force ordered the THIRD Section to follow behind the NACHI. SHIGURE replied that her steering engines were out of order.

26.	0442	COMDESDIV XRAY, in CLAXTON with CONY astern, started to round the western end of the battle line.
27.	0442	USHIO proceeded ahead at high speed to escort the ABUKUMA. Shortly afterward, the other three destroyers also proceeded south for the same purpose.
28.	0445	MOGAMI attempted to follow the NACHI and ASHIGARA.
29.	0447	ASAGUMO changed course to the southwest in an attempt to follow the MOGAMI.
30.	0448	Commander Right Flank Cruisers changed course to south in order to support the Left Flank Cruisers.
31.	0451	NACHI increased speed to eighteen knots.
32.	0455	SHIGURE took Upper Surigao PT's (327, 321, 326) under fire; went ahead and turned away.
33.	0455	Commander SECOND Striking Force reversed course so as not to cross the line of fire from the SHIGURE to the Upper Surigao PT's. Upon completing the turn he changed course to the west.
34.	0455:30	Commander Right Flank Force ordered his destroyers to take station 6,000 yards south of the cruisers.
35.	0457:30	NEWCOMB closed the ALBERT W. GRANT and sent medical assistance.
36.	0458	Upper Surigao PT's launched three torpedoes at SHIGURE. All missed because the SHIGURE had turned away. PT 321's torpedo had a hot run on deck, which attracted the attention of the ASAGUMO, and the PT's were caught in a heavy crossfire from SHIGURE and ASAGUMO.
37.	0458	Commander Battle Line reversed course to east.
38.	0459	ASAGUMO, after sighting a fire from a hot torpedo run on the deck of PT 321, opened fire.
39.	0500	SIGOURNEY had an engine casualty and made a wide detour to the north and west.
40.	0506	Commander SECOND Striking Force changed course to the south and continued his retirement.
41.	0507	WELLES had an engine casualty and slowed down.
42.	0508	Commander Right Flank Force commenced forming antiaircraft disposition VICTOR.

43. 0511 RICHARD P. LEARY was ordered by Commander Attack Section ONE to proceed to the ALBERT W. GRANT and provide antiaircraft defense during the rescue operations.

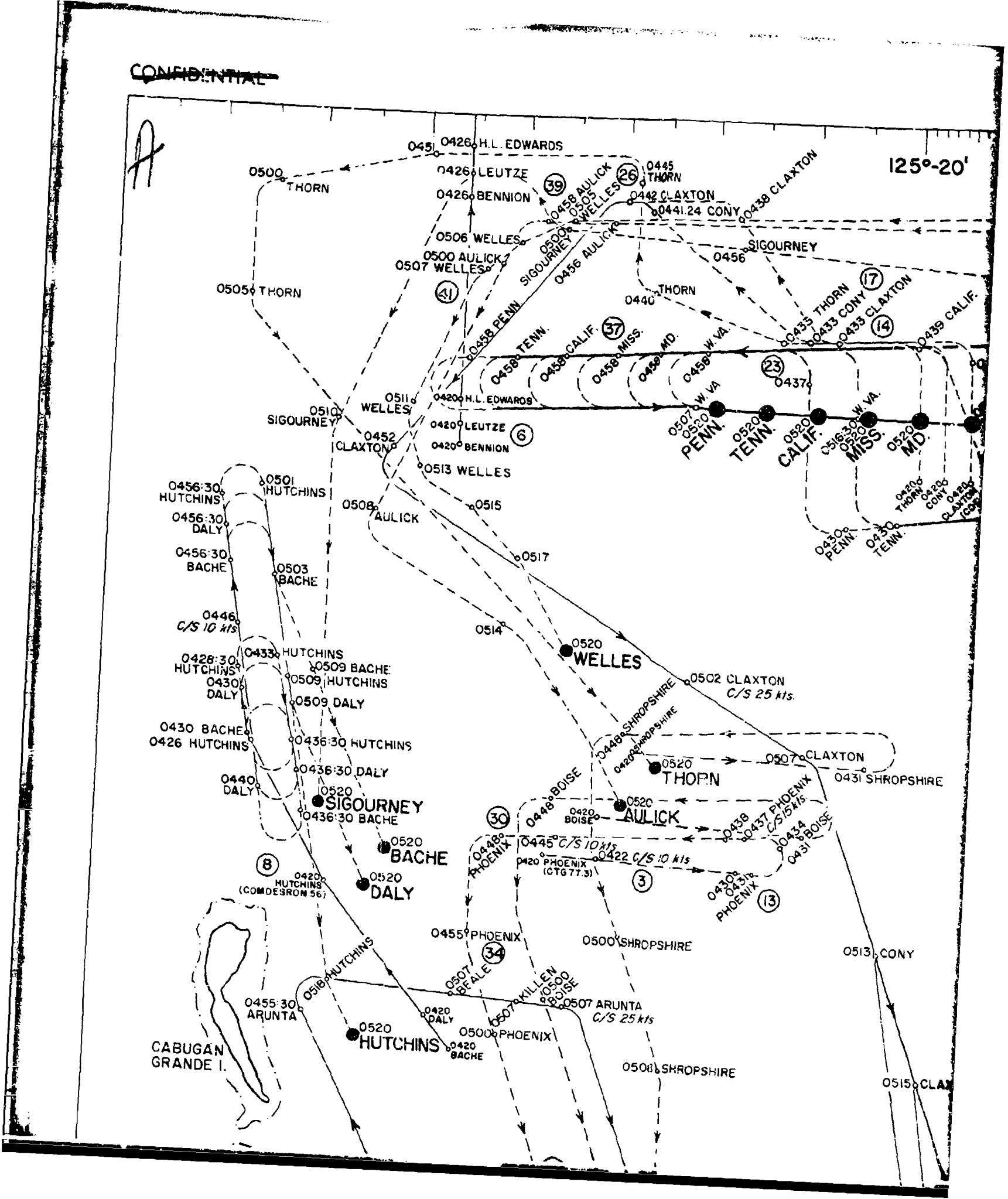
44. 0512 Attack Section THREE formed column astern of Attack Section TWO.

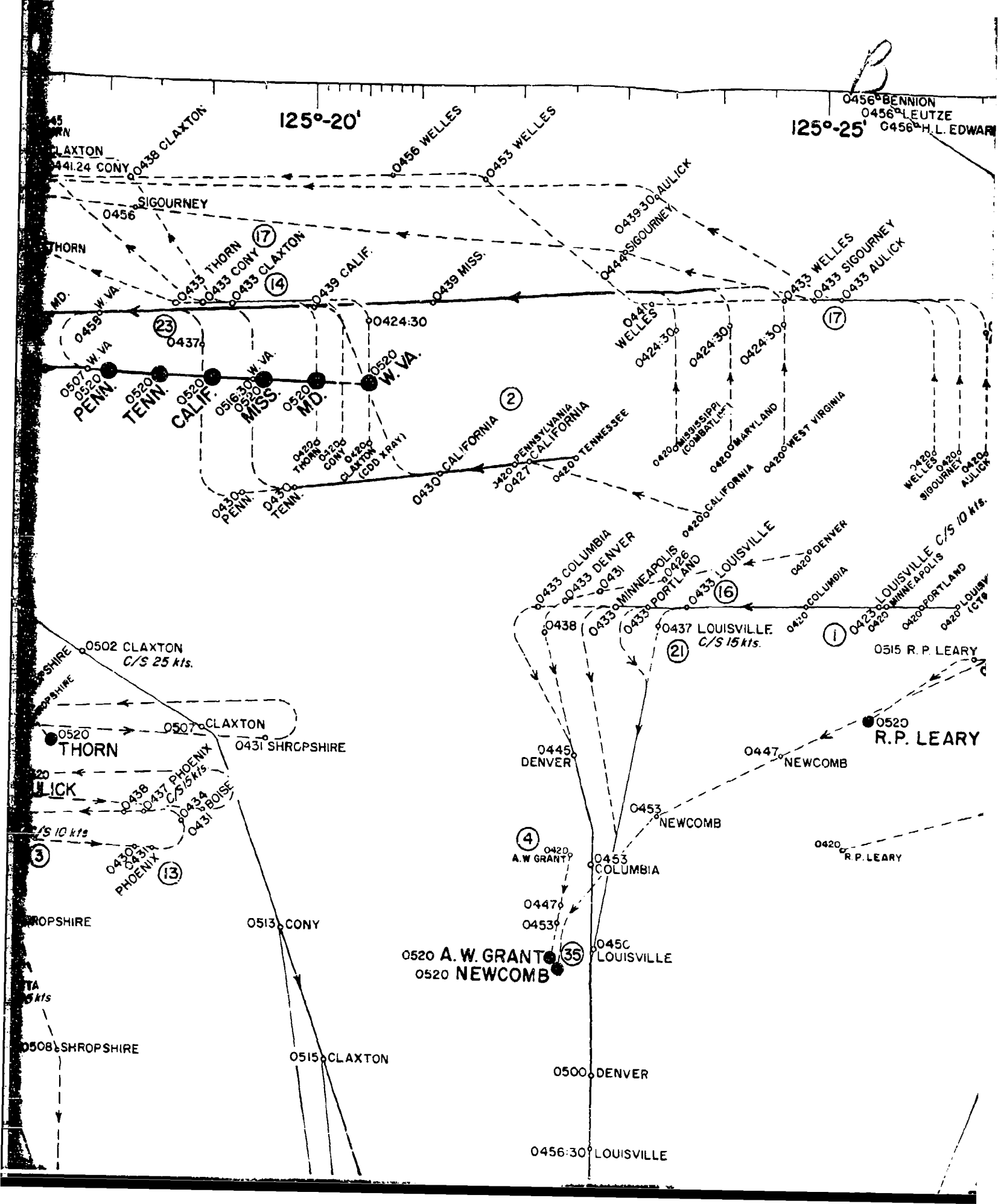
45. 0512 COMDESDIV 112, in ROBINSON, received an order from CTG 77.2 to retain the destroyers in their present stations until daylight and then to regain their regular screening stations. (This message should have been sent to COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR.) As a result COMDESDIV 112 changed course to the west instead of proceeding south to screen the Left Flank Cruisers.

46. 0513 SHIGURE continued to have steering difficulties.

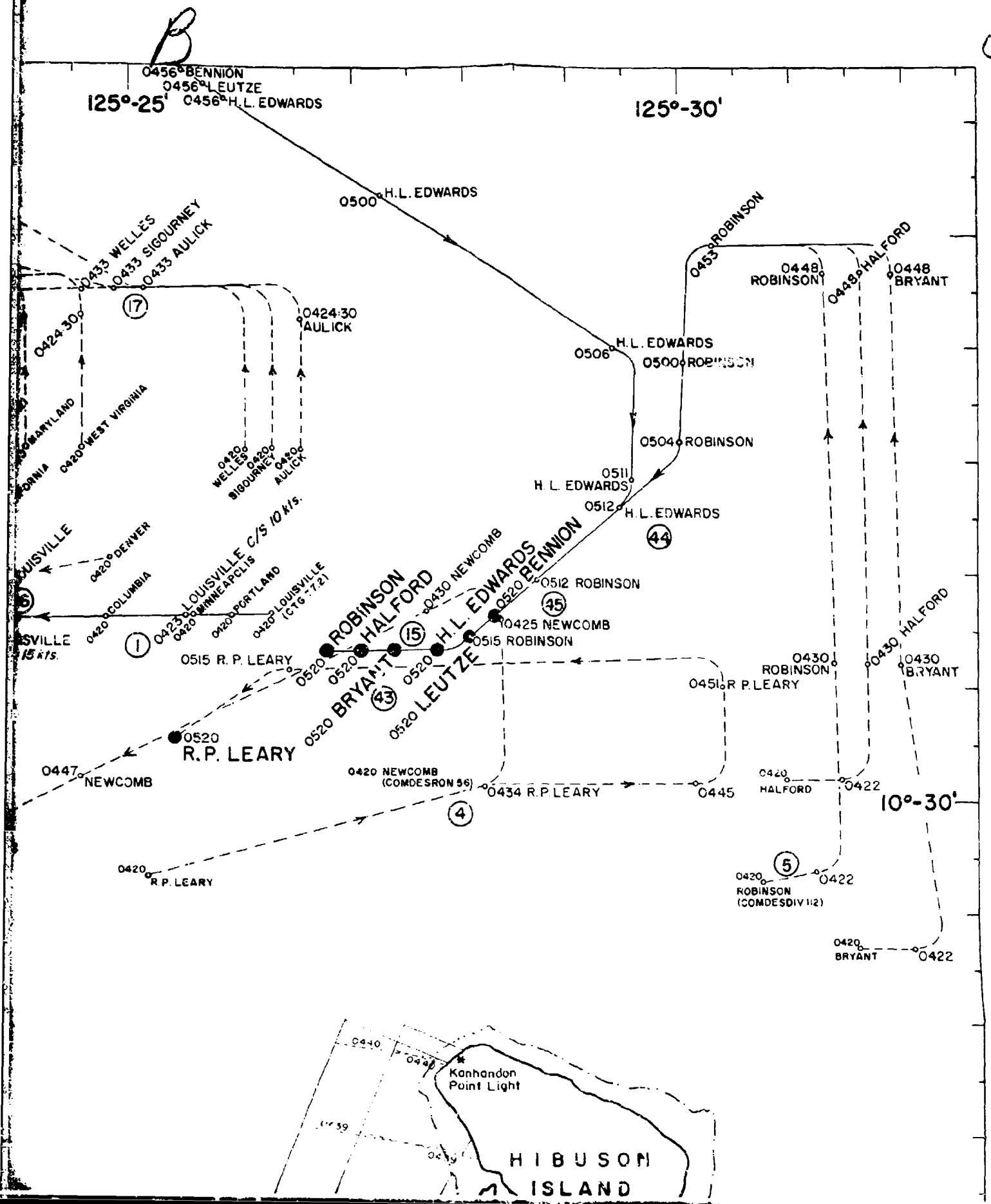
47. 0514 MOGAMI changed course to 192°(T) and was gradually left behind because she could not keep up with the NACHI and ASHIGARA.

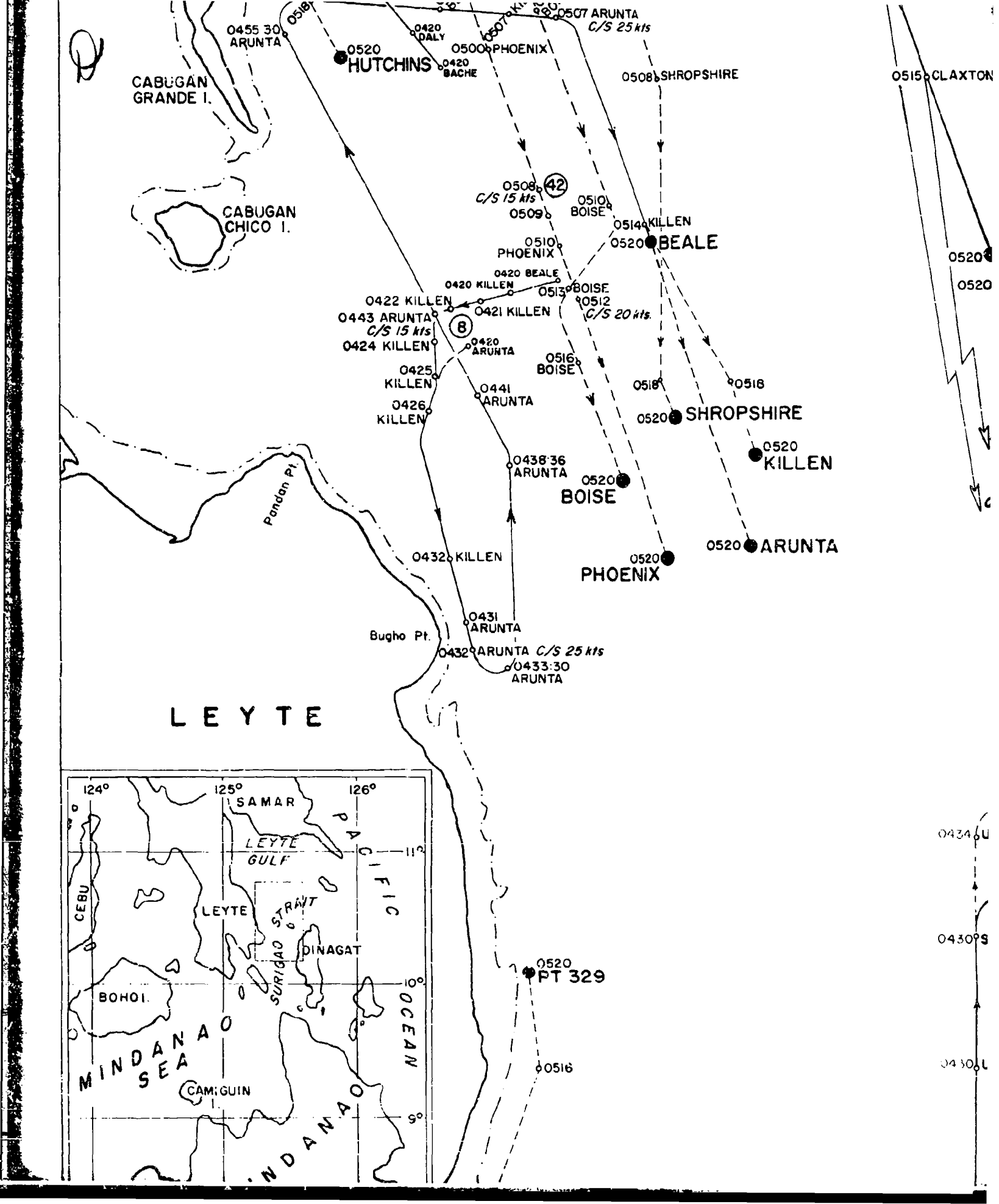
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

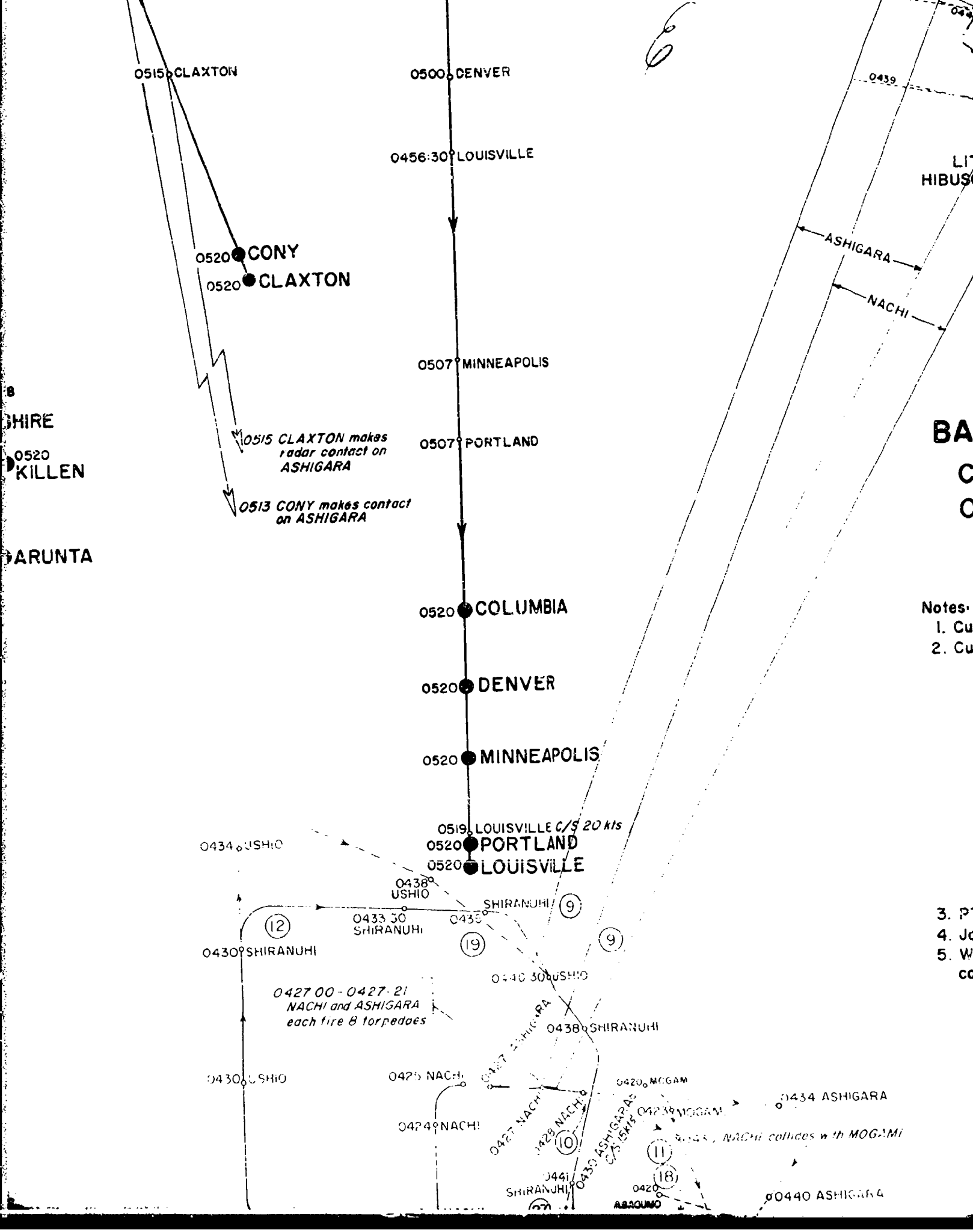


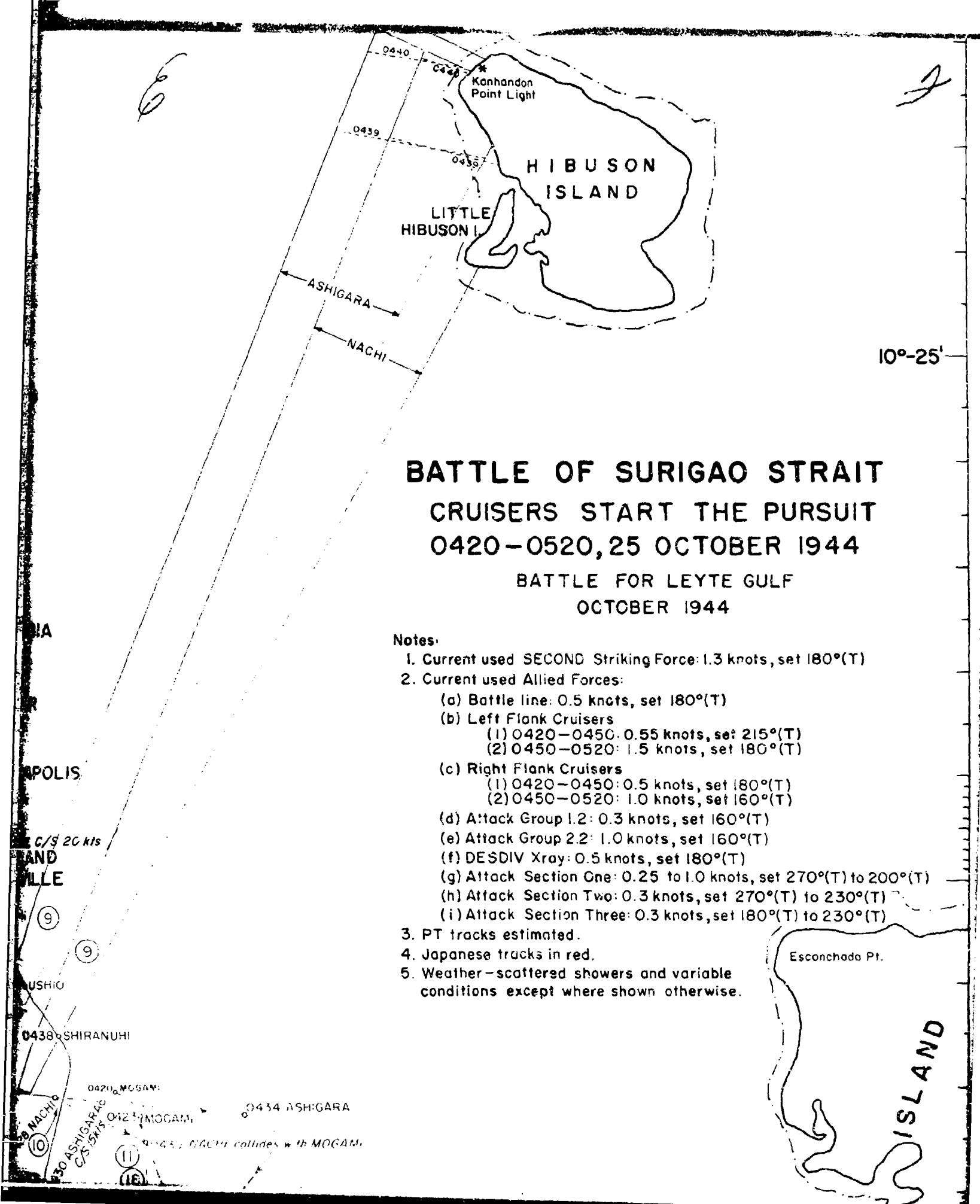


125°-20'
125°-25'
0456 BENNION
0456 LEUTZE
0456 H.L. EDWAR
0438 CLAXTON
0456 WELLES
0453 WELLES
0441.24 CONY
SIGOURNEY
0456
0439:30 AULICK
0444 SIGOURNEY
0433 THORN
0433 CONY
0433 CLAXTON
0439 CALIF.
0439 MISS.
0433 WELLES
0433 SIGOURNEY
0433 AULICK
0458 W. VA.
0437
0424:30
0441 WELLES
0424:30
0507 W. VA.
0520 PENN.
0520 TENN.
0520 CALIF.
0516:30 W. VA.
0520 MISS.
0520 MD.
0520 W. VA.
0420 THORN
0420 CONY
0420 CLAXTON (CDD XRAY)
0430 CALIFORNIA
0420 PENNSYLVANIA
0427 CALIFORNIA
0420 TENNESSEE
0420 MISSISSIPPI (COMBATLINE)
0420 MARYLAND
0420 WEST VIRGINIA
0420 CALIFORNIA
0420 WELLES
0420 SIGOURNEY
0420 AULICK
0430 PENN.
0430 TENN.
0433 COLUMBIA
0433 DENVER
0431
0433 MINNEAPOLIS
0426 PORTLAND
0433 LOUISVILLE
0420 DENVER
0420 COLUMBIA
0423 LOUISVILLE C/S 10 kts.
0420 MINNEAPOLIS
0420 PORTLAND
0438
0437 LOUISVILLE C/S 15 kts.
0515 R. P. LEARY
0502 CLAXTON C/S 25 kts.
0520 THORN
0507 CLAXTON
0431 SHROPSHIRE
0520 R.P. LEARY
0445 DENVER
0447 NEWCOMB
0438
0437 PHOENIX C/S 15 kts.
0434 BOISE
0431
0453 NEWCOMB
0430 0431 PHOENIX
0420 A.W GRANT
0453 COLUMBIA
0420 R.P. LEARY
0447
0453
0513 CONY
0520 A. W. GRANT
0520 NEWCOMB
0450 LOUISVILLE
0508 SHROPSHIRE
0515 CLAXTON
0500 DENVER
0456:30 LOUISVILLE


B
C
125°-25'
125°-30'
10°-30'
0456 BENNION
0456 LEUTZE
0456 H.L. EDWARDS
0500 H.L. EDWARDS
0433 WELLES
0433 SIGOURNEY
0433 AULICK
17
0424:30
0424:30 AULICK
0453 ROBINSON
0448 ROBINSON
0448 HALFORD
0448 BRYANT
0506 H.L. EDWARDS
0500 ROBINSON
0504 ROBINSON
0511 H.L. EDWARDS
0512 H.L. EDWARDS
44
0420 WELLES
0420 SIGOURNEY
0420 AULICK
0420 WEST VIRGINIA
0420 DENVER
0420 COLUMBIA
0423 LOUISVILLE C/S 10 kts.
0420 MINNEAPOLIS
0420 PORTLAND
0420 LOUISVILLE (CTG 7.2)
0430 NEWCOMB
0520 BENNION
0512 ROBINSON
45
0425 NEWCOMB
0515 ROBINSON
15
0520 ROBINSON
0520 HALFORD
0520 BRYANT
0520 LEUTZE
43
0515 R.P. LEARY
0430 ROBINSON
0430 HALFORD
0430 BRYANT
0451 R.P. LEARY
0520 R.P. LEARY
0447 NEWCOMB
0420 NEWCOMB (COMDESRON 56)
0434 R.P. LEARY
0445
0420 HALFORD
0422
4
0420 R.P. LEARY
5
0420 ROBINSON (COMDESDIV 112)
0422
0420 BRYANT
0422
0440
Kanhandon Point Light
HIBUSON ISLAND


0455 30 ARUNTA
0518
0520 HUTCHINS
0420 DALY
0420 BACHE
0500 PHOENIX
0507 ARUNTA C/S 25 kts
0508 SHROPSHIRE
0515 CLAXTON
CABUGAN GRANDE I.
CABUGAN CHICO I.
0508 42 C/S 15 kts
0509
0510 BOISE
0514 KILLEN
0520 BEALE
0510 PHOENIX
0420 BEALE
0420 KILLEN
0513 BOISE
0512 C/S 20 kts.
0422 KILLEN
0421 KILLEN
0443 ARUNTA C/S 15 kts
8
0424 KILLEN
0420 ARUNTA
0516 BOISE
0425 KILLEN
0441 ARUNTA
0426 KILLEN
0518
0518
0520 SHROPSHIRE
0520 KILLEN
0438 36 ARUNTA
0520 BOISE
Pandan Pt.
0520 ARUNTA
0432 KILLEN
0520 PHOENIX
0431 ARUNTA
Bugho Pt.
0432 ARUNTA C/S 25 kts
0433 30 ARUNTA
LEYTE
0520 PT 329
0516
0434
0430
0430
124°
125°
126°
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
11°
CEBU
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
10°
BOHOL
MINDANAO SEA
CAMIGUIN
9°
MINDANAO


0515 CLAXTON
0500 DENVER
0456:30 LOUISVILLE
0520 CONY
0520 CLAXTON
0507 MINNEAPOLIS
0507 PORTLAND
0515 CLAXTON makes radar contact on ASHIGARA
0513 CONY makes contact on ASHIGARA
0520 COLUMBIA
0520 DENVER
0520 MINNEAPOLIS
0519 LOUISVILLE C/S 20 kts
0520 PORTLAND
0520 LOUISVILLE
0434 USHIO
0438 USHIO
0433.30 SHIRANUHI
0430 SHIRANUHI
0427.00 - 0427.21 NACHI and ASHIGARA each fire 8 torpedoes
0430 USHIO
0425 NACHI
0424 NACHI
0438 SHIRANUHI
0420 MOGAMI
0434 ASHIGARA
0441 SHIRANUHI
0420 ABUKUMA
0440 ASHIGARA
ASHIGARA
NACHI
0439
Notes
1. Cu
2. Cu
3. P
4. Jo
5. W
co



BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

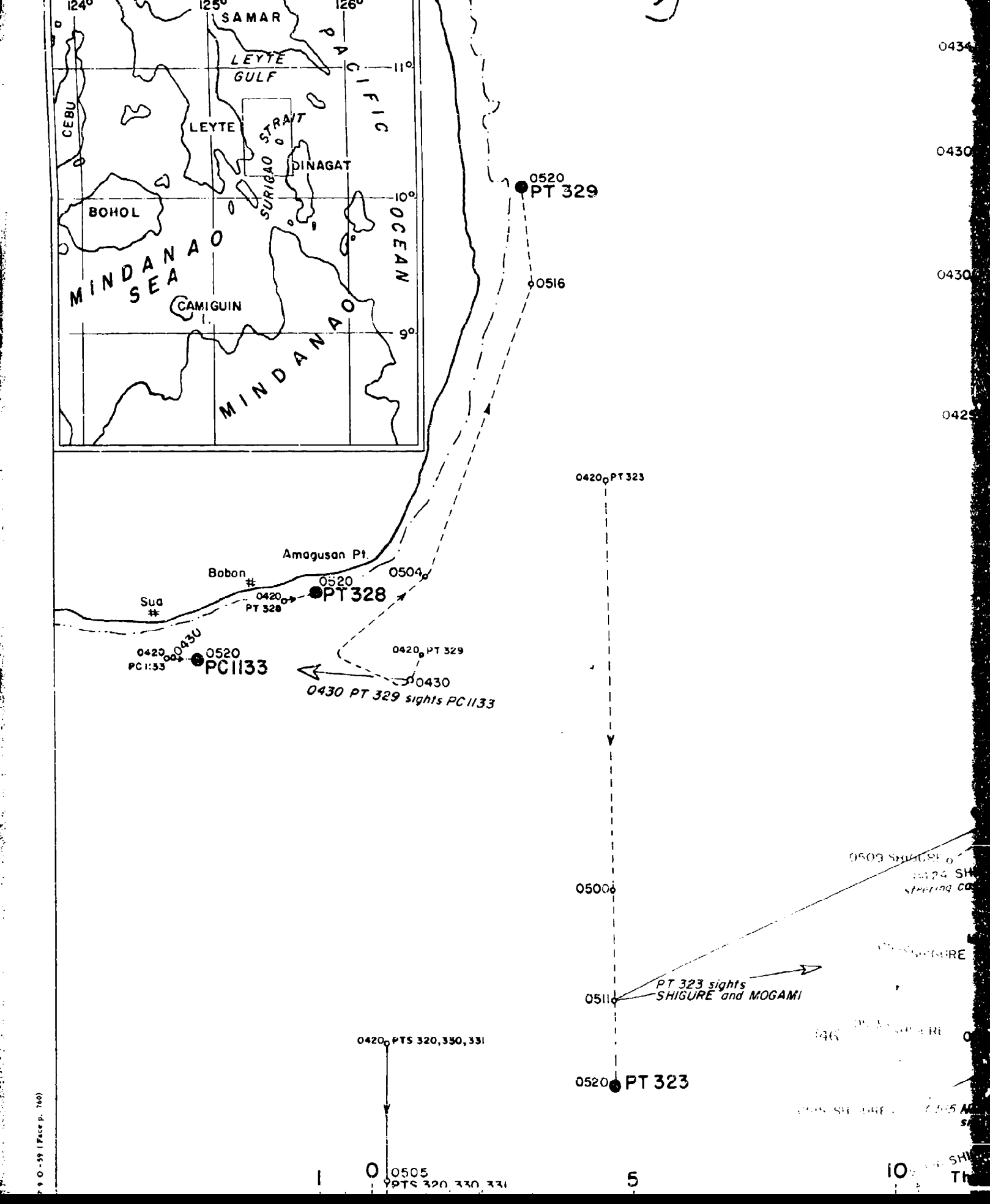
CRUISERS START THE PURSUIT

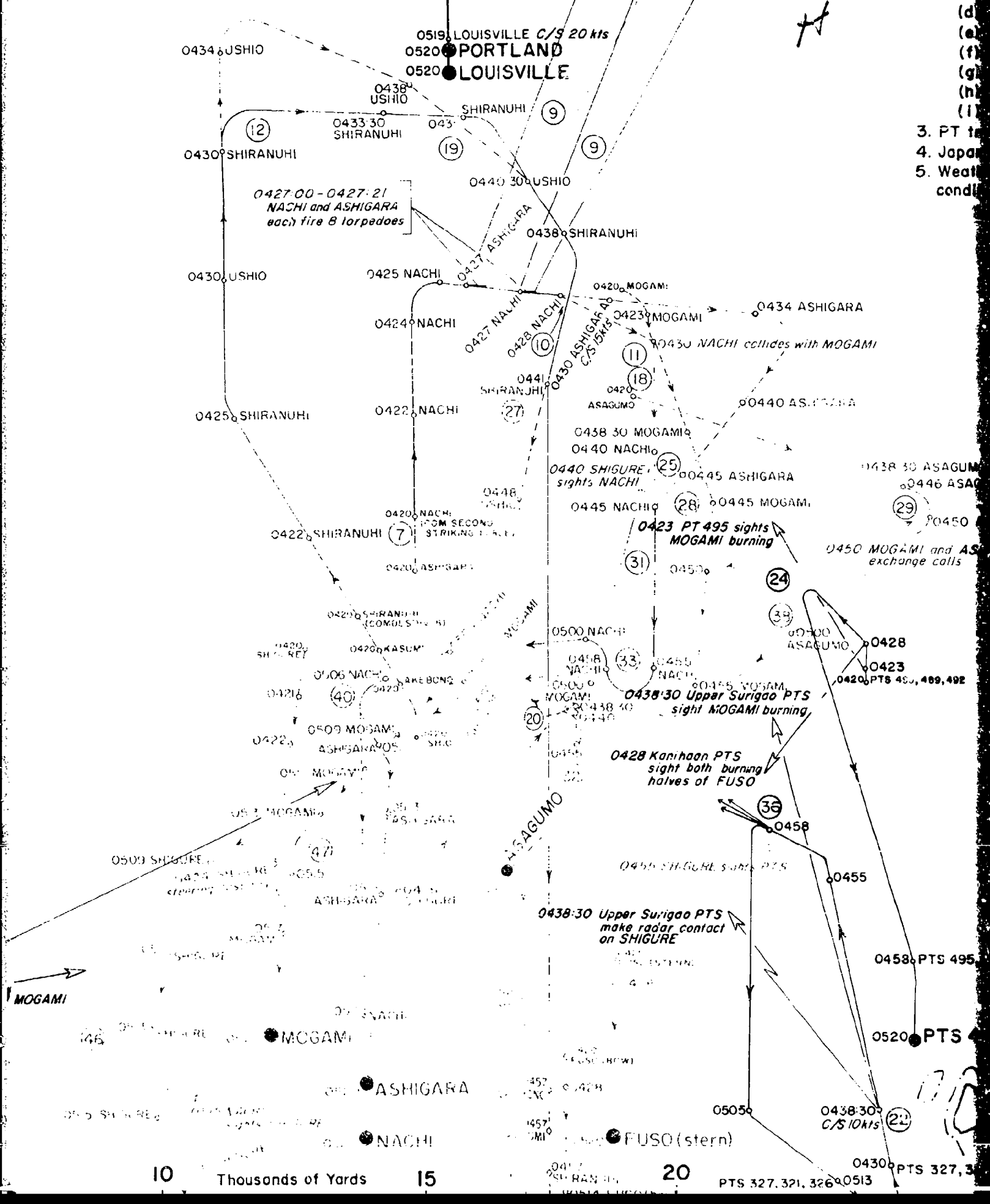
0420–0520, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

Notes:

1. Current used SECOND Striking Force: 1.3 knots, set 180°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces:
   - (a) Battle line: 0.5 knots, set 180°(T)
   - (b) Left Flank Cruisers
     - (1) 0420–0450: 0.55 knots, set 215°(T)
     - (2) 0450–0520: 1.5 knots, set 180°(T)
   - (c) Right Flank Cruisers
     - (1) 0420–0450: 0.5 knots, set 180°(T)
     - (2) 0450–0520: 1.0 knots, set 160°(T)
   - (d) Attack Group 1.2: 0.3 knots, set 160°(T)
   - (e) Attack Group 2.2: 1.0 knots, set 160°(T)
   - (f) DESDIV Xray: 0.5 knots, set 180°(T)
   - (g) Attack Section One: 0.25 to 1.0 knots, set 270°(T) to 200°(T)
   - (h) Attack Section Two: 0.3 knots, set 270°(T) to 230°(T)
   - (i) Attack Section Three: 0.3 knots, set 180°(T) to 230°(T)
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Weather–scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.

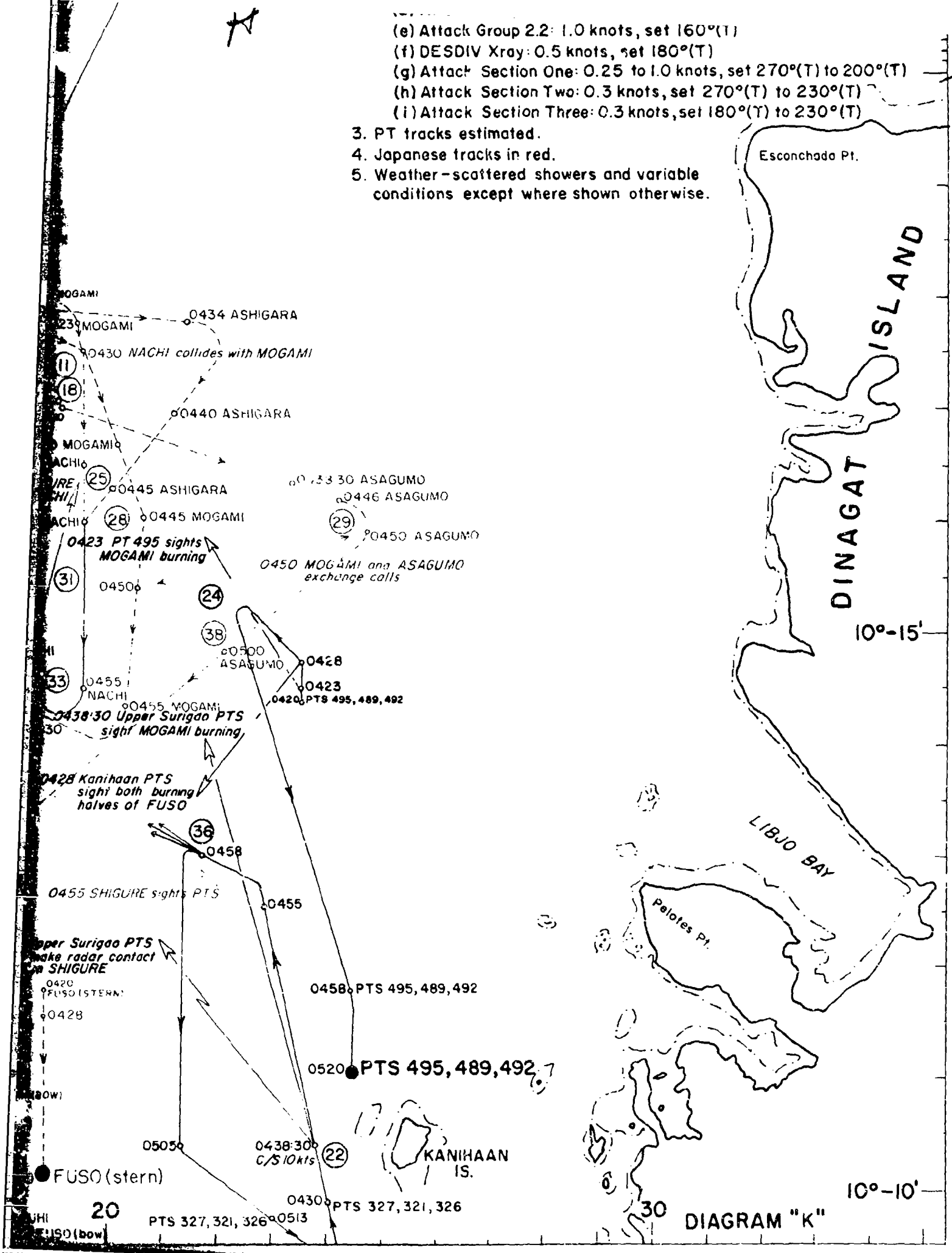

124°
125°
126°
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
LEYTE
CEBU
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
BOHOL
MINDANAO SEA
CAMIGUIN I.
MINDANAO
PACIFIC OCEAN
11°
10°
9°
0520
PT 329
0516
0420 PT 323
Amagusan Pt.
Bobon
Sua
0504
0520
PT 328
0420
PT 328
0430
0420
PC1133
0520
PC1133
0420 PT 329
0430
0430 PT 329 sights PC1133
0500
0511
PT 323 sights
SHIGURE and MOGAMI
0420 PTS 320,330,331
0520
PT 323
0505
PTS 320, 330, 331
1
0
5
10



0519 LOUISVILLE C/S 20 kts
0520 PORTLAND
0520 LOUISVILLE
0434 USHIO
0438 USHIO
0433:30 SHIRANUHI
SHIRANUHI
0430 SHIRANUHI
0440:30 USHIO
0427:00 - 0427:21 NACHI and ASHIGARA each fire 8 torpedoes
0438 SHIRANUHI
0427 ASHIGARA
0430 USHIO
0425 NACHI
0420 MOGAMI
0434 ASHIGARA
0423 MOGAMI
0424 NACHI
0427 NACHI
0428 NACHI
0430 ASHIGARA C/S 15kts
0430 NACHI collides with MOGAMI
0441 SHIRANUHI
0420 ASAGUMO
0440 ASHIGARA
0425 SHIRANUHI
0422 NACHI
0438:30 MOGAMI
0440 NACHI
0440 SHIGURE sights NACHI
0445 ASHIGARA
0445 NACHI
0445 MOGAMI
0438:30 ASAGUMO
0446 ASAGUMO
0450
0423 PT 495 sights MOGAMI burning
0450 MOGAMI and ASAGUMO exchange calls
0422 SHIRANUHI
0420 NACHI (COM SECOND STRIKING FORCE)
0420 ASHIGARA
0420 SHIRANUHI (COMDESTRIES)
0420 KASUMI
0500 NACHI
0500 ASAGUMO
0428
0423
0420 PTS 490, 489, 492
0506 NACHI
LAKE BONG
0438:30 Upper Surigao PTS sight MOGAMI burning
0509 MOGAMI
ASHIGARA
0428 Kanihaan PTS sight both burning halves of FUSO
ASAGUMO
0458
0455
0509 SHIGURE
0438:30 Upper Surigao PTS make radar contact on SHIGURE
0458 PTS 495
MOGAMI
MOGAMI
0520 PTS
ASHIGARA
0505
0438:30 C/S 10kts
NACHI
FUSO (stern)
0430 PTS 327, 3
PTS 327, 321, 326
0513
10
Thousands of Yards
15
20
3. PT t
4. Japa
5. Weat
condi

(e) Attack Group 2.2: 1.0 knots, set 160°(T)
(f) DESDIV Xray: 0.5 knots, set 180°(T)
(g) Attack Section One: 0.25 to 1.0 knots, set 270°(T) to 200°(T)
(h) Attack Section Two: 0.3 knots, set 270°(T) to 230°(T)
(i) Attack Section Three: 0.3 knots, set 180°(T) to 230°(T)

3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Weather - scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.



Events Depicted on Diagram "L"

October 25th, 1944

0457 - 0600

1. 0457 Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the SECOND Striking Force and the mobile ships of the THIRD Section, continued his retirement.

2. 0520 MOGAMI, on course 192°(T) at fifteen knots, was gradually falling astern of the NACHI and ASHIGARA.

3. 0520 Commander Left Flank Cruisers was proceeding down the strait to engage the fleeing enemy.

4. 0520 Commander Right Flank Force (CTG 77.3) was proceeding down the western shore of Surigao Strait in order to support the Left Flank Cruisers. His cruisers had nearly formed a circular disposition and his destroyers were forming a circular screen.

5. 0521 SHIGURE increased speed to twenty-four knots and, at 0522, changed course to 155°(T) in order to regain the center of the channel.

6. 0522 Commander Left Flank Cruisers changed course to 250°(T) preparatory to opening fire on the damaged enemy ships to the south.

7. 0525 ASAGUMO, which was attempting to follow the MOGAMI, succeeded in increasing speed to fourteen knots.

8. 0529 Commander Left Flank Cruisers opened fire on the damaged enemy ships to the south.

9. 0529 MOGAMI, taken under fire by the Left Flank Cruisers, took evasive action by making a sharp turn to the right and a gradual turn back to the south.

10. 0530 PT 323 changed course to the east probably to investigate the FUSO fire.

11. 0531 Commander SECOND Striking Force, observing that the Allied cruisers to the north had opened fire on the MOGAMI, changed course to 160°(T) in order to throw off the enemy gunfire.

12. 0531 LOUISVILLE opened fire on bow section of FUSO and, although only eighteen rounds of eight-inch AP were fired, the bow section sank at 0540.

13. 0533 Despite having turned away from the enemy gunfire, the ASAGUMO was taken under fire. She was hit on the stern and a fire resulted. This gunfire was from the MINNEAPOLIS which shifted her gunfire to the MOGAMI at 0535.

14. 0535 SHIGURE, now on a southerly course, shifted to auxiliary power steering.

15. 0537 Commander Left Flank Cruisers turned away to course 010°(T) to avoid possible torpedoes from the MOGAMI.

16. 0538 COMDESDIV XRAY, in CLAXTON, with CONY astern, slowed and changed course to the north in order to take station as screen for the Left Flank Cruisers. His other destroyers were a considerable distance to the north.

17. 0538 Commander Right Flank Force reversed course to the north.

18. 0540 PT 490 sighted the MOGAMI on southerly courses at low speed and on fire. She had no torpedoes and so did not attack.

19. 0540 Commander Left Flank Cruisers ordered cease firing.

20. 0540 Allied gunfire had ceased and MOGAMI changed course to 150°(T).

21. 0542 The DALY, which was a considerable distance behind COMDESRON TWENTY-FOUR in HUTCHINS, turned to the west after challenging PT 329 in order to investigate and deliver a message.

22. 0543 PT 491 sighted the MOGAMI, about 6,000 yards away, on fire and proceeding south at low speed. He attempted to report the contact without success and then maneuvered to gain a favorable firing position.

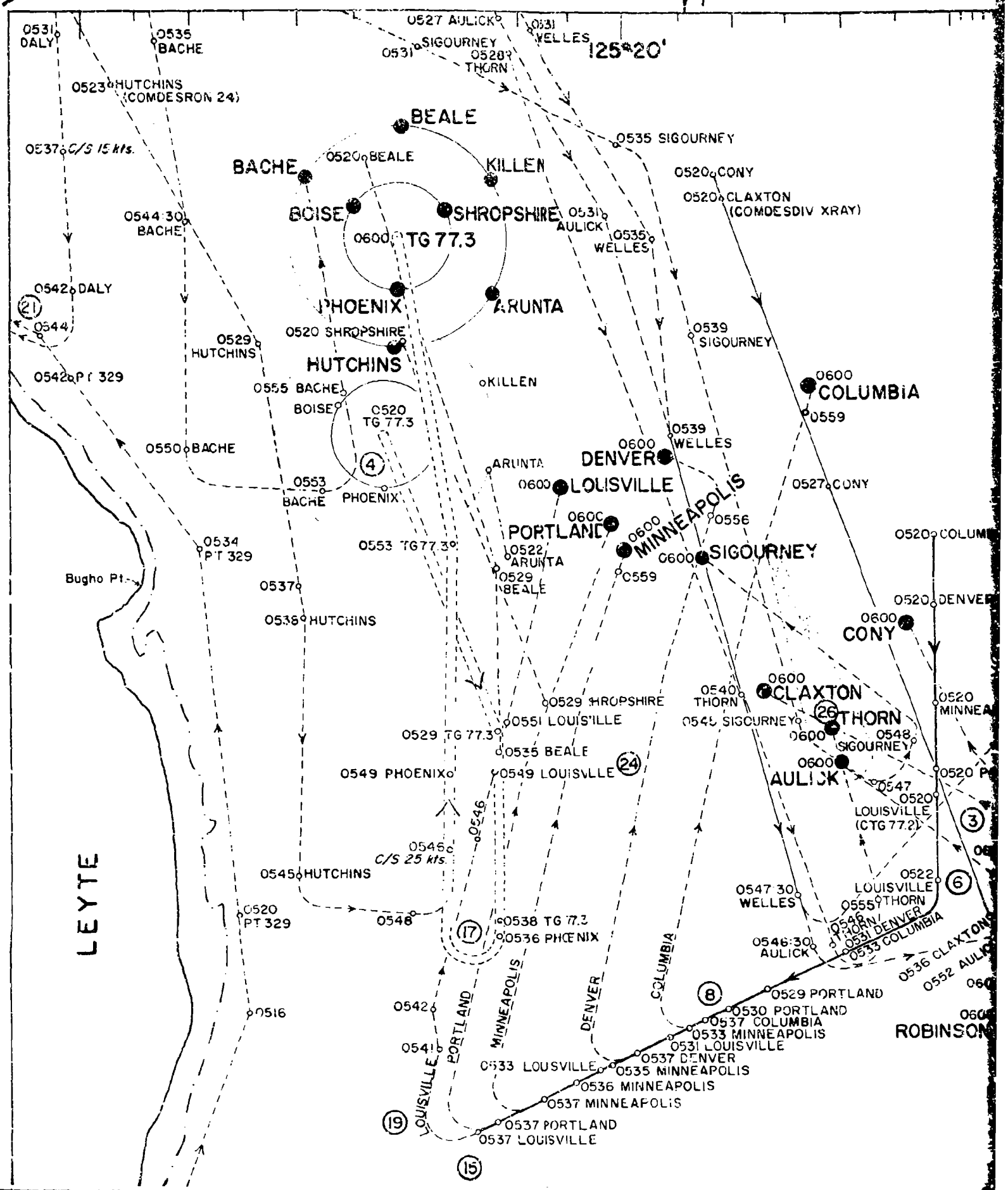
23. 0546 COMDESDIV XRAY started to form a circular screen around the Left Flank Cruisers.

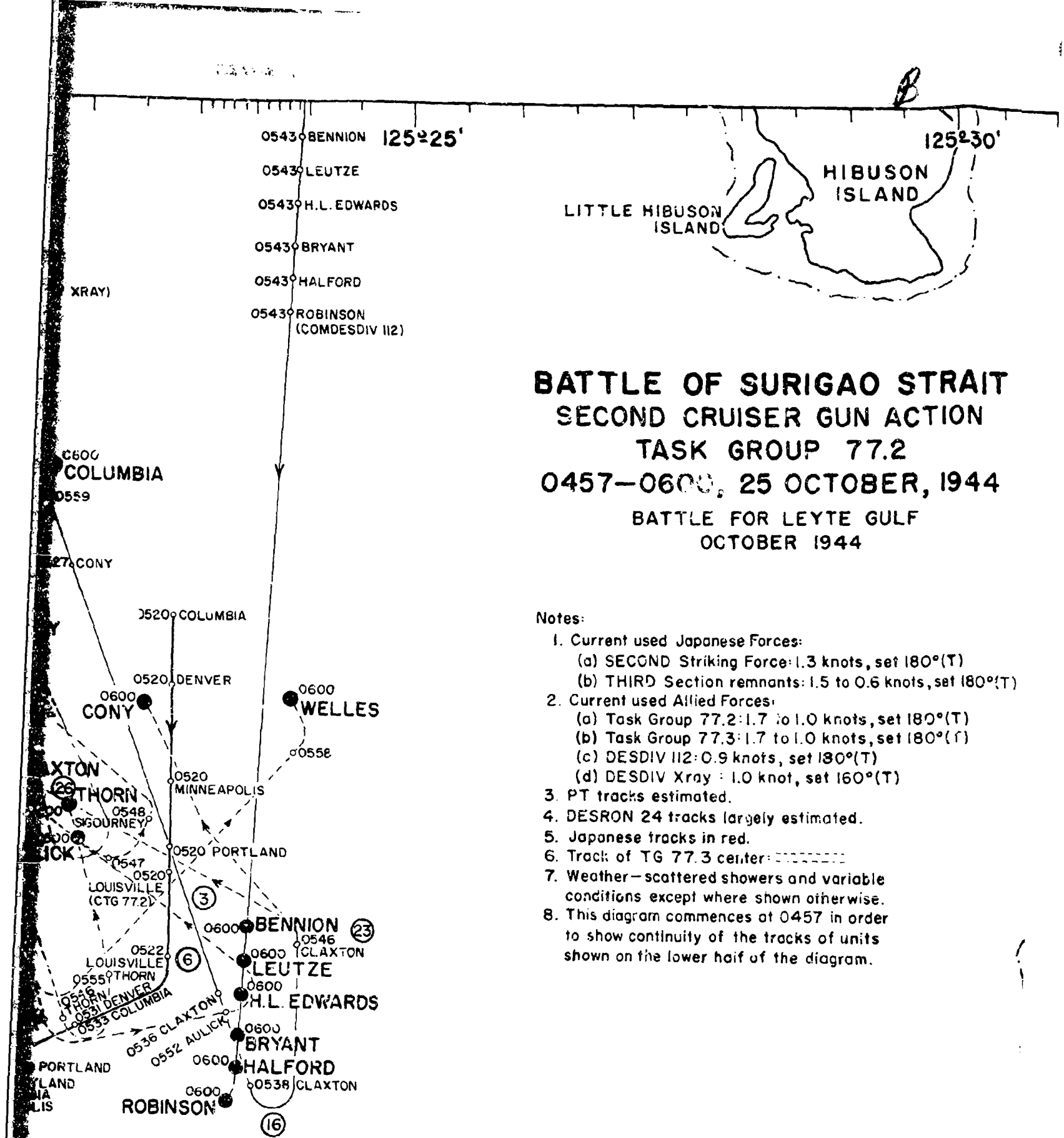
24. 0549 Commander Left Flank Force started to form circular cruising disposition.

25. 0551 Commander SECOND Striking Force, being approximately in the center of the channel, changed course to 180°(T).

26. 0557 COMDESDIV XRAY sighted numerous survivors in the water and reported them to CTG 77.2. He was directed to pick them up. (These survivors were from the YAMASHIRO.)

27. 0558:30 MOGAMI, being near the center of the channel, changed course to 180°(T) and headed for the southern exit from Surigao Strait.


125°20'
0531 DALY
0535 BACHE
0527 AULICK
0531 SIGOURNEY
0531 WELLES
0528 THORN
0523 HUTCHINS (COMDESRON 24)
BEALE
0535 SIGOURNEY
0537 C/S 15 kts.
BACHE
0520 BEALE
KILLEN
0520 CONY
0520 CLAXTON (COMDESDIV XRAY)
BOISE
SHROPSHIRE
0531 AULICK
0544 30 BACHE
0600 TG 77.3
0535 WELLES
0542 DALY
21
PHOENIX
ARUNTA
0544
0520 SHROPSHIRE
0539 SIGOURNEY
0529 HUTCHINS
HUTCHINS
0542 PT 329
0555 BACHE
KILLEN
0600 COLUMBIA
BOISE
0520 TG 77.3
0559
0539 WELLES
0550 BACHE
0600 DENVER
ARUNTA
4
0553 BACHE
PHOENIX
0600 LOUISVILLE
0527 CONY
0600 PORTLAND
0600 MINNEAPOLIS
0556
0534 PT 329
0553 TG77.3
0522 ARUNTA
0600 SIGOURNEY
0520 COLUM
Bugho Pt
0529 BEALE
0559
0537
0520 DENVER
0536 HUTCHINS
0600 CONY
0600 CLAXTON
0540 THORN
0520 MINNEA
0529 SHROPSHIRE
26
THORN
0551 LOUISVILLE
0548 SIGOURNEY
0529 TG 77.3
0600
0548
0535 BEALE
SIGOURNEY
0600
24
0549 PHOENIX
0549 LOUISVILLE
AULICK
0520 P
0547
0520 LOUISVILLE (CTG 77.2)
3
0546
C/S 25 kts.
0522 LOUISVILLE
6
0547 30 WELLES
0555 THORN
0545 HUTCHINS
0546
0520 PT 329
0548
17
0538 TG 77.3
0536 PHOENIX
0546 30 AULICK
0533 COLUMBIA
0536 CLAXTON
0552 AULI
LEYTE
0516
0542
8
0529 PORTLAND
0530 PORTLAND
0537 COLUMBIA
0533 MINNEAPOLIS
0531 LOUISVILLE
0537 DENVER
0535 MINNEAPOLIS
0536 MINNEAPOLIS
0537 MINNEAPOLIS
0537 PORTLAND
0537 LOUISVILLE
19
15
ROBINSON
LOUISVILLE PORTLAND MINNEAPOLIS DENVER COLUMBIA

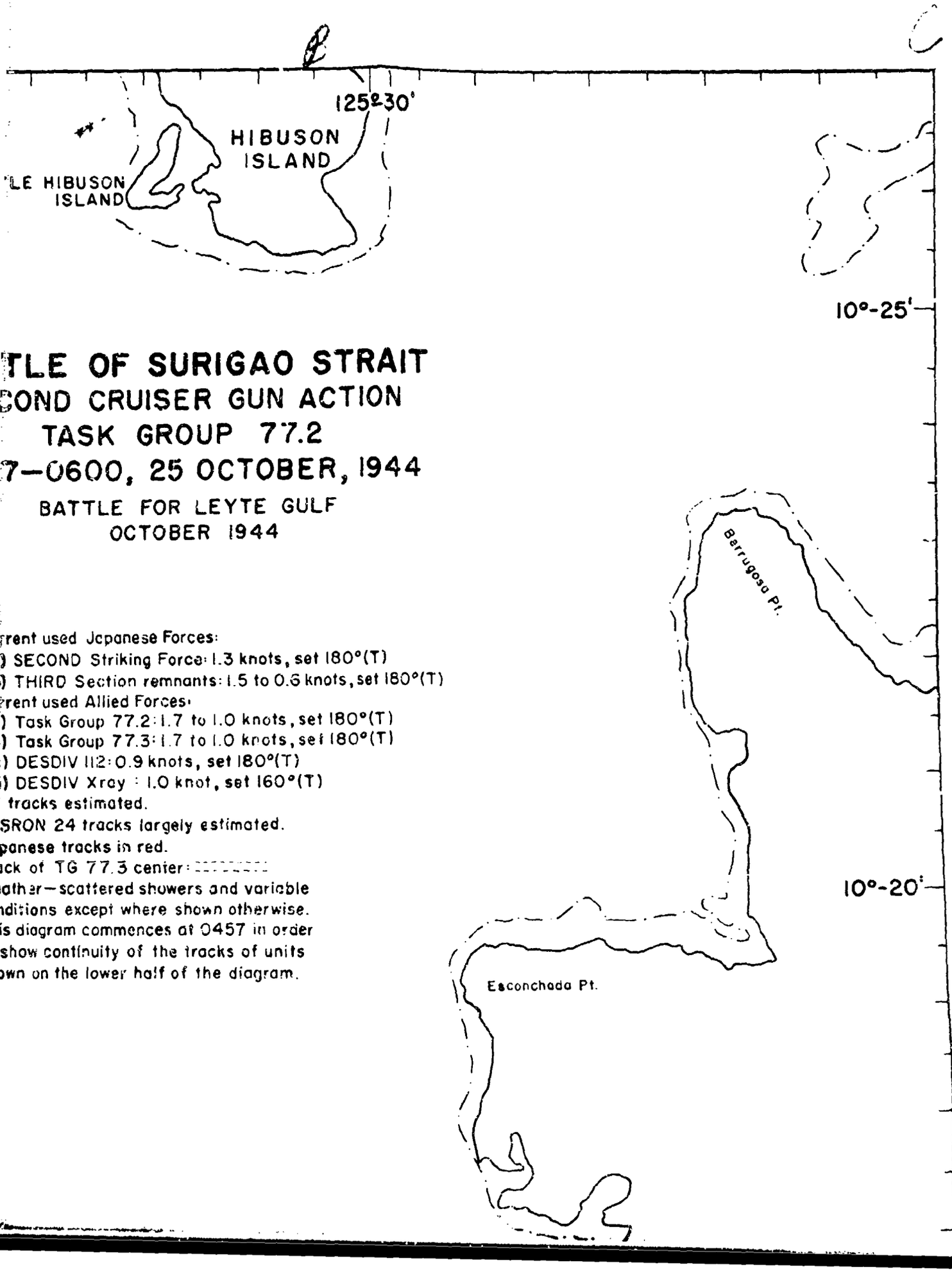


BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
SECOND CRUISER GUN ACTION
TASK GROUP 77.2
0457–0600, 25 OCTOBER, 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

Notes:

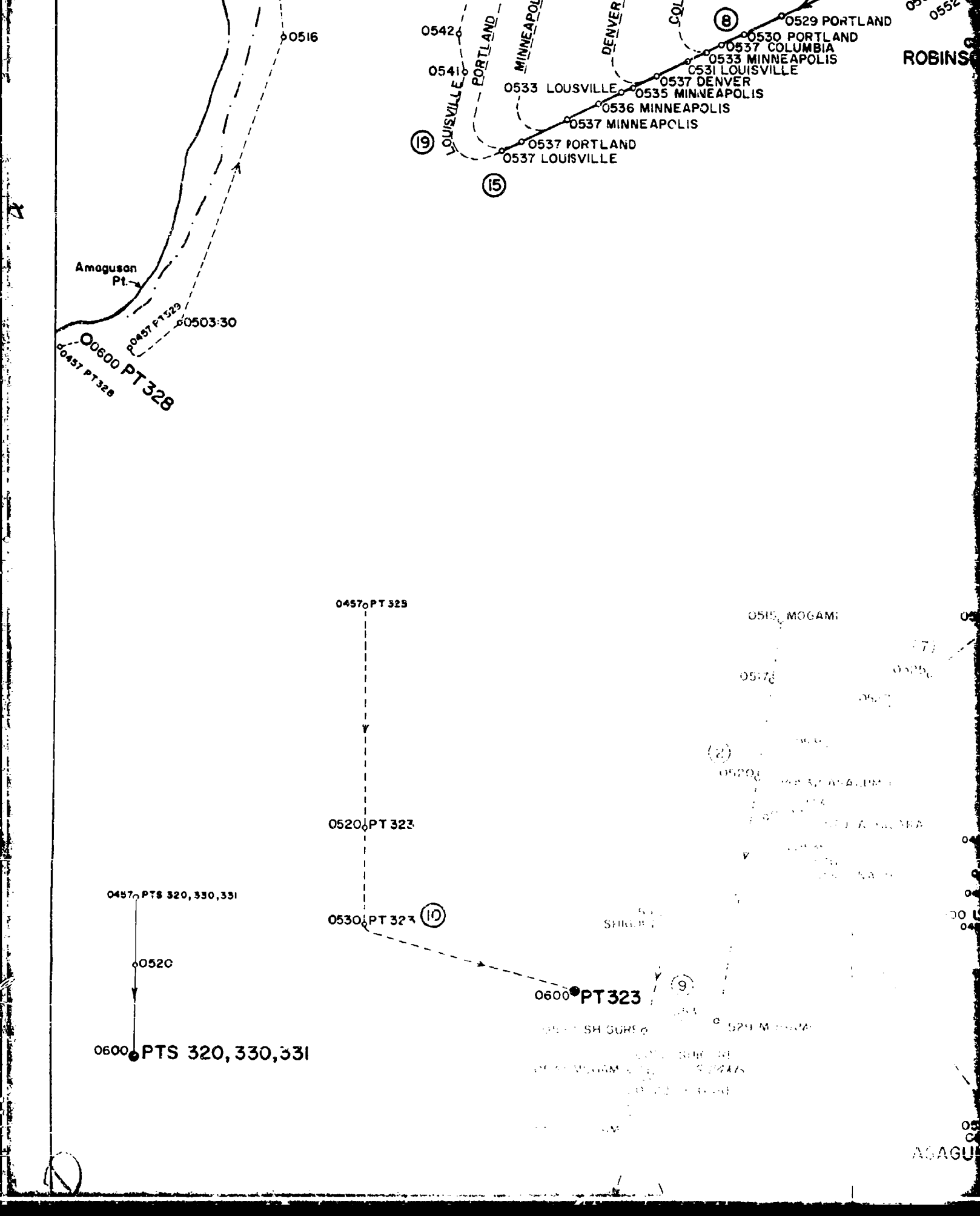
1. Current used Japanese Forces:
   (a) SECOND Striking Force: 1.3 knots, set 180°(T)
   (b) THIRD Section remnants: 1.5 to 0.6 knots, set 180°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces:
   (a) Task Group 77.2: 1.7 to 1.0 knots, set 180°(T)
   (b) Task Group 77.3: 1.7 to 1.0 knots, set 180°(T)
   (c) DESDIV 112: 0.9 knots, set 180°(T)
   (d) DESDIV Xray : 1.0 knot, set 160°(T)
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. DESRON 24 tracks largely estimated.
5. Japanese tracks in red.
6. Track of TG 77.3 center:
7. Weather—scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.
8. This diagram commences at 0457 in order to show continuity of the tracks of units shown on the lower half of the diagram.

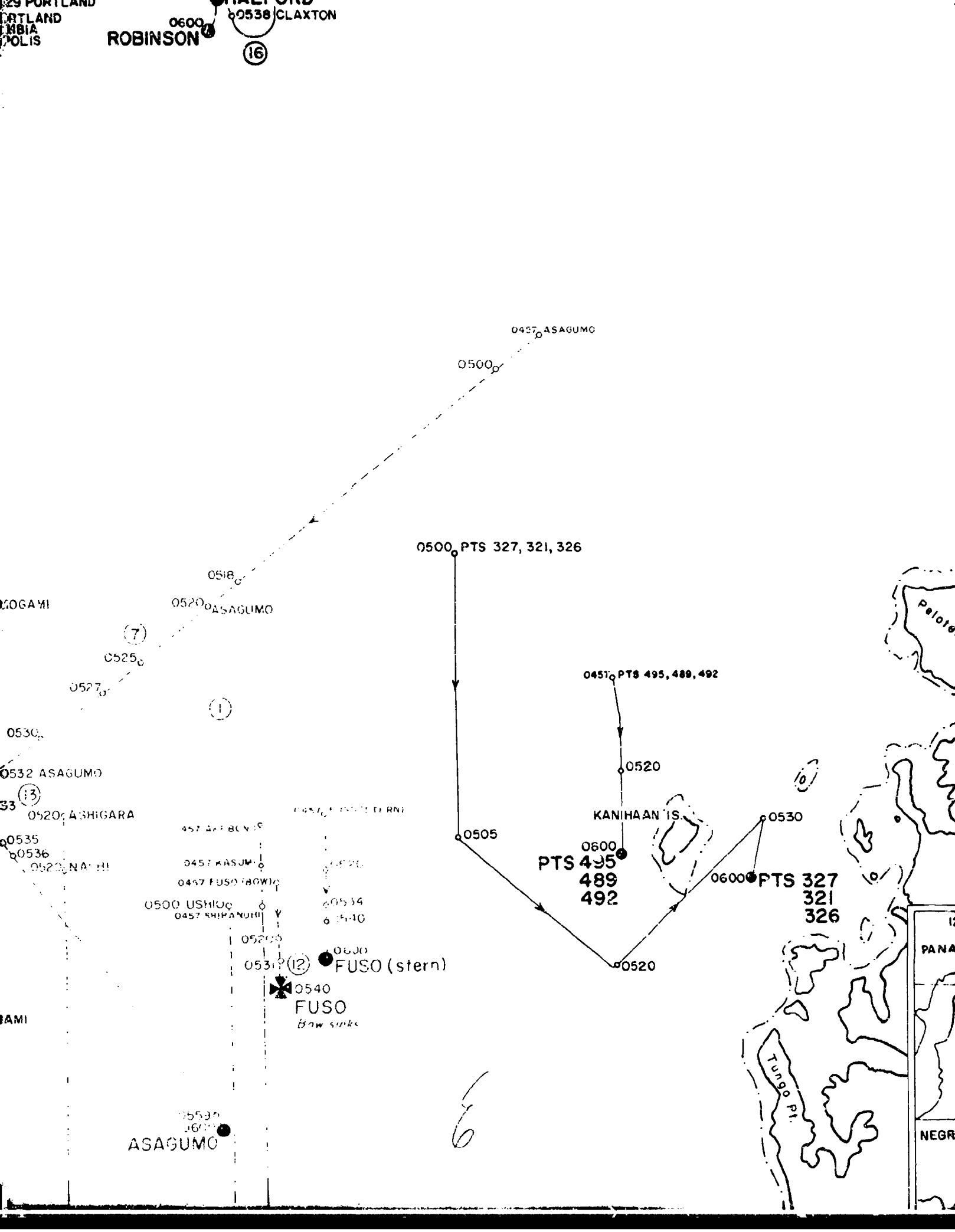


TLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
COND CRUISER GUN ACTION
TASK GROUP 77.2
7–0600, 25 OCTOBER, 1944

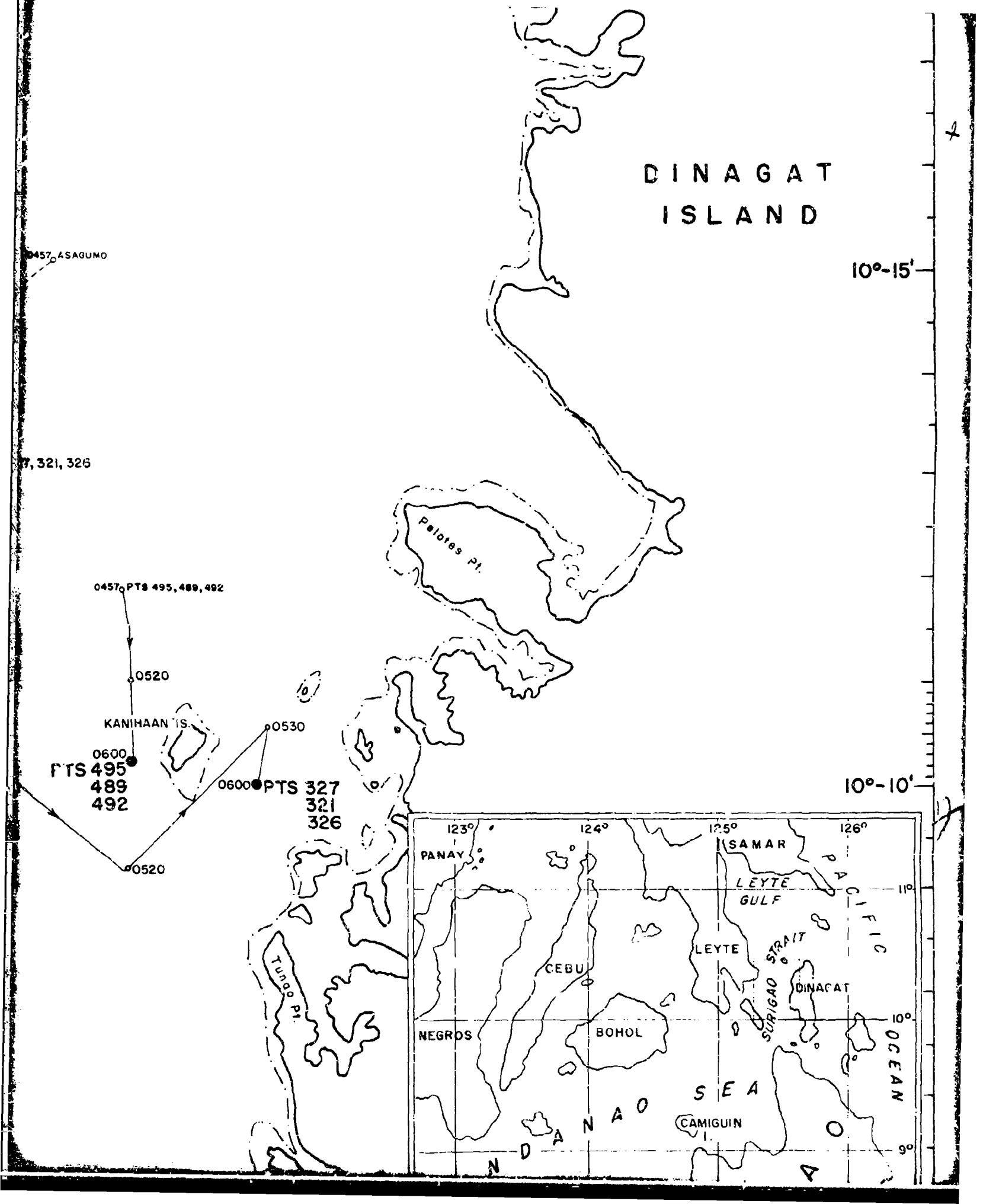
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

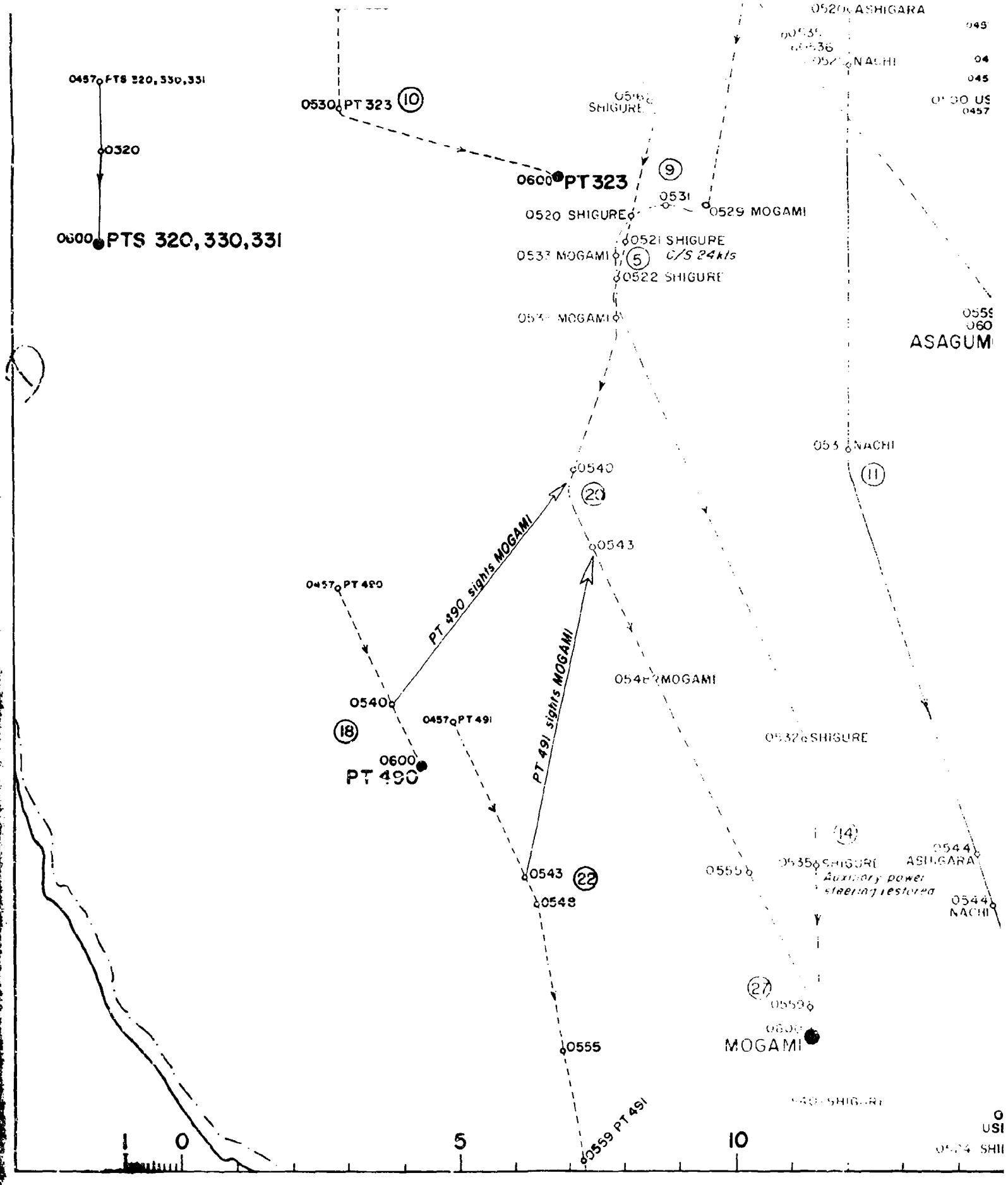
rent used Japanese Forces:
) SECOND Striking Force: 1.3 knots, set 180°(T)
) THIRD Section remnants: 1.5 to 0.6 knots, set 180°(T)
rent used Allied Forces:
) Task Group 77.2: 1.7 to 1.0 knots, set 180°(T)
) Task Group 77.3: 1.7 to 1.0 knots, set 180°(T)
) DESDIV 112: 0.9 knots, set 180°(T)
) DESDIV Xray : 1.0 knot, set 160°(T)
tracks estimated.
SRON 24 tracks largely estimated.
panese tracks in red.
ack of TG 77.3 center: ========
ather—scattered showers and variable
nditions except where shown otherwise.
his diagram commences at 0457 in order
show continuity of the tracks of units
own on the lower half of the diagram.


0516
0542
0541
0533 LOUSVILLE
0537 PORTLAND
0537 LOUISVILLE
0529 PORTLAND
0530 PORTLAND
0537 COLUMBIA
0533 MINNEAPOLIS
0531 LOUISVILLE
0537 DENVER
0535 MINNEAPOLIS
0536 MINNEAPOLIS
0537 MINNEAPOLIS
PORTLAND
LOUISVILLE
MINNEAPOLIS
DENVER
8
19
15
ROBINS
Amagusan Pt.
0457 PT 323
0503:30
0600 PT 328
0457 PT 328
0457 PT 325
0520 PT 323
0530 PT 323
10
0600 PT 323
9
0457 PTS 320, 330, 331
0520
0600 PTS 320, 330, 331
0515 MOGAMI
(2)
AGAGU

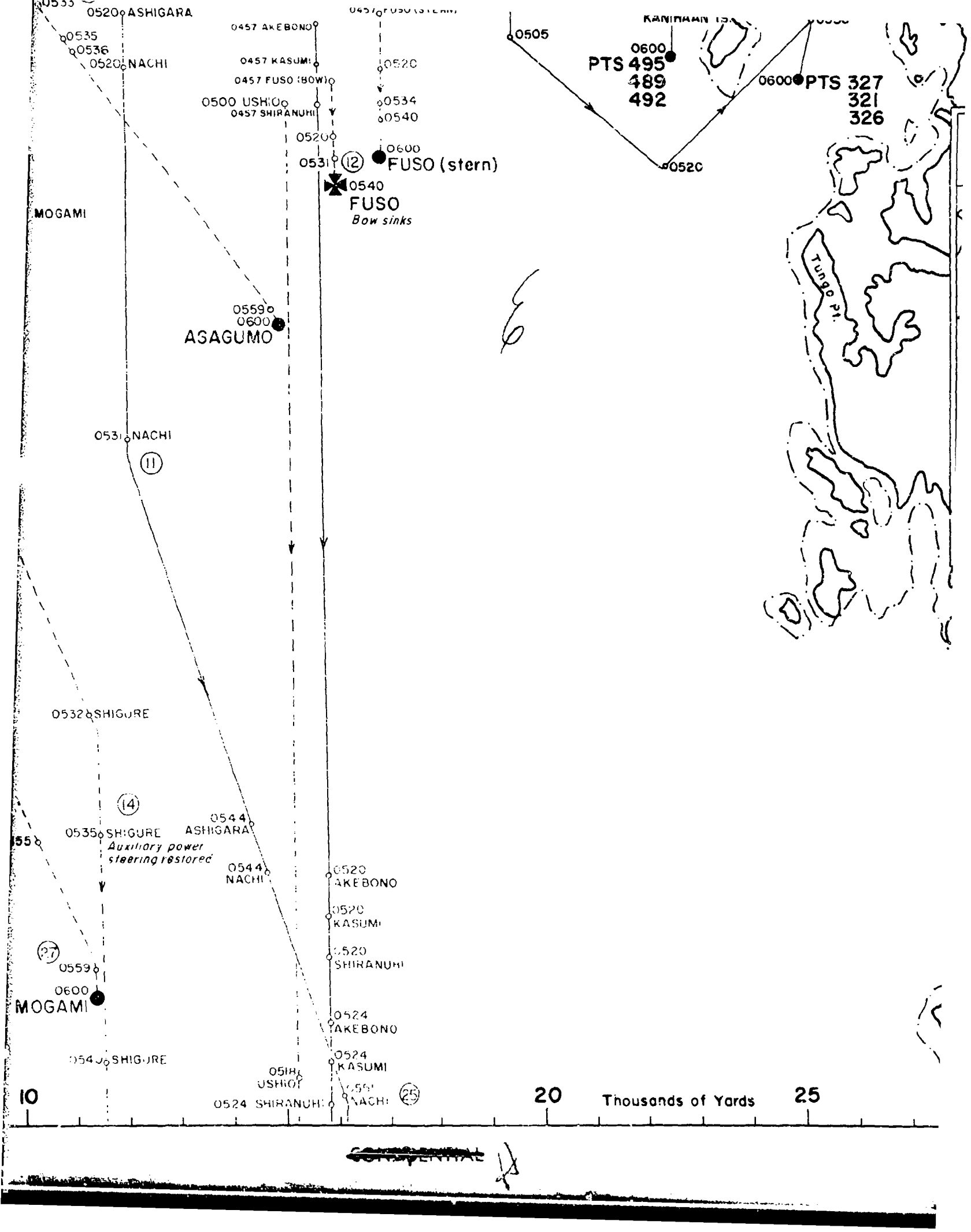

29 PORTLAND
ORTLAND
NBIA
POLIS
0600
ROBINSON
0538 CLAXTON
16
0457 ASAGUMO
0500
0518
0520 ASAGUMO
7
0525
0527
1
0530
0532 ASAGUMO
13
0520 ASHIGARA
0535
0536
0457 KASUMI
0457 FUSO (BOW)
0500 USHIO
0457 SHIRANUHI
0534
0540
0520
0531
12
0600
FUSO (stern)
0540
FUSO
Bow sinks
ASAGUMO
0500 PTS 327, 321, 326
0457 PTS 495, 489, 492
0520
KANIHAAN IS.
0505
0600
PTS 495
489
492
0530
0600 PTS 327
321
326
0520
Pelote
PANA
NEGR
Tungo Pt.

6


DINAGAT
ISLAND
10°-15'
10°-10'
0457 ASAGUMO
7, 321, 326
Pelores Pt.
0457 PTS 495, 489, 492
0520
KANIHAAN IS.
0530
0600
PTS 495
489
492
0600 PTS 327
321
326
0520
Tungo Pt.
123°
124°
125°
126°
PANAY
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC
11°
CEBU
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
10°
NEGROS
BOHOL
SEA
OCEAN
CAMIGUIN
9°



0457 PTS 320, 330, 331
0320
0600 PTS 320, 330, 331
0530 PT 323
10
0600 PT 323
9
0531
0520 SHIGURE
0529 MOGAMI
0521 SHIGURE
C/S 24 kts
5
0522 SHIGURE
ASAGUMI
NACHI
11
0540
20
0543
PT 490 sights MOGAMI
0457 PT 490
PT 491 sights MOGAMI
0540
18
0457 PT 491
0600
PT 490
0543
22
0548
0555
14
0535 SHIGURE
Auxiliary power steering restored
0544 ASHIGARA
0544 NACHI
27
0559
MOGAMI
0559 PT 491
0
5
10



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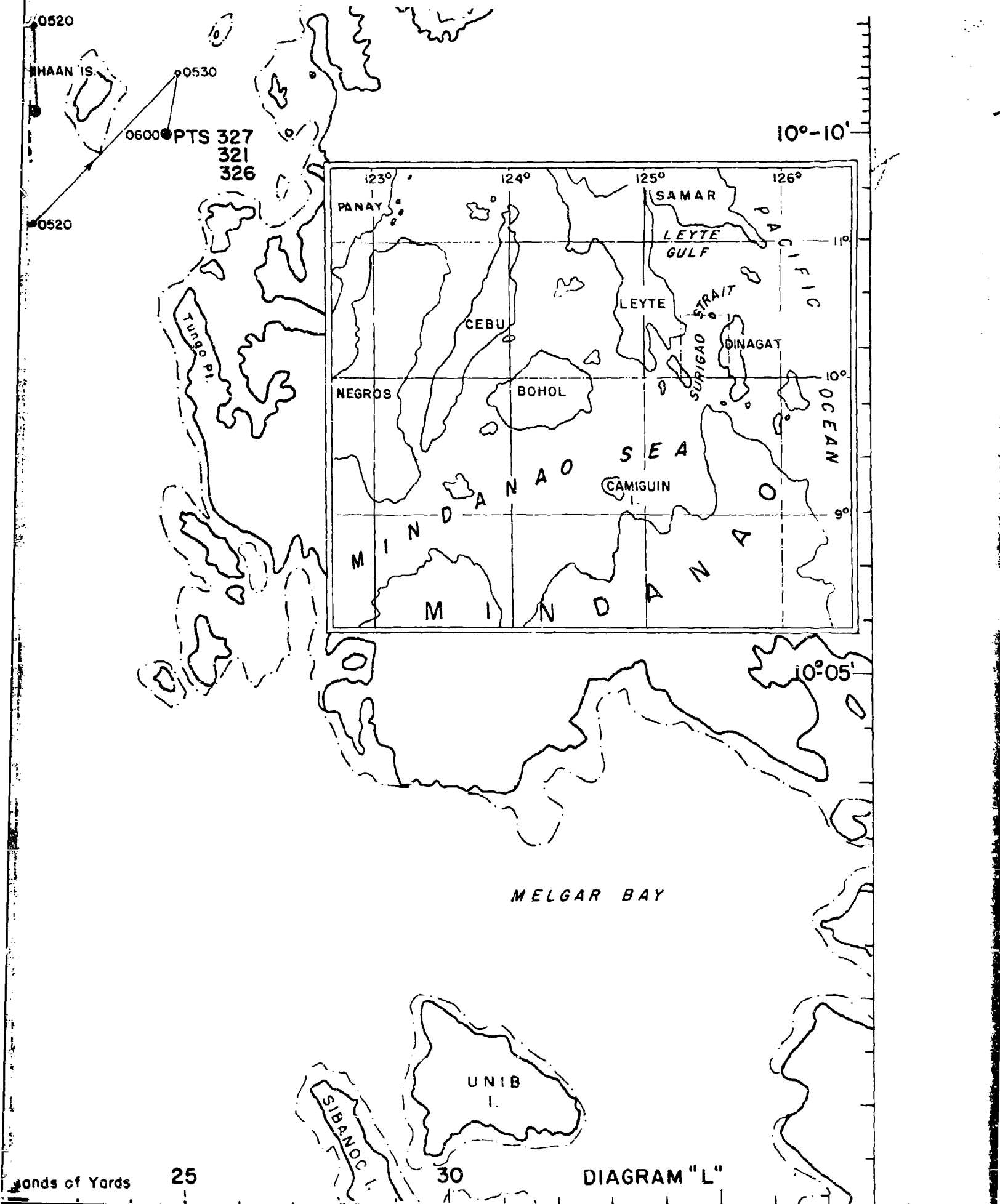

0520
HAAN IS.
0530
0600
PTS 327
321
326
0520
10°-10'
123°
124°
125°
126°
PANAY
SAMAR
PACIFIC
LEYTE
GULF
11°
LEYTE
STRAIT
CEBU
DINAGAT
SURIGAO
10°
NEGROS
BOHOL
OCEAN
SEA
MINDANAO
CAMIGUIN
9°
MINDANAO
10°-05'
Turgo Pt.
MELGAR BAY
UNIB
I.
SIBANOC I.
onds of Yards
25
30
DIAGRAM "L"

Events Depicted on Diagram "M"

October 25th, 1944

0515 - 0700

1. 0515 The ABUKUMA, having completed the first emergency repairs, was proceeding on course 020°(T) at twenty knots following the SECOND Striking Force. At this time she recorded sighting the USHIO standing toward her but this time seems doubtful.

2. 0515 USHIO, proceeding down the strait to escort the ABUKUMA, was on course 180°(T) at thirty knots.

3. 0520 USHIO changed course to 213°(T) and headed toward the ABUKUMA.

4. 0525 ABUKUMA, having observed USHIO rapidly approaching from the north, reversed course.

5. 0525 SW Panaon PT's (194, 150, 196), after proceeding past Binit Point in order to see what was happening in Surigao Strait, sighted a large fire to the north in Surigao Strait. They proceeded on course 065°(T) and increased speed to ten knots.

6. 0528 PT's 150 and 194 contacted the USHIO and ABUKUMA and proceeded to intercept. PT 196 which had no radar was not notified of the contacts.

7. 0532 ABUKUMA and USHIO sighted PT's 194 and 150 to starboard and opened fire. PT 150 fired one torpedo at USHIO, which missed, and the PT's retired under smoke.

8. 0533 PT 194 was hit by ABUKUMA's gunfire and retired toward Balongbalong. She was forced to slow by flooding and asked for assistance.

9. 0533 PT 137 heard PT 194's request for help and proceeded toward Sonok Point to look for her.

10. 0535 PT's 150 and 196, operating separately, proceeded toward San Ricardo Point to look for PT 194 and assist her.

11. 0535:30 KASUMI sighted PT's 150 and 196 withdrawing and laying smoke under starshell illumination.

12. 0540 PT 137 sighted USHIO and ABUKUMA on a southerly course.

13. 0542 ABUKUMA fired starshells toward Sonok Point in order to disclose any enemy force lurking there.

14. 0543 PT 137 sighted starshells ahead and reversed course.

15. 0544 ABUKUMA, being escorted by the USHIO, changed course to 260°(T) and slowed to ten knots or less.

16. 0545 Commander Sumilon PT's directed the Bilaa Point PT's (494, 324, 497) to join him.

17. 0549 SHIGURE changed course to 185°(T) and continued toward the Mindanao Sea at twenty-four knots, keeping well clear of the ABUKUMA and DESDIV EIGHTEEN.

18. 0555 Commander SECOND Striking Force recalled his destroyers and directed them to screen the NACHI and ASHIGARA.

19. 0559 Commander Madilao PT's (192, 191, 195) decided to return to his base (Liloan Bay) via Sogod Bay and changed course to 315°(T) and increased speed to twenty-three knots.

20. 0601 MOGAMI opened fire on PT 491 when the MTB changed course toward her.

21. 0601 PT 196 went alongside PT 194 and transfered a hospital corpsman and two other men to help with the casualties and repairs.

22. 0602 Commander SECOND Striking Force changed course to 240°(T) in order to pass south of Binit Point and enter the Mindanao Sea.

23. 0605 ABUKUMA changed course to 249°(T) and changed speed to nine knots.

24. 0605 PT 491 fired two torpedoes at the MOGAMI at a range of about 3,000 yards. Both torpedoes missed as the MOGAMI turned toward PT 491.

25. 0605 PT 150, having failed to locate PT 194, reversed course to the south.

26. 0607 DESDIV EIGHTEEN destroyers commenced taking stations on the bows of the NACHI and ASHIGARA.

27. 0610 PT's 151 and 146, which had heard PT 194's request for help, joined PT's 194 and 196 and the four MTB's returned to their base at Liloan Bay.

28. 0610 Madilao PT's (192, 191, 195) sighted smoke from the USHIO and ABUKUMA and at the same time sighted four or five destroyers coming south from Surigao Strait. They changed course to 060°(T) and headed for Madilao Point.

29. 0615 SHIGURE, being well south of the SECOND Striking Force, changed course to 244°(T) to pass between Bohol and Camiguin Islands.

30. 0620 KASUMI departed from her screening station on the bow of the NACHI in order to take COMDESRON ONE and staff off the damaged ABUKUMA.

31. 0623 ASHIGARA opened fire on PT 150 and, at 0624, Commander SECOND Striking Force turned away to course 231°(T).

32. 0625 MOGAMI fired on two motor torpedo boats near Binit Point.

33. 0627 USHIO opened fire on PT 150 which was retiring at high speed. USHIO ceased fire at 0637.

34. 0630 Sumilon PT's (523, 524, 526) and Bilaa Point PT's (494, 324, 497) joined and commenced their return to base.

35. 0636 PT 491, retiring toward the north, sighted PT 493 aground on Maoyo Point. She called for help and went to the aid of PT 493.

36. 0637 USHIO opened fire on PT 190 which retired to the northwest.

37. 0639 USHIO changed course to the south in order to rejoin the NACHI and ASHIGARA.

38. 0642 Commander SECOND Striking Force changed course to 252°(T) in order to clear the ABUKUMA.

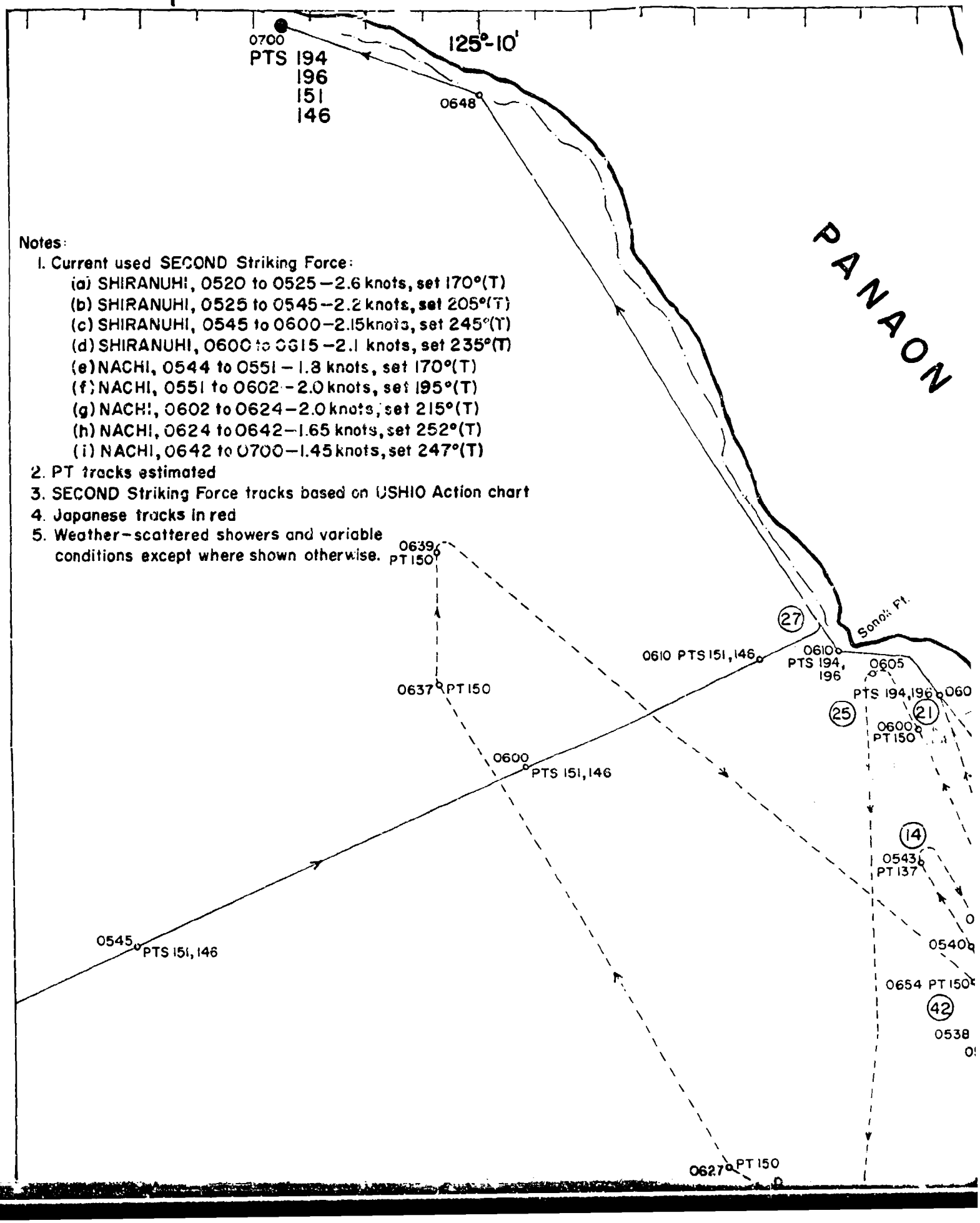
39. 0645 PT 137 sighted MOGAMI which was smoking badly abaft the stack. PT 137 changed course to 180°(T) and increased speed to ten knots in order to intercept.

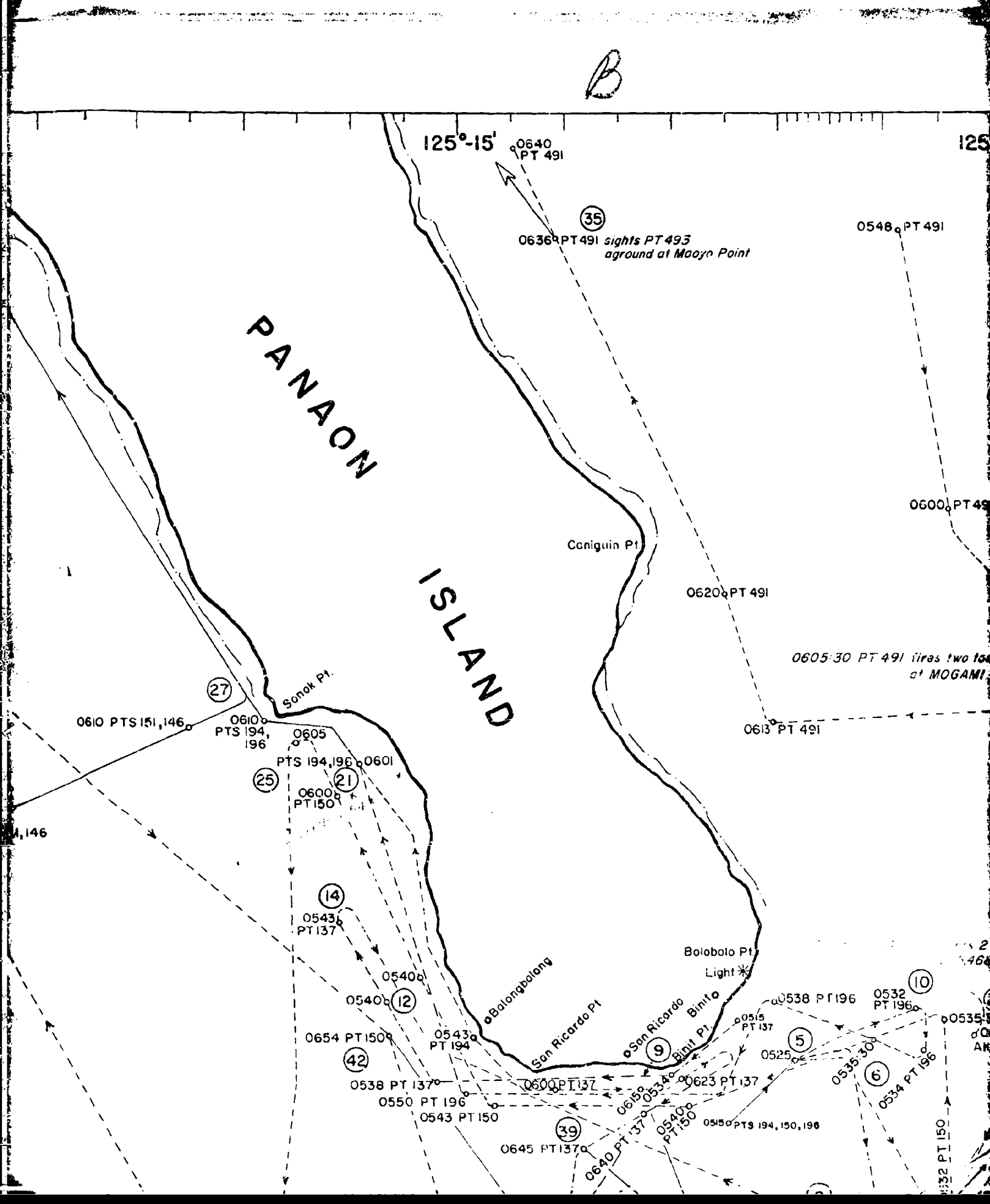
40. 0645 MOGAMI changed course to 240°(T) and entered the Mindanao Sea following the SECOND Striking Force.

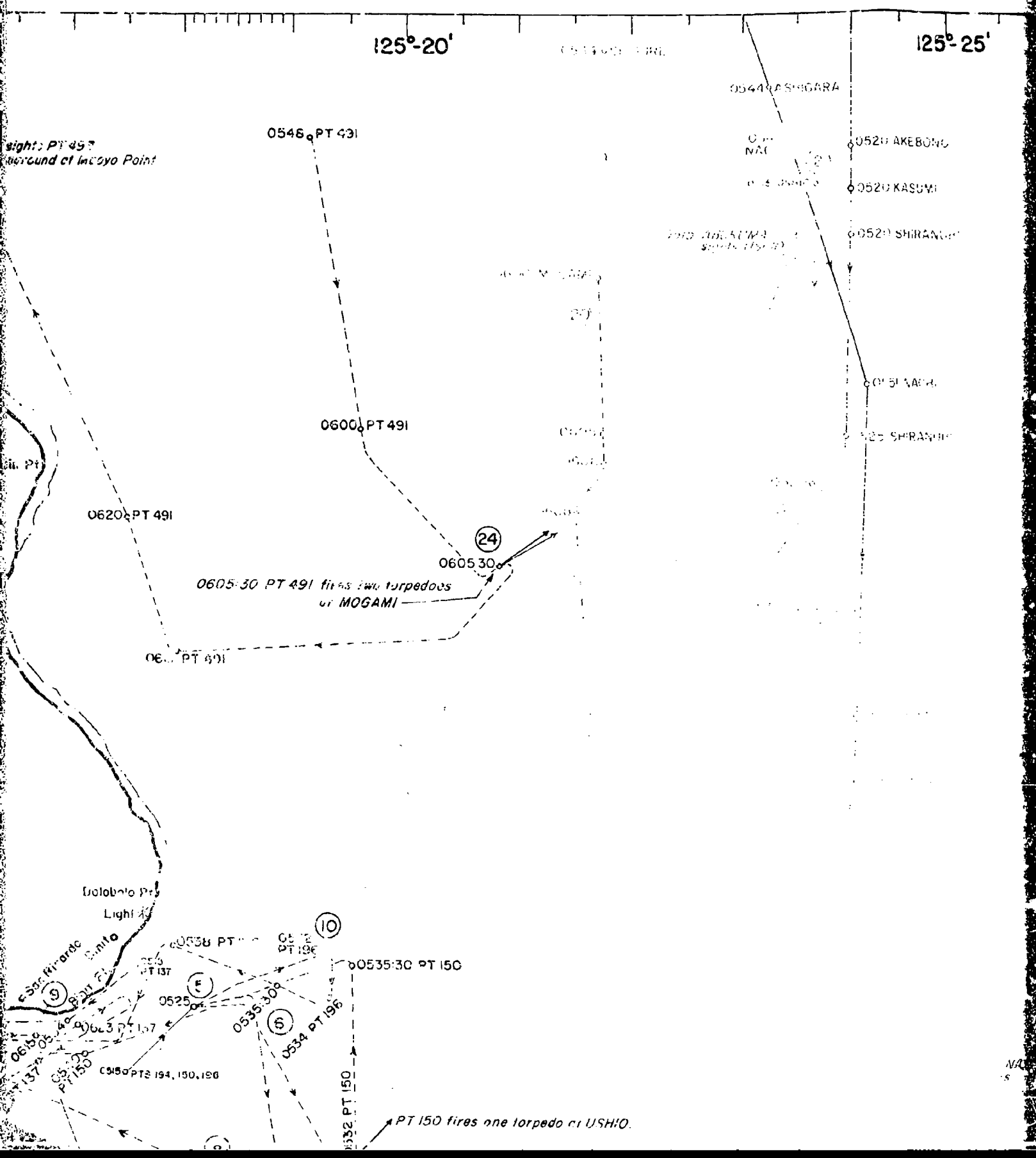
41. 0650 USHIO turned to the formation base course of 252°(T) and resumed her position in the disposition.

42. 0654 PT 150 sighted the MOGAMI and headed south to intercept at high speed.

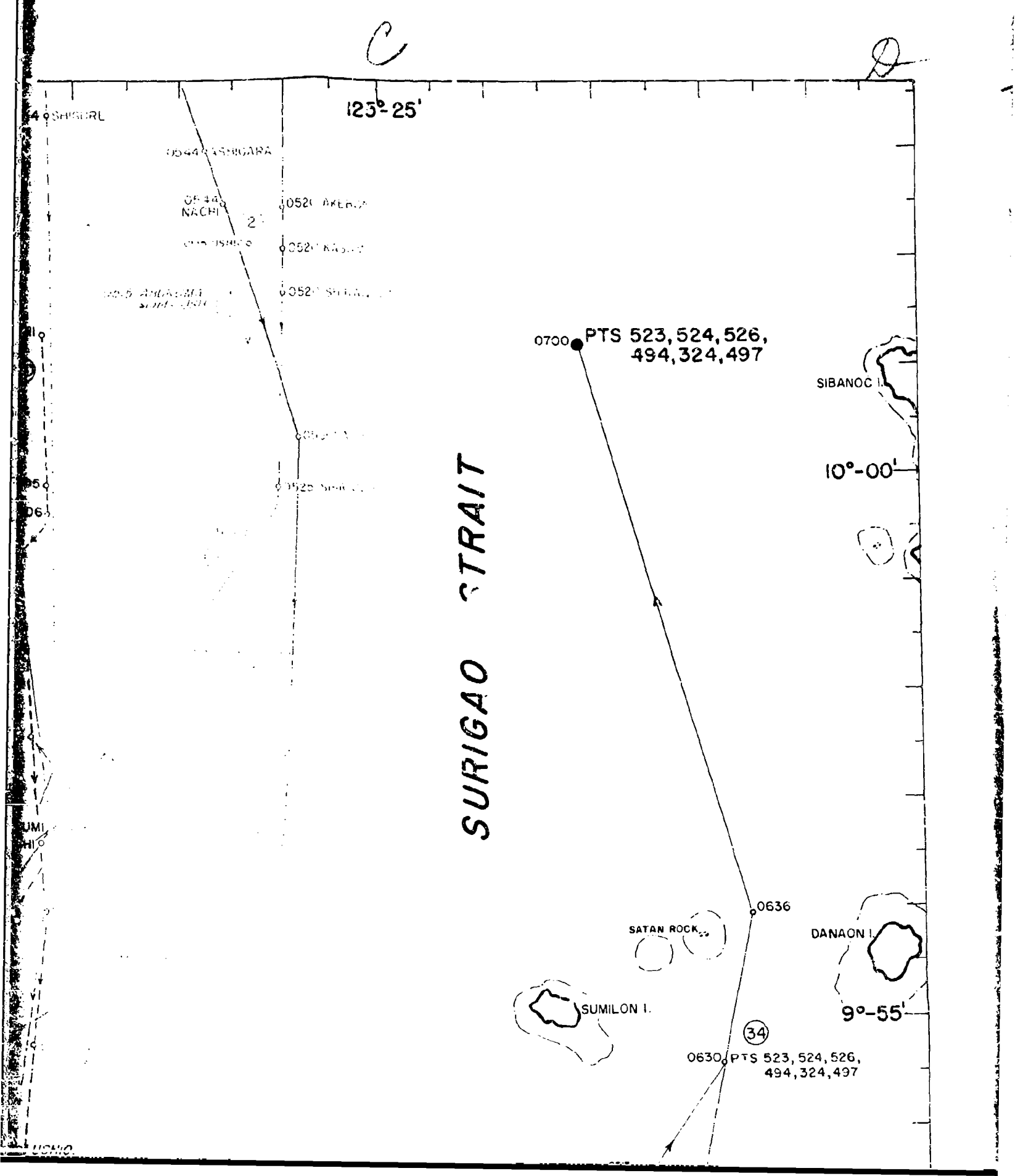
43. 0658 About this time MOGAMI opened fire on PT's 137 and 150 which were approaching from the north.

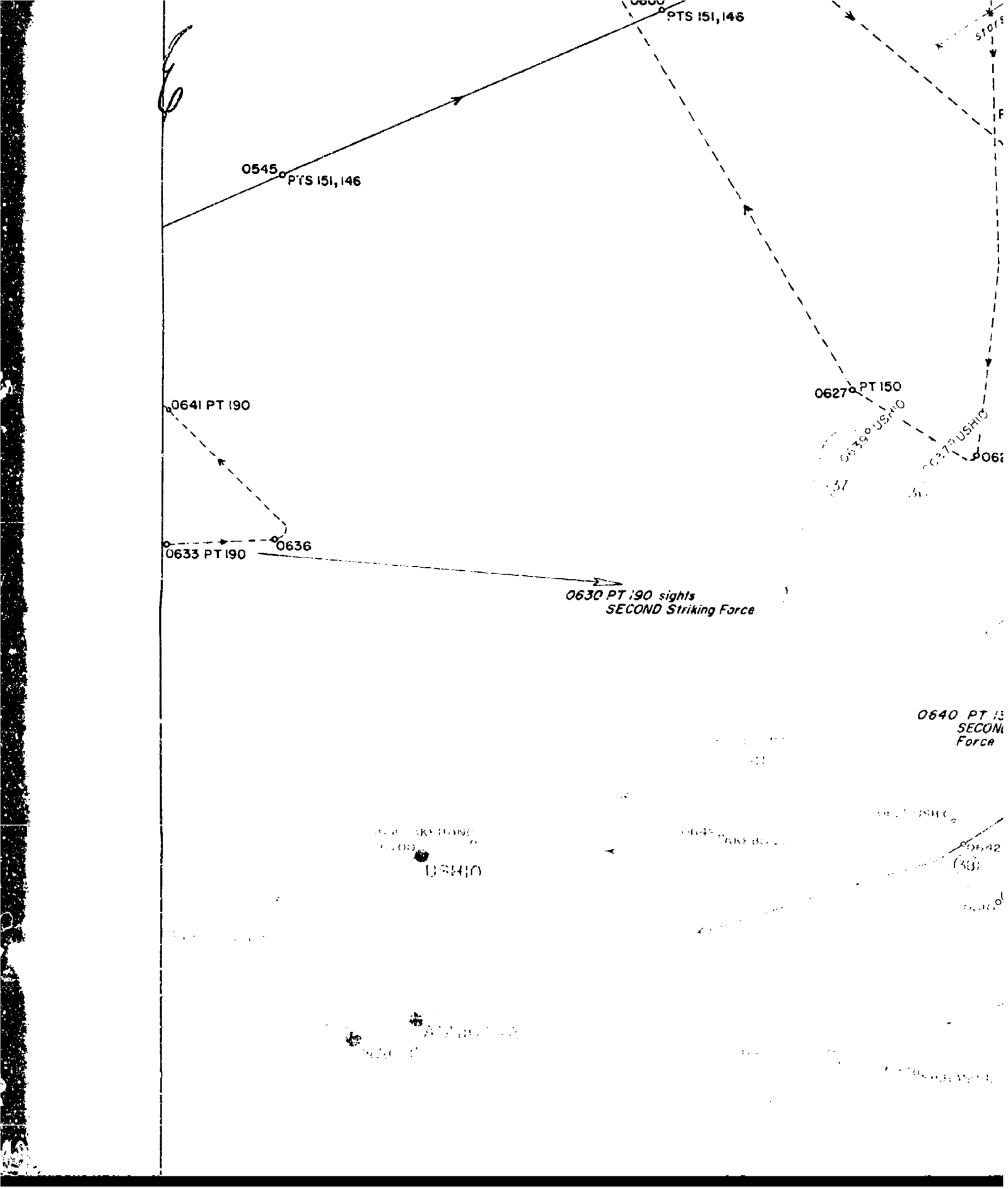

0700
PTS 194
196
151
146
125°-10'
0648
PANAON
Notes:
1. Current used SECOND Striking Force:
(a) SHIRANUHI, 0520 to 0525 – 2.6 knots, set 170°(T)
(b) SHIRANUHI, 0525 to 0545 – 2.2 knots, set 205°(T)
(c) SHIRANUHI, 0545 to 0600 – 2.15knots, set 245°(T)
(d) SHIRANUHI, 0600 to 0615 – 2.1 knots, set 235°(T)
(e) NACHI, 0544 to 0551 – 1.8 knots, set 170°(T)
(f) NACHI, 0551 to 0602 – 2.0 knots, set 195°(T)
(g) NACHI, 0602 to 0624 – 2.0 knots, set 215°(T)
(h) NACHI, 0624 to 0642 – 1.65 knots, set 252°(T)
(i) NACHI, 0642 to 0700 – 1.45 knots, set 247°(T)
2. PT tracks estimated
3. SECOND Striking Force tracks based on USHIO Action chart
4. Japanese tracks in red
5. Weather – scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.
0639 PT 150
0637 PT 150
0600 PTS 151, 146
0545 PTS 151, 146
0627 PT 150
27
0610 PTS 151, 146
Sonoki Pt.
0610 PTS 194, 196
0605
PTS 194, 196
060
25
21
0600 PT 150
14
0543 PT 137
0540
0654 PT 150
42
0538

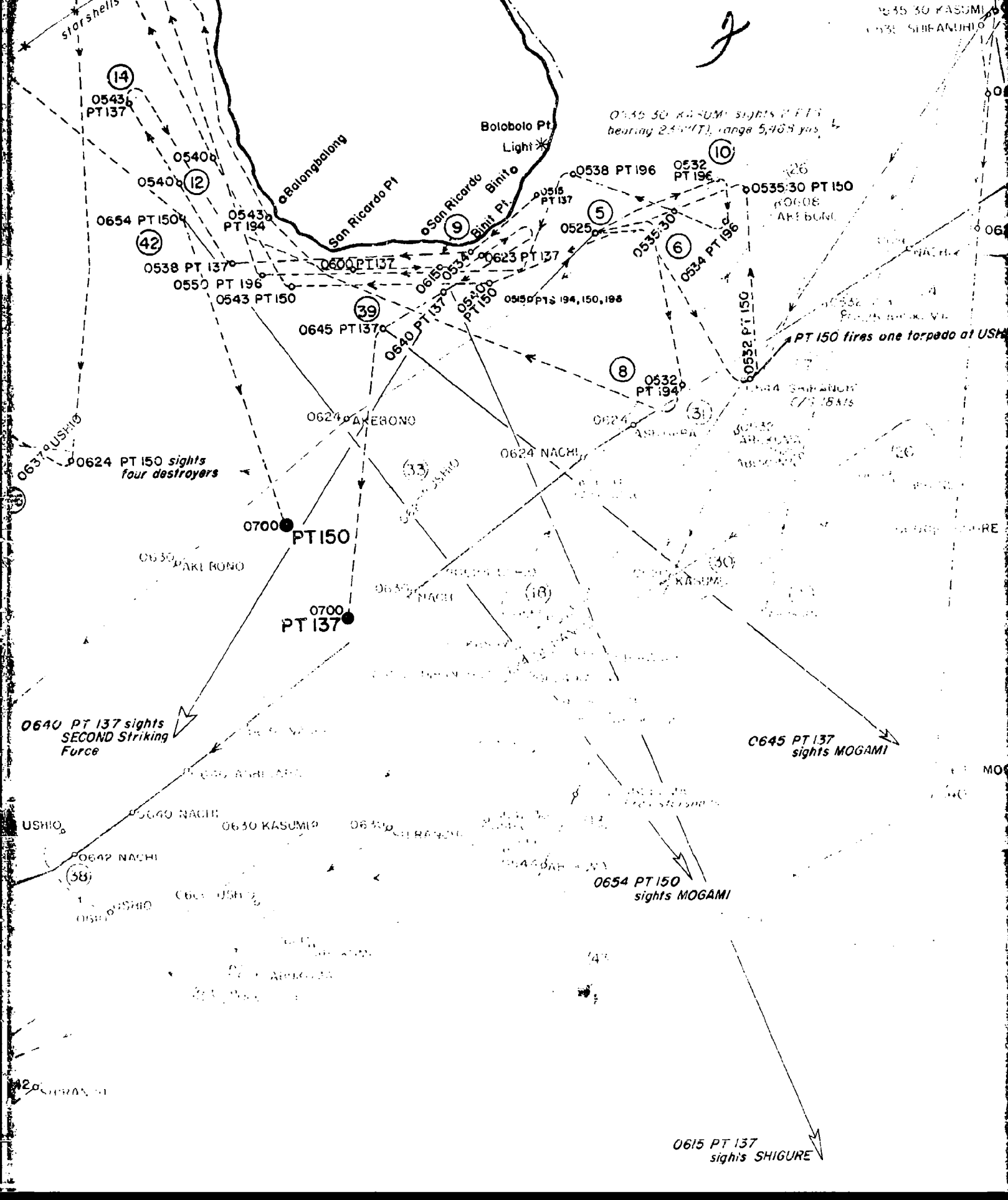

B
125°-15'
125
0640 PT 491
35
0636 PT 491 sights PT 493 aground at Maoyo Point
0548 PT 491
PANAON ISLAND
0600 PT 49
Caniguin Pt
0620 PT 491
0605-30 PT 491 fires two
at MOGAMI
0613 PT 491
27
Sonok Pt
0610 PTS 151, 146
0610 PTS 194, 196
0605
PTS 194, 196
0601
25
21
0600 PT 150
14
0543 PT 137
0540
12
0540
Bolobolo Pt
Light
Balongbalong
San Ricardo Pt
San Ricardo
Binit
Binit Pt
0538 PT 196
0532 PT 196
10
0515 PT 137
0654 PT 150
0543 PT 194
9
5
0525
42
0538 PT 137
0600 PT 137
0623 PT 137
0550 PT 196
0543 PT 150
0615
0534
0540 PT 150
0515 PTS 194, 150, 196
6
0535-30
0534 PT 196
39
0645 PT 137
0640 PT 137
32 PT 150



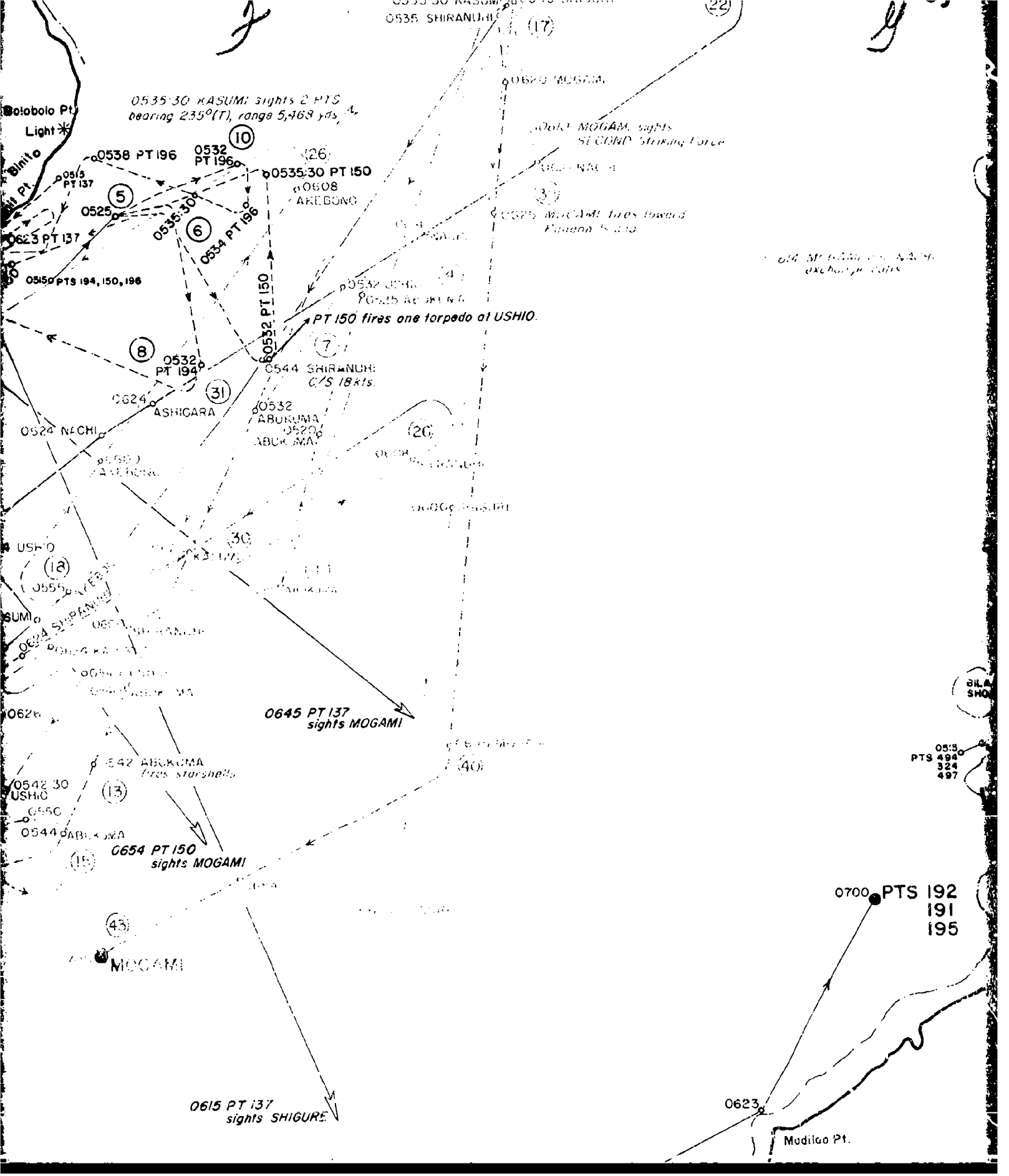
125°-20'
125°-25'
0544 ASHIGARA
0546 PT 491
0520 AKEBONO
0520 KASUMI
0520 SHIRANUHI
0600 PT 491
0620 PT 491
24
0605 30
0605:30 PT 491 fires two torpedoes at MOGAMI
Dolobolo Pt
Light
10
0535:30 PT 150
0525
0535:30
0534 PT 196
0515 PTS 194, 150, 196
PT 150 fires one torpedo at USHIO.

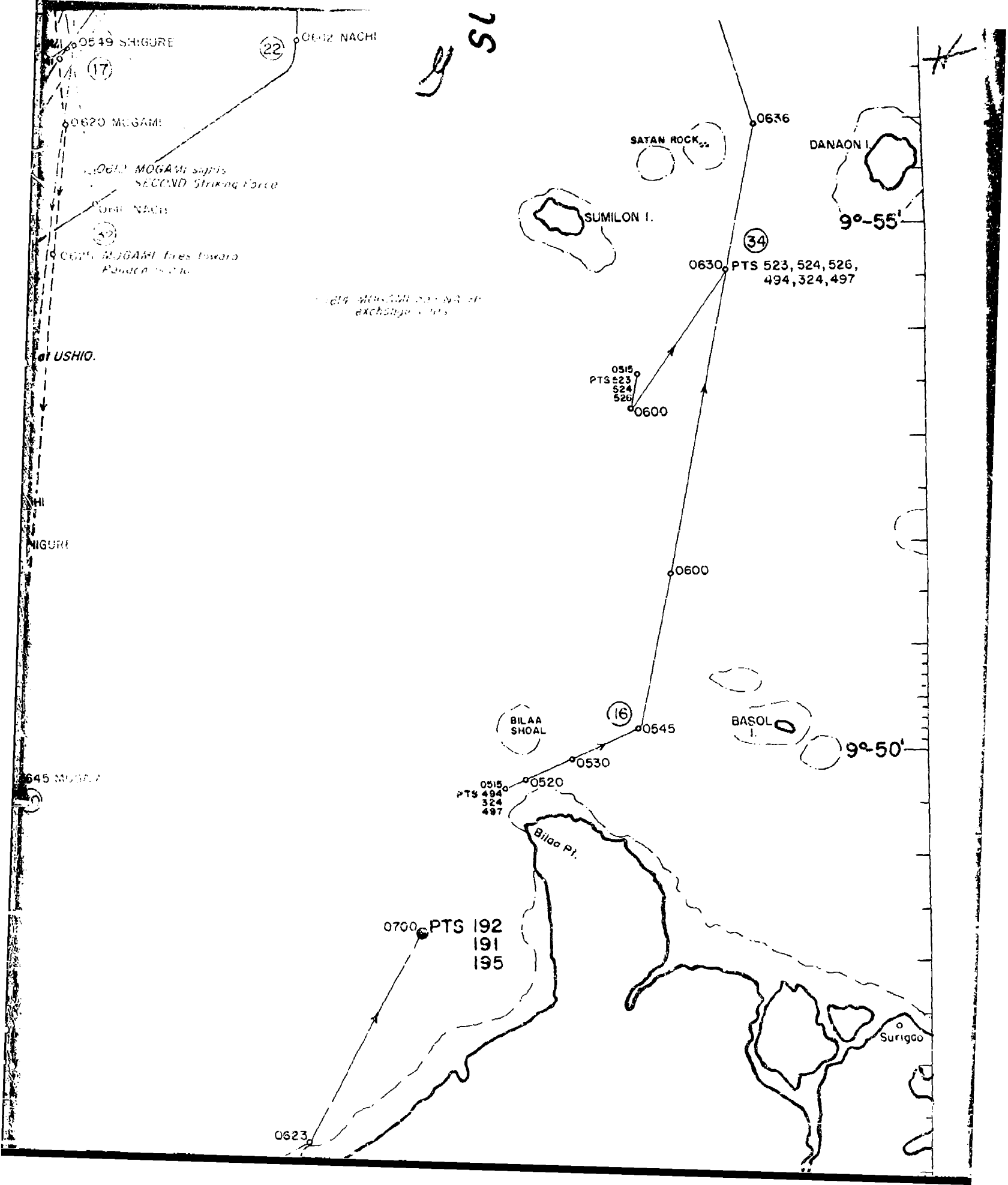

C
D
125°-25'
SHIGURE
0544 ASHIGARA
0544 NACHI
0520 AKEBO
0700 PTS 523, 524, 526, 494, 324, 497
SIBANOC I.
10°-00'
SURIGAO STRAIT
0636
SATAN ROCK
DANAON I.
SUMILON I.
9°-55'
34
0630 PTS 523, 524, 526, 494, 324, 497


PTS 151, 146
0545
PTS 151, 146
0641 PT 190
0627 PT 150
0633 PT 190
0636
0630 PT 190 sights
SECOND Striking Force
0640 PT 1
SECON
Force

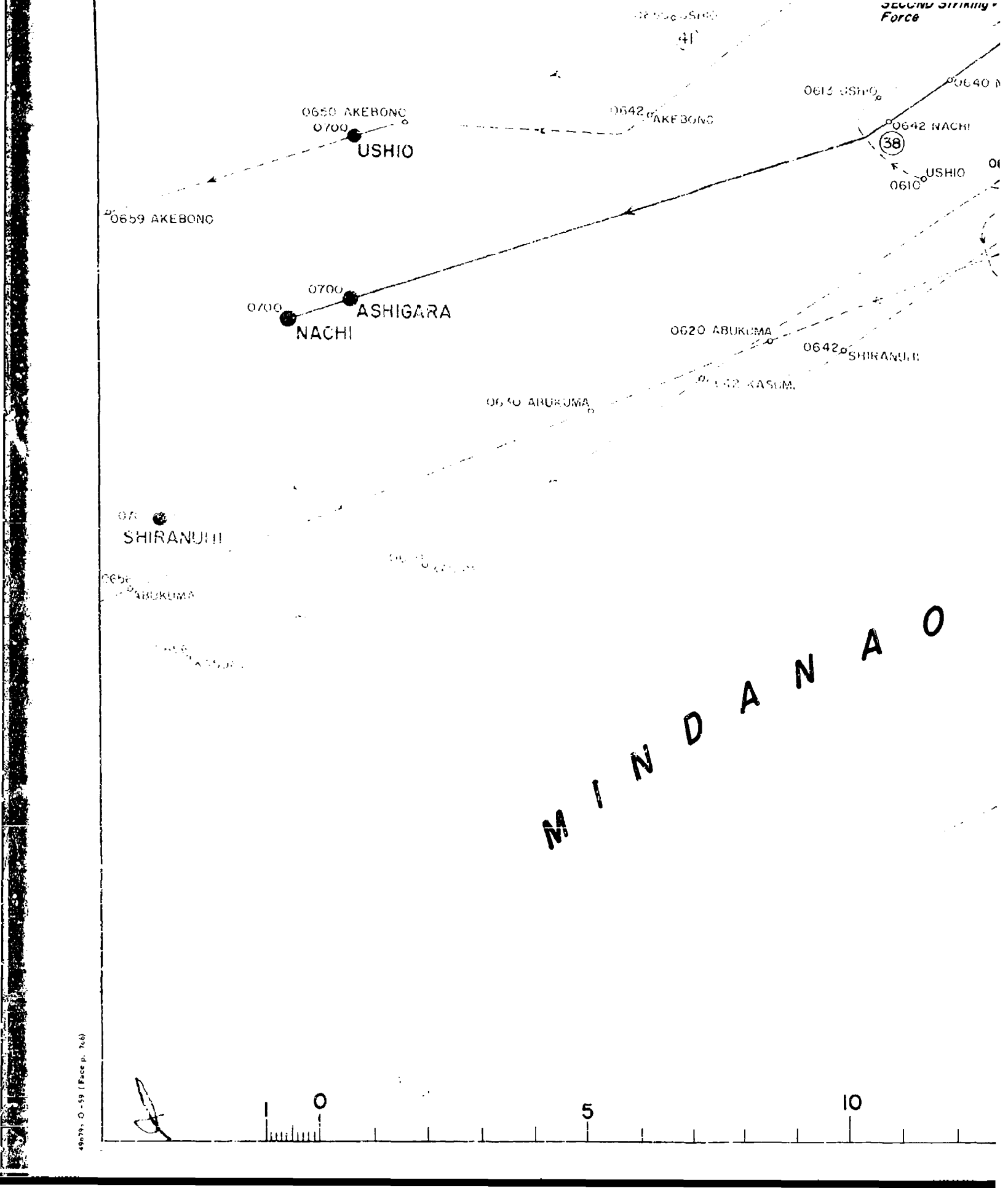


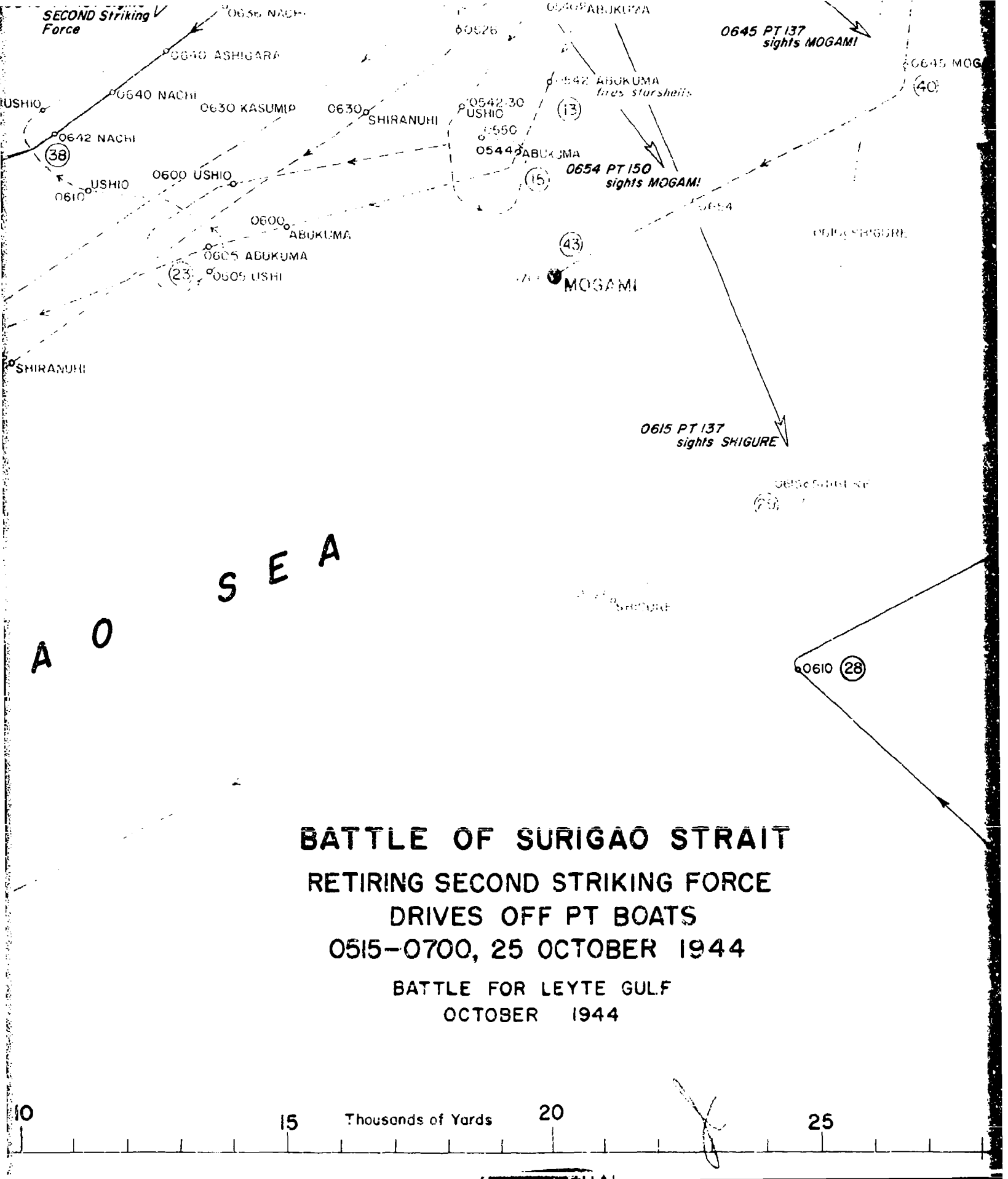
starshells
14
0543 PT 137
0540
0540
12
0654 PT 150
42
0543 PT 194
0538 PT 137
0550 PT 196
0543 PT 150
Balongbalong
San Ricardo Pt
San Ricardo
Binit
Binit Pt.
Bolobolo Pt.
Light
9
0600 PT 137
0615
0534
0623 PT 137
0540 PT 150
0640 PT 137
39
0645 PT 137
0515 PT 137
0538 PT 196
0532 PT 196
10
0535:30 PT 150
5
0525
0535:30
6
0534 PT 196
0515 PTS 194, 150, 198
0532 PT 150
PT 150 fires one torpedo at USH
8
0532 PT 194
31
0624 AKEBONO
0624 NACHI
33
0624 PT 150 sights four destroyers
0700 PT 150
0630 AKEBONO
0630 NACHI
18
30
KASUMI
0700 PT 137
0640 PT 137 sights SECOND Striking Force
0645 PT 137 sights MOGAMI
USHIO
0640 NACHI
0630 KASUMI
0642 NACHI
38
0654 PT 150 sights MOGAMI
0615 PT 137 sights SHIGURE


0535 SHIRANUHI
0535:30 KASUMI sights 2 PTS bearing 235°(T), range 5,469 yds
Bolobolo Pt Light
Binito Pt
0538 PT 196
0532 PT 196
0535:30 PT 150
0608 AREBONG
0515 PT 137
0525
0535:30
0534 PT 196
0623 PT 137
0535 PTS 194, 150, 196
0532 PT 150
PT 150 fires one torpedo at USHIO.
0532 PT 194
0544 SHIRANUHI C/S 18kts.
0624 ASHIGARA
0524 NACHI
0532 ABUKUMA
0520 ABUKUMA
USHIO
0555
0624
0626
0645 PT 137 sights MOGAMI
0542 ABUKUMA fires starshells
0542:30 USHIO
0550
0544
0654 PT 150 sights MOGAMI
0615 PT 137 sights SHIGURE
MOGAMI
0700 PTS 192 191 195
0623
Modilao Pt.
0515 PTS 494 324 497



0549 SHIGURE
17
22
0602 NACHI
0620 MOGAMI
0610 MOGAMI sights
SECOND Striking Force
0625 MOGAMI fires toward
at USHIO.
0636
SATAN ROCK
DANAON I.
SUMILON I.
9°-55'
34
0630 PTS 523, 524, 526,
494, 324, 497
0515
PTS 523
524
526
0600
0600
16
BILAA
SHOAL
0545
BASOL
I.
9°-50'
0530
0515
PTS 494
324
497
0520
Bilaa Pt.
0700 PTS 192
191
195
Surigao
0623


Second Striking Force
41
0650 AKEBONO
0700
USHIO
0642 AKEBONO
0642 NACHI
38
USHIO
0610
0659 AKEBONO
0700
0700
ASHIGARA
NACHI
0620 ABUKUMA
0642 SHIRANUI
0642 KASUMI
0640 ABUKUMA
SHIRANUI
ABUKUMA
MINDANAO
0
5
10

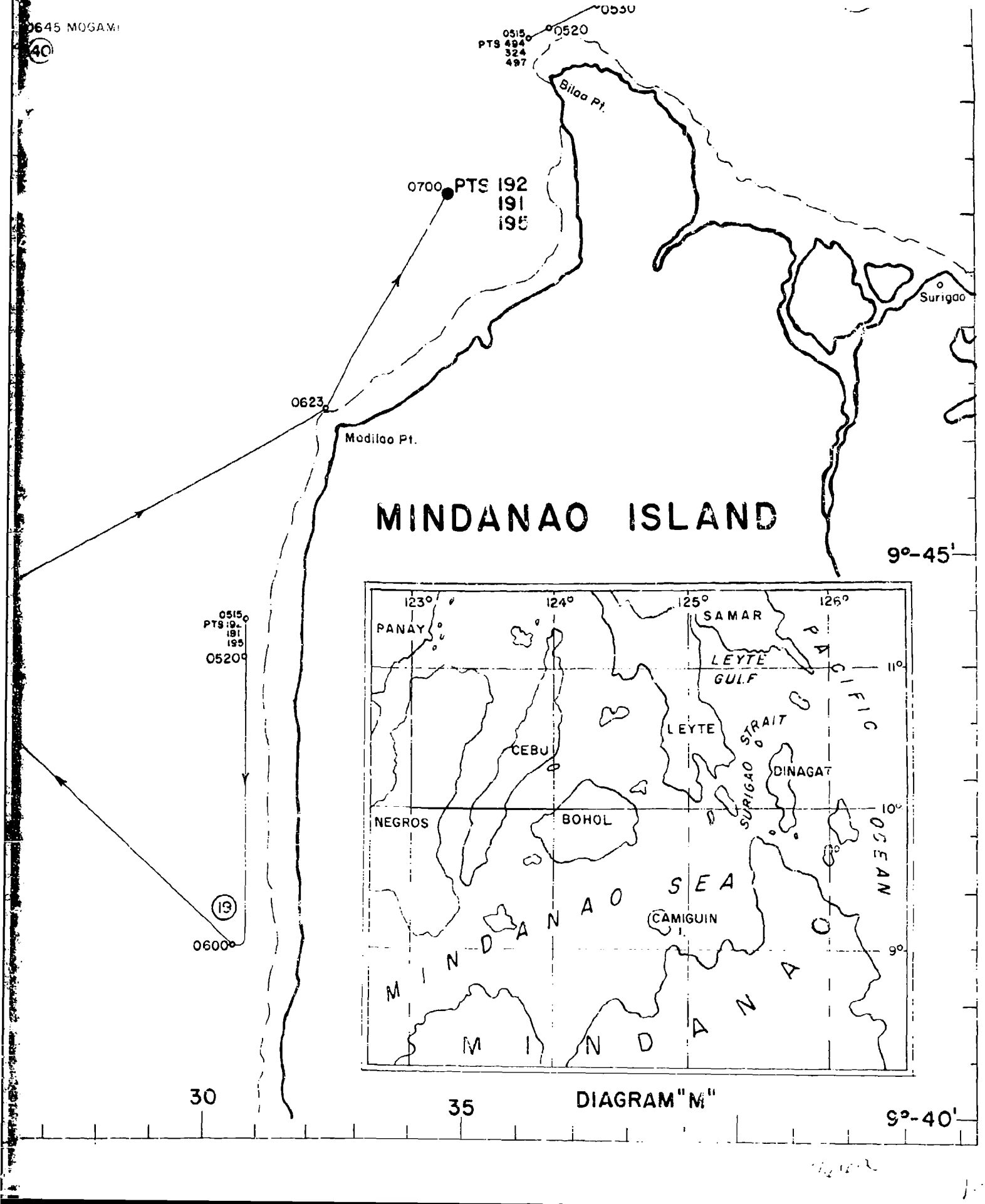


BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

RETIRING SECOND STRIKING FORCE DRIVES OFF PT BOATS 0515–0700, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

10 15 Thousands of Yards 20 25


0645 MOGAMI
40
0530
0515
PTS 494
324
497
0520
Bilao Pt.
0700
PTS 192
191
195
Surigao
0623
Modilao Pt.
MINDANAO ISLAND
9°-45'
0515
PTS 194
191
195
0520
123°
124°
125°
126°
PANAY
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
11°
LEYTE
CEBU
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
10°
NEGROS
BOHOL
MINDANAO SEA
CAMIGUIN
9°
MINDANAO
19
0600
30
35
DIAGRAM "M"
9°-40'

Events Depicted on Diagram "N"

October 25th, 1944

0600 - 0700

1. 0600 The stern of the FUSO, completely afire, was slowly drifting to the south.

2. 0600 Commander Left Flank Force was forming circular antiaircraft disposition on a northerly course at fifteen knots.

3. 0600 CTG 77.3, with all of his ships except the DALY in a circular disposition, was on a northerly course at twenty-five knots clearing the Left Flank Force.

4. 0601 ASAGUMO, badly damaged and with fires raging out of control, was dead in the water. The crew was preparing to abandon ship, but also spent considerable time trying to save her.

5. 0603 CLAXTON, in accordance with CTG 77.2's orders, reversed course to return to the survivor area and pick up survivors.

6. 0604 PT 329 stopped close inshore at Cabugan Grande Island to seek shelter from enemy aircraft.

7. 0606:30 COMDESDIV 112 directed his two attack sections to proceed independently to join the cruisers.

8. 0609 COMDESDIV 112 reported passing a large group of survivors to CTG 77.2.

9. 0610 NEWCOMB moored alongside ALBERT W. GRANT and continued furnishing all possible assistance, including transfering the wounded.

10. 0612 COMDESDIV 112, in accordance with orders from CTG 77.2, reversed course to pick up survivors.

11. 0618 Commander Left Flank Force turned to course 190°(T).

12. 0620 CTG 77.2 received a warning of enemy aircraft from CTF 77.

13. 0625 HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS entered formation taking the position left vacant by the CLAXTON.

14. 0625 CTG 77.3 reversed course in order to follow the Left Flank Force down the strait.

15. 0630 CTG 77.2 observed sunrise.

16. 0630 PT 323, which had been approaching the FUSO, sighted the ASAGUMO, and commenced an approach on the latter.

17. 0633 NEWCOMB commenced towing the ALBERT W. GRANT alongside. RICHARD P. LEARY, having previously transfered her doctor and two hospital corpsmen, was screening.

18. 0640 Commander Left Flank Force, having previously increased speed to twenty knots, changed course to 175°(T).

19. 0640 Kanihaan PT's (495, 489, 492), having heard PT 491 call for help in the rescue of PT 493, headed for Maoyo Point.

20. 0640 Commander South Amagusan PT's decided to return to base and proceeded on northerly courses at about fifteen knots.

21. 0645 BENNION moved out of formation to investigate objects appearing to be survivors but which turned out to be rubbish.

22. 0646 ASAGUMO sighted PT 323 approaching and opened fire with one gun at a range of about 3,000 yards.

23. 0648 COMCRUDIV TWELVE in the DENVER and with the COLUMBIA, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION, proceeded ahead to sink the ASAGUMO and started to form column.

24. 0651 Commander Left Flank Force ordered PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS to form column astern of LOUISVILLE.

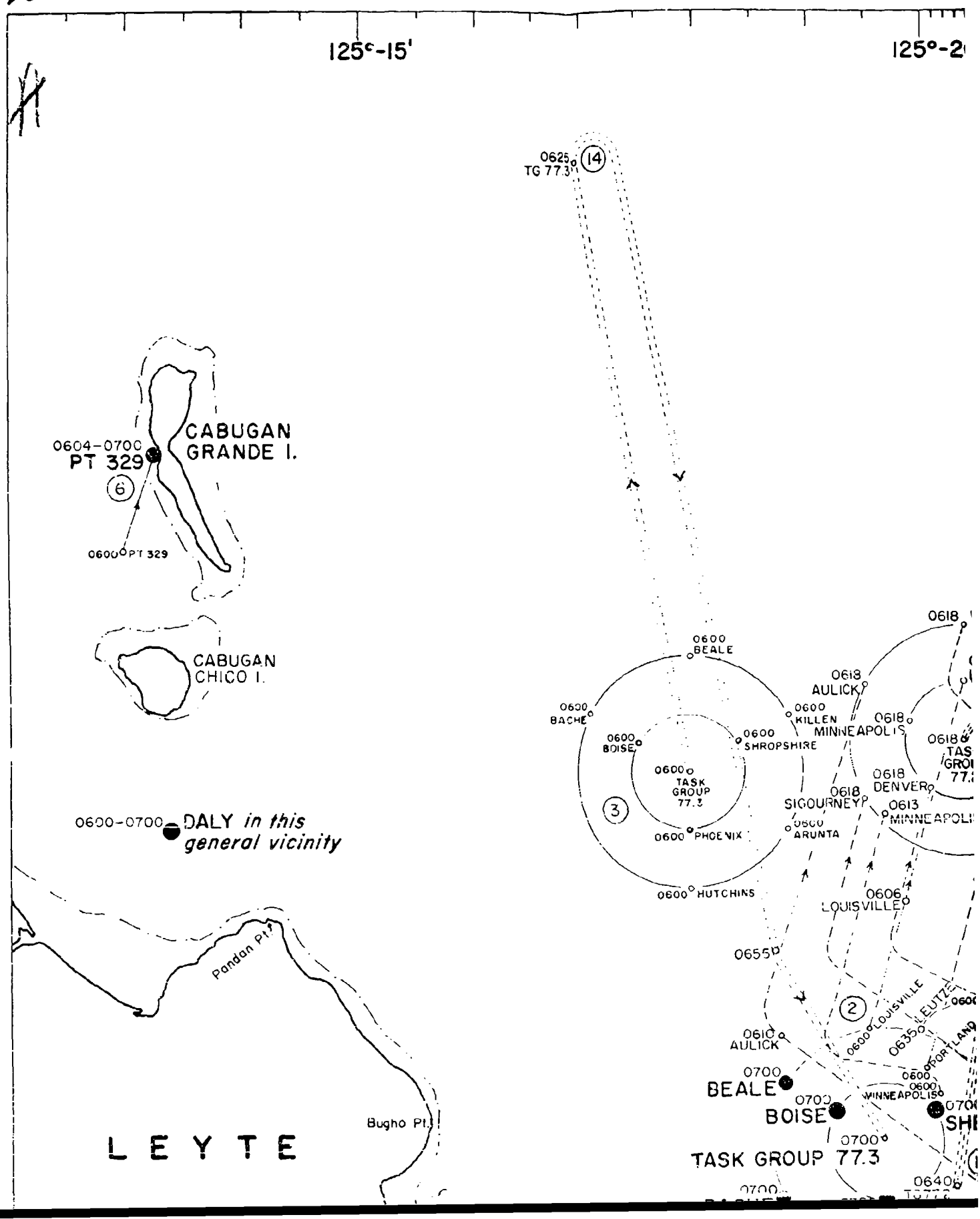
25. 0652 Kanihaan PT's, passing about 700 yards away, reported that there was no ship left but only burning oil on the surface. It is concluded that the stern of the FUSO sank about 0640.

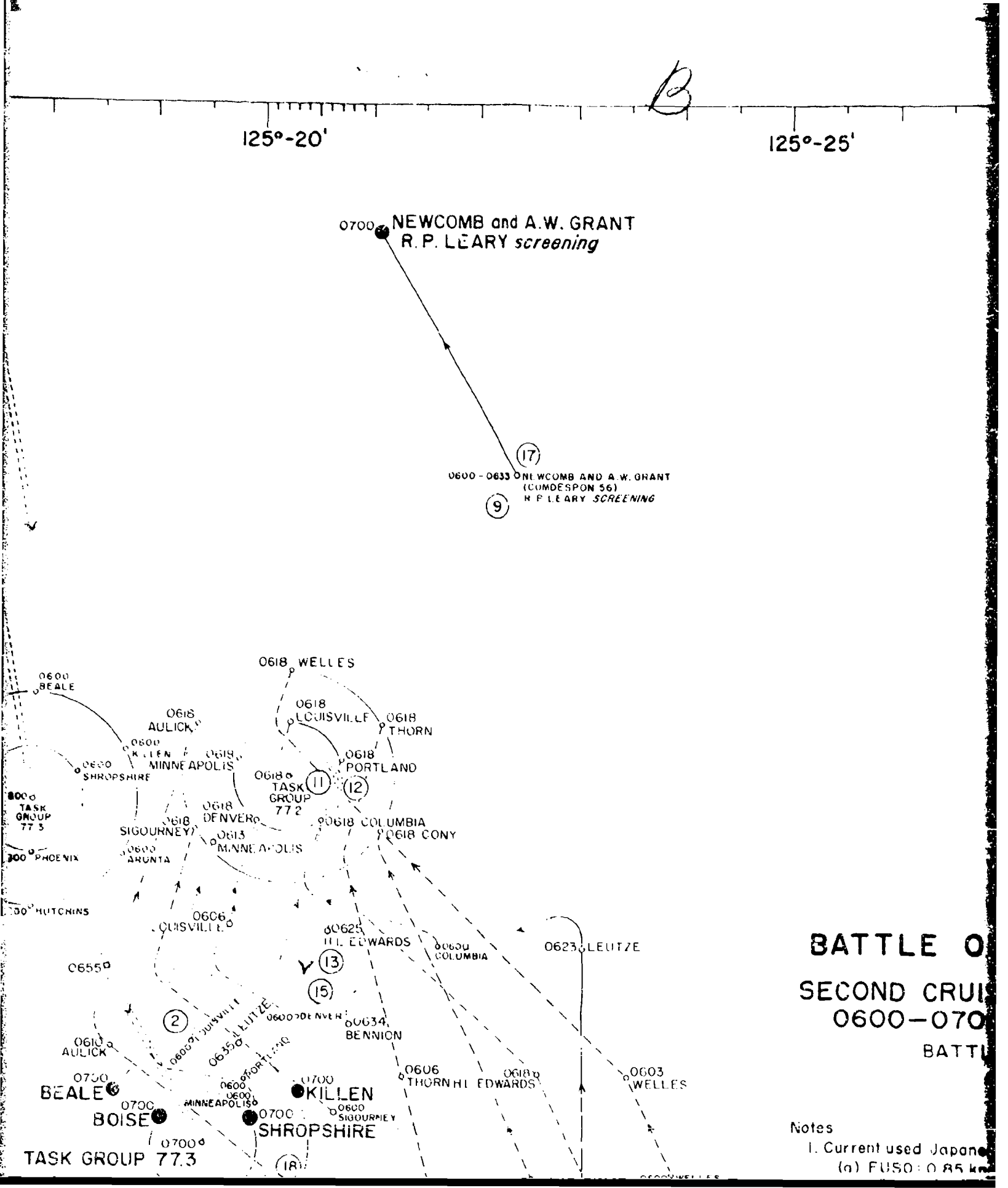
26. 0653 CLAXTON departed from the survivor area to rejoin the cruiser screen, having picked up three Japanese survivors from the YAMASHIRO.

27. 0654 PT 328 sighted the South Amagusan PT's and stood out from the Leyte shore to join them.

28. 0656 PT 495, passing about one and one-quarter miles to the north, observed two small boats alongside ASAGUMO.

29. 0657 Commander Left Flank Force noted that the ASAGUMO was firing at the Allied forces.


125°-15'
125°-2
0625 TG 77.3
14
CABUGAN GRANDE I.
0604-0700 PT 329
6
0600 PT 329
CABUGAN CHICO I.
0600-0700 DALY in this general vicinity
Pandan Pt.
Bugho Pt.
LEYTE
0600 BEALE
0600 BACHE
0600 KILLEN
0600 BOISE
0600 SHROPSHIRE
0600 TASK GROUP 77.3
3
0600 PHOENIX
0600 ARUNTA
0600 HUTCHINS
0618
0618 AULICK
0618 MINNEAPOLIS
0618 DENVER
0618 SIGOURNEY
0613 MINNEAPOLI
0606 LOUISVILLE
0655
2
0610 AULICK
0600 LOUISVILLE
0635
0700 BEALE
0700 BOISE
0700 TASK GROUP 77.3
0600 PORTLAND
0600 MINNEAPOLIS
0640



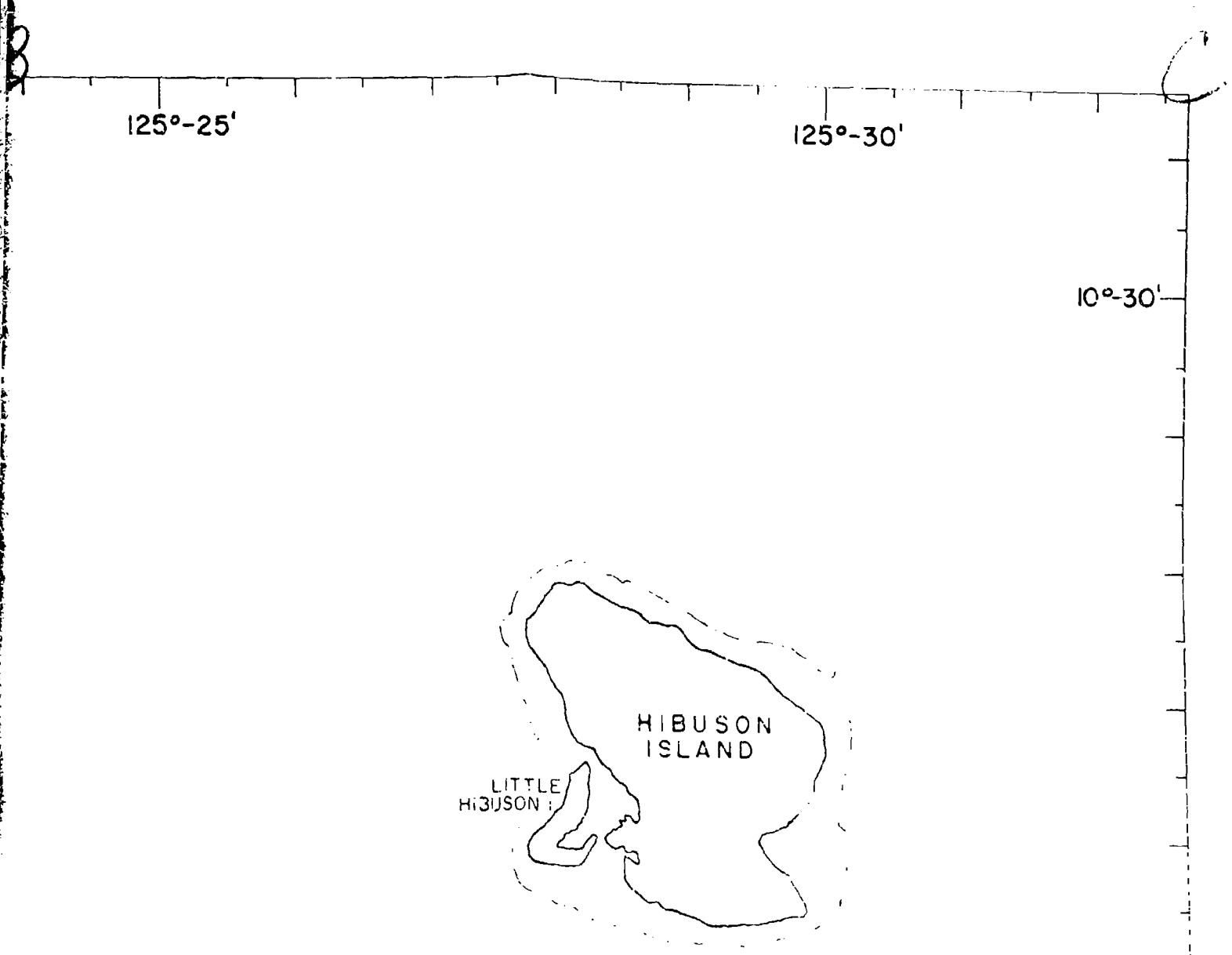
BATTLE O

SECOND CRUI
0600–070

BATTL

Notes

1. Current used Japan
(a) FUSO : 0.85 kn



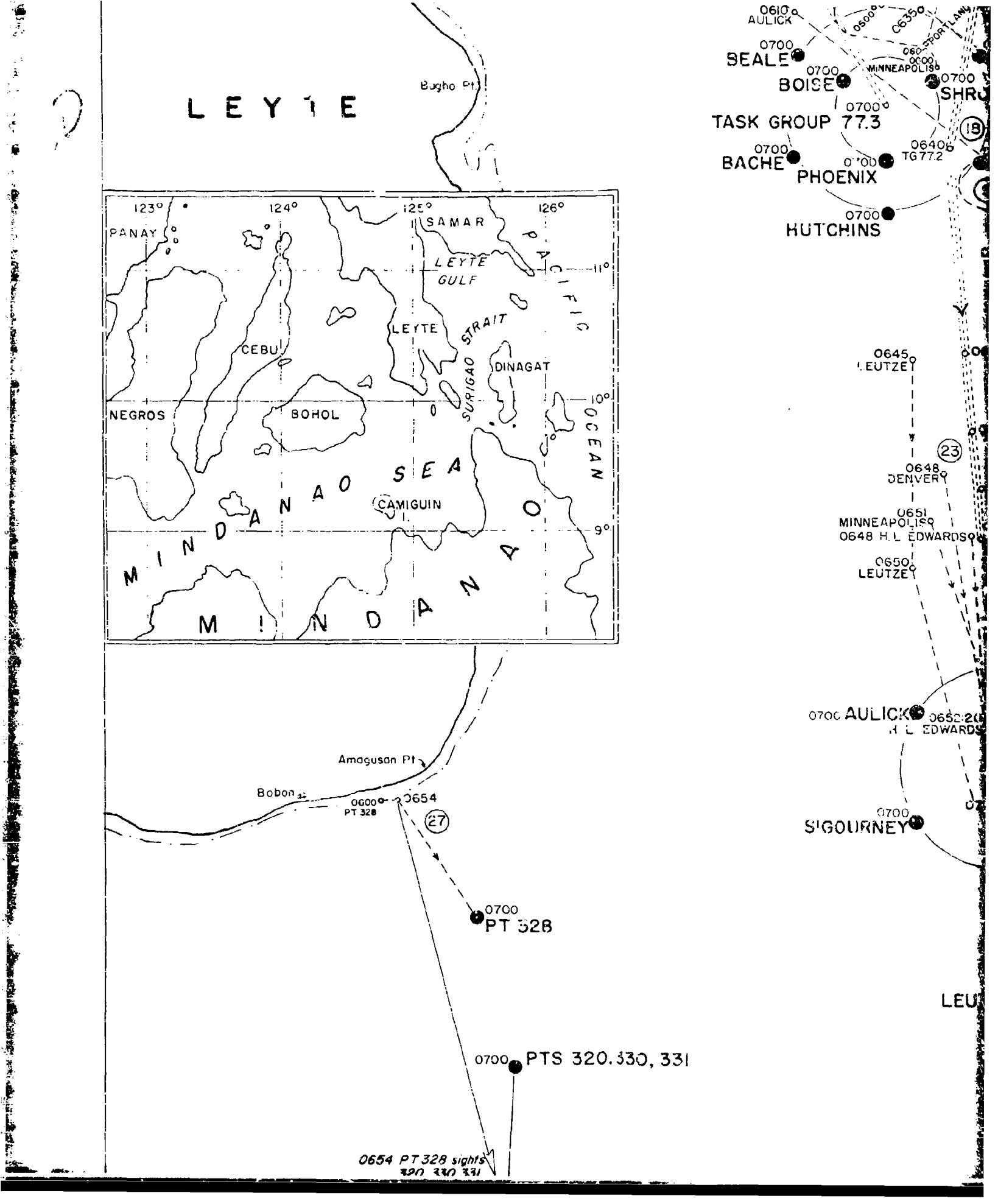
BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

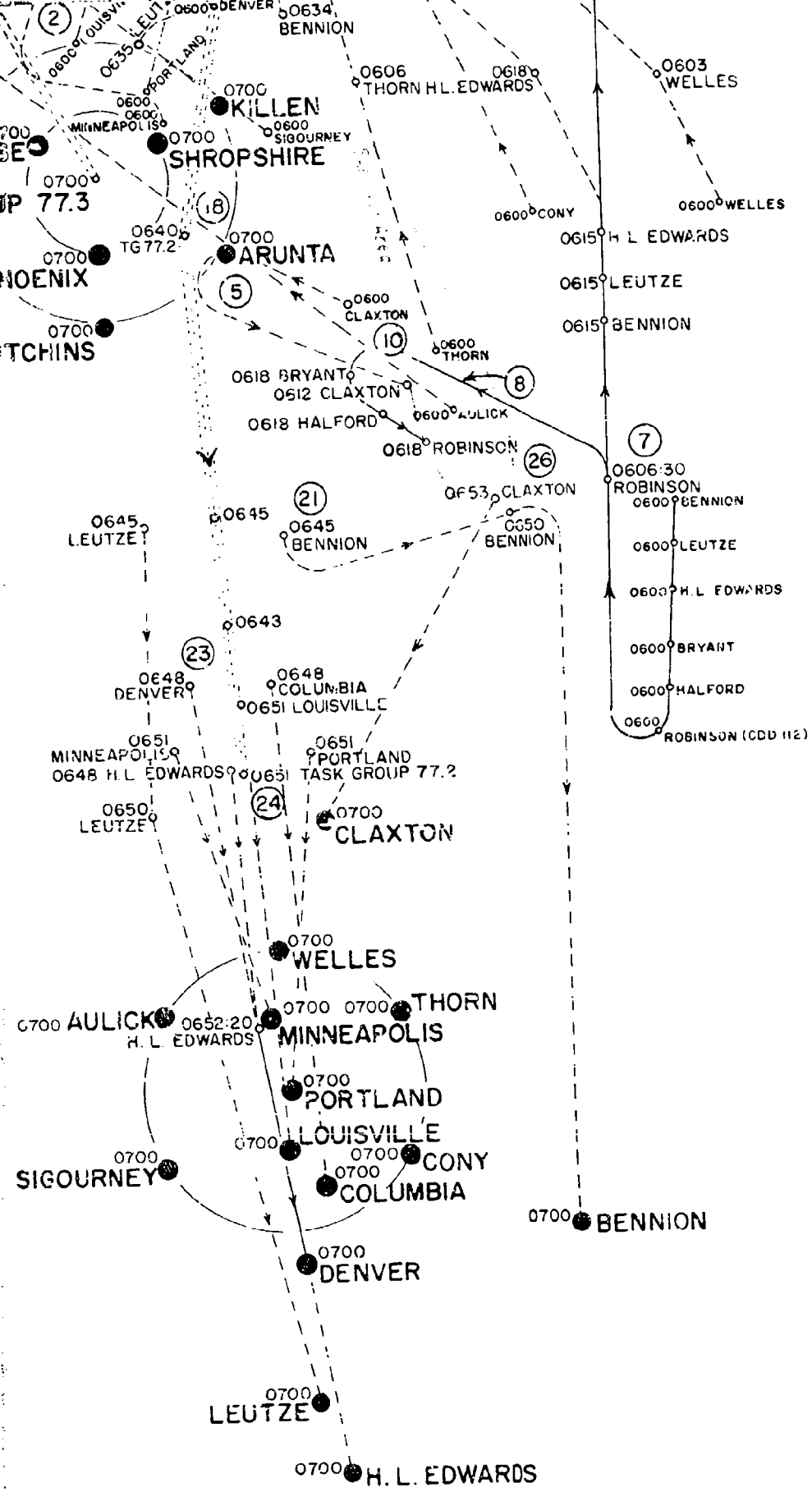
SECOND CRUISER MOVEMENT SOUTH
0600–0700, 25 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

Notes

1. Current used Japanese Forces:
   (a) FUSO: 0.85 knots, set 180°(T)


LEYTE
Bugho Pt
123°
124°
125°
126°
PANAY
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
11°
CEBU
LEYTE
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
10°
NEGROS
BOHOL
SEA
CAMIGUIN
MINDANAO
MINDANAO
9°
Amagusan Pt
Bobon
0600
PT 328
0654
27
0700
PT 328
0700 PTS 320, 330, 331
0654 PT 328 sights
320 330 331
0610
AULICK
0600
C6350
0700
SEALE
0700
BOISE
MINNEAPOLIS
0700
SHR
0700
TASK GROUP 77.3
18
0700
BACHE
0640
TG77.2
0700
PHOENIX
0700
HUTCHINS
0645
LEUTZE
23
0648
DENVERY
0651
MINNEAPOLIS
0648 H. L. EDWARDS
0650
LEUTZE
0700 AULICK
0700
SIGOURNEY
LEU


BATTLE FOR LEY
OCTOBER 19
Notes
1. Current used Japanese Forces:
(a) FUSO: 0.85 knots, set 180°(T)
(b) ASAGUMO: 1.0 knot, set 180°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces:
(a) Task Group 77.2: 0.7 to 0.25 kn
(b) Task Group 77.3: 0.3 to 0.15 kn
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Tracks of Task Group centers show
(a) Task Group 77.2
(b) Task Group 77.3
6. Weather - scattered showers and vari
cond tions except where shown other
0700 KILLEN
0700 SHROPSHIRE
0700 ARUNTA
0700 PHOENIX
0700 TCHINS
0700 WELLES
0700 AULICK
0700 THORN
0700 MINNEAPOLIS
0700 PORTLAND
0700 LOUISVILLE
0700 CONY
0700 COLUMBIA
0700 SIGOURNEY
0700 DENVER
0700 BENNION
0700 LEUTZE
0700 H. L. EDWARDS
0700 CLAXTON
0700 TG77.2
0700 TG77.3
0700 ROBINSON
0652:20 H. L. EDWARDS
0606:30 ROBINSON
0600 ROBINSON (CDD 112)
0600 H. L. EDWARDS
0600 BRYANT
0600 HALFORD
0600 LEUTZE
0600 BENNION
0615 BENNION
0615 LEUTZE
0615 H. L. EDWARDS
0603 WELLES
0606 THORN
0618 H. L. EDWARDS
0634 BENNION
0618 BRYANT
0612 CLAXTON
0618 HALFORD
0618 ROBINSON
0645 LEUTZE
0645 BENNION
0650 BENNION
0643
0648 DENVER
0648 COLUMBIA
0651 LOUISVILLE
0651 MINNEAPOLIS
0648 H.L. EDWARDS
0651 PORTLAND
0651 TASK GROUP 77.2
0650 LEUTZE
0640 TG77.2
0600 CONY
0600 WELLES
0600 THORN
0600 AULICK
0600 CLAXTON
0600 SIGOURNEY
0600 MINNEAPOLIS
0600 PORTLAND
0600 DENVER
0600 LOUISVILLE
0600 BENNION
0600 LEUTZE
0600 H.L. EDWARDS
0600 BRYANT
0600 HALFORD
0600 ROBINSON (CDD 112)
0700 KILLEN
0700 SHROPSHIRE
0700 ARUNTA
0700 PHOENIX
0700 TCHINS
0700 WELLES
0700 AULICK
0700 THORN
0700 MINNEAPOLIS
0700 PORTLAND
0700 LOUISVILLE
0700 CONY
0700 COLUMBIA
0700 SIGOURNEY
0700 DENVER
0700 BENNION
0700 LEUTZE
0700 H. L. EDWARDS
0700 CLAXTON
0700 TG77.2
0700 TG77.3
0700 ROBINSON
0652:20 H. L. EDWARDS
0606:30 ROBINSON
0600 ROBINSON (CDD 112)
0600 H. L. EDWARDS
0600 BRYANT
0600 HALFORD
0600 LEUTZE
0600 BENNION
0615 BENNION
0615 LEUTZE
0615 H. L. EDWARDS
0603 WELLES
0606 THORN
0618 H. L. EDWARDS
0634 BENNION
0618 BRYANT
0612 CLAXTON
0618 HALFORD
0618 ROBINSON
0645 LEUTZE
0645 BENNION
0650 BENNION
0643
0648 DENVER
0648 COLUMBIA
0651 LOUISVILLE
0651 MINNEAPOLIS
0648 H.L. EDWARDS
0651 PORTLAND
0651 TASK GROUP 77.2
0650 LEUTZE
0640 TG77.2
0600 CONY
0600 WELLES
0600 THORN
0600 AULICK
0600 CLAXTON
0600 SIGOURNEY
0600 MINNEAPOLIS
0600 PORTLAND
0600 DENVER
0600 LOUISVILLE
0600 BENNION
0600 LEUTZE
0600 H.L. EDWARDS
0600 BRYANT
0600 HALFORD
0600 ROBINSON (CDD 112)
0635 PORTLAND
0600 LOUISVILLE
0600 DENVER
0600 MINNEAPOLIS
0600 SIGOURNEY

0600–0700, 25 OCTOBER 1944

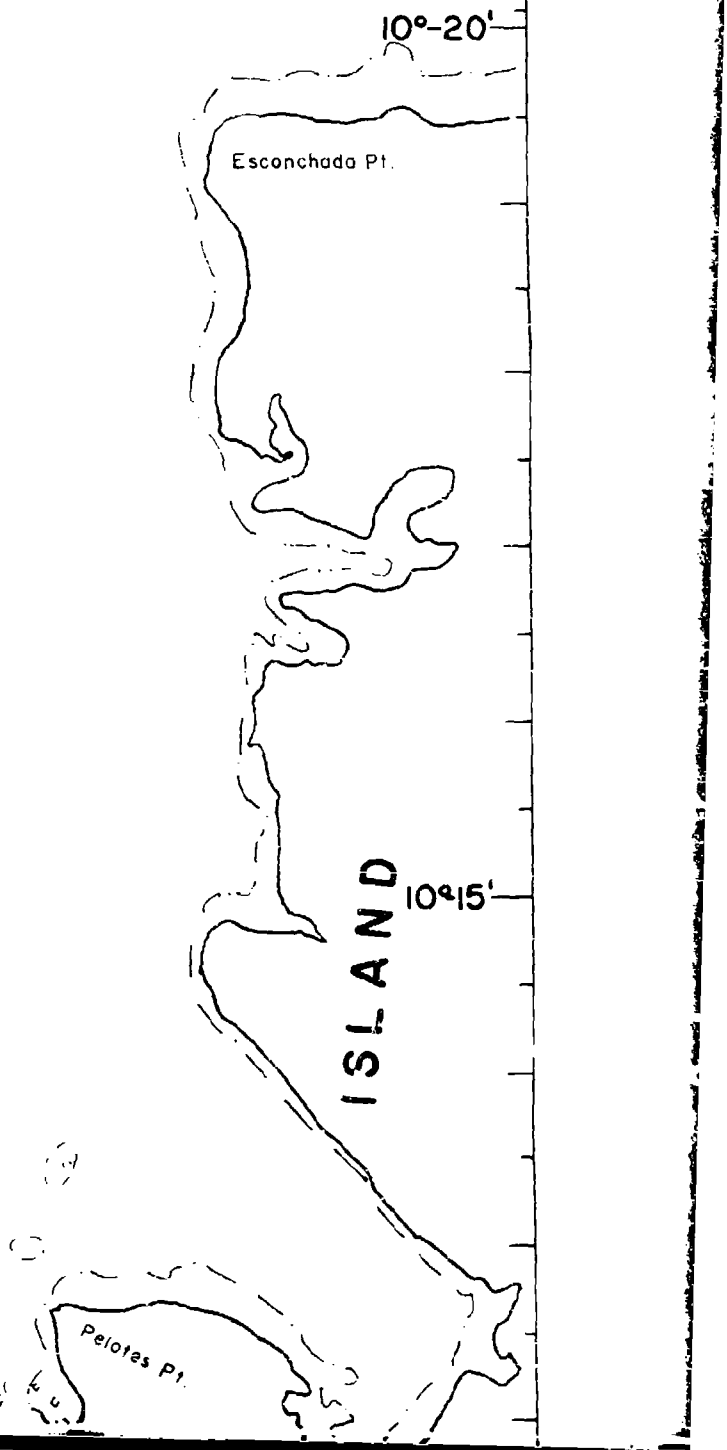
E

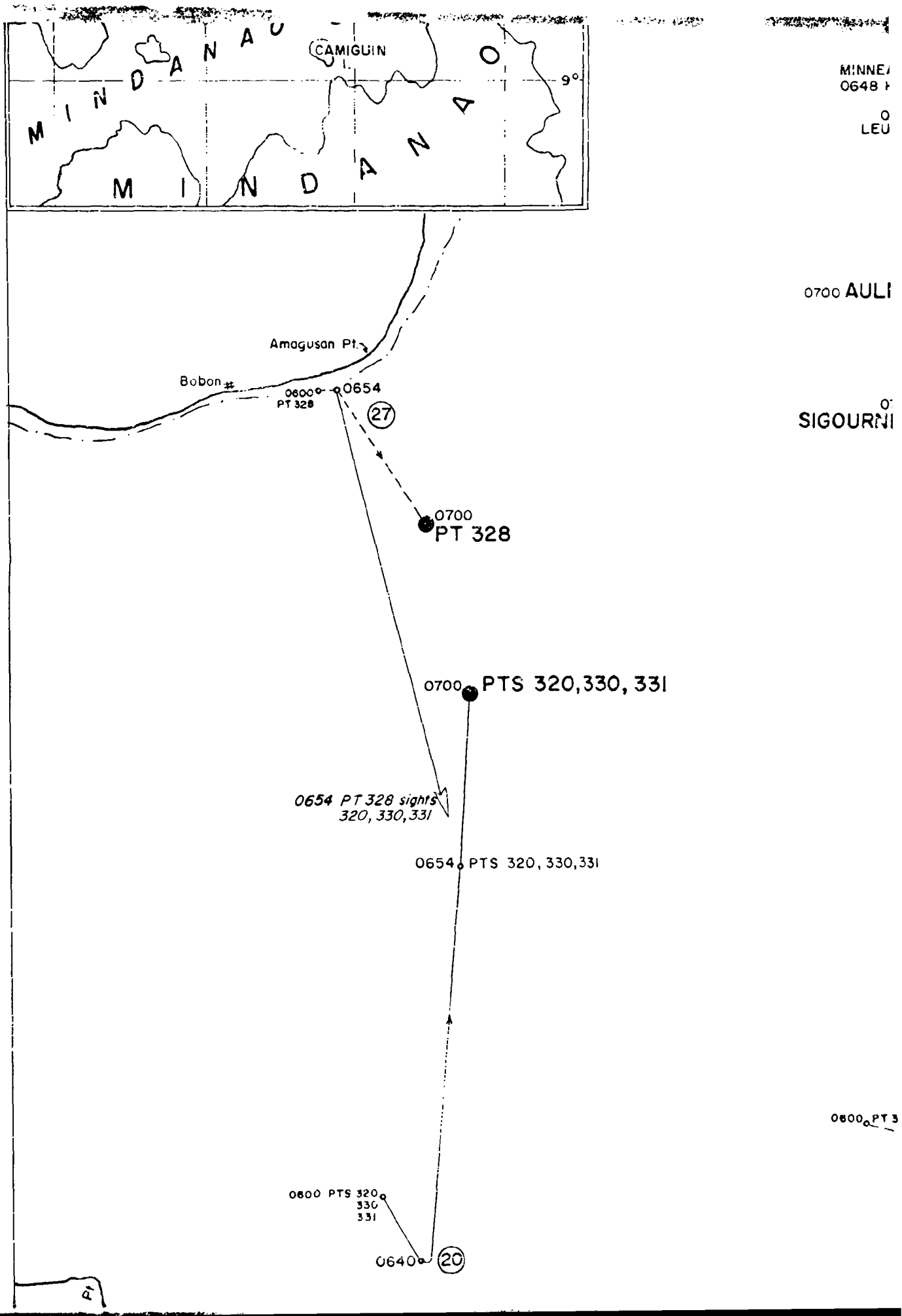
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF
OCTOBER 1944

F

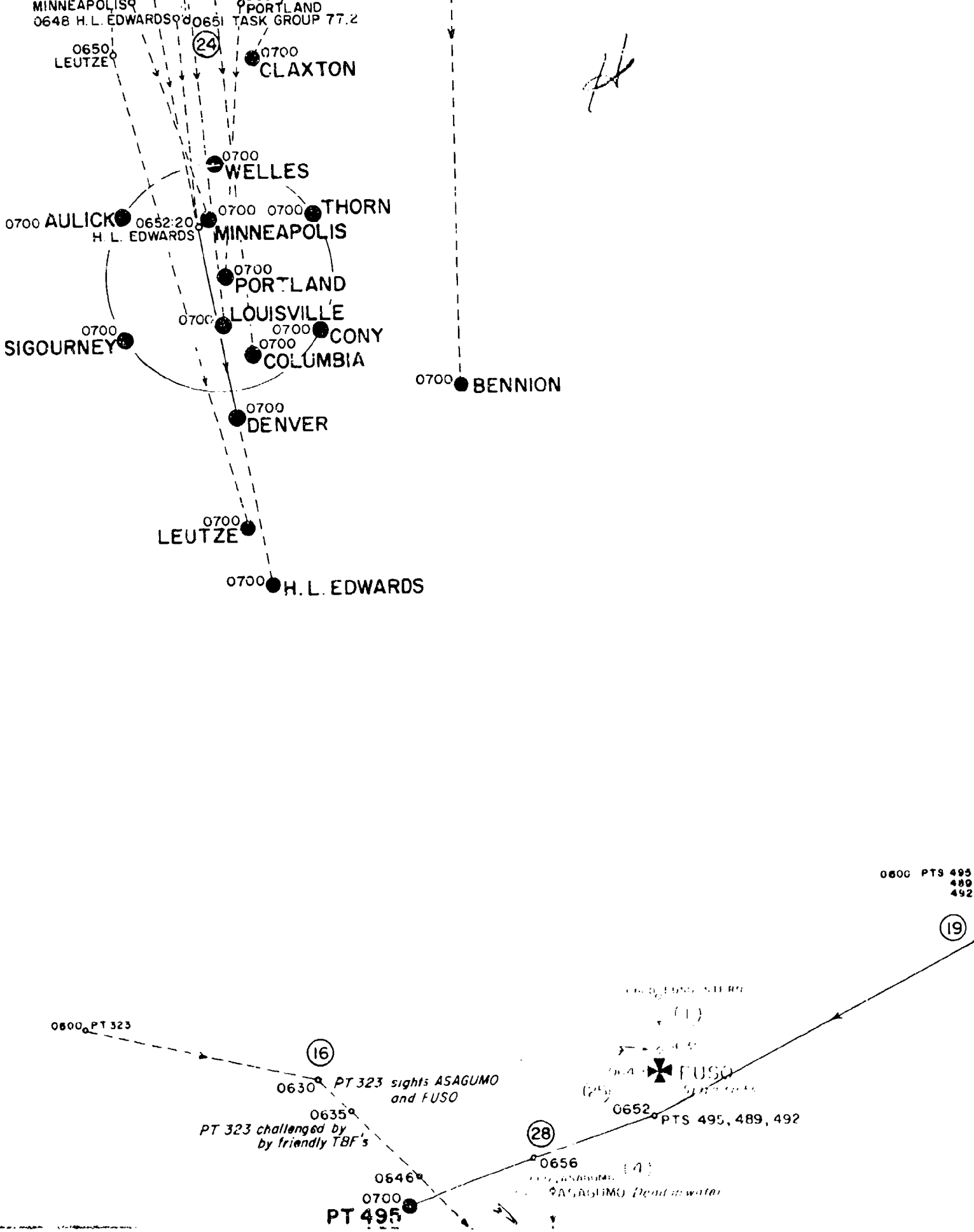
Notes

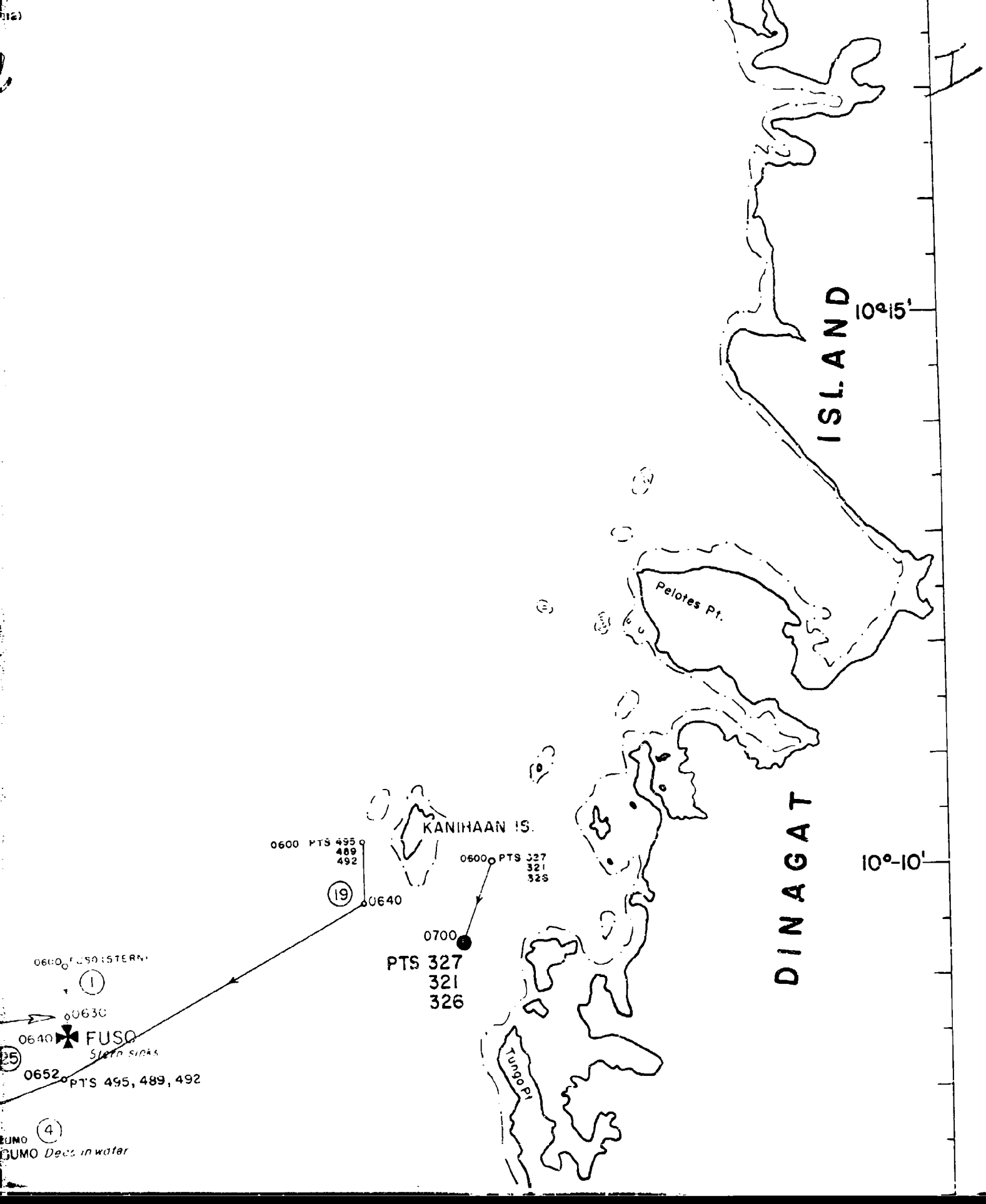
1. Current used Japanese Forces:
   (a) FUSO: 0.85 knots, set 180°(T)
   (b) ASAGUMO: 1.0 knot, set 180°(T)
2. Current used Allied Forces:
   (a) Task Group 77.2: 0.7 to 0.25 knots, set 160°(T) to 180°(T)
   (b) Task Group 77.3: 0.3 to 0.15 knots, set 170°(T) to 180°(T)
3. PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks in red.
5. Tracks of Task Group centers shown thus:
   (a) Task Group 77.2:
   (b) Task Group 77.3:
6. Weather – scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.

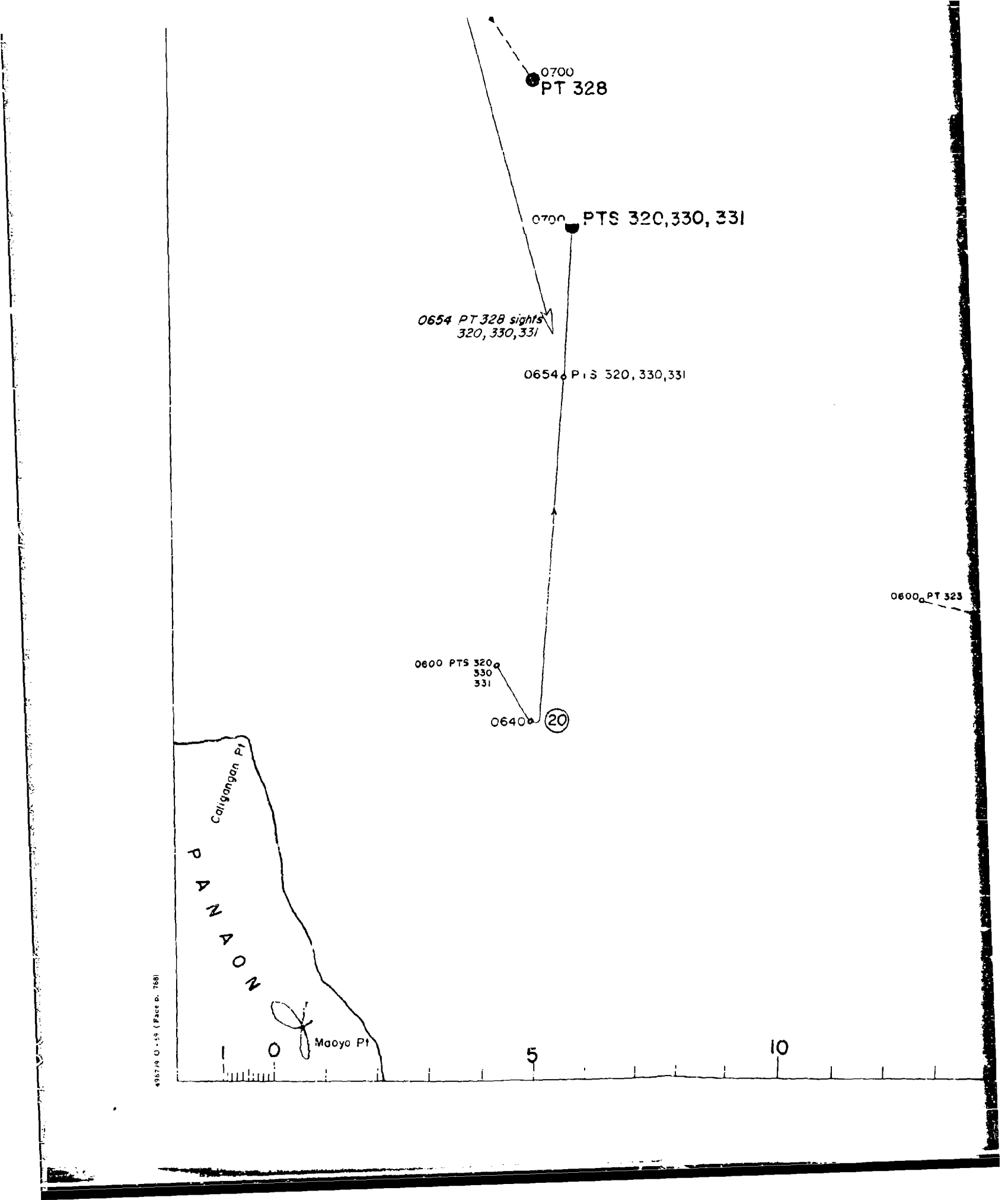


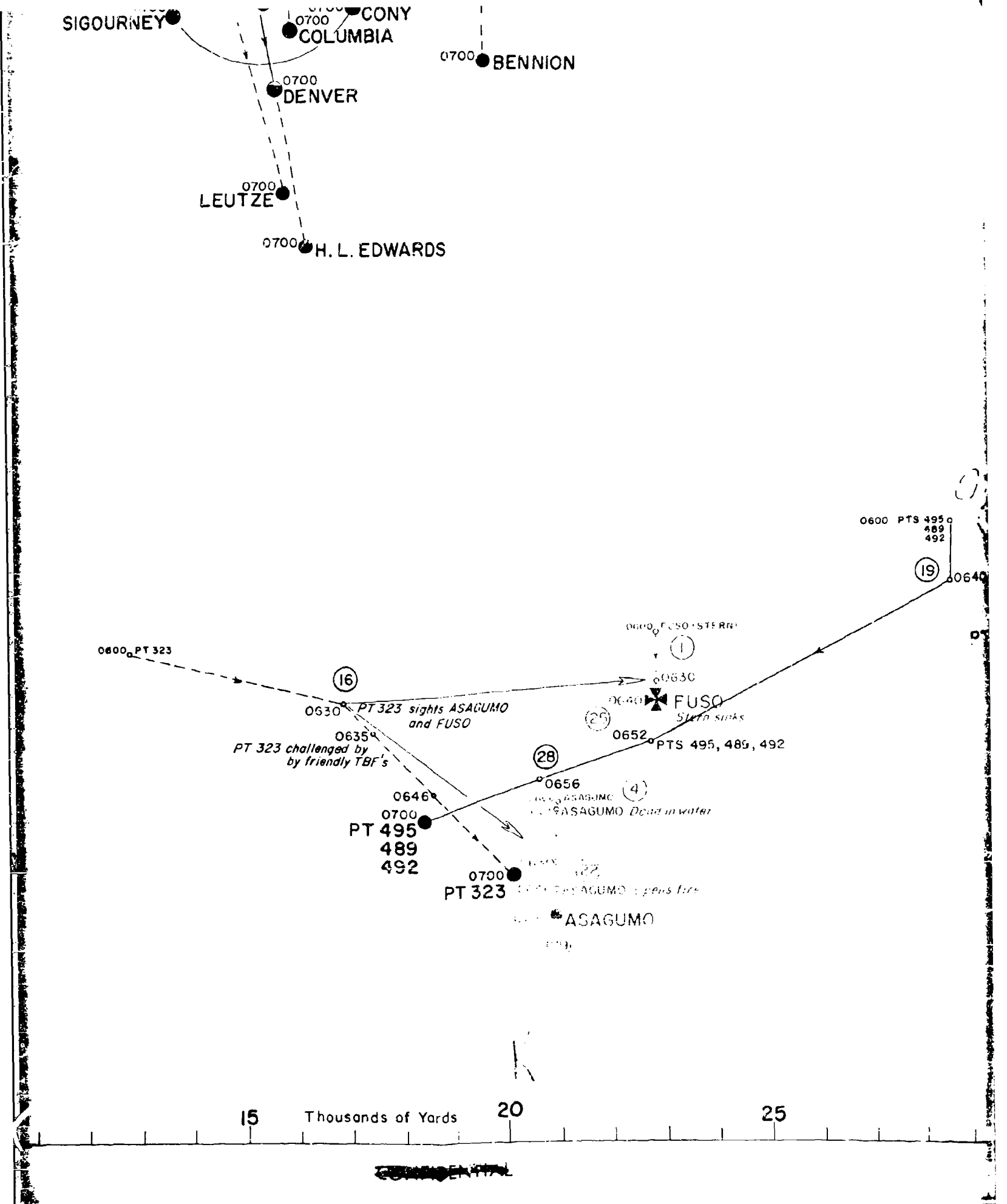


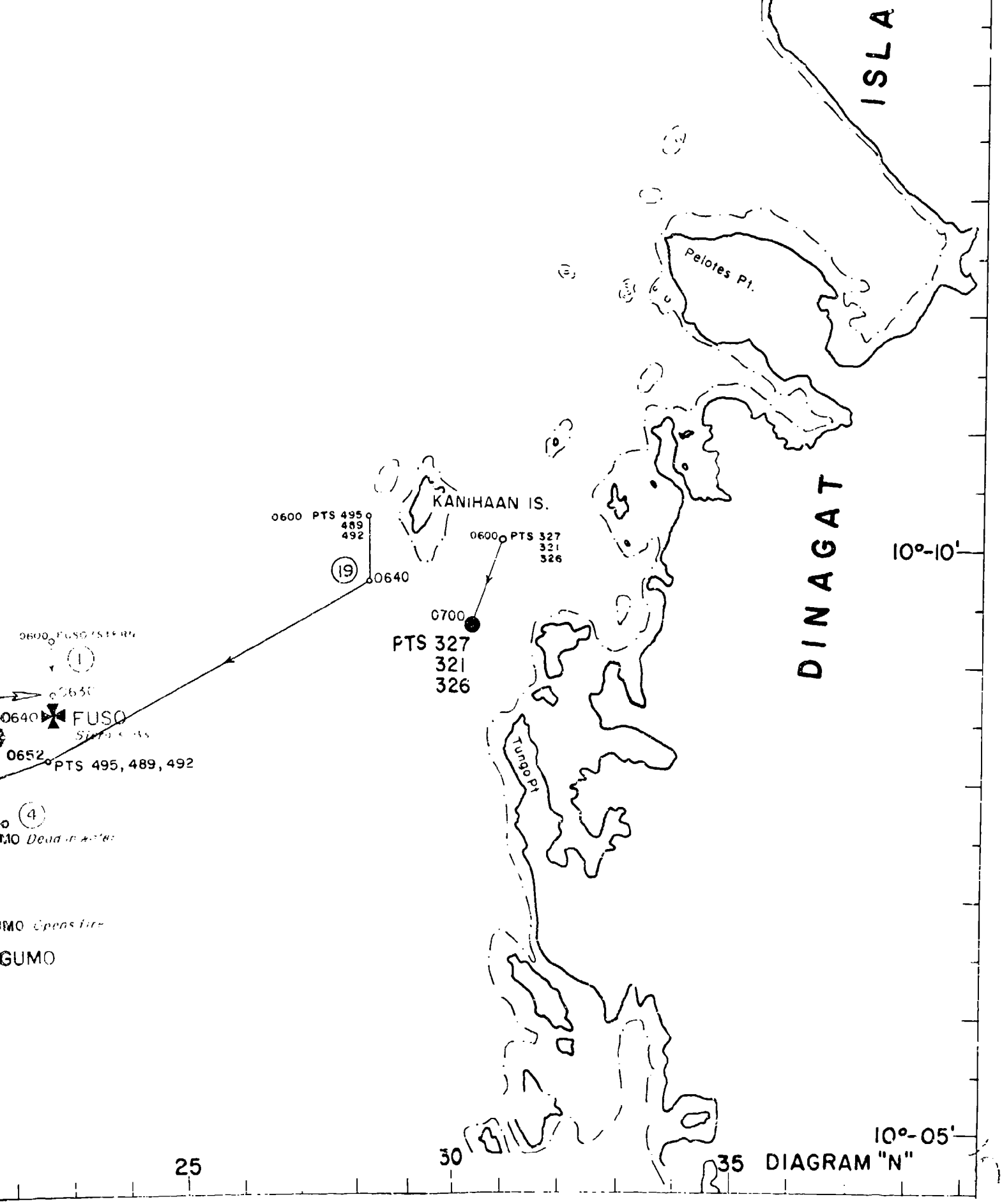
MINDANAO
CAMIGUIN
9°
MINDANAO
MINNE
0648
LEU
0700 AULI
Amagusan Pt.
Bobon
0600
PT 328
0654
27
SIGOURNI
0700
PT 328
0700 PTS 320,330, 331
0654 PT 328 sights
320, 330, 331
0654 PTS 320, 330,331
0600 PT 3
0600 PTS 320
330
331
0640
20


MINNEAPOLIS
0648 H. L. EDWARDS
0651 TASK GROUP 77.2
PORTLAND
0650 LEUTZE
24
0700 CLAXTON
0700 WELLES
0700 AULICK
0652:20 H. L. EDWARDS
0700 MINNEAPOLIS
0700 THORN
0700 PORTLAND
0700 LOUISVILLE
0700 SIGOURNEY
0700 CONY
0700 COLUMBIA
0700 BENNION
0700 DENVER
0700 LEUTZE
0700 H. L. EDWARDS
0600 PTS 495 489 492
19
0600 PT 323
16
0630 PT 323 sights ASAGUMO and FUSO
0635 PT 323 challenged by by friendly TBF's
28
0652 PTS 495, 489, 492
0656
0646
0700 PT 495


ISLAND
DINAGAT
10°15'
10°-10'
Pelotes Pt.
KANIHAAN IS.
0600 PTS 495
489
492
0640
19
0600 PTS 327
321
328
0700
PTS 327
321
326
0600 EASTERN
1
0630
0640
FUSO
Stern signs
25
0652
PTS 495, 489, 492
4
Tungo Pt


0700
PT 328
0700 PTS 320,330, 331
0654 PT 328 sights
320, 330, 331
0654 PTS 320, 330, 331
0600 PT 323
0600 PTS 320
330
331
0640
20
Caligangan Pt
PANAON
Maoyo Pt
1
0
5
10


SIGOURNEY
0700
CONY
COLUMBIA
0700
BENNION
0700
DENVER
0700
LEUTZE
0700
H. L. EDWARDS
0600 PTS 495
489
492
19
0640
0600 PT 323
16
0630
PT 323 sights ASAGUMO
and FUSO
0635
PT 323 challenged by
by friendly TBF's
0630
FUSO
Starts sinks
0652
PTS 495, 489, 492
28
0656
4
ASAGUMO Dead in water
0646
0700
PT 495
489
492
0700
PT 323
ASAGUMO
15
Thousands of Yards
20
25


ISLA
Pelotes Pt.
DINAGAT
KANIHAAN IS.
0600 PTS 495
489
492
0600 PTS 327
321
326
19
0640
0700
PTS 327
321
326
10°-10'
0640
FUSO
0652
PTS 495, 489, 492
4
Tungo Pt
GUMO
10°-05'
25
30
35
DIAGRAM "N"

Events Depicted on Diagram "O"

October 25th, 1944

0700 - 0845

1. 0700 ASAGUMO, badly damaged and afire, was dead in the water but was still firing at PT 323.

2. 0700 PT 323 commenced launching torpedoes at the ASAGUMO from about 1,000 yards away. The first two missed but the third torpedo hit the ASAGUMO in the stern.

3. 0700 COMCRUDIV TWELVE in the DENVER and with the COLUMBIA, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, LEUTZE and BENNION, was moving ahead and forming column in order to sink the ASAGUMO.

4. 0700 Commander Left Flank Force, having previously directed PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS to form column on the LOUISVILLE, was following COMCRUDIV TWELVE down the strait. The destroyers remaining with him maintained approximately the same positions in formation.

5. 0700 BRYANT abandoned the attempt to pick up survivors and headed south to join the cruisers.

6. 0702 CLAXTON entered column about 4,000 yards astern of the LOUISVILLE.

7. 0703 HALFORD, after the survivors had jumped overboard and refused rescue, sank the small boat and departed to join the cruisers.

8. 0704:30 CONY, after obtaining permission from CTG 77.2, opened fire on the ASAGUMO followed by the BENNION at 0705. Shortly afterward the AULICK, SIGOURNEY, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and THORN also opened fire on the ASAGUMO.

9. 0705 PT 323 departed from the vicinity of the ASAGUMO and commenced her return to base.

10. 0709 After steadying on the firing course of 210°(T) and slowing to fifteen knots, the DENVER and COLUMBIA opened fire on the ASAGUMO. LEUTZE delayed opening fire until 0715 and CLAXTON until 0717.

11. 0712 ROBINSON departed from the survivor area after rescuing one survivor.

12. 0719 Commander Left Flank Force ordered all ships to change course to 155°(T) At this time the DENVER and COLUMBIA ceased firing and within the next two minutes the destroyers also ceased firing.

13. 0719 ASAGUMO rolled over. She sank at 0722.

14. 0728 Kanihaan PT's (495, 489, 492) slowed and prepared to go alongside PT 491 at Maoyo Point.

15. 0728 CTG 77.2 received information that the CVE's of TG 77.4 were under attack off the coast of Samar by a strong force of Japanese battleships and cruisers. At 0732 he reversed course to rejoin the battleships and make preparations to either defend the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf or go to the aid of the CVE's.

16. 0730 Commander Left Flank Force directed the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS to investigate the survivors and motor launches which she had reported at 0722.

17. 0748 HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS sank two motor launches and departed to rejoin the cruisers.

18. 0758 ROBINSON took proper station in the disposition.

19. 0800 Left Flank Force formed circular disposition on a northerly course.

20. 0820 Antiaircraft disposition formed by the Left Flank Force.

21. 0824 CONY and WELLES ordered to remain behind to guard Surigao Strait.

22. 0838 HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS took proper station in the disposition.

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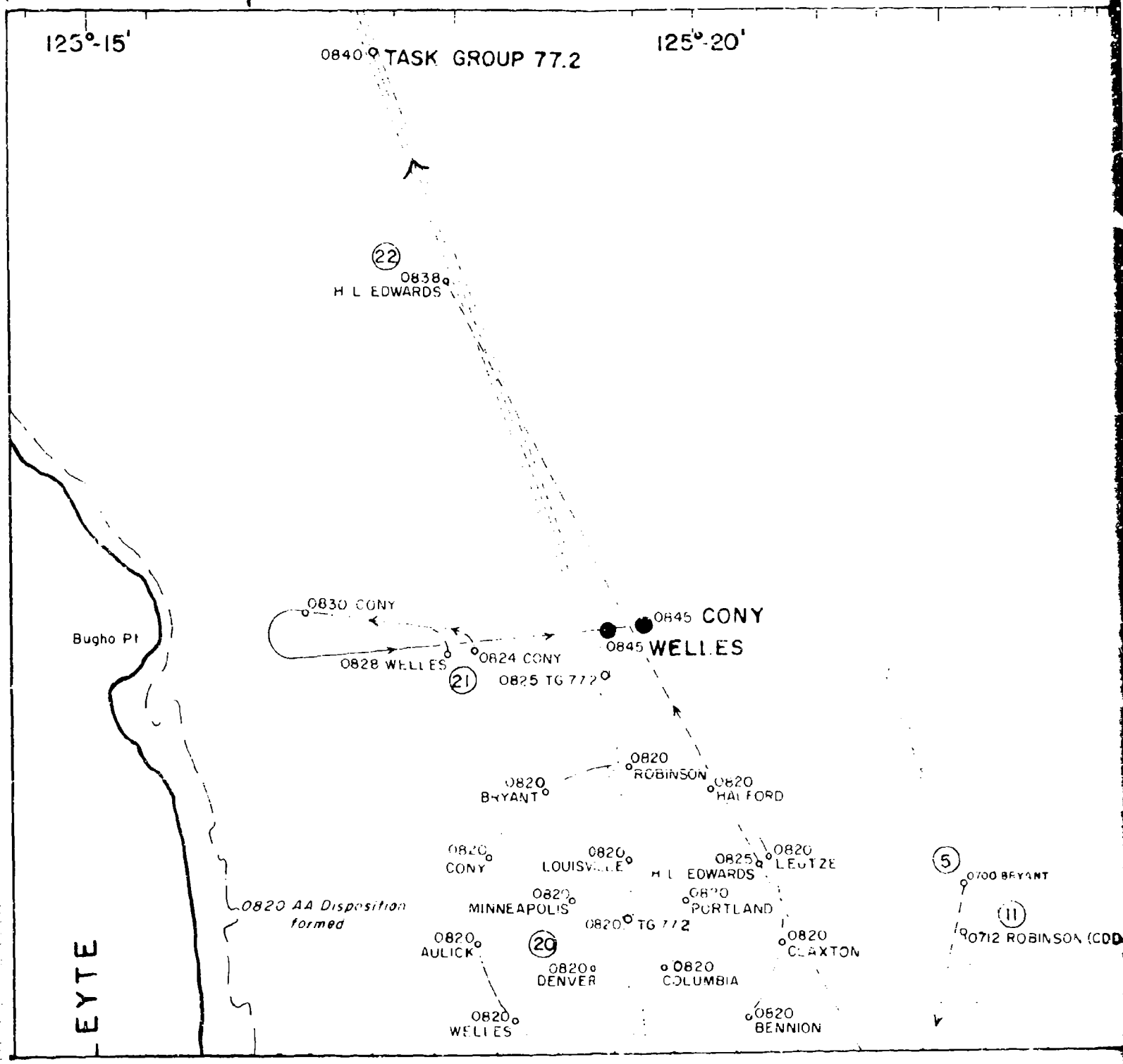


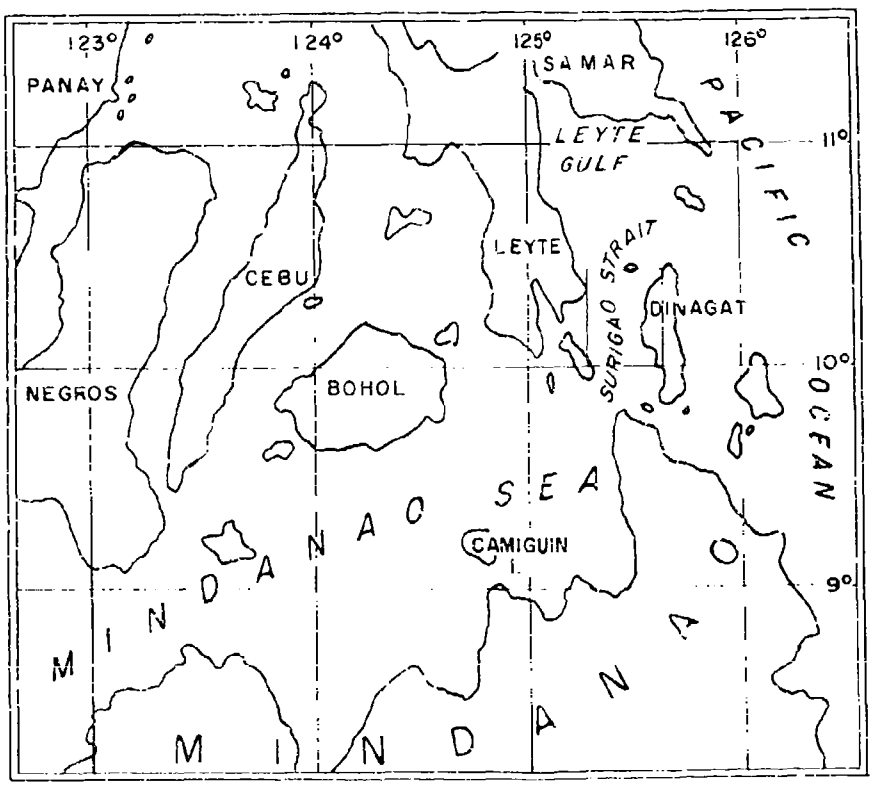
B

125°-25'

125°-30'

HIBUSON ISLAND

LITTLE HIBUSON ISLAND



(7)

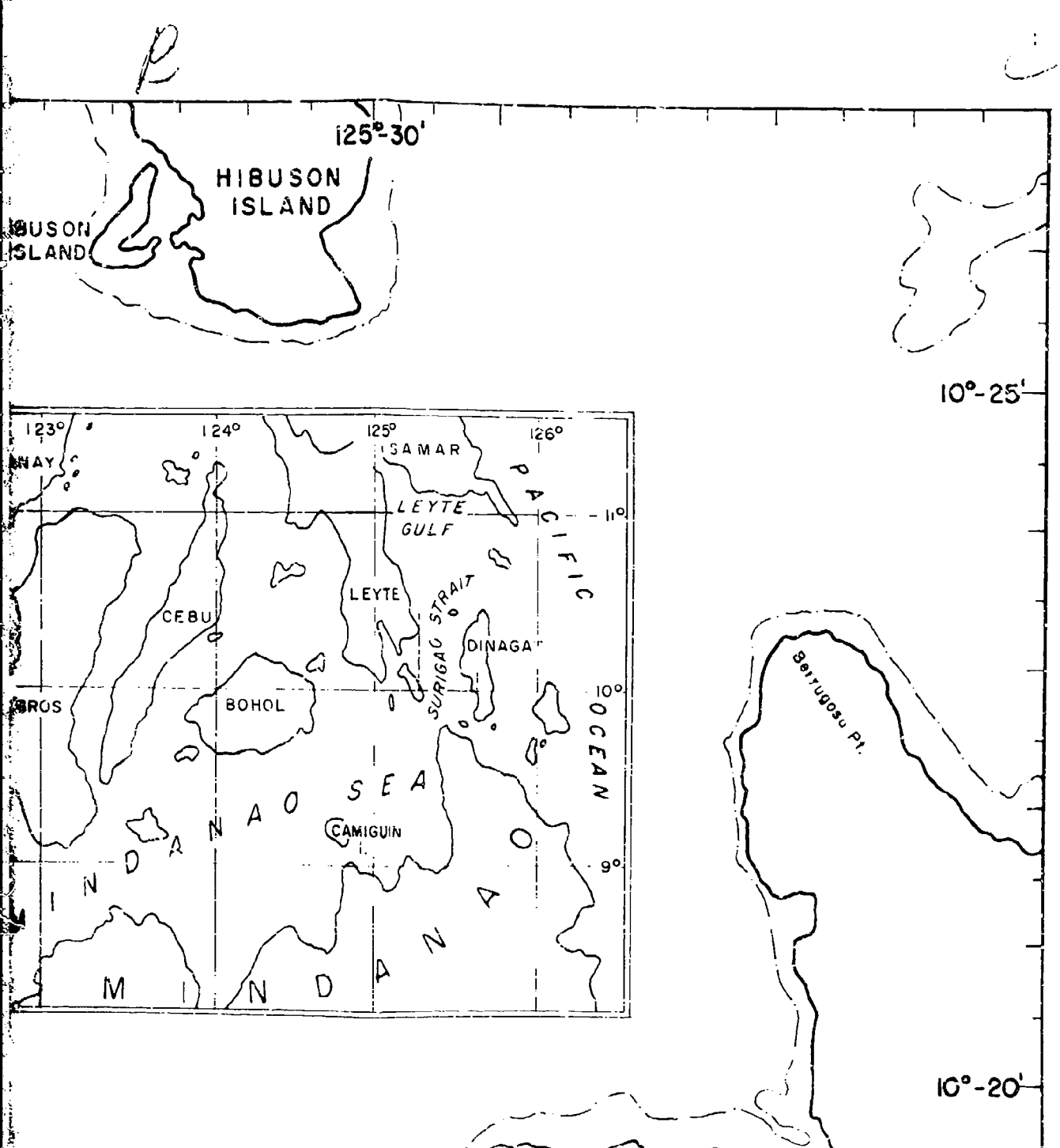
0700 HALFORD

0703 HALFORD sinks boat.

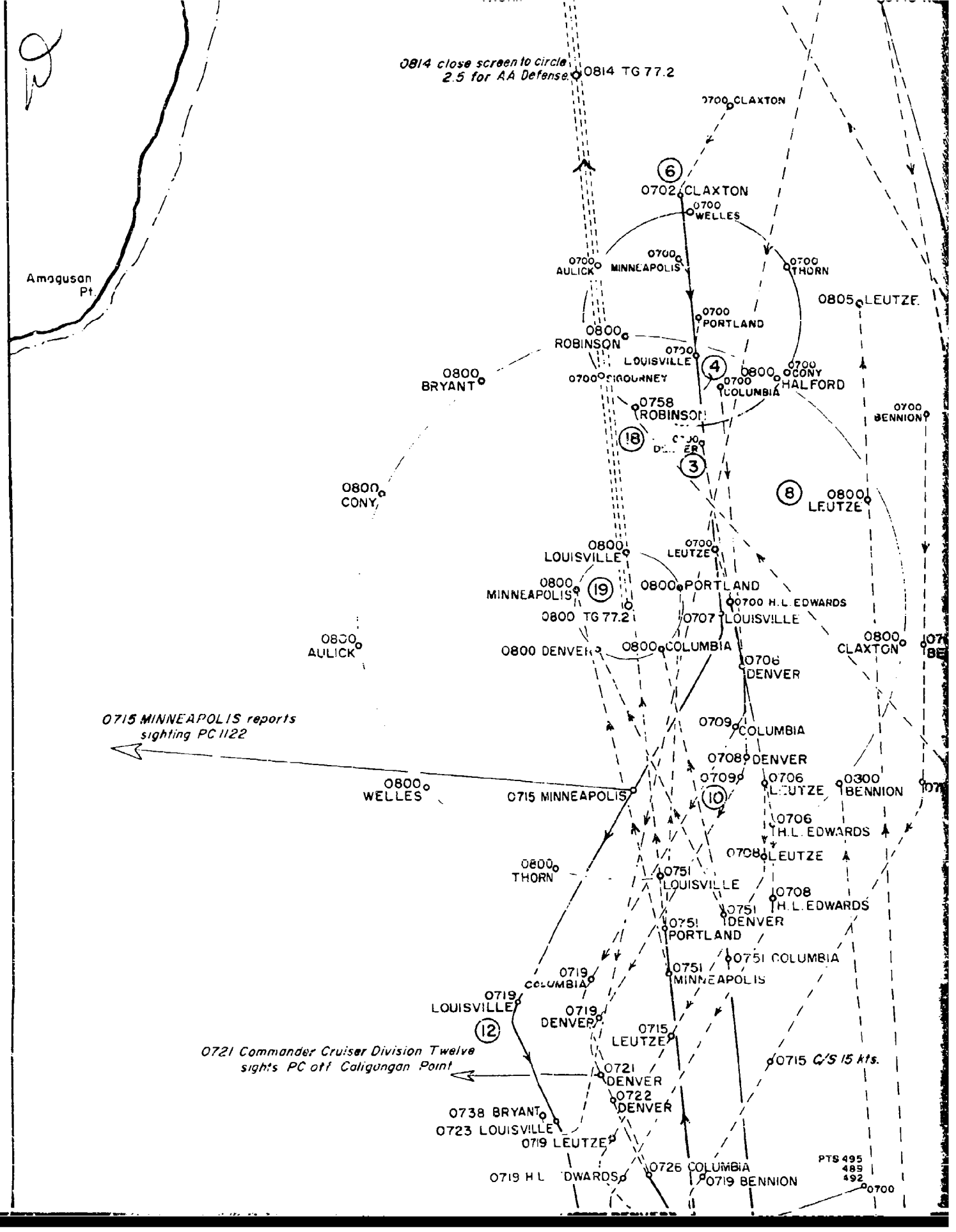
0705

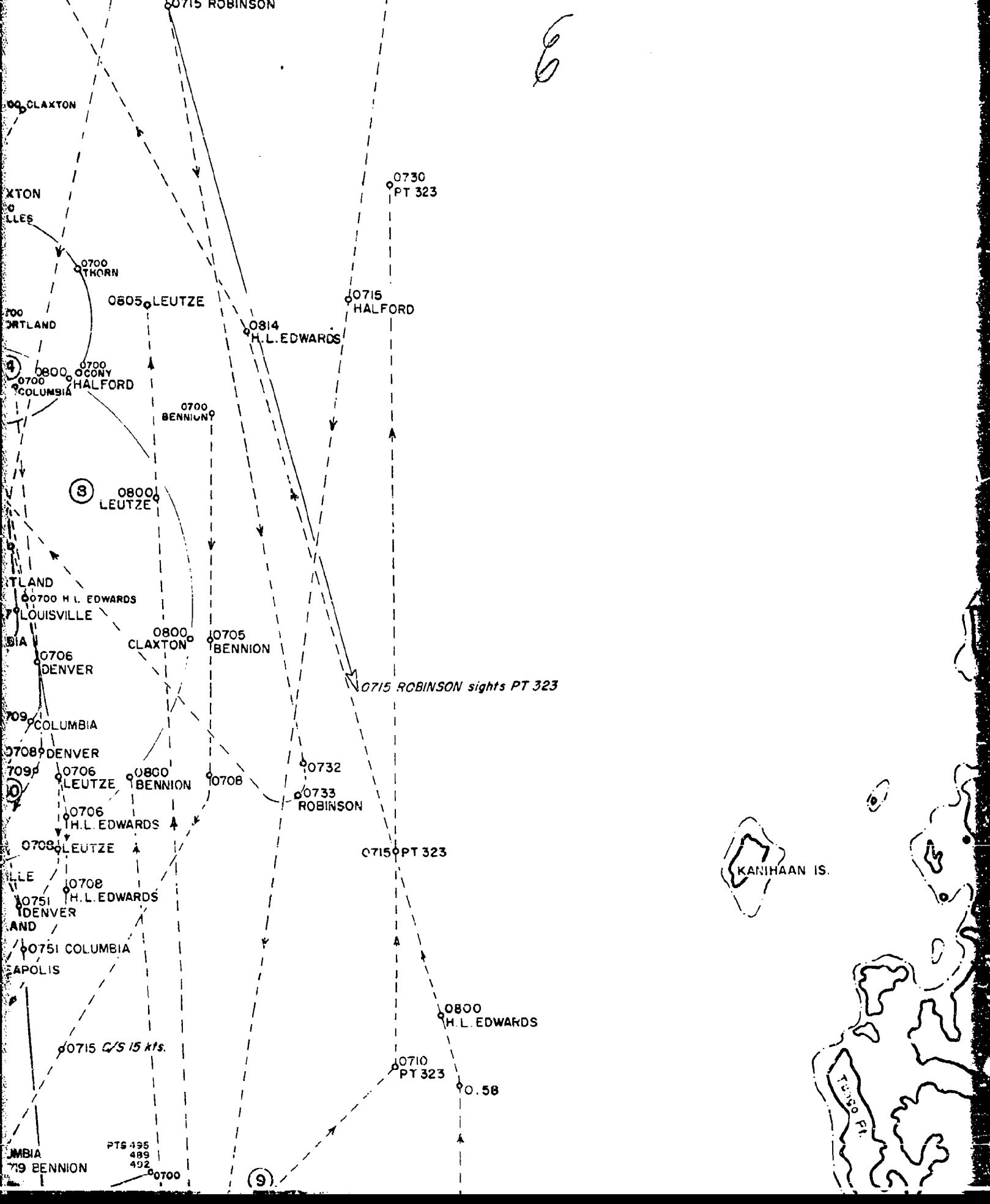
D 112)

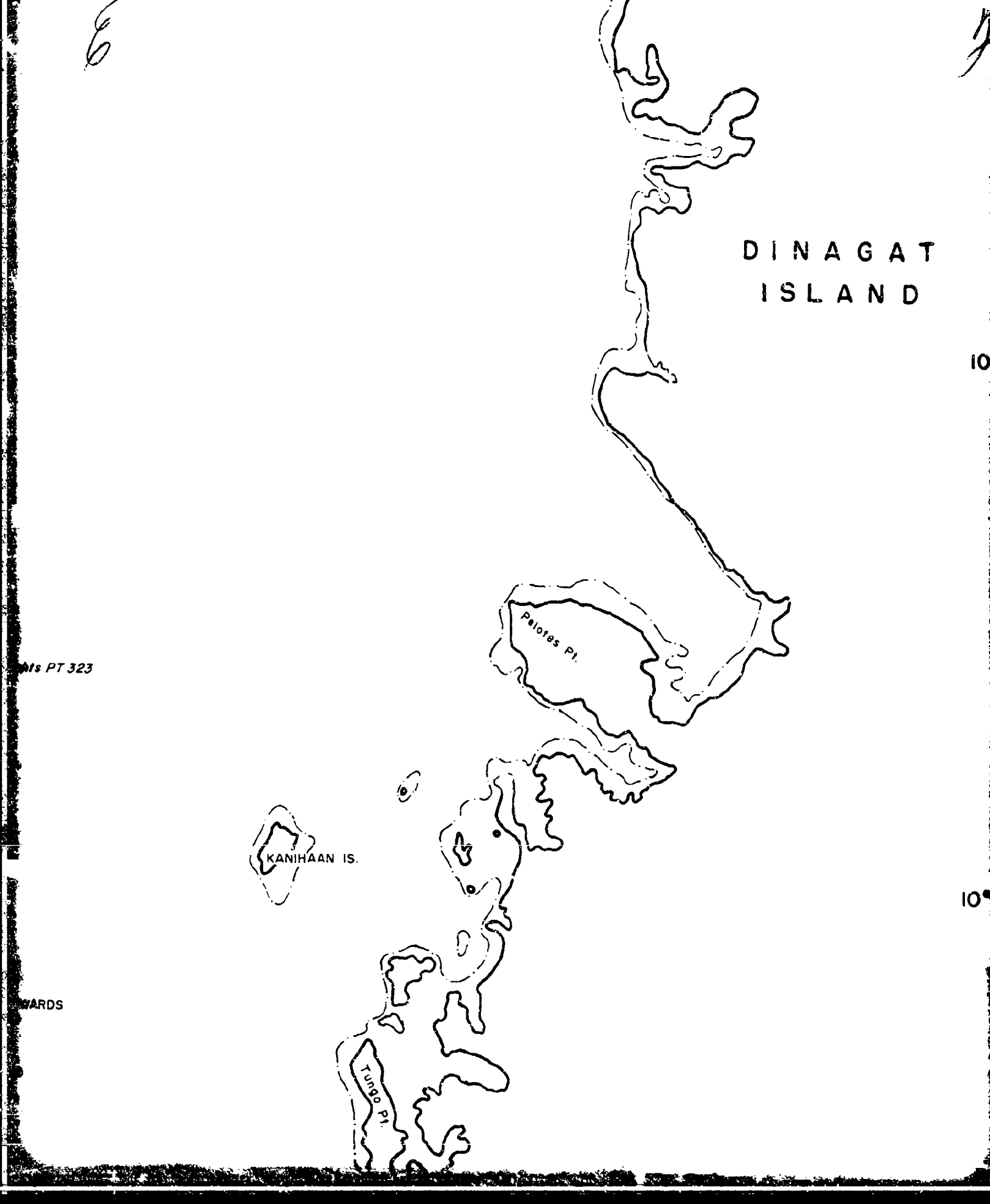
Esconchada Pt.

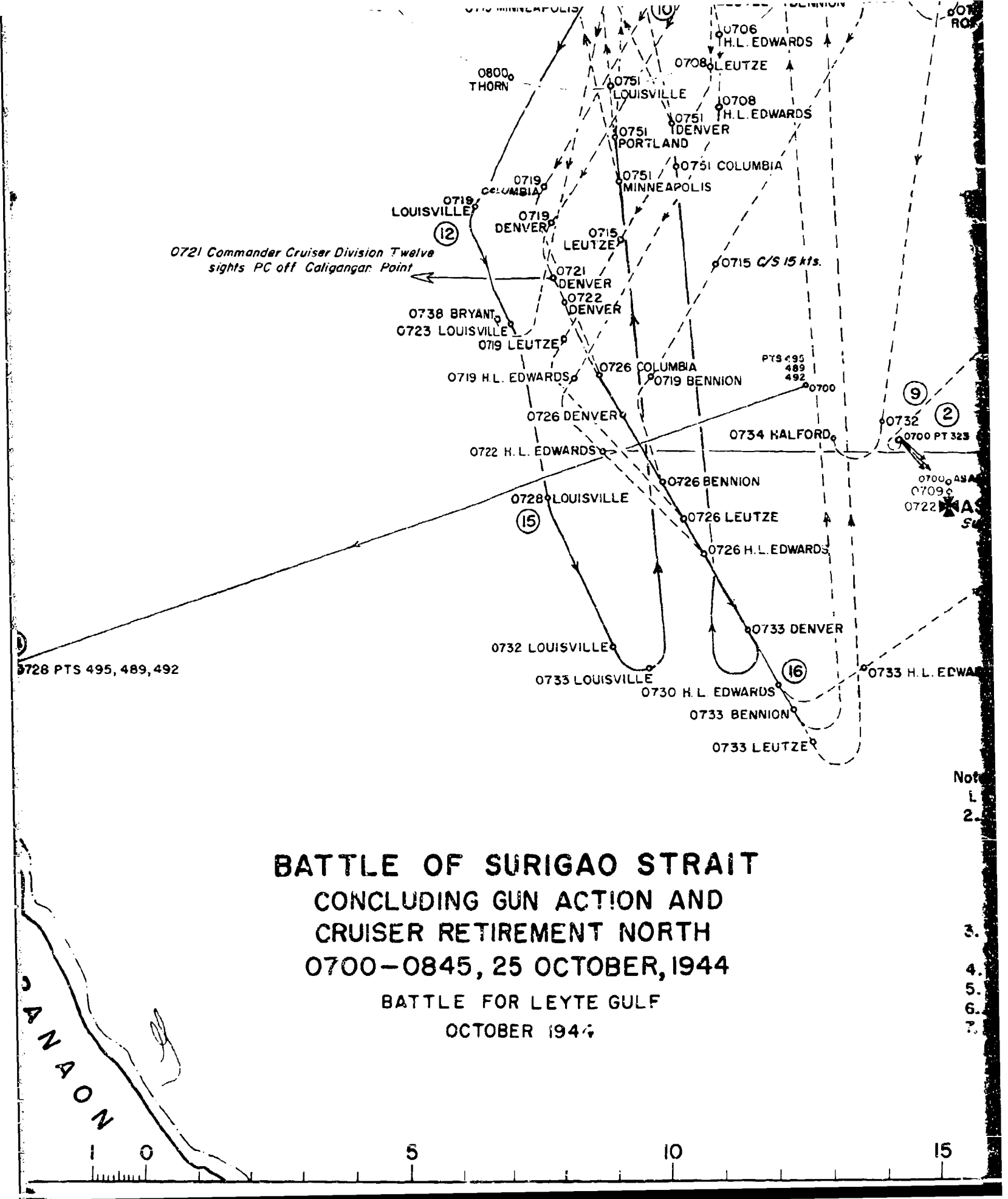

125°-30'
HIBUSON ISLAND
BUSON ISLAND
10°-25'
123°
124°
125°
126°
SAMAR
LEYTE GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
11°
10°
9°
LEYTE
CEBU
SURIGAO STRAIT
DINAGAT
BOHOL
CAMIGUIN
MINDANAO SEA
MINDANAO
Berrugosu Pt.
10°-20'
Esconchada Pt.

770a


0814 close screen to circle 2.5 for AA Defense
0814 TG 77.2
0700 CLAXTON
6
0702 CLAXTON
0700 WELLES
0700 AULICK
0700 MINNEAPOLIS
0700 THORN
Amoguson Pt
0805 LEUTZE
0700 PORTLAND
0800 ROBINSON
0700 LOUISVILLE
4
0800 BRYANT
0700 CONY
0800 HALFORD
0700 COLUMBIA
0758 ROBINSON
0700 BENNION
18
3
8
0800 CONY
0800 LEUTZE
0800 LOUISVILLE
0700 LEUTZE
0800 MINNEAPOLIS
19
0800 PORTLAND
0700 H.L. EDWARDS
0800 TG 77.2
0707 LOUISVILLE
0800 AULICK
0800 DENVER
0800 COLUMBIA
0800 CLAXTON
0706 DENVER
0715 MINNEAPOLIS reports sighting PC 1122
0709 COLUMBIA
0708 DENVER
0800 WELLES
0715 MINNEAPOLIS
0709
0706 LEUTZE
0300 BENNION
10
0706 H.L. EDWARDS
0708 LEUTZE
0800 THORN
0751 LOUISVILLE
0708 H.L. EDWARDS
0751 DENVER
0751 PORTLAND
0751 COLUMBIA
0751 MINNEAPOLIS
0719 COLUMBIA
0719 LOUISVILLE
0719 DENVER
12
0715 LEUTZE
0721 Commander Cruiser Division Twelve sights PC off Caligungan Point
0715 C'S 15 kts.
0721 DENVER
0722 DENVER
0738 BRYANT
0723 LOUISVILLE
0719 LEUTZE
0719 H L EDWARDS
0726 COLUMBIA
0719 BENNION
PTS 495 489 492
0700


0715 ROBINSON
CLAXTON
0730
PT 323
0700
THORN
0805 LEUTZE
0715
HALFORD
0814
H.L.EDWARDS
0800
0700
CONY
HALFORD
0700
COLUMBIA
0700
BENNION
0800
LEUTZE
0700 H.L. EDWARDS
LOUISVILLE
0800
CLAXTON
0705
BENNION
0706
DENVER
0715 ROBINSON sights PT 323
COLUMBIA
DENVER
0706
LEUTZE
0800
BENNION
0708
0732
0733
ROBINSON
0706
H.L. EDWARDS
0708
LEUTZE
0715 PT 323
0708
H.L.EDWARDS
0751
DENVER
0751 COLUMBIA
0715 C/S 15 kts.
0800
H.L. EDWARDS
0710
PT 323
0.58
KANIHAAN IS.
TURSO PT.
PTS 495
489
492
0700
BENNION


DINAGAT
ISLAND
Pelotes Pt.
KANIHAAN IS.
Tungo Pt.
10
10



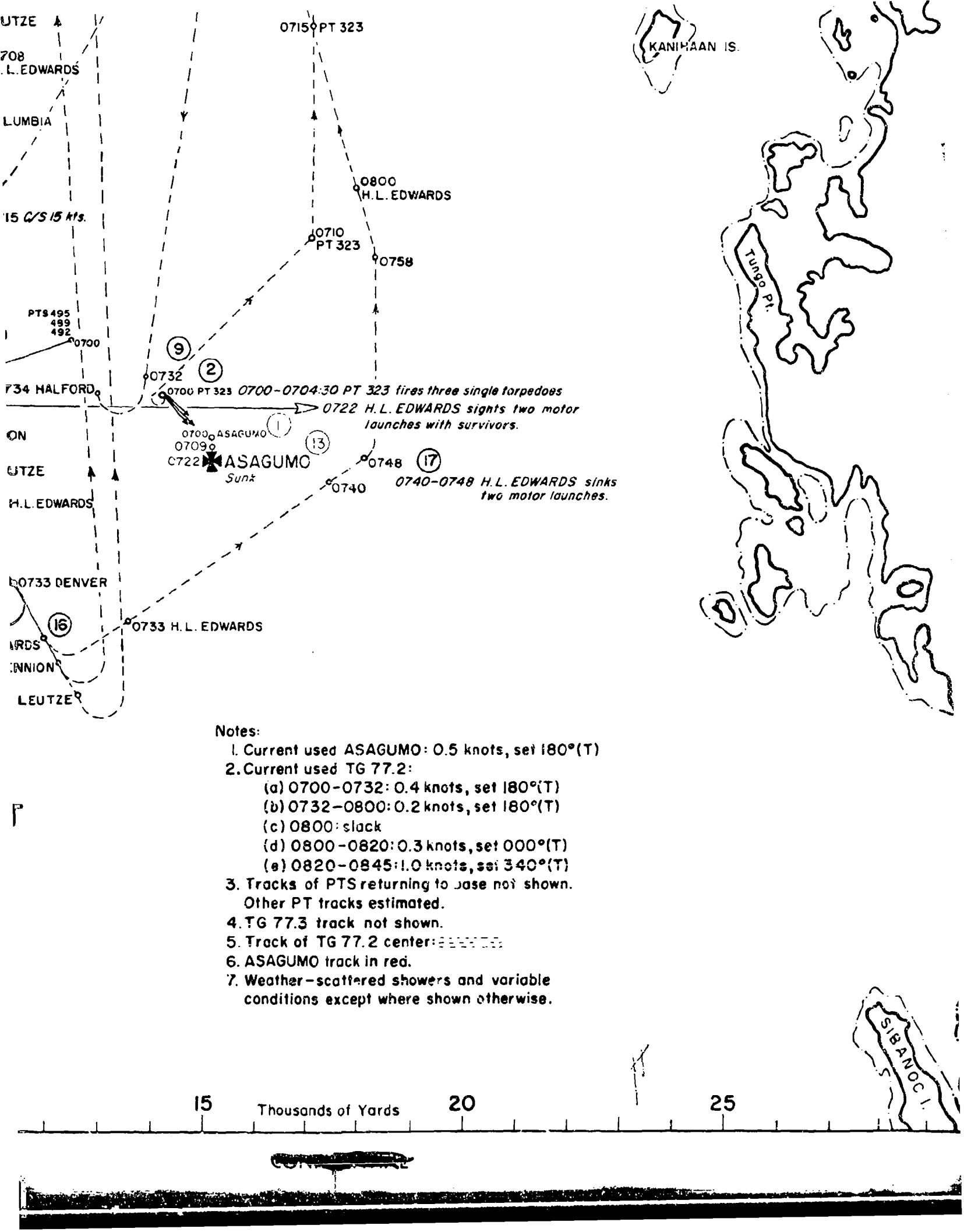
BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

CONCLUDING GUN ACTION AND CRUISER RETIREMENT NORTH

0700–0845, 25 OCTOBER, 1944

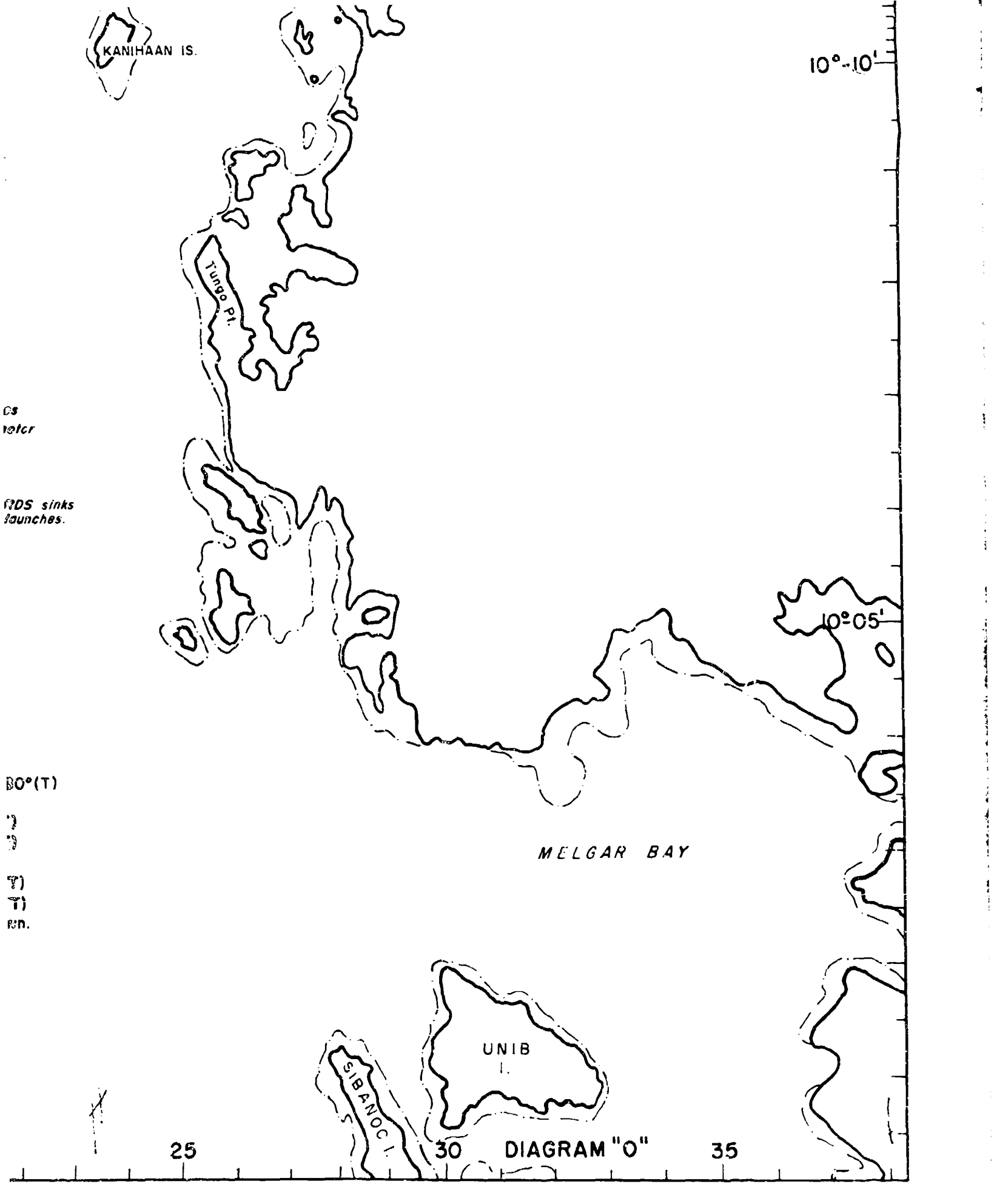
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

OCTOBER 1944



Notes:

1. Current used ASAGUMO: 0.5 knots, set 180°(T)
2. Current used TG 77.2:
   (a) 0700-0732: 0.4 knots, set 180°(T)
   (b) 0732-0800: 0.2 knots, set 180°(T)
   (c) 0800: slack
   (d) 0800-0820: 0.3 knots, set 000°(T)
   (e) 0820-0845: 1.0 knots, set 340°(T)
3. Tracks of PTS returning to base not shown. Other PT tracks estimated.
4. TG 77.3 track not shown.
5. Track of TG 77.2 center:
6. ASAGUMO track in red.
7. Weather-scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.


KANIHAAN IS.
10°-10'
Tungo Pt.
10°05'
MELGAR BAY
UNIB
I.
SIBANOC I.
25
30
DIAGRAM "O"
35

770 w

Events Depicted on Diagram "P"

October 25th, 1944

0700 - 0840

1.	0700	MOGAMI, following astern of the SECOND Striking Force, was firing at PT's 137 and 150.
2.	0700	AKEBONO had just reversed course and was proceeding to the aid of the MOGAMI.
3.	0700	USHIO proceeded to escort the ABUKUMA.
4.	0700	SHIGURE continued her retirement toward the west.
5.	0700	Commander SECOND Striking Force in NACHI with ASHIGARA and SHIRANUHI continued his retirement toward the west.
6.	0705	KASUMI went alongside the ABUKUMA in order to take off COMDESRON ONE and staff.
7.	0715	PT's 137 and 150, having received permission to retire, abandoned the attack on MOGAMI and retired to the northwest.
8.	0715	Allied carrier type aircraft were sighted and at 0717 KASUMI opened fire.
9.	0719	COMDESRON ONE and staff having come aboard, the KASUMI cleared the ABUKUMA's side and went ahead to rejoin the NACHI and ASHIGARA.
10.	0724	USHIO opened fire against enemy aircraft.
11.	0727	MOGAMI was bombed and strafed by enemy aircraft. No additional damage was done by this attack.
12.	0733	Allied air attacks, particularly against the damaged ABUKUMA and MOGAMI, continued.

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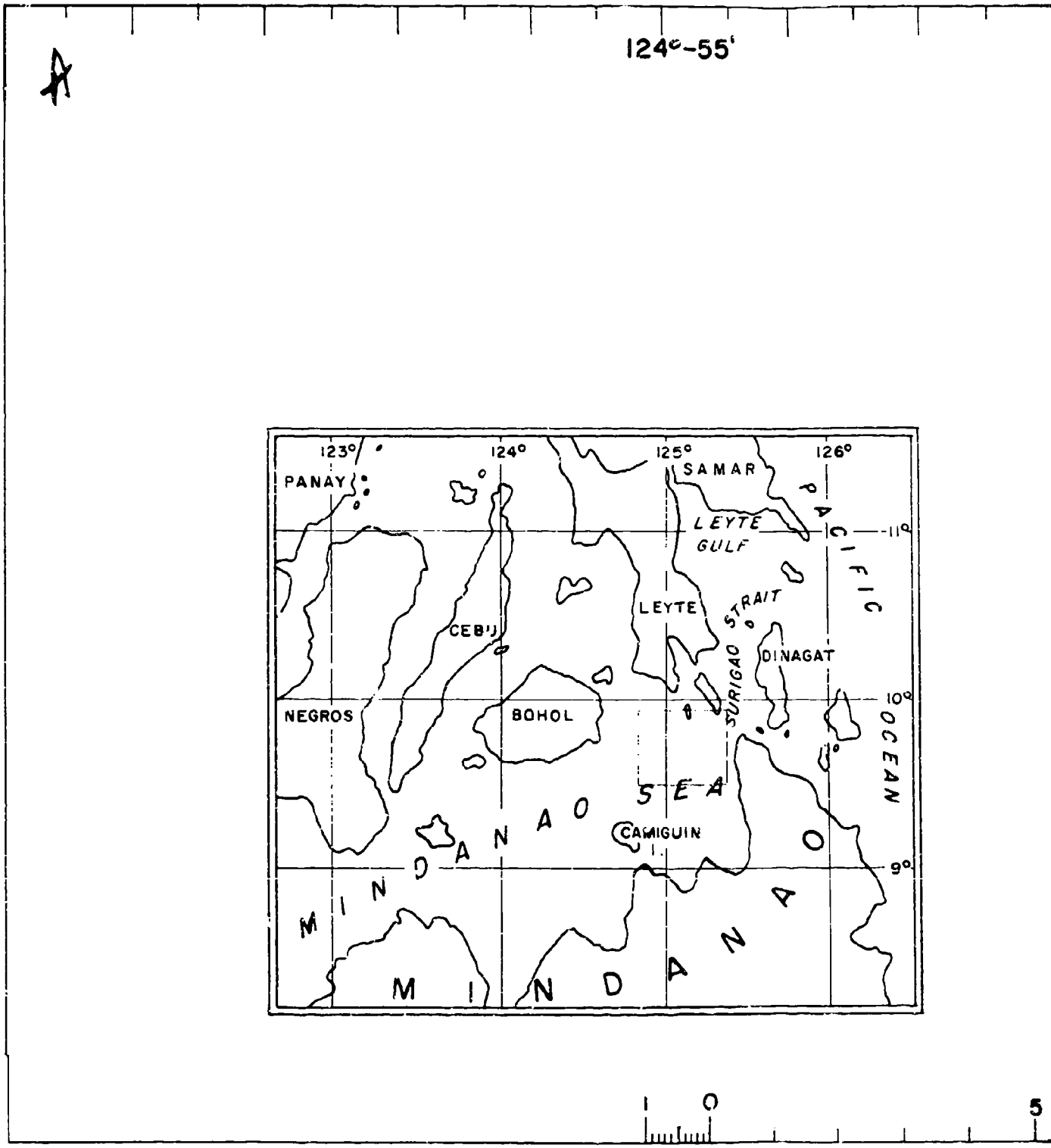

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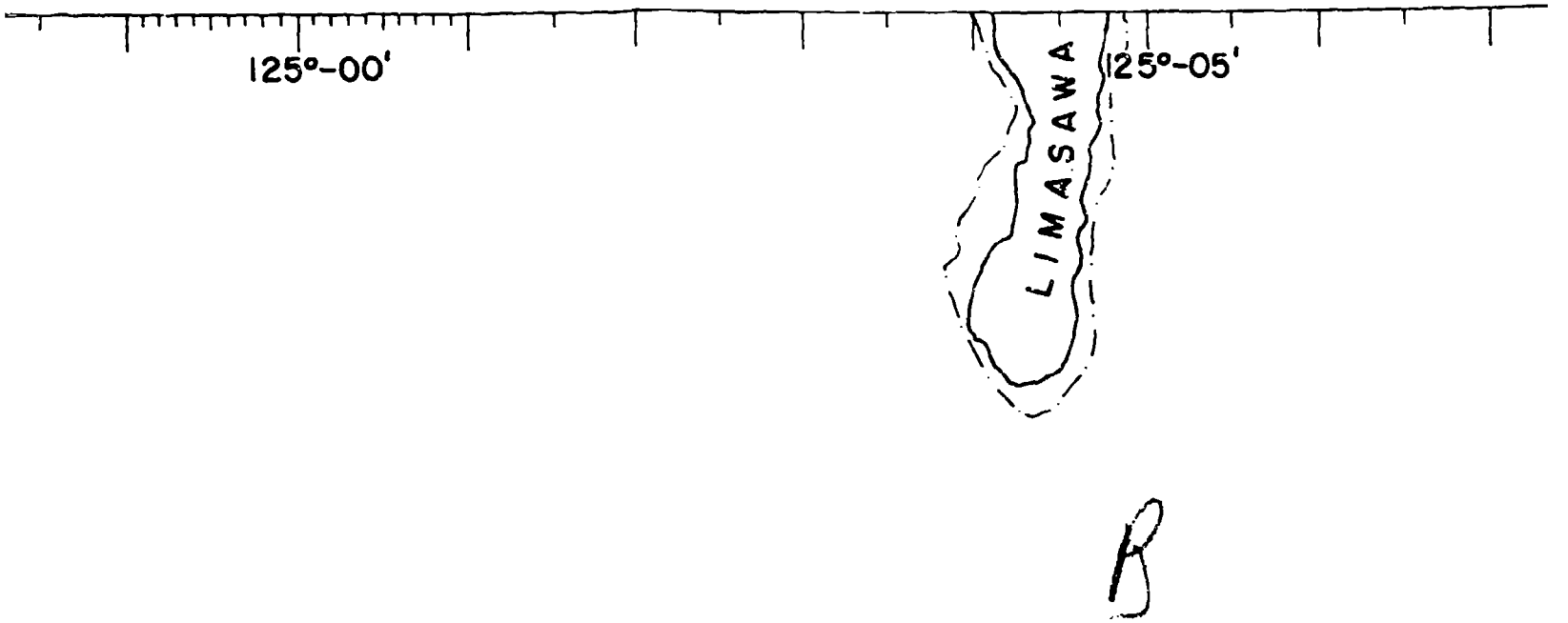

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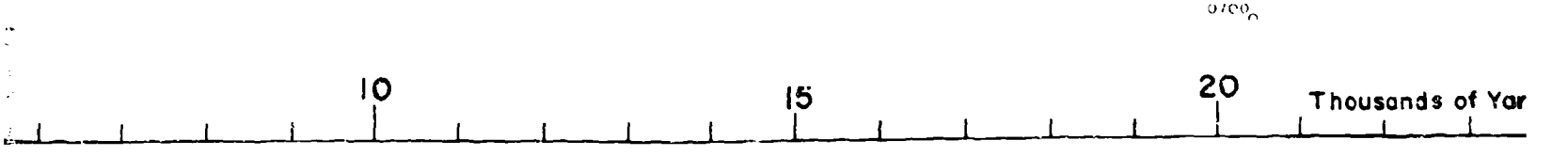

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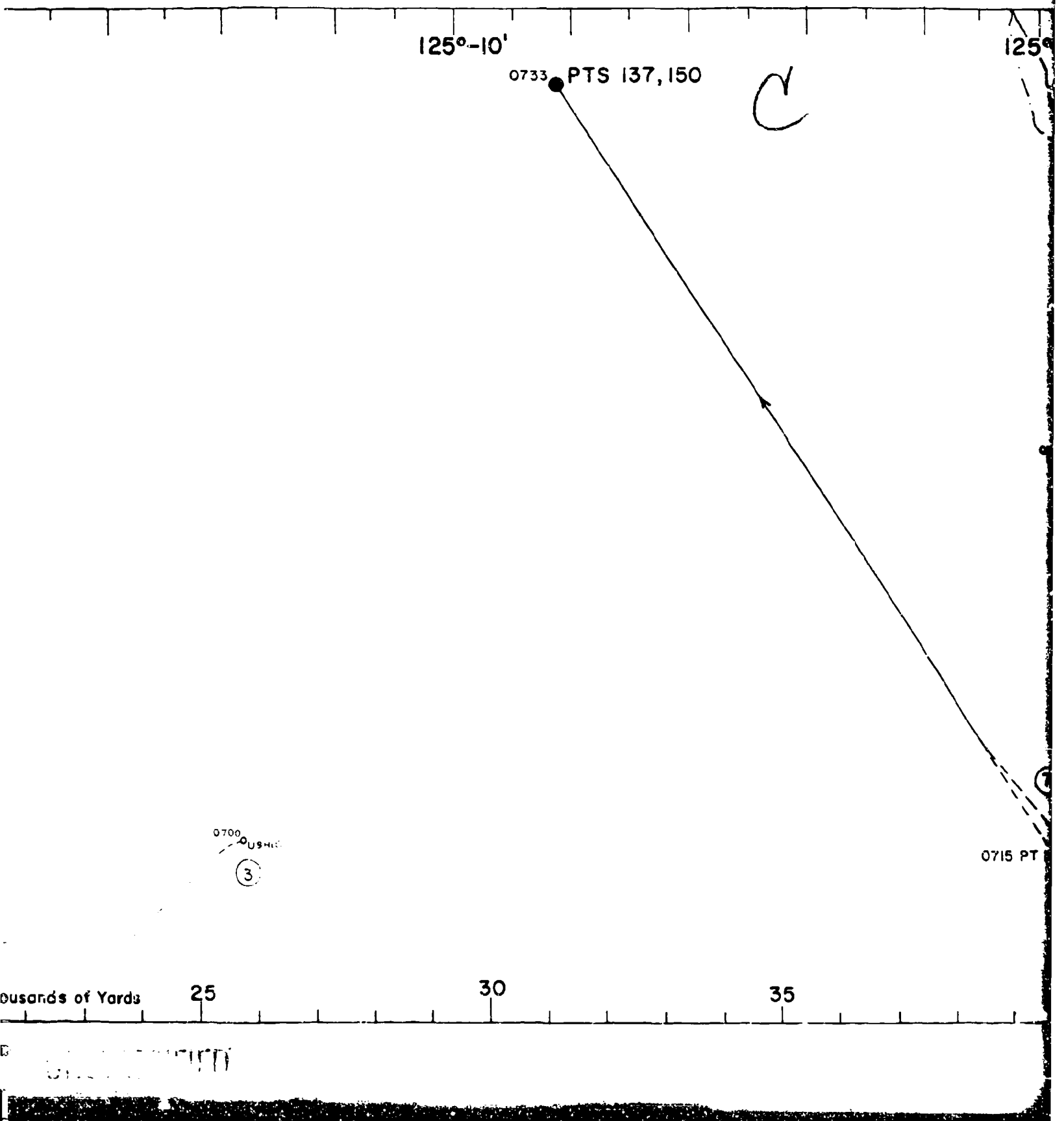


125°-10'
125°
0733 PTS 137,150
C
0700
USHIC
3
0715 PT
ousands of Yards
25
30
35

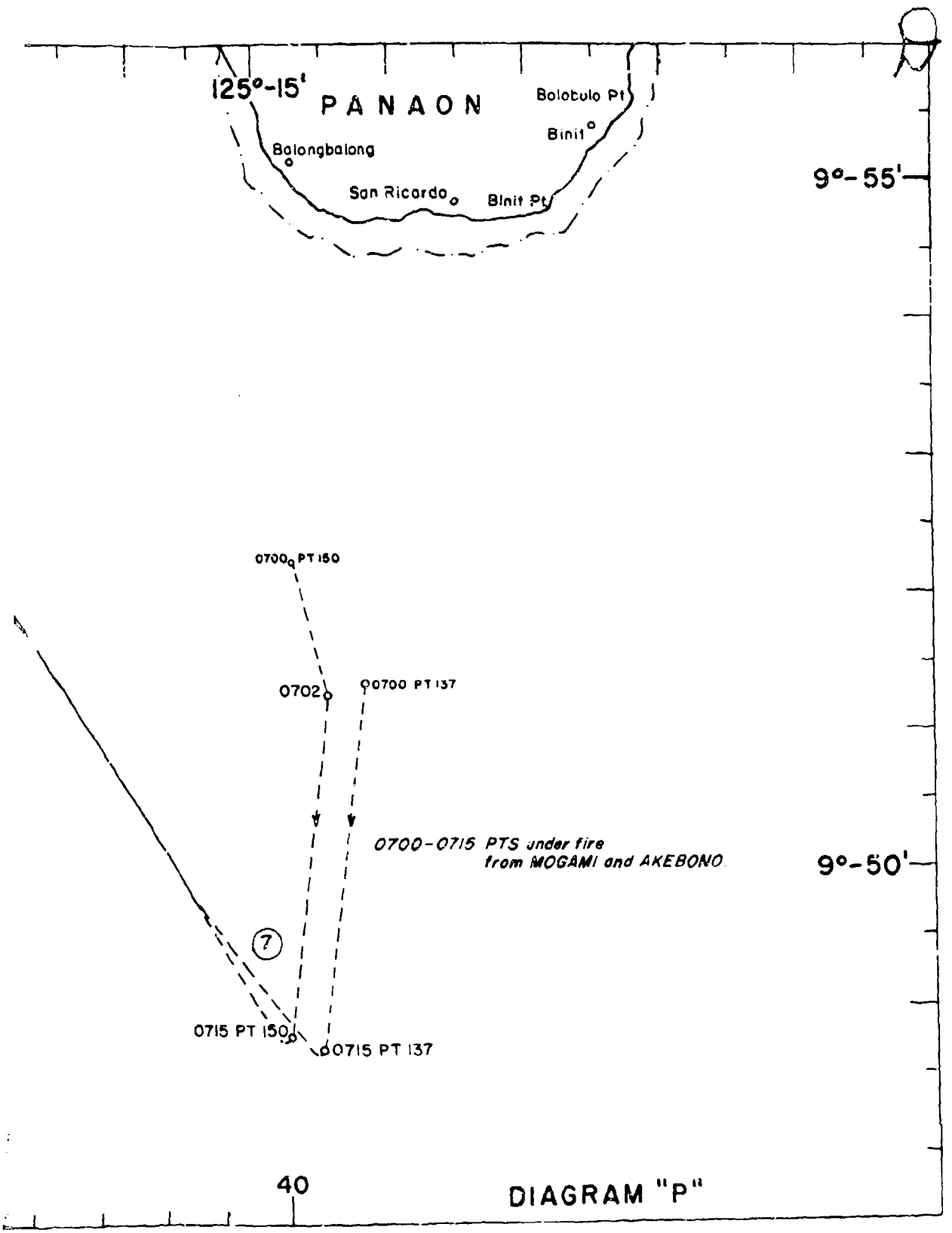
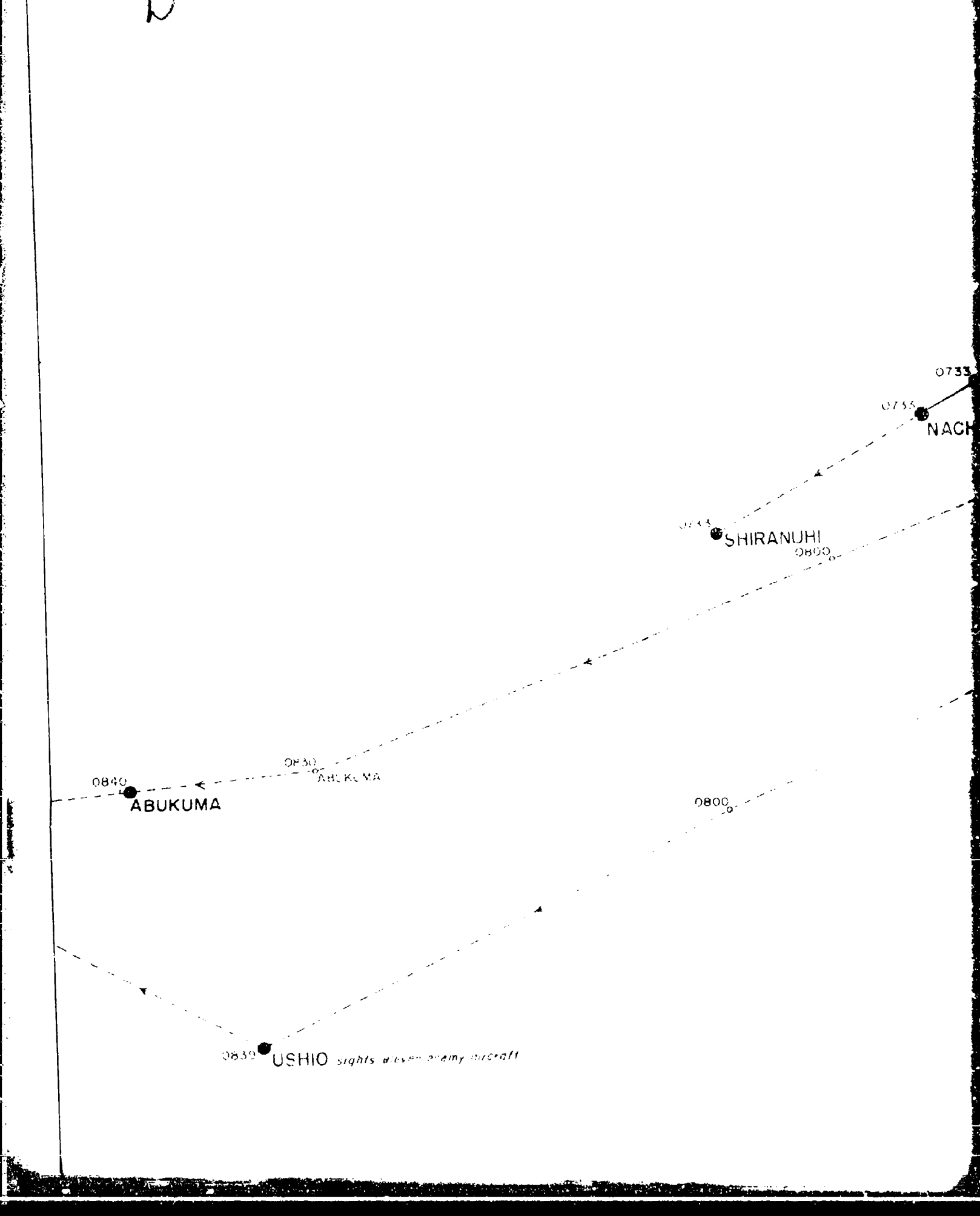
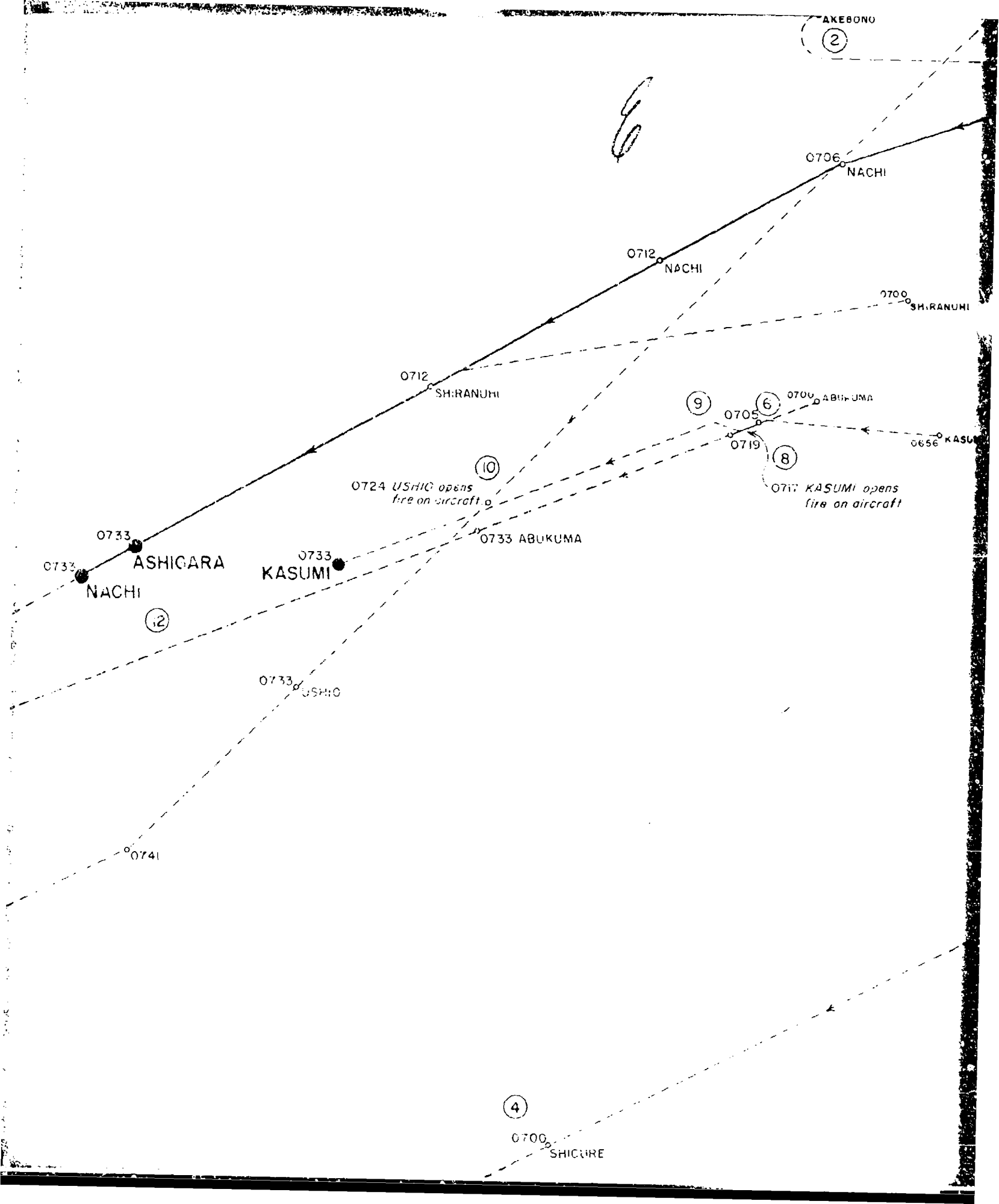
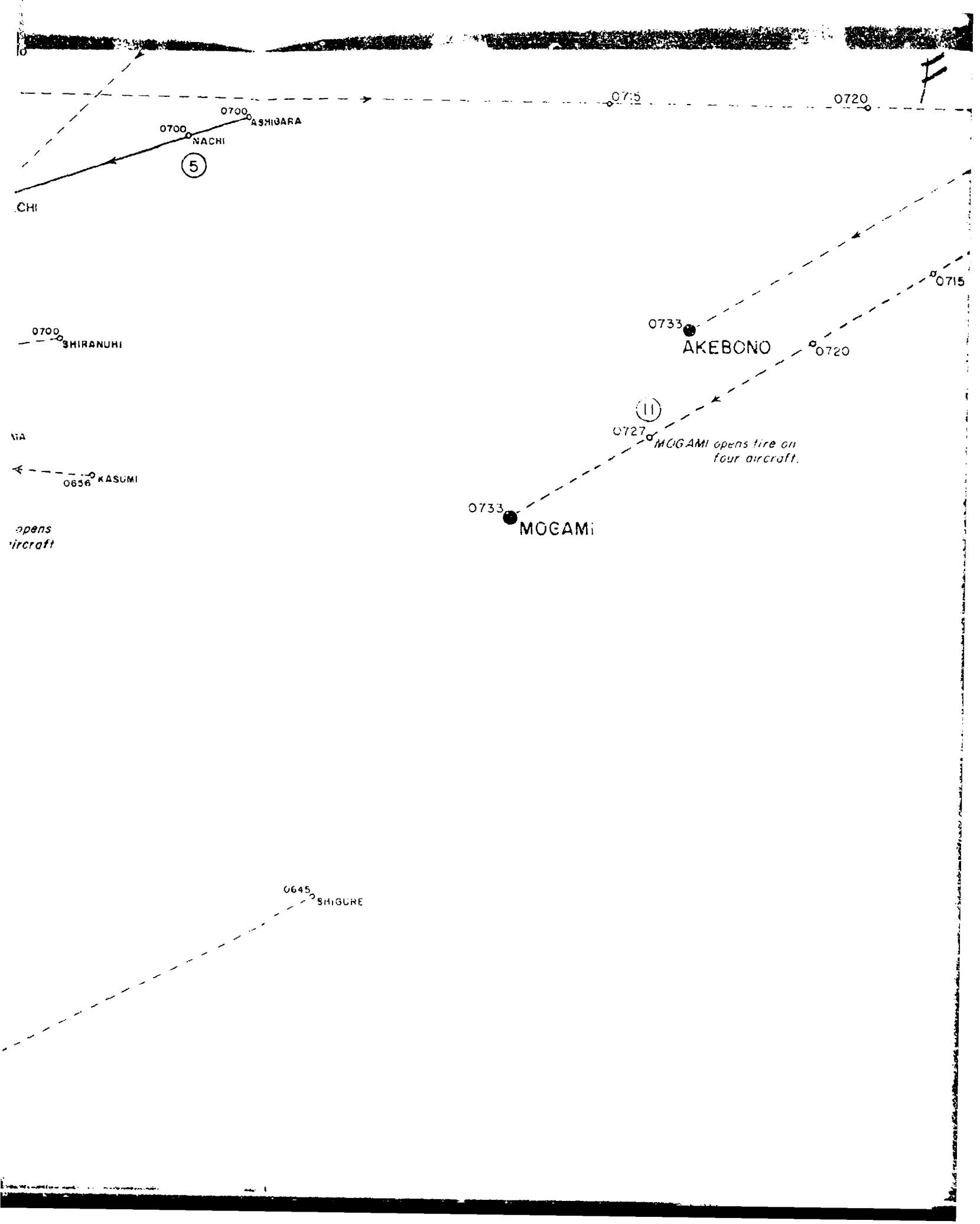
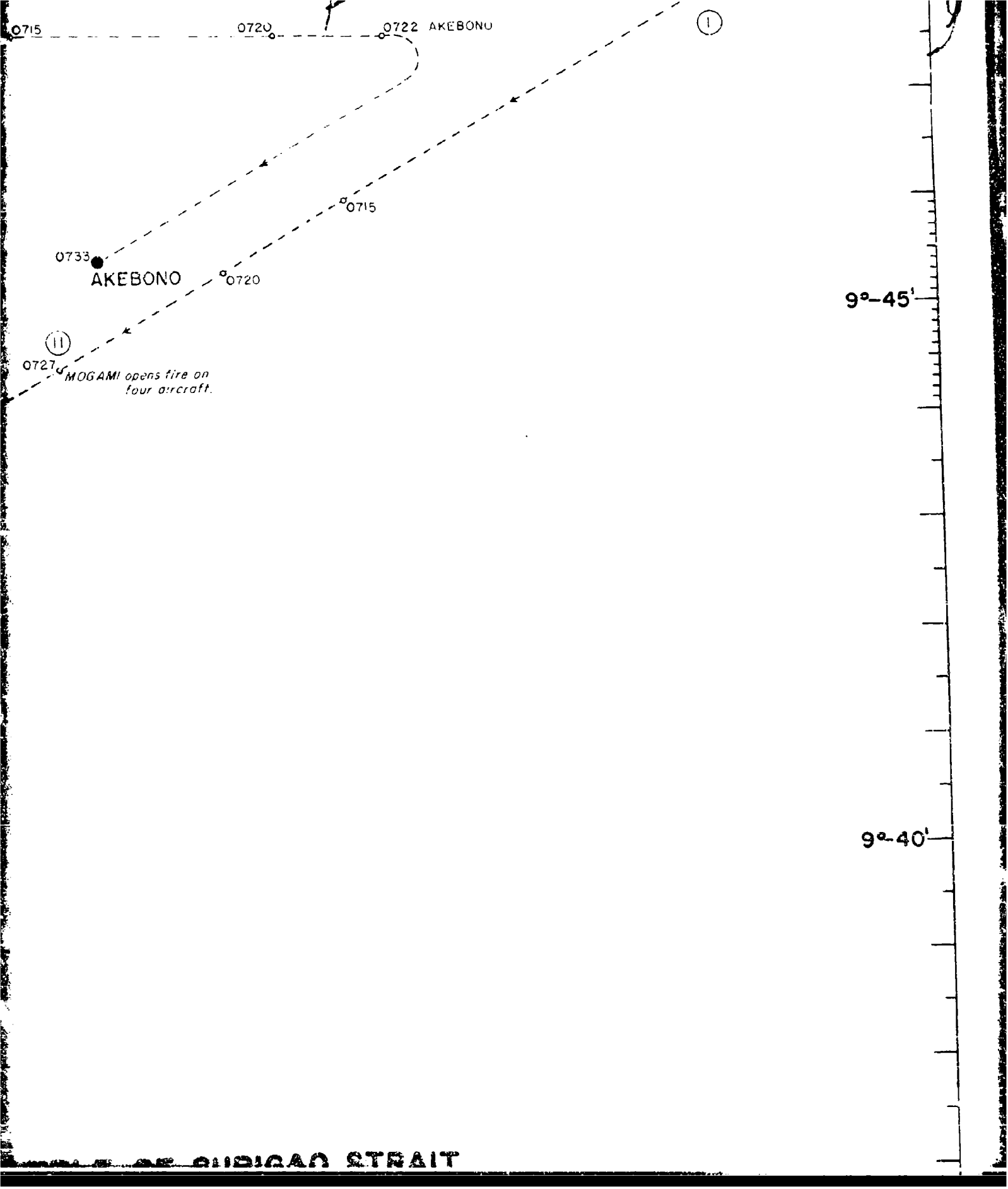

125°-15'
PANAON
Bolobulo Pt
Binit
Balongbalong
San Ricardo
Binit Pt
9°-55'
0700 PT 150
0702
0700 PT 137
0700-0715 PTS under fire
from MOGAMI and AKEBONO
9°-50'
7
0715 PT 150
0715 PT 137
40

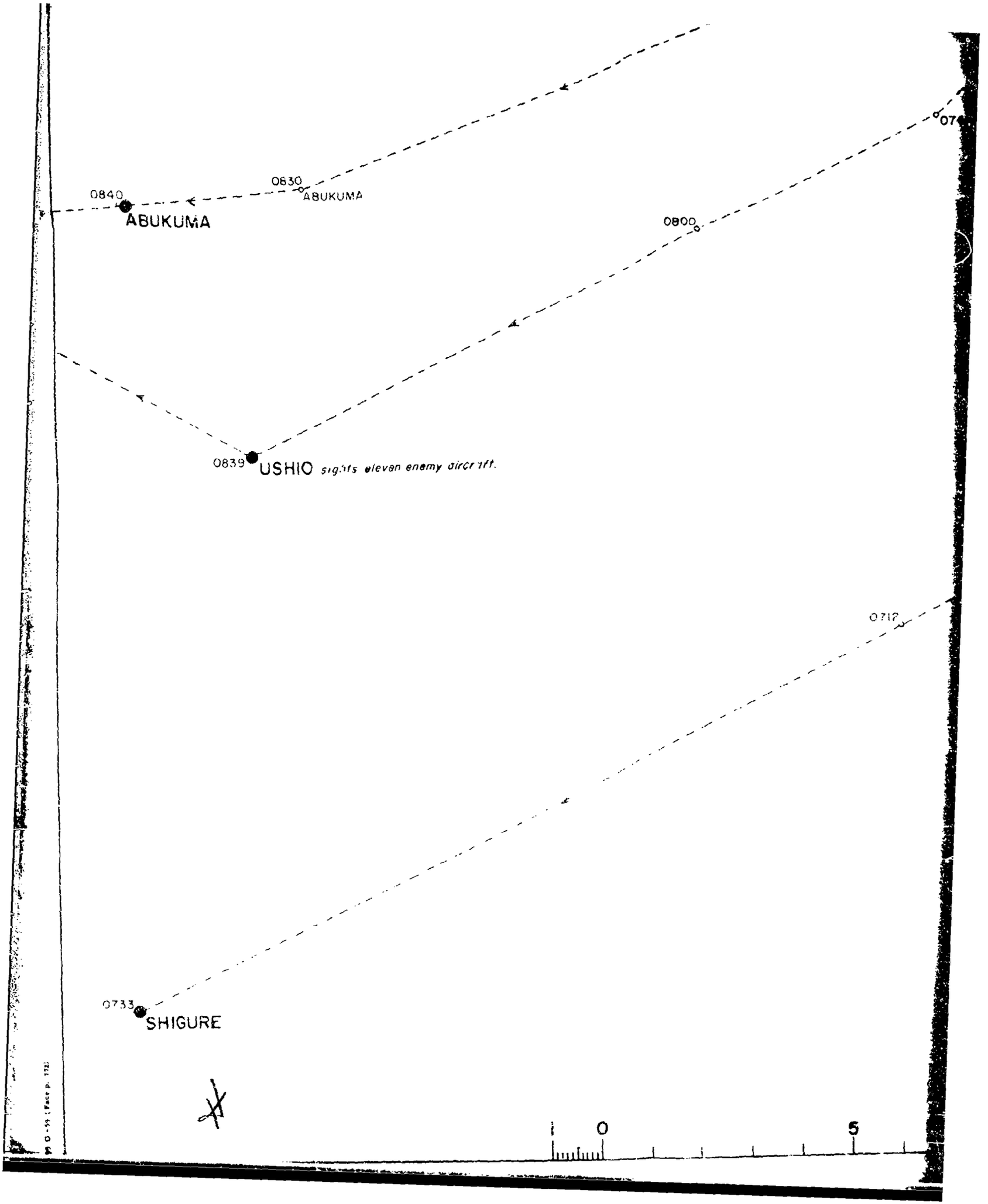
DIAGRAM "P"

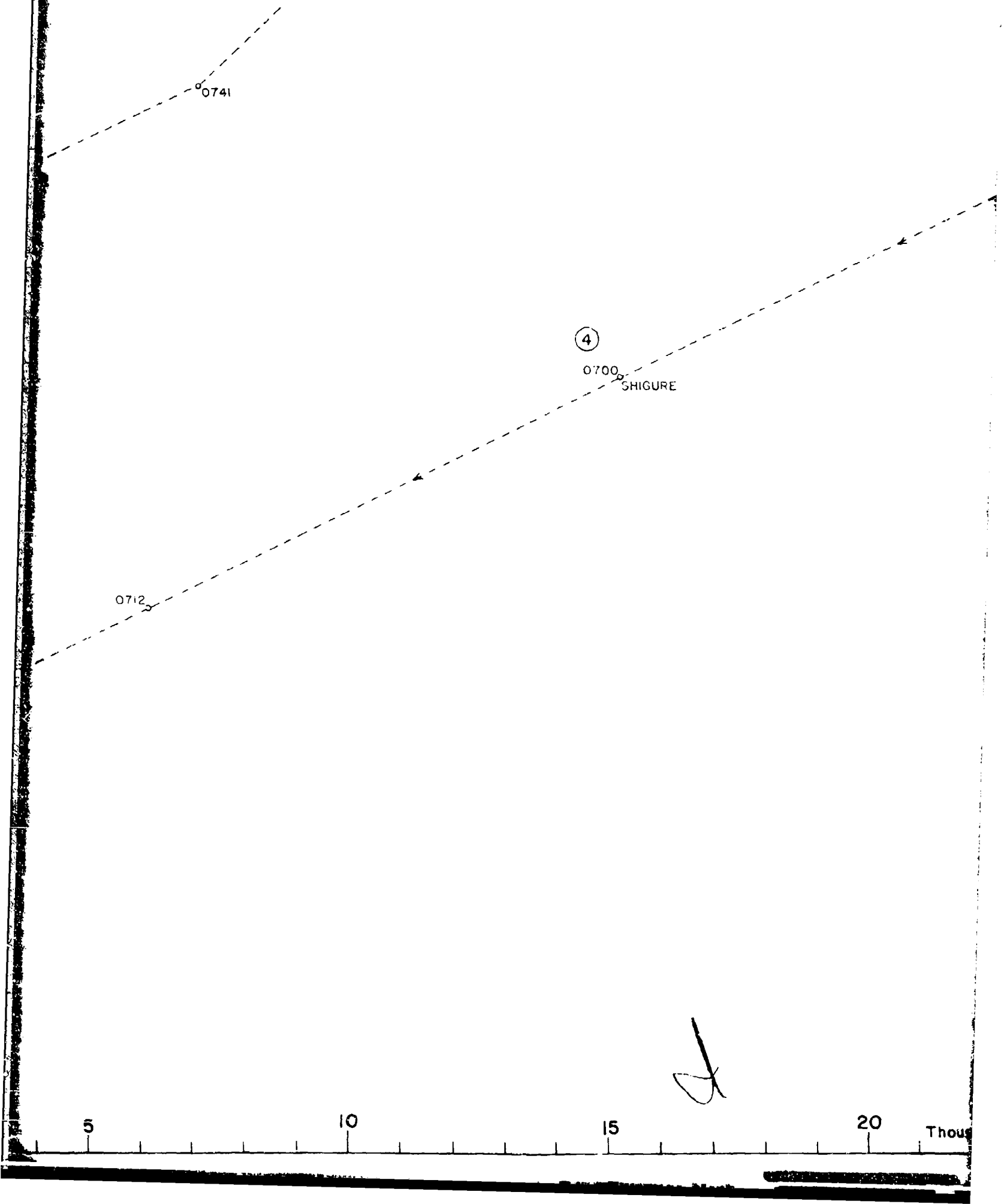

0733
0735
NACH
SHIRANUHI
0800
0840
ABUKUMA
0800
0839
USHIO sights seven enemy aircraft

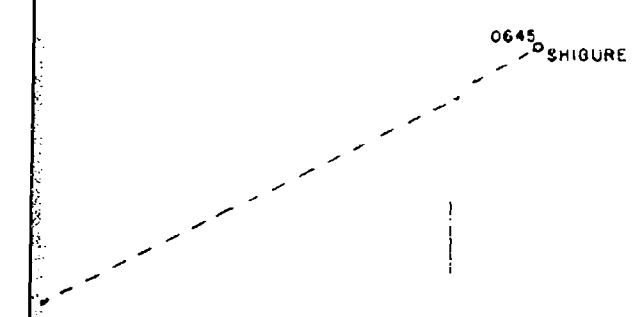

AKEBONO
2
6
0706
NACHI
0712
NACHI
0700
SHIRANUHI
0712
SHIRANUHI
9
6
0700
ABUKUMA
0705
0719
0656
KASU
8
10
0724 USHIO opens fire on aircraft
0717 KASUMI opens fire on aircraft
0733 ABUKUMA
0733
ASHIGARA
0733
NACHI
0733
KASUMI
12
0733
USHIO
0741
4
0700
SHIGURE


F
0715
0720
0700
ASHIGARA
0700
NACHI
5
CHI
0700
SHIRANUHI
0715
0733
AKEBONO
0720
11
0727
MOGAMI opens fire on four aircraft.
0733
MOGAMI
KASUMI
0656
0645
SHIGURE


0715
0720
0722 AKEBONO
(I)
0715
0733
AKEBONO
0720
9°-45'
(II)
0727
MOGAMI opens fire on four aircraft.
9°-40'


0840
ABUKUMA
0830
ABUKUMA
0800
0839
USHIO sights eleven enemy aircraft.
0733
SHIGURE
0
5


0741
4
0700
SHIGURE
0712
5
10
15
20
Thous



BATTLE OF SURIGAO STF

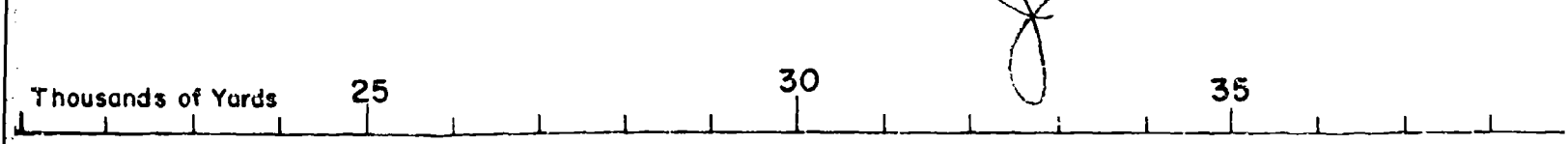
SECOND STRIKING FORCE I
THE MINDANAO SEA
0700–0840, 25 OCTOBER, I

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

OCTOBER 1944

Notes:

1. Current used NACHI: 0.9 knots, set 245°(T
2. Current used MOGAMI: 1.12 knots, set 242°(
3. Tracks of PTS returning to base not shown. Other PT tracks estimated.
4. Japanese tracks are in red, are partly estim and are largely based on USHIO's Action Chart 0540–0950, 25 October, 1944.
5. Weather—scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.



TLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
ECOND STRIKING FORCE IN THE MINDANAO SEA
0–0840, 25 OCTOBER, 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

OCTOBER 1944

9°-40'

9°-35'

os:
Current used NACHI: 0.9 knots, set 245°(T)
Current used MOGAMI: 1.12 knots, set 242°(T)
Tracks of PTS returning to base not shown.
Other PT tracks estimated.
Japanese tracks are in red, are partly estimated and are largely based on USHIO's Action Chart 0540–0950, 25 October, 1944.
Weather—scattered showers and variable conditions except where shown otherwise.

35

40

DIAGRAM "P"