

DE-413/A16-3/(Z:bk)
Serial X001

EX-U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413),
Care Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
20 November 1944.

DECLASSIFIED

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Via: (1) The Commander, Escort Division Sixty-Nine.
(2) The Commander, Carrier Division Twenty-Five
(Commander, Task Unit 77.4.3).
(3) The Commander, Seventh Fleet.
(4) The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.

Subject: Combined Action Report, Surface Engagement off Samar, Philippine Islands, and Report of Loss of U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), on 25 October 1944.

Reference: (a) My Secret Desp. of 11 November 1944, to SecNav reporting loss of U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413).
(b) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Art. 874(6).
(c) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Art. 841(3).
(d) PacFlt Conf. Ltr. 20L-44.
(e) ComCarDiv 25 Special Action Report of 29 October 1944, Serial 00100.

Enclosure: (A) Casualty Report.
(B) Reconstructed TES Log.

PART I

1. This report is submitted in compliance with references (b) and (c), to cover the circumstances of the action and loss of the U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), (hereafter referred to as the ROBERTS). All times referred to in this report are Item (Zone -9), and are reconstructed from memory, interview, and reference to the TES log attached to reference (e), inasmuch as all logs, records, accounts, publications and notes of every kind went down with the ship. The ROBERTS was in contact with and engaged, in company with other vessels of the Task Unit, an overwhelmingly superior Japanese force from about 0655 until 0910, when the word was given to abandon ship, after all power had been destroyed on the ship, the ship was on fire aft, listing about 10 degrees to starboard and down about four feet by the stern, with one gun out of use and the other unable to bear on any target, and all but 42 rounds of the ship's five inch ammunition of all types having been expended. The abandonment of the ship, delayed by the care for wounded, was completed about 0935 and the ship continued to slowly list to starboard, listing to about eighty degrees, where she hung for some time,

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finally twisting stern down, bow up, in which position she very slowly sank at 1005.

During this intervening time this vessel laid tremendously effective smoke screens, both black funnel and white FS, launched a torpedo attack from a range of four thousand (4000) yards upon the leader of a Japanese cruiser column, getting one hit from a spread of three torpedoes, thereafter fired a total of six hundred and eight (608) rounds of 5"/38 calibre ammunition from her two 5"/38 calibre guns, and succeeded, largely through the providence of God, the chasing of salvos, and the smallness of the Japanese patterns and inaccuracy of their fire, in escaping any damage until 0851, at which time the first hit was received. The ship had, for the preceding fifty minutes been engaging a Japanese TONE class heavy cruiser at ranges from 8500 to 6000 yards. Between 0851 and 0907 during which time the range closed to 4000 yards in an attempt to interpose a smoke screen between Japanese cruisers and our own carriers, the ship received approximately twenty hits from five, eight, and fourteen inch shells, battering it entirely out of commission. This vessel was instrumental in heavily damaging one Japanese heavy cruiser (AOEA class) by torpedo hit, and in causing heavy damage from five inch gun fire at close range to another Japanese heavy cruiser (TONE class).

2. Preliminaries

(a) Sortied from Secador Harbor, Manus Island, Admiralty Group, as a part of Task Unit 77.4.3, (Rear Admiral C.A.F. Sprague) and immediately joined up with Task Group 77.2 (Rear Admiral J.E. Glendorf) (Fire Support Group) and proceeded to the Leyte area, fueling enroute. Before arrival at the area, various units were detached and proceeded independently. On 18 October 1944, Task Unit 77.4.3 commenced operations as Northern Air Support Group, in an area about fifty (50) miles east of Samar Island, this vessel being a part of the anti-submarine and anti-aircraft screen for the escort carriers of the Task Unit. The screen was designated as Task Unit 77.4.33, (Commander W.D. Thomas, USN) in U.S.S. HOEL. Operated in this status until 25 October 1944. Picked up one TBE crew from U.S.S. FARSEAW BAY (operational casualty) during this period.

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(b) For tactical aspects, assumptions, and estimates of the situation see reference (a). In the absence of specific orders to the contrary, doctrine used was in accordance with General Tactical Instructions, and USF10A.

(c) Our forces at the beginning of the action consisted of the surface and attached air units of Task Unit 77.4.3, viz. the escort carriers, FARNSHAM BAY, GAMBIER BAY, KALININ BAY, KITKUM BAY, SAINT LO, and WHITE PLAINS, the destroyers HERRAIN, HOEL, and JOHNSTON, and the destroyer escorts BUTLER, DENNIS, RAYMOND and SAMUEL E. ROBERTS. The unit was in formation 5R and this vessel was in the most northwesterly screening station. The movements of the Task Unit are set forth in charts which are appended to reference (a).

(d) Enemy forces were estimated to consist of four battleships (2 identified as YAGATO), six to eight heavy cruisers (1 identified as AOKI - 2 identified as either ATAGO or KAMEI - 1 identified as TOBE - 1 identified as UGAMA), one light cruiser identified as KATORI, and from six to twelve destroyers (2 identified as ASASEIO), sighted originally to the northwest of this unit, distant approximately 17 miles.

(e) See reference (a) for condition of wind, sea and visibility.

PART II

About 0650 word was received over TBS that one of our aircraft had contacted the enemy task force. Immediately thereafter our lookouts sighted anti-aircraft fire to the northwest and the fighting tops of the larger units, which the Gunnery Officer immediately identified as Japanese. The ship went to general quarters at 0655. At this time our force was on course 090° T and the carriers immediately started launching all available aircraft. Full speed was then ordered. At 0658 this ship noted splashes from heavy calibre shells, with both green and purple dye markings, falling close to the JOHNSTON, the rear carrier, and this ship, and this fact was communicated to the Unit Commander on TBS. At this time CIC plotted the Japanese cruiser force at 33 knots. At 0700 orders were received to lay smoke screen astern. JOHNSTON immediately commenced laying heavy black funnel smoke, followed by FS smoke from the ROBERTS, followed by black funnel smoke from the HOEL. A few minutes later the ROBERTS commenced making

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heavy black funnel smoke, which laid down on top of the white FS smoke which adhered to the water's surface, providing one of the most effective smoke screens that any one on the ROBERTS had ever previously observed. It was noticed that the smoke screen caused a slackening of enemy fire and a seeming uncertainty in their fire control. About this time the Task Unit entered a rain squall in which it remained for some ten or fifteen minutes, during which time enemy fire slackened to almost nothing. At 0735 the Task Unit Commander directed the Screen Commander to deliver a torpedo attack. The ROBERTS called Screen Commander and asked if DE's were to accompany DD's, as the difference in speed, torpedo armament, and fire control made such action open to question. The Screen Commander replied negative, directed destroyers to form in order, HEBERMANN, HOEL and JOHNSTON for first attack, and for DE's to form up for second attack. This message was heard to be acknowledged over our TBS by only ROBERTS and JOHNSTON (Screen Commander was in HOEL). After waiting about five minutes for some indication that other DE's were forming for an attack, and finding none, the Commanding Officer, finding his ship in an advantageous position from which to make a torpedo attack, called upon CIC for a torpedo attack course, and followed in about 3000 yards astern of HOEL and JOHNSTON, passing JOHNSTON as she was turning away after firing her torpedoes. The approach was made on the starboard bow of the Japanese cruiser column, through the cover of smoke previously made by HOEL, JOHNSTON and ROBERTS, and was apparently wholly undetected by the enemy. For this reason the decision was made not to open fire with No. 1 5"/38 calibre gun, although excellent targets were presented. All fire control data, however was set up, and guns were loaded and ready for firing if we were detected. ROBERTS was able to approach to 4000 yards without being detected although it had been originally intended to launch from 5000 yards. An unexpected delay in interior communications, with the ships closing at a relative speed of about 47 knots shortened the range below that intended. It was intended to fire torpedoes at high speed setting, but while passing JOHNSTON which was under fire, a stray enemy shell hit the radio antennae, which in falling, fell across the tubes and dislodged the speed setting wrench. Consequently torpedoes had to be fired at intermediate speed. Flame, smoke, and a column of water were observed near the waterline below the secondary control

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of the AOBA class heavy cruiser leading this column, between three and four minutes after firing. The other two torpedoes are believed to have hit nothing, although all torpedoes ran hot, straight and normal. When this cruiser column was next seen, after the ROBERTS had completed retiring into smoke from the torpedo run, the AOBA class cruiser was no longer in column, the column now being lead by a TONE class heavy cruiser. It is believed that some major damage was done to this particular cruiser (AOBA).

At about 0805 the ROBERTS opened fire for the first time with her 5 inch battery, opening at a range of 10,500 yards which was rapidly closed to 8500. From about 0815 until 0855, when the range had closed to 5300 yards, the range varied between 6000 and 7500 yards to a Japanese TONE class heavy cruiser which had been selected as a target and upon which was delivered the heaviest, fastest and most accurate fire of which the ROBERTS, with limited fire control installations, was capable. Occasionally fire was directed momentarily to other vessels as maneuvers of the ROBERTS to escape ladders of enemy fire prevented her guns from bearing on this particular cruiser.

At about 0840 the ROBERTS got clear of a near collision between the JOENSTON and HEERMANN (all ships were laying smoke and firing at Japanese cruisers to port) and changed course to left to interpose between Japanese cruisers and our carriers, as directed about five minutes previously by Task Unit Commander. By 0851 she received her first hit, a salvo, which put a hole below the waterline in No. 1 lower handling room, and ruptured main steam line in No. 1 fireroom, putting No. 1 fireroom out of commission, and reducing maximum available speed to 17 knots. As the range closed to 4000 yards at about 0900, hits were coming in rapid succession. No. 1 engineroom was hit and knocked out, and a heavy shell, either eight or fourteen inch, hit the superstructure deck house aft, and exploded, completely obliterating the after twin 40 mm mount and after 40 mm Mark 51 director. No further trace of the mount, gun, shield or director was ever seen.

At about 0900 a tremendous explosion took place, believed to be hits from two or three fourteen inch high capacity shells, which tore a hole some thirty to forty feet long and about seven to ten feet high in the port side at the waterline. This salvo wiped out number two engineroom, ruptured the after fuel oil tanks, and started fires on the fantail. All power was

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lost at this time, and the ship, aft of the stack, was left an inert mass of battered metal. The ship was now incapable of motion and without offensive or defensive measures left to her.

After all power, air, and communications had been lost, and before the word to abandon ship was passed, the crew of number two gun, who as a crew distinguished themselves throughout the entire action, loaded, rammed, and fired six charges entirely by hand, and with the certain knowledge of the hazards involved due to the failure of the gas ejection system caused by the air supply having been entirely lost. While attempting to get off the seventh charge in this manner, there was an internal explosion in the gun, killing all but three members of the gun crew, two of whom subsequently died on rafts.

No underwater explosions of any appreciable volume were noticed. Our own depth charges were all wired on safe and did not explode when the ship sank. During the action wires broke on three charges and they worked themselves off the safe setting. These three charges were reset and rewired at abandon ship. It is estimated that over 200 enemy two and three gun salvos of various calibres were shot at or in the vicinity of this ship. Most of the heavy calibre shells appeared to be armor piercing, and for the most part did not explode. After retiring, three of the Japanese ships, a KATORI class light cruiser, and two ASASHIO destroyers, passed close aboard survivors of this vessel who were in the water, clinging to nets and rafts, and took motion pictures, but did not fire upon any of the survivors in the water.

PART III

1. Performance of own ordnance material and equipment.
 - (a) The ordnance equipment of this vessel, except for the utter and complete destruction of the after twin 40 mm and its Mark 51 director, suffered few hits. No. One 5 inch gun was hit by shrapnel and the forward starboard corner of the mount was pierced. The pointer's telescope was broken to the extent that it was useless and all power connections to his hand wheel were severed. Thereafter the pointer operated his equipment in manual control. This damage was received at about the same time number one fireroom was hit. A considerable number of rounds were fired after this time. Power was lost on the hoist of No. 2 gun, relatively late in the action. So much damage was being received at this time, and communications

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had been so disrupted, that it was impossible to determine definitely the cause of this failure. Generally speaking the operation of all ordnance equipment on board this vessel proved highly satisfactory. After all connections, including all air lines (high and low pressure), to Gun 2 had been destroyed as a result of heavy damage aft, gun 2 was operated entirely by hand. Six rounds were fired using this procedure. While attempting to fire the seventh round the powder charge cooked off before the breech was closed, wrecking the gun and killing or critically wounding all but one crew member, he having been blown clear of the mount and ship by the resultant explosion. Due to the death of all key men in the mount, it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty the nature of the casualty, but from knowledge that all power and all air for gas ejection were previously lost, plus some additional descriptive information as to the condition of the gun and mount itself by a petty officer who removed dying men from the mount, it is believed that the casualty was caused by one of two circumstances: (1), The process of hand ramming may have occasioned a premature detonation of the primer by percussion; or (2), The heat of the gun plus the burning and partially decomposed particles of powder, which were undoubtedly present due to the loss of gas ejection air, may have cooked off the powder charge before the breech could be closed securely.

It has been sometimes suggested that torpedo tubes should be removed from WGT DE's. When previously questioned, and now again, the Commanding Officer, in view of the excellent mechanical condition of the tubes and the mark 15 torpedoes, and their performance in action, was and is of the opinion that the torpedoes comprise a large part of the ship's striking power and therefore that the offensive strength of the ship should not be diminished by their removal.

Previous to the engagement the Gunnery Officer had held many periods of instruction in loading, local control, spotting, and casualty control, and the training proved invaluable.

One thing in particular impressed the Commanding Officer as a matter of importance. For the most part the ships of our unit, particularly the HOEL, JOHNSTON and ROBERTS, were at all times in a general meleo, usually surrounded by Japanese vessels. The fact that the Gunnery Officer had had thorough and organized training in recognition at the Naval

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Recognition School, Ohio State University, and had taught recognition to all officers and gun crew members, was invaluable in making it possible to quickly distinguish targets. This, plus excellent fire control discipline, enabled this ship to go through the action without firing on any of our own units despite the hodge podge and scramble which existed. It is believed that Gunnery Officers of destroyer types should have a thorough course in recognition.

(b) 608 rounds of common, AA common, and Mark 32 projectiles were fired. Three Mark 15 Mod. 3 torpedoes were fired and all ran hot, straight, and normal.

(c) The guns were fired in modified local control with original range, deflection, and spotting data furnished from the bridge.

Fire control equipment consisting of a MK 6 computer, with radar ranges and direct spotting over LJP and JQ circuit, was utilized throughout the engagement. Spotting was facilitated by the use of orange dye marker projectiles. Direct spotting was supplemented by generated ranges from the computer when evasive maneuvers of the ROBERTS rendered the use of up ladders cumbersome and time consuming. The MK 51 main director was manned continuously but not utilized as, at no time, except at the firing point of the torpedo run, were enemy units within the effective range of that director.

Fire from both five inch guns was rapid and continuous. Fire was necessarily checked when the targets were obscured by our own smoke screen or a rain squall. It is recommended therefore, that consideration be given to the problem of equipping DE's carrying five inch guns with equipment similar to a MK 33 director, together with a stable element, to enable such ships to utilize advantageous firing positions for continuous fire while obscured in just such smoke or rain squalls.

2. Performance of enemy ordnance material and equipment.

Enemy surface fire seemed definitely inferior to the fire to be expected of our own forces of like composition - as a matter of fact, disregarding weight of shells thrown, it seemed highly inferior to the fire observed to be put out by the HOEL, JOENSTON and ROBERTS. The ineffectiveness of the enemy fire, based on the limited observation we were able to

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make in the heat of battle, may be attributed to (1) The very small pattern of Japanese salvos; (2) The lack of tenacity of the Japanese in following up an original fire control solution which in many cases produced near misses on the first salvo - it appeared that the Japanese were continually shifting targets. It was noted that a very large number of major calibre salvos with colored dye markings resulted in near misses, and were not immediately followed by either hits, or other salvos with the same colored dye markings. A few very excellent ladders from medium calibre weapons were observed, but these were avoided, largely due to the extreme maneuverability of the destroyer escort type. It is believed that the Japanese were unfamiliar with a 5"/38 calibre ship which had the maneuverability which we possessed, and full use was made of the highly maneuverable characteristics of the vessel by constant changes in course, with the use of large amounts of rudder, and frequent changes in speed.

Yellow, green, and purple dye markers were noticed. The larger calibre shells by and large seemed to be of the armor piercing type and for the most part passed through the ship without exploding. However, it is believed that at least two heavy explosions were caused by heavy calibre shells.

While sporadic Japanese AA fire was heard, no one observed it, either as to volume or effectiveness, although from time to time our own planes were seen to approach the Japanese vessels closely and this harassment by our planes undoubtedly eased the burden for the surface units engaged.

PART IV

1. Own battle damage.

(a) This vessel received approximately 20 direct hits from 5, 8, and 14 inch projectiles. Results of many of the hits were unobserved, at least by any of the survivors. The first hits received were evidently from a salvo of eight inch armor piercing projectiles with green dye, which did not explode. One entered the main deck on the port side at frame 65, leaving a jagged hole about four feet in diameter, about five feet aft of the deck hatch to No. 1 fireroom. The shell apparently hit the high pressure steam line, inasmuch as the same was ruptured in several places, and the entire space filled with live high pressure steam and disintegrated lagging.

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The forward bulkhead of No. 1 engine room was also damaged, as steam leaks were caused in No. 1 engine room, and lagging was disintegrated and blown over personnel and machinery in that space. Another shell from this salvo hit near the waterline on the port side at about Frame 50, and penetrated the I.C. and gyro room without exploding, but in the course of its passage heavily damaged electrical installations and left the ship below the waterline. Water entered this compartment so fast that no damage control efforts were feasible except to abandon the compartment and secure the water tight scuttle through which the exit was made. Another hit was in No. 1 lower handling room. Repair Party I assisted handling room personnel in removing all ammunition and in instituting a new ammunition supply route.

One of the next major hits observed and noted was that of a heavy salvo of either eight or fourteen inch shells which hit some portion of the upper deck house superstructure, at a point approximately between the after twin 40 mm mount and the Mark 51 director located some ten feet forward of the gun mount. This shell or salvo exploded, the force of the explosion being heavily felt throughout the entire ship. After the smoke resulting from the explosion had cleared away the entire gun installation and director installation had entirely disappeared, the superstructure deck clear up to the torpedo tubes was sagging, warped, twisted, and torn. The entire area was torn by shrapnel, a large amount of debris was dumped on No. 1 K gun (the forward K gun on the starboard side), and a small fire broke out in this area. Damage control parties immediately started to run hoses to this area to fight the fire, but at this time hits were being received in rapid succession, and a hit in No. 1 engine room was received and power was momentarily lost, and the fire main was ruptured.

Immediately thereafter a heavy salvo, of either two or three high capacity shells, estimated to be fourteen inch, hit the port side in the vicinity of compartment C-202L, and a shell or shells of the same salvo penetrated number two engine room, at or just above the waterline. All these shells exploded and did considerable damage. A hole approximately thirty to forty feet long and seven to ten feet in height was torn in the ship's side in the vicinity of compartment C-202L, rupturing fuel oil tanks in the vicinity and starting fires, both below decks and on the fantail where fuel oil was thrown by force of the explosion. As a result of these hits all power was lost, all fire mains destroyed, and all means of controlling damage or fighting fire were destroyed. As all of these hits and the resultant damage occurred during a fifteen minute interval there was very little opportunity to adequately estimate damage or to take effective damage control measures.

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Damage control parties were well trained, but no damage within their capabilities to effectively combat was experienced. The ship was simply shot to pieces the last 15 minutes she was in action. Many members of the repair parties performed invaluable services in the handling rooms, relieving exhausted handling room personnel and thereby permitting the maintenance of the terrific rate of fire which prevailed at all times except when guns were either unable to bear, or targets obscured. Damage control equipment was adequate and satisfactory - very little opportunity was afforded to utilize it.

(b) It was noted that in spite of numerous hits, very little fire resulted. One fire on the starboard side of the fantail could not be controlled due to the lack of means then available for fighting it. The fact that no other fires broke out except the fuel oil fire from the last big hit, and that this fire was not an excessively large one is attributed to the fact that inflammables of all kinds were kept to a bare minimum aboard ship, and hull painting was kept to the bare minimum coincidental with preservation.

2. Enemy battle damage.

(a) As a result of this vessel's action it is believed that one LOBA class heavy cruiser received serious damage from one torpedo hit which must have slowed her and forced her retirement, at least temporarily. A TONE class cruiser was the target of at least eighty five percent of this vessel's total five inch fire. While it can not be claimed from hits observed that the cruiser was put out of action, it was observed that her number three turret was definitely put out of action, her bridge badly holed, and set on fire, and several small fires started in the superstructure abaft the bridge.

(b) - - - - -
(c) - - - - -

PART V

1. Special comment.

(a) - - - - -
(b) No accurate data was obtained on radar antennae of the TONE cruiser, the presence of such antennae only being generally observed. The KATORI class light cruiser and the two ASASEIC destroyers which passed fairly close aboard, did

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not appear to have any noticeable radar antennae.

(c) - - - - -

(d) - - - - -

(e) The use of smoke screen by this Task Unit was extremely effective. ROBERTS found that an extremely effective screen was made by laying heavy black funnel on top of white FS. It is believed that the fact that the escort vessels were alternately able to momentarily throw off the Japanese gunnery by moving into the smoke of other escorts materially prolonged the life of these escorts.

(f) CIC was superb. Combat kept a constant flow of clear, concise, correct, and vital information to Conn. The value of CIC in battle cannot be too highly emphasized. Most, by far, of the credit for a successful torpedo attack goes to CIC, and it is felt that the installation of a very efficient CIC set up, plus the interest shown in it by the ComDesPac representative, and the excellent organization and, drilling of personnel accomplished by the Chief Evaluator, and Assistant Evaluator were of inestimable value.

(g) - - - - -

(h) Performance of the engineering personnel and equipment was of the highest order. Both Engineering Officers knew their jobs thoroughly, and the engineering division was the best trained and most efficient division in the ship. These men, at the risk of their lives, and only a few escaped from engineering spaces, remained at their posts and performed their duties so coolly and efficiently that the engineering performance of the vessel exceeded any expectations previously entertained by the Commanding Officer.

Although the ship had exercised at laying FS smoke, no drills had been held in making funnel smoke. However, without any delay the engineers force furnished funnel smoke equal to that of any other ship.

During the ships speed and endurance trials off Boston in late June 1944, four hours steady steaming was made at about 406 average r.p.m., giving, it is believed, a speed of about 23 knots. The Engineering Officer was cognizant of the superiority of enemy forces opposing us, and when upon retiring from delivering a torpedo attack, flank speed was rung up, the pitometer log at the Captain's conning station on the bridge showed a speed of 28.3 knots. Until number one fireroom was hit the pitometer log continued to show speeds of

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26 - 28 knots except when tubes were blown, as had to be done several times due to the heavy deposits caused by making smoke.

(i) - - - - -

(j) - - - - -

2. The Commanding Officer was assisted by all surviving officers in the writing of this report.

3. (a) The success which was obtained by this Task Unit, being unsupported by heavy ships, submarines, or adequate aircraft, in what might be called a surprise engagement with an overwhelming enemy task force seems like a myth. Why this ship was not sunk long before it was will ever be a mystery - except for one concrete fact which is here advanced, - namely that the silhouette of the WGT type destroyer escort furnishes no real point of aim, and is, defensively, one of the best silhouettes of all the navies of the world. This may also account for the fact that no hits were received in the bridge superstructure. The fact that we could stay afloat for over an hour within 7500 yards gun range of Japanese cruisers also seems to testify to the very pitiful efforts of Japanese gunnery, in so far as this action is concerned, as well as the kindness of providence.

(b) The enemy task force which engaged this Task Unit apparently came from San Bernardino Straights, and, so far as is known to this command, its sortie, or presence east of Samar Island, was unknown until the first contact by planes of our own Task Unit.

(c) Our survivors were in the water for approximately fifty hours. Most of the survivors were in two major groups, one consisting of one raft and one floater net, and the second of two rafts and one floater net. A few men however were adrift on shoring and staging, or groups of five inch powder cans, in small groups of from two to five. None of these latter men were rescued so far as is known at the present time. During the afternoon of the action we were sighted by friendly aircraft, one of which buzzed us from low altitude to let us know we had been sighted. We were amazed, and our morale reduced by seeing no activity indicating a search for us on the following day. On the 26th two formation flights of friendly planes were seen, but there was no evidence that we were sighted. It is felt that a greater, better, and more effective effort, similar to that used to search for and pick up downed aviators could

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have been used to locate us and effect our rescue before fifty hours in the water. The battle we had been through had been both physically and emotionally exhausting, and in another twenty four hours it is doubtful if there would have been more than a handful of survivors at best.

Even though it might have been impossible to have picked us up aboard ships sooner than was done, it is definitely felt that aircraft could have located us the following day, let us know we were sighted, and that help was coming, thereby helping morale, and also should have been able to drop near us additional rubber life rafts with medical supplies and water, which would have not only have helped in saving the lives of some of the badly wounded, but would have greatly lessened the number of cases of extreme exhaustion experienced.

PART VI

1. The performance of officers and enlisted personnel of this command was exemplary - in accordance with the very highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. To witness the conduct of the average enlisted man aboard this vessel, newly inducted, married, unaccustomed to navy ways and with an average of less than one years service would make any man proud to be an average American. The crew were informed over the loud speaker system at the beginning of the action, of the Commanding Officer's estimate of the situation, that is, a fight against overwhelming odds from which survival could not be expected, during which time we would do what damage we could. In the face of this knowledge the men zealously manned their stations wherever they might be, and fought and worked with such calmness, courage, and efficiency that no higher honor could be conceived than to command such a group of men.

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ComCortDiv 69
BuShips.

3 497

CASUALTY REPORTFOLLOWING MEN KILLED IN ACTION:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>SERVICE NUMBER</u>	
BARD, Francis P.	WT3c	819 22 20	
BIRCHALL, Richard A.	Flc	854 13 60	
CADERETTE, J. W. Jr.,	F2c	311 90 44	USN
CARR, Paul F.	GM3c	849 76 70	
DERBELLIS, John H.	Flc	726 84 39	
GREGORY, James A.	Slc	624 12 12	
LEGGI, Joseph (n)	Flc		
LAUER, Edward W.	RM3c	711 39 37	
MEYER, Herman E.	Flc	827 78 71	
MUDRE, Steve (n)	Slc	810 09 05	
O'CONNOR, Dudley E. Jr.,	WT2c		USN
OLIVER, Clarence E.	MM3c		
SAYLOR, Arthur E., Jr.,	Flc	819 90 53	
SMITH, Charles E.	OM(AA)		
STATSBERY, Gilbert J.	S2c		
WETHERAD, Thomas	MT1c	600 93 45	

FOLLOWING MEN DEED OF COURAGE OR INJURIES RECEIVED IN ACTION:

PICKETT, R. E.	S2c	209 22 03	
OSBORNE, Jerry G.	WT1c (T)	295 51 00	USN
SEPARINI, Fulio J.	CRM(AA) (T)	253 01 92	
STAUBACH, Charles (n)	CEM(PA)		USN
STOVALL,	S2c		
THURMOND, Willard A.	Slc		
WAGNER,	Flc		

FOLLOWING MEN MISSING IN ACTION:

Lieutenant Herbert D. Trowbridge, E M
 Ensign John S. Le Clercq, III, D V(G)
 Ensign Leopold P. Riebenbauer, U.S.N.

AEAIR, Russell Jr.,	Slc		
AIRLSON, Albert L.	S2c		
ANDERTON, Wilbur E.	Rd3c		
BARTLETT, Ray E.	Flc		
BARRETT, Harold (n)	S2c	856 11 71	
BATES, Fred W.	S2c	895 72 85	
BRADY, Norbett E.	MM3c		
BRAUN, Lloyd G.	MT2c	858 27 75	
BUTLER, Vernon R.	St3c	842 71 15	
BUTLERWORTH, William F.	F2c	659 79 63	
CUMINGS, Robert P.	EM3c	897 37 68	
DAIS, John K.	S2c	931 71 01	
DECUBELLIS, Ralph (n)	Slc	830 5 78	
DOWNS, Elroy (n)	Slc	867 42 26	

(1)

ENCLOSURE (A)

3 497

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>SERVICE NUMBER</u>
FIRST, Cecil (n)	St1c	958 7950
FREYE, Albert E.	EM3c	724 55 16
GALLENINI, Leonard (n)	MM3c(T)	861 33 86
GOLDSTEIN, Leonard S.	S2c	818 53 42
GONYEA, Martin C.	PhM3c	601 17 93
GRAY, John R.	EM2c(T)	356 57 99 USN
GROVE, Fredrick A.	CWT(AA)(T)	USN
GROLLER, John J.	GM3c	
GREEN, Joseph F.	ST2c	800 80 37
GOGGINS, "J" "C"	Cox	272 67 56 USN
HARRIS, Woodrow W.	S1c	930 65
HOOD, Enoch (n)	S2c	
HAWKINS, Hubert B.	S2c	931 48 01
HAUSMAN, Donald R.	GM3c	249 72 USN
HAGG, Justin C.	MM3c	
HODGES, Troy T.	F1c	
KENSLER, Jacob D.	F1c	859 55 93
KILBURN, Fred (n)	S1c	856 14 47
KNISLEY, Charles E.	S1c	827 58 91
KUPIDLOWSKI, Chester P.	F1c	643 48 80
KYGER,	S2c	
LEVITAN, Herman	F1c	
LONGO, Louis V.	F1c	800 81 3
LACON, Shirley R.	CGM(AA)	272 40 37 USN
MAZURA, Thomas J.	SM3c	864 09 83
MILLER, Mike (n)	GM2c	283 64 58 USN
MORAN, John J.	MM1c	652 03 77
MORT, William C.	WT3c	860 65 21
MERRITT, George	FC3c(T)	630 59 83
NATTER, Charles W.	SM3c(T)	811 81 68
NEWMILLER, John J.	S2c	
ORLOWSKI, Joseph (n)	S2c	819 42
PAONE, John J.	S2c	
PIERSON, Hilton R.	CGM(AA)	266 04 36 USN
ROSS, Charles A.	S2c	930 65 73
ROZZELLE, John T.	S1c	838 49 67
SCOTT, Harold K.	S2c	908 42 94
SHAFFER, Russell W.	S2c	896 04 61
SCHAFFER, Darl H.	CM2c	615 77 90
SHEARS, Melvin	S2c	
STREHLE, Fred A.	SC1c	
SULLIVAN, John J.	EM3c	
ULICKAS, George P.	MM2c(T)	
WALLACE, Percy H.	S1c	906 42 63
WEAVER, James K.	EM2c	645 49 86
WILSON, Charles J.	S2c	246 17 65
WETHINGTON, Cloy W.	EM2c	412 50 32
ZUNAC, John R.	F1c	923 10 98
LOCKE, John Jr.,	S1c	575 16 3

(2)

ENCLOSURE (A)

FOLLOWING MEN WOUNDED IN ACTION:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>SERVICE NUMBER</u>
AGUADA, Andres (n)	COOK(AA)(T)	497 92 60 USN
BISHOP, Jackson D.	EM2c	305 96 05
BLUE, Sam (n)	S1c	830 75 69
CANTRELL, Frank (n)	COOK(AA)(T)	668 89 56
CHANCELESS, Oran R.	SM1c	356 51 00 USN
COLE, Cecil E.	Flc	838 06 07
CONWAY, John L.	COX(T)	238 17 81
COYLE, Oliver E.	S2c	930 65 67
DOUGHERTY, William J.	SC3c(T)	802 75 82
DOULL, Clifton E.	QM3c(T)	800 69 17
DRISKILL, Edward W.	S2c	935 26 97
EMANUEL, Herbert (n)	S1c	814 20 58
FARMER, Clem J.	S2c	935 26 74
FERRIS, Lin S.	Ekr3c(T)	829 63 04
FARDEY, Robert W.	S2c	258 63 38 USN
HEALES, Edward A.	S2c	758 59 00
HELMICH, Erwin E.	SC1c	573 06 62
KENSLEY, Clifton J.	S2c	935 75 25
HOGAN, Edmund F.	SC2c	376 18 43 USN
HUFFMAN, Ernest G.	S1c	931 70 60
INTERRANTE, Salvatore J.	Flc	816 77 59
KREBS, William R.	QM3c(T)	283 07 99 USN
KATSUR, William (n)	Flc	
LABBE, Wilfred J.	WF3c(T)	823 24 52
LANDRY, Edward P.	Flc	824 05 45
LEMOIR, Aldred C.	Flc	838 38 14
LOUIS, William P.	F2c	907 58 57
MENZGER, Ray L.	MT3c	951 30 10
MYERS, James E.	S2c	833 78 16
MC GASKILL, Jackson R.	S2c	575 46 77
MORIARTY, Patrick J.	Flc	852 25 09
LYNN, Roy E.	S2c	893 73 43
LIDLARD, Neal R.	SM2c	966 65 92
OLSON, Robert E.	Flc	2 2 43 20 USN
RATTERSON, James E.	WF3c(T)	893 55 86
ROBERTS, Francis L., Sr.	Flc	931 65 87
ROBINSON, Frank W.	RM3c	894 84 2
RONDE, Richard K.	RF3c	711 51 08
SACORTE, Clifford A.	TM2c(T)	668 80 07
SWIGGETT, Kenneth J.	S2c	906 42 89
TASE, Doyle E.	S1c	862 59 40
TAYLOR, Robert (n)	S2c	641 65 69
TOLPINSON, Everett L.	S2c	835 14 72
TUCK, Grover (n)	S1c	906 42 93
WALLACE, Gene W.	Y1c	624 61 02
WEBSTON, Edward E.	RF2c	615 80 48
WEINERS, Harold G.	QM3c(T)	814 71 60

(3)

ENCLOSURE (A)

FOLLOWING MEN WOUNDED IN ACTION:

Lieut. Commr., Robert W. Copeland, DE-V(G), 74669, USNR.
Lieut. William S. Burton, D-V(S), 170935, USNR.
Lieut.(jg), Thomas J. Stevenson, Jr., O-V(S), 139985, USNR.

No complete muster roll being available, this list has been compiled with the names and service numbers of killed and missing as remembered by their shipmates; therefore some service numbers and initials are missing.

No attempt has been made in this report to distinguish between the seriously wounded and slightly wounded. All survivors, including those listed above, were in the water for fifty hours or more and received treatment for shock, exposure and immersion.

R. W. COPELAND.

(4)

ENCLOSURE (A)

TBS LOG

This log has been reconstructed from memory as to actual transmissions received and sent, remembered by the radioman who kept the TBS log in Combat, the Executive Officer and Combat Officer. After reconstructing the text of this log the appropriate times have been taken from the TBS log annexed to Commander Carrier Division Twenty Five's Action Report, Serial 00100.

- 0650 Mercury 3 v Taffy 3 - We are being fired upon by enemy task force, execute upon receipt, shackle, baker uncle easy turn, Fido, Nebraska acknowledge. Fido, Nebraska, wilco, out.
- 0635 Mercury 3 v Taffy 3 - Standby to launch all planes for attack on enemy fleet 15 miles astern.
- 0658 Taffy 3 v Juggernaut - We have splashes falling astern of us. Taffy 3, roger, out.
- 0659 Mercury 3 v Taffy 3 - All great danes make full speed, zig zag fifteen degrees either side.
- 0700 Taffy 33 v Taffy 3 - Make smoke astern.
- 0701 Taffy 33 v Taffy 3 - Lay smoke screen astor of us. V. Taffy 33, wilco, out.
- 0735 Mercury 3 v Taffy 3 - Open up with pea shooters on stern.
- 0735 Taffy 33 v Taffy 3 - Deliver fish attack. Taffy 33, wilco, out.
- 0736 Taffy 33 v Juggernaut- Do you want little little fellows to go in with big.
- 0737 Juggernaut v Taffy 33- No.
- 0737 Mercury 33 v Taffy 33- Big fellows make first run, form on me in order, Droadnaught, Nebraska, Brasslock. Little fellows form up for second run. Brasslock, Juggernaut, wilco, out.
- 0754 Mercury 3 v Taffy 3 - All carriers make smoke.
- 0800 Taffy 33 v Juggernaut- My fish are off.
- 0803 Taffy 33 v Juggernaut- Fish sighted headed for Great Danes. Taffy 3, wilco, out.

- 1 -

ENCLOSURE (B)

- 0804 Taffy 33 v Dreadnaught- Exercise is completed.
- 0826 Mercury 33 v Taffy 3 - Small boys on my starboard quarter intercept heavy cruiser on my port quarter. Juggernaut, wilco, out.
- 0834 Mercury 33 v Taffy 3 - Small boys on my starboard quarter enterpose between me and enemy cruisers. Juggernaut, wilco, out.

- 2 -

ENCLOSURE (B)
3 497DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND965137
By BA NARA Date 4/19/05

U. S. S. RICHARD W. SUESENS (DE 342), Flagship,
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

File No. DIV69/A16-3
Serial No. 004
TCP:tgs

14 December 1944

SECRET

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to C.O. EX-U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS
(DE-413) Secret ltr. file DE-413/A16-3(Zbk), Serial X001,
dated 20 November 1944.

From: Commander Destroyer Escort Division SIXTY-NINE.
To : The Secretary of the Navy.
Via : (1) The Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE
(Commander Task Unit 77.4.3).
(2) The Commander Seventh Fleet.
(3) The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.

Subject: Combined Action Report, Surface Engagement off Samar,
Philippine Islands, and Report of Loss of U.S.S.
SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), on 25 October 1944.

1. Forwarded.

2. The performance of duty of the U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS
in the battle off Samar Island October 25, 1944 was in every respect
in accordance with the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.
I consider that the Commanding Officer, Lieut. Comdr. R.W. Copeland,
U.S.N.R., distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and
intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of
duty and without detriment to the mission of his command.

J. C. Phifer
T. C. PHIFER

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File
 CGD25/A16-3
 Serial:

COMMANDER CARRIER DIVISION
 TWENTY-FIVE
 c/o FLEET POST OFFICE
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on
 CO, USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS
 ltr. DE-413/A16-3/(Z:bk)
 Serial X001 of 20 Nov. 1944.

21 December 1944.

From: Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE (Commander
 Task Unit 77.4.3).
 To: The Secretary of the Navy.
 Via: (1) The Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
 (2) The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
 Subject: Combined Action Report, Surface Engagement off
 Samar, Philippine Islands, and Report of Loss of
 U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), on 25 October
 1944.

1. Forwarded.

C. A. F. Sprague
 C. A. F. SPRAGUE

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Reg. No. OM-02670
 R.S. No. 3 497

UNITED STATES FLEET
 COMMANDER SEVENTH FLEET

A16-3(2)(F-3-4/eeh)

Serial 00134

~~SECRET~~ CONFIDENTIAL
S-E-C-R-E-T

1 MAR 1945
 10 3 37
 CHIEF

THIRD ENDORSEMENT to:
 CO, USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS
 ltr DE-413/A16-3 (Z:bk)
 serial X001 of 20 Nov. 1944.

From: Commander Seventh Fleet.
 To : Secretary of the Navy.
 Via : (1) Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.

Subject: Combine Action Report, Surface Engagement off Samar, Philippine Islands, and Report of Loss of U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), on 25 October 1944.

1. Forwarded.
2. The performance of the Commanding Officer, Officers and crew of the U.S.S. SAMUEL B. ROBERTS in the surface engagement off Samar was a credit to the traditions of the Naval Service.
3. Attention is particularly invited to the comments of the Commanding Officer on following points:
 - (a) The efficacy of smoke screens in reducing the effectiveness of Japanese gunfire. (page 4)
 - (b) The value of retaining torpedo armament on Destroyer Escorts of the SAMUEL B. ROBERTS type. (page 7)
 - (c) The proven value of previous recognition training in a Naval Action.
4. By copy of this endorsement, the Commander Destroyer Escort Division 69 is requested to obtain and mail copy of this report to the Commander Seventh Fleet for his file.

T. C. Kinkaid
 T. C. KINKAID

Copy to:
 ComCarDiv 25
 ComCortDiv 69 (2)

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② 95331 **FILMED**

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DECLASSIFIED
 Authority ND965133
 By BAR NARA Date 4/19/05