

CLASSIFIED

NND 968133

ARA Date 5-9-02

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

May 20, 1942.

From: Air Officer.
 To : Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
 Subject: Report on the Air Engagement and subsequent sinking of the LEXINGTON, 8 May 1942.

1. Upon commencing to write this report the day after the action, I discovered that my mind was filled with a confused group of events which were difficult to arrange in their proper order. The details of the events were perfectly clear but their arrangement in proper order was impossible until I consulted the rough log and the war diary which had most fortunately been saved. Where exact times are given below they have been taken from those logs.

2. The day (8 May) commenced with the usual 45 minute flight quarters and launching of the morning search. The search was a 12 single plane sections search to 200 miles in a 210° sector, median north, and a 6 single plane section search to 100 miles in a 150° sector, median south. VS-2 had only 12 planes available for search, and they took the longer sector. VB-2 the shorter one. In addition, 4 VF were launched for Combat Patrol. Completed launching about 0635. After this brought up 12 VT-2 planes from hangar deck armed with torpedoes.

0820:- Received contact report from a plane by voice "2 CV, 4 CA bearing 006°, distance 120, speed 15". Garble and interference prevented hearing plane's call. This prevented the checking of the reported bearing relative to Point Zed since we did not know the sector of the contacting plane, (Point Zed 14-40 S - 156° E) nor was the message authenticated which is understandable since the method prescribed was too complicated for use in an airplane. The contact report was then repeated on key by 2-S-2 and received satisfactorily. Could not get 2-S-2 after this to check authenticator. 2-S-3 then repeated the message by voice and we checked him by name for authenticity. Everything looked all right, so we launched Attack Group at 0907 - completed about 0925, the YORKTOWN starting a little ahead of us. 11 VB, 4 VS, 12 VT, 9 VF plus 4 VF relief Combat Patrol were launched by LEXINGTON. Since the distance to the enemy was so great (180 miles) I personally told Lieutenant GAYLOR (C.O. of Air Group Fighters) to make the trip if gasoline permitted and that his presence over the enemy carrier would be of considerable value even if he did not do much fighting. I also told him that if they encountered the enemy Air Group on the way, to break off and attack,

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returning to the LEXINGTON with them. At this time (pilots were manning planes) Lieutenant Commander HAMILTON called my attention to the fact that his planes had only 220 gallons of gasoline and said that he would like to have 250 gallons (full). I told him that we were trying to get both groups off as nearly together as possible and there was no time to give him any additional gasoline. Since the planes carried 1000 pound bombs, a full fuel tank required extra wind for the overload condition. There was sufficient surface wind that morning and we could have launched in this heavy condition. I forgot that the planes were gassed to 220 gallons until it was too late to fill them. However, 220 gallons was more than enough fuel to permit them to travel the distances involved.

- 0928:- Commenced landing Combat Patrol and 6 VB who had returned from search. Continued landings as YORKTOWN was into wind until 10 SBD's were on board.
- 1012:- Launched 6 VB and 4 VS Anti-Torpedo Plane Patrol, and must have landed some more VS-2 (5).
- 1030:- Landed 1 TBD with engine trouble.
- 1057:- Fighter Director reported group of planes 020°, 52 miles.
- 1106:- Completed launching 5 VF and 5 VS as Anti-Torpedo Plane Patrol (2-F-3 was put into commission giving us 19 VF in the air).
- 1116:- Enemy VT were observed diving to attack on our port bow. Captain started turning to right to comb the torpedo tracks astern.
- 1120:- One torpedo struck port side just under #2 5" gun gallery.
- 1120 $\frac{1}{2}$:- One torpedo struck port side just at the forward elevator. Several torpedoes were observed at this time approaching on the port quarter. The ship had stopped swinging right and was started left. I called to the Captain to go back to the right, because there were more torpedoes coming. This he did. Two of the approaching torpedoes broached about 100 yards out - one resumed its depth and struck the ship at the stem - the other continued on the surface and passed clear. Two others passed about 100 to 200 feet ahead. These last four torpedoes listed, approached the ship from broad on the port quarter. Two others appeared running deep from

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just abaft the beam and passed under the ship between the forward elevator and #2 gun gallery. Another torpedo appeared from broad on the port beam and struck a little aft of the forward elevator.

The first three or four torpedoes were dropped from about 1000 yards, but after that the drops were outside of 3000 yards. I believe that the effectiveness of our AA fire was responsible for this as I saw about three of the first torpedo planes shot down. Also the volume of 5" bursts was so great that it obscured the approaching planes. Several of the torpedo planes were noticed streaming gasoline as they flew past, indicating they had been hit. One burst into flames heading directly at the ship, executed a double snap roll and crashed into the water just under the flare of the port bow at #2 1.1 battery.

The dive bombers appeared just as the torpedo planes were finishing. One of the first bombs hit just aft of the port beam about 50 yards out. It was about $\frac{1}{2}$ second delayed action and only threw up spray about 50 feet high. Most of the bombs went over. One 1000 pound near miss was received close aboard just under 20 mm. guns in gig boat pocket. Another was close aboard well aft under the port quarter. One of the last bombs released struck the side of the ship at the after end of the #2 gun gallery. I thought it was delayed action AP for the resulting hole was small. I was watching all releases and ducked behind my splinter shield on this one. The explosion raised the flight deck about 6" in the vicinity of the jagged hole. The bomb had hit the fire outlet on the gun gallery, so we ran hoses across the flight deck. The amdyco didn't seem to help much, although there was no flame appearing on the flight deck. I believe the marines put the fire out with below deck hoses.

- 1132:- The log shows the attack was completed. One of our SBD's tried to approach the ship and apparently was shot down by cruiser and destroyer fire. At least he landed in the water apparently under partial control while they were firing. The signal "Easy Cast Hypo" was hoisted, but no one could stop the fire in time.
- 1134:- Another SBD tried to land aboard through surface ship firing. We were about 120° out of the wind and turning hard right with about 20 knots. Signal Officer waved him off but to no avail. He struck the deck in a wild diving turn, caught and broke #2 wire and finally went over the side just aft of the barrier taking an arresting gear oper-

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ator with him. Two people were observed in the water and a DD was signalled to the rescue. I believe he reported a successful recovery later.

1145:- Bomb hit hole was no longer smoking, so we washed down the flight deck in vicinity to clear amdyco mess.

Shortly after the enemy planes had withdrawn, both elevators were reported to be permanently out of commission because of torpedo damage to the bottle wells located below the forward elevator well. About the same time I sent aft for Lieut.(jg) DEITZER and asked him for a report on the gasoline system. He reported the port side out of commission. He stated that he had personally made the inspection.

We were turning into the wind from a northerly heading when the SBD went over the side. Very shortly thereafter we landed on board 4 VF Combat Patrol and 9 SBD's. Three of these (2-S-1, 2-S-2 and 2-S-19) were from the morning search, the rest from the Anti-Torpedo Plane Patrol. While these planes were being respotted for take-off, I reported to the Captain the condition of the gasoline system and that I was not refueling until I was certain all fires were out. We planned to delay until just before the Attack Group returned. I also reported the condition of the elevators and explained that we would have to throw some planes over the side to make room for the rest. Two of the SBD's on deck were badly shot up so the propellers and loose equipment were removed for spares and the planes pushed over the ramp.

The log shows a report of all topside fires out at 1142 and a further report of all fires out at 1233.

About 1230 we commenced refueling the planes on deck. The fighters were completed first and were launched about 1243. Just after the last fighter had been launched, a terrific explosion occurred below decks forward that vented to the flight deck through the bomb elevator. After a little delay the fueling of the SBD's was completed and their launching finished at 1259. From then on we continued landing operations until we had taken on board 11 VB, 1 VS and 1 VF of the Attack Group at 1328. The gasoline system had been secured just after the explosion at 1247 and was never again reopened.

At 1400 we started into the wind to land the torpedo planes which were fired upon by the YORKTOWN during their approach to the disposition. At 1413 completed landing 10

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VT and 1 VF. Sometime before this, Air Plot had reported 1 VT and 2 VF landing in the water about 30 miles short of the ship because of lack of fuel. The Captain requested Admiral FITCH to send a destroyer back for them which I believe he did. CLAG and 3 VS were still missing and Air Plot reported they could not find the ship. Radios were out of commission in Radio IV for some time after the Japanese attack. Commander AULT reported by radio that he had obtained a 1000 pound bomb hit and that he was wounded in the left arm and leg. When our radio and Radar went out of commission again, as result of the internal explosions, the YORKTOWN was requested to try and bring the lost planes in. She was not successful as these planes are missing.

After the first internal explosion at 1247, there were numerous small explosions until at 1442 a large explosion occurred in the forward elevator well. This explosion raised the elevator about six inches, and flames came out around the edges. Communication with the hangar deck had been intermittent for some time due to the large quantities of smoke. After some delay I learned from Lieutenant HIRSCH that the hangar deck sprinkling system was on and that the fire was confined to the forward elevator well. Fire hoses on the flight deck were able to put a little water down the elevator and succeeded in reducing the fire somewhat for a short time. Later this fire increased when all water pressure was lost on the flight deck. This fire slowly spread aft during the afternoon and finally reached and exploded the torpedoes on the hangar deck mezzanine after all hands had abandoned ship. Shortly after four o'clock the destroyer MORRIS came alongside and gave us two fire hoses which were put down the elevator but to no avail. Since the ship was slowly going down by the head we moved all planes aft to shift this much weight. This was accomplished about 1500.

All squadron personnel were assembled aft on the flight deck and were ordered to embark on the destroyers that were standing by. This word was given some time before 1700. These personnel plus wounded were removed by the MORRIS and another DD astern.

The word to formally abandon ship was given by the Captain at 1707 upon the advice of Admiral FITCH. All preparations had been completed some time before this. The disembarkation was conducted in a very orderly manner into life rafts thrown over the bow and stern.

About 1750, the Captain, the Navigator and myself left

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the bridge, all hands forward being in the water and only a few remaining on deck aft. When we arrived on the flight deck, we discovered some 12 or 15 wounded men being disembarked alongside of the bridge and stack structure. These men had been brought forward from the after stations too late to be placed on the MORRIS. The three of us assisted by Ensign KNOX put four wounded men over the side into a whale boat thus assisting two small parties headed by Lieut.(jg) LAIRD and a boatswain's mate. When this was completed, the Navigator and myself lowered ourselves into life rafts as the destroyer HAMMANN came alongside.

By this time the fire had spread to the flight deck and the internal explosions were occurring every two or three minutes, making the HAMMANN'S position very dangerous. After rescuing a large portion of the men in the water, she backed clear attempting to drag clear the remaining rafts with tow lines. As she backed clear, some 1.1 ammunition at batteries 3, 4, 5 and 6 exploded. Had the HAMMANN remained alongside, her bridge would have been stripped. The HAMMANN'S whale boat was sent back to pick up the remaining people in life rafts.

The HAMMANN then put her bow under the stern of the LEX picking up men and attempted to pull clear the life rafts that were being held alongside by the drift of the ship. Two violent explosions on the flight deck covered the DD with debris and on my advice of the danger of torpedo explosions in the hangar deck the HAMMANN again backed clear. The HAMMANN'S whale boat was again despatched in and finally succeeded in dragging clear the remaining four or five life rafts.

I learned later that shortly after the HAMMANN backed clear of the starboard side, a violent explosion blew out the quarterdeck door and killed four men in a life raft near by. Had the HAMMANN remained alongside, this explosion would have blown her bow off together with some one hundred men assisting in rescue work.

I wish to take this opportunity to call attention to the outstanding performance of the HAMMANN, her Captain and her crew. His seamanship was superb; their courage without equal. With total disregard for their own safety, the Captain twice placed his ship close aboard the burning LEXINGTON withdrawing only on the advice of LEXINGTON Officers when they felt that further risk of the ship was not warranted. Also to the HAMMANN'S whale boat which time after time returned to the side of the LEXINGTON

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removing the final survivors. The story is told in the total survivors on board - 478 officers and men.

3. I heartily concur with the Chief Engineer's recommendation that a separate medal and ribbon be awarded to all participants in the battle of the Coral Sea, 7 & 8 May 1942. All men and officers performed their duties in a most satisfactory manner, fully living up to the finest traditions of the Navy.


H. S. DUCKWORTH,
Commander, U.S. Navy.

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U.S.S. LEXINGTON

June 12, 1942.

Confidential

From: Air Officer,
To: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

Subject: Supplementary Report on the Air Action in the Coral Sea on 5 May 1942.

1. The following supplementary report is submitted after consultation with the various officers and men of the Air Department and other Departments of the LEXINGTON.

2. The following torpedo hits were observed by the Assistant Air Officer and myself and confirmed by members of the flight deck crews.

1. Hit frame #10
2. Hit frame #18
3. Hit frame #64
4. Hit frame #86

Later I talked to Ensign THOMAS, battery officer of "Cast" 20 mm. battery (Gig boat pocket) who stated that there were two torpedoes running close together which struck at frame #86 practically simultaneously. This raises the total torpedo hits to five and also accounts for the damage in vicinity of fire rooms #2, 4 and 6.

3. The following bomb hits and near misses were similarly determined:

- (a) One 1000 lb. instantaneous near miss about frame #200, port.
- (b) One A.P. bomb $\frac{1}{2}$ second delay 50 yard near miss opposite frame #100 port side.
- (c) One 1000 lb. instantaneous near miss at frame #88 port side (Gig boat pocket).
- (d) One 250 lb. instantaneous hit in stack, setting off the siren.
- (e) One 500 lb. instantaneous hit just aft of #6 5" gun frame #50.

(NOTE) The weights given above are not definitely accurate, but are an estimate based upon the relative power of the several explosions.

4. The following facts have been determined concerning the gasoline system:

- (a) The system was secured during the action, all lines above the armored deck being drained and all pressure removed.

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- (b) Shortly after the action the starboard side of the system was tested under pressure, found satisfactory and again secured.
- (c) That refueling of planes was commenced from the starboard system forward of frame 90 about 1230 after word was received that all fires were out.
- (d) That when the explosion occurred at 1247, planes were being refueled.
- (e) That the starboard system was then shut down, inspected and no leaks sighted. Electrical failure prevented draining the lines.
- (f) That immediately after the attack the port system was thoroughly inspected for breaks in lines in the CPO quarters, and found secure and intact.
- (g) That both starboard and port salt water expansion tanks were found to be full of salt water at 1230. This indicates that no large leaks existed in tanks or lines on either side at that time.
- (h) That both E valves on the quarterdeck were closed, thus making it impossible for gasoline to be pumped from the starboard side to the port side.
- (i) That the port gasoline control room was entered and inspected after the action and no damage found, but in view of the outboard piping being damaged this side was secured.
- (j) That the port gasoline control room was flooded with O2 and salt water from the fire main at about 1200 using the quarterdeck controls.
- (k) That the starboard control room was not so flooded.
- (l) That there was no fire or dense smoke on the quarterdeck immediately after the explosion at 1247 or at 1255.
- (m) That all operators left the quarterdeck at about 1248 and it was again visited by Lieutenant (jg) DRITZER of the gasoline detail at 1255. At this time there was no fire in the compartment although an instantaneous flash occurred under the overhead accompanied by explosions in the adjacent forward compartment.
- (n) That Machinist DAVIDSON was on the quarterdeck at the 1247 explosion and reports heavy concussion effect but no evidence of flame or fire in that compartment. He places the explosion as being under the CPO Mess Room.

5. After the completion of the attack, the hangar deck was in the following condition.

- (a) One bomb fragment entered the hangar deck at about frame 200 from a near miss.

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- (b) Smoke from the bomb hit on the flight deck frame #50 filled the hangar deck entering elevator well via main deck openings, but was cleared by the exhaust blowers.
- (c) About 75% of the lights were out in the forward bay.
- (d) There was no fire.

6. The explosion at 1247 came from forward of the elevator well. The blast knocked some of the men down and broke a compressed air line in the elevator well. Upon learning of the casualties in Central Station, the hangar deck crew assisted in their removal. The forward end of the hangar deck was used as an emergency dressing station for some 25 casualties until the smoke and fumes drove them aft to the fuselage deck. Each succeeding blast filled the hangar deck with more smoke and fumes. The heat was so intense that the casualties were moved from the fuselage deck to the main deck and torpedo work shop. There was no fire on the hangar deck during this period.

7. At 1442 there was a violent explosion in the forward elevator well. All lights were extinguished by this blast. The heat of the blast was intense but no flame was observed aft of the after elevator. The forward elevator well was afire as result of this blast and burned continuously thereafter. The heat, fire and smoke were so intense in the forward end of the hangar deck, that personnel were unable to enter the areas to fight the fire. The hangar deck water curtains were turned on about 1500, and delivered a small ineffectual quantity of water. Foamite was not used on the hangar deck at any time. Prior to the 1442 explosion there was no fire in the vicinity and thereafter there was so much fire that the area could not be entered.

H.S. DUCKWORTH,
Commander, U.S. Navy.

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CV2/A4-3/A16

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

SECRET

May 13, 1942.

From: Air Operations Officer.
 To : Commanding Officer.

Subject: Air Operations of LEXINGTON, 7-8 May, 1942 -
 Report of.

1. Account of Action, morning of May 7th.

(a) Narrative.

(1) During the afternoon of May 6, 1942, orders were received from ComTaskForce SEVENTEEN to prepare for air attack upon enemy (Orange) forces reported to be concentrated in the vicinity of MISIMA ISLAND in the LOUISIADÉ Archipelago, south-east of the PAPUAN Peninsula, NEW GUINEA.

(2) At 0926 (Zone 11) May 7, search planes from YORKTOWN reported contact with an Orange combatant force consisting of 2 aircraft carrier, 4 cruisers and _____ destroyers, approximate bearing from TF-17 325°(T), distance about 180 miles. At about 0953 the LEXINGTON launched an attack group. The attack group consisted of the LEXINGTON Air Group Commander and two additional SBD, 12 TBD-1 of VT-2, 16 SBD-2 of VB-2, 11 SBD-3 of VS-2 and 10 F4F-3 of VF-2 to act as fighter escort. The TBD's were loaded with one torpedo each, the SBD-2s with one 1000-lb. bomb each (1400 sec. fuse setting), the SBD-3s with one 500-lb (1/3 sec. fuse setting) and two 116-lb. bombs each and the Group Commander section same as VS-2. The F4F-3s carried a full load of caliber .50 machine gun ammunition, belt loading being approximately 2 A.P., 1 tracer, 1 incendiary cartridges. All aircraft carried full gasoline, 180 gallons for the TBDs, 147 gallons for the F4F-3s, and 250 gallons for the SBDs. All gasoline was 100 octane, aviation. 8 F4F were retained as combat patrol over the ship, 2 SBD of VB-2 and 6 SBD of VS-2 remained as anti-torpedo defense patrol. The Air Group departed, followed about 15 minutes later by the YORKTOWN Air Group. The LEXINGTON attack group radios were set on 6645 kcs, the combat patrol on 6540 kcs. and the anti-torpedo patrol on 3265 kcs. YE was turned on all during the attack.

(3) After the Attack Group departed the Force steamed on a westerly course, point option having been given to the Attack Group as 290°(T), speed 15 kts. During the absence of the Group one KAWANISHI 4-engine patrol plane was intercepted by a F4F of the YORKTOWN combat patrol and shot down in flames.

The weather at the time of the launch was good, with wind 17 knots from 110 degrees true, sea choppy, visibility excellent, scattered clouds with rain squalls to the westward.

After the launch the Force moved into an area of heavy rain squalls with occasional small patches of clear weather.

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(4) The Group attacked and returned at 1309.

(b) Damage to Enemy.

(1) All attacks made by the LEXINGTON group, except for one 116-lb. bomb dropped upon a heavy cruiser by a VS-2 pilot, were upon one aircraft carrier. This was the only carrier encountered. It was escorted by a force estimated to comprise four heavy cruisers and four destroyers.

(2) Results of the attack were reported by Group pilots as follows: VS-2 attacked first with eleven 500-lb. bombs. The results of drops were not observed by the pilots but a conservative estimate by them gave at least three direct hits, with more probable. VB-2 and VT-2 made a simultaneous dive bombing and torpedo attack which resulted in six certain 1000-lb bomb hits, two more probable, two unobserved and six misses out of sixteen bombs; VT-2 scored 9 torpedo hits out of 12 released. VF-2 shot down in flames 2 type zero fighters and damaged one single-float biplane seaplane when three planes attempted to intercept; the seaplane made a force landing on the water. An SBD of VS-2 shot down with fixed guns one type zero fighter which was pursuing a second SBD, while the free gunner in one of the VS-2 planes shot down an intercepting type zero fighter. Group command section scored one 500-lb bomb hit on CV.

(3) The carrier, believed to be the ZUIKAKU class, was observed by all pilots to burn fiercely in a manner obviously beyond control. Several severe explosions, other than those resulting from bomb or torpedo hits, were observed, and before the attack was completed the ship was almost entirely hidden by smoke and flame. The smoke cleared before all the LEXINGTON planes left the area and the ship had disappeared. Photographs taken at close range by attacking torpedo planes showed planes still in their attack dives and torpedo approaches when the ship was burning throughout its length.

(c) Damage or Injury to Own Forces.

(1) One SBD-3 of VS-2, 2-S-10, piloted by Lieut. E.H. Allen, USN, ROUSE, ARM.2c, radioman, was attacked by one or more enemy defense planes after the bomb had been released at the objective. The plane was observed to crash into the water. It did not burn.

(2) One SBD-3 of VS-2, 2-S-9, piloted by Ensign Anthony J. Quigley, USNR, WHEELHOUSE, ARM.3c, radioman, had its ailerons jammed, cause not known to the writer. Ensign Quigley announced by radio that he would fly to ROSSELL ISLAND.

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he was apparently uninjured, but it is not known whether he attempted to land the plane or parachuted, or whether he reached ROSSELL ISLAND. Apparently the engine was undamaged.

(3) One SBD-3 of VS-2, piloted by Lieut. (jg) HALL, USNR, was attacked by enemy defense aircraft. One bullet entered the plane from ahead through the side panel of the windshield and penetrated the left shoulder of the radioman, PHILLIPS, C.C., RM.3c. The self-sealing gasoline tanks of this plane did not leak after being penetrated by three bullets, caliber unknown.

(4) One SBD-3 of VS-2, piloted by Ensign LEPPLA, USNR, was attacked by enemy defense aircraft but returned safely. The pilot suffered many superficial wounds, left arm and hand, apparently from fragments of an explosive shell. A rifle caliber projectile was found resting on the pilot's parachute seat-pack upon his return to the ship. This pilot is the one mentioned in paragraph (b)(2), who shot down with fixed guns a type zero fighter.

(5) Ensign A. J. Schultz, USNR, suffered superficial shrapnel wounds in right arm and right thigh. He was piloting an SBD of VS-2.

(d) Enemy Tactics.

(1) From observations of the Air Group Commander it is known that the enemy carrier occupied a position at the center of her supporting forces. There were light or heavy cruisers, type not known, and four destroyers. The cruisers occupied positions at the corners of a square, one at each bow of the carrier and one at each quarter, distance from carrier to cruiser about four miles. The destroyers also appeared to be about four miles from the carrier and they occupied the spaces between the cruisers. Pilots said that the resultant formation seemed wide open and that they found no difficulty in avoiding surface AA fire during approach or retirement.

(2) The maneuvers to avoid our air attack suggested that they were based upon a predetermined plan because all turns of the carrier were 90 degrees.

(e) Enemy Air Protection.

(1) Enemy aircraft were in the air and climbing and intercepted the first dive bombers before they attacked. All enemy attention seemed directed on our first bombers (VS-2), and it was the planes of this group which met the most opposition. VB-2, following in later from an altitude of 18,000 feet,

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and VT-2, which approached at the same time from 10 miles out at 100 feet, were practically unmolested by enemy aircraft. There was no evidence to indicate that the enemy had had early knowledge of the approach of our aircraft.

2. Account of Action, Afternoon of May 7th.

(a) Narrative.

(1) After recovery of the morning attack group Task Force SEVENTEEN continued on a westerly course at speed 15 knots. Combat and anti-torpedo defense patrols were kept in the air or in Condition One on deck.

(2) Late in the afternoon, at about 1735, radar indications were received of an unidentified force approaching from the west. These planes were headed directly toward the Force. The weather was overcast and squally, with occasional rain and many low clouds.

(3) Fighter Director was in the LEXINGTON. Combat patrols from both carriers were directed to intercept. At about twenty or twenty five miles west of LEXINGTON our combat patrol intercepted nine enemy fighters, type zero, proceeding eastward. These planes were flying in a group with five planes in Vee formation and two two-plane sections following astern. Our patrol attacked from astern and above, apparently unobserved. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The first section leader attacked the two rear-most enemy and shot them down in flames. His wingman did not shoot. These planes retired. The following combat section attacked the second rear enemy section, downing one in flames and holing the gas tanks in the second. At this time the five leading enemy planes became aware of the attack and broke their formation in a "scatter" fashion. An explosion and fire seen at this time by our retiring patrol was believed to be a collision between an enemy fighter and the section leader of our second combat section, who was pressing home his first attack. This pilot ~~was~~, Lieut. (jg) P.G. Baker, USN, was not heard on the radio during the engagement and did not return to the ship. Repeated attempts to contact him by radio failed.

(4) Combat patrol planes returned to their ships after the interception. At 1825 our planes commenced landing aboard the LEXINGTON. The sun set at 1829. Vessels of the screen reported visual contact with unidentified aircraft in their vicinity. These planes appeared to be enemy torpedo or bombing type, flying very low. YORKTOWN aircraft circling to land were readily identified as own fighters and not the strange planes. The unidentified planes flashed

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the code letter "F" which was interpreted by our signal force as "Friendly" in accordance with instructions in PAC 70, Pacific Fleet Communications Doctrine. The one-letter reply for the hour was therefore made by LEXINGTON, whereupon 8 or 9 aircraft turned on their running lights and assumed a position approximately in the landing circle. Vessels of the Force which were close to the strange aircraft opened fire upon them. The planes extinguished their lights and flew away. These were undoubtedly part of an enemy attack group returning to the parent ship, which in the darkness they confused with our own.

(5) All but one of our fighters (2-F-14, Lt.(jg) P.G. Baker, USN) returned aboard at _____.

(b) Damage to Enemy.

(1) Three enemy fighters were shot down and seen to crash in the water, burning. One fighter was seen to be streaming gasoline and was a possible loss. It is believed that another fighter collided with one of our own and was lost. The final damage therefore was three fighters shot down, one probably destroyed by collision, one possibly forced down.

(c) Damage to LEXINGTON Force.

(1) One fighter lost probably by collision with enemy fighter.

3. Account of Action, May 8th.

(a) Narrative.

(1) At 0625 LEXINGTON launched a search group as follows: 12 SBD of VS-2 and 6 SBD of VB-2 to cover 360° about the force. The northern search, 14 single-plane sections, covered an arc of 210 degrees to 200 miles, geographic, median of the search 000 degrees, true. The southern sector, 150 degrees, was covered to 100 miles geographic by 4 single-plane scouts, median of search 180 degrees, true. A combat patrol of 4 VF was also launched at this time.

(2) At 0828 a Japanese aircraft contact report was intercepted. This report gave position and disposition of our force.

(3) At 0835 a LEXINGTON scout contacted and reported an enemy force of 2 CV, 4 CA and many destroyers, position 175 miles bearing 020 degrees true from LEXINGTON.

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Report of.

(4) At 0907 commenced launching attack group, 13 F4F-3 of VF-2, 12 TBD-1 of VT-2, 11 SBD-2 of VB-2, 4 SBD-3 of VS-2 and the Air Group Commander in an SBD-3, as described in paragraph (2), except that the 11 planes of VB-2 were gassed to 220 gallons and radio frequencies were set up. The weather was very good, with a wind of 15 knots from 125°(T), visibility and ceiling unlimited, about four tenths cloud cover, slight sea running from southeast. After the launch our course was maintained into the wind until returning search planes were landed and combat patrols in the air were relieved on station and landed. 10 SBDs from the morning search were launched as anti-torpedo patrol at 1013.

(5) An enemy four-engine KAWANISHI patrol plane shadowing the Force was shot down in flames at 1016 by a YORKTOWN combat patrol plane; the fire was visible from the LEXINGTON.

(6) At 1028 1 TBD of the Attack Group and 5 of the morning Search Group were landed. The TBD had experienced engine trouble.

(7) At 1050 the last of the morning Search Group were landed.

(8) Radar indications showed an unidentified force bearing 58 miles bearing 020°(T), on course toward TF-17 at 1057. Our course was changed into the wind; launching of 5 F4F and 5 SBD defense patrol was completed at 1106 and course 028 degrees, true, was resumed.

(9) Enemy aircraft appeared and were taken under fire by LEXINGTON at 1116. Operations of own defense aircraft were not observed. Fire ceased at 1133.

(10) At 1133 2-B-13, Ensign F.R. McDonald, USNR, pilot, and HAMILTON, C.H.O., ARM.3c, radioman, fell over the port side during an attempted landing on deck. The pilot had been wounded in the right shoulder by enemy gunfire and lost control of his plane during the landing. Both pilot and passenger were recovered by U.S.S. MORRIS. Ensign McDonald's right upper arm was broken in two places in the plane crash.

(11) Several F4Fs and SBDs of the defense patrols landed aboard at 1135.

(12) At 1243 were launched 5 F4F, 7 SBDs of VS-2 and 2 SBDs of VB-2. During this launch several aircraft were landed.

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(13) at 1322 were landed 11 VB, 1 VS and 1 VF.

(14) At 1407 were landed 10 TBD, one having landed on the water out of fuel about 20 miles bearing about 295°, true, from the LEXINGTON at about 1355. One F4F was also landed at 1407. During the approach to the landing circle these planes were fired upon by friendly vessels. Because of low fuel they had approached without making the usual identification procedure maneuvers. A warning was sent out on the warning net that the approaching planes were friendly. All these planes landed aboard safely and were the last planes operated from the LEXINGTON. LEXINGTON planes patrolling (5 VF, 7 VS, 2 VB) were later landed aboard YORKTOWN.

(b) Damage to Enemy.

1000 (1) From information based upon the incomplete pilot reports available it appears that the enemy suffered damage from two 500-lb. bombs dropped on the flight deck, and from at least two, probably three, torpedo hits. The carrier was the only ship attacked by LEXINGTON aircraft. 11 TBDs of VT-2 attacked, as did 3 or 4 SBDS of VS-2 in the Group Command section. After the launch our course was maintained into the wind until returning search planes were landed and combat patrols in the air were relieved on station and landed. 10 SBDS from the morning search were launched as anti-torpedo patrol at 1013. The weather in the vicinity of the target was bad. at 55 miles from the LEXINGTON the torpedo planes encountered at 1300 foot ceiling which forced them below it. VB-2, flying at 16,000 feet, could occasionally see VT-2 through open areas among the heavy ~~stratus~~ cumulus clouds. VB-2 descended to search for the enemy but had not yet discovered him when shortage of fuel forced them to jettison their bombs and return to the LEXINGTON. The VT Squadron joined up after the attack and proceeded as a unit, flying at about 50 feet above the water. They encountered a group of enemy aircraft apparently returning from their attack upon our Force. Fighters accompanying this group made ineffectual attacks upon our planes and appeared reluctant to closely approach the formation. They made several half-hearted single plane attacks and started a small fire in some rags in one plane. The fire was extinguished without damage. One plane of VT-2 was forced down by fuel exhaustion. It was piloted by Lt. (jg) Thornhill, USNR and it is probable that the personnel were recovered by a destroyer which was dispatched to pick them up. When our attack planes left the enemy carrier it was burning and smoking and appeared too damaged to operate aircraft. It was still underway.

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(c) Damage or Injury to Our Forces (Aircraft).

(1) Of 13 VF which accompanied the Attack Group only 6 are known to have returned to LEXINGTON. Some may have landed aboard YORKTOWN. Of

(2) Of 4 VS in the Group Command section only one returned to LEXINGTON, Ensign Haschke. Commander LEXINGTON Air Group was in voice contact with LEXINGTON until our radio went out. He was lost and unable to use his special homing equipment, apparently because his radioman, previously reported as wounded, was unable to turn it on for him. The controls for the equipment are in the radioman's cockpit. No radar trace identifiable as that of the Group Commander appeared on the radar plot. He climbed in response to instructions but did not appear. When LEXINGTON radar and radio went out YORKTOWN was instructed by visual signal to work the Group Commander on 6645 kos, the LEXINGTON search and attack frequency. Unless YORKTOWN contacted him immediately after this signal was made it is questionable that the plane contained enough fuel to enable him to return to the ship. The Group Commander had reported earlier that he was wounded.

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THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA.

Report of Action 7-8 May, 1942, by Fighter Director.

7 May 1942.

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0700 Yorktown launched 12 (?) scouts to search 200 miles covering a sector of 120° median 315° (?). Cruiser launched SOC's for inner and intermediate patrol. The intermediate patrol was a source of constant worry as they did not stay on the screen and we were forced to investigate by vectoring fighters. Many of which turned out to be SOC's. We undoubtedly missed 1-2 Jap shadowers and wasted radio silence and gasoline on too many of our own people. In the future these patrols should never be used unless better organized as to their tactics and unless they have I.F.F. It would have been better if they had stayed down low and off the radar screen. They were finally recalled and the patrol secured.

0730 Lexington launched 9 VSB anti-torpedo patrol and 4 VF for combat patrol. During the period immediately following we were being shadowed by at least two Bogies which we were unable to intercept, one came in at the same time Yorktown scouts were returning from search on 270° distance 25 miles where he began circling, a combat section was vectored but recalled before contact could be made by order other than that of F.D.O. (Fighter Director Officer) when it was felt that planes were identified as friendly, (by circling). Later because the

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circling continued, fighters were re-vestored but after a heartbreaking chase were unable to intercept. The Jap apparently saw our fighters but they could not sight him. The section leader Lt. (jg) Clark later reported big black clouds in the area where he was searching. Another heartbreaking chase was made on bogey about 0900 when at one time we had three sections chasing the bogey, approaching him on different courses. This bogey withdrew to 45 miles where he went off the screen. Again the section leader Ens. Eder reported tall columns of puffy clouds which made excellent coverage for a plane wishing to escape. There is no doubt that our force was shadowed continuously for a considerable part of the day by Kawanishi and carrier based aircraft.

- 0835 VS-2 scout reported enemy position and we prepared to launch attack group. No doubt enemy shadowers observed our launching.
- 0925 Launched 4 VF Combat patrol and began launching Attack group of 9 VF, 28 VSB and 12 TBD. Ten scouts had 500-lb. bombs and 18 bombers 1000-lb. bombs.
- 1010 Launching completed.
- 1040 Landed patrols. Yorktown completed launching her attack group consisting of 8 VF, 34 VSB and VTB.

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At this period we were passing through rain squalls and VS 42 scouts were returning from search. All scouts (all of our planes for that matter) must have I.F.F. as quickly as possible. Twice two sections of our fighters were vectored to orbit at stations to intercept doubtful bogeys. The fighters were placed on stations 10-15 miles from the fleet center and ordered not to lose sight of the force since it is very difficult to keep an accurate check on them when they are in that close and lots of other planes are cavorting around such as inner and anti-torpedo patrols. Our own fighters were not hard to follow as they had IFF.

- 1130 Lieut. Crommelin of VF 42 was vectored successfully and he shot down a Kawanishi at 025⁰ distance 15 miles. There was no rain at the time but the weather seemed foggy.
- 1145 Lexington launched 4 VF landed 4 VF and 5 SBD.
- 1204 Yorktown launched 12 VSB anti-torpedo patrol 2 VF and landed 4 VF. The attack group were nearly at their objective. The bogeys were giving us a rest for a change. Our radar operators were doing an excellent job and were furnishing us with sufficient information to evaluate the situation within reach of our radar. Ensign Henslee, Asst. Fighter Director officer was especially useful and was proving himself to be extremely capable. He is a little older than the others, very quick, intelligent and resourceful.

The other assistant fighter director officers do a swell job but Henslee has "it". Guymon ACMW did not have much chance to work until late in the day.

- 1240 Lt. Comdr. Dixon reported "Scratch one flat top". We remained in the vicinity of the Ryukoku and positively saw it sink. Ensign Tony Quigley reported one aileron shot away, unable to return to ship and that he would land on an island probably Russell. Our returning aircraft appeared on the screen 50-60 miles away by side of the IFF. Yorktown group returned about the same time. We should have designated some of our IFF planes to accompany Yorktown groups, like wise we should have paired Yorktown fighters up with our people in order to simplify the problem of identification. We tried to do this in the air on the 8th but don't believe the order was ever carried out.
- 1300 Carriers began recovering returning aircraft.
- 1304 Lex launched 6 VSB and 6 VF.
- 1312 Bogey 290/75 same @ 1316 290/82.
- We had several plots from time to time on this bogey which was a large group which must have been the Japanese attack group looking for us. They were on a Southwesterly course.
- 1345 Lex completed landing 27 VSB - 12 TBD - 14 VF.
- Our losses 1 VSB, the pilot, Quigley, probably alive on

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on Rossell Island. Yorktown lost one bomber. Yorktown
 apparently attacked the same carrier our people did
 which was in a sinking condition when they arrived.

They could have looked for the other carrier or gotten the
 cruisers and destroyers. At this time it was difficult to
 see Yorktown because of a rain squall.

1550 Launched 8 VF wind 19 kts, sea slight swells, weather
 unsuitable for SOC's, sky overcast.

1555 Msg. received from Neosho "Sinking".

1600 From: Neosho - position @ 2300 16-38 S., 158-28 E.

1615 Landed 4 VF.

1648 Bogey 275°/72 miles is believed to have been same
 bogeys sighted earlier at 1312 which were undoubtedly
 an enemy attack group looking for TF17.

1700 We changed zone time to -11.

1715 Yorktown reported a bogey 354°/24 miles which we
 could not find on our screen.

1737 The radar screen was clear.

1747 A large group possibly two groups of bogeys appeared
 on the radar screen 144°/48 miles apparently flying
 toward our ship at high speed at about 1500 feet in
 altitude. We checked gas of combat pilots in air,
 most of them had about 60 gallons. We vectored the
 Agnes division of 4 planes and two sections of Yorktown
 fighters Brown and Orange who did not get very far before
 they reported instrument conditions so because of their
 low supply of gasoline and because they were harder to

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track having no IFF, they were recalled. In the mean-
 time Lt. Comdr. Ramsey was about to intercept the Japs
 who had turned left about 25 miles away to a course of
 about 275° T., later 260° T.

1755 Lex launched additional fighters followed by Yorktown.
 The Lex fighters were kept standing by and Yorktown were
 vectored to assist Ramsey. Lt. Comdr. Flatley with six
 fighters were ordered to buster. He arrived shortly
 after Lt. Comdr. Ramsey had made his attack shooting down
 four Japs, one Jap had holes in his gas tank and was
 probably lost. Lt. Comdr. Flatley and his group intercepted
 but we could not tell whether they were getting any Japs
 or not. Lt. Comdr. Ramsey reported seeing nine Jap
 fighters. We recalled Lt. Comdr. Ramsey at once for he
 was forty miles away and low on gasoline. He just had
 enough to get back and land aboard.

1825 Lex recovering planes.

1852 Yorktown completed recovery of planes. During this
 period, three fighters were lost, one Lex and one Yorktown,
 both named Baker, another from Yorktown named Knox. We
 had thought all of our people were back safe because Baker's
 wing man had answered up "Agnes White on station" which
 was Baker's call. Later when we could check and found Baker
 missing we looked for him on the radar screen and thought
 we had a plane with I.F.F. about 10 miles away. We could not
 get any answer to our calls so called him by name where upon
 Purple 2 from Yorktown answered up "This is Baker". It took

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several minutes for us to straighten out this confusing coincidence. At times Purple 2 was very close to our force. Aircraft for which we could not account were observed approaching the fleet. They appeared to want to land. They flashed on their running lights and when challenged replied with either George Fox or "Slant" (-...-). Some ships including the Minneapolis opened fire. Yorktown was landing planes and a Yorktown pilot was heard to cry "What are you shooting at me for, what have I done now?", or words similar. Baker or Purple 2 had reported that he was over the formation at 2500 feet, he wanted instructions, we told him to "pancake" about the time firing started but apparently he was wrong, anyhow, he did not show on the screen. Yorktown tried to bring him in but communications were not good among other things and they finally told him to fly about 320°T/120 miles if he wanted to and that with a 25 knt tail wind at low altitude he might reach land.

2000 Position 13° 12" S., 154° 40" E., Sea moderate, sky broken clouds, no moon, very dark. Gus. 125°T Axis 270°T Speed 15.

2205 Fleet course 150°T; 20 knots. Estimated Jap losses were 1 OV (Ryukaku), 1 CA, 1 CL damaged 3-96 VF, 3 VF, 6 Kamunishi VP (From Minneapolis log) and 2 VF seaplanes. Our losses were 1 Lex scout, Ens. Tony Quigley believed to have landed on Rossell Island, 1 Yorktown bomber who were with the

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attack group. In the evening engagement Lex fighters show down four ~~possibly five~~ Jap fighters and lost Lt. (jg) P.G. Baker who was either shot down by or collided with a Jap fighter. Yorktown lost two fighter pilots, Baker and Knox. The number of planes shot down is not known.

2400 Gus 120°T/20 knots. Axis 270°.

8 May 1942.

0645 Lexington launched 4 VF combat patrol, 12 VSB scouts to search 200 miles from 260° to 080°, searching singly and 6 VSB bombers to search 100 miles 080° to 260°, searching singly. One bomber went 200 miles because of a mistake in navigation.

0657 - Course 125°T.

0730 Yorktown launched 4 VF combat patrol and 8 VSB anti-torpedo patrol.

0800 Position 14°-24" S., 154°-30" E.

0807 The first bogey appeared 330°/22 miles on a course of about 240°T high speed, down fairly low. Fighters were vectored to intercept but were unsuccessful. This bogey did not falter in his course or speed but as we would have been perfectly silhouetted for him, he undoubtedly had a good look at us. He was on the screen about 9 minutes and then disappeared at 0816.

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- 0829 Lt. (jg) Joe Smith made contact with enemy, including ^{ON OF 20138} 2 CV, 4 CA and ~~REDACTED~~ ^{VE 143} they were 006°/120 miles from point Zed. Point Zed was 13°S/153°E (this should be checked as we are not positive, also Lt. (jg) Hall says he went 300 not 200 miles on the search).
- 0855 We intercepted a Jap message reporting two CV on course 028°.
- 0901 Yorktown began launching their attack group; 6 VF, 14 TBD, 12 VF (these last are doubtful).
- 0908 ComAir assumes command of fleet (Signal).
- 0910 Lexington attack group launched, Comdr. Ault with 4 scouts, 1000 lb. bombs, Lt. Comdr. Hamilton with 12 bombers, 1000 lb bombs and Lt. Comdr. Brett with 12 Torpedo planes and torpedoes.
- 0920 Attack group departed.
- 0930 Lex landed 6 VSB and 2 VF.
Lt. Comdr. Dixon gave new position on enemy CVs.
- 0950 Lex landed 4 VSB and 2 VF.
- 1005 Two bogeys appeared on the screen one bearing about 030°, one was a returning torpedo plane which had to turn back because of engine trouble. Two sections of fighters were vectored to intercept and at 1014 a Yorktown fighter show down a Kawanishi, four engined flying boat. Some ship reported seeing a Zero fighter but he was not seen by anyone else. Meanwhile our fighters had been unsuccessful in intercepting another bogey which was on and off the screen for about twenty minutes.

1030 Lex landed 6 VSB.

1048 Lex landed 2 VSB, the last of our search group. Shortly thereafter, at 1055, a large group of bogeys appeared on the screen bearing 020° distance 68 miles; minimum altitude 10,000 feet. They came straight in to intercept us never disappearing from the screen indicating that they flew out of the big null of our radar which would place them up ^{rate of} ground 18,000 feet. They were traveling at a high speed.

1100 - Lexington launched 5 VF and 5 VSB. Yorktown launched 4 VF, combat patrols in the air did not have enough gasoline to intercept at high speed and fight very long. The freshly launched fighters were vectored. (to intercept).

1113 They intercepted between 20-30 miles out but were unable to get close enough to shoot. Lt. Comdr. Ramsey reported 18 dive bombers and 18 fighters. Lt. Comdr. Flatley and the Yorktown fighters did not intercept and were told to return as quickly as possible to protect the force. About this time a report came through from our attack group that they had made contact with the enemy. Jap torpedo planes had previously been reported. Comdr. Ault reported that he and his four planes had made hits with two 1000 lb. bombs. Later reported that he and his radiomen were wounded, the radiomen badly. We never had Comdr. Ault on the screen and were unable to help him to return.

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- 1115 TF17 opened fire on Jap Torpedo planes and dive bombers.
- 1121 Lex attacked by torpedo planes and bomb hit received on port gun gallery. Japanese torpedo planes came in at 5000 feet pushed over out of gun range, came in fast and launched torpedoes from 50-200 feet. By this time fighter direction was past control by the Fighter Director.
- 1123 Yorktown was hit. The radar went out of control and our Fighter transmitter was out but we were able to get back on the air in about twenty minutes. Fighter direction was not shifted to the Yorktown. The Japanese appeared to be returning to the north.
- 1135 Lexington began recovering aircraft.
- 1142 Ens. McDonald cracked up coming on board, went into the water; he and his radioman were picked up by a destroyer.
- 1145 Radar indicated a large friendly group returning to the ship bearing 040°/15 miles.
- 1210 Lexington stacks cleared, was smoking badly after first hits.
- 1218 Radar reported friendly planes bearing 348°T.
- 1223 Lex making 25 knots without trouble.
- 1241 Friendly torpedo planes bearing 280°/distance 36 miles were reported. These planes were reported friendly from the time they appeared on the screen but in spite of that they were fired upon when they came within gun range.

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- 1245 Lex launching and recovering planes.
- 1330 One Lex torpedo plane landed in the water out of gasoline bearing 290° distance 24 miles. A destroyer was sent back to pick up Lieut. Thornhill but was unsuccessful. It was later learned that the destroyer sighted a plane life raft but saw no signs of any personnel.
- 1340 Minneapolis fired on friendly aircraft.
- 1404 A friendly group approaching Yorktown were fired upon because they approached from 300°T.
- 1414 Last of Lexington group were landed on board. Comdr. Ault was still in the air but we were unable to communicate well with him. He was not on the screen.
- 1452 Flames on Lexington are not under control. We are unable to service aircraft on the deck. Our radar was temporarily out when the power went off the gyro control; we were ready to function when the big explosion came at 1525 cutting off all power. Fighter direction had been shifted to Yorktown.
- All men in air plot and those in the radar shack stuck to their posts until ordered to leave after it became apparent that we would not be able to function any more. Lieut. Raring; Amey, R.D., Y3c, Wood, V.J., See; and Epstein, S.H., Sea2c, stood by in air plot until forced to evacuate by smoke. Ensign Henslee manned the radar shack with his men until ordered away. The following named men manned radar shack during the attack:

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Howard, W.H., Seale; Duke, E.E., Seale; and Shonkwiler, GM30

- 1521 Yorktown launching agents.
- 1525 Big explosion on Lex. Lots of smoke.
- 1600 Lex at standstill.
- 1605 Getting ready to abandon ship.
- 1642 Destroyers picking up survivors.
- 1737 Another big explosion on Lex.
- 1800 Lex continuing to blow up.
- 1830 All men have abandoned ship. Captain Sherman was the last to leave.
- 1845 Lex burning furiously.
- Minneapolis and New Orleans and several destroyers stopped around Lex recovering survivors.
- 1900 Underway on Cus 220-225/19. Are to join up with Yorktown group.
- 1915 Phelps fired torpedoes (5) into Lex. Lex still burning.
- 1940 Lex still burning.
- 1952 Lex turned over and sank.
- 1954 Phelps reported stern blown off in error when a last terrific explosion occurred on Lex after she had sunk which lifted the Phelps stern out of water.

Respectfully submitted,

F. F. GILL,
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy,
Fighter Director.

May 26, 1942.

S E C R E T

From: Engineer Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
To : Commanding Officer.
Subject: Report of action in Coral Sea, May 8, 1942 -
Engineering Department.

1. This report covers events occurring in the Engineering Department, which came under my observation, and events reported to me by the officers and men of the Engineering Department, during the action and subsequent thereto in the U.S.S. Lexington in the Coral Sea on May 8, 1942.

2. At about 0930 went to general quarters and set condition "Zed". The machinery set up was four units and sixteen boilers on the line. Power was available for maximum speed. The forward dynamo flat was separately exciting the forward auxiliary bus and supplying power to the forward distribution board. The after dynamo flat was separately exciting the after auxiliary bus and supplying power to the after distribution board. The main steam line, the auxiliary exhaust, the high pressure drains, and the fuel oil service were split between the two engine rooms at frame 104. The boiler feed water system was split on the center line. The firemain was split on the center line; the forward fire and bilge pumps feeding the port fire main, and the after fire and bilge pumps feeding the starboard fire main.

3. Fuel oil and reserve feed water tanks and bottoms were filled as follows. Forward of frame 75, all fuel oil tanks and bottoms were full and the fuel oil system secured. Between frames 75 and 133; on the port side the sluice tanks were empty and all other tanks full, on the starboard side the sluice tanks and reserve feed water tanks were empty and all other tanks full, and all bottoms were full except the starboard reserve feed water bottoms which were partially filled. Aft of frame 133; tanks were filled with fuel so that there was one liquid layer around the stern of the ship, and fuel oil bottoms were practically full, fuel oil suction having been shifted to these bottoms the evening of the 7th of May.

4. At about 1100 word was received that many enemy planes had been picked up about 65 miles away. Starting at about 1120 the guns opened fire and enemy bomb hits, near misses, and torpedo hits were felt in Main Control. Numerous jars and shocks were felt estimated between 12 and 15, three of these being very strong, shaking the ship violently.

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5. At about 1135 word was received that the attack was over. All stations reported that their machinery was in good condition except for a few minor casualties which were being repaired. Boiler rooms #2, #4, and #6 reported oil and water coming in and were ordered to secure. Reports were received that fireroom #2 had 18 inches of water and oil, fire-room #4 had 12 feet, and fireroom #6 had 5 feet. Orders were given to secure the firemain in these firerooms, for it was suspected that these firerooms were flooding from ruptured firemain, fuel, and feed water lines, which proved to be the case. A bilge suction was taken on these firerooms and within about an hour they were pumped dry. These firerooms all had minor leaks along the seams of the outboard bulkheads, and the bulkheads of the trunks leading to the firerooms were distorted and stove in, especially in #4 fireroom. Baker unit throttle tripped out during the attack but was reset without difficulty. No fires were reported in the engineering spaces except the oil on the surface of the water in #4 boiler was burning but later on was extinguished.

6. Ship took a list to about seven degrees maximum which was removed in about one and a half hours by pumping fuel oil aft of frame 104 from port to starboard. Wing Tank Control reported that fuel oil tanks forward of frame 104 on the port side were contaminated with water.

7. About 1200 word was received from Central Station that all fires were out or under control and word was received to open fittings necessary for ventilation. I left Main Control at this time to inspect boiler rooms #2, #4, #6, leaving the Senior Assistant Engineering Officer in charge.

8. I went forward along the port boiler passageway, stopping by Wing Tank Control. At this time they reported having control. The ship had stopped listing and commenced returning to an even keel. In #2 and #4 boiler passageway a seepage of oil was coming up through the third deck seams, but not enough that it could not be handled by bailing it out with buckets, and later by installing a submersible pump. Lieutenant Hawes in charge of Repair IV made the following reports to me:

- (1) That storeroom B-308-A was slowly flooding, and that B-326-A had a hole in it above the water line.
- (2) That both elevators were out of commission.
- (3) That the hatch going from the forward elevator well down into the port bottle well had been blown open

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during the attack and from the fumes escaping that apparently the hydraulic lines and high pressure air lines in this well were ruptured.

(4) That this hatch had been closed again.

9. At about 1245, immediately following a heavy explosion forward, Lt(jg) H. E. Williamson from the forward distribution board reported to me in #2 boiler passageway that hydrogen gas in the forward storage battery had blown up and that there were many injured in Central Station, Interior Communication Room, and the Forward Board. Main Control reported communication lost with Central Station, Interior Communication Room, Forward Board, and Repair II. Some smoke in Main Control accompanied by a sweet smelling gas. Burner control telegraph, "Walker Log", Rudder angle indicator, engine order telegraph, and ship's service telephone put out of operation in Main Control. Used sound powered telephone circuits for control. Put electric fire and bilge pumps on main drain and gradually shifted all steam fire and bilge pumps to the starboard fire main. Fire main pressure maintained at 100# until about 1500 when it fell to 40#. It is believed that this explosion was caused by gasoline fumes leaking into the I.C. Motor Generator compartment, and being set off probably from brush sparking of one of the I.C. motor generators or some other electrical sparking. Main Control reported that this explosion was felt in Main Control as severely as any previous explosions. There were no gasoline fumes in the forward elevator well at this time.

10. Ordered Repair IV under Lieutenant Hawes to the scene of the explosion, and requested the Engineering Battle Dressing Station doctor and crew to report to the hangar deck. Called Main Control and reported the explosion. Assistance under C.M.M. Lynch also arrived from Repair V. At this time I personally checked the forward storage battery supply vent in #2 boiler intake. A heavy brown oil smoke was coming from this intake which suggested that there was an oil fire in the vicinity of the battery locker or the acid resisting paint in the battery locker was smoldering. At the forward elevator well the injured were being removed from the I.C. Room, Central Station and Forward Board to the forward end of the hangar deck. This rescue work was carried on under most difficult conditions, all compartments being blanketed in smoke. About twenty-five (25) injured were removed from these compartments to the hangar deck. Remaining personnel were reported either dead or could not be found in the debris. No fires were reported in these compartments. About six inches of water was reported over the I.C. compartment deck. During this period that wounded personnel were being removed, explosions of less violence were occurring intermittently forward of

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these stations at periods of about every 20 minutes. White smoke was seen being emitted around the side of the Band Room doors indicating gasoline explosions.

11. The dense brown fuel oil smoke finally became so bad that the repair parties had to abandon these compartments. All doors and hatches were closed before abandoning. Dead and wounded on the hangar deck were moved aft. Hangar deck was filling rapidly with a dense brown smoke. Although exhaust blowers on hangar deck were running, they were not of sufficient capacity to exclude all the smoke. This smoke was being discharged through the hangar deck exhaust blowers on the port side to the boat pockets where it was drawn back into the engineering spaces by the intake blowers of the engineering spaces which are located in the same boat pockets. Thus the engineering spaces were filling with smoke so intake blowers were shut down. This caused the spaces to become unbearably hot.

12. When all hands abandoned the hangar deck on account of smoke I returned to Main Control and was informed that I was to take over the duties of damage control and for Main Control to take over the duties of Central Station if the First Lieutenant could not be found. There being no J.A. outlet in Main Control, the extent of the damage forward of the quarterdeck was not known. At this time telephone communication was still maintained with Repair Parties I, III, IV, and V, over the JZ phones. Through Repair I information was obtained that the Executive Officer and Ensign Dowling were in charge of fighting the fire forward. All spare men and rescue breathers available in Repairs III, IV and V were sent forward. I ordered Lieutenant Hawes with Repair IV to take over the duties of Repair II and to fight the fire aft but not to open up closed compartments, especially the machine shop, hoping that the fire might burn itself out.

13. Explosions forward continued after the first explosion at 1245 at intervals of 20 to 30 minutes. A heavy explosion occurred in the forward elevator well at about 1500. After this, lights and power failed forward and circuit breakers on the forward flat were opened caused by grounds from the forward circuits. Lieutenant Hawes witnessed this explosion from the port side of the hangar deck and states that the forward elevator well up to the underside of the elevator, which was in the up position, was in a mass of flames.

14. After the above explosion, orders were received by Repair III from the Gunnery Officer to sprinkle the after magazines and war head locker and to turn on the sprinkler system on the hangar deck. These orders were carried out. Water from

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the hangar deck sprinkler system began leaking around the loading hatch between the hangar deck and the forward reserve plane stowage. This caused considerable anxiety for there was danger of flooding the main motors.

15. The heat in the forward machinery space was becoming intense and the forward bulkhead very hot, with paint peeling, indicating a fire in the evaporator spaces. Gasoline was reported leaking out of one of the pneumericator lines in Wing Tank Control from one of the forward tanks. At about 1530, requested permission from Bridge to abandon the forward machinery space due to intense smoke and heat. All machinery and boilers forward of frame 104 were secured and abandoned. The intense heat from the fire could be felt in all compartments below deck. A heavy explosion occurred above #8 fireroom at about 1530. Ordered watch to secure boiler and abandon fire-room. The watch in the forward machinery space are to be commended for their devotion to duty having remained at their stations operating Affirm and Baker units for a period of about one hour after all electric light and power had been lost. No blowers were operating during this period and the smoke and heat became unbearable. A great percentage of this watch were so exhausted that they required assistance of others in leaving this space.

16. At about 1600 communication with Bridge became very weak. Repair V was ordered to rig portable sound powered phone to top side from steering engine room. Soon after, the last word was received over the J.V. phone in Main Control and this was to "secure all machinery and all engineering personnel lay up on the flight deck". This word was relayed to all stations and all hands secured their machinery and went to the flight deck. The fireroom, engineroom, Repair IV, and Repair V personnel escaped through the boiler intakes direct to the main deck. Main Control, Ice Machine, Motor Room, and #1 and #2 Torpedo Air Compressor personnel escaped through the ladders on the starboard side leading up past the refrigerator spaces. Members of Repair III, thrust block rooms, and steering engine escaped through the scuttle in the after reserve plane stowage to the hangar deck, then aft through the carpenter shop, or up through the torpedo workshop.

17. In the Engineering Department no personnel of the Boiler and Main Engine divisions were lost. The following personnel of the Electrical Division are unaccounted for:-

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	<u>NAME</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>BATTLE STATION</u>
1.	BARRY, M.F.	Warrant Electrician	I.C. Room
2.	McLAIN, R.L.	C.E.M.	I.C. Room
3.	OHLER, W.G.	C.E.M.	I.C. Room
4.	KING, J.M.	E.M.1c	I.C. Room
5.	ALTO, E.J.	E.M.1c	I.C. Room
6.	ORR, M.S.	E.M.2c	I.C. Room
7.	DUPREE, W.J.	E.M.3c	I.C. Room
8.	SMITH, V.C.	E.M.2c	I.C. Room

It is believed that these men were killed at their battle stations when the first explosion occurred in the I.C. Room at about 1245.

The following personnel of the Auxiliary division are unaccounted for:

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>BATTLE STATION</u>
1.	DAVIS, J.O.	M.M.1c	Fwd "A" Div. Reserves. (Machine Shop)
2.	DUNN, J.J.	F.2c	Torpedo Air Compressor #3
3.	FLATT, G.E.	M.M.2c	Steering Gear.
4.	GARREN, "J". "B".	F.1c	Repair II.
5.	HALL, E.L.	M.M.2c	Ammunition train (B-025-T).
6.	KRAUSE, J.H.	M.M.2c	After "A" Div. Reserves.
7.	LEWANDOWSKI, A.A.	Mldr.2c	Repair II.
8.	THAU, W.A.	M.M.1c	Torpedo Air Compressor #3.

It is believed that Davis, Garren, Hall, and Lewandowski were killed by explosions while fighting fires in the forward part of the ship.

It is believed that Dunn, Flatt, Krause, and Thau were trapped on the hangar deck in trying to escape after word had been passed for the Engineering Department to lay up on the flight deck, or lost in the water during abandon ship.

18. I believe that the above narrative speaks for itself, in commenting on the state of training, devotion to duty, bravery, courage, and self sacrifice displayed by the members of the Engineering Department on May 8, 1942. Each man did everything possible to save his shipmates and to save his ship. All hands did their duty and were in there fighting till the last ray of hope was lost. The high standards displayed by all personnel makes it difficult to bring to your attention individual cases of

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men who were outstanding. A separate letter is being forwarded of recommendations submitted by officers of the Engineering Department of particular cases of exceptional courage and devotion to duty which came to their attention during the day. I myself wish to commend all officers for their excellent work and the fine leadership they displayed under the most trying conditions, and also all hands in my department for a job well done.

19. I wish to call to the Commanding Officer's attention the excellent work of the U.S.S. HAMMANN in rescuing personnel from the U.S.S. LEXINGTON. The fine seamanship displayed by the Commanding Officer (Commander A.E. True, U.S. Navy) and his crew is to be commended. This destroyer remained as near to the burning vessel as it was safe to do so, until the last man was rescued from the water. Final count showed that they picked up 454 men and 24 officers. The thoughtfulness, kindness and assistance that was given the Lexington personnel by the crew of the U.S.S. HAMMANN and later by the crew of the U.S.S. CHESTER will long be remembered by those who were on board.

20. It is my opinion that the torpedo hits received by the U.S.S. LEXINGTON on the port side forward, opened the in-board and top seams of the fuel oil and gasoline tanks, and water pressure forced petroleum fumes into surrounding compartments. When sufficient gas had accumulated to form an explosive mixture this was ignited from sparks from electrical equipment in the vicinity. The first explosion covered such a large area and started large fires in so many compartments at one time that it was practically hopeless to combat this fire with the equipment that was available. Continued explosions ruptured bulkheads more seriously and fed more fuel to this inferno. Why this fire did not burn itself out from lack of air still remains a mystery as the ship still had condition "Zed" set.

21. Recommendations:-

- (a) That gloves be worn by all hands at general quarters to protect their hands from burns. Burns about the hands render one helpless.
- (b) That portable sound powered telephone sets with connecting cord be made a part of each repair party equipment in order that new lines of communication may be established quickly.

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Subject: Report of action in Coral Sea, May 8, 1942 -
Engineering Department.

- (c) That the Bureau of Ships be requested to continue the study of the prevention of fires from petroleum fumes. Would steam in compartments surrounding gas storage be of any benefit? Is there some chemical that would act as an absorbent for the fumes, that could be spread on the deck of a compartment where fumes are prevalent?
- (d) In order that all hands down to the lowest seaman may be commended for their actions on May 8, 1942, it is recommended that a medal be issued for the Battle of the Coral Sea bearing on the face a print of a carrier, the color of the ribbon to be green and white, the Lexington colors.
- (e) That men be given lectures in conservation of energy under battle conditions and also in relaxation.
- (f) That men be taught the best method of swimming with life belts on.
- (g) That exercises on board ship include rope climbing.
- (h) The present type of portable drainage pump is unsatisfactory. The suction clogs too easily, it is cumbersome to handle and it does not have sufficient lift. The old fashion pump used by city sewer departments appears more serviceable. In order that it may be transported more conveniently, consideration should be given to having separate units; pump and a driving unit that could be quickly coupled together.
- (i) It is questionable in my mind whether a single fire-main system is the most practicable. Would not many individual systems, cross-connected if considered desirable, but each system complete in itself with firemains, pump, etc.
- (j) All electrical equipment operating the gasoline system and gasoline tanks and the equipment in the adjoining area should be gas tight.
- (k) Consideration should be given to having portable fire fighting equipment. The fact must be kept in mind that at the damaged area, the fire fighting equipment here is also generally damaged.

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Subject: Report of action in Coral Sea, May 8, 1942 -
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- (1) Present type rescue breathers are unsatisfactory, for repair parties in passing through scuttles or manholes, and for work that required bending over. It is recommended that the oxygen bag be placed on the shoulders or the back.

A. B. Junker
A. B. JUNKER.

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U.S.S. BARNETT
U.S.S. LEXINGTON UNIT EMBARKED

(EJO/jr)

S-E-C-R-E-T

May 30, 1942.

From: The Gunnery Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
To : Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the
Japanese Navy, 7 - 8 May 1942.

1. All Gunnery Department activity except for plane arming and re-arming took place on 8 May.
2. The ship went to General Quarters immediately after the attack group was launched about 0930.
3. Many reports of aircraft were received from Air Plot. An enemy aircraft was seen shot down on the port beam. It caused a great column of smoke on the horizon. I believe this was a scout.
4. Shortly before the attack the Gunnery Radar reported planes somewhat forward of the port beam. These planes could not be seen. There were clouds and some haze along the port bow to the port beam. This information was sent to all stations and the director and all port five inch guns were trained on the reported bearing. Very shortly thereafter, Air Plot reported, "Enemy Bombers with Fighter Protection, coming in". The five inch guns were trained to this bearing which was up on the port bow. The guns had barely reached the bearing when the first enemy torpedo plane was sighted on the port beam. Estimated range - 5000 yards. The enemy was in a glide of about 10 - 15 degrees. Short range weapons opened fire almost simultaneously with our sighting him from Sky Forward. He seemed to be making higher speed than our torpedo planes are accustomed to make. Although the automatic weapon fire against him did not look very effective, he kept veering away from it, to his left. He dropped, at about 1500 yards, in such a way that his torpedo was not released until after he had started his turn away; as a consequence his torpedo ran well ahead of the ship, which had commenced its swing to the right. The torpedo plane attack developed from abaft the port beam as the ship swung right.

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Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the
Japanese Navy, 7 - 8 May 1942.

5. About 45 - 60 seconds after the torpedo plane attack had started, the first dive bomber was sighted on the port bow. The dive bombers were picked up immediately by the automatic weapons. This attack was dispersed considerably in bearing. From then on, I cannot be certain of the order of attack. It seemed that we were engaged continuously until cease firing was given.

6. From my station in Sky Forward, I was unable to see much of the torpedo plane action which was carried out well aft on the port quarter. The glide bombing attack on the port bow was carried out at angles of glide from 40 to 45 degrees. Dropping altitude was estimated to be 2500 feet. Most of the bombs were over. Five inch battery Two was hit in the vicinity of gun no. six. This caused debris and smoke to rise well above Sky Forward. The battery was out of action.

7. A bomb hit the lip of the stack; this was seen to cause small fires about the machine gun platform and great clouds of smoke or soot from the stack. It also jammed the siren. I sent word to Main Control via the smoke watch to shut off the steam to the whistle and siren. This was obviously a small bomb or a low order detonation since only three or four guns were put out of action.

8. My attention was called to two torpedoes running on a slightly converging course with the ship. I believe that one of these torpedoes hit and that one missed the port bow.

9. It is believed that three torpedo hits were felt.

10. One dive bomber caught fire rather spectacularly on the port bow. It was believed that it would hit the flight deck. I climbed down into the battle look-out station so I could report where it hit. It had disappeared when I got there. It is believed that one other dive bomber and two torpedo planes were seen by me to be shot down on the port side. I saw two dive bombers pass over the ship streaming gasoline from their wings near the fuselage. I did not see the attacks on the starboard side. It was reported that there were but one or two torpedo planes on the starboard bow and three dive bombers on the starboard quarter. None of these planes made hits.

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U.S.S. BARNETT
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(EJO/jr)

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Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the
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11. After the first few seconds of attack, local control was ordered all around. Subsequently, certain of the five inch group control officers attempted to designate fuze settings to be used (the five inch ammunition was all pre-set to either 5.2 seconds, 3 seconds, or 2.2 seconds). It is considered that they erred in so doing. The surviving five inch were used against torpedo planes. They were not mobile enough against the shallow glides and dispersed bearing of the dive bombers.

12. The fire discipline and distribution of the automatic weapons was splendid. No enemy plane was seen to attack without being fired upon. The accuracy of the fire was fairly good, as nearly as could be judged.

13. After the action, the report from five inch battery Two indicated that about half the personnel were wounded or killed; that guns four and six could not be repaired quickly; that gun no. two would soon be ready for action. Five inch battery Four reported several personnel casualties and two minor material casualties. This battery had been strafed and had had several near misses by bombs. They were soon ready for action.

14. The 1.1" mounts had little to report. A gun on Mount No. 3 had a burst muzzle. No personnel casualties resulted. Mount No. 8 had a jammed training rack. The material functioning of the guns was beyond expectations.

15. 20 mm Group Cast (Gig Boat Pocket) had its gun platform blown back by the blast of a near miss. All four guns were out of commission. About half the crew were casualties. No other 20 mm stations suffered casualty. The material functioning of the 20 mm guns was generally excellent.

15. The stack .50 calibre machine gun groups suffered casualties from a bomb hit as noted above. Otherwise all .50 calibre machine guns functioned without important casualty. The gunner of group four was struck, Ensign Sullivan took his gun and continued it in action. After the action, the stack machine gun groups were reorganized by Ensign Gavigan who had taken charge after the bomb had wounded Ensign Stupin.

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Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the Japanese Navy, 7 - 8 May 1942.

16. The personnel of the department were kept informed of the very encouraging news from Central about improving list and speed.

17. Full replenishment of ammunition was ordered at all stations. This was progressing expeditiously.

18. The fire at battery Two and on the Main Deck was reported out. About one hour after the action an explosion comparable to the torpedo explosions was felt. We could not reach Central or I.C. by phone. However, we still had power to our directors. When it occurred, efforts were made to communicate with Gunner Whitham, who had charge of the ammunition supply. He could not be reached by any of the battle telephones. The Bridge passed the word for him. About this time, the last of the bogies had been identified as "friendly".

19. I asked and received permission to turn over control to Lieutenant Moore and to check on the magazines.

20. The forward five inch batteries were visited. It was noted that smoke was coming up the ammunition hoist tubes. It was ordered that hoses be lead down all hoists on both batteries. This was done. It was noted that the crew of gun No. six were burned beyond recognition.

21. Concern was felt for the safety of the forward magazines and for the Bombs in the servicing stations, particularly the machine shop. I went into the ship and met the Commander at the hatch on the Main Deck, just aft of Admiral's country. He told me that they were getting people out of Central Station. About that time the members of the repair party reported that it was no longer possible to get down to Central. It was further reported that heavy fires were known to be in the office spaces. It was suggested that hoses be led down the food conveyer which has its outlet near the Executive Officer's Office. This was done. Someone mentioned that the machine shop was flooded. In an emergency that required abandonment of the machine shop, the last man away from flood control was to flood magazines. However, no one could be found who had actually witnessed magazine flooding. It was decided to check the auxiliary flood controls in the after CPO bunk room.

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U.S.S. BARNETT (EJO/jr)
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Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the Japanese Navy, 7 - 8 May 1942.

When the hatch in Warrant officers' country, above Sick Bay, was reached, a member of the repair party reported that it was very smoky along the CPO passageway and that a mask and strong light were required. It was realized that I was not familiar enough with the location and operation of the auxiliary flood controls to find them and work them in the dark. I returned topside and found two gunner's mates, who had stood integrity watches for some time. We got lights and put on masks and started down the Sick Bay hatch. At that instant there occurred an explosion which blew us back up the hatch. We ran aft along the Warrant officers' country passage. On the next hatch aft, a man was sitting on the scuttle against a pressure which had built up below. I believe one of the gunner's mates helped him secure that scuttle.

22. It was decided to try the machine shop from aft. It was believed that the forward magazines must have been flooded because of the heat and explosions that had occurred about them without their exploding. In the machine shop, there was a full rearm of bombs.

23. I reported to the Commander what I had observed and what I considered to be the situation. Then I went to the after end of the Hangar Deck. The torpedo mezzanine was visited. CTM Blanton reported that he had twenty-seven torpedoes with war heads on the mezzanine. He was ordered to get them as far aft as possible and to commence sprinkling them. It was impossible to dispose of them because the torpedo elevator was jammed in the up position. The after end of the Hangar Deck was rather smoky and it was beginning to get rather warm. Two young seaman were met coming aft on the Hangar Deck. They reported that it was very hot and smoky forward. I asked about the machine shop. They answered that they had tried the door and that there was water leaking out of the shop and that they did not attempt to get in. I asked them to show me the door. We had masks and hand lanterns. It was impossible to see in the forward end of the hangar. I held on to one of these men as the other lead the way. Unfortunately, the man whom I was holding on to, got a little too far to the right so that he and I walked off the hangar deck into the elevator well. In falling I lost my mask, but I did not get hurt. However, it was difficult to breath and impossible to see because of the smoke. The man with the light checked the door which was still leaking much water. He then led us back along the Hangar Deck. The fact that the Machine Shop was flooded was shortly thereafter substantiated by the repair party. This was reported to the Commander.

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U.S.S. BARNETT
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Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the
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It had been noted that there seemed to be an increase in the temperature in the after end of the Hangar Deck. The war head magazines had been flooded. Permission was received to sprinkle the after magazines. Through the afternoon, the temperature increased in the Hangar Deck. Permission was received to flood the after magazines. The after flood control group was ordered to abandon their posts after flooding. Concern was felt for the safety of personnel assembled on the flight deck because of the war heads on the mezzanine deck.

24. Five inch battery personnel reported that ready ammunition was getting very hot. I ordered all ready five inch ammunition thrown over the side. It was reported that some of it was so hot that it could not be handled with bare hands.

25. About this time the order was given to abandon ship. The Gunnery divisions were ordered to abandon. The Marine Guard, assembled on the port after gun gallery, was the last division to leave the ship.

26. An effort was made to assemble available information concerning the explosion which occurred at 1247. Gunner Sawula and ACOM Turlington were on the office deck (first deck) on their way to the Machine Shop when the explosion occurred. Gunner Sawula reported that prior to the explosion, this area was in good condition. When the explosion occurred it was almost immediately transformed into an inferno. The offices were ablaze; the bulkheads and decks were blistering hot, and the area was filled with heavy smoke. The two men escaped by opening one of the after doors and going out to the band room where they noted that the 100 lb. bombs were intact. The bomb elevator was broken down. They climbed up the well and out along the Main Deck. They reported that no doors were blown off and that the area directly above the quarterdeck was relatively cool.

27. The men in the forward five inch ammunition train stationed in the CPO passageway, generally report that the doors were blown down, that the compartments became very hot and smoky and soon started to burn. There was ammunition in the print shop to be sent up to battery One. An attempt was made to communicate with the men stationed in the lower handling rooms. The attempt was unsuccessful. All the men there were lost.

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U.S.S. BARNETT
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S-E-C-R-E-T

Subject: Action Fought in the Coral Sea with the
Japanese Navy, 7 - 8 May 1942.

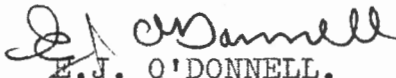
28. It is reported that Gunner Whitham had just warned members of the ammunition party and the Sick Bay personnel about smoking because he had noted gas fumes. This was substantiated by survivors of the explosion.

29. It is considered that the practical criterion of effectiveness of gunfire is the protection of the ship, therefore, the gunfire was not sufficiently effective. From careful survey of reports at hand it is quite certain that three torpedo planes and two dive bombers were destroyed on the port side; that one torpedo plane was destroyed on the starboard side. It is quite probable that one additional torpedo plane was destroyed on the port side and one other plane destroyed on the starboard side. Two dive bombers were seen passing over the ship trailing gasoline; it is not believed that they could reach their carriers.

30. Lieutenant (junior grade) E.M. Price, U.S. Navy; Ensign C.H. Ziehr, U.S. Navy; and Gunner J.E. Whitham, U.S. Navy were killed in action, or died from injuries received during the action or just after.

31. Thirty enlisted men of the Gunnery Department are known to be dead or are missing. Of these, twenty-one were marines.

32. All group and battery officers highly praised the conduct of their men. The high standards of courage and leadership set by officers and petty officers was most gratifying. The conduct of Captain Ralph L. Houser, U.S. Marine Corps; Ensign W.J. Gavigan, U.S. Naval Reserve; and Gunner J.E. Whitham, U.S. Navy, will be the subject of separate letters.


E.J. O'DONNELL.

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NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. LEXINGTON
AIRCRAFT, BATTLE FORCE

May 23, 1942.

From: The Medical Officer.
To : The Commanding Officer.
Subject: Report of Activities of Medical Department,
U.S.S. LEXINGTON, May 7 - 8, 1942.

1. The organization of the Medical Department at the beginning of the battle on May 7, 1942 was as follows:

MAIN BATTLE DRESSING STATION (Sick Bay), Compartment A-207-L.

Medical Officer: Comdr. A. J. WHITE, (MC), U.S. Navy.
Chaplain: Lt. Comdr. G. L. MARKLE, (ChC), U.S. Navy.
Assistants: R. A. FLEMING, CPhM, U.S.N.
R. C. SUMMY, PhM1c, U.S.N.
P. G. KIBBY, PhM2c, U.S.N.
M. E. GILLIES, PhM3c, U.S.N.R.
Y. W. CAUSEY, PhM5c, U.S.N.R.
G. E. WOGAN, PhM3c, U.S.N.
B. G. JOHNSON, Sea2c, U.S.N.
J. T. MILAM, Sea2c, U.S.N.
R. L. McCOY, Sea2c, U.S.N.

Repair Party II (Machine Shop): H. D. WESTCOT, PhM3c, U.S.N.

AVIATION BATTLE DRESSING STATION (Main Deck, Starboard Side, Frame 120.)

Medical Officer: Lieut. L. H. BARBER, (MC), U.S. Navy.
Fw'd Collecting Station: Comdr. W. C. TROJAKOWSKI, (DC), U.S.N.
After Collecting Station: Lieut. A. T. SMITH, (DC), U.S.N.
Assistants: S. J. BUCKO, PhM1c, U.S.N.
C. L. BELL, PhM1c, U.S.N.
E. C. RUSSELL, PhM1c, U.S.N.

Flight Deck Fw'd Bridge: L. G. CADY, PhM2c, U.S.N.

Flight Deck Amidships: A. KOZLOWSKI, PhM1c, U.S.N.

Flight Deck Aft: F. L. GIBBENS, PhM1c, U.S.N.
V. L. WEEKS, PhM2c, U.S.N.

Ass'st. Fw'd Collecting Station: P. R. BURGNER, PhM3c, U.S.N.

Ass'st. After Collecting Station: S. L. HUFF, PhM3c, U.S.N.

Repair Party No. I: K. E. PRUITT, PhM1c, U.S.N.

AFTER DRESSING STATION, (After Reserve Plane Stowage).

Medical Officer: Lieut. E. E. KEETON, (MC), U.S. Navy.

Assistants: L. "L" KEMP, CPhM, U.S.N.R.
E. F. RICH, PhM1c, U.S.N.
O. J. MILLER, PhM1c, U.S.N.
M. BOOK, PhM1c, U.S.N.
C. M. WADE, PhM3c, U.S.N.

Repair Party No. III: R. B. McNELEY, PhM2c, U.S.N.

Repair Party No. V: J. A. MCCARTHA, PhM3c, U.S.N.

Subject: Report of Activities of Medical Department,
U.S.S. LEXINGTON, May 7 - 8, 1942.

ENGINEER'S BATTLE DRESSING STATION, (Amidships, Port Side,
Engineer's Passageway).

Medical Officer: Lieut. J. F. ROACH, (MC), U.S. Navy.

Assistants: C. GILBERT, PhMlc, U.S.N.
J. D. FULLER, PhM3c, U.S.N.R.
E. J. CAMPBELL, PhM3c, U.S.N.

Repair Party No. IV: W. St. C. COCHRAN, PhM3c, U.S.N.

2. On the afternoon of May 7, 1942, following the return of the attack group, three casualties were treated in the Main Battle Dressing Station. D. C. Phillips, ARM3c, U.S.N. received a small caliber gun shot wound of the soft tissues of left shoulder. There was no bone injury. Ensign J.A. Lepla, U.S.N.R., several small fragments of shrapnel removed from left thumb and forearm. Ensign A. J. Shultz, U.S.N.R., sustained superficial shrapnel wounds of right forearm and thigh.

3. Main Battle Dressing Station, (Second Day of Battle). During the attack, no damage was sustained in Main Battle Dressing Station. There were twelve patients in the ward, one of which was considered a stretcher case - Appendectomy in his 3rd post operative day, in good condition.

Immediately following the attack inspection by a repair party showed that the sick bay country and storeroom on the deck below were undamaged. Casuals began to arrive very soon after the cessation of firing as follows:

- (a) Lacerated wound anterior surface right ankle, Sulfathiazole powder used, wound sutured and returned to ward.
- (b) Extensive 2nd degree burn of face and body. Clothing blown off by blast. Morphine, tannic acid jelly and spray, blood plasma, and to bed.
- (c) Extensive 2nd degree burn of face and hands, some trunk and leg involvement. Morphine, tannic acid jelly and spray, blood plasma 250 cc, to bed.

A report from the main deck, forward collecting station revealed heavy damage in that vicinity, with the death of Comdr. W. C. Trojakowski, (DC), U.S.N. Two Corpsmen and needed fresh supplies were despatched from main battle dressing station, and a new station was established in the Captain's Cabin which functioned in an excellent manner. It was learned that the battle dressing locker at this station had been demolished with the blast from the ammunition lockers. Aviation Battle Dressing Station reported at this time that many casualties were arriving, with injuries consisting of burns of varying degrees and shrapnel wounds of varying type. Supplies were plentiful and work was progressing satisfactorily.

After Battle Dressing Station reported a few casualties by telephone. Work was progressing satisfactorily and the station was undamaged.

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Engineer's Battle Dressing Station could not be contacted. A later report revealed no damage and no casualties at that station.

At about 1247, a terrific blast was sustained in the Main Sick Bay country, followed by much smoke and gas, but no fire. As a result of the blast the Medical Officer sustained fracture of right shoulder, contusion with laceration of left ankle and contusion of right ankle. Whether the injury to ankles was due to explosion below the deck is not known, but he was carried thru the air for a distance of ten to fifteen feet and landed in a sitting position. Other personnel in the sick bay country were carried varying short distances by the same blast but sustained no injuries.

After a quick survey of all spaces and assurance that there were no new injured personnel, it was advisable to evacuate to the upper deck. Communication circuits were dead, so no report was made. All patients and personnel were ordered to put on gas masks because of smoke and fumes, and all were able to make their way to the main deck to the Captain's cabin where a first aid station had already been established. The transfer was accomplished very effectively by the corpsmen and the musicians under the supervision of Chief Pharmacist's Mate R. A. Fleming, U.S.N. All personnel carried on in a splendid manner. Excellent assistance was rendered by Chief Carpenter Novak and his repair party. Casuals in the vicinity of the C.P.O. quarters, which were badly damaged by the blast, were brought to the main deck station. Supplies were also brought up from the operating room by this repair party. Blood plasma, tannic acid jelly and morphine were available in ample quantity. Plasma was given to the severely burned and seemed to aid in combating shock. Drinking water was available, thanks to the good old water breakers, and thermos jugs which had been kept filled for many months as stand-by supply. Lemons and oranges made available from messes supplemented the limited water supply, and due to the watchful care of Chaplain Markle, no one suffered from lack of water or fruit juice. In this group severe burns predominated, the cases numbering about twenty (20). One case showed severe injury to left leg, probably a fracture of the femur. Two cases showed severe head injury along with extensive burns. All severely injured were placed on mattresses on the deck and covered. Two cases showed delirium, one of which had a laceration of scalp with possible basal fracture. Work was progressing satisfactorily at this station until the spreading of fires below deck began to fill the cabin with smoke. Efforts were made to check it by closing doors into the passageways and cutting off the dampers in the ventilating trunk. All efforts failed and it soon became necessary to move all patients to the five inch gun gallery, starboard side, and very soon from there to the flight deck.

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The risks entailed were numerous, with lack of clothing, covering of any type, mostly sheets, chair covers and spreads were used. All did their utmost to help themselves and finally all were assembled on the starboard side of the flight deck preparatory to transfer to the ships boats or destroyers, which was later accomplished. It is to be regretted that injured personnel had to be moved so frequently, but succeeding events each time proved the necessity for such action. Due to succeeding explosions in the vicinity of sick bay country, there was no opportunity for the salvaging of health records or other files.

4. Report of Activities at the Aviation Battle Dressing Station, May 8, 1942. There were two direct routes for evacuation of injured to this dressing station; one from the flight deck down a ladder directly into the dressing station and one passageway from the main deck.

This station was well stocked with medical supplies and instruments for performing nearly any surgery. Lighting and sterilizer units functioned well until one hour before we received the order to abandon ship. Water was available from a fifty gallon reserve tank and a thirty gallon hot water heater.

Four Stokes stretchers and two Army type canvas litters were distributed fore and aft on the flight deck and from the super structure, lowering those injured by a line attached to the zipper stretcher.

For considerable time before our ship was attacked by the Japanese air force, Aviation Battle Dressing Station was manned and in condition of readiness one (I). Shortly after the onset of the attack casualties arrived. Their injuries consisted of first and second degree burns, shrapnel wounds, contusions and lacerated wounds, blast injuries and simple and compound fractures. A number of injured had received first aid at outlying stations, consisting of application of tourniquets where indicated, tannic acid jelly to burns and morphine where indicated. The injured arrived in such great numbers that the dressing station became congested, so flash clothing, dungarees and skivies were cut off and a quick survey of the extent of the injuries was made. Those men who did not show critical injury were carried or walked into the division sleeping spaces immediately outboard of the dressing station where they were bunked and received further medical attention as time would allow. One Pharmacist was detailed to these spaces and carried out such orders given by the medical officer, reapplication of tourniquets on patients with arterial bleeding every twenty minutes, dressing burns that covered large areas of the body with sterile gauze for protection, and general nursing care. First and second degree burned patients became chilled very easily

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and asked for great quantities of water to drink. Blankets were plentiful and were used on every patient, as nearly all showed some degree of shock.

Contact was made by ship's service phone with the Main Station, Sick Bay. A report of conditions in the Aviation Battle Dressing Station was made. Supplies were plentiful and requests for dressings, morphine, and tannic acid jelly for first aid men on the flight deck and main deck were filled.

Zipper stretchers were sent with a party of men to lower injured from sky aft and machine gun mounts on the stack where a small bomb had hit. These injured were lowered to the flight deck by a line tied to the zipper stretcher. Several men had multiple shrapnel wounds and where fragments were easily accessible were removed and sulfanilamide powder was inserted into the wound. All wounds were dressed in this manner and the patient put to bed.

Patients, who had extensive burns and those with considerable blood loss from shrapnel wounds, were given a unit of blood plasma. An estimate of nine patients died, all of whom were in a moribund condition on arrival at the dressing station. Causes of death in six cases were large shrapnel wounds of the abdomen and chest. Two patients apparently died as a result of a blast. An examination showed no external wounds except for superficial powder burns of the face. Both were unconscious, pulse thready and respirations very shallow and irregular.

One pilot returned to the ship with his radioman, who had received a shell wound of the genitals and perineum. Examination showed that he had been dead for some time.

An estimate of fifty officers and men were treated and turned into bunks adjacent to the battle dressing station, and an estimate of forty more officers and men were treated for more minor injuries and were sent back to duty.

Many officers and men of other divisions ably assisted the Medical Officer and Hospital Corpsmen throughout the battle and for several hours after. These officers and men assisted transporting patients to the dressing station and rendered nursing service where instructed. When the opportune time came, the dressing station was cleared of all clothing and the deck was swabbed as there was a large amount of blood and debris which had to be cleared away before any imperative surgery could be performed.

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Patients were then placed on the operating table where shrapnel could be removed and bleeding vessels tied off. Shortly after this work was begun we received an order from the Executive Officer to bring all patients to the flight deck for abandoning ship. The critically and seriously injured were lowered over the starboard side in Stokes' Stretchers and on an improvised plank platform into motor whale boats and launches from other ships. Other less injured patients were lowered by a line tied around their trunk to a destroyer which had pulled along side.

One Pharmacist's Mate Second Class V. L. Weeks, U.S.N. was killed while he was standing in a life raft, when an explosion blew the quarter deck gangway door off and a metal fragment penetrated his skull. He died almost instantly.

A search was made throughout the adjacent area of the Aviation Battle dressing station and the compartments used for hospitalization and no living personnel were found. This search was made after the order to abandon ship was given. The dead had been evacuated to the crew's washroom. All patients were evacuated to cruisers and destroyers of the Task Force.

The Medical Officer in charge of the Aviation Battle Dressing Station wishes to commend the Pharmacist's Mates and Musician stretcher bearers of this station for carrying out their duties in a highly efficient, resourceful, and tireless manner.

5. Report of Activities at Engineer's Battle Dressing Station, during and immediately following action with enemy on 8 May, 1942 by Lieut. J. F. Roach, (MC), U.S. Navy.

During the battle, I was at my General Quarters Station which was Engineer's Battle Dressing Station located on the 3rd deck, port side frame 104. While the action was going on, no casualties were brought to the station nor were any calls for aid received.

About one hour after the last hit was felt, I received word from Repair IV that help was needed on the hangar deck. Taking one corpsman with me I proceeded to the hangar deck and there found the first two or three men who were brought out from the vicinity of central station and adjacent spaces. In all, approximately 25 men were brought out and laid on the forward end of the hangar deck just aft of the forward elevator. These men were all unconscious. Some were breathing and some were not. All had been burned on the exposed parts of the body. Treatment given, consisted of artificial respiration, morphine sulfate, and tannic acid jelly to the burned areas. Of these 25 men (estimated), two were either dead on arrival or died within a very few minutes.

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Within the space of ten or fifteen minutes, the amount of smoke in the forward end of the hangar deck had become so great that it was necessary to wear gas masks. The dead and wounded were then carried to the after end of the hangar deck where the air was better and treatment could be continued. A careful search of the hangar deck was made in order to assure that no one was left behind.

During the next ten or fifteen minutes, four more men died. These along with the two brought from the forward end of the hangar deck, were laid under the wing of a plane and were covered with blankets.

It soon became apparent that the smoke and heat were becoming so intense that further evacuation was necessary. Three (3) Stokes stretchers were obtained and the process of raising the wounded to the main deck, through the hatch in the overhead of the fuselage deck, was begun.

After six or seven patients had been removed in this way, there was a series of heavy explosions in the vicinity of the forward elevator well. These were accompanied by very dense smoke and intense heat. Although it was impossible to see more than two or three feet even with the aid of a flashlight, a cherry red glow could be seen at the forward end of the hangar deck.

It was then necessary to abandon the process of hoisting the wounded to the main deck because it was feared that the torpedoe war heads might explode. The remaining wounded, were then carried, without stretchers, up the ladder to the torpedoe gallery, through the ship fitters shop thence up to the main deck. They were later removed to the starboard side of the stack and placed aboard a destroyer.

I should like to emphasize that the hospital corpsmen who were with me did an excellent job. We were greatly aided by hangar deck personnel under the direction of Lieut. Hirsch without whose aid, our efforts would have been of little avail.

6. Report of activities at the after Battle Dressing Station on May 8, 1942.

This battle station was adequately supplied and manned.

Shortly after the attack began the ship vibrated heavily, and the battle dressing light which was securely bolted to the overhead was put out. The exact cause was not investigated as there were three other large electric lights in that area also, but the lamp bulb was large and it is assumed that vibration broke the wires in it.

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A few minutes later one patient reported to this station because he had torn the nail of his left index finger approximately half off while handling 5 inch ammunition. The nail was removed, finger bandaged, and patient returned to duty.

About fifteen minutes after the attack was over, one ambulatory patient suffering from heat exhaustion was brought to this station from the nearby after Steering Gear Room. He was treated, observed, and returned to duty in about one half hour.

Drinking water originally provided for personnel in this area was inadequate. The temperature and humidity were high as all ventilation had been off for nearly four hours. Water jugs were empty and many men came to this station asking for a drink. To avoid all possible heat exhaustion several water jugs were filled and much drinking water dispensed as needed from our large reserve supply (12 gallons in wooden kegs and 30 gallons in an overhead emergency steel tank).

A short time after the first explosion occurred, the hospital corpsman from this station with Repair V returned for several tubes of tannic acid jelly. He reported he had treated several cases of burns at the forward end of the hangar deck, that these had been evacuated to main deck and that no help was needed.

Later we learned that we had no communication with Central Station over the JZ phone but could contact the bridge indirectly over it. Then we heard that the ship could be steered manually from the after Steering Gear Room but that the compasses had been broken so that orders to steer had to come from the bridge. Several other explosions occurred, and the Reserve Plane Stowage compartment in which we were located became filled with smoke, we put on our gas masks, lost indirect communication with the bridge, and were told to abandon ship. There were no casualties in our area and all personnel departed, going to flight deck through the fuselage deck where there was much smoke, much dripping hot water from the sprinkler system and poor visibility with only three (3) electric lights on, but there were three ways of leaving that area and everyone should have gotten to the flight deck, as did all the personnel manning the after Battle Dressing Station.

The first destroyer was pulling along side when we arrived on the after end of the flight deck. All wounded there were ambulatory. There was a large crowd forward and I was told that the seriously wounded were there, that there was plenty of help and that we should remain on after flight deck. We abandoned ship as directed, most of us getting on the destroyer Hamann.

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7. Report of Activities at After Aviation Collecting Station, (Main deck frame 165), by Lieut. A. T. SMITH, (DC), U.S. Navy.

A few minutes after the action had started, a marine sergeant was the first wounded man to enter the compartment from Battery IV. He had multiple gunshot wounds from a strafing plane. The wounds seemed to be made from small caliber bullets. A few seconds later two more marines entered with bullet wounds. One patient had a wound of the lower leg and the other patient a bullet wound in the back of the shoulder over the area of the scapula. All patients were laid on the deck and made comfortable. The wounds of each patient were bandaged by the hospital corpsman and myself; the hemorrhage arrested and morphine given. Patients were covered with blankets.

A short time later the action had ceased, I was called into the adjoining compartment to look at a marine who had been brought in. This man was dead with a bullet wound in the region of the heart. This was the only death we had at this first aid station during the day.

Shortly after the action three more patients arrived with multiple bullet wounds. These were taken care of and treated in the same manner as the above patients. Two of the patients had bones in the forearm splintered. These were bandaged and splinted. A short while later two more men arrived with burns on the arms. Tannic acid jelly was applied. Total of eight patients received treatment.

Later in the afternoon four severely burned patients (who had been in Central Station when a blast occurred), were raised by a Stokes Stretcher from the fuselage deck to the main deck through the hatch in the next compartment. Dr. Roach was below directing this operation. Several blasts occurred from the region of the hangar deck and this operation ceased. After an interval to allow the escape of the men the hatch was closed and secured again. Due to the smoke in the compartment, the patients were moved outside to the after ends of batteries III and IV. A short while later all the wounded aft, approximately 12, were hoisted to the flight deck and carried forward to be evacuated from the ship.

8. Personnel: All members of the medical department assisted by Chaplain G.L. Markle and the bandsmen did their work in a splendid manner. The cooperation of all men of the ship's company when needed was commendable. Repair parties were very helpful in the removal of patients from difficult parts of the ship under very trying conditions of smoke and darkness. They were of material aid in salvaging medical supplies from the Sick Bay after we were forced to evacuate and move to the Captain's Cabin.

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The senior dental officer, Commander W.C. Trojokowski, was killed in the blast from a bomb hit while carrying on his duties in a splendid manner on the main deck. Weeks, V.L., Pharmacist's Mate second class, after doing excellent work and removing the last of the patients to be transferred was killed on a raft by a piece of flying metal from the ship following one of the later explosions.

It was more than gratifying to the senior medical officer to note that the organization as worked out functioned so smoothly, showing elasticity, mobility when necessary, and coordination.

The following points as brought out in the Pearl Harbor attack and stressed by the Fleet Medical Officer were again evidenced.

- (1) Disbursement of medical supplies in ample quantities is essential.
- (2) Provision for reserve drinking water containers, as our ship's supply failed due to damage early in the attack.
- (3) Careful distribution of medical department personnel to allow for damage to one or more groups.

Finally: All that was accomplished in action and later the removal of so many of the ship's personnel was made feasible only through the splendid leadership and timely decisions of Captain Sherman aided by the many observations and reports from various inspections throughout the ship made by Commander Seligman, the Executive Officer. Suitable recognition is due these officers.

The Commanding Officer and the entire personnel of the U.S.S. MORRIS and the U.S.S. PORTLAND deserve commendations for their excellent help in caring for injured personnel from the LEXINGTON. This should apply to all other ships who at great risks and under hazardous conditions transferred and cared for injured personnel. The two named were observed by me personally.

Recommendations: (1) I wish to recommend all men under me in the medical department for a letter of commendation for: Having accomplished their work in an excellent manner during and after the battle under exceptionally difficult conditions.

(2) I wish to subscribe to Commander Junkers suggestion that a suitable medal be made available for all hands including all ships of the Task Force.

A. J. White
A. J. WHITE
Cdr.

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CV2/P6/MM
Serial 01002

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From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
To : The Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Subject: Casualties, Report of, Coral Sea Action
May 7 and 8, 1942.

Enclosures: (A) Report of casualties, officers.
(B) Report of casualties, enlisted men,
including U.S.S. LEXINGTON, ComCar
Div ONE Flag Allowance, VS-2, VF-2,
and VT-2.
(C) Report of casualties, Marine Detachment.

1. Enclosures (A), (B) and (C) are forwarded
herewith for the information of the Bureau.

2. The remains of personnel killed in action
were not recovered.

3. The next of kin have not been notified.

FREDERICK C. SHERMAN.

CC: OpNav.
Comserforpac.
Comcarpac.

REPORT OF CASUALTIES

DECLASSIFIED A L

U.S.S. LEXINGTON
(Officers)

1. The following officers were killed in action on May 8, 1942, except as noted:

NAME	RANK
BARRY, M.F.	Electrician, U.S.N.
GILMORE, W.W.	Commander, (SC), U.S.N.
HEALY, H.R.	Lieut.Comdr., U.S.N.
JOHNS, P.H.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.
PRICE, E.M.	Lieut. (jg), U.S.N.
TROJAKOWSKI, W.C.	Commander, (DC), U.S.N.
* WHITHAM, J.E.	Gunner, U.S.N.
ZIEHR, C.H.	Ensign, U.S.N.
ZWIERSCHKE, R.H.	Ensign, (SC), U.S.N.R.

2. The following officers are missing since May 8, 1942, except as noted:

AULT, W.B.	Command, U.S.N.	CLAG
a ALLEN, E.H.	Lieutenant, U.S.N.	VS-2
a BAKER, P.G.	Lieut. (jg), U.S.N.	VF-2
BULL, R.S., Jr.	Lieutenant, U.S.N.	VF-2
CLARK, H.F.	Lieut (jg), U.S.N.	VF-3
HALE, R.O., Jr.	Lieut (jg), U.S.N.	VS-2
MASON, N.H.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	VF-3
PETERSON, D.W.	Ensign, USNR	VF-3
ROWELL, R.M.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	VF-3
RINEHART, C.F.	Lieut (jg) U.S.N.	VF-2
a b QUIGLEY, A.J.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	VS-2
THORNHILL, L.W.	Lieut (jg) U.S.N.	VT-2
WINGFIELD, J.D.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	VS-2
b WOOD, H.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	VS-2

a --- Missing since May 7, 1942.

b --- Reported Rescued.

ENCLOSURE A

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Report of Casualties

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

1. The following men were killed in action on May 8, 1942, except as noted:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO.</u>	<u>RATE</u>
ALTO, Eino J.	328 46 27	EM1c
ARCHIBALD, Edmund W.	368 68 88	Sea2c
BLINCOE, Michael V.	382 55 37	Sea2c
BOHLANDER, Frank W., Jr.	356 63 55	Sea2c
BOHNER, Theodore R.	376 31 07	Sea2c
BROWN, Eddie L. Jr.	272 25 06	SC3c
BROWN, Robert Van B.	342 17 06	SK3c
BULT, Thomas K.	368 25 62	QM1c
CARLSON, Albert E.	311 42 21	CM3c
CARLSON, John B.	316 47 44	SK2c
COLEMAN, Donald E.	342 43 83	Sea2c
DAVIS, Jess O.	320 72 03	MM1c
DIAMOND, Theodore L.	337 33 55	Sea2c
DULL, Burl W.	300 11 79	CM3c
DUNN, John J.	266 19 97	F3c
DUPREE, William J.	360 34 76	F3c
DURANT, Howard E., Jr.	413 55 43	Sea2c
EDWARDS, Kenneth O.	337 40 18	SF3c
ELY, Robert C.	385 83 33	SealC
FLATT, Garfield H.	368 42 72	MM2c
FORTNER, Roscoe L.	287 45 55	SK3c
FRASURE, Hershell D.	287 53 40	Sea2c
FURMAN, Burton J.	680 00 40	SK3c
GARREN, "J" "B"	295 74 05	F1c
GIBBS, Nathaniel	262 95 92	Matt3c
GOULD, Howard S.	662 06 35	SK3c
HALL, Elby L.	346 76 80	MM2c
HART, Thomas H.	268 79 12	Sea2c
HENRY, Joel Q.	295 74 16	Sea2c
HOFSTRA, George J.	382 44 20	Sea2c
HOWARD, James E.	346 83 43	SK3c
JAQUES, Ray L.	337 48 14	Y3c
JEMISON, Eugene	272 71 37	Matt2c
JOHNSON, Ralph E.	272 38 49	SC3c
JONES, Edgar	342 39 20	AMM3c

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO.</u>	<u>RATE</u>
KANE, William J.	414 41 42	SK3c
KIDD, James W.	291 60 78	SC3c
KING, John M.	356 92 13	EM1c
KING, Kenneth R.	356 63 36	Sea2c
KRAUSE, John H.	404 93 66	Flc
LETTOW, Charles A.	321 37 85	Cox
LEWANDOWSKI, Arthur A.	328 60 06	M1dr2c
LIBBY, Robert L.	223 45 24	SF2c
LITTLE, James L.	295 32 75	SF2c
LOCKARD, Joseph R.	382 48 98	Sea2c
LYNN, Estus L.	337 07 97	SF3c
MAC DOUGALL, Eugene R.	299 99 90	Y2c
MARTIN, Earl W.	300 19 74	SK3c
MC LAIN, Robert M.	393 05 38	CEM(AA)
MENDIOLA, Francisco N.	421 07 50	Matt2c
MILLER, Richard C.	616 02 32	Y3c
MILLER, Stephen J.	299 77 57	SF2c
NOFTSGER, Ernest H.	342 00 93	GM2c
NUNES, William W.	662 04 63	Sea2c
O'DELL, Charles H.	316 78 35	Sea2c
O'NEAL, Willie (n)	346 73 87	Matt1c
OHLER, William G.	375 55 75	CEM(AA)
ORR, Manley S.	262 46 81	EM3c
PAGE, Warren W.	393 49 15	Sealc
PENNYBACKER, Frank H.	295 75 41	SF3c
RAMSDEN, Marvin L.	389 97 04	Cox
RASBERRY, Mahlon E.	360 43 46	Sea2c
ROSE, Joseph E.	311 39 44	GM3c
RUPERT, Dale E.	368 58 56	SF3c
RELERFORD, Nathaneail L.	346 83 52	Matt2c
a SCHAMP, Delbert D.	316 75 20	Sea2c
SCHNEIDER, Albert J.	360 07 92	Flc
SMITH, Carlyle G.	238 69 32	Ptr3c
SMITH, Vernon C.	372 15 51	EM3c
SNYDER, Glenn L.	337 04 10	Sealc
STASKO, John, Jr.	238 69 05	SF3c

a - Died of wounds 5-15-42

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(Enclosure B)

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Report of Casualties

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO.</u>	<u>RATE</u>
STRAUS, David "H", Jr.	624 03 42	SK2c
THAU, Willard A.	375 78 49	MM1c
VASS, Frank I., Jr.	382 29 28	Sea2c
WHITE, Eugene A.	266 39 14	Sea2c
WHITE, Lester J.	381 21 53	GM3c
WHITELEY, Robert L.	372 19 82	Bkr3c
WILKERSON, Claude M.	360 18 78	SK3c
WILLIAMS, Alter L.	287 31 13	Matt1c
WILLSON, Charles E.	201 78 18	SC3c
YOUNG, Carl C.	295 75 37	Sealc
ZEIGLER, Harry D.	243 77 14	Y3c
ZILINEK, Victor J.	223 87 70	GM3c

COM CAR DIV ONE

PARKER, Richard E.	632 10 66	Matt3c
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Scouting Squadron TWO

b BUTLER, William T.	223 24 91	ARM1c
b DAVIS, William P.	283 93 69	AOM3c
EDWARDS, John O.	212 52 95	ARM2c
c HUVAR, Cyril F., Jr.	360 27 79	RM3c
b LACKEY, John D.	316 61 47	ARM2c
b ROUSER, Charles W., Jr.	328 69 41	ARM2c
c WHEELHOUSE, Robert E.	300 07 93	ARM3c

b - Missing since 5-8-42.

c - Reported rescued from Rossel Island.

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Report of Casualties

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO.</u>	<u>RATE</u>
<u>FIGHTING SQUADRON TWO</u>		
HOLCOMB, Allen D.	386 03 75	Sea2c
WEEKS, Virgil L.	265 85 24	PhM2c
HUDSON, Norman, Jr.	279 -- --	OC3c
<u>TORPEDO SQUADRON TWO</u>		
b GLOVER, Wilmer T.	262 27 70	AOM2c
b HELDOORN, Johannes C.	401 36 53	AMM1c
b - Missing since 5-8-42.		

(Enclosure B)

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NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. LEXINGTON
MARINE DETACHMENT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

Report of Casualties

1. The following men were killed in action on May 8, 1942 except as noted. Separate report has been submitted by the Commanding Officer, Marine Detachment.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>
ANDERSON, Richard T.	Pfc
CARSON, Arthur W.	Pfc
CORBIN, James J.	Pvt
HARSHBARGER, John R.	Cpl
HERZOG, Robert A.	Cpl
HULSE, Ellis M.	Pvt
JUSZKOWSKI, Edward J.	Pfc
LANDWHERE, M.L.	Pvt
MAYFIELD, Leonard S.	Pvt
b McCARTY, Wallace E.	Pfc
MILLER, Raymond L.	Pvt
a NICHOLSON, Oliver D.	Cpl
NORDSTROM, Layne	Pfc
PREINER, Gerald P.	Pfc
a SIBLER, Donald J.	Pfc
SCHUESSEL, Marvin B.	Pfc
SHERWOOD, Gail M.	Pvt
SMITH, Elwin E.	FM Cpl
STULE, James M.	Pvt
WOODS, Francis M.	Pfc
ZEMOLA, Henry	Pfc

- a Died of wounds on U.S.S. NEW ORLEANS 5-8-42.
Buried at sea 5-9-42.
- b Died on U.S.S. SOLACE 5-16-42.

Enclosure (C)

DECLASSIFIED
ity NWD 968133
NARA Date 5-9-02

CONFIDENTIAL

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

CV2/P6/MM
Serial 01003

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Subject: Hospital patients, officers and enlisted men,
 attached to U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

Enclosure: (A) Report of patients transferred to Naval
 Hospital San Diego, California.
 (B) Report of patients transferred to U.S.S.
 SOLAGE.

1. Enclosures (A) and (B) are forwarded herewith
for the information of the Bureau.

J. R. DUDLEY,
By direction.

Copies to:
 OpNav
 ComSerForPac
 ComCarPac
 Personnel Officer 11th Naval District

**Report of Patients Transferred
to
U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, California.**

CONFIDENTIAL**OFFICERS**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	
HALL, W. H.	Lieut. (jg) U.S.N.R.	VS-2
HUNT, J. E.	Marine Gunner, USMOR	
McDONALD, Frank R.	Ensign, U.S.N.	VB-2
NIXON, T. J. III	Lieutenant, U.S.N.	
PRESTON, C. W.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	CGD-1
a SELIGMAN, Morton T.	Commander, U.S.N.	
STUPIN, P. J.	Ensign, U.S.N.R.	
TERRY, Winthrop	Lt. Comdr., U.S.N.	
WHITE, Arthur J.	Commander, (MC), U.S.N.	
a Admitted June 10, 1942.		

ENLISTED MEN

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO.</u>	<u>RATE</u>	
ALLRED, Edwin Francis	308 349	Pfc	USMC
CAMPBELL, Harold Robert	300 05 78	PG2e	
GERMANY, Thurman D.		Pfc	USMC
HORTON, Dana Norris	204 45 60	ACOM	
KRICKORIAN, John Levon	382 48 76	Seale	VT-2
MASSEY, Harold Ambrose	360 30 78	AOM3e	VF-2
MAXWELL, Jack Andrew		AMM1c	VF-2
NETTS, Robert "D"	268 54 15	EM3e	
MIRON, Allen Maurice	382 42 46	Sea2e	
MONROE, William (n)		Pvt	USMC
ROYAL, John B.	382 50 22	Sea2e	
RUIZ, John (n)	376 14 57	Sea2e	
THOMPSON, Norley M.	262 69 07	Seale	
WILLINGHAM, "R" "D"	355 92 66	Cox	

The above transfers were made June 2, 1942, except as noted.

Enclosure (A)

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NARA Date 5-9-02

Report of Patients transferred to U.S.S. SOLACE

CONFIDENTIAL

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO.</u>	<u>RATE</u>
N210	ALBRIGTON, Donald LeR.	385 47 07	CY(PA)
	→ AUGUSTINE, Max P.	372 34 83	Sea2c
N250	→ FRAZIER, James E.	287 57 93	Matt2c
N450	→ HARMON, Willard S.	320 43 44	GM(PA)
	JOHNSTON, Julian K.	268 54 03	F1c
N250	→ MISSELDINE, Hark "L."	368 58 47	Sea2c
N450	→ HOSS, Ruffice R.	376 14 79	Sea1c
	MULLINS, Wayne E.	295 74 18	F1c
N250	→ SELDON, Leland P.	265 74 16	Matt1c
	STABLER, Kenneth R.	316 44 02	GM1c
	TONDRE, Clement O.	359 98 18	SP2c
USNHSO	→ THRASHER, Eddie Jr.	268 50 46	Matt2c
NJMI	SKINNER, John W.		Pvt
N450	WEBSTER, William P.		Pfc <i>side letter</i>

NOTE: The above transfers were made May 15, 1942.

N450. *Gully, E. ...*

Enclosure (B)

83-B

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by NW 468133
NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. BARNETT

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

May 29, 1942.

From: Ensign C. E. DOWLING. (Senior Officer Present
C & R Department.)

To : Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

Via : Executive Officer.

Subject: Report of Action of May 8, 1942.

My General Quarters station was Repair I located in No. one (1) Winch Room, forward end of the stack structure.

This Repair Party was responsible for fire fighting, repair of damage and rescue work on the Main Deck, Flight Deck, the Island and Stack Structures.

From my battle station I observed the approach of enemy planes from the Port Side of the Ship and notified the Damage Control Officer in Central Station. The planes dived out of the Sun and launched a torpedo and Bombing Attack. I saw several planes drop torpedoes and felt at least three hit the Ship. About this time a Bomb hit No. two (2) Port Gun Gallery in the vicinity of No. six (6) Gun. After notifying the Damage Control Officer at Central Station I sent two sections of the Repair Party to the scene of the Bomb hit and they immediately went into action fighting fire in and around the Admiral Quarters, and on No. two (2) Gun Gallery. I then received orders to investigate and fight fire in the Port Marine Compartment, the other two sections of Repair I were sent.

Shortly after I received word from the section leader of the first party sent out, that the fire from the Bomb hit was under control, the dead and wounded were being removed to Battle Dressing Stations, and Members of Repair I with HUTCHENS, D. W., CSF, in charge, was inspecting for damage and fires in all rooms and spaces adjacent to the Gun Gallery.

The section leader of the Second Party reported back to Repair Headquarters that the fire was out in the Marine Compartment and shortly after the Chief Petty Officer of the Repair Party reported to Headquarters that all fires were out on the Main deck. He also reported the Extent of Damage as follows:

"The Bomb had hit near No. six (6) Gun and the Ready Locker and exploded. Flight deck was torn up along the edge but the Bomb had not penetrated below the Main Deck but that it had made quite a deep indentation at one point.

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by NND 968133
NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. BARNETT

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

May 29, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action of May 8, 1942.

Quite a number of men were killed, wounded and burnt on battery two, and several men were knocked down by the blast in the passageway on the Main Deck. The Damage Control Officer in Central Station was notified of the Extent of damage and that all fires were under control.

In the meantime Repair I was ordered to send Corpsmen with stretchers and assistance to the Machine Gun Station around the top of the stack. One (1) section was sent and they lowered several wounded and dead men to the flight deck and transferred them to the Battle dressing station.

Repair I received several orders in quick succession to investigate fires, assist with wounded in different localities; one being the Coding Room, others the Executive Officers stateroom, Sky Forward, Sky Aft, Gig Boat Pocket and the Wardroom.

After all inspections were made and wounded taken care of the Damage Control Officer in Central was notified.

Central Station then reported to all Repair Parties that the ship was on an even keel and making about 25 knots and that all damage was under control.

I was then ordered by the Damage Control Officer to take a look over the port side of the Ship and try and locate the frame numbers where the torpedoes had entered. I had located one torpedo hit at about frame 90 in wake of the Gig Boat Pocket. The Blister at that point was torn loose, the 20 MM Guns had been thrown back into the Pocket and all life nets in the vicinity were torn loose and hanging. I had started forward but before any further inspections could be made there was a very heavy explosion from below, which I later learned was in the vicinity of the I. C. Room and Central Station. I immediately returned to Repair Party Headquarters and upon arrival there was informed by the J. Z. talker that he could not get Central Station or Repair II Station. I told the talker it may be his phones and to shift to a new set, in the meantime I tried to get in touch with Central Station by Ship Service Phone, also tried to reach Repair II. After failing to get in touch with Repair II or Central I notified Main Control, Repair Parties III, IV, and V, over the J. Z. Phone. Repair I was sent below to assist Repair II and investigate the Explosion.

I was informed by Main Control that all Information would be sent to Main Control and all orders issued from there as they were taking over Damage Control.

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NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. BARNETT

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

May 29, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action of May 8, 1942.

About 10 minutes later a messenger from Repair I returned to Party Headquarters with the information that Repair I was assisting Repair II to fight fires in and around the C.P.O. Quarters, and in the vicinity of the executive officers office and gunnery office. I was asked to try and get some Rescue Breathers to the scene of the fire and some more men to assist in removing men from the Sick Bay. Rescue Breathers were sent from Repair III and men were sent from the Air Department to Assist in Removing wounded.

Several explosions occurred at irregular intervals and I was informed that the fire main pressure was off. I inspected the Pressure Gauge on the flight deck and found we had about 20 lbs. Repair I notified Main Control and was informed that they had three (3) pumps on the Fire Main. The Repair Party they commenced to shift hoses to different fire plugs. The Risers forward were cut out and all hose connected up aft, as far back as frame 170.

Repair Parties continued to fight fire assisted by other members of the Ships Company but soon all means of fire fighting was exhausted. All the CO2 used up and water supply cut off.

We tried unsuccessfully to get the fire under control from the time of the first explosion at about 1235 to around 1545.

About 1600, I received orders from the Executive Officer to lower life rafts from the stowage position on the stack and distribute them forward and aft, where they could be launched if necessary. Men were detailed from the third division to prepare rafts on the port side of the ship for lowering, and men from the first and fourth divisions were detailed to lower boats.

Shortly after a destroyer came alongside the starboard side and 2, 1 1/2" hoses were led out from her to the flight deck, water was turned on and the hoses turned down into the elevator well. The fire had gotten out of hand by that time and we were ordered to transfer all wounded men to the destroyer and then the Captain gave orders to Abandon Ship.

In conclusion, I would like to state that the old type "B" Rescue Breathers were inadequate for fighting a fire where intense heat prevailed. The rubber lung collapsed and stuck together after a very short time.

Gas masks protected the eyes but men could only stay in smoke filled compartments a short time.

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by NWD 768133
NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. BARNETT

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

May 29, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action of May 8, 1942.

It is hard to pick out any individual men for praise as all hands performed their duty efficiently and coolly but I would like to mention the inspiring leadership, coolness and assistance of the Executive Officer, Commander M.T. Seligman, the attention to duty of the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lieut. (jg) LAIRD | - First Division Officer. |
| KARAS, Frank | - CBM Repair I Section Leader. |
| HUTCHENS, D. W. | - CSF Repair I Section Leader. |
| WITTHROW, V. N. | - BM2c Repair I |
| WILKERSON, J. L. | - SF1c Repair I |
| GINTER, R. E. | - SF3c Repair V |
| CHILDERS, W. H. | - WT2c Repair I Talker |
| STACY, W. L. | - Sealc Repair II |
| KIRKPATRICK, C. H. | - Cox. Repair I |
| DEAN, J. D. | - Cox. Repair I |

Edwards, K. O., SF3/c and Miller, S. J., SF2/c were in the forward drainage pump room and remained at their station. They were trapped later by fire and are reported missing.

C. E. Dowling
C. E. DOWLING
Ensign, U.S. Navy,
Assistant to 1st Lt.
U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

FILE No.

U. S. S. GEORGE F. ELLIOTT

May 30, 1942.

From: Ensign Gordon Ansell Harrison, D(V)G, USNR.
To : Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

Subject: Report of action on May 8, 1942.

1. My duty in connection with action on May 8, 1942 was Repair III Officer. The repair party station was located in the After Reserve Plane Stowage, therefore the observation of my people and myself were less extensive as that of the Repair Parties located forward.

2. During the actual attack upon our ship, there was only one noticeable jar in our sector. I believe that this was the torpedo hit which caused sea water to penetrate into #4 fireroom. There was also heard at least three close bomb misses which were on the port side of the ship aft.

3. Immediately after the attack, Central Station ordered Repair III to make a complete inspection of our part of the ship for damage, and that soundings be taken in all voids. The damage was limited to approximately ten shrapnel holes in the hull of the ship on port side, within the Musicians Compartment on the upper half deck. All soundings were found to be normal. Various reports of fires in the after part of the ship were reported from Central Station, but inspections indicated the negative. Central Station ordered that we send support to Repair I in fighting fires at Number TWO 5 inch Battery and in the Marine Compartment on the port side. I sent two sections (20 men) in compliance and they offered valuable support in taking control of those fires.

4. After sometime there was a report from Central Station that all fires were under control and that the ship was on an even keel. Shortly after this report there was an explosion forward and communications with Central Station and Repair II was lost both on the 2J Z circuit and the ship's service phone. In several minutes Repair IV reported that there was an explosion in Central Station and the Machine Shop. From this time Main Control took charge of damage control operations.

DECLASSIFIED

ity NND 968133

NARA Date 5-9-02

FILE No.

U. S. S. GEORGE F. ELLIOTT

Subject: Report of action on May 8, 1942.

5. As a result of explosions forward there raged a fire of considerable intensity in C.P.O. country, and I sent two sections with all available rescue breathers to aid in fighting same. There was no success in bringing that fire under control and all rescue breathers had completely drained all available oxygen. I ordered an inspection of the hanger deck and there was found smoke circulating aft in huge quantities and vision was cut to ten feet with gas mask and flash light. There were no fires in the after part of the ship. I was ordered to have after steering station to take steering control and that station steered the ship for quite a while, with rudder orders forwarded from the Bridge. Smoke commenced to enter the station via ventilation ducts and it was necessary to use gas masks. About this time the ship had lost all steering control and speed. We were soon ordered to top side by Main Control and all of my people reached that destination safely.

G. A. Harrison
G. A. HARRISON,
Ensign, USNR,
"R" Division Officer.

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by NND 68133

NARA Date 5-9-02

U.S.S. ALLYWN (355)

12 May, 1942

From: Lieutenant Commander G. L. MARKLE (Ch.C) U.S.Navy.
To : The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
Subject: My personal experience in the U.S.S. LEXINGTON,
during the battle in the Coral Sea on Friday,
May 8, 1942.

1. When General Quarters sounded I was on the bridge. Because I was below decks at my Battle Station on all previous engagements with the enemy, I requested permission from the Executive Officer to remain on the bridge to witness this engagement. Permission was granted provided I found a steel helmet to wear. I was unable to locate one, so I went at once to my battle station in the Sick Bay and reported to Commander A. J. White, (MC).

2. After four heavy shocks which seemed to raise the ship up as if going over a hump, I realized that I was without my gas mask and with Dr. White's permission I started for my room on the main deck No. 0211 to get it. (Approximately frame 25).

3. When I arrived on the main deck I found dust and smoke drifting through the passageways coming from aft. Having reached my room and getting my gas mask, flash light and pen, I ran at once to the passageway amidships where I found four men ^{Knife} who were nearly naked yelling for help, having been horribly burned. One Filipino cook (or steward) was there in the passageway just aft of the officers head about frame 20 on the main deck, and he helped me get the men on the cots in the passageway and take off the remainder of their clothes and give them a drink of water and a morphine injection.

4. I then ran back to my room to call Dr. White and report the conditions I found on the main deck. Dr. White advised me to remain on the main deck and assist the wounded, which I did.

5. When I returned to the wounded, (main deck, frame 25), I found a hospital corpsman there administering tannic acid jelly to the patients and generally caring for the wounded, largely cases with severe burns covering large areas of the body. These men kept coming in from the 5" gun galleries on the port bow, sometimes alone and others with the help of a shipmate.

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NARA I

Subject: My personal experience in the U.S.S. LEXINGTON,
during the battle in the Coral Sea on Friday,
May 8, 1942.

6. I believe we had about 12 men on the cots in the passageway when a brief lull came and I went out to the port gun gallery, #2, to see where the wounded men were coming from and what the cause was. There I saw several charred bodies (about four) by #6 gun. They seemed to have been frozen or charred into grotesque statues. Captain Houser, U.S.M.C., was there with a few marines manning #2 gun, which was still able to function.

7. I then returned to the wounded on the main deck and found two corpsmen and other helpers busy with the injured, but everyone was then cared for as well as possible under the circumstances.

8. I then took a turn through the officers country and met Commander Seligman in the passageway by the Admiral's Cabin. He pointed to an officer in the Admiral's pantry and asked me to look after him while he, Commander Seligman, went on forward. The officer in the pantry proved to be Commander W. W. Gilmore, (SC), USN. With some help I got him out to the passageway and administered first aid (artificial respiration) but to no avail. He apparently was dead when we found him. We covered him with a door curtain and left him beside two other bodies in the main deck passageway by the entrance to the coding office. Then it was, that one of the pharmacists mates reported that he had found Commander Trojakowski, (DC), USN, dead, in the same vicinity a few minutes before.

9. I was called to help with a man at the foot of the double ladder just aft of the Wardroom on the upper half deck. We turned him over and finding him badly burned, I gave him a hypodermic of morphine and helped to carry him up to the main deck and forward out of the smoke.

10. By this time there had been other explosions below and Dr. White and his patients from the sick bay came up to the main deck at about frame 25.

11. The main deck passageway was rapidly filling with smoke from below and it was evident that we would have to move the wounded to avoid suffocation. We moved them all to the Captains Cabin where we had the entire deck of all three rooms covered with injured.

12. Then, Gunner Whitham was reported to be badly injured down by the gunnery office. Two men volunteered to go down and I insisted on them wearing gas masks. As they reached the ladder leading from the main deck to the forward door of the Wardroom, Gunner Whitham came up the ladder slowly under his own

Subject: My personal experience in the U.S.S. LEXINGTON during the battle in the Coral Sea on Friday, May 8, 1942.

power, but badly burned and in a state of shock. We helped him to the Captain's Cabin, where we gave him water, a hypodermic, and applied tanic acid jelly to his badly burned body. He appeared to be stunned.

13. I then went aft along the starboard side of the main deck from the Executive Officers cabin to the Aviation dressing room, speaking a word of encouragement and assurance to some 40 injured men in bunks along each side of that narrow living compartment aft of the Radio Repair Shop. Although many were badly burned and wounded they were all quite calm. They seemed to know me and appreciate a word of interest and encouragement. I found four in this group who were dead. Dr. Barber and at least one pharmacists mate were working rapidly but quietly in the dressing room.

14. I went back to the Captain's Cabin where I helped with the injured, assisting Dr. White, Chief Pharmacists Mate *Fleming* and several corpsmen. Eventually we had to move all patients out to the gun gallery on the starboard side when the Captain's Cabin filled with heavy smoke from below. I asked Dr. White if he thought all patients were out and he was uncertain because there were so many and the move was made so rapidly. By that time the Captain's Cabin was filled with a dense smoke and we were unable to see inside. Dr. White and I each put on a gas mask and went in and felt our way around the cabin but neither of us could locate anyone. We then felt certain that all were clear.

15. About 15 minutes later we decided to get all of our patients up on the flight deck to clear the gun gallery so that the guns could be effectively fired if another attack was made. To protect the patients from the wind and have them near the boats, I suggested they be transferred again to a spot on the starboard side forward of the stack. This was done with the help of the men on the flight deck.

16. After Dr. Barber made a hurried examination of Dr. White, I learned that he had probably sustained a broken collar bone and a badly lacerated ankle when an early explosion knocked him off his feet before leaving the sick bay. I suggested that he get in one of the boats when the injured were taken off and Dr. Barber agreed. This he was unwilling to do, until Dr. Barber and I went to the Captain on the Bridge and got his permission to send Dr. White in a boat with the injured.

17. The Captain then ordered all hands to abandon ship. I went to the injured back of the stack to see if I could help and to give the injured water, and found Lt.(jg) Laird and two pharmacists mates who said they were taking charge of loading of the injured. There were plenty of men to assist.

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by NND 968133

NARA Date 5-9-02

Subject: My personal experience in the U.S.S. LEXINGTON,
during the battle in the Coral Sea on Friday,
May 8, 1942.

18. I then followed instructions from the bridge to go forward and prepare to abandon ship with all others. When only a half dozen men were left on the bow and more than that many lines were available I suggested to Dr. Roach that he go down a line and I followed him off the port bow. There were no boats or rafts available at the time, so I slid down a line and after some difficulty in getting away from the ship I swam about half the distance to the nearest destroyer and then got hold of a raft which was drifting faster than I could swim. Soon a boat came and picked up all of those on that raft and took us to the U.S.S. NEW ORLEANS, where I climbed up a cargo net with some helping hands and made the deck. Lieutenant J.T. Bollinger, U.S.N., was with me in the water, on the raft, and in the boat which landed us on the U.S.S. NEW ORLEANS.

19. I personally know of 20 dead and 65 severely injured officers and men. Minor injuries not estimated.

G. L. Markle
G. L. MARKLE.

DECLASSIFIED
by NND 468133
NARA Date 5-9-02

From: Harry F. Nowack, Carpenter, U.S.N.
To : The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

Subject: Action, report of 8 May 1942.

1. On Station with Repair II in General Machine Shop.
2. First underwater explosion (hit) took place and was judged to be aft port side of Repair II (Machine Shop).
3. Sent one section to investigate.
4. Immediately afterwards I took one man and went to investigate.
5. Arrived on the quarter-deck, met Machinist Davidson who stated that he had just flooded the port Gasoline Control Room (Water and CO₂) because the seams of the outboard bulkhead were leaking. At this time another underwater explosion occurred just forward of the quarter-deck, port side. No damage at quarter-deck area.
6. Man from Elevator Control room asked me for permission to secure his station as the forward elevator was out of commission. Told him to secure his station.
7. Went up to lower half deck just above quarter-deck - smoke present - no fire in this area. Proceeded forward and met the Outlying section of Repair II, section leader said there was a fire above and it was impossible to fight it as they only had gas mask masks and the smoke was too heavy. Found one oxygen rescue breather at the outlying station, put same on and proceeded to middle half deck which was heavy laden with smoke - no fire present. Went up to main deck - had fire in Admiral's Cabin extinguished. Assisted in removal of wounded from this area.
8. Went down to middle half deck, met my Repair party; they stated that they had inspected all decks and area around damage and that all fires were out.
9. Had the high pressure air to the port forward battery cut off.
10. Reported to central station that all fires were out and that the Repair party was going to make another thorough inspection of all deck spaces forward.

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NARA Date 5-9-02

Subject: Action, report of 8 May 1942.

11. Detailed Repair Party men to each deck level and also to take soundings.

12. Remained by the after door of J.O. Mess with JV phone talker awaiting the reports of inspection of deck spaces by repair party men.

FIRST INTERNAL EXPLOSION

13. About two minutes after detailing the repair party for inspection of deck spaces forward - a large roar and explosion took place, flames of fire covered the office area followed by heavy smoke. The flames of fire looked as if they came from the gunnery office. I had just started to put on my gas mask when the explosion took place, my gas mask was knocked out of my hands, and I had to retreat to thw W.O. Mess area. Had fire hose run into this fire area by two repair party men, no water pressure on fire main risers forward. Removed fire hose and closed door at the forward end of J.O. Mess.

Went up to main deck to get another gas mask and a breath of fresh air. Doctor White needed some equipment from the Sick Bay area on 2nd deck. Fleming, Chief Pharmacist's Mate and myself went down and procured same. No fire in Sick Bay Area.

14. Fire hose from after fire main risers were run down 5" ammunition sauttles on forward Stbd. gun gallery.

15. Ran hoses from after fire main risers to passage-way aft of Wardroom and down to Office spaces where fire had gained headway, unable to get down to C.P.O. passageway where fire was also raging. Small explosions were taking place mingling with the explosion of 5" ammunition. Entire Wardroom deck was raised about six inches by first internal explosion.

16. Unable to put fire out in office area as each explosion seemed to give the fire more headway. As water pressure dropped the explosions became heavier. Had repair party men leave hoses in compartment for flooding of same.

17. All repair party men, Commander Seligman and myself retreated to flight deck.

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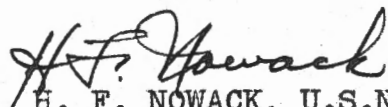
Subject: Action, report of 8 May 1942.

18. Opened battle port on middle half deck, stbd. side of elevator well, entire elevator well was ablaze.

19. Recommended to Commander Seligman that Hangar Deck sprinklers be turned on to prevent the fire from spreading aft to the torpedo stowage on the mezzanine deck. Permission was granted. All sprinklers were turned on from the main deck.

20. Commander Seligman detailed me to inspect the forward part of the main deck to note the progress of the fire. Entered from door on Starboard forward gun gallery, unable to go into compartment because of the heavy smoke which was hot and similar to steam. Closed door and returned to the flight deck.

Respectfully,


H. F. NOWACK, U.S.N.
Carpenter,
Repair II Officer.

COMMANDER DESTROYER SQUADRON ONE

A16-3/L11
Serial 0179.

May 14, 1942.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

From: The Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE.
To : The Commander Task Group 17.2,
(The Commander Cruiser Division SIX).

Subject: Sinking of U.S.S. LEXINGTON.

1. The following is based upon stenographic notes of messages received over T.B.S. Where times are stated they are correct.

2. The Japanese attack occurred at 1115, 8 May, 1942, at 1117 LEXINGTON was hit, at 1121 LEXINGTON was seen to have been hit by a bomb from a VF on the port bow. Shortly thereafter she hoisted a signal "I have been hit by 5 torpedoes."

3. Subsequently the LEXINGTON steamed at 20-25 knots on various courses. She landed planes in the air. A small amount of smoke was observed coming from under both sides of the forward part of the flight deck.

4. At 1447 an explosion was observed on the LEXINGTON and at 1448 she hoisted the general signal "This ship has had a serious explosion;" and at 1450 "Flames are not under control." At 1455 she hoisted "Standby. This vessel needs help." At 1505, to the PHELPS, "Close this ship." The MORRIS (Comdesron TWO), ANDERSON and PHELPS closed the LEXINGTON.

5. Meanwhile a signal had been received from the Task Force Commander, by Comdesron ONE, stating that a night attack was contemplated and requesting the amount of fuel on board. By T.B.S. conversation between Comdesron ONE and TWO it was decided that Comdesron TWO would stand by the LEXINGTON. Accordingly the MORRIS, ANDERSON and HAMANN closed the LEXINGTON while PHELPS, AYLVIN, and RUSSELL screened the YORKTOWN. This was based upon a T.B.S. message from the Task Force Commander to PHELPS "Might need you for tonight's work" and subsequent orders from the Task Force Commander for MORRIS, ANDERSON and HAMANN to standby LEXINGTON.

6. At 1610 intercepted T.B.S. message from Comdesron TWO to the Task Force Commander "LEXINGTON is losing pressure, fire out of control, list increasing, have abandoned all below deck stations."

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7. Shortly thereafter, Desron 2 destroyers began going alongside LEXINGTON to take off personnel. At 1726 DEWEY came over the horizon and at 1738 was ordered by Comcrudiv 6 to close LEXINGTON; she had been sent to rescue a plane believed to have been down. MINNEAPOLIS and NEW ORLEANS were standing by.

8. At 1739 Task Force Commander ordered Comdesron 1 to have more destroyers close LEXINGTON. AYLWIN and RUSSELL were left to screen YORKTOWN and PHELPS and DEWEY close LEXINGTON. Desron 2 ships were still taking personnel as were boats from NEW ORLEANS and MINNEAPOLIS. Wounded were being transferred to cruisers by boars. LEXINGTON was well afire forward and from about 1740 on many more or less severe explosions were occurring at very frequent intervals. The fire spread aft.

9. PHELPS and DEWEY took position about 1000 yards to windward of LEXINGTON and then boats began picking up survivors in the water. PHELPS intended going alongside LEXINGTON following the HAWAIIAN. However, it was seen that there were no more survivors leaving the ship. But, it was noted that there were 20 or 30 men on a raft under the after port quarter overhang; they were eventually rescued by an unknown motor launch.

10. At about 1810, after it had gotten quite dark, Lieutenant Commander J.C. Daniel, U.S. Navy, in a PHELPS whaleboat was sent in to ascertain whether there were any more men in the water. He took this boat directly under the port side of the LEXINGTON and made a sweep of that side, then made a sweep up the starboard (leeward) side as far as the smoke would permit him to see. He found no survivors. At this time the ship had a list of about 30°, her flight deck was afire from stem to stern, a serious explosion had just thrown planes, etc. over her tops and other planes on deck were in imminent danger of sliding off on top of the boat. All men who had drifted to windward of the LEXINGTON had been picked up.

11. At 1853 received a signal from Comtaskgroup 17.2 "Detail one DD to sink LEXINGTON with torpedoes then rejoin promptly". The PHELPS was detailed.

12. Between about 1730 and 1915 cruisers and destroyers were engaged in rescuing remaining survivors, transferring wounded to cruisers, hoisting boats and getting clear. Comdesron 2 was

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ordered to screen MINNEAPOLIS and NEW ORLEANS while PHELPS torpedoed the sinking ship.

13. At 1915 the first torpedo was fired, range 1560. It was set for 50 feet as it was calculated the LEXINGTON had a draft of 45 feet. It exploded on her port side opposite the barbette of old #1 turret. The explosion seemed to have no effect. It was realized torpedoes should have been fired into her starboard side; however, at the time the location of other ships was not certain and it was feared a torpedo might run in their direction if aimed at her starboard side. An intermittent light from a DD was observed to windward.

14. At 1920 fired second torpedo, depth setting 50 feet, torpedo was observed (as far as visibility permitted) to be running toward her midships sector. It either missed or else the warhead exploder was defective. At 1929 fired third torpedo; this exploded abreast her stack; her list immediately increased about 10 degrees but no more. Range 1560, depth setting 50 feet. By this time the port edge of the flight deck was awash.

15. By this time it was obvious that friendly ships were clear. Accordingly, PHELPS moved around to LEXINGTON starboard bow, clear of smoke, and fired the fourth torpedo, range 1200 at a target angle of about 060 at 1945; depth setting 50 feet. This torpedo is believed to have hit in the smoke, probably about amidships. However, she did not sink. As the Task Force was getting farther and farther away, a fifth torpedo was fired at 1952 with a depth setting of 30 feet. The LEXINGTON sank very suddenly at 1952 in 2400 fathoms of water in position, Lat. 15-12 S. and Long. 155-27 E. She probably sank before the fifth torpedo reached her. Whether she capsized or sank on even keel, or one end first, could not be observed.

16. At 1952^(?) there were two terrific underwater explosions from the LEXINGTON. At the time the PHELPS had no way upon her; the Captain thought he had been torpedoed; the Squadron Commander thought some accident had occurred and depth charges had been dropped, and broadcast on TBS (before power could be lost) "PHELPS has had a serious explosion. Stand by to give assistance. Stern believed to be blown off". However, it quickly developed that PHELPS was not damaged, which fact was broadcast. Three theories are offered for this explosion:

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- (a) Water pressure, increasing as she sank, was applied to a defective depth charge bomb in her magazines.
- (b) As she turned over, bombs or fuses were thrown against a red hot bulkhead or deck.
- (c) Steam pressure was generated inside the ship when red hot metal came in contact with saltwater.

It has since been ascertained that ships 10 miles distant also felt this shock.

17. After the LEXINGTON sank, PHELPS proceeded on base course and rejoined the formation at daylight.

18. In reply to signals, destroyers reported having aboard survivors as listed below. However, it is believed these figures are not very accurate.

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Men</u>
DEWEY	13	108
PHELPS	1	24
RUSSELL	2	88
HANNMANN	24	428
MORRIS	2	80
ANDERSON	17	335
<hr/>		
TOTAL	59	1063

Since the AYLWIN was screening the YORKTOWN, it is believed she made no rescues.

19. In order to expedite their reports, DEWEY and PHELPS (now in company) have been instructed to submit reports direct to ComTaskGroup 17.2

/s/ A.R. EARLY.

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May 10, 1942.

From: The Commander Task Force ELEVEN.
To : The Commander Task Force SIXTEEN.
Subject: Recommendations based on Coral Sea Action
7 - 8 May.

Enclosure: (A) Recommendations of LEXINGTON Fighter
Director Officer.
(B) Recommendations of Commanding Officer,
Fighting Squadron TWO.
(C) Recommendations of Squadron Commander,
Bombing Squadron TWO.
(D) Recommendations of Squadron Commander,
Torpedo Squadron TWO.

1. The following information and data are being hastily compiled prior to transfer of the LEXINGTON survivors from the ships of Task Force ELEVEN to the ships of Task Force SEVENTEEN. Points covered are those considered essential and worthy of consideration for operation against the enemy in the Coral Sea area.

2. In addition to the opinions presented by the enclosures I strongly recommend the following:

- (a) That a cruiser raiding force ^{should} normally ~~never~~ ^{not} be detached for a separate daylight mission without air coverage. Admiral Kinkaid concurs with me in this opinion. The experiences of the Australian Squadron on 7 May (Task Force FORTY-FOUR) strongly bears out this point.
- (b) That cruiser intermediate patrol is not sufficiently important to be maintained when action is expected; at this time it greatly handicaps the evaluation of Radar information, thereby reducing its value. At this time the only patrol that I recommend for cruiser aircraft is inner patrol, and cruiser aviators must be warned not to exceed the five (5) mile limitation of this patrol. Cruiser pilots are prone to exceed this limitation.

cc: ComCruDiv 6
(with enclosures)

AUBREY W. FITCH.

From: The Fighter Director Officer, Task Group 17.5.
To : The Commander Task Group 17.5.
Subject: Comments as a result of actions of 7 - 8 May 1942.

1. It is essential that the rigid restrictions of radio silence be removed from the P.D.O. whenever combat patrols are in the air.
2. There should never be more than two CXAM type Radars operating in the same force simultaneously. At one time with four CXAM Radars operating and the force spread out widely it was impossible to determine the presence of aircraft beyond 90,000 yards because when the scale was shifted the screen was filled solid with other Radars and ships.
3. All aircraft should have I.F.F. of the type used by LEXINGTON planes. These worked fine but YORKTOWN's I.F.F. did not register on our screen. If only a limited number are available they should not be given 100% to fighters as they always work in pairs. It is most important to have I.F.F. in every scouting section. Enemy scouts appear most often right at the time when own search is returning and it is highly necessary to be able to tell them apart. It might be best to have our own people stay off the screen as long as possible by staying below Radar horizon.
4. Intermediate patrols flown by cruiser planes are a nuisance, especially when close to the enemy. Other intermediate patrols serve to keep submarines down but are ineffective in intercepting enemy snoopers, attacks by dive bombers or torpedo planes. Planes used for these patrols should use I.F.F.
5. Inner air patrols must never go beyond one half mile from the outer limits of the force screen; they should be constantly in sight from the fleet guide.
6. Combat patrols, with present equipment, should be launched as often as possible. They must patrol at 20,000 feet if they are to be successful in stopping dive bombing attacks. A secondary combat patrol at lower altitudes for interception of shadows, scouts, and torpedo planes should also be maintained if practicable. The attack on TF 17 came from 18,000 feet. The Jap bombers first appeared 68 miles away traveling at high speed. They flew out of the big null

NOTES FOR FIGHTER SQUADRON COMMANDERS OF SQUADRONS WHICH MIGHT ENGAGE JAPS.

Based on experiences of VF2 pilots 7-9 May 1948.

Types Jap VF encountered: Zero, double Zero, 97, and ME 109. All these are very maneuverable. The ME 109 is very fast - faster than P47s above 18000 ft. Rate of climb of all Jap VF better than ours. Fire power of 4 - 50s excellent and if you get on really shoots them down.

Jap pilots are tenacious and dogged and in no way showed any disinclination to fight.

The ME 109s were painted glossy colored yellow and khaki with large red circles on wings, red band around fuselage.

The Japs will not normally attack a close formation of aircraft except at extreme ranges.

The Zero fighter bursts into flame quickly when hit with incendiaries.

The ME 109 must have good armor as they do not explode or burn like the zero or double zero. They can be surprised as can our own pilots - two of ours shot down due surprise attack out of sun. (3 of our pilots missing to date).

Expect Japs to patrol at all altitudes from sea level to 20000 ft.

The Jap fighter escort for VB or VS always flies above, to rear, and in close formation, which is not broken unless attacked.

After attack group has launched its attack all their planes retire at high speed at low altitude. Every indication that Japs also have radar. They seemed to pick us up 30 to 40 miles away from their disposition.

For escort work, our fighters should be concentrated - not dispersed. Superior rate-of-climb of Jap VF enables them to take favorable attack positions almost at will.

NOTES FOR FIGHTER SQUADRON COMMANDERS OF SQUADRONS WHICH
MIGHT ENGAGE JAPS.

Based on experience of VFB pilots 7-9 May 1942.

(cont'd)

Jap VF gunnery poor - can sit on you for quite a while and
miss. Avoid at all costs being separated in action - you
never can get together again.

Paul H. Hussey,
Lieut. Comdr., U.S.N.,
C.O. VFB.

Enclosure "B"

- 2 -

From: Commander, Bombing Two.
To : Commander Task Group 17.3.
Subject: Air Operations - Comments as Result of Actions
of 7-8 May 1942.

1. It is vitally important for the success of coordination of VB and VT attacks, that the weather be included in contact reports - initial contact reports - otherwise, the bombers, by climbing to altitude, may miss coordination if bad weather is encountered at the objective. This occurred on 8 May; VB2 climbed to 15,000 ft., the weather was clear 7/8 of the distance to the objective - a descent was then necessary, to 1000' - VB was seen by VT as it entered the large area of squalls - VT happened upon the objective while, as a last resort, flying a "box." VB, though in the immediate vicinity, could not make contact -

Result: One CV not attacked. It was necessary to jettison the eleven 1000 lb bombs in order to enable the squadron to return to own CV.

If the weather conditions had been known to be bad at the objective, VB would have remained low, and in visual contact with VT.

2. Use 1000 lb bombs whenever other variables permit. They start violent fires - are so destructive that direct hits insure the destruction of the objective.

3. If one carrier group bombs an objective and damages it to the extent that its sinking is virtually assured, the next group to attack should, in my opinion, endeavor to destroy the next important combatant vessels in the enemy disposition. On 7 May, the carrier was so badly damaged by the LEXINGTON group that the YORKTOWN attack was superfluous and represented, in my opinion, a waste of striking power and torpedoes.

4. From the viewpoint of high altitude dive bombers, AA fire is ineffective. The protecting cruisers and DD's scatter, and concentrate their efforts upon the VT attacks and upon the retiring bombers. Only a small amount of 3" or 5" AA fire was observed on 7 May; and this was sporadic.

Enclosure "C".

Operations - Comments as Result of
Actions of 7-8 May 1942.

5. Fighters attacked VB at pushover point. VB came in from 16,500 ft., distance 10 miles from the sun. There was no serious fighter opposition, as the enemy VF had concentrated its efforts on the VS, which had attacked first.

6. No attempt should be made to rendezvous following the attack, especially if VF are known to be in the area.

7. SBD's should always carry 250 gals of fuel, other conditions permitting. If VB had been fueled to capacity on 8 May, it is highly probable that the second CV would have been located and attacked.

8. The enemy CV on 7 May employed no evasive measure other than to circle left. The approach of the 1st VB plane happened to coincide with the positioning of the CV directly up and down wind - enabling the first 1000 lb. bomb to be a direct hit.

Summary.

1. Weather should be included in initial contact reports.
2. 1000 lb bombs exclusively against enemy objectives at sea, other conditions permitting.
3. Duplication of effort should be avoided by groups and squadrons, and a shift of targets directed at the proper time.
4. AA fire is ineffective at high alts.
5. VF follow down in dives, leave at pullout.
6. Do not rendezvous after completion of attack.
7. Always fuel to 250 (SBD's) if possible.

B. L. HAMILTON.

From: The Commanding Officer, Torpedo Squadron TWO.
To : The Commander Task Force ELEVEN.
Subject: Notes of Lessons Learned in the Attacks of
VT-2 Upon Enemy CV's on May 7 & 8, 1942.

1. Use anvil attack regardless of direction of approach. The CV's enter a turn and maintain it. Therefore, the initial direction of approach is somewhat immaterial and allows all planes to get a good shot. With the CV in a tight turn it can be hit easily from an "inside of the turn" quarter shot.

2. Enemy surface ships were in a wide open formation with the CV as the center of the disposition and usually three CA's disposed on the 8,000 yard circle; one at 8,045, one at 8180 and one at 8315. This results in the largest opening through the screen being on each beam of the CV. Therefore, if a head on attack is to be made, the break-up point for the squadron is quite a distance from the CV. Usually 15 - 20 miles. This wide open formation allows our torpedo planes to enter the screen ahead of the CV and in the least dangerous area as far as A.A. fire is concerned.

3. In the second attack, clouds were effectively used as a screen to pass over the CA's without drawing their A.A. fire because they could not see the squadron. The attack being launched from 5,000 feet altitude from over the CV, descending in a power glide spiral. The Torpedo planes were nearly to the dropping point before fire was opened on the surface ships. Make use of clouds, they are of tremendous value in delivering the attack without drawing enemy fire.

4. Watch the enemy surface vessels and when they, or she, opens fire, take evasive action by altering course about 10 degrees and altitude up about 200 feet. After the burst has exploded, drop back down to original altitude and course. Repeat at next flash but not in the same direction.

5. The high level attack is the only one to use even on days of high visibility because it allows the planes to be glided in at about 180 kts, slowing for the drop at the last possible minute.

**Subject: Notes of Lessons Learned in the Attacks of
VT-2 Upon Enemy CV's on May 7 & 8, 1942.**

6. Always give the surface ships a high rate of change of bearing, they are weak on keeping up. They are very good on fuse setting.

6a. There was no evidence of Radar in the enemy ships.

7. Do not hesitate to approach close enough for an accurate drop. Maintain a rate of change of bearing in to about 1,000 yds. and then straighten out for the drop.

8. On retirement, all planes should scatter and rendezvous about 20 miles from the CV in the direction of Point Option. While within 50 miles of enemy CV, fly at very low altitude in order to prevent fighters from seeing the squadron and also to eliminate the underneath runs.

9. When attacked by enemy fighters, this command used a staggered line:



This gave us a very compact formation and mutual support from the rear and sides. This is protection against simultaneous fighter approaches from either side. In this case the runs made on us were high side "S" turn rear approach. This squadron shot down two enemy T-97 fighters out of the squadron of about 12 planes and the remainder withdrew immediately.

10. Where opposition is expected and there is no surprise element, the maximum distance that TBD-1 airplanes should be sent out is 160 miles out and back. This is deemed to be the very maximum, if it is desired to recover our planes.

11. Drop torpedos at 110 kts. from 75 feet altitude and there will be no erratic runs.

J. H. BRATT, Jr.

Enclosure (D)