

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

Reg. No. 10149
S.S. No. 11. 1308

DD526/A16-3

U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD526),
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
13 November 1944.

Secret
CONFIDENTIAL

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Secretary of the Navy.
Via : (1) Commander Destroyer Division FORTY-EIGHT.
(2) Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-SIX.
(3) Commander Battleship Division THREE.
(Commander Task Group 77.1).
(4) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
(5) The Commander In Chief, U.S. Fleet.

Subject: Combined Action Report and Report of Loss of
U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD526) on 1 November 1944.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regs., 1920, Art. 874(6).
(b) U.S. Navy Regs., 1920, Art. 841(3).
(c) CO, U.S.S. ABNER READ conf. ltr DD526/P6-1
of 8 November 1944.

Enclosure: (A) Special A/A Action Report (A.M. 1
November 1944). - p.8
(B) Special A/A Action Report (P.M. 1
November 1944). - p.9
(C) Recommendations for Awards. - p.11
(D) A Discussion of Japanese Suicidal Dive
Bombing Attacks. - p.18

PREFACE

1. U.S.S. ABNER READ sank at 1415 Item on 1
November 1944 in Latitude 10°47'30" North, Longitude 125°22'
15" East, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, following an attack
by a Japanese bomber which crashed on deck, starting a fire
which exploded the ship's magazines and resulted in uncontrol-
led flooding and loss of the vessel. Casualties, reported
in detail in reference (c), were as follows: killed in
action or dead as a result of wounds received in action -
seven (7) enlisted men; missing in action - three (3) officers
and twelve (12) enlisted men; wounded in action - one (1)
officer and fifty-five (55) enlisted men. All records,
accounts, logs, publications, and papers were lost with the
ship.

PART I - GENERAL NARRATIVE

2. Since 29 October U.S.S. ABNER READ, with
Commander Destroyer Division 48 (Captain J.B. McLean) aboard,
had been employed first on A/S patrol and then in the A/S
and A/A screen of reconstituted Task Group 77.1 (Rear
Admiral Weyler in U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI). On the morning of 1
November this task group, consisting of 3 BB, 3 CL, 1 CA,
and 13 DD (of which 5 DD normally were absent on A/S patrol
and radar picket stations) was patrolling Leyte Gulf in
Cruising Disposition 5RW, with heavy units on circle 2 and
destroyers on circle 5. Fleet axis was 120°T. Fleet course
was alternately 035°T and 215°T. Fleet speed was 10 knots.
ABNER READ occupied A/S screening station 5315 or A/A screen-
ing station 3.5315, as ordered. Commander Destroyer
Squadron 56 (Captain Smoot in U.S.S. NEWCOMB) was Commander
Screen.

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3. Weather was mild, with unlimited surface

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visibility and approximately five tenths cloud cover at about five thousand feet. The sea was calm. Wind direction and velocity are unknown, but were negligible.

4. During the morning of 1 November, beginning about 0930 Item, Task Force 77.1 was under air attack for about one hour by Japanese dive bombers (Vals) and torpedo planes (Betties). At 0945 ABNER READ opened fire with 5"/38 battery on a "Val" sighted in a shallow dive over the heavy units of the formation. No hits were observed prior to the order "Check fire" as the plane dove low over the battleships. Fire was resumed on this or possibly a second plane at 0948 by both 5"/38 and 40mm batteries as it passed down the starboard side of the ship on the reverse of the formation course in a shallow glide headed for CLAXTON. This plane was hit repeatedly by ABNER READ's 40mm fire and at least one very close 5"/38 (Mk 32 fuzed) burst. The plane was set on fire approximately 500 yards dead ahead of CLAXTON, but continued in its dive and crashed about ten feet off CLAXTON's starboard quarter. CLAXTON was observed to slow and circle as a result of damage from the near miss. (Detailed A/A Action Report is contained in enclosure (A)).

5. A few minutes later U.S.S. AMMEN, on the opposite side of the screen, was attacked by a diving "Val" which crashed into AMMEN's forward stack. Shortly thereafter a third "Val" dove on U.S.S. KILLEN, in the van of the screen, damaging her with a near miss abreast no. 1 5"/38 mount. During and following these attacks single "Betties" were observed to be circling the formation at very low altitudes (about 50 feet), but except on one occasion remained just outside of effective A/A range of the screen. During the morning raid, which was directed almost entirely at the screening destroyers, a total of eight planes (five "Vals" and three "Betties") were seen. Of these eight, three "Vals" were observed to crash, even though on fire, on or close to three destroyers; one "Betty" was observed to crash well outside the screen. No combat air patrol was in the air over the task group during this raid.

6. At approximately 1100 Item ABNER READ was directed to leave the screen to stand by CLAXTON, who was alternately lying to and going ahead slowly on one engine. At about 1215 Item, ABNER READ ceased its patrol in the vicinity of CLAXTON to send a boat with medical officer, pharmacist's mates, repair personnel, and oxygen bottles to CLAXTON. Shortly thereafter, CLAXTON steadied on course 310°T at best safe speed of 10 knots, enroute to the transport area. ABNER READ commenced patrolling about 1500 yards ahead at 15 knots.

7. At 1339 Item, upon detecting "bogys" bearing 300°T at 10 miles on the SC-2 radar, ABNER READ went to General Quarters. About two minutes later, two "Vals" were sighted through the clouds bearing approximately 60° relative, position angle 30° - 35°, altitude about 6000 feet, target

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angle zero. "Commence firing," "Right full rudder," and "All engines ahead flank", were ordered immediately as the leading plane nosed over into a dive on ABNER READ. Despite 5"/38, 40mm, and 20mm fire which enveloped the plane in flames and shot away the port wing, this plane dove into the ship. (Detailed A/A Action Report is submitted as enclosure (B)). The immediate result of plane crash and accompanying bomb explosion was a raging fire in the after fireroom, after engine room, C-20LL (berthing space), no. 3 upper handling room, and the entire topside area from the after stack to a point just abaft no. 3 5"/38 mount.

8. The bomb (or bombs) entered the after fireroom through the forward starboard side of the after stack, approximately five feet above the level of the deckhouse, exploding in the uptakes of no. 3 boiler. The starboard side of the fireroom burst into flames, necessitating abandoning the fireroom. Prior to leaving, all burners and steam to the forced draft blowers were secured. At the bomb explosion, fire broke out in the forward starboard corner of the after engine room and the after main distribution board fell inboard and burst into flame. The engine room immediately filled with smoke and steam, and was abandoned. Prior to abandoning the engine room, the main engine throttles were closed in answer to a "Stop" signal from the bridge. It is impossible to verify the report of one man in the after engine room who claims to have seen the forward bulkhead (between after engine room and after fireroom) blown in on the starboard side. No estimate of the weight of the bomb can be made, but its explosive effect was sufficient to flatten all after fireroom and after engine room personnel.

9. The path of the flaming and disintegrating plane (less bomb) was diagonally down across the ship from no. 3 40mm mount, across the after torpedo tube, onto the main deck, and over the port side. Parts of the plane (starboard wing, landing gear, or engine) struck the barrels of no. 3 40mm mount, struck the Mk 51 director platform on the starboard side of the stack, struck the breech end of no. 2 torpedo tube (trained 275° relative), struck the starboard 20mm machine gun, and swept the port 20mm machine guns over the side. Those areas, plus no. 3 5"/38 mount and upper handling room and both sides of the main deck from no. 3 40mm ready service magazine to a point abreast the handling room, burst instantly into flame. The enormous extent of this fire indicates the use of some type of oil and gasoline fire bomb in addition to the bomber's normal gasoline fuel load.

10. The immediate effect of bomb explosion and plane crash on personnel in the vicinity was as follows. Of nine men and one officer stationed on no. 3 40mm mount and director, the battery officer and two men are missing and four men were wounded. Of six men stationed on the two starboard waist 20mm machine guns, three are missing and three were wounded. Of the five men stationed on the port 20mm guns, two are missing and three were wounded. One of two men on the

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10 November 1944.

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Subject. Combined Action Report and Report of Loss of
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after torpedo tube was killed; the second man and two men on the forward tube were wounded. From the starboard depth charge projectors, one man is missing, one was killed, and the third wounded. A number of men stationed in the after fireroom and after engineroom were wounded or burned either by the initial explosion or during their escape to the fantail. Personnel of no. 3 5"/38 mount and no. 5 40mm mount, driven from their stations by fire and debris from the bomb explosion, suffered burns and fragment wounds.

11. On the bridge, as the plane was seen to crash into the ship, "Stop" was rung up on both engine order telegraphs and was answered by forward engineroom but not by after engineroom. Tests on all soundpowered telephone and MC circuits revealed communications intact forward, but no communication with any station aft of the bomb hit. Steering control and ship's gyro were normal. Forward engineroom and forward fireroom reported the forward plant intact, and that the electrical load was being taken on the forward board. Forward Repair Party started fighting the fire from the main deck. Main Battery Control and no. 1 40mm mount shifted targets to the second "Val", which was already in a shallow dive, but which turned off when brought under fire and when apparently satisfied with the result obtained by the leading plane. With the after torpedo mount on fire and the forward mount subjected to intense heat and occasional flame by the blazing after stack, the order was given to jettison all torpedoes on the port beam (approximately 270°T), a clear area. This was done expeditiously at the forward mount. All torpedoes were fired with tripping latches retracted, and the torpedoes sank immediately. The after mount, engulfed in flames, was inaccessible and within a few minutes the impulse charges began to cook off, resulting in the intermittent launching of five fully ready but highly erratic torpedoes into the water.

12. About one or two minutes after the crash, "Back Full" was rung up, and answered by the forward engineroom, to kill the ship's headway and reduce the effect of relative wind in carrying the fire aft. About two minutes later, "Stop" was rung up, and the ship lay almost dead in the water. By that time the fire had spread to the entire after deck house, and the after stack had the appearance of a blast furnace, periodically erupting flame, chunks of metal, and debris into the air in all directions. In addition, from no. 3, 4, and 5 40mm mounts and ready service, from the starboard and port 20mm machine gun ready service, from no. 3 5"/38 mount and upper handling room, and from the port and starboard depth charge projectors and impulse charge lockers there was a continuous and deadly shower of exploding ammunition, fragments, and burning debris.

13. The Forward Repair Party initially led out fire hoses from fire plugs 1-90 and 1-105, but firemain pressure was insufficient. Word was sent to the forward engineroom to put all pumps on the firemain. This was already in the process of being done. With the electric fire and flushing pump and

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both steam fire and bilge pumps running at maximum speed, a pressure varying between 40 and 80 pounds was all that could be maintained. Simultaneously, hoses were led aft from fire plugs 1-18 and 1-41, and from the port side of the forward engine room. The available gasoline handybilly was started, using overboard suction. Efforts to connect electric submersible pumps to the nearest emergency power outlet (in Emergency Radio) were defeated by the fire and flooding which occurred in that compartment. All efforts at fire fighting were of course hindered by the intense heat, great noise, and murderous hail of exploding ready service ammunition in the midship section of the ship. Practically all repair personnel suffered fragment wounds or burns as a result of these explosions.

14. The situation confronting the After Repair Party and after gun crews was hopeless from the initial explosion. All power, lighting, communication, and water was gone. The fire was being rapidly swept aft; and the fantail personnel were exposed to a steady shower of fragments and flaming debris. Hoses were led out and magazine flooding control valves were opened, but firemain pressure was gone. All efforts were subsequently directed toward insuring depth charges set on "Safe", getting wounded men into the water, distributing life jackets, and casting loose life floats.

15. Approximately four to six minutes after the initial plane crash, torpedo wakes were sighted broad on the port bow. The starboard engine was backed "Emergency Full", and the forward 5"/38 and no. 2 40mm mounts opened fire at the wakes. One or more torpedoes were actually sighted running erratically near the surface, one circling to within about five yards of the port side. There can be very little doubt, although there were "Betties" in the area, that these torpedoes were those launched by the fire in ABNER READ's after torpedo mount. When it was seen that sternway and the suction of the starboard screw were endangering the men in the water astern of the ship, the order "Stop" was given to forward engine room. This was the last order given to the engines.

16. At 1352, ten minutes after the plane hit, a tremendous internal explosion occurred aft which shook the entire ship, caused her to list about 10 degrees to starboard, and to sag by the stern. This explosion is believed to have occurred in C-301M or C-303M. In anticipation of a succession of magazine explosions, the Commanding Officer ordered "Abandon Ship." When no further explosions occurred and the fire and ready service ammunition detonations actually seemed to decrease somewhat, the Commanding Officer ordered men on the forecastle to stand fast and shortly thereafter returned them to the forward 5"/38 and 40mm mounts. Simultaneously, all life rafts were lowered, the port motor whaleboat was lowered, 5"/38 powder tanks were collected for use as additional floats, wounded men were brought to the forecastle, and all lower decks cleared.

17. At 1358, with the ship listing about 25 degrees

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and the explosions aft increasing in frequency and severity, the Commanding Officer ordered the Repair Party to the forecastle and ordered all hands to abandon ship on the port side. At 1405, when to the best of his knowledge all personnel had been cleared from the ship, the Commanding Officer abandoned the ship. At 1415 ABNER READ rolled over on her starboard side, and at 1417 sank stern first. No depth charge or other underwater explosions followed her sinking. A large fuel oil fire burned for several hours over the point where she sank.

18. U.S.S. CLAXTON, U.S.S. RICHARD P. LEARY, and later U.S.S. CHITAQUA picked up survivors with speed and efficiency. By about 1500 all known survivors were aboard these three ships. Upon departure of rescue ships from the area, Commander Destroyer Squadron Five (in U.S.S. FLUSSER) remained to search the area. All survivors from the three ships were transferred to U.S.S. PINKNEY (APH2) upon arrival in the Transport Area about 1800.

PART II - PERFORMANCE OF MATERIAL AND PERSONNEL

19. The performance of all material (ordnance, radar, engineering, and damage control) was normal prior to, during, and following the action. Casualties to and loss of the use of equipment following the initial plane and bomb hit were those which might reasonably be expected to be experienced in a destroyer.

20. Except for momentary losses of power during load shifting, the main battery director, plotting room, forward Mk 51 directors, and all forward gun mounts continued in normal operation until the magazine explosion at 1352. Following that severe explosion, which killed the director trainer, snapped off the slewing sight, and jammed the director in train, no further effort was made to use the main battery control equipment.

21. All radar equipment survived the bomb explosion, but went out with the magazine explosion. The nature of the damage was not determined as C.I.C. was ordered abandoned at that time.

22. Performance of engineering equipment was in general excellent. Due to the inherent vulnerability of power, firecontrol, and I.C. circuits leading fore and aft, all power, lighting, telephone, MC, and transmission aft was lost with the bomb hit and fire in the after plant. Power to and bridge control of the steering gear were maintained until the ship was abandoned. The single fire main, even when split fore and aft (as it was habitually in ABNER READ), is a highly vulnerable line. It is not known positively, but all evidence indicates that the firemain snapped in the after fireroom, forward of the main cut-out separating the forward and after systems. The result was no water aft, and a delay in obtaining a working pressure forward.

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23. Except for a shortage of one electric submersible pump, ABNER READ possessed all allowed fire fighting equipment. Approximately 65 percent of her officers and crew had been to fire fighting school. The repair parties were well drilled and fire-conscious. The initial fire, spread by relative wind, exploding ready service ammunition, and an erupting fireroom, was from the outset simply too great to be fought successfully with the equipment at hand.

24. A detailed discussion of suicidal Japanese dive bombing attacks and recommended measures for increased protection of destroyers against this type of attack is attached as enclosure (D).

25. The performance of officer and enlisted personnel was up to the very highest traditions of the naval service. The machine gun crews, who manned their guns until struck by the flaming plane, did so with a full appreciation from observation that morning of the deadly intent and danger to themselves of a Japanese dive bomber. Their heroism was matched, however, by that of the repair personnel, who fought to the bitter end against a fire which they knew they could not subdue, and by the innumerable officers and men of the crew who delayed in abandoning the exploding ship until assured that everything could be done for the safety of the ship, for the evacuation of the wounded, and for the assistance of the non-swimmers. It is this last group, which, in their determination to do everything within their power regardless of danger to themselves, was responsible for the fortunate survival of such a remarkably high percentage of the officers and men of the ABNER READ.

A. M. PURDY

cc: Cominch (Advance Airmail) ✓
CinCPac (2)
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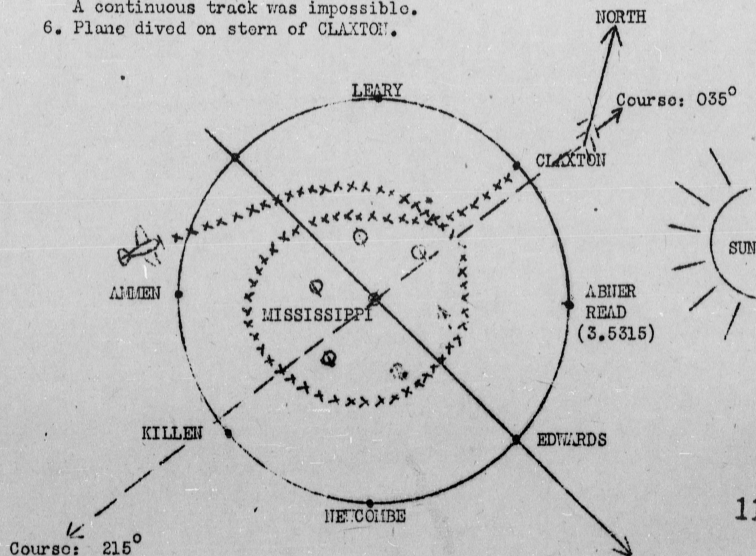
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ANTI-AIRCRAFT ACTION BY SURFACE SHIPS

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Location of ship: Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands
U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD526) Date: 1 November 1944
Zone Time: 0945 Itom

1. Surprise attack: Yes
2. Method picking plane up: Naked eye after radar warning of planes in area.
3. Range plane was picked up: Less than five miles.
4. Number of planes: One
5. Type of planes: Jap "Val". Type of attack: Glido bombing (suicide).
6. Speed and altitude: 180 knots - 5000
7. Guns firing: 5 - 5"/38; 3 - 40mm; 3 - 20mm. Method of Control: Director.
8. Ammunition expended: 75 rounds 5"/38; 361 rounds 40mm; 59 rounds 20mm.
9. Approximate time tracking to first shot: five seconds.
10. Approximate time of first hits: three minutes (fire was checked after 30 seconds).
11. Approximate time first to last shot: 3 minutes, 30 seconds.
12. Approximate position angle open fire: 30°.
13. Approximate position course fire: 5°.
14. Approximate bearing first shot: 270°T.
15. Approximate bearing last shot: 330°T.
16. Approximate range first shot: 7000 yards.
17. Approximate range last shot: 2000 yards.
18. Approximate altitude of bomb release: None observed.
19. Hits on ship: Plane crashed in flame 10 feet from U.S.S. CLAXTON.
20. Planes shot down: Sure: One
By what size guns: Combination 5"/38 and 40mm.
21. Details of damage to target by gunfire: Plane burst into flames at about 500 feet height, 1000 yards from CLAXTON.
22. Performance of ammunition: Good. High percentage premature Mk 32's.
23. Sketch:
 1. Fleet Axis: 120°
 2. Fleet Course: 215°
 3. Fleet Speed: 10 knots
 4. ABNER READ's speed varying between 15 and 20 knots.
 5. As plane circled over Task Force, it was at times hidden in clouds. A continuous track was impossible.
 6. Plane dived on stern of CLAXTON.



Enclosure (A) to U.S.S. ABNER READ
ltr A16-3, of 13 November 1944.

Axis: 120°

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ANTI-AIRCRAFT ACTION BY SURFACE SHIPS

CONFIDENTIAL

Location of ship: Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands.
U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD526) Date: 1 November 1944.
Zone Time: 1341 Itom.

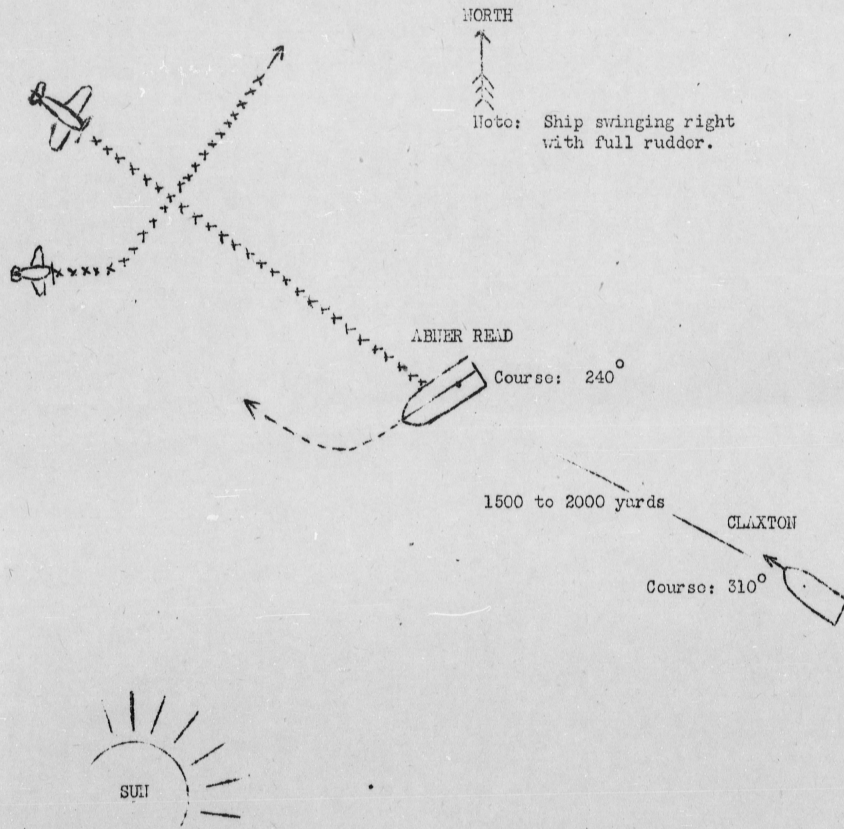
1. Surprise Attack: Yes.
2. Method picking plane up: Naked eye, after radar warning.
3. Range plane was picked up: About 3 miles.
4. Number of planes: Two
5. Type of planes: Jap "Val". Type of attack: Glide bombing (suicide).
6. Speed and altitude: 250 knots - 6000 feet.
7. Guns firing: 2 - 5"/38; 3 - 40mm; 3 - 20mm. Method of control: Director.
8. Ammunition expended: 6 rounds 5"/38; 280 rounds 40mm; 180 rounds 20mm.
9. Approximate time tracking to first shot: None.
10. Approximate time of first hits: 5 seconds.
11. Approximate time first to last shot: 35 seconds.
12. Approximate position angle open fire: 30° - 35°.
13. Approximate position cease fire: -
14. Approximate bearing first shot: 300°T.
15. Approximate bearing last shot: -
16. Approximate range first shot: 4000 yards.
17. Approximate range last shot: Zero.
18. Approximate altitude of bomb release: None observed. Type bombs:
Explosive and incendiary.
19. Hits on ship: Amidships, number two stack, starboard side.
Was ship strafed: No.
20. Planes shot down: Suro: One. By what size gun: 40mm or 20mm.
21. Details of damage to target by gunfire: Plane was hit and set on
fire at a range of 800 to 1000 yards. Shortly thereafter, the left
wing was shot off.
22. Performance of ammunition: Good.
23. Sketch:
 1. Bearing: 300°.
 2. Position angle: 35°.
 3. Height: 6000 feet.
 4. Range: 4000 yards.

Enclosure (B) to U.S.S. ABNER
READ ltr A16-3, of 13 November 1944.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS

1. The following named men are recommended by the Commanding Officer for award of the Purple Heart Medal or Gold Star in lieu of a second Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in action on 1 November 1944, incident to the Japanese aerial attack on U.S.S. ABNER READ. This list repeats Medical Officer, U.S.S. ABNER READ's letter to the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, dated 5 November, which is a report of casualties sustained in the action of 1 November 1944. Missing personnel are recommended for award of the Purple Heart Medal at such time as final status is determined.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Purple Heart</u>	<u>Gold Star</u>
KETTLE, Joseph E.	Lieut., D-V(G)	239897	x	
O'NEILL, William J., Jr.	Ensign, E-M	180798	x	
ROBSON, Walstan S.	Ensign, D-V(G)	330668	x	
GILMAN, John C.	Ens., D-V(G)	258689	x	
BREWER, Robert N.	Flc, V6	618-83-72		x
BRIGHT, Alvin M.	Slc, V6	655-35-96	x	
BROWN, William H.	Slc, V6	665-54-14	x	
KEPHART, Anson W.	Slc, V6	653-63-49	x	
LONGOSZ, Raymond F.	Slc, V6	851-48-63	x	
McCLUEN, William A.	BM1c(T)	375-85-88	x	
MEYERS, Charles R.	MM2c(T), V6	655-36-45	x	
REYNOLDS, Clarence (n)	Slc(SC) V6 SV	831-69-81	x	
ROOKER, William H.	S2c, V6	570-53-84	x	
SIMMONS, Timothy (n)	St3c	566-66-59	x	
TROSPER, Frank (n)	MM3c(T), V6	859-30-55	x	
WARNER, Lawrence E.	Slc, V6	357-01-49		x
AMIS, James H.	WT2c, V6	625-17-23	x	
ANDERSON, William J.	WT1c	393-48-76	x	
BLACK, John E.	RM2c(T), V6	617-47-56	x	
BOTTOMLEY, Robert H.	Bkr2c, V6	377-11-62	x	
BREWSTER, Arthur R., Jr.	S2c, V6	706-03-18	x	
BRUMET, Dean E.	GM3c, M2	564-14-62	x	
CARR, John W., Jr.	Slc(TM), V6 SV	865-56-09	x	
CASEY, Donald V.	EM3c(T), USN-I	869-69-40	x	
CASSIDY, Francis X.	Slc, V6	554-61-71	x	
CHIPMAN, Emmitt D., Jr.	TM3c	360-57-07	x	
CLAYTON, Melvin J.	GM2c, V6	654-85-17	x	
COLBERT, Gene R.	Slc, V6 SV	851-41-01	x	
COOK, Lansing Y.	Slc	312-94-65	x	
COSTLEY, Austin W.	Flc, V6 SV	866-47-49	x	
CREVOISIER, Herman M.	Slc, V6	553-52-63	x	
DALLAMORA, Samuel F.	MM1c, V6	607-08-86	x	
DAVIS, Kenneth P.	Flc, V6 SV	866-60-23	x	
DELORY, Bertram A.	WT1c, V6	564-79-32	x	
DENNY, Harold A.	B1c	336-96-30	x	

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Enclosure (C)

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Purple Heart</u>	<u>Gold Star</u>
DRAPELA, Frank L.	FC3c, V6	555-89-41	x	
GAWLOWICZ, Walter (n)	TM3c, V6	642-27-40	x	
GIAMBUZZI, Ralph (n)	S2c, V6 SV	818-76-32	x	
GUILLOU, Jewell F.	S1c, O-1	410-78-09	x	
GRANBY, Robert L.	3C2c, V6	655-33-18	x	
GREENE, Merrill F., Jr.	S1c, V6 SV	823-93-16	x	
GRIFFIN, Clifford F.	MM1c	356-17-74	x	
GRIFFIN, Jimmy C.	S1c(FCO) V6	563-17-27		x
HALLMAN, John H.	S2c, V6	245-21-49	x	
HAMPSHIRE, William E.	S1c, SV	856-55-98	x	
HART, Harold E.	SM3c, V6 SV	882-95-99	x	
HENDERSON, Dempsey L.	Bkr3c(T), V6	256-63-89	x	
HENDRICKS, Casper T.	SoM3c	258-45-91		x
HILT, Ralph E.	SM3c, V6 SV	871-71-92	x	
JONES, Arthur H.	S2c, V6	601-26-52	x	
JONES, William P.	SoM3c, V6	377-78-85	x	
KRULL, Joseph W.	S1c, V6	653-11-89	x	
MAIOLI, Ralph (n)	S1c	204-56-15	x	
McQUEEN, Paul S., Jr.	GM3c	250-73-32	x	
MIZONY, Herbert P.	Cox, V6	680-40-60		x
MOORE, George A.	MM1c	393-32-43	x	
MURPHY, Robert E. L., Jr.	CM3c, V6	563-41-94	x	
ORTIZ, David L.	S1c, V6	563-39-45	x	
RHODES, Harvey M.	S2c	874-38-16	x	
RHOADES, Paul (n)	M2c, V6 SV	875-40-40	x	
ROBERTSON, William B.	CRM(PA), T P4D	183-77-51	x	
ROBINSON, Ralph D.	S2c, V6 SV	756-17-00	x	
ROTEN, Jean F.	S2c, V6	753-45-47	x	
ROTTERMAN, Robert C.	FC3c, V6	613-07-83	x	
ROHLAND, Robert L.	S2c	387-02-91	x	
RUDDER, Lyles "B"	S2c, V6 SV	838-47-99	x	
SAMCZYK, Louis (n)	S2c, V6 SV	313-41-37	x	
VASQUEZ, James W.	GM3c	376-18-20	x	
*WADDELL, William R.	WT3c, V6	640-22-02		x
WEATHERS, Daryl L.	S1c, V6	564-86-75	x	
WEERHEIM, Kenneth W.	Flc, V6	554-27-00	x	
WHITE, Larry F.	Flc(MM) V6 SV	844-20-57	x	
WHITE, Neamon R.	S1c, V6 SV	860-93-47	x	
AUGUSTUS, Wayne H.	GM1c(T)	372-06-83	x	
HARMON, George K.	FC3c, V6	634-82-76	x	
ROSSI, Emil N.	BM1c(T)	283-48-04	x	
TIRABASSI, Ernest (n)	S2c, V6	615-84-43	x	
ZINGG, Ernest Jr.	TM3c, V6 SV	874-95-85	x	

*Recommendation for first Purple Heart still pending.

enclosure (C)

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2. The following men are recommended by the Commanding Officer for awards as shown below. It is believed that in all cases the proposed citations, attached to this enclosure, fully justify and describe the circumstances which have prompted these recommendations. Although it has been impracticable to forward affidavits of eye witness accounts, the recommended awards are the result of a thorough screening of all survivors, followed by a careful investigation of individual cases by an organized board of ship's officers. These recommended awards are known to and have the full approval of the entire ship's company.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Rank or Rate</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
CARPENTER, Richard J.	321-01-75	CTM(PA)	Navy Cross	
McCLUEN, William A.	375-85-88	BMlc(T)	Navy Cross	Missing in action.
BREWER, Robert N.	618-83-72	Flc, V6	Navy Cross	do
ROBSON, Walstan S.	330668	Ensign, D-V(G)	Silver Star	do
O'NEILL, William J.,	180798	Ensign, E-M	Silver Star	do
ROSSI, Emil N.	283-48-04	BMlc(T)	Navy & M.C. Medal	Killed in action.
AUGUSTUS, Wayne H.	372-06-83	GMlc	Navy & M.C. Medal	do
KETTLE, Joseph E.	239897	Lieut., D-V(G)	Bronze Star	Missing in action
GRIFFIN, Jimmy C.	563-17-27	S1c(FCO) V6	Bronze Star	Wounded in action
BLACK, John E.	617-47-56	RM2c, V6	Bronze Star	Wounded in action
DRAPELA, Frank L.	555-59-41	FC3c, V6	Bronze Star	do
SIMMONS, Timothy (n)	566-66-59	St3c	do	Missing in action
RUDDER, Lyles "B"	838-47-99	S2c, V6 SV	do	Wounded in action
WEATHERS, Daryl L.	564-86-75	S1c, V6	do	do
MEYERS, Charles R.	655-36-45	MM2c, V6	do	Missing in action
BROWN, William H.	665-54-14	S1c, V6	do	do
PATTERSON, Charles	670-81-73	S1c, V6	do	
VASQUEZ, James W.	376-18-20	GM3c	do	
GRANBY, Robert L.	655-33-18	SC2c, V6	do	Wounded in action
BOTTOMLEY, Robert H.	377-11-62	Bkr2c, V6	do	do
HOEFER, John H.	80797	Lt. Cdr., D-V(G)	CinC Com-mendation	
HUGHES, William W.	342263	Bos'n (T)	do	
HAMPSHIRE, William E.	856-55-98	S1c, SV	do	Wounded in action
HILDOM, LeVerne A.	509-44-35	S2c, V6 SV	do	do
RHOADES, Paul (n)	875-40-40	M2c, V6 SV	do	do
STEVENS, Charles E. Jr.	368-06-53	CPhM(PA)	do	
NOVAK, Nicholas F.	202-31-40	S1c(FC)	do	

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PROPOSED CITATIONS

NAVY CROSS

Richard J. Carpenter, CTR(PA), USN: After a suicidal dive bomber had crashed into a destroyer in which he was serving, he courageously and repeatedly exposed himself to the danger of flames and exploding ammunition on a sinking ship to drag wounded men to safety, to jettison torpedoes, to administer first aid to wounded men, to direct the lowering of a boat, to assist in the flooding of a blazing ready service magazine, and, as one of the last members of the crew to leave the ship, to assist in the evacuation of the wounded. By his utter disregard for his own personal safety, his bold and decisive leadership, his untiring strength, and his intimate knowledge of his ship he was an unsurpassed example of achievement and inspiration.

NAVY CROSS

William A. McCluen, BMlc, U.S.N. (Missing in Action): While serving as leading petty officer of the after repair party in a destroyer which was hit by a suicidal Japanese dive bomber he courageously and with utter disregard for his own personal safety made valiant attempts to bring spreading fires under control. Seeing that his efforts were in vain, he with great efficiency and foresight directed for his isolated group the preparation for and actual abandoning of the sinking ship. In the face of raging fires and intermittent explosions he remained steadfast on the open deck until all wounded personnel were evacuated. Showing no concern for his own fate he relinquished his own life jacket to a painfully wounded shipmate, thereby sacrificing his own chances of reaching safety.

NAVY CROSS

Robert Norries Brewer, Flc, U.S.N.R. (Missing in Action): During and subsequent to the time that the destroyer in which he was serving was attacked by a suicidal Japanese dive bomber, he first manned a machine gun squarely in the path of the diving plane and directed a continuous fire into the plane until it crashed within a few feet of him. Then, having been blown into the water and although painfully injured, he helped a severely wounded shipmate to safety and was last seen returning to the sinking ship to give aid to another man who was unable to swim.

SILVER STAR

Ensign Walstan Steel Robson, U.S.N.R., (Missing in Action): Stationed as the Battery Officer of a group of machine guns on a destroyer, he, with complete disregard for his own safety, controlled and directed the fire of his mount into a suicidal Japanese dive bomber, maintaining accurate and destructive fire until the flaming and disintegrating plane crashed into his station.

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SILVER STAR

Ensign William J. O'Neill, U.S.N.R. (Missing in Action): As the officer in charge of the after engine room of a destroyer attacked and hit by a suicidal Japanese dive bomber, he remained steadfastly at his post despite the immediate danger of nearby fire and explosion until all personnel under his authority were evacuated. Making his way to the main deck, he directed, with utter disregard for his own safety, the evacuation of wounded men trapped on the stern by flames, and was thereby instrumental in the major portion of these men reaching safety.

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL

Emil N. Rossi, BMLc, U.S.N. and Wayne H. Augustus, GMLc, U.S.N., (Killed in Action): After the destroyer on which they were serving was struck by a Japanese suicidal dive bomber, these men, without thought of their own safety, assisted their shipmates in getting clear of the sinking ship. They heroically remained in the blazing and exploding ship to assist in evacuating the wounded and lowering the life rafts until they themselves were fatally wounded and blown into the water.

BRONZE STAR

Lieutenant Joseph E. Kettle, U.S.N.R., (Missing in Action): Stationed as the Battery Officer of a 40mm gun mount on a destroyer, he stood resolutely at his station controlling the fire of his mount during the attack of a suicidal Japanese dive bomber which crashed close to his station. Making his way aft to a group of men trapped by fire, he there, despite his dazed condition resulting from serious head wounds, refused to abandon ship until assured that the last man had reached safety.

BRONZE STAR

Jimmy C. Griffin, S1c, U.S.N.R., (Wounded in Action): As a member of the forward repair party, when his ship was put ablaze by the crash of an enemy plane on deck, exceeded the normal call of duty, with total disregard for his own safety, in his heroic attempts to bring the flames under control. Assuming an obviously dangerous position close to exploding magazines, he manned a fire hose and fought the fire until he fell to the deck seriously wounded.

BRONZE STAR

John E. Black, RM2c, USNR: Stationed as bridge radioman on a destroyer which had been hit by a suicidal enemy dive bomber and being released from this station, he heroically scorned the safety of the protected superstructure deck and voluntarily joined the repair personnel. Here, subjecting himself to the danger of flames, shrapnel, and exploding magazines, he assisted in dragging men to safety, in administering first aid to the wounded, and in evacuating wounded men from the blazing ship.

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BRONZE STARS

DRAPELA, Frank L., FC3c, USNR	- wounded in action.
SIMMONS, Timothy, St3c, USN	- missing in action.
RUDDER, Lyles "B", S2c, USNR	- wounded in action.
WEATHERS, Daryl L., Slc, USNR	- wounded in action.
MEYERS, Charles R., Mm2c, USNR	- missing in action.
BROWN, William H., Slc, USNR	- missing in action.
PATTERSON, Charles (n), Slc, USNR	-
VASQUEZ, James W., Gm3c, USN	-
GRANBY, Robert L., SC2c, USNR	- wounded in action.
BOTTOMLEY, Robert H., Bkr2c, USNR	- wounded in action.

The men, stationed at a group of machine guns on the destroyer in which they were serving, heroically accepted obvious peril and remained resolutely at their stations to direct the destructive fire of their weapons into an enemy dive bomber until the disintegrating plane crashed into their station. Forewarded by earlier observation of the suicidal intent of enemy dive bomber tactics in the area, these men are distinguished, not individually but in a group, in their heroic steadfastness to duty.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMMENDATION

Lieutenant Commander John H. Hoefer, USNR: Serving as Executive Officer of a destroyer which was set on fire by an enemy dive bomber, he distinguished himself by his exceptionally meritorious performance of duty during and subsequent to the action which resulted in the sinking of his ship. Making maximum use of his thorough knowledge of the ship and its equipment, he supervised the fire fighting efforts of the repair personnel, the evacuation of the wounded, and the final clearing of the ship. The effect of his calm and determined manner as he went about the ship was a major contributing factor in the overall efficiency with which, under conditions conducive to the greatest excitement, the damage control efforts and finally the abandoning of the ship were conducted.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMMENDATION

Boatswain William W. Hughes, U.S.N.: While serving as Damage Control Officer in a destroyer hit by an enemy dive bomber distinguished himself by his exemplary performance of duty in the face of overwhelming obstacles. Confronted with a blazing fire which engulfed the after part of the ship, and with intermittent explosions occurring in the area where the fire was being fought, Hughes organized and directed the application of fire fighting equipment until his position became untenable. He then assisted in the evacuation of wounded personnel from the danger areas to safety, and later remained with the sinking ship until assured that all injured had been lowered into the water.

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COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMMENDATION

HAMPSHIRE, William E., Slc, USNR - Wounded in action.
HILDOM, LeVerne A., S2c, USNR - Wounded in action.
RHOADES, Paul, M2c, USNR - Wounded in action.

These men, members of the repair party of a destroyer hit and set ablaze by a suicidal Japanese dive bomber, rendered meritorious service by fighting fire in a confined space adjacent to an exploding 40mm magazine with utter disregard for personal safety. They continued to play water on the fire until wounded and driven back by the fury of exploding ammunition.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMMENDATION

Charles E. Stevens, Jr., CPhM(PA), USN: In the absence of the ship's medical officer, he performed outstanding service in discharging the great responsibility which was suddenly thrust upon him when the destroyer in which he was serving was hit by an enemy dive bomber. His efficient treatment and evacuation of the wounded, performed under the most hazardous conditions, were instrumental in saving the lives of many men aboard his ship, and were continued aboard the overloaded rescue ship.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMMENDATION

Nicholas F. Novak, Slc, USN: As a pharmacist's mate apprentice serving in a destroyer which was hit by an enemy dive bomber, and from which a large portion of the medical personnel was absent, he performed services and displayed professional qualifications far in advance of those which might normally be expected from a man of his rating. By his heroic and efficient treatment and evacuation of the wounded, under the most dangerous circumstances, he contributed to the saving of many lives.

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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

A DISCUSSION OF TACTICS AND DEFENSE AGAINST JAPANESE
SUICIDAL DIVE ATTACKS

SECRET

I

1. The sudden intensity of suicidal crashing into surface vessels by Japanese pilots in the Phillipines area and the great publicity given to the acts as well as the results of suicidal Japanese pilots by the Japanese radio indicate that these fanatic attacks will undoubtedly increase rather than decrease in the near future. Although this form of attack has been known and encountered by the Navy since the start of the war, it is considered essential that surface personnel have a greater appreciation of its deadliness in order that our greatest efforts may be directed at defeating it. For this reason all information available to me at this time is being presented for whatever use or dissemination seems best.

2. The devastating effect of these attacks on our surface vessels cannot be overlooked. On 1 November in Leyte Gulf I observed five attacks directed at destroyers, screening the heavy units patrolling the gulf, with the following results: ABNER READ hit and sunk; AMMEN hit in the top of the forward stack and set on fire, but continuing in action; KILLEN suffering an internal explosion and flooding resulting from a near miss abreast the forecandle; CLAXTON sustaining a gun or handling room explosion and flooding from a very near miss off the quarter; and RICHARD P. LEARY narrowly missing disaster from a near miss dead astern. In addition, ANDERSON had a plane crash into the port motor whale boat the same evening. Prior to this, on 25 October, three near misses and one direct hit are known to have been made on the CVE's, one of them fatal to the CVE.

II

1. No special tactics were observed to be used during the approach. No effort at coordination, even when no Combat Air Patrol was over the area, was apparent. The bombers chose to attack individually, when ready, using the sun and cloud cover to conceal their approach. The attacks I have observed were nearer to being glide than dive attacks, the position angle at nosing over being between 20° and 45°, and initial altitude about 6000 feet (average cloud height). All planes used for these suicidal attacks were "Vals". There were a few "Betties" in the enemy air group, but they did not appear to be engaged in any type of attack, merely circling the formation well outside the effective A/A range of the screen. They possibly were engaged in photographing the results of the "Val" attacks.

2. A notable characteristic of this type of attack is the fact that the bomb (or bombs) is not released prior to crashing, but is apparently intended to detonate in the gasoline soaked debris of the plane itself. However, the possibility of a suicide bomber performing double duty - bombing and then crashing - may yet occur to the Japanese. From the experience of the ABNER READ, the explosive bomb carried comprised only a portion of the total bomb load; and, from the tremendous fire occurring in the vicinity of the plane crash, some type of gasoline or other rapid-spreading incendiary bomb probably completed the loading. For some reason the "Vals" do not strafe during the glide. The only possible

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explanation seems to be that machine guns are removed prior to departure from base. The only information I have on diving speed comes from the Gunnery Officer of the RICHARD P. LEARY, who reported tracking an undamaged, attacking "Val" at 275 knots.

III

1. The problem of defense against this type of attack, when no C.A.P. is present to destroy the bombers in the air, is an immediate one for all surface vessels. Although considerable success has been claimed in the past for 40mm and 20mm machine guns in repelling dive, glide, and torpedo attacks, machine guns are practically powerless to divert a suicidal bomber. The fire from three twin-barreled 40mm mounts and three 20mm guns on ABNER READ, although early, heavy, continuous, and seemingly very accurate, was insufficient to stop the Jap even though it succeeded in setting him on fire and shooting off one wing. The effectiveness of 40mm and 20mm fire was, in no attack observed, either early enough or great enough to disintegrate the plane, nor was it sufficient to deflect the plane far enough from its course to avoid severe damage to the defending ship.

2. It is believed that the 5"/38 and 5"/25 batteries are the only weapons that surface vessels possess which offer any promise, by total destruction of the plane at a respectable range, of stopping this type of attack. Using Mk 32 fuzed projectiles, and with the accurate direct fire or line of sight barrage which the present 5" firecontrol installations are capable of, four or more 5" guns should offer a high probability of effective hitting outside of 1500 yards range.

3. I do not know to what extent the destroyers attacked used Mk 32 fuzed projectiles, nor do I know the relative accuracy of their 5"/38 fire control. However, I in no case saw a defending ship obtain a truly destructive 5" hit. ABNER READ, in the morning, obtained one "close" Mk 32 5" hit on the plane diving on CLAXTON, but it merely set it on fire; it did not disintegrate it. In the afternoon attack on ABNER READ, although Mk 32 fuzed projectiles were used, Main Battery Control was very late in getting on target as a result of their previous tracking of the second (rather than the diving) plane. Consequently, when the main battery opened fire the director was in "slew sight control" and the computer was set for a "dive barrage" (advance range set to 2300 yards). Advance range may have been inside the minimum range of Mk 32 fuzed projectiles. No 5" hits were observed.

4. One other measure which may be taken for defense against suicidal attacks is the use of speed and rudder. If the heavy units of the formation remain on base course at ten knots, station keeping for the screening destroyers at twenty-five knots becomes so difficult that there is a great temptation to slow. But ship's speed must be maintained at a maximum and constant rudder used if they are to have any appreciable effect in causing a diving "Val" to miss. Circling at high speed by all units of the formation has been used in the past with success, and is the recommended procedure.

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IV

1. Seeing the vulnerability of destroyers to suicidal dive attacks and observing the Jap concentration on them as targets, measures for increased offensive fire power to defeat the attack, and for greater damage control and fire protection after being hit are inevitable. The following recommendations are submitted:

- (a) Authorize and direct the use of Mk 32 fuzed projectiles from 5"/38 or 5"/25 guns under all circumstances where this type of attack is imminent, specifying 100% Mk 32 instead of the previously recommended 75 or 80%.
- (b) Indicate to all ships the extreme necessity for a high volume of accurate 5" fire during the very short period of a single dive attack. This involves emphasis on high angle loading drill and target practice firing at high position angles, simulating surprise action by permitting no preliminary tracking.
- (c) Stress the importance of instant readiness of guns and director to open fire on this type of target. Guns should be elevated to 45°, trained on the quarters, projectile and powder in the tray, three additional Mk 32 fuzed projectiles and three powder charges stowed in the gun mount (not in hoist) and immediately accessible, pointer and trainer constantly in the immediate vicinity of their stations. Every effort should be made to man all 5" mounts with at least four men during condition watches: to insure high volume of fire for four rounds per gun, sacrificing if necessary the generally accepted "instant readiness" of depth charge and torpedo batteries; and securing 20mm guns in view of their utter uselessness.
- (d) Control procedure and orders must be simplified to one or two standard commands, and control personnel drilled to eliminate every possible second's delay in putting director on target and guns into "Automatic" and firing. The general reluctance of Gunnery Officers to permit free use of the slewing sight on the Mk 37 director is probably the most common cause of slow and inept slewing of the director onto air targets. Slewing seems simple, but is a drill requiring technique in the same way that pointing does. The supreme importance of being constantly ready to defend against dive bombers cannot be over stressed.
- (e) The removal of all 20mm guns with a view to reinstalling a 40mm twin on the stern of 2100 ton destroyers, and the substitution of two 40mm twins forward on the 2200 ton destroyers, should receive serious consideration.
- (f) The generally accepted readiness condition of torpedo tubes should be reviewed in the interest

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SECRET

of reducing the hazard from fire. I believe it is common practice for all ships to carry impulse charges in the tubes at all times while underway, inserting primers at "Torpedo Action." It is suggested that doctrine be revised to accept the delay incident to inserting impulse charges at such times that air action is more probable than surface action (99% of the time). This would eliminate the possibility of impulse charges cooking off and launching torpedoes.

- (g) An alternate suggestion is the installation on torpedo tubes of a means of locking the tripping latch connecting rod in the retracted position, providing of course a means of instantaneous release. (Securing the present rod with manila line is unsatisfactory because of the vulnerability of the line to fire.) Doctrine should provide for torpedo tubes to be secured with tripping latches retracted until the command "Torpedo action." This second suggestion has the apparent advantage of permitting, with impulse charges in the tubes, automatic jettisoning as the impulse charges cook off, thereby reducing the danger of air flask explosion in the tube.
- (h) The problem of 5" lower hoists as a fire conducting duct between upper and lower handling rooms is one which offers no ready answer. With the many types of shell and powder now required for immediate use and therefore stowed in small quantity in upper handling rooms, it is inevitable that the hoist must be in use shortly after the main battery commences firing. It is possible that the hoists could be altered to provide some degree of automatic flame tightness. Upper and lower handling room personnel must in the meantime be made conscious of their great responsibility regarding closure of the hoist doors and instantaneous flooding of ammunition spaces in the event of fire.

A. M. PURDY

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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

COMMANDER DESTROYER DIVISION 48
U. S. S. BUSH (DD-529)

S-E-C-R-E-T

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

23 November 1944

1st Endorsement to USS ABNER READ's
Secret ltr DD526/A16-3 dated 13 Nov-
ember 1944.

CDD48/A16-3
Serial: 0026

From: Commander Destroyer Division FORTY-EIGHT.
To; The Secretary of the Navy.
Via: (1) Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-SIX.
(2) Commander Battleship Division THREE (CTG 77.1).
(3) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
(4) Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

Subject: Combined Action Reports and Report of Loss of
U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD526) on 1 November 1944.

1. Forwarded.

2. As a matter of record and in reference to paragraph 5 of basic report, it is noted that the U.S.S. AMMEN reports that the plane which crashed her was a "Frances" rather than a "Val". It is also noted that the Commanding Officer of the ABNER READ refers to a near miss on the U.S.S. ~~KILLEN~~, which was in fact a direct bomb hit.

3. The recommendations for awards are concurred in. Having been in the ABNER READ (F) at the time I can readily understand that the duties performed by the listed men were under conditions of exceptional mental and physical hazard.

4. The ABNER READ had the torpedo tubes trained out at all times when air attack was probable. This is in accordance with stipulated doctrine but should be reemphasized as it has been observed that some destroyers are not complying.

5. (a) I agree with all remarks of the Commanding Officer in enclosure (D) except as to the "utter uselessness" of the 20mm guns. They are comparatively ineffective but nevertheless are an addition to the armament. However, they most assuredly should not be retained in any position where it is practicable to replace them with 40mm mounts.

(b) Certainly one of the best defensive measures against dive and suicide bombers is the use of high speed and turn movements. It is noted from observation and reports that at least three Japanese suicide planes missed astern of their targets. The plane which crashed the AMMEN apparently meant to crash the bridge but missed astern and hit the stacks. The Japanese

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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

COMMANDER DESTROYER DIVISION 48
U. S. S. BUSH (DD-529)

S-E-C-R-E-T

CDD48/A16-3
Serial: 0026

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

23 November 1944

1st Endorsement to USS ABNER READ's
Secret ltr DD526/A16-3 dated 13 Nov-
ember 1944.

pilots do not seem to appreciate relative movement and since they cannot practice suicide crashes it is considered that they will continue to miss astern. This tendency is to our advantage and the advantage is enhanced by use of speed.

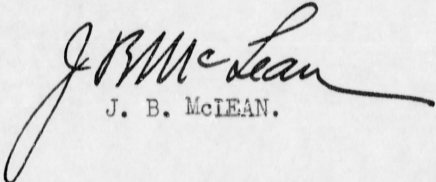
(c) It is recommended that formation speed of a force composed of heavy ships should always be increased to the maximum available to the slowest heavy ship when air attack is imminent and that turn movements be initiated prior to the movement that any plane can reach a release or dive point and continued during the attack.

(d) Fifteen hundred to two thousand yards from nearest heavy ship is the distance stipulated by U.S.F. 10-A for the anti-aircraft screen. I believe this still remains the best distance. It allows room for individual maneuver and offers mutual protection by gun power between heavy ships and the screen. A destroyer that is too close to the heavy ships loses its defensive advantage of speed. If over two thousand yards from the heavy ships it loses much of the heavy ship gun power assistance and becomes a good target for suicidal planes. With the increase in Japanese suicidal tactics, the shoe is partially on the other foot and destroyers need the protection of heavy ship fire power as much as the heavy ship needs the protection furnished by destroyers.

(e) In reference to the needed ability to open a high rate of fire quickly, destroyers should always be in condition one easy in landlocked waters where air attacks are frequent and early warning not always possible. This condition is not a hardship for a destroyer if properly organized and it is recommended that the senior destroyer commander present be enjoined by directives to enforce this as a rule.

6. By copy of this endorsement the Commanding Officer, U.S.S. ABNER READ is directed to furnish Commander SEVENTH Fleet with the names and home addresses of the next of kin of those men recommended for awards, if such information is obtainable.

cc - USS ABNER READ


J. B. McLEAN.

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By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

File No. A16-3
Serial (0032)

DESTROYER SQUADRON FIFTY-SIX
CARE OF POSTMASTER
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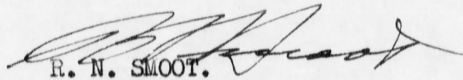
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SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:
C.O. USS ABNER READ's
Secret Ltr DD526/A16-3
of 13 November 1944.

26 November 1944.

From: Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-SIX.
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Via: (1) Commander Task Group 77.1 (Commander Battleship Division 3).
(2) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
(3) The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Subject: Combined Action Reports and Report of Loss of U.S.S. ABNER READ
(DD 526) on 1 November 1944.

1. Forwarded.
2. This is a well-considered and comprehensive report. The recommendations of the basic letter are concurred in.
3. With respect to the tactical employment of a screen for such an attack, this office desires to subscribe most emphatically to the remarks of the first endorser. Speed and maneuverability are the most important defensive inherent qualities of a destroyer. As opposed to the free employment of these qualities is the primary mission of the type, ie., defense of the large and slower ships being screened. The two functions are difficult to reconcile mutually. It is believed the most effective compromise is obtained by placing the screening destroyers on a circle just outside that of the heavy ships, the distance being such as to permit free maneuverability independent of the main body, and at the same time not too far to lose the fire support effect of the big ships. One to two thousand yards would appear to satisfy these conditions.
4. In the practical application of these tactics, screening ships should be originally disposed on their circle so as not to mask the batteries of the ships screened, and should consider this factor in their subsequent maneuvering.


R. N. SMOOT.

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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

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File No.
A16-3
Serial 0036

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP DIVISION THREE
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SECRET

3 December 1944

THIRD ENDORSEMENT to
CO ABNER READ Secret ltr.
DD526/A16-3 of 13
November 1944.

From: Commander Task Group 77.1 (Commander
Battleship Division Three).
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Via: Commander Seventh Fleet.
Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Subject: Combined Action Report and Report of Loss of
U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD 526) on 1 November 1944.
Reference: (a) C.T.G. 77.1 (CBD-3) Action Report A16-3
serial 0028 of 7 November 1944.
(b) C.T.G. 77.1 (CBD-3) 2nd Endorsement
to CO PHOENIX ltr. A16-3 serial 0208
of 2 December 1944.

1. Forwarded.
2. The recommendations and remarks contained in the basic letter and first two endorsements are in general concurred in.
3. The opinion expressed by Commander Destroyer Division FORTY-EIGHT regarding the relative usefulness of 20 millimeter guns is in accord with that of this command.
4. To avoid surprise attacks and to permit the use of AA special, Commander Task Group attempted to maneuver the formation clear of all land masses. Due, however, to the restricted waters of LEYTE GULF, this was not always possible. It is considered, however, that 75% to 100% AA special, at the option of individual ships should be used against suicide dive-bombers, without any restriction imposed because of the proximity of enemy-held territory. Ships maneuvering in hostile and restricted waters are in greatest need of the increased anti-aircraft effectiveness imparted by the Mark 32 fuse.
5. It is noted that the ABNER READ fails to observe that the task group increased speed to fifteen knots at 0944, just prior to the initial attacks. With the screen on circle 3.5 (1500 yards outside of the heavy ships), it is the opinion of the Task Group

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By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

File No.

A16-3
Serial 0036

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP DIVISION THREE
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SECRET

Subject: Combined Action Report and Report of Loss of
U.S.S. ABNER READ (DD526) on 1 November 1944.

Commander that individual destroyers had adequate opportunity to maneuver radically at high speed to avoid direct attack. It is his further opinion that this form of evasion is far more effective than maneuvering of the entire disposition. When attacks are being made upon individual ships from different directions at the same time, those ships concerned must decide for themselves what avoiding action will be most effective. General maneuvering of an entire task group, while advantageous to one ship under attack might be disadvantageous to other ships of the formation, and preclude individual ships from initiating evasive maneuvers. This doctrine was transmitted to all ships of the group and believed to be well understood.

6. For more detailed comment covering these points, attention is invited to reference (a) and (b) of this endorsement.


GEO. L. WEYLER.

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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

UNITED STATES FLEET
COMMANDER SEVENTH FLEET

Doc. No. 0.11013403
S.S. No. 12 1461

A16-3(F-3-4/wmw)

Serial: 002501

15 DEC 1944

SECRET

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT to:
CO ABNER READ ~~secret~~
ltr. DD526/A16-3 of
13 November, 1944.

From: Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
To: Secretary of the Navy.
Via: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.

Subject: Combined Action Report and Report of Loss of U.S.S.
ABNER READ (DD 526) on 1 November 1944.

1. From the action report of the Commanding Officer it is apparent that the attack by the Japanese suicide plane developed very rapidly. In spite of serious damage inflicted on the plane in its dive, including the loss of a wing, the ABNER READ was struck. Under these circumstances the only possible means of escape lay in early complete destruction of the plane by gunfire or radical maneuvering at high speed by the target ship. The remarks of Commander Task Group 77.1 on the matter of individual maneuvering by a ship directly under attack are concurred in.

2. The recommendations and remarks contained in the basic letter and endorsements, are concurred in.

3. Original enclosures B and C were not received and copies are substituted therefor.

C. E. Van Hook
C. E. VAN HOOK
Deputy.

1944 DEC 22 15 44

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
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