

SECRET

August 13, 1943.

From: The Executive Officer.
To: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LANG.
Subject: Action report against Japanese force August 6-7, 1943.
Reference: (a) Art. 948, U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920.

1. In accordance with reference (a) the following report is submitted.

2. During approach and entrance into Vella Gulf, was conducting all around search on S.G. radar, using short scale with frequent long scale sweeping into the entrances to Vella Gulf. No contacts of any kind developed until 2336. At about 2335 a ship of division 1 A ahead, reported radar contact at 350°T, 19,000 yards: At 2336 had radar contact on one ship bearing 339°T, range 16,900 yards, using long scale, and shortly there appeared four definite targets in loose column, course 180, speed 26 knots. In my opinion, the size of contact indicated three of destroyer size and one slightly larger. Ranges and bearings were fed to C.I.C. control, conn, and Torpedo Directors as opportunity permitted, still keeping close watch on other section and for any new targets. The first section was making their attack from the port bow and beam of the enemy while the second section maintained station ahead and slightly on the bows of the enemy. The two sections were about 9,000 to 10,000 yards distant during the first part of the action.

It is quite evident that the enemy was taken by complete surprise, as there were no indications of any evasive action made by the enemy. One target pip disappeared shortly after action was joined, and by 0028 the screen was clear of all enemy contacts.

During the action all our ships showed ABE identification signals which were clearly visible on the SC-1 screen, and it was very easy to keep track of section 1 A in this manner, however, in this particular action no difficulty was encountered keeping track of section 1 A with sweeps of the S.G. but the SC-1 gave us an added check. At the close of the action the flaming hulk could not be picked up on the S.G., indicating that there was not much, if any, Japanese ship left.

This most decisive action can be attributed to the high proficiency of the development of radar, S.G. and F.D. in this case. It is to be noted that Task Group 31.2 was close to

SECRET

August 13, 1943

Subject: Action report against Japanese forces August 6-7,
1943.

Kolombangara when contact was made and if the Japs had radar, land interference behind us, totally collapsed the efficiency of their radar. There was no land background to interfere with the enemy contacts on our S.G. during the entire action, there was however, very slight interference on the F.P.I. scope from other ship S.G.'s. The radar was in good working order before, during, and after the battle. It kicked out once by shock of gun fire but was back in commission in a matter of seconds. None of the 5" salvos of our ships were discernable on the S.G. F.P.I. scope for spotting purposes, because the S.G. beam was trained on the target only long enough to get a range and bearing, sweeps being made to keep the Division Commander (Division 2 A) and Captain informed of other targets and Division 1 A. The Gunnery Officer had reported they were easily made out on the F.D. screen and accurate spotting was done by the F.D. operator. At no time did other than friendly contacts appear on the SC-1 screen. Here again land background interfered with the SC-1, and it is recommended the F.P.I. scopes be installed on this type radar for those ships which operate in land-locked waters.

The Executive Officer again notes with pride the fine performance the men exhibited upon contact with the enemy. All personnel and equipment worked 100%. A rehearsed radar short range battle practice and torpedo practice could not have gone over more smoothly.

PEMBERTON SOUTHARD

USS LANG 399
SURFACE ACTION
NIGHT OF AUGUST 6-7 1943
AGAINST JAPANESE FORCES
VELLA GULF



