

## WAR DIARY

### U.S.S. STRETT (D.D.-407) South Pacific Force

November 1, 1942 to November 16, 1942

#### November 1

En route to Guadalcanal with Task Force 65.

0800 Lat. 14-31.7S; L. 167-17.6E.

1200 Lat. 14-04.5S; L. 166-34.2E.

2000 Lat. 12-52.2S; L. 165-13.8E.

Noon to noon - 248 miles - course 329&176 T.

#### Task Force 65 - Organization:

C.T.F. 65 - Rear Admiral Callagan.

T.G. 65.1 - Captain Reifsnider.

HUNTER LIGGETT    BARNETT    PRES. HAYES

T.G. 65.2 - Col. Jeschke.

Landing Group - Eighth Marines.

T.G. 65.3 - Rear Admiral Scott.

Screening Group:

ATLANTA    FLETCHER    AARON WARD

LARDNER    BENHAM    STERETT

GWIN    WALKE    McCALLAN

T.G. 65.4

Support Group.

SAN FRANCISCO    HELENA    BUCHANAN

LAFFEY

T.G. 65.5 - Captain Ashe.

Eastern Transport Group:

NEVILLE    HEYWOOD    FOMALHAULT

MANLEY    McKEAN

T.G. 65.6 - Col. Sturgis

Eastern landing group:- Fifth Marines (detachment of).

147th Infantry.

246th Field Artillery.

500 Acorn personnel.

**Two (2) companies - 2nd Raider Battalion.  
T.G. 65.7 - Rear Admiral Tisdale.  
Eastern Screening Group:  
PENSACOLA CUSHING PRESTON MUSTIN ANDERSON**

**MISSION: Reinforce Guadalcanal Garrison/Establish new beachhead at Aola Bay.**

**November 2**

**0800 Lat. 11-05S; L. 163-31.4E.**

**1200 Lat. 10-20.7S; L. 163-20.7E.**

**2000 Lat. 10-33.3S; L. 162-35.3E.**

**Noon to noon - 300 miles - course 318 T.**

**1600 Task Group 65.7 joined.**

**1700 Formed approach disposition w/HELENA, WALKE and STERETT in van.**

**2000 Received radio report that a Japanese force of 4 cruisers and 17 destroyers were headed for Indispensable Straits. The transports screened by destroyers were ordered to retire. HELENA, PENSACOLA, SAN FRANCISCO and six destroyers, including STERETT (screen commander) proceeded at 22 knots to intercept the enemy. Heavy rain most of night.**

**November 3**

**Japanese force retired, contact not established. The enemy, however, landed troops and equipment at Koli Point, Guadalcanal Island. Task Force 65 ordered to rendezvous and carry out mission on morning of November 4th.**

**1600 Entire Force, less one transport and one destroyer formed up and started approach with STERETT in van. Passed crippled CONYNGHAM that had been in collision with FULLER. Support Group now composed of HELENA, SAN FRANCISCO, BUCHANAN, LAFFEY and STERETT.**

**2000 Went to General Quarters and so remained until 0600 Nov. 4th.**

**0800 Lat. 10-59.9S; L. 161-17.9E.**

**1200 Lat. 11-10.1S; L. 162-17.8E.**

**2000 Lat. 09.58.5S; L. 161-46.8E.**

**November 4**

**Operating with Support Group in Indispensable Straits covering approach and entrance of our Force.**

**0630 Entered Sealark Channel.**

**0810 Went to General Quarters, enemy shore battery at Kokumbona opened A/A fire on our planes and enemy shore batteries at Koli Point opened fire on our landing boats, loaded with troops. Our destroyers bombarded Koli Point. SAN FRANCISCO, screened by STERETT, proceeded to Kokumbona and shelled area for 35 minutes, silencing battery and starting fires. Then proceeded to Koli Point.**

**1008 SAN FRANCISCO, HELENA and STERETT opened fire on enemy positions at Koli, each ship had its own plane for spotting.**

**1048 Ceased firing, having expended 503 rounds, 5"/38, no casualties. Large fires were started and our spotters repeatedly reported direct hits on enemy concentrations, dumps and buildings. Fires burned throughout day.**

**1100 Secured from G.Q. and set 2 MS and Baker.**

**1150 Went to General Quarters and screened transport group. Received report 12 enemy planes headed for this vicinity.**

**1310 Resumed "2 MS", attack failed to materialize.**

**1800 Stood out through Sealark Channel, patrolling Indispensable Straits.**

**November 5th**

**Operating in STRATES with support group. Received word a Japanese force of 27 bombers and 24 fighters were headed this way. No air coverage is available for our transports.**

**1050 went to G.Q. and formed close A/A screen about our transports group off Aola Point. The enemy bombed our air field at Lunga but did not approach this force.**

**1225 Secured from air alarm and transports resumed unloading.**

**1230 Task Group 65.1 screened by T.G. 65.3 departed.**

**1330 GWIN reported to this group. Patrolled Indispensable Straits.**

#### **November 6th**

**0215 Went to General Quarters and Support Group, with STERETT in van, took approach disposition and headed for Sealark Channel. Report received that two enemy cruisers were headed for Guadalcanal from westward and enemy planes were headed for Henderson Field. Our Support Group and motor torpedo boats headed for enemy, who retired before we could make contact. Shore battery played searchlights and opened fire on planes. One of our planes dropped one 500 lb. near CL, no damaged claimed.**

**0330 All clear.**

**0400 Mission completed, Task Force 65 departed for Espiritu Santo. The Support Group five miles astern, toward possible enemy.**

**0800 Lat. 09-52S; L. 161-35.7E.**

**1200 Lat. 10-09.9S; L. 162-32.2E.**

**2000 Lat. 11-46.6S; L. 162-56.2E.**

#### **November 7th**

**0800 Lat. 14-07.6S; L. 163-19.2E.**

**1200 Lat. 14-14.1S; L. 164.12.6E**

**2000 Lat. 14-22.5S; L. 166-19.8E.**

**Noon to noon - 264 miles - course 158 T.**

#### **November 8th**

**0600 Entered Segund Channel, following heavy units. Fueled from tanker.**

**1000 Anchored in berth C-1 Received ammunition and provisions.**

**1700 Held C.O.'s conference.**

**November 9**

**1200 - STERETT and six other DDs in 'C' berths dragged. GWIN and Laffey had minor collision. GWIN's bow was dished in and her wildcat was disabled.**

**2000 - CO's conference in CUSHING (CDD-10).**

**November 10**

**0520 - Task Group 67.4 Sortied.**

**SAN FRANCISCO; T.G.C. Rear Adm. CALLAGHAN.**

<b>PENSACOLA</b>	<b>HELENA</b>	<b>CUSHING (CDD10)</b>
<b>PRESTON</b>	<b>BUCHANAN</b>	<b>LAFFEY</b>
<b>GWIN</b>	<b>STERETT</b>	

**0800 Lat. 15-51S; L. 167-07.SE.**

**1200 Lat. 15-22S; L. 166-09.5E.**

**2000 Lat. 14-13.7S; L. 164-39.1E.**

**1800 PENSACOLA, PRESTON, and GWIN departed to join T.F. 16.**

**November 11**

**0500 Rendezvoused with remainder of Task Force 67.  
Task Force Commander - Rear Admiral Turner.**

**Transports - 67.1**

<b>McCRAWLEY (Flag)</b>	<b>PRES. JACKSON</b>
<b>CRESCENT CITY</b>	<b>PRES. ADAMS</b>

**Landing Group 67.2**

**ATLANTA - R. Adm SCOTT.**

**MAURY - AARON WARD (CDS12)**

**BARTON - FLETCHER**

**LARDNER - McCALLA**

**Support Group 67.4**

**See November 10 plus PORTLAND, JUNEAU, SHAW.**

**MISSION - to reinforce our land forces in Guadalcanal, protect our transports and destroy enemy forces as opportunity offers.**

**1135 Went to General Quarters - Japanese reconnaissance planes sighted our force but remained out of range.**

**1200 Secured.**

**1840 General Quarters, Condition Affirm.**

**2000 Formed battle disposition.**

**2200 Support Group 67.4 entered Sealark Channel and headed Westward toward SAVO Island in search of enemy forces.**

**0800 Lat. 11-39.8S; L. 162-56.9E.**

**1200 Lat. 11-25.8S; L. 162-23.9E.**

**2000 do**

**Noon to noon - 324 miles - course 316 T.**

### **November 12**

**STERETT in Support Group in Battle Formation searching SAVO Island area for enemy forces. Order in column: BUCHANAN, CUSHING, LAFFEY, STERETT, SAN FRANCISCO, HELENA, PENSACOLA, PORTLAND, JUNEAU, AARON WARD, FLETCHER AND LARDNER. 500 yards between D.D.'s, 700 yards between types and cruisers.**

**0550 BUCHANAN had sound contact and delivered attack.**

**0600 Secured from night general quarters, Transports anchored and began unloading, screened by cruisers at 3,000 yards, and by DDs plus ATLANTA and JUNEAU at 6,000 yards.**

**0730 Enemy shore batteries began firing on our HIGGINS boats loaded with troops. No direct hits observed. HELENA, SHAW, and BARTON were designated and began shore bombardment.**

**1010 SOME of our cruisers and destroyers opened fire on Douglas transport and 8 Grumman fighters.**

**1230 CUSHING and BUCHANAN ordered to destroy enemy landing boats to westward. They destroyed about 25 craft. BUCHANAN was hit in after stack by a 5"/38 during the T.B. attack killing 5 men and damaging stack.**

**1320 Air alarm - general quarters - condition affirm - transports got underway, formed 3 columns, base course 340 T. Combatant ships formed close screen 1,000 yards. Maneuvered by turn signals.**

**1406 Sighted formation of 21 enemy bombers standing in from north over Florida Island. STERETT reported sight contact to O.T.C. over T.B.S. Attacking planes made one circle over Florida Island, then fanned out and started approach 50 to 100 feet off water. STERETT was in perfect position in direct line of approach between planes and our transports. Began tracking and had fire control solution well before planes came in range. During the approach our fighter planes destroyed some of the attackers. One of our Higgins boats hit one plane with .50 cal. machine gun fire.**

**1413 Surface craft opened fire. STERETT shot down two with 5"/38 and two with 20 m.m. machine gun fire. These four are definite. We most probably damaged a fifth with 20 m.m.**

**1417 ceased firing. 20 of the 21 torpedo bombers were shot down. Many of them before they could release their torpedoes. Three torpedoes were sighted by us and easily avoided. We had to maneuver radically to miss hitting one plane that crashed and went up in flames close aboard. One burning plane crashed into SAN FRANCISCO and did minor damage. One of our fighters crashed in sea close to our formation, pilot was rescued. No other damage was sustained by surface units. At same time a formation of high level bombers and Zero fighters headed for this force were engaged by our fighters. They never reached their objective. All told 52 enemy planes were engaged and 32 of them shot down. The water was one mess of burning planes. STERETT suffered two personnel casualties, not critical, one from shrapnel, one from bullet wound in chest.**

**1450 Secured from air attack and transports resumed unloading.**

**1830 transports got underway and stood out through Lengo Channel. Task Group 67.4 covered sortie, departing through Sealark Channel. Covered transport group until 2200 in Indispensable. Straits then we reversed course, through south to west and headed for Lengo Channel and the enemy. PENSACOLA, GWIN and PRESTON were sent ahead of transports to protect them and then join Task Force 16.**

**2000 Task Group 67.4 went to General Quarters and formed battle disposition. Order in column: - CUSHING (CDD10), LAFFEY, STERETT, O'BANNON, ATLANTA (R. Adm. Scott), SAN FRANCISCO (R. Adm. Callaghan O.T.C.), PORTLAND, HELENA, JUNEAU, AARON WARD(CDD 12), BARTON, MONSSEN and FLETCHER.**

**(Action Report – night of November 12-13, 1942 appears below)**

### **November 13**

**1700 Conducted Burial at sea services. Buried 28 late shipmates.**

**0800 Lat. 09-51S; L. 161-06E.**

**1200 Lat. 10-52.1S; L. 161-12.8E.**

**2000 Lat. 12-27.5S; L. 162-51E.**

**November 14**

**0800 Lat. 13-52.5S; L. 166-08.9E.**

**1200 Lat. 14-40.3S; L. 167-02.2E.**

**Noon to noon - 377 miles - course 123 T.**

**0955 HELENA reported periscope.**

**1016 STERETT had sound contact.**

**1352 FLETCHER had sound contact.**

**1635 Stood in to Segund Channel and fueled from tanker.**

**2030 Minor fire on tanker - sent our fire & rescue party & prepared to cast off.**

**2040 Secured.**

**November 15**

**0130 Received orders from Comairsopac, to report on board CURTISS. The "Staff", despite the fact that they had a dispatch report on the battle damages to STERETT, wanted to know if vessel could return to Guadalcanal and join R. Adm. Lee's force.**

**0400 Returned on board ship.**

**0800 Cast off from tanker and moored alongside TANGIER for emergency battle repairs.**

**1100 Transferred 13 seriously wounded cases to SOLACE.**

**1330 Attended conference held by R. Adm. Turner in McCAWLEY, regarding engagement November 13th.**

**2030 Went to General Quarters - Jap submarine shelled harbor leisurely for half hour. No damage, nuisance value only.**

**November 16**

**Undergoing emergency repairs alongside TANGIER. Transferred all unsafe (overheated and flooded ammunition to shore station).**