jb

Serial 003

15 December 1944

S-J-C-R-E-T

From:

Commanding Officer.

To:

Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
(1) Commander Destroyer Squadron FOURTEN.

Via:

(2) Commander Task Group 78.3.
(3) Commander Task Force 78.

(4) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.

Subject:

Report of Action with the Enemy, Ormot Bay, Philippine Islands,

December 11 ~ 12, 1944.

Reference:

(a) ComSEVENTHFLt Conf. ltr. Serial 0212 of 17 February 1944.

(b) ComDesRonFOURTERA Operation Order, Serial 0001 of

10 December 1944.

inclosure:

(A) Copy of Reference (b).

(B) Rough Track Chart.

(C) Casualty List.

PART I - GENERAL NAMMATIVE.

The emphibious landings at Ormoc Bay the previous week having been successful, resupply echelons were necessary. An echelon composed of thirteen LSM's and LCI's screened by the USS CALDWELL (CDS14), USS COCHLEL and USS EDWARDS of Destroyer Division TWENTY-EIGHT, and the USS ELITH (CDD10), USS CONYINGHAM and USS REID of Destroyer Squadron FIVE left Leyte Gulf bound for Ormoc. The basic plan was to make as much of the three hundred mile trip as possible in darkness and under the protection of our own aircraft. Landing craft were to arrive at the Ormoc beachhead at about 2300, December 11th, and leave as soon as unloaded. Due to the loss of the USS COOPER, USS MAHAN and USS WARD in these waters, and the damaging of many other destroyers, the Reserve-on-Board registered publications and pay accounts were left in the San Pedro Bay area, Leyte. Only the USS CALDWELL carried her ACM. Air support from the Leyte strip at Tacloban was promised.

Japanese forces held part of Ormoc Bay and had strong airfields on Cebu and Mindanao. No surface enemy forces equal in strength were expected, and actually none but barges were encountered.

All times herein are zone description Minus Nine (Item).

PART II - CHRONOLOGICAL NECORD OF EVENTS.

December 11, 1944

1040 - Formation completely formed, departed southern Leyte Gulf for Ormoc via Surigao Strait.

1517 - Jap snooper crossed ahead of the formation 13 miles away,

1612 - With the south point of Limasawa Island bearing 008°T, distance 6,700 yards, changed course to 307°T. Formation D-2 in use, speed 12 knots.

about 320°T, range 21,000 yards. There were nine planes formed in three sections, the leading section in a "V", the trailing two sections in inverted "V" s; altitude about 2,500 feet. These planes were close to land, along the mountains above Massin, Lat. 10°08'N, Long. 124°50'E. The trailing sections made a circle, probably to give the leading section time to get in position. The leading section, believed a predesignated unit for suicide attack if the opportunity arose, started around the starboard side of the formation and in on the USS RMD (inboard leading ship) which commenced firing. About this time the others were intercepted by the Corsair CAP. Some seemed to come on in, some were shot down by the CAP. The USS RAND hit the leading plane, but it crashed into her main deck amidships; followed almost immediately by the second plane which also hit her.

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She apparently blew up aft, then rolled over on her side, hung for perhaps thirty seconds with her mast along the surface and then sank.

Meanwhile the USS CALDWELL fired on the main group of Jap planes. One was hit and crashed, it is believed from our fire. Another plane came on over us and was taken under fire by the main battery. At this time the port machine guns opened up on a plane passing down the port side. A FAU apparently saw our danger from this last plane and disregarding the danger from our fire crossed us at masthead height to get the Jap. One 20MM gun shot 15 rounds at him before he was recognized; but did not hit him. The Zeke came on in a steep bank to his port, crossed the fantail and crashed twenty feet to starboard, drenching the bridge with gasolene and debris. Either the left full rudder at 32 knots, the Corsair, or our port 40MM and 20MM hits on him caused him to miss, but everyone was pretty much shaken up. At this point control observed the plane at which the main battery had been shooting crash about 1,000 yards to starboard.

By order of Comdesron FOURTEAN the USS COCYLAN was standing by the USS RAID, and about five LCI's had stopped and were recovering survivors. The USS CONYINGHAM had taken the USS RAID's station.

1709 - Ceased firing. Phemy retired. Proceeded on mission. Position: Lat. 090571N, Long. 1240561E.

1822 - Sunset, darkened ship.

1853 - The convoy, completely reformed except for the USS RAID, resumed a speed of 12 knots.

2000 - Secured from general quarters.

- 2028 USS COGHLAN reported a total of 152 men and 14 officers, including the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer, recovered from the USS RAID.
- 2207 Commenced observing flares and gunfire, which together with aircraft "heckling" was to last all night.

2216 - Called all hands to general quarters.

2320 - Lade surface radar contact on two small targets off Diasons Point evaluated as enemy barges. Radar interference as from a radar of about 900 cycles was received from this area.

2332 - The landing craft were vectored toward their beaches and released.

December 12, 1944

0016 - USS SMITH reported being strafed.

0020 - The Communication Officer observed two red aircraft flares nearby,

the current recognition signal.

- 0021 A large green aircraft flare was dropped to the southcastward, about 1,500-2,000 yards away, and what looked like blinking light signals were observed from a plane to the beach near the enemy barges bearing northwest.
- 0022 A large (36" or larger) searchlight placed about on Diasong Point opened up directly on the ship, indicating either radar control or the effectiveness of the flare dropped on the other side of us, Heavy machine gun fire and light artillery (estimated 3") opened up on us and was returned. Many straddles but no hits were received. This fire was from the enemy ships or the beach beyond them.

0026 - A strafing run was made across the stern by what sounded like a Jake, although it wasn't seen. The fantail was holed but damage was in-A Section 1 significant.

0027 - The main battery put the enemy searchlight out of action. It flared up briefly and then burned out. NOTE:

Several times during the night the enemy barges were strafed by a plane or planes using white tracer. Retired to the southward to about Lat. 10050'N.

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Subject:

Report of Action with the Enemy, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands. December 11 - 12, 1944.

0153 - USS COGHLAN took enemy craft under fire as they slowly worked down the west side of Ormoc Bay, ceasing when they finally disappeared toward Apali Point,

0400 - Returned to northern part of Ormoc Bay to rendezvous with convoy.

- 0420 Contacted LCI's and LSM's coming out from the beach. Made surface contact on a large, fast unidentified target standing out from near Ormoc Town heading for Apali Point. USS COCHLAN drove the craft back to the beach with gunfire. Convoy commenced retiring southward, under continual threat of air attack. From this time on, indeed from early the previous evening, there were enemy aircraft contacts almost continually.
- 0612 Sighted three enemy planes passing overhead, elevation 3,000 feet, weather cloudy.
- 0624 Sighted three enemy planes overhead.

0650 - Sighted planes overhead.

- 0800 Position: Lat. 10°30'N, Long. 124°42'E. Himuquitan Island close aboard to starboard, Amogotada Point close aboard to port. Maneuvering as radically as proximity of land permits.
- 0801 Enemy planes sighted to west and southwest closing rapidly. Estimated number twenty-five, including Dinahs and Zekes. Changed speed to 32 knots. The CAP intercepted and a Jap plane was seen to crash. A parachuting person was also seen.
- 0805 Commenced firing at a flight of Dinah's on the starboard bow. Noticed three Zekes detach and head for us. Control slewed on to this new threat. Two Zekes pecled off for dive-bombing and were kept under fire by the main battery. The third Zeke came down the port side, under continual machine gun fire, crossed the stern in a steep bank. One landing gear was flopping out. He went into a vertical bank and at 0807 hit the ship just as he was turning over on his back. One wing hit the bridge, one the break of the forecastle, and the fuselage in Main Radio. Simultaneously, the ship was straddled with several bombs (according to observers on three other ships), one striking and exploding No. 2 Handling Room. A bomb from the suicide plane glanced off No. 2 Gun and exploded just to the starboard of No. 1 Gun. This was a perfectly planned and excellently coordinated attack. Due to the fire getting close enough to scorch his men, CTM Carr (CARR, George Peter, 120 57 98, CTM, V-6, USNR) very properly jettisoned all five MK-15 MOD-1 torpedoes (all communication to Torpedo Control and the Bridge was lost). The Capt was among those wounded but refused to leave the Bridge.
- 0808 The starboard 40MM ceased firing. Unable to bear on planes attacking this ship, the mount was firing at a plane attacking an adjacent destroyer. The plane crashed into the sea, probably due to combined fire.

0843 - LCI-744 came alongside to port to assist.
0848 - LCI-543 came alongside to starboard to assist.

0908 - Most wounded were transferred to the LCI's, the fires were under control, and the LCI's got underway from alongside. Engineering spaces reported full power was still available.

- O910 Because of a severely painful hand injury, and by order of Comdesron FOURTEEN, Commander George Wendelburg, U.S.Navy, 72318, was placed on the sick list and the Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Dunlap R. Robinson, D-V(G), U.S.N.R., 82869, succeeded to command. Proceeded.
- 1005 Transferred Comdesron FOURTEEN and Staff to LCI-661 for further transfer to USS COCHLAN where he resumed tactical command. Proceeded to San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf, without further attack.

DD605/A16

U.S.S. CALDWELL (DD605)

jb

Serial 003

15 December 1944

S-E-C-R-E-T

Subject:

Report of Action with the fnemy, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands,

December 11 - 12, 1944.

PART III - PERFORMANCE OF ORDNANCE MATERIEL.

A. Ammunition Expenditure:

5"/38 cal. AAC - 200 rounds (50% MK-32)

40MM - 1,425 rounds 20MM - 780 rounds

- The tragic explosion of No. 2 Handling Room was aggravated by the fact that the ship's bombardment allowance of 50 rounds WP projectiles, which was stowed there, caused a terrific fire.
- C. FD Radar For several weeks there had been intermittent failures of the FD Radar and all talent available had worked on it so that it was believed to be in satisfactory condition. It failed miserably, however - - control could not even pick up the enemy surface craft.
- D. All other ordnance equipment operated very well.

PART IV - BATTLE DAMAGE.

- Own:
 - 1. <u>Demolished</u>: Main battery guns No. 1 and No. 2; all forecastle deck compartments forward of Frame 60; all main deck compartments, Frame 35 to 47; 20MM gun No. 2; five MK-15 MOD-3 torpedoes jettisoned.
 - 2. Heavily damaged by fire and fragments: Director; Torpedo Director; Director Platform; Bridge; C.I.C.; Wardroom; First Platform Deck compartments, Frame 20 to 55; fire control switchboard; 20MM sponsons Nos. 1, 3 and 5.
- В. Enemy losses as seen from the USS CALDWELL:
 - 1. December 11th.

CAP - Several, undetermined.

- 2 suicide crashes.

CALDWELL - 1 probable in the main group,

1 close aboard,

1 suicide crash.

2. December 12th.

- l sure.

CALDWELL - 1 suicide crash,

1 by 40Mi to starboard.

Summary:

The USS CALDWELL makes no claims. Due to the confused scene and loss of key personnel, it is almost impossible to say who shot what dowin. The best available evidence, which is not very good, would indicate the ship (singly or assisted) shot down five planes if the suicides, both of which were hit, are included. The main point to us is that the echelon got to Ormoc.

PART V - SPECIAL COMMENTS:

C.I.C.

Radar navigation was successful in taking the formation through Canagao Channel without trouble. Three shoal buoys, two to port and one to starboard, were picked up by SG Radar at about 3,500 yards. This vessel navigates in such restricted waters by taking SG ranges only to points prominent on the PPI and crossing the resultant arcs. It is believed that the overlay method is not necessary and is too cumbersome in this terrain where good sized hills come down abruptly to the sea and where favorable angles for crossing arcs are almost always available.

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Report of Action with the Enemy, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands, December 11 - 12, 1944.

A. C.I.C. (Continued)
C.I.C. located fishing craft with which the area abounds, and had little difficulty in picking up enemy barge traffic. One disadvantage, at least in this type of C.I.C., is lack of room to navigate and yet do effective surface plotting. The chart was mounted on the DRT which was set to scale, but it is quite often a scale almost useless for good surface tracking. More operational charts on a scale of 1,000 yards per inch are recommended.

Because of the land echoes in the Philippines, the SC Radars are frequently useless - especially for Fighter Direction. It is believed that

quently useless - especially for Fighter Direction. It is believed that the present doctrine of securing them entirely is very sound. Radar interference was observed on SG coming either from the barges or Biasong or Nabonic Points, Ormoc Bay, at a repetition rate of about 900 cycles.

B. Suicide Crashes.

There is no doubt that the high rate of success of this tactic is causing grave anxiety to all of us. The Japs apparently send out Dinah's on bombing missions with a Zeke escort. A section of fighters is prepared to make a coordinated suicide—dive bombing attack if the right opportunity presents itself. While Dinah's get the attention a section of Zeke's makes a run on a ship with one or all designated to crash. The planes always choose our inboard (closest to land) screening ship and don't bother the convoy itself. In making the attack they come down the port side within range of the machine guns, bank steeply to the left, cross the stern, go into a vertical bank and start to roll over on their backs, usually striking the ship on the starboard side forward. If they turn too soon or the ship has right rudder on they hit about No. 1 stack. If they turn late or the ship has left rudder on they crash close aboard to starboard

If the USS CALDWELL knew of any satisfactory defense she wouldn't have been hit, but the following points are pertinent:

- Long range interception defeats the attack but is very difficult in Central Philippine confined waters, even if sufficient fighters were available.
- 2. It is not believed that using the 36" searchlight in automatic in daytime would help, but it is a trick that has everything to gain and nothing to lose and, so, is worth trying.
- The use of WP projectiles might work and it is recommended that it be tried. This ship feels the value of WP is outweighed by its menace.
- In the future, the installation of some type of mortars on the quarters, to throw out a smoke grenade at the normal plane approach position, might be an answer. It has been suggested by the Commanding Officer of the USS CABLE, which has repaired many damaged ships.
 It is believed that the best way to meet a suicide attack is to
- 5. It is believed that the best way to meet a suicide attack is to steam steadily until the pilot commits himself and then maneuver radically, favoring a sharp turn to port. This should also improve gunnery. It is also believed that we are neglecting to make full use of smoke. Where the standard pattern is to attack from the quarters, smoke becomes especially valuable.
- 6. In the Ormoc area, where the enemy has had the most success, it is suggested that although conditions may well warrant the risk of destroyer losses to protect vitally needed men and materiels enroute, that the delivery of the materiel throws the balance the other way and the destroyers could immediately commence retiring at high speed and be almost out of danger by daylight.

15 December 1944

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Subject:

Report of Action with the Themy, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands, December 11 - 12, 1944.

C. Damage Control.

1. Attendance of every line officer and over half the crew at Pearl Harbor Fire Fighting School gave the needed confidence and experience to put out a phosphorus fire which at first could only be attacked from the lee side.

2. The ship's policy of keeping hoses connected hand tight is sound. It took very little time to tighten up connections and those which

needed shifting were easily broken.

3. The ship's policy of having two lengths of hose connected to each fire plus is not sound. Such great length was not needed and the hoses kinked badly in the confined spaces. To have one length connected and two stored nearby is recommended.

- 4. White phosphorus shells stowed in the No. 2 Handling Room exploded, sending out violent fumes and intense heat. Although fog nozzles finally cooled the chemical down below the ignition point, phosphorus was scattered all over the forward compartments by the water, and when it dried would re-ignite. This condition lasted for about 36 hours, by which time most phosphorus had been located and shovelled out.
- of valuable assistance in determining casualties were the mimeographed lists of name, rank/rate, file/service number of all persons aboard; distributed to about 20 persons prior to departure.
- 6. The carbon dioxide system in the inflammable liquids storeroom worked perfectly. The fire resistant paint was very effective.

PART_VI - PERSONNEL.

- A. Enclosure (C) indicates in detail the casualties. Totals were: Killed in Action 20; Died of Wounds or Injuries Received in Action 4; Missing in Action 9; Wounded in Action 40. Of the latter, all were transferred for further treatment and 16 returned to this vessel.
- B. Recommendations for awards will be the subject of separate correspondence. As has consistently been true throughout the service, the personal sacrifices made and the extreme bravery shown in the face of death is beyond belief or expression. Several men manned and fired machine guns until actually struck down by the plane. Others dashed into the blazing hell that was once No. 2 Handling Room and in the face of burning phosphorus extricated the dead and wounded. Several persons were throwing overboard unexploded WP shells all during the fire in spite of the fact that they were badly burned by phosphorus. These comments apply equally to the Staff of Comdesron FOURTEEN. The thing that was most gratifying was the coolness with which all hands met the emergency. There was no shouting, no flinching, things were accomplished smoothly and rapidly. I know I shall never meet a braver, more capable, gang of men.

D. R. ROBLISON.

Copy to:
Cominch (advance),
Cincpac,
Comdespac.

C-O-P-Y

COMMANDER DESTROYER SQUADRON FOURTEEN % Fleet Post Office

Serial: 0001

A16-3 San Francisco, California

Z-Z-Z-Z-E-T

10 December 1944

From:

Commander Destroyer Squadron FOURTEEN.

Τo

Escorts for Re-Supply Echlon Ormac.

Subject:

Letter of Instructions.

Reference:

(a) Movement Order.(b) ComPhib Group Nine Attack Order 5-44.

Screens - Dog 1, Dog 2, and Dog 3. 1.

() Caldwell

Dog 1.

1000_yds___Coghlan

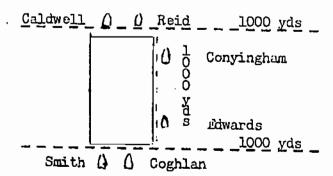
() Edwards <u>100</u>0 yds

Dog 2.

Caldwell () _ () Reid _ 1000 yds Smith 01 000 yds Coghlan ijί

__Conyingham 1000 yds

Dog 3.



C=O-P-Y

Al6-3 Serial: 0001 COMMANDER DESTROYER SQUADRON FOURTEEN % Fleet Post Office San Francisco, California.

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Z-Ø-Z S-E-C-R-E-I

10 December 1944.

Subject: Letter of Instructions.

2. Screen and patrol at objective. Stations one through four are four thousand yards in length, 5 and 6 six thousand yards, reference point midway between Baod and Bagonbon Rivers.

Station 1	. Reid	Midpoint	246	range 5000	CS.	209
2	. Caldwel	1	212	8300		173
3	Coghlan		196	10,500		306
4	. Edwards		172	10,750		254
5	. Conyngh	ann.	223	11,000		180
6	. Smith		200	12,600		270

On sortie for return, take patrol stations as in Dog 3. Axis will be approximately 150 True.

- 3. Four boilers to be on the line at all times.
- 4. When and if under air attack, maneuver individually and radically for self protection, but do not permit such maneuvers to leave convoy unprotected.
- 5. During darnkess ships will not, <u>repeat not</u>, open fire without specific authority from me except in a known emergency where planes are actually attacking at very close range.
 - During darkness, do not use SC radar.
- 7. Friendly anti-aircraft fire may be expected from the beaches all the way up the Leyte West Coast. This is considered to be a help to this group.
- 8. Considerable barge and small craft Army and Navy traffic may be encountered on the West Coast of Leyte. Any craft approaching the disposition at speeds in excess of 15 knots are to be viewed with suspicion.
- 9. Ships gunfire against shore targets will be counter-battery only.
- 10. All ships must be prepared to tow and be towed and rescue survivors as necessary.
- 11. Guard circuits as outlined in reference (a) and also keep a close watch on Mike Nan.
 - 12. Communications.

Fleet Common 3905(P) Fleet Common 4010(S)

Fleet Common 34.8

LAW (if ordered) 3115 kcs.

General Air Warning (if ordered) 3000 kcs.

13. Special Madio Guards

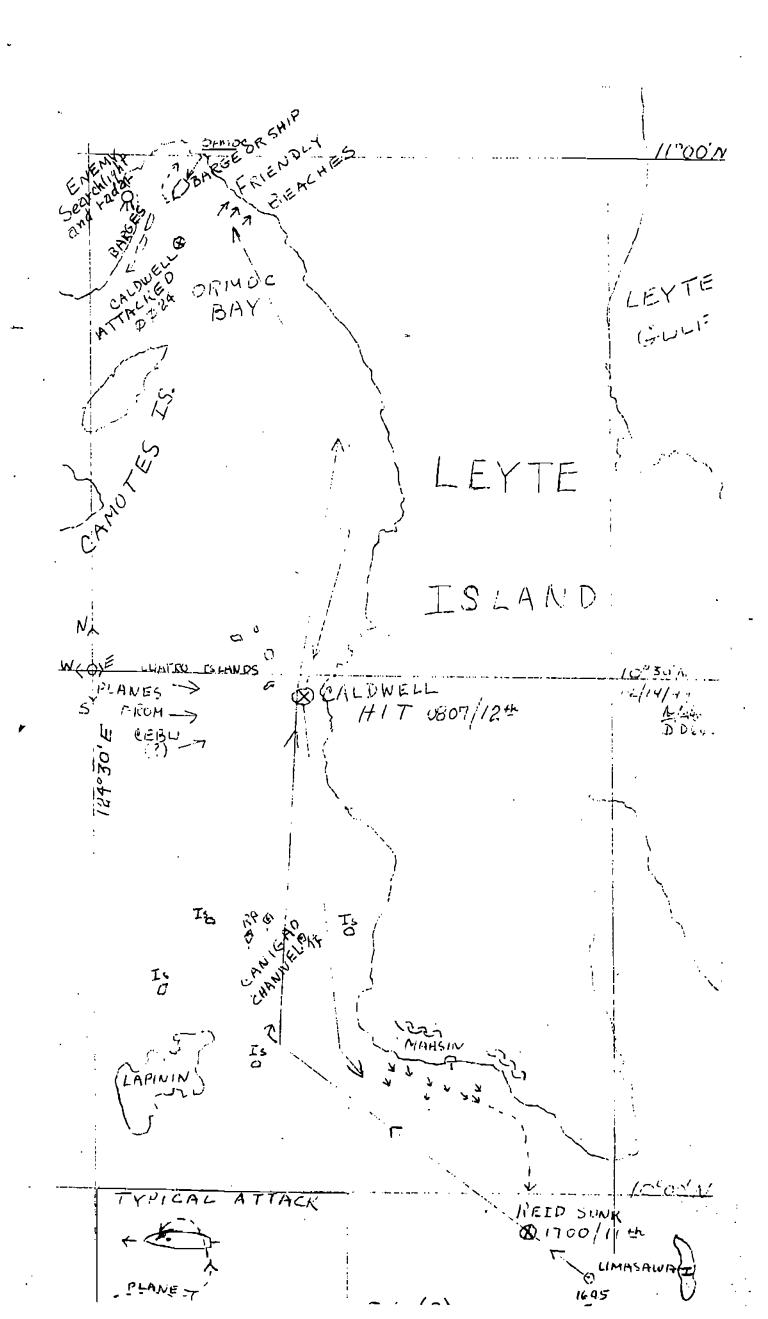
Smith - Army CAP Emergency Circuit 3080; also

Fighter Director Circuits.

Reid - Peetee Frequency - 3274

Caldwell - CW 2415 Voice 3000

/S/ W. S. ROUNTREE, Lieut(jg), USNR Operations Officer J. F. NEVMAN, Jr.



' U.S.S. CALDWELL (DD605)

CASUALTY REPORT - DECEMBER 12, 1944

KILLED IN ACTION

APPENZELLER, Herbert Paul CLOUGH, Arthur Russell COURTNEY, Harold Jack DE VOTO, William Jean, Jr. FROIO, Frank GALLEGOS, Juan Sacramento KROCHT, Reginald William PARKS, Donald Keith PATINO, Santiago PEAKE, Vernon Leroy PENNOYER, Marvin Lynn PEOPLES, Joseph ROGERS, Claude Worley SALVITTI, Alfred SLAUGHTER, Barney Lee STRONG, Louis Calvin VALDEZ, Joel (n) WELCH, Lawrence Junior ZIELINSKI, Frank Adam ZIMMER, John Richard	RM1c(T), V-3 SK3c, V6S F2c, V6S F2c, V6S GM3c, V-6 F2c, USN-I Cox(T), V6S RM3c(T), V-6 Cox(T), V-6 S1c CRM(T) S1c(RM), V6S S2c, V6S S1c, V6S RM3c, V-3 GM3c, V-6 F1c, V-6 S2c, V-6 F1c, V-6 S2c, V-6 S2c, V-6	610 78 88 (Flag-CDR14) 869 76 29 866 88 83 880 22 95 600 59 47 889 72 55 821 11 06 619 29 79 (Flag-CDR14) 576 94 07 393 77 51 381 26 64 942 08 09 (Flag-CDR14) 835 68 54 818 50 73 618 42 08 702 65 38 625 10 49 756 15 65 611 49 50 613 54 48
DIFD OF WOINIDS OF THIRDRE AND	TUE THE LOWERS	Total - 20
DIED OF WOUNDS OR INJURIES RECE DEASON, James Sheppard DITTOE, Patrick Emmet WALL, Donald Hue ZANETTI, Alfred Charles	S2c, V6S GM2c S2c, V6S S2c, V6S S2c, V6S	943 36 30 360 54 32 945 23 97 896 08 84
MISSING IN ACTION		Total - 4
CLARKE, Floyd Robert DAVIS, Horace Mastin GARRETT, John Patrick KRAVEC, Michael John KUZMIAK, Charles PEREZ, Jesus Marquez SWANSON, Paul Alvie THOMPSON, Joseph Clarence WILBER, Kenneth Grant	RTlc, V-6 S2c, V6S S1c S1c, V6S Y3c(T), V6S SC3c, V-6 HM2c SK1c S2c, V6S	648 10 49 938 54 96 381 90 27 807 51 03 821 80 00 555 82 59 372 44 52 311 15 84 962 60 00

WOUNDED IN ACTION

Total - 9

The below listed personnel were transferred to a hospital ship for further treatment (December 12, 1944):

WENDELBURG, George DUDEK, John Melvin FLADAGER, Vernon LeRoy ALLEN, Stephen Gatchell Jr. DEVITT, Edward James	Commander, USN Lieut., MC-V(G) Lieut(jg), SC-V(G) Ensign, D-V(G) Lieut., I-V(S)	72318 154781 247147 341333 211299 (Flag-CDD28 for
ELLIOTT, Ellis Engene KOPCZYNSKI, Chester MC GLEAM, William Joseph MC NEAL, Roy Herman MULVIHILL, Joseph Jr. OLSEN, Norman John Jr. ROBBINS, Robert Foster SALTZ, John Thomas	RT2c, V-2 SG2c, V6S GM2c, V-6 S1c, V-6 TM3c PhM3c, V-6 S1c, V6S S2c, V-6	temp. duty) 654 25 69 805 35 87 662 49 25 604 79 12 382 88 31 647 70 28 803 01 10 726 65 86

U.S.S. CALDWELL (DD605)

CASUALTY REPORT - DECEMBER 12, 1944 (Continued)

WOUNDED IN ACTION (Cont'd)

The below listed personnel were transferred to a hospital ship for further treatment (December 12, 1944): (Continued)

WHITE, Frank "D" S2c, V6S WILDMAN, Everly Ray S2c, V-6 VASILOVICH, Stanley (n) WM3c, V-6 VOYLES, William Gene S2c, V6S S2c, V6S S2c, V-6 756 73 71 895 28 40 CFlag-CDR14
VOYLES, Willie Gene RM2c, V-6 670 45 90 (Flag-CDR14

Total - 24

The below listed personnel were transferred for further treatment and returned to this vessel for duty (December 12, 1944, and return same day):

Total - 16

Total all casualties - 73