

Oct. 24, 1942: The Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands. I was on the port gun on top of No. 2 Turret. We had been at general quarters all night. At about four bells they found the first plane. They started at us from all directions. There were 24 planes in the first attack. I saw about 20 planes hit the water in two minutes. It reminded me of shooting ducks.

Then came the second attack. They still didn't get to us. I saw bombs dropping all around us and the Enterprise. A couple of torpedoes just missed our fantail.

In the third attack the last plane that came at us got through somehow and dropped a bomb right on No. One Gun Turret. I didn't see it coming or I would have hit the deck. It knocked me down around the gun. I thought my back was broken. Gun Captain E.E. James helped me down the ladder and I went for first aid. When I was bandaged up I went back to my post and stood watch until 1750 that night.

Except for a time in San Diego Naval Hospital, I was proud to serve aboard the SoDak for 38 months. It has remained a special part of my life.