

My battle station was a member on a section of Repair #4 stationed on the main deck inside the aft sleeping quarters, responsible for all battle damage repair, aft and below during any skirmish. It was sometime after midnight on the 15th of November 1942 when the control of land and sea in the Guadalcanal area was in doubt. The Navy lost three cruisers and three destroyers in the last three days of very intense action for control of the invasion beachhead the American Marines have had for over two months. The USS South Dakota with the battleship USS Washington and four destroyers ~steamed into the Savo Island sound, the Japanese held with their Navy. Our ships were intent in destroying this battle force of a battleship, four cruisers and four destroyers and thus secure the area for future operations. Upon entering the Sound we lost our three leading destroyers and the South Dakota was suddenly illuminated with search lights from the enemy ships and began taking many shell hits mostly above the waterline. Making many zig zag turns to avoid our burning destroyers, we kept our firing at all targets and putting the searchlight out of order. Hit aft, were our secured search airplanes where fires started, and I was directed to go aft and evaluate the fires and damage. Running to the exit door on the starboard side, I opened the door and stepped out when a giant blast sent me back through the still open door caused by the concussion of the main battery of three 16" barrels. I was unconscious for a short minute or more when I realized I had almost walked into the barrels of the number 3 turret shooting forward. I was lucky then but many weren't that night, as Guadalcanal was at last secured on our way to victory over Japan.

James F. Mulvey ~2/c
"A" Division Ice Mach.
Repair #4