

I was in the Fifth Division and trained in Great Lakes in January and February of 1942. From there I went to Camden, NJ to wait for the new U.S.S. South Dakota to be completed. I was one of the original crewmembers on her and remained with her through the entire World War II. We were involved in many battles.

One battle in particular I recall was in the Savo Islands on the night of Nov. 14 (after midnight) and early hours of Nov. 15, 1942. It was rough! Our job was to take on the Japanese troop ships that were making landings, instead we ran into the Japanese war fleet! We fired dead ahead at a Jap cruiser that was only a few feet ahead of us, split it in half and ran right over the top of it. There was fire on top of the water and Jap sailors in the fiery water. We kept firing our way through. There were several destroyers with us but all were sunk except the U.S.S. Washington which was always ahead. We followed her but she disappeared. We went back looking for her and then all hell broke loose. We lost our radar and radio and all contact with the world. We took about 40 shells plus lost over 1200 men on our ship. We buried the dead at sea the next morning. At about 10:00 a.m. we limped out of the area all by ourselves — no guns work-ing or ammunition left. We noticed a PBY come over us and signaled to us. In turn they had signaled to the U.S.S. Washington where we were located. They knew we needed help desperately. They signaled that lots of unidentified planes were about 100 miles away. We thought that was the end of us but they turned out to be 200 American planes coming in for reinforcements. What a relief.

The U.S.S. South Dakota was a great ship and we were a great crew!
After the war was over, I left the ship, went home and got married in 1948.