

File No.  
CVE27/A9/F41-6  
(95-hlr)  
Serial

U.S.S. SUWANNEE  
(CVE-27)

c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.,  
3 November, 1944.

SECRET

From: The Bomb Disposal Officer.  
To: The Commanding Officer.  
Subject: Enemy Attacks, preliminary report on.

1. "Suicide Bombing" attack, 25 October, 1944, 0804.
  - (a) No evidence of fuzes, tail assembly or bomb filler were recovered.
  - (b) The bomb and plane penetrated the flight deck and detonation of the bomb occurred approximately three feet above the hangar deck plates.
  - (c) Many splinter holes in the vicinity, up to six inches in diameter and extensive scabbing and splinter penetration as far as 250 feet away through steel plate indicate the bomb to be of possible 250 kg (G.P.H.E.) size. This is further borne out by the 17 foot diameter hole in the hangar deck plates and blown curtains and bulkheads on the hangar deck.
  - (d) Definitely a high order detonation with excellent fragmentation. There is much to indicate that the bomb was carried in an armed condition.
2. "Suicide Bombing" attack, 26 October, 1944, 1241.
  - (a) This bomb was seen to be released just prior to plane crash on deck - about 20 feet. Distinct holes of plane and bomb bear this out.
  - (b) Detonation was instantaneous, with no penetration. Perfect splinter striation pattern is evident on flight deck and forward elevator.
  - (c) The nose fuze and part of nose section of the bomb have been recovered. The nose fuze is most likely an A3(a) or A3(b) with the fuze body of steel instead of brass.
  - (d) Thickness of nose fragment recovered indicates the bomb to have been of about 250 kg (G.P.H.E.) size.
  - (e) Cone of blast can be accurately traced on the ship's island structure, centered in the approximate .15 foot diameter hole in the forward elevator and torn planking and plates just aft of the elevator.

ENCLOSURE (C)

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3. Dive Bombing Attack, 26 October, 1944, 1243.
- (a) Bomb was released at extremely low altitude and penetrated the flight deck, into the catapult space.
  - (b) Possible 0.01 delay in the fuze, with detonation of high order.
  - (c) Splinter damage, blast damage, and fragments recovered indicate bomb to have been of about 100 kg (G.P.H.E.) size.
  - (d) Definite hole of entry in flight deck, (plates bent down) plus below deck blast (plates bent up) just forward of hole of entry, is of about 6 foot diameter.
  - (e) Extensive buckling of bulkheads in officer's country indicates typical unvented blast damage.
  - (f) Extensive splinter damage is best evident through weather side bulkheads and plates just below and outboard of the catapult machinery.
  - (g) In accumulator bottle surface is what appears to be a definite pattern of this bomb. Three marks, covering about 12 inches, appear to be the point of detonation of this bomb. They form a definite bomb-nose pattern.

*El Sobel*

ELI SOBEL.

ENCLOSURE (C)

SECRET

DEFERRED

U.S.S. SUWANNEE

(COPY)

Action to: ComInch, CInCPac, ComAirPac, CTF77,  
Info to: ComSerForPac, ComSeron 10, ComCardiv 22, BuShips.

Reference my [redacted] October x Amphiling report follows x One 250 KG bomb and plane hit at 0804 25 October penetrating flight and exploding frame 64 on hangar deck x Hole in flight deck 10 feet wide by 20 feet long center 20 feet from center line to starboard x Girders supporting flight deck frame 62 to 68 pierced with numerous fragments x Hole in hangar deck 25 feet in diameter center frame 64 x Girder supporting hangar deck frame 64 demolished x Upright support I beams main deck starboard side frames 63 - 64 - 65 demolished x Hangar deck Bulkheads - electrical cables, sprinkler system riddled by fragments x After elevator girders distorted x Main deck frame 64 pierced slit 3 feet long x Butterworth, midship cargo pump exhaust, galley steam and steam smothering lines ruptured frame 62 to 66 x One 250 KG bomb and plane at 1240 26 October exploding after starboard side forward elevator x Forward elevator completely demolished x Port bulkhead bridge structure distorted x Resulting flight deck fire destroyed forward 30 percent flight x Flight deck frame 77 to forward elevator ruptured and distorted x One 100 KG bomb at 1243 26 October penetrating flight deck and exploding in catapult machinery space frame 84 x Hole in flight deck frame 84 to 86 about 15 feet wide on port side x Catwalk frame 79 forward distorted x Aerological office and all staterooms frame 82 to 91 except extreme starboard side demolished x Catapult demolished x Hole in Forward bulkhead forward elevator well 3 feet in diameter x Hole in skin on forecastle deck frame 83 to 85 about 10 feet in diameter x Main deck frame 81 pierced by 8 or 10 small holes x Fire main risers frame 81 frame 67 ruptured x Fresh water dash flushing water dash power cables dash ventilation systems frame 82 to 91 on both forecastle and galley deck levels ruptured x Following equipments needs replacing x Catapult x Complete forward elevator x All power cable and power panels on forecastle and gallery deck frame 82 to 91 x Flight deck frame 75 to bow x Power cables and power panels in hangar x Forward degaussing cable x Power cable to after elevator x Bomb and torpedo hoists in hangar x Vent motors 1-65 and 02-79 x Power cables to bridge x After Sperry mark 14 Master Gyro x Radio equipment x RAU-2 paren serial No. 16 paren x DP-12 paren serial No. 5 Paren x BC-639-A paren VHF paren serial No. 20364 and 20365 x NMB-1 paren serial No. 36 paren x TAQ-9 paren serial No. 150 paren x TBK-12 paren serial No. 51 paren x TBL-6 paren serial No. 427 paren x LR-1 paren serial No. 199 and 200 paren x SGA paren serial No. 81 paren x End of radio equipment x Following need significant repairs x All remaining radio equipment x After elevator and elevator guides x Diesel generator and auxiliary pumps x Battery and battery equipment in battery charging room x Pitometer log x Power cables between bridge, IC room and engine room x DRT x Communication to bridge x Arresting gear and yielding elements x 7 inch exhaust steam line from midship pump room x Two diesel oil fueling pumps x Two fresh water pumps in diesel pump room x Steam smothering system to fuel tanks x

ENCLOSURE (D)

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CONFIDENTIAL

XIII. MATERIAL DATA.

Report No. VF-60 #61-11.

1. All aircraft on this hop functioned in a normal manner.

U. S. S. SUWANNEE  
(CVE-27)S-E-C-R-E-Tc/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.,  
6 November 1944.

From: The Executive Officer,  
To: The Commanding Officer.

Subject: Executive Officer's Report.

Reference: (a) Article 948, U.S. Navy Regulations.

12 123

1. In accordance with reference (a) the following report is submitted. This should be regarded as a preliminary report and is confined with a very few exceptions included to give the report proper proportion to an account of the action of individuals who performed certain services in saving U.S.S. SUWANNEE in the role of volunteers. It is the intention of the undersigned to submit a further report on the performance of department heads and other officers and men in fields connected with their own duties and own skills.

2. On 25 October at 0804 an enemy so-called "Suicide Plane" struck the flight deck of U.S.S. SUWANNEE just forward of the after elevator, its engine penetrating through the hangar deck to the main deck and its bomb exploding on the hangar deck. On 26 October at about 1232 another plane struck and destroyed the forward elevator, its bomb exploding on contact with the flight deck. A minute or two later a bomb from another enemy plane struck the flight deck just above the catapult room, penetrating to and exploding in that room.

3. The explosion on 25 October caused a fire in the hangar deck and that on 26 October caused a severe fire on the flight deck. Personnel killed, wounded and missing in the two attacks, or directly resulting therefrom, totalled two hundred and fifty nine.

4. During these two days the conduct of the officers and men aboard SUWANNEE was completely satisfactory. Insofar as the personal observation of the undersigned is concerned, and judging from all reports made by the officers to the undersigned, there was no incident involving hysteria, refusal to do his duty or the shirking of duty on the part of any individual. To the contrary, most, if not all of the personnel aboard, did everything possible to save SUWANNEE and to aid their dying and wounded comrades. The conduct of the complement was excellent in every particular.

5. Although no one group needs to be singled out for particular mention, it is incumbent that recognition should be paid to the officers and men of Air Group SIXTY who were aboard at the time of the attacks and thereafter. Individual instances are cited below of outstanding performances; their work together in fire-fighting, aiding the wounded, saving of life and helping the medical officers deserves mention here,

6. A list of individuals whose conduct deserves praise is assembled below.

ENCL (F)

S-E-C-R-E-T

U. S. S. SUWANNEE  
(CVE-27)

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (Continued)

It is a commonplace that in time of crisis many instances go unnoticed and in moments of recollection many such incidents which were noted are not recalled, or the individuals involved not remembered. Such was the case on 26 October of an enlisted man, uninjured, on the forecastle, which was cut off from the rest of the ship by flames. After several calls to have medical supplies brought to the forecastle for those seriously injured were unproductive of results, the enlisted man informed C. K. BARR, ACEM, that he would try to get through the flames to get medical supplies because he could no longer stand the sufferings of the wounded. Despite Barr's efforts to stop him, the man climbed to the 20 mm. mounts just forward of the flight deck and when Barr lost sight of him, was climbing toward the flight deck. A second later a TBM directly in his path exploded and the man was seen holding on to the starboard side of the flight deck with one leg blown off. A moment later he fell into the water and was not seen again. Every effort to ascertain his name has proved unavailing. It is a justifiable assumption that many similar cases occurred.

7. These individuals are called to the attention of the Commanding Officer:

Lt. C. J. PREMO----Lt. PREMO, Navigator, although severely burned and wounded by the explosions on 26 October, from the effects of which he died a few hours later, made his way from the burning bridge to the after-quarters of the ship where he told the officers and men gathered there that several men were trapped in the bridge and that every bit of available help was needed to fight the fire on the flight deck.

Lt. A. J. CAROCARI----Lt. CAROCARI, Assistant First Lieutenant, although severely burned and wounded from the bomb explosions on 26 October, made his way from the bridge, where he was junior officer of the watch, to the flight deck where he persisted in fighting the fire until he was taken to the after part of the ship where he died a few hours later.

Ensign D. W. FLEISCHMANN----Ensign FLEISCHMANN, Assistant Navigator, who was on the bridge was seriously burned on the hands and deafened by the explosions. Although he had had only a few months experience in navigation, he was recalled from Sick Bay to navigate the SUWANNEE from Leyte Gulf to Kossol Passage, Palau and thence to Manus; he successfully performed these duties despite his serious and painful injuries.

BROOKS, William S., CSF(AA) - - On 26 October, Brooks was making his way forward along the hangar deck when he was knocked unconscious and injured in the abdomen by the force of the explosions. Upon regaining consciousness he crawled under the planes to the valves controlling the water curtain and the forward sprinkler system and opened them, thus preventing the fire on the forward elevator, which had been smashed down to the hangar deck level, from spreading to and

S-E-C-R-E-T

U.S.S. SUWANLEE

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## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (Continued)

exploding the gassed planes on the hangar deck which in all probability would have made the fire uncontrollable, resulting in the loss of the ship. On 25 October Brooks donning rescue-breathing gear, made his way through the fire and smoke on the hangar deck to the valves and opened them, aiding greatly in subduing the fire of that date.

Ensign Pardee C. FINLEY, Air Group SIXTY - - On 26 October, Ensign Finley, upon learning that several men were trapped, unconscious, in Radio Central, donned rescue gear, made his way through smoke and debris to Radio Central and, with the aid of several others, listed below, rescued several men. Finley also searched "Officers Country" forward, in rescue gear, looking for survivors; he was in the forefront of the group fighting the fire on the flight deck, manning the nozzle of a hose directly facing the hottest part of the flame; after the fire and rescue work ceased, he remained active for several days in the various temporary sick-bays, nursing the wounded and dying, in one case working unceasingly with oxygen apparatus to keep an enlisted man alive until transfer to the hospital ship.

Lt. Ray N. MAHAN - - On 26 October, Lt. Mahan upon learning there were several men unconscious in Radio Central, donned rescue-breathing apparatus and made his way to Radio Central where he succeeded in moving one man into the passageway from where he was later rescued; previous thereto, he searched Air Plot and Radar Plot, using rescue gear, looking for survivors. It was primarily Lt. Mahan's persistence in demanding aid, and organizing rescue work in that eventually caused the rescue of all men alive in Radio Central.

Donald LANGAN, Aviation Machinist's Mate, second class - - LANGAN, upon learning that men were trapped unconscious in Radio Central first made his way through the passageway under the flight deck fire to Radio Central without the aid of rescue gear and, with the aid of others, carried out three men, badly burned and wounded. When the smoke became to severe, he donned a mask and rescued Ship's Clerk FITCH. He later searched "Officer's Country" for survivors.

JOHNSON, Axel D., Boilermaker, first class - - The first, or one of the first to reach Radio Central. JOHNSON, with Lt. Mahan, succeeded in moving one man to the passageway and then returned with MOORE, Wallace Ray, Machinist's Mate second class, to complete the rescue. When the injured man grasped MOORE's face-mask hose almost succeeding in strangling him, Johnson cut the line which allowed Moore to reach the catwalk and air. Johnson also removed three wounded men from the ready service room of No. one 40 mm carrying them to the flight deck where they were given medical aid.

MOORE, Wallace Ray, MM2c - - Moore participated in the rescue outlined above.

S-E-C-R-E-TU.S.S. SUWANNEE  
(CVE-27)EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (Continued)

LADIGO, J. R., Aviation Machinist's Mate, second class - - On 26 October, Ladigo was one of the first of several men who made rescues of the radiomen rendered unconscious in Radio Central by the bomb explosions and smoke. Aided by others he carried out two radiomen from Radio Central to the flight deck. Ladigo was also in the forefront of the fire-fighting party battling the fire on the flight deck.

Ensign Glenn O. RYNEARSON, Air Group SIXTY - - On 26 October, after fighting the fire for a long period of time, Ensign Ryneerson heard requests for aid from the catwalk near the passageway to Radio Central, immediately donned rescue gear and with Ensign Finley and Langan made his way to Radio Central and carried out Ship's Clerk FITCH.

Lieutenant Walter B. BURWELL, MC-V(G), USNR - - On 26 October Lieutenant Burwell was in the forward battle dressing station, below and just aft the catapult room, attending numerous patients injured in the explosion of 25 October. When the effects of the two bombs caused the lights to be extinguished, the bulkheads to begin to give way and water from a ruptured main to pour into the station, Lieutenant Burwell quieted the wounded, and directed their movement to the after-hatch of the compartment. He opened the dogged-down door, entered the next compartment alone and after again dogging down the door, explored that compartment to determine whether it was safe to move the patients through. He repeated this process, moving the wounded into each safe compartment, and then advancing alone into the next one, until he and the party of wounded reached Chiefs Quarters, already in use as a temporary sick bay. He then continued his supervision of those wounded 25 October and turned his attention to the newly wounded as they were brought in, having already treated several new cases as he moved his party along to Chiefs Quarters.

EVANS, Leo Virgil, GM3c - - After escaping from No. 2 40 mm without injury in the first explosion of 26 October, Evans with several others went from the forecastle to the Cargo Space and fought the fire there until he was severely burned by the effects of the second explosion which injuries caused his death several hours later.

Lt.Cdr. Jerry F. DANIELS, USN - - Lt.Cdr. Daniels, on the bridge at the time of the explosion of 26 October made his way by line to the signal bridge to the catwalk where the second explosion caught him, giving him burns about the head and slight shrapnel wounds. Despite his injuries, Daniels, the Assistant Air Officer, immediately set to work to organize the flight deck fire fighting party, including the breaking out of hoses and direction of the attack against the fire.

STANSBURY, Leslie J. ACMM - - Stansbury aided Daniels in the preliminary organization and was, indeed, the first man at the scene of the fire. His knowledge of fire-fighting technique and location



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(CVE-27)EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (Continued)

of equipment, and his direction of the man under him, proved invaluable.

Lt(jg) Quinn D. LaFARGUE, Air Group SIXTY - - When notified of the fire, on 26 October LaFargue immediately went to the scene, manned the first hose, and with complete disregard for his safety went among the burning planes and amid the exploding ammunition, fighting the fire until it was subdued. By his example he encouraged others to go forward, and by his cheerfulness, contributed greatly to morale. He carefully played his hose on other fire-fighting parties at intervals to enable them to withstand the heat.

Ensign Roy C. GARNER, Air Group SIXTY - - Garner attacked the fire with the same vim and vigor as did LaFargue and with his hose on the other side of the deck from LaFargue, the two pilots formed a team which ignored/any consideration of their own personal safety. completely

CASELLO, Charles P. Jr., AMM2c - -

McCAIG, LeRoy F. AMM1c - - These two men manned the hoses with the pilots and were in the forefront of the fire-fighting during the early and crucial stages. Their knowledge of the equipment and technique proved invaluable.

KOPP, Robert E. Slc - - On 26 October, Kopp went from the forecastle to the Cargo Space and fought fire there until seriously burned by the second explosion.

Lt.(jg) Ivor R. THOMAS, A-V(S), USNR - - On 26 October, Lt(jg) Thomas fought fire in Radar Plot caused by the first explosion; after exhausting available CO2 bottles he went down the passageway toward Radio Central where he was wounded in the leg by the second explosion. He crawled out of the passageway to the catawalk and thence to the flight deck where he participated immediately in the fire-fighting activity despite his wound and dazed condition until he was persuaded to go to Sick Bay.

HEAL, Thomas E., RdM2c - - On 26 October, Heal fought the fire in Radar Plot caused by the first explosion and was later found dead in Radio Central with a CO2 bottle by his side.

Many persons, who unfortunately were not identified, contributed their efforts to the early stage of fire-fighting. Among those who were noted, and who persisted until the fire was subdued were:

Lt. C. L. FREDERICK, Air Group SIXTY  
Lt(jg) Walter TRUSLOW, Air Group SIXTY  
Ensign Ira PITCHER, Air Group SIXTY  
JORDAN, Kenneth "E", Slc  
O'BRIEN, James C., S2c  
SANTISTEVAN, Juan J., Slc

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## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (Continued)

DICKEY, Raymond E., SF3c - - Isolated on the forecastle on 26 October by the effect of the two explosions, Dickey coolly directed the group fighting the fire on the forward part of the flight deck; by his knowledge of the fire-fighting apparatus he was enabled to maintain a constant water pressure despite several failures. Also fighting the fire, which several times threatened to engulf the forecastle as flaming gasoline dripped from the deck, and aiding the seriously wounded on the forecastle were:

Lieutenant (jg) Eli SOBEL, D-V(G), USNR - - Lieutenant Sobel organized and directed the fire-fighting party.

Lieutenant Donald A. DETLOFF, A-V(S), USNR - - Although dazed and almost rendered unconscious by the effect of the blasts, Detloff made his way to the forecastle and when recovered, fought the fire and tended the wounded.

Chief Radio Electrician, Murray C. ALEXANDER  
BARR, C. M., ACEM  
PENNINGTON, F. H., ACOM  
STEVENS, Slc  
JUDE, Frank T. W., BM2c

Others who fought the fire with intelligence, stamina and skill have not been identified.

Chief Carpenter Frank C. SHELTON, USN - - On 25 October, Shelton organized the fire party fighting the hangar deck fire and subdued the fire; on 26 October, Shelton first put out the hangar deck fire and then went to the flight deck where he organized the men maintaining pressure on the hoses used in fighting the fire until it was subdued.

VEAL, John "D", StMlc - - On 25 October, Veal was injured by a fall but persisted in his duties carrying wounded despite the injury which incapacitated him later.

Another group which deserves mention are the volunteers who spent sleepless days and nights performing, in many cases, the duties of corpsmen, under the supervision of the medical officers in the temporary Sick Bays, such as the Wardroom, The Chiefs Quarters, the Ready Room and other places. Officers and men, pilots, specialists, seamen and steward's mates, their devotion was untiring their cheerfulness inspiring and, most important, their rapidly acquired knowledge under conditions of severe strain, undoubtedly contributed to saving many lives. Some of them have already been mentioned; others are anonymous; those that were particularly noted are:

Ensign PITCHER, Air Group SIXTY  
Ensign KALAL, Air Group SIXTY  
Ensign RYNEARSON, Air Group SIXTY