

C O N F I D E N T I A L

WAR DIARY

COMMANDING OFFICER U. S. S. PHELPS

From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. PHELPS

To : The Chief of Naval Operations.

June 1, 1942 — June 30, 1942
July 1, 1942 — July 31, 1942
August 1, 1942 — August 31, 1942
Sept. 1, 1942 — Sept 30, 1942
Oct. 1, 1942 — Oct. 31, 1942
Nov. 1, 1942 — Nov. 30, 1942.

Original to:

Chief of Naval Operations
(Officer of Naval Records and Library)

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REPORT FOR COMMANDING OFFICER, U.S.S. PHELPS
Operating under Commander Task Group 16.4 and 11.4, U.S. Pacific Fleet
(Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE)

TASK ORGANIZATION:

- 16 Rear Admiral A. L. Spruance - HORNET, ENTERPRISE
- 16.2 Rear Admiral Kinkaid (Comcrudiv-6) - MINNEAPOLIS,
NEW ORLEANS, ATLANTA, VINCENNES, NORTHAMPTON,
PENSACOLA.
- 16.4 Captain A.R. Early (Comdeson ONE) - PHELPS, WORDEN,
AYLWIN, MONAGHAN, BALCH, BENHAM, ELLET, MAURY,
CONYNGHAM.

Changes: On 4 June BALCH, BENHAM, PENSACOLA, VINCENNES detached
and order to join Task Force 17.

on 5 June MONAGHAN detached and order to join Task
Force 17.

On 6 June MAURY and WORDEN detached and ordered to
proceed to fueling rendezvous.

on 8 June MONAGHAN, BALCH and MONSSEN rejoined.

On 9 June PHELPS with Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE
on board detached, proceeding Pearl Harbor with
CIMARRON, GUADALUPE, HUGHES and BLUE.

On 11 June DEWEY, HULL, MACDONOUGH moored Pearl.

On 12 June PHELPS with Commander Destroyer SQUADRON ONE
on board moored Pearl.

On 13 June Captain S.B. Brewer, U.S. Navy, relieved
Captain A.R. Early, U.S. Navy, as Commander Destroyer
Squadron ONE.

On 14 June Task Force 16 moored Pearl. AYLWIN
detached at sea on escort duty.

On 16 June joined Task Force 11, reorganized as
follows:

TASK ORGANIZATION:

- 11 Rear Admiral A.W. Fitch - USS SARATOGA
(Task Force Commander)
- 11.2 Rear Admiral T.C. Kinkaid (Comcrudiv 6) -
MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, ASTORIA

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TASK ORGANIZATION: (Cont'd)

11.4 Captain S. B. Brewer (Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE) - Desron ONE less FARRAGUT (AYLWIN absent on detached duty).

Changes: (Cont'd)

On 21 June LAFHEY joined Destroyer Squadron ONE. Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE shifted flag from PHELPS to WORDEN.

On 28 June MONAGHAN departed Pearl Harbor on detached escort duty.

On 29 June LAFHEY detached. FARRAGUT joined Task Force 11. Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE shifted flag from WORDEN to PHELPS.

On 30 June Rear Admiral Fletcher relieved Rear Admiral Fitch as Commander Task Force 11.

On 30 June Rear Admiral Wright relieved Rear Admiral Kinkaid as Commander Cruiser Division SIX.

1 JUNE 1942

GCT	LCT	
1340	0240	ELLET reported sound contact. MAURY ordered to support
1410	0310	ELLET reported contact lost.
1430	0330	ELLET and MAURY rejoined.
1900	0800	Posit. 31-48 N., 174-11 W. Cruising Disposition 10 Victor.

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1 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

GCT -LCT

1940 0840

Received following message from GTF 16: "WE EXPECT AN ATTACK ON MIDWAY, THE FORCE TO CONSIST OF ALL TYPES OF COMBATANT VESSELS INCLUDING FOUR OR FIVE CARRIERS PLUS TRAIN VESSELS AND TRANSPORTS X SHOULD THE WHEREABOUTS OF TF 16 AND 17 BE KEPT FROM THE ENEMY WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT SURPRISE FLANK ATTACKS FROM THE NORTH-EAST OF MIDWAY X ON THE RESULTS OF THESE ATTACKS DAMAGE INFLICTED ON MIDWAY FORCES AND INFORMATION OF ENEMY MOVEMENTS FURTHER OPERATIONS WILL BE BASED X OUR COUNTRY WILL REAP GREAT BENEFITS FROM THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE OPERATIONS NOW COMMENCING."

2300 1200 Posit. 32-00 N., 175-05 W. Course and speed made good - 290 T., 12.5 knots.

0700 2000 Posit. 32-58 N., 174-26 W.

2 JUNE 1942

1900 0800 Posit. 31-30 N., 172-55 W. Cruising Disposition 10 Victor.

2300 1200 Posit. 31-46 N., 173-57 W. Course and speed made good - 104 T., 2.5 knots.

0330 1630 Sighted Task Force 17. ComTaskFor 17 ordered Task Force 16 to remain within 10 miles of that force.

0600 1900 Set clocks to plus 10 LZT

0600 2000 Posit. 32-03 N., 173-29 W.

3 JUNE 1942

1800 0800 Posit. 32-33 N., 175-51 W. Cruising Disposition 10 Victor, ComTaskFor 17 within visual distance.

2200 1200 Posit. 33-00 N., 176-00 W. Course and speed made good - 305 T., 5.6 knots.

0600 2000 Posit. 33-15 N., 175-42 W. Received following report of enemy contact: "Large FORCE OF SHIPS OCCUPATION FORCE SIGHTED 700 MILES BEARING 261 TRUE FROM MIDWAY ON COURSE EAST".

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4 JUNE 1942

GCT	LCT	
1800	0800	Posit. 31-32 N., 176-26 W. Cruising Disposition 10 Victor. TaskFor 17 within visual distance.
1805	0805	PHELPS lost suction.
1825	0825	2 enemy CV reported sighted North of Midway on course 135 T. Went to General Quarters.
1835	0835	Sighted friendly PBV
1900	0900	HORNET and ENTERPRISE commenced launching attack groups.
2000	1000	Attack groups departed
2020	1020	Single engine enemy twin-float plane reported bearing 185, distance 30 miles.
2027	1027	Received signal from Task Force Commander: "PREPARE TO REPEL AIR ATTACK".
2030	1030	On signal, formed Cruising Disposition 11 Victor, course and axis 240 T., Speed 25 knots.
2124	1124	Black smoke sighted bearing 020, distance 10 miles, believed to be plane shot down. Received report that Midway had been attacked by enemy planes.
2200	1200	Posit. 30-33 N., 176-35 W. Course and speed made good - 192 T., 6.3 knots.
2341	1341	PHELPS picked up personnel from crashed ENTERPRISE plane - Lieutenant C. E. Dickinson, Jr., U.S. Navy, and DeLUCA, ARMLC, U.S. Navy.
0001	1401	Received following message over warning circuit: "LARGE GROUP OF ENEMY PLANES BEARING 305 T, 30 MILES, 3000 FEET".
0002	1402	Received signal: "PREPARE TO REPEL AIR ATTACK".
0003	1403	Sighted A.A. fire and smoke bearing 305 below horizon in vicinity of where YORKTOWN was. Noted planes crashing into the sea and some bursting into fire in the air.
0006	1406	Sighted heavy smoke billowing skyward on horizon bearing 300 T.

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4 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

GCT	LCT	
0009	1409	Enemy plane burst into fire and crashed, bearing 318 T., distance 10 miles.
0015	1415	Received report over TBS from YORKTOWN that her RADAR was out.
0020	1420	Our attack groups commenced returning in small groups, many of them making crashed landings into sea because of shortage of gas.
0031	1431	ComTaskFor 16 ordered PENSACOLA, VINCENNES, BALCH, and BENHAM to proceed to aid of ComTask For 17.
0105	1505	MONAGHAN recovered crew of crashed TBD
0242	1642	Sighted YORKTOWN being attacked by enemy, bearing 300 T., distance 10 miles, very heavy A.A. fire. 2 planes crashed in flames bearing 290 T. and 250 T.
0245	1645	Received warning on warning circuit: "ENEMY AIRCRAFT APPROACHING FROM 290 to 300 TRUE".
0330	1730	ENTERPRISE and HORNET launched attack group of 23 SBD
0600	2000	Posit. 30-32.4 N., 176-29.8 W.
0700	2100	HORNET and ENTERPRISE recovering attack group.
0714	21148	Formed Cruising Disposition 11 Victor, course and axis 090, speed 15. ComTaskFor 16 sent signal that at 0200 would change course to 000 T and at 0300 change course to 270 T.
0814	2214	HORNET sent message to ENTERPRISE: "OUR PLANES ATTACKED 1 BB 1 CA ESTIMATE AT LEAST 4 DIRECT HITS. BB BURINING BADLY HIT IN STACK AND MAINMAST. CA ALSO ON FIRE. NO AIR OPPOSITION ENCOUNTERED. ALL ATTACK PLANES RETURNED. ONE OF YORKTOWN PLANES LANDING ABOARD FIRED .50 CALIBER GUNS INTO SECONDARY BATTLE STATION CAUSING MAJOR PERSONNEL CASUALTIES".

5 JUNE 1942

1240	0240	RADAR contact reported bearing 330, distance 28,000 yards, continued on northerly course.
1357	0357	Changed course to 270 T.
1800	0800	Posit. 29-48 N., 175-45 W. Cruising Disposition 11 Victor, course 270, speed 25 knots, pursuing enemy. Low clouds, frequent rain squalls, visibility 500 yds.

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5 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

GCT	LCT	
2130	1120	Sighted PBY on surface. MONAGHAN ordered to investigate.
2200	1200	Posit. 29-05 N., 177-13 W. Course and speed made good - 201 T., 3.8 knots. Weather clear, visibility unlimited.
2220	1220	Sighted 2 friendly submarines on surface.
2400	1400	ComTaskfor 16 ordered MONAGHAN to proceed and join Task Force 17.
0250	1650	Sighted raft. PHELPS investigated and picked up SBD personnel - Lieutenant PENLAND, U.S. Navy, and HEARD, RM2e, U.S. Navy, from ENTERPRISE. Plane crashed in water 1300, 4 June 1942, 29-39.2 N., 178-51.2 W.
0312	1712	HORNET and ENTERPRISE launched attack groups of 62 SBD on report of enemy contact.
0440	1840	Sighted 2 friendly PBY's.
0600	2000	Posit. 30-21 N., 179-42 W.
0700	2100	Commenced recovering attack groups. Night landing operations.
0810	2210	Plane from ENTERPRISE crashed. AYLWIN recovered personnel.
0830	2230	All planes recovered. Changed course to 280 T., speed 25 knots. Attack groups failed to contact enemy.

6 JUNE 1942

1710	0710	ENTERPRISE launched search group of 18 SBD's
1800	0800	Posit. 30-48 N., 176-40 W. Formed Cruising Disposition 10 Victor. Visibility unlimited.
1905	0905	Received following message from ComTaskFor 16: "ENEMY LOCATED. WILL PROCEED TOWARD HIM AT 25 KNOTS TO ATTACK. SEND DD SHORT OF FUEL TO RENDEZVOUS WITH CIMARRON AT 21-30 ZED 8 JUNE, POSIT 32 NORTH 178 WEST".

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6 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

1911 0911 Enemy contact reported 29-33 N., 174-00 W., course West, speed 10. Cruisers ordered to launch planes and track enemy. Enemy force reported to consist of 1 CA and 5 DD.

2000 1000 HORNET launched attack group of 8 VF and 26 SBD

2024 1024 Sighted friendly PBY

2037 1037 Pilot in search sector reported no CV present but 1 BB instead

2148 1148 Received report that "CINC 2ND JAPANESE FLEET WAS BEING BOMBED". Believed to be in ships now being attacked by HORNET group

2200 1200 Posit. 30-23 N., 175-28 E., course and distance made good - 283 T., 16.1 knots.

2230 1230 HORNET recovered attack group

2255 1255 ENTERPRISE launched attack group

2313 1313 Received following report from HORNET attack: "ONE THOUSAND POUND HIT BETWEEN STACK AND SIDE OF LARGE SHIP. ONE THOUSAND POUND HIT CENTER OF SHIP NEAR STERN. ONE THOUSAND POUND HIT ON ANOTHER LARGE SHIP. VF ATTACK ON DD SEEMED TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE WITH AN ADDITIONAL ONE HUNDRED POUND HIT ON DD. CONSENSUS OF OPINION IS THAT LARGE SHIP IS A BB POSSIBLY A CA. ONE OF SHIPS HIT TURNED IN UNCONTROLLED CIRCLE TO RIGHT".

0000 1400 Received message from ComTaskFor 16: "POSSIBLE ATTACK BY LONG RANGE BOMBERS FROM WAKE ISLAND HEADED THIS WAY".

0042 1442 LAURY and WORDEN detached to proceed to rendezvous with CIMARRON because of fuel shortage. Due to possible attack from Wake, instructed them to proceed on course 045 at 20 knots for 3 hours before heading for rendezvous

0047 1447 PBY -- circled formation

0108 1508 Report received from ENTERPRISE attack: "MANY HITS ON BB DEAD IN WATER AND BURNING. 1 CA BURNING BUT HAS WAY ON".

0131 1531 HORNET launched attack group

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6 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

0140 1540 ENTERPRISE recovered attack group

0220 1620 Changed course to 045 T., speed 15 knots, to head for fueling rendezvous

0355 1755 HORNET attack group recovered. Reported BB or CA completely gutted by fire and abandoned. Because of shortage of fuel, pursuit was abandoned and Task Force now heading for fueling rendezvous

0600 2000 Posit. 29-44 N., 174-27 E.

Following messages were received:

"FROM COMTASKFOR 16: YESTERDAYS ATTACK BY ENTERPRISE HORNET AND YORKTOWN BOMBERS ON DEFEATED AND FLEEING ENEMY COMPLETED AN AIR ACTION COVERING THREE FULL DAYS X ESTIMATE ENEMY LOSSES AS RESULT OF ACTION BY TASKFORCES 16 AND 17 ON THURSDAY THREE CVS SUNK ONE CV ON FIRE AND BADLY DAMAGED ONE BB OR LARGE ARMORED SHIP AND ONE CA DAMAGED X OF THREE CVS SUNK ONE WAS AKAGI ONE WAS OF HIRYU CLASS ONE PROBABLY KAGA X DAMAGED CV PROBABLY ONE OF KIRYU CLASS WAS LAST SIGHTED BY PLANE FORENOON FRIDAY ON NORTHWESTERLY COURSE STILL BURNING X OUR ATTACK GROUPS FAILED SIGHT HER ON TWO HUNDRED FIFTY MILE FLIGHT LATE FRIDAY AFTERNOON X SHE MAY HAVE ESCAPED OR SHE MAY HAVE BEEN ABANDONED AND SUNK X OUR ATTACK GROUP SIGHTED ONLY TWO SMALL SHIPS PROBABLY DDS X YESTERDAY SATURDAY OUR SEARCH PICKED UP TWO SMALL ENEMY FORCES BOUND FOR HOME X FIRST WAS 2 CAS 2 DDS HEADED SW BOMBED DURING FORENOON WITH HITS REPORTED ON BOTH CAS X SECOND GROUP WAS 2 CAS 3 DDS HEADED WEST X OF THESE ONE CA OF MOGAMI CLASS WAS WRECKED AND ABANDONED OTHER SMALLER CA RECEIVED BOMB HITS ONE DD SUNK OTHERS STRAFFED BY VF X OUR CARRIER AIR GROUPS HAVE DONE A MAGNIFICENT JOB IN SPITE OF HEAVY LOSSES SUFFERED ON THURSDAY FORENOON IN THE INITIAL ATTACK WHICH DECIDED THE FATE OF THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY X THEIR FOLLOW UP BLITZ ON OUR RETREATING ENEMY WERE CARRIED OUT WITH GREAT DETERMINATION X THE JAPS STATE OF MORALE AT THE END OF THE BATTLE WAS INDICATED BY ABANDONING TO THEIR FATE THE CREW OF THE MOGAMI CLASS CRUISER WHEN THE OTHER SHIPS OF THAT GROUP LEFT WITHOUT EFFECTING RESCUE OF PERSONNEL X THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR SHIPS DURING THIS PERIOD LEAVES NOTHING TO BE DESIRED X TASK FORCES 16 AND 17 HAVE AGAIN HELPED TO MAKE HISTORY X WELL DONE TO ALL HANDS".

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6 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

The following message was received by TF Commander from Cincpac
ON 16 AND 17 IN THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY SHOWED HEROIC DETERMINATION
WHICH WAS DECISIVE IN THE CULMINATION OF A SUPERB VICTORY FOR THE
COUNTRY & THEIR EARLIER RECORD OF BARRING IS MATCHED BY THIS ACTION &
I REGRET THE HIGH PERSONNEL LOSSES IN PROPORTION TO MATERIAL LOSSES &
HOWEVER I AM CONFIDENT THAT TF 16 WILL COMPLETE THE UPSURGE OF THE
ENEMY WAR EFFORT SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO MORE IN THE ALIEN AREA

7 JUNE 1942

GCT	LCT	
1800	0800	Posit. 31-31 N., 178-08 E., Cruising Disposition 16 Victor
2135	1135	Friendly submarine sighted dead ahead
2200	1200	Posit. 31-41 N., 177-54 E. Course and speed made good - 058 T., 6.1 knots.
0600	2000	Posit. 31-38 N., 179-58 E.

8 JUNE 1942

1645	0645	Sighted CIMARRON escorted by MONSSEN
1700	0700	CIMARRON and MONSSEN joined formation. Commenced fueling operations.
1800	0800	Posit. 31-43 N., 177-13 W. Special Cruising Dis- position for fueling. MONAGHAN, BALCH and HUGHES joined formation.
2200	1200	Posit. 31-13 N., 177-15 W. Course and speed made good - 130 T., 1.8 knots.
2320	1320	GUADALUPE escorted by WORDEN, BLUE, LAURY and RALPH TALBOT joined formation.
0100	1500	In reply to message sent by Comdesron One to TaskFor Commander requesting to transfer flag to WORDEN because of oil leak in PHELPS, received following message from ComTaskFor 16: "PROPOSE HAVE YOU RETURN PEARL IN PHELPS SUBSTITUTING EITHER RALPH TALBOT OR BLUE PLEASE RECOMMEND" RALPH TALBOT recommended to remain .

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8 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

GCT LCT

0600 2000 Posit. 31-13 N., 177-44 W.
0735 2135 Ceased fueling operations. Formed Cruising
Disposition 10 Victor, using dimmed running
lights. Course and axis 062 T., speed 17.5 knots

9 JUNE 1942

1637 0637 Task Force re-commenced fueling operations.
1800 0800 Posit. 31-00 N., 175-20 W. Special Cruising
Disposition for fueling.
2200 1200 Posit. 31-24 N., 174-28 W. Course and speed
made good - 086 T., 6 knots.
2210 1210 Received following message from Commander Task
Force 16: "UPON COMPLETION FUELING AND WHEN
DIRECTED TAKE CHARGE TASK UNIT 16.6.2 CIMARRON
GUADALUPE PHELPS HUGHES AND BLUE AND PROCEED
PEARL IN ACCORDANCE CINCPAC [REDACTED] X UPON
ARRIVAL INFORM CINCPAC RALPH TALBOT MONSSEN
BEING RETAINED WITH TASKFOR 16"
0320 1720 Completed fueling operations. Proceeded with
Task Unit 16.6.2 as previously directed by
ComTaskFor 16. Set course 114 T., speed 17.5
knots. PHELPS, BLUE and HUGHES formed anti-
submarine screen 3 Sail on tankers. CIMARRON
guide. GUADALUPE in column maintaining position
160 relative from guide. Zig-zagging using
Plan #6
0520 1929 Ceased zig-zagging and changed course to 144 T.
0540 1940 Commenced zig-zagging using Plan #6. Ordered
BLUE and HUGHES to assume RADAR guard for
nights.
0600 2000 Posit. 31-42 N., 172-40 W.
0655 2055 Ceased zig-zagging and changed course to 114 T.

10 JUNE 1942

1600 0600 Commenced zig-zagging using Plan #6
1800 0800 Posit. 30-10 N., 169-13 W. No change in formation
2045 1045 Changed course to 130 T.

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10 JUNE 1942 (Cont'd)

GCT	LCT	
2200	1200	Posit. 29-41 N., 167-53 W. Course and speed made good - 107 T., 14.8 knots.
0600	2000	Posit. 28-28 N., 166-08 W.
0630	2030	Ceased zig-zagging . HUGHES and BLUE ordered to assume RADAR guard during night.
0645	2045	Changed course to 157 T.

11 JUNE 1942

1600	0600	Commenced zig-zagging
1800	0800	Posit. 25-28 N., 164-31 W. No change in formation.
1807	0807	Sighted PBY 3-P-9 and passed following message by blinker for delivery to CINCPAC: "TASK GROUP 16.6.2 POSITION 25-27 N 164-30 W SPEED 17 ENROUTE BETWEEN THIS POSIT AND PEARL TO ARRIVE 1700 FRIDAY X CIMARRON GUADALUPE PHELPS HUGHES BLUE"
2200	1200	Posit. 24-32 N., 163-59 W. Course and speed made good - 214 T., 15.5 knots.
0600	2000	Posit. 22-37 N., 163-03 W.
0615	2015	Ceased zig-zagging
0630	2030	Changed course to 130 T

12 JUNE 1942

1100	0100	Set clocks to plus 9½ LZT
1538	0608	Commenced zig-zagging using Plan #6
1606	0636	Changed course to 080 T.
1642	0712	Sighted PBY
1644	0714	Changed speed to 18 knots
1730	0800	Posit. 20-48 N., 160-26 W.
2130	1200	Posit. 21-01 N., 159-17 W. Course and speed made good - 129 T., 336 miles.

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12 JUNE 1942 (ContId)

GCT	LCT	
2235	1305	Sighted Oahu
0048	1518	Changed course to 090 T.
0058	1528	Sighted Diamond Head
0120	1550	Changed course to 070 T.
0137	1607	Commenced entering Pearl Harbor
0311	1741	Moored berth C-5, Pearl Harbor, T.H., alongside USS DIXIE

End of Midway

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22 - 24 JUNE 1942

GCT LCT

Moored Berth B-2, Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, special availability.

Special availability completed 24 June. During availability modified FC-Radar from Mk 3 to Mk 3, Mod. 1, and partially retubed #2 boiler.

25 JUNE 1942

1550 0620 Sortied in company with USS BALCH, MAURY, BENHAM, ELLET, GRAYSON, MAHAN, MONAGHAN, to conduct gunnery practices as outlined in Commander Destroyer Squadron SIX serial 0109, June 23, 1942.

1705 0735 Took station for firing special Long Range Target Practice at high speed target towed by USS ELLIOTT.

1815 0845 Main battery commenced firing.

1819 0849 Main battery ceased firing having expended 80 rounds common, 16 rounds blind load and target projectiles. The average range was 9,000 yards and the PHELPS and MONAGHAN fired a double concentration at target on reversed course. Speed during firing 24 knots.

2130 1200 Posit. 20-55 N., 157-51 W.

0120 1550 Fired 20 rounds 1.1 projectiles at sleeve towed over formation by utility plane.

0405 1835 Entered Pearl Harbor and moored in Berth X-7.

26-28 JUNE 1942

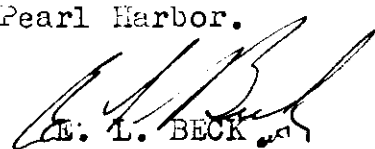
Moored in Berth X-7, Pearl Harbor.

29 JUNE 1942

0007 1437 Moored in Berth X-7, Pearl Harbor. Commander Destroyer Squadron ONE shifted his flag from USS WORDEN to USS PHELPS.

30 JUNE 1942

Moored in Berth X-7, Pearl Harbor.


E. L. BECK
Lt-Commander, U.S. Navy,
Commanding, U. S. S. PHELPS