

GUADALCANAL

the Slot, again. However, they ran into an American air squadron from Henderson Field, of Guadalcanal. Three enemy transports were sunk.

All during the night of November 13-14, Henderson Field was plastered with hundreds of eight-inch shells from more Japanese cruisers. But, luckily the only serious damage was to two landbased airplanes. It sounds incredible, as it must have then, but it was true. The rest were patched up, and the field was miraculously put back in shape. "The rest" also included some newly arrived twin motored P-38s from the States.

The following morning, November 14, the Japanese were certain Guadalcanal had all but been rendered useless regarding Allied air protection from its airfield, so that for another time a heavy number of enemy transport vessels steamed down the Slot. They were so overconfident they sailed in bright sunshine.

About 100 miles away, they were annihilated. U.S. naval and marine fighters and torpedo-dive-bombers intercepted them and, to say the least, cut all but four of the eleven to ribbons. Without equipment, some 3,000 out of 7,000 still made it to "Guadarakanaru". However, the next day their transports never left Guadalcanal; they too were located and destroyed. A heavy cruiser also escorting the transports was sunk, the *Kinugasa*.

On this particular morning, when enemy transport contingents were moving towards Guadalcanal, an allied cruiser squadron that had fought in the first round, was on course to Espiritu Santo when it headed into the patrol area of a Japanese submarine. It was around eleven when the submarine was discovered and, as customary, depth charges were fired.

The sub went deep to the bottom for safety and radar was lost. The Japanese sub survived, but before diving deep, it sent out her torpedoes. Two struck the cruiser *Juneau*. It is believed that a direct hit was made on her

magazines. It quickly sank, taking practically her entire crew of 700.

Some managed to hang on for dear life to either 3 rafts or some floating cork nets. Survivors who drank the seawater became confused and delirious. They could not even think straight. Believing they could not take it anymore, some on the liferafts just jumped off the raft. The splash unfortunately alerted the sharks, that would bite at anything. A leg. An arm. They'd sink their teeth in between the crotch and tear at the victim's testicles and manhood. Sailors on the raft watched defenseless, unable to help. All they could do was listen to the screams in horror, and watch blood, and guts float by.

Hour after hour, they floated. Marooned on a raft. Trying to catch the drops of rainwater which fell occasionally. On Nov. 14, an army plane dropped another liferaft, with no supplies. Out of 700, an estimated 75-100 managed to survive the *Juneau* sinking. According to eyewitness Seaman second class Frank Holmgren, not until the 4th day on a raft were they rescued by a seaplane. Only 5 survivors were found alive. The rest had perished.

As it turned out, five brothers, all sailors, went down, too. They were the Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa. Not since the American Civil War had so many from one American family in the service of its country die in a battle. Their story became widely known in the U.S., and they became a national symbol of heroic sacrifice and fortitude. A Hollywood movie was released in 1944 that told the story of the Sullivan brothers. It was called *The Fighting Sullivans*, made by 20th Century-Fox. Most of the film centers on life in America before the war—an American family in a small town. This film inspired the Hollywood blockbuster of some 55 years later, *Saving Private Ryan*.

From then on, no matter how big a family was, no

There was never enough of anything on Guadalcanal, because the homefront had nothing substantial yet, in terms of munitions/transport, and the army and the navy had nothing to spare, because everything was committed to the invasion of North Africa. Also, military intelligence by September was dead in the water, due to the leak by the *Chicago Tribune* that the U.S. had broken JN-25--so the Japanese codes were drastically changed.

siblings were allowed to serve on the same ship. In addition, a regulation was issued saying that no sole survivor could be drafted.

On the evening of November 14, the engagement around Guadalcanal returned strictly to the night.

In vain, the Japanese sent an armada to bombard Henderson Field and to secondarily lead a destruction on nearby American vessels, again. As it turned out, it would be the concluding scene to the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, and once again it proved furious.

Action opened as salvos were made first by the destroyers of both navies, and it highly favored the Imperial Navy. The battleships then joined in. It was close to midnight when an American destroyer was knocked out of action. The U.S. battleship *South Dakota* had her radar knocked out.

During the course of the fighting, as the already-battered *South Dakota* was coming under attentive enemy fire from enemy cruisers and battleships, the heavy battleship USS *Washington* crept in close on another battleship, the *Kirishima*. Undetected, and coming to within 8,400 yards, it fired all she had. The *Washington*, commanded by Admiral Lee, blasted the *Kirishima* out of the waters--score another enemy battleship.

Although all sides were persistent, the impending guns of the *Washington*, veteran of the Atlantic, were too much and the Japanese forces were forced to retire.

From the fiery night battle, the U.S. Navy had lost three destroyers, the Imperial Fleet a destroyer, a battleship, and two cruisers were heavily damaged. Japan had reached the end of its endurance. All the series of battles formed one of the U.S. Navy's greatest victories in securing the island of Guadalcanal--by team effort.

As Admiral Halsey later put it, regarding operations and the encircling sea clashes around Guadalcanal, "if