

# They Gave Their All: The Sullivan Brothers and Tragic Sinking of the USS *Juneau*

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## ABSTRACT

The loss of the *Juneau* near Guadalcanal in the British Solomon Islands on Friday the Thirteenth (November 1942) was a seminal event in the United States' World War II experience. The death of the five brothers, in the most ferocious naval battle of the Pacific War, created a windfall of patriotism, which the US government leveraged to boost war bond sales and increase war material production. The siblings' deaths had both immediate and far-reaching consequences on the military's prosecution of the Second World War and the deployment of its troops in the nation's future conflicts. Finally, this tragedy left an imprint on American popular culture, renewed by the discovery of the *Juneau's* wreck on St. Patrick's Day 2018.

**Keywords:** World War II, Guadalcanal, USS *Juneau*, the Sullivan Brothers, Sole Survivor Policy (1944), Special Separation Policies for Survivorship (5 January 2007), Department of Defense Directive 1315.15, Hubbard Act of 2008

# Lo dieron todo: los hermanos Sullivan y el trágico hundimiento del USS *Juneau*

## RESUMEN

La pérdida del *Juneau* cerca de Guadalcanal en las Islas Salomón Británicas el viernes 13 (noviembre de 1942) fue un evento fundamental en la experiencia de Estados Unidos en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. La muerte de los cinco hermanos, en la batalla naval más feroz de la Guerra del Pacífico, generó una ganancia inesperada de patriotismo, que el gobierno de Estados Unidos aprovechó para impulsar las ventas de bonos de guerra y aumentar la producción de material de guerra. La muerte de los hermanos tuvo consecuencias inmediatas y de gran alcance en el enjuiciamiento militar de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y el despliegue de sus tropas en los

conflictos futuros de la nación. Finalmente, esta tragedia dejó una huella en la cultura popular estadounidense, renovada por el descubrimiento del naufragio de Juneau en el Día de San Patricio de 2018.

**Palabras clave:** Segunda Guerra Mundial, Guadalcanal, USS Juneau, los hermanos Sullivan, Política de superviviente único (1944), Políticas especiales de separación para la supervivencia (5 de enero de 2007), Directiva del Departamento de Defensa 1315.15, Ley Hubbard de 2008

## 他们献出了全部：苏利文五兄弟和朱诺号轻巡洋舰的悲剧沉没

### 摘要

1942年11月13日（星期五）朱诺号沉没于瓜岛（英国所罗门群岛之一）附近，这是美国二战经历中的一次重大事件。苏利文五兄弟在太平洋战争之最激烈海战中的丧生掀起了激昂的爱国主义，美国政府充分利用这一情绪增加战争债券销售和战争材料生产。五兄弟的死亡对二战美国军事进行以及美国未来冲突中的军队部署产生了立即的效果和深远的影响。最后，这一悲剧事件给美国流行文化打下了烙印，2018年圣帕特里克节期间朱诺号残骸的发现加深了该烙印。

关键词：二战，瓜岛，朱诺号轻巡洋舰，苏利文五兄弟，仅存者政策（1944），幸存者之特别分离政策（2007年1月5日），国防部1315.15指令，2008年哈伯德法案（Hubbard Act of 2008）

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The solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

—President Abraham Lincoln “Bixby Letter of 1864”

**O**n November 20, 1942, an old four-stack destroyer rescued the last survivor of the torpedoed cruiser USS *Juneau*. Six hundred *Juneau* crewmen, including all but one of the Sullivan brothers, died in the initial explosion. Miraculously, more than one hundred men survived the detonation of *Juneau*'s torpedo magazine, and endured thirst, starvation, exposure,

and an armada of circling sharks while awaiting rescue. After eight desperate days, only ten men lived. None were named Sullivan.

The loss of the *Juneau* near Guadalcanal in the British Solomon Islands on Friday the Thirteenth (November 1942) was a seminal event in America's World War II experience. The death of the five brothers in the most ferocious naval battle of the Pacific War created a windfall of patriotism, which the US government leveraged to boost war bond sales and increase war materiel production. The siblings' deaths had both immediate and far-reaching consequences on the military's prosecution of the Second World War and the deployment of its troops in the nation's future conflicts. Finally, this tragedy left an imprint on American popular culture, renewed by the discovery of the *Juneau's* wreck on St. Patrick's Day 2018.

With the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, the United States—and the entire world, for that matter—were on the precipice of the most dramatic and all-encompassing conflict in world history. No corner of the globe was untouched, and no family was exempt from harm. Not even the Sullivans of Waterloo, Iowa. “Farm families were close because they have to be,” explains Sullivan biographer John R. Satterfield, “in the Sullivan house, these bonds especially were strong, forging a sense of loyalty that bridged generations.”<sup>1</sup>

Father, Thomas F. “Tom” Sullivan (1883–1965), was a union man who worked hard for the Illinois Central

Railroad to provide for a stable home for his family. Starting as a yard laborer, he was steadily promoted into jobs with increasing responsibility, security, and commensurate wages, until his promotion to freight train conductor. Family friends described Tom's wife, Alleta May (Abel) Sullivan (1895–1972), as a pleasant woman with an energetic personality who enjoyed socializing within the rural community. Still others described her as “high-strung and prone to bouts of nervous exhaustion that kept her bedridden for days.”<sup>2</sup>

On February 4, 1914, Tom married Miss Abel, then nineteen years old, and twelve years his junior. It was Alleta's widowed mother, Mary, however, who anchored the Sullivan family. Mrs. Abel instilled the values of family and loyalty in the children, the first of which, George Thomas, arrived in 1914 (1914–1942). Sullivan children came steadily over the next two decades until there were five more: Francis Henry “Frank” (1916–1942), Genevieve Marie (1917–1975), Joseph Eugene “Red” (1918–1942), Madison Abel “Matt” (1919–1942), and Albert Leo “Al” (1922–1942).

Tom's gainful employment freed his children from the need to work to contribute to the household income, as was the case with many local families. Never studious or driven to any particular profession, the boys were free to follow their frivolous pursuits. These usually involved fishing and hunting, but always outdoors, and they were always together.

“Nearly everybody who knew them agreed they were happy-go-lucky,

average, working-class kids,” observes Satterfield, “they reflected the values of a tough neighborhood in a town that offered scant privileges to its residents.”<sup>3</sup> “They did not get into any more trouble than anyone else,” recalls Phyllis Eldridge-Friesner in a 1989 phone interview with Satterfield.<sup>4</sup> Former Waterloo resident S.G. Heronimus remembers the boys differently, however: “They were all fighters. They took and gave no shit.”<sup>5</sup> True to their creed, a scrap with any Sullivan brother inevitably led to a contest with all five.

One incident on the Cedar River cemented the brothers’ solidarity. While paddling a dilapidated rowboat downstream, the craft began to take on water. Four of the five boys jumped out and swam to the shore, but Albert, still a toddler, had to be rescued as the water lapped over the gunwales. Only quick-acting adults, who rescued Albert from the sinking craft, averted a tragedy. Afterward, the boys swore, “We stick together.” This motto became the creed that defined the brothers’ relationship.

In 1937, George and Frank enlisted in the military to escape the monotony of the American Midwest. The two accepted the challenge to join the Navy and see the world. The pair served together on an old four-stack destroyer, a customary practice in the peacetime Navy, until honorably discharged in 1940.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the boys met to discuss their options. Unanimously they decided to enlist in the Navy, but not solely based on patriotic sentiments or the older brother’s

Navy experience. The Sullivans wished to avenge the deaths of their childhood friends Bill and Masten Ball, also Waterloo residents, both of whom died aboard the battleship USS *Arizona*. George, always the leader, prophetically announced the decision to their anxious parents by saying, “Well, guess our minds are made up, aren’t they fellows? And when we go in, we want to go together. If the worst comes to worst, why we’ll all have gone down together.”<sup>6</sup>

A few days later, the boys marched into the local Navy recruiting office to enlist and made serving together a requirement for their enlistment. The Navy challenged this condition but relented after George wrote a letter of protest to the Navy Department. Al, married with a son named Jim, was eligible for a deferment, but he followed his brothers into the service with his wife’s blessing. Katherine “Kena” (Sullivan) MacFarland (b. 1922), who passed away in 2016 at the age of ninety-three, said, “Albert would have been unhappy if all the other Sullivans had gone to war, but he had stayed at home.”<sup>7</sup>

After basic training at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the brothers became able seamen in the US Navy. George and Frank were rated Gunners and Coxswain Mates 2nd-Class, respectively, because of their previous service, but new to the Navy, Red, Matt, and Al were all rated Seaman 2nd-Class. The five then traveled to the Brooklyn Naval Yard and joined up with their ship, the USS *Juneau* (CL-52AA) being fitted-out in Kearny, New Jersey, at the Federal Shipyard and Drydock Company.

*Juneau* was the second of eleven *Atlanta*-class light anti-aircraft cruisers. *Atlantas* were built to perform fleet screening duties that the older and slower *Omaha*-class scout cruisers (1920s) were no longer able to perform. The ships of the class measured 542 feet in overall length, had a 53-foot beam, and drew 21 feet of water with a fully loaded displacement of 8,340 tons.<sup>8</sup> As designed, the *Juneau* rated a crew of 638 seamen and petty officers and thirty-five officers; however, the ship's compliment swelled to over seven hundred with the addition of more sophisticated electronics and weapons systems.<sup>9</sup>

*Juneau's* would be a familiar crew. Early in the war, many siblings

served together despite the Navy's wartime prohibition. Brothers who enlisted together served together to satisfy the demand for sailors to crew ships rushed into service. The five Sullivans were joined by the Rodgers siblings of Monroe, Connecticut; however, Joseph, James, Louis, and Patrick heeded the Navy's warnings and separated before sailing.<sup>10</sup> Eight other pairs of brothers boarded *Juneau* with the Sullivans; Louis and Patrick Rodgers, Williams and Harold Weeks, Russell and Charles Combs, Albert and Michael Krall, George and John Wallace, Curtis and Donald Damon, Richard and Russell White, and Harold and Charles Caulk.<sup>11</sup>



Unlike the Sullivans, the Rodgers (left to right) Joseph (24), Patrick (22), Louis (20), and James (18), split up before the *Juneau* left the United States. Source: Naval History and Heritage Command, Catalog No. NH 52363.

Although the *Atlanta's* mounted two quadruple 21-inch torpedo mounts and two anti-submarine depth charge racks, the ship's primary role was fleet anti-aircraft defense. *Juneau's* main and secondary batteries were ideally suited for this purpose. Her main battery consisted of sixteen 5-inch/38 caliber, high angle, rapid-fire guns, in six twin mounts arranged along the centerline (turrets numbered 1-3 and 6-8) and one more on either side of her aft deckhouse (turrets numbered 4 and 5). The *Juneau's* remaining guns, 1.1-inch and 20 mm anti-aircraft machine guns put up an impressive curtain of flak but were woefully ineffective against capital ships.<sup>12</sup>

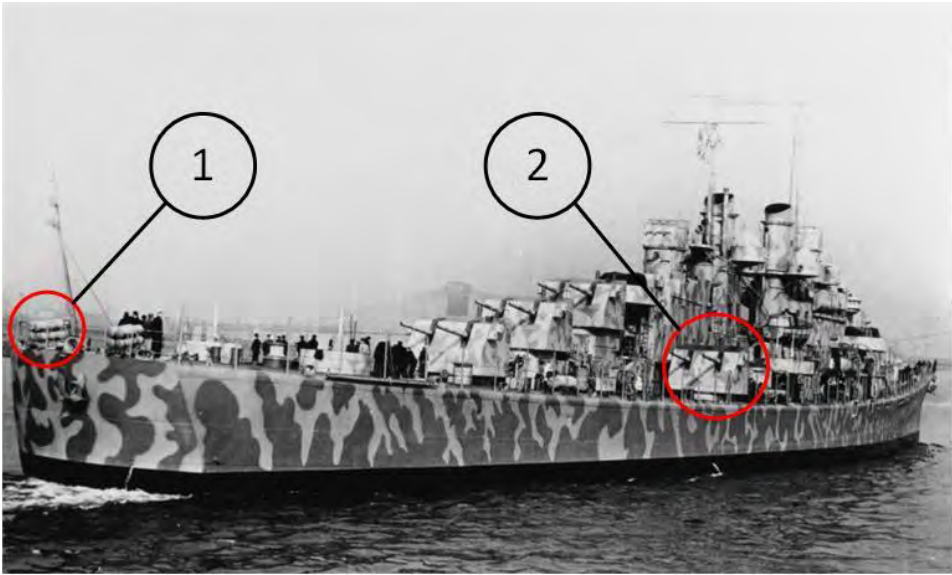
Two powerful high-pressure Westinghouse turbines gave the *Juneau* an average top speed of 32.5 knots. Every knot was necessary to keep pace with the fast carrier task forces, the Greyhounds of the Pacific. With a fuel capacity of 1,436 tons, the *Juneau* had a range of 8,500 nautical miles at 15 knots.<sup>13</sup> Speed and range came at the expense of protective armor, however. Her hull armor was thickest on her sides (3¾-inches), and her deck and gun house armor were 2-inches thick.<sup>14</sup> By comparison, the Imperial Japanese Navy's battleship IJN *Hiei*, *Juneau's* future opponent, sported eight 14-inch guns and two-and-a-half times the armor thickness of the out-gunned little cruiser.<sup>15</sup>

*Juneau's* keel was laid down in May 1940, when escorts for the Atlantic convoy duty were in critical demand. She was launched on the Hackensack River in October 1941, a full

four months ahead of schedule. Rushed into service, she was the first ship in the Navy commissioned in her North Atlantic camouflage war paint.<sup>16</sup>

The United States added Hull No. CL-52(AA) to the Navy roster on February 14, 1942. Transfer from the builder to the Federal government occurred when her sponsor, Mrs. Harry I. Lucas, the wife of Juneau, Alaska's mayor, broke a bottle of champagne on the ship's prow.<sup>17</sup> She was the first ship named for a city in the Territory of Alaska, the remote and mostly uninhabited land that would not become a state for another seventeen years. In the same ceremony, forty-nine-year-old Captain Lyman K. Swenson, of Pleasant Grove, Utah (Naval Academy Class of 1916) became *Juneau's* first and only commanding officer.

The Navy, having overcome its hesitancy to their joint service, embraced the brothers as a valuable propaganda tool. After the commissioning concluded, the Sullivans gathered on the *Juneau's* fantail to visit with family and pose for photographs. As newsreel cameras whirred, press cameramen took one of the most iconic photographs of the Second World War. The picture captured the five Sullivans, dressed in pea coats, buttoned to the neck, wearing brimless flat caps circled with embroidered "US Navy" ribbons, gathered around a ship's open hatch. The next day their bashful, self-consciousness grins dominated the front page of the *Waterloo Daily Courier*, the last time their friends and family in Iowa would see them.



The USS *Juneau* in New York Harbor, February 11, 1942. Naval History and Heritage Command, Catalog No. 19-N-31267.



Knute Swensen holding a photograph of his grandfather Captain Lyman Knute Swenson. Surnames are spelled differently because the Navy made an error when Lyman entered the Naval Academy and then refused to correct the misspelling. Source: Author's Personal Collection.



The Sullivans of Waterloo Iowa (left to right) Joseph (24), Francis (26) Albert (20), Madison (23), and George (28). Source: Naval History and Heritage Command, Catalog No. NH 52362.

After a brief shakedown period along the Atlantic seaboard, *Juneau* participated in the blockade of Vichy French naval units in Martinique and Guadalupe.<sup>18</sup> *Juneau* then made a port call to Annapolis, Maryland in April, and Captain Swenson visited his son Robert, a midshipman at the Naval Academy for the last time. While the Navy publicly delighted in the Sullivans, the elder Swenson, while proud of the brothers' service aboard his ship, was not happy about it. Robert wrote later, "He [Captain Swenson] felt the risk of a family tragedy outweighed the advantages for public relations."<sup>19</sup>

From mid-May to mid-July 1942, *Juneau* escorted convoys from Brazil

to Key West, Florida, before receiving orders to transit the Panama Canal to the Pacific. On September 11, *Juneau* joined Task Force 61, escorting carriers USS *Wasp* and USS *Hornet* already in the theater.

Submarine IJN *I-19* torpedoed *Wasp* on September 15, 250 miles northwest of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, the submarine-infested waters christened "Torpedo Junction."<sup>20</sup> George Sullivan, whose battle station was the depth charge racks on *Juneau's* fantail, had a front-row seat for the action as his ship searched for the offending submarine. The escort dropped depth charges to no effect. *Juneau* continued to screen TF 61 until the Bat-

tle of the Santa Cruz Islands (October 26) when *Hornet* succumbed to Japanese air attack. After the battle, *Juneau* transported seventeen officers and 193 enlisted men from the *Hornet* to New Caledonia.

For nine days, *Juneau* rode at anchor in Dumbea Bay in the Free French town of Nouméa. *Juneau's* crew had performed well during the Santa Cruz battle, with eight confirmed kills —four dive-bombers and four torpedo planes.<sup>21</sup> Despite the satisfaction of earning their first battle star, a curious incident left Captain Swenson and crew crestfallen over the *Hornet's* loss. *Juneau* had misunderstood a signal from the carrier, causing *Juneau* to transfer to *Enterprise's* screen, leaving the “Happy Hornet” with diminished anti-aircraft protection at the time the carrier needed it the most.

Now bloodied veterans, the Sullivans and their shipmates set about the grim task of transferring the *Hornet's* wounded to hospitals and replenishing the ship's magazines with ammunition and its larder with dry and perishable goods. Decades later, none of the *Juneau* survivors remembered how the brothers felt about the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands. Still, they did remember, and not surprisingly, “They spent a lot of time together in the enlisted mess, just sitting and talking when they got time off.”<sup>22</sup> Each officer, petty officer, and sailor had privately answered the question of how they would acquit themselves in battle. The stoic determination of men who had glimpsed their mortality replaced the cocky invincibility of boys spoiling for a fight.

When *Juneau* finally departed Nouméa, the Allies' first offensive campaign of the Pacific War was just four months old. The fighting on land, at sea, and in the air, which began with the First Marine Division's assault on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, would be the bloodiest fighting anywhere. The Marines were holding on, but just barely. The Leathernecks needed help to hold “Cactus,” the island's codename, and the crushed coral airstrip whose polyglot of Army, Navy, and Marine planes kept the Japanese from reinforcing their garrison, at least during daylight.

At sunset, the Allies ceded control of the sea to Dai Nippon, whose guns, large and small, cratered the airfield and grounding the Cactus Air Force. If the planes were grounded, the “Tokyo Express” could land Imperial Japanese Army soldiers, artillery, and even tanks in daylight and in plain sight of the Marines who could do nothing about it.

Twice since the Marine landing on August 7, the Navy had confronted the nocturnal intruders. In the first instance, the joint American-Australian task force screening the invasion transports were totally surprised and thoroughly defeated by a numerically inferior force at the Battle of Savo Island: the worst defeat in the US Navy's history. The second occasion, two months later off Cape Esperance, a marginal tactical victory for the Blue Jackets failed to prevent Japanese battleships from bombarding Henderson Field the following night. At dawn, Allied sea and air power reasserted local control.

November 8 found the *Juneau* attached to Rear Admiral Norman Scott's task force escorting three troop transports. On the 11th, Scott rendezvoused with Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan's task force escorting four more troop transports bound for Guadalcanal. Together, the two groups were combat loaded with six thousand troops from the Army's 182nd Infantry Regiment, the 4th Marine Replacement Battalion, and 1st Marine Air Wing personnel.

The decision to commit all available resources, land, sea, and air, to support the First Marine Division was a promise Admiral William F. Halsey Jr., newly appointed Commander of the South Pacific Fleet, made to his subordinate officers in mid-October. Reinforcement put an exclamation mark on the Allies' willingness to begin the long road to Tokyo from where Major General Archer A. Vandergrift (USMC) was standing in his headquarters south of the airfield.

Like the Allies, Imperial Japanese Headquarters concluded that the Solomon Islands, and not Papua, had become the defining action of the Pacific War. Decoded Japanese radio messages revealed plans to reinforce the island garrison with seven thousand fresh troops, initially intended for New Guinea, were already underway. Halsey knew a valuable Tokyo Express, such as this, would be heavily defended by big-gunned escorts. The dual tasks of escorting the troopships and interdicting the Japanese force fell on Callaghan and Scott. The carrier USS *Enterprise* and the battleships USS *Washington* and

USS *South Dakota* were in the theater but too far away to help.

Scott was junior to Callaghan by just a few days. Although he led the victorious American fleet at the Battle of Cape Esperance, Callaghan, in his flagship USS *San Francisco*, assumed overall tactical command. "Uncle Dan," formerly President Roosevelt's Naval Attaché, and most recently chief-of-staff to Halsey's predecessor, was commanding a wartime task force for the first time. Despite the relative experience of the commanders, Callaghan did not seek, nor did Scott offer, advice on formation or tactics.

Neither task force had operated together before that day, necessitating a comprehensive battle plan, or at the very least a meeting of the captains. Neither of those events occurred, nor does history record the two admirals meeting while in the theater.

Before dawn on the 12th, the combined task forces navigated between San Cristobal and Guadalcanal, through Indispensable Strait and Lengo Channel, the southern entrance to "Ironbottom Sound." Arriving at their destination off Lunga Point, the transports dropped anchor and began disembarking troops. The escorts assumed anti-aircraft dispositions and waited for the inevitable air attack, which materialized that afternoon. Warned by Coastwatchers, the transports stopped unloading, weighed anchor, and maneuvered with all their available speed.

The Japanese arrived, as predicted at 1400 hours. Anti-aircraft cruisers *Juneau* and her sister *Atlanta* (Scott's

flagship) were placed at the outer edge of the screen and were the first to engage. In his unpublished memoir "Seven Days in Hell," Seaman 1st Class Wyatt Butterfield recalls, "It was like ten Fourth of July's all rolled into one."<sup>23</sup>

While Wildcat fighters scrambled from Henderson to engage thirty Japanese Zero fighter planes, sixteen twin-engine "Betty" bombers split into two groups and began their torpedo runs. South Pacific captains, however, had become adept at dodging Japanese torpedoes. *Juneau* was strafed by Zeros and lifted out of the water by a near miss, but Dr. Roger O'Neil, *Juneau's* surgeon, remembers there were no casualties.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, the Navy did not go unscathed by the air raid. *San Francisco*, the largest ship in Savo Sound, was intentionally targeted by a burning Betty. The collision and fire in the after-deckhouse killed two dozen and wounded fifty, including the ship's executive officer. A low-trajectory, 5-inch shell from an American ship hit destroyer USS *Buchanan* and wrecked its torpedo tubes killing five while wounding seven.<sup>25</sup>

The air raid was over in eight minutes, and the transports were moving back into position to continue unloading by 1430. At dusk, their task completed, the transports hauled out of the Sound, escorted by damaged *Buchanan* and four more ships, for Espiritu Santo, where they arrived without incident on the 15th.

Naval Intelligence reported a heavy surface force north of Guadalca-

nal on the 12th. Callaghan had received an abundance of aircraft intelligence about the Japanese disposition throughout the day, and the morning's aerial observation sighted two battleships or heavy cruisers and six destroyers.<sup>26</sup> No doubt, this was the bombardment group intending to lay waste to Cactus and ensure follow-on transport units could unload troops and supplies at their leisure, returning home unmolested. At their current course and speed, the Japanese would arrive off Lunga Point at thirty minutes after midnight.

Vice Admiral Hiroaki Abe was perturbed that his bombardment was behind schedule. He had canceled the mission once that night after the Imperial Army Headquarters on Guadalcanal failed to give timely reports of the weather over the airfield. When Headquarters finally reported clear weather in the Sound, his fleet, centered on 14-inch gunned battleships *Hiei* (Abe's flagship) and *Kirishima*, became separated while reversing course in a local rainsquall. Valuable time was lost trying to organize his escorts: cruiser *Nagara* and eleven destroyers. Despite Abe's best efforts, the Raiding Group looked like a flock of migrating geese. At least the area was empty of enemy shipping, or so he thought.

Rear Admiral Callaghan, a profoundly religious man, was resigned to his fate. He and his subordinates understood the approaching Japanese armada was superior in number and firepower. He had no choice. Running from this fight meant the Japanese would be free to level Henderson Field, and the Japanese garrison would receive fresh

reinforcements. When the battle commenced, Callaghan made no effort to maneuver for advantage but struck the enemy head-on. The clash was sudden and incredibly violent, one that Commander-in-Chief of the US Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King called, "One of the most furious sea battles ever fought."<sup>27</sup>

The thirteen American ships assumed disposition B-1, a long snake-like column resembling the line-of-battle from the age of sail. Cruisers *Atlanta*, *San Francisco*, *Portland*, *Helena*, and *Juneau* followed the lead division of four destroyers, with another four destroyers in the rear. Several of Callaghan's ships had the newest radar, which spotted the Japanese at a range of 32,000 yards (18.1 mi), but *San Francisco* was not one of them. Blind for want of an adequate radar picture, Callaghan made frequent and urgent requests for the enemy's course and distance from his seeing-eye dog *Helena*, until the radio circuits became hopelessly overloaded. The Americans lost their radar advantage as Callaghan dithered for ten minutes while the two fleets closed at 40 knots or 46 mi/hr.

Like *Helena*, *Juneau* possessed the newest "Sugar George" centimeter-wave surface-search radar. Merely possessing the technology, however, did not guarantee accurate interpretation of the images on the repeater scope. Further examination of *Juneau's* first contact proved it to be the volcanic cone of Savo Island, imposing but quite harmless. Dr. O'Neil remembered, "We first thought [the contact] was the enemy, but later found it to be land."<sup>28</sup>

As the last ship in the cruiser column, her radar became masked, and *Juneau* made few other contacts. Captain Swenson was therefore surprised when at 0130 hours the message was passed by blinker to "Stand-by for enemy contact momentarily."<sup>29</sup>

Those ships with the less capable SC meter-wave radar, or no radar at all, were virtually blind. Partially overcast, the weather was punctuated by sheet lighting from friction storms over Guadalcanal, which reduced visibility to almost nothing. *Juneau* survivor, Seaman 1st Class Joseph Hartney, recalls the darkness as "a blackness so thick, so heavy, so velvety, you felt you could take the night in your hands and wring it like a rag."<sup>30</sup>

At 0141, the destroyer *Cushing*, first in the column, nearly collided with an enemy destroyer. Turning quickly to avoid *Yudachi*, *Cushing* caused a four-ship pile-up in the vanguard. Commander Thomas M. Stokes, leading Destroyer Division Ten in *Cushing*, asked Callaghan for permission to fire torpedoes, but the admiral hesitated. At 0145, Callaghan gave the order to "Stand By to Open Fire!"<sup>31</sup>

The Japanese were startled but not asleep. Cruiser *Atlanta*, next in line behind *Cushing*, longer and heavier than the smaller ships swung wide. Its high superstructure presented Japanese gunners with a juicy target. At 0150, Japanese searchlights snapped on and illuminated the lead cruiser. This kind of light, the kind sailors fear, startled Callaghan to action. He ordered, "Commence Firing! Counter Illumi-

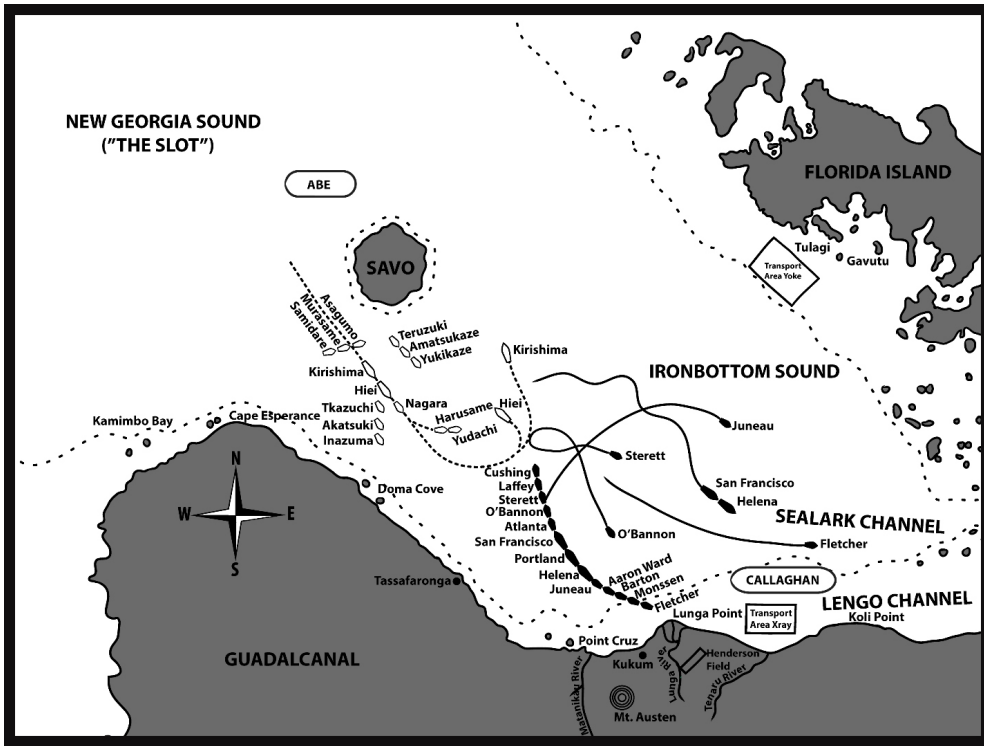


Diagram of night cruiser action on November 12-13 1942.  
Source: Author's Personal Collection.

nate!”<sup>32</sup> The misnamed “Lucky A” was soon a smoking hulk, being smothered with Japanese shells fired from a scant 1600 yards.<sup>33</sup>

The *San Francisco* was next into the melee, coming face to face with the 14-inch guns of Abe’s flagship. With Japanese ships all around him, Uncle Dan issued a series of orders, which sounded quite heroic, but only added to the confusion. “Odd ships commence firing to starboard, even ships to port!”<sup>34</sup> “Give her hell!”<sup>35</sup> “We want the big ones! Get the big ones first!”<sup>36</sup> Chaos reigned. This situation became so chaotic that one participant summed the action perfectly: “A barroom brawl with the lights turned out.”<sup>37</sup>

*Atlanta*, now dead in the water, began drifting backward into the *San Francisco*’s line of fire, just as *Hiei* came into *San Francisco*’s gun sights. The heavy-cruiser fired every 8-inch gun whose muzzle would bear, and her secondary 5-inch battery targeted the *Hiei*’s pagoda superstructure. Callaghan realized *Atlanta*’s peril a salvo too late. A horrified Callaghan watched as *San Francisco*’s fire destroyed *Atlanta*’s bridge. He immediately ordered, “Cease firing, own ships,” but it was too late. Scott and all his staff were all dead.<sup>38</sup>

Callaghan’s directives ceased suddenly when a salvo from *Hiei* wrecked *San Francisco*’s superstructure, mortally wounding her captain and killing Cal-

laghan and his staff. Had Japanese shell hoists been loaded with armor-piercing shells, and not thin-skinned bombardment rounds, *San Francisco's* damage would have been fatal. Furthermore, the two ships were so close, often just a few hundred yards, that the battleship could not depress its guns sufficiently to hit *San Francisco* below the waterline.

Cruiser *Portland*, seventh in the column, came to *San Francisco's* aid but only momentarily. "Sweet Pea" loosed several 8-inch salvos at *Hiei*, but a Japanese torpedo struck her fantail. A massive hunk of steel from her stern acted as an auxiliary rudder and jammed her steering hard over. As *Portland* made endless circles, her main battery got off a few rounds aimed at Abe's flagship before checking fire to avoid hitting friendly ships.

*Helena* also came to San Francisco's aid by sinking destroyer *Akatsuki* in place and pouring small-caliber rounds into cruiser *Nagara*. Always considered a good (lucky) ship, *Helena* received minimal damage, but a Japanese shell struck her bridge, freezing the wall-mounted clock at 0148.<sup>39</sup>

Last in the cruiser column, *Juneau* plowed ahead as hell swarmed all around her. Her sixteen 5-inch guns spewed a continuous stream of fire, first at destroyer *Yudachi* or *Harusame* and then *Hiei* and *Kirishima*. Seaman Allen Heyn and George Sullivan, standing just a few feet apart at their battle stations on the fantail, watched the growing danger. Heyn, who handled the 1.1-inch machine gun, could do something about it, while George's depth charges

were useless in a fight against surface ships. Heyn remembered seeing a Japanese battleship materialize out of the dark and firing right at him, "so close you'd think you could almost throw something at it."<sup>40</sup>

Moments later, as she turned to avoid *San Francisco*, a Japanese "Long Lance" torpedo struck *Juneau's* forward fire room on her port side, causing an enormous explosion. The blast disabled central fire control, which powered her gun turrets, and crippled the ship's steering controls. Captain Swenson had little choice now but to get clear of the action and labor to keep his ship afloat.

The four rearmost destroyers were last to join the slugfest, but their opening ranges were greater than the side-scraping distances at which the vanguard destroyers fought. Station keeping and target selection were nearly impossible among the shattered debris that was the American column. Individual ships maneuvered as best they could, avoiding the sinking *Cushing* and *Laffey*, the dead-in-the-water *Atlanta*, and the un-steerable *Portland*. They fired on targets of opportunity and checked fire when the range became fouled. Eventually, however, luck ran out for all but one destroyer. Only tail end Charlie, the *Fletcher*, reported to the rendezvous at daybreak.

No American knew, but by four bells of the midwatch, Abe decided to withdraw. There would not be enough time to gather his dispersed ships and complete the mission before daylight, and so at 0200, the Japanese commander ordered a general retreat. Hen-

derson Field and her precious planes would live to fight another day and fight they would. In the morning, Cactus dive-bombers caught up with damaged *Hiei* and her consort *Yukikaze* and bombed the battleship mercilessly until it capsized and sank north by northeast of Savo Island.

So ended the most ferocious night surface action of the Pacific War, one that historian Samuel Eliot Morison described as “the most desperate sea fight since Jutland” and “a struggle that recalled the Anglo-Dutch naval battles of the seventeenth century.”<sup>41</sup> In

the end, however, mistakes were canceled out by courage as the Japanese bombardment of Guadalcanal had been thwarted.

As dawn broke, the US vessels that were able departed Iron Bottom Sound via Indispensable Strait. The formation included three lame ducks. *San Francisco’s* topsides were demolished by her duel with *Hiei*. *Juneau*, with a broken keel, settled four feet lower in the water with a slight list to port. More concerning, she developed a crack along the short axis aft of turret no. 5.<sup>42</sup>



Starboard side 5-inch gun mount (turret no. 5). The transverse crack in the *Juneau’s* deck developed behind this turret. Photo reprinted with the permission of Vulcan, Inc.

Fearing she might tear apart at any minute, Captain Swenson ordered lashings loosened on all the life rafts. Finally, destroyer *O’Bannon*, whose sound gear had been damaged by an underwater explosion, was sent ahead to trans-

mit a message to Admiral Halsey. Captain Gilbert Hoover in *Helena*, as the senior surviving officer and Swenson’s Naval Academy classmate, ordered his formation of six ships to zigzag on a southeasterly base course for Nouméa.

As *Juneau* and her consorts passed San Cristobal, the southernmost island of the Solomon chain, the Japanese submarine *I-26*, skippered by Commander Minoru Yokota, lurked nearby.<sup>43</sup> Cruising at periscope depth, *I-26* fired a spread of torpedoes at *San Francisco*, the largest ship in the formation, but missed. With no means of warning the others, its radios wrecked and signal flags shredded, *San Francisco's* crew watched helplessly as a single torpedo shot past her stern and straight towards *Juneau*.

At 1101, the torpedo detonated on *Juneau's* port side under the bridge, igniting the cruiser's torpedo magazine. The *Juneau* seemed to disintegrate wholly and instantaneously. The only trace was a pillar of smoke seen forty miles away. "The *Juneau* didn't sink ... she blew up with all the fury of an erupting volcano," recalled Lieutenant Commander Bruce McCandless, who witnessed the detonation from *San Francisco*.

Similarly, *Fletcher's* executive officer Lieutenant Commander Joseph Wilely watched in awe as a 40-ton, 5-inch gun mount flew a mile through the air and crashed into the destroyer's wake just 100 yards astern of his ship.<sup>44</sup>

When the smoke cleared, the *Juneau* had disappeared. Captain Hoover did not believe anyone could have survived such an explosion. Fearing the submarine inside his destroyer screen, he chose to exit the area at top speed. Hoover did not even order a life ring thrown overboard, so firm was his conviction. Nor did he break radio silence,

later testifying that he did not want to give his position to the enemy. In retrospect, Hoover's was a specious argument considering that *I-26* must have already reported the cripple's location.

A B-17, piloted by Lieutenant Robert Gill (USAAF), was attracted to the location by the pillar of smoke, and Hoover signaled the patrolling aircraft to report the *Juneau's* sinking and position. Gill's crew saw the vast oil slick and approximately 180 men in the water. Later, the *Juneau* survivors estimated that, at the time, there were between 125 and 140 men in rafts and clinging to floating nets and debris.<sup>45</sup>

Hours passed before Gill, who also elected not to break radio silence, landed at Espíritu Santo and reported the *Juneau's* location and the number of survivors to an Army Intelligence officer.<sup>46</sup> Another three days would pass before anyone read Gill's report, as it became buried deeper and deeper in the officer's inbox. In the meantime, Gill dutifully overflew the survivors daily and reported their dwindling number and position to the same officer.<sup>47</sup>

For the men in the water, hours turned into days, and the surviving *Juneau's* crewmen began to die. Mercifully, the severely wounded men perished quickly. For a short time, the survivors had fresh water and meager rations stored in the rafts that survived. However, when the water was gone, sailors drank seawater and became delirious.

By day, the drifters were scorched by the tropical sun, despite a coating of fuel oil, which gave them some protection. At night, men urinated on them-

selves in a futile effort to stay warm. After the first few died and drifted out to sea, an ever-increasing armada of sharks shadowed the rafts. As delirious sailors left their rafts (for whatever reason), they were set upon and devoured. With airplanes periodically flying overhead, this deadly pattern repeated for eight days.

George Sullivan survived the explosion, but no other brothers lived. Several survivors remember an anguished George swimming from raft to raft calling out in vain to his brothers and wiping the faces of the dead and unconscious to be sure.

The dead included Joseph and James, two of the four Rodgers brothers who elected to split before departing the United States. The Sullivans had also considered splitting up, but now it was too late. George lived until the third or fourth day, when he too succumbed to delirium caused by drinking seawater and dove into the sea. Allen Hyen, a fellow raft mate remembers George saying he was going to swim to the island and get some buttermilk before he disappeared.<sup>48</sup>

The Navy organized a determined rescue effort once they awoke to the fact that some of *Juneau's* crew were alive and adrift in the Solomon Sea. Roger O'Neil, *Juneau's* surgeon, and three of his Pharmacist Mates were already accounted for, having been transferred to *San Francisco* the morning of the sinking to assist with her casualties.<sup>49</sup> Lieutenant j.g. Charles Wang, the only officer to survive being adrift, and his two raft mates, Signalman 2nd Class

Joseph "Jimmy" Hartney and Seaman 1st Class Victor Fitzgerald, were blown by the wind to a nearby island where they were taken by friendly natives to a Dutch planter.<sup>50</sup> Seaman 1st Class Wyatt Butterfield, Seaman 1st Class Arthur Friend, Machinist Mate 2nd Class Henry Gardner, Seaman 2nd Class Frank Holmgren, Chief Gunner's Mate George Mantere, and Signalman 1st Class Lester Zook were rescued by two PBV Catalina flying boats, the second nearly crash landing in rough seas.<sup>51</sup> Finally, Allen Heyn, the sole survivor of one raft, was plucked from the water by the seaplane tender USS *Ballard*.<sup>52</sup> The total number of survivors was ten.

The Navy made Captain Hoover the scapegoat for failing to rescue the survivors. As his punishment, Admiral Halsey relieved him, effectively ending the career of the three-time Navy Cross recipient. But there was plenty of blame to go around. Both Hoover and Gill were handcuffed by woodenheaded Navy regulations that prevented breaking radio silence even to broadcast distress calls. The Army Intelligence Officer who failed to sound the alarm is at least as culpable, if not more so. This fact became apparent to Halsey after Gill demonstrated that on three separate occasions, he tried to escalate his reports to higher headquarters within the 5th Army Air Force, to no effect.

Not since President Abraham Lincoln consoled Mrs. Lydia Bixby on the death of her five sons had an American family been so tragically affected by war. The Navy did not dare report the loss of the *Juneau* to the public. Nor did it notify the next of kin until after vic-

tory in the Solomons was guaranteed. But neither could they ignore the patriotic harvest that would be reaped from the loss of all the male children of one family during the most ferocious naval battle of the war.

Once announced, the family's tragedy was an even bigger boost to the war effort than their recruitment and insistence on serving together. Both circumstances the Navy put to good use in its recruiting campaigns. The reaction of the family to the inevitable deluge of reports and government officials, however, would be critical to steering the public perception of the tragedy. Had the Sullivan family reacted negatively, public support for the war effort could have diminished.

The Navy informed the Sullivans that their boys were missing in action on January 11, 1943. A telegram from Vice President Henry A. Wallace encouraged the parents to remain hopeful in light of "the most extraordinary tragedy which has ever been met by any family in the United States."<sup>53</sup> Still, his news did not come as a complete surprise to Tom and Alleta. The couple had been warned by a neighbor whose son, also in the Navy, had written her to say, "Wasn't it too bad about the Sullivan boys?"<sup>54</sup> A handwritten note from an anonymous *Juneau* survivor, who felt he owed the family the truth about their sons, crushed any hope that their boys would be found alive.

These revelations, however, failed to destroy the shield of hope the family outwardly projected. Mother, father, and sister "enveloped themselves in a

vortex of public attention after January 11, avoiding, for the time being, those doubts and the misery the doubts evoked,"<sup>55</sup> observes Satterfield. Alleta, with Tom watching pensively in the background, gave a multitude of radio and newsreel interviews in which she repeated over and over again the phrases that whitewashed the family's façade, "Keep your chin up."<sup>56</sup> "Our boys did not die in vain."<sup>57</sup> "They went together like they wanted."<sup>58</sup> "It's a big loss to lose them, but I know they did a big service to their country."<sup>59</sup> Her most famous platitude adorned recruiting posters for the remainder of the war; "They did their part."<sup>60</sup>

In February, the Navy's Industrial Incentive Division arranged for Tom, Alleta, and Genevieve to come to Washington DC to "tour of war plants in the hope their fortitude in their time of sorrow might inspire workers to maximum production efforts."<sup>61</sup> While at the capitol, Alleta met with Eleanor Roosevelt and newspaper reporters to encourage all America to "work harder to turn out more ships and win the war," but more poignantly "mothers should pray for their boys and, above all, be brave and keep their chins up."<sup>62</sup>

So began the Sullivan's morale tour, which would conclude in San Francisco four months later. The trio visited sixty-five cities, attended 235 rallies, and spoke to millions of war industry workers.<sup>63</sup> At each gathering, they repeated their mantra of hope and increased industrial output. Within a few weeks, the government, with the media's help, "had transformed the Sul-

livals' tragedy into an inspiring national call to arms."<sup>64</sup> As a result, the Industrial Incentives Division received dozens of letters from factory managers attesting to the increased worker productivity after the family's visit. Consequently, the Navy "credited [the Sullivans] with increasing the output of war materials during the tour."<sup>65</sup>

While in Connecticut, Chicago, and San Diego, the Sullivans met with *Juneau* survivors. They also met with the Rodgers family to offer their condolences and repeat their message of hope that the boys were just missing in action. In Los Angeles, the Sullivans were guests of Paramount Motion Pictures who were casting a film tribute to their sons. While in Chicago, Genevieve announced that she would follow in her brothers' footsteps and enlist in the Navy as a WAVE, a Woman Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, taking the oath at tour's end.

The Navy further honored George, Francis, Joseph, Madison, and Albert by renaming a *Fletcher*-class destroyer hull just then coming off the builder's ways. The USS *The Sullivans* (DD-537) was the first instance where the Navy gave a ship a plural name.<sup>66</sup> Alleta Sullivan christened the vessel in a ceremony on San Francisco Bay on April 4.

*The Sullivans* would survive the war after participating in the bombardment of Truk, the Saipan and Iwo Jima campaigns, and dangerous *Kamikaze* picket duty off Okinawa in 1945. During the latter battle, she rescued 118 sailors from the torpedoed cruiser *Houston*

and 166 from the carrier *Bunker Hill* after it was struck by a suicide plane,<sup>67</sup> earning a total of nine battle stars.

DD-537 *The Sullivans* also served in both the Korean Conflict and the Cold War under its green and white shamrock flag. The ship whose motto, like that of the brothers', was "We stick together," earned three more battle stars and never lost a single man. Decommissioned in 1965, after twenty-two years of active duty, it still serves the American people as a Sullivan Memorial and World War II museum ship in Buffalo, New York.

The Navy once again honored the memory of the brothers in 1995. On August 12, Kelly Sullivan Loughren, granddaughter of Albert, christened the second USS *The Sullivans* (DDG-68) then under construction by the Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. This ship is an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer that will serve the US Navy well into the twenty-first century.

At the conclusion of the April 4, 1943 commissioning ceremony, which everyone knew would be the climax of the tour, Alleta caved in emotionally. Unable to put off her grief any longer, sobbing and on the verge of collapse, doctors accompanying the family forbade her from attending any further christening functions. The family returned to Waterloo to care for their grandson and daughter-in-law, hospitalized with pneumonia.

In early August, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, sent a personal letter to the Sullivans. Given the eight-month lapse since the sinking of the *Juneau*

and the circumstances surrounding the disaster, the Secretary reluctantly concluded that the boys were not missing in action but “were in fact killed by enemy action.”<sup>68</sup> The Navy’s official statement found that, “The loss of the five Sullivan brothers ranks as the greatest single blow suffered by any one family since Pearl Harbor and, probably, in American Naval history.”<sup>69</sup> The Navy then declared that the four-month tour of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Sullivan had ended. Biographer Satterfield concludes that “Americans had fought too many other battles and lost too many other sons to preserve the Sullivan brothers’ special significance.”<sup>70</sup> The nation had moved on from the loss of the *Juneau* and her crew.

Ironically, the crew of the *Helena*, the ship whose commander had left the *Juneau* survivors in her wake, would benefit from the new sensitivity to the plight of survivors that arose after the loss of the *Juneau*. During the Battle of Kula Gulf (July 7, 1943), the *Helena*, now under the command of Captain Charles Cecil, was struck by three Japanese torpedoes causing the cruiser to jackknife amidships and sink in less than twenty minutes. Immediately, two destroyers picked up 735 *Helena* survivors despite the presence of Japanese warships.<sup>71</sup> A flotilla of whaleboats and life rafts, commanded by Captain Cecil, made landfall on New Georgia, and destroyers *Radford* and *Nicholas* rescued more. Of *Helena*’s 1267 crew, fewer than three hundred died during the sinking and the remainder rescued.<sup>72</sup>

The tragic death of the siblings had immediate and far-reaching conse-

quences on how the military deployed its personnel. Immediately, the US military began to strictly enforce its policy forbidding siblings to serve together on the same ship, same unit, or even in the same theater of war. This strict enforcement spared the Niland family of Tonawanda, New York a loss like that experienced by Tom and Alleta.<sup>73</sup>

With an end to the War in the Pacific in sight, Congress debated several bills related to family members serving together in military units. However, no “Sullivan Law” ever passed. Instead, Congress approved the Sole Survivor Policy (1944), which permitted the “discharge of the last surviving child of parents whose other children died in the war.”<sup>74</sup> In light of this new legislation, Navy officials encouraged Genevieve to accept an honorable discharge and return home after serving twenty-one months.

Over the decades, the Sole Survivor Policy evolved into the Department of Defense Directive 1315.15, the Special Separation Policies for Survivorship (January 5, 2007), and this revised policy protects American military families today. The Hubbard Act of 2008 expanded the definition of a sole survivor to include the missing-in-action or 100% service-related disabled status of the sole survivor’s siblings.<sup>75</sup> Its protections have been activated twice in the last decade with the most profound appreciation of the Hubbard (Jason Hubbard, Iraq, 2007) and Wise (Beau Wise, Afghanistan, 2011) families.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, this patriotic, and at the same time tragic, story of the Sullivans has had a profound effect on US popular

culture. The movie entitled *The Fighting Sullivans* premiered in New York with both Tom and Alleta in attendance. The film, which concentrated on the boy's childhood, required two sets of actors to play the brothers. Columnist Walter Winchell, who accompanied the parents to the first showing, heaped high praise on the film calling it "Twentieth's great tribute to the Sullivans ... but not a tear-jerker ... done in grand taste."<sup>77</sup>

The movie won critical acclaim and garnered Anne Baxter a Best Actress Academy Award nomination for her role as Katherine Sullivan. The movie opened in Waterloo on March 9, 1944 where five hundred people paid \$1.10 each to see the film, with all proceeds going to the Sullivan Memorial Fund.<sup>78</sup> Kena, who saw the opening in the boy's hometown, thought, "the picture was a wonderful tribute to the boys and what they fought for."<sup>79</sup> While *The Sullivans* earned respectable box-office receipts, the profits were nowhere near what would be needed to provide for Jimmy's education.

Jimmy Sullivan followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Navy in 1958. He steadfastly refused to serve aboard the ship that bore his family name because "he did not want the publicity or possible favoritism."<sup>80</sup> After active duty service, he joined the Naval Reserves and served as a SeaBee for more than thirty years.

Fans of Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) will recognize the Sullivans' story as an integral part of the film's plot. However, *Saving Private Ryan* is a composite of several sole

survivor stories, but most closely resembles the predicament of Sergeant Frederick "Fritz" Niland. In the case of the four Niland brothers, the US Army believed that all but one of the brothers had died in combat: Edward, a Technical Sergeant in the USAAF, was killed in Burma; Preston, a 2nd Lieutenant in the 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, died on D+1 near Utah Beach; and Robert, a Technical Sergeant from the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, killed on D-Day near Neuville-au-Plain.<sup>81</sup> Several days after D-Day, Fritz, a Sergeant in the 501st Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, traveled to the 82nd Division area to locate his brother. There he learned that Robert died manning a machine gun so that two other men could escape.

News of the deaths of Preston and Robert and the presumed death of Edward reached Mrs. Niland in Tonawanda, NY, on the same day. When the War Department realized that Fritz was the sole surviving Niland son, the Army brought the young man home. Unlike the fictitious Private Ryan, however, no patrol was dispatched to retrieve Sgt. Niland. Father Francis Sampson, the 501st Regimental chaplain, informed Fritz of the death of his brothers and was charged with making sure he got home safely.<sup>82</sup> He transferred to England before being shipped to New York, Sgt. Niland served as an MP for the remainder of the war.

To the family's relief, Edward survived the war, held in a Japanese prison camp in Burma, and released

in late 1945.<sup>83</sup> Fritz, awarded a Bronze Star for his World War II service, died in 1983, at the age of sixty-three, fifteen years before the premiere of *Saving Private Ryan*.<sup>84</sup>

Almost eighty years have passed since the tragic loss of the USS *Juneau* and her crew. In the intervening decades, no one has attempted to photograph the wreck. Unlike countless ships that have disappeared without a trace, the *Juneau* location was well documented: 10-33S, 161-03E.<sup>85</sup> No fewer than four individuals witnessed the explosion and noted the cruiser's precise coordinates: *San Francisco's* Lieutenant Commander Bruce McCandless, *Helena's* skipper Captain Gilbert Hoover, the B-17 pilot, Lieutenant Robert Gill, and of course Commander Minoru Yokota of *I-26*.

The explanation lies in the depth of the ocean in this part of the world. Unlike the shallow lagoons of Truk Atoll in the Caroline Islands and Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, the depth of the Solomon Sea did not give up her secrets so easily. There was also the question of how much of the *Juneau* remained to be discovered. Recall that Robert Gill likened the torpedo magazine detonation to that of the atomic bomb blast. How could there be anything left to find?

Enter the Research Vessel *Petrel*, owned and operated by Vulcan Inc., a philanthropic venture of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. *Petrel* began operating in the Western Pacific in 2015 and subsequently located and photographed some of the iconic shipwrecks

of the Second World War. With stunning regularity, Allen-led expeditions explored USS *Astoria* (February 2015), Japanese battleship IJN *Musashi* (March 2015), the USS *Indianapolis* (August 2017), and the aircraft carrier USS *Lexington* (March 2018) lost at the Battle of Coral Sea. His team, under the direction of Robert Kraft, Director of Subsea Operations, was also responsible for retrieving the ship's bell from the HMS *Hood* for presentation to the British Navy in honor of its heroic service.

In the spring of 2018, *Petrel* arrived in the southern Solomon Sea, an area called "Torpedo Junction" by US sailors. Armed with the latest is side-scan sonar, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), and autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), Allen completed a winning season and located the *Juneau*.

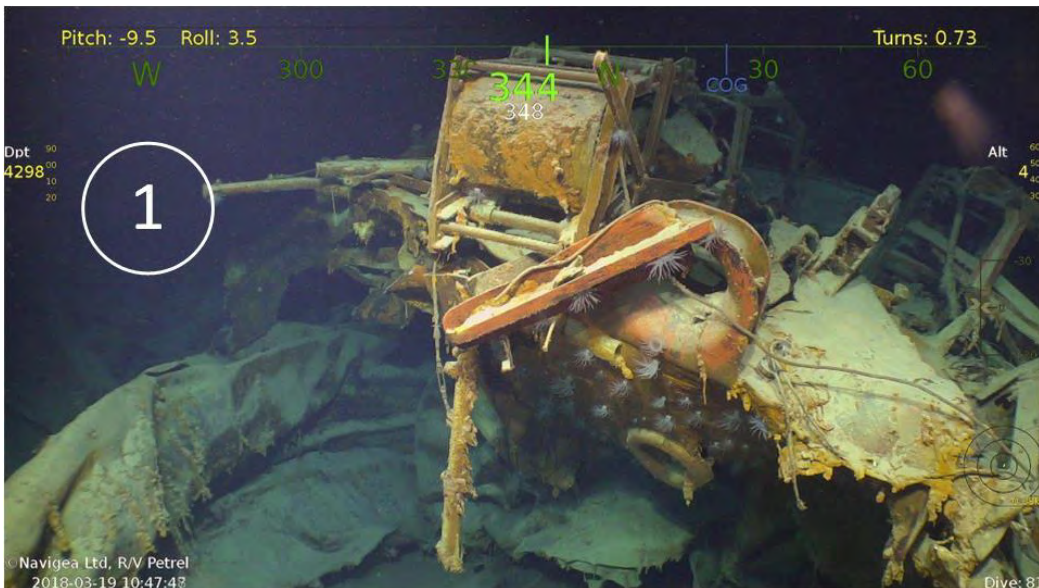
The *Petrel's* AUV first identified the ship with its side-scan sonar on March 17, 2018. Upon analysis of the sonar data, the *Petrel* crew deployed its ROV the next day and verified the wreck's identity with its high-definition video cameras. "We certainly didn't plan to find the *Juneau* on St. Patrick's Day. The variables of these searches are just too great," said Kraft.<sup>86</sup>

*Juneau* lies on her side at a depth of 4200m/13,780ft, a little more than 2.5 miles down.<sup>87</sup> The video and still photos released by Vulcan, Inc. are of the aft one-third of the ship. Images show *Juneau's* stern is surprisingly well preserved, but with the expected accumulation of marine organisms. The fact that the stern is still very much intact jives with survivor accounts and the

fact that most *Juneau* sailors who survived the initial blast were stationed on or near the fantail: Allen Hyne, George Sullivan, and Charles Wang.

Locating the USS *Juneau* on Saint Patrick's Day was an unexpected coincidence that honored not only the Sullivan brothers but also all crewmembers

who were lost on that Friday the Thirteenth. Perhaps the short life of the ship and its valiant crew were summed up best by Vice Admiral Richard A. Brown, commander, Naval Surface Forces, US Pacific Fleet: "The story of the USS *Juneau* crew and Sullivan brothers epitomize the service and sacrifice of our nation's greatest generation."<sup>88</sup>



*Juneau*'s fantail as photographed on St. Patrick's Day 2018. Top center, one of the two depth charge racks that were George Sullivan's battle station. Photo reprinted with the permission of Vulcan, Inc.

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