

USS South Dakota Gunfire on 15 November 1942

| Time | Documentation | Salvo | Number of guns | Target | Comments |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| 0018 ¹ | South Dakota opened fire on the enemy, left two ships almost in line, apparently on reverse course straddled, and fires started. Range 15,700 yards Spot U-100, RO2 | 1st | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0019.15 | Second salvo range 15,800 yards. Spot U-300 Second ship in formation South Dakota's target. | 2nd | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0020-10 | Third Salvo, range 16,100. Spot U-400. Target burning | 3rd | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0020-42 | Fourth Salvo, range 16,500 Spot D-100 | 4th | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0021-40 | Fifth Salvo, range 17,000. Spot NC | 5th | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0022-15 | Sixth Salvo, range 17,600. Spot U-200 | 6th | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0023-00 | Seventh Salvo, range 18,000. Spot U-400 | 7th | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0024-18 | Eighth Salvo, Range 18,000. Spot none. Target disappeared. Sunk. | 8th | 7 | Shikinami or Uranami | |
| 0028 | Main battery shifted to divided fire as all turrets could not bear. | | | | |
| 0030 | Radar Plot reports ships bearing 315 degrees true, 13,000 yards, closing, Ninth salvo(turret three) range 10,800. Spot D-200. | 9 th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0030-40 | Tenth Salvo (all turrets) range 10,700. Spot D-100 | 10th | 7 | Ayanami | |
| 0031-20 | Eleventh Salvo (all turrets) range 10,700. Spot NC. | 11th | 7 | Ayanami | |
| 0031-58 | Twelfth Salvo (turret 3) range 10,500. Spot - non | 12th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0033 | Thirteenth salvo (turret 3) range 10,400. No Spot. Checked fire. Lost power circuit breaker tripped | 13th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0040-10 ² | Main battery firing on targets close to Savo Island, fourteenth salvo, range 14,100. Spot D-300 | 14th | 7 | Ayanami | |

¹ South Dakota, Action Report, night engagement 14-15 November 1942, with Japanese naval units, off Savo Island., page 5.

² South Dakota, Action Report, night engagement 14-15 November 1942, with Japanese naval units, off Savo Island., page 6.

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| 0041-10 | Fifteenth salvo, range 15,200. No Spot D-500 applied | 15th | 7 | Ayanami | |
| 0042-05 | Turret 3 firing on target astern set fire to planes sixteenth salvo, range 15,500. No Spot | 16th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0043 | Salvo blew two planes overboard and extinguished most of the fires started range 15,500. Spot NC. | 17th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0043-15 | Eighteenth salvo, range 15,800. No Spot | 18th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0043-40 | Nineteenth salvo, range 16,100. Spot D-200 | 19th | 3 | Ayanami | |
| 0045 | Main battery ceased fire. Target astern exploded and lost on radar screen. | | | | Ayanami was on fire but did not sink at this time. |
| 0047 ³ | Fires extinguished in vicinity of planes. Main battery reported difficulty getting ranges and requested secondary battery directors to track. Radar's in secondary directors 1 and 4 out, 2 and 3 doubtful, radar plot reported ships bearing 070 degrees relative 5,800 yards. One or two previous reports received at 7,000 yards but overlooked in Conn while directing fire control to fire on target bearing 112 degrees relative. | | | | This entry tells me she does not have good tactical awareness. The steel never lies and by this her first hits are from ships abeam of her because we have entry and exit holes. These hits cannot come from the bombardment group which is forward and 11,000 yards ahead of her. |
| 0048 | Enemy search lights turned on South Dakota by 2 nd ship of enemy column, range 5,000 yards, slightly forward of the beam. Four search lights, closely grouped in pairs, each arranged vertically. Washington opened fire on leading target almost immediately. Our secondary was delayed firing on illuminating | 20 th 21 st 22 nd | 3 1 3 Total rounds expended 112 | Sendai or Nagara | Believe each turret fired independently as she was pointing her turrets aft she now has targets abeam so as each turret bears it fires which is why Capt. Gatch claims the main battery fired |

³ South Dakota, Action Report, night engagement 14-15 November 1942, with Japanese naval units, off Savo Island., page 7.

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| | ship until enemy opened fire 30 seconds after illumination, lights went out shifted to primary collective, director 3 controlling main battery. Third ship in enemy column illuminated us as soon as second ship failed. Main battery fired two or three salvos on illuminating ships after lights were extinguished, estimated range 9,800 yards. Apparent list, no data available, but believed sunk, no target on radar screen. Large clouds of black smoke issuing from leader, steam and fire soon later. | | | | two or three salvos. It is simply each turret fired separately from each other. |
| 0107 ⁴ | Main battery fired salvo, no data available. | 23rd | 3 | Unknown | In all likelihood fired from turret 3 as the bombardment group is now aft and this is before turret three will be knocked out at 0110. |
| Summary ⁵ | Total of 115 main battery rounds fired. | | | | |
| | Turret one fired 13 salvos with 39 shells expended. Turret two fired 13 salvos with 13 shells expended. Turret three fired 21 salvoes with 63 shells expended. | | | | |
| | In addition, the 5" secondary guns fired 305 rounds of Anti-Aircraft Common and 83 Illumination rounds. | | | | |

⁴ South Dakota, Action Report, night engagement 14-15 November 1942, with Japanese naval units, off Savo Island., page 8.

⁵ South Dakota, Action Report, night engagement 14-15 November 1942, with Japanese naval units, off Savo Island., page 12.