

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

File No.

DDFORM 16-3
Serial 918.

U. S. S. CHAMPLIN (DD 601)

CONFIDENTIAL

15 JUL 1943

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander Destroyer Squadron SIXTEEN.
(Commander Task Unit 85.3.1).
(2) Commander Cruiser Division EIGHT
(Commander Task Group 85.3).
(3) Commander Amphibious Forces Atlantic Fleet
(Commander Task Force 85).
(4) Commander U.S. Naval Forces North African
Waters (Commander Western Naval Task Force).
(5) Commander-in-Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

Subject: Action Report. *Husky - T.F.85 - Dinner*

Reference: (a) CTF 85 Operation order 2-43.
(b) Comnavaw Conf. Ltr. 1CL-43.
(c) Cinclant Conf. Ltr. 5CL-43.

1. The following action report on operation HUSKY is submitted in accordance with existing instructions.

2. The Concentration Phase, the Approach Phase and the Follow-up Phase were conducted in accordance with the operation order without incident to this vessel except for the hour's delay in H hour and the substitution of this vessel in the fire support group vice the QUICK.

3. The following is a narrative report of the Assault Phase which commenced at 2345B on July 9, 1943. At this time CHAMPLIN was approaching transport area Two with Transport Group Two acting as screen for the latter, and continued thereat until word was received at 0340, July 10, 1943 via TBS that the first wave of boats were leaving for beach Yellow Two.

- 0341 - Started approach acting as right flank support of first boat wave. Course 066°T, speed 6 knots.
- 0358 - Range to target 12 now 4000. Commenced turn away to course 140°T.
- 0401 - Commenced bombardment of Beach Yellow Two (Target 12) in accordance with plan. Opening range 3900 yards.
- 0404 - Ceased fire, having expended 40 rounds 5"/38 AA Common. Results not observed as plan called for no smoke projectiles on this beach.

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- 0405 - Commenced bombardment of Target 11 in accordance with plan. Opening range 3500 yards.
 - 0408 - Ceased fire, having expended 32 rounds 5"/38 Common and 8 rounds 5"/38 WP. Shells were observed to burst over assigned area. This fire is thought to have been very effective.
 - 0409 - Increased speed to 10 knots and returned to close vicinity of southernmost transport to act as screening vessel while awaiting requests for gunfire from Shore Fire Control Party.
 - 0437 - Five flares dropped in close vicinity of transport area Two.
 - 0510 - (Approx) Four or five small bombs dropped close aboard transport about 500 yards on our starboard bow thought to be the U.S.S. ANTHONY. Transport fired a few bursts of machine gun fire. Plane not seen by this vessel.
 - 0513 - Opened fire on fighter bomber already engaged by other ships. Range about 3500 yards. Position angle 60°. Bearing 090° relative. Plane crossed slightly ahead of ship and fire was resumed on port side by all machine guns bearing. Expended 90 rounds 40MM and 250 rounds 20MM. Machine Gun Control Officer observed tracers from 40MM entering wing of plane, bursting there causing plane to take a perceptible stagger just as it went out of range on port side. Plane was lost in the half light of dawn.
 - 0517 - Opened fire on fighter or fighter bomber range 4000 yards opening, bearing 300° relative, position angle 20°. Range at cease fire was about 6000 yards bearing 225° relative. Expended 30 rounds 40MM, 17 rounds 5"/38 AA Common and 34 rounds 5"/38 Mk. 32. Plane began to leave a smoke trail but whether from our own fire or someone else's is not known.
 - 0525 - Opened fire on fighter or fighter bomber bearing 080° relative, position angle 5°, range 4000 yards. Expended 150 rounds 20MM, 50 rounds 40MM and 14 rounds 5"/38 Mark 32. No damage believed caused.
 - 0624 - Received orders via TBS to bombard Target 30. Increased speed and changed course to get in position.
 - 0631 - Slowed to 5 knots and commenced firing on Target 30 which had just previously been observed opening fire on transports trying to anchor closer to beach.

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- Opening range 6200 yards. Fired 3 deliberate salvos followed by seven rapid salvos, then rapid fire, then salvo fire. All salvos observed to burst in or over area. Complete target obscured by smoke and dust.
- 0642 - Ceased fire, having expended 65 rounds 5"/38 AA Common. This gun position never resumed fire.
 - 0643 - Resumed patrol in Fire Support Area One.
 - 0854 - Established communication with our Shore Fire Control Party.
 - 1327 - Shore Fire Control Party requested fire on Target 15. Commenced maneuvers to get in favorable position.
 - 1350 - Commenced fire on Target 15. Fired one 4-gun salvo of 5"/38 AA Common. Projectiles burst over target. While waiting for a spot, the Shore Fire Control Party ordered cease firing and a few minutes later reported that the target (Village of Camerina) had surrendered.
 - 1412 - Emptied guns through the muzzle on safe bearing. Expended 4 rounds 5"/38 AA Common. Resumed patrol in Fire Support Area One.
 - 1640 - Received message from Shore Fire Control Party to standby till dark.
 - 2055 - Observed "SOS" being flashed by searchlight toward us from beach. Answered signal and asked what was wanted. Received signal to get on radio on 500 KCs which was done without results. More communication by light requested radio communication on 5500 KCs and later on 3500 KCs. Was never able to establish communication on any radio channel or to establish identity of originator of "SOS". A series of ranges and bearings on the signal searchlight plotted in at coordinates H475015 and at 2119 fired 3 four gun salvos totalling 9 rounds 5"/38 AA Common and 3 5"/38 WP at a point three degrees to the right and 1000 yards beyond the searchlight, which point was pre-arranged target number seven. Further attempts at obtaining radio communication or coordinates by searchlight were fruitless.
 - 2245 - Returned to regular patrol in Fire Support Area One.
- July 11, 1943
- 1215 - Small bomb appeared to drop among LSTs waiting off Beach Blue Two. LSTs opened with machine gun fire. A plane was seen in distance over land heading inland.

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- 1230 - Focke-Wulf 190 came in low from behind land and upon arrival over Beach Blue Two adopted a vertical turn and machine-gunned beach. CHAMPLIN opened fire with 20MM. Tracers were close but no damage believed done. Expended 20 rounds 20MM. Plane was in range but a very few seconds and was out of sight low over land before director could pick him up. Plane did not return again.
- 1425 - Observed a plane gliding toward us from slightly on port bow, propeller idling; Fire withheld in belief it was friendly. Plane glided down port side apparently to attempt a forced landing near Beach Blue Two and was thought to be a Mustang. Star and Yellow circle were seen. LSTs near and on Beach Blue Two shot it down and it crashed and burned on Beach Yellow Two. The plane dropped an unknown object very close to LSTs and this is thought to be reason they opened fire.
- 1730 - USS NIELDS relieved this vessel of Fire Support duties.
- 2100 - Assumed anti-submarine patrol outside mine field near Cape Scalambri Light.

July 12, 1943

- 0652 - Received following on 5800 KCs from Shore Fire Control Party: "Blocking right flank. Forces out of range of your guns. Your beach bombardment forced 200 of the enemy to retire from the area. Our mission is protection of right flank forces thus no fire is needed. Letter of information will be sent." Patrolled area entire day acting as submarine and anti-aircraft screen until 1950 when departed area escorting 12 transports to Oran. Commander of Screen, Commander Destroyer Division 32, in this vessel. Continued thereat without incident until arrival Oran on July 15, 1943.

3

4. Comments on Material

(a) SMOKE PROJECTILES: These were very effective and the Commanding Officer believes their employment against surface ships would be effective in starting fires and unnerving crews. Their use against surface ships at night to assist spotting seems particularly worthy of thought. If these projectiles

21

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DD601/A16-3
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Doc. No. 86
U.S. No. 014495
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become standard allowance for destroyers, a special top-side ready locker is indicated.

(b) 5"/38 Mark 32 Projectiles: Insufficient data is on hand to make any worthwhile generalization as to their effectiveness. The danger of their prematurely exploding among our own forces is omnipresent. CHAMPLIN's experience has been that sending these projectiles up in upper hoists nose down with flexible cover attached results in fewer nose breakages. Although producing a slower rate of fire, time saved in not clearing gas of broken fragments is thought to compensate. One nose broken during the AA action described above, taking fifteen minutes to clear out the jammed breech plug which followed.

(c) Flashless Powder: Performance was excellent and highly pleasing.

(d) 5"/38 AA Common Tracers: About 50% failed to function during night shore bombardment. Failures not due to moisture in fuze as far as can be determined.

(e) Mark XIV Sights: Ours only seven months installed and already will not meet the timing tests.

5. No personnel casualties or material damage was received. Conduct of officers and crew was uniformly excellent.

C.L. MELSON.

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