

Serial 041

Subject: War Diary for the month of March, 1944.

CONFIDENTIAL

(b) Received despatch orders from Commander Cruiser Squadron Fifteen to proceed to shore bombardment area off FORMIA to arrive by 120900A. Engines placed on one-half hour's notice for full speed.

12 March

(a) Pursuant to despatch orders of Commander Cruiser Squadron 15 departed NAPLES at 0600 for FORMIA area. Mission was assigned as counter-battery fire in support of the U.S. 88th Division which had recently relieved the British 5th Division on our left flank. This division was green and it was intended to bolster the Division morale by furnishing shore bombardment on enemy artillery which had grown stronger and more aggressive in recent days. Weather and visibility were poor to fair, rain squalls frequent, sea and wind from the southeast force three. U.S.S. HILARY P. JONES and LANSDALE accompanied as screen. Stood out of NAPLES through swept channels, proceeded south of ISCHIA because of poor visibility and stood to the westward at 20 knots to a point directly south of swept channels to FORMIA. Commander Minesweeper Flotilla 12 (Royal Navy) had been requested by FOWIT to sweep a channel two miles wide between points "D" (040-07.2 N - 13-40.1 E), "X" (41-06.5 N - 13-48 E) and "F" (41-09.9 N - 13-45.1 E). Presumably ship was expected to enter via channel swept between points "D" and "E". At 0730 commenced calling F00 1 on 2935 Kcs. 0753 Changed course to 000°(T), commenced zig-zagging in accordance with diagram #11 at half time intervals. At 0820 sighted Minesweeper Flotilla 12 consisting of 6 minesweepers (Commander Minesweeper Flotilla 12 in H.M.S. FLY) bearing 340°(T) headed to the eastward. Confirmation was received of that force having swept channels given above. Requested Commander Minesweeper Flotilla 12 to sweep channel between points "E" and new point "G" (40-58 N - 13-46.3 E).

(b) At 0830 having been unsuccessful in raising F00 1 reversed course to "kill" time.

(c) Intended to enter through point "D" and pursue the triangle "D", "E", "G" and "D". LANSDALE ordered to keep anti-submarine patrol between points "G" and "D" while JONES ordered to furnish smoke in company with PHILADELPHIA. 0900 Reversed course to 000°(T) and raised F00 1. Communication with F00 1 proved to be unreliable. Lost communication with him at 0910. 0945 Again established communication with F00 1 but he seemed to be about 20 kcs off frequency; tuned him on. 1020 Received word from F00 1 that visibility would not permit observations. Informed him that ship would standby pending further possible clearance.