

Serial 041

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

CONFIDENTIAL -----

(d) Steamed on various courses and speeds. At 1054 received word from FOO 1 that due to poor visibility, shoot was unlikely. At 1140 FOWIT notified ship that Fighter cover which has been airborne since 1027 had been withdrawn due to weather. At 1200, after checking weather conditions, notified FOO 1 that task group was returning to base.

(e) Visibility decreased to less than 500 yards at 1250; heavy rain set in. Returned to NAPLES area via route west and south of ISCHIA. 1405 Anchored off FORT DELL'OVO, NAPLES.

(f) 1426 Received orders from Commander Cruiser Squadron 15 to standby to proceed to FORMIA area at full speed on one - half hours notice.

13 March

(a) Departed NAPLES 0700, speed 21 knots for FORMIA through ISCHIA channel. Set course 058 (T) for approach to "D" - "E" channel off FORMIA. Wind 020 (T), 22 knots; visibility excellent; sea moderate; no clouds. Plan same as yesterday: HILARY P. JONES to smoke screen as necessary for PHILADELPHIA, LANSDALE to conduct antisubmarine patrol between points "D" and "G" outside of 100 fathom curve. Planned for first run of channel to be at 15 knots. 0841 Established communications with FOO 1 and requested targets. 4 P-39's furnished fighter cover and ship got in touch with planes. Approached point "D" but upon receipt of despatch from FOO 1 (Believed to be firing instructions) reversed course to "kill" time. It developed that message contained instructions about 1200 shoot. Therefore again reversed course and entered firing channel "D" - "E" about 0952, standard speed 15 knots. The first mission was to be spotted by Cub plane but about this time received word from FOO 1 to cancel mission and plane to come down and that first mission would be through spotting with Fizzing (Spitfire). Established contact with Fizzing. As ship approached point "D" enemy shell landed beyond ship to seaward on the starboard quarter. This was followed in succession as ship went down channel "D" - "E" by a series of other enemy shells which at first were short gradually went over with correct deflection. Increased speed gradually to throw off his deflection first to 18 then to 20, 21, 23 and eventually near point "E" to 25 knots. The enemy shells had by this time fallen short again and landed in the vicinity of the HILARY P. JONES which was on our port bow making smoke. Smoke was ineffective. The JONES reported splinters falling aboard. There were from 20 to 24 enemy shells, 12 of them straddled the ship, the closest one was estimated to have landed 200 yards on the seaward beam. Some of the shells were reported to have landed in pairs.