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COMMANDER MINE SQUADRON TWENTY
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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L
CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commander Mine Squadron TWENTY.
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Subject: War Diary, submission of.
Reference: (a) Cominch ltr. FFL/A12-1/A16-3 serial 7152 of
29 Oct 1943 (N.D. Bulletin 43-1531).

1. In accordance with reference (a), the War Diary for the period 1 March - 31 March 1945, is submitted herewith.

R. A. Larkin
R.A. LARKIN.

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WAR DIARY

1 March 1945

NOTE: Numbered paragraphs following correspond to sub-paraphraphs of paragraph 3 of Cominch Ltr. Navy Dept. Bull. 43-1531 (Cum. Ed.).

1. Mine Squadron TWENTY, a part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, operating under Commander, Minecraft, U.S. Pacific Fleet, constituted as follows:

	<u>MinDiv 58</u>	<u>MinDiv 59</u>	<u>MinDiv 60</u>
Comdr.	F.P. MITCHELL, USN (Ord)	Capt. R.A. LARKIN, USN	Comdr. M.D. MATTHEWS, USN
DMS	24 FORREST (F) 25 FITCH 26 HOBSON 23 MACOMB (FD)	DMS 19 ELLYSON (FF) 20 HAMBLETON 21 RODMAN 22 EMMONS (FD)	DMS 29 BUTLER (F) 28 HARDING 27 JEFFERS (FD) 30 GHERARDI

Minron 20 less RODMAN, MACOMB, EMMONS and JEFFERS constituted TU 18.2.3 for passage to Ulithi via Eniwetok. TU dissolved on arrival and reporting to CominPac for duty in FIFTH Fleet.

2. AdCominPac 212010 February creating TU 18.2.3.
AdCominPac 222337 February directing RODMAN, MACOMB, EMMONS and JEFFERS report to CTF 16 for routing and sailing to Ulithi.

3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 enroute Eniwetok.

Time	Clocks advanced at	2000 (-12)
Latitude	1700 (±11) to -12 time.	15-30 N
Longitude		173-38 E

4. At 1700 clocks were set to -12 east longitude date.

- 5-7. No remarks.

2 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 enroute Eniwetok

Time	0800 (-12)	1200 (-12)	2000 (-12)
Latitude	14-28 N	14-05 N	13-22 N
Longitude	170-27 E	169-24 E	167-15 E

4. Calibrated all radars by echo check in forenoon.

Conducted Exercise 16 in afternoon. Satisfactory results at 5000 yards attained by ELLYSON, FORREST. Other ships had large initial errors (ranging from 325 to 1000 yards) and were unable to establish hitting range on third salvo. HARDING, GHERARDI patterns triple acceptable limits.

- 5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

3 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 enroute Eniwetok

Time	0800 M	1200 M	at
Latitude	12-13 N	11-43 N	anchor
Longitude	164-03 E	163-01 E	Eniwetok

4. At 1315 B26 plane from Eniwetok arrived, circled formation and streamed target sleeve. 1325 TBF arrived and streamed target sleeve. All ships formed in column and exercised 5" and automatic weapons on target sleeves.

1445 ceased firing, entered Eniwetok channel.

ELLYSON, HAMBLETON, FITCH, BUTLER directed to fuel from ASTABULA. GHERARDI from GEMSTOCK. HARDING at unknown tanker. FORREST and HOBSON from ASTABULA.

5. Visual despatch from HECP ENIWETOK directs reporting to CTG 96.3 on completion of logistics for onward routing.

- 6-7. No remarks.

4 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 at Eniwetok.
4. Completed preparations for sea and reported to CTG 96.3, ships ready on 12 hours notice.
- 5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

5 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 at Eniwetok.
4. Received CTG 96.3 OpOrder #149-45 assigning TU 18.2.3 and VAMMEN (DE 644) to escort ULITHI-KOSSOL Convoy #20.
TU 18.2.3 plus VAMMEN underway at 1300 M to sortie from Wide Passage.
At 1430 M convoy consisting of following ships formed and took departure from Eniwetok.
- Convoy Commodore - Commanding Officer, USS ALLENDALE (APA 127)
Vice Commodore - Commanding Officer, USS MERIWETHER (APA 203)
- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| (11) MENARD | (21) MERIWETHER | (31) ALLENDALE | (41) GRAFFIAS |
| (12) BUCYRUS VICTORY | (22) ASTABULA | (32) CAPE IGVAK | (42) WESTWARD HO |
| | (23) HOVENWEEP | (33) SWAN ISLAND | |

At 1700 clocks set to $-11\frac{1}{2}$ time.

- 5-7. No remarks.

6 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 plus VAMMEN (DE 644) and ULITHI-KOSSOL Convoy #20.

Time	0800 (-11 $\frac{1}{2}$)	1200 (-11 $\frac{1}{2}$)	2000 (-11)
Latitude	11-51 N	11-56 N	12-18 N
Longitude	158-18 E	157-15 E	155-21 E

4. At 1900 set clocks to -11 (L) time.
- 5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

7 March 1945

1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 plus VAMMEN (DE 644) and ULITHI-KOSSOL Convoy #20.

Time	0800 (-11)	1200 (-11)	2000 (-10 $\frac{1}{2}$)
Latitude	12-48 N	12-58 N	12-57 N
Longitude	152-34 E	151-37 E	149-41 E

4. Conducted Exercise _____ at 5000 yards 100 mil offset. Satisfactory results obtained by ELLYSON, FORREST, HARDING; GHERARDI nearly satisfactory; other ships unsatisfactory in all respects large initial and final error of MPI and large patterns, except BUTLER pattern good. 1900 set clocks to -10 $\frac{1}{2}$ time.

5-7. No remarks.

8 March 1945.

1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 plus VAMMEN (DE 644) and ULITHI-KOSSOL Convoy #20.

Time	0800 (-10 $\frac{1}{2}$)	1200 (-10 $\frac{1}{2}$)	2000 (-10)
Latitude	11-55 N	11-35 N	10-56 N
Longitude	147-00 E	146-06 E	144-07 E

4. At 1900 set clocks to -10 time (K).

WAR DIARY

9 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 1 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TU 18.2.3 plus VAMMEN (DE 644) and ULITHI-KOSSOL Convoy #20.

Time	0800 (-10)	1200 (-10)	2000 (-10)
Latitude	10-19 N	10-10 N	at anchor
Longitude	141-17 E	140-17 E	Ulithi

4. Repeated Exercise 16 Dog USF 10A with satisfactory results by all ships except HOBSON and HAMBLETON who did not fire as cause of previous errors still remained undiscovered or uncorrected.

At 1430 K arrived off Ulithi and convoy commenced entering port. MerShip WESTWARD HO was detached to proceed to Kossol, U.S.S. VAMMENS escort. While VAMMENS transferred hospital case and passengers to U.S.S. GHERARDI, U.S.S. FORREST proceeded as temporary escort for WESTWARD HO.

Minron TWENTY entered Ulithi reporting to CominPac who referred ships to ComDesPac Rep in Cascade for fuel, ammunition and berths. By sunset all ships were fueling.

5. Received following directives:

ComPhibsPac OpPlan A1-45.

CominPac Training Order 2-45 of 26 Feb 1945.

Supplementary Order to CominPac 2-45.

- 6-7. No remarks.

10 March 1945

1. Mine Squadron TWENTY, a unit of the FIFTH Pacific Fleet, operating under Commander Minecraft, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and constituted as follows:

<u>MinDiv 58</u>	<u>MinDiv 59</u>	<u>MinDiv 60</u>
Comdr. F.P. MITCHELL, USN (Ord)	Capt. R.A. LARKIN, USN	Comdr. M.D. MATTHEWS, USN
DMS 24 FORREST (F)	DMS 19 ELLYSON (FF)	DMS 29 BUTLER (F)
25 FITCH	20 HAMBLETON	28 HARDING
26 HOBSON	21 RODMAN	27 JEFFERS (FD)
23 MACOMB (FD)	22 EMMONS (FD)	30 GHERARDI

2. ComPhibsPac OpPlan A1-45.
CominPac Training Order 2-45.
3. In ELLYSON at Ulithi with Minron 20 less RODMAN, EMMONS, MACOMB, JEFFERS.
4. Ships remained at anchor for logistics and upkeep. HAMBLETON assigned availability until midnight 13 March.
5. Received ComPhibGrpONE (CTF 52) Operation Plan A106-45.
- 6-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

11 March 1945

1-3. Same as 10 March 1945.

4. At 0700 underway with Minron 20 present less HAMBLETON for training period in compliance with CominPac Training Order 2-45.
Ships calibrated moored, acoustic and magnetic sweeping gear.
HOBSON having lost two port paravanes was directed to return to port for replacements.

5-7. No remarks.

12 March 1945

1-3. Same as 10 March 1945.

4. At 0530 commenced streaming moored sweep gear in ELLYSON, FORREST, FITCH in predawn exercise and formation sweeping practice.

At 0730 FORREST reported loss of port sweep gear and was directed to fall out and recover gear.

At 0800 ELLYSON and FITCH were ordered to recover gear and prepare for towing exercise.

0915 to 1030 FITCH made three unsuccessful attempts to take ELLYSON in tow. On last attempt FITCH fouled her port propeller with several turns of manila messenger and some wire. Attempts to clear by shallow water diving defeated by rolling of ship. FITCH directed return to port, clear propeller and rejoin.

HOBSON rejoined and continued calibrating moored sweep gear.

HOBSON reported losing two sets of port sweep gear. FORREST later made same report. HOBSON reported wiped bearing on steam winch. Both HOBSON and FORREST ordered return to port for replacement of gear and repairs.

2200 MACOMB reported by voice radio having been ordered to join. Enroute gear was streamed and winch motor disabled, gear was being recovered by hand. ELLYSON closed MACOMB to act as screen during recovery. MACOMB ordered to return to port at daylight for repairs.

5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

13 March 1945

1-3. Same as 10 March 1945.

4. RODMAN, JEFFERS were sighted and closed. Both were directed continue calibrating sweep gear.

FORREST, FITCH were sighted and closed. ELLYSON lowered boat, transferred Comdr. F.P. MITCHELL to FORREST to assume command of Mine Division 58 in compliance with BuPers orders.

FORREST directed to continue calibrating, FITCH to form column.

1930 formed squadron present consisting of ELLYSON, BUTLER, JEFFERS, HARDING, GHERARDI, EMMONS, FORREST, FITCH in standard formation No. 8 to cruise for night.

5-7. No remarks.

14 March 1945

1-3. Same as 10 March 1945.

4. At 0330 streamed sweep gear in preparation for dawn sweeping operations.

At 0700 squadron in starboard quarter echelon with two ships astern commenced rehearsal sweep.

0800 detached EMMONS and HARDING for calibration of EMMONS magnetic gear. HAMBLETON and RODMAN joined and were directed to calibrate moored sweep gear.

JEFFERS and GHERARDI lost gear and fell out to recover and restream. 0945 U.S.S. GMIN (Cominron 3) joined to act as mine disposal vessel.

1430 recovered gear and proceeded to port with FITCH. Comindiv 60 was directed to return to port with his division when ready. HAMBLETON, RODMAN and EMMONS to remain at sea to complete calibrating. FORREST operating independently calibrating gear to return on completion.

At 1600 U.S.S. ELLYSON followed by FITCH passed over reef in latitude 09-14.34 longitude 139-56.45 E. FITCH struck reef damaging both propellers. FITCH proceeded at steerageway for entrance 15 miles bearing 315° T. ELLYSON standing by. CominPac requested to despatch tug to assist FITCH. 2130 Tug APACHE arrived and took FITCH in tow. ELLYSON departed to enter Ulithi.

5-6. No remarks.

7. Administrative report of grounding made by CO FITCH ltr. DMS25/L11 ser. 016 of 16 March 1945 and forwarded by my endorsement FC6-20/L11-1 serial 033 of 16 March 1945.

WAR DIARY

15 March 1945

1-2. Same as 10 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON at Ulithi with Minron 20 less HOBSON and MACOMB operating independently outside Ulithi.

4-7. No remarks.

16 - 18 March 1945

1-2. Same as 10 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON at Ulithi with Minron 20.

4-7. No remarks.

19 March 1945

1. Same as 10 March 1945.

2. ComPhibsPac (CTF 51) OpPlan A1-45.
ComPhibGrpONE (CTF 52) OpPlan A106-45.
CominPac (CTG 52.2) Movement Order 3-45.
ComBatronONE (CTG 54.3) Retirement Plan 1-45.

3. In ELLYSON at Ulithi with Minron 20.

4. 1400 K Minron 20 underway to sortie from Ulithi in accordance with CominPac (CTG 52.2) Movement Order 3-45 for operations scheduled in the plans of paragraph 2 above.

5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

20 March 1945

1-2. Same as 19 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON with Task Group 52.3.

Time	0800 (-10)	1200 (-9)	2000 (-9)
Latitude	12-14 N	13-06 N	14-31 N
Longitude	138-31 E	137-50 E	136-40 E

4. At 1100 set clocks to zone "I" (-9) time.

At 2030 HAMBLETON dispatched by screen commander to investigate a group of targets bearing 037° true distance 18 miles. At 2045 these ships were determined to be Group Two of Mine Flotilla TG 52.2.

5. Received for information CominPac despatch of 18 March reporting damage to FITCH and recommending return of ship to Pearl for repairs to struts, tailshafts and propellers. Maximum speed 12 knots on one engine, ready for sea 22 March.

6-7. No remarks.

21 March 1945

1-2. Same as 19 March 1945.

3. In ELLYSON with TG 52.3 enroute objective

Time	0800 (I)	1200 (I)	2000 (I)
Latitude	16-24 N	17-00 N	18-27 N
Longitude	135-10 E	134-43 E	133-45 E

4-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

22 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 19 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TG 52.3 enroute objective

Time	0800 (I)	1200 (I)	2000 (I)
Latitude	20-21 N	20-31 N	21-45 N
Longitude	132-33 E	133-00 E	131-58 E

4. At 0600 changed course and axis to 070°, slowed to eight knots and commenced fueling.

At 1230 resumed advance with main body, HARDING, LAMONS and WEAVER screen for fueling group. On completion of fueling tankers were released to rendezvous with Group Two.

At 1700 U.S.S. WILEY made contact and joined. CTG 52.3 detached WILEY about sunset to fuel and rejoin.

- 5-7. No remarks.

23 March 1945

- 1-2. Same as 19 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with TG 52.3 enroute objective

Time	0800 (I)	1200 (I)	2000 (I)
Latitude	23-37 N	24-22 N	25-29 N
Longitude	130-03 E	129-31 E	128-42 E

4. At 1530 took special disposition #13 for approach. DMS Group on starboard bow in division columns on circle 7.

At 2230 Red alert announced. Bogies closed formation from starboard crossing ahead and down port flank. Several ships in port screen fired at long range. No visible result. Bogies retired to southwest and were lost apparently in a window at about 20 miles. Two night fighters from an adjacent carrier group were vectored to our formation but bogies were not intercepted.

5. By despatch at 1530 operational voice calls became effective.
- 6-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

24 March 1945 (Love minus 8 Day)

- 1-2. Same as 19 March 1945.
3. In ELLYSON with Minron 20 less FITCH operating as a part of Task Group 52.2 (Rear Admiral Alex. SHARP, CominPac) at OKINAWA.

4. At 0500 (I) (Love minus eight day) ComPhibsPac (CTF 51) Operation Plan Al-45 and associated plans became effective for operations.

The DMS Group (TG 52.3, Capt. R.A. LARKIN, USN, Cominron 20) consisting of the following named ships having been detached at 0300 proceeded to assigned areas and commenced scheduled sweeping at sunrise.

TU 52.3.2 Sweep Unit TWO, Comdr. F.P. MITCHELL, USN, Comindiv 58

DMS 24 FORREST (F)
26 HOBSON
23 MACOMB (FD)
DM 33 GWIN (Cominron 3) Capt. A.M. TOWNSEND, USN

TU 52.3.3 Sweep Unit THREE, Capt. R.A. LARKIN, USN, Comindiv 59

DMS 19 ELLYSON (GF)
20 HAMBLETON
21 RODMAN
22 EMMONS (FD)
DM 32 LINDSEY

TU 52.3.4 Sweep Unit FOUR, Comdr. M.D. MATTHEWS, USN, Comindiv 60

DMS 29 BUTLER (F)
30 HERARDI
27 JEFFERS (FD)
28 HARDING
DM 29 HENRY A. WILEY (Substituted for AARON WARD)

Results of all sweeps negative - no enemy resistance encountered.

At 1930 recovered sweep gear and rejoined TG 52.2 for night retirement.

5-7. No remarks.

25 March 1945 (Love minus seven Day)

- 1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. DMS Group released to proceed independently to assigned sweep stations.

At 0500 commenced streaming sweep gear and at 0630 began scheduled sweep operations.

Results of sweeping operations negative. No enemy opposition encountered. Recovered gear at 1830 (I) and proceeded to assigned night patrol stations.

5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

26 March 1945 (Love minus 6 Day)

1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. At daylight streamed moored and acoustic minesweeping gear and commenced clearance of area "B-2" plus 1000 yard strip in "A-4" along southern boundary. Completed sweeping, recovered gear about 1600 and proceeded to report to CTG 51.1 at 1900.

On reporting sweep unit 3 and 4 were assigned to night screening stations around transport area.

At about 2300 an air alert was sounded when many unidentified planes were detected approaching from westward. Fire was opened by several screening ships and one plane was seen to be enveloped in flames. The plane attempted a suicide dive, then turned off and disappeared after several minutes apparently crashing over the horizon. No enemy planes were detected within 6 miles of this ship.

5-7. No remarks.

27 March 1945 (Love minus 5 Day)

1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. Sweep Units 3 and 4 when released at 0430 from screening duty proceeded to rendezvous and streamed sweeping gear. At sunrise commenced check sweep of channel "A-1". On completion proceeded to area "N-2" to explore western 11,000 yards. At 1530 completed sweeping operations, results negative.

At 1800 joined night retirement unit on screening circle ten.

5-7. No remarks.

28 March 1945 (Love minus 4 Day)

1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. At dawn air attack on screening vessels on far side of screen occurred and was driven off after splashing one would-be suicide dive attack.

At about 0730 formed A/S screen on Fire Support Unit THREE second section and proceeded to bombardment area off preferred beaches on OKINAWA.

At 1730 Sweep Unit THREE (52.3.3) was released and proceeded to join retirement unit ONE (TU 54.1.3)

At 1900 joined retirement unit ONE and as screen commander established screen on circle 8 of 13 ships.

5-7. No remarks.

WAR DIARY

29 March 1945 (Love minus 3 Day)

1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. Approached OKINAWA demonstration beaches and formed a double line area screen. Maintained area screen while Fire Support Unit ONE bombarded and later covered the Underwater Demolition Teams.

At 1700 when released RODMAN and EMMONS proceeded to KERAMA RETTO for fuel.

5-7. No remarks.

30 March 1945 (Love minus 2 Day)

1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. While leaving KERAMA RETTO anchorage at about 0300 HAMBLETON fouled port propeller in torpedo net.

0600 ELLYSON and RODMAN underway from KERAMA RETTO and at 0745 joined Fire Support Unit ONE. Formed inner and outer screens.

0930 TUSCALOOSA escorted by LINDSEY, PRITCHETT and LAFFEY proceeded to KERAMA RETTO to fuel.

1630 ELLYSON, RODMAN proceeded to KERAMA RETTO to report to TUSCALOOSA and screen her on return to Fire Support Unit ONE in morning.

2010 HAMBLETON reported herself free of net.

5-7. No remarks.

31 March 1945 (Love minus 1 Day)

1-3. Same as 24 March 1945.

4. At 0530 ELLYSON and RODMAN underway from KERAMA RETTO and passed through northern exit and formed screen on TUSCALOOSA enroute to Demonstration beach.

At about 1630 U.S.S. ESTES (CTF 52) and LAFFEY joined.

At 1800 commenced retiring from area towards rendezvous.

At 2200 effected rendezvous with retirement unit ONE.

5-7. No remarks.