

DD592/A16-3
Serial

U.S.S. HOWORTH (DD592)
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

13 December 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

Via : (1) The Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-ONE.
(2) The Commander Amphibious Group Nine.
(3) The Commander 7th Amphibious Force.
(4) The Commander 7th Fleet.

Subject: Special Action Report (Anti-Aircraft Action by Surface Ships),
submission of.

Reference: (a) ComAdmCom7thPhibFor rest. ltr. serial 2823 of 12 November 1944.
(b) Com7thPhibFor conf. ltr. serial 0212 of 17 February 1944.
(c) ComPhibGroup 9 Op-Order 4-44.
(d) Com7thFlt Op-Order 15-44.

Enclosure: (A) Anti-Aircraft Action by Surface Ships form.
(B) Ship and formation track chart, showing relative positions
of ship and indicating movement during progress of raid.

1. In accordance with reference (a) and (b), enclosures (A) and (B) are
submitted herewith.

2. The U.S.S. HOWORTH was acting as an escort destroyer attached to the
Commander Mindoro Attack Force's Assault Echelon; O.T.C., Commander Mindoro Attack
Force, in the U.S.S. NASHVILLE. The echelon was formed in special assigned cruising
disposition "M-1" (see reference (c)) with screen commander, ComDesRon 51 in the
U.S.S. HALL: this vessel on station 2500 yards bearing 000 relative to the formation
axis from the formation guide. A short time previous the U.S.S. NASHVILLE had been
crash dived by a "Suicide Zeke"; the resultant fire was out and the U.S.S. O'BANNON
(DD450), who had commenced to go alongside to assist, had been ordered clear. The
formation was intact, save that the O'BANNON had not regained station.

3. At 1505 the U.S.S. NASHVILLE and screening destroyers in that vicinity
were observed to take an enemy plane identified as an "Irving" under fire. This
vessel obtained a solution and opened fire at 1506 with the two forward five inch
guns, after guns being unable to bear. At 1506½ ceased firing due to extreme range.
At 1507 the plane disappeared from view apparently undamaged. He had been turned
back without attacking if such had been his intent, instead of reconnaissance. He
was not seen again.

E. S. BURNS

cc: Cominch (Advance & Enc. (A))
ComDesRon 51 (Enc. (A))
ComPhibGroup 9 (Enc. (A))
Com7thPhibFor (Enc. (A))
Com7thFlt (Enc. (A))
ComDesRon 45 (Enc. (A))
ComDesPac (Enc. (A) & (B))

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.
15 December 1944.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-ONE.
(2) The Commander Amphibious Group NINE.
(3) The Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force.
(4) The Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
Subject: Shore Bombardment of Caminawit Peninsula, Mindoro Island, P.I.,
by USS HOWORTH, report of.
Reference: (a) ComAdmCom7thPhibFor rest. ltr. ser. 2823 of 12 November 1944.
(b) Com7thPhibFor conf. ltr. ser. 0212 of 17 February 1944.
(c) ComPhib Group 9 Op.Order 4-44.
(d) Com7thFlt Op.Order 15-44.
(e) ComTaskGroup 78.3 visual dispatch 140500 of December 1944.
Enclosure: (A) Sketch showing ship's track and target area during the bombardment.
(B) Reference (e).

1. In the Mindoro assault operations of 15 December 1944, the USS HOWORTH was assigned bombardment of Caminawit Peninsula in accordance with reference (a) prior to the initial landings thereon. Shortly after 0700 on the morning of 15 December, the USS HOWORTH proceeded into Mangarin Bay to take station for bombardment. At 0729, with the ship lying to 4100 yards from shore, four air bursts (altitude 100 feet) were fired at three second intervals over the area of Pandurucan Village for purposes of warning friendly natives of the impending bombardment.

2. Due to dense jungle growth along the shoreline, Pandurucan Village, itself, was indiscernible, but other previously known landmarks, enabled control to closely approximate the location of the village. Indirect fire was opened at 0734 laddering the area with a total of 40 rounds of 5"/38 caliber. At 0739 fire was shifted to a beached enemy float plane, identified as a ("Paul II"???). Two salvos of two guns each were fired at this target with no direct hits observed, although shrapnel holes were later observed. At 0741 fire was shifted to a large group of houses believed to be Caminawit School, which, from intelligence reports, contained a cannon emplacement. Thirty rounds were fired at this target, hits being observed but no hostile activity encountered. At 0749 fire was shifted to the area of the railroad elbow, where intelligence reports indicated enemy AA battery emplacements. Fifteen rounds were fired in this area with no results observed. From 0800 until 0851 a laddering fire was carried out on the area from Pandurucan Village to the tip of Caminawit Point using two gun salvos, the ship proceeding to eastward of Mauadi Island. Direct fire was used; and throughout, salvos were placed in any areas which appeared to offer particularly good cover for enemy troops. Due to warnings of approaching enemy aircraft, bombardment was ceased at 0851, this ship being taken under attack by suicide planes at 0856.

3. Early in the bombardment, No. 3 gun was observed to be firing wild. Upon investigation it was found that parallax servo-motor in the train indicator had failed. Parallax was matched by hand and fire resumed. Battery performance was excellent as was ammunition performance. One hundred eighty-five rounds of 5"/38 AA

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common were expended with no casualties.

4. The bombardment of Caminawit Peninsula was carried out as directed. All areas of possible enemy resistance were well covered. Throughout the bombardment, no enemy activity whatsoever was observed. Immediately following the bombardment, landings were made on Red Beach (see reference (c)) on Caminawit Peninsula and the entire area was reported captured with no enemy opposition. Although no detailed reports have been received by this vessel from Army personnel later present in the area, it is believed that this bombardment was a success, accomplishing the objectives as outlined in reference (e). Dense undergrowth throughout the bombardment area made damage assessment of fire difficult during the operation. No shore fire control party or plane spots were available.

E. S. BURNS

cc: Cominch (Advance & Enc. A).
ComDesRon 51
ComPhibGroup 9
Com7thPhibFor
Com7thFlt
ComDesRon 45
ComDesPac

15 December 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander Destroyer Squadron 51.
(2) The Commander Amphibious Group Nine.
(3) The Commander 7th Amphibious Force.
(4) The Commander 7th Fleet.
Subject: Special Action Report (Anti-Aircraft Action by Surface Ships),
submission of.

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(b) Com7thPhibFor conf. ltr. serial 0212 of 17 February 1944.
(c) ComPhibGroup Nine Op Order 4-44.
(d) Com7thFlt Op Order 15-44.

Enclosure: (A) Anti-Aircraft Action by Surface Ships form.
(B) Ship and formation track chart, showing relative positions of
ship and indicating movement during progress of raid.

1. In accordance with reference (a) and (b), enclosures (A) and (B) are
submitted herewith.

2. At 0850 Item 15 December 1944 the USS HOWORTH was completing an
assigned shore bombardment mission in Mangarin Bay, S.W. Mindoro Island, Philippine
Islands, having covered the area from Pandurucan Village down the Caminawit Peninsula
to the point in preparation to landing by our forces at assigned beach (see reference
(c)). The 40MM battery was strafing the beach area in general and a float plane
identified as a "Paul II", in particular, from about 2500 yards range. At this
time an alert was received over the warning net, placing "bogies" in the immediate
area to the south. The ship's head was brought around to move out of the very
restricted sea area; all stations were warned as to the possible imminence of attack.
Ceased firing at shore targets at 0851½.

3. At 0855 about seven enemy planes identified as "Zekes" were sighted
flying low over the water coming from the cover of Ambulong Island apparently head-
ing to the northwest (see enclosure (B)). At 0856, at an initial range of about 9000
yards, fire was opened. At 0856½ checked fire to shift targets to three (3) Zekes
sighted coming in on a northerly course low over the western tangent of Ilin Island
at a range of about 6000 yards (see enclosure (B)). Intense fire from all batteries
set one plane to smoking and it was seen to pull up and then fall off to the north.
It is believed that this plane later crashed but all hands were too occupied for the
next two minutes to be positive. The remaining two planes came in with unmistakable
suicide intent. The ship was in a left turn with full rudder and twenty knots were
"rung up" but it is believed that the ship was not fully up to speed until about the
time that the planes hit. The first plane to crash is believed to have been hit and
out of control at about 500 yards before reaching the ship. He overshot in his dive
and passed over No. 3 five-inch gun missing it about ten feet and crashing about 20
feet off the starboard side opposite the midships 40MM mount. Parts of this first
plane were seen to land on the forecastle after the plane hit the water and other
parts of the plane and pilot were found aft of the bridge. It is believed that bomb
from the plane exploded under water as personnel topside were not aware of explosion

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but personnel in plot are sure they felt an underwater explosion. The Commanding Officer, upon seeing that the first plane had missed, reversed the rudder (giving full right rudder). About 20 seconds to 30 seconds later, the second plane crashed into the air search radar antenna with his undercarriage, opening his gasoline tanks and spraying the ship with gasoline. The plane continued its dive with the right wing glancing off the port bow carrying away the life lines on the port side from frame 8 to 33 and putting a slight dent in the forecastle deck at frame 14 about three feet from the ship's side; luckily no fire resulted. He crashed into the water just off the bow sending up a column of water which covered the ship including the director. The ship continued in its right turn and proceeded to a northerly heading then turning left, standing about a mile west into an area with more sea room and covering AMs in area. At 0900 two LSTs, #738 and #472, were observed burning in the transport area about three miles northwest from the ship's position at this time. Three destroyers were attempting to assist them in putting out the fires and rescuing survivors. No other evidence of enemy planes was then apparent. The ship resumed its station in fire support area off Caminawit Peninsula until directed by CTG 78.3 to take station in fire support area #3.

4. During action, the damage control parties took cover as ordered, but had several hoses washing off the gasoline within two minutes after the crashes. The performance of all gun batteries was most gratifying. All hands did their duty very very commendably. No personnel casualties were suffered.

5. The Commanding Officer considers that the ship's escape from serious damage was due to three factors: one, the intense volume of fire by all batteries; two, violent maneuvering and the timely reversal of rudder upon the crash of the first plane, and three, kindly Providence, or in the common vernacular, "Lady Luck smiled and smiled". The fire control searchlight was not brought to bear on either plane due to failure of control to effect it. No comment can be made as to its effectiveness against this type of attack. It is believed that both planes carried small bombs, probably 100 pounds, for the ship was littered with small pieces of plane from stem to stern. Both planes are believed to have been damaged by AA fire but just how much this contributed to the failure of either plane to register a successful attack is problematical. Neither plane attempted to strafe the ship although either was in a position to do so had he and his guns been operative.

cc: Cominch (Adv. & Enc. (A))
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ComPhibGroup 9 (Enc. (A))
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