

18 April 1945

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

Via: (1) The Commander Destroyer Division NINETY.
(2) The Commander Task Group 53.2 (The Commander Transport Squadron 18).
(3) The Commander Task Force 53 (The Commander Amphibious Group FOUR).
(4) The Commander Task Force 51 (The Commander Amphibious Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet).
(5) The Commander FIFTH FLEET.
(6) The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

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

Reference: (a) Commander Task Force 51 Op-Order A1-45.
(b) Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 1CL-45.
(c) Commander Amphibious Group Four Movement Order A404-45.

Enclosure: (A) Anti-aircraft action by surface ships' form (Night).
(B) Anti-aircraft action by surface ships' form (Dawn).

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

2. The USS HOWORTH was steaming in company with the Commander Amphibious Group Four Transport group Baker on the night of 1-2 April 1945, approximately seven miles south of Kume Shima in the Okinawa Gunto on course 050 degrees true returning to Hagushi beach head, Okinawa Island, after night retirement. The convoy of troop transports was in cruising disposition "4-B" screened by three destroyers, three destroyer escorts and three minesweepers (AM); USS HOWORTH on screening station #2 (5.5327) in accordance with reference (c). The ship was at general quarters, maneuvering at 20 knots (convoy speed 13 knots) to repel air attack. The moon was about two-thirds full with fair visibility, many scattered cumulus clouds. The convoy was in "flash red, control yellow".

3. At 0041 Item enemy aircraft were reported in the vicinity off the port bow of the convoy. Air search radar obtained contact at 12 miles and target was designated to main battery director. Contact was obtained at 5000 yards and firing commenced immediately at a single engine enemy plane Believed to be an "Oscar". All 5"/38 and port 40 MM batteries were in automatic control using main battery director. Opening range was 5000 yards, altitude 50 feet. No course of speed was obtained before opening fire. Ceased firing at 0042 Item, range 4000 yards, when other screening ships came into the line of fire. It is believed that no damage was done to the plane. This was due to the poor solution. No offensive action was noted from the enemy.

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4. About 0600 while in the transport area Baker off Hagushi beach head, Okinawa Island, gunfire was observed on the port bow, ship's course 274 degrees true. The transport area was in "flash red, control yellow", and was heavily congested with hundreds of ships of all types. Sunrise was at 0620. Visibility poor due to smoky haze and low cloud cover. One enemy plane believed to be an "Oscar" was sighted at a range of 5000 yards (0601 Item). Commenced firing with 5"/38 battery on a poor solution, target speed 180 knots, altitude 1000 feet. Ceased firing at 0602 Item at a range of 6000 yards, target opening. No form of enemy action was observed. Many ships were observed firing, and a plane believed to be this one was observed to crash in flames on the water about eight miles bearing North. Whether this plane was shot down or made a suicide dive at one of the many ships in the area was not discernible at this distance.

E. S. BURNS

cc: Cominch - Read. Div. (Adv. copy & Enc. A & B)
ComDesDiv 90 (Enc. A & B)
ComTransRon 18 (Enc. A & B)
ComPhibGr 4 (Enc. A & B)
ComPhibPac (Enc. A & B)
Com5thFlt (Enc. A & B)
ComDesRon 45 (Enc. A & B - direct)
ComDesPac (Enc. A & B - direct)
Cincpac (3adv. direct - Enc. A & B)