

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Editor

**The U.S.S. *Meredith* (DD-726) in World War II:
Documents and Photographs**

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Survivors of USS Meredith (DD-726):

Your ship didn't have a chance to see much combat in World War II, but you all can be very proud of your participation in General Eisenhower's Great Crusade. June 6, 1944, is truly a date to remember. I'm sending copies of this booklet to seventeen naval libraries/museums (including the National D-Day Museum/New Orleans, the Normandy American Cemetery/Col Ville sur Mer, France, and the UTAH Beach Museum, Normandy, France), so the Meredith's role in that epic battle will be well documented for future historians.

As you can see from this booklet and the "About The Editor" page at the end I'm not an author -- or, for that matter, an investigative reporter attempting to settle the controversy over whether the Meredith was sunk by a mine or a glider bomb -- but I believe my compilation of available documents and photographs is an effective way to record the events you experienced.

I know you all will be happy to learn that I've sent three copies to the sponsor's family. Philip Kopper (see his letter in my booklet) accompanied his mother when she christened your ship, his mother's aunt had christened the earlier Meredith (DD-434) in 1940 and his sister sent the Meredith (DD-890) down the ways in 1945.

I don't have any extra copies to send you, but I hope you will have copies made at a copying store for your families.

I never charge for my booklets, but modest contributions will be appreciated.

Enjoy!



E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
Commander, USNR (Ret.)

The U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726) in World War II

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E. A. Wilde, Jr.
May, 2002

Any man who may be asked what he did to make his life worthwhile can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, "I served in the United States Navy."

- President John F. Kennedy, addressing the new class of midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy on August 1, 1963.



Mrs. William Kopper, great-great-grandniece of the late Sergeant Jonathon Meredith, USMC, was designated by the Navy as sponsor for the third Meredith, (DD-726). Her aunt had christened the previous Meredith, (DD-434), in 1940, and her daughter, Juliette Starr Kopper, christened the Meredith (DD-890) in June, 1945.

(Official U.S. Navy Photograph.)



DD 726
SPONSOR'S PARTY
BATH, MAINE

The Meredith's sponsor, Mrs. William Kopper, at the christening ceremony on December 21, 1943, with her sons Philip, 6, and Bruce, 9. Also in her party, Archibald M. Main, Vice President of Bath Iron Works, and Captain R. S. Hitchcock, USN, Supervisor of Shipbuilding for Maine. (U.S.N. Photograph.)

Meredith *

Jonathan Meredith, born in Bucks County, Pa., about 1772, enlisted in the Marine Corps 6 June 1803 and was promoted to sergeant 1 August of the same year.

During an engagement in the harbor of Tripoli 3 August 1805, Sergeant Meredith saved the life of Lt. John Trippe of *Vixen*, who with a party of nine men had boarded a Tripolitan ship. Heavily outnumbered, the boarding party fought a fierce hand-to-hand combat, in which Trippe was severely wounded; Meredith protected him from what would have been the final blow. Four days later Meredith was killed in the explosion of *Gunboat No. 3* during a similar attack against the Tripolitans.

* Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Volume 4.
Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1969.

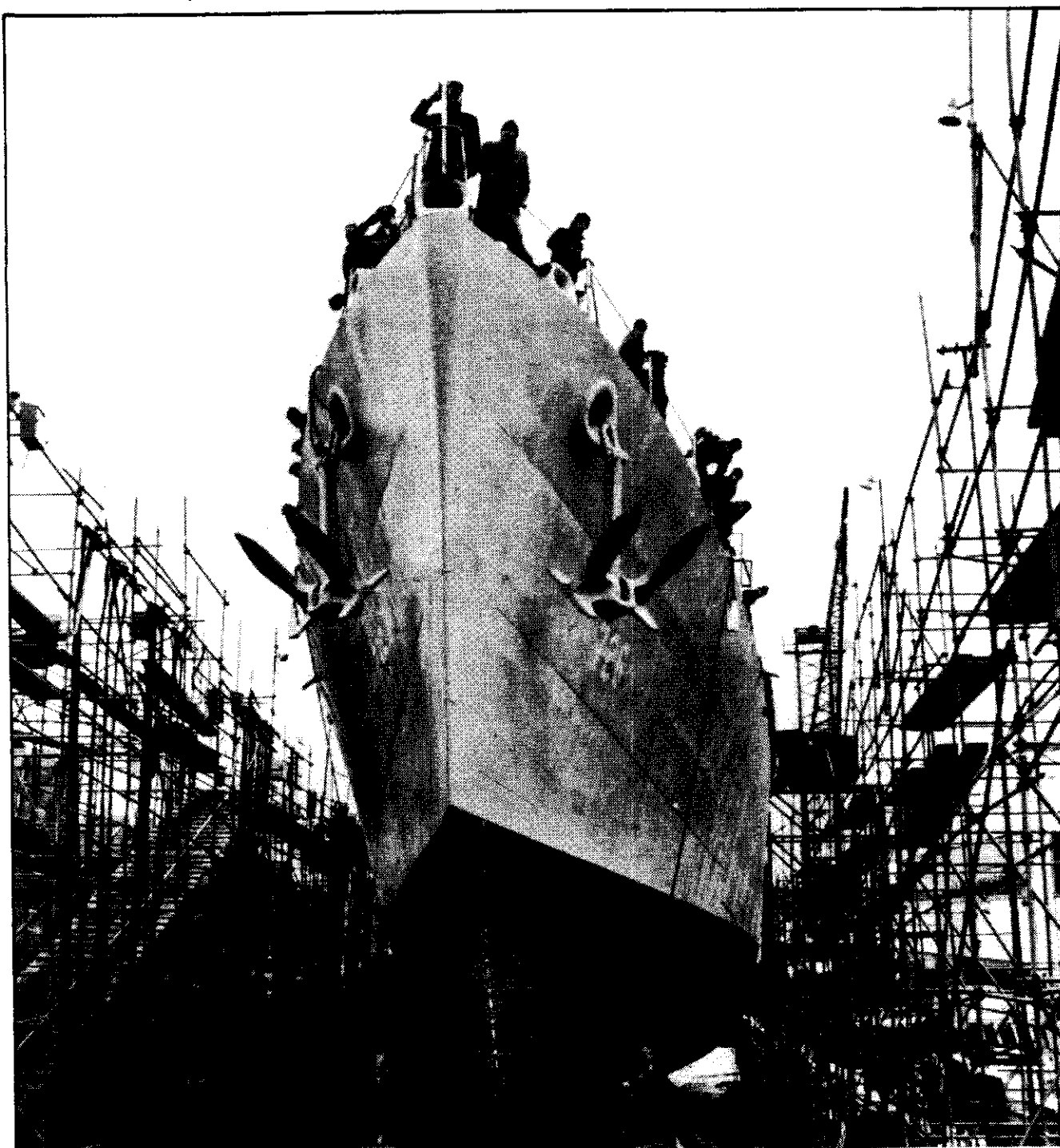


"In the name of the United States I christen thee Meredith!"

Notes: The champagne bottle is fitted with a "tuxedo" - made in the shipyard - which consists of a slotted aluminum casing or fine mesh to prevent broken glass from endangering the sponsor.

*On the launching stand, the champagne is kept in an insulated bag of about 60 degrees, to assure a frothy splash. If the weather is cold, an electric heater is provided to warm the champagne, with a spare bottle within easy reach as a backup to the original...just in case.**

** Keith, Frazier, Somerville & Harriotte W. B. Smith, *Ships of the United States Navy and Their Sponsors.* Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1952.*



The launching of the Allen M. Sumner-class destroyer U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726) at the Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine, on December 21, 1943. After fitting out she steamed to Boston, Massachusetts, where she received her fire-control and search radars. She hoisted her commission pennant at the Boston Navy Yard on March 12, 1944, Cdr. George Knuepfer, USN, in command. (Naval Hist. Center.)

DESTROYER MEREDITH LAUNCHES TUESDAY

**But Few Witness the Slide of
Twenty-First Destroyer
Built This Year**

But a handful of spectators braved the cold biting winds to watch the launching of the U. S. S. Meredith, launch from the north ways of the Bath Iron Works Corp., Tuesday morning.

Named for Sgt. Jonathan Meredith, U. S. Marine Corps, who had distinguished service during the war with Tripoli, 1803-4, the U. S. Meredith was the 21st ship to go over from the local ship-building plant this year. She was christened by Mrs. William Kopper of New York City, a great great grandniece of Sgt. Meredith. Mrs. Kopper was accompanied to Bath by her two small sons, Phillip and Bruce, and by James K. Lane of Portland.

Cmdr. E. Andrew Wilde Jr.
Apartment 339
1210 Greendale Ave.
Needham, Mass 02192

August 19, 1997

Dear Commander Wilde,

It was very interesting to talk with you this morning and to hear that you are researching the ship my mother commissioned in December of 1943, the USS Meredith (DE #726).

Yes, I remember the event clearly--our trip from New York City to Portland, where we spent the night in a hotel, then the pre-dawn drive to Bath and the fascinating goings-on at Bath Iron Works. (I recall a Navy officer assuring me that we were indeed seeing some "military secrets" and we shouldn't blab about them lest we help the enemy! My brother Bruce said he would keep his mouth open when mother swung the bottle in hopes of a taste of champagne. Such were the concerns of the young sons of the ship's sponsor.)

Sorry, I cannot identify the man named Lane whom you say a newspaper identifies as having been a member of our party. Nor can I say why my sister and our father did not make the trip. She (Juliette Starr Kopper) would have been 13 at the time, and she christened the next USS Meredith in Corpus Christi in about 1945 or '46.

Please send me whatever information you have about all this. (Admiral Morison's one-volume history of the Navy in WWII had a very brief mention of the Meredith's sinking at Normandy.) I look forward also to receiving a copy of your book in due course. Let me reiterate my conviction that you are engaged in noble work! Thanks for taking it on.

With good wishes,


Philip Kopper

USS Meredith (DD-726)*

The third MEREDITH DD-726) was built by the Bath Iron Works Corporation of Bath, Maine. Her keel was laid 26 July 1943, and she was launched 21 December 1943 under the sponsorship of Mrs. William Kopper, great-great-grandniece of Sergeant Jonathan Meredith, U.S. Marine Corps.

MEREDITH had an overall length of 376 feet, 6 inches; extreme beam, 40 feet, 10 inches; standard displacement, 2200 tons; maximum draft, 15 feet, 8 inches; designed speed of 34 knots; and a complement of 21 officers and 336 enlisted men. Her original armament was six 5-inch/38 dual-purpose guns in three twin mounts, two twin and two quadruple 40-mm antiaircraft mounts, eleven 20-mm antiaircraft guns, two quintuple 21-inch torpedo tube mounts and six depth charge projectors.

MEREDITH was placed in commission at the Boston Navy Yard on 14 March 1944, Commander George Knuepfer, USN, in command. She cleared Boston on 2 April for shakedown training operations while based at Bermuda and returned on 8 May for alterations in the Boston Navy Yard. On 16 May she put to sea as a part of the escort for a convoy which comprised thirteen merchant vessels and the fleet oiler AUCILLA (AO-76). The convoy reached Plymouth, England, on 27 May. MEREDITH was again under way on 4 June as part of the escort for a troop-laden amphibious landing craft bound for the invasion beaches of Normandy, France. Off UTAH Beach on 7 June, she was relieved of escort service and commenced gunfire support as directed by Navy spotters on the UTAH sector of the invasion beach. A few minutes before midnight she was assigned to a screening station north of the large combatants, in the Northwest Naval Gunfire Support Area of the UTAH Sector.

Arriving on station at 0110, she began patrol of her assigned area. At about 0152, 8 June, while changing course with right full rudder, MEREDITH struck a submerged contact mine amidships on the port side. A violent explosion shook the ship, opening a gaping hole 65 feet wide on the port side and blowing heavy machinery to starboard, thereby causing a list to starboard. All power and lighting were lost immediately; the ship stopped dead in the water; all communications were lost with the engineering spaces and the after part of the ship. Casualties among the ship's officers and enlisted men were: 8 killed, 28 missing and 27 wounded.

At about 0220 the ship settled deeper in the water, the list increased to 12 degrees and the starboard side of the main deck was awash. At about 0230 it was decided by the Captain to transfer all MEREDITH personnel to nearby ships. This was completed at about 0250.

A second call was made requesting the services of salvage tugs to assist the ship to the Transport Area. The tugs appeared at 0515, and shortly thereafter 48 men and 4 officers returned aboard the MEREDITH. The ship was taken in tow and reached the Transport Area at 0730. Salvage operations were started immediately.

At about 1430, orders were received to move the MEREDITH out of the Transport Area, and at 1600 she was anchored in 10 fathoms of water about three miles from the beach at Grandcamp, France, in the Bay of Seine.

An enemy air raid of the area was made between 0030 and 0200, 9 June. One 2,000 pound bomb dropped about 800 yards off the port bow of the MEREDITH, and shook the ship considerably; the stern moved and whipped sideways appreciably. The open seam on the superstructure deck opened out several inches. The after end of the ship worked back and forth noticeably throughout the night, though the sea was comparatively calm.

At about 0730, a thorough check of the ship revealed no change in conditions and salvage operations were renewed. At 1010, 9 June 1944, without any warning, the USS MEREDITH broke in two and went down amidships. The stern slid forward and down, upright, until just the depth charge racks and after portion of 5-inch Mount 3 were visible above the water's edge. The bow turned over to starboard until this section lay on its side, with only the turn of the foot remaining above the water.

The USS MEREDITH (DD-726) was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Area Service Medal with one Battle Star. She was stricken from the Navy list on 29 June 1944.

* Compiled from two undated MEREDITH (DD-726) histories on file in the ship's folder at the Washington Navy Yard (Ships' Histories Branch, Naval Historical Center). The portions used were selected for their completeness and accuracy when compared to the MEREDITH's action report for 6/8-9/44 and the rather brief history included in the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Personnel casualties were changed to agree with the machine-generated report prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war.

Typed 9/29/97
E. A. Wilde, Jr.

U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726)

Obituary for Captain George Knuepfer, USN (Ret.)
1904-1992*

Commanding Officer: 14 March 1944 to 9 June 1944

GEORGE KNUEPFER '27



Captain George Knuepfer, USN (Ret.) died at Villa Coronado Convalescent Home on 29 May 1992 as the result of a stroke. Arrangements are being made to scatter his ashes at sea as well as those of his wife, Natalie, who predeceased him by

three weeks.

Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, he attended elementary and high schools in Chicago and was appointed to the Naval Academy from Illinois to graduate with the Class of 1927.

On graduation, he served successively in: battleship, NEW MEXICO; destroyers, BARKER, ROBERT SMITH and DORSEY; cruiser CINCINNATI; Navy Postgraduate School; NTC Great Lakes; Submarine Tender HOLLAND; Naval Station, Olongopo, P.I.; and the Hydrographic Office, Portland, Or.

World War II duties included service in the carrier WASP and destroyer LANG, operating with the British fleet in North Sea and Atlantic waters. He was commended for his participation in WASP's "relief of Malta."

He then commanded destroyers BALDWIN and

MEREDITH. The latter ship was sunk while participating in close-in support of landings on Normandy. He was commended for his conduct prior to the ship's sinking. He was verbally commended and recommended for the Navy Cross and Silver Star for "saving lives" and the handling of his screening assignment off Utah Beach against enemy E-Boats. However, the superior officer who made the recommendation died and contrary opinions prevailed.

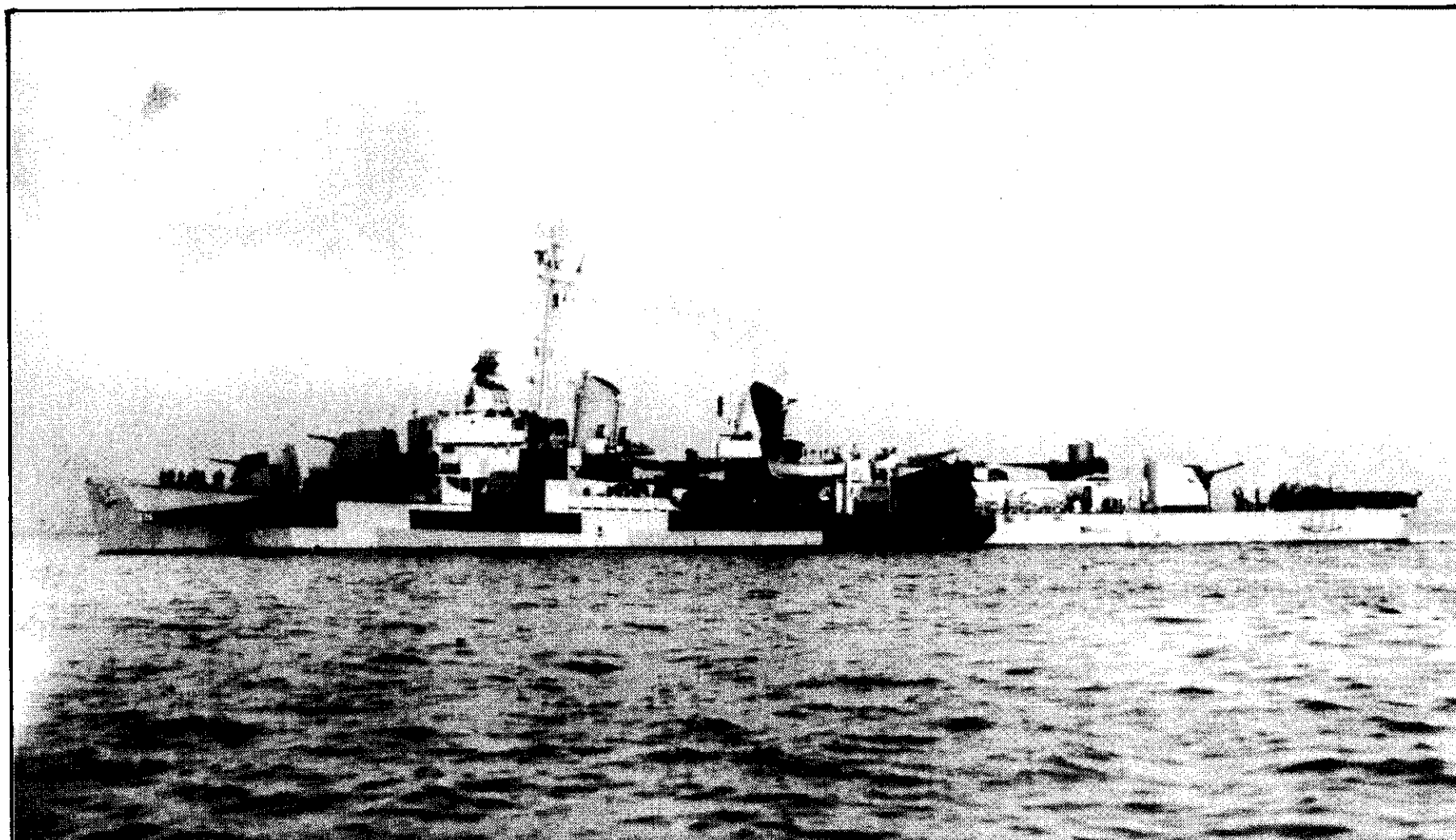
Subsequent assignments included: Executive Officer of the cruiser ST. PAUL, operating in Pacific Ocean Areas. His final assignment was as C.O., Electronics School, Mare Island and Small Craft Facility. He retired at his own request on completion of 20 years commissioned service.

Capt. Knuepfer was entitled to the following medals: American Defense Service, National Defense Service, European-African-Middle East Campaigns with 2 battle stars; Asiatic-Pacific Campaigns and WWII Victory.

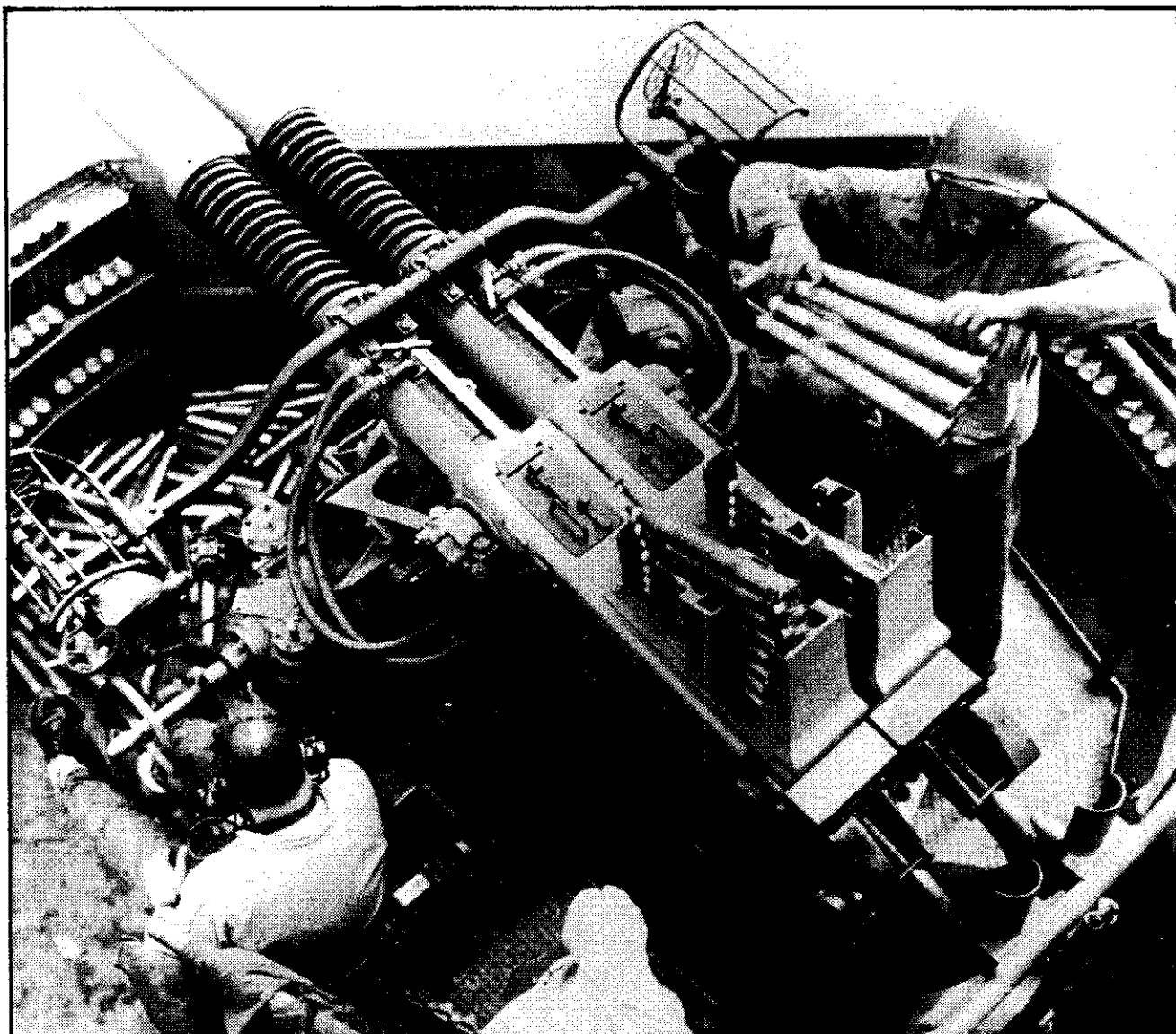
Retired from active duty in August 1947, he was employed by National Fabricated Products, Chicago; was General Manager and Vice President of Hoffman Electronics Corp; in 1960 organized Somanatics, Inc. in San Diego, and worked as a consultant for Photo Voltaic Solar Energy.

His wife, Natalie, predeceased him by three weeks.

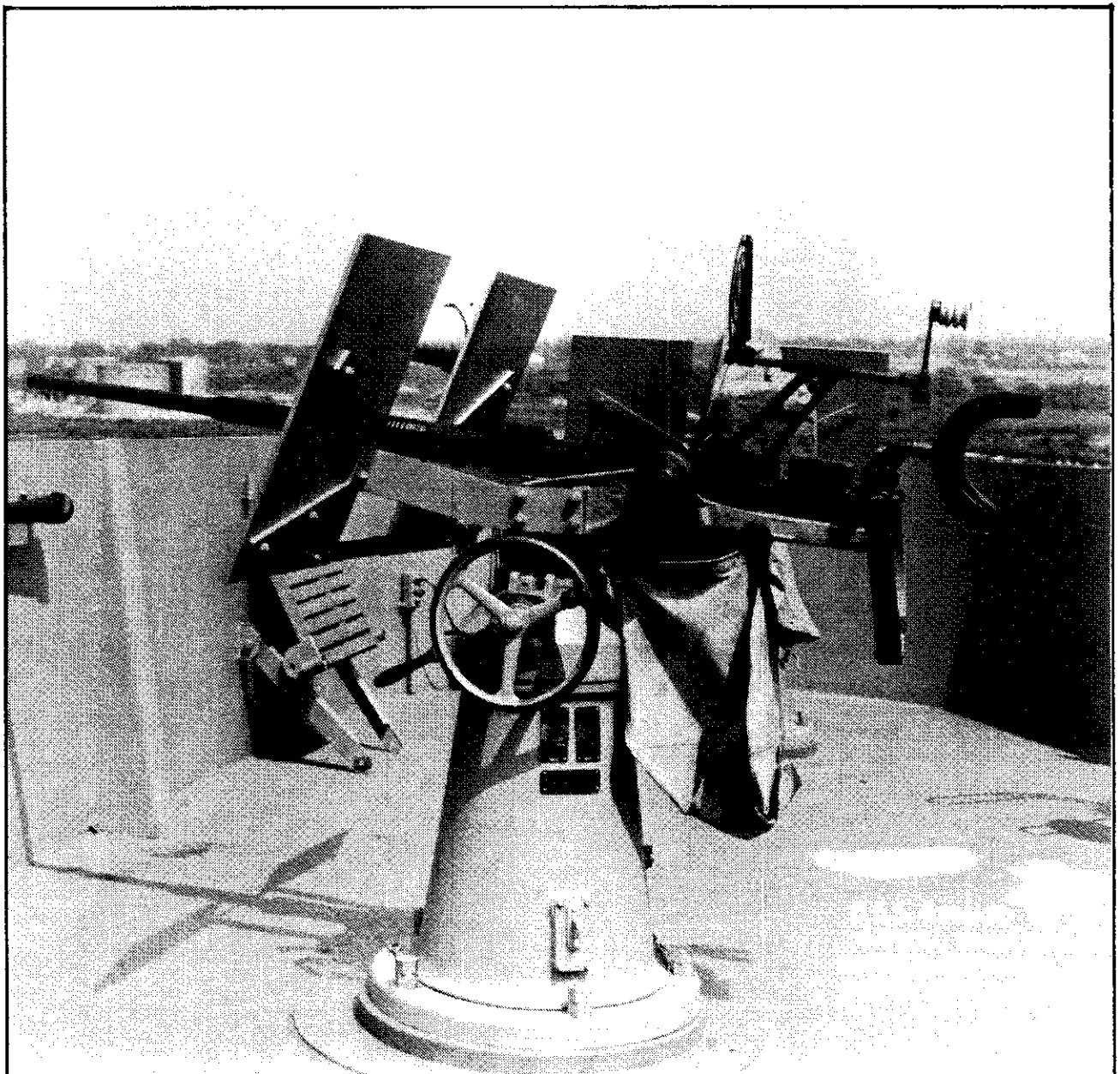
* *Shipmate* magazine, July-August 1992



(Boston, 3/29/44) The Meredith (DD-726) was armed with six 5-inch/38 dual-purpose guns in three twin mounts, two quintuple 21-inch torpedo tube mounts, twelve 40-mm Bofors antiaircraft guns in two twin and two quadruple mounts and eleven 20-mm Oerlikon machine cannons. For use against submarines, she carried depth charges in two stern racks and six side projectors ("K-guns"). The after 5-inch mount could fire ahead over the mast and bridge, so a cylindrical blast shield was provided to protect the crew on the after torpedo tube mount. (U.S. Naval Institute Collection.)



The 40-mm Bofors gun fired a two-pound explosive shell with an effective range of about 2,800 yards. It was primarily an antiaircraft weapon, but destroyers also used their 40-mm's against enemy strongpoints when they provided close-in gunfire support during landings. The gun crew for a twin mount consisted of a pointer, a trainer, a gun captain and four loaders (two for each barrel). The Bofors was capable of firing about 160 rounds/barrel/minute, but the number of rounds actually fired depended on the ability of the loaders to provide an uninterrupted supply of ammunition. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)



In 1941 the 20-mm Oerlikon air-cooled machine gun began to replace the .50-cal. water-cooled machine gun as the Navy's standard light antiaircraft weapon. (It was also called a machine cannon because it fired explosive shells.) This early Mark 4 version with an open-ring sight required a four-man crew: the gunner, a trunnion operator (to adjust the height of the gun carriage) and two loaders. When fitted with the Mark 14 gyroscopic sight, introduced in 1943, a range setter was also required to enter range data. The Oerlikon had an effective range of 1,600 yards and fired at a rate of 450 rounds/minute. (Official USN Photo.)

*Excerpt from Destroyers in Action
by Richard A. Shafter.**

"A Lovely Ship"

Destroyers! Mention the word and the layman's mind will conjure up a picture of a little ship steaming death-defying, head-on into the fire from an enemy battlewagon's heavy guns. In the heavy seaway the little ship is tossing like a cork, with the white water breaking high over her bows. Then suddenly she swerves hard to starboard. There are a couple of splashes on her portside and a moment later appear the bubbling wakes of the tin fish she has sent on their voyage of destruction. And a short while later there is a terrific crash. The enemy's sides and decks are clothed in sheets of smoke and flame from the explosions that tear her inwards apart. And another naval battle is won.

It is an inspiring picture that has adorned many a calendar sent by solicitous ship's chandlers and seed stores to their customers, to be remembered by for the rest of the year. The practice looks different. Whether it's even more romantic than the calendar artist envisioned, or just a drab, humdrum existence, depends very largely on the point of view of the individual man who crews a "tincan." One thing, however, can be said for it: it's most versatile. If Kipling's crack about the liner has of late found an officially sanctioned variation to describe the glamour girl of the Navy, "The Carrier, she's a Lady," then it can safely be varied once again: "The destroyer, she's a workhorse."

Pulling binder, hay rig, threshing machine or the "democrat" for the family on its way to church, it's all one to a farmer's workhorse. A Navy workhorse may be on antisubmarine patrol today: dropping depth charges in their prescribed pattern all over the spot where the cooperating Navy flier believes he has seen the underwater raider; tomorrow, she may be riding herd on a convoy of merchantmen: running breathlessly and tongue-lolling around her flock, shooin' stragglers into line, and then tackling, in the manner of good and faithful sheepdogs anywhere, all enemies regardless of size and number, whether aircraft, surface squadron, or wolf pack. Or they might install a pair of steel ovaries on her decks and give her a load of ugly horned eggs to drop in waters the enemy's fleet is certain to traverse. Then again, they might give her a

pair of paravanes to tow and send her out to sweep the channels leading to a new invasion beach clear of the mines which the enemy himself has sown there, and then the next day convert her into a fast transport and send her in with a deckload of Marine Raiders who are to establish the first beachhead foothold. And while weird landing craft are yet on their way with reinforcements, supplies, tanks and artillery, the destroyer that has landed them will stand by to give the Leathernecks who are digging themselves in on the narrow coral strip whatever fire support her 4- or 5-inch guns are capable of.

Then again, on duty with a task force, the destroyer is in the van and on the flanks of the capital ships, scouting, protecting, running interference and when the actual engagement begins, throwing a smoke screen around the carrier or battlewagon to spoil the enemy's gunnery. When disaster comes, when carrier, battleship or cruiser has received the deadly wound that causes the decks to buckle and burst with the explosion of magazines and fuel tanks, it's the destroyer that rushes in close, though the heat may blister what patches of paint are still left on her sea-bitten plates, and takes off the men still left alive after the unsuccessful battle to save their doomed ship. As the hull of the big capital ship slowly drifts down with the tide, a roaring inferno, yet still floating, it is the destroyer's job to come in and send the once proud craft to the bottom with a torpedo, to save her from the last ignominy of having her dead body defiled by the enemy's hands.

Rescue missions generally are hardly more than mere routine assignments among the manifold jobs that are a destroyer's lot. Many a flier, shot down by ack-ack, or forced down in a gale, later got back in the fight simply because some indefatigable DD would not give up the search. A quart of whiskey for her skipper and ten gallons of ice cream for her wardroom became the traditional price that any carrier gladly paid to a DD for each of its fliers delivered back aboard or safely landed in port.

"Let the DD's do it!" has almost become axiomatic with the Navy whenever there is a particularly unpleasant or difficult job under discussion. Their speed, their maneuverability, their relatively high firepower

for their size, and their comparatively low building price, have made destroyers not merely the most versatile, but ton for ton the most efficient, naval craft ever devised. They are the Navy's true "expendables."

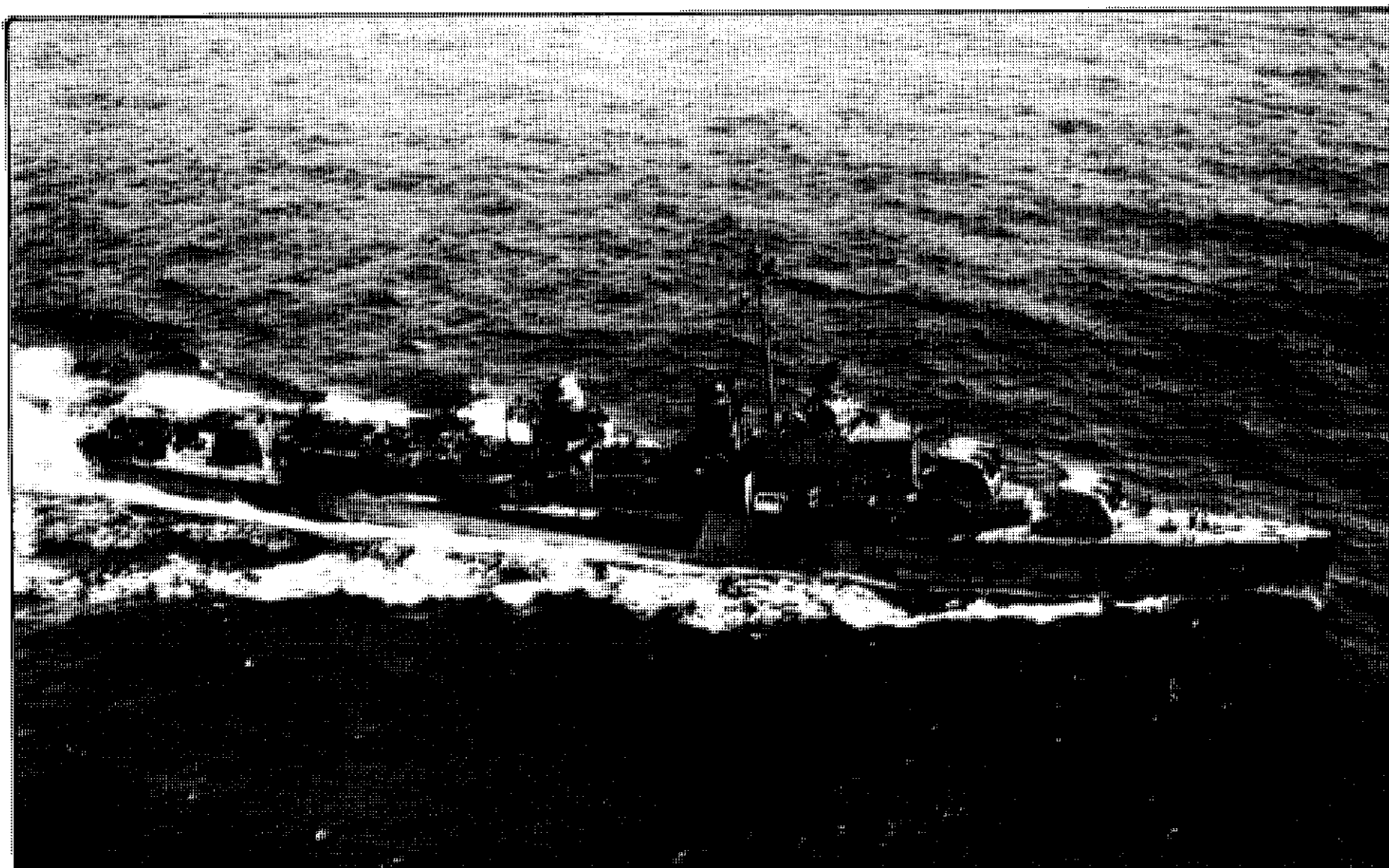
The spirit of the little ships reflects itself in that of their crews. Destroyermen are a bit apart from the rest of our man-of-war men. On their small ships they have to do without many of the comforts the crews of carriers, battleships or even cruisers enjoy. They live in cramped quarters. There is no canteen or ship's service booth where a man might get a coke, an ice cream or western story pulp magazine. Yet the destroyerman, though he beefs about it all and swears it's a dog's life, in his innermost heart glories in the hardships his particular trade imposes upon him. He's inclined to look down on the men from the big ships as "softies." His walk is a "destroyer roll." His hat sits precariously on one eyebrow. He is the bane of the Shore Patrol.

He'll abuse his ship roundly as the most uncomfortable, leakingest, buckingest crate that ever went to sea. But let somebody else pass unfavorable comment on her and he's up in arms. Asked why he wasn't applying for a transfer after he had given a lengthy and extremely critical recital of his ship's famed action, a survivor of the *Borie* put it all in a nutshell. "Me? No, thanks! There's too much red tape on a big ship for me. On a destroyer you know everybody with their good sides and their faults. And everybody knows you. You can't sham on a DD. You gotta be a sailor, mister."

Destroyers get into the blood not merely of the men that serve in them, but of anybody who has been given a chance to get acquainted with them. Even a master of the hard-boiled school of writing like John Steinbeck can wax dithyrambic over a little ship. After spending part of his correspondent's tour of duty aboard a DD he wrote:

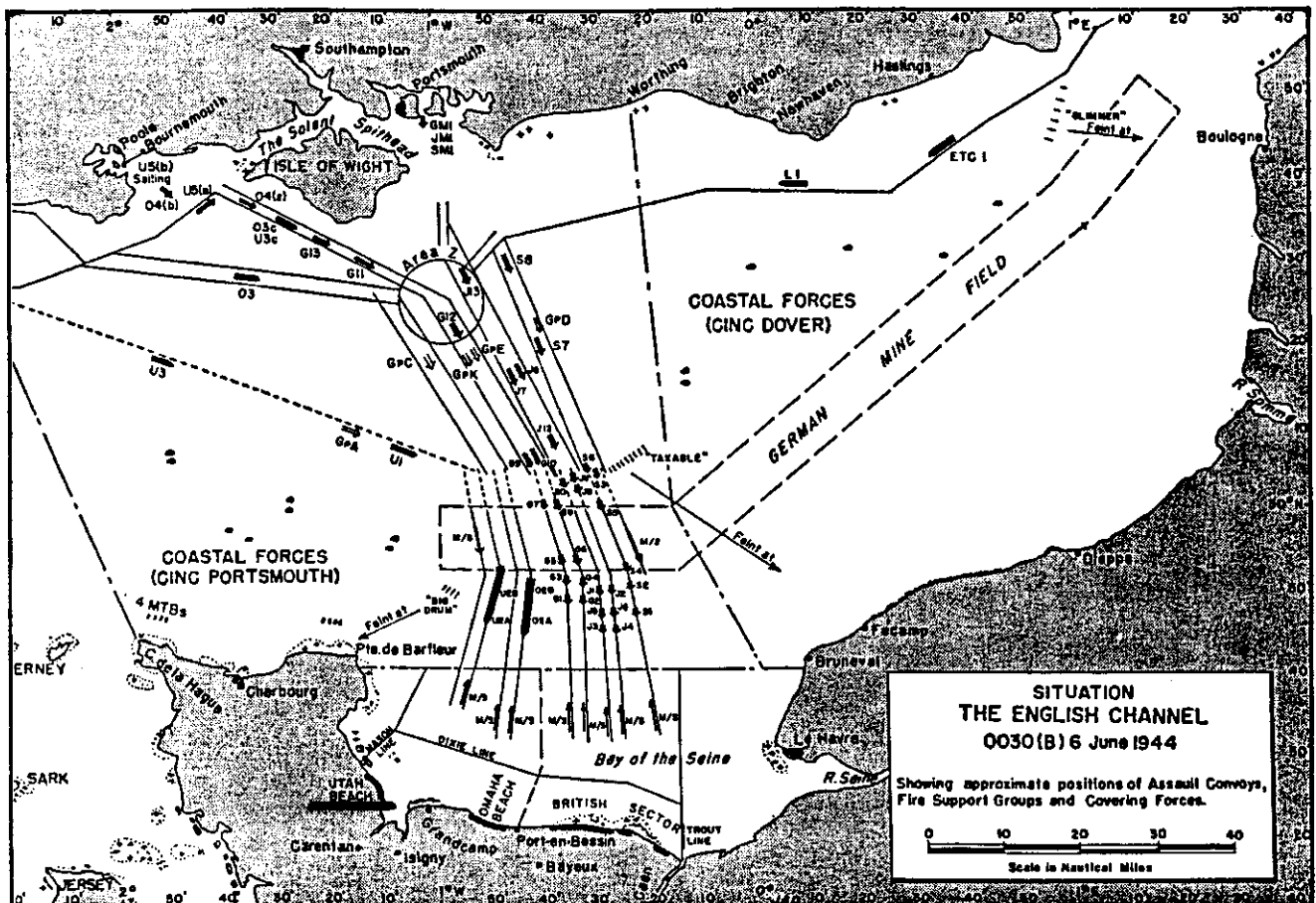
"A destroyer is a lovely ship, probably the nicest fighting ship of all. Battleships are a little like steel cities or great factories of destruction. Aircraft carriers are floating flying fields.

"Even cruisers are big pieces of machinery, but a destroyer is all boat. In the beautiful clean lines of her, in her speed and roughness, in her curious gallantry."



The USS Meredith (DD-725) in April, 1944, painted in a dazzle camouflage scheme, Measure 31/30. The hulls of the Fletcher and Sumner-class destroyers were almost identical, but the latter incorporated two major design improvements. Twin rudders reduced their tactical diameter from 950 yards (for the Fletcher's, at 30 kts.) to 700 yards, and a covered main-deck passageway extending the length of the topside structures provided a sheltered access to the machinery spaces - an important safety feature in heavy seas. The Sumner-class destroyers were also the first to incorporate a Combat Information Center (C.I.C.) in their original design. (Official U.S. Navy Photograph.)

U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726)



"Operation Neptune" was the code-name for the amphibious landing phase of "Operation Overlord," the invasion of Europe. On June 6, 1944, an armada of 2,727 Allied ships and small craft crossed the English Channel to land troops on the coast of Normandy, France, about 80 miles south of the English Channel ports of Portsmouth and Southampton. The destroyer Meredith was assigned to the "Utah Beach" Sector, at the western end of the Beach-head, where she screened the heavy ships against expected attacks by German E-boats and provided gunfire support to the U.S. troops ashore as directed by the Shore Fire Control Parties. (Morison's history, Vol. XI)

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

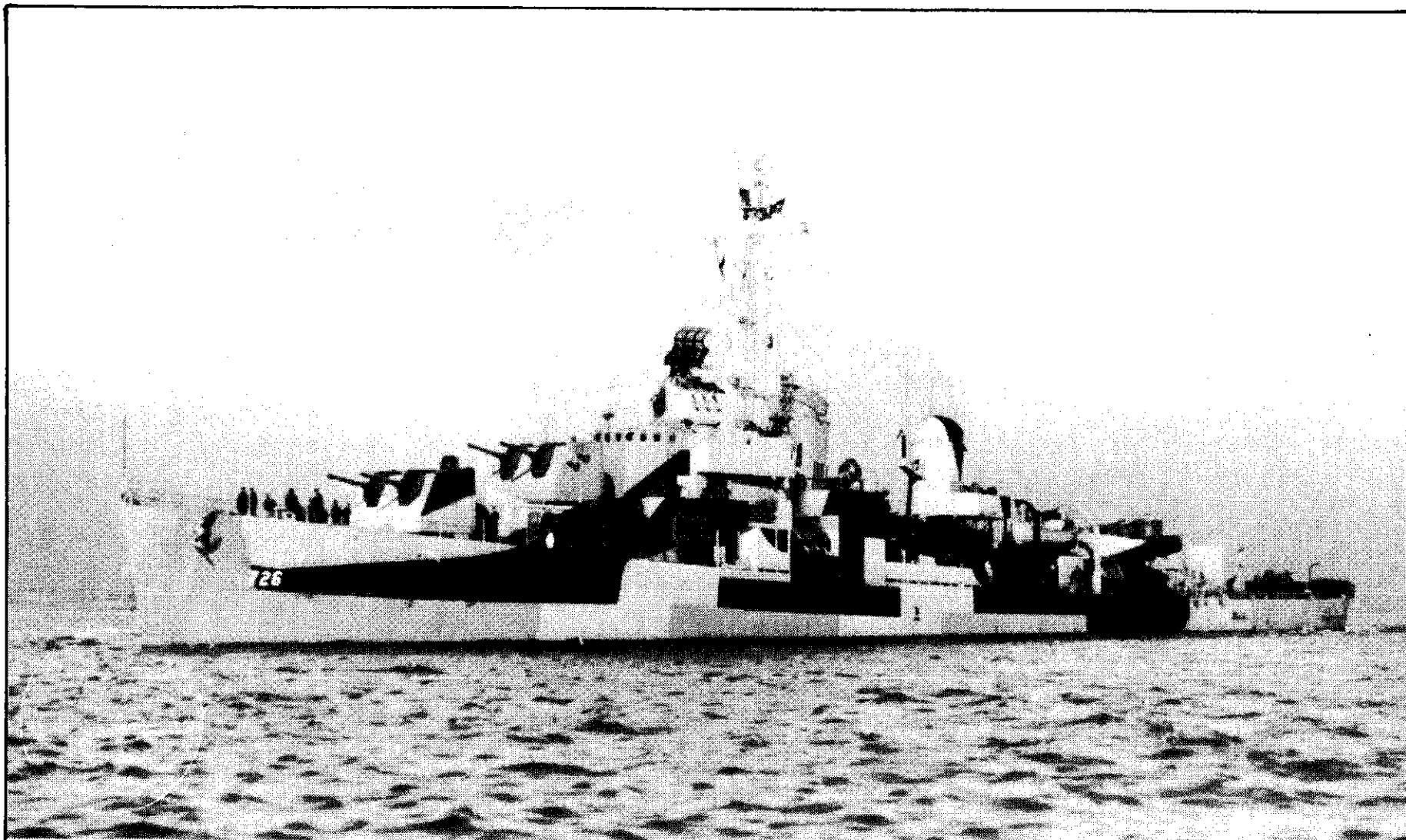
I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

This eve-of-battle message to Allied forces was read over all PA systems once ships cleared port. Retyped from a replica of the original message, held by the Imperial War Museum, included in D-Day, by Richard Collier (New York: Abbeville Publishing Group, 1992).

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
April, 1999



The USS Meredith (DD-726) (Cdr. George Knuepfer, USN) in Boston Harbor on March 29, 1944, shortly after her commissioning. Four Babcock & Wilcox boilers and 2-shaft General Electric geared turbines gave her a rated maximum speed of 36.5 knots. Other characteristics of these Allen M. Sumner-class destroyers:

Standard displacement	2,200 tons	Draft (maximum)	15' 8"
Length overall	376' 6"	Shaft horsepower	60,000 H.P.
Beam	40' 10"	Range (at 12 knots)	4,620 miles

(Official U.S. Navy Photograph.)



German motor torpedo boats, called "E-boats" by the Allies, threatened the Invasion Fleet, so destroyers at Normandy were often assigned to a screening station around the heavy ships. The vessel shown is an earlier model, but in 1944 these E-boats were powered by three 20-cylinder diesel engines rated at 2,500 hp each, giving them a maximum speed of 43.5 knots. They were 115 ft. long and displaced 113 tons. These vessels carried four torpedoes: two in their tubes and two more amidships which could be reloaded in 45 seconds. Six sea mines could be carried in place of the reloads. They were manned by 26-30 officers and men.

(Naval Historical Foundation Collection.)

DOD Dir, 5200.9 Sept. 27, 1958

NM by *[Signature]* Date 5-9-69UNITED STATES SHIP MEREDITH (DD726)

TUESDAY

(Day)

6

(Date)

June

(Month)

1944

RECONSTRUCTED LOGADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS00 - 04

Patrolling in van of Convoy U-3 course 116°(T and pgo) speed 6-1/2 knots (60 rpms). Boilers 2 and 4 in use. Spit at General Quarters with material condition Able set. Numerous white flares and gunfire flashes sighted on southeastern horizon throughout the watch.

[Signature]
J. R. BURTON, LT(jg) USNR
Lieut (jg), D-V(G), USNR.

04 - 08

Patrolling as before.

[Signature]
J. R. BURTON, LT(jg) USNR
Lieut (jg), D-V(G), USNR.

08 - 12

Patrolling as before. Mustered crew on stations, absentees none. 0957 Passed flag buoy marking channel #1 on starboard beam. Changed course 210° (T and pgo). Base course 169° T, steering right of base course to compensate for strong set of current. Passing to port of red and yellow buoys marking channel at 1 mile intervals. Made daily inspection of magazines and smokeless powder samples. Condition normal.

[Signature]
E. G. FINDER, Ensign, D-V(G), U.S.N.R.

12 - 16

Patrolling station as before. Standing in through channel #1 base course 169° T, base speed 5 knots. Steering various courses to compensate for set of current. 1520. Convoy entered transport area and escorts were detached to proceed as per previous orders. Proceeding to North-East of Transport Area.

[Signature]
J. R. BURTON, LT(jg) USNR
Lieut(jg), D-V(G), USNR.

16 - 20

Patrolling at 10 knots (092 rpms) to Northeast of transport area.

[Signature]
E. G. FINDER, Ensign, D-V(G), USNR.

20 - 24

Patrolling at 10 knots (092 rpms) to Northeast of Transport Area. 2120 Closing U.S.S. RAYFIELD. Navigator at conn. 2154 Captain left ship for conference on U.S.S. RAYFIELD. 2237 Captain returned to ship. Standing out to commence A/S and E-Boat patrol 3 miles to Northeast of Transport Area. 2300 Commenced patrolling at 10 knots (092 rpms).

[Signature]
E. S. DGE, Lieut (jg), D-V(G), USNR.

APPROVED:

[Signature]
G. KNEPPER, Commander, U.S. Navy,
Commanding Officer.

Examined:

[Signature]
W. B. HAMMER, Lieut-Comdr. U.S. Navy,
Navigator.

FORM BY *[Signature]* Date *2-7-69*UNITED STATES SHIP MEREDITH (DD726)WEDNESDAY 7June19 44

(Day)

(Date)

(Month)

RECONSTRUCTEDADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS00 - 04

Maintaining A/S and E-Boat patrol 3 miles Northeast of Transport Area in Bay of the Seine. Speed 10 knots (92 rpms) ship at General Quarters, material condition Able set. Boilers #2 and 4 in use.

E. G. Finder
E. G. FINDER,
Ensign, D-V(G), USNR.

04 - 08

Patrolling as before. 0550 Ceased patrol and proceeded on various courses at various speeds to Shore Fire Support Station #2. 0718 On station and communications established with Shore Fire Control Party #31. 0740 Assigned target. Shifted ship's position 2000 yards to Westward to clear boat lane from transport area before firing. 0755 Fired 2 six gun 5" inch salvos. Advised target destroyed and party was advancing.

J. R. Burton
J. R. BURTON,
Lieut (jg), D-V(G), USNR.

08 - 12

Maintaining Station in Fire Support Station #2. Mustered crew on stations, no absentees. 0830 Underwater explosion 3300 yards off starboard bow. 0905 LCT 486 struck mine 3000 yards off starboard bow and sank immediately. Approximately 12 minesweeps proceeded to that immediate area and commenced sweeping operations. 0923 UTAH beach bombed or shelled. No enemy planes sighted. 0938 U.S.S. TIDE, (AM-125) struck mine 3000 yards off starboard beam and began settling in water after violent explosion. Numerous mines were detonated throughout morning by mine sweepers in that area. Made daily inspection of magazines and smokeless powder samples. Conditions normal.

E. G. Finder
E. G. FINDER,
Ensign, D-V(G), USNR.

12 - 16

Maintaining station in Fire Support Station #2 and communications with Shore Fire Control Party #31. Advised by SFCP to standby for further target assignment. Spitfire plane with British insignia crashed from approximately 300 feet altitude, 400 yds off port bow. Pilot observed to fall clear. Motor whaleboat lowered and body of pilot recovered. Body identified as William John DROPE, card #1144638, Royal Canadian Air Force. Death certified by ship's doctor to have been caused by multiple injuries. 1429 Landing barge from LST 49, Medical Guard Ship, alongside. Body of pilot transferred.

E. G. Finder
E. G. FINDER,
Ensign, D-V(G), USNR.

16 - 20

Maintaining station in Fire Support Station #2. Standing by for target assignment by SFCP #31.

J. R. Burton
J. R. BURTON,
Lieut (jg), D-V(G), USNR.

20 - 24

Maintaining station in Fire Support Station #2, standing by for target assignment by SFCP #31. 2353 Proceeding to area to Northward of U.S.S. TUSCALOOSA to maintain E-Boat patrol. Captain at Conn.

E. S. Doe
E. S. DOE,
Lieut (jg), D-V(G), USNR.

APPROVED:

[Signature]
E. H. PFFER, Cmdr. U.S. Navy,
Commanding Officer.

Examined:

[Signature]
J. R. BURTON, Lieut. Cmdr. U.S. Navy,
Navigator.

UNITED STATES SHIP NEREDITH (DE726) THURSDAY 8 June, 19 44.
(Day) (Date) (Month)

RECONSTRUCTED

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS

00 - 04

Proceeding on various courses at various speeds to area Northward of U.S.S. TUSCALOOSA to maintain E-Boat patrol. Boilers 2 and 4 in use. Ship at General Quarters material condition Able set. Captain at Conn. 0129 On station, commenced patrolling. 0134 Heavy underwater explosion 700 yards on starboard beam. 0150 Right standard rudder. 0152 Heavy explosion amidship port side. Depth charges placed on safe on orders of Captain. Communication with repair parties, engine, and fire rooms out. Steering control lost. Ship dead in the water and listing 15° to starboard almost immediately. Report by messenger from Repair 1 and 3 indicates that explosion was centered in #2 fire room and breaching the transverse bulkheads between that space and forward and after engine rooms accompanied with immediate flooding. Due to extent of flooding and fact that there was no fire magazines were not flooded. Ship was inspected for internal flooding but was watertight with exception of the three engine and fireroom spaces. Jettisoning of top side weights commenced. 0212 Captain gave order to remove personnel to near by ships. PC-1232 and PC 1263 alongside to port taking off men. DE 68, U.S.S. EATES placed her port quarter along starboard side of our forecastle and remainder of men left ship.

0630 Commanding Officer, and 3 additional officers, and 35 men returned to ship to attempt salvage. Tug BARNOCK came alongside to assist. Commodore Sullivan, U.S.N.R., inspected ship. Preparations made for towing to shallow water by tug.

0800 Towing operation commenced by tug. Ship working heavily with fore and aft motion of main deck.

0900 Tug completed towing operation. Anchored and commenced salvage operation. Commanding Officer and salvage officer proceeded to U.S.S. PAYFIELD for conference.

1100 Commanding Officer returned to ship.

1130 Tug commenced towing from alongside. Ship again working heavily with fore and aft motion.

1230 Ship anchored in shallow water approximately 4000 yards from UTAH Beach. Commenced salvaging top side weights. Jettisoned starboard anchor and chain. Removed (3) 20MM mounts from fantail, (2) 20 MM mounts from starboard quarter, (1) quad. 40 MM mount removed from starboard side. All depth charges and smoke screen generators jettisoned. All portable top side weights jettisoned. Arrangements were made to lift the (2) torpedo mounts and also 5 inch mounts.

1830 Commanding Officer and salvage party left ship. Security watch of 4 officers and 15 men came aboard. Bodies of Lieutenant (junior grade) James Robert WAGNER, 119712, E-V(G), U.S.N.R.; ALEXANDER, Richard Clyde, 782-42-72, S2/c, V-6, U.S.N.R.; EIEGEL, David (n), 814-89-10, S1/c, V-6S, U.S.N.R.; BREAU, "A" "B" John, 274-07-32, CEM(PA), U.S.N.; LETSON, Wyle Quillian, 832-36-15, EMS/c, V-6S, U.S.N.R.; and PRICE, George Lewis, 835-50-52, S1/c, V-6S, U.S.N.R., were delivered to Army Authorities at UTAH Beach for burial.

2100 Salvage operations ceased. Tug cleared from alongside and anchored 500 yards off port quarter. Security watch set.

2300 Sporadic Bombing attacks on allied shipping. Several heavy bombs dropped close aboard off port bow.

J. K. Burton, RKG 9 USN

APPROVED: *[Signature]*
J. K. Burton, RKG 9, Commander, U.S. Navy,

Examined: *[Signature]*

DECLASSIFIED ~~PARTIAL~~

DOD Dir. E200.9 Sept. 27, 1953

Page _____

N/A by McLure Date 5-9-69UNITED STATES SHIP MEREDITH (DD728)FRIDAY9June1944

(Day)

(Date)

(Month)

RECONSTRUCTEDADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS/

0030 Bombing attacks ceased.

0800 Tug RAMMOCK alongside to port. Throughout the night ship worked heavily and showed indications of breaking in two. Tug waiting for barge on which to place 5" and torpedo mounts.

1030 Ship broke in two and sank with only forecastle and fantail remaining above water. All personnel of tug and security watch were rescued by LCU's which were in vicinity.

J R Burton, R. H. USN

APPROVED:

[Signature]
A. McAFFEE, Commander, U.S. Navy,
Commanding Officer.

Examined:

[Signature]
B. R. RANCE, Lieut-Comdr. U.S. Navy.

Navigator.

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET

ACTION REPORT

USS MEREDITH

DD-726

SERIAL NONE

20 JUNE 1944

LOSS OF USS MEREDITH (DD-726).

INVASION OF NORMANDY - WESTERN NAVAL
TASK FORCE - FORCE U - TASK GROUP 125.8,
STRUCK MINE, 8 JUNE, AND SANK 9 JUNE
1944

76341

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

A16/A9

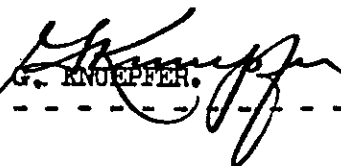
U.S.S. MEREDITH
(Administration)

20 June 1944.

~~SECRET~~
DECLASSIFIED

From: Commander George Knuepfer, U.S. Navy.
To : Commander U.S. Naval Forces Europe, London, England.
Subject: Report of Loss of U.S.S. MEREDITH (DD726) - Submittal of,
Enclosure: (A) Twenty (20) copies of subject report.

1. Enclosure (A) is submitted herewith in its entirety for action, distribution and forwarding. No advance copies have been forwarded, mailed or distributed by this administrative command. There are twenty (20) copies of this report included herein with routing designated for only sixteen (16), leaving four (4) extra copies available for additional distribution.


G. KNUEPFER.

A16/A9

U.S.S. MEREDITH
(Administration)

20 June 1944.

~~SECRET~~

From: Commanden George Knuepfer, U.S. Navy.
To : The Secretary of the Navy.
Via : (1) ComDesRon-60.
(2) Commander Bombardment Group (CTG-125.8).
(3) Commander Force "U" (OTF-125).
(4) Naval Commander Western Task Force (OTF-122).
(5) Commander U.S. Naval Forces Europe,
(6) Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.

Subject: Loss of U.S.S. MEREDITH (DD726).

Reference: (a) Article 841(3), U.S. Navy Regulations.
(b) Article 712, U.S. Navy Regulations.
(c) "Report of Loss" despatch 161547B to Com, 12th Flt., SecNav, ComInch, CF-122; Info; to CinCLant, ComDesLant, CTF125, CTG125.8.
(d) "Report of Casualties" despatch to Comnaveu; info; CTF122, CTF125, CTF127 dated 14 June 1944.
(e) "Report Status of Personnel Killed or Missing" Mailgram in accordance Comnaveu order No. 73.
(f) Medical Officer's Report to BUM&S via; Comnavau.

Enclosures: (A) List of officers surviving, killed, wounded and missing.
(B) List of men surviving, killed, wounded and missing.

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH (Retyped 9/25/97)

1. The U.S.S. MEREDITH (DD726) of Destroyer Division 119, Squadron 60, escorted Convoy TCU-24B from the United States to the United Kingdom and arrived in Portland, England, on 28 May 1944. On 1 June the Commanding Officer was briefed and issued all necessary publications for OPERATION NEPTUNE at Plymouth, England. The MEREDITH was assigned to escort Convoy U-3 to the Transport Area and then as a unit of the Area Screen or Naval Gunfire Support Group under Commander Force "U," Western Naval Task Force, Operation Order No. 3-44 for OPERATION NEPTUNE.

2. Convoy U-3, composed of 16 troop-laden LST's and 6 Rhinos, Escort Commander, Commanding Officer U.S.S. MEREDITH, and eleven other Allied escort ships, departed Torquay, England, on 5 June 1944. The convoy arrived safely and intact in the Transport Area at the scheduled time on 6 June 1944 (D-day). The MEREDITH was assigned to the Area Screen by Commander Force "U" (CTF-125) for the night of 6 June and screened the NE Sector of UTAH area. The following morning at 0600 7 June, the MEREDITH was assigned to Station No. 2 in the Naval Gunfire Support Group Bombardment Area and provided gunfire support as directed by the Shore Fire Control Parties on UTAH beach. At about 2350 7 June the ship received orders from Commander Bombardment Group to take station near the TUSCALOOSA, located in the NW Naval Gunfire Support Area of UTAH, to screen to the northward of the heavy ships in that area. This assignment was believed to be due to reports of enemy naval forces approaching this area. The screening area was approached from the NE after proceeding along the southern, eastern and northern boundaries of UTAH area. At about 0110 MEREDITH arrived in the screening area and commenced a vigorous patrol of assigned area.

3. The MEREDITH had been at General Quarters with Condition Affirm set since departing with Convoy U-3. This condition was modified only to the extent to permit men to answer calls of nature; during meal hours to permit men to be fed at their battle stations; and, twice a day for men to wash when conditions permitted. At all other times half of the men on battle stations were permitted to rest and were alerted when any attacks approached the UTAH area. Thus, at all times, all batteries were in full readiness to open fire and to sustain fire.

4. At about 0115 various unidentified planes were flying about the area and ALERT was given to all stations. There was scattered fire from various heavy ships and screening vessels. About six destroyers and several DE's and PC's were patrolling in the screening area. Station was maintained by radar bearing and verified visually on the TUSCALOOSA. Since no definite screening sector had been assigned and because visual signalling was considered inadvisable under the existing conditions, screening station was established in the NE sector of the area, distance 1000 to 2000 yards from TUSCALOOSA and a battleship believed to be NEVADA. The positions of the various ships screened and of the screen were plotted in CIC by the Executive Officer and their positions by types were established. The speed used was from 10 to 15 knots with frequent changes of speed and radical changes of course. No greater speeds were considered practicable because of close proximity of other ships in the screen. At about 0120 two low-flying planes identified as HE-177's by the Recognition Officer were sighted about 1500 yards to westward of TUSCALOOSA on a generally southerly course. The order to open fire was given but was not carried out. Due to low-hanging clouds the Assistant Gunnery Officer in the director did

not see them and could not pick them up on the FD radar because of their low altitude and proximity of land and nearby ships. At about 0138 an underwater explosion was heard about 1000 yards on starboard beam. An unidentified 1630 destroyer in that area let out a huge cloud of smoke and a stream of sparks from her stack but appeared unaffected in any other way. No flash or smoke were seen; the explosion could have been a torpedo reaching the end of its run. No small pips were indicated on SG radar screen or seen by lookouts and no sound contact was made by listening watch on sound gear to indicate presence of E-boats or submarines. Due to numerous night fighters in the area and the lack of any information regarding this coverage or reports of enemy planes approaching or in the area the air search radar was not manned and would not have been of much value because of the numerous targets present. In addition, its use might disclose the position of the force to the enemy. The FD radar was in a standby condition and cut in whenever gunfire was observed or suspicious air flying targets observed. The necessary and stringent orders for opening fire promulgated by the operations orders, restricted AA fire a great deal, unless a target was definitely recognized and identified or was attacking.

5. At about 0152, 8 June 1944, with DG coils properly set while changing course with right full rudder from a southerly course, speed 10 knots, the MEREDITH struck, what is believed to be a submerged contact mine, amidships on the port side. The estimated position of the ship was Latitude 49-33.3 N. Longitude 01-06.3 W. Depth of water was 12 fathoms. The sea was choppy with a fresh breeze blowing; sky low and overcast with a ceiling of about 1000 feet. The moon was up and visible occasionally through breaks in the clouds. The bearing and distance from the various originally assigned positions by OPERATION NEPTUNE of the heavy ships in the N.W. Naval Gunfire Support area were as follows: TUSCALOOSA 070 T - 1.3 miles; QUINCY 030 T - 1.7 miles; NEVADA 350 T - 3.0 miles.

6. A violent explosion shook the ship, appeared to lift her up and throw her forward. A huge geyser of water drenched the entire forward part of the ship, and falling debris rained upon the open bridge area. The personnel on the bridge were thrown to the deck and against the sides of the open bridge. There was a total absence of any flash, smoke or flame from this explosion. As the cloud of water settled only steam rushing from the after stack area was evident, and this subsided rapidly. The explosion appeared to have occurred deep down in the ship on the port side over the After Fireroom. All power and lighting were lost immediately; the ship stopped dead in the water, turning slowly to starboard; all communications were lost with the engineering spaces and the after part of the ship. The bridge was able to establish communications with Repair I and the forward part of the ship, including Plot, over sound-powered telephones only. Repair I was instructed to get in touch with Repair III by messenger and to have the Damage Control officer aft in Repair III report on the extent of damage and flooding. The Torpedo Officer, who was on watch on the bridge at the time, was sent aft to check on the depth charges. He returned shortly thereafter and reported that all depth charges were set on "safe" and that all impulse charges had been removed.

7. There was no hysteria and no panic among the personnel; orders were obeyed smartly and all hands outside of the stricken area remained at their stations.

7. (Cont'd) I remained on the bridge with those who were stationed there at General Quarters. The Executive Officer, who had been at his station in CIC, checked in with me on the bridge and then proceeded aft to the scene of the damage. The MEREDITH did not appear to be in any danger of sinking immediately, but all hands were ordered topside onto the undamaged areas and told to assist the injured and the Repair Parties in every way. There were several screening vessels in close proximity ready to render any assistance required. I had the Communications Officer call the Task Force and Group Commanders over the TBY and request two Salvage Tugs to assist the MEREDITH to the Transport Area. The Communications Officer reported that an acknowledgment had been received, but due to poor communications he did not know from whom. Due to the strong tides and currents in this area there was grave danger of the ship drifting towards the enemy shore.

8. At about 0220 the ship appeared to settle deeper in the water, the list increased to 12 degrees and the starboard side of the main deck was awash. All hands were ordered to the main deck to stand by the life floats and nets. At about 0230, after having received a complete report of the damage sustained and reports of injured, I decided to transfer all personnel to nearby ships for their own safety. The ship was drifting towards the enemy shore, and with the increased settling in the water this appeared to be the best decision. The major damage was confined to the area of free flooding in the Forward Engine room, After Fireroom and After Engine room. These areas had a gaping hole 65 feet wide on the port side, open to the sea. Heavy machinery had obviously been either blown out of the port side of these spaces or had been blown to starboard, thereby causing the list to starboard. The ship had reached a position of static balance and would remain in this condition if the huge bulkheads on either side of these spaces would hold. If they gave way the ship would either capsize or break in two amidships. Any jettisoning of major weights might also upset this balance and produce the same effect. Extensive shoring of these huge bulkheads, reaching from the keel to the main deck was not considered feasible; besides, these bulkheads were solid and intact with no apparent bulges or breaks. The bilges were dry forward and aft of the damaged area. The extent of damage to the keel could not be determined in darkness in these spaces filled with torn and mangled machinery. Everything possible had been done for the ship by my personnel and Salvage Tugs had been requested in accordance with the Salvage Plan for OPERATION NEPTUNE. The Salvage Plan for OPERATION NEPTUNE had been well planned. In my opinion the ship could be saved by salvage operations and the salvage equipment available in the area. I therefore decided to evacuate all personnel to nearby ships and to place my key officers and men and myself aboard one of the ships and to return aboard the MEREDITH at dawn or prior to that time if the Salvage Tugs arrived sooner.

9. At about 0235 two PC's and a DE who were close aboard and who had offered assistance were hailed. PC 1263 came alongside to port, forward; all injured and about one-hundred and thirty men and two officers were placed aboard her. When she pulled away PC 1232 came alongside to port and took the Executive Officer and about ninety officers and men. The USS BATES (DE-68) secured to the starboard bow at about the same time and took off about one-hundred and twenty men and myself. These ships also used their boats for transferring personnel. PC 1263 was instructed to proceed to the U.S.S. BAYFIELD, Flagship of

9. (cont'd) Commander Force "U" in the Advanced Transport Area. PC 1263 transferred all MEREDITH personnel to the BATES. The ship was cleared of all personnel by about 0250. Several men who had left the ship on (? - End of para. 9 on original, signed, copy of this action report.)

10. The following conditions and damage to the MEREDITH were established:

(a) From an inspection of the damaged area and from the accounts of survivors from the Forward and After Engineerooms, the explosion appeared to have been centered on the port side of the After Fireroom. The forward bulkhead was pushed into the Forward Engineeroom and the after bulkhead into the After Engineeroom. All twelve (12) of the personnel on watch in the After Fireroom were missing. Of the twelve men (12) men on watch in the Forward Engineeroom 5 were missing, 1 was dead, 4 are hospitalized and 2 are unhurt. Of thirteen (13) men on watch in the After Engineeroom: 2 were missing, 9 are hospitalized and 2 are unhurt.

(b) Free floodings had taken place to within four feet of the overhead of the Forward Engineeroom, After Fireroom and Engineeroom. Bulkheads 110 and 130-½ were gone, and across the area on the port side was a gaping hole 65 feet wide, open to the sea. The extent of flooding in C-201-E, shaft alley and the Machine Shop could not be determined. It was believed bulkhead 148 in this area had been holed by flying machinery. A test plug into the Machine Shop indicated pressure and flooding. Boundaries of the flooded area were:

- (1) Forward - after bulkhead of the Forward Fireroom at bulkhead 92½;
- (2) Aft - after bulkhead of C-201E, shaft alley, Machine Shop at bulkhead 157 and forward bulkhead of cofferdam, shaft alley and Diesel Generator Room (C-202-E) at bulkhead 148;
- (3) Starboard - side appeared intact along entire length of ship;
- (4) Port - open from about frame 94 to 131;
- (5) Bottom - condition of keel unknown, but port side appeared to be open to the keel as far as could be determined.

(c) All boundaries of the free flooded area from main deck down were solid and intact. Bilges were dry in all areas forward and aft of the flooded area. There was very little oil in the water, and this was believed to have come from lines to boilers and from the engineerooms.

(d) In the damaged areas the machinery had been either blown over the side or had been displaced to starboard approximately as follows:

- (1) One-third machinery from Forward Engineeroom missing or blown to starboard side.
- (2) Two-thirds machinery and boilers from After Fireroom missing or blown to starboard side. Tanks B-12-W and B-14-W had all sides gone.
- (3) One-half machinery from After Fireroom missing or blown to starboard side.
- (4) Port side main deck and ship's side from frame 94 to 131 missing with edges of demarkation torn, ragged and bulging, up to frame 92 forward and frame 148 aft.
- (5) Superstructure deck and port bulkhead from frame 110 to 131 to centerline missing. The entire seam from port to starboard sides of the Superstructure Deck along bulkhead 130½ was curled and bulged up; rivets were cut loose but the rivet holes and deck plating were not

- 10.(d)(5) (Cont'd) torn. This appeared to be the only venting evident on the starboard side besides bulging of deck plates forward and aft of No. 2 stack for about six frames on each side of the stack.
- (6) Port side of No. 2 stack, including inside liner missing, edges badly torn and stack inclined to starboard about 5 degrees.
 - (7) Two 20MM guns, mounts, ready boxes and gun shields (port side No. 2 stack) missing.
 - (8) Forward motor whaleboat davit missing.
 - (9) Motor whaleboat missing.
 - (10) Port bulkhead of stateroom C-202-L buckled.
 - (11) All bulkheads of Supply Office buckled.
 - (12) Entire after bulkhead of amidships passageway buckled.
 - (13) Port bulkhead of Ship's Office (adjoins Supply Office) buckled.
 - (14) Port bulkhead of stateroom C-203-L buckled.

(e) The areas topside adjoining the damaged areas were remarkably undamaged. Area of explosion was definitely confined. Surrounding areas, including open bridge were sprayed with a gray mush that resembled soaked insulation (fiber glass).

(f) Both the forward and after Diesel Generators were operative. The forward Diesel would run but would not furnish power or lighting. The after Diesel furnished light for a careful examination of spaces aft. Since areas of free flooding could not be pumped out, and other areas were dry, these generators were not put to any other use.

(g) Both torpedo tubes were jammed in a fore-and-aft position and could not be trained. The same condition was found on all three 5" mounts, except that they were in various positions of their original air readiness.

(h) Boiler No. 2 in the Forward Fireroom was found intact and had 30 lbs. of steam on it. This was released by lifting the safety valve by hand. Boiler No. 1 had not been in use.

11. The following action was taken:

- (a) A complete inspection of the ship was made to establish the condition and damage to the MEREDITH.
- (b) Areas shored were:
 - (1) After port hatch leading into the After Engineroom. This hatch had been sprung by the force of the explosion.
 - (2) After bulkhead of Machine Shop C-201_E including door.
 - (3) Forward bulkhead of After Diesel Generator Room C-202-E.
 - (4) Port and starboard sides of after bulkhead (99½) of Forward Fireroom along outboard sections between ship's side and spaces occupied by boilers and machinery.
- (c) The following topside weights were removed or jettisoned:
 - (1) Starboard anchor - jettisoned.
 - (2) Depth charges - jettisoned.
 - (3) Loose and torn pieces of plating and loose gear - jettisoned.
 - (4) 40MM ammunition from ready rooms and magazines on starboard side - transferred to U.S.S. JEFFERS.

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH (Retyped 9/25/97)

11. (c)(5) 20MM ammunition and magazines from starboard side and amidships - transferred to JEFFERS.
 - (6) 5"/38 ammunition from mounts and upper handling rooms - transferred to JEFFERS.
 - (d) The following official records and funds were saved.
 - (1) Muster roll.
 - (2) Pay Accounts
 - (3) Service Records.
 - (4) Health Records.
 - (5) Supply Officer's funds turned in to Supply Officer BAYFIELD and receipted for; (\$40,461.06) turned over to Lt. H.W. Means, U.S.C.G.
 - (6) Mail Clerk's cash and stamps to the value of \$100.00 kept in Mail Clerk's safe were lost, but \$200.00 in cash and stamps in custody of the Supply Officer were saved.
 - (7) Wardroom Mess Funds.
 - (8) Welfare Funds were saved and expended in full for crew's health and comfort at Base Two (\$43.31).
 - (e) A large portion of personal gear was saved by officers and personnel of the Repair Parties who were present and who later assisted in the salvage work.
12. I requested the Commanding Officer of the BATES to remain close aboard the MEREDITH until the arrival of the Salvage Tugs. To insure their arrival I made another report and request for tugs to the Task Force Commander. I remained on the bridge of the BATES until dawn. The ship had drifted considerably to the NW and was much closer to the enemy shore; an exact position at this time is not available. Just prior to this time the U.S.S. JEFFERS (DD-621) went alongside the port side of the MEREDITH and their personnel removed 5" ammunition from the mounts and upper handling rooms, 40MM clips and 20MM magazines filled with ammunition. The ATR Salvage Tugs appeared in the distance at about 0515 and shortly thereafter about forty-eight men and four officers, including myself, went aboard the MEREDITH. Commodore Sullivan, Salvage Officer, and Lieutenant Commander McClung, the Assistant Salvage Officer, came aboard the JEFFERS, still secured alongside, and made an inspection of the damage outboard on the port side of the MEREDITH and later inspected the topside. At about 0620 Commodore Sullivan left the ship to make his report to the Naval Commander Western Task Force (CTF 122) on the U.S.S. AUGUSTA. No information is available as to the nature of this report. Lieutenant Commander McClung remained aboard the MEREDITH with the Salvage Party. We secured the towing hawser and proceeded to an anchorage in the Advanced Transport Area, towed by the U.S.S. BANNOCK (ATR-81) while the second tug followed close aboard. The BANNOCK anchored the MEREDITH in position about Latitude 49-30.9 N, Longitude 01-03.5 W, to northward of the BAYFIELD, flagship of Commander Force "U", and secured alongside to port. Depth of water was 12 fathoms. At about 0730, after the ship had anchored, the inclinometer was checked and the list to starboard was found to be 14 degrees; prior to being towed the list was 12 degrees; otherwise all conditions were unchanged. All compartments and bilges forward and aft of the damaged area were inspected and found to be dry. During the towing operation no movements of the stern were observed. I reported aboard the BAYFIELD to make my report of damage to Rear Admiral D.P. Moon, U.S. Navy,

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH (Retyped 9/25/97)

12. (Cont'd) Commander Force "U" (CTF 125). I was instructed verbally to destroy all registered publications and secret features of radars.

13. The balance of the survivors were taken to the Advanced Transport Area by the USS BATES and PC-1263 where they were transferred to various LST's in the area as directed by Commander Force "U." One hundred and thirty men (130), including the wounded, were transferred to LST's leaving the area for the United Kingdom. The wounded were sent ashore for hospitalization and the remainder were put up in Quonset Huts at Vicarage Field, Plymouth. One hundred and forty-eight (148) men and sixteen (16) officers were retained in the Transport Area and lived on board the LST-311 to assist the Salvage Parties. The LST-311 remained in close proximity to the MEREDITH's anchorage.

14. At the anchorage the Communications Officer proceeded to burn all remaining U.S. and British publications, letters and any other material that might be of any value to the enemy. Secret and confidential features of the radars were also destroyed. When the ship first struck the mine, several weighted bags of publications had been dropped over the side in 12 fathoms of water and so destruction was completed at this time. Reserve on board publications that had been turned in to Queen Anne Barracks, USNAAB, Plymouth, England, prior to departing for OPERATION NEPTUNE, were obtained and turned in to Sub-Issuing Office at Exeter, England. Report on form RPS- was duly made.

15. I consulted with Lieutenant Commander McClung, the Assistant Salvage Officer to determine the nature of Salvage operations that were to be undertaken. After studying the ship's plans he decided to remove the following topside weights in order to lighten the ship and to remove the list to starboard. (The following is a copy of his memorandum to the Salvage Party):

(a) "Remove: Torpedo Tube	23,500 lbs.
Torpedo Tube with shield	24,540 "
Torpedoes (5)	4,000 " ea.
40MM twin	13,200 "
40MM directors	690 "
2-40MM quads	23,400 "
40MM director	690 "
6-20MM mounts	1,825 "
Depth charge tracks	2,300 "
36" Searchlights	1,840 "
24" Searchlights	700 "
Damaged stack	-

BANNOCK to work but be on call at any time for emergency."

- (b) The instructions of paragraph (a) above were given to the Salvage Officer of the BANNOCK. MEREDITH personnel assisted in every way. Work of removing all 20MM guns was started immediately.
- (c) Five men and one officer who were killed in action were removed from the MEREDITH and sent ashore in the UTAH area for burial by the Army on the Far Shore in accordance with the directives of OPERATION NEPTUNE. These men were primarily from Repair II, stationed amidships, and from the 20MM group on the port side of No. 2 stack. No other bodies were recovered.
- (d) Lieutenant Commander McClung stated verbally that he planned to send down divers, as soon as they were available, to determine the extent of under-

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH (Retyped 9/25/97)

- 15.(d) (Cont'd) water damage. No diving operations were conducted as divers were employed elsewhere in Salvage Operations.
(e) Material was placed on board the BANNOCK for strengthening the damaged area, but no work of this nature was undertaken on the MEREDITH.

16. At about 1430, 8 June, I received word from the Commanding Officer of the BANNOCK that the Assistant Salvage Officer had issued instructions, believed to have been received from higher authority, to move the MEREDITH out of the Advanced Transport Area to a distance of about 9,000 yards south of the BAY-FIELD towards the Naval Gunfire Support Areas. The exact reason for this move is not known, but is believed due to the possibility of the ship sinking in the crowded Transport Area. Whether the conclusion that the ship might sink was due to the increased list of 2 degrees that took place during the towing operation, or for other reasons is not known. In my opinion, the MEREDITH appeared stable and in the same static balance that she had attained when she first hit the mine.

17. The MEREDITH was towed at about 4 knots, with the BANNOCK secured to the port side, to the new anchorage. Salvage operations continued enroute. As was unavoidable when being towed alongside, considerable bumping and grating took place between the two ships. When about halfway to the anchorage, what was believed to be a mine, was sighted on the starboard bow of the MEREDITH, distance about 150 yards. The BANNOCK backed emergency full, twisted and turned to pull the MEREDITH out of the path of the mine. She succeeded in doing this due solely to the excellent shiphandling of her Captain. The mine was taken over by small boats in the area, and we proceeded on to the anchorage. We anchored at about 1600 by taking a cable from the BANNOCK and using the MEREDITH's anchor. BANNOCK remained secured to port. Position of anchorage was Latitude 49-26.4 N, Longitude 01-43.3 W, located about 3 miles from beach at Grandcamp, France, in the Bay of Seine. Depth of water was 10 fathoms. Salvage work was continued. The starboard 20MM groups 3 and 5, mounts and ready boxes were removed. The starboard midships 40MM quad and shields were also removed prior to darkness. The MEREDITH's Salvage crew of about fifty (50) men and four (4) officers including myself had been aboard since early morning, so it was decided to relieve them with new officers and men. Accordingly about 2030 seventeen (17) men and three (3) officers came aboard the BANNOCK to take over the Security Watch for the night. Made arrangements with the Captain of the BANNOCK to remain close aboard throughout darkness and to take off my men in case of necessity. Signals were arranged for signaling between ships. The MEREDITH was inspected, conditions were found unchanged. She was dry and secure. All below decks, doors and hatches were closed securely, and the ship was battened down for the night. The Security Watch were instructed to sleep topside on the forecastle and to keep one officer and five men awake at all times. At about 2130 BANNOCK cast off and anchored about 300 yards to starboard. I left the ship and went aboard LST-311 for the night. The list before the starboard 40MM quad was removed was 14.2 degrees, and it decreased to 12.6 degrees (starboard) when that weight was removed. It remained at this inclination throughout the night.

18. An air raid of the UTAH area was conducted by the enemy between 0030 and 0200, 9 June 1944. The attack was made by low-flying twin-motored bombers who dropped bombs of approximately 2,000 lbs. Several dropped about 2,000 yards

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH (Retyped 9/25/97)

18.(Cont'd) from the MEREDITH, near some merchant ships anchored in the boat lanes to the UTAH beach from the Transport Area. One dropped about 800 yards off the port bow and shook the ship considerably; the stern moved and whipped sideways appreciably. The open seam on the superstructure deck along bulkhead 130½ had opened out several inches. The after end of the ship worked back and forth noticeably throughout the night, though the sea was comparatively calm. The ship still appeared safe and gave no indication of breaking up. The BANNOCK returned alongside at about 0730, and a thorough check of the entire ship was made in company with the Salvage Officer of the BANNOCK. No change in conditions was found. No further topside weights were removed as the BANNOCK was waiting for an LCT to come alongside, into which it was planned to load the heavy topside weights.

19. At 1010, 9 June, without any preliminary warning the MEREDITH broke in two and went down amidships. The BANNOCK cut her lines to clear the side and stood off to render assistance. All officers and men of the Security Watch on board jumped or lowered themselves clear of the ship and were picked up by the BANNOCK and passing boats. The stern was raised to an angle of about 20 degrees, while the bow arose to 45 degrees. The stern slid forward and down upright until just the depth charge racks and after portion of 5" Mount No. 3 were visible above the waters edge. The bow turned over to starboard until this section lay on its side with only the turn of the foot remaining above the water. These sections of the MEREDITH were still visible the next night when all remaining survivors left the area aboard the SS Benjamin Hawkins bound for the United Kingdom at about 1900, 10 June 1944.

20. The remaining one hundred and forty-eight (148) men and sixteen (16) officer survivors were taken to Plymouth, England, and arrived at about 2000, 11 June 1944. Twenty-six (26) cases were sent ashore for hospitalization. The remaining survivors joined the first group of survivors at Vicarage Field. Two men died in a Naval Hospital at Plymouth and were turned over to the Army for burial. Lists of survivors and the dead and missing are contained in Enclosures (B) and (C). The entire group remained at Vicarage Field, Plymouth, England, until 1910, 14 June. We were transferred to Base Two, Roseneath, Scotland, by train, arriving at 1330, 15 June 1944. At both bases work was undertaken of reconstruction of records, reports, filing of personal claims and the general rehabilitation of the officers and the crew.

21. The casualties sustained were as follows:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed	1	7	8
Missing	1	26	27
Hospitalized	1	25	26
Survivors	<u>18</u>	<u>278</u>	<u>296</u>
Total involved	21	336	357

22. I can not speak too highly of the conduct of officers and men. All hands lived up to the best traditions of the Naval Service. The standard of conduct was so exceedingly high that it is with the utmost humility that I venture to single out the following from the great number of instances of commendable conduct which took place:

(a) BRYAN, Brady Lawson, Chief Machinist's Mate, (AA), U.S. Navy, 359-94-16,

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH

(Retyped 9/25/97)

22. (a) (Cont'd) is recommended for the award of a Navy Cross. BRYAN was in charge of the watch in the after engineroom when the MEREDITH struck a submerged mine. In spite of the terrific explosion that took place in that area he was stunned but otherwise unhurt and managed to make his way out of the shattered after engineroom by climbing up the ladder of the after engineroom hatch on the port side to the port passageway and back to the fantail. On the fantail he did not see any of his men that had been on watch with him in the after engineroom, so he realized that they were still down in the damaged after engineroom. He obtained a flashlight and at the risk of his own life he went down into the totally dark and shattered after engineroom, which at that time was flooded to within four feet of the overhead, and displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty in his disregard of danger when the MEREDITH was in danger of sinking and saved four injured men. He carried these men out of the after engineroom to the fantail, kept them together and subsequently assisted in putting them aboard a ship that came alongside to remove them. These men were all badly injured and were subsequently hospitalized for burns, fractures and lacerations, but all of them are alive and will recover from their injuries. The names of three of these four men saved by BRYAN have been established as: ALLEN, W.F., F2/c; NOE, H.P., F1/c and RADOS, G.T., MM2/c, U.S.N.R.

(b) The manner in which Lieutenant (jg) Charles Spencer DAVISON, 288503, MC-V(G), U.S.N.R., and the men of the Medical Department: Chief Pharmacist's Mate William Lewis McWHITE, U.S. Navy; Otto Erle EKHOLM, PhM2/c, U.S.N.R. and George Thomas NIXON, seaman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R., gave aid and administered relief to the injured while still on board their ship, and later continued their unselfish efforts during the subsequent passage to the Transport Area, was most commendable.

(c) Particular credit and commendation are due the following named officers for the efficient manner in which they handled the Damage Control problem created by the initial effect of the mine explosion and the untiring assistance they gave the Salvage Party of U.S.S. BANNOCK (ATR-81):

- (1) Lieut.(junior grade) Everett Scott DOE, D-V(G), U.S. Naval Reserve.
- (2) Ensign Robert Gibson McILROY, D-V(G), U.S. Naval Reserve.

(d) Particular credit and commendation are due the following named officers for their unselfish efforts in assisting the injured and helpless to escape from the dangers which threatened them:

- (1) Lieutenant Commander Donald B. Ramage, U.S. Navy.
- (2) Lieut.(junior grade) Donald Leonard LASSELL, U.S. Navy.
- (3) Ensign Newton Mabrey MARLER, Jr., U.S. Navy.
- (4) LINDEMUTH, Harry Clemson, 204-46-76, MM3/c, U.S. Navy.
- (5) POVICKE, Albert Francis, 243-61-01, CMM(AA), U.S. Navy.

(e) Great credit and commendation are due to the Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. BATES (DE-68), PC-1232 and PC-1263 for bringing their ships alongside the MEREDITH and for their successful rescue of so many officers and men in the area where enemy threats were so actively present. Their task required the nicest judgement of seamanship and required that their ships be stopped for considerable periods while so many wounded casualties were laboriously taken aboard. The limited facilities of these ships were stretched in an attempt

Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. MEREDITH (Retyped 9/25/97)

to make all wounded and survivors as comfortable as possible. Particular credit is due the Commanding Officer of the BATES for remaining on the scene, at the request of the Commanding Officer of the MEREDITH and in screening that helpless ship until the arrival of the Salvage Tugs and the Salvage Officer.

23. The Commanding Officer and Salvage Officer of the U.S.S. BANNOCK (ATR-81) under the direction of Lieutenant Commander McClung, removed some equipment from the MEREDITH in connection with the Salvage operations. A list of this equipment or of its final disposition was not obtained or made available to this administrative command.

24. Reports of references (c), (d), (e) and (f) were made as indicated in accordance with existing instructions.

25. The foregoing is a statement and narrative based on the collective information of officers and men of the MEREDITH and my own observations and opinions. The Executive Officer concurs in the statements made herein and is not submitting a separate statement.

G. KNUEPFER.

Advanced Copies to: ComSerFor(CTF-127)(1)
ComInCh. (4)
CinCLant (2)
ComDesLant (1)
ComDesPac (1)



The USS Meredith (DD-726) as she broke in two without warning and sank off the Normandy Beachhead, France, on June 9, 1944, after having been severely damaged by an enemy mine a day earlier. Fortunately, all of the twenty officers and men of the Security Watch aboard her were rescued. This photograph was taken from the rescue tug USS Bannock (ATR-81), which had been assisting in the salvage operation. (Courtesy of Tin Can Sailors, Inc.)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY CROSS to

BRADY LAWSON BRYAN, CHIEF MACHINIST'S MATE,
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism and outstanding devotion to duty in saving the lives of four injured men by carrying them out of a totally dark, shattered and flooded engine room under hazardous conditions on 8 June, 1944, when the U.S.S. MEREDITH struck an enemy mine while engaged in supporting the assault on France.

Bryan was in charge of the watch in the after engine room when the ship struck a mine. Although dazed, he made his way out of the engine room, but upon learning that the twelve men of his watch were still below, he, with total disregard for his own safety, and realizing that the room was flooded to with four feet of the overhead, went below and succeeded in rescuing four badly injured members of the crew who otherwise would have gone down with the ship. The courage and decisive action displayed by Bryan on this occasion were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

Secretary of the Navy

Typed from a draft citation on file at the
Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard.
The official citation may have been reworded.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
September, 1997

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the BRONZE STAR MEDAL to

COMMANDER DONALD BREWSTER RAMAGE
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For meritorious service as Executive Officer and Navigator of the U.S.S. MEREDITH, prior to and during the invasion of the Coast of France, June 1944. Embarked on the ship of the Escort Commander, Commander (then Lieutenant Commander) Ramage rendered valuable assistance to the Convoy Commander in achieving the safe passage of the convoy from the United States to an assault area, despite strong tides, currents and restricted, mined channels. During subsequent operations when the MEREDITH was assigned to the Area Screen for gunfire support, Commander Ramage served as Officer-in-Charge of Combat Information Center, efficiently maintaining the ship's position and providing firing data to gun control based on information received from Shore Fire Control Parties. By his initiative and devotion to duty, he upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President

Secretary of the Navy

Typed from a draft citation on file at the Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard. The official citation may have been reworded.

*E. A. Wilde, Jr.
September, 1998*

DECLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

ACTION REPORT

USS JEFFERS

DD 621

SERIAL 00106

30 JUNE 1944

NARRATIVE ACTION REPORT OF U.S.S. JEFFERS (DD 621)
FOR OPERATION. _____ (ALL TIMES ZONE MINUS TWO)

[GIVING FIRE SUPPORT IN UTAH AREA, BAIE DE
LA SEINE DURING INVASION OF NORMANDY,
PERIOD 3 - 17 JUNE 1944 OPERATING IN
TASK GROUP 125.8.]

81742

OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY

U. S. S. JEFFERS (DD621)

Serial: 00106

DECLASSIFIED

CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, N. Y.

30 June 1944.

Subject: Narrative Action Report of U.S.S. JEFFERS (DD621)
for Operation [REDACTED] (All Times Zone Minus Two).

8 June (D + 2)

At about 0125, a guided missile was observed overhead, altitude approximately 5000 feet, headed in general vicinity of UTAH beaches. At 0130 another guided missile passed about 1500 feet overhead and was seen to strike the water approximately 3000 yards from JEFFERS. At 0150 the ship fired two four-gun salvos 5"/38 AA common with flashless powder, at a HE-177 passing overhead at altitude of approximately 2000 feet; apparently no damage to plane resulted. At 0201 MEREDITH, occupying position on DIXIE Line Screen about one mile north-west of JEFFERS, was hit by the third (and last) guided missile seen by this ship's personnel. Unmistakable transmissions by parent aircraft were heard on these three occasions, and the ARQ operators jammed each transmission.

The ship proceeded immediately to the assistance of MEREDITH, and the fire and rescue party was sent alongside in a ship's boat. At 0205 complied with CTF 125's orders to make funnel smoke but at 0215 ceased making smoke because of hindrance to rescue operations. At 0230 MEREDITH personnel abandoned ship; U.S.S. BATES and JEFFERS were ordered to stand by her.

At 0445 MEREDITH had been carried by the tide to a point well within range of the enemy coastal batteries on Cape Barfleur, and since she gave every indication of remaining afloat indefinitely, at 0500, in compliance with orders of CDS 17, in JEFFERS, a salvage party was sent aboard MEREDITH to determine practicability of salvage. The report of this party being favorable, JEFFERS was put alongside, starboard side to port side of MEREDITH, the 15° list to starboard was reduced, by jettisoning topside weights, to 5-10 degrees, her rudder was set manually, and JEFFERS commenced towing her back to assault area, using 5 knots, then 10, on the port engine. At 0715, two salvage tugs under control of Commodore Sullivan arrived, took MEREDITH in tow at 10 knots, and at 0730 JEFFERS cast off and returned to assigned position in Area Screen.

At 0903, relieved HERNDON as fire support vessel in Fire Support Station 1.

At 1440, several splashes were observed to land near UTAH beach. Got underway and at 1445 commenced slow firing on target 88, which was reported by TUSCALOOSA as being active. Continued this fire until 1510, and since many hits were observed, target was considered neutralized.

DECLASSIFIED

COMMANDER DESTROYER SQUADRON SEVENTEEN
CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, N. Y.

CDS-17/A9/A16-3
Serial: 0044

1 July 1944.

~~SECRET~~
DECLASSIFIED

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to:
CO JEFFERS Ltr. A9/A16-3
Serial: 00106 of 30 June
1944.

From: The Commander Destroyer Squadron SEVENTEEN.
To : The Naval Commander Western Task Force.
Via : (1) The Commander Task Group 125.8.
(2) The Commander Task Force 125.

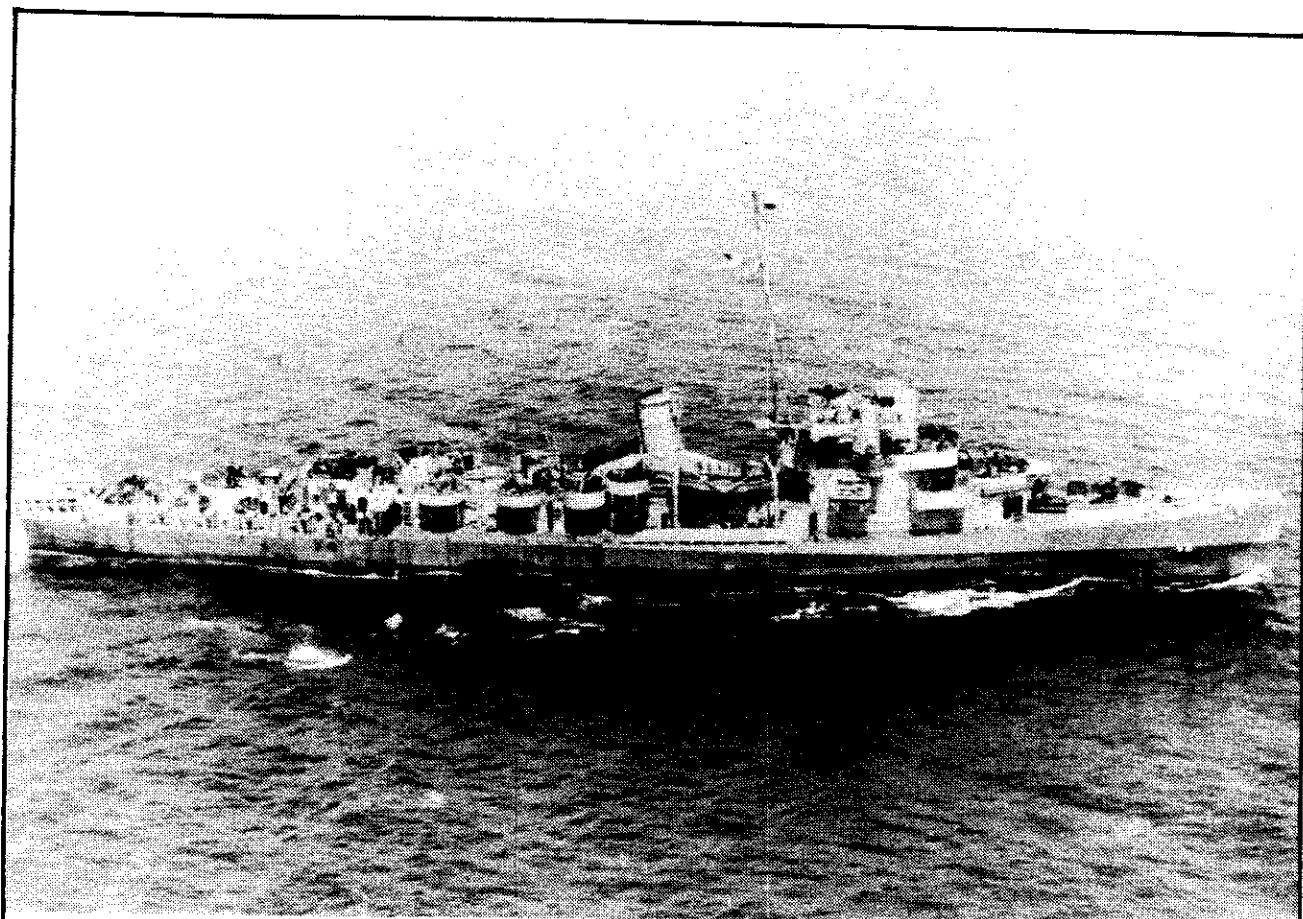
Subject: Narrative Action Report of U.S.S. JEFFERS (DD621) for
Operation ~~XXXXXXXX~~ (All Times Zone Minus Two).

1. Forwarded.

2. The Squadron Commander considers the skill and determination displayed by the Commanding Officer JEFFERS in maintaining his fire support station under heavy fire on the afternoon of 7 June, and his excellent seamanship in connection with the attempted salvage of the MEREDITH, worthy of special recognition. Recommendations for award will be submitted by separate correspondence.

A. C. Murdaugh
A. C. MURDAUGH.

Copy to:
CTG 122.4
CO JEFFERS



The Buckley-class destroyer escort USS Bates (DE-68) (Lt. Comdr. H. A. Wilmerding, Jr., USNR) went alongside the stricken Meredith on 8 June 1944 to rescue survivors and then stood by the helpless vessel until a salvage tug arrived on the scene. The Bates was 306 feet long and displaced 1,400 tons. Her complement: 15 officer, 198 enlisted. (Official U.S. Navy Photograph.)

Editor's Note: The Bates was later converted to a high-speed transport (APD-47) and then deployed to the Pacific. She was lost off Okinawa after being hit by two kamikazes on 25 May 1945. Casualties: 21 killed or missing, 35 wounded.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
September, 1998

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION REPORT

USS BATES

DE 68

SERIAL 119

16 JUNE 1944

ACTION REPORT AND REPORT OF OPERATIONS, 31 MAY 1944
TO 12 JUNE 1944.

[COVERS FIRE SUPPORT UNIT 1 FOR ASSAULT
GROUP WHILE LANDING FORCES.]

76337

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REFER TO
FILE NO.
DESS/ A16-3
Serial 119
HAW:jmj

U. S. S. BATES (DE-68)
Fleet Post Office,
New York, N. Y.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

16 JUNE 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : The Commander, Assault Force "U", CTF 125, Western
Naval Task Force, Allied Naval Expeditionary
Force, and,
Chain of Command.

Subject: Action Report and Report of Operations,
31 May 1944 to 12 June 1944.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, Art. 712.
(b) Atlantic Fleet Confidential Letter, 13 CL 43.
(c) Cominch restricted letter, FFL/A12-1/A16-3,
Serial 7152, 29 Oct 1943.

Enclosure: (A) Tracing of Operations.

1. In accordance with references (a), (b), and (c), the following action report and report of operations is respectfully submitted.

2. Detached 30 May 1944 and proceeded alone in accordance with NCWTF 301115 B and ComCruDiv 7 301332 B, from Belfast Lough, Northern Ireland and reported CTF 125, Commander, Assault Force "U", Western Naval Task Force in USS BAYFIELD (PA 33), Plymouth, Devon, 31 May 1944. Designated Task Unit 125.15.4 -- fire support unit one for Iles Saint Marcouf assault group as outlined in CTF 125 Operation Order 5-44, serial 00052 of 25 May 1944.

3. Mission was to arrive at H minus 140 minutes in Fire Support Area Able, located in unswept waters, 1200 to 3000 yards from the Saint Marcouf Islands between the beach and Fire Support Area 1, prepared to support landing force on the islands. The Saint Marcouf Islands are located about three miles off shore of the Cherbourg Peninsula in the Baie de la Seine. The landing force, commanded by Lt. Col. E.C. DUNN, U.S.A., consisted of 130 men and six officers of the 4th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized, transported by the PC 484, one LCS(S) and four LCA's. This force was to occupy and defend Iles Saint Marcouf at H minus 120 minutes. As the result of a conference with Lt. Col. DUNN, it was decided that the USS BATES would not bombard the islands or shore batteries unless called upon to do so by the landing force or unless heavy fire was received either from shore or from the islands.

4. Sortied from Plymouth, Devon, 5 June 1944 in company with USS BAYFIELD (PA 33) and USS RICH (DE 695), rendezvoused with convoy ULA and proceeded to assault area. At 0129, 6 June 1944,

16 JUNE 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

"D" day, branched off at point "M" from USS BAYFIELD (PA-33) and other transports and proceeded down Fire Support Channel #1, arriving in Fire Support Area Able at 0408 (E - 142 minutes). During the approach, considerable anti-aircraft fire was visible on the mainland and several returning friendly planes passed from 50 to 500 feet overhead.

5. Maneuvered during the next 90 minutes to within 1500 yards of Iles St. Marcouf, prepared to support landing force which passed us proceeding towards the islands at about 0445. Used echo ranging sound gear in approach to the islands in an attempt to pick up any mines in the area. No mines were encountered during the approach, although several were seen to explode in the vicinity of the islands during the next four days. At about 0520, heavy gun fire was encountered from shore batteries. Two straddles were close, within 200 yards, one of which jarred the jettison release pin loose from the starboard smoke generator on the fantail, which was lost overboard. Another shot made a direct hit on the PC 1261, a control boat in the boat lane, and surrounding landing craft, which promptly sank about 500 yards away. At 0530, the gunfire shifted to the direction of the USS QUINCY and the USS NEVADA, which were approaching along the southwestern leg of Fire Support Channel #1. This fire was not returned by the USS BATES because the location of the batteries was not observed. Minesweepers were also believed to be still behind the islands between us and the shore.

6. At 0535, withdrew from area Able in accordance with gunfire Support Plan of CTF 125 Operation Order 5-44 and took station about 300 yards abeam of USS NEVADA in order to be out of the latter's line of fire. From this position between the USS NEVADA and the boat lane, about 5000 yards from Saint Marcouf Islands, it was still possible to interpose fire on the islands if called upon.

7. At 0730, proceeded across the bow of the USS NEVADA back into Fire Support Area Able at the request of PC 484 to take off wounded. Eight wounded of the landing party were taken aboard. They reported no personnel were found on the islands, their wounds being received from land mines planted on the beach.

8. On orders from CTF 125.8 a screening position was maintained to the seaward of the fire support ships on 6 June and 7 June 1944.

9. At 0155, 8 June 1944, while in screening position about 3000 yards to the north of fire support ships, the USS MEREDITH (DD 726) a new 2200 ton destroyer, in a similar position 1500 yards to the west, was hit by a mine or glider bomb. Proceeded to their assistance, lowered whaleboat and came alongside at their urgent request to take off survivors. Picked up 147

16 JUNE 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

enlisted men and 16 officers from the ship and out of the water, including some which were later transferred from a PC which came up on the other side. Remained in vicinity of the USS MEREDITH in company with USS JEFFERS (DD 621) until daylight when a salvage party of 32 men and 4 officers of the USS MEREDITH was put back aboard. Survivors were transferred to the LST #46.

10. While returning to the transport area, about 0930, 8 June 1944, witnessed the sinking of the USS RICH (DE 695) to the northwest of the Saint Marcouf Islands. The USS RICH (DE 695) was apparently hit by two mines.

11. At 1245, 8 June 1944, Captain Tompkins, Chief of Staff, CTF 125, came aboard from the USS BAYFIELD. Got underway and steamed around transport area off the beachhead, giving instructions for the movement of transports and merchant ships for unloading. While returning up the boat lane to the vicinity of the USS BAYFIELD, which was anchored in the boat lane near point Y, two shells from a shore battery fell abeam to port about 300 yards.

12. From 9 June to 12 June, anchored in screening position about 1000 yards to the east of fire support ships. Rendezvoused 1000, 12 June 1944, in accordance with NCWTF 111413 B (CN678), with ComCortDiv 19 in USS AMESBURY (DE-66) and USS BLESSMAN (DE-69) which had been attached to Assault Force "O", CTF 124, and proceeded to Plymouth, Devon.

Henry A. Wilmerding Jr.
H.A. WILMERDING, Jr.

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ComCortDiv 19 - cc direct
File - cc

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the SILVER STAR MEDAL to

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HENRY A. WILMERDING, JR.,
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For meritorious performance of duty in connection with operations against the enemy in rescuing the survivors of the USS MEREDITH under difficult conditions and in hazardous waters.

Lt. Cdr. Wilmerding, with prompt initiative, immediately went to the assistance of the disabled USS MEREDITH. With great skill and seamanship, he placed his ship alongside the USS MEREDITH, which was listing and damaged and appeared to be in immediate danger of capsizing. He continued to screen salvage operations which took place in mined waters within easy gun range of numerous heavy enemy batteries. The initiative and decisive action displayed by Lt. Cdr. Wilmerding on this occasion were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

Secretary of the Navy.

Lt. Cdr. Wilmerding was the commanding officer of the destroyer escort USS BATES (DE-68). This is a draft citation on file at the Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard. The official citation may have been reworded before it was issued.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
September, 1997

~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

ACTION REPORT

USS PC 1232

SERIAL 001

30 JUNE 1944

OPERATIONS - REPORT OF.

[PATROLLED UTAH TRANSPORT AREA, BAIE DE
LA SEINE ON 6 JUNE - THEN JOINED AREA
SCREEN TIL 11 JUNE 1944.]

81233

OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY

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30 June 1944

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Naval Commander, Western Task Force.
Via : (1) Western Task Force Assault Force "Unit".
(2) Commander Task Group 122.4.

Subject: Operations - Report of.

Reference: (a) CTG 122.4 Dispatch 202227B.

1. Following is a brief report of operations from
5 June through 17 June:

- (a) At 1440, 5 June underway to join convoy UIA. Joined convoy at 2202 and took screening station. On 6 June 0230 entered Utah Transport Area, and commenced patrolling area. 0700 reported to LST 282 to lead RHF's into beach. 0930 commenced towing RHT 21 which had both engines out. 1000 standing by LST 282 with RHT as tow - 1123 passed line to RHF 21 and commenced towing RHF 21 and RHT 21 to beach - 1200 LCI 321 took over tow of RHF 21 and RHT 21. 1210 returned to LST 282 for further orders. 1730 released from LST 282 and ordered to report to Commander Task Group 122.4 by Commander Force Unit. 1845 reported to Commander Task Group 122.4 and took station on Dixie Line. Patrolling station in accordance with orders from Commander Task Group 122.4, from this date through 17 June.
- (b) At 0245 8 June went alongside USS MEREDITH (DD 726), which was sinking ^{due to} enemy action, to pick up survivors. Picked up seven officers and twenty men and at 0311 transferred them to DE which had picked up rest of survivors. Returned to station.
- (c) 2110 11 June proceeded to LST 496 which appeared to have hit mine - 2143 went alongside LST 496 to pick up survivors. Took aboard five injured men, five uninjured men and four dead men. Underway to transfer men to hospital ship. 2305 moored alongside LST 283. Transferred survivors and returned to station.

W.E. Stevenson
W.E. STEVENSON

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ORIGINAL

ACTION REPORT

USS PC-1263

SERIAL 387

21 JUNE 1944

OPERATION NEPTUNE, REPORT OF.

NARRATIVE REPORT OF R. S. STEVENS,
COVERING EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF
NORMANDY LANDINGS. EVACUATED SUR-
VIVORS OF USS MEREDITH MINED AND
SUNK 8 JUNE 1944.

84513

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

~~SECRET~~
PC 1263/A9-8
Serial No. 387

c/o Fleet Post Office
New York, N. Y.

21 June 1944

From: The Commanding Officer
To: Commander Task Force 122
Via: (1) Commander Task Force 126
(2) Commander Task Group 122.4
Subject: PC 1263 in Operation [REDACTED] Chronological
Narrative report of
Reference: (a) C.T.G. 122.4 serial 202227B.
Enclosure: (A) Recommendations.

1. This vessel was attached to T. U. 126.3.1 (Escort Convoy B-2, Force Baker) from 1 June 1944, to 1500, 6 June 1944, when T. U. 126.3.1 was dissolved upon arrival in the assault area. Reported to C. T. G. 122.4, via ComDesRon 17, for duty with the area screen. Attached to area screen (T.G. 122.4) from 1500, 6 June 1944, and during remainder of period covered by this report (Reference (a)).

2. A brief narrative report follows:
0009/6 weighed anchor, Jenny Cliff Boy, Plymouth, underway as escort convoy B-2. Proceeding via swept channels to Portland Bill and via channel C and approach channel 3 to assault area.
2200/6 Assigned position Able-57 in assault area.
7 June - Patrolling station Able-57. 1642/7 - Alongside USS Frankford to report status of fuel and water. 0210/8 - Observed USS Meredith, bearing 320° T, distant 1000 yards, strike delayed action mine, apparently dropped by enemy aircraft. Meredith holed in No. 1 fire room and listing heavily to starboard.
0212/8 - Proceeded to assistance of Meredith. 0220/8 - Alongside Meredith. Evacuated approximately 100 survivors and five badly wounded casualties. Also received classified publications.
0240/8 - Underway - proceeded to discharge survivors to USS Tuscaloosa. 0327/8 - Departed Tuscaloosa returned to Meredith to assist further. Meredith had been abandoned by all hands so returned to station Able-57 as directed by USS Borum standing by Meredith. 0500/8 - On station Able-57.
1412/8 to 1432/8 - Transferred secret and confidential publications recovered from Meredith to Tuscaloosa. Returned to position Able-57. 0130/9 - Observed by radar, and reported, suspicious high speed targets in mountain area. Two E-boats engaged and driven off by our destroyers in mountain area. Heavy continuous gun fire bearing 020° true. 2003/9 - Assigned station Fox-2. June 11 Patrolling station Fox-2. June 12 - Patrolling station Fox-2.

From: Naval Commander Western Task Force.
To: Western Naval Task Force.
Subject: Message from Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force.

1. The following message from the Supreme Commander Allied Expedition Force is to be published in morning orders and placed on bulletin boards of vessels and units attached to this command.

"TO THE SOLDIERS, AIRMEN, SAILORS AND MERCHANT SEAMEN, AND ALL OTHERS OF THE ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCES:

ONE WEEK AGO THIS MORNING THERE WAS ESTABLISHED THROUGH YOUR COORDINATE EFFORTS OUR FIRST FOOT HOLD IN NORTHWESTERN EUROPE. HIGH AS WAS MY PRE-INVASION CONFIDENCE IN YOUR COURAGE, SKILL AND EFFECTIVENESS IN WORKING TOGETHER AS A UNIT, YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON THE FIRST SEVEN DAYS OF THIS CAMPAIGN HAVE EXCEEDED MY BRIGHTEST HOPES. YOU ARE A TRULY GREAT ALLIED TEAM, A TEAM IN WHICH EACH PART GAINS ITS GREATEST SATISFACTION IN RENDERING MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE TO THE ENTIRE BODY, AND IN WHICH EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER BE JUSTIFIABLY CONFIDENT IN ALL OTHERS.

NO MATTER HOW PROLONGED OR BITTER THE STRUGGLE THAT LIES AHEAD, YOU WILL DO YOUR FULL PART TOWARD THE RESTORATION OF ALL FRANCE, THE LIBERATION OF ALL EUROPE AND NATIONS UNDER AXIS DOMINATION, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NAZI MILITARY MACHINE.

I TRULY CONGRATULATE YOU UPON A BRILLIANTLY SUCCESSFUL BEGINNING TO THIS GREAT UNDERTAKING. LIBERTY LOVING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE WOULD TODAY LIKE TO JOIN ME IN SAYING TO YOU: 'I AM PROUD OF YOU'.

/s/ GENERAL EISENHOWER"

A.G. Kirk.



A contingent of Meredith survivors as they arrived at Vicarage Field, a receiving base in Plymouth, England, shortly after their ship was mined off the Normandy Beachhead on June 8, 1944. All of the ship's unwounded survivors were put up there in Quonset Huts until they were transferred to a base in Rosneath, Scotland, on June 14th. (View #1 of 3) (U.S. Navy Photograph)



Heredith survivors at Vicerage Field, Plymouth, England, in early June, 1944. (View #2 of 3)
(Official U.S. Navy Photograph.)



Meredith survivors as they arrived at Vicarage Field, Plymouth, England, in early June, 1944. (View #3 of 3) (U.S. Navy Photograph.)

U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726) - List of Officers, 6/8/44¹

KNUEPFER, George	CDR	USN	Commanding Officer
RAMAGE, Donald Brewster	LCDR	USN	Executive Officer/Navigator
SAVAGE, Robert William	LT	USNR	Gunnery Officer
**LAFEY, Harold Joseph	LT	USN	Engineering Officer
**WAGNER, James R.	LTjg	USNR	Ass't. Eng./Damage Control
BURTON, John Routhe	LTjg	USNR	Communications Officer
DOE, Everett Scott	LTjg	USNR	1st Lieutenant
LASSELL, Donald Leonard	LTjg	USN	Ass't. Gunnery Officer
BEAZLE, John Fennimor	ENS	USNR	Ass't. C.I.C. Officer
FINDER, Earl George	ENS	USNR	Ass't. Navigator
McDANIEL, John Lawrence	ENS	USNR	
SHARP, Randolph	ENS	USNR	Ass't. Torpedo Officer
EGGLESTON, William J., Jr.	ENS	USNR	C.I.C. Officer
HEDDEN, Joe Crawford	ENS	USNR	Ass't. Communications Off.
McILROY, Robert Gibson	ENS	USNR	Ass't. Damage Control Off.
*HASTINGS, Kenneth W.	ENS	USN	Ass't. Engineering Officer
BAKER, Walter Steuart	ENS	USNR	
MARLER, Newton Mabray, Jr.	ENS	USN	Torpedo Officer
DAVISON, Charles Spencer	LTjg (MC)	USNR	Medical Officer
McMULLEN, Hugh Doan	ENS (SC)	USNR	Supply Officer
McMULLEN, Harry Sharples	W.O.	USN	Machinist

* * * * *

¹ Source: Enclosure (A) to the action report of 6/20/44. The primary duty assignments are the best recollections of LCdr. Harold J. O'Leary, USNR (Ret.), Lt. Newton M. Marler, USN (Ret.) and Joe C. Hedden.

** Killed (* Wounded) when the ship was mined on 6/8/44 according to the machine-generated casualty report prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
September, 1999

U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726)

Muster Roll of the Crew, 6/8/44

ADAMS, Charles Leslie	668-53-49	WT2c
ADAMSKI, Thomas	712-08-59	S2c
*ALEXANDER, Richard Clyde	762-42-72	S2c
ALLEN, Byron Gordon	381-61-07	QM3c
*ALLEN, Walter Francis	814-21-69	S2c
ANDERSON, Ralph Kermit	832-32-16	EM3c
ANDRIE, Joseph Armando	822-83-16	S2c
ANGELBERGER, Emmert Franklin	827-32-39	S2c
ARGO, Melvin Junior	300-97-10	S2c
ARMY, George Henry Philip	212-36-27	BM1c
BADERTSCHER, Lester Wayne	875-29-69	S2c
BAILLIFF, Welborn Wayne	627-10-47	MoMM1 c
**BAKER, Oren David, Sr.	896-93-91	F1c
BAKER, Laverne Morrison	564-40-12	RT2c
*BALOG, John Louis	856-89-80	F1c
BARE, Harry Louis	622-75-46	Cox
BARTH, Charles John, Jr.	243-81-94	BM2c
BARUCH, Norman	712-09-19	S2c
BATES, Onnie Angus	356-98-17	S1c
**BEIGEL, David.	814-89-10	S1c
BELAJASAK, Stefan	642-24-99	GM2c
*BELL, Bobby Leo	357-91-91	S1c
BELTRANTE, Salvatore Billy	245-97-80	S2c
BEMENT, Robert Edwin	807-80-19	S1c
BENWITZ, Norman Frank	234-34-22	Bkr1c
BERRY, Robert Leon	671-28-70	S1c
BERTONE, Frank James	814-21-64	S2c
*BICKEL, Francis Norman	651-45-80	WT3c
BLACKBURN, James Theodore	643-24-56	S2c
BLUM, Murray B.	706-27-33	RT1c
BORRUSO, Joseph John	814-78-15	S2c
*BOUDREAUX, Herbert Sly	625-57-70	S1c
BOURQUE, Henry Oscar	666-52-20	Bkr3c
BOWIE, Allan	862-33-31	S2c
BRYAN, Brady Lawson	359-94-16	CMM
BRANDEBERRY, Robert Truman	655-66-39	GM3c
*BREAU, A. B. John	274-07-32	CBM
BRUENING, Donald	306-18-97	MM3c
*BRUNET, Laurent Conrad	807-79-69	S2c
BURKHART, William Francis	822-76-93	F2c
BURKE, Thomas Michael	712-07-44	S2c
BURNS, William Fred	690-57-21	S2c
BURRISS, Charles Edward	268-50-91	Cox
CABRAL, Antone	803-06-55	S2c
CALHOUN, William Morris	817-99-49	S1c
CALIRI, Charles Edward, Jr.	607-15-96	SoM3c
CALKINS, Kenneth Elton B.	404-89-51	WT3c
CALLOWAY, Elmer Allan	624-24-80	SM2c
CAMMARATA, Vincent Alonso, Jr.	814-21-78	S2c
CASCIO, Andrew John	644-24-35	S1c
CAWLEY, Paul Edward	266-73-79	S2c

GHARTIER, Henry Francis	667-34-36	S2c
CLARK, Marshall Allen	718-07-46	S2c
CLOYD, Burton Eugene	200-24-01	CRM
COBBETT, Edward Walton, Jr.	607-07-86	WT3c
COCHRAN, Idus Drewry, Jr.	690-57-08	S2c
COGGINS, John Thomas	666-10-96	TM2c
COLLICOTT, Vaughn William	305-99-81	S1c
*CONROY, Albine James	895-59-71	MM3c
COOK, Clarence Edward	291-69-11	S1c
COOKE, Richard Jeneson	800-87-52	S2c
COX, Chester Anderson	965-84-46	S2c
COX, Willie Alfred	864-72-52	S2c
DALKA, Stanley, Jr.	627-98-60	S1c
*DARK, Hugh Francis	818-33-14	S2c
DAVIS, Gerald Dean	829-44-83	S1c
DELAP, Buford Donald	604-52-68	F1c
*DEL MONICO, John	808-26-05	S2c
**DENNING, John Arthur	563-18-30	MM2c
DE ROCCO, Umberto Bert	662-28-41	TM2c
DE ROSE, Ferdinand Joseph	818-32-95	S2c
DEVLIN, Patrick James Joseph	244-48-23	S1c
DEWEY, Charles Albert	402-95-76	FC1c
**DIBBLE, Robert Emerson	311-47-37	TM2c
DIGESU, James	814-85-72	S2c
DILLON, Edward Michael	814-80-04	S2c
DOBRANSKY, Joseph	623-44-54	EM2c
**DORGAN, John Albert	234-08-69	MM1c
DOUGLAS, Clarence Everett	965-84-18	S2c
DUBOIS, John Akin, Jr.	668-99-46	GM2c
DUDEK, John Walter	800-78-25	S1c
*DYKE, Edgar Robert	606-07-48	MM2c
*DYKES, William Robert	895-88-64	S2c
DYKIEL, Matthew Andrew	300-45-46	EM2c
EAKLOR, Eugene Gilbert	669-79-70	TM3c
ECKARD, Julian Clair	935-16-13	S2c
EDGERLY, Charles Edwin	225-37-81	S1c
EKHOLM, Otto Erle	648-14-21	PhM2c
ELWELL, Joseph Gordon	244-48-52	EM2c
*ERICKSON, Allan Hjalman	726-20-63	MM2c
ERWIN, Philip Holmes	845-80-91	Y3c
**EVANS, William Henry	274-29-34	CWT
FABRICO, Aspano Casper	814-85-75	S2c
FARMER, Clyde Elroyd	613-45-50	S2c
**FENTON, Franklin Edward	815-81-55	WT3c
FERMANO, Joseph Louis	202-04-82	RM3c
*FERRETTI, Alexander Joseph	820-52-59	S2c
FETZER, Worth Cleland	627-95-35	S1c
FINNERTY, John Joseph	724-56-61	S1c
FLANAGAN, Edward B.	623-23-52	MoMM3c
FLITTNER, Cletus Anthony	864-71-87	S2c
FLYNN, James Terrence	814-58-16	S2c
FORRESTER, Allan John	245-93-03	S2c
FOSTER, William Green, Jr.	832-53-91	S2c

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**FOX, Jacob Harvey	836-39-78	F1c
FRANKEN, John Fred	285-50-86	S2c
FRANKENFIELD, Paul Lester	820-28-50	S2c
GALL, Sylvanus Joseph	841-23-67	S1c
GARRISON, James William	279-56-59	SC1c
GAUN, Walter Raymond	809-57-50	F1c
GIAMPIETRO, Carl	642-72-50	SC3c
GILCHRIST, Travis Clayton	262-68-62	Cox
GILJUM, George Peter	668-09-66	TM2c
GILPIN, Harry George	382-23-38	RM1c
GODBOUT, Francis John	202-55-76	S2c
GODLESKY, Joseph Francis	666-51-72	MM2c
GRAHAM, Ernest Charles	224-35-49	GM3c
GRAHAM, "J" "L"	624-92-45	SC2c
GRAY, Phillip Walker	266-00-08	StM1c
GREEAR, Vernon Robert	300-65-29	EM2c
GRIGOS, Stephen	808-08-38	S2c
**GRILLO, Joseph	708-79-26	F1c
GROSS, Norman Andrew	859-14-06	S1c
HARGRAVE, Charles	375-21-44	CCS
HARRIS, Thad, Jr.	656-82-57	MM3c
*HARSAR, Albert Joseph	858-37-02	F1c
HATHAWAY, Dell LeRoy	633-35-07	M2c
HAYS, William, Jr.	643-35-09	S2c
HAYWARD, Winthrop Charles	201-64-58	B1c
HELENTJARIS, Lee Ulysses	850-73-94	GM3c
HERCZEG, Steve John	942-43-07	F1c
HINCHCLIFFE, Richard Albert	664-38-14	Y2c
**HIRD, James Walter	606-89-63	MM2c
HOLT, Samuel Thaddeus	604-91-47	S2c
HOLT, Jack Edward	828-25-17	F1c
HOLTWICK, Joseph Bernard	856-82-73	S1c
HOLZMAN, Fred	814-19-77	S2c
HOLZAPPEL, Clifford Duane	864-39-73	S2c
HOMICK, John	820-01-30	S2c
HOOD, Carol Robert	337-26-67	S1c
HORTON, James Augusta	858-36-75	CM3c
HOUSE, John Milton	855-59-53	F1c
HUGHES, James Tyson	851-13-38	S2c
HUGHES, Gordon George	223-51-01	GM1c
*HUNT, Robert Gray	849-99-33	S1c
INGRAM, David	656-76-44	S1c
ISZA, William Valentine	611-72-55	S1c
JACKSON, Russell Issaac	651-09-39	S1c
JACOBS, Frederick Karl	896-27-20	S2c
JACOBSON, Allan Walter	868-38-07	S1c
JAKOBCZYK, Anthony Stanley	244-37-63	S1c
JANSON, Frederick William	223-50-54	GM2c
JANSSEN, Elmer Lloyd	648-53-03	SF3c
JEFFREY, Donald Alexander	802-23-39	S2c
JEMIGAN, Willie Fred	840-53-26	StM2c
JOHNSON, Robert Lloyd	864-82-21	S2c
JOHNSON, Wilburn Nelson	279-60-99	BM2c

**JOHNSON, James Anderson	652-62-27	F1 c
JONES, Paul David	265-77-00	StM2c
**JONES, Rollie Gordon	274-11-52	CMM
JONES, Willie	842-60-76	StM2c
JORDAN, Berties Lincoln	144-67-47	CWT
JUNGNITSCH, Abraham Lincoln	328-48-68	GM1 c
KAPING, Robert Ervin	639-36-98	SK3c
**KASZA, Charles Frank	858-37-43	F1 c
**KEIZER, Joseph David	856-95-55	HA2c
KELDER, Bradford Vernon	800-51-43	S1 c
KELLY, Louis William	811-99-21	S1 c
KENNEY, John Joseph	708-43-82	S2c
KENNEY, Ralph Hugh	817-55-31	F1 c
KEPPEN, Avery George	942-53-06	F1 c
KLEIN, Harold Steve	311-25-14	SF1 c
KNIERIM, William Thomas	711-02-69	S1 c
KOLOCH, Andrew Albert, Jr.	650-14-73	S2c
LAEDTKE, Lester Carlton	610-43-78	FC2c
*LAMBERT, Charles Edward P.	401-37-91	MM1 c
**LAMBERT, Melvin Theodore	328-74-37	WT1 c
LAVEY, William John	204-64-40	S1 c
*LEACH, Glendon Eugene	850-73-89	S1 c
LENKER, Richard Eugene	819-18-59	S1 c
**LETSON, Wyly Quillian	832-36-15	EM3c
LINDEMUTH, Harry Clemson	204-46-86	MM3c
LINDSEY, Louis Lovelng	266-59-20	S1 c
LINWOOD, Louis Ray	690-57-07	S2c
*LOMBARDI, Henry Harry	372-09-25	MM1 c
*LOMBARDO, Joseph Anthony	813-01-01	F1 c
LONG, William Leo	854-02-06	S1 c
LOTT, Harrold Daniel	287-54-09	S1 c
LOWE, Jesse James	552-86-25	S1 c
LUCI, Vincent James	811-16-07	S1 c
*LUGO, Victor Cervantes	632-29-65	S1 c
LULLING, Henry Edward	851-62-84	TM3c
MAC PHERSON, John Cairns	815-72-36	RdM3c
MAC ELWEE, George Apple	245-18-57	FC3c
MAHONEY, James Willard	300-17-25	MM1 c
MALAY, Donald William	601-44-18	S1 c
MANARIN, Vincent Joseph	870-32-64	GM3c
MARBERRY, Edwin Ernest	336-83-55	CEM
MARION, Tommie Lee	274-37-79	Ck2c
MARTEL, Alcide Joseph	204-35-39	CGM
MARTIN, Billy Burns	867-17-98	S1 c
MARTIN, James Levi	930-32-26	S2c
*MARTIN, Joseph Patrick	222-83-46	MM2c
MATECKI, John Joseph	224-56-13	S1 c
MATHEWS, Jay Kemp	857-17-30	GM3c
MATHEWSON, David Russell	601-42-68	S1 c
MAYBERRY, George	839-79-20	StM2c
*MC CARTNEY, Wendell Boyd	703-73-93	S1 c
MC GRATH, James Rowen	817-46-85	S1 c
MC LAUGHLIN, Frank James	818-59-46	RdM3c

McMILLEN, Robert James	560-02-93	S1c
*McWHITE, William Lewis, Jr.	271-77-98	CPHM
MEYER, Dayle Eugene	723-49-39	SoM3c
MILLER, David Emery	404-12-68	QM1c
MILLER, Merle Edward	285-59-46	S2c
MILTON, Lester Thomas	828-76-30	RdM3c
MOLLER, Robert Ernest	611-96-71	RM3c
MONTGOMERY, Richard Leland	285-49-29	S2c
MORRIS, Boyd Franklin	352-44-38	S2c
MOTT, John Melburn	234-14-66	BM1c
MUNDY, Bernard Carlton	659-34-32	S1c
MUNGER, Clair	623-39-97	SoM3c
MURPHY, Joseph Leo	762-34-22	S2c
**MYCUE, Irving Francis	400-63-05	MM1c
NEAKRASE, Bruno	942-63-39	F1c
NELSON, William H.	296-11-55	S1c
NEWTON, Robert Woodward	801-00-21	RdM3c
NIXON, George Thomas	758-74-86	S2c
*NOE, Hugh Patrick	648-36-27	F1c
NORDSTROM, Ernest Rudolph	962-33-99	F1c
O'LEARY, Harold John	402-64-34	CQM
OUELLET, Eugene Joseph	606-12-48	Cox
PADILLA, Joseph Ralph	907-59-49	StM2c
PARRISH, William Dayton	262-56-45	EM1c
PEARSON, James Seal	930-81-94	StM2c
*PEITRUCHA, Philip Joseph	809-60-12	F1c
PETERSON, Jesse Thomas	837-07-70	StM2c
*PHILLIPS, Benson Ralph	869-47-18	F1c
PHILLIPS, William Henry	651-71-20	S1c
PIGG, Jack William	634-47-84	S1c
PIRIPAVEL, Vasil	820-80-00	F1c
*PITTS, William Irvin	262-23-88	WT1c
POOLE, Thomas Judson, Jr.	262-27-19	WT1c
PORTSCHE, Vernon Willis	660-53-37	GM3c
POVICKE, Albert Francis	243-61-01	CMM
PRICE, Fred W.	291-66-33	GM2c
**PRICE, George Lewis	835-50-52	S1c
PRIZWAN, John	305-70-67	CM2c
QUAAS, Oswald Frank	800-38-63	S1c
*RADOS, George Thomas ²	608-19-56	MM2c
RANICKE, Anthony David	943-06-06	F1c
RASMUSSEN, Arne Halbert	709-60-32	FC3c
RAUSCH, Francis Roman	870-01-21	RM3c
REARDON, Philip Joseph	209-02-49	S1c
REARDON, William Joseph	801-55-40	S1c
REDMOND, James Gregory	708-21-58	S1c
RICHARD, Leroy John	645-82-40	RM3c
RICHARDS, Harold Eugene	337-77-09	FCR3c
**RIEDEL, Benjamin (n)	329-00-38	S2c
RIORDAN, John Milton	663-56-47	SoM2c
ROLLINS, Albert Lee	625-10-30	S1c
RONDEAU, William Francis	207-14-12	CY
ROOP, Neil Hamilton	212-21-43	SK1c

**ROTH, Robert Arthur	962-33-71	F1c
ROYALL, Wilbur Mankin	827-45-80	S2c
ROYBAL, Antonio Jose	553-54-00	RM3c
ROYCE, Howard Eugene	321-77-86	SoM3c
RUA, Joseph	201-99-54	Cox
RUDELL, Charley Luther	893-84-99	S2c
SADONIS, John	951-28-10	F1c
*SANDERS, LaRue Elbert	942-64-05	F1c
SAROFF, Theodore (n)	863-92-21	FC3c
SAWYER, Marshall Dunn	266-02-01	GM2c
SCARPA, Anthony Pat	826-37-91	F1c
SCHMIDT, Carl William, Jr.	316-49-36	SM1c
SCHEETZ, John Norman	940-94-60	F1c
**SCHMILKE, Frank (n)	301-27-25	S2c
SCHWAB, Elwyn Charles	564-84-95	FC3c
SCISCOE, Philip Scott	293-46-19	S2c
SCOGGINS, James Gemell	637-27-80	GM3c
SHERARD, Max Howe	931-83-43	S2c
SHERWOOD, Harry Raymond	626-81-57	SoM3c
SHINGLE, Lester Howard	817-88-56	S1c
SIMPSON, Robert	250-74-07	S1c
SIPPLES, Clyde	560-10-66	F1c
SMITH, Don Clinton	940-91-69	F1c
SMITH, Fred Lawrence	869-57-96	F1c
SMITH, Harry Edward	864-23-59	TM3c
SMITH, Merle Eugene	293-46-35	S2c
SMRZ, Charles (n)	725-43-13	SC3c
SPRINGER, Robert Carl	295-33-91	FC1c
STATLER, Elliott Edward	382-14-03	TM1c
STEINBECK, Edwin Wilfred	870-28-77	FGR3c
STEMPLE, Daris Burns	258-09-93	TM1c
STETTLER, Paul Edward	629-28-96	S1c
STOKES, James David	272-79-39	S1c
**STRATTON, Lawrence Earl	942-98-09	F1c
SWIMELAR, Charles Samuel	800-86-76	S2c
TALADAY, George William	835-53-00	S2c
TARLETON, Walter Bruce, Jr.	893-26-01	SK3c
TAYLOR, "R" "B"	560-05-26	WT2c
TENNANT, Vaughn Sine	279-68-77	RM3c
TERRY, George Donald	858-22-07	S2c
**TERRELL, Elmer Ernest	943-01-28	F1c
**THOMPSON, Ralph Frederick	410-21-95	MM1c
THORNTON, Elish "I"	556-20-13	S1c
THORPE, Virgil Henry	629-32-79	S2c
THOMAS, William Arthur	575-35-54	F1c
TORIAN, James Henry	266-18-01	Cox
**TORGERSON, Leonard Gerhard	620-34-33	GM2c
TREVINO, Gilberta Davila	625-48-33	S1c
TURNER, Frank Swift	761-80-63	S1c
TYRON, George Edward	895-80-00	S2c
TYSDAL, Whitford Leroy	648-05-65	WT3c
VANDEVILLE, Verne Vern	869-57-78	F1c
VIELA, Roy Myron	601-59-53	S2c

VILLERE, Joseph (n)	847-50-96	StM2c
VITALE, Christopher Joseph	814-90-26	S2c
*WALLACE, Edward Joseph	400-02-50	GM1c
WARD, Alfred Gerry	833-63-94	SoM3c
WATSON, Norman Dale	570-40-28	S2c
WEAVER, Obra Neal	832-49-86	S2c
WEBSTER, James Alfred, Jr.	930-31-18	S2c
WEBB, John Joseph	826-25-74	EM3c
WEILER, Francis Stark	224-89-50	SM3c
WESSELS, Walter Douglas	834-96-32	EM3c
WEST, Willie Bay, Jr.	269-11-63	S1c
WHISKER, Dale Byron	875-49-14	S2c
WHITLOCK, Allen Raymond	246-10-44	S2c
**WHITE, Dewey James	837-45-73	S2c
**WHITE, Lee Oliver	223-97-45	WT3c
WHITE, Leonard Leighton	287-28-91	EM1c
**WILK, Michael Joseph	809-60-50	F1c
WILLIAMS, Royle Charles, Jr.	618-79-80	F1c
WYANT, Warren Vance	626-26-96	S1c
ZAN, John Joseph	821-11-82	F2c

* * * * *

1 Source: The Muster Roll of 31 March 1944 and Report Of Changes sheets through 31 May 1944 on microfilm at the National Archives. The resulting enlisted complement of 336 agrees with Enclosure (B) to the ship's action report of 20 June 1944.

2 The Bureau of Naval Personnel casualty report shows RADOS, George Thomas as "Killed in Action" (not, "Died of Wounds") on 11 June 1944. This was after the Meredith sank, so I have shown him as being wounded based on the casualties listed in Enclosure (B) to the ship's action report.

* Wounded (** Killed) when the ship was mined off the Normandy beachhead on 6/8/44 according to a machine-generated casualty report prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war.

Summary of Casualties:

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Not Wounded</u>	<u>Complement on 6/8/44</u>
Officer	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>
Enlisted	<u>33</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>276</u>	<u>336</u>
TOTALS	<u>35</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>294</u>	<u>357</u>

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
August, 2000

U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726)

*Cemeteries Where the Bodies of Crew Members Killed on 8 June 1944
Are Interred* (Total: 8)*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Service Number</u>	<u>Rate/ Rating</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Location Note #</u>
ALEXANDER, Richard Clyde	762-42-72	S2c	USNR	1
BEIGEL, David (none)	814-89-10	S1c	USN	2
BREAUX, "A" "B" John	274-07-32	CBM	USN	3
DIBBLE, Robert Emerson	311-47-37	TM2c	USN	4
LETSON, Wyly Quillian	832-36-15	EM3c	USNR	5
MYCUE, Irvin Francis	400-63-05	MM1c	USNR	6
PRICE, George Lewis	835-50-52	S1c	USNR	7
WAGNER, James R.	119712	Lt.(jg)	USNR	8

* * * * *

Location Notes:

- 1 Keokuk National Cemetery, Keokuk, Iowa
- 2 Mount Lebanon Cemeteries, Rahway, New Jersey
- 3 Normandy American Cemetery, St. Laurent-sur-Mer, France
(Plot C, Row 27, Grave 40)
- 4 Plum Hill Cemetery, Union, Michigan
- 5 Normandy American Cemetery, St. Laurent-sur-Mer, France
(Plot C, Row 12, Grave 40)
- 6 Cambridge American Cemetery, Cambridge, England
(Plot F, Row 5, Grave 76)
- 7 Normandy American Cemetery, St. Laurent-sur-Mer, France
(Plot C, Row 25, Grave 34)
- 8 Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia
(Grave #4398, Section #34)

* Several of those listed may have died on 9 June, apparently from wounds. The twenty-seven crew members reported missing or buried at sea are listed separately.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
January, 2002

U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726)

Crew Members Missing After the Ship Was Mined on 8 June 1944
Memorialized at the Normandy American Cemetery,
St. Laurent-sur-Mer, France: (Total: 27)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Service Number</u>	<u>Rate/ Rating</u>	<u>Branch</u>
BAKER, Oren David, Sr.	896-93-91	F1c	USNR
BICKEL, Francis Norman	651-45-80	WT3c	USNR
DENNING, John Arthur	563-18-30	MM2c	USNR
DORGAN, John Albert	234-08-69	MM1c	USN
EVANS, William Henry	274-29-34	CWT	USN
FENTON, Franklin Edward	815-81-55	WT3c	USNR
FOX, Jacob Harvey	836-39-78	S1c	USNR
GRILLO, Joseph	708-79-26	F1c	USNR
HIRD, James Walter	606-89-63	MM2c	USNR
JOHNSON, James Anderson	652-62-27	F2c	USNR
JONES, Rollie Gordon	274-11-52	CMM	USN
KASZA, Charles Frank	858-37-43	F1c	USNR
KEIZER, Joseph David	856-95-55	HA2c	USNR
LAFFEY, Harold Joseph	284626	Lieut.	USN
LAMBERT, Melvin Theodore	328-74-37	WT1c	USN
PEITRUCHA, Philip Joseph	809-60-12	F1c	USNR
PITTS, William Irvan	263-23-88	WT1c	USN
RIEDEL, Benjamin	329-00-38	S2c	USNR
ROTH, Robert Arthur	962-33-71	F1c	USNR
SCHMILKE, Frank (none)	301-27-25	S2c	USNR
STRATTON, Lawrence Earl	942-98-09	F1c	USNR
TERRELL, Elmer Ernest	943-01-28	F1c	USNR
THOMPSON, Ralph Frederick	410-21-95	MM1c	USNR
TORGERSON, Leonard Gerhard	620-34-33	GM2c	USNR
WHITE, Dewey James	837-45-73	S2c	USNR
WHITE, Leo Oliver	223-97-45	WT3c	USN
WILK, Michael Joseph	809-60-50	F1c	USNR

* * * * *

Note: All of the information regarding memorials and interments is courtesy of Gustavus R. Ide, Jr., a survivor of another destroyer sunk off the Normandy beachhead, the USS Glennon (DD-620). His sources were the American Battle Monuments Commission and (with the assistance of Senator Edward Kennedy's office) the records at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland (Textual Archives Services Division, Record Group 92).

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
January, 2002

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Narrative by: Commander G. Knuepfer
USS MEREDITH, DD 726 in Normandy Invasion.

The story of the loss of the second
destroyer named MEREDITH in the current war
is told here by Commander Knuepfer. The
MEREDITH was sunk by a mine on 8 June 1944,
while participating in the Neptune operation.

Film No. 240
Recorded: 11 June 1944

Copy No. 1 of three copies.
Rough Transcript: Arienta, 26 September 1944
Smooth Transcript: Beckman, 15 May 1945

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Narrative by: Commander G. Knuepfer
USS MEREDITH, DD 726 in Normandy Invasion.

Commander Knuepfer:

I am Commander George Knuepfer, Commanding Officer of the USS MEREDITH, Destroyer 726, the third ship of that name, the second one lost in this current war.

The MEREDITH arrived in the United Kingdom on the 28th of May, (1944) after having escorted a convoy from United States to the United Kingdom. Shortly after our arrival in Plymouth, around the 29th of May, I received all the information for operation Neptune. We received a special briefing in the old theatre at Plymouth, where the whole operation was explained to us, and I, in that operation, was assigned as Escort Commander of Convoy U-3 which consisted of 16 LSTs, and six Rhinos, the whole convoy containing about 7500 troops.

Among my escorts were two French Corvettes, the R'ACONIT and the RENONCULE, three British Trawlers and four U.S. Coast Guard Escort ships, quite an assortment of Allied Escort vessels. We started out the day before D-Day from Torquay, England and made our way across through swept channels across to the invasion coast.

The weather was quite rough, heavy overcast and a moderate sea. As is well known, the tides in the English Channel, particularly as you approach the French coast, average sometimes as much as 6 knots at full flood. And I had a 6-knot convoy, so that at many times in order to make the course good, I had to steer 86° off the base course to make my path good.

I feel that this crossing with the slow convoy was probably one of the most hazardous of the trip. Navigationally we had no trouble. We were able to keep our fixes by radar and arrived in the transport area, with the convoy intact and on time. While crossing during the night, we saw innumerable ships illuminated by star shells and snowflakes which indicated presence of E-boats but none of them approached close enough to my convoy to entail any real danger and I felt that not to disclose our position was the wisest course. So we did not have occasion to do any firing on the way down.

The sight of these thousands of ships crossing the channel was something that I never hoped to see. Being a slow convoy, we started before

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many of the others had to start so they passed us in the channel going down. A greeting from each one of these ships was the call-of-the-day. My ship in particular being one of the newest of our Navy received particular comment from the British forces that passed me, telling me what a fine ship I had, good luck and happy hunting.

We arrived in the transport areas, I said before, on time and my ship was assigned to the area screen to the northeastward of the transport area to guard the ships anchored there. I turned over my convoy to the Task Force Commander and I was assigned an area to screen to the northeast of the transport area. This area was about five miles from the French coast. During the night we patrolled this entire area along with about five other destroyers, hoping for an E-boat attack so we could eliminate a few of those that had caused quite considerable trouble to ships crossing.

We stayed on station on screen until about six o'clock in the morning of the day following D-Day when I was assigned to station No. 2 in the gun support area and there we had our first occasion to fire a shot in anger. We were stationed about a mile and a half to two miles off the French coast, just to the eastward of the boat lane through which our troops were passing to the beach.

We gave them gun support as directed by the gun support fire parties on the beach. In some cases they were Naval officers, in other cases, they were Army officers. They would give us positions of areas to open fire on by co-ordinates and we would let them have it as quickly as possible. The majority of our targets were tank and troop concentrations closing on our troops and it was a gratifying thing to hear when our salvo reached them, "well done, MEREDITH, you got them in the first salvo."

We stayed in this area supporting the troops throughout the day on 7 June and on the evening of 7 June about four minutes before midnight, we were ordered to proceed to the northward of the heavy ships in their gun support areas and screen them against E-boats. Just prior to this a report had been received that E-boats were concentrating in that area from the Cherbourg coast. I was assigned to the northward of a position just about five miles from the Island of Marcouf and was patrolling my station along with about six other destroyers, when suddenly I struck a submerged mine. This was at 0152.

The ship gave a tremendous lurch forward and upward and everybody on the topside was thrown to their knees and we were all drenched with a huge cloud of water as a result of the mine explosion. This water just seemed to fall for minutes and minutes until it appeared as if we were going down under the sea, suddenly all abated, flying debris had stopped falling and we stirred around to find out the extent of damage. All communications had been lost and power was off the ship.

We immediately investigated the extent of damage and found that the mine had struck on the port side of the keel right under No. 2 fireroom and

had wiped out both No. 1 fireroom, No. 1 engine room and No. 2 engine room, killing most of the men in that area including those that were in the repair parties on topside just above that area. The explosion blew a hole about 65 feet outward in this area, completely wiped out the main deck, the forward boat davit, the motor whaleboat, the super structure deck and half of No. 2 stack.

The machinery in these areas was actually blown overboard, just a tangled mass of machinery was in evidence. The ship had immediately taken a list to starboard of about twelve degrees as a result of machinery missing in the engineering spaces and she appeared to be settling. The bulkheads on each side of the damaged area were intact and the bilges were dry. It was one of those unusual conditions of damage control but there was nothing we could do. My forward auxiliary diesel engine was in operation, but there was no area to pump out. The ship had taken a position of static balance and nothing materially that we could do within our means could help the ship. I felt that the jettisoning of heavy weights would only upset this balance, and forces of sagging in effect, so my first thought was to get hold of the salvage parties.

The salvage plan for this area was quite elaborate and I decided to take advantage of it. I called alongside two PC boats to take off my wounded and a good proportion of my crew, just to get them out of the way.

In the black of night, I didn't know when she might break in two, I felt that the keel was broken, that all that was holding me together was probably the starboard shaft, and the starboard side of the ship. So I thought of the safety of the crew as being the most important thing at the time since I knew that the salvage tugs would come to me shortly so I removed the wounded and half the crew on these two PCs and then the ship gave another lurch and I thought she might break, so I called a DE and put all my key men, about 150 of them, and key officers, and myself on this DE, and I requested the skipper to lie off about 100 yards until the salvage tugs arrived.

The ship took a list of about two more degrees when I left and the starboard rail went further under the water.

The crew throughout the operation followed the best traditions of the Navy. There was no panic, everybody did their job. Men remained at their stations 'til they were told to leave. It was about an hour and fifteen minutes before all hands were clear of the ship.

Two PCs went into the transport area to the bigger ships while I stayed off close aboard watching the ship. Throughout the night she drifted toward the Cherbourg coast, which was another reason for my wanting the crew off, 'cause I knew as soon as she got within range of the Cherbourg coast that she would be taken under fire by eleven-inch guns in that area.

However, about 6 o'clock in the morning, two salvage tugs appeared

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on the scene and we immediately proceeded back to our ship, helped the salvage tugs secure the lines to the ship and they took her in tow into the advanced transport area. There the salvage parties inspected her and the decision was made to remove topside weights and to strengthen the side and have divers look at the keel. There were so many other ships at that time damaged that not much could be done on my ship.

About two o'clock in the afternoon on the 8th, they decided that there was danger of her sinking and if she sank in the transport area she would definitely be an obstruction. So they moved me down into the fire support area about a mile and a half off the beach. We arrived there about four o'clock in the afternoon. En route to this area, we suddenly saw two floating mines about 100 yards off the starboard bow and we immediately screamed to the tug that was towing us alongside to pull us out of the way. People had had just about enough of mines and to have hit that would have been rather a crucial moment. By the fine ship handling of the Captain of that tug he managed to pull us clear and anchored us, using his own anchors.

Salvage work continued throughout the afternoon and early evening. By this time the crew officers and myself that had originally come aboard were rapidly reaching the point of exhaustion, so I decided to place a relief party on board of three officers, that had not been on board previously, and about fifteen men as a security watch. I gave them instructions that if at any time the ship appeared in danger of breaking up to hail the tug, which would either be alongside or nearby to take them off.

On the early morning of the ninth the area was heavily bombed by the enemy and one 2,000-pound bomb landed about 500 yards off the ship's bow and it shook the ship terribly and it had indicated the first evidence of the stern working itself loose.

The break of the deck had originally been quite level and now the stern section began rising but still the bulkheads were intact, the bilges were dry and we felt that the ship would eventually be saved and live to fight again. However, about ten o'clock on the morning of the 9th, she suddenly gave a terrific crunch and broke in two. There was sufficient time for everybody to jump clear into the water to be picked up by the tugs. The bow slid down aft and the stern slid down forward and just as the bow was about to go underwater, she turned over so that the keel was exposed and she broke in two and rapidly sank out of sight. She sank about thirty-two hours after she was originally struck.

I feel that everybody did everything in their power to save her. It was a terrific thing to lose--such a new and fine ship.

As in every serious accident this one had a little bit of its humor. When I was getting ready to leave the ship, one of the chief petty officers said to me, "I almost forgot Lurky." I said, "Who is Lurky?" He said, "It's our pet cat that you never knew had been aboard." I was quite sur-

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prised to get the news at such a time, 'cause I had a ship's order that no pets would be allowed on my ship. The destroyer with its steel, hot decks is a rather cruel place to keep pets. I've seen so many of them lost overboard, so I didn't want any.

This Chief Petty Officer went down into the blacked out chief's quarters and soon came out with this tiny little taunt cat. He tucked her inside his jacket and climbed aboard the DE alongside.

The acts of heroism usually don't come to a Captain's attention 'til after the people are all off and you get a chance to sit down and talk about these things. Then come to light those things that create medals and for which medals are awarded.

I had one particular outstanding case, Bryan Brady Lawson, Chief Machinist Mate, U.S. Navy. I cited him for extraordinary heroism and outstanding devotion to duty in saving the lives of four injured men by carrying them out of the totally dark, shattered and flooded engine room under hazardous conditions when the USS MEREDITH struck an enemy mine while engaged in operation Neptune, Utah Area, Bay de Seine, France. Bryan, Chief Machinist Mate, U.S. Navy, had been in charge of the after engine room watch, when the MEREDITH struck a mine. In spite of the terrific explosion that took place in that area, he was stunned but otherwise unhurt. He managed to make his way out of the shattered after engine room by climbing out the after engine room hatch passing out to the fantail.

On the fantail, Bryan did not see any of the twelve men who had been on watch with him in the engine room, so he realized that they must still be down in the damaged engine room. He obtained a flashlight and at the risk of his own life, he went down into the totally dark and shattered after engine room which at that time was flooded to within four feet of the overhead and displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty with his total disregard to danger when at any time, at any moment, the MEREDITH was in danger of sinking, and he saved four injured men.

He carried these men out of the after engine room, passed them up the ladder to the hatch, where other men assisted in carrying these men to the fantail. Bryan kept these injured men together and subsequently assisted in putting them aboard a rescue ship. These men were all very badly injured and were subsequently hospitalized in United Kingdom for very serious burns, fractures and lacerations but all of these men are alive and they will recover. I saw them all at a hospital at Plymouth. They are in good spirits and the doctor assured me they would live. For this great feat, I have recommended Bryan for the award of the Navy Cross.

In addition to Bryan being recommended for the award of the Navy Cross, the following officers and enlisted men were recommended for the awards of letters of commendation and the commendation ribbon for services performed:

The first one was Lieutenant Commander Donald Brewster Amage, Executive Officer of the MEREDITH. He was cited as particular credit and commendation for outstanding performance of duty as Executive Officer and Navigator of

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the USS MEREDITH, in assisting the Convoy Commodore of Convoy U-3, of which the Commanding Officer, USS MEREDITH, was the Escort Commander, in the safe navigation of Convoy U-3 from the United Kingdom to the Utah Transport Area under adverse conditions of strong tides and currents through narrow and restricted swept channels which were known to be mined. This performance of duty assisted the Escort Commander to arrive safely intact and at the scheduled time with Convoy U-3 for operation Neptune.

The subsequent operations in the Utah area and beach while the MEREDITH was employed as a unit of the area screen and in the gun support area, the executive officer was in charge of the combat information center, and efficiently maintained the ship's position and provided firing data to the gun control based on this information, an excellent job—well done.

The other Credit goes to the Commanding Officers of the USS BATES, PC 1232, and PC 1263, great credit and commendation are due to the commanding officers of these ships for bringing their ships alongside the MEREDITH after she had been struck by the mine and for their successful rescue of so many officers and men in the area where enemy threats were so actively present. Their task required the nicest judgment of seamanship and required that their ships be stopped for considerable periods while so many wounded casualties were laboriously taken aboard. The limited facilities of these ships were stretched in an attempt to make all wounded and survivors as comfortable as possible.

Particular credit is due to Commanding Officer of the BATES for remaining on the scene at the request of the commanding officer of the MEREDITH, and in screening that helpless ship, until the arrival of the salvage tugs and the salvage officer.

The others are my damage control officer and assistant damage control officer, Lieutenant (j.g.) Edward Scott Doe, D-V(G), and Ensign Robert Gibson McElroy, also D-V(G). They are cited as follows: Particular credit and commendation are due to the following named officers who were in charge of repair parties three and one respectively, for the efficient manner in which they handled the damaged control problem, created by the initial effect of the mine explosion and for their untiring efforts and assistance for a period of over thirty-two hours rendered the salvage party of the USS BANNOCK under the supervision of the assistant salvage officer of the Naval Western Task Force.

The remaining commendations go to the Medical Department. The Medical officer, Lieutenant (j.g.) Charles Spencer Davidson, Medical Corps, USNR; Chief Pharmacist Mate, William Lewis McWhite; Otto Earl Eckart, Pharmacist Mate 1/c; also George Thomas Nixon, Seaman 2/c, U.S. Naval Reserve, who was acting as a Pharmacist Mate.

The citation reads as follows: The manner in which the Medical Officer, Lieutenant (j.g.) Charles Spencer Davidson, MCDG, U.S. Naval Reserve, and

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the men of the Medical Department, Chief Pharmacist Mate, William Lewis McWhite, Otto Earl Eckart, Pharmacist Mate 2/c, and George Thomas Nixon, S2/c, gave and administered relief to the injured while still on board their ship and later continued their unselfish efforts during the subsequent passage to the transport area, was most commendable.

The following officers deserve particular credit and commendation in their helping, in their unselfish efforts in assisting the injured and helpless to escape from the dangers which threatened them. Lieutenant Commander Donald Bruster Amage, Lieutenant (j.g.) Donald Leonard LaSalle, Ensign Newton Marbury Mauer, Albert Francis, Chief Pharmacist Mate; and Henry Cary Bronson, Machinist Mate 3/c. These men helped the injured into the boats, they administered first aid, and were responsible for saving many lives.

There were a great many men who were seriously burned, several had lost arms and limbs, and these men were totally helpless and needed the attention of men just like this.

In addition to these awards were the innumerable and sad posthumous awards of purple hearts for the personnel that were dead and missing. They are too numerous to mention right here.

Also there are the recommendation for awards for the purple heart medals for those who were wounded. There was a total of 35 men lost, dead or missing, 33 enlisted men and two officers, and there were 25 men and one officer badly injured that had to be hospitalized. That is all.

-- END --

"They fought together as brothers in arms; they died together and now they sleep side by side. To them we have a solemn obligation - the obligation to insure that their sacrifice will help make this a better and safer world in which to live."

- Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, at The Surrender on board the U.S.S. Missouri (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945.

The U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726) in World War II

Photograph Credits

<u>Description</u>		<u>Source Code/Ident. No.</u>
Sponsor, Mrs. William Kopper, 12/21/43	NA	19-N-56585
Sponsor's party, Bath, Maine, 12/21/43	NA	19-N-56586
Christening, Bath, Maine, 12/21/43	NA	19-N-56587
Launching, Bath Iron Works, 12/21/43	NA	19-N-56588
Port bow, u/way, Boston, 3/29/44	NA	19-N-130103
Port beam, u/way, Boston, 3/29/44	NI	Order with photocopy
Aerial, starboard beam, u/way, 4/16/44	NA	80-G-237958
20-mm, Mark 4, Oerlikon machine gun	NA	19-N-31965
Twin 40-mm Bofors gun mount	RWP	N-6569A
German torpedo boat ("E-boat")	NHC	NH 71371
Breaking in two, from <u>Bannock</u> , 6/9/44	TCS	Order with photocopy
Rescue ship, USS <u>Bates</u> (DE-68)	NI	Order with photocopy
Survivors, Plymouth, England, View #1	NA	80-G-243665
Survivors View #2	NA	80-G-243667
Survivors View #3	NA	80-G-243663

* * * * *

Key to Sources:

NA National Archives
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
Still Picture ref.: (301) 713-6625, Ext. 234
(Request addresses/price lists of private vendors)

NHC Naval Historical Center (CUP)
805 Kidder Breese St., SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060
(202) 433-2765

NI U.S. Naval Institute Photo Service
291 Wood Road
Annapolis, MD 21402
(410) 295-1022; Fax (410) 269-7940

RWP Real War Photos, P.O. Box 728, Hammond, IN 46325

TCS Tin Can Sailors, Inc.
P.O. Box 100
Somerset, MA 02726
Phone: 508-677-0515; FAX: 508-676-9740

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
May, 2002

The U.S.S. Meredith (DD-726) in World War II

Bibliography/Sources

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Miscellaneous:

- Action reports, WWII (National Archives)
- Casualty report in the "Battle Books" at the National Archives (a machine-generated report prepared by BuPers c. 1946).
- Deck logs, WWII (National Archives)
- Muster rolls, USS Meredith (DD-726), on microfilm (National Archives).
- Oral history transcripts, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard.
- Ships' Histories Branch files, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard.
- WWII Citations file, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
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About The Editor

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Commander, USNR (Ret.), received his commission through the NROTC Program at Dartmouth College in 1950. Following graduation he saw action off Korea aboard the USS Douglas H. Fox (DD-779) when this destroyer dueled with numerous North Korean shore batteries in the Sea of Japan. Many of the photographs he took during this period have been donated to the Naval Historical Foundation, and two of them appeared in the coffee-table book, The Navy, published by the Foundation in 2000. After completing three years of active duty he began a civilian career in public accounting and later in management positions at Raytheon Company in Waltham, Massachusetts.

In 1993 he developed a strong interest in naval history and began editing a series of illustrated ships' histories primarily of U.S. destroyers sunk in World War II. Primary source documents such as action reports, ships' war diaries, medal citations and muster rolls are included in these histories as well as many firsthand accounts. His booklets are not for sale, but he sends complimentary copies to the survivors and to the families of crewmembers killed on these vessels.

Commander Wilde is a life member of the Naval Historical Foundation and the U.S. Naval Institute.

Historical Compilations by the Editor:

(Destroyer/Destroyer Escort Hulls in World War II)

<u>United States Ship</u>	<u>Date Sunk/ (Damaged)</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Killed/ Wounded¹</u>
<u>Aaron Ward</u> (DD-483)	04/07/43	Guadalcanal	42/139*
<u>Barton</u> (DD-599)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	164/32
<u>Borie</u> (DD-215)	11/01/43	North Atlantic	27/00
<u>Colhoun</u> (APD-2)	08/30/42	Tulagi	51/18
<u>Corry</u> (DD-463)	06/06/44	Normandy	24/55
<u>Cushing</u> (DD-376)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	72/67
<u>DeHaven</u> (DD-469)	02/01/43	Guadalcanal	168/40
<u>Douglas H. Fox</u> (DD-779)	(05/17/45)	Okinawa	10/36
<u>Drexler</u> (DD-741)	05/28/45	Okinawa	158/54
<u>Duncan</u> (DD-485)	10/12/42	Guadalcanal	48/35
<u>Emmons</u> (DMS-22)	04/06/45	Okinawa	60/78
<u>Fiske</u> (DE-143)	08/02/44	North Atlantic	33/65
<u>Glennon</u> (DD-620)	06/10/44	Normandy	25/49*
<u>Halligan</u> (DD-584)	03/26/45	Okinawa	160/43
<u>Hammann</u> (DD-412)	06/06/42	Midway	84/63
<u>Laffey</u> (DD-459)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	59/114
<u>Lansdale</u> (DD-426)	04/20/44	Mediterranean	49/76
<u>McFarland</u> (AVD-14)	(10/16/42)	Guadalcanal	12/13
<u>Meredith</u> (DD-726)	06/09/44	Normandy	35/28
<u>Monssen</u> (DD-436)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	145/37
<u>Perry</u> (DMS-17)	09/13/44	Angaur/Peleliu	8/17
<u>Preston</u> (DD-379)	11/15/42	Guadalcanal	117/26
<u>Spence</u> (DD-512)	12/18/44	Luzon, P.I.	315/24
<u>Strong</u> (DD-467)	07/05/43	Cent. Solomons	45/61
<u>Walke</u> (DD-416)	11/15/42	Guadalcanal	82/48

* * * * *

Notes:

* Total for two engagements with the enemy

¹ Including those presumed dead more than a year subsequent to the date they were reported missing either due to enemy action or by drowning.

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
Commander, USNR (Ret.)
June, 2005

Locations Where Historical Compilations by the Editor
Are Available For Researchers

- ¹ Air Zoo, Guadalcanal Campaign Collection, Potage, Michigan
ECU Manuscript Collection, Joyner Library, Greenville, NC
Louisiana Naval War Memorial Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- ² Maine Maritime Museum Library, Bath, Maine
Mariners' Museum Research Library, Newport News, Virginia
Mystic Seaport's G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic, Connecticut
- National Archives II Library, College Park, Maryland
- ³ National D-Day Museum Library Collection, New Orleans, LA
National Museum of Pacific War, War Studies, Fredericksburg, TX
- Naval Historical Center, Navy Dept. Library, Washington Navy Yard
_____, Operational Archives Branch, Washington Navy Yard
_____, Ships' Histories Branch, Washington Navy Yard
- Naval War College, Naval Historical Collection, Newport, RI
N.Y. Public Library, 42nd & 5th Ave., Room 315, New York, N.Y.
- ² Portland Public Library, Portland Room, Portland, Maine
- ⁴ Tin Can Sailors, Inc., Research Library, Somerset, Massachusetts
US Naval Academy, Nimitz Library Special Collections, Annapolis
U.S. Naval Institute, History Division, Beach Hall, Annapolis, MD
- U.S. Navy Memorial's Research Library, Washington, D.C.
USS Slater (DE-766) Library, Albany, New York

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Notes:

- ¹ Only ships which participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign:
Aaron Ward, Barton, Colhoun, Cushing, DeHaven, Duncan, Laffey,
McFarland, Monssen, Preston, Walke.
- ² Only Bath-built ships: DeHaven, Drexler, Emmons, Meredith,
Spence, Strong
- ³ Only ships sunk off the Normandy Beachhead: Corry, Glennon,
Meredith
- ⁴ By appointment only: (508) 677-0515

E. A. Wilde, Jr.
June, 2006

1210 Greendale Ave., Apt. E3
Needham, MA 02492-4622
August 16, 2003

Marty Morgan, Historian
The National D-Day Museum
945 Magazine Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Dear Sir:

I'm sending you four historical compilations on destroyers which participated in OPERATION NEPTUNE. Three of these ships were sunk off the Normandy Beachhead in shallow water: USS Corry (DD-463), USS Glennon (DD-620) and USS Meredith (DD-726).

The USS Emmons (as DD-457, before she was converted to a mine-sweeper and redesignated DMS-22) provided effective gunfire support (841 rounds of 5-inch shells on June 6th) of the landings at OMAHA BEACH. After firing on assigned targets this destroyer closed to within 1500 yards of the shore to engage enemy batteries and fire at targets of opportunity. Although she was bracketed by enemy fire she was not hit and had no personnel casualties.

The three destroyers which were sunk had a total of 84 killed/missing and 125 wounded. My booklets identify these men and list both the grave sites for those interred overseas and the cemeteries where the missing are memorialized.

My Corry booklet contains several very moving personal accounts of the hardships these survivors endured before they were rescued.

I hope your museum makes visitors aware of the important role destroyers played at Normandy on D-Day, June 6th, 1944.

Yours truly,



E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
Commander, USNR (Ret.)
(781) 449-0392

THE NATIONAL
D-DAY
MUSEUM
NEW ORLEANS

April 12, 2004

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.
1210 Greendale Ave., Apt. E3
Needham, MA 02492-4622

RE: Library Donation

Commander Wilde,

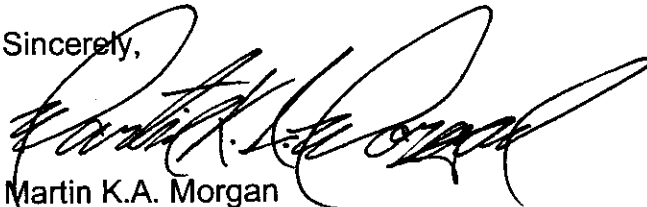
The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge receipt of the material you forwarded to this office on August 16, 2003. These booklets are certainly of great interest to this institution and I am confident that future researchers will benefit from their content as well.

As you well know, US Navy destroyers played a very important role during Operation Neptune. Had it not been for the direct fire support of the USS *Emmons* (DD-457), the battle at Omaha beach would definitely have turned out much differently than it did. Also, the loss of USS *Corry* (DD-463), USS *Glennon* (DD-620) and USS *Meredith* (DD-726) proves that naval combat on D-Day was every bit as ferocious as combat on the beaches and drop zones.

Your donation of these pieces of source material has made a meaningful contribution to the collection of historical literature held by The National D-Day Museum. This library collection is open to researchers and consequently available for future historians who wish to continue the development of human understanding of this historic event.

Thank you very much for contributing to this institution's library collection. We are deeply appreciative of your support.

Sincerely,



Martin K.A. Morgan
Research Historian



America's World War II Museum

The National D-Day Museum | 945 Magazine Street | New Orleans, LA 70130-3813 | Phone 504.527.6012 | Fax 504.527.6088 | www.ddaymuseum.org

