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ACTION REPORT

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ORIGINAL

COMMANDER EIGHTH FLEET

SERIAL 00215

3 MARCH 1945

SALERNO OPERATION, ACTION REPORTS OF DIVERSION GROUP.

[COVERS ACTIVITIES OF TASK GROUP 80.4
IN DIVERSION RAIDS IN GULF OF NAPLES.
REPORT COVERS PERIOD 9-18 SEPTEMBER
1943.]

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UNITED STATES EIGHTH FLEET

Serial:

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DECLASSIFIED MAR 1946

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

Subject: Salerno Operation, Action Reports of Diversion Group.

Reference: (a) CTG 80.4 Serial 004 of 23 Sept. 1943.
(b) CO USS KNIGHT Serial 048 of 22 Sept. 1943, plus first endorsement.
(c) ComARB Ron 1 Serial 016 of 5 Oct. 1943, plus first endorsement.
(d) CO USS SC 690 Ltr. dated 24 Sept. 1943.
(e) THE SALERNO LANDINGS, COMTF (Com8thFlt) Serial 0010 of 11 January 1945.

Enclosure: ✓(A) Reference (a).
✓(B) Reference (b). *Previously photostated.*
✓(C) Reference (c).
✓(D) Reference (d).

1. All enclosures are forwarded herewith, their classification being raised to Secret due to the use of secret code names.

2. Each enclosure is the action report of a unit or command attached to the Diversion Group (TG 80.4). Their contents:

- Enclosure (A) - General Action Report of Commander Diversion Group (CTG 80.4).
- Enclosure (B) - Action report of USS KNIGHT covering the period in which the destroyer served as flagship for the Diversion Group.
- Enclosure (C) - Action report of Commander ARB Ron ONE for the period in which the Aircraft Rescue Boats under his command operated with the Diversion Group.
- Enclosure (D) - Action report by USS SC 690 covering, chiefly, the period in which the SC served in the Diversion Group.

3. The mission of the Diversion Group was to conduct raids, demonstrations, and other deceptive activities in the general region of the Gulfs of Naples and Gaeta with the purpose of diverting enemy strength from the main assault area. A complete account of the group's activities and observations thereon are found in Section 17, page 158, of reference (e).

4. The group was composed of the units listed in paragraph 3, page 2 of reference (a) with the exception of the Dutch Gunboat S. ELBA, which was unable to participate due to a steering casualty. The motor boats attached were 1 US PT, 10 US Aircraft Rescue Boats, 6 British MLs, and 4 British MTBs.

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Subject:

Salerno Operation, Action Reports of Diversion Group.

See paragraph 1, page 158, of reference (e).

5. In paragraph 2, page 2 of reference (c), the date "September 10" should read "September 9", and likewise, the date "September 11" in paragraph 3 of the same page should read "September 10". See last paragraph of page 3, reference (b).

H. K. Hewitt

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CHIEF

ALB-3718 80.4
Serial: 004

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Task Group 80.4,
Western Naval Task Force,

SEP 23 1943

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From: The Commander Task Group 80.4.
To: The Commander Western Naval Task Force.
Subject: Task Group 80.4, Report of Actions during
Operation Avalanche by.

1. The mission assigned to Task Group 80.4 was to create a diversion in the Gulf of Gaeta by (a) simulated landing operations off the beaches north of Naples, (b) capture of the Island of Ventotene and (c) bombardment of coastal batteries in order to assist in firmly establishing the 5th Army ashore in the Salerno area. After the initial landing, Task Group 80.4 was reformed and directed to raid enemy coastwise convoys north of Naples and to occupy the islands covering the approaches to the Gulf of Naples.

2. From the diversity of units operating under Commander Task Group 80.4 and the variety of missions carried out it appears advisable to submit this report in narrative form. However, before commencing the detailed report the following facts can be stated:

(a) The Axis press released reports of landings north of Naples in the Gulf of Gaeta on the morning of D day.

(b) Ventotene Island was captured on D-1 night, according to plan, including 91 German prisoners. These Germans were a group of Luftwaffe Radar technicians. Also enough of the German Radar was salvaged to reconstruct the instrument.

(c) One German ammunition lighter was blown up on the morning of D-Day and a convoy dispersed.

(d) All islands off the entrance to the Gulf of Naples (Capri, Ischia and Procida) were occupied and prospective reoccupation by the enemy denied. The islands of Ponza, San Stefano and others in the Pontine Group were also occupied in order to complete the command of the sea approaches to the mainland in the Naples area. Also an aircraft beacon and a radio station were established on Ventotene Island as directed.

(e) No enemy convoys operated in or out of the Naples area after Task Group 80.4 commenced operating on coastal routes.

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(f) A successful Commando raid was carried out on the Island St. Martino.

(g) A great quantity of valuable Intelligence material relating to enemy dispositions, operations and movements was collected and turned over to Commander Western Naval Task Force, as well as reports of military and civilian conditions ashore.

(h) The establishment of an advance small boat operating base at Capri and the creation of close operational liaison with British Naval, Military and SOE units, later assigned to operate under Commander Task Group 80.4, was accomplished.

(i) Political prisoners of importance and prospective agents were released from prison and transported.

(j) Successful diversions were executed as ordered on D+2 Day.

3. Task Group 80.4 assembled at Bizerte. The forces consisted of:

U.S.S. KNIGHT - Headquarter's ship and fire support.
HNMS SOEMBA) - bombardment ships.
HNMS FLORES)

One PT - to lead ARB's. 10

ARBron ONE - "B.J." unit and Deception Group.

4 SC's - escort.

31st ML Flotilla - Troop carriers 6

32nd MTB Flotilla - Screen. 4

Final plans were drawn up; rehearsals held and equipment assembled. The offensive mining plan was cancelled because, in view of latest Intelligence, it was considered not feasible. Special Service troops of the 509th Parachute Infantry and special deceptive equipment and personnel arrived only at the last moment necessitating several readjustments of plans to meet the changing situation. The British "Blossom" equipment arrived just before sailing and it was decided to install them in two ML's, which eliminated these craft from landing troops since the equipment is so secret that no chance of compromise could be permitted. The addition of "Blossom" required further alterations of tactics. The troops were reassigned to four (4) ML's.

4. Since it was necessary to contact certain O.S.S. officers in Palermo, Commander Task Group 80.4 arranged to have

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✓ kite barrage balloons ^{+ leaders + jammers} rigged on ARB's and departed for Palermo with one PT, 5 MTB's and 10 ARB's. The KNIGHT, the two gunboats, ML's and SC's were scheduled to follow in convoy the next day.

✓ 5. In Palermo on D-3 Day, O.S.S. Headquarters was contacted and arrangements made for Special Service troops to act as interpreters and for Intelligence duties. These men were under command of Capt. Torello, U.S.A., and Lt.(jg) H.R. North, U.S.N.R. Also 11 special agents were detailed to be landed on the mainland north of Gaeta. The following morning U.S.S. KNIGHT with H.N.M.S. FLORES, 6 ML's and 4 SC's arrived and reported that the SOEMBA had returned to Bizerte due to a steering casualty.

✓ 6. The four SC's were brought into the harbor and rigged with special kite barrage balloons, with RADAR reflectors, and then sent to Termini to act as convoy escort and then to rejoin Task Group 80.4 next morning.

7. MTBron 15 reported to act as screen until necessary to depart for their own operation area.

✓ 8. A final conference was held at MTBron 15 base at 1900.

✓ 9. The group was to sail in two sections. The slow section, making 10 knots, was to leave at 0530 and the PT's, ^{FAST SECTION} MTB's and ARB's were to leave at 1100 and overtake the slow section before dark because, at slow speed, the ARB's could not keep their batteries charged.

10. That evening Commander Task Group 80.4 received a message stating that an important change in the operation plan was being flown to Palermo by fighter plane.

I. SEPT. 8th/9th, D-1 DAY, D-DAY.

3 11. Next morning the slow section departed on time but the KNIGHT was held waiting for the special message. At about 1000 word was received that the message had arrived and an officer was sent in to receive it. The special message was that airborne troops would not land in the Gulf of Gaeta area, but would go straight to the Rome area. This necessitated changes in ship movements and the alterations of plans were forwarded to all units. KNIGHT was underway at 1031 and made a speed of 25 knots to overtake the slow section.

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12. The KNIGHT rejoined slow section at 1330 and took on board, from an SC, 24 cases of phosphorous shells. She then took station ahead of FLORES in formation. At 1800, the fast section of PT's, MTB's and ARB's joined formation. Task Group 80.4 was completely assembled for the first time and proceeded at 12 knots towards point "C" to carry out their mission.

13. At 2040, a S.G. contact at 7,920 yds. was made. At about 2100 the ship's radio reported the Armistice with Italy and attendant instructions. This further change of plans required more alterations in our operations and the units were notified accordingly.

14. At 2110 gunfire and flares were visible off the KNIGHT's starboard bow. This appeared to be coming from the beach and continued for several minutes. Sound contacts were made and depth charges dropped but contact was lost and no result noted. Considerable AA fire appeared to come from Isola di Capri. At 2146, 3 unidentified planes were picked up by Radar bearing 010° at 5,000 yds. and nine minutes later a small boat (presumably part of Task Group 80.4 but not certain) shot down one of the planes while it was bearing 200°.

15. At 2150, our Radar reported that the enemy had picked up our group on his RDF and was showing considerable interest in our movements. We were attempting to "jam" his RDF but our equipment broke down and we were unsuccessful. However, the deceptive devices were working well and it was then assumed that the enemy supposed our force to be far more formidable than it actually was. This was authenticated by the continued interest in the group and the flares seen from the beach and dropping from planes. Also several unidentified planes would occasionally circle overhead only to retire when friendly planes arrived in the area or when, within range, they were fired upon.

16. At 2258, Task Group 80.4 converged on Point "C" and, at 2300 Radar contacted another unidentified plane at 25,000 yds. It was presumed to be one of those which had been dropping flares.

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17. At 2313, one of the ARB's, which was prepared to broadcast by loudspeaker a recorded demand to surrender, was dispatched to the island of Ventotene. The KNIGHT stopped off Isola San Stefano, abeam to port 5,500 yds., the MTB's and SC's deployed to screening positions around the FLORES on the right

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flank, the ARB's patrolled to the southward. The enemy continued to be interested in our force, plotting us on his Radar and Fire Control and breaking into our TBY circuit with unintelligible conversation.

18. At 2317, Lt. Cmdr. Kremer left the ship for MTB 289. In company with MTB 298 he was to land the special agents ashore northwest of Gaeta.

19. Meanwhile at 2345, the ARB^{AS} commenced its recorded demand for surrender and repeated it three times. The demand stated that the island would be allowed 15 minutes to decide before fire would be opened. The ARB was lying 1,000 yds. off the beach at Ventotene. At 2400 three white rockets went up from the island indicating surrender. Air action on the mainland beaches continued to be clearly visible as, at 0015, Commander Task Group 80.4 and certain members of his staff led the ML's into the harbor in a motor whaleboat. A lead-line was used in order to locate the tortuous and narrow channel entrance. Three more white rockets were shot as the whaleboat entered a false harbor and was obliged to turn about and proceed westward around the island. The ML's laid off, waiting for a signal from Commander Task Group 80.4, who continued the search for the small harbor. A great deal of shouting could be heard on the island and Capt. Torello, U.S.A. (of O.S.S.) was landed with one of his men on the beach in order to help find the entrance. This was quickly located and just as the boat came around a sizeable explosion took place in the harbor. This was followed by more explosions inland and further "three white rocket" surrender signals and Very lights. This was confusing at first but on landing it was found that the Italians, who had surrendered and fired the rockets, were ousted by a detachment of German Luftwaffe Radar personnel who decided to defend the island. At first they had planned to escape in motor boats but later decided our force too great for the attempt. They then manned the machine-gun defenses to the harbor in an attempt to forestall the initial landings but when the whaleboat and ML's were seen to enter the wrong harbor, and later to land on a beach, they assumed that their retreat had been cut off. The Germans then ordered the partial destruction of a small gunboat in the harbor by grenades and proceeded to retreat to the western section of the island, demolishing equipment and installations as they withdrew (later it was learned that their RADAR had reported the presence of a "large naval force" in the Gulf, of which this was but a section).

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20. The Italians greeted the whaleboat's arrival at 0040 excitedly and advised us of the enemy's prepared positions and that, although they were destroying the Italian coastal defenses, they were equipped with trench mortars and machine guns. A German Warrant Officer, on the quayside, surrendered immediately and admitted it was he who had blown up the boat.

21. Commander Task Group 80.4 ordered the first ML into the harbor. Only the splendid seamanship of Lt. Cmdr. Lloyd, RNR, could have made it and, after the first troops had disembarked, it was decided that the rest should land in the whaleboats and towed rubber boats. There was no room for the docking of any craft larger than a PT boat.

22. Orders were sent to H.N.M.S. FLORES to proceed with 2 SC's to the Southern Attack area to report for duty as her slow speed precluded her employment in any emergency that might arise thereafter.

23. Beginning at 0100 demolition explosions, which continued sporadically for some hours, were noted throughout the island. Fires were started in various places and it was decided not to order our 50 S.S. Parachute Infantry troops inland against superior forces until daylight. Meanwhile they were ordered to deploy and keep watch over the harbor entrance. Lt.(jg) North, U.S.N.R. (of O.S.S.) proceeded with Intelligence interrogation of Italian military and political prisoners. Lt. (jg) North and Capt. Torello (of O.S.S.) and Capt. Howland (of the Parachute Infantry) were advised that, provided the Germans could not be "bluffed" into surrender, Task Group 80.4 would return with reinforcements the next day. Nevertheless, Lt.(jg) North proceeded with plans to invite the German surrender. (Although information received at the time of landing disclosed that Mussolini had left Ponza that day, later Intelligence disclosed that he did not, in fact, leave until D-Day).

24. Italian military personnel gave full information on telephone, power, R.D.F., etc., installations. At 0145, Commander Task Group 80.4 returned to KNIGHT with the German W.O. prisoner. Lieut. Fairbanks led a small reconnaissance party through the village to the outskirts to establish pickets and to make sure that no enemy threatened the further debarkation of troops. Also small O.S.S. and Paratroop detachments cautiously explored the environs of the village. Explosions and fires continued in the wake of the German withdrawal. Lt.(jg) North returned to report the capture and disarmament of the Italian Militia Guard.

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25. A signal from CinCMed was decoded and found to contain instructions regarding the firing on Italian forces and shore installations.

26. As the situation on Ventotene was still unclear and as pre-demonstration shore bombardment was cancelled due to the Armistice, the KNIGHT was ordered to standby for an emergency. Meanwhile, the 2 ML's and the ARB's rigged with special sonic and deceptive signalling equipment, were deploying in positions south of the Volturno River according to plan.

27. At 0245, flares and flashes were dropped in various areas in the Gulf of Gaeta, apparently with a view to locating our force. More flashes of gunfire and bombing from the mainland were clearly visible.

28. The Demonstration Group carried out its operation according to plan but, aside from rockets from shore and flares from planes in the area, were not engaged. On the way in, the group ran parallel to a considerable force of enemy craft but as neither side was sure of its strength no one opened fire. This same enemy convoy was undoubtedly the one met by Lt. Cmdr. Kremer and his MTB's.

30. With Lt. Cmdr. Kremer on board MTB 298 were 5 civilian agents and one U.S. Army officer. Five other agents were aboard MTB 289. These agents were to land in rubber boats, sent in from a few hundred yards off shore. The boats were to be recovered by the MTB's. The MTB 298 and 289 proceeded at 25 knots, to about ten miles due south of the point (northwest of Gaeta) at which the agents were to be landed.

31. MTB 289 came alongside the MTB 298 and transferred the remaining civilian agents to the MTB 298. At 0032 a course 000° was steered at a speed of 8 knots until at 0132 on a position due south a landing point was reached. MTB 298 then proceeded close to the beach on one auxiliary engine at a speed of 3 knots. MTB 289 taking position astern at maximum visibility distance in order to screen the landing. Visibility was poor to the north and bad to the east where a high coastline backed by hills gave no silhouette.

32. At 0140 a rubber boat was prepared and civilian agents ready to board it when at 0147 heavy diesel engines were heard to the east and at approximately 0150 five enemy craft were observed bearing approximately northeast. These craft were

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approximately five cable distance and proceeding on a westerly course. They appeared to be "F" Lighters and/or Siebel Ferries. The order was given to turn west and stop. The enemy continued on his course and disappeared to the westward. The MTB's were apparently unobserved.

33. At 0200 MTB 289 reported a U-boat or large landing craft passing close across her stern from east to west. The order was given to sink by torpedo if enemy was a U-boat, but to remain stopped if anything smaller, in order that they could carry out their original mission. At 0205 MTB 289 reported the enemy a Siebel Ferry and at 0208 course was resumed for the beach.

34. At 0212 two R-boats, or ^{Kramer} large E-boats, about 120 feet in length, were observed closing MTB 298 from the east about 2 cables distance. The order was given to turn west, but MTB 298 to remain underway to maneuver in the event of the enemy trying to ram. However, the enemy passed $\frac{1}{2}$ a cable to the south of MTB 298 at a speed of between 12 and 15 knots, and, as they passed between the two MTB's, flashed a signal at MTB 298 asking for their identity, with a series of "A's" flashed in groups of two, with a white light. MTB 298 replied with rapid and unintelligible signals giving prominence only to the German "U", also with a white light. After a brief interval the enemy challenged with the letter "A" and was answered in the same manner. The enemy then stopped challenging and appeared to be altering course to the south.. The order was given to crash start main engines and proceed at high speed to the south as had the enemy come about to engage from a seaward position the landing operation would have been compromised and the MTB would have suffered severe damage due to the greater power of the E-boats' guns.

35. At 0225 when in position approximately 5 miles due south of the landing point the order was given to stop, for nothing could be seen of the enemy. MTB 289 which was inshore of MTB 298 reported 2 small E-boats and one smaller craft proceeding on a westerly course and bearing northeast. These craft proceeded on their way and at 0230 aircraft flares were dropped in the direction Gaeta. As these flares improved visibility to the east and no enemy craft were observed, the MTB 289 kept station for screening. At this time a delegation of the agents said they could not land as they were certain to be captured and requested that they be returned to Palermo as soon as possible. This was suggested by Lieutenant Calore, U.S. Army, who accompanied these agents. He pointed out

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that it was too late for the mission to be effective.

36. At 0246 seven enemy craft were observed northeast proceeding to the west. The order was given to stop, and as there appeared to be a constant stream of enemy traffic passing close inshore, it was decided that in any event it was impossible to land the agents, therefore, an attack on the enemy with torpedoes was ordered. The largest enemy vessel was selected as target. At 0259 the order was given to turn to the right and fire torpedoes. At 0301 both MTB's fired torpedoes at a range of 800 yards. The enemy was not engaged more closely due to the fact that the Commanding Officer of the MTB 298 was instructed that it was not desired to lose these ships during the early stages of the operation off the west coast of Italy and it was impossible to gain bearing on the enemy without revealing the position of the MTB's by the noise made by starting the main engines.

37. After firing, both MTB's disengaged to the south at a slow speed and about a minute after firing two instantaneous explosions occurred in the direction of the target. This was followed by a huge explosion and pyrotechnic display as the target that was loaded with ammunition blew up. In the subsequent illumination of target, three of the craft were identified as "F" Lighters.

38. About 30 seconds after torpedo hit, the remaining craft opened fire, apparently 20 mm guns, followed by fire of guns probably 40 or 80 mm. Most of the firing passed about 1 cable off starboard beam of MTB 298. When the enemy opened fire the order was given to crash start and both MTB's proceed southeast at high speed. A prearranged rendezvous at a point due south of the landing point was kept at 0335.

39. At 0352 MTB 298 was steered at the speed of 25 knots to pass between the Islands of Ventotene and Ponza and thence to Gulf of Salerno at 0745.

40. Back with the main force, at 0325, an unidentified plane, flying low and close aboard was fired on by the KNIGHT but veered away before any hits were made.

41. At 0330 more explosions and fires were observed on the island of Ventotene while an occasional "ping" of rifle fire was also noted. Our forces on the island requested of Commander Task Group 80.4's representative to pass on their desire for fire support from the KNIGHT. Reconnaissance, however, failed to disclose the exact whereabouts of the enemy's positions. At 0400 Commander Task Group 80.4's staff returned to the KNIGHT.

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and it was decided to fire star shells on the island in an attempt to silhouette the island and help locate the enemy's positions. The geography of the island being small and irregular it was thought dangerous to our own troops to actually bombard without accurate information, therefore only star shells were used. After several salvos "cease fire" was ordered and at 0530 the KNIGHT with 4 ML's and 2 SC8s retired toward the Southern Attack area. The ARB's and MTB's were ordered to retire and refuel according to plan.

42. The KNIGHT making 12 knots passed Isola d'Ischia at 0730, four miles on the port beam and Capri at 0920 at 15,000 yards. Several unidentified planes were plotted on RADAR but no action was necessary.

43. The proposed raid on Ischia was abandoned because of the danger of landing a force without preliminary bombardment.

44. At 0956 all ships of Task Group 80.4 were released and ordered to comply with basic orders. The KNIGHT changed speed to 20 knots and proceeded into the Gulf of Salerno arriving at 1048 to await orders.

II. SEPT. 9th/10th,
D DAY - D+1 DAY.

45. Commander Task Group 80.4 went on board the ANCON to report to Naval Commander Western Task Force in accordance with orders received by visual signal.

46. Task Group 80.4 was directed to embark reinforcements for the small landing force on Ventotene Island. At 1545 details of troops and equipment were arranged and embarkation started of 65 troops and 5 officers on board the KNIGHT. At 1758 troops were embarked and the ship underway for Ventotene, working up to 34 knots speed.

47. At 2045, the KNIGHT arrived off Ventotene and sent a boat ashore with reconnaissance party and shore fire control party in case fire support from KNIGHT were required. Signal from the beach reported that German troops had surrendered. They had been told of our "overwhelming" force and as this substantiated their fears they surrendered. Our troops, instead of landing, were organized into guards for the prisoners. The small island of San Stafeno had been occupied during the day and the political prisoners freed. We started taking German prisoners on board via whaleboat, assisted by a large ferry type German motor boat operated by our men which had been captured at the island. Three officers and 87 enlisted men were taken on board as prisoners.

48. Underway at 2335 for the Gulf of Salerno to deliver prisoners and return troops to their units. At 0430 flares were dropped ahead, followed by more over the ship. At 0445 fired 2 rounds of 5 inch and 10 rounds of 40 mm with no results. One bomb dropped about 500 yards astern. At 0824, anchored in transport area and proceeded to transfer prisoners and troops.

49. Task Group 80.4 dissolved and staff transferred to ANCON at 1420. Various units of the Group were ordered to report for duty as directed by Naval Commander Western Task Force. One ARB sent to position south of Ventotene Island to act as a beacon ship for aircraft.

III. SEPT. 11th/12th,
D+2 DAY - D+3 DAY.

50. Forenoon of 11 Sept., Capt. Andrews was directed to collect LCT's and LCI(L)'s on Red Beach to move reinforcements to Maiori. After collecting necessary craft and directing them to proper beach and conferring with Army authorities on shore, located SC 676. Turned over to him information as to LCT's collected and where they were beaching and gave him charts and directions concerning movement of troops and turned the operations over to him as directed.

51. Afternoon of 11 Sept., Task Group 80.4 was re-organized with the mission of raiding enemy coastal convoy lanes north of Naples and of raiding and occupying islands commanding the entrance to the Gulf of Naples.

52. Further, Task Group 80.4 was directed to create a diversion in Gulf of Gaeta on the night of 11/12 Sept. Also signal was received from Ventotene requesting assistance in the form of reinforcements. (WITNESSES SINCE THE GERMAN CAPTAIN had surrendered?)

53. Commander Task Group 80.4 reembarked staff in KNIGHT and assumed command of Task Group 80.4 consisting of the following units:

U.S.S. KNIGHT
MTBron 15
*ARBron ONE
32nd MTB Flotilla
33rd MTB Flotilla) -(to arrive later)
20th MGB Flotilla)

// A signal was dispatched requesting the reassignment of ML Flotilla 31 with Blossom equipment but no answer was received.

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54. At such short notice it was found impossible to secure the proper balloon equipment for our RADAR deception and it was decided to rely on radio deception, gunfire and the "B.J." units. X

55. At 1630, the KNIGHT was underway for Ventotene to investigate request for assistance, having made arrangements to rendezvous with the Demonstration Group as soon as they could fuel and proceed.

56. At 1950, the KNIGHT arrived off Ventotene and sent a boat ashore with boarding officer to contact Italian Corvette and two Italian MS boats and to report on conditions ashore. The Italian Captains reported on board the KNIGHT and were directed to proceed to Palermo. The shore station reported that German planes had been flying over the island daily but, with one exception of minor strafing after having been fired upon, had not attacked. Received request from Capt. Howland of 509th the Parachute Infantry for additional troops and sent dispatch in his name accordingly. Reported by dispatch that beacon on Island was operating.

57. At 0100, Demonstration Group arrived and all ships started for stations. Three boats from MTBron 15 were to screen eastern part of Gulf; ARBron ONE, screened by MTB Flotilla 32, proceeded to northern beaches for demonstration - minus special RADAR deception equipment.

58. At 0135, received report that Demonstration Group had exploded mine and one ARB had suffered minor damage to its propeller shaft. Demonstration Group was then ordered to withdraw and carry out patrol west of Cape Cercio as previously planned. The KNIGHT, operating outside the 100 fathom curve, fired star shells over northern beaches. Flares were fired from shore and a plane was observed by RADAR to investigate the source of star shells. As the shells were fired on several targets, it was difficult for the enemy to know if they came from a plane or a ship. More star shells were fired and the plane withdrew but returned later to investigate again. Lieut. Fairbanks and Lt. (jg) Daum conducted a verbal "landing operation" on the high-frequency voice radio, ordering imaginary ships and craft to various beaches, for a period of about one hour. The reactions to this were ascertained not only by flares sent up all along the shore but by intercepted voice in German plain language, some of which is quoted as follows: "Where are the ships?"; repeated "Where are the ships?"; "There outside - - - (interference) - - - come in"; "Since when is shooting taking place?"; "Where are the Ship? I am waiting for an answer. Come in." The above seems to indicate that, although the regular full-scale demonstration had to be

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cancelled and all special devices were not available, the armed forces ashore were led to believe that considerable Allied activity was going on in the area. The 3 PT's in the east and 3 MTB's to the west made no contacts and, at 0450, all ships were ordered to cease operations and return to base. The KNIGHT arrived in transport area at 0900 while the small craft proceeded to their base at Maiori.

IV. SEPT. 12th/13th,
D+3 DAY - D+4 DAY.

59. Commander Task Group 80.4 reported on board ANCON to see what could be done about the fuel situation which was becoming acute and to discuss future operations. Attempts were also made to arrange for provisions to relieve the situation on the island of Ponza.

60. A further signal requesting reassignment of ML's and "Blossom" equipment was dispatched. At 1500, underway in KNIGHT for Maiori where small craft were based and arrived at anchorage at 1710. Efforts to locate ComMTBron 15 were in vain as he was ashore.

61. An Italian Naval officer, accompanied by Commander 32nd MTB Flotilla, came on board from a small motor boat and requested that Allied Forces take over Capri and a flotilla of MS boats there before the Germans reoccupied the island. A staff officer was sent ashore to see about provisions for Ponza which had surrendered to our forces on Ventotene that day and to get troops from the Rangers or Commandos to occupy Capri. Neither provisions nor troops were available. It was therefore decided to risk the occupation with only a "show of force" and, at 1932, Commander Task Group 80.4, with three MTB's, started for Capri, led by the small Italian motor boat.

62. At 2030 the Italian authorities on the Island of Capri surrendered the island officially to Commander Task Group 80.4, as well as 7 MS boats and other craft in the harbor. At 2230, Commander Task Group 80.4 returned to Maiori to board the KNIGHT and found a member of the staff of Commodore "N" on board discussing plans to take the island the next morning. A signal was sent immediately to Naval Commander Western Task Force that the island of Capri had surrendered.

63. The fuel situation was now so acute that the ARB's fueled with 87 octane gasoline in order that the combat boats would have all that remained of 100 octane.

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64. On the morning of 13 Sept., MTB's escorted 7 Italian MS boats to the Maiori anchorage. Commander Task Group 80.4 took on board the MTB the Senior Italian Naval officer and 2nd in command of Italian Army forces on Capri and proceeded to U.S.S. BISCAYNE to report to Naval Commander Western Task Force.

65. MGB Flotilla 20 and MTB Flotilla 33 reported for duty while at BISCAYNE.

66. Returned on board KNIGHT at about 1600. A report was received that the town of Maiori was being evacuated due to approach of enemy. Several shells landed from 100 to 200 yards outboard of KNIGHT. Task Group 80.4 was ordered to evacuate Maiori and proceed to Capri as base. Meanwhile the MS boats had been ordered to operate under Commander Task Group 80.4. At 1828, KNIGHT moored to the mole in Capri, as well as ARBron ONE, MTB Flotillas 32 and 33 and MGB Flotilla 20. MTBron 15 did not arrive that night. At 1850, a German reconnaissance plane flew by to northward. Opened fire with no results.

67. At Capri, Comdr. D. Wyburd, R.N., with LCI(L) and ML and party of Commandos had arrived on orders from Commodore "N". Comdr. Wyburd requested permission to operate as part of Task Group 80.4. Signal was sent to Naval Commander Western Task Force but answer was negative.

68. During the day Lt.(jg) North, Capt. Torello, O.S.S. personnel and the political prisoners were brought from Ventotene to Capri. Nearly all small craft were now inoperative because of lack of fuel and lubricating oil and operations were postponed until the next night. A second request for "Blossom" was dispatched.

V. SEPT. 14th/15th,
D+5 DAY - D+6 DAY.

69. Lt. Cmdr. Kremer left Capri on the Italian MS 52, accompanied by the Italian MS 21 and one PT boat at 0430 for the Island of Ischia to determine if there were any Germans on the island and to accept the surrender of the island. We had been informed that they had all evacuated but a few days before. He was accompanied by ten British Commandos and one British Naval officer who spoke Italian. (CMDR. WYBURD)

70. A short stop was made at Forio and the group landed at Porto Ischia at 0700. The commanding officer of the garrison and the senior Italian Naval officer said that no Germans were there.

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71. Part of a German radio was removed from a hotel and the gun emplacements were inspected.

72. The senior officer was notified that he would be responsible for law and order, both civil and military until an Allied military unit could be landed. This was requested by the senior officer to be landed as soon as possible.

73. The group left the island at 1430 taking with them six American Army aviators who had crashed near the island and who had been interned. The British Naval officer and the Commandos remained. The party arrived at Capri at about 1700. (WYBURD)

74. At about 0900, two German E-boats were seen to stand out of Naples bay and turn to the northward. No PT's were present and aside from ARB's, all other craft were immobilized by lack of fuel. Lt. Cmdr. Kremer on Ischia was notified and the two Italian MS boats made a sweep to intercept but with no results.

75. Established shore base, quarters and mess ashore for small craft. Also set up operational organization for all units. Cmdr. Wyburd wished to continue operations with our group unofficially and mutual assistance was rendered. The local Fascist Militia was disarmed and the Carabinieri assumed police duties. As a signal from Commander Western Naval Task Force ordered Task Group 80.4 not to operate north of Naples on the night of either the 14th/15th or 15th/16th, due to destroyer operations, we were limited to the Gulf of Naples area. It was therefore planned to occupy Island of Procida that night. Furthermore, word had been received from local authorities that the Germans had planned reoccupation as soon as possible. No PT's were available so planned operation with 2 MGB's, 2 MTB's and two ARB's. No other craft were operational. A British landing party of 20 ratings and party of Special Service troops consisting of Capt. Torello, Lt. (jg) North and 5 O.S.S. Army enlisted men was organized. Commander Task Group 80.4 in MGB headed for the western end of the island and then followed close to the shore around to the northeastern end where the port is located so as not to be seen from the mainland only two miles away at that point. While the occupation was in progress, two MTB's lay off the harbor as a screen to observe and report any danger. The island surrendered without opposition and Lt. Daum was sent by fast boat to report in person to Naval Commander Western Task Force that we were in a position two miles from the mainland and that artillery placed there would control the whole Naples area and also cover any landing desired.

5) ARB 40, ENS. SAM SCHWARTZ

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76. The KNIGHT reported sighting a submarine southwest of Capri and attacked without results. A dispatch was sent requesting early transportation of special RADAR and balloon equipment.

77. Lieut. Hooper, R.N., reported that, following a reconnaissance of Sorrento, there are no Germans in occupation and an Allied force is earnestly requested by the mayor. Details were passed to Commodore "N".

78. In answer to CinCMed's inquiry regarding "Blossom" a third request for reassignment was made.

79. On September 15th started using 87 octane gasoline in MTB's and MGB's.

80. As the situation was considered somewhat precarious and increasing German interest in Procida was reported by Intelligence and refugees from the mainland, it was decided to put up a "bluff" of strength. Consequently, two ARB's were sent to Ventotene to evacuate Capt. Howland and his detachment of 509th Parachute Infantry for use as an emergency garrison on Procida. The beacon signal party, under Lt. Wills, was left on Ventotene.

81. A conference with Admiral Morse was held as a result of which decisions were arrived at to send for AMG personnel for Capri and Ischia; to establish Capri as main base and headquarters and Ischia as advanced base; that Admiral Morse would administer shore and port Naval activities and that Commander Task Group 80.4 would administer all active operational activities. *see next page for lui 10*

82. The following dispatch was received from Commander Western Naval Task Force, No. 151121, "Your 131931. All Naval Forces on Island of Capri are placed under Command Commander Task Group 80.4. This cancels my 141516."

15m 83. At a planning conference on board the KNIGHT, preparatory to the occupation of Procida and other prospective operations, Commander Task Group 80.4 was informed by ComMTBron 15 that all PT's had been secured.

16 84. As up to this time, of the 16 operational PT boats of MTBron 15, never more than 2 or 3 had, from time to time, been made available to Commander Task Group 80.4, despite the fact that all other craft had been using 87 octane gasoline to leave more for the PT's, it was decided to return the squadron to Commander Western Naval Task Force for duty where its services might be more usefully employed. Hence the following signal,

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No. 152215, was sent to Commander Western Naval Task Force:
 "MTBron 15 no longer required for operations with Task Group 80.4
 am returning them to original command."

85. At about 2100 Lieut. Fairbanks, Jr., U.S.N.R., and Comdr. Wyburd, R.N., left Capri in two ARB's with Parachute Infantry for garrisoning of Procida. Considerable difficulty was encountered in locating our seven O.S.S. Army personnel and Capt. Torello. The Islanders had been expecting a German landing party that night and were under the impression that our force was it. The troops were immediately deployed to look-out posts and a watch was set overlooking the narrow channel to the mainland. It was necessary to keep in the shadows as German lookouts on the cliffs had been ordered to fire on all traffic to the Island during the curfew hours. After the troops had been billeted and arrangements with local officials made, Lieut. Fairbanks returned to Capri and Comdr. Wyburd was sent direct to Commodore "N" to arrange for fuel, provisions and reinforcements for the islands.

VI. SEPT. 16TH, D+7 DAY.

86. J.A. On 16 September another conference was held with Admiral Morse (who was most cooperative and helpful). A RAF fighter-control unit was established on the beach; radio station and lookouts were established on the high points of Island; port office and harbor control were initiated and the port started to function.

87. It was then arranged to take Admiral Morse for an inspection of Ischia and Procida leaving Capri at 1430 in an ARB.⁶³ Three MGB's using 87 octane were detailed to sweep south of Procida until 1430 and then through the channel between the islands and continue north of Procida. When about halfway from Capri to Ischia, with the admiral in the ARB, smoke was observed south of Procida and the three MGB's headed for us at full speed. We ran alongside the leading MGB and found that the enemy batteries on the shore had taken them under fire and they had retired behind smoke. They thought that the gunfire had come from the islands as well as the mainland. Not knowing whether the islands had been recaptured by the Germans, Commander Task Group 80.4 requested the Admiral to return to Capri on the MGB while he investigated the gun fire. Commander Task Group 80.4 proceeded on to Ischia, with a small party, without incident. Commander Task Group 80.4 decided to run back and bring the Admiral over since the islands were secure.

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TO CAPRI

ADM. MORSE, RN

88. On the way back several shells landed about 100 to 200 yards astern of the boat. They were apparently coming from the mainland but we could not locate the battery. At Capri, the Admiral could not be located, so Commander Task Group 80.4 decided to return to remove members of his staff left on Ischia. The fastest ARB was used and on the way over it was decided to run closer to the mainland to locate the battery if they opened fire. A few shots dropped astern as before (ARB was making 40 knots) and gun flashes were spotted on shore. Then, in quick succession, three four-gun salvos straddled the boat. Course was changed left 45° and speed increased to 48 knots. The Germans evidently had no RADAR control since the salvos continued to fall along the old course. The party on Ischia was picked up and course was laid well off shore on the return trip since we had located the battery and did not wish to risk losing the boat. The German fire at such a high speed target was surprisingly accurate. The range when they straddled was about 8500 yds. The guns appeared to be about 90 mm, and fragmentation shells were used. Later Capt. Torello on Ischia accurately reported the positions of the Batteries as he had observed the entire incident through binoculars. Just before the second run to Ischia a submarine was reported submerged off Capri by the lookout on the hill. The KNIGHT was ordered out to investigate but reported negative results.

89. The plan for the night of the 16th had been a sweep along the coast north of Rome with the KNIGHT off shore and PTs and/or MTB's close in to the beach. Upon return from Ischia it was reported that no PT's or MTB's were operational due to fuel shortage or machinery defects so Commander Task Group 80.4 went aboard the KNIGHT to conduct a sweep up the coast alone. Word was left for the MGB's to make a sweep in the Gulf of Naples and Gaeta if they returned from fueling in time. Commander Task Group 80.4 in KNIGHT made a sweep up the coast about four miles off shore to a position north of Rome and returned without making contact. Three MGB's later made a search of the Gulf of Naples going along the coast and passing within 1200 yards of the Naples breakwater. They then returned without results. It appeared that all coastal movements south of Rome had been discontinued.

STAGNANT FROM

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90. On this night a small party of Commandos from Ischia, in an Italian MS boat, raided the island of St. Martino. This island, just north of Procida, is the location of a large Italian torpedo factory and is connected to the mainland by a bridge. The Commandos, consisting of one officer and four men, also one Naval officer, located the submarine wires by which demolition charges were to blow up the factory, which information

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had been secured from S.O.E. Intelligence. ^{COMING} These wires were cut and the party, eluding German sentries across the bridge, rescued an interned Italian Admiral and his wife (they were obliged to wait for her to pack) and withdrew to Capri via Procida and Ischia.

91. Meanwhile, our O.S.S. Intelligence made detailed reports of enemy movements and dispositions on the mainland. Their reports were secured by observation, infiltration of agents, reports from refugees, etc. The enemy was, by now, convinced (according to these reports) that we had considerable forces on the islands. This was deliberately aided by a show of activity and movement and the dissemination of false rumors. A request for "A Force" dummy encampments had been sent in previously but as there was no response we carried on the "bluff" as best we could without unduly encouraging enemy fire.

92. After dark, on the same night, 3 LCI(L)'s arrived at Ischia and disembarked 150 airborne troops to reenforce our defenses in that area. This was in answer to the request for additional troops made on the 12th, 5 DAYS EARLIER.

93. The enemy opened fire on the Island of Procida on the night of the 16th and killed one of the released political prisoners who had served a decade in prison for an attempted assassination of Mussolini. Several other persons were wounded. No military damage was sustained, nor were there any other casualties. It was decided to remove all prisoners to Capri and thence to Palermo the next day.

VII. SEPT. 17TH/18TH,
D+8 - D+ 9 DAY.

94. On the morning of the 17th a conference was held with Admiral Morse and the two AMG officials who had arrived in Capri. One AMG official was assigned to Capri and the other to Ischia. AMG proclamations were posted and arrangements made with banks for exchange and use of invasion currency. Also the local civil authorities were brought into line under the guidance of AMG and several local ex-Fascist leaders were placed in custody.

95. At about 1430 word was received that an Axis convoy was sighted off Leghorn, heading south. The KNIGHT was notified to prepare for sea at once and two PT's were reported to have sufficient fuel for a round trip to Elba. It was planned for the KNIGHT to cruise north 10 miles off the beach. Points A, B, C and D were designated so that the KNIGHT and PT's could communicate their positions to each other by distance and bearing from a point without disclosing their location to the enemy.

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At 1555 the KNIGHT was underway and proceeding outside the islands in the Gulf of Gaeta to avoid mine fields. Shortly afterwards two PT boats cleared the harbor and followed the KNIGHT.

96. At 1600 a message was received from Commander 8th Fleet dissolving Task Group 80.4. However, it was decided to continue the search for the Axis convoy. At 1915 an Axis plane, identified as a DO 217, was sighted flying low over the water at a range of about 10,000 yards. Opened fire but no hits were observed. At 1940 RADAR reported a friendly plane approaching from the west. When the plane was at a range of 8,000 yards it was definitely identified as a JU 88 despite the friendly IFF signal. Fire was opened and the plane was observed to be hit but apparently not damaged badly. About this time one PT reported engine trouble and was directed to return to Capri. The KNIGHT and one PT proceeded with the search for the Axis convoy. Proceeded north as far as the Argenterio Promontory with no enemy contact. The KNIGHT could not proceed in among the islands due to danger of mines and the PT boat had only enough fuel for the return trip. According to the plot, the reported convoy would have been south of our present position if proceeding at 5 knots or more. Hence it was decided to head south. The return run was uneventful except for clearly visible fires and heavy bombing on the coastline and the KNIGHT arrived at Capri at 0835. This further convinced us that no enemy convoys of E-boats were operating south of Elba on the Italian coast.

97. It had been planned for the following night to sweep the coast of Corsica while also maintaining a defensive patrol in the south but the dissolution of Task Group 80.4 put a stop to further planning or operations as a combined group.

98. At Capri all units were notified of the dissolution of Task Group 80.4 and the KNIGHT started for Salerno to place Commander Task Group 80.4 and staff on board ANCON and report for duty to Commander Task Group 89.

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99. During the operation the following officers were particularly deserving of recognition for their valient and courageous behavior not only under enemy fire but also at other times when it was uncertain whether the enemy would open fire or not and the orders were not to fire unless fired upon:

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Lt. Cmdr. J. Kremer, USNR - Chief Staff Officer.
Lieut. D.E. Fairbanks, Jr., USNR - Ass't. Chief
Staff and Operations Officer.
Capt. Torello, A.U.S. - Com. O.S.S. Troops.
Lt. (jg) North, USNR - Naval Liaison of O.S.S.

100. The following officers are deserving of recognition for their efficient performance of duty under the most trying conditions where practically all operations were carried out at night with a small force operating in enemy territory without benefit of close support and with little or no chance for rest in the daytime:

Lt. Cmdr. Kremer, USNR - Chief Staff Officer.
Lt. D.E. Fairbanks, Jr., USNR - Ass't. Chief
Staff and Operations Officer.
Lt.(jg) A.E. Daum, USNR - Communications Officer.
Capt. Howland, A.U.S. - Comder. 509th Parachute
Infantry Detachment.
Lt. Cmdr. Lloyd, RNVR - Comder. 31st ML Flotilla.
Lt. Cmdr. Green-Kelley, RNR - Cdr. 32nd MTB Flotilla.
Lt. Cmdr. Hughes, RNVR - Cdr. 20th MGB Flotilla.
Lt. Cmdr. Archer, RNVR - Cdr. 33rd MTB Flotilla.
Lieut. Warner, RNVR - O-in-C MTB 363
Lt. A. Bryant, USNR - ComARBron ONE.
S/Lt. F.A.M. Shore, RNVR - O-in-C of MTB 298.
S/Lt. Barnesdale, RNVR - O-in-C of MTB 289.
F/O Wolf, R.A.F. - Spec. Balloon & RADAR equipment.

101. Task Group 80.4, a small heterogeneous force, operating minus close surface support and without air coverage, executed its various missions and operations in enemy dominated areas with no casualties to personnel and no loss of material.

C.L. Andrews, Jr.
C.L. ANDREWS, JR.

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TOP-SECRET

U. S. S. KNIGHT

September 22, 1943.

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Chain of Operational Command.

Subject: Report of Operations While Acting as Flagship
of Task Group 80.4 in Operation AVALANCHE.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, Arts. 712 and 874.

1. This vessel participated in operation "AVALANCHE" as flagship of Commander Task Group 80.4, Captain C.L. ANDREWS, Jr., USN. His flag was initially hoisted in BIZERTE on August 30, 1943, was temporarily hauled down on September 5, 1943, and hoisted again in PALERMO on September 7, 1943.

2. The task group consisting of U.S.S. KNIGHT, Netherlands Gunboat FLORES, ARBron ONE, 6 British ML's, 4 SC's, 3 British MTB's, and one PT from PTron 15 sailed from PALERMO on the morning of September 8, 1943, to create a diversion in the Gulf of GAETA and to occupy the Island of VENTOTENE. PTron 15, accompanied this group until opposite the Gulf of NAPLES and then entered the gulf to intercept any traffic trying to escape or sortie.

Lay to four miles East of VENTOTENE at 2258 with 4 ML's and screened by 2 SC's. ARB's approached island and made demands of surrender by loudspeaker. Italian garrison made sign of surrender at 2400 (September 8th). Commander Task Group 80.4 left in ship's boat to lead in ML's carrying 55 troops from 82nd Airborne Division, and returned at 0210 (September 9th), with one German prisoner.

At 0325 a twin-engined bomber, otherwise unidentified, flew close aboard at low altitude. Fired 9 rounds of 5"/38 with no hits observed. Plane did not attack nor return to vicinity.

Boats returned on completion of landing and reconnoitering at 0400. Learned that an unexpected German garrison of 90 men was on the island. Apparently the demonstration had impressed them to the extent that they had withdrawn.

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behind a barricade after demolishing as much equipment as possible. Our 55 paratroops controlled the island as long as a showdown did not occur.

At 0500 opened fire with starshells in vicinity of reported German concentration. Starshells performed very poorly. Out of 13 rounds only 1 functioned perfectly. This will be the subject of a separate report. German garrison was not located so did not bombard. Left area at 0535 with approach of daylight and proceeded to Southern Transport Area off SALERNO beaches. Delivered German prisoner to U.S.S. ANCON at 1025.

Loaded 65 combat troops with equipment during afternoon and departed at 1800 (September 9th) for VENTOTENE to reinforce paratroops. Steamed at full power, worked up to 34 knots. While slowing down at end of run a main steam gasket blew in after engine room with result that the remainder of the night was spent on one engine.

Stopped one mile offshore at 2045. CTG 80.4 took boat in with portable radio. Reported back that German garrison had surrendered to paratroops. We did not land troops but took aboard 90 German prisoners, 3 officers, 87 enlisted. Sailed for Southern Attack Area at 2335, speed 12 knots on one engine.

At 0430, September 10, encountered a single enemy plane in Latitude 40-23 N., Longitude 13-45 E. His tactics indicated that he was equipped with radar and that he did not actually sight the ship for some time after making contact. The encounter lasted for 15 minutes. Plane dropped flares 10,000 yards ahead (East), then gradually closed with flares to Northeast and Southeast and Southwest until ship was illuminated. Apparently plane was not in position to attack when ship was illuminated but instead returned to Eastward and dropped flares quite low, distant 2000 yards. The ship was maneuvered radically throughout, in general keeping end on to the brightest light to reduce silhouette and turning broadside to plane when SC radar indicated plane was closing. Speed was increased once, but visibility of the resultant wake was such that speed was again reduced to about 12 knots. After dropping the final flares to the Eastward, plane made a fast end run and started attack from Westward.

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Ship was at this time heading West, stern to flares. As soon as flares hit the water, course was changed to the right with full rudder, in darkness. Plane was tracked by SC radar and was heard coming in from Westward on the port bow. One bomb was dropped from an estimated altitude of 500 feet, and landed about 800 yards away on the port quarter with the ship heading about 345°. Fire was opened at noise and an occasional glimpse of target during this phase. Two rounds of 5"/38 and 10 rounds of 40 mm. were expended with no hits. Plane retired after dropping the bomb at 0445.

The SC radar maintained contact with the plane at all times and furnished a continual flow of information which was of assistance in maneuvering the ship. The FD radar tried constantly to get on target by matching up, and did so several times, but was unable to maintain contact due to radical maneuvers of plane.

Returned to Southern Transport Area and anchored near U.S.S. ANCON at 0824 (September 10th). Port engine was reported back in commission at 0830. Prisoners were transferred to S.S. ORANTES. Army personnel were returned to landing craft from which they had come. CTG 80.4 and staff transferred to U.S.S. ANCON. U.S.S. KNIGHT reported to Commander Task Force EIGHTY-ONE in accordance with Naval Commander Western Task Force despatch and was directed verbally by Commander Task Force EIGHTY-ONE to report to Commander Destroyer Squadron EIGHT for screening duties. While enroute to comply, at 1700, received visual despatch from Naval Commander Western Task Force to hold previous instructions in abeyance. Anchored again in vicinity of U.S.S. ANCON to await instructions.

At 2242 (September 10), bombing raid commenced. Fired 11 rounds of 5"/38, 800 rounds 40 mm., 1500 rounds 20 mm. by barrage method. Results unknown.

At 0445 September 11, 1943, bombers came in again. Got underway and steamed around transports making smoke. Expended 200 rounds of 40 mm. and 2880 rounds of 20 mm. in barrage fire. Results unknown.

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Anchored at 0624. At 0940 two bombers got through. U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA was missed about 50 feet. U.S.S. SAVANNAH was hit by a rocket type bomb dropped from 24000 feet by a Dornier 217. U.S.S. KNIGHT fired 17 rounds of 5"/38 at this plane after bomb was dropped. Plane rapidly pulled out of range and was not hit.

At 1140, a Focke-Wulfe 190 approached U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA and was driven off. U.S.S. KNIGHT fired 4 rounds of 5", but could not distinguish own bursts.

Commander Task Group 80.4 and staff returned aboard at 1606. Sailed for VENTOTENE at 1630 and arrived at 1950. Found one Italian Corvette and two motor torpedo (MT) boats which had surrendered. Made boarding calls and sailed ships for PALERMO.

Stood to Northward from VENTOTENE at 0135, September 12, 1943, to back up light craft during a demonstration in the Gulf of GAETA and to destroy any shipping encountered. Met ARB's enroute and learned that they had exploded a mine in the demonstration area. Demonstration was cancelled and U.S.S. KNIGHT lay offshore and fired starshell spreads toward beach at 0315, 0325, and 0405. Diversionary effect is not known except that area of starshell bursts was examined by planes after each spread. Expended 28 starshells, performance very poor. At 0450 proceeded to Southern Transport Area arriving at 0900.

During afternoon of September 12, U.S.S. KNIGHT moved up the coast to MAIORI which port was being used as a PT and ARB base. During evening of that date, Commander Task Group 80.4 went to CAPRI, accepted surrender of Italian garrison and arranged to base there. Task Group 80.4 moved base to CAPRI and U.S.S. KNIGHT moored inside breakwater at 1830, September 13, 1943. At 1850 fired 21 rounds of 5" at a Dornier 217 which passed at long range enroute to NAPLES. No hits observed.

During forenoon of September 14, Commander Task Group 80.4 accepted surrender of ISCHIA. Got underway at 2121 on that date with ARB's and MTB's to occupy PROCIDA. Small boats went out ahead and stood to Northwest.

On clearing the island (CAPRI), the SG radar reported surface contact West of the Island, 8000 yards. FD radar tracked

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target and determined target course Westerly, speed 18 knots. It was believed to be either one of our own MTB's somewhat off his course, or an enemy E-boat. Range was closed and indistinct sight contact made at 4300 yards in bright moonlight. Target was challenged by blinker tube whereupon it submerged and fired a torpedo at long range as U.S.S. KNIGHT closed to conduct sound search. Sound search was begun but no contact was made. After twenty minutes received a message from Commander Task Group 80.4 in MTB's requesting position. Abandoned search to get on station to cover his landing. Remainder of operation was uneventful. Returned to CAPRI at 0800 September 15, 1943.

Left CAPRI at 2130 September 16th, proceeding singly to raid coastwise shipping between Cape CIRCEO and ROME. No traffic of any kind encountered. Searched to point 6 miles south of TIBER River. Expended 51 rounds 5" in target practice on a rock comparable in size to a cruiser silhouette. Obtained about 20% hits at 5000-6000 yards, radar control. Returned to CAPRI 0845 September 17, 1943.

Underway at 1555 September 17, proceeding coastwise at 25 knots to attempt interception of SIEBEL FERRY convoy reported heading south from LEGHORN. A Dornier 217 on reconnaissance approached from Northward at 50 feet and circled ship at about 15000 yards. This occurred at 1915, west of PONZA. Fired 34 rounds of 5", but opening salvos were erratic. When fire became more accurate, plane pulled out of range and disappeared to Northward.

At 1940, radar reported a friendly plane approaching from the port beam (Southwest). Plane was sighted heading directly for the ship but was identified visually as a Junkers 88 at 8000 yards. Fire was opened with 5" and later with 40 mm. and 20 mm. Plane was outside of range of 20 mm. and beyond effective range of 40 mm., but the tracer display in the fading light may have helped to dissuade him from his attack. 5" fire appeared fairly accurate and it is believed that hits were obtained. One near burst was believed to be from Mk 32 projectile and some Mk 18 bursts appeared close. 41 rounds of 5" were fired in the ratio of 75% Mk 32 to 25% Mk 18. Plane headed for ship until range was about 4000 yards, then turned sharply and opened the

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range, disappearing finally to Northward.

It is considered worthy of repetition that this plane gave friendly radar recognition both during approach and retirement. It made a hostile approach on the ship, was visually identified as a Ju 88 by the recognition officer, was not observed to fire any identification pyrotechnics after fire was opened, and it persisted in its direct approach to a bomb release position until destruction from gunfire was imminent. There is small doubt as to its hostile character, but the radar recognition was definitely present.

At 1954 another twin-engined bomber approached from the Southwest heading for the ship, likewise giving friendly radar recognition. In view of the recent experience, 5" fire was opened at about 7000 yards. Plane banked sharply and turned away as soon as fire was opened and fired proper identification signal. Fire was checked after 12 rounds (50% Mk 32). No hits were observed but some bursts were close and plane may have been damaged.

Arrived at Latitude 42-15 N., Longitude 11-19 E., at 2330, and patrolled East and West in vicinity of ISOLA DI GIANNUTRI until 0100 September 18th. Made rendezvous at that time with own PT boat which had paralleled us up the coast inshore and proceeded down the 100 fathom curve at 25 knots with PT boat inshore. No contacts whatever were made. Moored in CAPRI harbor at 0835.

Sailed for Southern Attack Area shortly before noon and arrived in vicinity of U.S.S. ANCON at 1430. Commander Task Group 80.4 and staff shifted to U.S.S. ANCON. U.S.S. KNIGHT reported to Commander Task Force EIGHTY NINE in U.S.S. BISCAYNE in accordance with Naval Commander Western Task Force directive dissolving Task Group 80.4. Assumed duties in A/S and A/A screen outside transport area.

3. Materiel functioned well with the exception of casualties mentioned above which are covered in detail in separate correspondence. In addition to these there have been many minor leaks and small deficiencies which are more or less

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U. S. S. KNIGHT

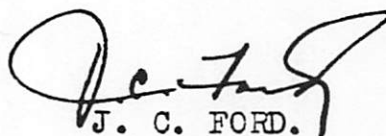
DECLASSIFIED

September 22, 1943.

Subject: Report of Operations While Acting As Flagship of
Task Group 80.4 in Operation AVALANCHE.

a function of the four months of strenuous operation including the Sicilian campaign as well as AVALANCHE since there has been any opportunity for any but emergency upkeep.

4. Personnel acquitted themselves well throughout. No cases of outstanding personal heroism were noted, nor were there any cases noted deserving of censure. The Commanding Officer is well pleased with the conduct of all personnel.


J. C. FORD.

Copy to:

Comdeslant
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FIRST ENDORSEMENT:
P16-3/TG 80.4

Task Group 80.4
Western Naval Task Force
September 28, 1943.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

From: Commander Task Group 80.4
To: Commander 8th Fleet

1. Forwarded.


D. J. FAIRBANKS, JR.,
Ass't Chief of Staff Officer.
by direction

3 758

ENCLOSURE (B)

October 5, 1943.

DECLASSIFIED

From: ☒ Commander Aircraft Rescue Boat Squadron ONE. (LT ART BRYANT)
 To: Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters.
 Via: Commander Task Group 80.4.
 Subject: Action Report covering Operations during period September 8 to 25, inclusive.

ARBRO-1
 1. Aircraft Rescue Boat Squadron ONE departed PALERMO 1100 September 8, as a part of Task Unit 80.4.4 CTU in PT 214. Eight of the ten Rescue boats were flying kite balloons with radar-deception devices attached. The same craft were also equipped with sonic deception apparatus. About 1300 AFB 38 fell astern with engine trouble and was not again seen until the next day.

2. Shortly before dusk Task Unit 80.4.4 joined the remainder of Task Group 80.4, Captain C. L. ADAMS in USS KNIGHT commanding. Approaching the Island of VENTOTENE, radar deception and jamming was used. At 2300 AFB 48 followed PT 214 in to a point 300 yards from the southeastern beach of the Island of VENTOTENE, the range being determined by the radar on PT 214. Here a specially prepared proclamation in Italian was projected over the sound equipment of AFB 48. During the approach the radar receiving equipment aboard PT 214 recorded the fact that the two boats were being fixed by enemy fire control radar. After about twenty (20) minutes had elapsed, white flares indicating surrender were observed from the Island.

About 0230 September 9, H - 1, Task Unit 80.4.4 conducted another radar deception off the beach just south of the Volturno River in the GULF OF GAETA. As the Task Unit was approaching the beach for a sound demonstration at H hour, two enemy F lighters were encountered proceeding in the direction of GAETA or TERRACINA. The range was point blank, but neither side opened fire, CTU 80.4.4 having received specific orders to initiate no firing whatsoever after the announcement of the surrender of ITALY. Due to the delay, the sound and smoke demonstration was not conducted until H plus 45 and the run was not completed and boats reformed until H plus 1 hour and thirty (30) minutes. Accounts of reaction from the beach varied with observers; some saw searchlights, others saw small caliber gun fire, and some saw nothing at all. It may thus be safely said that there was not much active reaction on the part of whatever enemy may have been occupying the beach positions.

During this operation AFB 38 which had been left astern and was attempting to close the remainder of the flotilla was subjected to heavy and accurate gunfire on at least six separate occasions. The cause for this was undoubtedly the radar deceptive device which she was flying and the shell fire was in all probability from friendly forces operating to the westward of the area. Once her gear was rigged in the shelling discontinued. She joined up

ENCLOSURE (C)

DECLASSIFIED

Subject: Action Report covering Operations during period September 8 to 25, inclusive.

in the GULF OF SALERNO after daylight.

On the night of September 10, ^{9th} ARBs 39 and 68 accompanied USS KNIGHT to the Island of VENTOTRINE to facilitate the transport of reinforcement troops ashore. While returning after the completion of the mission the group was illuminated by flares dropped from enemy planes. USS KNIGHT, due to a broken steam line was able to make only 12 knots. ARB 39, therefore, circled in the area directly beneath the flares in order to act as decoy while the destroyer got clear. The ruse was evidently successful for two bombs fell close astern of ARB 39 while USS KNIGHT went unharmed.

On September 11, ^{10th} ARBs 39, 46, 48, and 71 departed the SALERNO area in company with PT 214 and HM MTBs 636 and 633 to make a sound, smoke, and gunfire diversion off the beach running eastward from TERNACINA in the GULF OF GAETA. ARB 39 passed directly over an enemy acoustic mine which exploded astern of her and ahead of the next boat ARB 71. ARB 39 suffered concussion damage to after hull frames, oil, and fuel lines. Due to the presence of mines in the area, the operation was cancelled and the ARBs returned to SALERNO.

At 1430 September 15, ARB 68 with Admiral MORSE, RN, and Captain ANDREWS CTG 80.4 aboard departed CAPRI for BAGNO on the Island of ISCHIA. About halfway across the GULF OF NAPLES three MTBs which had been sent ahead as an anti E boat screen were met returning at full speed. Their commander came close aboard and reported that he had been engaged by enemy shore batteries both from the mainland and he feared from ISCHIA itself. Admiral MORSE was put aboard the MTB and proceeded to CAPRI while Captain ANDREWS continued to ISCHIA to investigate. No enemy activity was encountered.

On the return trip to CAPRI, however, several salvos were fired at ARB 68, apparently from the mainland, none landing closer than 150 yards.

Since another trip to ISCHIA had to be made, ARB 40, which is capable of 48 knots was used. This time a course was steered considerably closer to the mainland in order to insure drawing the enemy fire and thus locating the offending battery. This was done, ARB 40 being bracketed several times by 88 millimeter anti-personnel shells, some of which burst within 50 feet. The mission was accomplished as the battery was located by the gun flashes. ARB proceeded to ISCHIA undamaged and without casualties.

September 21, while on an air sea rescue search in the GULF OF GAETA ARB 40 was again fired on by shore positions in the GAETA area.

At 1030 September 25, ARB 48 departed CAPRI for PROCIDA with passengers aboard. Arrival was at 1130 and the boat was tied up to the seawall inside the harbor on the northeast end of the island. At 1155 firing from 38

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370 ~~TOP SECRET~~

Serial: 016

Subject: Action Report covering Operations during period September 8 to 25, inclusive.

millimeter batteries on the high ground across the CANALE DI PROCIDA commenced, half a dozen well controlled salvos falling about ARB 48. All hands who were on the dock at the time took cover. As soon as the firing ceased temporarily, Ensign Herbert G. FRIZLER, the boat captain, MoMM2c W. L. BROWN, and Lieutenant (jg) H. R. NORTH, USNR, a passenger, made a dash for the boat and got her underway. Firing commenced immediately and a number of near hits were scored on ARB 48 as she cleared the harbor and ran for the shelter provided by the northern tip of the island. About 60 shrapnel holes pierced the hull in various places, but there were no casualties.

The boats of ARB RON ONE conducted numerous missions during the whole period which were definitely in defiance of the enemy; the transport of OSS men, paratroopers, and supplies to and from the various islands of PONZA, VENTOTENE, ISCHIA, and PROCIDA; the furnishing of aircraft beacons at night; the performance of air sea rescue work, and other special missions compiling hundreds of engine hours.

The various bombing attacks undergone in the GULF OF SALERNO were a matter of course and require no recording in this report.

A. H. Bryant
LT. A. H. BRYANT, USNR

FIRST ENDORSEMENT
to ltr. ARB RON I,
Secret ser. 016, of
October 5, 1943.

TASK GROUP 80.4

October 10, 1943

From: Commander Task Group 80.4.
To : Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters.

1. Forwarded.

By direction
D. E. Fairbanks, Jr.
D. E. FAIRBANKS, JR.
Lieutenant U.S.N.R.
Assistant Chief Staff Officer.

3 768

ENCLOSURE (C)

DECLASSIFIED

Serial: 050

U. S. S. KNIGHT

31 December 1943.

~~TOP-SECRET~~

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commander Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters.

Subject: Action Report of USS SC-690.

Enclosure: (A) Subject Report.

1. Subject report was recently received by this vessel for endorsement by Commander Task Group 80.4.

2. Commander Task Group 80.4 left this vessel when the Task Group was dissolved in September. Inasmuch as his present location is not known, the report is forwarded herewith.


J. C. FORD.

3 768

ENCLOSURE (2)

DECLASSIFIED

U.S.S. SC-690
c/o Fleet Post Office, New York City.

~~SECRET~~ **TOP-SECRET**

SC690/A4-3

24 September 1943.

From: Commanding Officer.
To: Commander Naval Forces,
Northwest African Waters.

Via: Commander Task Group 80.4.

Subject: Action Report.

1. This vessel sailed from Bizerte, Tunisia, September 6 at 0730. After taking on a barrage balloon at the harbor entrance, we proceeded to sea, echo ranging to cover convoy FSM-1 X proceeding out of the harbor. Rendezvous was accomplished with the LCI's in convoy FSM-1. At 0600 September 7, convoy FSM-1 X peeled off from FSM-1 and proceeded into Palermo, Sicily, arriving there at 1100.

2. In Palermo the four SC's in 80.4 (SC's 690, 691, 977, 1043) re-rigged barrage balloons in accordance with radar deception plan and at 1315 proceeded to Termini Imerese where we reported to Lt. Comdr. Patty, on the LST 345, as escorts. At 2400 September 7 a submarine warning came over the air; we weighed anchor and patrolled off shore with no sound contacts and only one radar contact which proved to be a British ML who refused to answer the challenge.

3. At 0300 September 8 convoy FSS-2Y proceeded from Termini to effect rendezvous with FSS-2X at point PR at 0800 with the four SC's as escorts. Rendezvous was made on time, the four SC's waited for task group 80.4 to arrive after being released by Lt. Comdr. Patty. At 1000 the SC's joined with its own group and proceeded northward to carry out mission.

4. At 2300 landing was effected on the Island of Ventotene in northern entrance to the Bay of Naples. We screened the Dutch Gunboat FLORES who lay to ready to offer assistance if necessary. The bombardment plan had been cancelled. At 0200 September 9 the SC-690 and SC-977 proceeded south with the FLORES to join the Southern Attack Force off Agropoli in the Bay of Salerno. No action was encountered on the trip. At 0730 we reported to the Commander Task Force 80 in the U.S.S. ANCON. At 0830 we were released by the FLORES and ordered to report to the U.S.S. WAINWRIGHT. We screened the ANCON and CHASE for two days, started to escort H.M.S.

23
Facts 5.2 (0)