

C O P Y

U.S.S. AYLWIN (DD355)

DD355/P6/A16
Serial 040

9 August, 1945.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: The Commanding Officer.
 To : The Commander Western Carolines Sub Area.
 Subject: Search Operations for 4 - 5 August, report of.
 Reference: (a) ComesCarSubArea secret despatch 040720 of August, 1945.
 Enclosure: (A) Three track charts of various phases of operation.

1. In accordance with reference (a) the following report is submitted:

At 1640 K, 3 August, this vessel, on patrol in picket station #B6, off Ulithi Atoll, was verbally directed in C.T.U. 94.6.2 despatch 030615 to proceed to latitude 11° 45' N., longitude 133° 35' E. to assist in search for survivors.

Arrived at reference point at 0800 K, 4 August, and were directed by the U.S.S. MADISON, O.T.C., to proceed to station four, 35 miles southwest of the reference point to work with the U.S.S. ALVIN C. COCKRELL (DE366).

By arrangement with the COCKRELL, the AYLWIN took the northern portion of sector 4. Patrol plane 4 was assigned to work with both the COCKRELL and the AYLWIN.

A block search plan for the northern portion was established but before it could be put into operation, our aircraft reported life rafts, debris, and life jackets bearing 330° T. about 8 miles from us. We arrived in the designated area at 1000 K and remained within 5 miles of this spot for the remainder of the day's search.

Life nets and life rafts were first investigated in the belief that at this late date the living would almost inevitably have to be on some sort of float. About six bodies were passed during this investigation. When investigation of the rafts and nets revealed no life the motor whaleboat was lowered with the ship's doctor aboard and directed to various bodies in the vicinity.

Between 1000 K and 1155 K three bodies were examined and buried. All identification was removed and fingerprints were obtained from two bodies. During this period two aircraft type rubber life rafts and one floater net were recovered and hauled aboard to eliminate the problem of repeatedly having the plane spot the same floating objects. Several life jackets were similarly recovered.

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At 1155 K the patrol plane located and reported 2 lifeboats about 4 miles bearing 020° T. from us; the whaleboat was hoisted and we proceeded to the spot designated. The boats were both overturned but in good condition. The larger was a parachute type rescue boat and had been dropped from aircraft; the smaller was a merchant type dinghy. There was no evidence that either had been occupied at any time and there were no bodies in the immediate vicinity. Efforts to hoist the larger boat proved futile and it was sunk by gunfire; the smaller was brought aboard.

At 1503 K the U.S.S. DUFILHO in search station 3 reported having made several runs on a sonar contact and the AYLWIN was ordered by the O.T.C. to join the DUFILHO in a hunter killer search. Left search station 4 informing the COCKRILL that there were several bodies in the general area which we had been forced to leave when diverted by the plane's discovery of the lifeboats.

A retiring search was started on the AYLWIN's arrival at 1750 K, the DUFILHO having lost contact during our approach. Plan #7 followed by plan #10 of FTP223A were selected and carried out with negative results.

At 0440 K, 5 August, the sound search was discontinued on orders of the O.T.C. and the two ships set course for assigned stations in eight ship scouting line as directed by ComWesCarSubArea despatch 040720.

AYLWIN arrived on station bearing 108° T. 8 miles from reference point at 0630 K, having passed U.S.S. MADISON (O.T.C.) enroute. U.S.S. RALPH TALBOT had not yet joined the formation, MADISON was about 16 miles to starboard, and U.S.S. HELM was 8 miles to port. At 0630 scouting line commenced search ahead - course 018° T., speed 14 knots.

At 0735 K RALPH TALBOT joined, AYLWIN and HELM moving right to adjust stations.

AYLWIN discovered and sank a small conical buoy at 0825 K. At about 0850 K, HELM, the westernmost ship in the line, was directed to investigate debris sighted by aircraft approximately 8 miles west of the formation. The HELM left station and did not rejoin the scouting line during daylight.

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Visibility closed at 0908 K and AYLWIN reduced speed to 10 knots. Twenty-four minutes later the entire formation reduced speed to 5 knots on orders of O.T.C. When visibility improved at 1019 K O.T.C. ordered all ships less AYLWIN and HELM to increase speed to 15 knots and change course to 288° T. When the line closed us we turned to 288° T. at 1043 K, and at 1101 K O.T.C. ordered us to rejoin. At 1102 K formation resumed course 018° T., speed 14 knots.

No objects were sighted or reported and formation steamed on base course until 1445 K when ships executed 90° turn to port to course 288° T. on orders of O.T.C.

At 1500 K MADISON and RALPH TALBOT left formation and commanding officer of COCKRELL was directed to assume duties of O.T.C. AYLWIN left the line at 1512 K on orders of O.T.C. to investigate buoys discovered by aircraft #16, about 16 miles to northwest of formation. While AYLWIN engaged in this mission, formation changed course to 198° T. at 1615 K. Between 1635 K and 1653 K AYLWIN sank 2 spherical float buoys and one oil drum. At about this time aircraft #8 sighted and reported life rafts to southwest. O.T.C. ordered us to investigate. Sank one oil drum at 1728 K enroute to spot described by plane.

At 1730 patrol plane #8 reported having us in sight and directed us on various courses towards the life rafts. As we had a patrol plane on reciprocal bearing indicated, directions given by patrol plane 8 were followed until at 1831 it became evident that patrol plane 8 had mistaken another ship of the scouting line for AYLWIN. At this time rafts were already being investigated and AYLWIN was directed to rejoin the scouting line taking the right flank position. Course was set to intercept the line but because of a growing shortage of fuel with no indication as to extent of continued search operations speed was held to 20 knots. Rejoined formation at 2345 K and took formation course 198° T., speed 15 knots, AYLWIN station bearing 288° T. from U.S.S. DUFILHO, distance 3 miles, distance between ships having been changed to 3 miles during our absence. Remained with the formation in the area until 0525 K, 6 August, when we were detached by O.T.C. verbal despatch 051919 to proceed to Ulithi.

/s/ K. F. NEUPERT.

Copy to:
C.T.U. 94.6.2.
War diary.

C O P Y