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DE368/A16

U.S.S. CECIL J. DOYLE (DE 368)  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.

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Memorandum Report on Rescue of Survivors of  
USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35) August 2 - 4, 1945.

1. At 1405 King, while en route to Kossol Passage from the vicinity of 10°57'N, 136°23'E after completion of an unsuccessful JASASA operation, ComWesCarSubArea's secret despatch 020245, ordering air-sea rescue of survivors sighted by 19V258, at position 11-30 North 133-30 East, was received. This message was decoded and course reversed at 1418 King, and speed gradually increased to 22½ knots. At this time the ship's position was 08°-34' (N) 135°-10' (E). At 1435K communication was established on 4475 KC with Gambler Leader, the VPB 152 search plane who was already at the scene. This vessel assumed the call of Bird-dog One and thereafter maintained continuous communication with search and rescue planes engaged in the operation.
2. At about 1830 King a despatch giving further details obtained from planes was forwarded to ComWesCarSubArea by 2716 KC voice. Several corrected positions were received, both from PELELIU and planes, and slight course corrections accordingly made. Information from the planes was received that first one and then two dumbos had made successful water-landings and had gathered near them a large number of survivors, many of them in a critical condition. At 1633 King ComWesCarSubArea's despatch 020601 was received, indicating that USS RALPH TALBOT (DD 390) and USS MADISON (DD 425) were en route. At 1856K voice communication was established with the MADISON on 2716 KC and his ETA determined to be about 0345 King; at 2000 King, voice communication was established on the same circuit with the RALPH TALBOT, and his ETA determined to be 0400 King. Both DD's were informed that this ship's ETA was 0000 King.
3. At 2149 King, the loom of an aircraft flare was sighted ahead and verified by voice radio with planes at the scene. From this time until arrival at the dumbos on the surface, flares were continuously visible. At 2242 King, this ship illuminated the sky with 24" searchlight to give planes our position and to encourage survivors in water. Later reports indicated that this beam was sighted at the scene and was helpful for this purpose. From this time on, searchlight was used intermittently and frequent sweeps ahead were made to avoid possibility of running down survivors. At this time it was thought that the majority of the most critically injured survivors were near the planes on the water, and it was determined to proceed directly to them first and to return to search for other groups later. A Very's pistol flare was seen at some distance shortly before reaching the planes on the water, but its investigation was deferred for this reason.

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4. At 0000K the planes in the water were sighted and at 0010K the ship's motor whaleboat was lowered and proceeded to the nearest dumbo, Number B-72. The position of the planes at this time was 11°45'(N), 133°35'(E). Wind was from NNW, about 8-10 knots, and the planes were drifting steadily in a direction of about 160°T. The first survivors were brought on board at 0030K, and as soon as details could be determined urgent secret despatch 021500 was forwarded to ComWesCarSubArea, reporting arrival on scene and identity of survivors.

5. Thereafter the whaleboat continued to shuttle between ship and plane with survivors, and the ship cruised slowly in the vicinity searching with searchlights and aircraft flares for other groups. At 0300K two rubber life-rafts with seventeen (17) survivors were located (first indication was hearing whistle blown by one of survivors) and ship maneuvered alongside. At 0443K, two more rubber rafts were found by searchlight and twenty-two (22) more survivors taken aboard. In the meantime, fifty-three (53) survivors had been ferried from the first dumbo (B-72), nearly two-thirds of whom were stretcher cases, and one from the other dumbo on the water. At this time a total of ninety-three (93) survivors had been taken on board. Search was continued throughout the night without further success, the motor whaleboat remaining in the water and investigating all objects located by searchlights. The B-72 dumbo had been so damaged that the pilot thought a take-off impracticable, and at his request, after no further survivors were located in the area, the motor whaleboat returned to the plane and removed the remaining crew and all salvageable gear. This was at 0600 King. The boat was then hoisted aboard and search continued in the vicinity to the south of the dumbos, where the pilots reported other survivors had been seen before dark. Planes still flying in the area were unable to locate any further groups of survivors in the darkness.

6. In the meantime, other ships had arrived in the area. At 0110K, a searchlight was observed to the north and the ship identified by exchange of signals as the USS BASSETT (APD 73). She was asked by signal to close this ship and assist with her four LCVP's, and warned to proceed cautiously to avoid running down survivors. She soon encountered several groups of survivors whom she picked up. TBS voice communication could not be established with her, but she remained within visual signalling distance. She was subsequently asked to send a boat when possible to take off crew and gear of dumbo B-72, but this was cancelled when she reported all her boats engaged with survivors and when this vessel found its boat free and no more survivors in the vicinity.

7. At about 0315 King, a second ship arrived in the area and was identified as the USS DUFILHO (DE 423). Communication was established on TBS and MAN (34.8 MC), and she was informed that the survivors were from the USS INDIANAPOLIS and were scattered over a large area. She was also notified that both surfaced planes had been investigated and survivors in the immediate area picked up. At 0353K the USS DUFILHO reported a good underwater sound contact, and all lights were extinguished and the ship maneuvered until the contact was classified as probably non-sub a short time later. The USS DUFILHO proceeded to search north and east

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of the surfaced planes, in an area which had not been covered, but found no more large groups. She picked up one (1) survivor before daylight.

8. Between 0130K and 0230K, calls were exchanged on 4475 KC and 2716 KC with the destroyers MADISON and RALPH TALBOT. In answer to questions, they were informed that this ship was at the scene and picking up survivors, and that searchlights were being used. The number of survivors on board at that time and the ship's position were reported to the USS MADISON. Subsequently searchlights were seen over the horizon which were believed to come from these two ships, and communication was established with them also by MN (30.14MC). The TBS receiver of this ship was giving difficulty and had to be secured for several hours for repairs but communications were maintained on other circuits. The USS MADISON asked for and received reports from all ships present on the number of survivors each then had on board. In answer to another question, MADISON was informed that none of this ship's survivors was then in critical condition, and that this ship would be able to remain in the area for a daylight sweep. At about 0615K, as soon as the crew from the abandoned dumbo B-72 had been taken aboard, a report was made by MN to MADISON stating that one dumbo would attempt take-off at dawn and that the other had been abandoned and received from MADISON to stand by the plane which was to take off until it was airborne, and to sink the other at discretion. Thereafter, further search for survivors was made south of the two planes, without success, and at 0720K the B-72 was burned and sunk by 40MM Fire. The other dumbo thereafter made a successful take-off.

9. Just prior to this, shortly after dawn, visual contact was first made with the two destroyers. The USS MADISON was advised that the dumbo pilot on board reported survivors had been seen well to the south of him the previous night, and a scouting line was accordingly formed by MADISON with this ship as at which the dumbo was destroyed. Several planes were in the vicinity, and, after discussing the matter with the dumbo pilot, it was suggested to the MADISON that at least two of them be sent off to search at some distance from the ships. This was done, and later in the morning two other rafts of survivors were found by these planes and closed and picked up by the destroyers. During this daylight search this ship passed from twenty-five (25) to fifty (50) individual bodies floating in lifejackets, and investigated and picked up a number of rubber rafts, all empty. The location of the bodies was reported to MADISON, but the search was not stopped to recover them as it was still believed that more survivors could be found. At 1220K, MADISON ordered this vessel to proceed to PELELIU to discharge survivors, and course was set direct to PELELIU, speed 22½ knots. Several more empty rubber rafts were located and recovered shortly thereafter, but no further survivors were seen. PELELIU was reached at 0200K on August 4th, and survivors discharged.

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10. It is believed that once the survivors were discovered, everything was done to recover them that could have been done by planes or ships. No difficulty was experienced in communicating with planes, and very little with other ships, in spite of temporary TBS failure. Considerable difficulty was had in communicating with PELELIU and most messages required one or more relays with considerable delay. Until the USS MADISON arrived shortly before dawn and took charge, this vessel as the first on the scene gave instructions and information to planes and the other ships as they came up, although no time was taken in the short time before the MADISON arrived to determine which of the three ships was actually the senior. (The USS RINGNESS (APD 100) was not in the immediate area and had no contact with this vessel prior to dawn). Each was engaged in searching an area not previously covered by any other and it was felt that more could be accomplished by giving each ship all the available information and having him search independently until daylight than by attempting to prescribe what each should do. Planes in the air seemed unable to locate any more groups of survivors at this time. This vessel was preparing to send an amplifying report to ComWesCarSubArea on the ships present and total number of survivors picked up when the MADISON arrived; thereafter all reports were made to him as SOP.

/s/ W. G. Claytor, Jr.  
/t/ W. G. CLAYTOR, JR.,  
Lt. Commander, USNR,  
Commanding Officer.

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U.S.S. CECIL J. DOYLE (DE 368)  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.

File No. DE368/A9/P6  
Serial No. 0062

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9 August 1945.

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: Commander Western Carolines Sub Area.  
Subject: Report on Search conducted August 5 - 9, 1945.  
Reference: (a) ComWesCarSubArea secret despatch 040052.  
(b) ComWesCarSubArea secret despatch 070825.  
(c) C.O., USS CECIL J. DOYLE (DE 368) secret Memorandum Report DE368/A16 of 4 August 1945.  
Enclosure: (A) Track Chart showing movements of USS CECIL J. DOYLE (DE 368) July 31 - August 9, 1945.  
(B) List of bodies recovered and buried at sea, with geographical positions.

1. At 1945K, August 4, 1945, on completion of fueling from SS LOOKOUT, this ship left BARNUM BAY in accordance with reference (a) to participate in further search for survivors of USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35). At 0600K, August 5, 1945, radio communication was established with OTC in USS MADISON (DD 425). Shortly thereafter, contact was made with the adjacent ship in the scouting line, USS FRENCH (DE 367), and search was commenced in accordance with attached track chart, Enclosure (A). Although some empty life-jackets were recovered as indicated on the track chart, no survivors, bodies or wreckage were found during the search on August 5.

2. After daylight on August 6, all ships departed the area except USS FRENCH (DE 367), and this vessel. OTC was in USS FRENCH (DE 367). Search was continued as indicated on track chart, and during the day seventeen (17) bodies were recovered. All bodies were discolored and bloated, and some were in an advanced stage of decomposition and were almost skeletonized. In the opinion of the medical officer, all had been dead for a period of at least three (3) days. The first group was taken on board and, after identification, was buried at sea with services conducted by the Commanding Officer. Photographs of the services were taken and will be available if it is considered desirable to send them to the families of the deceased. After the first group, on the advice of the medical officer, further bodies located were identified and buried directly by the medical officer and party working from the ship's boat without attempting to bring them aboard for more formal burial service. All personal effects were removed, collected, and properly marked, and are being forwarded separately to ComWesCarSubArea for further disposition. As indicated on the track chart, all bodies found on August 6th were located in an area in the vicinity of 11°25' (N), 132°27' (E).

ENCLOSURE (B)

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DE368/A9/P6

9 Aug. 1945.

Subject: Report on Search conducted August 5 - 9, 1945.  
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3. On August 7th, search was commenced again as indicated on track chart, and four (4) more bodies as well as two (2) rubber life-rafts (one not inflated) were recovered. Of the total of twenty-one (21) bodies recovered, thirteen (13) were at least partially identified as indicated in Enclosure (B). In addition, approximately fifty (50) empty life-jackets were recovered during these two days.

4. In accordance with reference (b) and orders of USS FRENCH (DE 367), this vessel proceeded to the east in company with USS FRENCH (DE 367) during the night of August 7 - 8 to search an area in which numerous life-rafts had been reported by search planes. Search was conducted with planes all day, but all objects reported as rafts were identified as floating trash and garbage, apparently dropped by passing ships. At 1400 King, however, at position 12°07'(N), 134°58'(E), a floating mine reported by the search plane was located. The mine, a spherical type with numerous horns, was very rusty and appeared to have been in the water a long time. It was exploded by rifle fire. Thereafter, the search revealed nothing further, and, in company with FRENCH, this ship returned to PELELIU.

5. In order to give the complete picture of this vessel's movements from July 31, 1945 when she left KOSSOL PASSAGE on a JASASA mission, the accompanying track chart, Enclosure (A), includes the track of this ship on its JASASA mission, showing the area ordered covered by the search planes, and also the track of this ship on its first trip to the scene of the INDIANAPOLIS disaster the night of August 2 - 3, 1945, to which it was diverted while returning to KOSSOL PASSAGE from the JASASA operation. The full report of this mission, in which ninety-three (93) survivors were picked up, is given in reference (c) and is not repeated herein.

W. G. CLAYTOR, JR.

cc: CTU 94.6.1.  
USS FRENCH (DE 367).

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BODY NO.	POSITION	NAME AND SERIAL NO.	DATE & TIME
1	11-26-55 (N) 132-34-20 (E)	ERNST, Robert C. 566 31 28	0910 K 6 Aug. '45
2	11-27-40 (N) 132-35-10 (E)	DANIEL, H. W.	0939 K 6 Aug. '45
3	11-28-10 (N) 132-36-00 (E)	HUBBARD, L. R.	0952 K 6 Aug. '45
4	11-28-10 (N) 132-36-00 (E)	NEAL, C. K. 294 00 98	1003 K 6 Aug. '45
5	11-25-00 (N) 132-28-20 (E)	GAITHER, Forest M. 627 12 23	1058 K 6 Aug. '45
6	11-26-30 (N) 132-28-50 (E)	HAYNES, Wm. A.	1128 K 6 Aug. '45
7	11-27-20 (N) 132-29-00 (E)	KELLY, C.	1153 K 6 Aug. '45
8, 9, & 10	11-28-00 (N) 132-29-30 (E)		1215 K 6 Aug. '45
11, 12, 13 & 14	11-28-00 (N) 132-28-30 (E)		1325 K 6 Aug. '45
15	11-27-20 (N) 132-28 (E)	SUDANO, A.A.	1505 K 6 Aug. '45
16	11-27-10 (N) 132-28-55 (E)	BING	1623 K 6 Aug. '45
17	11-27-10 (N) 132-32 (E)	BRIGHT, Chester Lee 339-06-89	1717 K 6 Aug. '45
18	11-13-50 (N) 132-08-30 (E)		1245 K 7 Aug. '45
19	11-13-50 (N) 132-08-30 (E)	POHL, Theodore 910 43 40	1255 K 7 Aug. '45
20	11-15-10 (N) 132-08-00 (E)	PURCEL, F. W. 948 42 19	1315 K 7 Aug. '45
21	11-12-50 (N) 132-07-10 (E)		1408 K 7 Aug. '45

ENCLOSURE (B)