

U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD (DE-138)
% FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

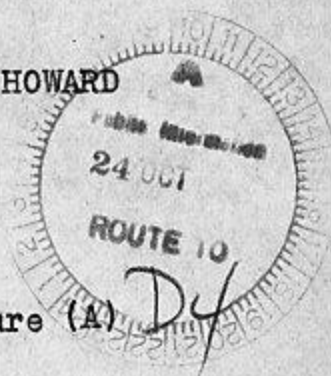
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Navy Department
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DE138/A12/jmc
Serial 237-45

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: Factual History of the U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD
(DE-138).
Reference: (a) AlPac 202.
Enclosure: (A) Factual History.

ALL INFO. 1000

EXOS Mail Room

In compliance with reference (a), enclosure (A)
is forwarded herewith.

M. B. Baker, Jr.
M. B. BAKER, JR.

CC:
CinCPac (Pearl)

156795

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FACTUAL HISTORY OF THE
U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD (DE138)

The U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD (DE-138) was built by the Consolidated Steel Corporation, Shipbuilding Division, Orange, Texas, and was placed in commission on 29 July 1943 with Lieutenant Commander Gordon D. Kissam, U.S. Naval Reserve, in command. After the usual acceptance trials this vessel proceeded to New Orleans, Louisiana for completion of outfitting.

On the 20th of August 1943 the HOWARD arrived at Bermuda, British West Indies, for a shakedown period. Following shakedown and period for overhaul and repairs at the Charleston Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina, this vessel reported to Commander John H. FORSHEW, U.S. Naval Reserve, Commander Escort Division NINE, in Norfolk, Virginia. This ship became flagship of the division, which was attached to the Atlantic Fleet.

The HOWARD'S first operational cruise was as a unit of Task Group 65 escorting UGS-20, sailing from Hampton Roads to Casa Blanca, French Morocco, and various ports in the Mediterranean. This trip was completed without incident, and after an availability at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York, and a short period of training in Casco Bay, Maine, the HOWARD reported for duty on the 4th of December 1943 again to Task Force 65, which was assigned to escort Convoy UGS-26. During the availability Lieutenant W. F. STOKEY, U.S. Naval Reserve, relieved Lieutenant Commander Gordon D. KISSAM as commanding officer. The Convoy was escorted to Casa Blanca, French Morocco, without incident as was the returning section, GUS-25.

The third operational cruise was made in company with Task Force 65 escorting Convoy UGS-32, which left Hampton Roads on the 3rd of February 1944. Again the section of the Convoy escorted by the HOWARD went to Casa

Blanca, French Morocco. After returning to New York with Convoy GUS-31, the HOWARD, together with Escort Division NINE, reported to Commander Task Group 21.16, in the U.S.S. CORE (CVE-13). This task group left Hampton Roads on the 3rd of April 1944 and was to operate in the North and Central Atlantic as an anti-submarine killer group. These anti-submarine operations were carried out for the next two months, after which this task group was disbanded and the escort division proceeded to New York for an availability. During this availability, a combat information center and HF/DF equipment were installed.

On the 11th of June 1944 the HOWARD reported to Commander Task Group 22.6 on board the U.S.S. WAKE ISLAND (CVE-65) and shortly thereafter got underway for anti-submarine operations. During this cruise a submarine was sighted on the surface about ten miles on the Task Group's port beam and the HOWARD and U.S.S. FISKE (DE-143) were detached to investigate and attack. Contact was made by both vessels almost simultaneously and the FISKE was turning in for an attack approach when it received a torpedo hit on the port side amidships, which caused it to break in two and sink shortly thereafter. The HOWARD, meanwhile, made several hedgehog and depth charge attacks on either the submarine which had torpedoed the FISKE or what might have been a second submarine in the vicinity, but with no results. These attacks were hampered to a certain extent by the presence in the water of the survivors of the torpedoed ship, which was only 1,000 yards from the HOWARD at the time of the explosion. Operations with the U.S.S. WAKE ISLAND were concluded on the 15th of August 1944 and the HOWARD then proceeded to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York, for another availability. On the 29th of August Lieutenant John T. PRATT, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve, relieved Lieutenant Commander W. F. STOKEY as commanding officer. On the 7th of September 1944

Commander E. W. YANCEY, U.S. Navy, relieved Commander John H. FORSHEW as Commander Escort Division NINE.

On the 8th of September this ship, in company with Task Group 22.1, Commander Task Group, Captain J.R. RUHSENBERGER, U.S. Navy, in the U.S.S. MISSION BAY (CVE-59) took departure from Hampton Roads for anti-submarine operations in the South Atlantic. The original order called for intensive practice maneuvers with a friendly submarine off Bermuda, B.W.I., but because of a severe hurricane this order was changed and the group proceeded to Dakar, French West Africa, for fueling. Shortly after leaving Dakar and during the course of searching operations, a radar contact on an unidentified target was made and evaluated as a submarine. From the 28th of September, when the contact was made, until the 8th of October 1944, planes from the U.S.S. MISSION BAY and ships of Escort Division NINE made an extremely thorough search of this particular area. On 30th of September the U.S.S. FESSENDEN and U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD were searching about six miles south and one mile west of the original contact when the FESSENDEN reported a good sound contact. A minute later the FESSENDEN fired her 7.2 projector charges and reported an explosion which was felt by personnel on the HOWARD. Further indications of successful attack were received, including immense quantities of oil which covered the area for several days afterwards. (This attack was later assessed as a possible kill). On the 12th of October the U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD crossed the equator, where Neptunus Rex and his party initiated a very large percentage of officers and men into the "Mysteries of his Domain". The HOWARD was then en route to Bahia, Brazil, South America, in company with Task Group 22.1. The Task Group left Bahia on the 19th of October and proceeded in a southeasterly direction carrying out anti-submarine sweeps with aircraft from the carrier en route. No

contacts of any kind were reported, and on the 30th of October the Task Group entered Cape Town, Union of South Africa, where all hands spent an extremely enjoyable four days. From Cape Town the group returned to Recife and from Recife back to Norfolk and New York.

On the 12th of December 1944 the HOWARD left New York and proceeded to New London, Connecticut, for anti-submarine exercises and firing exercises. On the 17th of December, this vessel reported to Commander Task Group 22.1, Captain J.R. RUHSEMBERGER, U.S. Navy, in the U.S.S. MISSION BAY (CVE-59). The Task Group was ordered to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for a period of refresher training, which lasted until the 16th of January 1945, when it left for Jacksonville, Florida, to participate in carrier qualification exercises. These exercises were conducted from the 22d of January until the 7th of February 1945, at which time the Task Group was ordered back to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for further refresher training. Almost immediately after arrival at Guantanamo Bay for a second time the Task Group was ordered to the Central Atlantic for anti-submarine operations. During the course of these operations the HOWARD was detached and ordered to steam eastwards independently until contact with the U.S.S. SAVANNAH (CL-42) was made, after which it was to retire to the west and rejoin the Task Group. This operation was completed on the 25th of February. On the 27th of February the Task Group returned to the East Coast. After the usual availability the HOWARD rejoined Commander Task Group 22.1 in Norfolk, and left there on the 27th of March for anti-submarine operations in the North Atlantic. During these operations the Task Group was joined by Task Groups 22.13 and 22.5 to form a barrier across the estimated track of a number of German submarines, said to be on their way to the East Coast. This particular

operation was quite successful, although this ship did not have the good fortune to be in the areas at the time when successful contacts were made. During this trip the Task Group put into Argentia, Newfoundland, on two different occasions. The HOWARD was at sea as a unit of the anti-submarine barrier when word of the German surrender was received on the 8th of May 1945. Shortly thereafter Task Group 22.1 was ordered to return to the States, the carrier proceeding to Norfolk and the escorts to New York. The HOWARD then enjoyed ten days of rest and recreation in New York.

On the 9th of June 1945, after having participated in submarine exercises in the Block Island Sound and carrier qualification exercises with the U.S.S. MISSION BAY southwest of Nantucket, the HOWARD was ordered to the Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, Massachusetts, for an extended availability in preparation for transfer to the U.S. PACIFIC FLEET. Commander Elmer C. POWELL, U. S. Naval Reserve, relieved Commander E. W. YANCEY, U.S. Navy as Commander Escort Division NINE on 25 June 1945.

Upon the completion of availability on 30 June 1945 the HOWARD proceeded to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for intensive refresher training. This training was completed on the 18th of July and the ship then departed for San Diego, California via the Panama Canal. On the 21st of July, the U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD reported to the Commander in Chief, U.S. PACIFIC FLEET, for duty.

After leaving San Diego, California, the HOWARD arrived at Pearl Harbor, Oahu, T. H., on the 8th of August 1945. On the 5th of August Lieutenant Maurice B. BAKER, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve, relieved Lieutenant Commander John T. PRATT, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve, as commanding officer. While at Pearl Harbor the ship participated in anti-submarine firing and calibration exercises. While the HOWARD was at Pearl Harbor, word was received that the Japanese government accepted the Allied surrender terms.

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

DE138/A12/jmc
Serial 279-45

8 December 1945

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Secretary of the Navy (Public Information
Office).

Subject: Ships History and Supplementary Data - Submission of.

Reference: (a) A1Pac 318.

Enclosure: (A) Ships History and Supplementary Data.

1. In compliance with reference (a), three copies of enclosure
(A) are forwarded herewith.

A. J. Cronvich
A. J. CRONVICH.

CC:
CinCPac (3)
ComDesPac (3)
Fleet Hometown News Ctr,
844 Rush, St., Chicago,
11, Illinois.

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U.S.S. DOUGLAS L. HOWARD (DE138)

The U.S.S. HOWARD arrived at Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, September 3, remaining at anchor there until September 25 with the exception of four short operational and training cruises.

On September 25, the HOWARD got underway for Kusaie, an island in the Caroline group, arriving there the next day. At Kusaie were the U.S.S. SOLEY (DD707) and the U.S.S. RICKETTS (DE-254); the latter needing fuel and supplies, departed on the HOWARD'S arrival, returning October 1. In company with these ships and with the APC 95, which arrived September 29, the HOWARD assisted in administering control over Japanese troops, naval personnel and civilians remaining on Kusaie. The HOWARD also aided military government personnel in their work with the native inhabitants of the island. The SOLEY and RICKETTS departed from Kusaie finally on October 13. The Japanese hospital ship, MS HIKAWA MARU arrived off Kusaie November 4 to evacuate a portion of the Japanese military and civilian personnel located there, departing the next day.

On November 15, the HOWARD was relieved by the U.S.S. FARQUHAR (DE-139) and departed for Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, arriving there November 16, and leaving with Commander Task Group 96.3 aboard on November 21 for Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, where she arrived November 22.