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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

U. S. S. BRISTER (DE 327)

FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

FILE NO.

DE327(FMR)/A7-1/
Serial: 266-45

23 December 1945.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Secretary of the Navy, Public Information Officer.
Subject: Ship's History for Public Information - Submission of.
Reference: (a) ALPac #318-45.
Enclosure: (A) Three (3) copies of subject history.

1. In accordance with Reference (a), the ship's history for public information usage, of the U.S.S. BRISTER (DE 327) is submitted herewith.

2. Details regarding Ensign Brister are not available on board but will be forwarded as soon as received.

H. T. Wordell.
H. T. WORDELL.

cc:

CincPac Pubinfo (3)
Flt Hometown News Cntr. (3)
ComDesPac (3)



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SHIP'S HISTORY - FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION USAGE

Reference: ALPac 318 of 1 December 1945.

During two years of war service the U.S.S. BRISTER was active in the Carribean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Ocean, English Channel, Irish Sea and Pacific Ocean areas. She was built by Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, Ltd., at Orange, Texas and was commissioned as a unit of the United States Navy on November 30, 1943.

Lt. Comdr. Lawton H. Crosby, USNR, 403 Center Avenue, Lake Bluff, Illinois was the first commanding officer of the ship. As escort commander, with four PC's, this ship's first duty was escorting merchant convoys between Guantamamo Bay, Cuba, and Trinidad, B. W. I. Following this duty the U.S.S. BRISTER rejoined Escort Division 57, and with other units, escorted fast convoys of tankers and transports from Caracao (Dutch Guinea) and eastern United States coastal ports, to Naples, Italy and other Mediterranean ports including Casablanca, Bizerte, Tunis, Algiers. Included in these convoys were troops and equipment for the invasion of southern France.

On November 27, 1944 Captain Crosby was commended by the Commander in Chief of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet, Admiral Jonas H. Ingram; "For meritorious and heroic achievement as commanding officer of the U.S.S. BRISTER in rescuing a member of the crew who had fallen overboard while alongside a dock during the night of November 5, 1944."

On December 22, 1944 Lt. Comdr. Richard D. Tucker, USNR, Mill Neck, Long Island, New York, relieved Lt. Comdr., Crosby as commanding officer.

Other commanding officers are; Lt. Comdr. Francis C. Cady, USNR, 6625 Muirlands Drive, LaJolla, California and Farmington, Connecticut. Lt. Comdr. Herbert T. Wordell, USNR, 3924 N. Whipple Street, Chicago, Illinois, and 406 Union Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Following the invasion of Southern France the U.S.S. BRISTER was assigned to various task units and escorted fast convoys of tankers, munitions, supplies and troops between ports of Northeastern United States and European ports of Cherbourg, France; Belfast, Ireland; Plymouth, Southampton, Liverpool, and Cardiff England; and Glasgow, Scotland.

During the night of April 9, 1945 the S.S. NASHBULK and S.S. SAINT MIHIEL collided in the vicinity of Latitude 37° North; Longitude 64° West. the U.S.S. BRISTER, U.S.S. SELSTROM, U.S.S. RHODES, and U.S.S. RICHEY were detailed to aid the survivors of the burning ships. Working throughout that night and part of the following day the officers and crew of the

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SHIP'S HISTORY - FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION USAGE (Cont.)

U.S.S. BRISTER rescued 19 survivors and aided in extinguishing the fires aboard the SAINT MIHIEL. Both principles in the collision were able to return to port under their own power.

As a result of this action the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, Admiral Jonas H. Ingram, USN, awarded letters of commendation and commendation ribbons to the following: Lt. Comdr. Richard D. Tucker, USNR, Mill Neck, Long Island, New York, Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. BRISTER for "Skillful and untiring effort in the maneuvering of his ship and the maximum employment of all available facilities to effect in the rescue of survivors and aid in extinguishing fires and saving the S.S. SAINT MIHIEL."

To Joseph W. Colbert, 4034826, GMlc, USNR, USN Frontier Base, Staten Island 1, New York; James T. Russell, 6353387, S2c, USNR, 914 W. Market Street, Louisville, Kentucky, son of Mrs. Onnie Russell; and Carl W. Turnage, 6576548, Cox., USNR (home address not listed) -- "The above named men were of the greatest assistance in bringing survivors, many of whom were injured and/or unable to swim, to the nets and assisting them up over the side. During the greater part of the period when rescue of survivors was taking place these men were in the shark-infested water, at times up to their necks, clinging by one hand to the life nets and being buffeted against the side of the ship. The effective manner in which these men acted in disregard of their own safety reflects great credit upon the Naval service."

The escort of convoy duties performed by the U.S.S. BRISTER contributed greatly to the reduction and stoppage of the menace of the Axis submarines and aided in the defeat of those powers. During sixteen months of such duty the BRISTER used more than three hundred depth charges and other anti-submarine explosives in fifteen attacks on underwater contacts suspected to be Axis submarines.

Still at sea upon the occasion of the surrender of Germany, the BRISTER returned to New York for post "VE" Day celebrations, leave and liberty in the "Big Town" for officers and crew, and the installation of new equipment and guns aboard the ship in preparation for duty in the Pacific Ocean against the Japanese. After departure from the United States in June, and participation in training exercises specifically planned for use against the Japanese, the BRISTER commenced duty in the Pacific Ocean in July 1945.

Pearl Harbor, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, and Guam were left behind and the U.S.S. BRISTER was formed up with her division, Escort Division 57, Commander Donald H. Johnson, USNR, Division Commander, and ordered to escort duty with a unit of escort carriers (CVE) under the command of Rear Admiral D. Ketcham, USN. Acting as screen for the carriers and as plane guard during flight operations, all hands quickly adjusted to the routine of the new duty and added to their itinerary by spending some time in and about Leyte Gulf, Samar, and the areas of the Phillipine Sea and East China Sea.

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SHIP'S HISTORY - FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION USAGE (Cont.).

Early in September, after the surrender of the military and naval forces of the Japanese Imperial Government, the U.S.S. BRISTER again achieved distinction by entering Kiirun, Formosa which was still protected by enemy minefields and other underwater hazards. In the company with the U.S.S. GARY (DE 326) (Flag), U.S.S. FINCH (DE 328), and the U.S.S. KRETCHMER (DE 329), the BRISTER became one of the first U. S. warships to enter Kiirun since the historical visit of Commodore Mathew Perry in 1854. The purpose of the mission was to liberate and evacuate 1,2000 Japanes-held Allied prisoners of war.

The resulting citations, received from Commander Seventh Fleet, Admiral Thomas Kincaid, USN, and from the Unit Commander, Rear Admiral D. Ketcham, USN, best expresses the action: "For evacuating prisoners of war from Formosa you were nothing short of sensational. To every officer and man in your ships is due resounding applause for shoving your noses into Kiirun before the occupation, without thought of self in a most worthy cause."

"The handling of passengers (liberated POW's) and their care, like everything else in the operation, was done in the American way and there is no better."

"I pass to you the message of the Commander, Seventh Fleet"; "Prompt and determined action in the Formosa evacuation under difficult circumstances was a magnificent performance and a God-send to our prisoners. Well done." Signed, Thomas Kincaid, Admiral, USN.

Before disembarking at Manila, the POW Passengers presented the BRISTER with an appropriate memento of the occasion - an embroidered coat of arms of the 36th Fortress Company, Royal Engineers. The background is a plain white handkerchief the borders of which are signed by the members of the Company who were aboard the BRISTER. It is now framed and occupies a prominent space on the bulkhead of the ship's wardroom. The copy attached reads as follows: "The embroidered handkerchief is a copy of the Royal Engineer's Cap Badge. This Corps was formed in 1685 A. D. Thirty-sixth Fortress Co., R. E., was the company of engineers stationed at Penang, Malaya. The small badges represent bombs and are worn by all ranks as a collar badge. The handkerchief was the only one issued during our incarceration on Formosa by the Japanese. The drawing was done by Sgt. Bell, of the Royal Artillery, and the needlework by Pvt. J. Woodrough, of the Suffolk Regiment with silk taken from Japanes Service Bars and smuggled into camp by POW's. To officers and men of the U.S.S. BRISTER. We thank you all for your generous hospitality."

Since leaving Manila in September the U.S.S. BRISTER has been at Okinawa, for local patrol duties in the East China Sea, in the vicinity of Nagasaki, Japan, Korea, and Formosa, still operating with CVE's. During the period at Olinawa the ship experienced the outer fringes of typhoons upon two occasions but weathered both without personnel casualties or serious damage to the ship.

The original officers and crew of the ship represented a cross section of all sections of America. East Coast, South, Midwest, West Coast and South-west. Original ship's officers represented a cross section of civilian professions and experience. Lt. Comdr. L. H. Crosby, USNR, Commanding Officer, Lake Bluff, Illinois, had been a salesman in Chicago. Lt. Comdr. Richard D. Tucker, USNR, Mill Neck, Long Island, N. Y., was a graduate of Harvard

SHIP'S HISTORY - FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION USAGE (Cont.)

University, and former New York businessman. Lieut. Edward C. Raney, USNR, 1420 Neskannock Blvd., New Castle, Pa., a former professor of Ichtheology at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. Lt. Ebert S. Watson, USN, 1602 Wilmington Avenue, Richmond, Va., was the only "Mustang" aboard having formerly been a Chief Machinists Mate, USN. Lt. Cleo A. Noel, USNR, 617 Gilman Rd., Moberly, Missouri, had been an associate professor of history at the University of Missouri. Lt. George A. Vaughan, USNR, 3100 17th Street, Great Bend, Kansas, had worked in oil fields throughout the west and southwest and also served in the Merchant Marine. Lt. Leonard E. Canner, USNR, 210 Babcock St., Brookline, Mass., graduated from Brown University, studied medicine, and was also purchasing agent for a Boston shoe factory. Lt. Richard K. Brown, USNR, 127 S. 4th Street, Delavan, Wisconsin, Executive Officer of the BRISTER at the present time, graduated from the University of Wisconsin and was employed as an accountant. Lt(jg) John Sisinger, USNR, 3806 Manistique Street, Detroit, Michigan, had attended the Henry Ford Trade School and also worked aboard ore boats in the Great Lakes. Lt. Comdr. H. T. Wordell, USNR, 3924 N. Whipple Street, Chicago, Illinois, Commanding Officer of the BRISTER at the present time was formerly employed by the Chicago Park District as Supervisor of Recreation.

Captain Wordell and Lieutenant Brown are the only "plank owners" still aboard the ship. The former is one of four of an "all-navy" family of 3 brothers and 1 sister. Commander Malcolm T. Wordell, USN, Naval aviator, recipient of the Navy Cross with Gold Star, and co-author of "Wildcats over Casablanca", (the story of a Naval aviation group during the invasion of North Africa); Lieut. Milton P. Wordell, USNR, serving aboard the U.S.S. FRANK KNOX (DD 742), and SK3c Ruth L. Wordell (WR) on duty in the Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Alice Wordell, proud mother of this Navy family, resides at 406 Union Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts. The following commendation was recently sent to Mrs. Wordell from Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal: "A grateful nation shares your pride in your family's contribution to the cause of freedom. In recognition of your courage and sacrifice I extend to you the Commendation of the Navy Department and my personal congratulations." Signed James Forrestal.