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USS Buckley (DE51) Engagement Reports (Copies) Collection

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Biographical Note

USS Buckley (DE/DER-51) was a Buckley-class destroyer escort of the United States Navy, launched on 9 January 1943. On 22 April 1944, she joined hunter-killer Task Group 21.11 (TG 21.11) for a sweep of the North Atlantic and Mediterranean convoy routes. On the morning of 6 May, aircraft from the escort carrier Block Island (CVE-21) reported an enemy submarine near Buckley. She steamed toward the surfaced submarine, evading her torpedoes and gunfire, and commenced firing.

At 0328 Buckley rammed the German submarine U-66 and then backed off. Shortly thereafter, the submarine struck Buckley, opening a hole in the escort vessel's starboard side. Hand to hand combat ensued between crewmembers of the two combatants. The U-66 drew astern of Buckley and sank at 0341 in 17°17'N 32°24'W. Buckley picked up 36 German survivors and then retired to New York where she underwent repairs until 14 June 1944.

For this most interesting action, regarded by several high naval officers as being the most "exciting" anti-submarine kill in the battle of the Atlantic, Buckley personnel were

authorized to wear a combat star in the European-African Theatre ribbon. The then commanding officer, Lt. Comdr. Brent M. Abel, USNR, of Cambridge, Mass., was awarded the Navy Cross for his part in its execution.

Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection contains copies of four declassified reports on the May 6, 1944 engagement between the U.S.S. Buckley (DE51) and the German Submarine U-66. The reports come from the U.S.S. Buckley, U.S.S. Block Island, and the United States Atlantic Fleet. The collection is concluded with a narrative recollection article from The New Yorker by E.J. Kahn, Jr. telling of the event.

Arrangement

The collection arrived in chronological order and has been maintained. The collection consists of one series:

Series One: Copies of Declassified Reports

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Key Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the Library's online catalog. Researchers interested in materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these subject headings.

Subjects

Destroyer escorts--Atlantic Ocean--History--20th century.
United States--Navy--Atlantic Fleet.
World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Atlantic Ocean.
World War, 1939-1945--Naval operations--Submarine.

Container List

	Copies of Declassified Reports, 1944	1944, 1988
800184001	USS Buckley: Action Report of Engagement with German Submarine, 6 May 1944 (7 pages)(Copy). From: Commanding Officer Brent M. Abel; To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.	5/8/1944
800184002	USS Block Island: Report on Surviving Prisoners from U-66 (21 pages)(Copy). From: The Commander Task Group 21.11 (Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Block Island) F.M. Hughes; To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.	5/18/1944
800184003	USS Block Island: Action Report of Engagement with German Submarine, 6 May 1944 (1 page)(Copy). From: The Commander Task Group 21.11 (CO USS Block Island) F.M. Hughes; To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.	6/25/1944
800184004	United States Atlantic Fleet: Action Report of Engagement with German Submarine, 6 May 1944 (1 page)(Copy). From: Chief of Staff W.K. Kilpatrick; To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.	7/5/1944
800184005	Annals of War and Peace: Hand to Hand. (Copy of article from The New Yorker by E.J. Kahn, Jr.	2/8/1988