

To : The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet (Readiness Division). (1) The Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTY-EIGHT. (2) The Commander Task Group 51.2 (3) The Commander Task Group 52. (4) The Commander Task Force 51. (5) The Commander FIFTH Fleet. (6) The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.

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Subject:

Action Report of Shore Bombardment of Iwo Jima,' Volcano Islands.

References: (a) Art. 712 and 874(c), U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920. (b) PacFlt Conf ltr 1CL-45 of 1 January 1945.

During the landing, occupation and capture of Iwo Jima, in 1. the Volcano Islands, this vessel was assigned to the Joint Expeditionary Force with the primary mission of screening the transport groups in the transport area at the objective. On two occasions orders were received to report to Commander Task Force 52 for fire support missions. During the periods 19-20 February and 22-23 February 1945, this ship fired various call fires; neutralizing; and harassing fire missions as narrated below, expended a total of 2,168 rounds of 5"/38 caliber AAC. 83 rounds MP, 5 - 5"/38 common, 217 star shells and 3,496 rounds of 40 MM ammunition.

Minus 10 Time Zone, 19 February 1945

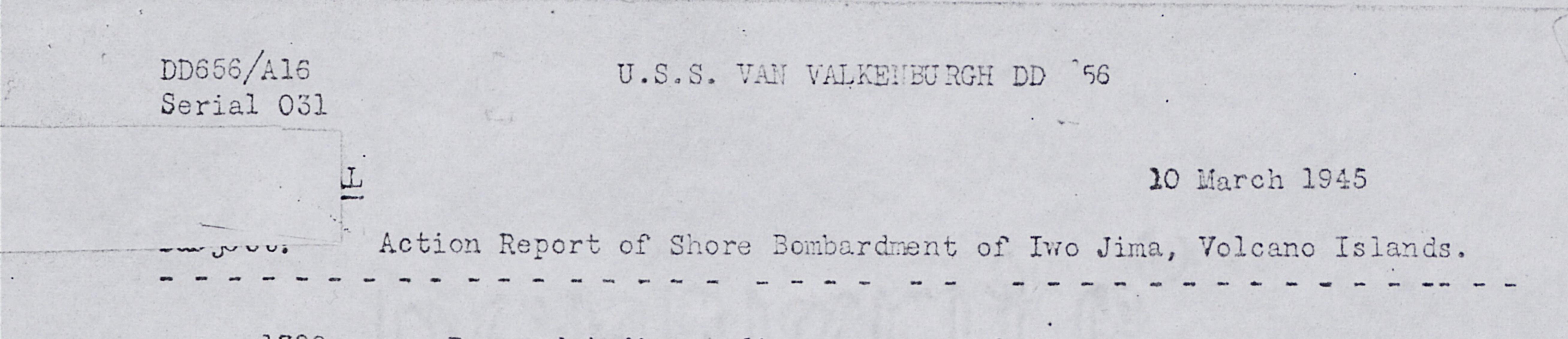
1643 Ship on station in fire support sector one, 1800 yards off the southeastern beach of Iwo Jima, crew at general quarters, ship in material condition "Able", communications established with air observer and NLO 232 on spotting frequency.

- Commenced indirect fire neutralizing target areas 183 1659 D, E. I, and J, and areas 184 K, L, M, and T, air observer spotting.
- Checked fire and shifted to target 183 W to silence 1709 heavy firing from that area.
- 1710 Resumed indirect fire. -

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Checked fire on target having received maximum spot of 1727 -20 yards. 85 rounds expended.

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- 1728 Resumed indirect fire on original target areas.
- 1740 Checked fire . Spotters reported observation difficult.
- 1742 Resumed fire.
- 1744 NLO 232 relieved air observer of spotting. Continued fire with frequent use of white phosphorous.

	Observed flames in target area on ridge and with permission
	from NLO 232 shifted to direct fire to cover this target.
	Spotter reported very good coverage of ridge in target area.
	Continued firing two gun salvos.
	Ceased fire, standing by for new target.
-	Observed mortar firing in area 184 T and took under direct
	fire with 5" and 40 MM.
-	Ceased fire, results undetermined.
-	Received "Flash Red" and notified spetter. Standing by for
	night assignment.
-	Opened range to 6,000 yards for night illumination.
	Commenced firing star shells for adjustment.
	Commenced night illumination, 10 star shells per hour.
	NLO 242 relieved NLO 232 as spetter.
-	Commenced firing AAC, two gun salvos, 30 rounds per hour
	c.vering assigned area 182 Q, P, R, L, M, and N.
-	Ceased fire to shift targets. continuing illumination.

2313 - Commenced fire on new target areas 181 T and 182 P, K, L and M.

20 February 1945

- 0000 Continuing night illumination and harassing fire with NLO 232 spotting star shells only.
- 0642 Ceased illumination, continued harassing fire.
- 0700 Ceased fire, standing by for new target.
- 0727 Established communication with air observer.
- 0732 Observed mortar fire in target area 184 A and commenced direct fire with 40 MM and 5"/38 caliber batteries, air observer assisting.
- 0734 Ceased firing 40 MM.
- 0742 Ceased firing, mortar firing silenced.
- 0755 Commenced fire on new target 182 M air observer spotting.
- 0800 Air observer reported "Hitting target, continue firing". 0814 - Checked fire.
- 0820 Resumed fire on new target 183 F, field artillery piece.
- 0829 Rapid fire five salvos.
- 0831 Shifted to slow fire.
- 0835 Observed cave entrance with troop movement at mouth. Fired 3 salvos direct fire. Results were direct hit in cave.
- 0937 Ceased fire. NLO 232 secured circuit to move up.
- 0950 NLO back on circuit.
- 0958 Commenced indirect fire two gun salvos on gun emplacement in target area 182 T. MLO 232 spotting.

U.S.S. VAN VALKEIBURGH DD656 DD656/A16 Serial 031 Li March 1945 Action Report of Shore Bombardment of Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands. Subject:

- 1013 Completed firing 11 two-gun salvos. Fired 1 five-gun salvo.
- 1015 Ceased fire. Results unknown although spots of "no change" were received.
- 1216 Relayed NLO 242's report of naval gunfire falling among friendly troops to Commander Task Force 51 and 52.
- 1225 NLO 242 reported firing had stopped; only one salvo landed near friendly troops,
- 1305 Took enemy field gun under fire in target area 184 A, B, and G, using indirect fire.
- 1347 Completed 50 salvos covering above area with air observer spot-
- ting. Observation very difficult, check fire. 1355 - Resumed fire. Fired each salvo on order of air observer to permit his sweeping low over targot for a better look. 1410 - Ceased fire.
- 1420 NLO 242 relieved air observer. Lost communication with latter, standing by for target designation.
- 1445 Relieved on station by U.S.S. HARRY F. BAUER (DM26) and proceeded to outer screen awaiting assignment by Commander Task Group 51.2.

22 February 1945

- 1245 In accordance with orders of Commander Task Force 52, this vessel proceeded to fire support sector one, Iwo lima, Volcano Islands, to relieve the U.S.S. TERRY (DD513) of station as fire support ship.
- 1310 Ship on station, crew at general quarters, ship in material condition Able. Communications established with the spotter, who was aboard an LCS close to the beach. Standing by for targets.
- 1320 Observed gun emplacement in area 184X and received permission to take it under direct fire.
- 1325 Commenced firing two-gun salves with unknown results.
- 1330 Ceased fire, target obstructed by smoke.
- 1355 Received new target designation 184T.
- 1357 Commenced firing one-gun salvos indirect fire.
- 1400 Fired 3 five-gun salvos using white phosphorous projectiles.

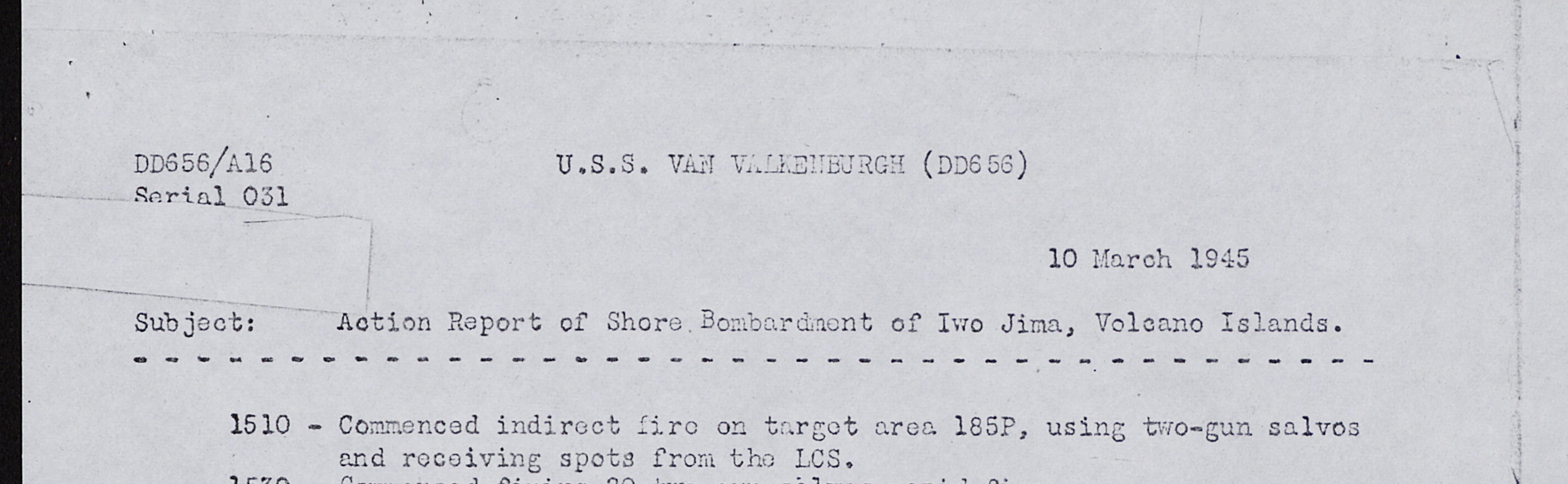
1403 - Continued firing, shifting to five-gun salvos in groups of three. 1407 - Checked fire.

- 1412 Resumed fire and rolayed to Commander Task Force 52 report of green cluster sighted by the spotter in another area. Continued slow deliberate fire until 1416, at which time resumed firing five-gun salvos.
- 1427 Received word from spotter that enemy counter-attack may be developing in our target area.

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- 1430 Ceased fire.
- 1505 Received "Flash Red" and informed spotter.

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- 1530 Commenced firing 20 two-gun salvos rapid fire.
- 1533 Ceased fire. Spotter reported salvos well in the target area but observation very difficult.
- 1605 Received new target designation 185 H and commenced harassing fire using two-gun salvos.
- 1607 Checked fire. Tested communications with new spotter.
- 1625 Received new target designation, 184 T and resumed deep support harassing fire using two-gun salvos.
- 1649 Spotter reported harassing fire very good, ceased firing.
- 1650 Requested front line information without results.
- 1727 Received new target designation, 185 L and commenced firing harassing fire.
- 1737 Ceased fire after having completed twenty (20) salvos,
- 1741 Spotter reported enemy counter-attack underway and requested rapic fire in new target areas 216 M, N, and O.

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ines .

- 1743 Commenced rapid fire, five-gun salvos.
- 1754 Fired 5 salvos, rapid fire in each of five separate target areas

requested by spotter.

- 1801 Ceased fire, having fired 300 rounds 5"/38 AAC in the last twenty minutes. Results unknown.
- 1825 Reported ammunition on hand to spotter for night mission.
- 1848 Commenced firing on designated target, area 1845 and X.
- 1850 Ceased fire after having completed three salvos.
- 1928 Opened the range to 6000 yards for starshell illumination.
- 1953 Commenced illumination for adjustment.
- 2005 Commenced firing illumination, sixteen starshells per hour and harassing fire of sixteen two-gun salvos per hour in target area 184 B, C, H, I, N, O, T, and 185P.

23 February 1945

- 0013 Received word we may be brocking up counter-attack, continued night illumination and harassing fire throughout the night until 0640.
- 0702 Commenced preparatory fire in designated areas 184R, S, W, X, 167 C and D.
- 0714 Ceased fire to check front lines. Spotter requested another starshell so he could see to shackle his report of front lines.
- 0715 Shifted firing position.
- 0720 Was ordered to standby for target.
- 0725 Commenced indirect firing in target areas 185 Q, U, V and 168 A.
- 0750 Ceased fire, standing by for new target.
- 0819 Commenced firing on enemy position in target area 184 SX.
- 0826 Ceased fire. Standing by for targets of opportunity.
- 0919 Took under direct fire boarded-up cave and u stroyed with a direct hit, firing five salvos, target area 184 N.

DD656/A16 Serial 031 U.S.S. VAN VALKENBURGH (DD656)

10 March 1945

Subject: Action Report of Shore Bombaroment of Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands.

0930 - Observed galvanized house or shack and destroyed with a direct hit, firing six salves, target area 184 D.

- 1014 Observed two gun emplacements in target area 184 B and requested permission to take under direct fire. Permission not granted as target was too near friendly troops.
- 1029 Observed a few men in a ravine in target aron. 184 Y, T, O, and N. Maneuvered ship to a position from which enfilade fire could be dolivered into the ravine and covered the area with direct fire, 40ME and 5"/38 air bursts.
- 1035 Ceased fire, standing by.
- 1213 Relayed message from spotter to Commander Task Force 51 to cease all naval gunfire as some ship was firing in friendly troop areas. Continued standing by until 1547 when relieved on station by the U.S.S. DEWEY (DD349) and proceeded to screening station.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. During the bombardment, this vessel closed within 600 yards of the beach in order to pick up targets visually, but with little or no success. Targets were evidently well obscured and observation by the shore fire control party was very difficult, most of the time impossible. White phosphorous was used almost continuously, while it lasted, to aid the spotters. This vessel received no fire from shore installations, but observed some mortar and machinegun fire from the beach in other fire support sectors.

2. C.I.C. kept the ship accurately positioned at all times, using radar ranges and visual bearings, and furnished accurate target ranges and bearings to the computer. Briefing all radar operators with PPI pictures, models and charts prior to D-Day paid big dividends at the objective.

3. Performance of ammunition and material was excellent. No failures were experienced.

4. The shore fire control party kept the ship informed of the current situation on the beach and enabled the crew to secure from eneral quarters on

two occasions for hot meals. Other meals consisted of "K" rutions served to each station by repair parties. Hot coffee was served during the nights. No difficulty was experienced in messing the crew during this period.

5. The shore fire control frequency was guarded in C.I.C. using headsets and a speaker. C.I.C. also guarded the TBS (headsets) and the naval gunfire common (speaker). The fleet common and local air warning net were available in C.I.C., but were guarded on the bridge. Communication material was excellent throughout the bombardment, however, it was often difficult to get through on the spotting frequency, which, at times, was shared by as many as five different units.

U.S.S. VAN VALKENBURGH (DD656)

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6. The performance of the officers and crew we of the highest standard. It was an experience heartily enjoyed by all hands.

A. B. COXE, Jr.

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