

HISTORY OF USS ENGLISH DD 696

The Destroyer ENGLISH was built by the Federal Shipbuilding and Drydock Company of Kearney, New Jersey and launched on 27 February 1944. The ship was named after Rear Admiral Robert H. English, Jr., USN. The ENGLISH has an overall length of 377 feet, and a beam of 41 feet. She displaces 2200 tons of water and has a maximum speed of 34 knots. The ENGLISH is flagship for Destroyer Division 22 which consists of the USS ENGLISH (DD 696), USS HANK (DD 702), USS BORIE (DD 704), and USS LIND (DD 703).

From September 1944 until the end of the war the Destroyer ENGLISH was assigned to the Pacific Fleet. She participated in the engagements at Luzon, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and in Third Fleet Operations along the coast of Japan. She had many exciting days during these operations. On 14 March 1945 while at General Quarters, with the Japanese making raids on Task Group 58.3, ENGLISH rescued a sailor involved in a freak accident aboard the USS BUNKER HILL. He had driven his jeep off the deck of the carrier. The following day the ENGLISH was in a group covering the withdrawal of the stricken ship USS FRANKLIN (The carrier had taken two severe hits, setting off tremendous explosions and fires among the planes ready to take off and the ready ammunition). ENGLISH was credited with shooting down one plane while assisting the FRANKLIN. On 7 April the ENGLISH rescued eight men from the USS HANCOCK (They had been blown overboard by the blast of exploding bombs and fuel tanks, caused by a suicide plane cartwheeling across its deck). On 12 July, two days after Task Group 38.3 made their first strike on Tokyo, ENGLISH made contact with an enemy submarine and attacked fiercely, dropping all the depth charges she had. An underwater explosion brought up pieces of black rubber and an oil slick. In July 1945 Cruiser Division 18 and Destroyer Squadron 62 led by USS ENGLISH entered Tokyo Bay to conduct an anti-shipping sweep in the bay, and a shore bombardment of Nayima, Saki, and Honshu. ENGLISH thus lays claim to having been the first United States surface vessel to penetrate the entrance to Tokyo Bay since the beginning of the war. Four Battle Stars were earned by the ENGLISH for her participation in these operations.

At the end of the war the destroyer headed back for the United States and the Atlantic Fleet. She operated out of Boston, Massachusetts until February 1947, when, with the other ships of Destroyer Squadron 16, she sailed to New Orleans. For the next sixteen months the destroyers were in and out of New Orleans, operating as Naval Reserve Training Ships. Thousands of reservists took their annual training cruises in ENGLISH as she visited ports throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.

During the Korean conflict ENGLISH again had many combat operations. The first weeks of Korean duty were spent as a unit in the

screen of the United Nations blockading forces. ENGLISH fired her first shell on shore bombardment fire support with USS HANK, coming to the aid of the Marines at KOJO. The enemy was driven out and a relief column got through to the Marines.

The ship participated in the operations leading to the first amphibious landings at Wonsan, Korea, and then began a round of blockade patrol and shore bombardment of the principal Communist held ports. She hit Songjin, Chongjin, Kwon and Chaho Sinchaing, operating in the bitter cold of the Korean winter with the ship often coated with ice from the heavy seas and driving spray. Enemy mines further complicated the operations.

On 20 January 1951 ENGLISH assumed duties as a gunfire support with the ROK Capital Divisions at Bokuko Kol, Korea. During the next week several bombardment missions were carried out in support of the South Koreans.

Major General Kim, Commanding General of the First ROK corps, and Brigadier General Song, Commanding General of the ROK Capital Division, came aboard ENGLISH off Samch'ok and presented a porcelain lion which was christened "The General". Attention was shifted further to the north and on 30 and 31 January 1951 shore bombardment at Kanson and Kosong were carried out with a task group which included USS MISSOURI and MANCHESTER.

As the Capital Division moved north, ENGLISH moved with them, reaching Kangnug in February. On 4 February 1951 two North Korean infantry battalions made a dawn attack against advance elements of the Capital Division, and were shattered and dispersed by accurate fire from ENGLISH.

Later the same day accurate fire, from ENGLISH, aided the capture of a key ridge commanding Kangnug. When this ridge fell, communist resistance collapsed and Kangnug was captured the next day.

Her next blockade patrol was to Chongjin, hitting targets at Chaho and Songjin enroute. This patrol was maintained until 5 March 1951 when ENGLISH returned to Wonsan Harbor to lend support for siege of Wonsan. She spent 20 consecutive days on the firing line, firing her 12,000 round of 5-inch ammunition since reporting for duty in the Korean Area. She set the record in Korea for having fired the most rounds of main battery ammunition (12,600) during a single tour of combat duty.

Since returning to Norfolk in May of 1951 ENGLISH has made three cruises to the Mediterranean. During the Suez crises of 1956 ENGLISH was placed at sea for 30 days awaiting developments. As the Middle East situation was clarified she left Gibraltar astern and headed home.

During the years 1960-1961 the ENGLISH was assigned various anti-submarine training assignments under the Operational Control of Commander Anti-Submarine Defense Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. In June of 1960 with 10 first-class and 16 third-class midshipmen aboard, the ENGLISH and Task Force 83 visited Halifax, Nova Scotia and New York City on a summer cruise.

On the 19th of December 1960 the ENGLISH reverted to the Operational Control of Commander Destroyer Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet and began preparations for entrance into the Norfolk Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth, Virginia. The ship left the Shipyard in April and proceeded to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for six weeks of intensive training returning to Norfolk in time for a 4th of July cruise to Baltimore. After participating in the summer midshipman cruise with the Second Fleet intensive preparations for a Mediterranean cruise were made, and on 8 September 1961 ENGLISH, with other units of Destroyer Squadron TWO sailed to join the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

During the Mediterranean cruise ENGLISH participated in numerous training cruises as a unit of the Sixth Fleet and took part in one NATO exercise in which she joined with ships of the British, Italian, and Greek navies. On 1 April 1962 she returned to her home port of Norfolk, Virginia.

On 13 April 1962 ENGLISH participated in the Presidential Review, along with some 60 other ships of the U.S. Second Fleet.

In May ENGLISH took part in Mercury recovery operations. Most of June and July 1962 found ENGLISH engaged in type training and a midshipmen training cruise highlighted by a Fourth of July visit to Camden, Maine. August 1962 was a period of upkeep and tender availability in preparation for ENGLISH's interim shipyard availability at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in September 1962.

English completed shipyard availability early in October 1962 and shortly thereafter was assigned to Cuban Quarantine operations in the Caribbean.

Following the Cuban Crisis ENGLISH spent several intensive months of preparation for a Mediterranean cruise. She departed Norfolk on 29 March and soon joined the U. S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.