

PARCHE
2nd PATROL
31 JULY 1944

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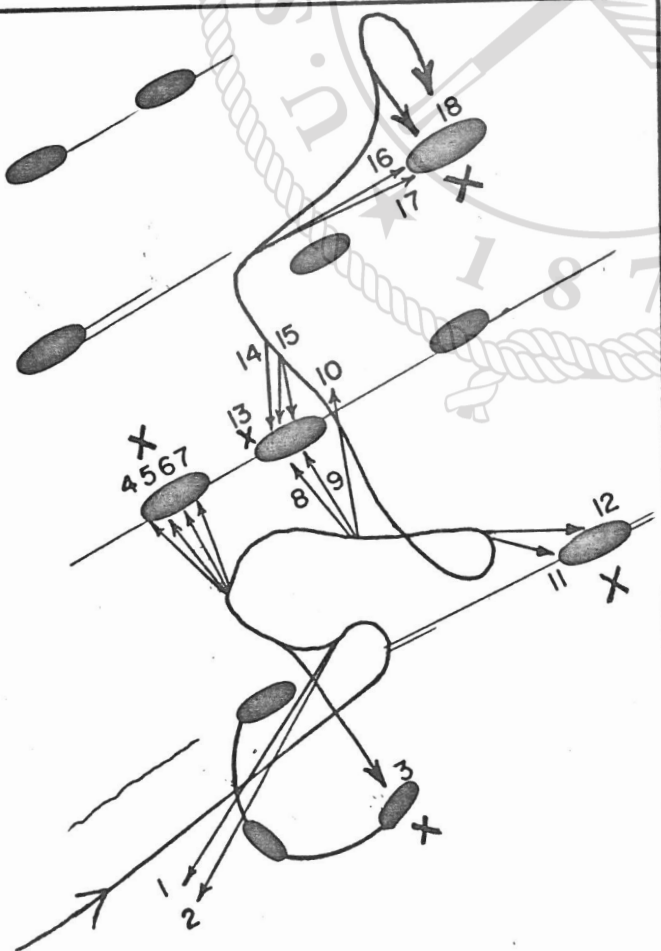
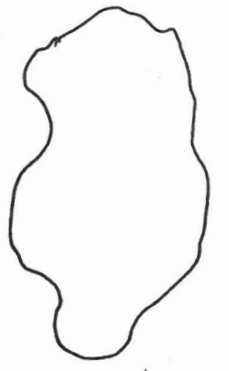
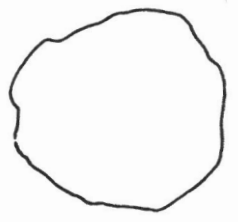
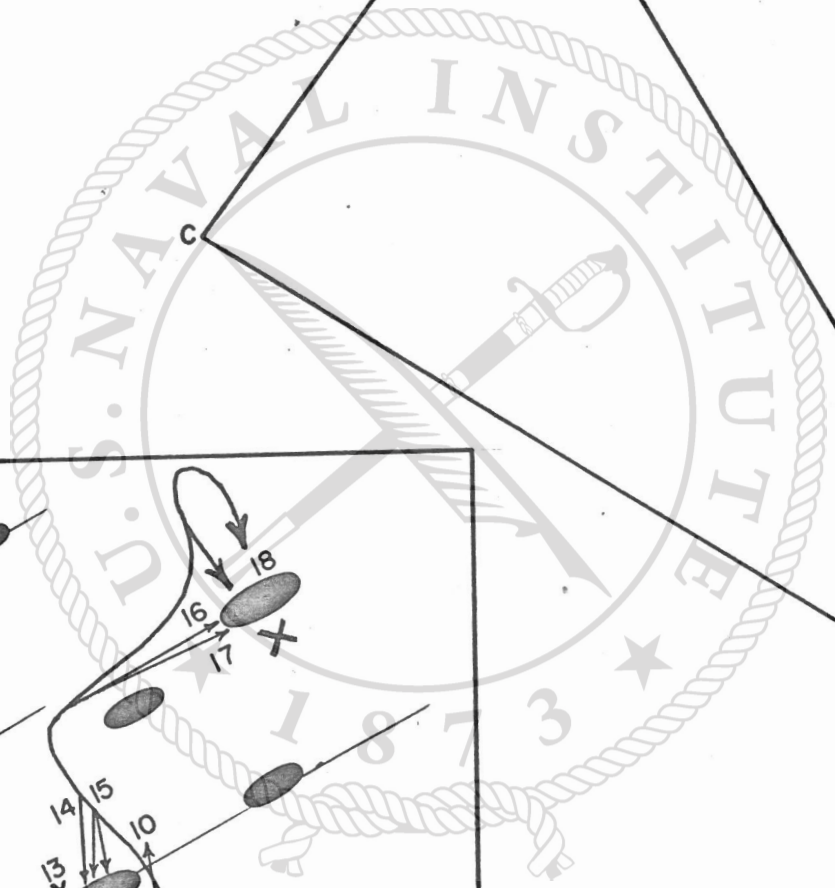
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0300

LUZON



C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

26 July

1959 I Surfaced.
2030 I Group Commander sent message assigning new patrol stations for tomorrow to all boats. Set course 270 T at full speed.
2250 I STEELHEAD reported sighting a patrol boat.

27 July

0030 I Group Commander sent message changing course to 270 T. Got receipt from STEELHEAD - no answer from HAMMERHEAD.
0145 I Sent message directing all boats to discontinue use of low frequency which has proved unreliable throughout patrol.
0150 I Sent change in assigned patrol stations to both boats.
1320 I Arrived on station and dived.
2015 I Surfaced on course 190 T.
2133 I Group Commander directed all boats to patrol on course 070 T speed 10 and report fuel on hand.
2150 I Received first of 6 reports from HAMMERHEAD concerning her contact with two patrol boats. She apparently did not get the new station assignments as her position was 120 miles to the eastward.
2300 I Received fuel reports from both.
2315 I Group Commander sent HAMMERHEAD her patrol station for tomorrow.

28 July

0100 I Received HAMMERHEAD's request for extension of patrol.
0130 I Sent message reassigned all patrol stations for today.
0210 I Cleared Group Commander's message to ComSubPac via NPM requesting extension of patrol for all boats.
0615 I Dived on course 090 T.
1959 I Surfaced.
2100 I Received ComSubPac's reply granting extension of patrol.
2145 I HAMMERHEAD requested permission to bombard airfield on BATAN ISLANDS upon departure on the 30th.
2215 I Group Commander advised to attack at discretion.
2245 I Sent message assigning patrol stations for tomorrow.
2315 I HAMMERHEAD reported her sunrise and sunset positions for today as she had not yet rejoined pack.

29 July

0600 I Dived on station.
1238 I Aircraft contact: Sighted 4-engined MAVIS on a northerly course at 6 miles.
2015 I Surfaced, patrolling on station.
2340 I Received HAMMERHEAD's departure message indicating she was shoving off for Australia.

30 July

0420 I Received report from HAMMERHEAD that she had radar contact with a convoy of 7 ships and 3 escorts on course 175 T speed 8 knots in position about 20 miles south of us. Set course 180 T at full speed to intercept.

30 July

0438 I HAMMERHEAD reported she was attacking from port flank and verified enemy course and speed.

0440 I Group Commander requested verification of enemy position for our plot indicated that the convoy should have passed right over us three hours before.

0441 I Group Commander directed STEELHEAD to close for attack.

0450 I Received position report from HAMMERHEAD putting convoy about 30 miles to the north of us. Changed course to 000 T.

0455 I Inasmuch as this was a radical change from previous position the Group Commander asked HAMMERHEAD to verify and repeat this last position report.

0457 I HAMMERHEAD came back with another position more to the northeast. Changed course to 035 T accordingly.

0536 I No contact yet nor any radar interference so Group Commander asked for another position report.

0543 I HAMMERHEAD replied that she had completed her attack and that convoy was scattering, giving a new position about 30 miles to the northwest of us.

0545 I This information did not seem logical for STEELHEAD was searching to the westward and had not reported contact but we changed course to 290 T as a last resort. As the sun came up it finally dawned on us that we were the victims of another snipe hunt. That was bad enough but we never expected to be left holding the well known burlap by one of our own team-mates.

0621 I So with no smoke or masts in sight, no radar interference and the planes due momentarily - Dived.

0702 I STEELHEAD reported she had been forced down by a plane and requested further instructions. Nothing more was ever heard from the HAMMERHEAD.

0801 I Group Commander directed STEELHEAD to conduct regular submerged patrol.

0811 I Sighted masts of patrol boat bearing 327 T on southerly course. Rain squalls prevented positive identification.

0858 I Lost sight of patrol boat bearing 215 T. Set course 215 T to trail.

0901 I Heard first of seven depth charges, apparently dropped by this patrol boat.

0929 I Aircraft contact: Sighted 2 four-engined (NAVIS) patrol boats bearing 222 T. From this time on and throughout the day at least 2 or 3 planes were in sight continuously, including NELLIS, SALLYS, PETERS, and NAVIS'.

1025 I Sighted smoke bearing 197 T.

1100 I Smoke moving to right, changed course to 270 T.

1136 I Five columns of smoke bearing 215 T changed course to 215 T. At least three planes circling over convoy.

1150 I Smoke drawing to the left, changed course to 090 T.

1250 I Lost sight of smoke bearing 165 T convoy apparently headed southeast toward BABUYAN ISLANDS.

1752 I Sighted mast bearing 293 T moving south rapidly.

1835 I Lost sight of mast bearing 235 T.

1840 I One distant explosion.

2014 I Surfaced.

- 30 July
- 2016 I Received contact report from STEELHEAD on convoy about 35 miles to the southwest on course 210 T speed 8 knots. Set course 205 T at full speed.
- 2100 I Told STEELHEAD we were closing for attack.
- 2256 I STEELHEAD asked if we were attacking.
- 2305 I Informed STEELHEAD that we had not yet made contact.
- 31 July
- 0030 I Not yet having made contact nor having picked up radar interference, asked STEELHEAD to report enemy position, course, and speed.
- 0035 I STEELHEAD came back with a position about 30 miles southeast of us indicating convoy had made a radical change of course. Set course 167 T to intercept.
- 0115 I Picked up radar interference dead ahead.
- 0240 I SJ radar contact: Convoy bearing 150 T, distance 34,000 yards. Moon just setting.
- 0246 I Battle stations; commenced closing convoy's track.
- 0301 I Picked up escort or STEELHEAD on radar bearing 343 rel., distance 9000 yards.
- 0307 I Six targets in convoy group tracking on course 195 T, speed 8, range 21,000 yards.
- 0311 I Convoy changed course to 230 T.
- 0313 I Escort ahead crossing over to starboard bow, range 6000 yards.
- 0316 I Radar reports 10 targets, range 13,000 yards.
- 0320 I Picked up second escort bearing 323 rel., range 12,000 yards. 13 targets now.
- 0324 I Convoy changed course to 215 T.
- 0330 I Pulling ahead of second escort abeam to port.
- 0333 I Convoy changed course to 195 T.
- 0337 I Picked up third escort bearing 300 rel., range 6000 yards.
- 0340 I Convoy fired a couple of flares.
- 0342 I Several ships in convoy barely visible now bearing 090 T, range 10,000 yards. Sky overcast, scattered rain squalls. Escort situation as follows: First escort bearing 039 rel., range 2300 yards; second escort 240 rel., range 5500 yards; third escort 290 rel., range 4500 yards, closing rapidly. Present position was becoming untenable so decided to reverse the field and close in astern of second escort now on port quarter.
- 0343 I Commenced swinging right from 150 T through 270 T and 000 T to 090 T.
- 0350 I This reverse spinner apparently confused the opposition for we now found ourselves inside the escorts with the convoy dead ahead, range 6000 yards. Plot then showed that the convoy had come right to course 270 T, putting us on the opposite (port) flank.
- 0354 I Commenced approach on nearest target, a medium AK. Made ready all tubes.
- 0357 I Found we had greatly overestimated the range and before we could get a set-up the SJ operator reported having lost the target at 450 yards. Swung full right and slid down the side of this fellow at a distance of about 200 yards. As soon as we were clear astern, continued swing to right to make another pass at him.

- 31 July
0359 I Commenced firing bow tubes at AK but he was already alerted and had started swinging to the left. Saw first two torpedoes were going to miss astern so checked fire. AK had now effectively blocked off an escort that had followed us in.
- 0400 I Spotted two ships on starboard bow which appeared at first to be flat-tops but were soon identified as large tankers. Started swinging right to close at full speed (13.5 knots).
- 0402 I Plot was still tracking AK which was in nice position for stern shot. TDC had good set up so fired tube #7 at range 2000 yards. Heard one explosion about 2 minutes later, no other confirmation of damage except we could not locate this fellow after the show was over.
- 0407 I Closed leading tanker and fired four bow tubes on 110 port track at range 1500 yards. First torpedo disintegrated bow while other three piled into his bridge, quarter, and stern respectively. Tanker sank almost immediately leaving only small oil fire on surface.
- 0408 I Came hard right again to bring stern tubes to bear on second tanker.
0410 I Fired three stern tubes at this tanker on 100 port track range 1200 yards. First one missed ahead while the second and third hit forward slowing him down but not stopping him. The escorts now started to become a problem with their indiscriminate machine gun fire and flares. However along came another target, a medium AK or AP, with a sizeable super-structure just asking for trouble.
- 0412 I Commenced approach. Forward room reported two reloads ready.
0416 I Fired two bow tubes at AP on 80 starboard track at 800 yards. Both hit squarely amidships. Ship broke in two and sank within a couple of minutes.
- 0417 I Came right to avoid nearest escort and headed back toward our second tanker. As we closed we could see lights on his stern indicating he was manning his guns.
- 0419 I Crossed his track about 200 yards astern opening out for a stern shot. At about 500 yards this tanker opened up with everything he had. The 4" or 5" whistled overhead and landed well up ahead. Apparently his trim down by the bow did not permit depressing his gun sufficiently to get on us but the 20mm, 40mm, and small stuff was too hot to handle. Sent all lookouts and spare hands below. The quartermaster stuck to the after TBT until we had the set-up then —
- 0421 I At 800 yards range fired three stern tubes at this menace. All hit — the gunfire from that quarter was effectively silenced and with five torpedoes in her the big tanker gave up and went down leaving only a small oil fire as did the first one.
- 0423 I Two escorts on the port quarter were now concentrating their machine gun fire on us and we were about to come right to put them astern and head for the prize of the evening, a huge AP, when we spotted a small fast job similar to the KAIHO MARU, coming in sharp on the starboard bow, apparently intent on ramming us. Called the engine house to pour in all the oil they had — the other fellow had the right-of-way but we were in a hurry.
- 0425 I When half way across his bow, put the rudder full right swinging our stern clear. The Japs were screaming like a bunch of wild pigs as we cleared all around by less than 50 feet. Mutual cheers and jeers were exchanged by all hands.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

31 July

- 0426 I We now found ourselves boxed in on both sides by several small craft and the big transport dead ahead with a zero angle. This left no alternative but to fire down the throat.
- 0429 I Commenced firing bow tubes. First fish started off to the right so checked fire and spotted on, then fired two more. These were right in the groove and both hit - stopping him. Closed in on his starboard bow and then swung hard left to bring our last stern tube to bear.
- 0433 I Fired one stern shot on 90 starboard track at 800 yards. It was a bullseye hitting squarely amidships.
- 0435 I Took time out to appraise the situation and get another check on the escorts which were still busy firing at us and at each other. Radar gave a count of eight pips.
- 0439 I The big AP was stopped and down by the bow but showed no further signs of going down so decided to go back and deliver the coup-de-grace.
- 0442 I The big AP suddenly disappeared from sight and radar in one big blurb as the stern came up and went straight down, head first.
- 0445 I Radar reported only seven targets remaining, all small stuff (no side lobes), at ranges from 2000 to 12,000 yards.
- 0447 I Set course 330 T to put a little distance between us and this hornets nest as dawn was commencing to break. This decision was further prompted by the fact that the gyro setting gear on all tubes forward had been jammed when the torpedomen commenced matching gyro setters just as the last spindle in tube #5 was being engaged, thereby bonding it and preventing it from being disengaged.
- 0450 I One of the escorts challenged us with AA AA by searchlight; this appeared to be rather unusual until one of the quartermasters explained, "Those Japs probably have a lot of forms to fill out too". Several flares were observed and a few explosions heard as we retired.
- 0554 I Dived on course 315 T.
- 0652 I Heard one tremendous explosion.
- 0720 I Several distant explosions.
- 1325 I Several distant explosions.
- 2006 I Surfaced and set course for BALINTANG CHANNEL.
- 2040 I SJ radar contact: Bearing 343 T distance 11,000 yards closing rapidly.
- 2041 I Lookout sighted 4-engine flying boat (RAVIS) flying low at 7300 yards. Dived.
- 2101 I Surfaced and proceeded as before.
- 2125 I STEELHEAD reported her position and six torpedoes remaining.
- 2230 I STEELHEAD reported results of her attacks.
- 2300 I Received information on HALSENHEAD's attack in ComSubPac's nightly news bulletin.

1 August

- 0028 I SJ radar contacts: BATAN ISLANDS bearing 054 T, range 60,000 yards.
- 0200 I Entered BALINTANG CHANNEL.
- 0345 I BALINTANG ROCKS abeam to starboard five miles, set course 085 T departing area.
- 0513 I Exchanged recognition signals on SJ with STEELHEAD bearing 290 T.
- 1045 I Sighted STEELHEAD bearing 286 T distance 8 miles.