

NORTHWEST SEA FRONTIER

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Al6-3(3)/PC815
(EL-s)
Serial F223026

8 June 1943

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SECOND ENDORSEMENT on
CO USS PC815 1tr PC815/
Al6-3(167) dated 24 May 1943.

From: Commander Northwest Sea Frontier
To: Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
Via: Commander Fleet Operational Training Command, Pacific
Subject: Battle Report - Submission of.

1. At the time of the incident reported herein PC 815 was enroute to San Diego, California, in accordance with orders of Commander Fleet Operational Training Command, Pacific.
 2. It is noted that the report of PC 815 is not in accordance with "Anti-Submarine Action by Surface Ship" (ASW-1) which should be submitted to Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.
 3. SC's 536 and 537, CGC's HDNHAM and 78302, and blimps K-33 and K-39 engaged in this submarine search. Reports have been received from the Commanding Officer of each of these ships in writing and in personal interviews. An oral report has also been received from Lieutenant Commander E. J. Sullivan, U.S.N., Commander Airship Squadron 33, who made a trip to the area during the search on one of the blimps.
 4. There is a known magnetic deposit in the area in which depth charges were dropped.
 5. An analysis of all reports convinces me that there was no submarine in the area. Lieutenant Commander Sullivan states that he was unable to obtain any evidence of a submarine except one bubble of air which is unexplained except by turbulence of water due to a depth charge explosion. The Commanding Officers of all ships except the PC 815 state they had no evidence of a submarine and do not think a submarine was in the area.
- b. Transmission of this letter by registered mail is necessary and is authorized.

TYPE OF HEARING	<i>Special</i>
CASE NO.	<i>420153</i>
<i>Flippo</i> EXH. NO.	<i>91</i>
ADMITTED IN EVIDENCE	
DATE	<i>6-6-44</i>
JOHN J. CORCORAN, COUNTY CLERK	
BY:	<i>R. [Signature]</i> DEPUTY

Frank Jack Fletcher
FRANK JACK FLETCHER

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IN REPLY REFER
TO NO.

U. S. S. PC-815

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ACTION OFF CAPE LOOKOUT

Acting under the orders of the Commander of Operational Training Command, Pacific Fleet, 161909 of May, the U.S.S. PC815 got under weigh from Astoria at 2116 May 16, 1943 enroute to San Diego, California to undergo Shakedown.

At the time of departure this vessel was reasonably ready for action, officers and crew having been constantly drilled and taught since January 20, 1943 at which time, with a few exceptions, the complement had reported to Portland, Oregon for duty in connection with fitting out and construction.

Proceeding southward just inside the steamer track an echo ranging contact was made by the soundman then on duty, Grover, E.N., Soundman third class. The Commanding Officer had the conn and immediately slowed all engines to ahead one third to better echo ranging conditions, and placed the contact dead ahead, 500 yards away.

The first contact was very good. The target was moving left and away. The bearing was clear. The night was moonlit and the sea was flat calm. No ships of any kind were in sight or expected. Screw noises, fluttering and without pulsation, were distinct on the bearing and quite different from the pulsations of our own screws. The extent of bearing was about eighteen degrees with the mushiness of a wake to the right. The U.S.S. PC815 closed in to 360 yards, meanwhile sounding general quarters. Depth charge levers on the signal bridge were not used because contact was lost at 360 yards.

The range was quickly opened out and a search made of the area with echo ranging equipment. Contact was regained at 800 yards and was held on the starboard beam while further investigation was made. Screws were present and distinct as before. The bearing was still clear. Smoke signal identification was watched for closely and when none appeared it was concluded that the target must not be a friendly submarine. All engines were brought up to speed, fifteen knots and the target was brought dead ahead with ship on course 240 T.

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The target turned away and a lead angle was applied at which time the movement of the target was ascertained. The ship swung back to an intercepting course, crossed over the target ahead of it and laid the first barrage. Structural firing charges were in the K-guns and did not explode. The three charges rolled exploded at their settings two for 100 feet one for fifty feet. The contact was lost at 100 yards indicating a target depth of 100 feet.

Attack I concluded (see chart and chemical recorder trace) the range was opened well out on standard procedure and closed again on the side toward which the target had been turning. The depth charge boil was easily ranged upon but up to 800 yards but difficulty was experienced in picking up the actual target. When screw noises and the metallic quality of the contact reestablished contact, the ship came up to attack speed and made a run. The target was found to be turning back toward the depth charge disturbance. Contact was lost at 200 yards indicating that the target had dived. A four charge pattern was laid, two from the racks set at 266 feet, two from the K-guns set at 150 feet. The time of this attack was 0332.

Using standard procedure a relocation of the target was accomplished and the target again developed for screws, target width doppler and change of bearing. The ship, sleepy and skeptical had come to their guns swiftly and without error. No one, including the Commanding Officer could readily credit the existence of an enemy submarine here on the steamer track and all soundmen, now on the bridge, were attempting to argue the echo ranging equipment and chemical recorder out of such a fantastic idea. Testing and evaluating the contact, the ship swept back and forth, keeping the contact in range on either bow and beam. Sound conditions were good and there was not any great interference.

When the Commanding Officer and the soundmen had finally completed investigation, a third attack was made. A run of 700 yards at attack speed was complicated by the failure of the chemical recorder. Stop watch range rates were being kept and it was found that the attack was a quarter attack with a rate of eight knots. Due to the rapid exhaustion of charges, only two were used with settings of 200 feet.

Standard procedure failed to regain contact. Circling

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area with a sharp lookout. At 0450, with dawn breaking over a glassy sea, a lookout sighted a dark object about 700 yards from the ship on the starboard beam. When inspected the object seemed to be moving. No definite conclusion could be reached as to the identity of the object and the range was closed. Although very probably this object was a floating log no chances were taken and the target was used to test the guns which had not been heretofore fired structurally. The gunners, most of whom were men of experience, displayed an astonishing accuracy, bursts and shells converging on the target.

The target disappeared for several minutes and then, to test guns not brought to bear on the first burst, the ship was turned in case the object reappeared. The object appeared again closed to the ship. Once more fire was opened and the target vanished.

It is stressed that no conclusion was reached by the Commanding Officer concerning this target and it is thought likely that it was merely drift. The effect upon morale was good and the ship was now assured that its newly installed guns could work if needed.

Only three depth charges were now left to the ship. The chemical recorder was being repaired by the sound technician. The next three attacks were therefore parsimonious.

The fourth, fifth and sixth attacks were made in rapid succession with an eye to harrass the submarine into surfacing where it could be worked upon with the guns.

The fourth attack was started from a range of 800 yards. This was a beam attack turning into a quarter (right moving) attack. The range rate was eleven knots when the quarter of the turning submarine was targeted. Suspecting an entire reversal of the submarine course, the ship used slightly opposite lead angle and then shifted rudder to lay the charge ahead and to the left of the submarine, setting 150 feet. The contact was maintained throughout all but one hundred yards of the run and was regained quickly, the submarine cutting back and toward the explosion point.

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Having maintained contact, the ship swerved back widely immediately after the depth charge explosion and six minutes later laid its next charge, having started its run from 600 yards. The submarine evidently attempted to turn in toward the ship for the range rate jumped from a bow to a head on attack in a very short distance. The one charge, set at 150 feet, was fired early to anticipate the advance. This charge, however, missed by a good seventy-five yards owing to the continued turning and speeding up of the submarine, as established by quickly regained contact. Screw noises were very loud.

A standard sweep was used to lengthen the range and a 1200 yard run was attempted but it was discovered owing to the depth (about 96 fathoms or slightly less) or to some other sound condition that contact at this distance was difficult to maintain. The range was closed back to 900 when good contact was regained. The target was drawing right. The range rate was about twelve knots at first. The submarine turned during the run and the range rate dropped to about eight knots with the submarine's wake interfering considerably in the operation. One charge was fired with a setting of 150 feet. This was our last charge.

Since our first establishment of the target as a submarine we had been sending for help and ammunition. No reply was given us from anyone except "Roger". As "Roger" could not be rolled off our racks the ship was forced to maintain contact as best it could and hope for reinforcements. Sound conditions began to grow poor.

At 0906 (see radio log) two U.S.N. anti-submarine blimps appeared, K-39 and K-33. While we held contact they investigated and announced to us that they had a magnetic contact where we were holding a sound contact. We tried to conn them into a run but their conception of distance below them was often in error as much as 500 yards. They continually confirmed our bearings.

At 1306 SC536 was sighted and was immediately informed of the situation. The USS PC815 regained contact at 900 yards and took SC536 stern of her. With the bullnose of the SC nearly against our flagstaff we came to attack course, instructing the SC to lay her pattern on a signal from our whistle. Attacking due north we found the submarine had been lying to. It started off and we heard screw noises. Target width at 500 was about 15 degrees

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Target gave off screw noises for a moment and then screw noises ceased. The attack was made, therefore, without lead angle. Allowance was made for the distance between the PC projector of the sound head and the racks of the SC. The whistle was blown and a five charge pattern was laid.

The general conduct of the SC536 is here remarked upon. Her sound gear, WEA 1 was not in good operating condition and Lieutenant (jg) Kroepke, USNR, then in command (her assigned commanding officer did not arrive until several hours after the last attack of the last day) showed brilliant judgment and seamanship. The lag between blowing the whistle and his laying of the pattern was not more than four seconds and all charges exploded. Lieutenant (jg) Kroepke executed all orders with promptness and efficiency during formation steaming to sweep the area later in the attacks as well as in laying his charges at our command.

Attention is invited to the radio logs of this period, from 1330 LWT to 1900 LWT. The observation blimps began to sight oil and air bubbles in the vicinity of the last attack and finally a periscope. This ship also sighted air bubbles.

At 1600 the eighth attack was made, again by taking the SC536 astern and bringing her over the target and signaling as before. The target was now very deep and charges were set on maximum settings. The depth of the water in the vicinity of these attacks was now about 90 fathoms. The target was moving right at about three knots. Two charges were dropped.

At 1605 oil was reported again and this ship saw oil. Great air boils were seen and the sound of blowing tanks was reported by the soundman.

During the action so far guns were all in a condition of readiness and at least one watch, Condition Two, on duty with the 40's always bearing and the 3" usually. All guns were now manned with great attention as it was supposed that the sub was trying to surface. Everyone was very calm, gunners joking about who would get in the first shot.

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At 1631, using the listening head (JK) to locate his target, the soundman on duty, Beers, P.A. Sol3/c established definite contact, the SC was brought astern- once more and a run was made. The chemical recorder was again in operation. (See chemical recorder Trace for this, the Ninth Attack).

The target was still blowing tanks and the water around it disturbed by air bubbles. Two charges set for 200 feet were laid by the SC on our whistle signal.

About two hours earlier Beers, (above), had discovered a matter of interest by accident. Beers proved himself throughout to be an extraordinarily sensitive and interested soundman with great operational ability and was at the stack on nearly all runs while Welch, the sound technician (Welch, Lonnie, Sol2/c) operated the recorder and kept the equipment in a high state of repair/.

Beers had located a second contact. All our operation was on relative bearings due to a failure at the yard to install a gyro repeater in our sound stack. The steersman neglected to bring Beers ninety degrees right when the ship was turned and Beers found himself pinging on a moving target with screws when he had thought his target was blowing air and lying still. The Commanding Officer saw the difficulty and immediately remedied the train of the sound head. Returning to the first target which was motionless Beers examined it and found it to be as before. He then examined the new target, or contact, and found it to be drawing away at a speed of four knots. The extent of bearing was about nine degrees and the range 420 yards. Opening doppler.

When the ninth attack was concluded more blowing was heard and pil was seen coming to the surface and spreading.

Contact was sought on the new target but could not immediately be regained.

At 1646 the Coast Guard patrol boat 78302 came alongside with 23 depth charges and needed equipment for them. Within seven minutes all charges were transferred and within nine minutes two were in our racks, set to be dropped. In twenty-three minutes all charges were ready. This is remarked as a gauge of the response of the PC's crew.

While lying to, taking on these charges, echo ranging

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was heard upon us. We were listening with the JK head and when we had located the source, the bearing was found to be clear. All other sources either had not arrived or could not operate sound gear.

About noon the Commanding Officer had concluded that the submarine under attack was unable to launch torpedoes for the sea was smooth and the PC was an excellent target. Accordingly, lying to occasioned no great concern.

When the QC head was directed toward the source of this pinging and the chemical recorder turned on, no reception was noted and our pings were all that registered upon the trace. We were still in the water and the trace showed a range rate (see photostat of trace). Contact passed within 150 yards of our bows, from starboard to port.

At 1746, (see radio logs) the blimps reported sighting a periscope. This was where charges were dropped ~~sixty~~ earlier in the afternoon. Air boils were reported in this spot and blowing tanks were again ~~heard~~ heard on our sound machine.

The final attack of the day was made on a non-sub target, the SC accompanying, both ships dropping one charge. (It has not been ascertained if the SC536 dropped more, but only one was seen to explode). The charge was dropped near the non sub target.

At 2010 the SC537 arrived on scene. ~~It~~ The USSCG Bonham (NRFB in the radio logs) had been on or around the scene since 1738. These two reinforcements seemed to be reluctant to close to contact range and were usually well outside it. Difficulty (see radio logs) was experienced with these two vessels either because of their inexperience or unwillingness. During the night of the 21st when this vessel was attempting to make a routine sweep and search in the standard sweep formation, neither the SC537 nor the USSCG Bonham showed any understanding whatever and refused by their actions to cooperate. It is later understood that the Bonham had a top speed of 19.2 although she reported her speed to us as 12, and that she was under the supposition that she would blow herself up if she dropped charges. The SC537 had one contact which she reported during the following day and failed to prosecute it. The SC537 left the scene with her racks full of charges although the SC536 and the PC215 had exhausted all theirs. Echo range was never more than about 900 yards in this shallow water and despite orders neither vessel would close in to this with one exception, as noted in the attacks as of the following morning.

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During the afternoon of May 19 the SC536 had brought us orders from Astoria Naval Station to secure and proceed on our original orders. We sought to protest these when they were received but evidence seemed to point to plenty of people being on the scene and so we secured reluctantly. We had no more than started away when Comwestseafron cancelled the Astoria Naval Station orders and ordered us to remain on scene. We ascertained responsibility and came back to the scene.

During the night vessels patrolled. The SC536 was ordered into an oil slick by the blimp and air bubbles were seen rising from this. (See radio log). This was in the scene of the final series of attacks, *of the day*.

On May 20, 1943, at 1140 the blimp made contact with its magnetic gear and dropped a smoke bomb. The USS PCB15 came to general quarters from Condition II and set out to verify the blimp's contact.

It may here be remarked that the coordination between surface ships and the blimps was excellent. No attack was made, after the arrival of the blimps, without verification of sound contact by magnetic or magnetic contact by sound. Because her sound gear was not working properly (which fact she reported to us several times) the SC536 stood by for us to verify. This teamwork, the blimp's smoke flares, and the use of echo ranging gear saved us many times from losing contact.

Because we had three times found two sub targets on the previous day, we considered from her failure to surface that one sub was gone down in 90 fathoms. The other still had batteries well up for it made good speed in subsequent attacks (three to six knots).

The wide searching of the blimps and surface ships had ringed the area, blockading it.

An attack

~~XXXXXXXX~~ was made by the SC536 on a blimp magnetic contact about two hours before the USS PCB15 started out as above. (See radio log). Having ^{inoperative} sound gear the SC536 used an oil slick and put charges to explode on the bottom, letting go six charges in all.

On the blimp's magnetic contact and dropped smoke bombs, the USS PCB15 relocated the contact and at 1305 made an attack on echo ranging equipment. This was Attack YII. The PC attacked on course 320 True

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and found an extent of bearing of 14 degrees. The contact had been carefully investigated before attack and the submarine, evidently saving batteries, was awaiting our attack before it speeded up. (See Trace XI). It was moving directly away from our bows at a speed of about two knots during this long period of investigation while we kept bare steerage way behind it. When satisfied as to the identity of the target, having found screw noises, we came to attack speed as swiftly as possible and ~~through~~ the submarine was also heard to speed up (about five seconds after we were ahead all engines flank.) The Commanding Officer has checked this closely with the soundmen. The monotonous fluttering noise was not to be confused with our own screws. We laid a five charge pattern while the submarine was coming up to speed. Target was lost at 150 yards - 150 feet deep.

At the last moment it was seen that the submarine had ~~xxxxxx~~ right rudder on. Accordingly we drew off, as part of this attack and closed again when the chemical recorder was cut off as not registering distinct pings. Something, not yet established was wrong with this recorder until the following day and all attacks hereafter ^{or later} were made on indicator light, and sound. (An additional reason for this was the excellence of operation without recorder).

The PCB15 swerved back, picked up contact, found the target going swiftly left (PC now on reverse to first attack course) and dropped two more charges set at 300 feet from the racks.

Contact was lost at 350 yards, which seems to indicate that the target had dived to that depth. Only a short time had elapsed between the two phases of this attack, so short that the PC curved around one of her K-gun charges in getting back to roll two more. The first charge exploded, by rough calculation, about 50 yards dead astern of the target, the next two probably came closer.

At 1342 another attack was made, Attack XIII. Ship was on a true course of 170. The target course was 160 True. A small lead angle was applied ~~xxxx~~ to the left and four charges were laid set at 300 feet.

The blimps were informed that the target, according to our sound data was heading inshore into shallower water. The destination was predicted and the blimp made magnetic contact in spot marked by explosion point for Attack XIV on chart.

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It was at this time (1420, May 20, see PC radio log) that K-33 who was on the scene, gave command of all surface ships to the PC 815.

The PC approached the flare and smoke bomb where the blimp had made a magnetic contact and confirmed blimp's contact.

At 2000 the PC found a target under the blimp's flares. (see Attack XIV) Screw noises were heard while PC lay to listening. The range was 400. Bottom noises made the contact blurred but by changing angle of search a clear contact was made. The blimp again confirmed magnetic contact.

At 2003, on true course 095 this vessel came to attack speed, range 500 yards, using indicator light, sound and stop watch. Sub's course was found to be about 180 true, on which course the sub steadied. The shallowness of the water made it necessary to set charges for 75 feet. The PC came in and dropped charges ahead of the sub, then put her rudder hard right, pivoting around her starboard K-gun charge and rolled two from the racks set for 150 feet.

The blimp K-33 then dropped into the explosion pattern. This vessel having stretched other ships into line, attack was then made by them in rotation on their sound contact. It is not known how accurate were their contacts. The Bonhas dropped on what she termed a poor contact. No record is available at this writing for the positions the vessels occupied in line or how many charges they dropped. The SC536 seems to have gotten her WEA I into operation for a short period here.

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At 2034, when other vessels had cleared the attack area this vessel approached the area and carefully sought to regain contact despite the disturbed water. Just northwest of the depth charge slicks, at a distance of several hundred yards, a contact with loud screw noises was regained. All other vessels were to the south and west, most of them with engines stopped. E-33 dropped a flare to mark his magnetic contact which concurred with our sound contact. This vessel then took an attack course of 335 True and found herself on the port quarter of the submarine which was making about 3 knots. A lead angle of five degrees was applied and the charges dropped five seconds after the calculated time.

Elimps, and all surface vessels, searched the area without further contact.

The weather was still good but a slight wind had begun to spring up.

All during the following night, the USS PC815 kept the area swept as well as it could. The moonlight showed up an oil slick which was investigated, though the slick was too thin for samples.

It was very difficult trying to make the Bonham and the SC537 understand that the area must be patrolled with sound gear in an orderly fashion to blockade it. The patrol went from just south of Baystack Rock to north of Cape Lookout and back again. The SC536 was placed all the way xxix to seaward where the sub might be expected to surface.

A report that the sub had surfaced off Sand Lake (see Chart) caused all vessels except the Bonham to go flying north to that position. But before flank speed was attained the reported "sub" was reported as a fishing vessel. The SC536 was detached to investigate, the Bonham assigned a lower area where she would be out of the way and the patrol proceeded. For some time the SC537 was ^{not} ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~area~~ ~~and~~ it has not been established why she ~~was not~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~area~~ ~~from~~ this ordered patrol.

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At 0708, May 21, 1943, being near the area of the attacks the night before, this ship stopped to search. (See Chart for Attack XV).

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At 0704 no contact had been made. This was due to having lately maneuvered here to ~~pick up a strange object~~ pick up a strange object, a small round ball laced with a line netting, which was floating here. Turbulence caused by our screws prevented echo ranging.

Suddenly a boil of orange colored oil, very thick, came to the surface immediately on our port bow. The Commanding Officer was aft where he had been trying to get the strange marker aboard with the help of his men.

The watch had been piped down for chow and due to the quietness of the area the opportunity had been taken to ease the barrel springs on the port 20MM and cock the starboard 20MM.

Ensign Wiemers, USNR, was Officer of the Deck, the Commanding Officer having had the conn since the beginning of the action on the morning of May 19th. Ensign Wiemers instantly sighted the oil boil and sounded General Quarters, shouting to gunners to get guns ready to fire.

The Commanding Officer came forward on the double and saw a second boil of orange oil rising on the other side of the first.

The soundman was loudly reporting that he heard tanks being blown on the port bow.

Every man on the bridge and flying bridge then saw the periscope, moving from right to left, rise up through the first oil boil to a height of about two feet. The barrel and lens of the instrument were unmistakable.

By efficient and swift work, Coates, C.C. SC2/c had gotten the forward 20MM loaded and Lacey, W.K., GM2/c had the Port 20MM ready to fire. This in some fifteen to twenty seconds. Both are expert gunners.

On the appearance of the periscope both gunners, Lacey and Coates, fired straight into the periscope, range about fifty yards. The periscope vanished in an explosion of 20MM bullets. It cannot be ascertained if the periscope was hit.

As the ship was dead in the water, charges could not be immediately dropped. The sub had been turning as if to get back under the ship. Only two charges were left to us, one loaded in a K-gun, on the wrong side.

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We called ships to the area. There were so few charges left to any of us that we wished the next attack to be final and concerted.

The appearance of another orange oil boil ahead of us caused us to open out the range and gather speed and then search back for the contact. We could not establish contact though we searched the area in wide sweeps.

It was then reported to the Commanding Officer that both main engines would have to be stopped to replace relief valves. This was not unusual for depth charging and unaccustomed stress had showed up much slackness in the installation. Permission was granted to shut down one engine at a time for no longer than ten minutes.

During this period, ^{20 minutes after all engines had stopped,} the soundman on duty, Beers, requested ~~his~~ ^{new} search orders and was given 360 degrees by way of novelty. His first ping found contact dead astern of us. The wind drifted us to starboard and the contact remained stationary ^{on the port beam}. We examined the contact and developed it. It was the submarine lying to, evidently having followed hard in our wake. The main engines were reported repaired.

We drew off, swiftly, and came to attack course. The first range was about 900 yards. When we came up to speed we cut in the chemical recorder. (See trace 16) (See chart Attack XV). The submarine turned to the left and gave us her port quarter and then nearly her port beam. Her screws were very plain. Change of bearing was to the left. Moderator doppler. A lead angle was applied (attack course 335 T,) to steady on 315 True. Charges set for 200 feet. Fired by recorder. Two charges. Contact lost at 250 yards.

A marked explosion met this attack concurrent with the depth charge explosions.

The target was then examined when regain contact procedure had been executed.

The blimp examined the target and confirmed. The SC536 was brought up to the scene and taken in behind us. We examined the target from a range of 520 yards.

At 1005 we started attack XVI. The SC536 was led astern of us. The first range at attack speed was 700. Attack speed 12 knots. The target was moving straight away from us on course C75. Her speed was very low.

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Some difficulty was experienced in pinging through the submarine wake and for this reason the chemical recorder was not cut in for this run.

There was no change of bearing. Target width was about six degrees. Moderate opening inclination.

On stop watch a range rate of 9 knots was established and the ship speed was 12 knots.

On whistle signal the SC laid her charges. The Commanding Officer of the PC then swarmed up on the signal bridge and saw that the SC was nearly 75 yards behind. The Commanding Officer then blew another signal when seventy five yards had run on his stop watch which was still running. The SC then laid a second barrage.

The first barrage exploded, by calculation, just astern of the submarine. The second barrage exploded on its bow as nearly as could be judged.

All the charges of the SC and the PC B15 had then been expended.

A search formation was taken up and no sign of the submarine could be found through 360 degrees.

A patrol formation was organized. The CG Bonham was secured after transferring her charges to the 537. A long blockage was formed around the area when no further contact could be gained.

The weather was getting bad with low visibility and a moderate sea running. Rain was coming down intermittently.

The PC ran up the coast on its sector and came upon the ~~USS 778~~ USS 778. The 778 had orders, according to Captain Barner, which permitted her to join the attack, but she protested very strongly against helping. She was finally brought into some sort of sweeping formation which she held raggedly, requesting continually to be allowed to be secured. She was led down to the spot of the last attack for she had fifty depth charges.

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Contact was regained on a questionable target in the area of the last attack (See Attack XVI). The contact was metallic, had a width of bearing of 15 degrees at 300 yards and was evidently on the bottom. There was a strong echo. The drifting of this ship made it appear for a moment that the target had a range rate of 1½ knots but this was shortly established as an effect of wind and current. The contact, whatever it was, showed no inclination and change. But it narrowed to five degrees at 400 yards while we circled it and then widened to fifteen as we came around it, narrowed again and widened again.

We gave the PC778 explicit directions on the contact. We were motionless in the water. We tried to pass the contact over to the PC778. She failed to get the contact, mainly because she was over a thousand yards from it and did not come up. At this depth (about thirty-two to thirty-six fathoms, with the rough sea) the contact could not be held at that distance. She failed to allow for drift and finally we recalled her to keep her from going aground and sent her on her way with her fifty charges. She would not part with any charges or any part of them although this presented no problem, the sea being calm enough for her to allow an SC to take off an officer from her without the use of boats. Orders from ComwestseafRon came via another SC which said we could not have the 778.

In the late afternoon, just before sunset we ran a horizon patrol. The visibility was shutting down steadily but we wished to keep any sub, if any were left, from surfacing or running away.

Twelve hours after the last attack the area was still calm. The contact above mentioned was still there but we could do nothing about it. ~~The SS537 still had charges but evidently could not use her sound gear and would not close.~~

At midnight we were secured by orders received from ComwestseafRon and returned to Astoria, arriving at daylight the morning of the 22nd of May.

Total time in contact with submarines was 55½ consecutive hours. (55 hours and 27 minutes)

Total time in area searching was 68½ hours. (68 hours and thirty-seven minutes.)

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Total depth charges expended by this vessel, 37.

Total casualties, 3, all very minor.

Material casualties, numerous, all minor, mainly to engines. The engines were repaired on the scene with the parts at hand whenever they broke down.

Failure on the part of a gunner to properly assemble the parallelogram of the starboard 20MM (he reversed it) caused this gun to go off when pointed at the zenith and expend a full magazine, cutting away our antennae. The gun was not at the time manned.

PERSONNEL CONDUCT REPORT

All personnel behaved with uniform attention to duty. Calmly and cheerfully, despite lack of sleep, all hands executed their required duties with efficiency.

No man is singled out for praise for to praise one would be to praise all.

No man is censured for no man required censure.

A report on the officers is submitted as follows:

USNR

Lieutenant T.S. Moulton, Executive Officer, handled Communications and Fire Control for the guns during the action. He showed zeal and imagination in the execution of duty and displayed his ability to receive and carry out orders promptly. He is considered a valuable officer, deserving of a command of his own.

Ensign D.E. Walker, USNR, Gunnery Officer, stayed hard by his post as Gunnery Officer and personally supervised the handling of depth charges. His feat of assembling 23 depth charges in 23 minutes, of having two ready in the racks two minutes after transfer was completely effected, deserves mention as a record. The firing lag of depth charges was cut down to a fractional amount by his timing and more than once his example caused such accurate dropping that two and, once, three charges, exploded simultaneously. There was no depth charge failure except for the structural firing charges which were already in the guns.

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Ensign M.E. Wiemers, USNR, First Lieutenant, carried out all orders efficiently and promptly. He was diligent in maintaining the materiel condition Affirm throughout the action. He spent long stretches of duty as Officer of the Deck and in this respect was especially trusted. His performance of duty had no highlights. It was uniformly dependable and quietly effective. He has proved himself to be an able officer, a good ship handler and, in all, a valuable part of this ship. An early promotion to Lieutenant (junior grade) is recommended for this officer.

SUMMARY

When this ship returned to port under the orders of Comwestseafron~~y~~, she was received with considerable skepticism. Her records had not been examined, her crew had not been questioned and no qualified report had been made.

This ship was handicapped by the lack of outside aid from anti-submarine warfare officers. The only anti-submarine warfare officer present being Lieutenant (junior grade) Kroepke of the SC536. This officer, naturally able, and trained in ASW was our biggest help while in command of the SC536. When the regular commanding officer of that ship was brought to it by the PC778, cooperation from that direction ceased.

The captains of K-39 and K-33 were diligent, particularly the latter whenever he assumed command, but they showed a deep blank on the usual knowledge of ASW one might expect of them. They did, however, beautiful coordination work when cooperating with surface ships.

The radio intercepts from shore stations near the scene were garbled because the blimps operated on 5 watts and could not reach. Therefore only a fragment of their orders, confirmations, etc. reached shore stations. The garbled conditions of such logs seemed to be due to static. This garble led to erroneous opinions.

The Astoria Naval Station did all possible to aid. Additional ammunition was not sent because the bar was running too high after the first load of 23 charges was delivered.

SECRET

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The U.S.S. PC815 was manned by S.C.T.C. trained officers and petty officers, experienced in handling ASW vessels or at least closely instructed.

The sound equipment of the U.S.S. PC815 is QCS and was easily the best, probably the only, efficient sound gear on the scene, well cared for and well-manned.

All attack conning was done by the Commanding Officer as well as all usual conning during the period of attacks, search and patrol. With due allowance for lack of rest, all attacks were conducted and operated on standard procedure on the doctrine of Fleet Sound School, Key West, Florida.

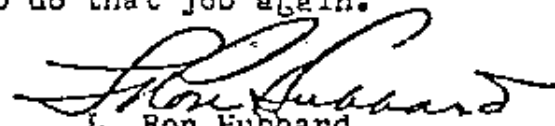
This vessel appreciates the favor of Comwestseafron for allowing it to remain on the scene and later, for the interview.

CLAIM:

It is specifically claimed that one submarine presumably Japanese, possibly a mine-layer, was damaged beyond ability to leave the scene and that one submarine, presumably Japanese, possibly a mine layer, was damaged beyond ability to return to its base.

This vessel has requested permission to search for possible wrecks on the bottom to bouy then to be swept for or dived for. It is the opinion of this vessel that at least one wreck may be found, near the scene of the last attacks /or in the ~~in the~~ vicinity of attacks VII, VIII, and IX, in 92 fathoms of water. Due to stress of attack or later attempts to get away, these positions may not mark, exactly, the locality of any wreck.

This vessel wishes no credit for itself. It was built to hunt submarines. Its people were trained to hunt submarines. Although exceeding its orders originally by attacking the first contact, this vessel feels only that it has done the job for which it was intended and stands ready to do that job again.


L. Ron Hubbard
Lieutenant, D-V(S), USNR
Commanding U.S.S. PC815