

Jewell: Sounds like your unit had more than its share of mechanical troubles.

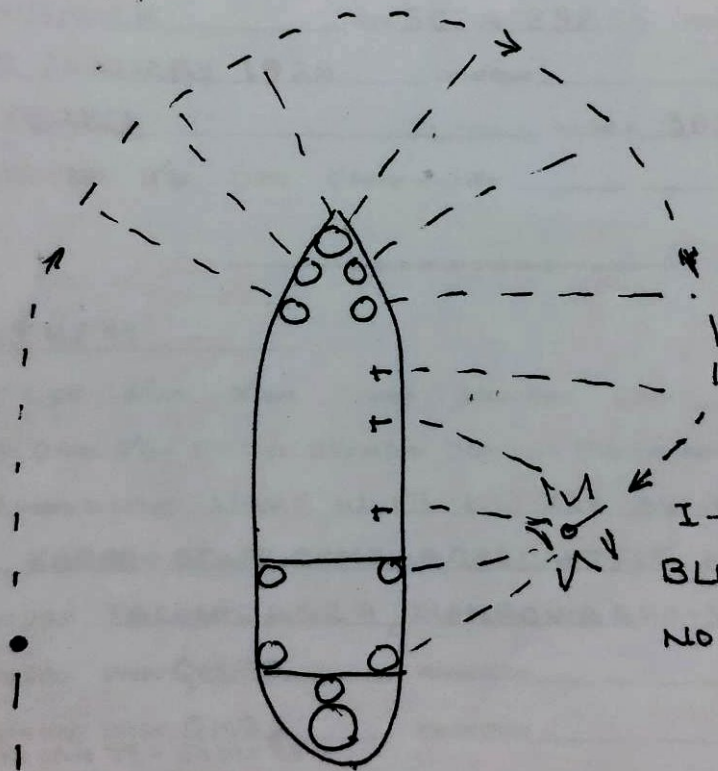
Reckert: Hey, when it goes wrong, you know old Murphy. On January 5th we had secured the island. We left Fais and on January 7th of '44 ['45?] we got back at Pelelui [sic]. On January 10th we anchored at Kossol Passage. Kossol Passage is the northern part of these Pelelui [sic] islands where Angaur and Pelelui [sic] is at the lower tip and then there was Babelthaup which was the larger island which we didn't ... we bypassed, and Kossol Passage was just north of that. It was a big atoll. On January 12th as we were going to general quarters, eight o'clock in the morning, I came up topside and started to go to general quarters and one guy looked out there and ... we were at anchor ... he said, "Hey, look at the whitecap." I said, "That's not a whitecap, that's a periscope" and it was. So I ran up on the bridge and I sent up all my hoists and everything and started to send around, "Hey, there's a submarine out here." That submarine went ... was going towards our bow, parallel with us, and he rounded our bow and he headed around our bow and came in in a circle right towards our bridge on our starboard side, and he was headed towards our bridge when ... and we kept firing at him all the time with our .20s and .40s. You had a .50 caliber machine gun. Well, as he was coming around at us, he emerged, came out of the water - his whole conning tower was out when he blew up about 150 yards away from us. His number was on there - it was number 72. He came from a fleet Sub I-53. But we blew him up and sunk him about 8:05 that morning of January 12th. We were just 150 yards away from being blown to kingdom come. There was an oil tanker in the Ulithi Atoll was sunk by one of

these submarines.

Jewell: He had fired at you?

Reckert: No, he was gonna ram us. He didn't fire. He was one of those midget submarines. There was three of them that got loose in there that day. That one we sunk, another one had gone out and it blew up on the coral reef, and the other one was ... we were right next to the channel where you came in and out of the atoll, and there was eleven ships coming in at that time, and one of the freighters, the first freighter coming in after the one blew up on the coral reef ... there was another periscope again parallel to our port side headed for that one ship and as he got to that ship he went under water and I guess he went back out to see. But he didn't do any damage at all. So that was that for that day. We left ... that was on January 12th. We left Kossol Passage for Pelelui [sic] and got there on January 23rd. We left there for Saipan, got to Saipan on the 27th of January and we left Saipan on the 31st and got to Eniwetok on the 6th of February. Left Eniwetok on the 9th of February. Our port engine went out on February 14th, was out for five days. One day we lost 50 miles. On February 2nd we arrived at Pearl Harbor. We were assigned to West Lock again. We got our first liberty in months, got into our LCVP and headed for fleet landing. Suddenly we heard a loud siren. Here came an admiral's barge immaculate SPs with white shoes and ordered us to stop. The SP told our bosen's [sic] mate to get this hulk off the river. Needless to say we had our liberty. We stayed there until March 7th. We left Pearl for San Diego. As we approached San Diego it was about four in the morning. The signal tower in San Diego challenged us so I replied. I guess they weren't satisfied with my reply so a PBY flew over us and dropped a star shell. Finally the tower sent us a message that we were supposed to be in San Pedro. They had sent a message by radio but we didn't get it. We arrived at San Diego on March 21st. When the ship's repair people came aboard, they asked if we had been sunk for a month and we were just brought to the surface. Then in April we were re-outfitted and went up to Washington and the naval yard up there. I was discharged from the ship and went to a unit ... I needed one-quarter of a point for discharge. The war was already over. Went up to Washington and was sent to Olathe Naval Air Station to get a quarter of a point and from there I went to

FIRST sighted



I-72
BLEW UP AND SANK
NO SURVIVORS

MESSAGES RECEIVED

12 January 194

From; Port Director, Kossol Passage.

"WELL DONE"

From; LST 131

Good work---sub you sank was number 72, thought you would like to know---we definitely saw her number.

From; U.S.S. Farenhalt (Commander Screen)

"GOOD WORK"

From; Commander LST Group 37

Congratulations to you and your gun crew members on morning

From; U.S.S. St. George.

Congratulations to you and your men.

From; Captain to Gun Crew.

Well done. Your excellent shooting saved the ship and gives a chance to paint the Conn with a jap flag.

From; Commander Western Carolines Sub Area,
(Rear Adminal J.W. Reeves, U.S.N.)

"Well done for your successful action against enemy submarine on 12 January. Request names of personnel involved and complete narrative.

From; Commander Forward Areas, U.S. Pacific Fleet,
(Vice Admiral J.H. Hoover)

"My congratulations to LST 225. Nice Shooting."