

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP-29)
SHIP'S HISTORIES SECTION

HISTORY OF USS FLASHER (SS 249)

USS FLASHER (SS 249), first ship of the Fleet to bear the name, was built by the Electric Boat Company of Groton, Connecticut. Her keel was laid 30 September 1942 and she was launched 20 June 1943, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Willard A. Saunders, wife of Lieutenant Commander Saunders, USN, who was awarded the Navy Cross for heroic service during command of submarine GRAYBACK. The ship was placed in commission at New London, Connecticut, 25 September 1943, when Lieutenant Commander Reuben T. Whitaker, USN, assumed command.

FLASHER conducted training in the vicinity of Newport, Rhode Island, and on 6 November 1943, departed for Key West, Florida, where she provided services to the Sound School and engaged in maneuvers and exercises with destroyers and destroyer escort vessels. After a week of this duty she steamed for the Pacific. Transit of the Panama Canal was made 30 November 1943, and she arrived at Pearl Harbor on 15 December 1943. FLASHER underwent repairs in the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard and conducted several weeks of intensive training in the Hawaiian area.

On 6 January 1944, FLASHER departed Pearl Harbor to conduct her first war patrol. Enroute to her patrol area off Mindoro, 18 January, she made her first torpedo attack which sank ex-gunboat YOSHIDA MARU of 2,900 tons (23°-50'N; 151°-28'E). On 5 February, she conducted an attack in waters off Manila, Philippine Islands, scoring hits which sank cargo TAIISHIN MARU of 1,723 tons (13°-09'N; 120°-24'E). While on patrol in the vicinity of Macariban Island, 14 February 1944, she made two successive attacks on a convoy to sink cargo MINRYO MARU of 2,193 tons (13°-44'N; 120°-40'E); and, cargo HOKUAM MARU of 3,712 tons (13°-40'N; 120°-27'E). She concluded her patrol at Fremantle, Australia, arriving 29 February 1944.

FLASHER departed Fremantle, 4 April 1944, to conduct her second war patrol off the French Indo-China coast. On 29 April, in coastal waters of French Indo-China, about 3 miles off Hon Doi Island, she found river gunboat TANURE of 644 tons in convoy with cargo SONG GIAM MARU of 1,065 tons, and delivered a torpedo attack to sink both ships (13°-02'N; 109°-28'E). The last of her torpedoes were expended, 7 May 1944, when she attacked a large cargo vessel in the Sulu Sea, scoring hits for unobserved extent of damage. She returned to Fremantle, 26 May 1944.

On 19 June 1944, FLASHER sailed from Fremantle to conduct her third war patrol in the South China Sea. On 28 June, she encountered a heavily escorted convoy of 13 ships. A surface attack did not seem advisable because of shallow water and FLASHER made an end-around to starboard bow of the leading ships of the convoy during the night. At 0111, the morning of 29 June, she maneuvered in for the attack on overlapping targets and fired three bow torpedoes at each target. Cargo NIPPO MARU of 6,079 tons, hit three times, broke in two and immediately sank ($00^{\circ}-43'N$; $105^{\circ}-31'E$). Two other hits stopped a large passenger-cargo vessel in the water who opened fire as FLASHER retired on the surface. In the vicinity of Capo Varella, the evening of 7 July 1944, she intercepted a freighter with one escort and screened by rain; made a fast end-around to fire four after torpedoes. Cargo KOTO MARU of 3,557 tons exploded in flames and sank ($13^{\circ}-02'N$; $109^{\circ}-26'E$). On 12 July, she formed a coordinated attack group with submarines CREVALLE and ANGLER under command of Lieutenant Commander R. T. Whittaker in FLASHER. The next morning she reported contact with a two-ship convoy to ANGLER and CREVALLE. The escort headed for FLASHER who outran the enemy on the surface. Some thirty minutes later she was forced down by enemy aircraft and the anti-submarine vessel closed but passed overhead without making contact.

On 19 July 1944, FLASHER sighted a ship emerging from the overcast and submerged to commence immediate approach as the target was identified as a cruiser under escort of a destroyer. When the target showed a thirty degree port angle, Lieutenant Commander Whittaker headed in for a bow shot but the enemy shifted to a seven degree port angle and FLASHER sped ahead to cross the enemy's track for a stern shot, firing four torpedoes for two hits as she went deep. She evaded a pattern of depth charges dropped by the destroyer and about an hour later was at periscope depth to observe the cruiser obviously disabled. Range was closed to 3,200 yards and a spread of four bow torpedoes were fired for no hits as FLASHER again dived to evade another barrage of depth charges from the destroyer. Lieutenant Commander Whittaker held FLASHER at a depth of 150 feet and rushed to reload her forward tubes. She was barely ready to commence third approach when explosions echoed under the sea as light cruiser OI of 5,700 tons slipped beneath the waves. ($12^{\circ}-45'N$; $14^{\circ}-20'E$). Periscope observation some hours later revealed the destroyer alone on the seascape. On 26 July,

she downed tanker OTORIYAMA MARU of 5,280 tons (18°-10'N; 117°-15'E). She also obtained hits for damage to cargo AKI MARU of 11,409 tons, who was sunk that same day by submarine CREVALLE. Having expended her torpedoes, FLASHER steamed for Fremantle, arriving 7 August 1944.

On 30 August 1944, FLASHER departed Fremantle to conduct her fourth war patrol in the area of the Philippine Islands, forming a coordinated search and attack group with HAWKBILL and BECUNA, under command of Lieutenant Commander Whitaker in FLASHER. On 18 September, she intercepted ex-light cruiser SAIGON MARU of 5,350 tons and sank her off Corregidor (14°-11'N; 120°-02'E). The next nine days were spent on uneventful life guard station off Cape Bolinao, Luzon. She then resumed patrol in the Philippine area. On 27 September, she scored hits to sink transport URAL MARU of 6,374 tons (15°-40'N; 117°-18'E). While patrolling off Santa Cruz Harbor, Luzon, 4 October, she intercepted and sank TAIBIN MARU of 6,886 tons (15°-26'N; 119°-49'E). FLASHER returned to Fremantle, 20 October 1944.

On 31 October 1944, Commander Reuben T. Whitaker was relieved by Lieutenant Commander George W. Grider, USN. For heroic achievement during his command of FLASHER, Commander Whitaker was awarded the Navy Cross, two gold stars in lieu of a second and third Navy Cross; and, a gold star in lieu of a second Silver Star Medal. He also received the ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded FLASHER for extraordinary heroism during her Third, Fourth and Fifth War Patrols.

On 15 November 1944, FLASHER departed Fremantle on her fifth war patrol, forming a coordinated search and attack group with HAWKBILL and BECUNA, under command of Captain E. H. Bryant, USN, in HAWKBILL. Enroute to her patrol area off Camranh Bay, about one-third of the way from Palawan to the Indo-China coast, the early morning of 4 December 1944, FLASHER received contact report from HAWKBILL of a Japanese tanker convoy and steamed to intercept. Some thirty minutes later she sighted silhouettes of the oilers and gained ahead to await approach of the enemy. She headed in for attack but as the range shortened from 2,000 to 1,100 yards, fired a salvo of four torpedoes at a destroyer which had suddenly loomed out of the downpour as FLASHER was closing. Two hits

stalled the destroyer and she took a list, smoking heavily. Lieutenant Commander Grider obtained a quick set-up on a large tanker beyond the destroyer and fired four stern shots at this target. A hasty periscope sweep revealed the destroyer down by her stern in the water. As this spectacle was observed, a second destroyer bore down on FLASHER only 700 yards distant and she coasted deep as two hits were heard to explode on the tanker target. Sixteen depth charges exploded close about her but she evaded and again came to periscope depth to observe the tanker afire and settling by the stern. Some distance from the burning tanker, a destroyer, a net tender and other escorts were standing by. FLASHER rushed to reload and moved in to attack the destroyer and finish off the tanker. Upon first approach rainsqualls blinded her periscope as she closed range. But some minutes later a break in the downpour enabled a limited view of the targets and four torpedoes were fired at the destroyer. Two of these torpedoes were set to pass beneath the destroyer and hit the tanker beyond. Four hits exploded as FLASHER dived to evade counter-attack which continued for half an hour. When she again came to periscope depth, the torpedoed destroyers were nowhere in sight but three escorts remained on the scene with the torpedoed tanker, afire from stem to stern. The tanker was abandoned at sundown and the escorts had departed. Since the enemy was still above water and might be salvageable, one torpedo was fired to blow under tanker HAKKO MARU of 10,022 tons (13°-12'N; 116°-37'E). She joined destroyer KISHINAMI of 2,100 tons sunk at the same location in earlier attacks that day by FLASHER.

Foul weather hampered FLASHER during the next two weeks as she patrolled westward to the Indo-China Coast. While off Hon Doi Island, the morning of 21 December 1944, a small patrol boat excursionsed up the coast and was allowed to pass at about 3,000 yards. Shortly afterwards FLASHER sighted a convoy of large oil tankers under heavy escort as she moved farther out to sea. The convoy passed within 2,000 yards of FLASHER but high waves made torpedo performance doubtful and she steamed to surface some twenty miles off-shore and commenced a long end-around. Heavy seas compelled Lieutenant Commander Grider to order three-engine speed - as fast as he dared drive FLASHER over the hills of water. Contact was lost that afternoon but that night, FLASHER's radar picked up what first appeared to be a small island and was about to reverse course when the island was observed underway. This contact soon proved to be five large tankers with three escorts and a destroyer steaming through the night at 11 knots, following a course which traced the shoreline.

An attack from seaward was prevented by intervening destroyers with the tankers in tight formation of a column some 500 yards apart. FLASHER maneuvered for an attack from the land side, the enemy tankers being about 12 miles off the beach. As FLASHER moved on the port bow of the leading ship, a destroyer briefly intervened, then dropped back to starboard of the convoy but one escort remained on the port bow of the lead ship. The other escorts were on the convoy's starboard flank. FLASHER moved in and fired three bow tubes at the leading tanker then shifted to fire three at a second. She then swung right to bear her stern tubes on a third tanker as two hits each were observed on the first two. The second tanker blew up and illuminated the area as the third tanker exploded and flames of these two targets flowed together in a river of fire. A destroyer which had dropped back as FLASHER fired, now came forward on her port beam at a range of 4,000 yards, made one circle to the left and fell into position again on her port beam at a range of 3,200 yards. She did not find FLASHER and as she dropped back, the first target exploded and all three tankers disintegrated by explosions being swallowed in the flames. No depth charges were dropped and no guns were fired. The enemy apparently believed they had struck a minefield. In this action FLASHER sank tanker OMUROSAN MARU of 9,204 tons, and tanker ARITA MARU of 10,238 tons (15°-04'N; 109°-06'E). FLASHER retired to the southeast, returning to Fremantle, 2 January 1945.

On 29 January 1945, FLASHER departed Fremantle on her sixth war patrol. She battle surfaced, 21 February and sank a sea truck with her gunfire and on 25 February, scored hits to sink cargo KCHO MARU of 850 tons (20°-04'N; 111°-22'E). On 4 March 1945, she put into Subic Bay for repairs, departing 8 March for the coast of Indo-China to join a Coordinated Search and Attack Group. No contacts were made by 27 March 1945, and that midnight she was ordered to Pearl Harbor, arriving 3 April 1945. A few days later she sailed for overhaul at San Francisco, arriving 24 April 1945. She returned to Pearl Harbor, 24 July 1945. She departed for Guam, 21 August but received orders, 24 August, to return to Pearl Harbor.

On 28 August 1945, FLASHER departed Pearl Harbor for the United States. She completed transit of the Panama Canal, 14 September, and sailed via New Orleans to New London, Connecticut, where she was placed out of commission in Reserve, 16 March 1946. Lieutenant Commander George W. Grider was awarded the Navy Cross for heroic service as commanding officer of FLASHER during her Fifth War Patrol. He also received the ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded FLASHER for extraordinary heroism in action during her Third, Fourth, and Fifth War Patrols.

In addition to the Presidential Unit Citation for her Third, Fourth, and Fifth war patrols, she was awarded six battle stars for operations listed below:

1 Star/SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 6 Jan-29 Feb 1944

1 Star/SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 4 Apr-28 May 1944

1 Star/SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 19 Jun-7 Aug 1944

1 Star/SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 30 Aug-20 Oct 1944

1 Star/SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 15 Nov 1944-2 Jan 1945

1 Star/SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 27 Jan-13 Apr 1945

The text of FLASHER's Presidential Unit Citation reads as follows:

"For extraordinary heroism in action during the Third, Fourth, and Fifth War Patrols against enemy Japanese surface forces in restricted waters of the Pacific. Constantly forced down by fierce and repeated depth charging and threatened by strong hostile air coverage, the USS FLASHER persistently resurfaced to carry on a vigorous and determined offensive against the Japanese. She effected wide coverage of assigned areas far from home base and developed every contact; she boldly penetrated formidable screens to press home her attacks by day or night - in the glassy seas or foul weather; she placed her hits with devastating accuracy, evaded fierce countermeasures of escort vessels and inflicted terrific damage on the enemy in vital ships sunk or severely damaged. Ceaseless in her vigilance and daring in combat tactics, the FLASHER has served with distinction in thwarting the war efforts of a fanatical enemy and her brilliant record of achievement is a reflection of the personal valor and superb seamanship of her officers and men."

ORIGINAL STATISTICS

LENGTH OVER-ALL:	311'9"
EXTREME BEAM:	27'3"
STANDARD DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	1526
Mean Draft:	15'3"
SUBMERGED DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	2424
DESIGN SPEED:	
Surface:	20.25 knots
Submerged:	8.75 knots
DESIGN DEPTH:	300'
DESIGN COMPLEMENT:	
Officer:	6
Enlisted:	54
ARMAMENT:	
Torpedo Tubes:	(10) 21-inch
Secondary:	(1) 3"/50
	(2) .50 caliber
	(2) .30 caliber
TORPEDOES:	24



Number of Patrols	Number and Type of Ships Sunk	Total Tonnage of ships sunk	Number & type of ships Damaged	Total Tonnage of ships Damaged
#1	Four Freighters One Sampan	26,442 40	One Sampan	40
#2	Three Freighters	12,565	One Freighter	7,500
#3	One Transport One Light Cruiser One Tanker Four Freighters	10,000 5,100 10,000 20,600	None	
#4	One Transport Three Freighters	7,500 15,500	One Freighter	4,000
#5	Four Tankers One Destroyer	40,000 1,700	None	
#6	One Freighter One Sea Truck Two Luggers	2,500 75 50	None	
Total for War		152,072		11,540



Holding one of the highest records of Uncle Sam's subsurface fleet the submarine USS FLASHER accounted for more than 154,000 tons of enemy cargo being sent to the bottom and an additional 11,500 tons being damaged in her six war patrols.

For her outstanding record during her 3rd, 4th and 5th patrols, the FLASHER was awarded the Navy Unit Citation. It was during her 3rd patrol after "trailing for hours" that she finally got into position for her largest prey, a 45,000 ton Japanese Cruiser.

On her very first patrol in the China Seas the FLASHER sank four ships and one sampan accounting for a total of 26,482 tons of enemy shipping. Her 2nd patrol in the same waters recorded 12,565 more tons of "made in Japan" goods delivered to "Davey Jones' Locker."

Besides the Japanese Cruiser, which practically blew to pieces, the FLASHER sank six other enemy craft on its 3rd patrol, adding another 47,000 tons to its total.

Four more of the "Rising Sun's" ships took the full force of the "Firing FLASHER'S" guns and were sunk on the 4th patrol. Another enemy vessel was badly damaged. This added 23,000 more tons to the sub's credit.



Commander GEORGE W. GRIDER, USN, also of Memphis, Tennessee, relieved Commander Whitaker as the FLASHER'S Commanding Officer in November 1944, and subsequently commanded the ship on her last two war patrols.

Between war patrols, the FLASHER based and refitted at Fremantle, West Australia. At the end of March 1945, the FLASHER turned her bow towards the east for the long trip across the Pacific and home. She had been overseas for seventeen months when in April she passed beneath the Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco, returning to be overhauled at the Bethlehem Steel Company. After being put back into "Ship-shape condition", she again turned to the west to renew her feud with enemy shipping. However, shortly after reaching Pearl Harbor, hostilities had ceased and the FLASHER never made her 7th war patrol.

Serial: 01323

7 November 1944.

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

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:
U.S.S. FLASHER Conf. Ltr.
A16-3/A9 Serial 021,
dated 20 October 1944.
Report of Fourth War
Patrol.

From: The Commander Submarines, SEVENTH FLEET.
To : The Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via : The Commander, SEVENTH FLEET.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of Fourth War
Patrol - Comment on.

1. FLASHER's Fourth War Patrol was conducted in the SOUTH CHINA SEA off the West Coast of LUZON. The Commanding Officer, Commander R. T. WHITAKER, U.S.N., was the Group Commander of a Coordinated Search and Attack Group consisting of FLASHER, LAPON, and BONFISH. His able direction of this Group left nothing to be desired.

2. FLASHER turned in her usual fine performance in spite of the fact that air and surface anti-submarine opposition was much stronger than that usually encountered. Smooth sea conditions increased the hazards on all attacks, but did not prevent this experienced and capable Commanding Officer from reaching good attack positions and sinking ships.

3. It is regretted that lifeguard duties prevented FLASHER from joining in a coordinated attack on a convoy reported by LAPON, particularly since there was no call for services during the two days spent in performing this special assignment.

4. Submarines departing on patrol are being given two copies of CSP 1247.

5. The award of the Submarine Combat Insignia is authorized for this patrol.

6. The Force Commander takes pleasure in congratulating FLASHER's Commanding Officer, Officers, and Crew on another fine patrol, and notes with pride that in four consecutive successful patrols this outstanding submarine has sunk seventeen cargo ships and one Light Cruiser for 109,900 tons, and damaged two cargo ships for 11,500 tons. FLASHER is credited with inflicting the following heavy damage on the enemy in a well planned and splendidly executed patrol:

FE24-71/A16-3

UNITED STATES NAVY

12a/pr

Serial 01323

7 November 1944.

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

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:
USS FLASHER Conf. Ltr.
 A16-3/A9 Serial 021,
 dated 20 October 1944.
 Report of Fourth War
 Patrol.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of Fourth War
 Patrol - Comment on.

SUNK

1 - AK (Large - EU)	7,500 Tons (Attack No. 1)
1 - AP (Medium - EU)	7,500 Tons (Attack No. 2)
1 - AK (Medium - EU)	4,000 Tons (Attack No. 3)
1 - AK (Medium - EU)	4,000 Tons (Attack No. 3)

Total Sunk 23,000 Tons

DAMAGED

1 - UN	4,000 Tons (Attack No. 2)
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Grand Total 27,000 Tons

R. W. CHRISTIE.

DISTRIBUTION:

Cominch	(3)	- Direct	OTG-71.3	(2)
Vice Opnav	(2)	- Direct	OTG-71.4	(2)
Vice Opnav Op-23c	(1)		OTG-71.5	(2)
Com1stFlt	(1)		DivComsSubRon-12	(1)
Com2ndFlt	(1)		DivComsSubRon-16	(1)
Com7thFlt	(2)		DivComsSubRon-18	(1)
ComSubs1stFlt	(30)		S/M School, N.L. Conn.	(2)
ComSubs2ndFlt	(4)		SubAd, Mare Island	(2)
OTG-71	(4)		S/Ms 7TH FLT	(1)
OTG-72	(2)			

THIS REPORT WILL BE DESTROYED PRIOR
TO ENTRY INTO ENEMY CONTROLLED WATERS.

P. F. STRAUB, Jr.,
 Flag Secretary.

Serial 0205

Care of Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California,
23 October 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to
U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249)
Report of Fourth War
Patrol

From: The Commander Submarine Squadron EIGHTEEN.
To: The Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via: (1) The Commander Submarines, SEVENTH FLEET.
(2) The Commander SEVENTH FLEET.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of War Patrol Number 4.

1. During this patrol the commanding officer acted as group commander of a coordinated search and attack group comprising FLASHER and LAPON from 20 September 1944 until 11 October 1944 with BONEFISH joining the group on 30 September.

2. The patrol area, west of Manila was at all times under heavy air coverage (57 plane contacts), surface patrols were active, all convoys heavily escorted, and sea conditions glassy smooth. FLASHER overcame these obstacles in characteristic fashion. All four attacks were day submerged attacks indicating excellent use of periscope. All torpedoes were Mark 14A or Mark 23.

3. Attack No. 1 on 18 September was made against a large single ship, probably being used as a transport, escorted by four destroyers. Five torpedoes were fired from good position, range 2750 yards, small gyro angles, torpedoes spread by periscope. The destroyers prevented staying up to witness results but four timed hits were made. All indications are that the ship was sunk.

Attack No. 2 on 27 September was made on a convey encountered in early morning while attempting to make an end around on two battleships previously encountered on the surface. Contact with the battleships was lost and attack conducted against a medium transport and an overlapping AK in the convoy. Four torpedoes were fired. Escorts again prevented witnessing results but two timed hits were heard, one in each ship, and LAPON observed one ship explode and another hit. Firing range 2400, torpedoes spread by periscope, 50° track, small gyro angles.

Attack No. 3 on 4 October was made on a convoy standing out of Santa Cruz Harbor, Luzon, sighted early in the morning just after diving. Three torpedoes were fired at the leading ship and three at the second ship in column, both ships being medium AK's. One timed hit in the first ship, two in the second. Again FLASHER was forced deep without being able to see the results. On this, as on the first two attacks, the

Serial 0205

Care of Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California,
23 October 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of War Patrol Number 4.

escorts made depth charge attacks. One minute after return to periscope depth, FLASHER saw one crippled ship blow up and sink. Spread was accomplished by offset, small gyro angles, range 2400 yards.

Attack No. 4 on 6 October was made on a large convoy with seven or eight surface escorts and seven plane escorts. A medium AK was target; four torpedoes fired on a 33° track from range of 2000 yards. A spread was used which should have ensured coverage of 600 feet at that range, but all torpedoes missed. The sharp track necessitated by proximity of escort, or possible evasive action by target probably account for these misses.

The FLASHER returned from patrol in good material condition. She will be given a normal refit by EURYALE and ONE EIGHTY-TWO - 2 relief crew. The state of cleanliness was excellent. Proper inspection procedure during refit should prevent recurrence of crankcase explosion experienced on 9 September. All mufflers, tail pipes and elbows will be renewed. The present auxiliary compass is not designed for continuous operation and if it is to stand up it must be used only when necessary. The hydrogen detector should be renewed but as replacement is not available, it will be repaired. A dam will be installed in the forward torpedo room to prevent bilge water grounding out the sound training motors. All other material defects will be corrected during refit.

The commanding officer's recommendation that two copies of CSP 1247 be issued each submarine is concurred in.

On this fourth patrol the commanding officer displayed the same sound judgment, aggressiveness and careful planning which have characterized his previous patrols. He, his officers and crew are to be congratulated on another fine patrol. The high state of training and morale are reflected in the heavy damage inflicted on the enemy.

Elliott H. Bryant
ELLIOT H. BRYANT.

U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249),

CONFIDENTIAL:
SS249/A16-3/A9
Serial 021

% Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.,
20 October, 1944.

From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. FLASHER.
To : The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Official Channels.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249), Report of War
Patrol Number 4.

Enclosure: (1) Subject report.

1. Enclosure (A) covering the fourth war patrol of this vessel conducted in the Manila - Cape Bolinao Area during the period 30 August 1944 to 20 October 1944, is forwarded herewith.

R. T. Whitaker
R. T. WHITAKER.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(A) PROLOGUE.

Returned from Third War Patrol on August 7, 1944 and after running magnetic range, commenced refit in Fremantle, W.A. Refit was completed on August 21, 1944 and regular underway training was commenced on August 22, 1944. The ship was sound tested and the starboard shaft was found to be noisy. The propeller on this shaft was changed and the trouble was remedied. The ship was tested for cavitation noises, curves were drawn up, and the ship was furnished with copies for use during evasive action. Training was completed on August 28th and final loading was completed on August 29th.

(B) NARRATIVE.

The following officers and chief petty officers are attached to this vessel on its Fourth War Patrol:-

NAME	RANK OR RATE	PREVIOUS NUMBER WAR PATROLS
R. T. WHITTAKER,	Lt. Cdr.	9
P. T. GLENNON,	Lieut.	6
G. F. COFFIN,	Lieut.	7
T. A. BURKE, Jr.	Lieut.	2
T. R. McCOMBS,	Lieut.	3
F. B. HARRISON, Jr.	Ens.	1
J. G. HAMLIN,	Ens.	2
J. E. ATKINSON,	Ens.	0
BAKER, Robert A.	CRM(AA) (T)	3
BUCK, Spiva L.	CMOMM(AA)	6
CAREY, Harold S.	CY(PA)	6
CYPHERD, Victor M.	CEM(PA)	6
PEARCE, William J.	CTM(AA)	7
SEBASTIAN, Francis O.	CRT(AA) (T)	3

August 30

1714 Underway for Fourth War Patrol.

2200 Took departure on Rottnest Island Light.
Proceeding to Exmouth Gulf.

August 31 - September 1

Enroute Exmouth Gulf conducting surface and submerged training.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

September 2

- 0913 Moored port side to fuel barge in Exmouth Gulf. Took aboard 9,354 gallons fuel.
- 1422 Underway, leaving Exmouth Gulf and heading for Lombok Strait.
- 1522 Fired thirteen rounds of four inch at wreck off Vlaming Head.

September 3 - 4

Enroute Lombok Strait, conducting surface and submerged training.

September 5

- 0549 Submerged 15 miles south of entrance to Lombok Strait.
- 1845 Surfaced, still 15 miles south of entrance, having had a $2\frac{1}{2}$ knot current against us all day.
- 1948 Commenced transit of Lombok Strait at four engine speed.
- 2200 Completed transit and slowed to two engine speed. No patrol in Lombok this time. Sighted several sailboats during night.

September 6

- 0853 Submerged with SD radar contact 10 miles closing. (Plane Contact No. 1).
- 0955 Surfaced. Headed for lower end of Makassar Strait at 2 engine speed.

September 7

- 0535 Submerged about 12 miles off land, about midway between Cape Mandar and Cape William, with the intention of running submerged today.
- 0908 We have made no headway against a strong current, so surfaced 12 miles from land to try our luck on the surface.
- 0930 Sighted patrol plane bearing 130° T., distance 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 2). Did not close so we did not dive.
- 0937 Sighted another patrol plane bearing 345° T., distance 10 miles and closing. (Plane Contact No. 3). Submerged.
- 1230 Surfaced. Still about 12 miles from land.
- 1415 Cape William abeam to starboard. Sighted several sail boats during day.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

September 8

- 0545 Passed North Watcher abeam to starboard at range of about 25 miles.
 0951 SD radar contact, range 11 miles. (Plane Contact No. 4). Submerged.
 1052 Surfaced.
 1129 SD radar contact, range 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 5). Submerged.
 1236 Surfaced.

September 9

- 0330 Commenced transit of Sibutu Passage at three engine speed.
 0500 Transit completed.
 0518 Submerged about 10 miles north of Sibutu Passage. Headed for passage between Laparan Island and Pearl Bank.
 1838 Surfaced about 20 miles south of Pearl Bank.
 2030 Completed transit of passage between Laparan Island and Pearl Bank. Headed toward southwest tip of Panay.

September 10

- 0816 Sighted plane at about 10 miles distance. (Plane Contact No. 6). Submerged.
 0939 Surfaced.
 1316 Sighted three planes bearing 020°T., distance 20 miles. (Plane Contact No. 7). Did not dive as planes did not close. They were flying at about 14,000 feet and appeared to be headed for Davao.
 1535 Decided to spend today and tomorrow patrolling traffic lanes from Basilan Strait to West Coast of Panay. Submerged as we desired not to be detected.
 1812 Surfaced. Headed for West Coast of Negros for radar fix as it is overcast.
 2130 Obtained land fix and headed back for traffic lane.

September 11

- 0523 Submerged.
 1314 Sighted three planes bearing 049°T., distance 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 8). These planes were flying very low, but were in formation. Their course was about 180°T.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 1639 Sighted ship bearing 146°T., range 16,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 1). Went to battle stations and commenced approach. Angle on bow about 25 port. It appears that we will get in easily. Do not understand lack of escorts or air coverage.
- 1650 Target identified as a large hospital ship of about 8,000 tons. Discontinued attack.
- 1830 Surfaced, headed north for deep water along West Coast of Panay.

September 12

- 0015 Sighted lights of Hospital Ship bearing 358°T.
- 0055 SJ radar contact bearing 075°T., range 10,000 yards. Identified as friendly submarine. (Ship Contact No. 2). He had evidently investigated hospital ship also.
- 0232 Slowed to 2/3 to let hospital ship open out.
- 0516 Submerged 10 miles off Southwest tip of Panay.
- 1231 Sighted plane bearing 121°T., distance four miles. (Plane Contact No. 9). Plane appeared to be fighter and was headed north.
- 1331 Sighted two motored bomber bearing 096°T., range 5 miles. (Plane Contact No. 10). This plane appeared to be circling over beach and at times would completely disappear. Close observation revealed that he was making landings on a strip behind the trees in the vicinity of San Jose. Watched him make a total of about five landings.
- 1555 Sighted formation of 12 medium bombers flying north over the Coast of Panay. (Plane Contact No. 11). They circled in the vicinity of San Jose and finally they all landed on our newly discovered landing strip.
- 1830 Surfaced. Headed for Mindoro Strait.

September 13

- 0333 Completed transit of Mindoro Strait. Headed out to sea. Thought we would try it on the surface today.
- 0625 SD radar contact 10 miles. Submerged 20 miles off Cape Calavite. (Plane Contact No. 12). Decided to remain submerged.
- 1842 Surfaced. Headed for area at two engine speed.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 1916 SJ radar contact bearing 230°T., range 11,500 yards. (Ship Contact No. 3). Identified as friendly submarine.
- 1930 Received message directing us to cover approaches to Manila, with reconnaissance our primary mission. Heard HADDO tell HAKE to cover route from Manila north of Cabra Island. Decided that we should cover northern approaches to Manila, so took station about 15 miles from coast just off Subic Bay. Feel that we will sight from this point any task force entering Manila from north.
- 2030 Arrived in Area off Manila, P.I.

September 14

- 0515 Submerged.
- 0659 Sighted patrol boat bearing 014°T., range about 10,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 4). He was headed down coast and passed well clear.
- 0838 Sighted float plane bearing 032°T., distance about 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 13). He passed out of sight on northwesterly course.
- 1144 Sighted two motored bomber bearing 153°T., range 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 14). He was flying at about 1500 feet and passed within about four miles headed up the coast of Luzon.
- 1843 Surfaced. HAKE is scheduled to leave station tonight and as the route north of Cabra Island is considered very important, decided to cover it instead of our present position. Headed for point 12 miles north of northern end of Cabra Island.
- 2230 Commenced patrolling new station north of Cabra Island.

September 15

- 0512 Submerged.
- 1015 Sighted fighter plane bearing 225°T., range 6 miles. (Plane Contact No. 15). He was on an easterly course and disappeared in the clouds almost immediately.
- 1824 Surfaced.

September 16

- 0514 Submerged.
- 1827 Surfaced.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

September 17

- 0515 Submerged for patrol about 12 miles north of Cabra Island.
- 1832 Surfaced.
- 2347 Decided to patrol across traffic lane bearing about 250°T. from Corregidor. Headed for this new position at 10 knots.

September 18

- 0122 Reached new patrol station.
- 0516 Submerged.
- 0824 Sighted plane bearing 242°T., distance about 4 miles. (Plane Contact No. 16). This was a twin float plane and believe he may be searching ahead of convoy.
- 0906 Sighted mast of ship bearing 275°T., range about 20,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 5).
- 0913 Again sighted our float plane over ship. Had believed the mast might only be a patrol vessel until this time, but now feel sure it is a convoy.
- 0917 Went to battle stations. Knowing this convoy is headed for Manila, we can tell from his true bearing that we are about on his base course, so our problem is fairly simple. The sea is rough, so feel sure we will not be sighted by plane.
- 0926 Target identified as large MARU with four destroyer escorts. He appears to be a very new ship and looks very modern. He has two destroyers at a range of 1500 - 2000 yards, one bearing about 60° on each bow. The other two destroyers are well out at a range of 3000 - 4000 yards from him and possibly a little sharper on the bow. They are all pinging and if their equipment is good, we will have trouble getting through. Sound conditions are excellent. We picked up screws of the convoy at about 14,000 yards by JP.
- 0929 Target zigged toward giving us small angle on bow at about 11,000 yards. We headed for him.
- 0938 Target zigged 30° to his left giving us 20° starboard angle on bow at 6,000 yards.
- 0942 Range 4,350 yards. Target appears to be covered with people. Believe he is a loaded transport. He seems to have hundreds of people around his rails, possibly acting as periscope lookouts.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0945 Coming right with full rudder at 2/3 speed, heading in for 90° track. Target has zigged away giving us 70° starboard angle on bow. The near starboard escort is very close to us on our starboard bow. Probably as close as three hundred yards, but his angle on the bow is about 70° starboard. Had intended to fire six torpedoes, but cannot get number three tube ready. (See Note under Casualties).
- 0947-20 Still swinging right. Commenced firing forward with about 15° right gyro, about 90° starboard track, torpedo run about 2750 yards. Fired torpedoes at about 8 second intervals. Spread torpedoes by periscope. First torpedo aimed just abaft MOT, second just forward MOT, third about half a ships length ahead of bow, fourth half a ships length astern, and fifth at MOT. Hoped to get at least three hits. Used target speed 11 knots. Due to nearness of escort and due to the fact that the plane was close aboard, decided to go deep. Headed for 300 feet turning left at standard speed.
- 0949 Heard first torpedo hit followed at 7½ second intervals by two more hits and then after 15 seconds by the fourth hit.
- 0950 Near escort has passed astern, but now have outer screen coming in fast from dead ahead. Shifted rudder to full right to try to get off his track.
- 0953 We didn't manage it. He passed overhead, going down our whole length, and dropped four beautiful ones. These charges were close and really shook the boat breaking many light bulbs and doing other minor damage. We were at 325 feet at this time and I believe they were above us. Commenced avoiding at 2/3 speed with destroyers milling around and pinging all over the place. Headed out on westerly course.
- 1000 Explosion heard. Not close.
- 1001 Hear many sounds characteristic of ship sinking, bearing 008°T. by sound. This would be in the correct direction.
- 1010-30 Heard another explosion.
- 1012-30 Another explosion. Destroyers are pinging astern but don't appear to be trying too hard to find us.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 1035 Commenced coming up to periscope depth. Would have started up sooner, but water was so high in forward torpedo room bilges that we could not take an up angle for fear of grounding out our sound training motors. Something should be done about this situation.
- 1050 Forward torpedo room reports that they have the water under control, having been using the buckets efficiently for the last half hour. Destroyers still appear well astern and act as if they might be picking up survivors rather than hunting for us.
- 1114 Periscope observation showed two or three destroyers in vicinity of attack. They are apparently picking up survivors as they are remaining in the same vicinity. The float plane is circling them, flying very low and every once in a while he increases altitude then turns and dives down as if to indicate presence of something on water.
- 1201 Lost sight of destroyers. When last seen they were still in vicinity of attack with float plane still circling them.
- 1420 Sighted float plane for last time, still circling in direction of attack.
- 1835 Surfaced about 20 miles northwest of Cabra Island. Discovered that depth charging has ruined the performance of our SJ radar. It appears to be all right but it just doesn't pick up anything. Headed for Cabra Island to make a better check.
- 2138 Definitely determined that the SJ radar is out. Commenced conducting patrol covering traffic lanes west of Manila.

September 19

- 0512 Submerged about 15 miles northwest of Cabra Island. Commenced heading up coast toward Subic Bay. Will head for station off Cape Bolinao tonight.
- 0610 Heard pinging bearing 068°T.
- 0639 Sighted masts of three destroyers bearing 070°T. to 078°T., range about 14,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 6). These destroyers appear to be searching for the submarine that made the attack here yesterday.
- 0700 The three destroyers are in line making about 20 knots and appear to be conducting a thorough anti-submarine search off Manila Harbor east of Longitude 119° - 50'E. We remained

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- to the west of the search group hoping that perhaps they were searching ahead of a task force.
- 0800 Destroyers passed out of sight to northeastward. Our attack yesterday occurred close to the HADDON'S position for her life saving duties on the 21st and 22nd. I am concerned as to whether our action might interfere with him. Feel we are bound not to disclose our presence here today unless something of a very important nature comes by to shoot at
- 1100 Again hear pinging to eastward.
- 1223 Sighted masts of destroyer search group again bearing 080°T.
- 1245 Lost sight of masts.
- 1748 Sound heard screws bearing 317°T. Sighted mast of patrol vessel on this bearing at range of about 12,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 7). This vessel appeared to be large patrol vessel. He had one gun forward, a tripod mast forward, a stick mast aft and a stack well aft. This is the first of this type I have seen. He was headed for Manila, making about 15 knots, and was not pinging. He passed at about 7,000 yards from us.
- 1844 Surfaced. SJ radar still out. We have worked on it all day, but could find nothing wrong. Our radar man now believed the trouble lies in the antenna mast itself. Headed for station off Cape Bolinao.
- 2200 LAPON reported that she was on station. Directed LAPON to conduct inshore patrol along the coast of Luzon in the vicinity of 16°N. Also told him I would patrol Cape Bolinao when my lifeguard duties were finished.

September 20

- Decided to submerge early this morning in order to give the radar technician a long day to work on the SJ. It appears now that the lower antenna assembly must be pulled. In order to do this, feel it necessary to go deep and stay there as a bomb or depth charge might rupture the mast topside, and we would have nothing to keep the water out with the lower assembly off.
- 0415 Submerged to 110 feet. Commenced work on the SJ mast.

U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249)
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(E) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0830 Completed work on SJ mast. Located difficulty. (See remarks under Casualties).
0912 Sighted float plane bearing 090°T., range about 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 17).
0916 Plane disappeared over Cape Bolinao.
1227 Sighted float plane bearing 108°T., range 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 18).
1229 Plane disappeared in direction of San Fernando.
1840 Surfaced. Headed for Lifeguard Station off Cape Bolinao.

September 21

- 0250 Sighted properly marked hospital ship headed toward Manila. (Ship Contact No. 8). Did not close.
0430 Arrived on station about 17 miles northwest of Cape Bolinao to conduct lifeguard duties.
0904 Sighted large flying boat bearing 120°T., distance about 10 miles and headed toward us. (Plane Contact No. 19). Submerged.
0933 Watched plane go out of sight by periscope.
0946 Surfaced.
1005 Sighted two planes bearing 095°T., distance about 18 miles. (Plane Contact No. 20). These planes closed in to 10 miles and then opened out and disappeared.
1020 Sighted two float planes bearing 070°T., distance about 17 miles. (Plane Contact No. 21). Soon lost sight of these planes at 24 miles. Heard our aviators talking quite a lot on the voice frequency, but apparently they were not in our vicinity.

September 22

- 0055 Got message from LAPON saying he had been kept down by 5 enemy destroyers since our planes attacked a convoy in that vicinity.
0320 LAPON reported contact with a convoy. Since this convoy was about 60 miles away from us, it would be impossible for the FLASHER to attack and still be on station for lifeguard duty at dawn. We are forced to let this convoy go. This is very unfortunate as few opportunities like this present themselves during a patrol.
0643 Sd radar contact at 19 miles. (Plane Contact No. 22).

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

0646 Sighted above plane which turned out to be flying boat.
0711 SD contact at 20 miles. (Plane Contact No. 23).
0725 Lost contact at 24 miles. Plane not sighted
1510 SD contact at 13 miles. (Plane Contact No. 24).
1520 Lost contact at 14 miles. Plane not sighted
2000 LAPON reported sinking a tanker at 0400 and stated she had lost contact with convoy. Commenced conducting patrol off Cape Bolinao. Will patrol 18,000 yards off beach at night and 10,000 yards off during the day.

September 23

0523 Submerged.
1835 Surfaced.

September 24

0515 Submerged off Cape Bolinao.
1826 Surfaced.

September 25

0508 Submerged.
1009 Sighted plane bearing 284°T., distance 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 25).
1021 Lost sight of plane.
1030 Sighted several very small coastal freighters headed up coast very close to land. They varied in size from about 100 tons to about 500 tons. Did not attack. (Ship Contact No. 9). From 1030 to 1130 about 17 of these small vessels passed.
1830 Surfaced. Still conducting patrol off Bolinao.
2207 Ordered LAPON to patrol special area Charlie 52. FLASHER to patrol Charlie 45. This covers traffic north and south to the west of Scarborough Shoals. FLASHER and LAPON 20 miles apart.
2230 Commenced heading for new area at 14 knots.

September 26

0654 Sighted LAPON bearing 215°T., range about 18,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 10). LAPON appears to be just about on station. We will pass her to get to our station.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0900 Arrived on station. Commenced surface patrol at 10 knots, one hour legs.
- 1907 Submerged to wash out number four main ballast tank after converting it.
- 1927 Surfaced. Received message telling me to confine our activity to Area east of 118°E. from now until October 9, 1944. As we just arrived here today, it would be a complete waste of many miles steaming and two days time if we left now. Decided to remain here until 1200 tomorrow. Directed LAPON to move to Latitude 15° - 40'N. Longitude 119° - 10'E. at 1200 tomorrow. Told him we would patrol 30 miles to west of him.
- 2217 Made rendezvous with LAPON so he could tune his SJ transmitter. Found our SJ is not working too well, but it's the best we can do with the antenna mast as it is.
- 2300 Returned to station.

September 27

- 0532 Sighted two ships bearing 325°T. These appeared to be two battleships with about 30° port angle on the bow. Put stern to them and went ahead on four engines trying to open out to make an end around. Was afraid we would be sighted in early morning light. (Ship Contact No. 11).
- 0540 Sighted smoke bearing 170°T. This made it evident that we could not make end around on battleships. There was no time to encode a message to the LAPON, so sent them a plain language message of sighting ships and submerged.
- 0555 Unable to sight battleships, but sighted smoke bearing 169°T. (Ship Contact No. 12).
- 0559 Believe we are well to the west of this convoy's track as his base course here should be about 015°T. Came to normal approach course and commenced closing track.
- 0628 Still closing track. Identified contact as 8 - 10 ship convoy arranged in two columns with several escorts, including at least two destroyers. Commenced making approach on passenger vessel which is leading ship of near column. He appears to be a medium AP of the LFM type. He has at least three passenger decks and an awful lot of superstructure.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0646 One tanker appears to be in center of formation and two more tankers in far column. We cannot get to them.
- 0721 With angle on bow about 35° port and range about 3500 yards, came left for fifty port track. Hoped to hold on long enough to swing left for larger track later, but port leading destroyer is on our starboard beam fairly close with about a 20° port angle on bow.
- 0723-30 Target range 3,000 yards. No change in course. Destroyer has now given us a zero angle on the bow, range 1000 - 1500 yards. Feel we must either fire now or probably lose all opportunity of doing so. Decided to fire only four torpedoes as other ships of column are about in line and at greater range.
- 0724-30 Commenced firing forward. Target speed 7 knots, track 50° port, torpedo run about 2400 yards. Fired four torpedoes at seven second intervals spread $\frac{1}{2}$ ships length between tracks. Spread by periscope.
- 0725-30 With destroyer on our starboard beam with zero angle on bow and range about 1,000 yards, decided to go deep. Thought of firing four stern tubes at him but did not have time to turn for down the throat shot. Went to 330 feet. One minute and thirty-seven seconds after firing, heard one hit. Forty-four seconds later heard another definite hit. The first hit checked well for the third torpedo which was spread well forward, and later events indicated that our speed estimate was low. The second hit does not check in time for a hit on the transport as time between hits was 44 seconds and firing time was only 22 seconds. There was another ship astern of our target however, and at somewhat greater range, but with a small angle on the bow. The time for the second hit checks well for a hit by the first or second torpedo on this target or on a target in the far column. The LAPON who was tracking this convoy on the surface, later reported seeing one ship explode and also said that she saw a flash with white smoke on another ship.
- 0728 The first of 15 fairly close depth charges went off.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0729-28 Three fairly close charges.
- 0734 Commenced hearing very loud breaking up noises in direction of first target. These noises were heard throughout the ship and were the loudest the commanding officer has heard in ten war patrols.
- 0739 Seven more depth charges, not close. Avoiding to southeast..
- 0806 Commenced coming up slowly as escorts seem to be not too close.
- 0844 Periscope observation shows two escorts bearing 034^{OT}, range about 8,000 yards. These fellows appear to be looking for survivors. Headed away from them to get clear and surface.
- 0943 Escorts apparently have picked up all hands as they commenced dropping single depth charges, apparently to keep us down. They dropped about 16 between now and the time we surfaced at 1102.
- 1042 Lost sight of escorts. Still hear their pinging.
- 1101 Heard distant depth charge.
- 1102 Surfaced. Masts of two escorts still in sight by periscope on surface. Opened out at full speed.
- 1130 Lost contact with escorts. Commenced searching for convoy on original base course as we have no idea which way they went. Making 18 knots on four engines.
- 1544 We should be ahead of convoy now, but have not sighted them. Headed over toward Lingayen Gulf to intercept them if they changed course that way. Also feel they may head in and anchor over-night.
- 1810 Received message from LAPON indicating convoy headed for beach at 1200 today. We changed course to head for entrance to Lingayen Gulf in the hope of intercepting them. LAPON reports sinking large tanker and large freighter.
- 2340 Sighted low flying aircraft crossing bow from starboard to port. (Plane Contact No. 26). Manned SD and found him to be 6½ miles away.
- 2343 Lost contact at 8 miles.

September 28

- 0023 We are now 10 miles off Cape Bolinao and still no convoy. Changed course to 250^{OT}. to head out on their probable course.

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0145 Got message from LAPON saying she had been forced down by plane - probably the one we saw. Sighted lights of properly marked hospital ship bearing 275°T. and on northerly course. (Ship Contact No. 13). Let him go.
- 0408 It appears that we have lost convoy for good. Headed for new patrol station about 60 miles off Coast. LAPON is 30 miles to east of us and thirty miles off coast.
- 0523 Sighted small patrol vessel bearing 260°T., range about 22,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 14). Avoided.
- 0635 SD radar contact 11 miles. (Plane Contact No. 27).
- 0637 Sighted float plane. Submerged with plane at 9 miles. He didn't sight us.
- 0651 Sighted above plane by periscope and watched him go out of sight to the westward.
- 0802 Surfaced.
- 0939 Sighted smoke bearing 084°T. Headed to close smoke. (Ship Contact No. 15). Could not contact LAPON.
- 0957 Sighted mast bearing 083°T. Commenced tracking.
- 1035 Found target to be headed on base course toward us at speed of 13 knots. Submerged and commenced approach.
- 1040 Hear pinging from only one ship.
- 1106 Identified target as AS vessel. Continued approach.
- 1124 Target came in to 10,000 yards and then gave us a 90° port angle on bow. He was a CHIDORI.
- 1130 CHIDORI headed north. Could never close nearer than 10,000 yards.
- 1155 Lost sight of target. Can still see smoke. He looks like he might be burning coal from the way he smokes. Decided to stay down and work torpedoes.
- 1441 Still hear pinging of CHIDORI. He appears to be searching Area very thoroughly.
- 1645 Lost pinging. Finished working torpedoes.
- 1718 Surfaced.
- 1820 Ordered LAPON and FLASHER to move north forty miles due to air and patrol activity this area.

September 29

- 1619 SD contact 9 miles. Submerged. (Plane Contact No. 28).
- 1720 Surfaced.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

2000 BONEFISH is supposed to join wolf pack tonight but cannot reach him on voice. Tried both voice and CW. Sent message to LAPON ordering new patrol stations as follows. BONEFISH: Latitude 15°-32'N, Long. 119°-18'E; LAPON: Latitude 15°-21'N, Long. 118°-50'E; FLASHER: Latitude 15°-12'N, Long. 118°-20'E. Had hoped to get this to BONEFISH but maybe we will contact him later. Headed for new station. Will wait until tomorrow night, then if we can't contact BONEFISH will send him dope through BAKERS.

September 30

Still unable to contact BONEFISH. Consider a submarine without voice communication as practically useless for wolf pack operations.
1900 Finally contacted BONEFISH and sent him message giving patrol stations.

October 1

0023 Ordered LAPON to conduct insmore patrol today in the vicinity of 16°N. In this position they should see any north or south bound traffic hugging the coast.
0815 Received message from BONEFISH reporting contact with four ship convoy with air coverage in position Lat. 15°-38'N. Long. 119°-48'E., course 180°T. Put four engines on and commenced attempt to gain contact. We will have to run about 90 miles before we can hope to sight them. Hope to get ahead of them just north of Subic Bay.
0846 BONEFISH sent message giving her position as Lat. 15°-13'N. Long. 119°-32'E. and giving convoy position as bearing 040°T., distance 15 miles. This makes it look as if convoy may be headed south toward Cabra Island.
1426 Now within 20 miles of Subic Bay and still no convoy. Feel sure we have not missed him as he went by, so think he either turned off

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- or holed up along the coast somewhere. Cannot contact BONEFISH, so guess he is down. Commenced hunting to the northwest.
- 1540 SD radar contact 26 miles. (Plane Contact No. 29). Sighted five high flying planes bearing 170°T. apparently heading for Manila.
- 1557 Lost contact at 29 miles.
- 2000 BONEFISH reported he was unable to close convoy due to bombing.
- 2045 LAPON reported only contact with A/S screen of three A/S vessels and one plane. The enemy appears to conduct pretty thorough search for submarines along the coast.
- 2327 Ordered BONEFISH to patrol vicinity Lat. 16°-30'N, Long. 119°-36'E. during daylight tomorrow to cover coastwise traffic.

October 2

- 1558 SD contact 11 miles. (Plane Contact No. 30).
- 1559 Sighted plane at 10 miles. Submerged to keep from being sighted.
- 1626 Sighted above plane by periscope. He appears to be searching Area.
- 1636 Lost sight of plane.
- 1701 Surfaced.
- 2205 BONEFISH reported being back on station, having sighted only a hospital ship.

October 3

Have ordered submarines to occupy the following inshore patrol stations commencing daylight October 4th: BONEFISH - vicinity 16°-20'N; LAPON - vicinity 16°N; FLASHER - vicinity 15°-30'N. This puts the BONEFISH off Cape Bolinao, the LAPON 20 miles south of him off Point Caiman, and the FLASHER 30 miles south of the LAPON. We should cover coastwise traffic very effectively from these positions. Expect considerable A/S activity.

- 1907 Headed for new patrol station.

October 4

- 0330 SJ contact with friendly sub believed to be the ROE bearing 035°T., range 6,600 yards

201-41111

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- Avoided. (Ship Contact No. 16).
- 0502 Submerged about 10 miles off coast, just north of Palauig Point.
- 0532 Heard pinging bearing about 038°T.
- 0540 Sighted CHIDORI type torpedo boat bearing 040°T., range about 12,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 17).
- 0600 Sighted smoke bearing 038°T. (Ship Contact No. 18). This appears to be a convoy coming out of Santa Cruz harbor.
- 0611 Sighted two planes bearing 022°T., distance about 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 31). They appeared to be searching above convoy.
- 0615 Convoy appears to be heading north. Guess we are out of luck.
- 0645 More ships are standing out of Santa Cruz Harbor.
- 0701 This convoy is headed our way. (Ship Contact No. 19). Battle stations.
- 0713 Convoy appears to be composed of about 8 - 10 ships in two columns of 4 - 5 ships each. There are many escorts and they have two planes above them. The sea is absolutely smooth. Not even a ripple on it. This will probably be fun. Commenced going to 60 feet between looks.
- 0730 Range now about 8,000 yards. We appear to be about on base course.
- 0745 Made ready all tubes. Range now 4500 yards. It appears that we may be able to fire three torpedoes each at two leading ships in starboard column. Angle on bow of leading ship in this column now about 40° starboard.
- 0748 Range now 3600 yards, angle on bow about 45° starboard. Three escorts are on starboard beam of convoy. We are dead ahead of them. Planes close aboard above convoy.
- 0750 Track now about 60° starboard, torpedo run 2200 yards. Commenced firing forward as I was afraid we would be sighted if we waited any longer. Fired three torpedoes at leading ship with 2° divergent spread, and then fired three at second ship. Started deep immediately after firing as both planes were fairly close and our position should be well marked in this water. Heard one torpedo hit on

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(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- first target one minute and thirty-five seconds after firing followed by two hits on second target at correct intervals.
- 0758 Escorts started dropping depth charges, some fairly close and some far away. From now until 0815 about 35 depth charges were dropped. The ocean appears full of escorts and they are all pinging. Believe they are getting in each others' way.
- 0815 Sound reported definite sinking noises in the direction of target. These were also heard by the commanding officer and are believed to have been from the second target.
- 0830 Escorts now appear to be interested in something in the general direction of the attack. There is much pinging but none very close. Started up for look.
- 0848 Made periscope observation. Saw damaged ship with his bow well up in the air bearing 123°T., range about 8,000 yards. One other unidentified ship and a CHIDORI are standing by him.
- 0849 Damaged ship sank with a loud explosion and with a cloud of white smoke above him. This is believed to have been the first target. Two float planes are searching the Area.
- 0852 The unidentified ship appears to be lying to and looks as if he may be down by the stern. He may be damaged. Commenced closing him at 2/3 speed to polish him off.
- 0940 Two power boats flying the Japanese Merchant flag are in the vicinity of the sinking ship.
- 1000 As we get closer there seems to be some doubt as to whether this so called damaged ship is even a merchant ship. He has a gun forward and looks now like a hybrid escort. He also appears to be pinging.
- 1009 All doubt was cleared up when our damaged ship suddenly whirled around to port and dropped four depth charges. Commenced clearing area to seaward as only two escort vessels and two planes remain in this vicinity.

COMBAT LOG:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 1053 Watched two more CHIDORI torpedo boats join the search group. These seem to smoke very heavily.
- 1145 Escorts and planes still in sight searching, but they seem to think we went north. At least they haven't searched in our direction yet.
- 1305 Lost sight of escorts and plane. Still hear pinging.
- 1341 Sighted plane again, but he is far away. No longer hear pinging.
- 1822 Surfaced. Will remain out from coast tonight and head in tomorrow morning to be in close for daylight patrol.

October 5

- Decided to patrol tomorrow just south of Hermana Mayor in order to intercept any traffic coming out of Santa Cruz harbor.
- 0512 Submerged. Thought we were about 10 miles west of Hermana Mayor but later found we were about five miles further south.
- 0513 Heard pinging bearing 013⁰T.
- 0541 Sighted CHIDORI bearing 084⁰T., range about 12,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 20).
- 0550 Sighted smoke bearing 030⁰T., range about 25,000 yards. Appears to be convoy coming out of Santa Cruz. (Ship Contact No. 21). He will be in excellent position for attack if they head south.
- 0600 CHIDORI headed for us and closed in to 4,000 yards before turning south.
- 0615 Convoy headed north after coming out. We will be unable to attack, but LAPON and BONEFISH should be in good position.
- 0630 CHIDORI disappeared on bearing 135⁰T.
- 0642 Sighted 2 float planes bearing 060⁰T., distance about 4 miles, on opposite course. (Plane Contact No. 32). One appears headed north toward convoy. The other is searching this Area.
- 0700 Sighted masts of 5 ships bearing 044⁰T., range about 15,000 yards. Angle on bow 30⁰ starboard. (Ship Contact No. 22). Commenced closing only to find that they are small engines-aft coastal type vessels not worth torpedoes.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0805 Sighted land plane bearing 040°T. (Plane Contact No. No. 33). Lost all sight of smoke from convoy going north.
- 0900 Sighted three bombers bearing 145°T., range about 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 34).
- 0920 Sighted float plane bearing 008°T., range 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 35).
- 0942 Sighted large unidentified plane bearing 121°T., range about 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 36).
- 1002 Sighted bomber bearing 030°T., range about 14 miles. (Plane Contact No. 37).
- 1007 Sighted patrol plane bearing 180°T. (Plane Contact No. 38).
- 1109 Sighted plane bearing 021°T., range about 18 miles. (Plane Contact No. 39).
- 1128 Sighted land plane bearing 108°T., range about 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 40).
- 1155 Sighted float plane bearing 137°T., range about 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 41).
- 1215 Sighted two medium bombers bearing 036°T., range about 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 42).
- 1240 Sighted 3 medium bombers bearing 113°T., range about 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 43).
- 1400 Sighted low wing monoplane with twin floats bearing 332°T., range 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 44).
- 1419 Sighted 3 bombers bearing 180°T., range about 3 miles, heading north. (Plane Contact No. 45).
- 1606 Sighted bomber bearing 055°T., distance 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 46).
- 1823 Surfaced.
- 1930 Unable to contact BONEFISH by voice.
- 2015 LUPON reported attack on large southbound convoy with 7 plane coverage. No results obtained.

October 6

- 0403 Submerged 8 miles west of Palauig Point.
- 0538 Sighted smoke bearing 006°T. (Ship Contact No. 23). Commenced approach. The water is absolutely smooth as glass. Not even a ripple.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0557 Sighted bomber in direction of convoy. Plane Contact No. 47). This was the first of seven planes sighted covering this convoy. There were five medium bombers and two float planes. The float planes seemed to fly fairly high while the bombers usually were within 100 - 200 feet of the water. As it was very smooth, this forces us to be very careful and go deep between observations.
- 0630 Range now 12,000 yards, angle on bow 20° starboard. We seem to be pretty well ahead of convoy now. Numerous planes are making it difficult though, and on this observation large bubbles were noted coming up from forward. There is no time to check for origin of these bubbles. Decided they were probably from bow buoyancy so closed bow buoyancy vent. We have only stern tubes so will attempt to get directly ahead and keep stern pointed at convoy during latter stages of approach.
- 0703 With planes all around made observation and found that convoy had given us a 25° port angle on bow. As stern is pointed toward them and as torpedo run is only about 1700 yards felt this was a favorable opportunity. This was further indicated as several of the targets were overlapping. We hadn't been sighted now and it seemed probable that we would be at any time, so decided to fire.
- 0704 Commenced firing stern tubes with 30° port track, torpedo run about 1700 yards. Used one degree divergent spread. Started deep after firing as planes were all around. Expected to get at least one hit but were disappointed as all torpedoes missed. Believe they saw tracks and avoided.
- 0710 Screws and pinging from escorts all around but not a single bomb or depth charge. Don't understand it, but guess they decided to let us alone as we hadn't damaged them.
- 0808 Periscope observation showed convoy well past in the distance and many planes still searching our vicinity.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 1117 Have sighted planes on every periscope observation.
- 1400 Planes no longer in sight. Feel that undue concern over planes caused us to miss this convoy. Had we held fire for a few minutes we could probably have gotten into firing position from which we could hardly have missed. The commanding officer had felt from the beginning of the approach that he would probably be sighted, and he was so relieved to get into what he considered to be an acceptable firing position that he went ahead and fired.
- 1823 Surfaced.
- 1900 Still cannot contact BONEFISH so sent a message to the Boss telling him so. Feel that when my message comes back on the Schedule BONEFISH will contact us.
- 2330 Got message from BONEFISH saying that she had failed in attack on fifth and that she also chased another hospital ship. LAPON suggested moving out a couple of days to let area cool off, so ordered pack to move out to former station off coast.

October 7

- Moving out to station off coast.
- 0700 Arrived on station.

October 8

- Patrolling station as before.
- 1050 Sighted overturned life boat. Debris in this area indicates that some ship has been sunk near here.
- 1900 Wolf Pack have been ordered to maintain in-shore patrol as before, commencing tomorrow morning. Headed for station off Palauig Point.

October 9

- 0504 Submerged off Palauig Point.
- 0637 Sighted mast and smoke bearing 245°T. Commenced closing at high speed. (Ship Contact no. 24).
- 0811 Identified contact as two very small coastal freighters not worth torpedoes.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 1207 Sighted medium bomber bearing 138°T., distance about 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 48).
- 1425 Sighted 2 float planes bearing 060°T., distance about 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 49).
- 1428 Sighted two more float planes bearing 091°T., range about 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 50).
- 1511 Sighted bomber and float plane bearing 113°T., range about 10 miles. (Plane Contact No. 51).
- 1718 Heard three distant explosions.
- 1720 Heard three distant explosions.
- 1820 Surfaced. Patrolling about 20,000 yards off beach.

October 10

- 0457 Submerged off Palauig Point as before.
- 0742 Sighted small coastal freighter bearing 055°T, not big enough for torpedoes. (Ship Contact No. 25).
- 1620 Sighted two columns of smoke bearing 010°T., (Ship Contact No. 26). Commenced closing but ships never appeared. Their change of bearing and position indicate that they are anchoring in Santa Cruz Harbor overnight.
- 1822 Surfaced.
- 1930 Ordered Pack to be in following positions at dawn tomorrow. BONFISH - Lat. 15°-40'N, Long. 119°-45'E; LAPON - Lat. 15°-30'N, Long. 119°-47'E; FLASHER - Lat. 15°-20'N, Long. 119°-47'E. This puts us along the coast 10 miles apart and all of us south of Santa Cruz Harbor. If convoy comes out tomorrow we should have fun.

October 11

- 0430 SJ radar contact bearing 035°T., range 17,000 yards. At first this appeared to be only an escort, but it soon developed that it was our convoy. (Ship Contact No. 27). Commenced closing and tracking. They are on course 150°T, speed 8 knots. This puts us in a bad position as it heads them for shallow water south of Palauig Point. They already have sixty degree angle on bow so they will be hard to catch before daybreak. Headed in at high speed.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- 0503 With ships in sight by eye was forced to dive to prevent being sighted. Submerged and went to 80 feet making high speed submerged. Closing as rapidly as possible, but it looks hopeless.
- 0520 Made observation. Convoy consists of eight ships with three escorts. The sea is very calm. Targets bearing 035°T., range 11,000 yards. Angle on bow now 65° starboard. Continued closing at high speed.
- 0600 We are getting very close to shallow water. Navigator says we have about two miles before we are due to run aground.
- 0618 Range now 6,000 yards. Angle on bow about 90° starboard. Three of the ships are overlapping. If we had Mark XIV fish, believe I would fire low power shot. As it is, we have three Mk. 23 and one Mk. XIV. Sighted two float planes over convoy. (Plane Contact No. 52).
- 0622 Convoy zigged away. Continued to close hoping they would zig back.
- 0635 We have traveled more than our two miles and should have already run aground on a five fathom bank. Reversed course to 280° and decided to give up. They are already in shallow water. We don't even have a chance of making an end around due to the water.
- 1205 Surfaced and headed for southern end of Area.
- 1800 Departed Area.
- 2055 SJ contact with friendly submarine bearing 349°T., range 9,500 yards. (Ship Contact No. 28).
- 2100 Lost contact.
- 2300 Commenced transit of Apo East Pass.

October 12

- 0249 Passed Ambulong Island abeam to port, distance 6,250 yards.
- 0253 SJ contact bearing 165°T., range 16,250 yards. Commenced tracking. (Ship Contact No. 29).
- 0320 Targets are on base course about 230°T., speed 8 knots. There are about 3 ships in convoy. This course takes targets into shallow water north of Cuyo Islands. We cannot make end around without running through much shallow water with many banks of from 3 - 10 fathoms. Do not consider it

CONFIDENTIAL:

(3) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

- worth the risk. Will continue down to eastward of the Cuyo Islands and see if we can't recontact convoy there.
- 0340 Commenced transit of 45 fathom water to the east of Cuyo Islands at 17 knots.
- 0629 SD contact 10 miles closing. (Plane Contact No. 53). Submerged.
- 0716 Surfaced.
- 0737 SD contact 13 miles. (Plane Contact No. 54).
- 0743 Lost contact at 19 miles.
- 0755 SD contact 14 miles moving in slowly. (Plane Contact No. 55).
- 0800 Submerged when plane closed to 7 miles.
- 0847 Surfaced.

October 13

- 0700 Completed transit of passage between Laparan Island and Pearl Bank. Headed for Sibutu. Hope to be able to dive about 20 miles from entrance to Sibutu Passage.
- 0855 Now 15 miles from entrance to Sibutu. Decided not to push our luck any further so submerged.
- 0930 Sighted float plane bearing 235°T., range about 15 miles. (Plane Contact No. 56).
- 0945 Lost sight of plane.
- 1059 Sighted same float plane bearing 116°T.
- 1312 Surfaced just clear of southern end of Sibutu Passage having had a three knot current with us all day and have completed transit submerged.

October 14

- 0800 Entered Makassar Strait.
- 1111 Sighted smoke bearing 235°T. (Ship Contact No. 30). Changed course to close.
- 1129 Sighted ship bearing 261°T., smoking heavily.
- 1132 Angle on bow appears to be zero. Submerged.
- 1203 Identified ship as Class AM-13 minesweeper. He appears to be making about 17 knots. Don't think he has seen us.
- 1219 Minesweeper passed at 1000 - 1500 yards. He was not pinging.
- 1315 Surfaced. Heading south at 17 knots.
- 1419 SD contact 12 miles. (Plane Contact No. 57).

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

1420 Submerged with plane at 9 miles.
1448 Surfaced.
1455 Sighted friendly submarine bearing 194°T. (Ship Contact No. 31).
1505 Exchanged calls with RATON. Also told him about patrol boat to northward.

October 15

0033 Passed through narrows south of Cape William. Sighted several sailboats, during day.
1436 Sighted friendly submarine bearing 160°T., range about 18,000 yards. (Ship Contact No. 32).
2100 Commenced transit of Lombok Strait.
2128 SJ radar contact bearing 197°T., range 6,500 yards. (Ship Contact No. 33). Identified as small patrol boat and avoided.
2300 Completed transit of Lombok Strait.

October 16

0554 Sighted submarine bearing 099°T., range about 15,000 yards. Later identified as SECUMA. (Ship Contact No. 34). She is also headed south.

October 17 - 19

Enroute Fremantle, W.A.

October 20

0830 Moored in Fremantle Harbor.

AE24-71/A16-3

UNITED STATES NAVY

Serial 0165

24 January 1945. - 1545

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

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:
USS FLASHER Conf. Ltr.
A16-3 Serial 07, dated
2 January, 1945. Report
of Fifth War Patrol.

From: The Commander Submarines, SEVENTH FLEET.
To: The Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via: The Commander, SEVENTH FLEET.
Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of Fifth War
Patrol - Comment on.

REC'D NO 115	
14/ JAN, M. I.	
24 January 1945.	
STAFF	
ASST. STAFF	
ADJUTANT	
OPERATIONS	
DOCTOR	
COM. OFF.	
PERSONNEL	
ENGINEERING	
RECOGNITION	
LOGS OFF.	
TORPEDO OFF.	
Y. MAN	

1. The Fifth War Patrol of the FLASHER was conducted in the areas west of MANILA, and off the coast of INDO CHINA, as a member of a coordinated search and attack group consisting of FLASHER, HAWKBILL and BEGONA under the tactical command of Captain E. H. BRYANT, U.S.N., in HAWKBILL.
2. The first series of attacks occurred on 4 December and were characterized by skill and determination. At 0745 a contact report from HAWKBILL indicated that FLASHER was on the path of a westbound convoy, and at 0749 four sets of masts were sighted through the rain squalls. At 0844, after tracking from ahead, FLASHER dived to conduct a submerged approach in the very spotty visibility still prevailing. At 0915 she fired four torpedoes at an ASASHIO Class DD which had appeared suddenly out of the mist at range 2,000 yards. Immediately after observing two hits on the DD, a four torpedo set-up was fired at a large tanker in the formation. Two hits in this target were heard after being driven down by a close, and closing, escort vessel. FLASHER was depth-charged but returned to the attack and fired four more torpedoes at the DD at 1251. This counter attack was described as "a very thorough working over with many king-sized explosions very close aboard". Back at periscope depth at 1410 FLASHER observed that the DD had sunk, and that the tanker, burning from end to end, was a total loss. However, FLASHER had to administer the coup de grace at 1921 with one torpedo, range 600 yards.
3. The second series of attacks, which resulted in even more damage to the enemy, took place on 21 December. At 1008, while patrolling submerged off HON. DO, INDO-CHINA, FLASHER observed a convoy pass out of torpedo range, northbound along the coast. At 1204 she surfaced and commenced the chase. At 0100 the next morning, contact was regained, and during the next three hours FLASHER completely out-manuevered the four escorts and succeeded in delivering a surface

Serial 0165

24 January 1945.

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

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:
 USS FLASHER Conf. Ltr.
 A16-3 Serial 07, dated
 2 January, 1945. Report
 of Fifth War Patrol.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) -- Report of Fifth War
 Patrol -- Comment on.

 attack which produced six hits from ten torpedoes fired, and sank
 three loaded tankers.

4. The award of the Submarine Combat Insignia is
 authorized for this patrol.

5. Commander GRIDER, his Officers and Crew are
 congratulated upon this excellent patrol which has added the
 following assessed damage to the FLASHER's impressive total:

SUNK

1 - DD (ASASHIO Class - EU)	1,700 Tons (Attacks 1 & 3)
1 - AO (Large - EU)	10,000 Tons (Attacks 2 & 4)
3 - AO (Large - EU)	<u>30,000 Tons</u> (Attacks 5 & 6)

Grand Total 41,700 Tons

JAMES FIFEDISTRIBUTION:

Cominch	(3) Direct	CTG-71.5	(2)
Vice Opnav	(2) Direct	CTG-71.8	(2)
Vice Opnav Op-230	(1)	CTG-71.9	(2)
Com1stFlt	(1)	DivComsSubRon-12	(1 each)
Com2ndFlt	(1)	DivComsSubRon-18	(1 each)
Com7thFlt	(2)	DivComsSubRon-26	(1 each)
ComSubs1stFlt	(30)	S/M School, N.L. Conn.	(2)
ComSubs2ndFlt	(4)	Comdt. NYD Puget Sound	(1)
CTF-71	(7)	SubAd, Mare Island	(2)
CTG-71.3	(2)	S/Ms 7thFlt	(1)
CTG-71.4	(2)		

THIS REPORT WILL BE DESTROYED PRIOR TO
 ENTRY INTO ENEMY CONTROLLED WATERS.

J. B. Miller
 J. B. MILLER,
 Flag Secretary.

Serial 08

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
3 January 1945.

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

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to
USS FLASHER (SS249) -
Report of Fifth War
Patrol.

From: The Commander Submarine Squadron EIGHTEEN.
To: The Commander in Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via: (1) The Commander Submarines, SEVENTH FLEET.
(2) The Commander SEVENTH FLEET.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of Fifth War Patrol.

1. The fifth war patrol of the FLASHER was conducted in the SOUTH CHINA SEA, in areas west of LUZON and adjacent to the FRENCH INDO-CHINA Coast. FLASHER participated in two wolf packs, one with HAWKBILL and BECUNA, the other composed of HOE, BECUNA, DACE and PADDLE.

2. This patrol was of 49 days duration, 34 of which were spent in the assigned areas. It is significant that only one full day was spent submerged. This resulted in excellent area coverage and presented the advantage of FLASHER being in the right place at the right time for the subsequent attacks which took place.

3. Attack No. 1. Acting on a contact report received from HAWKBILL on 4 December the FLASHER was able to develop the first attack upon a DD which was part of a convoy composed of an AO, a net tender and several smaller escorts. Four torpedoes were fired at the DD from a range of 1650 yards on approximately 90° track angles to obtain two hits in the vicinity of the engine room spaces.

Attack No. 2. Immediately after disposing of the DD the FLASHER then brought the stern tubes to bear and two torpedoes were fired at the AO from 1900 yards on about 65° track angles both of which hit and caused it to catch fire. At this time the escorts took charge and FLASHER was subjected to a very thorough depth charging.

Attack No. 3. Upon regaining periscope depth FLASHER again took the initiative and closed the convoy to attack what appeared to be another DD and the damaged AO which presented themselves as overlapping. A total of six torpedoes were fired from about 2000 yards on 120° track angles with four of them aimed at the DD and two aimed at the AO. Four hits were netted in the DD while the AO did not appear to be affected. Again FLASHER was given a very thorough working over which she successfully rode out and evaded.

Attack No. 4. Undaunted by counterattacks FLASHER surfaced in the late afternoon and observed the AO to be still burning and in an awash condition. At dark the submarine closed in for the kill and fired

Serial 08

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
3 January 1945.

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

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to
USS FLASHER (SS249) -
Report of Fifth War
Patrol.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) - Report of Fifth War Patrol.

one torpedo from 600 yards on 90° track angle to dispose of this menace to navigation which had withstood the attacks previously described.

Attack No. 5. On the morning of 21 December FLASHER contacted a convoy of five AO's escorted by one DD and three patrol craft which she chased and tracked until the early morning of 22 December. Taking advantage of the lackadaisical tactics of the DD escort the FLASHER attacked from the surface the two leading AO's of the column with three torpedoes each from the bow tubes at a range of 2200 yards on 115° track angles. Two hits were obtained on each ship which set them afire and caused them to blow up.

Attack No. 6. This was the second phase of the preceding attack when FLASHER came about rapidly and fired four torpedoes from the stern tubes at the third AO of the column from 1900 yards range on 130° track angles to obtain two hits. After burning for some time it too blew up and disappeared. The engagement was broken off after a short period of evasion with the DD which apparently never sighted the submarine.

4. With the exception of number three main engine the material condition was very good. She will be given a normal refit by U.S.S. EURYALE and Submarine Division 182 Relief Crew.

5. Cleanliness of the ship upon return from patrol was exceptional. The morale of the crew is very high.

6. The Squadron Commander extends his heartiest congratulations to the Commanding Officer, officers and crew upon the results of this highly effective patrol and for adding to the already illustrious record of the FLASHER. Since there was so much incendiary activity on the part of the enemy, it might be called the "Flaming Action" patrol.

C. C. Burlingame
C.C. BURLINGAME,
Acting.

U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249),

CONFIDENTIAL:
SS249/A16-3/A9

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
2 January, 1945.

Serial 07

From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. FLASHER.
To : The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Official Channels.

Subject: U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249), Report of War
Patrol Number 5.

Enclosure: (A) Subject report.

1. Enclosure (A) covering the fifth war patrol of this vessel conducted in the Scarborough Shoal - Camranh Bay Area of the South China Sea during the period 15 November, 1944 to 2 January, 1945 is forwarded herewith.

G W Grider
G. W. GRIDER.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(A) PROLOGUE.

Returned from Fourth War Patrol on 20 October, 1944; commenced refit in Fremantle, W.A. Refit was conducted by EURYALE and Division 182 relief crew. The following major items of work were accomplished during refit:

New electronic equipment installed as follows:

I.F.F., V.H.F., A.P.R., Loran.

Two main engines were overhauled.

Two new propellers installed to eliminate "singing shafts".

The upper pintle bearing on the rudder was found to have excessive clearance but no corrective action was taken at this time.

On 31 October, 1944 the Commanding Officer, Commander R. T. WHITAKER, U.S.N., was relieved by Commander G. W. GRIDER, U.S.N.

Refit was completed on 3 November. Underway training began on 5 November and consisted of six day's training underway with one convoy exercise and the firing of two exercise torpedoes. Training was completed on 12 November and final loading, on 13 November.

(B) NARRATIVE.

The following officers and chief petty officers are attached to this ship on her fifth war patrol:

NAME	RANK OR RATE	PREVIOUS NUMBER WAR PATROLS
G. W. GRIDER,	Comdr.	7
P. T. GLENNON,	Lieut.	7
G. F. COFFIN,	Lieut.	8
T. A. BURKE, Jr.	Lieut.	3
T. R. McCANTS,	Lieut.	4
F. B. HARRISON, Jr.	Lt(jg).	2
J. G. HAMLIN,	Lt(jg).	3
J. E. ATKINSON,	Ens.	1
BUCK, Spive L.	CMoMM(AA)	7
CAREY, Harold S.	CY(PA)	7
CYPHERD, Victor M.	CEM(PA)	7
DE BOIS, Frank J.	CMoMM(AA) (T)	4
PEARCE, William J.	CTM(AA)	8
SHERMAN, Francis O.	CRT(AA) (T)	4

CONFIDENTIAL:

B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd):

Departed Fremantle at 1300, 15 November 1944 in company with U.S.S. BUCUNA and U.S.S. HAWKBILL as a coordinated search and attack group, Captain E.H. BRYANT, U.S.N., on HAWKBILL as group commander. Conducted convoy exercise in joint zone until 2300, then proceeded in company enroute to Port Darwin.

15 - 22 November

Uneventful. Proceeding Darwin conducting tracking drills, submerged and surface approaches, and tests of the new electronic equipment with HAWKBILL. At 0900 on the 21st, spoke the HMAS Castlemain (J244), heading west. Rendezvoused with (J641) and proceeded to Darwin. Moored outboard of BUCUNA and HAWKBILL alongside U.S.S. CHANTICLEER at 1027, 22 November. Received 33,573 gallons of fuel oil, 590 gallons of lub oil, 4200 gallons of fresh water. Effectuated repairs to SJ radar training gear, retuned the VHF, touched up the paint, beered the crew.

At 1653, 22 November, underway without escort enroute to patrol area off northwest coast of Luzon. Our route is east of Timor, through the Banda and Timor seas, passing between the Tiger Islands and Saleier Islands thence to Makassar Strait, Sibutu Pass and Mindoro Strait. We are first boat out and are to rendezvous with HAWKBILL the second night in the area. Spoke the J246 while proceeding out of swept channel.

23 November

<u>Plane</u>	At 0437 made radar contact with morning flight of medium bombers from Darwin. Sighted one at sixteen miles. Several more showed on SD screen.
<u>Contact</u>	
<u>No.1</u>	

At 1043 lookout reported plane close aboard. Dived. Surfaced fifteen minutes later directly under the guns of a large frigate bird. (Bird Contact number 1). Bow buoyancy vent will not close.

<u>Plane</u>	At 1528 began receiving IFF signals at a range of 35 miles. Closed in to five miles before we sighted him in a cloudless sky; a silver Liberator, very hard to see. Drove him off with recognition signals and emergency flares.
<u>Contact</u>	
<u>No.2</u>	

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Ship
Contact
No. 1

While passing through the strait between Timor and Moa Islands in bright moonlight sighted a small boat, not picked up on radar. Believe it was a wooden fishing boat. Avoided. Had bow buoyancy vent back in commission by 0300. (See major defects).

24 November

Plane
Contact
No. 3

At 0759 made IFF contact with several Liberators, sighted three and sent recognition signal to one who came in to 4 miles. No answer, but he went away.

25 November

At 0125 made SJ contact at range of 4000 yards on starboard beam. Dodged this contact for the next half hour. It plotted on a course south at twenty knots and closed to 2000 yards; the night was clear and bright, but nothing was ever sighted. Finally slowed down and let it pass ahead. The executive officer believes it was an ionized sea gull.

Ship
Contact
No. 2

At 0440 made SJ contact to the north at a range of 14,000 yards. As daylight was beginning and the pip did not look large, did not investigate. Ship could have passed through Saleier Pass before we could end-around.

During the day while rounding SW tip of Celebes, sighted a large number of native sail boats. Investigated the first one and passed over a carton of Chesterfields.

26 November

At 1821 exchanged calls with and sighted U.S.S. BESUGO, southbound. Torpedo Data Computer out of commission (See major defects).

27 November

Plane
Contact
No. 4

At 0739 made SD contact on plane, 23 miles. No IFF. Passed about 18 miles ahead. Looked like Liberator.

CONFIDENTIAL:

B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Plane At 1059 sighted same plane on reverse
Contact course. Passed ahead at 10 miles.
No. 5

At 1458 dived for trim and training. TDC still out of commission. Put pressure test on all torpedoes in tubes. Found one leaky torpedo. Surfaced at 1700. Transited Sibutu Pass. At 2043 sent message requesting TDC spares from a south-bound boat.

28 November

At 0041 when ten miles north of Pearl Bank made SJ contact with U.S.S. HARDHEAD. At 0100, HARDHEAD came alongside and passed over TDC spare motor; four hours and seventeen minutes after sending despatch. That's better service than one gets alongside the tender. HARDHEAD departed. We remained in same location, planning to patrol northern mouth of channel between Doc Can Island and Pearl Bank today, looking for two cruisers reported by aviator to have left Balikpapan yesterday morning. Believe HAWKBILL will be in vicinity of Sibutu Pass.

Dived at 0628 about five miles north of channel. Patrolled all morning. Nothing came through the channel, saw no signs of air or patrol activity, so we surfaced at 1600 and proceeded northward.

29 November

Plane Proceeding north in the Sulu Sea. At
Contacts 0937 made SD contact with friendly air-
No. 6-8 craft at 32 miles. He did not close. At 1019 made another SD contact at 50 miles, friendly. At 1136 made SD contact on friendly plane at 38 miles. Sighted him at 20 miles. He moved in slowly to 3 miles and circled us. It was a PB2Y. We gave him recognition signals and flares and he pulled away to the westward. Established VHF communications and asked him if there were any targets in the area. He said "Negative"; we then asked him politely not to come so close next time. He said, "Roger, Wilco", and shoved off.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Plane
Contacts
No.9-10

At 1335 OOD and lookout sighted two engine bomber flying low and headed at us. Dived. Surfaced at 1423. At 1613 made SD contact and later sighted three planes, they passed 21 miles ahead, flying high.

Exchanged recognition signals with U.S.S. GUNNEL by SJ in APO East Pass at 2158.

30 November

Plane
Contact
No.11

At 0144 in Mindoro Strait made SJ contact on plane at 13,000 yards. We put our tail to him and he passed 8,000 yards away, flying low and on opposite course. Could be plainly seen at 10,000 yards in the bright moonlight.

Cleared Mindoro Strait about 0400 and headed for rendezvous established by ComWolfPak; 120 miles to the westward. Steamed all day without event. Dived in the evening to flush out number 4 FBT. Auxiliary engine muffler seems to have a hole in it.

Arrived at rendezvous at 1958 and circled until 2102. Apparently HAWKBILL is still behind us. Set course to the eastward to look for a convoy reported by plane to be in Palawan Pass; thought we might get him if he headed north from there.

1 December

Convoy didn't appear; at 1030 started return to rendezvous. Fell in with HAWKBILL enroute and she assigned a patrol station for tomorrow. Proceeded toward it.

2 December

Patrolled assigned station all day. At 1753 headed for rendezvous point assigned by ComWolfPak in western part of area A6.

3 December

Rendezvoused with HAWKBILL and BECUNA at 0700. HAWKBILL passed over supplementary patrol instructions, assigning FLASHER to north end of patrol line in A6 on Longitude 117° east, HAWKBILL at Latitude 12° 55' north. FLASHER twenty miles north during

CONFIDENTIAL:B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

daylight, 30 miles at night. At 0755 set course for assigned point 80 miles to northeast. Wind and sea making up from northeast. Arrived on station at 1642.

4 December

Patrolling station. Favi ator got his first sight in 36 hours, showed us about fifteen miles to west of assigned station. At 0705 started heading east.

Ship
Contact
No.3

At 0745, received contact report from HAWBILL on westbound convoy. A plot showed us directly in its path. At 0749 sighted convoy bearing 080°(T). Could see three or four sets of masts and one large ship through the rainsqualls. Began tracking from ahead.

Sent message to HAWBILL and at 0844 dived thirteen miles ahead of convoy. Large swells made depth control very difficult. Visibility conditions were poor with many heavy rainsqualls in the area. A mast could be seen occasionally, but nothing more. When the generated range closed to 8000 yards the whole area was blotted out in a heavy downpour. Much pinning and screw noises on sound; periscope up almost continuously.

Attack
No.1

Finally at a range of 2000 yards an ASASHIO class destroyer popped out of the mist; relative bearing 14, angle on the bow 30 starboard. Started swinging right but the gyros were swinging faster. At 0915 with gyros ranging from 28 to 51 and runs from 1650 to 1100 yards, track angles from 80 to 103 starboard, fired four torpedoes spread by periscope. Estimated target speed 15 knots. Down scope.

Heard first hit as scope was going back up. Heard second and saw the spray rising around him in the room. He began to smoke heavily; his screws stopped, and he fell off to his left, settling aft and listing.

Sometime before firing, a sweep around showed that the rain had lifted and there were three or four escorts, one a net tender, and a large tanker on the starboard quarter of the destroyer.

After hitting the destroyer, took a set up on the tanker and started firing our stern tubes at him.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Attack
No. 2

At 0918 fired first stern tube. Gyro angle 233, torpedo run 1900, track angle 60 port, estimated speed 10 knots. After firing first one, the scope went under and wouldn't come back out. The assistant TDC operator was instructed to fire three more, spreading by offset. Consequently, the second torpedo was fired seventeen seconds after the first without a spread.

The scope then came back out. The target was turning toward; angle on the bow 30 port and growing smaller. Checked fire.

Turned attention to destroyer for killer shot. He was dead in the water with his stern almost under and very close; he had drifted around to about a 130 degree port track now. Took sweep around and saw another destroyer or patrol boat boiling down on us at about 500 - 1000 yards. Went deep.

As we were going deep, heard two timed hits on tanker. Apparently he was making more than ten knots and his maneuver slowed him down just enough to let them catch them both in the tail. Verily, we smell of the rose.

At 0925 the depth charges started; about sixteen in all, mostly close. At 0931 heard screws through the hull. Executive officer: "If he drops now, they're gonna be close". At 0932, four depth charges. They were.

We were under a good negative gradient which started at 250 feet. We retired to the south and west, gradually pulling away from the searchers.

At 1053 we were back at periscope depth. To the north we saw: a. The tanker on fire in his engine room aft and settling by the stern. b. An ASASHIO class destroyer standing by, about 500 yards nearer and a little off to the left of the tanker. c. Two escort vessels and the net tender making sweeps around the tanker. Range to the destroyer was 7500 yards.

Started a reload. At 1136' turned around and headed in to attack the destroyer and finish off the tanker. The plan is to fire three at each, depth set six feet. At 1205 reload completed. When the range to the destroyer was 4400 yards another rain squall closed in and visibility was reduced to zero.

CONFIDENTIAL:

U.S.S. FLAMER (SS249),

3) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

This may have been the same destroyer we attacked in the morning. It doesn't seem natural that a healthy, intelligent destroyer would lie to for so long. On the other hand, this destroyer was on a perfectly even keel with his boat topping a little above the surface and parallel; his starboard side showed no signs of damage; his searchlight and echo ranging gear were in excellent operating condition; and the escorts were not protecting him while they were circling the tanker. It is the commanding officer's opinion that it was another ship.

Continued to close taking almost continuous looks at the rain. At 1239 saw an outline that looked like our target. She was underway, beyond, and off to the left of where he should have been. We started to swing left.

At 1249 the rain squall lifted somewhat and we saw that we were chasing an escort. Destroyer was still lying to, range 1400 yards, angle on the bow about 110 starboard. Tanker not in sight. An escort was crossing the bow of the destroyer and coming in our general direction, so decided to go ahead and fire four at the destroyer.

Attack
No. 3 --

At 1251 commenced firing four torpedoes at the destroyer, spread by periscope, coverage one and one half target length. While firing, saw bow of tanker projecting beyond stern of destroyer by about an eighth of his length, so tried to lob five and six close under destroyer stern to hit the tanker.

Heard two hits on destroyer followed by two more. We almost broached so periscope was put down and negative flooded. By time periscope was up we were too deep. The last look at the escort showed him close and coming in so went on down to deep submergence, speeded up and got off the track.

At 1256 the depth charges started. This turned out to be a very thorough working over with many king-sized explosions very close aboard. However, the worst of it was over in four minutes and the remaining ones were comfortably distant. A total of 46 were dropped, the attack lasted for 29 minutes.

We retired to the southwest, came to periscope depth at 1410 and sighted three escorts and the tanker, now burning fiercely along his whole length. No sign of the destroyer even with fifteen feet of periscope out and the escorts in sight down to their water lines.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

A post firing analysis of explosion times indicates that all four hits on this attack were in the destroyer. The two targets were not in line until the last look and consequently all torpedoes were set on six feet. The two fired at the tanker hard under the destroyers stern must have hit the destroyer. The breaking up noise heard in the direction of the destroyer lasted a very short time.

We continued to retire to the southwest, assuming that the tanker would sink; reloaded and checked all torpedoes that had been in flooded tubes.

It appears that this convoy consisted only of the tanker, the two destroyers and the three escorts. If there had been more ships, it does not seem reasonable that a destroyer and three escorts would remain with the damaged one. A thorough sweep all around was never obtained before the first attack this morning because of rain squalls.

At 1700 sighted BECUNA coming up from the westward; surfaced and exchanged calls with her. Heavy black smoke was still coming from the tanker. We expected her to be on the bottom by now.

Sent message to ComWolfPak reporting results and telling him that we would finish off tanker after dark. Received instructions to return to assigned station when mission was completed.

As darkness fell, we started in. Obtained radar ranges at 19,000 yards. Eased in carefully and found the tanker burning briskly with deep oil fires in her wells and her bridge structure a skeleton of flames, completely abandoned and all escorts departed. She was back on an even keel, however, with her well decks still about a foot above water. She appeared to be salvagable.

We came in parallel and to windward at 300 yards to check identification, swung away and stopped at 600 yards.

CONFIDENTIAL:

B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Attack
No.4

The movie camera and two after tubes were made ready. At 1921 fired one torpedo at her after well and started the camera. One of the great shots of the war was lost to posterity when the torpedo hit, practically put out the fires, and sank her in almost complete darkness.

This target appeared loaded when first seen in the morning. The odor suggested bunker oil and was very strong when she sank. She was the TITO MARU, 9650 tons.

Proceeded to assigned station, arriving at 2300. Reported results to ComWolfPak.

5 December

Uneventful. Patrolling assigned station.

6 DecemberPlane
Contacts
No.12-14

Three aircraft contacts today. Sighted one at 0950 to the south headed west; another at 1106 to the north that appeared to be circling. An SD contact at 1120 at 30 miles. Last two showed friendly IFF. Investigated circling plane at 1106, notified ComWolfPak; misunderstood order from him and continued north until out of area at 1800. Asked advice and he ordered us back at 1830. An error in one character of the Wolf Pack code can cause serious misunderstandings.

7 DecemberPlane
Contacts
No.15-17

Three more plane contacts today. The first one, at 1028, showed friendly IFF, was south of us headed west. We dived to periscope depth when he turned in our direction and closed to 12 miles. He turned away shortly and we surfaced after 26 minutes. The second, at 1305, was an SD contact without IFF at 30 miles. He did not close. The third at 1346 was sighted to the south headed east and did not close. No SD contact on him.

8 December

At 0830, ComWolfPak ordered the scouting line moved east to longitude 118; arrived on station at 1500.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

9 December

Plane Patrolling station. One plane contact
Contact during day, not sighted.
No.13

Ship At 1855, SJ contact bearing 010 at
Contact 23,000 yards. Called rest of pack and
No.4 started tracking. At 1945 sighted hospital
ship, course 250, speed 14. Notified pack;
closed to 7000 yards to verify, and then
returned to station. HAWKBILL followed ship.

10 December

Plane Uneventful except for four plane contacts,
Contacts one of which pushed us under in the after-
No.19-22 noon. They may be Liberators, but none
showed IFF.

The line was shifted back to 117 longi-
tude during the night.

11 December

Uneventful.

12 December

Uneventful.

13 December

Plane Patrolling station. At 1020 sighted
Contact plane to south heading west. Also saw what
No.23 looked like recognition grenade from HAWK-
BILL. At 1213 ComWolfPak shifted line to
longitude 116 at flank speed.

Received CTF 71 serial 24 at 2026 ordering us to
patrol off Manila Bay north of Lubang Island to watch
for combatant ships coming out. Departed scouting
line, acknowledged to CTF 71, reporting that we would
arrive off Manila about noon of 14th.

14 December

Plane At 0710, chased under by a plane. Went
Contact deep for bathythermograph reading; good
No.24 negative gradient at 300 feet. Surfaced at
0741

CONFIDENTIAL:

3) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Watched our planes make two strikes on Subic Bay. Lots of planes and flak over the islands; no one paying much attention to us. Could hear conversation of VHF: "Transport in Subic Bay, lets get him", etc.

Plane At 1001, when at a point bearing 240(T)
Contact 18 miles from Corrigedor, we were chased
No.25 under by a plane that came in from seaward. We were on station, so remained submerged and patrolled east and west in the bight of the 100 fathom curve.

Sighted numerous planes during day. Surfaced at 1804 and headed for a point 10 miles north of Cabra Island. Arrived at 2043.

Plane At 2047 made SJ contact on 2 planes bear-
Contact ing 054, 30,000 yards. They seemed to be
No.26 searching the area where we submerged this morning. Lost the planes after about 15 minutes. The APR indicated a 180 mgs radar in the area which gradually grew stronger. At 2150, SJ contact at 14,000 yards; closing. We dived when it had closed to 8000 yards.

Twenty minutes later the SD was raised and the planes were still there at six and eight miles. Eased back down to periscope depth.

Plane At 2235 all clear; surfaced with the SD
Contact in operation. Two minutes later we had
No.27 contact at 17 miles, closing. At 2237, dived when range had closed to three miles. Decided to give them an hour to go away.

Surfaced at 2345 with the SD in operation.

15 December

Plane At 0025, they came back and we went down
Contact when they closed to 3 miles. Their radar is
No.28 180 mgs. Decided to give them another hour and to quit using the SD. The night is very dark.

Surfaced at 0130. We have been getting interference on the SJ from Cabra Island and strong indications on the APR at 530 mgs. Thought Cabra might be the stool pigeon and decided to open out to 20 miles. Made a couple of distant SJ contacts on planes while doing so.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Ship At 0320 while congratulating ourselves
Contact on having eluded the planes, made SJ contact
No. 5 on patrol boat standing out of Manila Bay,
 bearing 270, range 14,000 yards. Put our
 stern to him. He closed to 9500 yards and
 we progressively increased speed before he
 began to open range with us at flank speed.
 Single small pip. Decided not to investi-
 gate. He appeared to have a 150 mcs radar.

We were working around him to the north when we
 received orders to take station on scouting line
 fifty miles west of Cape Bolinao. We cheerfully set
 course for that position. This night was worse than
 the training period.

The patrol boat gave no indication of having con-
 tacted us. The planes evidently could locate us with
 their radar, given time, and could come in like a
 homing pigeon on our SD. Effective reconnaissance
 of this area by a single submarine would be very
 difficult while the enemy was using night search
 planes on a large scale.

Plane Two more plane contacts on the SJ during
Contacts the early morning; each closed to 8000
No. 29-32 yards and then opened out. The SD was
 started 15 minutes before sunrise.

Two plane contacts at 0620. One passed
 seven miles to the eastward in full day-
 light; we turned tail to him, slowed, and
 he did not see us.

Plane Arrived on station at 1416. Sent FLASH-
Contacts ER serial four enroute, describing our
No. 33-34 planned movements on scouting line. At
 1538 the scouting line was shifted to an
 arc of 200 miles radius from Mindoro; pro-
 ceeded to new station at eastern end of
 arc. Two more plane contacts during day.
 Listened on 2880 KCS to HANKEBILL and BECUNA
 track a convoy. Asked ComWolfPak if he
 could use us. Reply: "Negative". Arrived
 on new station at 2049.

16 December

Plane Plane contact on SJ at 0140. Sighted
Contacts and made SJ contact on north-bound hospital
No. 35-38 ship at 0523. She was about fifteen miles
Ship off coast, properly marked, looked about
Contact the size of a medium AK.
No. 6

CONFIDENTIAL:

U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249).

3) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Several plane contacts during day. Chased down by six fighters at 0756. Surfaced at 0815.

At 1604 set course for Camranh Bay, French Indo China as part of coordinated attack group with BECUNA (OTC) and HOE, as directed by CTF 71.

At 1746 sighted HAWKBILL against sunset to the westward; held course. As we approached, it grew darker and she could no longer be clearly seen; received no recognition signals. At 1827, at range of 4000 yards, changed course to the north to go around her. She then started chasing FLASHER. It was necessary to pound full speed into the sea in order to open the range. Communicated with HAWKBILL by radio and found that it was indeed he who was chasing us. Sent him our greetings.

Set course to rendezvous with BECUNA and HOE, having received orders from BECUNA in the meantime.

17 December

Rendezvoused with BECUNA at 0815. She passed over Opord. Proceeded toward Camranh Bay on scouting line with BECUNA and HOE.

Plane At 1107, momentary SD contact at 11
Contact miles. At 1110, sighted plane at range
No. 39 of two miles; a Liberator. Exchanged
recognition. He showed no IFF.

At 1300 received MINGO'S excellent contact report on enemy forces leaving Camranh Bay.

Seas are very heavy from the north.

18 December

Proceeding toward Camranh Bay.

19 December

Plane Three plane contacts during day.
Contacts Wind force seven from North. Forty
No. 40-42 foot waves. No sights for two days.

Picked up land on the SJ at 1347. Believed land to be Hon Lon island.

CONFIDENTIAL

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

There are now five subs in our pack; the DACE and PADDLE having been ordered to join. We took position as northern unit of three offshore boats on longitude 109-40 E.

At about 1600 received DACE contact report on convoy that left Camranh at 0900 headed north. Changed course to north to try to overtake. It was impossible to make over seven knots into the sea and the current was setting south at four knots. Gave up pursuit after half an hour.

During night discovered that we were south of Camranh Bay and that the land on the SJ was Davaich Head. Tuned SD on land.

Exchanged positions with DACE during night. She had suffered slight damage from "weather and grounding". We are now northern inshore unit of pack/

Noted very strong radar indications in vicinity of Camranh Point at 220 mgs.

20 December

At 0630, dived for submerged patrol bearing 060(T) distance 10 miles from Camranh Point. Weather is no better. Depth control very difficult. By heading north at four knots we were able to hold our own against current.

Surfaced at 1848. Obtained permission from Pack Commander to patrol tomorrow off Hon Doi Island, north of Van Fong Bay. This looked like a better spot for intercepting north-bound traffic from Camranh.

21 December

Proceeded to a point five miles off Hon Doi and dived at 0625.

ShipContactNo. 7

At 0905 sighted patrol boat bearing 177(T) coming up the coast. Maneuvered to seaward of him and he passed 3000 yards astern. At 0932 heard more screws to the south; headed for them. At 0945 sighted a torpedo boat bearing 257. At 0955 sighted several large tankers on landward side of the CHIDORI. The visibility was very poor due to high seas and spray.

At 1008 sighted a destroyer on starboard beam of last ship. He passed about 2000 yards ahead. Did not fire because of doubtful depth performance of torpedoes in heavy sea and because of poor solution. Convoy passed and proceeded up the coast.

CONFIDENTIAL:

B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

At 1031 headed east to open out from the beach.

Surfaced at 1204; sent contact report to pack; headed north in pursuit at three-engine speed. Heavy seas prohibited faster speed. We were making about $12\frac{1}{2}$ knots through the water and fighting a three-knot current. Estimated convoy speed at $8\frac{1}{2}$ knots through the water.

FLASHER stayed about twenty miles offshore until dark, then closed to seven miles. Received permission from BECUNA to chase; no other ships in pursuit. Expected to regain contact at about 2200.

At 2043 tracked four side lobes from the beach for a few minutes.

22 December

After 2200 our spirits began to droop.

The weather began to improve as we moved northward. It was fairly calm by 0500.

We had decided to reverse course at 0100. At that time the navigator noticed that Tortue Island was underway. This turned out to be our convoy. It developed into five large tankers, three smaller escorts and a destroyer. Speed eleven knots, not zig zagging.

Commenced tracking and working ahead on their starboard, seaward side. It took us until 0400 to get ahead of the convoy. All the time we were working ahead the destroyer remained exactly between us and the nearest ship. Occasionally he would turn on his radar and create very heavy interference on our SJ. Disquieting.

The other three escorts were distributed along the seaward side of the convoy. The formation was very tight with less than 500 yards between tankers. They were not zigging, but appeared to shift from column to line of bearing from time to time. Attack from the seaward side appeared impracticable.

I Decided to try an attack from the land side. Convoy was twelve miles off the beach and about fifteen miles south of the pass between Cape Batangan and Kulao Rai Island. FLASHER was 10,000 yards, 30° on the port bow of the leading ship; ships in column. As we moved into this position, the destroyer stayed between us and convoy until he was dead ahead of leading ship. He then began to drop aft on the starboard side of convoy. A-h-h-h-h!

CONFIDENTIAL.

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

There was one escort on port bow of leading ship; all others were on the starboard flank of the convoy; convoy in column. As we started in, a light appeared on the beach abeam and another on Cape Batangan. These apparently were navigational lights turned on by request. The horizon was hazy in the direction of the convoy. There was a black cloud behind FLASHER, but it was moving away fast.

Started in at 0415. Sighted targets at a range of 6000 yards. At 0446 began firing three bow tubes at leading tanker; torpedo run 2500 yards, track 115 port. Shifted to second tanker and fired three at him. Then swung right to bring stern tubes to bear on third tanker. While swinging observed two hits in each of first two tankers. A small fire started on the first one.

Just prior to firing the stern tubes, the second tanker blew up and illuminated the area like a night football game.

At 0448 fired four stern shots at the third tanker. Torpedo run 1900, track angle about 110 starboard. He exploded immediately when hit and made the visibility even better. The flames from the second and third targets flowed together and made a really impressive fire.

Swung to course 180 and went ahead flank plus. This put the convoy abeam but we didn't want to get any nearer the shallow water. Took a fathometer reading; fifty six fathoms.

When we fired, the destroyer had dropped back to the starboard quarter of the last ship. When we headed south, we sighted him two points forward of our port beam at a range of 4000 yards. He made one circle to the left and fell into position on FLASHER's port beam; course 180, speed 19, range 3200 yards, FLASHER guide. Sent the lookouts below. We could see him in full detail with the unaided eye.

This weird formation cruised south for about two miles before the destroyer slowed down and dropped aft. Apparently he never saw us. We breathed a prayer of thanks to the camouflage artists and slowed to flank speed.

CONFIDENTIAL:

6) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Shortly after the destroyer dropped back, the first target blew up and added his light to the flames. The entire sea aft was covered with billowing red fire which burned for about forty minutes. All hands came up, two at a time, and had a look. It was something to see. When we passed to leeward of the mess, there was a strong odor of naphtha. The explosions suggested gasoline, but the fire gave off great clouds of heavy black smoke that resembled oil.

All three tankers disintegrated with the explosions; were swallowed in the flames and not seen again.

The destroyer went back to the formation for a moment, then proceeded southward along the coast in the direction from which he had come. No depth charges were dropped; no guns were fired. Apparently they believed they had struck a minefield.

FLASHER opened out to the southeast, sent a message to CTF 71 reporting results, then dived for a rest at 0630.

Surfaced at 1631 and headed for the barn.

23 December

Ship At 0325, when 48 miles bearing 135° from Cam-
Contact ranh Bay, made SJ contact on a northbound convoy
No. 8 of three ships and two escorts. Sent contact report at 0400 to BECUNA, DACE, HOE and PADDLE on Wolf Pack frequency. Tracked them until 0500; course 355, speed 13. Could not see them at 6000 yards. Sent another contact report at 0500, then broke off and resumed course to southward.

At 2100, exchanged calls with U.S.S. GURNARD, north-bound.

24 December

At 0901 sighted a drifting mine. Attempted to sink with 20mm fire. Scored two hits but mine did not sink or explode.

25 December

Crossed equator at 0930. Picked up BARBERO'S SJ interference at 1930, she was overtaking us very slowly. Exchanged calls at 2145; she passed abeam about midnight.

CONFIDENTIAL;

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

26 December

Exploded a drifting mine at 1418. Sank another at 1450.

Just after sinking second mine, at 1453 sighted through the periscope what appeared to be a submarine bearing 072 (T); submerged to avoid being sighted. Tried until 1556 to close range, but never saw more than a single tall stack with no masts. May have been a small trawler or the shears of an American submarine; there was considerable mirage effect on the horizon. Surfaced at 1556.

27 December

Set course to pass west of Kangean Islands, between Goa Goa and Kangean Island. Sighted about twenty sailboats during day.

At 0537 exchanged recognition signals with U.S.S. BLUEGILL, northbound.

At 0830, gave carton of Chesterfields and loaf of bread to the first sailboat that passed close aboard. Crew of friendly natives.

At 1142, just after passing between Goa Goa and Karang Takat Reef made SD contact on plane at nine miles, closing. Dived.

Surfaced at 1229.

<u>Plane</u> <u>Contact</u> <u>No. 43</u>	At 1615 sighted a RUFFE at a range of about 15 miles coming from direction of Soerabaja enroute Lombok Strait. Submerged to periscope depth and watched him pass. He made several dips and circles in vicinity of the northwest point of Bali and finally disappeared over the Strait at 1655. He was painted black; a float plane.
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Surfaced at 1659. At 1729 sighted him returning. Submerged and watched him pass by headed for Soerabaja. We were then thirty miles from the entrance to Lombok Strait. Decided to remain submerged until sunset.

Surfaced at 1835 and set course for the Strait.

CONFIDENTIAL:

B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

Ship At 1909 while some twilight remained and with
Contact a full moon, sighted a patrol boat against the
No.9 background of Bali, bearing 203° (T), range 6
miles, angle on the bow zero. Picked him up
on SJ at same time.

Went to flank speed and put him broad on the starboard quarter. Estimated his top speed to be about fifteen knots. He was about the size of a PC boat. Intended to work to the south of him and continue through the Strait. He cooperated by always giving us a zero angle on the bow. Had he attempted to head us off he could have succeeded.

By 1930, when the range had closed to 4860 yards he opened fire with two automatic guns of about 20mm caliber. His speed was 17½ knots. Sent lookouts and OOD below. At this time we were on course 130 (T) and headed for Lombok Island.

He continued to shoot at us during the remainder of the chase. His shells landed astern, ahead, and on both sides, but never hit us. The shells did not seem large enough to cause serious materiel damage.

From time to time he would turn on his searchlight and send a short signal in the direction of Bali. It appeared to be "6T".

We continued to make small course changes to the right. Finally, by 1950, we were on 190 (T) headed for the middle of the Strait with the escort almost astern and the range opening. Minimum range was 4500 yards.

By 2020 the range was 7050 yards, most of his shots were falling astern and the situation was improving.

Ship At that time, sighted another patrol boat
Contact sharp on our starboard bow at a range of about
No.10 five miles. Submerged.

Went to 300 feet, got off our track to the westward, rigged for depth charge attack, and waited. We were almost in the center of the northern entrance to the Strait. There was a sharp negative gradient beginning at 250 feet.

We could hear shells hitting the water for about five minutes after the dive. He then slowed and commenced echo-ranging. We ran 1½ miles to the west and then resumed our course through the Strait. The other patrol boat was pinging to the south.

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

They never contacted us and did not drop depth charges. Apparently they thought we would try to escape to the northward. By 2100 both searchers were north of us. Came to periscope depth at 2150 and could barely see one patrol boat moving away slowly to the north.

Navigational fixes showed a $1\frac{1}{2}$ knot current against us. We had about 25 miles to go to clear the Strait.

At 2320 surfaced with the patrol boats out of sight though still pinging. Proceeded through the Strait without further incident. We gave the southwest cape of Lombok a wide berth, passing 4 miles east of Nusa Besar and seven miles from Lombok.

28 December

We were clear of Lombok Strait at 0055 and very glad to feel the Indian Ocean swells under the keel. At 0430 sent our Serial Six to CTF 71 describing speed and gun range of patrol boats, current and the method we used in clearing the SW cape.

Transit of Lombok Strait can be made very difficult by two patrol boats during bright moonlight. We were sighted against a clear background before we either sighted or radar-contacted the patrol boat, which was against a land background.

29-30 December

Uneventful. Exchanged calls with U.S.S. HARDHEAD and U.S.S. BESUGO at 0610 and 0748 respectively on the 29th.

At 2101, 30 December, moored alongside Y0 10 at Exmouth Gulf.

31 December

Underway at 0202, 31 December, having received 22,800 gallons of diesel fuel oil.

At 0855, exchanged calls with U.S.S. COUGAL, north-bound. Observed radar interference on the SJ to the southeast all night. Could not communicate.

1 January, 1945

No. 3 main engine out of commission at 1014. (See major defects).

U.S.S. FLASHER (SS249) ,

CONFIDENTIAL:

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd).

2 January 1945

Conducted sound tests and ran degaussing range.

At 1115 moored starboard side in nest alongside
U.S.S. EURYALE.