

# THE MAKING OF A BATTLE FLAG



U.S.S. GATO (SS-212) 1941 – 1945

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transcribed and edited by Robert G. Sharpe

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Tokyo Bay 1945

Photo courtesy of Kurt Kramer

U.S.S. Gato was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for five war patrols, 13 battle stars and the Submarine Combat Patrol Insignia with 10 stars for her service during World War II. Gato damaged or destroyed enemy ships and an aircraft; rescued civilians and downed aviators. She had many close encounters with the enemy and even sustained damage by friendly fire. A great ship, a great crew, and a proven leader for one of the largest classes of submarines ever made.



Tokyo Bay 1945

Photo courtesy of Kurt Kramer



U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) Ship's Patch



Courtesy Submarine Force Library and Museum

The Gato's Battle Flag shows 28 skulls, one for every torpedo that was considered to be a "Hit" that caused damage or destruction, with a prowling looking Gato shark in the middle.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors responsible for the data contained in this document include the following personnel:

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Lieutenant Commander W. C. Myers   | December 31, 1941 – October 2, 1942;   |
| Lieutenant Commander R. J. Foley   | October 2, 1942 – April 29, 1944;      |
| Lieutenant Commander R. M. Farrell | April 29, 1944 – March 29, 1945;       |
| Lieutenant Commander R. Holden     | 29 March 1945 – March 16, 1946; and    |
| Crew of the U.S.S. Gato SS-212     | December 31, 1941 – September 13, 1945 |

I would like to thank the following Gato personnel for their time, effort and information:

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Clarence Butler, MOMM 1 | Pueblo, CO           |
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Historical Naval Ship Association Organization - U.S.S. Gato's War Patrol reports:

San Francisco Maritime National Park Association – The Fleet Type Submarine NavPers 16160

Lastly, I would like to pay a special tribute to the Gato crew members that helped make the Gato's battle flag and are on eternal patrol:

"There is a port of no return, where ships may ride at anchor for a little space.  
And then some starless night the cable slips, leaving only an eddy at the mooring place.  
Gulls veer no longer, Sailor rest your oar. No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore."

"Sailors - Rest your oars."

## DISCLAIMER

Submarine War Patrol Reports were submitted at the end of every war patrol. These reports were compiled in accordance with Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet instruction. The instruction required the commanding officer to provide the following: A cover letter from the commanding officer to the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, via the Division commander, Squadron commander and Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet commander enclosing the war patrol report (track chart the Commander Submarine Force, only).

The Submarine War Patrol reports are currently available in a compressed .pdf format from the original carbon copy of the patrol report that was placed on microfilm in November 5, 1980. The microfilm copy is only as good as the original carbon copy. In some areas words or letters were blotted and difficult to read. In other cases the middle of a paragraph would be blank. Spelling, especially for the islands within Gato's patrol area, were often difficult to read.

For the most part information and data obtained was from the following sections: Prologue, Patrol Narrative, Weather, Ship Contacts, Aircraft Contacts, Attack Data, Anti-Submarine Measures and Evasion Tactics, Major Defects and Damage and Remarks. This information and data was transcribed, edited and restyled by me. The wording/grammar from the original patrol report was edited to highlight the events pertaining to the making of the Gato's Battle Flag.

Using the official U.S.S. Gato's War Patrol Reports, related historical documents, biographies, personal histories and conversations with previous Gato crew members, I hope that I have documented the Making of the U.S.S. Gato's Battle Flag.

What is typed herein is not an exact reproduction of the original war patrol report. Words were change to compensate for the individual commanding officer's writing styles. In some cases, words were added to make a complete sentence instead of a one-word submarine operational event or action. If necessary, words were omitted because they were not legible but could be eliminated because those words, sentence or sentences did not change the intent of the paragraph.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

### U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) was the lead ship in a highly successful class of 77 submarines built in the United States during World War II. The ship displaced 1,526 tons on the surface and 2,424 tons submerged and had a top speed of 21 knots surfaced, 9 knots submerged and a designed test depth of 300 feet. Gato was approximately 311 feet long and 27 feet wide and had a crew of 60 officers and men. She was initially armed with one 3-inch 50 caliber gun, four machine guns, and ten 21-inch torpedo tubes.



Radio Call Sign: November - Echo - Charlie - Whisky

The U.S.S. Gato (SS212) was built by the Electric Boat Company of Groton, Connecticut where she was launched on August 21, 1941 by Mrs. Royal E. Ingersoll, wife of then Rear Admiral Royal Ingersoll, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations. Gato was placed in commission, December 31, 1941, when Lieutenant Commander William C. Meyers assumed command. She conducted training out of New London, Connecticut until February 16, 1942, then sailed for the Pacific. She completed transit of the Panama Canal on February 24. During the transit she developed maintenance issues that were deemed in need of immediate repairs. Gato arrive at the Navy Yard, Mare Island CA on March 1, 1942. Repairs were completed within three weeks and Gato was scheduled for sea trial tests.



Launching August 21, 1941



After Commissioning December 31, 1941

New London, CT to Pearl Harbor, T.H.

### **Friendly Fire - March 23, 1942**

On the morning of March 23, 1942, Gato was conducting a trim dive in the swept channel off the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The U.S.S. Gato was depth bombed by the U.S. Naval lighter-than-aircraft TC-13 when she was misidentified and accidentally bombed by the TC 13. The following information provided is from the U.S.S. Gato's "Material damage caused by depth bombing of the U.S.S. Gato" report SS212/L11-1 Serial (010), dated April 1, 1942.

The U.S.S. Gato, under escort of the U.S.S. Humphreys APD-12 (exDD-236) and operating in accordance with approved operation orders, was proceeding at six knots, at periscope depth (60'), when between 08:10 to 08:21; four Mark 17 (325 pound) depth bombs were dropped by the TC-13 in two sticks of two bombs each. The first salvo was estimated by the Commanding Officer of the TC-13 to have landed within 150' of the periscope. Immediately after the first stick of two bombs exploded, Gato had taken to deep submergence and was proceeding at approximately 120 foot depth when the second salvo of bombs was dropped. The physical shock of both sticks of bombs was severe, and the second stick was markedly greater than the first. Personnel in the conning tower and in the after torpedo room were more adversely affected than those in the remainder of the ship. It was particularly noted that the audible noise of the explosion and the physical shock of the detonation wave were simultaneous. The effect was similar to that of being in close proximity to a large caliber gun when it is fired. The depth charges in each stick were set to explode at 50 feet and detonated almost simultaneously. Luckily, Gato was able to emergency surface and make it back to the Navy Yard, Mare Island.



Lighter Than Aircraft - TC-13

The U.S.S. Gato sustained the following notable damage:

1. The bow and stern planes were inoperative in power due to the solenoid in the bow tilting panel being knocked out. The bow planes could not be operated by hand and the solenoid was reset by hand. Paint chips and welding material were subsequently removed from the bow plane tilting gear in the superstructure. It is assumed that this foreign matter in these gears prevented the bow planes from operating in hand.
2. The stern planes became inoperative on power due to the resistor in the stern plane tilting panel becoming dislodged which caused the stern planes clutch to de-energize and the solenoid adjusting arm of the stern plane tilting mechanism being dislodged by the shock. The stern planes were operated on power by holding the electrical contractor in by hand until the vessel was brought to the surface.
3. The flag staff which was in the stowed position on the starboard quarter was carried away along with its stowage clamps.
4. The gasket of the after engine room hatch had several grooves on its bearing surface due to the hatch being moved in a horizontal plane as was evidence by gouges on the outboard edges of the hatch dogs where those dogs had been jarred against the shoulder of the underneath surfaces of the hatch gasket bearing surface.
5. The ship's bell was shattered
6. Many minor air leaks were found in the low pressure and high pressure air systems within the vessel, particularly in the after portion of the ship. The silver-soldered joints of the high pressure air system in the main ballast tanks did not develop any leaks.
7. The micro-switches of the hull-opening contactors on the after torpedo room leading hatch and the after engine room hatch were broken.
8. The general announcing feature of the 1 MC system was inoperative due to a ground caused by wires of the coil of a loud speaker in the after torpedo room being grounded to the iron core of the speaker.
9. The tail pipes of the #1 and #4 main engine mufflers jarred loose from the packing clamps at the junction of these pipes to their mufflers.
10. The overboard discharge piping to #1 main engine exhaust valve cooling system failed at the hull flange.

New London, CT to Pearl Harbor, T.H.

11. The retaining clips holding the perforated plate on the top of #4 main engine outboard exhaust stop valve were knocked out of shape.
12. Three of the special HRT shock-proof light globes furnished to this vessel by the Bureau of Ships failed; two of which were in the after torpedo room and one of which was in the forward battery compartment. Two standard 100-watt light globes which were installed in regular lighting fixtures were shattered.
13. The needle of the barometer - manometer installed in the conning tower was jarred from its zero position and required adjustment and recalibration.
14. The eye piece lens of one gun telescope sight was cracked.
15. The NM sound head (fathometer) was grounded, The damage head was removed by the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California, and a new head installed by that activity.

After returning to the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California, this vessel was docked on March 24, 1942, and a through inspection revealed no damage whatsoever to the underwater portions of the vessel. Upon completion of all repairs, Gato was ready for sea on March 27<sup>th</sup>. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, Gato departed for Pearl Harbor, T.H. and arrived there on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April.

The first endorsement to the C.O. U.S.S. Gato ltr. SS212/L11-1 dated April 1, 1942 was from the Commander Submarine Division Eighty One to the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet; via the Commander Submarine Squadron Eight, the Commander Submarines, Pacific Fleet and to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet.

He stated "that although this incident was of such a serious nature that it might have resulted in the loss of the Gato, nevertheless, it was not without some benefit in that the bombing proved certain design features and strengthened moral. To know that our latest type of submarine can withstand punishment with only minor damage is most gratifying. It is of interest to note that the silver solder joints in the high pressure air lines within the main ballast tanks, which were installed under the most adverse conditions during the training period of the Gato by the Submarine Base, New London, CT, withstood the shock of bombing without a single failure. This alternation to the high pressure air lines as eliminated, in the opinion of the Division Commander, the greatest defect that our newest submarine possessed. The performance of duty by the Commanding Officer, officers, and the crew of the Gato during this emergency were of the highest order".

**First Patrol – A Learning Experience - 20 April 1942 – 10 June 1942**

U.S.S. Gato departed Pearl Harbor on the morning April 20<sup>th</sup>. She was under escort until after sunset, when she departed for her first patrol in the Marshall Islands. Enroute she conducted training exercises. Fired ten rounds of 3" 50 caliber (training ammunition) and 50 rounds of 50 caliber machine gun ammo.

April 21<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area, no entries in the patrol report.

April 26<sup>th</sup>, submerged until evening twilight due to partial overcast of low hanging clouds rendering early detection of aircraft impossible and distance to Wotje Atoll (300 miles) making air contact very likely, although no enemy planes have been contacted visual or by radar, up to this time. Also, desire to arrive off Kwajalein Atoll unobserved. Radar contacted a plane at four miles which was lost at six miles.

April 27<sup>th</sup>, began submerged patrol during daylight hours. Radar contacted a plane at two miles which was lost at six miles.

April 28<sup>th</sup>, entered area and set course for ROI Island in the Kwajalein Atoll, following instructions contained in Commander Task Force Seven (CTF-7) dispatch to remain north of Latitude 9° N until after 3 May 1942.

April 29<sup>th</sup>, sighted a diesel trawler that showed no indication of any Anti-Submarine (A/S) measures being taken. Patrolled off the north reef to the west of Bigej Island.

April 30<sup>th</sup>, conducted submerged patrol north and east of Ebadon Island. Sighted a small (150') auxiliary vessel.

May 1<sup>st</sup>, conducted submerged patrol off Mellu Island and the North Passage. Sighted a patrol type plane, circling over Mellu Island and two 'Catcher Type' patrol vessels patrolling on various courses off of the North Passage. Sighted a freighted of about 7,000 tons standing up from south part of the lagoon. The vessel later changed course to the north and anchored in lagoon south of ROI Island. Attempted to get inside of the patrol line off ROI Island but had to stand to the west to keep clear of patrol vessels.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, conducted submerged patrol off Mellu Island and North Passage. Patrol vessels and planes are very active, which forced our line of patrol to westward about five to six miles from the entrance to channels.

First Patrol (20 April – 10 June 1942)

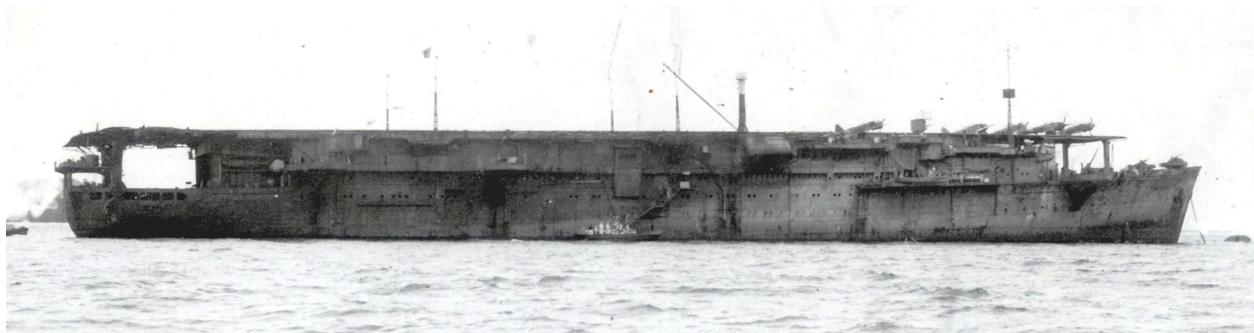
May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 04:17 while steaming on the surface, sighted a “Whale Catcher Type” patrol vessel. With a brilliant moonlight and almost daylight, submerged and patrolled off Nellu Island and North Passage noting the patrol vessels and planes continued activity.



Typical Whale Catcher Vessel

At 13:15 sighted the converted Japanese aircraft carrier Kasuga (CV) with two destroyers and two patrol vessels forming an antisubmarine screen. Assumed an attack course and at 13:22 fired a spread of five torpedoes. (No attack data was provided in the patrol report.)

The destroyers and two patrol vessels started searching using supersonic gear with hand keying. Intense sonar search forced us to lose contact without results of the torpedo attack. We went to deep submergence (255') with silent running, making off to the north and took station four miles east of ROI Namur to examine anchorage. Could not see Kasuga or the destroyer escorts. Stood to the northeast and reported to CTF 7 the attack on the Kasuga with two possible hits.



Converted Japanese Aircraft Carrier Kasuga (CV)

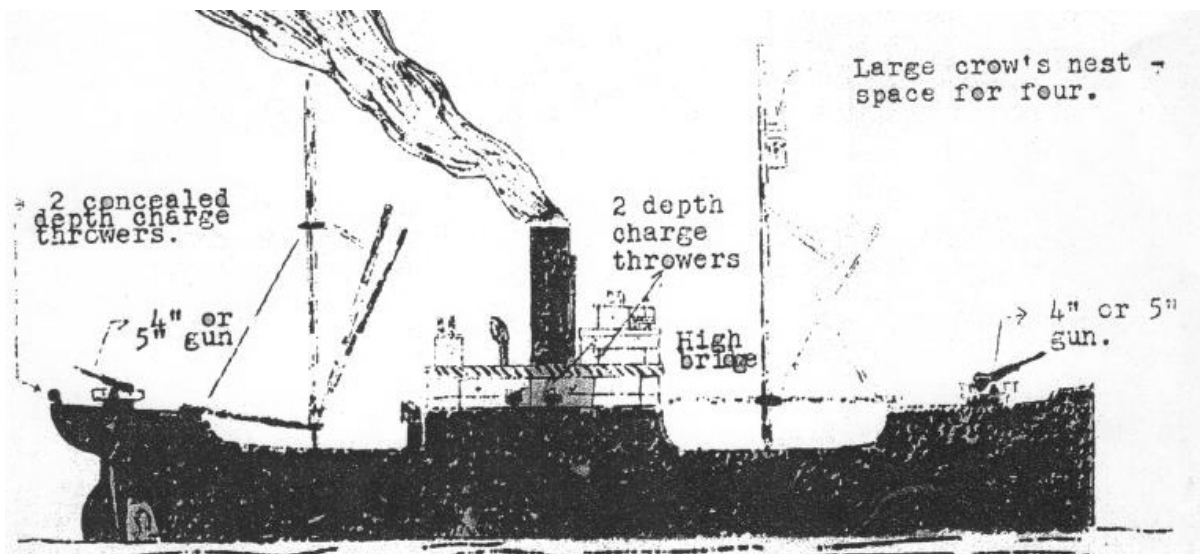
May 4<sup>th</sup>, 13:50 sighted two destroyers, the Kasuga (apparently undamaged) and five cargo vessels (3,000-7,000 tons) anchored east of Mellu Island and North Passage. At 16:07 sighted a destroyer. A depth charge was dropped on our starboard quarter, followed by seven more at about one-minute intervals. Took to deep submergence and silent running and made off to the north.

At 17:50, lost contact with the destroyer and patrol vessel. Sent CTF 7 data regarding ships in ROI anchorage and the three hangers or storehouses located on the west side of ROI Island.

May 5<sup>th</sup>, patrolled submerged east and northeast of ROI Island. Observed a land type plane. Observed two destroyers and three cargo vessels anchored in the eastern part of ROI anchorage. Sighted a fishing sampan. During the darkness changed position to be off Bigej channel at daylight to obtain data for patrol on May 7<sup>th</sup> as result of a CFT 7 dispatch regarding entry of an important unit on that date.

May 6<sup>th</sup>, patrolled submerged off Bigej channel to the north of Kwajalein Island. Sighted a sampan standing out of the Bigej channel. Observed five cargo vessels (2,000 – 7,000 tons), and one freighter-passenger vessel (7,000 tons) at anchor in the lagoon north of the Kwajalein Island.

May 7<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off Bigej channel, as recommended by ComSubPac, for entry of the important unit. Sighted a patrol vessel similar to the U.S.S. Gudgeon's "Q" ship.



Drawing from the U.S.S. Gudgeon's Patrol Report

Editor's Note: Q-ships were very shallow drafted ships. They were designed to lure a submarine into firing torpedoes at it, normally set to deep to hit it. The escorts would then locate the submarine by following down the wake left by the torpedoes, and then they would conduct a

First Patrol (20 April – 10 June 1942)

coordinated depth charge attack against the submarine. Though Q-ship tactics were once highly successful, but during World War II they achieved few positive results.

Observed the anchorage north of Kwajalein Island: one Asama Maru, one passenger-freighter type (7,000 tons), one cargo vessel (7,000 tons) and four cargo and trams (2,000 – 3,000 tons). Sighted a sampan or a small patrol boat off the Bigej channel.

May 8<sup>th</sup>, patrolled east, north and west of ROI Island. Sighted an airplane, unknown type, Asama Maru vessel stood up from the south and anchored south of ROI Island.

12:28 sighted a “Catcher Type” patrol vessel on station northwest of ROI. Very active patrol until vessel stood south at 15:27.

16:48 Asama Maru vessel sighted standing out. Started approach but unable to close range under 6,000 yards after a half hour chase at a one-hour rate. Target making 104 r.p.m. (10 kts). Astern of patrol vessel on course 302° (T) with airplane A/S screen. 17:59 target was out of sight. A speed of ten knots checked throughout time target was in sight.

19:17 surfaced and started a pursuit on course 302° (T). Pursuit made at a ten knots vessel could easily be intercepted during the night.

May 9<sup>th</sup>, 01:00 passed through target’s 12.5 knot position, ten miles north of Wotho Atoll. Changed course to intercept the ten knot position on course 290° (T) from ROI which was reached at 05:00. Conducted patrol on course 110° (T).

May 10<sup>th</sup>, conducted patrol off southwest side of Kwajalein Atoll, No activity off any of the passes.

May 11<sup>th</sup>, patrol off GEA Pass. Sighted a patrol vessel similar to a Catcher Type. Conducted an active patrol on northwest-southeast line about five miles out from the entrance to GEA Pass

May 12<sup>th</sup>, patrolled off GEA Pass. Sighted a patrol vessel, similar to a Catcher Type, very active. In sight intermittently during the day.

May 13<sup>th</sup>, patrolled off GEA Pass. Sighted a patrol vessel similar to a Catcher Type with “651” painted on it sides amidships. Conducted a continuous patrol off GEA Pass and to the southwest of Pass maintained by patrol vessel.

13:48 sighted tanker and commenced and made attack No. 2 off entrance to GES Pass. (No attach data provided in the patrol report.)

15:10 sighted a Catcher Type patrol vessel "632" distance about 2500 yards. Evidently lying to, did not hear any sound gear. Went to deep submergence and silent running. Lost sound contact with patrol vessel.

May 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>, patrolled on a north-south line west of ROI Island covering approaches to the North Passage. No contacts were made.

May 17<sup>th</sup>, patrolled off Bigej Channel. Sighted a sampan type patrol boat which maintained a patrol line off the channel entrance all day.

May 18<sup>th</sup>, patrolled east of Kwajalein Island. Sighted four patrol vessels, one Q-type, two Catcher Type and one sampan, which passed south of the Kwajalein Island and stood eastward. Eight vessels are anchored in Kwajalein Island anchorages.

May 19<sup>th</sup> patrolled off the North Passage. Sighted a sampan type patrol vessel. Sighted two vessels, a large freighter (7,000 – 8,000 tons) and a small freighter (4,000 tons) anchored in the ROI anchorage.

19:07 surfaced about nine miles north of ROI Island. Landing field floodlighted and red lights burning on the radio and lookout towers. No planes landing or taking off could be seen. Lights were turned off at 19:30.

May 20<sup>th</sup>, patrolled off the North Passage. Sighted a sampan type patrol vessel. Sighted a sea plane circling over North Passage. Same vessels are at anchor.

May 21<sup>st</sup>, patrolled off of North Passage. Sighted a land plane double tail circling over North Passage. Same vessels are at anchor.

May 22<sup>nd</sup>, patrolled off of North Passage. Sighted a land plane double tail circling over North Passage. Same vessels are at anchor.

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, patrolled off North Passage. Sighted a small tanker. Heavy rain squall reduced visibility to the extent that no attack could be made. Could not pick up target on sound gear. Tanker next seen about 4,500 yard, entering the North Passage. Sighted two seaplanes at high altitudes. Sighted one sampan patrol vessel. Same vessels at anchor.

May 24<sup>th</sup>, patrolled off North Passage. Same vessels at anchor. Sighted a sampan patrol vessel.

First Patrol (20 April – 10 June 1942)

May 25<sup>th</sup>, Gato was assigned to the Midway Task Group 7.1 and received the designation of 7.1.9. The submarines of Commander Submarines Pacific (Task Group 7) were to be on station by June 4<sup>th</sup>. Gato changed course to take station off Midway as directed by ComSubPac.

May 26<sup>th</sup>, enroute to the Midway patrol station. Sighted a PBY airplane. Radar contact which led to plane being sighted. Submerged until mid afternoon.

May 27<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup>, enroute to the Midway patrol station.

May 29<sup>th</sup>, 03:52 arrived on patrol station west of Midway.

May 30<sup>th</sup>, while in patrol area and sighted another PBY airplane.

May 31<sup>st</sup>, set course for Midway to obtain fuel in accordance with CTF 7 instructions. Sighted three PBY airplanes. Kure Island bore 000° (T), five miles. At 15:21 Gato was secured to pier at Midway and commenced fueling.

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 05:19 underway from Midway enroute to the patrol station. 19:00 arrived on station, while enroute, sighted numerous PBY's and B-17's patrolling out of Midway.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, patrolling in the assigned sector on a 200 mile circle west of Midway. Sighted a PBY airplane

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, patrolling west of Midway. Sighted two PBY airplanes.

June 4<sup>th</sup>, patrolling west of Midway. Surfaced and proceeded at full power on course 080° (T) to close enemy forces located northwest of Midway as directed by ComSubPac. Radar contact on an airplane distance 12 miles.

15:00 changed course to 320° (T). No further reports on reports of position of enemy forces received and considered no contacts likely west of Midway this late in the day.

15:46 sighted a PBY airplane. By flashing light obtained information from this plane that enemy forces bore 338° (T) for Midway. Sighted two more PBY airplanes.

17:30 changed course to 180° (T) and proceeded to station on a sector on a 100 miles circle west of Midway.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

June 5<sup>th</sup>, patrolling in sector on a 100 mile circle west of Midway. Sighted two destroyers with a zero angle on the bow. One of the destroyers turned and put searchlight on us as we attempted to get on the port beam. Submerged, but no attempts made to search or conduct any A/S measures.

07:23 surfaced and proceeded at full power to station five miles west of Midway as directed by ComSubPac. 07:43 sighted flight of about 12 fighter planes and submerged. 08:17 surfaced and continued patrol. Throughout the morning Gato sighting numerous airplanes and held on radar.

09:02 sighted flight of airplanes and submerged. 09:31 surfaced and sighted more airplanes.

09:37 sighted cruiser type planes headed for Gato. After this vessel submerged enemy planes chased a PBY for several miles then returned and patrolled in the general location of this vessel for about 45 minutes. 10:55 surfaced sighted airplane but had no opportunity to identify ship so submerged.

15:30 arrived on station five miles off Midway. Modified to 12 mile circle during the night.

June 6<sup>th</sup>, patrolling in a sector on the 12 mile circle west of Midway. 09:46 proceeded to Pearl as directed by ComSubPac. 19:35 sighted vessel and maneuvered to clear area as own forces were known to be enroute to Midway.

Editor's Note: History shows that Gato and the other submarines patrolling close to Midway were too far away from the battle and were not able to close the enemy. Gato along with the Grayling, Trout and the Dolphin were frustrated and ineffectual. While trying to run on the surface toward the enemy forces, they were machined gunned or lightly bombed by the enemy and/or friendly forces. They were forced to dive in order to avoid being hit. None of them were able to make enough distance to meet the enemy.

June 7<sup>th</sup>, Gato was released and departed her patrol sector off Midway. At 16:27 she sighted an anchor type mine floating on the surface. Unsuccessful at destroying it. Reported the mine's location to ComSubPac and continued her transit.

June 8<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Pearl Harbor. Sighted a vessel and an airplane.

June 9<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Pearl Harbor. Sighted several USN, PBY's during the day. Gave the main storage battery an equalizing charge followed by test discharge of six hour rate. Required time 6 hours, 20 minutes, actual time took 6 hours and 50 minutes.

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 05:06 made rendezvous with the U.S.S. Litchfield DD336 and the U.S.S. Grenadier SS-210. Returned in company to Pearl Harbor, T. H.

First Patrol (20 April – 10 June 1942)

**Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of First Patrol:**

**From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato Patrol Report.**

The commanding officer believes that the majority of the vessels using the North Passage approach on courses between 310° (T) and 270° (T) and depart on the same sector. The destroyer attack on May 4<sup>th</sup> was probably a preliminary to a sortie by Kasuga Maru. Close inshore patrol off channel entrances is practically impossible once presence of a submarine is known. The attack on the Kasuga Maru on May 3<sup>rd</sup> three miles off the entrance to North Pass is thought to have been a complete surprise. It is regretted that an error in speed estimate prevented more success from this attack.

**From: Commander Submarine Squadron Eight**

The first patrol of the U.S.S. Gato was conducted in an inactive area. Attack opportunities were limited to two, each of which apparently was unsuccessful. Failure of the attack on the KASUGA is a disappointment, unquestionably felt no more keenly by anyone than by the personnel of Gato. Radar performance in indicating the presence of all but low flying planes is most gratifying. The patrol report reflects the excellent morale of the personnel of this submarine. It is felt that they are to be congratulated upon a war patrol that was well conducted in an aggressive spirit.

**From: Commander Submarine, Pacific Fleet**

The first patrol of the Gato was productive only of experience. No damage was inflicted on the enemy. It is believed that the sinking of a few patrol vessels would cause anti-submarine vessels to be more cautious in hunting submarines and that torpedo attacks on them are warranted when a favorable opportunity presents itself. In order to get a favorable opportunity to attack, it is necessary to stay at periscope depth and observe the movements of these vessels until attack is imminent. A return to periscope depth immediately after the depth charge attack may afford a good chance to get in an attack which the anti-submarine vessel is lying to trying to regain contact.

**Awards:**

U.S.S. Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for her role in the Battle of Midway  
3 June – 6 June 1942.

**Refit - 11 June to 1 July 1942**

Editor's Note: No refit description was provided in the war patrol reports. However, because of the Gato's excellent maintenance record it can be assumed that it was a normal refit. Gato would have completed the refit, underway tests and training certification and be ready for sea by 1 July 1942.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

### Second Patrol – The First Maru - 2 July 1942 – 2 October 1942

U.S.S. Gato departed Pearl Harbor, under escort, at 09:00 on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Conducted 3” 50 caliber gun and other training while enroute to Midway.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>, transiting to Midway. (No entries in the patrol report.)

July 6<sup>th</sup>, arrived Midway and reported to Commander Task Force Eight (CTF-8) for duty. Fueled to capacity and departed on her second war patrol east of the Kurile Islands toward the Aleutian chain.



U.S.S. Gato wearing Ms 9 overall black camouflage summer 1942

July 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area, no entries in the patrol report.

July 12<sup>th</sup>, while transiting on the surface, sighted a Japanese transport and a destroyer escort. Both vessels came out of the fog bank at a range of about 1,200 yards. Transport made a radical course change to the left and the destroyer headed toward position where Gato had just submerged. Destroyer steamed at high speed and in a constantly changing head. Appeared to be following a sine-curve course along bearing lines of this vessel. The destroyer commenced depth charge attack. After 45 minutes, Gato eluded the enemy and arrived on station off of the Kurile Islands.

July 13<sup>th</sup>, submerged to make patrol during the day while crossing the great circle tracks from Empire ports to Attu Kiska area. Low visibility. At 23:07 sighted vessel about 200' long, no superstructure, most probably a patrol vessel. While maneuvering for a firing position, target changed course to bring this vessel astern and disappeared into fog. During remainder of the night sighted lights of several fishing sampans.

July 14<sup>th</sup>, patrolled in assigned area. (No entries in the patrol report.)

July 15<sup>th</sup>, 05:30 sighted land bearing 290° (T). Changed course to patrol submerged off of Ocomaye Wan. 17:06 sighted three fishing sampans. Fog and reduced visibility, to less than 1,000 yards, when about seven miles off shore

Second Patrol (02 July – 02 October 1942)

Stood to the east until 23:00, then paralleled coast to southeast to be off Masashi Wan at daylight. Sampans sighted during the night in brief periods of fair visibility.

July 16<sup>th</sup>, submerged for an approach to Masashi Wan. Visibility only 500 to 1,000 yards. With visibility less than 1,000 yards, changed course to 090° (T) to patrol in southeast portion of area

July 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>, patrolling in southeast corner of area. Visibility below 1,000 yards except for short periods on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>. During this time skies were 100% overcast.

July 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>, patrolled in northwest section of area.

July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 21:49 sighted vessel (Patrol Boat) lying to. Went to Battle Stations.



Typical Japanese Patrol Boat

21:57 fired one torpedo, it was a miss. Target got underway on rapidly and changed course to the right about one minute after firing. Torpedo either passed under the shallow draft vessel or target maneuvered to avoid and stood off at high speed. Lost contact in the fog.

July 24<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>, patrolled assigned area. Visibility was poor, rain and heavy fog persisted.

July 30<sup>th</sup>, sent Commander Task Group 8.5 (CTG-8.5) a synopsis of operations and data on unfavorable weather conditions noted in the area. Recommended evacuation of area because of limitations forced on operations and offensive measures by low visibility conditions prevalent in this area and absence of shipping.

July 31<sup>st</sup>, received orders from CTG 8.5 to search east of Kurile Island to Latitude 46° North, the lower reaches of Okhotsk Sea and west of Kurile.

August 1<sup>st</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>, patrolled assigned search area. After three weeks of uneventful patrol east of the Kuriles, Gato ordered to proceed to Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Chain.

August 15<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Dutch Harbor on great circle course Paramushiru Attu in accordance with CTG 8.5 orders received on August 13<sup>th</sup>. Strong Northwest winds with good visibility but heavy overcast. Decided to remain submerged during daylight to increase time along route and chances of interception.

22:38 sighted two ships, one cargo vessel Kinka Maru (9,300 tons, #294 Recognition of Japanese Merchant Vessels), and one Destroyer about 1,000 yards astern of the Maru.



Kinka Maru

Made an attack by firing two torpedoes from stern tubes, two hits (one amidships in line with stack). Swung right to regain attack position as Commanding Officer thought only one hit was obtained from stern tubes. Maru swung slowly to left and reduced speed. Fired three torpedoes from bow tubes with two hits. Destroyer had searched on starboard side of Maru after first hits and was coming toward vicinity of this vessel so stood North East at high speed. Maru had heavy list (30 - 40°) to port when last sighted (about two minutes after firing bow tubes). Star fix obtained later on in the evening showed Maru was intercepted on Rhumb Line course instead of Great Circle course.



August 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Dutch Harbor. On August 20<sup>th</sup> Gato arrive at Dutch harbor.

Second Patrol (02 July – 02 October 1942)

### Refit - 20 August – 29 August 1942

Gato arrived at Dutch Harbor, Territory of Alaska (T. A.) on the August 20<sup>th</sup>. Gato commenced refit on the 21<sup>st</sup> by ship's personnel assisted by submarine base personnel and relief crew personnel from Submarine Squadron 45.



Crew of the Gato (SS-212) posing for a shot in the Northern Pacific summer 1942

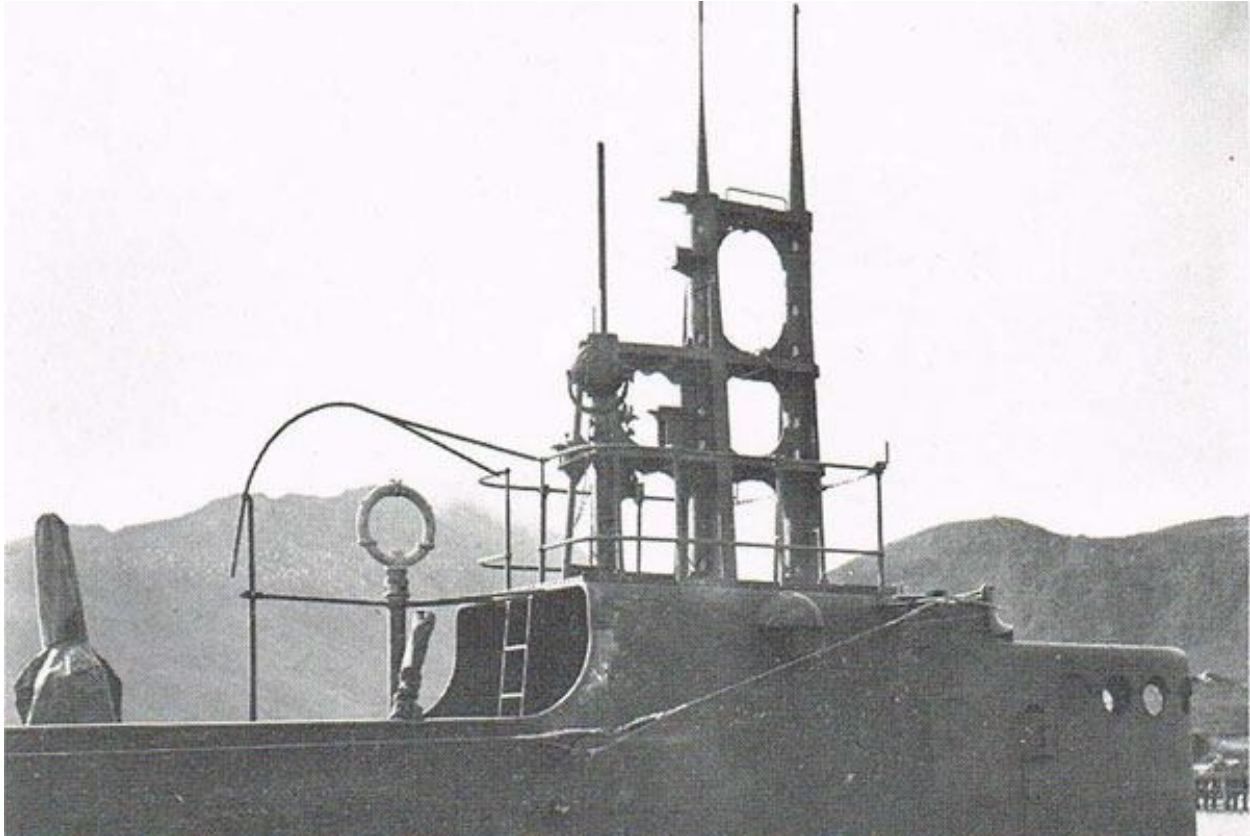
No major items of overhaul were undertaken. Refit items included:

- Removed the steel plating surrounding the periscope shears.
- Completed the 1500 hour overhaul of No. 4 main engine.

Gato was not depermed or wiped. No training period, very limited rest facilities, and during the period in Dutch Harbor Gato was rigged for dive at all times. Refit was complete on the 29<sup>th</sup> and Gato was ready for sea.

On August 30<sup>th</sup> Gato was placed on six hour notice to get underway.

On September 1<sup>st</sup> the underway notice was reduced to two hours. Gato stayed on two hour notice till September 4<sup>th</sup>.



U.S.S. Gato with a variation on the Mod 1

This 30 August 1942 photo taken in Dutch Harbor shows her periscope shears unplated. Not normal with a Mod 1 or 1A with this variation. The circular Direction Finder loop is very prominent in this photo. The object aft of the loop is the water-cooled .50 caliber machine gun. It is covered with a weather proof canvas covering. This weapon would not have been left mounted topside when the boat submerged. It would have been taken below and was mounted here to provide some level of air defense while the boat was in harbor.

### **Second Patrol (Continued) - 4 September – 22 September 1942**

September 4<sup>th</sup> Gato was underway from Submarine Base, Dutch Harbor, T. A. for patrol southwest and east of Amatignak Island in accordance with ComTaskGroup 8.5, Operation Order 13.42. September 5<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>, Gato commenced patrol off Kiska Island.

Made passage of Akutan Pass under air escort from Dutch Harbor. Passed a Russian cargo vessel on easterly course south of Cape Morgan. 17:00 conducted a trim dive and exercised at battle stations. Surface and continued at four engine speed (70% load condition, 17.5 knots). 20:49 sighted beam of searchlight and glare of flood lights bearing 333° (T). Bearing and distance place on North East coast of Umnak Island (Otter Point Airfield).

Second Patrol (02 July – 02 October 1942)

September 5<sup>th</sup>, no entities in patrol report.

September 6<sup>th</sup>, 02:15 entered area and took up daylight patrol northeast and east of Amatignak Island and during darkness on generally east and west courses in area in line with northern boundary of area.

September 7<sup>th</sup>, no entities in patrol report.

September 8<sup>th</sup>, sighted a PBY airplane.

September 9<sup>th</sup>, during the morning sighted another PBY airplane. After sunset set course at four engine speed to shift area to Kiska in accordance with orders from CTG 8.5

September 10<sup>th</sup>, making a transit of Amchitka Pass, south of Semisopchnoi Island. Made careful observations of this island from four miles south of the island. No signs of lookout stations or garrison troops ashore. Surfaced about five miles off southwest coast after dark and observed no lights. Set course to be north of Sirius Point on Kiska Island at daylight.

September 11<sup>th</sup>, submerged for daylight patrol north and northwest of Kiska Island. After sunset surfaced and set course to be north of Buldir Island at daylight.

September 12<sup>th</sup>, submerged for daylight patrol north and northwest of Buldir Island. Maintained this patrol on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> during daylight on line Semichi-Buldir Islands and darkness on line then points ten miles north of Sirius and Red Head Points

September 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>, patrolled northwest of and north of Kiska. Daylight patrols were maintained on Sirius point – Buldir line and north of Sirius Point. Night patrolling done in general area 15 to 25 miles north of Sirius Point..

September 20<sup>th</sup>, set course to enter Kiska Area on line then point 40 miles north of Gula Point (Segula Island) in accordance with orders from CTG 8.5.

September 21<sup>st</sup>, at dark set course to clear Kiska Area on eastern boundary and make transit of Amchitka Pass. Prevented from entering Pass during darkness by heavy seas and the necessity for navigation by fathometer. (Heavy overcast skies and low visibility had prevented any navigational fix since September 18<sup>th</sup> ).

September 22<sup>nd</sup>, made passage of Amchitka Pass during darkness. Gato was ordered by ComTaskGroup 8.5 to set course for Midway.

This war patrol of the Gato was terminated after only 18 days enroute to and on station due to the necessary of recalling the submarine to Pearl Harbor for operations with Task Force 7. During this time no contacts or attacks were made.

September 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, transited to Midway.

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 06:30 made rendezvous with surface and air escort. 09:43 moored alongside U.S.S. Fulton AS-11. Off-loaded 22 Mark 14 torpedoes, transferred 21 men of crew to Commander Submarine Division 81 and received replacements.

September 29<sup>th</sup>, 06:00 underway for Pearl Harbor, under surface and air escort for 30 miles from Midway.

September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup>, transited to Pearl Harbor. Sighted only one PBY airplane.

October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 06:15 made rendezvous with escort and proceeded into Pearl Harbor, T.H.

#### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Second Patrol:**

##### **From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato, Patrol Report paragraph 17 'Remarks'**

The original operation order called for return from patrol area 48 days after departure from Midway, 52 days from Pearl. This would have required 42 days on station which in the opinion of the Commanding Officer is too long a period for patrol in enemy waters. The period on station was, upon the recommendation of the Commanding Officer, later reduced by eight days.

The Commanding Officer is convinced that 30 days should be the maximum period spent in the patrol area and that the length of a patrol should not be longer than the time enroute to and return from station plus this thirty day limit for time actually on station. This opinion is based upon the observation of the limit of endurance of personnel under conditions which exist in a patrol area.

##### **From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato, Patrol Report, addenda to, paragraph 17 'Remarks'**

The Commanding Officer can explain that he made no contacts by no other reason than that the shipping was being routed to the south of Kiska Island. The mental and physical alertness of the officers and members of the crew retrogressed more rapidly on this patrol than on the two previous patrols. This can be explained by the short period in port, during which time the officers were messed and berthed on board ship and it was possible to give only three days messing and berthing for the crew at the submarine base barracks. Recreation facilities were limited to movies, hiking and fishing, the latter two of which were denied during several days of inclement weather while this vessel was in port.

Second Patrol (02 July – 02 October 1942)

**From: Commander Task Group Eight Point Five, 30 August 1942**

This war patrol covered a period of fifty days of which thirty-five were spent on station. The Task Group Commander does not concur that thirty-days should be the maximum period spent in a patrol area by fleet-type submarines. The added strain of operating in the North Pacific during periods of excessive high percentage of fog is recognized and it is believed that, in so far as possible, patrols should be limited under these circumstances to about thirty days with a shorter refit periods than is the custom after the longer patrols. Such a schedule can be carried out when operations are from an advanced base without increasing the overhead time. The commanding Officer states that the recommendation of thirty day limit is based upon endurance estimated in terms of repeated patrols over extended period. Since the problem there includes such unpredictable factors as the areas in which successive patrols will be made, the activity to be encountered in these areas, and the physical and temperamental qualities of individuals, its solution should await the determination of those factors.

Experience has shown that Japanese shipping in the Western Pacific is routed very close to friendly shores. This patrol is not conclusive, therefore, of the amount of shipping along either side of the Kurile chain. In this connection it is noted that the enemy ship contacted and attacked on August 15<sup>th</sup> was on the rhumb line track from Attu to Paramushiru. This would indicate that traffic is routed via a base on the latter Island or into the Okhotsk Sea via Onkotan Kaikyo. No observation was made of Musagni Man, or of the western side of the chain, including the northern entrance to Paramushiru Kaikyo. Weather conditions during the patrol were a real handicap to fully effective submarine operations.

As has been pointed out by Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet in his comments on numerous War Patrols, excessive ranges are not conducive to accurate torpedo fire. In the night attack of July 23<sup>rd</sup> upon a relatively small vessel, reported to be lying to, it is considered that the range, 2,500 yards, measurably decreased the chances of hitting. Furthermore, regarding the fact that the target remained on a steady bearing astern for two minutes, the following except from the comment of Commander Submarines on a similar attack is to be noted:

“It must be remembered that a constant bearing indicated a relative speed of zero knots and not an actual speed of zero knots. If the problem is set up on the torpedo data computer, a solution of actual enemy speed can be quickly obtained.”

The Task Group Commander congratulates the Commanding Officer, Officers, and crew of Gato upon the destruction of a valuable enemy naval vessel. The subject of award has been taken up by the Task Force Commander.

**From: Commander Submarine, Pacific Fleet, 15 September 1942**

This patrol of the Gato was in general well conducted. The commanding officer covered his assigned areas in spite of bad weather.

The remarks of Commander Task Group 8.5 in paragraph 3 of his endorsement are concurred in. The Commander Task Force Seven cannot agree with the Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato, that a submarine should remain in an area no longer than thirty days. The distances which must be traversed by vessels of this Task Force going to and from their assigned areas make it necessary that submarines remain on station as long as possible. If, when fatigue is apparent, the Commanding Officer retires temporarily to rest the crew, the submarine can remain on patrol longer and save much enroute time.

**From: Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, addenda to, 7 October 1942**

This war patrol of the Gato was terminated after only eighteen days enroute to and on station due to the necessity of recalling the submarine to Pearl Harbor for operations with Task Force Seven. During this period no contacts or attacks were made.

The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, concurs in the remarks of the Commanding Officer that insufficient time and opportunity were allowed the personnel of the Gato prior to departure on this patrol; the recuperation period should be sufficiently long to properly rehabilitate the personnel.

**Awards:**

U.S.S. Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for a Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
2 July - 20 August 1942

|         |               |          |            |
|---------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Sinking | Freighter (1) | Totaling | 9,300 tons |
|---------|---------------|----------|------------|

Silver Star (Posthumously) will be awarded to Commander William Girard Myers

Second Patrol (02 July – 02 October 1942)

**Refit - Change of Command – 2 October – 2 November 1942**

On October 2, 1942, Lieutenant Commander W. C. Myers was relieved of command by Lieutenant Commander R. J. Foley, USN.

Received routine refit by the Submarine Repair Unit. No major items of overhaul were undertaken. Refit items included:

- Installation of 20mm gun mounts
- Installation of the SJ Radar
- Removal of the Battery Induction Outboard and Hull valve
- Replacement of the universal joints in the bow plane operating shaft in the Forward Battery compartment. (Maintenance item noted during the Dutch Harbor refit.)

Two training periods of three days each were permitted, the second being primarily for the benefit of the new commanding officer who arrived at the station after the first training period was completed. (Commanding officer, Executive Officer and third officer were detached.)

Gato was ready for sea on the November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Third Patrol – No Credit - 5 November – 23 December 1942**

U.S.S. Gato departed Pearl Harbor on November 5<sup>th</sup>. She was escorted until dark by the USCGC Taney (WHEC-37). While enroute to the patrol area, northeast and southeast of New Ireland, we made daily training dives and battle surfacing. Fired the allowed amount of ammunition with the 3-inch gun and the 20mm gun at home-made targets. Conducted training in clearing the bridge, running silent, rapid pursuit, etc. Developed a leak at 200 feet in newly blanked off Battery Induction hull valve casting that was repaired on the surface by taking up on the nuts.

November 8<sup>th</sup>, 01:00 Gato received a message from Commander Submarine Pacific (ComSubPac) directing her to go to the assistance of a Catalina Flying Boat (PBY), downed near Johnston Island. At 07:00 passed through the last given position of the plane, nothing in sight. 07:45 sighted patrol plane three miles abeam to port, on same course and mission. Exchanged recognition signals.



Typical Catalina Flying Boat (PBY)

12:45 received a ComSubPac message giving new position of lost plane. This point was 48 miles directly toward Johnston Island from us. Headed for it, still at the best four engine speed.

13:30 received a ComSubPac asking our present position and estimate time of arrival to the above point. Gato replied to message.

16:02 passed through last given position of plane. There is nothing in sight. Continued on, planning to run a 30 mile circle search pattern.

16:30 search was called off by ComSubPac. The plane has succeeded in taking off. Gato was directed to proceed in accordance with original orders. (Note: We are now 24 hours behind the original schedule and 6,000 gallons shorter of fuel than yesterday.) Set course to resume assigned track, slowing to an economical two engine speed.

Third Patrol (5 November – 23 December 1942)

November 10<sup>th</sup>, passed to the command of Commander South Pacific, and changed radio guard accordingly.

November 11<sup>th</sup>, no entries in the patrol report. (We can assume that Gato continued transit to patrol area at economical two engine speed.)

November 12<sup>th</sup>, increased to economical three engine speed, to take best advantage of coming period of darkness in passing Mili Island, known to be a Japanese air base.

At noon, some 235 miles from Mili Island, a heavy bomber glided from the high clouds directly astern and leveling off at 1,000 feet. It was almost overhead when seen and Gato made a quick dive. One depth bomb exploded as we were passing 80 feet with hard right rudder. No noticeable damage. We steadied on course 90 degrees to the right of the diving course. Fifteen minutes later a second bomb exploded, shaking the boat slightly but again no damage found.

At 14:00 with no further attacks, preceded to periscope depth and found no visual or radar contacts. On surfacing, found that the bow planes would not rig in and the bridge diving alarm was short-circuited.

The bow plane rigging in motor was so overloaded it would slow down, then stop and kick out the over-load relays; and in hand power there was a very definite binding noise and finally a complete freezing up of the gearing. A topside inspection showed all gears and shafting to be free. The lower half of the worm wheel casing in the forward torpedo room as removed and there was evidence of binding between the worm wheel and the worm. The angular contact thrust bearing was bound so tightly it would not rotate. The locking ring for the bearing was loosened, the bearing freed-up, the casing cleaned and the unit reassembled. After the assembly the planes worked satisfactorily. The binding of this bearing had caused a misalignment between the worm and the worm wheel, causing this derangement. This may have resulted from the bombing or from reassembly during the refit.

20:00 received first message from Commander Task Force Forty-Two (CTF-42), assigning Gato a task unit designation and directing acknowledgement with position when prudent.

November 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>, patrolled in our assigned area.

November 17<sup>th</sup>, 08:50 sighted smoke bearing 260° (T). Succeeding puffs appeared to draw nearer and moved slowly left. Decided his course was easterly. Submerged to commence approach on 265° (T), but smoke drew away to the south and could not be discerned through periscope. 09:46 surfaced and made rapid pursuit on course 220° (T).

Thereafter, the occasional puffs of some drew to the southward. By noon we decided that the ship was on course south southwest, too near his destination to be overtaken. We resumed course for assigned area.

At 22:30 sighted four ships coming out of squall on starboard quarter. Bearing was  $110^{\circ}$  (T), angle on the bow  $90^{\circ}$  port. The range was estimated at 12,000 yards. Commanding Officer identified them as destroyers. Gato was exactly in the path of the moon (full) from them. Their course estimated at  $020^{\circ}$  (T).

Came left to course  $140^{\circ}$  (toward targets but slightly astern), reasoning that surface chase on this flank was impractical. Planned to cross astern and endeavor to overtake on dark side.

Just as we steadied on new course, distance appeared to decrease rapidly. Nearest destroyer (a four stacker) had an angle on the bow of Port  $70^{\circ}$ , turning toward us. We dived and turned left to  $350^{\circ}$  (T). Destroyer was pinging at 18 kcs (long count), but could not be seen through periscope. At 23:53 surfaced and could not find any vessel by sight or on radar. We resumed patrol.

November 18<sup>th</sup>, received CTF 42 dispatch, notifying Gato of the coming of last night's contacts. We continued to patrolled southeast of area.

November 19<sup>th</sup> to December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Gato patrolled assigned areas as directed by CTF 42.

December 4<sup>th</sup>, 03:22 sighted unidentified vessel bearing  $230^{\circ}$  (T) (own course is  $260^{\circ}$  (T)), estimate range 8,000 yards. We changed course to  $050^{\circ}$  (T) and commenced tracking. Target course was determined to be easterly. Target was tentatively identified as a destroyer. Commenced approaching on course 220, working up to full speed.

03:43 SJ radar picked up the target, giving the bearing  $343^{\circ}$  (R), range 7,760 yards. By this time, angles on the bow were discernable and target was definitely identified as a destroyer. We came left to course  $135^{\circ}$  (T), but the target (which plotted 19 knots) drew to the left.

04:06 changed course to  $090^{\circ}$  (T). Range and bearing remained constant (we are making 19 knots at the time). Although the approach was finished, the course and speed were continued for a short time to check the radar against the pelorus and to note the visibility conditions with regard to the moon streak.

When target eased into the moon streak, instead of becoming more distinct, it disappeared entirely at 7,800 yards. Concluded from this and previous observations, that when the moon's

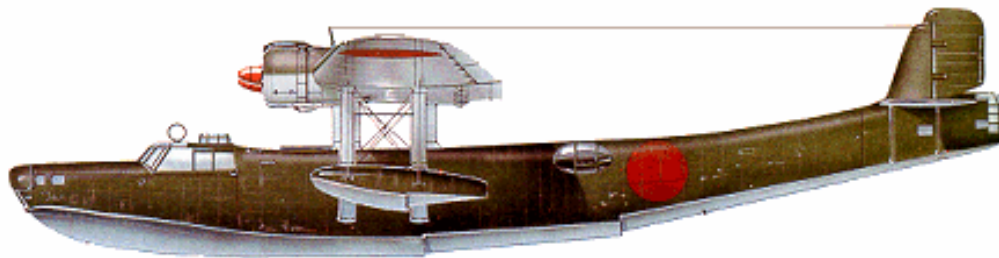
Third Patrol (5 November – 23 December 1942)

altitude is above  $45^\circ$  its path hinders visibility when target is over 6,000 yards in direction of the moon. There seems to be a glare or haze which absorbs the target.

04:20 reversed course to place us between Cape St. George and the destroyer, acting on the possibility that it was meeting some unit for escort to Rabaul.

December 5<sup>th</sup>, no entries are in the patrol report.

December 6<sup>th</sup>, 10:40 observed through the periscope, from a distance of about eight miles, a Kawanishi four-engine patrol plane (Code name Emily). It passed over Cape St. George and disappeared to seaward on a course of  $126^\circ$  (T). Altitude was about 200 feet.



Kawanishi H6K: "Emily"

At 16:32 a Kawanishi patrol plane, probably the one sighted this morning, was seen dead ahead of the first exposure of a periscope observation. It was close to the water and gliding (propellers were barely rotating). The periscope officer could not be certain whether or not it was turning toward Gato. The angle on the bow was about  $40^\circ$ . We went to 100 feet. No bombs were dropped.

17:41 made a periscope observation. A heavy cloud of black smoke was visible, over the horizon, bearing  $160^\circ$  (T). Changed course to  $145^\circ$  (T) and went to battle stations.

Observed the masts of two cargo ships (AK), hull down on the horizon. The sea was absolutely flat and glassy with not the slightest ruffle. As the range decreased a screen of three destroyers became evident. One patrolled ahead of the two merchantmen and the other two maintained station abeam of the second merchantman. The main target was estimated at 9,000 tons. The foremost and aftermost goal posts were each surmounted by a single vertical mast with a cross-tree. She was light in the water. The commanding officer was unable to give the second merchantman more than a few passing glances. She was much smaller and was estimated at 4,000 tons. The formation was on a zig-zag course. Angles on the bow of the main target went from  $30^\circ$  port to  $30^\circ$  starboard. Observations were extremely hazardous because of the flat calm sea; the worst periscope water this commanding officer has ever seen.

18:28 the target zigged toward us. Angle on the bow was  $5^{\circ}$  starboard, at a range of 1,000 yards. A quick sweep around showed us to be 600 yards abeam of the leading destroyer, which bore the number 39, and showed no excitement on deck or bridge. At this time had to make a short swing and increase the distance from track slightly to be in good position for a  $120^{\circ}$  - track stern tube shot at the main target. The listening gear, incidentally, seemed to be confused of screw noises which blended together, covering about  $180^{\circ}$  of arc.

As the periscope started up for a final firing bearing check, an aircraft depth bomb (not a depth charge) exploded fairly close aboard. Continued raising the periscope but just before it broke the surface, the handles were practically wrenched out of the commanding officer's hands by the force of an explosion. This was the first of a pattern of four which detonated almost simultaneously. It cannot be definitely stated whether these explosions were from depth charges or aircraft bombs. To the commanding officer they sounded more like aircraft bombs. The boat was severely shaken but seemed intact. Without the final bearing, the periscope was lowered and four torpedoes were fired on the generated bearing using a Voge 6 knot spread for a 450 foot target. Forty seconds after the first torpedo was fired a torpedo detonation was heard. This is the only evidence of success. The three destroyers concentrated on us for the next four hours, and no periscope observations were made.



A coordinated echo ranging search by the three destroyers was started. This well conducted and systematic procedure, culminated in an accurate depth charging at 19:12.

19:20 as soon as the above attack was completed the destroyers opened out and stood station for another approach. This time, however, it appeared that we had worked far enough away to be outside their triangle. Although the pinging was heard until 21:03, no further attack developed.

Note: This method was used by the three Japanese destroyers in the search and attack on Gato. The initial position of the submarine was known within close limits. Air screen had probably sighted us, periscope had been raised in flat calm sea, and torpedoes had been fired. The destroyers opened out to form an equilateral triangle whose center was the assumed position of Gato. (Their bearing from us were very close to  $120^{\circ}$  apart.)

Echo ranging was practically continuous. It was unhurried and pinging on frequencies of 14 and 18 kcs. The destroyers did appear to stop and listen very often. It appeared that the attack was withheld until the submarine position and track were well established. The target meantime was running silent and alternating course at intervals. It seemed that, when the CCP was satisfied with the plot, a single designated destroyer proceeded in at moderate speed and delivered a

Third Patrol (5 November – 23 December 1942)

pattern of charges on the determined position. The other two destroyers remained at a distance, and were heard pinging as soon as the disturbance subsided.

It is felt that the chances of their success would have been greatly increased if all three had dropped charges. Another search was commenced immediately. This time, however, we were outside their triangle, as their bearing was all in the same semicircle. We had selected a base course which ran with the current, and this caused the destroyers to draw aft. The pinging eventually faded out, well abaft the beam.

The commanding officer wished to call attention to the fact that Lieutenant Commander G.K. Mac Kenzie, the Navigator, had carefully studied the current during our ten day stay in the area. It is felt that his solution of the current (greatly at variance with the sailing directions) was largely instrumental in the evasion.

The accuracy of this attack may be realized from the following sequence of events:

- The screws of the destroyer were tracked in on bearing 90° relative.
- The sound gear lost the screws as they passed overhead.
- The sound operator just called out, “There it is on 260” and the charges started detonating.

Four charges seemed too straddle. The Gato was at 250 feet. Although the jolting was heavy, only minor derangements were sustained, as follows:

- The JK sound gear failed electrically, and when repaired, was too noisy in training for any but the slowest speed.
- The starboard rudder ram developed a loud noise where it rubbed in the packing.
- The steering motor became noisy.
- A slight oil leak developed in the fuel oil transfer line, forward engine room.
- The bridge diving alarm circuit was broken.
- A few electric bulbs were broken.
- Spring on the engine room hatch was broken.

22:05 made a periscope observation and could see nothing. Surfaced on course 135° (T). Three blurs were visible on the bearing (155°) where the pinging had last been heard. Felt reasonably sure that they could not make us out. We turned away to course 090° (T). The three objects did not decrease in size. Came left (away) to course 070° (T). 22:42 a rain squall obscured the three objects. Resumed course 135° (T), with nothing further in sight.

Note: the large merchant vessel very closely resembled the Goyo Maru in ONI-208J. Torpedoes in forward tubes were serviced.

December 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>, patrolling across the Rabaul-Shortlands - Buka routes on a North-South courses near the center line of assigned area. On December 8<sup>th</sup> sighted what might have been a white or pale green flare. A cautious coverage of the vicinity failed to disclose any source. Object was probably a shooting star.

December 10<sup>th</sup>, 21:07 the Officer of the Deck observed black object in the haze estimated at 600 yards, on the port beam. It resembled the conning tower and forward section of a partially submerged midget submarine. Tail was turned toward it and stern tubes prepared. Neither radar nor sound gear could detect anything. Courses were changed to give better sound reception and the area was cautiously approached and crossed but no further contact was made.

December 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, no entries in the patrol report.

December 14<sup>th</sup>, 06:53 in position Latitude 04° 57' South, Longitude 152° 45' East, sighted smoke. By exposing about ten feet of periscope made out stick masts. It drew to southward. Normal approach course at six knots failed to close, and smoke passed out of sight.

21:33 in Latitude 05° 17' South, Longitude 153° 06' East (29 miles from Cape St. George) the SD radar picked up a plane and another radar. The plane moved in and out at ranges from 16 to 11 miles. The other radar, which was apparently directional, swept across our bearing at intervals varying from ten minutes to an hour. The plane's image was last seen at 22:25. The radar beams last sweep across our screen was at 00:34. Our SD was kept manned throughout the night. During this period the SJ radar which is manned continuously, detected nothing.

Note: the SD radar is not manned continuously at night as a rule. It is tested nightly and used to determine navigational ranges. Therefore, this strange radar may be used by the enemy nightly. Further searches will be made.

December 16<sup>th</sup>, 20:06 the SD radar picked up a plane distance 14 miles. It appeared to move out to about 13 miles then its image disappeared from the screen

Note: No strange radar was indicated tonight or last night but this is not conclusive as the equipment was not functioning well.

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 06:37 in Latitude 05° 33' South, Longitude 153° 15' East, sighted masts of ship dead ahead (our course 217° (T)), distance estimated at ten miles, angle on the bow 90 starboard. Came right to course 280 and increased speed. Target continued to draw to the right. Abandon approach when angle on the bow reached 130° Starboard with range increasing. Ship had goal post masts. We saw no stack and no escort was visible. At 19:03 departed southwest corner of area as directed by the Task Force Commander.

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December 18<sup>th</sup>, 00:40 in Latitude 06° 49' South, Longitude 152° 52' East, SD radar picked up airplane distance 14 miles. Range decreased steadily. Made a quick dive when range reached five miles. Before radar mast submerged range indicated was three miles. 01:19 made a periscope observation, saw nothing in bright moonlight.

01:22 raised the radar mast. There was indication of an object two miles distant. Lowered the radar mast and the periscope. Made periscope observation followed by SD radar observation. Same object as before was indicated. Decided it was too steady for a plane. Made wide sweep with SJ radar. No indication was found.

02:05 surfaced and continued on track. 03:20 observed a radar beam crossing the screen of the SD radar.

09:40 sighted masts and top of stack bearing 061° (T), distance eight miles. (Gato's position, Latitude 07° 38' South, Longitude 154° 34' East). Angle on the bow estimated to be 100° Port. We came to course 060°, then 000°, then 320° but range and angle on the bow increased with each observation. Target passed out of sight at 10:30. No identification of the vessel can be made. On one observation smoke was seen forward of the ship, indicating the presence of another craft.

19:47 the SD radar indicated that another radar beam swept across it. Another such indication was obtained at 19:59, but no others were obtained during the night.

December 19<sup>th</sup>, through periscope in Latitude 09° 43' South, Longitude 156° 27' East, observed a low wing, single engine monoplane bearing 130° (T), distance approximately three miles. Plane was on northeasterly course and gave no indication of sighting Gato.

December 20<sup>th</sup>, 01:10 image on SD radar indicated aircraft distance six miles, which closed to four miles as Gato submerged. 01:54 surfaced after radar showed all clear.

10:30 lookout reported a periscope dead ahead. It was gone by the time he called the Officer-of-the-Deck's attention. Turned tail to spot and got after tubes ready. No periscope appeared. Submerged and listened. Sound gear did not pick up and contact. Ran submerged for about one hour.

11:36 surfaced on course 185°. A large plane was two miles away on the starboard quarter turning toward us. Although it looked like a PBY, there was no time to go through recognition routine. We dove to 200 feet, changing course to 100° (T) enroute. 12:20 surfaced all clear.

12:37 sighted plane on the port beam distance about eight miles. We are heading 180° and the plane is heading north. It appeared to be a B-25, but might have been a Japanese Type 98 Fiat bomber. We flashed aircraft recognition letter. Plane flashed but no letter could be made out. Radar picked up the plane and the range checked with visual estimate.

As plane moved aft it gradually turned toward us, closing. We fired a smoke bomb of proper color. Continued to flash challenge but got no further flash from plane. When directly astern, the plane headed for us at low altitude. We made quick dive and radical change of course.

14:40 surfaced and mounted the 20mm gun. 15:20 an image of a recognition radar (I.F.F.) appeared on screen of the SD radar, appearing briefly four or five time within a period of about three minutes. Nothing was in sight at the time.

18:53 a disturbance appeared in the water about 800 yards from the ship on the starboard quarter (Latitude 14° 20' South, Longitude 156° 50' East). It can best be described as resembling an impulse bubble. Using hard rudder and flank speed, it was placed astern. No solid object appeared in the vicinity. We zig-zagged throughout the night.

December 21<sup>st</sup>, in Latitude 18° 32' South, Longitude 156° 30' East, observed periscope bearing 165°, distance about 3,500 yards. We had just zig-zagged from course 195°, to course 225°. Periscope went under a few seconds after being sighted. We turned to course 325°, using full rudder and flank speed, described a wide circle back to base course

December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 02:40 sighted Cape Moreton Light bearing 253° (T). Distance 25 miles. 07:47 picked up pilot and entered Brisbane, Australia.

### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Third Patrol:**

#### **From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato, Patrol Report, paragraph 18 'Remarks'**

In view of the detachment of the Commanding, Executive and Engineering (third) Officers prior to this patrol, the Gato was fortunate in having Lieutenant Commander G. K. Mac Kenzie ordered onboard for temporary duty. Acting as Executive Officer, Navigator and assistant approach officer, he left no doubt as to his ability and judgment. In the carefully considered opinion of the commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Mac Kenzie is in all respects ready to command a submarine on a war patrol.

Morale and performance of duty by both officers and men was of such a high order to be extremely gratifying to the commanding officer.

Third Patrol (5 November – 23 December 1942)

**From: Commander Task Force Forty-Two, 25 December 1942**

Few contacts were made and only one could be closed sufficiently to fire torpedoes. Four torpedoes were expended on the only attack made and were fired on generated bearing four minutes after final observation. A speed spread was used and one explosion was heard 40 seconds after firing.

Considering the factors that enemy counter-action precluded observing results and the last observation was made with target five degrees on the bow at 1,000 yards, no damage to the 8,500-ton vessel of the Goyo Maru type can be credited.

Indication of other radar beams noted was probably from another friendly submarine in the adjacent routing lanes.

**From: Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 8 January 1943**

The ability of the submarine commanding officers to successfully evade depth charge attacks, the ability of the ships themselves to withstand the effects of such attacks, and the generally excellent material condition of the submarine during and on return from patrols continue to be a source of gratification to the Force Commander and reflects credit on responsible personnel.

The favorable remarks of the Commanding Officer about Lieutenant Commander Mac Kanzia's performance of duty are noted with pleasure.

**Awards:** None

**Refit – 24 December 1942 – 12 January 1943**

Refit was accomplished by the U.S.S. Fulton AS-11 and the relief crew of Submarine Division Eighty-One. No major repairs or alternations were undertaken. The vessel was wiped in Brisbane River by personnel of the Fulton. Instructions for our next patrol are, briefly "to conduct unrestricted warfare against the enemy in the areas surrounding the New Georgia group of the Solomon Islands until the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, then return to Brisbane after patrol".

**Fourth Patrol – First Warship - 13 January – 26 February 1943**

U.S.S. Gato departed Brisbane on the morning of January 13<sup>th</sup> to conduct a war patrol in the New Georgia Group of the Solomon Islands.

11:00 north of Brisbane River conducted noise tests with a sound boat from the U.S.S. Fulton AS-11. Discovered an excessive noise in No. 2 I.C. Motor Generator, which would certainly have cause us embarrassment. 15:00 completed noise test and continued to sea.

18:00 in vicinity of Calounda Head, joined Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Vendetta D69, for combined training exercises as prescribed in the operations order. We followed her through the swept channel and then after a trim dive, made night approaches until midnight. This much needed drill is greatly appreciated. It is hoped that similar opportunities will be afforded at each departure.

January 14<sup>th</sup>, 08:00 commenced morning exercises with Vendetta. Completed scheduled morning exercises. On request, the destroyer dropped one 300 lb depth charge at 500 yards distance.

11:00 made 300 foot test dive. Material is completely satisfactory. 13:00 commenced daylight practice approaches on Vendetta.

16:15 completed afternoon scheduled exercises. Destroyer gave us a Dead Reckoning (D.R.) position and good wishes. The Vendetta returned to port and Gato continued enroute to the patrol area.

January 15<sup>th</sup> to January 16<sup>th</sup>, enroute to patrol area. Conducted drills and training exercises. Fired 20mm gun and the 3" gun for training.

January 17<sup>th</sup>, submerged for the daylight period, 70 miles south of New Georgia. 16:35 changed course to north and entered area "B" South. After sunset, surfaced and preceded through area "B" South on two engines. At 22:29 on reaching the line from the Japanese new Georgia to Guadalcanal, slowed to five knots and trimmed down, on chance of intercepting any cross traffic.

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 03:21 received Commander Task Force Forty-Two (CTF-42) message number 44 B, directing Gato to proceed to the northern entrance to Bougainville Strait. We went to four engine speed and set course to pass between Buraku and Russell Islands. 04:33 an aircraft flare was dropped on our port beam distance of about four miles. This was followed in about five minutes with another. The non-directional radar picked up a plane which closed from six to four miles. Submerged and continued track toward Indispensable Strait. After sunset, we surfaced between Ramo and Santa Ysabel islands. We are preceding at best speed to new station.

Fourth Patrol (13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943)

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 09:13 dived to prevent detection by an unidentified patrol plane which crossed ahead. Since our schedule requires only one hour more on the surface before dark tonight, we remained submerged until just before apparent noon. Surfaced and preceded at best four engine speed. At 13:46 dived to approach new station. After sunset, surfaced and patrolled the east-west line across the Bougainville Strait at Latitude 06° 20' South. A small patrol boat passed to northward on easterly course, distance about six miles, pinging on 18 kcs. It passed out of sight without noticing Gato.

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 00:06 sighted flashing lights bearing 326° (R). They appeared to be rockets or flares. Shortly after a small patrol boat appeared bearing 329° (T), distance five miles, closing. Gato submerged to periscope depth. The boat passed us at about 700 yards, not pinging, and stood toward the Shorthand Harbor entrance. At 02:03 surfaced and resumed patrol.

02:43 received CTF-42 message NR 57 B.

Editor's Note: The next four to six lines, about the message, of the patrol report are blank.

05:43 submerged and patrolled the line at periscope depth. At noon sighted a single float observation plane bearing 050° (R) distance five miles on course 330° (T).

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 03:35 sighted patrol boat bearing 170° (T) distance about seven miles. Kept end on to him and he passed without detecting us. No pinging heard.

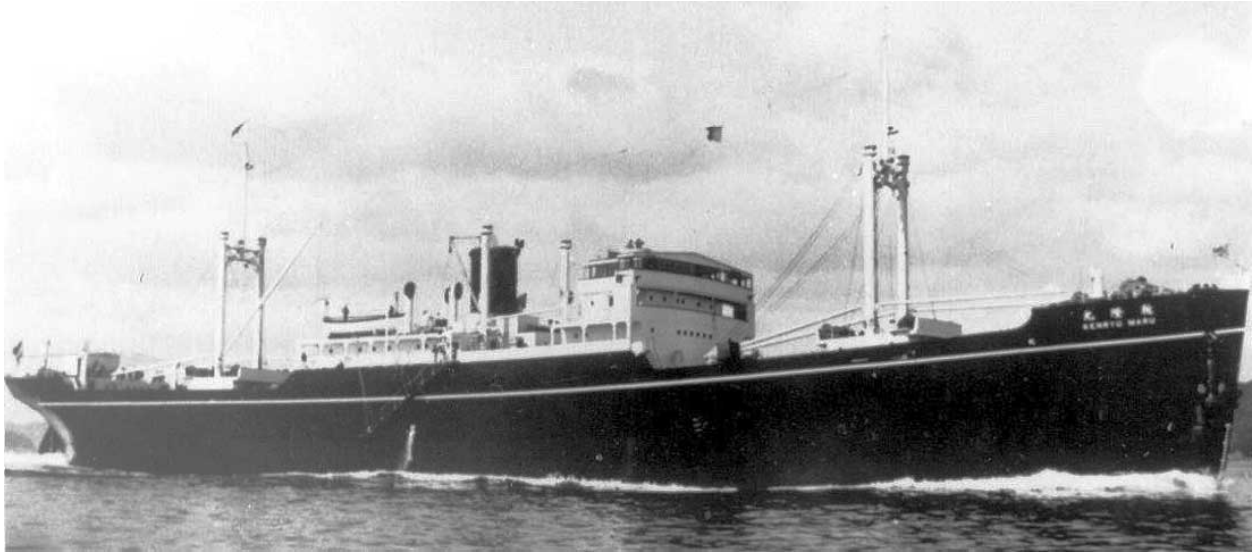
16:00 sighted smoke bearing 319° (T). As smoke drew to left, came to course 230° (T). Smoke appeared to come from several ships. We went to battle stations. We heard pinging at 18 kcs.

17:30 masts of ships appeared for the first time. We gradually made out a formation of four ships escorted by two destroyers.

18:10 the leading destroyer made a false contact ahead of the formation, hoisted a two-flag signal, speeded up and dropped one depth charge.

Gato fired two bow torpedoes at the lead ship and two bow torpedoes at the second ship. The lead ship closed Gato making high speed, Gato started for 250 feet.

At 18:15 (2 minutes and 20 seconds after the firing No.3 tube torpedo) one torpedo detonated and was followed by several smaller detonations. Gato commenced evasive tactics and running silent. Destroyers were using 'sound bombs'.



Kenkon Maru

19:50 Gato made a periscope observation. The Kenkon Maru was burning violently. It was aflame for the entire length. The flames were of mast head height (100 ft), but flared up every few seconds at each end of the ship to be at least twice that height. Flames continued until 22:15 when they changed to a dull glow. This glow in turn disappeared shortly. There is no doubt in the mind of the commanding officer that this ship was completely destroyed. Other information indicated that it was a transport. (In morning no ship was there, only small charred pieces of debris was observed.)



21:17 sighted a destroyer, bearing 237° (T). 21:52 heard one depth charge a long distance away.

22:09 came to course East and made a two-thirds speed to endeavor to clear the Anti submarine (A/S) search before our batteries are depleted. 23:04 sighted a destroyer two miles, to the north. It stood to the southwest without pinging or changing course. 23:43 surfaced and commenced charging batteries.

January 22<sup>nd</sup>, on assigned station conducting a submerged patrol during daylight. 09:56 sighted small patrol vessel bearing 195° (T) distance about five miles. He passed at about three miles without detecting us.

19:50 surfaced and observed three indistinct shapes on horizon 280° (T). We headed for the contacts. Then as they draw to the north, came to normal approach course at best three engine speed. 22:20 unable to close contact. Broke off chase and returned to station.

Fourth Patrol (13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943)

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 05:00 a plane was heard to pass overhead. It was not seen although the moon was bright. 05:45 submerged and closing in on the entrance west of Omea Atoll.

17:00 sound heard screws bearing 078° (T). It was a Japanese submarine of the I-53 class, on the surface about 5,000 yards on course 195° (T). Gato fired two bow tubes. The target turned parallel to the torpedo tracks. No hits, both torpedoes were heard to explode after five minutes thirty seconds and five minutes and forty seconds respectively after firing.

22:50 while on surface at low speed, sound heard pinging to the northwest. Soon made out that there were four ships inshore. Commenced approach on surface.

23:12 submerged when plot indicated we could reach attack position at low speed. SJ radar working beautifully, picking up targets at 9,000 yards. There were three large ships and two destroyers. Made tubes ready. Sound indicated one destroyer was approaching at high speed.

23:27 periscope looked full into the searchlight of a destroyer closing rapidly. Went deep receiving three depth charges enroute. Consider it fortunate we were not rammed as we come up to 40 feet keel depth to expose radar. The destroyers then successfully kept us down for three hours while the convoy reached safety. During this time deciphered SUBS 42 NR 76 B, directing Gato to sound off and evacuate to a new station.

January 24<sup>th</sup>, surfaced on course 090° (T). Making 12.5 knots while transmitting a radio report. Gato changed course to 335° (T) and proceeded toward new station north of Kieta.

January 25<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on course 090° (T). At 00:31 dived to avoid what appeared to be the conning tower of a submarine on opposite course passing to northward about 1,000 yards from our track. Felt that it was the U.S.S. Nautilus SS-168. This was no snap decision. Reasoning as follows:

- We have been submerged for approaches or evasive tactics repeatedly during the past few nights, missing much radio traffic. Nautilus must have been similarly engaged.
- If Nautilus missed the message changing her station, she would be exactly here and most probably on an east-west course.

01:25 surfaced and resumed patrol. Sighted two ships on the horizon bearing northeast coming down on a southerly course.

02:00 went to battle stations and commenced approach on the surface. This unusual approach was described in considerable length in the war patrol report, not because it would contribute

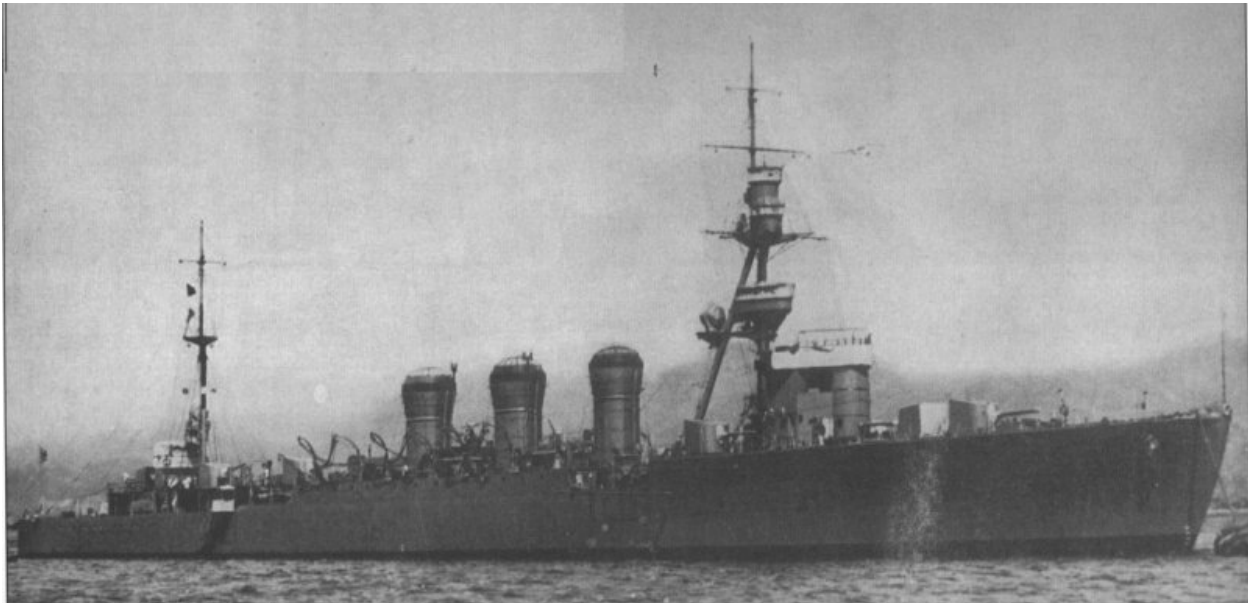
anything to the science or technique of attack but because it illustrates some freak condition of visibility, sound conditions and radar reception. Dived, continuing the approach submerged.

03:18 from a depth of 40 feet, fired first of six bow torpedo tubes at intervals of 10, 10, 17, 14 and 13 seconds respectively. Went to 60 feet and heard a torpedo hit, then another torpedo hit. Periscope visibility was absolutely nil. High speed screws were closing; Went deep as first of four depth charges exploded within one minute. Ran silent, started up but so did the destroyer screws. Started down again.



04:02 a distant explosion was heard, but it could not be classified.

05:20 surfaced and sighted nothing. Commenced a battery charge at emergency rate. On this attack, although we know we put two torpedoes into something, no claims can be made unless the Task Force Commander hears from other source of Japanese difficulties at this point.



Gato gets credit for damaging a Japanese Light Cruiser

13:35 Gato suffered a stern plane casualty. Depth control was regained at 135', but creamed chipped beef covered the galley deck. Controlling depth by the bow planes only.

16:30 stern plane were back in commission.

Fourth Patrol (13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943)

Editor's Note: In the Patrol Report, Captain Foley did not report the final status of the creamed chipped beef. However, we can assume the worst.

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 01:49 smoke sighted bearing 302° (T). 02:01 echo ranging heard on 18 kcs. Bearing remained almost constant, but smoke did not close appreciably. Reversed course and closed on surface.

02:25 made out four large vessels and two destroyers, but there may have been more. Visibility was poor. We were almost on the track. Gato dived to await approach. Distance estimated six miles. While range was still about 9,000 yards, and Gato at periscope depth, we were located by the escort, which now contained three destroyers.

02:47 went deep as one destroyer ran down our bearing at high speed. All destroyers seemed to alternately echo range, speed up, and stop to listen then speed up again.

As screws and echo ranging faded, we started up to periscope depth. Convoy has not yet passed our position. The ascent to periscope depth abruptly interrupted when a hitherto reliable sound operator announced that the destroyer bearing ten degrees relative had speeded up and was 'charging directly at us'. Deep submergence was ordered, but when no attack developed and the operator continued his somewhat melodramatic reports, the sound receiver was tuned on to the loud speaker. The reports were not justified. Started for periscope depth but critical time had been lost. (Although this man is removed for that important post, he is not condemned. The sound man must say what he thinks he hears, and it is felt that the man's imagination was sharpened by fatigue or perhaps the strain of recent days.)

04:07 surfaced on four engines in a heavy rain squalls with much reduced visibility. Ran at best speed on estimate track of convoy, but never saw it again. At sunrise, submerged and commenced retracing our track.

23:00 while patrolling close inshore in the vicinity of Zeune and Otua Islands received SUBS 42 serial 89 B message. The part referring to Gato is badly garbled, but believed it merely directs us to cover the whole area east of Buka and Bougainville.

January 29<sup>th</sup>, patrolling northeast coast of Bougainville Island. Submerged during daylight. 23:25 while closing Oema Atoll, trimmed own to decks awash, encountered heavy ground swell just as rudder was put over for a change of course. This resulted in shipping a green sea over main induction.

January 29<sup>th</sup>, patrolling east-west line, close aboard north side of Oema Atoll. Trying to cover passages on both sides of atoll. This is a mistake as shown below.

07:03 sighted ship bearing 274° (T) distance 14,000 yards hugging the Bougainville coast. Normal course at high speed failed to close below 6,000 yards.

His speed plotted approximately 16 knots. He was a conventional four goal post auxiliary, estimated at 9,000 tons. His escort which was not pinging, might have been a submarine.

As target entered channel out of range, resumed patrol, but this time closed the Bougainville coast ignoring the east entrance.

15:10 heard echo ranging to south. Smoke was then sighted bearing 172° (T) and started closing it. The target proceeded close to the reefs as expected, but probably on false contact by the escort he abruptly swung about 135° right to course 090° (T). Commenced approach.

16:24 fired two stern torpedoes. One hit under the bridge. The target took a 50° list, swung through 180°, then returned to an even trim, but commenced to take an angle down by the head. At this time, since the escort (converted yacht type, bearing the number 22) seemed hopelessly confused, the target was studied closely and a 'conference' was held over the identification book. Except for the addition of crows nest she was an exact duplicate of the Seiwa Maru, 7,200 tons, painted war color and numbered 853.

A detonation was heard and the escort had not dropped a depth charge and with no evidence seen on the target. We assumed it to be our second torpedo finishing its run.

16:36 target seemed to quit settling. The captain was considering expenditure of another torpedo, when the target's tail rose in the air. Took two snapshots of her. Men in dark clothes commenced leaving the ship by jumping and sliding down ropes. Three life boats were in the water.

The target sank bow first. The escort continued an incessant pinging but failed to see or hear us although at times she passed within 1,000 yards. Her deck, superstructure and masts were completely covered with men in spotless white, all staring in the water.



16:50 commenced steering northwesterly courses to clear the scene without leaving lane unguarded.

Fourth Patrol (13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943)

18:35 a small float observation plane circles the scene of recent sinking. Gato went to 120 feet. While preparing to surface for the night, heard echo ranging astern. It closed on steady bearing and was recognized as a regular patrol boat. We went to 200 feet.

20:23 the boat passed directly overhead and continued off on a reciprocal of her approach course. Seventeen minutes later Gato surface and patrolled close to a line of reefs for the night.

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 02:02 to 04:00 planes with running lights pass close aboard. Heard plane pass close to port. Radar was tracking plane passing, distance at least eight miles. Anti Aircraft firing at Kieta, distance 11 miles. More Anti Aircraft fire and strafing at Kieta

04:58 bombing observed in vicinity of Bougainville Strait. Radar then tracked planes in toward ship from 11 miles to zero. Just as the operator reported "It must be directly over us", the lights of two planes were seen close aboard, passing almost overhead. Their course was directly from the above mentioned bombing, the lookout was sure he saw U.S. markings. 05:50 daylight and Gato submerged.

06:35 sighted patrol boat #22 (yesterdays inefficient one) approaching to enter Bougainville Strait. As we were almost in his path, eased out and he passed 600 yards abeam. Studied him carefully to determine the advisability of destroying him. As commanding officer, I am convinced, from his performance of duty, that we would be aiding the enemy by removing him, since he probably gives then an unfounded feeling of security.

After sunset, on the surface in hazy visibility, we sighted an unusual patrol boat on his outbound leg. He passed abeam on opposite course ( $330^{\circ}$  (T)) distance estimated at two miles. It is only with a mental effort that due precautions are now being taken on contacting this patrol. They are taken however. In this case, shifted to battery motors and turned carefully away, presenting the stern until he faded. He is not pinging.

January 31<sup>st</sup>, patrolling off the east coast of Bougainville, close enough to preclude the passage of targets inshore. 18:52 patrol vessel passed three miles abeam without detecting us. Received SUBS 42 serial 3 directing Gato to move north to Latitude  $4^{\circ}$ -00 South, and conduct a surface patrol. Came to course  $000^{\circ}$  (T) and preceded at best two engine speed.

February 1<sup>st</sup>, on the surface zig-zagging and running four hour legs centered at  $156^{\circ}$  East. Received SUBS 42 NR 80 calling for immediate shift to new station. Gato is now assigned to cover eastern approached to Buka Passage. This can only be done properly by being in the mouth of the passage, since it can be approached from a great variety of courses. Proceeded on four engine speed.

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, at sunrise submerged six miles from the east entrance of Buka Passage, and continued closing. Spent the day observing the entrance, sea approaches and the adjacent coastline. Chart appears quite inaccurate, as to the shape of coast and location of mountain peaks, but Gato is not in position to give accurate corrections.

During the afternoon studied the coastline. On the Buka side, close to the east entrance is a group of newly constructed buildings which are not native type. On the Bougainville side, set well back, but projecting above the trees, is an object which could be a radar or signal station. Its top did to appear to rotate. Two groups of white tents are located about four to six miles north of the passage, on the Buka coast. They are at the sea level rather than to the top of the low bluff which follows the coast. Atop the bluff are what appear to be native shacks by the hundreds. None of them looked new.

In a few spots the foliage appears artificial, somewhat like the camouflage used by our army around Oahu, but this impression may be due to unfamiliarity with the local plant life.

15:51 a single engine monoplane, circled over the passage. Had no float, and if he had wheels they were folded. Otherwise resembled Mitsubishi type 97 observation and light bomber.

19:43 brush file on Bougainville coast seven miles east of Buka passage, will assist materially in our surface navigation tonight. During night lights showed at irregular intervals and for irregular periods where the camps and native houses are located.

23:00 CTF-42 NR 12 message directs Gato to remain here looking for cripples (Damaged Japanese shipping trying to return to port).

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 05:07 searchlight beam (vertical) was shown at Buka Passage for about 37 minutes. 10:30 sighted observation plane bearing 220°, distance five miles (over Buka Pass) circling as for a landing.

23:27 received SUBS Four Two Serial 14 message, moving boats to new station. Gato is assigned to the channel between Ontong Java and Roncador Reef, to patrol on surface southwest of the former. Set course for new station at two-engine speed. Sighted plane burning lights over Buka Pass/

February 4<sup>th</sup>, changing station on surface. Zig-zagging during the daylight. 19:15 (at about 20 miles from nearest island of the Ontong Java Group) a strange radar beam swept across the screen of our SD radar. This was repeated for several times. 20:15 arrived at a point bearing 220°, distance six miles from Ontong Java and took up surface reverse. Scouting speed 14 knots.

Fourth Patrol (13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943)

February 5<sup>th</sup>, surface patrol southwest of Ontong Java, making a trim dive at dawn. Again a strange radar indicated on our screen. Radar picked up a plane distance 17 miles. When it closed to ten miles without being sighted, submerged for 20 minutes. Assume we must be undetected by enemy to be of any value here.

09:08 radar picked up a plane at 15 miles. It closed to 14 miles then opened out. It was not sighted.

13:04 sighted plane bearing 065°. Believed it to be a B-17 but not sure. Submerged for 23 minutes. 14:02 strange radar again seen on our screen. 14:34 plane sighted. It was a large patrol-type plane too distant to identify. Flying at about 10,000 feet, bearing 189° and on a course of 280° (T). It passed into clouds at the time when radar indicated 22 miles.

14:40 another plane sighted bearing 330°. This was quite definitely a B-17, course 175 (direction of Guadalcanal), height about 3,000 feet. Passed us eight miles ahead. Probably saw Gato, as he swung slightly toward us as he crossed the bow, then resumed his course.

February 6<sup>th</sup>, received SUBS 42 serial 22 message. Gato is to remain on present surface patrol, but remain unseen in hopes the enemy main body will pass through this channel.

Throughout the day patrolled line 45°-225° at best two engine speed, observing Ontong Java with the high periscope at northeast end of run. Reversing course after two hours run to the southwest. No plane or ship contacts. Foreign radar swept across our screen throughout the day.

21:30 SUBS 42 NR 23 message discloses that the position of Japanese main body is not known.

22:06 the #3 main engine was stopped when an unusual noise was heard and a drop was noted in the exhaust temperature of the #15 unit. Examination showed that a foreign piece of cast metal had clogged the fresh water inlet to the #15 unit. The piston seized and the lower half of the connecting rod bearing was wiped. The necessary parts were renewed and the engine was placed on propulsion.

February 7<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on surface exactly as yesterday. Radar picked up a plane four miles away. Ceiling appeared to be not over 100 feet. Weather is rainy and blustery. We did not dive. Figure this must be a low storm and plane is over it. A plane passed overhead, but not visible. Just as it was fading from the radar screen another plane passed, distance 17 miles.

15:48 sighted large four-engine patrol plane, similar to a Kawamishi 97 flying boat. On southerly course distance six miles. Made a quick dive. While diving, radar picked up above plane, distance six miles. Gato surfaced 45 minutes later.

February 8<sup>th</sup>, same patrol as yesterday. We still get flashes of another radar across our screen.

12:15 SD radar picked up a peculiar target at 26 miles. It appeared to be many times as large as the usual airplane.

It closed slowly to 19 miles, during which time it was joined by a regular airplane. Believed now that it was a plane with a radar onboard. The radar tracked it out to 40 miles. (our record) where it disappeared. Nothing sighted from the bridge during this time.

20:00 reduced scouting speed to economical one-engine speed as we have only 35,000 gallons left. This will permit very little high speed work if we are to return to base without refueling.

February 9<sup>th</sup>, received SUBS 42 serial message directing Gato to proceed to equator and work between 154° and 158° east. Sent radio report of fuel and torpedoes on hand with resume of activities and then departed for new station. At 17:44 Gato passed north of Tauu Islands.

February 10<sup>th</sup>, proceeding North toward equator on 156° meridian. On the surface except for a trim dive at dawn. Radar picked up plane passing 12 miles, Gato was not seen. 08:01 another plane passed, nearest distance was 13 miles, again Gato was not seen.

16:15 lookout observed periscope on starboard beam distance about 1000 yards. Another lookout picked it up. The Officer of the Deck could not make it out on first look, did not wait to search. He applied full left rudder and flank speed, getting after tubes ready. No further evidence was seen.

February 11<sup>th</sup>, patrolling equator, west of Longitude 156° East. 01:10 received SUBS 42 serial 32 message, directing Gato to work southward on 156° meridian and cover East coast of Bougainville again. 08:00 reached assigned meridian and commenced working southward at one engine speed.

February 12<sup>th</sup>, proceeding toward Bougainville Strait, on surface except for a dawn trim dive. At 16:19 sighted Bougainville Island bearing 190° (T).

21:01 twenty miles due north of Oema Island, approaching the entrance. The land was covered with a haze. Half moon near the meridian. Three destroyers came out of the haze approximately four miles away, bearing 140° (T), in column, course about 000° (T). Although silhouetted by the moon, we were nearly end on and felt that we might be unobserved. Came to course 140° (T) and got tubes ready. Dived on that course. As we dived the two leading destroyers made smoke and seemed to turn toward us. Through the periscope one target was very clear. Another was hazy and had opened out to his left. The third could not be seen. The clear one was on a

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course to pass about 1000 yards abeam. Commenced swinging the necessary 70 degrees for a stern shot. Had just started this turn when a pattern of depth charges was placed close to Gato. This must have been the third destroyer. Went to deep submergence. A ragged pattern of four depth charges followed. A single destroyer commenced echo ranging. Normal evasive tactics were employed.

21:32 pinging ceased, screws faded. Planed up slowly to periscope depth. Nothing in sight.

22:28 surfaced and continued toward Oema Island.

February 13<sup>th</sup>, patrolling the southeast coast of Bougainville, northeast of Oema Island.

21:45 sighted three destroyers coming out of entrance, bearing 150° (T), distance four miles and course estimated 340° (T). Came to approach course. Dived (This is now considered too early, but at the time it was considered necessary to prevent detection). Targets were visible for short time in periscope and were lost in a wide rain squall. Sound conditions seemed poor, but indicated in general that the screws passed to the northeast at high speed. Surfaced and resume patrol. Rapid pursuit considered plausible.

February 14<sup>th</sup>, no entries in the patrol report.

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 20:10 while patrolling the position between Oema and Otau Islands at the entrance to Bougainville Strait, Gato sighted smoke in the channel. Heard echo ranging from the direction of target and went to battle stations.

20:27 submerged dead head of targets which now appear to be two fairly large vessels escorted by one destroyer. Again Lieutenant Ward, the executive officer did an excellent work on the low periscope. Sound conditions were excellent. Bearings were obtained on three sets of screws. Radar was exposed three times without result, but justified itself on the 4<sup>th</sup> exposure. Excellent range and bearing of all ships were obtained.

21:00 targets clearly visible as a Supply ship (AK) of about 8,000 tons, a Tanker (AO) of about 7500 tons and a Destroyer (DD), Fired first of two bow shots at the AK, then fired the first of two bow shots at the AO. Started deep as two of the torpedoes were defective and missed the AO. One torpedo hit with a particularly heavy explosion. The AK's screws stopped almost immediately. The other three torpedoes missed and exploded at end of run. It sounded like the compartments on the AK were caving in.



The destroyer speeded up, but did not locate us, his bearing crossed our stern. Screws of the tanker drew to the right (north). Three depth charges were dropped by the destroyer, well clear of us, and then three more were dropped at a safe distance from us.

21:40 a violent series of the 'egg crate' noised came from the AK. The destroyer screws stopped and the Tanker faded away.

22:00 reached periscope depth, two miles from the firing point, but could see nothing.

22:23 surfaced on four engines and headed away from the scene. The destroyer was broadside to Gato and was either picking up survivors or merely listening for us. We were too close for comfort (est. three miles). The AK had sunk and the AO had apparently continued on her course unescorted.

22:30 when we were fairly certain that the destroyer would not be able to pick up our broadside silhouette, Gato set course to intercept the tanker.

23:35 sighted the tanker all by herself hugging the coast. We were on her quarter and the visibility did not permit a surface approach. Between the rain squalls there are periods of bright moonlight.

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 00:00 while jockeying to obtain attack position, us and the AO were passing in and out of frequent rain squalls.

00:30 the target failed to emerge from one rain squall. We took position on his projected track, trimmed down to deck awash, slowed to steerageway and waited. 00:40 when target did not appear, we decided he had been able to use some reserve speed and pull ahead. Plotted his 03:30 position on that assumption and proceeded there at maximum speed.

03:30 no target was found. Decided that the target must have entered Kieta which was abeam when he disappeared. 04:06 commenced working back to the coast to intercept if he comes out. Submerged and followed the coast toward Kieta.

February 17<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off Oema Island, Bougainville Strait. Echo ranging heard on sound gear. No surface craft detected. The same was heard at irregular intervals throughout the day. It came from inside the channel. 13:00 periscope #2 is commencing to get foggy.

February 18<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off Oema Island, Bougainville Strait. 01:12 SJ radar picked up a momentary target on 030° (T), which disappeared immediately. Almost simultaneously (and

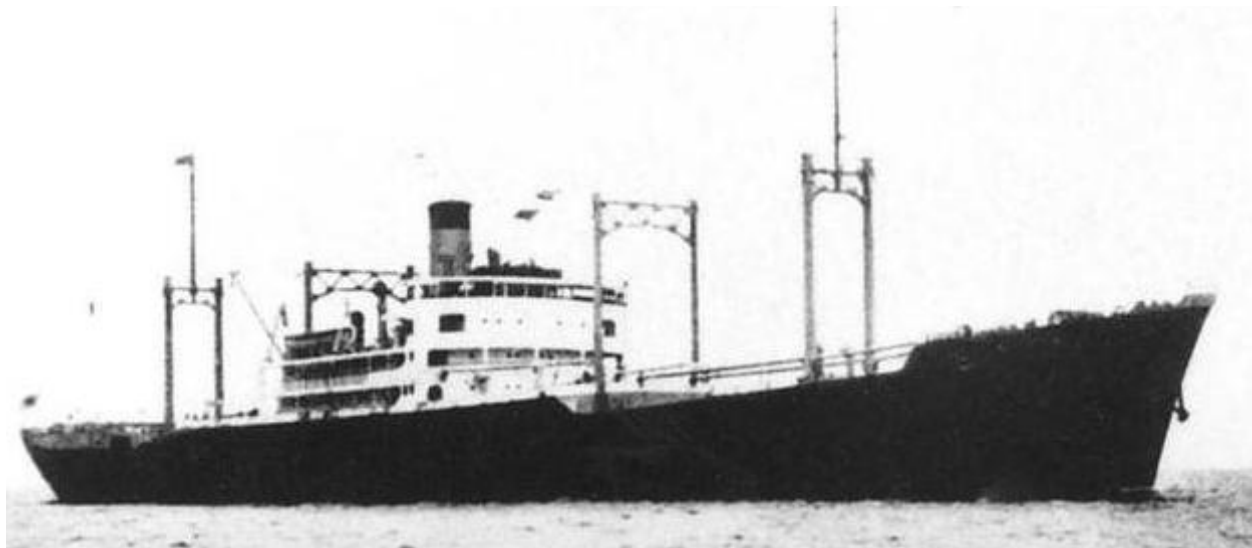
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independently) one lookout saw what he believed to be a periscope bearing 040° (T). Put tail to it. No screws could be heard. No further indications. Continued to Zig-zagged thereafter.

Once each hour we pass through the spot where our last attack was made. A stream of fuel oil starts from this point and goes down current. This may account for our periscopes fogging yesterday.

February 19<sup>th</sup>, Gato was patrolling northwest of the Oema Island. 02:16 three aircraft flares were dropped over the Shortlands Area. 02:37 Anti-aircraft fire in the Shortlands Area.

17:57 sighted smoke deep in the channel bearing 201° (T). As the stack of a ship was sighted, went to battle stations and commenced approach. This was an orthodox approach except for the radical course changes of the target required excessive speeds by the submarine, until the last leg on which the target came into excellent position for a stern tube shot (we have no torpedoes forward). The target was a four post auxiliary which we classified as an AK, although of course it might have been some sort of tender (after war assessment determine it was the 6550 ton Japanese ammunition ship Hibari Maru). Tonnage was estimated at 9,000 tons. The escort is thought to be a Chidori class torpedo boat.



Typical Japanese Ammunition Ship

19:35 Gato fired three stern torpedoes. One torpedo struck near the stern of the target. She immediately veered about 70 degrees to her right and then swung slowly back. In about three minutes she started settling by the stern. The escort did not charge toward us for an appreciable time, but stopped and appeared to make a sweep with her sound gear. Then she turned toward us and speeded up. We started for 200 feet immediately. Before the periscope went under, the target was observed to be sinking stern first with no list. She still had the poop deck above

water, but looked like it would be gone in about two minutes. There was heavy black smoke coming out of her stack.

The first depth charge detonated but not dangerously close. Five more charges, not in a pattern, were dropped. Minor noised and cracking up sounds came from the target. Echo ranging indicated that the escort had lost us. Slowly headed back to periscope depth. Periscope observation, the full moon was near the zenith.

Escort idling and pinging at the 'scene', about 3,000 yards away. No target in sight. Visibility estimated at ten miles. It is considered that we are justified in claiming that she sank because only 22 minutes lapsed between observations.



At 20:16 put tail to escort, lowered periscope and ran for one hour on course 095° (T). During this time the echo ranging seemed to draw to the south, toward the channel entrance. Slowed and returned to periscope depth and had nothing is sight. Escort had either entered the channel or blended in with the islands at the entrance. Surfaced in 'rapid pursuit' (misnomer) on four engines. Remained on easterly course while clearing message to task force commander. This message reported our shortage of torpedoes. With the radio transmission completed, made radical change of course to the northwest, doubling back toward Bougainville coast.

February 20<sup>th</sup>, Gato received SUBS 42 Serial 63 message directing her to return to port. That night received message SUBS 42 Serial 65 message directing Gato to pick up two downed aviators off of Baniata Pointe, Rendova Island. After estimate of times and distances, increased to three engine speed. This may get us there in time for a brief daylight survey of the beach on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

February 21<sup>st</sup>, proceeding south through neutral lane west of Buka and Bougainville, enroute to recover aviators. Ran submerged during most of the daylight.

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, when due south of Shortland Island heading for Rendova Island on all four engines, received SUBS 42 Serial 71 message to 'come home, aviators have been rescued'. Changed course and slowed to more economical speed to get back on return route.

At this time a study of speed, fuel and miles showed that with reasonable luck we could save one day of the unproductive 'proceeding' period. This plan entails the use of three engines and no trim dives. Proceeded on three engines.

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12:54 radar picked up plane distance eight miles. It came into sight two minutes later. It was a B-26 on northerly course. It presently sighted us and made a wide sweep around us at about three miles, then proceeded north.

14:20 Gato sighted what appeared to be two periscopes distance 5,000 yards. Headed toward it at flank speed. It turned out to be two large birds on a dilapidated life raft. The raft was made of light wood or bamboo, originally covered with white canvas. Oblong instead of oval in shape. No marking could be found, although we examined it closely.

Editor's Note: In conversation with SN (SS) Harry Trott, he was the person who conducted the search of the raft. He stated that he did find a small Japanese silk bag that hang around one's neck and normally contains pictures of family, notes from home or religious icons. In this bag was found a little log book with the names, call sings and grid locations of all of the current Japanese ships in the area. He assumed that the Gato's Patrol Report was purposely annotated that nothing was found to prevent any unauthorized disclosure of the information via the patrol reports.

February 24<sup>th</sup>, a storm of considerable size is building up. Wind is southwest, velocity about 45 knots. Gato can only make about ten knots with two engines. At this speed solid water comes over the bridge. At 10:43 Gato passed a gray painted life raft (unoccupied). It was in fairly good condition. At 13:45 the storm seemed to be increasing. Slowed to one engine speed. Although we can not reach Caloundra Head until dawn on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Gato still saved one day by starting out on three engines. This storm would have added one day to the trip anyway.

February 26 at 09:00 was moored alongside of the U.S.S. Fulton, Brisbane, Australia.

### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Fourth Patrol:**

#### **From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato, Patrol Report, paragraph 10 'Remarks'**

Personnel: The ship went to sea with 65 men, or four men less that the commanding officer considers necessary to operate at maximum efficiency. It was many times evident that a four man increase in complement would have paid tremendous dividends in the ability of the ship to properly carry out her mission. Specific details and examples will be taken up with our Immediate Superior in Command.

Officers: The commanding officer is exceedingly proud of the officers. There is no better feeling than the supreme confidence that comes of knowing that every department of the ship will perform exactly as desired when desired. This applies to every phase from the tightness of the hull at test depth to the correct solution of the torpedo problem, and runs the gamut of radar

performance, navigation, mess management, engineering dependability and trim during attacks. This confidence has never been misplaced.

Enlisted men: The crew performed all duties in an enthusiastic and (as the patrol progressed) capable manner. It must be admitted that each of the first few dives and approaches was an adventure. This because new men had to be placed on stations they had never manned. Enthusiasm and hard work soon overcame this. Now as the patrol ends, it seems a crime to partially break up a smooth-working, self-confident, eager fighting unit, whose morale and efficiency are definitely on the up grade.

**From Commander Task Force Forty-Two, 28 February 1943**

The exercise of great caution to avoid detection prior to attack in a restricted and active area such as Gato's is of the utmost importance. That her commanding officer appreciated this is evidence by his repeatedly electing to submerge for night approaches, accepting the erratic performance of the SJ radar and poor conditions for night periscope observations. Two of the three approaches so conducted were successful. This indicated that Gato's torpedo control party is well trained. The extraordinary night vision of the executive officer at the stand-by periscope was another factor which contributed greatly to the success of these approaches.

Enemy anti-submarine measures in the area during this patrol were much weaker than had been expected. Air patrols were not effectively maintained. The anti-submarine patrol craft stationed in the area was not operated efficiently on Cape Friendship over detected Gato. Manifestly, as long as enemy ships continue to utilize restricted passage through the channel west of Oema Island, where Gato found her targets, this will be a profitable area.

Presence of the enemy radar on southwest side of Ontong Java was indicated by significant flashes on Gato's radar screen.

Gato's material condition is good. She will be given the normal three weeks' refit.

**Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 28 February 1943**

Forwarded, congratulating the Gato on a thoroughly satisfactory patrol resulting in the impressive total of 31,700 tons sunk or destroyed.

On his second war patrol Lieutenant Commander R. J. Foley, U.S. Navy, the commanding officer, has demonstrated an efficiency and obtained results which compare most favorably with the best submarine commanding officers of the war to date.

Fourth Patrol (13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943)

**Commander Task Force Seventy-Two, 29 March 1943**

In paragraph 5 of Commander Task Force Forty-Two, Gato is credited with destruction of a transport of 8,700 tons. Information received subsequently indicates that the vessel destroyed was a freighter or transport of 4,560 tons.

**Awards:**

U.S.S. Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for the Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal  
13 January – 8 February 1943

U.S.S. Gato was to be awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action

Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
13 January – 26 February 1943

|                                |                                 |          |             |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Destroying                     | Transport (1)                   | Totaling | 4,560 tons  |
| Sinking                        | Freighters (3)                  | Totaling | 23,000 tons |
| Damaging Unidentified Ship (1) | (a Warship, Possibly a Cruiser) |          | 7,000 tons  |

Navy Cross to Lieutenant Commander Robert Joseph Foley  
Commanding Officer

Silver Star to Lieutenant Norvell Gardiner Ward  
Executive Officer, Navigator, and Assistant Patrol Officer

Silver Star to Lieutenant Charles Francis McGivern  
Assistant Approach Officer and Torpedo Data Computer Operator

Silver Star to Lieutenant Ralph Huntington Lockwood  
Engineering Officer and Diving Officer

**Refit – 26 February 1943 – 18 March 1943**

Refit was accomplished by the U.S.S. Fulton and relief crew of Submarine Division Eighty-One. No major repairs or alternations were undertaken. Interim docking and wiping were included. No major items of overhaul were undertaken. Instructions on departure 19 March 1943 were to conduct unrestricted warfare against the enemy in the Solomon-Bismarck - New Guinea Area, with the additional special task of landing Lieutenant Keenan (R.A.N.R.), 11 Australian Imperial Force (AIF) commandos and their supplies at Teop Bougainville Island; and to evacuate 12 commandos and 12 civilian from the same point.

**Fifth Patrol First Part – Women and Children First - 19 March – 11 April 1943**

March 19, 09:00 underway from alongside U.S.S. Fulton, Brisbane, Australia. Conducted sound test with Fulton's Sound Boat off Pile Light. 13:00 unable to conduct 3" 50 caliber target practice as target obscured. Called off practice and released towing vessel when we had to depart for next rendezvous.

17:00 transferred Pilot to Examination Boat, and Commander Bruton, USN to HMS Gimpie H63 (Corvette), for training exercises. Proceeded to sea and conducted night approaches on Gimpie.

March 20<sup>th</sup>, 02:40 during training exercises Gato sustained casualty to No. 2 Main Generator. Informed the O.C.P (Commander Bruton) of intentions to continue patrol with three engines.

No. 2 main motor terminal box burned due to salt water leaking from the generator cooler and running down the cables to their terminals, causing a short circuit. This generator was pulling 2200 amps at the time. The bakelite terminal block was burned to depths of ½ inch (original thickness is 1 1/8 inch). No spares for this part (or material for its manufacture) are carried onboard. However, by carefully removing the charred portion and painting the surface of the block with many coats of glyptol, it gave satisfactory megger readings with 500 volts across the terminals. The block was replaced and the generator tested satisfactorily at 1000 kw.

08:00 commenced morning sound exercises with Corvette and made a test dive to 325 feet. No uncorrectable leaks. Conducted afternoon training attacks on the Corvette. At sunset completed training exercises and headed to Bougainville in heavy seas.

March 21<sup>st</sup>, enroute to Bougainville Island in heavy seas. Our wooden boat is badly holed and several of its ribs are broken. Three pad-eyes for securing the gripes were torn from out hull. Now secured and we endeavor to patch it up for the landing.

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, enroute to Bougainville Island. Received Commander Task Force Seventy Two (CTF-72) serial 71 message confirming arrangements for landing of our passengers at Teop, Bougainville Island after dark on 28<sup>th</sup>. At 14:25 passed float chamber of a catamaran type life raft, floating vertically. Painted light grey and somewhat battered. Our relief gun pointers used up remaining 3" target ammunition on it.

March 24<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Teop, Bougainville, running submerged during daylight. CTF-72 serial 75 message warning Gato of a daily routine patrol plane flying over Teop.

March 25<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Teop, Bougainville, running submerged during daylight

Fifth Patrol (19 March 1943 – 6 June 1943)

March 26<sup>th</sup>, north of Buka, enroute to Teop, Bougainville. Received CTF-72 serial 82 message with the report of a target but tells us to leave him alone, as well as any but major targets, until Gato's special job is completed.

March 27<sup>th</sup>, north of Cape Henpan and before dawn worked on our damaged boat. 19:05 on surface set course for Teop Harbor.

March 28<sup>th</sup>, submerged at dawn five miles from Teop entrance. 11:34 sighted small merchant vessel coming down coast. Went to 100 feet and tracked him by sound. Having decided that a night entry into Teop would jeopardize the mission, commenced a slow submerged entry.

Entered the harbor as far as she could go, decided to lie on sandy bottom of inner harbor in 118 feet of water until dark.

Made periscope observation, not quite dark, there is a wooden vessel of 100 feet length anchored near the native village. No activity on board. No activity anywhere. Settled back on the bottom.

Made periscope observation, full dark, no signal fires. A few lights visible in native village, plantation house and on the wooden draft. Proceeded submerged toward channel where we surfaced and stood out.

20:03 two bonfires appeared well up the mountainside behind Teop. Considering them our beacon and commenced reentry. In mid-channel received CTF-72 NR 88 message directing Gato to keep out of sight unless a ship was seen to leave and fire seen. Could not turn before reaching inner end of channel. While turning (trimmed deep and using only steerageway on motors) observed harbor and beach carefully. No indications that we were seen. Same lights as before visible. None in motion.

21:30 departed Teop. On leaving channel cleared area to the northeast at high speed. An interference appeared in radio receiver, similar to that caused by our own SD radar. Possibly a radar is tracking us. 23:48 we are in a violent rainstorm. SJ radar picking up a momentary 'pip'. Turned away at flank speed. SJ radar got another brief indication of ship close aboard. Visibility is nil and made a quick dive. No screws were heard throughout the dive. Discovered that our negative tank flood valve leaks freely. It is thought that the gasket rubbed out on the bottom of Teop harbor or was blown out.

March 29<sup>th</sup>, 00:44 surfaced all clear. Sent radio message to find out if fires we saw were signals. Then made radical change of course at high speed. Received CTF-72 series 90 telling us to keep out of sight and try again tonight.

Submerged at daylight. A small steamer passed proceeding from direction of Buka, toward Kieta. We avoided him.

At dusk, steered into channel. Signal fire appeared on beach. Gato surfaced and stood into the channel. We stopped close to shore abreast signal fire which was being doused. LT MacLean in one of our rubber boats proceeded ashore to reconnoiter. In a native canoe, LT Read, R.A.N.R. came aboard. He has assembled 51 souls and asks that we take as many as possible. The group includes 27 children, 9 mothers, 3 nuns and 12 A.I.F. commandos. The number was a shock but decided we could handle them all for such a short trip. Commenced embarking and disembarking simultaneously. Our dinghy repair job was successful. Native canoes were very helpful. Our rubber boats alone would have taken hours.

21:22 Gato was ready to depart. Nosed out the now familiar channel in the pitch black.

Cleared the channel and ran eastward at four engine speed while getting the passengers settled. All were 'trouper' and were quickly adopted by the ship's company. The adoption was reciprocal. Typical example: one 10 month old child would not sleep nowhere but in the arms of a bearded Torpedoman who manned the telephone at the forward tubes. They made a weird picture on watch. Brief impressions of the Gato's incongruous family:

- The children - Though a cycle of awe, apprehension, mischief, ravenousness, and unwilling sleep.
- The Mothers - Distraught, then trustful.
- The Nuns - Benign and patient.
- The Soldiers - "Haven't you some dirty jobs we can help you with" and "Is there any beer in Brisbane."
- The Gato crew - Clumsy but enthusiastic volunteer nursemaids.

March 30<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to rendezvous with sub chaser near Florida Island. Passengers getting along well although the atmosphere becomes oppressive submerged. Used CO2 absorbent and oxygen, ran air compressors frequently. At noon surface briefly to change air in the boat. While surface, discovered that rotating sound gear makes excellent merry-go-round.

At 19:30 CTF-72 serial 96 message sets the rendezvous at 02:00 on April 1<sup>st</sup>, but offers to change it on request. In order for Gato to have enough darkness to clear the rendezvous area, requested rendezvous at 20:30 on March 31<sup>st</sup> instead of 02:00 on April 1<sup>st</sup> (Gato dispatch 300930).

March 31<sup>st</sup>, proceeding toward Florida Island to rendezvous with sub chaser. At dawn submerged off Indispensable Strait. Spent morning trying to penetrate barrier shoals submerged.

Fifth Patrol (19 March 1943 – 6 June 1943)

Method used was to make bare steerageway at 72 feet keel depth (to permit rising without breaking surface). When water under keel reaches one fathom we would retreat, pick a new spot and try again. In this manner, worked across whole strait without finding an opening. Twice we touched bottom. The second time at the edge of the shoal just west of Ramos Island. In backing off here we inadvertently broke the surface. Since it was a non-flying weather, took advantage of poor visibility and ran over the shoals on the surface and submerged in deep water on the southern edge.

20:30 effected rendezvous, one hour early, with SC-531, and commenced transfer of passengers and gear. 21:20, completed transfer and proceeded northwest between Ysabel and Ramos Islands.

April 1<sup>st</sup>, proceeding north of Ysabel and Choiseul Islands heading toward our new station. In order to reach a likely traffic lane by nightfall, remained on surface. Reasoned that our discovery could only lead the enemy to false conclusions. 07:50 sighted a plane (thought to be a PBY) six miles astern coming toward Gato. Submerged for 38 minutes and then surfaced. 10:15 sighted another plane (possibly PBY but also possibly Japanese). Distance 12 miles and heading south. He crossed ahead but then turned toward. Submerged for 1 hour 30 minutes and then surfaced.

23:42 arrived at an inshore traffic lane along northeast coast of Bougainville. Slowed to six knots (for listening), trimmed down and followed the coastline. Patrolled the coastline, noting planes circling Buka Airdrome.

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, following the east coast of Bougainville from 6° latitude to Cape Henpan. 11:30 looked in on Buka Passage from a distance of six miles. No surface activity was seen. Continued northward by following coastline.

13:07 noted plane circling Buka Airdrome, preparatory to landing. Identified as a medium bomber probably a Mitsubishi 96 or 97. On each periscope observation until 15:25 these planes were seen over the passage. Total of five planes were seen and Gato is certain that they were not seen. 19:25 surfaced east of Cape Honpan and proceeded toward East Cape, New Ireland.

April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 06:05 submerged off East of Cape New Ireland heading toward Tanga Island. At dusk surfaced and proceeded west of Tanga Island. At this time the SJ radar failed. Because of the extremely poor visibility this was considered a dangerous situation. The radar officer and the material man worked frantically on it.

It is believed that when ships speed was changed from dead slow to standard a surge of current was applied. This blew fuses F7 and F8. When these fuses were replaced the radar did not return to normal. All tubes in the range unit and indicator were changed with no improvement.

The transmitter-receiver was checked and seemed to be alright. The regulator-rectifier was checked and all its tubes were changed, but it would not come up to the required voltage (300v), being about 70 volts too low. When the equipment is first turned on the initial voltages reaches 300 but as the range unit cuts in it causes an overload on the rectifier, causing the voltage to drop to 230. On the screen there is a bright green spot at the right hand edge of the sweep, which persists. The sweep fluctuates abnormally but it was found when a target appeared, that ranges and bearing could be taken. It is believed that the equipment will have to be checked with an oscilloscope to locate the trouble.

April 4<sup>th</sup>, proceeding between Tanga and Lihir Islands in very low visibility. There were numerous rain squalls and haze patches. No results could be obtained with the radar. 02:58 a large vessel appeared out of the haze on the starboard bow, on reverse of our course close aboard. Now believed it was slightly over two miles distant although it seemed closer. One lookout believed he saw another escort on the far (port) bow of the target. Turned away, ordered tubes ready and battle stations. I am fairly certain we had not been sighted. Intention was to open, circle around and make surface attack from ahead, but during the initial turn the radar officer turned on his equipment again and got a range and bearing that looked good to the commanding officer. Parallel to target and on his beam, but it seemed we must be sighted any minute. Decided to make submerged radar attack.

03:07 submerged and as commanding officer took initial look through periscope he saw the escort (Japanese corvette) turning toward Gato. Started for deep submergence. Radar gave escort's range 1,700 yards. Angle on the bow was zero.

The first of three depth charges detonated close aboard port side aft as we passed 150 feet. The first one was practically a direct hit. The shock was violent and the vessel seemed to jump and appreciable distance. Fire extinguishers, flashlights and such items left their receptacles. Cork left the bulkheads and air could be heard leaking into the boat. The most important immediate result was the loss of all power (propulsion, steering, diving planes, gyro, lights, etc.) this was caused by the main battery positive and negative bus bars in control cubicle jarred together and arced, causing battery disconnect switches to trip both battery disconnect switches and all switches on the auxiliary power panel.

Emergency lights functioned; hand control was achieved on steering and diving planes. The auxiliary circuits were closed immediately; giving lights, but planes and steering were kept in hand operation. Battery disconnect switches were closed and propulsion regained in time to catch the boat at 380 feet. However, it already required high speed to keep depth from increasing and water was being taken in continuously. Sound heads were forced up into the boat making listening gear inoperative. The boat became dangerously heavy aft. Had to accept the danger of making noise. Pumped, blew and increased speed.

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The after trim tank was obviously ruptured through the pressure hull. The Commanding Officer is impelled to stop at this point to commend Lieutenants Ward and Lockwood who collaborated on depth control. They overcame an impossible situation.

03:48 a pattern of three depth charges which, compared to the last ones, seemed miles away. Succeeded in forcing sound heads out hydraulically. Our own noise prevented satisfactory listening, however.

04:20 maintaining depth control is a losing fight. The many small leaks kept the boat heavy despite pumping. By this time we were making 150 rpm (and the three hour discharge rate for our battery). Decided to surface while an hour of darkness remained. Gato reached 100 feet and for a brief interval stopped motors and pumps to listen. Heard nothing. Cannot believe enemy would clear the area.

04:36 surfaced with no ships close at hand. A suspicious smudge was visible on the eastern horizon. Headed west of north on the only engine that would start immediately. Commenced charging with auxiliary engine and compensating the boat. Very soon two more engines were started, they were placed on charge.

Daylight and Gato submerged. Steered northerly course and took stock of our material condition. It became obvious that the feasibility of continuing the patrol without repairs was doubtful.

The following damage was noted:

1. After trim tank ruptured through the pressure hull and floods freely from sea.
2. After Water Round Torpedo tank floods from after trim tank, this may be due to damaged overflow valve which cannot be reached without disassembling tube drain lines and the overflow line itself.
3. Pressure hull dished in slightly, frames 120 to 124 portside, but holds a deep submergence.
4. Torpedoes jammed in No. 9 and 10 tubes. Possibility that tubes are out of alignment (tried to pull with one-ton chain fall). Torpedoes in No. 7 and 8 tubes resisted withdrawal but this was overcome with force. Torpedoes from tube No. 7 have smashed propellers, torpedoes from tubes No. 8, 9 and 10 needs to be tested for bent propeller shafts and deranged bearings. Torpedo tubes No. 7 through 10 have major structural issues and continual leakage.

5. The governors on No. 3 main engine broke off at the base plate (replaced). The governor on No.2 main engine was cracked at the base plate (strapped down and functioned satisfactorily).
6. Two leaks of considerable size at cable stuffing boxes in the conning tower.
7. The stern plane motor chatters.
8. One small air leak is visible from periscope, but has not been located.
9. The main battery bus bars in the control cubicle are burned, indicating that the initial shock brought them close enough for an arc to jump.
10. The after torpedo room gyro regulator indicator binds in hand operation, indicating misalignment of gears and shafting.

Realizing the shortage of submarines on station and the importance of time, much thought was given to overcoming our defects or accepting some of them, in order to continue the patrol for a time at least. All four after torpedo tubes were distorted sufficiently to require their renewal. Torpedoes within the after tubes were damaged as well as guide studs and tube operating gear. Steering ram cylinders were thrown out of alignment. Main Ballast Tank No. 1 riser leaked slightly at flanges. Miscellaneous other damage of minor nature occurred, principally in after portion of ship. Depth control became the deciding question. We can fire torpedoes forward and can dive with reasonable speed, but after a careful study of the depth control possibilities the commanding officer decided to obtain repair before continuing the patrol.

The reasoning was as follows:

1. After trim, after Water Round Torpedo (WRT) and negative tanks are opened to sea and must be carried full. They total 32.97 tons of water.
2. It is necessary to add 13.9 tons of water to forward trim to compensate fore and aft.
3. The excess water is 24.2 tons above our normal trim.
4. Carrying safety tank dry, (uncomfortable but acceptable), we now have at periscope depth only 10.75 tons of variable water. As deep submergence the figure is 8.75 tons. This must take care of fuel consumption and leaks.

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5. This margin would conceivably permit us a precarious week on station. We would then have to start for home and jettison stores torpedoes and other weight.
6. Continuing the patrol without repairs is not justified.

At sunset, surfaced and informed Task Force Commander of their decision. Set course for inbound routing points at best three engine speed.

April 5<sup>th</sup>, proceeding southward between Feni and Nissan Islands at three engine speed. Submerged during daylight hours.

April 6<sup>th</sup>, proceeding between New Ireland and Bougainville, enroute to Brisbane. Submerged during daylight hours. At 10:30 sustained casualty to No. 2 main engine

No. 2 engine developed a foreign noise in the vicinity of the blower casing. The engine was stopped, silencer removed, blower lobes inspected and found OK. The blower gear drive housing cover was removed and salt water gear drive bearings were found wiped and drive shaft loose. Upon further investigation the pump double row radial ball bearing at the inner end of the supporting head was found badly scored and worn excessively. Repairs were not attempted because of inadequate facilities aboard to properly line bore the spare pump drive gear bearings. If the ship had not been returning to port for repairs would have been attempted. The cause of this casualty was excessive wear in the double row radial ball bearings at inner end of the salt water pump supporting head.

April 7<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to Brisbane. Submerged during daylight hours.

April 8<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to Brisbane on the surface. Zig zagging during daylight hours.

April 10<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Brisbane. Zig zagging during daylight. At 14:00 made quick dive for submerged drills, check-up on certain leaks and noises, and to determine how our margin of variable water has decreased. Found that, with safety tank still dry, our overall variable water at final trim at periscope depth is now only 3.57 tons. (In other words our margin has decreased slightly over seven tons in six days).

April 11<sup>th</sup>, entered Brisbane. At 04:00 passed Calounda Head and picked up the pilot. 08:00 arrived in Brisbane.

### **Repairs – 11 April 1943 – 19 April 1943**

Gato arrived in Brisbane on April 11<sup>th</sup>, from the first part of Fifth War Patrol. Commenced repairs on that date, jointly by ship's force and U.S.S. Fulton repair forces. Gato was dry docked on the 12<sup>th</sup>. After Trim and After W.R.T. tanks were made tight. Torpedo tubes #7 and #8 made serviceable. Repairs not undertaken on tubes #9 and #10, but damaged torpedoes extracted. With repairs completed Gato was ready for sea on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Fifth Patrol Second Part – Reconnoitered Islands - 20 April 1943 - 6 June 1943**

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 08:00 underway, from alongside of the U.S.S. Fulton at Brisbane Australia, with party of 16 coast watchers and A.I.F. Troops. Conducted a self noise test in the Moreton Bay. Tested the after torpedo tubes, #7 and #8, by firing two exercise torpedoes. Results were satisfactory. Escorted through sweep channel by the U.S.S. Patterson DD-392. Made a trim dive combined with 300 foot test dive. Results were satisfactory. Commenced night approaches on the Patterson making one surface and two submerged attacks. 22:30 proceeded on base course, zig-zagging in moonlight, while being escorted by the Patterson.

April 21<sup>st</sup>, commenced second day of exercises with the Patterson. In the morning acted as target for Anti Submarine attacks. In the afternoon made four simulated attacks on Patterson. 16:14 enroute to the Solomon Islands at two engine speed.

From April 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, Gato was enroute to Bougainville Island, Solomon Islands. Exercising daily at battle stations torpedo, clearing bridge, diving, battle stations gun and firing the 3" and 20mm guns.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 09:55 avoided masts seen on the horizon. Excellent weather enabled us to make good time so, at our request, the date for entering Teop was advanced to the 28<sup>th</sup>. However, on the 25<sup>th</sup> CTF-72 directed us to stay clear of Teop because of Japanese present, and to attempt the landing at Teopasino Plantation, several miles to the south of Teop.

April 27<sup>th</sup>, the landing was postponed until April 29<sup>th</sup> to enable the coast watchers to rescue survivors of a crashed PBY. Gato was off the coast on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>.

April 28<sup>th</sup>, submerged off Toep Harbor, East coast of Bougainville. Observing harbor entrance, adjacent coastline and mountain background. No traffic noted. Scattered on the mountain side are what appear to be about 20 white tents, Capt. Robinson A.I.F, will investigate after landing and report. At sunset surfaced and drew away from coast for the night.

April 29<sup>th</sup>, submerged near Toep. Trying to identify Teopasino Plantation. Never succeeded, although assisted by Capt. Robinson who has spent years in this district and has walked from

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Teop to Teopasino many times. Any part of this coastline resembles any other. The chart shows only a dotted line running South-South-East. (Actually the coast runs due east of Teopasino). Decided to hover at our best estimate of the location and to depend on signal fire to guide us in. 14:30 observed topmasts of small vessel coming out of Teop. Went to 250 feet, ran silent, and tracked him by sound. He turned north and left.

18:04 surfaced in extremely heavy rain squall. Coast invisible 2,600 yards away (by radar). Circled till rain decreased a half hour later. No fires were visible on beach although there was a light on the hillside. Passengers assured me that this rain would not prevent fires so stood out to seaward for wider vision. This disclosed a small light about four miles up the coast. Investigation revealed the two signal fires. Had been advised to approach large fire on course 180° until small fire bore 151° (T), then head for small fire. Distance to starting approach not given, this caused anxiety as the directions were obviously meant to bring us through a hole in the reef, trimmed down, started fathometer, gritted teeth and followed direction. Current was 3.5 knots across our course so could not ease in. Least depth encountered was six fathoms, which was probably at the opening. When inside could see reef for the first time. Could just turn around but no room to spare. Lieutenant Everly, volunteer, proceed in to beach in rubber boat. This was done concurrently with the disembarkation of passengers and freight. When his mission accomplished Lieutenant Everly started back in the rubber boat but was carried off by the current and had great difficulty getting to us. This caused delay which soon became dangerous as the native canoes had returned to “Japanese infested” Teop, disclosing unusually activity in the vicinity. The boat was not located till midnight.

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 00:13 the rubber boat was hoisted and the departure commenced. Least depth was again six fathoms. 00:35 cleared last shoal and stood east on three engines. 03:17 informed CTF-72 we could pass Ramos Island at dusk tomorrow and requested rendezvous.

Submerged at daylight and spread CO<sub>2</sub> absorbent and controlled the smoking as our missionary passengers are in bad shape. They are run down, most of them cough, and all appear undernourished. Our pharmacists mate was kept busy treating infected abrasions, tropical ulcers, some sort of poison oak rash and various minor ailments. However, their appetites were encouraging. 14:16 weather became progressively worse. Flying would have been impossible. Surfaced on three engines in a torrent. At 20:00 received from CTF-72 instructions for rendezvous with SC-504 just north of Florida Island.

May 1<sup>st</sup>, approaching Indispensable strait. Submerged at daylight and intended to jockey for position to dash over the reefs at dusks. 10:45 weather became too vile for flying. Surfaced and with decks awash stood through strait passing west of Ramos Island. Least depth was 50 feet under keel while drawing 26 feet. 12:46 submerged in deep water south of Ramos. Weather

clearing rapidly. 15:48 sighted a B-25 flying low bearing 175° (T), course 000° (T), distance estimated at ten miles. Went to 100 feet. 17:47 surfaced and stood toward rendezvous.

19:47 sighted and challenged sub chaser. The reply was correct. He was persuaded to come alongside. Passengers (a priest (Bishop's assistant), the Bishop of Bougainville, coast watcher and scouts) and their effects transferred without mishap. Delivered two official letters to Commanding Officer SC-504: Gato secret letter serial 004 to CTF 72 (advance information on Bougainville in case other landings are planned before this report can reach him), and also a letter from Coast Watcher Keenan to his superior at Lunga. 20:45 transfer completed Gato preceded via Indispensable Strait enroute to assigned patrol station.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, enroute to the patrol area. Made the following estimate of fuel situation:

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| • Fuel on hand (Noon May 2 <sup>nd</sup> )                               | 62,903 gal. |
| • Fuel needed from Indispensable Strait to Operation area                | 3,000 gal.  |
| • Fuel needed for transit from op area to Pearl (Rhumb line at 13 knots) | 37,852 gal. |
| • Fuel for unusual conditions or chores enroute to Pearl                 | 3,000 gal.  |
| • Fuel kept for one six-hour pursuit                                     | 1,800 gal.  |
| • Total requirements other than for patrolling station                   | 45,652 gal. |
| • Balance available for 25 days at sea                                   | 18,251 gal. |
| • Daily quota in area (charge, propulsion and extra chase)               | 730 gal.    |

The above will justify the reluctance with which CTF-72 uses submarines for these landings and evacuations. In addition to the time taken from their stations and the possibility of loss from rocks, shoals, and enemy traps, submarines diverted from this work are thereafter greatly restricted in their movements for the duration of the patrol. Further study shows what can be accomplished with the daily quota of fuel:

- Can run four engines \*850kw) for 2.33 hours, or
- Can run three engines (850kw) for 3.20 hours, or
- Can run two engines (850 kw) for 4.7 hours, or
- Can run 1 engine (850kw) for 9.5 hours, or
- Can run No. 2 auxiliary engine for 48 hours, or
- Plan the time and speed on the surface so as to get in a charge and make at least way consistent with accomplishing our mission. (Gato's plan)

Next made an "Estimate of the Tactical Situation" which is omitted from this report. The decisions, with brief reasons are listed below:

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- To proceed rapidly to the 156<sup>th</sup> meridian then proceed slowly north to area (this puts Gato in promising waters earlier and uses least fuel).
- While in area, to apportion time on known traffic lanes and on tracks known to have been used, hesitating the longest on most promising spots and using good speed across supposed “dead gate” (sample plot produced this).
- Since lanes and tracks are not parallel submerged, to cross from one to another at their closest points.
- To spend greater part of the daylight submerged, (fuel ration leaves no choice) but to surface as frequently as fuel permits, to increase coverage.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, proceeded westward and at 19:30 arrived at 156<sup>th</sup> meridian and patrolled north at slow speed. No contacts.

May 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>, patrolling northward along the 156<sup>th</sup> meridian enroute to the equator. No contacts.

May 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>, patrolling area in northwest direction in accordance with above decisions. Submerged during daylight, except for approximately one hour at mid-day when we surfaced, run at ten knots on a zig-zag course. Using both periscopes, man the aircraft search radar, and use full quota of lookouts. No contacts.

May 11<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup>, Gato was crossing and re-crossing the knuckle in the Truk-Rabaul traffic lane. No contacts.

May 13<sup>th</sup> at 19:43 the SJ radar made a contact and reported a very small echo at 800 yards abeam. Gato turned away and increased speed to flank. Three pairs of binoculars were unable to see anything although the moon was bright. The contact had disappeared immediately and did not re-appear. After a discussion with the radar operator the commanding officer decided that it was probably a periscope. If so no targets will be along this line for a while. Set course for the next line to westward, which is the direct Truk-Steffen Strait line.

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 04:00 reached the Truk-Steffen Strait line and proceeded on southerly course toward the latter. Submerged during daylight except for a one-hour period at noon. In evening received CFT-72 dispatch message which convinced the commanding officer that the SD radar is a liability. Do not propose to use it in the future.

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 reached a point where three supposed tracks to Steffen Strait coverage to within ten miles of each other (from Truk, from Saipan, and from the ‘Knuckle’). Commenced patrolling on east-west courses across junction of above mention traffic lanes. Patrolling submerged during daylight hours.

20:40 patrolling on the surface, decks awash, making about seven knots, picked up high speed screws bearing 050 relative. Nothing was visible with binoculars (numerous local rain-squalls) the bearing indicated was clear for at least 10,000 yards. Gato turned away while trying to see or track. Screws faded very quickly (but not before sound expert had heard and identified them as destroyer making about 280 rpm). Stopped own screws to permit better listening but no further contact was made. Proceeded through a handy rain squall and continued patrol.

May 17<sup>th</sup>, patrolling north of Steffen Strait

May 18<sup>th</sup>, patrolling north of Steffen Strait. At 01:16 received SUBS Strip No. 16 stating U.S.S. Grayback SS-208 was heading east right through our present position. Same message directed Gato report results and fuel remaining, and indicated we may be moved west to Mussau tonight. Came to course northeast at two engine speed to clear lane and transmit. Told Task Force Commander of negative sightings, plenty of fuel and of the fact that we have not yet reconnoitered Greenwich. Then proceeded northwest.

20:00 at western edge of area, waiting for message. 21:51 Message arrived, but it says, "GO EAST FAST". We could not have been further from our new spot which is Greenwich Island. After looking over Greenwich we are to conduct reconnaissance patrol along Lat. 01 North, Long. 154° to 156°. There is indication of major southbound enemy force. 23:12 received Sub Strip message #20 with routing instructions to Pearl Harbor (departing here on 27 May). Also calls for looking over Tarawa enroute.

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 15:28 sighted Greenwich Islands after a 290 mile speed run. Submerged to close islands and reconnoiter. No activity seen. Particularly noted that no aircraft landed or took off from lagoon before sunset. At sunset Gato surfaced and set course to circumnavigate Greenwich Atoll.

May 20<sup>th</sup>, patrolling and reconnoitering Greenwich Island. Submerged on eastern shore of Greenwich Atoll. Devoted the day to study of the islands while maintaining a watch to seaward for possible task force. Found the following all grouped on Nun/Kitsu Island which seems to have the only military installations.

- Two radio towers
- Radio shack
- Lookout tower, (this also has aerological gadgets).
- Water stowage tank
- Several buildings (masonry with red roofs).
- Small wharf to seaward, (Lagoon side not observed).
- Flag pole (No flag on it).

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Note: All of the above could be completely destroyed by 3" 50 gunfire, from outside the lagoon. Deep water runs in to 100 yards from shore. No aircraft were seen in the air or on the ground or in the water; and there is a definite absence of hangers. No ramps could be seen inside or outside the lagoon. Pictures were taken at distances between one and two miles off shore. Pointers and trainers of all guns as well as the relief pointer and trainers were shown the 'Target' through the periscope. Inside the lagoon, about 1,000 yards from the above group, was a small vessel which resembled a buoy tender or net tender. It was about 150 feet long and a clipper bow and a large davit like crane. It appeared that the bow was equipped to handle lines, buoys, nets or mines. She was very neat and had white awnings fore and aft. This, of course, was marked for incidental destruction. Small pleasure-type sailing boats were racing inside the lagoon during the afternoon.

18:24 surfaced and headed out eastward. Patrolling on east-west courses. Held battle surface and gun pointing drill.

May 20<sup>th</sup>, patrolling east of Greenwich Island. Received SUBS 72 Strip serial 21 asking if we have a certain harbor chart and directing us to head south for a special job taking some soundings off Bougainville. Also calls for acknowledgement and fuel on hand. Gato headed south along Long. 156° East. Although it was near daylight, tried to transmit Gato 201825 acknowledging the above message, telling of fuel and chart on hand, and giving results of Greenwich observations. Thought it best to get it off her (near Greenwich) before our future movements are evident from our position. However, interference believed to be from the recently seen radio station, prevented its complete delivery, and we quit in broad daylight without obtaining a receipt. Hope to get partial acknowledgement on tonight's schedule.

06:25 received SUBS 72 Strip number 22 and 23 which gave details of the special job. We are to take soundings of Numa Numa (Bougainville) to determine practicability of mining. We are to make complete report from vicinity of Lat. 06 South and Long. 158 East.

09:41 proceeding south on the surface. Sighted a B-17 bearing 110° (T), height 2,000 feet, distance seven miles, heading toward Gato. Submerged to avoid plane and steered 090° (T).

11:04 surfaced, all clear, continued southward on one engine, zig-zagging. Not using the SD radar. 12:34 sighted plane, did not identified clearly. Believe it was a two engine monoplane, bearing 325° (T), course southerly, altitude about 2,500 feet, distance seven miles. Dove immediately and changed course at 200 feet. 13:59 surfaced and continued southward.

May 22<sup>nd</sup>, proceeding southward toward Bougainville. 01:03 when last schedule of radio messages contained no word from CTF-72 that he had received our message, or part of it, we

retransmitted it. Submerged at daylight in hopes of picking up a target on this line. At sunset surfaced and headed for Numa Numa using two engines in order to be there before daylight.

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, submerged about two miles off the reef at Numa Numa, and waited for enough light to plot positions. Attention is here invited to the German sketch map of Numa Numa Harbor (chart 1599 A). If this chart were accurate it could possibly be used to identify the harbor. Although there are spots every few miles along the coast which have villages, rocks and reefs in about these same relative positions. In fact, after several hours of experimenting with the land marks it was decided that we were not off Numa Numa because the villages and islands were definitely not in the relative position shown. The final answer came after ten hours of trial and error, crossing and re-crossing the area, assuming that first on group of land marks and then another was correct, and plotting that group against distance run. To be brief, the net result is as follows:

- The village of Numa Numa is correctly located and there is a prominent green shed at its northern point right on the waters edge.
- The village of Koi Koi is not visible.
- Of the three 'bumps' shown on the reefs, none are in the positions shown. One bump shows fairly well from the seaward side and can be used for plotting.
- The northernmost reef does not break in a moderate sea.
- The reef to the southeast breaks continuously, even on a calm day.

During the period devoted to locating landmarks, we were twice interrupted by small coastwise craft passing, once in a pair and once in a trio. These vessels average, about 50 tons are driven by what sound like old diesel engines, and are slow dilapidated affairs. They follow the coastline and occasionally spread a square canvas to augment their speed. Gato remained out of sight each time they appeared.

14:00 when finally sure of our position, commenced a systematic coverage of the area. Before darkness we were able to cover 30 squares of our assigned grid (about 30%) taking an average of thirteen soundings per square. 18:31 surfaced and ran east-west course across the coastwise traffic lanes during the night. Detected no contacts.

May 25<sup>th</sup>, proceeding on an easterly course north of Choiseul Island. Submerged at daylight. 11:15 surfaced to gain the necessary 13 miles to reach our assigned spot at dark. 12:12 made a quick dive. Stern planes jammed on hard dive causing excessive angle on the boat (estimated 30°). It was necessary to blow main ballast as well as safety tank, and to all-back emergency.

When stern planes are put on hard dive causes the power to be lost. Cause: The series relay 3 SR contactor (type 175) in the dynamic breaking and pilot circuits, stuck in the open position. Examination of the contactor disclosed a condition a fault in design. The length of the contact

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lever is only slightly less than the space it must occupy in the open position. The slighted sag in the bracket which supports this contact lever will cause it to jam as ours did. The sag is quite possible since the same bracket supports the solenoid. Remedies suggested are: Shorten the contact lever or invert the entire device so that sag will have the opposite effect.

Surfaced at spot designated, and transmitted our report of soundings taken. The delivery of the messages (Two parts) took about 90 minutes, during which time Gato maneuvered about the spot, mostly on a north-south course. Included a report of no targets and plenty of fuel to make Johnston via Tarawa. 19:40 on completion of radio transmission set course east on two engines, heading between Ontong Java and Rancador Reef.

May 26<sup>th</sup>, proceeding toward Nauru and Ocean Island enroute Tarawa. 01:15 received SUBS 72 Strip #25 which directs us to pass to the command of Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet, on May 30<sup>th</sup>. We are then to proceed to Tarawa, if fuel permits, and to spend one daylight period patrolling there before proceeding to Johnston or Pearl. 01:30 received SUBS 72 Strip #26, warning of U.S.S. Silversides SS-236 coming across our path. Her route is given, but only the date of his departure from Johnston so it is impossible to predict his progress, since he is to make a stop enroute. Decided that the only certain way to avoid him was to head due north crossing well ahead of him. This course of action would also permit a slight possibility of a target which is lacking in this vicinity.

07:00 changed course to north to cross Lat. 00-30 south, ahead of Silversides. Ran on two engines.

May 27<sup>th</sup>, 00:24 received SUBS 72 Strip #29 which cancels the above plans by directing Gato to "Pass at least 50 miles south of Nauru which should keep her well clear of Silversides". Set course to comply. No contacts.

May 28<sup>th</sup>, proceeding eastward, well south of Nauru Island. Submerged during daylight hours. It appears that we are not expected to cross 00-30 south lines until tonight. By crossing early we may interfere with Silversides. Decided to look over Ocean Island enroute. 02:45 sighted Ocean Island bearing 084° (T). 03:55 submerged six miles west of Ocean Island, and closed the harbor. No ships present. No aircraft took off at dawn. The only activity noticeable from 1.5 miles away was at what is assumed to be the phosphate works. This is in the center of the shore line of Home Bay. Ore cars were unloading on a trestle at the upper part of the installation. The large pier in Home Bay has not been repaired yet. Neither has the jetty at the west end of the island.

11:00 the small patrol boat which had been stationary in the bay, moved out and took up a patrol across the southwest side of the island. She cruised in a line about three miles long with its mid

point off the harbor. She did not ping. She did not detect Gato at a range of 1,050 yards, at which range we went deep and ran silent.

11:40 commenced tour about the island to locate landing strip or other military installations. The results are as follows:

- The main town looks quite modern and well kept.
- The native villages are weather beaten.
- Japanese flag flies on the 'Residency'.
- Surprisingly, there is no landing strip on the level land at the northwest corner of the island.
- Radar, with a parabolic face, is situated at the geometrical center of the island. In the plateau. Many towers (Probably radio) dot the high part of the island. Most of them have some small structures at the upper end. Cannot tell whether this is a detection device or part of the antenna array.
- No landing strip or other evidence of aircraft could be seen. We could not, of course, see the top of the central plateau.
- No gun installations were visible. If present, they are well camouflaged.

Remarks: - Although the phosphate works, the dock area, the residency (or any other part of the island) could have been shelled at dusk with reasonable accuracy, it was decided to take no action for the following reasons:

- None of the targets are exclusively military.
- All are surrounded by (or probably occupied by) former inhabitants, in a non combatant status.
- We are unacquainted with any plans our superiors may have for the future use of this spot.

17:35 completed the circumnavigation about 1.5 miles off Home Bay took some snap shots, and set course east. Surfaced in extremely black night. Could make out dim outline of Ocean Island in the relatively good visibility due west. Ran east at best speed. At a distance of 11.5 miles from the island, we were challenged by flashing light. In view of the visibility conditions, this indicated to us that the radar searches the surface rather than exclusively the air. 19:43 on the meridian of 179° E changes course to North, secured the SD radar and slowed to economical speed.

May 30<sup>th</sup>, 00:01 crossed the equator at longitude 170° E, passing the operational control to Commander Task Force Seventeen, shifted radio guard to station NPM. Set course for Tarawa Atoll, in the Gilbert Group. Submerged during daylight hours.

Fifth Patrol (19 March 1943 – 6 June 1943)

May 31<sup>st</sup>, reconnaissance of Tarawa. 04:47 submerged to approach Bititu, the principal island of the atoll. Noted that the reported current of two to four knots on the southern side was lacking. Throughout the day observed Bititu Island and that part of the lagoon visible from the south and west. No ships used the channel. None occupied the anchorages. No aircraft were seen at any time. Most activity is on the north (or lagoon side) of Bititu. Buildings there are in general invisible from the south side because of trees. Ships anchored off Bititu would be immune to torpedo fire. Shelling on the anchorage or shore installations by submarine would be impracticable. Surface craft however could pass along the south shore and level the island. At 18:10 surfaced in poor visibility, southwest of the atoll, and proceeded sounding enroute. Turned east to pass between Tarawa and Naiana Islands. Taking sounding enroute.

19:08 sounding decreased at an alarming rate. Depths went from 2,100 fathoms to 200 fathoms in the space of about three miles. Least depth encountered was 160 fathoms at the estimated point seven miles south of Bairiki Island. It is noted that the only sounding given on the chart for this vicinity is 413 fathoms.

June 1<sup>st</sup>, proceeding on the surface toward Johnston Island. 11:16 at a point 175 miles due east of Makin Island, sighted a large type plane believed to be four-motored. Bearing 037° (T) distance 12 miles, altitude about 1,200 feet. Course 210° (T). Gato submerged for 70 minutes.

13:48 in Lat. 3-20 North and Long. 175-01 East, sighted four engine land plane bearing 090° (T), heading 270° (T), altitude 1,000 feet, distance seven miles. Make a quick dive. Our identification pictures show no Japanese four engine land planes. If no B-17s were thereabouts, intelligence should be interested. 14:56 surfaced and cleared the vicinity.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, proceeding to Johnston Island for additional fuel to reach Pearl. During the afternoon the 3<sup>rd</sup> a patrol plane (PBY) passed about 12 miles abeam. On parallel course, altitude 1,000 feet.

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 06:16 arrived at Johnson Island. Fuelled. 09:30 departed for Pearl. NAS Midway sent our departure and ETA report. Received CTF-17 serial 10E on the 5<sup>th</sup> designating rendezvous.

June 6<sup>th</sup>, 06:00 affected rendezvous with U.S.S. Skipjack SS-184, U.S.S. Sawfish SS-276 and PC 549. Proceeded toward Pearl. 10:30 arrived Pearl Harbor.

**Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Fifth Patrol:**

**From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato War Patrol**

With 51 passengers submerged, the air became oppressive in two hours. For a short period (2 days) this could be accepted but it is recommended that no such load be accepted for a longer trip, as one might find himself with many cases of heat prostration.

It will be obvious to anyone who reads the account of the depth charging on April 4<sup>th</sup>, that there were a few grim moments when a misstep would have been very serious. The Commanding Officer can only say that the performance of officers and men was “of the highest order”, as expected.

The Executive Officer (who was also the Navigator), was detached the day we sailed. His navigational duties were taken over by Lieutenant C. F. McGivern, our Gunnery and Torpedo Officer. On a patrol which contained some of the most difficult navigational situations possible, Lieutenant McGivern’s navigation was stellar.

Lieutenant R. K. MacLean whose pre-war experience was a far cry from handling personnel, was suddenly called upon to add the duties of executive officer to his job as First Lieutenant. This he has done exceptionally well. In the meantime he taught himself navigation. The Commanding Officer wishes to go on record as ‘all for’ these energetic reserve officers who make up in enthusiasm what they lack in experience.

**From: Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, 23 April 1943**

In successfully withstanding the damage sustained on April 4<sup>th</sup> the Gato proved herself a stout ship with a stout-hearted crew. The landing and evacuation task at TEOP March 29<sup>th</sup> was skillful and commendable.

**From: Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 17 June 1943**

The Gato successfully carried out important missions in the Southwest. In addition, excellent reconnaissance was made in the Bougainville area and various islands in the South Pacific.

The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the Gato on the successful accomplishment of the hazardous missions assigned in this fifth war patrol.

**Awards:**

Gato was awarded a ‘Battle Star’ for a Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
20 April – 6 June 1943

U.S.S. Gato was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action

Navy Cross – Gold Star in lieu of second award to Lieutenant Commander Robert Joseph Foley  
Commanding Officer

Fifth Patrol (19 March 1943 – 6 June 1943)

### **Overhaul – 7 June 1943 – 22 August 1943**

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, Gato proceeded from Pearl Harbor to Navy Yard, Mare Island for overhaul, arriving on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Major items accomplished at the Navy Yard included:

- Renewal of entire, after torpedo tube nest.
- Reduction of bridge silhouette.
- Installation of ballistic protection to conning tower.
- Installation of an addition 20mm gun mount.
- Installation of the JP sound device.

Four key officer were removed, namely the Executive Officer, Engineer (Diving Officer), Assistant to the latter and the Communications (Radar) Officer. Depermed for area of expected operation.



Gato early Mod 3 configuration was ready for sea

At this point in her service, Gato still had the thin scopes and the Mk. 5 solid mounts for the 20 mm guns. Corresponding with the Mod 3 changes, the deck gun was moved to the forward position. This provided some tactical advantages as you could fire at the target while approaching, as opposed to swinging broadside or moving away to bring the gun to bear. At the time that this shift was made, large numbers of the more powerful 4-inch/50 caliber gun became available and these were quickly fitted onto the boats. These guns came mostly from decommissioned S-boats and their popularity amongst the boat crews did lead to some short-term shortages, as evidenced by the fact that Gato is still carrying the 3-inch/50 caliber gun in this photo. It was actually pretty rare to see this gun in the forward spot.

August 15<sup>th</sup>, Gato departed Mare Island and arrived at Pearl Harbor, TH on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Because of the officer and enlisted personnel changes, requested and received seven days training with the excellent facilities there available.

**Sixth Patrol – Maru Damage Only - 6 September 1943 – 28 October 1943**

On September 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 Gato departed Pearl Harbor. Escorted until dark by Patrol Craft 597. Made a trim dive and transited enroute to Johnson Island on four engines.

September 7<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Johnston Island on four engines. Conducted assorted training.

September 8<sup>th</sup>, arrived at Johnston Island at 09:40. Topped off in fuel, lube oil and a few fresh vegetables. Pearl Harbor – Johnston Island: 348.0 miles on 6,624 gallons.

September 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> Gato continued transiting, enroute to Ocean Island at best economical speed. Adjusted speed in order to reach a possible contact location on the northern approaches to Makin at dawn on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

September 13<sup>th</sup>, 06:40, while enroute to Ocean Island, submerged to patrol across the northern approached to Makin. No contacts. At sunset, surfaced and continued transit.

September 14<sup>th</sup> enroute to Ocean Island for submerged reconnaissance. Submerged during daylight except for LAN sunsights. Directed to drop present plans and get to Cape Astrolabe by dawn on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Messages provide the time and incentive for Gato to spend tomorrow on the Nauru – Ocean line, well clear of Peto, but in position to intercept if freighters should go to Ocean Island. Set course and speed in accordance with message directions.

September 15<sup>th</sup>, 05:47 submerged on line between Ocean and Nauru Islands and patrolled toward Nauru. 17:56 surfaced and continued toward Nauru to intercept any target which might have left there at dark for Ocean. This scheme bore no fruit. Changed course to 180° (T) and headed for the point designated for radio transmission.

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 03:43 tried to transmit next three day's positions as directed. Could raise no one. Sent message blind, then set course 240° (T) for Cape Astrolabe. At sunrise, submerged and held drills during the day. At dusk, surfaced and continued on one engine. 20:10 our message of last night did not arrive. Transmitted another with same information. This one was receipted for immediately.

September 17<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Cape Astrolabe. Submerged at dawn because of last night's transmission. At noon, surfaced and proceeded on two engines.

September 18<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Tulagi on the surface at two engine speed. Noon, sighted a two-engine unidentified plane, bearing 060° (T), distance about six miles, course 240° (T), (Heading for us). Submerged to 150 feet and changed course. 12:31 surfaced with nothing in sight.

Sixth Patrol (6 September 1943 – 28 October 1943)

Proceeded on two engine speed. 17:30 sighted a friendly night patrol from Guadalcanal. Established communications by flashing light.

September 19<sup>th</sup>, patrolled off the islands of Cape Astrolabe and Tulagi and arrived at rendezvous at 05:50. Joined Sub Chaser 761, then U.S.S. Guardfish SS-217 and proceeded to Tulagi Harbor. 11:10 moored to Government Wharf for removal of all torpedoes except those in tubes. Refueled to capacity.

September 20<sup>th</sup>, Gato was moored to U.S.S. Guardfish in Tulagi Harbor. During the night several Japanese planes raided Guadalcanal, hitting one plane and a small ammunition depot.

September 21<sup>st</sup>, moored in Tulagi Harbor. During the night two air raids were held over the area, but Guadalcanal was the only target. 02:00 watched two Japanese bombers shot down by fighters. Learned one other fell, but was not burning. 14:00 Gato was underway for Tulagi and escorted until dark by the U.S.S. Ward (APD 16). Proceeding toward Bougainville.

September 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> Gato carried out special mission (transported a reconnaissance team and supplies was the reason for off-loading all torpedo room torpedoes and making room for personnel) east coast of Bougainville. This portion of Gato's patrol report must have been submitted under separate cover.

September 29<sup>th</sup>, 04:00 made rendezvous with U.S.S. Stringhan APD 6, escort, and started for Tulagi. The master gyro lost vacuum and started to heat up. It was secured immediately. The ship was steered by auxiliary compass. 08:53 anchored in Tulagi Harbor to await our turn at torpedo loading dock.

11:03 moved to dock and commenced loading our torpedoes, recovered R.C.M. and other secret matter which had been landed. No fuel was needed as we already have the sixty thousand gallons to which we are limited. The defective part for the gyro is not to be had locally. Requested air shipment from Commander Task Force Seventy Two (CTF-72). Meantime, endeavored unsuccessfully to use the spare vacuum gage from the auxiliary gyro.

September 30<sup>th</sup>, moored in Tulagi Harbor, working on gyro and antenna trunk. Completed repairs to antenna and tested it, reporting our completion of mission, gyro trouble and desire for a month in the operating area. 08:00 U.S.S. Drum SS-228 came along side and transferred the gyro part. Arranged by Commander Task Force Thirty One (CTF-31) for air shipment of our defective gyro rotor to Brisbane and to await arrival of the new one. Requested escort from Captain Quigley (CBN Forward Areas). Sent via shore station predicted dawn and dusk positions along the bombing restriction lane.

12:25 departed Tulagi, escorted until dark by Sub Chaser 729. 18:30 the new gyro rotor commenced to lose its vacuum. Slowed it down by setting latitude correction 50°. It cooled down and Gato steered by auxiliary compass. Commenced diagnosis. 19:15 radar flashed appeared on our screen from the bearing of Ramos Island. Interval 14 seconds.

October 1<sup>st</sup>, heading northwest through 'bombing restriction lane', at four-engine speed. 03:45 observed anti-aircraft firing on the approximate bearing of Rekata Bay. 04:54 made a trim dive. 05:38 surfaced and steered a zig-zagged course on four engines.

06:47 sighted unidentified patrol plane on parallel course, distance about five miles. Submerged to 200 feet and flooded the antenna truck, despite recent repairs. 08:28 surfaced and proceeded. Just after dark, obtained a very small radar contact at a range of about 2,000 yards. While we were avoiding it, the image disappeared and reappeared several times. This indicated a periscope. We gave it a wide berth as there is a possibility that the Guardfish; proceeding us by 24 hours, was delayed.

20:00 concluded, after the day's work on the gyro, that we cannot maintain the proper vacuum at the regular speed; but that the error is only 1° at the reduced speed. So we will use it with a carefully watched error, rather than dismantling it at this time,

October 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup>, Gato patrolled the south entrance of Truk, down to five degrees latitude.

October 8<sup>th</sup>, Gato submerged at 05:09 and at 11:34 sighted smoke bearing 145° (T). Manned Battle Stations, submerged and commenced approach. Smoke was from the lesser of two cargo ships, which were escorted by one destroyer and one other escort vessel (not definitely identified). The two AKs were in line of bearing and following a radical zig-zag almost in unison. The DD was on the starboard bow of the right hand ship. The other DD was on the port quarter of the left hand ship. Escorts patrolled their stations.

Conducted approach primarily on the larger of the target's but hoped to solve the destroyer's gyrations.

A zig put us dead ahead of the small AK but with a 50 degree angle-on-the-bow of the primary target. Range was 2,200 yards. Fired the four after tubes at the large target. Observed three torpedo tracks (two torpedoes were fired with the same gyro angle and might have used same track). One appeared to pass just ahead of or just under the bow. The second torpedo headed fair for the target just abaft of mid-ships. As it reached the target, a fine mist or spray rose from the waterline, reaching slightly above the main deck and hanging in the air for about a half-minute. No detonation was heard in the conning tower. Torpedo room reported a peculiar single concussion. I am afraid the Gato had fired a dud. The third torpedo passed astern.

Sixth Patrol (6 September 1943 – 28 October 1943)

The target stopped and swung about 40 degrees to her right. The destroyer made a 180 degree turn away from us, circled around the far side of target and turned toward Gato down the approximate track of our #3 torpedo. Meantime, the small merchantman swung right. This we only noted while swinging to observe the other escort. The latter was starting to turn in our direction when observed. Gato went deep at that time.

13:06 the first of seventeen depth charges were dropped, fourteen of which were dropped in eight minutes. Note: The bathythermograph showed a sudden four degree temperature drop at about 240 feet. This is the greatest we observed. Secured from silent running, depth charge attack, and battle stations, as the echo ranging had become very faint. Gato came to 200 feet. 14:13 three more depth charges were dropped, not very close. Gato went back to 275 feet.

18:17 Surfaced and proceeded toward western part of area. Today's attack was southeast of Truk so assume next target will approach from southwest.

Editor's Note: After the war it was determined that Japanese Sub Chaser CH-28 and Hiyodori were escorting Amagisan Maru when she is attacked by the Gato. Gato hits Amagisan Maru with a dud Mark-14 torpedo. Although the torpedo does not explode, it causes flooding in hold No. 6. CH-28 remains behind to conduct an ASW sweep. The remainder of the convoy, escorted by Hiyodori, continues on its way.

October 9<sup>th</sup>, patrolling about 60 miles southwest of Truk.

October 10<sup>th</sup> on the surface with engines idling at the southwest approach to Truk. Gato submerged at daylight. At dusk surfaced in poor visibility and patrolled at slow speed. Received orders if can make it undetected to get down south of New Ireland on the 12<sup>th</sup>. From our present position, we would need 25 knots, so we continued our present plans.

October 11<sup>th</sup>, Gato submerged at dawn and surfaced at dusk.

October 12<sup>th</sup>, 01:01 sighted three ships, bearing 350° relative, angle on the bow 70 starboard, distance about eight miles. Radar had not picked them up. Moon was nearly full and behind us. Commenced turning with full rudder and flank speed; but before we completed turning, the leading ship commenced flashing a signal light, submerged to radar depth. Lost visual contact which was not regained. Believed now that targets changed course directly away. Their speed was about 20 knots. At 02:01 surfaced and ran on their last known course for a half-hour, we then gave up. At 06:17 submerged, spent the day submerged and at 19:10 surfaced.

October 13<sup>th</sup>, 06:10 submerged for the day. At 19:10 surfaced and patrolled back and forth. Gato is assigned to an 80,000 square mile area from 01-0 N to 07-15 North and from 148 to 152 E. Gato's spot is on the middle longitude of this area.

October 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> patrolling in assigned area southwest of Truk. At 06:18 submerged for the day. At 21:00 set course east to cross our area, thus cutting all approaches to Truk.

October 17<sup>th</sup>, 06:07 submerged for the day. 19:01 surfaced and the range feature on the SJ radar is now inoperative. It picks up pips, but the range has to be estimated. 19:45 radar picked up three objects due south of us (dead ahead). Put them astern and commenced tracking. Went to battle stations. Could never see targets although we closed range to 7,000 yards. Lost radar contact although range had been closing.

21:04 secured from battle stations and commenced patrolling on two engines athwart the target base course. 23:45 sighted three small ships dead ahead. Noted that all were about the size of a sub chaser. Obviously they had to be avoided. Reversed course, opened range and circled to eastward.

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 08:03 submerged for the day. 18:00 sighted target, but were just far enough from track so that a high speed approach failed to get us within range. However, a long tracking exercise got us their course 300° (T), speed 12.5 knots, and formation. The two AK's kept a good line of bearing 000° (T). One was about 8,500 tons, with four goal posts, one stack, very neat, and about one-fourth loaded. The other, of about 7,000 tons had three goal posts and seemed about half full. The destroyer, patrolling across astern of the marus, was identified as of the Pubuki class.

19:20 surfaced and gave chase. There has been a short delay for a disparate, but vain, attempt to remedy the radar trouble. Our two material radiomen are working ceaselessly on it. The range feature refuses to function.

20:55 running down the base course. Obtained radar contact (leading to visual contact) and commenced run around left end. Because of moonlight, passed 18,000 yards abeam. Even at this range, we had misgivings, since the targets were plainly visible at 23,000 yards. Visual bearings showed that the radar was also erratic in its bearings.

21:08 perceived what was thought to be a radar flash, picked up on our own radar and then never seen again. 22:11 targets in line bearing 000° (T). (Same as this afternoon.) 23:10 near target abeam, distance 10,000 yards.

Sixth Patrol (6 September 1943 – 28 October 1943)

October 19<sup>th</sup>, chasing convoy of two marus, escorted by one destroyer. 01:00 targets commenced zig-zagging. Attained a position 2,100 yards from base track at a range of 23,300 yards. Sounded Battle Stations, submerged and commenced approach.

02:05 the three ships were plainly visible in #1 periscope. Came up to periscope depth to get some ranges. Down to periscope depth because of bright moonlight. Sound bearings were excellent, but was surprised to note that both operators frequently gave "heavy screws on the destroyer's bearing and 'High speed screws' on the bearings of the marus.

02:31 commenced firing bow tubes. Fired three torpedoes each at the two AK's, which were overlapping that bearing. Track 120 degrees, range 1,800 and 2,600 yards. Torpedo tracks not visible. Observed one hit on near target (the smaller). The geyser was nearly amidships and of normal size, and no flash was seen. The target received one torpedo close to the stern. This flashed as well as splashed. Three torpedo detonations were heard, but do not know where the third one exploded.

The destroyer, when the periscope got to him had turned to his right, apparently for his regular trip across the formation's stern. This put his broadside to us. We swung hard left to bring stern tubes on the destroyer.

Took another look at the targets. The large one was pointed, about on the base course and was settling in the water on an even keel. She had increased her draft about ten or twelve feet, before we swung the periscope to the destroyer. (It is realized that the few seconds he was watched, seemed much longer.)

The destroyer was practically stopped and broadside to us, distance about 2,000 yards. The smaller maru was end on to us, seemed stationary, although her funnel was smoking very black. No evidence of damage was visible.

02:38 the destroyer swung slowly left toward us. Fired two after torpedoes at the destroyer, figuring on a zero angle on the bow. But destroyer swung right on past presenting a 45° starboard angle, then came right, heading for us. We increased speed, ordered deep submergence as torpedoes left tubes, and as periscope went under, the destroyer was closing rapidly. The first of seven depth charges were deployed, close but set too shallow. 02:55 destroyer made a second pass at us and dropping three depth charges. He definitely had good information on everything by our depth. He was not heard thereafter.

03:50 proceeded to periscope depth and found nothing in sight. Surfaced and ran over to the scene. There was a large patch of oil and at one edge a flashing light. This was investigated and then picked up in hopes of identifying the target. It was carbide can wired to a short bamboo log.

It had no markings. Ran at best speed along targets' base course. 04:45 transmitted report of tonight's action. Decided that the probability of regaining contact justified remaining on surface after daylight.



08:30 decided that the target were not following base course. Submerged and continued along supposed base course. No contacts.

19:11 surfaced and started back toward center of area. 22:02 directed to come home via specified route.

October 20<sup>th</sup>, proceeding eastward across area south of Truk. Submerged during daylight hours. 22:17 radar picked up small ship, bearing 210° (T), distance 7,000 yards. Visibility was poor, nothing could be seen. Commenced tracking the contact. Operator thought it looked like a submarine, but so does a sub chaser. Radar obtained only sporadic contacts, since the old trouble have not been remedied. Enough information was obtained however, to fix his course at 340° (T) and his speed at 12.5 knots. (We tracked for two hours.)

October 21 moonrise was scheduled for 00:20, so we arranged to be in position just prior to that time. 00:15 submerged 20 degrees on the starboard bow of target, range 2,030 yards. Commenced approach. Radar could not pick up target, so went to periscope depth. All three sound devices gave continuous bearings.

00:32 saw target for the first time, decided it was a submarine. 00:35 fired three torpedoes on 90° track, range 2,500 yards, using Vage four knot spread. No hits, then three explosions. Presumed to be our spent torpedoes. 01:04 seeing or hearing nothing, surfaced and found nothing. Set course for homeward routing line as directed.

October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> enroute to Tulagi on surface in bombing restricted line.

October 24<sup>th</sup>, enroute Tulagi. 05:02 Joined H.M.N.Z.S. TDI, which escorted us to Tulagi. Arrived Tulagi, received 10,000 gallons fuel and was underway again for Brisbane. Escorted until dark by H.M.N.Z.S. TDI.

October 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> enroute from Tulagi to Brisbane.

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 08:45 Gato arrived Brisbane, Australia for refit.

Sixth Patrol (6 September 1943 – 28 October 1943)

**Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Sixth Patrol:**

**From: Commanding Officer U.S.S. Gato War Patrol Report, paragraph 11 ‘Remarks’**

Defense Workers – Carelessness is closely akin to sabotage when the end of the war means the end of a good paying job. Ship’s officers, while inspecting, found the two-by-four, left in the main induction housing, but the one in the hull induction did not appear until it worked up under the seat and prevented its closing. These pieces of wood are used to support the valve while the mechanism is worked on. When the work is finished, it is easier to knock them out than to pull them out. Other boats should be warned.

Food – was plentiful and well handled, despite the welcome inroads of our passengers. Incidentally, boats should never count on replenishing their larder at Tulagi. Available on our second visit there were two items: onions and canned liver. The marines had liked our bread so well that they had practically de-floured the Gato.

**From: Commander Task Force Seventy-Two, October 31, 1943**

U.S.S. Gato was congratulated on the successful accomplishment of a hazardous mission.

**Awards:**

Gato was awarded a ‘Battle Star’ for a Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
6 September – 28 October 1943

|        |               |          |             |
|--------|---------------|----------|-------------|
| Damage | Freighter (2) | Totaling | 15,500 tons |
|--------|---------------|----------|-------------|

U.S.S. Gato was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action

**Refit – 28 October – 17 November 1943**

Received routine refit by Submarine Repair Unit. No major items of overhaul were undertaken. Not depermed or wiped.

Lookouts, Fire Control, repair party and radar operators received practical instruction. Approach party made practice runs alongside dock, observed by Commander Submarine Division Eighty Two. Made test dive for leaks in Brisbane River. Gato was ready for sea on 17 November.

**Seventh Patrol – Depth Charge Patrol - 18 November 1943 – 10 January 1944**

On November 18, 1943, at 08:00, Gato departed Brisbane, Australia with Commander Submarine Division Eighty Two temporarily onboard to conduct training exercises. Conducted sound test and gun firing in Moreton Bay.

15:00 effected rendezvous with the Sub Chaser 1123, (our escort and target), at examination vessel, and proceeded to sea through swept channel. 19:07 made trim dive followed by two practice radar approaches.

November 19<sup>th</sup>, making training runs on the Sub Chaser 1123, off Moreton Island. 08:00 commenced submerged periscope and sound approaches. 11:00 made radar approaches. 11:55 prepared for simulated air attack by R.A.A.F. planes failed to appear.

13:00 Escort made simulated depth charge attacks. 16:00 conducted exercise in 'down-the-throat' attack on escort. In subsequent evasive tactics went to test depth as prescribed. No defects. 20:00 commenced night chase and simulated surface attack.

22:05 secured from exercises and proceeded into Moreton Bay to transfer the O. C. E.

November 20<sup>th</sup>, 02:45 transferred Commander Submarine Division Eighty Two to Pilot Examination Vessel, Moreton Bay, and proceeded to sea.

04:35 joined escort and proceeded along prescribed route. 07:46 commenced exercise in daylight end-around run. 12:04 submerged on targets bow. 13:28 simulated firing six torpedoes and then surfaced.

13:45 escort received orders requiring her to depart. Cancelled the only remaining exercise (Sound approach by escort) and released her. Gato set course along prescribed course.

November 21<sup>st</sup>, enroute to Tulagi Harbor. Slowed to make a trim dive, surfaced and then continued transit.

November 22<sup>nd</sup>, enroute to Tulagi Harbor. 00:40 shifted steering to auxiliary gyro. Master gyro losing vacuum. 05:32 commenced steering by master gyro, having reduced the speed by setting latitude correction to 50°, preventing further loss of vacuum. Made training dives by section. Engine induction leaks. At sunset, the SJ radar is out of commission.

November 23<sup>rd</sup>, enroute to Tulagi Harbor. Made only one training dive as radar parts filled the conning tower. Radar is still not fixed.

Seventh Patrol (18 November 1943 – 10 January 1944)

05:00 effected rendezvous with escort Sub Chaser 728 and proceeded toward Tulagi Harbor. 09:00 located SJ casualty and commenced repairs. 10:10 moored to fuel barge, Tulagi and commenced fueling. Completed fueling and our radar went out again. Turned our escort over to the U. S. S. Peto SS-265, which was ready to depart. Sent his departure report and predicted positions. Notified Commander Task Force Seventy Two (CFT-72) of actions and continued to work on the radar.

17:00 radar is back in commission. Too late to start for Point White. Requested escort for dawn tomorrow. Sent predicted positions to Task Force Commander.

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 05:50 underway from Tulagi, escorted by Sub Chaser 724. 12:00 off Cape Astrolabe, Sub Chaser 724 obligingly stood by while Gato made a trim dive. 12:30 released the escort and set course through bombing restriction lane on 3 engines.

November 26<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to patrol area on three engines. Made a trim dive after morning star sights. 10:15 received CTF-72 serial telling us not to spare the horses. Put on the other engine.

Editor's Note: Admiral Fife received an Ultra message on a convoy loaded with infantry, ammunition and gasoline for the embattled Japanese garrisons. He had four boats operating in that area: U.S.S. Gato SS-212, U.S.S. Peto SS-265, U.S.S. Raton SS-270 and the U.S.S. Ray SS-271. Although they did not operate as a formal wolf pack, the effectiveness of their combined firepower pointed the way to more 'cooperative' efforts.

November 27<sup>th</sup>, proceeding northwest toward patrol area on four main engines.

November 28<sup>th</sup>, heading westward on four engines. 19:45 received contact report from the Raton and altered course accordingly to make earliest contact with contact.

November 29<sup>th</sup>, received Raton's contact report, and adjusted our course. It is to be noted that it takes three hours to relay contact reports via the shore stations, as we are required to do. (Our only interrupt if we guess which ship shore frequencies he will use.) In this case we were at top speed for the three hours in the wrong direction. 07:00 made a trim dive.

08:48 sighted the Ray, closed him and exchanged recognition calls and information. We agreed to search different speed circles in the Northeast.

13:51 sighted smoke bearing 342° (T), closed at high speed. 14:05 three sets of topmasts came into sight. Commenced end-around run. 15:23 submerged on estimated (generated) base track of convoy.

17:09 fired three torpedoes from forward tubes before losing depth control. Target was one of three cargo vessels escorted by two new looking sub chasers. As we fired the boat came up rapidly and it was necessary to use high speed to prevent broaching. Escort was heading for us at high speed, so when the periscope was inadvertently pulled under, decided to go deep.

17:11 two torpedoes detonated. They could have been hits. (But the next day we saw the target undamaged.) Last seen headed fair for target but smoking a heavy white cloud.

17:18 two depth charges were dropped very close. In fact all 25 charges dropped on this attack showed that these escorts are quite proficient. Sound conditions were excellent and the escorts never seemed to lose contact. The attack was unhurried and when they decided to drop it was obvious that they had all information except our depth. We were well shaken up, and developed noise in rudder shaft and stern planes. Also the main induction and engine induction valves were lifted off their seats. Forward trim developed a slow leak.

18:22 last depth charge was dropped. The escorts drew away while still pinging directly on us. This seemed strange until it was learned later that the Raton had purposely closed the escorts on the surface to draw their fire and attention away from us.

19:00 secured from silent running and reloaded out tubes. Surfaced and took up chase along best estimate of base course.

November 30<sup>th</sup>, chasing then searching from flank for the convoy. 08:45 sighted what was probably the Ray about ten miles ahead on almost the same course as Gato. She gradually drew off to the northwest. 10:45 had another glimpse of the Ray through the high periscope.

12:47 sighted smoke bearing 352° (T). Closed at best speed. Masts appeared on the horizon. It is our convoy. Commenced end-around run. Alternate clear periods and rain squalls made it difficult to maintain.

17:30 submerged 13 miles ahead of convoy and commenced approach. It is noted that our target of yesterday is holding her own with no evidence of damage, although she makes twice as much smoke as yesterday.

The three Marus were almost abreast and their zig-zags indicated that we were exactly on the base course. The final zig put their left wing ship directly at us, giving Gato an excellent track angles on the other two. Decided to fire first at the best ship. She was heavier than the others, having an extremely broad beam, two goal posts and two single masts. Estimated her tonnage at 9,000 tons. She had a good paint job of dark gray and bore the number 890 in white on her side.

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Resembled in every observed detail as the Kansai Maru. Intended to fire four torpedoes at her and two at the 6,000 tonner next in line.

18:20 commenced firing forward tubes. Again rapidly lost depth and after first four torpedoes we were frantically trying to keep from broaching. Again when the periscope went under, Gato went to 300 feet. Heard two torpedo hits followed in turn by a series of muffed heavy explosions, followed in turn by the definite noise of compartments breaking up.



18:25 the first two depth changes were dropped and were fairly close.

18:34 a pattern of three or four depth charges too close, which drove the boat down another 75 foot and tilted us down by the head about 12 degrees. When level flight was regained at 400 feet (100 foot below test depth), no serious damage was noted and we found a steep temperature gradient registered at 360 feet. So we stayed there a while. The escorts dropped depth charges carefully until 19:00 and continued echo ranging in the vicinity until 20:24.

21:00 all clear at periscope depth. Surfaced and set course 090° (T) and commenced chase on all engines.

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 06:58 submerged for much need servicing of torpedoes. Six of them have been in the twice flooded tubes. On completion, went to test depth to listen to our rudder moan and shaft squeal and to test our main and engine inductions which flooded during the depth charging. Most of these ailments are not as intolerable as appeared at first.

08:03 sighted the Ray through the periscope. She had apparently conducted the same search as Gato. We did not disclose our presence and she passed about 1,200 yard abeam and disappearing to the eastward.

09:28 heard distant explosions, thought to be depth charges, (Later found out that the Peto made an attack at 09:07, about 45 miles away, and was kept down for five hours by the escorts.)

13:58 surfaced and set out to reach a probable track of the convoy (if he heads for Pelews).

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, proceeding to point just north of Admiralties, on the Rabaul – Pelews route.

09:52 float biplane came out of the clouds bearing 095° (T) distance four miles, heading northwest. Made a quick dive. There is a slight possibility that he did not see us, but decided to

remain submerged. Since we are not in an area of air search, this may have been air coverage for our particular convoy. Surfaced in dark and headed toward Tingwon. Commenced retiring search at four engine speed.

December 3<sup>rd</sup>, on retiring search on Tingwon – Pelews route on four engines.

00:30 received SUBS serial message reporting that a convoy to two marus and two escorts were sighted where our last targets should be. This should indicate that we probably sank one.

05:03 received Ray's message which reports our convoy has only two marus left at 18:00 the day after we attacked. Consider this verifies the sinking.

Editor's Note: U.S.S. Gato torpedoes and sinks Columbia Maru at 01-56N, 147-21E. Abandoned and drifted away, she finally sinks at 01-56N, 147-21E. Only one crewman is KIA.

December 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup>, continued retiring search on Tingwon – Pelews and the Pelews – Rabaul routes.

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 01:20 sighted properly illuminated hospital ship bearing 190° (T), distance eight miles, heading toward Tingwon. SJ although operating had not picked it up. Closed to test radar and to note any suspicious movements on the part of the hospital ship. Unsuccessful on both counts and resumed search.

15:30 sighted masts with periscope, bearing 045° (T), distance about 12 miles. Commenced tracking and running an end around.

17:32 submerged on estimated track of target and closed on reverse course.

18:00 targets are two marus with two escorts. One maru is 6,000 tons with three goal post (cut down from 4). Other maru is 4,500 tons with two stick masts. Neither could be called ship-shape. One escort is new, clipper bow type, of our recent acquaintance. On studying him for the third time, believe his one gun is a 40mm. The other escort is a clumsy, blunt nosed affair which pings as well as the best of them.

18:15 went to battle stations and commenced approach. Despite our use of speed, targets increased our distance to track (we should make every effort to complete these attacks before the time of his dusk change of base course).

19:22 commenced firing bow tubes at the marus which were overlapping on bearing 240° (T). Saw the torpedo running normally. Observed the escorts and the new one turned toward us and

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opened fire with automatic weapons. The shells landed close enough to hear slapping the water. They were tracers and did not explode as they hit the water.

While watching the escort we heard two torpedo explosions. Swung periscope to targets and saw no geyser. The near maru (smaller) was spinning around to the right and had covered about 150° when we shifted scope. The far maru pulled ahead.



Both of the escorts are converging on us. Ordered deep submergence. The first depth charge was close but no damage. A total of eleven depth charges were dropped, individually. Their sound work seemed less efficient than usual. They lost us frequently. By 22:00 they had worked well to the south pinging violently but searching around the dial.

20:05 surfaced on four engines with nothing in sight. Commenced search to westward on all engines while reloading enroute.

December 9<sup>th</sup>, conducting a retiring search curve for convoy. By mid afternoon had covered all courses from 000° (T) to 230° (T) (westward) and speeds from eight knots to nine and a half knots. We had also assumed a two hour delay and courses from 250° (T) to about 300° (T). An estimate of the fuel situation showed that we could just make it to Tulagi on three engines. Also we can rendezvous at Cape Astrolabe

Editor's Note: Admiral Fife noted that this operation had not been a formal wolf pack. No one skipper had been in charge. There had been no radio exchanges between the boats. It was strictly speaking, a concentration of available firepower against a single convoy and the boats sank four of the five ships in the convoy.

16:01 set course for Tulagi and notified Task Force Commander. Received SUBS serial telling Gato to continue to Tulagi.

December 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Tulagi for fuel. Transmitted the prescribed dawn-dusk positions and weather, along with request that lube-oil and torpedo crane be available (we have only used forward tubes to date).

December 12<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Tulagi through bombing restriction lane. 09:00 sighted a B-17 bearing 140° (T) distance 11 miles, patrolling and ignoring Gato.

14:45 sighted a Catalina PBY bearing 250° (T), distance ten miles, altitude 2,500 feet, course 160° (T). No evidence of sighting us. We took no action.

20:50 a Liberator appeared in moonlight crossing our bow two mile ahead, whilst we swung left (toward). We exchanged what were probably recognition signals. He circled, blinking unintelligible remarks. As he crisscrossed we maneuvered radically at flank speed and full rudder to show our confidence in him. Believe he mistook us for the U.S.S. Balao, which is engaged in some exercises with aircraft some 125 miles ahead. His transmissions appeared to be prearranged code words.

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 05:17 joined escort, Sub Chaser 518, off Cape Astrolabe and proceeded toward Tulagi Harbor.

11:40 arrived Tulagi with 2,000 gallons of fuel left over, commenced shifting torpedoes and loading lube-oil in drums. Fuel and torpedoes must be taken separately in this port. Unsuccessful in getting the SJ radar to work. The radar expert from the M.T.B. Base, Lt Flanagan, volunteered his services and worked all night with our personnel.

18:00 completed loading torpedoes. Carried deck load of lube-oil drums as we shifted to the fueling barge. Commenced fueling.

December 14<sup>th</sup>, fueling in Tulagi. 06:30 when all our radar talent was stumped, sent message to Task Force Commander, giving the symptoms, and stating that we would depart without the benefit of the radar.

10:30 completed fuelling and got underway escorted by the Sub Chaser 518. Off Cape Astrolabe, released escort and increase speed to three engines. Made trim dive then surfaced and proceeded. 18:16 received some technical radar advice from CTF-72, some of which had not been tried as yet. Work continues.

December 15<sup>th</sup>, enroute to patrol area. Radar seems to be developing new ailments. Received more radio advice on the subject. All items are acted upon

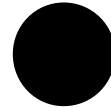
December 16<sup>th</sup>, enroute to patrol area. 08:03 at Lat. 00-17-03 South and Long. 147-37 East sighted a man on a life raft. Took him aboard. Appears to be a Japanese soldier, adrift about two weeks (estimated), but decided to bring him along. He had the remains of a bird and a bit of bread. When he saw we were stopping he consumed a bottle of water. He was pretty well covered with salt water sores. His clothes were in tatters. Wore a belt of part leather and part web. No weapon.

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Rescue of a Japanese Soldier

Photo courtesy of Kurt Kramer



His possessions, which will be delivered with him, comprise of a wallet with Japanese invasion money, snap shot of a girl, pay-book, chop marks (seals). He was given a bath and treatment for the sores and supervised feeding. We will keep him under guard.

December 17<sup>th</sup>, proceeding westward on equator. 16:00 changed course to south to reach the point where the three traffic lanes to Rabaul meet (From Pelews, Wewak and Balikpapan.)

20:30 passed through the above mentioned point and commenced patrolling back and forth on two engines (Radar is still out of commission.)

December 18<sup>th</sup>, patrolling the junction of the Pelews, Wewak and Balikpapan routes to Rabaul. Submerged as it was about the time for the morning air search to pass over. 08:15 surfaced and readjusted position per star sights.

19:00 the radar personnel feel that the radar is ready to operate but first must be tuned on a target to get maximum sensitivity. Set course up the Balikpapan route toward Kaniet Island for that purpose.

Received order to inactivate the magnetic feature of our torpedoes. 23:26 sighted Kaniet Island distance five miles. Commenced trying to pick it up with radar. Succeeded at about 6,000 yards and commenced adjusting.

December 19<sup>th</sup>, 00:31 having turned the radar to its best performance, set course back to the three route junction. 06:00 resumed patrol

15:15 Gato was directed to look for Pelews and Saipan traffic to Rabaul. As well as tanker traffic from the southwest to Truk. To fulfill this large order, first set course up to Rabaul – Pelews line.

17:13 sighted two unidentified planes bearing 035° (T), course south, distance ten miles, altitude 3,000 feet. Submerged and since it costs nothing, Gato will assume that they saw us. Decided to go up the 'Saipan Route' instead. 18:04 surfaced, all clear and Gato set course toward Saipan.

December 20<sup>th</sup>, on what we believe is the Saipan – Rabaul route. 13:27 sighted smoke bearing 345° (T). Commenced tracking.

16:14 submerged on estimated track of target. Manned Battle Stations, target in sight. One large cargo vessel or tanker (9,000 to 10,000 tons) with four goal post and engines aft. Would think it is a tanker but can not see any pipe lines running fore and aft. Has cargo booms horizontally housed. The other ship is just a cargo vessel with a fair amount of passenger space (troop transport Tsuneshima Maru). Two stick masts, one stack, armed, estimated at 6,500 tons. The two escorts (the CH-28 and the OTORI) are the new type we have unpleasantly met recently. Every effort was made to reach a position for a close shot at the large vessel, but the zigs during the latter stages left us on the side near the smaller one. Also thought no effort on our part the two marus lined up on the firing bearing.

17:31 commenced firing bow tubes at the middle of the smaller target. After three were seen running normal favored the stern of same as that was the bearing of the middle of the large target. While watching the near escort for his first move, heard a tremendous explosion. Gato was shaken. Swung the periscope to target. Pieces were flying through the air as high as 300 feet. The burst covered the whole field of the periscope. On a few seconds the air cleared and all that remained of the smaller maru was one mast sinking rapidly at a large angle. Had a glimpse of the large cargo ship still there but could not tell much about it. Do not believe the torpedoes had time to reach it yet. Periscope went under. Ordered deep submergence.



17:33:40 two distant explosions (believed to be torpedoes). The sonic listening device heard the sound of a 'gong' ringing in the distance.

17:39 the first of 19 depth charges were dropped. This was the worst depth charging we have ever received. Practically all of the charges seemed right on top of us and the ship was shaken violently with each one. However, the Gato took it very well. These new escorts are too proficient.

They spotted us accurately and stayed on, although we were at all times about 70 feet below our test depth. They did not speed up to drop, but passed directly overhead at slow and deliberate speed. Also believed they may use a fathometer to determine our depth.

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None of our ‘bag of tricks’ was effective in shaking them, for about two hours, when a slow gradual turn seemed to leave them astern.

19:30 sound gear detected the approach of a heavy rain squall. Both escorts are rotating their sound heads. Prepared for battle surface.

19:42 surfaced, heading away from the echo ranging, in a heavy rain squall. Radar shows nothing but that may or may not indicate clear field. Set course to 310° (T) for the ‘scene’ which is also the bearing of the echo ranging.

20:03 slowed on approaching the scene of the attack. Visibility is very poor.

20:16 a heavy explosion was heard and felt throughout the ship. Could not tell the bearing or type.

20:21 observed a blur on the port bow, estimated about 1,500 yards. (Pretty sure it was one of the escorts.) 20:22 sound reports pinging 35° relative. Then saw the other escort on that bearing distance 2,000 yards. Swung hard to right at flank speed. (Note that radar has made no contact yet). Drawing away from escorts who seem more surprised than we are. Radar, after being coached on, commenced giving ranges and bearings. (These are very experienced operators too)

20:32 one escort astern fired one round, radar range 3,500 yards. The propellant charge is far from flashiness. The projectile is fused. It burst abeam, showing his range exact, elevation a bit high and deflection three mills to right (estimated). Settled on course for Tingwon (Most likely course of big maru).

20:33 situation resembled a five ring circus. Gato was simultaneously:

- Outrunning the two escorts.
- Trying to overtake the maru.
- Reloading the forward tubes.
- Making some necessary minor repairs.
- Trying to dispose of one unexploded depth charge without blowing our rudder off\*.

Editor’s Note: This is the only known case of a submarine surfacing with an entire depth change onboard. This event would eventually be used in a ‘Ripley’s – “Believe It or Not”’ cartoon. Admiral Charles Lockwood ComSubPac noted that in the patrol report, Captain Foley apparently considered it a small matter, being then occupied with events of more pressing urgency. It was almost an hour after surfacing that he acknowledge the situation and another it took another half-hour to get rid of it.

21:00 the prisoner and our language student (Lt. McGivern) each copied the marking on the depth charge, after which it was lashed to the rubber boat and set adrift with a slow leak. When last seen it was bobbing along in the path of our pursuers.

December 21<sup>st</sup>, closing Mussau Island without overtaking the ship. Many items indicate that this ship was at least damaged, or possibly sunk. We submit the following for consideration.

- The two ships were lined up on the firing bearing.
- The near ship was hit.
- The two additional torpedo explosions were timed exactly for the run between the ships.
- Two hours after the attack, neither escort has left the scene. In fact they were milling around pinging, at 20:22 about two hours forty minutes after the attack.
- We covered the track from the scene to within sight of Mussau at about twice his speed then patrolled athwart his most likely track until he would have had more than enough time to reach the spot. No contact was made.
- Our ‘prolific’ air searches make no report that could be connected with this ship. In short, Gato has convinced herself that she sank both ships in this convoy.



05:30 patrolling on east – west courses. Mussau Island bears 132° distance 36 miles.

08:27 dived to avoid unidentified aircraft bearing 215° (T), distance eight miles, course 340, altitude 1000 feet. Quite sure that he did not see us. While submerged serviced the torpedoes in the flooded tubes (aft).

11:15 surfaced and commenced retracing steps toward the scene of yesterdays attack.

13:31 a small plane believed to be a float plane was dimly seen in the haze, altitude 1000 feet, course about 120°. Gato dived. We must assume that he saw us.

14:12 surfaced and proceeded to intercept any traffic which may have been rerouted around the other side of Mussau Island.

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, reached the Truk – Mussau traffic lane and turned northward.

December 23<sup>rd</sup>, patrolling on the Truk – Rabaul route. 11:58 sighted an unidentified plane bearing 230° (T), distance six miles on course 130. Submerged, to be on the safe side, and after 30 minutes surfaced and resumed patrol.

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12:40 high periscope had a brief glimpse of two masts (well separated, as on two separate vessels), bearing 245° (T), and well over the horizon. Could not be located by closing at high speed. Believed they were southbound destroyers which just reached our circle of visibility. Terminated pursuit and resumed patrol.

December 24<sup>th</sup>, patrolling across the Truk – Rabaul route. 09:16 sighted a plane, probably a Liberator but could not be sure. Bearing 090, heading south at a distance of eight miles. Gato submerged for 14 minutes.

14:03 a lookout reported torpedo wake on the port quarter. All ahead flank. Put tail to it and made ready the after tubes. After discussion with the lookout, decided that it was a wind slick with rain on it. Slowed, stopped, listened and proceeded on patrol.

15:35, sighted a Liberator on bearing 150° (T), distance eight miles, Gato exhibited one flare of proper color. Sighted another Liberator bearing 040° (T), distance ten miles. Remained on surface, tested the SD radar, and blinked identification signals. No answer, but no antagonism.

December 25<sup>th</sup> and December 26<sup>th</sup>, patrolling athwart on the Truk – Rabaul line and the western detours of Truk – Rabaul line. No contact.

December 27<sup>th</sup>, patrolling the western detours of Truk – Rabaul line. 06:41 in first light of morning, sighted vessel bearing 010° (T), distance about four miles. Commanding Officer thought it looked like a destroyer. Others called it everything from a freighter to a submarine. Radar, radar was mute. Gato dived and commenced approach.

07:14 made out that the target was a submarine. Zigging widely. We were just too far from the track but kept approaching in hopes of a change of basic course. Abandon current approach. Decided to make end-around run. Lay doggo (in concealment; out of sight) till he drew away.

09:05 surfaced and chased the submarine. Sighted target dead ahead. Commenced working around his starboard. Learned that it is quite a delicate performance for one submarine to keep a zig-zagging submarine in sight. When he zigs toward he really closes fast (and vice versa). Also our need for engine overhaul is obvious. Despite the tenderest of care we cannot exceed our standard speed (820 KW) without excessive smoke. We made several attempts to work up speed but had to refrain.

13:05 submerged ahead of target on his base course, and commenced approach. Identified target as I-62 class submarine, with three inch gun forward. Masts were properly housed.



I-64 (KD4) Class Japanese Submarine

13:57 commenced firing four forward tubes for most perfect position one could ask. Range was 2,150 yards, track angle 90. We had his speed, length, and draft. Heard three of the four torpedoes running on the correct bearing. One went off at a tangent. Could see at least two tracks heading correctly. But nothing happened. Target was unconcerned, and well after the torpedoes should have hit he slowly changed course away.

14:03 three torpedoes exploded (end of run). Decided we might be able to land a lucky 3-inch hit on him, and certainly drive him down, delaying his mission, while diverting our crew's minds the disappointment.

14:29 Battle Surface. Closed target at full speed and commenced firing the 3-inch gun at 7,500 yards. Second shot obscured target but he was still there when the splash subsided. He submerged on the fifth shot. The sixth landed in his diving swirl. Ceased firing and reversed course. Then, thinking that this report, if DF'd, would disclose the fact that subs were using this circuit, decided to transmit a message on the sub circuit after discreet interval. Had several things that should be said, anyway. Set course along the Pelews track while transmitting (this is over 90° from the course we followed after the transmission).

15:29 sighted a patrol plane. Not certain of the type or nationality. The Japanese know our position, and we might direct one of our planes to the Japanese sub so we remained on the surface, manning the anti-aircraft battery. However, the plane cloud-hopped and disappeared.

20:00 visibility decreased rapidly in driving rain. Radar was not working. Lowered sound heads, stopped and listened for ten minutes. When the Commanding Officer and the Officer-Of-the-Deck, could not see or hear each other on the bridge, made the decision to dive. Submerged and manned sound gear. Copied radio messages on the SD radar antenna.

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December 28<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on the Truk – Rabaul line. Submerged during the rainstorms. At end of day decided to abandon the Truk – Rabaul route, by direction, and headed for the Rabaul – Pelews route at best speed.

December 29<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on the Rabaul – Pelews line. 08:15 sighted smoke bearing 156° (T) and changed course to close. Made out many masts and set an intercepting course. 09:55 masts bearing 120° (T), consider ourselves on his track. Came to his estimate course.

10:10 sighted a float plane appeared between us and targets, crossing track. Gato dived, apparently undetected.

10:53 submerged and manned Battle Stations. Seven ships are visible. One is 10,000 ton transport, one 9,000 ton freighter, three medium Marus and two escorts, believed to be torpedo boats. Zigging was radical but Gato managed to place itself ahead of the center, as desired. Selected the transport as target. Firing position was dead ahead of the 9,000 tonner on the final leg.

12:08 almost in position. Raised the periscope for final bearing. The float plane was zooming in on us. Target had turned to ram. Escorts were closing at high speed. Abandoned the attack. Carefully went deep to avoid putting screws into target which passed overhead. (The Commanding Officer does not favor the periscope's light gray camouflage paint.)

13:30 the searching escorts while still pinging in our direction (to keep us down) drew away on the base course. The convoy screws had already faded in that direction. Made periscope observation to get last look at smoke of convoy and check direction. Float plane was circling the smoke patch bearing 282° (T). Went to 100 feet and waited for convoy to draw away (and take the plane with them). Serviced our four torpedoes.

14:50 surfaced on northerly course, hoping to pull well off their flank and repeat the chase. Manned the Anti Aircraft battery.

15:00 the float plane appeared again. It was a Japanese 'Jake' patrol plane.



Aichi E13A "Jake" Naval Reconnaissance Floatplane

Since he had already sighted us and we had our Anti Aircraft battery manned, decided to give him a few burst. The plane made a diving approach. Gato opened fire with two 20mm and one .50 cal guns, enveloping him in traces. Well before his release point he pulled up in a steep climb, with surprise written all over both floats. In all, the plane came in five times, but on each approach he was met with a hail of rapid fire, and each time thought the better of it. During this time Gato fired 120 round each of 50 cal. tracer, incendiary and A.P. and 200 round each of 20mm tracer, incendiary and high explosive. Although no vital parts of his plane were hit, he received one strip of .50 cal holes in his starboard pontoon, and several scattered 20mm, holes in his wings. He then commenced circling out of our gun range. At no time did he fire any guns. Gato decided it was time for more planes to arrive from Mussau or Manus. It must be understood that the Gato did not surface to engage this plane for the fun of it, but to maintain the contact. The attack was broken off when, in the opinion of the Commanding Officer, Gato had opened the distance from the Admiralties enough to preclude the arrival of surface craft before nightfall.

15:56 submerged on course north and remained at 200 feet until time for star sights. 19:48 made periscope observation, all clear. Surfaced, all clear chased after convoy at best speed.

December 30<sup>th</sup>, proceeding on four engines alone base course from the last position of the convoy towards Pelews. Reached the convoy's nine knot position circle. Made short sweep to right of track (one hour) to cover slight deviations from base course, then commenced retiring search on left side of base track. We had covered both sides of track for his speeds of seven to nine knots and deviations of about 40° from base course, when SUBS Serial message directed Gato to shift to another lane. Set course and speed to comply.

December 31<sup>st</sup>, searching the northwest detours of the lane from Pelews to Steffan Strait. Sighted the U.S.S. Balao on the same mission. Closed and exchanged recognition signals. Suggested that she cover the northeast side of track while Gato covers southwest. Also since Gato has no T.B.S. radio set, that we use the ship shore circuit for contact and coordination messages. We separated from Balao and proceeded to search as agreed.

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January 1<sup>st</sup>, searching on route from Pelews to Steffan Strait. We had just drafted a message reporting that our fuel on hand permits search until tomorrow, when we received SUBS 72 Serial message directing Gato to start for Tulagi at dawn tomorrow (if no contacts).

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, searching as before, no contacts. Set course for Tulagi. Gato was directed to remain in the vicinity of the Equator and Long. 154° until further orders (because of important friendly ship movements between us and our destination).

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, loitering at the above mentioned location.

January 4<sup>th</sup>, awaiting the passage of friendly Task Force. We are not to start heading south until dusk tonight.

18:06 sighted plane belonging to the friendly Task Force of which we have been warned. Submerged and shortly thereafter heard echo ranging. Decided not to play games with US Destroyers. Fired smoke bombs of proper color. Sighted the friendly Task Force. Description is omitted here for security purposes.

Surfaced and reviewed the passing of the triumphant Task Force. Expended one red flare and considerable hero worship. When it was all clear Gato proceeded to carry out her next mission.

January 6<sup>th</sup>, conducted a special mission to survey the Green Islands for CTF 31.

January 7<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Tulagi. Directed to join the U.S.S. Cero before she reaches Cape Astrolabe. She is to be proceeding slowly in that direction, accompanied by a tug and sub chaser.

January 8<sup>th</sup>, enroute to Tulagi. Sighted tug as expected but no Cero or Sub Chaser. Took over an hour to convince the tug captain that we were Americans. He then informed us that the Cero and escort were up ahead of him.

03:30 overtook Cero and exchanged recognition. A second escort appeared and reported to conduct Gato to Tulagi

11:30 arrived in Tulagi and commenced fueling. A representative of CTF-31 was on the dock waiting to confer. This made it unnecessary for the Gato to proceed to Guadalcanal. This saved one day of Gato's absence from patrol. Since they have better charts than we have, our data was taken for replotting on a very large scale. Lieutenant Porter, who represented CFT 31, plotted enough to assure us that our data is satisfactory for the purpose.

16:00 departed Tulagi for Milne Bay, New Guinea and was escorted until dark by the Sub Chaser 1286.

January 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, enroute to and arrived Milne Bay, New Guinea for refit along side the U.S.S. Fulton.

**Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Seventh Patrol:**

**From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato, SS212/A16-3 paragraph (Q)**

Our new men knew very little about the Navy when we got them, but generally their desire to learn and their earnest effort makes them acceptable submarine sailors. One thing is certain: They show a lot of intestinal fortitude in the tight places that we are able to provide.

**From: Commander Submarine Division Eighty One, 11 January 1944**

The patrol produced eight ship contacts, including one hospital ship and one submarine. Three out of five torpedo attacks were successful.

A normal refit will be accomplished by the U.S.S. Fulton and Sub Div 81 relief crew. Especial attention will be given to the SJ radar.

The Commanding Officer, officers and crew are to be congratulated for a successful patrol and the damage inflicted upon the enemy.

**From: Commander Submarine Squadron Eight, 16 January 1944**

This patrol was characterized by aggressive action on the part of the Gato and by accurate depth charging on the part of the enemy. Eight contacts with enemy vessels were made, five of which were developed into attacks. One contact was with a properly illuminated hospital ship. Two gun attacks were made, one against a submarine and the other against a plane. The latter attack, which looked upon with disfavor as a general practice, was made in order to enable Gato to proceed on the surface with a view of maintaining contact with the convoy. Although only minor damage was done to the plane, he was driven off five times and finally circled out of gun range.

The Gato experienced particularly severe depth charging which resulted only in minor damage and some buckling of the hull plating. The accuracy of the enemy depth charging is sustained by the fact that the Gato surfaced with a dud depth charge on deck. The latter was disposed of by floating it away in a rubber raft. The observed torpedo performance was excellent.

The Commanding Officer, Officers and Crew are congratulated on the completion of a very successful patrol.

Seventh Patrol (18 November 1943 – 10 January 1944)

**From: Commander Task Force Seventy-Two, 17 January 1944**

While the Task Force Commander is not yet ready to promulgate a policy of remaining on the surface and fighting it out with search planes, the Gato demonstrated the possibility in an emergency and is credited with damage to one Japanese float plane, probably another ‘Submarine First’.

The Commander Task Force Seventy-Two congratulates the Commanding Officer, Officer and Crew on this outstanding long patrol and the successful accomplishment of a special mission.

Commander and Chief – US Navy / Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest J King let it be known in no uncertain terms that he took a poor view of Gato’s battle with the plane. Admiral Ralph Christie (ComSoWesPac) informed all submarines basing in Australia that “gun action with airplanes are not approved”. However, Gato turned northward for Truk, where he fell under Admiral Lockwood’s (ComSubPac) jurisdiction.

**Awards:**

U.S.S. Gato was awarded a ‘Battle Star’ for a Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
18 November 1943 – 10 January 1944

|          |                                  |          |             |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Sinking  | Freighters (3)                   | Totaling | 21,100 tons |
| Damaging | Freighter (1)                    | Totaling | 4,500 tons  |
| Damaging | Aichi E13A (Jake) Floatplane (1) |          |             |

U.S.S. Gato was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action

Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Silver Star to Lieutenant Charles F McGivern, USN  
for Fifth, Six and Seventh Patrols

**Refit – 10 January – 1 February 1944**

The normal two week refit was performed by the U.S.S. Fulton AS-11 and Submarine Division 81 relief crew. Received a static sound test as well as a deep running noise test. An excellent two day training period was provided. U.S.S. Coucla ASR-8, HMAS Stawell J348, and for a shot time, two PT Boats participated.

**Eighth Patrol They Did It All 2 February – 1 April 1944**

On February 2, 1944 07:00 U.S.S. Gato departed Milne Bay, escorted by the Patrol Craft 1121, to patrol in the Bismarck-New Guinea - Truk area. Made a trim dive and exercised in clearing the bridge.

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, off Dreger Harbor, New Guinea, made rendezvous with PT boats 196 and 323. Released PC 1121, transferred the ECM to the Motor Torpedo Boat Tender U.S.S. Portunas (AGP-4) and proceeded toward Vitiaz Strait, escorted by the two PT boats.

19:00 on completing the surface transit of Vitiaz Strait without incident, released escorts and proceeded on a special mission.

Gato was assigned to perform a special mission to remove from Maitanakunai, Open Bay, New Britain, one Australian coast watcher and as many shot down allied aviators as could be assembled there. She was also ordered to conceal their presence until clear of land, then disclose our presence by a lengthy radio transmission, to give false impression that submarines were patrolling that area.

February 4<sup>th</sup>, submerged North of Vitu Islands, for a daylight run. Surfaced at dark to approach the coast. At 22:15 a large flying boat crossed the bow in moonlight, distance three miles, altitude 600 feet. As the plane turned toward, we submerged but no bombs were dropped. In order to clear the spot before destroyers could arrive from Rabaul, we surfaced and stood toward Open Bay at best speed.

February 5<sup>th</sup>, reconnoitering Open Bay to locate point designed for rescue. Submerged at dawn.

11:00 distinguished a white marker on shore. This was one of the signals suggested to the coast watcher.

19:37 surfaced in trimmed down condition, two miles from designated landing point and headed in. All 20mm and .50 cal. weapons were manned, sound gear and pitometer log were housed. Propulsion is by battery-motors. Party on beach immediately flashed, by hand flashlight, the proposed recognition signal.

20:10 no enemy activity having been noted to seaward or landward, launched two rubber boats. As is customary, these were manned by selected volunteers. (Lt John Gilman Jr. USNR, H. L. Sterti, S1c, USN and D.E. Sly, S1c, USNR). The boats made the beach through the surf without a mishap.

Eight Patrol (2 February – 1 April 1944)

20:51 the coast watcher and four aviators were quickly embarked in the boats which then started to return.

Having covered about 200 yard of the return journey they heard a commotion on the beach. Some crude blinker signaling was being perpetrated. From Gato it read “67 more aviators”. We commenced breaking out our wooden boat for a ferry, and directed the cook to prepare soup for about 80 guests. Meantime the rubber boats returned to the beach. They found three additional aviators who, having been notified by native runner of the evacuation, had made forced marches from across New Britain via jungle and mountain. They were embarked in the rubber boats.

21:21 the boats reached Gato. While guests were being given the “Six-B” treatment (bath, bandage, bread, butter, bouillon and bed), Gato extricated herself and transmitted the message. Then set out on four engines for Vitiaz Strait.

February 6<sup>th</sup>, proceeding (submerged during daylight) toward rendezvous with the PT boats.

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 06:26 effected rendezvous with PT 192 and PT 326 at north end of Vitiaz Strait and proceeded toward destination. 13:30 entered Dreger Harbor, T.N.G. and moored next to U.S.S. Portunas AGP-4.

Commenced fuelling and disembarked the following passengers:

First Group

1. Major A. W. Roberts, A.I.F. (ANGAU) attached to A.I.B. (Coast watcher)
2. Master Sergeant Gordon Manuel, Bombardier of Flying Fortress and its only survivor (Bailed out six miles off Put Put Harbor 5-21-43)
3. LT Owen Giertsen, AC US Army (Crashed landed a P-38 off of Wide Bay 11-8-43)
4. LT Carl Planck, AC US Army (Crash landed in water off of Talili Plantation 11-2-43)
5. LT Edward Czarnecki, AC US Army (Bailed out of P-38 near Wide Bay 10-23-43)

Second group

1. Wing Commander W. Townsend C.O., 22<sup>nd</sup> Squadron R.A.A.F (Shot down over Palmalmal 11-3-43)
2. Flying Officer David McClymont, R.A.A.F. (Shot down over Palmalmal 11-3-43)
3. Captain Fred Hargesheimer, A.C. US Army (Bailed out of P-38 near Ubibi, 6-5-43)

16:08 a single bomb was dropped by plane (believed enemy) landing on beach 900 yards from us. Local pursuit planes commenced performing.

19:55 fuelling completed and Gato was underway from alongside the Portunas. Enroute to operating area escorted by the two PT boats.

February 8<sup>th</sup>, enroute to the patrol area. 03:05 released the escorts at North and Vitiaz Strait. Sighted an unidentified aircraft bearing 080° (T), distance eight miles, altitude 3,000 feet and course southerly. Made a quick dive and held various drills. Surfaced and continued.

February 9<sup>th</sup>, patrolling North of New Guinea in the vicinity of the equator. During the morning made dive for trim, test and training.

February 10<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on assigned station. Sighted unidentified plane bearing 085° (T), distance about six miles, course 050° (T), altitude 10,000 feet. Possibility a Liberator. Submerged for 90 minutes using this opportunity for drills.

February 11<sup>th</sup>, patrolling the Kavieng – Pelews route. Made a one-hour dive for trim and training.

February 12<sup>th</sup>, proceeding northward and patrolling the Truk – Kei route. Made a two-hour dive for trim and training.

February 13<sup>th</sup>, patrolling the Truk – Kei route. Submerged for trim and training. Surfaced and set course for new station on scouting line south of Truk.

February 14<sup>th</sup>, on the scouting line south of Truk. Received contact report from search plane, four Marus, one Light Cruiser (CL) and one Destroyer (DD) in our area. Set course to intercept, using all engines. Received correction to the above contact report, changing the estimated course by 35 degrees and the speed by three knots. Had to assume latest message is correct. Ran to point dead ahead of them. Then steered reversed of their course.

16:30 no contact on passing a point the convoy would have reached even at slow speed if the course estimate had been correct. Changed to a westerly course at top speed covering as many assumed courses and speeds as possible before dark. Then set a retiring search to Southeastward, still at top speed.

February 15<sup>th</sup>, running a retiring search for reported convoy of four Marus and three escorts.

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By 03:00 had covered such a variety of Southerly courses and speeds that the commanding officer, now believes that the convoy either returned to base or set course for the NEI almost immediately after the contact report.

03:34 sighted several small lights. These turned out to be small electric lights mounted on goose necks projecting about two foot out of the water. Felt it wiser to defer close investigation until daylight. Ran on for 90 minutes then headed back.

06:03 sighted same lights. Commenced cautious approach, considering the possibility of mines or sound instruments. Sighted trawler in vicinity of the lights. Slowed to study him. As daylight became brighter, submerged to avoid being seen. Set course for the trawler.

07:46 examined trawler at close range. Made of heavy wood. Estimate his tonnage 150. Two mast, heavy with antennas. Has a 20mm gun forward and a machine gun on the deck house. Rising Sun on each bow. We had to either destroy him or remain submerged for many hours as he is moving about at random.

Not wishing to remain submerged and miss any radio contact reports, we surfaced and took the trawler under fire with 86 rounds of 3" high capacity, three rounds of 3" common projectiles, and 60 rounds mixed types of 20mm. Many hits were obtained during the latter part of engagement at close range which spread fires but would not sink wooden target. Opening range was about 6,000 yards rapidly closed to 300 to 500 yards. First hit was observed at a range of 4,000 yards. He could have transmitted a message before his top hamper was shot away, but his guns never got manned. Fire broke out in the engine spaces early.

Trawler is completely useless. Guttled by fire with fuel tanks blown up. Three inch shells will not sink it. Rapidly burning to the waterline. Thirty men in water, about ten bodies had been seen on deck. (A large crew for a "fisherman").



Set course 330° (T) at four engine speed to clear area. Took up patrol Northeast of Helene Shoal which appears to be a turning point (This is in our assigned area).

15:45 at a distance of 94 miles from this morning attack was driven down by a twin engine land plane, believed to be a Betty, which passed approximately overhead after coming out of the clouds, altitude 700 feet. Two depth bombs went off as Gato passed 200 feet. Not close. Our course had been changed about 30 degrees by this time.



Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" Bomber

17:00 surfaced, all clear and proceeded to the other side of the Helene Shoal (southwest). We might catch anything rerouted around the shoal because of this afternoon's sighting.

February 16<sup>th</sup>, patrolling west and south of Helene Shoal but by dawn headed east to be more in Truk Rabaul route, bearing in mind our primary mission, to detect a movement of the men-of-war from Truk to the south. Received instructions to move into the area west of Pollsuk Island to cover the strikes at Truk scheduled for tomorrow and the next day. Set course and speed accordingly.

February 17<sup>th</sup>, in the process of shifting station. Dived for what a lookout believed to be a fighter plane coming down our wake. No depth charge or other indications. Surfaced and reached new station and patrolled on surface without incident.

February 18<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on a north – south line West of Pollsuk, from about Lat. 5-30 to 6-30 North. Remained on surface using the high periscope watch. 23:18 Received instructions to leave here tomorrow at dusk for South Pass, Truk.

February 19<sup>th</sup>, patrolling east of Polusuk Island to intercept anything escaping from Truk. No information received as to results of U.S. attack on Truk. No contacts. At dusk set course for Truk.

February 20<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to new station at the south entrance of Truk. Still have no report on whether or not our forces hit the place yesterday or day before, as scheduled.

06:40 passed through a large patch of oil 20 miles south of South Pass. Took this as an indication that some large vessel was sunk here very recently. Submerged at daylight fifteen miles from South Pass, and continued toward the entrance.

08:30 heard echo ranging in direction of South Pass. Very soon the following stood out. one Heavy Cruiser, one Tender (Aircraft or Destroyer), one Light Cruiser, one very small Oiler AO or Gasoline Tanker AOG, three Destroyers, two small escorts (PC type).

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The initial range was about ten miles, commenced approach and went to battle stations. However, immediately on clearing the reef the targets changed course sharply to the west and stood off at an estimated 17 knots. Convoy never got within range. (Minimum torpedo run 5,000 while angle on the bow 130). Extended SD radar antenna for transmitting (we were now just over two miles from Ollan Island which is well built up). Checked frequency and tuned the radar.

09:31 commenced transmitting contact report on aircraft frequency using aircraft code and calls. After second call up someone answered through the static so we transmitted the report. Received acknowledgement but Jap station was listening in so we let it go at that.

A small patrol boat stood along the reef passing between Gato and Ollan Island. We were two miles off the reef at the time. Estimated the patrol boat was about 500 yards of the reef. She did not echo range. Had extremely high masts, without crows nest, single thin high stack, small guns fore and aft. Made brown smoke. Maybe 150 tons.

20:00 surfaced and stood down traffic routes to Helene Shoal. Planned to retransmit out contact report if no acknowledgement came.

20:30 received contact report showing that although our transmission at 09:30 was not received, the same enemy force was reported by a patrol plane at 14:30 today. Therefore we will not retransmit. Slowed and steered courses to cover this traffic line and to be five miles off South Pass at daylight.

February 21<sup>st</sup>, patrolling off South Pass, Truk Island. 06:35 submerged and patrolled line four miles south of the Southern reef of Truk Atoll. No contacts. 19:57 surfaced and made sweep across the Western approaches to Turk.

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, patrolling off South Pass, Turk. Submerged during the day.

15:50 sighted peculiar vessel proceeding westward along reef near Ollan Island. Commenced approach. It was two-masted, with a bridge abaft mainmast, tonnage about 5000. Top mast white, midsection of mast grey, bottom black or nearly black. Hull was dirty black. On stern a circular platform painted white, with diameter greater than beam of the ship. Nothing but a single mounted gun in middle of platform (not over three inch). His speed plotted at ten knots.

16:28 nearest we could approach was 4,000 yards, at which range Gato fired three forward torpedoes. All heard running normal. Although tracks were abaft vessels beam, he turned toward, either to counter attack or because reefs prevented him from turning away.

Gato went deep. Three torpedoes exploded on the reef. Four depth bombs exploded, not close. Screws of vessel after a few maneuvers, faded westward. No further bombs.

20:00 surfaced after dark and stood to south. 21:52 received instructions to sound off and proceed to point near the Rabaul Pelems route. Set course accordingly.

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, proceeding southwest toward new station. 09:57 received instructions to stand by in case the aviators photographing Lukonor Island today should need assistance. This is 330 miles from our present position and on the reverse of our course to new area. Reversed course and stood to Eastward on three engines.

20:45 directed to proceed to our station near Hollandia. Reversed course again.

February 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, proceeding toward station off Hollandia, using periscope on surface. Sighted on large patrol plane and made a quick dive. Do not believe we were observed.

February 26<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on the Pelews – Hollandia route. Submerged at daylight. 14:20 sighted smoke bearing 255° (T). Came to a normal approach course. It was evident that we were in the wrong position, too distant to reach a firing point; too close to surface. Opened out on reverse a course. Surfaced and commenced an end around run.

18:35 submerged on estimated track of convoy, and commenced approach. Heard screws on reverse of target bearing. Periscope revealed nothing there.

19:21 Heard same screws. Unmistakable. Had a very brief view of a submarine on surface on our side away from the convoy. Believed it to be the Balao but could by no means be certain. As I looked, he dived. Continued the approach.

Targets are four escorted Marus, with two Sub Chaser escorts. The leading cargo ship (they would be in a diamond formation while on base course if the straggler caught unless the smokiest and smallest (est. 4,500 tons). The largest was 8,500 tons; he was on the port corner of the diamond. The starboard corner was occupied by a Maru, believed small; not too carefully observed. The trailer was of medium size, believed 6,500 tons, and the only one with a semblance of paint and he smoked heavily. Sunset and we had some doubt that the targets would reach us before darkness. Fortunately we had selected a position to silhouette them.

20:31 fired four forward torpedoes at the largest Maru. Swung immediately to trailer and gave set-up. Swinging the periscope to first target while waiting for the Torpedo Data Computer to set up. Saw one hit the large Maru, near the foremast. Swing to second target (hearing hit #2 in target #1). Fired the remaining forward torpedoes at second target. Periscope being washed over

Eight Patrol (2 February – 1 April 1944)

by every wave. We may be too timid about the amount of periscope exposed. We have not yet fired six forward tubes without dunking it. As has happened on several occasions, the commanding officer ordered deep submergence without being sure the escorts were on us.

Torpedo explosion believed to be in target #2. As listener tracked torpedo to it, and time clocked very well. (Meantime the first target was breaking up, which noises were piped to our loudspeakers for amusement purposes.

Editor's Note: The Gato SS-212 sank the Daigen Maru No. 3. She takes down 554 combat ready troops of the Imperial Japanese Army's 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and 23 crewmen.



20:37 first of 26 depth charges were dropped. None dangerously close. During the next two hours the escorts made up for their inaccuracy by scurrying around in wild fashion, starting, stopping, listening and alternately echo ranging. Also two unusual noises were heard, one resembled gunfire (last patrol we had people shooting at our periscope). The other noise resembled some sound bombs that were used on us about a year ago.

22:40 the radical actions of the escorts had kept us from clearing the scene. Meantime, of course, the remains of the convoy were heading for port. So at this time, when both escorts were on the same general bearing we surfaced heading in the other direction. It was pitch black and all clear.

22:50 commenced reloading tubes, charging batteries and heading toward Hollandia.

February 27<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to Hollandia to intercept the convoy. 07:19 submerged on last estimate of approach course, 30 miles off the harbor entrance.

10:15 sighted smoke and commenced approach. As the vessel approached, we were pleased to note that there were only two Marus. This meant that if Balao did not attack, we have two. The small smoker was leading and smoking. The other was larger, possibility 5,000 tons.

11:57 the larger ship changed course radically to the right, at least 60°. The small one continued zig zagging toward us. By the time we approached the small ship, the larger one was using a shallow ditch in close to the shore.

Commence firing after tubes, range about 1,000 yards. Heard a particular explosion. Saw no geyser on the target, which "went to general quarters". At least 50 people appeared on the flying bridge. The forward gun was manned, cast loose and trained to starboard. The ship took a 15°

list toward us, so we could observe that part of the deck usually hidden by rails. The deck cargo (canvas covered) did not shift while we watched. The target screws stopped (but were heard to start up ten minutes later).



12:40 started deep, two depth bombs (not very close). Target screws started up and worked up to exactly the same rpm she had been making before the attack. Fast screws passed down our port side (North to South).

14:02 made periscope observation, nothing in sight. Secured from battle stations and remained submerged off Hollandia until dark. No contacts.

23:30 surfaced and transmitted Gato message 270940 reporting fuel and torpedoes on hand, results of attacks, and intentions to maintain station for several more days (despite fuel shortage).

February 28<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off the New Guinea coast. No contact. Received instructions to leave station at dusk March 1<sup>st</sup>, for Langerak Bay for emergency fuel.

February 29<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off the New Guinea coast, in vicinity of Wakde Island. 17:40 sighted small vessel moving toward us paralleling the coast. She was about 300 ton, metal, steamer, and had a 36 foot boom rigged out to port. On close approach it was noted that she was dragging something underwater by a large cable. She was numbered 241. Painted in dark gray. No echo ranging was heard.

18:15 target came abreast at a distance of about 500 yards then turned toward us. Gato had been running silent for some time. At this time planed down to 200 foot. Secured from silent running and nothing further was heard from the boat.

20:30 surface and commenced patrolling clear to the coastline Northwest of Wakde Island. Could find no evidence of radar in the vicinity.

March 1<sup>st</sup>, patrolling the Wakde Island, New Guinea. 07:10 submerged to reconnoiter the above named base. Found no visible radar antennas. No surface vessels visible. Many planes were landing and taking off during the day. They were light to medium bombers, bay wing, single engine, fairly slim fuselage, retractable wheels, and a high tail and had a lump or bulge under the nose which might be a bomb or part of the engine cowl. All planes seemed to land on approximate course of 300° (T).

Eight Patrol (2 February – 1 April 1944)

We were not observed during the day although we were exposing the periscope at a distance of from two or three miles from the island.

20:06 surfaced and started for equator to reach bombing restriction lane. Informed Task Force Commander of predicted position and requested that a salt water pump for our air conditioning be sent to Langemak Bay.

March 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup>, enroute to Langerak Bay, T.N.G., for emergency fuel.

March 4<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to Langerak Bay, T.N.G. 06:55 made rendezvous with our escort Sub Chaser 738 and proceeded. Moored to U.S.S. Coucal ASR-8, in Langemak Bay. Commenced fueling. Officers and men commenced what might well be termed a tender overhaul on the Gato. Welders tackled our punctured muffler and muffler pipe. Simultaneously they discovered that our other mufflers were on the verge of blowing out. These were repaired. Commissary personnel restocked our larder. It was learned later that they had devoted many hours and such effort in obtaining for us a generous supply of ice cream. Our salt water pump had not arrived and Coucal personnel were at all airports seeking the pump. They found out that the pump was delayed by bad flying weather; the Coucal machinists took our broken brass impeller and performed a miracle. It worked perfectly. These are only a few of the items which show that the Coucal, from commanding officer to gangway watch have “got what it takes”.

March 5<sup>th</sup>, moored to the Coucal in Langerak Bay, T.N.G., obtaining emergency fuel and repairs. 08:00 U.S.S. Scamp SS-277 stood in and moored alongside to starboard. 11:00 underway from Langerak in company with the Scamp escorted by Sub Chaser 738. Release escort at Vitiaz Strait and proceeded on three engines through bombing restriction lane.

March 6<sup>th</sup> Enroute o patrol area. Arrived to the patrol area off North end New Guinea in vicinity of Wakde Island on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

March 8<sup>th</sup>, patrolling in channel between Cape Sarmi and the Koemanba Islands. Submerged at daybreak. Closed Sarmi anchorage to a distance of two miles. A large warehouse has been built close to the dock area. No ships in sight. No activity of any kind noted. Proceeded around the Cape Sarmi. The West side of the Cape has considerable cleared spaces, and might be used for unloading in Northeast weather. We were not close enough to the docks, if any. Stood off to Northwest through the passage inside of the Koemanba Island. Any traffic hugging coast would pass through here. No contacts. Surfaced in the dark and stood up the coast toward Cape d’Urville.

March 9<sup>th</sup>, enroute to new patrol station near Manokwari Dutch New Guinea. While proceeding along North side of Biak on surface, sighted two masts on horizon.

Commenced surface approach. Submerged and closed contact. It is obviously small, and is either trawling or patrolling (course erratic).

13:47 examining the target at about 2,000 yards. It can't be more that 100 tons. Rising Sun on bow. Two radio antennas. One stack. No fishing gear over the side. No nets in sight. Crew (about 18 Japs no blacks) loitering amidships. One in khaki shirt. No gun in sight.

14:52 surfaced to destroy target with gunfire. Reasoning:

- Enemy engines, radios, conveyances and personnel, even in small numbers should be destroyed when practicable.
- We have the time and are well clear of enemy air space.
- Even is he gets a contact report off, an anti sub hunt in this locality will be wanted.

Accordingly, closed to 300 to 500 yards and opened fire. Fired 300 rounds of 20 mm, 500 rounds of 50 cal., and five rounds of 3" common projectile. The machine guns cleared the upper works and started fires. The 3" shells were placed near the waterline and in engineering spaces.

His crew abandoned at first shot. The vessel was making about 14 knots and her engines continued to run at full speed. Only expended enough ammunition to remove pilot house, disable antennas, stop engines and start a small fire. Then set course to clear area.

17:45 at a range of 35 miles, smoke of target was still visible. Gato continued around the shoal off Ajawi Island enroute new traffic lane in Geelvink Bay.



March 10<sup>th</sup>, patrolling approaches to Manekwari from Southeast. At daylight took up station for surface patrol between Noemfoor Island and the shoal to its Southward. Traffic from both Mokmer and POM should pass here well within sight. Anything on the shoal would also be in sight.

11:30 heavy rain made the last two sentences, above incorrect. Visibility is 800 to 1,000 yards. Radar, however, clearly picks up land in all directions.

13:25 radar contact, a large ship, 16,000 yards to southward. Visibility is still about 800 yards. Commenced tracking. He appeared to be stopped or nearly so. Headed toward him. His bearing drew west at exactly the rate of the current. Concluded he is anchored on the shoal or aground on the reef. Closed the target while taking soundings. Plot shows him stationary.

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14:03 radar indicates a smaller vessel between us and the target. Target appears to be nearly stationary. Commencing maneuvering around toward the beam. Visibility is less than 1,000 yards. Assume his heading is into the current. At 4,000 yards range the rain swept away, clearing from him to Gato. First a heavy plume of smoke appeared, then in broad daylight we saw a 6,000 ton empty Maru and his escort which was either a small DD or one of those torpedo boats. Both were now moving slowly (until they saw us). This was easily the acme of all Gato ludicrous situations. The idea of doing gun battle merely passed through the CO's head without stopping. He already had full left rudder and flank speed. To dive would be to give up all chance of subsequent attack. So we took off after the rain squall and never caught it. The Maru turned tail to us. The escort to our surprise followed the Maru but lagged behind.

Target was hull down but smoke could be tracked. She was heading toward the mainland but would have to turn northward to reach port. Accordingly we set course for the coast to intercept. The only hope was to reach a position ahead and dive. The target appeared over the horizon closing us and Manokwari. We were closing her track but could not reach her on the surface.

15:00 submerged as bridge of target came over the horizon. Closed coast at best speed for 15 minutes. Found that we were losing out. Continued on course hoping for any change of course, loss of speed or other lucky move on the part of the target. Target passed well outside the firing range. We were now too close to Manokwari to catch her by surfacing. Stood out from the coast.

20:25 surfaced 14 miles southeast of Manokwari and set course to clear Geelvink Bay. Observed six high powered Anti-Aircraft searchlights in and around the harbor. They waved and concentrated. No planes observed in the beams. Searchlight display continued sporadically until 24:00.

March 11<sup>th</sup>, patrolling north coast of Dutch New Guinea between Cape of Good Hope and Manokwari. 07:45 submerged at daylight, two miles off Tagong Saoekris, having selected this as a spot where we can hug the coast just as well as the convoys. This point is a night's run from Manokwari for the average merchantman, and on the logical route to Halmakera. Conducted submerged patrol about two miles from the coast where we can see a vessel round either capes. No contacts.

08:30 surfaced and hauled out from coast six miles to charge batteries.

March 12<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off northwest coast of Dutch New Guinea. 01:05 visibility is very poor, sighted a small vessel to seaward. It looked like a fishing vessel. Since Gato was extremely close to the coast we felt perfectly secure from detection and lay to, permitting him to pass. Radar could not detect him.

01:30 radar picked up another ship, metal this time, only ten degrees in bearing from the fisherman. The range was eight miles. Commenced radar tracking and closed the range.

02:11 sighted target but in peculiar moonlight made out no details. The two are loosely in company of heading for Malmakera. Made and end around run.

03:22 submerged ahead of targets to examine them at close range. Targets passed close aboard. Decided the largest target was about 2,500 tons (later reduced to 2,000 tons), lightly loaded and drawing insufficient water to justify torpedoes. He had engines aft, bridge aft, large clear space amidships a shielded Anti Aircraft gun forward, a large canvas covered aft gun. Tracked at seven knots. The small target was laughable. She was an ancient 50 ton trawler of wood but she too wheezed along at seven knots. Decided to have another look in daylight and gun them if practicable

05:09 surfaced and made a second end around of the night.

07:55 submerged ahead of targets. Targets appeared again. Former description verified, escort tonnage of larger is estimated at 3,000. Small one has no weapons showing. The larger has a good looking Anti Aircraft gun on the forecastle, ready for service, but the after gun is securely lashed in its canvas. Decided it would take him about five minutes to cast loose his after gun and get it in use. Also noted that The Anti Aircraft gun could not train close to his stern. The answer was plain.

10:00 target pass over Gato. Went to Battle Stations surface directly astern of large target, at a range of about 300 yards. Although it took our three inch gun three shots to score the first hit, there were no misses for some time thereafter. Gato fired 40 rounds of 3" Anti Aircraft, ten rounds of 3" common projectile, and three rounds of 3" HC projectiles, 480 rounds of 20mm and 750 rounds of 50 cal. One close Anti Aircraft burst and machine gun fire silenced his gun. The enemy's large gun never got unwrapped. It was actually and literally shot over the side. In passing, the small target was given several burst of 20mm and 50 cal. From Gato's "after group" which could not yet bear on the large target.

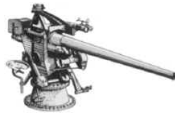
The main target swung right, unmasking her forward gun which started to pump out some kind of shells (all appeared to be over us). All of our guns at once rained a concentration on her forecastle at point blank range. The enemy gun crew disappeared. As we passed abeam of the vessel our firing continued, and the enemy was burning fiercely over about 60% of her length. Reference to clock showed we had been on surface for seven minutes. Both life boats and all life rafts had been demolished. We made on complete circle about the target to insure complete destruction, firing all calibers carefully into the less damaged parts. Many snapshots were taken.

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As we crossed astern we passed through quite a group of Japanese soldiers in full uniform (at least from the waist up). They were fired upon since they were combatant personnel, likely to be deployed again.

10:26 secured guns. As there was no question of total destruction. Target now burning 100%. It is noteworthy that the cargo space burned more violently than any other, suggesting that gasoline or other inflammable cargo was last carried. Set course for another part of our area (Geelvink Bay) using four engines.

11:15 heavy explosions commenced on target. The crew was permitted to observe through periscope. Possibly a dozen explosions occurred. The smoke was heavy and black until 11:30 when it ended in white smoke or steam. Could not observe target sinking as she was over the horizon by this time.



11:55 sighted three small planes flying in V formation. They were following the coast and gave no indication that they sighted us, we made a quick dive.

18:47 surfaced and headed for Geelvink Bay.

March 13<sup>th</sup>, Patrolling off Manokwari, on the surface. 09:59 sighted small land plane. It appeared to take off from Noemfoor Island, which may disclose a hitherto unknown airport or strip.

12:16 surfaced to cover more possible lanes. Sighted masts on the horizon. Commenced tracking, Submerged ahead of the target.

13:30 target came into view. Sound man had prepared us for a 'spit-kit' but not quite for the disreputable wreck that we now saw. It was a broken down trawler used for carrying cement and stones for construction purposes. (This may be further indication of defenses on Noemfoor Island.) Definitely no attack was warranted this close to the enemy base. We remained submerged.

16:33 through the periscope observed medium bomber. When it was dark, surfaced close into coast intending to await the 'coast hugging' traffic. Received CTF 72 signal eighty seven, sending Gato west at best speed toward Waigee Island.

March 14<sup>th</sup>, proceeding toward Waigee Island on four engines. Arrived at 10:08 at a point off Waigee Island where traffic lanes between Malmakera and Manokwari should converge. Commenced surface patrol northwest southeast line. At 19:06 received CTF 72 serial eighty nine which sent Gato northward to the line between Halmakera and Asia Island. Set course accordingly.

March 15<sup>th</sup>, patrolling the eastern approaches to Halmakera. 08:00 set course for a 'well known' traffic crossroads just east of Asia Island. Commenced patrolling on North-South line on the east side of Asia Island.

18:09 Gato was attacked by aircraft believed to be a 'Kate', which glided out of the brilliant sun. The first indication of its presence was the sound of its motor as it pulled out of its glide, on releasing first bomb. The Officer of the Deck LT J. E. Gilman, USNR, maneuvered skillfully to avoid the first bomb, and had Gato well on the way toward deep submergence before the second bomb. It is believed that the bombs were very small.

20:50 dark and we surfaced. Now that we have disclosed ourselves at the three main points in our area, we shall start the cycle all over. Set course for Cape Mamori.

March 16<sup>th</sup>, patrolling off Cape Mamori on north-western approach to Manokwari. Submerged during daylight. No contacts.

March 17<sup>th</sup>, patrolling inside Geelvink Bay, close to shore south of Manokwari. No contacts. Submerged through daylight.. At 20:23 surfaced and departed Geelvink Bay.

March 18<sup>th</sup>, enroute Midway, crossing the Halmahera – Hollandia line.

March 19<sup>th</sup>, enroute Midway, crossing the Pelews – New Guinea line. 01:30 radar indicated another radar bearing. This was thought to be one of the friendly submarines which are expected to pass through our area. The IFF did not register a friendly ship however. Spent one hour and fifteen minutes maneuvering to pass each other to North, the both reversed at the same time.

March 20<sup>th</sup>, approaching and passing through Caroline Islands, enroute to Midway. Sighted Ifalik Island bearing 030° (T) and made an end around to port.

09:34 sighted unidentified aircraft bearing 150° (T), course 030° (T) and make a quick dive. At periscope depth, all clear and surfaced.

Eight Patrol (2 February – 1 April 1944)

15:00 sighted a float plane bearing 235° (T), distance ten miles, heading for Gato. Made another quick dive. First depth bomb, large but not dangerously close. Second and last depth bomb was the same size and distance. At 16:21 all clear on the SD radar, surfaced and cleared the area.

16:44 sighted a float plane, probably the same one sighted at 15:00, approached from bearing 080° (T), distance about ten miles. Again, made a quick dive and immediately bottomed on uncharted shallow spot.(three minutes after the navigator had taken a sun line.) Felt like soft mud. Assumed we were stirring up the bottom and making a fine target, but no bombs were dropped. The plane must have only carrier two bombs. We wasted no time in obtaining a slight negative buoyancy and backing clear (LT J. E. Gilman, USNR, handling the trim very nicely). After steering the reverse of our original course for more than a half hour without finding any deeper water, decided we must be just holding our own against a current. Felt that this was a poor place to be caught when the plane brought surface or air reinforcements.

17:44 Battle surfaced (two 20 mm guns). Plane had gone. Set course north to open distance from Olkarao Island. (Note: since our positions were known with extreme accuracy, and verified by subsequent sights, the incident shows that Tarang Bank is either more extensive (by 35 miles) than shown or else a new bank has been located

20:00 dark, set great circle course for Midway Island

March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, transiting North of Caroline Islands, enroute to Midway. Sighted one plane during each day. Gato made a quick dive and was not detected.

March 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, proceeding to Midway Island on the surface.

March 28<sup>th</sup>, arrived Midway Island. In exchange for nine torpedoes, we received 30,000 gallons of fuel, and a generous helping of fuel oil, apples, oranges, celery, lettuce, guard and a band. At 14:00 we departed under air escort.

March 29<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> enroute to Pearl on surface.

April 1<sup>st</sup>, arrived Pearl Harbor, T.H. Reported from SoWesPac Task Force 72. Submarine Division 82 and the U.S.S. Fulton AS 11 will conduct a normal refit.

### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Eight Patrol:**

#### **From Commander Submarine Division Eighty Two, 9 April 1944**

Gato's eight war patrol was characterized by the same skill and aggressiveness as her earlier patrols under her able and experienced commanding officer.

This patrol was conducted in Task Force Seventy-Two area north of New Guinea. During the fifty-eight days between her departures for Milne Bay and her arrival at Pearl, Gato had eleven ship and seventeen plane contacts and made three gun and three torpedo attacks. Her area coverage was good, it being necessary to refuel her at Langemak Bay thirty-one days after her original departure.

All these gun attacks demonstrated the high state of training of the Gato and the indomitable spirit of her officers and men.

The commanding officer, officers, and men of the Gato are congratulated upon successful completion of another eventful and destructive patrol.

**From Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 13 April 1944**

The Gato's eight war patrol was spent in the Bismarck-New Guinea-Truk area and enroute to Pearl Harbor.

This patrol covered large areas where possible enemy shipping might be encountered and was outstanding in aggression, well prepared torpedo and gun attacks which resulted in the destruction of enemy shipping. In addition to the primary mission of sinking enemy ships, the Gato carried out a special mission successfully, and also performed lifeguard duty South of Truk.

The gun attacks by the Gato against enemy trawlers and on an armed merchant vessel were carried out only after careful estimate of the situation had been made and when the Gato was assured that the strategic advantage was hers.

Anti-submarine measures encountered by the Gato during the patrol indicate that the Japanese are evidently using a form of Sono-bomb to endeavor to locate the submarine.

This patrol is designated as "Successful" for a Combat Insignia Award.

The Commander Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet, congratulates the Commanding Officer, Officers and crew for this aggressive and outstanding war patrol.

**Awards:**

Gato awarded a 'Battle Star' for the Asiatic-Pacific Raids 1944  
Turk, Satawan, Ponape Raid 16 – 17 February 1944

Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for the Iwo Jima Operation – Assault and  
Occupation of Iwo Jima 15 Feb – 7 Mar 1944

Eight Patrol (2 February – 1 April 1944)

Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
2 February – 1 April 1944

|            |                 |          |             |
|------------|-----------------|----------|-------------|
| Destroying | Merchantman (3) | Totaling | 17,000 tons |
|            | Trawlers (3)    | Totaling | 300 tons.   |
| Damaging   | Merchantmen (1) |          | 4500 tons   |

U.S.S. Gato was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action.

Gato's vigilance in patrolling the north entrance to Bougainville Sound, her aggressive attacks during her Fourth through Eighth Patrols in the Solomon's, Bismarck Sea, New Guinea and Truk areas earned for her the nickname "THE GOALKEEPER" from Admiral William F. Halsey, Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force

Silver Star to Lieutenant Commander Robert K. Kaufman, USN

**Change of Commands/Refit – 2 April – 29 April 1944**

Submarine Division 82 and the U.S.S. Fulton AS 10 commenced a refit on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Refit was completed by Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor upon departure of the U.S.S. Fulton for the navy yard in Mare Island, CA on 18 April 1944.

Conducted a normal refit and accomplished the following:

- Installed a radar Plan Position Indicator (P.P.I.) screen and Meacham Range Unit.
- Converted Main Ballast Tank #4 to Fuel Oil Ballast Tank

Dry docked in the U.S.S. ARD #8

- Installed auxiliary Bow and Stern Plane and Auxiliary rudder angle indicators
- Installed 4" 50 caliber gun
- Installed Mark III – Mod 5 Torpedo Data Computer (TDC)
- Installed centrifugal type trim pump

Completed Sound Test in West Lock, but not depermed

On April 29<sup>th</sup> Commander F. J. Foley, USN relieved as Commanding Officer by Commander R. M. Farrell, USN. Held seven days training April 21<sup>st</sup> April through the 27<sup>th</sup>. Fired four (4) Mk 14 and two (2) Mk 18 torpedoes. Completed loading out on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Ready for Sea on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1944

**Ninth Patrol Life Guard Duty 30 May 1944 – 22 June 1944**

On April 30<sup>th</sup> at 13:20 Vice Admiral C. A. Lockwood, Jr., U.S.N., Commander Submarine Pacific (ComSubPac) came onboard. Gato got underway and departed Pearl Harbor, T.H. in company with the U.S.S. Muskallunge SS-262 for Midway, T.H. with P.C. 1077 as an escort. Commenced operations in accordance with Commander Task Force Seventeen (CTF-17) Secret Operation Order #149 of 29 April 1944, operating as Task Unit 17.2.14.

16:00 made a trim dive and surfaced. Released the escort, set course 330° (T), standard speed on two main engines. Parted company with the Muskallunge.

May 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, enroute to Midway at two engine speed. Conducting daily trim dives and fire control drills. Sighted two PBY scout planes while enroute. Did not exchange recognition signals.

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 06:15 sighted the Muskallunge, set course for two miles south of Midway entrance. Sighted and exchanged signals with air escorts.

07:30 sighted and exchanged recognition signals with air escorts. Sighted Midway T.H.

08:15 Picked up the pilot and entered Midway channel. Moored alongside U.S.S. Pampanito SS-383 in nest with U.S.S. Proteus AS-19 at Submarine Pier, Midway.

09:10 Vice Admiral C. A. Lockwood, Jr., U.S.N., ComSubPac departed the ship.

11:30 Muskallunge stood in and moored alongside. Fueled ship to capacity. Received 16,891 gallons of fuel and 350 gallons of lube oil. Proteus commenced renewing coils to #1 evaporator and investigating reason for failure of the fathometer. Test showed a full ground in fathometer head. The head was removed and salt water was found causing the full ground plus partially dissolved crystals. The fathometer head was beyond repair so an attempt was made to install one from the U.S.S. Barb SS-220. The head could not be removed from the Barb, so a replacement was ordered from Pearl Harbor via the first air transportation.

May 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>, moored alongside the Proteus awaiting arrival and installation of the fathometer head. Bad flying weather held up delivery until the 9<sup>th</sup>. Transferred a Radio Technician second class because of illness (laryngitis). A relief was furnished.

May 10<sup>th</sup>, fathometer head was installed and tested. Gato was ready for sea. 09:25 underway from Midway for patrol area. Escorted by two planes. Cleared channel, set course to 245° (T). Set standard speed on two main engines about 13 knots.

Ninth Patrol (30 May 1944 – 22 June 1944)

14:00 released escort planes. 14:30 sighted three aircraft (T.B.P.) bearing 320° (T). Exchanged recognition signals.

16:35 made a quick dive and conducted training exercises and surfaced at 16:59.

18:07 changed base course to 223° (T), in accordance with new routing instructions ordered by ComTaskFor 17. Sent Gato message serial #1 acknowledging change. 22:00 crossed the 180<sup>th</sup> Meridian and changed time and changed date to 11 May, 1944.

May 12<sup>th</sup> to May 17<sup>th</sup>, underway enroute to patrol area at two engine speed. Conducting daily training dives and fire control drills.

May 18<sup>th</sup>, the Dead Reckoning (D/R) plot indicated we are in vicinity of enemy submarine patrol line, so increased speed to 16 knots on three main engines. Made trim dive and held fire control drills. Utilized time submerged for routing torpedoes and repairing #3 main engine (leaky lube oil line). Surfaced and continued at standard speed on two main engines.

May 19<sup>th</sup>, arrived and commenced patrolling the eastern edge of patrol area (15-A).

May 20<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on surface. Sighted unidentified plane and dived to avoid detection. Used submerged period to work on torpedoes. After torpedo room pulled #8 torpedo without completely disengaging speed setting spindle, which necessitated complete disassembly and renewal. Surfaced at sunset.

May 21<sup>st</sup>, patrolling on surface. Weather scattered low-hanging clouds. 10:55 SD radar reported contact at two miles, so made a quick dive. Since nothing was dropped I am inclined to believe contact was false. At 11:45 surfaced.

14:05 SD radar contact at four miles. Made a quick dive. While clearing the bridge the Officer of the Deck sighted a plane coming out of clouds, distance about four miles. Aircraft apparently did not sight us for he made no attempt to turn toward. Plane was unidentified other than being a high wing, single monoplane. At 16:00 surfaced.

22:00 changed course and at standard speed on two engines headed to be off Woleai Island tomorrow for submerged patrol.

May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 04:20 radar contact on Woleai Island at 24,750 yards. Dived for submerged patrol off southern edge of Woleai. (Concentrating off Raur channel).

14:00 took panoramic shots of islands. No shipping or patrol boats in lagoon and no aircraft sighted all day. What appears to be a small sampan type patrol boat was beached off Motegosu Island. Several life boats were sighted on the beaches. No special sign of life noted when 1,600 yards south of Raur channel entrance.

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, submerged to conduct patrol off the north edge of Woleai, concentrating on the North Channel. Mid-morning sighted first plane landing on Woleai. Low wing single engine land plane (might have been a 'Val').



Aichi D3A Dive Bomber (Val)

13:00 took panoramic shots of Woleai and adjacent islands from 1700 yards off the North Channel. The main island of Woleai appears to be considerably bomb-blasted. Shredded coconut tree tops, etc. There still appears to be no signs of much activity on the island; and no indication of radar control stations as previously implied.

Surface after dark and took station ten miles west of Woleai and patrolled on ten mile legs north and south throughout the night.

May 24<sup>th</sup>, submerged and patrolled off Woleai (southern edge) throughout the day. Surfaced after dark and then set course for northeast corner of patrol area.

May 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, patrolled on the surface. Sighted a few planes and made quick dives to avoid detection.

May 28<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on surface across the Saipan – Truk route. 22:02 radar contact bearing 345° (T), distance 20,000 yards. Put stern toward contact and commenced tracking and keeping range about 17,000 yards. Radar finally showed four large pips at this range plus intermittent smaller ones; which indicates four ships in the convoy plus and unknown number of escorts.

Tracking shows the convoy on course 120° (T), speed eight knots. A small zig plan was indicated, but could be due to yawing (about 10° - 15° either side of the base course). Moonset is at 23:00, so Gato will hold off attack until after the moon goes down.

Ninth Patrol (30 May 1944 – 22 June 1944)

23:37 man battle stations torpedo – took station 5,000 yards off track to port and commenced approach, keeping zero angle on the bow to the target group.

May 29<sup>th</sup>, 00:07 range 7,000 yards, angle on the bow 55° Port; made ready all tubes. At this range the convoy showed up on radar as follows:

- Four main ships of the convoy in loose column formation (one smoking heavily).
- Five escorts – two on each flank patrolling back and forth and one astern patrolling from quarter to quarter.

No indication of radar. At a range of 4,500 yards the convoy can now be made out through binoculars as follows:

- Two leading ships in column 3,000 – 4,000 ton freighters
- Third ship appears to be a medium engine aft freighter (he is the smoker)
- Four and last ship in column is a medium tanker.

Gato will take the forth ship as the first target. The escorts can not be definitely identified but they appear to be Patrol Craft or Sub Chaser type boats.

With range at 4,000 yards to target and near escort 2,500 yards solution does not check with the Target Data Computer (zig away indicated). We turned right with full rudder and pulled away from the convoy in order to make another attempt. Plan to come in for a 100° Port track shot.

The radar display and plot show the stern escort patrolling at ten knots on 50° zigs either side of the base course, while the two flanking escorts on either side are patrolling back and forth and in-and-out from 1,000 to 2,000 yards off the convoy track.

After working up to the port beams, we came right to 220° (T), and headed in, range 5,000 yards, speed 14 knots.

With 4,200 yards to target and 2,200 yard to trailing port escort, 090° Port track and ready to fire, four or five small dim lights appeared on the escort and he appeared to be swinging left toward us. Thinking we were sighted and range too great for firing, came right with full rudder and put stern to escort. We opened slowly but his lights still remained. At a range of 6,000 yards to the escort, since he did not appear to be chasing us, decided to go astern of convoy and try for the starboard side. The background to port is getting lighter while that to starboard is becoming darker. Continued tracking and working ahead on the starboard flank, distance 7,000 yards.

02:36 came left to 020° (T), and started in for attack. Adjusted our course to keep small angle on the bow to the target group.

With range to target (forth in column, which is the tanker) 4,000 yards, the rear flanking escort showed several small white lights and started swinging toward, range 2,500 yards. Fright full rudder and all ahead full. The range closed to 1,800 yards then opened slowly. Opened range to 6,000 yards.

Came right and will attempt to come up on a 110° Starboard track (behind the starboard escort). If this is not successful we'll end-around for a dawn periscope attack. Sighted green light on trailing starboard escort. The two starboard escorts and the stern trailing escort turn toward us. Left full rudder, all ahead full. Range to nearest escort is 1,500 yards. Made quick dive, rigged for depth charge attack and went to 350 feet. Ten to twelve depth chargers were dropped shallow and astern. However, they were only close enough to break a few lights bulbs aft.

Put stern toward and speeded up when the charges went off. From all indications they (the escorts) let go when they reached the slick made by diving.

03:45 with echo ranging far astern secured from depth charge attack and came to periscope depth. Escorts still searching astern, but appear to have lost contact.

04:35 heard five distant depth chargers and after a few minutes heard five more.

05:15 surfaced with nothing in sight. Sent Gato serial #2 message to CTF 17. All ahead full making 16 knots on three main engines, charging on the forth engine. Gato will attempt to intercept convoy along the route to Truk. On surfacing it was found that the insulator at the top of the SD mast was cracked due to the depth charge, giving a full ground. Later, attempts were made to seal the crack with Glyptol and dry out the mast; but the full ground would appear after each dive. Consequently the SD radar was out of commission and secured for the remainder of the patrol.

05:38 radar interference bearing 180° (T). It has the characteristics of our SJ and is probably the U.S.S. Permit SS-178 attempting to intercept the same convoy. Changed course to 090° (T), in order to round Mogami Bank.

10:50 sighted smoke on the horizon and commenced tracking. Hoped there will be no air cover, but expect it. Sighted Ulul Island bearing 092° (T), distance 12 miles. Changed course to 132° (T), in order to close track and get ahead of convoy. The convoy is ahead of our predicted position and in view of the increased smoke (three heavy distinct puffs now) it appears as though the convoy has speeded up. We do not have a good plot solution.

11:47 sighted three planes bearing 202° (T), distance eight to ten miles. There's their air cover. The planes headed toward us so we made a quick dive. A rough estimate of our plot so far gives

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a 70° port angle on the bow. Consequently at full speed submerged we would be unable to reach firing position. Convoy is still about 20 miles distant. In view of the air cover and the distance from Truk, do not see how we can overtake them before they reach their destination. Hope the U.S.S. Permit SS-178 picks them up.

Reversed course and headed for Greyfeather Bank in order to patrol along the Saipan – Truk route. Spent period submerged inspecting all torpedoes for flooding. All torpedoes were dry.

May 30<sup>th</sup> patrolling on the surface. Sighted plane bearing 005° (T), distance seven miles. Appears to be a medium or heavy bomber, unidentified. Submerged to avoid detection. Surfaced and continued patrolling.

May 31<sup>st</sup> patrolling on the surface. We are now at the northern limit of our area patrolling along the Saipan – Truk routing of the last convoy. Sighted a floating object which had the appearance of an oversized torpedo warhead. However, can not be positive that they were mines, they may have been buoys. Sank it with 20mm gunfire.

June 1<sup>st</sup> patrolling on the surface in the Northeast part of patrol area. Sighted another floating object that appeared to have the same characteristics as the one sighted yesterday, except that it had considerable sea growth clinging to it. Sank it with 20mm gunfire. When it was hit and sank it exuded a black dye-like substance which spread over the water. Changed course to 270° (T), and headed for the Saipan – Woleai route.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> patrolling on the surface. During the day sighted planes and submerged to avoid detection. Surfaced and went ahead at standard speed on two main engines on a course of 190° (T), in anticipation of submerged patrol off Woleai tomorrow.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> patrolling on the surface. Made radar contact on Woleai Island, bearing 230° (T), distance 15,000 yards. Made a quick dive and conducted submerged patrol off Raur channel. There is still no indication of shipping or patrol boats in this area. No planes were sighted landing or taking off throughout the day. The island is considerably more damaged and bomb shattered than noted during period 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> May.

19:29 surfaced and commenced patrol on ten mile legs on a Northwest – Southeast line 18,000 yard from Woleai. 23:20 sighted flood light or signal light on Woleai (flashed on for a very short interval). This is the first indication we have had of any activity on the island today.

June 4<sup>th</sup> patrolling on surface off Woleai Island.

June 5<sup>th</sup> patrolling on surface. Sighted two engine bomber (“Sally”) bearing 29° (T), distance ten miles. Made a quick dive to avoid detection. 07:02 surfaced and commenced patrolling.



Mitsubishi KI-21 Army Bomber (Sally)

Sighted plane (“Sally”) bearing 060° (T), coming out of the sun, distance six miles. Made a quick dive and while coming to periscope depth from 100 feet a depth charge exploded. Gato started down again and another depth charged exploded. No damage. They seem to have been dropped in the slick. Indications are that he made a wide sweep hoping to catch us napping when we surfaced – almost did. Decided to remain submerged for we are across the shipping lanes. At dusk, surfaced and commenced patrolling.

June 6<sup>th</sup> patrolling on the surface across the Saipan – Truk route. Sighted unidentified aircraft bearing 300° (T), distance eight miles. Submerged to avoid detection.

June 7<sup>th</sup> patrolling on the surface. 09:51 Sighted medium bomber (“Sally”) bearing 335° (T), distance 210 miles. Made quick dive to avoid detection. 11:30 surfaced and continued patrol.

14:20 sighted a black rubber life raft. Headed toward it to investigate. The raft was empty and looked as if it had been adrift for considerable time.

June 8<sup>th</sup> on surface on course 134° (T), at standard speed 17 knots on four main engines. SJ radar contact at 8,000 yards which closed immediately to 5,000 yards, dead ahead. Right full rudder, immediately thereafter the OOD sighted a two engine bomber (“Sally”) off the port bow at about 3,000 yards, swinging toward us.

Cleared the bridge and dived. Radar showed the plane at 1,500 yards when radar screen went under. Rigged for depth charge while going deep. Nothing was dropped and with that everyone breather again. The following was the condition of visibility: Sky three quarters overcast; moon setting; rain squall dead ahead; and early morning twilight.

Ninth Patrol (30 May 1944 – 22 June 1944)

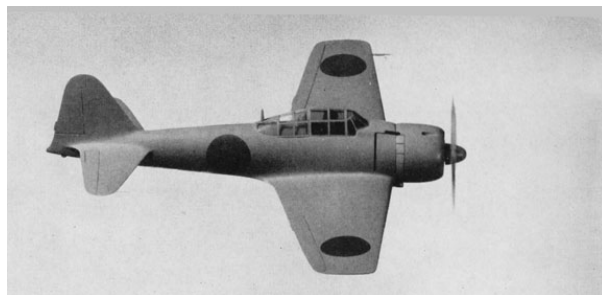
We were just making preparations to dive. The plane came directly to us out of an area of rain and bad visibility which to me indicates that he has radar.

Throughout the morning sighted the plane and heard distant depth charging during the afternoon. June 10<sup>th</sup> patrolling on the surface. Sighted float biplane and dove to avoid detection. As we are on the Saipan – Truk route decided to remain submerged in view of air cover, and possibility of intercepting traffic. For the past few days while patrolling this area just north of Mogami and Greyfeather Banks the air cover has been quite extensive. This leads me to believe that Puluwat Island is being used for an air base for planes to meet traffic at Greyfeather or Mogami Bank and cover it on the last leg to Truk on the Truk – Saipan route. Especially when planes are sighted so early in the morning.

15:11 surface and received CTF 17 serial changing our area and duty. Sent Gato serial #3 message to CTF 17 acknowledging the change. Ahead standard, speed 15.5 knots on four main engines.

June 11<sup>th</sup> enroute to new area off Truk. 08:03 sighted Tel Island, Truk atoll bearing 075° (T), distance 52 miles. Entered assigned area and conducted search for crew of B-24 reported down a week ago.

10:40 sighted four planes (Haps or Rufes) bearing 200° (T), distance five miles. Submerged, do not know whether we were detected.



Mitsubishi Type 0 Army/Navy Fighter (Haps)

11:30 – 13:30 heard distant explosions at various intervals. Sounded like bombs explosions. We have had no information that Truk was to be hit at this time.

17:20 surfaced and continued searching for downed aviators.

21:30 sighted searchlights and anti aircraft fire over Truk. Searchlights, flares and sporadic Anti aircraft fire continued over Truk until 23:00.

June 12<sup>th</sup> patrolling on station 30 miles from Truk. Anti aircraft fire over Truk 04:44 submerged and conducted patrol off Otta Pass.

11:31 sighted medium bomber (Sally) bearing 090° (T), distance three miles on course 180° (T). Observed anti aircraft bursts over Dublen Island, Truk.

12:20 sighted single engine fighter bearing 020° (T), distance two miles. He headed toward us so we submerged to 150 feet. 12:40 came to periscope depth, all clear. Sighted stick buoy with red flag, distance one mile. It could be a fishing buoy or marker buoy. Heard three distant explosions.

18:59 surfaced and headed for center of assigned sector off Truk.

June 13<sup>th</sup> patrolling on surface. 04:55 dived and started conducting submerged patrol.

11:05 surfaced to be on call for strike scheduled at 11:30. 11:20 sighted unidentified plane bearing 220° (T), distance 15 miles. Put stern toward. Apparently we were not sighted.

11:31 – 11:51 sighted medium bomber 320° (T), distance ten miles. Plane was just off the water, elevation ½ °, heading toward us. 11:52 made a quick dive.

13:42 surfaced. Air strike scheduled for 14:00 – 16:00. 15:47 sighted Nama Island, bearing 080° (T), distance 30,000 yards.

June 14<sup>th</sup> patrolling on station in center of assigned sector. 04:58 dived and conducting submerged patrol. 11:03 surfaced, standing by for air strike scheduled for 11:30.

11:25 sighted anti aircraft burst over Truk and three bombers just above burst.

12:42 sighted a single engine fighter bearing 240° (T), distance ten miles coming out of the clouds. Put stern toward. He appeared to be heading for us so made a quick dive. Since strike is completed, decided to remain submerged to avoid detection.

18:43 surfaced, all clear.

22:11 detected an SJ radar contact at 15,000 yards closing rapidly. Swung left to put stern toward, but when range closed to 8,000 yards. Made a quick dive. Contact was heading in our direction. 23:01 surfaced and continued patrolling on station.

Ninth Patrol (30 May 1944 – 22 June 1944)

June 15<sup>th</sup> patrolling on station in the center of assigned sector. 01:17 heard sound of a large number of plane engines overhead. They should be our forces going in for an air strike. Searchlights and anti aircraft gunfire was observed over Truk. 02:10 heard sound of plane engines overhead. Should be our forces returning.

03:16 SJ radar contact on plane bearing 226° (T) closing rapidly. Made a quick dive. As it is only another hour until morning twilight and our air strikes is completed. Decided to remain submerged. It is noted that this night is the only one while in this area that we have been bothered by night flying planes. I am inclined to believe that we are being D/F (Direction Finder) on our A.B.K. (Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) transponder). This is the first time we have used it in this area. The few times it was used previously it was observed to trigger off when no plane contacts were evident. Hereafter it will remain secured.

11:08 surfaced and standing by for air strike scheduled for 11:30. Sighted two planes bearing 340° (T), heading toward us. Submerged and opened the area. After 20 minutes came to periscope depth and noticed the plane circling the spot where we submerged. We work over to westward part of our sector and to the south of Truk to get away from the spot where we picked up by planes last night.

June 16<sup>th</sup> patrolling in our assigned sector south of Truk. 11:02 surfaced and standing by for our air strike scheduled for 11:30. Sighted a single engine float plane bearing 205° (T), coming out of the clouds and heading toward us. Made a quick dive.

11:30 heard distant explosion. Observed anti aircraft fire over Truk. It looks like our air strike is progress so will try our luck on the surface again.

11:44 surfaced and sighted a medium bomber bearing 275° (T) six miles head north of Truk. He sighted us and started swinging toward. Made a quick dive. I'm afraid our efforts to act as a lifeguard are being a bit frustrated. Our air strike should be about over now so it looks as though the best thing we can do is remain submerged and work up toward the area of our sector east of Truk for tonight's scheduled strike. 18:53 surfaced and received CTF-17 serial directing us to depart area and lifeguard duties on the evening of the eighteenth.

June 17<sup>th</sup> patrolling in assigned sector east of Truk. Surfaced at 11:08 and stood by for air strike scheduled for 11:30. 12:33 received call from a plane over voice frequency requesting our position. We broadcasted our position four times, but had no receipt or indication that we were heard. We stood by for instructions but for the succeeding hour heard no more attempts to contact us. The same voice that requested our position was heard periodically testing with planes in his formation until they faded out.

It's just a guess on my part that he may have sighted something on the surface and wanted to check our position before taking any action. We rechecked our transmitter. It was on proper frequency. Submerged and headed for position in our section south of Truk for station tonight and tomorrow. Surfaced at 18:55. S.J radar contact at 15,000 yards closed rapidly to 9,000 yards caused us to make a quick dive and surface again 30 minutes later.

June 18<sup>th</sup> patrolling on station. Surfaced at 10:59 and standing by for air strike scheduled for 11:30. Heard aircraft engines overheard. Sighted Liberators through the haze directly overhead on course North heading toward Truk. Forward and after torpedo rooms reported sounds of explosions through the hull. Must be the first wave hitting Truk.

13:00 submerged because air strike is completed. Will avoid detection, since we have not been sighted so far today. Surfaced at 18:42 and rang up all ahead standard, 14 knots, on two main engines on course 130° (T).

20:00 departed area and enroute to Majuro. Detected radar interference bearing 010° (T). It is probably the U.S.S. Snapper SS-185, for she is scheduled to take over our area this evening. Opened track till radar interference definitely drew aft to starboard, then came back to base course of 103° (T).

June 19 and 20<sup>th</sup> underway on surface enroute to Majuro via safety lane.

June 21<sup>st</sup> underway on the surface. At 11:11 sighted U.S.S. Gauvina bearing 046° (T). Exchanged recognition signals. Gauvina was tracked to 16,000 yards by SJ radar before it was lost, angle on the bow 170° - 180°. It is gratifying to know that the radar can get these kind of ranges on a submarine, especially practically end-on.

14:07 sighted our escort, PC 583, distance 11 miles. Made rendezvous and fell in astern of escort.

June 22<sup>nd</sup> underway in company with escort. Moored alongside of the U.S.S. Sperry at 10:40.

### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Ninth Patrol:**

#### **From Commander Submarine Division One Hundred Two, 24 June 1944**

The ninth war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato was the first for LCDR Farrell in command. Operations in area 15-A were combined with a week of plane guarding off Truk to cover a full month on station. Four days were devoted to submerged patrol and reconnaissance of Woleai Island, otherwise most of the time in the area was spent patrolling on the surface across the shipping lanes Northwest of Truk.

Ninth Patrol (30 May 1944 – 22 June 1944)

Commander Submarine Division 102 congratulates the officers and crew of the U.S.S. Gato upon their safe return, which in no small degree, is due to the alertness of her lookouts.

**From: Commander Submarine Squadron Ten, 25 June 1944**

Forward, concurring in the endorsement of Commander Submarine Division One Hundred Two.

Despite several attempts of the Gato to reach an attack position on the single convoy contacted, flanking escorts succeeded in protecting the convoy from attack. It is of note that the U.S.S. Permit made contact with what was probably the same convoy a half hour after the Gato was driven down following its third attempted night attack, and that Permit damaged one of the freighters about an hour later. Both submarines, unseen by each other, later followed the convoy during the day.

**From: Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 7 July 1944**

The ninth war patrol of the Gato was conducted in a area west of the Caroline Islands. The patrol was the first for the new commanding officer, as such.

Much of the time was spent performing lifeguard mission. Area coverage was good. The Gato was frustrated by active enemy anti-submarine activity in attacking the one contact worthy of torpedoes. The Gato also conducted a photographic reconnaissance of Woleai.

This patrol is designed as “Successful” for a Combat Insignia Award.

The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the Commanding Officer, officers and crew for the successful performance of its mission.

**Awards:**

Gato was awarded a ‘Battle Star’ for a Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
30 April – 22 June 1944

**Refit – 22 June 1944 – 14 July 1944**

U.S.S. Gato arrived at Majuro Atoll where the U.S.S. Sperry AS-12 and Submarine Division One Hundred Two commenced refit. New SD-3 Radar, with pre-amplifier installed. Completed refit on 7 July. From 7 – 12 July Gato conducted post repairs and three days training period. She conducted a final load on 13 – 14 July and on the 15<sup>th</sup> was ‘Ready for Sea’.

**Tenth Patrol Life Guard Duty – 15 July 1944 – 2 September 1944**

On 15 July 1944 the U.S.S. Gato departed for patrol area in accordance with Commander Task Force Seventeen (CTF-17) Operation Order 230-44 of 14 July 1944. Escorted by U.S.S. Captivate (AM-156) in company with the U.S.S. Tuna SS-203 to southern edge of the North-South safety land.

July 16<sup>th</sup>, 09:08 Gato parted company with the Captivate.

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, 20:30 Gato departed company with the Tuna. Gato was enroute to patrol area at Standard speed 13 knots on two main engines until July 21<sup>st</sup>. Conducted training dives and fire control drills enroute.

July 22<sup>nd</sup> 12:50, sighted the U.S.S. Thresher SS-200 through high periscope, distant about ten miles on opposite and parallel course. Did not exchange recognition signals, because of excessive range for Aldis lamp. At 13:16 lookout and the Officer-Of-The-Deck sighted a plane (Betty) distant ten miles apparently running down Thresher's track. The plane then swung left toward us. Dived, but do not know whether we were sighted or not. Remained submerged until 16:30 when we surfaced and the area was clear.

July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 07:20 sighted a plane (Betty) and dived. Master gyro follow-up system is out of commission; remained submerged attempting repairs. At 09:35 repairs were completed and Gato surfaced. Sighted plane (Betty) distant; submerged. Since it appears that we are near to the Pagan – Bonin aircraft staging route will spend a few hours submerged training new personnel in diving and depth control.

July 24<sup>th</sup>, enroute on surface, passing through area 14 (O), 19:00 entered assigned area 14 (P) in Bonin. At 23:15 made radar contact with Hashimo Shima, changed course and headed for Chichi Jima for submerged patrol tomorrow.

Note: After two attempts to repair flooded-out forward and aft bridge Target Bearing Transmitter (TBT)'s the effort has been unsuccessful. The leads through the hull are completely water-logged. From now on we will have to depend upon bearing to the TBT by word-of-mouth. Apparently the TBT's were too loosely packed during the refit, for this is the first TBT trouble Gato has had since her last yard overhaul a year ago.

July 25<sup>th</sup>, 21:08 received Tuna's contact report. Commenced patrolling up and across course line.

Tenth Patrol (15 July 1944 – 2 September 1944)

July 26<sup>th</sup>, 04:50 submerged, conducting submerged patrol across anticipated course of convoy in view of air cover from Chichi Jima – 35 miles distant. At 06:50 sighted tops of two ships distant 12,000 yards. Weather fully overcast with intermittent rain squalls.

Went to battle stations and commenced approach. The formation developed into one escort, which appeared to be a destroyer, in column ahead of on small cargo ship (similar to Diado Maru, 2,500-3,000 tons). Sequent data indicated base course 140° (T); speed eight knots, target is on a zig-zagging course. We approached for a bow tube attack. As target closed the escort had all appearances of a destroyer and was definitely radar equipped. Tuna reported as much in her contact report. (Subsequent inspection in the recognition manual definitely cataloged the escort as a PG (E)-1.) Gato's plan was to get the radar-equipped escort and then shift to the Maru.

07:39 Target zigged right. From the plot the zig indicates that he had reached the left extreme of his zig plan. This will necessitate a longer torpedo run than anticipated.

At 07:49 fired four torpedoes at the PG(E)-1, range 2,500, 85 port track, gyro angle 6 ¼ right to 6 left with continuous chuck bearings, depth setting six foot. 07:51 heard explosions which shook the ship considerably. Periscope was dipping at 65 feet and could not find target. The second target (Maru) of which was seen with brief glimpses between waves was observed to swing away to the right. We could not find the target due to periscope dipping, the explosion had all the characteristic of a depth change, and the second target was swinging away at range of 2,700 yards eliminating any possibility of a good set-up, rigged for depth charges.

07:55 three depth charges exploded. At 08:08 nine depth charges exploded; at 08:09 four depth charges exploded and at 08:10 one depth charge exploded. All charges were well aft which indicated the escort dropped them from where he was rather than heading down the torpedo track. Three small density layers plus a heavy rain squall eliminated the sound of his screws. No echo ranging was heard preceding or during the attack. Gato evaded at 2/3 speed (80 rpm). The set-up was good bearing checked and with an 84° - 99° Port track with practically zero gyro angle at least one should have hit. Indications point to torpedoes running under or target maneuvering to avoid. One fact still is not clear. The first explosion which we took for a depth charge occurred at the exact same time the first torpedo should have crossed the target's track. Could it have been a premature of one of the succeeding torpedoes running in a moderately choppy sea at six feet?

09:00 periscope depth, nothing in sight. The proximity of Chichi Jima, their destination (30 miles), precludes a successful end-around run. This is a hard pill to swallow in view of the fact that those were the first torpedoes fired for the patrol.

19:06 Surfaced and picked up SJ radar interference from a friendly submarine in adjacent area.

July 27<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>, patrolled assigned area. Sighting and avoiding various enemy aircraft.

August 1<sup>st</sup>, patrolling across Chichi Jima – Tokyo route. Three submarines are patrolling in this area. At 06:36 determined that we had inadvertently formed a nice scouting line of about ten mile interval. Unfortunately we were parallel to the anticipated target track rather than normal to it. In view of this set-up decided to open out to the westward to increase the area coverage. However, as events turned out, we chose the wrong one of two choices.

16:48 received U.S.S. Shark SS-174 contact report on the convoy. The position report definitely puts the convoy out of our reach. Gato surfaced and spotted friendly submarine distance nine miles. Closed to get some information. The U.S.S. Pintado SS-387 informed us that he sighted smoke of convoy at 07:00 this morning in a position 35 miles to the northwest of our patrol position. Planes had also kept him down and out of range. From his information the convoy was three hours ahead of Gato's estimated position of the convoy. This fact put them too far ahead to overtake before he reached his destination; with our maximum 17 knots speed on four main engines.

18:14 sighted friendly submarine distance eight miles. Pintado informed us that it was the U.S.S. Croaker SS-246 with whom he was joining to proceed to their assigned area. Set course for assigned patrol area. Received the Shark's contact report about the same convoy. His position report definitely puts the convoy out of our reach.

19:53 lookout sighted two small objects but the SJ Radar has no contact. Put stern toward and started tracking. Radar finally got range of 5,000 yards, bearing rate changing slowly to the right. It is a bright moonlight night. Put bow to target and started closing slowing to investigate. According to the plot the two small objects draw slowing to the right, remained steady and then draw left. This looks fishy, put stern toward and hauled out. In view of the concentration of our subs in this area today we did not dare to get mixed up with any of their patrol boats. In the back of the captain's mind was the recent information they have of small enemy subs acting as escorts and decoys. Changed speed to ten knots on one main engine and again heading for assigned area. Received a message from ComSubPac assigning Gato to a 'Special Mission' in a few days.

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, started passage between Chichi Jima and Yono Jima.

August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 02:50 picked up a SJ radar contact. Commenced tracking. Sighted contact at 9,000 yards and it looks like a patrol boat. Plot indicates vessel is patrolling to the west of the channel we had passed through between the islands. It appears that we were sighted by shore lookouts or radar while passing through and the patrol vessel has been sent from Chichi Jima, for he was not there earlier last evening. We decided to keep clear.

Tenth Patrol (15 July 1944 – 2 September 1944)

03:30 put stern toward and started easing away. Patrol craft then headed toward and as we increased speed, the bearing and range to the contact remained constant. Looks like we can not outrun him on four engines. With dawn breaking, made a quick dive and continued pulling off track to the right at 2/3 speed.

05:00 echo ranging was heard, and then shortly thereafter screws were picked up on the port quarter. Sound picked up second set of screws broad on port beam. Two of them are looking for us. Continued easing off to westward at 2/3 speed under a three degree temperature gradient at 120 feet. Changed depth to 250 feet.

06:20 ascended to periscope depth, nothing in sight. Weather overcast with the seas building up. Patrolled the remained of the day and surfaced at sunset.

August 4<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on station in the vicinity of lifeguard station. Morning twilight, on station 20 miles west of center of Chichi Jima.

10:40 friendly planes detected on SD radar. First strike coming in. Started working toward Chichi Jima. Gato has no fighter cover for this strike.

13:05 fighter cover arrived overhead (two Hellcats). The second strike came in and they continued for the remainder of the afternoon. Communications work perfectly between us and the planes. We have a good 'radio-side' view of the action. Received information from CTG-58.1 that friendly lights cruisers and destroyers will operate north of Chichi Jima tonight. The air striking groups have sighted a large north bound convoy northwest of Chichi Jima and are pounding it. They gave us a course of 300 (T), speed six knots.

14:30 sent contact report of convoy to Dunders Derby via NPN Guam to insure its reception. It was receipted for and came out on the schedule at 15:32.

15:25 received report of a Grumman TBF Avenger (designated TBM for aircraft manufactured by General Motors) down 25 miles from Muko Jima. This is 52 miles from our present location. Gato will transit and be on that spot just at the end of evening twilight at full power on four main engines.

17:00 fighter cover had to return to base for lack of fuel. Sent message on area frequency to the U.S.S. Sterlet SS-392 that Gato would be passing through her area and gave position of downed plane. Picked up an SJ radar contact and shortly thereafter sighted smoke column through rain squall and headed toward it. The contact developed into a cargo AK or an oiler AO entirely enveloped in flames and billowing black smoke.

Short thereafter sighted our friendly light cruiser force of the Cleveland class heading north. Either they or the air group had finished this one off. Gato continued toward position of downed plane.

17:40 gunfire and flashed in direction of the surface force. It appears that they were rounding up the straggles of the blasted convoy.

18:50 in the approximate position for the downed aircraft. Fired another green rocket. Shortly thereafter sighted what was thought be a red rocket slightly off the port bow, very dim for the weather was overcast and hazy. Fired two green rockets. We were answered by what they thought was a red rocket. Commenced closing spot attempting to pick up raft on the SJ radar, visibility poor.

19:07 all stopped, shifted to battery motor combination and fired another green rocket. It was not answered. Afraid that if they are in the vicinity they are out of rocket ammunitions. Fired several more green rockets. Maneuvering ahead slowly, calling out intermittently on hope that we can be heard. No response.

19:31 Went ahead on two main engines conducting search through large amounts of wreckage and numerous Japanese survivors swimming, hanging on to planks and sitting on barrels and life rafts. The visibility is fairly good now with the full moon breaking through the cloud covers at times. This is where the planes hit the convoy this afternoon. Sighted plane with running lights on at various intervals between 20:00 and 21:00.

21:30 sent Gato's account to ComSubPac giving information on search and requesting information on whether to continue or return to lifeguard station for tomorrows strike and turn search over to Sterlet.

August 5<sup>th</sup>, 00:41 received instruction from ComSubPac to return to Lifeguard station and turn search over to the Sterlet. Set course for and arriving on station at 03:50.

04:15 SD radar interference, it appears the friendly surface force is returning. At 05:49 anti aircraft fire is seen over Chichi Jima.

06:24 Sterlet called over voice frequency using 'Equipoise' as call. He wants to know if we have any friendly surface craft west of Muko Jima (that's where they are now). If he was not told he must have experienced a few uneasy hours last night. Informed him we did have. He also wants to know if he is going to have fighter cover. There he has us stumped. He can use ours if he needs it. In view of the absence of plane opposition their main duty now seems to be to keep over-eager friends off our backs.

Tenth Patrol (15 July 1944 – 2 September 1944)

07:34 interceptions of interest over the voice circuit. “Do you see the large AK nearly on the beach in Futami Koi. Standby with two fish”. “Somebody hit the jackpot in that harbor”. “What ya say we turn around and try it over again”. See the Sub below us? I think it’s one of ours” (He must have made up his mind, for nothing more came of that).

08:08 sighted friendly task force to northward heading south. It consisted of one Atlanta class, three Cleveland class, and seven destroyers. Changed course to close and be recognized.

08:20 the leading cruiser is attempting to exchange recognition signals at 8,000 yards, with his large searchlight. Our little Aldis lamp has a range of about 1,000 yards in daylight. Pulled recognition flare. The starboard flank screening destroyer headed toward and we were finally able to exchange signals.

08:30 Fighter cover overhead. Fighter cover over surface craft. Three observation planes in air over cruisers. It looks like they are going to bombard. Surface force four to six miles off Futami Ko, commenced bombardment. Gato is nine miles off Futami Ko, taking pictures and enjoying the show.

09:30 the bombardment group countermarched and started second a second run. Had an almost uncontrollable impulse to tag along astern and join in the fun. However, in view of their snappy signal flag maneuvers would probably foul up the countermarches. The bombardment group made a third run and then steamed off to the south. During the shelling no air strikes were in progress but started again after the surface forces left.

11:04 received first call for rescue services – two miles from the south east corner of Chichi Jima. Gato proceeded at all ahead full. Fighter cover informed us that he did not have enough gas to remain and aid us in the search and returned to base. Set course to round the southern edge of Chichi Jima at four miles. Enroute we passed a small vessel burning to the water line that had been hit by the flyers earlier in the morning. From the huge black column of smoke he was probably carrying oil. When about one mile past the burning ship sighted a raft with what appeared to a man wearing a yellow lifejacket, left full rudder and headed toward. It developed into a raft with three Japanese, one wearing a yellow slicker. Right Full rudder and continued toward position of reported downed plane. For the next five to ten minutes we had to resort to broken field running, dodging numerous Japanese in life jackets and clinging to debris.

11:40 numerous planes overhead rendezvousing after another strike. A plane jettisoned a bomb a 1,000 yards off starboard beam. At the same time we heard over the voice frequency, “Hey lay off that sub”.

11:47 Helldiver circling over Gato, he appears to be going to land. The plane made a water landing 1,000 yards off the starboard bow. Maneuvering to pick up two survivors.

12:00 Got Lt. Donald F. Holm, USNR, aboard after considerable difficulty due to rough seas. He was fagged out after attempting to keep both himself and his back seat man, J.R. Snow ARM2c, USNR, afloat. Two of our rescue party went over the side in an attempt to assist but Snow slipped out of their grasp and sank. Lt Holm later told us that Snow had a bad cut (probably a fractured skull) in the back of his head and appeared to die as he was attempting to hold him up. We really felt bad about this failure. Lt Holm had a five inch cut to his forehead which required four stitches. This was taken care of in a very professional manor by David R. Calligher CPhM, USN.

Note: on our succeeding rescues the ship will be flooded down to decks awash. This will facilitate picking up survivors; because they will be practically at deck level when hauled alongside.

Editor's Note: In conversation with FT2 Carl Hood, a member of the two-man rescue party, he said that Airman Snow's body with limp, lifeless and dead weight. The 'bad cut' on the back of his head was putting it mildly. While they were trying to separate Airman Snow from Lt Holm, they were unable to keep both Lt Holm and Airman Snow afloat. One of the saddest things that I have ever done was losing grip on Airman Snow.

12:10 rang up ahead full – continuing to position of previously reported survivor. 12:50 on position of reported survivor, two miles from the south east tip of Chichi Jima. Can see gun emplacement on crest of the hill but they don't seem to care about the Gato. Fighter cover would feel good. No survivor in sight. The water is calm here in the lee of the island. Put stern toward beach and started working out slowly. We can't miss spotting anyone if they are in this vicinity.

13:38 received report of plane down five miles from center of Chichi Jima. Received additional report of a downed plane 20 miles. We will attempt to pick up the first one now as he is only four miles away.

13:50 our fighter cover is back. In fact we now have four fighters circling the down survivor. At 14:09 message from fighter cover "Right ahead of you about four miles. I will attempt to drop a life raft to him". Calvin from 21 Ripsaw, "Will assume spot. I'm going down". We saw the life raft drop and headed for that spot.

14:25 pulled up alongside convoy of two life rafts and a set of flashing white teeth, evidently the result of a smile of relief on the part of single occupant. Picked up LTjg. H R McCue, USNR and struck rafts below.

Tenth Patrol (15 July 1944 – 2 September 1944)

He had parachuted from his Avenger at 1,200 feet, and states that his two crew members failed to get out. While maneuvering to pick up McCue, the report of the survivor at 20 miles was corrected to Okimura Ko, Haha Jima.

14:28 Gato rang up All Ahead Full and set course for Okimura Ko, distant 35 miles. While enroute made fighter cover to search for survivor reported down off southeast corner of Chichi Jima (where we had searched previously). They could spot nothing. Presumed man went down with his plane. Two fighters are circling the man down in Okimura Ko, attempting to prevent the Japanese from picking him up (information via voice circuit). The man has no life raft, only a Mae West jacket. We requested a plane to attempt dropping a life raft so that he could start paddling out.

At 15:42 protecting plane reports circling harbor at 120 knots and nothing firing at it yet. At 16:15 Gato arrived off Okimura Bay – five miles to center. Lying to, attempting to have planes spot survivor and for us to devise a plan for getting him out. A circling fighter plane dropped us a grid chart of Haha Jima, giving the location of the man. The conditions existing are as follows:

- The man is in a Mae West ½ mile south of Oki Misaki close to the reefs just inside the entrance to the bay.
- Flood tide is tending to set him back into the bay.
- A submerged periscope rescue is not feasible because of (a) 2,000 yard channel entrance prevents maneuvering submerged, (b) period of daylight remaining is too short and (c) salvageable waters.
- Entrance on surface not feasible because of presence of shore batteries as indicated on the grid chart dropped by the plane, and lack of room for maneuvering. Told plane to attempt another life raft drop and that we could wait off the entrance of the bay and fire green flares at intervals so that the pilot could paddle out to us.

At 17:04 the plane dropped the life raft. The survivor has now been in the water for three hours with only a life jacket. A Hellcat was circling Gato – is going to make water landing. The fighter cover left due to shortage of gas. At 17:09 Lt Elvin L. Lindsey, USNR reported aboard. His plane ran out of gas and pretty well shot up. Lindsey informed us that he had dropped the last life raft and that the man was now in it. Lindsey was also the pilot who dropped the grid chart giving the survivor's position in the bay. We will remain down wind off the vicinity of the entrance tonight and fire green rockets at intervals on the hope that the pilot, with what help he can get from the wind, can work his way in our direction. His raft is not equipped with paddles only hand flippers. Volunteers to take the Gato's rubber boat into the harbor in search of the pilot were unanimous. This suggestion was vetoed by the commanding officer because of the 100-1 chance of contact in this overcast night and the strong likelihood of their being picked up by the Japanese who will be out in force searching.

August 6<sup>th</sup>, no contact as yet in the life raft. At 02:23 radar detected an interference bearing 160° (T). Exchange challenge and recognition signal with U.S.S. Cobia SS-245 by means of radar. 03:57 radar contact 10,000 yards. Gato's position is five miles west of Inuni Zuki, Hoha Jima. Commenced tracking and plot gives all indication of a patrol boat. No definite course and speed. Started working toward. Dawn is breaking. As it becomes lighted nothing could be sighted. The radar operators finally decided (when nothing could be seen) that they had been tracking a side lobe which was especially strong because of the proximity of the rugged coast of Haha Jima.

There now remains one final possibility of finding our man. During the night the wind should have caused him to drift on a course of 340° (T). Against him are the flood and ebb tide, both tending to force him over against the west bank of Haha Jima. This would put him somewhere in a lane bounded by the beach and a drift line 340° (T), 1 ½ miles off the beach. Chances are slight of sighting him through the periscope submerged. We will run down the drift line on the surface and if he is afloat our lookouts will spot him. We can then submerge and take him out via periscope. It is now light enough to see.

At 04:40 ahead on two main engines, on course 160° (T) running down the search line 1 ½ miles off the beach. 05:05 all ahead full on four main engines. We are past the area our pilot should be, but will continue a bit further (in hopes). We can see their camouflaged coastal batteries now. Their positions check well with the aviator's grid chart.

Editor's Note: For this phase of the rescue the commanding officer had total support of the crew. It was determined later that this dangerous rescue attempt almost sent the Gato on eternal patrol. The decision to turn and submerge was the only thing that kept the second salvo from being a direct hit.

05:18 gun flashes 20 degrees on our port bow from our spotted battery at a range of 5,000 yards. Right full rudder. Our first plan was to put the stern to and haul out. However, when the first salvo landed on the deflection but short. Gato made a quick dive. An additional battery was seen to open up while clearing the bridge. Did not wait to spot it. Sounded like the periscope shears were straddled while going under.

As we were in the lee of the island the sea was fairly calm. The high periscope watch plus five lookouts, the Officer of the Deck and Lt Lindsey could not spot the life raft. Our range of visibility was excellent. In view of this the commanding officer is of the opinion that the Japanese had rowed out and picked up the survivor either last night or early this morning. 05:25 set course for life guard station for strikes scheduled for today.

06:00 set watch on voice frequency on SD antenna. Made periodic sweeps with SD radar for plane contacts. Our three Aviator passengers informed us that the strikes are over and that the

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task force has cleared the area. However, our orders say there will be one today. We will listen in on the voice circuit, making passage submerged between the islands enroute our regular patrol area. No strikes materialized today. Guess they were right.

18:45 SJ radar went out while warming it up prior to surfacing. Will delay surfacing until we can affect repairs. 19:40 Gato surfaced with the SJ radar back in commission.

August 7<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>, patrolled off Chichi Jima in hopes of picking off any cripples that may attempt to get out.

August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 18:35 surfaced and departed the area. Set course for Midway in accordance with Operation Order. August 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> Gato transited enroute to Midway.

August 29<sup>th</sup> 10:17 Moored Midway, commenced fueling and discharging torpedoes. At 16:10 underway enroute to Pearl.

August 30<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, enroute to Pearl

September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 05:45 Gato rendezvoused with P.C. 108 and at 10:16 moored, Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, T.H.

**Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato Tenth Patrol Report paragraph (U) Remarks.**

The following suggestion may or may not be of any value. However, it is indicated that beneficial results could be obtained if those submarines patrolling in Dunkers Derby, Speedway, etc. were supplied with a standard wolf-pack doctrine, especially in regarding to communications. Occasions frequently arise where they have the opportunity to act as a coordinated attack group. The area frequency used is inadequate in that the non-receipt method leaves one hanging in mid-air as far as knowing what the other fellow is doing. When an occasion arises for coordinated search and attack submarines know who will be in the group and who could normally be in command as group commander. Admitted, the basic tactics are known, but someone has to take charge and the communication doctrine must be the same as employed by the regularly constituted "Wolf-packs".

Lifeguard procedures has vastly improved since a standard doctrine has been devised. Communications (for us) between planes and ship worked surprisingly well. The following suggestions are submitted for possible discussion and acceptance between the ComSubTrainPac and ComAirPac boards.

Supply each life raft with something metallic that the SJ radar can range on when searching at night. Even though you might sight a red flare, a greater difficulty is to then sight the raft –

especially at night. A suggestion is to supply each raft with a square of ordinary wire screen of any suitable dimensions, that can be unrolled and placed on a paddle and hold up-right at night.

Our aviator passengers informed us that experiments with metallic paint for sails are being carried out. However, something is needed now, not a year from now.

Have the first fighter cover drop information on times of the scheduled strikes, calls of the various air groups, and calls of your fighter cover. This may soon unnecessary at first glance, but I will go on record as stating that more intelligent services could be rendered, and not leave the submarine 'wondering what it's all about'.

#### **Commander Submarine Division Forty-Two, 7 September 1944**

The tenth war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato was conducted in the vicinity of the Bonin Islands. The patrol was of 50 days duration, 30 of which were spent in the assigned area, and was terminated by the provisions of the operation order.

Only one contact worthy of torpedo fire was encountered. This was a submerged day periscope attack on a small 2,500 ton AK with a PG escort. The escort was mistaken for a destroyer and four bow tubes were fired at him, range 2,500 yards, 95° track angle. All torpedoes missed and depth charging forced the boat to go deep.

The Gato did an excellent job of life-guarding in picking up three aviators. It is unfortunate that the rescue of one downed aviator could not be effected because of his position in shallow water close to the shore batteries. The Gato approached sufficiently to draw fire, which, because of its accuracy forced her to dive immediately.

The Gato will return to Mare Island for overhaul.

The commanding officer, officers and crew are congratulated on a fine patrol. It is regretted that lifeguard mission ordinarily preclude any surface contacts worthy of torpedo fire. It is reported that the presence of submarine engaged in this duty gives our aviators a tremendous boost in morale. The Gato, consequently, can take pride in having performed this duty in a manner to reflect great credit to the Submarine Force.

#### **Commander Submarine Squadron Four, 9 September 1944**

The suggestions contained in paragraph (U) concerning improvements in the mechanics of "Lifeguarding" are excellent, and are recommended for inclusions an integral part of the current doctrine immediately.

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The importance of a “lifeguard” mission which brings our airmen back, can only be judged by the immense moral value it has for our fliers.

The knowledge that a competent and courageous submarine crew are on call to assist given the individual flier incentive to press home attacks regardless of probable damage to the aircraft.

Commander Submarine Squadron Four is pleased to congratulate the Commanding Officer, officers and crew of the U.S.S. Gato for this well executed special mission under enemy fire.

### **Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 15 September 1944**

The tenth war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato was conducted in the Bonin Islands Area. In addition to offensive patrol, the Gato was assigned lifeguard duties.

Excellent area coverage was maintained but only one contact was made. This contact consisted of a small AK with the PG (E)-1 as an escort. An aggressive attack was made but the target avoided the torpedoes or they ran under. The Gato had a ringside seat for the air strike on Chichi Jima on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of August. Her daring and alert performance of lifeguard duty resulted in the rescue of two aviation personnel.

This patrol is designated as “Successful” for Combat Insignia Award.

The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the commanding officer, officers and crew for this aggressive and successful patrol and joins them in their pride and pleasure for having rescued the downed aviators.

### **Awards**

Gato was awarded a ‘Battle Star’ for the Marianas Operation  
Fourth Bonin’s Raid – 4 -5 August 1944

Gato was awarded a ‘Battle Star’ for Western Caroline Islands Operations  
Raids on Volcano Bonin Islands and Yap Island 31 Aug – 8 Sep 1944

Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
15 July – 2 September 1944

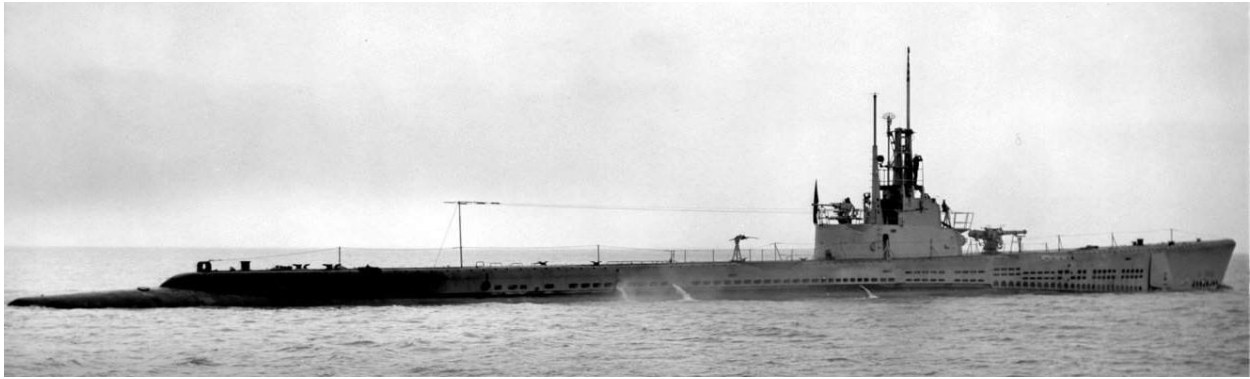
Commander Richard M. Ferrell received a Letter of Commendation  
with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

### Overhaul – 3 September 1944 - 27 January 1945

On 3 September 1944, Gato departed Pearl Harbor for Navy Yard Mare Island, California. On September 10<sup>th</sup> Gato arrive at the Navy Yard Mare Island and commenced overhaul.

September 11<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup> Gato was overhauled and all out standing alternations were completed, including hydraulic periscope hoist, installation of Sugar Tare Radar, elongation of conning tower, etc. Gato also conducted Post Repair Trails, Sound Test and deperming. On December 5<sup>th</sup> Gato reported 'Ready for Sea'.



**U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) 23 November 1944**

December 6<sup>th</sup> 09:00 Gato got underway from Mare Island Navy Yard, California enroute to San Diego, California in accordance with ComSubPac Op Order. Met escort (PC-780) at San Francisco net and thence enroute operating area to conduct sound training exercises with Western Sea Frontier until 15:00. At 16:00 was enroute to San Diego, California

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 moored alongside pier at West Coast Sound School, San Diego, California.

December 9<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>, conducted sound training exercise with West Coast Sound School in San Diego Area.

December 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>, underway enroute to Pearl Harbor in accordance with ComSubRon-45 Op Order #18-44 with escort (PC-815) until December 15<sup>th</sup> at 15:00. Conducting training exercises and dives enroute.

December 21<sup>st</sup>, moored Submarine Base Pearl Harbor. Fueled and provisioned. Installed the 5-inch 25 caliber deck gun aft.

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, Gato got underway from Pearl Harbor enroute Kajuro, Marshall Islands in accordance with ComSubPac Op Order 418-44 and escorted by (PC-486). At 18:00 parted company with the escort.

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December 22<sup>nd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, enroute to Majuro conducting training exercises and dives enroute.

December 31<sup>st</sup>, 09:20 rendezvoused with escort (SC-1364). At 15:00 was moored alongside U.S.S. Howard Gilmore at Majuro Atoll, Marshall Island.

January 1<sup>st</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>, conducted voyage repairs and seven days training under ComSubDiv-222. Conducted sound test. Drydocked in ARD-18 for adjustment of #6 torpedo tube shutter and outer door.

January 15<sup>th</sup>, 10:10 was underway from Majuro enroute to Saipan in company with the U.S.S. Sunfish SS-281 in accordance with ComSubPac Op Order #14-45. Escorted by the U.S.S. Floridian ID-3785 until 16:00. Enroute up safety lane encountered two friendly ships (freighter) – one during daylight and one at night. Tracked them and kept clear.

January 16<sup>th</sup> –to the 21<sup>st</sup>, enroute to Saipan astern of the Sunfish about ten miles. Conducted communications drills (VHF, CW and SJ) and tracking drills with Sunfish. Conducted individual ship's training and dives

January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 03:30 contacted an AFR contact on 108 mcs. Believed to be US Army type. 06:00 rendezvoused with escort LCI-1063. At 12:25 Gato was moored alongside U.S.S. Fulton AS-11 in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, Marshall Islands.

January 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, was moored alongside the Fulton at Saipan. Conducted one day's training under ComSubDiv-81. Replaced one Mk 18-1 torpedo because of battery explosion in tube.

**Eleventh Patrol – Wolf Pack ‘Shelby’s Shellackers’ – 28 January – 13 March 1945**

On 28 January 1945, the U.S.S. Gato was underway and enroute to Area Twelve in company with U.S.S. Jallao SS-368 in accordance with ComSubPac Op Order #27-45 escorted by LCI-1063. U.S.S. Sunfish SS-281, Task Group Commander (Wolf Pack – Shelby’s Shellackers), led by Commander E. E. Shelby was delayed on day and will join us in the area.

16:30 transferred K. M. Erdner, P1c, USNR to the escort via rubber boat along with records and accounts. Subject man, who had been received from Submarine Division-81 relief crew the previous day, fainted upon leaving the harbor. He later complained of body cramps, nausea, etc. Decided then and there that he would be source of worry for the remainder of the patrol. Upon aiding him to the deck for transfer he fainted again. It was with a sigh of relief that we finally saw him safely on board the escort. At 17:00 the escort returned to base.

January 29<sup>th</sup>, transiting enroute to area conducting communications, tracking and individual ship’s drills in company with Jallao. 08:10 SD radar contact at six miles. Verified by IFF response.

January 30<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. Made trim dive and surfaced. 09:30 SD radar contact at eight miles. No IFF response. Submerged until 09:50. 10:55 sighted single engine plane and SD radar contact at ten miles. No IFF response. Submerged until 11:37. 12:55 SD radar contact at ten miles. No IFF response. Submerged until 13:50.

January 31<sup>st</sup>, SD radar contact at ten miles. No IFF response. Contact faded out at 11 miles. 07:40 SD radar contact at ten miles. No IFF response. Submerged and will remain submerged for transit of Kaikyo Suido tonight.

18:23 surfaced and found that both the trainer’s and pointer’s seats on the 5” gun have been broken off by heavy seas. Further investigation revealed that the seats were carried away because of poor welding of seat adjustment sleeve. The gun, if fired, will be fired by hand, with the pointer and trainer walking around with gun.

21:53 SJ contact on Yakushima, distance 70,000 yards. 23:30 commenced transit of Kaikyo Suido on four main engines. Maximum speed 14 knots due to head seas and a five knot current.

February 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, transiting the Kaikyo Suido on four main engines. 06:42 submerged south of Danjo Gunto. 19:15 surfaced and crossing Area 9.

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 02:00 SJ contact on Danjo Gunto range 40,000 yards. APR contact on 98 mcs. Apparently search radar on Danjo Gunto. It did not steady on us.

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11:45 entered Area 12. 14:45 lookouts sighted three sampans at 5,000 yards. The visibility was poor due to squalls and mist. SJ radar had not detected them because of the large wave pips. Avoided the sampans because seas are too rough to put gun crews on deck.

19:35 Lt J. F. Bostic, USN, Assistant Officer of the Deck, was felled by a wave taken over the bridge and thrown against the ammunition locker suffering severe contusions and abrasions to his right eye, and bruising his right shoulder.

February 4<sup>th</sup>, detected APR contacts at 255, 260 and 280 mcs. The 260 mcs steadied on us for three minutes the other two did not steady on us. 19:10 SJ radar interference and exchanged recognition signals with the U.S.S. Atule SS-403. We made arrangements to coordinate our search tonight and tomorrow.

February 5<sup>th</sup>, 07:35 submerged and sighted aircraft (Betty) through the periscope, distance four miles. 18:43 surfaced and detected SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signals and messages with the Atule. He had no luck on contacts either.

February 6<sup>th</sup>, Gato shifted area in accordance with "Pack" schedule. Patrolling on surface – solid overcast. 08:00 visibility closed to two miles with intermittent snow squalls. SJ radar manned.

10:25 SJ radar contact at 5300 yards, visibility about 3,000 yards. Put target astern. Radar pip and range indicated a 'wooden' ship. At 10:28 submerged.

10:40 picked up contact in haze, range 4,000 yards. Target tracked at speed of six knots using periscope radar. The visibility then increased appreciably and target was made out to be a Junk sailing wing-and wing. Let him pass down our starboard side at a range of 1,000 yards and looked him over. He appears friendly.

'Battle Surface', manned the 40 mm and 20mm guns. Fired a few rounds across his bow and the junk doused sails immediately. Went alongside and looked him over. They were definitely Chinese. An accurate count of the occupants could not be made for a few heads would peek out of the hatch momentarily and then disappear. An estimate of eight to ten people in the crew. There were seven men on deck. When we trained our guns off them we could actually see their sighs of relief. Shown them our colors. Either they were too scared or else they didn't know what it meant. All we got was a half-hearted wave of relief. Waved them on and continued patrolling.

Note: The 40mm jammed after one shot. Cause was due to the extreme cold which stiffened the grease and prevented the double loading stop from returning to the ready position. The loader was removed; all parts were cleaned, greased and then reinstalled.

17:30 converted #1 Fuel Ballast Tank to a Main Ballast Tank. Then submerged to flush it out and then resurface for the night.

February 7<sup>th</sup>, received China report of a concentration of ships (one CV and four Man-of-War) anchored off Raffles Island. Patrolling on a southeast course to cover their possible route to the Empire.

10:06 SD contact at seven miles. Closed to six miles and made a quick dive. Just prior to diving the Officer of the Deck thought he sighted a floating mine broad on the starboard bow. Unfortunately we were unable to investigate.

11:00 surfaced and sighted floating mine dead ahead, range 1,500 yards. Sank it with 20mm fire but it did not explode. Sighted another floating mine and exploded it with 30 cal. Machine gun. Sighted three more floating mines but the time element (we are attempting interception) and rough seas prohibit stopping and sinking them.

At 18:20 a lookout reported 'mine'; the Officer of the Deck mistook the word as 'plane' and dived. (Note: from now on lookouts will report mines as 'objects'). At 18:41 surfaced.

February 8<sup>th</sup>, patrolling across the Van Dienay Strait – Shanghai route. Seas are building up again after two days of fairly comfortable riding. Star and sun sights are few and far between. Navigating mainly by soundings. Sighted two floating mines today, seas too rough to attempt sinking them.

February 9<sup>th</sup>, seas are abating to force 1. At 10:05 made trim dive and for shifting torpedoes in after room for charging. Surfaced at 10:50.

14: 26 detected a SD contact at six miles and it closed to five miles. Submerged and since there has been no observed air cover in this sector of the area, decided to remain submerged for a few hours in case this plane is acting as air search for something coming through.

17:45 surfaced and at 18:05 a lookout sighted a plane. Distance eight miles apparently headed toward us. Made a quick dive but it looks like we surfaced too soon. At 18:55 surfaced and transmitted weather report to ComSubPacAdComd, Info to ComSubPac.

February 10<sup>th</sup>, patrolled the area on the surface.

February 11<sup>th</sup>, shifted area in accordance with 'Pack' schedule. At 07:00 dived for submerged patrol and for routine maintenance of torpedoes. Patrolling west of Danjo Gunto and south of Saishu To.

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February 12<sup>th</sup>, 02:01 detected SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signal with the Jallao. Made arrangements to patrol in company with him tomorrow. Jallao will be five miles to the northeast of Gato on a 240° track that we decided on. Intercepted a message from the Pack Commander. In Area Nine directing the U.S.S. Sea Cat SS-399 to patrol on station 20 miles to the northeast of Gato's chosen patrol station.

02:06 sighted lights of a small fishing sampan. Avoided them, they could be the same one as previously contacted this evening – or Japanese are out investigating this part of the area. At 07:50 submerged for the day.

18:55 surfaced and detected SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signals with Jallao. Made arrangements for patrol tonight and tomorrow across track we patrolled today. At 19:40 transmitted weather report to ComSubPacAdComd, Info ComSubPac.

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 07:00 submerged, with radar interference still on APR screen. 18:45 Surfaced.

18:55, SJ radar interference and exchanged recognition signals with Jallao. He has had no more luck than us; so wished each other better luck and departed for out respective areas.

20:30 sighted our ever-present two fishing boats to northward. They seem to remain fairly consistently in this part of the area. Obtained first star sights in three days. A good fix still put us only five miles from our D.R. position.

February 14<sup>th</sup>, patrolling south of Saishu To. Quite a strong APR pip on 78 mcs. 06:55 submerged, patrolling southwest of Saishu To. 18:50 surfaced APF contact on 78 mcs.

19:00 the Officer of the Deck sighted two engine plane, range four miles, elevation 3°. Plane was picked up against the evening twilight back-ground. Made quick dive to 150 ft, and rigged for depth charge. No counter-action so guess he did not see us. APR gave saturation pip on 78 mcs on surfacing, but I still think this is the radar on Saishu To.

19:30 surfaced and 20:10 SJ radar contact at 13,000 yards. Two targets, put stern toward and tracked at range of 10,000 yards. 21:34 with zig-zag and speed solved came around and headed in. Targets were plotted on base course 085° (T), speed 10.5 knots, zigging on five and ten minute legs. The visibility advantages offered by coming in from a starboard track and firing into the sea out weighed the advantages of firing with the sea on a port track. Set torpedo depth to four feet. Targets appear to be two DE's or small destroyers. We have periodic pinging on 24.2 kcs. No indication of radar.

21:43 targets zigged toward so Gato swung left for stern tube shot.

Attack #1, fired three torpedoes (MK 18-1) on a 90 starboard track, 167° to 175° gyro angles, torpedo run 2,500 yards, divergent speed (spread from aft to forward).

Two timed and observed on leading DE. Target stopped and then disappeared from the radar screen in approximately four minutes, range 5,000 yards. Pinging stopped. Commenced reloading aft. After torpedo room reported that all tubes were ready. Upon investigation it was found that the torpedoman between the tubes hit the hand firing valve on #7 tube when he should have fired #8. Consequently #7 and #8 torpedoes went out simultaneously. #9 and #10 torpedoes hit.



21:55 Commenced approach on remaining target. He had closed sinking target and stopped alongside. When target sank he started maneuvering at various courses and speeds.

22:10 suddenly an additional pip appeared on the radar screen about 500 yards this side of the target and moved slowly toward us about 1,000 yards. It then completely disappeared from the radar screen. This sudden additional target caused some momentary confusion, but it was finally decided that the DE was employing some type of decoy or reflector. This is our first experience with this type of counter measure; but the affects were those described in current publications. The false pip was as large and sharp as the remaining ship's pip, but became smaller and fuzzier until it disappeared. Its speed toward us was approximately the drift speed it would have in the wind speed existing at the time.

22:16 a salvo of six or seven depth charges; range 6,000 yard to the southeast. DE is now changing course radically, speeding up and slowing down, apparently listening. It is now apparent that the roles are reversed. He is doing the hunting now. He has reversed course and is charging off in the opposite direction. Decided to give him the field and hauled clear.

In retrospect it appears that we ran into a hunter-killer group working southwest of Saishu To. The plane we sighted on surfacing this evening was coming from the direction we finely picked up our contact. They could have been working together. The target was finally identified through 7x50 binoculars as a DE rather than a small destroyer, because of its bulkier lines.

22:45 detected SJ radar interference bearing 095° (T). Exchanged recognition signals with Jallao. Informed him of our results and asked him if he had received any orders for the Pack commander on new patrol stations for the next few days. He then relayed Pack Commanders dispatch (via SJ) assigning new patrol stations. We acknowledge receipt of message, to Pack Commander via CW.

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February 15<sup>th</sup>, made radar contact with Jallao at various times this morning. He is on our port on course 180° (T) on route to his patrol area. 06:45 submerged and at 19:08 surfaced and SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signals and news with Jallao.

February 16<sup>th</sup>, enroute to new station on two main engines. Jallao radar interference faded out at 02:30. 09:00 arrived on station. Submerged and commenced patrolling on station. 19:25 surfaced and continued patrolling on station.

February 17<sup>th</sup>, set course for coast of China to patrol off Heishan Island. 05:15 APR contact on 74 mcs apparently land based on Heishan Island and is non-directional.

06:55 submerged and patrolling area. At 12:30, 14:022 and 16:49 sighted sailing junks.

19:25 surfaced and set course north for patrol between Two Brothers and Lukon Island. At 23:00 sighted first lights of fishing fleet. Spent the remainder of the night avoiding them.

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 07:40 sighted two masts bearing 273° (T). Went to battle stations and commenced approach. Contact developed into two small fishing trawlers. The remainder of the day was spent keeping out of their way along with six more of their friends, later picked up. We appear to be right in the middle of their fishing grounds. At 19:28 surfaced and set course north for patrol off KO TO.

February 19<sup>th</sup>, crossed the Shanghai Banks. At 08:50 sighted mine. 09:54 APR contact on 78 mcs. 19:00 APR contact on 155 mcs. Non-directional. Keyed SD-no contact. Cut off pipe railing around forward 20 mm gun deck. Two stanchions had given way at their base and caused us to sound like a Mack truck at two knots speed submerged.

February 20<sup>th</sup>, 02:25 detected SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signals with Jallao. 04:45 SJ radar is out of commission. 05:25 the SJ radar was back in commission (Sigh of relief). 06:30 submerged for the day and patrolling north of KO TO.

19:25 surfaced and detected an SJ contact at six miles. Made quick dive. Closed to two miles before antenna went under. SD showed three pips, indicating a formation. APR showed no indication of radar between 140 -160 mcs. They were not picked up on SJ. Note: On a hunch (or call it what you will) we just happened to key the SD prior to lowering the mast and placing it in the stand-by position.

20:22 surfaced. At 20:40 APR contact at 73 mcs, weak and non-directional.

21:10 SJ radar contact bearing 132° (T), distance 15,000 yards. Commenced tracking single ship. He tracked at nine knots on steady course of 310° (T), no escort (a dream come true). Bright moonlight. We can see target at 14,000 yards through No.1 periscope and 7x50 binoculars. An ideal time to test the ST radar.

22:45 in position 4,000 yards off track to starboard and range 12,000 yards. Submerged and commenced approach. With seven feet of scope exposed, picked up target at 10,000 yards on ST. Visibility is excellent, and he will be between us and the moon. With his course and speed cold all we have to do is wait till he comes on the range for a 90 starboard straight bow shot.

23:11 the target can now be definitely identified as Tone Maru type. With target due to be on the firing bearing shortly, she made a 100° course change to the right. At this time we had only three feet of periscope exposed at a range of 5,500 yards so I am positive he did not sight us, as we were down moon. We are now on the well known limb. With excessive torpedo run tracked him on course 050° (T), speed eight knots out to 12,000 yards.

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 00:20 surfaced and commenced and end-around run. APR contact on 69 mcs. Strong, but apparently non-directional. At 02:30 at range 12,000 yard, 5,000 yard off port track went to battle stations and commenced approach. Moon has now set.

03:09 Attack #2, fired three MK 18-1 torpedoes on 70° port track, range 3,000 yards, torpedo run 2500 yards, 12 to 8 right – gyro angles, depth set at three feet. Target appears as big as a house. It can now be definitely identified as noted above. He apparently saw us after we fired for smoke poured from his stack as he gave her the coal. One torpedo broached (sea calm).

03:12 one torpedo timed and observed a hit in the stern (¼ length of ship from the stern). Target completely enveloped in black smoke. Target stood on her keel and went down vertically, stern first in two minutes ten seconds. The target's burst of speed after firing no doubt caused the two misses, for the torpedoes were spread from aft to forward with spread reduction of 1° from the normal 4-3-2-1 spread doctrine. Third torpedo hit. It is interesting to note that prior to the two contacts we have had so far we have encountered aircraft upon surfacing.



03:20 continued north for patrol off Kakureppi Retto. At 04:22 received ComSubPac serial 201742 directing Gato to take charge of Task Group 17.18 upon departure of Sunfish from area.

06:39 submerged for day time patrol. Heard distant depth charge or depth bomb. Sighted a sailing junk and a small fishing sampan. 19:34 surfaced, detected APR contact on 73 mcs,

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strong, but apparently non-directional. At 20:43 SJ radar contact dead ahead at 2,000 yards. For the remainder of the night until Gato clears the fleet at 00:30, we got contacts any where from 4,000 to 800 yards about every ten minutes. Two unlighted sampans were sighted out of the whole group.

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, set course for patrol across Shantung-Kakureppi route. 06:45 submerged. 15:54 sighted aircraft (Betty), range four miles, elevation 3 degrees. At 19:30 surfaced and sighted four small fishing craft during night. Avoided them.

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 06:48 submerged and patrolled off the northwest point of Shantung Promontory. Surfaced at 19:30 and sighted three small fishing craft during the night.

February 24<sup>th</sup>. 06:41 submerged and patrolled off Chosan Kan. 13:59 sighted smoke, and went to battle stations. Contact developed into small trawler steaming back and forth between mainland and reef three miles off land. 19:27 surfaced and at 22:00 received ComSubPac serial assigning Gato to lifeguard duty on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 06:50 submerged and patrolled of Kakureppi Retto. At 09:15 sighted sailing junk. Passed close aboard and looked him over. At 19:50 Gato surfaced.

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 06:37 submerged and patrolled off KO TO. 07:07 sighted smoke and manned battle stations. Contact developed into a small fishing trawler (too small for torpedo). Gato surfaced at sunset.

22:12 radar contact at 12,000 yards. 22:22 manned battle stations, commenced tracking. Target developed into a single ship on base course 030° (T), speed 10.5 knots with three to four minute legs per zig. Bright full moon so we remained at range of 10,000 yards while pulling ahead to get on his track.

February 27<sup>th</sup>, had the targets zig plan down. 00:30 Gato submerged and commenced approach. ST radar picked him up at 9,500 yards, He appears to be a small patrol or escort type vessel from the size of the pips and visually through the 7x50 binoculars. No indication of radar. 00:45 he is tracking according to his predetermined zig-zag plan.

01:00 at range of 2,000 yards and just prior to firing he commenced pining at 17 kcs, speeds up, and presented a zero angle-on-the-bow. Before he turned he was definitely identified as a Chidori. The gyro angles were too great to make a 'down-the-throat' shot feasible (50° to 60° left gyro) so we went deep. Depth of water 49 fathoms. Before we could stop her without speeding up we settled on the bottom with sound gear and pit log out. Secured everything. With this muddy bottom we settled as if on a feather mattress.

01:05 heard his screws go close down our port side (on JP and through the hull). For the following 20 minutes we followed him up and down our port side, stopping periodically apparently listening. He doesn't seem to be quite sure of his contact; of which we are thankful.

01:25 screws faded out on bearing 050° (T). At 02:30 broke loose from the bottom by blowing safety. Sound gear can be raised and it apparently not damaged. Pit log rod is bend slightly but operates normally.

03:16 surfaced, all clear. The only explanation I can think of for our being detected by sound is our exceptionally noisy bow planes. It is imperative that they be corrected. They were not entirely satisfactory subsequent to our navy yard overhaul, and they have become progressively worse.

06:40 submerged and patrolled between KO TO and Kokuzan. While preparing to surface the SJ radar went out. 20:05 SJ radar back in commission and Gato surfaced. 20:09 APR contact on 161 mcs. Directional, it occasionally trained on us. This is apparently the radar on Kokuzan. At 20:10 set course for lifeguard station.

February 28<sup>th</sup>, enroute to lifeguard station off Shanghai. 07:00 visibility closing-fog. 08:00 the visibility close to zero. The fog persisted until 14:00 and then began to clear. At 24:00 Gato was on lifeguard station. Bright full moon. Sighted one unlighted small fishing sampan. He is on our lifeguard station.

March 1<sup>st</sup>, patrolling on station. At 03:00 received word from China of a 24-hour delay in strike. 06:35 submerged and patrolled in the vicinity of lifeguard station (between Lukon and Barren Islands). 19:30 surfaced. 20:30 sighted lights of two small fishing sampans. They are in the same spot as the one sighted last night, right on our lifeguard position.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, patrolling ten miles northeast of lifeguard station to keep clear of fishing boats, maintaining position by radar fixes on Barren Island. At 03:00 received word from China informing us that they would keep us informed of their strike schedule. Weather has delayed them so far. 06:45 submerged and patrolled on lifeguard station. 19:20 surfaced on station.

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, patrolling on station. At 03:00 received word from China of additional delay in proposed strike. I hope they get their operation off sometime in the near future. 06:45 submerged on station. 11:40 sighted two small fishing boats and stayed clear of them.

19:12 received China radio sked on the SD antenna. Mission is again held up. China request a weather report from Gato. 19:23 surfaced. At 20:30 received ComSubPac serial 030649 message extending patrol three days (until sunset, 7 March 1945).

Eleventh Patrol (28 January – 13 March 1945)

March 4<sup>th</sup>, patrolling on lifeguard station. 04:00 sent weather report to China – as requested. 06:38 submerged. 15:45 #2 periscope developed excessive hydraulic oil leak in starboard piston. Went to 90 feet and put #2 out of commission and commenced repairs. This necessitated having #2 in the fully raised position.

17:00 picked up pining on 17 kcs (two ships doing the pinging). Pinging getting louder – picked up screws of two small patrol boats. With #2 periscope still out of commission and fully raised, this leaves us in an embarrassing position. Rigged for silent running and attempted to keep stern toward patrol boats. Tracked them in toward us. One passed fairly close down our port hand while the other passed us to starboard at a greater range. They continued on out to the northeast, no doubt heading for the spot we transmitted to China this morning. We had been expecting something like this all day. It just took them a long time to get here.

17:45 #2 periscope is back in commission. 18:14 pinging and screws faded out. Secured from silent running. 19:46 surfaced, the weather is clearing. The strike should take place tonight. 22:28 SJ radar contact bearing 285° (T), distance 4,500 yards. Two pips. Lookouts saw momentary light. Our two patrol boat friends – although they have secured their pining during darkness. We will keep clear of them.

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 03:10 received word from China that strike would take place about 00:15. We had assumed as much. However, nothing was heard on the lifeguard circuits except occasional testing. Will remain on station until we receive word that no planes are down.

06:15 SJ radar contact at 6,000 yards. Our two patrol boats again. Pulled out to eastward a bit more and then submerged. At noon, there was nothing for us on the China sked. 18:50 surfaced and received word from China that all planes were safe and that we could now secure. Set course North for patrol area.

March 6<sup>th</sup>, seas are building. Can make only six to seven knots on one main engine without flooding out everything. Sighted three floating mines during the day, but did not attempt to sink them because of rough seas. At 22:00 we arrived on station.

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 08:50 sighted formation of five planes (unidentified, but single engine) distance five miles. Weather is overcast. 08:51 made quick dive. Wonder if this can be advance air cover? 14:02 surfaced, patrolling on station. Commenced departure area at sunset. 19:25 APR contact at 77 mcs.

March 8<sup>th</sup>, SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signals with U.S.S. Tench SS-417, enroute to Area 12. 05:45 APR contact at 73 mcs, non-directional, quite weak.

Then another APR contact at 95 mcs. Submerged, south of Danjo Gunto. At 18:30 surfaced and at midnight we were transiting the Tokara Strait.

March 9<sup>th</sup>, transiting on the surface to Guam. 14:03 sighted submarine through high periscope. It appeared friendly by virtue of 'Eiffel Tower' periscope shears. Manned SJ radar and exchanged recognition signals with U.S.S. Razorback SS-394. He is heading for Guam also.

March 10<sup>th</sup>, transiting to Guam. Razorback is astern about seven to nine miles. 08:15 made a trim dive and surfaced. Sighted Razorback through high periscope distance seven miles.

14:26 SD radar contact a five miles. Sighted a B-29 at four miles, on northerly course. Stood by ready to show recognition signal if he should turn toward us. Razorback (astern about six miles) pulled flare and dived. Plane continued majestically on his way, probably to reconnoiter the pounding they gave Tokyo last night in their first 300 plane raid.

19:30 U.S.S. Razorback reported sighting white flare. Gato headed over in that direction, Razorback firing green flares intermittently. I think he caught the tail end of a falling star, for they have been coming down in that general area since evening twilight. We were closer to the reported sighting and saw nothing other than falling stars. Nothing further resulted from the search. 23:30 Razorback SJ interference faded out astern.

March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, transiting to Guam. On the 12<sup>th</sup> at 06:40 sighted PB4T-2 (Privateer) patrol plane. Plane circled and we exchanged recognition signals. 14:17 heavy seas cutting down speed of advance. Reported delay in arrival at rendezvous to CTG 177.

March 13<sup>th</sup>, SD contact at eight miles. Plane not sighted. Friendly IFF. 12:39 made rendezvous with escort (PC-824), proceeded Guam harbor. At 17:40 moored to U.S.S. Proteus (AS-19)

#### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Eleventh Patrol:**

**Commander Submarine Division Eighty-Two, 15 March 1944**The eleventh war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato was spent in the Yellow Sea areas. This patrol was fifty-four days duration of which thirty-four days were spent in the assigned operating area.

Gato was a unit of a coordinated attack group consisting of Sunfish, Jallao and Gato. The Commanding Officer Sunfish being Task Group Commander. Upon departure of Sunfish from the area the Commanding officer of the Gato assumed command of the task group.

Eleventh Patrol (28 January – 13 March 1945)

During this patrol three contacts worthy of torpedo fire were made. Successful attacks were completed on two of those. The attack on the third contact was frustrated by a radical maneuver of the target, a Chidori torpedo boat, which gave Gato a zero angle on the bow just prior to firing. The setup did not permit a down-the-throat shot so Gato rightly dove.

Attack Number One: A night surface radar attack delivered on 14 February, against one of two DE type vessels apparently members of a "Hunter-Killer" group. The range at firing was 2,000 yards, track angle was 90S; the gyro angle was small; and depth was set at four feet. Four Mark 18 torpedoes were fired. Two hits were obtained and the target a DE-UN-1 of 600 (EU) tons sank in four minutes. The other DE began countermeasures so the attack on it was discontinued.

Attack Number Two: During the night of 21 February a night surface radar attack was made against a single AK (Tone Type (EC)) after a previous night periscope submerged attack had been denied by a large zig to the target. Three Mark 18 torpedoes were fired at ranges of 2,900 yards. On track angle of 60°P; depth set at three feet; in a sea state of three. One hit was obtained and the target, a Tone class AK (EU) of 4,078 tons sank in two minutes.

During this patrol Gato spent five days on life guard station without any call for her services.

Various contacts were received and despite every effort being made to intercept the convoys and task force results were negative.

The use of window or some other form of radar countermeasures was noted subsequent to the attack on the D3 on 14 February. This momentarily caused concern but was soon identified by the radar personnel of the Gato.

The Gato arrived in Guam very clean and a normal refit is indicated. Refit will be accomplished by the U.S.S. Proteus and the relief crew of the Submarine Division Eighty-Two

The Division Commander congratulated the Commanding Officer, Officers and men of the Gato on the completion of another successful patrol in which the merchant fleet of the enemy was further reduced and one of his newer anti-submarine vessels sent to the bottom while on the hunt for submarines.

#### **Commander Submarine Squadron Twenty, 15 March 1945**

1. Forwarded concurring in the remarks of Commander Submarine Division Eighty-Two,
2. Commander Submarine Squadron Twenty congratulates the commanding officer, officers and hands this well conducted aggressive patrol, noteworthy for the destruction of one of the enemy's submarine hunters.

**Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 26 March 1945**

The eleventh war patrol of the Gato, under the command of Commander H. M. Ferrell, U.S. Navy, was conducted in the Yellow Sea areas. The Gato, along with the U.S.S. Jallao SS-368 and the U.S.S. Sunfish SS-281, formed a coordinated attack group with the commanding officer of the Sunfish as the group commander, being relieved by the commanding officer of the Gato upon departure of the Sunfish from the area.

This smart, aggressive patrol resulted in three contacts worthy of torpedo fire. Well planned attacks were delivered resulting in the sinking of a Destroyer Escort and a medium Cargo ship.

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

The Commander Submarine force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the commanding officer, officers and crew for this aggressive and successful patrol, another added to the long illustrious record of the Gato.

**Awards:**

Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for Iwo Jima Operation Assault and Occupation for Iwo Jima  
15 February to 7 March 1945

Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
28 January – 13 March 1945

|            |                                       |            |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Destroying | Destroyer Escort (UN-1 Type) (EU) (1) | 600 tons   |
|            | Medium Cargo (AK Tone Type) (EC) (1)  | 4,100 tons |

Commander Richard M. Ferrell was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Third Silver Star Medal for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as commanding officer of the U.S.S. Gato.

Eleventh Patrol (28 January – 13 March 1945)

### **Refit – 13 March – 11 April 1945**

U.S.S. Gato was moored alongside the U.S.S. Proteus in Arpa Harbor for a normal refit under the administration of the Commander Submarine Squadron Twenty. The following major items were accomplished by the U.S.S. Proteus and Submarine Division Eighty-Two Relief crew:

- Installed new type hydrogen burner light panels in forward and after torpedo rooms.
- Mounted 5” ready ammunition locker aft.
- Mounted two 20mm ammunition lockers forward.
- Raised all submerged torpedo tube rollers from 0.030” to 0.045”.
- Improved drainage facilities of conning tower and control room.
- Installed Torpedo Detection Monitor (TDM) equipment for QB sound gear.
- Installed modified bellows in pit log.
- Installed SCR-60 radio-transmitter-receiver

March 29<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Commander Richard Holden, USN relieved Commander R. M. Farrell, USN as commanding officer. (The Executive Officer and four other officers were also relieved.)

March 31<sup>st</sup>, Gato conducted post repair trials, deep dive and cavitation tests.

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, commenced an eight-day training period with the commander, Submarine Division Eighty-Two’s Training Officer. Seven exercise torpedoes were fired by Gato at escorted targets. One torpedo ran erratic, the other six hit.

April 8<sup>th</sup>, U.S.S. Haddock SS-231 fired one exercise torpedo, using Gato as the target, for a test of the Torpedo Detection Monitor equipment. Loaded four Mk. 18-1 torpedoes.

April 12<sup>th</sup>, Gato reported ‘Ready for Sea’.

06:10 Gato was underway for Tanapag, Saipan, in accordance with CTG 17.10 dispatch 110510 of April, 1945 in company with the U.S.S. Coneff (DE-49) as escort. Started school-of-the-boat training. Gato submerged for a trim dive.

18:20 moored alongside U.S.S. Fulton in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan. Loaded 18 MK 18-1 torpedoes.

**Twelfth Patrol Life Guard- Rescue – 13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945**

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 Gato was underway for Twelfth War Patrol in company with LCI-371 as escort. 13:00 exercised fire control party tracking friendly convoy. 14:45 entered joint zone and released the escort. Made a trim dive and then commenced transiting to patrol area.

April 14<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. Midnight exchanged recognition signals with the U.S.S. Grouper SS-214. At dawn made a trim dive.

April 15<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. 03:45 exchanged recognition signals with the U.S.S. Cero SS-225. At dawn made a trim dive. 13:52 exercised at Battle Stations Gun, test-firing 5-inch, 40mm and 20mm guns.

April 16<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. At dawn made a trim dive.

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 00:33 received message from Commander Submarine Force Pacific (ComSubPac) directing Gato to search for downed aviator. Set course for point at four engine speed. 05:50 transmitted Gato first to ComSubPac. 07:12 sighted Cero. Commenced search with Cero using reported position as origin, Cero took western and Gato eastern semi-circles traveling circumferentially in five thousand yard radial increments.

09:40 10,000 yard circle completed. While receiving visual message for Cero, single tail B-24 entered the scene. At three miles, with still no friendly IFF response and an angle on the bow of zero, dove with the colors up. These eager zoomies are difficult to fathom. 10:00 surfaced and continued search.

13:50 U.S.S. Tirante SS-420 reported in and took the ten mile circle. 14:30 notified the U.S.S. Spadefish SS-411 of current search plan, requesting instructions.

16:32 sunset, discontinued search on ComSubPac's orders. 19:35 Ensign L. D. Borin, Assistant Officer of the Deck, sighted mine on starboard bow, distance 200 yards. Maneuvered to put it against the twilight. 19:40 commenced firing the bridge 20mm gun and the mine exploded when halfway through second magazine, range 300 yards. 20:52 received message from the U.S.S. Atule SS-403 assigning us our area.

April 18<sup>th</sup>, 05:50 made a trim dive. 09:30 B-29 commenced circling us. Established communication on VHF. Directed him to Cero, for whom he was looking. Own planes have been around us intermittently since we left Guam. No separate reports of them are made unless they affect our operations. Tonight we enter area with the missions of life-guard, scouting and acting as the one of the corks for the Inland Sea

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

A daylight submerged patrol is indicated as close in as we can get and still keep clear of possible newly laid anti-invasion minefields. Night cruising will be done using ST, SJ radar and the APR on 150, 170, and 210 megacycles contacts, SD will be keyed for one second and a quick sweep will be made on the 40,000 yard scale of the Plan Position Indicator (PPI). If there are no pips, we will swing ship and attempt to develop contact a la U.S.S. Batfish SS-310.

Our Torpedo Detection Monitor (TDM) watch has a ten knot sector card mounted over the bearing scale of the chemical recorder. For speeds above ten knots this card gives the proper action to take for torpedo traces appearing beneath each sector. In the Dive sector, he shouts "Dive Dive" over the 7 MC to the bridge. The quartermaster will sound the diving alarm. The OOD shouts "clear the bridge" and passes "Dive Dive" over the 1MC. In other sectors the TDA operator puts rudder over accordingly.

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 01:15 exchanged recognition signals with U.S.S. Hackleback SS-211. 05:14 submerged to patrol northeast of Ashizuri Saki. 09:57 Officer of the Deck sighted mine through periscope. Surfaced and noted that the wind and sea are increasing in strength. Attempted to sink the mine by 20mm gun-fire at ranges from three to five hundred yards. Secured firing because the seas are too rough. Wind is from the south, force 6, sea state five and the barometer indicates a gale is making up. Set course to 180° (T) to reach night rendezvous with Threadfin and Atule.

16:34 with sea state six, wind hauled around to west, visibility cleared making Shikoku plainly visible. Submerged and at 19:48 surfaced and seas are sufficiently rough to prevent our reaching midnight rendezvous. Will dive south of Ashizuri Saki and investigate it tomorrow.

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 04:30 submerged. 10:53 ST radar interference and attempted to challenge. 11:15 established communications with the U.S.S. Threadfin SS-410 via ST radar while submerged. Was advised they were going to investigate Okino Shima.

15:10 ST range 18,200 yards on Ashizuri Saki. Visibility is very hazy. Navigating on soundings and ST ranges. At 17:00 we are now three miles south of Ashizuri Saki. The long submerged run was necessary to avoid being picked up by shore radar. Discovered ST interference to the west. The Threadfin probably. Hunting points are getting too crowded

19:30 commenced opening out and will try this area again. With more knowledge of the Kure Shio, should be able to cut down submerged time. At 21:15 Gato surfaced

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 00:50 Plane detected on SJ radar, closing fast. 01:01 Plane range 4,000 yards, closing. Gato submerged.

01:24 at periscope depth no contacts, all clear, surfaced. Evidently Japanese plane was going home. 04:50 submerged, bow plane tilt is frozen.

09:59 surfaced to ascertain if we had fouled bow planes with fish net. Planes appeared to be clear. 10:12 submerged to 90 feet to work on bow planes. The lock-nut was cross threaded against the end-plate. This was faulty Mare Island work, Job Order No. L1-2203, Code 28354 and cost us one day of patrolling. 20:10 bow planes repaired. Surfaced and headed for life-guard station.

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 03:06 SJ plane contact, 14,000 yards. 03:50 SD plane contact, 44,000 yards. 05:21 made a trim dive and at 06:13 surfaced. The B-29's appeared overhead throughout the morning.

08:30 patrolling on life-guard station. The Officer of the Deck sighted mine and exploded it with 20mm gun-fire.

10:30 secured from life-guard station and submerged.

18:30 surfaced and headed for Bungo Suido. The Officer of the Deck sighted float type plane distance eight miles, submerged. 19:28 surfaced, sea is flat, calm and the moon is bright. 20:39 SJ radar plane contact, 2,100 yards, submerged and at 21:01 surfaced

21:50 torpedo contact on TDM, dived, torpedo passed ahead. Rigged for silent running. All clear on sound. Gato opened to the east and at 23:25 surfaced.

April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 01:06 Torpedo on TDM, dived, torpedo passed down port side. This is getting exasperating. We cannot get any SJ contacts on our friends. They are probably midget subs along whose scouting line we had unfortunately laid our base course. The Arma Course Clock and TDM have saved our necks tonight.

02:21 surfaced and cleared the area to eastward on four main engines. Cannot get into Bungo tonight, will patrol off Ashizuri Saki. At 04:00 Gato submerged.

19:40 surfaced, bright moonlight and flat calm sea. 22:02 SJ radar plane contact, six miles closing fast, submerged. 22:57 all clear and Gato surfaced.

April 24<sup>th</sup>, 02:15 detected SJ plane contact, three miles, submerged. An electric cable through the conning tower developed a bad leak around its packing gland. 05:30 leak is repaired, but it is too light for surfacing. We will stay down. Seas are flat calm

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

19:50 surfaced. 23:06 SJ plane contact, six miles, closing, submerged. 23:38 surfaced, sea is calm with a bright moon.

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 04:27 submerged, heading into Okino Shima. Wind and sea conditions three. Making periscope sweeps every ten minutes. Spent the day patrolling inside the hundred fathom curve between Okino Shima and Ashizuri between four and ten miles from the beach. 19:49 surfaced and opened out on four main engines proceeding to life guard station.

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 04:35 arrived on life-guard point and submerged. 07:00 surfaced ten miles off Van Diemen Strait. Established communications with our B-29. Also have P-51's in the area. Wind force 5, sea state five from the east. Low visibility.

08:57 the B-29 told us we were all clear and it was leaving. Put two men on deck and repacked the DRT cable. Found that it had no outside packing at all. This was the work of Navy Yard, Mare Island. We could not make out our Mustang cover although we had friendly IFF. Felt justified in accomplishing some more top-side work and repaired No. 4 FBT vent.

10:11 Japanese are jamming 4474. Evidently the B-29's are finished and the P-51's are over their targets. Cloudhopper 4 told us a chicken was down in our vicinity and that he had no more information.

11:21 asked the Atule if they had any more information about chicken. They didn't. We don't have anything to go on. Visibility is low and seas are rough.

11:40 decided to remain here and wait for amplifying data from ComSubPac tonight. We will conduct search tonight and tomorrow on his information. Cannot understand why the Mustangs couldn't give us some approximate information on the location of the plane. Submerged and opened to the east.

19:56 surfaced, bright moon and flat calm sea. 22:14 plane contact distance 15 miles. We headed for life guard station.

April 27<sup>th</sup>, 01:46 detected plane at three miles, submerged. 02:23 surfaced and at 04:30 submerged. 07:57 surfaced on life guard station. Established communications with planes.

09:42 plane down 200° (T) distance 56 miles. Put on four main engines, blew everything dry and manned bridge guns. Do not plan to be forced down. 10:30 a Zero entered the scene, looked and departed. Our cover did not see him.

12:55 arrived in the area. Three B-29's are circling. They have done a very nice job of conning me. Sea state two and wind force is 2. Sighted survivor in a one-man raft. He saw us started waving his life belt.

13:00 recovered Corporal Cloice Gene Tarn, USAAF, 39<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 62<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron, who had been in the water three hours. Sighted second survivor and recovered Sergeant David L. Hirsch, USAAF. Sighted an empty life raft and sank it with gun-fire.

13:26 sighted third survivor and recovered 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Frank Lemont Johnson, USAAF of the same unit. He discovered us only after we vented 1 & 2 main ballast tanks alongside him. Our Coding Board is now complete. At this time we were 22 miles southeast of Toi Misaki.

13:52 completed search of the area. Headed for point where this plane crashed.

14:30 arrived at gasoline slick. Sighted wreckage of plane. Its bombs, which had failed to release over the target, exploded when plane crashed. Four of the crew jumped. One chute did not open. The rest did not get out. We took Kodachrome movies of the recovery which we hope will turn out. 15:15 submerged, plane cover has been gone for an hour.

19:51 surfaced, bright moon, flat calm sea. Received notice to be on same life guard station tomorrow. Sighted a plane at five miles, submerged. This guy always gets us when we are on the finishing rate of the battery charge. 23:06 surfaced and detected a plane at eight miles, moved out. 23:37 plane at seven miles.

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 04:30 submerged. 07:58 surfaced on lifeguard station. Contacted Dumbo

10:15 intercepted message on 4474 kcs that a plane had ditched 75 miles bearing 160° (T) from Tosaki Hane. Told plane, bent on four engines, blow everything and headed for point. 12:46 ordered our covering Dumbo to investigate this point. Our other Dumbo never had shown up. 13:03 our Dumbo reported he saw nothing at this point. Dumbo then returned to base.

14:19 received message from ComSubPac that our plane was 35 miles from Tosaki Hanna on the same bearing. We have an eighty mile goose-chase. Decided to search first report position anyway as it was close by. 14:37 no signs of downed plane. Headed for new point.

18:21 commenced searching at new point running 16 to 20 miles from Toi Misaki. 19:46 forced down by planes. 19:54 surfaced, bright moon and flat calm sea.

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

21:15 A Betty passed down port side at 200 yards. We were heading up-moon. Submerged and decided that in as much as we were getting coverage in the morning to stay down all night at 55 feet. Keep an ST-watch and get some rest. For seven out of the past nine nights we have been forced down by night planes. The planes don't bother us as much during the day as they do at night.

April 29<sup>th</sup>, received message from ComSubPac to take life guard at survivor's position. 07:53 surfaced on new life guard station after a good night sleep. Established communications with our Dumbo who commenced giving us courses to steer. The day is clear and the sea is flat.

09:47 plane Mascot 5 reported to our Dumbo and us that survivors were in the water. Dumbo has the Conn and also has no IFF. 10:16 our Dumbo has led us to a point five miles from Toi Misaki. Kyushu is nicely visible for navigational purposes. At this time he changed our course to south. We are still on four main engines, everything is blown up and the bridge 20mm and 40mm are manned. Our Dumbo has reported bandits in the area.

10:22 Dumbo changed our course to 140° (T). I do not want to get forced down until after we get the survivors.

10:57 a float type Zeke entered the scene on our port beam distance three miles. Dumbo saw him and we both opened fire simultaneously. Our 20 and 40mm tracers were meeting him nicely but he kept on coming. At 60 degrees position angle he nosed over and headed down at us. We were doing alright until we saw two bombs released from his belly, with a zero angle on the bow.



Mitsubishi A6M5 Zero "Zeke" Fighter

10:58 put rudder hard left, yelled 'Take Cover' and proceeded to carry out my orders. The first bomb exploded to starboard and the second about two feet astern. We resumed revenge fire.

Zeke pulled out of his dive, climbed up to a thousand feet and did a nice wing over for a strafing run. Cleared the bridge. Dumbo had only got in an initial burst and was trying to maneuver.

Put rudder amidships, dived and let Dumbo shoot to his heart's content. This is interesting work, but I feel we need a little more fire power to exploit it successfully.

Submerged and arrived at 150 feet to take stock of the situation. Discovered that our camera fan, Ensign Lloyd Greene, USNR had been taking movies of the proceedings up until the time of 'Bombs Away'. Our mess-boy, Port 20mm loader, beat gravity in clearing the bridge but left the metal part of his helmet up there. Rang through the main power circuits, found everything all right.

11:25 surfaced and now we have two Dumbos and no Zekes. Went to four main engines to reach survivors. Dumbo told us there are no bandits in the area. 12:14 Boxkite 45 has a survivor in sight to the north. We are to steer 340° (T). Put three main engines on propulsion, heading for the survivors.

12:30 float Zeke returned for some more of the same. Dived, I am beginning to doubt the efficiency of our Dumbos.

14:00 surfaced, our Dumbos have gone home. Put four main engines on the line and headed up on 340° (T). Sighted airplane debris and a life raft.

14:56 picked up Sergeant Jack Cannon, 499 Group, 877<sup>th</sup> bomber Squadron USAAF. Dumbo had dropped him a seven man raft and he was fixed for thirty days. He crashed yesterday. As we were twelve miles from the beach he thought we were Japanese. He had covered the raft with his blue blankets and lowered his sail, trying to make himself inconspicuous. Later he said that when he saw us getting closer he resigned himself to his fate, took a drink out of his canteen and waited for the machine gun bullets. He was the last of the only six to jump. His chute opened just before he hit the water. Apparently he jumped from 500 feet at an air speed of 240 mph. That would put the others within five miles to the north

Sank raft and continued search along best estimate line of parachute drop which was 340° (T). Sea is flat, visibility excellent. Searched west for three miles and then north for four miles to within eight miles of the beach. Headed east and then north zig zagging across plane track and current set.

15:44 sighted 20 Betty planes, they are looking for us or for Okinawa. Dived. 17:00 surfaced and continued search

18:32 have searched an area eighteen by twelve miles. It is too dark to see, so headed away from the beach. Dumbo had reported only this survivor in the water. Talking it over with the other aviators later, I believe the following happened:

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

This plane was badly hit over Miyazaki which they were bombing from 15,000 feet. The right hand engines were out. The pilot headed out over the water. They were losing altitude fast and at 2,000 feet the alarm bell was sounded. Five jumped ahead of Cannon, who pulled his rip cord on jumping. He is small and the high speed of the plane did not cause his shroud to break when the chute opened. His chute opened just before he hit the water and it carried him under long enough that when he reached the surface he could not see the plane whose debris was around him. The others who jumped were heavier by thirty pounds, he said. If they delayed pulling their rip cords too much, they'd be too late.

If they pulled their rip cords before their bodies lost their high lateral speed, the shock of the chute opening would snap their necks and break their shrouds. They had 2,000 feet or less in which to balance these two factors at a speed of 240 or more miles per hour. Considering the above, and the report of Dumbo who was at 1,000 foot when he dropped the raft, I don't believe there were any survivors. I write this dissertation for the benefit of others who may have to make the hard decision of breaking off the search

Search accordingly and found not a thing. Attempted to contact Dumbo, no luck. Upon conference with there survivors the following came out: They started parachuting at 13,000 feet plane speed 250 mph. Last chute went out a 9,000 feet. We had four from the nose, including pilot and bombardier. We had two from the center section. Pilot believes navigator's chute did not open, and that the tail gunner did not jump. Co-pilot was a highly nervous type and may have not pulled chute or may have been dragged under. The radar operator and central fire control man who dropped first were cool and could possibly have headed for the beach. A marine diesel engine was heard during the night and the others believe these two could have also been picked up by a Japanese patrol boat. They are not in this area.

19:19 surfaced and opened out. Attempted to inform ComSubPac but we were in a complete radio blind spot and could raise no one. Opened out to get clear. SD radar is out of commission.

May 1<sup>st</sup>, 00:55 succeeded in transmitting survivor report to ComSubPac. Base Radio Station of Commander Utility Wing relayed it for us. This is the first time I have seen the phenomena of a complete radio transmitting black-out.

04:32 submerged to head for the hundred fathom curve. Will search all probable points of any aviators we may have missed from the plane crash of the 29<sup>th</sup>.

09:39 surfaced with Toi Misaki bearing 258, distance 12 miles. Seas are state four, wind force five from the south. It's bad weather for one-man life rafts. Headed up along the hundred fathom curve which covers the current path quick accurately, also the path of downed aviators.

11:50 we have searched along the curve for 15 miles and have looked into 80 fathoms to give eight mile lateral coverage for the best estimated position. Nothing shows up. Pilot and myself are satisfied that the six we have recovered are the only ones around. Submerged to start a fuel economy program. We have used half our fuel life guarding.

These planes that crashed were badly hit over the target and just made it to sea. Lt. Fisher evidently was the only one of the three pilots to make the correct estimate and get his people out. He was the last of those who left the ship. Since receiving the report on the Nachi mine chart, I don't feel justified in going deep across the hundred fathom cures.

It is an exasperating block that I can't see to get around. For the present I'll confine my patrol to Okino Shima. 19:40 surfaced and headed for Bungo Suido

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 04:25 submerged to patrol in northern half of Bungo Suido. 19:54 surfaced. 22:32 friendly radar interference, probably the Atule.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 00:40 SJ contact and friendly radar flashes 165° (T), 11,000 yards. Exchanged recognition signals with Atule. 02:40 Atule now 7,000 yards, 115° (T) from us. Opened to the west. 04:31 submerged to patrol in western half of Bungo Suido.

20:01 surfaced. 23:32 plane on SD at 17 miles. 23:47 planes on SD at seven and 12 miles. Closed to four miles. Submerged, these may be our own but they show no IFF.

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 00:25 more planes on SD radar at two miles. 00:50 surfaced, planes at 4, 12 and 14 miles. These are probably ours, but they show on IFF.

01:02 one plane coming in. Cleared the bridge and tried to establish IFF. No success. I can hear his engines and whether ours or Japanese, we submerged with plane overhead. I'll wait until this raid is over. Held a conference with our aviators to find if they could distinguish between the sound of a B-29 and a Japanese plane. Decided that this would be too uncertain.

03:05 surfaced, the raid is over. 04:25 submerged to patrol in western half of the Bongo Suido. 20:01 surfaced, Atule bearing 185° (T), 11,800 yards,

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 04:00 plane on SJ, distance three and a half miles. Submerged. Atule will be on surface for two hours, twelve miles south of Okino. Using her for bait, will attempt to catch any small-fry the Japanese may send out to chase her. 10:30 sighted unidentified plane. 16:14 sighted a Betty. 19:50 a submarine surfaced by day in Bungo Suido evidently rates only a float Zeke. Surfaced.

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

May 6<sup>th</sup>, 04:15 submerged for patrol in western half of Bungo Suido. 10:00 sighted unidentified plane. 20:00 surfaced.

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 02:54 plane on SJ radar, six miles, submerged. 04:00 while attempting to surface, discovered we had Atule at 130°, five miles. We were in good position for the day's patrol and in order to avoid confusing the issue for Atule, decided to remain submerged. She is acting as bait again today.

19:00 the Japanese has sent nothing out to intercept Atule. With great disgust, we surfaced.

May 8<sup>th</sup>, for the past six days we have been diving in the southwestern part of Bungo Suido, riding with the current along the hundred fathom curve to the center entrance. We then buck the current and open to the south. Some of our aviators had sighted anything in Bungo on their raids except by Okino and that is the Atule's bailiwick. I don't feel justified in entering mineable waters unless there is a target. The planes we have around this area should be able to keep us informed of this situation. Therefore we will confine our patrol to the most probable sortie point of Japanese naval units.

04:10 submerged, Atule is bait again today. We will cover her approach routes. Sea state is 1.

May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, conducted submerged patrol of Bungo Suido.

May 11<sup>th</sup>, 02:40 exchanged calls with Atule by SJ radar. We will exchange sides of Bungo Suido on the 14<sup>th</sup>. 04:04 submerged, sea state is 2. 18:00 distant explosions. Planed up to thirty feet to make SJ sweep. No contacts. 19:00 surfaced.

May 12<sup>th</sup>, 04:04 submerged, sea state 2. 20:02 surfaced and planes are dropping flares over Kyushu, then they started bombing. This continued intermittently throughout the night.

May 13<sup>th</sup>, our carrier planes are hitting southern Kyushu today. If the Japanese comes out, he'll probably be in an anti-aircraft disposition. The only waters large enough to support that type of sortie are the center channel. Therefore we will patrol accordingly. This will also give us good coverage across the entire entrance. 03:50 submerged, sea state is 3.

13:20 for the past twelve days we have been going our best to remain undetected and at the same time cover the most probable sortie route of the remaining Japanese fleet. This has entailed sixteen-hour daily dives which invariably covered a line west of Okino Shima across the entrance to Bungo Suido. It was with a feeling of the man who held best to the winning lottery ticket that I watched a flight of some three hundred F8F Bearcat Fighters, TBF Avengers and dive bombers come sauntering out over Bungo on course 180° (T).

It is obvious that they have been up to no good in the Inland Sea and that our chances for a crack at the remaining Japanese Fleet are fast going by the board. With little grace of good humor, raised the SD mast and set a watch on the life guard frequency. Perhaps we can salvage something from this situation in the form of new members (aviators) for the Coding Board, Sea is flat, visibility is good, no downed aviators in sight.

20:05 surfaced, heavy Japanese interference on the life guard frequency. 22:28 plane at two miles, no IFF and had to submerged. 22:50 surfaced, own planes are around tonight. We are not diving for them unless they indicate Japanese radar on the APR.

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 00:01 several planes at 15 miles with friendly IFF. 00:15 some flashes to the north. 02:40 sighted flare over a Kyushu airfield.

03:35 plane on SJ radar, three miles. Unfriendly radar so we submerged. 03:45 surfaced and detected plane on SJ radar at ten miles.

04:17 submerged to resume patrol west of Okino Shima. Sea state 1.

May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, conducted submerged patrols in Bungo Suido.

May 17, 00:25 plane contact on SJ radar, ten miles. 01:05 friendly IFF at four miles. 03:59 submerged for daily patrol and surfaced at 19:59. Received message from ComSubPac directing Gato to depart station on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>, proceed to Saipan and then to Pearl.

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 04:04 submerged to patrol in Bungo Suido. 19:57 friendly ST radar interference, bearing 180° (T). Cannot contact, but it is probably the U.S.S. Toro SS-422. Surfaced on course 135° (T). Put four engines on propulsion to get clear of the Toro.

20:41 Passed Okino Shima abeam to port, 18 miles. The night is exceptionally clear and the seas are calm. 22:23 exchanged recognition signals and call with the U.S.S. Jack SS-259. 23:50 strong APR signals, Japanese plane radar.

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 00:10 a plane headed for us, distance three miles, submerged. At 00:50 surfaced. 01:45 our plane is back. 02:04 plane is closing, distance three miles, submerged. The moon is still bright. At 02:45 surfaced. 03:20 plane returned once more and we submerged. 04:05 after unsuccessfully trying to box us in, plane gave up and headed home. Returned to four engine speed. 13:00 submerged and at 15:07 surfaced and returned to four engine speed.

May 20<sup>th</sup>, transited on surface at four engine speed.

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

May 21<sup>st</sup>, 21:39 sent serial two to CTG 17.7, sighted various friendly planes. No mention of them will be made unless they effect Gato's operations

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 00:50 unidentified radar contact on SJ at 31,000 yards. Believed to be a very large ship. At 00:59 submerged for trim. 02:04 surfaced and resumed four engine speed.

03:44 SJ radar contact on our escort, PC-1082, at 17,000 yards. Exchanged recognition signals. 03:51 set course for Tanapag Harbor, Saipan Island.

07:53 Moored alongside U.S.S. Orion AS-18 in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan. Fueled ship and supplemented our provisions with fresh. Received two enlisted passengers on board from SubDiv-162 Relief Crew. Transferred one man for treatment of infected foot and received on board one man as a replacement.

May 24<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H., in accordance with CTG 17.7 Operation Memorandum, dated 23 May 1945, in company with U.S.S. LCI-1098 as escort. 14: 40 released escort.

May 25<sup>th</sup>, in transit.

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 07:01 exchange recognition signals with the U.S.S. Haddo SS-255. 07:13 commenced acting as target for a sound approach by the Haddo at her request to check her sound gear.

09: 28 sighted friendly submarine on horizon. Unable to exchange recognition signals. Believed it to be either the U.S.S. Sea Devil SS-400 or the U.S.S. Ronquil SS-396.

May 27<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>, in transit. On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 15:40 sighted a life raft bearing 350° (T). Upon investigation, found it empty. Continued in transit.

June 1<sup>st</sup>, received ComSubPacAdCom dispatch ordering rendezvous with U.S.S. Silversides SS-236 to receive an appendicitis case. Changed speed to four engine speed.

09:50 made rendezvous with Silversides and received man onboard.

14:36 received ComSubPacAdCom message ordering rendezvous with U.S.S. Vinton (AKA-83) to effect transfer of our recently acquired appendicitis case. Changed course toward rendezvous position at four engine speed.

18:57 detected the Vinton on SJ radar, range 29,000 yards. Commenced tracking.

20:45 transferred appendicitis case to the Vinton and received in exchange five gallons of ice cream. 22:45 entered Joint Zone and set course for Pearl rendezvous position at four engine speed.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, in transit.

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 07:00 contacted and made rendezvous with escort, PC-483. 10:30 Moored at U. S. Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, T. H.

### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Twelfth Patrol:**

#### **Commanding Officer U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) Twelfth War Patrol Report Para (V) Remarks**

For lifeguard duties I believe it should be impressed on the covering planes that their primary mission is to locate survivors and then direct the submarine to them. Their services as fighters are required only when the submarine is actually picking up personnel.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April our covering plane acted primarily as a fighter cover. As a result we passed between two groups of survivors, each distant from us about fifteen miles. Each group heard out gunfire, yet our covering plane did not see them because it was at an approximate altitude of three thousand feet, acting as an Anti-Aircraft ship. The sea was flat calm. Subsequent rescues were executed eight and twenty-four hours later without benefit of air coverage.

It is recommended that photo static track chart reproductions be included in the Area Digests. I believe that this would be of great assistance to the Commanding Officers in determining their hunting points.

Unfortunately the Japanese did not choose our patrol period nor our patrol station to effect a sortie of their major naval units. I am sorry, for we have fine tools of attack, and opportunities for their employment are fast disappearing.

#### **Commander Submarine Division One Hundred Three**

The twelfth war patrol of the Gato was the first for Lieutenant Commander R. Holden as Commanding Officer and was conducted in the Bungo Suido area. It was of fifty-three days duration, thirty of which were spent in the area. Twenty-three days were spent submerged.

There were no ship contacts but while on life guard station, by intelligent planning and searching, ten aviators were rescued on three separate occasions. Three on 27 April, one on 29 April and six on 30 April. These aviators will now be able to carry more destruction to the Jap homeland.

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

The commanding officer's intelligent use of the TDM probably saved his ship on the nights of 22 and 23 April.

Although not included in the patrol report the commanding officer recommends that submarines assigned life guard station be issued additional blood plasma. It is therefore recommended that submarines departing on life guard mission be issued a double supply of blood plasma

Communications via the ST radar while submerged is noted.

The Gato returned from patrol in excellent material condition and above average in cleanliness. Refit will be accomplished in time by Submarine Division One Hundred Three Relief Crew and the Submarine Base

The Division Commander congratulates the Commanding Officer, officers and crew of the U.S.S. Gato upon completion of this arduous patrol.

#### **Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 15 June 1945**

The twelfth war patrol of the Gato, under command of Lieutenant Commander R. Holden, U.S. Navy, was conducted in the vicinity of Bungo Suido. In addition to offensive patrol the Gato was employed for lifeguard services.

During this long arduous patrol area coverage was good, and the Gato had the pleasure of rescuing ten aviators. Smart seamanship, excellent navigation, coordination of movement with air cover, and determination in the face of the enemy air anti submarine activity were responsible for these rescues. Except in unusual circumstances, submarines should not engage in gun battles with aircraft. The lack of anti-aircraft fire power and the vulnerability to damage by bombing, strafing and suicide attacks outweigh the damage that may be done to the enemy.

The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the commanding officer, officers and crew of the Gato on the completion of this well conducted patrol; and hopes that suitable targets will be available to them on future patrols.

#### **Awards**

Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for the Okinawa Gunto Operation Assault  
and occupation of Okinawa Gunto – 18 April to 18 May 1945

Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
13 April – 3 June 1945

### **Refit – 4 June 1945 – 7 July 1945**

Commenced normal refit under the administration of the Commander Submarine Squadron Ten and Commander Submarine Division One Hundred and Three.

The following major items were accomplished by the U.S. Submarine Base and Submarine Division One Hundred Three Relief Crew:

- Installed 40mm gun on forward cigarette deck replacing the single 20 mm gun.
- Installed twin 20 mm gun on main deck forward replacing single 20 mm gun.
- Removed and reinstalled all torpedo tube shutters, built up and recut the roller paths. Overhauled operating valves.
- Installed spindle-type firing valves.
- Modified stop rod, No. 7 torpedo tube, for silent firing of the Mk 27 torpedoes.
- Installed additional Mare Island Type DRT in control room.
- Overhauled No. 3 and No. 4 main engine and the auxiliary engine.
- Installed JA sound powered telephone outlet at gyro indicators.
- Installed the Depth Charge Direction Indicator (DCDI). This indicator is a sonar device used to indicate to a submarine conning officer the general direction of depth charge explosions occurring in his vicinity. By noting which three out of a bank of six indicating lamps are illuminated by the explosion, the officer can tell if it was port or starboard, above or below, and ahead or astern.
- Installed protected dome over QB sound head.
- Installed JP intercommunication system.
- Installed the new SD-5 radar Surface Search Radar
- Installed APR-5AX Radar Countermeasures

Twelfth Patrol (13 April 1945 – 3 June 1945)

- Installed cable trunk and spare hull stuffing tubes between the conning tower and the control room.

LT M. A. Ellis, USNR radar officer was detached and LTjg J. R. Schumacher, USNR reported onboard for duty.

Gunnerymate C. H. Tate, USN accepted appointment as Warrant Gunner and reported to the commanding officer for duty.

June 25<sup>th</sup>, Gato conducted post repair trials and cavitation tests. Excessive noise was discovered in the port shaft. An extension of the refit was granted in order to correct it.

July 26<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>, made repairs to the port propeller shaft

June 30<sup>th</sup>, conducted the remainder of post repair trials, deep dive and sound tests.

July 1<sup>st</sup>, commenced a five day training period with Commander Submarine Division One Hundred and Three, Captain W. H. Brockman, Jr. USN as training Officer. Eight exercise torpedoes were fired by the Gato at escorted targets.

July 6<sup>th</sup>, loaded out six Mark 14 torpedoes.

July 7<sup>th</sup>, Gato reported 'Ready for Sea'.

**Thirteenth Patrol The Last Patrol – 8 July 1945 – 12 September 1945**

On July 8<sup>th</sup> at 13:30 Gato was underway for Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, in accordance with ComSubPacAdComd Operations Order #134-A-45 of 7 July 1945 in company with the Patrol Craft 602 as escort. Started school of the boat. 16:10 made trim dive and at 20:16 released the escort.

July 9<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. 08:50 exchanged recognition signals and calls with the U.S.S. Piranha SS-389. 13:11 made a trim dive and exercised the tracking party.

July 10<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. 15:35 exercise at Battle Stations Gun. Test-fired the 5" gun. Exercised the tracking party and made a trim dive.

July 11<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. 08:25 detected a SJ radar contact 278° (T), distance 1,900 yards. Submerged and contact was unidentified. Surfaced and exercised aircraft rescue party. 15:35 exercise the tracking party.

July 12<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area.

July 13<sup>th</sup>, at 07:58 made trim dive. 14:00 exercised the aircraft rescue, boarding and tracking parties. At 23:38 received ComSubPac serial 76 message designating Gato for life-guard duty at Wake Island.

July 14<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area.. Exercised the tracking party.

July 15<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. 15:43 exercised the tracking party. Took departure from assigned route to head for Wake Island.

July 16<sup>th</sup>, transiting to patrol area. 05:38 submerged to determine what arguments the Japanese had against close-in rescue work. The battery of guns at the south-west end of Wilkes Island is quite impressive. Nothing at the south dock. A freighter is piled up on the south reef. Beaches appear to be well covered with barbed wire and mines. 20:11 surfaced and had no indication of Japanese radar.

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 05:38 submerged to investigate the eastern side of Wake. One truck was seen moving down the beach. Another battery of guns was found on Peacock Point. I don't envy these Japanese their shore duty.

July 18<sup>th</sup>, 05:30 on lifeguard station. At 07:19 the first school of dive bombers commenced. First group hit the target.

Thirteenth Patrol 8 July 1045 - 12 September 1945

Much sand thrown up but no fires. We were comfortably equipped with two fighters and a PBM Mariner a patrol bomber flying boat. 09:01 second dive bombing commenced. No smoke or fires. 14:00 planes resume bombing. 17:30 last attack on Wake. Japanese ack-ack persisted throughout the day. Evidently no damage inflicted. At 17:34 dismissed our planes and headed for Saipan.

July 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>, transiting to Saipan. 16:00 each day exercised the tracking party.

July 21<sup>st</sup>, transiting to Saipan. Passed two submarines probably the U.S.S. Spot SS-413 and the U.S.S. Sea Owl SS-405. Made a morning trim dive. 14:50 exercised at Battle Stations Gun, and the tracking party. 20:38 exchanged calls via SJ with the U.S.S. Perch SS-178.

July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 15:15 exchanged recognition signals and calls with the U.S.S. Marsh DE-699. Exercised the tracking party.

July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 04:52 picked up escort LCI 1098. 10:22 moored port side to U.S.S. Archerfish SS-311 in nest alongside U.S.S. Orion. Gato received 20 Mk 18-2 torpedoes.

July 25<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 Gato was underway enroute the patrol area in accordance with Commander Task Force Seventeen (CFT-17) operation order No, 169-45. 14:04 dismissed escort and made a trim dive.

19:07 sighted a B-29 circling low over the water. Put on four engine speed and headed for him. Upon establishing communications was informed that he had been sent out to look for a survivor 35 miles west of Alamegan, but did not have him in his sight after one hour search. In as much as he was west of Anatahan, decided to head for us.

21:35 Exchanged call with U.S.S. Pargo SS-264. Pargo had just come through the reported position. Decided to break off the search. There is not enough positive information and we can't waste fuel on goose-chasing.

July 26<sup>th</sup>, 17:19 sighted U.S.S. Threadfin SS-410 and received much-needed seven megohm resistor via line-throwing gun.

July 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>, patrolled in assigned area.

July 30<sup>th</sup>, 03:48 submerged between Inamba Shima and Mikura Shima to work on main hydraulic plant. Shifted main and emergency by-pass valves. 16:36 surfaced. 18:33 sighted and sank mine Lat 33-30'N Long 140-43'E.

21:06 received message from ComSubPac directing Gato to proceed to Area One, Two and Three, arriving on station sunset 1 August. Archerfish will coordinate patrols of Atule and Gato

July 31<sup>st</sup>, 01:50 received message for Archerfish. Gato will have Area Two for first five days. Shift is in numerical order of areas every five days. At 12:25 sighted two 'Betty's' distant eight miles, heading for Honshu. Gato submerged.

At 12:30 a loose link between cells 30 and 31 in the after battery arced when full speed was rung up. The arc burned the duck board, filling vent cap and elbow. 12:46 Gato surfaced and jumpered out cell 30 in the after battery and one cell in the forward battery. Gato will carry this cell at the top of the cycle for the remainder of the patrol and renew the electrolyte during next refit.

At 15:57 sighted a periscope dead ahead distant 1,000 yards. Gato submerged. This periscope was dapped yellow and brown and was similar to our 2.414 inch size. Riggged for silent running and opened to the east. Could hear nothing. At 19:30 Gato surfaced.

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 08:07 sighted and sank mine. 12:50 submerged to work on SD radar. 19:45 repairs completed surfaced.

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 03:02 submerged to patrol off Kobe Zaki. Gato spent the day three miles off the beach, heading north, using the ST radar and sound. No contacts. 19:06 Surfaced and commenced northward search along beach for night shipping. No contacts.

August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 03:28 submerged eight miles northeast of Todo Saki. Headed in to three mile line for southerly patrol along the shore. Heavy fog, using the ST radar and sound.. 10:40 heard three pingers evidently coming out of Yamada Ko. Very low visibility. Two went south and one went north.

At 11:32 surfaced to end-around the two southern ones. Still very foggy. Evidently they are two patrollers. Tracking nicely at speed 9. During this end-around, received indications of ten centimeter radar. Maintained a minimum range of 8,000 yards.

Editor's Note: The following is from U.S.S. Gato's formally Top Secret Report of Firing Mark 27 Torpedoes, Patrol 13 and was not contained with Gato's 13<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Report. It is included here for continuity.

At 13:15 Gato noted the following; sound conditions: excellent; water depth: 90 fathoms; sea conditions: force 1. Two unidentified ships; small believed escort type. QB sound picked up pinging and screws. Heavy fog, visibility zero. This ship is believed to be a Kaibokan.

Thirteenth Patrol 8 July 1045 - 12 September 1945

This type patrols area in pairs and was only typed sighted in area. Radar tracking gave accurate target data. Surface approach is not desirable since fog had been lifting suddenly. Also target had ten cm radar. Could not get firing bearing submerged except by sound. Checked the Target Data Computer solution with sound bearings and fired on computers. range with target on steady course, Angle-on-the-bow 15 degrees port.

13:15 time of fire from tube 7. 13:19:15 time of hit. Characteristic screws on one contact not heard after explosion. Other screws continued. Sound heard explosion and breaking up noises. Explosion was not depth charge.



At 14:08 surfaced in fog. 15:01 fog lifted very quickly. Gato submerged and closed beach.

18:20 sighted single Kaibokan patrolling in the entrance to Ryori Wan. He is pinging as though he had something. 18:22 Kaibokan released a pattern of depth charges and headed north. That should impress the local citizenry with the indomitability of the Grand Escort Fleet.

19:45 Gato surfaced. On examination of our torpedoes which we had made ready during the day, found one completely flooded and the other with a flooded battery compartment. This was caused by leaky hand-hole plates. Commenced examination of all torpedoes. Made night search along the shore, no contacts.

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 03:42 submerged north-east of Todo Saki for a patrol south along the coast. 09:20 heard possible pinging ahead. There is heavy fog. 10:09 surfaced to verify this contact, Nothing on the SJ radar. 10:19 fog lifted abruptly. Submerged and headed back into three mile line. Continuing patrol southward along the three mile line.

15:00 completed torpedo examination. Found no gaskets in four hand-hole plates and eight drain plugs, five joint rings were loose.

At 19:57 Gato surfaced to make night patrol along southern half of Area 2 W. Gato will keep eight miles off the headlands in the hope of SJ contacts. Tomorrow, to cover all bets, Gato will make a day surface patrol; fog permitting, to cover any possible fog routes the Japanese may be using to the east of us. It is possible that he may have cut to sea upon departure from Kinkasan. We have developed no contacts except two patrollers from our present strategy.

August 5<sup>th</sup>, 09:06 the fog lifted. Submerged and headed into Ututsu Saki. Sea flat, visibility good. Making periscope exposures every fifteen minutes, running deep between observations.

12:16 heard pinging. Came to periscope depth and found two Kaibokans to the northeast of us distant 4,500 yards. Went to battle stations, rigged for silent running and started approach. It looks as though they had heard us. Target formed column and moved north of us, range 8,000 yards. They then reversed course and commence to make a circle around us in a clock-wise direction, keeping a radius of about 5,000 yards. Their signal search lights were busy and it looked as though they were fully alerted. They are maneuvering too much for a torpedo shot. Targets are now southwest of us and have changed course towards. This looks like a firing run. Went deep for a special supplement situation (Firing Mark 27 Torpedoes).

13:27 Targets faded out on JP. 13:35 all clear by periscope. The Japanese changed their mind and left the area. 19:54 Gato surfaced. Received message from ComSubPac to be on life guard station off Shiriya Saki on the eight.

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 03:09 submerged off Todo Saki for a patrol southward along the two to three mile line. Sea calm and visibility is good. 11:00 sighted one small sampan in Kamaishi Ko. He is too far in for a gun target. 19:21 sighted unidentified plane through periscope.

19:56 surfaced to clear area. We are supposed to take Area Three for tomorrow and then be in Area One by 04:00 on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Decided to make surface patrol on the 7<sup>th</sup> and head up to our point. At 22:20 converted No.4 Fuel Ballast Tank to a Main Ballast Tank. Submerged to wash out residue fuel oil. At 23:50 exchanged recognition signals with the Atule.

August 7<sup>th</sup>, 08:40 SD radar is out of commission. Submerged to effect repairs. 16:55 repairs completed and Gato surfaced. 17:01 SJ radar interference. Would not reply to any challenge. It may be 3<sup>rd</sup> fleet units.

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 04:00 on life guard station. Weather inclement for air raids. 12:46 sighted formation of six planes. No IFF and they may be Betty's. Submerged until 13:12 and at 14:03 submerged again. No planes have arrived and there has been no traffic over the life-guard circuits.

15:50 weather cleared somewhat. Surfaced and received messaged saying that the carrier strike had been postponed. Submerged until 19:44. Surfaced and sighted searchlights near Ominato.

August 9<sup>th</sup>, 04:00 on life guard station. 07:00 fighter cover appeared. Attack on Ominato commenced. Raids continued throughout the day. Our CAF (Cover Area Fighter) could only stay about ten minutes. The carriers are evidently a great distance away.

14:00 one plane has splashed in Kutu Bay or Mutau Kaiwan. We can not get him. If he can paddle on out he should be in the entrance to Tsugaru Strait in 28 hours. His chances are not so

Thirteenth Patrol 8 July 1945 - 12 September 1945

good. 16:15 our current CAF informed us that this was the last raid of the day and that they were leaving. Gato submerged.

August 10<sup>th</sup>, 04:00 on life guard station. No CAF appeared throughout the day. Our planes returned to Ominato. Either another plane splashed in Mutau Bay or they are orbiting yesterday's survivor. 15:39 received message from ComSubPac assigning Gato to life guard station for August 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. At 16:30 raids completed and we submerged. 19:45 Gato surfaced and will patrol in Uchiura Bay tomorrow. Gato hopes to catch any shipping that may try to clear carrier target areas of Ominator or Hakodate.

August 11<sup>th</sup>, 03:20 Gato submerged to conduct patrol in Uchiura Tan from Suna Suki to Oujiri Wan. This is along the southwest shore and should be the shipping route.

At 12:15 became involved in a series of fish traps. Went deep and cleared the traps. 18:18 sighted ship due north distance about 12,000 yards. Battle stations, angle-on-the-bow is large and starboard. 18:26 ship is a destroyer. His track lies directly in the route from Uroran to Esan Saki and Gato is six miles from it. He is constant helming at about 13 knots. 18:51 Gato's decision to patrol off Suna Saki has cost her an Auteu class destroyer. The only consolation is that Gato found where the traffic was running. Target has rounded Esan Saki, probably for Ominato. 19:47 surfaced and headed for lifeguard station off Shiriya Saki. 22:07 received ComSubPac serial 25 message canceling air strikes because of a typhoon.

August 12<sup>th</sup>, 07:00 seas are making up. We will make a surface patrol today across the entrance to Tsugaru Strait. 16:24 received contact report from the Atule saying that a two ship convoy should round Erimo Sai about 17:00. Put on four engine speed and headed for intercept point three miles off Crakawa Ko. 18:18 land is visible, distance 10,000 yards. Submerged and headed into beach. 18:40 visibility is very poor. Headed southeast paralleling the beach, distance two to three miles. 20:15 no contacts. Surfaced with radar flashes bearing 250° (T). Exchanged calls with the Atule. Commenced a retiring search curve at four engine speed. Atule is taking the area to north and west of us.

August 13<sup>th</sup>, 01:12 received Atule's contact on two patrollers. This is not their original contact. Headed in to Uchiura Wan to continue search for initial Atule contact. Heard several distant explosions. 03:43 Submerged to patrol along route from Muroran to Esan Saki. Visibility poor, seas about number 5. 19:56 Surfaced. No contacts throughout the day. Headed to patrol off Shiriya Saki.

August 14<sup>th</sup>, 03:24 submerged with Shiriya Saki bearing 330° (T), distance seven miles. Patrolling two to three miles off-shore. 19:47 Surfaced to patrol this area again tomorrow.

August 15<sup>th</sup>, 03:34 submerged. It is foggy and visibility is poor. 11:23 sighted large sea truck heading south, distance 8,000 yards. Went to Battle Stations Torpedo. Range is too great to shoot and the target is now behind the minefield. Opened out for an end-around. There is a spot to the south where we can catch him at about 15:30 either with torpedoes or gun.

12:13 surfaced on four main engines. Started an end-around approach. At 12:27 received ComSubPac Serial 32 directing all submarines to cease all attacks. Read same to crew over the 1 MC. Secured from Battle Stations, badly disgruntled that peace had caught us holding bead on the vermin. 12:50 Plane contact six miles. Submerged to cogitate on the vagaries of fate. At 15:33 we surfaced.

August 16<sup>th</sup>, at 02:20 received ComSubPac serial 36 message directing us to Area 3. Proceeding to Area 3. Sighted and exploded a mine. At 15:27 received ComSubPac serial 36 directing us to Area 1. Sighted and sank another mine.

August 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> transiting to area 1. On the 17<sup>th</sup> made a morning trim dive and surfaced. Sighted and exploded another mine.

August 19<sup>th</sup>, 04:31 friendly SJ radar interference on the SJ radar. Believe it to be the Archerfish. Decided to contact her and exchange movies. 05:05 SJ radar interference disappeared. 12:30 sighted Archerfish surfacing 10,000 yards. Exchanged recognition signals and call sings. 13:30 completed exchange of movies. Gato will patrol Area One west of Longitude 143°E while Archerfish patrols east of 143°E.

August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, patrolled area and on August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 20:00 received ComSubPac serial 50 message designation rendezvous on the 28 August 1945 and informing us that Gato will be part of the submarine delegation at Tokyo Harbor for the formal surrender of Japan.

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 07:49 sighted single 'Betty' breaking through overcast three miles. 07:50 submerged to conduct submerged patrol. 16:11 surfaced.

August 24<sup>th</sup>, 06:56 sighted two sampans 12,000 yards. Maneuvered to avoid. 07:37 sighted third sampan and maneuvered to avoid.

August 25<sup>th</sup>, 21:55 received Tigrone's serial five message reporting north-bound ship along coast. Maneuvered to intercept.

August 26<sup>th</sup>, 00:43 SJ contact 19,450 yards. Commenced tracking. Target was large as evidence by the long-band contact by SJ. It rounded Shiriya Saki and set course. It is believed that he was heading for Hakodate. 01:53 lost contact at 23,000 yards.

Thirteenth Patrol 8 July 1045 - 12 September 1945

August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, patrolled on station. On the 28<sup>th</sup> at 04:30 made rendezvous with the Tigrone and exchanged movies.

August 29<sup>th</sup>, 07:05 submerged for trim and surfaced at 07:55. 23:32 exchanged recognition signals and call signs with the U.S.S. Cavalla SS-244 by SJ radar.

August 30<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 made rendezvous in accordance with ComSubPac serial 50 and 65 messages. Received Benny's Peace Makers Op-order #1-45 from the U.S.S. Runner by line and was underway for Tokyo.

Editor's Note: Raymond Henry "Benny" Bass was only 5-6 tall and 130 lbs., but competed as both a boxer and a wrestler at the U.S. Naval Academy. Rope climbing enabled him to develop an impressive pair of shoulders. Rope climbing led to a gold medal in the Olympics in his only serious year of competition in that sport. He was named "Benny" by his Naval Academy classmates because of a supposed resemblance to the professional boxer, Benny Leonard. During World War II he was the commander of the U.S.S. Plunger SS-179. He was the only American submarine skipper to survive two missions into the Sea of Japan and was slated for a third mission when the war ended. After the Japanese surrender, Bass, Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Runner, led 12 submarines, dubbed "Benny's Peacemakers," into Tokyo Bay.

### **Tokyo Bay 31 August – 2 September 1945**

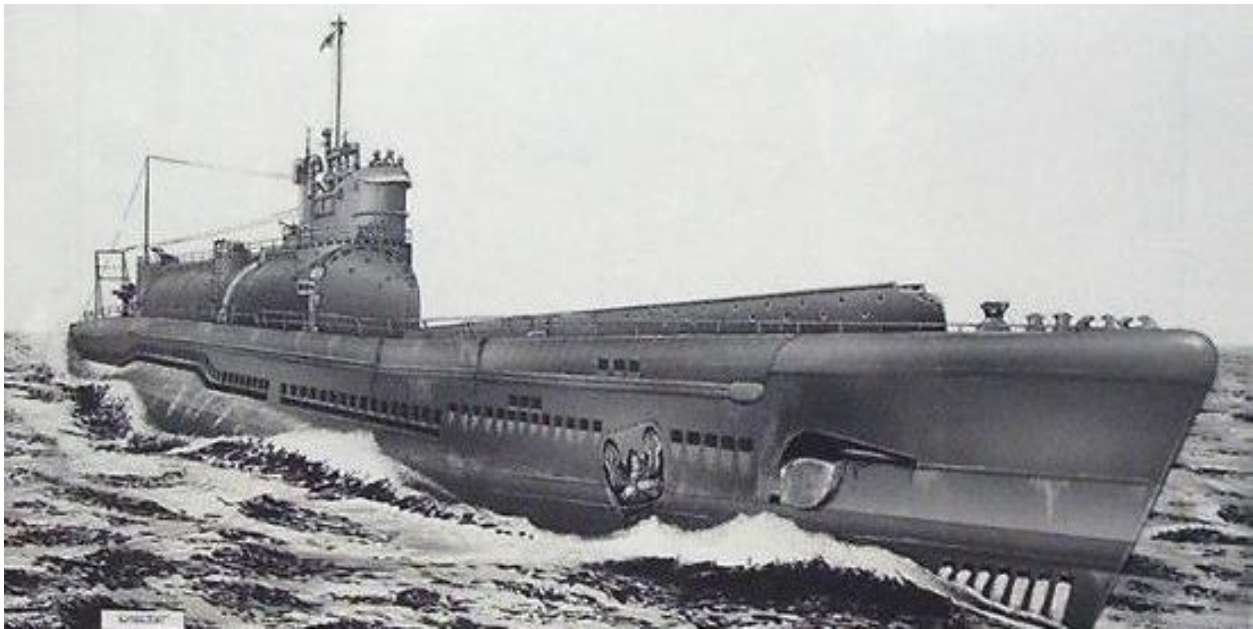
August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, moored alongside U.S.S. Proteus AS-19 in Tokyo Bay. Commenced overhaul of the No. 1 Main Engine. During this period the Japanese Battleship Nagato, Submarines I-400, I-401 and Submarine Base, Yokosuka, Japan were inspected by all hands.

The Japanese Battleship Nagato was the flagship of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Other than participating in the Battle of Midway in June 1942, where she did not see any combat, the ship spent most of the first two years of the Pacific War training in home waters. She was transferred to Truk in mid-1943, but did not see any combat until the Battle of the Philippine Sea in mid-1944 when she was attacked by American aircraft. Nagato did not fire her main armament against enemy vessels until the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944. She was lightly damaged during the battle and returned to Japan the following month for repairs. The Japan was running out of fuel by this time and decided not to fully repair her.

Nagato was converted into a floating anti-aircraft platform and assigned to coastal defense duties. In mid-1946, the ship was a target for nuclear weapon tests during Operation Crossroads. She survived the first test with little damage, but was sunk by the second test.



Japanese Battleship Nagato

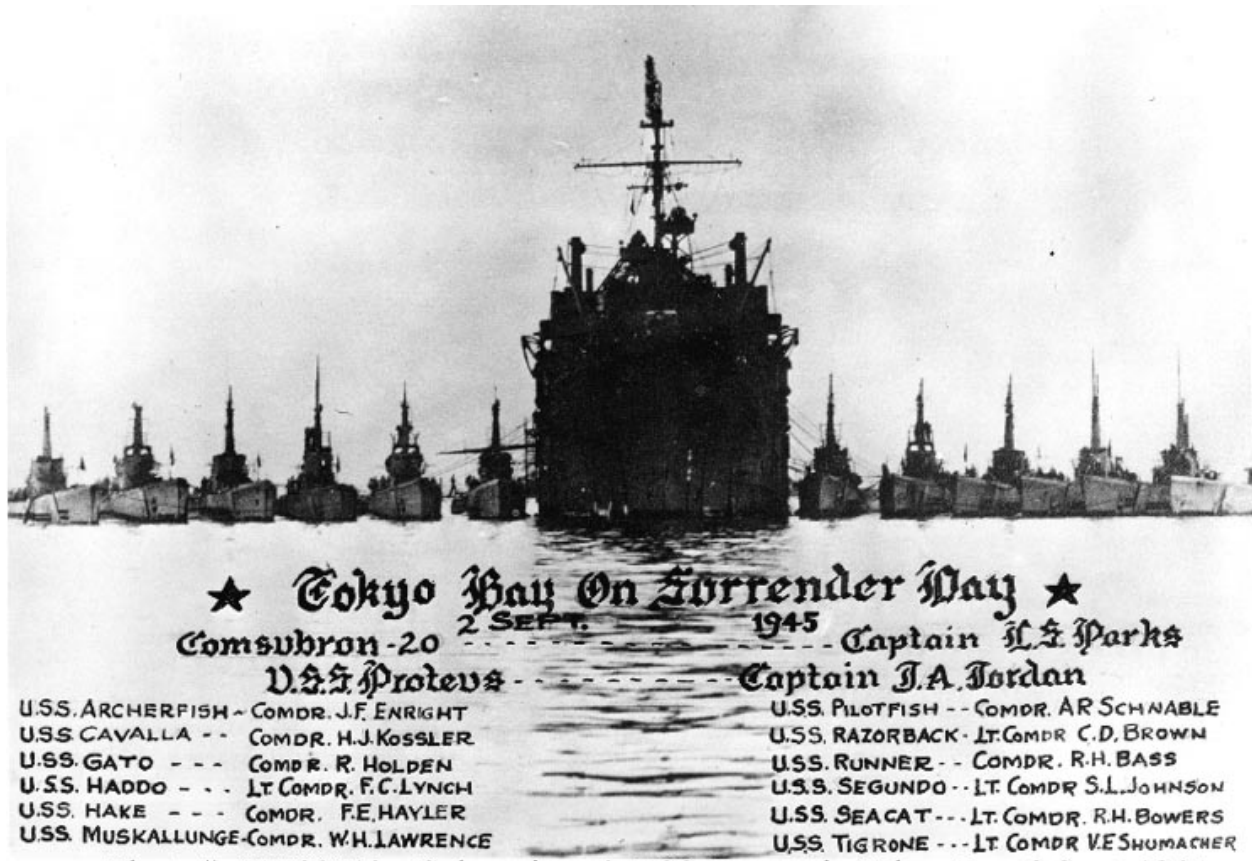


Japanese Submarine I-401

The I-400 class submarines were the largest submarines of World War II and remained the largest ever built until the construction of nuclear ballistic missile submarine Ethan Allen-class of nuclear subs in 1961. The I-400 subs could travel one and a half times around the world without refueling. They carried Aichi M6A1 Seiran attack planes (I-440 two planes and the I-401 and the I-402 three planes), which they launched off their bow when surfaced, effectively making them underwater aircraft carriers. They were designed to surface, launch their planes, and then quickly dive again before they were discovered. They also carried torpedoes for close-range combat.

Thirteenth Patrol 8 July 1045 - 12 September 1945

September 2<sup>nd</sup>, GATO anchored in Tokyo Bay witnessed the signing of the documents aboard U.S.S. MISSOURI which marked the end of World War II.



Souvenir Card Wallet Card

This is a souvenir wallet card issued to servicemen in commemoration of attending the Japanese formal surrender ceremonies. The original name has been digitally removed so the name area is blank.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> 08:00 completed overhaul of No. 1 Main Engine. Received one officer and 29 men on board for transportation to Pearl.

09:10 underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H., in company with the U.S.S. Runner, U.S.S. Pilotfish, U.S.S. Cavalla, U.S.S. Hake, U.S.S. Tigrone, U.S.S. Haddo and U.S.S. Segundo, in accordance with CSS 20 op-order 1-T-45 of 2 September.

From September 4<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>, transiting to Pearl Harbor.

September 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 arrived US Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, T.H. and completed Gato's 13<sup>th</sup> and final submarine patrol.

### **Comments on the U.S.S. Gato Report of Thirteenth Patrol:**

#### **Commanding Officer U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) Thirteenth War Patrol Report Para (V) Remarks**

None of the enemy that I saw in Yokosuka ashore and aboard the I-401 appeared to be defeated. They were still arrogant and their morale seemed excellent. They haven't learned their lesson, and it looked like they would ask for a return match.

I hope the peace will justify the losses we suffered to bring it about. Somehow I don't believe our dead would rest is it turned out otherwise.

#### **Commander Submarine Division One Hundred Three. 14 September 1945**

The thirteenth war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato was conducted in areas off the east Coast of Honshu during the period of 8 July 1945 to 12 September 1945 under the command of Commander R. Holden.

The patrol was primarily a life guard patrol with no opportunity arising to rescue survivors. The few worthwhile torpedo targets contacted were aggressively pursued. One contact developed into a successful single torpedo attack on 3 August, 1945. The patrol vessel target undoubtedly sank because screws stopped and breaking up noises were heard. The Gato was making an end around on another patrol vessel preparatory to attacking on 15 August, when the 'Cease Fire' order was received.

The patrol was of 66 days duration, 31 days were spent in the area, ten of which were submerged and 3 were spent in Tokyo as part of the Navy contingent arriving for the surrender ceremonies. In spite of the many days at sea, by maintaining the ship in excellent condition with the ship's force, the U.S.S. Gato was ready to proceed to her new station the day after her arrival at the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor.

Thirteenth Patrol 8 July 1045 - 12 September 1945

The Division Commander congratulates the Commanding Officer, officers and crew, upon the damage inflicted upon the enemy and upon the completion of the last war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato

**Commander Submarine Squadron Ten, 18 September 1945**

Forwarded, concurring in the remarks of the Commander Submarine Division One Hundred Three. The Squadron Commander congratulates the Commanding Officer, officers and crew of the U.S.S. Gato upon the completion of that vessel's Thirteenth War Patrol.

**Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, 25 September 1945**

The thirteenth war patrol of the U.S.S. Gato, commanded by Lieutenant Commander R. Holden, U.S. Navy, was conducted in waters east of Honshu and in the approaches to Tsugaru Strait.

Enroute from refit base to advance base from which patrol was to start, Gato diverted for one day of lifeguard duty off Wake. Fortunately her services were not required. Gato was able to find the enemy, making seven ship contacts, none larger than a destroyer, before the cessation of hostilities. The enemy was shy and Gato was able to develop only one contact into an attack which was successful. On the several occasions that she was given lifeguard assignments Gato had no feasible opportunity to effect a rescue. Although all shipping sighted might be classed as anti-submarine, and enemy planes were sighted on three occasions, Gato was unopposed. It is noted that drifting mines are comparatively rare in area patrolled.

As the culmination of her distinguished wartime career, during which she inflicted impressive damage on the enemy, Gato was present at the formal surrender of the Japanese Empire at Tokyo.

The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the Gato on the completion of an aggressive and successful patrol during which damage was inflicted on the enemy

**Awards**

Gato was awarded a 'Battle Star' for the Third Fleet Operations Against Japan  
1 -15 August 1945

Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific  
8 July -12 September 1945

|         |                   |          |          |
|---------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Sinking | Kaibokan (PF) (1) | Totaling | 800 tons |
|---------|-------------------|----------|----------|

Gato was awarded the Navy Occupation Service Medal (Asia) – 2 -3 September 1945

### Post War Years

Gato departed on 13 September 1945 Pearl Harbor to the New York Naval Shipyard via the Panama Canal to formally end her tour of duty concerning World War II. She was officially decommissioned as a US Navy fighting boat on March 16th, 1946.

Gato was credited, based on the Submarine Operations Research Group (SORG):

- Damaging one Warship and four Merchants totaling 31,500 tons.
- Sinking two Warships and fifteen Merchants a totaling 80,800 tons.

Gato was formally credited, based on the Joint Army–Navy Assessment Committee (JANAC):

- Sinking one Warship and eight Merchants a totaling 26,085 tons.

During the war the Submarine Operations Research Group (SORG), under Commander Submarines, Pacific (ComSubPac), listed and assessed all reported submarine attacks. It took into account the commanding officers' patrol reports, the comments of higher commanders in their endorsements to the reports, and the limited information available from radio traffic with submarines that were lost or other sources. SORG tabulations by date and hour of attack and also by boat and patrol number were used. These were classified SECRET until well after the war.

It is apparent that little intelligence information was made available to SORG. So-called ULTRA information obtained from decrypted Japanese messages was not provided. The 'result' data represents SORG's assessment of the success of the attack with, in most cases, no knowledge of the identity of the actual target. SORG's assessments of sinkings and damage, as well as those of target tonnage, almost always agree with those of the operational commanders. Unfortunately, they are greatly overestimated in comparison with postwar analyses. Although this was already known during the war to the few people who had knowledge of ULTRA findings, it was not revealed lest the Japanese find out that their codes were being broken. The SORG assessments, however, have been given certain credence by being cited in the U.S. government publication United States Submarine Losses, World War II.

Despite its limitations, the SORG compilation is a generally accurate summary of the data in patrol reports; as such it is handier to work with than the original patrol reports. In addition to the ULTRA problem, SORG's assignment of partial credit to two or more submarines in certain cases has proven to be incorrect. Another shortcoming is that SORG gives the time of attack rounded off to the nearest hour, and more seriously, shows the time as given in the patrol report without consideration of the zone time being used. Since Japanese reports all used Tokyo time, submarine time reported in a different zone must be corrected before the reports can be compared.

The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

| Patrol No. | Attack Date | Weapon Used | Torpedoes Fired | Torpedo Hits | Target Type | Results |   |    | Estimated Tonnage |       |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|---------|---|----|-------------------|-------|
|            |             |             |                 |              |             | N       | D | S  | Damaged           | Sunk  |
| 1          | 5/3/1942    | Torpedo     | 5               | 0            | CVE         | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 1          | 5/13/1942   | Torpedo     | 1               | 0            | AO          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 2          | 7/23/1942   | Torpedo     | 1               | 0            | PAT         | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 2          | 8/15/1942   | Torpedo     | 5               | 4            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 9300  |
| 3          | 12/6/1942   | Torpedo     | 4               | 1            | AK          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 4          | 1/21/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 0            | AP          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 4          | 1/21/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 1            | AP          |         |   | 1  |                   | 4600  |
| 4          | 1/23/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 0            | SS          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 4          | 1/25/1943   | Torpedo     | 6               | 2            | CL          |         | 1 |    | 7000              |       |
| 4          | 1/29/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 1            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 7200  |
| 4          | 2/15/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 1            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 7900  |
| 4          | 2/15/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 0            | AO          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 4          | 2/19/1943   | Torpedo     | 3               | 1            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 7900  |
| 6          | 10/8/1943   | Torpedo     | 4               | 0            | AK          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 6          | 10/19/1943  | Torpedo     | 3               | 1            | AK          |         | 1 |    | 7000              |       |
| 6          | 10/19/1943  | Torpedo     | 3               | 1            | AK          |         | 1 |    | 8500              |       |
| 6          | 10/19/1943  | Torpedo     | 2               | 0            | DD          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 6          | 10/21/1943  | Torpedo     | 3               | 0            | SS          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 7          | 11/29/1943  | Torpedo     | 3               | 0            | AK          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 7          | 11/30/1943  | Torpedo     | 4               | 2            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 5600  |
| 7          | 12/8/1943   | Torpedo     | 4               | 2            | AK          |         | 1 |    | 4500              |       |
| 7          | 12/8/1943   | Torpedo     | 2               | 0            | AK          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 7          | 12/20/1943  | Torpedo     | 6               | 1            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 6500  |
| 7          | 12/20/1943  | Torpedo     | 0               | 2            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 9000  |
| 7          | 12/27/1943  | Torpedo     | 4               | 0            | SS          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 7          | 12/27/1943  | Deck Gun    | 0               | 0            | SS          | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 8          | 2/15/1944   | Deck Gun    | 0               | 0            | TRA         |         |   | 1  |                   | 100   |
| 8          | 2/22/1944   | Torpedo     | 3               | 0            | UNK         | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 8          | 2/26/1944   | Torpedo     | 4               | 2            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 8500  |
| 8          | 2/26/1944   | Torpedo     | 2               | 1            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 6500  |
| 8          | 2/27/1944   | Torpedo     | 4               | 1            | AK          |         | 1 |    | 4500              |       |
| 8          | 3/9/1944    | Deck Gun    | 0               | 0            | TRA         |         |   | 1  |                   | 100   |
| 8          | 3/12/1944   | Deck Gun    | 0               | 0            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 2000  |
| 8          | 3/12/1944   | Deck Gun    | 0               | 0            | TRA         |         |   | 1  |                   | 100   |
| 10         | 7/26/1944   | Torpedo     | 4               | 0            | PGE         | 1       |   |    |                   |       |
| 11         | 2/14/1945   | Torpedo     | 4               | 2            | DE          |         |   | 1  |                   | 600   |
| 11         | 2/21/1945   | Torpedo     | 3               | 1            | AK          |         |   | 1  |                   | 4100  |
| 13         | 8/3/1945    | Torpedo     | 1               | 1            | PF          |         |   | 1  |                   | 800   |
| Totals     |             |             | 100             | 28           |             | 16      | 5 | 17 | 31500             | 80800 |

Submarine Operations Research Group Attack Data - USS Gato (SS-212)

The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

Joint Army–Navy Assessment Committee (JANAC) was a United States inter-service agency set up to analyze and assess Japanese naval and merchant marine shipping losses caused by U.S. and Allied forces during World War II. JANAC consisted of representatives of the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Army, and the Army Air Forces.

The assessment of losses, unanimously agreed to by all JANAC members of the committee, was published in 1947, included:

- All Naval vessels known or believed to have been lost.
- All merchant vessels of 500 or more gross tons known or believed to have been lost.
- JANAC provided a detailed chronology of Japanese naval and merchant marine losses cross-indexed in the appendix of its final report, including a separate summary about losses caused by U.S. submarines.

| Patrol No. | Attack Date | Weapon Used | Torpedoes Fired | Torpedo Hits | Target Type | Results |   |   | Estimated Tonnage |       |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|---------|---|---|-------------------|-------|
|            |             |             |                 |              |             | N       | D | S | Damaged           | Sunk  |
| 4          | 1/21/1943   | Torpedo     |                 |              | AP          |         |   | 1 |                   | 4575  |
| 4          | 1/29/1943   | Torpedo     |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 2723  |
| 4          | 2/15/1943   | Torpedo     |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 991   |
| 7          | 11/30/1943  | Torpedo     |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 5618  |
| 7          | 12/20/1943  | Torpedo     |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 2926  |
| 8          | 2/26/1944   | Torpedo     |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 5256  |
| 8          | 3/12/1944   | Deck Gun    |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 871   |
| 11         | 2/14/1945   | Torpedo     |                 |              | DE          |         |   | 1 |                   | 800   |
| 11         | 2/21/1945   | Torpedo     |                 |              | AK          |         |   | 1 |                   | 2325  |
| Totals     |             |             |                 |              |             | 0       | 0 | 9 | 0                 | 26085 |

Joint Army–Navy Assessment Committee (JANAC) - USS Gato (SS-212)

1946 to 1950 she served as a reserve training platform for Navy submariners at the Naval Reserve Training Center New York, New York

1960 to 1960 she served as a reserve training platform for Navy submariners at the Naval Reserve Training Center Baltimore, Maryland.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)



U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) at the Naval reserve Center, New York City

Ripley's Believe It or Not in September 1953, ran a six page cartoon about the U.S.S. Gato's 9th patrol were Gato surfaced to find a depth charge on the deck.

The Silent Service, a television program that aired in 1957 and 58 aired an episode "The Gato Story" on Oct 19 1958 Episode Detail: The Gato Story - The Silent Service - Enemy planes attack the U.S.S. Gato as it tries to rescue downed airmen. Holden: Paul Richards. Young: Hal Riddle. Haley: Robert Karnes. Lehman: Robert Nash.

To view this episode, go to <http://www.olgoat.com/silentserv/series2/19-33.mp4> compliments of Old Goats.com

Her name was struck from the US Naval Register on March 1st, 1960, then sold for scrap on July 25th, 1960 to the Northern Metals Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Physically the end to a leader of leaders, but she will sail on for ever in the hearts of all submariners and those who study her glorious history.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

### War Patrol History

- 1<sup>st</sup> Patrol      20 April – 10 June 1942  
Battle star      Battle of Midway – 3 - 6 June 1942
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Patrol      2 July – 20 August 1942                      Part I  
4 September – 22 September 1942                      Part II  
Battle Star      Submarine War Patrol – Pacific      2 Jul – 20 Aug 1942  
Sunk              Freighter (1)                      9,300 tons
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Patrol      5 November – 23 December 1942  
No Awards
- 4<sup>th</sup> Patrol      13 January 1943 – 26 February 1943  
Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action  
Battle star      Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal - 13 Jan – 8 Feb 1943  
Destroyed      Transport (1)                      4,560 tons  
Sunk              Freighters (3) Totaling      23,000 tons  
Damaged      Unidentified ship (1) Warship/Cruiser      7,000 tons  
Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific
- 5<sup>th</sup> Patrol      19 March 1943 – 6 June 1943  
Battle Star Submarine War Patrol – Pacific 20 Apr – 6 Jun 1943  
Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action
- 6<sup>th</sup> Patrol      6 September 1943 - 28 October 1943  
Battle Star Submarine War Patrol – Pacific 6 Sep – 28 Oct 1943  
Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action  
Damage      Freighters (2) Totaling      15,500 tons
- 7<sup>th</sup> Patrol      18 November 1943 – 10 January 1944  
Battle Star Submarine War Patrol – Pacific 18 Nov 1943 – 10 Jan 1944  
Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action  
Sunk              Freighters (3)                      Totaling      21,100 tons  
Damage      Freighter (1)                      Totaling      4500 tons  
Damaged      Aiche E13A (Jake) Floatplane  
Submarine Combat Insignia for Submarine War Patrol – Pacific



**U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) Presidential Unit Citation**



**CITATION:**

“For extraordinary heroism in action during her Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth War Patrols in enemy Japanese-controlled waters in the Solomon Islands, Bismarck, New Guinea and Truk areas from January 1943 to April 1944. Pursuing tenacious tactics in the face of strong surface and air opposition, the U.S.S. GATO penetrated hostile waters to track and close her targets, striking with swift fury and withdrawing safely to renew her relentless search for Japanese shipping and combatant vessels. By her accurate torpedo and gunfire, she sank thirteen Japanese ships for a total of 66,000 tons and damaged five more for a total of 31,500 tons. Subjected to severe countermeasures as she executed six special missions, the GATO boldly made dangerous reconnaissance patrols, conducted navigational surveys, approached perilously close to enemy held beaches and frequently operated within known range of Japanese shore batteries, completing every assignment and emerging safe from every encounter with the enemy. This notable record of achievement under conditions of extraordinary difficulty and danger attests the GATO’s readiness for combat and the gallant fighting spirit of her officers and men, thereby adding new luster to the traditions of the United States Naval Service.”

The Navy and Marine Corps Presidential Unit Citation is awarded to units of the Armed Forces of the United States and allies for extraordinary heroism in action on or after 7 December 1941 against an armed enemy. The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions so as to set it apart and above other units participating in the same campaign. The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of the Distinguished Service Cross to an individual.

During World War II 49 Presidential Unit Citations were awarded to only 36 Submarines. 11 were awarded for single patrols and 25 were awarded for multiple patrols.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

### Battle Stars



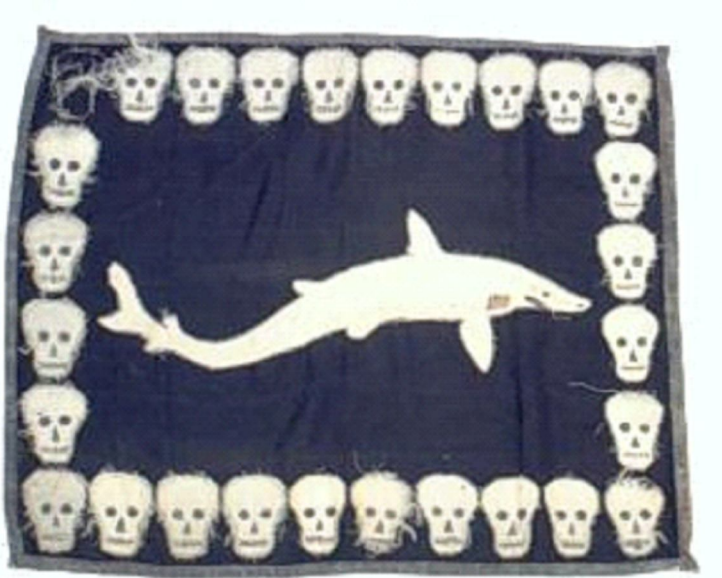
U.S.S. Gato's Battle Stars are displayed on the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal

- 1 Battle of Midway - 3 to 6 June 1942
- 2 Submarine War Patrol – Pacific – 2 July to 20 August 1942
- 3 Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal – 13 January to 8 February 1943
- 4 Submarine War Patrol – Pacific – 20 April to 6 June 1943
- 5 Submarine War Patrol – Pacific – 6 September to 28 October 1943
- 6 Submarine War Patrol – Pacific – 19 November 1943 to 10 January 1944
- 7 Asiatic-Pacific Raids 1944 Truk, Satawan, Ponape Raid 16 to 17 February 1944
- 8 Submarine War Patrol – Pacific – 30 April to 22 June 1944
- 9 Marianas Operation Fourth Bonins Raid – 4 to 5 August 1944
- 10 Western Caroline Islands Operation Raids on Volcano Bonin Islands and Yap Island – 31 August to 8 September 1844
- 11 Iwo Jima Operation Assault and Occupation of Iwo Jima – 15 February to 7 March 1945
- 12 Okinawa Gunto Operation Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto – 18 April to 18 May 1945
- 13 Third Fleet Operations Against Japan – 1 to 15 August 1945

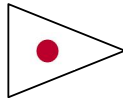
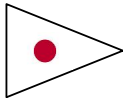
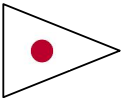
Battle Flag With Missing Items



"The GOALKEEPER"



USA 14 - RAF 3



Rescued

|          |    |        |   |          |   |
|----------|----|--------|---|----------|---|
| Children | 27 | Women  | 9 | Nuns     | 3 |
| Priest   | 1  | Bishop | 1 | Aviators | 8 |



### U.S.S. Gato Class Modifications

Design and built by the Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut. She was the first ship of her class and the prototype for the major portion of the submarines constructed by the United States for service in World War II.

#### Weapons based on Modifications

|                            |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 3" 50 caliber deck gun;    | 4" 50 caliber deck gun     | 5" 25 caliber deck gun |
| 20mm anti-aircraft gun.    | 40mm anti-aircraft gun.    |                        |
| Two 50 caliber Machine Gun | Two 30 caliber Machine Gun |                        |

The Gatos were subjected to numerous exterior configuration changes during their careers, with most of these changes centered on the conning tower fairwater. The large bulky original configuration proved to be too easy to spot when the boat was surfaced; it needed to be smaller. Secondly, the desire to incorporate new masts for surface and air search radars drove changes to the fairwater and periscope shears. Third, additional gun armament was needed and cutting down the fairwater provided excellent mounting locations for machine guns and anti-aircraft gun. The modifications (or Mods) to the Gato-class conning tower fairwaters were fairly uniform in nature and they can be grouped together based on what was done when:

Mod 1 - This is the original configuration with the covered navigation bridge, the high bulwark around the aft "cigarette" deck, and with the periscope shears plated over. All the early boats were built with this Mod and it lasted until about mid 1942.

Mod 2 - Same as Mod 1 but with the bulwark around the cigarette deck cut down to reduce the silhouette. This also gave the .50 caliber machine gun mounted there a greatly improved arc of fire. Began to appear in about April 1942.

Mod 3 - Same as Mod 2 but with the covered navigation bridge on the forward part of the fairwater cut away and the plating around the periscope shears removed. In this configuration the Gatos now had two excellent positions for the mounting of more powerful 20 mm anti-aircraft gun. This mod started to appear in late '42 and early '43.

Mod 4 - Same as the Mod 3 but with the height of the bridge itself lowered in a last attempt to lessen the silhouette. The lowering of the bridge exposed three I-beams on either side of the periscope shears. These exposed beams gave rise to the nickname "covered wagon boats". Began to appear in early 1944.

Variations on the above mods included the 1A (shortened navigation bridge), 2A (plating removed from periscope shears), and the 3A and 4A (which moved the SJ radar mast aft of the periscopes).

## Commanding Officers

### William Girard Myers, USN

Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) War Patrols #1 and #2

Date of birth: October 8, 1904

Date of death: January 21, 1943

Place of birth: Cleburne, Texas

Home of record: Cleburne, Texas

William Myers graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Class of 1926. In August of 1942 Commander Myers was transferred to Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet staff to over see the building and overhauls of submarines at Mare Island Naval Shipyard. He died in a plane crash near Booneville, California, north of San Francisco on 21 January 1943.

#### Silver Star

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Commander William Girard Myers (NSN: 0-60457), United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in combat while serving as Commanding Officer of the Submarine U.S.S. GATO (SS-212) during 1942. Despite determined enemy opposition Commander Myers skillfully pressed home attacks which resulted in the sinking of an important amount of Japanese shipping; this without disabling damage to his own ship. His conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander in Chief, Pacific: Serial 33 (April 29, 1943)

### Robert Joseph Foley, USN

Commanding Officer U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) War Patrols #3 through #8

Date of birth: 30-Jan-05

Date of death: 6-May-86

Place of Birth: East Orange, New Jersey

Home of record: Jamaica, Long Island, New York

Robert Foley graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Class of 1927. He retired as a U.S. Navy Rear Admiral.

#### Navy Cross

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Lieutenant Commander Robert Joseph Foley (NSN: 0-61364), United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), on the FOURTH War Patrol of that submarine during the period 13 January 1943 to 26 February 1943, in enemy controlled waters of the Bismarck-New Guinea-Truk areas of the Pacific. Upon sighting a hostile convoy escorted by warships, Lieutenant Commander Foley, with bold skill and daring, maneuvered his ship into position to strike the enemy and launched a vigorous attack. Sinking one Japanese transport and three cargo vessels totaling 31,700 tons, and damaging an unidentified ship, he successfully avoided detection and desperate anti-submarine counter measures on the part of enemy escorting vessels.

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

His expert seamanship and unyielding devotion to duty, employed at great person risk in the face of grave danger, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander Southwest Pacific: Serial 00212 (March 12, 1943)

### Navy Cross – Gold Star

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Navy Cross to Lieutenant Commander Robert Joseph Foley (NSN: 0-61364), United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), on the FIFTH, SIXTH, and SEVENTH War Patrols of that submarine during the period 19 March 1943 to 10 January 1944, in enemy controlled waters of the Bismarck-New Guinea-Truk areas of the Pacific. Encountering strong hostile opposition and repeated depth charge attacks throughout this hazardous period, Commander Foley daringly and aggressively fought his ship at every opportunity, sinking three valuable hostile craft and damaging three others, on each occasion skillfully evading the enemy and returning safe to base. When his craft was severely depth charged during one action resulting in extensive hull damage and loss of power, he valiantly kept his crippled ship under control and brought her back for repairs without loss of personnel. Commander Foley's expert seamanship, courageous initiative and outstanding devotion to duty throughout many dangerous missions contributed materially to the successful operations against the enemy and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander 7th fleet: Serial 0349 (February 17, 1944)

### Navy Cross – Gold Star

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Second Gold Star in lieu of a Third Award of the Navy Cross to Lieutenant Commander Robert Joseph Foley (NSN: 0-61364), United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), on the EIGHTH War Patrol of that submarine during the period 2 February 1944 to 1 April 1944, in enemy controlled waters of the Bismarck- New Guinea-Truk areas of the Pacific. Fighting his ship fiercely and with outstanding tactical skill, Commander Foley delivered smashing torpedo attacks against escorted hostile shipping and, by the bold and effective use of his deck guns, succeeded in destroying four enemy ships, including one heavily-armed merchantman, out of a total of six sunk and another severely damaged during this hazardous patrol. Employing skillful evasive maneuvers while under depth charge and aerial bombing attacks, he brought his ship through the furious engagement without damage and returned his ship safely to port. Commander Foley's expert seamanship, dauntless courage and resolute devotion to duty were an inspiration to his officers and men and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander Submarine Forces Pacific Fleet: Serial 1647

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**Richard Marvin Farrell, USN**

Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) War Patrols #9 through #11

Date of birth: March 30, 1912

Date of death: November 14, 1995

Richard Farrell graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Class of 1935. He retired as a U.S. Navy Captain.

**Silver Star**

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Second Gold Star in lieu of a Third Award of the Silver Star to Commander Richard Marvin Farrell, United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), during the ELEVENTH War Patrol of that Submarine in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Yellow Sea Area from 28 January to 13 March 1945. Skillfully and daringly penetrating strong escort screens, Commander Farrell launched well planned and smartly executed torpedo attacks which resulted in the sinking of a hostile destroyer and a freighter. Although attacked both by enemy aircraft and patrol vessels after these encounters, he made his escape and brought his submarine safe to port. His courage and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander in Chief Pacific: Serial 04030 (May 6, 1945)

**Richard Holden, USN**

Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Gato (SS-212) War Patrols #12 and #13

Date of birth: December 21, 1915

Date of death: June 23, 1983

Place of Birth: Rutland, Vermont

Richard Holden graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Class of 1937. He retired as a U.S. Navy Rear Admiral.

Bronze Star 12<sup>th</sup> Patrol – No Citation available

Letter of Commendation with ribbon and ‘V’ device for 13<sup>th</sup> patrol – No Citation available

### **Silver Stars**

Lieutenant Charles Francis McGivern

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant Charles Francis McGivern (NSN: 0-81332), United States Navy, for gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as Assistant Approach Officer and Torpedo Data Computer Operator in the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), during the FOURTH War Patrol of that Submarine from 13 January to 26 February 1943. Lieutenant McGivern performed his duties in an outstanding manner rendering inestimable assistance to his Commanding Officer in making six attacks in which 31,700 tons of enemy shipping were sunk and an unidentified vessel was damaged. Further, his devotion to duty throughout three previous War Patrols was of the highest order. His actions and conduct were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Silver Star to Lieutenant Charles Francis McGivern (NSN: 0-81332), United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action with the enemy. During the FIFTH, SIXTH, and SEVENTH War Patrols of the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212) from 19 March 1943 to 10 January 1944, in enemy controlled waters, he as Assistant Approach Officer, Navigator, and Executive Officer rendered inestimable assistance to his Commanding Officer and was largely instrumental in the sinking of three valuable enemy ships totaling 21,000 tons and the damaging of three others of 20,000 tons. His accurate and skillful navigation under the most hazardous conditions enabled his ship to accomplish several missions in enemy held territory, which contributed greatly to the success of Allied operations. In addition, on one occasion when an unexploded enemy depth charge was found on the deck of his vessel, he volunteered to examine and sketch for intelligence purposes even though he was under enemy gunfire at the time. With complete disregard for his personal safety he obtained valuable information from the enemy depth charge, using a Japanese prisoner to copy the markings. His actions throughout these patrols was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

Lieutenant Ralph Huntington Lockwood

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant Ralph Huntington Lockwood (NSN: 0-81314), United States Navy, for gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy. During the FOURTH War Patrol of the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212) from 13 January to 26 February 1942, during which 31,700 tons of enemy shipping were sunk, he performed his duties as Engineering Officer and Diving Officer in an outstanding manner, rendering inestimable assistance to his Commanding Officer by coolly and calmly

## The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

maintaining depth control throughout repeated and vigorous depth charge attacks, and was in a large measure responsible for the safe return of his ship. Furthermore, his devotion to duty throughout three earlier War Patrols was of the highest order. His actions and conduct were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander 7th Fleet: Serial 0612 (April 29, 1943)

### Lieutenant Norvell Gardiner Ward

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant Commander [then Lieutenant] Norvell Gardiner Ward (NSN: 0-75082), United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in the performance of duties as Executive Officer, Navigator, and Assistant Patrol Officer aboard the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), during the FOURTH War Patrol of that submarine in enemy controlled waters, from 13 January to 26 February 1943. Commencing an aggressive approach on an escorted target which he alone saw in the dark, Lieutenant Commander Ward skillfully worked out plans for a damaging attack which proved to be of inestimable value in the sinking of 31,700 tons of enemy shipping. His extreme bravery and loyal devotion to the completion of a vital mission were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander 7th Fleet: Serial 0610 (April 29, 1943)

### Lieutenant Commander Robert Kenneth Kaufman

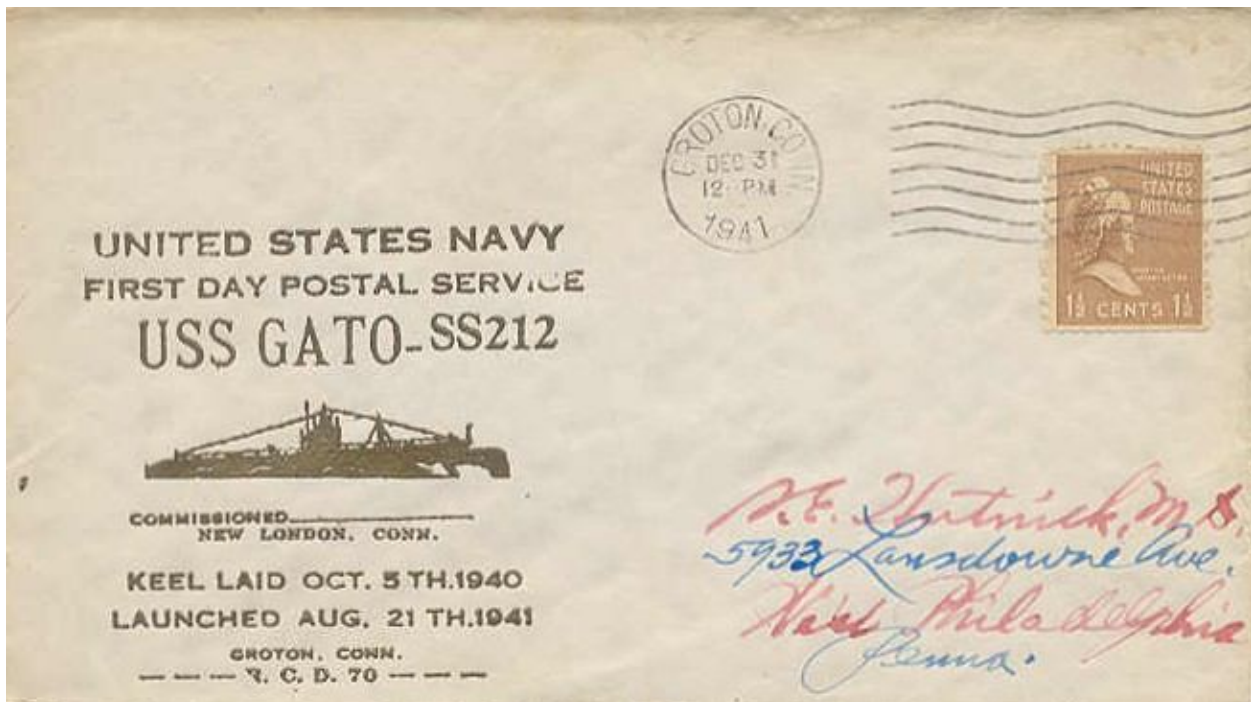
The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant Commander Robert Kenneth Kaufman (NSN: 09-85314), United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action in the performance of his duties in the U.S.S. GATO (SS-212), during the EIGHTH War Patrol of that Submarine in the Bismarck-New Guinea-Truk Area from 2 February 1944 to 1 April 1944. As Assistant Approach Officer and Gunnery Officer, his excellent judgment and thorough knowledge of attack problems, and his excellent supervision of gunnery personnel and their equipment, assisted his Commanding Officer considerably in conducting successful attacks which resulted in the sinking of six enemy vessels totaling 17,300 tons, and the damaging of another vessel of 4,500 tons. His coolness and high devotion to duty contributed directly to the success of his vessel in evading severe enemy countermeasures. His conduct throughout was an inspiration to the officers and men in his ship and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. General Orders: Commander Submarine Forces Pacific: Serial 0295 (May 24, 1946)

The Making of a Battle Flag - U.S.S. Gato (SS-212)

First Day Covers and Postage Stamps



Keel Laying



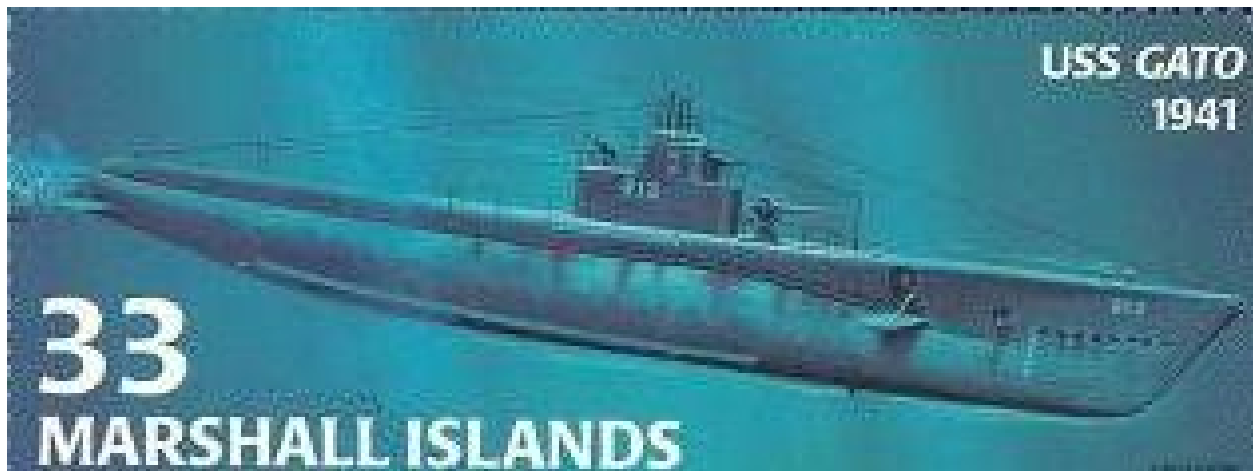
Christening

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Commissioning

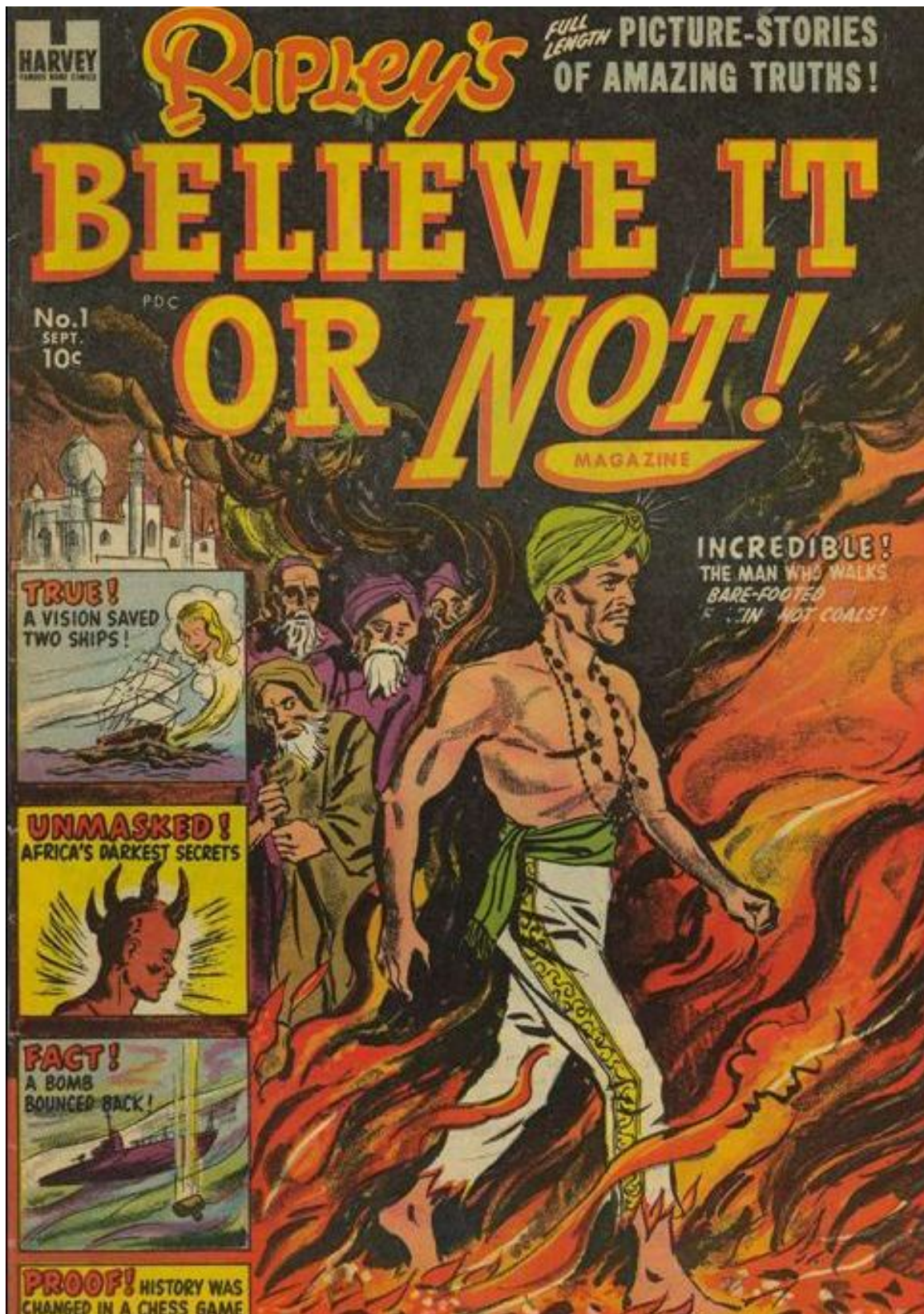
Postage Stamp Commemorative



Year of Issued 2000

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