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Incident No. 5927 (USS CHAMPLIN and USS HUSE)
6023 (USS BOYLE)

ANALYSIS OF COORDINATED ANTU SUBMARINE ACTION REPORT USS CROATAN PLANE TBM-18, USS BOYLE (DD600), USS CHAMPLIN (DE601) and USS HUSE (DE145)

EmploymentKiller Group.
Task Group Organization(a) TG 21.15 - USS CROATAN and five destroyer escorts
(b) TU 27.6.1 - USS PARKER, MC LANAHAN and LAUB
(c) TU 27.6.2 - USS BOYLE, CHAMPLIN, NIELDS, and
ORDRONAUX
Latitude40-18 N
Longitude62-22 W
Depth of Water.2700 fathoms
Weather Conditionsheavy overcast; sea very rough (30 feet waves reported);
Wind SW Force 4
Sonar conditions Poor - considerable quenching
Contact first made byAircraft - sighting. Range: 4-1/2 miles
Surface craft - sonar. Range: 950 yards

1. BRIEF NARRATIVE.

(a) At 0659 GCT, CROATAN plane TBM-18 sighted a submarine distant 4-1/2 miles. Submarine immediately opened fire. The pilot experienced difficulty in dropping flares and smoke floats and no attack was made.

(b) At 0730 CTG 21.15 ordered TU 27.6.1 and TU 27.6.2 to the scene. 1010 TU 27.6.2 arrived in the area. 1112 BOYLE made sonar contact at 950 yards. His report states, "no charges were dropped on the first run due to doubt as to how to evaluate contact and hesitancy to interfere with aircraft operations in the vicinity". However, contact was maintained and on the second run an 11 charge pattern set from 200-300 feet was dropped. While the pattern was being fired, the Commanding Officer sighted a periscope about 50 yards astern in the wake. Ship was turned hard left. Run was too short and no charges were dropped. Sonar contact was lost and not regained. P/W testimony indicates that just previous to the depth charge attack, the sonar operator in the U-856 heard propellers and the Commanding Officer then came to periscope depth to investigate. His first look through the periscope disclosed a shower of depth charges encompassing the U-boat. P/Ws further stated that as soon as the depth charges had detonated, the boat dove to 200 meters.

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(c) 1215 CTU 27.6.1 arrived and assumed command of the search operations. CTG 21.15 also ordered two CVE escorts, HUSE and FROST, to join the search. 1220 a box search in general conformity with Diagram #21, F.T.P. 219, was begun. 1415 HUSE and FROST were directed to take positions as second ship on each end of the line. Sonar range was determined to be 2500 yards and interval on the scouting line was 3000 yards.

(d) The box search was continued until 1800, at which time the submarine's probable movements, based on a 2 knot speed assumption from the time of BOYLE's contact, had been covered. CTU 27.6.1 then took the following factors into consideration in arriving at a decision as to best method of continuing search:

(1) A known enemy submarine was within a circle whose radius was 15 to 21 miles. Center of circle Lat. 40-30.5 Long. 62-21.

(2) Submarine had been held submerged for previous ten hours.

(3) Submarine was probably operating at maximum depth.

(4) Based upon USCG SEA CLOUD's report of submarine on course 015 the previous night, and an apparent southerly submerged course, based on plane contact and BOYLE's contact, it appeared enemy's most likely movement would be to a general north to northeast or south the southwest direction.

(5) Sunset 1840Q. Full moon rising at 1744Q.

(6) Concentrating all surface craft on a scouting line would cover maximum front.

(7) Splitting available surface craft into two groups would permit having a group in two locations where submarine might logically surface after sunset as well as covering a great part of circle before sunset.

(8) If groups split a DE equipped with ahead throwing weapons should be assigned each group.

(e) Based on the above factors CTU 27.6.1 decided:

(1) TU 27.6.1 plus DE FROST commence a retiring search in a westerly direction 1500 circle (based on submerged speed of 2 knots) bearing 030°(T) from BOYLE's contact.

(2) TU 27.6.2 plus DE HUSE proceed through original contact point and commence a retiring search in an

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easterly direction 15 miles bearing 220°(T) from BOYLE's contact. Both groups to assume an enemy speed of 10 knots after 1900.

(f) 1942 CHAMPLIN made sonar contact, classified as positive submarine, at 1600 yards. Contact was lost at 600 yards and due to the sketchy information obtained on the run, no charges were dropped. The position was marked by a dye marker. 2010 contact was regained at 1600 yards but was lost at 1150 and again no charges were dropped. A smoke bomb was dropped to indicate the approximate position of the submarine to HUSE, who had been ordered to assist the CHAMPLIN. HUSE made contact which was lost at 650 yards. Unable to obtain sufficient information on the approach, she did not attack. Contact was regained at a range of 1600 yards and at 2014 HUSE made a hedgehog attack which was followed by two muffled explosions. 2034 CHAMPLIN made an attack, dropping 9 charges set from 500-600 feet. This attack was made using the marker as a reference point and an estimate of course and speed of the target from information reported by HUSE. No sonar contact was obtained on this run. 2040 HUSE regained sonar contact at 1300 yards. Contact was lost at 250 yards but no attack was made due to a failure of the hedgehog firing circuit. This casualty is understandable in view of the heavy seas running. 2045 CHAMPLIN regained contact at a range of 1300 yards and dropped an 8 charge medium pattern. Sonar contact was not lost after this attack but before another attack could be made submarine surfaced and was immediately engaged by gun fire on the part of both ships. 2106 CHAMPLIN rammed submarine astern and then circled for another approach. 2108 HUSE stood in to ram but when she was about 100 yards from the submarine a tremendous pooping sea caused her to miss. 2109 CHAMPLIN apparently started in to ram for the second time but unfortunately a 20 MM projectile exploded on the bridge, wounding the Commanding Officer and three enlisted men. 2114 HUSE stood to drop a shallow pattern but on the advice of the CHAMPLIN, and since the submarine was sinking, pattern was not dropped. During this action the submarine was under continuous fire. After the U/boat sank NIELDS and ORDRONAUX by excellent seamanship, rescued three officers and 25 men.

2. EVALUATION OF TARGET

- (a) Submarine.

3. EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE

- (a) Submarine sunk.

4. ANALYSIS OF DEPTH CHARGE ATTACKS

(a) Despite heavy weather and difficult sonar conditions, excellent attacks were conducted. This was the first time the CHAMPLIN and HUSE had worked together, and their success indicates

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a high state of training and readiness. CHAMPLIN's and HUSE's reports indicate excellent communications and exchange of information contributed much to the attacks. It is noted that neither ship made an attack until the approach was considered satisfactory. Normally, an attack without sonar contact could hardly be considered sound practice. However, under the prevailing conditions, CHAMPLIN's decision to drop on her first depth charge attack was sound. The Commanding Officer of HUSE states, "even though HUSE and CHAMPLIN had never worked together prior to this date, it is felt that a more perfectly coordinated attack could not have been made. HUSE, because of its smaller turning circle, was able to make an attack and reattack following each run of the CHAMPLIN. After each run the ship making the run regained contact and passed the bearing and distance to the other ship as a check on submarine's position. CIC was of great assistance a coordinated attack eliminates much time in reattacking."

(b) BOYLE's Attack

Time	1112
Range at which contact was regained	950 yards
Range at which contact was lost	300 yards
H.E.	None
Doppler	Slight, low
Target movement	Left
Number of charges	11
Depth settings	200-300 feet

Remarks

The sighting of a periscope in the depth charge pattern and P/W testimony indicate a perfectly laid pattern in plan. BOYLE was unfortunate in that the U/boat chose this particular moment to come to periscope depth.

(c) CHAMPLIN's Attacks

Time	1034
Range at which contact was regained)
Range at which contact was lost)

H.E.)No contact
Doppler)
Target movement)
Number of charges	9
Depth settings	500-600

Remarks

Since this attack was not made on sonar contact no estimate as to accuracy can be made. However, P/W testimony indicates the attack was very accurate, causing considerable damage which caused the U/boat to go to great depth.

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Time	2045
Range at which contact was regained	1300 yards
Range at which contact was lost	300 yards
H.E.	None
Doppler	None
Target movement	Right
Number of charges	8
Depth settings	200-300 feet

Remarks

While the report of cut-ons submitted would indicate the target was moving right slowly, no lead angle was taken and the pattern should have missed astern. It is interesting to note the P/W evidence indicate the charges dropped on this attack were quite close. Prior to the attack the U/boat's Commanding Officer had decided to surface. The shallow depth of the target was appreciated and charges were set for 200-300 feet.

(d) HUSE's Attack

Time	2014
Range at which contact was regained	1600 yards
Range at which contact was lost	450 yards
H.E.	None
Doppler	Moderate opening

Target movement	Right slowly
Number of charges	24
Depth settings	Hedgehog

Remarks

On this attack a quarter attack with the target moving slowly right was assumed. Target was assumed to be deep and a recorder sinking time for 400 feet on slant range corrected bow plate was used.

5. GUN FIRE

(a) Reports from the ships concerned and from P/W testimony show that the gun fire was extremely effective. The explosion of a 20 MM projectile, which resulted in the death of the Commanding Officer of the CHAMPLIN and the wounding of three men, resulted from an improperly out firing cam cut-out which did not allow for the open lid of the ready box.

6. RAMMING

(a) The damage sustained by the U/boat during the ramming by the CHAMPLIN was not determined. CHAMPLIN sustained the following damage as a result of the ramming:

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(1) Compartment A-204L flooded to a depth of three feet from a gash 8 feet long and 8 inches wide in port plating at frame 41-45 at about 1-1/2 feet above the water line.

(2) Compartment A-205L flooded to a depth of three feet from a gash 5 feet long and one foot wide in port plating at frame 45-48, also above water line.

(3) Entire length of port bilge keel bent down against hull. It was believed that this alone saved the engineering space from being ruptured.

(4) Fuel oil tanks A-4F, C-2F, C-4F and C-10F contaminated due to minor leaks.

(5) Port side plating bulged at frame 27.

By 2230, one hour and 34 minutes after ramming, the damaged plates had been shored and the compartments were being pumped out.

OPINIONS

Plotting Room

Submarine sunk.

Tactical Analysis Officer

Submarine sunk.

It is believed that BOYLE's attack should be classed "G" and that HUSE and CHAMPLIN's attacks should be assessed "A" with both ships sharing equal credit.