

THE STORY OF THE USS BLUEGILL, SS 242 AND HER CREW

FORWARD

This will be a compilation of information from the lecture given at our 50th anniversary at San Diego by retired Captain George Folta, better known as Igloo, and a "diary" of radioman Ed Goessel, along with some incidence of recollection by the author Read "Clark" Gwyer.

We were lucky -- many of us got into some submarines for the first time on the BLUEGILL. So, we were lucky that we weren't in submarines at the beginning of the war when so much was unknown, and when some of our subs were antique. And then we were lucky to be assigned to the BLUEGILL for several good reasons; not the least important, we survived.

Over the years a lot of lives were lost developing the fleet boat as we knew it; e.g., in 1915, the E-2, while in the Brooklyn Navy yard, was testing alkali batteries when the batteries exploded, that's why we went to lead acid batteries. These early boats were death traps, and many boats narrowly escaped destruction due to hydrogen and gasoline fumes, e.g., in 1917, at the Cavite Navy yard in Manila, the A-7 was undergoing overhaul. The skipper backed out from the pier on his electric motors and then gave the order to shift over to gasoline engine drives, but on cranking up, the gas engines exploded killing the captain and seven enlisted. A similar explosion occurred on the A-2 killing the chief electrician.

When the war broke out the Navy also had a torpedo problem. There were only 100 torpedoes at Pearl with promised delivery of 24 a month. At one point some submarines went out on patrol with only eight torpedoes so they took out mines also. Some fleet boats, POMPANO for one, carried the slow Mark 10 torpedo developed for S boats. The sea wolf actually sank a ship with a Mark 9 torpedo, whatever that is. But even sadder than the torpedo scarcity was the Mark 14 torpedo itself with the

Mark 6 magnetic exploder. Boats were returning from patrols with tales about torpedoes passing under Jap ships and not exploding, hitting ships and not exploding, and exploding prematurely. But those war time "sailors" sitting behind large desks in Washington, DC at the Bureau of ordinance snorted, "impossible". According to them the failures were due to poor solutions by the fire control party and improper maintenance by the torpedo gang. But after tests done by commands in the fleet; namely Captain Lockwood, later Admiral Lockwood, it was determined that the torpedoes ran about ten feet deeper than the depth setting and that when the torpedo hit the side of a ship squarely -- 90 degrees angle -- the firing pin did not set off the fulminate of mercury capsule. So we were lucky, by the time BLUEGILL was fighting Japs, most of the torpedo problems had been ironed out, but our torpedoes never were as good as German or Jap torpedoes.

And then there were the skippers. Having trained only in peace-time against our own forces, our sub crews did not know what to expect of the Jap anti-submarine capabilities. Indeed, one of the attack approaches used, was to fire by sonar alone, and the sub skippers were taught to be over cautious. On 10 December 1941 the TRITON encountered a Jap ship. The TRITON went to 120 feet and fired by sonar, and then went deeper. This skipper quickly changed his ways and became very successful.

But we were lucky on the skipper we picked. I remember going to the attack trainer at New London during precommissioning of the BLUEGILL. I frequently watched a fire control team of another submarine being built at Electric Boat the same time as BLUEGILL. The skipper of that submarine, the ANGLER was a real "Asiatic"; while chewing on a cigar he would calmly make his attack with almost disdain. To him this was just kid stuff. Wait till he gets his boat out into the battle zone. Then I'd look at our rosy-cheeked, baby faced skipper, with close cropped hair, and wonder if I had picked the wrong boat. He looked so young.

At this point I am going to interject the letter that Igloo wrote about the Captain and sent it to Ray "Basil" Phipps, who sent it to me for our reunion in Branson, Missouri in 1995.

THE OLD MAN

I thought back to when I met **The Old Man**. It was late summer 1943, and I had been assigned to the **BLUEGILL**, a submarine being built by Electric Boat Company in New London, Connecticut.

When I met the prospective commanding officer, normally referred to as **The Old Man**, I wasn't impressed. In fact I was discouraged, for I mentally compared him to the other submarine "skippers" I had met. His work khakis were neatly pressed and spotless, as if he had just sat at his desk all day. He was of medium height and build, and his hands were delicate and appeared soft, but what really shocked me was his boyish face with rosy cheeks and topped with close cropped hair. Gawd, I thought, I must be older than he. I quickly realized, however, that **The Old Man** was all business, understandable, for he had come from a long line of seafaring men. He lived by the Navy Regulations, customs, and traditions, and he told me he expected the same behavior from his officers and crew.

It was in the submarine attack trainer that I started to develop respect for **The Old Man**. My battle station was in the conning tower at the torpedo data computer. **The Old Man** knew exactly how he wanted his attack fire control party to function, and he was explicit in his guidance and orders. While in sub school I had watched other pre-commissioning crews in the attack trainer, and in comparison I now realized that this middle sized man was a giant in capabilities.

It wasn't until we had our ship's party, just prior to commissioning, that I got to know **The Old Man** socially. No longer was he stand-offish. Instead he was laughing and congratulating his crew and stopping at each table to share a drink with them. There were too many tables - - he became slightly tipsy before the night was over - - but we knew he was proud of his "boat" and crew.

After six war patrols in the Pacific the **BLUEGILL** returned to Mare Island Naval Shipyard in California. **The Old Man's** submarine had a distinguished record for sinking and damaging many ships.

Also he was only one of six skippers that made all patrol runs with the sub he put in commission

Looking back I realize how much I owe this man. Only he had a visual picture of what was happening on the sea's surface during our torpedo attacks, for only he was looking through the periscope. It was on his mental calculations that our lives depended. His timing had to be perfect. Should we stay at periscope depth a few seconds longer in order to get a better solution for a torpedo firing or dive deeper to lessen the damage from the enemy depth charges. Our mission was to sink enemy ships; his responsibility was to save a submarine and the 76 humans aboard. Many times he called it very close, but we survived. I thank God for assigning me to a submarine that had a baby faced rosy cheeked **Old Man**.

(Now back to the story).

The submarine, USS **BLUEGILL**, SS 242, a Gato class Submarine, started her existence at Electric Boat Co. of Groton, Connecticut. She was born on December 17th, 1942, having her keel laid that day in Groton. After many months going through the slow process of growing into maturity, she was launched on April 8, 1943, at the EB yards with the usual ceremonies and good wishes from Navy and civilian officials. From thenceforth on, her new crew started reporting aboard until nearly a full complement was reached. During the ensuing weeks, the crew became acquainted with their new home, making a point to learn the nomenclature of the boat and just what makes her tick in general.

Next came the preliminary trial runs to test for any defects and then a commissioning on November 11, 1943. We had a commissioning party and some of us never recovered, namely Clark, until about three days later.

Her armament consisted of six torpedo tubes forward and four aft. A 4 inch 50 deck gun was situated just forward of the conning tower topside. A 20 millimeter gun occupied both the forward and after cigarette decks. The magazine held several 50 and 30 caliber machine guns besides a number of rifles and pistols and all the ammunition.

The compartments were as follows: The forward torpedo room which included crews quarters, sonar and a head. Then the forward battery, officers head, officers quarters, chief quarters and yeoman's shack. The next was the control room and pump room below with conning tower above. Also the radio shack. Then the after battery and crew quarters, crews mess, magazine, heads, wash and shower facilities. Then the forward and after engine rooms; then the maneuvering room with a head and finally the after torpedo room and crews quarters. The BLUEGILL was operated by a crew of approximately 80 officers and enlisted men. Probably 70 percent of the crew were green and had very little or no submarine duty to speak of but naturally, this situation didn't exist for long.

We continued trial runs off Block Island and Newport for training with torpedoes and then we left New London on January 3, for Key West.

It didn't take long for the going to get tough. A few hours out of New London a wicked storm was encountered which all but incapacitated the majority of the crew for the next two or three days. As I recall, there were only 18 of the officers and crew that were able to stand watch with out being sea-sick. I remember Louie Bertone when he would call the crew for the next watch, had a flashlight in one hand and a bucket in the other.

After riding out the storm, Key West, Florida was her first stop, arriving there on January 10th. Several days in dry dock were followed by more trial runs.

Several things happened in Key West. It was there that Sexton, with a bunch of the gang at La Concha Hotel, talked someone into biting a waitress on the butt as she leaned way over the table to collect bottles, glasses, and trays. She let out a horrible scream sweeping her arms out and throwing booze, beer, and glasses in all directions. Our wonderful exec, Bud Cooper, had to get most of the gang out of the brig. And then there was the time that Story and Basil stole Key West base bicycles and Basil rode his off the end of the pier. Captain. Brown wasn't going to let the BLUEGILL leave until he got that bike back and the guy who took it. Basil and Hugh Story both deny this, so I wonder who it really was that pulled this stunt? Then there was the night that some

of the crews were returning back to the boat when they ran into so some EAGLE boat sailors returning back to their ship. One was especially boisterous and said that he had sailed the seas and that no one, especially "Pig boat" sailors, ever put anything over on him. And while he was bragging, Moon Hrenchier was "wetting" him down. When this braggart realized what was happening, he turned, but one look at Moon and the bunch from the BLUEGILL made him realize that he had better keep his mouth shut. And then there were a couple of officers who stole a bunch of silver ware from the Casa Marina hotel. Well it wasn't real silverware.

We departed for the Panama Canal Zone on January 29. We arrive CZ at 1315 on February 2, negotiated the very interesting passage through the canal the same day, and arrived at Balboa, CZ that evening at 2130. We laid to until February 5th when we commenced further trial operations in the Saboga Island area. These consisted mainly of torpedo and gun practice and approaches. While out there we had our first indoctrination of 3 depth charges placed at different distances from the sub. Two weeks later we left the Saboga area and arrived back in Balboa on the 19th. I believe it was Boucher who had the duty but snuck ashore and ran into the "old man" on the beach. Boucher was restricted to the ship for two weeks while the ship was underway for Milne Bay, New Guinea. Not to worry, Boucher, the trip took 27 days.

Actually we left for the Galapagos Islands and arrived there on February 25th. During this trip we crossed the equator at 0207 and had the customary Shellback initiation held at the islands.

We left San Salvador the same day after we refueled. Clark was on lookout and he sure wouldn't want to fall overboard. For about the first 100 miles of ocean it seemed to be alive with sharks. Arriving at Milne Bay on March 27.

I remember that before going on patrol we served as a submarine target for some ASW destroyer and patrol craft while in the Milne Bay area. After one exercise we surfaced and one of the stupid patrol craft set the message by flashing light, "what ship?". On board BLUEGILL was our colorful Division commander, Creed Burlingame, who exclaimed to the quartermaster, "Oh for Christ's sake, send him

the I-15 of the Imperial Japanese Navy." For a second I was fearful, but the patrol boat hurried away, I guess to make a contact report.

After several days of rest, our final trial runs began, lasting until April 1st when the BLUEGILL departed for Langenak, New Guinea and arrived there and refueled. We left Langenak on April 3rd for our 1st war patrol. This is when her fighting days officially began.

FIRST PATROL

We got underway from Langenak escorted by the USS SC 981 with our belly full of fuel. 1230 sighted and spoke to the submarine SILVERSIDES. 2000 parted company with our escort USS SC 981. We're on our own from here on out.

April 4th we sighted two different aircraft, they went on their way and we stayed on surface. We also sighted USS TUNNY inbound. Next day we sighted evidence of a ship having been sunk. Bud Cooper dove overboard with a line around his waist and retrieved a life ring. No name was visible on the ring. Marine growth indicated it had been in the water for several days. Had another aircraft contact but we remained surfaced.

April 8th Sighted Helen Island. 0630 submerged until 1955. Made reconnaissance of Helen Island. Observed no evidence of activity either on the Island or in the lagoon.

April 9th entered our patrol area, Sighted Morotai Island at a distance of 30 miles. Bright moonlight night. 0630 conducting a submerged patrol within the western approach to Morotai strait. 0930 aircraft contact number 4. Picked up by periscope at eight miles. No bombs were dropped. 1008 ship contact No. 1 picked up by periscope at ten miles. 3 merchant ships skirting beach at north-western corner of Morotai strait. Unable to close. Estimate ships at about 3500 tons. The next four days consisted of submerging in the morning and skirting Tg Sopi each day and surfacing at night.

April 15 entered new area surface patrol with high periscope and high lookout during the daylight. Had 2 aircraft contacts dove from both. Sighted Pulo-Anna Island. The next 11 days we sighted a number of islands including the Sonsorol Island's.

There were 14 aircraft contacts during this period of time and we dove from each of them to be on the safe side. The lookouts were getting a workout and had a number of bruised shins to prove it.

April 27 a great day. 0420 set course at 4 engine speed to intercept 2 20 knot targets reported by the USS BLACKFISH to be heading in the direction of Sonsorol Islands. 0707 ship contact No. 4. Sighted top of ship coming out of a rain squall about 26,000 yards distant. Visibility improved somewhat. One target identified as a MITSUKI class destroyer circling in a large circle. Had another aircraft contact and descended to 100 feet. Later came up to periscope depth. JP sound contacted the targets screws at a range of 9800 yards. 1015 ship contact No. 5. Sighted a cruiser of the YUBARI type steaming out from behind the island at high speed. Here's big meat.

Commenced approach on the cruiser at a range of 11,000 yards. At the same time the cruiser commenced radical maneuvers. There were two depth charges apparently from the aircraft. The cruiser went behind the Island and we commenced an approach on the destroyer. Destroyer apparently sighted us. She turned toward us and increased her speed. Made ready 4 of the bow tubes at depth settings of 6 and 8 feet. Sighted cruiser again headed for us with a large stern wake. All ahead full speed. Make ready all bow tubes. Obtaining quick setup on the cruiser. Her range is now 2600 yards. Took two more observations in the next minute and a half. 1058 fired six torpedoes at a range of 1900 yards. Speed used was 20 knots. 1100; boom it's a hit! A good solid hit was observed about the vicinity of No.1 fire room on the cruiser. Periscope saw it hit and an instant later heard the explosion. Cruiser heeling to water line to starboard and almost completely involved in smoke. A few seconds later another explosion was heard but later confirmed that it did not hit cruiser. All ahead full. Bring stern tubes to bear in the direction of the destroyer. Cruiser is dead in the water with a definite starboard list and smoking heavily. BLUEGILL slowed to two-thirds speed with rudder amidships. The destroyer is headed our way at a high speed and meaning business. Four more depth charges but not from destroyer. Probably the aircraft. Or it could be explosions on the cruiser. Fired all four stern tubes at destroyer with varying coverage but all missed de-

stroyer. We dove deep and rigged for silent running and depth charge attack. Settled down to evasion tactics at 312 feet. 1350 up periscope. Nothing in sight. Secured from silent running and depth charge attack. Saw 3 three destroyers in distant. No cruiser is visible. We had a total of 27 depth charges. This was a great day for the BLUEGILL. I remember the "Old Man" saying "well, we have just paid for the BLUEGILL", meaning that the cost of the YUBARI was equivalent to the 9,000,000 dollars it cost to construct the BLUEGILL.

Now let me tell you what Takehiko Tsuda told me about our attack. He was the navigator aboard YUBARI and at the time of the attack was on the bridge and had the 'conn". I met him a few years later. While YUBARI was coming to starboard, in accordance with the zigzag plan, a lookout saw three torpedo wakes coming toward the cruiser. While swinging the ship to port to avoid the first torpedo, one of the others hit it amidships. Tsuda said only one torpedo hit YUBARI but so much happened in a few seconds he may not have realized the other hit. The ship took on a lot of water, and in Tsuda's words floundered because it became waterlogged; however, it did stay afloat for 20 hours before sinking.

The YUBARI was laid down on June 1922 and was completed in July 1923. She was the model ship for the Japanese heavy cruisers MOGAMI and MIKUMA. At the end of 1943 YUBARI completed repair at Yokosuka and in March 1944, while assigned guard duty in the Sipan Island area, she was given the task, along with two destroyers, to transport the first battalion of the 192nd infantry regiment, about 580 officers and men, to Sonsorol Island to prohibit the occupation of the island by US forces. YUBARI accomplished this task on the 27th of April 1944.

April 28 we continued reconnaissance of Sonsorol Island. No evidence of the cruiser. At 1344 ship contact #7, dived and commenced approach. It was a convoy at 14,000 yards, and consisted of new type cargo barge escorted by one MATSUKI class destroyer. We attempted to shoot the destroyer as the barge had a shallow draft. Visibility is very bad, the convoy apparently is deliberately following within the rain squall. Making deliberate approach. Range 5000 yards. Fired four stern shots. Long torpedo

run was bad. Torpedoes ran apparently directly under the target. The destroyer and barge both heading toward us. Started deep at standard speed, rig for silent running and depth charge attack. Had a total of ten depth charges. They seemed fairly close. Later surfaced and noticed strong odor of bunker fuel oil in the air and a heavy slick was sighted in the water.

May 1st we had our eighth contact. Attack No. 4. The high lookout sighted smoke over horizon at a distance of 30,000 yards. They were 3 merchant ships. Convoy lost in rain squall. Headed toward the rain squall at four engine speed. As we got closer we go to periscope depth. We chose the largest ship which was a 9,000 ton stubby stack diesel. Two SC escorts were with her. Set torpedoes at 8 feet. Target length 450 feet. Fired four fish from the bow tubes. Range 2475 yards. Speed 10 1/2 knots. Checking perfectly on TDC. Saw and heard two solid hits. One forward and one aft. Target presented a slight list to starboard and was engulfed in smoke. Sound reported high speed screws, similar to those of a torpedo, heading this way. Observed leading merchant on that bearing, puffing smoke, and building speed. It could very well be a "Q" ship. Down to three hundred feet and fast! Steered left full rudder to present bow to possible torpedo. Rigged for silent running and depth charge attack. Commenced evasion, last sweep around before going deep. Showed in addition to the "Q" ship and the target the other merchant ship high-tailing it over the hill. Two sub chasers headed in this general direction at high speed. On our way down, we hung on a heavy density layer at 200 feet. Standard speed wouldn't drive her through. Flooded 14,000 pounds in order to get to 300 feet. Slowed to three knots, then the depth charges started and we took a total of 18 depth charges. None too close. Reached periscope depth at 2018. Sighted the target blazing furiously. Flames must be visible for 50 miles or better. No other ships in sight, but the visibility not any too good because of near darkness. The flaming ship was a beautiful but awesome sight. The sight which probably comes as the greatest thrill in the life of a submariner. Secured from silent running and depth charge attack. Surfaced at four engine speed. Transmitted our contact report via radio. Nothing else in sight accept the target burning furiously. Nothing around target except for abandoned life

boats. Patrol area during night. Comes dawn, and she's still afloat! 0600 battle stations surface. Closing in on target as dawn approaches. Gun attack No.1. Although the ship appears to be abandoned, it's still very possible there may be survivors aboard who could do no little damage with a deck gun. Best not to get too close. Commenced firing four inch gun. Range being from 1500 to 2000 yards. One hundred rounds of four inch ammunition expended. At least 90 percent of these proved to be hits. Observed two tremendous holes in the bottom of the target from the torpedo hits yesterday. One aft and one forward. Took pictures. The ship was identified as a ASOSAN MARU (AK) at 10,593 tons in ballast. She was gutted by the fire raging inside fore and aft; hull plating showed red just before dawn. It was quite a thrill to see her go under just like the movies. Closed to one life boat with the intentions of retrieving gear, particularly looking for identification data. Aircraft forced us to dive.

May 3rd had another ship contact. Contact identified as the submarine USS BILLFISH. Spoke to her and left our station headed for Seeadler, Manus Island, in the Admiralties, for fuel, via the Sonsorol Islands. Had aircraft contact #24 May 4th, three miles distant. Dived, but quick. Next day we contacted Sonsorol Islands at 70,000 yards. Patrolled within range of island. Submerged reconnaissance encircling islands. Had a good look all around. No military activities visible. Took periscope pictures. Continued on our way to port.

May 8th and 9th we had four more aircraft contacts and dived from each. On the last one several distant explosions strong enough to shake the boat were heard. That guy must know we're here somewhere and wants to keep us down for awhile.

May 10th we rendezvoused with the submarine USS CERO and the cruisers USS LONG BEACH, our escort. We moored in Seeadler Harbor and received 9 torpedoes and 50 rounds of four inch ammunition from the USS CERO. Received fuel from the USS MINK. And miscellaneous provisions from both the US Navy and US Army shore establishments. The smell of land seemed good again.

Clark wants to tell a little story about the **Old Man** during peace time in St. Petersburg. The skipper had made a trip from San Antonio to Tampa

Bay, on his way to Miami to meet his wife and then go to Key West for a vacation. He couldn't get out of McDill air base for at least three days so he called Howard Haney and was hoping to stay with him. He had a full house of company so he brought him over to Clark's house. The skipper of the CERO, lived in Largo Florida, near St. Petersburg and the skipper asked me to take him to see him. I don't remember the other skippers name but he and his wife had a good time talking about the time we got torpedoes from the CERO because he hadn't gotten rid of his fish like we had. They had quite a time together and his wife made some pretty good drinks. I took him back to our house and then we went out for dinner. **The Old Man** was feeling no pain.

May 11th received fresh water from the USS LEOPARD. Got underway in company with the USS CERO and the USS LONG BEACH. About 2130 parted company with our escort and headed for our patrol.

May 12th parted from the USS CERO.

May 16th entered our area from the equator to the east coast of Halmahera and Morotai.

May 19 submerged patrol Tg Lelai, Halmahera, skirting inside gulf. Ship contact #12. JP sound gear reported screws. Ship shapes becoming visible through periscope identified as one MITSUKI destroyer and SC boat standing out to sea against the land background. Poor attack positions, withheld our attack. 1 ship, contact #13. One 600 ton oiler accompanied by a small boat they apparently intended to be an escort. Would make good gun targets but not worth a torpedo. Saw a number of other small ships and fishing boats that day but did not attempt to contact them.

May 20th, 1645 ship contact #14, attack No. 5. Distance 12,000 yards. Escorts were visible shortly, thereafter taking stations on the port quarter of the target. BLUEGILL is in an excellent position. Battle stations submerged! Commenced approach. Observed that the target is apparently holding steady on her course. Gained an excellent attack position between the target and the coast line with both escorts been screened by the target. The high noise level background was very unfavorable for the escorts sound conditions. The ship is tentatively identified as similar to that of a MIYAURA MARU. 1720

up periscope. Range now 1700 yards. Nice setup. Firing all torpedoes to hit. Can almost make out features of the crew on board the target. Here's hoping we kill everyone of the bastards! 1724 fired 4 torpedoes with a 750 yard torpedo run using a target speed of 9 knots. Waiting for the expected explosions. Boom, boom, boom. There they are! Saw and heard the first three torpedoes hit. The first one hit right under the stack amid ships, lined perfectly on the vertical crasher. What explosions and flames. It indicated gasoline or ammunition or other high explosives. The ship simply evaporated. Small pieces of their ship probably will be found high and dry on land. Tried to save the last torpedo from being fired, it went out just as "stop shooting" was ordered. Don't think there was any ship left for it to hit. She sunk. Hope the escort skippers do the honorable thing and commit hara-kiri. 1726 take her down to three hundred feet and right full rudder. Rigged for silent running and depth charge attack. Received a total of 11 depth charges. They were dropped singly and deliberately. Some were not too far away; particularly at first, evidenced by the fact that several storage clamps securing fuel hose in the superstructure were carried away with result of banging of the hose against the plating. Took offending hoses inside the boat upon surfacing. Reached periscope depth no shipping in sight. Sighted one of the escort crossing stern at a distance of 6000 yards. 2050, secured from depth charge attack and started some of our more silent auxiliaries. In general we remain at silent running, however, until surfacing.

May 21st had two more ship contacts but did not present very good targets. They were of the smaller escort type. That evening we surface patrolled on a northerly course.

May 22nd we had radar contact and closed to range of 20,000 yards. We had aircraft contact, dived, continued approach submerged, and with rain, aircraft and escorts we were never able to get a shot at the targets. There were a total of 7. They detected us and dropped 3 depth charges. They were very close aboard, probably the closest we have had yet. We came to periscope depth and were out of visibility from the ships. Secured from silent running and depth charge attack. Surfaced and commenced chase at full power.

Now comes a very exciting period of the patrol. A plane attacked us out of the sun. Remember, this was our first patrol, and the officer of the deck, instead of diving instantly passed the word, "Captain to the bridge, aircraft contact!" And I remember the "old man" rushing into the control room and passing the word, "for Christ's sake, dive, dive." Simultaneously, Bud Cooper, who had been using the after battery head, came streaming into the control room with one leg in his pants, and one leg out encircled in toilet paper. Well we dove, and that plane dropped two aerial depth charges those aboard. The first one exploded while passing 40 feet down. It knocked the power out of the bow planes just as they got to hard dive. The second one exploded seconds at the stern, while passing 200 feet. The boat was severely shaken, and we lost depth control with planes jammed and a 25 to 30 degree down angle. Clark had been on look-out at the time and had the bow planes and sure was scared. He kept thinking, as he spun the diving plane hand wheel in hand, that some day they would pull the plug on the ocean and find the BLUEGILL with her nose buried in the mud. Well by backing emergency and blowing bow buoyancy and by backing the plains off hard dive by hand, we finally gained control. Because of the lack of power on the bow and stern plains together with the boat being light forward, she began to shoot upward at another dangerous angle. Seemed as if we were going to pop right out of the water and once again make ourselves a target for the Jap plane. But at about one hundred feet we once again managed to gain control of the boat, this time for good.

We had quite a bit of damage topside, and some inside the boat, but most of it we could repair, or leave until we got into port.

During the first patrol we sank the following: 1 YUBARI class cruiser 2890 tons: one freighter ASOSAN MARU 8812 tons: 1 freighter MIYAURA MARU 1855 tons, a total of 13558 tons. And it was finally realized that Clark Gwyer's shins would always be skinned and bleeding when we were on patrol. He always missed the ladder when "clearing the bridge".

From May 23rd till May 29 we had four aircraft contacts and 2 ship contacts. Then on May 29 we left the patrol area headed for Brisbane, Australia.

This is when the Old Man broke out the 2 ounce bottles of whiskey; one for each one of the crew, if they wanted it.

On June 1st we rendezvoused with the USS PC 1124 our escort and moored alongside the submarine tender USS EURYALE, in Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island, Admiralties. The patrol considered completed on this day although we took departure in the afternoon to arrive in Brisbane, on June 7 for a complete overhaul of the BLUEGILL and a two week leave for the officers and crew. We took a total of 69 depth charges and 3 aerial bombs during this patrol. The patrol lasted a total of 61 days.

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

After we arrived in Brisbane all hell broke out. While the crew was at the Toowoomba rest camp it seems that Talbot lost his submarine combat pin at a place near by, so some of us stole a Navy bus, raided the house and Bragg procured some records that he played in the after torpedo room. Talbot got his pin back. (That's when a combat pin meant something). Well, it was nice to get ashore and get away from Ceretto's stinking black Italian cigars, but I always enjoyed his singing "I'll be home for Christmas".

A group of about ten of us went to Sydney for ten days and it sure was enjoyable. We stayed in a hotel that was opened for Airforce and submarine sailors. We were the first ones to stay there. It was an old hotel and they had taken the doors off for fire safety reasons. The first morning when we woke, we were surprised to see a maid in the room while we were still in the rack. We waited a few minutes but she was in no hurry to finish, so we finally got up and got dressed and went down for breakfast. We were given ration coupons for one liter of spirits and one of wine. The bars only had enough beer for 1/2 hour each day so you would watch to see where a line started and rush to get in before they closed the doors. You might be three or four deep trying to reach over for a beer. It was quite an experience and we had a good time. We had flown down on a PBY but had to go back by train and it took 24 hours to get back as each state had its own gauge rail road. We had to change trains at the state line. We were

also issued clothing coupons and I never could figure out why. Clark met a cousin over there that was in the Army quartermasters and one of the Australian men, working in the building, asked me if I would get him a white shirt. I went in a store and the first shirt they showed me looked like a piece of old muslin. I asked for the best white shirt and had no trouble getting it, with more clothing coupons. When I took it back the man told me they weren't allowed to buy those kind of shirts.

After our two weeks of R and R we loaded stores and the equipment we need for the next run which included any spare parts that we might need or had used on the last run. The relief crew replaced all the worn and broken parts that had happened on the first run.

SECOND PATROL

We left Brisbane June 28 on our way to Seeadler Harbor. July 6 we got under way for our second war patrol. It was to be in the vicinity of Davao Gulf, Mindanao, Philippine Islands. Igloo remembers three things about this patrol. I will put them in and then go to the dairy of Ed Goessel.

The first was one night while I had the deck and we were trailing off Davao. It was pitch black, and Lt. Bucko Stockton passed the word to the bridge that our radar interceptor receiver had a loud indication. Now up to this time we had little faith in that contraption, but suddenly a roar was heard above and I could see the fiery exhaust of a large plane passing just overhead, at least the shadow looked large, and the roar was loud. Of course we dove immediately, and as we were passing 90 feet I realized that I was shaking all over. From then on I respected that contraption.

Another memory is that on that patrol Bud Cooper's wife, Kathy, was expecting a baby. Of course he was concerned, so the wardroom was trying to come up with a name. We thought all kinds of arrangements, but in the end the baby girl was named Sally. So when we received that news we would recite the poem to Bud, "Of all the girls that are so sweet, there's none like pretty Sally, for she's the darling of my heart, and she lives down in our alley."

And so on. When I finally met Sally she was a grown wife, about 30 years later.

The third incident I remember was based on the landing at Normandy. As you recall, that occurred in June, and once we got above the cliffs, the US Army made a rapid advance toward Paris. In fact, at the time of this incident, it was forecasting that the GIs would be entering Paris any day. Well, one night I had the deck and Hrencher came into the control room and passed the word, "they are marching through Paris!" Wonderful news, so good that I thought proper to awake the Old Man from his much needed sleep and acquaint him with the good news. He duly thanked the messenger. In the morning when he got up he went to the radio shack to read the news about the US Army entering Paris. No news, the next word from the control room was "Igloo", where did you get the news about the Allies entering Paris?" I thought, "Oh God, that Hrenchir!" I got Hrenchir up and asked him where he got the news, and he simply replied, "They've been marching through Paris for years! "

Oh, and I remember that Kenny Beckman, when he trimmed the boat to a fine point he would tell Soldier to stay in one place.

Now with Ed's diary. The first 13 days we had 12 aircraft contacts. On July 20 we had our second ship contact, attack No. 1. It proves to be a light cruiser and we thought we would get ourselves another cruiser, oh boy. We made all tubes ready fore and aft. And she was tracking at 26 knots. It would be a long 4300 yard torpedo run and she's not coming any closer. Fired six steam torpedoes, the tracks were plainly visible plus a light blue smoke the NATORI maneuvered to avoid and missed all six fish. There's no doubt but what he saw them coming. They dug six nice holes in the beach. We had four aircraft contacts and 2 depth charges but probably were aerial bombs. It was a nice try for the cruiser but no such luck.

July 20, second ship contact #3, attack No. 2. The periscope sighted a small 1000 ton MFM innocent looking steamer standing up the coast. It was traveling at a speed about 7 knots. No zigzagging. No escort in sight. Looks like easy pickings for us. Made ready tubes forward set depth of torpedoes at 4 feet. Fired three steam torpedoes. 1400 yard tor-

pedo run. The target did not maneuver to avoid, but the torpedoes did not hit the target. Torpedoes must have run under target. Don't think she saw the wakes but were startled by the explorations of the torpedoes against the beach. She then turned toward us. There's a wire tending a submerged tow astern. Man, are we a bunch of suckers! It's a "Q" ship. Take her deep in a hurry. Rigged for silent running and depth charge attacks. Commenced evasion tactics. We took nine depth charges, all of them quite close. They came fast and furious and shook the boat considerably, but luckily no serious damage was done. She stayed around for a while and dropped 2 more depth charges. She later left the area and went back out of sight.

July 23rd ship contact #4. Sighted a lighted ship. Commenced our approach. Its speed was 14 knots, and no zigzagging. No other ships were in her company. We closed until we got close enough to positively identify her as a 2 stack hospital ship correctly illuminated, apparently on a course for Palau out of Davao. We let her go by.

July 25 had three more aircraft contacts and ship contact #5. Periscope sighted a small 1200 ton MFM Coast freighter with 3 escorts. The target was bouncing around like a cork. A deep draft ship wouldn't bounce that much in the existing sea condition. We decided that we wouldn't play sucker twice.

Nothing much doing until August 2nd when we had ship contact #8. We tried to get into a good position to fire. She had a CHIDORI type escort. The target proved to be a 3500 ton MFM passenger freighter. As we were getting ready to fire a nice short torpedo run the CHIDORI had shifted to short scale hand keying. Up periscope. Range of CHIDORI is now 1500 yards.. Periscope, no good solution. Depth charges 1,2,3,4,5,6, close aboard. Wham! Depth charge No. 7. Depth charge 8 still very close. We never did get a good set-up to fire any fish and we took a total of 14 depth charges.

Nothing much doing until August 7. 1300, ship contact #11, attack No. 3. There were three Jap ships along with the target. Range to the target is 18,000 yards. Making intermittent ranges and bearings. Going to 100 feet between sightings. Length of target is 400 feet. There are at least 2 escort vessels on the starboard quarter of the target. Only one was

echo ranging; they must listening; the lone Kate was still there. For tubes forward were made ready and upon completion of a final bearing target was at 1425 yards. The escorts were getting too close, had to fire all four fish. The tracks were visible, no smoke was observed. We weren't detected as yet. Escorts are on short scale pinging now. They're heading in toward us. Take her deep fast! All ahead standard and left full rudder. Two explosions were heard. A good solid hit in the engine spaces. Noticed much smoke and flame billowing forth. The target has a definite list to starboard. Rigid for depth charge and silent running. Heard the fourth torpedo exploding against the beach. Depth charge number one quite close then depth charges 2,3,4,5 and 6. Close, too close. Depth charges 7 and 8 still close. Then depth charges 9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15. They kept dropping them and some were close and others farther away. The final count was 36 depth charges.

August 8th had 2 ship contacts but were never able to do any firing at them. The next four days we had aircraft contacts and some small ships but did no shooting.

August 13 had 2 aircraft contacts in early morning. 0925 ship contact #12, attack No. 4. Sighted a cargo transport with 5 escorts attending. Planning a stern shot with Mark 18s made ready four torpedoes using target length of 350 feet. Right full rudder. Target speed 7 1/2 knots. Many men are visible cluttering up the targets topside, apparently troops. Final bearing and shoot. Fired four torpedoes from the stern tubes. 1500 yard torpedo run. It's a hit! Right smack in the quarter. Her stern lifted completely out of the water. Target took a heavy list and flames enveloped her, flaming from aft to forward. No chance to lower life boats here. Another hit! We got an escort. The escorts don't even know what's happened yet. The escort went up in a column of smoke and flame two hundred feet high. Our opinion being that torpedo No. 9 hit the target. No. 8 missed, No. 7 hit the escort. And No.10 ran erratic. Went to 300 feet and rigged for depth charge and silent running. 2 depth charges close but don't feel that the escort has a good contact. We had a total of 5 depth charges.

August 15 ship contact #13, gun attack #1. Sighted a sailing ship. Commenced a submerged ap-

proach to gain station for battle surface. Estimated length was 90 feet in excellent condition. Made battle surface. Range 3000 yards. Closing to 800 yards. 23 rounds of four inch expended with 17 hits. 180 rounds of 20 mm expended with mostly all hits, ship sunk.

August 18th Sighted our escort the HMAS ML 807; and joined company with her. Moored along side the USS COUCAL a sub rescue ship at Darwin, Australia. August 19 departed for Fremantle, Australia and two weeks leave in Perth.

Sunk this patrol 2 AK ships each 4,000 tons, 1 TB 5000 tons, one sailing coaster, 100 tons. A total of 68 depth charges.

PERTH AND FREMANTLE, AUSTRALIA

Finally, on August 24th, 1944 we arrived at Fremantle, Australia. What a place! Do any of you remember who it was who stole the madam's parrot from the house of ill repute on Roe Street, the town got so hot with shore patrol and police, that the thief had to pay a civilian to get the parrot back on its perch? How about the time when Nick Ferro fell into the honey bucket during that beer bash at Co-tasloe? How about that night that DU Smith, Rabbit Hare and Dudley Bragg could- n't find a fish and chips place open, so they started sneaking around back yards to find a chicken to cook. Hell, they were so far gone they couldn't have caught one even if were crippled. In time they passed out on someone's front yard, and since they were so far gone and didn't move, the frost formed on their blues. When they opened their eyes they saw an elderly lady staring at them and backing away. As soon as one of them moved, the lady screamed and hobbled away at flank speed. And then there were those ships parties! A little wilder than the one we had in New London, by far. After our customary overhaul and R and R, we loaded supplies and headed out for our third patrol.

THIRD PATROL

The third successful war patrol was most successful indeed! It was undoubtedly the most unforgettable patrol we made. More seemed to happen on this one than any of the others. It added to our already growing laurels but nearly proved to be our downfall. This patrol was unquestionably our best and also our most dangerous, proven by the fact that we almost wound up at the bottom of Makassar Straits. Once again, however, we outlasted the yellow devils and after 71 days at sea we pulled into Fremantle again.

September 18th we got underway from Fremantle Western Australia, on our third war patrol. Proceeding to Exmouth Gulf, W A., in company with the submarines USS Cod and USS Angler conducting training exercises enroute. September 18th we moored along side a fuel barge in Exmouth Gulf and took on our fuel before leaving for the Philippine Islands. Four days later we commenced transit of Lombok Strait. This was early morning and we had a ship contact 10,000 yards. Closed to 5400 yards, either a patrol craft or fisherman. Avoided. Had 4 aircraft contacts during the afternoon and early evening. We dived from each of them. Continued on to Sulu Sea. During the next five days we had a number of aircraft contacts and some small ships. Sept. 30 we converted a fuel oil tank to a main ballast tank. We were in our assigned patrol area.

October 6 about 4:30 p.m. had ship contacts No. 7. Distance 15000 yards. Commenced our approach. She was an MFM inter island steamer estimated 1500 tons. It was the largest ship contact yet made this patrol. Proceeded to make ready for a battle surface attack. Made battle surface a range of 15,00 yards. First 4 inch shot hit amidships in the engine spaces. 20mm and 30 caliber sprayed her topside, particularly what looked like a gun on the focastle head. Target with full left rudder headed for the beach but apparently they abandoned the ship almost immediately thereafter. After expending 64 rounds of 4 inch, 1400 rounds of 20 mm and 1500 rounds of 30 cal, the target began to sink. It didn't sink hardly at all so fired one torpedo on the surface at a range of 1000 yards. The torpedo hit and the

target disintegrated! The net result was we saved 2 torpedoes, would have fired three on a submerged attack.

October 12 was a very rough day for us. We sighted three Sea Trucks complete with trees and brush camouflage at a distance of 14,000 yards. Prepared to make battle surface. Made battle surface of the starboard quarter of the target group at range of 1800 yards. The target group immediately dispersed in a very efficient and military manner. One went left, one went right and we were left in the middle. Two of the trucks opened fire with apparently 50 caliber machine guns. Our 4 inch gun quickly silenced, with the help of the forward 20 mm, No. 2 Sea truck. No. 3 had found our range and was hitting us with no opposition. Our after 20 mm was jammed with the first cartridge, a load clearing projectile was stuck in the barrel. Our 30 caliber had not yet opened fire. The 4 inch gunners continued their fire. These Japs really knew what they were doing. Emphasized by the amount of lead flying our way. Abie Gold, was wounded on top of the scalp by an enemy 50 caliber bullet which pierced his helmet. His helmet saved his life by deflecting the bullet. Ed Goessel was creased on the elbow by an enemy 50 caliber projectile. Cerreto received light shrapnel burns on the left shoulder. With 50 caliber bullets rattling around the periscope shears, bridge, and the 20 mm platform, our situation was getting precarious. Clear the bridge! All three trucks were not worth one U S. sailor being wounded. In clearing topside, Harmon was wounded extensively but not too seriously with shrapnel in the left shoulder and arms as he descended through the hatch. Later in Australia an operation was necessary to remove pieces of shrapnel. Rudick received a split lip when he was kicked in the teeth in the scramble for the hatch. Altogether, it was an ignominious retreat, but seemed to be the only sensible one. We could have blasted all three of them out of the water in short order but we probably would have lost several good American lives doing it. All hands from the skipper down are madder than hell. Actual results 2 500 ton Sea trucks damaged with three hits of 4 inch and numerous hits of 20 mm.

October 14 about midnight there was a hydrogen explosion in the after torpedo room in No.9 tube. The torpedo was withdrawn and attempts made to

pull the battery and salvage the fish but a fire broke out inside and got ahead of the personnel working on the torpedo. Heavy smoke and fumes made habitability in the after torpedo room and maneuvering room dangerous. Opened the after torpedo room hatch, closed engine induction and pulled a suction with four engines through the hatch in the maneuvering room air induction while the flaming fish was loaded back into the tube. We jettisoned the faulty torpedo by firing it from No.9 tube. Herbie Maine was the one working on the torpedo and Clark Gwyer was assisting him. Herbie got so frustrated trying to get the connections on the battery and he just couldn't get at it because of the danger of fire in the torpedo. We were the only 2 in the torpedo room while he was working on it.

October 18, about 0345, we contacted ships at 25,000 yards. It was a convoy of about 10 large ships plus at least 3 DE escorts. Judged their speed to be 8 1/2 knots. Started in for a night surface attack, hoping to complete it before dawn, but no such luck. We stayed on the surface and planned a dawn submerged attack. Commenced transmitting contact report to the USS ANGLER plus all submarines and completed the transmission at 0500. No receipts. When ANGLER was called first, and answer came back with: "Frank has submerged, have you anything for me?" Suspicions of a Jap on that one! Broadcast and encoded contact report to all hands. Later we found out that it was the submarine USS RATON. We went to periscope depth and continued tracking the convoy. We set depth on the torpedoes at 6 feet forward, 4 feet aft. The electric's are ready for the escorts. Ed Goessel has a lot of detailed notes on this attack sequence. The general gist of it is that we fired three torpedoes at one target and three at another target and were forced to go down by the escorts. We took 17 depth charges and were doing evasive tactics at 325 feet. Went up to periscope depth. Nothing was close, smoke of the convoy was in sight. about 1100, here comes NAN, our small transport. She's echo ranging. Range 6200 yards; make ready bow tubes set torpedo depth at 6 feet. Will shoot 4 at NAN and then immediately 2 at the cripple. We got hits on the target and hits on the cripple. We had to take her deep, rig for depth charge and silent running They started depth charge

attack and dropped 28 of them on us and it was knocking cork and other things lose in the boat. We could hear the ship's breaking up and it sounded as though they were very close to us. Igloo said what scared him the most were the ship's breaking up noises. Our course changes in avoiding the escorts, had put us practically under a sinking ship. The noise on the starboard quarter was the strongest, and from the conning tower the noise seemed to be just outside and on deck. I had visions of being carried down to Davy Jones Locker, because these were big ships, and if we were caught underneath one, no more liberty. In addition, there was a scraping noise along the starboard side, and I swear they were grappling hooks. The Japanese had used hooks once before that I know about. But the depth gage showed that we were holding our depth and not going deeper, and the scraping noise slowly subsided. We lucked out, we were lucky. About 2000 we took stations for night surface torpedo attack. Made ready bow tubes. Fired two torpedoes. 1200 yard torpedo run. No hits. Fired remaining 3 torpedoes from the forward room. Fired on radar bearings. The targets could not be seen from the bridge even at that close range. Observed and heard 2 torpedo hits in the target. Almost instantly thereafter the target disappeared from the radar screen at a range of 500 yards. The pip on the escort was still in evidence though. Then she decided that was enough submarines hunting for her. She turned and ran away. Lost honorable face no doubt. Positively sunk 2 large ships of 7500 tons and 1 ship of 4000 tons. Probably sunk 1 large ship of 7500 tons.

The last 2 pages were from Ed Goessel's notes, except for the incident about Igloo. Now to some of Igloo's notes.

We were off Cape Mangalihah at on the northeast coast of Borneo. We were patrolling at periscope depth, and the sea was smooth as glass. Nothing was going on, and Ploetz's birthday cake was on the wardroom table. I was all set to dig in when the word was passed, " Captain to the conning tower!" Seconds later the word was " battle stations submerged!" We didn't know it, but the Japs knew exactly where we were, and they had sent out a hunter killer group to get us. We had started the approach and had flooded the tubes aft. Those damned electric fish,

they sometimes leaked. We already had had a battery fire in a Mark 18 fish that we had to fire out of the stern tubes. On the next periscope observation, the target had turned away and the escorts were headed for us, and the OLD MAN ordered, "secure the tubes, take her deep fast, rig for depth charge attack an silent running." Then followed 47 depth charges that were close, big and nerve shattering. With each charge something else would break inside the boat, sea valves were opening in the engine room and flames were coming through the forward torpedo room loading hatch. the depth charges cause such a vacuum when they go off that is why the loading hatch actually opened slightly and allowed a sheet of flame to come in and slam shut and not a drop of water came in. There were 5 of the crew in the forward room that saw the flash. I was worried about the electric fish flooding, so I proceeded back to the after torpedo room. In the forward engine room Hrenchier and I got the sea valves closed, but when I got to the after torpedo room water tight door, I was stopped. It was securely dogged to the point that I couldn't open it and the light was out, and Bryce was not about to let me in. That was his last patrol; he said later that he never wanted to go through a depth charging like that again, and I guess he didn't. Years later I met him at the cocktail lounge on the " Top of the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. He was the maitre'd. Finally, at about 1900 we surfaced. We had multiple damages both internally and topside and it was then that Doc Carey or Nick Ferro, whoever was on the radar repeater said, "I have a contact! " And the OLD MAN followed by, " let's go get them! "With what I thought; four tubes forward were unusable, the after fish may be flooded, and the deck gun was knocked askew. I was reaching for a wrench to hit Carey or Ferro over the head, when he announced that he had lost contact. Lucky for him we turned south for home.

Since this was about our worst experience of any of the patrols, I am going to give a detailed report that Ed Goessel used in his. Depth charges 1, 2, 3 and 4. my God! These were hits! Block busters! The noise and confusion were indescribably terrific. It felt like inside of our heads were splitting wide open. Many of the crew were knocked flat. Samples of the depth charges were retrieved upon surfacing and

were retained on board for examination.. Charge 4 brother, he's right on us. Depth charges 5, 6, 7 and 8. These knocked out our emergency lights temporarily. Resorted to using flash lights. Depth charges 9,10, 11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26, 27 and 28. In the midst of these we maneuvered with full left rudder and used standard speed until the noise of the charges died away. Didn't do any good though. The force of the explosions knocked us down to nearly 400 feet with an increasing down angle. The bow planes, stern planes, and rudder were buffeted around considerably. Stopped to avoid going any deeper while we regained control of the angle on the boat. The clutches to the bow and stern planes were held in locally by hand in the forward and after torpedo rooms. These charges were head splitting. It's for sure the boat can't take many more of these. We'll be done for. Hell must have sprung a leak. Depth charges 29, 30, 31, 32. These were dropped with a definite pattern in depth. Single explosions and not a ripple effect like the previous. Still right on us.. By this time the deck in the control room and conning tower were slippery with sweat. You could see the sweat boil out of your skin These are the nerve centers of the boat and where most of the evasive tactics are centered from. The air conditioning was naturally off and consequently the temperature and humidity were high. Depth charges 33, 34 and 35. This is getting unbearable. Don't think there's a man onboard who isn't downright scared. Still there is no signs of anyone cracking up or going hysterical. All hands seem cool and collected which means a lot at a time like this. The charges aren't subsiding a bit. They were exploding all around us. Hope the little yellow slobs are enjoying themselves. It's a cinch we weren't. Depth charges 36 and 37. Sound reports noise as of escaping air from the forward torpedo room. Secured service air forward, noise stopped. This wasn't impulse bottles. Depth charge 38 and 39. Still awfully close. Everyone is taking a considerable shaking up. JP sonic equipment is reported out of commission. Quick survey of the boat indicated that there is considerable minor damage, but by some miracle she's still tight, and she's still going. Everything seems to be under control. The torpedo room crew is getting tight from alcohol fumes as the result of ruptured storage tanks. The boat is heavy and hard to hold 340 feet at

90 rpm. Subsequent inspection revealed that the amidships sanitary tank was flooded with both the sea and stop valves backed open. Depth charge 40, 41, 42, and 43 Oh God! This hurts. Why don't they go away and leave us alone? We ain't done them no harm. Oh there was no doubt that we'd pull through O. K.. But what was doubtful in our minds, was whether there would be anyone left to tell about it. Depth charged 44, 45, 46, 47. All 47 of these depth charges were very very close. The last 2 were the least close of the lot and the first indication that the escorts. were losing us. Of immediate importance; the gyro spindles were bent on bow tubes 1, 2, 3, 4. No. 5 and 6 spindles had been withdrawn. The bow planes would not rig in in power. There were numerous electrical grounds throughout the boat. The important damage of yesterday's depth charging had been repaired by the crew. All tubes are ready to shoot after having removed, straightened, and replaced the damaged gyro spindles. The bow and stern planes were now operative in power. Most of the numerous electrical grounds have been cleared.

Clark remembers one time that we dove and went to battle stations submerged and had 3 depth charges dropped and he was still asleep. He was only about eight feet from the klaxon and the IMC speaker, but they didn't bother him at all. Every one was on battle stations for 20 minutes when they realized that he hadn't showed up in the forward battery on his station and they had to send somebody to wake him up.

We had a total of 92 aircraft contacts on this patrol, we dove from most of them just to be on the safe side. We also had a total of 33 ship contacts but only those that we have mentioned are included in this report. The results of this patrol were; sunk 22,500 tons, damaged 10,500 tons, grand total of 33,000 tons. Later on it was learned that actually our results were better still. Also sunk one A. K. 9500 tons (listed as damaged). one DD 1500 tons evidently hit in one of the attacks on the convoy off Manila Bay. Accounted for one or two of the unidentified explosions that were heard. He must have gone down fast. Later still it was learned that he was the escort that was guarding the lone cripple we polished off by firing three torpedoes during our night surface attack. She must have gotten in the way of one of the fish

and sank a few minutes later. The AP sunk was definitely confirmed to be a Q ship as we had suspected, thus classifying her as a Man-o-War. The total depth charges for this run were 98.

We transited Lombok Strait on November 21st and arrived in Fremantle on November 25th this ends the third patrol.

FOURTH WAR PATROL

Since Ed Goessel stayed in on this patrol we don't have any of his diary. This will be from Igloo's report.

We departed from Fremantle on Dec. 19th and on December 26th, at night, we tried to transit Lombok Strait in the moon light. I remember that I was in the control room with Bud Cooper, we were plotting our position as we transited. Suddenly I heard an airplane roar overhead, and I expected the captain, who was on the bridge, to dive the boat. But Bud said, "that's no airplane, that's a 6 or 8 inch projectile." Then more came, and the Captain was salvo chasing. The shore battery on the southwest corner of Lombok was firing at us, and the flashes were coming closer, so the old man did the smart thing and we retreated and transited later that night when the moon set. We also received 2 Jap war prisoners during that patrol, and I remember the Aussies aboard thought up all kinds of torture, which I can't blame them, after what they had seen the Japs had done to the Australian soldiers in the Stanley mountains of New Guinea. Clark remembers the Jap that was held in the after torpedo room was about 26 and had a family of three or four in Japan. His name was Meyaoka. He gave us no trouble at all as he wanted to get back to his family if at all possible. The one we had in the forward room was more of a problem. His name was Koa. They had to keep him well guarded as he was about 16 and would have done damage to the sub if given any kind of a chance. Both of them were under guard and would have hand cuffs and legs cuffs on unless they were being escorted for food. The Japs had been given to us on our way back to Fremantle as the sub that had sunk one of their ships picked these two up. We didn't sink any ship's on this run but did blow up a number of mines

We arrived back in Fremantle on February 10th. It was in Perth this rest period that William Wood Schweer exchanged his grease gun for a larger one. He got so good with that gun that he could hit a zerk fitting at 50 paces. I remember that during approaches, all the OLD MAN had to do is make a comment about the leaky periscope and suddenly William would appear, I guess from behind the sonar panel, with his trusty gun.

This was our last rest period in Perth, and it was during this period that some of the crew had befriended a gal at the local USO. I may not have all the facts correct, anyhow they convinced her to have a party at her place. Refreshments included a keg of beer that one of the fellows brought. Anyhow this girl couldn't keep up with these wild guys and finally went to sleep. So how did our crew show their appreciation? They put the beer barrel in the bed beside the passed out sleeping girl. When she came to, we were leaving Fremantle, it was March 12th, 1945

FIFTH WAR PATROL

On leaving Fremantle we proceeded to Exmouth Gulf, W A. independently. We sighted and spoke to USS CROAKER and USS BREAM. Then commenced transit of Lombok Strait.

March 19 at 6 a.m. ship contact No. 1. Torpedo attack No.1. The periscope sighted one auxiliary sailing vessel acting as a tug to a small MARU and it really is small. Fired 3 torpedoes singly from the bow tubes. The targets were anchored. Depth setting 2 feet. Range 2600 yards. Missed!

March 20 overtook an pulled alongside a 14 ton sailboat which contained 8 Malayan men, exceedingly well fed and healthy looking. A thorough search for a radio and weapons revealed nothing. We gave them some rice and cigarettes, but they didn't seem very happy with our boarding them. A while later we came alongside another. sailboat. This one was much smaller but contained 19 Malays including two women and five very small children. It was jammed packed. They were all hungry and half starved showing definite indication of malnutrition. Obviously they were not in the employ of the Japs. They were delighted to see us and on showing them the American flag their faces lit up in a large smile and

they bowed all over themselves we gave them rice and cigarettes which were received with much demonstration of appreciation.

March 28th, 1030, ship contact #4, torpedo attack #2. Large transport at a distance of 13,000 yards. Battle stations submerged. Depth charges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. quite a salvo and quite a distance. Later information indicates it was probably the submarine USS BLACKFIN being worked over about six miles to the south. There were five escorts. and sound reports the escorts. had shifted to short scale and is coming in. Depth charges 14, 15 and 16. Plenty close. 11 o'clock the navigator says we're too close to Hon Doi, so right full rudder. Loud screws. Sound says we're surrounded. To hell with them! Make ready tubes 8, 9, and 10. Depth charge 17. Shook the boat considerably. Up periscope. Still can't get in range. We're surrounded by the escorts. The target is getting clear now; seems to be settled down. Range 2600 yards. It's a transport all right, an MFM. She's sure loaded as she's riding deep in the water. Up periscope stand by aft. Shoot! Fire 8. The escorts. are still all around us down scope. Fire 9, fire 10. Sound reports one set of screws closing, all around the dial. Better go down deep. Rig for depth charge and silent running. Down to 150 feet. Not very much water here. Depth charge 18. Close, torpedo explosion. It was No. 8. torpedo. Explosion from No. 9. A great array of depth charges. 35 in all and plenty close! Must have been more than one escort. The boat was taken quite severely. This was the largest single salvo we've ever encountered. The concussions open sea valves fore and aft. Hydraulic oil spewed all over the after torpedo room from the steering system. Much minor electrical damage occurred, nothing too serious. 1120 received five more depth charges. Close but not as bad as the previous salvo. Wham! Here they come again. Another large salvo. 25 this time. They are really organizing and teaming up. Down to 75 feet. Make ready No. 7 tube. Another salvo of depth charges, received 12 of them this time and getting a little farther away, but still shook the boat. Bango! A salvo of 20 this time. Getting farther away. Received three more singles before coming to periscope depth. 1400 secure from silent running and depth charge attack. Head for the 2 escorts.. They must be guard-

ing or standing by something, or picking up survivors. Receive seven heavy depth charges which were quite far away. This proved to be the last of them. We took 112 depth charges this time.

March 29, investigated the ship which was beached on Hon Doi with the 2 torpedo hits from yesterday's action. She was hard aground by the bow, but she looked pretty whole salvageable. 0245 take station for night surface torpedo attack. Closed to 1400 yard torpedo run. Made ready tubes 6, 5, 4 just in case we missed with the first one or it exploded on the rocks. 0430 fire six, seconds later fire five! Hot, straight and normal. Stop shooting. They both hit abaft the stack about 50 feet apart. The explosions were tremendous, throwing up debris and flame 2 hundred to three hundred feet in the air, followed by a huge oil fire breaking out. We opened to watch the show and clear the vicinity. A most awe inspiring sight.

0455 received word of a downed aviator near the coast just north of Cameron Bay and about 24 miles south of here. All ahead flank on 4 main engines. Had a number of aircraft contacts and dived from each. Being night they saw the sail boats near the fire and apparently were firing at them. We searched the surface for the day but could find no trace of the downed aviator. Had 1 aircraft contact we dove and he dropped 3 depth bombs on us.

March 13 about 0330 ship contact #5 at 23,000 yards. It turned out to be a lighted hospital ship speed 10 knots. A large lighted red cross on the after stack was brilliantly illuminated. Horizontal green band extending only about one fourth the length of the ship. Had to let her go.

April 4th we submerged patrol of Cape Varella one half to one mile off shore. April 5th about midnight we sent a landing party consisting of two Australian commandos from our boat to shore. They were to attempt to blow up railroad bridge but were detected. However they did manage to successfully make their escape. We picked them up and resumed our surface patrol.

April 14 we contacted a ship and found it was a large three masted sail boat. We fired 4 inch, 40 mm, 20 mm, 50 cal. and 30 caliber ammunition all around the sailboat but she did not douse her sail. Finally at 300 yards we discovered a few heads

peeping out of her holds. The heads were not Jap. She finally got the idea that we wanted her to pull in her sail. Finally boarded the sailboat. 19 men in their crew: no large cargo; she carried no papers of any kind. We gave them some bread, rice, and cigarettes and showed them the American flag whereupon they all started bowing. Finally sent them on their way. Our commandos had gone aboard the burned out ship and brought back Jap papers, charts, etc.. Including one box of Kayser silk hose made in the USA. and one Colt 30 caliber machine gun made in the USA. The bridge had been all burned out. The officers quarters and staterooms were partially burned out, and most of the living spaces in the island were flooded as she was well down by the stern. They had set incendiaries to start fires and charges to blow holes to finish off the ship. We're waiting for the fireworks to begin. 0340 first explosion heard. Observed a small fire break out in the living spaces and around the bridge which spread by leaps and bounds. This account of the sinking of the ship's and other incidents were from Ed Goessel's diary and now I am going to give the account that Igloo made.

Remember, with the BLACKFIN and BLUEBACK, we attacked repeatedly, the last convoy on the Indo China coast and we succeeded putting 2 electric fish into the tanker auxiliary named the HONAN MARU. The Japs beached her and later on we put 2 steam fish into her, and she was put on fire. I remember that Cecil Anderson and Cliff Owens, our 2 Aussie commandos, visited the HONAN MARU at night, and later Cliff told me that he found a machine gun aboard made by Colt arms. Getting back to the attack; I counted 108 depth charges that attack, but we also stopped a destroyer dead in its track, for on that patrol we carried Mark 27 "cutie" acoustic torpedoes. About time, the Germans had had them for some time. Lieutenant Bucko Stockton had taken some instructions on firing this Mark 27, he was to fire when the sound intensity of the ship's propellers above reached a certain level. We had to be below 50 feet or the "cutie" might come back to our screws. There was Bucko, with his ears cocked, and as this destroyer came over for another depth charging run, Bucko yelled, "fire!" The cutie carried out its mission, for we heard no more propeller noises, and an aircraft of the Army Air

Corps reported one destroyer dead in the water at our location. The cutie had hit the propellers. Years later during the Vietnam conflict, I had command of a ship operating off Indo China, but I could find no trace of the HONAN MARU, or even the name of Hon Doi. One other event happened on this patrol, an event that caused many tears across our nation. Franklin Roosevelt died on 11 April. Regardless of what one may think of his political views, we were lucky to have him. leading the nation during the war. On this patrol we got credit for sinking the following; HONAN MARU 5500 tons, and damaging destroyer 1500 tons. This was our shortest patrol, it only lasted 41 days. We pulled into Subic Bay April 18th. Moored alongside the submarines tender USS ANTHEDON. All set for another two weeks leave.

SUBIC BAY, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Not much happened during this rest period, no scandal except it was rumored that Lieutenant George Ellis found a girl ashore, a feat worthy of a medal. Some went hunting Japs; was it Dunning that got himself one? I, myself, remember visiting Manila. Kind of a mess! Clark remembers going to Manila and then trying to go up to Bagio where the fighting was. The MPs stopped us on our way and made us go back. I understand that a few of our crew were able to get through. The Skipper, as I remember, gave us a certificate saying that we could be with some armed forces. Manila sure was a mess. Outside the walled city there were dead Japanese and we were told not to go near the bodies at all for fear of booby traps. Manila had been taken just two months before we got there. One thing that amazed me was seeing children, five and six years old going around pimping for their sister and they would have a role of bills big enough to choke a horse. We could sell a carton of cigarettes for 20 dollars. We only paid 50 cents a carton.

Clark remembers a very embarrassing moment for him on the way back to Subic Bay. He hitchhiked a ride on an army truck that had women and little children and drums of fuel. He sat on one of the drums and it was high octane gas and the bung wasn't tight and he sat in a puddle of gas which of course started to burn his butt. He had to get his trousers

down to get air on his butt and as soon as the truck slowed enough and he saw some water he jumped off and sat in the water to cool off.

Clark also remembers in the chow hall when we would take our trays out to the garbage can and there were always Filipino children waiting to get some food. We would always take more than we wanted to eat and scrape it onto their pans or whatever they had to eat from.

SIXTH WAR PATROL

We departed Subic Bay on May 11th for life guard duty to pick up downed aviators.. After several days of patrolling in the Hongkong area, Pratis Island was sighted. It is located approximately 150 miles east of Hongkong and 200 miles southwest of Formosa, actually being quite small, probably no more than a mile or so in length at the most.

At this point I am going to interject excerpts of the story of "BLUEGILL ISLAND the island named for a submarine" from May 93 Sea Classics, written by A. B. Feuer.

The BLUEGILL carried two members of the A. I. F. (Australian Imperial forces), Captain Cecil H. Anderson and Lieutenant Clifford J. Owens who belonged to special assessment command outfits known as the M/Z units. Beginning early in the war, these small commando detachments were put ashore by submarines on Japanese-occupied islands. The Australians were rigorously trained in jungle warfare. They contacted guerrillas units, acted as coast watchers, and reported emmy ship movements.

On May 26, the BLUEGILL closed Pratas Island to within a thousand yards, and periscope reconnaissance revealed no signs of life. The submarine continued patrol west and north of the reef.

Meanwhile, commander Barr and Captain Anderson were busy formulating a plan to invade the island, destroy Japanese installations, and obtain intelligence data. Two landang sorties were decided upon. The first would be a night recon patrol by the Australians. If Pratas was clear of the enemy, the commandos would rendezvous at daylight with a naval party at a designated location. Upon reaching the beach safely, Anderson's instructions were to transmit a low whistle. And, at 0500, he was to establish ra-

dio communication with the submarine. Code names were set up. The M/Z units would be referred to as MEATBALL, and the BLUEGILL as TARFU.

Any, and all, eventualities were discussed. Emergency light signals were agreed upon:

On beach, required assistance to return to sub - letter "A."

Capsized in water-letter "C."

Recognition - letter - "R."

An alternative plan was also adapted in case the commandos failed to contact the submarine or keep their rendezvous with the naval shore party. The BLUEGILL would patrol off the western coast of Pratas Island, and watch for any predetermined signals that would be displayed near the southwestern shoreline:

Smoking fire - returning to ship immediately.

White cloth spread at edge of underbrush- enemy on island, require help.

Both fire and cloth - all clear, require assistance to return to ship.

About noon on May 28, a US Navy PBY Catalina dropped a few bombs and strafed the island. An hour later, the BLUEGILL surfaced, and pounded Pratas with 60 4-inch shells and 76 rounds of 40 mm ammunition.

On May 29, 0025, the BLUEGILL closed to within 3000 yards of Pratas Island. Anderson and Owens climbed into a fol-boat (Australian 2-man kayak) and paddled toward the ominous shore. Captain Cecil Anderson narrated: "at 0140, we landed without opposition at the southwestern headland of the island. After signaling that our landang had been successfully accomplished, Owens and I preceded proceeded west, keeping close to the underbrush, and reconnoitered the south beach. We came across several old foxholes and the remains of a recent fire.

About an hour later, I discovered a path leading inland from the beach. We followed this trail for approximately 800 yards to the edge of a settlement. All buildings were searched and found clear of the enemy. We then moved south along a narrow-gage railroad track to a jetty on the south beach. Additional foxholes were found along this track. A trenchwork system was also discovered which covered the sea approaches to the wharf. By 0430, the

area in the vicinity of the jetty had been searched and found clear of the enemy. At 0500, we returned to where the fol-boat and radio had been hidden, and transmitted the results of our reconnaissance to the BLUEGILL. Commander Barr then gave orders for the naval shore party to prepare to leave for the island".

While waiting for the men from the submarine to arrive, the commandos reconnoitered the north shore of the beach, but no further signs of enemy occupation were discovered.

Captain Anderson described his reconnaissance mission: "Pratas is a horseshoe-shaped island about one and a half miles long and a half mile wide. The vegetation consists of two palm trees, some bamboo trees, mello plants, and a heavy underbrush which covers the entire island. Rats and small lizards seem to be the only living creatures.

The settlement area is comprised of six concrete buildings - all reduced to rubble except a radio shack, which is heavily damaged. Besides the south jetty, another path leads to a jetty on the northeast shore. Both piers are constructed of concrete and are in good condition. Each jetty is 50 yards long, and eight feet deep off the end at low tide. Two mooring buoys off the northern pier indicate a possible emergency Sea plane base. A neglected black framework light tower, 120 feet high, stands on the eastern end of the island. A few small wooden shacks and boats were found along the southern shore. It was evident that the Japanese were using the island for a radio and weather station

At 0835, the naval landing party, commanded by Lieutenant George Folta, and consisting of four officers and six enlisted men, climbed into rubber boats and headed for Pratas Island. Lieutenant Folta narrated: "we hit the beach near the south jetty at 0945, and were met by Captain Anderson and Lt. Owens. We split into two sections and scouted the paths leading to the settlement. My group took the trail beginning at the palm trees. The other members of the party followed the railroad track inland. We joined up at the clearing where the settlement was located. All buildings were searched and investigated.

In the two story radio shack we found wet-cell batteries made in the US, radio parts, and meteorological equipment. Nearby was a pump house containing

a well, pump, bath tub and showers. There were also two lavatories. One with porcelain fixtures (evidently for officers), and another, not so lavishly furnished, for enlisted men. A weather reporting structure had been completely demolished. We also discovered a storage area which contains 20 drums of heavy crude oil.

The buildings had been well built, but were now damaged beyond repair. Adjacent to the pump house was a tennis court, and around the periphery of the settlement, we discovered several boxes of weather recording equipment. At the north end of the clearing, the Japanese had set up two wooden auxiliary guns guarded by a couple of fake soldiers. An arch, with Japanese writing, was located near the guns, and a path lined with inverted Saki bottles, ran underneath the arch and led to a small two-door shrine. Upon opening the doors, we found offerings of bread-fruit, melon, a money box, and a couple of vases containing plants. The fruit and plants were still green which indicated a recent occupancy - estimated from 10 to 14 days".

After the shore party had completed their investigation of the clearing, the commandos and submarine personnel gathered around a flagpole. And, at 1022, on May 29, 1945, two captured Japanese bugles called the invasion force to solemn attention as the Stars and Stripes were raised to the summit. A plaque was affixed to the base of the pole certifying the capture of the enemy territory, and changing the name of Pratas to BLUEGILL ISLAND."

Lieutenant Folta continued his story: "Upon completion of the ceremony, Lieutenant, Frank Stockton, Jr., and two men, searched the beach eastward along the shore from the north pier to the south jetty. The rest of our party assembled at the light tower, where we proceeded to place demolition charges. At 1205, the charges were set off. The resulting explosion blew off the top of the structure, and the tower telescoped half its length before toppling over."

The sailors and commandos resumed their exploration of BLUEGILL ISLAND and soon discovered two ammunition dumps. A cache near the settlement contained ten boxes of 25 caliber shells and several cans of food. A partially concealed storage bin, near the south jetty, was not only packed

with ammunition, but also held two 25 mm guns in excellent condition.

George Folta stated: "We stumbled across several foxholes, but they were placed - according to Captain Anderson - with no tactical plan in mind. Additional explosive and incendiaries charges were placed in the fuel and ammo dumps. We set off the charges at 1500 - just prior to leaving the island. As we headed back to our ship, I could see billows of smoke twisting skyward from the beach, and hear the staccato reports of exploding shells."

At 1640, the entire landing party was back aboard the BLUEGILL, and loaded down with the "spoils of war". Among the dozens of souvenirs collected by the men were 4 boxes of 25 caliber ammunition, a grave post and a wooden plaque bearing Japanese writing, weather monitoring and radio equipment, glass ball fishing net floats, binoculars, a bayonet, and the two bugles that sounded the capture of the enemy territory.

In his action report, Commander Eric Barr stated: "it is suggested that BLUEGILL ISLAND could be used as a weather reporting and radio station - and possibly as an air-sea rescue base. The Island can also be utilized as an advanced submarine and aircraft facility. Evidence, such as ramps and mooring buoys, revealed that it had been recently used by Japanese seaplanes. With a little blasting, the island's lagoon can be made serviceable for ships the size of submarine tenders - a veritable second Midway."

This concludes the story of "BLUEGILL ISLAND" published in Sea Classics.

On thing that was not mentioned in this story, that I believe is correct, is in the message the Skipper radioed in also said: "Request beer and air coverage for a ball game". That didn't go over too good with the "Brass", but they had to congratulate him on the mission.

We continued our search and rescue operation but found no downed aviators. On June 12 we Moored alongside the tender ORION in Saipan. We had mail, ice-cream, beer, etc. but no women. The next day we left enroute to Pearl Harbor.

June 21st we moored at the sub base Pearl Harbor. We stayed at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel that was set aside for service personnel. I remember three of the crew tried to bring booze into the hotel and the

OD caught them two times and poured about 100 dollars worth of booze down the drain.

June 25th we left Pearl Harbor on our last lap home. We were going back for a major overhaul at Hunters Point. July 2nd we arrived at San Francisco, California, docking at Hunters Point and later shifting to the sixteenth Street Bethlehem Steel yards for a general overhaul. I remember arriving in Frisco, we were in whites and our lookouts were in the same foul weather gear they had on in December in New London. That's how cold it was. Boy did we shiver on deck

FINALE

Now just to finish off about the BLUEGILL, since the war was over in August, they had no more need for the BLUEGILL and her fighting spirit. In November they moved the BLUEGILL to Vallejo, California for decommissioning. Quite a few of the crew had gone home by then after being discharged from the Navy. We were the thirteenth boat outboard from the pier and it was quite a chore for the electrical gang on the dock to keep fuses in for each boat. They had large cables running to the end of each pier, and each boat only had a 100 amp fuse to supply all their needs. We finally had the BLUEGILL decommissioned on March 7th, 1946. Eight of our commissioning crew were still on her to the end

In the 50's the BLUEGILL was put back in commission with modifications to her superstructure and interior. She later was in Pearl Harbor for a while. Then they had no further use for her and she was sunk in 125 feet of water. They used her for training divers on rescue for submarines. There were some civilians that were diving on her and the Navy was afraid someone would get hurt and sue the Navy so they had a big task force raise her and tow her out to 1000 feet and sink her again.

Some of us have told other sub guys that "the BLUEGILL had the longest dive on record." When they would ask "how long", we would just say "13 years."

Ray "Basil" Phipps has a lot of pictures of her being raised and towed to her final rest.

Thus finishes:

“THE STORY OF THE USS BLUEGILL, SS 242, AND HER CREW”