



IN REPLY REFER TO

U. S. S. POMPANO

WAR DIARY OF T.P. McGRATH

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Aboard the U.S.S. California, P.H., T.H.

7 December, 1941.

Today will go down in history as a momentous one for the Navy and the Nation. Our losses on this day will both hinder and help our future Naval actions.

"Had breakfast at about 0725, finished eating about 0750. Took a turn into the wardroom for the morning news papers when G.Q. sounded. All of this was most unusual, definite feeling of action in the air, so immediately doubled time topside.

As I came out upon the quarterdeck I saw several large columns of water rising from the otherside of Ford Island and a fierce fire raging in one of the large seaplane hangers on the southern side of the flying field. Above the Ford Island airfield was a Japanese plane turning away after having delivered an attack on the ships berthed across the Island from the California. I could plainly see the orange red circles on both wings as he banked steeply away from me. An indescribable feeling of hate swept me.

It is funny how one reacts, I couldn't believe my eyes;

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however; I doubled up to the conning tower. Explosions were most frequent by now, some quite heavy and close, everyone was most calm.

On arriving at the conning tower I found the door locked shut so had to break the lock off before it could be manned. by this time the din was becoming terrific. Shortly after communications were established to the various control stations from the conning tower we received two torpedoes to port from torpedoed planes coming in on our port beam.

By now things were happening fast, the hospital right across from us on Ford Is. received a bomb. (Luckily it landed in the patio and did very little damage to the hospital proper.) Incendiaries were falling, lucky, in the water. A Jap sub was sighted across the Is. The Curtiss opened fire on it followed by a destroyer who shelled it and then depthcharged it into nothing. Made a very impressive picture to see the great gysers of water rise up in the harbor when the charges went off, plus all the gun fire. Also, by this time I had seen several planes crash, one from a direct hit in mid-air. One of these planes crashed on Ford Is., the pilot was

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worked over with the bayonet by a marine as he walked over to him. (Well Done, at this writing I envy the marine; there will be few prisoners in this war. The fewer the better.)

The Nevada has steam up now and is under way steaming out the Pearl Harbor Channel. The firing, bombing and machine gunning has ceased considerably. Just about the time the Nevada reaches the bend to round the southern tip of Ford Is. all hell cuts. Two heavy bombs strike her in quick succession aft of her bridge. Large fires engulf the bridge area and she grounds across from the Is. after receiving additional bombs for'd. that detonate as though her magazines went. A destroyer in the floating dry dock blew up along with another in the dry dock with the Pennsylvania.

The Oklahoma received from three to five torpedoes about the same time we received ours and she is now observed to have rolled completely over; total time, fifteen minutes. Gad, they must have lost the men. From the battleships astern great clouds of smoke are rising; can't tell from where.

With this second attack we receive one heavy armor piercing bomb frame 57 strb'd. which explodes on the armor deck in the engineers' compt. just for'd of the J.O.

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for'd. bunkroom. Many near hits shook us considerably, one salvo of four bombs just straddled our bow, very lucky. Fire began to pour out from below decks from our bomb hit, the ship was listing about ten degrees from our torp. hits and a great sheet of flame was being blown down on us from the damaged battleships up wind from us. These flames (about fifty feet high) engulfed our ship and passed on.

Orders were given to abandon ship as there was great danger of rolling over into the sea of flaming oil all around us; our mooring lines had a heavy strain. I followed the Capt. down to the boat deck, watched the flames come towards us and then went up for'd. to the Foc'sl. Helped the Capt. over the side and was sliding down a line when the large awning over the entire foc'sl. burned with explosive force. The flames were passing us rapidly so walked down the armor belt to the quarter deck. By now officers and men were returning to the ship, I received orders to go to the signal bridge and get things reorganized. While in the process of getting things squared away a man came up from below and reported that five men were trapped below central station and plotting room, in the ford' distribution room. Opened one submerged hatch to

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. attempt to free a man in an adjacent compartment, the comp't. was too small as it filled up with water as the hatch was pulled open. Space was so limited and the water so muddy that to look further would delay unnecessarily the rescue of the others.

We cut a hole through the deck to the For'd. board and brought out one Ens. and four men. In the meantime plot and central station were filling with oil and water, a horrible mess. The stench of oil fumes nearly overcame us. However; the ship listing to port enabled us to use our cutting torch to a maximum as one side filled up first. The fuel oil was only about four feet from the torch when we finally got through. We and they were very lucky.

It is now very dark, the Arizona is burning fiercely, the keel of the Oklahoma is all that shows, the Nevada is still burning , we are resting on the bottom with a ten degree list along with the West Virginia. The Maryland Tennessee, and Pennsylvania have all received damage of a less serious nature. I wonder what next.

Wild stories are circulating. One of our carriers is supposed to be sunk; Wake, Guam, and Midway are supposed to have been captured. They have hit us hard, no need to kid ourselves, but it is the last lick that counts. They have yet to see what we can put out. Damned, we better

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get something to fight with.

Parachute troops are supposed to have landed out around Barbers Point. If they did, which I doubt, they were well taken care of.

This will go down in history, nevertheless, as one of the most remarkably coordinated, planned and executed attacks in the history of modern warfare. Results achieved are probably the most extensive ever attained against a first class Naval Power.

8 December, 1941

Tonight as I sit here in my black room with the chair slipping on the inclined deck I can't help but think of the damage received by the U.S. Fleet. In brief:

The Utah, sunk; Oklahoma, sunk; Arizona, sunk and afire; West Virginia, sunk; Tennessee, apparently undamaged; California, resting on the bottom and minor fires; Nevada, aground and afire; Penn., one small bomb; Maryland the same; Raleigh, torp. and bomb; Cassin, Shaw and Downes sunk or blown up; Ogalala, sunk; Helena, one torp, and a few other units damaged here and there.

As to our casualties: All day we have been finding them down below. Dead, like wax images or burnt to a crysp or blown to bits. As yet there are still several officers un-

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accounted for. Estimated casualties on this ship, I would say at least 200 dead, wounded--? It seems you were either dead or alive, no half way measures. The dead on the Ariz. and Okla. must be terrific.

Last night we had an air raid surprise that turned out to be our own planes. Three were shot down; they were coming in from the wrong direction. A terrific sight, 50 cal. MG and 5" gun fire lighting the sky and then the terrific burst of flame when the planes crashed.

Guess that we will be transferred to other ships shortly as ours, I'm afraid, is out for some time to come. Have no doubt that eventually we will make the Japanese "So Sorry" that they ever started this mess. Should they strike again as hard as they did this last time I'm afraid it would make it difficult.

I understand now that there were three subs inside Pearl Harbor. I saw one get the works, have no doubt what happened to him. Only one question; where the G.D. were our planes? Didn't see a single plane get shot down by combat.

10 December, 1941

We are reorganizing fast, large numbers of men must be accomodated ashore as they have no ships, for once we will

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have more men than ships. Do wish I would get some word as to what my next duty will be; guess I'll just sit tight and wait.

The Calif. has settled to the bottom, quarterdeck completely under but most of the list is off. Under stand that the after torpedoes made a gap in our side 15' by 40', damned big and most difficult to mend as it goes under the turn of the bilge.

I have been very lucky, my room is still largely intact and I can still sleep in it. The greater majority of the officers lost all of their gear by fire or water.

Think I will make a time outline of the attack while it is still fresh in my mind.

0755 - Jap planes attacked Hickham Field, Ford Is., Wheeler Field, Barbers Pt., and Caneoe Field, also Bellows. Loss of planes was high.

0800 - Torpedo planes attacked all large ships in P.H. Submarine on west side of Is. Planes at Hickham Field bombed officers quarters bombed, officers machine gunned, PBY hanger in flames at Ford Is.

0815 - Oklahoma after receiving 4-5 torp. rolled over. Calif. took a list of 8.5 deg. to port after two or three torp. were received. WVa., Ariz., Ogalala, Utah, Raleigh all received one or more torp.

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0830 - Attack continued with considerable bombing of air-field. Destroyer depth charges submarine, see several Jap. planes go down, one into the mast of the Curtiss.

0900 - All ships ordered to get underway, attack lulls, somewhat.

0914 - Nevada underway.

0925 - Terrific dive bombing attack, Arizona very badly hit Nevada hit severely twice or more, destroyer in drydock with Penn. hit, destroyer in floating drydock aflames.

0930 - Nevada evidently out of control, attempts being made to ground her out of channel, successful. Small magazine blows up. Incendiary bombs in water, Calif. receives 500 lb. bomb frame 59 strb'd. 15' inboard. Terrific fire started. Bomb intended? for Calif. lands in the center of Navy dispensary, ship machine gunned again.

0945 - Destroyer in floating dry dock blows up along with destroyer in drydock with the Penn. Magazines on Ariz? start blowing up, Tenn., WVa., and Md., engulfed in oil fire which is being blown down on the Calif.

1000 - Engulfed in terrific oil fire that passes quickly. Main attack over.

Thus the Attack on Pearl Harbor drew to a close. Am anxious to see how historians will write this up in history books yet to be printed.

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11 December, 1941

Received orders to the Staff of Commander Battle Force.

12 December, 1941

Do not like the prospects of a staff job in spite of possible obvious advantages, much prefer something with more real action. Called on friendson the Pompano and have requested duty there. The Chief-of-Staff of ComBatFor and the Capt. of the Pompano are both working for me.

13 December, 1941

Received orders to the U.S.S. Pompano, SS181, for duty.

13-17 December, 1941

Getting squared away on my new ship, must admit that there is a tremendous amount to learn on one of these small ships. No where in keeping with there size.

18 December, 1941

Underway for a submarine war patrol against the enemy. Orders sealed, cannot open them until our trim dives have proven successful,. Escorted from P.H. with three destroyers, made two dives , found aft. battery hatch leaking badly. Effected repairs and took departure from our escort.

19 December, 1941

Made 5 emergency crash dives from aircraft.

20 December, 1941

Bombed 0710 (about) by airplane, one of two bombs close.

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20 December, 1941

At about 1630 three dive bombers made attack on us. They were first sighted only 2,500 yds. away coming out of a cloud bank, the leader was leaving formation for us.

Crashedived. Planes dropped three 500 lb. bombs set with delayed fuse for 50 feet. Two went off right over us, and one was a dud. Shook the boat considerably. The reason for the accurate information on this attack is that it was delivered by our own planes and I talked with the pilot who was the section leader.

21 December, 1941

Ran submerged all day.

22 December, 1941

Surface all day, one plane sighted at 1438.

23 December, 1941

Submerged all day, went to 350 feet unintentionally. Ship took the strain satisfactorily.

24 December, 1941

Ran submerged all day surfaced at night.

26 December, 1941

Crossed the international date line so skipped Xmas, just as well.

27 December, 1941

Submerged all day, surface at night, heard ship-no contact.

Note

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28 December, 1941

Same routine as before.

29 December, 1941

At 551 the boat jumped to 581,
Sound contact with the enemy, no visual.

30 December, 1941

Sound contact with the enemy. Received word that we are the only Allied ship within contact distance of WAKE so-- we don't have to worry about identity before shooting. Always a big help.

31 December, 1941

Submerged all day, surfaced at night. New Year's Eve, dead calm, sea glassy.

1942

1 January

Submerged all day, received orders to report Conditions at Wake. Proceeding to Wake.

2 January

0400 When about six, or less, miles from Wake we submerged; continued on in until under 3,000 yds. from the beach and looked the place over. Quite a thrill. No targets sighted other than beached enemy destroyers. Could see the Japanese flag flying.

3 January

Repeated routine of the second; however encountered difficulties. Had been in sight of Wake most of the day when we started an approach to take some pictures, had

in mind particularly a beached destroyer. At about 1400 we were coming up for another "look see" when depth control became erratic. At 55' the boat jumped to 51', flooded in water and down we went to 80'. Pumped out to regain original depth when our bow shot up 12 degrees and we shot to the surface--about a mile from the beach. The variable and unpredictable currents are probably responsible for this unusual action. It was a most tense moment or minute that we spent on the surface as a four engined bomber had been sighted just previously. No bombs or depth charges were dropped, we submerged and escaped.

4 January

Received new orders to an area in the Marshall Is. down on the eastern edge of Jap Mandates. Stood my first top deck watch underway and made my first dive. Encountered no difficulty, also standing diving officer watches. Have been in Subs a day over three weeks, been at sea 18 days and spent over 200 hrs. submerged. Like this sort of sub school.

5 January

Enroute Marshalls, same routine.

6 January

Took over First Lt. duties; passed first Jap Is.

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7 January

Nearly on station, should be sighting something soon.

8-11 January

Observed conditions at Wobje, 3 steamers and one man-of-war in harbor, one steamer very large, have picked it out for a target.

12 January

After letting three targets go by (one a sound ship 500 yds abeam) we sunk a large steamer of 17,000 tons with a four torpedo spread, three hits. Didn't take the small target on the previous days as by so doing our presence would have been disclosed and probably been unable to have sunk this baby. The sinking of this steamer of the Yawata class built '40 of 17,000 tons was the greatest moment of my life.

13 January

When surfacing the 12th we blew up from 175' depth and took a large slug of water into the control room. As a result we have had to lay below today and make repairs.

14 January

Today we approached Wotje to within probably less than 1,000 yds. In fact, took position between two destroyers (minelayer type) and the surf. For five hours tried to get

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a killing shot in. Was a terrific strain as they could cook our goose in a moment had we been sighted, one of our ships would have seen us in a moment and that would have been the end. Three times we put our periscope up within five hundred yards from the target. The battery was getting low so we left them for the morrow.

15 January

Very bad weather, unable to find Wotje.

16 January

Looked the Island over, saw one large freighter and two patrol vessels.

17 January

Attacked destroyer mine layer submarine patrol ship just off the entrance to Wotje; we were between the beach and target when we fired. First two torpedoes went off prematurely. Patrol vessel turned towards us, we fired two more when he was less than a 1,000 yds. and dove to 250 ft. Under went a series of six depth charge attacks 10-12 charges were dropped, all but one was very close. From the cracking and booming that goes with a depth charge attack as well as the shaking of the boat I figured our ticket would be up on the next one several times.

18 January

Took things easy, tomorrow it will be Maloelap.

19 January

Looked over Maloelap; saw 3 patrol vessels, two mer-

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chant vessels. This was over the NE edge of the reef, entrance is about 40 miles away.

20 January

Southerly set took us down by Aur Atoll, will go through channel to night.

21 January

Went up to SW entrance Maloelap, started to torpedo anchored patrol vessel when two more stood out. Turned away when within 900 yds of reef. That night had two ships pass over, patrol antisubmarine vessels, unable to fire.

22 January

Looked over Maloelap SW entrance again, anchored vessel of previous day patrolling channel; went through channel.

23 January

Approached Eastern end of Maloelap to observe Taroe Is. Very strong and variable currents put us inside of breakers, able to get out. Observed 2500 ton minelayer, 2 patrol vessels, barracks, ect. Set course for P.H. Radio transmitter out unable to report. Information vital.

24 January

Radio still out reports still to be made.

25 January

Radio repaired, made necessary reports. Tomorrow we will run on the surface during daylight and I will see the

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sun for the first time since Dec. 22nd. Making landfall at Oahu is probably going to be most dangerous part of entire trip; keeping away from our own forces.

26 January

Sighted one plane, went down with 20-25 degree down angle at emergency full ahead, very tight for a moment. Conning tower hatch was not closed properly, took several thousand pounds over water into the conning tower and control room. No damage done, was able to catch rate of descent at 210 ft.

27 January

Crossed date line. Sighted one plane believed to be Jap very close, could hear him when we saw him. No bombs were dropped.

28 January

Sighted another plane.

29, 30, 31 January

No planes to duck.

1 February

Rendezvous with escort and another sub. and entered Pearl Harbor.

END OF FIRST WAR PATROL

T.P. M. Grubb.