

USS Escolar (SS-294)

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FACT

The last known radio transmission received from USS *Escolar* (SS-294) was on Tuesday, October 17, 1944. *Escolar* reported that she was 33°-44'N, 127°-33'E, and was heading for 33°-44'N, 129°-06'E. These coordinates place the submarine in the Tsushima Strait. The 'wolf pack', known as "Millican's Marauders" and consisting of USS *Escolar* (SS-294), USS *Croaker* (SS-246) and USS *Perch* (SS-313) entered the strait on Sunday, October 15, 1944. On Tuesday, October 17 at 23:00, *Escolar* Commander M.J. Millican ordered *Croaker* and *Perch* south of Sasebo, Japan. They departed, separating from *Escolar*.

DISCREPANCY

The data is undisputed.

SOURCE

Entry in the USS *Perch* (SS-313) log, dated Tuesday, October 17, 1944.

FACT

On Thursday, October 19, 1944, Imperial Japanese Navy destroyer *CD-38* detected an unknown submarine and engaged in an anti-submarine attack while escorting IJN convoy MI-23 in the Tsushima Strait, dropping over 30 depth charges. Bubbles and an oil slick immediately appeared and gear believed to be from the submarine surfaced at the site. The coordinates of the attack: 33°-32'N, 128°-43'E. USS *Escolar* (SS-294) would have very likely been at those general coordinates at that time. If she did, indeed, execute her route according to her last radio transmission, the documented attack coordinates would have been along her route.

DISCREPANCY

The coordinates of the attack are also documented as 33°-32'N, 128°-43'E. It must be noted that the Japan Geodetic System used the Bessel Ellipsoid, not WGS 84 Ellipsoid. This would appear to cause a 60m shift, and could possibly account for the variation**.

CORROBORATION

Victor Lavon Lee, Jr. (deceased), crew member of USS *Croaker* (SS-246) while on patrol with USS *Escolar* (SS-294) and USS *Perch* (SS-313). He contacted Anthony Duda on Wednesday, May 9, 2012 in response to his Wednesday, January 4, 2012 blog about USS *Escolar* (SS-294). He stated that he witnessed sound of explosions in distance and the direction of USS *Escolar* (SS-294) at approximately 15:00 on Thursday, October 19, 1944.

Website: <http://www.anthonyduda.com/blog/2012/01/04/January-2012-A-Personal-Ghost-Story.aspx>

SOURCE

*Combat Action Report of *CD-38*, dated Thursday, October 19, 1944. Japan Center for Asian Historical Records National Archives of Japan.

Website: <http://www.jacar.go.jp>

*Wartime diary of IJN *PB-102*. Japan Center for Asian Historical Records National Archives of Japan.

Website: <http://www.jacar.go.jp>

*Imperial Japanese Navy personnel memorandum. Library of Peace Memorial Display Museum.

Website: <http://www.heiwakinen.jp/library/shiryokan/heiwa>

*USS *Perch* log, dated Tuesday, October 17, 1944

**Richard F. Graham, MosaicGeo USA, LLC, Seattle, Washington

FACT

No other United States Navy submarine or submarine from another nation was reported as attacked or sunk on Thursday, October 19, 1944 in the area where USS *Escolar* (SS-294) would have likely been at the time of the IJN *CD-38* attack*.

DISCREPANCY

The data is undisputed.

SOURCE

*IJN 1st Escort Flotilla wartime diary (*CD-38* and *PB-102* were part of IJN 1st Escort Flotilla), October 1944.

*Exhaustive Internet investigation and research.

FACT

There is an official Japan Coast Guard 'snag report' map that notates a wreck approximately in the documented location where IJN destroyer *CD-38* located and attacked the unknown submarine on Thursday, October 19, 1944.

DISCREPANCY

The data is undisputed.

SOURCE

Japan Coast Guard.

Website: <http://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/umi.html>

Website: <http://www.kaiyoudaichou.go.jp/KaiyowebGIS>

FACT

According to bathymetric charts, the documented coordinates (regardless of the possible Bessel Ellipsoid/WGS 84 Ellipsoid discrepancy) in the Tsushima Strait place the wreck at a relatively shallow depth of 140m (460ft).

DISCREPANCY

The data is undisputed.

SOURCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Website: <http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/bathymetry/relief.html>

Note

According to Yutaka Iwasaki, a researcher in Japan, the documented coordinates where IJN *CD-38* attacked the unknown submarine (33°-32'N, 128°-43'E) would place the location of the wreck in or very near an area of the Tsushima Strait known as "Area Golf", a fire training area for United States military forces in Japan. The Japan Coast Guard warns not to enter the area without full knowledge of the possible risk.

Summary

While there is some question as to the *exact* location of USS *Escolar* (SS-294), this slight discrepancy is likely due to the Bessel Ellipsoid utilized by the Japanese at the time relative to the WGS 84 Ellipsoid used today. In any event, the Japan Coast Guard *does* know where the wreck is located, as they have noted it on their 'snag report' map of the area. In addition, we have fairly precise coordinates, corroborated by multiple source material. The facts demonstrate that there is every reason to believe the "unknown submarine" attacked in the Tsushima Strait on Thursday, October 19, 1944 was, indeed, USS *Escolar*, with no existing evidence to suggest otherwise.

The 82 brave men aboard USS *Escolar* want to be found. They want finality and closure for their family members and loved ones and, only then, will they finally rest. But perhaps, most of all, they want their story to be told. They want us to know the truth.

We owe them that.

Research and Assistance

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