

CONFIDENTIALACTION OF ENEMYName of Vessel
Date of CasualtyWILLIAM K. VANDERBILT
5-17-45

Master

"After the ship had sunk, the submarine surfaced and headed directly for my boat. We were rowing away from it. When he was quite close and I felt that he surely had seen us, I gave orders to stop rowing and to keep quiet so we would not attract attention in event he had not seen us. Immediately after I stopped the men from rowing, the submarine turned at right angles to its course and turned on a searchlight. I later learned that at this time a machine gun from the submarine fired at No. 4 boat, which was the Third Mate's and a life raft on which he put the men who jumped into the water. However, no one was hit by bullets, neither were there any holes in the boat or the raft. I saw the submarine cruising around very slowly for awhile. It appeared to be about 300 feet long, very long on the conning tower. I did not notice what kind of gun was on the deck. The deck of this sub seemed to go up in a kind of a hump on the forward end near the bow. As the submarine appeared in the darkness I did not know when it submerged, and I felt it advisable to wait until daylight before looking for survivors, as the moon had already set and it was quite dark."

Name of Vessel
Date of CasualtyWILLIAM KING
5-6-45

Chief Mate

"He came over to us. He came in between the two boats and told us to come alongside and fired a short machine gun. Came alongside and they asked for the captain. At first we told them the captain was gone, that he had gone down with the ship, but he wouldn't take that for an answer. So the captain gave up and went aboard the submarine."

Name of Vessel
Date of CasualtyHENRY KNOX
6-19-45

Chief Mate

"About 7:30 P.M. the submarine was observed 70 yards to the windward and bearing directly toward the boat. The sub passed twenty yards forward of the boat and cruised to the leeward and astern of the burning vessel; never approaching nearer than a quarter of a mile to the ship and veering off to about three-quarters of a mile as it returned to the boat and signaled it alongside with a flash-light.

When the boat came alongside the submarine a line was hoisted to the boat and made fast at the bow with about a fathom and a half of line between the boat the cleat on the sub's deck. As the boat approached within two fathoms of the sub a hail came from the top deck of the conning tower

(cont'd on next page)

ACTION OF ENEMY**CONFIDENTIAL**Name of Vessel-
Date of CasualtyHENRY KNOW (Cont'd)
6-19-48

Chief Mate

in broken English of Japanese inflection --'You must tell the truth or we can kill you; understand?' The hail was answered, 'He will tell the truth.' A series of questions were asked which were answered with as much evasion as possible; however, the information possessed by the enemy was so accurate that his leading questions were answered in the affirmative. The questions asked were substantially as follows:

'What is the name of the ship?' 'HENRY KNOWI'
 'What is the nationality?' ('American'.
 'Where was it bound?' 'Persian Gulf.'
 'Is the Captain of 1st Officer in your boat?' 'No.'
 'What boat is the Captain in?' 'We don't know.'
 'How many boats were launched?' 'Ours is the only one.'
 'Where is the Captain?' 'He was on the bridge, we think he was killed.'
 'How many persons on board?' 'About 48 or 47'.
 'Any Navy personnel?' 'No. 2 or 10'
 'What is the ship's tonnage?' 'About 7,000 tons.'
 'What was the speed?' 'About 9 or 10 knots.'
 'What was her cargo?' 'General war supplies.'
 'Any airplanes?' 'Yes'
 'How many?' 'Maybe fifteen'.
 'Any powder, ammunition?' 'Yes.'
 'What else was carried; list the cargo in detail.' 'Airplanes, trucks, ammunition, tires. It was marked general cargo.'
 'Again, how many airplanes?' 'About 50; we don't know as the ship was loaded before we went aboard.'
 'What was the ship's home port?' 'New York.'
 'When did she leave?' 'March 22.'
 'Were there any battleships there?' 'We didn't see any.'
 'Did you come by way of Australia?' 'The ship was enroute from New York to the Persian Gulf.'
 'Answer the truth, did you stop in Australia? Was that your last port?' 'Yes.'
 'Perth?' 'Yes, Fremantle and Perth.'
 'Did you make any other ports?' 'We dont understand'.
 'Did you come by way of the Panama Canal?' 'Yes.'
 'Did you stop at any islands?' 'No, only Perth.'
 'When did you leave Australia?' 'June 5'.
 'How many ships left Perth with you?' 'None'.
 'Weren't you in convoy?' 'No, we came alone.'
 'Weren't there much shipping in Perth?' 'Several ships were there.'
 'About how many?' 'We dont know, we were only there three days.'
 'What cargo did you discharge in Australia?' 'None, we only stopped to take oil and water.'

During the questioning the Officer in Charge remained on the top deck of the conning tower. His English was at times unintelligible and some
 (con't on next page)

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION OF ENEMYName of Vessel
Date of CasualtyHENRY KNOX (Cont'd)
6-19-43

Chief Mate

and some of the questions as well as most the answers were relayed by a junior officer whose English, though not fluent, was easily understood. The Junior Officer wore side arms and carried binoculars. He took a position on the main deck of the sub outboard of the conning tower and braced himself against the handrail.

After a lull in the questioning while the Commanding Officer's attention was directed elsewhere, the painter slipped free of the boat. Oars were put out and the boat rowed clear of the sub but stood by for instructions. Subsequent information revealed that about the same time, the Captain's boat No. 3 approached very close to the opposite side of the sub to take a survivor out of the water. Also during the time the No. 2 boat was free of the sub the power in No. 5 hold ignited and shot a gusher of fire skyward for two hundred feet illuminating the sea with daylight brightness. The powder burned for four or five minutes.

The No. 2 boat was signaled alongside again and some of the above questions were repeated and the ship's name was spelled out twice. A spotlight was played on the boat, its occupants individually and upon various items of the equipment. As the aforementioned junior officer spied a particular item, he called for it to be passed aboard the sub. A handline was heaved to the boat and the following items passed over; 1st Mate's 'get-a-way-bundle'; a tube of matches and lantern wick. Each item was inspected briefly by the junior officer and passed to the bridge atop the conning tower. The two personal bundles and the tube of matches were returned. The sail, charts and rations were kept. The 'get-a-way bundle' had been thoroughly searched. A bottle of brandy was returned in one bundle with its label removed; this label indicated that the bottle had been purchased in Australia.

All the while the boat was alongside the sub, its occupants were hard put to keep the swell from pouncing it upon the sub's whale-back and capsizing the boat. With a foot-and-a-half of water, shipped in the launching, in the boat's bilge the boat was very hard to manage. The second time the boat was tied up lines were passed fore and aft with only a fathom of standing line. A boat hook and vive oars were broken attempting to hold off. After the bundles were returned the after line was released and four oars were put out and backed water to hold the boat off. In spite of these efforts the boat hit hard several times and a wooden boat would have been stove in.

After the questioning and inspection ceased the boat was held for another fifteen minutes while the burning ship was surveyed. On the sub's bridge an apparatus, apparently a stereoscopic camera with some type of filtering lens was being used.

An order to 'move' was given the boat and immediately the diesel motors of the sub started without a cough or sputter indicating the excellent condition of the engines and quality of the fuel. The sub appeared to be in the best of condition and clean. The crew were dressed in clean khaki shorts, short sleeved 'V' necked blouses and sandals, and appeared well fed and quite elated on their success. Some twenty five or thirty crowded the deck and conning tower smoking with total disregard for blackout as did the officers with the spotlight and glare of the fire."