

SS323/A16-3

U.S.S. CAIMAN (SS 323)

Serial ( 024 )

Care of Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, California.  
27 June 1945.

**DECLASSIFIED**  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To : The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.  
Via : (1) Commander Submarine Division TWO SIXTY TWO.  
(2) Commander Submarine Squadron TWENTY SIX.  
(3) Commander Submarines, Southwest Pacific.  
(4) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: U.S.S. CAIMAN (SS 323) - Report of Third  
War Patrol.

Enclosures: (A) Subject report.  
(B) Track chart (ComSub7thFlt only).

1. Enclosure (A), covering the third war patrol of this vessel, conducted in the South China Sea off the South Coast of Indo China during the first phase and off the West Coast of Borneo and in the Java Sea during the second phase in the period from 28 April 1945 to 27 June 1945; is forwarded herewith.

DECLASSIFIED-ART. 0445, OPNAVINST 5510.1C

BY OP-0989c DATE 5/25/72

W. L. FEY, Jr.

DECLASSIFIED

8 03905

(A) PROLOGUE

This vessel arrived in Subic Bay, P.I., on 6 April 1945, and moored alongside U.S.S. ANTHEDON. The normal refit was accomplished by Submarine Division 262 Refit Crew. The officers and men returned to the ship on 20 April 1945, at which time Lieutenant J. H. EMERY, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve, was detached and Ensign W. F. PETRAT, U.S. Navy, reported on board for duty.

The readiness for sea period was from 21 to 27 April 1945, two days of which were spent in training exercises. No exercise torpedoes were fired, but the five inch gun was fired at an improvised target which included a radar decoy. Captain J. H. WILLINGHAM, U. S. Navy, was aboard for the second day of training. His help in ironing out wrinkles in the control party were particularly appreciated.

The personnel of the CAIMAN believe that special mention should be made about the excellent refit performed by the ANTHEDON repair force and the Submarine Division 262 Refit Crew. The number of post refit items was very low.

(B) NARRATIVE (All Times ITEM)

List of officers and chief petty officers attached:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK/RATE</u>	<u>NO. PATROLS</u>
FEY, William L., Jr.	Lieut. Comdr.	3
McGUINNESS, Walter A.	Lieut. Comdr.	3
BENNETT, William F.	Lieut.	11
ROECKLEIN, Robert G.	Lieut. (jg)	3
LAKE, Edward W.	Lieut. (jg)	13
O'NEAL, Walter H.	Lieut. (jg)	2
PETERSON, James V.	Lieut. (jg)	3
PETRAT, William F.	Ensign	1
BACKMAN, Henry Lee	CPhM(AA)(SS)	6
JONES, John Emanuel	CMoMM(SS)	6
KOPACKA, William Frank	CMoMM(SS)	6
SAXON, Robert Lewis	CMoMM(SS)	6
WATERS, Richard Eugene	CRM(AA)(SS)	8
WHITE, Bennie Russell	CEM(AA)(SS)	10

28 April

1400 Underway from alongside U.S.S. ANTHEDON for third war patrol in accordance with Commander Task Group 71.1 Operation Order No. 57-45.

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

- 1425 Passed through net and joined up with U.S.S. WILLETT and U.S.S. ACREE.
- 1545 Slowed down because of pit log derangement. Contemplated returning to tender, but at
- 1628 Decided that ship's force could effect repairs. Resumed speed.
- 1758 Rendered services to surface vessels for one hour.
- 1858 Set course for joint zone with U.S.S. WILLETT.
- 2030 Received message from CTF 71 to enter area at dawn on May 1st and to patrol special anti-submarine zone off CAPE PADARAN and CAMRANH BAY. In this zone we are authorized to attack any submarine contacted.
- 2130 Held radar tracking drill.
- 2222 Entered joint zone; released escort. Proceeded at three engine speed zigzagging on base course 270°T.

## 29 April

- 0000 Transiting joint zone at three engine speed.
- 0013 APR contact on an SD radar.
- 0148 SJ interference detected on bearing 250°T. Challenged but received no reply.
- 0245 SJ interference faded out. Assumed it to be the BASHAW.
- 0704 Sighted periscope. (SC #1) Avoided.
- 0733 Sighted periscope. (SC #2) Avoided.
- 0815 Decided to send contact report in spite of fact that we are in joint zone. No receipt received.
- 0908 SD contact at 20 miles. Attempted to contact plane by VHF to report periscope sightings. No success.
- 1200 Posit:                   Lat.     14-57N  
  Long.  115-34E
- 1719 SD contact at 18 miles.
- 1720 Sighted Privateer.
- 1730 Established communications via VHF and informed plane of our periscope sightings in the joint zone.
- 1900 Cleared joint zone.
- 2029 Slowed to two engine speed. We are not to enter area until BAYA has departed.

## 30 April

- 0000 Enroute CAMRANH BAY area at two engine speed.
- 0707 Made trim dive.
- 0938 Sighted plane.
- 0940 SD contact at 9 miles. Friendly IFF. Identified as Liberator. Plane fired correct recognition pyrotechnic to which we replied in kind. VHF communication established.

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont't)

1200 Posit: Lat. 12-32N  
Long. 111-53E

1340 Sighted Liberator which turned out to be the one we saw this morning. He informed us that he had sighted nothing on the coast.

2330 Noted message from BAYA to CTF 71 that she had cleared anti-submarine zone.

## 1 May

0000 Enroute CAMRANH BAY area at two engine speed.

0611 APR contact on 162 mgc. Very strong.

0654 Dived about 17 miles from coast. The reason for diving so far out was to study the geography of this area.

1000 Headed for CAMRANH POINT. Numerous small sail boats about.

1200 Posit: Lat. 11-59N  
Long. 109-26E

1700 Three miles off CAMRANH POINT. Crossed the entrance to CAMRANH BAY and detected no activity there.

2000 Noted a large fire in the mountains.

2055 Surfaced about 4 miles off MUI DAVAICH.

2109 Received message from CTF 71 that BLOWER would relieve us after 6th of May. No specific orders for us however.

2130 Received message from CTF 71 to provide lifeguard services for Liberator strike on SAIGON at 1230, May 3rd.

2135 Commenced patrolling between FAN RANG POINT and CAPE PADARAN about 5 miles off the coast.

## 2 May.

0000 Patrolling about 5 miles off FAN RANG BAY.

0649 Submerged about 8 miles SSE of CAPE PADARAN for a day's patrol covering FAN RANG BAY. On course 345°T we made good 000°T.

1200 Posit: Lat. 11-22N  
Long. 109-03E

1358 In a position from which no part of FAN RANG BAY was more distant than 4 miles we ascertained that the bay was empty.

2057 Surfaced and proceeded to lifeguard station.

2200 Received message from CTF 71 that BLOWER will enter our area on May 12th. We are to depart at dark May 11th and proceed patrol in Gulf of Siam. We are to report when clear of the special anti-submarine zone. (Note: This changes the message received last night.)

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U.S.S. CAIMAN

WAR PATROL NO. THREE

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

3 May

- 0000 Enroute lifeguard station.  
0140 Passed between PULO CECIR DE MER and CATWICK ISLANDS.  
0805 On lifeguard station. As no specific station was assigned, Posit- Lat. 9-30N, Long. 108-15E was selected, putting us about 80 miles from the reference point (CAPE ST. JACQUES).  
1200 Posit: Lat. 9-28N  
Long. 108-20E  
1525 Received message from CTF 71 assigning lifeguard duty for strike on SAIGON at 1100, May 4th. No specific station was assigned so we selected Posit- Lat. 10N, Long. 108E, putting us about 60 miles from the reference point (CAPE ST. JACQUES).  
2100 Decided to swing around the CATWICK ISLANDS which put us on new station tomorrow morning.

4 May

- 0000 Heading for CATWICK ISLANDS at two engine speed.  
0520 Passed 2 miles North of PULO SAPATU.  
0826 Made trim dive.  
1000 On lifeguard station.  
1022 Sighted object which resembled three construction pontoon sections. Noted "PONTON GEAR" printed in English on one section. Fired 20mm into it.  
1138 SD contacts varying from 24 to 36 miles. Sighted 12 Liberators on generally westward course. Friendly IFF but no communications. Assumed them to be the SAIGON strikers.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 9-59N  
Long. 108-11E  
1254 SD contact at 28 miles. No IFF. Sighted group of Liberators evidently returning from strike on SAIGON.  
1700 Set a westerly course to leave lifeguard station.  
2000 Rounded CATWICK ISLAND group to southward and headed for CAPE PADARAN.

5 May

- 0000 Enroute vicinity of CAPE PADARAN from lifeguard station.  
0620 Dived about 8 miles East of MUI DAVAICH and commenced closing the coast.  
0915 About 2½ miles off MUI DAVAICH came to course North and just about stood still.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 11-42N  
Long. 109-18E

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

1426 Sighted Liberator in high power. Ran East for an hour at 2/3 speed and at  
1527 About 7½ miles off coast put up SD mast to attempt radio communication with plane. This was unsuccessful.  
1540 Commenced closing the coast.  
2050 Surfaced and commenced patrolling off CAMRANH BAY.

6 May

0000 Patrolling off entrance of CAMRANH BAY.  
0130 Ran down coast to CAPE PADARAN and returned to CAMRANH BAY.  
0633 Dived about 8 miles off POINT HONNAI for a submerged patrol off entrance to CAMRANH BAY.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 11-46N  
Long. 109-17E  
1339 About 3 miles off MUI DAVAICH came to a northerly course, barely holding our own against the current, slowly closed the entrance to the bay.  
1852 Headed to seaward.  
2100 Surfaced about 5 miles off entrance of CAMRANH BAY. Commenced patrolling between CAPE PADARAN and CAMRANH BAY.

7 May

0000 Patrolling between CAMRANH BAY and CAPE PADARAN.  
0100 Received message from CTF 71 assigning us lifeguard duty for SAIGON strike; time over target from 0700 to 1400 on May 7th. Station assigned is Lat. 10-33N, Long. 109-07E, which is about 10 miles East of PULO CECIR DE MER. Set course for lifeguard station.  
0640 On lifeguard station.  
1052 Sighted plane thought to be a Liberator.  
1112 SD contact at 30miles.  
1125 Sighted Catalina (Air-Sea rescue plane for the strike).  
1126 Sighted 3 groups of planes (total about 36) on westerly course.  
1127 Contacted Catalina by VHF.  
1141 Sighted 4 Lightnings which are fighter cover for the Catalina.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 10-34N  
Long. 109-09E  
1311 Received word from Catalina that there was no work for us. Decided to remain on station a while longer just in case.  
1545 Knowing that the Japanese were suspected of having a lookout station on PULO CECIR DE MER, and as we had APR contacts which we thought might come from there,

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

we thought that we might find a military target suitable for bombardment with the five inch gun. We closed the island and passed along the west and east sides at about 2 miles. There were no indications of radar antennae and nothing that looked like a lookout station. As the island is only 3 miles long and 2 miles wide we had a good view of the entire place including looks through a 16 power long glass. If there is anything of a military nature on PULO CECIR DE MER it is very well camouflaged. The reason we went so close to the island on the surface was because we could have been seen on the assigned lifeguard station anyway.

1730 Received message from CTF 71 to take position Northwest of PULO MINKI (which is one of the ANAMBAS ISLANDS) on May 15th.

1817 Finished looking over PULO CECIR DE MER and commenced return to the vicinity of CAPE PADARAN and CAMRANH BAY.

1917 Received message from CTF 71 that Liberators and Mitchells would strike coast of INDO CHINA between 1100 and 1300, May 8th, and for us to take lifeguard station off CAPE PADARAN. Decided to be about 15 miles East of CAPE PADARAN at dawn and then move in close when we sighted the bombers.

8 May

0000 Two miles off CAPE PADARAN -- began patrolling along the coast.

1055 Fifteen miles East of PADARAN heading in toward the coast.

1112 Sighted four Liberators.

1133 Saw the first of the bombs explode.

1150 Having moved in to about 5 miles off FAN RANG BAY, we had a fairly good view of the bombing.

1151 The bombing completed, moved out off the coast.

1200 Posit. Lat. 11-27N  
109-04E

1343 Sighted Liberator.

1505 Sighted Liberator and received word over VHF that he had nothing to report.

2030 Commenced night patrol attempting to be five or less miles off PADARAN and CAMRANH BAY at end of each leg.

2130 Received message from CTF 71 to provide lifeguard services for Mitchell strike on CAMRANH BAY between 1100 and 1300, May 9th. Assigned station 20 miles East of ILE TIGNE.

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

2215 Received message that aircraft sighted destroyer or large patrol boat patrolling Lat. 11-32N, Long. 109-10E at 1145, May 8th. What the aircraft sighted was the CAIMAN lifeguarding for him as the reported position was within a few miles of our position at that time. There was definitely no destroyer or large patrol boat in the vicinity.

9 May

0000 Patrolling about four miles off CAMRANH BAY.  
0640 Headed East for lifeguard station 20 miles East of ILE TAGNE.  
0725 Made trim dive.  
1100 On lifeguard station.  
1104 Sighted Liberator.  
1200 Posit:                   Lat.     11-48N.  
                                  Long.  109-25E.

At this time we had moved in to about 10 miles off CAMRANH BAY.

1300 End of scheduled time for air strike and no Mitchells or Lightnings sighted. Not knowing whether strike had been cancelled or merely delayed we remained on surface between 5 and 10 miles off CAMRANH BAY.  
1933 Sighted float plane (JAKE) flying out of CAMRANH BAY headed for us. (AC #1) Dived.  
1937 Two very loud depth bombs. Although we had been under for fully three minutes he managed to drop fairly close.  
2001 Started up to periscope depth.  
2010 At 80 feet - two more depth bombs - not too close.  
2013 Periscope depth - all clear - but decided to stay down till dark.  
2104 Surfaced. Commenced patrolling off CAMRANH BAY about 5 miles off entrance.

10 May

0000 Patrolling off CAMRANH BAY.  
0435 Received message from CTF 71 that one destroyer or large PC had been sighted in Lat. 11-32N, Long. 109-10E, at 1200, May 8th. We assume that this is a repeat of the message received last night. There is absolutely no possibility whatsoever of any destroyer or patrol craft having been in that position at that time. The CAIMAN and our sailboats were the only vessels operating on the surface off FAN RANG BAY at that time.



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U.S.S. CATWICK

WAR PATROL NO. THREE

(E) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

0633 Submerged five miles off POINT HONNMI and headed toward coast for inshore patrol.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 11-44N.  
Long. 109-18E  
1506 Sighted Liberator.  
1930 East of HON DO at 3½ miles.  
2051 Surfaced and commenced patrolling along coast between CAPE PADARAN and CAMRANH BAY.

11 May

0000 Patrolling between CAMRANH BAY and CAPE PADARAN.  
0631 Dived 3½ miles East of POINT CAMRANH and headed in toward the coast.  
1029 East of MUI DAVAICH at 2 miles, continued southward along the coast.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 11-40N  
Long. 109-13E  
1930 East of CAPE PADARAN at 1½ miles.  
2040 Surfaced about 4 miles East of CAPE PADARAN. Enroute new area in the GULF OF SIAM.  
2307 Sent message to CTF 71 reporting that we were clear of the anti-submarine zone at 2200 tonight.  
2320 Received message from CTF 71 cancelling our orders to be off PULO MANKI on May 15th. Continued enroute GULF OF SIAM.

12 May

0000 Enroute GULF OF SIAM at 2 engine speed.  
0030 Passed between PULO CECIR DE MER and the CATWICK ISLANDS.  
0206 Received message from CTF 71 to patrol the area off the INDO CHINA COAST between Lat. 10N and 12N. As the BLOWER is in the anti-submarine zone we will be restricted to that portion of coast between Lat. 10-00N and 11-10N.  
0237 Reversed course to patrol a North-South line from PULO CECIR DE MER to Lat. 11N.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 10-48N  
Long. 108-58E  
1300 Decided to patrol over toward approaches to SAIGON during the night.  
1500 Passed between PULO CECIR DE MER and the CATWICK ISLANDS.  
1815 Came to a westerly course on Lat. 10N.

(B) NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

13 May

0000 Patrolling to the southward of the approaches to SAIGON at 2 engine speed.  
0015 About 19 miles south of CAPE ST. JACQUES reversed to an easterly course.  
0210 South of CAPE BAKE headed North to the vicinity of the 10 fathom line. There are shoals which might force shipping to run out within range of us at this vicinity.  
0420 Ran South and headed East along Lat. 10N.  
0853 South of POINT KEGA headed North.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 10-31N  
Long. 108-15E  
1210 Sighted POINT KEGA lighthouse.  
1216 Sighted Liberator.  
1238 Communicated with Liberator on VHF.  
1413 Resighted Liberator and received word that he had found no shipping.  
1420 Headed South to Lat. 10N and then ran East.  
1810 After getting a fix on the CATWICK ISLANDS, turned North.  
2057 Turned West when about 9 miles West of PULO CECIR DE MER to avoid BANC HOLLANDAIS.  
2200 South of POINT GUIO headed north.

14 May

0000 Patrolling near coast of ANNAM at two engine speed. About 5 miles South of POINT GUIO came to an easterly course.  
0215 South of CAPE PADARAN headed North and at Lat. 11-06N turned South.  
0450 About 10 miles North of PULO CECIR DE MER ran North up to Lat. 11-03N then ran South rounding the island to the southward.  
1130 Decided to patrol on zig-zagging legs along a line from PULO CECIR DE MER and CAPE ST. JACQUES in the hopes of finding a sea truck or lugger.  
1200 Posit: Lat. 10-29N  
Long. 108-48E  
1305 SD contact at 20 miles.  
1308 Sighted plane; apparently a Liberator.  
1328 Resighted plane.  
1443 SD contact at 26 miles.  
1531 SD contact at 14 miles.  
1532 Sighted Liberator.  
1533 Communicated with plane via VHF; he had sighted no shipping.