

MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT SQUADRON EIGHTEEN

% Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California

FILE No.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

26 November 1944

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From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. PT 362.
To: The Commander-in-Chief, UNITED STATES Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander.
(2) The Commander, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons, SEVENTH Fleet.
(3) The Commander, SEVENTH Fleet.

Subject: PT's 362 and 363 - Report of action on morning of 25 November 1944.

1. The force taking part in subject action consisted of PT 363, commanded by Lieutenant F. K. MITCHELL, U.S.N.R., who was the officer in tactical command, and PT 362. The mission of the patrol was to blockade and destroy enemy water-borne traffic which might sail from lower Kase Bay, Halmahera Island, Netherlands East Indies, and to destroy any enemy equipment or positions discovered in the waters of northern Kase Bay or along the east and west coasts of the northern section of the bay. The action resulted in the destruction of PT 363 by enemy fire after she was disabled during an attack on a beached enemy barge. The enemy forces encountered consisted of a three (3) inch shore battery of one (1) or two (2) guns, several machine gun batteries and riflemen.

2. The action took place from four-hundred (400) to six-hundred (600) yards off shore approximately one (1) mile south of Cape Gorango on the west coast of northern Kase Bay in water of a charted depth of approximately one-hundred (100) meters. Action commenced at 0631 ITEM, 25 November 1944. With PT 363 leading, the boats were proceeding north two (2) miles off shore at thirty (30) knots when a lookout sighted a "suspicious object" on the beach. It was decided to investigate the object, and course was changed to approximately 300°. The crews of both boats were called to General Quarters. At a distance of about one (1) mile the object was identified through a light haze as a large beached barge. Speed was reduced to approximately twenty (20) knots and course was changed slowly until the lead boat was cruising parallel to the coast line, approximately 005°. PT 362 followed in the same maneuvers at a distance of about two-hundred (200) yards, fifty (50) yards to starboard of the lead boat's wake. PT 363 opened fire on the barge when it was within range. PT 362 commenced firing when within range. PT 363 appeared to slow down and PT 362 swung outboard of the lead boat, ceasing fire to avoid hitting the

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3. PT 362 expended the following ammunition:

30 cal	100 rounds
50 cal	1800 rounds
20 MM	150 rounds
37 MM	100 rounds
40 MM	120 rounds

The gunnery is believed to have reduced the volume of shore fire, but the light caliber batteries on the beach were dispersed over the entire area of the action and maintained heavy fire. While retreating from the area PT 362's 40 MM fired at the Cape Corango battery and the rate of fire from those guns was markedly reduced. Enemy fire was heavy and accurate. PT 362 sustained approximately twenty-five (25) hits from light guns and was straddled by three (3) inch fire. PT 363 is believed to have been hit by three (3) inch fire. It was smoking as PT 362 pulled away and from a distance of about two (2) miles an explosion aboard was observed through the haze by 362 personnel. One (1) barrel of the fifty (50) caliber twin mount aft jammed intermittently during the action due to faulty ammunition. The 20 MM was placed out of action after two and one-half (2 1/2) magazines by a bent face plate.

4. PT 363 exploded and burned as a result of enemy gunfire. PT 362 sustained hits in the inboard stack of the starboard engine, in two (2) mufflers, in both 50 caliber turrets, in the cockpit, in the chart house, in the crew's quarters, in the officer's head and water tank, in the captain's cabin, in the port fuel tank, in the day room, in the engine room, on the 40 MM mount, and in the 40 MM ammunition rack. Performance of mechanical equipment remained normal throughout the action. No estimate of damage to the enemy could be made from observations of personnel aboard.

5. Communications were efficient throughout the engagement. The VHF set on PT 363 continued to operate until a few seconds before PT 362 came alongside. The VHF transmitter on PT 362 was put out of commission by a bullet early in the action, but the receiver continued to function. TCS reached U.S.S. MOBJACK and then the P I Base with no delay. Radar equipment was secured during the action. The engineering plant performed normally despite sudden acceleration and deceleration and minor gunfire damage. First aid equipment was adequate for care of the wounded.

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6. The principal conclusion reached by the reporting officer was that effective PT action by daylight against fortified beach areas is impossible without air support.

7. The incident of the engagement which was of principal concern afterwards was the loss of FRIEDMAN, David L., 832 41 71, OM3c(T), SV-6, U.S.N.R., missing in action. His absence aboard PT 362 was discovered when the survivors of 363 were mustered as soon as the 362 was out of enemy range. Survivors of 363 said FRIEDMAN had been injured early in action, had been given first aid by the boat captain, and had then gone below, where he was observed by one man who had been ordered to get lines up on deck for towing and was proceeding to the forepeak through the crew's quarters.

8. The following casualties were sustained by the ship's company of PT 363:

Lieutenant Frank K. MITCHELL, D-V(S), U.S.N.R., fatally wounded.

FRIEDMAN, David L., 832 41 71, OM3c(T), SV-6, U.S.N.R., missing in action.

Ensign Edwin W. POLK, D-V(S), U.S.N.R., shell fragment right thigh and right wrist.

STEVENS, John T., 251 34 93, S1c, V-6, U.S.N.R., shell fragment in right chin.

WATTS, Neil L., 635 15 55, TM3c, V-6, U.S.N.R., shell fragment in chin and left leg.

KOONS, Charles W., 819 87 93, F1c, SV-6, U.S.N.R., shell fragment left eye.

KORT, Edwin R., 816 09 96, F1c, SV-6, U.S.N.R., shell fragment in both thighs.

OKENT, Frederick W., 828 39 62, MOOM3c(T), SV-6, U.S.N.R., shell fragment left hand.

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VRBKA, Raymond L., 872 15 34, S2c(RM), SV-6, U.S.N.R.,
shell fragment in lower region of legs.

GEROULO, Thomas F., Jr., 819 70 34, S1c, SV-6, U.S.N.R.,
shell fragment both legs.

9. The following casualties were sustained by
ship's company of PT 362:

Ensign Walter D. CROSS, Jr., D-V(S), U.S.N.R., shell
fragment left ring finger.

COOPER, Francis O., 839 54 25, Tm3c, SV-6, U.S.N.R.,
shell fragment left heel and right foot.

RICHARDS, Garlan D., 958 46 58, S1c SV-6, U.S.N.R.,
shell fragment left knee and thigh and right
thigh.

KILPATRICK, James W., 273 12 46, S1c, V-6, U.S.N.R.,
shell fragment in both knees.

HARKNESS, Hulon A., 357 38 85, S1c(SC), V-6, U.S.N.R.,
gunshot wound left arm.

KNOWLES, David W., 859 70 16, S1c(QM), V-6, U.S.N.R.,
second degree chemical burn left forearm.

10. Without a single exception performance by the
men of PT 362 as observed by the officers was efficient, intelli-
gent and calm. No man left his station in the face of heavy
fire. The two (2) engineers on watch in the engine room were
remarkably rapid in executing engine orders from the bridge
during the maneuvers to come alongside PT 363 and to withdraw.

11. Four (4) persons were observed by the reporting
officer to have conducted themselves with bravery and efficiency
beyond the call of duty and are recommended for consideration
for appropriate citation and award:

Ensign Edwin W. POLK, D-V(S), U.S.N.R., Executive Officer
of PT 363. Although wounded in the hand and in both legs, he
remained at his station at the wheel of PT 363, supporting the
injured commanding officer, Lieutenant F. K. MITCHELL, and at
the same time directing the evacuation of his men from the boat.

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When his men were all clear he dragged Lieutenant MITCHELL, with the assistance of a man from PT 362, to safety. He refused attention to his injuries until his men had been given first aid. During the return trip to the base he maintained a cool, cheerful attitude which contributed greatly to the morale of all hands.

COOPER, Francis O., 839 54 25, TM3c, SV-6, U.S.N.R., although wounded in both feet, he remained at his station as pointer on the 40 MM until the gun was screened from the beach while the boats were together. He then left his gun, jumped over to PT 363 and assisted in bringing Lieutenant MITCHELL to safety. Then he returned to his station on the 40 MM and helped to maintain heavy fire until the boat was out of range of the beach.

KNOWLES, David W., 859 70 16, SLC(QM), V-6, U.S.N.R. During the second run on the beach a small caliber bullet passed from the forward port corner of the chart house to the after starboard corner and ignited signal pyrotechnics stowed on the bulkhead. He received second degree burns of the arm while assisting the executive officer extinguish the fire with CO2. While the boats were together he ran to the port side of PT 363 and made certain no men were remaining on deck on the shore side and then returned to his boat. He efficiently maintained the notes for the log and assisted with navigation on the trip back to the base.

McCLURE, Alfred R., 811 37 65, MOMM3c(T), SV-6, U.S.N.R. He remained at his station on the deck 50 caliber and kept firing after the 37 MM expended its ammunition and the 20 MM had a stoppage. He maintained steady fire over the bow of PT 363 providing the only cover during the transfer of personnel, as other guns were screened or out of operation. As the boat pulled away he observed that the 40 MM trainer was injured and had fallen from his station. With his own gun rendered useless when the boat turned stern towards the beach, he ran back and took the station on the 40 MM and helped maintain heavy fire until the boat was out of range. He then rendered first aid efficiently to the injured, administering two (2) units of blood plasma to Lieutenant MITCHELL.

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26 November 1944

Subject: PT's 362 and 363 - Report of action on morning
of 25 November 1944, page 2.

other boat, and resuming fire again when the range was clear to the north. At 0634 ~~ITEN~~ the following VHF transmission was received by 362 from 363: "Our engines are conked out. We are working on them." At about the same time splashes from light caliber fire were observed in the water in the vicinity of both boats. PT 362 advanced to full throttle, made a circle to starboard and made another firing run, firing to port. Fire was directed at the beach in the vicinity of the barge with the intention of reducing the machine gun and sniper installations. As PT 362 passed the then immobilized PT 363 another circle to the right was made and the firing run to port was repeated. During these two (2) runs several hits from small caliber guns were made on PT 362. During this second run the following transmission was received from PT 363: "Come alongside and throw us a tow. After we get out of here we can fix it in ten minutes." Another circle to the right was made and two (2) men on PT 362 were ordered below to obtain towing lines stowed in the forepeak. As 362 closed in to about one-hundred (100) yards on the starboard quarter of 363, the following transmission was received: "Wait. I'm not ready." Another hard turn to the right was made. Fire against the beach was maintained except when the other boat intervened. During this last turn the following was received: "For God's sake come alongside and take us off of here." PT 362 came along the starboard side of PT 363 and stopped. Personnel from the disabled boat came aboard PT 362. Two (2) members of the 362 crew boarded 363, one to assist in removing the wounded boat captain; the other to inspect the port side of the deck structures to see if all hands were clear. PT 362 then headed on zig zag course away from the beach at full throttle. Fires were observed in the dayroom of 363 while 362 was alongside, and smoke was issuing from the engine room of 363. During the last two (2) approaches of PT 362 heavy fire from one (1) or two (2) guns believed to be three (3) inch was observed from Cape Gorange. The fire followed the boat until it was out of range. Use of smoke during the action was rendered impractical by a strong off-shore breeze. Enroute to base, PT 362 was met by PT 370 with medical personnel and proceeded to the Army Dock, Morotai Island, to remove the wounded to an ambulance. Leakage from the gasoline tanks then made starting the engines hazardous, so U.S. Army LCM 109 towed the boat to a mooring at the Soemoe Soemoe base.

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MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT SQUADRON EIGHTEEN

% Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California

FILE No.

FCS-18/A16-3
Serial (009)
(ag)

1st Endorsement
to GO, PT 362 Conf. Action
Report of 26 November 1944

5 December 1944.

SECRET

From: The Commander.
To: The Commander-in-Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.
Via: (1) The Commander, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons,
SEVENTH Fleet.
(2) The Commander, SEVENTH Fleet.
Subject: PT's 362 and 363 - Report of action on morning
of 25 November 1944.

1. Forwarded.

2. The loss of the PT 363 to enemy shore-battery fire again demonstrates the vulnerability of motor torpedo boats to coastal defenses and stresses the importance of avoiding areas known to be protected by such installations. The batteries which were responsible for the destruction of subject boat were known to exist, for in the early stages of operations in the Halmahera Island area, shore fire was frequently observed to come from the Galela-Miti Island vicinity. In the two weeks previous to subject incident, boats had been in this vicinity without receiving fire of any kind and it was considered that the positions had been wiped out by known aerial strikes. The crafty enemy was evidently awaiting just such an opportunity as presented itself on the morning of 25 November, before again revealing his guns. It is considered even possible that the barge on which the run was being made had been previously placed there as a decoy, for no reports had previously been made of enemy craft in that area on the beach.

3. It is considered highly improbable that any classified matter fell into enemy hands for the boat captain of PT 362 states that in withdrawing, he observed a brilliant explosion when distant about two miles from PT 363. Further, the undersigned, upon receipt of word of the incident, made immediate arrangements with the THIRTEENTH Air Force for fighter cover, and under protection of eight P-47's made a reconnaissance with two PT's of the area in which the boat had been hit. No single large piece of the boat was seen, the water being covered with hundreds of small pieces of charred

FCB-18/A16-3
Serial (009)

5 December 1944.

SECRET

Subject: PT's 362 and 363 - Report of action on morning
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wooden wreckage, easily identifiable as from a PT boat because of the peculiar type of wood used in the construction of these boats. GSP 1270 (CX), which was not removed prior to the abandoning of the boat, was held in a folder made of sheet steel, and it is felt that even if the publication were not burned, that it sank.

4. The commanding officer and crew of PT 362 have been commended for their rescue of the crew of the stricken boat.

H. M. S. SWIFT.

UNITED STATES FLEET
COMMANDER, MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT SQUADRONS
SEVENTH FLEET

Reg. No. *Em 167*
R.S. No. *1 53*

CTG70.1/A16-3(jwl)

Serial: (I- 0350)

19 December 1944.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SECRET

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to
CO PT 362 conf. action
report of 26 Nov. 1944.

From: The Commander, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons
SEVENTH Fleet.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, UNITED STATES Fleet.
Via : The Commander, SEVENTH Fleet.
Subject: Report of action PTs 362 and 363, morning of
25 November 1944.
Reference: (a) ComMTBRon 18 dispatch to SecNav 251544 of
November 1944.

1. Forwarded, concurring in the first endorsement.
2. As reported by reference (a) CSP 1270 (CX) register number 77787 was not recovered. In view of the circumstances surrounding the destruction of PT 363 and the prompt and thorough search of the area and observation of the wreck which disclosed its total and complete destruction, compromise of the CSP 1270 code is considered extremely unlikely.

Copy to:
ComMTBRon 18.
CTF 77.
Cominch ✓
(Adv. copy of complete report).

S. S. BOWLING.

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UNITED STATES FLEET
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
NAVY DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



30 January 1945

SECRET

MEMORANDUM

From: F-48
To: Secret Mail Room
Subject: Distribution of CO USS PT 362 letter of 26 November 1944 and 1st and 2nd Ends. thereto. (Subject: Action Report on PTs 362 and 363 morning of 25 November 1944 - HALMAHERA.) (RS 1-538)

1. Please have subject report distributed as follows:

CominCh:	
F-48	1
Vice CNO:	
Op-16; Op-16-E; Op-23-D	3
BuShips	1
BuOrd	1
Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron Precommissioning	
Detail, Naval Station, New Orleans, La.	1
C.O., Naval Base, Taboga Isl., RdeP	1
C.O., N.T.C., Miami, Fla.	1
Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron Training	
Center, Melville, R. I.	1
ComMTBRons Third Fleet	1
BuPers (pgs 4-6 Action Rpt)	1

G. C. Gill
G. C. GILL.

BUEN WHEN NO LONGER REQUIRED.

MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT SQUADRON EIGHTEEN

% Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California

FILE No.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

26 November 1944

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From: The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. PT 362.
To: The Commander-in-Chief, UNITED STATES Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander.
(2) The Commander, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons, SEVENTH Fleet.
(3) The Commander, SEVENTH Fleet.

Subject: PT's 362 and 363 - Report of action on morning of 25 November 1944.

1. The force taking part in subject action consisted of PT 363, commanded by Lieutenant F. K. MITCHELL, U.S.N.R., who was the officer in tactical command, and PT 362. The mission of the patrol was to blockade and destroy enemy water-borne traffic which might sail from lower Kase Bay, Halmahera Island, Netherlands East Indies, and to destroy any enemy equipment or positions discovered in the waters of northern Kase Bay or along the east and west coasts of the northern section of the bay. The action resulted in the destruction of PT 363 by enemy fire after she was disabled during an attack on a beached enemy barge. The enemy forces encountered consisted of a three (3) inch shore battery of one (1) or two (2) guns, several machine gun batteries and riflemen.

2. The action took place from four-hundred (400) to six-hundred (600) yards off shore approximately one (1) mile south of Cape Gorango on the west coast of northern Kase Bay in water of a charted depth of approximately one-hundred (100) meters. Action commenced at 0631 ITEM, 25 November 1944. With PT 363 leading, the boats were proceeding north two (2) miles off shore at thirty (30) knots when a lookout sighted a "suspicious object" on the beach. It was decided to investigate the object, and course was changed to approximately 300°. The crews of both boats were called to General Quarters. At a distance of about one (1) mile the object was identified through a light haze as a large beached barge. Speed was reduced to approximately twenty (20) knots and course was changed slowly until the lead boat was cruising parallel to the coast line, approximately 005°. PT 362 followed in the same maneuvers at a distance of about two-hundred (200) yards, fifty (50) yards to starboard of the lead boat's wake. PT 363 opened fire on the barge when it was within range. PT 362 commenced firing when within range. PT 363 appeared to slow down and PT 362 swung outboard of the lead boat, ceasing fire to avoid hitting the

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