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ACTION REPORT

COMMANDING OFFICER USS MC KEAN

DD-1184

SERIAL 0001

5 JANUARY 1951

UNDERWATER CONTACT, 18 DECEMBER 1950.

REPORT OF SONAR CONTACT AND ATTACKS BY  
USS MC KEAN AND USS FRANK KNOX ON A HULK  
OFF SASEBO.

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5 Jan 1951

T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T

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From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Chief of Naval Operations  
 Via: (1) Commander Task Force NINETY-FIVE  
 (2) Commander U. S. Naval Forces Far East  
 (3) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Submarine Contact; report of

Ref: (a) CNO Secret Ltr. serial 0093P31 of 11 May 1949, with enclosures thereto

- (1) Evaluation Form (as outlined in enclosure (2) to reference (a) )
- (2) Recorder Traces (CNO only)
- (3) Track Charts (CNO only)

1. In accordance with reference (a) the following report is submitted herewith:

On 18 December 1950, at 1036I, while steaming independently enroute to gunnery exercise area off Sasebo, Japan, this ship obtained sonar contact bearing 270(t), range 1500 yards (Lat. 33-26.2N; Long. 129-17.0E). The ASW Officer evaluated the target as Possible Submarine, with bright visual echo, sharp audible echo, and high doppler. Contact was maintained and range was opened for further investigation and evaluation.

During this period target was tracked on course 145(t) at a speed of 7 knots.

A tractor aircraft, which was orbiting overhead prior to furnishing services for AA gunnery exercises, was notified of the contact and during the period of contact development reported a possible silhouette in the general location of the sonar contact. The foregoing information, with ship's evaluation, was transmitted to the OTC (Commanding Officer, U.S.S. FRANK KNOX (DDR 742) ), who ordered McKEAN to make urgent attack. An urgent attack was made immediately thereafter, and evaluated by CIC and Conn as "Good". The aircraft reported silhouette in center of pattern at time of explosions, after which silhouette disappeared and was not sighted again. The aircraft then reported sighting air bubbles near the location of first attack and an oil slick, which grew larger as time passed. This oil slick was also sighted by this ship and the FRANK KNOX, which joined about 20 minutes after the first attack.

As FRANK KNOX was approaching, a re-attack was not made. Instead, McKEAN held contact and vectored FRANK KNOX on to the contact. FRANK KNOX obtained contact and concurred in McKEAN's evaluation.

Meanwhile, contact plotted as dead in the water (or nearly so) for a period of about 25 minutes, but upon being closely approached the target tracked on course 025(t) at 3 knots.

After FRANK KNOX made attack, McKEAN made second depth charge attack. During this attack doppler changed from none to down and the contact was evaluated as being in a hard left turn. Attack course was compensated but firing time was too early.

During the first attack an additional contact was noted about 200 yards inside first contact. This contact had bright visual echo, sharp audible echo, and no doppler, and was intermittently detected, causing some confusion when both contacts merged and only one contact was detected thereafter.

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PAC BOX #131950-333 #020/17 TIT/PAD FILE JACKET # 2 PKC  
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From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Chief of Naval Operations  
 Via: (1) Commander Task Force NINETY-FIVE  
 (2) Commander U. S. Naval Forces Far East  
 (3) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Submarine Contact; report of (Continued)

After McKEAN's second attack, the contact was tracked as being dead in the water, with no doppler. McKEAN and FRANK KNOX alternated making attacks until, upon completion of McKEAN's fourth attack, noises, evaluated as sonar countermeasures, were detected (see enclosure (1)). At about this time the aircraft overhead reported wake evaluated as possible torpedo wake. Both McKEAN and FRANK KNOX took evasive action, and FRANK KNOX reported crossing wake. Wake indications were plainly visible on the QHB-a scope and a steady humming noise was heard on bearing of reported torpedo which was very similar to noises previously evaluated as sonar countermeasures.

After evasion, McKEAN made fifth attack, after which both FRANK KNOX and McKEAN lost contact due to effectiveness of "jamming" by sonar countermeasures. This "jamming" decreased very gradually, and contact was eventually regained in approximately the same location that it had been lost, with bright visual echo, sharp audible echo, no doppler, and plotting dead in the water.

Both McKEAN and FRANK KNOX had expended all but three depth charges, so contact was maintained by both ships. Heckler runs by alternate ships were made at irregular intervals, dropping one charge each run.

No movement of the target was detected from this time until 181712I, when U.S.S. TAUSSIG arrived at scene and McKEAN was ordered to return to Sasebo for a reload of depth charges.

McKEAN returned the following morning and made three more attacks on contact, which still plotted dead in the water in the same location as previous attacks.

Subsequently, an ASR, the U.S.S. GREENLET, arrived at the scene, moored over the contact, and sent down a diver. He reported a hulk with name IONA MARU on stern, which it was later ascertained capsized on 10 December 1950.

It is believed that the jamming of the sonar equipment may possibly have been caused by unexploded Mk. 14 Mod. 0 depth charges, which were employed in the fourth attack.

2. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1), (2), and (3) are forwarded herewith.

J. C. WEATHERWAX

Copy to: CNO (Advance)  
 CinCPacFlt (Advance)  
 ComDesFlot ONE  
 ComDesDiv 112

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ITEMS TO BE CHECKED FOR EVALUATION OF SUBMARINE CONTACTS

## I VISUAL IDENTIFICATIONS

Surfaced Sub (Radar Visual)	No
Submerged Sub	Possible
Periscope	No
Snorkel	No
Wake, slick, or bubbles	Yes
Torpedo	Possible
Disappearing Radar Blip	No
MAD Contact	No

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Any other items such as Running Lights, Blinker Lights, etc? No

Altitude and distance from object observed: Not applicable

Sea State: Moderate waves with low swell.

Wind force and direction: At time of initial contact, 15 knots from 340(t), shifting to 140(t) in afternoon and decreasing to 5 knots.

General light conditions: Sunny with scattered clouds.

Relative Position of sun: Approximately overhead.

Number and experience of observers: Qualified and experienced ASW Officer and ASW team consisting of 2 SOG1, 2 SO3, and 4 SOSN.

Sketches appended: Yes

## II SONAR EFFECTS

Doppler: Run #1 - High to None to Low; Run #2 - Down to None to High;  
Run #3 - None; Run #4 - None; Run #5 - None; Run #6 - None

Echo Quality: Very sharp and clear at all times when contact was held.

Sonar Signals: No

Audible Countermeasures: Yes. Shortly after completion of third depth charge attack a weak, steady humming noise was heard on sonar equipment, changing in pitch from low growl to high whine. This caused slight interference on the QHB-a scope but did not prevent or severely hinder echo-ranging on the contact. The interference was noted intermittently until after the fifth depth charge pattern had been fired, at which time hydrophone effects were noted, followed by a very strong whine on the bearing of the contact. This whine gradually increased in intensity until neither an echo from the contact nor the outgoing sound signal could be heard and the QHB-a scope was completely blanked out by jamming over an arc of fifty degrees in bearing. The jamming continued for a period of approximately five minutes. During this time attempts were made to counteract the jamming by changing the operating frequency of the sonar equipment between 22 and 29 kcs., but this had no effect. A sketch of the appearance of the jamming on the QHB-a scope is appended.

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ITEMS TO BE CHECKED FOR EVALUATION OF SUBMARINE CONTACTS (Cont'd)

Hydrophone effect: Yes

Did H/E correspond to changes in range rate or plotted speed or to any particular speed? At the time H/E were noted, jamming commenced and no accurate plot of S/M movement could be made.

Was RPM count made: No

Did RPM fit plot: Not applicable

Wire recording submitted: No

Chemical recorder traces submitted: Yes

### III TRACKING

Length of time contact held: 8 hrs. 35 minutes.

Number of times contact lost: 14, including times lost due to short range.

Reason for lost contact: Due to short range and opening beyond maximum sonar range.

Plotted speed of contact: From 7 knots to stopped.

Turning circle of contact: Unknown

Is track consistent with sub characteristics? Yes

Did range rate from recorder and from plot generally agree while tracking? Yes

Did second ship confirm any part of track? Yes

Local currents: Set: None Drift: None

### IV MISCELLANEOUS

Target width: 10 degrees (average)

Initial detection range: 1500 yards

Lost contact range: Run #1: 250 yds.; Run #2: 150 yds.; Run #3: 200 yds.  
Run #4: 200 yds.; Run #5: 200 yds.; Run #6: 400 yds.

Target depth: 150 to 240 feet. How determined: By using thumb rule that range of lost contact due to short range, in yards, equals depth of S/M in feet. Also, by use of the fathometer.

Depth of water: 240 to 280 feet.

Character of bottom: Sandy

Recorder traces: Run #1: Quarter; Run #2: Bow; Run #3: Quarter; Run #4: Bow;  
Run #5: Beam; Run #6: Beam

Relative speed: Run #1: 13 knots; Run #2: 17 knots; Run #3: 14 knots;  
Run #4: 15 knots; Run #5: 14 knots; Run #6: 15 knots

Latitude and Longitude of contact: 33 - 26.2 North; 129 - 17.0 East

Sketch of shoreline submitted: Not applicable

Remarks: None

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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COMMANDER UNITED NATIONS BLOCKADING AND ESCORT FORCE  
FLEET POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

CTF95/RMH:hob  
A16-6  
Ser 0004

Rec 12-21-97

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15 FEB 1951

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CO, USS McKEAN (DD-784) Top Secret ltr ser 0001  
of 5 Jan 1951

From: Commander United Nations Blockading and Escort Force  
(Commander Task Force NINETY-FIVE)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations  
Via: (1) Commander U. S. Naval Forces Far East  
(2) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Submarine Contact; report of

1. Forwarded.

J. A. FARRELL, JR.  
Chief of Staff

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INFO: 1201 VTI  
FILE: 102

CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION - UNCLASSIFIED - NAVAL FORCES

File: CNFE/A16-6  
Serial: 00056

(25)/APS/rb

17 March 1951

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SECOND ENDORSEMENT on CO, USS McKEAN (DD-784) Top Secret ltr ser 0001  
of 5 Jan 1951

From: Commander Naval Forces, Far East  
To: Chief of Naval Operations  
Via: Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Submarine Contact; report of

1. Forwarded.

W. H. BENSON  
Assistant Chief of Staff

Copy to:  
OTG 95.9  
CO, USS McKEAN (DD-784)

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Rev. 12-31-44

REF ID: A6692  
ATTN: COMNAVSTA

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(S) \ 662 \ 4P

CINCPACFLT FILE

FF1-1  
-18-A16  
Ser 00050

22 MAR 1951

Pre-Signature Routing

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THIRD ENDORSEMENT on USS McKean (DD-784) Top Sec ltr DD784/JCW/ta  
A9-8/A16-8 ser 0001 of 5 January 1951

From: Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet  
To: Chief of Naval Operations CPF-0269

Subj: Submarine Contact; report of

1. Forwarded.
2. CINCPACFLT evaluation is non-submarine.

E. T. LAYTON  
Assistant Chief of Staff  
for Intelligence

Copy to:  
COMNAVPAC CPF-0270  
COMINTEC/OPC/INTFOR CPF-0271  
CG USS MCKEAN (DD784) CPF-0272

ORIGINATOR: LCDR. H. G. HIRSCHFELD (211) 3/21/51 -JRT  
BASIC CORRESPONDENCE NOT REQUIRED IN CINCPACFLT FILES

*H. G. Hirschfeld*

22 MAR 1951

*Mailed*  
*MD*

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