

SECRET

Naval Officer-in-Charge,
DARWIN, N.T.

REPORT OF SINKING OF H.M.A.S. "PATRICIA CAM" BY ENEMY
ACTION ON 22nd JANUARY, 1943.

Sir,

I regret to submit the following report regarding the above.

2. Ship was in position $11^{\circ} 19' S.$ $136^{\circ} 23' E.$ on a course 067° heading for the coast about the middle of Wessel Island when at 1330 H. a plane was seen and heard simultaneously by a number of members of the ship's company when just on the point of releasing bomb. Plane appeared to have dived from out of the sun with engines shut off and passed over ship from stern to stem at an altitude of not more than 100 feet above mast.

The bomb which was estimated to be about 100 lb. landed amidships in centre of cargo hatch and exploded in bottom planking making a very large hole and causing the vessel to sink in about one minute.

3. Several members of the ship's company were sitting on the hatch forward when explosion occurred and were thrown down the hold but were almost immediately washed out again by the rush of water into the ship. Both boats were rendered useless but the raft remained intact. When vessel sank and ship's company were still bunched in a small area the plane came over and dropped a second bomb amongst them. It is thought that Ordinary Seaman Penglass was killed or injured by the first bomb and went down with the ship and that Acting Able Seaman E. D. Nobes and two natives were killed in the water by the second bomb; Stoker Cameron and one native died from the effects of same after landing ashore.

After the second bomb was dropped and the badly injured were brought alongside raft the others dispersed over large area to avoid machine gun fire.

4. Plane continued to circle the area machine gunning survivors for at least half an hour without scoring a hit. He then flew away to Northward out of sight but returned about five minutes later and after circling a few times alighted on the water and manoeuvred the plane to where Mr. Kentish and one other were resting on some hatches. He then ordered Kentish to swim over while covering him with a pistol. After a short conversation Kentish was taken on board and plane took off and flew away in a northerly direction.

5. After departure of plane the injured were placed on raft and an effort was made to reach Wessel Island but during the afternoon a breeze sprung up from the N.E. and no headway was made after about 1800, however a strong current swept us down to the southward close to the coast of Southern Island and after a hard pull, raft was brought ashore on a small rocky islet about 2 miles west of Cumberland strait at 0330 next morning Saturday 23rd.

When we started to paddle the raft ashore there were several members of the ship's company on improvised rafts of hatches; these all came over and held on to raft during afternoon except Moffit and Johnston who remained a short distance away and although we waited for them for some time they made no effort to get to the raft. At dark when last seen they were still only about 1 cable distant. A search was made of the coastline at daybreak but nothing was seen.