

Guide to the Scholarly Resources Microfilm Editions of

World War II Naval Histories and Historical Reports

- Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, Battle Experiences December 1941–August 1945
- Intelligence Division, OPNAV, Combat Narratives
- Naval War College, Battle Analysis Series
- U.S. Submarine War Patrol Reports and Related Documents, 1941-1945: Reference Documents on Submarine Operations and Submarines

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, Battle Experiences, December 1941 - August 1945 | 1 |
| Intelligence Division, OPNAV, Combat Narratives | 3 |
| Naval War College, Battle Analysis Series | 5 |
| U.S. Submarine War Patrol Reports and Related Documents, 1941-1945: Reference Documents on Submarine Operations and Submarines | 7 |

Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, Battle Experiences, December 1941 - August 1945

Introduction

These secret information bulletins were prepared on a continuous basis during and shortly after World War II; the first report, "Battle Experience from Pearl Harbor to Midway," was prepared on 15 February 1943. The bulletins were issued for the general information of officers and were distributed to commissioned personnel. The information in the reports was drawn from war diaries and battle reports of various commanders and ships and covers primarily surface operations. Air combat, submarines, amphibious operations, and other facets of the war are not specifically dealt with in the bulletins.

Each bulletin has a detailed table of contents. Although formats vary from bulletin to bulletin, each one contains a summary of operations, analyses of major problems, a summary of battle lessons, and conclusions. In nearly all cases the summaries of operations are interrupted by bold offset copy or copy in all capital letters. These highlight a lesson learned or a reason why things happened the way they did.

Subsequent bulletins contain photo sections that feature Japanese kamikaze attacks, rough seas, exploding ships, and destroyed shore defenses. Other graphics include track maps (particularly relevant to sea battles), island maps, task force formations, and chain-of-command charts. One anomaly in this set of naval histories is bulletin number 19, "Supporting Operations for the Invasion of Northern France." No other European operation is detailed, such as Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, or the Sicilian operation. Particularly useful, however, is the bulletin detailing the battle for Leyte Gulf, as its corresponding description in the Battle Analysis Series stops right before the major engagement.

Roll Contents

Number of Rolls: 2

Type of film: 16mm, without frame numbers

ROLL 1:

Secret Information Bulletins

- No. 1: Battle Experience from Pearl Harbor to Midway, December 1941 to June 1942, including Makin Island Raid, 17-18 August 1942
- No. 2: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands Actions, August and September 1942, including Bombardment of Kiska, 7 August 1942
- No. 3: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands Actions, October 1942
- No. 4: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands Actions, November 1942
- No. 5: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands Actions, December 1942 - January 1943
- No. 6: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands and Alaskan Actions, January - February 1943
- No. 7: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands and Alaskan Areas, March 1943

- No. 8: Battle Experience: Solomon Islands and Alaskan Areas Bombardments, May & July 1943
- No. 9: Battle Experience: Assault and Occupation of Attu Island, May 1943
- No. 10: Battle Experience: Naval Operations, Solomon Islands Area, 30 June - 12 July 1943
- No. 12: Solomon Islands and Alaskan Areas, July - October 1943
- No. 11: Battle Experience: Naval Operations, Solomon Islands Area, 12 July - 10 August 1943 (Note: Bulletins filmed out of sequence.)
- No. 13: Battle Experience: Bombardment of Wake Island, 5-6 October 1943: Dress Rehearsal for Future Operations
- No. 14: Battle Experience: Naval Operations, South and Southwest Pacific Ocean Areas, 6 October - 2 November 1943

ROLL 2:

Secret Information Bulletins

- No. 15: Battle Experience: Supporting Operations before and during the Occupation of the Gilbert Islands, November 1943 (First Major Stepping Stone Westward)
- No. 16: Battle Experience: Battle off Cape St. George, New Ireland, 23-25 November 1943; Surface and Air Attacks on Nauru Island, 8 December 1943
- No. 17: Battle Experience: Supporting Operations for the Occupation of the Marshall Islands, Including the Westernmost Atoll, Eniwetok, February 1944 (Second Major Stepping Stone Westward)
- No. 18: Battle Experience: Battleship, Cruiser, and Destroyer Sweep around Truk, 16-17 February 1944. Bombardments of Satawan and Ponape, 30 April - 1 May 1944
- No. 19: Battle Experience: Supporting Operations for the Invasion of Northern France, June 1944
- No. 20: Battle Experience: Supporting Operations for the Capture of the Marianas Islands (Japan, Guam, and Tinian), June - August 1944 (Third Major Stepping Stone Westward)
- No. 21: Battle Experience: Night Action and Subsequent Bombardment of Chichi Jima and Ani Jima, Bonin Islands, 4-5 August 1944; Destruction of Japanese Convoy off Bislig Bay, 9 September 1944; Supporting Operations for the Occupation of Palau and Ulithi, September - October 1944
- No. 22: Battle Experience: Battle for Leyte Gulf; (A) Battle of Surigao Strait, (B) Battle off Samar, (C) Battle off Cape Engano (East of Luzon), 23-27 October 1944
- No. 23: Battle Experience: Bombardments of Iwo Jima, November 1942 - January 1945; Third Fleet Operations in Support of Central Luzon Landings including the South China Sea Sweep, 30 December 1944 - 23 January 1945
- No. 24: Battle Experience: Radar Pickets and Methods of Combating Suicide Attacks off Okinawa, March - May 1945
- No. 25: Battle Experience: Encountering Typhoons or Storms, June - August 1945
- No. 26: Battle Experience: Final Operations of Units of the Pacific Fleet off the Shores of Japan, July - August 1945

Intelligence Division, OPNAV, Combat Narratives

Introduction

These twenty-six narratives were prepared by the Publications Branch of the Office of Naval Intelligence, at the request of Fleet Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations. They were designed to provide all commissioned naval officers with interim summaries of actions prior to the availability of official histories. As such, the combat narratives are more polished historical accounts than the previously described battle experiences, which served a more instructional and temporary role. The combat narratives also contain charts and photographs on a more consistent basis than the battle experiences.

The narratives were drawn from action reports, operation orders, war diaries, army reports, Marine reports, and personal interviews, and usually contain the following components: introduction; situation; organization of forces; approach; action; and conclusion, including lists of personnel and materiel losses. Each narrative has a table of contents, charts, and illustrations.

Although most of the narratives describe action in the Pacific theater, the North African landings (November 1942), the Sicilian campaign (10 July - 7 August 1943), and the Salerno landings (September 1943) are also the subjects of separate narratives. Among the other actions described are the Aleutians campaign, the battle of the Coral Sea, the Java Sea campaign, the battle of Midway, and the Solomon Islands campaign.

Roll Contents

Number of Rolls: 3

Type of film: 35mm, without frame numbers

ROLL 1:

The Aleutians Campaign (June 1942 - August 1943)

The Battle of the Coral Sea (4-8 May 1942)

The Java Sea Campaign

The Assault on Kwajalein and Majuro (Part One)

The Battle of Midway (3-6 June 1942)

The Landings in North Africa (November 1942)

Early Raids in the Pacific Ocean (1 February - 10 March 1942)

Solomon Islands Campaign:

I: The Landing in the Solomons (7 August 1942)

ROLL 2:

Solomon Islands Campaign (Continued):

II: The Battle of Savo Island (9 August 1942)

III: Battle of the Eastern Solomons (23-25 August 1942)

IV: Battle of Cape Esperance (11 October 1942)

- V: Battle of Santa Cruz Islands (26 October 1942)
- VI: Battle of Guadalcanal (11-15 November 1942)
- VII: Battle of Tassafaronga (30 November 1942)
- VIII: Japanese Evacuation of Guadalcanal (29 January - 8 February 1943)
- IX: Bombardments of Munda and Vila Stanmore (January-May 1943)
- X: Operations in the New Georgia Area (21 June - 5 August 1943)
- XI: Kolombangara and Bella Lavella (6 August - 7 October 1943)
- XII: Bougainville Landing and Battle of Empress Augusta Bay
(27 October - 2 November 1943)

ROLL 3:

- The Sicilian Campaign (10 July - 17 August 1943)
- Miscellaneous Actions in the South Pacific (8 August 1942 - 22 January 1943)
- Guadalcanal and Tulagi Bases
- Operations in New Guinea Waters (30 June - 3 October 1943)
- The Salerno Landings (September 1943)
- Bougainville Operations (3 November 1943)
- Anti-Aircraft Action on Guadalcanal and Tulagi (7 April 1943)
- The Salerno Landings (September 1943)
- Bougainville Operations (3 November 1943)
- Anti-Aircraft Action on Guadalcanal and Tulagi (7 April 1943)

Naval War College, Battle Analysis Series

Introduction

The Battle Analysis Series was prepared by the Naval War College after the Second World War for the benefit of postwar naval officer training and education. It is a compilation of all information, drawn from both Allied and Japanese sources, available to the college at the time of publication (1953-1958) and is, as stated in the preface, an "endeavor to maintain at all times the viewpoints of the commanders of the units involved on both sides."

The analyses trace the movements of individual battle groups and land-based aircraft units in detailed chronological order and are based on action reports, operation orders, war and ships' diaries, and personal interviews. Each major engagement is broken down into volumes (for example, the Leyte Gulf Battle Analysis Series), which contain a table of contents, detailed command charts, battle group formation charts, and position maps.

Because the major aim of the Battle Analysis Series is to present the most accurate description of situations and the decisions made based upon information available to commanders during those situations, the series refrains from passing judgment upon the decisions to any great extent. The major strength of the series is in the painstaking detail with which battle actions are reconstructed. Only four of the seven planned volumes of the Leyte Gulf Battle Analysis Series were printed: 1, 2, 3, and 5. This series concludes with the Battle of Surigao Strait and as such contains only those operations preceding the major engagement. Nevertheless, the details within the pages of these volumes are enough to contain ample information of value to researchers.

Roll Contents

Number of Rolls: 3

Type of film: 35mm, frame numbers on Rolls 2 and 3 only

ROLL 1:

The Battle of the Coral Sea (1-11 May 1942)

The Battle of Midway, Including the Aleutian Phase (3-14 June 1942)

The Battle of Savo Island (9 August 1942)

ROLL 2:

The Battle of Leyte Gulf

Vol. 1: Preliminary Operations until 0719, 17 October 1944

Frame counter numbers: (0003-0348)

Vol. 2: Operations from 0719 October 17th until October 20th (D-day)

Frame counter numbers: (0349-0633)

Vol. 3: Operations from 0000 October 20th until 1042 October 23rd

Frame counter numbers: (0634-END ROLL 2)

ROLL 3:

Vol. 3: Operations from 0000 October 20th until 1042 October 23rd (continued)

Frame counter numbers: (0003-0380)

Vol. 5: Battle of Surigao Strait from 1042 October 23rd to 0733 October 25th

Frame counter numbers: (0381-END ROLL 3)

**U.S. Submarine War Patrol Reports and Related Documents, 1941-1945:
Reference Documents on Submarine Operations and Submarines**

Introduction

This collection is made up of eight smaller groups of documents:

1. Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet: "Submarine Operational History of World War II." This four-volume set was prepared by the commander of the submarine force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, in 1947, and was a secret, registered document issued by the chief of naval operations. Only fifty-seven copies were circulated. The information was drawn from the files of the Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, which contain over fifteen hundred submarine war patrol reports. The purpose of these volumes was to include only outstanding material based on results or tactics, which makes for interesting and often gripping wartime action reports. Complete summaries of all patrol results are contained in the appendix. The volumes were intended to serve as a textbook for submarine officers.

The volumes contain:

- I: General chronology of actions, Central Pacific; general chronology, Southwest Pacific; general chronology, Atlantic; enemy antisubmarine measures; submarines vs. the Japanese Navy.
- II: Submarine tactics; torpedoes; "lifeguarding" (rescues of downed aviators); reconnaissance; special missions.
- III: Outstanding patrols and incidents (Congressional Medals of Honor, prisoner-of-war rescues); bringing home damaged submarines.
- IV: Fatal and near-fatal errors and casualties; unusual incidents; submarine bulletin; appendices — I: Statistical Summary of Wartime Sub Operations; II: Outstanding Patrol Report; III: Japanese Naval and Merchant Ship Losses during World War II.

2. Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee (JANAC): "Japanese Naval and Merchant Ship Losses during World War II by All Causes." This report, prepared in February 1947, includes a) all naval vessels known or believed to have been lost and b) all merchant vessels of five hundred or more gross tons known or believed to have been lost. It was drawn from captured enemy documents, intelligence sources, and prisoner-of-war reports.

3. U.S. Army Far Eastern Command, Military History Section: "The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II: A Graphic Presentation of the Japanese Naval Organization and List of Combatant and Non-Combatant Vessels Lost or Damaged in the War," February 1952. Also known as Monograph No. 116 of the Japanese Operational Monograph Series, this study contains flow charts detailing fleet organization as well as a combination map and chart of monthly losses of Japanese merchant and combat ships.

4. Bureau of Ships Preliminary Design Branch: "Submarine Report: Depth Charge, Bomb, Mine, Torpedo and Gunfire Damage, Including Losses in Action, 7 December 1941 to 15 August 1945," prepared January 1949. This is an engineering study of the many strains placed on submarines during the war, based on submarine action reports. This report deals with some of the most grueling conditions of the war, when long emergency dives by submarines resulted in temperatures of over 130 degrees Fahrenheit, high humidity, and hazardously high amounts of carbon dioxide inside the submarines.
5. Naval History Division: "U.S. Submarine Losses in World War II." This details each of the fifty-two American submarines lost during the war. All known circumstances surrounding each loss are given. Lists of the names of officers and enlisted men killed in the line of duty serve as an appendix. Photographs of commanding officers, where available, are published in the report.
6. Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Fleet: "Current Tactical Orders Submarines, April 1939 (USF-24, revised)." Also included is "Current Doctrine Submarines, 1939 (USF-25, revised)," and Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, "Current Doctrine Submarines, February 1944 (USF-25A)," which replaced the former orders.
7. Chief of Naval Operations, Submarine Division: "Submarine Officers Conferences, 1940 - 1949." The September 1945 conference was on the development of postwar submarine policies. These records include minutes of meetings, letters, recommendations, and summaries of decisions made at the conferences.
8. Chief of Naval Operations, Communications Division: "The Role of Communications Intelligence in Submarine Warfare in the Pacific (January 1943 - October 1943)." This eight-volume report, dated 19 November 1945, is an attempt to determine the accuracy and reliability of the operational intelligence to submarines cruising in the Pacific during the first ten months of 1943. The reason 1943 was selected was that, according to the report, the year was "an outstanding period in American submarine warfare in the Pacific" and therefore a more accurate appraisal of the worth of communications intelligence. The source of intelligence was Japanese messages that were deciphered and translated by the U.S. Naval Communications Intelligence Organization.

Roll Contents

Number of Rolls: 9

Type of film: 35mm, without frame numbers

ROLL 1:

Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet: "Submarine Operational History of World War II," 14 May 1947. Volume 1 to Volume 3.

ROLL 2:

Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet: "Submarine Operational History of World War II," 14 May 1947. Volume 3 (cont'd) to Volume 4.

ROLL 3:

Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee (JANAC): "Japanese Naval and Merchant Ship Losses during World War II by All Causes," February 1947.

U.S. Army Far Eastern Command, Military History Section: "The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II: A Graphic Presentation of the Japanese Naval Organization and List of Combatant and Non-Combatant Vessels Lost or Damaged in the War," February 1952.

ROLL 4:

Bureau of Ships Preliminary Design Branch, "Submarine Report: Depth Charge, Bomb, Mine, Torpedo and Gunfire Damage, Including Losses in Action, 7 December 1941 to 15 August 1945," 1 January 1949.

Naval History Division, "U.S. Submarine Losses in World War II," 1963.

Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Fleet, "Current Tactical Orders Submarines, April 1939 (USF-24, revised)" and "Current Doctrine Submarines, 1939 (USF-25, revised)"; Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, "Current Doctrine Submarines, February 1944 (USF-25A)."

ROLL 5:

Chief of Naval Operations, Submarine Division, Submarine Officers Conferences, 1940-1949.

Submarine Officers Conference, 12 January 1940 to 25 June 1941.

Submarine Officers Conference at Hunter's Point, 7-19 August 1944.

Submarine Conferences - Submarine/Undersea Warfare Division: General Postwar Policies, September 1945.

ROLL 6:

Chief of Naval Operations, Submarine Division, Submarine Officers Conferences, 1940-1949.

Submarine Conferences, May 1946-1949.

ROLL 7:

Chief of Naval Operations, Communications Division, "The Role of Communications Intelligence in Submarine Warfare in the Pacific (January 1943 - October 1943)."

Volumes 1-4

ROLL 8:

Chief of Naval Operations, Communications Division, "The Role of Communications Intelligence in Submarine Warfare in the Pacific (January 1943 - October 1943)."

Volumes 5-7

ROLL 9:

Chief of Naval Operations, Communications Division, "The Role of Communications Intelligence in Submarine Warfare in the Pacific (January 1943 - October 1943)."

Volume 8

