USS GUNNEL FIRST WAR PATROL
(Oct 19 – Dec 7, 1942)

USS GUNNEL REPORT OF FIRST WAR PATROL – PERIOD OCT. 19, 1942 TO DEC. 7, 1942

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L
U.S.S. GUNNEL
% Postmaster, New York, N.Y.
December 7, 1942

REPORT OF FIRST WAR PATROL – PERIOD OCT. 19, 1942 TO DEC. 7, 1942

PROLOGUE:
Operations prior to this patrol run consisted of training runs subsequent to commissioning.

NARRATIVE:

October 26, 1942, 1730 to 1820 (P):
Sighted light bearing two points on the starboard bow, distance about five (5) miles. Submerged to avoid detection. Closer observation indicated small vessel with running lights, on opposite course. 1820 surfaced and continued on base course.

October 27, 1942, 1700 to 1835 (P):
Sighted ship one (1) point on port bow, distance 16,000 yards. Submerged to avoid detection and closed target at six (6) knots. Closer observation three (3) island freighter traveling light with screw out of water with colors flying and brightly lighted. Maneuvered submarine whereby ship passed 1,000 yards, port 90° track for a straight stern tube firing. Freighter turned out to be of Swiss nationality, making eight (8) knots on course 270° (T). 1835 surfaced.

October 30, 1942, 2100 to 2145 (O):
Sighted green flare broad on starboard bow. Sounded battle stations and changed course to 135° (T), heading for position of flare estimated to be 8,000 to 10,000 yards. Closing for 12,000 yards and not detecting anything on radar or sound gear, secured from battle stations and resumed original course.

October 31, 1942, 2000 to 2135 (O):
All outboard exhaust valves leaked making it necessary to send men aft on deck to grind them in with a special wrench that CMM Murphy had the foresight to have made up before departure. This is not the last time that these valves gave us trouble.

2200 to 2250:
Sighted white light on horizon bearing 123° (T), distance 10,000 yards. Changed course to 123° (T) in order to close. Identified light as that of fishing vessel of average size, apparently trawling. She was well lighted with running lights. Distance to ship was 35,000 yards. She turned on a searchlight so I cut in order to prevent possible detection; changed course to 065° (T).

November 1, 1942, 0025 (N):
Received dispatch from British Admiralty rerouting GUNNEL to avoid convoy.

November 4, 1942, 0258 (Z):
Sighted white light on horizon bearing 207° (T). Changed course at 207° (T) and closed light at 18 knots until identified as a small fishing vessel of Spanish registry.

0520:
Picked up plane on SD Radar, distance five (5) miles and made quick dive.

0532:
Changed course to 075° (T).

1815:
Changed course to 135° (T); heard screws on bearing 169° (T). Planed up to periscope depth and sighted two small craft apparently fishing.

1915:
Surfaced and sighted lights broad on port quarter. My position at this time was about twenty (20) miles off the coast of French Morocco and it was evident that I was involved in some sort of fishing fleet. Dived immediately and maneuvered to starboard to clear the above mentioned vessels.

1950:
Surfaced. Changed course to 030° (T) and cleared area at 15 knots. Commenced approach on Fedala to take up station for reconnaissance patrol.

2000:
Sighted lights broad on starboard bow, distance six (6) miles. In the direction of Casablanca there was the large glow of light that emanates from a large city, and it was apparent that the city was not darkened. The next six hours were spent in evading a fishing fleet of some thirty or forty small boats working in pairs. At the same time I was charging batteries preparatory to the periscope run off Fedala. The water was rough and very phosphorescent, limiting the speed available for running undetected. At speeds above eight (8) knots the water would cascade over the submarine leaving no doubt in the minds of an observer from another vessel that something was amiss.

November 5, 1942, 0500 (Z):
Dived on course 020° (T) and changed course to 180° (T).

0515:
Surfaced to grind-in No. 4 main engine exhaust valve which was leaking badly.

0548:
Dived on course 000° (T).

0715:
Changed course to 180° (T); running at three (3) knots.

1125:
Made land fall through periscope; estimated Fedala Light bearing 200° (T), distance 12 miles. Speed 3 knots, depth to keel 65 feet. Increased speed to 7 knots and ran at same for one (1) hour.

1225:
Slowed to 3 knots. Took periscope observation. Recognized town of Fedala. Sighted two (2) merchant freighters bearing 045° (T), apparently lying to. Angle on the bow 90° starboard.

1245:
Increased speed to 4.5 knots and changed course to 148° (T) to close FEDALA light. Planed down to 125 feet.

1430:
Sound picked up screws, high speed, on bearing 330° relative which passed down port side and stopped.

1435:
Came up to periscope depth and sighted destroyer on port quarter lying to, angle on the bow 90° port. This destroyer was at a range of 2,000 yards and appeared to be of the Cassard class having four stacks.

1437:
Sound reported screws on starboard side turning over slowly. Saw through periscope another destroyer much smaller than first bearing 140° relative, distance 1500 yards, two stacks of La Pomone class, angle on bow 150° starboard. Estimated distance to Fedala light 3.5 miles, depth of water 180 feet. Immediately rigged for silent running and battle depth charge stations; went to 100 feet. Commenced reversing course to left at one-third speed and steadied on 045° (T) parallel to coast.

1440:
Small destroyer appeared to be moving up port side at slow speed. When the bearing was 340° relative, I put the helm hard over and came to course 000° (T) which brought

destroyer over on starboard bow. The larger destroyer was still stopped. Proceeded on course 000° (T) at slow speed expecting to be depth charged clearing area.

1442:
Small destroyer stopped.

Here is the full combined transcription from the **U.S.S. GUNNEL Report of First War Patrol – Period Oct. 19, 1942 to Dec. 7, 1942**, covering all nine pages (Enclosure "A"):

November 1, 1942, 0025 (N): Received dispatch from British Admiralty rerouting GUNNEL to avoid convoy.

November 4, 1942, 0258 (Z): Sighted white light on horizon bearing 2070° (T). Changed course at 2070° (T) and closed light at 18 knots until identified as a small fishing vessel of Spanish registry.

0520: Picked up plane on SD Radar, distance five (5) miles and made quick dive.

0532: Changed course to 0750° (T).

1815: Changed course to 1350° (T); heard screws on bearing 1690° (T). Planed up to periscope depth and sighted two small craft apparently fishing.

1915: Surfaced and sighted lights broad on port quarter. My position at this time was about twenty (20) miles off the coast of French Morocco and it was evident that I was involved in some sort of fishing fleet. Dived immediately and maneuvered to clear the above mentioned vessels.

1950: Surfaced. Changed course to 0300° (T) and cleared area at 18 knots. Commenced approach on Fedala to take up station for reconnaissance patrol.

2000: Sighted lights broad on starboard bow, distance six (6) miles. In the direction of Casablanca there was the large glow of light that emanates from a large city, and it was apparent that the city was not darkened. The next six hours were spent in evading a fishing fleet of some thirty or forty small boats working in pairs. At the same time I was charging batteries preparatory to the periscope run off Fedala. The water was rough and very phosphorescent, limiting the speed available for running undetected. At speeds above eight (8) knots the water would cascade over the submarine leaving no doubt in the minds of an observer from another vessel that something was amiss.

November 5, 1942, 0500 (Z): Dived on course 0200° (T) and changed course to 1800° (T).

0515: Surfaced to grind-in No. 4 main engine exhaust valve which was leaking badly.

0548: Dived on course 0000° (T).

0715: Changed course to 1800° (T); running at three (3) knots.

1125: Made land fall through periscope; estimated Fedala Light bearing 2000° (T), distance 12 miles. Speed 3 knots, depth to keel 65 feet. Increased speed to 7 knots and ran at same for one (1) hour.

1225: Slowed to 3 knots. Took periscope observation. Recognized town of Fedala. Sighted two (2) merchant freighters bearing 0450° (T), apparently lying to. Angle on the bow 900° starboard.

1245: Increased speed to 4.5 knots and changed course to 1480° (T) to close FEDALA light. Planed down to 125 feet.

1430: Sound picked up screws, high speed, on bearing 330° relative which passed down port side and stopped.

1435: Came up to periscope depth and sighted destroyer on port quarter lying to, angle on the bow 900° port. This destroyer was at a range of 2,000 yards and appeared to be of the Cassard class having four stacks.

1437: Sound reported screws on starboard side turning over slowly. Saw through periscope another destroyer much smaller than first bearing 1400° relative, distance 1500 yards, two stacks of La Pomone class, angle on bow 150° starboard. Estimated distance to Fedala light 3.5 miles, depth of water 180 feet. Immediately rigged for silent running and battle depth charge stations; went to 100 feet. Commenced reversing course to left at one-third speed and steadied on 0450° (T) parallel to coast.

1440: Small destroyer appeared to be moving up port side at slow speed. When the bearing was 3400° relative, I put the helm hard over and came to course 0000° (T) which brought destroyer over on starboard bow. The larger destroyer was still stopped. Proceeded on course 0000° (T) at slow speed expecting to be depth charged clearing area.

1442: Small destroyer stopped.

1530: Planed up to periscope depth, observed large destroyer lying to at 7,500 yards, bearing 1300° (T). Secured from depth charge stations and proceeded on course 0000° (T) in order to clear area, at 120 feet.

1901: Surfaced, commenced battery charge, and proceeded on various courses avoiding numerous fishing craft.

November 6, 1942, 0520 (Z): Submerged on course 1530° (T) at three knots, approaching Fedala, taking periscope observations every hour. There was an unexpected northerly set which greatly increased the expected time of arrival off of Fedala the second day.

1211: Sighted small fishing vessel bearing 1140° (T), distance 1,000 yards.

1332: Sighted small fishing vessel bearing 2350° (T).

1340: Changed course to 1800° (T) to close Fedala light.

1401: Heard explosion very similar to depth charge attack at quite a distance.

1403: Took periscope observation, nothing in sight to indicate cause of above explosion.

1412: Down periscope. **1413:** Heard pinging on bearing 350° relative. **1414:** Up periscope, nothing in sight.

1720: Commenced clearing Fedala. Town darkened, Fedala light not on.

1912: Surfaced, commenced charge, and old business of avoiding large number of fishing vessels.

2155: Sighted green flare bearing 0000° (T). Increased speed to 18 knots and came to course 0000° (T). As usual, nothing picked up.

2310: Resumed charging.

November 7, 1942, 0408 (Z): Casablanca light was illuminated. Each night city was not darkened.

0510: Submerged and commenced patrol off of Fedala, taking navigational fixes down the coast. Results same as day before, no traffic indicated except for small fishing vessels.

1315: I decided to run in to 2.5 miles off beach to east of Fedala light.

1730: Placed submarine directly north of light in position "FM" on course 0000° (T). Intending to steam four miles north and reverse course to return to initial point.

1800: Picked up Casablanca light through periscope.

1915: Surfaced.

1920: Changed course to 1860° (T), at five knots to return to point "FM". Night was very black with offshore breeze and intermittent rain. Blackness of night made night unusually black and phosphorescence of wake disgustingly visible for a great distance.

1925: Sighted the dimmed mast headlights of three large ships off of Fedala, apparently standing up coast. Made all torpedo tubes ready for firing.

1930: Sighted the wake of a fast vessel of unknown identity examining fishing vessels on port side. This wake was visible several thousand yards. Stopped all engines and watched. Vessel passed within 2,000 yards and then proceeded on a northeasterly course.

2035: Resumed course at 5 knots on one engine.

2158: Changed course to 2100° (T) to avoid two fishing vessels.

2200: Increased speed to 10 knots. Immediately searchlight pointed in our direction from beach so slowed down. They did not see us but the wake at that speed was a dead giveaway.

2230: Lying to on heading 0000° (T).

2250: Pinging of large number of ships heard. Started making prearranged signal on infra red signaling device.

2315: Challenged US Destroyer No. 600 and received proper reply. From then on, one ship after another passed in dark. Lightning flashes indicated a much larger force than I anticipated.

November 8, 1942, 0430 (Z): Left area on surface at 18 knots, course 0450° (T).

0607: Changed course to 0000° (T).

0634: Changed course to 2700° (T).

0735: Submerged when strafed by Army P-40 plane.

0750: Surfaced. Watched bombardment of Casablanca through glasses.

1140: Changed course to 2270° (T).

1302: Submerged from unidentified plane. **1203:** Plane dropped bomb which exploded over conning tower knocking paint off bulkhead.

1204: Changed course to 0000° (T).

1725: Surfaced, sighted ship of Spanish registry, combination passenger and freighter, named *Rio Franco*.

1800: Proceeded to assigned patrol area.

November 9, 1942, 0000 (Z): Closed vessel of Spanish registry at 1,000 yards. Commenced patrol on surface.

1335: Sighted ship on horizon. Dived and closed at periscope depth. Ship identified as *Rio Franco* of Spanish registry making about 8 knots on same course as on previous night.

1630: Sighted unidentified ship on horizon. Unable to close to identify.

November 10, 1942, 0000 (Z): Lighted ship sighted; closed and identified as Spanish freighter.

0330: Sighted small lighted fishing vessel.

0655: Sighted Merchant ship.
0712: Dived to investigate.
0738: Ship identified as Spanish *Monte Gurugu*. Cleared area and surfaced.

1712: Sighted ship.
1713: Submerged and closed. Ship a Portuguese freighter of 1700 tons.
1800: Surfaced and resumed patrol on surface.

November 11, 1942, 0100 (Z): Sighted light which proved to be Spanish freighter.

2148: Sighted green flare bearing 0320° (T). Changed course to 0600° (T) and increased speed to 18 knots. Never able to pick up anything. Each previous experience I went down on the initial bearing but decided this time to put the flare on the bow.

November 12, 1942, 0825 (Z): Sighted Spanish freighter of 1700 tons on southerly course. Submerged and simulated approach.

1210: Sighted ship on horizon, unable to close.

November 13, 1942, 1525 (Z): Sighted ship, submerged and headed for her. Identified as Spanish freighter of 2,000 tons on northerly course.

1800: Received from Comsubron-50: 1219Z/13 RELEASED FROM DUTY

1900: Proceeding on surface as routed by F.O.S.

November 14, 1942, 0135 (Z): Sighted light bearing 2050° (T). Ship identified as neutral vessel of 2500 tons.

November 16, 1942, 0738 (Z): Proceeding on prescribed route to Base. Sighted submarine (apparently German) bearing 0620° (T) about six miles on parallel course 284° (T) in Lat 35° 23’ N., Long 16° 23’ W. Submerged immediately and came to course 0620° (T). Submarine apparently sighted us about same time for he submerged at 0740. Continued towards him on course 0620° (T); rigged for silent running. Nothing was seen or heard.

1035: Gave up and surfaced. Main engine gear train carried away on No. 1 main engine.

November 17, 1942, 0440 (Z): Proceeding to Base on prescribed route. Radar reported object bearing 0530° (T), range 1,600 yards, identity unknown.

0443: Changed course to 0530° (T). No further contact by sight, sound or radar.

November 18, 1942, 1110 (Z): Proceeding to Base on prescribed route. Sighted object on horizon bearing 2080° (T), distance about 5 miles. Submerged. Object, later identified as US Submarine, on parallel course passed 2,000 yards on ninety track, straight bow shot a big disappointment.

November 19, 1942, 1640 (Z): Proceeding to Base on prescribed route. Sighted ship bearing 1590° (T), distance about 7 miles. Object appeared to be drawing to left. Submerged and came to course 0500° (T).
1647: Changed course to 0670° (T).

1658: Identified as Anti-Submarine screen of expected convoy north bound.

1708: Fired red smoke bomb, trained stern tubes on nearest corvette and awaited results.

1725: Surfaced and proceeded on prescribed route. Corvette H.M.S. Londonderry senior in command.

No. 3 main engine out of commission, casualty same as reported for No. 1 main engine.

November 20, 1942, 1315 (Z): Commenced submerging during daylight. Heard distant depth charging.

1600: Last of depth charging.

No. 2 main engine out of commission, same casualty as previously reported. Auxiliary engine becoming more important as cruise progresses.

November 21, 1942: Proceeding on prescribed route, submerging by day. Discovered broken tooth on drive gear of No. 4 main engine. Auxiliary engine now veritable favorite of whole ship's force. It subsequently took us into port at five knots charging the batteries and air banks faithfully each night. In separate correspondence I have adequately expressed my feelings.

November 26, 1942 0930 (A): Secured at dock in Falmouth, England, awaiting Squadron Engineer. Decided to proceed to Roseneath on auxiliary engine.

December 3, 1942, 0815 (A): Underway for Roseneath at five knots, escorted by H.M.S. Cape of Portland.

December 7, 1942: Arrived at base.

NOTE: The evasive tactics that I used prior to completion of the beacon duties performed off Fedala were in accordance with the specific directive contained in paragraph 7, Operation Order No. 4-42.
