

Informationen dankend erhalten von E.Zimmerman (eMails vom 11 & 12/01/23)

I have looked over the COMCARIBSEAFRON war diary for April - June, 1942. I can recommend the following updates for DUKBOOT, the aircraft ones have already been incorporated into AC ATTACK.

17.1 U69 wird angegriffen von USS TURQUOISE am 17/05/42

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173>, (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 1/1/42-6/30/42) image 107

At 1410 P the following sent to the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier by the Commandant, Naval Operating Base, Trinidad: "Believe two, possibly three submarines in area. Patrol seaplane bombed one forty seconds after dive at 1750 Z 17th. Results probably negative. One escaped TURQUOISE on surface at 1450 Z 17th."

(#23152) Surface attack on U69 by the USS TURQUOISE. Correct in DBF, but TURQUOISE is misspelled as TURJOISE.

17.2 U69 wird angegriffen von ein Landflugzeug am 18/05/42 um 1455DSZ in ED9833

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 4/1/42-6/30/42), image 105:

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L WAR DIARY May 18, 1942.

Aircraft of VP Squadrons 31 and 92 carried out routine patrols, reconnaissance and training. Searched areas in which submarines were reported. At 2315 P, the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier directed the U.S. Naval Air Station, St. Lucia, to send one patrol seaplane to search for survivors of the S.S. SAN ELISEO and to the U.S.S. BLAKELEY to vicinity when located.

Aircraft of the Antilles Air Task Force carried out routine patrols, reconnaissance and training. The 25th Bombardment Group scouted the area between latitudes 17° 45' north and 19° 15' north, and the limiting longitudes of the Mona Passage, commencing at daylight with all available aircraft. They failed to locate submarine reported in the Mona Passage. One aircraft of the 9th Bombardment Group attacked a submarine sighted in latitude 11° 25' north, longitude 62° 35' west. Four 6-hundred pound bombs were dropped with apparent results. Two bombs failed to explode. The Trinidad Sector, VI Interceptor Command was constituted with station at Waller Field, Colonel Chas F. Born commanding. It includes all U.S. Army combat Air Forces in the Trinidad Area.

Image 107:

At 1410 P the following sent to the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier by the Commandant, Naval Operating Base, Trinidad: "Believe two, possibly three submarines in area. Patrol seaplane bombed one forty seconds after dive at 1750 Z 17th. Results probably negative. One escaped TURQUOISE on surface at 1450 Z 17th. BARNEY sighted one at 1830 Z 17th. Unable to locate it after it submerged due to her sound gear being out of commission. Army bombed one 1310 Z 18th. Results believed negative. Army planes covering daylight, Navy dark. Am doing utmost with facilities available. British Mike Tare Baker Sail assisting within limitations. Urgently request relief plane crews. Now on hand three crews three planes. Request assistance obtaining sound gear parts BARNEY'S 150315."

From the above it is apparent that the 9th BG attacked a submarine on 18/05/42 at 11.25N 62.35W (= ED9489).

The second excerpt indicates the attack as at 1310/Z on the 18th. This is close to, but not a perfect match with the KTB of U69 (OL Ulrich Gräf) (#23153).

The air attack on the submarine this date is currently linked to an attack by a Catalina of VP-31 but this possible connection was made by me in AC ATTACK as I could not identify the attacker on U69 or the target of VP-31s attack which was actually on May 17, 1942. However, armed with the latest information from the war diary and further data from the KTB of U69 which reported the attack on the 18th at 1455 DSZ in ED9833 „Crash dive for land based aircraft. One bomb astern when at A-20“ (60 meters). While there is about 60nm between the reported positions and 15 minutes (1310Z=1510DSZ) between times, the attack by the 9th Bombardment Group presents the best match to U69s data. I make this match in AC ATTACK and would recommend it for the DBF as well.

Unfortunately the The USAAF squadron is not identified at any point in the ComCaribSeaFron diary. At this time the 9th BG comprised the 1st, 5th and 99th Bomb squadrons.

17.3 Flugzeugangriff auf U155 am 19/05/1942

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 4/1/42-6/30/42), image 109:

Aircraft of the Antilles Air Task Force carried out routine patrols, reconnaissance and training. Made daylight searches of areas in which submarines were reported. Two planes of the 22nd Pursuit Detachment at St. Lucia reported having made a positive sight contact with an enemy submarine at 1102 P, about 20 miles to the south of Grenada. Both planes made dive bombing attack from 4500 feet. One 500-pound demolition bomb was dropped by one plane scoring a direct hit on the bow. Bomb failed to detonate. One 300-pound demolition bomb was dropped by the second plane but struck 100 yards from the target. The submarine submerged and could not again be located although the area was thoroughly searched. Submarine apparently undamaged.

This attack was on U155 (KL Adolf-Cornelius Piening). DBF (#41274) 1601 hours - DB95 Attack by two 2-motor a/c - 2 bombs. No damage.

There is no doubt about the match here, the position given as 20 miles south of Grenada is a good match for ED95. 1102P hours. P = Z-3. So 5 hours between P and GST: the time is an exact match. The 22nd Pursuit squadron (USAAF) had just been redesignated the 22nd Fighter squadron (effective May 15, 1942). The squadron was equipped with both Airacobras (P-39D) and Warhawks (P40). Both were single engined fighters, but the detachment at Beane Field, St Lucia was flying the Airacobras and used for A/S searches in areas of suspected Axis submarines.

17.4 Angriff U502 auf MI HrMS JAN VAN BRAKEL am 19/05/1942??

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 4/1/42-6/60/42), image 111:

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

WAR DIARY

(continued)

May 19, 1942.

The Haitian Flotilla of 5 CGRs: 1508, 1509, 1511, 1512 and 1513 departed New Orleans at 1116 P for duty assigned, under command of Lt(jg) Harbamon, U.S.C.G.

At 0215 P, a torpedo was fired from shoreward to seaward and passed under the stern of the H.N.M.S. JAN VAN BRAKEL in latitude 11° 44' north, longitude 70° 16' west. Submarine unmistakably in Gulf of Venezuela. The JAN VAN BRAKEL searched until daylight without results and then continued escorting convoy to Curacao.

Der niederländische Minenleger HrMS JAN VAN BRAKEL meldet ein Torpedo wurde von der Küste Richtung See gefeuert und lief unter das Heck vom Schiff durch.

Ort: 1144N-7016W = EC9547.

Zeit: 0215P = 0715 DSZ.

Von die Boote die um diese Zeit in die Gegend von EC (Quadranten EB – EC - ED) operierten laut

1) KTB BdU <https://www.uboatarchive.net/BDU/BDUKTB30307B.htm>,

2) https://historisches-marinearchiv.de/projekte/duikboot/eingabe.php?neu=1&active_duik=search (für die Boote mit bereits vorhandene tägliche Positionen auf See,

3) KTB der Boote und/oder

3) <https://uboat.net/boats/patrols/search.php>,

(d.h. U69, U103, U125, U155, U156, U162 sowie U502), meldete kein Boot einen Angriff.

Alle kamen Heim von der Feindfahrt außer U502, ein Totalverlust.

Wenn es ein Torpedoangriff gab auf MI HrMS JAN VAN BRAKEL, kann es nur einen Angriff von U502 gewesen sein. U502 setzte während seine Feindfahrt mehrere Funksprüche ab mit die Lage und seine Erfolge, meldet aber keinen erfolglosen Angriff am 19.

Es gibt kein Beweis dafür U502 griff MI HrMS JAN VAN BRAKEL an. Eine Möglichkeit ist es aber schon.

<https://www.antillesatwar.com/war-charts/> berichtet der Torpedo wurde auch gehört von HrMS JAN VAN BRAKEL, leider ohne Quellenangabe.

Der Angriff auf MI JAN VAN BRAKEL wird nicht erwähnt in „Zij vochten op de zeven zeeën“ van K.W.L.Bezemer.

17.5 U159 wird am 05/06/42 angegriffen vom Zerstörer USS BIDDLE

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 4/1/42-6/30/42), image 164:

U.S.S. BIDDLE and U.S.S. UPSHUR escorting the convoy NC-3 enroute Kingston to San Juan. At 2011 P, the BIDDLE sent the following despatch to the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier: " Made sound contact. Made 3 depth charge attacks at 2102 Z in latitude 16° 43' north, 70° 12 west. Results negative. BIDDLE and UPSHUR searching. Convoy NC-3 proceeding independently."

It is apparent this attack involved U159 (KL Helmut Witte). The boat had sunk the sailing vessel SALLY with artillery at 2000 hours in grid EC3811. At 2300 hours she reported being driven under by gunfire and subsequently depth charged. 2102/Z = 2302 GST. 16.43N 70.12W corresponds exactly to grid EC3811. Clearly the destroyer USS BIDDLE was the escort responsible for the attack on U159.

17.6 U159 wird am 24/06/42 angegriffen von ein Flugzeug in ED2374

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 4/1/42-6/30/42), image 206:

At 1129 P, the Marine Corps Air Station at St. Thomas notified the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier that a plane of VMS-3 had attacked an enemy submarine as it was submerging and believed the submarine had been hit. The submarine was in position 17° 50' north, longitude 63° 50' west and the attack took place at 1103 P.

Looking over the DBF and information I've gotten from Frans, an immediate match can be made. This attack was on U159 (KL Helmut Witte) which reported:

- 1601 hours (=DSZ) - ED2374 - Crash dive for a small fast one engined aircraft.
- 1604 - when at 50 meters - 2 bombs. Light damage. 17.50N 63.50W (= ED2375).

The time of 1103P matches DSZ with a 5 hour difference, again an exact match.

VMS-3 was equipped with the Kingfisher (OS2N-1) at this time.

Amendment, Mail Eric Zimmerman vom 12/01/23

An amendment re. the air attack on U159 (KL Helmut Witte) June 24, 1942 by VMS-3.

I mentioned the attacking aircraft was a Kingfisher (OS2N-1). I used The U-boat War in the Caribbean by Gaylod Kelshall as my source for asserting this. In fact it was more likely a Duck (J2F-5) as it was this type that the same squadron attacked U172 (KL Carl Emmermann) on July 3, 1942, just 10 days later. I attach the report downloaded from <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77634971> (2 pages) which indicates the a/c type in the July 3rd incident. Unfortunately the same type of report does not seem to be available for the June 24th attack.

17.7 U203 wird am 29/06/42 angegriffen von ein Flugzeug in ED2377

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133933173> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 4/1/42-6/30/42), image 222:

Aircraft of the Antilles Air Task Force carried out routine patrols, reconnaissance and training. At 1230 Z today a submarine was attacked by an airplane of the 12th Bombardment Squadron in position 13° 45' north, 63° 52' west. The attack was made as the submarine submerged. Three depth bombs were dropped. The center bomb appeared to land about 20 yards ahead of conning tower. No evidence of damage to submarine. The plane remained in the area until relieved by a Navy plane.

Again armed with this war diary information, it is straightforward to find the U-boat involved.

U203 (KL Rolf Mützelburg) reported:

1430 hours (=1230Z) - ED2377 - Crash dive for a/c, when at 60 meters, 3 bombs.

The times are an exact match and the positions also are close. 18.45N 63.52 = DO8975. DO was the grid directly north of ED23 and this was the direction U203 was heading.

The 12th Bombing squadron (USAAF) was equipped with the Bolo (B-18) at this time.

Informationen dankend erhalten von E.Zimmerman (eMail vom 17/01/23)

17.8 U575 wird am 12/07/42 angegriffen von Flugzeuge in ED9861

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133938885> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 7/1-31/42), image 32:

Aircraft of the Antilles Air Task Force carried out routine patrols, reconnaissance and training. Two fighter airplanes of the Trinidad Detachment of the VI Fighter Command sighted a submarine, positive identification, in position 11° 07' north, 61° 25' west at 2130 yesterday. The submarine was at periscope depth and the planes attacked with 37MM and machine guns but attack is believed to have been ineffective.

Image 35:

At 2000 P, the Commandant, Naval Operating Base at Trinidad advised that two Army pursuit planes sighted an enemy submarine on the surface yesterday at 2030 Z in position 11-08 north, 61-22 west. They attacked with gunfire and the submarine crash dived. Results of attack believed to be negative. Surface craft conducting intensive search.

The two fighter aircraft attacked U575 (KL Günther Heydemann). The U-boat reported - 2325 hours - ED9861 - Crash dive for 2 fighter aircraft, when at 30 meters - several small bombs. Minor damage.

The A/C-time is given as 2130, clearly this was Z zone which would agree very closely with the 2325 DSZ recorded by U575. 11.07N 61.25W = ED9941 right on the border of ED98 - ED99. The two positions are very close. This is certainly a match.

Despite the minor differences in position in the extracts from the Caribbean War Diary, both clearly refer to the same attack.

No bombs were actually dropped but the cannon fire, some of which clearly hit U575 was mistaken aboard the boat as small bombs. The type of a/c or squadron is not identified in the Caribbean War Diary but it is highly likely that the aircraft were from the 22nd fighter squadron (USAAF) flying the Airacobra (P-39) one of the few aircraft equipped with a 37mm cannon. This squadron had a detachment at Waller Field, Trinidad, and was certainly involved in the ASW routine of this period.

17.9 U437 greift einen Dampfer an 20/07/42 in DN8199 mit ein 3t-Fächer

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133938885> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 7/1-31/42), image 64:

At 1301 P, the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier advised COMINCH, the Commandants Naval Operating Bases, Guantanamo and Key West that the SS ULUA reported attacked in position 20-00 north, 70-34 west at 0454 Z yesterday, arrived base TARE with no damage.

July 20, 1942

U437 (KL Werner Karl Schulz) 1724 - DN8199 - 3 torpedo spread fired at large passenger freighter, believed to be of the 15,000 (GRT) PRESIDENT class. Two detonations were heard and a possible hit claimed.

July 21, 1942

U437, believing the valuable target had been damaged, continued pursuit into the following day (=21/07/42) and between 0635-0639 fired four more single torpedoes at the same ship. These 4 attacks were in grid DN9439.

It seems certain the target was the SS ULUA (in 1943 she became USN store ship USS OCTANS, AF-26) below is a photo of OCTANS in 1944:



ULUA/OCTANS was only 6,494 (GRT) and did somewhat resemble the bigger PRESIDENT class, and Schulz might have felt he was attacking a much larger vessel. It would also help explain all the missed torpedoes.

20.00N 70.34W = DN9461 and 0454/Z would be equivalent of 0654 DSZ. Both pretty good matches with what U437 reported although the liner did not realize she had been pursued and under attack until the very end.

The diary for July 23, 1942 includes this entry:

At 1801 P, the Commander, Caribbean Sea Frontier informed the Commander, Gulf Sea Frontier and the Commandant, Naval Operating Base, Key West that the SS ULUA was detached from WAT-6 in Windward Passage for Base JIG unescorted, speed of advance 13 knots. The ULUA was reported attacked north of Santo Domingo but escaped. Addressees were asked to insure that correct instructions are issued in the future.

While confusing in some regards it does confirm ULUA was on the same course from the Windward Passage (where U437 made her initial attack) to the north of Santo Domingo where U437 made her second attack.

17.10 U134 wird angegriffen von ein Flugzeug am 29/07/42 in DN4796

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/133938885> (war diary COMCARIBSEAFRON 7/1-31/42), image 89:

Aircraft of the Antilles Air Task Force carried out routine patrols, reconnaissance and training. A plane of the 417th Bombardment Squadron attacked a submarine at 1425 Z in position 21-30 north, 75-50 west. The submarine was on the surface when sighted. No bombs were dropped on the first run due to material failure. Bombs were dropped manually on the second run with no results. Three planes were despatched to cover the area.

Image 91:

At 1928 P, the Commandant, Naval Operating Base, Guantanamo advised that a Camaguey Army plane attacked a submarine in position 21-20 north, 75-50 west at 1425 Z today. The intervalometer failed on the first attack at 22 foot spacings. The bombs were dropped manually on the second run but the submarine had submerged and attack was unsuccessful. Three planes were despatched to cover the area.

A long standing mystery is solved here.

U134 (KL Rudolf Schendel) reported an air attack at 1619 DSZ (=1419Z) in grid DN4796 (north of eastern Cuba), crash dived for an approaching aircraft (land machine), 4 bombs and minor damage.

Time is a good match and 21.30N 75.50W = DN4792. Clearly the attacker was a B-18B of the 417th USAAF Bombing squadron.