

US PATROL BOAT Operations During World War Two

A few years ago I published "Coastal Command" a set of rules and campaign guidelines for small craft operations during World War Two. As part of the rules, I intended a list of scenarios based on actual engagements. This article is a continuation of the scenario presentation process along with additional notes on small craft operations during the war. Invaluable material and an outstanding book on US operations can be found in Cpt Buckley's book, "At Close Quarters", 1962, which is based on official reports from both Allied and Axis sources. Other good books include William Breuer's "Devil Boats: PT War Against Japan" and Frank Johnson's "US PT Boats of World War II".

Much admiration must be given to the crews which manned the various types of small craft utilized during the war. The prestige of the assignment was little with the task of daily operations and maintenance of these craft daunting. The supply problems were vast. US PT Boat Squadrons were to be composed of the same boat model which improved the supply situation somewhat. The range of equipment used on the boats was vast with different tools needed for different torpedo or gun types within the US Navy. In addition the US Navy in Europe often operated with British forces which increased the different types of equipment and tools used.

Another example of their low supply priority was that PT units were given the pre-war Mark VIII torpedo until the supply was exhausted which was not until almost 1945. These torpedoes often ran too deep to be effective against the common targets of the boats. While later versions handled newer torpedoes, the launching systems were different so the same torpedo model could not be used on every boat AND the tools needed to fix or operate the systems also varied.

Because of their shallow draft which allowed the boats to cross most minefields and sail close to the shore, the patrol boats were often given missions which placed them in isolated positions without substantial support from larger vessels. Some missions included dropping off and picking up various OSS agents from the coastlines, rescuing ship and aircraft survivors, escorting minelaying-sweeping craft, carrying supplies to beachheads, and conducting deception operations while larger landing operations took place nearby.

While the speed of the US PT boats in the Pacific was fast enough to catch their primary target, Japanese barges, in the Mediterranean early models did not have the engine horsepower to overtake their Italian and German opponents. Also in the Mediterranean, the 20mm and .50 caliber guns could not inflict much damage to the well built German F-Lighters.

Considering that hundreds of PT boats were built, it may be surprising to discover how few PT boats were actually lost to enemy action. Many were destroyed by their crews to prevent capture. While others were lost due to friendly fire and collisions. Being of wood construction, the PT boats often suffered numerous hits and still remained afloat. Also these damaged boats were often quickly repaired for duty within only a couple of days. A summary of US PT boat losses are 69 boats lost with only 22 being lost directly due to hostile actions. . The conditions of lost were: Seven by enemy ships; Four by Shore Batteries; Seven by enemy aircraft; Four by Mines; Two by Allied ships; Five by Allied Aircraft; Nineteen were grounded in enemy territory and

destroyed to prevent capture; Three more were destroyed in port prior to being captured; Fourteen were lost due to storms or accidents in port or non-combat situations.

Due to the dominance of Allied airpower in most areas after 1942, the Axis attempted virtually all of their supply convoys at night. As a result, most of the Allied boat patrols which made contact were also conducted at night. All engagements are at night unless otherwise noted. While many of the engagements may have occurred after midnight, I have listed the date of the battle based on when the patrol began. In regards to the location of the battle, I have tried to list an approximate point. The Chart should be read as "Near or off the coast of ...(the point listed)". Not every area of operations had heavy contact with enemy forces. In the Aleutians and in the English Channel the number of contact were limited. The main foe in the Aleutians was the environment. The 100+ islands were often surrounded by submerged rocks. The weather was a mix of high winds, rain or fog and could include a mix of snow and hail during the worst periods. This combined with high seas and frigid water severely limited patrol time. Also after their loss at Midway the Japanese expressed little interest in the area, so contact with the enemy was rare. Most of their missions included supply runs, mine laying, recon, and air-sea rescue. After a limited stay in the area most boats and crews were transferred to the South Pacific.

In the Atlantic's English Channel, the US deployed four squadrons (2 of 12 boats, one of six and one of three boats) during 1944. Being the British home waters the US craft often were assigned secondary missions. Squadron 2 of 3 boats spent most of the time assigned to the OSS and performed drop off and pick up duties of agents along the European coast. During the period after the Normandy Invasion, most of the boats manned a protective screen near the beaches and conducted many rescues of crewmen from ships which had hit mines. Between June 25th and 28th four-five US PT boats engaged shore batteries protecting Cherbourg. Most of the other actions occurred in the Le Havre area during August. In the Le Havre area the US employed the British tactic of a DD or DE controlling ship. Once Le Havre fell, most PT boats were used as couriers and ship escorts between Britain and French harbors. Some of the engagements in the Le Havre area during 1944 are listed below.

Aug 8. DD 'Maldy' + 5 PTs (500, 503, 507, 509, ?) vs 6 GE MineSweepers

Aug 11. DE 'Borum' + 2 PTs(500, 502) vs 2 GE MineSweepers

Aug 13. DE 'Borum' + 2 PTs(498, 505) vs 5 GE MineSweepers

Aug 6. DD? 'HMS Thornborough' + 3 PTs(510, 512, 514) vs 3 GE S-boats

Aug 8. 3 PTs (511, 520, 521) vs 5 GE R-boats + 1 MS or armed trawler

Aug 10. 3 PTs (515, 518, 513) vs 4 GE R-boats + 1 S-boat + 1 armed trawler

Aug 24. 3 PTs (511, 520, 514) vs 4 GE S-boats + shore batteries

Aug 25. 3 PTs (513, 516, 519) vs 2 GE S-boats + 2 R-boats

Aug 26. 3 PTs (511, 520, 514) + DE? 'Retalick' vs 5 GE Landing craft + shore Btys

Aug 26 same action but in a different sector. HMS 'Middleton' + 4 BR MTBs vs R-boats + landing craft + shore btys.

Below are listed a number of engagements in the South Pacific during World War Two which can be the basis for designing challenging scenarios. This is not a total list of patrols or attacks. I did not list many actions such as the nightly encounters with armed barges. Nor the common missions of picking up/ dropping off of coast watchers or the air-sea rescue of downed pilots.

This vast area of operations was further divided into operational regions based on the area's main campaign. Ironically by 1943 many PT boats were modified to encounter the type of common foes found in their area. Those boats which fought armed barges regularly had 40mm guns placed on the bow and stern with some having their torpedo launchers removed to reduce weight. In other areas where enemy destroyers were still engaged, the tubes were kept with some PTs mounting a 37mm gun on the bow. In addition various patrol support options were used. Sometimes a destroyer accompanied boats or a heavily armed LCM may add more firepower. A frequent and very effective support craft was the PBY equipped with bombs and radar. Being airborne, the PBY radar was less affected by bad seas or island blind spots which hampered PT boat radar systems. All of these support options provided PTs with extended vision for their night sojourns which was a vast improvement from early 1942 when a night patrol may become aware of enemy craft because their boats would begin to rock due to the enemy's wake.

Besides the formidable Japanese destroyers, US PTs in the Pacific had to deal with other types of deadly foes. Until the Allies gained air superiority, the PTs were often attacked by Japanese Zeros and float planes. Even at night the planes could spot the PTs due to the white form wake trails on the black water. Another underestimated foe was the Japanese barges. Small barges were easy prey but the Medium barges often had 20mm and/or MGs mounted on them. A very difficult opponent was the Large barges which were more heavily armored than the PTs and mounted 40mm and 20mm guns as well as several MGs. Also the Japanese began to place shore batteries along the routes taken by the barges which also proved dangerous for the PTs.

All Allied ships are USA and Axis ships are Japanese unless noted otherwise

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Though moored they fired over 4000 rounds of .50 caliber ammo at the enemy.

Dec 10, 1941. Cavite Bay, Philippines. Day. 6 PTs vs 5 JN Dive bombers

1942

Jan 18. Binanga P.I. 2 PTs (31, 34) vs Shore Btys + Armed Cargo ship w/ 2 x 5.5" guns

Jan 22. ? Subic Bay P.I. 2 Pts (34, 41) vs 2 Landing Barges

Jan 24. Subic Bay P.I. PT 41 vs Armed Cargo ship + Shore Btys.

Feb 1. Subic Bay P.I. PT 32 vs Minelayer 'Yaeyama'

Apr 8 P.I. 2 PTs (34, 41) vs CL 'Kuma' + reinforced by 2 DDs. A good scenario with most of the action between the PTs and the CLs. The Dds arrive and pursue the PTs as they retreat.

Apr 9 P.I. PT ? vs 4 Floatplanes armed with two bombs each.

June 4. Midway. Day. 11 PTs vs Japanese planes as they attack the Midway Island airfield.

Oct 11. Guadalcanal. 4 PTs (38, 46, 48, 60) vs CL + 4-6 DDs. The object of the mission is to make the ships stop bombarding Marines positions on the island and attack the PTs.

Oct 29. Cape Esperance. 2 PTs (38, 39) vs 3 DDs

Nov 5. Cape Esperance. 3 PTs vs 2 DDs. No radar, PTs are alerted by wakes rocking the boats.

Nov 6. Koli Point. PT 48 vs DD

Nov 8. Savo Island. 3 PTs (37, 39, 61) vs 3 DDs

Nov 10. Savo Island. 3 PTs vs 4 DDs

Dec 3. Savo Island. 8 PTs in three groups (109, 43/ 40. 48/ 59, 44, 36, 37) vs CL + 5 DDs

Dec 9. Kamimbo Bay. PT 44 vs Sub (I3) + Armed barge

Dec 11. Kamimbo Bay. 8 PT vs 5 DD + Cargo ship
Jan 10, '43. Kamimbo Bay. 10 PT vs 8 DD
Jan 14, '43. ?? 13 PT vs 9 DD
Feb 1, '43. 11 PT in 5 groups (47, 39 / 111, 48 / 109, 36 / 123, 124 / 37, 59, 115) vs 12 DD + 3 supply barges. A minefield was also in the area.
July 3, '43. Rendova. 3 PT vs 4 DD
July 23, '43. Blackett Strait. 3 PT (117, 154, 155) vs 3 DD
July 26, '43. Blackett Strait. 3 PT (117, 154, 106) vs 6 Armed Barges
Aug 1, '43. Vila. 15 PT vs 4 DD.
Aug 22, '43. Vila. Day ! 6 PT in 2 groups vs Shore Btys + MG positions + Barges
Feb 25, '44. Emp Augusta Bay. 2 PT (251, 252) + Armed LCI vs Shore Bty + 9 Barges
Mar 17, '44. Emp Augusta Bay. 2 PT (283, 284) + PBV + DD 'Guest' vs Shore Bty + Barges
May 5, '44. "The Rantaw Trap". 3 PT (247, 245, 250) vs Shore Btys + 8 Large Armed barges in three groups which approach the PT boats from three directions and encircle them.
As I stated earlier, there were almost daily contact with barges. In 1944 and 1945 with the increased air bombardment of Japan, PT boats were utilized in the air-sea rescue role.

Below are listed a number of engagements which involved US PT boat forces in the Mediterranean during World War Two. Note: The German 10th Torpedo Boat (TB) Flotilla in 1943 consisted of Italian ships manned by German crews, often reported as DDs or Corvettes.
1943

May. The PT boats are ordered to patrol within five miles of the African coast in an attempt to intercept any Axis supply or evacuation convoys.
May 10. Cape Bon. 3 US Pts (202, 204, 205) vs 3 GE S-boats. Two British DDs in the area fire at both groups of boats.
June 11. Pantelleria. 3 US Pts vs a group of 8 GE ME109s and Stukas.
July 12. Cape Granitola, Sicily. 5 US Pts + 4 BR ASRC (Air sea Rescue Craft) w/ loud speakers conduct diversionary operations and are engaged by shore batteries.
July 27. Stromboli, Sicily. 3 US Pts (202, 210, 214) vs 7 GE F-lighters.
July 28. Stromboli, Sicily. 3 US Pts (203, 218, 214) vs 3 IT MAS-boats
July 27. Stromboli, Sicily. 2 US Pts (204, 217) vs 2 GE F-lighters + 4 IT MAS-boats
August 15. Sicily. 3 US Pts (205, 215, 216) vs 2 GE S-boats
Sept 8. Salerno. 2 US Pts vs 1 GE F-lighters
Sept 15. Salerno. 2 US Pts vs 1 GE ME 109
Sept 20. Naples. 2 US Pts vs 4 Shore battery positions
Oct 19. North of Leghorn. 3 US Pts (208, 211, 217) vs 3 GE R-boats + 1 GE F-lighter + Merchant "Giorgio"
Oct 22. North of Giglio Island. 3 US Pts (206, 212, 216) vs 4 GE R-boats + 1 Corvette- Merchant
Nov 2. Leghorn. 2 US Pts (207, 211) vs 3 GE R-boats + 1 GE Subchaser (UJ2206)
Nov 29. 2 US Pts (204, 211) vs 1 GE S-boat + Mindsweeper. Due to very poor weather, they did not see each other until they were only 75 yards apart. They were also on a collision course.
Dec 11. Elba. 3 US Pts (207, 208) vs 2 GE-IT TBs
Dec 18. Bastia. 4 US Pts (206, 208, 210, 214) vs 2 GE-IT TBs
Dec 18. Elba. US PT 209 + BR MTB 655 + 2 BR MGBs (659, 663) vs 2 GE-IT Tbs + Shore Btys

1944

Feb 17. 3 US Pts (202, 203, 211) vs 2 GE TB

Feb 18 3 US Pts (202, 203, 211) w/ rockets vs 6 GE S-boats + 4 F-Lighters

Mar-Apr. Operation Gun was an attempt to sink the well built and armed F-lighter craft. It was a combined US-Br operation in which 2 x 4.7" guns and 2 x 40mm guns were placed on LCG landing craft and crewed by British Marines. The force was divided into several formations including a control (HQ) section, an Attack group consisting of the LCGs with escorts, and one or two scouting formations.

Mar 27. Scout 2 US PT (212, 214) + Contol 2 US PT (208, 218) + Attack 3 LCG (14, 19, 20), 3 BR MGB (659, 660, 662) , 1 BR MTB (634) vs 2 GE Dds + 6 GE F-lighters

Apr 24. Scout 3 US PT (212, 213, 202) + Contol 2 US PT (209, 218) + Attack 3 LCG (14, 19, 20), 4 BR MGB (657, 655, 660, 662) , 2 BR MTB (633, 640) , 2 US Pts (211, 216) vs 5 GE F-lighters + Armed Tug; Later, 3 GE F-Lighters reinforced by 1 GE S-boat + 2 GE DDs.

May 18. Vada Rocks. 3 US PTs (204, 304, 213) vs 2 GE Flak Lighters + Shore Bty

May 23. Vada Rocks. 3 US groups one of 2 boats and two of 3 boats vs 2 GE Cor + Subchaser

May 30. La Spezia. 3 US PTs (304, 306, 307) vs GE Cor + TB/DD

June 14. La Spezia. 3 US Pts (552, 558, 559) vs 2 GE Cor

June 17. Elba. 2 US Pts (209, 210) vs 1 GE S-boat + 2 GE F-lighters

June 17. Elba. 2 US Pts (211, ?) protecting landing craft vs GE F-Lighter

June 18. Elba. US PT 207 + 1 BR MGB (658) + 3 BR MTBs (633, 640, 655) vs GE Cor + F-Ltr.

June 19. Elba. 3 US Pts (203, 204, 214) vs 2 GE F-Lighters evacuating German troops

June 29. Elba. 2 US Pts (308, 309) vs 2 IT MAS evacuating German officers.

July 15. Nice. 1 PT w/ qd 20mm + 2 Pts w/ 40mm vs GE Patrol craft

July 17. Antibes. 1 PT w/ qd 20mm + 2 Pts w/ 40mm vs GE Patrol craft

July 17 Sou France. BR Gbs Aphis + Scarab + ASRCs w/ speakers; later reinforced by 2 US Pts + DD 'Endicott' vs 2 GE Corvettes (ex-IT TBs)

Sept 10. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 559 + 2 BR MTB (422, 376) vs F-Lighter + Tug and barge.

Sept 13. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 559 + 2 BR MTB (422, 376) vs 2 GE F-Lighters + COR

Sept 10. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 558 + 2 BR MTB (423, 419) vs F-Lighter + 2 tug-barges

Dec 15. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 310 + BR MTB (422) vs 4 GE F-Lighter w/ 88mm

Dec 16. Mouth Rhone River. 2 GB trawlers w/ 4' guns + 2 US Pts vs R-boat + 4 F-lighters

1945

Jan 7. 2 US Pts (303, 304) + BR MTB 422 vs 3 coastal shore Btys

Feb 8. Leghorn. US PT 308 + 2 BR MTB (376, 423) vs 3 GE F-Lighters

Mar 9. Leghorn. 3 US Pts (304, 308, 313) vs 2 GE F-lighters + 6 armed Tugs w/ barges

April 16. Leghorn. US PT + FR DD 'Troumbe' vs IT MAS w/ German crew.

April 23. Leghorn. 2 US Pts (305, 307) vs IT MAS w/ German crew

With the wooden PT boats being easy to build, it was natural for many to become part of the Lend Lease program which provided equipment to America's allies. The separate article on PT Squadrons and their boats contain data on those craft which saw service in both the American and other Navies, including those boats which were built in the USA for direct use by other countries.

PT Boat Squadrons, Numbers And Boat Models Used Plus Other Notes

Normally there were four to six active boats in a squadron at one time. Squadrons with vast numbers listed had frequent reassignments during the war. Some boats will be listed with more than one squadron due to transfers. Some of the early numbers were decommissioned during the war due to obsolescence rather than operation losses. Other boats were reclassified later in the war as Non-combat small boats for use in various courier and non-patrol missions. Some boats never served in the US Navy, being sent to other countries as part of lend lease. Notes :

A. PT 8 was the only all aluminum hull boat.

B. Experimental rocket launchers were installed on the bow of PTs 211, 203 and 202. They were noted as only being used twice vs other boats since the ignition flame pinpointed their location.

C. The Elco Thunderbolt system was a Quad 20mm deployed with Sqdn 29 on at least 4 boats.

D. For long missions PT boats carried extra fuel on deck in drums or rubber tanks which were often dumped if early contact was made with the enemy.

E. For deception Operations boats were often outfitted with loudspeakers.

F. One of the most effective additional pieces of equipment was the floatable smoke pots which the boats could drop over the side when needed.

Scraped as Obsolete = (#). Lend Lease to Britain = (*). Reclassified as Non-Combat Small Boat = (@). Code = Length/ Model / PT numbers of that model

MTB 1 : 58' Fischer = 3*,4* ; 81' Higgins = 5*,6* ; 81' Philadelphia = 7*,8 ; 70' Scott-Paine = 9* ; 77' Elco = 20 -29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43

MTB 2 (A): 81' Philadelphia = 8 ; 70' Scott-Paine = 9* ; 70' Elco = 10*, 11*, 12*, 13*, 14*, 15*, 16*, 17*, 18*, 19* ; 77' Elco = 20, 21, 22, 23, 24@, 25, 26 27@, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 59, 60, 61 ; 80' Elco = 109, 110 - 113, 144 - 148

MTB 2 (B) Special Operations Squadron (OSS) : 78' Higgins = 71, 72, 199

MTB 3 (A) (In Philippines 1941-42) : 77' Elco = 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 41

MTB 3 (B) (Solomons 1942) : 77' Elco = 21, 23, 25, 26, 36@, 37, 38@, 39@, 40@, 45@, 46@, 47@, 48@, 59@, 60, 61@

MTB 4 : Training Squadron = Had many boats assigned then transferred to other units.

MTB 5 : (Solomons 1943) Elco' = 62@, 63, 64@, 65@ ; 80' Elco = 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110 - 114, 314 - 319

MTB 6 : (South Pacific 1942-44) Elco 80' = 115- 119, 120, 121, 123-126, 187, 188, 189

MTB 7 : (New Guinea & Philippines) 80' Elco = 127- 138.

MTB 8 : (New Guinea 1942-43) 77' Elco = 66@, 67, 68 ; 80' Elco = 110, 113, 114, 120, 121, 122, 129, 130, 142 -150, 188, 189

MTB 9 : (South Pacific 1942-44) 80' Elco = 126, 151-159, 160, 161, 162, 187, 318, 319

MTB 10 : (South Pacific) 80' Elco = 108, 116, 124, 125, 163, 164, 166- 169, 170, 171, 172, 174.

MTB 11 : (South Pacific) 80' Elco = 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186

MTB 12 : (New Guinea) 80' Elco = 127, 145, 146, 150-152, 187-196

MTB 13 : (Aleutians 1943-44, New Guinea June 1944) 78' Higgins = 73-84

MTB 14 : (Panama Sea) 78' Huckins = 98, 99, 100, 101, 102

MTB 15 : (Mediterranean) 78' Higgins = 201*, 202, 203*-217*, 218

MTB 16 : (Aleutians 1943-44, New Guinea June 1944) 78' Higgins = 71, 72, 213-224, 235, 241, 242, 295-301

MTB 17 : (Philippines 1944-45) 78' Higgins = 71, 72, 225-234

MTB 18 : (SouthWest Pacific) 80' Elco = 103-105, 147, 148, 362- 367; 70' Canadian Power/
similar to Elco = 368 - 371

MTB 19 : (South Pacific - replacement Squad) 78' Higgins = 238 - 244

MTB 20 : (Bouganville, New Guinea, Philippines) 78' Higgins = 235-238, 240, 245-254

MTB 21 : (New Guinea) 80' Elco = 128, 131, 132, 320-331

MTB 22 : (Mediterranean) 78' Higgins = 302-313

MTB 23 : (Bouganville, Philippines) 78' Higgins = 241-244, 277-288

MTB 24 : (New Guinea) 80' Elco = 106, 332-343

MTB 25 : (New Guinea, Philippines) 80' Elco = 115, 134, 344-355

MTB 26 : (Hawaii Defense) 78' Huckins = 255 - 264

MTB 27 : (Treasury Islands, Philippines) 80' Elco = 356-361, 372 - 377

MTB 28 : (Treasury Islands, Philippines) 80' Elco = 378-383, 546 - 551

MTB 29 : (Mediterranean) 80' Elco = 552-563

MTB 30 : (English Channel 1944-45) 78' Higgins = 450-461

MTB 31 : (Treasury Islands, Palau, Okinawa) 78' Higgins = 453-455, 462-473

MTB 32 : (Treasury Islands, Okinawa) 78' Higgins = 474 - 485

MTB 33 : (New Guinea, Philippines) 80' Elco = 137, 138, 488- 497

MTB 34 : (English Channel 1944/ Transferred to USSR) 80' Elco = 498 - 509

MTB 35 : (English Channel 1944/ Transferred to USSR) 80' Elco = 510 - 521

MTB 36 : (New Guinea, Philippines 1944-45) 80' Elco = 522 - 532

MTB 37 : (Treasury Islands, New Hebrides 1944-45) 80' Elcos = 533 - 544

MTB 38 : (Philippines, 1945 Limited action) 80' Elco = 565 - 576

MTB 39 : (Philippines 1945, no action) 80' Elco = 575 - 588

MTB 40 : (Philippines 1945, no action) 80' Elco = 589 - 600

MTB 41 - 45 : Not assigned before the war ended.

Motor Boat Submarine Chasers Squadron 1 : 70' Elco = 1-12 . Tansferred to British and
reclassified as MGBs 82 -93.

BPTs are British Patrol Boats built in the USA.

77' Elcos = BPT 1-10 (Old US 49-58) became MTB 307-316 (March 1942)

78' Higgins = (Old 88, 90-94, 198) became MTB 419-424, ? (April 1943)

70' Vospers = (Old US 384-399) became MTB 396- 411 (Oct 1944)

70' Vospers = BPT 21-28 became MTB 275 - 282 (Nov '42 - Mar '43)

70' Vospers = BPT 29-36 became MTB287 - 294) (Jun 43)

70' Vospers = BPT 37 - 42 became MTB 295- 300 (April 43)

70' Vospers = BPT 43- 48 became MTB 301 - 306 (Mar 43)

70' Vospers = BPT 49 - 52 became MTB 283 - 286 (April 43)

70' Vospers = BPT 61 - 68 became MTB 371 - 378 (Dec 43)

Russian Lend Lease Transfers. RPT are Russian Patrol Boats.

78' Higgins = RPT 1-4, 11 (Old US 85-87,89, 197) (Feb 1943)

78' Higgins = (Old US 265 - 276) (Nov 1943) & (Old US 289 - 294) (Dec 1943)

70' Vospers = (BPT 53 - 60) (Feb 44)

70' Vospers = (Old US 400-449) (Oct 44) & (Old US 661-692) (May 45)

78' Higgins = (Old US 634- 656) (August 45)

90' Elco = (Old US 731 - 760) (Oct 44 - Feb 45)

US PT BOAT OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Below are listed a number of engagements which involved US PT boat forces in the South Pacific during World War Two. This is not a total list of patrols or attacks. I did not list many actions which represented a frequent type of action such as the nightly encounters with armed barges. Nor did I list the common missions of picking up/ dropping off of coast watchers or the air-sea rescue of downed pilots. The list will provide a number of interesting situations around which gamers can design challenging combat scenarios.

This vast area of operations was further divided into operational regions based on the main campaign being conducted during that time. Ironically by 1943 many PT boats were modified to encounter the type of common foes found in their area. Those boats which fought armed barges regularly had 40mm guns placed at the bow and stern and some even had their torpedo launchers removed to lessen weight. In another area where enemy destroyers were still engaged, the tubes were kept with some PTs mounting a 37mm gun on the bow. In addition various patrol support options were considered. Sometimes a destroyer accompanied boats or a heavily armed LCM may add more firepower. A frequent and very effective support craft was the PBY equipped with bombs and radar. Being airborne, the PBY radar was less effected by bad seas or island blind spots which often hampered PT boat radar systems. All of these support options provided PTs with extended vision for their night sojourns which was a vast improvement from early 1942 when a night patrol may become aware of enemy craft because their boats would begin to rock due to the enemy's wake.

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Mar 17. Emp Augusta Bay. 2 PT (283, 284) + PBY + DD 'Guest' vs Shore Bty + Barges
May 5. "The Rantaw Trap". 3 PT (247, 245, 250) vs Shore Btys + 8 Large Armed barges in three groups which approach the PT boats from three directions and encircle them.

As I stated earlier, there were almost daily contact with barges. In 1944 and 1945 with the increased air bombardment of Japan, PT boats were utilized in the air-sea rescue role along with US submarines.

SELECTED US PT BOAT OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Below are listed a number of engagements which involved US PT boat forces in the Mediterranean during World War Two. This is not a total list of patrols or attacks. I did not list several actions which involved only the firing of torpedoes at extended ranges at ships or into ports. Nor did I list the frequent missions which involved the picking up or dropping off of OSS agents along the Italian or French coast. The list will provide a number of interesting situations around which gamers can design challenging combat scenarios.

At this point let me comment on several observations which I have made about the Mediterranean theater of operations. Due to the dominance of Allied airpower in this area, the Axis attempted virtually all of their supply convoys at night. As a result, most of the Allied boat patrols which made contact were also conducted at night. While many of the engagements may have occurred after midnight, I have listed the date of the battle based on when the patrol began.

In regards to the exact location of the battle, I have tried to list an approximate point. The Chart should be read as "Near or off the coast of ...(the point listed)".

The German 10th Torpedo Boat (TB) Flotilla in 1943 consisted of Italian ships manned by German crews. The TBs were sometimes reported as Destroyers or Corvettes.

1943

May. The PT boats are ordered to patrol within five miles of the African coast in an attempt to intercept any Axis supply or evacuation convoys.

May 10. Cape Bon. 3 US Pts (202, 204, 205) vs 3 GE S-boats. Two British DDs in the area fire at both groups of boats.

June 11. Pantelleria. 3 US Pts vs a group of 8 GE ME109s and Stukas.

July 12. Cape Granitola, Sicily. 5 US Pts + 4 BR ASRC (Air sea Rescue Craft) w/ loud speakers conduct diversionary operations and are engaged by shore batteries.

July 27. Stromboli, Sicily. 3 US Pts (202, 210, 214) vs 7 GE F-lighters.

July 28. Stromboli, Sicily. 3 US Pts (203, 218, 214) vs 3 IT MAS-boats

July 27. Stromboli, Sicily. 2 US Pts (204, 217) vs 2 GE F-lighters + 4 IT MAS-boats

August 15. Sicily. 3 US Pts (205, 215, 216) vs 2 GE S-boats

Sept 8. Salerno. 2 US Pts vs 1 GE F-lighters

Sept 15. Salerno. 2 US Pts vs 1 GE ME 109

Sept 20. Naples. 2 US Pts vs 4 Shore battery positions

Oct 19. North of Leghorn. 3 US Pts (208, 211, 217) vs 3 GE R-boats + 1 GE F-lighter + Merchant "Giorgio"

Oct 22. North of Giglio Island. 3 US Pts (206, 212, 216) vs 4 GE R-boats + 1 Corvette- Merchant

Nov 2. Leghorn. 2 US Pts (207, 211) vs 3 GE R-boats + 1 GE Subchaser (UJ2206)

Nov 29. 2 US Pts (204, 211) vs 1 GE S-boat + Mindsweeper. Due to very poor weather, they did not see each other until they were only 75 yards apart. They were also on a collision course.

Dec 11. Elba. 3 US Pts (207, 208) vs 2 GE-IT TBs

Dec 18. Bastia. 4 US Pts (206, 208, 210, 214) vs 2 GE-IT TBs

Dec 18. Elba. US PT 209 + BR MTB 655 + 2 BR MGBs (659, 663) vs 2 GE-IT Tbs + Shore Btys

1944

Feb 17. 3 US Pts (202, 203, 211) vs 2 GE TB

Feb 18 3 US Pts (202, 203, 211) w/ rockets vs 6 GE S-boats + 4 F-Lighters

Mar-Apr. Operation Gun was an attempt to sink the well built and armed F-lighter craft. It was a combined US-Br operation in which 2 x 4.7" guns and 2 x 40mm guns were placed on LCG landing craft and crewed by British Marines. The force was divided into several formations including a control (HQ) section, an Attack group consisting of the LCGs with escorts, and one or two scouting formations.

Mar 27. Scout 2 US PT (212, 214) + Contol 2 US PT (208, 218) + Attack 3 LCG (14, 19, 20), 3 BR MGB (659, 660, 662) , 1 BR MTB (634) vs 2 GE Dds + 6 GE F-lighters

Apr 24. Scout 3 US PT (212, 213, 202) + Contol 2 US PT (209, 218) + Attack 3 LCG (14, 19, 20), 4 BR MGB (657, 655, 660, 662) , 2 BR MTB (633, 640) , 2 US Pts (211, 216) vs 5 GE F-lighters + Armed Tug; Later, 3 GE F-Lighters reinforced by 1 GE S-boat + 2 GE DDs.

May 18. Vada Rocks. 3 US Pts (204, 304, 213) vs 2 GE Flak Lighters + Shore Bty

May 23. Vada Rocks. 3 US groups one of 2 boats and two of 3 boats vs 2 GE Cor + Subchaser

May 30. La Spezia. 3 US Pts (304, 306, 307) vs GE Cor + TB/DD

June 14. La Spezia. 3 US Pts (552, 558, 559) vs 2 GE Cor
June 17. Elba. 2 US Pts (209, 210) vs 1 GE S-boat + 2 GE F-lighters
June 17. Elba. 2 US Pts (211, ?) protecting landing craft vs GE F-Lighter
June 18. Elba. 1 US PT (207) + 1 BR MGB (658) + 3 BR MTBs (633, 640, 655) vs GE Cor + F-Lighter.
June 19. Elba. 3 US Pts (203, 204, 214) vs 2 GE F-Lighters evacuating German troops
June 29. Elba. 2 US Pts (308, 309) vs 2 IT MAS evacuating German officers.
July 15. Nice. 1 PT w/ qd 20mm + 2 Pts w/ 40mm vs GE Patrol craft
July 17. Antibes. 1 PT w/ qd 20mm + 2 Pts w/ 40mm vs GE Patrol craft
July 17. Sou France. BR Gbs Aphis + Scarab + ASRCs w/ speakers; later reinforced by 2 US Pts + DD 'Endicott' vs 2 GE Corvettes (ex-IT TBs)
Sept 10. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 559 + 2 BR MTB (422, 376) vs F-Lighter + Tug and barge.
Sept 13. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 559 + 2 BR MTB (422, 376) vs 2 GE F-Lighters + COR
Sept 10. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 558 + 2 BR MTB (423, 419) vs F-Lighter + 2 tug-barges
Dec 15. Mouth Rhone River. US PT 310 + BR MTB (422) vs 4 GE F-Lighter w/ 88mm
Dec 16. Mouth Rhone River. 2 GB trawlers w/ 4' guns + 2 US Pts vs R-boat + 4 F-lighters
1945
Jan 7. 2 US Pts (303, 304) + BR MTB 422 vs 3 coastal shore Btys
Feb 8. Leghorn. US PT 308 + 2 BR MTB (376, 423) vs 3 GE F-Lighters
Mar 9. Leghorn. 3 US Pts (304, 308, 313) vs 2 GE F-lighters + 6 armed Tugs w/ barges
April 16. Leghorn. US PT + FR DD 'Troumbe' vs IT MAS w/ German crew.
April 23. Leghorn. 2 US Pts (305, 307) vs IT MAS w/ German crew