

Santa Cruz Sentinel
WARS - WORLD WAR
Tuesday, Dec 23, 1941
Cap. Crew Tell Of Jap Sub Attack On Agwiworld

Small Pistols Only Defense
Against Sudden Sub Attack

Thirty-five crew members of the shelled oil tanker Agwiworld which sought temporary shelter in Santa Cruz harbor Saturday afternoon after attack by enemy submarine had only one regret.

"If we'd only had a gun."

The large Richfield oil tanker had exactly two small calibre pistols in a ship locker for armament. Captain Frederick Borges Gonçalves took the only offensive action possible--he headed the long black tanker straight at the submarine after the first shell passed just above the ship's rigging about 2:15 p.m.

Sunday morning the seamen--earliest to know war so close to home--were in peaceful berth in San Francisco bay. Their story was told there.

TWO SMALL PISTOLS

And that was all right with them. Their single reaction was: "If only we'd had a gun"

The ship bore no sign of its attack. Her smooth, smoke-black sides were unscratched. No rubble littered her bridge. Her stacks and rigging stood sharp and clear against a light gray sky.

"THIS IS OUR SCRAP"

The crew, curled up in bunks, sleeping the sleep of exhaustion, emotional and physical knew.

They've had a long watch," First Mate Edward Crabtree said. The crew had remained up through the long Saturday afternoon and night maintaining ceaseless vigil against a second attack.

Where Japanese Are Attacking in Southern Sector



Here is the scope of Japanese attacks in the farthest south area of the Pacific. 1—Japan's offensive in Burma and Thailand; 2—Nippon's drives on the east coast of Malaya; 3—Raid on the island of Palawan.

was in the stubble of each chin, in the dark shadows beneath each pair of eyes, and in the thankful peacefulness of their smiles. It was in the smell of their clothes which had been sopped with salt water and perspiration. Richfield officials began arriving and the ship's officers went to the captain's stateroom for a conference soon after the ship berthed at San Francisco. In sharp contrast to the relaxed faces of the crew were the tense lines in the faces of officials. A young naval officer stood guard on the deck. There was some excitement in the air but it was anticlimactical. Captain Gonçalves is no stranger to submarines or to sea warfare. A graduate of the Brazilian naval academy, he served in the last war as second officer aboard a Norwegian freighter and was torpedoed in the North Sea.

"We were given a warning that time, however," he said. The captain had high praise for his crew and its officers, including Second Officer A. Lyal and Chief Engineer A. Owens.

Captain Gonçalves is an American citizen and has lived in the United States for the last 25 years. His home is Port Arthur, Texas.

Three officers of the shelled Agwiworld gave graphic descriptions of the attack made on their ship by an enemy submarine off Santa Cruz.

The closeness of the attacks and enemy subs were active off the coast.

The Agwiworld, 6771 tons, is owned by the Richfield Oil Company. It was proceeding north to San Francisco when attacked.

Captain Gonçalves said his ship was 20 miles due west of Santa Cruz when the submarine fired without hailing the vessel.

The first thing I knew there was the explosion of a shell over my head. I was in my room. I ran to the bridge," he declared.

The submarine was lying about 100 yards due west of us in the path of the sun.

I put the helm hard to port and fired straight for the sub.

When the second shot came, I put the helm hard over to starboard and then presented the bow to the sub. There was a ground swell which kept the sub from coming closer.

The next six shots missed us, but some of them came awfully close.

We had only had a gun that would never shoot at another ship. It was a beautiful target.

First Mate Crabtree said the engagement lasted about an hour. At the first shot we received a warning to the navy and other ships. All hands rushed to their battle stations. I was in my room when the first shot came and ran to the deck.

There was a heavy northwest wind and swell. The submarine was faster than we are, but she couldn't keep her gun deck above the surface level. If she had, we would have been sunk.

Following the attack on the Agwiworld all shipping was ordered off Santa Cruz waters.

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The War

What You See

When it comes to the war, the only thing you can see is the war. The only thing you can see is the war. The only thing you can see is the war.

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Santa Cruzons On Alert For Subs

Both club drives were lined with people Sunday apparently keeping a weather-eye on the water in hopes of seeing the enemy Japanese submarine which fired eight shots at the tanker Agwiworld Saturday afternoon. Holding drifted gave some of the "clubbers" for a second or two as they believed they had set their eyes on the hostile sub.

You Can Help

War needs money. It will cost money to defeat Japan, Germany and Italy. Your government calls on you to help now. Buy defense bonds or stamps today. Buy them every day, if you can. But buy them on a regular basis. This newspaper urges all Americans to support your government with your dollars.

TIMBERS ARRIVE

Numbers of large timbers have arrived at Southern Pacific station grounds. They are to be used in construction work of rebuilding Bay street viaduct.

swell her gun crew would have been washed overboard.

"She kept running with us about 500 yards off. Her aim was bad because of the swell rocking her."

"I think she didn't try to close with us for two reasons: (1) She was afraid of being rammed, and (2), she had heard our warning to the navy and had to be ready to get out of the vicinity fast."

Third Mate D. F. Gosney of the Agwiworld has served a six-year hitch with the United States navy submarine branch and was stationed at San Diego.

"I was on the poop deck when the submarine began to shoot at us," he said. "I fell down on my face and stayed there until we had swung and went heading directly at the sub. Then I got up and manned my station."

"There was no panic aboard. The sub kept in the sun. We headed north. I believe the sub used a five-inch gun on us."

"It's too bad we didn't have a gun."

The Agwiworld moved in as close to shore as possible. The crew men could not tell exactly when the sub submerged. After hovering close to the coast for several hours, the Agwiworld continued to Santa Cruz. It left here at 10 p. m. Saturday.

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