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COMMANDER SUBMARINE FORCE
FF12-10/A4-1/(11) UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET A

Serial 0624

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
May 12, 1943.

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet.
Via : The Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.
Subject: Loss of the U.S.S. PICKEREL (SS177).

1. The U.S.S. PICKEREL has not been heard from since her departure from Midway on patrol on March 22, 1943, and it is presumed that this vessel has been lost.

2. On March 18, 1943, PICKEREL departed Pearl Harbor for Midway. On March 22, 1943, she arrived Midway and after topping off with fuel, departed for patrol in Area Two. (Area Two is between latitude 38 degrees 30 minutes north and 40 degrees north, and between longitude 145 degrees east and the coast of Honshu.)

3. The PICKEREL was scheduled to enter Area Two about daylight on March 30, 1943, and had orders to remain in that area until sunset on April 29, 1943 (East longitude dates). Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, Secret dispatch 200734 of April 1943 extended the PICKEREL's patrol, ordered her to remain in Area Two until sunset on May 1, 1943, and instructed her that material difficulties or shortage of fuel would be considered the only reason for the PICKEREL to terminate her patrol before that date. No acknowledgement for this dispatch was required and none was received.

4. Submarines of this Force returning from patrol in the Empire waters have orders to transmit by radio prior to entering a circle of radius 500 miles from Midway. Had the PICKEREL departed her area as ordered by Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet dispatch 200734 and cruised at normal cruising speed, it is expected that a report from her would have been received by May 6, 1943. Because of non-receipt of this dispatch a message was sent addressed to the PICKEREL on May 7, 1943, which required an immediate reply, and this message was retransmitted sufficiently often to insure its receipt by that vessel. No reply to this message has been received. If the PICKEREL departed her area as ordered and proceeded to Midway at 8 knots, which is the lowest speed it is considered she

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would use, she would have reached the Midway 500 mile circle at zero hours GCT on May 9, and have arrived off Midway about ten hours GCT on May 11, 1943.

5. Considering the possibility that the PICKEREL's radio transmitter was out of commission, on May 9, 1943, the Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, directed Submarine Subordinate Command, Midway, to make daily plane search along the PICKEREL's expected route. This search has thus far given negative results.

6. In view of the above facts the U.S.S. PICKEREL is presumed to have been lost.

7. It is impossible to determine whether or not the classified publications carried by the PICKEREL may have been compromised. A very small portion of Area Two is salvageable water. The previous patrol of the PICKEREL was conducted in this same area and a study of her track charts for that patrol indicates that the Commanding Officer conducted his patrol in waters of 60 fathoms or greater depths, and it is assumed that he conducted a similar patrol in the present case.


C.A. LOCKWOOD, Jr.