I feel the historical chapter of the Japanese Navy and submarine activities prior to America entering World War Two on 7 December 1941 has not been properly written yet. One major problem for all historians became the fact the United States of America and the United States Navy covered-up or gave out false information to the American public, in regards to the sighting and later sinking of shipping along the west coast by Japanese submarines. Then, forty to seventy years after the end of WWII, the true facts slowly began to be released from American archives, and a much different picture appears. This is not my history to tell, nor do I have the time or money to properly search and record the known facts, which I also believe involves the coast of Mexico. During my fifty years of Canadian aviation research, records exposed the fact the Imperial Japanese Navy submarines were being sighted along the west coast of British Columbia in the late months of 1941. There are over 9,000 miles of coastline from Attu on the western tip of the Aleutian chain, [where Japan invaded] to the southern most important Panama Canal. Each coastline was protected in a different way, first by the United States in Alaska, then Canada, the U. S. coastline and last Mexico. Canadian WWII records from RCAF Daily Diaries and the grim hidden evidence from post Pearl Harbour, strongly suggests the possibility two or more Japanese submarines were freely using our Canadian remote coastal groves and nooks to rest and hide, while they surveyed the United States coast and prepared for war.

More than one submarine periscope sighting was reported around Stewardsen Inlet, located on the northwest cove of Vancouver Island, when on 7 November 1942, one Japanese submarine was caught on the surface inside of Stewardsen Inlet, by an RCAF aircraft on patrol. I now believe this was one
main hiding and resupply depot for the Japanese submarines in Canadian waters from late 1941 to early 1943. Two other partly confirmed hiding sites for Japanese submarine resupply bases were reported in Mexico, one on the Baja peninsula, Magdalena Bay [Bahia Magdalena] just 600 miles south of the U. S. Navy base at San Diego.

The Canadian story begins when our government formed the Canadian Air Board on 6 June 1919, which controlled both civilian and military aviation. The Canadian Air Force was formed in December the same year, flying with aircraft and equipment donated by the British and American governments. The British and American flying boats became the most important aircraft as Canada has the largest coastline and the largest water to land mass [8.9%] in the world. The twelve American Curtiss HS-2L Flying Boats became the workhorse, which blazed air routes, experimented in air mail service, delivered ‘treaty money’ to Indians, flew the sick and injured, suppressed smuggling, and illegal immigration.
The funny part being Canada had the only Military Air Force in the world which the government operated in a non-military role, while our seaplanes were given to us by the United States.

On 1 April 1924, the Canadian Air Force was officially formed, our fifth air force, which performed much like the predecessor, something like a government civil aviation company wearing military uniforms.

In 1935, retired General McNaughton who was in the Canadian Army, evaluated and completed a detailed report on the fact Canada was not able to defend itself from an attack by a foreign country. The major section of his report outlined how the west coast of Canada was totally unable to defend itself, plus our RCAF was just a paper air force flying obsolete aircraft, and this upset the United States much more than our Canadian government. A
United States Congressional Committee conducted their own report and voiced the same warning to the Canadian government which paralleled the General McNaughton’s report. From this date on, Home Defence of Canada became the principal justification for our RCAF, but improvements in men and equipment moved very slowly.

In October 1936, No. [4] Flying Boat Squadron began the task of completing an air survey of the complete west coast of Canada [over 700 miles] which was delivered in 1938. The new air defence of Canada’s west coast should have been a simple task, but World War Two changed future plans. After declaring war on 10 September 1939, Canada began sending all her assistance to Great Britain at the expense of her west coast protection, which was the only decision she could make at that time. Next came the defence of the east coast of Canada from German enemy surface ships and submarines, and the RCAF now flew patrols far out into the Atlantic to protect this lifeline to Great Britain. When France fell to the Germans in June 1940, it also appeared the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force were in danger with the invasion of England. This worldwide fear brought substantial military collaboration between Canada and still neutral United States, which resulted in meetings over ‘joint’ defence plans. The Air Defence of Canada plans now including building land and mostly seaplane bases in remote sites to protect the entire west coast of British Columbia, Canada.
Advanced construction of seven new bases began in June 1940, at RCAF Stations Prince Rupert, Alliford Bay, Bella Bella, Coal Harbour, Ucluelt, Patricia Bay, and Vancouver, B. C. During October 1940, a secret Police Military conference was held at the H. Q. of Western Air Command [Victoria, B. C.] regarding the local Canadian born Japanese population in the event of war with Japan. Five of the seven RCAF Seaplane Stations were being constructed in the most isolated locations on the rugged coast of B. C., and security was of a major concern. Just five months earlier, the Home Guard of Canada was formed from volunteer veterans who served in World War One, and they became the answer. In 1941, the Home Guard title was changed to “Veterans Guard of Canada”, and they were organized into a Company of 250 men. In the summer of 1941, the Veterans Guard were divided into groups of 35 to 75 men and assigned to the RCAF bases under construction, where they organized the first base security. This is when the first sightings of suspected Japanese submarines were made, but little was recorded as the sites were still under construction and the RCAF would not take charge for months later. Other RCAF Stations received civilians formed as the Rocky Mountain Ranges, made up of farmers, woodsmen, and native Indians, who were relieved from duty every five months. Active Army units such as the Irish Fusiliers and Canadian Scottish were also assigned to early security of these remote RCAF seaplane bases.

In October and November 1941, RCAF intelligence officers in Western Air Command became concerned about the loyalties of the resident Canadian born Japanese and the possibility Japanese submarines were dropping off spies in remote coastal areas. The difficulty for the RCAF lay in the screening
out of Canadian born Japanese who displayed a strong loyalty to Japan, it was impossible to make a choice.
Western Air Command progress report of new base construction 1 November 1941.

WESTERN AIR COMMAND — WEEKLY R.C.A.F. PROGRESS REPORTS
1-11-41.

R.C.A.F. STATION, VANCOUVER, B.C.

Administration Building — progress doors and outside finish. Recreation Building Heating installation 100% completed. No advance on sick quarters or recreation Building, pending outcome of negotiations between contractor and Department of Munitions and Supply. Work started on erection of main boilers for Central Heating Plant. Paint Store foundations completed. Progress fair. Weather fine.

R.C.A.F. STATION, PATRICIA BAY, B.C.

Additional water supply, storage and sewage facilities; working erecting forms side walls and placing reinforcing steel for water storage reservoir. Paving and construction of roads — no progress since last report. All plant taken off and put on runways. Hospital, Recreation Building, Gas and bomb chamber, detention cells, general store building nearing completion. Main cause of delay is interior and exterior painting, metal products and hardware. Progress fair; weather fair.

R.C.A.F. STATION, PATRIE RUPERT, B.C.

Fair progress on grading of new hangar area. Recreation building 75% complete. Stores building 97% per cent complete. Armament building site graded. Weather very wet and stormy. Progress fair.

R.C.A.F. STATION, ALLIFORD BAY, B.C.

Buildings number 20, 21, 25 and 27 are 95% complete. Building number 17, 60% complete. Cement culvert 50%. 25% delay due to wet weather and high tides delaying concrete culvert. Progress fair considering wet weather.

R.C.A.F. STATION, UCLUELET, B.C.

Good progress now being made on buildings number 23, 24, 26 and 36. Other buildings and roads progress good. Pump house and salt water lines nearing completion. Should be in operation by November 10th. Weather fair. Progress good.

R.C.A.F. STATION, COAL HARBOUR, B.C.

Work progressing to extent of material deliveries. Water, sewer and power services progressing favourably.

R.C.A.F. STATION, BELLA BELLA, B.C.

Twenty-one buildings average 95% complete. Six buildings being completed, roofs on and interior work well advanced. Two buildings Numbers 34 and 35 not started. Main dock 95% complete. Other services well advanced. Weather good. Progress good.
Japanese submarines had made their presence known to both Canadian and United States governments on the west coast of each country before the attack on Pearl Harbor. These wartimes classified “Secret” images were taken at RCAF Station Bella Bella, B. C. in November 1941, and show the construction of log and rock protection from possible Japanese submarine shelling. What the RCAF did not know, was that during the preparation for the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Navy engineers had modified and adapted eleven of their I-Class submarines to carry and launch aircraft.
The Yokosuka E14Y1 “Glen” Japanese small seaplane would fly reconnaissance over the United States and Canada for the next one and one-half years, however it is still unknown if any flew over the west coast of Canada before 7 December 1941.

On 27 November 1941, Admiral Yamamoto ordered the Japanese task force to depart for the Hawaiian Islands and the attack on the morning of 7 December. RCAF Station Bella Bella, B. C. received the war message at 15:30 Hrs, 7/12/41.
On 2 January 1942, Air Officer Commanding Western Air Command L. E. Stevenson sent a message to Air Force Headquarters, recommending all axis male aliens [German, Italian, and Japanese] of eighteen years of age or older, be removed from the west coast Defence Zone of British Columbia. In February 1942, RCAF Air Vice-Marshal Johnson supported the idea and the Cabinet War Committee ordered the complete evacuation of all Axis and Japanese families from the west coast of Canada, officially on 27 February.
Several actions were carried out by orders of the federal government [Canadian Navy] before the evacuation order came into effect. On 10 December 1941, the Japanese fishing fleet at Ucluelet was seized and transported by the Navy Reserve for storage on the Fraser River near Vancouver. All telephones in the Vancouver and Victoria area belonging to Japanese citizens were ordered to be seized or cut off by B.C. Provincial Police, assisted by members of the Army Signal Corps.

While the seven RCAF Stations were built to protect Canada from invasion, their first duty became the arrest, detention, and transporting of Japanese Canadians to Vancouver for internment camps. A number of the RCAF Daily Diaries record this action, which took a huge amount of manpower from the old Veteran Guards of Canada. The Veterans Guard members would become the main guards of Canadian POWs, political axis prisoners, and the Japanese internment camps in the interior of B. C.
This Daily Diary for RCAF Station Coal Harbour 11 March 1942, records the arrest, detention, and transport to Vancouver for processing and placement into internment camps. It is interesting to read the RCAF recorded they were being transported to lumber camps. Not all Japanese were interned, and many single Japanese girls were allowed to remain in the evacuation zone. Two Japanese girls ran the laundry at Port Alice and did all of the RCAF Officers cleaning at Coal Harbour during the war. Many others were employed by the RCAF at Ucluelet and show up in photographs. This is still a forgotten part of the complete history and needs to be told, however it may be too late. By 22 April 1942, over 12,500 people of Japanese origin had been removed to inland camps in B. C. and the United States Japanese would suffer a similar fate. That is the only history today’s political correct historians wish to repeat over and over again.

The Japanese Cabinet planned and approved war against the United States and now the invasion of the west coast of Canada was possible and real. The Canadian government took action based on the facts and recommendation of the RCAF. Throughout 1942 and the first three months of 1943, the frequency of enemy submarine sightings and Japanese E14Y1 over-flights continued on the west coast of Canada and were recorded by the RCAF, which makes for interesting reading for historians.

Now that the Japanese attack had forced the neutral United States into World War Two, Americans faced formidable forces and global responsibilities, one being they could not defend the entire coast of Alaska and their mainland Pacific region alone. This coastal protection had been assigned to the U. S. Navy Pacific Fleet, which now remained on the bottom of Pearl Harbor. Yes,
Uncle Sam ask for help and the RCAF dispatched squadrons to help the U. S. defend and later reclaim the Aleutian Island chain from the Japanese.

American and Canadian forces also cooperated in the inshore patrols of Bellingham, Port Angeles, Everett, Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia in the State of Washington, where Canadian built Hurricane fighters were even based on the lookout for Japanese submarines. This RCAF history has been forgotten, but one original 94-year-old RCAF pilot survives with his log book.

In 1940 and 1941, the primary task of the RCAF was building, organizing, and meeting the challenge of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Due to the fact Canada had not developed its own aero-engine manufacturing before the war, it was totally dependent of engines from the British and Americans. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the RCAF Home War Establishment expanded at an extraordinary pace due to the near panic of invasion or attack of the Pacific Northwest. Up until 8 December 1941, Canada had to compete, [beg] with Great Britain for the very limited supply of fighters, bombers, propellers, and aero-engines, which were crucial for the air war in Europe. The Americans at once diverted P-40 aircraft for England to the RCAF, and aero-engines for Canadian built Hurricanes were assigned to Home War Establishment units being formed in Canada. The United States needed help to protect her west coast and that is why Canada received the much needed aircraft. This requires a lot of research and reading of Daily Diaries, however I just cut to the middle and get to my main point. The protection of six major shipbuilding yards in the Portland, Oregon, area and the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress plane factory at Seattle, were just part of the hundreds of smaller naval bases, lumber yards, mines, railway terminals, and fishing fleets which were all open to Japanese submarine shelling. Most of this
history was hidden when the United States took a different approach to informing their public on the actions of the Japanese submarines on their west coast. The American public were not told the truth, and the news agencies agreed to total censorship. It took forty to seventy years to understand the enormous burden the Japanese submarines placed on the United States west coast in December 1941, the year of 1942, and early 1943. We are still learning the past as more and more “Special Secret” documents are being found and many are now appearing on the internet.

The Japanese burned most of their top-secret documents at the end of the war and what was left was confiscated by the American occupation forces, and today it is housed somewhere in U.S. archives. The year 2001 became an educational year when both Japanese and American researchers found and released hundreds of documents. It was revealed that Tokyo knew what was going on in Washington, D. C., two weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese broke the American code. The British broke the Japanese code a year before the Americans but never told them. In preparation for the attack on Pearl Harbor the Japanese modified eleven submarines which could house and launch a Yokosuka E14Y1 “Glen” seaplane for observation. Twelve I-type submarines surrounded Hawaiian waters on the afternoon of 6 December 1941, to sink any Pacific Fleet ships that escaped the attack on Pearl Harbor. Submarine I-5 launched its Glen seaplane before dawn on 7 December 1941, and it flew over Pearl Harbor. The attack on Pearl Harbor was so successful not one American ship escaped and none were seen by the submarines for the next two days. Nine submarines were then ordered to proceed to the U. S. west coast on 10 December 1941.
The nine were positioned in the shipping lanes most commonly used by American merchantmen.
What follows is a small sample of the Japanese submarine activities from 7 December to 24 December 1941. Most of this information was kept from the American public during the war years, but today can be read in full detail on the Internet from released documents.

Sub I-26, 7 December 1941, sank the lumber freighter *Cynthia Olson*, 300 miles from the California coast. The first merchant ship sunk by a Japanese submarine, at the same time Pearl Harbor was being attacked. The crew radioed the attack and it was received by the steamship *Lurline*, however the message became lost when the U. S. Navy attention was focused on the Pearl Harbor attack. The crew all perished at sea before they were found.

Sub I-9, 11 December 1941, surfaced and fired 25 salvos at *S.S. Lahaina*. Sunk with 34 crew placed into one lifeboat, with no food or water. They were luckily found ten days later.

Sub I-25, 18 December 1941, surfaced and fired 10 salvos on Union Oil Company *St. Clair*, which escaped up the Columbia River.

Sub I-17, 18 December 1941, fired deck guns at freighter *Samoa*, which escaped south to San Diego harbor.

Sub [unknown] 19 December 1941, surfaced 100 miles from Hawaii and fired on *S. S. Pruss* which was sunk. 26 of 35 crew survived.

Sub I-17, 20 December 1941, torpedoed tanker *Emidio*, 31 survivors. Sub surfaced and attempted to ram life boat, missing by 30 yards.
Sub I-23, 20 December 1941, shelled tanker *Agwiworld*, which escaped to Monterey Bay. Sub 20 miles west of Santa Cruz, Calif. Hiding in path of the sun, fired without warning, killed 22 crew.

Sub I-23, 20 December 1941, moved further north and shelled small craft, damaged steering and left it going in circles.

Sub I-15, 20 December 1941, sometimes the insanity of man-made world war includes some comedy in its sad history. Major coastal cities in the U. S. haul their garbage out to the deep ocean and dump it. On the late evening of 20 December, tugboat *Taboe* began pushing an Oakland Garbage Scow out to sea, were it dumped its cargo in the ocean and proceed back to the lights of San Francisco Bay. This normal routine trip took the tugboat within one mile of the Farallon Islands, located 33 k/m or 20 miles from the Frisco Bay. Darkness had fallen over the California coast as the tugboat proceeded to her home base, everything appeared normal. Dead ahead in the dark water the Japanese submarine I-15 was submerged to periscope depth, watching for any ship movement in San Francisco Bay. Then, with only seconds warning, the tugboat and scow crashed into the partly submerged submarine I-15. Captain Nobuo Ishikawa, in command of I-15 believed he had been spotted and rammed, he ordered a crash dive. Capt. William Vartnaw of the tugboat had spotted the periscope but he was only 60 yards from the submarine and could not stop. The wooden scow lost 80 feet of barge, but made it to San Francisco Bay which was now less than 20 miles away. Submarine I-15 did not record the incident, the U. S. Navy took the report of Capt. Vartnaw and the San Francisco Chronicle reported the story, which perhaps embarrassed the U. S. Navy brass. The first ramming of a Japanese submarine was a smelly civilian garbage tow tugboat named *Taboe*.
Sub I-9, 21 December 1941, followed a zigzagging tanker for three days attempting to get a torpedo shot. The tanker made it to Long Beach, California.

Sub I-21, 23 December 1941, torpedoed tanker *H.M. Story*, which zigzagged and the shot missed. Escaped to Estero Bay.

Sub I-21, 23 December 1941, hit oil tanker *Montebello*, sinking, was abandoned by crew in four lifeboats, which was machine gunned by submarine deck guns.

Sub. I-9, 24 December 1941, lumber ship *Barbara Olsen* fired on but escaped.

Sub I-25, 24 December 1941, found on surface and attacked by B-25 medium bomber, sub escaped unharmed and proceeded up the Columbia river to shell Fort Stevens, near Astoria, Oregon.

Sub I-19, 24 December 1941, reported that American surfers foolishly lined the beaches of Los Angeles where they patrolled. At 10:30 a.m. the sub began to stalk a 5,700-ton freighter owned by the McCormick Steamship Lines, loaded with lumber. Two torpedoes were fired and the first missed, the second hit below the waterline, 50 feet from the stern. The freighter sank to the level of her main deck but remained afloat due to her cargo of lumber.
A United States Navy sub-chaser arrived and 32 depth charges were dropped. The U. S. Navy decided to use this good-luck story to fight the new war on gossip and wisely picked a famous pin-up girl and movie star to promote the campaign with slogans and posters. LIFE magazine printed the story and donated a full page ad.
Last week the Navy initiated a highly important crusade against one of America’s greatest weaknesses—gossipy chatter. In peace, gossip is sometimes fun, more often a waste of time. Wartime gossip, however, can be a military hazard of grave importance, and Washington is currently endeavoring to curtail its own traffic in rumors. But it is on the West Coast, where military movements have immediate significance, that the problem of unwary speech is greatest. Hence posters bearing the slogans “Serve With Silence” and “A Slip of the Lip May Sink a Ship” have been placed in shipyards, defense factories, public gathering places and elsewhere in the Eleventh Naval District. To heighten the impact of this campaign, Captain Richard B. Coffman, commandant of the San Pedro Naval Operating Base, last week enlisted the services of Movie Actress Jane Russell. She was escorted aboard the U. S. freighter Absaroka, which a Jap submarine torpedoed off the California coast on Christmas Eve. Standing in a great jagged hole through which tons of lumber and one seaman were blown by the torpedo blast into the sea, Miss Russell, finger to lip, held aloft a Navy poster. A Navy press relations officer revised the poster’s phrasing to read: “A Slip of the Lip May Have Sunk This Ship.”
This full page ad with pin-up star and actress Miss Jane Russell appeared in the 26 January 1942 issue of LIFE magazine, the beginning of a campaign to stop gossip on wartime secrets. This image shows the effects of one Japanese submarine I-26 torpedo.
After Christmas 1941, the reports and attacks on Japanese submarines in Canadian coastal waters increased, proof the Japanese were moving further north.

**Japanese Carry War to California Coast**

Last week LIFE printed as its frontispiece a picture of the first enemy missile fired against American shores in World War II—a torpedo beached on Caribbean island of Aruba—and predicted more would follow. Here you see a second deadly token of Axis enmity. The grizzled, repentent object shown above is a shell fragment, hurled from a Japanese submarine which rose out of the Pacific at dusk Feb. 23, and for a quarter hour bombarded the rich oil fields at Ellwood, Calif., 18 miles north of Santa Barbara.

Though no one, happily, was hurt in this coastal raid, and though damage was inconsequential, the episode impressed on complacent citizens, as no admonitions had succeeded in doing, the stark fact that the enemy could and would carry hostilities to America's continental coast. For the first time in this war, the U.S. had truly been attacked at home. For the first time in its history as a State, California had heard hostile gunfire and the thud of hostile steel. The impact was such that President Roosevelt's address to the nation, during which the raid took place, was crowded from the lead columns of the morning papers. And that, doubtless, was a primary objective of the foe. In Tokyo, Imperial headquarters crowed: "The raid proved to be a great military success."

All last week California's war nerves quivered tensely. In the pre-dawn hours of Feb. 23, anti-aircraft batteries in the Los Angeles district spat 1,000 rounds of sparkling ack-ack into the sky—at what moone knew. And up and down the Pacific coast West-coasters watched a great involuntary migration of enemy aliens away from posted areas, factories and air-drones, away from the sea. At week's end one local disposition prevailed. No matter how comfortably Midwest and Mountain States continued to slumber, the West appeared now to be approaching a belated awareness that its murderous enemy was separated from it not by 2,000 oceanic miles, but only by a few feet of salt sea water, a few feet of dark night sky.

A  near miss  ends up only 50 ft. short of aviation fuel storage tank. Here projectile struck squarely on a nearby asphalt road, ricocheted over field and fire wall and plowed up dirt (foreground, above). It dented but did not puncture a feed line.
As the sun set [7 p.m.] on 23 February 1942, the Japanese I-17 penetrated the coastal waters of Santa Barbara Straits and Capt. Kozo Narahara ordered the rapid fire of seventeen rounds from his deck guns, known as the “Bombardment of Ellwood.” LIFE magazine reported the events in detail and the American public knew the war was now just off-shore of the Pacific coast. The U. S. Navy and Coast Guard still refused to report or acknowledge the full truth, however the LIFE images recorded how close the shelling came.

On Sunday 7 June 1942, the freighter S. S. Coast Trader departed Port Angeles, Washington, loaded with 7,000 barrels of bunker oil and 1,250 tons of newsprint for San Francisco. In the afternoon she was between Cape Beale and Cape Flattery, at the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Japanese submarine I-26 was waiting and launched one torpedo at 2:10 p.m., the ship went under in 40 minutes. The full details can be read on a number of websites, [including diving video on the vessel] and some credit a U. S. Coast Guard aircraft for finding the crew of 22 in two life rafts. This is the true story. The crew of Coast Trader numbered 56, and 34 were able to get into a wooden life boat, while the other 22 shared two rubber life rafts. At first they were tied together, however the two rubber rafts became separated by heavy seas and drifted away. Around 4:00 pm 8 June 1942, the lifeboat crew spotted the fishing vessel Virginia I, and were taken to the U. S. Naval Section Base in Neath Bay. The U. S. Coast Guard conducted an air search for nine hours but could not find the two rubber rafts with 22 survivors, and they would not report the incident to the RCAF until 02:10 hrs, 9 June 1942.
At 02:10 hrs [2:30 a.m. the morning of 9 June 1942], the U. S. Coast Guard contacted the RCAF of No. 4 [B.R.] Squadron based at Ucluelet, B.C. and reported the torpedoing of the *Coast Trader*. Above is the Daily Diary for 9 June 1942.
At 03:10 hrs [morning light] three RCAF Supermarine Stranraer Flying Boats #914, #938, and #932 attempted to take-off but were unable due to heavy fog and rain. At 04:50 hrs the three RCAF aircraft departed and began their search areas. At 05:31 hrs a red glow [flare] was seen by aircraft #914 and #938, and soon after the two life rafts became visible in the rain and fog. The seven-man crew of Stranraer #938 photographed the two rubber rafts, and reported the position to an R.C.N. Corvette HMCS Edmundston [K-106], which was only ten miles away. At 05:50 hrs a U. S. coast guard aircraft arrived and dropped one floating flare. The HMCS Edmundston arrived at 06:00 hrs. and rescued the crew [one had perished from exposure, cook Steven Chance 56 years] at 48.40 degrees north by 125.31 degrees west.
Photo of Coast Trader crew survivors in two life rafts where they had been floating for 40 hours.

While the American crew of the S. S. Coast Trader, the RCAF aircrew of fourteen, and the RCN Corvette crew knew the freighter was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine, the United States government refused to acknowledge the sinking and officially attributed it to an internal explosion.

The first causality in war is always the truth, that’s why we need historians.
Then the U. S. Coast Guard aircraft claimed the credit for finding the missing crew. If any historian is at all interested, this is the RCAF crew of fourteen who found the 22 Americans from the *S. S. Coast Trader*.

The following day, 10 June 1942, RCAF War Room H.Q. in Ottawa, ask for details of the sinking and this reply was received from Washington, D.C., “EXPLOSION INTERNAL.”
Two years ago [2015] the *S. S. Coast Trader* hit the news again, found 50 miles inside Canadian waters, and the submarine torpedo hit was confirmed at long last. The main concern today, and for another Canadian generation are the 7,000 barrels of bunker oil which at some time will begin leaking from the freighter. This will have a major effect on the west coast first nations people and the fishing fleets based on western Vancouver Island.
These 1942 Japanese submarine attacks are still haunting the Canadian coast well into the near future, and it is not “if” but when, the bunker oil begins to leak onto the Vancouver Coastline.

Thanks to American Navy top-secret submarine documents being released, the research being conducted on WWII confiscated Japanese files, and Japan’s secret diplomatic archives in Tokyo, a much clearer detailed history of Japan’s submarine war is coming to light from a young generation of historians. I do not have access to this information, however the WWII RCAF Daily Diary reports give a very clear picture on the sightings, attacks, and sinking of Japanese submarines in Canadian waters beginning on 11 December 1941, when a submarine periscope was spotted one mile east of Kains Island lighthouse, heading for Port Alice, B. C.
Kains Island lighthouse was constructed in 1905, this Library and Archives Canada image was taken in 1934. This photo taken from north looking south, where a submarine passed from right to left [east direction] on 11 December 1941.

The next day, at 16:40 hrs a submarine surfaced seven miles west of this lighthouse and proceeded north-west direction into the sea. On 1 January 1942, the Canadian Navy Minesweeper HMCS Outarde #J161, sighted a submarine 100 miles north west of the tip of Vancouver Island, and attacked. This was the first Royal Canadian Navy possible sinking of a suspected Japanese submarine. On 3 January 1942, a Japanese seaplane [E14Y1 “Glen”] flew over RCAF Station Coal Harbour twice, reported by RCAF Airmen LAC C. Luce.

The new minesweeper #J161, was named after Outarde Bay, in Quebec, and was constructed in the Vancouver, B.C. shipyards, commissioned on 4 December 1941. She was assigned the patrol area of inlets and coves on the coast around Prince Rupert, B.C. and was proceeding north when her lookouts sighted a Japanese submarine periscope 100 miles north-west of the tip of Vancouver Island. They attacked the last seen position and remained in
the area patrolling, again sighting a submarine periscope on 8 January 1942, in the same general area of the first sighting.

The RCAF Daily Diary reports and my map suggests that on 11 December 1941, a Japanese submarine periscope was seen one mile east of the Kains Island, B. C. lighthouse, travelling east towards RCAF Station Coal Harbour which is still under construction.
This is RCAF Station Coal Harbour looking straight west. Port Alice was located on the left side of this image, where the Japanese submarine remained for eight to ten hours conducting observation of the Canadian RCAF base under construction. The submarine departs on 12 December 1941, and after passing the Kains Island lighthouse approximately seven miles, it comes to the surface of the ocean at 14:50 hrs. and proceeds north-west direction. The Canadian Navy Minesweeper HMCS Outarde is on patrol in the Queen Charlotte Strait and observed the submarine [nineteen days later] on 1 January 1942, and attacks with unknown results although large amount of oil is seen on the water. On 3 January 1942, the submarine moves to a new location and launches its E14Y1 Glen seaplane, which flies over RCAF Station Coal Harbour two times doing observation. The seaplane is recovered and the submarine proceeds back to her original location where the HMCS Outarde sights her on 8 January 1942.
This is just a small sample of the WWII data that can be found in the combined files of the RCAF War Office Ottawa, RCAF Daily Diary, RCAF Squadron Diaries, and the Western Air Command Daily Diaries.

The most interesting data was found on the 7 November 1942, when a Japanese submarine was sighted from the air by a passing RCAF Cessna Crane on a routine training flight. The submarine was sighted on the surface in the dead end of Stewardson Inlet. To enter this inlet, the submarine must pass north in Sidney Inlet for 4 km, then make a left U-turn and proceed south 2 km to a dead end. This inlet is surrounded by high mountains and the submarine could only be seen by an aircraft passing directly over that location. A perfect hiding location which I feel was picked for that main reason. From this hiding spot the Japanese could launch their E14Y1 Glen observation seaplane and fly over RCAF Tofino [43 km south] or RCAF Ucluelet [78 km south] under the very nose of the RCAF.

I believe this unidentified Japanese submarine was in fact I-26 which had shelled Estevan Point lighthouse on 20 June 1942, which was located just 10 km from their hiding inlet. The submarine I-26 had also torpedoed the Soviet submarine in this location on 30 July 1942. I believe this was a main Japanese submarine hiding location on Vancouver Island during early 1941 and the complete year of 1942. The other two hiding spots were located south in Mexican coastal waters where Japanese submarines were sighted before 7 December 1941.
Kiska and Attu, Alaska, were only 2,006 miles from Tokyo, Japan. In November 1941, submarines had been sighted on the coast but ignored. The Japanese established submarine home bases from 6 June 42 to 28 July 1943.

Japanese I-26 hid and patrolled the coast of British Columbia, Canada.

Stewardson Inlet, B.C., Canada. Attu, Alaska, to Stewardson Inlet, 2,565 miles.

20 March 1942, only attack on a Japanese submarine by 1st Air Regiment Mexican Air Force, 30 miles off the Sinaloa coast, Between Mazatlán And Cabo San Lucas.

Magdalena Bay [Bahia Magdalena] Mexico 600 miles south of San Diego, Calif. Stewardson Inlet, B.C. to Magdalena Bay, Mexico, 1,881 miles.

La Palma, Chuapas, Mexico 60 miles north of Guatemala border. Magdalena Bay, Mexico to La Palma, 1,401 miles.
I created this map from official reports taken from the RCAF War Room H.Q. in Ottawa, Canada, RCAF WWII Daily Diary records and related books on the subject. The Alaska submarine records and the Canadian reports are based on true fact, however only historical experts with access to American and Japanese WWII submarine records know the full truth concerning bases in Mexico.

Did the Japanese submarines have secret hiding, resupply, bases in Canada and Mexico? The answer appears to be “Yes they used Mexico to spy on U.S.”

Magdalena Bay in Baja California has a long history as one of the best natural harbors on the Mexican Pacific coast. It also has a long history of American and Japanese interest in obtaining control of that harbor. In 1868, the United States Navy obtained the use of the harbor for landing duty-free coal, and by 1900 had obtained the right to use Magdalena Bay for U.S. Navy ship target practice. This privilege expired in 1907, and by 1911, the Japanese were attempting to purchase the harbor from Mexico. This was investigated by the U.S. Senate and in 1912 resulted in the adoption of the “Lodge Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, aimed at preventing Japan from taking control of this strategic harbor.
This powerful [free domain] editorial cartoon appeared in April 1912, signed T.E. Powers. Uncle Sam kicks the Japanese out of Magdalena Bay, Mexico. Did the Japanese return in 1941?
This cartoon clearly suggests a Japanese fishing company attempted to purchase Magdalena Bay for military purposes. In August 1912, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge sponsored a resolution to be added to the Monroe Doctrine, declaring “any harbor or other land so located for naval or military purposes that might threaten the safety of the United States”, preventing Japan from purchasing the harbor. This became known as the Japanese Scare at Magdalena Bay, and can be found in books and on websites for detailed reading.

As Mexico ended her internal revolutionary wars in the late 1930s, her relations with the United States were very tumultuous, and the Mexican government was not anxious to have any American occupation of her lands. The 800-mile-long Baja California region was mostly a desert with very little rain fall, and the southern region contained only a few small towns. This desert section was ignored by the Mexican government and perfect for the Japanese submarines to hide, as nobody cared. I feel this information is still hidden today in American intelligence reports, as the U. S. were keeping a close eye on Mexico and her air force. In February 1939, the American attaché at the U. S. Embassy in Mexico City reported the defence of the west coast and the Mexican Air Force was “deplorable.” Some good research by both Japanese and American historians should help clear up this forgotten part of history, and put a date on when Japanese submarines arrived at Magdalena Bay.
In July 1940, the newly appointed commander of the Mexican Air Force, General Roberto Fierro, began a program of rebuilding his air arm with more modern equipment and aircraft. The Mexican government slowly began to recognize that the World War could possibly involve and threaten the peace of Mexico. This led to friendly meetings with the United States in December 1940, followed by the establishment of the Joint Mexican-American Defense Commission with the first ‘preliminary discussion’ meeting held on 17 February 1941. The last preliminary meeting was held on 3 December 1941, at which time the U. S. Army Air Force requested unrestricted flight privileges over the 800-mile thinly populated stretch of the Baja peninsula, which included Magdalena Bay. Did American intelligence officers know that Japanese submarines were using Magdalena Bay as a hiding, and refueling base, to spy on the Naval base in San Diego, California?

Against this backdrop, Pearl Harbour was attacked four days later and America went to war. Mexico broke off all diplomatic relations with Germany, Japan, and Italy, but did not declare war on the Axis powers. The Mexican Air Force was organized into two air regiments, each containing three squadrons. The first air regiment [1* Regimiento] was sent to patrol Baja California, while the second regiment remained in Mexico City. The three squadrons patrolling the Baja were all flying old general-purpose biplanes, a few surviving Vought 02U-2Ms, Mexican built Azcarate Corsario 02U-4A and a few Vought V-99M Corsairs all equipped with a single machine gun. A few Consolidated Model 21-M trainers were also used for just observation, and none of the aircraft carried bombs. Fighting submarines
with no bombs shows how inadequately prepared the Mexican air arm was for defending their country or attacking an enemy in time of war.

This American publication image shows seven obsolete U. S. Vought Corsairs at La Paz, Baja California, and it is believed one of these made Mexican history. On 20 March 1942, Teniente Leopoldo Meza of the 1st Air Regiment was conducting his patrol when he sighted a Japanese submarine [possibly I-10] on the surface 30 miles west of Mazatlán, and the coast of Sinaloa. The rear gunner attacked with his single machine gun, but the submarine crash-dived and escaped undamaged. This location is very close to Magdalena Bay and possibly confirms that Japanese submarines were using the harbor up until at least late March 1942. The combination of Mexican Air Force archives, Japanese documents, and American records should provide much more identification of the submarine involved in this confirmed air attack. Over to the experts with the documents.
I believe this sighting, and attack, worried the United States more than the Mexican government, as suddenly American Lend-Lease delivered six new modern Vought Sikorsky OS2U-3 Kingfisher landplanes for patrolling the Western Coast of Mexico.

Free domain image of the six Mexican Kingfisher OS2U aircraft, which were painted in standard U. S. Army Air Force olive drab, light grey lower surfaces, with Mexican National colors on wings and tail, with orange serial numbers P-69 to P-74. Armed with three .30 cal. wing guns and one 100 lb. bomb under each wing.

The Mexican-American Defense Commission meetings continued and now focused on the primary objective of Mexico’s role in the protection of North America, [Mexico had not declared war] the future protection of Mexico itself, and the third primary concern became the defense of the sparsely populated Baja California region from Japanese submarines and possible invasion. The Mexican government were now anxious to have any American airpower including even occupation of American troops on the Baja California narrow peninsula. Then, Mexico declared war on the Axis Powers on 28 May 1942, after German submarine attacks were made on her shipping in the Gulf of
Mexico. The United States at once began to construct roads into the remote Baja area, built a 150-mile-long telephone line for communication to the remote site at San Felie base, and by November 1942, three American radar stations were operating with one on the Gulf of California side [Punta Diggs – Punta Estrella] and two on the Pacific Ocean side. The beginning of 1943, possibly marked the end of Japanese submarines using the Mexican coastline and Magdalena Bay for hiding and refueling sites.
The U-boat "Battle of the Atlantic" – Canada, United States, and Mexico
The German U-boat campaign known as the “Battle of the Atlantic” began on 3 September 1939 and lasted until the end of war in May 1945. It was the longest continuous campaign during the Second World war, and in the end the German blockage of England failed but not before they sank over 3,500 merchant ships and 175 warships with the loss of 783 U-boats. It was the German U-boat sinking of Mexican merchant ships that sparked Mexico’s entry into WWII.

Prior to the declaration of war, neither the British or Canadian governments anticipated the extent German submarines would have on shipping in the Atlantic or the blockage of the lifeline to United Kingdom. Both governments should have learned from the German U-boat offensive in World War One, when the sinking of merchant vessels almost brought Britain to her knees, but in peace-time they forgot. The 1917-1918 lessons learned by the Germans were not forgotten, and they had developed a deadly and effective U-boat campaign. In early 1939, Germany’s U-boat fleet trained and operated out of bases in the northern coast of Germany, and this lasted until the fall of France in June 1940. On 3 September 1939, German U-30 sank the British liner *Athenia* northwest of Ireland, and the British Admiralty prepared plans for the protection of convoys. When the first Halifax, Canada, to United Kingdom convoy put to sea on 16 September 1939, a pattern was established for the RCAF which would last until the end of the war. In late June 1940, the U-boats began moving south to the coast of France, where they sank 270 Allied ships from July until October 1940, a period named the “Happy Times.” Operating out of the Bay of Biscay, gave the U-boats a great advantage in striking at the Atlantic sea lanes, which Britain was almost
completely dependent upon. In September 1941, the Germans gained the upper hand in the gathering of naval intelligence, and the submarine wolf packs were expanding further across the Atlantic to the southern tip of Greenland.

On 24 October 1941, Admiral Donitz sent four submarines to attack shipping around Newfoundland and by 3 November, eighteen U-boats were operating in the Canadian coastal waters. For the first time, Hitler gave permission to Donitz for the attack on shipping south of the Grand Banks, which had been forbidden due to the proximity to U. S. territorial waters. In late November 1941, the Canadians and Americans held an urgent meeting and the responsibilities for patrolling the northwest Atlantic were agreed upon. The news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, 7 December, shattered all future plans by the Allies and Axis powers. Japan’s entry into the war also came as a surprise to Admiral Donitz, who launched a new campaign with the code name “Paukenschlag” five weeks later. Donitz believed the U. S. military was ill-prepared for his combat experienced and well-trained U-boat fleet. He was correct. Seven type VIIC U-boats would now attack the zone 250 miles south from Newfoundland, while five larger Type IXB submarines would follow the coastline from the St. Lawrence to New York Harbor. Korvettenkapitain R. Hardegen commanding U-123 struck the first blow on 11/12 January 1942, when he torpedoed the British ship *Cyclops* 180 miles south of Nova Scotia, Canada. This was the first merchant ship to be sunk close to American waters, 300 miles east of Cape Cod, with loss of 87 passengers and crew.
Hardegen next set a course for New York City Harbor but his charts were not very good, however he was surprised to find all the American lighthouse sites beaming a most welcome navigational aid. He arrived in New York Harbor at first light on 15 January, and was shocked by the bright lights of Manhattan skyscrapers, which he wrote:

“It was unbelievable, we were the first to be here, the first time a German soldier looked out on the coast of the USA.”

That same night, against the brightly lit coast, U-123 torpedoed the British tanker Norness, and a fireball erupted 650 feet into the night sky.
This 1918 editorial cartoon came true on 15 January 1942.
Rising darkly in crowded sea lanes off the Atlantic Coast last fortnight, enemy submarines struck savagely and without warning at U. S. and Allied shipping all the way from Cape Hatteras to the Grand Banks. Day after day the torpedoes drove home, until by Jan. 83 the toll of ships attacked had risen to twelve. In many instances facts were obscure, tonnages unannounced, casualties uncertain. But it was clear that at least 200 merchantmen had lost their lives as the result of submarine activities in U. S. coastal waters. And at least 150 more went down off Nova Scotia's sun-bleached shore.

From survivors came tales of harrowing experiences in icy January seas and seas awash with deadly slicks of blazing oil. During World War I, German U-boats operated audaciously in these intimate waters. But then the U. S. Fleet was fighting a one-ocean, not a two-ocean, war. Last week Nazi strategicists were wasting no time taking advantage of American preoccupation in the Pacific.

Their undersea offensive was timed, too, to coincide with the Pan-American conference at Rio de Janeiro, where Sumner Welles was fervently endeavoring to convince Latin American statemen that the U. S. Fleet could protect their shores from harm. What the ultimate effect would be on coastwise shipping schedules, no one ventured to predict. But the sinkings quickly prompted marine underwriters to double war insurance rates on Atlantic coastwise shipments.

There was one other result. The loss of ships and lives tragically emphasized the urgency of the Navy's Serve With Silence campaign, and the significance of its facile slogan, "A slip of the lip may sink a ship!" (LIFE, Jan. 80). On Jan. 29 a Navy spokesman in Washington took occasion once again to urge the U. S. public to shun loose talk. "Whispers and gossip can give information of value and comfort to the enemy," he declared. "If you know something, keep it to yourself. If you hear something, don't pass it on . . . Even if you have seen a submarine destroyed or captured, keep it to yourself. Let the enemy guess what happened."

With this admonition the Navy released good tidings of the U. S. counteroffensive against Hitler's insidious "excursionists." In a dryly worded communiqué, the Navy proclaimed: "Some of the recent visitors to our territorial waters will never enjoy the returning portion of their voyage. Furthermore, the percentage of two-way traffic is satisfactorily on the decline."
American government censorship was attempted, but LIFE magazine hired aircraft and sent reporters to off-shore Atlantic sinking's.
The initial wave of five large German U-boats had been code named “Drumbeat” and they ended operations on 6 February 1942, and headed back to base in France. They sank 25 ships along the coast of the United States, and Hardegen in U-123 had sent nine to the sea bottom. Several other waves of U-boats were being sent into U. S. waters and further south into the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. These new waves of submarines were commanded by the most experienced German naval officers such as Topp U-552, Degen U-701, Schnee U-201, Mohr U-124, Lassen U-160 and Witt in U-129. The sinking totals began to raise, 37 in February, 60 in March and 59 in April 1942. The United States Northeast received 90% of her refined oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico [including oil from Mexico] and the U-boat attacks were beginning to cause fuel shortages in New York City, Boston, and even Washington, D.C. This was hidden from the American public, and gas rationing was being blamed on the total war effort and the Japanese.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Mexican President General Manual Avila Camacho broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, Japan, and Italy. The government then seized nine Italian and three German merchant ships in Mexican ports of call. These twelve Axis power merchant ships became part of the Mexican Merchant Navy, and began delivering Mexican oil to the American refineries in the Gulf of Mexico coast. On 10 April 1942, the Mexican-owned oil-tanker _Tamaulipas_ sailing under an American flag, was attacked and sunk by U-552, killing three Mexican crew members. [why was a Mexican ship was sailing with American colors]
The month of May, became a peak period for U-boat sinking’s with 106 merchant ships destroyed with a large loss of life, and a much larger turning point in history. On 13 May, U-boat 564 sighted Mexican tanker *Portero del Llano* off the coast of Miami, Florida, and sank the tanker with a loss of 14 Mexican crew members. This tanker had been one of the confiscated Italian vessels and the Mexican government demanded an explanation from Hitler and Germany, which was delivered through the Mexican ambassador in Sweden. Germany never responded, and nine days later U-106 sank the Mexican tanker *Faja de Oro*, another former Italian merchant ship, this time killing ten of the Mexican crew. Mexico officially declared war on the Axis powers on 28 May 1942, and from this date on the United States Army Air Force would equip, train, and reorganize the Mexican Air Force with modern American built aircraft.

On 30 June 1942, President Camacho ordered six pilots, who had earlier trained in the United States 1934-36, from the 2nd Air Regiment to proceed to Duncan Field, Texas, for navigational training in the Gulf of Mexico, [one week on Beechcraft AT-7] and one week for training to fly the North American AT-6B Texan trainer aircraft. The officer in command was Major Noriega Medrano and the other officers were listed as – Capt. Jose Mena Barona, Capt. Ignacio Ortiz Diaz de Leon, Lt. Roberto Legorreta Sicilia, Lt. Alfonso Gandarilla Garacia, and Lt. Carlos Astorga Franco. This history was covered with photos in Chapter Seven. Although the AT-6B Texan aircraft became the number one trainer during World War Two, they could also be armed with machine-guns and bombs.
PILOTS OF 24 NATIONS TRAIN IN "TEXANS"

The most widely used trainer in the world today is the North American Texan, formerly known as the Harvard. More than 10,000 airplanes—believed to be a world's record—have been built in North American Aviation's trainer series. Twenty-four nations have chosen the Texan as their own combat trainer. Their flying instructors adore this plane.

In gunnery and bombing practice, in formation and instrument flying, in coast patrol and semi-combat duty, the Texan has proved its versatility.

A pilot trained in a Texan is equal to any job in modern air war. He feels as much at home in a P-51 Mustang fighter as in a North American trainer. For the instrument panels and controls in all three North American planes have been specially designed to make the transition "painless" from trainer to fighter or bomber—helping give young pilots full confidence on their first flight in a heavier plane.

In the United States Army Air Forces almost every pilot of a fighter or bomber—whether single-engine or twin-engine—was in Texans. It's a mighty important fact that we, the men and women of North America, are proud of.

Pilots of 24 nations train in "Texans"!
This North American ad is an under-statement, as their bombers, fighters, and trainers had gone to war two full years before the United States of America declared war on the Axis Powers. Now these Mexican AT-6B trainers would be used as a dive-bomber and attack German U-boats in the Gulf of Mexico.

North American Aviation Archives image showing four of the six new AT-6B trainers in Mexican wing and tail markings. The six trainers appeared in natural-metal finish with USAAF serial numbers 41-17428 to 41-17433. American ferry pilots flew the six to Duncan Field, Texas, in early June 1942. They were then painted in U. S. Army drab colors, [olive drab upper surfaces and light grey lower surfaces] with fuselage, wing, and tail Mexican national
colors/markings. They received Mexican serial numbering [P for Patrol *Patrulla*] and the numbers P-75 to P-80. It is not confirmed if the yellow Mexican serial numbers were painted in Texas or upon return to Mexico City, after 14 June 1942. The first six American Vought OS2U-3 Kingfisher aircraft sent to Mexico in March 1942, received the serial P-69 to P-74, the AT-6 Texan yellow serial numbers followed in sequence. The flight led by Major Noriega departed Duncan Field, San Antonio, Texas, 13 June, stopping for fuel at Laredo, Plaza Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, and Tampico, arriving Mexico City Balbuena Field at 15:36 hrs, 14 June 1942.

This image has no date or data on back, possibly taken in Texas, 13 June 1942.
On 19 June 1942, the six new AT-6B trainers gave a dive-bombing demonstration outside Mexico City for high ranking army and air force officers, with special guest President Avila Camacho. The pilots continued training until 4 July 1942, when orders decreed three aircraft would be flown to a new base at Tuxpan, Veracruz, serial P-77, P-78, and P-80. Major Noriega Medrano was placed in charge with pilots Lt. Jose Mena Barona, Lt. Alfonso Gandarilla Garcia, ground crew Sgt. 1st class Fernando Lozario and Sgt. 2nd class Aurelio Becerra Suarez. The three aircraft were assigned the Military Region of the Gulf Coast of Mexico, headquarters at the port of Veracruz, Commanding Officer General Anacleto Guerrero. Major Noriega was assigned AT-6 Texan serial P-80 on 17 June 1942, in Mexico City, and this continued to be his aircraft which he flew on eleven of fourteen patrols until 24 July 1942. It is possible this was the same AT-6B Major Noriega had his photo taken in front of in Texas, shown in the above photo.

German U-129, commanded by Kapitan Leutnant Hans Witt had sank two Mexican tankers, Tuxpan on 26 June [killing four crew] and the following day Las Choapas [killing three crew]. The German U-boat total for the month of June reached 104 merchant ships sank in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. The German U-boats did not expect to be attacked by any aircraft in the coastal regions of unprotected Mexico, but that was about to change. On 5 July 1942, Major Noriega took off on a patrol in his AT-6B serial P-80, and history would be made. He was flying 25 miles north of Tampico, following the coast, when he received a radio message that a commercial aircraft had spotted a submarine very close to his area. He soon spotted the partly submerged German U-boat and after obtaining permission to attack, dropped his two 100 lb bombs. One bomb landed 45 feet from the bow of the
submarine and the other struck 3 feet from the conning tower. He then returned to base [Tuxpan, Veracruz] to rearm and returned to the area of attack and observed a large oil slick on the ocean surface.
The above painting was completed by New York illustrator Floyd Davis, appearing in LIFE magazine 21 September 1942. It shows the iridescent waters around the coast of Mexico provided little protection for submerged German U-boats seen from the air, giving some idea of what Major Noriega possibly observed. Total sinkings for end of July – 321.

The following day, 6 July 1942, Major Noriega Medrano again sighted and attacked a German submarine. He reported – “At 13:45 Hrs., sighted submarine, two M-30 bombs of 100 lbs. were consumed in action against enemy submarine.” The true facts would not be revealed until years later, when German WWII submarine records would record U-129 made four emergency dives on 5 July 1942, and the following day another emergency dive when another North American aircraft attacked. Major Noriega had in fact attacked U-129 twice in two days, but the U-boat was not sunk as he believed, it continued sinking ships reaching a total of 29, equalling 143,792 tons. The German crew scuttled U-129 at Bordeaux, France, on 18 August 1944, to prevent it from being captured by Allied Forces.
My painting of the attack on U-129 was completed in the art capital of Mexico, San Miguel de Allende during the winter of 2012. Since 1984, I have been to hundreds of locations in Mexico, but San Miguel is a pure haven for lovers of the visual arts, and my preferred place to live, eat, drink, and paint. The Museum Nacional de Antropologia, in Mexico City, also holds the best of sculptures and monuments from the ancient past Mesoamerican civilization. These sculptures, paintings, and other works of art sometimes leave you with an undefined uneasiness which can be both marvelous and horrible at the same time.
The eagle was a symbol of the sun, combined with the powerful Aztec God of War. Life and death were joined in the Aztec world and I wished to express this in my painting. The city of Tenochtitlan was the governing center of the vast Aztec empire, founded in 1325, constructed in the middle of Lake Texcoco. [Mexico City] It flourished for almost two centuries, with well-constructed buildings, causeways, canals, running water and sanitation for 250,000 inhabitants. Then in 1521, the Spanish invaders came and destroyed everything, dumped garbage in the streets, home for the rats, etc., etc. Today Mexican mural art is full of this sad part of their violent past history. The center of Tenochtitlan was called the “Sacred Precinct” which contained the Aztec Templo Mayor, home to architecture, deeply religious sculptures, and paintings which expressed the religious beliefs of the Aztecs who believed were dependent on the gods for their own survival. Two stairways on the west side contained shrines dedicated to the god of water and the other the god of war. This complete temple area was destroyed by the Spanish and the stone blocks were used to construct the huge Roman Catholic Cathedral which stands today in the center of Mexico City. During the 1970 excavations of the Templo Mayor, over seven thousand items were discovered, and thousands more continue to be found and displayed in Mexican museums. In their attempt to destroy the past religion and Aztec gods, the Spanish in fact covered over and preserved the ancient history of the vast Aztec empire they conquered. One of the many items found was a stone carving of a complete nesting eagle bird, which was a “Cuauhxicalli” or offering vessel for the human heart and blood from the victim. The “Eagle Vessel” is 28 inches high and 30 inches long, carved out of solid rock by an artist who captured the tiniest of eye and feather details, each feather is a single individual carving. On the back of the nesting eagle you find a deep 6 inch circle hole which contained the human
heart, which a high priest had torn from the victim and was still dripping with fresh warm blood. At first, I wondered how many hearts had been placed in this receptacle, then as you move around the stone eagle, the light falling on the face of the bird changes the features of the eye and it appears the eagle is looking directly at you. A most remarkable stone carving by an Aztec artist with enormous talent. This is the Aztec eagle head I decided to use in my painting to honor Major Noriega. The eagle was the principal among all creatures associated with war and the sun god, which placed a major part in the act of ritual human sacrifice, and the heart was termed “eagle cactus fruit.” The eagle was the highest appropriate title given to brave Aztec warriors because the bird was sacred to the tribal war god Huitzilopochtli.

Although the very small element of three AT-6B Texan trainers were very poorly supported, the pilots and crews under command of Major Noriega conducted their patrols as seriously as they could and it paid off. Major Luis Noriega Medrano became a modern Aztec Eagle warrior when he attacked German U-129 on 5 and 6 July 1942. Although his attacks were not fatal to the German U-boat, it soon became a good news press release to the world. The American government and press were most eager to advertise Mexico was a partner in the global war against the Axis nations. The New York Sun for 8 July 1942 had large headlines –

“MEXICAN PLANES BLAST GERMAN U-BOAT.”

Even American comics were used to advertise the fact Mexico was an ally of the United States.
1000 years before the white man set foot upon this part of the world, powerful Indian tribes lived here. They were—

They built big fortified cities.

Their temples were beautiful pyramids, sweeter to those built in Egypt.

In 1517, Hernando Cortes landed where Vera Cruz is today. He had 11 ships, 663 men, 15 horses and 14 cannon.

Montezuma, Emperor of the Aztecs, did not welcome the white intruders.

Tell the strangers that the road here is dangerous—to go back with our greetings to their king!

The war drums sounded. Indian warriors gathered.

And on the night of July 1, 1520, the Spaniards narrowly escaped death.
They had tremendous treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones.

Human sacrifice was practiced by these ancient Indian peoples.

The white man suffers from a disease that only gold can cure.

But Cortez fought his way to Tenochtitlan (Mexico City today), where he met the emperor of the Aztecs.

Attacking by surprise, Cortez and his men killed many Aztecs and took more gold and treasures than they could carry.

Retreat and establish your lines!

But the Spanish returned, defeated the Aztecs and made this land a colony of Spain.
FOR 300 YEARS MEXICO WAS RULED BY THE SPANIARDS. ALL THE WEALTH THAT COULD BE GATHERED WAS SHIPPED TO SPAIN.

WILL YOU HAVE BACK THE LAND THE SPANIARDS STOLE THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO?

- 1810 -
THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM GREW STRONGER, AND MEN, SUCH AS THE PRIEST MIGUEL HIDALGO, Fought TO BREAK SPAIN'S POWER.

VIVA LA INDEPENDENCIA! VIVA MEXICO!

-Hidalgo lead his army from town to town. The Indians took up arms against the Spaniards, and the cry for independence was heard all over Mexico.

I DIE! BUT MEXICO FOR THE MEXICANS WILL LIVE AND GROW!

THis ragged army was finally defeated - Hidalgo was executed - but the spirit of independence grew stronger.

OUR GLORIOUS ARMY HAS DEFEATED THE SPANIARDS!

VIVA LA INDEPENDENCIA!

MEXICO WAS FREED FROM SPANISH RULE, BUT FREEDOM WAS ABUSED UNTIL BENITO PABLO JUAREZ, A FULL BLOODED INDIAN, BECAME MINISTER OF JUSTICE IN 1857.

1821 - THE WORK THAT HIDALGO STARTED WAS CONTINUED BY HIS FOLLOWERS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF - AGUSTIN DE ITURBIDE AND JOSE MARIA MORELOS.

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.
IN EUROPE THERE WERE MANY WHO WERE STILL GREEDY FOR THE LAND AND RICHES OF MEXICO. *
FRANCE, NAPOLEON III...

WE WILL SEND OUR TROOPS TO MEXICO AND GIVE THEM AN EMPEROR OF ROYAL BLOOD - MAXIMILIAN OF AUSTRIA.

NEVER DESPAIRING, JUAREZ LED RAGGED MEXICAN TROOPS AGAINST THE NEW INVADERS.

IT IS SAID THAT NAPOLEON HAS SENT 50,000 TROOPS AGAINST US.

THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT ALLOW ANY EUROPEAN POWER TO INVADE THIS HEMISPHERE. SEND HELP TO JUAREZ!

FIGHTING WITH THE COURAGE OF MEN WHO LOVED LIBERTY MORE THAN LIFE, THE MEXICAN PEOPLE UNDER JUAREZ, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES, FORCED THE FRENCH TO LEAVE MEXICO.

WHAT OF EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN? LET THE AUSTRIAN SAVE HIS OWN NECK.

IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

YES, MR. PRESIDENT.

BENITO JUAREZ, HAPPY THAT HIS COUNTRY WAS FREE, BUT WEAKENED AND TIRED BY HIS LABORS, DIED ON JULY 18, 1872.

JUAREZ IS DEAD. I HOPE HIS REFORMS WILL LAST!

THEY WILL! YOU CAN BE SURE OF THAT!

WITH THE DEATH OF MAXIMILIAN, MEXICO WAS FREE AGAIN.
But liberty and justice were abused by the successors of Juárez.

You will give me half of your crop! You and your family must work for me!

Si, Señor.

No free elections were possible.

You will vote as instructed!

For almost a century, Mexico's government shifted between honest men and those who wished to rule Mexico as dictators. Assassinations were frequent.

Events often moved so quickly in Mexico...

Who is our President this week, Miguel? Ay, Diego! Quien sabe? (Who knows?)

And then out of the masses came heroic men who fought only for liberty. Men such as Madero... Zapata... Obregón... Calles... Cardenas... and Camacho.

These liberty-loving men of courage won the battle against the enemies of the people... now Mexico faces a future bright with promise.
Today Mexico is a powerful member of the Big American family. The riches of her plains and mountains are being explored, her people educated.

In twenty years, 1,600,000 peons got 57,000,000 acres of land. The earth's riches have been tapped.

Precious metals are dug out of the earth.

Thousands of miles of railroads have been constructed.

Peons are being taught to read and write.

Side by side with her neighbor, the United States, Mexico under its President, Manuel Avila Camacho, fights the Axis enemies who would destroy the liberty for which Mexico fought for 500 years.

Camacho

Roosevelt
The American lend-lease began to deliver more aircraft and four AT-6C Texans arrived on 23 July 1942, and were immediately flown to Tampico to join the three on patrol. Major Noriega flew his last [fourteenth] patrol in AT-6B, serial P-80, on 24 July 1942, he was then posted back to Mexico City for assignment. By 25 September 1942, six AT-6B and twelve AT-6C were engaged in Mexican coastal patrols, some newer AT-6C were flown in bare metal skin. Two more attacks would be made on German U-boats by the AT-6 aircraft, 22 October 1942, and 22 January 1943.

Not all AT-6C aircraft were camouflaged and at least one flew with rare nose art showing a smiling “Death-Head” wearing pilot helmet with crossed bombs. [E. Valasco]
Starting in June 1943, Douglas A-24B Dauntless dive-bombers began arriving in Mexico, the first true combat aircraft designed to attack submarines. These American Lend-Lease bombers were built at Tulsa, Oklahoma, flown to San Antonio, Texas, by female WASP pilots, then flown to Mexico City by Mexican military pilots. They were concentrated at Balbuena Field, where new Dive-Bombing Squadrons were formed under training command of Major Luis Noriega Medrano. While these new squadrons were being formed, three A-24Bs were assigned to the 201st Squadron flying from El Cipres, Ensenada, of Baja California, coastal patrol for Japanese submarines. These anti-submarine patrols had been conducted by four North American AT-6B aircraft until this date. The Mexican Air Force received 30 Douglas A-24B aircraft with USAAF serial numbers: 42-54316, 54317, 54318, 54319, 54320, 54338, 54339, 54340, 54341, 54342, 54384, 54385, 54386, 54387, 54388, 54489, 54490, 54491, 54492, 54493, 54573, 54576, 54578, 54579, 54580, 54679, 54680, 54681, 54682, and 54683. Mexico would operate the largest number of American A-24B dive-bombers of all the Latin American countries, Chile came second with twelve.
The Douglas A-24B Dauntless would form another chapter in the Mexican Air Force and continued to fly until the mid-1950s. They were painted in the usual U.S. Army drab colour the same as the AT-6B, and C, Texan, with Mexican national markings on wings, tail, and fuselage. The Mexican serial numbers were in yellow painted on the tail, BID-2501 to BID-2530. In the summer of 1945, the remaining twenty-one A-24B dive-bombers had their camouflage paint removed and they flew in natural polished metal skin.
This image was taken at Guadalajara airfield in postwar summer of 1945, showing the Douglas A-24B dive-bombers in the background. Major [one star] Luis Noriega was promoted to Teniente Coronel [Lt. Col.] on 10 December 1945, and this image was possibly taken in June to November that year.
Serial last three numbers appear in black lettering.

This image taken on same date [summer 1945] shows eight AT-6B & C trainers still wearing camouflage paint, with new orange training numbers in three digits 700 block.
The numbers shown are #725, #735, #737, and #743. These eight AT-6 trainers remained in the Mexican Air Force until 1964, and then the survivors were used in aviation military schools for training until 1983. The AT-6 Texan has served the military aviation world more than any other, and has graduated 40 generations of Mexican pilots. At least two survive today in Mexico, however I was so close, but could not obtain any records.

I spent four winters living in Irapuato, Queretaro, and Celaya, which is close to the Mexican Air Force Academy in Zapopan, Jalisco, where I believe these images were taken in 1945. They have one AT-6 painted yellow and mounted in the front entrance, and the history of this aircraft should be preserved. Another AT-6C Texan is found in the Aviation Museum Santa Lucia de Mexico, Mexico City, marked as EAN-796.
In 1944, the A-24Bs were used in their intended role by the Mexican Air Force. In February 1944, seven experienced Mexican pilots arrived in San Diego, California, for combat training in the U. S. Navy. They formed a separate Mexican Squadron with eight U.S. SBD aircraft in Mexican markings. This is possibly where the Mexican nose art came from, but that is a pure guess on my part. In December 1944, training was terminated and the
seven pilots were ordered back to Mexico City. They would soon form the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force that would fly the P-47 and fight for the liberation of the Philippines. The A-24 was so important in training the new Mexican pilots to fly the Republic P-47D Thunderbolts of the 201st Mexican Fighter Squadron.

The Mexican A-24B continued service in Mexico until 1957, when the last serial BID-2525 was flown at Piede la Cuesta, near Acapulco. Three carried nose art images, BID-2510 had a pirate, [1947] and BID-2527 carried “Casper” the ghost on her nose in 1949-55 era.
El Dr. Es dos de Marzo

Concede el G. Almirante de Aeronáutica, Pilotos, Lluís Noriega Medrano, del Teniente Coronel, Pilotos, Alerador, en la Propia Señor

Antigüedad de primera de mayo de mil novecientos cuarenta y cinco, en virtud de encontrarse comprendida en lo dispuesto por el artículo

cuatro de la Ley de Ascensos y Remuneraciones del Ejército y Armada, Nacionales, vigente.

Las autoridades militares a quienes corresponda decidirán que se los guar-
den las consideraciones inherentes a su jurisdicción, conforme con las leyes
militares y demás disposiciones legales. La Secretaría de Hacienda y Credito Público tomará razón de esta patente y dispenderá se lo abone el sue-ño que a dicho grado asigne la Ley de Presupuesto de Egresos vigente.

México, D. F. a diez de diciembre de mil novecientos cuarenta y cinco.

Firmas: Nacional
On 10 December 1945, Major Luis Noriega Medrano was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and appointed Director of Secretariat of National Defense in Guadalajara, Mexico.

From 1946 to 1947, Lt. Col. Noriega continued living in Mexico City and commuting 300 miles to his air force director’s office in Guadalajara.

Daughter Gloria Rasmussen recalls -

“I’ve been told that I’m the one responsible for cutting his tenure short. My mother said that, as a one-year old, every weekend when my father got ready to return to Guadalajara, I would run into his bedroom, put my arms around the legs of his uniform and cry, not wanting to see him leave home. After seeing this episode repeated week after week, my mother asked my father to consider the effect his job was having upon his new family. He promptly submitted his resignation and returned to civilian life in Mexico City.”

Luis Noriega was 43 years of age, and served his country as a pilot for the past twenty-six years. He married in 1934, and now relaxed to civilian life, raising one son and four daughters. He passed away in August 1979.