

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION (OP-09B9)  
SHIPS' HISTORIES SECTION

HISTORY OF SHIPS NAMED GREENLING

USS GREENLING (SS(N) 614), named in commemoration of submarine GREENLING (SS 213), is the second ship of the Fleet to bear the name of a fish known scientifically as Hexagrammos stelleri.

A Greenling is an elongate, fine-scaled fish with a large mouth provided with small but sharp teeth. Its cone-shaped head, symmetrical body, and well developed fins enable this species to swim rapidly in pursuit of its prey. One of its most remarkable features is five lateral lines on each side, three along the back, one short one between pectoral and pelvic fin, and one along the lower side. These structures are sensitive organs for perception of vibrations in the water and serve as a sonic device to warn a Greenling of the approach of enemies or prey. The name greenling was no doubt derived from the pale blue-greenish coloration of its flesh. It is found from Kamchatka and Unalaska to San Francisco, and is abundant in Puget Sound and northward.

The first GREENLING (SS 213) was built by the Electric Boat Company of Groton, Connecticut. Her keel was laid 12 November 1940 and she was launched 20 September 1941, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Ralston S. Holmes, wife of Rear Admiral Holmes, USN. The ship commissioned at New London, Connecticut, 21 January 1942, Lieutenant Commander Henry Chester Bruton, USN, commanding.

After shakedown training out of New London, GREENLING departed 7 March 1942 for combat operations in the Pacific. She arrived in Pearl Harbor 3 April and sailed 20 April to conduct her maiden war patrol. In waters off Eniwetok 30 April, she encountered an armed freighter, probably the 6,659-ton ship SEIA MARU. Four torpedoes sent on their way at sunset trailed a disappointing wake of silence. A second salvo of two torpedoes missed in a midnight submerged attack. As the exasperated submariners moved in for a kill on the surface, GREENLING was greeted by two rounds of gunfire which fell far short of the submarine. Closing the range, she got off ten rounds from her 3-inch deck gun in a running gun duel that terminated when a shell glanced off her side and ricocheted too close for comfort above the heads of GREENLING's crew. The wily submariners trailed the target until near dawn of 1 May when GREENLING moved in for a fourth attack. The wake of a single torpedo crossed ahead of the freighter. A second torpedo headed straight and true for a bull's-eye hit but exploded prematurely only five hundred yards from the submarine for no score. GREENLING was forced to dive by approaching aircraft and her target escaped. Her torpedo misses may have been due to erratic depth control as it was soon discovered that many torpedoes often ran ten feet deeper than set. Nevertheless, this fine example of daring aggressiveness and tenacity did not go unrewarded. It became the hallmark of GREENLING's gallant crew that made her one of the most valuable units of the Pacific Submarine Force.

As the Japanese converged upon the Solomons, GREENLING headed for their Caroline stronghold at Truk. Here, the supply and troop transports routed from Japan via the Bonins and the Marianas could pick up escorts for the run to reinforce garrisons in the Solomons some 900 miles to the south. Truk also served as the base for Japanese warships and carrier forces that would speed to the Solomons combat zones. Though Truk's defenses were believed at that time to be invulnerable, the waters off that enemy bastion were not immune to submarine penetration.

While carrier YORKTOWN launched air strikes against enemy transports landing troops at Tulagi 4 May 1942, GREENLING drew her first blood of the war in approaches to Truk. A single torpedo hit the 3,262-ton armed cargo ship KINJOSAN MARU squarely amidships, broke the target in two, and she went under in less than three minutes amid the din of tremendous explosions. GREENLING continued to reconnoiter off Truk while Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher's carrier force, built around carriers YORKTOWN and LEXINGTON, turned back a powerful Japanese task force that unsuccessfully sought to win control of the Coral Sea and cut Australia off from the war. Moving through glassy seas, the submarine sought in vain to intercept and sink Japanese forces retiring from the memorable Battle of the Coral Sea back to Japan. Her speed was no match for that of a carrier with four screening destroyers sighted 16 May and she was unable to gain attack position. She bore in on a heavily guarded convoy three days later but was intercepted by a destroyer who held her down with depth charge attacks until the convoy passed hopelessly out of range. Departing Truk 4 June, she conducted an unrewarded search for Japanese warships fleeing in defeat from the historic Battle of Midway. Having spent fifty-seven days at sea, she returned to Pearl Harbor from her first war patrol 16 June 1942.

GREENLING departed Pearl Harbor 10 July 1942 on her second war patrol. One of the pioneering submarines who had reconnoitered Truk, she now assisted in a blockade of that dominating base so vital in the bitter struggle to regain the Solomon Islands. On traffic lanes running from Truk towards Japan, 26 July, she sent three torpedoes towards a medium ship for undetermined results, then went deep to evade 26 depth charges dropped by an escort. Three days later a zig-zagging tanker was the victim of a dawn submerged attack. Three torpedoes streaked for this target and the echo of four explosions indicated two probable damaging hits. On 5 August, two days before the Guadalcanal landings, GREENLING sank the 12,733-ton transport BRAZIL MARU in waters northwest of Truk. A prisoner picked up at the scene of the wreckage provided the identification of this sunken target, stating it had carried 400 troops and valuable cargo. A few minutes after midnight the 4,495-ton cargo ship PALAU MARU was added to the score of kills. The receipt of three hits from three torpedoes fired, the freighter disintegrated and sank in about two minutes.

After taking periscope photographs of Truk, GREENLING set course 14 August for the vicinity of New Ireland in an attempt to intercept Japanese Fleet units retiring from the Solomons. She was driven deep 20 August by a destroyer but only five distant depth charges were felt to explode as she easily evaded this hunter. Enroute to Midway six days later, she destroyed a large trawler with her deck guns. This 53-day war patrol, her second, terminated at Midway 1 September 1942.

GREENLING's third war patrol took her off Honshu, Japan. Departing Midway 23 September 1942, she forged a strong link in a chain of submarine patrols that gave the Japanese Empire a deadly embrace of attrition that would not let up for the duration of the war. North of Inubo Saki, 3 October, she torpedoed and sank the 5,552-ton cargo ship KINKAI MARU. More than 38 fishing sampans approached the scene to rescue survivors. When the submarine surfaced under cover of closing darkness, she found heavy fishing line entangled around her conning tower and radio antenna. A part of the line trailed in the water and the fighting submarine discovered herself a fisherman. A large shark was hooked on the end of the trailing fishing line. After clearing the line and broken antenna cable, she headed up the coast of Honshu. On 4 October 1942 she put the 4,146-ton cargo ship SETSUYO MARU underneath the sea with two torpedo hits.

GREENLING ran into a storm on the 7th and fought heavy seas for several days. On 14 October, she gained three hits out of three torpedoes fired at the 3,500 cargo ship TAKUSEI MARU. That target sank in less than six minutes. An attack on a heavily escorted merchantman turned into a frustrating experience in the early morning darkness of 17 October when a torpedo hit target amidships but failed to explode. After a lively time evading determined escorts, she sighted a large southbound ship 18 October and scored one hit amidships that set the target aflame. Crossing to the other side of this victim, she attempted a coup de grace with two torpedoes that boomeranged in an erratic circular run and returned to pass dangerously close aboard GREENLING. After this near suicide experience, she recovered her composure sufficiently to launch a single torpedo that broke the back of the 6,673-ton cargo ship HAKOSENSAN MARU. That stubborn enemy disappeared from the surface of the sea within two minutes.

GREENLING destroyed a 50-ton sampan 21 October on the Tokyo-Aleutian shipping lanes. Heavy swells made life difficult 22 October as she bore in dead astern of a destroyer to fire a spread of five torpedoes at an aircraft carrier. Two resounding explosions were heard on this target of estimated 22,000 tons. The submarine dived deeper to avoid the depth charge attacks that held her down for an hour. GREENLING returned to Pearl Harbor 1 November 1942 for refit. For a submarine patrolling without SJ radar, she had attained an impressive record of attrition on Japanese shipping.

GREENLING departed Pearl Harbor 9 December 1942 and arrived off Bougainville Strait the 21st. She immediately contacted a tanker with two escorts. Submerging ahead of the target group after midnight, she sank PATROL BOAT 35, missed a tanker with a single torpedo, then was driven down by effective depth charge attacks of a destroyer. Moving on traffic lanes towards Truk 30 December, she attacked a six-ship convoy for damaging hits on ship RYUFUKU MARU and sent the 5,857-ton freighter NISSHO MARU to the bottom.

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In the early morning darkness of 10 January 1943 GREENLING bore in on a tanker with destroyer escort. Her intended victim sighted the submarine and gave out a warning whistle that alerted the destroyer. She launched one torpedo to no avail before diving from the escort. She heard the explosion of two depth charges, maneuvered for another try on the surface, and was again driven off, this time by the large forward deck gun of the tanker. Near dawn, she gained another firing position and fired three torpedoes. Loud explosions from the target jarred the submarine violently but the tanker did not appear much damaged. Unable to regain attack position, she let the targets continue north to run another submarine guantlet there. In waters off Rabaul, New Britain, 16 January, GREENLING torpedoed and sank the 3,261-ton cargo ship KIMPOSAN MARU and destroyed a tug with her deck guns. Two days later one of her torpedoes passed under the shallow draft of a patrol craft that retaliated with four exploding depth charges which failed to damage the submarine. On 19 January GREENLING expended her last torpedo which missed a small target. She reconnoitered the Admiralty Islands enroute to Brisbane, Australia.

Lieutenant Commander Bruton brought GREENLING into Brisbane from her fourth war patrol 31 January 1943. By this time GREENLING had sunk 11 ships totaling 54,557 tons. For brilliant exploits during her first three war patrols, she was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. The holder of three Navy Crosses, two Legions of Merit and a Commendation Ribbon, Lieutenant Commander Bruton was later promoted to a rear admiral. He was succeeded in command of GREENLING by Lieutenant Commander James D. Grant, U. S. Navy.

GREENLING's fifth war patrol was conducted in the Solomons-Bismarck area. Departing Brisbane 21 February, she landed a party of intelligence agents 2 March on the east coast of New Britain. In a patrol characterized by bad weather, she found no targets until 15 March when she fired three torpedoes at a freighter for no hits. A heavy barrage of depth charges churned around her from two escorts before she gave them the slip. Another attack 17 April was foiled by two destroyers that forced her down and held her there until the convoy passed out of sight. She returned to Brisbane 26 April 1943.

GREENLING departed Brisbane 17 May 1943 to conduct her sixth war patrol in the Solomons-Bismarcks-New Guinea area. On two successive days, 27 and 28 May, she sighted a Japanese submarine coming out of a rain squall but was unable to close the range for attack. She caught up with a tanker in the early morning darkness of 9 June, gaining three torpedo hits which left the target a flaming mass. The following night she sent two torpedoes streaking towards the leading ship in a column of three freighters, followed by a salvo of three towards the second ship. Two loud explosions were heard before the escorts forced her down for a four-hour wait. On 27 June, aircraft forced her to abandon an attack on an auxiliary aircraft carrier. On second approach she managed to fire four torpedoes from the stern in a quick set-up before submerging to escape straddling gunfire from the target. She returned to Brisbane 8 July 1943.

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GREENLING sailed from Brisbane 29 July 1943 for a special mission that included the landing of a party of Marine Raiders in the Treasury Islands the night of 22-23 August. This survey party selected the best landing beach and site for a proposed radar station in anticipation of the invasion landings that would take place 27 October 1943. From there the submarine reconnoitered Tarawa (10 September) enroute via Pearl Harbor (17-19 September) to San Francisco. She was overhauled in the Hunter's Point shipyard (25 September-28 November) and returned to Pearl Harbor 5 December 1943 to renew action in the Pacific.

GREENLING's eighth war patrol was spent in the Caroline Islands. She departed Pearl Harbor 20 December 1943 and celebrated the end of the year in a midnight attack which sank the 1,936-ton freighter SHOHO MARU. Leaving the escorts sitting over the spot of attack, she reconnoitered Wake (23 January) before returning to Midway 28 January 1944. Her ninth war patrol was the special mission of photographic reconnaissance of Guam, Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas. She put to sea on this patrol 20 March 1944 and returned to Pearl Harbor 12 May 1944 with intelligence valuable to planning the campaign for the capture and occupation of the Marianas Islands. Lieutenant Commander John D. Gerwick took command of the submarine from Lieutenant Commander Grant 17 June 1944.

On her tenth war patrol (9 July-12 September), GREENLING searched off Formosa as a unit of "Moseley's Maulers," a coordinated attack group comprising herself, BILLFISH (SS 286) and SAILFISH (SS-192). This patrol was not productive of targets, though GREENLING was many times forced down by watchful Japanese aircraft. She sank a trawler with gunfire 8 August, taking one prisoner transferred ashore at Saipan, then returned to Midway 12 September 1944 for refit.

On 5 October 1944 GREENLING set course for the ocean approaches to Tokyo. The afternoon of 7 November she sighted a five-ship convoy with two escorts coming out of the haze and fired four torpedoes at overlapping columns. Two resounding hits exploded in a huge splash of oil-stained water which nearly enveloped the 971-ton oiler KOTA MARU. When it settled, the submarine was rewarded by the sight of her target broken in the middle with jagged ends rising in the air for the final plunge to the ocean bottom. A third explosion told of a torpedo hit that sank the 945-ton transport KIRI MARU 8. Her last victim of the war slid under the sea 10 November 1944 when she sank an old Japanese destroyer then designated PATROL BOAT 46. GREENLING returned to Pearl Harbor 23 November 1944.

GREENLING's twelfth and last war patrol was carried out in the Nansei Shoto Islands. Departing Pearl Harbor 26 December 1944, she found no targets until 24 January when she intercepted a 9-ship convoy. On approach she received an unexpected salvo of 19 depth charges, went deep and was boxed in by four high-speed escorts. For two and a half hours the enemy above worked her over systematically, dropping a total of 95 depth charges uncomfortably close. Minor damage mounted as she was first shaken and later knocked down about 60 feet in the next to last attack. She evaded her pursuers after firing false target shells to confuse them.

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GREENLING reached Saipan 27 January 1945 for emergency repairs. From there she was routed onward via Pearl Harbor to San Francisco, thence to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. After overhaul in the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, she decommissioned at New London, Connecticut, 16 October 1946.

In December 1946 GREENLING was placed in service of the First Naval District to assist training Organized Reserve submarine divisions. Stationed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and later at Boston, she helped provide the Navy's "silent service" with a nucleus of combat-ready underseas fighters to serve the nation in time of any emergency. She continued this vital training until 18 March 1960 when she was placed out of service in the Boston Naval Shipyard. She was sold for scrapping 16 June 1960 to Minichiello Brothers, Chelsea, Massachusetts.

GREENLING (SS 213) received the Presidential Unit Citation and ten battle stars for the operations listed below:

- 1 Star/BATTLE OF MIDWAY: 3-6 Jun 1942
- 1 Star/SECOND WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 10 Jul-1 Sep 1942
- 1 Star/THIRD WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 23 Sep-1 Nov 1942
- 1 Star/CAPTURE AND DEFENSE OF GUADALCANAL: 9 Dec 1942-31 Jan 1943
- 1 Star/SIXTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 17 May-8 Jul 1943
- 1 Star/SEVENTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 29 Jul-17 Sep 1943
- 1 Star/MARSHALL ISLANDS OPERATION: 1 Jan 1944
- 1 Star/NINTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 20 Mar-12 May 1944
- 1 Star/TENTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 9 Jul-12 Sep 1944
- 1 Star/ELEVENTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 5 Oct-23 Nov 1944

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION: First, Second and Third War Patrols.

LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Commander Henry Chester Bruton, USN:	21 Jan 1942- 1 Feb 1943
Lieutenant Commander James Don Grant, USN:	1 Feb 1943-17 Jun 1944
Lieutenant Commander John Day Gerwick, USN:	17 Jun 1944-19 Jun 1945
Lieutenant Commander William H. McClaskey, USNR:	19 Jun 1945- 6 Feb 1946
Lieutenant Commander Francis T. Cooper, USN:	6 Feb 1946-30 Apr 1946
Lieutenant Commander Robert N. Carroll, USNR:	30 Apr 1946-18 Jun 1946
Lieutenant Francis M. Oakley, USN:	18 Jun 1946-16 Oct 1946

ORIGINAL STATISTICS

LENGTH OVERALL:	311 feet, 9 inches
EXTREME BEAM:	27 feet, 3 inches
STANDARD DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	1,526
Mean Draft:	15 feet, 3 inches
DESIGNED SPEED:	
Surfaced:	20.25 knots
Submerged:	8.75 knots
SUBMERGED DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	2,424
DESIGNED COMPLEMENT:	
Officers:	6
Enlisted:	54
DESIGNED DEPTH:	300 feet
ORIGINAL ARMAMENT:	(10) 21-inch torpedo tubes (1) 3-inch .50 caliber gun (2) .50 caliber machine guns (2) .30 caliber machine guns

The second GREENLING (SS(N)-614) is under construction by the Electric Boat Division, General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, Connecticut. Her keel was laid 14 August 1961. The nuclear-powered attack submarine was launched 4 April 1964, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Henry Chester Bruton, wife of Rear Admiral Bruton who commanded the first GREENLING (SS-213).

The second GREENLING has an overall length of 292 feet, 3 inches; extreme beam, 31 feet, 8 inches; surface displacement, 3732 tons; draft, 24 feet, 10 inches; submerged displacement of 4311 tons.

## A HISTORY OF USS GREENLING (SS 213)

USS GREENLING (SSN 614) is the second ship of the fleet to bear the name, in commemoration of the submarine GREENLING (SS 213). The first GREENLING was built by the Electric Boat Company of Groton, Connecticut and was commissioned on January 21, 1942, Lieutenant Commander Henry Chester Bruton, Commanding. SS 213 was a GATO class fleet-type submarine of the latest all-welded design, displacing 1500 tons at a length of 307 feet and a beam of 27 feet and was equipped with ten torpedo tubes. With its 6400 horsepower diesel all electric drive, it could cruise the ocean at 20 knots on the surface.

After shakedown training out of New London, SS 213 departed March 7, 1942 for combat operations in the Pacific. GREENLING distinguished herself during World War II by sinking more than 59,000 tons of Japanese shipping. Through twelve war patrols, her skippers earned two Navy Crosses, one Silver Star and one Legion of Merit. Although official Navy records credit GREENLING with only fifteen definite kills, her logs relate to the sinking of twenty-two Japanese vessels totaling 102,500 tons and damage to an aircraft carrier and two tankers. The SS 213 was decommissioned on October 16, 1946 in New London with ten battle stars and the Presidential Unit Citation.

The wife of the SS 213 commissioning commanding officer, Mrs. Henry C. Bruton is the sponsor of USS GREENLING (SSN 614).

