

NUMBERED AMONG THOSE United States submarines which won undying fame during the war in the Pacific was the *USS Trigger* (SS-237). The *Trigger* was one of a class of seventy-three *Gato* fleet-type submarines built for the U. S. Navy during World War II. The building of the *Trigger* was authorized by Congress on June 14, 1940, and her construction was assigned by the Navy to the Mare Island Shipyard, Vallejo, California, where her keel was laid on February 1, 1941. She was launched on October 22, 1941, and was placed in commission by Lt. Cdr. J. H. Lewis on January 21, 1942.

As completed, *Trigger* had an overall length of 311 feet 10 inches, extreme beam of 57 feet 4 inches, mean draft of 15 feet 2 inches, standard displacement of 1,526 tons, submerged displacement of 2,424 tons, a design depth of 300 feet. Fairbanks Morse diesel engines of 5,400 shp provided a surface speed of 20.25 knots, and General Electric motors of 2,740 shp provided a submerged

speed of 8.75 knots. Armament consisted of six 21-inch torpedo tubes in the bow and four in the stern plus 14 torpedo reloads, one 3-inch 50 deck gun and two 50-caliber machine guns on the bridge. She carried a crew of six officers and fifty-four enlisted men.

As soon as *Trigger* was commissioned she got underway for San Diego, where she and her crew were put through an intense training program and shakedown cruise. Upon completion of her training she returned to Mare Island for correction of some minor deficiencies which the cruise off San Diego had brought to light. These repairs were speedily completed as *Trigger* was under orders to proceed to Midway Island to join the United States fleet taking up position to give battle to the Japanese invasion force. *Trigger* departed Mare Island on May 21, 1942, for Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on May 27, 1942. There she topped off her tanks and, after a conference at Submarine Headquarters, sailed on May 29 for Midway. *Trigger* was

She claimed more than 100,000 tons of Japanese warships and freighters sunk during her two years on patrol during WWII. The Navy recorded less. But no one could deny, the submarine TRIGGER was a scourge to the Japanese Fleet and a blessing to the Allies in the Pacific.

by Charles H. Bogart



HUNTER

assigned to patrol twelve miles north of Midway and to engage any Japanese ships that managed to slip by the carriers.

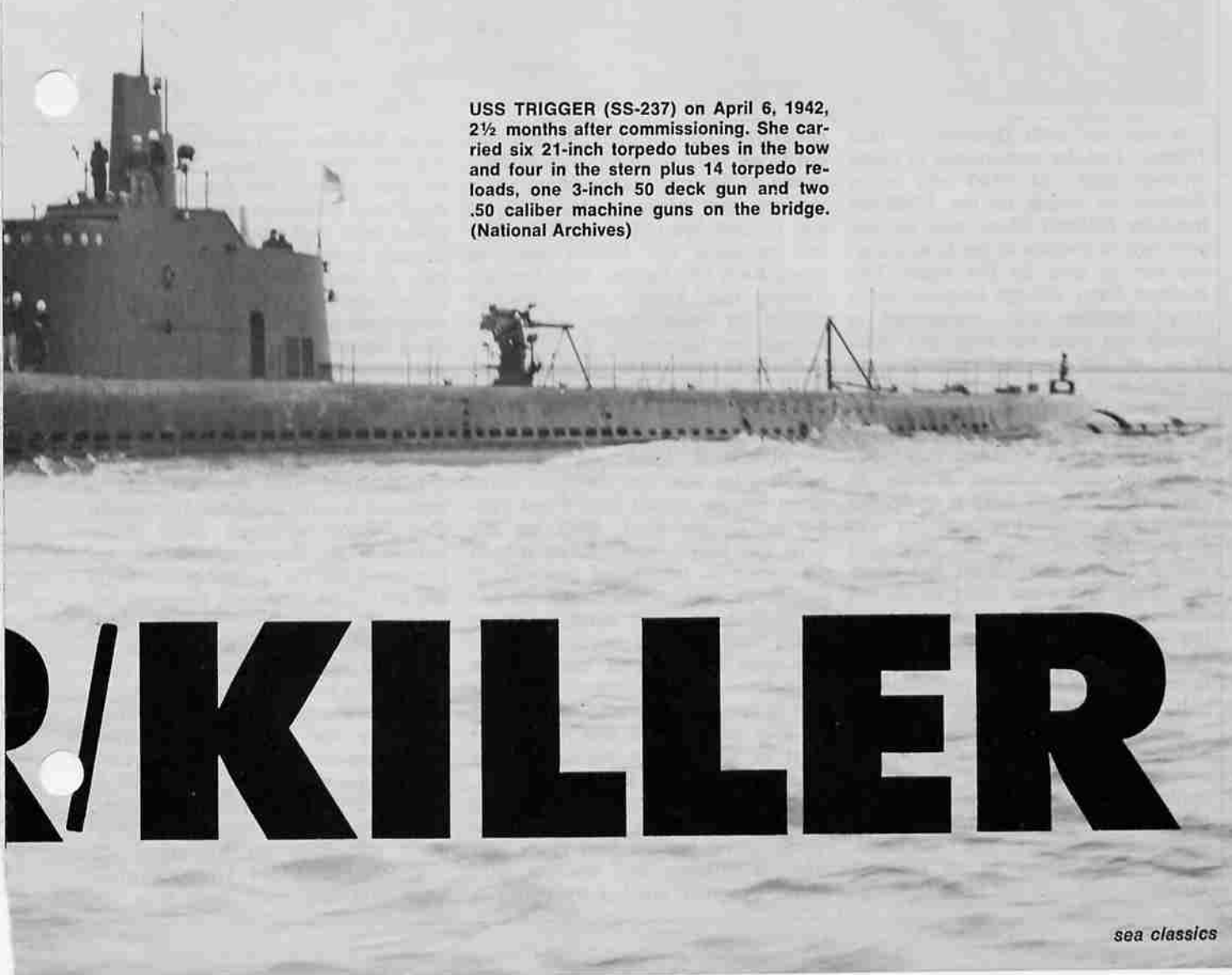
Immediately upon arrival on her patrol station things began to go wrong for *Trigger*. The most serious disaster was her running aground on a reef off Midway. She was only extracted from this precarious situation by the lightening of the boat and the dispatching of a tug from Midway to provide pulling power as *Trigger* backed down all full. Once freed of the reef, major damage was found to consist of the holing of Number 1 ballast tank. Despite this damage, *Trigger* remained on station but made no contact with the Japanese forces.

Once confirmation was received that the Japanese forces had definitely turned back, *Trigger* was ordered to join *Narwhal* (SS-167) and *Plunger* (SS-179) in a sweep through the waters around Midway in search of any downed pilots. No survivors were sighted by the submarines, and on June 9 *Trigger* was ordered

to return to Pearl Harbor for repair. At Pearl Harbor, *Trigger* underwent a short training course in the latest lessons learned by the submarine force so far in the war. On June 26, 1942, she turned her bow northward for Dutch Harbor and her first war patrol. At Dutch Harbor she found orders for her to search Holtz Bay and Chicagof Harbor, and then patrol off Kiska. The patrol was unproductive due to the heavy fogs and high seas in the area and the absence of radar for navigational and search purposes. Her only contacts during the patrol were with a submarine whose identity she was unable to determine and later, on July 9, with two Japanese destroyers which appeared out of, and then promptly disappeared back into, a fog bank off Kishka before any attack could be developed. As a result of these sea conditions, *Trigger* spent most of her time sending weather reports to Dutch Harbor. With her captain sick from pneumonia, *Trigger* returned to Dutch Harbor on August 8. She was then ordered back to Pearl Harbor where,

upon arrival on August 18, Lt. Cdr. Lewis was rushed to the hospital and Cdr. R. S. Benson reported aboard as her new skipper.

When *Trigger* departed Pearl Harbor for her second war patrol on September 28, 1942, she pointed her bow westward for Japan. Her patrol area was to be off Bung Strait. There, on October 5, she tangled with her first enemy ship which she evaluated as a submarine decoy ship or "Q" ship. This evaluation was made as a result of her claim of having been unable to sink a 4,000-ton cargo ship or drive her crew from her guns after hitting her with five torpedoes. As Japanese anti-submarine measures were non-existent at this time, it is now believed that *Trigger* tangled with a converted gunboat, and what she believed were hits were in reality premature explosions of her torpedoes, which caused little or no damage to the target. Premature explosions, or dud hits, by torpedoes were to plague the United States submarine force for the first two years of the war.



USS TRIGGER (SS-237) on April 6, 1942, 2½ months after commissioning. She carried six 21-inch torpedo tubes in the bow and four in the stern plus 14 torpedo reloads, one 3-inch 50 deck gun and two .50 caliber machine guns on the bridge. (National Archives)

R/KILLER



It was not until October 17 that *Trigger* had the opportunity to close another ship. At 0100 she commenced an attack on the 5,869-ton freighter *Holland Maru*, and hit her with two torpedoes in the bow, causing her to sink by the head. The *Holland Maru*, though finished, went down fighting and maintained a steady fire from her bow and deck guns in the general direction of *Trigger* until they were under water.

That night *Trigger* was subjected to a working over by a Japanese destroyer, which dropped a number of depth charges in her vicinity. In retaliation, *Trigger* tried a down the throat shot against the destroyer with three torpedoes. She was rewarded with a colossal explosion, but when the flame and water died down the destroyer was still afloat but turning and leaving the area. It was later determined that one of the torpedoes had exploded prematurely, setting off the other two.

Trigger's next target was a tanker, which she attacked on October 20 but failed to hit due to premature explosion of her torpedoes. The tanker, amply warned, turned to ram *Trigger* but missed as she went deep.

The next tanker which crossed *Trigger's* path was not to escape un-

scratched. On October 24 the sub cut loose with a spread of torpedoes at the 10,526-ton *Nissho Maru*, scoring one and possibly three hits on her. Forced down by aircraft, *Trigger* had to allow the *Nissho Maru* to creep back into harbor. With her fuel running low, *Trigger* now changed course for Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on November 8.

As 1942 was coming to an end, the expenditure of torpedoes had become so great that pre-war stocks were depleted and the procurement of additional torpedoes was not keeping up with the demand. Thus, when *Trigger* sailed from Pearl Harbor on December 3, 1942, on her third war patrol, she carried a load of mines in her tubes instead of torpedoes. Her orders called for her to plant a series of mine fields off Inubo Saki, located north of Tokyo Bay. She commenced laying these mine fields on December 20, after first observing the traffic in the area for four days. Since she noted that most of the traffic seemed to be steaming along the 20 fathom curve, *Trigger* planted her mines in this general depth. Even as she was finishing laying her mines *Trigger* was able to observe the wisdom with which she had planted them, for a

large freighter was spotted heading into the mine field area. The freighter was quickly brought to a stop by a loud explosion, after which she rolled over and sank. With one ship already sunk in her mine field, *Trigger*, as she cleared the area, observed another freighter entering the mine field area and come to a stop as a result of an explosion. Post-war investigation confirmed at least two ships sunk by this mine field plus others damaged.

Trigger had hoped that once her mine field became known, the Japanese would route their shipping to seaward around the field. This would give *Trigger* sufficient water under her keel to make submerged approaches on the shipping transiting the area. The Japanese, however, refused to play by *Trigger's* rules and instead routed their ships inshore of the mine field, thus converting the mine field into a defense shield for themselves against *Trigger*.

Luckily for *Trigger* some ships did, however, pass to the seaward side of the mine field. One of these was the 5,198-ton cargo ship *Teitoku Maru*, which fell before two of *Trigger's* torpedoes on December 23.

Information about *Trigger's* presence and the mine field was ap-



USS NARWHAL (SS-167), October 1934. With the NARWHAL, the TRIGGER searched the waters around Midway after the defeat of the Japanese Navy in June 1942 for downed American flyers. None were found. (National Archives)

◁ USS TRITON (SS-201), sunk by Japanese on 15 March 1943 while making an attack on a convoy with the TRIGGER. (National Archives)

Although the crew of the TRIGGER claims more than 100,000 tons sunk, she was officially credited with only 86,552 tons during her career. Only one U.S. submarine, FLASHER (SS-249), officially sank more than 100,000 tons. (National Archives)



parently still unknown to part of the Japanese merchant marine for, on December 26, a convoy was seen to be standing into the mined area and a number of explosions were heard. Post-war investigation was unable to establish that any ships were sunk or damaged on this day in that area. They were also unable to confirm the sinking of a large cargo ship carrying a deck load of sea planes which *Tigger* reported she sank with two torpedoes on December 31 in seas so heavy that she had to run up fifteen feet of periscope.

The Japanese Naval Command apparently finally decided to do something about *Trigger* because the 1,300-ton *Minekaze* class destroyer *Okikaze* began to sniff around the area on January 10, 1943. Two hits out of three torpedoes fired by *Trigger*, however, permanently stopped *Okikaze* from any mischief. With her torpedoes now expended, *Trigger* turned for Midway, which was now serving as an advance submarine base. There she tied up on January 22, 1943.

Trigger cleared Midway for her fourth war patrol on February 13, 1943, and arrived in her patrol area between Palau and Wewak on Feb-

ruary 26. There, three days later, she became involved in a cat and mouse game with a Japanese sub chaser. After a day of maneuvering the game was called off by both contestants with no shots exchanged.

Three days later, though, *Trigger* was able to launch an attack on a lone freighter. Before the attack was over *Trigger* was almost sunk by one of its own torpedoes, which malfunctioned and began a circular run. She was only spared from this fate by the curse of the submarine service, the premature explosion of her own torpedo. During the excitement of the circular run the Japanese freighter was able to make good its escape.

The situation began to look brighter for *Trigger* on March 15, when she was able to penetrate to the center of a five-ship convoy under escort by two destroyers. Picking out the largest ships in the port and starboard columns, *Trigger* commenced firing her bow tubes. Once again malfunctioning torpedoes rose to plague her when one of the torpedoes fired at a port column commenced a surface run alerting the escorts. Before *Trigger* could fire at the starboard column the escorts were on top of her, forcing her deep.

But going down even deeper was the 3,103-ton cargo ship *Momoha Maru*.

Unknown to *Trigger* as she had commenced firing, *Triton* (SS-201) was preparing to attack the convoy. During the escort's hunt for *Trigger* they located *Triton* and began to deliver a series of attacks which sank her as *Trigger* stole from the scene. *Triton's* presence was only learned after the war when Japanese anti-submarine attack reports were studied.

Trigger closed out the patrol on March 20 with an attack on a convoy of four freighters which scored a hit on the lead ship. Low on fuel, however, *Trigger* was unable to continue the chase and was forced to break off action. She returned to Pearl Harbor on April 6.

Departing Pearl Harbor on April 30, 1943, *Trigger* set out on war patrol number five. Her patrol area was once again to be the coast of Japan. Arriving on station on May 14, *Trigger* spent the next eight days fruitlessly searching for a target. Then, on May 22, she hit the jackpot when over the horizon came a Japanese task force consisting of a carrier, three battleships and numerous escorts. Driving for the carrier,

(Text continued on page 56)

TRIGGER

(Text continued from page 11)

submerged, *Trigger* closed to within 9,000 yards of the screen only to have the task force turn away and increase speed, leaving *Trigger* far behind in their wake.

Two days after the abortive attack on the carrier, *Trigger* began stalking a convoy only to have each thrust toward the convoy blocked by its escorts. Unable to gain a firing position, *Trigger* broke off the action. *Trigger* was more successful on May 28, when she was able to damage a tanker in a convoy. The next stalk by *Trigger*, on June 1, finally saw her rewarded with a kill when three down the throat shots demolished the cargo ship *Noborikawa Maru*.

On June 9, *Trigger* again sighted a Japanese task force, this time consisting of two aircraft carriers. Giving chase, *Trigger* was unable to overtake the task force before it entered Tokyo Bay. Undaunted, she determined to lay outside of Tokyo Bay for the next few days in hopes that the carriers might sortie forth again. *Trigger's* patience was rewarded when at 1500 on June 10 she sighted the 24,140-ton aircraft carrier *Hiyo* standing out to sea with two destroyers for escort. As *Hiyo* crossed *Trigger's* bow she was greeted with a salvo of six torpedoes. What should have been a sure kill became only a major damage to *Hiyo* when four of the six torpedoes malfunctioned: two prematures and two turning off course.

As it was the two hits on *Hiyo* would have sunk her if port had not been so near. When *Hiyo* reached Yokosuka Naval Yard under tow of the light cruiser *Isuzu*, it was with water almost up to her flight decks. *Hiyo*, as a result of the damage sustained, was to be out of the war for the next year. With this action *Trigger* ended her patrol and set course for Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on June 22 to a hero's welcome and a new captain, Cdr. R. E. Dormin.

When *Trigger* sailed from Pearl Harbor for her sixth war patrol on September 1, 1943, she was outfitted with a new surface search radar and one of the first PPI (Plan Position Indicator) radar scopes in the submarine force. Prior to this *Trigger* had had an "A" scope, which is similar to an oscilloscope, which presented only range and bearing in the direction the radar antenna was pointing. The PPI scope, however, presented a continuous 360° picture (PPI scope is the same type of

scope as used to show radar weather on TV). Her hunting ground this time was to be the East China Sea. There she launched her first attack on two freighters on September 17. Unfortunately the Bureau of Weapons had not yet remedied the material faults of the United States torpedoes. Thus, while the torpedoes were heard to hit the targets, they failed to explode. Thus, alerted, the two freighters turned away from each other. *Trigger* thereupon took up a stern chase of the larger of the two. This ship was eventually overtaken and down to the bottom of the sea went the 6,435-ton cargo ship *Yowa Maru*. The other freighter had wisely used the time granted to her and had disappeared over the horizon leaving *Trigger* with one kill instead of two.

A surge of smoke over the horizon on the afternoon of September 21 signaled *Trigger's* next ambush. The smoke soon resolved itself into a convoy of three tankers and three freighters under escort. Sliding into the middle of the convoy that night, *Trigger* commenced a series of surface attacks that expended all of her torpedoes in a running battle. To *Trigger's* crew on the conning tower, the sea seemed filled with burning ships and the sound of gunfire. *Trigger* herself started to join in the gunfire and began to unlimber her 3-inch deck gun to finish off the burning vessels. However, after considering the fact that her 3-inch gun never had managed to get off five rounds without jamming, plus the fact that an undamaged escort was still prowling in the area, *Trigger* decided that she should instead discreetly leave the area and head for Midway. Behind her she left settling under the sea the Imperial Navy 6,500-ton fleet oiler *Shiriyu*, the 7,498-ton tanker *Shoyo Maru*, and the 6,662-ton cargo ship *Argun Maru*. This was *Trigger's* shortest patrol with only nine days on station before she had expended all of her torpedoes. It was a warm welcome *Trigger* received when she tied up at Pearl Harbor on September 30, 1943.

Departing Midway on October 22, 1943, *Trigger* set forth on her seventh war patrol. Her patrol area was to be the waters between Okinawa and Iwo Jima. Immediately upon arrival in the area on November 1, her radar picked up a contact which was identified as a convoy of twelve ships zigzagging under escort of four ships. *Trigger* began to close the convoy with only her radar antenna out of the water. The first attack was commenced on the convoy based entirely on the radar picture

of the PPI scope. This attack left one ship pulling out from the convoy while another disappeared in a flash of light that lit up the convoy from stem to stern.

With her tubes empty, *Trigger* dropped back to reload and avoid a counterattack by two of the convoy's escorts. With her tubes reloaded, *Trigger* reentered the convoy and launched her torpedoes. This time a freighter was observed to take a down angle on her bow, which soon had her decks awash, while a tanker with her bow removed was left dead in the water burning amidship. Torpedo tubes again empty, *Trigger* drew off to return to the area of her first attack to pick up some prisoners for interrogation. A search of the area though turned up no survivors, only a large oil slick and much debris. *Trigger* posted a claim of three ships sank during these two attacks but post-war investigation confirmed only the sinking of the 7,148-ton transport cargo ship *Delagoa Maru* and the 1,852-ton cargo ship *Yawata Maru*.

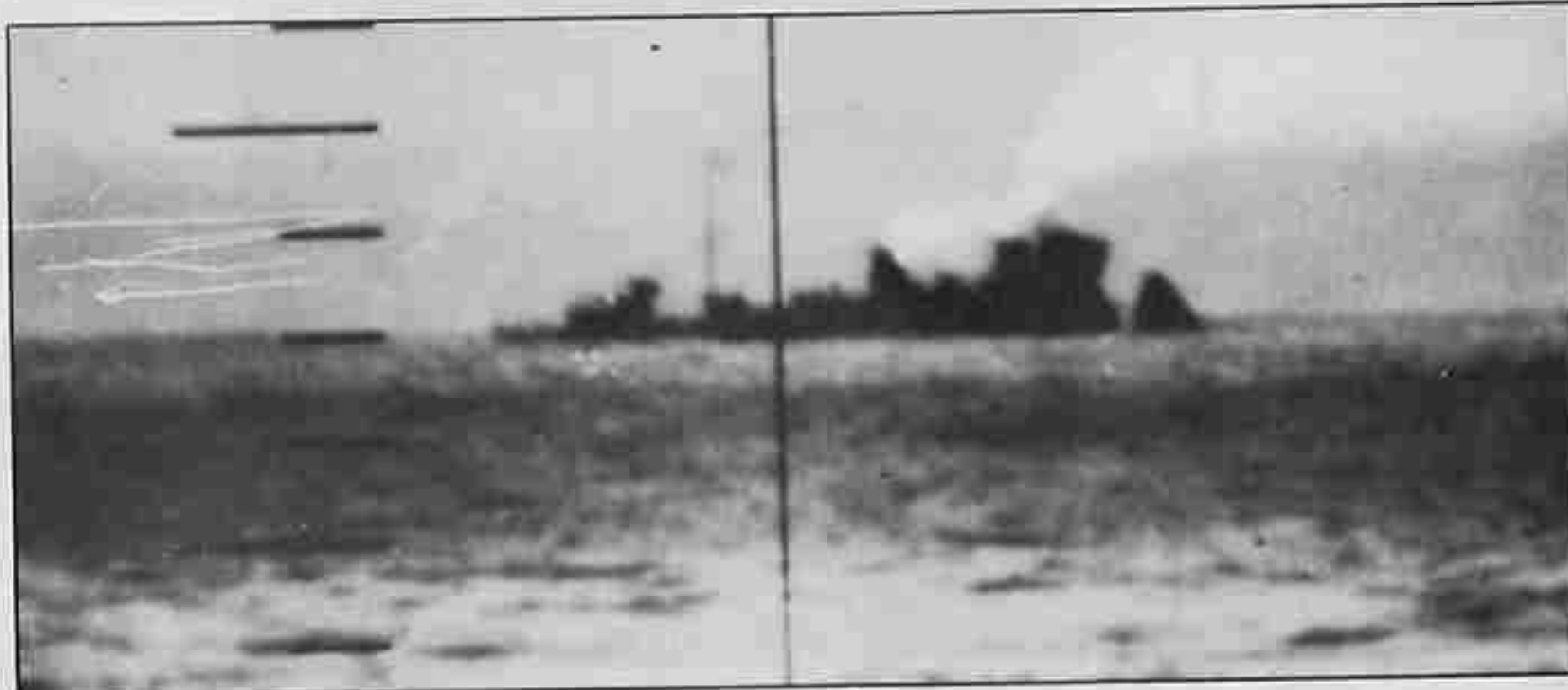
Three days later, on November 4, *Trigger* intercepted a three-ship convoy twenty miles southeast of Akusaki Jima. Her planned attack on the convoy was stopped before she could reach her launching point by an aircraft, which called in one of the escorts. Going deep, *Trigger* laid quiet until the sound of the convoy disappeared. Returning to periscope depth, she was confronted with a destroyer playing possum and an aircraft circling overhead. As she pulled her periscope down, the water around her exploded in bomb blast and the destroyer commenced a run dropping depth charges. This time *Trigger* remained deep until her batteries began to run low. Fortunately, when she broke water this time the seas were empty, and she was able to recharge her batteries.

November 13 was to be a lucky day for *Trigger* but not for a Japanese convoy of thirteen ships and escorts. Diving in front of the convoy, *Trigger* let the escorts pass over her and then surfaced in the center of the convoy. A salvo of six torpedoes spread between three ships announced her presence when two hit home on a freighter. Forced down by the escorts, *Trigger* was unable to watch the death struggle of the 4,443-ton passenger cargo ship *Nachisan Maru*. One other ship fell victim to *Trigger* before she returned to Pearl Harbor on December 8; this was the 1,681-ton cargo ship *Eizan Maru*, which she sank with her last four torpedoes on November 21.

(Text continued on page 58)



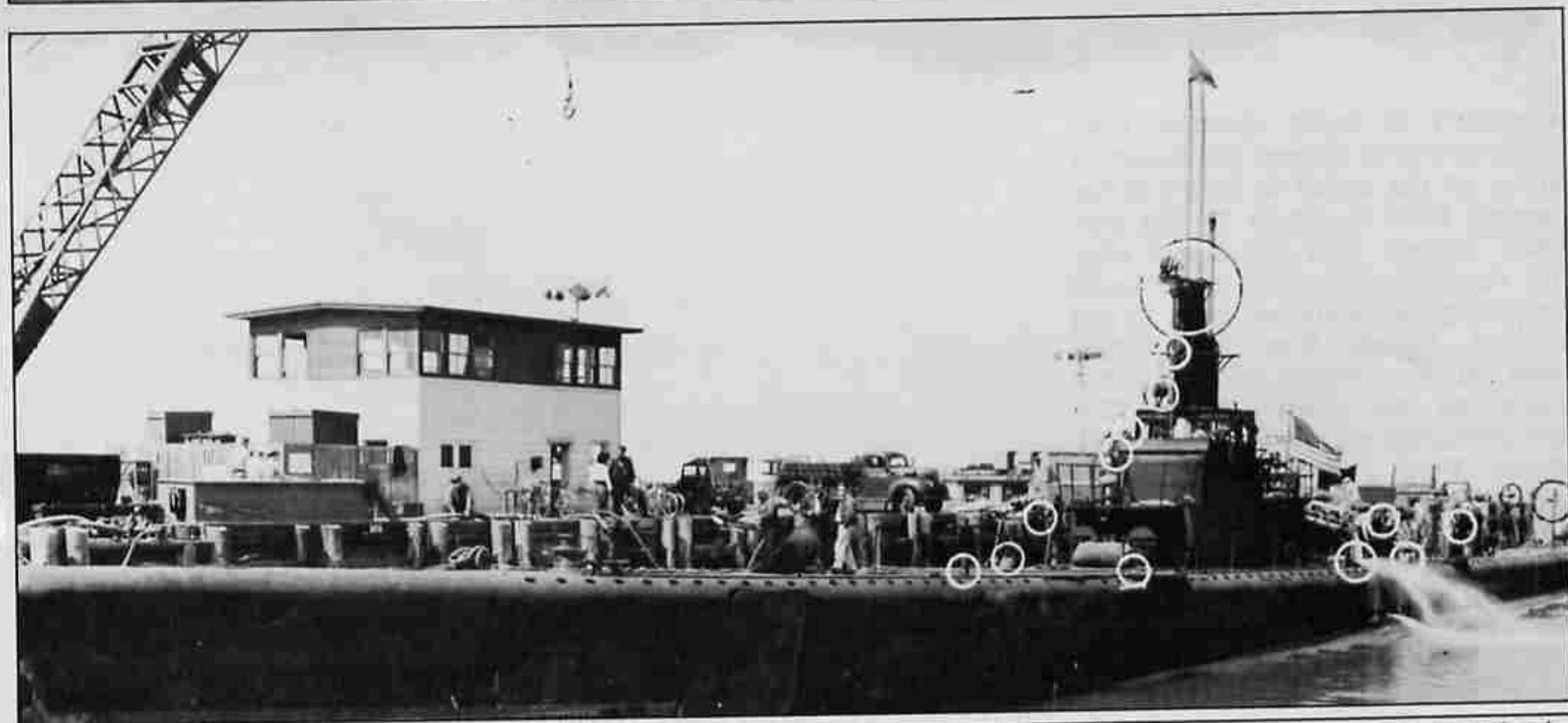
USS (SALMON (SS-182), December 29, 1937. While operating in a wolfpack unit with the TRIGGER and STERLET, the SALMON was seriously damaged by Japanese depth charges in October 1944. Unable to submerge, she was escorted by the TRIGGER back to Saipan for repairs. (National Archives)



The Japanese destroyer OKIKAZE sinking after being hit by the TRIGGER in 1943. (National Archives)



Amongst the tonnage sunk by the TRIGGER was the YAWATA MARU, shown here in February 1941. (National Archives)



The TRIGGER in 1944 at Hunter's Point. Circles indicate changes incorporated during this refitting. (National Archives)

When *Trigger* shipped out of Pearl Harbor on January 1, 1944, on her eighth war patrol, her destination was the waters off of Truk and Guam. At 1224 on January 27, while proceeding submerged, she made contact with the enemy. A Japanese RO class submarine was sighted crossing *Trigger's* bow. As final bearing and range information was being fed into the fire control director, the enemy submarine was observed to turn and bring her stern tubes to bear on *Trigger*. Unsure as to whether she had been discovered by the Japanese sub or if the submarine was just changing course, *Trigger* went deep to avoid any torpedoes being fired at her. By the time it became apparent that *Trigger* had not been discovered by the Japanese submarine and had returned to periscope depth, the Japanese submarine had disappeared.

On the night of January 31, *Trigger's* radar picked up a convoy of three ships and two escorts. Closing the contacts on the surface, *Trigger*, firing on radar information, launched an attack which demolished the 443-ton coastal minelayer, *Nasami*, and damaged the 1,961-ton *Asashio* class destroyer, *Michishio*. The *Michishio* consort immediately turned on *Trigger* and commenced a firing run on her. *Trigger*, in response, let loose with three "down the throat" torpedoes which the destroyer managed to avoid.

With shells splashing around her, *Trigger* crash dived to be jolted by



This deck scene of the TRIGGER at Hunter's Point shows some of the alterations made in 1944. (National Archives)

The TRIGGER as launched in 1942. Compare this photo to that taken in 1944. The tower was cut down to lessen her silhouette during night surface attacks. (National Archives)



a pattern of depth charges. After a few runs over *Trigger* the destroyer broke off the action to return to her convoy. Free to return to the surface, *Trigger* was off again after the remaining ships of the convoy. Following the destroyer back to the convoy, *Trigger* fired four torpedoes at the largest ship. As the torpedoes hit home, the 11,933-ton converted submarine tender, *Yasukuni Maru*, burst into flames that were only drowned out when *Yasukuni Maru* slid beneath the Pacific. Down with the *Yasukuni Maru* went most of the staff of the Japanese Sixth Fleet plus many submarine specialists and technicians who would be sorely missed by the Japanese

submarine service. *Yasukuni Maru* had been on her way from Japan to Truk to relieve the light cruiser *Katori* as flagship of the Japanese Sixth Fleet. With this sinking, *Trigger* terminated her patrol and returned to Pearl Harbor on February 23. At Pearl Harbor a change of command ceremony was held on *Trigger*, with Cdr. F. J. Harlfinger II taking over her con.

Upon sortieing from Pearl Harbor on March 23, 1944, *Trigger* set course for Palau and her ninth war patrol. Off Palau she found enough targets for herself when a convoy of twenty ships steamed into her area. Working her way into the center of this convoy, *Trigger* began to set up her firing data only to have a destroyer start a run on her before she was ready to fire. On the assumption that there were so many ships around her that some of her torpedoes were bound to hit a target, *Trigger* fired in the general direction of nearby ships as she began to crash dive. As the waters closed around her she heard two hits but was too busy to observe their effect for she was soon fighting for her own life.

During the next hours, six different escorts pounded away at *Trigger*. When they finally broke off action, *Trigger's* hull was flooded to the deck plates while her bow planes, trim pump, sound gear and radars were out of commission. *Trigger's* crew, however, was undaunted by this damage, and instead of returning to Pearl Harbor, they turned to with a vigor, and through the use of considerable ingenuity were able to return her to fighting condition

was scattering and *Trigger* was only able to claim a possible long distance hit on a cargo ship. Post-war investigation was able to confirm the sinking of the 11,738-ton cargo ship *Miike Maru* and damaging of the 870-ton *Etorofu* class destroyer escort *Kasado*, the 9,467-ton cargo ship *Hawaii Maru* and the 8,811-ton cargo ship *Asosan Maru*. With her torpedo supply exhausted after this series of attacks, *Trigger* set course for Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on May 20, 1944.

Awaiting *Trigger* upon her arrival at Pearl Harbor was the good news that she was to return to Mare Island for a major overhaul. *Trigger* wasted little time at Pearl Harbor, departing on May 24 for San Francisco. In all, *Trigger* was to spend three months stateside having her equipment updated before starting back for the war zone on September 12, 1944.

During the period *Trigger* was stateside being updated, the course of the submarine war in the Pacific had changed. The arrival of the new construction plus the shrinking of the war zone brought about the adoption of wolfpack tactics. The one-boat submarine patrol was becoming a relic of the past. Thus, upon arrival at Pearl Harbor, *Trigger* was directed to join with *Silversides* (SS-236) and *Tang* (SS-306) as part of a training course in these new tactics. Upon completion of this training course *Trigger* was ordered to sail from Pearl Harbor on September 24 for the new advanced submarine base at Saipan. At Saipan she was ordered to join *Salmon* (SS-182) and *Sterlet* (SS-392) as part

in four days.

Trigger was again in contact with the enemy on April 26 when she intercepted, north of Palau, Convoy Matsu No. 5, consisting of six ships bound for Japan. Firing a full salvo of six torpedoes at two overlapping ships, *Trigger* saw one disintegrate before her eyes while the other staggered out of formation on fire.

Furiously reloading her torpedo tubes, *Trigger* returned to the fray and scored a hit on another freighter as well as one of the escorts. Once again, with torpedo tubes empty, *Trigger* refused to break off the action and instead reloaded her forward tubes to continue the hunt. By this time, though, the convoy

of the wolfpack, Coye's Coyotes. After a three-day stay at Saipan, *Trigger* departed on October 5 on her 10th war patrol with the rest of the wolfpack for the east coast of Formosa. The pack's first duty upon arrival on station was to provide lifeguard assistance for a carrier air strike being launched against Formosa by Admiral Mitscher on October 12.

Trigger had only been on her station for a short time when at 1100 a Hellcat from the *Bunker Hill* (CV-17) pancaked in the water alongside of her. The pilot, injured in the crash, was rescued by one of the crew swimming out to him and tying

(Please turn page)

a life line around him. This was done with the full knowledge that he and the pilot would have to be abandoned if *Trigger* was attacked by one of the Japanese planes in the area.

The wolfpack was then assigned to act as a scouting force to cover the United States landings on Leyte. No contact was made with any of the Japanese naval units steaming to battle, but as the Japanese fleet fled from the Leyte Gulf disaster the pack made contact with part of Ozawa's decoy force on October 26. The pack, however, was unable to overhaul the Japanese force, which consisted of the battleships *Ise*, *Huza*, light cruisers *Oyodo*, *Isuzu* and five destroyers. Thus, *Trigger* exchanged no shots during the largest sea battle fought by the U. S. Navy.

With the Japanese Navy driven from the seas, *Trigger* returned to hunting the Japanese Merchant Marine. On October 30 she made

other members of the wolfpack saved *Trigger* but pulled the escorts down on *Salmon*, which they severely damaged. When *Salmon* was at last free of her attackers she was barely able to claw her way back to the surface. Once on the surface she found herself unable to dive or proceed. In answer to her calls for help, both *Trigger* and *Sterlet* came to her aid and helped repair her engines.

Once more able to proceed on the surface, but unable to dive, *Salmon* set out under escort from *Trigger* and *Sterlet* for Saipan. This operation was successfully accomplished on November 3, 1944, but only after they had out-manuevered a spread of torpedoes fired by a Japanese submarine.

Upon safely delivering *Salmon* to Saipan, *Trigger* was assigned along with *Ronquil* (SS-396), *Burfish* (SS-312), *Sterlet* (SS-392), *Saury* (SS-189), *Silversides* (SS-236), and *Tambor* (SS-198), to Burt Brooms. This

waters off southern Japan. Arriving on station on January 3, 1945, *Trigger* spent a frustrating month futilely searching for targets. The seas off Japan had been hunted so often and so many ships had been sunk that few targets remained. *Trigger* was therefore ordered to terminate her patrol on January 30 and return to Guam, which she did on February 3. This marked the first time since her first war patrol that *Trigger* returned to port empty handed. At Guam, in a change of command ceremony, *Trigger* received her fourth captain since commissioning, Cdr. D. R. Connole.

Departing Guam on March 11, 1945, for her twelfth war patrol, *Trigger* set course for the Nansei Shoto area. There, on March 18, she attacked a convoy, damaging one cargo ship and sinking the 1,012-ton cargo ship *Tsukushi Maru No. 3*. As after the attack the convoy entered a Japanese defensive mine field west of Nansei Shoto in the East China Sea, Submarine Headquarters ordered *Trigger* to follow the convoy and plot the swept channel for future use by United States forces. On March 27 she added a new scalp to her belt by downing the Imperial Navy's 1,564-ton cable layer *Odate*.

On March 26, 1945, *Trigger* was ordered to join *Seadog* (SS-401) and *Threadfin* (SS-410) as part of the wolfpack Earl's Eliminators. This message she failed to acknowledge, as well as all other messages addressed to her. On May 1, 1945, she was officially reported overdue and presumed lost. From investigation of Japanese anti-submarine attack records after the war, it was determined that *Trigger* was sunk by a combined Japanese air and surface attack between Formosa and Japan on March 28.

In all, *Trigger* had made twelve war patrols and by her log claimed to have sunk 27 ships of 180,600 tons plus damaging 13 more of 102,900 tons. Post-war investigation, however, could only confirm the sinking of 18 ships of 86,552 tons to place *Trigger* in a tie with *Rasher* (SS-269) and *Seawolf* (SS-197) for ninth place for the number of ships sunk, and in seventh place for total tonnage sunk.

For her services during the war *Trigger* won eleven battle stars and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation Badge and the Navy's Unit Commendation Award. The name *Trigger* has been carried on in the U. S. Navy by the diesel-powered attack submarine *Trigger* (SS-564), which was commissioned on March 31, 1952. †



The latest TRIGGER (SS-564), was commissioned March 31, 1952, a conventionally powered attack submarine of the TANG Class. She was decommissioned

in early 1973. Her original length was 269' 2", but the entire class underwent radical reconstruction at various periods. All had FRAM II. (Official U.S. Navy)

contact with a tanker accompanied by four escorts. By this stage of the war oilers had become so vital to Japan that they rated stronger escorts than fleet units. Stealing in on the tanker, *Trigger* fired a full salvo of torpedoes at the target only to have one of the torpedoes porpoise as it sped on its way giving the tanker sufficient warning that it was able to avoid the attack. Determined not to lose the target, *Trigger* crept back to the convoy and fired another salvo at the tanker, this time knocking off the tanker's stern. In a fury the four escorts fell on *Trigger* and began to subject her to a devastating depth charge attack. As the escorts were closing in on *Trigger*, both *Salmon* (SS-182) and *Sterlet* (SS-392) arrived on the scene and finished off the 10,021-ton tanker *Takane Maru*. Credit for the sinking of *Takane Maru* was evenly divided between the three submarines.

The new torpedo attack by the

was a wolfpack whose mission was to sweep from the sea all Japanese picket boats lying in a corridor 100 miles wide running from the Bonin Islands northeast to Japan. The purpose of this operation was to clear a path for a proposed carrier raid on Japan. Heavy seas, lack of fire control equipment and the small size of the targets prevented the submarines from carrying out their mission. Most of the picket boats were of less than 100 tons but too heavily armed to allow the submarines to close in on them without risking damage to their pressure hulls which would prevent them from submerging. As a result the operation was cancelled shortly after the pack sailed on November 10, and *Trigger* thus found herself tying up at Apra Harbor, Guam, on November 23.

Trigger slipped out of Guam for her eleventh war patrol on December 28, 1944. Her destination was the