

HISTORY OF USS HOE (SS 258)

Named for one of the dogfish sharks, the submarine USS HOE participated in eight War Patrols in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, and sank many tons of enemy shipping.

USS HOE was constructed by the Electric Boat Company, Groton, Connecticut. The keel of the submarine was laid on 2 January 1943. She was launched on 17 September 1942, with Miss Helen Hess, an Administrative Assistant in the Office of the Chief of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, serving as sponsor.

The submarine was placed in commission on 16 December 1942, and Commander V. B. McCrea, USN, assumed command as her first commanding officer. HOE operated around New London, Connecticut until May when she got underway for Pearl Harbor.

USS HOE arrived in Pearl Harbor on 15 May 1943, and from the 16th through the 21st, underwent refitting. She commenced her first war patrol on 27 May which continued through 11 July.

Her first stop was at Johnston Island on the 29th, where she remained only a day, and from there proceeded to her assigned operating area. On 15 June, HOE picked up three ships on her radar. The radar indicated one ship with two escorts. When HOE closed the range to 5,000 yards, the largest target was determined to be a cargo ship of about 6,000 tons. HOE fired three torpedoes hitting her target with one. Her escorts then commenced dropping depth charges, however none came close enough to cause any damage.

HOE commenced patrolling the Fais-Palau traffic lanes on 18 June, Smoke was sighted from a convoy on the 21st, and the submarine commenced her approach. That evening, masts and the stack of one large ship was sighted in the convoy. When HOE closed range, a large loaded transport was sighted, escorted by two destroyers.

At 2257, HOE fired four torpedoes from her stern tubes at the large transport. Three contact hits were made. When the second torpedo hit, flames covered the entire middle section of the ship and then she broke in two, sinking immediately.

The remainder of the patrol was uneventful, and HOE returned to Pearl Harbor on 11 July via Ulithi and Midway.

HOE's second war patrol was conducted in an area west of Truk and south of Guam. This patrol was from 21 August to 18 October 1943. Only five worthwhile contacts were made during this patrol. HOE developed three of the five contacts into attacks, one attack resulting in damage to the enemy.

The first contact was on a 1500 ton escort vessel with no determined results. The second contact during this patrol was with a cargo ship, an aircraft carrier and several destroyer escorts. Due to a small speed advantage and the fact that the targets would reach Truk in 20 hours, the commanding officer of HOE decided not to attempt an end around run on the vessels.

The third contact consisted of a gunboat, a 5,000 ton cargo ship and two escorts. Due to an unfortunate set of circumstance which included a foggy periscope and a glassy sea, HOE was detected in her approach and forced under by counter measures before an attack could be delivered.

At 0600 on 1 September, HOE picked up two targets at a distance of approximately 22,000 yards. As the targets approached they were identified as a gunboat, a 5,000 ton cargo ship, and two escorts.

HOE raised her periscope for a final bearing at 1800 before firing at the gunboat. She discovered he was swinging to head directly for her, at a distance of 200 yards away. One officer was standing on the wing of the bridge of the ship, and pointed at her periscope. HOE dived deep and on passing 220 feet, the first depth charge went off close aboard knocking paint and cork off bulkheads. The second depth charge was also close.

In the meantime, the two small escort vessels took up the attack, and dropped four more depth charges while searching.

At 1405 on 22 September, HOE sighted masts of a large ship on the horizon, and commenced tracking. It was a large tanker, and unescorted. HOE fired a port track straight bow shot at a range of 2,200 yards. The boat broached about 20 seconds after firing its torpedoes. HOE heard two torpedo explosions, and upon regaining periscope depth, she observed the target turning away with a port list. The submarine attempted to overtake the damaged ship, but due to failure of one engine, she was unable to pursue her.

HOE patrolled submerged during daylight, and at 2218 on 30 September, she made radar contact on six ships. She maneuvered on the surface for an attack position while tracking the target to obtain her course and speed. The night was very dark with heavy rain, so the submarine decided to make a surface attack. The group consisted of three large vessels and three escorts. Due to a heavy rain, HOE lost contact. She returned to Pearl Harbor on 18 October via Midway.

The third war patrol of USS HOE extended over a period of 39 days of which twelve were spent in the assigned patrol area between Mindanao and Halmahera. On 16 February 1944, the submarine sighted smoke and commenced tracking. At 1310 HOE sighted the superstructures of a convoy at a distance of 9,000 yards, and headed in for the attack. They were easily visible at this range. HOE fired six bow tubes at the two leading ships, and several minutes later, fired four stern tubes.

She made a total of four hits with her torpedoes. Black smoke commenced pouring from the first two targets, and one large pip disappeared from the radar screen at 6,000 yards. Due to heavy smoke, visibility in the direction of the convoy was poor. At 2354, another pip disappeared from the radar screen. At midnight there were four explosions, and one ship in the convoy blew up, the flames reaching about 2,000 feet.

The force of the explosion shook HOE considerably. HOE passed someone in the water about 200 yards away to the starboard following this, who flashed

a light three times. It was assumed to be survivors who were on a raft or in a small boat. The submarine did not stop to investigate as she hurried to close the remainder of the convoy.

Due to the presence of an enemy patrol boat, the submarine fell back 20 miles behind the convoy. HOE picked up a radar contact at a distance of 24,000 yards on 25 February 1944, and maneuvered for an attack position.

When HOE closed the range to about 2,350 yards, one of the three tankers in the group apparently sighted the wake or smoke from HOE's engines and commenced flashing a white light. The leading tanker changed course and opened fire on HOE. Depth charging began at a rapid rate. At 0115, the leading tanker had settled on a course, and HOE fired four stern tubes at her from a range of 2600 yards. There were two hits on the tanker, which stopped her firing.

HOE set her course at 0119 and noticed the damaged tanker was still underway and headed for Banos Point about 15 miles away. One of the enemy destroyers on HOE's starboard quarter turned and headed for the two tankers at high speed. The DD attempted to pass what he thought was the tanker's stern, and ran into her bows on, causing some damage.

HOE fired her last four torpedoes at the damaged tanker, hitting her with two of them. The tanker sank about 10 seconds after the second torpedo hit, and the remaining destroyer and oiler headed up in Davao Gulf at high speed.

The submarine left the area south, having expended all her torpedoes, and returned to Fremantle, Australia.

Her fourth war patrol was conducted from 4 April 1944 to 2 June 1944. During this patrol, HOE steamed a total of 12,529 miles, and expended 21 torpedoes in three attacks upon enemy convoys.

Her first submerged attack was made on a large convoy consisting of at least 12 ships accompanied by one carrier and several destroyer escorts. HOE registered two hits on a large cargo ship and a medium oiler. The escorts immediately dropped depth charges over a period of two hours with no results.

HOE changed her course on 4 May and steamed enroute to the area off the coast of Luzon. She made radar contact on 8 May 1944 with at least five enemy ships at a range of 17,000 yards. It turned out to be a convoy of about 12 ships with many escorts. The convoy changed course at 0455 on this date, and headed directly for HOE. The submarine immediately changed course to head directly for the leading ship in the center column, which was a large transport.

The convoy again changed course which left HOE about 4,000 yards off the track of the port column.

HOE fired four torpedoes at 0509 at a large cargo ship of about 4,000 tons. She then fired two torpedoes at a medium tanker, but was unable to observe hits through her periscope due to depth control difficulties. The escorts commenced depth charging HOE, but fortunately their charges were set shallow and none caused any damage.

Smoke was sighted on the horizon on 17 May, which was determined to be a convoy consisting of 11 cargo ships, transports, and oilers with numerous escorts. They were at a distance of approximately 13,000 yards. Three escorts closed in on HOE before she could observe the damage done by the two torpedoes she had fired. As a result, HOE lost the convoy.

At 0424, HOE sighted smoke from the convoy again, and she immediately submerged as aircraft were coming in on her port beam at a distance of eight miles. This was probably the same convoy, and there were three ships missing. HOE decided to trail the convoy and make an attack at sunset.

The convoy used the same tactics, and gave HOE the slip. Apparently, they had headed for the vicinity of Manila. The submarine made contact again at 2238 on 19 May. The convoy that she had contacted, included three large vessels and four smaller ones. The night was very black, and the targets were difficult to see at a range of 4,000 yards. At 0128, she commenced firing torpedoes.

Six torpedoes were fired, four of which hit a medium size cargo ship causing it to explode. The entire area was lit up as a result, and HOE was perfectly exposed. HOE commenced firing her after tubes at 0132 at an escort vessel with several cargo ships lined up behind him. While firing aft, the escort commenced firing at HOE. After the second torpedo, the ship turned toward HOE. HOE then fired two additional torpedoes.

There were two torpedo explosions which hit the freighter just behind the escort. Two more explosions hit separate targets at a range of 3,000 yards. Heavy red flashes from the last two hits were observed from the bridge. One ship blew up and the other had heavy black smoke pouring out its entire length. Numerous depth charges commenced with no result. HOE returned to Fremantle, Australia on 2 June, thus ending her fourth war patrol.

Her fifth war patrol was conducted in the South China Sea from 29 June to 23 August 1944. During this patrol, HOE was unsuccessful in several attempts to close a convoy for a night surface attack north of Palawan Passage. The convoy had unusually alert escorts which were probably equipped with surface search radar. After moonrise, a submerged approach was attempted. This was also unsuccessful due to the convoy making a radical change of base course.

Contact was regained at dawn but was lost soon thereafter in a rain squall and never regained in spite of a well planned daylight search. HOE deserved an opportunity to attack this convoy because of her persistent and well directed efforts.

The sixth war patrol was conducted off the west coast of Luzon during the period 15 to 22 September 1944. It was of 37 days duration. HOE was congratulated by the Commander SEVENTH Fleet for the completion of this successful patrol in which 15,000 tons of shipping was destroyed and 12,500 tons damaged.

The first two attacks were night surface attacks on a large convoy of approximately 12 to 14 ships. HOE fired four torpedoes at a large cargo ship from a range of 4,615 yards, and registered two hits. Large and small explosions were heard following this. A few minutes later, she fired three additional torpedoes at another cargo ship from a range of 4,000 yards. One hit was made, and the ship began to smoke.

A long chase was made on the same convoy, followed by a night surface attack with six torpedoes on the last two ships in the convoy. One hit was observed and the target commenced smoking heavily throughout the entire length.

After trailing on the surface, the convoy was again contacted during the night and two more night attacks were made. HOE fired six torpedoes at the two leading cargo ships with one hit. Another approach was made shortly thereafter, firing four additional torpedoes at a large cargo ship. One hit was made and the cargo ship blew up. Another hit was made shortly thereafter when she fired a single torpedo at an escort.

The South China Sea was the area in which the submarine conducted her seventh war patrol as a member of a coordinated search and attack group consisting of BAYA and CAVALLA. The period of this war patrol was from 23 November 1944 to 3 January 1945.

The submarine made her first attack on 2 December in the Java Sea while enroute to her assigned area. She fired four torpedoes from a range of 2300 yards during a night surface attack on a small tanker, hitting her with two torpedoes. The tanker was damaged as a result of the torpedoes but managed to escape.

HOE's eight war patrol was from 8 February to 8 April 1945 and was conducted in the South China Seas under the command of Lieutenant Commander M. P. Refo, III, USN. Targets were scarce and enemy anti-submarine aircraft measures heavy during this patrol. HOE, in an aggressive night attack on a large tanker escorted by a single destroyer, launched one good hit in the DD which blew her up. USS HOE received the Submarine Combat Ensignia for this patrol.

She was placed out of commission and in reserve in January 1947. HOE is presently berthed in New London, Connecticut.

USS HOE earned seven Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participation in submarine war patrols:

- 1 Star/Submarine war patrol 285 -- 27 May - 6 July 1943
- 1 Star/Submarine war patrol 286 -- 21 August - 18 October 1943
- 1 Star/Submarine war patrol 287 ---26 January - 5 March 1944
- 1 Star/Submarine war patrol 288 -- 4 April - 2 June 1944
- 1 Star/Submarine war patrol 289 -- 15 September - 22 October 1944

1 Star/Submarine war patrol 290 -- 23 November 1944 - 3 January 1945

1 Star/Submarine war patrol 291 -- 8 February - 8 April 1945

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STATISTICS

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| OVERALL LENGTH | 312 feet |
| BEAM | 27 feet |
| SPEED | 20 knots |
| DISPLACEMENT | 1468 tons |

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U. S. S. HOE (SS-258)

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New York, N. Y. YANKEE SUBMARINE
31 October 1945 FLEET
ADMINISTRATION

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: Ship's History.
Reference: (a) ALPac 202.
Enclosure: (A) Subject History.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith.

MILES P. REFO, III.

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SHIP'S HISTORY, U.S.S. HOE (SS 258)

The USS HOE was built by the Electric Boat Company of Groton, Connecticut. The keel was laid on 2 January, 1942, and the ship launched on 17 September, 1942, sponsored by Miss Helen Hess. Upon completion of fitting out, the HOE was commissioned at the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, on 16 December, 1942.

Lieutenant Commander E. C. Folger, USN, was the first commanding officer. The ship then commenced her shakedown and trial period under Commander Submarines, Atlantic Fleet. On 23 January, 1943, Lieutenant Commander V. B. McCrea, USN, relieved Lieutenant Commander Folger as commanding officer.

On 19 April, the training period completed, HOE departed for the Panama Canal and thence to Pearl Harbor, arriving on 15 May. She departed Pearl Harbor 27 May on her first War Patrol, under Commander Submarines, Pacific Fleet. This patrol was made in the vicinity of Guam and Palau and resulted in the sinking of one passenger freighter of the Africa Maru Class (9476 tons) and damaging one freighter of the Chile Maru Class (5860 tons), both by submerged torpedo attacks. This patrol was considered successful for purpose of awarding the Submarine Combat Insignia. HOE returned to Pearl Harbor for refit by Submarine Squadron Four on 11 July, after spending fifteen days on station. The run lasted forty-five days.

The second war patrol, lasting fifty-eight days, was conducted in the area west of Truk and southeast of Guam and started on 21 August. HOE was credited with the damaging of one unidentified 10,000 ton tanker in a submerged approach. This patrol was not considered successful and was further marred by considerable engine trouble. HOE returned to Mare Island for new engines upon completion of this run.

The Navy Yard overhaul was completed on 2 January, 1944, and the ship departed Pearl Harbor on 26 January, on her third War Patrol which was conducted in the waters between Mindanao and Malacca and lasted thirty-nine days. This patrol was listed among the hundred most successful of the war and earned the Navy Cross for Lieutenant Commander McCrea. Four ships were sunk; a 10,000 ton Mischo Maru tanker, a 5,400 ton Bengal Maru merchantman, and two 6,800 ton Genca Maru merchant ships. Another 10,000 ton Kyokuto Maru tanker was damaged; in two attacks, 29,495 tons sunk and 10,000 tons damaged. Both of these attacks were night surface approaches against escorted and armed convoys. The patrol was considered successful and the HOE put into Fremantle, West Australia, 5 March for refit by USS PERLAS.

On 4 April, the ship commenced her fourth war patrol, sixty days in length, conducted in the South China Sea off Hainan Island. One Submerged attack resulted in the damaging of two unidentified ships; one of 7,500 tons and one of 4,000 tons. Two night surface attacks resulted in sinking one 4,000 ton ship and damaging two more of 4,000 tons each. This was considered a successful patrol, and the ship returned to Fremantle for refit by the USS GRIFFIN.

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SHIP'S HISTORY, U.S.S. HOE (SS 258) Cont'd.

HOE departed on her fifth patrol on 29 June. This was fifty-five days in length and was also conducted in the South China Sea. A general rise in counter measures plus unfavorable weather prevented any success on this run, although two attacks were made, one being against a Japanese submarine of the I-9 class. HOE once more returned to Fremantle, for refit by the GRIFFIN.

The sixth war patrol, lasting thirty-seven days, was conducted off the northwest coast of Luzon. HOE commanded a "wolf pack" this run, consisting of three boats. Five night surface attacks were made in a two-day running battle with a convoy, resulting in the sinking of two large freighters of 7,000 tons and the damaging of three more of 4,000 tons plus one escort. This patrol, considered successful, was Commander McCrea's last; he was relieved on 31 October, 1944, by Lieutenant Commander Miles P. Refo, III., U. S. Navy.

Refit was accomplished again in Fremantle, by the GRIFFIN, and HOE departed on her seventh War Patrol on 23 November, back to the South China Sea. This was not considered a successful run; HOE damaged one small 1,500 ton tanker in a night surface attack and staged an impromptu commando raid on a small island only to find that the enemy had already abandoned his position. HOE returned to Fremantle, for a refit by Submarine Repair Unit 137.

The eighth War Patrol commenced on 8 February, and lasted forty-six days, once more in the South China Sea. This was considered a successful patrol, in that a Tenryuiki class destroyer (2300 tons) was sunk in a submerged attack. Lieutenant Commander Refo was awarded the Legion of Merit Medal for this patrol. An incident believed unique in submarines occurred on this run; HOE rammed another friendly submarine while both boats were submerged. Neither ship was seriously damaged. Upon the completion of this patrol, HOE returned to Mare Island for a Navy Yard overhaul. Leaving the States 5 July, 1945, the ship was just entering Apra Harbor, Guam, on her way to Japan when the war ended. A few days later she was ordered back to the States, passing through Midway, Pearl Harbor, Panama, and arriving in New York on 27 September.

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| <u>No. of Patrol</u> | <u>No. and Type Ships Sunk</u> | <u>Total Tonnage Sunk</u> | <u>No. and Type Ships Damaged</u> | <u>Total Tonnage Damaged</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | 1 AK (Africa Maru) | 9476 | 1 AK (Chile Maru) | 5860 |
| 2. | - | - | 1 AO (unknown) | 10020 |
| 3. | 1 AO (Miesho Maru) | 10526 | 1 AO (Kyokato Maru) | 10052 |
| | 1 AK (Bengal Maru) | 5389 | | |
| | 1 AK (Genoa Maru) | 6785 | | |
| | 1 AK (Genoa Maru) | 6785 | | |
| 4. | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 | 1 AK (unknown) | 7500 |
| | | | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 |
| | | | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 |
| | | | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 |
| 5. | - | - | - | - |
| 6. | 1 AK (unknown) | 7500 | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 |
| | 1 AK (unknown) | 7500 | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 |
| | | | 1 AK (unknown) | 4000 |
| | | | 1 Escort (unknown) | 500 |
| | - | - | 1 AO (unknown) | 1500 |
| 8. | 1 DD (Terutsuki) | 2300 | - | - |
| 9 Ships Sunk | | 60271 | 12 Ships Damaged | |
| | | | 59432 | |



