

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP 09B9)
SHIP'S HISTORY SECTION

HISTORY OF SHIPS NAMED SCORPION

Five ships of the Fleet have been named SCORPION.

The first SCORPION, a schooner, was acquired by the Navy in 1812. The date and manner of acquisition, tonnage and dimensions of this schooner are unknown. She had an approximate complement of 25 officers and men. In 1814, she was armed with one long 24-pounder, one 18-pounder and two 12-pounders. Some entries in official records refer to SCORPION as a "cutter" or "sloop".

SCORPION, under the command of Lieutenant Edmond P. Kennedy, was attached to the Norfolk Station as early as September 1812. Lieutenant Kennedy was ordered to take command of the Potomac Flotilla on 29 March 1813 and hoisted his flag in SCORPION. He was relieved as her commanding officer on 5 May 1813 by Lieutenant George C. Read. This little flotilla which also included the schooner ASP and three gunboats, cruised in the Potomac River for the protection of Washington, keeping watch for the appearance of the enemy at the mouth of the river.

On 18 February 1814 SCORPION arrived at Baltimore, Maryland, where she became flagship of Commodore Joshua Barney's Chesapeake Flotilla of thirteen barges, two gunboats, a galley, and a lookout boat. The Flotilla sailed from Baltimore on 24 May to repulse the enemy which had entered the Chesapeake Bay and was advancing towards the capital city of Washington. A British squadron was encountered at the mouth of the Patuxent on 1 June and the little Flotilla was forced up river. During the following weeks, Commodore Barney's barges had several skirmishes with the enemy in a gallant but unsuccessful effort to halt the British march. When it became apparent that the little Flotilla would fall into the hands of the enemy on 21 August 1814, Commodore Barney landed the greater part of his men at Pig Point near upper Malborough and marched towards Washington, leaving SCORPION and the barges to be burned by a detail of men under Lieutenant Frazier. The British entered the capital city three days later, setting fire to the Capitol, the White House and other public buildings, and returned to their ships.

The second SCORPION was a 2-gun schooner, built for the United States Navy at Erie, Pennsylvania, by the firm of Adam and Noah Brown of New York. Launched in the spring of 1813, her length of keel was 62 feet; beam, 17 feet; depth of hold, 5 feet; and approximate tonnage, 63. She had a complement of 35 officers and men, and was armed with one short and one long 32-pounder.

SCORPION was assigned to Commodore Oliver H. Perry's squadron in the summer of 1813 and two of her men were killed in the Battle of Lake Erie, on 10 September 1813. This victory by Perry's squadron of nine vessels off Put-in-Bay, resulted in the capture of the British fleet of two ships, two brigs, one schooner and a sloop. One of the most important events of the

war, it opened the way for the American troops to repossess territory and penetrate Canada and led to the destruction of the Indian Confederacy. Subsequent to the battle, SCORPION operated in the Thames River in support of General William Harrison's forces, transporting ammunition and stores captured from the enemy. She was laid up at Erie, Pennsylvania, during the ice-bound winter months of 1813-1814 and commenced active cruises on the Great Lakes in May 1814. She transported troops and supplies in support of the Army in the Detroit area, then was assigned with schooner TIGRESS to blockade the Nautawassaga River and Lake Simcoe, the only route by which the enemy could supply their garrison at Mackinaw. The two schooners effectively cut off supplies and provisions so that by September 1814, that enemy garrison was threatened with starvation.

While anchored near the shore off St. Joseph's the evening of 3 September 1814, TIGRESS came under surprise attack by a force of 100 British and Indians which had been sent out in five boats from Mackinaw to raise the blockade. Outnumbered by three to one, the men of TIGRESS put up a heroic fight to repel the boarders but were soon carried by the overwhelming force. The enemy under command of British Lieutenant Bulger, remained aboard the TIGRESS who was kept in the same position with her pennant flying. Bulger ordered his men to hide when the SCORPION approached on 5 September and came within two miles to anchor for the night. At dawn of 6 September, TIGRESS ran alongside the unsuspecting SCORPION, and the enemy boarders rushed from their concealment to overwhelm the small crew and hoisted the British flag. Both schooners were taken into Mackinaw where their crews were imprisoned. SCORPION was taken into the service of the British Navy as the 4-gun schooner CONFIANCE.

The third SCORPION, was the former steamer AURORA, built in 1846 by Bishop and Simonson of New York, for Sidney Mason and William D. Thompson and purchased by the Navy Agent at New York on 7 January 1847. Her purchase price was \$65,000.

SCORPION had an overall length of 152 feet, beam 25 feet, and depth of hold, 10 feet. As described by her builders she had a "a half poop deck, a cut water billet head, a round tuck and square stern, three masts and measured 339 tons or thereabouts."

SCORPION was placed in commission at the New York Navy Yard on 23 February 1847, Commander Abraham Bigelow, USN, in command. She put to sea from New York on 4 March 1847 and after repairs in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, steamed by the way of Havana, Cuba, to join the Home Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico on 24 April 1847. The squadron arrived at Anton Lizardo on 27 April and on 16 June 1847, SCORPION formed a part of the expedition against Tobasco. She towed VESUVIUS and WASHINGTON up the Tobasco River, landed a force at Tobasco, and gave other assistance for the occupation of that city. She returned to Anton Lizardo on 24 July 1847 and frequently cruised from that base to Vera Cruz, Alvarado, Frontera, and Salmadina, for the transport of personnel and provisions. On 9 January 1848 she arrived at Laguna, basing similar operations from that port where Commander Bigelow was Senior Naval Officer until close of the Mexican War. SCORPION departed Laguna on 23 July

1848, steaming by way of Havana and Norfolk to arrive at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on 11 August 1848. She was decommissioned ten days later and sold at public auction on 18 October 1848 for \$14,500.

The fourth SCORPION, a converted yacht, was built in 1896 by the J. N. Robins Company of Brooklyn, New York. Formerly the steel twin screw yacht SOVEREIGN owned by Mr. M. D. C. Borden, she was designed by Mr. J. Beaver-Webb who also designed SULTANA, CORSAIR, INVERPID and other luxury yachts. As a private yacht, her steel decks were covered with selected pine and a large deck house containing a chart room, deck salon, galley, upper fireroom, lavatory, a storeroom, and entrance to the engine room. Below decks in the forecabin were quarters for a crew of 36 and individual staterooms for ten officers. Aft these quarters in the order mentioned, was the main salon in San Domingo mahogany containing an organ, piano, seaboard and other furniture; a pantry, companion and bath; engine and boiler rooms; owner's stateroom extending in ivory white the breadth of the ship with mahogany wainscot and doors; two good-sized staterooms fitted in the same manner; an after cabin, and two other staterooms fitted similarly with one bath. All deck fittings were of Honduras mahogany and her main deck aft was as clear of houses as a sailing yacht, extending 100 feet clear from the after port of the deck house to the taffrail. She had two pole masts and carried two dory launches, a gig, a cutter and two dinghys. Purchased by the Navy for the sum of \$300,000, she was renamed SCORPION and arrived in the Brooklyn Navy Yard on 2 April 1898 for conversion to naval purposes. Her main mast and fittings were entirely removed, the bowsprit cut down, and a battery of twelve guns installed. Steel plating, seven-eighths of an inch thick and eight feet wide, was fitted on the outside for the entire length of her engine and boiler rooms.

SCORPION's overall length was 250 feet, 5 inches, breadth 28 feet, 1 inch; depth of hold, 16 feet, 7 inches; displacement, 850 tons, and mean draft, 11 feet, 6 inches. Her original armament was four 5-inch rapid fire guns; six 6-pounders, and two 6-mm Colts. She had a complement of 7 officers and 93 men, and a maximum speed of 17.85 knots.

SCORPION was placed in commission at the New York Navy Yard on 11 April 1898, Lieutenant Commander Adolph Marix, USN, in command. She put into Norfolk on 1 May and reported for duty with Commodore Schley's Flying Squadron which included BROOKLYN, TEXAS, and MASSACHUSETTS. The squadron cleared Hampton Roads on the 13th and steamed by way of Key West to establish a blockade off Cienfuegos, Cuba, on 22 May 1898. SCORPION left the squadron that night to deliver important dispatches to scouting ships off Santiago, and again touched at Cienfuegos before steaming to Key West for coal. During her absence Admiral Cervera's Spanish Squadron was discovered in the harbor of Santiago and a blockading fleet under Admiral Sampson was established off that port. She sailed from Key West on 7 June as convoy escort for the ammunition ship ARMERIA and provision ship SUPPLY, joining the blockade off Santiago on 10 June 1898. Acting as a scout for Admiral Sampson's fleet, she landed an expedition of arms, ammunition, and provisions for 500 men at Sigua on 18 June; assisted in clearing the beach at Daiquiri for the landing of General Harrison's Army troops on 22 June, and performed a similar duty at Siboney the next day.

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SCORPION was detached from the blockading station at Santiago on 29 June 1898 and arrived off Cape Cruz the following day to blockade Spanish gunboats in the harbor of Manzanillo, Cuba. She made a daring run into that harbor with OSCEOLA on 1 July, but the Spanish gunboats withdrew to the cover of gun batteries on the shore and chase was abandoned. During the next few days she turned away several ships attempting to supply the enemy garrison and captured an 80-ton provision lighter, 3 July, taking off coal which enabled her to remain on station an extra day until 5 July when she sailed to provision at Guantanamo Bay. She returned to her blockade station on 11 July, awaiting the arrival of reinforcements which would enable a successful attack on the Spanish gunboats and other Spanish vessels at Manzanillo, Cuba. Meanwhile Admiral Sampson's Fleet had destroyed the Spanish Squadron at Santiago on 3 July, the city surrendered on 12 July 1898.

On the evening of 17 July, ships of the blockading force including WILMINGTON, HELENA, SCORPION, HIST, HORNET, WOMPATUCK, and OSCEOLA, made rendezvous and approached the harbor of Manzanillo from the westward. The next morning WILMINGTON and HELENA entered the northern channel, SCORPION and OSCEOLA in mid-channel between two cays, while the three other vessels steamed up the south entrance. After running one gunboat on shore, SCORPION's starboard five-inch guns became disabled and she was obliged to back in and bring her five-inch port battery to bear on other gunboats to the south of the city. In succession another gunboat was sunk and a third set on fire and blown up. Unable to reach a fourth gunboat which lay close inshore to the city, SCORPION was turned around and took position abreast of this enemy. After obtaining the range with two of her six-pounders, the first shell from SCORPION's five-inch gun blew the gunboat up, apparently having struck the boilers. During this action she came so close inshore that her sharpshooters attempted to pick off the officers on horseback as they rode to issue orders to different shore batteries. She returned the fire of the enemy batteries as long as in range, then steamed out of the harbor to resume blockading station. In this action the blockading force destroyed five enemy gunboats, three transports and a storeship.

SCORPION remained on blockade duty off Cape Cruz until 3 August 1898 then shifted her base of operations to Guantanamo Bay. She carried dispatches between various ports of Cuba until 27 November when she put to sea from Havana for return to the New York Navy Yard on 24 December 1898. She was placed out of commission in that yard on 14 January 1899 for conversion to a gunboat. During the conversion period, her armament was reduced to two 4-inch rapid fire guns, six 6-pounders and four 6-mm Colt machine guns. She was recommissioned on 22 August 1899, under the command of Lieutenant Commander W. A. Marshall who was relieved by Lieutenant Commander Nathan Sargent, USN, on 9 September 1899.

SCORPION departed New York on 20 September 1899 to accompany battleship KEARSARGE during trial runs off the coast of Massachusetts. She returned to New York on 28 September and entered the Norfolk Navy Yard on 14 October to be fitted out for duty with Isthmian Canal Commission.

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The Isthmian Canal Commission, with Rear Admiral John G. Walker as President, had formed in the city of Washington on 15 June 1899. This body was to report on the results of surveys made under its direction, of interocean canal routes designated as the Nicaragua route, the Panama route, and other possible routes. After considering the results of surveys made in the past, the commission decided to limit the explorations in search for other possible routes to that part of Colombia known as Darien, extending from Panama to the Atrato River. The work of the commission in Darien finally limited to three routes. The Atrato route which covered the distance from the mouth of the Atrato River to the tide water on the Pacific side; The San Blas route starting from the Pacific Side up the Chepo and Mamoni Rivers, following the valleys of these streams to Mandinga Harbor in the Gulf of San Blas on the Atlantic Side; and the Caledonia route which had the distinction of being the location where the isthmus was first crossed by white men in 1513 when Balboa marched with his band from Caledonia Bay to San Miguel Bay on 25 September of that year and discovered the Pacific Ocean. SCORPION was detailed for service on the Atlantic side of the Darien Isthmus, and her presence rendered practicable a task which otherwise might have been impossible of execution. She embarked the Survey Engineers of the Darien Isthmus Survey Party on 7 November 1899 and cleared Norfolk to arrive at Port Royal, Kingston, Jamaica, on 12 November. After coaling and receiving provisions she got underway two days later, touching at Cartagena, Republic of Columbia, on the 16th, and anchored in Caledonia Bay on 25 November 1899. Lieutenant Commander Sargent inspected the harbor in a steam launch and sent a whaleboat ashore to look for a suitable landing site. Shortly after the noon hour of 27 November all members of the surveying party and six laborers brought from Jamaica were landed and a camp was established on shore in sight of the ship. Two days later SCORPION sailed for the Harbor of Colon, Panama, where she took aboard laborers and stores for transfer to the party in Caledonia Bay on 4 December 1899. The next morning the Chief of all Indians from Cape Tiburon to Cape San Blas, Colonel Tuanguna, visited the ship to consult Lieutenant Commander Nathan Sargent. "An agreement was drawn up and signed by the terms of which all surveying parties which should land in the future, and those now ashore would not go to the Indian Villages nor damage any cocoa or banana plantations, and the Indians would receive the parties amiably, allowing them to land, and would sell them provisions and fruit; a price list of articles of food was agreed upon." At 7:20 p.m., Lieutenant Commander Sargent signalled the following message: SCORPION to Camp - Amicable arrangement made with Chief of all Indians on the Caribbean Coast. No more trouble to be feared. Work can be prosecuted in any direction with same orders as before." During the following months SCORPION made frequent voyages to Cartagena, Columbia, and occasional voyages to Kingston, Jamaica, and Colon, Panama. She returned from these ports with newly recruited members for the labor force, Columbian silver for their payroll, and every manner of food, supplies, instruments, equipment and stores, transferring them to the survey party in Caledonia Bay, and at San Blas where she had landed a survey party on 16 January 1900. Other important service included a consultation between Rear Admiral Walker and Lieutenant Commander Nathan Sargent at Cartagena on 16 January 1900 and several voyages from that port with members of the commission aboard for inspection of the survey work in the Darien Isthmus. On 22 May 1900, at Assardi, Caledonia Harbor, SCORPION

brought aboard the supplies and surveyors of the Isthmian Canal Commission, numbering twenty-one surveyors and seven laborers with their instruments. All passengers stores and supplies were landed at Cartagena the next day, and SCORPION stood out of the harbor to touch at Kingston, Jamaica, before return to Boston, on 5 June 1900.

SCORPION underwent repairs in the Boston Navy Yard until 29 July 1900, and after operations off Newport, New London, and New York, she departed the latter port on 21 October to anchor at Hampton Roads until 5 November, then steamed by way of Key West to anchor off Cape Haitain Harbor, Weayte, Haiti, on 12 November 1900. She then cruised for calls at Port au Prince; Kingston, Jamaica, Sanchez, Santo Domingo; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. From the latter port she sailed to visit La Guayra, Venezuela, touched again at San Juan, then cruised on dispatch boat and patrol duty between La Guayra, Venezuela and Curacao, Netherlands West Indies. She put to sea from La Guayra on 8 April 1901, sailing by way of San Juan and Key West to anchor off New Orleans on 26 April 1901. She steamed up the Mississippi River for visits to the river ports including Memphis, Tennessee; Vicksburg and Natchez, Mississippi, then cleared New Orleans on 20 June 1901, bound for the Boston Navy Yard. Still under the command of Lieutenant Commander Nathan Sargent, she touched at Key West before her arrival at Boston on 29 June 1901. She was placed out of commission in the Boston Navy Yard on 24 July 1901.

SCORPION was recommissioned at Boston, 1 July 1902, Lieutenant Commander C. J. Boush, USN, in command. Assigned to the North Atlantic Squadron she cruised with battleships off Newport, engaged in search problems and tactics in Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Sound operating areas until 24 August. The next two weeks were spent in the same areas with men of the Naval Militia aboard for practice experience during combined Army-Navy maneuvers. After operations at New London and upkeep in the Boston Navy Yard, she touched at Tompkinsville, New York, departing that port on 20 November with units of the North Atlantic Squadron for winter maneuvers off Culebra Island and San Juan, Puerto Rico, making incidental cruises to the Virgin Islands and Jamaica. She continued this duty until 10 February 1903 when she put to sea and steamed by way of Port Antonio, Jamaica, and Galveston, Texas, to arrive at Pensacola, Florida, 2 March 1903. Operating from that port until 22 April, she carried umpires to observe target practice of the North Atlantic Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico. She then steamed by way of Key West, Norfolk, and New York, to enter the Boston Navy Yard on 3 May 1903. She put to sea from Boston on 29 July for maneuvers and training off the coast of Maine; New London, Connecticut, and spent a period of upkeep in the New York Navy Yard. On 1 December 1903 she cleared Tompkinsville for winter fleet maneuvers in waters of Cuba, departing the base at Guantanamo Bay on 4 March 1904 for another tour of duty on the target ranges at Pensacola until 9 June 1904. She then sailed by way of Key West for return to Guantanamo Bay and made brief cruises from that base for visits to ports of San Domingo and Colon, Panama. She put to sea from Guantanamo Bay on 30 August 1904 for return to New York on 7 September 1904. After target practice in Casco Bay and a visit to Tompkinsville, she entered the Portsmouth Navy Yard on 30 September 1904.

SCORPION departed Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on 19 December 1904 and anchored in Hampton Roads two days later. On 9 January 1905 she put to sea with units of the Atlantic Squadron for winter maneuvers in waters of Cuba, followed by target practice in the Gulf of Mexico while based at Pensacola, Florida. She returned from this duty to Hampton Roads on 7 May 1905 and entered the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 9 May for extensive repairs.

SCORPION sailed from Philadelphia on 12 October 1905 to augment the gunboat force of the Sixth Division of the Atlantic Fleet in the troubled waters of the Dominican Republic where revolutionary political conditions prevented collection of custom revenues, used by that Republic to pay for various commercial properties of American citizens which had been turned over to that nation.

SCORPION arrived off Monte Cristi, Santo Domingo, 17 October 1905, cruising between that port, Puerto Plata, Sanchez, and Santo Domingo City for the protection of custom collection officials until 26 November 1906. After steaming to San Juan for coal, she again touched at Monte Cristi on 6 March, thence by way of Key West to New Orleans, and return to Warrington, Florida, on 18 March 1906. She got underway the next day with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Truman Newberry aboard and cruised off Dry Tortugas Flats to observe Fleet gunnery practice and maneuvers. The Assistant Secretary debarked at Dry Tortugas on 21 March and SCORPION touched at Key West before returning to her station at Monte Cristi on 31 March 1906. She resumed her former duties in waters of the Dominican Republic until 26 November 1906, then cleared Monte Cristi for overhaul in the Boston Navy Yard. Steaming by way of Norfolk, she arrived in the Boston Navy Yard on 10 December 1906 and departed that port on 1 February 1907 for another tour of service off the Dominican Republic until 9 April. She then set course from Sanchez to receive coal at San Juan, embarked the American Minister to Santo Domingo at Santiago de Cuba on 22 April, and arrived off Santo Domingo City to debark the American minister two days later. She returned to base her operations at San Juan. Steaming from the latter port on 22 August, she arrived in the Boston Navy Yard eight days later for extensive repairs until 11 February 1908.

SCORPION departed Boston on 11 February 1908 and reported for duty as a tender to the Third Torpedo Flotilla at Norfolk. She put to sea with the Flotilla on 21 February for practice training while based at Pensacola, until 8 May, then sailed by way of ports of Florida and Charleston to arrive at New York City on 25 May 1908. She entered the Boston Navy Yard on 9 June and was placed in reserve on 15 June 1908. She was recommissioned on 9 August of the same year, and sailed from Boston on the 17th for a cruise to Guantanamo Bay, followed by visits to New York and Philadelphia. She put to sea from the latter port on 22 October 1908 for duty as station ship at Constantinople where she arrived on 4 December 1908.

When SCORPION received word of the terrible earthquake at Messina, she got underway from Constantinople to arrive at that port on 3 January 1909. In cooperation with the International Medical Service, her medical officer, Assistant Surgeon C. E. Rhoades treated many of the injured and sick with

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the assistance of his staff on board SCORPION. She transferred seriously injured persons to hospital facilities at Naples during 4-5 January, then returned to Messina for continued treatment of injured earthquake victims until 8 January 1909. She resumed her duties as station ship at Constantinople until 6 February, then sailed for repairs at Naples, Italy. She was anchored in the Bay of Naples on 26 April 1909 when a terrible explosion rocked the nearby Italian submarine FOCA. The officers and men of SCORPION were the first to reach the scene and saved many of the survivors. Assistant Surgeon Rhoades again gave untiring devotion on the scene of the disaster and later in the dressing station of the Royal Arsenal, rendering valiant surgical attention to the numerous wounded.

SCORPION departed Naples on 15 July 1909 to resume her duties as station ship at Constantinople. She continued to act as a ship of mercy in the succeeding years and often carried the United States Ambassador on brief diplomatic voyages to various ports of Turkey and Greece. Serious earthquakes occurred in Turkey on 12 August 1912, and SCORPION got underway from Constantinople the following day to afford medical treatment and medical supplies at the Turkish ports of Sarwi, Heraclytze, Myrophyto, and Kora. She returned to her station at Constantinople on 17 August 1912.

Turkey formed an alliance with Germany upon the outbreak of war in Europe and SCORPION was requested to shift from her usual winter moorings in the harbor of Constantinople, to the Merchant Basin, Golden Horn, Constantinople. She moored at that location on 7 August 1915 for a period of enforced idleness that terminated upon close of World War I. Since the United States had not declared war against Turkey, SCORPION was not seized. She was interned on 11 April 1917 and kept under guard established by the Turkish Government until 23 October 1918. Her crew and officers were not molested during this time and were allowed the freedom of the shore. British prisoners began to appear in Constantinople on 25 October, having been liberated from various prisons in Turkey. In the course of the next three days SCORPION took aboard and helped rehabilitate about fifty of the liberated men. She continued to base at Constantinople after the war, serving Rear Admiral Mark L. Bristol, High Commissioner to Turkey. As the flagship of the U. S. Naval Detachment in Turkish Waters, she often transported members of various Allied relief organizations between Turkey, Greece, and Italy, also landing medical and food supplies for the unfortunate people of these and other nations bordering the Mediterranean. She continued duty with the Naval Detachment in Turkish waters until 4 November 1923 when she arrived at Phaleron Bay, Greece, for duty with the U. S. Naval Detachment, Eastern Mediterranean. Thereafter her principal cruises were conducted from Naples to ports of France, Spain, Turkey, Greece, and Algeria.

SCORPION put to sea from Gibraltar on 16 June 1927 for return to the United States. Steaming by way of the Azores and Hamilton, Bermuda, she arrived at Philadelphia on 11 July 1927. She was decommissioned in the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 22 October 1927 and remained in that status until her name was stricken from the Navy list on 23 March 1929. SCORPION was sold, 25 June 1929, to the Boston Iron and Metal Company of Baltimore, Maryland.

The fifth SCORPION (SS 278), was named for the fish known scientifically as *Scorpaena guttata* Girard. A member of the family Scorpaenidae, the Scorpion is light or dark reddish brown, irregularly mottled with purple and olive, and inhabits relatively shallow waters in bays and along shore, to a depth of about 25 fathoms. It is confined to the coast of California and Baja California between Point Abrejos and Point Arguello, and is well armed. There are seven pairs of strong rigid spines on top, twelve or thirteen equally strong ones on each side of the head, and the anal fin has three stiff spines. The twelve spines of the dorsal fin can inflict wounds of intense pain and swelling. If deep, the wound can be very dangerous.

SCORPION was built by the Portsmouth Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Her keel was laid 20 March 1942 and she was launched 20 July 1942, under the sponsorship of Miss Elizabeth T. Monagle, daughter of the Master Moulder at the Portsmouth Navy Yard. The ship was placed in commission on 1 October 1942, Lieutenant Commander W. N. Wylie, USN, in command. She departed Portsmouth on 15 January 1943 and after shakedown training in the area of New London, Connecticut and Newport, Rhode Island, transited the Panama Canal on 11 March, bound for the Hawaiian Islands.

SCORPION arrived at Pearl Harbor on 24 March 1943 and put to sea on 5 April to conduct her first war patrol off the coast of Honshu, Japan. The morning of 19 April, with Naka Minato bearing about 30 miles north, she headed for the coast to reconnoiter the proposed mining area. That afternoon she planted twenty-two mines at spacing ranging from 600-1000 yards in irregular lines, then commenced search for enemy shipping. A little before the noon hour of 20 April 1943, she torpedoed and sank converted gunboat MEIJI MARU NO. 1, 1934 tons (37°-10'N; 141°-25'E). She riddled a sampan with 3-inch gunfire the next day and on 23 April, intercepted two freighters under escort of a destroyer. Making a high-speed submerged approach in the early morning moonlight, she fired three torpedoes at the lead freighter and managed to fire another at the second freighter as the escorting destroyer headed her way. She skillfully maneuvered clear of a string of thirteen depth charges and upped periscope to observe the first target running toward the horizon, and the second freighter almost dead in the water and down by the stern. This target got way on as SCORPION approached for a second try but the destroyer headed in at high speed to break off this attack. Four days later SCORPION found a convoy of four freighters, steaming in columns of two, with an escort in front center. She sent a spread of four torpedoes streaking for the lead ship in one column, then shifted attack to the second ship. As she swept the sea with her periscope, two torpedo hits exploded just forward and aft of the stack of the lead freighter, followed by two more hits on the enemy's bow and stern. A moment later the escorting destroyer appeared "to rise out of the water" and made for SCORPION. A deft maneuver put her clear of that enemy and eight depth charges exploded harmlessly in the water some distance away. At 0547 she observed passenger-cargo YUZAN MARU, 6380 tons, sink stern first (36°-08'N; 143°-03'E). She battle-surfaced and sank a 100-ton patrol vessel with gunfire on 29 April. The next morning SCORPION closed a 600-ton patrol vessel on the surface. Painted gray and the number 23 painted on the bow, this enemy mounted a gun on a high platform forward, with two or more machine gun mounts along the bulwark, and a rack of depth

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charges aft. The enemy opened fire with her forward gun as SCORPION closed range and swung her bow away to answer with the 3-inch forward gun and the 20-mm machine guns. As she passed broadside at 800 yards her 3-inch gun jammed but she raked the patrol vessel with her remaining guns. She drew out of range to clear the 3-inch gun while the enemy released a heavy white smoke float marker for aircraft and drew off the south. SCORPION moved in at flank speed for another try and her first shot hit the enemy's stern, raising a big smoke cloud. All guns were firing as she closed to about 400 yards. By this time the target had stopped dead in the water with her forward gun out of action but from several points along the bulwarks, the flash of machine gun fire was observed and persisted in spite of SCORPION's rapid fire. During this action Lieutenant Commander Reginald Marbury Raymond, making the patrol as prospective commanding officer, was fatally wounded by an enemy bullet as he fired a Browning automatic rifle from SCORPION's bridge railing. The enemy refused to sink after this second attack although riddled with 3-inch common and high explosive. SCORPION then spun to bows on, backed to 500 yards range, and fired her last remaining torpedo which disintegrated the enemy in a tremendous explosion. Seven minutes later her radar picked up an enemy plane and she made a quick dive as two aerial bombs exploded at a considerable distance into the sea. She terminated her patrol at Pearl Harbor on 8 May 1943.

On 29 May 1943 SCORPION departed Pearl Harbor for her second war patrol. After topping off with fuel at Midway, she set course eastward to cut the Formosa-Tsushima-Nagasaki shipping lanes, thence off Shanghai and along the Korean coast. She was plagued by heavy seas and winds of gale force, coupled with heavy rain squalls until about the noon hour of 28 June when she passed Shanghai and set course for Saishu To to meet the Yellow Sea traffic. During the morning of 3 July she went to battle stations when a contact developed into a convoy of five freighters with destroyer escort. She fired salvos of five and three torpedoes with divergent spread and heard five resulting explosions. Sent to the bottom of the sea in this attack were cargo ship AZAN MARU, 3890 tons, and passenger-cargo ship KOKURYU MARU, 6112 tons (38°-08'N; 124°-20'E). With an enemy escort and two vessels close on the beam with near zero angles, SCORPION did not wait to observe these results. She started down on the last shot and received seven close depth charges as she stopped screws to avoid stirring up a mud trail and settled to the bottom. Two minutes later a chain or cable was dragged over her hull, followed by close depth charge. The drag passed over her hull again as she moved ahead to deeper water with radical course changes, enduring four more close depth charge attacks before evading the enemy. With her sound gear out of commission she made no further contacts during the next three days, then departed the area for return to Midway on 15 July 1943. She put into Pearl Harbor on 18 August for completion of battle-damage repairs. On 23 September 1943, Lieutenant Commander W. N. Wylie was relieved by Lieutenant Commander M. G. Schmidt, USN.

On 13 October 1943 SCORPION cleared Pearl Harbor for her third patrol which was spent in reconnaissance of many of the Marianas Islands. Despite thorough coverage of this area, only four contacts worthy of torpedoes were made. Her first contact, a cruiser sighted on 5 November 1943, put on more speed during a chase through heavy seas and wind, and was lost in a rain squall.

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On 8 November 1943 SCORPION was running up the Marianas Group from Agrihan to Farallon de Pajaros Islands. She sighted smoke near the noon hour and commenced an end-around to submerge in the track ahead of what first appeared to be a 3000-ton steamer. Three torpedoes sped for the enemy but passed directly under the shallow draft of the target, a "Q-boat" who turned sharply with the whine of high-speed diesel engines and dropped eleven depth charges, eight of which were too close for comfort.

Near daylight on 13 November 1943 SCORPION made her third contact, a convoy of one freighter and a large tanker, screened by three escorts. Despit the threat of the three escorts who patrolled ahead on the port beam and on the port quarter of the tanker, she pressed home an attack on that target and scored one torpedo hit with a tremendous long rumbling explosion. With one escort only 150 yards on her port quarter she went deep to evade a string of nine depth charges, then came up for a look about two hours later, observing all escorts attempting to locate her with cross bearings. The tanker was now dead in the water and down by the stern. About this time one escort reversed course and headed for SCORPION who cleared the area for reconnaissance of Saipan Island.

At 0653 22 November, SCORPION surfaced for a high-speed chase of a large troop transport which was under escort of two destroyers and a corvette. She lost contact at 1340 when her search radar went out of commission but later — picked up the targets in her periscope and continued chase until near midnight. The targets were lost from sight by this time. She had no radar with which to maintain contact and her remaining fuel would not enable a run for a daylight attack position and still have enough to get back to base. She broke off the pursuit and entered Pearl Harbor on 5 December 1943 for refit.

SCORPION was lost on her fourth war patrol. Commander M. G. Schmidt took her to sea from the Submarine Base at Pearl Harbor on 29 December 1943, and after fueling at Midway, cleared that harbor to patrol that part of the China Coast in the area of latitude 29° North and to the West of longitude 127° East. She was to depart her patrol area no later than sunset on 12 February 1944 and stop at Midway for fuel before return to Pearl Harbor for refit. On the afternoon of 4 January 1944 she reported that one man had sustained a simple fracture of the upper arm and requested rendezvous with HERRING who was then in her vicinity and returning from patrol. HERRING made rendezvous with SCORPION on the afternoon of 5 January 1944 but heavy seas made it impossible to transfer the injured man to HERRING for return to Midway. SCORPION reported the case "Under control" before midnight and HERRING set course for Midway. SCORPION was not seen or heard from again. When no report was received from her by 24 February, she was directed to make a transmission but made no acknowledgement. She was presumed lost on 6 March 1944 and Japanese records examined after close of the war furnished no clue to her fate. It is possible that she struck one of the mines which were strung in an extremely thin barrier across the Yellow Sea.

SCORPION was awarded three battle stars for operations listed below:

1 Star/FIRST SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 5 Apr - 8 May 1943

SHIPS NAMED SCORPION

1 Star/SECOND SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 29 May - 15 Jul 1943

1 Star/THIRD SUBMARINE WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 13 Oct - 5 Dec 1943

ORIGINAL STATISTICS

LENGTH OVERALL:	311'8"
EXTREME BEAM:	27'4"
STANDARD DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	1526
Mean Draft:	15'3"
SUBMERGED DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	2410
DESIGNED SPEED:	
Surfaced:	20.25 knots
Submerged:	8.75 knots
DESIGNED COMPLEMENT:	
Officer:	6
Enlisted:	54
DESIGNED DEPTH:	300'
ARMAMENT:	
Torpedo Tubes:	(10) 21-inch
Secondary:	(1) 3-inch .50 caliber
	(2) .50 caliber machine guns
	(2) .30 caliber machine guns
TORPEDOES:	24

Stenciled 5 Oct 1959 (ks)

The name SCORPION was assigned to a nuclear powered submarine hull whose keel was laid down 1 November 1957 in the yard of the Electric Boat Division, General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, Connecticut. She was cut in two, had a 130-foot missile launch tube inserted, and renamed GEORGE WASHINGTON (SSB(N)-598), effective 6 November 1958. Thus the nuclear powered submarine hull was converted into the world's first Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine GEORGE WASHINGTON who launched 9 June 1959 and commissioned at Groton 30 December 1959.

The sixth SCORPION (SS(N)-589) was built by the Electric Boat Company Division, General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, Connecticut. She is named in commemoration of SCORPION (SS-278). Her keel was laid 20 August 1958. She launched 19 December 1959, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Elizabeth B. Morrison, daughter of Commander Maximilian G. Schmidt, USN, commanding officer of SCORPION (SS-278) at the time that ship was lost at sea in the Pacific during World War II. The nuclear powered submarine commissioned at Groton, Connecticut, 29 July 1960, Commander Norman B. Bessac, USN, commanding.

SCORPION (SS(N)-589) is a SKIPJACK-Class nuclear powered submarine. She has a length overall of 251 feet, 9 inches; extreme beam of 31 feet, 7 inches; surfaced displacement of 3,075 tons; submerged displacement of 3,500 tons and design accommodations for 10 officers and 89 men. Her armament includes six torpedo tubes and she is powered by one water-cooled nuclear reactor.

SCORPION was assigned to Submarine Division 62, Squadron SIX, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. On 24 August 1960 she departed New London, Connecticut, for a two-month deployment across the Atlantic to demonstrate her capabilities in rigorous exercises with units of our own and North Atlantic Treaty Organization navies. These operations included visits to Portsmouth, England, and Faslane, Scotland. She returned to New London 28 October 1960 for training along the eastern seaboard until departure 29 May 1961 for special operations that included a visit to Holy Loch, Scotland. The submarine returned to New London 9 August.

SCORPION made Norfolk, Virginia her base of operations 10 September 1961. She specialized in submarine warfare tactics in waters ranging off the New England Coast south to Bermuda, Florida, and Puerto Rico. Both the hunted and the hunter, she worked to develop tactics and techniques for use, by and against, a high performance nuclear powered submarine. Her exceptionally

meritorious service during certain phases of this duty in 1962, brought her the award of the Navy Unit Commendation. Her Commanding Officer, Commander Robert Y. Kaufman, was awarded the Legion of Merit for his outstanding leadership during the operations. Her effective contributions continued through the first five months of 1963, including more than eight weeks of aggressive, imaginative opposition on a 24-hour basis to Hunter-Killer Groups. The data collected during these operations enabled her to document a number of facts of importance to antisubmarine warfare readiness. She received the Atlantic Fleet Submarine Battle Efficiency Competition Award for the fiscal year 1963 as well as the annual award for Excellence in Torpedo Fire Control and Performance.

SCORPION overhauled in the Charleston Naval Shipyard, South Carolina, from 8 June 1963 to 5 May 1964. She then resumed seaboard training out of Norfolk. This was intervened by another trans-oceanic patrol from that base, commencing 4 August 1964 and terminating with her return to Norfolk 8 October. She again departed the eastern seaboard 1 May 1965 for service that included a call at Holy Loch, Scotland. She returned to Norfolk 26 June for independent exercises and fleet tactics that found her ranging into the Caribbean Sea. During the spring and fall of 1966, she completed missions of high national importance that resulted in the award of the Navy's Commendation Medal to her commanding officer, Commander James R. Lewis in recognition of his outstanding leadership, foresight, and professional skill. Other officers and men of SCORPION were also cited for meritorious achievement during the same period. Her outstanding performance and the superior teamwork of every officer and man on board her, was reflected in the Battle Efficiency Competition Award for Atlantic Submarines, presented to SCORPION for both the fiscal years 1965 and 1966.

SCORPION entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard 1 February 1967 for overhaul that included refueling of her nuclear reactor. Sea trials began 2 October and Commander James R. Lewis was relieved as her commanding officer 17 October 1967, by Commander Francis A. Slattery, U.S. Navy. Refresher training took her to New London, thence south to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for Weapons System Acceptance Tests. Type training continued out of Norfolk until 15 February 1968 when she departed for an extended period of operations with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. She touched Rota, Spain (1-5 March) and reached Taranto, Italy, 10 March 1968.

Having served throughout the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet, SCORPION set course for return to Norfolk. On 21 May 1968, communication with the submarine indicated her position about 50 miles south of the Azores and some 2,100 miles east of Norfolk. She was reported overdue at Norfolk 27 May 1968 when a massive search for the submarine began. There had been no communication with the submarine since the report of 21 May, south of the Azores.

LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

Commander Norman B. Bessac, USN:	29 Jul 1960-30 Mar 1962
Commander Robert Y. Kaufman, USN:	30 Mar 1962-12 Aug 1963
Commander Ralph M. Ghormley, USN:	12 Aug 1963-22 Jul 1965
Commander James R. Lewis, USN:	22 Jul 1965-17 Oct 1967
Commander Francis X Slattery, USN:	17 Oct 1967-

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