

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

HISTORY OF SHIPS NAMED SNOOK

The nuclear powered submarine SNOOK (SS(N) 592) is the second ship of the Fleet to be named for a fish, known scientifically as Centropomus undecimalis (Bloch). They range along the Atlantic Coast from Florida and Texas, southward along the West Indies and Panama, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, living along the coast and ascending fresh water streams a short distance. The Snook is bluish-gray above; and, silvery below a black lateral line. It attains a length of about four feet and a weight of fifteen to twenty pounds. The Snook rushes its prey like a black streak and is well protected from enemies by sharp spines on the gill covers and by the strong spines in the fins.

The first SNOOK (SS 279) was built by the Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire. Her keel was laid 17 April 1942 and she was launched 15 August 1942, under the sponsorship of Mrs. James C. Dempsey, wife of Lieutenant Dempsey, USN, who had been awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism as commanding officer of submarine S-27.

SNOOK was placed in commission at the Portsmouth Navy Yard on 24 October 1942, Lieutenant Commander C. E. Tribel, USN, in command. Upon completion of shakedown training off the New England coast, she cleared New London, Connecticut, on 3 March 1943 for the Pacific. She entered Pearl Harbor on 30 March 1943 and put to sea on 11 April to conduct her first war patrol. Heading for the China coast, near Shanghai, she felt her way through Junk fishing fleets and arrived in the vicinity of North Saddle Island Light on 30 April. The tricky current emanating from the mouth of the Yangtze River gave her a bad time after she submerged in a hunt for the best possible ground to lay her mines. At one time she stuck on a mud bar in less than seventy feet of water but was expertly planed up and over this menace. More skillful handling brought her clear of the silt time and again. She almost pierced a junk with her periscope in coming to the surface and her mines were planted that night. She then headed north for the Yellow Sea.

On the afternoon of 5 May 1943 SNOOK sighted two freighters standing out of Port Dairen. She trailed both until after nightfall, then sent a three-torpedo spread which blasted the 1,268-ton freighter KINKO MARU. The lead freighter steamed blissfully on until someone on the sinking KINKO MARU sounded a whistle. The lead freighter now made frantic maneuvers to dodge two torpedoes and opened fire with her guns on SNOOK who beat a hasty retirement, then let go with three lethal torpedoes which caught the 3,194-ton DAIFUKU MARU amidships. Both enemy vessels went to the bottom of the sea (38°-39'N; 122°-35'E).

## SHIPS NAMED SNOOK

The morning of 7 May 1943 had not passed the hour mark when SNOOK commenced tracking a convoy. She closed the range to send four torpedoes on their way, then five minutes later let go with three others. Amidst a din of explosions befitting any New Year's Eve celebration, she made her way clear of the melee. Sunken victims of this action were the 4363-ton cargoman TOSEI MARU and the 1,265-ton cargoman SHENSEI MARU #3 (36°-05' N; 123°-21' E). She destroyed two armed trawlers in actions which took place 13 and 16 May, terminating her first war patrol at Midway on 23 May 1943.

SNOOK put to sea from Midway on 9 June 1943 to conduct her second war patrol in waters extending from the Nansei Shoto to the China Coast. In the morning daylight of 24 June she closed a six-ship convoy escorted by two destroyers and heard two hits out of two torpedoes fired at a large tanker as she went deep and rigged for silent running to avoid the patrolling destroyers. She came back up to periscope depth to find a destroyer guarding the cripple and was prevented from a second try by planes overhead. Some forty minutes before the midnight of 3 July she made radar contact on a convoy. In less than two hours she had settled uncomfortably in the midst of the convoy to unleash three torpedoes for two hits on target. She got out in a hurry and soon commenced trailing a ship which detached itself from the convoy. At 0231, 4 July, she sent six torpedoes on their way and was rewarded by three hits which sent a yellow ball of flame from amidship of her target. Ships of the enemy convoy had scattered in confusion over a twenty-mile circle by this time and SNOOK observed two more hits on another target before clearing out to escape high-speed escorts which came in from nowhere, bent on vengeance. Searching for stragglers of the convoy, she made contact at 0406 but missed twice as this target swung towards SNOOK, lacing her with tracers as another enemy escort came upon the scene. After a twenty-minute battle of wits with these watchdogs, she left them astern. In this action SNOOK sank the 5,290-ton cargo ship KOKI MARU and the 5,865-ton LIVERPOOL MARU (28°-40' N; 124°-10' E). She had also severely damaged the 5,872-ton cargo ship ATLANTIC MARU. SNOOK returned from her second war patrol to Pearl Harbor, on 18 July 1943.

SNOOK got underway from Pearl Harbor for her third war patrol on 18 August 1943 and made landfall on Marcus Island on 30 August to take reconnaissance pictures before the carrier airstrike of 1 September, during which she stood by for lifeguard duty. She made a photographic record of the results of the airstrike the next day, and shortly after moonset of 11 September 1943 she closed a six-ship convoy and two escorts. A sharp change of course by the target at the moment of firing, caused all torpedoes to miss. In the early morning darkness of 13 September she moved in on another convoy and fired six torpedoes at overlapping ships. She heard the explosion of a resounding hit and came to periscope depth an hour later to observe her target low in the water and surrounded by many small boats as well as two escorts. This was the Japanese transport YAMATO MARU, 9,656 tons, who slipped under the sea in Latitude 30°-06' North; Longitude 123°-20' East.

SNOOK intercepted a ship standing out from Port Dairen on 22 September 1943 and sent the 715-ton cargo ship KATSURAHAMA MARU to the bottom of the sea in four minutes (39°-11' N; 123°-20' E). A similar ship with a cargo of lumber was sighted at 1745 and SNOOK's first torpedo wakes were sighted by that target who turned away and headed back for the harbor channel, dodging another spread of four torpedoes before safely reaching port. SNOOK touched at Midway and terminated her third patrol at Pearl Harbor, on 8 October 1943.

SNOOK spent her fourth war patrol in a coordinated attack group with PARGO (SS 264) and HARDER (SS 257) in waters of the Marianas. She got underway from Pearl Harbor on 30 October 1943 and closed a convoy with PARGO a few hours before the midnight of 28 November 1943. A salvo of six torpedoes gained two hits for SNOOK and two patrol vessels on her port beam were discouraged when she let go torpedoes from 4 stern tubes for a damaging hit on one of her pursuers. About an hour after midnight she sent four torpedoes on their way toward a group of three cargo ships while keeping a watchful eye on the escort on her port beam. All four apparently hit the 4,928-ton passenger-cargo ship YAMAFUKU MARU which disintegrated (18°-37' N; 139°-45' E). Two torpedoes failed to scare off a pursuing escort but SNOOK gave him the slip and scored one hit in the stern of the 3,512 cargo ship SHIGANOURA MARU. That enemy stopped dead in the water and was sent to the bottom by two shots from SNOOK's stern tubes (18°-38' N; 139°-35' E). SNOOK returned to Midway on 7 December 1943 and was routed onward to the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard.

SNOOK cleared Pearl Harbor on 6 January 1944 to conduct her fifth war patrol along the western coast of Kyushu. She topped off with fuel at Midway four days later and west of the Bonin's on 23 January, sent the converted gunboat MAGANE MARU, 3,120 tons, to the bottom of the sea (29°-49' N; 140°-07' E). On 8 February she made a periscope radar attack on a thirteen-ship convoy off the coast of Kyushu, firing a spread of four torpedoes for three hits on targets before going deep to hear 21 depth charges explode in the distant sea. In this action she sank the 6,989-ton freighter LIMA MARU and heavily damaged the 4,939-ton freighter SHIRANESAN MARU (32°-18' N; 129°-20' E). Four torpedoes missed a destroyer on 10 February and on the 14th, SNOOK sank the 3,591-ton freighter NITTOKO MARU with a torpedo hit amidships (33°-48' N; 128°-49' E). She gave the same treatment to the 875-ton freighter HOSHI MARU (34°-23' N; 128°-23' E) on 15 February 1944 and was on her way back to Midway on 23 February when she spotted a hit in an enemy convoy some eight miles away. This was the work of PLUNGER (SS 179) and as the convoy scattered, three ships and four small escorts came SNOOK's way. Although below safe fuel limit, she would not let this opportunity pass. After a daring approach through a screen of eleven enemy escorts, SNOOK let go with a salvo of five torpedoes and observed two good hits which sank the 5,471-ton passenger-cargo ship KOYO MARU (28°-58' N; 141°-15' E). She touched at Midway on 1 March and terminated her fifth war patrol at Pearl Harbor on 6 March 1944. The next day Commander Triebel was relieved by Lieutenant Commander G. H. Browne, USN.

## SHIPS NAMED SNOOK

SNOOK sailed from Pearl Harbor on 8 March 1944 and entered the Hunter's Point Navy Yard on 15 March for a major overhaul. She returned to her home base of Pearl Harbor on 1 June and got underway for her sixth war patrol on 24 June 1944. She was denied a victim on this patrol by convoys hugging the coastlines of Japan under cover of aircraft and guard of numerous escorts. On 12 July she closed two freighters and was jolted by explosion of aircraft bombs as she fired a salvo of four torpedoes for unconfirmed results. She dodged over fifty aerial bombs or depth charges before clearing the area and terminated her sixth war patrol at Midway on 14 August 1944.

SNOOK's seventh war patrol was conducted in the Luzon Straits and the South China Sea. She put to sea from Midway on 6 September 1944 and touched at Saipan (14-15 September). On 20 September she sent divers below to inspect a noisy shaft and a heaving line was finally removed after repeated dives but the noise did not diminish. She returned to Saipan for repairs (25 September-4 October), then continued her patrol. Heavy seas swept a lookout off his platform on 6 October but he luckily landed on the cigarette deck of SNOOK and was recovered.

On 23 October 1944, SNOOK received a contact report of an enemy convoy from SAWFISH (SS 276). She made contact just before the midnight, moving in on the surface and sticking close to the convoy to confuse radar-equipped planes in the vicinity. She followed up the attack made by ICEFISH (SS 367) to draw the escorts away from that submarine and scored hits which sank the passenger-cargo ship SHINSEI MARU #1, 5,863 tons, (19°-44' N; 118°-25' E). As that target settled beneath the waves she evaded two trailing escorts and went after the convoy again. She observed one hit on target and then a spectacular explosion disintegrated the whole after end of her second target, the 3,887-ton tanker KIKUSUI MARU (20°-54' N; 118°-19' E). A "down-the-throat" shot at one closing escort caused that enemy to shear to starboard and open with aimless small caliber gunfire, and when two other escorts gave up the hunt and returned to the convoy, so did SNOOK. At 0459, 24 October 1944, she let go with five bow torpedoes and had the satisfaction of observing the 6,886-ton cargo ship ARISAN MARU sink beneath the waves (20°-31' N; 118°-32' E).

In the early morning darkness of 27 October 1944, in Latitude 20°-34' North, Longitude 120°-40' East, SNOOK closed contact and sent three torpedoes streaking for target. The results of this attack were a mystery. Timing of the explosion of a torpedo indicated that it hit something between SNOOK and her target. A large pall of smoke hung over the area as the target turned away and escaped at high-speed. On 3 November 1944, SNOOK rescued Howard J. Stockert, USNR, the pilot of a fighter plane from the heavy aircraft carrier HANCOCK. He had drifted in his rubber boat for four and one-half days before his rescue. SNOOK touched at Midway (13-14 November) and returned to Pearl Harbor on 18 November 1944. Commander George H. Browne, was relieved as commanding officer on 5 December 1944, by Commander John F. Walling, USN.

## SHIPS NAMED SNOOK

SNOOK conducted her eighth war patrol off the Kurile Islands. She sailed from Pearl Harbor on 25 December 1944 and stopped off at Midway for last minute alterations in preparation for cold weather operations. Underway from Midway on 30 December, she encountered heavy gales, low visibility, extreme cold, and drifting ice. Her only sightings were two Russian vessels except for momentary contact with a small patrol vessel which was promptly lost. She returned to Midway on 17 February 1945.

SNOOK was lost while conducting her ninth war patrol. She formed a "wolf pack" with BURRFISH (SS 312) and BANG (SS 385), under tactical command of Commander Walling, Commanding Officer of SNOOK. Known as "Walling's Whalers", the wolf-pack left Guam on 25 March 1945 with orders to patrol Luzon Strait, the South China Coast and waters along the east coast of Hainan. The submarines were also to perform life-guard duties for Philippine-based planes as directed by radio dispatch. SNOOK returned to Guam for emergency repairs (27-28 March 1945), then rejoined her group. She sent daily weather reports as she headed westward until 1 April when she was directed to discontinue this practice. On that day she was ordered to join a wolf pack known as "Hiram's Hecklers", under Commander Hiram Cassidy in submarine TIGRONE (SS 419). "Walling's Whalers" had been disbanded when BANG and BURRFISH were assigned lifeguard missions. On 8 April 1945 SNOOK reported her position to TIGRONE as 18°-40' North, 111°-39' East. She did not acknowledge messages sent from TIGRONE the next day and it was assumed that SNOOK had moved eastward towards Luzon Straits. On 12 April SNOOK was ordered to take lifeguard station in the vicinity of Sakeshima Gunto in support of a British carrier-air strike. On 20 April 1945, the British carrier task force commander reported one of his carrier planes downed in the station assigned to SNOOK and stated he was unable to contact her by radio. BANG was dispatched to the area where she rescued three British aviators but saw no sign of SNOOK. She was never heard from again and the circumstances of her loss were never determined.

Japanese records of anti-submarine attacks do not account for her sinking and she had been fully informed of the location of minefields in the Sakeshima Gunto area. It is possible that she was the victim of a Japanese submarine. Five Japanese submarines were lost in waters of the Nansei Shoto during April and May of 1945. One of these may have sank SNOOK before their sinking by United States warships.

SNOOK earned seven battle stars for operations listed below:

1 Star/FIRST WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 11 Apr-23 May 1943

1 Star/SECOND WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 9 Jun-18 Jul 1943

1 Star/PACIFIC RAIDS-1943:

Marcus Island Raid: 31 Aug 1943

## SHIPS NAMED SNOOK

- 1 Star/FOURTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 30 Oct-7 Dec 1943  
 1 Star/FIFTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 6 Jan-6 Mar 1944  
 1 Star/SIXTH WAR PATROL-PACIFIC: 24 Jun-14 Aug 1944  
 1 Star/WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS OPERATION:  
 Assaults on the Philippine Islands: 9-24 Sep 1944

## ORIGINAL STATISTICS

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

The second SNOOK (SS(N) 592) is under construction in the yard of the Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation, Pascagoula, Mississippi. Her keel was laid 7 December 1957 and the nuclear powered submarine is scheduled for launching in the fall of 1960.