

HISTORY OF USS DEVILFISH (SS 292)

The submarine USS DEVILFISH, veteran of four war patrols during World War II, was constructed by the Cramp Ship Building Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, during 1942 and 1943. She is named for a fish of enormous size which has a flat body, and strongly resembles a skate or stingray.

The keel of USS DEVILFISH was laid on 31 March 1942. The submarine was launched on 30 May 1943, with Mrs. Frank W. Fenno, Jr., wife of Commander Frank W. Fenno Jr., as serving as sponsor.

The submarine was commissioned on 1 September 1944 at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, with Commander Edward C. Stephen, USN, assuming first command.

On 6 September 1944, DEVILFISH got underway from the Navy Yard for the Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut, where she arrived on the 7th. Her training period was conducted at New London and torpedo firings were made at Newport, Rhode Island.

Upon completion of the shakedown and training period on 10 October 1944, DEVILFISH departed the New London area for Key West, Florida, for temporary duty with the Fleet Sonar School. She departed Key West on 2 November 1944, for the Panama Canal. While in Balboa, the submarine conducted training operations, which included several torpedo firing practices and a coordinated bombardment, from 6 to 15 November.

DEVILFISH sailed from Balboa on 15 November in company with THREADFIN and BOARFISH enroute to Pearl Harbor. The group arrived on 2 December, and underwent additional training plus installing new equipment at the Submarine Base.

The first war patrol for DEVILFISH commenced on 31 December 1944, when she departed Pearl Harbor enroute to Saipan. She arrived in Saipan on 12 January 1945 and remained until 15 January. During this time fuel tanks were topped off, provisions were taken on board and operation orders for the first war patrol were obtained.

Her first patrol was conducted on the Loo Suido and Bungo Suido area off the coast of Japan. Unfortunately, DEVILFISH contacted no enemy shipping nor was she ever in a position to give aid to downed aviators. Much enemy air activity was noted during this patrol. The submarine arrived at Guam on 13 February 1945, after a 44 day patrol.

On 3 March 1945, Lieutenant Commander Stephen S. Mann, Jr., USN, relieved Commander Edward Stephen, USN, as commanding officer. The training period lasted from 5 to 13 March 1945, when the sub proceeded to Saipan. She was assigned lifeguard and offensive patrol duty in waters between Tokyo Bay and Northern Nanpo Shoto Islands.

On 16 March 1945, the second war patrol commenced for DEVILFISH. She sighted an enemy fighter plane on the 20th at a distance of about four miles

coming in from astern. She dove immediately, but was struck as the top of the periscope shears while attempting to go deep.

The shears were bent slightly forward, destroying the periscope optics and both radar masts were severed. A great deal of water came in through a crack which developed at the base of the mast, which started several small electrical fires and grounded out much of the electrical equipment in the conning tower and control room.

This is the only known incident where a Kamikaze plane crash-dived a U. S. Navy submarine during World War II. DEVILFISH surfaced and set course for Saipan. During the voyage to Saipan, only emergency dives to shallow depths could be made because of the excessive damage received.

After her arrival in Saipan on 24 March, temporary repairs were effected, and the sub continued on to Pearl Harbor, arriving on 6 April. The Combat Insignia was authorized DEVILFISH for her second war patrol.

A refitting period was commenced by Submarine Division 103 at Pearl Harbor, which was later completed by USS BUSHNELL on 12 May 1945.

Following a training period, DEVILFISH got underway from Pearl Harbor on 20 May 1945 for her third war patrol. After a short stop at Midway for voyage repairs, the submarine proceeded to her patrol area. Orders were received to conduct offensive patrol off the entrance to Tokyo Bay, and after several days, to patrol another position on lifeguard duty. While patrolling her lifeguard station, there were no opportunities for rescuing downed aviators, and the submarine proceeded to patrol the Bungo Suido area.

On 16 June 1945, an enemy submarine with a midget submarine mounted on her deck just forward of the conning tower, was picked up by sound. Heavy seas and murky weather allowed only two quick looks by periscope. A rapid set-up was made by DEVILFISH, and two torpedoes were fired from her stern tubes.

Both missed and the enemy submarine submerged. Unable to regain contact after a long surface search, DEVILFISH moved to a new lifeguard station.

Again no opportunities were presented for rescue, so the submarine patrolled the areas along the west coast of Honshu and South of Hokkaido. After returning from Northern Hokkaido, the submarine rendezvoused with TREPANT, SEA ROBIN and SPRINGER, and transferred a total of nine Army aviators and one Navy appendicitis case for transportation to port.

On 7 July 1945, after a 48-day patrol, DEVILFISH moored alongside the submarine tender FULTON in Guam to be refitted by Submarine Division 342.

Upon completion of a refit and training period, DEVILFISH departed Guam for her fourth war patrol, with Lieutenant Commander Mann, Jr., USN, serving as commanding officer. Her assignment was lifeguard duty in the Northern Nanpo Shoto area. On 10 August 1945, she surfaced and bombarded radio and radar installations on Tori Shima Island expending 44 rounds of five-inch ammunition.

DEVILFISH continued Lifeguard duty until 15 August 1945, when she received the word to "cease fire". She proceeded to Midway Island, and moored alongside the submarine tender ARGIR on 22 August 1945.

The submarine got underway on 1 September 1945, for San Francisco, California, arriving in Hunter's Point on the 11th. DEVILFISH entered the Naval Dry Docks there to undergo preparations for placing the ship in a reserve status.

In January 1947, DEVILFISH was placed out of commission in reserve at Mare Island, California.

DEVILFISH earned three Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participating in the following operations:

- 1 Star/Okinawa Gunto Operation
Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto -- 7 - 21 June 1945
- 1 Star/THIRD Fleet Operations against Japan -- 6 - 15 August 1945
- 1 Star/Submarine War Patrol -- 16 March - 6 April 1945

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STATISTICS

OVERALL LENGTH	312 feet
BEAM	27 feet
SPEED	20 knots
DISPLACEMENT	1,525 tons

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