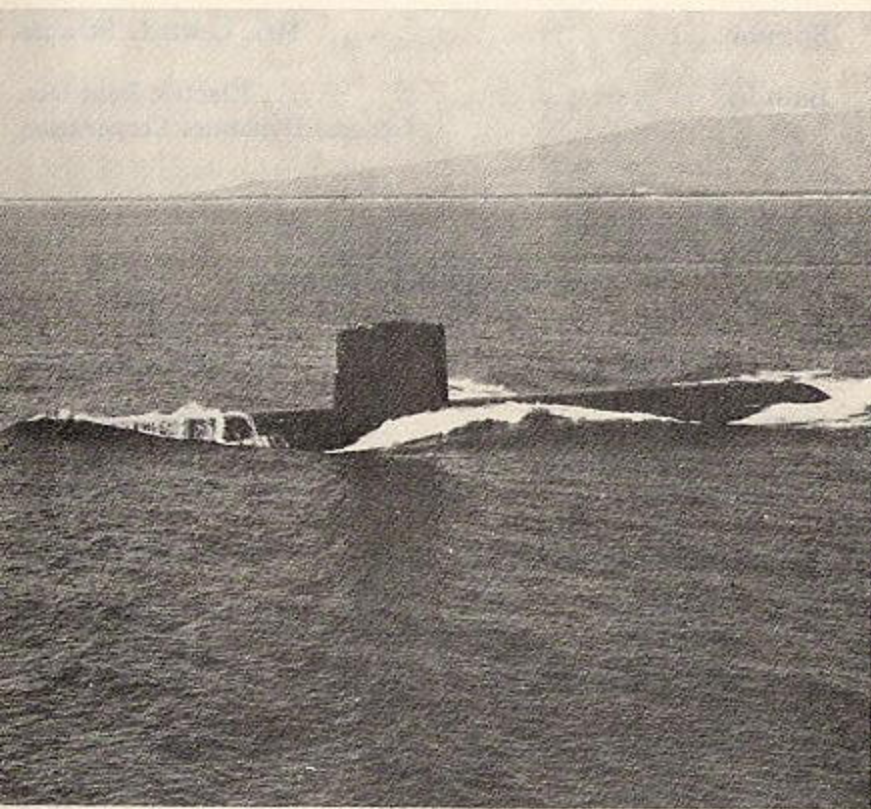


Welcome Aboard



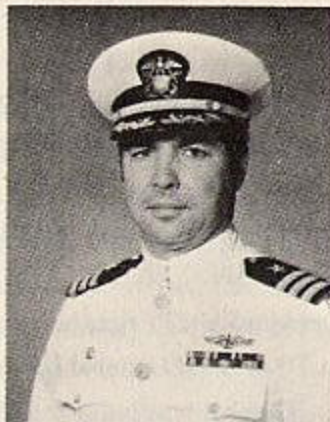
USS SKATE
(SSN 578)

USS SKATE (SSN 578)

Keel Laid July 21, 1955
Launched May 16, 1957
Commissioned December 23, 1957
Sponsor Mrs. Lewis L. Strauss
Built by Electric Boat Div.
General Dynamics Corporation

COMMANDING OFFICERS

J. F. CALVERT Dec 1957 to Sep 1959
E. W. COOKE Sep 1959 to Sep 1960
J. L. SKOOG Sep 1960 to Sep 1962
C. F. RAUCH, JR. Sep 1962 to Jul 1964
E. O. DIETRICH Jul 1964 to Mar 1965
E. A. BURKHALTER, JR. Mar 1965 to Apr 1968
A. D. PHOENIX Apr 1968 to Jun 1971
R. M. EYTCHISON Jun 1971 to Feb 1975
R. J. ASAFAYLO Feb 1975 to Sep 1977
M. H. SOLLBERGER Sep 1977 to Nov 1979
G. R. FISTER Nov 1979 to May 1982
W. J. FERNANDEZ May 1982 to Present



COMMANDER WAYNE J. FERNANDEZ, USN

Commander Wayne Jacinto FERNANDEZ was born and raised in Tampa, Florida, the son of Jacinto and Palmira Fernandez. He attended Auburn University as an NROTC midshipman and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering in June, 1965. He made a Polaris deterrent patrol on the USS ETHAN ALLEN (SSBN 608) during his senior year summer cruise.

Following commissioning, he attended the Naval Nuclear Power School at Mare Island, California, the Nuclear Power Training Unit at Idaho Falls, Idaho, and the Naval Submarine School at Groton, Connecticut. Subsequently, he reported to the USS GRENADIER (SS 525), where he earned his gold dolphins and was designated "Qualified in Submarines". From 1968 to 1972 he served aboard USS TINOSA (SSN 606). He served aboard the USS ALEXANDER HAMILTON (SSBN 617) as Engineering Officer from 1972 to 1976; he completed two Polaris deterrent patrols and saw the ship through a Poseidon conversion and a SUBSAFE and refueling overhaul. Duty on USS SAND LANCE (SSN 660) from 1976 to 1979 followed, where he served as Executive Officer. Commander FERNANDEZ served as Director of the Submarine Personnel Monitoring Division and Department Head of the Monitoring Department of the Navy's Enlisted Personnel Management Center from 1979 to 1981. In 1981 he earned a Master of Arts Degree in Human Resources Management from Pepperdine University. Commander FERNANDEZ has been in command of USS SKATE since May 1982.

Commander FERNANDEZ is authorized to wear the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal with two gold stars, the National Defense Medal, the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, the Navy Expeditionary Medal and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Commander FERNANDEZ is married to the former Oralia Zuniga of Brownsville, Texas. He has four children, Tamara, Christopher, Stacey and Jason, and resides in Honolulu, Hawaii.

SHIP'S HISTORY

USS SKATE (SSN 578) is the third submarine to bear this name and the third nuclear powered submarine constructed by the United States. Her namesake in World War II conducted seven war patrols and later served as a target ship for the atomic bomb tests at Bikini in 1946.

The keel of the present SKATE was laid down on July 21, 1955, at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics corporation in Groton, Connecticut. The ship was launched May 16, 1957, by Mrs. Lewis L. Strauss, whose husband was then chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. SKATE was commissioned seven months ahead of schedule on December 23, 1957, under the command of Commander James F. Calvert, USN.

During the first months after joining the Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, SKATE completed a shakedown cruise to northern European ports and participated in a fleet exercise which included a thirty-one day period of complete submergence, sealed off from the earth's atmosphere.

In August 1958 SKATE made her first cruise to the Arctic where she operated under the ice pack for ten days. During this period she surfaced nine times through openings in the ice, became the second ship to reach the North Pole, and successfully navigated over 2,400 miles beneath the ice. On her return to the United States, the ship was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for "... braving the hazards of the polar ice pack"

In March 1959 SKATE again headed north, this time to pioneer arctic submarine operations during the period of extreme cold and maximum ice thickness. In twelve days under the pack SKATE forced her way up through thin ice to the surface ten times and steamed over 3,000 miles. In a dramatic highpoint of this cruise, on March 17, 1959, SKATE became the first submarine to surface at the North Pole where the ashes of famed

explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins were committed to the arctic waste. On her return to port SKATE was awarded a bronze star in lieu of a second Navy Unit Commendation for demonstrating ". . . for the first time the ability of submarines to operate in and under the arctic ice in the dead of winter"

From January to August 1961 SKATE underwent her first overhaul at Electric Boat Division, Groton, Connecticut, where SKATE's reactor was refueled for the first time after more than three years of operations.

In July 1962 SKATE again charted a course from New London, Connecticut to the North Pole, while the USS SEADRAGON (SSN 584) departed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and headed North. This trip was marked by the rendezvous of SKATE and SEADRAGON in the arctic ice region. After the historic meeting SKATE and SEADRAGON operated together for over a week. One operation included a double surfacing at the North Pole.

SKATE underwent her second regular overhaul from April 1965 to September 1967 at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia after nearly four years of Atlantic Fleet operations. This overhaul included her second nuclear refueling in seven years of operations.

SKATE was assigned to Submarine Development Group TWO in January 1968 and participated in the development of new tactics and equipments.

SKATE deployed to the Mediterranean in October 1968 to participate in NATO exercises.

In March and April 1969 SKATE returned to the Arctic to conduct submerged operations under the polar ice pack in company with PARGO (SSN 650) and WHALE (SSN 638). During this trip new concepts of submarine polar tactics were researched. SKATE received Meritorious Unit Commendations for her participation in the 1970 SQUEEZE PLAY exercises and for her arctic operations with HAMMERHEAD.

SKATE underwent her third refueling overhaul from February 1971 to September 1973 at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia. After completing overhaul, SKATE was assigned to Submarine Squadron TWO and homeported at the Naval Submarine Base, New London.

Early in September 1974, SKATE left New London to participate in a major NATO exercise in the North Atlantic and then continued on to the Mediterranean in October and returned to New London in late January 1975.

During 1974 SKATE was assigned to Commander Second Fleet in evaluation of the Interim Sea Control Ship. During April and May 1975, SKATE was again involved in tactical development as she successfully conducted SSN swimmer operations while participating in exercise SOLID SHIELD. SKATE's anti-submarine warfare capabilities were lauded when she was awarded the Submarine Squadron TWO ASW "A" in July 1975.

Early in September 1975, SKATE left New London to participate in Operation UNITAS XVI, being the first nuclear ship to participate in this annual exercise. SKATE toured ports in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Trinidad, and Venezuela and returned to New London, Connecticut in early December 1975.

In April 1976, SKATE deployed to the Mediterranean. After deployment, SKATE conducted various exercises including the training of SEAL Teams, Special Forces, and Marine Force Reconnaissance Troops.

On October 17, 1977, SKATE left New London to join Submarine Squadron SEVEN in the Pacific Fleet. SKATE arrived at her new homeport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on November 24, 1977.

SKATE underwent her fourth overhaul from February 1978 to July 1979 at Naval Shipyard, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

In September 1979, SKATE deployed to EASTPAC for a shakedown cruise and participation in Fleet Exercise 2-79. Since

that time she participated in RIMPAC 1980, CNO Special Projects, ASW Exercises and mine-laying operations Type Training.

In July 1980 SKATE made her first Western Pacific Deployment. She operated with units of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and Allied Navies and returned to port on December 23, 1980, the 23rd anniversary of her commissioning.

SKATE received the 1980 Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet Golden Anchor Award for enlisted retention excellence and the 1981 Commander Submarine Squadron SEVEN Damage Control "DC" and Supply "E" awards.

SKATE made her second Western Pacific deployment in April 1982. She operated with units of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and Allied Navies, and returned to Pearl Harbor in September 1982.

For outstanding performance in 1982 SKATE was awarded: the Battle Efficiency "E", the Engineering "E", the Damage Control "DC", the Communication "C" and the Deck Seamanship Award.

SKATE celebrated the 26th anniversary of her commissioning on December 23, 1983.

SKATE made her third Western Pacific deployment in August 1983. She operated with units of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and Allied Navies, and returned to Pearl Harbor in February 1984.