



## **COMMANDERSUBMARINE FORCE, U.S. FORCE, U.S. PACIFIC FLEET**

# **USS F-4 (SS 23) March 25, 1915 - 21 Men Lost**

- Keel laid down by Seattle Construction & Drydock Co., Seattle, WA, August 21, 1909;
- Launched: January 6, 1912; Sponsored by Mrs. M.F. Backus;
- Commissioned: May 3, 1913 with Lt Kirkwood H. Donavin in command;
- Lost March 25, 1915 after foundering off Honolulu, Hawaii.

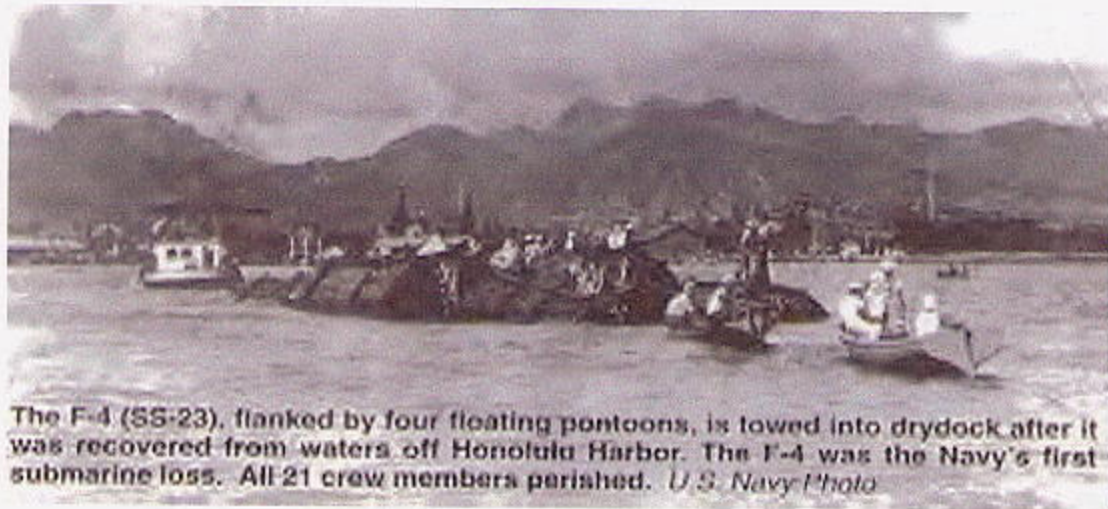
USS F-4 (SS-23) was christened SKATE and was renamed F-4 on 17 November 1911.

Joining the 1st Submarine Group, Pacific Torpedo Flotilla, F-4 participated in the development operations of that group along the west coast, and from August 1914, in Hawaiian waters. During submarine maneuvers off Honolulu on 25 March 1915 she sank in 51 fathoms, 1 1/2 miles from harbor. Despite valorous efforts of naval authorities at Honolulu to locate the missing boat and her crew, all 21 perished.

A diving and engineering precedent was established with the Navy's raising of the submarine on August 1915. Courage and tenacity marked the efforts of divers who descended to attach cable tow the boat into shallow water; while ingenuity and engineering skill characterized the director Naval Constructor J.A. Furer, Rear Admiral C.B.T. Moore, and Lt C. Smith who accomplished the feat with the aid of specially devised and constructed pontoons.

The investigating board subsequently conjectured that corrosion of the lead lining of the battery tank had permitted seepage of sea water into the battery compartment and thereby caused the commanding officer to lose control on a submerged run.

F-4 was struck from the Navy List on 31 August 1915.



The F-4 (SS-23), flanked by four floating pontoons, is towed into drydock after it was recovered from waters off Honolulu Harbor. The F-4 was the Navy's first submarine loss. All 21 crew members perished. *U.S. Navy Photo*



### *Shipmates on Eternal Patrol in USS F-4 (SS-23):*

George T. Ashcroft, GM1 / Clark G. Buck, GM2 / Ernest C. Cauvin, MM2 / Harley Colwell, EMC  
Walter F. Covington, MM1 / George L. Deeth, EM1 / Alfred L. Ede, LT(CO) / Frederick Gilman,  
GM1 / Aliston H. Grindle, EMC / Frank N. Herzog, EM2 / Edwin S. Hill, MM1 / Francis M. Hughes  
MM1 / Albert F. Jennie, EM2 / Archie H. Lunger, GM2 / Ivan L. Mahan, MM1 / Horace L. Moore  
GM1 / William S. Nelson, MMC / Timothy A. Parker, ENS(XO) / Frank C. Pierard, GMC / Charle  
Wells, MM2 / Henry A. Withers, GM1