

Cmdr. Fred Connaway (continued)

Commander Connaway decided to surface and to fight clear. The ship was surfaced and went to gun action. During the battle Commander Connaway and the Gunnery Officer were on the bridge, and the Executive Officer was in the conning tower.

When the destroyer placed a shell through the main induction, and one or more through the conning tower, these officers and several men were killed. Lt. Brown succeeded to command. He decided to scuttle the ship, and gave the order "all hands abandon ship." After giving the order the last time the ship was dived at emergency speed by opening all vents. About 12 men rode the ship down, including Captain Cromwell and one other officer, both of whom refused to

leave it. Captain Cromwell, being familiar with plans for our operations in the Gilberts and other areas, stayed with the ship to insure that the enemy could not gain any of the information he possessed. For this action, ComSubPac recommended that he be given the Congressional Medal of Honor. In all, 42 men were taken prisoner by the Japanese destroyer, but one was thrown over the side almost immediately because he was severely wounded. Another man escaped being thrown overboard only by wrenching free of his captors and joining the other men.



The group of 38 enlisted men and 3 officers were taken to Truk where they were questioned for ten days. Then they were loaded on two carriers (21 on one, 20 on the other) and started for Japan. En route to its destination, the carrier CHUYO, carrying 21 Sculpin survivors, was torpedoed and sunk by SAILFISH on 31 December 1943, and only one American escaped. This was a particularly coincidental and tragic event since Sculpin stood by SQUALUS (later re-commissioned SAILFISH) when she sank off Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1939. At Ofuna, the 21 survivors were repeatedly questioned, and they learned they were in an unofficial Navy prison camp. They were released from the camp a few at a time when the enemy became convinced that they could get no information from them, and were sent to work in the copper mines of Ashio. There they were allowed to register as prisoners of war, and received at least enough food to live on, although not enough to maintain health properly. They remained at Ashio until released by American forces on 4 September 1945.

This submarine on her first eight patrols sank nine ships for 42,200 tons and damaged then, totaling 63,000 tons. Her first patrol off the east coast of the Philippine group resulted in one sinking, the 3,124 ton transport KANKO MAUR on 10 January 1942. During her second patrol in the region east of Celbes, she sank a destroyer type vessel and did damage to a light cruiser. Her third patrol was conducted in the Molukka Sea, and Sculpin damaged a freighter. On her fourth patrol, conducted in the South China Sea, she is credited with having sunk a freighter, damaged another freighter and three tankers.

Sculpin went to the Solomons area for her fifth patrol, and is credited with sinking two large tankers and a transport. She damaged a freighter on this patrol. Going back to the Solomons for her sixth patrol, Sculpin damaged a tanker. Sculpin made her seventh patrol in May and June 1943 in the Aleutians. Here she sank two small patrol craft and damaged two freighters. On her eighth patrol in the East China Sea, Sculpin sank a freighter-transport.

(Account taken from: NavSource On-line)

New Member

At our 26 October 2007 meeting we welcomed aboard a new member, Allen Dowdy. Al is another diesel boat sailor, qualifying aboard the USS Sealion (SS-315) in 1968. Al also served aboard the USS Grenadier (SS-525) and the USS Mackerel (SST/T-1), all being Key West, Florida boats. Maybe you have never heard of the Mackerel. I have fond memories of the Mackerel and the Marlin (SST/T-2) while I was aboard the USS Picuda (SS-382).

USS *Mackerel* (SST-1) was the lead ship of her class and she was the second submarine of the Navy named for the mackerel, a common food and sport fish. She was planned as an auxiliary submarine (AGSS-570) and originally known as *T-1*.

Mackerel was laid down on 1 April 1952, at Electric Boat Division, General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, Connecticut. She was launched on 17 July 1953, sponsored by Mrs. Charles R. Muir, and placed in service (not commissioned) as *T-1* on 9 October 1953, with Lieutenant J. M. Snyder, Jr., in command.

During May and June of 1966, special equipment was installed in *Mackerel* at Electric Boat. Then *Mackerel* transited south to Key West and arrived, there, on 26 June 1966. At Key West, the submarine conducted experimental work to acquire data to be used in the development of future Navy submarines during 1966 and 1967. She evaluated equipment intended for the NR-1 Deep Submergence Craft, including keel-mounted wheels for rolling over the ocean floor, thrusters, external television cameras, a manipulator arm, and experimental sonar. *Mackerel* "bottomed" some 225 times during the nine-month evaluation period. After finishing this assignment during March of 1967, the submarine had some of her special equipment removed, and she resumed operations at Key West running submerged in the operating areas for vessels assigned as "pingers" for the Fleet Sonar School.

Mackerel acted as a target for surface and air ASW forces off the Florida coast and in the Caribbean during the late 1960s and into the 1970s. Sometime in 1971, *Mackerel* was commissioned. She provided target and training services for antisubmarine warfare units of the Atlantic Fleet in the Key West and the Mayport/Jacksonville operating areas in 1971 and 1972. *Mackerel* made her last dive on 21 July 1972. She remained in reduced-complement status from that day until 3 January 1973, but, nevertheless, conducted junior officer and midshipmen training regularly through October 1972.

Mackerel and her sister *Marlin* (SST-2) were decommissioned on 31 January 1973, in a dual ceremony at the Naval Station, Key West, Florida; both were struck from the Naval Vessel Register on the same day. *Mackerel* was sunk as a target off Puerto Rico on 18 October 1978

General characteristics:

Displacement: 303 tons surfaced, 347 tons submerged
Length: 131.25 feet, Beam: 13.6 feet
Draft: 12 feet,
Mean Speed: 10 knots surfaced, 10.5 knots submerged; Complement: two officers, 12 men
Armament: one 21 inch torpedo tube



Broadside view of the *Mackerel* (SST-1), underway, USN photo courtesy of Robert Hirst. Partial text courtesy of DANFS

"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country."