

Angler

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Angler is a large voracious fish found on the northern coasts of Europe and America.

(SS-240: dp. 1526; l. 311'9"; b. 27'3"; dr. 15'3"; s. 20 k; cpl. 60; a. 1-3", 10-21"TT; cl. Gato)

Angler (SS-240) was launched by the Electric Boat Co., Groton, Conn., 4 July 1943; sponsored by Mrs. P.H. Drewry; and commissioned 1 October 1943 with Lieutenant Commander R.I. Olson in command.

Angler departed Midway Island 10 January 1944 on her first war patrol and six more followed before 1 August 1945. During them she sank two Japanese merchantment totaling 9269 tons and a small fishing boat. In March 1944 the submarine evacuated 58 refugees from the Philippines and during 23-24 October she tracked the Japanese central force enroute to the Battle for Leyte Gulf. During the summer of 1945 she bombarded installations and towns on Hokkaido and Kinkasan.

Decommissioned in January 1947 she was laid up at New London, Conn., until recommissioned in April 1951. In October 1952 she was again decommissioned, this time for conversion to an anti-submarine submarine. She was reclassified SSK-240 in February 1953 and recommissioned the following September. Since then Angler has served with the Atlantic Fleet.

Angler received six battle stars for her World War II operations.

Considered by its crew to be a "lucky" submarine the USS ANGLER ran a 1000-mile gauntlet in enemy waters acting as escort to the damaged USS BERGALL back in December of 1944. This was only one episode in the exciting war career of the ANGLER which also acted as a rescue ship, completed several special missions and destroyed a number of enemy ships.

On her very first patrol "luck" was with the ANGLER as it seemed that no sooner had her new and glistening bow been thrust through the reef at Midway Island than she was in the very middle of the enemy encampment. Before arriving in a patrol area, an enemy convoy was sighted and, in a night surface attack, two ships were sunk and one damaged. A fifty-ton fishing boat had already felt the bite of the ANGLER'S guns a few days earlier.

Constructed by the Electric Boat Company, Groton, Connecticut, the ANGLER was commissioned on 1 October 1943. Since that time the ANGLER has completed seven patrols. Lieutenant Commander R. I. Olsen, USN, was the commanding officer for the first three patrols.

Following its initial patrol the ANGLER was directed to Panay Island, one of the Philippine group, on a special mission, which turned out to be the rescue of fifty-eight men, women and children who had eluded searching Jap troops for several years. They were taken to Australia.

In early May of 1944, the ANGLER set out from West Australia for Soenda Strait to conduct an offensive reconnaissance in conjunction with the bombing of Soerbaja by other units of the fleet. Patrolling in the shadow of the famous volcano Krakato, a medium transport was sighted accompanied by an escort. Four of the ANGLER'S torpedoes took care of the transport. The escort, however, became a little incensed at the loss of his one ship convoy and opened up with depth charges, but the ANGLER escaped undamaged.

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Prior to leaving on the fourth patrol, Lieutenant Commander Olsen was relieved by Lieutenant Commander F. G. Hess, USN, as skipper. The fourth patrol of the ANGLER was spent in the South China Sea in company with the USS FLASHER and USS CREVALLE. A convoy of ten large cargo ships, an escort carrier and numerous smaller escorts were sighted and trailed. After the flames cleared away from the joint bombing of the three subs, only one of the original ten Nip cargo ships remained afloat, and "it wasn't in the best of health." The carrier, however, seemed eager to carry the news home to Hirohito, and was last reported headed full speed in the direction of Tokyo.

After a refit in Australia, the ANGLER was ready for her fifth patrol during which she accounted for an enemy troop transport ship. It was also on this trip that the ANGLER did reconnaissance work around Leyte and Samar prior to the invasion of allied forces.

While cruising along at slow speed on an inky-black night in the South China Sea the officer of the deck reported hearing wierd screams from the water. The ANGLER played a game of hide and seek, trying to locate the origin of the sound, but it was not until after daylight when numerous Jap soldiers and sailors were sighted in the water. Some were dead, some alive and other about half-way between. The ANGLER picked up several for questioning, one being an Army lieutenant, who readily admitted at that time that "Japan had lost the war."

While proceeding toward the northern end of Palawan Passage, the ANGLER contacted a large enemy task force, which, it was later learned, consisted of five battleships, eight cruisers, and thirteen destroyers. The ANGLER trailed this force and kept the U. S. Fleet informed of its location. This force was later engaged by the U. S. Fleet in the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea. It was while trailing this task force that the ANGLER also ran across a convoy of merchant ships. However, the ANGLER kept to the more important duty of trailing the task

force so that it might not interfere with the plans of the allied invasion program.

After having found where the task force was bound, the ANGLER retired from the scene to return to Australia for necessary repairs. It was at the end of this patrol that Lieutenant Commander H. Bissell, Jr., USNR relieved Lieutenant Commander Hess as commanding officer. Lieutenant Commander Bissell was one of the first reserve officers to assume command of a fleet-type submarine.

It was on her 6th patrol in the South China Sea that the ANGLER was informed that the USS BERGALL, another United States submarine, had been damaged during a night surface encounter with two Jap cruisers, and was unable to submerge. The BERGALL was less than a hundred miles from Singapore, and over a thousand miles from the nearest allied forces. The ANGLER was ordered to contact the BERGALL, remove her crew and torpedo her to prevent capture by enemy forces. It was in December of 1944 that the ANGLER contacted the BERGALL and removed all but thirty of her crew. The captain, Commander Hyde, felt his submarine could be saved and decided to run the gauntlet of the Jap held islands with the ANGLER standing by in case of trouble.

Never out of sight of enemy held islands, through Karimata Strait, the Java Sea, Lombok Strait, and on down to Australia, always fearful of spying eyes from enemy aircraft or surface ships, the crippled sub and her gallant escort, the ANGLER, pulled safely into friendly waters, where the BERGALL was repaired and lived to sting the enemy again.

One of the highlights in every submarine patrol from western Australia was the passage through Lombok Strait, a long narrow pass between the islands of Bali and Lombok, with the small island of Nusa Besar thrown in as an added obstacle. After having delivered the BERGALL to port, the ANGLER was once again enroute to her patrol area. It was Christmas Eve and the third Sunday night in succession that the ANGLER had gone through this hazardous area. A bright moon

was shining, but evidently the Japs had no idea of the Christian observance, for just after entering the strait, the entire beach of shore batteries opened fire on the ANGLER. Nip planes joined the shore fire. However, the ANGLER ploughed ahead and escaped without so much as a scratch to hold Christmas services.

Shortly following this the ANGLER began her long trek back to San Francisco for a much needed overhaul. She set out again for the Western Pacific in May 1945. In the latter part of June, the ANGLER departed from Guam in company with seven other submarines, enroute to conduct anti-shipping sweeps in advance of the Third Fleet, for the purpose of permitting the fleet to approach the coast of Honshu undetected. After completion of this duty, the ANGLER selected as its next target an enemy radar and army installation on the island of Kinkasan off the coast of Honshu. The first shell fired went right into the front door of the administration building of the Nip's army headquarters without even bothering to knock. Others damaged surrounding properties.

After such success in this first bombardment, the ANGLER turned to Tomakomi, a city of 30,000 population on the island of Hokkaido. Fifty rounds of high explosives were scattered through the manufacturing section of this town with devastating results.

Early in August of 1945 the ANGLER made rendezvous with two other U. S. subs, the THORNBAC and SEA POACHER in plans for a joint bombardment of several towns on the southern coast of Hokkaido. Resistance was so trifling that even a landing was considered. After expending all ammunition, the ANGLER departed from the "Land of the Rising Sun", which was rapidly setting, proceeded to Midway Island and there celebrated the end of the war.

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