

Office of Naval Records and History
Ships' Histories Section
Navy Department

HISTORY OF USS ANGLER (SS 240)

The USS ANGLER (SS-240) was constructed by the Electric Boat Co., Groton, Connecticut, and was commissioned on the first of October 1943. Sponsor of the submarine was Mrs. Patrick H. Drewry of Petersburg, Va., whose husband was a member of the House Naval Affairs Committee at the time. Special guest on the sponsor's platform was Captain Frank T. Cable, 80, of New London, Connecticut, who commanded the submarine Holland, launched in 1896 and declared to be the first successful undersea boat ever built in the United States.

Lieutenant Commander Roger I. Olsen, USN, assumed command of the submarine upon commissioning and served aboard her for the ship's first three war patrols.

On her first patrol, it appeared that the ANGLER was going to be a "lucky" submarine. No sooner had the ANGLER's new and glistering 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 two damaged. A few days earlier a fifty-ton fishing boat had felt the bite of the ANGLER's guns. Because only half her torpedoes remained after this attack, the ANGLER returned to Midway Island to load torpedoes. Score for the ANGLER after only twenty-two days out of port: Three enemy craft sunk, one damaged, and one prisoner had been taken.

After a short refit, the ANGLER again put to sea, intent on disrupting the enemy supply lines. After several weeks of fruitless searching, a despatch was received directing the ANGLER to proceed to Panay Island, in the Philippines, for a special mission. Early one evening the ANGLER proceeded into the beach on the surface and effected the rescue of fifty-eight men, women and children who had eluded searching Jap troops for several years. They were taken to Australia where the ANGLER received repairs in preparation for her third patrol.

Third
In early May of 1944, the ANGLER set out from Perth, West Australia, for ~~Second~~ Strait to conduct an offensive reconnaissance in conjunction with the bombing of Soerabaja 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 torpedoes were fired, sinking the transport. The escort turned on the ANGLER and opened up with depth charges, but she escaped undamaged.

Prior to leaving on her fourth patrol, Lieutenant Commander Olsen was relieved by Lieutenant Commander Franklin G. Hess, USN, as commanding officer. 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. Late that night the FLASHER made the first attack, sinking several of the transports and setting fire to others. The carrier left the scene of attack and the ANGLER closed in on the remainder of the force.

Attacking on the surface, the ANGLER sent another Jap ship to the bottom before one of the escorts sighted her in the light of early morning and began sending explosives in her direction. Submerging; the ANGLER sent another salvo of torpedoes into the enemy force and, after the CREVALLE's attack, only one of the original ten transports remained afloat, and "it wasn't in the best of health."

Several days later another convoy was sighted, but the ANGLER was unable to close to torpedo range so no ships were sunk.

After a refit in Australia, the ANGLER was ready for her fifth war patrol. This patrol was conducted in the Mindanao Sea, Sulu Sea, and South China Sea during the months of September and October 1944. During her patrol, the ANGLER did reconnaissance work around Leyte and Samar prior to the invasion by our forces. A few days before the invasion, the ANGLER left the Mindanao Sea and patrolled off Puerta Princesa, Palawan, sighted several merchant ships, but was unable to attack because of unsatisfactory conditions.

From Puerta Princesa the ANGLER proceeded to Cape Calabite on the Northern tip of Mindoro, sighting a convoy and sinking a troop transport enroute. Arrival off Mindoro seemed to be the signal for the starting of general fleet maneuvers. Everytime the periscope was raised a destroyer or cruiser, making maximum speed, would go by. Their haste saved them from attack.

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 others 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 destroyes. 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 Howard 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 U.S. 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 escort 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 Beasar 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. A patrol boat eased into the submarines path and opened fire and a Nip plane zoomed over-head. However, the ANGLER ploughed ahead and escaped without so much as a scratch to hold Christmas services.

Shortly following this encounter the ANGLER began her long trek back to San Francisco for a much needed overhaul. She set out again for the Western Pacific on 18 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 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 and formulated plans for a joint bombardment of several towns on the southern coast of Hokkaido. Several towns were shelled but soon all ammunition was expended and the ANGLER departed for Midway Island and there celebrated the end of the war.

By Directive dated January 1947, USS ANGLER (SS 240) was placed out of commission, in reserve, attached to the U.S. Atlantic Reserve Fleet.

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USS ANGLER earned six Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal, for participating in the following operations:

- 1 Star/Leyte Operation -- 10 October to 16 December 1944
- 1 Star/THIRD Fleet Operations against Japan -- 1 February 1944 to 11 August 1945
- 1 Star/Submarine War Patrol - Pacific -- 10 January to 4 February 1944
- 1 Star/Submarine War Patrol - Pacific -- 15 February to 9 April 1944
- 1 Star/Submarine War Patrol - Pacific -- 3 May to 29 May 1944
- 1 Star/Submarine War Patrol - Pacific -- 29 June to 23 August 1944

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STATISTICS

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

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Stencilled 9-2-48
Restencilled July 1951

U.S.S. ANGLER (SS-240)

Built at Electric Boat Co., Groton, Conn.

Launched on July 4, 1943 Disp 2070 tons

Length 306 ft.

Sponsored by Mrs. Patrick H. Drewry

Commissioned Oct. 1, 1943

First Commanding Officer Lt. Cmdr. Robert I. Olsen

U.S.N.R. Phila. Navy Yard 1968

Alderson J.	Haw.	Hammond W.	Cal.
Apperson A.	N.M.	Hess F.G.	Cal.
Ball R.L.	N.D.	Hudgins	
Barnes R.	Conn.	Hogan G.W.	Ill.
Bernard J.A.	Fla.	Ingles W.	Wash.
Berry R.	Fla.	Jasinas J.A.	Conn.
Brunke H.	N.Y.	Kasuga A.A.	Ohio
Calver H.W.	Pa.	Kelly F.	Cal.
Combs H.	Neb.	Kershner J.J.	Tex.
Cowles E.	Wyo.	Kovich J.G.	Ind.
Crawford C.W.	Tex.	Matingly M.	Ind.
Davis L.A.	Haw.	Meschwitz H.	N.Y.
Demers M.L.	Fla.	Moore R.	Conn.
DeVitt J.A.	Cal.	Nelson G.H.	Wash.
Dressel W.G.	Va.	Newell L.	Cal.
DuCharme A.N.	Conn.	Oakey E.S.	Conn.
Dudics G.	N.J.	O'Niell R.	Mass.
Egidio R.T.	Cal.	Peterson R.E.	Mich.
Ellis R.L.	Mich.	Quinn J.F.	Iowa
Ervinger J.L.	Ariz.	Robb G.	Fla.
Ford J.A.	Cal.	Schuster W.C.	Ohio
Francis J.B.	Wisc.	Senn J.	Ill.
Fulmer J.	Cal.	Staatz C.	N.Y.
Gant F.	N.J.	VanBoheman B.	N.J.
Garbati E.P.	Conn.	Weaver R.	N.Y.
Greer		Wood J.	Tex.
Gregory L.	Cal.	Worthington R.	Cal.
Grubbs J.	Ind.	Wright R.	Ala.
Hall K.	Cal.	Wurm M.	Conn.

Bob, This is it. These lists represent the men who served on these particular boats during World War II and have become members of our Organization. I don't know who put the piece in Polaris, I think it was Jim Woodall, but what it meant was or refers only to our members. If you recognize anyone who you would like to contact, let me know and I will try to get you addresses. Most of my addresses are firm. Are you # 1111? I have you listed in Michigan but for some unknown reason, I have you listed for the Pilotfish.

Fraternally,

C.E. Whitten