

Commander Howard W. Gilmore C.O. USS Growler.

When submarine commanders returned from patrol, they gathered at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu, not only for rest and relaxation but to swap information and catch up on news of the other boats. They remembered those who had been lost and spoke of men whose heroic feats had made them legends.

One such man of legend was Commander Howard W. Gilmore of the Growler. During a patrol in the South Pacific near Rabaul in February of 1943, Gilmore's sub closed on a small ship that he had been stalking on the surface, when the ship changed course and steamed toward the Growler.

The two collided and the submarine sliced a hole amidships in the enemy vessel. Japanese machine-gunners strafed the bridge of the Growler, killing two men and wounding Gilmore and two others. Gilmore ordered the survivors to clear the bridge but could not get to the hatch himself. Still topside, he shouted to his executive officer "Take her down"! The exec. obeyed, and Gilmore was last seen clutching to the bridge as the Japanese continued to sweep the submarine with machine-gun fire. The badly damaged Growler escaped and eventually struggled to Australia.

Commander Gilmore's MEDAL OF HONOR was the first ever awarded to a war time submariner.

Growler was credited with sinking four merchantships and one Japanese Destroyer. While Gilmore was C.O. and was awarded the Navy Cross and the boat the Navy Unit Commendation.

Commander Sam D.Dealey C.O. U.S.S.Harder. Ships motto: 'HIT'EM AGAIN HARDER'.

USS Harder Sank 16 Vessels on six war patrols and was famous for the 'Down the Throat Shot'on attacking Anti-Submarine Ships.

Six of the last seven ships sank were warships,4Destroyers and 2 Frigates. Three destroyers in June 1944,one each on June 6,7 and 9.The 2 Frigats were sunk on the same day 22 Aug.1944.

Harder left Australia on Aug.5th.1944,to conduct her sixth warpatrol.She was leading a wolf-pack composed of herself,Hake and Haddo.It shuld be noted that submarine captians did not as a rule make over five consecutive patrols as captain.

Haddo an Harder made a combined attack on three coastal defense Frigats,Haddo Cdr C.W.Nimitz Jr. Commanding sank one and Harder sinking two in short order,this was off Bataan P.I.Hake arrived on scene and the wolf-pack continued the hunt.On the morning of August 23d.Young Nimitz in Haddo the Jap DD Asakaze,out of ammunition she returned to Australia.

Harder and Hake held a conferance and continued the hunt. On the morning of Aug.24, the boat submerged for dayly patrol off Caimen Point.Presently Hake heard 'pinging',and her periscope picked up two ships.Hake's C.O.Commander Broach closed and identified them as Phra-Ruang a three stack Siamese destroyer and a Jap minesweeper. Cdr.Broach discontinued the attack when the destroyer zigged away.Hake soundman heard three strong 'pings'.A periscope exposure showed the minesweeper closeing on the two submarines.Cdr.Broach supected the enemy had made contact,so ordered deep submergence.Hake heard 15 rapid depth charges in the distance.'Pinging'went on for sometime an Cdr.Broach maneruvered to evade.Two and half hours later-silence.That noon there was no sign of Harder.

Captain John P.Cromwell: Lost in Sculpin.Story told by Lieutenant G.E.Brown,the diving officer,who was rescued and sent to POW camp.With shells bursting around the submarine and the conning tower torn open,Lt.Brown,decided to scuttle and gave the order,'All hands abandon ship!'Vents open,the submarine plugged from sight,makeing her final dive.

About 12 men 'rode the boat down'.Among them was Captian Crommwell,who refused to leave the stricken submarine.Forty-two of Sculpin's crew,including three of her officers,got overside and were taken prisoner by the Japanese destroyer.One of the men was immediately thrown by his captors back into the sea because he was badly wounded.

Captain Cromwell,who went down with the submarine,did so because he possessed vital information concerning 'Operation Galvanic'and other war plans-information which might be extracted by torture.Sculpin would keep these secrets well.

For this action,Captain John P.Cromwell,wolf-pack commander,was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Sculpin's survivors were taken to Truk where they were questioned for ten days.They were embarked on two carries (21 on one,and 20 on the other) and started for Japan.Only one of these parties reached Japan and imprisonment and hard labor in the Ashio copper mines.Of the other group (the party of 21) only one man reached Japan.It was the fate of these Sculpin survivors to start for Japan aboard the carrier Chuyo,witch was sunk December 3,1943,by USS Sailfish.

MOHJPC

The account of an A/S attack off Caiman Point was found in Japanese records. The report concluded, 'Much oil, wood chips and cork floated in the vicinity'.

So perished Harder and Sam D. Dealey-one of the greatest fighting teams of the Pacific War.

Commander Dealey was posthumously awarded the MEDAL of HONOR, and the Harder the Presidential Unit Citation.

One can only summarize that Cdr. Dealey tried one of his famous down the throat attacks. For some reason missed the small minesweeper-and took the 15 depth charges, heard by Haddo at a shallow depth.

MOHSAM

MOHGLS

Lieutenant Commander George L. Street III C.O USS Tirante.

The sage is told, Navy style, from the citation with which the Submarine Board of Awards recommended Lt. Cdr. Street for the Medal of Honor.

With extreme aggressiveness, brilliant planning and daring, the commanding officer took his submarine deep into the enemy's defenses in a meticulous search for enemy shipping. With sagacity and consummate skill, he penetrated strong escort screens in shallow water and launched four devastating torpedo attacks which resulted in the sinking of a 1,218 ton freighter, a 2,220 ton freighter, a tanker and a 5,057 ton transport loaded with troops. After the attack upon the transport, Tirante was subjected to a severe depth-charging which bounced her off the bottom. This gallant submarine came back with a vengeance, to sink a valuable 1,500 ton patrol vessel, after which she made her escape. It was determined that the enemy ships were using a confined harbor on the north shore of Quelpart for an anchorage. In order to reach this anchorage, he would have to take his submarine through many miles of shallow water. The harbor was inevitably mined, numerous reefs and shoals were known to exist. The whole area was closely guarded by shore-based radar, numerous patrol vessels and extensive air coverage. The commanding officer made his decision - 'BATTLE STATIONS TORPEDO'. A decision to attempt an act far above and beyond the call of duty.

Disregarding the mine-fields and the five shore-based radars, Tiranti closed the shoreline and progressed into the harbor through numerous anti-submarine vessels. The guncrews were at their stations, as Tirante would have to fight her way out on the surface if attacked once in the harbor. A rapid set-up was made on a 10,000 ton tanker. Two torpedo fired at this target and a great mushroom of white blinding flame shot 2,000 ft into the air and a thunerous roar nearly

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In the light of the burning tanker, two new Mikura-Class frigates spotted Tirante and started in for the kill. Quickly bringing his submarine to bear on the leading frigate, the commanding officer tenaciously fired two 'DO OR DIE' torpedes at this vessel which was endeavoring to block his escape and then swung his ship and fired his last torpedo at the other frigate. With all torpedes expended, he headed his ship out of the confined harbor at full speed just as the torpedoes hit the first frigate and blew it sky-high. Seconds later, the sister ship was hit and it, too, followed a like fate and disintegrated. With emergency full speed ahead, the Tirante slipped right out of the enemy's hands. In addition to this History-Making offensive against the enemy, a 100ton lugger was sunk by gunfire, three prisoners were captured from a schooner and two aviators were picked up from a downed Jap aircraft.

ON OCTOBER 5, 1945, President Truman presented the MEDAL OF HONOR to COMMANDER GEORGE L. STREET III and the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the Tirante.

MOHGEO

Commander Lawson P. Ramage, C.O. USS Parche. The following excerpts from Submarine Force Board of Awards recommending Commander Ramage for The MEDAL OF HONOR. The personal daring and outstanding skill displayed by the commanding officer in his series of attacks against a large heavily escorted convoy, consisting of tankers, transports, and freighters, contacted on 31 July, is one of the outstanding attacks in submarine warfare to date. With action packed into every minute of this forty-six minute battle against the enemy. Attaining the ultimate in aggressiveness, exceptional courage, personal heroism, and bearing, the commanding officer sagaciously and with consummate skill, fired nineteen torpedos in forty-six minutes to obtain fourteen or fifteen hits in a brilliant night surface attack. By a brilliant act of stratagem the commanding officer penetrated the strong escort screen; and, although hemmed in on all sides by ships and escorts trying to maneuver and deliver counter-attacks, he daringly closed to a favorable firing position from which to launch his torpedoes. With a well executed stern shot, he succeeded in damaging a freighter. Following up with a series of bow and stern shots, he sank the leading tanker and damaged a second tanker. Despite the grave problem of machine-gun fire and flares from escorts, near proximity of vessels, some as close as 200 yards, he successfully delivered two forward reloads to sink a transport. At the same time, he commenced maneuvering to avoid nearest escort's gunfire and obtain a stern shot at damaged tanker that had now manned her guns. As he reached a firing position, the first fusillade of tanker's 4" or 5" shells passed close overhead and slightly forward. Because of the additional enemy 20mm and 40mm, increasing the possibilities of casualties, all lookouts and spare hands were sent below, with the exception of the bridge quartermaster who volunteered to remain on the TBT.

Damage with utter disregard for personal safety, courageously remained at his station, on the bridge, despite the hail of bullets and shells, in order to maneuver his ship more effectively and score hits with his stern tubes. Simultaneously with his sinking the damaged tanker and while trying to close a large transport, he was forced to commence evasive maneuvers to avoid a fast transport or freighter bearing down, intent on ramming him, and also in order to avoid concentrated machine gun fire of the two nearby escorts. At emergency full speed he swung the stern of Parche as she crossed the bow of the onrushing ship, clearing the onrushing ship by less than fifty feet. Although now boxed in, he delivered three smashing down-the-throat bow shots and stopped the target. With high speed and expert seamanship, he tenaciously attacked again, scoring a killing hit with a reloaded stern torpedo.

At break of dawn, with enemy escorts' counter-attacks becoming too accurate to justify further attack and risk, Parche cleared the area, having sunk four and damaged one in forty-six minutes.

The counter-attacks on Parche were probably the most intensive ever encountered by a submarine engaged in a surface attack.

The C.O. courage in remaining on the bridge during this intense action enabled him to control his ship skillfully and efficiently, and to evade the enemy's vigorous efforts to destroy Parche.

Commander L.P. 'RED' Ramage, Two Navy Crosses, Two Presidential Unit Citations. One as C.O. USS Trout; One on Parche and the Navy Unit Citation and the MEDAL OF HONOR.

It was recognized early as skipper of Trout that he possessed the two qualities which made for success in submarines. The qualities?

SAGACITY and EFFICIENCY

MOHLAU

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Commander Eugene B. 'LUCKY' FLUCKEY, C.O. USS BARB:

Barb formed a coordinated attack group with Queenfish and Picuda on her eleventh war patrol, departing Midway on 19 December 1944. This patrol was conducted in the Formosa Straits and East China Sea off the east coast of China from Shanghai to Kam Kit. On 8 January 1945, while in the northern reaches of Formosa Straits, she sank passenger-cargo ship Anyo Maru, tanker Sano Maru, and cargo ship Seinyo maro. On 23 January, Barb was patrolling the China Coast when she rounded Incog Island to discover an entire convoy anchored in the lower reaches of Namkwan Harbor. Barb made a night attack on the surface, firing eight torpedos for eight hits. Cargo ship TaiKyo Maru settled and sank. A large ammunition ship blew up in a tremendous explosion and one unidentified vessel had its entire side blown out. Two other vessels could be seen burning but smoke from the ships hit, on fire and exploding obscured all ships and further observation of damage was not possible. Barb retired at high speed on the surface in a full hour's run through uncharted, heavily mined and rock-obstructed waters. Although Japanese records do not account for ships sunk as a result of Barb's attack on Namkwan Harbor, it is estimated that 36,000 tons of Japanese shipping was laid useless. Barb terminated her patrol at Midway on 10 February 1945. In recognition of his valor during this outstanding patrol, Commander Fluckey was awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR.

Commander Fluckey: FOUR NAVY CROSSES, The Barb awarded Presidential UNIT CITATION and NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION.

Recommended reading: 'THUNDER BELOW' by Admiral Eugene B. Fluckey, University of Illinois Press
Urbana and Chicago

MOHEBF

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USS BARB and JANAC:

The Japanese merchant and naval losses do not score the entire submarine effort. Carefully compiled by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, the listing stand as the official score for the Pacific War. JANAC's data base was flawed, they only gave credit for a sinking or damage if it could be found in Japanese records. It can be proven and has been many times that the Japanese were poor record keepers. Many ships that were confiscated, as they marched across ASIA, were never put on the list for Jap ships, only a new name painted on the ship and the rising sun flag identified it as a target for US Subs. Its loss was many times not recorded. The Jap's even had other Asian country war-ships.

Scoreboard of USS Barb Attacks on Japanese shipping as determined by research, including Japanese and US archives and interviewing witness at Namkwan Harbor China. From the Barb's Seventh War patrol to the Twelfth War patrol, 29 1/2 ships by torpedo attacks. Vessels Destroyed by Gunfire, 3 luggers, 2 trawlers, 69 sampans. Destroyed by Saboteur Party one train engine with 16 cars. Vessel Destroyed by Ramming 1 trawler. Total Tonage 146,808.

Total JANAC listed 16 ships, 94,409 tons, so much for official records.

NO BETTER CREW OF BUCCANEER'S ever sailed the seven seas.

"WELL DONE BARB"

MOHGEN

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Commander Richard O'Kane C.O USS TANG.

October 23, 1944 patrolling in the narrow and dangerous Formosa Strait made contact with a convoy of one transport, four freighters and numerous escorts. As the Tang maneuvered on the surface to close the convoy, the radar showed a blip breaking away from the convoy and moving in their direction. O'Kane made a wide arc and positioned the Tang in the spot the Japanese escort had vacated and began to zig when the convoy zigged. When dead-ahead of the convoy he stopped and waited on the surface for it to come to him. Once he was between the two lines of ship's, he fired from his bow tubes on three of the leading ships. A lookout warned O'Kane that a transport had veered from line and was bearing down on Tang. With no time to dive, he ordered full-speed-ahead in a frantic attempt to cross the bow of the giant ship. Gunners poured machinegun fire on the Tang from above. O'Kane ordered 'left full rudder', the Tang pivoted and steamed strait down the side so close the machinegunners could not depress their guns enough to hit the Tang.

O'Kane ordered 'clear the bridge', in preparation for diving, but saw that the transport was about to collide with one of the Freighters. The two ships collided, O'Kane called for after torpedo room to fire stern tubes hitting the freighter with a parting shot.

The next night, finding the seam between escorts and merchant vessels, O'Kane slipped into the front of another convoy. The Tang was sighted by destroyers but O'Kane stayed on the surface long enough to hit a tanker and two transports. He had two torpedos left, but the destroyers were closing so fast that he had to make his escape before using them. O'Kane waited an hour until he thought it would be safe to return to the battle in order to finish-off the transport he had crippled.

MOHROK

He fired his twenty-third Mark 18 torpedo of the mission at the crippled ship, then the twenty-fourth. The twenty-third hit the mark, but the twenty-fourth took a sharp turn, and as the men on the bridge watched in horror, it began to circle back toward the Tang. O'Kane called for emergency speed as the berserk torpedo porpoised in and out of the water on a direct line for the center of the boat. It hit the Tang with a devastating detonation that blew O'Kane and eight others into the water. O'Kane watched helplessly as the Tang sank.

Thirteen men escaped through air locks to the surface. Of the twenty-two men in the water that night only O'Kane and eight others lived through the night, to be picked up by a Japanese destroyer in the morning. To be secretly held in OFUNA POW CAMP, the RED CROSS was not told of their capture.

CDR. Dudley 'MUSH' Morton C.O. USS Wahoo, said of O'Kane, who had been EXO on Wahoo 'He was the bravest man I ever know.'

CDR. George Street III said, 'O'Kane was 'absolutely fearless'. High praise indeed.

Commander Richard O'Kane, as commanding Officer made the five most successful war patrols in WWII, four Navy Cross and the MEDAL OF HONOR.

Because of fear of retaliation against O'Kane if he were alive, his medal was not announced until his release from POW Camp.

MOHO 'K

Questioned after the war, Admiral Soemu Toyoda, Commander-In-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, could not believe one submersible responsible for such destruction as Harder. He had according to his own testimony, already conceived a sincere respect for the prowess of U.S. Submarines.

Admiral Toyoda C-in-C '' Early in the war I think the submarines were the part of the United States Navy which I considered the greatest threat. '' ''The main reason, I think is that we did not have sufficient numbers of ships to begin with, and such as we had, suffered heavy damage owing to your submarine and air action.

By the time of Saipan operation, the greatest hindrance to drafting of operation plans was the fact that we did not have sufficient tankers to support it.

C.W. Nimitz: Fleet Admiral, U.S. Navy.

It was to the Submarine Force that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of great peril. The world should know how well they did their work in spite of real hardships and heavy losses.

Vice Admiral C.A. Lockwood Jr. Commander Submarine Force
1943-1946. (Uncle Charlie)

''I can assure you that they went down fighting and their brothers who survived them took a grim toll of our savage enemy to avenge their deaths''

POSTWAR.