



***Flounder* (SS-251)** was launched 22 August 1943 by Electric Boat Co., Groton, Conn.; sponsored by Mrs. Astrid H. McClellan; and commissioned 29 November 1943, Commander C. A. Johnson in command.

*Flounder* arrived at Milne Bay, New Guinea, from New London 5 March 1944, and 11 days later sailed on her first war patrol, bound for the Palau. Many planes were sighted, limiting her action, and few contacts were made. She returned to Milne Bay to refit, then sailed to Manus for training, and from that base took departure 3 June on her second war patrol. In the Philippine Sea during the assault on the Marianas, *Flounder* made a sound contact on 17 June which resulted in her sinking a 2,681-ton transport. Escorts immediately began a persistent, vigorous counter-attack, fortunately ineffective. On 24 June, as *Flounder* sailed on the surface, two enemy planes suddenly dived out of the cloud cover, and dropped bombs which landed close aboard, causing some damage, luckily not serious. The submarine topped off her fuel tanks at Manus 5 July, and sailed on to Brisbane, Australia, to refit.

*Flounder* cleared Brisbane on her third war patrol 1 August 1944, and after calling at Manus 8 and 9 August, sailed on to serve as lifeguard during strikes on the Philippines. Once more, during the portion of her patrol devoted to aggressive patrol, she found few contacts, and was able to make only one attack. The intended target, a small escort, dodged her torpedoes, and drove her deep with depth charges. *Flounder* took on provisions and fuel at Mios Woendi, New Guinea, 28 August to 1 September, then completed her patrol in Davao Gulf, returning to Brisbane 4 October.

On her fourth war patrol, for which she sailed 27 October 1944, *Flounder* patrolled the South China Sea with two other submarines. North of Lombok Strait on 10 November *Flounder* sighted what was first thought to be a small sailboat. Closer inspection revealed the target to be the conning tower of a submarine, and *Flounder* went to battle stations submerged. She sent four torpedoes away, observing one hit and feeling another as the target submarine exploded and was enveloped by smoke and flame. Coming back to periscope depth a half hour later, *Flounder* found nothing in sight. She had sunk one of the German submarines operating in the Far East, *U-537*.

An attack by her group on a convoy off Palawan 21 November 1944 sank a freighter, but other contacts were few, and *Flounder* returned to Fremantle to refit between 13 December and 7 January 1945. Underway for her fifth war patrol, *Flounder* had to return to Fremantle from 12 to 14 January to repair her fathometer, then sailed to lead a three-submarine wolf pack in the South China Sea. On 12 and 13 February, her group made a determined chase after a Japanese task force, but was unable to close these fast targets. A more obliging target came her way on 22 February, when she launched four torpedoes at a patrol boat. Two of these, however, ran erratically, and only *Flounder's* skillful maneuvering saved her from being hit by her own torpedoes. More trouble came her way 3 days later, when in a freak accident, she and *Hoe* (SS-258) brushed each other 65 feet beneath the surface. Only a slight leak developed, which was quickly brought under control.

*Flounder* prepared for her sixth war patrol at Subic Bay from 25 February 1945 to 15 March. Again with a wolf pack, she scouted targets south of Hainan, and on 29 March contacted a large convoy, which was attacked by aircraft before she and her sisters could launch their torpedoes. She closed her war patrol at Saipan 22 April, and headed home for a stateside overhaul. Returning to Pearl Harbor action-bound on the day hostilities ended, *Flounder* was ordered to the east coast, and arrived at New York City 18 September. After laying immobilized at Portsmouth and New London, she was decommissioned and placed in reserve at New London 12 February 1947.

The second and fourth of *Flounder's* six war patrols were designated "Successful," and she is credited with having sunk 2,681 tons of Japanese shipping as well as *U-537*. *Flounder* received two battle stars for World War II service.