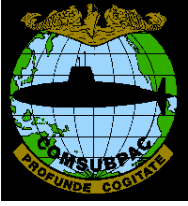


USS Wahoo (SS 238)



Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

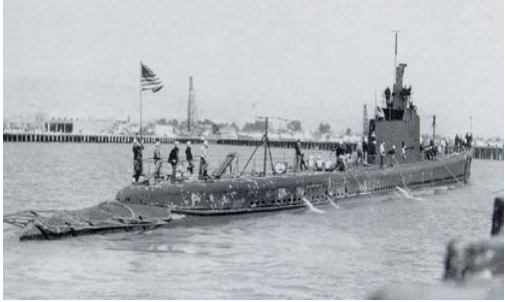
USS WAHOO (SS 238)

October 11, 1943 - 80 Men Lost

WAHOO returned to Pearl Harbor from her sixth war patrol on 29 August 1943 with the dejected air peculiar to a highly successful submarine who suddenly could not make her torpedoes run true. In twenty-eight days away from port, seven of them spent in her assigned area in the Sea of Japan, WAHOO had expended ten torpedoes in nine attacks without inflicting any damage on the enemy. Her Skipper, Cmdr. D.W. Morton, returned to port to have the torpedoes changed or checked, and requested that WAHOO be sent back to the Japan Sea for her seventh patrol.

On 9 September, WAHOO again departed Pearl. She topped off with fuel at Midway and left there on 13 September heading for the dangerous but important Japan Sea. Shortly afterwards, SAWFISH left Midway and also headed for this area. WAHOO was to pass through Etorofu Strait, in the Kurile Islands, and La Perouse Strait, between Hokkaido and Karafuto, and enter the Japan Sea about 20 September. She was to head south and remain below 43 degrees north after 23 September, and below 40 degrees north after 26 September. SAWFISH was to follow WAHOO, entering the Japan Sea about 23 September and patrolling the area north of WAHOO.

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USS Wahoo



CDR Dudley "Mush" Morton



Dollar bill signed by Wahoo crewmembers on the evening prior to departing on their final patrol.

No transmission was received from WAHOO, either by any shore station or by SAWFISH, nor was she sighted by SAWFISH after she left Midway. She had orders to clear her area not later than sunset 21 October 1943, and to report by radio after passing through Kurile Island chain en route to Midway. This report was expected about 23 October, but Midway waited in vain. By 30 October, apprehension was felt for WAHOO's safety and an aircraft search along her expected course was arranged. When this revealing nothing, WAHOO was reported missing on 9 November 1943.

Although no transmission was received from WAHOO after her departure on patrol, the results of one of her attacks became known to the world via Tokyo broadcast. Domei was quoted as reporting that on 5 October, a "steamer" was sunk by an American submarine off the west coast of Honshu near the Straits of Tsushima. It was said that the ship sank "after several seconds" with 544 people losing their lives. The submarine could have been none other than WAHOO: none other was operating in that area.

In this reporting broadcast, TIME magazine of 18 October 1943 stated:
"KNOCK AT THE DOOR"

"In the rough Tsushima Straits where two-decker, train carrying ferries ply between Japan and Korea, an Allied Submarine upped periscope, unleashed a torpedo. The missile stabbed the flank of a Jap steamer. Said the Tokyo radio: the steamer went down in 'seconds' with loss of 544 persons aboard.

"Fifty miles across at their narrowest, the Tsushima Straits are Japan's historic doors the Asiatic mainland. Over them centuries ago Regent Hideyoshi's armada sailed to battle the Koreans and send home 38,000 enemy ears pickled in wine. Upon them in 1905 crusty Admiral Togo smashed the Russian Fleet. Presumably the submarine knocking at the door last week was American. It had achieved one of the World War II's most daring submarine penetrations of

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enemy waters, a feat ranking with German Gunther Prien's entry at Scapa Flow, the Jap invasion of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. raid in Tokyo Bay."

Information gleaned from Japanese sources since the cessation of hostilities. Indicates that an antisubmarine attack was made in La Perouse Strait on 11 October 1943. This was two days after SAWFISH went through the Straits. Supplementary data on the attack of 11 October state, "Our plane found a floating sub and attacked it, with 3 depth charges." SAWFISH was attacked here while making her passage, and that attack is not mentioned in Japanese records; the primary attacking agency in that case was a patrol boat, and about five depth charges were dropped. Thus it is safe to assume that the attack cited here was made on WAHOO, and is not the attack on SAWFISH with an incorrect date. Both Tsushima Straits, where the attack on the steamer was made, and La Perouse Straits, through which WAHOO was to make good her exit from the Japan Sea, are known to have been mined. This despite the fact that SAWFISH transited La Perouse on 9 October and reported no indications of mining. It is felt, however, that WAHOO succumbed to the attack referred to above, and not a mine.

WAHOO was one of the Submarine Force's most valuable units during her six patrols, and her feats have become submarine legend. She sank 27 ships, totaling 119,100 tons, and damaged two more, making 24,900 tons, in the six patrols completed before her loss. Her patrolling career began in August 1942 in the Carolines. On this patrol WAHOO sank a freighter. Her second patrol was in the Solomons, and she sank a freighter. WAHOO conducted her third patrol in the Palau area. She sank two large freighters, a transport, a tanker, and an escort vessel. In addition, she entered Wewak harbor, on the north coast of New Guinea, seriously damaged a destroyer, which was later found beached there, and obtained reconnaissance data. For her fourth patrol, WAHOO went to the Yellow Sea west of Korea. Here she sank eight freighters, a tanker, a patrol craft and two sampans in March 1943.

Going to the Kurile chain for her fifth patrol, WAHOO sank two freighters and a large tanker, also doing damage to another freighter and a large (15,600-ton) aircraft transport. The sixth war patrol of WAHOO was the disappointing one in the Japan Sea due to poor torpedo performance. Not one of the many attacks on merchantmen resulted in a torpedo hit; WAHOO's only sinkings were of three sampans by gunfire. WAHOO was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for her third patrol. Commander Morton was considered one of the topnotch officers in the submarine force, and the loss of this ship was an irreparable blow to the Service.

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Japanese records now reveal that the following ships were sunk in the Sea of Japan shortly before WAHOO's loss: TAIKO MARU 2,958T., 25 Sept.; KONRON MARU 7,903T., 1 Oct.; KANKO MARU 1,288gt., 6 Oct.; and KANKO MARU 2,995gt., 9 Oct. WAHOO was the only submarine who could have sunk these ships.

Sailors Lost On USS WAHOO (SS 238) 10-11-1943

Anders, F. MM3
Andrews, J. S. EM1
Bailey, R. E. SC3
Bair, A. I. TM3
Berg, J. C. MM3
Browning, C. E. MOMM2
Brown, D. R. LTJG
Bruce, C. L. MOMM1
Buckley, J. P. RM1
Burgan, W. W. LT
Campbell, J. S. ENS
Carr, W. J. CGMA
Carter, J. E. RM2
Davison, W. E. MOMM1
Deaton, L. N. TM1
Erdey, J. S. EM3
Fielder, E. F. LTJG
Finkelstein, O. TM3
Galli, W. O. TM3
Garmon, C. E. MOMM2
Garrett, G. C., Jr. MOMM2
Gerlacher, W. L. S2
Goss, R. P. MOMM1
Greene, H. M. LT
Hand, W. R. EM2
Hartman, L. M. MM3
Hayes, D. M. EM2
Henderson, R. N. LT
Holmes, W. H. EM1
House, V. A. S1
Howe, H. J. EM2
Jacobs, O. MOMM1
Jasa, R. L. MM3
Jayson, J. O. CK3
Johnson, K. B. TM1
Keeter, D. C. CMOMMA
Kemp, W. W. GM1
Kessock, P. F1

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Krebs, P. H. S1
Kirk, E. T. S1
Lape, A. D. F1
Lindemann, C. A. S1
Logue, R. B. FC1
Lynch, W. L. F1
MacAlman, S. E. PHM1
MacGowen, T. J. MOMM1
Magyar, A. J. MM3
Manalisay, J. C. ST3
Mandjiak, P. A. MM3
Massa, E. E. S1
Maulding, E. C. SM3
Maulding, G. E. TM3
McGill, T. J. CMOMMA
McGilton, H. E. TM3
McSpadden, D. J. TM1
Mills, M. L. RT1
Misch, G. A. LTJG
[Morton, D. W. CDR](#)
Neel, P. TM2
O'Brien, F. L. EM1
O'Neal, R. L. EM3
Ostrander, E. E. MM3
Phillips, P. D. SC1
Rennels, J. L. SC2
Renno, H. S1
Seal, E. H. Jr. TM2
Simonetti, A. R. SM2
Skjonsby, V. L. LCDR
Smith, D. O. BM1
Stevens, G. V. MOMM2
Terrell, W. C. QM3
Thomas, W. S1
Tyler, R. O. TM3
Vidick, J. EM2
Wach, L. J. COX
Waldron, W. E. RM3
Ware, N. C. CEM
White, W. T. Y2
Whipp, K. L. MM2
Witting, R. L. MM3