

Submarines Sunk by Patrol Squadrons During World War II

IN MANY RESPECTS THE BATTLE AGAINST Axis submarines proved to be one of the most pivotal conflicts of WWII. The U.S. Navy was largely unprepared for the Axis submarine threat, despite participating in the Neutrality Patrols from September 1939 to December 1941. The ferocity of the conflict can be judged by large number of Allied merchant vessels that were sunk with the loss of a large number of personnel.

Against such a threat, U.S. and Allied merchantmen required protection over the lifelines to England, the Mediterranean and the South Pacific. The use of long-range Navy patrol aircraft flying cover over the convoys in late 1942, the addition in 1943 of sufficient Allied long-range patrol aircraft to cover the mid-ocean air gap and escort carriers accompanying the convoys over their entire routes in 1943 turned the tide against the Axis powers, ending the Battle for the Atlantic in May 1943. In the Pacific, the combination of long-range, land-based patrol bombers; carrier battle air groups; the mining campaign; and the U.S. submarine forces virtually swept the seas of Japanese vessels by the end of the war.

The risks in combat with the Axis submarine forces were not totally in favor of the Allies. As the war progressed, German submarines in particular became more heavily armed with anti-aircraft defenses. At least 57 U.S. aircraft were shot down by U-boats compared to only 12 U-boats lost in these attacks. The RAF Coastal Command alone lost 700 aircraft that were badly damaged, shot down or written off after encounters with U-boats.

Technology used by both sides in the conflict improved dramatically as the war progressed. On the Allied side the advantages of ASDIC, aircraft-borne radar, MAD gear, rockets and homing torpedoes temporarily offset wolfpack tactics and improved AA weapons. New German developments such as the schnorkel and the fast Type XXI, XXIII and Walter Electric Boats were introduced to late in the war to have any impact. The Japanese navy built some of the largest submarines in WWII, which were used for transporting vital supplies and reinforcements to out-

posts located in Allied controlled waters unreachable by surface vessels. Some, like *I-400*, were designed to carry up to three aircraft and could range as far as 37,000 miles cruising on the surface at 14 knots.

The following section lists the details regarding submarines sunk by patrol squadron aircraft. The squadron designations are shown as they were at the time of the attack and the designation in parentheses is the squadron's final designation. Headings for the listing are as follows: the **squadron designation**, followed by a listing of the submarines it sunk. The listing of submarines sunk includes the **number** and the **date it was sunk**, as well as data on the submarine that includes **type, date laid down, date commissioned, commanding officers, career, successes** and its final **fate**. The squadron listing is in alphanumeric order beginning with VBs, VPs and finally VPBs.

VB-103 (VPB-103)

U-966, 10 November 1943 (shared)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 1 May 1942, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 4 March 1943, Oblt. Eckehard Wolf

Commander: Oblt. Eckehard Wolf

Career: Assigned: March 1943–July 1943, 5th Flotilla (Kiel) training; August 1943 – November 1943 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 10 November 1943 in the Bay Biscay near Cape Ortegal, Spain, by American and Czech aircraft bombs in one of the longest surface battles of aircraft against a U-boat in WWII. At 0800, a VB-105 PB4Y-1 Liberator piloted by Lieutenant L. E. Harmon was alerted by an RAF aircraft of a radar contact near the coast of Spain. Harmon located the surfaced U-boat and made two strafing attacks. Heavy AA fire damaged his aircraft and forced him to break off the attack. An RAF fighter then dove

to attack the submarine. Harmon made a third strafing attack, but had to break off afterwards due to a fuel shortage. Lieutenant K. L. Wright of VB-103 located *U-966* near Ferrol at 1040 and delivered a strafing and depth charge attack. Intense AA fire drove him off and he, too, had to depart the target for lack of fuel. Lieutenant W. W. Parish and crew then arrived on the scene. A depth charge attack was conducted in cooperation with a rocket-firing RAF Liberator at 1230. The submarine was abandoned by its crew after running aground at Oritiguiera, Spain. The German crewmen were quickly picked up by nearby Spanish fishing vessels and interned in Spain.

U-508, 12 November 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 24 September 1940, Deutsche Werft, Hamburg

Commissioned: 20 October 1941, Oblt. Georg Staats

Commander: October 1941–November 1943, Kptlt. Georg Staats (Knights Cross)

Career: Six Patrols; assigned: October 1941–June 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); July 1942–November 1943 10th Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: 14 ships sunk for a total of 74,087 tons

Fate: Sunk 12 November 1943, north of Cape Ortegal, Spain, in position 46°00'N, 07°30'W, by U.S. bombs (VB-103). 57 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant (jg) Brownell made a night attack on a submarine. His PB4Y-1 Liberator was apparently heavily damaged by the U-boat's AA fire and crashed into the sea with no survivors. The next day, two oil slicks were spotted, about five miles apart. Postwar examination of German records indicates that he sank *U-508*.

U-271, 28 January 1944

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 21 October 1941, Vegesacker Werft, Bremen-Vegesack

Commissioned: 23 September 1942, Kptlt. Curt Barleben

Commander: September 1942–January 1944, Kptlt. Curt Barleben

Career: Assigned: September 1942–May 1943, 8th Flotilla (Danzig) training; June 1943–January 1944, 1st Flotilla (Brest) front. *U-271* was one of seven U-boats converted into "U-flak" boats to serve as surface escorts for the incoming/outgoing attack U-boats operating from the French Atlantic bases. They had greatly increased antiaircraft firepower and

were intended as aircraft traps by luring Allied aircraft to attack these heavily armed U-boats. The converted boats proved effective for little more than two months before the Allies developed countermeasures. *U-271* operated briefly as a U-flak during October 1943, providing AA cover in the refueling area north of the Azores. All U-flaks were converted back to attack boat configuration in November 1943. It should be noted that by late 1943 the U-flaks had become redundant due to improvements in the standard AA armament for U-boats.

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 28 January 1944, west of Limerick, in position 53°15'N, 15°52'W, by a PB4Y-1 Liberator of VB-103. 51 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant George C. Enloe and crew caught the U-boat on the surface and dropped six depth charges. The submarine quickly settled by the stern and slid beneath the surface.

VB-107 (2nd VP-27)

U-598, 23 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down** 11 January 1941, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 27 November 1941, Oblt. Gottfried Holtorf

Commander: November 1941–July 1943, Kptlt. Gottfried Holtorf

Career: Assigned: November 1941–July 1942, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); July 1942–July 1943, 6th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)

Successes: Two ships sunk for a total of 9,295 tons; one ship of 6,197 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 23 July 1943, in the South Atlantic near Natal, in position 04°05'S, 33°23'W, by U.S. bombs (VB-107). 44 dead, one survivor. Lieutenant (jg) Waugh, flying PB4Y-1 Liberator aircraft 107-B-6, attacked the surfaced U-boat in conjunction with a second squadron aircraft flown by Lieutenant William R. Ford, sinking the submarine. Waugh's aircraft apparently sustained damage during the attack, plunging into the sea after his bombing pass with the loss of all hands. The submarine's identity was confirmed by the sole survivor as *U-598*.

U-848, 5 November 1943

Type: IX D2 **Laid Down:** 6 January 1942, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 20 February 1943, Korvkpt. Wilhelm Rollmann (Knights Cross)

Commander: February 1943–November 1943, Korvkpt. Wilhelm Rollmann

Career: One patrol; assigned: February 1943–July 1943, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); August 1943–November 1943, 12th Flotilla (Bordeaux)

Successes: One ship of 4,573 tons sunk

Fate: Sunk 5 November 1943, southwest of Ascension Island, in approximate position 10°09'S, 18°00'W, by U.S. bombs (VB-107). 63 dead (entire crew lost). A VB-107 PB4Y-1 Liberator aircraft from the Ascension Island detachment, piloted by Lieutenant Baldwin, attacked *U-848* in conjunction with two other squadron aircraft. Lieutenant Baldwin damaged the submarine sufficiently to prevent it from submerging. Lieutenant S. K. Taylor's aircraft administered the coup de grace, hitting the target on two bomb runs, causing it to blow up and sink within five minutes.

U-849, 25 November 1943

Type: IX D2 **Laid Down:** 20 January 1942, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 11 March 1943, Kptlt. Heinz-Otto Schultze (Knights Cross)

Commander: March 1943–November 1943, Kptlt. Heinz-Otto Schultze

Career: One patrol; assigned: March 1943–September 1943, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); October 1943–November 1943, 12th Flotilla (Bordeaux)

Successes: None.

Fate: Sunk 25 November 1943, in the South Atlantic west of the Congo estuary, in position 06°30'S, 05°40'W, by U.S. bombs from a PB4Y-1 Liberator aircraft (VB-107). 63 dead (entire crew lost).

U-177, 6 February 1944

Type: IXD **Laid Down:** 25 November 1940, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 14 March 1942, Kptlt. Wilhelm Schulze

Commander: March 1942, Kptlt. Wilhelm Schulze; October 1943, Korvkpt. Robert Gysae (Oak Leaves); October 1943–February 1944, Korvkpt. Heinz Buchholz

Career: Three patrols; assigned: March 1942–September 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); October 1942–November 1942, 10th Flotilla (Lorient); December 1942–February 1944, 12th Flotilla (Bordeaux)

Successes: 14 ships sunk for a total of 87,388 tons

Fate: Sunk 6 February 1944, west of Ascension Island, in position 10°35'S, 23°15'W, by U.S. bombs (VB-107). 50 dead. A PB4Y-1 Liberator piloted by Lieutenant (jg) C. I. Purnell made

two successful bomb runs on *U-177*, straddling the submarine.

U-863, 29 September 1944

Type: IX D2 **Laid Down:** 15 September 1942, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 3 November 1943, Kptlt. Dietrich von der Esch

Commander: November 1943–September 1944, Kptlt. Dietrich von der Esch

Career: Assigned: November 1943–June 1944, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); July 1944–September 1944 12th Flotilla (Bordeaux)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 29 September 1944, east-southeast of Recife, in position 10°45'S, 25°30'W, by U.S. bombs from two PB4Y-1 Liberators (VB-107) flown by Lieutenants E. A. Krug and J. T. Burton. 69 dead (entire crew lost).

VB-108 (2nd VP-28)

I-174, 12 April 1944

Type: 1st Class Fleet Submarine, Improved Kaidai Type 6B **Laid Down:** 1934

Commissioned: 28 March 1937, Sasebo.

Commander: 1940–1942, LCDR Toshi Kusaka; 1942–1944, LCDR Nobukiyo Nambu; 1944, LCDR Katsuto Suzuki

Career: Originally designated *I-74*, redesignated *I-174* 20 May 1942. Assigned: SubRon3, Kure Naval Base. Modified to transport configuration in early 1943 to accommodate 46-foot Daihatsu landing craft or other equipment.

Successes: Served as refueling vessel for first Operation K mission (overflight of Oahu by Emily long-range seaplanes), sank one 7,000 ton merchantman in April 1942. Later in the war *I-174* sank three merchant ships of 11,568 tons and damaged an LST and two other merchant ships 7,713 tons. On 24 November 1943, *I-174* sank the American escort carrier *Liscome Bay* (CVE 56).

Fate: Departed Kure, Inland Sea of Japan, on 3 April 1944 for Marshall Islands. Failed to answer when called on 11 April, listed by the Japanese navy as lost with all hands (crew of 107). VB-108 had just been relocated to Eniwetok on 11 April 1944. In the early morning on the next day a squadron PB4Y-1 Liberator flown by Lieutenant J. E. Muldrow attacked an enemy submarine while on patrol, claiming a sinking at 10°45'N, 152°29'E. *MacDonough* (DD 351) and *Stephen Potter*

(DD 538) were credited with sinking this submarine on 29 April 1944, but postwar examination of records indicated that the submarine sunk on 29 April by the two destroyers was actually *RO-45* and VB-108 is credited with sinking *I-174* on 12 April 1944.

VB-109 (VPB-109)

RO-117, 17 June 1944

Type: Small, short-range, Class B Submarine, Type KS
Laid Down: 1941, Kawasaki, Kobe

Commissioned: 1943

Commander: LCDR Yasuo Enomoto

Career: Assigned: SubRon 7

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk by a VB-109 PB4Y-1 Liberator at 0338, between Guam and Truk, position 11°05'N, 150°31'E. Lost with all hands. Lieutenant William B. Bridgeman and crew sank *RO-117*, which had left Truk on 5 June bound for a position off Saipan. Originally claimed by the squadron as possibly damaged, the submarine was confirmed as sunk by Japanese records after the war. (entire crew of 55 were lost).

VB-125 (VPB-125)

U-174, 27 April 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 2 January 1941, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 26 November 1941, Fregkpt. Ulrich Thilo

Commander: November 1941–March 1943, Fregkpt. Ulrich Thilo; March 1943–April 1943, Oblt. Wolfgang Grandefeld

Career: Assigned: November 1941–July 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); July 1942–April 1943, 10th Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: Five ships sunk for a total of 30,813 tons

Fate: Sunk 27 April 1943, south of Newfoundland, in position 43°35'N, 56°18'W, by U.S. bombs. 53 dead (entire crew lost). A VP-125 aircraft attacked *U-174* on the surface near Cape Race. The U-boat heavily damaged the PV-1 Ventura with its 20-mm AA guns before sinking.

VB-127 (VPB-127)

U-591, 30 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 30 October 1940, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 9 October 1941, Oblt. Hans-Jürgen Zetsche

Commander: October 1941–September 1942, Kptlt. Hans-Jürgen Zetsche; September 1942–November 1942, Oblt. Peter Schrewe; November 1942–May 1943, Kptlt. Hans-Jürgen Zetsche; June 1943–July 1943, Oblt. Raimar Ziesmer

Career: Assigned: October 1941–January 1942, 6th Flotilla (Danzig); January 1942–June 1942, 6th Flotilla (St. Nazaire); July 1942–May 1943, 11th Flotilla (Bergen); June 1943–July 1943, 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: Five ships sunk for a total of 23,960 tons; one ship of 5,701 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 30 July 1943, in position 08°36'S, 34°34'W, by bombs from a VB-127 PV-1 Ventura. Lieutenant (jg) W. C. Young and crew attacked and sank *U-591* off Recife, Brazil. Twenty-eight survivors out of a crew of 49, including the commanding officer, were picked up by *Saucy* (PG 65).

U-761, 24 February 1944 (shared)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 16 December 1940, Kriegsmarinewerft, Wilhelmshaven

Commissioned: 3 December 1942, Oblt. Horst Geider

Commander: December 1942–February 1944, Oblt. Horst Geider

Career: Assigned: December 1942–July 1943, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); August 1943–February 1944, 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: *U-761* was detected by PBY-5 Catalinas from VP-63 during an attempt to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar. The two VP-63 aircraft, piloted by Lieutenants Howard Baker and T. R. Woolley, used their MAD gear to detect, track, and assist in the sinking of *U-761*, the first sinking of a submarine aided by MAD equipment. The U-boat was attacked by a British Catalina of RAF Squadron 202 and a PV-1 Ventura of VB-127. Lieutenant P. L. Holmes, pilot of the VB-127 Ventura, assisted in the kill by dropping depth charges on *U-761* when it surfaced. Following the attack by VB-127, the U-boat was scuttled 24 February 1944 in the mid-Atlantic near Tangier, in position 35°55'N, 05°45'W, in view of approaching British destroyers. Nine dead. The 51 members of the crew of the U-boat and its commanding officer were picked up by HMS *Anthony* and *Wishart* after scuttling their badly damaged submarine.

VB-128 (5th VP-1)

U-279, 4 October 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 31 March 1942, Bremen-Vegesack

Commissioned: 3 February 1943, Oblt. Otto Finke

Commander: February 1943–October 1943, Kptlt. Otto Finke

Career: Assigned: February 1943–July 1943, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); August 1943–October 1943, 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 4 October 1943, southwest of Iceland, in position 60°40'N, 26°30'W, by U.S. bombs from a PV-1 Ventura of VB-128 flown by Lieutenant Charles L. Westhofen. Although the crew abandoned the sinking submarine and floated four or five life rafts, none were ever located. 48 dead (entire crew lost).

VB-129 (VPB-129)

U-604, 30 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 27 February 1941, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 8 January 1942, Kptlt. Horst Höltring

Commander: January 1942–August 1943, Kptlt. Horst Höltring

Career: Six patrols; assigned: January 1942–July 1942, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); August 1942–August 1943, 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: 6 ships sunk for a total of 39,891 tons

Fate: Lieutenant Commander Thomas D. Davies and crew spotted a fully surfaced submarine during a coastal barrier sweep northeast of Bahia. The U-boat crew attempted to fight it out with 20-mm AA fire, but the bow guns of the Ventura quickly cleared the decks of the submarine, allowing Davies to make a perfect drop with four Mark 47 depth charges athwart the still surfaced U-boat. The submarine, *U-601*, submerged after the attack then surfaced again at a 60-degree angle with the screws out of the water. The U-boat then submerged again. Later, German prisoners of war indicated that the damage to the U-boat was so severe that it had to be scuttled on 11 August 1943. The *U-604* crew was taken aboard *U-185* and *U-172* (during the sinking of *U-185* 14 men from *U-604* died).

VB-130 (2nd VP-2)

U-615, 6 August 1943 (shared, see VP-204)

VP-11 (VPB-11)

I-172, 29 October 1942

Type: 1st Class, Class A Fleet Submarine, Kaidai Type 6A **Laid Down:** 1931, Mitsubishi, Kobe

Commissioned: 6 April 1935

Commander: 1942, LCDR Takeshi Ota

Career: Assign: SubRon 3, originally designated *I-72*, redesignated *I-172* on 20 May 1942. Modified as a transport in early 1942, accommodating a 46-foot Daihatsu landing craft, amphibious tank, or other external equipment.

Successes: None

Fate: *I-172* was listed as missing by the Japanese navy after 28 October 1942, in the vicinity of the Solomons, the operational area of VP-11's PBV-5 Catalinas at the time of the claimed sinking. Official credit for *I-172* was given by the U.S. Navy to *Southard* (DMS 10), for a sinking on 10 November 1942, at the south end of Indispensable Strait, position 10°13'S, 161°09'E. Japanese records indicate that the submarine claimed by *Southard* was actually *I-15*. On 29 October 1942, Lieutenant F. Joe Hill sighted a submarine while on search at 13°15'S, 162°45'E about three miles on the starboard beam. The sub crash-dived and was below the surface when Hill dropped his two 650-lb depth charges. A large quantity of oil appeared and remained on the surface during the next day. The submarine was lost with all 91 hands aboard, including Rear Admiral Yoshisuke Okamoto, Commander of the 12th Squadron of the Kure Submarine Flotilla. *I-172* was the fourteenth Japanese submarine lost during the war.

VP-14 (VPB-197)

Midget, 7 December 1941 (shared)

Type: Type A (Midget) Koryu

Laid Down: 1940, Ourazaki, Kure

Commissioned: 1941

Commander: Lieutenant Naoji Iwasa

Career: Assigned to tender *Chiyoda*, at Base P on the island of Ourazaki, spring 1941; SubRon 1, Kure Naval Arsenal, late summer 1941; *I-22*, 21 October 1941.

Successes: None

Fate: Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor VP-14 had launched three PBY-5 Catalinas for routine patrol. Aircraft 14-P-1, flown by Ensign William P. Tanner, spotted a Japanese midget submarine at the entrance to the harbor and assisted *Ward* (DD 139) in sinking the intruder. Lieutenant Naoji Iwasa and Petty Officer Naoharu Sasaki had been launched from *I-22* half an hour before sunrise 5–10 miles from the entrance to the harbor as part of a contingent of five midget subs launched from fleet submarines. Iwasa's orders were to enter the harbor and rise to the surface to attack once the air attack had begun, then circle Ford Island, exit the harbor and proceed to the rendezvous with *I-22*. Iwasa was attempting to follow the tug *Antares* through the harbor entrance while *Antares* had a barge in tow. Ensign Tanner saw the wake of the periscope and alerted *Ward*, which dropped one depth charge.

VP-23 (VPB-23)

RO-101, 15 September 1943 (shared)

Type: Small, short-range submarine, Class B, RO-100 series, Type KS

Laid Down: 1941, Kawasaki, Kobe

Commissioned: December 1942, LCDR Zenji Orita

Commander: December 1942–August 1943, LCDR Zenji Orita; August 1943, LCDR Masataka Fujisawa

Career: Assign: SubRon 7, carried supplies for garrisons

Successes: None

Fate: *RO-101* departed Rabaul for a patrol area south of San Cristobal. It was spotted by a PBY-5 Catalina of VP-23 piloted by Lieutenant W. J. Geritz. *Saufley* (DD 465) assisted in the kill southeast of San Cristobal, at position 10°57'S, 163°56'E. The submarine was listed by the Japanese as lost with all hands (crew of 50).

VP-32 (VP-46)

U-159, 15 July 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 11 November 1940, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 4 October 1941, Kptlt. Helmut Witte (Knights Cross)

Commander: October 1941–June 1943, Kptlt. Helmut Witte; June 1943–July 1943, Oblt. Heinz Beckmann

Career: Five patrols, assigned: October 1941–April 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); April 1942–July 1943, 10th Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: 22 ships sunk for a total of 119,533 tons; one ship of 265 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 15 July 1943 south of Haiti, in position 15°58'N, 73°44'W, by bombs from a PBM-3C Mariner from VP-32. 53 dead (entire crew lost). The claim was judged probable sunk by FAW-11's intelligence officer, and was not confirmed until examination of German navy records after the war.

U-759, 26 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 15 November 1940, Kriegsmarinewerft, Wilhelmshaven

Commissioned: 15 August 1942, Oblt. Rudolf Friedrich

Commander: August 1942–July 1943, Kptlt. Rudolf Friedrich

Career: Assigned: August 1942–January 1943, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); February 1943–July 1943, 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: Two ships sunk for a total of 12,764 tons

Fate: Sunk 26 July 1943, east of Jamaica, in approximate position 18°06'N, 75°00'W, by bombs from a U.S. Mariner PBM-3C of VP-32. 47 dead (entire crew lost). The claim was judged probable sunk by FAW-11's intelligence officer, and was not confirmed until examination of German Navy records after the war.

U-359, 28 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 9 June 1941, Flensburger Schiffsbau, Flensburg

Commissioned: 5 October 1942, Ltnt. Heinz Förster

Commander: October 1942–July 1943, Oblt. Heinz Förster

Career: Assigned: October 1942–February 1943, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); March 1943–July 1943, 7th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 28 July 1943 in the Caribbean south of Santo Domingo, in position 15°57'N, 68°30'W, by U.S. bombs from a PBM-3C Mariner. 47 dead (entire crew lost). *U-359* was sunk by the San Juan Detachment of VP-32. The claim was judged probable sunk by FAW-11's intelligence officer, and was not confirmed until examination of German Navy records after the war.

VP-42 (2nd VP-5)

RO-61, 31 August 1942 (shared)

Type: Small, short-range submarine, Class B, Type L4
Laid Down: 1922, Mitsubishi, Kobe

Commissioned: 1923

Commander: LCDR Toshisada Tokutomi

Career: Originally designated *No. 72*, redesignated *RO-61* on 20 May 1942. Assigned: SubRon 7

Successes: Sank U.S. seaplane tender *Casco* (AVP 12) on 31 August 1942 (which was beached and later repaired).

Fate: Sunk in joint effort on 31 August 1942 by PBY-5A Catalinas from VP-42 and VP-43 and *Reid* (DD 369) off Atka, Aleutian Islands, position 52°36'N, 173°57'W. *RO-61* was caught on the surface five miles north of Cape Shaw, Atka Island. Lieutenant S. Coleman of VP-42 heavily damaged the submarine in a bombing attack. *RO-61* was located later on the same day at 1915 hours by *Reid* (DD 369) and sunk with the loss of 59 crewmen, including the commanding officer. Several survivors were rescued from the frigid waters.

VP-53 (VP-AM-1)

U-156, 8 March 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 11 Oct 1940, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 4 September 1941, Kptlt. Werner Hartenstein (Knights Cross)

Commander: September 1941–March 1943, Korvkpt. Werner Hartenstein

Career: Five patrols, assigned: September 1941–December 1941, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); January 1942–March 1943, 2nd Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: 18 ships sunk for a total of 92,889 tons; 4 ships damaged for a total of 20,001 tons

Fate: Sunk at 1315 on 8 March 1943, east of Barbados, in position 12°38'N, 54°39'W, by U.S. bombs (Catalina from VP-53). 52 dead (entire crew lost).

VP-63 (VPB-63)

U-761, 24 February 1944 (shared, see entry for VB-127, U-761)

U-392, 16 March 1944 (shared)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 10 January 1942, Howaldtswerke, Kiel

Commissioned: 29 May 1943, Oblt. Henning Schümann

Commander: May 1943–March 1944, Oblt. Henning Schümann

Career: Assigned: May 1943–November 1943, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); November 1943–March 1944, 1st Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 16 March 1944 in the Straits of Gibraltar in position 35°55'N, 05°41'W, by depth charges from British frigate HMS *Affleck*, the destroyer HMS *Vanoc* and bombs from three U.S. PBY-5A Catalinas. 52 dead (entire crew lost). Three VP-63 aircraft piloted by Lieutenant (jg) M. J. Vopatek, Lieutenant R. C. Spears and Lieutenant (jg) V. A.T. Lingle detected *U-392* during its attempted passage of the Gibraltar Straits. Lieutenant (jg) Vopatek guided HMS *Affleck* into position with his MAD gear. *Affleck* fired a pattern of depth charges that sent the U-boat to the bottom.

U-731, 15 April 1944 (shared)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 1 October 1941, Schichau, Danzig

Commissioned: 3 October 1942, Oblt. Werner Techand

Commander: October 1942–November 1943, Oblt. Werner Techand; December 1943–May 1944, Oblt. Alexander Graf von Keller

Career: Assigned: October 1942–April 1943, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); May 1943–May 1944, 1st Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 15 May 1944 near Gibraltar, in position 35°54'N, 05°45'W, by depth charges from the British patrol vessel HMS *Kilmarnock* and the antisubmarine trawler HMS *Blackfly* and bombs from VP-63 PBY-5A Catalinas. 54 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant (jg) Vopatek and Lieutenant H. L. Worrell detected *U-731* with their MAD gear while it was attempting to cross the Straits of Gibraltar. Subsequent attacks by the aircraft did not sink the U-boat, but both continued to track the submarine, guiding HMS *Kilmarnock* into position for a successful Hedgehog attack that sent the submarine to the bottom. This sinking was to be the last in the Mediterranean theater, since the squadron had, in the words of British Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham “turned the Mediterranean into an Allied lake.”

VP-73 (2nd VP-34)

U-464, 20 August 1942

Type: XIV **Laid Down:** 18 March 1941, DeutscheWerke AG, Kiel

Commissioned: 30 April 1942, Kptlt. Otto Harms

Commander: April 1942–August 1942, Kptlt. Otto Harms

Career: One patrol, assigned: 10th Flotilla (Lorient). *U-464* was a Milkcow support vessel. The role of the ten type XIV boats was to support the operating type VII and IX attack boats by delivering their supplies and ammunition.

Successes: None, sunk on first deployment

Fate: Set out on first patrol 4 August 1942. Sunk on 20 August 1942, southeast of Iceland at 61°25'N, 14°40'W by a VP-73 PBV-5 Catalina. Lieutenant (jg) Robert B. Hopgood and crew attacked and sank *U-464* while on convoy escort in Skerja Fjord, near Reykjavik, Iceland. HMS *Castleton* rescued 53 survivors (2 dead). While en route back to base Hopgood sent the following message: "Sank Sub Open Club."

U-582, 5 October 1942

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 25 September 1940, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 7 August 1941, Kptlt. Werner Schulte

Commander: August 1941–October 1942, Kptlt. Werner Schulte

Career: Assigned: August 1941–December 1941, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); December 1941–October 1942, 1st Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: Six ships sunk for a total of 38,826 tons

Fate: Sunk 5 October 1942, southwest of Iceland, in position 58°41'N, 22°58'W, by a VP-73 PBV-5 Catalina. 46 dead (entire crew lost). Aircraft 73-P-12 of VP-73 attacked and sank *U-582* while on convoy escort near Reykjavik, Iceland.

VP-74 (1st VP-40)

U-158, 30 June 1942

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 1 November 1940, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 25 September 1941, Kptlt. Erwin Rostin (Knights Cross)

Commander: September 1941–June 1942, Kptlt. Erwin Rostin

Career: Two patrols, assigned: September 1941–February 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); February 1942–June 1942, 10th Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: 16 ships sunk for a total of 91,770 tons; two ships damaged for a total of 15,264 tons

Fate: Sunk 30 June 1942, west of the Bermudas, in position 32°50'N, 67°28'W, by U.S. bombs from a PBM-3C Mariner from VP-74. 54 dead (entire crew lost). Aircraft 74-P-1, flown by Lieutenant Richard E. Schreder, was credited with the sinking of *U-158*. The submarine was spotted by the crew during a routine ferry flight.

U-128, 17 May 1943 (shared)

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 10 July 1940, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 12 May 1941, Kptlt. Ullrich Heyse (Knights Cross)

Commander: May 1941–February 1943, Kptlt. Ullrich Heyse; March 1943–May 1943, Kptlt. Hermann Steinert

Career: Assigned: May 1941–November 1941, 2nd Flotilla (Wilhelmshaven) training; December 1941–May 1943, 2nd Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: 12 ships sunk for a total of 83,639 tons; one ship of 5,687 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 17 May 1943, south of Pernambuco, in approximate position 10°00'N, 35°35'W, by gunfire from destroyers *Moffett* (DD 362) and *Jouett* (DD 396), and by bombs from two VP-74 PBM-3C Mariners flown by Lieutenant Howland Davis and Lieutenant Carey. Seven dead.

U-513, 19 July 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 26 April 1941, Deutsche Werft, Hamburg

Commissioned: 10 January 1942, Korvkpt. Rolf Rüggeberg

Commander: January 1942–May 1943, Korvkpt. Rolf Rüggeberg; May 1943–July 1943, Kptlt. Friedrich Guggenberger

Career: Assigned: January 1943–August 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); September 1942–July 1943, 10th Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: Six ships sunk for a total of 29,940 tons; two ships damaged for a total of 13,177 tons

Fate: Sunk 19 July 1943, southeast of Sao Francisco do Sol, in position 27°17'S, 47°32'W, by U.S. PBM-3S Mariner patrol bomber of VP-74. 46 dead, seven survivors. Aircraft 74-P-5, piloted by Lieutenant (jg) Roy S. Whitcomb was credited with sinking *U-513*. The U-boat

had elected to remain on the surface and fight it out with its AA batteries. Six depth bombs settled the issue quickly. Kapitanleutnant Guggenberger, commanding officer of *U-513*, had previously been credited with sinking the British aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* while commanding officer of *U-81*.

U-199, 31 July 1943 (shared)

Type: IXD **Laid Down:** 10 October 1941, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 28 November 1942, Kptlt. Hans-Werner Kraus (Knights Cross)

Commander: November 1942–July 1943, Kptlt. Hans-Werner Kraus

Career: One patrol, assigned: November 1942–May 1943, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); May 1943–July 1943, 12th Flotilla (Bordeaux)

Successes: One ship sunk for a total of 4,161 tons

Fate: Sunk 31 July 1943, east of Rio de Janeiro, in position 23°45'S, 42°54'W, by bombs from one U.S. PBM-3S Mariner of VP-74, piloted by Lieutenant W. F. Smith, and two Brazilian aircraft. 49 dead, 11 survivors. The survivors ended up in Brazil and then in U.S. captivity.

U-161, 27 September 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 23 March 1940, Seebeck, Bremen

Commissioned: 8 July 1941, Kptlt. Hans-Ludwig Witt (Knights Cross)

Commander: July 1941–December 1941, Kptlt. Hans-Ludwig Witt (in deputize); January 1942–September 1943, Kptlt. Albrecht Achilles (Knights Cross).

Career: Six patrols, assigned: July 1941–December 1941, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); December 1941–September 1943, 2nd Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: 19 ships sunk for a total of 100,054 tons, three ships damaged for a total of 13,916 tons

Fate: Sunk 27 September 1943, near Bahia, in position 12°30'S, 35°35'W, by PBM-3S Mariner from VP-74. 53 dead (entire crew lost). Plane #74-P-2, piloted by Lieutenant (jg) Harry B. Patterson, was credited with sinking *U-161*. Two crew members were wounded in the attack by return fire from the U-boat.

VP-82 (VPB-125)

U-656, 1 March 1942

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 4 September 1940, Howaldtswerke, Hamburg

Commissioned: 17 September 1941, Kptlt. Ernst Kröning

Commander: September 1941–March 1942, Kptlt. Ernst Kröning

Career: Assigned: September 1941–December 1941, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); January 1942–March 1942, 1st Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 1 March 1942, south of Cape Race, in position 46°15'N, 53°15'W, by a PBO-1 Hudson assigned to VP-82 flown by Ensign Tepuni. 45 dead (entire crew lost). *U-656* was the first German submarine sinking attributed to United States forces in WWII.

U-503, 15 March 1942

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 29 April 1940, Deutsche Werft, Hamburg

Commissioned: 10 July 1941, Kptlt. Otto Gericke

Commander: July 1941–March 1942, Kptlt. Otto Gericke

Career: Assigned: July 1941–February 1942, 2nd Flotilla (Wilhelmshaven); February 1942–March 1942, 2nd Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 15 March 1942, in the North Atlantic southeast of Newfoundland, in position 45°50'N, 48°50'W, by a PBY-5 Catalina assigned to VP-82. 51 dead (entire crew lost). VP-82 claimed a “heavy damage” assessment on a German submarine off Cape Race. It was not until after the war that examination of German records indicated that *U-503* was actually sunk.

VP-83 (2nd VP-27)

U-164, 6 January 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 20 June 1940, Seebeck, Bremen

Commissioned: 28 November 1941, Korvkpt. Otto Fechner

Commander: November 1941–January 1943, Korvkpt. Otto Fechner

Career: Assigned: November 1941–July 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); July 1942–January 1943, 10th Flotilla (Lorient)

Successes: Three ships sunk for a total of 8,133 tons

Fate: Sunk 6 January 1943, northwest of Pernambuco, in position 01°58'S, 39°22'W, by U.S. bombs from a PBY-5A Catalina of VP-83. 54 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant W. Ford

attacked the surfaced U-boat 80 miles north-east of Fortaleza, Brazil. The submarine's identity was confirmed by rescued survivors as *U-164*.

U-507, 13 January 1943

Type: IXC **Laid Down:** 11 September 1940, Deutsche Werft, Hamburg
Commissioned: 8 October 1941, Korvkpt. Harro Schacht (Knights Cross)
Commander: October 1941–January 1943, Korvkpt. Harro Schacht
Career: Assigned: October 1941–February 1942, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); March 1942–January 1943, 2nd Flotilla (Lorient)
Successes: 19 ships sunk for a total of 77,144 tons.
Fate: Sunk 13 January 1943, northwest of Natal, in position 01°38'S, 39°52'W, by a PBY-5A Catalina of VP-83. 54 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant L. Ludwig attacked the surfaced U-boat off the coast of Brazil. This submarine's large number of sinkings in 1942 was responsible for Brazil entering the war on the side of the Allies.

Archimede (Italy), 15 April 1943

Type: Archimede Class **Laid Down:** Cant. Nav. F. Tosi, Taranto, December 1937
Commissioned: 18 April 1939
Commander: February 1943–April 1943, Tenente di Vascello Guido Saccardo
Career: Assigned: April 1939–April 1943, La Verdun Flotilla
Successes: 3 Allied vessels sunk, tonnage not listed
Fate: Ensign T. E. Robertson and Lieutenant G. Bradford, Jr., flying VP-83 PBY-5A Catalinas, attacked a surfaced submarine off the coast of Brazil, position 03°23'S, 30°28'W. Ensign Robertson made the first bomb run, dropping four depth charges that damaged the boat. Lieutenant Bradford attacked minutes later, dropping four more depth charges from an altitude of 50 feet. The submarine sank six minutes later. Thirty survivors exited the boat and boarded three rafts. One raft was found 27 days later by Brazilian fishermen. It contained two bodies and one survivor who later confirmed the sinking of *Archimede*, a 913-ton Italian submarine.

VP-84 (VPB-84)

U-408, 5 November 1942

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 30 September 1940, Danziger Werft, Danzig
Commissioned: 19 November 1941, Kptlt. Reinhard von Hymmen
Commander: November 1941–November 1942, Kptlt. Reinhard von Hymmen
Career: Assigned: November 1941–April 1942, 5th Flotilla (Kiel) training; May 1942–June 1942, 9th Flotilla (Brest) front boat; July 1942–November 1942, 11th Flotilla (Bergen)
Successes: One ship with 5,464 tons sunk, shared with *U-589*
Fate: Sunk 5 November 1942, north of Iceland, in position 67°40'N, 18°32'W. 45 dead (entire crew lost). *U-408* was sunk by a VP-84 PBY-5A piloted by Lieutenant R. C. Millard. The submarine, caught on the surface, was struck by four depth bombs aft of the conning tower while submerging.

U-640, 14 May 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 30 October 1941, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg
Commissioned: 17 September 1942, Oblt. Karl-Heinz Nagel
Commander: September 1942–May 1943, Oblt. Karl-Heinz Nagel
Career: Assigned: September 1942–April 1943, 5th Flotilla (Keil); May 1943, 6th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)
Successes: None
Fate: Sunk 14 May 1943, off Iceland in position 60°10'N, 31°05'W, by a Fido homing torpedo from a VP-84 PBY-5A Catalina flown by Lieutenant P. A. Bodinet. 49 dead (entire crew lost). This is believed to be the first sinking by the new weapon against a U-boat.

U-467, 25 May 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 22 June 1941, Deutsche Werke AG, Kiel
Commissioned: 15 July 1942, Oblt. Heinz Kummer
Commander: July 1942–May 1943, Kptlt. Heinz Kummer
Career: Assigned: July 1942–March 1943, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); April 1943–May 1943, 11th Flotilla (Bergen).
Successes: None
Fate: Sunk 25 May 1943, southeast of Iceland, in position 62°25'N, 14°52'W, by bombs from a

PBY-5A Catalina of VP 84 piloted by Lieutenant R. C. Millard. 46 dead (entire crew lost).

U-388, 20 June 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 12 September 1941, Howaldtswerke, Kiel

Commissioned: 31 December 1942, Ltnt. Peter Sues

Commander: December 1942–June 1943, Oblt. Peter Sues

Career: One patrol; assigned: December 1942–June 1943, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); June 1943, 9th Flotilla (Brest)

Successes: None

Fate: Left Kiel on 8 June 1943. Sunk 20 June 1943, in the North Atlantic southeast of Cape Farewell, Greenland, in position 57°36'N, 31°20'W, by bombs from a PBY-5A Catalina of VP 84 piloted by Lieutenant E. W. Wood. 47 dead (entire crew lost).

U-194, 24 June 1943

Type: IXC/40 **Laid Down:** 7 January 1942, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 8 January 1943, Kptlt. Herman Hess

Commander: January 1943–June 1943, Kptlt. Herman Hess

Career: One patrol, assigned: January 1943–May 1943, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); May 1943–June 1943, 10th Flotilla (Lorient).

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 24 June 1943, southwest of Iceland, in position 59°00'N, 26°18'W, by a PBY-5A Catalina of VP-84. 54 dead (entire crew lost). *U-194* was sunk by Lieutenant J. W. Beach and crew.

VP-92 (VPB-92)

U-94, 27 August 1942 (shared)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 9 September 1939, Germaniawerft, Kiel

Commissioned: 10 August 1940, Kptlt. Herbert Kuppisch (Knights Cross)

Commander: August 1940–August 1941, Kptlt. Herbert Kuppisch; August 1941–August 1942, Oblt. Otto Ites (Knights Cross)

Career: 10 patrols, assigned: August 1940–October 1940, 7th Flotilla (Kiel) training; November 1940–August 1942, 7th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)

Successes: 26 ships sunk for a total of 138,467 tons; two ships damaged for a total of 12,480 tons

Fate: Sunk on 27 August 1942, in Caribbean waters, in position 17°40'N, 74°30'W by depth charges from a VP-92 PBY-5A Catalina piloted by Lieutenant G. R. Fiss, and ramming by the Canadian corvette HMCS *Oakville*. 19 dead, 26 survivors.

Le Conquerant, 13 November 1942

Type: 1st class, Redoubtable series **Laid Down:** 16 August 1930, A. C. Loire

Commissioned: 7 September 1935

Commander: CDR Delort-Laval, 4 Aug 1941–22 Sep 1942; LCDR Lefevre, 22 Sep–13 Nov 1942.

Career: Re-activated April 1941. Patrols in Tropical Atlantic from Dakar, returning to Casablanca in 1942.

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk on 13 November 1942, approximately 700 miles southwest of Casablanca, F. M., by a VP-92 PBY-5A Catalina flown by Lieutenant H. S. Blake. The submarine was spotted on the surface by two squadron aircraft, 92-P-5 and 92-P-4. Both aircraft circled the submarine and attempts were made to establish the identity of the vessel. No personnel were on deck and there was no response to signals from the aircraft. Lieutenant Blake, flying 92-P-4, made a bombing run and dropped his depth charges perfectly straddling the submarine. His attack was followed by the second squadron plane, 92-P-5. Crewmen on both aircraft reported the conning tower was blown off and the submarine sank immediately. No survivors were sighted.

U-135, 15 July 1943 (shared)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 16 September 1940, Vegesacker-Werft, Vegesack-Bremen

Commissioned: 16 August 1941, Oblt. Friedrich-Hermann Praetorius

Commander: August 1941–November 1942, Kptlt. Friedrich-Hermann Praetorius; November 1942–June 1943, Oblt. Heinz Schütt; June 1943–July 1943, Oblt. Otto Luther

Career: Assigned: August 1941–December 1941, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); December 1941–July 1943, 7th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)

Successes: Three ships sunk for a total of 21,302 tons, 1 ship of 4,762 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 15 July 1943, in the Atlantic, in position 28°20'N, 13°17'W by a VP-92 PBY-5A Catalina piloted by Lieutenant R. J. Finnie, and British destroyers HMS *Rochester*, *Mignonette* and *Balsam*. 5 dead, 41 survivors.

VP-94 (VPB-94)

U-590, 9 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 31 October 1940, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 2 October 1941, Kptlt. Heinrich Müller-Edzards

Commander: October 1941–June 1943, Kptlt. Heinrich Müller-Edzards; June 1943–July 1943, Oblt. Werner Krüer

Career: Assigned: October 1941–April 1942, 6th Flotilla (Danzig); April 1942–July 1943, 6th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)

Successes: One ship of 5,228 tons sunk

Fate: Sunk on 9 July 1943, in the mid-Atlantic near the Amazon estuary, in position 03°22'N, 48°38'W, by bombs from a PB5Y-5A Catalina of VP-94. 45 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant S. Auslander, from the Belem detachment of VP-94, attacked and sank *U-590*.

U-662, 21 July 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 7 May 1941, Howaldtswerke, Hamburg

Commissioned: 9 April 1942, Kptlt. Wolfgang Hermann

Commander: April 1942–February 1943, Korvkpt. Wolfgang Hermann; March 1943–July 1943, Oblt. Heinz-Eberhard Müller

Career: Assigned: April 1942–September 1942, 5th Flotilla (Kiel); October 1942, 7th Flotilla (St. Nazaire)

Successes: Three ships sunk for a total of 18,094 tons; one ship of 7,174 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 21 July 1943, in the Atlantic off Dutch Guiana, in position 03°56'N, 48°46'W, by bombs from a VP-94 PB5Y-5A Catalina. 44 dead. Lieutenant R. H. Rowland, from the Belem detachment of VP-94, attacked and sank *U-662*. Lieutenant Rowland's crew dropped life rafts for the survivors. The U-boat captain, Oblt. Heinz-Eberhard Müller, and three other crewmembers were fished out of the sea after 17 days by *PC 494*, Task Force 2.

U-199, 31 July 1943

Type: IXD **Laid Down:** 10 October 1941, AG Weser, Bremen

Commissioned: 28 November 1942, Kptlt. Hans-Werner Kraus (Knights Cross)

Commander: November 1942–July 1943, Kptlt. Hans-Werner Kraus

Career: One patrol; assigned: November 1942–May 1943, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); May 1943–July 1943, 12th Flotilla (Bordeaux)

Successes: One ship sunk for a total of 4,161 tons

Fate: Sunk 31 July 1943, east of Rio de Janeiro, in position 23°45'S, 42°54'W, by a Brazilian PB5Y-5A Catalina flown by a trainee pilot, Cadet A. Torres, assigned to VP-94. The U-boat went down in the Atlantic off Cape Frio, Brazil. 49 dead, 11 survivors. The survivors ended up in Brazilian and then U.S. captivity.

VP-204 (3rd VP-44)

U-615, 7 August 1943 (shared with VB-130)

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 20 May 1941, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 26 March 1942, Oblt. Ralph Kapitzky

Commander: March 1942–August 1943, Kptlt. Ralph Kapitzky

Career: Assigned: March 1942–August 1942, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); September 1942–August 1943, 3rd Flotilla (La Pallice)

Successes: Four ships sunk for a total of 27,231 tons

Fate: Sunk 7 August 1943, in the Caribbean south-east of Curacao, in position 12°38'N, 64°15'W. Lieutenant (jg) John M. Erskine, pilot of a PBM-3S Mariner of VP-204, attacked the surfaced *U-615* on 6 August, causing moderate damage. The squadron aircraft maintained contact with the submerged submarine and kept it down over night. On the morning of the 7th, Lieutenant Anthony R. Matuski spotted the U-boat when it surfaced and made an attack run. His aircraft was damaged by return fire and crashed with the loss of all hands. Lieutenant Lewis D. Crockett, flying a VP-204 Mariner, located the U-boat and conducted a bomb run that further damaged the vessel, but resulted in severe damage to his aircraft from AA fire. He remained on the scene until Lieutenant Holmes, pilot of a PV-1 Ventura of VB-130, arrived to assist him. The two aircraft conducted a coordinated bombing and strafing attack. Lieutenant (jg) John W. Dresbach, in a VP-204 Mariner, arrived and made a bombing and strafing attack on the U-boat. This attack resulted in mortal wounds to the pilot, Lieutenant Dresbach, and the final blow for the submarine. A U.S. Navy destroyer from Trinidad reached the area the next morning and rescued forty-five of the U-boat's crew of 49.

VP-205 (3rd VP-45)

U-572, 3 August 1943

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 15 June 1940, Blohm & Voss, Hamburg

Commissioned: 29 May 1941, Kptlt. Heinz Hirsacker

Commander: May 1941–December 1942, Kptlt. Heinz Hirsacker; December 1942–August 1943, Oblt. Heinz Kumentat

Career: Assigned: May 1941–August 1941, 3rd Flotilla (Kiel); August 1941–August 1943, 3rd Flotilla (La Pallice)

Successes: Six ships sunk for a total of 19,323 tons, one ship of 6,207 tons damaged

Fate: Sunk 3 August 1943, northeast of Trinidad, in position 11°35'N, 54°05'W, by bombs from a PBM-3S Mariner of VP-205. 47 dead (entire crew lost). Lieutenant (jg) C. C. Cox attacked *U-572* on the surface and was shot down during the bomb run with the loss of all hands.

VPB-16

I-177, 2 October 1944 (shared)

Type: *I-176* Class (Type KD7) **Laid Down:** 1940, Kure Naval Yard

Commissioned: 1942

Commander: LCDR Masaki Watanabe

Career: Designed as a short-range cruising submarine with a radius of action of 8,000 miles, modified after 1942 to act as a transport submarine. *I-176*, *I-177* and *I-181* had their 4.7-inch deck guns and spare torpedoes removed to make room for a 46-foot Daihatsu landing craft and other equipment to be used in supplying cut off island garrisons.

Successes: None

Fate: On the evening of 1 October 1944 a VPB-16 PBM-3D Mariner flown by Lieutenant Floyd H. Wardlow, Jr., made radar contact on a submarine near Palau Island. When approached the submarine crash-dived, but not before a positive identification was made as an enemy submarine. A Mark 24 mine was dropped, severely damaging *I-177*. Location of the target was relayed to a nearby hunter-killer group which destroyed the submarine the next day at 07°48'N, 133°28'E, approximately 12 miles from the first attack. *Samuel B. Miles* (DE 183) received credit for the kill. There were 101 men aboard when the submarine was sunk, including the commanding officer of Submarine Division 34, Captain Kanji Matsumura.

VPB-20

Yu-2, 27 November 1944 (shared)

Type: Yu-1 Class **Laid Down:** July 1943, Kasado Iron Works, Kudamatsu

Commissioned: 1943

Commander: Unknown

Career: The Yu-1 class submarines were built by the Army without any assistance from Naval constructors. They were an attempt to build inexpensive, quickly manufactured, short-range (1,500 miles) transport submarines that could be used to resupply beleaguered Imperial Japanese Army garrisons cut off by rapidly advancing U.S. forces.

Fate: A PBM-3D Mariner from VPB-20 flown by Lieutenant (jg) John B. Muoio was providing air coverage for Destroyer Division 43 while it was engaged in bombarding positions at Ormoc Bay. Lieutenant (jg) Muoio and his crew made radar contact on a surface target, and when checking it out, spotted a submarine moving into Ormoc Bay. The sighting was reported to the destroyer flotilla and it was quickly sunk by gunfire from *Waller* (DD 446), *Pringle* (DD 477), *Saufley* (DD 465) and *Renshaw* (DD 499).

I-48, 21 January 1945 (shared)

Type: *I-46* class (Type C2) **Laid Down:** 1944, Sasebo Naval Yard

Commissioned: 1944

Commander: 1944–January 1945, CDR Zenshin Toyama

Career: At the end of 1944, *I-48* was modified by the removal of the 5.5-inch gun to enable it to carry 4 Kaiten midget submarines. In March 1945 it underwent a further refit to enable it to carry 6 Kaiten s. Boats of this class were found to be too large and vulnerable to detection by radar and sonar, resulting in cancellation of further construction of the series.

Successes: None

Fate: On the night of 21 January 1945, a VPB-20 PBM Mariner flown by Lieutenant Frank A. Yourek and crew sighted submarine *I-48* west of Ulithi and attacked it with 2 depth charges and a Mark 24 mine. *I-48* escaped with heavy damage. Destroyers *Conklin* (DE 439), *Corbesier* (DE 438) and *Raby* (DE 698) observed the attack and sank the submarine the next day at 09°45'N, 138°20'E. *I-48*'s entire crew of 122 were lost. Commander Toyama and his crew had been on a Kaiten mission against shipping in Ulithi lagoon, but appar-

ently none of the Kaiten midget submarines were launched before the VPB-20 attack.

VPB-21 (2nd VP-41)

Midget, 21 January 1945

Type: Kaiten **Laid Down:** Unknown

Commissioned: Unknown

Commander: Unknown

Career: Unknown

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 21 January 1945, in Ulithi lagoon by a VPB-21 PBM Mariner flown by Lieutenant (jg) Richard L. Simms. The Kaiten was released earlier by the mothership, *I-36*, for an attack on shipping in Ulithi lagoon. Simms and his crew spotted the midget submarine in the lagoon and dropped 4 depth charges on it. Four midgets had been launched, but only one scored a hit on ammunition ship *Mazama* (AE 9). None of the Kaitens returned to *I-36* after the attack.

VPB-63

U-1107, 30 April 1945

Type: VIIC/41 **Laid Down:** 20 August 1943, Nordseewerke, Emden

Commissioned: 8 August 1944, Oblt. Fritz Parduhn

Commander: August 1944–April 1945, Oblt. Fritz Parduhn

Career: Assigned: August 1944–February 1945, 8th Flotilla (Danzig); February 1945–April 1945, 11th Flotilla (Bergen)

Successes: Two ships sunk for a total of 15,209 tons

Fate: Sunk on 25 April 1945, in the Bay of Biscay west of Brest, France in position 48°00'N, 06°30'W, by retro bombs from a MAD-equipped PB5Y-5A Catalina of VPB-63 flown by Lieutenant Frederick G. Lake. At least 37 dead, now known survivors.

VPB-103

U-681, 11 March 1945

Type: VIIC **Laid Down:** 21 October 1942, Howaldtswerke, Hamburg

Commissioned: 3 February 1944, Oblt. Helmut Bach

Commander: February 1944–August 1944, Oblt. Helmut Bach; August 1944–March 1945, Oblt. Werner Gebauer

Career: Assigned: February 1944–October 1944, 31st Flotilla (Hamburg); October 1944–March 1945, 11th Flotilla (Bergen)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk at 0930 hours on 10 March 1945, position 49°53'N, 06°31'W, by bombs from a PB4Y-1 Liberator of VPB-103. Lieutenant Field and his crew caught *U-681* on the surface southwest of the Scilly Isles and straddled the vessel with a perfect salvo of depth charges. Forty survivors exited the U-boat before it sank and were picked up by British naval units. 11 dead.

U-326, 25 April 1945

Type: VIIC/41 **Laid Down:** 26 April 1943, Flender-Werke, Lubeck

Commissioned: 6 June 1944, Oblt. Peter Matthes

Commander: June 1944–April 1945, Kptlt. Peter Matthes

Career: Assigned: June 1944–February 1945, 4th Flotilla (Stettin); March 1945–April 1945, 11th Flotilla (Bergen)

Successes: None

Fate: Sunk 25 April 1945, in the Bay of Biscay west of Brest, in position 48°12'N, 05°42'W, by a PB4Y-1 Liberator of VPB-103 equipped with air-dropped acoustic homing torpedoes (Fido). Lieutenant Nott and crew spotted a snorkel on the surface southwest of the Brest peninsula and dropped a salvo of torpedoes directly on top of the unsuspecting submarine. The snorkel was blown into the air, a large oil slick appeared, and the body of one of the German submariners surfaced. 43 dead (entire crew lost).

VPB-111 (5th VP-21)

Midget, 5 January 1945

Type: Unknown **Laid Down:** Unknown

Commissioned: Unknown

Commander: Unknown

Career: Unknown

Successes: Unknown

Fate: Two PB4Y-1 aircraft flown by Lieutenant Howard E. Sires and Lieutenant Franklin B. Emerson spotted and attacked a midget submarine two miles southwest of Chichi Jima. It was sunk using three 250-lb G.P. bombs and strafed with 700 rounds from 50-cal guns.

VPB-128 (5th VP-1)

Midget, 18 March 1945

Type: Unknown **Laid Down:** Unknown

Commissioned: Unknown

Commander: Unknown

Career: Unknown

Successes: Unknown

Fate: Two PV-1 Venturas flown by Lieutenants Dorrington and Snyder sank one midget and claimed a probable in Davao Gulf, Philippines.

Midget, 22 March 1945

Type: Unknown **Laid Down:** Unknown

Commissioned: Unknown

Commander: Unknown

Career: Unknown

Successes: Unknown

Fate: Two PV-1 Venturas flown by Lieutenants George Hall and Tepuni attacked a midget submarine at Cebu, Philippines. The submarine was sunk, but Lieutenant Tepuni and his crew were killed when their aircraft crashed immediately following the attack.

VPB-142 (VP-142)

I-165, 27 June 1945

Type: 1st Class Fleet Class Submarine, Kaidai Type 5, Class A **Laid Down:** 1929

Commissioned: 2 June 1931

Commander: April 1944–June 1945, LT Yasushi Ono

Career: Originally designated *I-65*, redesignated *I-165* on 20 May 1942. Assigned: SubRon 8 Indian Ocean, SubDiv 30, 1 March 1943–31 August 1944. *I-165* was removed from active service and assigned as a training ship to the Kure Naval District on 15 December 1944. The submarine was converted to a Kaiten (suicide torpedo) carrier on 1 April 1945 and reinstated into active service with the Combined Fleet. The captain and crew assigned to *I-165* during her service with SubRon 8 in 1943 to 1944 were accused of atrocities after the war, for machine-gunning survivors of sinkings in the Indian Ocean.

Successes: Numerous small cargo vessels, Indian Ocean

Fate: *I-165* departed the Inland Sea of Japan on 15 June 1945, for a Kaiten attack on the U.S. fleet east of the Marianas Islands. A VPB-142 PV-1 Ventura spotted the submarine at 0232 hours, 480 miles east of Saipan, position 15°28'N, 153°39'E. Lieutenant (jg) R. C. Janes and crew made an attack on the surfaced submarine, which appeared to be carrying the Kaiten miniature submersibles on its deck. *I-165* was straddled by the depth charges. Debris, two of the Kaitens and oil were seen on the surface after the attack. 95 crewmen were lost, including the commanding officer.