



Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

USS S-36 (SS 141)

January 20, 1942 - No Men Lost

On her first patrol, S-36 did not sink any ships. She was lost on her second patrol. These are the details:

She started her patrol on December 30, 1941. During the patrol, she made a daring and successful attack on a small transport displacing 5,000 tons that was moored in Calapan Harbor, Mindoro, P.I. After this attack, she was ordered to proceed to Surabaya, Java, N.E.I., by COMSUBAF. At 0404 on January 20, 1942, she suddenly grounded on Taka Bakang Reef in the Makassar Strait, west of Southern Celebes.



Her forward battery compartment flooded, and the salt water combined with the battery acid, generating chlorine gas. The situation was grave—so grave that her C.O., Lt. J. R. McKnight, sent a plain language message that the boat was aground and sinking. Sargo, nearing Surabaya, got this message and for five hours attempted to relay it without success. She then turned back to help S-36.

When Headquarters at Surabaya became aware of the grounding, a PBY was dispatched to evaluate the situation. By the time the plane arrived McKnight was more optimistic about being able to save his boat, if he could get some assistance. None of the crew were transferred to the plane, and when it departed it flew to Makassar City to request assistance from the Dutch

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authorities. They complied with the request and the next morning a launch arrived from Makassar. McKnight realized he would not need all the people he had on hand and sent two officers and 28 men into the launch, keeping the remainder behind in hopes that S-36 could be hauled clear.

Work though they might, conditions on the sub worsened, and when Dutch steamer Siberoet arrived in the afternoon of January 21, 1942, the C.O. decided to abandon S-36 and destroy her. All the remaining officers and men were saved, and they arrived at Surabaya on February 25 in Siberoet.