



Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

USS SEALION (SS 195)

December 10, 1941 - 5 Men Lost

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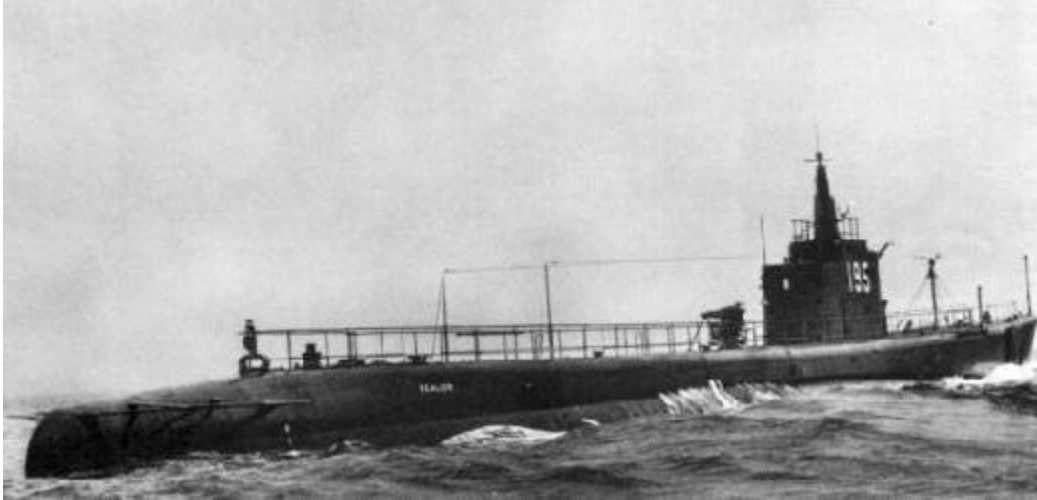
The first submarine victim of enemy action was USS SEALION (SS 195). The start of the war on December 8, 1941 found her, along with USS SEADRAGON, in the final stages of overhaul at the Navy Yard, Cavite, Philippines. Both ships were scheduled for completion on December 12th.

Despite frequent air raids in the Manila area during the first two days of war, enemy planes waited until the third day to pay a visit to the Navy Yard in Cavite on the afternoon of December 10th. The air raid alarm sounded at approximately 12:30 PM as 54 enemy planes zeroed in on the shipyard.

SEALION, nested at Machina Wharf, had SEADRAGON inboard and the minesweeper BITTERN outboard. All hands, with the exception of the Commanding Officer, LCDR R.G. Voge, the Executive Officer, LT A. Raborn, and three men, were below decks. LCDR Voge saw the first wave of bombs land 100 to 200 yards astern of SEALION and noticed that the planes were too high to reach by machine gun fire. He immediately ordered all hands below. It was a wise decision.

The second wave of bombs hit the ship almost simultaneously, one striking the aft end of the conning tower, completely destroying the machine gun mount that had been vacated just moments before. The bomb exploded outside the hull a few feet above the control room, which was occupied by the majority of the crew who would surely have been killed, had the bomb exploded inside. While the SEALION crew was spared from that initial blast, a fragment of the bomb pierced the conning tower of the inboard SEADRAGON killing ENS Sam Hunter, the first submarine casualty of the war.

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Seconds later another bomb passed through the main ballast tank and the main pressure hull and exploded in the after engine room, killing four men working in the compartment - electrician mates Foster, O'Connell and Paul, and machinist mate Ogilvie.

The explosion also flooded the aft engine room causing SEALION to settle in the mud aft while the forward engine room and torpedo room slowly began to flood as well. When the ship had finally settled the remainder of the crew escaped to safety while 40% of the main deck was underwater with a 15-degree list to starboard. All motor controls, reduction gears, and main motors were destroyed, totally immobilizing the ship.

The damage to the ship would normally have been considered non-fatal had there been overhaul facilities available for repair. SEALION wasn't so lucky. The bombing that wrecked the ship had also destroyed the Navy Yard and the closest repair facility now lay 5,000 miles due east at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Considering the war situation at hand, it was impossible to tow SEALION that distance. On Christmas Day, 1941, after the removal of all gear of value, such as gyro, radio and sound equipment, three depth charges were exploded inside the ship to prevent her from falling into enemy hands.

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Sailors Lost On USS SEALION (SS 195) 12-10-1941

Foster EM2
Paul EM1
Oglivie MOMM

Killed onboard USS SEADRAGON

Hunter, S. Ens.
O'Connell EM1