



Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

USS SNOOK (SS 279)

April 8, 1945 - 82 Men Lost

SNOOK (Cmdr. J. F. Walling) departed Guam on March 25, 1945 in company with BURRFISH (SS 312) and BANG (SS 385) to carry out a coordinated patrol with Commander Walling commanding the group. They were to patrol Luzon Strait, the south coast of China, and the east coast of Hainan, and to perform lifeguard duties if so directed by dispatch. SNOOK returned to Guam for emergency repairs on March 27th, and departed on March 28th to rejoin her group. The patrol was SNOOK's ninth.

In accordance with her orders, weather reports were received daily from SNOOK as she proceeded westward until April 1st, when she was told to discontinue the reports. On the same date, SNOOK was directed to proceed westward to join a coordinated attack group under Commander Cassedy in TIGRONE. BANG and BURRFISH already had been assigned lifeguard stations, and were not available for the attack group as originally planned.



Although the last message received from SNOOK by shore bases was on April 1st, TIGRONE was in contact with her until April 8th. On April 9th, TIGRONE was unable to raise her by radio, nor was she ever able to afterwards. TIGRONE's inability to contact SNOOK may be explained by the fact that on April 10th SNOOK was directed to move eastward toward Luzon Strait, and on April 12th she was ordered

USS Snook (SS 279)

duty was in the vicinity of Sakeshima Gunto, about 200 miles east of northern Formosa. No acknowledgement for these orders was required. On April 20th, the Commander of a British carrier task force reported he had a plane down in SNOOK's vicinity, but could not contact her by radio. SNOOK was ordered to search the area and to acknowledge these orders. When she failed to make a transmission, BANG was sent to conduct a search and rendezvous with SNOOK. When SNOOK had not appeared or made contact by May 16th, she was reported as presumed lost on her ninth patrol.



A number of enemy submarine contacts were reported in the vicinity of SNOOK's lifeguard station during the period in which her loss occurred. During April and May 1945, five Japanese submarines were sunk in the Nansei Shoto chain. The circumstances surrounding SNOOK's loss suggest the possibility that one of these lost submarines may have torpedoed her while she was surfaced during her lifeguard duties and it was not reported. It is known that such tactics were suggested to Japanese submarine commanders by their supporters.

No attacks had been reported by SNOOK prior to her loss on this patrol. She was, however, responsible for sinking 22 enemy ships, totaling 123,600 tons and damaging 10 ships, for 63,200 tons, on her eight patrols prior to her loss. Her first patrol was from mid-April to the latter part of May 1943, along the China Coast from Formosa to the Empire. She sank four freighters, a patrol craft, a sampan and a trawler. In her second patrol, SNOOK covered the East China Sea area. She sank two freighters and damaged two large tankers. During her third patrol, SNOOK covered areas in both the Yellow and East China Seas, and sank a transport and a freighter, and damaged a sub chaser. Her fourth patrol was along the Empire trade routes to the south. Here she sank two freighters and damaged three more.

SNOOK went to the East China Sea again on her fifth patrol, and sank four

USS Snook (SS 279)

freighters and a freighter- transport, while she damaged a fifth freighter. In the same area on her sixth patrol, SNOOK damaged one freighter. Her seventh patrol was in the Luzon Strait area and the northern South China Sea. She sank three freighters and damaged a fourth freighter and an unidentified vessel. SNOOK patrolled the Kurile region north of Japan on her eighth patrol, but contacted only three ships. Two were Russian and the other could not be attacked.

The actual whereabouts of SNOOK may have been discovered during a deep sea dive in 1995. The possibility exists that a U.S. submarine lies in about 350 meters of water off the coast of Iriomote island, the far southwest island in the Okinawa chain. During operations with an Okinawan company using a U.S. made "SCORPIO" ROV in 1995, a group of divers encountered a sonar contact with what appeared to be a metal structure, about 6 meters in girth and about 35 meters in length (exposed) at roughly an angle of 20-30 degrees. The sonar image of a large unexpected obstruction to the operations prompted the divers to command evasive maneuvers and avoid the area for the safety of the ROV.

The divers, thinking they would have another opportunity to work in the area at a later date, left the area and never returned to that site. Their ROV was lost in 1997 off Yonaguni island, the last island belonging to Okinawa off the east coast of Taiwan. They were fairly certain that the object was a submarine, and quite possibly the SNOOK (SS-279). No further dives in the area were ever attempted.

USS SNOOK (SS-279) Sailors Lost on 4-8-1945

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adams, R. B. CMOMMA | Bagby, E. E. J. TM2 | Baum, R. L. RT2 | Billingsley, R. S., Jr. MOMM3 |
| Bolger, K. P. F1 | Branum, B. A., Jr. RM3 | Browning, N. E. MOMM3 | Brownstein, S. EM3 |
| Burdick, R. K. RT1 | Burger, L. PHM1 | Busby, C. R. LTJG | Byron, D. A. F1 |
| Cave, J. E. F1 | Cesare, B. A. EM2 | Choate, J. D. QM1 | Clark, E. P. II LTJG |
| Crawford, D. L. GM1 | Cross, J. A. F1 | Dolph, W. L. RM1 | Eckenrode, C. J. S1 |
| Edmunds, C. F. S1 | Ellis, W. P. EM2 | Etkin, H. R., Jr. EM2 | Farrel, W. S. LT |
| Felabom, J. C. MOMM3 | Fry, D. W. EM3 | Gambardella, A. S1 | Gardner, S. P. LT |
| Glass, J. J. F1 | Gregorini, V. BKR2 | Grindzak, A. F1 | Groat, J. E. MOMM1 |
| Grupp, P. H. MOMM1 | Guthrie, A. "T" TM3 | Hughes, R. L. Y2 | Hurley, D. J. CEMA |
| Ingram, R. R. S1 | Johnson, H. M. CMOMMA | Johnston, J., Jr. SC2 | Julian, H. F. TM3 |
| Keiser, P. F. II S2 | Kellog, W. E. TM1 | Klosterman, F. J. F1 | Kramer, N. T. TM3 |

USS Snook (SS 279)

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| Lamont, T. W., III S1 | Lang, W. T. MOMM1 | Lundgren, L. W. S1 | Lunken, I. I. MOMM2 |
| Maney, F. R. F2 | Manley, J. G. EM3 | McEntyer, O. W. S1 | McGahan, J. E. QM3 |
| McGuire, R. M., Jr. F1 | McNeill, D. J. LTJG | Mlynek, V. P. QM3 | Morgan, C. MOMM2 |
| Olson, G. C. S1 | Page, G. C. TM1 | Parker, J. S. RM3 | Phillips, N. S1 |
| Regan, J. B. F1 | Register, M. L. EM1 | Rehbit, W. J. MOMM2 | Rodney, W. J. STM1 |
| Russell, A. M., Jr. TM2 | Schoen, R. L. EM3 | Schramm, W. C. FC3 | Schwendemann, R. L. LTJG |
| Scully, J. F. TM3 | Shelton, W. E. ST3 | Silvia, B. SC1 | Sloan, J. C. S1 |
| Spence, E. L. S2 | Sukola, R. "R" RT3 | Toulson, H. T. F1 | Wagner, H. "K" EM2 |
| Walling, J. F. CDR | Welch, A. W., Jr. LTJG | Will, J. A. MOMM1 | Wood, R. E., Jr. FC2 |
| Wood, R. E. F1 | Wright, J. N. ENS | | |