



Great Ships of The U. S. Navy

U.S.S. Pickerel

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As you may have noticed, all of the submarines have been christened with the name of a fish or other nautical creature. In this case, the *Pickerel* is a small, or young, Pike. The submarine is basically an underwater ship, hence the naming convention.

The first *Pickerel* was laid down 25 March 1935 by the Electric Boat Co., Groton, CT; launched 7 July 1936; sponsored by Miss Evelyn Stanley; and commissioned 26 January 1937, Lt. L.J. Huffman in command.

After shakedown, the new submarine conducted training exercises out of New London, CT, until getting underway 26 October 1937, and heading, via Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to transit the Panama Canal 9 November. Joining the Pacific fleet, *Pickerel* operated out of San Diego along the West Coast and in Hawaiian waters. Then transferred to the Asiatic fleet, she prepared for war with a vigorous training schedule in the Philippines.

Upon receiving word of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, *Pickerel* sped to the coast of Indo-China and conducted her first war patrol off Cam Ranh Bay and Tourane Harbor. She tracked a submarine and a destroyer but lost them in haze and rain squalls before they came into torpedo range. On 19 December, she also missed a small Japanese patrol craft with five torpedoes before returning to Manila Bay on the 29th.

On her second patrol (31 December to 29 January 1942), conducted between Manila and Surabaya, she sank the 2,929 ton ex-gunboat *Kanko Maru* on 10 January 1942. On her third patrol (7 February to 19 March), along the Malay Barrier, and her fourth (15 April to 6 June) in the Philippines, she failed to score.

Pickerel's fifth war patrol (10 July to 26 August) was a voyage from Brisbane, Australia, to Pearl Harbor for refit, with a short patrol in the Marianas in route. She damaged a freighter on this run. On her sixth war patrol (22 January to 3 March, 1943), she searched along the Kuriles on the Tokyo-Kiska traffic lanes. In sixteen attacks, she sank the 1,990 ton Japanese cargo ship *Tateyama Maru* and two 35 ton sampans.

She departed Pearl Harbor 18 March, 1943, and, after topping off with fuel at Midway on 22 March, headed for the eastern coast of Northern Honshu and was never heard of again. *Pickerel* was the first American submarine to be lost in the Central Pacific area. Post-war analysis of Japanese records credited *Pickerel* with sinking the 440 ton submarine chaser No. 13 on 3 April, and the 1,113 ton cargo ship *Fukuei Maru* on 7 April. *Pickerel* was struck from the Navy list on 10 August 1943.

