

THE SILENT SERVICE SERIES II EPISODE SUMMARIES - 1958

19-1 - Archerfish (SS-311) The submarine force nearly lost the services of the skipper who later sank the biggest target in the world when Joe Enright asked to be relieved of his command of the USS Dace. He blamed himself for the USS Dace's lack of [success](#) on patrol. After 6 months of duty ashore, he was convinced by his fellow skippers that his troubles had been caused not by bad judgment but by bad luck that hit all of them from time to time. Returning to sea, Enright was in command of USS Archerfish when the sub's radar showed a large target moving at high speed. With luck backed by skill, he maneuvered the submarine into position and fired six torpedoes. All six hit the target, sending the Shinano, largest carrier ever built, to the bottom.

19-2 - Sea Devil (SS-400) During the Korean War, the submarine, USS Sea Devil, tested our West Coast defenses by attempting an "attack" on Seattle. A division of destroyers prepared to "sink" the Sea Devil as it had every other sub in previous exercises. But they had not reckoned on the ingenuity of the sub's skipper. Bill Ruhe had a distinguished war record and was one of the most experienced submarine commanders in the Navy. By a masterpiece of strategy, he capitalized on an undiscovered weakness in the supposed airtight defenses.

19-3 - Bergall (SS-320) American submarines had the [job](#) of ridding Lombok Strait of annoying Japanese patrol craft. With a homing-type torpedo that was effective against shallow draught boats, the USS Bergall was able to mete out punishment to the enemy patrols. But the new torpedo posed some problems for the submarine's skipper; it homed on noise and wasn't particular about whose noise it was. There was always the chance that the torpedo would make for the submarine instead of the enemy.

19-4 - S-34 (SS-139) Hoping to harass enemy [shipping](#) in the newly-conquered Aleutians in June 1942, the S-34 entered the area but ran aground during her first attack. Discovered by an enemy destroyer, the S-34 jettisoned all reserve fuel, floated off the reef, then dived to avoid ramming by the destroyer. On the bottom, she was subjected to a harrowing depth charge attack that forced her to exceed her test depth and experienced an encounter with a giant octopus. Eight days later, she limped back to Dutch Harbor. Every ballast tank was punctured, her screws and rudder were bent on the reef, and depth charge fragments had to be pried from the conning tower fairing.

19-5 - Aspro (SS-309) During the closing days of World War II, the USS Aspro rescued a downed airman from the sea, only a few miles from the beaches south of Tokyo. The Aspro was attacked repeatedly by enemy aircraft but the rescue was affected due to the indomitable will of the submarine's skipper, of the skill and efficiency of his crew and of the close liaison between airplane and submarine.

19-6 - Thresher (SS-200) Despite a load of faulty torpedoes, the USS Thresher takes on enemy [shipping](#), blasting at the transports with her deck gun. In this action, a young seaman learns that he cannot run from a personal problem by seeking transfer to another submarine. When the enemy is fully engaged, he earns new respect from his shipmates by manning the submarine's deck gun.

19-8 - Peto (SS-265) For her tenth war patrol, the USS Peto was assigned to recover American airmen shot down during the closing phases of the war against Japan. One member of the submarine's crew, John Francis Laboon, Jr., changed the direction of his life as a result of the assignment. During the patrol, Laboon dove off the submarine to rescue a drowning flier. The experience left him with the decision to resign from the Navy following the war and enter the priesthood. Today, he is the Rev.

Father John Laboon of the Society of Jesus. He appears at the close of this episode to discuss some of his experiences aboard the USS Peto.

19-9 - S-38 (SS-143) Submarines don't usually serve as hospital ships but during the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies, the S-38 picked up survivors of the British destroyer Electra and transported them to safety. The rescue of the injured and dying, who were then crowded into the S-38's cramped quarters, and the narrow escapes from patrolling Japanese destroyers are dramatically presented in this episode.

19-10 - Tarpon (SS-175) Early in World War II, many U.S. Navy ships were stymied on station for overhauling, among them the submarine Tarpon. It left Darwin, Australia, in January 1942, for duty in the vital Manipa Straits area, like a tiger without claws, limping northward toward the enemy. Shortly after arriving on station, the Tarpon's No.2 engine went out in enemy patrolled waters. Later, ordered to a new area, she ran aground on an uncharted reef. With low tide and daylight near, efforts were made to lighten the sub. Torpedoes were fired at the beach, reserve fuel and supplies jettisoned and preparations made to destroy the submarine. Then, hardworking machinist mates revived the ailing engine. As Japanese planes started a bombing run, the Tarpon pulled **free** and slipped into deep water to fight another day.

19-11 - Trigger (SS-237) For her third war patrol, the USS Trigger had an unusual assignment: mine the coastal waters of Japan to drive enemy shipping into deep water. No one was happy with the assignment. For Ensign Thomas, mine-laying was a lowly chore. When the patrol takes an unusual turn, Thomas and the Trigger's crew find that even mine laying pays off.

19-12 - Baya (SS-318) When it was decided to improve plane-sub liaison so that the two could function as a team, Commander Gordon Selby was designated as the officer to work out the new arrangement. After working closely with the fliers, he came up with a formula. Its effectiveness is demonstrated in this episode, when the USS Baya, with an assist from the planes, sank six out of six ships in a Japanese convoy.

19-13 - Cod (SS-224) In the final days of World War II, American submarines had difficulty finding merchant ship targets. But the enemy junks that plied the coastal waters with cargoes of food for the beleaguered home islands were legitimate prey. The junks weren't worth a torpedo. Generally unarmed and with small crews, they were easy victims for boarding parties from submarines. In August 1945, the USS Cod surfaced alongside a junk and dispatched a board party. Everything went well until an enemy plane forced the submarine to submerge while the boarders were still on the junk. The USS Cod's boarders kept the enemy crew at bay and navigated the junk through a Japanese convoy to a final rendezvous with the submarine.

19-14 - Triton (SS-201) In a change of pace from action-packed episodes, this episode presents a sentimental Christmas story that unfolds inside the slim, steel hull of USS Triton, 200 feet beneath the surface of the Pacific. The USS Triton's log for Dec. 25, 1942 reads: "0900, dived to 200 feet and held appropriate Christmas ceremonies." These included Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, a tree, passing out of Christmas **gifts**, and a Santa Claus. In the holiday spirit, one man learns that war sometimes unites families as well as divides them. The skipper of the Triton, Lt. Cdr. C. C. Kirkpatrick, is now a Rear Admiral and was Chief of Naval Information.

19-15 - Hawkbill (SS-366) When the Japanese mine-layer Hatsutaka sank USS Lagarto, she signed her own death-warrant. Operating in an adjoining area, the USS Hawkbill learned of the Lagarto's fate. The

skipper of the USS Hawkbill vowed revenge out of friendship for the Lagarto's captain. The USS Hawkbill gets her revenge and a young seaman learns to respect the problems of others.

19-16 - Tigershark (Fictitious Submarine) For reasons that become obvious, the names of the submarine and its crew members have been changed for this episode of the "Silent Service." The story is one of personal heroism by a Chief Petty Officer who, when his submarine is badly damaged on the ocean floor, braves death by asphyxiation to get the engines running again.

19-17 - Cavalla (SS-244) On her maiden patrol in July 1944, USS Cavalla made contact with heavy enemy surface craft, including a giant carrier, but, because of orders, could not fire a single torpedo. With the battle for the Marianas in full swing, the USS Cavalla was ordered to report contacts but not to engage the enemy. Sending information about the enemy's whereabouts provided scant satisfaction to the submarine's crew and officers until fleet headquarters advised them the contact reports had touched off the Marianas "Turkey Shoot" and near annihilation of the Japanese Navy's air force. To top things off, the Cavalla's patience was rewarded a few days later when with the "don't shoot" restriction lifted, she sank a large carrier.

19-18 - Growler (SS-215) Quick thinking and unselfish devotion to duty on the part of her captain, Commander Howard W. Gilmore, saves the USS Growler from being rammed by an enemy gunboat. Although exposed to murderous machine gun fire, Commander Gilmore stayed on the bridge of the Growler to direct her moves against the enemy. He succeeded in driving the Growler's bow into the gunboat amidships and thereby averted loss of the submarine. He gave his life to save his ship, when, severely wounded and unable to make it to the hatch, he ordered an immediate dive with the command, "Take her down." He was the first submariner to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

19-19 - Tinosa (Submarine, SS-283) Penetrating Tsushima Strait to get at shipping in the Sea of Japan was a job that fell to a few specially equipped submarines in the closing months of World War II. The USS Tinosa was sent into the Emperor's "private lake", the Tsushima Strait. The Strait was guarded by thick mine fields. However, with the help of "frequency modulated sonar," the Tinosa finally slipped by without damage and reaped her harvest, convoys of unprotected enemy ships.

19-20 - Grayling (SS-209) A US submarine was saved by a whale in October 1943. The USS Grayling was assigned to patrol duty off Corregidor. She found plenty of targets but plenty of opposition, too. When only two torpedoes remained in her tubes, she searched hopefully for a final objective. The one she picked turned out to be an enemy Q-ship, which escaped the torpedoes and proceeded to unload some well-placed depth charges. When a friendly whale ventured near the Grayling, the Japanese detection devices mistook it for the submarine and followed it while the Grayling escaped.

19-22 - Pargo (SS-264) One of the little-known missions of U.S. submarines in World War II was the dropping of commandos on enemy-held islands. The USS Pargo executed this duty by taking two Australians to a small island occupied by the Japanese. The commandos are on reconnaissance but one member of the team gets unusual satisfaction out of the operation when he rescues his former fiancée who, along with her missionary father, had been held captive by the Japanese.

19-23 - Crevalle (SS-291) Laying mines off the Japanese-held harbor of Saigon was a tough job at best; but, with one of your own mines stuck in the torpedo tube and an enemy destroyer closing fast, it was a downright nightmare. The USS Crevalle comes through on such a mission, demonstrating the cool daring that characterizes officers and men and the US Navy's undersea fleet.

19-24 - Sunfish (SS-281) One of the severest drubbings ever given a submarine was handed out to the USS Sunfish by Japanese surface craft in the Sea of Okhotsk in the summer of 1944. By the time the enemy ceased the attack, the USS Sunfish had survived 186 depth charges, 86 of them close. The drain on physical reserves that goes along with sustained enemy action is described in this episode of the Silent service.

19-25 - Sunfish (SS-281) A submarine's cook wins the Bronze Star Medal in this "Silent Service" episode. Fed up with his routine chores in the gallery, the cook of the USS Sunfish, Teddy Aldridge, requests an active combat station for the next engagement with the enemy. The ship's executive officer assigns him a Browning automatic rifle for use during surface action. When the USS Sunfish encounters a fleet of enemy trawlers, the cook goes to work and finally diverts a Japanese skipper from a suicidal attempt at ramming.

19-26 - Nautilus (SS-168) Women are rarely passengers on United States submarines, but the USS Nautilus takes 14 aboard to the amazement of her crew. The women are nuns rescued from Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. The sub's crew, after being taken aback, give their guests a genuine, heart-felt welcome.

19-27 - Sandshark (Fictitious submarine) Rescuing a missionary and his wife from a Japanese-held island turns out to be more of a chore than the submariners figured. When the missionary balks at being taken off the island, one member of the rescue party takes matters into his own hands and settles the issue with a well-aimed left hook. Later, aboard the submarine, he tells the missionary that an enemy mortar blast had knocked him unconscious. Submarine and crew members are not identified but the incident happened exactly as depicted.

19-28 - Seadragon (SS-194) During World War II, a great human drama unfolded in one of the slim, steel ships that roamed beneath the seas. It had little to do with the enemy, yet life and death were involved as certainly as if the vessel were under attack. Days out of Fremantle, Australia, and just after sinking an enemy freighter, a member of the crew of the USS Seadragon was stricken with acute appendicitis. An operation was imperative. Rising to the emergency, Pharmacist's Mate Wheeler B. Lipes, who had qualified only as a lab technician, assembled makeshift surgical tools, ether and a supply of alcohol drained from the sub's torpedoes. Then, he undertook "the big gamble" with the other man's life. Two and one-half hours after he began operating, some of the time under depth charge attack, Lipes successfully completed his surgery.

19-29 - Harder (SS-257) In the most daring submarine rescue of the war, three men from USS Harder swam with a rubber boat through knife-like coral and a hail of snipers' bullets to save a Navy pilot from an enemy-held island. The sub's skipper, posthumous Medal of Honor [winner](#) Samuel D. Dealey, put the USS Harder's bow on a coral reef and fought to keep her from swinging broadside onto the reef while the crew hauled in the rubber boat. The flyer, Lt. John Galvin from the carrier USS Bunker Hill, was awarded the Submarine Combat Insignia for his service aboard the USS Harder during the remainder of this patrol in which she began the rampage that won her the name "Destroyer Killer."

19-30 - Tautog (SS-199) Waiting in vain for a report from USS Tautog, a hospitalized submariner has double reason to worry. The sub is his ship and this is the first patrol that he has missed. Also his younger brother is a crewman on her. During the long wait, he recalls for a fellow-patient the brilliant record of the USS Tautog and her gallant skipper, W. B. "Barney" Sieglaff, who commanded her on six fighting patrols. The USS Tautog, one of five submarines berthed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, repaid the enemy's treachery by sinking 26 Japanese ships, more than any submarine in the United States Navy.

19-31 - Swordfish (SS-193) After Pearl Harbor, planes from Japan's advanced air bases were hitting us hard. USS Swordfish, under the command of Chester C. Smith, was ordered to locate and destroy the hidden anchorage where the enemy received supplies for these bases. This mission had been attempted by two other submarines without success. Playing a long shot, Smith combined imagination and skill with a large helping of courage and nosed the USS Swordfish into the narrow Lembeh Strait in the northern Celebes. The only available charts for the area, dated 1908, indicated "Possible coral reefs" throughout these waters. In this respect, the charts were dead right. The daring of the sub's captain paid off. The Swordfish sank two big supply ships found in the hidden harbor.

19-32 - Gabilan (SS-252) Although warned away from an area to be patrolled by American destroyers, the U.S. submarine Gabilan risked attack by units of its own fleet to rescue a downed flier. Officers and men of the USS Gabilan went through some of the most agonizing hours ever passed in the undersea service. The USS Gabilan was nearly clear of the danger area when she was spotted by two American destroyers. Heavy fog prevented her identification signals from being recognized. With hardly any energy left in her batteries, she was forced to submerge to avoid shellfire. Then, with her electric power nearly gone and a strong current pushing her shoreward, she surfaced, only to find the destroyers still doggedly on her trail. She was saved when a clearing in the fog enabled her recognition signals to get through.

19-33 - Gato (SS-212) Rescuing downed fliers from the Sea of Japan was one of the less-publicized, though frequently valiant, chores of U.S. submarines during World War II. The USS Gato braves repeated air attack to recover airmen from the sea. In the process, one of her crew members learns his true mission in the war.

19-34 - Silversides (SS-236) On her third and fourth war patrols, the USS Silversides did more than sink enemy ships. The patrols had a profound effect on the life of one young torpedoman. Everything came easily to Torpedoman 3rd Class James P. Lane. From the moment he joined the Silversides crew, the submarine seemed to lead a charmed life. Her torpedoes ran hot and true. Enemy ship after ship went down without returning fire and Lane's cheery philosophy was reinforced. But things took an unexpected turn when the Silversides took on an enemy patrol boat in a surface battle. From then on, Lane knew that fighting a war was no snap.

19-35 - Bowfin (SS-287) On the second war patrol of the USS Bowfish, a young lieutenant seriously questions his own ability to become a capable, courageous submarine officer. But, when the chips are down during surface action against enemy ships, he comes through, reinforcing a belief in himself and winning the respect of his shipmates.

19-37 - Squalus (SS-192) When the USS Squalus sank in 240 feet of water in May 1939, the Navy had its first opportunity to test the rescue diving bell under actual emergency circumstances. The crew was trapped inside the stricken submarine at a depth that would have endangered their lives had they tried to escape by using Momsen lungs. The tragic sinking of the Squalus is seen, along with the valiant efforts that saved 33 men. At the end of the program, Vice Admiral Charles B. Momsen, inventor of the Momsen Lung and the supervisor of the Squalus rescue operation, is interviewed.

19-38 - Seanettle (Fictitious Submarine) In the summer of 1944, the USS Seanettle (name changed) received an unusual assignment from COMSUBPAC: find and sink a German submarine known to be traversing the Pacific en route to Japan. The skipper plotted a course that he felt would intersect with the refueling needs of the German sub. The USS Seanettle caught up with the German sub off the Hong Kong harbor and was able to sink the German sub with her last three torpedoes.

19-39 - U-47 (German Submarine) Early in World War II, the British Navy was dealt a humiliating blow by an intrepid and resourceful German U-boat commander who slipped into the anchorage at Scapa Flow and sank the battleship Royal Oak on October 13, 1939. Through the narrow Kirk Sound, in which the British had sunk block-ships as an anti-submarine measure, Gunther Prien, skipper of the U-47, steered his craft fully surfaced. Once inside Scapa Flow, he sent a salvo of torpedoes into the Royal Oak, sinking her within sight of British shore batteries. Undetected, the U-47 slipped back to sea, completing one of the most daring submarine patrols in sea warfare.