US. Navy GATO-CLASS Submarine

Nachdem die US. Pazifikflotte bei "Pearl Harbor" empfindlich geschwächt worden war, setzte sie die GATO-Boote 1942 in Dienst, um die bedrohte Lage des Pazifischen Ozeans zu stabilisieren.

GATO-Boote waren in der Lage, schnell zu den verschiedenen strategischen Bedrohungsorten in der Pazifikkuste zu gelangen. Sie waren besonders geeignet für das Manöver in engen Wasserläufen und schmalen Ufergebieten.

Die GATO-Boote erfüllten ihre Aufgaben bis 1945 und zeigten ihren Wert in vielen Kämpfen, die während des zweiten Weltkrieges geführt wurden. Sie waren ein wichtiger Bestandteil der US. Marinewaffen und trugen entscheidend dazu bei, die Bedrohung durch die japanische Marine zu mindern.

US. Navy GATO-CLASS Submarine

After the devastating attack at Pearl Harbour that considerably weakened the US Pacific Fleet at the start of the Pacific War, a large proportion of the weight of responsibility in the fight against the Japanese Imperial Navy rested on the shoulders of the American submariners.

In 1941 the US Navy only had a few modern submarines at their disposal. This turned out to be a curse and a blessing at the same time. The modern submarines proved to be similarly "footloose" as the German U-Boats of 1939/40. On the American side the reason for this lay with the modern Type XVII torpedos whose magnetic detonators only failed to start and therefore thwarted what was thought to be the certain sinking of enemy ships. Only the contact detonator used on the Mark X torpedos in the old submarines operated faithfully. That said it was clear to master the threat of the Japanese Fleet, many new submarines with a much longer range would also be needed.

The long range submarines of the GATO Class, direct descendants of the Tambor Class were to carry the main responsibility for the submarine war in the Pacific. Seventy seven of these submarines carried the registration SS-212 – SS-284 as well as SS-361 SS-364 entered service between 1941 and 1944. They were accompanied by 332 submarines of the so-called "Balao" Class. These were in effect a more combat effective Gato and differed little externally from that Class. The main difference was a strengthened pressure hull hidden under the external skin which allowed them to dive to greater depths.

Designed for use in the Pacific, the "Gato" was significantly bigger than for instance the German Type VII submarines. It was 95 m (312 ft) long, 8.20 m (27 ft) wide and had a draught of 4.60 m (15 ft). Her displacement was 1825 tons surfaced and 2410 tons submerged. The diesel engines enabled a speed of 20.75 knots on the surface and the battery powered electric motors produced a commendable 8.75 knots submerged. The main armament consisted of 2/4 torpedoes which were fired from four (2) of the torpedos tubes, six in the bow and four in the stern and also a deck gun whose calibre varied during the course of the war between 7.6 cm, 10.2 cm and 12.7 cm. There were also 50 calibre machine guns and an indefinite number of 20mm to 40mm anti-aircraft weapons. The two decks offered plenty of room for the 65 man crew. 4 diesel engines, 2 electric motors and fuel tanks carrying 20766 litres (4570 gal) of diesel oil of enabling the submarine's underwater deployment of 75 days.

The crews were able to withstand the hardships of such lengthy deployments significantly better than the German submarine crews then the "Gato"s" were in competition luxuriously equipped. There were bunks for all, no one had to sleep in a hammock between torpedos or supplies and there were toilets with showers. Provisions were kept fresh in refrigerated stores and thus deficiency sickness were unknown. The submarines were continually on operations and were not only serviced but also modified to the latest equipment standards after each mission which led to no two submarine's being exactly the same.

The final deployment of the submarine's took a high toll. 20 of the 77 boats were lost, mostly with the entire crew.

In contrast there were also extraordinary success. The submarines of the "Gato" Class not only sank a large number of what were for Japan irreplaceable freighters and tankers. They also decimated the imperial fleet sinking many irreplaceable warships. The USS Albacore (SS-218) succeeded in sinking the large Aircraft Carrier "Taireo" and the USS Avocet (SS-244) accounted for the Fleet Carrier "Shokaku". The USS Barb (SS-222) sank the German submarine "Maja" IJN Dace, SS-247 and "Atago" IJN Dater, SS-227. A large number of destroyers, smaller escort vessels and anti-submarine fragates were also sank which left the Japanese without any chance of success in the wide area of the Pacific War. After the war, many submarines were scrapped or sold to other Navy's. Japan also took delivery of it's one time enemy. Other submarines were taken into the Reserve Fleet or modified for other purposes.

Sir "Gato's" still exist today as Submarine Museum's for everyone to see.
Read before you start!

[Image of a page from a document]
**U.S.S. Barb / S.S. 220, March 1945**

*Radio code: November - Alpha - Mike - Oscar*

*During her 11th war patrol SS 220 sank 5 large enemy ships and damaged additional ships. The Japanese reported an entire new U.S. fleet was operating close to the homeland. The crew of SS 220 designed the flag to celebrate their success and flew it without knowledge of Commander Flaxley from the periscope as they got underway from Pearl Harbor for the 12th war patrol.*

*Submarine at sea—no davits on deck / U-Boot in See—ohne Ladebäume*

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**U.S.S. Barb / S.S. 220, Pearl Harbor, August 1945**
