

## HISTORY OF USS TREPANG (SS 412)

All combatants in the Pacific war were primarily dependent upon water transport since there was relatively little land transport available in this usually primitive theater of operations. The sea made an excellent road for those who controlled it and a barrier to those denied it. When Japan controlled the sea in the Far East her offensive rolled ahead through a series of practically unbroken victories, pushing the boundaries of her Empire to the Malay Barrier and the Solomon Islands. By means of the sea she could isolate Allied strongholds, deny them all reinforcements, concentrate her own forces and attack when and where she desired. When she lost control of the sea these conditions were exactly reversed. Before the end of 1943 the slow creeping Allied advance through the jungles was over and the swift advances over the sea had begun. The Empire of Japan melted away almost as rapidly as it had grown.

Our Submarine Force waged constant, relentless and effective war upon this Japanese sea potential. During the war years they sank 1,750 merchant ships and 194 combat vessels of all classes, more than 56% of the total of such losses. The USS TREPANG did not join the fray until the summer of 1944, but in her year of battle she downed eleven Japanese ships for a total tonnage of 23,850 tons. Awarded five Battle Stars for her successful patrols, she was also awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for her heroism in action during her first War Patrol.

The keel for the SS 412 was laid at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California on 25 June 1943. At the launching on 23 March 1944 Mrs. R. M Davenport, wife of the first commanding officer, served as sponsor. The submarine was christened "TREPANG" for a fish of the Actinopyga family, which are caught in northern Australia and the East Indies; boiled, dried, smoked, and then shipped to China for making soup. The sleek new submarine was accepted by the Navy and turned over to her first skipper, Commander Davenport at the commissioning ceremonies on 22 May 1944.

Shakedown and training cruise were conducted out of San Diego, California, and the TREPANG departed for the Pacific theater on 15 August 1944. On 13 September she steamed out on her first patrol. This was to be conducted in the area just south of Honshu, the main Japanese home island. On 1 October she contacted a fast enemy task force that was making a night sortie from Tokyo Bay. The enemy's speed, considerably greater than the TREPANG's, made it necessary to attack on the surface, with very little time to maneuver for an advantageous position. She must have been in sight for at least six minutes prior to reaching firing position, but she was able to launch her torpedoes, sink the freighter TAKUMAN MARU, and escape on the surface. On 11 October she sank the TRANSPORT No. 105 for another 1,000 tons. In the same action she severely damaged a battleship and a destroyer. On 23 October she returned to Majuro for refitting by the USS BUSHNELL.

On 16 November the TREPANG steamed out for her second run, which was to be conducted between northern Luzon and Formosa. She never got past Luzon. It was dark, rough and windy on that 6th of December. The TREPANG had surfaced after her day's submerged, inshore patrol, and had just set course for more open

ters, when she detected a group of ships approaching from the north. Upon investigation, they proved to be a slow speed convoy of seven large ships and three escorts, heading for the Philippines. The TREPANG radioed the news to the RAZORBACK and SEGUNDO, then went in for a submerged attack. The first attack resulted in the sinking of cargomen BANSHU MARU No. 31 and JINYO MARU, and the damaging of a third. Just as the submarine was about to administer the coup-de-grace to the latter, the FUKUYO MARU obligingly blew up and sank. A short while later, the SEGUNDO arrived on the scene, followed closely by the RAZORBACK. The TREPANG singled out a fourth member of the now scattered convoy. It stayed afloat long enough to receive the submarine's remaining torpedoes, then sank in a mass of flames. Meanwhile, the other two boats were delivering their torpedoes to the fleeing remnants of the convoy. The SEGUNDO promptly dispatched two of the survivors, one an ammunition ship, and damaged a third. The RAZORBACK, polished off the cripple. Now out of torpedoes, the TREPANG arrived in Pearl Harbor in time for Christmas. Here Commander Davenport was relieved of command by Commander F. A. Faust, USN.

On her third patrol the TREPANG again was off Honshu. In company with the submarines PIPER, POMFRET, BOWFIN and STERLET, she made an anti-picket boat sweep past Nanpo Shoto, the eastern island chain south of Tokyo. This was done to clear the area for the FIFTH Fleet assault on Iwo Jima. No worthwhile targets were encountered, and she was assigned to lifeguard station for the carrier strikes on Tokyo. She deviated from this duty long enough to sink a small freighter on 24 February 1945, and blow the bow off another small coastal freighter. The latter was stopped, but while the TREPANG was maneuvering to finish it off, several small anti-submarine vessels appeared from behind the nearby headland and converged on the raider. The TREPANG escaped damage, but she was pinned down for seven hours by the depth charging. No aviators were in need of the TREPANG's services during her time on lifeguard duty, and she returned to Guam for her third refit in early March 1945.

For her fourth patrol, the TREPANG was ordered to the Yellow Sea. This area was classified as a "hazardous duty" area due to the shallowness of the Sea. Aside from this consideration, it had long been considered a choice assignment, proven by a succession of lucrative patrols in the area. The TREPANG's was no exception. In separate attacks, during the first week in the area, she fired all her torpedoes and sunk a medium-sized landing craft on 28 April; a large, heavily laden freighter-transport on the 30th; and one large destroyer-escort, who blew sky high with a hit in the magazines, on 4 May. The TREPANG also gunned a wooden junk, carrying a load of lumber during this period. After she left the Yellow Sea, she did a short tour lifeguarding for B-25s off Shanghai and for the continuing B-29 strikes on Tokyo, then returned to Guam for her fourth refit.

The TREPANG's fifth and last patrol was divided into two parts. The first half was spent lifeguarding for Iwo-based Mustangs and Superforts from Guam, Saipan and Tinian. The second half was devoted to an offensive patrol off northeastern Honshu and eastern Hokkaido. She was first stationed a few miles southeast of Tokyo, for a fighter strike on the capital by P-51s. Having experienced two previous patrols of fruitless lifeguarding, she was expecting a series of long, dull days spent steaming in circles, squares or triangles, with possibly an occasional visit by an enemy plane to break the monotony.

However, shortly before noon on the first day, a parachute was spotted, and a few seconds later a huge geyser of water shot up from a crashing plane. The TREPANG raced for the spot, and soon had completed her first rescue. While she was maneuvering for this rescue, the TREPANG received a message from another pilot requesting permission to bail out. The second Mustang circled slowly, then the pilot executed a perfect jump, landing in the water about 400 yards from the submarine. In five minutes, he too was aboard.

Three days later the rescued aviators were transferred to the homeward bound TIGRONE. In the middle of the transfer, TREPANG intercepted a search plane's report of a B-29 crew down about seven miles off the coast south of Nagoya. Their plane had been shot down during the previous day's Superfort strike, and the men had been in the water for 24 hours already. Again the TREPANG shot ahead under full power, followed a few minutes later by the SPRINGER. Five hours later, the TREPANG arrived at the reported position, and found eight survivors in four groups of rafts, spread out over about four miles of ocean. The rescue-search plane led the submarine to each group in turn. The TREPANG had seven on board when the SPRINGER reached the eighth.

At the conclusion of the first phase of her patrol, the TREPANG was ordered to rendezvous with the inbound DEVILFISH to transfer her latest crop of fliers. Enroute she encountered a 492 ton minesweeper. The target carried only two 37 millimeter machine guns, so the submarine surfaced and sank it with deck guns.

The eastern coast of Honshu from Tsugaru Straits to Sendai Bay was one of the lifelines of Japanese industry. Ore from the vast coal and iron mines of Hokkaido was transported by sea to the industrial centers of Honshu. The contours of the ocean floor are such that the Japanese were able to plant an almost continuous minefield from the Strait to Tokyo Bay. In only a few places did the shipping lanes emerge from behind their wall of explosives and become vulnerable to undersea attack. One such spot is the very northern tip of the Honshu coastline, Shiriya Saki, at the mouth of Tsugaru Strait. This is the spot the TREPANG chose for her submerged patrol on a day in the middle of July 1945. Submerging at dawn, she crept to within a mile and a half of the beach, and settled down for a day of quiet waiting and watching.

All morning the area teemed with patrol vessels dashing back and forth, pinging furiously in the hope of detecting any submarine that might be lurking in the area. Time and again they passed close aboard the TREPANG, but none ever detected her. The submarine withheld her fire in the hope that these small craft might be forerunners of a more valuable target. Suddenly around noon, as if on a signal, all the patrol boats either returned to port or headed down the coast and soon passed out of sight, leaving the ocean to the TREPANG and a tiny sea going tug who all morning had been working his snaky way southward with two heavy ore barges in tow. About half an hour later, she sighted a convoy of three unescorted coastal freighters. The TREPANG scored two clean hits to sink the lead freighter, the KOUN MARU No.2. The second zigged, and escaped from three torpedoes unscathed. The TREPANG's crew pointed her nose seaward, feeling quite smug. Suddenly two jarring explosions shattered the stillness and tore at the welds of the submarine's hull. Instinctively, she groped for the bottom to escape her unseen assailant, meanwhile bracing for further blows. None came. The attack was delivered by a lone

lane that spotted the TREPANG's shadow beneath the surface. Fortunately, it carried only contact-detonated bombs which could not reach beneath the surface, and a quick survey showed that little damage had been done.

The war was moving fast by now, and before long the TREPANG was again on lifeguard duty. This time it was for the large-scale strikes on northern Honshu and Hokkaido. She picked up one carrier pilot during this period. On 14 July the submarine had a ring side seat for the Allied bombardment of the Japanese coastline. The TREPANG returned to Pearl Harbor just in time to watch the tumbling succession of events in August. First the atomic bomb, then Russia's declaration of war, Japan's tentative acceptance of terms, rumors, denials, more rumors, and finally, Peace!

Upon completion of refit the TREPANG left Pearl Harbor and turned eastward, toward the United States and home. She arrived in San Diego on 3 September 1945, one year and nineteen days from the time she passed under the Golden Gate Bridge bound for the war zone.

The USS TREPANG was awarded the Navy Unit Citation for her First War Patrol, with the text of the citation reading as follows:

"For outstanding heroism in action during her First War Patrol in the Tokyo Bay Area of the Japanese Empire, from September 13, to October 23, 1944. Operating in bold defiance of persistent and severe hostile counter-measures, the USS TREPANG maneuvered to strike at a heavily escorted Japanese battleship sighted leaving Tokyo Bay. Going in under relentless depth-charge and air opposition, she penetrated the enemy's formidable screen to deliver accurate and intensive torpedo fire against her targets and, by her daring and tenacious tactics, succeeded in sinking a large Japanese landing craft and in seriously damaging the battleship and a destroyer. Constantly ready for combat despite unfavorable attack opportunities, the TREPANG served with distinction in carrying the Battle of the Pacific into the enemy's home waters, and her gallantry in action reflects the highest credit upon her skilled and courageous officers and men and upon the United States Naval Service."

She also received five Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participating in the following operations:

1 Star/Iwo Jima operation

Assault and occupation of Iwo Jima -- 15 February - 16 March 1945  
FIFTH Fleet raids against Honshu and the Nansei Shoto -- 15 -16  
February 1945, 25 February and 1 March 1945

1 Star/Okinawa Gunto operation

Assault and occupation of Okinawa Gunto -- 17 March - 21 June 1945

4 Star/THIRD Fleet operations against Japan -- 10 - 17 July 1945

1 Star/First Submarine War Patrol -- 13 September - 23 October 1944

1 Star/Second Submarine War Patrol -- 16 November - 22 December 1944

By Directive dated January 1947, the USS TREPANG was placed out of commission in reserve, U.S. Pacific Reserve Fleet, and berthed at Mare Island, California.

\* \* \* \* \*

### STATISTICS

OVERALL LENGTH	312 feet
BEAM	27 feet
SPEED	20 knots
DISPLACEMENT	1525 tons
COMPLEMENT	8 officers and 72 men

\* \* \* \* \*

Compiled: 8 January 1954

# HISTORY OF THE USS TREPANG(SS412)

BY LIEUT. R.W. STECHER USN

In more than a year of war following her commissioning on May 22, 1944, the USS Trepang has seen her full share of action with Submarines, Pacific Fleet. She completed five war patrols, during which she sank 14 ships and damaged 2, for a total of 109,775 tons. Because she joined the fleet after the capture of our bases in the Marshalls and Gilberts and the recovery of Guam by our Navy and Marines, most of her offensive operations were conducted in the Jap inner circle of defense, with but one patrol as far away as the Philippines.

The first run was in the area just south of Honshu, the main Japanese home island. It netted two oil tankers and a destroyer sunk, and a battleship damaged. The latter two were picked off in a single attack on a fast Jap task force that was making a night sortie from Tokyo Bay. The enemy's speed, considerably greater than the Trepang's, made it necessary to attack on the surface, with very little time to maneuver for an advantageous position. By mathematical calculation, the submarine must have been in sight for at least six minutes prior to reaching firing position, but she was able to launch her torpedoes and escape on the surface, even passing within three ship's lengths of another destroyer, apparently without being seen.

After a standard two-weeks' refit by the USS Bushnell and a short training period at Majuro atoll, Marshall Islands, the Trepang left on her second patrol. This run was to have been conducted between northern Luzon and Formosa, but she never got past Luzon. On the sixth night in the area, she fired all her fish and came home.

It was dark, rough and windy on that sixth of December. The Trepang had surfaced after her day's submerged, inshore patrol, and had just set course for more open waters when she detected a group of ships approaching from the northward. Upon investigation, they proved to be a slow speed convoy of seven large ships and three escorts, heading for the Philippines. Here was a prize worth sharing! The Trepang sent out a hurried summons to the Razorback and Segundo, who were operating in near-by areas, and then proceeded to attack.

The first blow the Trepang delivered resulted in the immediate sinking of two ships and the damaging of a third. This third fellow obligingly blew up and sank fifteen minutes later, just as the Trepang was about to administer the coup de grace.

A short while later, the Segundo arrived on the scene of action, followed closely by the Razorback, and then the fun began. The Trepang singled out a fourth member of the now scattered convoy, one which stubbornly refused to sink until it had absorbed all the submarine's remaining fish, and then only with great protestations of flame and explosion which were enjoyed by all of the sub's crew who were free to go topside. While this was going on, the other two boats also were delivering their loads of fish to the desperately fleeing remnants of the convoy. The Segundo, first on the scene, promptly dispatched two of the survivors, one an ammunition ship which exploded with a violence that nearly took the attacker with it, and damaged the third. The Razorback, who came puffing up at the last moment, polished off the cripple. The most surprising part of the affair was that the three submarines, quite by accident, often

timed their attacks so as to fire almost simultaneously. The result was that when the Trepang fired aft, ships would explode ahead of her, and when she let go a forward salvo, she apparently picked off an ammunition ship astern. The Officer-of-the-Deck summed up the situation as "confusing."

The Trepang spent the Christmas holidays and her second refit in Pearl Harbor, where there were girls, Scotch (in small quantities), rooms at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, fresh milk and vegetables, and girls. Incidentally, there were the splendid repair facilities of the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, to accomplish the major work items which had arisen during two war patrols in continuously bad weather.

Patrol number three took the Trepang back to her old stamping ground off Honshu. In company with the submarines Piper, Pomfret, Powfin and Sterlot, she made an anti-picket boat sweep past Nanpo Shoto, the eastern island chain south of Tokyo, to clear the sea for Admiral Spruance's Fifth Fleet assault on Iwo Jima. This accomplished, her main mission was lifeguarding for Admiral Mitscher's carriers in their strikes on Tokyo. However, she deviated from plan sufficiently to send a large, 6,000-ton freighter to its ancestors in the short space of two minutes after the first hit, and to blow the bow off a small coastal freighter. The little one was stopped, but while the sub was maneuvering to finish her off, several small, high-speed, anti-submarine vessels appeared from behind the nearby headland and converged on the spot with a bone in their teeth, murder in their hearts, and a full load of depth charges. The Trepang escaped damage, but she was held down for seven hours by the depth charging.

No aviators hit the silk or the water near the Trepang, so she reported to the USS Proteus at Guam for her third refit without passengers.

By this time, the authority standing third from the end in the chow line could grove with facts and figures that the submarine was no longer useful for anything but lifeguard, because the airplane now could reach all the sub's formerly exclusive areas. But the old diehards, refusing to listen to logic, went out and sank ships anyway. Most of them smaller, it is conceded, but nonetheless, ships.

About this time also, the Japanese information sources released one of their informative communiques. The Yellow Sea, they declared in effect, was a mare clausum; Jap destroyers and escort vessels had made it so unprofitable for American submarines to operate there that only a few had dared attempt it during the entire war, and most of those had been sunk.

For her fourth patrol, the Trepang was ordered to the Yellow Sea. This area is classified as a "hazardous duty" region, not because of any extra ability of the Japanese in the Sea, but because the water is everywhere so shallow that it would be possible for the Japs to salvage a sunken submarine and recover her papers and equipment. This made it inadvisable to carry certain publications and devices which had been designated for extreme secrecy. Aside from this consideration, however, the Sea has long been considered a choice assignment, and has been proved to be such by a succession of lucrative patrols in that area.

The Trepang added one to that succession. In separate attacks, on the first four days and nights in the area, she fired all her

fish, bagging one large, heavily laden freighter-transport, who went down without protest; one medium-sized freighter, who absorbed much punishment, but gave none; and one large destroyer-escort, who blew sky high with a hit in the magazines. The most satisfying part of the last attack was that the destroyer-escort was obviously sent out with orders to get the Trepang. Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare, Imperial Japanese Navy, learned one lesson: never send a boy to do a man's job.

To keep the in-between-times from getting dull, the Trepang gunned a wooden junk, evidently Korean, but carrying a load of lumber plainly intended for Japanese consumption, and took a prisoner. The fellow proved to be ignorant of the fundamentals of sign language, and of little potential value to naval intelligence, so the Trepang decided to put him back. With him went a bundle of clothes, more food than the average coolie owns in a lifetime, and a bag of tools with which to repair his damaged but still floating junk. The Trepang had destroyed his cargo, and had no quarrel with his crew.

After she left the Yellow Sea, the Trepang did a short turn at lifeguarding for B-25s off Shanghai and for the continuing B-29 strikes on Tokyo; then returned to Guam for her fourth refit, alongside the USS Apollo.

The Trepang's fifth and last patrol was divided into two parts. The first half was spent lifeguarding for Iwo-based Mustangs and Superforts from Guam, Saipan and Tinian, while the second half was devoted to an offensive patrol off northeastern Honshu and eastern Hokkaido.

The first lifeguard station of this patrol was a few miles southeast of Tokyo, for a fighter strike on the capital by P-51s. Forewarned by two previous patrols of fruitless lifeguarding, she was expecting a series of long, dull days spent steaming in circles, squares or triangles, with possibly an occasional visit by an enemy plane to relieve the monotony. Shortly before noon, however, the Junior Officer-of-the-Deck spotted a parachute in the sky, and a few seconds later all hands on the bridge saw a huge geyser of water shoot up from a crashing plane. The Trepang raced for the spot under full power, and soon had Second Lieutenant Lamar Christian, USAAF, safely aboard.

While she was maneuvering to pick up "Red" Christian, the Trepang received a message from Frank Ayres, First Lieutenant, USAAF, requesting permission to bail out. The submarine told him to hold on for a while until the business at hand was completed, so Frank, in his battered, barely flyable Mustang, circled slowly, watching rescue operations. When Red was aboard, Frank executed a perfect jump, landing in the water about 400 yards from the submarine. Inside of five minutes he was tucked in bed, telling tall zoomie tales in his Louisiana drawl.

In order to speed the return of aviator survivors to their outfits, submarines leaving the lifeguard area to return to base usually rendezvous at sea with the rescue subs that are remaining in the area, in order to transfer the pilots to the homeward bound vessel. At the same time, the boats exchange movies and such spare parts and food as may be necessary. By virtue of much practice, many boats become quite adept in the conduct of these mid-ocean transfers (mid-ocean usually being 50-odd miles off the coast of Honshu).

Three days after rescuing them, the Trepang gave her two



fighter pilots to the Tigrone, who was on the way home with thirty passengers of her own. In the middle of the transfer, the Trepang intercepted a Boxkite's (rescue search plane) report of a B-29 crew that was down about 7 miles off the coast south of Nagoya. Their plane had been shot down during the previous day's Superfort strike, and the men had been in the water for 24 hours already. Again the Trepang shot ahead under full power, followed a few minutes later by the Springer, who was also discharging passengers to the Tigrone. The following conversation was heard over the ship's speaker system:

Captain: Manouvering Room, can you hold this speed?

Manouvering Room: I think so, Sir, but this is about the top. I don't think she'd take any more.

----Five-minute pause----

Captain: Manouvering, the Springer is 8,000 yards astern and coming up fast. Looks as if she'll beat us to the fliers.

Manouvering Room: Ayo, Ayo, Sir!

The ship shuddered slightly under a surge of power, and the Springer ceased to gain.

About five hours after receipt of the first message, the Trepang arrived at the reported position, and found eight survivors in four groups of rafts, spread out over about four miles of ocean. The Boxkite, still on the scene, led the submarine to each group in turn. The Trepang had \*seven on board when the Springer reached the scene in time to pick up the eighth, Lt. Col. Howard F. Hugo, of San Antonio, Texas. Four of the bomber crew were missing. One did not get out of the plane, one jumped with a burning 'chute, and two were never seen after the jump. The eight recovered were in good shape, and very pleased to be thumbing a ride on a submarine. One of them, 1st Lieut. Chester Kiesol, looked up at the men on deck as the sub came alongside him and shouted, "I don't know who you are or where you're from, but when I get up there, I'm going to kiss you!" When he got on deck, he grabbed the nearest sailor and planted a resounding kiss on his cheek.

Too much praise cannot be given to the B-29 "Boxkite" rescue plane that led the submarines to the survivors and stood by as air cover during the rescue. Only by a well conducted search could he have located the survivors at all. That accomplished, he displayed great ability in contacting the submarines and vectoring them to the area. The loyalty with which he stood by the downed fliers until his last ounce of reserve fuel was gone and the last man was on board was nothing short of heroic.

At the conclusion of the first phase of her patrol, the Trepang was ordered to rendezvous with the inbound Devilfish to transfer her latest crop of fliers. The Trepang was a few hours late for the rendezvous, because she stopped along the way to sink a small, troop-laden, 600-ton freighter that got in her way. The target carried only two 37 millimeter machine guns, so the submarine surfaced and sank it with the deck guns. A dozen or so fully equipped soldiers managed to escape from the fiercely burning living quarters, but all

\* The rescued fliers were: 1st Lieut. Chester G. Kiesol, Co-pilot; 1st Lieut. James R. Kennedy, Engineer; 2nd Lieut. Robert E. Conner, Bombardier; Staff Sergeant Guy C. Winks; Staff Sergeant Donald M. Sinclair; Technical Sergeant Leonard R. Poterek; and Sergeant Dono J. Ruggieri.

refused to be taken prisoner. A light wind storm that blew up during the night makes it practically certain that they all drowned.

The eastern coast of Honshu from Tsugaru Straits to Sendai Bay is one of the lifelines of Japanese industry. Ore from the vast coal and iron mines of Hokkaido must be transported by sea to the industrial centers of Honshu. This would seem at first glance to make the area a paradise for submarines, but such is not the case. The contours of the ocean floor are such that the Japs have been able to plant an almost continuous minefield from the Strait to Tokyo Bay. Only in a few places do the shipping lanes emerge from behind their wall of explosives and become vulnerable to undersea attack. Needless to say, the Japs are fully as aware of these few points of weakness as are our submarines.

One such spot is the very northern tip of the Honshu coastline, Shiriya Saki, at the mouth of Tsugaru Strait, and this spot the Trepang chose for her submerged patrol on a day in the middle of last July (1945). Submerging at dawn, she crept to within a mile and a half of the beach, and settled down for a day of quiet waiting and watching.

All morning long the area teemed with patrol vessels dashing back and forth, pinging furiously in the hope of detecting any submarine that might be lurking in the area. Time and again they passed close aboard the Trepang, but none ever detected her. Most were too small to warrant torpedo fire, and the submarine held her fire on the others in the hope that they might be the forerunners of a more valuable target. In any event, once she revealed her presence by firing a fish, she was certain to receive a warm welcome from the Japanese. It would be worth the risk for a good sized target, but not for these small escort types.

Suddenly, around noon, a strange development took place. As if on a signal, all the patrol boats either returned to port or headed down the coast and soon passed out of sight, leaving the ocean to the Trepang and "Smokey Joe," a tiny, sea-going tug who all morning had been working his smokey way southward with two heavy ore barges in tow. About half an hour later, the submarine sighted a convoy of three unescorted coastal freighters. Fair game! The Trepang got two clean hits to sink the lead ship, but the second one ducked when he saw his running mate blow up, and escaped from 3 torpedoes unscathed.

The following courses were then set by the vessels in the area:

The first freighter: Straight down.

The other freighters: Full speed for port.

Smokey Joe: Let out a tremendous belch of smoke, dropped his tow and fled successively in all directions, finally settling on a southerly course.

The Trepang: East. She ran happily to seaward, indulging in a merited bit of self-congratulation. She had just completed a rather neat attack, and gotten off scott-free.

Scott-free? Whan! Whan! With soul-shaking, tooth-jarring suddenness, two explosions shattered the stillness and tore at the welds of her hull. Instinctively, she pointed her nose downward and reached for depth to escape her unseen assailant, meanwhile bracing herself for further blows. None came, however; the attack was delivered by a lone plane that spotted the Trepang's shadow beneath the

surface. Fortunately, he had only contact-detonated bombs which could not reach beneath the surface to find the sub, and a quick survey showed that beyond a bad shaking up, little or no damage was done.

Either the Japanese escort commander was a poor student, or else he had run out of men. In either case, two nights later, he sent another boy (in quality, if not size) to try to eliminate the current submarine menace. This time, the boy's ammunition was not exploded by the torpedoes, but three solid hits along his length dissolved him in thirty seconds. Probably few of his crew ever awoke to know they had been hit.

The war was moving fast last July, and before long the Trepang found herself lifeguarding again, this time for the large-scale British and American strikes on northern Honshu and Hokkaido. She picked up one carrier pilot, Liout. (jg) Bill Kingston, USNR, of Jersey City, N.J.

For exactly a year now the Trepang had been waging unrestricted warfare against all shipping encountered in Japanese waters. Only submarines could possibly be friendly, and those she treated with utmost caution. Then, at 12:15 PM on 14 July, 1945, while lying surfaced about ten miles off the Jap coast, she saw a column of three battleships and one cruiser steaming confidently toward the Jap shore line, looking for all the world like a Navy Day review. They steamed to within a few miles of the beach and executed a smart column left. Directly in front of the Kamakishi reviewing stand, they commenced the most staggering salute ever given by one sovereign nation to another. Salvo after salvo they fired, in the only kind of salute the Sons of Hirohito are capable of understanding.

We of the Trepang knew then that the war was nearly over. The Trepang returned to Pearl Harbor just in time to watch the tumbling succession of world-shattering events that fought each other for a place in the headlines of the news in August. The atomic bomb, Russia's declaration of war, Japan's tentative acceptance of terms, rumors, denials, more rumors, and finally, peace!

The Trepang completed her fifth refit and left Pearl Harbor on schedule. But instead of heading west, she turned eastward, toward the States and home. She arrived in San Diego on September 3rd, one year and nineteen days from the time she passed under the Golden Gate Bridge bound for the war zone. She is at present operating as a training boat, while awaiting her turn to be put in reserve commission at Mare Island. When her commission pennant and colors are at last hauled down, she may well sigh with contentment as she settles down to her sleep. May she have a long, long rest before she is again called forth to battle!

Summary of Patrol Results:

Number of Patrol	Ships Sunk	Total Tonnage Sunk	Ships Damaged	Total Tonnage Damaged	Aviators Rescued	Insignia Authorized
1	2 Tankers 1 Destroyer	16,000	1 Battleship	35,000	---	Yes
2	4 Freighters	35,000	---	--	---	Yes
3	1 Freighter	6,100	1 Freighter	2,300	---	Yes
4	1 Freighter-Transport 1 Freighter 1 Destroyer-Escort	11,600	1 Sampan (Gun attack)	100	---	Yes
5	1 Freighter (Gun attack) 1 Freighter 1 Destroyer-Escort 1 Lugger (Gun attack)	3,675	---	--	7 B-29 2 P-51 1 F6R	Yes
<u>Total</u>	15	72,375	3	37,400	10	5

Total Sunk and Damaged: 109,775 tons

## HISTORY OF SHIPS NAMED TREPANG

USS TREPANG (SSN674) is the second ship of the Fleet to bear the Malayan name for a sea creature commonly known in English as a "sea cucumber." She is named in commemoration of the fleet submarine TREPANG (SS412) who received the Navy Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action duty her first war patrol.

The keel for the SS-412 was laid at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California on 25 June 1943. At the launching on 23 March 1944 Mrs. R. M. Davenport, wife of the first commanding officer, served as sponsor. The submarine was christened "TREPANG." The TREPANG is a fish of the Actinopyga family, which are caught in northern Australia and the East Indies; boiled, dried, smoked, and then shipped to China for making soup.

The submarine was accepted by the Navy and turned over to her first skipper, Commander Davenport at the commissioning ceremony on 22 May 1944. She had a length overall of 311 feet, 10 inches; extreme beam of 27 feet, 4 inches; standard displacement of 1,526 tons; mean draft of 15 feet, 2 inches; submerged displacement of 2,424 tons; a designed depth of 400 feet, and a designed complement of 6 officers and 60 men. She was designed for surfaced speed of 20.25 knots and a submerged speed of 8.75 knots. She was armed with ten 21 inch torpedo tubes; one 5-inch .25 caliber gun; one 40-mm, one 20-mm and two .50 caliber machine guns.

Shakedown and training cruise were conducted out of San Diego, California, and the TREPANG departed for the Pacific theater on 15 August 1944. On 13 September she steamed out on her first patrol. This was to be conducted in the area just south of Honshu, the main Japanese home island. On 1 October she contacted a fast enemy task force that was making a night sortie from Tokyo Bay. The enemy's speed, considerably greater than the TREPANG's, made it necessary to attack on the surface, with very little time to maneuver for an advantageous position. She was able to launch her torpedoes, sink the freighter TAKUNAN MARU, and escape on the surface. On 11 October she sank the TRANSPORT No. 105 for another 1,000 tons. In the same action she severely damaged a battleship and a destroyer. On 23 October she returned to Majuro for refitting by the USS BUSHNELL.

On 16 November the TREPANG steamed out for her second run, which was to be conducted between northern Luzon and Formosa. She never got past Luzon. It was dark, rough and windy on that 6th of December. The TREPANG had surfaced after her day's submerged, inshore patrol, and had just set course for more open waters, when she detected a group of ships approaching from the north. Upon investigation, they proved to be a slow speed convoy of seven large ships and three escorts, heading for the Philippines. The TREPANG radioed the news to the RAZORBACK and SEGUNDO, then went in for a submerged attack. The first attack resulted in the sinking of cargomen BANSHU MARU No. 31 and JINYO MARU, and the damaging of a third. Just as the submarine was about to administer the coup-de-grace to the latter, the FUKUYO MARU obligingly blew up and sank. The TREPANG

singled out a fourth member of the now scattered convoy to receive her remaining torpedoes, and sank it in a mass of flames. Now out of torpedoes, the TREPANG arrived in Pearl Harbor in time for Christmas. Here Commander Davenport was relieved of command by Commander A. R. FAUST, USN.

On her third patrol the TREPANG again was off Honshu. In company with the submarines PIPER, POMFRET, BOWFIN and STERLET, she made an anti-picket boat sweep past Nanpo Shoto, the eastern island chain south of Tokyo. No worthwhile targets were encountered, and she was assigned to lifeguard station for the carrier strikes on Tokyo. She deviated from this duty long enough to sink a small freighter on 24 February 1945, and blow the bow off another small coastal freighter. The latter was stopped, but while the TREPANG was maneuvering to finish it off, several small anti-submarine vessels appeared from behind the nearby headland and converged on the raider. The TREPANG escaped damage, but she was pinned down for seven hours by the depth charging. She returned to Guam for her third refit in early March 1945.

For her fourth patrol, the TREPANG was ordered to the Yellow Sea. In separate attacks, during the first week in the area, she fired all her torpedoes and sank a medium-sized landing craft on 28 April; a large, heavily laden freighter-transport on the 30th; and one large destroyer-escort, on 4 May. She returned to Guam for her fourth refit.

The TREPANG's fifth and last patrol was divided into two parts. The first half was spent lifeguarding for Iwo-based Mustangs and Superfortresses from Guam, Saipan and Tinian. The second half was devoted to an offensive patrol off northeastern Honshu and eastern Hokkaido.

At the conclusion of the first phase of her patrol, the TREPANG was ordered to rendezvous with the inbound DEVILFISH to transfer flyers rescued by her. Enroute she encountered a 492 ton minesweeper. The target carried two 37 millimeter machine guns, so the submarine surfaced and sank it with deck guns.

The eastern coast of Honshu from Tsugaru Straits to Sendai Bay was one of the lifelines of Japanese industry. This is the spot the TREPANG chose for her submerged patrol. Submerging at dawn, she crept to within a mile and a half of the beach, and settled down for a day of quiet waiting and watching.

All morning the area teemed with patrol vessels dashing back and forth, pinging furiously in the hope of detecting any submarine that might be lurking in the area. None ever detected her. The submarine withheld her fire in the hope that these small craft might be forerunners of a more valuable target. Suddenly around noon, as if on a signal, all the patrol boats either returned to port or headed down the coast and soon passed out of sight, leaving the ocean to the TREPANG and a tiny sea going tug who all morning had been working his smoky way southward with two heavy ore barges in tow. About half an hour later, she sighted a convoy of three unescorted coastal freighters. The TREPANG scored two clean hits

to sink the lead freighter, the KOUN MARU No. 2. The second zigged, and escaped from three torpedoes unscratched. The TREPANG's crew pointed her nose seaward. Suddenly two jarring explosions shattered the stillness. Instinctively, she groped for the bottom to escape her unseen assailant, meanwhile bracing for further blows. None came. The attack was delivered by a lone plane that spotted the TREPANG's shadow beneath the surface. Little damage had been done.

The war was moving fast by now, and before long the TREPANG was again on lifeguard duty. This time it was for the large-scale strikes on northern Honshu and Hokkaido. She picked up one carrier pilot during this period. The TREPANG returned to Pearl Harbor just in time to watch the tumbling succession of events in August. First the atomic bomb, then Russia declaration of war, Japan's tentative acceptance of terms, rumors, denials, more rumors, and finally, Peace!

Upon completion of refit on 27 August 1945 the TREPANG left Pearl Harbor and turned eastward, toward the United States and home. She arrived in San Diego on 3 September 1945, one year and nineteen days from the time she passed under the Golden Gate Bridge bound for the war zone. She had sunk 11 ships totalling 23,850 tons during that period.

She served as a training ship there for the Fleet Sonar School until 4 March 1946. The fleet submarine then proceeded to San Francisco to prepare for inactivation overhaul. She arrived 6 March 1946, and was decommissioned 27 June 1946.

TREPANG continued in reserve status at Mare Island for the remainder of her career in the Navy. On 6 November 1962 she was reclassified from a fleet submarine (SS412) to an auxiliary submarine (AGSS412). She remained inactive until her name was struck from the Navy List on 30 June 1967. Her stripped hulk was designated for use in target training practice off the coast of California.

All five war patrols were designated successful for the award of the Submarine Combat Insignia to her embarked officers and men. She also received five battle stars for the World War II operations.

The second TREPANG (SSN674) is a STURGEON Class nuclear attack submarine with a design length of 292 feet and a beam of 31 feet 8 inches. She has a surface displacement of 3800 tons and a submerged displacement of 4600 tons. Her complement consists of 12 officers and 95 enlisted men. TREPANG's armament consists of 4 midships torpedo tubes.

TREPANG (SSN674) was built by General Dynamics Corporation, Electric Boat Division, Groton, Connecticut. The keel was laid 28 October 1967.

On 27 September 1969, TREPANG (SSN674) was launched under the sponsorship of Mrs Melvin R. Laird, the wife of the Secretary of Defense. Secretary Laird was the principal speaker at the launching ceremony.

During the months of May, June and July 1969, TREPANG put to sea on builder's trials, acceptance trials and various engineering trials. Her performance during these trials was superior and she was preliminarily accepted by the Navy.

On August 14, 1970, under a hot Connecticut sun, the USS TREPANG (SSN674) joined the Atlantic Fleet as a unit of Submarine Development Group TWO, under the command of CDR Dean R. Sackett, USN. On hand as principal speaker at her commissioning was the Honorable Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense. Accepting TREPANG for the Navy was RADM F. J. Foley, USN, Commandant of the THIRD Naval District. Honored guests at the ceremony were Mrs Melvin R. Laird, the ship's sponsor, Deputy Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, the Honorable Daniel Z. Henkin, and Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Bernard J. Cleary.

TREPANG's shakedown period commenced in the fall of 1970, with the conduct of various tests and trials in the Caribbean area.