

LAUNCHING OF THE  
NUCLEAR  
ATTACK SUBMARINE

U.S.S.

# *Spadefish*

SSN 668

MAY 15, 1968

NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING AND DRY DOCK COMPANY  
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA





*Sponsor*  
MRS. CHARLES T. BOOTH

*Matron of Honor*  
MRS. WILLIAM E. RAMSEY





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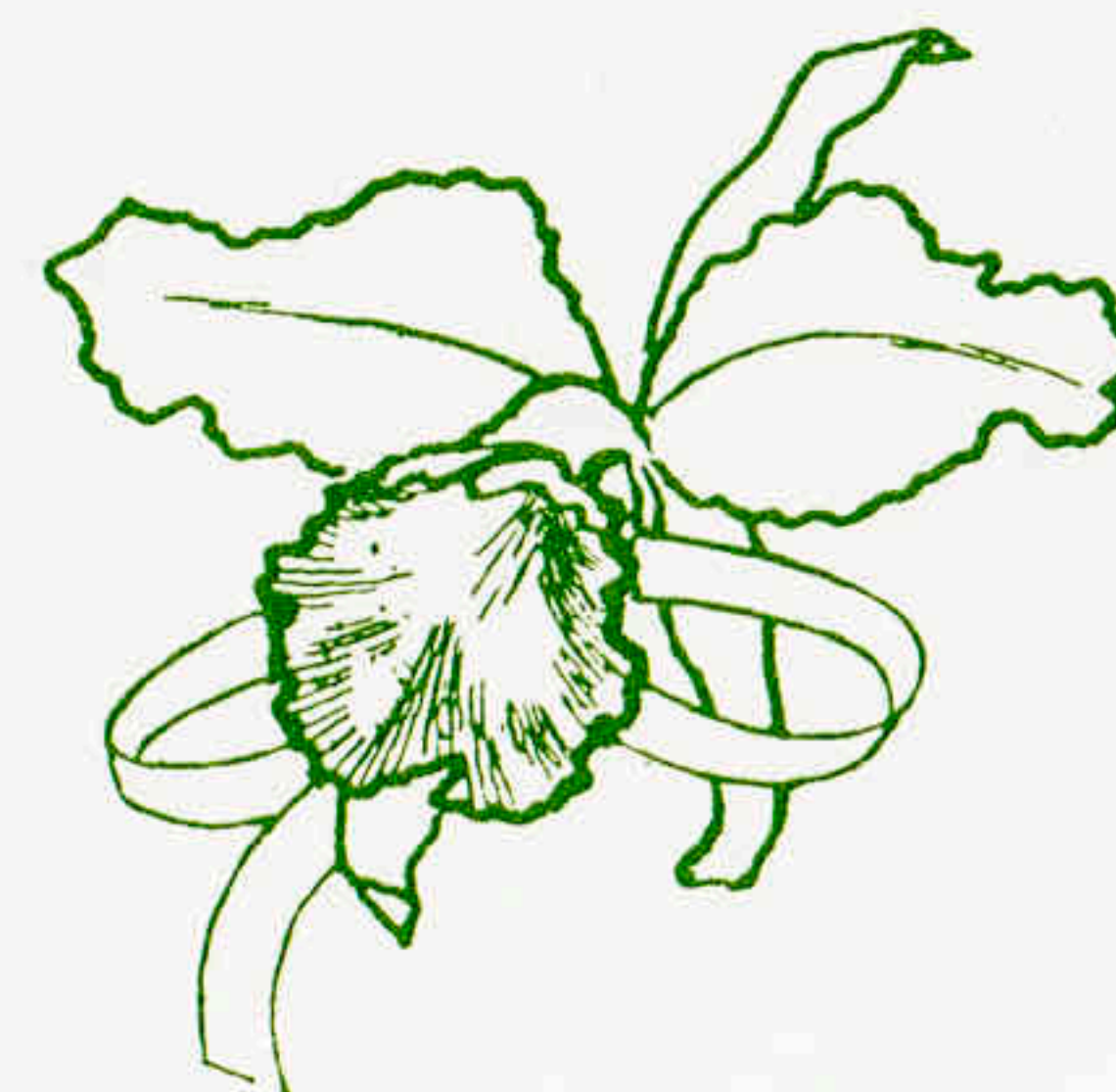
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# *Program*

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Commander, Naval Air Force,  
United States Atlantic Fleet Band

WELCOME AND  
INTRODUCTION OF THE SPEAKER

Mr. Donald A. Holden, President and  
Chairman of the Board of the Newport  
News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock  
Company

ADDRESS

The Honorable Paul C. Warnke,  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for International Security Affairs

INVOCATION

The Reverend Edward Felix Kloman,  
Rector of St. Alban's Episcopal  
Church, Washington, D. C.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SPONSOR  
AND THE MATRON OF HONOR

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# HISTORY OF THE FIRST

The ship being christened at Newport News today has been named to commemorate the fleet submarine SPADEFISH (SS-411) which was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action during World War II.

The first SPADEFISH was built in Vallejo, California. Her keel was laid May 27, 1943. The vessel was launched in January the following year and commissioned in March.

The SPADEFISH had a length of over 311 feet and a beam of more than 27 feet. Her standard displacement was 1,526 tons; submerged displacement was 2,424 tons. The ship had a surfaced speed of more than 20 knots, submerged speed of almost nine knots, and a complement of six officers and 60 men. She was armed with ten 21-inch torpedo tubes and four guns, including two .50 caliber machine guns.

In June 1944 the SPADEFISH arrived in Pearl Harbor and joined a wolfpack known as "Donk's Devils," which included the PICUDA and REDFISH. One of the hardest-hitting submarine patrols of World War II got off to a resounding start in August, when the SPADEFISH sank a 9,589-ton passenger-cargo ship off Luzon. The submarine was to deal the pack's hardest blow at the enemy on her first patrol. Trailing three large tankers along the Luzon coast, she moved in to hurl two deadly salvos of torpedoes and sank one 10,023-ton vessel and damaged a second. The SPADEFISH pursued the damaged ship but was foiled by an alert escort destroyer which guarded the vessel from attack and managed to avoid the torpedoes fired by the determined submarine.

After replenishing her torpedo supply in Saipan in September, the SPADEFISH began patrolling off the coast of Formosa. She had been in the area two days when she made a daring night surface attack on an eight-ship convoy. Shoveled under the sea were four cargo ships, totaling 11,930 tons. Another cargo ship was damaged in the attacks during which the SPADEFISH expended 20 torpedoes. The following morning her last four torpedoes were fired at an escort guarding the crippled ship, but the torpedoes ran under the target and the SPADEFISH was repaid with a rain of depth charges.

The valiant submarine was out of torpedoes, but she trailed the remaining ships in the Japanese convoy for four days before the PICUDA and REDFISH arrived to take over the ambush. Thus relieved, the SPADEFISH returned to Pearl Harbor. Her sister submarines returned on October 3, terminating a patrol which accounted for the sinking of some 64,000 tons of enemy shipping. This established a new record score for shipping sunk by American submarine wolfpacks - the lion's share attributed to the aggressive SPADEFISH. She had downed six ships for a total of 31,542 tons during a single war patrol. This impressive score won for the SPADEFISH and her men a secure position in the galaxy of United States submarine stars.

The brave vessel did not, however, rest on her laurels. She became the tactical leader of a coordinated attack group labeled "Underwood's Urchins" after Captain Gordon W. Underwood, skipper of the SPADEFISH. Also in the pack were the SUNFISH and PETO. Setting out in late October



# USS SPADEFISH (SS-411)

1944, the PETO and SPADEFISH had each downed a cargo ship by November 14.

The afternoon of November 17 found "Underwood's Urchins" patrolling the southern end of the Yellow Sea. That evening the SPADEFISH fastened her periscope on a convoy sluggishly headed straight towards her. As sunset was little more than an hour away, she let the convoy rumble over her. When darkness came she surfaced for a night "end-round" and streaked in for a kill. Six torpedoes tore through the water and ripped into the Japanese escort aircraft carrier JINYO. A rapid turn to the left brought a four-torpedo salvo headed towards a tanker. The JINYO became a blazing inferno of explosions. Planes bounced off her flight deck into the sea as her bow thrust upward before she finally sank. The Japanese Navy was left with but one escort carrier in commission - the KAIYO, the last of five escort carriers built and operated by Japan during the war. Fast carrier aircraft sent her to the bottom in July 1945, thus giving the SPADEFISH the distinction of sinking the last Japanese escort carrier to go down to submarine torpedoes.

After sending some 55,000 tons of enemy shipping to the bottom of the Yellow Sea, the wolfpack headed for home. The splendid seamanship and courage of her officers and men during her first two war patrols was recognized by the award of the Presidential Unit Citation to the SPADEFISH. In bold defiance of strong air and surface opposition, she took a tremendous toll of enemy shipping in perilous waters to complete an illustrious record of combat second to none in the "Silent Service."

It was during her next patrol that, following an attack in which the SPADEFISH sank two enemy ships, three Japanese escorts pounced on the submarine and one dragged a chain along her entire length. It was as though the escort were attempting to hook a grapnel onto the vessel, then lower depth charges down the chain, but the SPADEFISH made her escape.

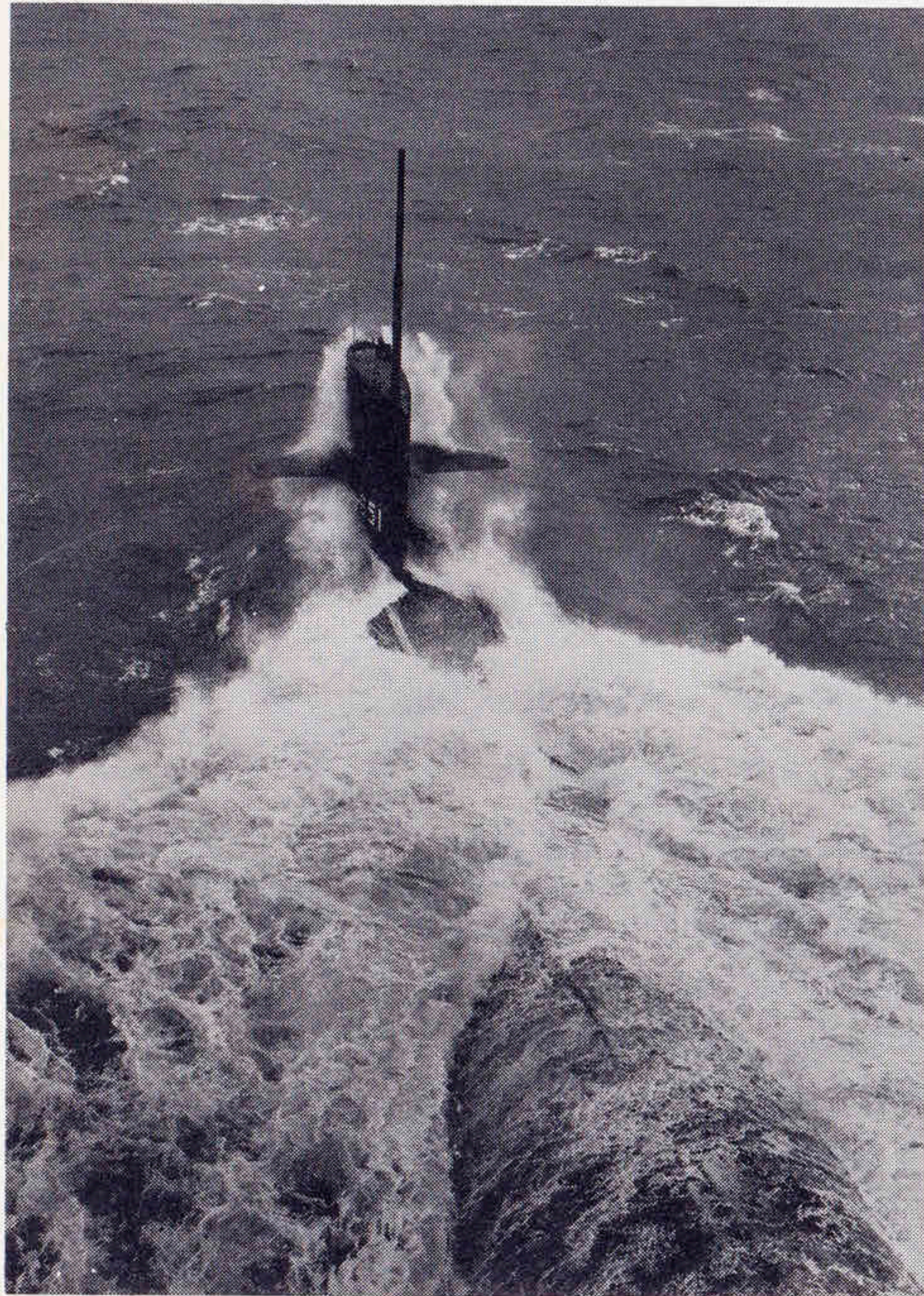
The last war patrol of the SPADEFISH, a very special one, began May 27, 1945, after intense study and planning. On June 4 with eight other submarines she crept through Tsushima Strait and entered the Sea of Japan. After all the vessels had reached their assigned stations, there was a thunder of torpedo fire that astounded the enemy. Radio Tokyo announced that the submarines had been "smuggled in," but the "smugglers" were the crack skippers who staked their lives on a scientific gadget, a mine-detecting device, which worked.

When the submarines returned to Pearl Harbor on July 4, they were minus one of their number, the BONEFISH, but they had sunk 27 Japanese merchant ships and a submarine in a very short time. For good measure they had shot up a number of small craft. Most important, they had circumvented the dangerous minefields and entered the Sea of Japan to prove submarines could completely isolate Japan by severing the last of her overseas supply lines.

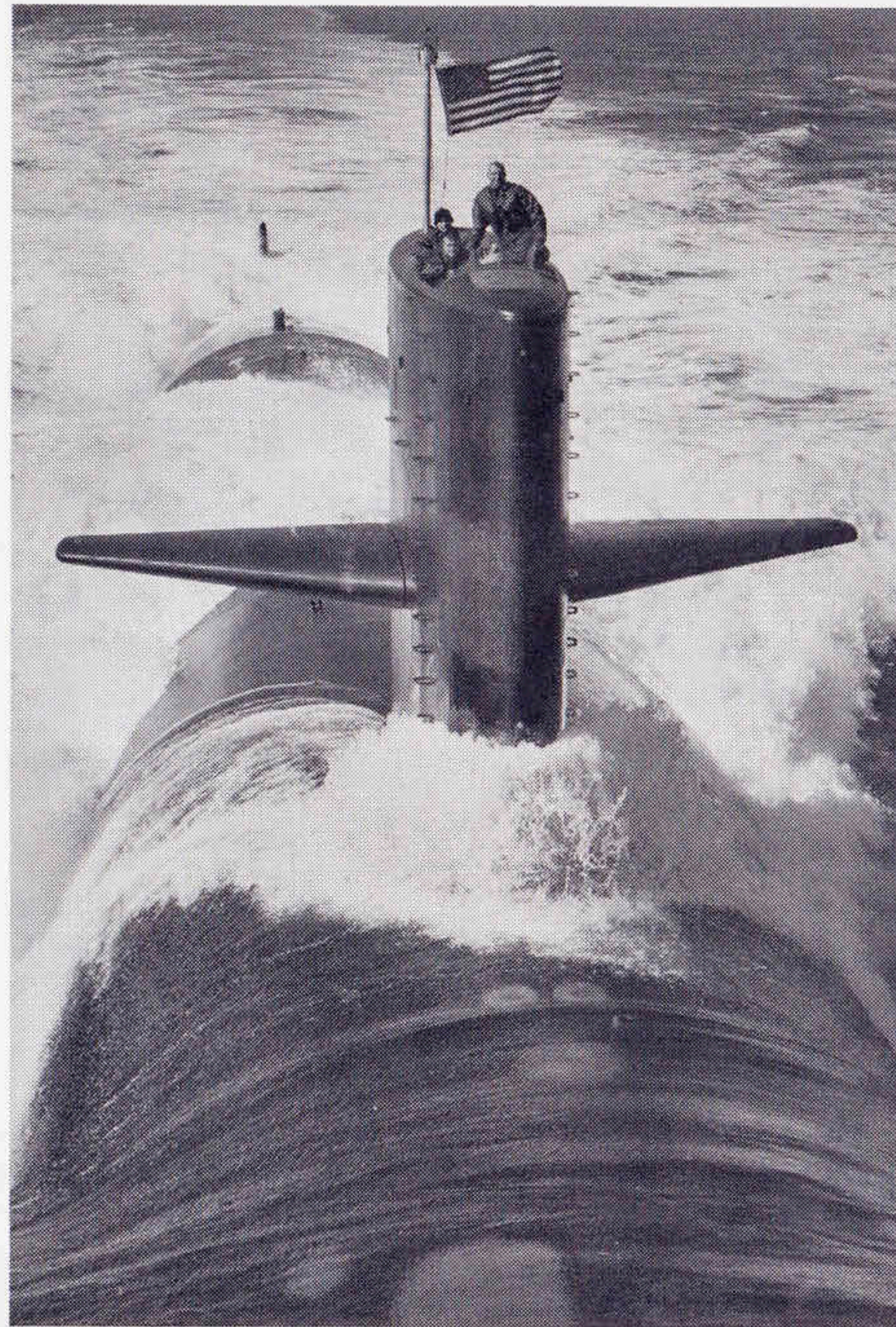
When hostilities ended, the SPADEFISH sailed for home, and was decommissioned on May 3, 1946. Her name was cancelled August 4, 1966 to permit assignment to the newest member of the Navy's underseas fleet.



# NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE CONSTRUCTION AT



USS QUEENFISH



USS RAY



USS LAPON



# NEWPORT NEWS

## Submarine Construction At Newport News

### POLARIS SUBMARINES

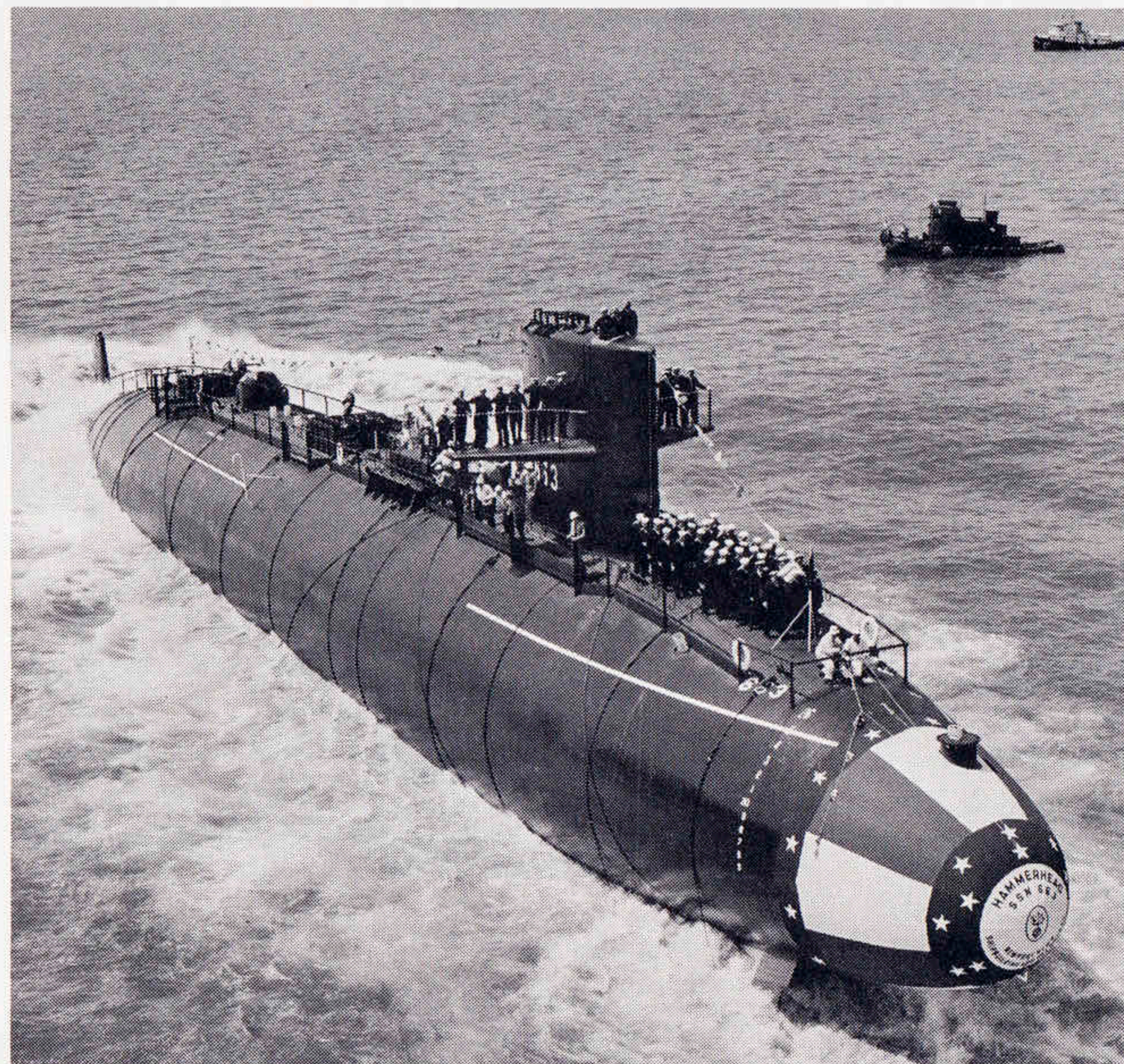
USS ROBERT E. LEE, SSBN601 (1960)  
USS SAM HOUSTON, SSBN609 (1962)  
USS JOHN MARSHALL, SSBN611 (1962)  
USS THOMAS JEFFERSON, SSBN618 (1963)  
USS JAMES MONROE, SSBN622 (1963)  
USS HENRY CLAY, SSBN625 (1964)  
USS JAMES MADISON, SSBN627 (1964)  
USS JOHN C. CALHOUN, SSBN630 (1964)  
USS VON STEUBEN, SSBN632 (1964)  
USS SAM RAYBURN, SSBN635 (1964)  
USS SIMON BOLIVAR, SSBN641 (1965)  
USS LEWIS & CLARK, SSBN644 (1965)  
USS GEORGE C. MARSHALL, SSBN654 (1966)  
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER, SSBN656 (1966)

### ATTACK SUBMARINES

USS SHARK, SSN591 (1961)  
USS QUEENFISH, SSN651 (1966)  
USS RAY, SSN653 (1967)  
USS LAPON, SSN661 (1967)

### UNDER CONTRACT

USS HAMMERHEAD, SSN663  
USS SEA DEVIL, SSN664  
USS SPADEFISH, SSN668  
USS FINBACK, SSN670



USS HAMMERHEAD



## THE USS SPADEFISH – SSN668

The SPADEFISH is one of 28 vessels authorized in the STURGEON class of nuclear attack submarines. These ships are 292 feet long, have a surfaced displacement of 3,800 tons and a submerged displacement of 4,600 tons. Both the STURGEON and PERMIT classes are designed to carry the Subroc missile-torpedo, the latest anti-submarine warfare weapons system.

The keel for the SPADEFISH was laid on December 21, 1966. The vessel is scheduled for delivery next summer. Newport News has three other STURGEON class vessels under contract. Nuclear attack submarines delivered by the company thus far are the SHARK, one of the SKIPJACK class, in 1961, and, since 1966, the STURGEON class vessels QUEENFISH, RAY and LAPON.

The SPADEFISH has an advanced hydrodynamic hull propelled by nuclear power. The extensive use of sound-isolating materials and great care in noise reduction of all moving parts give the SPADEFISH an inherent silent quality and maximum performance of her advanced sonar system. She combines the endurance and environmental independence of nuclear power with deep submergence and high speed. These capabilities, coupled with the latest in submarine weapons systems including nuclear-tipped and rocket-propelled torpedoes, make the SPADEFISH one of the Navy's most effective anti-submarine weapons.

The ship's complement is 12 officers and 95 men.

Super quiet, deep-diving and swift, the SPADEFISH is not only lethal to hostile surface shipping, but especially suited as a "killer submarine" vitally concerned with denying the effectiveness of a hostile underseas fleet.



LCDR GEORGE M. HENSON, USN  
Prospective Commanding Officer  
USS SPADEFISH (SSN668)



# Autographs





