***Blackfin* (SS-322)** was laid down on 10 June 1943 at Groton, Conn., by the Electric Boat Co.; launched on 12 March 1944; sponsored by Mrs. Charles A. Lockwood; and commissioned on 4 July 1944, Lt. Comdr. George H. Laird, Jr., in command.

After shakedown training in waters off New London, Conn., *Blackfin* got underway for the Pacific on 14 August. She transited the Panama Canal on 29 August, joined the Pacific Fleet, and headed for Hawaii. She arrived at Pearl Harbor on 11 September and spent the rest of the month engaged in voyage repairs and training in the local operating area. On 30 September, she set sail on her first war patrol. The warship topped off her fuel tanks at Saipan on 10 October and then continued on her way to the northern approaches to Palawan Passage in the Philippines.

Blackfin operated in Philippine waters during the invasion of those islands by Allied forces. She made her first contact with a Japanese ship on the 26th. All hands went to battle stations, and the submarine began an approach. However, one of the enemy ships began racing toward the submarine and forced her to dive to evade her.

On the morning of 1 November, *Blackfin*'s lookouts spotted smoke on the horizon. Shortly thereafter, a merchant ship with four escorts appeared on the horizon. The submarine fired six torpedoes at the freighter and sent the 2,745-ton No.12 *Unkai Maru* to the bottom. On 3 November, the submarine sighted a lighted ship but soon positively identified her as a hospital ship.

Four days later, *Blackfin* sighted a large tanker with three escorts, moved to the offensive again, and torpedoed the tanker. While observers on the submarine saw two torpedoes hit the tanker, the vessel was only damaged. The submarine continued her patrol uneventfully until she was assigned a special mission on 18 November. *Blackfin* rendezvoused with an Army commando team off Mindoro's northern coast on the 24th. The troops had captured a small Japanese patrol boat which carried many current Japanese ciphers and codebooks. The submarine picked up three bags of the classified material and proceeded south toward Morotai Island. Off Point Anna, she transferred the bags to an Australian ship, HMAS *Kiama*. The submarine then headed for Australia. She paused briefly at Darwin before reaching Fremantle on 4 December.

Upon completion of a refit by *Euryale* (AS-22), *Blackfin* carried out training before her second patrol. On 2 January 1945, *Blackfin* got underway for a patrol in the South China Sea. Upon reaching her station off the western coast of the Malayan peninsula, the

submarine joined a coordinated attack group covering the area. In the early morning of 24 January, she contacted a convoy consisting of a large tanker and four escorts, some of them destroyers.

Blackfin soon gained position for an attack on the tanker. However, shortly after the submarine fired torpedoes from her bow tubes at this target, one of the enemy destroyers came dangerously close to *Blackfin*. The submarine then diverted her attack to the destroyer, and one of her torpedoes hit the Japanese escort just abaft the bridge. The target, later identified as *Shigure*, was enveloped in a large cloud of white smoke and sank.

Blackfin then swung around to bring her stern tubes to bear on the tanker and scored one hit before another escort opened fire on the submarine. *Blackfin* broke off her attack on the tanker and cleared the area. Contact with the convoy was reestablished. Later that night, while *Blackfin* prepared to renew the attack, she saw a new Japanese ship and an escort through her high periscope. *Blackfin* began closing in on the second group when a Japanese plane arrived on the scene and forced her to dive.

In the afternoon of 25 January, *Blackfin* made contact with *Hardhead* (SS-365). Since both Japanese convoys were in shallow waters nearing Singapore, the submarines' skippers agreed to abandon the chase. Later that night, *Blackfin* came across a Japanese hunter/killer group searching for American submarines. The enemy ships began chasing *Blackfin*, but she managed to escape unharmed.

A few days later, the submarine received orders to take station off Saigon for lifeguard duty. No activity was seen in the area, so *Blackfin* moved to patrol the southern approaches to Palawan Passage and the Balabac Strait. The submarine then moved farther west to join a scouting line in an attempt to contact a large Japanese naval force heading north from Singapore to Japan. On the afternoon of the 12th, *Blackfin* spotted a Japanese force consisting of two battleships, a heavy cruiser, and at least three destroyers. She headed north into heavy seas in order to get into position for an attack. As the submarine closed the enemy task force, one of the destroyers broke away from the formation and headed toward her, forcing Blackfln to open range while trying to maintain contact. Since travelling on the surface gave them the speed advantage, the Japanese gradually opened range on *Blackfin* and disappeared. She then received orders to Subic Bay, in Philippines, where she terminated her patrol on 15 February. She was one of the first three American submarines to arrive at the newly established base. When she arrived, Allied ground forces were still fighting for the town of Olongapo, the main seaport of Subic Bay. The base lacked its full complement and the resulting manpower shortage meant that *Blackfin*'s crew carried out its own refit with some help from *Griffin* (AS-13).

On 6 March, *Blackfin* set out on her third patrol. She drew a patrol area in the South China Sea near Camranh Bay as part of a large coordinated attack group. Late in March, the group received a report of a heavily escorted Japanese convoy moving up the Indochinese coast. On the morning of 28 March, *Blackfin* spotted the masts of several ships sailing north of Camranh Bay. Since the convoy hugged the coastline, the

submarine had to enter shallow water to press home her attack. Just as she closed to within torpedo range of the largest ship of the convoy, one of the escorts began dropping depth charges. The first attack nearly sank *Blackfin* and put most of her equipment out of commission.

She stayed on the bottom for several hours in 150 feet of water in hope of shaking the Japanese escorts. The enemy ships finally gave up the hunt, and *Blackfin* cleared the area for the open sea to begin repairing her damage. After the damage had been more fully surveyed, orders arrived for *Blackfin* to return to Fremantle for repairs. On 9 April, she arrived tn Fremantle harbor and underwent a refit.

On 7 May, *Blackfin* began her fourth patrol which was scheduled to be made in the vicinity of Singapore but was cut short by engineering failures. After two days on station, the submarine was forced to return to Subic Bay for repairs. *Anthedon* (AS-24) repair crews attempted the necessary repairs but found the work to be beyond the tender's capacity. As a result, orders came sending *Blackfin* back to Pearl Harbor. She made a fuel stop at Saipan on the way and reached Hawaii in mid June.

After three weeks of repairs, *Blackfin* got underway on 17 July for the western Pacific. She spent the period from 21 to 29 July at Midway where she made voyage repairs and trained. The submarine then sailed for Saipan, arriving there on 7 August. Four days later, she embarked upon a patrol in the Yellow Sea. While in the eastern approaches of Nansei Shoto, *Blackfin* received the cease-fire order that signalled the end of World War II. However, she continued on to the Yellow Sea and began sinking floating mines. She downed 61 before receiving orders on 29 August set a course for Guam. After weathering a typhoon, *Blackfin* reached Guam on 5 September. The submarine received voyage repairs and fuel before heading, via Pearl Harbor, for San Diego, Calif.

Upon reaching San Diego, *Blackfin* was assigned to Submarine Squadron (SubRon) 1 and carried out local operations. On 2 January 1946, she got underway for the Marianas with other units of SubRon 1. She remained at Guam until 20 February, when she headed back to the west coast. After an overhaul at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, *Blackfin* stood out of San Francisco Bay on 28 June to participate in Operation “Iceberg.” She paused at Pearl Harbor to top off fuel and supplies and then left Hawaii in company with *Trumpetfish* (SS-425), bound for the Arctic Ocean. At Dutch Harbor, Alaska *Cusk* (SS-348) and *Diodon* (SS-349) joined the mission, and the group proceeded north through the Bering Strait to the polar ice pack. *Blackfin* crossed the Arctic Circle before leaving the Arctic Ocean on 30 July and heading for Guam.

The submarine reached Apra Harbor on 12 August and provided anttsubmarine warfare (ASW) services there and also made a brief trip to Truk. *Blackfin* returned to Pearl Harbor on 26 December and carried out independent ship’s exercises and multiship maneuvers in Hawaiian waters through 8 July 1947, when she shaped a course for San Diego. On 23 July, the submarine entered San Diego and reported to SubRon 3 for temporary duty. She provided ASW services in the San Diego operating area until 6 September, when she got underway to return to her squadron at Pearl Harbor. In October,

soon after her return to Hawaii, the warship entered the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for overhaul.

Blackfin resumed local operations in February 1948. On 21 May, she left Hawaii on a simulated war patrol and stopped at Adak and Kodiak, Alaska, before completing the patrol at Mare Island on 1 July. The submarine was decommissioned there on 19 November 1948.

After North Korean communist troops invaded South Korea in June of 1950, reactivation preparations for *Blackfin* were begun at Mare Island on 1 November 1950. She underwent a conversion to a Guppy 1A class submarine. When the process was completed, *Blackfin* was recommissioned on 15 May 1951. After four weeks of trials, she proceeded to San Diego to rejoin SubRon 3 and operated from that port through 14 December, when she sailed for the Far East.

Following a stop at Pearl Harbor, *Blackfin* reached Yokosuka, Japan, on 4 January 1952 and provided services to surface and aviation command, as well as carrying out training exercises. On 8 February, the submarine got underway for Okinawa and held hunter-killer exercises en route. She departed Okinawa on the 24th and returned to Yokosuka on 1 March. The submarine commenced a patrol from this base on 18 March. After a 50 day stint underway, *Blackfin* arrived back at Yokosuka on 15 May.

The submarine got underway on 24 May to return to her home port. She paused briefly at Pearl Harbor before reaching San Diego on 14 June. The vessel resumed her duties with SubRon 3. After extended local operations, *Blackfin* sailed for the San Francisco Naval Shipyard in late February 1953 for overhaul. The submarine held sea trials in June and left the west coast on 2 July en route to Pearl Harbor.

After a period of replenishment, *Blackfin* departed Pearl Harbor on the 16th on a special patrol. She completed that cruise on 11 September and, two days later, got underway for San Diego. She reached her home port on the 21st and resumed local operations.

On 8 March 1954, *Blackfin*'s home port was changed to Pearl Harbor. She arrived in Hawaiian waters on the 23d and began local operations and training exercises. The submarine entered the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard on 1 June for an overhaul. Her yard period ended on 5 October, and she resumed local operations.

Blackfin left Hawaii, on 4 January 1955 to begin another tour in Far Eastern waters. On the 18th, the submarine arrived in Yokosuka and was assigned to the 7th Fleet. She provided services to ASW forces, visited Okinawa twice, took part in exercises with Nationalist Chinese naval forces, and spent four days in Hong Kong. The submarine returned to Pearl Harbor on 28 June and took up a routine of local operations and upkeep.

During the first 10 months of 1956, *Blackfin* participated in type training exercises and provided services to surface and air ASW forces operating in the Hawaiian Islands. On 12 October, the submarine entered the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for an overhaul

which was completed on 1 March 1957. The warship conducted refresher training in preparation for deployment before departing Pearl Harbor on 6 May, for a six-month western Pacific (WestPac) cruise.

During this time, she took part in exercises with other American and Nationalist Chinese naval units, carried out type training, and conducted two patrols. The submarine made port calls at Yokosuka, Japan; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; and Hong Kong. On 1 July, she was assigned to Submarine Division (SubDiv) 72, a subordinate part of SubRon 7. *Blackfin* returned to Hawaiian waters on 1 November and conducted local operations and upkeep through the holidays.

Local operations occupied *Blackfin* into the autumn of 1958. On 31 October of that year, the submarine left Pearl Harbor and proceeded to WestPac. She took part in exercises with naval forces from the Philippines, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea. Among the ports she visited were Yokosuka, Kobe, Sasebo, Iwakuni, and Beppu, Japan; Subic Bay, Philippines; Chinhae, Korea; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; and Guam, in the Marianas.

Blackfin departed Guam in April 1959 and set a course for Australia to join in ceremonies commemorating the Battle of the Coral Sea. She touched at the ports of Brisbane and Newcastle Australia. The submarine left the latter port on 4 May and arrived back in Pearl Harbor on the 15th. From June through October, *Blackfin* participated in local operations and made recreation trips to Kona, Hawaii, and Wailuku, Maui. On 9 November, the submarine commenced an overhaul at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

Ready to resume operations on 16 May 1960, she began refresher training and preparations for deployment. On 19 August, she embarked upon her fifth WestPac tour of duty. During the cruise, she participated in training with the 7th Fleet as well as ships from the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Korean Navy. She visited ports in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa, and the Philippines. After a liberty call at Hong Kong, *Blackfin* returned to Pearl Harbor in February 1961.

Following a short leave and upkeep period, the submarine resumed local operations. In September, she left Hawaii for a cold-weather training cruise to Alaska. While in Alaskan waters, she visited Adak and Kodiak in the Aleutian Islands before returning to Pearl Harbor late in October. She spent the next four months operating locally out of Pearl Harbor.

In early April 1962, the warship left Pearl Harhor en route to the Pacific Northwest. During her deployment, she provided services to various air squadrons, reserve submarine divisions, and conducted guest cruises. Dlackfin visited Portland, Oreg.; Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia; and Port Angeles and Seattle, Wash. At the latter city, the submarine was present at the opening of the World's Fair on 21 April. The submarine returned to Pearl Harbor late in June and resumed local operations until early November when she began an overhaul at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

On 15 March 1963, *Blackfin* began refresher training in Hawaiian waters. The submarine left Pearl Harbor on 17 April and shaped a course for the west coast. She stopped first at Newport, Oreg., on the 27th. Three days later, she got underway for Dabob Bay, Wash., to undergo a fire control alignment inspection. Upon completing the tests, the submarine made calls at Seattle, Wash.; Vancouver, British Columbia; and San Francisco and San Diego, Calif. *Blackfin* headed back to Hawaii in mid June. During the next five months, the warship provided services to air and surface units at Pearl Harbor and prepared for overseas deployment. On 27 November, she began a transit to Yokosuka. Upon her arrival in early December, the submarine operated with other 7th Fleet units and spent the Christmas holidays in port at Sasebo.

Backfin remained in Japanese waters through March 1964 providing services to American and Japanese naval forces and participating in fleet and special operations. She then proceeded to Naha, Okinawa, and Subic Bay. In late April, the submarine sailed to Brisbane and Makay, Australia, for the Coral Sea celebration. *Blackfin* returned to Hawaii in mid May, soon resumed local operations, and remained in the Pearl Harbor area through the end of the year.

She spent most the first quarter of 1965 in port only putting to sea very occasionally for a brief local mission. In March, the submarine was again deployed to the Orient. Among her ports of call were Yokosuka and Sasebo, Japan; Subic Bay, Philippines; Hong Kong; and Bangkok, Thailand. After five months with the 7th Fleet, *Blackfin* returned to Pearl Harbor early in September and spent the next few weeks in leave and upkeep. From mid October through early December, she provided local services and participated in SUBASWEX 4-65.

In early 1966, *Blackfin* entered the Pearl Harbor Naomi Shipyard. During this period, a new fiberglass conning tower fairwater was added along with a new forward superstructure. The submarine left the shipyard in August and began a series of exercises, torpedo firings, and refresher training. On 16 November, she left Pearl Harbor, bound for Yokosuka. Arriving there on the 30th, *Blackfin* underwent voyage repairs before resuming operations with the 7th Fleet. She spent the Christmas holidays in port at Okinawa and the end of the year found the submarine in the South China Sea heading for Subic Bay.

During the first three months of 1967, *Blackfin* shuttled from Subic Bay to Tonkin Gulf. From the latter port, the submarine operated off the coast of Vietnam with the 7th Fleet. The vessel headed south toward Australia on 15 April to take part in the Coral Sea celebration once more. She paused at Mindanao's Zamboanga Peninsula for a two day goodwill visit before pushing on to Fremantle, Australia, where she stopped from 30 April to 5 May and visited Hobart, Tasmania, from 11 to 15 May. She made a stop at Pago Pago, American Samoa, before reentering Pearl Harbor on 6 June. After a four-week leave and upkeep period, the warship resumed local operations for the remainder of 1967.

Blackfin drydocked briefly in January 1968 and then took up local operations once again until late March. On the 28th, she left Pearl Harbor to return to the Far East. She reached Yokosuka on 11 April but departed for specia1 operations on the 20th. On 12 June, the warship arrived back at Yokosuka and entered drydock for repairs. On the 26th, she got underway for visits to Buckner Bay, Okinawa, and Hong Kong. The submarine returned to Yokosuka on 20 July but left again on the 26th for another series of special operations. Her mission ended at Yokosuka on 19 September with a two-week leave and upkeep period. *Blackfin* got underway for home early in October and reached Pearl Harbor on the 16th. During November and December, she carried out local operations and training exercises.

On 23 January 1969, the submarine set a course for the west coast. *Blackfin* arrived at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard on 5 February to begin overhaul. The overhaul and ensuing sea trials were completed on 10 July, and the submarine left the San Francisco Bay area, bound for her new home port, San Diego. She again put to sea on 21 July to visit Mazatlan, Mexico. Upon her return to San Diego, the submarine conducted refresher training. Weapons systems accuracy trials in Dabob Bay, Wash., between 14 and 24 August brought liberty calls at Seattle, Wash., and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Blackfin departed Canadian waters on 31 August to return to San Diego where she spent the month of September in upkeep and in-port training. On 6 October, the submarine moved to the San Francisco Bay area to provide training to submarine reserve units. She returned to San Diego on 12 October and devoted the next four and a half months to an extensive engine overhaul. In mid March 1970, *Blackfin* held two weeks of type training and then provided services to air units at San Diego.

The submarine embarked upon a WestPac deployment on 6 August. She stopped at Pearl Harbor for a week of training and briefings before resuming the westward voyage. She reached Yokosuka on 4 September, made voyage repairs. And then sailed to Kobe to visit the World's Fair at Osaka. *Blackfin* was back in Yokosuka on 19 September but resumed operations on 22 October to provide services at sea to ships of the Japanese Maritime Self- Defense Force and destroyers of the 7th Fleet. She stopped at Subic Bay on 16 November for voyage repairs, then returned to sea. From 26 November through 3 December, the submarine provided services to ships of the Nationalist Chinese Navy.

On 5 December, *Blackfin* returned to Subic Bay for five days of upkeep. She got underway on the 10th for a major fleet antisubmarine warfare exercise. Upon its completion, *Blackfin* visited Hong Kong for a leave period over the Christmas holidays. The year ended with the submarine providing services to ASW units of the 7th Fleet off Vietnam.

After pausing briefly at Subic Bay, *Blackfin* got underway on 23 January 1971 for Australia. She moored at Brisbane on 6 February and began a six day leave period. The submarine then commenced the voyage back to San Diego with stops en route at Suva, Fiji Islands, and Pago Pago. On 10 March, the submarine reached her home port after an

absence of over seven months. In April, she resumed training duties with air and surface ASW units of the Pacific Fleet.

Blackfin entered a drydock at San Diego on 23 August for repairs. She returned to duty on 15 September and began a final upkeep and loading period in preparation for a goodwill visit to several Central and South American countrtes. On 26 October, the submarine departed San Diego and reached Corinto, Nicaragua, on 4 November. She continued on southward on the 9th, and made port calls at Buenaventura, Colombia; Guayaquil, Ecuador; Salaverry and Callao, Peru; and Acapulco, Mexico, before returning to San Diego on 20 December.

During the first six months of 1972, *Blackfin* operated along the west coast, visiting San Francisco, Avalon, and Monterey, Calif.; Seattle and Port Angeles, Wash.; and Vancouver, British Columbia. She then began preparations for deactivation. *Blackfin* was decommissioned on 15 September 1972, and her name was simultaneously struck from the Navy list.

Blackfin earned three battle stars for her World War II service and four for her Vietnam service.

Original Source Here: http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/b6/blackfin-i.htm