

## USS Grunion (SS 216)



*Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet*

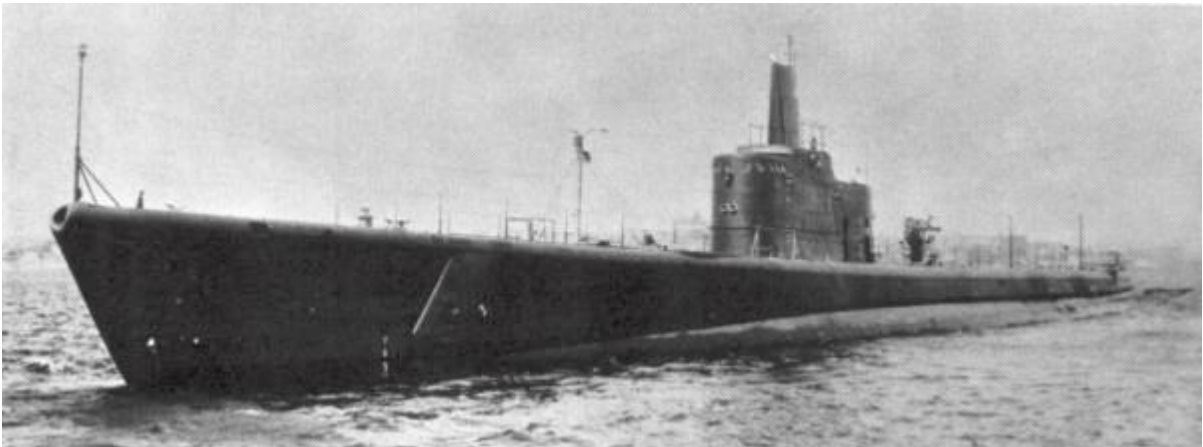
# *USS GRUNION (SS 216)*

## *July 30, 1942 - 70 Men Lost*

The submarine GRUNION arrived at Pearl Harbor on 20 June 1942, reporting for duty from the West Coast. This vessel engaged in the pre-patrol training given to all submarines reporting from new construction yards, and on 30 June, left for patrol.

Lt. Cmdr. Mannert L. Abele, in command, was ordered to proceed to the Aleutian Theater and patrol westward from Attu on routes between the Aleutians and the Japanese Empire. On 10 July GRUNION was reassigned to the area north of Kiska. GRUNION made her first report on 15 July: Dutch Harbor received her message that, attacked by an enemy destroyer, she had fired three torpedoes at it, and missed with all.

Shortly after this message was received GRUNION sent another relating that she had sunk three destroyer-type vessels on 15 July. This message was garbled to the extent that details of the attacks were never learned (Japanese information reveals that GRUNION sank patrol boats 25 and 27 and damaged a third patrol vessel). On 19 July GRUNION, S-32, TRITON and TUNA were assigned areas in the approaches to Kiska, all to be there by daylight 22 July.



There was a strong concentration of enemy vessels at Kiska, this time being only a

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month and a half after the enemy had taken that island. The vessels patrolling there were told to watch particularly on the afternoon of 22 July 1942 for departing enemy naval vessels, since our own surface forces were scheduled to bombard Kiska that afternoon. The bombardment did not take place in accordance with the original plans, but our forces did stage the operation on 28 July and GRUNION was told to guard the exits from Kiska during darkness on this date. On this day GRUNION reported an attack on unidentified enemy ships six miles southeast of Sirius Point, Kiska. She had fired two torpedoes, made no hits, and been depth charged, but sustained no damage.

GRUNION's last transmission was received 30 July 1942. She reported heavy antisubmarine activity at the entrance to Kiska, and that she had ten torpedoes remaining. On the same day, GRUNION was directed to return to Dutch Harbor. She was not contacted or sighted after 30 July, despite every effort to do so, and on 16 August was reported lost. Planes observing the approaches to Kiska for indications of enemy salvage operations in connection with GRUNION reported negatively.

Japanese antisubmarine attack data available now record no attack in the Aleutian area at this time, and GRUNION's fate remains an unsolved mystery. We know of no enemy minefields which were in her area; thus her loss may be presumed to have been operational or as a result of an unrecorded enemy attack.

**UPDATE** - A gentleman in Japan, Yutaka Iwasaki, posted some interesting information on his website, about sunken Japanese ships during WWII, which includes information about the possible fate of the USS GRUNION.

The Kano Maru was sunk at Kiska Mr. Iwasaki kindly provided some very interesting information about the ship's history and the USS GRUNION. He provided the following on the history of the ship in connection to the loss of the GRUNION (publications S.Komamiya's Wartime ship history (1991 private issue) and JIRO Kimata's Submarine attack" (2000 Kojin-Sya)):

### Kano Maru

- 30 July, 1942 - 08:00 Arrived at 36km north of Kiska. Heavy fog prevented approach, lost contact with the escort, forced drifting. Getting location by astronomical, she restarted approach to Kiska with 15kt.
  - 31 July, 1942 - 05:47 Torpedoed by Submarine Grunion (SS-216). One hit at machinery room starboard, main engine and generator stopped. No more escape nor radio.
- 05:57 Second torpedo came, but passed below the ship. Kano Maru pretended to launch seaplane without pilot, failed to start propeller.
- 06:07 Third and fourth torpedo came, hit fore bridge and amidships on the port but both dud. The Grunion intended to surface and sink by gunfire, ripples was seen 400m distance from her. Kano Maru had two old 8cm guns on forecastle and stern. Stern's one malfunction by the torpedo shock, but forecastle gun fired to

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the periscope. 13mm machine guns on bridge fired as well. Before the sub appear the whole, fourth shot from Kano Maru hit the conning tower of the sub. It is thought the last of Grunion. The attack had ceased. Later rescue came from Kiska, three seaplanes, cable layer Ukishima, and sub chaser No. 26.

For over 50 years the skipper's three sons knew little about what happened to their father's submarine. In 2002, due to an update on this website which helped pinpoint where USS GRUNION may have sunk, the Abele brothers began working on a plan to find the submarine. Last August 2006, a team of side scan sonar experts hired by the brothers located a target near Kiska almost a mile deep which may be USS GRUNION. Efforts by the Abele brothers to determine their father's fate are continuing.

### *Sailors Lost On USS GRUNION (SS-216) 7-30-1942*

Abele, M. L. LCDR  
Alexander, F. E. SM3  
Allen, D. E. SM3  
Arvan, H. J. Matt2  
Banes, P. E. CMOMM  
Bedard, L. J. I. CMOMM  
Blinston, W. H. RM3  
Bonadies, N. R. F2  
Boo, R. F. RM3  
Bouvia, C. L. MM1  
Caldwell, G. E. CEM  
Carroll, R. H. S2  
Clift, J. S. TM2  
Collins, M. F. F2  
Cooksey, L. D. MOMM1  
Cullinane, D. MM1  
Cuthbertson, W. H., Jr. ENS  
Deaton, L. D. S2  
DeStoop, A. E. CTM  
Devaney, W. P., Jr. S2  
Dighton, S. R., Jr. LTJG  
Doell, L. H., Jr. RM2  
Franck, L. H. S1  
Graham, M. D. CTM  
Hall, K. E. S2  
Hellensmith, E. G. EM3  
Henderson, H. B. MOMM2  
Hutchinson, C. R. TM3  
Kennedy, S. J., Jr. MOMM2

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Knowles, E. E., Jr. S2  
Kockler, L. R. TM1  
Kornahrens, W. G. LT  
Ledford, M. J. CY  
Lehman, W. W. EM1  
Loe, S. A. MOMM2  
Lunsford, S., Jr. EM2  
Lyon, J. W. F1  
Martin, C. R. CMOMM  
Martin, T. E. EM1  
Mathison, R. EM1  
McCutcheon, R. G. TM3  
McMahon, J. M. LT  
Miller, E. C. F2  
Myers, D. O. F1  
Nave, F. T. MOMM2  
Newcomb, A. G. RM1  
Nobles, J. W. MOMM1  
Pancoast, J. E. MOMM2  
Parziale, C. A. TM3  
Paul, C., Jr. MATT2  
Pickel, B. J. S1  
Post, A. C. S2  
Randall, W. H. RM2  
Ryan, L., Jr. S2  
Sanders, H. A. MOMM1  
Schumann, E. T. CQM  
Sullivan, P. P. PHM1  
Surofchek, S. SC1  
Swartwood, D. N. S2  
Templeton, S. A. GM1  
Thomas, M. W. LT  
Traviss, B. A. S2  
Ullmann, A. S1  
VanWoggelum, M. F. F3  
Walter, M. H. F3  
Webster, R. E. EM2  
Welch, D. F. FC2  
Wells, J. H. TM2  
Wilson, J. E., Jr. SC3  
Youngman, R. J. F2