



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

# *USS HARDER (SS 257)*

## *August 24, 1944 - 78 Men Lost*

Additional information provided by Captain C.C. Brock, USN(Ret)

Commander S.D. Dealey guided his eminently successful fighting ship, HARDER, out of the harbor at Fremantle, Australia on 5 August 1944 to begin the sixth war patrol of that vessel. In company with HAKE, HARDER conducted training exercises en route to Darwin. These two submarines topped off with fuel at Darwin, and on 13 August, together with HADDO, left for their assigned area



west of Luzon, P.I. They were to patrol as a coordinated attack or wolf pack group, with Cdr. Dealey in charge.

On the afternoon of 20 August 1944, RAY, patrolling the same area, tracked a large convoy into Paluan Bay on the northwestern coast of Mindoro. An hour after surfacing, she contacted HARDER just outside the bay and held a megaphone conversation with Sam Dealey. Dealey formulated a plan for concentrated dawn wolf pack attack on the convoy. HARDER came alongside HADDO at 0130 on the morning of August 21 and told Lt. Cmdr. C.W. Nimitz, Jr., that at least 16 enemy ships were holed up in the bay. When the convoy made its exit at dawn (as convoys were wont to do) RAY was to approach from the northwest, HADDO from the west, and HARDER from the southwest. GUITARRO also had been drafted by Dealey, and was to attack from the northwest near Cape Calavite Lighthouse.

During the attacks which ensued, four ships, totaling 22,000 tons, were sunk, by Japanese admission. It is thought likely that HARDER sank one of them.

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On the following day, HADDO and HARDER conducted a combined attack on three small vessels off Bataan. All three were sunk; these were the coast defense vessels MATSUWA, SADO and HIBURI. HADDO and HARDER each received credit for sinking one vessel, and shared credit for the third sinking.

The morning of 23 August HADDO contacted a tanker escorted by a destroyer, and blew the bow off the destroyer in a down-the-throat shot.

She fired her last torpedo in this attack, and in response to urgent calls for assistance, HAKE and HARDER rendezvoused with her. HADDO, being out of torpedoes, "received Sam's blessing" and left his wolf pack, heading south. HAKE and HARDER discussed plans for finishing off the damaged destroyer and then departed for their common objective off Caiman Point.

At 0453 on the morning of August 24th, HAKE dove not far from Caiman Point and about four miles off Hermana Major Island, west coast of Luzon, with HARDER in sight 4500 yards south of her. HAKE heard echo ranging to the south and soon sighted two ships. At first they appeared to be a three-stack light cruiser and a destroyer, but upon later



inspection were identified as a three-stack Thai destroyer (the PHRA RUANG, of 1,035 tons) and a minesweeper of less than 1,000 tons. HAKE broke off the attack and headed north when the target zigged away apparently to enter Dasol Bay, while the minesweeper stayed outside.

At 0647 upon coming to a northerly course, HARDER's periscope was seen dead ahead at about 600-700 yards. Sound also reported faint screws on the bearing, so HAKE turned away toward the south. At this point the minesweeper gave three strong pings, whereupon HAKE saw her 2,000 yards away swinging toward the two submarines. HAKE figured he had sound contact and went deep. The enemy kept pinging, but seemed to have the two targets located and to be undecided what to do about it. At 0728, HAKE heard 15 rapid depth charges,

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none close. Two sets of screws were heard and each continued pinging on either quarter of HAKE as she evaded to the westward. By 0955 all was quiet.



HARDER never was heard from again. Japanese records reveal that an antisubmarine attack was made on the same day with 440 pound depth charges. The enemy said, "much oil, wood chips and cork floated in the neighborhood." Presumably HARDER perished in this depth charge attack.

HARDER was officially credited with having sunk 20.5 enemy ships (the half credit was given for a ship sunk cooperatively with HADD0). This gave HARDER a total of 82,500 tons sunk and she damaged seven ships for 29,000 tons.

Her first patrol was conducted in Empire waters, starting in June 1943. She sank three freighters, and damaged seriously a freighter-transport, another freighter, a transport and a tanker. She went to the Empire again for her second patrol, and sank three freighters and a tanker, while she damaged a trawler.

HARDER was a part of wolf pack, of which PARGO and SNOOK were the other members, on her third patrol. In the open sea north of the Marianas, she sank a freighter, three freighter- transports and an armed trawler.

HARDER's fourth patrol was in the western Carolines. On April 1, 1944 she made a daring rescue of a Navy fighter pilot shot down at Woleai Island early that morning during a strike by a fast carrier task force. In mid afternoon on April 13, 1944 she was buzzed by a Japanese patrol plane which brought the destroyer IKAZUCHI to the scene. The DD was attacked and sunk along about sunset. Four nights later she sank a freighter and damaged a second destroyer.

HARDER departed Perth for her fifth patrol in the Celebes Sea on May 26, 1944. She picked up coast watchers from northeastern Borneo, and gave a very valuable contact report on a major task force leaving Tawi Tawi anchorage, Sulu Archipelago, preparing to engage in the first Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Shortly thereafter, while patrolling in the Tawi Tawi area she sank five destroyers over a five day period beginning on June 6, 1944. First to go down was MINAZUKI, followed the next day by HAYANAMI. Three days later on the 9th, she sank the TANIKAZE and another unidentified DD during the same

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attack; and sank another unidentified DD on the 10th.

Sinking of these last two unidentified DD's could not be verified shortly after the war by the Joint Army Navy Assessments Committee, but subsequent analysis of the data, published in 1989 by the U.S. Naval Institute, has supported the initial claim. Moreover, Sam Dealey and others in the fire control party observed the sinking of the fourth DD; and the fifth DD broke up almost on top of HARDER after being hit with a down the throat shot. By the time HARDER returned from this patrol, she had earned the reputation of being the Submarine Force's most terrible opponent of destroyers. Indeed, "five DD's in five days" was electrifying news throughout the submarine force."

HARDER received the Presidential Unit Citation for her first five patrols, and Commander Dealey was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for sinking five enemy combatant vessels on his outstandingly successful fifth war patrol.

### *Sailors Lost On USS HARDER (SS 257) 8-24-1944*

Altherr, C. R. MOMM2  
Baber, R. O. MOMM2  
Beutelspacher, W. F. SC3  
Bourg, S. MOMM3  
Brostrom, W. A. SM1  
Buckner, T. W. LTJG  
Bull, C. A. RM2  
Cash, V. J. MOMM1  
Chenard, R. R. R1  
Clark, W. L. RT2  
Conley, J. C. MOMM1  
Crask, H. F. S1  
Cromwell, J. E. STM2  
Dahlheimer, D. B. MOMM2  
Dallessandro, V. L. TM1  
Dealey, S. D. CDR  
DeVoe, E. W. F1  
Diamond, W. V. RM1  
Edgar, J. M. FC2  
Finney, C. E. LTJG  
Fisher, G. E., Jr. MOMM3  
Gifford, R. L. TM3  
Glueckert, J. L. MOMM3  
Gully, D. J. Y1  
Haloupek, W. O. ENS  
Hatfield, H. D. LTJG  
Hood, E. V. TM1  
Hutcherson, V. W. CMOMMA

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James, D. R. LTJG  
Jones, R. E. MOMM3  
Keckler, R. W. CEMA  
Kellogg, J. H. EM2  
Lakey, G. W. S1  
Lane, J. M. EM3  
Lawson, H. W. MOMM3  
Levin, G. B. RT2  
Lilley, S. B. S1  
Locascio, A. PHM1  
Logan, S. M. LT  
Lonas, J. P. CMOMM  
Lynn, H. A., Jr. TM3  
Majuri, F. P., Jr. EM1  
Manning, R. E. EM2  
Medley, B. R. RM2  
Miller, C. CTM  
Mills, R. R. EM3  
Moffett, C. A., Jr. MOMM2  
Moore, O. J. BM2  
Moore, R. CK2  
Morgan, A. B. EM2  
Moss, R. B. S1  
Murray, M. H. TM2  
McWilliams, G. K. BKR3  
McGrevy, F. B. EM2  
Ogilvie, T. D. S1  
Opisso, L. A. MOMM2  
Paquet, F., Jr. GM1  
Peck, E. R. S1  
Pick, R. S. S1  
Pratt, R. E. S1  
Przybilla, R. P. EM2  
Rogers, M. N. TM3  
Rogers, M. "M" S1  
Roosevelt, R. B. ENS  
Sampson, P. T. LTJG  
Sheibelhut, F. X. MOMM2  
Schwartz, M. MOMM3  
Simon, D. J. RM3  
Sloggett, V. I. LTJG  
Smith, A. TM2  
Snipes, J. W., Jr. MOMM1  
Snyder, W. N. TM3  
Sommerschild, L. H. COX  
Spice, N. MOMM3

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Swagerty, J. "T" MOMM3  
White, L. M. TM3  
Young, B. J., Sr. SC2  
Zander, W. G. MOMM2

