

USS Bonefish (SS 582)



USS BONEFISH was the Navy's last conventionally-powered submarine and the second ship in the Navy to bear the name. Heavily damaged by a fire on board on April 24, 1988, the BONEFISH was subsequently decommissioned on September 28, 1988. Stricken from the Navy list on February 28, 1989, the submarine was sold for scrapping on August 17, 1989.

General Characteristics:

- Keel laid: June 3, 1957
- Launched: November 22, 1958
- Commissioned: July 9, 1959
- Decommissioned: September 28, 1988
- Builder: New York Shipbuilding Corp, Camden, NJ.
- Propulsion system: three Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines, two General Electric motors
- Propellers: one
- Length: 219.5 feet (66.9 meters)
- Beam: 28.9 feet (8.8 meters)
- Draft: 27.9 feet (8.5 meters)
- Displacement: Surfaced: approx. 2,570 tons Submerged: approx. 2,895 tons
- Speed: Surfaced: approx. 15 knots Submerged: approx. 25 knots
- Armament: six 533 mm torpedo tubes
- Crew: 8 Officers, 70 Enlisted

One of the last conventionally powered submarines built for the US Navy, USS Bonefish was a Barbel class diesel-electric attack submarine. Construction on the vessel began in 1957 at the New York Shipbuilding Company's yard in Camden, New Jersey and the ship was commissioned in 1959.

After acceptance trials and shakedown Bonefish transited to the Pacific for operations there. The submarine conducted cruises to the western Pacific and made Pearl Harbor its home port, receiving its first scheduled overhaul there in 1964.

Bonefish would remain in the Pacific until 1982. During that time the duties of the conventionally powered submarine slowly changed, as more and more nuclear powered vessels entered the fleet. In the late sixties, Bonefish operated as an attack submarine, detecting and tracking submarines and surface ships of other navies while striving to remain undetected itself. As the 1970s evolved, Bonefish found

itself working more frequently as a training vessel, simulating Soviet and Chinese diesel submarines while working with its fasted and more durable cousins, the US nuclear attack submarines.

In 1979, this evolving role was reflected in the submarine taking part in that year's UNITAS operation, circumnavigating the continent of South America in concert with ships of several nations.

In 1982, Bonefish shifted home port to Charleston, South Carolina. After an extensive overhaul, lasting fourteen months, Bonefish assumed its duties operating in the western Atlantic and Caribbean areas, assisting anti-submarine warfare training for air, surface and submarine units of the US and friendly navies.

Bonefish was on one such mission in 1988, exercising with a guided missile frigate, USS Carr, when a fire broke out in the submarine's battery spaces. Heat from the fire was intense enough to melt shoe soles on the deck above. Initial attempts to contain the fire, which caused temperatures in the battery well to reach 1200 degrees, were of no avail. The submarine surfaced and the crew was ordered to abandon ship. Carr and USS John F. Kennedy dispatched assistance to the stricken submarine.

Three crew members died when they failed to open the bridge hatch, being overcome by smoke. The remainder of the crew escaped with minor injuries to a relative few. Bonefish was towed into Charleston by the salvage ship USS Hoist where the damages to the ship were evaluated. The decision was made to avoid the costs of repair and scrap the submarine. Bonefish was struck from the naval register and sold for scrap in August 1989.

