

OPERATION CAESAR: SUB VS. SUB

IN AN EXTRAORDINARY BATTLE OF WITS, A BRITISH SUBMARINE CAPTAIN ATTACKS A LONG-RANGE U-BOAT LOADED WITH HIGH TECHNOLOGY ITEMS DESTINED FOR JAPAN. THIS WOULD RESULT IN THE ONLY SUB VERSUS SUB UNDERWATER SINKING IN HISTORY

BY FRED ROBERTS

Late in the war, the Germans came up with a plan to supply advanced technology to their Japanese ally and the mission was named *Unternehmen Kaiser* or Operation *Caesar*. The cargo would consist of complete Junkers Ju 86 turbojet engines, plans, and significant parts supplies for those engines. This was the engine that powered the *Luftwaffe's* advanced Me 262 jet fighter. These engines would be utilized in the development of Japan's own jet fighter design. The secondary cargo would consist of 65 tons of strategic grade mercury that would be contained in 1857 canisters for use in the production of weapons. Also included were guidance components utilized in V-2 rockets, although the Japanese had little capability in creating such an advanced weapon.

The sub also carried technical drawings



Sailor cap tally band from HMS *Venturer*.

for various new German warplanes. Passengers included Messerschmitt engineers Rolf von Ohlingensperg and Riclef Schomerus along with Japanese torpedo expert Tadao Yamoto and Japanese fuel expert Toshio Nakai. The vast distance between Germany and Japan meant that a long-range Type IX U-Boat would be needed to transport this vital cargo.

The Type IX U-Boat was designed by Germany's *Kriegsmarine* in 1935/38 as a large ocean-going submarine suitable for sustained operations far from home support facilities. The class was

derived from the Type IA and had six torpedo tubes — four at the bow and two at the stern. They carried six reloads internally and had five external torpedo containers (three at the stern and two at the bow) that stored ten additional torpedoes. Heavily armed with a total of 22 torpedoes, this load allowed U-Boat commanders to follow a convoy and strike night after night. Some of the IXC variants were fitted for mine operations and could carry 44 TMA or 66 TMB mines.



HMS *Venturer* coming into port. The V-class subs were small and carried only eight torpedoes since their mission was to attack an enemy target and then exit the area as rapidly as possible.