

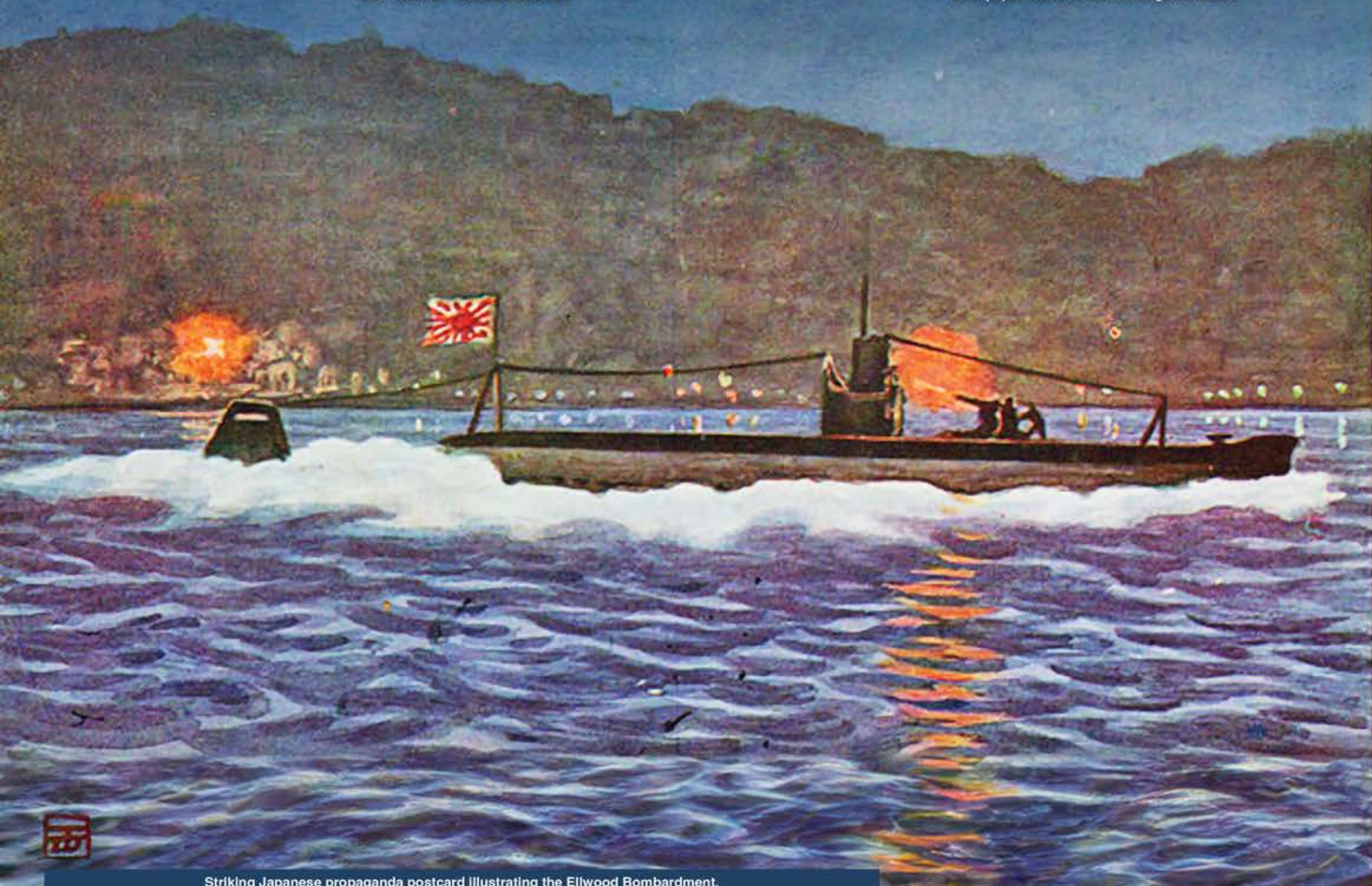
# THE ELLWOOD BOMBARDMENT

AFTER PEARL HARBOR, CITIZENS ON AMERICA'S WEST COAST WERE IN A NEAR PANIC AS THEY WORRIED ABOUT A POSSIBLE JAPANESE INVASION. THEIR FEARS CAME TRUE ON THE NIGHT OF 23 FEBRUARY 1942 AS THE DARK GRAY SHAPE OF A JAPANESE SUBMARINE SURFACED NEAR THE CALIFORNIA TOWN OF SANTA BARBARA TO LAUNCH THE FIRST ATTACK ON AMERICAN SOIL SINCE THE WAR OF 1812

BY BOYD RANSFORTH



Newspaper headline announcing the attack.



潜艦加州沿岸を砲撃  
海軍従軍画家 御厨純一筆

It had been a long voyage fraught with difficulties but as the cool California air rushed down the open hatch of the surfaced Japanese Imperial Navy submarine *I-17*, Cmdr. Kozo Nishino realized his latest mission had been worth all the danger. In the twilight, the lights of houses and small buildings twinkled as he scanned the coast with his binoculars, looking for his targets. He thought the Americans stupid for not having a complete blackout but such stupidity was going to make his daring attack that much easier. The *I-17* and its crew had performed superbly on their long voyage as they evaded Allied ships and aircraft.

The *I-17* was a *Type B1* sub that was also called the *I-15*-class. This was the first group of subs of the *Type B* cruiser submarine built for the Imperial Japanese Navy. A total of 20 were constructed beginning with *I-15* and this gave the series its alternative name.

Developed from the earlier *KD6*-sub-class of the *Kaidai*-class, the *I-15*s were fitted with a hangar and a small aircraft to enhance their long-range cruising and recon capabilities. Displacing 2631 tons surfaced and 3713 tons submerged, the class was 356-ft 8-in long with a beam of 30-ft 6-in and a draft of 16-ft 9-in. The class had a diving depth of 330-ft.

For the long-range mission, the *I-15*s were fitted with two 6200-hp diesel engines, each driving one propeller shaft, and these were for surface running. Power when submerged was supplied by a 1000-hp electric motor that drove both propellers. The *I-15*-class could reach 23.6 knots on the surface and 8 knots when submerged. On the surface, the class had a range of 14,000 nautical miles at 16 knots. When submerged, that range dropped to 96 nautical miles at three knots.

The *I-15*-class had another advantage going for it — in a waterproof hangar attached to the sail, the sub carried a small aircraft that could be put over the side for takeoff/recovery or launched via a catapult built into the deck.

The subs were armed with six

Striking Japanese propaganda postcard illustrating the Ellwood Bombardment.