



The date was 1 June 1944 and USS *Herring* (SS-233) was prowling the waters off Matsuwa Island in the Kuriles. The sleek *Gato*-class submarine had rendezvoused with USS *Barb* on 31 May and the joint combat patrol was proceeding as planned. However, after that rendezvous, no American would ever set eyes again on *Herring*.

With much of the world already encumbered by war, there was a rush to get more American submarines built and into service. At the Portsmouth Navy Yard in New Hampshire, USS *Herring* was laid down on 14 July 1941 and launched on 15 January 1942, just weeks after the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. The submarine was commissioned on 4 May 1942 with L/Comdr. Raymond W. Johnson in command.

With initial shakedown completed, *Herring* and four other submarines set out for the Mediterranean where they would go on station off the coast of North Africa prior to the momentous Operation *Torch* — the invasion of North Africa. *Herring* reached her patrol station on 5 November and observed shipping activity in the area but did not attack several likely targets. All that changed on the morning of 8 November with the launch of the invasion. *Herring* sent



Popular first day commemorative postal cover issued on *Herring's* 14 July 1941 keel laying.

torpedoes into the cargo vessel *Ville du Havre*, which was operated by the pro-Nazi Vichy French. The Allied forces were hoping to get the Vichy French to join their side but *Herring* and other submarines were issued with orders to destroy Vichy shipping setting out from Casablanca because they might hamper the invasion plans. After the 5700-ton vessel went to the bottom, *Herring* set course for Roseneath, Scotland.

On 25 November, the submarine arrived in Scottish waters and began resupplying for her next war patrol. On 16 December, she once again set out but targets were quite scarce. Through this and other war patrols, the sub and her



Jacket Insignia for USS *Herring*.

# FINAL PATROL

LIKE SO MANY WORLD WAR TWO SUBMARINES, THE USS HERRING SIMPLY DISAPPEARED WHILE ON PATROL. THE INTENSE EFFORTS OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY AND THE RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY HAVE NOW PIN-POINTED THE SUBMARINE'S FINAL RESTING PLACE

BY MIKAL HARDESTY

Dramatic view of the USS *Herring* sliding down the ways at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard during her launching on 15 January 1942.



Sleek lines of the *Gato*-class *Herring* shortly after launching.