



Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine

Richard H. O'Kane

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The career of the USS *Wahoo* in sinking Japanese ships in the farthest reaches of the Empire is legendary in submarine circles.

Christened three months after Pearl Harbor, *Wahoo* was commanded by the astonishing Dudley W. "Mush" Morton, whose originality and daring new techniques led to results unprecedented in naval history; among them, successful "down the throat" barrage against an attacking Japanese destroyer, voracious surface-running gun attacks, and the sinking of a four-ship convoy in one day. *Wahoo* took the war to Japan's front porch, and Morton became known as the Navy's most aggressive and successful sea raider. Now, in a new quality paperback edition, her full story is told by the person most qualified to tell it--her executive officer Richard O'Kane, who went on to become the leading submarine captain of the Second World War.

Praise for *Wahoo*

"The accounts of the patrols are spine-tingling, both in triumph and tragedy. It is a tale of great courage, brilliant leadership, and daring innovation in a new type of submarine warfare fought largely on the surface in waters closely controlled by the enemy. Well-written, a gripping story for anybody with a love of the sea or adventure in submarine combat."--**Naval War College Review**

"This is an exceptional story of American men who rose to the occasion time and again under dangerous circumstance." --**Abilene Reporter News**

"A first-hand--and first-rate--narrative, told by the former executive officer of this legendary WWII submarine, which gives readers an intimate feel for life aboard the 'boats' that helped beat the odds in the battles of the Pacific and put Japan on the defensive."--**Sea Power**

"Like *Clear the Bridge!*, [Richard] O'Kane's bestselling account of the Tang's 33 confirmed sinkings, [*Wahoo*] is a rousing, authentic war adventure that could well become a classic of its type, crack[ling] with the tensions, boredom, and occasional exhilaration of submarine life under the Pacific, O'Kane is a superb storyteller, and his credentials are impeccable."--**Springfield Sunday Republic**

Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine Details

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Bob says

If you are a WWII history buff, as I am, you need to read this book. For me, it was fast-moving and contained lots of drama, along with the needed technical details to keep the reader engaged and satisfied but not bored.

Ben says

Amazing book, written by Executive Officer O'Kane, providing excellent detail without being too technical and thus boring. Remarkable story.

7\$MartyQ says

Dudley "Mush" Morton, American Hero

With a quiet, calm determination, Dudley "Mush" Morton took the fight to the enemy. His motto was "stay we them until they're on the bottom". Where would America be today without men like Morton yesterday? Unfortunately stories of these brave men are not taught in history classes today; they were part of what history calls "The Greatest Generation," and again, unfortunately are more and more being relegated to pages in books like "Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine".

George Kenaston says

Outstanding book. Being a former submariner I really related to the narrative and events described!

Dan says

The story of man who found his calling in life, sinking enemy ships. I suspect he would have been successful leading anyone but this was the task at hand. Excellent technical details but the human element interjected into the book is what I like best. These were the men we needed at the beginning of the war to prosecute it to the end.

Iain says

O'Kane manages something quite remarkable in this book. He manages to present the mundane details of

submarine life in an interesting way. Engine operation, navigation by the stars, vacuum tube repair, even games of cribbage. On the flip side, he presents those bursts of intense activity, the torpedo attacks, the anti-sub warfare battles in an equally calm yet engaging way.

SPOILER ALERT

As a result the final chapters, when the Wahoo is lost with all hands after O'Kane is transferred, has a real emotional impact on the reader. That having been said the final chapters are a bit awkwardly written. Maybe it's because they're based on speculation, or in the third person, or simply that we know how the story ends and have grown less patient for the minutia so late in the story.

But such details can't scuttle fantastic O'Kane's work.

Jim says

The author was the Executive Officer on the Wahoo during its first 5 patrols prior to receiving his own submarine command. The book includes the Wahoo's sixth and seventh patrols. The Wahoo was sunk by Japanese aircraft during its seventh patrol, so the descriptions of the seventh patrol are based on the records of the ships sunk by the Wahoo, Japanese records of their attacks on the Wahoo, and the author's well educated guesses about what likely happened based on his knowledge of the captain and crew and his own experience.

Dudley Morton was a remarkable submarine captain. His, and the crew of the Wahoo's, exploits included sinking an attacking Japanese destroyer with a down the throat (head on) torpedo shot, sinking all 4 ships in a Japanese convoy, and infiltrating into the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea.

The author is candid about the problems that were experienced with different models of torpedoes that often failed to explode or went off course. In fact one errant torpedo circled back and struck the Wahoo, damaging it, prior to its being sunk while trying to make it home through the strait between Hokkaido and Honshu.

You'll enjoy this book. If you google the Wahoo, you'll find out that a joint international expedition located the wreckage of the Wahoo and determined that one of the Japanese bombs hit near the conning tower.

Tim Anderson says

Every chapter is the same over and over. Boring.

Jack says

The US WWII Submarine Force became the greatest threat to the Japanese Empire. Likewise, the IJN inflicted severe casualties on our submariners since they operated singly and in dangerous waters. The WAHOO became an ace at putting Japanese merchant vessels on the bottom. Even with the dud torpedoes, the crew managed multiple sinkings in a single attack. Sadly it was one of her own torpedoes that caused her

downfall when it circled and struck its own ship. The ship was lost with all hands.

Today at Pearl Harbor, you can walk around base or at the entry to the USS ARIZONA memorial and see the plaques on the walls of the submarine memorials. Each plaque has the names of the fallen on them. There are too many plaques. There are too many names. The WWII submarine force suffered the highest casualty rates any service in the war. The destruction they wrought was also the highest of any service in the war.

Today the Japanese Prime Minister is visiting Hawaii. I wonder what he thinks about seeing so much of our WWII history. I also find it amazing that such deadly enemies of WWII are now allies. Will we be fighting alongside German and Japanese servicemen during our next war?

I recommend you pick up a book on the WWII submariners and learn how they helped win WWII.

Rick Wong says

this book was the one that made me learn about Dick O'Kane. Mush Morton had stones. In incredible book about one of the early successful sub capt. when there wasn't too many success stories.

Michael says

Anyone that served on the boats will find this a very good read, those that didn't, it could be a good read for them once they understand the jargon of submarine operations. The only fault I find with this book is the author's rendition on how the WAHOO was lost, but then he did write this book prior to the discovery of wreck of the USS Wahoo a couple of years ago.

Curtiss says

They must have played a LOT of cribbage during their off-duty watches aboard the Wahoo, if Dick O'Kane was able to come up with both a 28-point hand and a 29-point hand during his time aboard her (against his captain, Mush Morton on both occasions).

James Watson says

Excellent story of the Wahoo successful patrol activity, initially under a skipper reluctant to attack. Replaced by Cdr. Morton who employed very aggressive tactics the Wahoo set an enviable record sinking Japanese shipping. O'Kane, Executive Officer for most of the patrols, provides intriguing details of the patrols and the tactics used to sink 24 Japanese ships. He describes the difficulties with the initially unreliable torpedoes and the successes made possible by improved weapons. I had the pleasure of meeting Adm. Richard O'Kane at a Medal of Honor Convention and learned first hand about this remarkable man.

Steve Scott says

I'd love to give this a higher rating, but can't.

Author Dick O'Kane, who went on from being the XO of the Wahoo to being the number one American sub captain of WWII, simply didn't consider his audience. Even with the (limited) glossary O'Kane provides, this account is full of cumbersome jargon and military acronyms. He assumes the reader knows what he's talking about. It's as if he wasn't writing it for a general audience, but for all those retired submariners from his era who were still alive. As a youngster I'd read popular accounts of WWII sub warfare that made sense of the tactics and methods of maneuver. This left me confused.

O'Kane also constructs an account (as he sees it) of Wahoo's final patrol, creating a completely speculative and fictional account of what happened on the boat. At one point he even has the crew cheering, though there were no survivors from this patrol to witness any of the events on board.

In this imagined re-enactment he has the Wahoo hit by one of its own rogue torpedoes and then finished off by aerial bombs. He projects his own identical experience on the USS Tang onto this boat for with no compelling reason. It's as if he can't accept that Morton and the Wahoo were vulnerable to the Japanese, and wanted to further blame fix the torpedo design defect that spelled doom for the Tang and most of her crew.

Since O'Kane's death the wreck of the Wahoo has been found, and with no evidence of a rogue torpedo hit. She'd suffered massive damage aft of her conning tower from a direct hit from a bomb, and sunk in just over two hundred feet of water.

There are better accounts of the Wahoo's exploits.

David L. Haven, Jr. says

The best submarine narrative I have ever read.

With all due respect to Tom Clancy, this book is the best page turner and more so for its history and accuracy. The story of Wahoo has been forgotten by boomers, through gen x and (alpha?) But this is a story that needs remembering.

Read this book, tell this story.
