

SECNAV Names Two Future Virginia-class Submarines Tang, Wahoo



The first USS *Tang* (SS-306), shown off the Mare Island Navy Yard, California, in 1943. U.S. Navy

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite announced Nov. 17 that two future Virginia-class attack submarines will be named USS Tang and USS Wahoo.

USS Tang (SSN 805) and USS Wahoo (SSN 806) will carry the names of two storied World War II submarines.

“The success in battle both previous namesakes endured will undoubtedly bring great pride to the future crews of USS Tang and USS Wahoo,” said Braithwaite. “Along with the previously named USS Barb (SSN 804), these boats will honor the strong traditions and heritage of the silent service.”

This will be the third time that the name Tang and Wahoo will be used for U.S. Navy submarines.

USS *Tang* (SS-306) was a Balao-class submarine and the first U.S. Navy ship to bear the name Tang, a surgeon fish popular in the waters of the Pacific Ocean. She was built and launched in 1943, and under the command of Lt. Cmdr. Richard H. O’Kane, she was credited with sinking five enemy ships during the boat’s first war patrol. In her five patrols, *Tang* is credited with sinking 31 ships, totaling 227,800 tons and damaging two for 4,100 tons. *Tang* received four battle stars and two Presidential Unit Citations for her service during World War II, and O’Kane received the Medal of Honor for Tang’s final, heroic actions.

A second USS *Tang* (SS-563), the first ship in the Navy’s Tang-

class of Diesel submarines, was commissioned in October 1951. She was among the first post-WWII submarines designed under the Greater Underwater Propulsion Power Program (GUPPY). She went on to complete multiple patrols supporting the Vietnam War, and later became a training vessel in Groton, Connecticut, before decommissioning in February 1980. *Tang* earned four battle stars for service in Vietnamese waters.

USS *Wahoo* (SS-238) was a Gato-class submarine and the first U.S. Navy ship to be named for the wahoo fish, a scombrid fish found worldwide in tropical and subtropical seas. Construction on the submarine started before the U.S. entered World War II, and commissioned after the U.S. entered the war. On October 11, 1943, *Wahoo*, under the command of the renowned Lt. Cmdr. Dudley Walker "Mush" Morton, was sunk with all 79 hands onboard by air and surface attack as she was attempting to exit the Sea of Japan via La Perouse Strait. At the time of her loss, *Wahoo* was the most storied boat in the fleet. In her seven war patrols, she earned six battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation. The boat would be credited with sinking 20 Japanese ships, 19 of them during her last five war patrols. Morton was later awarded the Navy Cross and the destroyer USS *Morton* (DD-948) was named in his honor.

The second USS *Wahoo* (SS-565), a Tang-class submarine, was commissioned on Memorial Day in 1952. After training exercises in the waters off the Hawaiian Islands, *Wahoo* embarked on tours of duty in the western Pacific as part of Seventh Fleet. She then completed two tours of duty in support of the Vietnam War and was decommissioned in June 1980. *Wahoo* was also recognized for her actions in Vietnamese waters.

Rules for giving certain types of names to certain types of Navy ships have evolved over time. Attack submarines, for example, were once named for fish, then later for cities and states. However, Braithwaite supports naming future submarines after past vessels with historic naval legacies.

“Naming Virginia class submarines is a unique opportunity to reclaim submarine names that carry inspirational records of achievement,” Braithwaite added.

Attack submarines are designed to seek and destroy enemy submarines and surface ships; project power ashore with Tomahawk cruise missiles and Special Operation Forces; carry out Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions; support battle group operations; and engage in mine warfare. For more information about attack submarines, visit <https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFiles/Article/2169558/attack-submarines-ssn/>