

USS WHALE (SSN 638)

CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 09501

At Sea
North Atlantic
16 April 1968

Dear Dwight:

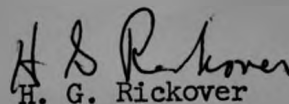
We are returning from the first sea trials of the USS WHALE (SSN638), our 34th attack type nuclear submarine. The ship completed all tests, including full power operation, both surface and submerged. The WHALE, second United States submarine to bear this name, was built by the General Dynamics Corporation.

The first USS WHALE (SS239) was commissioned 1 June 1942. In World War II, she made 11 war patrols and won 11 battle stars. She sank nine Japanese ships for a total of 57,716 tons. The WHALE's maiden patrol was as one of six submarines assigned to the first submarine minelaying mission in Japanese territorial waters. In spite of enemy aircraft, sampans, and harbor patrols, she also managed during this patrol to take valuable photographs of the Japanese shoreline, raising her periscope at some points only 500 yards offshore. In 1960, the WHALE was stricken from the Naval Register and sold for scrap.

The new WHALE's primary wartime mission is to destroy enemy submarines. Her comprehensive sonar system and computer-controlled weapons system enable her to detect and attack surface or submerged targets at considerable distances. This capability, the unlimited cruising radius and high speed provided by nuclear propulsion, and quietness make her a most effective antisubmarine weapon.

In addition to the 34 attack type nuclear submarines, we also have 41 Polaris submarines, making a total of 75 nuclear submarines in operation. When all nuclear submarines presently authorized by Congress are completed, the United States will have a nuclear submarine fleet of 41 Polaris and 65 attack submarines, and a small submarine capable of exploring the ocean bottom.

Sincerely,


H. G. Rickover

Mr. Dwight A. Ink
Rockville, Maryland