

U.S.S. PC 552  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
New York, N. Y.

SHIP'S HISTORY

In the afternoon of 29 July 1942, Lieut. Cdr. Sassley, USN, acting for the Commandant Third Naval District, accepted PC 552 and with Lieut. Donald McVickar, USNR, placed the 173 foot subchaser in commission at the Sullivan Dry Dock and Repair Corp., Brooklyn, N.Y. Lieut. McVickar, the first commanding officer took the U.S.S. PC 552 through her preliminary trials in a series of cruises in Long Island Sound arriving in late August at Boston Navy Yard for final equipment installations. Before "552" was to be given her real war tests as a submarine chaser, a week of training operations was scheduled with a "tame sub" at New London, Conn. Finally on 20 Sept. 1942, she sailed from New York as a convoy escort enroute for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. For fifteen months she plowed the Atlantic and Caribbean on this "New York to Gtmo run" hunting for enemy subs and protecting the convoys entrusted to her unit. There were occasional diversions to Santiago in Cuba, Trinidad, Key West and Miami and anti-submarine warfare training was paramount during her periods of "rest" between convoy runs. "552" dropped her share of depth charges and rockets and received credit for a possible "kill" in company with another PC.

On 28 November 1942, Lieut. McVickar was relieved of command by Lieut. J. Ross Pilling, USNR, who relinquished command to Lt.(jg) Frank E. Pierce, USNR, on 2 October 1943. It was Lieut. Pierce who brought the "552" into New York, on 17 December 1943 on what was to be her last trip from Guantanamo. For she had been selected as one of the multitude of vessels that was to play a part in the great land, sea and air operations in northern France.

After a few weeks preparation in Norfolk, the U.S.S. PC 552, on 4 January 1944, along with many of her class, sailed as part of Task Force 69 for the United Kingdom. With a rough crossing and a pleasant stay in the Azores behind them, the officers and men anchored their vessel in the Tamar River at Dartmouth England in late January. This was their first look at open warfare as they witnessed the German bombings of England's south coast. And they were eager to learn, when the intensive invasion training began on the beaches of southern England. Falmouth, Dartmouth, Plymouth, and Torquay will ever remain in the minds of those who served aboard "552" during this period of preparation. As spring grew into summer, the tension became greater and officers and men were confident that the ship they had made ready and trained aboard would do her bit when the fateful day arrived. Their hopes were temporarily shattered when on the 27th of May while escorting a group of landing craft during a practice operation, which proved to be the dress rehearsal for June 6th, the "552" collided with an LCT(R) causing slight damage to the landing craft but smashing in her own bow. It occurred in a dense fog but both vessels made