

The Japanese midget submarine attack on Sydney harbour.

The Japanese Navy was unique in WW II. It had submarines that could launch a plane or carry a midget submarine. No other Navy had this capability.

The Royal Navy had midget submarines – however these needed to be towed to the target. Several were lost during the long tow.

The midget submarines were very difficult to control. They would surface or dive out of control. It took three years to train the crew. Over 500 were built.

There were 5 midget submarines used in the attack on Pearl Harbour. None survived the attack.

There were three reconnaissance flights by planes from the mother submarines over Sydney harbour before the attack.

The harbour was protected by underwater loops and a partly completed boom net. The loops on the harbour floor detected any vessel passing over it.

Three midget submarines entered the harbour on the night of May 31 st 1942.

There were 6 ships on anti submarine patrol on this night.

The submarines were detected by the loops – however no action was taken.

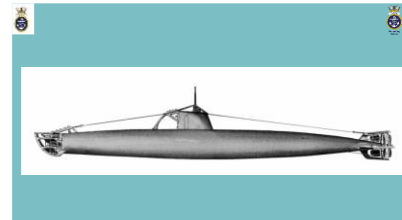
One became entangled in the boom net and set off its demolition charge killing the crew.

Another was destroyed by depth charges in Taylor's Bay.

The main target was the USS CHICAGO that had been involved in the battle of the Coral Sea where for the first time the Japanese invasion Army was turned back from its invasion of Port Moresby.

The Admiral in charge of the harbour was entertaining the captain and officers of the CHICAGO at TRESCO, the admiral's house on the night of the attack.

The third submarine fired two torpedoes and escaped the harbour to the northern beaches. This submarine was found in 2006. It is now a protected war grave.



The torpedoes went either side of USS CHICAGO and one exploded under HMAS KUTTABUL with the loss of 21 lives. KUTTABUL was an old ferry used as accommodation for sailors.

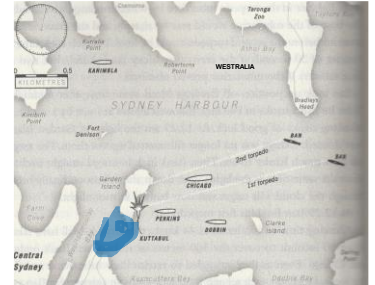


The other torpedo had defective depth control and hit a sea wall at Garden Island and did not explode.

Navy divers attached steel slings to the submarines and cranes brought them to the surface. A very brave dive without knowing the situation on the submarine.

The two submarines were salvaged and taken to Clark Island for inspection. They were then taken around NSW, Victoria and South Australia on a truck to raise war funds.

Each year on the anniversary of the attack a ceremony is held at the KUTTABUL memorial on Garden Island.



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