



Namesakes

by Ross Clinton, Post 593 Historian & Newsletter Editor



Post 593 has a great deal of company with other units, ships and aircraft that share the number "593". For the next few months, I'll be featuring some of these "sisters" numbered 593. It's a bit of history we all can be proud of!

USS *Thresher* (SSN-593), 1961-1963

Photo # NH 91424-KN Insignia of USS Thresher (SSN-593), adopted in 1960



USS *Thresher* (SSN-593), lead ship of a class of 3700-ton nuclear-powered attack submarines, was built at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine. Commissioned in August 1961, she conducted lengthy trials in the western Atlantic and Caribbean areas in 1961 and 1962, providing a thorough evaluation of her many new technological features and weapons. After the completion of these test operations, *Thresher* returned to her builders for overhaul.

On 10 April 1963, after the completion of this work, *Thresher* began post-overhaul trials. Accompanied by the submarine rescue ship *Skylark* (ASR-20), she transited to an area some 220 miles east of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and started deep-diving tests. As these proceeded, garbled communications were received by *Skylark*, indicating trouble

aboard the submarine. It gradually became apparent that she had sunk, taking the lives of 129 officers, crewmen and civilian technicians.

After an extensive underwater search utilizing the bathyscaph *Trieste*, oceanographic ship *Mizar*, and other ships, *Thresher's* shattered remains were located on the sea floor, some 8400 feet below the surface. Deep sea photography, recovered artifacts and an evaluation of her design and operations permitted a Court of Inquiry to determine that she had probably sunk due to a piping failure, subsequent loss of power and inability to blow ballast tanks rapidly enough to avoid sinking. Over the next several years, a massive program was undertaken to correct design and construction problems on the Navy's existing nuclear submarines, and on those under construction and in planning. Following completion of this "SubSafe" effort, the Navy has suffered no further losses of the kind that so tragically ended *Thresher's* brief service career.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY -- NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE SE -- WASHINGTON NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON DC 20374-5060

