



# Nothing Friendly in the Vicinity ...: My Patrols on the Submarine USS Guardfish During WWII

*Claude C. Conner*

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As chronicled in *Silent Victory*, Clay Blair's monumental history of United States submarine operations in World War II, the submarine war against Japan was a relatively little known war-within-a-war. It was waged by an initially small but expanding force of boats that eventually made more than 1,400 war patrols and sank almost 1,400 Japanese merchant ships and naval vessels. Many American submarines carved out enviable records, including *USS Guardfish*, the subject of Claude Conner's remarkable memoir of service aboard a US fleet boat as an enlisted man.

Conner, who served as a Radar Technician, weaves a compelling tale of his service during several war patrols in the Pacific Theater against the Japanese. His firsthand account spans the spectrum in detail and emotion, describing everything from humorous personal incidents to the boat's bone crushing battle against the sea; the thrill of sending an enemy ship, to the bottom of the deathly terror of being trapped in a flooding conning tower.

A significant portion of Conner's reminiscence describes the friendly-fire sinking of *USS Extractor*, which came about when *Guardfish's* skipper mistook the ship for a Japanese submarine. Along with the tragic sinking, Conner offers important information about *Extractor* and her crew, several detailed firsthand recollections of survivors, and an engrossing account of the Court of Inquiry that followed and for which Conner testified as a witness.

*Nothing Friendly in the Vicinity* is a fresh and compelling account of an enlisted man's experiences during the hellish submarine war against Japan, and recognized today as a classic of the genre.

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