

Walter “Gus” Kraus

Commander, USN



Walter (better known as “Gus”) Kraus was born in Bamberg, Bavaria, in 1920. He immigrated to the United States with his parents at the age five. They resided in Newport, Kentucky.

Following High School Gus enlisted in the U.S. Navy. After completing boot camp in Norfolk, he was assigned to the USS *SHAW* (DD 373) in San Diego. Gus was selected to attend the first Sound School (later designated as Sonar) at the San Diego Destroyer Base. He also volunteered to receive Passive Search training aboard the submarines *S-27* (SS-132) and *S-28* (SS-133). This introduction to submarines led him to volunteer for submarine duty.

In August 1940 Gus was assigned to the *S-36* (SS-141) in

Tsingtao, China in the Asiatic Fleet. He qualified for his enlisted dolphins in February 1941. At the outbreak of WWII the *S-36* was in the Philippines near Lingayen Gulf.

On her second war patrol, *S-36* grounded on Taka-Bakang reef in Makassar Straits; it was 20 January 1942. They had been running southward toward Surabaya, Java because the Japanese had rapidly occupied the Philippine Islands.

After unsuccessful attempts to free the boat the commanding officer ordered the boat to be scuttled. A Dutch freighter, the *HMS Siberoet*, rescued all hands and eventually disembarked the crew in Surabaya; all were assigned to other submarines. Gus subsequently served on *Snapper* (SS-185), *Pickrel* (SS-177) and *Cobbler* (SS-344), and completed 11 war patrols. At the end of the war he had earned the rank of Chief Machinist Mate.

Following the war, he remained in submarines until 1949 when he was selected for duty with the joint Brazil-United States Military Commission in Rio de Janeiro. In 1951 he served as Recruiter in Lexington, Kentucky. His acceptance to Warrant Officer cut that duty short. As a Warrant Officer, Gus was assigned to the Chesapeake Bay Training Group as a Liaison Officer for ships being transferred to NATO countries.

In 1953 he accepted his selection for Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island and was promoted to Ensign with an assignment to serve on USS *Sarda* (SS-488). He earned his Gold Dolphins as a qualified submarine officer in 1955.

In February 1969 Gus retired from the Navy with the rank of Commander after more than 30 years of service. Gus also served as the last national president of the United States Submarine Veterans of World War II. The group disbanded at the end of its national convention in September 2012.

YouTube video:
<http://bit.ly/2sUJcPI>

The American Submariner is honored to recognize Gus as USSVI’s longest Qualified Submarine Officer, February 1941 S-36 (SS-141)

