



# USS *Sellstrom*

DE-255; DER-255

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The USS *Sellstrom* was named for ENS Edward Robert Sellstrom, USNR, a pilot of Fighter Squadron 3 aboard the USS *Lexington* (CV-2). On 20 February 1942, he intercepted an enemy four-engine bomber, determinedly pursued it through clouds and heavy rain, and assisted in shooting it down despite heavy machine gun and cannon fire. Later that day, he intercepted and shot down another aircraft during an attack directed at his carrier by nine enemy bombers. As a result of his "skillful marksmanship and courage," he was awarded the Navy Cross. ENS Sellstrom was killed in an airplane crash on 21 June 1942.

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## **Edsall Class** Destroyer Escort

Displacement: 1,253 tons standard; 1,102 tons full load

Length: 306' oa

Beam: 36'7"

Draft: 10' 5' full load

Commissioned: 12 October 1943

Decommissioned: 13 June 1946; Recommissioned w / USN and Navy crew on 1 November 1955; decommissioned June, 1960; sold for scrap in April 1967.

Machinery: 2-shaft Fairbanks Morse diesels, 6,000 bhp

Range: 10,800 nm at 12 knots

Top Speed: 21 knots

Complement: 186

Armament: 3 x 5"/50; 2 x 40mm; 8 x 20mm; 3 x 21" torpedo tubes; 2 depth charge tracks; 8 depth charge projectors; 1 hedge hog.

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### **Commanding Officers:**

LCDR William L. Maloney, USCG.: 12 October 1943 - ?  
LCDR William L. Morrison:  
LCDR Carlton J. Schmidt, USCGR:  
LT Marcus N. McGarity: 19 January 1946 - 13 June 1946

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### **History:**

USS *Sellstrom*, DE-255, was laid down on 16 March 1943 by the Brown Shipbuilding Company in Houston, Texas. She was launched on 12 May 1943 and was sponsored by Miss Genevieve Dahl, ENS *Sellstrom*'s fiancée. The *Sellstrom* was placed in commission on 12 October 1943 under the command of LCDR William L. Maloney, USCG.

After trial runs and tests, final outfitting, and shakedown, *Sellstrom* departed Bermuda on 3 December 1943 for the east coast, arriving at Charleston Navy Yard on the 6th. On 13 December, the escort vessel departed Charleston and proceeded to Norfolk, arriving on the 15th. On 13 January 1944 she departed Norfolk as a unit of Task Force 63 bound for Gibraltar. On 31 January, Task Force 63 stood into the Straits of Gibraltar, turned over the escort of their convoy to British control, and set course for Casablanca, French Morocco. Arriving in Casablanca Harbor the following day, she moored at Jetty de Lure. She remained in the harbor, doing some patrolling, until 4 February, when she got underway for Gibraltar to pick up another convoy en route to the Chesapeake Bay. The *Sellstrom* was relieved of the convoy in Chesapeake Bay on 22 February and proceeded to New York, mooring at the Brooklyn Navy Yard the next day.

After repairs, alterations, and the loading of ammunition, she engaged in refresher training off Montauk, Long Island. On 10 March 1944 she departed Long Island and arrived at Norfolk on the 11th. She stood out of the Chesapeake Bay on 15 March and joined convoy UGS-36 en route to Bizerte, Tunisia. At 0400 on 1 April, enemy planes dropped parachute flares prior to attacking the convoy. Evasive maneuvering and a screen of antiaircraft fire, however, kept the five two-engine bombers' score to one burned merchant ship. The convoy arrived at Bizerte two days after the air attack.

On 11 April 1944 she joined convoy GUS-36 for the voyage back to the U.S. As flagship of Escort Division 23, *Sellstrom* guided the New York section of the convoy into the swept channel on 1 May and patrolled the area until all merchant

vessels had pilots on board. On 2 May anchored in Gravesend Bay to unload ammunition prior to going to the Navy Yard for repairs.

She departed New York on 13 May en route to Casco Bay, Maine. After completing refresher training there on 17 May, the escort vessel proceeded to the Naval Mine Depot at Yorktown, Virginia. On 23 May 1944 *Sellstrom* assumed her patrol station and began escort of convoy UGS-43 bound for Tunisia. She turned over the convoy to British escorts and entered Bizerte Harbor on 12 June 1944. On the 20th, she picked up GUS-43, delivering her section at New York on 9 July. She docked at the Boston Navy yard Annex on 11 July, remaining there until the 23rd. From 24 July to 9 August, *Sellstrom* engaged in refresher training off the coast of Maine.

After preparations on 10 and 11 August at the Boston Navy Yard, *Sellstrom* again reported for convoy duty. She successfully escorted sections of convoy TCU-35 into the Clyde and Loch Ewe, Scotland, and into Lough Foyle, Northern Ireland, on 21 and 22 August 1944. The destroyer escort then berthed at Londonderry from 23 to 26 August. Underway again on the 27th, *Sellstrom* escorted convoy UCT-35 back to the east coast, arriving on 5 September.

After training off New London, Connecticut, *Sellstrom* received fuel and provisions while moored off 33rd Street, Brooklyn Pier. She departed New York Harbor on 29 September and resumed convoy duty. The destroyer escort accompanied six more Atlantic convoys, delivering merchantmen to the ports of Belfast, Northern Ireland; Liverpool, Plymouth, Southampton, and Birkenhead, England; and Le Havre, France. After operating in the Caribbean early in June, she set her course for Charleston, arriving on 17 June 1945.

As the war was over in Europe, *Sellstrom* loaded supplies at Charleston in preparation for duty in the Pacific. She departed Charleston on 23 June, transited the Panama Canal between the 27th and the 29th, and arrived at San Francisco on 7 July. On 11 July, she departed San Francisco and proceeded to Alaskan waters, arriving at Adak on the 19th. From 21 to 27 July 1945, she remained at Dutch Harbor for assigned availability. The *Sellstrom* escorted her first Alaskan convoy, a minesweeper and eight LCIs, from Cold Bay at Adak, from 30 July to 1 August. Her operations consisted of routine patrols and serving as a guardship vessel for flights over the northern Japanese island chain. She also served as a station vessel for the record non-stop flight of three B-29s from Tokyo to Washington, DC.

From December 1945 through February 1946, *Sellstrom* operated in the post-war Pacific, visiting such ports as Tsingtao, China; Jinsen, Korea; and Pearl Harbor. From 17 to 20 March 1946, the destroyer escort transited the Panama Canal en route to drydocking in Charleston. On 13 June 1946 *Sellstrom* was placed out of commission, in reserve, and her Coast Guard crew was removed.

She reentered commissioned service with the Navy (and an all-Navy crew) on 1 October 1956. She was decommissioned in June of 1960 and was sold for scrap to the Peck Iron Metal Works at Portsmouth, Virginia, in April of 1967.

The *Sellstrom* earned one battle star for her service during World War II.

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**"USS Sellstrom (DE-255.)"; Rec'd 16 Sept. 1944; Photo No. USN-177791; photographer unknown. Official USN photo, released.**

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**Sources:**

*Sellstrom* Ship's File, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

U.S. Navy. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. Vol. VI. Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1976, pp. 434-435.

