

## REQUIEM FOR A LADY

There were no flags flying, no bands on the pier, no wives waiting and crying as the ir kids looked on. Everyone stood straining their eyes to get sight of dad on the deck in his clean starched whites. There was no wreath of flowered lei's hanging off her sail, no dolphin flag sailing from her scope. CinPacFlt wasn't there in his dress uniform with gold braids waiting to congratulate the captain and crew for a successful mission. No, there was none of that.

On the cloudy and rainy morning of thursday January 25, 2001 the remains of the once noble and proud United States Man of War, USS Barbel SS 580 slowly gave up her position along side the pier. She was coerced into the channel by a private tug, pulling her out of her berth in San Pedro California, where she had been tied up for the past 8 years. She no longer resembled that once mighty denizen of the deep. She had lost her sail and superstructure and had been turned into a home for the harbor seagulls.

Her service had been exemplary to her country and especially to her crew since the first time she hit the waves in 1957. She didn't look like much, at only 219 foot long, one of the three smallest attack submarines ever build for the modern Navy. But she wasn't small in heart and surely not in the success she earned over the next 30 years. Between her and her two sisters' and their dedicated crews, they made a mark in the modern Navy that was never equaled by any other diesel fleet boat. Out of all the Unit and Presidential Citations issued to post World War II Navy submarines, the three sisters were honored to receive four. The USS Bonefish and USS Barbel received one each and the USS Blueback earned two. A great legacy.

If this was the case, why wasn't there anyone to bid her a proper good-bye. No one to throw flowers on the waves or come to attention as they presented one last and honored salute to a noble warrior's last patrol? Wasn't she entitled to a Vikings funeral with the burning funeral pyre instead of a just slipping below the waves into an unmarked grave?

The Navy has a strange way of honoring their hero's. Maybe we the sailors who served aboard the "Boats" grew closer to them then the Navy did. We depended on them for our safety and our lives. Our wives depended on them to take us to sea and bring us home again. The "B Girls" did this for thousands of lowly sailors that called them home through both wartime and peacetime.

There's nothing that can be said that can express our deepest sorrow for the death of our friend, companion and shipmate the USS Barbel. May she rest in peace, below the waves, until the sea gives up her dead.

Respectfully  
Fred Tredy STS 2 (SS)  
Diesels Boats Forever