

Two weeks after V-J Day the **Baya** departed Subic Bay for San Francisco, and on 24



September steamed under the Golden Gate Bridge as part of Admiral Halsey's symbolic parade. Shortly thereafter, she began preparations for inactivation, and on 14 May 1946, she went out of commission in reserve at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in California.

The **Baya** was recommissioned on 10 February 1948 and converted to an Electronics Experimental submarine by the Mare Island Naval Shipyard and the Naval Electronics Laboratory (NEL) at Point Loma (San Diego) California. The **Baya** conducted experiments for NEL; participated in local operations near San Diego; and served with the Joint American-Canadian Task Force that gathered scientific data off the west coast of Canada during November and December of 1948.

During 1949, The **Baya** was turned over to NEL at San Diego, California, to be a sonar test ship working with NEL and the California Institute of Technology (CalTech) in Pasadena, largely in the development and testing of SONAR buoys, where aircraft would drop, using them to listen, with an extensive and substantial range, for the telltale sounds of submarine cavitation and other noises. When found, the strategy was to attack and alert other aircraft and surface ships to follow and attack the submarine until it was destroyed.

While assigned to NEL for work, and moored at NEL's dolphin piers, it remained in Submarine Flotilla One, assigned to Submarine Squadron Three attached to the USS **Sperry** (AS 12) for administrative and maintenance purposes.

To accomplish the tasks required of it by NEL and CalTech scientists, all torpedoloading and handling gear in the forward torpedo room was removed to provide space for experimental electronic equipment, although the torpedo tubes and torpedo racks remained intact, ready to be activated if the need arose.

On 12 August 1949, the "SS 318" **Baya** was reclassified as an "AGSS 318" submarine "AG" being the designation for "Auxiliary General."

During the period July through September of

1949, the USS **Baya** (AGSS 318) made a cruise to the Arctic to gather valuable scientific data in the Bering and Chukchi Seas.

During the Korean Conflict years of 1950 to 1955 the **Baya** continued her work with NEL and CalTech. Between July and October

**THE USS BAYA'S PEACETIME INSIGNIA AS AN AUXILIARY GENERAL (AGSS) SUBMARINE**



**A bespectacled bearded scientist riding astride a happy fish, amid electronic symbols**

of 1955, the **Baya** was deployed to Pearl Harbor for further experimental research. During 1958 and 1959, USS **Baya** was completely reworked to test LORAD equipment, an experimental longrange sonar.

The Forward torpedo tubes were removed and replaced by a blunt bow with a mushroom anchor in the bottom of the hull. A 23-foot section was added between the former forward torpedo room and the forward battery compartment, with quarters for twelve scientists. These modifications increased her overall length to 330 feet, her surface displace-



**THE BAYA CREW CELEBRATING ITS 2,500 DIVE NOVEMBER 7, 1954**

ment to 2,220 tons, and her submerged displacement to approximately 2,600 tons.

Accommodations for the crew were increased to provide for eight to eleven officers and 68 to 70 enlisted men. One main propulsion engine was removed to gain additional interior space for these modifications. The changes in the hull configuration, the lengthening of the hull and the loss of one main propulsion engine...all caused the top surface speed to drop to 10.5 knots about onehalf its preconversion speed.

The additional hull mass also caused the top submerged speed to drop to 8 knots. The original main propulsion motor reduction gear drives for the propeller shafts were replaced by direct drive motors to reduce shipgenerated noise. Laboratory facilities were incorporated into the modifications by the Mare Island Naval Shipyard...which did the work.

During 1962 and 1963, further alterations were made, followed, in 1964, by the installation of the BRASS-II sonar equipment and a second set of LORAD hydrophone "wings." During 1967, all remaining firecontrol and weapons equipment was removed, leaving the ship completely demilitarized and utterly defenseless!

The USS **Baya** (AGSS 318) continued to serve NEL in this capacity until she was decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Register on 30 October 1972. On 12 October 1973, the submarine was sold for scrap to the National Metal and Steel Company of Terminal Island, California, for \$142,615... which marked the end of the proud USS **Baya** right down to the last screw that may have fallen silently to the ground, as the final vestige of the boat disappeared forever! It was, indeed, not only the end of the **Baya's** twenty-eight years of honorable service... it also marked the end of an era!

Author: Art Randall, Commander District Five, Member of the Holland Club and the Topeka-Jefferson City Base of the US Submarine Veterans, Inc., was the **Baya's** Yeoman from 1952 to 1955.

Resource Acknowledgment: Much of the foregoing information was obtained with the invaluable assistance of John C. Miller, who erected a USS **Baya** Website as a tribute to his grandfather Horace Gary Keith, QM3, who was a crew members at the **Baya's** Commissioning on May 20th, 1944, through to its sailing to San Francisco at war's end, on the 24th of September, 1945.

John's Website, to which the Author also has contributed, may be found at: <http://www.ussbaya.com>

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