

Once Upon A Time

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We once rode under the seas in boats
And dazzled all the young ladies with all our quotes
We would stay out all night 'til the cows came home
In every exotic port we would roam
We were wild and wooly, invincible young men
Bound into a Brotherhood by an odd looking little pin
Some sailed on smokeboats by diesel electric power
Some by nuclear propulsion which was their shining hour
I feel that I was doubly blessed to experience more than most
Because I got to serve my country on both types of undersea boats
A lot of you started out on diesel boats and ended up on boomers or a fast-attack
My lot was I started on an FBM and was allowed to turn the clock back
My first boat was a boomer, so squeaky and so clean
That it looked more like an hospital boiler room than a Navy submarine
But she took me in and made me home
And filled me with awe and pride
And I'll never ever forget the honor I felt the day I qualified
Five patrols later and feeling pretty cocky
I had turned into a seasoned old salt, a veteran submarine jockey
I thought I had the world by the tail but my life was about to swerve
After I'd made 3rd Class, the Navy threw me a curve
I couldn't believe the orders that NavBuPers had wrote
I had been transferred off my boomer to a Guppy III diesel boat
Being full of shock and not quite knowing what to do or think
I sat down with my boomer crew for one last final drink
I was told by one of my shipmates that I would never forget this day
Because I was being transferred from a Cadillac to a worn out old Model A
My old chief winked and shook my hand and said you're going to have some fun
You're going to experience the old fashion way of how we used to get 'er done
My first look at my new home was one I'll always remember
As I climbed onboard her and went down the hatch at old Sub Pier November
A new guy coming from a Nuke boat throws a diesel crew in quite a spin
Until they all saw that shiny reflection of that odd looking little pin
It didn't take long to be accepted and we got along just fine
Because I'd earned all of their respect and they had surely earned all of mine
So another orphan get a new family that will stick with him 'til the end
And he now has earned the right to call them all Shipmates, Brothers and Friends
We all lived for the moment and danced right out on the edge
We were all like modern day pirates who ruled the briny brink
We acted on dare and impulse without caring what others might think
Our submarines have stood the test of time clear back to '41
When we stemmed the terrible invading tide from the Land of the Rising Sun
Fifty-two boats and their crews were so great a price to pay
But that was our cost of Liberty when we sailed off into Harm's Way
But in truth, with time, we have slowed down, grown older, wiser and tame
And lost much of that craziness we proudly used to claim
The days of wild abandon have all been mellowed down
All the times and places we used to tear around and rip
Have now all been replaced by Geritol and tubes of Poly-grip

The old times I remember seems so much like it was a dream
That I really served my Navy hitch onboard a submarine
The things we did in secret and the missions oh so bold
Many of these can never or ever will be told
We hunted the Bear in his watery lair
And learned all the tricks of his trade
We stalked our foe in depths below and whatever sounds he made
Our boats were like ghosts that haunted Ivan's coasts, keeping our enemy off guard
Our missions were trying, right out on the edge and sometimes really quite tough
But back then it was years before they came up with a name and called them "Blind Man's Bluff"
When the Soviets threatened to turn up the heat as everybody knows
Our silent boats won us victory and brought the Cold War to a close
So we'll hold fast to our history and gather together each year
To share tall tales of escapades mingled with laughter and beer
Then was then and now is now
And our deeds should be passed on and told somehow
It's our job to keep our stories true and pass our legacy on down to you
You, who now wear the Dolphins on your chest,
To those who have qualified and passed the test
You, who have accepted our honored crown,
You, who live by the phrase, "Take her on down"
So to you young lads we pass the baton. It's up to you now to carry on
Make us proud and keep us free as you navigate the depths of the seas
So whenever we gather together and talk of boats and shipmates gone by
It's OK to get that misty feeling that wells up from deep in your eye
Get up and look in the mirror and you'll full understand why
That age has come and caught up with us and technology has passed us by
So now whenever I raise my glass and toast each boat and their crew
I drink from both sides of my cup to honor each and every one of you
I drink deep to toast the future and I taste to remember the past
And I let my drink rest upon my tongue so my memories will forever last
Of Cracker Jack hats and bell-bottom blues and all the good times I hold of my past
One by one we'll slip away and sail to another shore
Where we'll meet again our Brothers all, who have gone on ahead before
The noise we'll make and our welcome there will rise up quite a din
For St. Peter will announce over Heaven's 1MC, there's another submariner checking in.