



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WORLD WAR TWO SUBMARINE TO BE GIVEN SECOND CHANCE**

Efforts are underway to protect, renovate, and restore a rare World War II submarine and its Memorial facility in Muskogee, Oklahoma. After 35 years of resting in the soil of a former bean field along the shores of the Arkansas River, USS *Batfish* volunteers, veterans, and previous members of her crew are now striving to save this one-of-a-kind historical relic.

The USS *Batfish*, a Balao class submarine, fought against the Imperial Japanese navy in the South Pacific from 1943-1945. Her most famous act was the remarkable sinking of three Japanese submarines over a three-day period. The *Batfish* continued serving in the US Navy throughout the Korean War conflict and then as a training and auxiliary vessel until 1969 when she was struck from the records and decommissioned. She languished near the port of New Orleans until acquired by the state of Oklahoma in 1971.

*Batfish* became part of Oklahoma's landscape in 1972, when efforts by former US submarine veterans and Senator Inhofe acquired it from the US navy's mothballed fleet. But her journey up the Arkansas River was fraught with difficulty, including her near loss after a rogue wave from a passing tanker sank one and severely damaged two of the four barges supporting her along the trek. By 1972, the *Batfish* settled in along the river's edge at the Port of Muskogee and opened to visitors, until she was permanently relocated to the new Memorial grounds in 1973.

Since that time, the submarine has faced the onslaught of extreme temperatures and climate, including two massive floods. In 1986 rising waters re-floated the *Batfish* over 5 feet from the ground until receding waters allowed her to resettle at a slight list. Over 35 years later, thousands of visitors have walked through her interior compartments and played with her exterior guns and hardware. But now, the ravages of time and neglect threaten to destroy this once proud and highly decorated warship.

Beginning October 18, 2008, volunteers that include former crew members and over 40 US Navy Sea Cadets will begin efforts to save the *Batfish*. Throughout that week, the sub's old decking will be removed and replaced, the loading of two WWII era torpedoes will commence, and preparations to begin Phase One of proposed renovation, preservation, and development plans for the Memorial will begin.

Phase One's efforts would include removing her lead-based exterior paint, repairing serious structural damages, placing the sub on a protective cradle, and repainting the *Batfish* in her wartime color scheme. Future phases include construction of a new Museum facility and acquisition of the USS *Oklahoma* mast, located during dredging operations at Pearl Harbor for the USS *Missouri* battleship memorial. Current estimates place the cost of saving the submarine and the Memorial at \$7-10 million dollars.

Memorial Director, Rick Dennis says, "This sub is an important part of US history. Now, more than ever, we need the help of her citizens to save her." To learn more about the *Batfish* and how you can help save her, visit [www.ussbatfish.com](http://www.ussbatfish.com).

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