

## Relics

MacGyver spun off the last bolt holding the carburetor down and sighed. The old Chevy pickup had been faltering a bit lately every time he hit the gas, and so it was time to give the old girl an overhaul.

He wandered over to the workbench, sat the carburetor down, and began to inspect it. There was a rebuild kit waiting and ready, along with a plentiful amount of cleaning fluid, and he hoped that a few new gaskets, a good fettle and maybe a new accelerator pump would be all that was needed to get his beast back in full form.

It was nice to just be able to take the time to do something like this, instead of chasing around the globe for the Phoenix Foundation, or getting mixed up in bizarre Halloween killings like he had the previous month with Neil Ryder.

He grabbed a stool and began to separate the unit to get at the jets when a car pulling up outside caught his attention. Of course, it could be someone for Mel, or one of his other crazy neighbors, but somehow Mac had that “feeling” his peace was once again about to be shattered.

He ignored the sound of the vehicle’s engine until he heard it die and two doors slam, then he simply couldn’t resist getting up to see what was going on.

MacGyver was halfway across the room when he heard a tapping sound, followed by a knock at the door.

*Pete Thornton, then!* Mac couldn’t tell from just the knock, but the tapping was definitely from Pete’s white cane.

“C’mon in,” he offered, turning back to look longingly at the Chevy.

Pete tapped his way across the workshop and adeptly stopped at Mac’s side. “Doing a bit of DIY mechanics?” he asked, raising a brow.

Mac smiled and grabbed a cloth, wiping some of the grease and oil from his hands. It was amazing what Pete could figure out, even though he didn’t have his sight anymore.

“Yeah, you just can’t trust garages these days. And besides, it’s kinda therapeutic to just sit and rebuild something, y’know?” He perched himself on the open flatbed of the truck.

Pete followed, taking a hand up from his friend when he got closer. “So you’re pretty busy..?” There was *that* look in his eyes as he asked the question. The look that meant he wasn’t just here on a social call.

MacGyver found it slightly amusing that after all this time, Pete couldn't come right on out and ask for what he wanted, but he didn't say so. "Aww, c'mon, Pete what's eating at you? You got an assignment you want me on, right?"

Pete squirmed a little. "Well...it's not exactly an assignment, more of a working vacation."

Mac raised a brow as he rubbed more grime from his hands. "Okay, so you wanna tell me what it's all about?"

Pete seemed to relax. "A little over a week ago, an amateur diver spotted a sunken German U-boat in the Baltic, and it looks intact..."

"U-boats and war relics are found pretty much all the time. What's so special about this one to get Phoenix involved?" Any thoughts of the Chevy or the carburetor were slowly ebbing away as Mac's inquisitive nature kicked in.

"Because this was no ordinary U-boat," Pete confirmed. "It was on a mission for the E.R.R. It sailed right at the end of the second war with stolen Nazi treasures onboard just like the ones we dealt with during the Rubens painting incident."

MacGyver's mind fleetingly jumped back to an auction that Pete had been trying to buy a painting at a few years previously. He'd won the bidding, only to have an elderly gentleman named Sam claim it was his – stolen during the war when the Nazi's had pillaged art galleries, national treasures, and Jewish family homes for anything antique they could find.

On that occasion, the good guys had won the day and the art had been returned to its rightful owners, albeit over forty years after the original thefts.

"Wouldn't you be better talking to Laura Sand than me? She's the expert on this stuff, and she was more than helpful last time?" Mac was thinking of the expert Pete had brought in to verify the Rubens, and who had eventually helped them stop a very nasty incident with modern-day Nazis.

Pete smiled. "We're bringing Laura in on this too. You guys worked too well together before to pass up the opportunity again."

Mac ran a hand through his hair. He really should have known Pete would be one step ahead in the planning department, which also meant he was pretty sure he was going to talk MacGyver into the assignment.

"This might seem like a dumb question, but surely there won't be any of the art or antiques left to find down there after all this time? I mean the sub's probably flooded and full of marine life by now." Mac didn't want to be a killjoy, but the obvious had to be pointed out, even though Pete most likely knew the facts and figures. "Not to mention, won't it be classed as a war grave? In which case we won't be able to touch it?"

“We’ve already anticipated that,” Pete confirmed. “Nikki contacted the German War Graves Commission and they’ve given us the go ahead to send a mini-sub down to check out the U-boat. Technically, if there are no crewmen aboard, we can go ahead and investigate. If she sank with the men,” Pete shrugged. “Then she’s untouchable under maritime law, and we have to scrub the search.”

“Okay,” Mac conceded. “So we have permission to check it out, but don’t you think the amateur diver’s description is likely to be a little exaggerated? I mean, c’mon, this thing has been down there the best part of half a century?”

Pete bobbed his head. “It is possible, and the foundation isn’t expecting it to be quite as good as this guy suggested. On the other hand, the wreck does have something going for it – it’s in the Baltic. There’s a lack of current and salinity in the water there that helps preserve sunken vessels better than anywhere else in the world.”

“Yeah, I’d kinda heard that,” MacGyver admitted with a sigh. “So what do you me for?”

“You worked well with Dr. Sand before, you know about the E.R.R. side of things, and hey, this is one assignment where you won’t get smacked on the head, chased or shot at. I thought you’d grab at it!” Pete chuckled. “And if that’s not reason enough, Nikki and I are going along too. We’ll stay topside, and you can go down in the mini-sub with Laura.”

MacGyver considered it, letting his gaze wander to the Chevy. There would probably still be time to fix it up before the trip, and it really would be good to work with Pete and Nikki in the field again without fearing for anyone’s life.

Mac smiled, even though Pete couldn’t see it, and then patted his old friend on the back. “Okay, you got me. When do we leave?”

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***Phoenix Research Vessel “Eternal Flame”  
Baltic Sea  
Three weeks later...***

MacGyver watched as Pete Thornton made his way across the lurching ship’s deck, somehow managing to keep on course with his cane, despite the heavy waves.

Pete had just come on board with Nikki after stopping off to pick up more research. Mac had arrived some twenty minutes earlier via a different chopper and had already stowed his gear in the allocated cabin.

“You finally made it, huh?” MacGyver met Pete halfway, rubbing his gloved hands together against the chill of the wind that even his thick winter jacket wasn’t quelling. “We must be nuts coming out here!” He found himself shouting over the noise of the sea and the retreating helicopter, and was glad when they reached the relative calm of the bridge.

Pete blinked as they entered, apparently sensing the change in conditions. “You know you love it,” he retorted.

Mac opened his mouth to reply, but an officer broke away from the rest of the crew and nodded as he came towards them. He tipped his cap. “I’m Captain McKenna, and you two must be Thornton and MacGyver?”

Mac held out his hand. “I’m MacGyver.”

McKenna shook it, and then turned to Pete offering his hand again. “I guess that makes you my boss?”

Pete chuckled and took the proffered appendage. “I guess it does! Listen, can you give MacGyver a tour of the ship? I really need to stow my things and get my bearings before Nikki declares me lost at sea!”

This time it was McKenna’s turn to chuckle. He was a tall and imposing figure with a thin frame and short mustache, and the laughter was definitely unexpected from his previous manner. “I’d be glad to,” he eventually agreed, and then turned to a young crewman. “Baines, can you escort Mr. Thornton to his cabin?”

Baines nodded, gave a small unofficial salute and then offered up an arm to Pete, who took it gratefully as the *Eternal Flame* pitched as it hit a swell.

McKenna watched them go and then fixed his gaze on MacGyver. He held it there for several seconds before gesturing towards the open hatch that led to outside.

Mac noted the captain’s appraisal and wondered what the man was making of him. Was it distrust, or something else? For now, he simply stored the thought in the back of his mind, and followed the officer back out into the unruly Baltic weather.

McKenna made a beeline for the DSRV, which was currently hanging from the side of the ship like a Christmas tree bauble. With the rise and fall of the waves it seemed to rock precariously from side to side, its bulbous white shape making it look like something from a tale of alien invasion instead of deep sea exploration and rescue.

“This is the *Sun Dog*, she’s a specially adapted LR7 the Phoenix Foundation commissioned a couple of years ago. For this mission, she’s been fitted with a docking collar specific to the U-boat’s escape hatch in case there’s still hull integrity. You’ll join Dr. Sand on board, along with one of my specially trained crewmen.” McKenna pointed to a giant reel that had a thick cable wound around it. “You’ll be connected to the *Eternal Flame* via an umbilical to improve communications, although the DSRV can operate fully without it.”

MacGyver inspected the LR7, shielding his eyes from bitter ocean spray to take in its size, controls and the tools it appeared to carry. “You really think there’s a chance the sub still has hull integrity after all these years? I mean, c’mon, that’s one heck of a long shot!”

“Stranger things have happened at sea.” McKenna smiled and jerked a thumb back to the hatch they’d used. “Look at the *Marie Celeste!*” He winked as he mentioned the ghost boat, and then clambered back inside the *Eternal Flame*.

MacGyver grimaced at the comparison and then rubbed at his head absently. Heck, what did it matter if this was one spooky mystery? It sure beat getting cracked on the skull for a living. What more could he wish for?

After taking two corridors and a set of stairs down into the bowels of the ship, McKenna paused outside another hatch. “This is the control room where we coordinate what’s going on with the DSRV and relay information back and forth.” He swung open the door with a metallic grind and entered, heading straight to a board with photos and printouts pinned to it. “This is all the information we currently have on U3524 – the designation the diver found on the sub.”

MacGyver instantly locked onto the images and details as if they were pieces of a giant puzzle. He loved fathoming things out, and this was one of the oldest conundrums he’d faced.

Was the U-boat really carrying treasures? Was there even the slightest chance it was intact, and not a war grave? Would they even find it given the current conditions in the Baltic?

McKenna appeared to realize his companion was already transfixed, and began to read out the data Phoenix had managed to piece together. “According to the official records, U3524 was scuttled by her commander, Hans Ludwig Witt in Flensburg Forde on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1945. Of course, we now know this is incorrect.”

“Unless the amateur diver got his numbers wrong,” Mac pointed out. “It’s gotta be kinda murky down there, ya know? Maybe he found a totally different sub.”

“No, its U3524...”

Another voice joined their conversation – a voice MacGyver instantly recognized. Mac spun to see Laura Sand standing by the hatch with an apologetic-looking crewman.

“MacGyver this Dr. Laura Sand...” McKenna was going to say more, but Mac held up a hand to stop him.

“We’ve already met,” MacGyver explained. “It’s a long story and one all about the E.R.R.”

McKenna looked puzzled for a moment but then turned to the crewman. “This is our communications officer, Dan Engel.”

Engel nodded and Mac shook his hand.

When the introductions were over, he looked to Laura Sand, and then the board where he'd been scrutinizing any intelligence Phoenix had gathered. "So you're sure this is U3524?"

Laura stepped to his side. "According to my records, a U-boat that matches this one's description is listed in E.R.R. files, although we never had its actual designation number before."

"So you really can't be sure until we get down there?" MacGyver probed.

Sand cocked her head apologetically. "Not one hundred percent, but, if we're correct this U-boat was carrying some of the most treasured art and antiquities you could dream of. Rubens *Annunciation*, Van Gogh's *Painter on the Road to Tarascon*..."

"I thought the Van Gogh was destroyed when the allies bombed Magdeburg," Engel interrupted. "I'm sure I read that somewhere."

Laura nodded. "That's what the Nazi's wanted the public to believe. There is however, a strong suspicion it survived and was on U3524, along with so much more."

Engel didn't appear swayed. "But should we really be getting excited?" He asked, looking at McKenna for apparent support. "I mean, if the submarine's compartments were flooded when it sank, there will be nothing left by now. And honestly, that's the most likely scenario after all this time." The young blond officer rubbed absently at his neck, looking almost sad.

"I hate to say it," MacGyver winced. "But he's right."

Laura smiled enthusiastically, as if she refused to accept defeat. "Well then, what are we waiting for? Let's get down there and find out!"

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***Phoenix DSRV "Sun Dog"***  
***Somewhere in the Baltic Sea***  
***Two Hours Later...***

MacGyver watched in awe from the mini-sub's huge glass frontage as they crawled along the bottom of the Baltic. Taking in the world's wonders above ground, whether it be wild mustangs or endangered rhinos was one thing, but to see what happened in the hidden world beneath the waves, well that was something else.

Mac had been down on dives before, but on those occasions it had been strictly business – no time to enjoy what was around him, or indeed to enjoy the wonders of what made a mini-sub tick.

Laura Sand didn't appear to be quite as impressed with their dive so far. Every few seconds, she'd sigh, check her watch and then scowl.

“These things take time,” Mac offered. “The diver who found the wreck wasn’t all that specific about co-ordinates, so we can’t just drop down to the sub, we have to search for it ourselves.”

“I know that,” Sand snapped and then slowly exhaled. “Sorry,” she apologized. “I just want to find the U-boat intact, so we have a chance to get its contents back where they belong.”

MacGyver wanted to say again that he didn’t think that was likely, but mentioning the submarine was probably a wreck didn’t seem to phase Sand one bit. “I understand,” he eventually conceded. “But it’s pretty murky down here, what with all the mud we’re disturbing and all. We have to do this by the numbers...”

As he spoke, he took another glance out into the depths. Suddenly, the sea he’d found captivating seconds ago now looked more dark, and much more ominous. Mac pushed the thought away. The hazy water wasn’t caused by anything dark or scary, it was simple mud, and that may well have helped preserve what they were searching for.

The pilot of the DSRV, Larry Mortimer, broke MacGyver from further thought. “Hey, I think we’ve got something...”

Mortimer eased the two joysticks that controlled the mini-sub’s planes and motors, pointing it in a slightly new direction.

Mac and Laura quickly took position either side the pilot and peered into the gloom, but at first they didn’t see what Mortimer’s trained eyes had.

Mortimer grinned cheekily as he navigated towards his find. “You guys want some gum?” He deftly removed a stick of Juicy Fruit while still steering and popped it in his mouth. “I have issues with the whole depth versus ear popping thing,” he explained.

Laura scowled, her expression suggesting she was mortified he’d even offered. “Err, no thank you,” she replied curtly.

Mortimer shrugged and Mac couldn’t resist a smile. This was one weird dive.

“There...I see something!” Laura was suddenly pointing excitedly to their left as what appeared to be a submarine’s tail came into view.

Mortimer nodded and spun the DSRV over just a touch to compensate for drift. Once they were hovering over the U-boat’s aft section, he stopped the maneuvering thrusters completely and simply let the mini-sub hang in the water.

MacGyver whistled in complete astonishment. The amateur diver *had* been wrong about the U-boat’s condition alright – the thing wasn’t just well preserved, it looked like it had only been submerged for a few months.

*This is impossible!* Mac’s mind screamed that he was dreaming, but he wasn’t, this was very real, and very *wrong*.

“I don’t believe it!” Laura’s hands were in the air in amazement one second and wringing with excitement the next. She was like a teenager meeting her screen idol instead of a trained expert on a scientific expedition. “It’s intact!” She oozed, “I’m sure of it! We can save the art!”

MacGyver put a calming hand on her arm. “Hey, what say we take it down a notch, huh?” He tried to quell Sand’s exhilaration just a touch without drowning her enthusiasm. “We have to remember this might still be a war grave, ya know? There might be bodies...” Mac let his eyes meet the doctor’s and kept them there until she drew down a breath and nodded.

Sand pulled free of his grasp, ran a hand through her hair absently and turned back to Mortimer seemingly fully composed. “Can you get us closer?” She asked in a level, almost neutral voice.

“You betcha!” Mortimer grinned and began to chew faster and faster as he moved the DSRV along the length of the U-boat.

From what MacGyver could tell, the submarine was slightly on its side, but if they could find the escape hatch, and it was clear of any debris, they might just be able to use the docking collar.

*Debris?* His mind questioned. *There is no debris. Nothing is damaged on this thing, and there’s hardly any sea life attached. It should be encrusted in the stuff after all these years...*

Mortimer’s voice broke him from further deliberation. “I’ve found the hatch and it’s clear. Are we gonna open up this can or what?” he drawled.

“I’ll call topside and ask them for the go ahead.” Mac moved to the DSRV’s radio and unclipped the mike. “*Eternal Flame* this is *Sun Dog*, we have a visual on U3524 and she looks intact. Do we have a go to use the docking collar?”

The line hissed, popped and then after a few seconds went completely dead. MacGyver keyed the mike a few times until the static returned, then repeated the message.

Nothing.

“I guess they’re busy having lunch,” he quipped. “I sure hope they save us some.”

“Try again!” The impatience was slowly seeping back into Sand’s voice. “Why aren’t they answering? The line and cameras should be monitored without fail!”

Mac shrugged. He had a bad feeling of his own about the lack of response, and it wasn’t because he was eager to open up the sub, or because he was worried about missing lunch. He tried again, and after a second failed attempt a disembodied voice finally came on the line.

It was Nikki Carpenter.

“Mac...unexpected...storm...crew busy...”

Parts of the message were missing, but MacGyver could still hear the tension and fear in Nikki’s voice – and Nikki didn’t panic easily.

He clicked the mike, worry lines filling his brow. “Can you put Pete or McKenna on?”

“Negative, McKenna too busy on bridge...can’t understand why we...no warning, no radar.... Can’t fin...Pete...” Nikki’s voice trailed and faded with a staccato hiss and then came back again as if someone had turned up the volume. “Ship taking a battering...”

MacGyver swallowed and was about to respond when he heard more muted sounds in the background followed by a new voice on the line.

“MacGyver, its McKenna. I need to disconnect...umbilical...storm...or we’ll start to drag you across sea bed...”

Laura’s face turned ashen. “He wants to cut our connection to topside?” She shook her head. “He can’t, what if we can’t get back!”

Mortimer was still smiling, either oblivious to any danger, or confident in the DSRV’s systems. “Don’t worry,” he reassured. “This little puppy wasn’t designed to need a line to the surface anyway.” He patted the DSRV’s console. “Think of it as an optional extra. We’ll be fine until the storm subsides. Heck, it won’t reach us down here, so we can carry on investigating your U-boat.”

Laura bit into her lip, but didn’t complain further. She slumped back into one of the mini-sub’s sparse seats and stared out at U3524 as if it was suddenly cursed.

Given its bizarre condition, MacGyver wasn’t sure she was wrong. He keyed the mike one last time. “Understood, *Eternal Flame*. Good luck.”

“Roger that,” McKenna confirmed. “I’ll re-establish contact on...regular channel once unhooked...storm...subsides.”

There was a click and the line went eerily silent. No one in the DSRV spoke. They’d gone from excitement to concern in just a few minutes.

Mac reached up to put the handset back on its hook, but the mini-sub suddenly veered in the water, almost making him stumble into the metal hull. He steadied himself and turned to ask Mortimer what he was doing, but the pilot wasn’t touching the controls.

In fact, Mortimer’s alarmed expression suggested he had no clue why they were moving.

And they *were* moving – straight towards the rear planes of the U-boat.

Mortimer grabbed at the joysticks trying to stop their drift, but the motors simply weren't strong enough.

MacGyver scrambled into a small glass observation bubble on the top of the DSRV and tried to see what was happening, even though he already suspected he knew the answer.

The umbilical that McKenna had intended to detach was still secure, and it was allowing the *Eternal Flame* to drag them across the sea bed as it pitched and yawed on the Baltic's crashing waves above.

Mac winced at the abrupt memory of his last time in a mini-sub. On that occasion it had been in a test tank, but he'd been just as trapped as he was now, and at least that time he was a heck of a lot closer to the surface to try and escape. He dropped out of the observation bubble to see Sand asking if she could help Mortimer, but the pilot was shaking his head, his attempts to control the DSRV failing.

"The umbilical won't disengage this end!" Mortimer yelled. "We're going to crash into the U-boat!" The pilot covered his face with his arms, expecting the worst.

Laura backed up from the glass nose cone and turned to MacGyver just as the DSRV smashed into U3524.

There was a metallic screech and the sudden hiss of escaping air as the two vessels collided. The *Sun Dog's* smaller frame took the brunt of the crash, its robotic front arm splintering away completely and sinking away into the depths.

MacGyver felt himself tossed forwards from the impact and narrowly missed being slammed into one of the empty front seats. Laura yelled, but he wasn't sure whether it was from fear, or an injury.

The red emergency lights kicked in, flickered, and then died, leaving the DSRV in complete darkness and at the mercy of the deep.

## **Part Two**

Seconds ticked by, and eventually MacGyver decided to try and move. Tentatively stretching out his arms, then legs he confirmed that he was still in one piece. He fumbled in the darkness, until his fingers made contact with the seat he'd almost crashed into. He used it to push up from the floor just as the emergency lighting kicked back in.

To Mac's right, Laura was brushing at her clothes, her hands shaking, but she too appeared in one piece.

Mortimer was already back at the controls, pushing buttons and throwing levers with a look of concern quickly spreading across his features.

MacGyver joined him, resting an arm on the back on the pilot's seat and looking out at the odd angle they were sitting at in comparison to the apparently undamaged U-boat. "Looks like German build quality gave us a thrashing," he commented. "So how bad is it?"

"We have some major issues," Mortimer confirmed. "The umbilical has finally disengaged, but we've lost the motors, the planes are partially jammed so we only have limited steering, and ballast control is down, so we can't just blow the tanks to get to the surface." He paused, chewed a little and then scowled. "Shall I go on?"

"Oh I think that's enough for now." Mac glanced at Sand. She'd turned a ghostly white, which he hoped was down to fear rather than lack of life support. "How about oxygen?" he asked quietly.

Mortimer tapped a gauge. "Life support appears undamaged, although that's not gonna be much comfort if we can't find a way to move..."

Mac grabbed the radio mike and keyed it. "*Sun Dog* to *Eternal Flame*, we have a situation down here, please respond?" He tried several times, knowing how long it had taken on his previous attempt.

This time, the line remained silent.

Laura swallowed hard. "It's just because we lost the umbilical right? And the storm is hampering normal communications, yes?"

Mac licked his lips. Should he tell a possible lie and agree, or proffer up his real suspicions that things might be as bad topside as they were on the sea floor?

In the end, Mortimer took care of the answer. "It could be they're just busy with their own issues right now." He looked soberly at MacGyver. "I've heard you're pretty good at fixing things. Wanna help me try breath some life back in this puppy?"

Mac smiled wanly. "I thought you were never gonna ask." He pulled his penknife from his pocket trying to keep the mood light. "So where do we start?"

Mortimer pointed behind them to what looked like a wall of electronics. "We can't fix the bent planes, but maybe we could restore drive? I don't think there's damage to the actual motors, so the fault must be in the circuits in here." He pushed up from his seat and led Mac to a protruding panel. "I just know the basics, I'm trained to pilot this girl, not fix her up, so I sure hope you know your stuff."

"Nope," MacGyver couldn't help but tease, albeit with the truth as he began to unscrew the plate. "I can't say as I've touched the innards of a sub before – well, not unless you count one that someone tried to drown me in, and that turned out okay."

Mortimer scowled but didn't push for answers. He simply watched as Mac pulled off the sheet of metal and began examining the wiring and circuitry. "See anything?" he eventually asked.

Mac tapped lightly on a section of one of the control boards with the tip of his knife that had turned a garish black. “I think this is kinda the equivalent of surge protection, and its pretty much blown.” He frowned, his eyes scouring the DSRV, but things like paper clips and safety pins just didn’t find their way onto mini-sub.

“So we blew a fuse and don’t have a replacement?” Mortimer’s gum chomping slowed as he apparently sobered to their situation.

The sullen expression and lack of chewing actually helped MacGyver. “Oh I wouldn’t say that...got any more of that gum?”

Laura gaped. “You want to chew at a time like this?”

Mac’s lips curled into a smile. “No ma’am, I want to fix this circuit board.” He took the stick of Wrigley’s that Mortimer offered up, unwrapped it, and folded the foil wrapper for size as an impromptu fuse.

“Will that actually work?” Laura looked incredulous as she watched.

MacGyver shrugged. “Well, what you have to realize is that the wrapper will just be acting as a bridge to complete the circuit, it might not burn out like the original did if there’s another surge, and that means the motors could fry if there’s a next time.”

“Yeah, well I don’t see a whole lot of other alternatives,” Mortimer bemoaned. “So can you just try it anyway and put us out of our misery? We’re eating oxygen here while we think about it!”

Laura nodded. “He has a point, just do it.”

Mac licked his lips and slid the wrapper between the two contact points. “Okay Larry, try firing her up.”

Mortimer sucked down a breath and clicked on the motor controls. There was a pause, and then the indicator lights finally turned green. The pilot exhaled and momentarily closed his eyes. His lips moved silently, and MacGyver suspected Larry was saying a prayer to whatever god was listening.

“Right, let’s see what we got.” Mortimer settled into his seat and tested out the joysticks. After a few seconds he looked up. “We can go down, but not up, straight ahead or left, nothing else.”

“Could we try docking with the U-boat?” Laura was staring out at the dark behemoth they were sitting over like it was the shark, and they were the pilot fish. “Maybe there’s something onboard we could use?”

“If it’s not flooded,” MacGyver pointed out, “but we have to remember it sank for a reason.”

Mortimer shrugged. “I think we have to try, ironically with the plane damage we sustained, about the only direction we *can* go is over the U-boat’s escape hatch.”

MacGyver nodded. “Okay, you get us over the hatch and I’ll go and set up the docking collar.” He glanced at Laura. She was staring at the U-boat again, but now all the enthusiasm had gone – replaced by a look of dread, and was that even hatred in her eyes?

Mac thought about what they’d been through against the E.R.R. before, and guessed Sand was thinking those thoughts too. Maybe U3524 should have been left alone in its watery grave, where its evil past could no longer harm anyone.

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Moving the *Sun Dog* over the escape hatch with damaged controls had taken longer than any of them had anticipated. Then it had taken MacGyver a further half an hour to master the soft docking collar’s controls and get that into place.

Now, as he stared down at the circular metal hatch release of the U-boat, Mac wasn’t sure how he felt about opening up the sub.

There was a small chance it wasn’t flooded, and a big chance it was. There was an even bigger chance there would be bodies of the original crew still lying in the depths of the thing. Of course he’d seen skeletons before, but somehow this unnerved him more than he cared to admit, and he didn’t even know why.

Reaching down, MacGyver felt the slimy, cold surface of the handle and almost recoiled. Instead, he held fast and attempted to spin it, expecting it to be jammed with age.

The handle refused to move on the first attempt, and he was about to look for something to use as leverage when something gave below his grip and the wheel began to turn albeit painfully slowly.

MacGyver gulped and pushed harder until the wheel came to a stop and the hatch was ready to open. He tugged hard, expecting to find the space below flooded.

It wasn’t.

There was a hiss as the pressure between the two ships equalized, and an outrush of stale air hit Mac’s senses, but the inside of U3524 was pitch black, and empty.

*This shouldn’t be happening. There shouldn’t be air, even if it is stale!*

Mac reached up and grabbed one of the DSRV’s emergency flashlights mounted on the wall. He flicked it on and let the beam play down past the ladder and into the depths below.

There was the smell of diesel oil, intermingled with must and other poignant aromas, but definitely not the distinctive smell of bodies decaying.

But then, they would just be bones by now, wouldn’t they?

Mac couldn't help but shiver anyway as the thought hit him he may have just opened up a tomb.

He clambered back to the wall of the DSRV and to the internal intercom controls. "Folks, I can't believe I'm saying this, but the U-boat has hull integrity – at least in the section where the escape hatch is located." In the background, he could hear Laura getting excited again, and it made him smile. He hadn't liked the darker side he'd seen of her earlier. It had been like she'd given in.

Moments later, Mortimer and Sand joined him in the aft of the mini-sub, their faces looking more hopeful now in the muted red lighting.

"Can we try going aboard?" Laura asked first. "I mean..."

"Are there bodies?" MacGyver finished for her. "I don't know, but I guess there's only one way to find out." He held onto his light with one hand and began the decent into the U-boat.

The rungs of the metal ladder were cold to his hands, and he wanted to shrink back, like he was touching a snake. Mac shook off the feeling and carried on until his boots hit the deck plate below.

He blinked, letting his eyes become accustomed to the darkness, and then swung around his flashlight to get his bearings.

The sub was narrower than most would imagine – a grimy world that smelled of diesel and stale air, but in this section at least, no skeletons.

There was the sound of dripping water from somewhere, and the shadows that filled the hull danced like fifty-year-old ghosts.

MacGyver tried to resist the urge to shiver, but didn't quite manage it. It was like a blanket of cold air had been wrapped around him.

From above, he heard the metallic clang of boots on iron and noted that Mortimer and Sand were joining him in the bowels of the submarine. He hoped they were ready for the atmosphere that was about to assault their senses.

"Did you find any crewmen?" Laura asked as she bounced down from the ladder.

Mac shook his head. "Nope, but there's a lot more of this U-boat to check out yet." He nodded towards open hatches to the fore and aft of their position. "Looks like the hull is holding in more than just this section."

Mortimer whirled around with his own light, checking out the plates that made up the submarine's structure. He shook his head, his brow creasing into a frown. "This is so impossible. The corrosion alone on a sub of this age should have led to major water ingress by now."

Laura scowled at him. “*What* corrosion? There’s oxidation, yes, but nothing more than surface rust.”

Mortimer prodded at a small section of hull that had paint damage, but hardly any rust was present there either. He blinked, shook his head again as if incredulous, and finally raised his hands in the air in defeat. “Well the rust that *should* be here,” he complained. “I mean what is this, some kinda ghost boat?”

MacGyver wasn’t buying that. “C’mon, there has to be a rational explanation for what’s going on here, and it’s our job to find it, and maybe even use it to fix our own situation.” Without asking them their opinion, he began to move forwards, hoping the pair would follow.

Mortimer popped in another stick of gum and stuffed his hands in his coverall pockets, then gave chase, with Sand bringing up the rear.

At first, there wasn’t a whole lot to see, just some very cramped bunks complete with ancient blankets. It was like a time capsule, frozen in 1945 and only just being opened.

And yet to Mac, there was still something “off.” Something he was missing that niggled in the back of his mind.

Eventually, they came to a cabin, and MacGyver fanned his light across the brass nameplate on the door. This was Commander Witt’s room.

Mac pushed inside the tiny officer’s quarters and held the beam of his light on a small table. There were papers still set out on it, curled, and tanned with age, but very obviously orders.

He turned to Laura and indicated the documents with a nod. “Can you translate for us?”

Laura moved to the table and carefully picked up the papers. After briefly scanning them she looked up at both men. “This really is the U-boat we thought it was. Commander Witt was ordered to fake the scuttling and proceed to a small inlet where the Nazis had a refueling port. Then he was to escape with the art treasures to Argentina.”

“You know, finding those documents still laid out like that is kinda weird?” MacGyver pointed out. “I mean, would Witt leave orders out on his table so openly? And speaking of Witt, where is he and the crew, ‘cause I’m not seeing any bodies?”

Laura huffed. “Isn’t that a good thing? It means the submarine isn’t a war grave, and we can look for the art!”

Mac winced. “Shouldn’t we be concentrating on getting out of the mess we’re in first?”

“I’m an art expert, not an engineer,” Laura pointed out. “There’s nothing I can do to fix anything, but I can search for the antiquities.” She looked at Mortimer. “We could go in one direction and MacGyver the other...”

It was clearly a plan to get her own way, but MacGyver let Sand’s persistence go. Right now, he wanted answers, and he wanted a way back to the surface more than he wanted paintings. “Okay,” he agreed. “I’ll take the engine room; there might be something I can use back there.”

Before Mortimer could argue his part in the plan, Sand had scurried through the nearest hatch and vanished into the gloom, leaving just the beam from her bobbing flashlight visible.

MacGyver shrugged and smiled at Mortimer, who quickly gave chase to the over-excited expert.

Once they were gone, Mac turned and moved in the opposite direction, towards where the batteries and diesel engines lay. Even before he reached the correct compartment, he knew he was close due to the overwhelming smell of fuel, grease and oil. It made MacGyver wonder how sailors managed for months submerged in such conditions.

The hatch ahead was closed, and he paused at it. Was it closed because there was sea water beyond? Had this section actually flooded and that was why the U-boat had sank? He tapped the end of his light on the door, listening for a change in note compared to the intact compartments, but the sound that came back told him the engine room should also be free from water.

MacGyver swallowed and carefully swung on the circular release lever, half-expecting the worst. There was a hiss as old air escaped, but thankfully no water.

He exhaled and moved inside, not quite ready for the surprise that awaited him.

The engines were relatively clean – no, not just clean, these diesels had been serviced and worked on recently.

*Whoa, what the heck is this..?*

Mac moved closer inspecting the pair of MANN engines, unable to resist the urge to actually touch them as if they were alive. The coldness of the metal did little to quell the craving he felt to try and start the things.

After a moment, he decided to investigate the motor room in the next compartment. It was where the huge battery cells that powered the sub under water were kept – although after more that forty years they technically would be useless.

*Technically, Mac reminded himself, but since when has anything been normal since we boarded this thing?*

The motor room didn’t disappoint.

Instead of the ancient rows of metal plates submerged in tanks that served as batteries in 1945, U3524 had been refitted with something much more compact and modern.

Mac carefully moved over to them and inspected the ratings on them. He was no expert, but at a guess, given their size they'd only been installed for emergency use.

*Not large enough to run submerged for long...but then given its age the structural integrity of the U-boat probably isn't up to that anyway.*

MacGyver shook his head. Exactly what had they stumbled onto?

Turning tail, Mac clambered back through the hatch doors in search of Mortimer and Sand. As he moved swiftly through the tight confines, he couldn't help but wonder if the art hadn't been already stolen. But even that didn't explain the U-boat's condition, how it had gotten here, and who had done the work to it.

A light up ahead signaled he'd found the others, and he slowed slightly, taking down a few breaths of stale air.

"Did you find anything?" He asked as Mortimer approached. The other man's grin told Mac they had.

"You bet we did! Everything the doc here was expecting and more!" The pilot's expression sobered when he realized MacGyver's face had remained stoic. "I'm guessing you didn't find anything to get us outta here, huh?"

"Not exactly," Mac admitted. "But I did find something I can't explain. We're not the first people on this tub since the war. Someone installed modern batteries back in the motor room, and the engines have had work too."

Sand looked to Mortimer and the pair looked back at Mac disbelievingly.

"That can't be," Laura eventually stammered. "What would even be the point? The art is still here, the U-boat is at the bottom of the Baltic. It doesn't make sense."

"You're dang right it doesn't," MacGyver agreed. "And that's why we have to find out what's been going on. It might be our only clue outta this mess." He took his flashlight and headed into the galley area of the submarine.

It too was cramped, but on the few tables available for the crewmen to eat at, there were various items of cutlery and tableware.

Mac let his light illuminate the scene, and quickly noted a half-crushed Coke can and a couple of mugs with stale liquid that might have been coffee in them. He picked up the nearest mug and examined it more closely. His eyes widened in surprise and obvious distaste as he realized he was staring at a picture of a scantily clad Pamela Anderson emblazoned with the words *Baywatch*. "Not exactly the kinda artwork Hitler would have been looking for," he quipped, quickly replacing the mug on the table.

“So the U-boat’s definitely had people on from the here and now,” Mortimer nodded. “But who? Why, and how come they didn’t declare their find?”

“And where are they now?” Laura joined in with the questions. “And why is the submarine stuck at the bottom of the Baltic if it can run?” She rubbed at her arms as she spoke, as if she’d suddenly turned colder.

A metallic clank stopped her from talking further, as something obviously slammed into the outside of the U-boat. The noise was followed by two more grinding thunks, like metal scraping on metal.

MacGyver reached out and touched the hull plates as another impact hit. He felt the vibrations through his hand and quickly pulled back, already suspecting what was happening.

A knot twisted in his stomach, but he didn’t vocalize his concerns – at least not yet, until he was sure.

“C’mon, we need to get back to the DSRV!” Mac’s voice was so commanding Mortimer and Sand instantly followed him back to the escape hatch and into their damaged mini-sub.

“W..what is it?” Laura stammered as she clambered up the rungs of the ladder.

Mac didn’t answer, but made a dive for the huge glass bubble at the front of the LR7. As he reached the pilot’s seat, something large and heavy smashed into the roof above him, rocking the smaller DSRV so badly an overhead pipe burst, spraying jets of water all over the cockpit area.

MacGyver quickly reached for a nearby valve and closed it, while still trying to see what was hitting them through the front port. Eventually, his eyes picked out smaller debris showering down from above and he momentarily closed his eyes in dread.

What he was seeing, and what was actually impacting with them, was sections of the *Eternal Flame* as it broke up on its journey to the sea bed. So far, the wreckage was confined to items from on the deck, including the crane that usually held the DSRV, but did that mean the entire ship had gone down, or that the storm was simply so bad the deck held machinery had been torn away?

As MacGyver reached out once again for the radio mike, he hoped it was the latter. “*Eternal Flame*, this is *Sun Dog*, come in?” For awhile, there was silence, only broken by the wild hiss of static.

“*Sun Dog* we’re...going do...fast.” It was Nikki, and she sounded out of breath and flustered, but then who wouldn’t on a sinking ship? “McKenna deployed...life rafts...”

MacGyver couldn’t push away an image of the ship sinking in the freezing Baltic waters. Inflatable life rafts or not, Nikki, Pete and the crew were in big trouble. “Nikki get to the rafts with Pete, *NOW!*”

There was a sudden yelp from the other end of the line, interspersed with a sound Mac couldn't identify. "Mac...ship's...rolling!"

The signal abruptly vanished and MacGyver couldn't bring himself to key the mike again. He knew it was no use. He looked over to Laura and Mortimer, but he couldn't find any words.

They were alone at the bottom of the Baltic, trapped on an ancient U-boat with a dead DSRV. And above, their friends and fellow workers were probably about to drown or freeze to death.

Mortimer spoke first. "You know they won't have long if they're not all in the life rafts? And if the ship just rolled, some of them won't be..." His voice cracked as he said the last words, and his eyes hit the deck plate of the mini-sub in sadness.

MacGyver felt the knot in his stomach from earlier return. Pete was blind, what chance did he have if he hadn't already made it to a life raft?

But then, given the situation they were all in, what chance did any of them really have?

### **Part Three**

MacGyver refused to give in. There had to be a way to salvage not only their own situation, but the one above. *Think, Mac, think!*

Mac bit into his bottom lip and ran a hand through the front of his hair as if it would instantly give him inspiration. "There has to be something we can do," he vocalized. "The DSRV is beyond fixing because of the plane damage, and we don't have wet suits, so that leaves..."

"It leaves nothing," Laura completed the sentence dejectedly.

MacGyver shook his head. "Maybe not. Someone worked on the U-boat to move it under its own steam, so why can't we?" He began to get excited as ideas began to flow.

Mortimer wasn't so optimistic. "We don't know why its sitting on its butt at the bottom of the Baltic – there has to be a reason, considering even the art is still on board. Trying to move a fifty-year-old sub is suicide!"

"So we just sit and run out of air?" Mac countered. "C'mon, work with me here. At least help me check out the U-boat's systems and see what's working and what we can fix up."

Laura watched the conversation ping back and forth like a heated tennis match, but she failed to comment. Mac noticed and hoped she hadn't already given in.

“You do realize to try and move the sub we’d need to ditch the DSRV?” Mortimer’s attitude was still negative, but his mind was obviously weighing up possibilities. “Once the *Sun Dog* has gone, if the U-boat’s hull pops, it’s all over...”

“Do you have a better option?” Mac countered, but Mortimer didn’t get a chance to answer.

A huge and unexpected wave of energy rocked the DRSV so violently its metallic frame shivered, and beneath it, the U-boat actually shifted in the mud a little.

The water outside the front bubble turned a dark, cloudy brown as the sea floor was torn up by a massive impact.

As the cloud began to dissipate, Mac, Mortimer and Sand were left with the horrific sight of the *Eternal Flame*, its once graceful lines now turned into a wreck, just like the thing it had come to search for.

Debris filtered down from above, hitting the DSRV every few seconds and pinging off its hull.

“Oh my God...” Laura looked like she was about to burst into tears as she pointed to something hanging in the water outside DSRV.

It was a body of one of the crewmen, his eyes still wide with terror, even in death.

It was Baines, the man who had escorted her earlier.

Mortimer cleared his throat and looked to Mac. “Okay,” he conceded. “Let’s go check out the U-boat and hope we get lucky.”

\* \* \* \*

Mortimer worked faster than MacGyver had expected, jumping from the control room dials and gauges, to the motor room, and eventually the engine room. While Mac had a fundamental knowledge of how subs worked, Mortimer was very much the expert, as well as a WW2 enthusiast.

It took about fifteen minutes in total for the pilot to make his appraisal.

Standing over the new style batteries, he rubbed absently at the back of his neck and drew down a long breath. “Right, well, the batteries might be recently fitted, but they’re pretty depleted with the sub being abandoned for awhile. I think I can get emergency lighting on and a few low drain systems, but it won’t last long.”

“What about the ballast tanks?” Mac asked, hoping it was good news.

Mortimer popped in a stick of his infamous gum and grinned. “There’s still enough air in the system to blow the tanks to surface, and the bow and stern planes look in good order.”

MacGyver nodded. "I can get the engines to run and there's fuel, although I know we can't use the diesels while we're submerged."

"Not even with the oxygen scrubbers working," Mortimer agreed, picking up a spanner and tinkering with it nervously. "So...the two big problems we have are just how good is the hull integrity, and how the heck do we get the power to pump the compressed air and blow the tanks?"

MacGyver moved to the small battery cells that had been fitted and examined them. They reminded him of something he'd seen on the *Sun Dog*. "What about using the batteries from the DSRV?" He asked.

"The main units are made up of two packs of twenty cells, and they're stored in pods outside the mini-sub, no way can we get to them." Mortimer blew a bubble, popped it and then squinted as if in thought. "There are some backups we could access inside the DSRV – two packs of four cells and one emergency unit."

Mac added up just how much power that would give in his head and then nodded excitedly. "If I can get them out and jury rig them in here, it just might be enough to blow the ballast tanks and get us to the surface!"

\* \* \* \*

MacGyver wasn't sure he'd ever worked so fast as he unscrewed the panel to remove the batteries with his penknife. Back on the U-boat, Mortimer was preparing the submarine for its power transplant, and Laura was busy stripping the DSRV of anything that might be of use later. So far, she'd taken life jackets, flashlights, an emergency oxygen tank and a few generic tools the mini-sub always carried.

Mac wasn't sure most of it would be of use, but given his track record anything was possible, not to mention, it gave Sand something to do.

The last of the screws popped out and Mac was finally able to access the emergency batteries. He might need help to carry them, but for now it was just a matter of disconnecting some cables and hoping he could rig them into a forty-year-old submarine.

*With any luck Mortimer will have most of the work done by the time I get these out...*

On cue, the pilot's head bobbed into view from the rear of the DSRV. He was still chewing happily. "You about ready, Mac?"

MacGyver nodded. "Can you give me a hand with these; they're heavier than they look."

Mortimer obliged, grabbing the end of the two cells, with Mac on the other side, while Laura appeared and took the emergency unit.

It took another five minutes to get back to the motor room. While MacGyver hooked up the cables he'd scavenged to the new cells, Mortimer was preparing things in the control room and instructing Laura on her part in the escape.

Once the batteries were sorted, Mac turned his attention to the DSRV. It needed cutting loose, but just disconnecting the docking collar wasn't enough. It had to be out of the way of the U-boat before they could try and ascend.

For that he needed to rig the controls, and he needed something to do it with. Returning to the panel where he'd removed the batteries, he found the two longest cable harnesses and cut them free. Unraveling the wire into two lengths, he slipped behind the sub's controls and wrapped the two separate pieces onto the joystick and motor controls.

Once secured, he moved aft and climbed down into the U-boat, trailing the wire along with him as he moved. At the bottom of the ladder, he tugged on the two wires until he heard the DSRV motors kick in, and then quickly closed the escape hatch and disengaged the docking collar.

There was no way to see if the mini-sub had cleared the U-boat's intended path, or ended up snarled on the wreckage or the *Eternal Flame*.

Now, there were no second chances.

When MacGyver finally clambered back to the U-boat's control room, Mortimer seemed to have things wrapped up.

"Did you manage to get the batteries connected and the DSRV free?" He asked, his normally jovial features now edged with worry.

"Hope so," MacGyver teased. "Why don't you throw a few switches and see?"

Mortimer scowled but did as he was told. The console in front of him flickered into life, the opaline backlighting attenuating the German writing on the gauges and dials. His frown instantly turned into a grin. "You did it!"

"So can you move this thing now or what?" Laura was sitting in front of a strange yoke that looked like it belonged more on a plane than a submarine.

Mortimer shook his head. "Like I was just explaining to you before Mac got back, I can't pilot this baby solo – it's old, it's dated, and back in the day it took a whole lotta crew to move it." He looked to MacGyver. "Can you take the other yoke next to Laura?"

Mac knew the yokes controlled the dive planes and ultimately the submarine, but he had no idea what to actually do with one. He took the metal seat next to Sand as instructed and waited while Mortimer worked his magic.

As he operated various levers and switches, the pilot explained what he was doing, his tone becoming that of an excited school boy as he moved back and forth between

stations. “Okay, I’m gonna start blowing the air into tanks five, four, three and two in that order, but only enough to get the con tower above water. Nice and slow so we don’t put any stress on the old gal’s hull...”

Mac and Laura watched in morbid fascination as Mortimer began throwing levers and the ancient Arian dials started to move. Beneath them, they felt the submarine groan as the air began to tug the U-boat from the silt on the sea floor.

The noise of metal screeching and twisting filled their ears, even though in fact the sound wasn’t that loud – right now, it was simply the only sound.

“Right, it’s your turn,” Mortimer offered. “Laura, take the yoke in front of you and push it forward, while Mac pulls his back. We want the forward dive planes up, and the stern down and we should start moving at about one and a half feet per second.” He paused, chewed hard and scowled. “At least I hope.”

MacGyver and Sand silently did as they were told, watching the depth gauges in front of them for signs of movement.

The U-boat wailed as it pulled from the mud and everyone finally felt it shift its weight and start to rise.

After a minute, more noises erupted from the aging metal as rivets began to pop and hull panels began to dribble water. The leaks were small, but how long would they stay that way?

Mac took his eyes from the controls and cast a glance at the largest point of ingress. If there were leaks like that in the motor room, the salt water could get to the batteries, and that would give them a whole new problem.

“We need to check the motor room. If salt water gets in those cells it can cause chlorine gas!” He moved to get up, but Mortimer waved him back down.

“We need to get topside first, before the hull completely blows!” The pilot appeared more than worried as he shut off a valve to stop a badly leaking pipe.

Laura seemed suddenly quietly composed. “We’ll make it,” she whispered. “We have to.”

The U-boat shuddered, as if answering, and then its ascent seemed to momentarily pause. It hung in the water, a ghost making a decision whether to return to death, or seek new life.

In the end, it chose to live, and finally finished its journey from the depths. The con tower burst through the Baltic’s cruel waves to see daylight once more.

Mortimer didn’t wait to get excited. He made a beeline for the nearest hatch and was halfway through before he paused and turned back to his companions. “I need to get to the engine room and start the diesels!” And with that glimmer of an explanation he was gone.

“What’s so important about starting engines so soon?” Laura asked as MacGyver began to slide on a lifejacket. “Aren’t we safe now?”

“I don’t think he can completely blow ballast until the engines are running,” Mac explained as he headed for the con tower ladder. “The U-boat uses the exhausts to finish the job. Hopefully the engines might put some charge in our batteries too.”

Sand’s lips mouthed “Oh” as if she understood, but her expression said otherwise.

Either way, MacGyver didn’t have time to stick around and go through the whole procedure. The *Eternal Flame’s* crew, Pete and Nikki might still be in the freezing water, and he had to try and help them.

Scrambling up the ladder rungs he quickly swung open the con tower and dared to face the storm outside. The waves had calmed somewhat and the wind had dropped a couple of notches, but it was still bitterly cold.

Visibility wasn’t great, and Mac had to squint to try and make out shapes in the water as the chill ocean showered him. Debris bobbed around the U-boat, but at first he couldn’t see any rafts – only crates, unused life jackets and items he couldn’t even recognize.

He spun around into the wind, his blonde mullet soaked and swept back by the squall, but he didn’t even notice. Just ahead, there was something orange bobbing in the water and the more he focused, the more certain he was that it was a raft.

Mac began waving his arms and shouting, his churning stomach praying there were survivors on board, and his subconscious begging for Nikki and Pete to be among them. “Hey! Over here!”

After a tense moment, a hand appeared from the enclosed raft and waved back. Someone unzipped the roof panel, revealing several people, and they all began to frantically try and row towards the submarine.

Beneath him, MacGyver felt the diesel engines finally kick in, and the U-boat rose further out of the water. He waited until the deck was through the surface of the sea and scrambled down the outer con ladder onto the hull.

The surface was awash with white crashing surf, and several times the troubleshooter stumbled and was almost tossed into the unforgiving water. He steadied himself and paused, knowing he needed to help the survivors, but how?

Mac’s eyes scanned the submarine’s sparse deck area and spotted the ropes it would have been moored with wrapped away carefully as if they’d been stowed only hours earlier.

They should have long rotted away, but then he already knew this was no ordinary wreck.

MacGyver tumbled and slipped across the deck until he reached the rope, and quickly coiled it over his arm. Looking up, he noted the raft had somehow made it closer to the sub. Maybe they were lucky and the storm was actually driving them in the right direction.

Mac waved again and pointed to the rope. “Try and grab this!” He yelled, hoping he could be heard over the noise of the wind.

Someone in the raft waved back, and MacGyver swung the rope out like he was pitching for his life – because he was, just not his life.

The line splashed into the Baltic just short of its target, and Mac quickly reeled it back in and made another attempt. This time, one of the men in the raft managed to grab it as it landed in the water next to him.

Other crewmen followed his lead and seized the rope, and began to pull on it. On the other end, MacGyver did much the same until the raft was slowly hauled to the U-boat’s bouncing decking.

Mac tied off the line his end and offered up a hand to the first crewman, it was the communications officer he’d briefly met earlier, named Engel.

Engel nodded his head in silent thanks as he clambered aboard, and then helped MacGyver unload a further seven of the *Eternal Flame*’s crew.

Neither Pete, nor Nikki was among them.

The realization made MacGyver suddenly feel even colder. He turned to Engel, wiping freezing spray from his face. “What happened to Pete and Nikki?”

Engel looked cold and disorientated as he shook his head. “I don’t know...everything happened so fast.” He glanced down at the U-boat, his face abruptly incredulous as he seemed to realize just what he’d climbed aboard. “Where’s the DSRV? How? I mean this *can’t* be U3524..?” He steadied himself as a particularly large wave glanced off the starboard hull.

MacGyver wanted to explain, but for now he wasn’t giving up on searching for more survivors, including his friends. He patted the officer on the back, urging him to the con tower where Mortimer was now ushering the other seven rescued men. “It’s a long and very crazy story. And it will have to wait...”

Engel still seemed dazed and simply nodded, following Mac’s guidance up the con ladder.

Once Engel was safe, Mac turned back to the swelling ocean and his search. Squinting again against the unforgiving weather, he soon spotted a second raft a little further out than the first.

This time, the orange material was sagging in the water, as if it hadn’t fully inflated, or maybe it had somehow been damaged when it had been deployed. Hanging onto

the flaccid fabric's edge was a figure – a portly frame and bald head that could only belong to Pete Thornton, and he wasn't moving.

In fact, if he hadn't been wearing a life jacket, MacGyver suspected he wouldn't still be on the surface at all.

*How many minutes has he been in the freezing water already..?*

“Hey, can you hear me?” Mac waved to the raft as he had done before, but this time there was no response from Pete, or anyone aboard – if indeed there was anyone else alive on the thing.

Mac swallowed hard and made a decision. The raft was too far for the rope, and there was no one to grab it anyway. While the raft was slowly drifting towards the U-boat like the first one had, Pete probably wouldn't survive if they had to wait for momentum alone to carry the raft to safety.

Without giving his own wellbeing a thought, MacGyver dived into the frigid sea and began to swim towards the raft. The tempestuous ocean seemed to try on purpose to push him back, but Mac was more than determined. He could feel just how cold the water was, and not knowing how long Pete had been at its mercy, spurred him on.

As he grew close, he spotted McKenna, trying in vain to pull Pete aboard. Nikki was there too, holding on to Thornton's arms for dear life to try and stop him floating away as his grasp loosened.

“You have to try and paddle to the U-boat!” Mac shouted above the squall, pointing behind him as he trod water. When Nikki and McKenna finally spotted him and nodded, he put his attention on giving them a hand.

There were ropes dangling freely at the side of the damaged raft, perhaps where it had been lowered into the sea. MacGyver gripped one as best he could with cold, stiff hands, and began to try and help “tow” the raft as he swam.

“It's not working!” Nikki was yelling into the storm, shaking her head as the raft bucked and was tossed off target by ruthless waves.

“Swim for it!” McKenna made the announcement and then dived into the water. Nikki followed him, pushing hard against the swell, sometimes her vest the only thing keeping her buoyant.

MacGyver watched them go and then let go of the rope, grabbing Pete instead. “Pete, it's me, Mac, just relax and let me help you.”

Mac felt the elder man go limp as he put his arm around Pete and began to haul him through the icy Baltic. Every now and again, he would feel Pete shiver, and in a way, he was glad, because it meant his old friend was still alive.

Once they reached the U-boat, Mortimer, Engel and Laura were waiting, perched precariously on the rocking deck to help them aboard. As soon as everyone was out of

the water, they clambered to the con tower and down into the slightly warmer bowels of the U-boat.

Inside, one of the rescued crewmen was already giving out cocoa and old blankets he'd managed to find.

MacGyver grabbed three of the blankets and quickly wrapped them around Pete, rubbing hard to try and warm his friend.

Pete continued to shiver, but managed a wan and very pallid smile. "T..Thanks," he stammered.

McKenna was sitting opposite, sipping from a mug that was older than he was. His hands were white and shook from the cold, but it was his gaze that caught Mac's attention the most. The captain was looking around the U-boat both in awe and amazement, his eyes a mix of disbelief and was that fear?

"This can't be U3524? It's some kind of setup...a badly timed joke?" McKenna looked to MacGyver expectantly.

Pete joined in with the incredulity. "We're *where*?" he mouthed, until now, unaware of his surroundings. "How is that even possible?"

"It's kind of a long, and very complicated story we only have half the answers to." Mac gratefully accepted a blanket that Laura offered up and wrapped it around his shoulders. "One thing for sure, this was no ordinary sunken wreck, if it was ever a wreck at all."

McKenna's expression didn't change. There was still that edgy look, and his eyes worked their way around the room every few seconds as if he was appraising everyone in the group. "How is that possible?"

"It doesn't matter right now." Mortimer had appeared from nowhere at the nearest hatchway and his expression was almost as grim as McKenna's. "Right now we have a bigger problem than how this tub got here, and who was behind it. This baby has sprung a few leaks, and if we don't stop them we'll all find ourselves back in the Baltic." He stared at MacGyver. "I know you're tired and wet, and we all need answers, but I could really do with your help and knowledge on this one."

Mac moved to pull off the blanket from his shoulders, but McKenna's soulless, almost terrified voice stopped him.

"We have more than the sea to worry about," the captain whispered, his voice cracking as if the cold and trauma of his ordeal had left him somehow broken. "The *Eternal Flame* didn't just sink because of some localized storm." He paused, milking the effect it had on the others. "She was a new ship, state of the art – the Phoenix Foundation only paid for the best. No...she was sabotaged, and whoever did it could be sitting right here among us."

## **Part Four**

Suddenly, everyone began to look at the person beside them; wary eyes uncertain of what to think. The submarine dived, not into the ocean, but into the depths of silence brought on by fear.

Now MacGyver understood McKenna's expression once he'd boarded the U-boat.

Nikki was the first to question what the captain was saying, but then going on past adventurers, Mac expected no less of her. "How can you be so sure?" She demanded, placing down her cocoa in favor of grilling the officer.

"There's no way we should have missed the storm on radar," he countered. "At least, not unless it was tampered with. Not to mention shipping forecasts, we should have had radio warnings. And as I just said, the storm wasn't bad enough to sink a ship like her, and yet we took on water so rapidly..."

"Maybe the radar malfunctioned?" Nikki offered. "Could the ship have had a design fault? Or even human error somehow?"

McKenna shook his head. "No...the *Eternal Flame* was sunk on purpose."

The silence returned, only broken by questions from MacGyver. "So this leaves us with more problems and no answers, like who, and why?"

"Why is a good question," Pete pondered. "I mean, surely they knew they were putting their own life at risk?" He hugged the blankets Mac had given him just that bit tighter.

"I kind of have an idea about that." MacGyver let his gaze fall on everyone in the confined space of the U-boat. Maybe putting them on the spot would make them squirm. "If I'm right, well the person who did this might value their "cause" more than their own life, or anyone else's."

"And what's that supposed to mean?" McKenna raised a brow, but Mortimer interrupted him.

"It doesn't matter – at least not yet." The pilot's urgent gaze locked with Mac's. "We need to sort out those leaks; otherwise this old tub and everyone on it, including your possible bad guy will be taking a dive they really don't want."

MacGyver nodded. "Where do we start?"

Mortimer turned back into the compartment he'd come from, obviously expecting Mac to obediently follow. "I'll take the one in the officers' quarters," he suggested. "Can you get the one in the electric motor room?"

"I'm on it..."

"Mind if I tag along?" Mac looked over his shoulder to see Nikki in tow. She might be asking, but he knew she'd already made her mind up to join them. She was

stubborn that way. It was one of the traits he liked about her, although he'd never admit it.

"The more the merrier." He squeezed through a hatch and held the metal doorway open for Nikki to follow. It didn't take long to reach the leak, but then it didn't take long to reach anywhere on a submarine the size of the U-boat.

As they entered the motor room, MacGyver instantly spotted the problem. The leak was coming from an overhead pipe that sat above the battery cells. The water ingress wasn't all that bad, but it was *where* it was dripping that bothered him.

The troubleshooter's face turned down into a scowl as he approached the trickling pipe and put his hand over the burst seam.

"What's with the frown?" Nikki demanded, eyeing the water as it seeped through Mac's fingers. "That leak is so small you could probably use some of your favorite duct tape and a safety pin," she teased.

Mac shook his head. "Nope, this is salt water we're dealing with, and if any decent amount of it mixes with the electrolytes in the batteries it could create chlorine gas – it happened during the war quite a few times after sub's were damaged by depth charges and mines."

It was Nikki's turn to scowl. "Chlorine?"

MacGyver nodded as he assessed the best way to deal with the situation. "Uh huh, the smoke when the two mix is pretty toxic, if you inhale it for long enough it can destroy your respiratory system and..."

"And it's definitely *not* something you want floating around a very small U-boat," Nikki concluded for him with a gulp. "So how do we fix it?"

Mac pointed to a valve at the other end of the pipe. "First up, we try the obvious and try and close this section off." He moved to turn the wheel, but a clang from the compartment door behind them made him spin around.

Engel, the communications officer from the *Eternal Flame* was standing in the doorway, staring at them, and he wasn't here for fun. In his left hand, he held a small, but very effective automatic.

"I've been thinking," Engel sighed. "And I really can't let you go back and tell the others just what your "idea" is about the saboteur."

MacGyver moved away from the pipe, trying to put himself in front of Nikki. He raised his hands as he moved, offering up surrender. "Engel is a German name, isn't it?" He questioned, even though he already knew the answer.

Engel's face turned into a sneer. "And proud of it." He nodded. "And I'm also proud to be part of Madam Brandenburg's group." He seemed to note surprise on

MacGyver's face and grinned. "Just because she was sent to jail, doesn't mean our Aryan movement can be stopped!"

Nikki pushed back past Mac, one hand on her hip in defiance. "Are you nuts?" She demanded, and then shook her head as if it was already a given. "Okay forget that, can somebody just tell me what the heck this is all about?"

"Oh I'd guess Brandenburg has her little soldiers looking for more lost E.R.R. treasures, just like the ones they had hidden down that silver mine." Mac stole a glance at Nikki. "These guys have the original files on where the Nazis stashed their stolen goods. But a U-boat? How can a U-boat in this condition survive all these years without being found?"

Engel shrugged, the sneer on his very smug face becoming even wider. "The U-boat originally docked at a secret re-fuelling port in an inlet not too far from our current location – just like it had been ordered too, but for some reason it never left. We found it by accident, after following the paper trail."

"So how did it end up in the depths of the Baltic?" Nikki didn't appear bothered about the gun that was pointing in her direction. Engel at least seemed to appreciate her gall, and continued to explain.

"My group found the U-boat at the inlet five months ago, complete with the art. It was inaccessible from land to remove the treasure, both due to the terrain, and the current landowner's security measures. Rather than be defeated, we decided to move the whole submarine to a secret destination. The project required some clandestine work to the submarine via the inlet, but it was a matter of pride to get what should have always belonged to us back in Aryan hands."

Nikki wasn't impressed. "So how come it ended up at the bottom of the sea?" Nikki snarked.

Engel drew down a breath that suggested he was becoming annoyed. "We were running on diesels on the surface, just to traverse a short distance, but we were spotted by a small dive boat and were forced to submerge before the occupants realized they were looking at a Nazi submarine, not a N.A.T.O. one."

"And?" Nikki was really pushing Engel. "You guys couldn't get it back up again?"

Engel's face reddened and his eyes widened just a touch. The weapon in his hand began to tremble, ever-so-slightly. "We had a problem. We had to use the escape hatch, and hoped to return for the U-boat when things quieted down. By then, though, the Phoenix Foundation was poking its nose in and we had to take more drastic measures."

"You sank a whole ship and killed how many people, just to get art?" MacGyver was incredulous. It seemed inconceivable, and yet he knew it was true. Some people could, and would kill for material things.

“Not just art,” Engel growled angrily. “A piece of Nazi history! And it will pay for more of my brethren ventures back in the states. There’s a ship already on its way from my people to pick me and the treasures up. It’s a pity we can’t take the U-boat as well now, but it’s about to become another very sad war grave...”

He gestured with the automatic, forcing Mac and Nikki further back into the compartment, and as they shuffled, MacGyver’s mind hit overdrive. Like any situation, there had to be a way out, it was simply finding it.

Engel didn’t seem to notice his enemy’s eyes, roving every inch of the motor room. Now that he had them backed into a corner, he turned to the leaking pipe and began to hammer on it with the butt of his weapon until the small trickle became a much larger gush.

The water splashed innocently down onto the batteries below and began to slowly find its way into every open orifice, true to its liquid form.

Engel smiled appreciatively at his work and then spun the gun around to keep it on his targets while he backed out of the compartment and closed the hatch behind him. As the metal lock spun into place, tiny tendrils of yellow-green smoke started to ebb from the corner of one of the battery cells.

It had begun.

MacGyver noted the wisps of chlorine and rushed back to the oozing pipe work, but there was nothing in the motor room to work with. He slapped both his hands over the hole, hoping to slow the ingress and give him time to think.

Nikki joined in, throwing her jacket over the nearest battery in an attempt to slow the water’s progress and stifle the leaking gases. “What do we do?” She asked relatively calmly. “If we don’t stop this it will kill everyone, not just us, and they won’t even know its coming!”

MacGyver looked at the hatch that was locked, and then at the one the opposite end of the room. There was no one back there to warn, but maybe there was something else he could use?

Taking a risk, he let go of the pipe and dived into the next compartment. It was the aft torpedo room. A place designed for only one thing – killing, and yet, as the cogs in Mac’s mind spun, he realized that for once, this place might be able to save lives.

MacGyver moved to the torpedo tubes and checked out the controls. This was more Mortimer’s forte than his, but it looked like this variant of U-boat was capable of reloading at sea, and that was what he needed.

“Nikki! I think I got something!”

Two seconds later Nikki was at his side, her face scowling but her eyes filled with hope.

Mac knew she trusted him, and he only wished he had the confidence she did right now, but he was messing with systems he had no idea how to work, and his German was definitely not up to reading the controls to help.

“What have you got?”

MacGyver glanced at the torpedo tubes. She was going to think he was nuts. “Listen, the U-boat is stationary in the water and on the surface, right? So technically, if I can get outside, I can get back in via the con tower hatch and warn everyone, and then we can get back here to sort the leak.”

Nikki shook her head. “Last time I looked there wasn’t a door in the side of this overgrown cigar tube labeled emergency exit?”

MacGyver patted the nearest torpedo tube. It felt cold and frighteningly alien. He carried on anyway. *It’s either this or be gassed...*

“I’m gonna climb inside a torpedo tube, and then you’re gonna flood it and open the outer door so I can swim out.”

“Are you *crazy*?” Nikki’s eyes widened suggesting she thought this wasn’t one of his greatest plans. “No way am I going to risk drowning you in there. I don’t know how to work a model sail boat, let alone a submarine that’s ancient and foreign!”

Behind them, and through the compartment door, something popped and an ominous hissing began to fill their ears. Nikki licked her lips and dared to stick her head through the hatch.

After a few seconds, she returned, her face a mask of concentration. “There’s more smoke,” she admitted. “And it’s starting smell funny.”

Mac raised a brow. “We don’t have long; let me show you how I think this all works.”

“Think?” Nikki grumbled. “How you *think*, it works? You better more than think, bucko, because I don’t want to be stuck in here to die on my own!” She turned to the torpedo controls and began to examine them.

MacGyver pointed out what he guessed were the right buttons and levers and ran through the sequence she needed to press them. Once Nikki was confident, he turned to the nearest tube, sucked down a breath, and opened the rear hatch as if he was going to load a fresh torpedo. Instead, he put a hand on either edge and levered himself inside.

It was cold, dark, and very claustrophobic.

Behind him, metal clanged and groaned as Nikki sealed him in, and he was plunged into complete darkness.

Mac took long, calm breaths, waiting for Nikki to bang on the door to signal she was going to flood the tube. In his mind, he couldn’t resist the idea that the outer door

would be stuck with age, or sea urchins, or maybe it had been damaged when the *Eternal Flame*'s remains had pounded its hull?

His heart began to race, and it took all of his willpower to calm it again.

And then the water was gushing in around him. Had Nikki signaled? He hadn't even heard it.

Taking one last breath, MacGyver waited, hoping to feel the outer door open and release him from this very confined and watery tomb.

Seconds ticked by, and then the light somehow changed from total blackness, to a miry gloom. MacGyver kicked away from the tube wall and prayed his hands wouldn't hit metal.

They didn't, and within seconds he felt his body yanked into the icy Baltic that still swayed and frothed from the earlier storm.

His eyes and body adjusted to the light and temperature change, and he quickly swam towards the brightness above, breaking through the surface with just a few kicks.

The U-boat was behind him, and he turned in the water, desperately pushing towards its deck as the merciless sea tried to carry him away. There was little time, and like Pete, he could easily succumb to the conditions if he didn't get out of the frigid waves quickly.

Mac reached out a hand and grabbed for the mooring rope he'd used earlier, but his stiff fingers lost their purchase and he fell back into the water. Somehow, this wasn't quite how he'd imagined it when he'd described the plan to Nikki.

Nikki...stuck in the confines of the gas chamber Engel had created...

The thought spurred him on, and he snatched for the rope again, this time gaining a tenuous grip on the line. He took a moment to regain his waning strength, and then pulled, hauling his body onto the submarine's sparse decking.

It was cold, but not coma-inducing cold, like in the water.

Mac rolled onto his back and panted until he felt almost human again, then struggled to his feet on the slick hull. His feet slid, but he managed to reach the con tower ladder without falling back into the Baltic.

He reached out to the first rung, and then stopped as his eyes met with something else in the hazy distance.

There was a ship heading their way – probably the one Engel had spoken of – and that meant they had very little time to prepare before even more bad guys arrived. Assuming, of course, that they could stop the chlorine gas, and that Engel hadn't already killed everyone.

MacGyver's heart began to race again as his feet slipped and slid their way up the ladder to the con tower. He paused at the sealed entrance and took a moment to regain his composure. Engel could be below, and opening the hatch would alert him that the cavalry was on its way.

Still, Mac had to act now if they had any chance at all. Tentatively, he dropped down and slowly and quietly began to spin the wheel that opened the hatch. It creaked and groaned with age, despite his efforts, and he winced as he dared to lift the metal portal up slightly.

Below, he could hear raised voices as two, maybe more people argued. At one point, he could discern the Engel's distinct tones, and he sounded close.

MacGyver dared to raise the hatch a little more, but before he could peer inside, the sound of bullets, ricocheting off the inner hull almost made him draw back.

Instead, he yanked open the hatch all the way, no longer caring how much the metal cried out.

At the bottom of the ladder, directly beneath him, Engel was still shouting and letting off random shots at the rest of the crew. Mac couldn't allow that to continue. With no regard for his own safety, he dived into the opening, disregarding the ladder in favor of freefalling onto his target.

Engel screamed in fury as MacGyver's weight hit him square on the shoulders and knocked him to the deck plates. He tried to roll free, but Mac was ready for him, punching the Nazi square on the jaw with his best right hook.

Engel blinked, then fell back stunned as MacGyver shook his aching hand, as much out of habit as pain.

"I don't know where you came from, but...thanks." McKenna appeared and grabbed Engel's gun where it had slid under the periscope. Behind him, crewmen were rushing to help a fallen comrade, who was clutching at his side where he'd taken a bullet.

"Motor room," MacGyver muttered without really thinking about his answer. He'd come from there, and he had to get back there real fast if he was to save Nikki and stop the U-boat filling with gas.

McKenna looked at the con hatch with a scowl, as if to question how Mac could have arrived from the motor room via the tower, but MacGyver didn't even notice – he was already racing through the galley and diesel engine room back to the motor room.

Arriving at the closed door, he quickly removed the rod Engel had wedged through the rotating handle and spun it open.

The putrid stench of chlorine hit him hard, evoking a coughing bout, and he quickly pulled his wet t-shirt over his nose and mouth before going inside.

The compartment wasn't quite as smoke-filled as he'd expected, at least, not yet.

*Nikki, where's Nikki?*

Mac spun around on his heels, but she was nowhere to be seen. Then he remembered he'd left her in the torpedo room and guessed she'd had the sense to remain there, as far away from the leak as possible.

His eyes began to sting, and he resisted the urge to rub at them as he made a beeline for the aft compartment.

“MacGyver! Your dumb plan actually worked!” Nikki had covered her face with a piece of old rag that was disintegrating with age, and she coughed apologetically as Mac approached.

He put an arm around her, taking some of her weight and quickly urging her to the now open motor room hatch. Nikki nodded she understood and let her savior take the lead.

Once they were both clear, Mac pulled off his impromptu mask and slammed the door temporarily closed behind them. He sucked down grateful breaths of stale, but so far un-poisoned air, and then looked hard at Nikki. It was going to be difficult to get her to leave, but he needed the others to know what was going on, while he tried to stop the leak.

“Listen, I need you to go back and tell McKenna and Pete what's going on back here, and I also need you to warn them that Engel's rescue ship is on its way, and its close.”

Nikki leaned forwards, hands on her knees and coughed for over a minute before answering with a deep frown and an even deeper, deadly serious voice. “No way am I leaving you. You need help to stop that mess in there!”

Mac let his deep brown eyes bore into her until she stopped her rant. “Do you know exactly how to stop the leak? No? But I know from experience you *do* know how to open your mouth. Now will you just go tell Pete?”

Nikki's jaw dropped, but she seemed to know better than to try and fight back. She shook her head in disdain. “You just be careful, you hear me?”

“Yes, ma'am...” MacGyver winked, and Nikki scowled again before scurrying into the next compartment and into semi-darkness.

Once she'd gone, MacGyver turned back and looked at the motor room door. He rubbed at his chin, ran a hand through his soaked hair, and then headed straight for the galley.

\* \* \* \*

It was funny how you could save a bad situation with just a few ordinary, humdrum items, and the fact never ceased to amaze MacGyver. Of course, you had to know just how to use those items, and that was where Mac always excelled.

Right now, he was rummaging through cupboards and drawers, his hands moving like the wind. He was so engrossed in the task at hand, he never even heard Mortimer clamber into the galley behind him.

“What the heck are you doing? The leak is back in the motor room and you’re searching for cutlery?” Mortimer’s wide eyes watched as Mac continued his urgent sifting.

“Actually, I’m looking for baking soda. Wanna gimme a hand here?” Mac didn’t look up.

Mortimer opened his mouth to respond, but MacGyver suddenly grabbed at a small tub from the back of a shelf and sighed with relief. “Gotcha!”

Without explaining what he was up to, Mac took a bowl and mixed the soda with some water. Satisfied he had the right strength mixture; he turned and picked up a towel that had seen better days. He slid a hand to his pocket, pulled out his knife, and cut the towel into two pieces, then soaked it in the solution he’d concocted.

“Please tell me you’ve not gone mad and are going to try and stop the leak with that?” Mortimer face was a picture of both curiosity and horror as he spoke.

“I’ve not gone mad,” MacGyver confirmed, prodding his creation to make sure the towel was sopping wet. “And I’m not going to try and stop a leak with this. What *I am* gonna do is hopefully stay alive with this. Bicarbonate of soda has properties that can help neutralize chlorine, so I guess you could say I just made us two gas masks.” He pulled out one rag and handed it to Mortimer, then wrapped the other around his nose and mouth. “What say we go fix that pipe?”

Mortimer looked at the rag, scowled, and then followed Mac’s lead, wrapping it around his face. By that time, MacGyver had already dived into the next compartment and back towards the leak.

As they grew closer, Mortimer paused in the engine room, patting Mac on the shoulder. “Maybe we can find a pipe clamp in here?” He began rummaging through oil and grease covered tools from a bygone era.

Mac considered helping until he spotted a spiraling tendril of smoke ebbing from the bottom of the motor room door. Originally, the hatches would have been made airtight, but after all this time, something in the old submarine had given, and that meant everyone would soon be susceptible to the gas.

“There’s no time, the gas is coming through the compartment door.” MacGyver bit into his bottom lip, and then clambered back the way he had come, leaving the pilot to continue his search.

In his mind, Mac already knew what he needed, and he also knew where to find it. Earlier, he'd worn a life jacket, and that jacket was now going to become U-boat first aid.

Finding the vest in the crew quarters, he scooped it up, and then moved on to the galley. He recalled the Pamela Anderson mug and smiled, but that wasn't quite what he needed. He selected an uncrushed Coke can, and once again moved on further forward until he reached Commander Witt's cabin.

Mac hoped the officer still had clothes here, and pulled open the tiny wardrobe in anticipation. There was a waterproof all-weather coat sitting on a wire coat hanger. *Perfect!*

MacGyver took off the coat, discarded it, and took the hanger – the final ingredient in his recipe for leaky pipes.

Now, he just needed a couple of tools he was sure he'd just seen Mortimer with back in the engine room. He headed back there at full speed, hoping the gas hadn't gotten any thicker in his absence.

It had.

The engine room was now full of the deadly gas, and even though he was wearing Mac's mask, Mortimer was still coughing. His eyes lit up as he saw the troubleshooter emerge through the mist, then his gaze dropped to the items in MacGyver's hands.

“Okay, tell me you're not gonna fix the leak with those either?”

Mac grinned, although Mortimer couldn't see it beneath the rag over his mouth. “Oh but I am!” He set the can, hanger and vest down and wafted at the mist until he could make out the tools laid out on the bench. Selecting a pair of cutters and a screw driver, he nodded to Mortimer. “Open up the hatch, it's now or never.”

Mortimer did as he was asked, waiting the other side for Mac to follow. “Just how is any of that going to stop the water?” He asked as MacGyver moved to the pipe with his homemade fix.

Mac took the life jacket and began to cut into it with his knife. “Easiest way to describe it, is that I'm kinda making a wound dressing for the pipe. These vests either have a rubber inflation tube or two rubber bladders. I want the rubber for my “gauze” pad.” He pulled out a central tube as if to prove his point.

He set the tube down, picked up the cutters and began to slice down the center of the Coke can, completely removing both the top and bottom sections to leave a metal tube with a slit down the side. “This is gonna be the bandage over my gauze,” he explained, then picked up the coat hanger and started to unwind it, cutting two lengths. “And finally, the hanger sections will be my adhesive strip...”

“You're nuts!” Mortimer hacked out, shaking his head.

MacGyver placed the thick rubber tube over the hole in the pipe. It was just the right size. Then he opened up the Coke can “tube” and wrapped it carefully over the rubber, closing it back together as tightly as he could with his hands.

The water ingress slowed slightly, but didn’t stop. Things weren’t quite taut enough yet. Taking the first piece of wire, he wrapped it around the left edge of the can then twisted the ends finger tight, making sure to leave reasonably long ends. He did the same with the right side of the can.

Once both sides were secure, he wrapped the wire ends around the screwdriver and quickly spun it clockwise to twist them further, shortening the length with each turn to tighten the hanger strips over the can and was far more securely than could ever be achieved by hand.

The steady flow of water at last began to abate until it was nothing but a tiny drip.

Mortimer still held a hand over the cloth on his face, but managed to mumble out a sentence. “The can stops the wire cutting into the rubber, and keeps it tightly in place! I’d never have thought of that!” He seemed genuinely amazed.

Mac didn’t have time for praise, however. He grabbed the pilot’s arm and tugged him back towards the motor room hatch. Once they were outside, he slammed it closed, spun the wheel into the locked position, and then used his wet “mask” to pack in at the bottom where he’d seen the gas leaking through earlier.

Mortimer copied the motion. “Now what?” he asked as he pressed hard on the cloth, pushing it into the door seal.

“Get every hatch topside you can open, so if any gas that’s left gets out, it will dissipate. I guess it wouldn’t hurt to get the oxygen scrubbers going too, even though we’re surfaced.” MacGyver stood up, exhaled, and then remembered the ship he’d seen earlier. It would be much closer now. “I’m going to see if Engel’s buddies are any nearer.”

\* \* \* \*

The atmosphere in the con was subdued as MacGyver entered, most of the spare crew had gone to try and either help Mortimer or man what controls they understood, but Pete, Nikki and McKenna had remained.

McKenna looked up as Mac breezed in, and his shoulders sagged as if he’d suddenly relaxed just a touch.

*Does he have that much confidence in me?* MacGyver wondered.

“MacGyver, did you stop the leak?” Pete was looking over at him, even though his eyes couldn’t see.

“We got it covered – literally, with a Coke can,” Mac teased. “What about the ship I saw earlier?” He asked, his tone becoming more serious.

McKenna rubbed at the back of his skull. "It will be on top of us in half an hour, max. No way can we dive, this thing just wouldn't take it, and even if we could, last time Engel's bunch tried it, they couldn't resurface for some reason. I don't even now how you guys pulled it off..."

"What about a good old fashioned run for it?" Nikki suggested. "Just because we can't go down, can't we just sail across, or whatever it is a U-boat does when it's not submerged?"

"It might help," McKenna agreed. "If we could run fast enough, and if we had a radio to call for help, but I don't think the diesels aboard this tub are a match for the ship out there, and the radio is bust!"

Pete apparently wasn't so defeatist. "What say we try anyway, Captain? Maybe Mac can fix the radio. He can just about fix anything!"

McKenna looked dubiously at his superior, but nodded. "I'll tell the men to get everything they can out of those engines, and we'll head for the coast..."

Mac glanced at Nikki and smiled wanly. "I don't suppose you know where the radio room is?"

"As it happens I do. It was the first thing I tried when we got aboard this overgrown boy's toy." She jerked a thumb back into the next compartment and MacGyver followed her into a tiny side room with Pete in tow.

The room was barely large enough for them all, and held just a small seat and an ancient and very large radio set with headphones the size of a house.

Mac perched Pete on the seat and then tried the radio's on and off selector. It was quite dead. *No power then.*

Taking out his knife, he let his fingers slide down the unit's metal casing until they reached four screws. He undid each in turn and gently lifted off the housing to reveal a maze of wires and strange, old-style vacuum tubes. He'd played with radios like this as a kid, even made them up from scratch, but those kind only received, and right now he needed to transmit.

MacGyver took a moment to survey the components, trying to recall what each one did. Then, in turn he checked each one until he found what he was looking for. Several of the contacts had become corroded with age, meaning current could no longer flow correctly via them.

Mac took the sharpest blade on his knife and began to scrape away the green oxidization on each until shiny metal was once again visible. Eventually, he tried the switch marked "Schalten Sie" again, and the radio crackled into life.

At first, it simply hissed and popped, but then MacGyver carefully and delicately changed the transmit frequency to something they had a chance of reaching a modern vessel on.

He handed the headset to Pete. “Okay, you two work your magic while I go help McKenna.”

Pete smiled and wafted a hand as if to say he had everything in control, and Mac truly believed he had. Pete was the best at diplomacy and communication, and if all else failed he had Nikki as back up with her rabid tenacity.

And given their crazy story, and current mode of transport, well, they needed all those skills and more not to get taken as time wasters.

Mac left his two friends behind knowing if anyone could pull it off, they could, and headed back to the con tower. McKenna was waiting, barking orders to the few crew he had.

When he spotted MacGyver, he walked brusquely over and shook his head. “The ship’s still gaining on us, and they have a deck mounted machine gun pointed our way. Think they’d actually use it, given what we’re carrying?”

“They want the U-boat and art, not us. If they manage to board the submarine, I’m guessing we’ll all be surplus to requirements.” Mac glanced around and noted Mortimer showing a crewman how to work the controls in front of him.

Mortimer met his gaze, and offered up a suggestion of his own, although it was one MacGyver would never approve of. “The U-boat has a deck gun of its own. We could try and clean it up...”

Mac sighed. Why did everything always resort back to violence? “That’s not the way to deal with this,” he answered. “And besides, after all these years no way is that gun safe. You’re more likely to shoot yourself than the bad guys.”

Mortimer wasn’t giving in so easily. “What about torpedoes? I just happen to know we can fire one from the aft tube of this puppy while it’s surfaced.”

“Does it have to come down to bloodshed?” Mac winced. “We can’t just sink that ship to save our own necks. Kill or be killed doesn’t work for me.”

“So we just die?” Mortimer’s tone said he was more than frustrated.

MacGyver didn’t hear the suggestion. He was already working on an alternative plan in his mind. He chewed on his bottom lip. “Maybe we could fire a few warning shots at Engel’s buddies until Pete can get help.”

“*If* Pete gets help,” Mortimer pointed out, wagging his forefinger. “And trust me, you can’t *just* fire a warning shot with a torpedo, those suckers don’t work that way. And you can’t *just* do close enough to scare and not hurt with fifty-year-old tech, either.”

“I think we can,” Mac argued. “Torpedoes don’t arm until they’ve traveled at least fifty meters, right?”

“What’s your point?”

“If we fire at Engel’s people with less than fifty meters between us, we can aim directly at them and the torpedo will simply break up on impact because it won’t have armed.” MacGyver was confident he could save lives – even the bad guys. “Maybe they won’t realize we did it on purpose and will back off.”

Mortimer’s brow creased as he appeared to think about it. Eventually, he slowly nodded. “It just might work! I can do the targeting from the con tower; can you deal with the torpedo room?”

Mac smiled. “I’ve already been there, kinda done that today, but from the torpedo’s point of view.”

Mortimer frowned, obviously not realizing just how MacGyver had escaped the motor room earlier. Mac didn’t stick around to explain, dodging back through compartments until he came to the area that had been filled with gas. The question now, was had it cleared enough to let him in the aft torpedo room?

Mac pulled away the rags they’d placed and spun the lock open. Tugging hard on the steel door he put his arm over his nose and mouth just in case.

The air beyond still wasn’t exactly pleasant, but most of the smoke had gone and he guessed, or rather hoped so had any danger.

Jogging inside, Mac stole a glance at the batteries. There was no more chlorine ebbing from them. He sighed with relief and carried on into the torpedo room.

The age-old projectiles were sleeping, as they had for many years on large metal racks. There was a hoist and straps to make it easy to load them into the tubes, and with a little maneuvering MacGyver was able to get one of the torpedoes into place relatively quickly.

He closed the small metal door behind it and remembered the sensation of claustrophobia he’d felt earlier when Nikki had shut him into the very same tube. He pushed off the feeling just as the sub’s intercom crackled behind him.

“This is Mortimer, McKenna has us in position, is everything ready your end Mac?” The line popped and cracked like an old record.

Mac pushed on the “send” button, or at least that was what he hoped it said. “Torpedo in position, tube flooded and ready to fire...I hope.”

There was a pause, as if McKenna and Mortimer were recalculating and repositioning, then Mortimer was back, his voice sounding suddenly more urgent.

“Fire now, Mac!”

MacGyver closed his eyes and slapped his hand hard on the controls. Would the torpedo even fire? Could he be sure it wouldn't explode on impact after all this time?

Guilt and uncertainty washed over him, but given the options, this really was their last chance. He waited, heart pounding in his chest for another call from the con tower.

"Mac, it worked! They're backing off!"

Mac considered waiting to see if another torpedo might be needed, but shook off the thought and raced back to the radio room where he'd left Pete and Nikki. What they needed now was contact with the outside world, but would his friends have actually pulled it off?

\* \* \* \*

MacGyver wasn't sure he'd ever seen Pete Thornton with such a smug face before. His portly friend was sitting in the radio room with rather red cheeks and a smile from ear to ear. Nikki Carpenter's expression wasn't any less complacent.

"I'm guessing you guys made my radio fix worth while?" Mac asked, popping his head into the confined room.

"*HMS Argyll* is already so close Engel's people are trying to make a run for it," Pete explained. "It took a little while to convince the captain of a British frigate that I wasn't going nuts, but once he contacted Phoenix..."

"Just wait until he pulls alongside this tub," Nikki added. "Can you imagine the moment a British warship and a WW2 German U-boat sit side by side? And we get to see it first hand!"

Pete became more serious, cocking his head in the direction Mac was standing. "The Brits have alerted other N.A.T.O. ships in the area about what's been happening. I don't think it will be too long before Madame Brandenburg's' people are caught and arrested."

"What about us?" Mac asked.

"They're going to tow us to the nearest port and disown us," Nikki joked. "Maybe they heard you were onboard?"

Mac puffed out a breath. He was just glad it was all over. "Yeah well, so much for a fun, *safe* assignment. Maybe I'll go up to the cabin, slide under a blanket and never come out again. I think it's the only safe place for me!" There was amusement in his eyes as he spoke.

Nikki laughed. "Mac, with your reputation for finding trouble, I doubt even that would work!"

\* \* \* \*

*Four Weeks Later*  
*Inlet off the Baltic Sea*

MacGyver steered the small motor boat carefully through the waves as he headed towards the shore. He was alone, and thinking hard about the U-boat's story.

After being towed back by the British frigate, he really should have just returned to L.A. but something about U3524 had intrigued him, and once he was on a roll, Mac rarely gave in without a solution to a problem, or in this case, the truth behind something fast becoming a legend.

The submarine was simply too well preserved to have sat in some Nazi refueling port for forty-five years without anyone knowing about it. And why had it never been discovered? Where was the crew? So many questions and Mac needed answers to them all.

After doing some digging with Dr. Sand, he'd managed to find the location of the secret port where Engel had found the sub, but the land it was on was privately owned by an elderly gent. In fact, the man had owned the land since the war had ended, and still lived there in a cabin in the nearby woods.

Maybe this man was the only person left alive who really knew what had happened so many years ago?

MacGyver slowed the boat and eventually cut the engine, letting it slide into the port on its own momentum. It hit the old wooden decking and bounced backwards, but Mac was ready for it and jumped out onto the landing stage, securing his ride with a rope for and aft.

He took a breath and looked around, suddenly amazed by how well preserved the place was. It was like he'd borrowed a time machine and stepped back into another era.

There were high rock formations all around, and the outcroppings provided good cover for the hidden port. To help with the illusion of barrenness, submarines that docked here had obviously been covered over to conceal them, and the huge colored web for U3524 still lay discarded on the ground where Engel's group had removed it.

There was old fuel drums lined up like troops, rusting and corroded, along with rotting crates and lots more camouflage netting. Here and there, he could still see the swastika emblem, faded and worn away with age and sunlight.

If U3524 belonged anywhere, it was here.

Sitting across from the port on one of the crates was an old gray-haired man with a fishing rod perched in his gnarled hands. He seemed oblivious to having a visitor and simply stared out at the water with deep blue, very weary eyes.

MacGyver guessed he was looking at Kurt Werner, the landowner – the man he had come to meet. Taking slow, deliberate steps he approached the old-timer and then pulled off his woolen hat as an act of courtesy.

“S’cuse me, sir, I’m looking for a Mr. Werner?”

The old man smiled as if he knew that already. “Then I would suppose you’ve found him,” he offered with a very sharp German accent.

Mac abruptly felt sheepish, and he gripped the hat in both hands just a little more tightly. “Sir, I think you know why I’m here...U3524..?”

Werner set down his rod and sat forwards, clasping his hands together as if he were gathering some inner strength before speaking again. Eventually, he sighed, and began to talk. “My brother and I were crewmen on the U-boat, and at the end of the war we were given orders to take the art we were carrying to Argentina.”

“But that didn’t happen?”

Werner shook his head, his eyes becoming bleary with obvious pain. “No, many of the crew, including myself didn’t believe in what the E.R.R. was doing, so when we docked here for fuel, we all refused to carry on. The war was over – we just wanted to go home to our families. That was never going to happen for my brother, Erik. There was a fight with one of the officer’s and he was shot and killed...”

MacGyver looked down at the frozen earth beneath his boots. He was getting the real truth now, but at the expense of Werner’s feelings, and that wasn’t what he’d intended. “I’m sorry,” he began, but Werner cut him off.

“Don’t be. I’ve never forgotten about Erik, or his senseless death. You see, a few weeks after the war ended I came back here, and imagine my surprise when I discovered the U-boat intact – no one had found her. My family was wealthy in their own right, not from pillaging others, and I was able to buy this land and move here. I kept everything, even the U-boat just as it was. Call it a lasting monument to my brother.” Werner looked over to where the submarine had been docked.

“And you weren’t tempted to sell the art, or return it?” Mac asked mindful of the old man’s feelings.

“NO!” The answer from Werner was sharp and gritty. “The submarine should have been left alone. She was a war grave, after all...” He paused, swallowed as if gathering himself and then continued. “One day recently I came here and she was gone. All those years of preserving her for nothing.”

“You didn’t just leave the U-boat to rust, though, did you? She lasted because you tried to work on her, to keep her just as she was originally?” MacGyver finally realized why the submarine had been able to run and function after so many years. Werner had been her caretaker – she had been his weird obsession for almost half a century.

Werner nodded solemnly. “You would tend a grave wouldn’t you? Take flowers and such? This was my mausoleum for Erik, and I don’t understand who would take this away from me? Was it about the art?”

“Kind of,” MacGyver admitted, taking a crate to sit next to Werner while they talked. “You see the E.R.R. still has followers, and they discovered your U-boat. They came here at night and did some modifications to make her sea-worthy again so they could get her cargo. At least they thought they had, but she went down in the Baltic a few miles from here and they had to abandon her. A diver discovered her by accident, and the foundation I work for stepped in...”

“She’s lost?” Werner was almost brought to tears by the news, and he looked away, scrunching his eyes closed to apparently hold back his feelings. “I knew some day when I was gone this might happen, but still...”

Mac put a hand on the old man’s shoulder reassuringly. “Kurt, she’s not lost. You looked after her so well we managed to surface her. In fact, I guess you could say she even saved a few lives, including mine.”

“Where is she now?” Werner’s eyes had become bright again.

“The German authorities have her. The bad guys have been arrested, and the art is being returned to its original owners, or their living relatives.” MacGyver smiled. He was a sucker for a happy ending.

Werner nodded, as if he approved. “I should have returned the art myself, instead of keeping the U-boat as a shrine, then none of this could have happened. What will happen to her now? I suppose she will be towed to some salvage yard to be broken up?”

“No way!” Mac enjoyed giving more good news. “Peter Thornton, a very good friend of mine at the Phoenix Foundation has arranged for your U-boat to be put on display at a German transport museum – she’s gonna be fully restored. That’s one of the reasons why I came to find you.”

“It is?” Werner was genuinely excited now.

“Yep, those folks at the museum would really love it if you could go over and see the boat being worked on, maybe give them some insight on her from your unique point of view.” Mac’s smile was creeping into a full-on grin as he spoke. It was good to give out a little joy, given how bleak the world could be sometimes.

Kurt rubbed at his chin, as if an idea was forming. “Do you think perhaps that the museum would allow a dedication plaque in my brother’s name?”

“Heck, I don’t see why not. In fact, I bet Pete could even arrange it for you.”

“How can I repay you?” Werner was close to tears again, but this time out of happiness. “I would ask you to join me for dinner, but...” He looked down at the

fishing rod and empty net and couldn't resist a small chortle. "I always was better at being under the sea like a fish, than actually catching one!"

MacGyver slid a hand under his thick padded jacket and pulled out a stick of chewing gum. The move drew a confused look from Werner, but Mac continued to unwrap it with a smile, being careful with the foil sleeve. "Oh, I think I just might be able to help you in that department..."

The End