

SHORT EXCERPT #2

From the chapter “Bozo the Sea Dog”

Welcome to *Blenny* (SS-324)

Imagine the reception LT Kessler received when he crossed the brow with his seabag and a leashed dog—his beloved Bozo. Any initial misgivings about Bozo were quickly dissipated by the dog’s docile manner and happy disposition. Kessler’s new shipmates fell in love with the dog right away. Many if not most of the crewmen on *Blenny* had owned dogs themselves, so having Bozo around was a pleasant reminder of home.

The captain of *Blenny*, Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) David H. Blumberg, from Brooklyn, NY, was initially a bit circumspect about Bozo’s arrival. However, the skipper seemed satisfied by what he was able to read in Bozo’s official personnel file, which Kessler hand-delivered. In part, the documents indicated that Bozo was a “first class dog” with identification number 123-45-67 and code name “K9-000”. His medical and dental records checked out, and Blumberg was impressed by Bozo’s total miles logged at sea aboard *Benner*. Bozo even wore his own “uniform”, complete with (questionably) earned stripes.



The skipper of Blenny, LCDR David Blumberg, reviews some paperwork with Bozo.

Having melted the hearts of the wardroom and enlisted personnel, Bozo's next challenge was adapting to life "inside a steel tube". Unlike his prior home at sea, Bozo's freedom of movement would be severely tested inside the cramped environment of a submarine, and his opportunities for vigorous play would require some adaptation to the rhythm of the boat's alternating submergence and surfacing. Only when *Blenny* was surfaced and sea conditions were calm could Bozo fully exert himself by running laps around the deck.

Bozo endeared himself to most of his shipmates with his antics and gentle disposition. He established a pattern of meandering around the boat while underway to spend time with all watchstanders in their various compartments. A favorite destination was the radio shack, where Bozo could always count on an extra snack or pet, or both. His presence gave the crew something to talk about and helped to alleviate a lot of the boredom that the prolonged runs at sea often provoked.

A feature piece about Bozo ran in many newspapers in late January 1962. Written by William D. Clark, it included the following sentence:

Bozo sees eye-to-eye with the officers and men on most things, has the run of the ship, is pampered by everyone, likes to romp on deck while the submarine is making a surface run, and can even climb a short ladder.

Of course, Bozo needed help up and down the longer hatch ladders. Whenever the boat was being buttoned up in preparation for a dive, the topside watch would yell down to anyone listening in the crew's mess, "Bozo down!" That was the signal for the dog to be lowered to waiting hands below. Once safely aboard, Bozo often checked on his sleeping accommodations first. Even though he was an enlisted dog, Bozo usually sought one of the unoccupied bunks in the officers' berthing area to snooze.



Bozo enjoys some well-deserved rack time.