



King of the miniseries?

Bostwick nudges Chamberlain with role in 'War'

BY NOW, ASSUMING you're locked into Herman Wouk's "War and Remembrance," you've already seen one of the best scenes in the entire ABC production—the tense, nerve-racking underwater bombardment of the submarine Devilfish, which is comparable to anything done in the now-classic film "Das Boot."

Barry Bostwick, as the sub's cigar-chomping officer, Lt. Carter (Lady) Aster, has done an outstanding job, and in days to come, he has some of the meatiest scenes in these opening 18 hours.

His character, Lt. Aster, is rewarded for his brilliant performance under pressure by being made commander of the submarine Moray.

"I'm also the only actor in the entire 30-hour miniseries that jumps into bed with a babe," said Bostwick, referring to his upcoming romance with Janice Henry (Sharon Stone).

The actor is running a close race with Richard Chamberlain for king of the miniseries. His list includes "Scruples," "George Washington"—Parts I and II, "Make Mine Manhattan," and "A Woman of Substance." But no role has been quite as exciting as this one—or as dangerous.

"In one scene, where we sink a Japanese ship, we're in shark-infested waters. I didn't know until after I read a production note that six divers with stun guns were underwater while we were shooting. I called someone up in production and he said about 18 sharks had been swimming in the vicinity. Had we known it, I doubt if anyone would have jumped into the water."

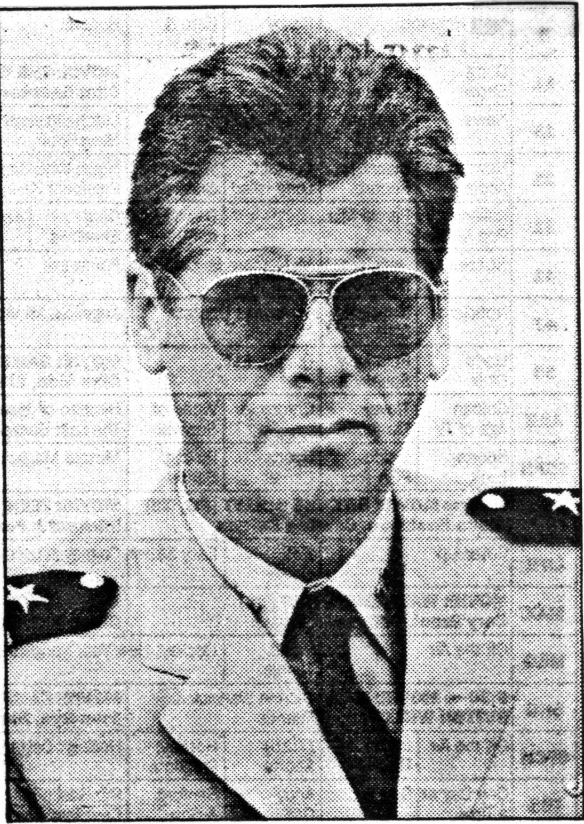
It's a chilling scene as the Japanese jump off the side of the burning ship while Cmdr. Aster orders his men to fire on them.

"What you're seeing is the aggressive, cold, warrior side of my character," he said. "He's been well-researched and is actually based on such men as Much Morton, a World War II Navy hero. He's the kind of military man whose talent bubbles to the top in the heat of battle. To some he may seem callous, calculating and too aggressive. But he knows you don't win a war by counterpunching. You win it by sinking ships and killing soldiers."

Bostwick refers to director Dan Curtis, the genius behind these 30 hours, as the "general" and says he'd follow him into battle any day.

Even the cigar Aster chews on throughout was a Curtis suggestion. "Light up that heater and let's get going," he'd order Bostwick, who hates cigars. Bostwick would gag and then follow orders. "We were in such close quarters in the submarine I felt sorry for the guys around me. Cigars give you the worst breath and in my opinion are hideous. I don't know how many boxes I went through."

He even auditioned them. "I went to a cigar



NO CIGAR: Which is fine with Barry Bostwick.

place in Pasadena. I needed something to fit my face. Not too long. They had to have a certain roundness, but not block my face, and I had to be able to shift them from side to side when the periscope went up and down. To make them short we cut them down. We had to keep matching scenes so I had a whole shelf of them handy."

The submarine, he said, was actually a museum piece and couldn't move under its own power. It had to be led around the Pacific by tugs. Barges carrying old tires were used for the fires.

"But the most difficult thing to do," he said, is to weight a ship so it tilts on its side before sinking. "Some scenes, of course, used miniatures."

BOSTWICK LOVES playing larger-than-life guys, but those roles don't come along often enough, he admits. "You need a background like World War II for them to emerge. I'm not good at playing small heroes. But the background must fit the foreground, as in this case."

Too, he confesses he was never much at history in school. But thanks to boning up for roles like "George Washington" and Aster in "War and Remembrance," he's learning fast. He hopes the miniseries, which he calls "a masterpiece," will serve the same purpose for youngsters who now turn their backs on history books.

"It's an honorable, honest project done for the right reasons," he said.



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