

The
Adventurers' Club News

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Pan Am's Honolulu Clipper

The Adventurers' Club News

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The end of an Icon – the Honolulu Clipper

Robert Bogash (© 1991 Robert Bogash)

The *Honolulu Clipper* – NC18601 – began life as NX18601 – the experimental registration for the first airplane of the twelve eventually produced. Although Boeing did not build a Prototype, and did not call this airplane a Prototype, in fact, it was a Prototype.

The Clipper was “rolled out” from Boeing’s original Plant 1 on the Duwamish – June 1, 1938. The factory was way too small, and the majority of assembly took place on the ramp outside the factory doors.

The B-314 had more than its share of bugs that all needed shaking out before it could enter service.

The small vertical fin, attached to that huge body, proved to be woefully inadequate in providing directional stability and control, both on the water and in the air. Boeing quickly removed the fin and replaced it with two at the ends of the hori-

zontal stabilizer.

Eventually, it was necessary to have three fins in order to “get it right.”

The following is Wellwood Beall’s recollection – close, but not “spot on.”

In a mid-1960s interview, Wellwood Beall, chief engineer on the B314, remem-

bered the first Boeing Clipper flight. He had the plane barged down the waterway from old Plant 1 to Seattle’s Elliott Bay in 1938. Boeing test pilot Eddie Allen took off, flew a sweeping circular route, and landed.

“How did it go?” Beall asked anxiously.

“The plane won’t turn,” Allen replied.

“There’s not enough rudder.”

The test pilot had completed his horse-shoe-shaped flight by powering up on two engines on one side and powering down on the other two.



Period Poster – Arriving from San Francisco at her namesake city, the Honolulu Clipper disembarks her happy travelers at the Pearl City terminal. The 2400 mile trip generally took between 16 and 20 hours depending upon winds.

(Clipper continued on page 2)

“We took the plane back to the plant and added another vertical tail,” Beall said.



Famed Boeing Test Pilot Eddie Allen conducts a taxi test on Elliott Bay – about June 5, 1938. Notice the single (small) vertical fin.



Boeing quickly removed the fin and replaced it with two at the ends of the horizontal stabilizer.



So we went back and put a triple tail on that bird and then she finally grabbed air.

“While the second tail helped, there was still not enough rudder.”

He recalled going along on a flight and opening an overhead hatch in the tail section. He stuck his head out of the hatch, expecting a great rush of wind. Instead, the air barely mussed his hair. “So we went back and put a triple tail on that bird and then she finally grabbed air.”



Other serious problems involved the size, shape, and location of the sponsons, or sea-wings. And, the airplane had a very bad porpoising problem on the water. Eventually, however, the location and geometry of the hull step was adjusted to resolve that problem. Here, flying on only the starboard engines.

My own firsthand experience

In the mid-80s, the local AIAA chapter had one of their monthly dinner meetings – the subject was Pan Am flying boats. I was a bigwig of sorts at the chapter in those days. In attendance were key players from the period – from Boeing, from Pan Am, and from the University of Washington, where the wind tunnel testing had been done. After the presentation, a Q&A session began, that led into a lively discussion from the audience. The subject of the single small vertical fin arose. Someone said it was obvious before first flight that the

(Clipper continued on page 6)

Lakemba

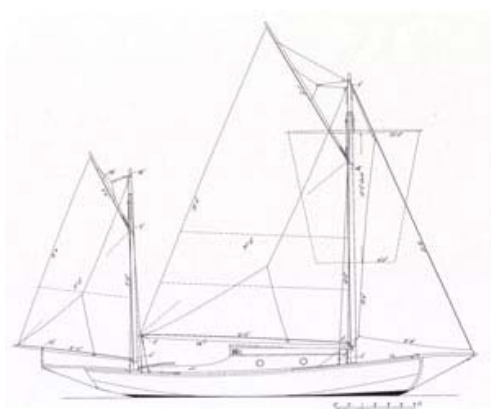
Edward G. Boden, #659

One of the all-time great single-handed world circumnavigators was an American, Harry Pidgeon. He was the second



Harry Pidgeon on Islander

sailor to have sailed around the world alone and the first to have done it twice, both of them aboard a 34 foot Seagoer class yawl named *Islander*. On his third attempt, however, this time with a wife, he came to grief in the New Hebrides Islands when caught at anchor by a typhoon. *Islander* was wrecked beyond repair, although Harry and his wife, Margaret, survived the disaster. They returned to



27' Sea Bird Yawl

Southern California and he built a smaller version of *Islander*, a 26 foot Sea Bird class yawl which he named *Lakemba* after an is-

land in the Lau Group of the Fiji Islands. Harry Pidgeon headed off on *The Great Adventure* in 1954 at 85 years old.

My sailing started in 1952 when I purchased a 15 foot sloop that was kept at the Fleitz Brothers Marina in San Pedro, CA. Harry Pidgeon's *Lakemba* was tied up at the California Yacht Anchorage, just across a narrow channel from where my little sloop was moored. One of my real regrets is that I never got around to his boat to pay my respects before he passed away. Procrastination won another round.

By 1962 I had acquired enough sailing self-confidence to begin my own single-handed circumnavigation, and traveled to Europe where I purchased a 25 foot Vertue sloop. I renamed her *Kittimake*. She had been strongly constructed of



wood in 1952 by an excellent boatbuilder on the south coast of England, and was equipped with a small, two-stroke, two cylinder gasoline engine. *Kittimake* was such a handy little vessel under sail that I rarely used the engine other than the time that it took to cross France by river and canal with the mast down and secured on deck. To say that the engine was troublesome was a kindness, so, after the transit through the

(*Lakemba* continued on page 4)

Panama Canal, I removed the engine in Balboa and gave it away. From that point, *Kittiwake* was pure sailboat.



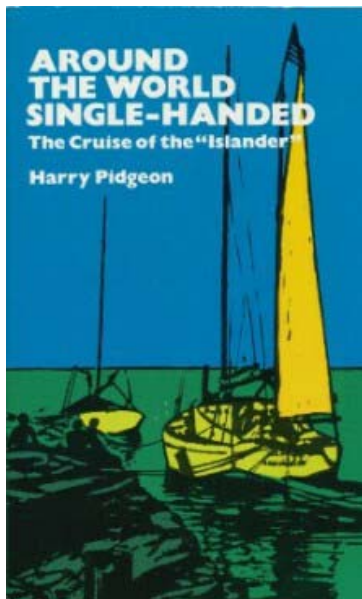
A 1952 classic 25" *Vertue Sloop*

By November of 1967 I had sailed half way around the globe and had arrived in New Zealand. One port that I wanted to visit was Whangerei, about twenty miles up a narrow, twisting river. With a fair wind ("fair" to a sailor is a wind from behind), that would not be a problem, and working sailing craft had made the passage for generations –sometimes spending many hours aground on the putty! I had a usable slant of wind for most of the passage up the river, but occasional twists in the river made some legs into an upwind beat. One such occurred at a particularly narrow stretch, and I became stuck on a mud bank. A passing power boat offered a tow which I gratefully accepted since it was less than an hour until sunset, and I still had several miles ahead of me.

There were a half-dozen or so sailboats tied up to the dock when I arrived in Whangerei at the end of the tow rope. A convenient place to drop the tow was alongside a small yawl about the size of *Kittiwake*. I

recognized the design of the yawl as being a Sea Bird, the same as Harry Pidgeon's last boat. Thinking, "I wonder," I looked at the stern and there was the name, *Lakemba*!

Harry Pidgeon's last boat had been sailed out from California by a young American and, apparently, had made quite a good passage until he'd been overtaken by a storm not far off the east coast of New Zealand. He'd been swept by a big sea that half-filled the little yawl because, as I recall, she didn't have a self-draining cockpit (one which will empty itself without filling the remainder of the boat.) I no longer remember most of the details of how he managed to survive, but he somehow secured a tow, and *Lakemba* was safely tied up in Whangerei when I, too, arrived at the end of a tow rope.



Harry Pidgeon's book

(Richard continued on page 8)

The Ultimate Adventurer

Dave Finner, #1065

Note: Bob Silver had what I thought was a pretty good idea. He approached me at dinner and suggested we start a novel in The Adventurers' Club News, where each month a member would continue to write a story where another member left off. So, I agreed to start the process. While there are no rules to this, a few suggestions might be in order. First, try to keep it around one page so our illustrious editor doesn't get fried with the idea. Second, while new characters can be introduced, or old ones disposed of, it should be a continuous saga, rather than a series of random short stories. Third, YOU GOTTA WRITE SOMETHING! Don't let my poor characters die from apathy and lack of interest.

For the few of you who haven't heard of me, my name is Buck Fantod, internationally known adventurer and treasure diver, and all around humble and nice guy. I have been asked to tell this story to clarify rumors that have unfairly circulated. While there's a slight possibility most of the heinous, vicious rumors are true, there are a few that are somewhat exaggerated, so I agreed to tell my story for the first time.

It all began the winter of 1954. Having just received my discharge papers from the Navy, I could now devote full time to follow my dream, a dream that was to become a compulsive force which would dictate the rest of my life: to find the ultimate treasure ship!

There was only one wreck that qualified to be called the "ultimate," a little-known Chinese pirate ship: the *Ning Bob*. Sold to the Philippines and refurbished as a Manila galleon, stolen by Spain and refitted as a Spanish frigate, bought by an American businessman to be put on display in Europe only to be confiscated by Hitler at the beginning of World War II, the *Ning Bob* had a somewhat unusual history. Only a handful of people knew about the vessel and that it sank near the end of the War with a shipment of gold that was to secretly purchase Australian army hats. I had spent all of my spare time in the last ten years researching the ship, and had nar-

rowed the wreck location to one of two geographic locations: Egypt or Tasmania.

I arrived at the tiny village of Pocomia, Tasmania, just as the sun reclined below the shadowed, jungle-covered peaks. I needed a drink. It was difficult to relax in the humidity, especially since I knew I had enemies. Word had gotten out about my search and there was little doubt that rival treasure hunters and adventurers would be tailing me.

I slipped into the sleazy little bar as inconspicuously as possible. The air was thick with cigar smoke and filled with the stench of unbathed and overworked peons. Adventurers! I thought to myself.

The room was hotter than a Mexican jail cell. I slowly walked toward an empty table. Dropping my duffle bag on the floor, I reclined in a rickety cane chair and began to scan the perimeter of the bar for the familiar face of a rival treasure hunter. It was difficult to concentrate as off-key piano notes seemed to suspend themselves in the dense air. I sought the direction from which the music radiated. In the corner, an antiquated upright piano seemed to dwarf a small Asian man who haphazardly punched at the keys in a pathetic attempt to play, *As Time goes By*.

Then I saw her. Thelma Bartholomski, ex-soviet spy who defected to Tasmania to become a treasure hunter. She sat on a bar

(Ultimate Adventurer continued on page 21)

Honolulu Clipper

(Clipper continued from page 2)

fin was too small for the big body. Some (but not all) of the Boeing people disputed the notion. And then, the UW people chimed in – pointing out that Boeing had been warned after the wind tunnel tests that the tail would present a problem. The joy in this exchange – which I sincerely wished had been videotaped – was hearing the actual people involved at the time – still passionate in their opinions and presenting a true “living history” lesson.



The Honolulu Clipper's first Trans-Pacific flight began March 16, 1939, under the command of Capt. Kenneth Beer. Beer was Number 19 on the Pan Am pilot seniority list. Here the airplane is being christened after arrival at Pearl Harbor. The last leg, from Manila to Hong Kong carried 45 people, including 30 paying passengers – at the time, a world record.

Loss of a Legend

On Saturday, November 3, 1945, the *Honolulu Clipper* was enroute from Hawaii to San Francisco with twenty-six passengers on a routine military flight (all B-314s were acquired by the military after the beginning of WW II, but were still operated

by Pan Am.) The Captain was S. E. “Robby” Robinson.

Five and a half hours after departure, number three engine began backfiring and shooting flames. It was shut down and the prop feathered. Robbins, a pilot for twenty-seven years, elected to return to Pearl Harbor. A short while later, number four engine also began acting up. After nursing it along for about an hour and a half, it also was successfully shutdown.



Ocean landing – NOT a ditching

Seven and a half hours after departure, at about 11 PM local time, the crew decided to land in the ocean (not a ditching, as some have referred to it – a ditching is the intentional landing of a landplane in water.



The Clipper stayed safely afloat awaiting rescue

This is one BIG advantage of a Flying Boat!) In total darkness, at 11:07 PM, the airplane was successfully landed, with no damage, about 650 miles east of Oahu.

The airplane maintained successful radio contact with shore stations in California

and Hawaii, rescue aircraft, and rescue ships closest to their location. Ultimately, five ships made for the disabled airplane. The *Englewood Hills*, a merchant tanker, was the first to arrive, and by 8:00 AM, had taken all the passengers on board.



The Englewood Hills removes the Honolulu Clipper passengers.

The Honolulu Clipper and the San Pablo

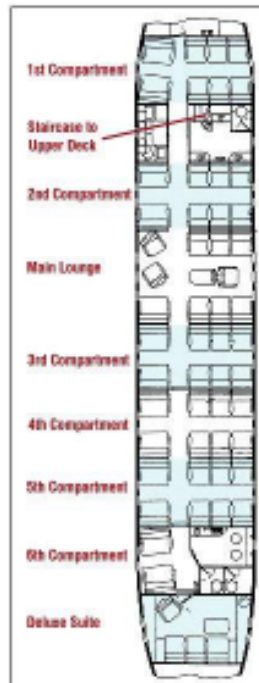
The crew, that had remained aboard, were joined by aviation mechanics from the escort carrier *Manila Bay*, now also on scene. They tried unsuccessfully to repair the aircraft's engines, and the ship ultimately took the airplane in tow. The weather turned bad, and after seven hours, the tow rope broke. The carrier maintained a loose formation with the airplane for two days until the arrival of the seaplane tender *San Pablo*.

The *San Pablo* intended to hoist the Clipper out of the water onto her deck. However, on November 7, a big wave crashed the airplane into the ship, causing major damage to the Clipper. Based on the costly damage inflicted on the airplane, and the time and effort required to re-snag her, Navy command in Pearl Harbor ordered salvage efforts to be terminated and the airplane to be sunk. It took 30 minutes and 1,200 rounds of 20 mm shells for the *Ho-*

nolulu Clipper to slip beneath the waves. The crew, that had departed for Pearl aboard the carrier, said they were glad they didn't have to watch her final moments. She had flown 18,000 hours and now she was gone.



The Honolulu Clipper and the sea plane tender San Pablo



Internal compartment layout for the Pan Am Clipper Class



Clipper Cocktail
 1/2 oz. light or gold rum
 1/2 oz. vermouth
 1/2 tsp. grenadine
 Combine all ingredients and pour over cracked ice into chilled cocktail glass.

(Clipper continued on page 8)

Honolulu Clipper – A Photo Archive



Honolulu Clipper *cutaway*



Honolulu Clipper *nose cutaway*



Honolulu Clipper *center cutaway*



Honolulu Clipper *aft cutaway*



Comparing the Clipper to other aircraft



Honolulu Clipper *flight deck*



The Flying Clippers



Unlimited Horizons

BOOK REVIEW —**BLUE WATER GOLD RUSH — The odyssey of a California Sea Urchin Diver**

Reviewed by John Grissim, author of *The Lost Treasure of the Concepcion*, with comments by the Editor
 Author: Tom Kendrick, Azalea Creek Publishing, Sebastopol, CA, 2006 (309p; 4½ x 8½), ISBN: 978-0-96779734-3-6

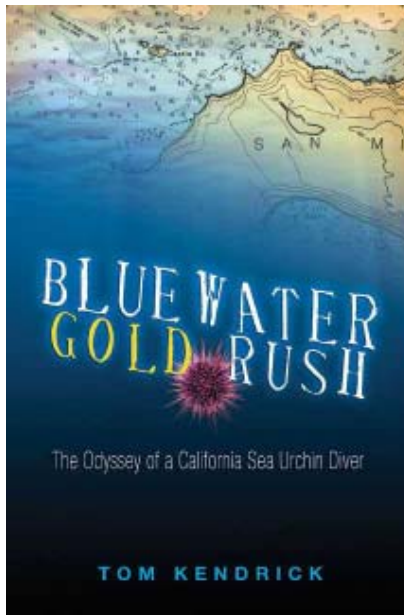
After reading excerpts in *The Surfer's Journal* and hearing friends in the West Coast water world rave about this gem of a book, I bought it and devoured it a week-end. This is a terrific read, at once an honest, deeply personal memoir and an entertaining swashbuckling tale of adventure.

Kendrick writes in a clear, deceptively easy style that grabs you off the dock on the first page and the next thing you know, you're down 85 feet deep on a big money dive in the gin clear waters of a virgin reef by the Channel Islands. And it doesn't let up.

Kendrick was a member of the Santa Barbara, California-based sea urchin divers who pioneered this offbeat fishery, reaping its rewards and facing lethal dangers, opening new waters in Northern California, even – and this is insane – harvesting urchins at the Farallon Islands, the stalking ground of the Great White Shark.

There are some great stories here, moments of danger and reward, death and laughter, all told with great insight. This is a memorable book that deserves to be in the book collection of anyone who loves

the ocean and the lore of the sea. Rumor has it that the author has been hired to write a screenplay adaptation. This book is an absolute natural for the big screen. Highest recommendation.



John Grissim is a writer who should know – he's well known in California diving circles. Club members who met Tom during his recent presentation at the Los Angeles Adventurers' Club will especially enjoy this book, since Tom gets into more detail, and takes his readers not only into the details of many of his most fascinating adventures, but ties them together in a coherent history of the entire evolution of sea urchin diving.

Tom starts off with a disclaimer that he has taken a bit of artistic license in order to write a coherent story. Then he grabs the reader's attention with the heart-wrenching tale of Jim Robinson's death by shark on December 9, 1994. Some 300 pages later the reader can finally surface for air, wondering where the time went.

Blue Water Gold Rush is available from wherever books are sold in stores and on the Internet, and directly from the publisher.

What's Happening...

Mike Harker Shake's A Leg around the world!



Mike Harker, whom many Club members have come to know through his interview series in the *News*, has just posted a nine minute video on You Tube about his life and his around-the-world sailing trip. You can view the Video here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYgT8RgL30A>

Jim Dorsey updates website



Jim Dorsey has recently updated his interesting website. Visit it at: www.jamesdorsey.com

Editor's Note:
Each month we will feature recent activities of members and friends on this page. Please send your material along with any photos to the Editor by email or snail mail. Designate it for "What's Happening...."

Jay Foonberg gives virtual lecture in South Africa



Recently, Jay Foonberg, who is a well-known, world-class attorney outside our Club circle, gave a long distance lecture to attorneys in South Africa at the American Embassy.

You can learn more about Jay at his website: <http://www.foonberglaw.com/>

Altaffer billed as World's most travelled man

HOW MANY AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS DO YOU HAVE?

From 0 to 9 exploits: Couch Potato
From 10 to 49 exploits: Beginner
From 50 to 99 exploits: Remarkable
From 100 to 149 exploits: Master
From 150 to 200 exploits: Grand Connoisseur!

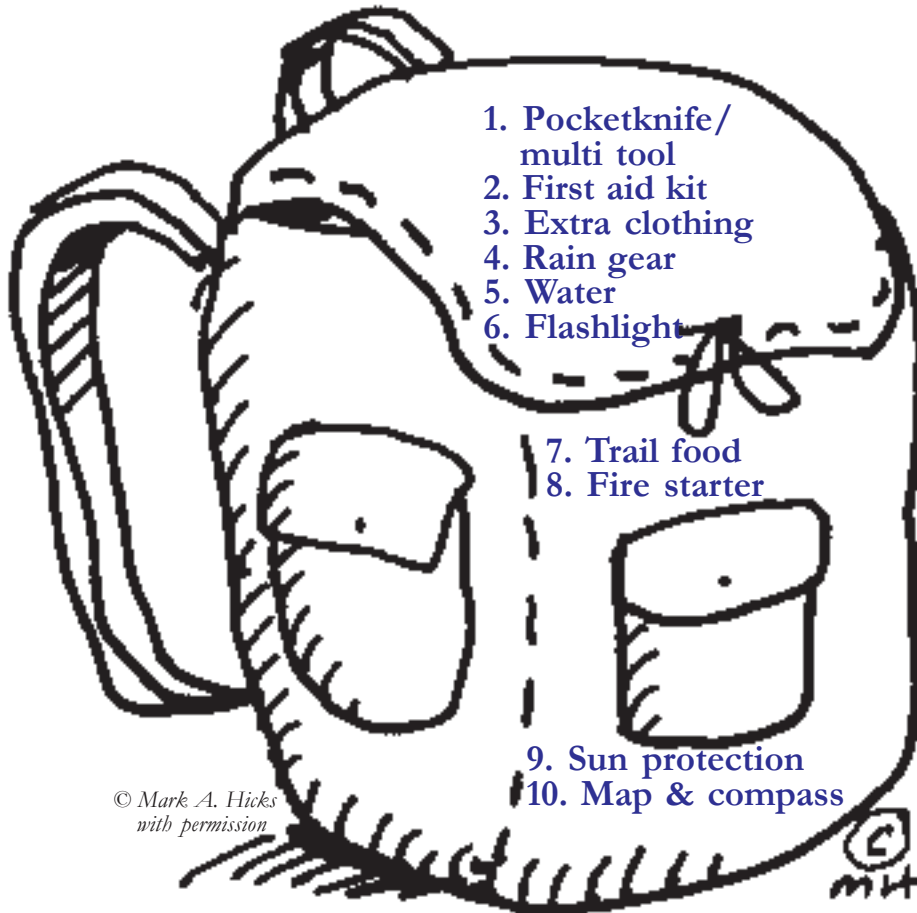
TRAVELLER NAME	NATIONALITY	YEAR OF BIRTH	EXPLOITS
GRAND CONNOISSEUR			
1. Bill Altaffer	USA	1943	179
MASTER			
2. André Bruguier	France	1917	130
3. Rafael Arana	Spain	1947	114
4. Juan Tare Talar	Spain	1941	91
REMARKABLE			
5. David Orr	Spain	1942	81
6. John Amersbach	Poland	1971	69
7. Jonathan Dorn	Spain	1927	67
8. Robert Quinlan	Spain	1927	67
9. Alan Thompson	USA	1945	66
10. Charles Taylor	USA	1940	61
11. Paul G. Fernandez	Spain	1959	74
12. Jean Mager	Portugal	1942	73
13. Thomas Gaudin	Germany	1949	62
14. Elliot Smith	USA	1947	60
15. Viktor Lindahl	Poland	1949	59
16. Miguel Marañón	Chaparral	1977	54
17. Francisco Gomez	Spain	1941	51
18. Luis Jimeno	Spain	1943	51
BEGINNER			
19. Valde Valhala	Poland	1948	47
20. Miguel Angel Garcia	Spain	1978	44

The Jorge Sanchez travel website lists Bill Altaffer as a "Grand Connoisseur" of travel with the highest rating of all participants.

The Adventurers' Backpack

Peter Jensen, #1101

Most backpackers and hikers are aware of the commonly accepted 10-essentials list that appears in various publications from time to time:



If you could add two things to make it an even dozen, what would it be? To get things going my two choices are:

11. Duct tape
12. Tweezers

Please submit your choices by mail or email to the Editor. We'll feature the best answers next edition.

THE THRAWN RICKLE

From the Ancient Scottish: thrawn = stubborn; rickle = loose, dilapidated heap

Robert G. Williscroft #1116 - Editor



For several issues I have been writing that I need somebody to help with the magazine, an *Assistant Editor* who will eventually take over the task. Thus far I have received exactly zero

responses to this plea. The *News* is a vital part of our Club. It is the one link that keeps everybody in touch with Club activities and fellow Club members. It would be a shame to see the *News* come out only infrequently, or not at all. But if somebody doesn't step up, that is exactly what will happen.

This month we feature a grand old dame from the past. It is possible that some of our members actually travelled on one of Pan Am's Flying Clippers. If you ever took such a flight, please tell us about it.

Our new website is taking shape. Forthcoming programs are available, and we're working to move the time horizon further out. This is a work-in-progress. We want it to re-

flect what you want to see in your Club. Please write or email your suggestions about how the website should appear, and what should appear on the site. We will try to incorporate new material as it becomes available, and are working to make the site interactive, so it can become a tool for your own research.

As the website develops, you may eventually be able to purchase copies of archived programs, and Club related merchandise like caps, mugs, patches, etc. We also anticipate the ability to conduct research into some of the Club's fabulous archived documents and books. This won't happen right away, but it definitely is coming.

A reminder: Articles about Club speakers report on what they said. Neither the Club nor the *News* endorses the content of these presentations.

Once again, this edition of the *News* is brought to you in full color through the generosity of several members, and the Board. Be sure to thank a Board Member the next time you see him.

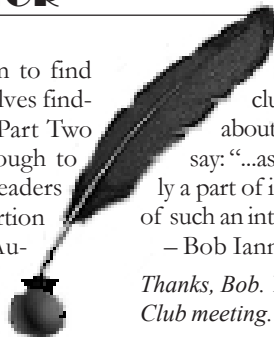
The password for the full color online edition is "acla0804".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I'm working on a financing consortium to find and raise the *Honolulu Clipper*. Part one involves finding and getting video tape of the wreck. Part Two involves raising the wreck, if there is enough to recover. Maybe one of your members or readers can be enthused enough to sign on for a portion of the support needed. – Bob Bogash (Author of lead article this month)

They've got the word, Bob. – Editor



To the Editor:

How exciting is it to be a member of a club whose editor, while reviewing a book about cold war submarine spy operations could say: "...as I can personally attest...as I was intimately a part of it..." What interesting members are part of such an interesting club.

– Bob Iannello (#1100)

Thanks, Bob. You can pick up your \$25 at the next Club meeting. – Editor

THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

October 21, 2007

Bob Zeman (#878)

Night of High Adventure

Almost 200 members and guests attended another spectacular show at the Club's annual Night of High Adventure at the Sheraton Delfina.

After a social hour, we were piped in by **Greg Elliott** and saw the large number of donated items up for auction. Most of us were in suits and dresses but **Jim Dorsey**



Greg Elliott pipes in the guests

in his blue robes from the Tuaregs of West Africa and **Henry von Seyfried** in his military uniform stood out.

President **Robert DeMott** introduced the members to give the traditional toasts: "To adventure, the shadow of every red-blooded man. To every lost trail, lost cause and lost comrade. To gentleman adventurers. To the game." They were given by **Steve Lawson**, **Bob Oberto**, **Bob Gilliland** and **Bob Seaman** although later it was pointed out that **Gene Wallace** probably qualified.

Pierre Odier who so nicely organized the event then introduced **Ralph White**. Ralph returned a Club flag having just returned from the Celebes Sea and Sulu Sea

where he and his crew discovered 50 new species in a 14,000-foot column of water.



The late Ralph White in the Celebes Sea

Later in the trip a restaurant in which he ate was bombed the next night. Earlier a cable had burst on board the ship.

Ralph also returned the expedition flag taken by Anatoly Sagalevitch to the bottom of the North Pole. Anatoly had given the Club a presentation on this adventure recently and it was the first presentation given outside of Russia. Anatoly is a great scientist and a great adventurer.

Bob Walters presented **Bob Silver** with a certificate for coming up with the concept of Night of High Adventure years ago.

Joe Valencic then took over as master of ceremonies. In addition to being a professor of marine science, a technologist and adventurer, he showed that he is an excellent speaker also. Joe met our first speaker Jim Delgado about 30 years ago while diving on the *Winfield Scott* on the channel islands off the California coast. Many years later Joe encountered Jim diving in the Bay of Pigs for a project. And his third meeting was at San Talmo, an island in the Perlas off the Caribbean coast of Panama.

(Minutes continued on page 14)

Discovery of the Mystery Submarine San Talmo

Jim Delgado has led or participated in shipwreck expeditions around the world. These include *RMS Titanic*, the recent discoveries of *Carpathia*, the ship that rescued



Jim Delgado

the *Titanic* survivors, and the notorious “ghost ship” *Mary Celeste*. He also participated in surveys of the *USS Arizona*, the bombed warships at Bikini Atoll, the polar exploration ship *Maud* and the 1846 wreck of the U. S. naval brig *USS Somers*. This last ship inspired Harman Melville’s *Billy Budd*.

Author Clive Cussler wrote of Jim in his book but changed the first name to Leo. Jim himself has written 31 books on underwater adventure archeology.

He was drawn to the Perlas Islands because he had heard stories of a small submarine that was exposed at low tide. He did view it and sent photos of it to many experts. But the conventional ideas of a World War II era sub were all discarded.

Finally, a man mentioned that it looked much like the *Hunley* a Civil War-era submarine. Jim did some drawings and they matched up with a diagram on display at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

It was called the *Explorer* and was built in

1864-1865 in Brooklyn. It was designed by Julian Crowell and launched in 1865. It had ballast chambers and working chambers. After the Civil War, it was shipped to Panama to dive for pearls. But Crowell died in 1867.

Jim found out that the submarine was well-designed and put to use. It found \$1 million worth of pearls in 11 days. But the workers fell ill and the operation came to a halt. Decompression sickness or the bends had set in because the depth was at 100 feet. Decompression was unknown at the time and the problem was written off as caisson fever.

Jim made drawings of the outside and the inside. He found the original valves. He is now working on a movie of the sub and the project with a German firm.

As an underwater archeologist, Jim enjoys sharing history with others.

Remote Transmission in Real Time

Valencic and Larry Schuette remarked how technology has changed in adventure in recent decades. Now special technology can use the power of the internet



Joe Valencic

to access remote field locations to control cameras and experiments using cutting edge components. This new science has the ability to put one live and inter-

active with field adventurers in virtually any location on the planet.

He showed how a camcorder can feed a signal into a slingbox which can then send high-quality video around the world.

Joe is the chief scientist for the Palm Island project in Dubai. He said the sultan is planting hidden one kilo blocks of gold in the underwater park to encourage more skin divers to visit the park.

Discovery of The Stone Age Kombat Tribe in New Guinea

John Husing, PhD. Is a leading authority on the impact of the goods movement industry on the southern California region and in particular its role as a provider of upward economic mobility to blue collar workers. He has a deep understanding of our political process, having managed over 100 partisan and nonpartisan campaigns.

He has traveled to 52 countries. In recent years, he has twice entered the unexplored jungles of northwest New Guinea to make first contact with previously undiscovered stone-aged tribes. Andrea Donnellan has described John as a really cool guy with a great adventurous spirit.

John said that there are 200 square miles of New Guinea that have never been charted.



John Husing

The jungle is so heavy that tribes just a few miles apart have a different dialect or language.

He started by showing a photo of a native with a stone-age axe, his primary tool. The native wore only a penis gourd and three strands of rattles. Since a person must receive permission to be allowed in, he was grateful to Magnus Anderson for his help.

On feast days, a tribe will invite another tribe to join but that is about the limit even though the distance apart is only about five miles.

He showed a photo of a plant that his botanist roommate was studying. The plant only grows on trees on which ants congregate. John had to endure the smell of the plant.

He packed in shoes and food which were foreign to the Kombats since they go bare-foot and eat off the land. They eat bugs for protein and a type of sego palm for carbohydrates. It can rain up to 16 inches per day.

There are many wild pigs probably left there by the early European colonists.

The Kombats live in tree houses up to 54 feet above the ground. They split the vines for lashings. The only previous whites they had seen were dead bodies.

But missionaries, loggers and miners are intruding on to their way of life. He did trade for bows and arrows and left after a couple of weeks via a dugout canoe.

A Journey to the Edge of the Abyss

Scott Cassell has been a mixed-gas commercial diver for nearly 22 years. He has dived with the Giant Humboldt Squid more than anyone else.

He described the squid as having three hearts with blue blood that grow fast and are smart as a dog. Their chitinous ring teeth

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don't let go after having clamped on. They can change from red to white and back in an instant due to chromatophores (specialized skin cells).

They live most of the time deep in the ocean but come up periodically to feed.

They hunt cooperatively but eat on their own. They are cannibalistic. Mostly, they feed on krill. They are equipped with eight arms and two long tentacles.

The biggest squid he photographed was eight feet long.

It weighed twice as much as a six-footer.

The population of the giant Humboldt Squid is declining because there is over fishing of the squid and of their food

sources in the Sea of Cortez, and because there has been a northward shift in the squid population. Many of the squid are released but are too weak to survive after a long fight on the fishing line.

Scott now uses a chain mail suit to photograph the squid because they have so many teeth in their suction cups.

In closing, Pierre Odier thanked all for coming. **Shane Berry** and **Gary Mortimer** said the list of silent auction winners was complete and we raised \$2,700. And President Robert DeMott presented certificates of appreciation to all of the speakers.



Scott Cassell

March 13, 2008

Bob Aronoff (#837)

An Iraqi Battle Surgeon Tells It Like It Is

Stationed in Iraq for a six-month tour of duty, March until August, 2007, Colonel Carrie Hill gave us an illuminating insight to two different hospitals. She split her time equally between Tikrit and Baghdad under some mighty tough conditions.

Dr. Hill, herself, was quite a spare person. With an engineering degree, she entered the service. After six to seven years

of active duty, she left the service to pursue a career in medicine although she remained a reservist. She could have been subsidized in her pursuit of a



Col. Carrie Hill medical degree with the Army paying her tuition. She turned it down because she wanted to have the freedom to go where she wanted for her residency and specialty work and not have military commitment. She also turned down a military loan, too. She graduated medical school owing \$200,000 in student loans. A lot of fortitude in Dr. Hill, all right, although she carries herself in a down-to-earth demeanor.

Field Hospitals

Dr. Hill subsequently volunteered for two tours of duty in Iraq, one for three

months in 2004 and the six-month duty assignment we saw tonight.

I don't watch TV much, but these slides seemingly could have come right out of the former longtime TV hit, "M*A*S*H." Probably 95% of her slides were inside what passes for military hospitals in Iraq where she was assigned, mostly "in the trenches" inside operating rooms. Probably due to her engineering background, this was a very well-organized, well-presented program tailored for the Club.

Telling it Like it is

These were some of the tidbits I made note of in her presentation. Most all patients were flown into these military hospitals – which look a little better than a tent or temporary set up but well-stocked and equipped.

Should a soldier be wounded, frontline medics did very preliminary care on-the-spot, such as a strategically placed tourniquet, any immediate first aid and maybe an IV started. The wounded soldier is then taken back to a staging area where a better assessment of the wounded soldier's medical needs could be made and maybe more substantial care before calling in a helicopter to transport the soldier to a military field hospital.

Helicopters could land aside the hospital with 8 to 24 wounded people on board, depending on the size of the helicopter. The hospital staff had no idea of the kinds of wounds they would see but have a bevy of MDs waiting to go into action as soon as they saw the patients. Sometimes a written piece of paper would be attached to the

wounded describing the circumstances and nature of the wounds.

Medics on the helicopter spent about 30 seconds transferring the wounded to hospital staff. The helicopter, without shutting off its motors, would then take off. All oral communication about the wounded would have to take place in those 30 seconds! The whirlybirds took off for another assignment or back to base for another "mercy mission."

In the meantime, the MDs and their nurses were rushing about in a tense manner trying to assess the necessary care on the wounded. What might look like a small incision to the skin, hid shrapnel which would be 4-6 inches imbedded in the body. Not all shrapnel could be removed. The wounded were generally then transferred out within 48-72 hours to permanent, fully-equipped medical facilities on US bases in Germany. Iraqis were turned over to the local medical facilities.

What Hours of Work are There?

Various medical specialties were represented by the undermanned medical staff. US MDs who volunteer for battle-field duty, Dr. Hill said, do so at salaries about 50% less than they would be earning otherwise. She said all the "docs" there were very dedicated and intense people doing outstanding work in difficult circumstances working without set hours (you worked whenever the wounded would arrive).

In combat zones, there are no set hours of work for anyone. The staff was about 25% women. Even veterinarians were on

(Minutes continued on page 18)

staff who would treat bomb-sniffing dogs were on duty. Fido was a contributing, life-saving “soldier” on the battlefield, too! Dr. Hill remarked the dog’s handlers were very emotionally concerned with their wounded “buddies,” too.

Some Iraqis Got US Medical Care

In using the word “people,” and not soldiers, who were brought in on the cop- ters, it was because Iraqis working for us or a civilian wounded by us were eligible for US military care. Also eligible, surprisingly, were “bad guys,” too. Included in the “bad guy” category were POI (persons of interest) – yet to be interrogated. In answer to a question, Dr. Hill said the non-USA people of any kind got equal treatment, as required by the Geneva Convention, in terms of the order of care when arriving at the field hospital.

She demurred to address the situation where the hospital was overloaded, but she implied Americans and “good” Iraqis might have been given preferential treatment but that situation didn’t arise during her tour. “Bad guys” were discharged to US military prisons nearby where whatever medical care was necessary was continued to be provided.

She stated if you were an Iraqi – fighting on our side in this war – and a decision was made to bring you to these US military hospitals, you would be brought by an Iraqi ambulance. At the edge of the US military hospital compound, the Iraqi vehicle would be inspected as well as the apparent wounded person for explosives attached to the body. If things checked out OK, the patient would be then transferred to a US staffed ambulance for the short delivery

into the hospital “building.”

Discharges were similar for Iraqis. US military staff would take the Iraqi to an established checkpoint at which time the Iraqi would be transferred to an Iraqi ambulance to be taken to an Iraqi hospital. Dr. Hill observed Iraqi hospitals she heard about were well-equipped, had good MDs but equipment may not have functioned for lack of parts and medical supplies might be wanting.

Seeing the Results of the Fighting

Some of the slides were gruesome without getting into the particulars but the various medical disciplines went right to work saving lives, limbs and putting people back together. Maybe Humpty-Dumpty couldn’t be put back together but Dr. Hill reported the work done in our military hospitals was superb given the conditions.

Conditions of War

She made mentioned that the enemy terrorists were well-trained and aimed their bullets at vulnerable areas just outside the areas protected by bulletproof vests worn by our troops – neck and groin areas, for instance. She said these kinds of terrorists were probably trained in Iran, given their equipment, bullets used and military skills.

While IED (incendiary explosive devices) caused the most deaths and injuries, other types of explosive were used which could be traced back to Iran. The shrapnel was sophisticated and deadly, also a tell-tale sign of probable Iranian involvement. These high velocity projectiles did a terrible job on our people.

An Enemy with No Rules

A telling aspect of the war in Iraq was the total alien methods of fighting used by the terrorists and their allies. Totally outside the tenets of the Geneva Conventions for warfare. She cited ammo and other military paraphernalia were stored in hospitals, schools and mosques making it necessary to target those facilities. The thinking of that culture was “outside the box” for Westerners engaged in warfare in the Middle East.

Tours of Duty

Dr. Hill reported that the MDs had 90-day tours of duty before moving on to a second 90-day tour of duty which caused some friction with non-MDs being stuck in Iraq for 12 to 15 month tours of duty but otherwise all whom she met, MDs and non-MDs, conducted themselves with a single purpose of getting their military jobs done in the best professional manner.

Suicide Bombers’ “Backup”

Other interesting insights were some suicide bombers might have gotten cold feet when approaching their target but that there were “backup” persons who would then detonate the bombs if that happened. Veterinarians were located in our military hospitals to work on bomb-sniffing dogs! For animal lovers, know that these dogs are well-taken care of based on the slides we saw.

The evening was topped off with a “standing ‘O’” round of applause for Dr. Hill and a similarly nice round of well-deserved applause for Robert Williscroft for the Feb/Mar 2008 *Adventurers’ Club News*. A nicely composed issue in full color!

March 20, 2008

Bob Zeman (#878)

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed a crowd of more than 80 for dinner and even more for a tribute to **Ralph White**.

Among those attending were the daughter of **Jerry Robinson**, Muffet Brown, great granddaughter of Mrs. J. J. (unsinkable) Brown, and Lisa Somme who went with Ralph on his trip to the *Bismarck*.

Ralph’s daughter Krista and her husband Darren Few were there and presented two nice trophies to the Club which were accepted by Pierre Odier. They included a whale harpoon that was seven to eight feet long. And since Ralph could not wear regular shoes in the *Mir* submersible, he wore moose slippers. These were presented to the Club.

Reda Anderson said that Ralph had invited her and her young granddaughter on a boat ride to the site of the *Titanic*. Reda said a boat ride sounded nice. At the site, Ralph encouraged Reda to get inside the small submersible. She said OK. Then Ralph said how about going to the bottom and Reda went to view the ship.

Robert Williscroft had asked Ralph for an article for the *Club News* about a month ago. In a remarkable coincidence, that article from Ralph arrived today March 20th despite being mailed by Ralph more than a month ago.

There were many others in attendance from fellow Marine Corps reservists to those who had worked with Ralph on underwater projects over the years.

Pam Madden said Ralph was one of her best friends and her mother was like an

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Auntie Mame to Ralph.

And of course, we were glad to have Ralph's fiancée Rosaly Lopes and her son Timmy who truly enjoyed his company over the past few years.

Steve Bein donated a photograph of a small flower for the NOHA auction and he donated a Styrofoam cup that was taken to 8,800 feet below the ocean on a search for Atlantis.

Bob Silver retold his great story of Ralph requesting a Volvo for his friend. Bob came up with the car and drove it to Ensenada. Ralph was there. A ship came in and lowered its boom. Up went the car and **Anatoly Sagalevitch** was the new proud owner. Later Ralph asked Bob to go to the Gulf War but Bob said no.

Tribute to Ralph by Don Walsh

Our first VP **Paul Isley** had hoped to have four speakers tonight but three could not make it. But **Don Walsh** was there. Don, along with Jacques Piccard, was the first person to go to the deepest part of the ocean – the Marianas Trench in 1960 in the bathyscaph *Trieste*.

Don said that he and Ralph went back 25 years. He was on the *Keldash* on trips to the *Titanic*, *Bismarck* and the underwater hydrothermal plants. Ralph was a great doer. Don nominated Ralph for the Lowell Thomas award at the Explorers' Club and he was a recipient this past year along with Steve Fossett and Edmund Hillary.

Even on the ship, he was a bit of a rascal but he interacted well with the crew since he spoke Russian. He realized that Russia

had a huge loss of confidence from being the number two superpower in the world. The diving world is small in numbers but Ralph was prominent and he knew Willard Bascom and Carl Hobbs, ichthyologist at Scripps.

Paul Isley then presented the slide show that was shown at the memorial services for Ralph. It showed many facets of Ralph's life:

- His dive trip to the *Edmund Fitzgerald*.
- His many parachute medals.
- Sky diving slides of getting on the plane and bailing out.
- Honorary certificate from the L. A. County Board of Supervisors.
- T-shirt denoting him as guide to *RMS Titanic*.
- Award from the National Geographic Society.
- His Lowell Thomas award from the Explorers' Club.
- His Adventurers' Club expedition flag.
- A wanted poster for D. B. Cooper, airline hijacker.

David Dolan stepped in and told of the Explorers' Club dinner attended by 1,000 persons at which Ralph received the aforementioned award. Dave read a quote from a book. If you want science, choose Scott; if you want leadership, choose Amundsen, but if you want rescue from a hopeless situation, choose Shackleton.

Anatoly Sagalevitch is publishing a book called *The Deep* which includes a number of photos. Ralph wrote the anecdotal side bars for the photographs.

Forthcoming Programs

- April 17, 2008 – “Swimming with Sea Monsters: 22 Years As California Sea Urchin Diver” Tom Kendrick
 - April 24, 2008 – “Diving the Andrea Dorea” Jerry Nickelsburg
 - May 1, 2008 – “The Greatest Generation” Bill Miniaga
 - May 8, 2008 – “The U.S. Navy's Two Man Moray Fighter Sub” Dick DiMarco
 - May 15, 2008 – “Airline Accident Investigation” Mike Barr
 - May 22, 2008 – **LADIES' NIGHT** – “An Ordeal Lived, A Life of Love” Louis Zamperini
 - May 29, 2008 – “Sun Chasing: Four Times Around the World By Motorcycle” Gregory Frazier
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NOTICES

The Club is looking for an Assistant Editor for *The Adventurers' Club News*. If you are a writer or editor, and want to make a meaningful contribution to your Club, please contact the current editor, Robert Williscroft, or any Board Member.

The annual dues letters have gone out. Please send in your dues as soon as possible. The Club operates on a small margin, and we need the membership income to keep going. If you have any changes to your profile (address, phone, email, etc.), please include that information with your dues. Your Club thanks you!

(Ultimate Adventurer continued from page 5)

NOTES

stool as sultry and seductive as ever. We went way back, and I knew I couldn't trust her. But then, I thought, maybe one dance wouldn't hurt.

I slipped my six gold chains out from under my shirt and looked at my dive watch, which was approximately the size of a Buick hubcap. That'll impress her, I thought. Sauntering over the dance floor, I glanced over to the piano player and said, “Play it again, Pham.”

It was a mistake I'd regret the rest of my life.

To be continued....

The
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