

**BASTILLE DAY BOAT DIVE -  
14TH OF JULY**

**SANTUARY**

By Jim Valario



*“Sacrebleu! C’était une belle journée pour être sur la mer.”*

And not only that, but the water conditions were very calm, or maybe it just seemed that way after last month’s stomach clenching boat ride.

Six Reefers boarded Capt. Mike’s boat, and we all managed to make it back, with the help of divemaster Paula.

Divers were: Pierre & Gerda, Norm, JimV, Curtis and (new member) Paul.

Paul, by the way, fit in very well with our motley group. He has the same irreverent, off the cuff sense of humor that has gotten most of us in a lot of trouble in the past.

*“Lentement, lentement, il l’attira à lui et lui baisa les lèvres rouges...”* uh, no, wait, that’s another story for another time. Back to the dive trip:

We did our first dive at Inner Pinnacle, the outer portion of Inner Pinnacle, to be exact.

Descended (and ascended) through layers of both large and small jellyfish. Viz was quite good and

the walls of the pinnacle didn’t disappoint. Put a light on just about any portion of the wall and the colors jump out at you.

Somewhat surgy, but very manageable.

Second dive was in the bay at a spot no one had ever been to before, called Anchor Farm, so named because two very large (old) anchors are in the general vicinity. (see *Stammtisch* for more details)

Water was dead calm and viz near the surface a greenish murk. Descending through this green murk and jellyfish layers was almost spooky. Viz opened up at the bottom to maybe 20ft. Bottom was flat and barren, except for a couple of forlorn white metridium hanging onto the edge of a small shelf. There were a number of these shelves that contained little critters.

Gerda called it muck diving and was pumped after the dive. Wants to go back. Must be an Austrian (or photographer) thing.



Usual electrolyte and carb replenishment after the dive, this time at Sand Bar.

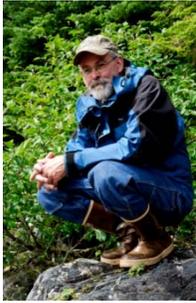
Nice trip.

## REEFER'S RAP

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<p>14 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 08:30</p> <p>18 - Movable Feast - Homeroom - in Oakland</p>	<p>15 - Movable Feast - Greenburger's in San Francisco</p>	<p>7 - 11 - Cozumel, Mexico</p> <p>21 - Movable Feast - Pi Bar in San Francisco</p>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<p>01 - Abalone Opener - ???</p> <p>14 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>18 - Movable Feast – Steelhead Brewery in Burlingame</p>	<p>12 – 13 Dive Show - Santa Clara Convention Center</p> <p>12 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>16 - Movable Feast – Chabaa Thai Cuisine</p>	<p>04 - Scuba Show - Long Beach - scubashow.com</p> <p>09 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p><b>20 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<p>14 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p><b>18 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p>	<p>TBD - Abalone Opener</p> <p>12-14 - Channel Islands - Jim Vallario - 415.566.0784</p> <p><b>18 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p>	<p>08 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p><b>19 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p> <p>24 - Colorado Dive Show - Denver – divechronicles.com</p>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>13 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p><b>17 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p> <p>22 - UK Dive Show - Birmingham - diveshows.uk.com</p>	<p><b>21 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>	<p><b>19 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</b></p>

## STAMMTISCH

By Pierre Hurter

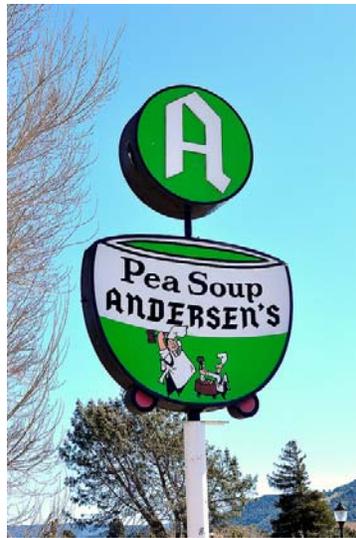


We had a nice club dive aboard the *Sanctuary* on July 14. We managed a late start, 8:30 which is so much more civilized, especially

when you drive down the morning of the dive; gives us a chance to sleep in a bit and stop at Martha and Brothers for a medium Latté and a bagel before hitting the road. We made good time and got to K-Dock with time to spare. Besides Gerda and me we had Paul, Norm, Curtis and Jim onboard with Mike and Paula at the helm.

For our first dive we headed out towards Carmel and Inner Pinnacles. Visibility was in the 50 foot range, a rare treat. I find the first dive always takes me a while to get settled in, this one was no exception. We had a fairly smooth passage, but I wasn't feeling well and wanted to get into the water. My neck seal is still new and tight as a drum, Paula said I was starting to turn funny colors. I jumped in, promptly realized my hoses, and various bits of kit were catawampus, so I spent a few minutes hanging around the anchor getting rearranged and settled in. In the meantime I had completely lost track of where the anchor was, no problem there's plenty of kelp to hang onto and besides it's a pinnacle, sooner or later we'll find it again. Great dive, a bit of surge towards the shallow spots, just enough to make it sporting, but not annoying.

For our second dive we headed back to the Bay and dropped anchor at a spot I've never been to before, Anchor Farm. When I first stuck my head into the water at the anchor line while waiting for Gerda my first thought was, "this is going to be a short dive". It was like cold pea soup. I had a momentary vision of the billboards you see for Pea Soup Anderson's when you head south on I-5. It was like diving into a bottomless bowl of very cold green pea soup. Anderson's by the way has been in Buellton since 1924 starting as Andersen's Electric Café in honor of the then fairly rare electric range; must be doing something right.



Anyway, we dropped down the anchor line and somewhere around 40 feet it opened up like dropping through a thermocline or is that pycnocline or maybe a halocline; you know where the water acts as if it were somehow piled up in layers with slightly different optical properties. One minute pea soup the next some fairly decent visibility, easily 30 to 40 feet and much more light then you might have thought you'd find on the way down.

And there not far from the Sanctuary's anchor we found one of the four anchors that make up the farm. These are big anchors ranging in length from 10 to 13 feet. Interestingly enough they appear to move every so often. Apparently they get hooked by the occasional cruise ship passing through and are dragged from one resting place to the next.

In talking to the "old hands" amongst us it seems that this site was discovered fairly recently in one of those serendipitous events that take place on occasion. It's a great spot if you like nudibranchs, and who doesn't? Back to the anchors, needless to say I was intrigued, these are big, really big and there's a fair amount of chain lying about. Not the sort of thing you would toss over the side of a Boston Whaler. The anchors are probably a left over from when this area was an oil shipping port. The shale beds off of Del Monte Beach are sometimes referred to as Tanker Reef.

In 1904 the Coalinga Oil and Transportation Company started building a pipeline that would connect the oil tank they had built in Monterey with the well they were drilling in Coalinga, some fifty miles southwest of Fresno. The work started in September and by October 12 of that year the pipeline had been completed. The line was 104 miles long and 6 inches in diameter with 3 pumping stations along the way to get the oil over the hills and down into Monterey.

It was quite the engineering feat in its day. The project cost some \$750,000 and was able to handle

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an estimated 1,500,000 barrels of oil per year. The reason for the pipeline was that Capt. William Matson of the Matson Line was running the steamship *Enterprise* between San Francisco and Hawaii. At that time the ship was fueled with coal from Australia, an expensive proposition. Captain Matson knew that there were oil deposits in Coalinga, he just needed to get the oil to Monterey and then onwards to San Francisco. He eventually convinced the Hawaiian plantation owners to switch to oil as well.



By August of 1905, the barge *Santiago* was making trips from Monterey to San Francisco every three days with a cargo of fuel oil. Matson sold the line to Associated Oil in 1908; Associated Oil continued to operate the line until the Great Fire of Monterey on September 14, 1924.

It was a Monday morning and a freak storm had come to Monterey Bay. Hail, wind, rain, lightning and thunder all taking turns hammering the Bay. At 10:10 am a lightning strike hit one of the 55,000 gallon oil tanks, located near today's Coast

Guard Station. The tank almost instantly burst into flames. Within hours every available fire truck from Monterey, New Monterey, Oak Grove, Pacific Grove and Carmel was on the scene and a call had gone out to Salinas to send what they could. Soldiers from the Presidio joined in as well.



By four in the afternoon it looked as if the fire would burn itself out. People were watching the spectacle from the Presidio parade grounds. At 4:30 p.m. the flames started off again with a renewed burst of energy, spilling oil into what turned into a wall of flame that witnesses described as reaching 500 feet into the air. By Monday afternoon all but one of the tanks had burned itself out. Towards noon the last 55,000 gallon tank gave up the ghost, collapsing and spilling its contents of flaming oil into the Bay heading for Fisherman's Wharf, a floating slick of flame. Fortunately the wind wasn't cooperating with the fire and it burned itself out before reaching the wharf.

Privates Eustace Watkins and George Bolio (when you drive by Pvt Bolio Gate at the Presidio, now you know who he was) perished fighting the blaze and oil storage in Monterey was banned shortly thereafter. The Associated Oil Company relocated their terminal to Seaside where it remained in operation until after World War

II. You can still see parts of the old pipeline if you hike around near Trail 49 on Fort Ord National Monument (On April 20, 2012, President Obama signed a Proclamation to designate the base a National Monument).

Getting ready for our trip to the Solomon Islands, laying out our gear, checking to see we have everything and then weighing the whole kit and caboodle. Traveling nowadays seems to be more about weighing your bags than anything else. Of course as Joerg would say, "there are no baggage limits, just cost prohibitions". That said we are trying for one bag apiece. Now that may seem like no big deal, but when you start tossing your wetsuit, regulators, a light or two, fins, mask BC, well it adds up. Fortunately it appears that on this cruise we won't have to dress for dinner, so I'll be able to get away with a Morning Coat and striped trousers during the day and stroller or lounge in the evening. To keep the weight down I'm experimenting with drilling holes into my flip-flops. I'll let you know how that goes, but so far we are on track towards one checked bag, one rucksack carryon and maybe a laptop case.

The Solomon Islands are a sovereign state, with a constitutional Monarchy, Queen Elizabeth II, being the current queen. Located Northeast of Australia and consisting of nearly 1,000 islands there is no lack of dive possibilities here. Those of you who are history buffs will probably recall that the Battle of Guadalcanal was one of the turning points in the Allies

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**Stammtisch from page 5**

efforts to halt what up to that point seemed Japan's unstoppable expansion. It was islanders who found John F. Kennedy and his crew after the shipwreck of the PT-109 and Major "Pappy Boyington's Black Sheep squadron made their home here.



The Islands gained independence in 1978 while retaining the Monarchy and its membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. There was a period of civil unrest also referred to as *the tensions*. This eventually led to the dispatch of Australian, New Zealand and Fijian troops and police in 2003 and further forces in 2006 to restore order in the capital Honiara.

The Solomon Islands stretch some 930 miles from the most westerly to the most easterly islands. They lay between 5 and 13 degrees south of the Equator. The mean temperature is 80 degrees with an annual rainfall of 120 inches that translates to hot, sticky and humid on the plus side the water temperatures are in the mid 80's year round.

Well after the usual joys of flying nowadays we are back and enjoying the foggy weather of home. We spent the last couple of weeks making our way to and from the Solomon's. There's a certain thrill in sitting in an airplane, looking at your watch

calculating how long it will take you to make it from United's LAX domestic terminal to Qantas in the International terminal. No problem we have plenty of ... "we're sorry, but your flight crew has not yet landed." That doesn't sound good, if we don't get to LAX, we miss our connection to Brisbane and there are only two flights to Honiara, the capital city of the Solomon Islands, Tuesdays and Thursdays. We made it, but there were definitely moments were we had our doubts.

When you land at Honiara International Airport you are almost immediately reminded that this is Henderson Field, named after Major Lofton Henderson, commanding officer of VMSB-241 who was killed in action at the Battle of Midway. There is the Wall of Honor with its collection of plaques commemorating and remembering those who sacrificed all in this far-flung corner of the globe. There are two listing those who received the Medal of Honor and Victoria Cross, most with the asterisk denoting that it was awarded posthumously. It's hard to imagine what it must have been like for those Marines, most in their teens and early 20's, many who had never before traveled to the state next door let alone half way around the world.

Once we had our bags we were met by the folks from the *MV Bilikiki* who stowed our gear, loaded us into their van and drove us across town to the boat. The *Bilikiki* itself is 125 feet long, 24 in the beam, with a 7-foot draft and has been operating in the Solomon's since 1998. The company was operating two boats, the *MV Bilikiki* and the

*MV Spirit of the Solomon's*. The *Bilikiki* is currently the only live aboard in the islands. The layout works well for diving. There are ten air-conditioned cabins located beneath the main deck. Each one has a small double bed with a single bunk above. There is a small area to hang clothes and several shelves for stashing your odds and ends. We stowed our dive bags under the bed and used the single bunk to layout our clothes, books etc. There's a good-sized (for a boat) bathroom and shower as well.

We didn't spend all that much time in the cabin aside from sleeping and the occasional nap. The upper deck features a separate room for charging all the odds and ends that go along with diving, particularly if you're a photo-bug. This just in, Gerda took a total of 1,752 photos, images, whatever you call the digital files that pass for slides nowadays. The top deck is also where we had our cocktail hour after the last day dive. Whenever the crew or one of our intrepid divers caught a fish we would usually have sushi along with a variety of other nibbles. We'd all have a beer and talk about the day's dives.

Meals were taken on the main deck, which featured a large enclosed cabin and an ever larger outdoors area with chairs and tables for dining. The meals were buffet style and delicious, for breakfast there were eggs, sausages, French toast as well as my personal favorite, toast and Vegemite. Lunch and Dinner would feature several salads as well as a couple of entrees. The food was great and the local beer more than adequate.

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The dive deck was at the rear, with tank stations arranged in a U-shaped arrangement around the back of the boat. There were baskets under each station for your odds and ends and in the center a good-sized camera table as well as separate dip tanks for cameras, masks and dive booties. The diving was from two "Tinnies". You head for the dive site and in the count of three, roll off and into the aquarium. One of the great things about diving off the Tinnies is that when you are done, you just head for the surface and they pick you up and head back to the mother ship.



Our hosts were Sam and Kellie a Brit and an Australian who along with the local crew took great care of our every need. The *Bilikiki* isn't what I would call a luxury boat, she's more like that old pair of jeans that fit just right and are the ones you grab when you want to be comfortable. It's like the memory of one of those great camping trips you took as a child, the one where you went to Yellowstone and saw Old

Faithfull and your first bear and ...

The diving was fantastic. Our checkout dive was on the wreck of *Hirokawa Maru* a Japanese freighter sunk during the war. In the next week and a half we did four dives a day, plus the opportunity for a night dive. For some reason our group wasn't all that keen on night diving, probably because after four dives most of us wanted a beer on the Lido deck rather than another dive.

Besides the *Hirokawa Maru* we dove a B17 Flying Fortress, the *Kinugawa Maru*, The I-1 a 319 foot long Japanese Junson cruiser class submarine, the *Maru #2* and to me the most interesting of the wrecks a Kawanishi H6K5 "Mavis" Flying boat. With a wingspan of 125 feet and a length of 92 feet this is a big plane. The 4-1,825 horsepower 14 cylinder radial engines along with their propellers are still intact, the right wing is broken off, but it's been 70 years since she went down, a little wear and tear is to be expected.



Aside from diving we visited several of the local villages. Whenever we anchored near a village, we would be surrounded by canoes filled with local produce and often Coca Cola bottles stamped with the date of manufacture, 1943 and the bottling plant, usually Oakland, California. We dove several sites where the Marines dumped

their left over war materials into the sea, bulldozing everything including the bulldozers off the beach and into the sea. Judging by the rubble, those guys apparently drank a lot of Coke.



The boat buys most of its produce from the villagers so you have the advantage of eating locally and providing some income to the villages. The locals make some tremendous carvings, both stone and the local woods including ebony. I think almost everyone bought at least one piece; fellow Reef Diver Joerg, bought a stunning piece and John bought a carved wooden hammerhead shark that looked as if I were life sized.



For me one of the highlights of the dives was seeing a blue ringed octopus, beautiful, that and watching the crew when they

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got a hit on the line they dragged behind the boat whenever we were underway. We had some great fresh Wahoo as well as Tuna on this trip, the crew would take you out to do some hand line fishing if you wanted, a big reel of line with a jig on the end featuring a hook that looked as if it came from the set of *Jaws*, John and Paul came back with four good sized Wahoo and a Yellowfin Tuna.

So if you're looking for water that stays in the mid 80's, fantastic fish variety, schools of barracuda so large they block out the sun and visibility ranging upwards of 80 to 100 feet, this may be the place for you. We managed 30 dives with depths ranging from 112 to 43 feet and almost all of them at least 60 minutes long. The water temperatures were a steady 84 degrees, the air temperature around 90 degrees. No rain or at least not while I was awake.

Wet suites are soaking in a brew of water and "Sink the Stink", laundry is folded and put away, the vacation is behind us and tomorrow is a brand new day full of e-mails and phone messages. For two weeks we made it from day to day without any cell phone coverage or Internet access, newspaper or TV, everyone should be so lucky.



**AUGUST'S BLAST FROM THE PAST**

Once again *You are There*, this time its August 1973 and *Far Under the Cold Kelp* featured an odd to the end of summer. You'll notice that people were arguing about resource management then as well as now.

Hi, I just glanced at the calendar and suddenly realized that the Summer is almost gone. I sure as hell don't know what happened; I remember the Bottom Scratcher trip and just about that time someone pee'd in my Snorkel

My spies report that The Cheese Munching & Wine Tasting Party hosted by Mark and Linda Gibson was a SSMMMAAASSSHHH! The local noise abatement laws were successfully tested; The Reef Divers Wine Tasting Committee performed nobly tasting 30 bottles of various wines. The Club also netted \$25.00 profit. It is believed that everyone made it to their various homes in fair shape. Some people complained that after leaving the party and on their way to their cars somebody stepped on their hands.

After the Bottom Scratcher Trip Cathy Fudge received an offer of a job in San Diego. She accepted and left quite suddenly. She dropped us a line and sends her best regards to all. She wants to stay in touch, her address is: 2551 Worden Street, Apt #27, San Diego, 92110. Were all gonna miss Kathy, her sense of humor, pink tank, and lethal AB iron.

In line with the Club's recent desire to participate in Public Service Dives Diane Heise, Carl Cervantes, and our intrepid leader, Mark Gibson, participated with CENCAL in checking under the wharf in Monterey as to whether a clean up dive was necessary. Lots of dandy little items like bathtubs, bikes, parts of cars, hand carts, bottles, etc., were found. We will try to give a follow-up report on this next time around.

Oh, I almost forgot. Mark and Linda Gibson, with a couple of friends, were checking out the Flora and Fauna in the Santa Cruz area, around The San Lorenzo River. It seems that the area was a State Park, but they didn't know it. It was hot, the River was inviting, so they decided to go for a dip. The fact that they didn't bring their swimsuits didn't seem important, they just skinny-dipped. They were splashing and frolicking and having a high old time when suddenly the Park Ranger shows up and puts the arm on the group via citations and summons an all sorts of official trappings. The charge wasn't so much what they were doing, as where they were doing it. You can't do it in a State Park, I guess. Anyway, off to see the judge, who was very sympathetic, and he reduced their fine from \$65.00, the going rate for such shenanigans, to \$35.00, which, I have got admit, aint good but it is better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

I heard from a couple of people who made the River Run. The River was a little lower than it was earlier in the summer, but generally, it was a good trip.

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**Blast from Past from page 7**

Now that we have made it once we should plan it earlier in the Summer next time. May seems to be a good month, the snow is starting to melt and the water is bound to be highest at that time. Is it true that Roy, The Hat, Allen, ran the river in his new Mazda? Mmmmmmmmm?

I am sure that everyone who has dove in Monterey area has spent time watching that fascinating creature the Sea otter frolicking in the water and feeding in their unique manner. Well, it seems that due to their being classified as an endangered species they have been allowed to do what Sea Otters do naturally and as a consequence they are expanding from their Monterey location in search of food.

There has been a movement afoot for some time now, especially in the Pismo Bach, Morro Bay area to control the critters.

The following and comment is reprinted with thanks from "Otter Raft", publication of the Friends of the sea Otter, and Sea era Diver, Loma Prieta Chapter.

**SPOTSMEN'S RESOLUTION CONCERNING SEA OTTER**  
(Adopted at the regular quarterly meeting, Sportsmen's Council of Central California Held at Buellton, California Feb 24-25, 1973.

WHEREAS - The Sea Otter has seriously deleted all the nearshore invertebrate fisheries of Monterey County and the Northern half of San Luis Obispo Co. south of Cayucos, and

WHEREAS -These fisheries include all varieties if mollusks and crustaceans, mussels, crabs, abalone, scallops, lobsters, snail, limpets and all varieties of clam, and

WHEREAS - There are nearly 2000 Sea Otter along the California Coast, and

WHEREAS - The Sea Otter consumes shell fish about equal to 25% of its body weight per day. These animals will consume 7,300 tons of shell fish per year, and

WHEREAS - The Sea Otters' southerly migration rate has been 3 miles per year and can therefore within 3 years be threatening the Pismo Beach Clam beds ruining the remainder of San Luis Obispo's County Fisheries, now, therefore, be it resolved

**RESOLVED** - The Sportsman's Council of Central California does request that the Sea Otter be managed in order to protect the invertebrates of the California Coast.

**COMMENT** - By James S. Mattison Jr.

This recently adopted resolution of Central Calif. Sportsmen's Council contains several inaccurate statements which should be corrected;

The opening paragraph erroneously states that "the Sea Otter has seriously depleted all the nearshore fisheries" with its range. Without question competition for some invertebrate resources exists between certain men and Otters. They compete for sea urchins, abalones, mussels, and some species of crabs. At Pint Lobos

State Reserve where collecting by man is prohibited those of us who dive have observed with great interest that an area heavily foraged by Sea Otters for more than 19 years is far from being wiped out. A great variety of invertebrate species remains in abundance.

"there are nearly 2000 Sea Otter" is also erroneous. Official counts have never exceeded 1060.

Reports of the eating of Pismo clams by Otters have been few. Most Pismo clams are covered by sand so that Otters could only locate them with great difficulty. Clams with large siphons which project above the sand are more easily found.

The Council has adopted similar resolutions. One called for management of the Sea otter; the other called for harvesting Sea Lions for commercial use.

CENCAL is going to have a hard time on this. Me? I always have been for the underdog. Until later, The Man in The Black Rubber Suit.



# Spindrift

## World's last undersea lab could be shut down for good

The world's last underwater research laboratory may soon be scuttled, for lack of federal funding. The lab's annual budget requirements are about \$3 million per year. The Aquarius Reef Base is part of the National Undersea Research Program, a deep-water study program run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) for the past 20 years. During that time it has provided a unique environment for everything from marine biology research to the testing of new technologies.

Built in 1986 by the federal government, the base is located 60 feet below the surface at the base of a coral reef within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Beyond marine research, NASA has long used the underwater lab to recreate the weightlessness of space. Recently, a team of astronauts descended the waters for a special dress rehearsal, a mock asteroid mission on the ocean floor.

## Is the "UFO" at the bottom of Baltic Sea a top-secret lost Nazi weapon?

If you've been following the obscure diver related conspiracy blogs then you'll know that some sort of unusually shaped object has been located in the Baltic Sea. The object shows up on sonar about ten feet off the ocean floor and approximately 200 feet long by 25 feet wide. So some are now speculating that this is a leftover from World War II.

A former Swedish naval officer and WWII expert Anders Autellus has revealed that the structure could be the base of a device designed to block British and Russian submarine movements in the area. Autellus claims it would have been built of double-skinned concrete and reinforced with wire mesh to baffle radar.

Explorer Stefan Hogeborn who is studying the images for the Ocean X diving team agreed: 'It is a good candidate for the answer to this mystery. The object lies directly underneath a shipping route. It would be of enormous weight in steel and concrete. Other Nazi anti-sub anchoring devices were nowhere near as large,' he added.

While the Ocean Explorer team is understandably excited about their potentially earth-shattering find, others are slightly more skeptical and are questioning the accuracy of the sonar technology.

To add to the mystery the divers exploring the object said that their equipment stops

working when they approach within 200 meters of the object, cameras and satellite phone would refuse to work when directly above the object, and would only work once they had sailed away.

The object was first found in May last year, stay tuned and find out if this is really a leftover secret weapon, a UFO or maybe just sonar backscatter.

## Odyssey Salvage Company Recovers 48 Tons Of Silver From The Deep

In what is being billed as the world's largest recovery of precious metals from the seafloor Odyssey Marine Exploration, pioneers in the field of deep-ocean exploration, announced that it has successfully recovered approximately 48 tons of silver bullion from a depth of approximately three miles. This initial recovery of bullion from the *SS Gairsoppa*, a 412-foot steel-hulled British cargo ship that sank in February 1941, totals 1,203 silver bars or approximately 1.4 million troy ounces of silver and has been transported to a secure facility in the United Kingdom. After unloading the cargo, taking on fuel and changing personnel, recovery operations will continue and are expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2012.

Odyssey is conducting the Gairsoppa project under contract with the UK Department for Transport. Under the terms of the agreement, Odyssey bears the risk of search and recovery and retains 80% of the net salvaged value of the *SS Gairsoppa* silver cargo after recovering its expenses.

In addition, an estimated 600,000 oz. of silver is expected to be found on the *SS Mantola*, a second shipwreck recovery project being conducted in conjunction with the Gairsoppa project.

The *SS Gairsoppa* was a merchant ship torpedoed by a German U-boat during World War II. During the War, the UK Government insured privately owned cargo under their War Risk Insurance program. After making an insurance payment of approximately £325,000 (1941 value) to the owners of the silver cargo lost aboard the *SS Gairsoppa*, the UK Government became the owners of the insured cargo. As some sources, including "Lloyd's War Losses" indicate a total silver cargo worth £600,000 (1941 value) lost aboard the *SS Gairsoppa*, there may

A television special will be featured on Discovery Channel latter this year.

## **Widow of National Geographic Filmmaker Wesley Skiles Blames Scuba Gear for Death**

Well-known National Geographic filmmaker Wesley Skiles drowned in July of 2010 while working in Boyton Beach shooting footage of Goliath Groupers for National Geographic's film "Speed Kills." Now his widow is suing Lamartek Inc. dba Dive Rite; Dive Gear Express LLC fka Dive Rite Express; Fill Express LLC aka Dive Rite Express; Mark E. Derrick; Juergensen Marine Inc. and Analytical Industries Inc., claiming that Dive Rite knew its oxygen monitoring system had a propensity to malfunction because it had been recalled multiple times, but Dive Rite ignored "serious quality control issues" and tampered with the scuba equipment evidence after the fatality.

Over his career, Wesley Skiles became a well-known and well respected underwater cinematographer. He founded his own cinematography company, Karst Productions, and shot underwater films for National Geographic, PBS, A&E, and Discovery Channel, directed the IMAX film 'Journey Into Amazing Caves,' and produced the acclaimed television series "Water's Journey." After his death, National Geographic named Wesley Skiles Explorer of the Year and Florida's Peacock Springs State Park was renamed "Wesley Skiles Peacock Springs State Park."

Terry Skiles is seeking damages for wrongful death, deceptive trade, and conspiracy to spoliage evidence, negligent spoliage of evidence, breach of warranty, costs and funeral expenses.

## **German Submarine Found Off the Coast of Nantucket**

In April 1944, the German submarine *U-550* was hunting in the waters off Nantucket when it torpedoed an American tanker caught straggling behind its convoy. The U-boat took cover beneath the sinking ship to avoid detection, but the flagship *USS Joyce* closed in and delivered a punishing depth charge attack that forced the damaged vessel to the surface.

After the submarine was forced to surface, the Germans began firing their deck guns, according to a Coast Guard history. Three US ships returned fire and one rammed into it. There were 44 casualties and 12 survivors. The prisoners of war, and the survivors of the American tanker, were taken to Great Britain.

There it lay, its final resting place an enduring mystery for nearly 70 years. A group of history buffs and divers as been looking for the wreck for the past 20 years, they discovered the elusive craft about 70 miles south of Nantucket.

The crew would not divulge the exact location of the wreck or the depths involved, so that others would not disturb the site. But they said the wreck can be reached by expert divers. The crew plans to notify families of those involved in the battle, including the German casualties.



**Come and join Us!**



San Francisco Reef Divers (SFRD)

**\$25**

Please make checks payable to "San Francisco Reef Divers"  
and mail to:

Pierre Hurter, SFRD Treasurer, 515 Diamond Street, San  
Francisco, CA 94114

*We encourage you to also support the other organizations listed*



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Sonoma County Abalone Network (SCAN)

**\$10**

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SINCE JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> 1973

**ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO REEF DIVERS (SFRD):**

The *Reef Diver Times* is the official newsletter of the San Francisco Reef Divers, a not for profit community organization dedicated to safe sport diving and the preservation of our ocean resources. Membership is \$25 annually, dues payable to "SFRD". The General Meeting is held the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Location is announced one week prior to the meeting. Please check our yahoo site for details <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfreefdivers/> We meet at 7:00pm for socializing, drinks, food and club business. For more information, visit <http://www.sfreefdivers.org/>.

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