

SUB AQUA JOURNAL

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LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

December has always been a month where I look back at the year, admit my mistakes and relish my accomplishments. Holidays bring out the cheer in people, as most will usually have a kind word or gesture. December is also a time for planning future dreams and expectations. I sit back and look at the year and review our achievements, which would not be possible if it were not for you our readers and advertisers. For a little while I would like to remember what we all have done and seen and learned; take this small journey back in time with me.

January brought us the dramatic sinking of the *Algol*, now one of New Jersey's hottest new dive spots. February took us to Houston where we introduced you to the trade show side of diving. We also explored the controversy on nitrox, which is still going on today but for different reasons. In March we devoted our issue to safety, prepping you for the busy season ahead. By the time April rolled around we were itching for some diving so we set out in search of shipwrecks, and explored some rarely-seen wrecks; we also began our regular interviews with American boat captains. During May we honored the majestic *USS San Diego*. Technical diving was the focus of our June issue, where we explored the complexities of tech diving.

Blue Water Diving in North Carolina was covered in July's issue which explored submarines, ironclads and a newly discovered wreck. August took us down below the 130-foot line to the rarely explored wrecks of the *Ostfriesland*, *Andrea Doria* and the *Oregon*. America's defense against the attacks of the shorelines during WW II left many U-boats scattered along our shores. The September issue examined the more popular ones and some that are still taking lives. By October the offshore diving was slowing and we went beach diving up and down the coast. November was devoted exclusively to the state of New Jersey.

Where the *Journal* took you this year was America. We went where you can take the family, spend a few days and few dollars yet still participate in the most exciting diving the world has to offer.

The *Sub Aqua Journal* has grown in size and in popularity. Many new writers and photographers have joined us and many names that now grace our masthead are the finest in the nation.

The *Journal* has dealt with some sensitive issues too — nitrox, mixed gas diving, decompression illness, accident training and air management. We have reported on the attacks of our rights to open new recompression chambers and the right to dive where we want to. We unfortunately have also witnessed too many deaths.

This year, due to the poor economy, many have decided to stay home and dive in our own backyard instead of traveling abroad for a brief one-week vacation. This shift in dive travel has some other magazines overly concerned. They are trying to find ways to tell you that staying home is dangerous. What is wrong with staying home? The unique part about this is that we had fun staying home close to the family and friends while doing some fantastic diving.

continued on page 4

DERELICT BAY

by Daniel Berg

Flying over Long Island in a little single engine Cessna we spotted a shipwreck. Actually, we spotted what appeared to be a small cove filled with small cabin cruiser wrecks. The cove was just west of Captree Boat Basin and on the bay side.

Hank and I had been taking aerial photographs for my new book, *Long Island Shore Diver*. We were on a tight schedule and didn't take the time to circle or photograph the site. Yet one wreck that interested me appeared to be around 45 feet long, sitting awash on her starboard side in the middle of the bay. Even though we continued on to finish our photography project, my thoughts were of the portholes that might still be found on the little wreck.

Two weeks later Hank and I were reviewing the aerial photographs and the topic of the little wreck came up. Diver Jim McGuire told me that he had actually been to the site, and that although the portholes above the water line were gone, those on the wreck's starboard side were still in place.

One week later divers Billy Campbell, Mike McMeekin, Donovan Berg and I boarded my 24-foot boat *R.V. Wreck Valley*. It was toward the end of October, pretty late in the season, yet the day looked perfect as the sun was just starting to burn off the early morning chill. Unfortunately, our hopes of running offshore were quickly canceled due to sea conditions. I remembered the little wreck out east and we decided to go take a look.

Cruising through the inland waterways

it only took about an hour to reach the bay. As we slowly inched our way closer we could see small boats scattered on the shore and a few sticking through the surface. I carefully watched the depth recorder as we entered the cove. We wanted to get as close as possibly to the 45-foot wreck I had spotted from the air. It was a little strange but as we approached, she appeared to be hard aground yet we still had 20 feet of water under us. Later we learned she was

smash the glass.) Then it's just a matter of going in to recover the artifact.

Within a half-hour all four of us were working furiously. In fact it sounded more like a construction site than a scuba dive. There were two different size portholes on the wreck and I started working on one of the small ones amidships. Within a short time the porthole was loose. I went in and found the engine room but there was no room for a diver. This was a little disappointing because it

meant that we couldn't get at three portholes.

With Mike's assistance we took another approach to the problem and chiseled a hole in the exterior wall. We worked in shifts with one swinging the hammer and the other prying with a crow bar. After almost an hour we had a hole large enough to reach in and grab the porthole.

For the other two

we just had to enlarge our hole and reach in the other direction.

Mike and I then moved to the bow where both Donovan and Billy seemed to be swinging their sledge hammers in rhythm. These portholes were not as easy as I had originally thought, they were securely mounted into two-inch thick hard wood. I squeezed through a hatch into the bow's interior and with a crow bar assisted the guys with three additional portholes. Mike had also just finished taking a little porthole off the deck house. We were all a little tired and headed back to the *Wreck Valley*.

After lunch Donovan snorkeled in to shore to check out the small visible wrecks for brass. Billy searched the bay's bottom for sunken boats. Mike and I



Donovan Berg, Bill Campbell and Mike McMeekin in *Derelict Bay*.

actually sitting on top of a sunken barge.

I was the first to suit up and snorkel over to the wreck. There was no sense in all of us getting wet if there were no artifacts. Also, we'd been planning an offshore dive and were set up with double tanks. As I circled the wreck and free dove down to her submerged starboard side I spotted the first brass porthole. Within a minute I found three more. The final count was seven.

I returned to get my tanks and tools as Mike, Bill and Donovan were suiting up. Donovan had never recovered a porthole before so I told him that on wooden boats they are usually easy to pry loose. The trick is to use a sledge hammer and chisel from outside the wreck and drive the porthole in. (Of course be careful not to

figured the 45-foot wreck had a nice size propeller and went back in with a hack saw. After another long working dive he and I were able to get through the two-inch propeller shaft by taking turns with the hack saw. Later when we were all back aboard we had a total of seven brass portholes, three propellers, a danforth anchor and an assortment of smaller brass items.

I'm still not a hundred percent sure why all these wrecks are in the same bay but I was told that the Coast Guard uses this cove to dump any derelict vessels it finds. This explanation makes sense and also means the area will be re-stocked with artifacts every few years. We probably won't return too soon. But we'll definitely remember this site the next time the weather kicks up and we can't make an offshore run in an area known as Wreck Valley.



Mike McMeekin displays one of the propellers.

EDITORIAL continued from page two.

In this issue of the *Journal* Danny tries another way to locate abandoned shipwrecks, he flies over them! Gary Gentile shares an excerpt from his new book on *Shipwrecks of Virginia*. Barb Lander interviews an interesting captain who gave up diving the *San Diego* for uncharted wrecks off the Virginia coastline. Hank Garvin speaks out on the controversy over nitrox use (not!) in the Caymans. Brad Sheard gives us his strong thoughts on the "Magic of Mixed Gas." Doc Lombardo recounts an extraordinary day learning about helicopters, medicine, the Coast Guard and rescue procedures. Cathie Cush reports on the start-up of ERRDO, an organization to which you will want to pay close attention. We can't forget Kirby, whose mission is simple and elegant: "enjoy the dive."

1992 has been a good year. Everyone here at the *Journal* thanks you for your continued support and wishes you all a very happy and healthy future.

Joel Silverstein, Editor



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THIS MONTH'S COVER

The French manufactured *Dolphine* helicopter was the focus of the simulated rescue demonstration at the US Coast Guard demonstration (see page 12 for story). At a cost of almost twenty million dollars and running costs exceeding \$3,000 per hour regardless of the type of operation, the *Dolphine* is capable of travelling at over 176 mph. In its hovering position over a boat or floating victim, the downward thrust from the propeller is almost 300 mph.

Photo by J. Silverstein using a Nikon FG with a 50 - 300 mm Nikkor zoom lens 1/500 sec at f8 on Kodak Tri-X Pan film rated at 320 asa.

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THE CAYMAN / NITROX CONTROVERSY

an editorial by Hank Garvin

The nitrox issue escalates. Here we are again fighting for our rights. Do you think that people with limited power (albeit print, political or money) will ever learn that the individual rights of a person may not be abridged for the financial or moralistic attitudes of another?

I am tired of having people take up the cause to save *me* from myself. Especially when the people doing the "saving" are hypocritical phonies, who are merely using issues to further their own power [and money base]. These people have no problem twisting facts or just out and out eliminating them from their arguments.

The Cayman Island group is a real player in the game. Their tourist industry depends upon a few things:

1. People must come to them.
2. Divers must be out of the water in less than 45 minutes.
3. Their dive boats can do 3 trips a day with 15-25 people on board.

The Caymans (and I'm only singling them out because of their blatant stand against nitrox) embraced the development of the dive computer. Why? The computer — because of its ability to calculate multi-level dives — gave people a little more bottom time and less surface interval. This was okay since it did not cut into the amount of trips run per day.

Now we come to the real issue about nitrox. A responsible diver using nitrox usually has some kind of redundant system of breathing gas (air or nitrox or O₂); this is a definite problem in the Caymans.

You see, that means divers could extend their bottom times, and "safety hangs" become more prevalent, in fact they become necessary. This change in diver profile cuts into the day's boat schedule and costs money because the [operator] can't handle the same [high] volume of diving.

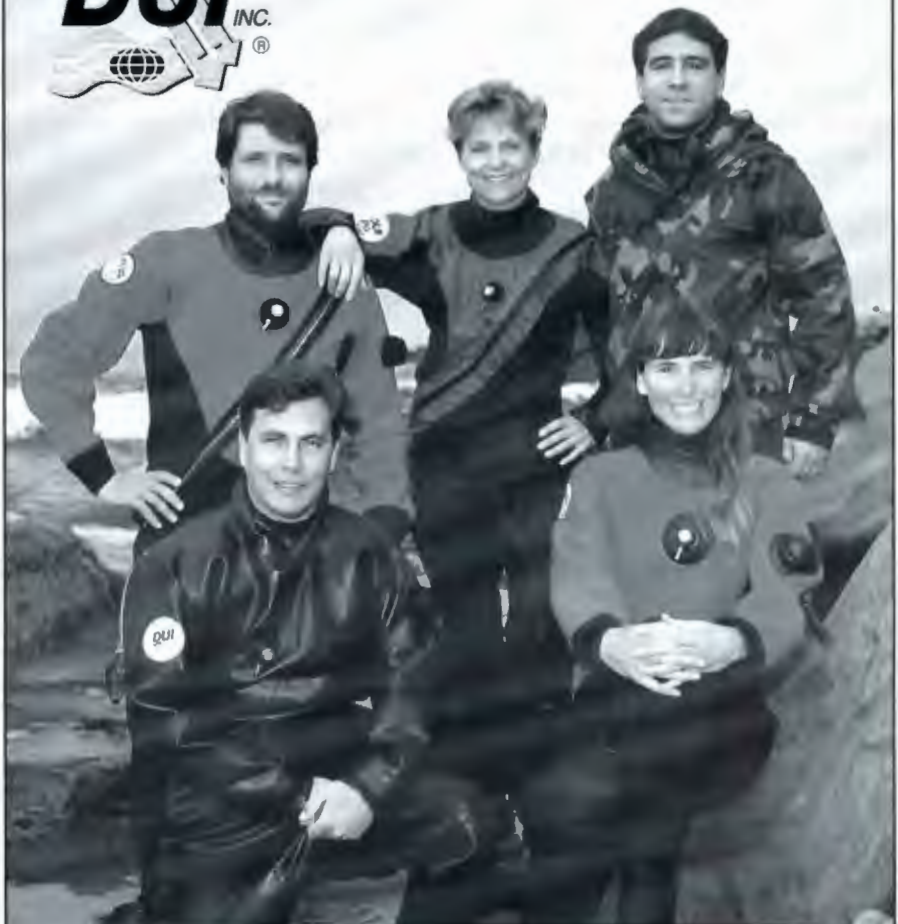
Now these [resort] people may postulate about how they want to save us from ourselves, but all they are really interested in is their own pockets.

The other issue is that the number of divers staying and diving in the U.S. — particularly in the North East — is hurting their [resort] business. Nitrox is just something they feel is going to draw people from them.

If they really care about the safety of their divers, why don't they have pony bottles available for all divers that request

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KINGSTON CEYLONITE

A Protector of the Virginian Coastline

by Gary Gentile

German propaganda abounds with tales of the exploits of intrepid U-boat commanders sneaking their undersea warships up the Chesapeake Bay to the Potomac River, where they observed proceedings in the very seat of the Nation's capital. This may have fooled the German populace whose knowledge of American geography was hazy, but it was mere fantasy.

In addition to shore emplacements, the Chesapeake Bay approaches were guarded by an extensive mine field extending some thirty miles out to sea. A mile-wide zigzag lane wove through hundreds of stationary mines, requiring ships to take on experienced pilots to navigate safely the circuitous route.

Yet one U-boat commander braved the American mine field in order to sow one of his own. On the night of June 12, 1943 Host Degen conned the *U-701* to within ten miles of Cape Henry, left his silent explosives, and slipped away without being spotted.

The first mine was found on the fifteenth by Convoy KN-109 from Key West. Clearly visible to swimmers and sun bathers at Virginia Beach six miles away, thirteen merchant ships and six escorts steamed in single column along the swept channel. A violent explosion rent the tanker *Robert C. Tuttle*. Her bow settled quickly in fifty-four feet of water, while the stern remained afloat. Veering sharply to avoid colliding with the wounded tanker, the *Esso Augusta* detonated another mine. She did not sink, but her engines were knocked out by the blast.

My father, Domenic, a gunnery sergeant, was on duty at one of the coastal bunkers at this time. Like most shore-bound observers, he remembered that day for the rest of his life. He often talked about the day a U-boat torpedoed three ships right off the beach.

With one ship sunk right in the channel and another drifting helplessly, the convoy was thrown into a rout. Escorts and merchantmen swerved out of the way like caroming billiard balls. No one knew whether the attack had come from torpe-



Courtesy of The National Museum, Greenwich, England.

does or mines. Patrol boats swarmed into the area with their sonars pinging. Spotting planes flew out from the Norfolk Navy base. Fortunately, none of the zigzagging merchant ships got far enough out of line to detonate the defensive mines that lined the swept channel, nor were there any collisions. But it was a wild time for captains and helmsmen.

The sound man on *USS Bainbridge* picked up a target on his earphones. The *Bainbridge* drove in fast and laid down a harassing pattern of depth charges. Minutes later, another target pinged on the sound phones. The *Bainbridge* charged over the suspected target and dropped eight depth charges—resulting in nine detonations. The last explosion was that of a German mine; it went off so close to the *Bainbridge* that she was damaged severely and knocked out of action.

The rest of Convoy KN-109 passed out of the action area, but shortly thereafter three more ships entered the German mine field. The tug *Warbler* towed the disabled steamship *Delisle*, escorted by the *HMS Kingston Ceylonite*.

The *Kingston Ceylonite* was one of 24 of Her Majesty's trawlers sent to the United States to fill the gap in coastal defense left when President Roosevelt gave 50 outdated flush-deck four-stack destroyers to England in return for 90-

year leases for U.S. military bases in the British possessions; the lend-lease program. These commercial fishing vessels had their trawl gear removed and replaced with depth charge racks. Each carried a 4-inch deck gun mounted on the bow, and sported machine guns amidships in armored tubs.

Because of the earlier casualties, the beaches and boardwalks were jammed with curious onlookers, many watching events through binoculars. "The trawler suddenly went up in two terrific explosions which blew her to bits. The first apparently was a mine, the second the ship's magazine." The *Kingston Ceylonite* sank in two minutes.

The blimp *K-5* swooped down toward the oil-soaked debris, among which were spotted fifteen men either kicking frantically to stay afloat, or clinging to wreckage and an overturned lifeboat. The *K-5* dropped a raft to the beleaguered British seamen. Minutes later, patrol boats converged on the catastrophic scene and picked up the survivors. Seventeen men were unaccounted for. Three bodies later washed up on the beach; the rest were presumed dead.

Navy tugs towed the *Esso Augusta* to port that same day. The *Robert C. Tuttle* was raised six days later and towed in for repairs. Mine sweepers immediately

canvassed the area and cleared the main shipping channel. They swept up all the mines except one (the story of which is related in the book's chapter on the *San-tore*).

On December 31, 1943, the fishing trawler *Cherokee* accidentally hooked her drag on the wreck of the *Kingston Ceylonite*. She recorded her position and passed it along to the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). On May 4, 1944, the *YP-449* located the wreck, identified it by divers' inspection and reported about 25 feet clearance over it. Four days later the *YP-449* led the buoy tender *Mistletoe* to the wreck, and Qk. Fl. Red buoy "2" was established 200 yards 076° from the wreck. Immediately after its definite location, the wreck was demolished by the Navy Salvage Service and a U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey wire drag indicated a least depth of 37 1/2 feet over it.

The wreck of the *Kingston Ceylonite* is little more than an oversized junkyard of twisted I-beams and bent hull plates. Little is left that is recognizable as a ship. Many sea bass and tautog have made their homes in the cavities created by overlapping metal sheets.

With due justice, the *U-701* was sunk three weeks later off Cape Hatteras. Kepitanleutnant Degen was one of seven survivors. Interestingly, although he was interrogated closely by the Office of Naval Intelligence, he did not reveal that it was he who had laid the mines that caused so much havoc off the Chesapeake Bay approaches; that intelligence did not come to light until after the war.

This story of the Kingston Ceylonite comes from Gary Gentile's Popular Dive Guide Series:

SHIPWRECKS of VIRGINIA.

Gary Gentile started his diving career in 1970. Since then he has made more than 1,000 decompression dives, over 90 of them on the Andrea Doria. Specializing in wreck diving and shipwreck research, he has written dozens of articles, and published thousands of photographs in magazines around the world. An author of twenty-one books: ten novels, and eleven nonfiction works on diving, and nautical shipwreck history, Gary is one of the preeminent figures of the diving community.



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THE CAYMAN / NITROX CONTROVERSY

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them? Why is it frowned upon to do a "safety hang" in many resorts? Why do they push three and four dives per day when scientific data indicates that multi-day, repetitive diving results in people

having a higher incidence of DCS?

It's time we divers stood up for ourselves. When the government threatened to involve themselves in diving years ago, we responded. Divers got behind a

few hard working people and supported them. The industry supported them. The magazines supported them. The "C" card was created and the number of accidents diminished.

A similar conflict is arising again. History is indeed repeating itself. Unfortunately, there's a schism being artificially created by the Caymans (with their millions of dollars of advertising power) and some easily influenced magazine editors not willing to stand up for the complete truth.

It is time now to support an organization that is being formed as I write this article. It's made up of divers, instructors, physicians, boat captains and attorneys that are not afraid to take a stand for the future.

This issue is no different than the problems the cave diving community went through in the 60's and 70's. At the time the public outcry was to close the caves, which in fact they did. Due to the tremendous efforts of a few, through education, the accidents are down and cave diving is enjoying popularity.

You, the public, must support your right to decide for yourself how, what, and where you want to dive.

Nitrox diving, deep diving, Trimix diving are not recreational diving. They don't belong in the realm of recreational diving. In fact the entire recreational diving community doesn't want the responsibility of this style of diving. For the most part, the training organizations want someone else to handle this aspect of the sport. The only way for this to occur will be with your support.

I urge you, whether you are planning to get into any of the "tech" diving or not, to join this group. Keep informed. Make your own decisions based on your understanding of what's right for you. Your involvement will stop those self-proclaimed saviors. It will allow people who chose to follow a path of "tech diving" to have the means and the education to do it as safely as possible.

If you agree with my feeling on this issue, please write this and other magazines. Stand up for your rights.

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TRUE TO THE TIDEWATER

Captain Trueman Seamans

by Barb Lander

In 1969, while still in high school on Long Island, Captain Trueman Seamans learned how to dive. Certification dives were scheduled off Fire Island in mid-February. He remembers the divers' cars getting stuck in the snow on the beach. The water felt like needles on his face. He claims he got his certification card just for showing up; he didn't even know how to clear his mask.

This is hard to believe when meeting the hard diving captain whose home is stuffed with artifacts recovered from wrecks up and down the East coast. Trueman confesses he had a plan to get all the artifacts from all the wrecks on the East Coast within five years. He laughs, "I'm a little behind schedule."

Trueman will go to great lengths to get his artifacts, one example are the dishes from the *China Wreck* he proudly displays in his home. He remembers having to run out several line reels, end-to-end as he followed "bits and pieces of dishes here and there," traveling as much as 1500 feet off the main wreck to find the intact plates.

Even as he scoured the wrecks for artifacts he caught his biggest prize on the surface. He captured the heart of a rare breed, a female wreck diver, Nike (pronounced Nicky).

An accomplished wreck diver in her own right, and now a captain also, Nike teamed up with Trueman in his explorations; they spent their honeymoon wreck diving. As they moved their diving southward it became harder to find dive boats to take them to the wrecks they knew were out there.

In 1981 they bought their first dive boat. But it was in 1983 that they both fell in love with the Tidewater area (that's what the locals call the area around the mouth of Chesapeake Bay) and its diving. They moved their boat the *Sundowner*, and themselves to Virginia Beach.

Trueman explains, "Diving in Virginia is where New Jersey was 20 years ago." Excited by the potential for new discoveries Trueman and Nike spend much of



their free time searching for new wrecks. They select likely spots from the nautical charts and run endless grid patterns. Back and forth 50 to 70 feet apart they comb potential areas with their depth finder.

Their efforts were rewarded when they found the ocean going tug *Winthrop* and later the Maryland pilot boat *W.D. Sanner*.

For Trueman and Nike the days of searching with the depth finder are over. Last winter Trueman added a magnetometer to the aboard the *Sundowner*.

One of his favorite wrecks out of Virginia Beach is the *Kingston Ceylonite*. It lies in 60 feet of water and is so blown apart that it is questionable if the entire wreck is there. The *Kingston Ceylonite* was a 160-foot British trawler that had its fishing gear removed to be armed for U.S. coastal defense.

Confusion reigned when Trueman recently recovered parts of a WW I gun from the bow section of the *Kingston Ceylonite*. However, it demonstrated the Allied desperation for any weapons early in WW II as British armed trawlers were frequently equipped with WW I leftovers. Other goodies for divers have been found among the twisted remnants of the *Kingston Ceylonite*.

In the meantime, convinced that there are more wrecks to be found in the Tidewater, Trueman and Nike are tuning up the magnetometer and combing the bottom for their next big find.

SHERWOOD

So simple it's ingenious.

The Myth of Magic Gas

an editorial by Bradley Sheard

It has been a terrible year for dive fatalities. Many more may follow in the next few years. The reason? It may well be the introduction of "technical diving."

Some two years ago, a revolution in deep diving began. Deep diving — and mixed gas diving in particular — came out of the closet, and as the "techies" proclaimed, it was here to stay. In reality, there was nothing new here—deep diving has been around for decades, and mixed gas diving has apparently been in use by the cave diving community for years as well. The only new aspect of this revolution has been the publicity and the sharing of knowledge—the "how-to" of mixed gas diving, if you will.

Mixed gas diving is a reliable and proven technology. Decades of military and commercial use, as well as years of "underground," but successful, use by cave and wreck divers have proven that *it works*. The technology is not the problem—rather it is the common sense of those who choose to use it, or not to use it.

The real danger with mixed gas is the apparently widespread belief among sport divers that it is a magic panacea that suddenly makes it OK to dive deep. Sport divers who would never have *dreamed* of venturing to depths of 200 feet and beyond on air, are suddenly contemplating taking

up mixed gas diving. These divers have been led to believe that this "magic gas" has somehow made deep diving a "safe" proposition. **THEY ARE DEAD WRONG!**

If you do not have *hundreds* (yes, hundreds) of dives into the 200-foot range, on air, under your belt, you have no business fooling around with mixed gas diving—PERIOD.

But I thought mixed gas diving was supposed to be safer??

Mixed gas does have two important advantages for deep diving. First, by replacing some, or all, of the nitrogen in air with helium, the problem of nitrogen narcosis can be limited or eliminated. Second, the partial pressure of oxygen in the breathing mixture can be reduced, eliminating the danger of oxygen toxicity at deeper depths. These are the *only* two advantages to mixed gas — and they come at a price. For one, contrary to popular belief, diving mixed gas requires *longer* decompression times than the same dive done on air. But the biggest problem for the "technical diver" using mixed gas is the extreme *operational complexity* of making such dives.

Operational complexity is one of those terms that doesn't sound as



scary as it should. Doing a 200-foot dive on air is *easy* compared to doing the same dive on mix. The main reason for the increased complexity of diving mix is that it is virtually impossible to decompress on mixed gas without the use of nitrox and oxygen; they are almost always required for the decompression.

A typical example: a 200-foot dive on 17/50 trimix (that's 17% oxygen, 50% helium and 33% nitrogen). For 20 minutes of bottom time, the first decompression stop would be at 70 feet on nitrox 50 (50% oxygen). This mixture would be used for stops at 60, 50, 40, and 30 feet. The diver must then switch to pure oxygen at the 20 and 10 foot stops; total decompression time — 45 minutes.

If for some reason (such as equipment failure) nitrox and oxygen were unavailable, the decompression time on trimix (the gas that's in the tanks on your back) for this same dive would be 2 hours and 4 minutes!! It is doubtful that *anyone* would have enough gas in their tanks after a 20-minute 200-foot dive to complete the required decompression. (In contrast, the U.S. Navy standard air decompression tables call for 40 *minutes* of decompression for the same 20-minute dive, on air — the use of nitrox and/or oxygen would cut this time dramatically.)



Dennis Kessler explores the bridge of the tanker Coimbra at 190 fsw. Photo by Bradley Sheard

Herein lies the hidden and unadvertised danger associated with this type of diving. Instead of managing a single air supply and arranging for backups, you now have to manage an adequate supply of at least 3 different gases (deeper or longer dives can call for even more gas mixes!). Backups must be provided not only for your main tanks containing trimix, but also for each one of your decompression gases. If you wear a dry suit, putting a helium mixture in your suit will probably make you freeze to death, so most divers resort to yet another tank with argon (or air) to inflate their suits. Sound complicated? It is. And when something goes wrong on your dive—it can become your worst nightmare.

There is another, perhaps more subtle, danger associated with this type of diving, and it applies particularly to the more experienced divers who are trying out this new technology. Experienced divers have been exploring wrecks and caves at depths of 200 feet and deeper on air for years. Narcosis is a problem that affects people to varying degrees. By venturing into this type of diving

slowly, learning and proceeding only at your own pace, narcosis can be dealt with. There is a certain amount of adaptation that takes place, but it is always there.

Don't believe anyone who tells you they "don't get narced."

The fact that narcosis is always present to some degree in deep diving is one of the things that holds you back — it keeps you from doing foolish things down there.

I remember listening to Gary Gentile, a noted deep diver and author, talk about his first venture into "Gimbel's hole" on the *Andrea Doria*, in search of the First Class china. He and Steve Gatto were the first to reach the china after Gimbel; he unabashedly recounted how he would have had no qualms about calling the dive if he didn't feel comfortable when they reached the wreck. "A little fear is a good thing," he said, "it holds you back." How true this is — while diving on air.

Now suddenly take away the

narcosis and the fear, and divers are pushing the envelope further than they ever would have dared. Gary's dive on the *Andrea Doria* was a walk in the park compared to penetrations being made on the wreck today. Two divers died on the *Andrea Doria* this past summer. Several others died elsewhere. Coincidence??

Mixed gas diving is undoubtedly here to stay, for better or for worse. But think twice (or maybe 100 times!) before trying it. This type of diving probably won't get you bent — but it could very well kill you. Perhaps unfortunately, perhaps not, there is no simple substitute for experience. It takes years of deep diving on air to feel comfortable at depths of 200 feet and beyond — there are no shortcuts. For those who regularly make these types of dives on air, mixed gas does *not* have certain advantages in some situations. For the inexperienced, "magic gas" is simply a shortcut to the morgue.

Bradley Sheard is the author of BEYOND Sportdiving — Exploring the Deepwater Shipwrecks of the Atlantic.

BIRDS FLY

by Stephen J. Lombardo, MD

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As the helicopters flew in, spectators were amazed at how exacting their pilots could be with these jet-propelled bird machines. One by one they landed. First from Fire Island, NY, Groton, CT, Cape Cod, MA, and finally the French-made high speed *Dolphine* from Brooklyn, NY. Tens of millions of dollars worth of machinery arrived at the U.S. Coast Guard Group Moriches Station on November 16, to help divers and captains learn about "helo med-evac."


U.S. Coast Guard Commander Miller and Master Chief Ed Michaels coordinated this impressive program with Captain Steve Bielenda, President, of the Eastern Dive Boat Association. This giant effort from both parties brought over 125 people to the symposium to learn about how the Coast Guard responds to a dive or boating accident.

Master Chief Michaels explained the process: "From the moment we get a call for an air lift that helo is on the way. The staff coordinates with DAN, a hospital, a medical officer, and the recompression chamber as to the most appropriate action to take. Usually, he explained, "given good weather and cooperative seas, we can have the injured party evacuated to the appropriate medical facility in under two hours. Sometimes, however, there are delays due to other emergencies and weather conditions, but we are working as fast as we can."

Captain Bielenda, gave a multimedia presentation of how an air-lift is done and the procedures that should be followed. "Total cooperation between the boat and the Coast Guard is needed to make a safe lift," he explained.

The next presentation was by Jim Tyrell RN, of the Hyperbaric Chamber Staff of the Bronx Municipal Hospital Center. Speaking of the many cases of dive injuries that are brought to the chamber, he emphasized the need for prompt diagnosis of even the possibility of decompression sickness. The practice of "diver denial," in which symptoms are ignored or attributed to something else, was described as a leading cause of divers *not* seeking treatment.

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Dr. Chuck Martinez, also of the Hyperbaric Chamber followed with an excellent synopsis of the "Field Neurological Exam." Although most of us remember that ABC stands for Airway, Breathing and Circulation when dealing with the priorities of a diver emergency, the "field neuro" is essential for a proper diagnosis. Dr. Martinez started at the head and worked his way down, testing for presence and symmetry of both strength and sensation. He also mentioned that a sign or symptom that improves with oxygen is DCS or AGE (arterial gas embolism) until proven otherwise.

The next presentation entitled First Responder, was given by me as a primary care physician in the field. The first responder to a dive emergency should be the individual best prepared by either training, experience or both, to organize the stabilization and evacuation of the diver. This involves team effort completely for maximum efficiency.

With the increasing popularity of technical diving and the uses of alternate breathing gases it is imperative that the first responder is familiar with nitrox, trimix, oxygen decompression and oxygen toxicity.

After a short break, Joel Silverstein thanked the Coast Guard for their excellent rescue efforts. He also introduced the idea of a designated "Medical Officer" on the vessel. This way a diver emergency could be rapidly diagnosed and dispatched directly to a chamber, bypassing the lengthy and sometimes damaging Emergency Room evaluation by untrained personnel. "It is every divers' responsibility to be trained not only for the dive, but for the emergencies that can happen."

The symposium continued with presentations from actual helicopter pilots who described the procedures necessary and the chain of command involved in a successful air-lift. This was further displayed by an actual simulation of an air lift in the bay just outside the Coast Guard Station. The enormous power of these machines and the courage, determination and intensity that Guard works under are a sight worth seeing — we hope you will never have to.

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Workshop Results In Formation Of Diver-Run Extended Range Diving Organization

by Cathie Cush



Following a series of fatalities off the Atlantic coast this summer, Joel Silverstein, publisher of the *Sub Aqua Journal*, organized an accident prevention workshop at NAUI's International Conference on Underwater Education in October. The workshop gave birth to a new, diver-run, non-profit safety organization, the **Extended Range Responsible Diving Organization (ERRDO)**.

"The certification agencies have done an excellent job of training recreational divers to go to 60 or 100 feet. But many divers are going deeper than that without formal training," says Silverstein.

"We are not promoting technical or extended range diving. Nor are we going to function as a certification agency," he stressed. "We are a communication organization. Our sole purpose is to prevent one more death. If we do that next season, we'll have been successful."

A committee comprised of the nation's top deep divers and trainers is examining existing literature and materials used by organizations such as the National Association of Cave Divers (NACD), the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers (IANTD), the American Nitrox Divers Inc. (ANDI), the Professional Scuba Association (PSA), and the deep diving specialty programs from PADI, NAUI, SSI, etc. They are developing guidelines and recommendations regarding equipment, thermal protection, illumination, gas selection and supply, guidelines, operations and other issues as they apply to extended-range diving. They will be contained in a manual available to technical-level instructors.

ERRDO will hold a public meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, January 24, 1993 in Orlando, Fla., at the DEMA trade show. Interested dive industry professionals are invited to attend. For more information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to ERRDO, 750 West Broadway, Long Beach, NY 11561.

For a copy of the workshop proceedings, send a check or money order for \$25.00 to ERRDO at the above address.

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MARES MR12-VOLTREX REGULATOR

a product review by Joel Silverstein



Photo by J. Silverstein

MARES appears to be going after the serious diver. Last year they introduced the MARES Navy regulator that took the recreational market by storm. This year they go one step further by taking one step backwards. Backwards? That's right. The new MR12 - Voltrex Regulator is built for performance.

Voltrex steps away from plastics and opts for a second stage made of chrome plated brass with a larger bypass tube. This tube is instrumental to the vortex assisted design that makes breathing a breeze. Although it's back to metal (which helps prevent freeze up due to heat conductivity) the second stage weighs in at only 9.2 ounces, making it the lightest all metal regulator available.

We used the Voltrex right out of the box on a variety of dives both shallow and deep. We went bottle hunting for ninety minutes, to 110 fsw on the San Diego, and to 130 fsw on the Oregon. Voltrex delivered the air we needed at all depths without hesitation or adjustments; just what we'd expected from a unit designed to exceed US Navy Group A specifications.

The first stage balanced diaphragm design has five low pressure ports and one high pressure port. An optional cold water diving kit is available. MARES also makes a matching octopus.

The new MR12 - Voltrex Regulator is available at your MARES dealer.

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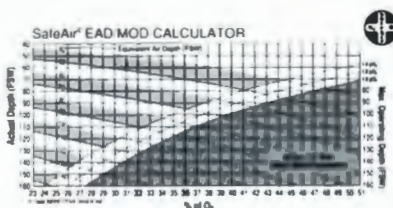
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- 11 **Hyperbaric Emergencies Conference** at the Bronx Municipal Hospital Center, Bronx, NY. The one-day program will provide an overview of hyperbaric emergencies.
 Contact: Michael Touger, MD (718) 918-5822

JANUARY

- 5-7 **Capt. Billy Deans** will be teaching a Nitrox workshop at the Scuba Shoppe in Medford, NY. Contact: Scuba Shoppe Jim Caccos (516) 289-5555
- 6 **Bret Gilliam**, celebrated author, will be speaking on deep diving and its applications at the NYC Sea Gypsies.
 Contact: Tony Smith (212) 242-3282
- 16 **Gary Gentile's Advanced Wreck Diving Seminar & The High Tech Wreck Seminar.** York, PA For tickets contact: (717) 757-1804
- 17-19 **tek93, 'An Emerging Dive Technologies Conference'** Twin Towers Hotel & Convention Center, Orlando, Florida.
 Contact: aquaCorps (800) 365-2655
- 20 **SDRG - Deep Diving Forum: A Question of - How Deep is Safe?** Orlando, Florida
 Contact: Richard Nordstrom (215) 388-2739
- 21-24 **DEMA — Diving Equipment Manufacturers Association trade show.** Orlando, Florida. Open to trade only. Contact: (714) 890-9915
- 24 **ERRDO — Extended Range Responsible Diver Organization** will be meeting at DEMA to discuss current operations and future plans. Contact: Cathie Cush (215) 579-2076
- by 31 **Beneath the Sea Photo Contest** For rules and entry blank Contact: **BTS Photo Contest** PO Box 644, Rye, NY 10580 Entry deadline Jan. 31, 1993

WHEELS ANYONE ?



by Kirby Kurkomelis

I had my football jacket on with the hood up over my head this early October morning boarding the *Jeanne II*. The weather report called for sunny skies with temperatures reaching the high 60's in the afternoon; still there was a chill in the air. Our destination was the Liberty ship *Thomas Dunlap*, just west of *Ambrose Light Ship*.

Pushing my way into the cabin I found the group trying to stay warm. Most were excited about this wreck. In the corner a diver was bragging about an artifact from his last dive, a brass wheel three inches across. This peaked my interest, I hadn't found a wheel in years.

The *Thomas Dunlap* was a Liberty ship serving in WW II. There are many stories concerning her sinking in the war but the *Dunlap's* secret went to her grave and still remains a mystery today. (Maybe she was hit by a U-boat or a floating mine?) Her hull is broken, twisted and scattered over a large sand bottom where large schools of bluefish roam.

Liberty ships were prefabricated; made out of steel and cement due to the shortage of raw materials. They were named to represent the courage, support, and fighting spirit of the American people during the second World War. Usually built in one day, and designed only for one transatlantic voyage, most Liberty ships had a short life span. Their sole purpose was to deliver troops and cargo.

The water out west was more green than blue. Descending down the anchorline was slow. A lone striped bass deliberate in her stride searching for a small bait-fish passed by me. My old friend the jellyfish kept me company along with a couple of hundred friends, sparkling in the green mist.

There was trouble on the line — a diver could not clear his ears. So I signalled to him to go up a few feet, take his time and try again. I waited until his ears had cleared then continued my dive. Looking back down I could see the wreck about 30 feet away. I let the line go, disturbing a school of porgies floating quietly over the wreck waiting for a herd of approaching spearing. Pushing them aside I ventured on.

I swam along the portside of the wreck towards the stern, where I could see brass pipes, leaving them aside for other divers. I saw large hull plates littering the bottom creating plenty of nooks and crannies for lobsters to hide. Maybe under all this debris lay a buried wheel; that would be a prized artifact.

Sticking out of the sand was a steel propeller blade scarred, battle weary, and lifeless, no doubt concealing a past journey across the Atlantic. Blackfish dashed in and out of her hull plates chasing seabass, and a rock crab rested motionless waiting for a piece of the loser.

My mission was simple; enjoy the dive. In the distance I could see the boilers, standing tall about 15 feet off the bottom, encrusted with soft white and yellow coral. Barnacles fought anemones for space, orange sponge creeping up the side of the boilers. At the base I spotted my five-pound lobster. Finally.

The struggle began. Reaching deep into the hole, the lobster began biting my fingers and my mask began to flood. Pulling my hand out I let go of the lobster. Clearing my mask, there it was, the biggest wheel I ever saw! It was three feet across attached to one of the boilers. Happy happy happy. Boy did I feel great. Checking my down time, I was at 72 fsw with 36 minutes into the dive. How do I get it off with no tools?

Out of nowhere divers descended on my wheel! Yanking and pulling on my wheel! I shouted though my regulator, almost biting my mouth piece in half. "Don't touch my wheel!" The wheel didn't move a hair. After a few frustrating minutes the two divers gave up.

This made me very happy; the sea urchins still have a place to hide. They lay perched on the boiler camouflaged by their dark brown color with short needle-like spines protruding from their bodies in all directions. Remember, their spines can cause illness if removed forcefully.

The divers signaled me that they were on their way and I headed back to the anchorline. With one last look I waved goodbye. The *Dunlap's* secret will be safe with me...

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NOVEMBER 1992



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July	4	USN Algal
	4	Fireworks
	13	Overnighter: Pinto, Mystery Imaculata
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June	11	Coimbra 180'
	12	Texas Tower 80-180'
	24	Andrea Dona 170-250' Expedition
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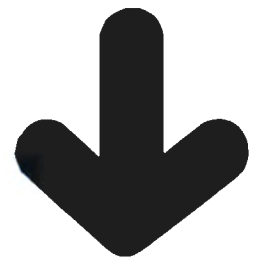
SUNDOWNER*

Capt. Nike Seamans
Capt. Trueman Seamans
(804) 481-7136
Chesapeake Bay Diving
Virginia Beach

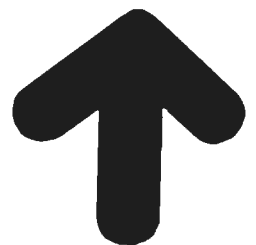
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