

AQUANEWS

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The Death of a Tough Lady by Bert Wilcher

Her death came on July 24, 1946 in a most glorious fashion for the time. At 562 feet in length with a displacement of 27,243 tons, she had become "expendable". The third Arkansas (Battleship #33) succumbed to the destructive force of a 21 kiloton nuclear device code named "Baker", an underwater test, in a pacific lagoon in the Bikini Atoll.

Often overlooked is the life that preceded her demise. She was constructed by the New York Shipbuilding Co, and launched on January 14, 1911, and commissioned at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on September 17, 1912. She was chosen to transport President William H Taft to the Panama Canal Zone to inspect the progress of the construction of the Panama Canal and return him to Key West, Florida in December 1912.

When World War 1 broke out Arkansas was attached to Battleship Division 7 with patrol duty on the York River and served to patrol the eastern seaboard, training the gun crews for armed merchantmen. Later in the war she was attached to the British Grand Fleet as part of the 6th Battle Squadron. Arkansas was part of the battle group that interned the German High Seas Fleet in the Firth of Forth, November 21, 1918.

In 1925 she entered the Philadelphia Navy Yard for modernization. Her coal fired boilers were replaced with oil fired ones. Additional deck armor was also installed.

At the outbreak of World War II, Arkansas was used to escort troop and cargo transports across the Atlantic. On June 3, 1944 Arkansas sailed for the French coast to support the invasion of Normandy. She was positioned 4,000 yards off "Omaha" beach and on the morning of "D" day she provided fire support for the Allied invasion force. She was reassigned to the Mediterranean where she provided fire support for the invasion of southern France known as Operation "Anvil".

After repairs she was reassigned to the Pacific Fleet and arrived at Tinian on February 12, 1945. Several days of shore bombardment training and she was prepared for the assault of Iwo Jima. For three days Arkansas provided fire support for the ground troops invading the Japanese island. She also provided fire support for the invasion of Okinawa. Arkansas shuttled more than 800 U.S. soldiers to the United States during Operation "Magic Carpet", at the end of World War II. For her service she was awarded 4 battle stars in WW II.

In 1946 she was assigned to be part of Operation "Crossroads", the atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll.

She now lies inverted, 170 feet beneath the water of Bikini Atoll. Her graceful bow provides a dramatic back drop against the clear blue water. The bow guns and anti-aircraft guns remain poised to remind us that this lovely lady was indeed battle hardened.

Two of the more interesting features of the Arkansas dive are the bow guns and anchor chains. On this portion of the dive, you swim between the number one and two turrets and the view of the draped anchor chains is incredible. Upon reaching the bow, the view of the upturned classic Battleship lines covered with whip corals is impressive. This becomes your ascent focus until you reach the overturned hull. The hull plates of the Arkansas are folded like an accordion. This is attributed to the tremendous pressure wave generated by the "Baker" blast that was centered near the Arkansas.

Some historians believe the shadow on the left hand side of the classic photograph of the "Baker" blast is the Arkansas blocking the ascent of the water column and falling into the void left by the rising water.

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AQUANEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
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TO CHANGE MAILING
ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER
OR E-MAIL, PLEASE NOTIFY:
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Everyone. We have a meeting scheduled for this Tuesday, June 12th at 7PM. We will be meeting at a new location:

The Sunbridge College (<http://www.sunbridge.edu>) in Chestnut Ridge, New York. We'll meet in a room at the Sunbridge College Administration Office Building. Check the website out before Tuesday Night.

We'll bring in select equipment for sale that our Organization has acquired through donations. Some great Stuff! Also, if anyone needs any repairs or if you need a tank VIP or fill, Paul will bring them back to the shop then you can arrange to meet at his house in Valley Cottage, once the job is complete.

Here's the directions.

BY CAR, FROM THE SOUTH

Take the Garden State Parkway north to Exit 172 (Grand Avenue). Turn left at the bottom of the ramp, go under the overpass and turn right at the stoplight onto Chestnut Ridge Road (Route 45). Continue/or about two miles, through two traffic lights, the New York State border and a third traffic light. Just past the first sign for Green Meadow Waldorf School on your left, turn left onto Hungry Hollow Road (the Hungry Hollow Co-op will be on the far corner).

BY CAR, FROM THE NORTH OR EAST

Take the New York State Thruway (Route 87) to Exit 14A (Garden State Parkway). Take the first exit (Red Schoolhouse Road, also identified as Last Exit in New York), turn right at the stop sign and go to the stoplight at Chestnut Ridge Road (Route 45). Turn left, and then take the first right turn onto Hungry Hollow Road. (The Hungry Hollow Co-op and Green Meadow Waldorf School are on the north and south corners of Hungry Hollow Road.)

AS YOU GO DOWN HUNGRY HOLLOW ROAD:

The second driveway on your left is the entrance to the Green Meadow Waldorf School's Nursery/Kindergarten parking lot.

Just past the bottom of the hill on your left is the parking lot/or short-term visitors to the Main House which houses Sunbridge's Offices, Dining Room and Teacher Training Room and Brookside Building.

Orchard Lane, the first actual street on your left, is the entrance For Holder House (the student dormitory) and student parking.

100 yards further on your right, opposite the entrance to the Fellowship Community, is the entrance of the Threefold Auditorium, which also houses both the Sunbridge College Library and the Bookstore.

Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

Mission Statement:

To provide, promote, and advance environmental protection, care, and voluntary clean-up of waterways by any and all lawful means; to promote the importance and care in every manner possible by environmental awareness and otherwise; to purchase, print, publish, and circulate literature to promote the importance and care of the waterways and the work of the Corporation. To perform all acts the Corporation may deem appropriate or advisable in such operation; to establish, provide, and voluntary clean-up waterways, to encourage, support and subsidize the cleaning and protection from pollution.

Death of a Tough Lady

(continued from page 1)

Sadly this tough lady is still leaking oil from her hull, the death spiral still continuing almost six decades after her destruction.

To dive the Arkansas is a treat available only to those who travel to Bikini Atoll. Your host, Bikini Atoll Divers, and their dive operators provide a comfortable and safe way to explore the history and the grandeur of this imposing lady and the other vessels used in the two atomic test blasts.

Diving to the Arkansas is not to be taken lightly; lying in 170 fsw this is an advance dive requiring mandatory decompression. Bikini Atoll Divers utilizes double cylinder configurations along with a surface vessel supplied decompression tree to allow for a more controlled and comfortable decompression stops. Further information may be obtained from Tampa Adventure Sports at www.tampaadventuresports.com or Bikini Atoll Divers at www.Bikiniatoll.com.



Caribbean Reefs Ailing from Bleaching, Disease

By Jim Loney, Reuters

MIAMI — Deadly diseases are attacking coral reefs across the Caribbean Sea after a massive surge of coral bleaching last summer, a two-pronged assault that scientists say is one of the worst threats to the region's fragile undersea gardens.

The attack, which is killing centuries-old corals, is the result of unusually hot water across the Caribbean region that some scientists argue is a consequence of global warming.

Coupled with a recent bleaching event that whitened and weakened coral on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the Caribbean epidemic has biologists fearing for the future of the habitats that serve as spawning grounds, nurseries, tourist attractions and, some believe, alarm systems for the health of the oceans.

A catastrophic loss of corals, which grow in vivid colonies often likened to flower gardens, could be a body-blow to the Caribbean islands' multibillion-dollar tourism industry, which sells scuba, snorkeling and fishing along with sun and sand.

The unprecedented assault started last summer with some of the highest water temperatures on record in the Caribbean, which caused coral to bleach from Panama to the Virgin Islands. Hot water stresses corals, causing the tiny animals to expel their symbiotic algae, which give corals their bright colors.

Scientists believe bleaching weakens corals, leaving them susceptible to disease. In some Caribbean locations, 90 percent of corals were bleached, according to reef monitors.

Coral can recover from bleaching when the water cools and the algae return to their hosts. But last year's bleaching event was followed by a devastating attack of black band disease, white plague and other ailments.

"It's one of the worst we've ever seen in the Caribbean," said Dr. Mark Eakin, coordinator of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Watch.

SITUATION COULD WORSEN

Researchers are uncertain how widespread the disease outbreak is and they fear it could get worse as the waters warm again this summer. Some preliminary observations in the British Virgin Islands show mortality of 20 percent to 25 percent, Eakin said.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, disease has killed some of the slow-growing corals, like brain and star corals, that build a reef's foundation, said Jeff Miller, a biologist with the National Park Service.

"At one of the study sites near St. John ... the preliminary results show about a 30 percent loss of coral cover," he said.

The Caribbean contains two of the longest reefs in the world -- the Belize reef, which ranks behind only the Great Barrier Reef, and the Florida Keys reef, which stretches beyond the length of the 110-mile

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Caribbean Reefs Ailing from Bleaching, Disease

U.S. island chain.

Billy Causey, superintendent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, said bleaching was less severe on the Keys reefs because the area was hit by a swarm of hurricanes, which gain their power by drawing energy from warm sea water.

Divers have seen some plague and black band disease on the Keys reefs but it has caused less damage than on the Caribbean reefs, he said.

While some scientists decline to link record high water temperatures to human-induced global warming because they have relatively few years of good records from which to draw conclusions, others are less reticent.

"I'm calling it heat stroke. I'm calling it an underwater nightmare," said marine pathologist James Cervino, a professor at Columbia and Pace universities.

"If we don't control atmospheric CO₂, we're putting the nail in the coffin right now," he said. "You're going to see isolated patches of sick, sorry corals, trying to hang on."

Source: Reuters

Accepted Hessian Lake Dives 2007

Sunday June 3rd at 9am
Saturday July 7th at 9am
Sunday August 5th at 9am
Saturday September 8th at 10am
Sunday September 30th at 10am
Saturday October 13th at 10am
Sunday October 21st at 10am

The Bonaire WebCams™ Family Grows with New Underwater ReefCams

Caribbean WebCams, LLC announced today that it has successfully installed a new Bonaire ReefCam™ on the island of Bonaire, joining the upgraded original Bonaire ReefCam which has been in Bonaire's waters entertaining millions of Internet viewers for nearly seven years.

The new Bonaire Pier ReefCam resides in a protected area under the pier at Bonaire's Eden Beach Resort in only about 1.6 meters/5 feet of water, while the original ReefCam has been remounted and upgraded and now shows views across the hull of the Bakanal, a sunken yacht located at approximately 19 meters/60 feet of depth. As such, the original ReefCam has been re-christened the Bonaire Wreck ReefCam.

Additionally, the three land-based Bonaire WebCams located at the Eden Beach Resort have also been upgraded and recabled to provide long term use and viewing pleasure, and join three other land-based WebCams on Bonaire: the DonkeyCam, the WindsurfCam, and the DowntownCam.

“With eight live WebCams on Bonaire running day in and day out, we figure Bonaire has the highest per capita public WebCam ratio of any island in the Caribbean, if not the world. And Bonaire also only has the only long-term permanent open ocean ReefCam installations anywhere. Tens of thousands of people view our WebCams from all over, and we regularly get e-mails and thanks from people who discovered the snorkeling and diving paradise of Bonaire via our WebCams and now vacation here regularly,” said Jake Richter, a Bonaire resident and Chief Operating Officer and Chief Diver of Caribbean WebCams LLC, owner of the Bonaire WebCams web site and a majority of the WebCams on display.

The Bonaire WebCams can be viewed at any time (although at night, Bonaire-time, some will be dark) at <http://www.BonaireWebCams.com>, with images being captured every minute off each camera. The site also offers memberships to people who would like to peruse the archives of all image captures - archives which go back as far as December 2000. The searchable WebCams archives allow Bonaire visitors to the cameras to look up images of themselves on the WebCams, meaning that vacationers to the island of Bonaire, the Caribbean diving and snorkeling capital, who pose for the ReefCams underwater or for the topside WebCams, for example, can look up the images captured of them upon their return from vacation. Memberships are free for limited archive access, and as low as US\$4.95 for a one week membership or US\$24.95 for an annual membership.

The Bonaire WebCams are so popular among the growing list of Bonaire fans that daily discussions about what has appeared on the Bonaire WebCams are held on the popular BonaireTalk web site in a section dedicated to the Bonaire WebCams (at <http://www.BonaireTalk.com/webcams>).

About The Bonaire WebCams

The Bonaire WebCams Web site is among the most popular Web sites featuring Caribbean content, with over 150,000 visitors and millions of page views per month. The Web site is provided with WebCam images from a proprietary image capture server on Bonaire, as well as custom programmed individual WebCams. Live weather information is also provided on the web site.

About Caribbean WebCams, LLC

Caribbean WebCams, LLC, owner and operator of the Bonaire WebCams and the award winning Bonaire ReefCam, specializes in all aspects of commercial WebCam set-up and installation for resorts and travel destinations. Company headquarters are located in Bolton, Massachusetts in the U.S.A. Caribbean WebCams information can be found at <http://www.CaribbeanWebCams.com>, and the company may be contacted at info@CaribbeanWebCams.com or by phone at +1-703-783-8370 or by FAX at +1-703-783-8371 in the U.S. or by phone at +599-7-174112 on Bonaire.

Links to Related Site:

Bonaire WebCams

<http://www.BonaireWebCams.com>

BonaireTalk WebCams Discussion

<http://www.BonaireTalk.com/webcams>

Bonaire Information Web Site

<http://www.InfoBonaire.com>



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE

Rockland Aquanauts Organization
2007 Dues

I guess it is that time of the year again, Membership Dues are due. Last year all our members received much more than they gave out to the Organization. As usual you will be receiving a tax donation for the first \$25.00. All members who attended the Annual Dinner not only received money off their own dinner but they also received money off their guests dinner. Everyone whom attended also received prizes, some worth many times the cost of their Dues. Don't forget the Annual Picnic as well as all the BBQ lunch's after the Lake Dives.

So please send in your \$42 dues early to;

Rockland Aquanauts Organization
c/o
Paul Galeazzi Jr.
4 Greensward Drive.
Valley Cottage New York 10989

Deadliest Sea Creatures

Saltwater Crocodile



Ian Waldi, Getty Images

The saltwater crocodile is the world's largest reptile and one of Australia's deadliest animals. It is the continent's only wild animal that actively hunts human beings which stray into its territory. These crocs reportedly kill hundreds of people each year. They usually grow to about 14 feet long, but some have surpassed 20 feet.



**Rockland Aquanauts
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New City, NY
10956**

June 2007

Death of a Tough Lady, Underwater Webcams, Caribbean Reefs, New Meeting Home, Membership Dues,

****Next Meeting****

June 12th 2007
(details inside)