

# AQUANEWS

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## On The Road with Max Back to Southeast Florida Max Estroff

My wife Rivka gets a call from one of her longest and dearest friends, Jeannette. Jeannette lives in Cuernavaca, Mexico and from what I understand quite a nice place. Rivka has been there and I have only seen pictures. She is coming to the capital of Central and South America, Miami and could Rivka come down to spend Jeannette's birthday with her.

It's December 13<sup>th</sup> and Rivka works our time share deal. We finally get December 18<sup>th</sup> thru the 25<sup>th</sup> in Weston. I make some phone calls and a few of my customers actually agree to see me. I now have to decide what sample bags not to bring. There is only so much room in our Ford Edge. With almost all of my dive gear, 1 steel 120, 1 30 CF Pony bottle and my Action Packer, 7 sample bags, a cooler, plus Rivka and all her stuff, the edge was packed. I had to leave only 3 sample bags behind. I also fill in the spaces with a few gallons of tap water as the water down south tastes foul as compared to our New York water.

While we were down there, Rivka again worked her magic with the time share people and we get a place on the beach at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and A1A, Pompano Beach. We had the Tiki bar, heated pool and of course the wide white sandy beach, right outside of our balcony. This was from December 24<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>.

I worked, saw family (just scheduling and getting to them was work), spent time with Jeannette and got to dive 1 time each week. This time of December always has variable temperatures. This time the nights were in the 30's and 40's and early mornings would be around 50. During the day it was maybe

70 degrees. However, the water temperature was 72 degrees. The last 2 days of our trip the air temperature started to warm up into the mid 70's. The ride home we enjoyed the best weather of the trip, considering we had driven down through a snow and icy rain type of storm.

I wanted to go diving with the people Vinny and I had met at the "Pompano Dive Center", on Atlantic Blvd. and A1A, 5 minutes south of the second place we stayed at. But this day it was not to be. I ended up at "South Florida Diving Headquarters", just south of Lighthouse Inlet off of A1A. They have 2 large pontoon boats. At 1:30 PM. 8 of us went out.

The first dive was on the "Sea Empress". In the sand it was 66 feet. This is where I saw a "Sea Robin" camouflaged in a small rubble pile. The concrete tubes are all resting quietly and this is where I got to see 2 different "Green Moray Eels". One was about 3 feet and the other was about 5 feet long. Both were swimming freely around the outside tubes. Sometime during the 34 minutes on the wreck, my local dive buddy connected with me and we finished our dive, including my 6 minute safety stop, together. The boat is tied to the ball, the ball to the wreck. Jumping off and getting back on was easy.

The second dive was an aquarium drift dive just north of "Lighthouse Inlet". It was along the outside of the ledge in the 60-90 foot range. It is a tongue and groove formation that has lots of growth covered high humps between the grooves. I carried the flag so we were together the entire dive.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## AQUANEWS

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This was the first time I used a steel 100. I had a 35 minute dive and still had 800 psi left in the tank.

Upon getting back onto the boat, one of the other divers had speared a small "Lionfish". The body was about 6 inches long. It was still on his spear and I got a good look at it. Now I have seen my first "Lionfish" in Floridian waters. Not surprisingly out of the water and on a boat. I could really rant about that but this is not the time.

However, because of the damage the "Lionfish" are doing to the other local fish, I think the state of Florida should be offering a bounty so that these spear fishermen could earn the money they would need to go to the local fish market to buy their dinner (funny how I worked my personal feelings into this. By the way, I don't eat fish). We got back to the dock a little after 4. The water and air temperature were both 72 degrees.

The following week I finally got to dive on the "Sea Dog Divers". I left my room at 8:10 AM and by 8:30 my gear was on the boat. The boat left at 9AM with 8 divers. The morning was beautiful.

We were going to the "Ancient Mariner". I was going to dive with a young man in his mid 20's that had only 30 dives. We talked awhile. He was diving with an AL 80 on air. I had my steel 120 with a 38% mix and my pony bottle. We made our plan. He would go up alone. The wreck is at 70 feet. The two of us jumped in first. We stayed together going in and through this small inter-island freighter. There is a pilot house mid ship. It is an easy wreck to go through and was filled with different Grunts and Sweepers. We get back to the up line and he started up. We had stayed together the entire time till now. I lingered around some more. I was not the last one to leave the wreck but because I take so long going up and do a 6 minute safety stop, I was the last one out, surfacing with 900 psi.

47 minutes later we jumped in together. I held the flag as we drifted along the inside of a ledge that sloped up from the sand to about 50 feet. It contained from 5 to 10 feet of relief and had a lot of hiding places. I saw only 1 lobster. My buddy, however, found in a hole a 6 inch across "Coral Crab" under our lights a bright red. Without the lights you could swim right over it without seeing it. With 40-50 feet of visibility, 73 degree water, it was

just another aquarium drift dive along another of South Florida's nameless reefs (they do all have names; I just choose to ignore them). I used a rented steel 100 for this 41 minute dive. When we surfaced together there was 800 psi still in my tank. It's the end of December and the short boat ride back is fantastic, 75 degrees and calm seas. This, you could really get used to.

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.**

## Exploding scuba tank kills two tourists

**An exploding scuba diving tank killed two Polish tourists and seriously injured two others overnight on a Croatian island, officials said.**

The first victim on the southern island of Vis was a 48-year-old Polish woman who died on the spot, a police spokeswoman said.

"The diving tank exploded while it was being unloaded from a boat on the coast in the port of Komiza," the transport and sea ministry said.

The cause of the blast was most likely a valve that popped out, it said.

Three other injured tourists - two men and a woman - were immediately transported to a hospital in the coastal town of Split on the mainland.

One of them, a 43-year-old man who sustained a head injury, died in the hospital overnight, its surgical department said.

The victims were in a group of 12 Polish tourists who arrived in Komiza to go scuba diving, the ministry said.

Croatia, which has a population of 4.4 million, attracts more than 10 million tourists each year, who mainly visit the country's Adriatic coast.



## Drug-smuggling submarine found in Bogota

BOGOTA, Colombia — Colombian soldiers have seized a fully submersible drug-smuggling submarine capable of reaching the coast of Mexico, authorities announced Monday.

Previous drug-carrying vessels found in Colombia were only semi-submersible, meaning part of the structure always remained above the surface.

The 99-foot-long fiberglass vessel has room for a crew of six and is powered by two diesel engines and has an air-conditioned interior.

But the sub discovered Sunday can operate completely underwater, said Col. Manuel Hurtado, chief of staff of Colombia's Pacific Command. He estimated it could hold eight tons of drugs.

The sub in Colombia was found in a rural area of Cauca province on the Timbiqui River about 275 miles southwest of Bogota.

### 'Heavy blow'

Hurtado said intelligence reports and tips from informants led troops to the vessel. He said the sub was empty when soldiers found it and no one was arrested.

General Jaime Herazo said it was believed the sub belonged to "narco-traffickers coupled with narco-terrorists, who received a heavy blow [due to its capture]," according to an article on Colombia Reports Monday.

The 99-foot-long fiberglass vessel has room for a crew of six and is powered by two diesel engines and has an air-conditioned interior, Hurtado said.

He said it was equipped with a 16½-foot periscope.

"The engines were already fully installed and ready to go," Hurtado said.

The sub had "the capacity to sail totally underwater and the ability to travel to the coast of Mexico without surfacing," he added. He said such a trip would take eight to nine days.

Hurtado estimated the vessel had taken six to eight months to build and cost about \$2 million.

He said Colombia has seized at least 32 semi-submersible vessels designed to smuggle drugs over the last decade, including a dozen last year.

Last July, another fully submersible "narcosub" was seized just across the border by authorities in neighboring Ecuador.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



Jaime Saldarriaga / Reuters

## Christian Lambertsen, Inventor of Scuba Precursor, Dies at 93

By DENNIS HEVESI

Published: February 25, 2011

When American commandos slipped into the sea off the coast of Burma in the last months of World War II and swam underwater to attach explosives to Japanese vessels, Capt. Christian J. Lambertsen often led them. After all, he had trained them to dive and had invented the breathing device that allowed them to stay below the waves.



Lambertsen Collection

Christian J. Lambertsen invented an underwater breathing system that was used by Navy commandos during World War II.

“He wasn’t someone to let someone else do it,” recalled Walter Mess, who had been commander of a near-silent 85-foot vessel that ferried the divers, usually in the dark, within 2,000 feet of shore. “Sometimes they were recon missions, sometimes to bring back downed airmen.”

Captain Lambertsen, an Army doctor, did not have to go on those missions. His assignment was to train members of the maritime unit of the Office of Strategic Services to use the device he had invented while in medical school. The Lambertsen Amphibious Respiratory Unit, or LARU, made those covert operations possible.

Dr. Lambertsen, an expert in respiratory medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, died on Feb. 11 at his home in Newtown Square, Pa., his son David said. He was 93.

The LARU is considered a precursor to modern scuba technology, and Dr. Lambertsen is widely believed to have coined the word scuba, an acronym for self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.

Although he started tinkering as a teenager, Dr. Lambertsen fully developed a closed-circuit, pure-oxygen rebreather in 1939 while a student at Penn’s School of Medicine. Using filters from anesthesia equipment, he built a back-mounted tank from which the diver inhales pure oxygen. Carbon dioxide in exhaled breath is then scrubbed out through a chemical filter and returned to the diver as purified oxygen.

“It means that it doesn’t emit bubbles, so if you are swimming under a ship there are no telltale bubbles,” said Tom Hawkins, a historian for the Naval Special Warfare Foundation in Virginia Beach. When Dr. Lambertsen demonstrated the LARU to the Navy in 1939, the Navy showed little interest because its deep-water salvage missions required helmeted divers to breathe through long hoses tethered to boats. But the O.S.S, a forerunner of the C.I.A., saw its stealth possibilities.

*(Continued on page 6)*

Once Dr. Lambertsen graduated from medical school in 1943, he joined the Army and was assigned to the O.S.S. as lead trainer for its underwater operations.

After the war, Dr. Lambertsen joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, where he converted an abandoned altitude chamber into a laboratory that was soon drawing experts and students interested in undersea and aerospace environmental physiology.

By 1948 the Navy had adopted Dr. Lambertsen's improved version of the LARU and hired him to train its divers.

"The naval special warfare community and the special operations community recognizes him today as the father of U.S. combat diving and swimming," Mr. Hawkins said.

Dr. Lambertsen taught at Penn for more than 40 years. In 1968, under his direction, the university established the Institute for Environmental Medicine, which has conducted multidisciplinary studies of oxygen toxicity, diving-related diseases and aerospace medicine.

Christian James Lambertsen was born in Westfield, N.J., on May 17, 1917, one of four children of Chris and Ellen Lambertsen.

Dr. Lambertsen's wife, the former Naomi Hill, died in 1985. Besides his son David, he is survived by three other sons, Christian Jr., Richard and Bradley, and six grandchildren.

After graduating from Rutgers in 1938, Dr. Lambertsen began his medical studies at Penn and was soon delving deeper into a childhood fascination.

"He spent a lot of time on Barnegat Bay with his grandfather collecting clams and started wondering how to go deeper underwater," his son David said. "He had his cousin in a rowboat using a bicycle pump and a hose to pump air 15 feet down to him."

**Christian J. Lambertsen**, 93, a scientist and doctor who invented an underwater breathing system used by the military in World War II and later coined the "scuba" acronym by which such systems are widely known, died of renal failure on Feb. 11 in Newtown Square, Pa. Among his many honors were the highest civilian awards from the Department of Defense and the Coast Guard.

Look what the humans dragged in....to the water



**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Rockland Aquanauts Organization  
2011 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. Don't forget we  
have all the BBQ lunch's after every Lake Dive.

So please send in your \$42 dues to;

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**February-March 2011**

On The Road With Max, Exploding scuba tank, Drug-smuggling sub, Inventor of SCUBA Dies, '11 Dues Due

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**We are currently looking for a place to have our 2011  
Annual Dinner...**

**Any suggestions?**



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