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In this issue:

True Sea Story
Cap'n King

Plan of the Day

Spotlight
Charlotte Vick

Classifieds

Meridian Passages

Central Pacific Edition
M/V Mermaid Vigilance
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Marshall Islands: The Big Trade

Excerpts from "My Return to Majuro"

It was the spring of 1989. I commanded the Navy salvage ship USS Brunswick at the time based out of Sasebo, Japan. Our assignment: SurvOps: TTPI. SurvOps was the Navy acronym for surveillance operations. TTPI was a political entity called the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. TTPI was a United Nations construct that established a protectorate of the far flung central and western Pacific Islands under the administration of the United States in 1947. American stewardship of this trust was accomplished through political channels and with a physical presence, often taking the form of a transiting U.S. naval vessel. We were going there to ensure that the islands were secure and not being re-militarized by any foreign government or that foreign fishing vessels had not taken up a permanent presence or infringed on the fishing resources.

Next stop... Majuro. This was the capital of the Republic. We were arriving from the nearby island of Jaluit where we had cleared a wreck from a pier, opening the way for commercial traffic. We were now in Majuro to get cleaned up, re-stow gear and get ready to return to Japan. I was

greeted in Majuro by the Minister of Transportation. He was delighted with our quick work on that vessel in Jaluit, and thanked us for our efforts. I assured him that it was a pleasure on behalf of the Navy to be of service. At that point, he pulls out a folded piece of paper...it was a list. On it were 8 more

projects, in or around Majuro much like the job in Jaluit. The Minister asked if we would consider doing any one of these, he would be extremely happy. I took the list. They were all vessel strandings or sinkings inside the commercial basin, all visible from our ship except one. The

last job was on a neighboring island. I said that I will take the list and get as far as I could in the three days we had to re-stow our gear and get ready to return to Japan. We already knew how to clear a wreck from a pier in 10 minutes. We

accomplished all 7 removals in two days. About that last job. This one was a personal favor from the President. He asked that we send a boat to the neighboring island of Arno. These two islands are close but like two horseshoes with the open ends opposite each other. A boat channel existed in

Majuro near Arno, but only a small and dangerous natural pass existed in Arno. Could we possibly lengthen and widen it to eight feet? It just so happens that we have a tool for that. So sure, tell the President we'd be



Plan of the Day March 28, 2017

0600 Est. REMUS Launch
1400 Daily Progress Meeting: Ops Ctr.

continued...

Charlotte Vick

Logistics & PR

In 1977, Charlotte Vick left the U.S. mainland with experience in business and government and an interest in the UN Convention on Law of the Sea. From that flight departing from Washington DC, she began a new odyssey into ocean communities, ocean research, coastal and marine resources governance and technology. She likes teams, loves to build them and has a talent as a connector. She was already working with David Jourdan in 2004 on applied ocean technologies when presented with the opportunity to work with David's company Nauticos LLC. She helped assemble a team to engage the public in the search for the lost airplane of Amelia Earhart. In 2006 she joined the expedition as the shore to ship logistics and PR liaison. This time around she's already solved logistics issues from dinner parties, tracking down hotel



bookings, flights and cargo and our transponder resupply.

Charlotte has a BA in American Studies/Ethnic Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She later studied oceanography and fisheries resource management at the University of Hawaii.

In 2008, Charlotte joined Dr. Sylvia Earle for a new ocean project with Google to map and create educational content showcasing the ocean systems and the life that lives there. Her current efforts include the Sylvia Earle Alliance and Mission Blue, the High Seas Alliance and the Global Island Partnership. She serves as a board member and/or advisor to EarthDayTX, SXSWeco, the BLUE Ocean Film Festival, the Dominican Republic Environmental Film Festival, the American Resilience Project and the Tetiaroa Society of French Polynesia. She has a long history with boards in health care, education, theater, public radio and the arts.

Charlotte is well-versed in the mission and the history of the era in

which our quest began. As she puts it, "Amelia Earhart deserves to be held in our highest esteem as one of our finest and best explorers. She is remembered fondly as an explorer who extended the boundaries of our nation and the world while extending the boundary of opportunity for all women. Her mystery must be solved and the truth of her mission proven for all time. That will always command my time and attention."

— edited by Marika Lorraine



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pleased to open up the channel to Arno. It would only take a half a day. After the required safety briefings and some careful calculations a small team of divers departed in the ship's boat. Maybe it was a lack of supervision or perhaps just too much safety margin, but the anticipated 8 foot boat channel turned out to be a twenty five foot super highway. When the news of our exploits reached the President, he was elated! He personally thanked me and my crew for all the work we had done in the Marshall Islands. He was most pleased with the new safer trading route between the islands. Before our departure, he asked if there was anything he could ever do for me. Well I had a list for him. I have always admired those giant clam shells which grow at great depths in these waters. A golf cart arrived at the ship 30

minutes later with the finest 150 pounds of clam shell I've ever seen.

I carried that shell with me for many years. It was when I last told this story to a listener, he expressed his own envy and desire to have a huge shell like that. Whenever someone admires the personal property of another, in the island culture it is good and it is right to give that property to them. I think the President would approve. And to this day I believe that shell resides in Salon, Iowa. Small world.

— Spence King



MERMAID CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS 100

WHAT TIME IS IT? Help needed figuring out what ship time to call in to conference in San Diego from the other side of the Dateline on April Fool's Day. Doc Pam, Sick Bay.

WANTED 200

STORIES for *Meridian Passages*. Dave 4031.

FOR SALE 400

CROSSING THE DATELINE pinup calendar, special edition with one day missing. Featuring all your favorite explorers. Will look great on your bulkhead or taped under the upper berth. Spence 3051.

BRACKETS. NCAA pool brackets, like new, hardly used. Will trade for Skyflakes. Joe, 306 lower berth.

LOST & FOUND 500

Place New Ads by Friday – ed.