

## **Diving With Legends**

**Story by: Bonnie McKenna**

*Bringing to life many who explore the fine edge of the underwater world*

This is not a book about actually diving with legends, but about divers that have made an impact on diving and have become legends. All of the divers featured in this book have contributed to the dive industry by increasing our knowledge of the underworld and/or by pushing the envelope while performing fetes of skill on the very edge of life itself.

The author, Dr. Pete Millar, is a red-headed Irishman with a crazy-fun sense of humor. He is a man of juxtaposed interests. Millar has a string of university degrees including a doctorate that puts him in the engineering and ‘hard-hat’ offshore/oil world that he finds irresistibly exciting, but on the other side of his life, there is the calm clean world of being a Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine. He has a home in Chicago, but lives on the other side of the world in Baku, Azerbaijan, working as the country manager for Oceaneering.

Millar says he likes to write, he claims he is not a writer, but he is a published author of several books.

“I wrote ‘The Eve of Armageddon’, a spectacularly unsuccessful Science Fiction novel. I did a book for my children called ‘Goldensocks and the Three Hares’, which, years later, my daughter illustrated and when my father died, I did a book, just for my family, on his life with images and stories about life growing up in Northern Ireland and our travels in the Middle East and China,” Millar said.

Millar says he couldn’t even be described as a “Legend in his own Lunchtime.” He says he is famous for very little other than writing books, one of which is ‘DOXA SUB – Forty Years 1967-2007’, a history of the DOXA dive watch.

Any fan of Dirk Pitt will immediately recognize the name DOXA as the orange-faced dive watch that is mentioned in all of Clive Cussler’s books starring our favorite hero.

“When I finished the DOXA book, I was pretty much at a loss. I looked at the information I still had and thought about a later update, especially on the chapter of SUBs currently in use. I also thought about the information I had from Stan Waterman about the days when he wore the vintage DOXA, and I wanted to expand on his adventures underwater. I guess I had one of those eureka moments when I thought, what if I asked Stan to tell me about his best dive or greatest adventure, or what he wanted to be remembered for. I knew I could write about him, but how cool would it be if he told me his story in his own words. That was pretty much the driver for the book,” Millar said.

Millar wanted his book to tell stories about courage and innovation in all aspects of diving and underwater life not just SCUBA diving.

“I wanted people who were famous in their own realm. Stan Waterman and Howard Hall were obvious choices for film and documentary work; John Chatterton and Richie Kohler, not only for U689, but also their television series Deep Sea Detectives. Dan Crowell’s shows on the Military Channel were awesome and he had a tie-in with Chatterton and Kohler. Leigh Bishop, first to explore a shipwreck deeper than 100 meters using mixed gas. Carl Spencer, who led expeditions to HMHS Britannic that is considered the benchmark expedition dive in the industry. Jarrod Jablonski, one of the world’s most capable and talented exploration divers. He holds the record for the world’s longest and

deepest cave diving penetrations. Burt Webber's search for the Spanish galleon Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion that sank in 1641 made a great treasure seeking tale. Some stories sort of landed in my lap. Henry Joyce sent me his father's diaries about the USS Sealion; the only allied submarine to sink a battleship in World War II. From big submarines to submersibles brought me to Graham Hawkes, an ocean engineer/inventor responsible for the design of manned underwater vehicles. He holds the world's record for the deepest solo dive of 304 meters, piloting his Deep Rover submersible. David Trotter, who has been exploring and discovering shipwrecks in the Great Lakes for 25 years. His discoveries have been featured in various television programs, newspapers and leading dive magazines. Obviously, when it comes to underwater records, Jacques Piccard and his seven mile descent into the Marianas Trench is about as big as it gets. Sadly, Jacques passed away before the book was finished. Tony Groom, who wrote the book 'Diver', was a bomb disposal diver in the Royal Navy; he put me in touch with Mike O'Leary. Few people have experienced what Tony and Mike have as bomb disposal and commercial saturation divers in the North Sea. I had to have underwater archeology in the book; Drs. George Bass and James Delgado were my top choice. Dr. Bass is considered the father of underwater archeology and founder of the Institute for Nautical Archeology. Dr. Delgado is the author of more than 30 books including the 'British Museum Encyclopedia of Underwater and Marine Archeology' and his most recent book, 'Adventures of a Sea Hunter'. Ralph Wilbanks is another well known underwater archeologist. His most famous find is the CSS H.L. Hunley, the first combat submarine to sink a ship. Wilbanks worked with Clive Cussler's National Underwater and Marine Agency (NUMA) searching tirelessly for the submarine until she was located in 1995 four miles outside Charleston, S.C. Dr. Joe MacInnis, a physician-scientist was the medical director of the American Man-In-Sea program and worked on the U.S. Navy's Sea Lab project. Karl Shreeves is the technical development executive for PADI and DSAT. He is also a contractor supporting NASA's NEEMO program in which astronauts live underwater for up to two weeks to study human factors and dynamics in space exploration. Paul Oberle was suggested by a dive buddy; when I heard he founded Scuba Rangers I knew I had to have him tell the story. Paul describes the mission of Scuba Rangers as simply as this: to involve children in scuba diving and pass along the excitement of water exploration.

"The book was turning into the chronicles of a bunch of male divers. I needed to get some women. Martha Watkins Gilkes and Zale Parry were my choices. Martha has been recognized by the Women Diver hall of Fame and the Who's Who of Women in the Environment by the United Nations. She has worked tirelessly throughout the Caribbean promoting conservation of the marine environment. Zale Parry started diving in the 1940s. She is best known for her role alongside Lloyd Bridges in the popular series Sea Hunt," Millar concluded.

While designing a Web site for DOXA ([www.doxa300t.com](http://www.doxa300t.com)) and during the production of the DOXA history book; Rick Marei and Romeo Jenny became interested in wanting to put something back into the diving world, which realistically had been the original reason for the DOXA watches.

"That idea was to tie in a Diving With Legends DOXA watch with the book, as an honor to each of the contributors. I was the perfect solution," Millar said with a smile.

In February this year, at the Our World-Underwater dive show, Millar gathered together almost all the divers he had honored in his book. With the assistance of DOXA

representatives each diver in attendance with honored with a copy of the book, autographed by each diver, and a beautiful special edition Diving With Legends orange-faced DOXA dive watch.

Despite Millar's love of the dive world, he only received his SCUBA certification in the late 1980s. He was running ultrasonic inspections on pipelines in the Middle East when he decided that he should get certified. Eventually, he got both NAUI and PADI certifications. His diving was mainly in the Great Lakes and some dark and muddy quarries until he discovered the Cayman Islands.

Today, due to serious eye problems that he would 'not wish on anyone' he doubts that he will ever dive again. The Cayman Islands is still his favorite place to go.

"A bunch of people from the DOXA watch forum meet up there every year and that is what diving is about for me," he said with a laugh.

Millar said he never expected to make any money from the book, and he is O.K. with it. He said he could have asked many other people to contribute to the book, but he knew it was going to be more than 300 pages; becoming too big and too expensive.

"As it happened, I could not find a publisher and had to publish it myself. It is so expensive I doubt many people will buy it, so the wonderful stories in it will by and large go unread. I'm always considering Diving With Legends volume two because there are many more incredible divers out there with fantastic stories to tell," Millar said. "For me the whole ethos of the project was to tell a story about each of these really cool people that would honor them and be something that people would read and feel a sense of awe or adventure or excitement and live vicariously through them."