Lagunana Recalls Harrowing Adventure

By DON CANTRELL
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LAGUNA BEACH—Roger S. Hopping, whose World War II adventures read like something out of "Terry and The Pirates," may never be able to repay the natives of the South Pacific, but he's meeting the debt in his own way.

Hopping, chairman of the health-oriented Kalois Kapalos Foundation, recently returned from Tahiti where his organization slaged a mammoth symposium to aid the French Polynesian Islands with environmental research. It isn't the first time, Hopping and his organization have contributed scientific manpower and funding toward solving ecology problems in the Pacific, nor will it be the last time.

But his love of the continuing challenge is only surpassed by a love of the natives, who once saved his life during one of the most harrowing, nightmarish periods of his military career.

In recalling the grim, 3-day episode, Hopping, who was an Army Air Corps observation pilot with the Far East Command in the Philippines, said his woes started when he was ordered to join in a search mission for a missing C-47 in the South China Sea.

"You were lucky if you had a good maintenance crew in those days," he said, reflecting on the faulty equipment, including a compass on the blink, and the frequent "lack of a qualified observer" for his single-engine "grasshopper" craft.

In the rush that particular day, Hopping allowed an eager kid who was attached to an Army oil supply outfit, to serve as his "digital observer."

As the black hours passed with neither realizing they were hundreds of miles off course to the south, the engine began Specialists got fat out to sea and Hopping prepared to ditch the craft.

Meanwhile, he had ordered his companion to inflate the one-man raft and dispatch it out the side door once it was smashed against a halt across the water.

"Fool was already aboard by the time I pulled myself onto the raft, but in doing so the sharp porc in my breast pocket punctured the tube," he said, and this meant we had to blow the raft up every hour to stay afloat."

Lacking food and water was the least of their worries because the giant swells started losing the raft about like an abandoned toy.

While Davy Jones' locker was up against Hopping's mind at that point, the prospect of death took on another dimension when the raft was struck again by something and they were knocked into the water.

And while looking up over mountains of swell, Hopping suddenly spotted a giant shark circling around and the two hurriedly scrambled back aboard the partially-submerged raft. "We were struck again that night, but it was hard to determine if it was a shark," he said.

However, the shark threat was only one greater disaster that awaited the two men who landed on a coral reef "and our feet looked like hamburger by the time we got there," Hopping said.

Although they might have been compensated by reaching the radio station, the pair's spirits were shattered upon finding it had been abandoned hours before their arrival.

"We were just in tears," Hopping remembered painfully.

"It wasn't long before Hopping was shocked to feel a hand on his shoulder."

"It was another native, only one in uniform and apparent doctor. He understood the problem and soon had us launched off on another craft towards Lavinia and home base."

And his indebtedness to the natives has never been forgotten.

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BRUCE HOPPING CHECKS RESEARCH MAPS IN TAHITIAN SYMPOSIUM
His Organization Recently Aided In Extensive Environmental Research

The Goldfish Club

This is to certify that

BRUCE STEWART HOPPING
has qualified for membership by escaping death, through the use of his emergency dinghy or life jacket.
He's for Kalos Kagathos

Ex-Navy Antagonist Shapes Up

Bruce S. Hopping and the Navy have kissed and made up.

If you're an old-timer here, you'll remember the Hopping story.

In 1952 he was a yeoman striker here who received a bad conduct discharge following a court martial that rocked the Navy and the Pentagon and received front-page play in the Star-Bulletin for many weeks.

The root of the case was what Hopping, a member of a wealthy East Coast family, called a failure of communications between the lower levels of the Navy and the upper echelons.

HOPPING, now 54 and a resident of Laguna Beach, Calif., is in Hawaii again. He's head of the Kalos Kagathos Foundation, which is participating in a two-week forum on swimming and water polo in conjunction with the Naval Air Station Barbers Point 1971 Forum.

In an interview, he said he has "been getting excellent cooperation" in the program, from Navy officials.

The current activities, which will run two weeks, involved 160 athletes from all over the country. All staying at Barbers Point.

Hopping's foundation began when his family's lumber empire was sold in New Jersey and the assets were plowed into Kalos Kagathos.

The ex-sailor is positively evangelistic about his organization.

"The foundation was conceived and endowed primarily for the motivation and encouragement of aquathletics," he said, explaining that Kalos Kagathos has copyrighted the word to describe its activities.

Hopping said he believes "aquathletics" can generate self-esteem.

"If you generate esteem for yourself," he said, "you will have esteem for other persons."

"THE GREEKS believed that if you had love for yourself and a society that cherished that love, you won't have problems of delinquency."

"It's all so simple. The Chinese, for instance, in their fervor for youth sports, have the lowest delinquency rates in the world."

Hopping said he still has feelings about deficiencies in the Navy, but added brightly that the Navy has been a pioneer in "aquathletics."

But he noted that sometimes obligations force other naval activities to come before "aquathletics."

"The Navy has a great potential for providing a positive identification for young people to achieve their potential," said Hopping.

"The Navy strongly identifies with "aquathletics," and by giving young people the advantage of the philosophy of "aquathletics," it can provide them with a positive identification."