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DEEP DIVER DIES

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS CLUB . . .

*John Luton, our correspondent,
is working on an oil rig in Bass Strait*

As you have no doubt heard by now, a diver was killed in Bass Strait recently. He was Ted Mathison, Diving Superintendent on the coring vessel, "Nyhauns Rose", on which I am also diving.

Yourself, and others in the club interested in deep diving may be interested in some brief details of what happened.

Firstly, though, I would like to make it very clear that this diver was an experienced diver in not only "heavy gear" but in all other types of U/W gear. He had also been deeper on air than his last dive and had done this particular job many times before.

A piece of equipment called the "riser" broke off during heavy seas and Ted Mathison made a dive to the bottom in "heavy gear" breathing air, to shackle a wire onto the riser. It was in 245 feet of water.

For some unknown reason, on this dive he had a severe case of nitrogen narcosis, where as on other dives to this depth and deeper on air there had been only a very slight amount of narcosis.

After he had finished the job, which was only a short length of time, he made his way back to the stage on the bottom.

Just after entering the stage he blacked out through nitrogen narcosis.

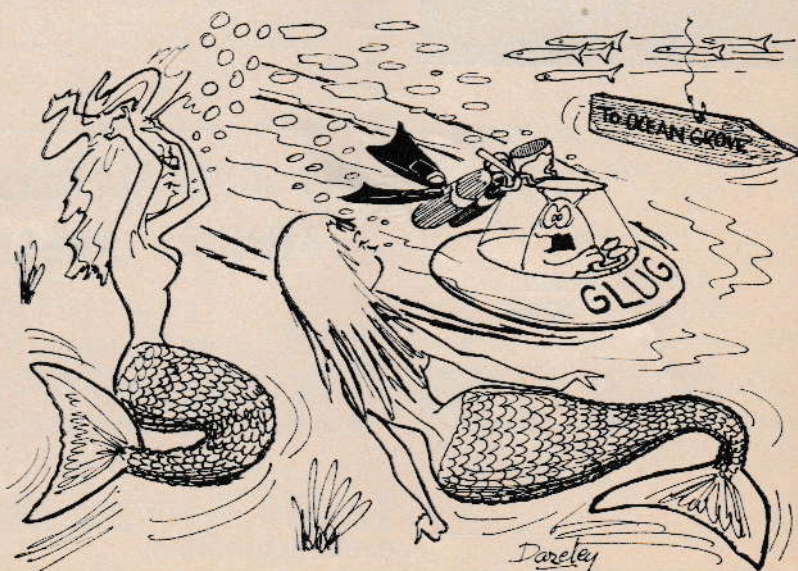
But, because of a mistake made by him while down there his hose was fastened to the bottom. I won't go into the full details but the hose broke 30 feet from the diver. The standby diver went after him immediately but blacked out from anoxia 40 feet from the bottom.

In all that happened there was only one thing to blame, nitrogen narcosis, no person was to blame, the equipment was in A1 condition, the air was good and the air hose itself took a strain of over 2000lb. before the extra strain put on it by the ship lifting on a swell broke the hose.

I think that other members who want to do deep dives (over 200 feet) should be aware of the real dangers that exist in dives of over 200 feet, or for that matter, shallower dives. Maybe the A.U.F. and the club could discuss this subject a lot more technically than it has been. Little authentic material has been written and I'm sure the A.S.M. would welcome the broadest opening of this subject.*

P.S. All dives over 200 feet done by drilling companies and rigs, etc., are now done on helium/oxygen.

* Sure would . . . Editor.



BOY, DO THESE GUYS KNOW HOW TO RUN A CONVENTION !