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Searching for the  
**Mother Lode**  
of the  
**Concepcion**

The *Monitor*  
vs. the  
*Andrea Doria*

ISSUE 25 \$7.95



Issue 25  
A Quarterly Publication



# “Lookout Air Raid”

## The Day Japan Bombed Oregon

Text and Photographs by Barbara Buchanan  
Unless Otherwise Noted

**Kwajalein** is a historical underwater museum, a treasure trove very few will ever see. In the lagoon at Kwajalein Atoll, the only two Glen aircraft remains that are known to exist in the world are in the cargo holds of the Japanese shipwreck, *Akibasan Maru*. The Glen aircraft holds an important part in history for both Japan and the United States.

The first aerial bombing on the US mainland took place on September 9, 1942, near Mount Emily in the southern part of Oregon, just outside of Brookings. The second attack was 20 days later on September 29, 1942, northeast of Cape Blanco Lighthouse near Grassy Knob forest in Port Orford, Oregon, about 40 miles north of Brookings. Today they remain the only aerial bombings on the US mainland, and later became known as the “*Lookout Air Raid*.” There are two theories as to Japan’s motives: the first is that they had a vengeance to retaliate because of the American B-25 bombings, known as the James “Jimmy” Doolittle Raid, 5 months before on April 18, 1942. After the Pearl Harbor attack the United States wanted to demonstrate to Japan that their homeland was just as vulnerable to air strikes. These bombings also were intended to bolster American morale and to cause Japanese people to have doubts about their military leaders. The second theory was that the Japanese hoped to start raging forest fires that would consume towns, and cause chaos and panic amongst the western coast civilian population, and draw US military resources away from the Pacific. Regardless, Japan



was on a quest to prove they were capable of dropping bombs on the United States from 5,000 miles away.

In order for Japan to accomplish a bombardment on the West Coast, it needed a submarine-based reconnaissance seaplane. The Japanese I-25 long-range, scouting submarine was specially modified to carry a reconnaissance plane, the E14Y1 (known to the allies as Glen). The 356-foot-long sub not only came equipped with a Glen aircraft, the sub was also armed with 17 torpedoes, a 5.5-inch deck gun, and twin-mounted, 25mm anti-aircraft guns and carried a crew of almost 100 men along with six 170-lb bombs. Pilot Chief Warrant Officer Nobuo Fujita was assigned to the I-25 a year before the US bombings. He was an experienced floatplane pilot, and had flown several reconnaissance flights over the harbors of Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart, Australia, the New Zealand ports of Wellington and Auckland, Suva, the capital of Fiji, and Kodiak Island, Alaska. Fujita came up with the idea to use the Glen plane to bomb strategic enemy targets. To his surprise his formal proposal was approved and he was given the orders from the Imperial Naval Headquarters to bomb Oregon's forest.

On August 15, 1942, the I-25 sailed from Yokosuka on a two-week journey eastward towards the West Coast of the United States. For the voyage to be successful, the sub would need to travel thousands of miles and

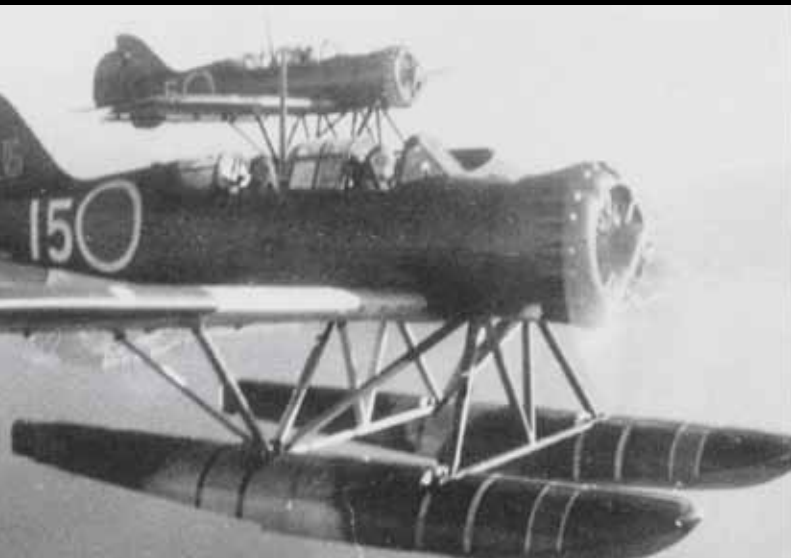


**Opposite Page:** Barbara Buchanan filming the Glen fuselage.  
Photograph taken by Dan Farnham

**Top to Bottom:** Aerial photograph of Kwajalein Island.

Archival photograph of *Akibasan Maru*.  
Courtesy of Dan Farnham

Japanese flag.



Archival photograph of two Glen planes. Courtesy of Dan Farnham



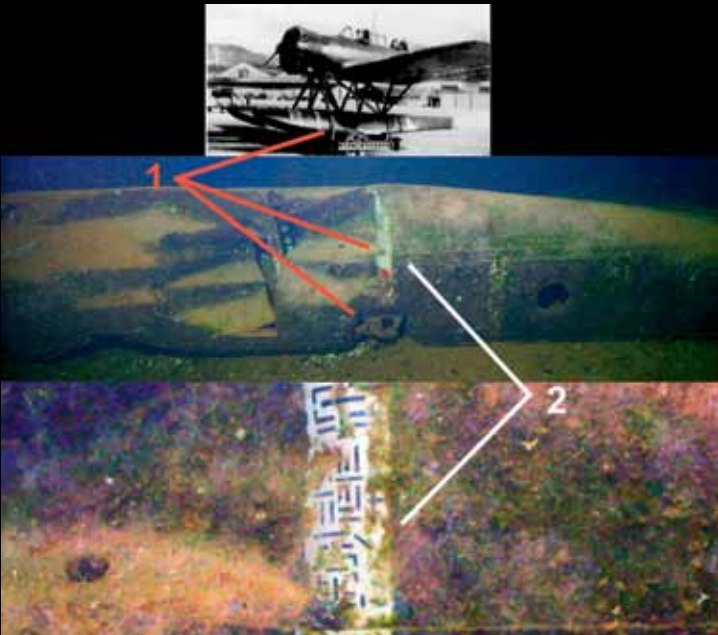
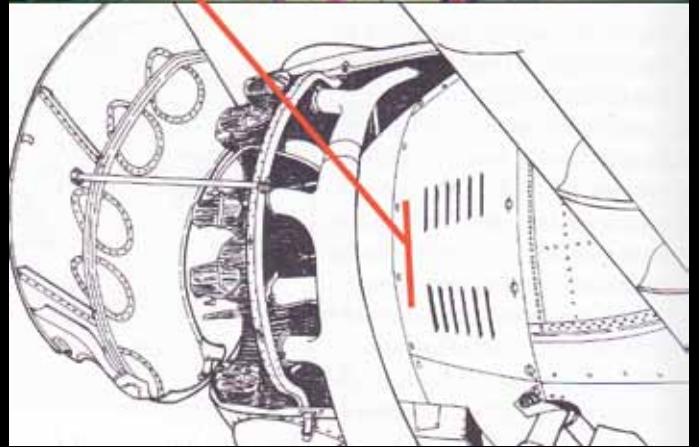
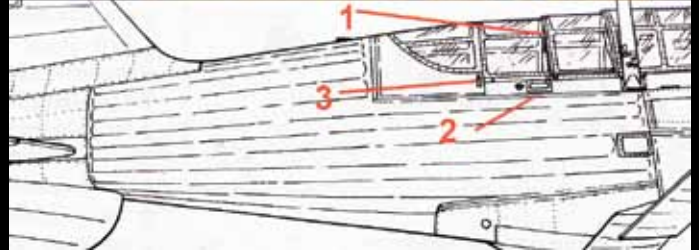
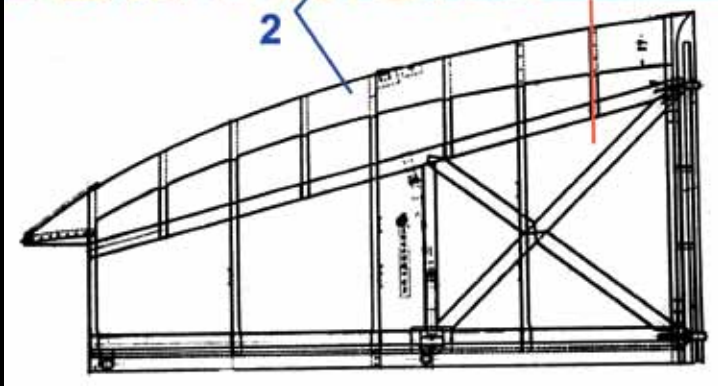
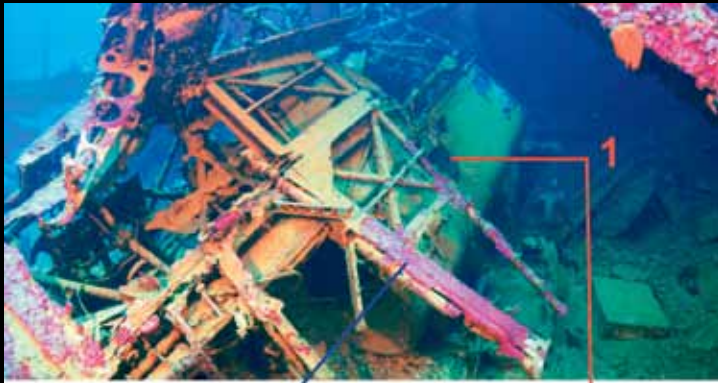
The Glen cowling showing the raised teardrop-shape bumps.

infiltrate the expansive Pacific Ocean undetected, and ascend close to the surface only to snorkel and recharge the batteries. After weeks of being submerged, the smell of diesel fumes mixed with foul, stale air filled all the compartments fore and aft. The air aboard the sub was not regenerated, scrubbed or cleaned as it is today; the snorkel only vented the diesel carbon monoxide and brought in fresh air for the crew and engines. It was during this time when the sub would be most vulnerable to detection. Having arrived 20 miles off the coast of Oregon, the I-25 ascended to periscope depth, bobbing up and down like a cork in the swells. The crewmen were eagerly waiting for Lt. Commander Mieji Tagami to issue the final orders to surface and open the hatches in hopes of fresh air. Tagami grasped the handles of the periscope and gazed through the lens, turning left and right, observing the surface conditions. The seas were rough and it was too risky to launch the Glen. These were harsh words for the crew to hear after a long voyage but they had no choice but to wait it out. It would take over a week before the seas would fall smooth. On the morning of September 9, 1942, Lt. Commander Tagami awakened Fujita at 4 am and invited him to look through the periscope - nothing but calm seas. Tagami prepared the submarine to surface while Fujita and his observer, Petty Officer Shoji Okuda, reviewed the plans for their flight mission. Fujita knew he could be facing death, flying into enemy territory, so he wrote his will, and in case his body might not be recovered, he saved the symbolic hair strands and fingernail clippings for proper burial.

The E14Y1 (AKA Glen) project "E" was the 14<sup>th</sup> type reconnaissance seaplane built by Yokosuka Naval Arsenal and the first major production version of the plane. When not in use, the plane was stored on deck in front of the conning tower with the wings and floats removed and tail folded, completely enclosed in a watertight hangar. The Glen's maximum speed was 153 mph, the two-bladed, wooden propeller driven by a Hitachi 9-cylinder,

air-cooled, 340-horsepower radial engine with a range of 548 miles. Because of the slow speed, it made for an easy target for fighters. The fuselage was short in length, only 28 feet long, which was ideal for a reconnaissance plane made mostly of metal with welded steel tubes, wood and some fabric. The wingspan was 36 feet, constructed of metal and wooden ribs wrapped in fabric, with light metal spars. Each wing could carry a 170-lb incendiary bomb attached to each side of the wings' undercarriage. The floats attached to the landing gear struts as if they were wheels. The rear cockpit was outfitted with a single 7.7mm machine gun. The Glen carried a crew of two: a pilot and observer. Petty Officer Okuda had double duty; not only was he the rear defense lookout but a bombardier as well. The Japanese nicknamed the E14Y1 after a Japanese shoe called "Geta" because the floats looked similar to the design of the shoe.

Unaware of the danger that lurked a few miles off shore and with no idea of what was about to happen, the West Coast slept. Aboard the sub the crew was extremely anxious in performing their assigned duties. Eagerly waiting for the first breath of fresh air, one by one in the control center announced their station was manned and ready for surfacing. For the first time in weeks, the bow of the sub breached from the depths of the ocean's abyss towards the heavens, up and over, splashing the body of the hull down on the surface. The sea washed over the top, slushing against the conning tower, and rolling over the sides of the hull. By then the smell of diesel oil had seeped into every piece of clothing, the bedding and into the saturated skin of unbathed bodies. The conning tower hatch swung open, and a wave of the fresh air flooded the control center, flowing down into the living chamber and other compartments, fore and aft. Almost in unison throughout the sub, the crew took a slow, deep breath, filling each lung, savoring the aroma of the fresh, crisp, sea air, as a draft passed by their nostrils, indulging in the comfort of feeling normal again.



**Top to Bottom Left:** The Glen tail wing section showing the internal framework with the "X" brace. Photograph by Barbara Buchanan, diagram courtesy of Dan Farnham

The Glen "floats" in hold two showing the white bands with kanji writing. Photograph and diagram courtesy of Dan Farnham

**Top to Bottom Right:** The canopy section of the Glen fuselage lying down. Photograph by Barbara Buchanan, diagram courtesy of Dan Farnham

The Glen cowling showing the vent opening comparison. Photograph by Barbara Buchanan, diagram courtesy of Dan Farnham

The port side walkway near the superstructure looking back towards the stern.



Within seconds the crew was on deck and sprang into action. A well-trained team could assemble the plane and have it airborne in six and half minutes. Each crew member assigned to the team knew their duties and performed them efficiently in a quick and timely manner. The Glen was first wrenched forward onto the catapult. While the top and bottom fins were being attached, the tail wing was unfolded, and the wings, landing gear struts and floats were anchored in place. Fujita and Okuda climbed in the front and rear cockpits while the two bombs were clipped and locked under each wing. The propeller attached, engine started, gauges checked, and the light was green. Head pressed against the seat with full throttle forward, engine RPMs cranked, prepared to launch. Go! Like a rocket, the Glen was catapulted into the air.

Heading towards the eastern sky, Fujita set out over the blue ocean on a cool, breezy September morning, greeted by the rising sun. To their amazement, crossing over Brookings, Oregon, there were no American fighters after them. It seemed as if the US coast were undefended from enemy invasion. Then approaching Mt. Emily in a dense forest area, Fujita signaled Okuda to deploy the first bomb. Flying over to the next ridge, they dropped the second bomb, which whistled through the air as it descended to the ground. What they didn't account for was the rainy weather a few days before and a very foggy morning. The forest was too wet for the bombs to ignite and cause significant damage. There were no big explosions, no raging, out-of-control forest fires, no alarms or sirens warning of incoming air attacks, only a small fire and a cloud of smoke. Arriving back to the sub, the Glen was hoisted on deck by a crane, disassembled and put back in the hangar. With the conning tower still visible within seconds of submerging, the I-25 was spotted by an Army bomber patrolling the southwest area of Gold Beach. It immediately took action, and dropped two 300-lb depth bombs, made another approach, dropping a third bomb while three more planes were being dispatched to the area. They made continuous patrol patterns over a 50-square-mile area until sunset; there was no further evidence of the submarine. It was the next day before US officials pieced together the investigated reports of the sub sighting, the unknown seaplane, and bomb fragments that were found at the extinguished fire site when they realized Japan had dropped bombs on the mainland of the United States.

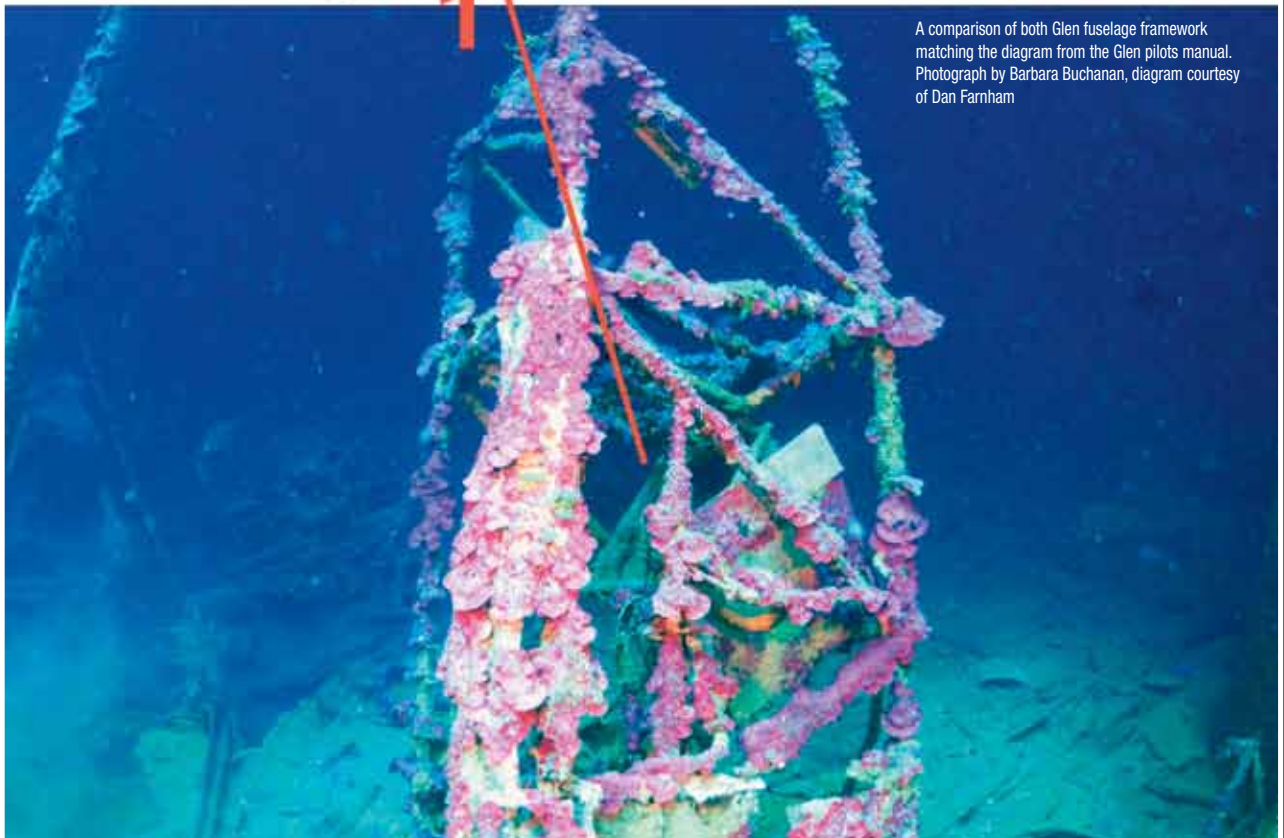
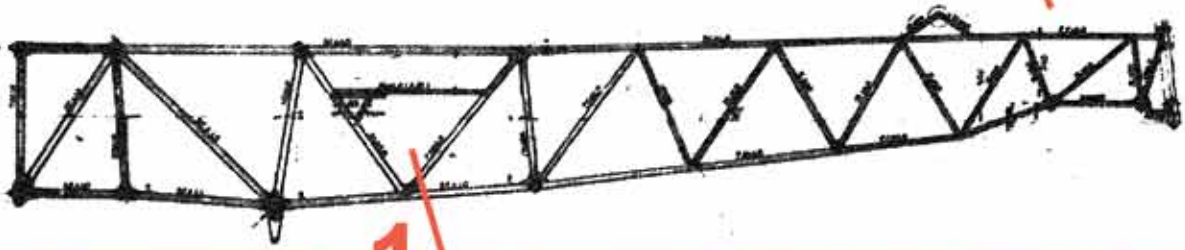
Every place has a past and a future and the battle of Kwajalein Atoll played a significant role in WWII history. The strategic importance of capturing the Marshall Islands from Japan was a key step to advancing towards Japan's mainland. Both topside and below the surface lie the war remains of buildings, bunkers, planes and shipwrecks, a reminder of the bloody battle that took place and the many lives lost. It is also home to the famous wreck, *Prinz Eugen*, a German cruiser sunk in the lagoon.

Kwajalein Atoll is the largest enclosed coral lagoon in the world, surrounded by 97 islands and islets, with

Kwajalein Island being the largest island of the Atoll. This is a diver's dream world - wrecks and reefs. What diver wouldn't want to visit here? That is easier said than done. You can't just buy a ticket, pack your bags and show up. Your feet wouldn't touch the ground long enough before you were put back on the plane and sent home with no refund. Kwajalein is where the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site is located and is under top security. Unless you're Army personnel stationed on the island, a contractor working, or family member, you need to have military orders and approved legal documents from the USAKA/RTS (United States Army Kwajalein Atoll/Reagan Test Site) to get off the plane. After months of corresponding back and forth with the Army, answering many questions regarding their concerns about what is authorized to publish or photograph, filling out forms, and government security background checks, it became official on May 6, 2010. The USAKA/RTS had granted me permission to enter Kwajalein.

It is June 2. As our flight is approaching, I'm peering out the window trying to get a peek of the island from above when your typical announcement comes over the PA. "Put your trays up and locked, your seat in the upright position." I was not expecting the following: "All window shades are to be closed and do not open until instructed. Taking photographs is prohibited. Everyone is to remain seated. No one is allowed off the plane unless this is your final destination." I could not tell you how many times I checked my backpack to make sure I had the documents needed to get off this plane, especially with all the island-hopping stops to get here. Hearing the wheels hit the tarmac reminds me of the sailors waiting for the sub hatch door to open for a breath of fresh air. Coming to a stop, I am full of anticipation for what's on the other side of the door. I collect my things and head towards the front of the plane as a warm breeze circulates through the cabin from outside. It is a beautiful sunny day as I step off the plane onto virgin territory, a place where tourism is non-existent and, actually, strictly off limits to visitors. The honor and privilege to be here is indescribable. I walk towards the air terminal building to check in for final paperwork and ID badge processing. Here I am greeted by wonderful folks: Bob Swanson, Judy Hoagland, Dan Farnham, Bob Greene, Hal Parker, Major Chris Mills and Captain Kevin Coyne who will be our hosts, tour guides and dive companions for the next week.

Over dinner and drinks we discuss the plans for the next several days and which wrecks we wanted to focus on. The *Prinz Eugen* was first on my list until I listened to Dan Farnham's story. Dan lives on the island and works for the Missile Range Dept. His passion for aviation history has led him to the discovery and identification of the aircraft remains in the cargo holds of the Japanese wreck *Akibasan Maru*. It took Dan over a year, from March 2008 through May 2009, researching and photographing the different sections of the plane, dissecting piece by piece, looking for distinguishing design patterns on the wings, fuselage and tail wing. The wings had three



A comparison of both Glen fuselage framework matching the diagram from the Glen pilots manual. Photograph by Barbara Buchanan, diagram courtesy of Dan Farnham

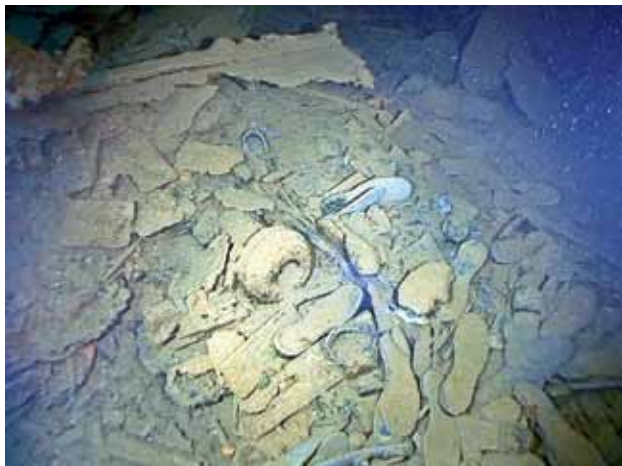
**Top to Bottom:** The observer seat of the Glen fuselage.

A pile of shoe soles and other debris.

Stacks of cylinders to the right of the fuselage.

A pair of Glen wings in hold five lying down on port side.

**Insert:** A pair of Glen wings in hold one leaning upright on starboard side.



distinctive features. One was the “X” shape, internal wire brace at the front section of the wing. The flaps and ailerons were separate parts stepped just under the wing unlike other planes that only had one main part. The overall wing design was also a determining factor. Another essential part was that the fuselage photographs he took matched the framework diagrams in the pilot’s manual. Also there were raised, teardrop-shape bumps in pairs around the cowling which made room for the cylinder heads on the engine. Even though other planes had this feature, they had nowhere near as many bumps in pairs. The canopy design, engine vent openings and floats all had instrumental characteristics as well. The key evidence found in the tail wing internal framework is an “X” brace not found on any other Japanese schematic of similar aircraft size and category. Comparing his photos to the archival photographs, pilot manual and diagrams, with help from Bill McCash, author of “Bombs Over Brookings,” the Smithsonian, and aviation experts at Japanese Aircraft, Ships, and Historical Research (J-aircraft.com), he was able to determine the identity of the plane. He found significant markings and structure designs that were key features unique to the Glen only. What Dan had found were the only two Glen planes known to exist in the world and their valuable historical importance. Listening to Dan, I am intrigued. Realizing the treasure trove he found, I’m ready to go diving.

Kwajalein Island is three and a half miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide. Besides walking, riding bikes is the main means of transportation. Sensing this is not a typical dive destination, I was wondering how to get the dive and camera gear to the dock. Simple. You attach a wagon to the bike and off you go. In minutes you’re at the marina, loading gear and tanks. The tanks and air compressor are maintained by the Kwajalein Scuba Club and located in a storage building by the marina which supplies air-only, single aluminum 80s. All divers must follow the USAKA/RTS Regulation number 385-9 chapter 8 for scuba diving which states the maximum depth allowed is the recreational



diving limit of 130 feet. No penetration or decompression diving is authorized and divers are prohibited from using rebreathers or mixed gases.

Plowing through the calm, clear, blue water, my hair blowing in the wind, all I can think about is the underwater museum that awaits me as we cruise out to the *Akibasan Maru*, known as P-Buoy wreck to the locals. Sunk January 30, 1944, the *Akibasan* is roughly 375 feet long with two masts, a main superstructure and 5 cargo holds, two forward and three aft. Arriving at the site, we moor to a submerged buoy attached to the stern mast and a second line to the wreck itself. Having the boat secured with two anchors allows the boat to be unmanned so everyone can dive together. Usually there are only four to six divers sharing a boat rental and fuel.

The *Akibasan* sits beautifully upright at 160 feet as if she were underway, cresting waves instead of on the bottom, cleaving the ocean floor. As I'm approaching the stern mast, the visibility is around 80 feet, and the grey silhouette shadow below becomes clearer, defining the shape and lines and curves of the ship. Several beams of sunlight shine through the water mass, glistening on the deck and superstructure below. Reaching the deck at 100 feet, swimming towards the bow, passing by the superstructure and stack, you can see the two forward holds, with the handling booms clasped over each opening. There are several winches on deck and, standing tall like a statue, is the bow mast reaching up to the heavens. As we enter cargo hold two, rays of sunlight illuminate the opening to the bottom, giving light to the dispersed cargo scattered about.

Approaching the first level is where the floats are located, displaying signs of battle scars and saltwater deterioration amongst layers of sediment. Observing closer, you can see the faint white bands with kanji writing around the float. The markings are important for they tell the ground crew where to line up the strut to the float for proper balance. The next level below there are two fuselages - one is leaning upward with the nose end downward to the hull. The framework is intact but appears fragile; the pilot and observer seats are clearly visible. Another fuselage is lying over to the side, flat on the bottom with the canopy still attached and the key evidence of the X brace on the tail wing in view. The observer canopy section is slid forward, giving an opportunity to view the skeletal remains of the cockpit framework. Around the rest of the hold is a debris field, with a large pile of shoe soles, several wheel chairs and stacks of cylinders scattered amongst the fine, powdery silt.

On the first level of hold one, sitting in a vertical position near the edge of the opening is a pair of Glen wings, leaning towards starboard. There is plenty of room to swim around to observe the structure. The fabric and wooden ribs have since been eaten away, but the metal framework is in fairly good condition, considering the salty bath it's been marinating in. The X shape internal wire brace pattern clearly stands out and if you look closer, you can see the flaps and ailerons are separate parts.

Heading back over the superstructure towards the stern, I decide to take the picturesque route up the stairs, and down the main deck area and stroll along the port side walkway

towards cargo hold five. Along the way, peeking in a small opening, I see a bathtub barely visible towards the end of the superstructure. The tub is full of muck and has a crack and chip on its side from a UXO (unexploded ordnance), a dud bomb that hit it on impact; the bomb was removed by the EOD several years ago. Moving on to hold five, on the first level lying down with the float strut arm facing up, are the other set of Glen wings, identical to the wings in hold one. After a quick tour around, it's time to go, following the stern mast as I ascend, admiring the colorful, encrusted coral and marine life swirling around the post. It makes a great place to end the dive.

Diving in Kwajalein is visiting a historical underwater museum, a treasure trove very few will ever get to see. With a seabed of wrecks yet to be explored, time is running out. Next on the list is the *Prinz Eugen*, sunk off Ennubuj Island after being towed to Kwajalein where it developed a leak and capsized. Her demise came after surviving two atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in 1946, so she is also known as the "Lucky Ship." With the clock ticking, this dive will have to wait until my return trip.



**Above:** Group shot from back left, Bob Swanson, Charles George, Dan Farnham, Barbara Buchanan, Hal Parker and Bob Greene kneeling front.

**Center:** Charles George and Barbara Buchanan on their bikes after a day of diving. Riding bikes is the main means of transportation, and to get dive gear to the marina you use a wagon attached to the bike, and off you go.

**Below:** Left to right: Charles George, Barbara Buchanan and Dan Farnham.

#### About the Author:

Barbara Buchanan is a photographer and videographer who travels the globe. She has worked on expeditions with archeologists on Blackbeard's shipwreck Queen Anne's Revenge documenting the excavation for the Dive Down project. Her most recent project is filming the wrecks of Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. She is owner of Scuba Planners Dive Travel and has arranged many expeditions including the Japan trip with Wreck Diving Magazine where she filmed the expedition. You can view her photos and video work at [www.fishtalesproductions.com](http://www.fishtalesproductions.com).

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ADDRESS: 383 PORTLAND STREET, FRYEBURG, ME 04037