

Wreck-diving journalist visits Kwajalein, Roi for article series, video documentary

By Sheila Gideon
Managing Editor

Admit it. She makes you a little jealous that she gets paid to dive. Barbara Buchanan works for *Wreck Diving Magazine*, a quarterly publication that focuses on the historical aspect of diving. She is here for six weeks, documenting and filming as many Kwajalein and Roi wrecks as she can for a series of articles and eventually a three to four part video documentary. She arrived July 4 and is set to head home to Wilmington, N.C. Aug. 15.

History of wrecks is what Buchanan seeks to discover out here. "*Wreck Diving Magazine* is all about the history. ...There's a lot of history here and the Battle of Kwajalein is very famous," she commented. "Not too many people get the privilege to be able to see the wrecks, so filming them is pretty much why I'm here."

While Buchanan appreciates the aquatic life here, she is most interested in the historical monstrosities that loom underwater. "I love history so I focus on wrecks," Buchanan said. Her project is not just about enjoyment; she also strives to preserve the wrecks before they deteriorate. "That's why it's very important to me to be able to document them ... now. Eventually, the salt water is going to eat them up and they're not going to be there." She is looking to help preserve the past through her documentary. "The only

thing you're going to have [in the future] is photography or video."

Buchanan planned this trip for six weeks. She goes out on a boat every day the small boat marina is open and tries to fit in as many dives as she can. Six weeks may seem like a long time, but with all the wrecks and all the history here at Kwajalein, it really isn't enough. She has already planned another trip for next year, with a crew, to continue her work here.

Her first trip to Kwajalein was in June 2010 for one week. During that trip she focused on the *Prinz Eugen*. After meeting and talking with Dan Farnham, our resident wreck diver, she was turned on to the 'Glens.' They are a pair of submarine-based reconnaissance aircraft discovered in Kwajalein waters. "They're the only two Glens known in the world. Archeologically- and historically-wise, that is very important," Buchanan stated. "That is a big prize." The fall issue of *Wreck Diving Magazine* will have Buchanan's story on the 'Glens' and the issue following will have her part II on the *Prinz Eugen*.

As for the documentary, Buchanan has experience filming them. Last year, after leaving Kwajalein, she and a team of seven went to Japan to film a Russian submarine that was sunk during the Cold War. "Once we get it documented and filmed, we'll get it put together for a network," she said.

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Photos by Dan Farnham

Barbara Buchanan is on a six-week visit at Kwajalein, diving the historical wrecks for a series of articles and a video documentary.

ry part of diving when she became certified in 1991. "At first I was all about the fish and everything; then I got into photography," she said. "Shortly after that I got into videography. Being in North Carolina, my backyard is basically full of war ships. So when I would dive locally, that's all we had was ship wrecks and I just loved it." After seeing the wrecks, it sparked all sorts of questions for her: How did it get here? Who sunk it? "You start getting into the history of things because you want to know. At least I did." That is what eventually led her to Kwajalein.

Buchanan has dived all over the world, but keeps coming back to the South Pacific in particular. "As far as other places in the world, I would say this is one of the top five [places to dive]." Truk Lagoon and Bikini Island are also places she recommends history buffs to dive.

Buchanan's work can be seen in upcoming issues of *Wreck Diving Magazine*. It will be a few years before the video documentary is compiled, produced and picked up by a network. Until then, she will continue her search for the world's most interesting wreck dives and keep all the 200 or so members of Kwajalein Scuba Club green with envy for having such an interesting and pleasurable job.



Barbara Buchanan shoots footage of a Japanese 'Jake' plane wreck near Ebeye June 7, 2010, during her first visit to Kwajalein Atoll.