

Navy official presents program describing Titanic exploration

By Shannon O'Neal
Reporter

On April 14, 1912 the R.M.S. Titanic sank during her maiden voyage, taking 1,500 passengers 2.5 miles to the ocean floor. She lay there, 400 miles southeast of Newfoundland, largely intact and undiscovered, until 1985 when a joint venture between the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) and a French nautical institute found her resting place beneath the Atlantic.

In summer 1986 a venture between WHOI and the U.S. Navy's Sub Development Group One in California revisited the Titanic and returned with images of a site unseen by man for 74 years.

Navy Lt. Mark Mahre was along for the adventure and Tuesday night he shared slides and narration with an audience of about 100 members of several engineering societies. Mahre stopped off at A&M during a three-day recruiting tour for the Navy. He also will visit Rice University, the University of Texas and the University of Houston.

Mahre was a crewman on the 25-foot-long, deep-submersible vessel Alvin, owned by WHOI, that explored the hulk. The U.S. Naval Academy graduate said the Alvin was specially equipped for the survey with Jason Jr., a remote-operated vehicle "robot eye" on a 250-foot coaxial cable that explored where the Alvin could not go.

Mahre described driving Jason Jr.

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—Navy Lt. Mark Mahre

(or J.J., as it was called) as a complicated operation.

"Below 300 feet it is pitch black down there, darker than night ever is," he said. "The operator drives J.J. by looking at a TV screen with a picture from its front camera. It kind of gives him the illusion of riding J.J. out there 4,000 meters beneath the sea, kind of like a video game in the ocean. More often than not the operator would lose sight of Alvin, so he would turn J.J. around and follow the yellow tether back out, like following bread crumbs."

Mahre offered his impressions of using the \$2.5 million system.

"A walking tour of the Titanic, that is what the video impression was," he said. "Alvin would sit with the portholes five feet off the ground and then J.J. would move out. We see a porthole, we send Jason in for a little peeping-tom action."

The lieutenant said the deep-ocean environment was responsible for destroying much of the ornate wood and metal work on the ship, though the Titanic was shorn in two in its plunge to the ocean floor.

"When the ship sank it broke just aft of the number two (exhaust) stack due to the flooding of the bow dome, implosions from the pressure and the explosions of the boilers, shearing the decks and hull in half," Mahre said. "It sank quickly to the bottom and the bow section settled upright with the stern rotated 180 degrees and 600 yards aft. There is a 100-meter-wide debris field between the two."

"Much of the wood has been destroyed by organic and chemical actions, and the metal is so badly rusted that in some cases it seems almost melted."

"One thing that amazed me were the brilliant colors and corrosion from the rust. From a long way off the ship would look like a melted candle. Another 100 years and it will be just a rust spot on the ocean floor."

As Mahre pointed out items photographed by the expedition, he related facts about the historic voyage. He said a one-way, first-class cabin ticket cost \$4,000 in 1914 — \$50,000 in 1988 dollars. At one point he remarked that some of the most fa-

mous passengers were the Astors, aristocrats of the era. As relics appeared he said they probably were used by the Astors — a bench offered seating, a bed frame provided a place to sleep, a punch bowl was used in their service.

Mahre described many technical aspects of the equipment used, explaining the Alvin's six- to 10-hour dive duration, 4,000-meter maximum depth and cruising speed of one knot along the ocean floor. The Alvin is composed of a pressure-hull and an external body with its cameras, batteries and thrusters, he said. The pressure hull is a titanium sphere seven feet in diameter and five centimeters thick.

Jason Jr. is a prototype funded by the Navy, Mahre said. He explained that WHOI is developing a sonar/video imaging system for the Navy that will be used to scan the ocean floor. The Navy has a definite use for the system, he said.

"You saw the movie 'Top Gun?' " he asked. "Everytime one of those F-14s goes down we have to go find it." He commented on the French expedition last summer that recovered several items from the Titanic.

"It's strange," he said. "Look how after falling 2.5 miles to the ocean floor, this mug somehow came to rest upright on this boiler. Of course, after the French were there last summer it may not be there."

"Some of the artifacts we took pictures of they collected and restored to nearly original condition through electrolysis. I don't know what they are going to do with them."

UTEP finalist for president backs out

EL PASO (AP) — A finalist for the University of Texas-El Paso presidency has decided he no longer wants to be in running for the position.

Samuel Kirkpatrick, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State, told UT System officials Monday he no longer wants to be considered for the position.

Four others are still in the running, said James Duncan, the UT System official who headed the committee that was in charge of selecting the finalists.

The UT System Board of Regents plans to select the new president Thursday.

The president is scheduled to meet the press in El Paso the next day.

Kirkpatrick said he made the decision to drop out of the running last week.

Several factors played an important role in his decision against the job, he said, including his children's residency in Arizona.

New Vend-a-card system at library makes copying more convenient

By Christina De Leon
Reporter

Texas A&M students no longer have to despair when they're unable to make copies at the Sterling C. Evans Library because of broken or empty bill-changer machines.

The library now has a Vend-a-card system that allows students to use a special decoder card that is prepaid for a specified number of copies.

"It's a lot more convenient for the students," Scott Haus, an employee at the Evans Copy Center, says.

One advantage of the Vend-a-card system, he says, is that students can make several copies at once without worrying if they have enough change.

Many times the problem was not with the bill-changer machines but rather that a student only had large bills and therefore could not use the machines, Haus says.

Usually, students go to the Copy Center to get change for paper money if they cannot use the bill-changer machines.

However, Rose Mary Calhoun, a library copy-center employee says

more problems occurred because the copy center is closed at night and on weekends.

"Texas Copy was having a hard time getting change for the copiers on weekends," she says. Calhoun says the library copy center received several complaints from students unable to get change for copies on weekends.

Texas Copy Systems Inc. owns the copy machines in the library but is paid by the University to maintain the University-owned bill-changer machines.

Jeff French, systems manager at Texas Copy, says that one of the main problems with coin-operated copy machines is maintaining the tremendous volume of coins the machines collect.

"We hope it will alleviate problems with the change machines," French says.

With the Vend-a-cards, he says, maintenance costs are reduced while making it easier and faster for students to get copies.

Since the Copy Center began selling Vend-a-cards two weeks ago, French says about 300 Vend-a-cards have been sold.

The Vend-a-cards cost 75 cents each including tax, although the initial purchase for a Vend-a-card is 10 — 75 cents for the card plus \$9.25 worth of copies at 5 cents each, Calhoun says. Afterward, the cards can be revaluated at Vendacoder machines in the amount of \$1, \$5, \$10 or \$20.

Another advantage of the Vend-a-cards, French says, is that the cards can be sold to other students for the programmed amount if a student decides he no longer needs the card or is going to graduate.

In addition, the cards have no expiration date by which the amount purchased must be used, he says.

Although the Vend-a-card system used at the Evans Library is the same type used at the Medical Sciences Library, the cards are not interchangeable, French says, because the system at the Medical Sciences Library is owned by the University.

Karen Moskal, an employee at the Medical Sciences Library, says that both A&M students and the Texas A&M Medical School students can purchase a Vend-a-card for use only at the Medical Sciences Library.

"The library is open to both Texas A&M students and medical school students," Moskal says.

However, she says that unauthorized cards used at either library will cause the programmed prepaid balance to be erased.

Texas Copy first considered using a Vend-a-card system at the library last fall after enjoying tremendous success with the Vend-a-card system used at the University of Texas in Austin.

Although only 10 copy machines are equipped for both Vend-a-cards and coins in the Evans Library, French said that if the system proves successful, Texas Copy eventually may install Vend-a-card machines on all of its library copy machines.

Texas high court upholds ruling forbidding protest at abortion clinic

AUSTIN (AP) — Right-to-lifers cannot demonstrate at a Houston clinic where abortions are performed, the Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday.

Right to Life Advocates Inc. had asked the court to overturn a lower court judgment forbidding group members to go onto private property at Aaron Women's Clinic to picket, offer "sidewalk counseling,"

hand out literature or confront employees or customers.

The anti-abortion protesters had begun such activities at the clinic, which also offers such services as birth control, in May 1985, according to court records.

The clinic obtained a trial court judgment forbidding the activities, and the 14th Court of Appeals in Houston upheld the ruling.

"Of major importance in this case is the physical and mental well-being of the clinic's patients. Whether or not we agree with their decisions to terminate their pregnancies, we must recognize their right to do so," the majority opinion of the appeals court said.

A dissenting opinion by an appeals judge agreed with the right-to-lifers that the prohibition involves constitutional rights.

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Wednesday, February 10, 1988.
8:00 - 9:30 p.m. Opening Address: "Glasnost"
Dr. Dimitri Simes - Senior Associate, Director, Project on U.S.-Soviet Relations, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Thursday, February 11, 1988.
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: "Soviet Foreign Policy"
His Excellency Alexander M. Belonogov - Ambassador of the Soviet Union to the United Nations
His Excellency John A. Birch - Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations
Dr. Aleksa Djilas - Visiting Scholar at the Russian Research Center, Harvard University
Dr. Betty Unterberger - Professor of History, Texas A&M University
7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Speech: "Life in the U.S.S.R."
Dr. George Feifer - Author of *Justice in Moscow* and *Moscow Farewell*

Friday, February 12, 1988.
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: "U.S. - Soviet Relations"
The Honorable Igor Khripunov - First Secretary, Embassy of the Soviet Union to the United States
Dr. Robert German - Director, Office of Analysis for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, U.S. State Department
Dr. Jerry Hough - James B. Duke Professor of Political Science, Duke University
Mr. Igor Fominov - Legal Affairs Officer, Legal Codification Division, United Nations

Saturday, February 13, 1988.
10:00 - 11:00 a.m. Closing Address: "Future of the Soviet Union"
Strobe Talbott - Washington Bureau Chief, Time Magazine

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