

***Beneath Haunted Waters* Book Proposal**

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Drama. Tragedy. Irony. Unsolved mysteries. Maybe even a little greed. *Beneath Haunted Waters* is not a ghost story; it's not that kind of "haunted" at all. These waters are haunted by generations of people who cannot forget the story of how two airplanes disappeared in 1943 and what happened to the boys on board.

During the World War II years, the convention was to call young men in their late teens to their late 20s, "boys." The boys who piloted bombers and fighter aircraft during World War II were 19 or 20 years old - barely out of their childhood. Imagine boarding a 737 today and seeing a teenager at the controls instead of a person with greying temples. That was the situation during the war.

Beneath Haunted Waters is a story about that era, when children flew large airplanes equipped with enough firepower to destroy cities. And yet, boys they were, and boys they will always be.

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Overview

On a winter training mission over California during World War II a B-24 Liberator with six crewmembers disappears late at night when returning from Phoenix, Arizona to Hammer Field in Fresno, California. It's suspected the Liberator is lost somewhere over the Sierra Nevada mountains. What caused the aircraft to veer so far off-course?

Later that morning, the *Exterminator*, another Liberator from Hammer Field is searching for the first B-24 when it is forced down over the Sierra Nevada. While the co-pilot and radio operator survive, bailing out from 100 feet above the ground, the other six boys aboard the *Exterminator* die when the plane ditches into Huntington Lake reservoir and sinks to the bottom. What problems brought down the *Exterminator* in Huntington Lake and why did most of the crew not parachute out from the stricken plane?

The *Exterminator's* co-pilot and radio operator will later serve together, flying 35 missions over Europe and then never speak to each other again. Isn't it odd the two survivors from that horrible morning in 1943 had no further contact with each other? Though the *Exterminator's* co-pilot survives the war, in 1957 he dies of a massive heart attack in front of his high school math students. He is only 39 years old.

Hidden beneath Huntington Lake's waters until 1955, the *Exterminator* is discovered after the reservoir is drained so repairs can be made to the dam. Sadly, the Army is unsuccessful in locating two of the families to let them know their loved ones have been found. Then only four of the six bodies from Huntington Lake are ever recovered. What happened to the other two boys and why was the Army unsuccessful in locating all the families?

The co-pilot's father from the first missing aircraft is Clinton Hester. He's a personal trainer to Hollywood stars like Robert Taylor, Spencer Tracey, and Marion Davies. He's convinced his son's airplane, flying off-course, has crashed in the Sierra Nevada near Mt. Whitney. For the next 15 summers Hester searches the High Sierra for his son. Everybody calls him the "Phantom Rider" because they encounter him, always alone, hiking the trails or riding his Harley-Davidson in the mountain lowlands during the snowy winters - searching, always searching. The Phantom Rider is almost killed in a motorcycle accident during one of his searches and this spurs him to quit Hollywood and move to Lone Pine, a remote town in the shadow of Mt. Whitney to conduct his search year-round.

Clinton Hester dies from heart failure in 1959 and his son's airplane is found the following summer at the bottom of a lake at 12,255 feet in the High Sierra. The airplane is terribly off-course, on the opposite side of the mountains from where it should be - just as Clinton predicted. The lake is officially christened "Hester" to commemorate a father's search. How could the Hester Lake B-24 become so lost?

After the Hester Lake discovery in 1960, the Army sends a team of hard-hat divers to the remote reaches of Kings Canyon National Park to recover the crew's remains. They find the B-24 on the lake bottom, over 100 feet beneath the surface. Of the crew, after a one week search, they find only bits and pieces. Where are they?

Since the missing plane's discovery in Hester Lake, a long line of SCUBA divers have chased the holy grail of the sunken B-24. Some have wanted to salvage it, for themselves or under the aegis of aviation museums. Others have wanted to probe the lake's waters for recreation. Some have gone for plunder. All but two have failed, defeated by the site's remoteness and difficulty of access. To reach the lake one must hike 14 miles by trail over a 12,000 foot pass, cross a river, and climb a canyon wall 3000 vertical feet in one mile, including a 300 foot high technical rock climb.

Hester Lake's remoteness and location in a national park have saved it from defilement. Huntington Lake, with its all-season road, summer and winter resorts, and recreational opportunities has not conferred the same protections. In 1970 attempts are made by entrepreneurs with profit in mind to raise the *Exterminator*. After \$100,000 was spent all that remained of the project was recriminations, fraud, bankruptcy, and lawsuits.

Why are so many people drawn to this story that they would risk their lives, their reputations, and their fortunes to seek answers to the mysteries at the bottom of two Sierra Nevada lakes? One answer might lie in the manageable scale of each tragedy. These two airplanes crashed and killed a dozen boys during a war where 60 million people died. Perhaps that is what intrigues so many of us today with the loss of a dozen aviators nearly 70 years ago.

When writing *Beneath Haunted Waters*, I will rely on the following sources:

- ✓ Interviews and reminiscences of family members (wives, children, siblings, nieces/nephews).
- ✓ Interviews with writers and historians who specialize in World War II aviation.
- ✓ Interviews with other people who have researched this story.
- ✓ Interviews with boys who were pilots, navigators, and bombardiers during World War II.
- ✓ Official military accident reports for the two

Liberators.

- ✓ Other source material from the US Army Air Forces including the 15th Air Force, 461st Bombardment Group (H), which is where the boys from *Beneath Haunted Waters* served.
- ✓ Historic newspaper and magazine articles.
- ✓ Memoirs of aviators who served during World War II.
- ✓ My own expeditions to Hester Lake and Huntington Lake.

About the Author

I am the author of *Final Flight, the Mystery of a World War II Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra* (Wilderness Press), *Best Hikes Near Seattle* (FalconPress), and a mystery novel, *The Flower Lover*. During book tours to promote *Final Flight* I made over 40 personal appearances to over 1500 people.

There is something beyond drama, tragedy, and mystery that draws people to the story of airplane wrecks that were once lost and are now found. Closure is a large part of it. There was a time when I thought "closure" was a pseudo-scientific term for new age crystal-staring, naval-gazers. That changed in 2007 after I found Ernest Glenn Munn. He was a World War II aviator and his remains were melting out of a glacier in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. I wrote *Final Flight* about this experience. I read the letters Glenn Munn wrote home to his mother in 1942. In eastern Ohio, I met his family. And then I met the families of the other three boys who were on Glenn's airplane when it disappeared. "Closure" finally meant something to me.

In telling Glenn's story I also learned the importance of telling the stories of all the lost soldiers from World War II. Air crews were always volunteers, never conscripts. What decisions did these boys make that placed them in airplanes? Many were fresh off the farm or from little towns. Hard to believe today, but these boys had never been in an airplane, never been in anything faster than a tractor or a street car. They were not the movers and shakers, the generals and politicians. They were people like me, and people like my friends, and family. Their stories have been largely ignored and forgotten. It's time we rectified that situation.

Some of the topics I've covered in over 700 magazine and newspaper feature stories include aviation, science and nature (for which I've received three awards including one by the Pacific Northwest Writer's Association), Olympic sports, outdoor adventure and recreation, history, theatre arts and

entertainment, and celebrity profiles.

In 1975 I received a B.A. in botany from the University of California, Davis, conducted graduate work in ecology at Humboldt State University, and in 1982 received a secondary teaching credential in life science. I've worked as an educator, outdoor adventure guide, laboratory technician, botanist, and plant ecologist.

I live in Seattle, Washington. My interests include photography, vegetable gardening, hiking, mountaineering, kayaking, bicycling, other outdoor-related gerunds on land, sea, sky, and frozen water, and recording oral history stories from World War II combat veterans.

Audience

Beneath Haunted Waters is a military aviation story and it will appeal to that very large demographic. Subsets of this group which widen the appeal are readers interested in World War II history and warbirds - predominantly piston-driven military aircraft from the 1930-1960s. Some recent tales about lost aircraft that have entered popular culture, appearing in books, news shows, or television programs, are the Kee Bird B-29 in Iceland, the Glacier Girl P-38 lost over Greenland in 1942, and the multi-year project to restore a SBD Dauntless dive bomber that crashed and sank during a 1944 training exercise in Lake Michigan. Over a million dollars has been spent in attempts to recover a J2F-4 Grumman Duck and its three crewmembers buried in a Greenland Glacier during World War II. These lost airplanes are as exciting to the public as ship wrecks like the Titanic.

The audience for *Beneath Haunted Waters* also includes people beyond aviation and military subjects. Within this group are readers interested in true historical mysteries, adventure stories, outdoor recreation, and Sierra Nevada natural history. I will blend all these elements together to keep reader groups interested and involved in the story. The writing style for *Beneath Haunted Waters* will use the techniques of narrative non-fiction.

Other Books on This Subject

Combat *training* for air crews in World War II was statistically as hazardous as combat. How dangerous was combat training? The United States lost 4500 aircraft shot down by the Japanese in the South Pacific. In comparison, 7200 aircraft and over 15,000

airmen and ground crew were lost to accidental death during the war. In the Royal Air Force (RAF), 12% of all aviator casualties (8300) died in training accidents.

The numbers are startling but the stories that give context to these deaths generally have not been as compelling as combat tales and little is published about aircrew training during World War II. What happened in the months, and in the case of pilots, nearly two years, of training that preceded deployment overseas is neither adequately or systemically chronicled.

There are a few specialty books on the subject of home front aviation losses but are not direct competitors of *Beneath Haunted Waters*. These books are compendiums and not the narrative I intend. They include *Aircraft Wrecks in the Mountains and Deserts of California, 1909-2002* by Gary Pat Macha and Don Jordan, *Wreck Chasing Commercial Aircraft Crashes & Crash Sites: Vol 1 and 2*, by Nicholas A. Veronica and others, and the three volume, 1336 page, *Fatal Army Air Forces Aviation Accidents in the United States, 1941-1945* by Anthony Mireles.

Warbirds are popular subjects for war historians and present-day pilots. Such books as *Hunting Warbirds*, by Carl Hoffman, tell the story of the search for individual airplanes that were either lost in combat or found and then lost again. But the focus is on the airplane and not the crew. *Leave No Man Behind*, by George Galdorisi and Thomas Phillips, covers the entire history of recovering downed pilots during wartime but nothing about searching for warbirds or their crews lost within the United States.

Marketing

The success of my previous book, *Final Flight*, demonstrates reader's interest in that part of World War II that does not involve the European or Pacific fronts. Everybody loves a good story and a great mystery, especially when founded in a firm sense of place.

Media attention in these kinds of stories has always been strong though books about the "home front" are a new genre. A website for my book already exists: www.BeneathHauntedWaters.com. Lost airplanes draw as much media interest as shipwrecks and *Beneath Haunted Waters* combines both topics. Newspaper coverage, magazines, movies and television, and now the internet with YouTube, Facebook, and other social media - all provide outlets for promotion.

As one example, I can point to media interest in my latest book, *Final Flight*. I was interviewed extensively by newspapers, radio, and television. These interviews can be accessed on my website, www.FinalFlightTheBook.com. I've been on three separate book promotion tours, speaking to over 1500 people in venues as large as museums and libraries and as small as bookstores and book clubs.

Years as an educator have given me ample public speaking experience. My book presentation has been filmed for television and web broadcasts. I was interviewed for National Geographic Television and National Public Radio. The Seattle Public Library system and the Museum of Flight websites have audio and video podcasts of my presentation. You can see, hear, or download these media at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FinalFlightTheBook> and http://finalflightthebook.com/Final_Flight_Press_TV.htm

Huntington Lake reservoir will once again be drained during the winter of 2012-2013. *Beneath Haunted Waters* might inspire further investigation of the wreck in hopes of recovering the final two crew members. The water is cold and anoxic. There is a very good chance any human remains will be well preserved.

Many websites are devoted to "wreck chasing" or "aviation archeology," the terms which describe warbird enthusiasts who search for crashed airplanes. The websites are quite extensive with heavily researched material and discussion forums. Examples include, WWW.Accident-Report.com, WWW.Aircraftwrecks.com, and WWW.Wreckchasing.com. Along with these website are several hundred airplane museums across the country. Together they serve as a clearing house for aviation, air shows, and aviation related stories, representing excellent marketing venues for *Beneath Haunted Waters*.

Sample Table of Contents with Descriptions

Chapter 1: I Am Going To Die

Since I serve as the reader's guide to the Hester and Huntington Lake stories, I begin with my own involvement with the Sierra Nevada and how I first learned of the airplanes and the crews.

At the age of 12, on my first backpacking trip in the Sierra Nevada, I learned about the Hester Lake and Huntington Lake stories. At the same time, this first trip was so physically demanding that I thought I was going to die. As difficult and as

strenuous as this trip was for me, it was also a life-altering event. Growing up in Los Angeles I had never seen a sky so blue, or trees as large, or rivers with such force as in the Sierra Nevada. I had never been surrounded by so much beauty as in the wilderness backcountry of the High Sierra. Everything in my life has grown from that first experience initial exposure to the mountains as a 12 year old, thinking I was going to die from exhaustion.

My introduction to the mountains was also my introduction to the Hester Lake and Huntington Lake stories. As I matured and traveled farther afield in the Sierra Nevada, I met others who knew the story and listened to their interpretations. Along the way I learned more details of what happened as well as realized that the lost airplane story had become analogous to a urban myth though, of course, it was in the mountains.

Chapter 2: Two of Our Airplanes are Missing

In the early morning hours of December 6, 1943 a US Army Air Forces B-24 Liberator bomber, piloted by 2nd Lt. William Turvey and 2nd Lt. Robert Hester, is lost over the Sierra Nevada mountains when returning to base at Hammer Field during a night-flying training exercise. Evidence suggests a faulty compass may have lead the navigator, 2nd Lt. William Cronin, to not realize he had been blown off-course by unforecasted high altitude winds. All six crewmembers are assumed lost.

While on a search mission for the lost airplane another B-24, the *Exterminator*, piloted by Capt. William Darden and 2nd Lt. Culos Marion Settle, is lost over the Huntington Lake reservoir. Lt. Settle and radio operator S/Sgt. George Barulic miraculously survive, bailing out at 100 feet above ground level. The *Exterminator* ditches (crashes) into Huntington Lake and sinks to the bottom of the reservoir in over 200 feet of water.

Conflicting testimony suggests this plane may have experienced mechanical failure or the pilot may have lost his nerve when something unexplained occurred in the cockpit. The pilot was involved in a messy divorce and child custody battle. Was this somehow a factor?

After the loss of a second plane, all aerial searches are called off. Debris along the lake shore indicates where the *Exterminator* may lie and Army divers spend all of December, in snow storms and sub-freezing temperatures searching for it. Their search is unsuccessful. Defeated by the weather and a military anxious to

get overseas and into combat, the recovery mission is allowed to fizzle out. As winter drags on into spring both missing airplanes are forgotten.

This chapter will also discuss the geography of the Sierra Nevada and its affects on weather as mitigating factors in both airplane crashes.

Chapter 3: The Phantom Rider

With the war and manpower shortages, the military quickly gives up on its search missions for the missing planes. Clinton Hester, father of the co-pilot from the first missing B-24 begins looking for his son. Hester lives in Los Angeles and works as a personal trainer to some of Hollywood's biggest male and female movie stars.

Clinton Hester is convinced, after cajoling the Army to release their top secret accident report, that his son's plane has to be somewhere around Mt. Whitney. On weekends, holidays, and any free moments he can squeeze from his schedule, Hester rides his Harley-Davidson to the Owens Valley, east of the Sierra Nevada. From there he hits the trail during the summer or he rides the back roads during the winter. He becomes such a ubiquitous presence that Valley residents and visitors come to call him the "Phantom Rider." He meets local pilots who volunteer to take him flying so Hester can scour the mountains from the air. There is an area the size of Rhode Island to search with thousands of lakes, deep canyons, and thick primordial forests.

After nearly dying in an accident when his motorcycle is hit by a truck, Hester decides to quit his job and move full-time to the tiny town of Lone Pine in the shadow of Mt. Whitney. He dies in 1959 without ever knowing what happened to his son. The cause of death is heart failure.

I'll use the discussion of my search for Clinton Hester's home in Lone Pine as an example of how difficult historical research can be, especially when tracking down family members from the two crews. Source material is nearly impossible to come by because records were not as assiduously kept in the 1940s as they are today.

Chapter 4: Training and Preparation

The crews of both missing planes were in the final stages of their training before being shipped overseas. The boys on each B-

24 didn't know each other very well, having only recently been assembled as a crew. This unfamiliarity was probably fatal on the *Exterminator*. Why?

For the Hester Lake crew, the navigator was still inexperienced in practical application of his craft. Maybe he was aware of his course being in error but, without the trust and teamwork that builds over time and experience within a crew, may have tried to make corrections without informing the pilots. Flying at night without visual references and in an era before radar, pilots "drove" the plane, following instructions and headings given to them by their navigator.

Navigation was only one issue facing the pilots. Once over the mountains (where they were not supposed to be), mechanical problems may have doomed the airplane. I've spoken to a Hester Lake researcher who snorkeled in the lake over 20 years ago when the *Liberator's* engines were still visible in shallow water. He told me there was evidence that one engine was "feathered," which means it was not turning when the plane went down. Therefore, a four-engine airplane was running on three, at high altitudes, where full power was needed.

There is a darker side to this. A review of official documents, including accident reports from both crashes, demonstrates that mechanical failures were common during training due to slipshod and deferred maintenance and faulty equipment. Consider the magnitude of flying with a faulty compass as the Hester Lake *Liberator* was known to possess. Recently unearthed documents show that training at Hammer Field, where the two B-24 *Liberators* were based, was behind schedule by several months due to one third of the training aircraft being grounded with maintenance issues.

To further understand the magnitude of dangers faced by the crew due to these mechanical problems I will also discuss the B-24, its flying characteristics, and the aircraft's design. Important in this regard is the habit of B-24s to break in the middle like a matchstick when ditching (crashing) in open water. This characteristic was not known very well in 1943 to non-combat crews. This undoubtedly doomed the boys who chose to ride out the *Exterminator's* problem with their captain versus chancing a bail out over an unfamiliar landscape in the middle of winter.

Chapter 5: Who Were These Boys Anyway?

As much as I can piece together their stories, this will be a biography of the boys from both airplanes. There can't be empathy

or understanding unless readers know and appreciate who these people were. Also, what was it that motivated them to go off to war? Most were from farms or small towns; none had ever flown in an airplane, or driven in anything faster than a tractor or a streetcar. Many had never even taken a train or made an overnight trip from home.

These boys were the generation that came to maturity with stories of horror and carnage from the Great War. They grew up in an age of isolationism yet were eager to leave home to fight, to kill, and quite possibly die. What precipitated such a fantastic turnaround of opinion? What these boys wanted to do obviously mattered... or they hoped it would.

Of the six boys from the Turvey-Hester crew, I have located and made contact with four families. Of the eight aboard the *Exterminator*, I have located one family as well as the one living survivor of the crash. He is 91 years old and in failing health.

This is an excellent place to bring in the history of what started World War II to explain what the boys were fighting for. It began with the armistice for the Great War in 1919 at Versailles. This segues naturally into the following chapter.

Chapter 6: What The Hell Were They Doing Flying Around Up There Anyway?

The dominant philosophy of military aviation during the 1930s and throughout the Second World War was that ultimate victory could be won through air power. It was believed by all the belligerents in Europe, Japan, and the United States that strategic bombing (i.e. dropping bombs on civilian rather than military targets) would shorten any war because those being bombed (i.e. the civilians) would be so outraged they would force their government to a negotiated peace.

With some modifications this philosophy of victory through air power was extended into the 1970s and the Vietnam War. The problem is, it didn't work.

The English, during the Battle of Britain, did not bow down to bombing by Nazi Germany. Neither were the Germans cowed by five years of Allied bombing. The boys flying around California that early morning of December 6, 1943 were being readied to join the phalanx of Allied bombers that would eventually drop over a million tons of bombs on 131 German towns and cities. They would hit some of those places only once and some repeatedly,

flattening many and killing about 600,000 German civilians with 3.5 million homes destroyed and 7.5 million people made homeless. What did the boys think about this, if they thought about it at all?

Many World War II aircraft, especially the B-17 Flying Fortress, could be brought home on "a wing and a prayer" if they were shot up during missions or not 100% mechanically sound. The B-24 Liberator was not such an aircraft. It needed all of its four engines to stay in the sky. It was a death trap when ditching in open water - as the crew of the *Exterminator* learned too late. These two issues directly account for the Hester and Huntington Lake disasters. Poor maintenance and faulty equipment contributed.

The loss rate of soldiers during training was 28% of all US casualties during the war. Over 15,000 aviators were killed during their training and another 40,000 injured. Of all the aircraft used by the United States between 1941-1945, the B-24 was ranked first in fatal accidents with 2796 aviators killed. What was the affect of this loss rate on the bomber crews? And what was the affect on the generals and politicians and strategic people who did the planning? You'd be surprised who was the least worried.

Chapter 7: Recovering the *Exterminator* and Telling It's Story

In 1955, after the Huntington Lake B-24 was lost and forgotten, it was rediscovered when the reservoir was drained for repairs to the dam. Families of the boys were informed but not all relatives could be found. Continual interest in the crash lead to an attempt to raise the wreckage in 1980 that ended in fraud, bankruptcy, and lawsuits. An attempt by a California aviation museum in 1991 ended in failure as did a private venture in 2007.

Not every story about the *Exterminator* has been a negative one. Huntington Lake reservoir is operated by Southern California Edison to generate electric power for the City of Los Angeles. The reservoir is a popular destination for hikers, anglers, and boating. The tiny town of Big Creek is close by and serves as home to a contingent of power company employees. Their children attend school there.

In 1989, fourth grade students at Big Creek School adopted the *Exterminator's* story. The children located more of the crew's families than the Army had in 1955, wrote a brief history of the disaster, and funded a painted portrait of the *Exterminator* as

well as a memorial plaque. In 1991 they held a dedication ceremony for the plaque and published a "book" documenting their research. Many of these children still live in the area and have children of their own.

The story of the *Exterminator* and its name will also be presented here. I have located and spoken to the one living survivor of the *Exterminator's* crash into Huntington Lake. I have located some of the 4th grade students from Big Creek School as well as one of their teachers. I've found and interviewed the artist who was commissioned by the students to paint a portrait of the *Exterminator* and have also located where salvaged pieces of the airplane were taken.

Chapter 8: Discovery in a High Sierra Lake

The Hester Lake B-24 was discovered in late July, 1960, by two United States Geological Survey researchers and a ranger from Kings Canyon National Park. The lake is located in an area so remote, at such a high elevation, and is so difficult to reach that it's likely Hester Lake had never been visited before - and surely not since 1943. All three discoverers are still alive and I have met and interviewed them several times. I'll be able to relate their story of discovery as well as the impact the event had on their lives.

Two teams of journalists from San Francisco managed to reach Hester Lake within a week of the crash site's discovery. They poked around the lake, took photographs, and took souvenirs. I have located and interviewed one of these people as well as the person who guided them up to the lake.

The national park service contacted the US Army to arrange recovery of any crew remains. The army had to ferry a team of hard hat divers and support crew to Hester Lake by helicopter. This was in an era when high altitude helicopters were in their infancy and the project was portent with danger. The helicopter was unable to land at the crash site and the only way the soldiers could get out was to jump 6-8 feet to the ground while the helicopter hovered. All their gear was lowered or thrown to the ground for the same reason.

Added to the already hazardous journey of reaching Hester Lake was the extreme danger of diving with atmospheric air at an elevation of 12,255 feet, in 100 feet with water, in temperatures a few degrees above freezing. I have located and interviewed the two Army divers from this trip. They were able to tell me

everything about their experience at Hester Lake and I can weave that into the dangers they faced while doing their work.

The procedures followed by the army in 1960 would never be practiced in 2012. Today, the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) would send a team of archeologists, accompanied by scientists who are trained in body recovery, and the site would be treated as an archeological dig. The removal of souvenirs at a crash site by reporters would not be countenanced today either.

In addition to chronicling the discovery of the Hester Lake B-24, I will discuss and contrast how procedures for removing the remains of fallen soldiers have changed during the intervening years. I'll include a description of the army diving team's operation and its dangers along with the difficulties in high altitude helicopter flight.

Chapter 9: The Searchers

Located at the northern end of Kings Canyon National Park, in an incredibly remote and difficult to access high elevation lake, the remains of the Hester Lake B-24 have excited and challenged SCUBA divers for decades. Of the many who have tried, only two teams have succeeded. This is due to logistics and well as the physical difficulty of attaining the lake encumbered by heavy gear. Two people, separated by 20 years, have been successful in snorkeling in the lake. I have spoken to all of these searchers and learned their stories.

Everybody - the researchers, rangers, hikers, divers, and snorkelers - who has ever visited Hester Lake has come up with their own scenario of what happened there in the early morning of December 6, 1943. I will tell the sometimes conflicting stories of these people; who they were, and what they found, and how they reached their conclusions, and how their interest and research have kept the story alive.

Many have searched Huntington Lake as well and postulated what happened to the *Exterminator*. In this group I include the one living survivor of the crash. They have kept the *Exterminator* story alive through all its trials (literal and figurative) and tribulations.

Chapter 10: Hester Lake Today - Updating History

During the summers of 2011 and 2012 (projected) I have spent a total of 8 days at Hester Lake. During that time I explored the

shallows of the lake and swam in the lake using an underwater camera in hopes of finding engine and other debris spotted in the past. I also explored the surrounding area in search of physical evidence of the airplane that would support the conclusions made by past visitors. I'll review these data, present my own, and compare/contrast my conclusions with those of previous visitors.

Chapter 11: A Remembrance of Miracles

What do we learn from stories like these? Why won't these stories die and go away? Why are we drawn to such mysteries as in these stories?

There is no information to be found for half of the 14 boys from the two crews of missing planes. Incomplete or no human remains were recovered from either Hester Lake or Huntington Lake and what was recovered, especially from Hester Lake, was impossible to identify individually. Only four of the six missing in Huntington Lake were brought back. The boys died so young - on the cusp of adulthood, mostly still children. Their friends and families who knew them are all gone and turned to dust. It's as if there is nothing to mark the passage of these people save a photograph here, a letter there; maybe a newspaper story or a distant memory. They are fourteen ciphers as to who they were and what they might have become. Can my life be meaningful if it's completely blotted out and if no one knows me or thinks about me whatsoever?

In summing up everything that precedes it, "A Remembrance of Miracles" will work through answers to these questions. The title comes from something E.E. Cummings wrote. "Miracles are to come. With you I leave a remembrance of miracles; they are by somebody who can love and who shall be continually reborn, a human being; somebody who said to those near him, when his fingers could not hold a brush 'tie it into my hand.' "

These questions of existence trouble us the longer we live and the older we become. These 14 boys were too young and too involved in the miracle of living to be troubled about the future and they were too young to have a past. As we contemplate their lives and what they may have become we realize they have left us a "remembrance of miracles;" of what they might have become.

Photos

Beneath Haunted Waters should have 16-24 pages of photographs including but not limited to:

- 1a. Color photos from my trips to Hester Lake and Huntington Lake in 2011 and 2012.
- 1b. Aerial color photos taken by me from 15,000 feet, above Hester Lake which show the lake's situation and surrounding topography.
2. Head shots of as many crewmembers as I am able to find (as of this date I have located four of the six from the Hester crew and two of eight from the *Exterminator* crew) provided by the crew's families.
3. Historical photos from the National Park Service archive of the 1960 US Army dive team at Hester Lake along with contemporary comparison photos taken from the same spot as the historical images.
4. Portrait images of the important contemporary researchers who have studied the Hester Lake and Huntington Lake crews and have contributed immeasurably to the story and its lore.
5. Photos of the Hester Lake crew internment at Arlington National Cemetery in October, 1960 following their discovery that summer, provided by the families.
6. Clint Hester's house in Lone Pine, California.
7. Miscellaneous color and grayscale photos of the crew provided by the families, archival sources, or newspapers.
8. Historic photos of Hammer Field Army Air Force base provided by archival sources.
9. Historic and contemporary images of the B-24 Liberator bomber provided by myself and by archival sources.
10. Other images to be determined.

NOTE: Color images can be converted to high contrast grayscale.

Appendixes

1. Letters (facsimiles?) from USAF in 1960 to Hester Lake crew families of the crash discovery.
2. Letter (facsimile?) from USAF to Hester Lake crew families detailing the 1960 recovery effort.
3. Letter (facsimile?) from USGS to Jane Hester Hovden explaining the naming of Hester Lake.
4. Letter (facsimile?) from William Lansford to Janet Hester Hovden + map explaining his research and logic for his crash analysis.
5. The Big Creek Elementary School 4th graders brochure (facsimile pages, if permission is given).
6. Letters (facsimiles?) from Mrs. Charles Turvey to Clint Hester about the her son, and her disappointment in the US military in locating his airplane and crew (later found in Hester Lake).

7. Other

8. Other

Chapter notes (if requested)

References

Acknowledgments

Sample Chapters

Significant Articles, Reviews, and Other Materials

"Mystery of the Ice Man," *Sierra Heritage*, September, 2006.

"Final Flight," *Sierra Heritage*, December, 2011.

"Beneath Haunted Waters," *Ranger*, Winter, 2011-2012.

Peter Stekel profile in *UC Davis Spectator*, 2011.