

Chapter 8
Discovery in a High Sierra Lake

4893 words

5696 words (with chapter notes)

Along the shore of the unnamed alpine lake the three men could see lots of aluminum pieces, chunks of metal mostly; broken bits of tubing and wiring, shreds of a parachute unfurled in the water waving like a flag. After finding the yellow oxygen bottle and all the other aircraft debris on the treeless granite slope below the lake they suspected something like this. It was hard to say with any certainty what happened here, only that it hadn't been pretty. An airplane crash for sure, but what kind of airplane and when?

The 1960 field season in Kings Canyon National Park had been both productive and exhausting for Frank Dodge. As a Stanford University graduate student and field assistant with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) all he had to do was follow the lead researcher, Jim Moore, around the High Sierra. Except that following Jim Moore was not an easy task. Since they were collecting rock samples for a geological mapping project of the park, the way never seemed to follow a trail. It was always up one mountain and then down the other. Mountain climbing experience was not a prerequisite for the job but it should have been.

Dodge and Moore rode horses into the backcountry on July 13 and set up a base camp in Dusy Basin, just over Bishop Pass and in the national park. The next morning they awoke to find a bear had raided their food cache taking all the choice bits like bacon, chocolate, and butter, and leaving everything else. The two geologists were not happy with losing all their high caloric food. Two or more weeks of strenuous work in the high country can really take it out of you.

After several days of mapping in Dusy Basin, Moore and Dodge left their cosy wall tent and remaining good food hanging in a tree and began an extended backpacking side trip. The geologists climbed and mapped North Palisade (14,242'), and dodged an electrical storm on Mt. Shakespeare (12,151'), eventually dropping down Palisade Creek to the Middle Fork Kings River where they made their way upstream to the LeConte Canyon backcountry ranger station.

At the station they met Leroy Brock, the seasonal park service ranger living there with his wife and baby daughter. The station was a wooden frame topped by a canvas tarp. The young family

hauled water from the river for drinking, cooking, and bathing and made use of a privy. Not far away was a corral for the ranger's horses.

Jim Moore remembers, "Normally, other people didn't go on our traverses. Leroy Brock was interested in our survey and asked to accompany us on this traverse that entailed a climb of more than 3,000 feet. He was eager to break the monotony of his ranger work and appeared at our camp early in the morning for a cup of coffee as we made up our packs for the day. He was in good shape and we could see he could make it."

Frank Dodge recalls, "We'd go by there (the ranger station) occasionally and it was something to see somebody else. I mean, we wouldn't see anybody for days on end when we were working back there. So, we'd stop and talk to Leroy for a while." Moore decided, "We'll make it an easy day this one time and we'll ask Leroy if he wants to come."

Brock was anxious to accompany the geologists for the day's excursion up the west wall of LeConte Canyon. Moore and Dodge planned on mapping the metamorphic rock comprising Black Divide. "It was kind of an easy day," Dodge told me, with a twinkle in his eye, summing it up with, "We hiked up the mountain from the cabin, and up to that lake. We went up and discovered (the crash site) and came back (to make their report) because we didn't have radios or anything like that then."

The way up was anything but easy. Forging the river below the ranger station the three made their way up the forested slope on the west wall of LeConte Canyon. It was a stiff climb. Water from higher up gushed, tumbled, and roared over a series of waterfalls. They scrambled over the lip of a hanging valley and into a pristine meadow covered in mountain hemlock. From there the only route went through a nearly 400 foot tall vertical notch in the canyon wall. The three men had to climb through prickly gooseberry, over matted willows, loose talus, and bedrock wetted by a stream running through their path. Not easy, indeed.

Above the notch the way was easy and they climbed steadily over giant slabs of granite towards the lake basin that was their initial target. Pretty soon they began seeing pieces of something that could have only been an airplane. Brock found what looked like a stainless steel bicycle chain. He recognized the unrusted part as a chain used to move the ailerons on an airplane wing. Next, they found a yellow oxygen tank, the kind used in unpressurized aircraft so the crew could breathe at very high altitudes. "Jim Moore or Frank Dodge had been in the air force, I think, during the second world war, and recognized it immediately." Needless to say, "It was unusual to find it in this

location."

They began to find more debris. "Further up the drainage we found the remains of a flight suit - the zipper and some kind of wool, maybe from a jacket. Attached to it was a partially burned piece of plywood with a bail-out bottle." A bail-out bottle is a green cylinder, bigger than a baseball and smaller than a basketball. It clips onto a uniform and aviators use it when they have to bail out at high altitude and breathe oxygen on the way down.

Once at the partially frozen and unnamed lake the three men could see plenty of objects in the water including a boot, a parachute, a wooden aircraft wheel chock, and another yellow oxygen bottle. "The water was so clear you could see right down [to it]." Brock went in the lake to retrieve the bottle, thinking it might have an identification number on it. They tried for the parachute but it was too deep and too heavy to remove.

Jim Moore decided to retrieve the boot. "I stripped down completely, dived into the water, grabbed the boot, but could not bring it to the surface because of cords attached to it." These were electrical cords attached to the boot to heat the aviator's flight suit in the sub-freezing atmosphere of 30,000 feet. Returning to the lake with his knife, Moore cut the cords and brought the boot to shore. What he discovered inside was gruesome. "It contained a human foot, broken off at the ankle. The skin of the foot, though slightly wrinkled and bleached, was otherwise almost perfectly preserved as was the hair and flesh." The men were shocked by their grisly discovery.

Expanding their search to around the lake, before long they found parts of a wing and tail assembly. The wing was difficult to see because it was "camouflaged or brown color" against the rocks. On it was labeled "FORD B-24."

They also discovered a weathered leather briefcase 30 feet up slope from the water's edge. "Papers within, though caked with mud and barely legible, revealed that they had belonged to the navigator of a B-24 bomber, the four-engine World War II Liberator." The briefcase was lying face down on the ground. Turning it over they could read "Lt. William T. Cronin" embossed on the cover. The remarkable preservation of the foot within the boot they now knew could be attributed to the lake being frozen much of the year, and its temperature remaining just above freezing during the remaining months.

Considering the evidence - pieces of the wing and tail section in the rocks above the lake, oxygen bottles and other debris scattered elsewhere, and all the smaller bits and pieces along the northeastern shore - the ranger and geologists put together a

scenario as to what happened. They decided the airplane came in low over the mountains, clipped its wing on the peak and ridge south of the lake, and then tumbled through the sky, disintegrating and throwing off parts as it cartwheeled down, hitting the frozen lake surface. It then skidded across the surface, ramming into the cliffs on the lake's northeastern shore. Once summer came and the lake melted, all the wreckage sank to the bottom.

Moore recalls, "We returned the boot to the lake, took the papers from the briefcase, and noted the inscriptions on other small pieces of the aircraft. I had difficulty resuming geologic work that afternoon." The party returned to the ranger station late in the day and Leroy Brock radioed park headquarters of their discovery.

With work of their own to do Moore and Dodge left Brock the next day and performed a grand sweep of High Sierra territory from Ladder Lake back to Dusy Basin, off-trail and through rough country, mapping as they went. A few days later they returned to the LeConte Canyon Ranger Station and Leroy Brock filled them in on what, exactly, they had discovered. The information from park headquarters was slim but definitive. On December 5, 1943 a B-24 left from Hammer Field in Fresno on an overnight training mission to Tucson. It had disappeared in poor weather, without a trace, during the return flight. The name on the brief case they found, Lt. William T. Cronin, showed where the plane had come to rest.

Some places are haunted. Hester Lake certainly is. Not by ghosts out of novels and movies but by people obsessed with getting to the lake, examining its waters, and solving the mystery of how Lt. Turvey and Lt. Hester's plane came to be beneath its waters. The quests began the week of the plane's discovery.

Even before the army could get a dive team organized to recover the crew's remains two sets of reporters and photographers from the San Francisco Bay area made their way to the lake. Dudley Booth and his son Johnny guided the first party up and Johnny took the second party up by himself.

First to the lake was James Benet and photographer Barney Peterson from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. On July 30, 1960 they flew over the crash site, snapping photos, before landing at their jumping off point in Bishop. In a rented car they showed up at the front door of Dudley Boothe, owner of Rainbow Pack Station, asking to be taken to the lake. Benet's article about the trip appeared two days later in the *Chronicle*. He called the crash site a "grim corner of the High Sierra."

In 1960, 19 year old John Boothe was home on leave from the US

Army, helping his father with the usual duties of a pack outfit - taking tourists, mostly fishermen, into Kings Canyon National Park over Bishop Pass on horses. The two newspapermen wanted to leave immediately so, "After a quick breakfast the two newspapermen, my father, and I, threw some supplies together, packed our mules and got on our way."

That first day was consumed in riding the 15 or so miles from the South Lake trailhead, over 12,000 foot Bishop Pass, through Dusy Basin, and down to 8800 feet in LeConte Canyon and the ranger station there. The next day, accompanied by Leroy Brock, they made the difficult hike to the lake where Turvey and Hester's B-24 had crashed. John Boothe recalls three hours of climbing the "shear side of the canyon" on "hands and knees" in some places and "hand over hand" through the notch.

At the lake they found lots of airplane parts and pieces. Benet dove into the lake and swam around in the shallow part, looking for significant debris. He described seeing hundreds of fragments on the lake's northeast shore. There were "bits of sheet metal, twisted instruments, a propeller blade. The force of the impact snapped the heavy aluminum castings to which a seatbelt was fastened and tossed half the seatbelt and half the casting, still bolted together, a hundred feet up the slope." All the parts were clean and rust free, the instrument panel dials readable and switches functional. Across the lake, on the ridge to the west, Benet came upon the wing seen by Moore, Dodge, and Brock. Echoing the site discoverers, Benet postulated the bomber struck a peak directly south of the lake and tumbled into the water.

In 2011 Benet, then 97 years old, had only dim memories of his trip to the unnamed lake with the airplane crash. "It was one of those things, at the time, you're really thinking how exhausted you are doing all this climbing. But it was an interesting trip. You know, if you're working as a daily newspaper reporter you have to expect to be put in some places that require a lot of energy. That's just part of the job."

After all this time John Boothe still speaks with respect for Benet and his companion, Peterson. The two men from the *Chronicle* were in their mid-40s, both heavy smokers, and yet they made the difficult trek to the lake and back without a whimper.

Not so the second group of reporters Boothe guided to the crash site. "We came out (with Benet and Peterson) and the next day a freelance TV reporter wanted to go up there. He had this guy with him who was supposed to be a diver." Like the previous trip they went by horseback to the ranger station and spent the night. "Had quite a time with those guys. They were both younger (than the previous reporters) but they were way out of shape."

The recent arrivals were Fred Goerner from KCBS news in San Francisco and the *San Mateo Times* along with photographer and "skindiver" Bob Fischer. Like Benet and Peterson, Goerner and Fischer showed up in the morning on the Boothe's doorstep, requesting a guide to the crash site. They had driven all night from San Francisco, arriving in Bishop at 5 a.m. Dudley Boothe turned to his son and told him, "Well, you know the way, you don't need me," and John Boothe was elected to return to the crash site.

Unlike the previous journey the other day this ride to the ranger station in LeConte Canyon was continually interrupted by Fischer's stops to film landmarks and Goerner's incessant questions to John Boothe. The 19 year old taciturn Boothe grew weary of having a tape recorder shoved in his face but had to grin and bear it. Two mules carried the party's diving equipment, cameras, and tape recording gear. Once they reached the ranger station Goerner followed Leroy Brock around like a puppy, taping a lengthy interview. "Leroy and I soon decided that the recorder was nothing but a nuisance."

At five the next morning John Boothe, Goerner, and Fischer departed for the crash site with Ranger Brock. Peter Schuff, Chief Ranger for Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, was ferried in from park headquarters by helicopter and met them at the lake. As bad as the horse ride was the previous day, the hike up to the lake was worse. They were carrying a television camera, tape recorder, and Fischer's SCUBA gear and dive suit - two mules worth of gear - on their backs. "The reporter guy got half way up that chute you got to climb up... said he wasn't going to go, couldn't make it any farther. And I told him he had made it this far, he was going. I took his pack and mine both and we got him up there."

At the lake they rendezvoused with Schuff and emptied the packs. Out came a weight belt of 20 pounds which elicited an angry remark from Ranger Brock. "Why in the hell did John have to pack this up here when there are all these rocks and sand around here?" When it came time for Fischer to dive, "I don't know if he was scared or what, but he just wouldn't do much. Brock had some diving experience so he finally put on the gear" and "wound up doing more of the diving."

Leroy Brock remembers the two men from the *Chronicle* barely making it to the lake. "The photographer, I don't know his name, he just totally zoned out. He got angry. You know how people get when they get so tired. He just got angry and wasn't cooperative at all. But he made it. He made it all the way up."

The other one, "He was doing research on Amelia Earhart and he

wanted to make sure that wasn't Amelia Earhart's plane. They were not in good shape at all. The writer, he couldn't function."

After the difficult and arduous trip to the lake Goerner and Fischer had little interest in carrying their gear back down to the ranger station. By that time the helicopter had returned for Chief Ranger Shuft. The *Chronicle* men asked if the pilot could haul the stuff out for them. Boothe is convinced some money changed hands and the deal was done. "The next night there was a brief report on CBS. The one or two minutes, it made me wonder how it was all worth it, considering what we all went through. I hope he (the reporter) was well paid."

All objects of historical significance as well as all living and non-living resources in national parks are protected. They can't be collected and removed from the parks. Unbeknownst to the park rangers, Goerner returned from his afternoon at the lake with a section of instrument panel with the plane's identification number, 41-28463, along with other fragments from the plane, becoming the first in a continuous line of uninformed visitors to take souvenir pieces of the wreck.

Goerner's account of his expedition is a mix of heroic adventure writing, journalism, drama, and speculative fiction mixed with inconsistently presented details. His article for the August 6, 1960 *San Mateo Times* has the overblown title, "The Angry Mountains - a radio newsman fights the High Sierra." After an "assault on that 3000 feet separating us and the Liberator's crash site," the lake reminds him of a "big rock quarry filled with water." The climb took, "five minutes more than six hours," packing, "that aqua-lung, diving suit, lead diving belt, face mask, snorkel, fins, underwater light, tools, tape recorder, still cameras, motion picture camera, and a good amount of film." One thing for sure, they were prepared.

For drama, "We scrambled, clawed and crawled our way up." They, "stopped, rested and fought" their way another hundred yards before reaching the crux, that gash or notch in the granite constituting LeConte Canyon's western wall. Here, "We climbed straight up the rocks hand over hand for better than 400 feet."

In Goerner's account, "Bob Fischer with his protective diving suit slid into the icy water of the lake," and does all the exploration under water. It takes Fischer an hour to locate the wreck in 50 feet of water at the bottom of the lake. To the surface he brings "many articles including parachutes, gloves, boots, warning lights, instruments."

At four o'clock they loaded up and backed down the mountain. There is a photograph in Goerner's article of four men snaking

down a steep granite slope. Two have day packs, a third carries some sort of handled case in his left hand, and bringing up the rear is a fellow with a cowboy hat carrying an aqualung. That would have been John Boothe.

At the notch, Goerner says he injured his ankle but, "I managed to make it to the plateau below," before collapsing. "My legs were so tired they wouldn't support me no matter how I willed them to do so." Brock and Fischer left him, promising to send a rescue helicopter. After cooling his heels and watching the sun dip below the peaks behind him, Goerner decided, "I'd better try to make it down on my own power." He panicked, not knowing if he could find his way, somehow managed to, and "Two hours later I came out within forty yards of the ranger's tent." No further words about the helicopter.

Goerner and Fischer packed out the next day and returned to San Francisco. Later that week they displayed their souvenirs from the angry mountains at the San Mateo County Fair where they elicited a lot of interest. In an interview, Goerner speculated on how the Liberator came to be in the lake. "The airplane struck about 200 feet below the highest point of the Black Divide. It bounced end over end a quarter to half a mile, skidded across the ice on the lake and smashed into a large rock."

Leroy Brock was getting a good deal of experience as a mountain guide and delivering people to the lake. With both pairs of news hounds back home the Army arrived at his little ranger station in the wilderness world of LeConte Canyon. Their plan was to use diving gear, explore the lake, and recover any bodies they found. Brock told them they were welcome to the place. "By that time I was doing other things and not wanting to go up anyway!"

The army sent Maj. John E. Thayer, assistant Sixth Army operations officer from the Presidio in San Francisco to survey the lake and decide what would be needed. Along with Thayer were two divers with the 561st Engineering Company at Fort Baker, Lt. Robert C. Hartman and Staff Sergeant Henry M. Waskavitch. They drove to Bishop, hopped aboard a helicopter, and were taken to the lake. An initial survey was made with "shallow diving equipment."

Hartman and Waskavitch's assessment was that helicopters were needed to bring divers, deep-sea dive suits, air compressor, food and camping equipment, and support staff into the High Sierra. This became a major expedition occupying many days. First, they used a Piasecki H-21 "Flying Banana" to fly everything and everybody to Little Pete Meadow, about half a mile up canyon from the ranger station. This ship was far too large to find landing space in the vertical world around the crash site so they needed

to shuttle smaller loads to the lake in a Kaman HH-43 "Huskie."

Reaching the lake on August 4, 1960 the Huskie pilot decided it was unwise to attempt a landing due to the extreme elevation of the site (11,255'), thin atmosphere, and uneven terrain. Instead, while he hovered over an area approximately 700 yards below the lake, equipment was dumped out from a height of eight feet. The divers and soldiers then followed. Three hours later they had hauled themselves and all their gear to the lake and performed their first dive. The survey trip had estimated the lake to be 50 feet deep but Sgt. Waskavitch and his assistant Sgt. Douglas McCoy determined this to be in error and their equipment was inadequate for a complete job. Heavier dive equipment would be needed and while they waited for it to arrive, they continued exploring the shallower water. Evidence seemed to support earlier hypotheses that the Liberator had smashed into a cliff at the lake's northeast shore and exploded outward across the frozen surface. Once the ice melted, the B-24 and crew sank beneath the water.

After the deep sea diving equipment arrived the lake bottom was searched on a pattern basis and all portions of the wreckage were examined and checked. Conditions on the bottom of the lake were less than ideal. A layer of silt as deep as four feet was stirred up by the diver's boots, making visibility challenging. Movement was slow, difficult, and laborious, and the divers often worked not by sight but by feel. In eight days of searching the lake bottom and surrounding area the identifiable remains of S/Sgt. Robert O. Bursley, the flight engineer, were found and recovered though it was impossible to identify any of the other recovered remains individually.

At the end of their field season Jim Moore and Frank Dodge submitted to the Board of Geographical Names that the lake where the plane was found be named. They chose "Cronin Lake" since it was the navigator's briefcase with his name on it that provided the first clue as to the airplane beneath the lake's waters. Instead, "Hester Lake" was chosen, to honor the co-pilot and the father who never gave up hope of finding him.

Robert Hester's sister received a telegram on August 21, 1960 from the Office of the Quartermaster General, Department of Army. "Reference your brother Second Lieutenant Robert M. Hester who lost his life 5 December 1943. His plane was recently discovered in a lake high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California. Army has investigated and results will be available by end of August. Army recognizes you as Roberts legal next of kin and letter furnishing details will be dispatched as soon as possible." Next of kin to the other crew members received similar messages.

The impact of Hester Lake on the first people to reach the crash site in 1960 was profound. There was something about that place. Benet felt the power of the lake. "Now come the newspapermen, the Air Force with, perhaps, a helicopter to try to give the bodies a burial more reverent, though no more dignified and safe than the one the mountains gave." Goerner was affected too, reflecting upon where the six boys had been buried nearly 17 years. "God must love them very much. He chose one of the most desolate spots in the world as their resting place. I like to think He wanted them to himself."

Waskavitch and McCoy were brothers-in-law and the story of Hester Lake was told over and over to their children. And their children have continued the tradition. Paul McCoy told me, "On the dive up there, my dad describes the water as being crystal clear. He said there was a light dust on the lake. He said as they'd be walking onto the lake, they'd be kicking up this dust. It looked, when they walked up to the aircraft that it had just crashed," because the metal was still bright, shiny, and with no traces of rust seem anywhere. "There were parts of the airplane strewn about on the lake (bottom) and you could see where the guys were sitting in their seats."

Naturally, "They never talked about removing the bodies, about how they did it. There was discussion about the personal articles, the wallet, the identification of individuals. And the retrieval of certain parts off the plane, to identify the actual plane. I remember that part." This makes sense. People were much more circumspect then than now. Television crime scene shows hadn't given us the ability to understand what was going on. In those days, the only reports would be, "We went in and did our job," and it was assumed the public would fill in the blanks. Painful detail was neither called for nor expected.

Ranger Leroy Brock has spent a lot of time over the years talking to people about the Hester Lake B-24 Liberator. It's a story that interests and excites people everywhere, not just in the backcountry. When asked, "I feel that I'm doing a service to the families and other people. At first it was kind of bad because it got in the papers and everybody coming down the trail - well, not everybody, but a lot of people coming down the trail wanted to just run up to the lake and take a look." He felt obligated to discourage, not encourage by telling hikers, "This is really a climb! It could be hazardous."

A few years later Leroy Brock was coming out of the backcountry from LeConte Canyon, through Dusy Basin and over Bishop Pass when he came across two men hiking up the trail in orange flight suits. Since this attire was so unusual, Brock stopped to talk with the two strangers. They were on their way to Hester Lake.

"One was the brother of one of the men who was aboard the plane. I can't remember what position it was. And this brother died in the crash." After the plane crash had become public in 1960 Brock would frequently see a large military cargo transport plane over the backcountry. "It would come circle, and circle, and circle." One of the men in the orange flight suits was that pilot. "I asked and he said, 'Yeah. That's me.'"

The pilot told a sad story. He and his brother had met for the last time shortly before the brother disappeared. The pilot told his brother that he could arrange a transfer to military transport if he wanted so they could be close. "But he said, no, because he wanted to stay with his crew because they were deploying overseas and he felt very strong ties to the crew."

The man in the orange flight suit was Lt. Col. Harold V. Cronin, older brother of Lt. William T. Cronin, navigator of the B-24 Liberator #41-28463 in Hester Lake.

Chapter notes:

"Leroy Brock was interested in our survey and asked to accompany us..." Moore, Mystery at Hester Lake, unpublished MS. Page 1.

"He was in good shape... and we could see he could make it." Jim Moore interview, February 4, 2011.

"We'd go by there (the ranger station) occasionally and it was something to see..." Frank Dodge interview July 25, 2011.

"It was kind of an easy day..." Dodge, Ibid.

It was a stiff climb. Jim Moore interview, February 4, 2011.

Stainless steel bicycle chain. Leroy Brock interview December 3, 2011.

Partially frozen lake. Jim Moore Mystery at Hester Lake, unpublished MS. Page 2.

Jim Moore or Frank Dodge had been in the air force... Leroy Brock interview November 1, 2011.

"The water is so clear you could see right down [to it]." Leroy Brock interview November 1, 2011.

"Then Jim Moore decided he would dive in the lake and collect the boot." Leroy Brock interview November 1, 2011.

"I stripped down completely..." Moore, *Mystery at Hester Lake*, unpublished MS. Page 2.

"camouflaged or brown color" Leroy Brock interview November 1, 2011.

...Papers within, though caked with mud and barely legible... and, "We returned to boot to the lake..." Moore, *Mystery at Hester Lake*, unpublished MS. Page 3.

"...grim corner of the High Sierra." James Benet, Chronicle Team Reachers B-24 in Sierra Lake. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 1, 1960, page 1.

"After a quick breakfast..." John Boothe, *John Boothe's Accounting of Trips to Plane Crash Site Discovered in July of 1960*. ND. Unpublished manuscript.

..."shear side of the canyon" on "hands and knees" in some places and "hand over hand..." Ibid.

"...bits of sheet metal, twisted instruments..." James Benet, Chronicle Team Reachers B-24 in Sierra Lake. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 1, 1960.

...dove into the lake... John Boothe, *John Boothe's Accounting of Trips to Plane Crash Site Discovered in July of 1960*. ND. Unpublished manuscript.

"It was one of those things..." James R. Benet interview, November 8, 2011.

...John Boothe still speaks with respect... John Boothe interview, August 31, 2011.

"Had quite a time with those guys. They were both younger but they were way out of shape." John Boothe interview, August 31, 2011.

"Well, you know the way, you don't need me." John Boothe, *John Boothe's Accounting of Trips to Plane Crash Site Discovered in July of 1960*. ND. Unpublished manuscript.

Two mules carried the party's diving. Fred Goerner, "The Angry Mountains - a radio newsman fights the High Sierra." *San Mateo Times*. August 6, 1960.

"Leroy and I soon decided..." Ibid.

"The reporter guy got half way up..." John Boothe interview,

August 31, 2011.

"Why in the hell..." John Boothe, *John Boothe's Accounting of Trips to Plane Crash Site Discovered in July of 1960*. ND. Unpublished manuscript.

"I don't know if he was scared or what..." John Boothe interview, August 31, 2011.

"...wound up doing more of the diving." John Boothe, *John Boothe's Accounting of Trips to Plane Crash Site Discovered in July of 1960*. ND. Unpublished manuscript.

The photographer... Amelia Earhart... Leroy Brock interview November 30, 2011.

"The next night..." Ibid.

Goerner returned from his afternoon... *San Mateo Times*, Page 1. August 2, 1960.

"assault on that 3000 feet..." Fred Goerner, *San Mateo Times*. "The Angry Mountains." August 6, 1960.

"We scrambled, clawed and crawled..." Ibid.

"Bob Fischer with his protective diving suit..." Ibid.

"I managed to make it to the plateau below..." Ibid.

Later that week they displayed... (*San Mateo Times*, citation needed)

"The airplane struck about 200 feet below..." Anonymous. "Sierra Lake Preserves Bodies of Bomber Crew." *Oxnard Press-Courier*. August 4, 1960.

"By that time I was doing other things..." Leroy Brock interview, November 30, 2011.

"Now come the newspapermen..." James Benet, Chronicle Team Reachers B-24 in Sierra Lake. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 1, 1960.

"God must love them very much..." Fred Goerner, *San Mateo Times*. "The Angry Mountains." August 6, 1960.

"I feel that I'm doing a service..." Leroy Brock interview, November 30, 2011.

...561st Engineer Company at Fort Baker... "Divers to Study Lost Bomber." *San Francisco Chronicle*, ND.

...an area approximately 700 yards below the lake... Letter from US Army to Hester family, August 31, 1960.

...their equipment was inadequate... Ibid.

"After the deep sea diving equipment arrived..." Ibid.

...to honor the co-pilot and the father... Letter from George W. Abbott, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to Hester family, January 20, 1961.

"Reference your brother Second Lieutenant Robert M. Hester ..."
Telegram August 21, 1960 from Office of the Quartermaster
General, Department of Army.

"On the dive up there, my dad describes the water as being crystal clear." Paul McCoy interview, March 29, 2011.

"One was the brother of one of the men who was aboard the plane."
Leroy Brock interview November 1, 2011.

The man in the orange flight suit, interview with Ron Welch, October 26, 2011.