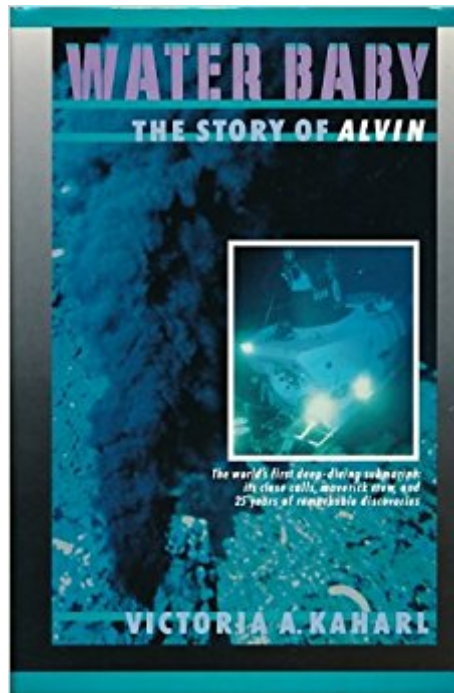




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Water Baby: The Story Of Alvin



Synopsis

Although "Alvin", a small, deep-diving submarine, was launched in the face of doubts about its value, safety and cost-effectiveness, it has been involved in some of the most important marine missions of recent times. "Alvin" and its crew found and retrieved a lost H-bomb, became the first to reach the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, discovered exotic new forms of life in the warm springs of the Galapagos Rift, and sailed through the hyperthermal vents of the East Pacific Rise, where fluid deposits are hot enough to melt lead. This study of the creation of "Alvin" charts these and many other dives, including the most famous of them all, the location in 1985 of the wreck of the "Titanic".

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The location of the Titanic and the discovery of marine plants surviving at unheard-of ocean depths were among the many underwater wonders espied by scientists aboard the submarine Alvin in the early 1970s. Kaharl, a science writer at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, at which Alvin is based, conveys the excitement of these discoveries. Readers will also learn of the initial skepticism of many scientists and administrators toward the idea of a research submersible, of the politics of obtaining funding for its operation, of rivalry among scientists, the technical problems of safely operating a vessel and equipment of great complexity, and the difficulties encountered by female oceanographers before 1980. Of interest to the general public as well as to young adults, the book could nevertheless have been improved through tighter editing and the inclusion of suggestions for further reading.- Judith B. Barnett, Pell Marine Science Lib., Univ. of Rhode Island,

About the Author: Victoria A. Kaharl is Science Writer in Residence at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Alvin is a deep submersible managed by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution which after 50 years of service and some overhauls is still one of the best tools available to the scientists for exploring the deep oceans. In this book Victoria Kaharl describes the origin of Alvin, the first exciting explorations, including the dive on the famed wreck of the Titanic, and how it was a game changer for oceanography. Through the pages of the book a surprising picture of Alvin and its pilots, the scientists that dived with the sub, the ingenuity of the crew, and the complex politics of finding funds for the operations develops. The book is a deserved tribute to the people that made possible to build and operate Alvin.

An excellent in-depth look at the early history of the Alvin submersible (up to 1989, the vehicle's 25th anniversary) that gives a real picture of how difficult and tenuous those early years before its current superstardom were. So many details both profound and amusing that I had never read elsewhere were included, including several vintage editorial cartoons about Alvin's early career and the Palomares incident. I would recommend this book to devoted fans of the history of underwater exploration, although those considering buying it for younger fans should be aware that Kaharl presents the authentic "sailor talk" of the seagoing folk involved, dirty-words and all, without asterisks or dashes. For the hardcore Alvin fan, this book is a must, and one can only hope a similar sequel covering the subsequent 25 years of Alvin's career may someday be produced.

I was happy to stumble upon this book while browsing on . It is a thicker book than I anticipated. If you are interested in Alvin or oceanography, get a copy of this if you can.

This is the "biography" of Alvin, the first manned submersible vehicle developed for scientific research. The book tells the story of Alvin's adventures, from the sub's conception in the minds of a visionary scientist, through the uphill battles for funding and the daunting technical problems in its design and building, to its many triumphs as a premier tool in pioneering advances in our knowledge of the seas. As a science writer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Kaharl had access to the people that made Alvin a reality, as well the sub itself. This isn't the neat, clear, lofty "science"

portrayed in TV programs; this is the nitty-gritty world of real science and real fieldwork, full of dangers, surprises, and seat-of-the-pants decisions.

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