

# Treasures, Shipwrecks & The Dawn of Red Sea Diving

Rarely do I sit down and read a book in its entirety in one sitting, but I started reading *Shipwrecks & The Dawn of Red Sea Diving* by Howard Rosenstein and did not put it down until I had read and thoroughly enjoyed every chapter.

This is a fascinating story that, if it was not the real-life of Howard Rosenstein, it would make a first-class adventure novel. The book details Howard's singular focus to realize his passion for diving, marine science and tourism by bringing the wonders of what would become one of the premier diving destinations, to divers the world over.

HOWARD ROSENSTEIN

# TREASURES, SHIPWRECKS & THE DAWN OF RED SEA DIVING



A Pioneer's Journey

With Forewords by Sylvia Earle & David Doubilet

Most of us have lives made up of varied beginnings and endings. For Howard Rosenstein, it is hard to keep track of all the beginnings in his extraordinary life. One beginning was, at the tender age of eleven, when Howard, armed with a bucket, sponge and liquid soap searched driveways near where he lived for dirty cars to wash. A dirty car and a chance meeting with a former "Hollywood Glamour Girl" turned into a prophetic conversation with the eleven-year-old. The former Glamour Girl recognized something in this young man, possibly his entrepreneurial spirit. During that chance meeting, she told him, "Howie, when you grow up you will be a world traveler." Little did she realize how correct her prophecy was. In just a few years, he was, indeed, traveling the world.

Another beginning was when he was snorkeling off the shore in an area of Israel that had been the harbor of the Roman city of Caesarea. As he returned to the shore, he saw a "flicker" down below which turned out to be the glint of gold. Rather than "Pennies from Heaven", this glint, from a cache of Roman gold coins on the bottom of the sea, was a beginning that spelled unexpected good fortune for Howard Rosenstein. That good fortune would, ultimately, go well beyond Israel and spell good fortune for, not only the diving world, but the world in general.





Another chapter in his amazing life began when his dream of establishing a dive center in the Sinai came to fruition. It took a great deal of effort and *chutzpah* to establish a successful dive center in an area where very few, if any, divers or tourist had ever been. With Howard's successful Sinai Dive Center as his base of operations, he continued his search for the best and most pristine dive sites throughout the Sinai including locating and identifying some of the area's most exciting shipwrecks.

When trying to build a career and a life for himself and his family, especially in an area with much potential political turmoil, it took some *protectzia* (a Hebrew slang term meaning the use of one's connections to your advantage) to make things work in his favor and in the favor of the growth of scuba diving in the region.

Undeterred by natural disasters, roadblocks from politicians and even confrontations with the military,



Howard was able to use his unique skills and more than a little *chutzpah*, such as creatively inventing "*Sinai Rule 950*," to achieve his goals. Through the use of his special brand of diving diplomacy, Howard was able to gain a seat at the table during the historic tourism talks between Egypt and Israel and help achieve what many thought was the unachievable. With the love of scuba diving and the marine environment as common elements, Howard was able to help bring together representatives from Egypt and Israel in the name of regional tourism, that would, for a time, put that part of the world at peace. This historic meeting would help the Red Sea become one of the diving world's most sought-after diving destinations.



*Mt. Sinai dive technical team 1975*

Over the length of his long, varied and exciting career, Howard would introduce friends and notable colleagues to the magical wonders of the underwater world around the Sinai Peninsula. This would include many of the world's top underwater photographers, marine scientists, diplomats and other influential people as they dived, photographed and shared their mutual love for diving in some of the most spectacular and pristine dive sites in the world. Such notables as Dr. Sylvia Earle, Dr. Eugenie Clarke, David Doubilet, Jack McKenney, Hans Hass, Leonard Bernstein, Anwar Sada, Menachem Begin and General Moshe Dyan would enjoy the undersea wonders of the Sinai. They would each help make diving diplomacy a force that would help shape the future of diving and tourism in the region. This would lead to a full understanding of the value of tourism in bringing different peoples and different ideologies to share a common element, the importance of preserving the underwater world. As his brand of diving diplomacy evolved, he would hear the recurring comment from those who dived the Red Sea, "*If I had to choose one place to spend the remainder of my diving days, it would be here.*"



*Howard Rosenstein and Hans Haas at Ras Mohammed 1980*

In fact, Howard's love of diving goes well beyond the bounds of our planet. During a National Geographic expedition to Sharm El Sheik, renowned underwater photographer, David Doubilet captured an underwater image of Howard that was included in the time capsule placed on NASA's *Voyager One* spacecraft launched in 1977. That time capsule is a twelve-inch gold plated copper disk containing pictures and sounds representing life and culture on our planet earth.

That glint of gold from the bottom of the sea turned out to be unexpected good fortune for us all. Thank you, Howard Rosenstein, for [sharing your fascinating journey and career with us](#). This is not only a story worth reading, but also a story worth reading, but also a story worthy of sharing with everyone who loves the sport of scuba diving and the underwater world.

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This book can be purchased at [www.olympusdive.com](http://www.olympusdive.com), [www.divedup.com](http://www.divedup.com) or Amazon.

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### Further reading

For those passionate about the origins and evolution of diving in the Red Sea, *Shipwrecks & The Dawn of Red Sea Diving* finds a remarkable complement in another compelling book: ***Let There Be a Red Sea*** by **Dr. Adel Taher**, Medical Director of DAN Egypt. With decades of experience both as a diver and a diving doctor, Dr. Taher offers a deeply personal and historical account of how Red Sea diving flourished, enriched by his unique insider's perspective. His book provides an essential local lens through which to understand the region's diving culture and transformation. You can read more about his story in this [Dive Magazine article](#).



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## About the author

[Dan Orr](#), President of Dan Orr Consulting, has more than 60 years of diving experiences. He created a college-level diver education program at Wright State University (Dayton, Ohio), was Associate Diving Safety Officer (DSO) at Florida State University and retired from the position of President of Divers Alert Network (DAN) where he helped focus DAN on its worldwide diving safety mission.

Dan is an invited speaker at numerous national and international diver conferences and conducts regular webinars for global audiences on a variety of diving safety subjects. He has published, co-authored and contributed to more than a dozen books and manuals including *101 Tips for Recreational Divers*, *Scuba Diving Safety*, *Diving Science-Revisited*, *Pocket Guide to First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries*; *Pocket Guide for Hazardous Marine Life Injuries*; the *NOAA Diving Manual* and the *DAN Oxygen First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries Training Manual*. He has also published hundreds of articles including *See Clearly. Dive Safely. Vision Correction and Diving*, *The Mental Health Benefits of Scuba Diving*, *The Four Ps of Scuba Diving Safety*, *The Normalization of Deviance (aka shortcut mentality)*, *Time to Return to Diving but Cautiously*, *COVID-19, Local Diving and The Older Diver*, *The Ageless Diver*, *A Crisis Lurking Below the Surface-Emergency Hyperbaric Chamber Availability*, *Diving Safety Is Good Business* and *Open-Circuit Diver Fatalities*.

Dan has been honored by his peers by being the recipient of many prestigious awards including the NOGI Award in Sports/Education and he is a member of the Explorers Club, a member of the Hall of Fame for Disabled Divers, the Diving Industry Hall of Fame, and the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame.