DEEP WATER ISLAND

by ALAN LeMAY

INSTALLMENT FOUR

THE STORY SO FAR: Karen Waterson, convinced by her lawyer, John Colt, that she has a claim to the island estate and fortune of her grandfather, Garrett Waterson, arrives in Honolulu to attempt to gain control of the property. Here she meets Richard Wayne, or Tonga Dick, as he is known throughout the South Pacific. He is a member of the Wayne family that has been in control of her grandfather's island, Alakoa, since the old man's disappearance. Although Tonga Dick knows who she is, Karen attempts to conceal her identity from him. Dick offers to take her sailing and accepts. Dick goes to the home of his half-brothers, Ernest and Willard, for a conference regarding their interest in Alakoa. In the course of their discussion it is revealed that the Wayne family obtained the island for a small sum and under the direction of the boys' uncle, James Wayne, it has been developed to where it has assets of around three million dollars. Next day as Dick takes Karen sailing she learns that he knows who she is and that he is taking her to Alakoa. She wants to go back to Honolulu but he refuses to take her. Now continue with the story.

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CHAPTER IV

She drew into herself, then. After a while Tonga Dick Wayne went aft to stand beside the man at the wheel, but Karen remained at the rail, her eyes on Alakoa.

For a long time the island drew no nearer. The Holokai seemed fixed at a given distance from her goal, racing across a restless sea which forever interposed itself. Under Karen's feet the deck of the little vessel pulsed between the steady boom of her Diesel and the shock of the smooth swells she was smashing to pieces as she drove.

Stealing a glance over her shoulder, Karen saw that Dick himself now took the wheel.

Very much alive with a definite concentration, Tonga Dick Wayne spun his vessel through Alakoa's treacherous shoals. A Hawaiian boy was in the bow with a lead line, his eyes turned to Dick's face, but Dick did not call for the lead. A great mound of water rose under the taffrail of the Holokai, slamming her shoreward like a surfboard before it broke and raced along her counter in a thrashing roar.

Then suddenly upon the little schooner there was silence—unexpected, but complete and final. The engine quit, and the voice of the reef diminished surprisingly, until it seemed no more than a whisper. Effortlessly, on so even a keel that she seemed to glide upon glass, the Holokai drifted under a single scrap of sail into Alakoa's little harbor.

So absorbing was her interest in the little port that for a while she forgot Tonga Dick; she was even unaware of the scrutiny of a hundred pairs of eyes—mostly those of small brown-skinned boys who swam beside the slowing Holokai. What occupied Karen now was this unfamiliar soil where her father had been born: this land which even yet, if John Colt was to be believed, belonged to her.

At one side, just behind the beach, an old warehouse ran, long and low, silver-gray from uncounted rains. It was half smothered in a tangle of sea grapes, and over one end hung a vast flame tree of the brightest crimson Karen had ever seen. Out from it ran a massive but crazily leaning pier; and all except the pier seemed lost in the riot of coconuts and hula palms, breadfruit trees and banyans, which made a veritable jungle behind the beach. This ruined development was the old Waterson layout.

But the pier that Garrett Waterson had built was not the principal landing any more. Farther to the west the Wayne landing stood, a modern concrete dock, long and clean-cut. Behind it a number of long, handsome stucco buildings stood, set in parallel. The roadways between them were ornamented with neat rows of date palms, and here everything was well planned, efficient, and clean.

One hundred yards from the beach the Holokai's anchor roared down, splashing water higher than her booms; and now Dick Wayne was standing beside Karen again.

He spoke to her with an impersonal courtesy.

"The ladder's down. If you're ready to go ashore—"

"No doubt that is very funny," Karen said incisively; "your jokes are perfectly killing. But meantime I am virtually your prisoner, for reasons of your own that I know nothing about. And I don't like it at all."

Dick Wayne spoke again, his voice very low and gentle. "I'm sorry it worked out this way," he said. "Of course, I understand how you feel. I promise you that things will be made as comfortable as possible for you while you're here. My brothers are in Honolulu, and there's no one you'll have to talk to here."

Karen Waterson's anger died out. This man could put her into white blazes of temper, but, curiously, she did not hate him when the anger was gone. Her tremendous curiosity about Alakoa came on her again, as strongly as if the heart of the island itself were pulling upon every part of her.

She glanced at Tonga Dick, who, as usual, was not looking at her; and, after a moment more, silently went down the ladder into the shoreboat.

"Well, cast your line, Hokano!"

Karen Waterson landed upon Alakoa fascinated, deeply stirred, and —afraid.

"Your uncle," Charles Wong said, "is very anxious to see you at once."

Ever since Tonga Dick and Karen had arrived, the tall Chinese, secretary to James Wayne, had been hovering near Dick—if Charles Wong could be said to hover. Charles Wong, who had never seen China, showed in his tall and bony frame the stamp of the Manchu, but about him was no mannerism belonging to the Oriental.

Dick was troubled because his uncle had not come out to meet him. "He's in bed?"

"No; he's supposed to be, but nobody can keep him there."

"Well—I'll go right in."

Yet Dick hesitated; he was wondering whether he had better ask the advice of Charles Wong. After all, it was two years since Tonga Dick had met his uncle face to face.

"This girl," Charles Wong said hesitantly, "this girl—" He stopped.

Dick Wayne was startled. It was as if the Chinese had read his mind. He remained silent, waiting.

"I was just thinking," Charles Wong said after a moment, "that perhaps it might be unwise, considering your uncle's condition, to introduce a stranger now. I mean, if perhaps we just said nothing—"

"Charles," Dick said, "that girl is Karen Waterson."

He went striding off through the big koa-wood rooms, leaving the secretary paralyzed under the weight of a hundred unanswered questions.

James Wayne, deeply swathed in blankets, sat behind a vast desk. His handclasp was quick and strong, as it always had been, though Dick thought there was a tremor in it now.

For the first time, Dick Wayne was looking at his uncle and seeing an old man. Haggard, gray-skinned, deep-carved with the lines which the years had saved up for him, only to mark him with them suddenly, over night—the face of James Wayne was almost unrecognizable to Dick.

"I got your radio, sir," Dick said. "I came on under all power as soon as the message was in."

"I should think," his uncle said slowly, "you would have come anyway, without so urgent an appeal."

Even, Dick noticed, James Wayne's voice had changed; it sounded weary and dry. His old temperate manner of speech was there, and the courtesy, almost like kindness, which had marked his speech all his life, even when dealing with his enemies, was there; but a rustiness was in it now.

James Wayne's eyes were fixed hard on Tonga Dick's face, and those eyes, clear and direct as ever, now seemed to burn. "Is there any message?" he demanded sharply.

"No message, sir," he said.

"Despatches, then?"

"No, sir."

James Wayne stared at him, his eyes boring hard into Tonga Dick. "You mean to say—you mean to say—no message, no letter—no anything?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Yet—he got the despatch from me? He got the word, at the same time you did?"

"I'm certain of it."

For a moment more they looked at each other, the old man's eyes alight with anger, and in his face—not disbelief, but an inability to accept the answer.

"This is incredible," said James Wayne, his unwinking eyes fastened hard upon Tonga Dick's face.

Dick said nothing, and the moments ticked by in such a silence that Dick thought he could count the pulsing of his own heart.

"If this is true," James Wayne said sharply, "then how does it happen that you are here?"

"I'm here against my orders."

Silence again; but now after a moment more Dick saw the light of anger and unbelief die out of his uncle's eyes, giving way to a bleak fatality.

"Name of God!" James Wayne said, his voice low and thick. "Name of God!"

He turned his head and looked out the window, across the darkening fog; and that slight movement emphasized the stillness with which he sat, hardly seeming to breathe. By clear daylight you could see the bay from that window, miles away and far below. Nothing was to be seen there now.

When James Wayne spoke again his voice was flat and dead. It was as if their interchange was over, with nothing more to be said, and that the words he now spoke were routine words, hopeless of result.

"If you've talked with your brothers," James Wayne said, "you know the situation here."

"Yes," said Dick.

"Have you seen this man John Colt?"

"Only at a distance, sir."

"I've seen him," James Wayne said, speaking without emotion. "An acquisitive and predatory type, almost a piratic type; but a man born to succeed, in his way."

"But the girl I have not seen," Dick's uncle said now. "This Karen Waterson — have you seen her, Dick?"

Tonga Dick hesitated. "Yes," he said at last.

"What does she look like?" James Wayne demanded, his voice rising a little. "Does she look hard? Does she appear grasping—predatory?"

Tonga Dick stirred uneasily. "No," he said after a moment.

"Yet she must be," James Wayne said, his voice vibrant. "That girl is evidently made of something harder than glass."

James Wayne had always spoken well; but at the same time he had always spoken briefly, choosing few words. Except for the curtness of anger, Dick had never seen him speak with emotion before. Now, as James Wayne fell silent, Dick wished that he were away.

"Dick," James Wayne said with a deep conviction, "I don't believe she's his granddaughter at all."

"My brothers told me," Dick said, "that they had thoroughly investigated that; they say that her claim of identity can be substantiated in any court."

"I suppose," James Wayne said wearily, "we may assume that the claim of relationship will be substantiated—at least to the satisfaction of the court. Beyond that—beyond that, what is your impression of her case?"

"My advice," Tonga Dick said, "is to settle at once, out of court, at the cost of any compromise whatever. This case must never come to trial. If it comes to trial, they will win."

A strange thing happened then. The immobile, apparently bloodless figure of James Wayne suddenly galvanized with such an explosion of energy as Dick had never seen James Wayne use. The old man shot straight up, and behind him the heavy chair crashed onto its back, and the blankets fell away to a muffle about his legs. A white blaze was in the old man's eyes, and every muscle of his body seemed to tremble.

"No!" he shouted. "No, I say! Never while I live! Not one cent—not one cent—"

The door opened and Charles Wong was there, and his thick glasses were beseeching upon Tonga Dick's face. In the moment's silence the blaze within James Wayne seemed to die away. Charles Wong picked up the chair, and the old man accepted it. Deftly the tall Chinese sought to rearrange the blankets.

"Dick," James Wayne said, "you know and I know there's a way to break this case."

Dick was silent; but it was the silence of a tentative assent.

"We've come to a showdown," his uncle said. "We've got to show down our cards—both yours and mine."

"Are you sure you want that?" Dick asked.

"It begins to look as if there isn't any other way."

"I'm afraid there isn't, sir. Although—although—"

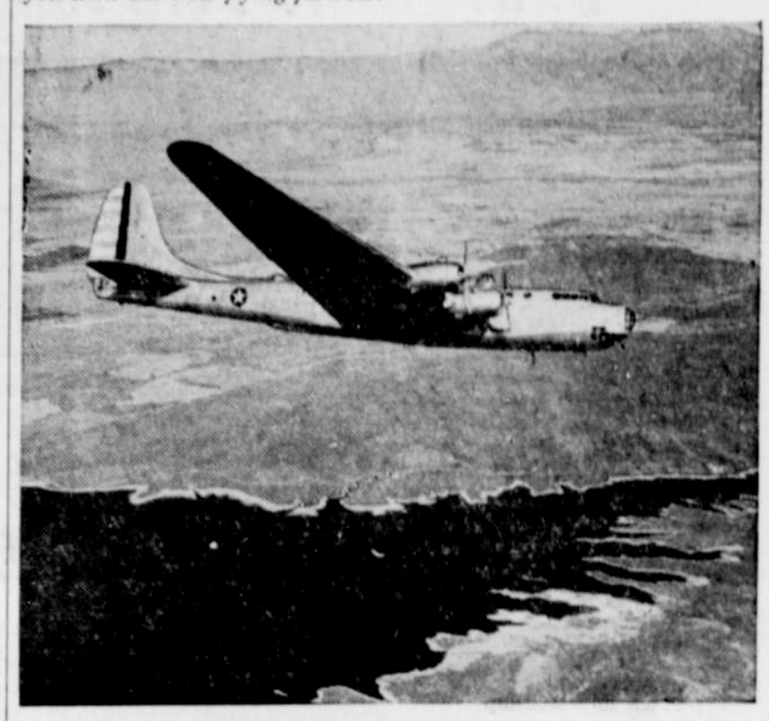
"Later," Charles Wong put in. "There's plenty of time for this. Mister Dick, your uncle should not talk any more right now."

Dick attempted to speak, but was checked—partly by his own loss of words and partly by Charles Wong's shaking head. Silently, Tonga Dick Wayne left his uncle's room.

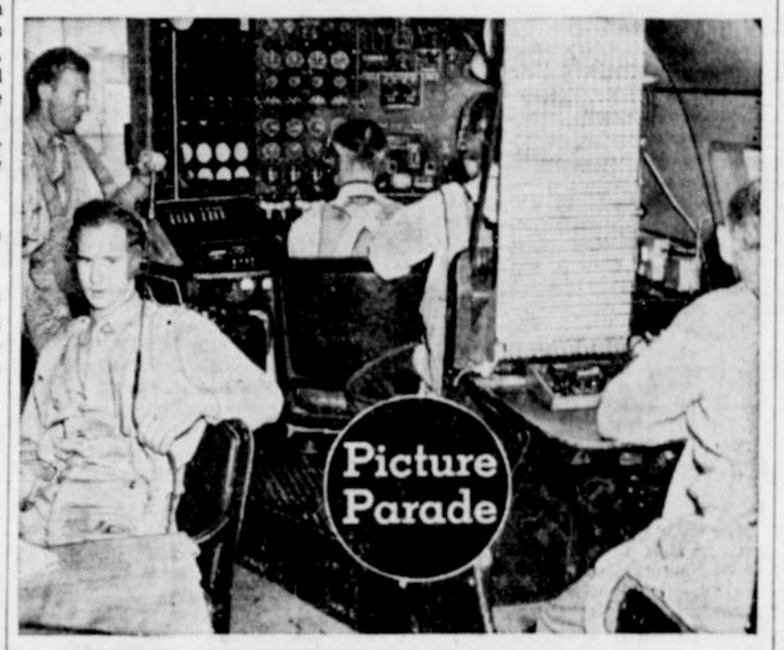
(TO BE CONTINUED)

Uncle Sam's Aerial Giant, B-19

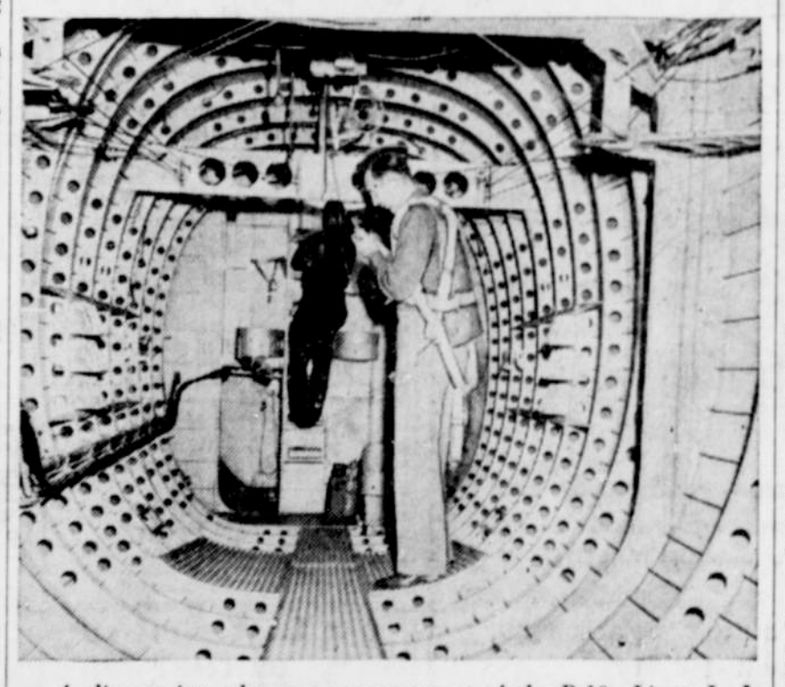
It is comforting in these days of air blitzes to know that Uncle Sam can boast the largest bombing plane in the world. It is the $3,500,000 B-19, a four-engined Douglas whose engines produce a total of 8,000 h. p. The gross load weight of this aerial giant is 82 tons, and it has a wing-spread of 212 feet. These pictures acquaint you with our new flying fortress.



Snapped in flight over a river in southern California is the giant B-19. The picture was made during a test flight, with twenty persons aboard.



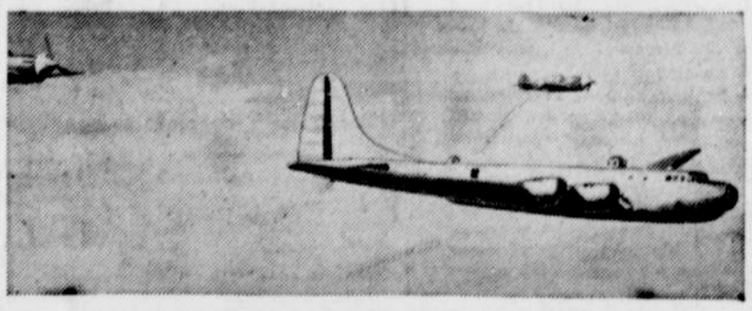
Looking aft from the pilot's cabin we see the radio and control panel which, with the pilot's instrument panel, comprise the "brains" of the world's mightiest plane.



A glimpse into the rear compartment of the B-19. Lieut. L. J. Doyle, veteran test pilot, is shown at the inter-plane phone. Machine gun mounts (not shown) are on sides opposite the lieutenant.

Lieut. Col. Stanley Umstead is here pictured at the controls during a three-hour test flight.

A view of the two starboard motors as seen from the cabin of the B-19.



The B-19 being escorted by two P-40 pursuit ships.

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