

## 32nd Anniversary—The Night I will never forget!

I remember many incidents where I came close to death, but never like the night of January 6, 1978. At age 4 and 6, I almost drowned; at age 8, I fell from a mango tree onto a two-story garage, rolled down to a chicken coop, then fell onto the sidewalk; in 1963, I almost got shot in the head while hunting; in 1964, while going to school, we rear ended a school bus; in 1967, the Navy helicopter I was in crashed in the South China Sea, Vietnam.

On Friday, January 6, 1978, driving down Mt. Haleakala, after putting in a day's work at the Hawaiian Telephone Microwave Relay Station, I could see the rough north shore waves. Nothing unusual for this time of the year, 15 to 25 foot waves, normal.

That evening, I received a call from Albert Soon an experience fisherman. He asked if I could go akule bottom fishing and trolling with him that night because his regular fishing partner went to the Hula Bowl. I told him the water looked pretty rough, but he mentioned checking with the weather service and it was okay. I agreed to go, not feeling comfortable about it.

My brothers Paul and Vince ( Vincent visiting from CA) came over to see if I would go out drinking with them. Told them sorry, had to go fishing. As they were leaving, I jokingly told them not to get too drunk, in the event they needed to look for me. We laughed about it but I later learned it created an air of uneasiness for Paul.

I met Albert at his house in Wailuku (10:00 p.m.). I parked my car on the side of the road, and for some reason, I left my wallet in the glove compartment, not wanting my wallet to get wet. We towed Albert's 18-foot homemade boat, with his Jeep, down to Kahului Harbor.

Launching the boat was difficult because of the rough surges, but we finally got it sailing. **Read the news article for the story.** I credit my Navy water survival training and that good physical condition I had in those days. I ran six to nine miles daily, played tennis, and practiced Karate in surviving the seven-and-one-half hour ordeal. If it wasn't for the Japan Maru finding me in the morning, who knows! We weren't expected back until Saturday evening.

While at the Harbor Security Office, I called 911, my wife Fay (three months pregnant), and Albert's wife Mary. My son Chris (6) didn't want to leave his cartoon shows to pickup daddy.

I was 32 years old, 32 years ago. I was chosen from the Man above, to witness Albert's departure. I believe it was destiny, as no matter how much I tried convincing him that the weather condition wasn't good, his mind was set. Later, Albert was declared dead on the night of Jan. 6 due to my statements in court. The family didn't have to wait for six years (statute of limitation) to finalize necessary legal matters..

# Wailuku man missing after boating mishap

*Jan. 9-1978*

The land and ocean search for a Wailuku man who was lost following a boating mishap Friday night has been suspended pending further developments, according to the U.S. Coast Guard Honolulu Rescue Center.

Missing, and presumed drowned, is Albert Soon, 60. He and Howard Platiro of Wailuku intended to go fishing along the northeast coast of Maui Friday. The 18-foot boat they were on was broken apart by a large wave which struck about 11:35 p.m., Platiro said.

Platiro had been in the water about 7½ hours when he was rescued by a Japanese tuna boat. He was able to report the accident about 8:20 a.m. Saturday. The search was conducted until 7:15 that night.

Platiro said he and Soon noticed the rough weather, which included 10 to 12-foot swells and wind speeds of 15 to 20 knots, but felt the water would smooth out once they were past the Kahului Harbor

breakwater.

About 10 minutes out, they were struck by a large wave and lost the main anchor. They rigged a secondary anchor but about 10 minutes later, the boat developed engine trouble. Attempts to restart it for about an hour were unsuccessful so the men resorted to the spare engine.

Shortly after they started it, a second wave struck the boat and Platiro found himself in the water, he told police. He called out to Soon who replied and sounded like he was about 10 yards away. Platiro was able to hang on to the bow of the boat, the only floating portion, but was unable to aid Soon.

The Japanese boat conducted a short search of the area, about three miles north of the Waiehu buoy, after Platiro was rescued but found only some items that were on the boat.

Involved in the search for Soon Saturday were the Coast Guard's cutter Cape

Newagen, a 21-foot boat, and two helicopters: a boat from Flotilla 26, the Coast Guard auxiliary, a rescue party on shore, and a private plane.



Albert Soon's Tennis Tournament Nov. 1977  
Mens Final: Howard (Champ)-Albert-Stan Nagamatsu (Runner-up)