

EXAMPLE LONG HISTORICAL STORY BASED ON RESEARCH

Prompt: Write a long historical story about a famous event that really happened and the people who participated in it. Show the scientific challenges that were faced and how they were resolved. Make sure that the story contains at least eight paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Provide a reference list containing at least four references and in-text citations where needed. Use the APA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: Lost Submarine

Lost Submarine
Jean Schumaker
Central High School

Mr. Roberts
General Science
15 May 2018

Lost Submarine

In 1968, the Soviet Union lost a submarine named K-129 (“Soviet submarine K-129,” 2018). Their 300-foot-long submarine just disappeared! Apparently, the submarine had had a mysterious accident on board and sank to the bottom of the ocean. The 98 crew members and three nuclear ballistic missiles were lost (Aid, Burr, & Blanton, 2010). The Soviets did not know where it was, and even if they did, they did not have the equipment to retrieve it. Moreover, they did not believe the United States had the equipment to retrieve it. After all, no one had ever retrieved something located more than 1000 feet under the surface of the ocean. No one had attempted such a feat. Nevertheless, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) discovered that the submarine was located three miles below the surface of the ocean about 1560 miles northwest of Hawaii (Aid et al., 2010). CIA agents wanted to retrieve the submarine, and they set in motion a secret mission called “Project Azorian” (sometimes called “Project Jennifer”) to salvage the submarine (“Project AZORIAN,” 2012).

The agents recruited Howard Hughes, a famous U.S. billionaire, to take part in the secret mission. They presented a plan to him for obtaining the K-129 so that the U.S. could learn about the Soviets’ equipment on board the ship. Interestingly, Hughes agreed to the plan. He agreed to build a ship that would have the ability to reach the submarine and pull it up to the surface. He also agreed to build the ship large enough so that the submarine could be hidden inside once it was retrieved. He promised to tell a fake story about building the custom-made ship for ocean mining. Until then, no one had explored the idea of ocean mining. Because Howard Hughes was known as a trailblazer and grew up in a mining family, the CIA agents thought he would be believed. That turned out to be true.

Immediately, Howard Hughes set to work on building the ship; he named it the Hughes Glomar Explorer. He hired the Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Company to build it for \$350 million dollars from 1973 to 1974 ("Glomar Explorer," 2018). It was a deep-sea drillship platform; its purpose was announced to be drilling for manganese nodules in the ocean floor. These nodules are "potato-sized chunks of manganese mixed with iron, nickel, cobalt and other useful metals" (Intelligence Resource Program, 2012, p. 1). The ship was 618.8 feet long, and 115.8 feet wide. It was 51 feet deep ("Glomar Explorer," 2018). Thus, it was plenty big enough to hide the submarine. Moreover, it had a submersible vessel that had a claw that could grab the submarine and bring it up to the ocean surface.

Once completed, the ship was launched in June of 1974. It traveled to the spot where the submarine was located and parked right above it on July 4, 1974 (Aid et al., 2010). Unfortunately, the Soviets were so interested in the idea of mining the ocean floor that they positioned a ship near the Hughes Glomar Explorer and at least one helicopter above it. They wanted to witness the new technology for mining the ocean floor. Naturally, the crew of the Hughes Glomar Explorer became nervous that the Soviets would discover the true mission of the ship. They wondered whether they should abort the mission. Nevertheless, a decision was made by the CIA to continue with the mission. The ship began to reach down to the ocean floor with its submersible vehicle so that it could grab the submarine. This process took two weeks. Meanwhile, the Soviets stayed close to the Explorer so that they could observe the process.

While bringing the submarine up to the surface, the equipment on the Hughes Glomar Explorer malfunctioned. Once the submarine had been lifted about a mile off the ocean floor, the ship began to shake like an earthquake. Not surprisingly, with all that movement, the submarine broke into two pieces: a smaller 40-foot piece that was being held by the claw, and

a larger piece. The larger piece broke up and fell to the ocean floor. Meanwhile, the Soviets were closely watching all the activity on the Explorer. The crew of the Explorer felt a great deal of stress and anxiety because the Soviets could attack them at any time to obtain their property. Given the danger involved with the Soviets watching, the CIA agents wondered whether they should continue the mission. After further discussion, a decision was made to hold onto the smaller piece of the submarine and to store it inside the Explorer. With some trepidation, the crew kept working to bring the smaller piece up to the surface for the remaining two miles.

As the smaller piece approached the underside the Explorer, the Soviet vessel nearby suddenly honked its horn three times to say goodbye. The Soviets never suspected that their submarine was being recovered, and they left the site. Interestingly, accounts vary on the contents of the recovered section of the submarine because the mission was classified. One account reported that the CIA agents recovered three nuclear missiles, two nuclear torpedoes, the ship's code machine, and codebooks. This information enabled U.S. agents to analyze the Soviet weapons and decode messages sent by the Soviets. Other accounts reported that nothing of importance was found.

The mystery of what was actually found continues to this day. A book about the mission titled *Red Star Rogue* by Kenneth Sewell (2005) has reported that all of K-129 was eventually found and brought up to the surface. In addition, the book claims that all of the dead crew members' bodies were recovered and given proper burials at sea. However, despite newspaper articles about the secret mission and requests for more information, the CIA has refused to provide any information. The famous phrase "We will neither confirm nor deny" was first used by the CIA in relation to the first mission of the Explorer (Martin, 2017). A few years after the mission, in 1997, the Explorer was converted so that it could drill in waters up to 11,500 feet in

depth. The cost of this conversion was \$180 million (“Glomar Explorer,” 2018). Then, in 2015, an announcement declared that the ship would be scrapped. The cost of operating and maintaining it had become too expensive.

In conclusion, regardless of the actual materials and technology found in the submarine by the CIA, the mission was deemed a success by many people. It was the first mission to go to the ocean floor for a depth of three miles. It was the first mission to bring something up from that depth. After the mission, the Explorer was used for drilling for oil in the ocean floor at extreme depths--another first. Once the technology for this task had been invented, similar tasks, like recovering airplanes lost in the middle of the ocean became more likely. Clearly, Project Azorian opened up a whole new frontier with regard to ocean exploration, mining, and drilling. Given the right people and money, almost anything can be accomplished.

References

- Aid, M., Burr, W., & Blanton, T. (2010, February). Project Azorian: The CIA's declassified history of the Glomar Explorer. *The National Security Archive*. Retrieved from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb305/>
- Glomar Explorer. (2018, March 1). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glomer_Explorer
- "Project AZORIAN." (2012, November 21). *Central Intelligence Agency*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-museum/experience-the-collection/text-version/stories/project-azorian.html>
- Martin, M. (2017, September). 'The taking of K-129': How the CIA stole a sunken Soviet sub off the ocean floor. *National Public Radio*, Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/16/551222628/-the-taking-of-k-129-how-the-cia-stole-a-sunken-soviet-sub-off-the-ocean-floor>
- Sewell, K., & Richmond, C. (2005). *Red star rogue: The untold story of a Soviet submarine's nuclear strike attempt on the U.S.* NY: Simon Schuster.
- Sharp, D. (2012). *The CIA's greatest covert operation: Inside the daring mission to recover a nuclear-armed Soviet sub*. Lawrence, KS: United Press of Kansas.
- "Soviet submarine K-129 (1960)." (2018, January). *Wikipedia*, Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_submarine_K-129_\(1960\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_submarine_K-129_(1960))