

Paris, February 18th. 1954

FRENCH BATHYSCAPHE PLUNGES to 15,333 ft
Pool coverage serviced to all competition
Off Dakar, on February 15th 1954
Positive developed, 225 meters - 750 ft

Two French naval officers went down under the sea for more than two and a half miles, the greatest oceanic descent in man's history, 153 miles off Dakar.

Aboard the bathyscaphe were Lt. Commander Georges Houot and engineer Pierre Henri Willm, 27 years old. Both had been working on the bathyscaphe for more than two years. The French naval bathyscaphe was built under Mr. Willm's direction. Commander HOOUT is 40 years old and Mr. Willm 27. Their plunge smashed the previous record for an oceanic descent of 10,520 feet established last October off Naples by Professor Auguste Piccard and his son Jacques.

The two French officers selected the spot off Dakar as being one of the deepest known sections of the seas. They were under water for over six hours. Before the plunge, the bathyscaphe was towed into position and frogmen armed with poles to fight off the sharks verified the apparatus's exterior.

The bathyscaphe is a 35 ton craft built around an old bathyscaphe designed by Professor Piccard. It was given to the French Navy by the Belgian Navy. It floats free in the water and descends on the ballast principle.

The craft carries metal weights held to the sides by magnets, and these weights drag the craft down. It also carries tons of gasoline - which is lighter than water -- which brings the craft to the surface when the ballast-weights are dropped off.

Pictures show, the last preparations of the bathyscaphe in the outer harbor of Dakar, towing of the craft on the chosen spot, then frogmen dive around the bathyscaphe for last checkings, before Lt. Commander Houot and Mr. Henri Willm get on board by means of a rubber-boat. The bathyscaphe is escorted by several French Navy ships, and both Lt. Commander Houot and Mr. Willm are brought to the spot by the "HENRI MOONIER" research-ship of the French Navy under command of Commander Tallies. Air views show the bathyscaphe being towed to the spot, then plunging.

After six hours underwater, the bathyscaphe is sighted by an airplane and navy ships speed to pick the two french officers up. On board the "HENRI MOONIER" Lt. Commander HOOUT and Engineer Pierre-Henri Willm are interviewed for Radiodiffusion and they give an account of their deep plunge, the deepest ever made by man.