

Novelist and Explorer Clive Cussler Dies at 88



Clive Cussler with the wreck of the submarine H.L. Hunley (Friends of the Hunley)

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Clive Cussler, the author of dozens of action novels and sponsor of countless shipwreck-hunting expeditions, passed away at his home in Arizona on Monday.

Cussler, 88, came to fame with the publication of the thriller "Raise the Titanic!" in 1976. It was the third book in his now-famous Dirk Pitt series, but the first to gain widespread public attention, and it soared onto the bestseller lists. The book became a movie in 1980, and Dirk Pitt went on to a long, adventurous career, appearing in 22 more novels between 1978 and 2018.

Overall, Cussler published 84 volumes of fiction, nonfiction and children's fiction over the course of his life, selling about 100 million copies. The numbers will keep going up after his passing: His 85th book, "Journey of the Pharaohs," is due for release next month, and his publisher told the New York Times that there are still more manuscripts in the pipeline.

Cussler was also an avid diver, and in 1979, he used the proceeds from his book sales to finance a subsea-search nonprofit, the National Underwater and Marine Agency - a real outfit named after a fictional agency in his Dirk Pitt series. NUMA has located 60 wreck sites to date,

and Cussler participated in many of its voyages and dives - as documented in a nonfiction book, "The Sea Hunters."

Among its other famous finds, NUMA conducted or contributed to the discovery of the Confederate ironclad *Manassas*; the steamer *Lexington*; the Cunard Line steamship *Carpathia* (the ship that rescued *Titanic's* survivors); and the Confederate sub *H.L. Hunley*, the first combat submarine to sink a warship.

The *Hunley* was raised in 2000, and the organization founded to [restore](#) and conserve her - the Friends of the Hunley - paid tribute to Cussler in a statement Wednesday. "[Cussler's] National Underwater and Marine Agency led the expedition that found the *Hunley* in 1995 and ultimately enabled the burial of the world's first submariners. His love of adventure will be missed by all. Today we honor a life well-lived. Godspeed sailor," the organization wrote.

Cussler is survived by his wife, Janet Horvath, along with his three children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.