

## CHAPTER 16: DIGGING OUT AFTER A LONG ABSENCE

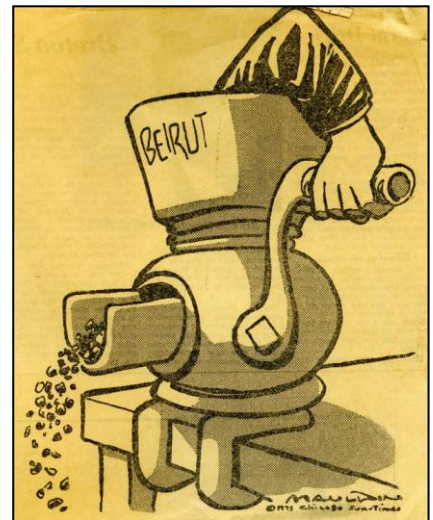
### The Summer In Athens - Getting Back To Unfinished Business

I wished that my April had been spent in Paris rather than in Iraq and Iran, but now that I was comfortably back home enjoying life in Athens again (and regularly sleeping in my own bed for the first time in three months) everything was fine....but with my recent health crisis still fresh in my mind I began to change my work habits. There had been no health problems since I had returned to work and to keep things that way my travel plans for the balance of the year consisted of a few short business trips to Geneva along with some personal time away.....a week long ocean cruise with Joella from Italy to Rhodes in early June and a three week road trip with Joella and my father from Athens to Paris in late September. In between the trip to Rhodes and the trip to Paris there would be a lot of catching up to do in the office.

Upon returning from Iran there was about a three month backlog of unfinished business waiting for me: I would need to continue working my way through the support plans for HP Iran and MEE Saudi Arabia, prepare a draft support plan for Iraq based on the potential MOIM deal, get started on the distributor development program, and prepare for the Packard / Young visit, which was tentatively scheduled for the first week of September. In addition, Claude would soon be arriving from Saudi Arabia and Pat Matthews from England. It was easy to conclude that even with the travel component of my job temporarily on the back burner there was still going to be a lot of pressure.

#### **THE CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON.....Paradise Lost.....Beirut Self-Destructs**

My plan to stay put for a while was supported by what was happening in Beirut. Just as Doug and I returned to Athens from Iran the civil war in Lebanon broke out and there was no way of telling how far the conflict would spread and how much more dangerous traveling in the region might become. Having been to Beirut on two previous occasions and having enjoyed what this beautiful city had to offer it was difficult for me to visualize people running through the streets shooting up the place and each other, but this was no surprise to someone like Claude who had lived in Lebanon his entire life and was familiar with the fragile political nature and turbulent history of the country.



At that time there were at least 18 religious factions in Lebanon (how many people have ever heard of Druze Muslims and Coptic Christians?), many of which were in control of large areas within Beirut (and also within Lebanon). To protect their turf several had built substantial militias (private armies). Although peaceful for many years the long-simmering conflicts between the factions had slowly turned Beirut into a powder keg just waiting for someone to ignite. In late April a busload of Palestinian guerillas was ambushed as they passed through a Christian neighborhood. This was the catalyst that set off the initial explosion of violence that would eventually turn into a full blown civil war between Lebanese Christians and Muslims. Of course, like a playground bully the PLO, who represented the disenfranchised Palestinian refugee community, would continually stir the pot in the hope of keeping the conflict going so that they could gain some advantage in the midst of the chaos.

This was a real civil war not simply a matter of the government battling it out with a group of motivated rebels. With so many stakeholders and so many ever-changing alliances it was difficult for outsiders to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. To keep the civil war from spilling out of Lebanon the Syrian

army sent in 40,000 troops to stabilize the situation. But even after the Syrians arrived the civil war continued for years and this eventually brought the Israelis into the conflict as well as the U.S. President Ronald Reagan, in a move that proved to the world how naïve U.S. politicians could be, stationed about two hundred U.S. Marines near the Beirut airport.....most of whom were quickly killed by a suicide bomber driving a truck full of explosives.....

The **Beirut Barracks Bombing** occurred during the Lebanese Civil War when two truck bombs struck separate buildings housing United States and French Military forces – members of the Multinational Force in Lebanon—killing 299 American and French servicemen. The organization Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the bombing.

In the early morning hours of October 23, 1983, a yellow Mercedes-Benz truck drove to Beirut International Airport, where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Marines under the 2nd Marine Division had set up its local headquarters. The truck was not the water truck they had been expecting, but a hijacked truck carrying the explosives. The truck turned onto an access road leading to the compound and circled a parking lot. The driver then accelerated and crashed through a barbed wire fence around the parking lot, passed between two sentry posts, crashed through a gate and drove into the lobby of the Marine headquarters. The sentries at the gate were operating under rules of engagement which made it very difficult to respond quickly to the truck. Sentries were ordered to keep their weapons at condition four (no magazine inserted and no rounds in the chamber). By the time the two sentries were able to engage, the truck was already inside the building's entry way, armed. The suicide bomber detonated his explosives, which were equivalent to 5,400 kg (12,000 pounds) of TNT. The force of the explosion collapsed the four-story building into rubble, crushing many inside.

Americans were shocked not only by the peace-time deaths of so many servicemen but also by the nature of the attack. From the “western” perspective, the central premise behind war has always been that the other guy doesn’t want to die any more than you do and will give up when death is imminent. As we have learned so well in recent years this logic is not applicable to Middle Eastern conflicts, where ignorant and illiterate peasants are routinely manipulated by intelligent and educated radicals whose agenda includes the use of suicide bombings to achieve their ideological goals. The intellectuals do not commit suicide, they let the “true believers” do it. Other than the short lived Japanese bonsai and kamikaze attacks that the U.S. had briefly experienced at the end of World War II, the concept of committing suicide for political or religious reasons was completely foreign to us. This is no longer the case.

When I heard the news about the conflict that had just broken out in Beirut I thought to myself, “Man, am I glad that I didn’t make any investments in Lebanon”. Then it quickly dawned on me that Claude’s wife and children were there. When I had Anne call them we could not get through. The next day Claude phoned me from Beirut. He had managed to get a flight from Riyadh that morning, was now at home, and had already sent Lea and the children to stay with her sister outside the city. Claude was now focused on trying to save their belongings. I could hear the chatter of automatic weapons firing in the background as he explained to me that Palestinian gunman were moving their families out of the refugee camps, which were under attack, and into apartments that they were commandeering. These apartments were in Claude’s neighborhood and he knew that it would be just a short time before they got to his.

When Claude’s father had passed away several years before, he had left Claude a great many valuable antique Persian carpets. Rather than risk everything by waiting for his scheduled move to Athens in July Claude asked for me to approve the immediate shipment of his family’s personal affects. He had a freight forwarder already lined up to pack and ship everything. While he was still on the line I put him on hold and called Doug’s direct number in Geneva. Luckily, this was one of the few times when he was actually in his office. When I told Doug that we had to get Claude’s family and their belongings out of Beirut, now, he just said “okay”. I was surprised by his simple and straight to the point response. Doug usually wanted to wring some kind concession out of me before approving any urgent request. He must have been preoccupied with his own problems, which was just fine with me. Claude’s shipment arrived in Athens without difficulty, followed by Lea and the children and eventually by Claude when his assignment at the KFSH was completed in July. Any plans we had to develop Lebanon were now dead. I would be in Beirut only one more time, and not by choice.

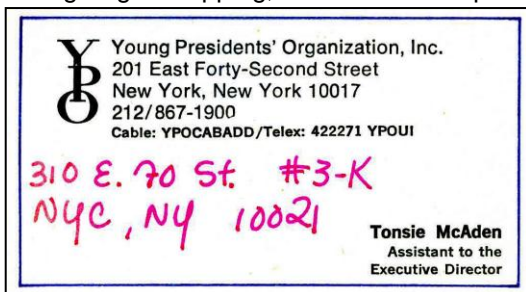
## THE SEA CRUISE TO RHODES .....Taking A Short Break While Still Possible

Our visit to Rhodes was something that I had been looking forward to ever since arriving in Greece and with the news of Doug's move to Athens I wanted to get the trip behind me before he arrived in mid-June. After practically living with him the entire month of April I had a good idea of what to expect. Ever the rabid salesman intent on utilizing every resource at his disposal to get orders Doug viewed vacations as an unnecessary distraction (unless it was his vacation) from our mission. Even though I was hired to set up service operations throughout the Middle East, which required me to spend a good portion of my time in planning mode, Doug was always pressing me to "get out into the territory" as if I was a sales engineer who needed to be forever on the road. In my role I had no reason to be constantly traveling and I had no intention of killing myself just to satisfy Doug's manic nature. The irony was that the less time I spent in the office developing and implementing our service plans the less likely it would be that Doug would realize the results he wanted.....without service we wouldn't be able to sell anything. Did he think that the planning for HP Iraq was going to magically happen without me spending considerable time at my desk?

During our first year in Athens, while I was busy flying all over the Middle East having loads of fun, Joella occupied herself with language lessons. We soon discovered that she had a natural ability to learn multiple languages and quickly became not only fluent in Greek but also Italian .....so that she would be able to better communicate with her family in Northern Italy. However, after the excitement of moving to Greece began to fade she started to get bored and this motivated her to look for some temporary or part time work. I was very much in favor of this because a bored Joella was an unhappy Joella.....and that was not a good thing.

Joella felt sure that with her background as an executive secretary she would be able to find something meaningful and within a few days was in contact with Executive Services Limited, a temporary employment agency in Athens. The result was a short assignment at the Hilton Hotel helping to plan a meeting of the Young President's Organization (YPO). In 1975 their annual meeting was held in Athens and Michael Karageorgis, the owner and President of Karageorgis Shipping, an ocean transport company, would be the host and

responsible for making all of the arrangements. The meeting was a great success and to reward everyone involved in the planning Karageorgis handed each person, including Joella, a personal letter that would give them free first class passage on any of his cruise ships. When she showed me the letter I was skeptical (which is my normal state), but we decided to see if it was legitimate. It was.



### Getting There

After spending April with Doug and playing catch up in the office the entire month of May I needed a break. So, we booked the Karageorgis ship the Mediterranean Sky for a short cruise that would take us from Ancona, Italy to the island of Rhodes. Doug was not yet in Athens and was therefore not in a position to interfere with our plans (and I was smart enough not to tell him). We flew from Athens to Milano and took a train to Ancona. It should have been about a four hour train ride but it turned out to be a milk run that took eight. We made it to the ship with about 30 minutes to spare. One thing I learned about Italian trains is to never book a first class ticket unless it is on an express train.....which have assigned seats. It is a waste of money. The first class sections of the inter-city milk runs are always filled with people who do not have first class tickets and the conductors are very reluctant to make them move. When the conductor asked us if we wanted him to check people's tickets we decided that it was better to sit on our suitcases in the hallway and wait for space to become available than to make a lot of our fellow travelers upset.

The Mediterranean Sky was a beautiful ship and the letter that we carried from Karageorgis actually did provide free first class accommodations and all meals. On our first night on board we went to the first class dining room. Our waiter was a very funny and expressive Italian fellow who was dressed in a tuxedo and, as you might expect, had a small towel draped over his arm. After we were seated he politely asked me if he could have our “meal ticket”. Not being familiar with cruise ship procedures I replied by asking him to tell me what a meal ticket was. He explained that before we could eat at any of the dining rooms on the ship we would have to go to the purser’s office and buy a meal ticket. Having to find the purser’s office was a bit of a challenge for me so I reached into my coat pocket and as I handed him the letter from Karageorgis I said, “Will this work”? As he read the letter his eyes got bigger and bigger and at one point I thought they might even pop out of his head. After he regained his composure he simply clicked his heels and said, “yes sir, what would you like?” After that we were treated like royalty. I must have gained 10 pounds in the three days we were aboard.



The Mediterranean Sky

Almost everyone disembarked when we reached Crete. There were only 5 or 6 people remaining on board when the ship departed for Rhodes, which was about eight hours away. I speculated that with the war raging in Lebanon not many people were willing to venture further into the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Having already visited Crete with the Potes the previous year we had decide to pass on Crete and go directly to our final destination, Rhodes.



The Author

### A Brief History

Because of its strategic location Rhodes was another crossroads of the Middle East. In ancient times it was the home of the Colossus of Rhodes, the bronze statue that supposedly once stood above the harbor entrance and was one of the wonders of the ancient world. At the fall of the Byzantine Empire in the 1300’s the Knights Hospitaller occupied the island and from that time onward were known as the Knights of Rhodes. The island joined the Ottoman Empire when it fell to the Turkish Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522. Rhodes remained under Ottoman rule until 1912 when it was seized by the Italians during the Italo-Turkish War. Rhodes, along with the other Islands in the Dodecanese Archipelago, remained under Italian control until 1943 when the government capitulated during World War II. It was then occupied by the Germans until the end of the war. In 1947 the Dodecanese were united with Greece. During their 31year occupation the Italians restored many historical sites, including the Grand Masters Palace, which is now a U.N. World Heritage Site. During our visit we noted that the palace, which was the home of the Knights of Rhodes, looked like it was new.



Dodecanese & Eastern Mediterranean

After three days in Rhodes we flew back to Athens. During our trip I had spent more time thinking about my planning for the Packard visit than I did about Doug’s arrival in Athens. In five years my career had advanced from obscure customer service engineer in the Mountain View Corporate Customer Service Center to a position where I would be presenting service plans for the Mediterranean and Middle East to David Packard and John Young. The thought of it was both exhilarating and sobering.



Grand Masters Palace



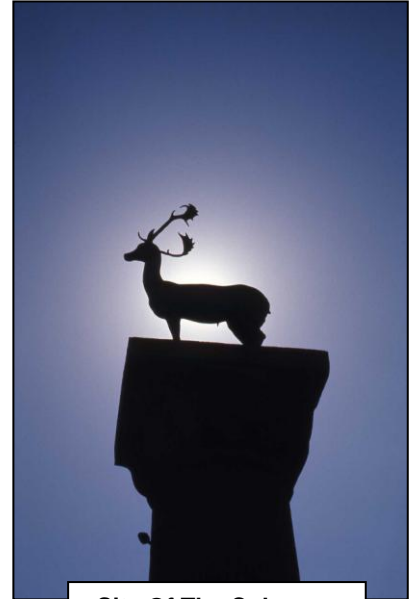
Lindos



Rhodes City Walls



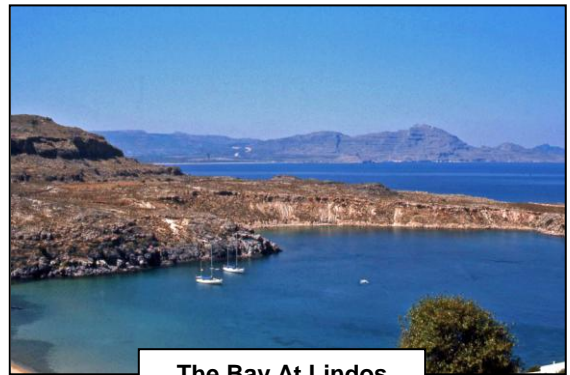
Palace Courtyard



Site Of The Colossus



Rhodes Harbor Quay



The Bay At Lindos

**COMIC RELIEF.....Provided By John Inglis**

With all of the serious stuff that was going on in the office it was nice to have some occasional light hearted interludes that would allow us to unwind a bit. The comic relief was inevitably and amply provided by John Inglis. Of all the humorous episodes that I describe in this story more often than not John Inglis was at the center of them. He would frequently get himself into some predicament that would give us all a good laugh. The following are a couple of examples that occurred during the summer of 1975. The first one happened just as we returned from Rhodes.

**Hippocrates The Cat.....Not Your Average Pet Pussy Cat**

During her first few months in Athens Anne had met and made friends with a Greek couple from the Island of Aegina. She became very close to them and as a gesture of friendship they brought her a kitten

they had found on the island. I have always been a cat lover and stopped by Anne's apartment to have a look at the kitten, which Anne had named Hippocrates. This was no ordinary cat. It had huge ears and a ringed tail and after a few minutes I speculated that her friends had unknowingly given her some kind of feral cat. As the months passed the cat grew bigger and bigger and became much more difficult to manage. By the time he was a about a year old Anne and I were the only humans that he respected.

When I returned to the office from Rhodes Anne was away on a two week vacation to Switzerland and as I was not around when she departed she had asked John to feed the cat. John reluctantly agreed, but could hardly wait for me to get back so that I could protect him from Hippocrates, who by now weighed about 30 pounds (and had never been declawed). After work on the day I returned we went by Anne's place to feed the cat. John was terrified of Hippocrates.....and sensing that the cat started to chase John around the apartment. I said, "Come on John, quit fooling around. You just have to know how to deal with this guy", at which point I tied a dish towel to the cat's tail. Of course, Hippocrates went totally berserk and while he tore through the apartment knocking things over in an attempt to separate himself from the towel I managed to put out fresh food. At that point I grabbed him by the neck, removed the towel and we quickly departed. After that I was the one who fed the cat.

Regarding Hippocrates, another episode occurred the following Easter when the local Greek Orthodox priest made his annual rounds soliciting (extorting) donations from the area's residents. When Anne opened her front door, Hippocrates, who was sitting on top of the table facing the door, took one look at this rotund gentleman dressed in black from head to toe and covered in gold crosses and let out with a long and very loud h-i-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s. The sight (and sound) of this monstrous cat was enough for the priest. He and the two disciples who were with him fell all over each other trying to get the hell out of there. It must have looked like a scene from an old Marx brother's movie. Anne thought that was the most amusing thing she had ever seen and even though almost 40 years has passed she still talks about it.

#### **The Vasectomy.....What We Have Here Is A Failure To Communicate**

Later in the summer John had some personal business to discuss with me. He had decided to have a vasectomy and would need a few days off to recuperate, which I thought was unusual because this was normally an out-patient procedure that should have indisposed him for not more than a day. I fully understood his desire to have it done. When he and Cheryl arrived in Athens in 1974 they already had three small children. One of them, Lindsay, was just a baby at the time. I remember meeting Cheryl at the airport with all of the children while John was away on his first trip to Saudi Arabia. She seemed to be completely overwhelmed. Before long it was obvious to all of us (and to John) that Cheryl had her hands full and with his travel schedule he would continue to be of limited help to her. To avoid adding to Cheryl's burden with an accidental fourth child and to eliminate all of the inconveniences associated with contraception, they decided that John should have a vasectomy. So far, so good. The only wrinkle in John's plan was that he wanted to have the procedure done in Greece.

Men in Greece are almost as macho as Arab men, who would never dream of not being able to father a child at the age of 80 if they felt like it. Because of this male attitude the concept of a vasectomy was completely foreign to Greek doctors, all of whom were male. Rather than having the procedure performed in England on one of his trips home, where the doctors were up to date, John insisted that it be performed in Greece, which I thought was really dumb.

When John tried to explain to the Greek doctors, none of whom spoke much English, exactly what he wanted to have done they sent him to a psychiatrist to make sure that he wasn't going insane. This should have been John's first clue that things were not going to go well. But nothing would change his mind. The second clue came when John had to actually check in to the hospital for what would have been a simple out-patient procedure anywhere else in Europe. The third clue came when they wheeled him into the hospital operating room. Before he had a chance to think about it one last time, he was out cold.

When John awoke he quickly discovered that he had a plaster cast from his thighs to his navel. Having a cast for what was supposed to be such a simple procedure surprised John and he began to wonder if

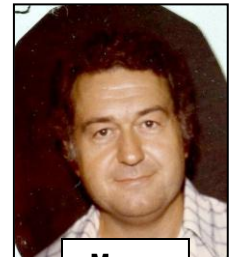
the doctors had misunderstood what he wanted done. He began to panic as he revisited the pre-op discussions he had had with the doctors, which were partially in English, partially in Greek and partially in sign language. What if they had misunderstood what he wanted? Was a psychiatrist really a pre-op requirement for a vasectomy? By the time John had completed this mental self-interrogation he realized that there was a possibility that the doctors may have mistakenly amputated some of his vital parts. Had they turned him into a eunuch? He had to know. Unable to communicate with the hospital staff John got dressed as best he could and took a taxi home where he and Cheryl used a pair of sheet metal sheers to remove the cast. I took them a few minutes to figure out that all of that red stuff covering the entire terra-genitalia was iodine and not blood, but after the initial shock they discovered that all of John's plumbing was still intact. After this trying experience John was completely frazzled and needed a few more days off to get his act together. After witnessing what John had gone through Pote decided to have the procedure done in London, which he said was not much different than sitting in a dentist chair for about an hour.

The fun times were about to end.....

**DOUG ARRIVES IN ATHENS.....Good Bye To Cherif's Management Team**

As soon as Doug had returned to Geneva from the U.S. in March after meeting with H & P and the Executive Committee he began quietly recruiting replacements for Cherif's management team. Upon his arrival in Athens in mid-June he quickly set about reorganizing the office to make room for his new managers. Some of the original crew accepted demotions while others (Rifaat, Merkel, Manchec) decided to leave HP. The following is a summary of the changes.

**Medical Products:** To make room for himself Doug's first official act was to demote Cherif to medical sales manager, the same position he had held in Canada. To make room for Cherif Merkel was demoted to medical sales engineer. In response Peter resigned and returned to the U.S. to finish his MBA at the University of Kansas. Cherif would soon leave HP as well and would be replaced by Natale' Mazza, who was from Geneva. Following his departure Cherif spent several months in Saudi Arabia as a paid consultant at MEE as they continued to develop their relationship with HP and then returned to Canada as a representative for his family's Cairo based trading company.



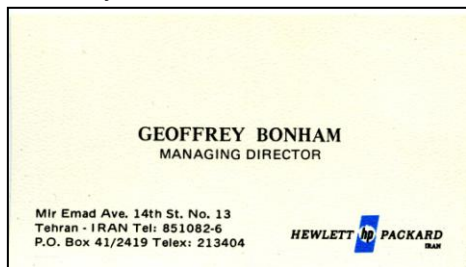
Mazza

**Electronic Instrument Products:** As previously mentioned, Geoff Bonham was off to Iran as the instrument sales manager and was replaced by Mel Zegel from HPSA. This move was not in Zegel's best interest. Just like Doug's situation, it was "strongly suggested" to Mel that he take the job in Athens. He was extremely unhappy about this offer that he couldn't refuse and would resign less than a year after making the move.

I had become friends with Mel when we were both with HP in Canada and I would be sorry to see him go. During a conversation we had had in Montreal in 1972 he told me that his dream was to join HPSA in Geneva and I remember how happy he was when he landed the instrument sales managers job later that year. After their move Mel and Heidi lived in a beautiful old farmhouse in the hills above Lake Geneva. Life was good. When the relocation to Athens killed Mel's dream of living permanently in Geneva he returned to HP Canada. He would be replaced by Hilmar Krinke from Germany. Hilmar was another of Doug's hand picked managers. He was a high roller..... when Hilmar transferred to Athens he brought along his yacht and his airplane.



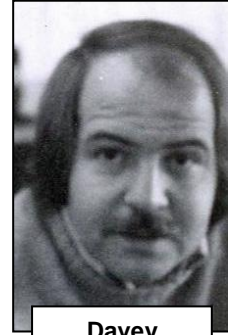
Krinke



Unlike Mel, Geoff took the long view of the move he was asked to make and the risk he took paid off. The Teheran assignment became a (the) major steppingstone in Geoff's career. Within two years he became the Managing Director of HP Iran following the departure of the initial General Manager, Bob

Bond. From that point onward all of the concerns Geoff had expressed to Cherif in 1973 about the lack of opportunities for advancement in the U.K. were forgotten.....and fate intervened to make sure that he would never again work for HP in the U.K. Our paths would cross many times later in our careers in places that we never could have imagined.....like Venezuela and Curacao.

**Desktop Calculator Products:** Martin Davey from the U.K. replaced Pote, who then joined Tony Gunn's computer systems group as a sales engineer.



Davey

**Analytical Products:** Juergen Hengstman from Germany replaced Vondjidis, who stayed on as a sales engineer.

**Computer Systems:** Tony Gunn had already replaced Manchec, who left HP to start a yacht rental business. At one point he had agencies at several ports in the eastern Mediterranean. Manchec was like Albert Hakim, a pull-out-all-the-stops risk-taking entrepreneur who became very successful when he was his own boss.



Hengstman

**Advanced Products:** Serge Daniel from HP France came in to manage the personal products (APD) business, which had been spun off from the Desktop Calculator group. Serge was a malcontent Frenchman who was a habitual complainer...unhappy about everything, all the time. After being in Athens for a couple of months he just packed up and moved back to France completely unannounced. One morning he did not show up for work and after two days of looking for him we found him back with HP France. Hippocrates Nikolacopoulos (aka, Hippo Nick), who was the senior man in the group, replaced Serge.



Hippo Nick

**Administration:** Phil Smith, an internal auditor from HP corporate headquarters, replaced Panos as our area/region Controller. Panos stayed on as the administrative manager. Up to this point in his career Phil, who was a CPA, had spent several years traveling around the world auditing HP subsidiaries. With the expertise he had developed Phil could have easily run HP Athens but, of course, there would have been no place for Doug to go. Phil later confided in me that he had been personally asked by Packard to move to Athens to make sure that the operation met HP's strict legal and ethical standards (i.e., by keeping an eye on Doug). Who better to counter-balance Doug's presence in the Middle East than an experienced auditor. I wouldn't say that Doug was afraid of Phil, but in management meetings it was always obvious that Phil's direct connection to top management earned him much more respect than Doug had for the rest of us.



Phil Smith

In August Phil arrived in Athens for a short "orientation" visit. He was 39 at the time, and at 6' 4" towered above all of the other employees, especially the Greeks. When I first met him his looks and demeanor reminded me a little of Clint Eastwood.....not the "Dirty Harry" Eastwood but more like the "Bridges of Madison County" Eastwood.....mild mannered, soft spoken, deliberate, and a man-of-few-words.

During the few days that Phil was in Athens he spent time with almost everyone and when I finally had a chance to sit with him we discovered that we were from the same small town, San Carlos, on the San Francisco Peninsula. But even though we lived just two blocks apart when we were growing up we did not know each other due to the difference in our ages (6 years) and the schools we attended. Phil told me that after spending several years on the road with a killer travel schedule it was going to be nice to go home every night. My impression of Phil was that he was a true professional and his presence in Athens would help moderate Doug's erratic management style.

When Phil returned to Athens in November of 1975 he brought some order to the chaos. An HP Manager in the true sense of the term, Phil spent his days in the office providing training, coaching and assistance



to everyone involved in the administration of HP's Middle East operation. He spent his evenings doing his own work and would sometimes take a break for dinner and then return to the office. Phil did not have much time for a home life during the week, but on the weekends Joella and I would take road trips with him and his wife, Kelly. Their kids, Terry and Stacy, were about the same ages as my boys and when they arrived for the 1976 - 1977 school year we spent even more time together.

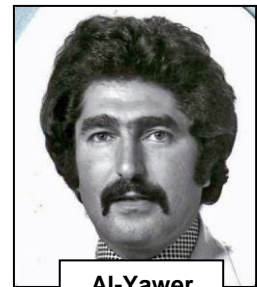
**Commercial Services:** Doug brought in Fernand Savary from HPSA to manage commercial services. Fernand was another person who did not want to be there.

**Personnel:** Lee Couvela, the personnel manager, was replaced by Bob Welch, who was from the Neely (Western) Sales Region in the U.S. So that Bob could obtain goods from the U.S. Military PX he hired Dolly Mater, the wife of a U.S. Naval officer, to be his assistant. Dolly was completely incompetent. She spent most of her time gossiping about what she had discovered in our personnel files.



**Customer Service:** Of Cherif's original management team I was the only one to survive the purge.....probably because no one else wanted my job.....and I couldn't blame them.

**Other New Faces:** Many of the new managers brought in additional expatriates, usually people they had previously worked with. These included Alan Mackelworth and Emad Al-Yawer (aka, "Ricky the Iraqi") both from the U.K. who joined Martin Davey's group. By the end of the summer most of Doug's new managers and their teams were in place and ready to meet Packard and Young. Thanks to Doug's efforts, at year end there would be about 20 very expensive expatriates based in Athens and more in Iran. Soon there would be more in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The operation's financial statements would quickly begin to show the consequences of Doug's quest for redemption.



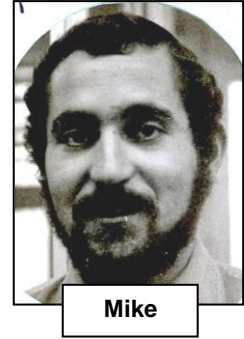
## **THE STATUS OF MY HIRING PLANS**

### **The Athens Service Operation Finally Becomes Fully Staffed.....It Had Been A Long Road**

In July 1975, Pat Matthews, my last Athens based expatriate service engineer arrived and at that point we began hiring only locals. Even so, we continued to fill the technical candidate "pipeline" with the names of service engineers from all over Europe who had inquired about opportunities to work elsewhere in Middle East. Considering that the Middle East was still thought of as a collection of "funny countries" and working in the area was viewed as a hardship assignment, I was surprised by the amount interest being shown. Many of the inquiries were coming from highly qualified engineers who were either frustrated by the lack of job opportunities, or were stuck in assignments they found boring, or did not like their boss, or wanted to make more money to be able to buy a house, or all of the above. Others were quite happy with their current situation, but there was not enough work to keep them busy. To avoid having to lay off fully trained and experienced service engineers, who would surely be needed again when the economy improved (the effects of 1973 -1974 recession were still being felt), their managers contacted me to see if I had any opportunities in our area, which was the only place within HPSA that was still hiring. This was a true win-win for all of us. HP could keep good engineers employed and I could quickly find service engineers for short term (2 year) assignments.

Regarding local hires, in the late summer and early fall we brought in several. The first was Dino Zakkas, who had worked as an accountant for the U.S. Military. Dino was dedicated to service accounting. There were so many errors in our monthly income statements (Schedule 8) and so many adjustments and corrections from previous months that it became necessary to hire our own accountant to sort things out. Until then it was impossible to get a meaningful monthly report on our financial performance.....and even after Dino joined us there were still continuing problems with the data that was coming from HPSA.

We also hired Mike Megaloconomous to be our "Parts Coordinator". It was Mike's job to ensure that all of our service kits were quickly replenished upon the return of the service engineers from their trips. The engineers no longer had time to do this themselves. Mike did a great job, but as a graduate engineer he was highly over-qualified for this type of work and would soon take over desktop calculator service from John and Alain. Van Papandreou would eventually replace Mike. As a result of the additional people we had hired and extra work that I was giving Anne she was becoming overloaded. To solve the problem we hired Mary Kafogiounakis to provide secretarial support to the service engineers. Mary was the last employee we hired for the Athens service operation. There were now ten of us.



### **Hiring For HP Iran Is On Track**

By the end of the summer Bill Scott and Francis Picard were formally hired for their assignments at HP Iran. I was having trouble locating a service manager for HP Iran and was relieved when Michael Schultheiss called me from Germany to express his interest. He would take the job.

### **THE PACKARD AND YOUNG VISIT.....My 15 Minutes Of Fame**

#### **Visibility.....Not Necessarily A Good Thing**

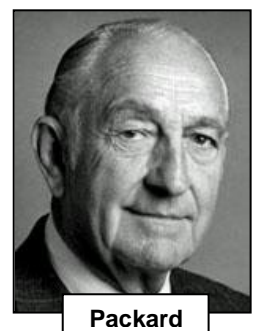
During my 36 years with HP I ran into a lot of people who thought that "getting some visibility" was the best way to advance their careers. I never cared for or subscribed to the it's-not-what-you-know-but-who-you-know approach. I recall a large banquet that I attended back in the 1980's at the Les Omelet restaurant in Palo Alto. Following the after-dinner speakers and before the cigars and brandy smoozing began in the bar I had had enough for one day and quietly departed. The next morning my boss was all over me....."Where were you? Don't you want to get some visibility?" My reply was, "I don't give a damn about visibility. I just want to be recognized for doing a good job". The subject never came up again.

I always preferred to work in international field operations, with a preference for subsidiary startups. Unlike working at headquarters where 90% of what you work on never goes anywhere there is a great deal of personal satisfaction in creating an HP subsidiary from scratch and providing customers with solutions to their problems. I also enjoyed the small office environment where you are not only building an organization but also a family that will be part of your life forever. A characteristic of new subsidiaries is that they naturally attract a lot of attention from upper management. So, whether I wanted visibility or not, I was going to get some.....and in the case of the Athens operation, where Doug had pumped up Hewlett and Packard and the Executive Committee, we were going to get a lot of it. In addition to Packard and Young we would eventually see just about every one of HP's vice-presidents. Some of the visits were formal, some were informal, and some were just boondoggles.....like the time Al Oliverio, marketing V-P, briefly stopped by while on his way to Modena, Italy to pick up his new Ferrari from Mario Andretti. As time passed all of the positive visibility that Doug had arranged for himself and, by extension, the rest of us, would go negative as the growth of expenses began to outpace revenue growth and the operation began to lose big bucks.

#### **The Plans.....Included Visits To Iran and Saudi Arabia**

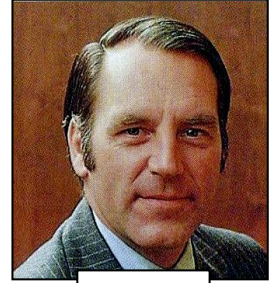
The dates were now set for the David Packard and John Young visit. At the beginning of September they would be spending a few days with us in Athens and then would travel separately to Iran (Packard) and Saudi Arabia (Young) to have a first hand look at our top priority markets.

On day one Tony Gunn and Martin Davey would meet Packard and Young at the airport and get them safely to their hotel. In addition to John Young, Packard would be accompanied by his wife, Lucille. On day two our management meeting with them would be followed by a formal banquet hosted by HP's long-time Greek



distributor, Costas Karayannis. On the morning of day three Young would be off to Saudi while Packard would remain in the office for another day to have one-on-one meetings with each of Doug's managers.

Due to her HP background Joella was given the task of organizing a sightseeing tour for Lucille Packard. It was ironic that in her capacity as the executive secretary for an HP division manager Joella had met both Packard and Young on many previous occasions, possibly even more often than Doug. Most of the Athens managers had never met either of them. As for myself, having spent time with Young when he had visited us at HP Taiwan for several days back in 1971 the two of us were already acquainted.



Young

**The Management Meeting**

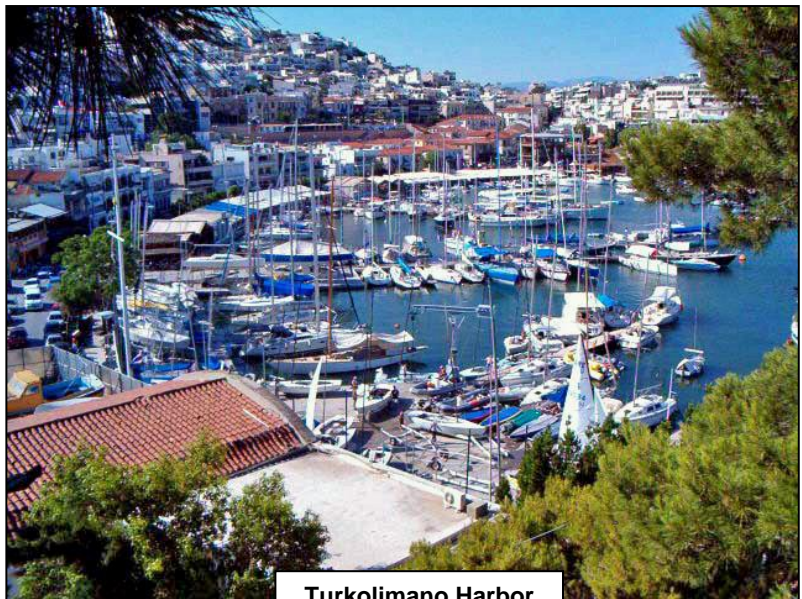
Preparation for the managers meeting with Packard and Young was less rigorous than I had expected. We had only one "dry run" which, surprisingly, seemed to satisfy Doug. Another surprise was that I had been moved to the top of the agenda. As the meeting began Doug provided his usual eloquent but somewhat bombastic introduction. Packard immediately made some off-the-cuff remarks that put everyone at ease. He impressed me as a very smart, low key, slow talking, homespun kind of guy who asked very well thought out and direct questions. Each of us was allotted an hour for our presentation.

As HP products had found there way into every country in our area I spent most of my time talking about the obstacles that we faced in our efforts to provide quality customer service throughout such a large territory and the plans we had put in place to address the problems. Both Packard and Young seemed to be very interested in the multi-country nature of our territory and how differing cultural and religious customs impacted our ability to provide service. I still find it hard to believe that Young was actually taking notes. Also during my presentation I spent a few minutes talking about the HP environment. When I expressed my concern about how burdensome many of the HPSA administrative procedures had become, Packard supported me by saying, "policies and procedures are no substitute for common sense and good judgment". As policies and procedures were Doug's mortal enemies he was very pleased with Packard's remarks. The remainder of the meeting went well with almost all of the time spent discussing potential order volume. Of course, Doug had chosen sales managers who supported the pie-in-the-sky estimates he had presented to Packard and the executive committee back in March.

**The Banquet..... And Some Kind Words from John Young**

Our dinner party that evening was a very impressive affair hosted by Costas Karayannis, who apparently had a very long friendship with Packard. As one of the wealthiest men in Greece Costas had no trouble making arrangements at the very exclusive Royal Greek Yacht Club, which overlooked the picturesque and quaint keyhole shaped Turkolimano harbor.

There are two things that I remember about this banquet. The first was my encounter with John Young. I was standing by myself, drink in hand, on the deck overlooking the harbor when John walked up. He told me that he found my presentation that morning



Turkolimano Harbor

extremely enlightening and then said something that I will never forget, “After what I heard today I wouldn’t want your job”. I can tell you that it was very surprising to hear the CEO of one of the largest companies in the world express his concern about the overwhelming challenges I was facing in the Middle East. That was the right kind of visibility.

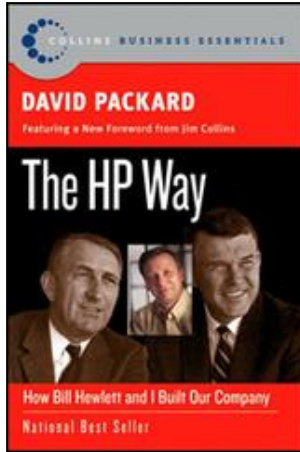
The second memory of that evening was more humorous than anything else. As soon as we were all seated at the very long banquet table it was evident that Doug had a hand in making the seating arrangements. As wives were invited there were probably 30 people present. Joella and I were seated at the very end of the table. We could not have been any further away from the action. Seated across from us were Cherif and Heidi. As Cherif would be gone within a month Doug had apparently decided not to waste any of Packard’s time on him. Cherif was now just the former general manager. Realizing what had happened Cherif looked across the table at me and said in a very sarcastic tone, “Now I know what it feels like to be a service manager”. Then we all had a good laugh.

### **One-On-One With the Man**

The next morning each manager had another hour scheduled with Packard. When he came into my department I introduced him to everyone. As the photo (below) taken in front of our office shows, me, and most of my employees were lucky enough to be included in the only group photo taken with him. This was one of the rare occasions when we were all in the office at the same time.



L to R: Tony Gunn, Katia Bougas (Doug’s secretary), me, Sofi Spilopoulos (Natale’s secretary), Dave Packard, Claude Gengoux, Eleanna Solidaki (Martin’s secretary), Pat Matthews, Alain Picard, John Nikolakakis, John Inglis, Sini Lambridou (receptionist), Bob Welch

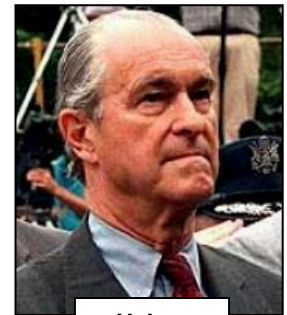


As Packard sat at my desk we went into more detail about the challenges facing service in the area. We also spent some time on personal topics: How long had I been with HP? What jobs had I held? Where was I from? Etc. For his part we talked a lot about his family. He actually had a son studying in Greece at that time. By the time I had finished speaking with this very polite and cordial gentleman I understood completely where the HP Way had come from. The only negative thing that happened was at the end of our meeting. When he asked me where the restroom was I directed him upstairs. Almost as soon as he left my desk I realized that at 6' 5" he might have some problems with the low stairway ceiling, which had been designed for the average (5' 8") Greek man. I turned and said, "Dave, watch your head". I knew that he had a hearing problem and when he did not respond I called out to him again only much louder at which point he turned and smacked his face on the concrete stairway ceiling. He smiled and waved at me, said that he was okay, and continued up the stairs.

### Departure

The morning following our dinner with Karayannis, John Young was off to Saudi Arabia. He had heard so much about the business potential of Saudi that he had asked Doug to organize a visit to Riyadh. While there he met not only the MEE management team but also the majority owner, Prince Al-Faisal. Apparently Young's meeting with the prince and Farouk Nasser went well (which was a surprise to all of us) and as a result our plans to develop MEE remained on track.

As far as Packard's visit to Iran was concerned, it was primarily personal. He wanted to spend some time with his close friend Richard Helms, the former director of the CIA during Packard's time in Washington D.C., when he was Nixon's Deputy Secretary of Defense. At the time of Packard's visit to Iran Helms was the U.S. Ambassador. This was supposed to be a social call with most of their time together spent duck hunting, but there was surely a lot of talk about the business environment. Whatever Packard learned did not change his mind about investing in a new subsidiary operation in Teheran. To the contrary, based on Helms' input Packard decided to give Iran a much higher priority.....our plans for Iran were about to change. ■



Helms

