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1926-2011 Ed Bilderback- Recollections and Information from Mike McCoy.

1 message

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Thu, Feb 19, 2026 at 3:21 PM

George,

I met Ed in Kewalo Basin on the Valiant Maid when Pailug and I were living on the Charles Gilbert. He was tied up at one of the finger piers next to an aku boat and we were tied up to the NMFS part at the end of the wharf. He told me about Kawaihae harbor and said he liked going to Kohala. Ed's one crewman at the time was named Van Zandt and lived in Kohala; can't recall his first name. I think he went to Alaska with Ed when he returned. There are apparently lots of Van Zandts in Kohala. Your query got me looking online for what happened to the Valiant Maid. It was one of a large number of famous similarly designed wooden fishing boats that were built by the Hansen Boat Co in Seattle before and after WWII. All the boats were named xxx Maid (e.g. Valiant Maid, Quaker Maid, Yankee Maid, Moonlight Maid, Norse Maid, Victory Maid, etc). The boat sank in Alaska in 2003. Here is something I found online that mentions his turtle activities:

The 42-ton, 49-foot longliner Valiant Maid hit a submerged rock, split apart, and sank in 45 feet of water off the northwest side of Spike Island, just offshore of Cordova on August 18, 2003. The owner of the Valiant Maid was Ed Bilderback, longtime Cordovan, well known big game guide and fisherman. He and his brother bought the Valiant Maid after WW II and brought it to Prince William Sound for seining in 1948. In 1966 Ed sailed the Valiant Maid to Hawaii where he fished and chartered out to the University of Hawaii for sea turtle studies. In 1979 the Valiant Maid was back in Cordova and remained there until she sank in 2003. Mark Mitten's tribute to the late Ed Bilderback in a 2013 article in Professional Bowhunting Magazine related what Ed had to say about the Valiant Maid's end:

"In 2003, Ed had just given the Valiant Maid a new paint job. She looked glorious as Ed cruised out of Cordova Harbor. After drinking a cup of hot chocolate, Ed dozed off a moment, running the Maid into Spike Island. This was a small island, or a big rock, depending upon your point of view. As Ed pulled the Maid off the island, she took on water and went down. The only thing that he salvaged was the...wheel. Ed was left wet and heart broken. 'For 53 years I kept her afloat. I only sunk her once. She was a faithful companion. She outlasted two wives and a whole bunch of girlfriends. Now, that's loyalty.'"

Aloha, Mike

On 2/19/2026 11:02 AM, George Balazs wrote:

[Ed Bilderback: Gone But Not Forgotten](#)

An amazing man and personality. Lived Waimea had the Valiant Maid. Took me to Kiholo for 2 days one night before the Queens Highway was finished late 1973 after I came back from the first summer at FFS. Used his seal nets to catch turtles way in at the end of the lagoon. Might you have known him or wife, or kids?

PS He took crap from No One! But he did it with the outward spirit of kindness.