

## Hubbard a malingerer, not hero, Armstrong says

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LOS ANGELES—According to a former high-ranking Scientologist, L. Ron Hubbard was never a war hero; never commanded a squadron of Navy ships; never saw combat and was not crippled and blinded, later healing himself with his theory of Dianetics.

Instead, Gerald Armstrong testified Monday that documents sealed by the California Superior Court will prove Hubbard's career was one of "a recurring pattern of malingering, feigning illnesses and false reporting to his superiors."

Armstrong said the documents will

prove that widely held beliefs about Hubbard's background are largely false.

Armstrong's attorney, Michael Flynn of Boston, began a slow process Monday of introducing as exhibits many of the 10,000 documents under seal pending the outcome of trial. Armstrong, a former sect archivist, is defending himself against Church of Scientology charges of theft because he took reams of papers, pictures and recordings.

But the 37-year-old Armstrong says he "did not steal" the contested documents. Other documents seem to verify Armstrong's contention that Hubbard ap-  
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## \* Hubbard

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pointed him to collect the historical papers to aid in the production of a biography of the reclusive 73-year-old founder of Scientology.

Most of the documents already introduced to Judge Paul G. Breckenridge pertain to Hubbard's military career in the U.S. Navy during the early 1940s. If, as Armstrong claims, they are authentic and accurate documents, then it appears Hubbard did not have the honored career some of his biographical sketches have attributed to him.

"(These documents) show conclusively that he was not crippled and blinded ... did not graduate from George Washington University," Armstrong said during his third day of testimony. "They show to me part of the fraud being perpetrated on the Navy, the Veterans Administration and later on all Scientologists and potential Scientologists."

Armstrong said he went to Flynn with the information because for 11 years he had placed great faith in Hubbard's claims but was disillusioned and devastated when he discovered the contradictions.

Among them, Hubbard claimed he:

- Was the provost marshal of Korea.
- Was a war hero awarded 28 medals.
- Has a bachelor's degree from George Washington University.
- Was the first World War II combat casualty in the Far East and was flown home aboard the Secretary of Navy's personal aircraft.

A document submitted Monday indicated that not only was Hubbard never in combat, but when he left the war theater he was sent stateside aboard a boat and labeled "not suitable."

Hubbard's claim of having commanded a squadron of corvettes, Armstrong said, is an elaboration of fact.

"He had two commands," Armstrong said referring to a document. "The first he lost before putting out to sea. And he lost the second one on a shakedown cruise when he fired (three) shots over the Mexican border."

"(Hubbard) caused problems for his superiors ... would not follow orders and did not leave (his post in) Australia in good graces."

However, Sect spokesman the Rev. Sandy Block said, "Most of what he (Armstrong) has said is taken out of context. Here you have a thief. He stole documents which are very valuable."

Block said that in addition to the papers under seal "there are other naval documents which tell a somewhat different story, so we'll see what happens. I don't think anything he said is earth-shattering."

Judge Breckenridge cautioned Armstrong Monday morning for talking to the press about specifics of the sealed papers. The judge's warning came after sect lawyers gave the court a copy of Sunday's *Clearwater Sun*.

Sect attorney Barrett Litt said a story in the edition, based on an out-of-court conversation with Armstrong, contained information from "the most sensitive" of the sealed documents. He asked that Armstrong be ordered not to talk to the press.

But Breckenridge noted no gag order was in effect, adding that Armstrong "has a vivid memory," and declined to muzzle the defendant. He did, however, caution him to watch what he says.

The sect wants the court to return the documents unpublished and also is seeking an unspecified amount in monetary damages.

The civil trial continues today with Armstrong still on the stand and Flynn introducing more documents.