L Ron Hubbard and Scientology

How did a struggling science-fiction author by the name of L. Ron Hubbard use his talents for telling fantastical stories to create the controversial modern-day church known as Scientology?

After dropping out of George Washington University in 1932, Hubbard began writing science fiction, specifically about missions into space — themes that would later come up again in Scientology's unbelievable theory of how the world began.

Before he started Scientology, Hubbard was an officer in the Navy. His military service is a major part of his persona within the church, which boasts of his multiple medals and his involvement in major battles during World War II.

However, a recent book and documentary claim that he exaggerated his military accomplishments during the war. Eventually he had to leave the service after he accidentally attacked a Mexican island.

In 1950, Hubbard began writing his most famous book, "Dianetics," the foundation upon which Scientology is built.

The basic principle described in "Dianetics" is that the brain records every experience and event in a person's life, whether good or bad, and which could negatively affect a person if they're triggered later in life. By taking part in what Scientology refers to as "auditing" — being asked many very personal questions by a trained Scientology "auditor" — the person can be cured.
But some say that Hubbard's motives behind "Dianetics" may not have been based on science, nor on the hope of helping people. According to his wife, Hubbard decided the only way to make any real money was to found a religion so he could avoid paying taxes to the government.

"Dianetics" became a cultural phenomenon. Hubbard began touring the country telling auditoriums full of people that he had developed a cure for the psychological ills of mankind.

Hubbard’s wife claims that “he began to believe he was a savior and a hero, that he was really a God figure.”

In the late 1960s, as the government began investigating him for tax evasion, Hubbard fled the US for the high seas. There, he created the Sea Organization, which would become Scientology’s clergy. Members would declare their loyalty to the church by signing billion-year contracts.

According to a recent documentary, Hubbard began to create penalties for those who made mistakes, didn’t follow rules, or disagreed with his teachings. One punishment was to literally throw a person who had done something “wrong” off the boat into the water.

By the mid 1970s, Hubbard’s ships were not welcomed to dock in the Mediterranean, so he sneaked back ashore in Florida so as not to gain the attention of the U.S government.

He lived the rest of this life in hiding. On January 24, 1986, Hubbard died of a stroke at age 74.

He left no plans of who would take his place, leaving the door open for the ambitious David Miscavige to quickly rise up the ranks to become church leader — a position he still holds today.

source: