



Hello again

For the second time in a month the Japanese Ambassador to Vanuatu Mr Chiba Hirohisa visited our Museum and Development Office in Luganville. It was wonderful to welcome the Ambassador back again, as it provided us with the opportunity to present to him our latest plans for the future.

Project Office Manager Lengkon Tokon was delighted to meet with the ambassador for a second time.

"Mr Chiba was very interested in our plans for the Museum," he said.

"We're very grateful to him for finding the time to visit us again."

The Ambassador was in Luganville to meet with government officials, further strengthening the bond between our two nations.

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One step at a time

Last year, at one of our annual board meetings, we discussed our plans moving forward. It was unanimously decided that we should be a little more realistic with our targets. We should set ourselves an attainable goal, achieve it and move onto the next one.

So, a phased approach was agreed upon, whereby we would break the build into more manageable and realistic 'chunks', which certainly makes fund raising that much more realistic and achievable.

With that in mind, we have great pleasure in sharing with you our vision for Phase 1.



With a little imagination, anything is possible.

Everything old is new again

On the western end of our site on the banks of the Sarakata River, is one of many concrete slabs still visible in the area. These were built for the Quonset huts that supported activities at the former US Navy PT Base that was constructed on the site.

It was always intended that we would build on the site, in fact it's included in our current plans with a modern open air space for displaying large exhibits, that are not so reliant upon a controlled display environment. However, only recently did we envisage erecting an original US Navy WWII Quonset hut on the site.

It's this Quonset hut will form the basis of Phase 1 of the major museum build. (continued...)



The slab upon which the Quonset hut would be rebuilt.



A pair of Quonset huts just off the main street in Luganville.



Another Quonset hut example near the boat repair wharf.

Santo's Quonsets

Santo was home to hundreds, if not thousands of Quonset huts built by US Navy Construction Battalions or Seabees during World War II.

Today, there are still many Quonset huts all over town in various states of repair or in some cases disrepair. Luckily for us they do get pulled down to make way for new building developments. What we need to do is find someone who would be willing to donate a Quonset hut to the Museum.

The framing will be stripped, resealed and the entire building reskinned in new, powder coated corrugated iron. Of course, a great deal of other requirements will be necessary to meet today's building regulations.

While design details have not been confirmed at this early conceptual stage, the plan is to build a two storey administration and display area in approximately the first 10 metres of one end of the Quonset. This would contain a reception area, offices, display areas, a compact theatre space and a small kitchen/bathroom area.

The remaining 20 metres of the Quonset hut will house some of our larger display items such as our restored Willys Jeep, photographic displays and documents. (continued...)



Purely conceptual and more for discussion than anything else, this image provides some idea as to what the final Quonset might look like.

The Quonset hut rebuild represents an important and necessary first phase for the Museum project. Apart from providing us with additional exhibition space for the Museum, it also works on so many levels.

The Quonset hut was such an icon of Santo during World War II. Which explains why it became an integral part of our logo and the obvious influence it had on the design of the larger museum.

However, by incorporating a real hut into the overall museum precinct, we have the opportunity to show visitors what a Quonset looked like, how large it was, how it was constructed and provide people with a feel for how military

Why reconstruct a Quonset hut?



The South Pacific World War II Museum Site. The Quonset hut will be located over near the Sarakata River in the top of the photograph.

personnel lived and worked during their time on Santo. We get to relive history and showcase it as it was when it first appeared on the island.

Where possible, we would employ the same tools used by the Seabees to rebuild the Quonset. We'll follow the instruction book they were issued with as closely as possible. Plus, we'll train up some local young Ni-Vanuatu men and women and employ them to do the work on the assembly and provide employment while rebuilding an authentic WWII American Quonset hut. (continued...)

Where to next?



A Plan overlay of the site in Luganville.

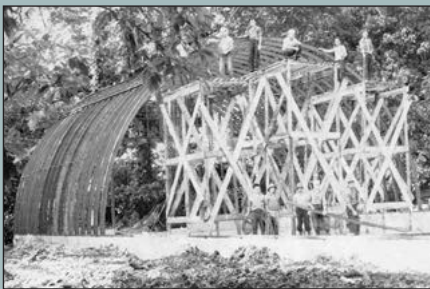
At this stage we can only approximate what the build will cost. Once we have architects' plans, we can get the project estimated and fundraising can commence.

Of course, the issue now is twofold. We need to:

1. Acquire a Quonset Hut from somewhere on Santo.
2. Commission an architect to design the Quonset interior for us, so that we can get that estimate calculated.

The original plans and renders of the 'big build' cost a great deal and came out of our own pockets. We're hoping for the Quonset build, we can get an architect on board who might donate their services. We'll have to wait and see.

As with any project like this, it's one expense after another. Being located on a South Pacific island, means receiving assistance for a project in a place some people have never even heard of, really does compound the problem. However, the Museum Board remains confident and optimistic that things will come together. It's just going to take a lot more perseverance and a good pinch of luck.



A Quonset hut being erected by Seabees on Santo.



A 3D render of the current South Pacific World War II Museum plans.

VTO opens Luganville office

In a sign of confidence in the soon to re-emerge tourism industry in Sanma Province, Vanuatu Tourism Office has opened a new office in the main street of Luganville.

The newly refurbished office at the eastern end of town, close to the cruise ship terminal, is a real vote of confidence in all that the northern islands of Vanuatu have to offer to tourists and visitors.



The office will be open during regular business hours and offer tours and recommendations of places for people to see and activities to do across the northern islands.

We look forward to working with VTO to ensure the South Pacific World War II Museum is high on their list of recommended places to visit on Santo.

Inspiring everyday heroes

This month we're recognising Vanuatu's custom chiefs and the incredible work they do throughout the islands.

The chiefs, presided over by the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, play a crucial role assisting

a significant role in advising the government on all matters concerning ni-Vanuatu culture and languages. In fact, it was the chiefs that granted permission for the first traders and missionaries to the then New Hebrides, to settle on the islands.



Chief Willie Grey Plasua. Photo: Vanuatu Daily Post.

communities and ensuring peace prevails throughout Vanuatu.

It is one of just a few institutions recognised under the Constitution of Vanuatu and as such, the Council plays

More recently, when Cyclone Harold decimated the northern islands last year, the President of Malvatumauri, Chief Willie Grey Plasua, organised a 'wheelbarrow push' from Tagabe to Saralana Park, Port Vila.

That walk raised over Vt1 million, which was given to the government for cyclone relief.

Chief Willie Grey Plasua, recently said that the theme for this year's National Chief's Day in March is "Respect our Vanuatu." In light of all that the chiefs do for Vanuatu's people and communities far and

wide, we can't think of a more suitable theme.

Inspiring Everyday Heroes is our Museum brand and means how the stories of yesteryear and our project can inspire today's new generation.



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