

## Logo refresh announces shift in thinking.

Those of you with a sharp eye, may have noticed the subtle change to our logo at the top of this newsletter, with the inclusion of 'Vanuatu' in our brand identity.

The addition of Vanuatu in the museum's logo serves several purposes according to Museum Project Manager James Carter. "Firstly, it helps to establish a stronger sense of place for us. By prominently featuring Vanuatu in the logo, visitors are reminded of the museum's connection to the local community and its cultural heritage," he said.

"Secondly, adding the country to the logo can help with differentiating the museum

from other institutions with similar names. This is particularly important in an increasingly globalised world where museums compete for visitors' attention and funding.

Of course, including Vanuatu in the logo can also help promote tourism and boost the local

economy — something we are most keen on encouraging."

The new logo will be progressively rolled out over coming months beginning with new destination signage that replaces the signs destroyed by Cyclone's Kevin and June earlier this year.



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# Buttoned down.

Back in October 2022, we brought you the story of Lt. Cecil G. Johnson. Cec was a bombardier aboard a famous B-25 Mitchell bomber nicknamed 'Pannell Job'.

Attached to the 500th Bombardment Squadron in New Guinea — also known as the Rough Raiders' — he would fly 51 missions over the space of nine months during 1944.



B-25D 'Pannell Job' of the 500th Bombardment Squadron.



Lt. Cecil G. Johnson. *Picture Mark Johnson.*

Promoted to Squadron Intelligence Officer in October of that year, just two months later he was sent stateside for some well-earned R&R. All up he had logged 308 hours of flying and deservedly was awarded the Air Force Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster.



Cec's Army Air Corps jacket.

Back in October Cec's nephew Mark donated his uncle's military collection to us, which included a Japanese surrender flag and samurai sword.

Last week the final pieces of the collection arrived in Australia with Museum Project Manager James Carter. The last of an amazing collection of photos depicting some of the many places Cec served was added to the initial collection that arrived late last year.

However of greatest interest to the Museum was Cec's officer jacket. Given it's around 80 years old, the jacket is in remarkable condition and comes with all its original brass buttons, ribbons, lieutenant's insignia and air crew wings. We're very much looking forward to displaying it with the rest of the collection later in the year.

Thank you again to Mark Johnson for entrusting the museum with his uncle's collection.

# On Eagle's wings.

Before World War II, the United States government requested that Aviation hero Charles Lindbergh visit various European countries, leveraging his fame to access restricted areas and officials. His assessment of the readiness of the allied and Axis powers led him to conclude that the United States should avoid involvement in the war, which he deemed unwinnable.



Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh.

He supported the America First Movement, which aimed to keep the United States out of the impending conflict, however he eventually felt compelled to resign his commission in the Air Corps. Despite serving a tour of duty, when he decided to re-enlist, President Roosevelt, suspicious of his politics, refused to reinstate his commission in the Air Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Lindbergh attempted to join various aviation companies, but Roosevelt repeatedly vetoed his appointments. Only Henry Ford, who was something of a maverick and no friend of Roosevelt, was willing to hire him.

In early 1942, Lindbergh became a technical advisor at Ford Willow Run, where they were preparing to build B-24 bombers, around the time that the 307th was being formed at Ephrata. He worked on troubleshooting early production issues. As B-24

production stabilised, he split his time between Ford and the Vought Aircraft Division, working with the iconic 'gull wing' Corsair Navy fighter.

In 1944, Lindbergh visited the Pacific Theatre of Operations as a Corsair technical representative. On April 24, 1944, he flew to Hawaii in a Navy C-47, then travelled to Espiritu Santo via Midway, Palmyra, and Funa Futi, visiting and flying with Corsair-equipped squadrons.

After two weeks, he moved on to Guadalcanal (Koli) and Bougainville and on to Green Island. On May 22, 1944, he flew his first combat mission, escorting TBFs to Rabaul with a Marine Corsair squadron and strafing assigned ground targets before starting home.



Charles Lindbergh (right), with personnel from a marine fighter squadron somewhere in the Pacific during WWII.

Before returning to Guadalcanal on June 10, he had flown 13 missions to Northern Solomon and Rabaul targets from Green and Emirau island.

After a week of technical duties on Guadalcanal, Lindbergh went to Hallandia, where he attached himself to the 475th Fighter Group, a Fifth Air Force P-38 outfit, and flew his first mission in a P-38 on June 27, joining three other 475th planes on a barge strafing mission to Salawati Island at the western tip of New Guinea. By July 4, he had flown five missions in the same area. It was soon noted that Lindbergh consistently returned from missions with several times as much fuel as the other pilots in his flight.

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Rumours of his presence in the area prompted Lindbergh's "invitation" to Brisbane to discuss his presence in their area of control with MacArthur and Kenney. The US Navy had apparently authorised his move to the SWPA without first checking with MacArthur's HQ. They discussed the usual issues concerning civilians flying in combat and the repercussions if he were shot down.



Charles Lindbergh with a P-38 Lightning from the 433rd Fighter Squadron in Biak, New Guinea.

Lindbergh suggested that the P-38's combat radius could be increased from 570 miles to 700-750 miles while still leaving a one-hour reserve of fuel. He felt that pilots could cruise at lower RPM and higher manifold settings, saving fuel without damaging the engines. This caught Gen. Kenney's attention, and it was quickly decided that Lindbergh could continue flying as an observer, providing he did not fire his guns.



Medal of Honour recipient and fighter ace Thomas B. McGuire speaks to Lindbergh after a flight in P-38s from Biak.

Following his return to the 475th squadron, Lindbergh resumed his flying duties on June 20, 1944, and carried out a total of eight missions until August 12 of the same year. These missions were primarily focused on providing bomber escort and strafing flights in the Ceram and Halmahera regions, with Lindbergh sharing

his fuel conservation techniques with other fighter units in between missions.

During a bomber escort mission in the Ceram area on July 28, Lindbergh shot down a Japanese aircraft, and on August 1, he flew a mission from Biak to Palau with



Lindbergh in the cockpit of a "J" model P-38 Lockheed Lightning at Hollandia, July 1944.

three other P-38s from the 475th. While his companions destroyed several Japanese planes, Lindbergh learned that he could not evade an enemy plane once it was on his tail. Fortunately, one of the other planes chased off the Japanese aircraft before any harm was done, and all of the planes returned safely to Biak.

Lindbergh continued to fly missions until August 12, but his actions on July 28 and August 1 ultimately resulted in General Kenney grounding him on August 13. Kenney was concerned that Lindbergh's fighter kill and the Palau fighter sweep would attract unwanted attention, particularly from heavy bomber crews who believed that the fighter planes did not have sufficient range to escort them to Caroline Island targets.



Charles Lindbergh (2nd from left) on Emirau Island May 1944 William E. Belis is the person at the far left. (continued...)

Nevertheless, thanks in part to Lindbergh's assistance, the maximum combat radius of P-38 and P-47 fighter planes increased to at least 700 miles, which proved to be life-saving to 307th crews during their strikes on the Balikpapan oil refineries.

After flying at least 32 combat missions at the age of 42 and spending nearly five months overseas, Lindbergh returned to California on September 16, 1944. Despite rumours that he participated in the Balikpapan missions,



The only P-38 in Europe, is owned by the Flying Bulls in Austria. This stunning example took four years to restore and its aluminium skin polished to a mirror-like finish. *Picture flyingbulls.at*

During his return to the United States, Lindbergh visited Marine Corsair squadrons in the Marshall Islands that were bombing and strafing bypassed Japanese garrisons. During his six missions in the Marshalls, he dropped a total of five 1000 lb. bombs and one 2000 lb. bomb, which was the heaviest bomb ever carried by a fighter at the time. On his final two combat missions flown on September 12 and 13, 1944, Lindbergh carried

Lindbergh did not personally fly on those missions, but his expertise certainly played a significant role in long-distance missions in 1944 and early 1945, where fighter escort for bombers may not have been possible without his vital contributions.



Charles Lindbergh inside a P-40 Corsair during WWII. This shot was taken somewhere in the South Pacific.

one 2000 lb. bomb and two 1000 lb. bombs under each wing, creating the heaviest bomb load ever attached to a Corsair or any other fighter plane during World War II.

# The island of Allies.

By contributing author George P Thomas.

The Pacific War of World War II was a major conflict that lasted from 1941 to 1945 and involving many countries and territories across the Pacific. One of the lesser-known locations of this war was the island of Espiritu Santo, located in the New Hebrides, which played a significant role in the Allied war effort.

The New Hebrides, today known as Vanuatu, was a group of islands located in the South Pacific, roughly halfway between Australia and Hawaii. The islands were jointly administered by Britain and France, which meant that there were two colonial powers present in the area. Espiritu Santo was the largest island in the group, and it featured a strategically located entrance to the Second Channel — a passage that led to the deep water port at what is now Luganville.

In 1942, the Japanese Empire was expanding rapidly across the Pacific, and they had set their sights on the New Hebrides as a potential target. The Allies



Construction of three Quonset hits joined together to make one large mess building on Espiritu Santo in 1942.

recognised the strategic importance of the islands and decided to establish a base on Espiritu Santo to protect their interests in the area.

The decision to establish a base on Espiritu Santo was made in early 1942, and the first American troops arrived on the island in July of that year. The island was chosen for its strategic location, which provided easy access to the surrounding islands, as well as its natural harbour, which could accommodate a large number of ships of any size.

The Americans quickly set about building a base on the island, which would eventually become one of the largest military installations in the South Pacific. The base consisted of a number of airfields, a seaplane base, a large naval base, and numerous support facilities. The construction was a massive undertaking



Construction of Bomber Airfield #2 by US Navy Seabees Assisted by local Ni-Vanuatu workers.

that involved thousands of troops and civilian workers, as well as a large fleet of ships and aircraft.

The establishment of the base on Espiritu Santo was a significant turning point in the Pacific War. The base provided a secure location for Allied forces to launch operations against Japanese-held islands in the area, and it served as a vital staging area for troops, supplies, and a range of vital equipment.

One of the most important operations launched from Espiritu Santo was the Guadalcanal Campaign. Guadalcanal was a Japanese-held island located in the Solomon Islands, which was strategically located on the route between Japan and Australia. The Allies recognised the importance of the island and launched an invasion in August 1942.

The invasion of Guadalcanal was a complex operation that involved troops and equipment from numerous Allied countries. The initial landing was carried out by

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Construction of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands was backbreaking work, carving the runways and taxways out of the coconut plantations and native jungle.

US Marines, who established a beachhead on the island and began building an airfield. The airfield, which was known as "Henderson Field," was crucial to the success of the campaign, as it allowed Allied aircraft to operate in the area and provided a base for land-based air support.

The troops and equipment for the Guadalcanal campaign were largely staged from Espiritu Santo. The island served as a major supply and logistics hub for the operation, and it was also used as a base for air support and reconnaissance missions.



Bomber #3 on Espiritu Santo was one of the three massive airfields on the island that was used for staging purposes during the war.

The Guadalcanal campaign was a long and brutal battle that lasted for several months. The Japanese launched numerous counterattacks in an attempt to dislodge the Allied forces, but they were ultimately defeated in February 1943. The victory at Guadalcanal

was a significant turning point in the Pacific War, as it marked the first major Allied victory in the area and gave the Allies a foothold in the Solomon Islands.

In addition to the Guadalcanal campaign, Espiritu Santo played a role in numerous other operations during the Pacific War. The island was used as a base for the New Georgia campaign, which was aimed at securing the western Solomon Islands, and it was also used as a staging area for the Bougainville campaign, which was aimed at capturing the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.



Members of Australia's 58th/59th Battalion near the Ogorata River in Bougainville, 18 July 1945. Picture Australian War Memorial.

The airfields on Espiritu Santo were also an important base for Allied aircraft, which were used to carry out bombing raids and reconnaissance missions throughout the area. The airfields were particularly important for the "Island Hopping" strategy, which involved capturing and securing key islands in the Pacific to use as bases for further operations.

The island of Espiritu Santo was not just important for its military significance. The establishment of the base on the island had a significant impact on the local population, who were largely Melanesian and had been living under colonial rule. The arrival of the Allied forces brought significant changes to the island, including the construction of new infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, and the introduction of modern technologies, such as radios and telephones.

The Allied forces also brought significant economic benefits to the island. The construction of the base created thousands of jobs for local people, and the

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presence of the Allied forces provided a significant boost to the local economy. The Allies also provided food, medical care, and other essential services to the local population.

However, the arrival of the Allied forces also had negative impacts on the local population. The construction of the base resulted in the displacement of many local people, who were forced to leave their homes and villages to make way for the military installations. The presence of the Allied forces also led to significant social changes, as the local people were exposed to new ideas and ways of life.

The impact of the war on Espiritu Santo was not limited to the period of the conflict. After the war, the island became an important location for the demobilisation of Allied troops, who were returned to their home countries. The base was gradually dismantled, and many of the military installations were abandoned. However, the legacy of the war remained, and the island continued to be seen as a significant location for military and strategic purposes in the future.



A wrecked military bulldozer wrecked and dumped at Million Dollar Point on Espiritu Santo. © 2022 Chris Hamilton | CHPhotographic

The role of Espiritu Santo in the Pacific War highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of the conflict. It was not simply a struggle between two great powers, but a global conflict that involved a wide range of actors and had far-reaching social, political, and economic consequences. The experiences of the war continue to shape the cultural heritage and political

landscape of the Pacific region today, and serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by countless individuals during this pivotal moment in history.

Espiritu Santo's role also highlights the important contributions of Melanesian and Pacific Islander people to the Allied war effort. Many local people worked alongside the Allied forces as laborers,



A local Ni-Vanuatu teaches a US Navy Seabee the fine art of traditional weaving palm leaves for roof and wall sections.

construction workers, and support staff, contributing their skills and knowledge to the war effort. However, their contributions have often been overlooked or marginalised in historical accounts of the war.

Moreover, the Pacific War had a lasting impact on the political and social landscape of the region. The war provided an impetus for decolonization movements in the Pacific, as local people became more aware of their own political and cultural identities. The experiences of the war also led to the formation of new political alliances and organizations, which played an important role in shaping the future of the region.

The role of Espiritu Santo in the Pacific War of World War II was a significant one, with lasting impacts on the physical, political, and cultural landscape of the region. The legacy of the conflict continues to shape the identity and culture of the Pacific, and serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by countless

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individuals during this tumultuous period in history. As the Pacific region faces new challenges in the 21st century, the lessons and experiences of the Pacific War remain relevant and important, underscoring the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in promoting peace, security, and development.



Bilateral security agreements between Vanuatu and Pacific neighbours such as Australia, strengthen peace and security in the Pacific.

Footnote:

This story was written by our special contributing author George P Thomas. So who is George P Thomas? His initials may provide a clue.

GPT or more commonly known as ChatGPT is the artificial intelligence or AI that has everyone amazed by its ability create and learn without human intervention.

This story was written entirely by the AI computers as an experiment. They were asked to produce just one thing: "Write an article about Espirtu Santo's role in the Pacific War during World War II." This is not copied text it is original text written by a computer.

Which has to leave you asking, where will it lead to next?



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## THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY

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# Swept up in war.

The Japanese air raid on Darwin in early 1942, in the Northern Territory of Australia, is well remembered. 243 people lost their lives, and up to 400 others were wounded.

But two weeks later, a much smaller air raid is less well known. This took place on the small Western Australian town of Broome, and had a particularly tragic twist to it.

Broome is a small pearling town, even today it has fewer than 15-thousand residents.



Broome after the attack in March 1942. *Picture courtesy of the Netherlands Institute of Military History.*

But in March 1942 it was a crucial staging point for civilian and military refugees fleeing the oncoming Japanese offensive through what were then the Dutch East Indies – now Indonesia.

Facilities in Broome were being used for refuelling aircraft – necessary because of the long distances between Australia and the islands.

During two weeks in February and March, more than a thousand refugees had passed through.

But just after dawn on 3 March, nine Japanese warplanes and a reconnaissance plane reached the flying boat anchorage at Roebuck Bay in Broome and the RAAF base at Broome Airfield.

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The enemy planes strafed aircraft on the ground and engaged those in the air, including a USAAF B-24A Liberator full of wounded personnel.



A pall of smoke rises from the burning hull probably of a Liberator, one of the six large aircraft, which included two Flying Fortresses and a Liberator, destroyed on the aerodrome in the Japanese air-raid on the town on 3rd March 1942. *Pic Australian War Memorial.*

Later the bodies of 30 Dutch civilians were found – including women and children, making the official death toll 88, though it may have been higher.

During the raid one Japanese plane was downed, killing pilot Osamo Kudō, when Dutch pilot Gus Winckel tore a machine gun from his Lockheed Lodestar and shot down the Zero by balancing the heavy weapon on his shoulder.

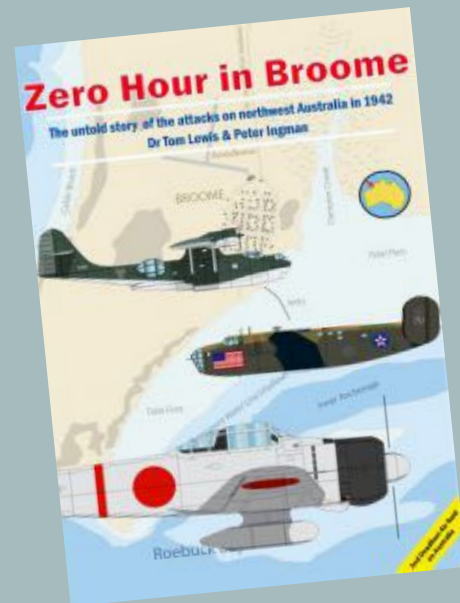


The engines and tail section were all that could be recognised of this US B-17 heavy bomber following the Japanese raid on Broome. *Pic Australian War Memorial.*

Another Japanese plane ran out of fuel and was forced to ditch, though the pilot survived.

All in all, Broome was attacked four times during the war but none so bad as the first. 15 flying boats were sunk in the attack – and the remains do appear at low tide.

The story of the attack is told in the book *Zero Hour in Broome* – written by Dr Tom Lewis, and friend of the museum, aviation writer Peter Ingman.



# South Pacific watermelons.

During World War II, resourcefulness and innovation were key in overcoming obstacles and providing essential supplies for troops. One such example is the establishment of a vegetable farm on the island of Kolombangara in the Solomons to supply fresh produce to the base hospital at Munda.



US Army Quartermasters examine lettuces grown on a farm to the north of Luganville, Espiritu Santo.

Before his induction into the Army, William Sabel was a poultry farmer with a passion for gardening. After six months training and attending Officer Candidate School, he was sent to Espiritu Santo with the 350th Engineer General Service Regiment. Camped in a cocoa bean plantation, he noticed the fertile dark soil and wondered if vegetables and flowers could grow in the tropics and requested a variety of seeds from his parents in Chicago, which he planted wherever his unit was stationed.

As the war progressed, William's regiment was ordered to Munda in the Solomon Islands, and the idea of establishing a vegetable farm was proposed. Given the success of his vegetable garden on Santo, establishing a garden on Munda seemed like a great idea to his commanding officer. William was chosen to lead the project, and with six enlisted men with prior agricultural experience and 15 native workers provided by the

British Government, they set to work on the nearby island of Kolombangara. The vegetables they were to grow there would be used to supplement the drab, bland menu that was served to the wounded in the base hospital.

The island had previously been a British coconut plantation, but the Japanese had confiscated it and used it as a fighter airfield to protect their base at Munda. The coconut trees had been cut flush with the ground for the landing strip, making ploughing a challenge. However, with resourcefulness and innovation, the team was able to establish a successful vegetable farm, providing a morale boost for troops and fresh produce for the base hospital at Munda.



William Sabel prior to his death in 2015. Photo Ann Hunt, American Legion.

Within three months, the team had produced a variety of fresh garden produce, including watermelons, cucumbers, and corn that was sent straight to the hospital at Munda.

In addition to being enjoyed by patients who'd survived off dehydrated food for extended periods, the local native workers also enjoyed the fresh watermelons — a fruit they were not familiar with prior to the war. William went on to demonstrate to the locals how to save the seeds and replant them. In 1998, some 55 years later, William learnt that watermelons were still being grown on Kolombangara and neighbouring islands of the Solomons. William Sabel of Tavares, Florida, passed away in 2015.

# Inspiring everyday heroes

Vanuatu has been in the world headlines before, sadly mostly when it has been hit by natural disasters – like the twin cyclones earlier this year.

But nothing can compare with the global interest sparked at the end of March – when world media reported on a potentially ground-shaking legal win by the Vanuatu government at the highest international level. The Washington Post had this headline:

*How a small island got world's highest court to take on climate justice.*

The BBC reported likewise, as did the New York Times – and of course Australia's ABC and New Zealand's Radio Pacific service.

What most of the stories also mentioned, although not in great detail, was that this process began several years ago in work first undertaken by Vanuatu law students studying in Fiji. So, what's happened?

Basically, Vanuatu – population 320,000 - has persuaded 120 countries in the UN General Assembly that they should seek a ruling by the world's highest international court on the obligations of countries to address climate change.

The request for an advisory ruling from the International Court of Justice is expected to clarify the legal obligations

of countries to address climate change – and to create a path for them to be sued if they fail to do so.

The Washington Post reports that a similar effort in 2011 by two other island nations, Palau and the Marshall Islands, failed at the United Nations. This time, Vanuatu obtained co-sponsorship from more than 120 countries, including Britain, France, Germany and other industrialised nations with a long history of high emissions.



Alatoi Ishmael Kalsakau, prime minister of Vanuatu, at U.N. Headquarters in New York. *Picture Reuters news agency.*

It quoted Vanuatu Climate Change Minister Ralph Regenvanu: "It is a matter of basic survival for us. We can't do anything economically and politically because we don't have any power. What we can use is our sovereignty as a United Nations member state."

**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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