

New bomber wreck discovered

Without a doubt, the local Ni-Vanuatu are the best sources of information in Vanuatu - particularly when it comes to locating aircraft wrecks. However, they won't reveal these secrets to just anyone.

Mayumi Green, museum board member and respected Santo tour guide, was chatting with a local who mentioned a large wreck on his village's land. Intrigued, Mayumi asked him to get some photos of the site. He returned with soe fabulous shots taken deep in the jungle, many hours from Luganville.

The aircraft appears to be a B-24 bomber, identified from a photo showing what looks like corrugated roofing – a design feature present



An engine from the aircraft wreck in the jungle to the west of Luganville.

inside the bomb bay doors of the large aircraft, though not exclusive to the B-24. Given that B-24s were operating from Santo during WWII, and several crashed in and around the islands of what was then the New Hebrides, there's a chance it is a Liberator.

A trek to the site is being planned in the next month or two. We'll keep you updated as to what we find. *(continued...)*

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An unknown part from the wreck.



Two pieces with readily identifiable text and part numbers on them.



One of the propeller blades from the crashed aircraft lies in the jungle.



Possibly the inside of the bomb bay doors.



An unknown section of the aircraft.



Two more pieces of aluminium from the wreckage deep in the jungle.

Sistas are doing it for themselves

During the month we had a visit from a very special group of talented girls.

Three representatives from the US Peace Corps including Mike McCabe, Regional Director IAP Region and two of his staff were here from Washington DC and Port Vila. Accompanying them was the latest group of 'SMART Sistas'.

The Smart Sistas ICT Camp for Girls in Vanuatu was established in 2016. It is an educational initiative aimed at empowering girls aged 9-14 by providing

them with opportunities to explore and learn about Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The camp offers sessions and hands-on training designed to inspire and equip young girls with the skills and confidence needed to pursue educational and career opportunities in the tech field. It will also help to bridge the gender gap in ICT.

Marina was delighted to take the girls on a special guided tour of the museum. We wish them all the success in the world with their future careers in ICT.



Everyone wanted to be photographed next to the famous Coolidge bell.



The girls were very interested in some of our videos on display.



The Sistas outside The South Pacific World War II Museum in Luganville.

A rosie by any other name

The name "Rosie the Riveter" is synonymous with women's contributions to the war effort during World War II. But the image many envision, certainly differs from Norman Rockwell's famous 1943 portrayal.



The actual Rosie the Riveter by Norman Rockwell that appeared on the cover of the *The Saturday Evening Post*. Photo *Saturday Evening Post*.

On May 29, 1943, *The Saturday Evening Post* featured Rockwell's depiction of Rosie the Riveter on its cover, becoming one of his most iconic wartime images. Rockwell's Rosie is depicted as a robust woman with well-defined muscles, taking a lunch break from her factory work, holding a half-eaten sandwich in one hand. She balances a rivet gun on her lap, ready to resume work, while stepping on a copy of *Mein Kampf*, symbolising her role in fighting Nazi Germany.

Rockwell used Mary Doyle Keefe as his model for Rosie, despite her being a telephone operator rather than a factory worker. This choice underscored the broader role of working women in the war effort, regardless of their specific jobs.

Despite Rockwell's Rosie being a powerful symbol, it is not the image most people associate with "Rosie the Riveter" today. The more recognisable version is an image from a lesser-known World War II workplace poster.

This popular Rosie is seen wearing a red and white polka-dot bandana, flexing her bicep with the slogan "We Can Do It!" above her.

Contrary to popular belief, this image was not originally intended to represent Rosie the Riveter. It was created as part of a brief internal campaign at Westinghouse Electric to boost productivity and morale among workers, rather than to recruit new ones.

During the war, such posters were designed to emphasise the importance of workers' contributions to the war effort. The "We Can Do It!" poster was aimed at encouraging women already in the workforce to maintain their efforts.



The "We Can Do It!" poster (Illustration by J. Howard Miller for Westinghouse, War Production Board, National Archives).

Rockwell's version of Rosie highlighted the transformative impact of women's labour during the war and emphasised their crucial role in the nation's success. His Rosie was a reminder that American women's hard work was vital to the war effort.



Mary Doyle Keefe poses beside the cover art based somewhat loosely on her, with Norman Rockwell.

Interestingly, twenty-four years after the painting, Rockwell sent Keefe a letter apologising for depicting her with a heftier physique than she had in real life.

Mary Doyle Keefe passed away in April 2015 at the age of 92.



Mary Doyle Keefe in 2002 with the cover of the May 29, 1943, Saturday Morning Post. (Jim Cole / Associated Press / LA Times)

When the war broke 'Old Ski Nose'

Bob Hope entertained US troops both at home and across the globe. His sharp wit and talent for bringing smiles to countless service members from 1941 to 1991 earned him the title "The GI's Best Friend."

However, it wasn't just his on-stage performances that defined Bob. After each show, he would visit field hospitals, moving quickly through the wards. These visits were not for publicity but showed Hope's sincere gratitude and empathy for those who had sacrificed for their country.



Jerry Colona, Tony Romano and Bob Hope sing at the Base Hospital on Kwajalein Island. Photo US Archives.

He asked each man how he was injured and how he was feeling. He cracked a few jokes and signed autographs but never offered sympathy.



Bob Hope at the Base Hospital on Kwajalein Island. Photo US Archives.

"That's the last thing these guys want," he said. "If you give them sympathy, they'll turn away. You gotta be clinical about it and talk to 'em on an honest basis.

All these guys in traction – I say, 'Don't get up, fellas.' or 'OK, somebody get the dice and let's get started.' In the old days, (comedian Jerry) Colonna and I would even get in bed with the patients."

"You have to show them that you're really happy to see them," Colonna said. "And in some cases, it's really tough. You know how they feel and they know how they feel. I choke up and get a lump in my throat and I have to walk away. But Bob – he's learned how to hold back his emotions."



Bob Hope shares a joke with soldiers at the 31st General Hospital on Espiritu Santo in 1944. Photo US Archives.

Still, he didn't always succeed. At the 31st General Hospital on 'Hospital Hill' on Santo in 1944, Hope stopped by the bedside of a severely wounded soldier receiving blood transfusions. "I see where they're giving you a little pick-me-up," Hope quipped. "It's only raspberry soda," the boy replied, "but it feels pretty good." Two hours later, Hope learned that the boy had died. "I thought about how in his last moments he'd grinned and tried to say something light," Hope recalls, "and I couldn't stand it. I had to go outside and pull myself together."

This was the side of Bob Hope that few people saw. The compassionate comedian who only ever wanted to "make those kids forget about their problems."

THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY

By the book

The statistics around the Allied military bases in the then New Hebrides are so big, they sometimes defy easy comprehension.

On May the 4th, a Naval Construction Detachment (later better known as the famed Seabees) arrived on Efate. The Marines had already begun building an airfield, now it was the job of the Seabees to take over and expand the runway.

And by May the 28th, the new 1800 metre by 106 metre surface was in action.



Bauer Field as it is today, but during the war a hive of activity for USAAF aircraft.

All that had been done with just one crane, ten trucks, three graders and seven bulldozers.

But as impressive as that, it was just scratching the surface, and what a surface.

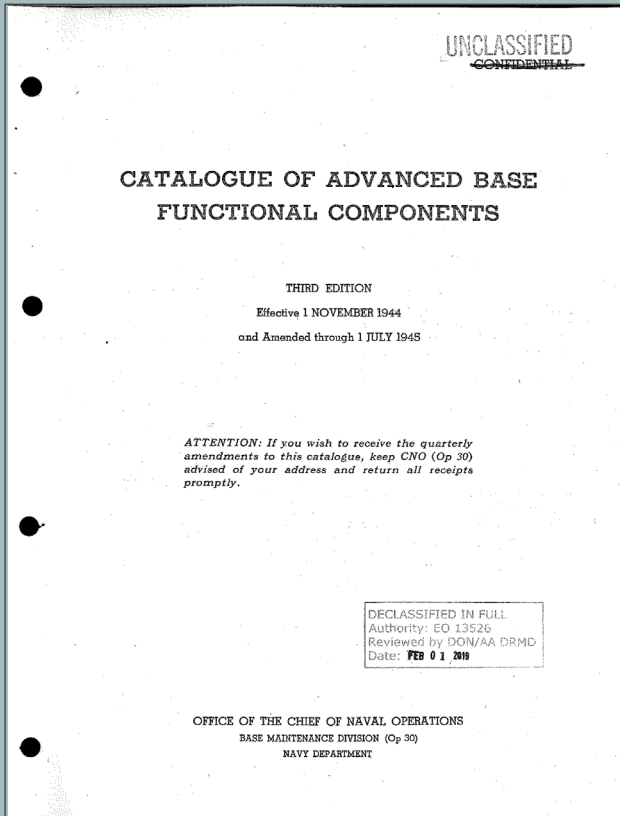
Eventually the country would be home to an advanced naval base, and what is astounding is that, essentially, it was built as if it were a giant Lego set – or what the US Navy called a LION.

What's more, there was produced in effect, a giant IKEA-style catalogue. In it was listed every component – and we mean every component – needed to building

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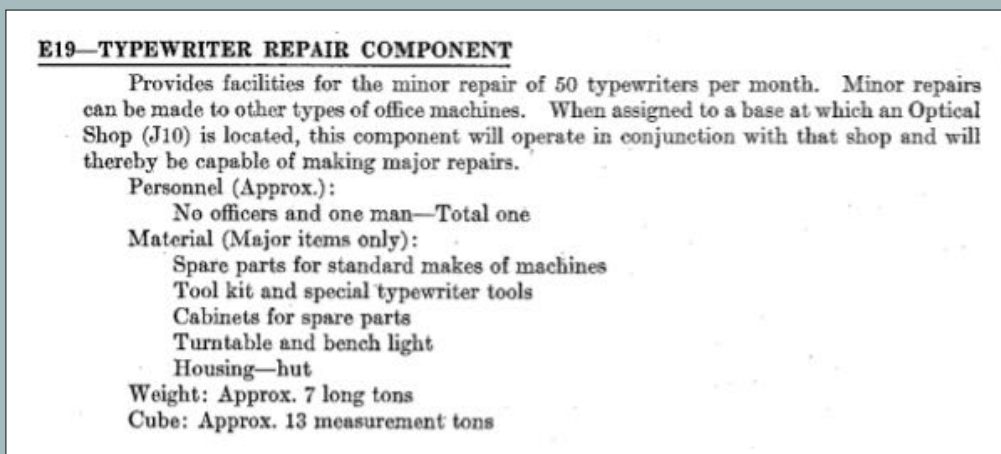
a LION any where in the world. This was called the Catalogue of Advance Base Functional Components and its secrets were only fully declassified in 2019.

It would tell you what each bit, or unit was – how many officers and enlisted men would be required – and how



The rather uninspiring cover of the Catalogue of Advanced Base Functional Components. The Ikea cataloge of base building. Not the stamp declassifying it in full dated Feb 01 2019.

much weight in tonnes, and space on a ship, it would take. So the whole giant enterprise could be stacked, stored, and shipped overseas for assembly.



Here's the entry to order a typewriter repair unit – sadly, now obsolete technology.

Some bits were very large, others quite small.

So let's talk about one small one. E19 – Type Writer Repair Component.

It would require one man, no officers.

It would be able to repair 50 typewriters a month and make minor repairs to other office machines.

The material needed included the hut, tools to repair said typewriters, and storage.

It would all weigh seven tons.

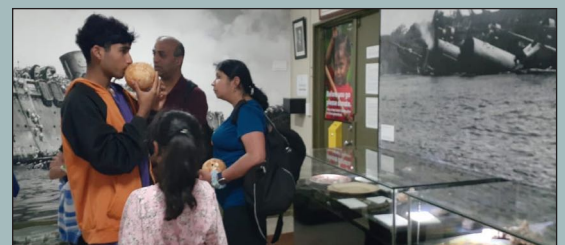
Without it, quite possibly a lot of typewriters would have quite quickly deteriorated in the heat and humidity and dust.

And without typewriters, there would be no paperwork to keep the war machine moving.

That then, was the sort of attention to detail that made the US an impossibly formidable foe, on the frontlines, and yes, the rear lines.

A welcome sight

It's wonderful to have several cruise ships arriving in port to put a smile on the faces of many locals. That included our very own Marina and Lyn down at the museum, ably assisted by Mayumi Green who showed the passengers from the Carnival Splendor around when the ship was in town on 23 May.



Connecting the world

The Naval Air Transport Service

The Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) was a branch of the United States Navy from 1941 to 1948. At its height during World War II, NATS consisted of four wings with 18 squadrons, operating 540 aircraft with 26,000 personnel assigned.



Since early 1943, a NATS base was in operation at Base Button in Espiritu Santo. With the increased demand for services, plans were made to enlarge the Seaplane Base facilities. Initially, there were insufficient quarters, and to address this problem. So temporarily, the ex-Pan American Airways (PAA) yacht, SOUTHERN SEAS, was employed to provide accommodations for transient NATS passengers. While this ship provided many services, it was understood that its use was a stopgap until land facilities could be set up.



The Lydonia photographed 27 March 1925 while owned by publisher Cyrus H.K. Curtis. It was bought by Pan American Airways, refitted and renamed Southern Seas. Photo Wikipedia.

The NATS East Pier was completed and opened on 23 September 1943, followed by the West Pier on 12 October 1943. The third pier was not completed until mid-1944. This last pier seemed unnecessary due to the rapid movement of the war away from the area. The first NATS pier was located where the Air Centre Boat Pool pier was, which Air Centre took over when NATS moved to its new location.



The three NATS piers built to the west of present-day Luganville on the Second Channel. Photo US Archives.

Since early 1944, the NATS Unit at Espiritu Santo was under the command and staffed by Air Transport Squadron 12, the NATS Administrative Squadron at Honolulu. Before Lt. Comdr. Snead took over as



A NATS PB2Y Coronado flying boat on approach to the NATS piers on the Second Channel. Photo US Archives.

(continued...)

Officer in Charge on 8 November 1944, the unit was commanded by Lt. Comdr. C.C. Barber, who expanded the base to its maximum facilities.

Around mid-1944, traffic through this unit peaked at about 35 planes per week. PAA's "Cannonball" used the facilities for its San Francisco to Australia 'express run,' with PAA personnel based at Santo until 1 January 1945, when PAA's operations in the South Pacific were discontinued, leaving NATS to run the area for the US Navy.



A Pan American Boeing 314 clipper, long range flying boat over San Francisco. It was aircraft like this that used Santo as a stopover on their way to Australia and New Zealand. Photo warhistoryonline.com

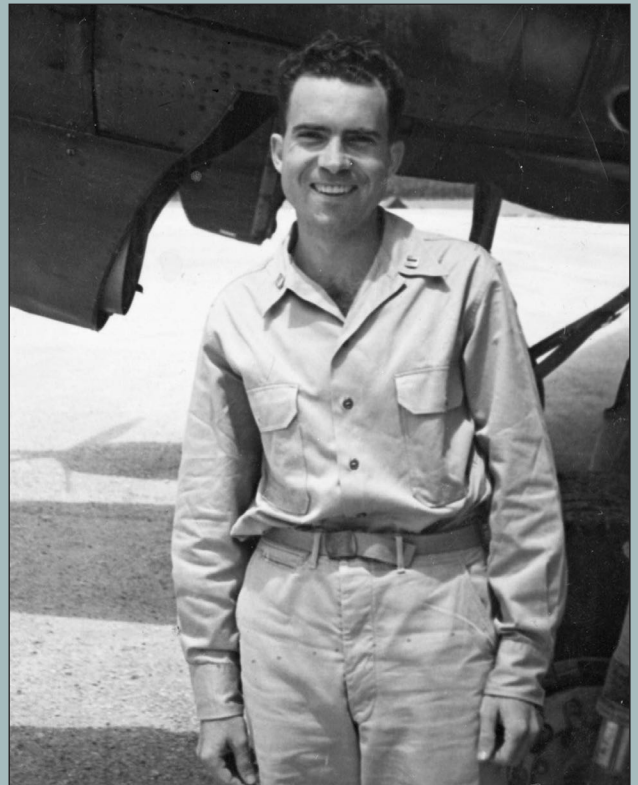
NATS even set up a flight control unit at the start of 1945, consisting of an aerology section with forecasts, flight release, and watch sections. This unit controlled all NATS flights into the South Pacific through to Australia.

In mid-December 1944, some housekeeping personnel were pulled from the base, and the Naval Air Facility (NAF) was set up to provide those needs for NATS operations.



Navy personnel make their way to a NATS pier on Espiritu Santo. Photo US Archives.

This unit, known as Naval Air Facility Sarakata (NAFS), continued until May 1945 with about 40 enlisted men. NATS personnel, consisting of 20 men, were assigned duties in flight operations, traffic, and transportation work. Additionally, Naval Air Facility personnel comprised the loading and docking crews.



Probably the Naval Air Transportation Service's most famous recruit. Future US President Richard Nixon, photographed at Espiritu Santo. Photo US Archives.

Flights transiting the unit decreased gradually from late 1944 to just two scheduled flights per week in April 1945, which were discontinued on 15 April 1945, with the closing of the Espiritu Santo NATS unit. NATS and NAFS, like all naval air activities on the island, came under the administrative control of Commander Air Centre.

Commander Air Centre issued all general directives governing flight and air traffic rules on the island, involving all airfields and seaplane bases. The commanding officers of the fields and bases were responsible for the operation of aircraft under their command.

The NATS base at Espiritu Santo was in a well-sheltered area of the Segond Channel, protected from sea and wind. (continued...)



The two NATS piers (circled in yellow), tucked into the sheltered Santo coast line in 1943. The huge base in Luganville can be clearly seen to the right. Photo montage US Archives.

Due to the smooth water and lack of wind, flights originating there were restricted to 1,000 pounds less cargo than any other base in the Pacific. Besides seaplanes, NATS operated C-47s from Pekoa Airfield (Bomber #2) until it closed, then shifted to Pallikulo Airfield (Bomber #1).



NATS C-47 aircraft line up at Eagle Farm in Brisbane, Australia. They flew from California via Honolulu. On the way they landed at Palmyra, Canton, Funafuti and Espiritu Santo. Photo Bob Livingstone and ozatwar.com

In December 1944, a weekly schedule of flights to Brisbane, Australia, was briefly maintained but soon discontinued.

Only one plane was lost at Espiritu Santo. A PBM was being docked when a mooring line snapped, causing the plane to wash up on the coral piers and sink. The aircraft was later salvaged. Part of the docking facilities of NATS were eventually handed over to the Royal New Zealand Air Force, which converted them for docking

Short Sunderland flying boats to carry cargo and repatriate New Zealand military personnel from the South Pacific back to New Zealand.

By 1944, the base was very self-supporting, considering its area and number of personnel. It operated its own laundry, commissary supply, Ship's Store, GSK, and two messes. It had facilities for engine changes, minor overhauls, and all line maintenance activities.



Late 1944 and RNZAF Short Sunderlands are on their delivery flight.

The Second Base was available for beaching, and while the Patrol Service Unit (PATSU) was there, its facilities were available. In the early days, before adequate facilities were established at Second Seaplane Base, the USS Curtiss assisted the seaplanes. A storm buoy was also placed in Aore Bay for mooring planes during prospective hurricanes, but it was never used.

The South Pacific routes peaked with the two-day "Cannonball" service from Honolulu to Brisbane, initiated on 1 March 1944. The route included stops at Palmyra, Canton, Funafuti, and Espiritu Santo, with only one overnight stop at Espiritu Santo, using PB2Y-3 Coronado transports. (continued...)



A PB2Y-3 somewhere over the South Pacific in 1944. Photo Wikipedia.

The "Cannonball" service ended in mid-August 1944, reverting to three-day flights. Sydney was added as a South Pacific route destination from May until October 1944.

Flights to Brisbane, Sydney, and Auckland peaked in June 1944, with seven, ten, and seven trips per week, respectively. Australia became increasingly connected to Honolulu through northbound connections to the NATS Central Pacific routes.

Variations on the South Pacific route continued until 1 March 1945, when the Canton – Suva – Noumea – Auckland portion was discontinued.

The entire South Pacific route was eliminated after 1 May 1945 as the war moved northwards and demand for transport service to Australia and New Zealand diminished.



A Pan American Boeing 314 clipper on Auckland Harbour.



A fantastic shot of the two NATS piers on Espiritu Santo, December 1943. A PB2Y Coronado is moored to the end of the East Pier. Photo US Archives.

Inspiring everyday heroes

This month our focus is on Georgette Kalorip, a corporal in the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) band. She plays the tenor horn and is currently in New Zealand attending a musician's course with the New Zealand Army Band School of Music, funded by the Mutual Assistance Programme (MAP). The nine-month course includes students from Fiji, Malaysia, Samoa, the

several relatives. The VMF, part of the Vanuatu Police Force, collaborates with partners like Australia and New Zealand to ensure Vanuatu's security and also responds to humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

Kalorip joined the VMF to serve her country, gaining opportunities to explore Vanuatu and travel overseas.

She visited New Zealand in 2021, representing Vanuatu in Defence Rugby. "I'm enjoying exploring Canterbury. The food is great and the people are so kind," she said.

Staff Sergeant Phil Johnston, Senior Instructor at the NZ Army School of Music, praised the MAP students for their diligence and hard work, noting that Kalorip quickly picks up new skills and positively influences her peers.

After completing the course, students will return home with

enhanced musical knowledge to share with their bandmates.

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



Georgette Kalorip – making music far from home. Photo NZDF.

Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Tonga, at Burnham Military Camp in the South Island.

Hailing from Ifira, just outside Port Vila, Corporal Kalorip has served in the VMF for five years, along with



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