

Honouring the USS Strong

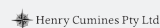
In this special edition of the South Pacific WWII Museum newsletter, we pay tribute to the USS Strong and feature the special event held in Luganville to honour those who perished on

the Fletcher Class destroyer in July 1943. This included the unveiling of a permanent memorial to the brave individuals on the ship at the South Pacific World War II Museum. (continued...)



Some of the many people involved in the creation of the USS Strong memorial. L-R, Rick Wood, Father Kami Huri, Museum Deputy Chairman William Widup, Museum Project Manager Jimmy Carter, Tammi Johnson, Museum Intern Gabby Brinez-Pardo, Museum Super Assistant Joycelyn Justin, Museum Support Officer Marina Moli and board member Mayumi Green.

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The creation of this important memorial display involved more than you might imagine. This is the story behind the Strong memorial.

It all began on March 10, 2021, when Tammi Johnson from *Project USS Strong DD467* contacted the museum. Tammi, a long-time supporter of our social media, had arranged for us to be interviewed by Stephen Harding, Editor in Chief of *Military History Magazine* and a supporter of Project Strong. Stephen had been receiving our newsletters thanks to Tammi.



A wonderful photo of our very own Marina with the ever-enthusiastic Tammi Johnson with her special Vanuatu scarf, just prior to her departure.

After the interview, we maintained contact with Tammi and learned about her plans to place a bronze plaque on the wreck of the Strong. Her great uncle, Ensign and Junior Communications Officer "Billy" Clay Hendrick Jr. had died when the ship sank, which fuelled her dedication to the project.

The USS Strong had been discovered on February 6, 2019, by the research vessel RV Petrel, funded by the late Seattle billionaire philanthropist Paul Allen's Vulcan Inc. Using sonar and underwater imaging, the Petrel found the wreckage lying 1,000 feet deep in the Kula Gulf, north of New Georgia in the Solomon Sea.

Tammi's initial plan was for a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to place the plaque on the wreck during

the Petrel's next visit to the Kula Gulf. If the Petrel didn't return, she hoped another exploration ship might. However, the onset of Covid-19 disrupted these plans, leaving Tammi to find an alternative location for the plaque that would still honour the crew members who lost their lives.



A crew member on board the RV Petrel spots a debris field which led to the discovery of the USS Strong. Photo - RV Petrel

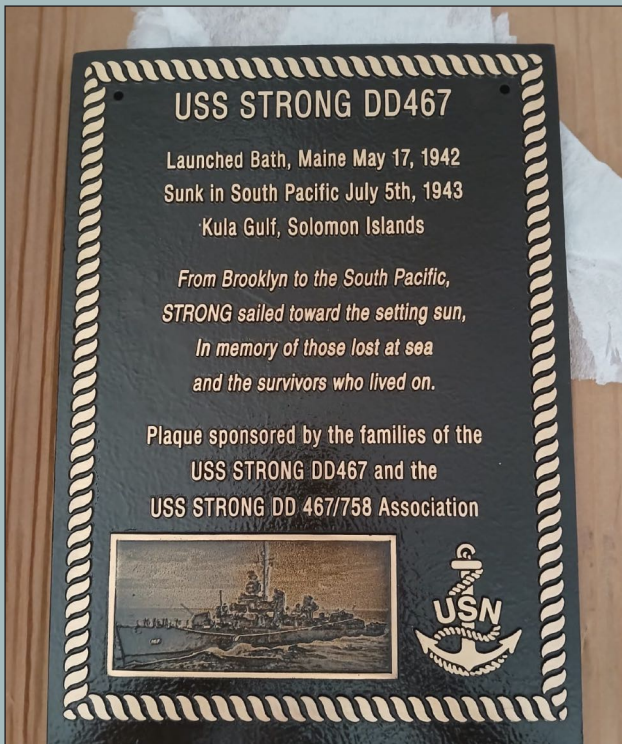
Tammi then began discussions with Museum Project Manager Jimmy Carter to explore other options. "We considered several locations, including along the coast of one of the Solomon Islands," Jimmy said. "But we were concerned about security and the risk of the plaque being targeted by scrap metal and souvenir hunters."

Eventually, it became clear to both Tammi and Jimmy that the perfect place for the plaque would be the South Pacific WWII Museum. The USS Strong had used Base Button for refuelling, resupply, and crew R&R. It was also the last place the ship visited prior to its sinking.



The USS Strong (DD-467) – the ship in the right background – makes its way up the Segond Channel at Espiritu Santo, 15 February 1943. The ship in the foreground is the USS Conyngham (DD-371). Photo – US Archives.

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One side of the USS Strong plaque prior to its journey to Santo.

Additionally, Tammi and the families of the crew members could trust that the plaque would be well cared for.

With the location agreed upon, two questions remained: how to display the plaque and how to safely transport the 13 kilograms of bronze to Santo.



A very early idea for the memorial was to have it mounted on a ship's compass base, similar to this one. The door certainly gave us more room to tell a more complete story.

Creating the memorial display

In early May, Jimmy reached out to Museum Chairman Bradley Wood to discuss the construction of a display for the double-sided memorial plaque. The initial idea was to mount the plaque on a steel tube and base, reminiscent of those found on a ship's bridge. This plan hinged on finding suitable materials at the Santo shipyard.

Bradley, accompanied by his son Jaden, set off on a scavenging mission. If anyone could find the right materials, it was Bradley. Their search yielded better results than expected.

An old ship had been dragged up the Santo shipyard slipway to be cut up for scrap by RecycleCorp, the local scrap metal recycler. Andrew Hibgame, known locally as 'Steptoe' and head of RecycleCorp, generously offered to cut out what we needed at no cost. Bradley and Jaden soon spotted a ship's door and frame in excellent condition.



Bradley's son Jaden stands with the door prior to it being cut out of the ship.

After some creative brainstorming with Jimmy back in Melbourne, it was decided that the door and frame would be perfect for the display. RecycleCorp's team used oxy-acetylene torches to cut out the door and frame, which were then craned onto a truck for transport back to town.

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The cutting crew torch the door and its frame from the ship.

While the cutting process was underway, Jimmy was working on designs for the display. Besides the plaque, it was decided to include a monitor to display a video and information about the USS Strong and the circumstances of its sinking.



Thumbs up from the cutting crew for a job well done.

With the plans finalized, the task of cleaning, painting, and fabricating the necessary elements was handed over to Bradley, Danielo and the team from Santo Hardware. Over the next three weeks, they transformed the old door and frame into something special. Meanwhile, Jimmy had his pieces printed and ready to be shipped to Santo in late June.

The final piece of the puzzle was the 13kg plaque, which was still with Tammi in Kentucky. If everything went according to plan, the museum would have a fitting tribute to honour the USS Strong and its crew.

The final preparations

July 5 marked the anniversary of the sinking of the Strong, and the plan was to have the commemoration on that date. While the team at Santo Hardware was busy with final painting, Jimmy arrived from Melbourne with the remaining display pieces. All that was left was for Tammi to reach Santo in time.

Tammi's journey began with a flight from Cincinnati to Los Angeles, followed by another to Fiji, and a third to Port Vila. That was the easy part, getting up to Santo was a little more interesting. As she detailed in her blog, "Getting there became a challenge. The airline that was supposed to take me from Efate Island, Port Vila, to Luganville on Santo went bust a few weeks before my trip. It then became a task to secure an Air Taxi charter. The date changed several times, and I lost money on non-refundable hotel bookings due to changes. But finally, I arrived on Efate on July 2 and flew to Santo-Pekoa Airport on the 3rd, where Jimmy Carter picked me up."



The plaque safely hanging within the memorial, thanks to Danielo from Santo Hardware.

With a day and a half to spare, Tammi made it, and we finally had the heavy bronze plaque ready to be mounted in the memorial.

In a final flurry of activity, Danielo expertly installed the plaque, ensuring it hung perfectly level in its special 'window' within the door frame. And after some last-minute cleaning and adjustments, we were ready for the ceremony on 5 July.

A day of remembrance

The commemoration began at 10:00 am and was well attended by Luganville locals and expats. Presiding over the ceremony was Father Kami Huri of the Anglican Archdiocese of Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Museum Deputy Chairman William Widup represented the museum, and Tammi Johnson spoke on behalf of the Strong families.

It was a simple and respectful ceremony, marking an important moment in World War II Pacific naval history as well as the history of the South Pacific WWII Museum. The event was more than just a commemoration; it signified the museum becoming part of the USS Strong family. We are deeply honoured to have been entrusted with the Strong memorial plaque.



The rear of the Strong memorial features the reverse side of the plaque with the names of those who lost their lives that July night in 1943.



The memorial and frame with details of the sinking of the USS Strong. A monitor on the left features a video story of the Strong.

The ceremony not only paid tribute to the officers and sailors of the Strong but also solidified a lasting connection between the museum and the families of the ship's crew. It was a day of reflection and gratitude, reminding us of the sacrifices made and the enduring legacy of those who served. The memorial stands as a testament to bravery and a beacon of remembrance for future generations.



The door of the memorial featuring the ship's official US Navy hull number.

Diving into history

In July, Museum board member Mayumi Green and her husband Kevin embarked on a diving adventure with renowned local dive operator Paul White from Aore Adventures.

Mayumi and Kevin are residents of Santo and are very

wrecks in the Second Channel – one a ship and the other an aircraft.

The aircraft they dived on lies 33 meters underwater, resting on the seafloor of the channel. It is a US Navy PBY Catalina that crashed during take-off in World War II.



The wreck of the Catalina showing its distinctive bubble observation window. Photo - Kevin Green.

The Consolidated PBY Catalina played a crucial role in the South Pacific. Known for their versatility and endurance, Catalinas were used in anti-submarine warfare, reconnaissance, air-sea rescue, and transport missions. Their presence was essential in helping maintain Allied control over the ocean and supporting naval and land operations.

A significant base for the Catalinas was at Base Button on the Second Channel, not far to the south from the

experienced in diving the SS President Coolidge. We are fortunate to have Mayumi on the museum board, as she brings extensive knowledge about the shipwrecks and plane wrecks scattered around Vanuatu's islands.

On this dive, Mayumi, Kevin, and Paul explored two



Another view of the Catalina in the Second Channel. Photo - Kevin Green.



Inside the hull of the Catalina wreck, cables and wiring is now covered in coral and growth. Photo - Kevin Green.

South Pacific WWII Museum. This location was a major logistical hub for Allied forces, making it ideal for operations over the Solomon Islands and New Guinea. The Catalinas conducted long-range patrols, providing

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A restored PBY Catalina in US Navy livery. Photo - Smithsonian.

vital intelligence and early warning. Additionally, Catalinas were crucial in air-sea rescue operations, saving countless lives of downed aviators.

More information on this aircraft will be featured in forthcoming issues of the Museum newsletter.



The Tui Tuatae sitting upright on the sandy bottom of the Second Channel. Photo - Kevin Green.

Turning our attention to the second of their dives, the Tui Tuatae, a distinguished World War II tugboat, played a crucial role in the maritime history of the South Pacific.

During World War II, Britain designed and built "Empire" class tugs, one of which was named Empire Shirley. This tug was owned by the Ministry of War Transport and served in the India to Singapore area. After the war, it was renamed Tapuhi and worked in New Zealand ports from 1947 to 1973. In 1973, it was sold to Narain Shipping Company of Suva, Fiji, and renamed Tui Tawate. The following year, Vanuatu resident Reece Discombe purchased and renamed it Tui Tuatae.



The Empire Shirley now called the Tupahi coming into Wellington. Photo - michaelmcfadyenscuba.info

Reece, who lived in Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila., until his death in the late 2000s, acquired the Tui Tuatae for salvage work on the SS President Coolidge.

By the early 1970s, salvage work on the SS President Coolidge had focused on removing oil leaking from its huge bunkers. Complaints from residents along Second Channel led the government to seek a solution. A salvage company found 34 tanks containing 650 tons of bunker oil in good condition, even after 35 years underwater.



Another photo of the Tupahi in Wellington, New Zealand. Photo - michaelmcfadyenscuba.info

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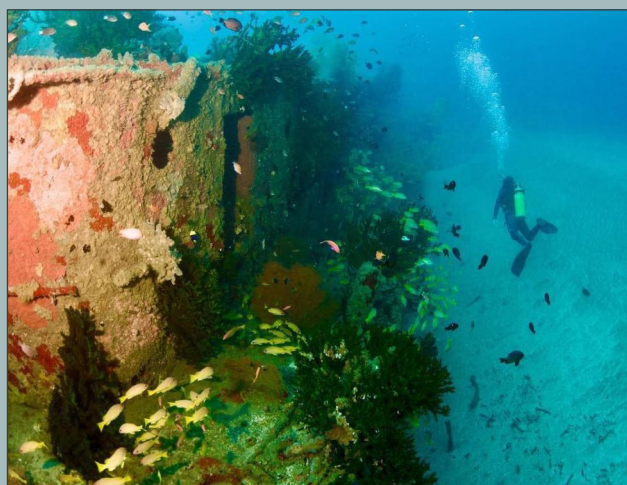
The Tui Tuata, barely making it from Fiji to Santo, was converted to hold oil in all its compartments. Instead of burning the oil in the tug's boilers, it was decided to sell it to the cruise ship SS Arcadia, which visited Santo regularly. In 1977, the Arcadia took on 200 tons of oil at a time over three visits, using it in her furnaces.

In 1978, the tug capsized in Port Vila and was flooded to prevent drifting. It was later refloated, sailed back to Luganville, and abandoned in the Sarakata River. On May 16, 1990, the Tui Tuata was towed into the Segond Channel and sunk.



A photo of the tug, renamed and called the Tui Tuata. Photo - michaelmcfadyenscuba.info

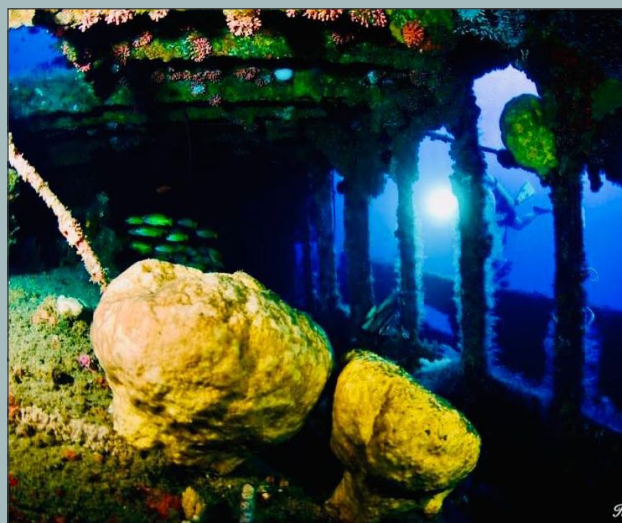
The tug, somewhat forgotten, was resting in about 45 meters of water and was rediscovered by Kevin Green in the late 1990s. It took just two dives by Kevin to find the Tui Tuata, upright in 44 meters of water near Coral Quays Resort, a few kilometres south of Luganville.



Another angle of the Tui Tuata sitting in the Segond Channel. Photo - Kevin Green.

The wreck now lies on a beautiful sandy bottom, with a maximum depth of 46 meters and a minimum of 30 meters, surrounded by vibrant marine life and an abundance of coral growth.

We are grateful to Mayumi and Kevin for sharing their dive photos with us and to Paul White from Aore Adventures for taking them to dive the Catalina aircraft.



The interior of the old tug boat now overgrown with coral. Photo - Kevin Green.



Another view of the interior of the Tui Tuata. Photo - Kevin Green.

Of Stronger stuff

One of the Museum's long-time supporters is the wonderfully enthusiastic Tammi Hedrick. She maintains the 'Project USS Strong' website, which is a fabulous repository of all things about the destroyer USS Strong (DD-467) - particularly for anyone who had a relative who served on the ship.

Tammi has done some remarkable work researching the ship, its history, personnel and the circumstances leading up to its sinking by a long range Japanese torpedo on July 5, 1943. Tammi's great uncle Billy Hedrick was an Ensign and Junior Communications Officer on the Strong when it went down between Kolombangara and New Georgia in the Solomon Islands.



USS Strong DD 467 launched from Bath, Maine in May of 1942, was later commissioned in August 1942. Photo - Project USS Strong.

One of the amazing stories to come out of that tragedy, was that of Lieutenant Hugh Barr Miller Jr., U.S. Naval Reserves and his incredible survival story.

Having endured the attack and subsequent sinking of the Strong, Miller ended up on one of two life nets and some pieces of life raft, with 22 other crewmen. Eleven



Lieutenant Hugh Barr Miller Jr. in his 'dress blues' uniform. Photo - Project USS Strong.

days later five of them - including Miller - washed up on Arundel Island, far behind the Japanese lines. Hardly the safest place to wash up, but at least it was land.

However, Miller was injured internally and shaken by a "severe haemorrhage", to the point where he thought he was going to die. Being the senior officer of the group he ordered the four men to take all the remaining equipment and rations and head to a coconut plantation down the coast, hopefully to find help.

Miller gave his shoes to one survivor but hung onto a pocket knife with broken blades and some Japanese beer bottles and two old cracker tins he used to store water in.

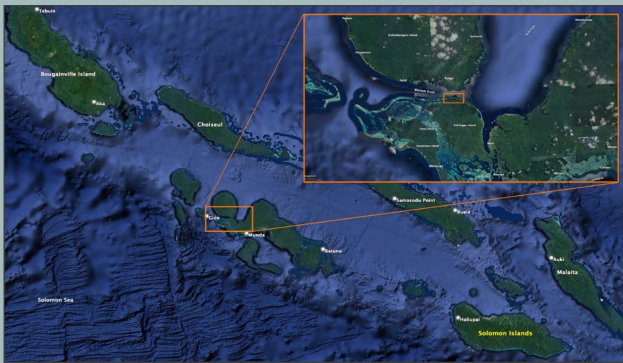
Following an emotional parting, Miller was left to die - or so he thought. He recounted later, "...figuring I wouldn't last long and that I might as well be as comfortable as possible, I drank all my water that first day—the 15th—after the boys left."

But the next day, Miller woke up to his surprise and actually began regaining strength. (continued...)

Two days later he was still alive. "I got to thinking about myself then and I decided I wasn't showing up as the kind of guy I had thought I was, just to lie down and die without a fight," Miller wrote later.

Lieutenant Miller began to take stock of his situation and soon realised that he was in the box seat to observe Japanese operations on nearby Kolombangara Island. The intelligence he could gather would be invaluable to the Allied forces, if he could just stay alive long enough to report back with his observations.

In his own words, "So I held a little conversation with the Lord, lying there on the edge of the jungle that evening, and I told Him that if He'd give me a little water, I'd get up out of there and do something about this situation."

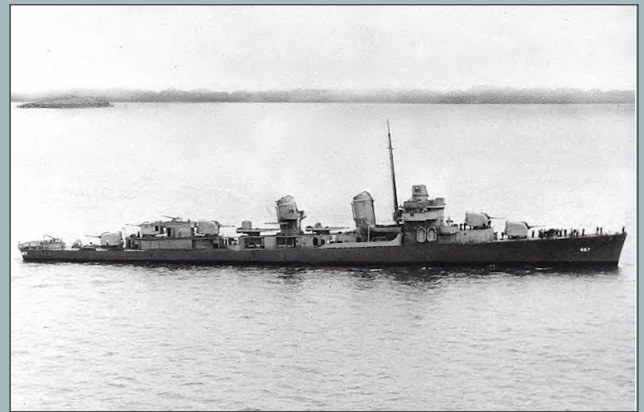


Arundel Island lies to the west of New Georgia island in the Solomons. Map - Google Earth.

Miller went to sleep, and sure enough, by about 9.00pm it began to rain. And rain and rain. In fact for four hours the water bucketed down. Miller made the most of it and drank four tins of water, just as soon as they filled up, before going back to sleep.

The following morning after a "leisurely breakfast in bed," consisting of more water from the cracker tin, Miller decided to hobble to a spring around two kilometres away, with some help from a staff the men had made for him before they left. It was an arduous walk as he was weak from lack of food and the coral and rocks soon shredded his bare feet. But he battled on and made it to the stream just before nightfall. Totally exhausted from his ordeal, he filled up on water and lay under a log and went to sleep.

The next day, things began to look up. Miller managed to crack open a coconut and ate some of the coconut



A heavily retouched photograph of the USS Strong taken in late 1942. Photo - US Naval History Heritage & Command.

meat inside, which was the first solid food he'd had in two weeks. But of greater importance was finding shelter. That would not only protect him from the elements, but more importantly hide him from Japanese patrols, which had obviously been on the island given the beer bottles and an old Japanese blanket he found near the spring.

Sure enough, it wasn't long before a small Japanese patrol came down the beach and Miller quickly retreated to the jungle.

The patrol soon passed and if he was to survive, Miller knew he had to find a better place to shelter. For five days he searched around the spring for the perfect place. He soon found a pocket among some "great" mangrove trees, "a natural shelter, protected on all sides by thickets and branches." It even had its own

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The USS Strong highlines mail to the light cruiser USS Honolulu (CL-48) during operations in the Solomon Islands area, only days before her sinking. Photo - Project USS Strong and USS Strong Association.

lookout, where high up, two branches crossed over each, creating a perfect perch to watch for enemy patrols.

Soon, a US PT boat attacked Japanese troop barges and supply boats in Hathorn Sound, which lay right in front of his makeshift camp. When it was all over it gave Lieutenant Miller the chance to pick over the debris that had washed up on the beach. From the body of a Japanese soldier he obtained shoes and socks, five cans of tinned beef, a belt, a bayonet, a grenade holder and two grenades.

Things were certainly looking up for Miller. Which is exactly what he did when he heard an approaching aircraft. As luck would have it, it turned out to be a US aircraft. Miller signalled to the pilot, who saw him and dropped a small package containing some iodine and Army D rations. That iodine probably saved Miller's life. He painted his bloodied and infected feet with it, which helped the cuts heal. According to Miller, "they had begun to fester and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to get around much longer."

With a new found strength and his feet healing well, it was payback time.

Miller began attacking the contingent of Japanese soldiers on the island. When a five-man Japanese patrol went out to investigate the body that had been stripped of its useful equipment and supplies, Miller soon took care of them all with one grenade.

He then stripped those bodies of everything he could possibly use and buried the bodies. Soon, more patrols were sent out to investigate the five men that were now missing. Miller just hid and eluded the Japanese efforts to find whoever was harrasing them.

Miller continued arming himself with whatever washed ashore and soon had enough in his stash to really start making a serious nuisance of himself.

After discovering Japanese machine-gun nests along the shoreline, he went on the attack, lobbing grenades into them, just as American aircraft flew overhead. This was followed up with what appeared, by all intents and purposes, to be "bombing runs" on the nights of August 10, 12, and 14.

The following morning, a Marine Corps Avenger pilot spotted Miller frantically waving a towel at him and realised he was a westerner, "by my red beard and shining forehead."



It wasn't long before a US Grumman J2F 'Duck' rescue seaplane arrived. It landed just 2,000 yards from the Japanese base on Kolombangara Island and seemed to have landed without being noticed by the Japanese. According to Miller, " the crew of that plane, composed of absolutely fearless men, didn't hesitate an instant."

They soon saw Miller was too weak to make it out to them so they inflated a rubber boat and rowed in to get him.

Miller hurried back to his campsite and collected all the enemy items he could carry and made his way back to the beach. He met Marine Corps Major Vernon A. Peterson, commander of the rescue party and explained to him the importance of the items he had from an intelligence gathering point of view. Peterson soon loaded up the rubber boat and took everything out to the Duck , before returning for Miller.

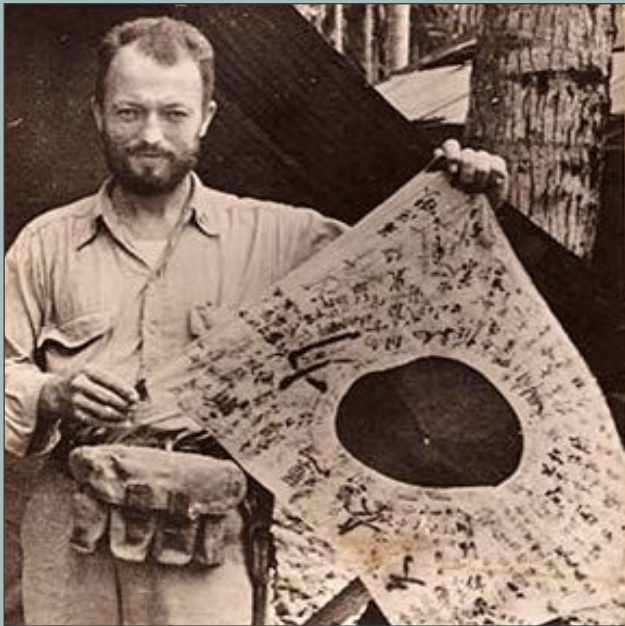
The rescue party soon took off and remarkably they didn't encounter any resistance from nearby Japanese forces.

Miller's first request of his rescuers, by the way, was for a cigarette. And then food. He recounted later, "We had returned to Munda in time for lunch that day, August 16, and it was my first real meal since the night of July 4.

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I had lost forty pounds during the forty-three days I was missing, but I started then and there to get it back."

Miller spent two days at Munda on New Georgia Island recovering from his ordeal. But more importantly, he spent most of that time debriefing everything he saw, providing vital intelligence information to the US Navy.



Miller soon after his rescue with a Japanese flag he recovered as part of his intelligence haul. Photo pacificparatrooper.wordpress.com

Other survivors from the Strong were picked up by ships, while others made it to nearby islands. However, all weren't so lucky and 46 officers and sailors - including Tammi Hendrick's great uncle Ensign Billy Hendrick - lost their lives that night of July 5, 1943.



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt presents Lieutenant Hugh Bar Miller Jr the Navy Cross. In the left of shot is Admiral William 'Bull' Halsey. Photo pacificparatrooper.wordpress.com

Miller managed to survive for 39 days on Arundel island. His extraordinary efforts did not go unnoticed and in spite of internal injuries that he suffered during Strong's sinking - and for his bravery - Lt. Hugh Barr Miller Jr was later awarded the Navy Cross, personally bestowed on him by United States First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt.

Hugh Barr Miller passed away June 21, 1978.

If you'd like to know more about the USS Strong and its remarkable history, visit Tammi's website at projectuss-strongdd467.com



The USS Strong's propeller as it is today. The ship lies in 1000 feet of water on the floor of the Kula Gulf north of New Georgia island. The ship was only found in 2019 by the crew of the research vessel RV Petrel.

This article first appeared in the April 2022 issue of our newsletter.

THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY

The legacy of the Niizuki

By contributing author Kevin McCarthy

The Museum's been honoured to now serve as the home for a plaque honouring the USS Strong, a destroyer sunk on July 4, 1943, in the Solomon Islands.

46 of her crew died – in an attack that summed up the deadly nature of the night-time waters around the islands.

A special memorial has been created which includes a bronze plaque. We know where the wreck of the USS Strong lays, thanks to the work of the RV Petrel and its undersea craft.



The USS Strong after her launch and prior to final fitting out.
Photo – US Navy.

And the memory of the USS Strong is being kept alive by people like Tammi Hedrick Johnson, who as she describes it, began her project as a labour of love to honour her great-uncle William "Billy" Clay Hedrick, Jr., an Ensign, and Junior Communications Officer who died aboard the Strong that night.

The Strong could have been any of the workhorses of the US Navy, the swift greyhounds that had little protection beyond their speed, and their guns and torpedoes.

But fate placed her in the path of a Japanese warship – the IJN Niizuki – equipped to deal out destruction from so far away, the US squadron thought they'd been targeted by a submarine.

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The Niizuki, or New Moon, was an unusual type of destroyer, and hadn't been many months in the water before the events of July 1943. While her keel had been laid the day after Pearl Harbour, her commissioning into service in her final form took until mid-1943.



IJN Hatsuzuki on December 1942 sea trials, Miyazu Bay. The Niizuki was of the same class as this ship. Photo - naval-encyclopaedia.com

She was designed to escort Japan's carrier fleet and was fast and equipped with eight 3-point-9 inch guns, able to fire against aircraft as easily as against surface ships.

Niizuki and her sisters weren't meant to be mixing it up in surface engagements, but inexorable losses in Japan's destroyer fleet in the Solomons meant she was pressed into an unintended role.



The Niizuki at sea, date unknown. Photo - IJN / Tracesofwar.com

She carried a single quad torpedo launcher, far fewer than most Japanese destroyers, but equipped with deadly 24-inch torpedoes. These were the best in service with any Navy in the world and were post-war nicknamed the Long Lance.

And while they could not match US technology, Niizuki crucially carried surface search radar,

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A Japanese Type 93 'Long Lance' torpedo being launched. Photo - Tides of History

giving the Japanese a chance to spot US warships and fire a salvo of torpedoes while still out of range of US guns.

On the night she carried out the strike on the USS Strong, she and two other Japanese destroyers were escorting a transport run under the cover of night. Her hit, at 11 miles range, is reputed to be the longest ever such hit achieved.

We don't know if the Japanese crew were aware of the hit, but Niizuki was back on the job the next night. This time however, retribution for the sinking of the Strong was swift. In the Battle of Kula Gulf, when a US task force surprised the Japanese supply run.



The Niizuki's torpedo launcher from which the record breaking torpedo was launched that sank the USS Strong. Photo - RV Petrel / Facebook / World War Wings



The R/V Petrel that discovered not only the wreck of the USS Strong, but that of the IJN Niizuki. Photo - Baird Maritime.

Niizuki was quickly sunk, with the loss of 300 lives.

Her wreck too has been located, ironically by the RV Petrel who also found the USS Strong.



The Niizuki wreck as it is today lying in the Kula Gulf, Solomon Islands. Photo - RV Petrel / Facebook / World War Wings

Inspiring everyday heroes

This month's Inspiring Everyday Heroes are of course easy to pick – they're the eight athletes taking part in the global Olympic sports extravaganza in Paris, and the Paralympic Games that follow soon after.

They are competing across seven sports and are the largest contingent sent to the Olympics by Vanuatu. The team members are:

- Priscilla Tommy — Women's Singles Table Tennis
- Ajah Pritchard-Lolo — Weightlifting
- Hugo Cumbo — Judo
- Chloe David — Athletics
- Jonathan Silas — Swimming
- Loane Russet — Swimming
- Elie Enock — Shot Put (Paralympics)
- Ken Kahu — Javelin (Paralympics)

Team Vanuatu was joined for their departure at the airport by the Minister for Sports Tomker Netvunei, French Ambassador Jean Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, acting Australian High Commissioner Jon Philp, and representatives from the Vanuatu Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee.

Minister Netvunei acknowledged the contribution from the Australian Government in helping get the team to Paris.

And Vanuatu's Olympic Chef de Mission Lydie Petersen-Visser expressed VASANOC's "deepest gratitude to each member of our team delegation for their dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to excellence."

She added: "Your passion for your sport and your country is truly inspiring, and we have no doubt that you will make us all proud with your performances."

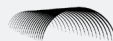


The Vanuatu Team waving from their craft during the spectacular opening ceremony on the River Seine in Paris.

Vanuatu's Paralympic Chef de Mission Margaret MacFarlane said "for ni-Vanuatu living with a disability, role models such as Elie Enoch and Ken Kahu have the power to change community attitudes and inspire them to dare to aspire, enable them to dream and to achieve."

Let's cheer them on the biggest stage of all!

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



SOUTH PACIFIC WWII
MUSEUM

South Pacific WWII Museum
Unity Park, Main Street,
Luganville, Espiritu Santo
Vanuatu

info@southpacificwwiimuseum.com
southpacificwwiimuseum.com

