

New exhibits for the museum

Next year will mark the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII, and it's incredible to discover well-preserved artifacts from that time still on Santo. This small but fascinating collection of aircraft parts was uncovered near

the site of the former Bomber #1 (Pallikulo) Airfield. Although the airfield itself has long disappeared, exploring the surrounding jungle continues to yield some valuable additions to our ever-growing collection.



Fighter exhaust component.



Navy aircraft arrestor hook.



Fghter aircraft wing flap.



Grumman aircraft foot pedal.



Aircraft ID plate.

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Look what the crew dragged in

The USS North Carolina (BB-55), a battleship of the North Carolina class, was commissioned in April 1941 and served with distinction in the Pacific during World War II, earning 15 battle stars.

George's journey to the North Carolina began when Edward F. Cope, a crew member, rescued the cat from the bay at Noumea, New Caledonia. George was soon "enlisted" as an Electrician's Mate, complete with a service number and a photo for his US Navy health card.

"George the cat received a clean bill of health, with his medical record noting his religion as 'Catholic,' his next of kin as 'the guys in the lighting shop, USS North Carolina,' and his eyes as 'green; in peachy condition,'" the battleship North Carolina shared on its social media pages.



USS North Carolina (BB-55) in Pearl Harbour in November 1942 for repairs. Photo – US Archives.

Amidst the fierce battles of the Pacific, the North Carolina welcomed an unexpected new crew member in August 1944. This recruit was unlike any other—a cat named George. Now, as we mark the 80th anniversary of George's arrival on the USS North Carolina, military records offer a wonderful glimpse into his life aboard the ship.

Form 11-2 (1942)

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

To be completely made up by medical officer at time of enlistment, extension of enlistment, reenlistment, advancement, appointment, commission, or promotion.

GEORGE (Name) 69-69-69 (Serial number)

General Electric (Occupation)

Enlisted Appointment Date: Seattle, Wash., Aug. 28, 1944

Rank: EM1c Previous service: none

Home: Place: P.S.N.Y. Date: 9-9-44

Religion: Pussay Religion: Catholic

Next of kin or blood: The guys in the Lighting Shop: USS North Carolina.

Complexion: Hairy Hair: Gray General appearance: Cattial

Head and face: normal

Eyes: Green Peachy condition

Vision: Right: 20/20, corrected to 20/20. Color perception: blind

Left: 20/20, corrected to 20/20

Hearing: Right: 15/15, Left: 15/15

Mouth, nose, throat: You should see them

Height: 1'11" Weight: 10 Temperature: 69

Character of expiration: 4F at inspiration: 1A

Salivary glands: Can't see it you worried?

Neck (thyroid, trachea, larynx): Hollars like Hell!

Spine and extremities: Twichy Tail

Throat (shape, movement, etc.): swell

Respiratory system: He does alright

Heart and blood vessels: Has red blood.

Pulse before exercise: 69 after exercise: 69 after rest: still 69

Blood pressure: systolic: 69 diastolic: 69

Abdomen and pelvis: normal

Genito-urinary system: smells

Urinalysis: Albumen: neg. Sugar: neg.

Nervous system: worries hell out of eVery-one.

10-5817

George's physical examination from his service record. Photo – Vicki Knopf.

DENTAL RECORD (To be filled in by the dental officer)

DO NOT REMOVE FROM HEALTH RECORD

General: GEORGE Electric

Date: Place: New Seafort Date: 9-9-44

INSTRUCTIONS: See Chapter 14, Section VI, Paragraphs 2311-2319, inclusive, Manual of the Medical Department, U. S. Navy.

RECORD OF FIRST DENTAL EXAMINATION

REMARKS:

RECORD OF SUBSEQUENT DENTAL OPERATIONS

FOR INSTRUCTIONS SEE CHAPTER 14, MANUAL OF THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

Next of Kin, changed to—

Name: Any Old Alley Cat

Address: Hogana Alley

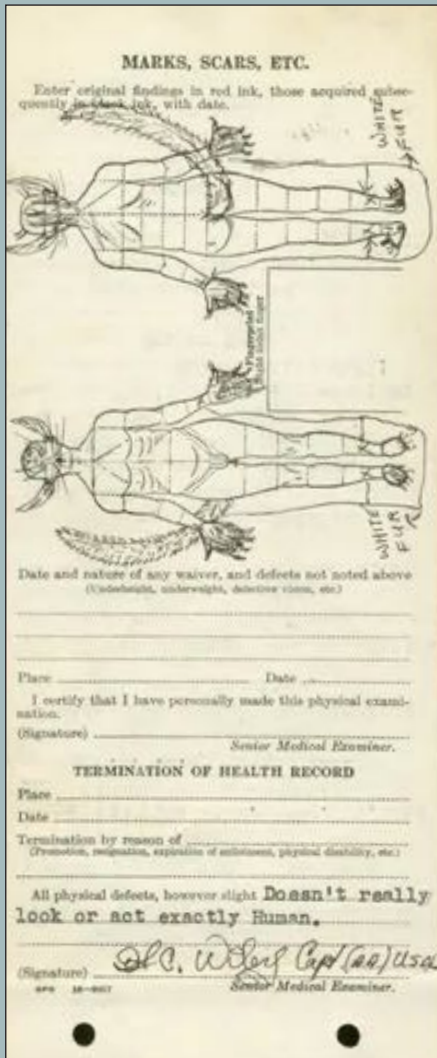
Name: _____

Address: _____

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-5817

George in a photo from his medical record. Photo – Vicki Knopf. Edward F. Cope was Vicki's grandfather.

A physical exam from September 1944 described George as standing 1 foot, 1 inch tall with a "hairy" complexion, and even included a modified human anatomy drawing to accommodate his ears and tail.



The modified human anatomy drawing from George's medical file. Photo – Vicki Knopf.

So, what became of George? According to Cope, George lived in the ship's lighting shop for over a year before he "went over the hill" when the vessel reached Seattle. Cope, who also kept lizards aboard the ship, shared this part of George's story.

For centuries, pets have been common on naval ships, often serving practical purposes such as keeping rodent populations in check. "It wasn't uncommon to have a cat onboard, as they provided companionship and affection," said Mary Ames Booker, curator of the Battleship North Carolina. This tradition of animal companionship aboard ships named North Carolina dates to the early 1900s,

when both a dog and a cat lived on the Armoured Cruiser North Carolina.

Today, the USS North Carolina is a museum anchored on the Cape Fear River in Wilmington, North Carolina. The ship, which participated in every major naval offensive in the Pacific theatre during World War II, was designated a national landmark in 1986.



The magnificent USS North Carolina as it is today in Wilmington North Carolina. Photo – ourstate.com | Matt Ray Photography.

With thanks to Vicki Knopf, The News&Observer, North Carolina and the USS North Carolina for their assistance with this story.

THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY

Four minutes that changed history

Four minutes in the darkness off Guadalcanal created one of the great *what ifs* of the war in the South Pacific in August 1942.

The four minutes was the time Japanese vice-admiral Gunichi Mikawa took to confer with his nearest commanders about what do now that his squadron had swept aside the Allied forces covering the barely two-day-old landings on the island.

The just-fought Battle of Savo Island had seen the US and Australian naval force suffering the most crushing loss – with four cruisers sunk.



Japanese vice-admiral Gunichi Mikawa.

The Japanese had lost none of their five heavy and two light cruisers.

At 16 minutes past 2, Mikawa raised the question of what to do next. Press on to the anchorage where the defenceless Merchant landing fleet lay, with many supplies unloaded, or to withdraw with a great victory achieved.

At 20 past 2 he decided to withdraw. Some of his staff had urged him to go on – but Mikawa's force was split up, would need to spend time reloading torpedo tubes, and was low on ammunition. Above all, Mikawa feared air attack if caught in daylight as he headed back to base.

(continued..)

The air attack wouldn't come from Guadalcanal – the airfield there could not yet take US planes. But there was a US carrier taskforce nearby – or there would have been, if Vice Admiral Frank Fletcher had not decided to head south, out of range of the Japanese ships.



US troops land largely unopposed on Guadalcanal – the quiet was shortlived.

Mikawa thus retired unscathed. The American ships left off the beaches at Guadalcanal held off leaving until later that day, with the Marines desperate to get as many supplies as possible off-loaded. Even so they were perilously short of food and ammunition.

If Mikawa had pressed on, it might have been a catastrophe for the Allies. Shipping remained precious; this being colloquially known as Operation Shoestring.



Vice-Admiral Gunichi Mikawa's flagship cruiser, Chokai in 1933, shortly after she was commissioned.

If the Marines and their eventual airbase had been further starved of supplies, it's hard to see the Japanese failing to recapture it, and thus changing the entire course of the Pacific war.

Instead, Japan was drawn into an attritional battle it could not win in the Solomon Islands.

Naval strategy and marmosets

In the past, we've discussed Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, and his involvement in the Pacific War. However, he wasn't the only science fiction writer to play a role in the conflict.



Fletcher Pratt at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, 1943. Photo - Internet Archive.

Fletcher Pratt, a science fiction author, was also a pioneer in naval war gaming and an exceptional amateur authority on naval history. Remarkably, two years before Pearl Harbour, Pratt outlined an eerily accurate prediction of how the US Navy would combat Japan.



A Fletcher Pratt Naval Wargame in progress.

While the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbour shocked many Americans, it didn't come as a complete surprise to Pratt. He had long anticipated a Japanese offensive against the U.S. and had predicted, with surprising accuracy, the a general timeline of the war.



Photograph taken from a Japanese plane during the torpedo attack on ships moored on both sides of Ford Island shortly after the beginning of the Pearl Harbour attack. Photo - Imperial Japanese Navy | US Navy.

Shortly after the war in Europe began in 1939, Pratt completed a comprehensive book on the world's naval forces and strategies. His conclusions were grim. "The battle line is the slowest in the world, which is to say that it cannot force an unwilling enemy to fight, nor escape from a disastrously superior one. Some of the battleships steer badly. The early heavy cruisers vibrate rackingly at high speeds, roll in a seaway and have weak features in their construction."



One of the most famous of all WWII US Battleships, USS Missouri (BB-63), during battle practice in Chesapeake Bay on 1 August 1944. Photo - US Navy | US Archives.

(continued...)

Pratt didn't shy away from criticising the U.S. Navy's internal issues either, stating, "Promotion in the American Navy is desperately slow and uncertain. Junior officers are constantly tempted to toady, and examining boards to give credit for correct routine rather than for original thought. Officers reach command rank late in life. ...In no country does it take longer to sign a contract for a new ship; in none is the building process marked by so many petty squabbles."

Yet despite these criticisms, Pratt acknowledged the formidable strength of the U.S. Navy: "No navy in existence, hardly any two together, can bear the weight of the United States fleet." He noted that while American battleships were slow, they were heavily armed, and the country's aircraft carriers were unmatched globally. "The American naval air service is a model which other nations have despairingly been trying to equal for 15 years. No navy has so good a catapult; the bomb sight has for years been the object of affectionate curiosity on the part of half the spies in the world."



The most decorated WWII aircraft carrier of them all, the USS Enterprise (CV-6) prior to going to war on 12 April 1939. Photo – US Navy.

When Pratt compared the U.S. Navy to its most likely adversary – not Nazi Germany, but Imperial Japan – he was dismissive of Japan's naval capabilities. He wrote, "The whole American battle line is up to date today; most of the Japanese line is well on the march toward the scrap heap."

He further argued that the Japanese fleet lacked the firepower and armour necessary to stand up to American battleships. "The operating range of the whole Japanese fleet is something under 2,500 miles. ...A Japanese campaign against the United States is

simply impossible as long as American warships float in Pearl Harbour."

Pratt's foresight into the challenges the Allies would face in 1941 was impressive. He predicted that the British navy, "very poorly fitted for South Sea work," with outdated World War I battleships, would be vulnerable to Japanese strikes, likely resulting in the loss of critical territories like the Dutch East Indies. His prediction proved accurate when Japan seized these vital resources just a day after attacking Pearl Harbour.



The battlecruiser HMS Repulse leading other British Royal Navy capital ships during manoeuvres, circa late 1920s. Built in 1916, the WWI era ship was sunk by Japanese bombers, 10 December 1941.

Foreseeing an inevitable conflict between American and Japanese forces in the Pacific, Pratt predicted that the Japanese offensive would focus on "direct conquest of American establishments west of Hawaii. Guam, Wake, Midway, the Philippines, all the small American outposts, would fall in the first rush."



American attack on Japanese-held Wake Island, 1943. Photo – Bettmann | Getty Images. (continued..)

Indeed, all these islands were attacked, and all but Midway were captured by early 1942.

Pratt also predicted the American counteroffensive against Japan would originate from the southern Pacific, as the northern route was too long and strategically ineffective.

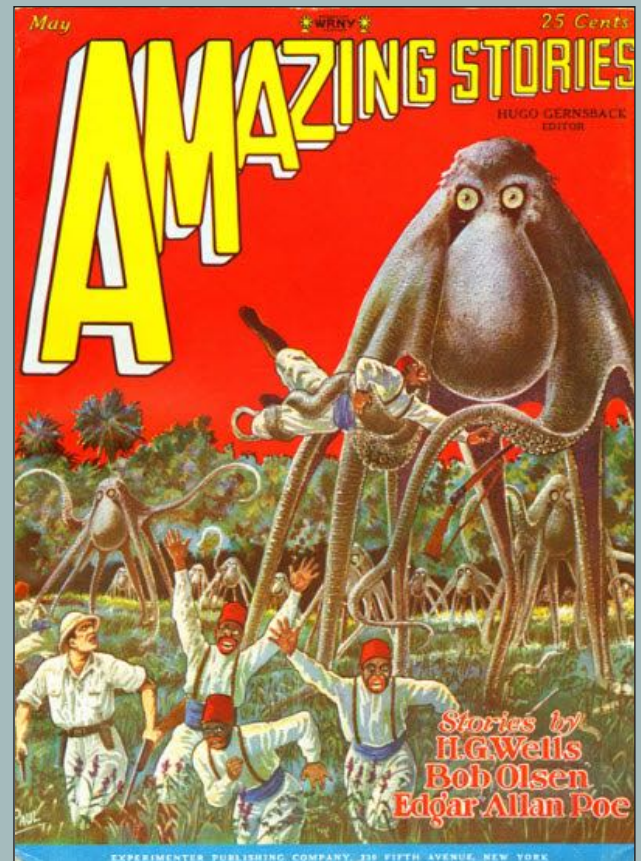


On Ulithi in the Caroline Islands, the USS Mississinewa (AO-59) was hit by a Japanese Kaiten manned torpedo in November 1944.

He suggested the U.S. would start from Hawaii, move through the Marshall and Caroline Islands, and connect with Australian forces to "roll up the Japanese lines from the south. Once that circuit were accomplished, once that blockade set up, Japan would be cut off; she must surrender or die—of a lack of food, oil, and iron, not to mention the many less essential materials she does not have in the islands. Japanese strategy and naval construction are accordingly directed toward the prevention of such a blockade."

While there were some differences between Pratt's predictions and the actual sequence of events, his overall assessment of the Pacific campaign from 1941 to 1945 was remarkably accurate.

Considering Pratt was a journalist, author and an amateur naval historian and not a naval officer, with no access to military intelligence, these discrepancies can be seen as relatively minor.



Pratt's novelette "The Octopus Cycle" was the cover story in the May 1928 *Amazing Stories*. Quite a departure from naval strategy and war gaming. Photo – Frank R. Paul | Experimenter Publishing.

Throughout World War II, Pratt served as a military analyst for both the *New York Post* and *Time* magazine. Later, he regularly reviewed historical nonfiction, as well as fantasy and science fiction, for the *New York Times Book Review*. *Time* magazine's obituary for Pratt described him as "bearded, gnome-like" and noted that one of his hobbies included raising marmosets.

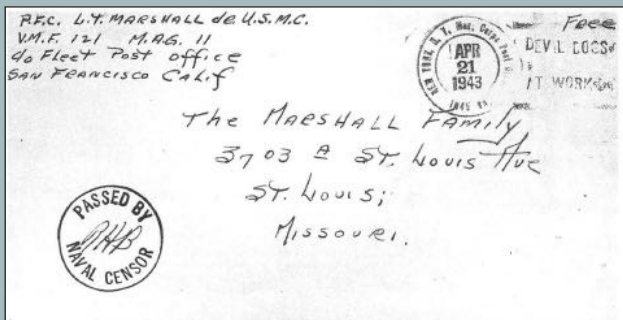
Murray Fletcher Pratt passed away in Long Branch, New Jersey, 10 June, 1956, aged 59.

One family's pride

It's remarkable how much of what occurred at Base Button on Santo was tied to Guadalcanal in some way.

One connection was Marine Air Group-11 (MAG-11), which played a pivotal role in the early stages of the Guadalcanal campaign.

According to Stanley C. Jersey's book, *New Hebrides Islands, Military Postal History of the United States Forces, 1942-1946*, MAG-11 was described as the backbone of Marine aviation. Its personnel and planes were constantly rotating between Espiritu Santo's base and Henderson Field at Guadalcanal.



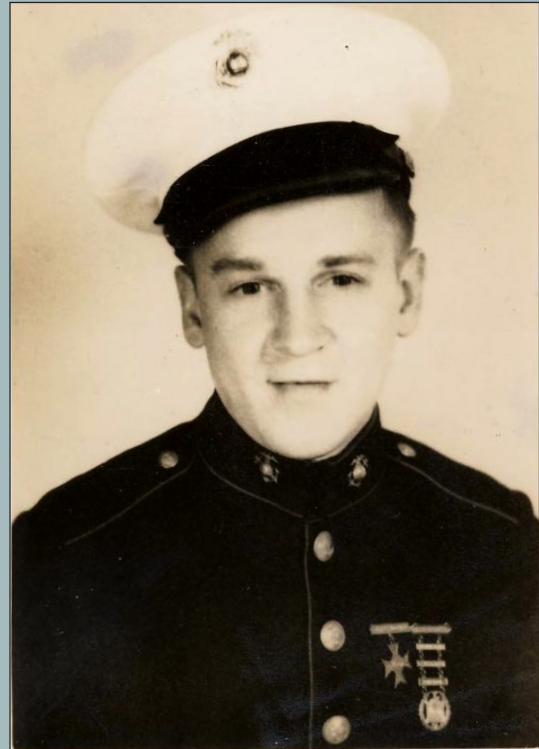
This letter from a member of Marine Fighter Squadron-121, MAG-11. Mailed at the Group's Post Office MCPO 1045 (Headquarters on Espiritu Santo), it bears the slogan cancel "DEVIL DOGS AT WORK." Photo – Military Postal History of the United States Forces, 1942-1946.

While stationed on Santo, MAG-11 was headquartered near the Turtle Bay airstrip, and as one of the largest and busiest units, it maintained a full complement of crew.

However, this isn't a story about postal history. It concerns Joseph Kaminsky, a member of MAG-11's HQ Squadron (1st Air Wing), who operated the radar on what's still known as Hospital Hill.



The view from Hospital Hill looking east. Photo – Kevin Green.



Pfc Joseph J. Kaminski in his Marine Corps dress uniform. Photo – Robert Kaminski.

The hill boasts some of the most stunning views along Santo's east coast, but during the war, it played a vital defensive role against any potential Japanese invasion. Hospital Hill housed not only a hospital but also a radar installation complete with a lookout tower, searchlight, and anti-aircraft guns manned by U.S. Army soldiers. It was located just down the road from MAG-11's base at Turtle Bay airfield.



Turtle Bay Airfield. Photo – US Archives.

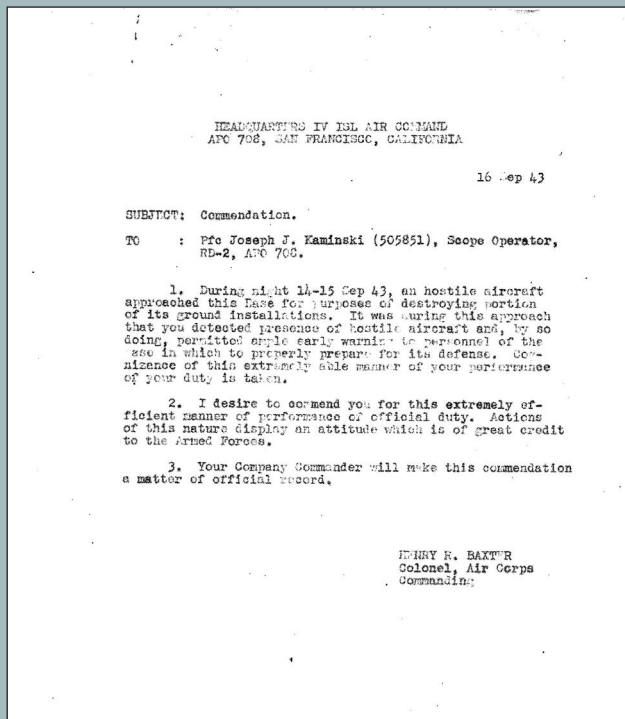
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Joseph's duty on Santo involved scanning for incoming enemy aircraft as a radar Scope Operator. Though the island was relatively safe from direct attacks due to its distance from the front lines, threats still existed. In 1943, Japanese H8K2 'Emily' seaplanes launched six long-range attacks on Santo from Shortland Harbour Seaplane Base. Although these raids caused minimal damage, Joseph's actions during one of those raids no doubt prevented the loss of life.



A Japanese 'Emily' seaplane of the type that attacked Santo. Photo – War History Online.

On the night of September 14-15 1943, Joseph detected an incoming enemy aircraft on his scope. He immediately notified base command, ensuring that ample warning was provided in time.



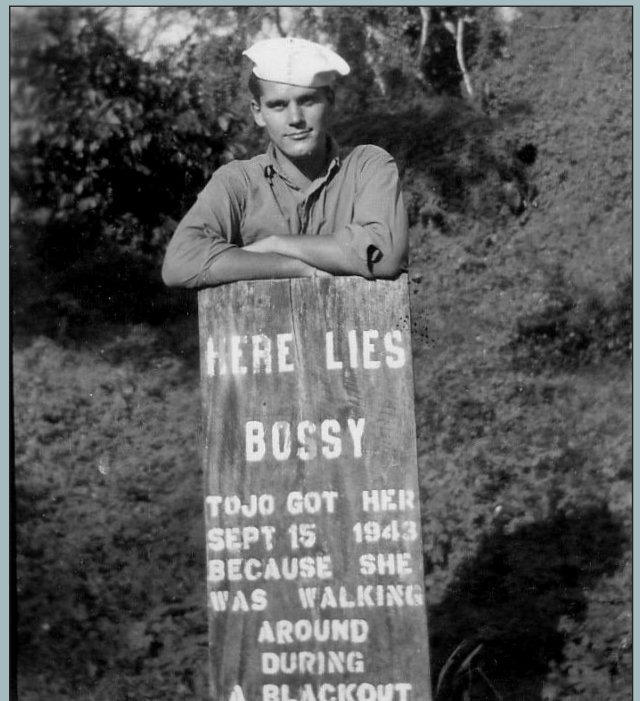
Joseph Kaminski's commendation letter. Photo – Robert Kaminski.

For his actions, Joseph received a commendation letter from Colonel Henry Baxter, Commander of the Air Corps. To this day, Joseph's family in the United States remain proud of his wartime actions.



USMC MAG-11 Radar Unit group picture Espiritu Santo, 14 July 1944. Joseph Kaminski is in the second row, 2nd from the right. Photo – Robert Kaminski.

As we've mentioned in previous newsletters, there was one unfortunate casualty during the blackout – Bossy the cow. Her headstone, crafted by U.S. Navy sailors, served as a reminder of what not to do during a blackout.



Bossy's headstone. Photo Mike Lechwar.

Guadalcanal, an official account

In the second of our stories about Guadalcanal, we turn to Samuel Morison – the official US Navy historian and his documenting of this turning point in the Pacific War.

We begin at dawn on August 7, 1942, when US Marines executed their first amphibious assault in 44 years, targeting the shores of Guadalcanal.

and potentially threatening Australia itself. During this period, Samuel Morison, was already documenting the entire naval history of World War II. His 15-volume work would eventually cover every naval encounter of the war. In an article in *The Saturday Evening Post* in July 1962, he reflected on the significance and importance of Guadalcanal.



U.S. Marines patrolling on Guadalcanal, August 1942. Photo – US Marine Corps.

Two months earlier, in June, Japanese forces had established a foothold on the island and commenced the construction of an airfield. Once operational, this airfield would provide the Japanese with a strategic base for launching bomber attacks aimed at driving U.S. and Australian forces from the Solomon Islands,



The airfield at Lunga Point on Guadalcanal, later called Henderson Field by the Allies, seen under construction by the Japanese in July 1942. Photo – Marines in World War II Historical Monograph, 1949.

“You may search the seven seas in vain for an ocean graveyard with the wrecks of so many ships and the bones of so many sailors as that body of water between Guadalcanal, Savo and Florida islands which our bluejackets called Ironbottom Sound.

“There is something sinister and depressing about that Sound. [The marines] who rounded Cape Esperance in the darkness before dawn on 7 August remembered, ‘it gave you the creeps.’ Even the



The number of sunken ships in Ironbottom Sound is nothing short of staggering. Map – Wikipedia Germany.

land smell failed to cheer sailors who had been long at sea; Guadalcanal gave out a rank, heavy stench of mud, slime, and jungle. And the serrated cone of Savo Island looked as sinister as the crest of a giant dinosaur emerging from the ocean depths.”

(continued...)

The US forces were somewhat daunted. "The Japanese army in Malaya, the Philippines, and Java had acquired a reputation of invincibility, especially in jungle fighting, and its losses so far were minute. Their navy, despite its defeat at Midway, still had plenty of ships and planes to throw into the Solomons." Luckily, the Marine landings on Guadalcanal and nearby Tulagi were successful. By 4:00 PM, they had taken control of the partially completed airfield.

"Things looked very bright for the Expeditionary Force. Then, shortly after midnight, [began] the worst defeat in a fair fight ever inflicted on the United States Navy." A Japanese task force, consisting of seven cruisers and a destroyer, swooped down on the Expeditionary Force, heavily damaging the landing craft and cutting off the Marines from their naval supply line. Continuing toward Savo Island, they launched a sequential assault on both the Australian and American vessels. A mix of miscommunication, unfortunate circumstances, poor decision-making, and the advantage of surprise led to a significant Japanese victory.



During the Savo Island battle, the Australian heavy cruiser Canberra was heavily damaged. Shortly after the crew were removed from the ship, it was sunk by the USS Selfridge and the USS Ellet - It took nearly 300 shells and five torpedoes to sink the pride of the Royal Australian Navy. Photo - US Navy.

"It was not a decisive battle and not an unprofitable defeat," wrote Morison, "although the cost was heavy—four heavy cruisers and one destroyer a total loss; 1270 officers and men killed and 709 wounded. ...The Navy held an investigation, which found the blame so evenly distributed that nobody was punished.

And it is well that Admiral Turner, primarily to blame, was not put 'on the beach,' because he became the leading practitioner of amphibious warfare in the Pacific. Many lessons were learned from this disastrous battle."



Admiral Turner with Marine Major General Vandegrift during the planning of Operation Watchtower in July–August 1942. Photo - Naval Historical Photographic Collection.

As had happened in the past, America's early involvement in the war was marred by expensive errors.

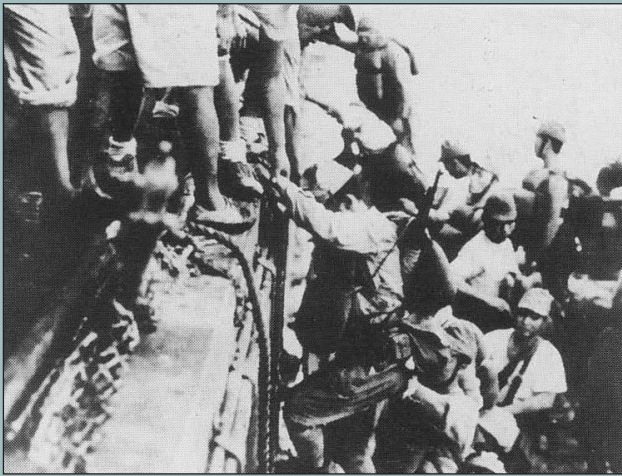
Lacking a warrior mindset, they entered each conflict with a civilian outlook and relied on outdated tactics from previous wars, leading to initial setbacks. Thankfully, the American military consistently adapted and learned from these early missteps.

During the following three months, American forces managed to hold their ground in what was nothing more than a fierce and costly stalemate. "From

sunup to sundown the Americans ruled the waves, big ships discharged cargoes, small ones plied between Lunga Point and Tulagi, as safely as in New York Harbor. But as the pall of night fell over the Sound the Japanese took over.

(continued..)

Allied ships cleared out like frightened children running past a graveyard, and small craft sought shelter. The 'Tokyo Express' of troop-carrying destroyers dashed in to discharge soldiers and supplies ...and big ships tossed shells in the Marines' direction. But the Rising Sun flag never stayed to greet its namesake; by dawn the Japanese were well away and the Stars and Stripes reappeared. Such was the pattern. ...Any attempt to reshape it meant a bloody battle."



Japanese troops load onto a warship in preparation for a "Tokyo Express" run sometime in 1942 to deliver personnel, supplies, and equipment to The Solomon Islands. Photo – Scanned from "Pacific Ground War," Shinjinbutsuoraisha, Tokyo, Japan.

During the night, the Marines fended off a series of relentless suicide assaults by the Japanese forces. At daybreak, Army engineers began repairing the damage to Henderson Airfield, ensuring that crucial supplies could continue to be flown in.

By November, the Japanese military shifted its focus from attacking the Navy to targeting the Marines they were defending. They dispatched a task force to Ironbottom Sound with the intent of bombarding the American forces with destroyer shells before launching a fresh invasion with troops from their Tokyo Express transport ships.

Expecting no resistance, they assumed the American fleet would have withdrawn by sunset. However, this night was different—the U.S. Navy stayed put. What unfolded next, according to Morison, was "the most desperate sea fight since days of sail.

"Ship losses were fairly balanced; two American light cruisers and four destroyers against two Japanese destroyers and a battleship. ...But the enemy bombardment mission was completely frustrated."

The battle resumed the next day, with the Japanese managing to sink the USS Juneau, and "almost 700 men, including the five famous brothers Sullivan, went down with her." However, American planes from Henderson Field successfully decimated the majority of the incoming Japanese transports. The Marines ensured that the few Japanese troops who managed to land on shore were quickly neutralised.



USS Juneau (CL-52) in New York Harbour, 11 February 1942. The five Sullivan brothers, were all killed in action as a result of her sinking and only 10 survivors were rescued after eight days in the water. Photo – US National Archives.

Meanwhile, the Navy deployed battleships to drive the remaining Japanese vessels out of the Sound. After three intense days of nearly nonstop combat in the air, on land, and at sea, the Japanese offensive came to a halt. Although smaller skirmishes followed, by 9 February, 1943, the Japanese had withdrawn their remaining forces from the island.

At the time, America didn't realize this was a pivotal moment in the war. Military strategists feared that every island battle in the Pacific would be just as prolonged and bloody. Yet by 1962, Morison was able to identify Guadalcanal as "a definite shift of America from defensive to offensive, and of Japan in the opposite direction. Fortune now, for the first time, smiled on the Allies everywhere: not only here but in North Africa, at Stalingrad, and in Papua." (continued..)

The triumph in the Solomons owes much to the over 80,000 Allied troops who fought there, particularly the 10,000 who gave their lives.

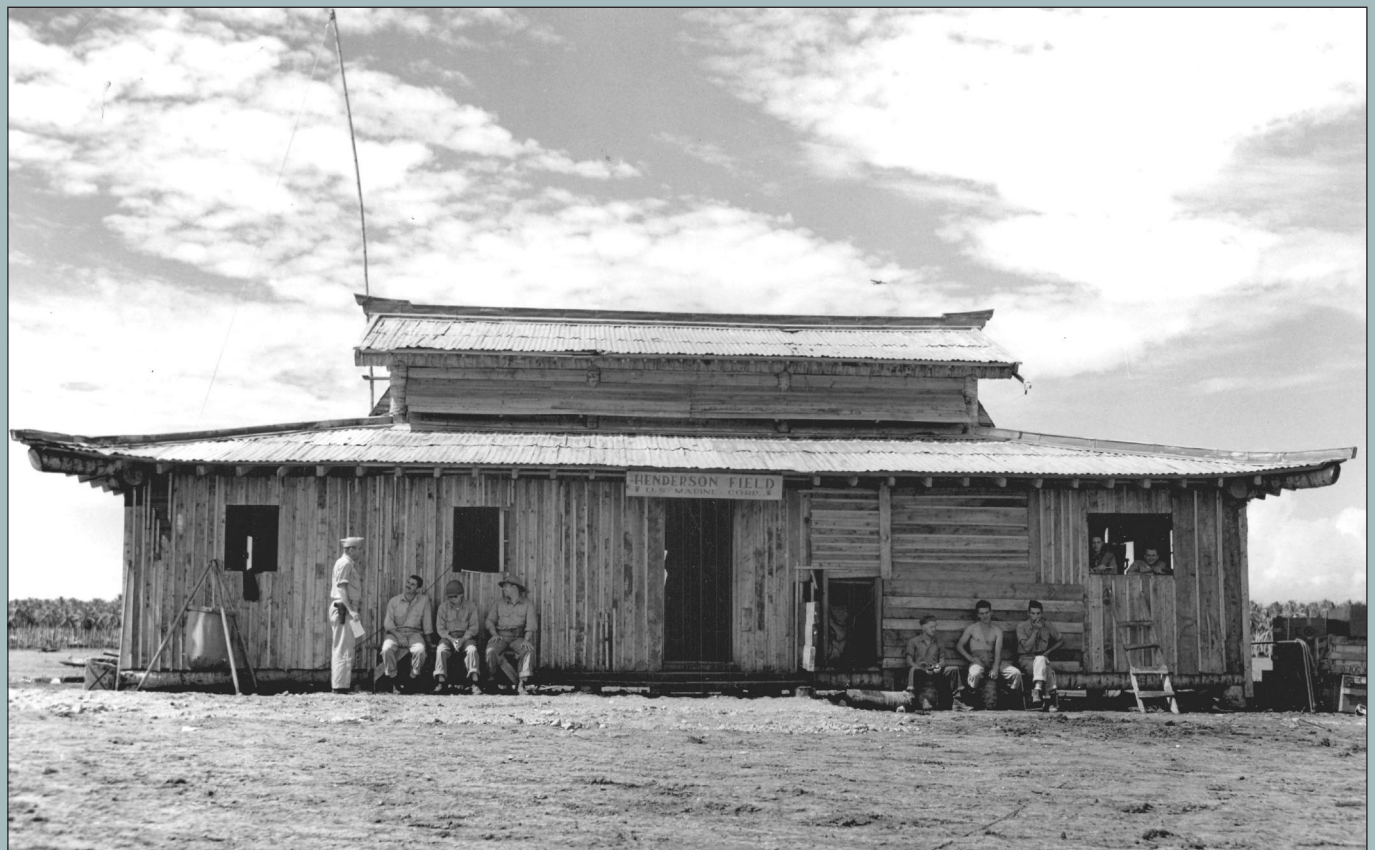


A field gun emplacement behind concealing sandbags on Guadalcanal. This emplacement was constructed by the Japanese, captured and revamped by US Marines. Photo – US Marine Corps.

Yet, equally important as their unwavering dedication and sacrifice was America's willingness to learn from its errors, to appoint more effective commanders, and to persevere even when the cost seemed unbearably steep.



35th Infantry troops returning to base after 21 days in a fighting line to capture the Gifu on Guadalcanal 1943 Photo – US Archives.



This pagoda was headquarters for US Marine Corps and Navy fliers at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. After surviving numerous Japanese bombings, the building was torn down following a near miss which rendered it useless as a shelter. Photo – US Marine Corps.

Inspiring everyday heroes

We're featuring two heroes this month, and they know all about turning around tough times.

Elie Enock and Ken Kahu are at the Paralympics in Paris - where huge crowds have been turning out to watch what for some is a better spectacle than the Olympics that preceded it.



Team Vanuatu Paralympian Elie Enock.

Perhaps that's because every athlete has an inspiring story behind why they are there.

Elie Enock is competing in the shotput, F57 class but actually has also competed in the powerlifting previously – at the 2022 Commonwealth games where she took part in both disciplines.

Last year she won gold at the Pacific Games.

The 35-year old was first identified at a talent identification session run by the Agitos Foundation and the Oceania Paralympic Committee.

Moving to Australia to the town of Stawell in Victoria,

she has combined work with being able to build her career, with her and her employer has helped in her sporting career by organising coaches and training fields.

Elie says that makes a big difference: "They really help me to continue because sometimes I have wanted to give up but they have really encouraged me. I'm so happy to be around a community that supports and encourages me. It is so friendly and being in Stawell, I feel like I am at home in Vanuatu."

She has a passion for acting and says the activity helped her to overcome depression following her accident. She was introduced to acting at the Wan Smolbag Rainbow Disability Theatre in Vanuatu.

"I had some really close friends that supported me and helped me to move on, but I would still stay at home. I was really upset about the accident and the way people looked at me differently. The Wan Smolbag supported me greatly. The challenge is when I have to choose between training or [performing in] a play."

She says her philosophy is:

"If I can do it then you can do it. You just have to think positive at all times that you can do it, and you will achieve anything you set your mind to."



Elie Enock competing in the shotput.

(continued...)

Vanuatu's Paralympian heroes

Ken Kahu is a 25-year old javelin thrower. He debuted for Vanuatu in 2019 and competed in the last World Championships in Dubai.



Team Vanuatu Paralympian Ken Kahu.

He was scouted by coach Deni Kalanga in Port Vila: "I was walking to the shop in Club Hippoque village and the coach of Para athletics also lived there, he saw me and shouted out, 'Hey boy, come'. So I went and had a chat, and he told me God sent me to him on that day so he could try me out for Para athletics as he recognised that I was young and fit, but that I had a physical impairment which was appropriate for Para.

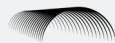
I started training throwing the medicine balls, building up fitness, doing running and using bands, then Deni gave me a javelin, even though I had never tried that before, and he identified I had potential in the 100m sprint and javelin. I came to realise the skills I have and began to love the sport with a passion.



Ken and Elie share a joke during training.

He too has worked in Australia, and also is giving back his knowledge as a javelin coach on Tanna Island.

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

email: info@southpacificwwiimuseum.com
web: southpacificwwiimuseum.com

