

We shall return

Recently, Museum Chairman Bradley Wood paid a visit to the MacArthur Museum in Brisbane, Australia. Bradley met with the museum's Managing Director, John Wright.



South Pacific WWII Museum Chairman Bradley Wood presents MacArthur Museum Managing Director John Wright with a Coke bottle from WWII.

John took Brad on a personal tour of the wonderful museum, once the Australian headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur. Much was discussed not only about the events

of the Pacific War, but the potential for the two museums to work together in the future.



General Douglas MacArthur's desk and chair as they were during World War II. One of the many fascinating exhibits at the MacArthur Museum in Brisbane.

We'd like to thank John for taking the time to show Brad around the museum and we'll let you know further details in future issues of our newsletter.

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Welcome 2025



Unity Park
Main Street,
Luganville, Vanuatu
+678 553 7000
info@southpacificwwiimuseum.com
southpacificwwiimuseum.com

5 January, 2025

Dear Friends,

As we step into 2025, I am filled with enthusiasm for the year ahead and the opportunities it brings to further our mission of preserving and sharing the rich history of the South Pacific during World War II.

Building upon our fantastic progress in 2024, we have ambitious plans to enhance our museum's offerings. We are excited to announce the development of new exhibits that will delve deeper into the diverse experiences of those who lived through this pivotal time. These exhibits aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the South Pacific's role in the war and the enduring impact on our region.

In addition to our exhibit expansions, we are embarking on investigations into new potential aircraft crash sites. Our dedicated team is actively researching and planning expeditions to uncover and preserve artifacts from these sites, which will offer invaluable insights into the aviation history of the era. These efforts will not only enrich our collection but also contribute to the broader historical narrative of the South Pacific during World War II.

We are also committed to strengthening our community engagement by hosting an increased number of educational programs throughout the year. These initiatives are designed to foster a deeper connection with our history and encourage dialogue among children of all ages.

None of these endeavours would be possible without your unwavering support. Your dedication and passion are the driving forces behind our continued success. Together, we will ensure that the stories of courage, sacrifice, and resilience from this significant period in history are preserved and shared for generations to come.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. I look forward to sharing these exciting developments with you throughout the year.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bradley Wood".

Bradley Wood
Chairman

A soldier's life

Recently we received an unexpected email from Janet Bunyan in Port Vila. She had been sent a copy of a letter from her friend's next-door neighbour in the USA. The neighbour was the daughter of a US soldier that served on Santo during the war. Her father, Private First Class Charles Hancock, was from North Carolina and was around 22 years old when he and two friends joined

up in 1941/42. That's about all we know of Charles and we're hoping to find more as a letter he sent home contains some very interesting descriptions of where he was based. We're not 100% sure where that was or what he was doing there. So for the moment we'll let you read his wonderful letter and what life was like for him at Base Button - or wherever he was.

SOUTH PACIFIC - 1942

Dear Daddy,

Although it has been five months now since I have last seen you, please don't feel as if I have neglected you by not having written but I constantly keep you, Mama and all the rest of the family in mind all the time. My one hope is that you are all well and happy. As for myself, I consider myself in tip-top shape, and really have never felt better in all my life. However, I have had my "old cough" with me for several nights but it has just about cleared up now. I stopped smoking for three days, not very long, of course, but found out it wasn't a cigarette cough. I have just a little cold and I imagine this has been my reason for coughing.

I thought for a while I would give up smoking but after three days, I started back again. My desire was too much for my will power. Anyway, I made myself believe it wasn't any percentage in trying to give up smoking when it is one of the few things I enjoy mostly doing down here.

One reason why I haven't written sooner is for the fact that I hoped by now the censorship would have lifted some of its restrictions and I would be able to tell you all about our setup and what particular part I am playing in this game. I can say though that for about twenty-five of us it has really been nice and still is.

Since the middle of May, we and two other boys have been completely on our own. In fact, since this time, I haven't even seen the rest of our boys, except once. The only people we see are the natives, who are a wonderful bunch of people, and who have been mighty nice to us. They speak very little English but a few understand the so called "Pigeon Language". We, of course, have picked up a lot of this language, and have reached the point where we can make them understand us without much trouble. They have built us several nice huts out of bamboo and with the leaves have plated a roof that won't leak. We have one to sleep in, one we call our dining room and the other is used to keep supplies in. You have never seen a race of people that enjoy working as much as these natives. I frankly say they would make the average American look like a sissy when it comes down to actual working with the hands.

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They often bring us up native food and when cooked and seasoned right, they really make good, tasty dishes. The other day one brought us up some tomatoes, a chicken, a head of cabbage and a stalk of bananas. They bring us up a lot of eggs, and yam, which is very much like the American potato, only about ten times as large. Then too, we have the coconuts, and the mills from these are really good. They are very smart in their ways. They have their own gardens, which are irrigated, raise pigs and chickens and other kinds of vegetables. Nothing seems to bother them and because of the heat wear hardly any clothing. In fact, the small kids wear nothing at all, to say nothing about the men and women.

The natives, who belong to the Malaynesian race, are somewhat like the American Negroes. They are very strongly religious minded and every Sunday several will come up to our place and hold a prayer for us. Of course, we can't understand what they are saying, but the thought behind their doing this makes up for the language. They, of course, belong to the Church of England and I have noticed their service is very much like the Episcopal service. The native name for their Bible is Tataro. We keep two of the native boys with us at all times. Each week two different boys will come up and their job is to get our drinking water. The water hole is about thirty minutes walk from camp and twice a day each boy will get a long bamboo about eighteen feet long, and go down and fill them up with water. We go down about twice a week ourselves and wash up. We, ourselves, have a daily routine we have to follow, and beside this, we generally spend the day reading or playing pinochle, a card game which doesn't involve the use of money. A lot of times we will take short trips through the jungle or bush as they call it, but we don't dare go out without one of the native boys. There are a lot of mosquitoes here, and at times the natives are taken sick by fever. We are protected somewhat from the mosquitoes by our bars which hang over our cots and every day, without fail, we take five grams of quinine. So far, none of us have had fever and I knock on wood when I say this. One boy who worked for us took fever one day and went back to his village the next. Two days afterwards, he died. We couldn't do anything for him, and didn't even know he had died until they had buried him. Of course, the three of us don't consider ourselves any better than the natives, and we have no racial prejudice up here, but we only have just enough quinine to meet our demands. They take the body right after it dies, wrap it in a blanket, dig a hole and bury him. No casket or means of preserving the body.

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An interesting letter and knew you would enjoy reading it. Charlie with five other boys had volunteered for out post duty and was on the New Hebrides Island. Two of his companions died with Black Fever. Charlie with one other companion was decorated by the Minister of New Zealand for valor beyond the line of duty.

This was to come - From Daddy

FWH, Jr.

The old chief, whose name is John, comes up and spends every weekend with us. He is one of the finest men I have ever known, regardless of his race. He has more character and initiative about him than any man I have ever seen, and we certainly owe him a lot for making us comfortable and getting us things that we need. He really enjoys being around us, and we tell him all about America and the American ways of living. Thursday, every man, woman, and child are coming up to our place and have a feast. It is some kind of a religious holiday, something I haven't yet been able to figure out, but we are all looking forward to it.

There is absolutely no need for money down here except for cigarettes and toilet articles. The natives themselves had much rather have tobacco and rice. We have a special kind of tobacco we use just for trading. What little money they do use is valued in shillings, which is worth 16 cents in American money.

At times, I find myself getting mighty homesick which is only natural, of course, but try and keep my mind occupied to the extent that I won't think about home too much. I can say though, that after doing, and having been through some of the things we have, you can certainly appreciate the better and finer things of life, and especially home. However, I have certainly seen a lot, learned a lot, and have met some mighty interesting people. Up to now, I have only received one letter from home, and that was the one Mama wrote of Mother's Day.

You really can't imagine how glad I was to hear from her and especially to learn that you were all well and happy. I was mighty glad to hear that Wills was entering O.C.S. and by the time you get this letter, I hope he will have his commission. I am still holding on to my little P.F.C. I think, and frankly, am quite satisfied with it. Hope you are getting my \$30 allotment regularly, and wish now I had made it out for a little more. I appreciate your buying me the bond. I am drawing a little more than I really need down here, so I will probably be sending money orders home from time to time. I understand that Robert is once again raising chickens. Tell him I will send him \$25 to be invested in his business, and to use it as he sees best. However, tell him I want a guarantee that none will be stolen.

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Then too, I will send home some money to be used at Christmas for presents just in the family. Promise me that the little I send home will be used for this occasion. Seems kinda funny talking about Christmas at this time of the year, but I imagine it will be around October when you get this, after it is mailed.

Tell Robert and Wills I wish they could be here with me. I believe I could show and teach them a few little tricks. This includes Gus also. Tell Prince, Chess, and all the rest of the family hello for me. If I don't get a chance to write again before long, tell Mama please not to try and send any packages to me.

My love to all the family, and hoping I will be able to enjoy their company and presence again before long.

Love,

S/ Charlie

Little boat, big impact

Following the Coral Sea Battles, Japanese forces were increasingly depleted, and their raids on Espiritu Santo yielded no significant gains, serving only to keep American troops vigilant.

In October 1942, a Japanese submarine stationed off the eastern shore of Pallikulo Bay fired twenty shells into

An eyewitness recounted an incident where a picket boat engaged a Japanese submarine near the northwest corner of Malo Island.

The submarine had surfaced in the Bougainville Canal between Malo and Malikulo Islands and was spotted by an outpost picket boat at Malo.



A Japanese B1 submarine, of the type that operated in the waters around the New Hebrides in World War II. Photo – naval-encyclopaedia.com

Espiritu Santo. Subsequently, during full moon periods, long-range Japanese seaplanes, dubbed "Moonlight Charlies" by the Americans, conducted raids that caused minimal damage, notably killing a cow named 'Bossie' with a stray bomb.



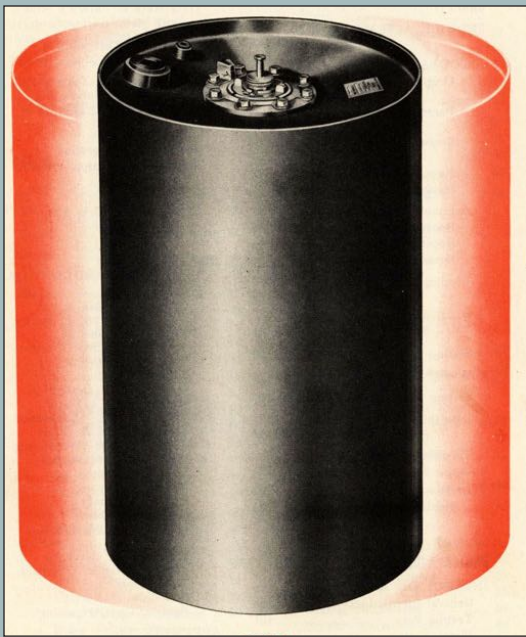
The Japanese Kawanishi H8K2 'Emily' flying boat, of the type that bombed Santo on six separate occasions. Illustration – War History Online.



A 38 foot United States Coast Guard Picket Boat, similar to the type that were operating in the waters around Santo. Photo – Wikipedia.

Upon receiving the report, Coxswain Enax observed a periscope about 150 yards off his starboard bow. Enax alerted his crew, increased speed to full ahead,

(continued...)



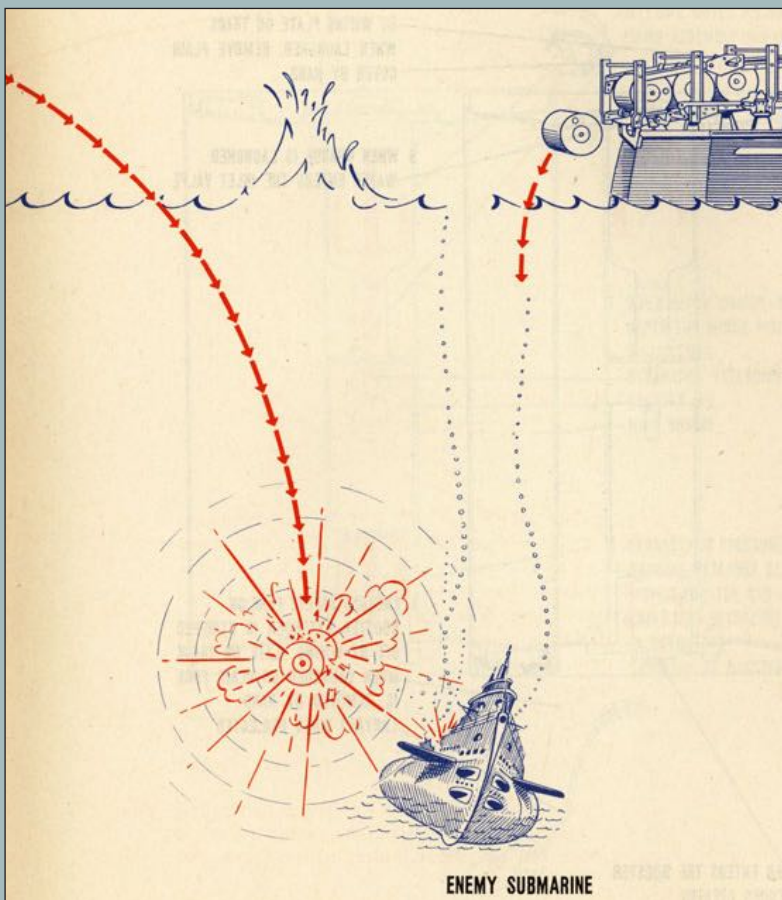
A Mark 6 depth charge similar to the ones that were dropped on the Japanese submarine. Illustration from the operating and maintenance instructions for Mark 6 depth charges. U.S. Department of the Navy Bureau of Ordnance. San Francisco Maritime National Park Association.

and headed toward the submarine, which began to dive upon hearing the picket boat's engines.

As the submarine submerged, Enax's vessel, travelling at approximately eighteen knots, closed in. Positioned above the submarine, the crew released a depth charge containing 350 pounds of TNT, set to detonate at thirty feet. The problem was, charges descend at only approximately eight feet per second.



The resulting explosion from a Mark 6 depth charge. Photo – International Military Antiques.



The fairly obvious result of a depth charge detonating in close proximity to an enemy submarine. From the operating and maintenance instructions for Mark 6 depth charges. U.S. Department of the Navy Bureau of Ordnance. San Francisco Maritime National Park Association.

The explosion lifted the picket boat out of the water and swung it around, Enax believing they were doomed. After finding the boat intact, he turned it around, and the crew set another depth charge to sixty feet. They made another pass over the spot, dropped the second charge, and moved away from the ensuing water upheaval.

Shortly after, a substantial oil slick, approximately one hundred yards in length and an inch thick, surfaced. For days, oil continued to rise before dissipating with the tides. Enax radioed the base to report the encounter. About thirty minutes later, two airplanes arrived and dropped bombs into the oil slick where the submarine had presumably sunk.

The submarine was never recovered. Did it sink off the coast of Santo? Evidence suggests so. But identifying the specific Japanese submarine remains uncertain, pending a potential future search.

SHI-DA, TSAH, NA-HASH-CHID, GAH, AH-JAH, WOL-LA-CHEE, JAD-HO-LONI, WOL-LA-CHEE, NA-HASH-CHID, DIBEH-YAZZIE, AH-JAH (or in Navajo, unbreakable)

Prior to World War II, Native American languages had been utilised for military communications, with the Choctaw language serving in World War I. However, during World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps required an unbreakable code for its Pacific island-hopping campaign.



Code talkers in training from the Choctaw Nation pose for a photo in 1918 during World War I. Photo – navymemorial.org

The Navajo language, unwritten and known by few outside the tribe, met the Corps' criteria. In 1942, twenty-nine Navajo men were recruited to develop this code. They created a "Type One Code" by assigning Navajo words to each English letter and devising special terms for planes, ships, and weapons. This system allowed Code Talkers to translate three lines of English in 20 seconds, a task that previously took 30 minutes with existing code-breaking machines.

Here's an example of the code:

Navajo Code:

DIBEH, AH-NAH, A-SHIN, BE, AH-DEEL-TAHI, D-AH, NA-AS-TSO-SI, THAN-ZIE, TLO-CHIN

Translation:

SHEEP, EYES, NOSE, DEER, BLOW UP, TEA, MOUSE, TURKEY, ONION

Deciphered Code:

SEND DEMOLITION TEAM TO...

Understanding Navajo alone didn't grant comprehension of the code. A fluent speaker would hear a series of seemingly unrelated words, while a trained Code Talker would interpret a clear message.

The code's memorisation eliminated the need for encryption devices, enabling rapid transmission and making Code Talkers vital to Marine units.

One man's brainchild

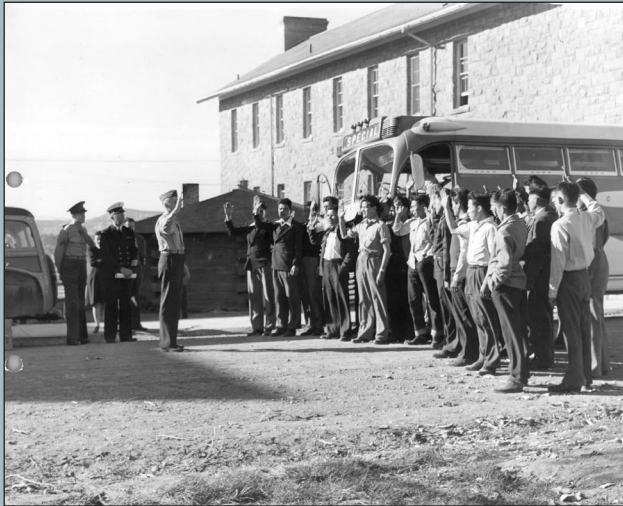
In 1942, Philip Johnston read about an armoured division in Louisiana attempting to develop a code using Native American languages. Having spent his childhood on a Navajo reservation, where his parents were missionaries, Johnston was fluent in Navajo and familiar with their customs. At age 9, he served as an interpreter for a Navajo delegation in Washington, D.C., advocating for Indian rights.



Philip Johnston. The man behind the idea to use Native American language as an unbreakable code during WWII. Photo - the mobilityforum.net

(continued...)

Despite concerns about the security of a code based on a Native American language, the U.S. Marine Corps approved Johnston's idea, initiating a pilot project with 30 Navajos and allowing Johnston to enlist and participate.



The first 29 Navajo U.S. Marine Corps code talker recruits being sworn in at Fort Wingate, NM, 4 May 1942. Photo – US Archives.

Saving time, saving lives

A sceptical lieutenant tested the Code Talkers' skills before deploying them for combat messages. They successfully translated, transmitted, and re-translated a test message in two and a half minutes, a task that could take hours without the Navajo code.

From then on, Code Talkers were integral to every major Marine operation in the Pacific theatre, primarily transmitting tactical information over telephone and radio.



CpL Henry Bake, Jr. and Pfc. George H. Kirk, Navajos serving in December 1943 with a Marine Corps signal unit, operate a portable radio set in a clearing that they have hacked in the dense jungle behind the front lines. Photo – Central Intelligence Agency.



Pfc. Preston Toledo and Pfc. Frank Toledo, Navajo cousins in a Marine artillery regiment in the South Pacific, relay orders over a field radio. Photo – Central Intelligence Agency.

During the invasion of Iwo Jima, six Navajo Code Talkers operated continuously, sending more than 800 error-free messages.

The Navajo Code Talkers earned the utmost respect from their fellow Marines. Major Howard Connor, the signal officer of the Navajos at Iwo Jima, stated, "Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima."

By the end of the war, the Navajo code remained unbroken.



The Navajo Code Talkers' remarkable contributions remained unknown until their mission was declassified in 1968, allowing for long-overdue recognition. Three different US Presidents recognised surviving Code Talkers. Here President George W. Bush presents medals to the four surviving Code Talkers at a ceremony held in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington in July 2001. Photo – Wikipedia.

The United States Navy Navajo Code Dictionary alphabet section, revised June 15, 1945. Imagine hearing these Navajo words as a Japanese code breaker.

ALPHABET	NAVAJO WORD	LITERAL TRANSLATION
A	WOL-LA-CHEE	ANT
A	BE-LA-SANA	APPLE
A	TSE-NILL	AXE
B	NA-HASH-CHID	BADGER
B	SHUSH	BEAR
B	TOISH-JEH	BARREL
C	MOASI	CAT
C	TLA-GIN	COAL
C	BA-GOSHI	COW
D	BE	DEER
D	CHINDI	DEVIL
D	LHA-CHA-EH	DOG
E	AH-JAH	EAR
E	DZEH	ELK
E	AH-NAH	EYE
F	CHUO	FIR
F	TSA-E-DONIN-EE	FLY
F	MA-E	FOX
G	AH-TAD	GIRL
G	KLIZZIE	GOAT
G	JEHA	GUM
H	TSE-GAH	HAIR
H	CHA	HAT
H	LIN	HORSE
I	TKIN	ICE
I	YEH-HES	ITCH
I	A-CHI	INTESTINE
J	TKELE-CHO-G	JACKASS
J	AH-YA-TSINNE	JAW
J	YIL-DOI	JERK
K	JAD-HO-LONI	KETTLE

K	BA-AH-NE-DI-TININ	KEY
K	KLIZZIE-YAZZIE	KID
L	DIBEH-YAZZIE	LAMB
L	AH-JAD	LEG
L	NASH-DOIE-TSO	LION
M	TSIN-TLITI	MATCH
M	BE-TAS-TNI	MIRROR
M	NA-AS-TSO-SI	MOUSE
N	TSAH	NEEDLE
N	A-CHIN	NOSE
O	A-KHA	OIL
O	TLO-CHIN	ONION
O	NE-AHS-JAH	OWL
P	CLA-GI-AIH	PANT
P	BI-SO-DIH	PIG
P	NE-ZHONI	PRETTY
Q	CA-YEILTH	QUIVER
R	GAH	RABBIT
R	DAH-NES-TSA	RAM
R	AH-LOSZ	RICE
S	DIBEH	SHEEP
S	KLESH	SNAKE
T	D-AH	TEA
T	A-WOH	TOOTH
T	THAN-ZIE	TURKEY
U	SHI-DA	UNCLE
U	NO-DA-IH	UTE
V	A-KEH-DI-GLINI	VICTOR
W	GLOE-IH	WEASEL
X	AL-NA-AS-DZOH	CROSS
Y	TSAH-AS-ZIH	YUCCA
Z	BESH-DO-TLIZ	ZINC

Nat Geo Orion drops by

Earlier in January the museum was lucky to be visited by passengers from the expedition ship, *National Geographic Orion*. The German built, 103m (337ft) small cruise ship accommodates 102 passengers and 75 crew. On board are 10 Zodiac inflatables, 10 sea kayaks and a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), making it perfect for exploring South Pacific islands above and below the water. We very much enjoyed having the passengers visit us at the museum in Luganville.



The *National Geographic Orion*. Photo – nationalgeographic.com

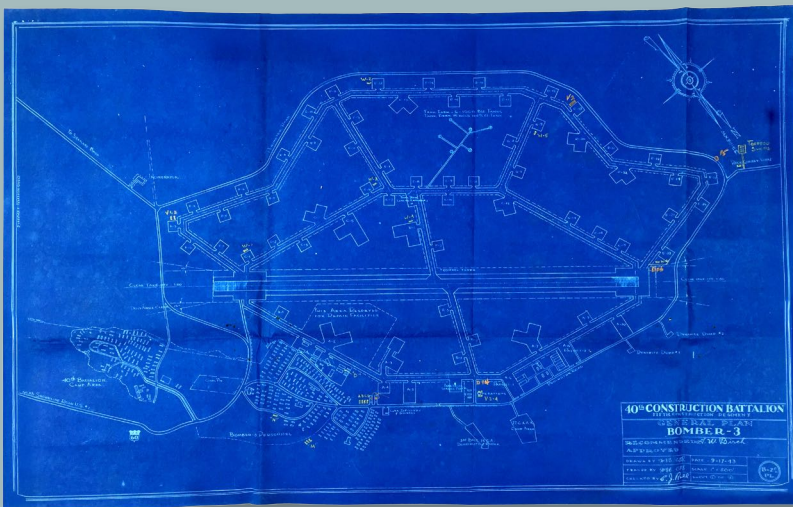


The nuts & bolts of Bomber #3

Formally known as Luganville Airfield

In previous articles, we've provided broad overviews of Bomber #3 Airfield on the west side of Luganville.

Now, thanks to a detailed report from the U.S. Archives, we can offer a more comprehensive account of Santo's third bomber airfield during World War II.



A blueprint created by the 40th Construction Battalion (Seabees) of Bomber #3, including the two camps for airfield personnel and Seebies. Photo – US Archives.

Construction of Bomber Field #3, also known as Luganville Airfield, began in early summer 1943 by the 5th Naval Construction Regiment. The field was completed around July 15, with operations commencing on August 1, 1943.

Lieutenant Commander Robert Sanders, AV(G) USNR, served as the Officer in Charge during this period. On October 1, 1943, the field was officially commissioned as Luganville Airfield, with Sanders appointed as the Commanding Officer.

From its inception, the airfield hosted a Carrier Aircraft Service Unit and a Field Overhaul Unit responsible for aircraft maintenance and repairs. In addition to various land-based Army, Navy, and Marine squadrons, numerous air groups from carriers docked in Espiritu Santo harbour utilised the field for aircraft repairs and testing.

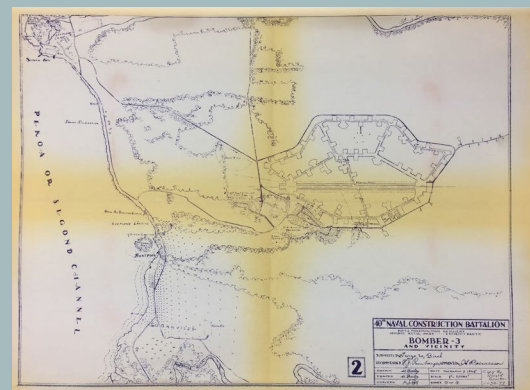
By the summer of 1944, Luganville Airfield reached its peak capacity, accommodating 650 planes, 3,000 enlisted personnel, and 500 officers.

Mobile Training Unit One was stationed at the field for approximately 15 months, during which it trained hundreds of enlisted aircrew members in aerial free gunnery.

Additionally, the South Pacific Aircraft Training Unit operated there for 12 months, providing anti-submarine warfare training to squadrons. The significant role Luganville Airfield played in supporting Allied operations in the South Pacific during World War II should never be underestimated.

The various Commanding Officers of Luganville Airfield following Lt. Comdr. Sanders were:

Lt. Comdr. Joseph H. Kempler, AV(G), USNR, from 10 Feb. 1944 to 20 March 1944;



Another plan of Bomber #3 by the 40th Seabees. Photo – US Archives.

Comdr. Arthur Laverents, AV(G), USNR, from 20 March to 1 June 1944;

Lt. Comdr. Hermon G. MacMillan AV(S), USNR, from 1 June 1944 to 17 August 1944;

(continued..)

Lt. Cmdr. James T. Gibson, AV(S),
USNR, from 17 August 1944 to 21
March 1945;

Lieut. Rufus W. Peckham (A), USNR,
from 2 February 1945 to 21 March
1945;

Lieut. David B. Aaron, S(A), USNR, from
21 March 1945 to the end of the war.

The various air groups, squadrons
and activities that were based on
Luganville Airfield during its 19
months of operation follows. This
list was included in the report in the
US Archives – quite an astounding collection given the
airfield was only in operation for around 19 months.



A spectacular aerial photo of Bomber #3, looking south east. In the distance you can see all manner of ships in port in the Second Channel. Photo – US Archives.

AIR CENTER COMMAND NAVY 140	
<u>ACTIVITIES BASED AT LUGANVILLE AIRFIELD.</u>	
Marine Air Group-33	Fighter Squadron-302
CASU(F)-39	Marine Bombing Squadron-433
CASU(F)-58	Scouting Squadron-55
South Pacific Aircraft Training Unit(SPATU)	Marine Observation Squadron-251
W.I.M.U.-157	Marine Bombing Squadron-133
Marine Fighter Squadron-322	Marine Fighter Squadron-321
Marine Fighter Squadron-323	Patrol Squadron-12
Marine Fighter Squadron-312	Marine Bombing Squadron-423
Patrol Squadron-54	Marine Fighter Squadron-534
Field Overhaul(ARU)	Marine Bombing Squadron-413
Mobile Training Unit-One	Composite Squadron-15
Scouting Squadron-65	Marine Bombing Squadron-443
Fleet Air Wing-One(Hedron)	Patrol Squadron-91
CASU-15	Patrol Squadron-81
Scouting Squadron-57	Marine Air Group-61
PATSU-1-7	Scouting Squadron-64
Marine Recon. Squadron-952	CASU-13
Bombing Squadron-148	Patrol Squadron-148
Patrol Bombing Squadron-130	Air Group-26
Bombing Squadron-611	Air Group-35
Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron-232	Air Group-37
Patrol Squadron-44	Air Group-60
Bombing Squadron-145	Bombing Squadron-140
VTMB-134	Air Group-5
Bomb & Fuze Instructing Unit- #13	Air Group-32
VMSB-133	Air Group-23
Marine Transport Squadron-952	Bombing Squadron-106
Marine Bombing Squadron-443	Altitude Flight Inst. Unit- #4
Marine Bombing Torpedo Squadron-131	Field Torpedo Unit- #17
Marine Bombing Torpedo Squadron-242	44th. Squadron
Bombing Squadron-305	Fighter Squadron-38
Bombing Squadron-306	VC-38
Torpedo Squadron-305	CASU-10
Fighter Squadron-301	Fighter Squadron-30
Torpedo Squadron-30	Carrier Air Group-17
Fighter Squadron-18	Patrol Squadron-23
CASU-9	

(continued..)

Luganville had been under consideration as a base for B-29 bombers, but the Pacific schedule had moved so far north in advance of the plans that Luganville found itself in a rear area before it was ever put to that use.

That said, it was amazing what went through Bomber #3 during its time of operation. At one time, over 650 planes were based there and planes with as many as 17 Japanese "kills" were seen. Incredibly, a minimum of 200,000 flights were made from the airfield.

Today the runway is the main road heading up past Santo's main communication tower overlooking Luganville and onwards north, towards the Millenium Caves



The old Bomber #3 runway looking south east. To the left on the coast is Luganville. To the left of the runway/road, you can still make out some of the taxiways. Drone photo – Jimmy Carter.

THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY

Cracked

By contributing author Kevin McCarthy

In January 1943, near Guadalcanal, a very small battle had very big consequences.

On the 29th of the month, a Japanese submarine – I-1 – was attempting a new way to deliver supplies to the starving remnants of the army on the island. A waterproof barge was strapped on its hull.

But I-1 never delivered that cargo – Allied radio detection of messages from as far away as New Zealand had given a strong hunch of the I-1's mission.



The Japanese submarine I-1 is rammed by the New Zealand corvette Kiwi.
Photo – Warfare History Network.

So, when the sub surfaced, it was met by two New Zealand corvettes.

We've covered the story of that epic surface fight before but not mentioned much about the game changing windfall it left.

The fight doomed the sub, which grounded on a reef. The remainder of her crew escaped but when debriefed back in Japanese territory it became clear not all the sensitive material on board may have been disposed of.

Those included codebooks. Bombers and another submarine were sent in fruitless attempts to destroy the wreck. But they were too late anyway.

(continued...)

Allied salvagers had already taken away everything of value – including five precious codebooks, for Japan's JN-25 code. Painstakingly dried out they were a treasure trove.



U.S. Intelligence personnel examine the twisted remains of the Japanese submarine I-1 after the vessel was sunk. Photo – US Archives.

JN-25 was a book of codes, which stood in for other words. It filled in much about the Japanese Navy that the US Navy had yet to learn or settle as fact.

(三ノ貳呂)					
73	56	39	02	15	
00147	88137	93504	21580	58665	
65826	38803	42393	94804	78478	
43223	01494	14713	46236	32551	

An excerpt of a message transmitted using the Japanese JN-25 naval code. Photo – WikiCommons.

The Japanese themselves declared a code crisis – and went about changing and reshaping the keys to their code. But they did not change the original codebooks vocabulary – meaning the Allies could always hope to be a step ahead,

Just a few months later that paid dividends when the revered Japanese fleet commander Isoroku Yamamoto decide to tour frontline bases in the Solomon Islands. Details were transmitted in the JN-25 code, because it was felt the Army code was not so secure. But the US obtained the schedule – and aided with what was now known about JN-25, was able to decipher what was intended after an intense period of work.



Victim of the code crackers – the last known image of Admiral Yamamoto, saluting pilots at Rabaul, April 1943. Photo – Wikicommons.

As result, a bomber carrying the Admiral was intercepted by US fighters flying a long distance mission. Pearl Harbour had been at least partly avenged.

And as the war swung away from Japan, their harried fleet must have felt it had fewer and fewer places to hide – a process, in part, due to their compromised code.

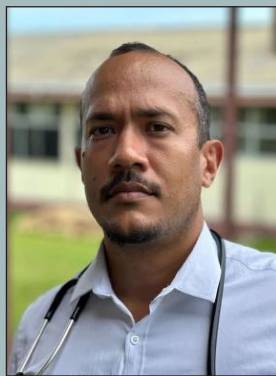
Based on material in Islands of Destiny – By John Prados.

Inspiring everyday heroes

Medical staff are expected to run to where the greatest need is.

In Port Vila last month, that meant that in the aftermath of a deadly magnitude 7-point-3 earthquake, many had to leave their traumatised families and head to work.

More than 200 were injured in the quake which caused building collapses in the capital. 14 people died.



Dr Sereana Natuman - Director of Hospitals and Curative Services & Dr Sale Tamata Vurobaravu - Specialist in Internal Medicine.
Photos – Koroï Hawkins, RNZ Pacific.

Vanuatu's Director of Hospitals Sereana Natuman told Radio New Zealand Pacific news that she had to leave her children aged three and 19.

"A lot of us had actually left our families and had to just come and stay at the hospital, and work tirelessly to at least make sure that the injured are seen and that services do continue."

"We have been going home at like eight, nine o'clock at

night but it's all worth it because at the end of the day, people are safe - lives are not lost in our care."

Dr Sale Vurobaravu, a clinical lead at Vila Central Hospital, was on his lunch break when the quake struck.

He said as soon as he saw the level of disaster, he knew it would be a mass casualty scenario. "It was all hands on deck," Vurobaravu said.

"Normally, we run as a National Hospital, we've got departments, people in their own corners - like the midwives are in the corner, we're down at the medical ward, the surgeons, but everybody went up to emergency because we knew that was the port of entry where the casualties were streaming."

He said simple things like blood pressure measurement and providing patients with oxygen could not be done.

The emergency department was also moved outside out of fear that the building was unsafe.

"We had well-trained individuals, but we didn't have the proper facility, and we didn't have our tools."

Vurobaravu says the next problem to handle are mental health ones - as people were traumatised by the quake.

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
VANUATU**

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

info@southpacificwwiimuseum.com
southpacificwwiimuseum.com

