SOUTH PACIFIC WWII MUSEUM
VANUATU

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Pages of progress

This month, the South Pacific World War II Museum was delighted to welcome a wonderful group from The Library Project, led by Ronwyn Collier. This inspiring initiative is driven by an incredibly dedicated team committed to improving literacy across Vanuatu. Their mission is as ambitious as it is admirable – to provide libraries and resources to every school in the country.

Marina Moli (centre), stands next to Ronwyn Collier (left of Marina) and the group from The Library Project. Photo – Lemy Nacisse.

During their visit, the group was keen to learn more about the museum and our work. Marina Moli, the Museum's Support Officer, met with them to share our vision, including our long held goal of establishing a library within the museum – a project we've been exploring for some time.

With more than 50 libraries already installed across Vanuatu, The Library Project is making a remarkable impact. Their work is a powerful reminder of how access to books and knowledge can help preserve the past, inspire the present, and shape the future.

Flight Lines and Frontlines

The aircraft of Espiritu Santo

Espiritu Santo's airfields supported a remarkably diverse complement of Allied aircraft – from heavy bombers to fighters, patrol and reconnaissance aircraft and torpedo bombers. Bomber Fields #1, #2 and #3 formed the backbone of USAAF strategic operations, Turtle Bay hosted both USMC and RNZAF fighter and attack squadrons, and the Segond Channel seaplane base was crucial for maritime patrol and reconnaissance. Together, they made Santo one of the most significant air hubs in the South Pacific theatre during World War II.

With that in mind, we thought it might be interesting to look at the different types of aircraft that operated from Santo and which airfields they flew from.

The aircraft

There was certainly a variety of aircraft based at the airfields on Espiritu Santo, from small fighters to large bombers and seaplanes.

There were a handful of other types of aircraft that flew in and out of what was then code-named Base Button, but those featured here were the most common seen over the skies of Santo.

B-17 Flying Fortress
Four engine heavy bomber – high altitude strategic bombing, long range, known for ruggedness.

B-24 Liberator
Four engine long range heavy bomber with greater payload and range than the B-17.

C-47 (DC-3) Skytrain
A vital military transport that served as a workhorse for troop transport, cargo delivery and casualty evacuation.

Lockheed Hudson / Ventura
Twin engine light bombers and patrol aircraft; RNZAF transitioned from Hudson to Ventura in 1944.

(continued...)

Douglas SBD Dauntless
Dive bomber used by RNZAF and U.S. Navy; accurate low altitude attacks on shipping and ground targets.

Grumman F4F Wildcat
Early carrier fighter, rugged and nimble, flown extensively in 1942.

Grumman TBF Avenger
Torpedo bomber with heavy payload and radar; also used for patrol and strike.

Grumman F6F Hellcat
Later replacement for the Wildcat; superior performance vs. Japanese fighters.

Vought F4U Corsair
Carrier capable fighter, famed for its speed and fire-power; flown by Marine squadrons including VMF 214.

Lockheed P-38 Lightning
Used in various aerial combat roles, including as a highly effective fighter-bomber, a night fighter, and a long-range escort fighter.

(continued...)

Consolidated PBY Catalina
Amphibious flying boat used for long range patrol, reconnaissance, convoy escort and rescue missions.

Consolidated PB2Y Coronado flying boat
used by the US Navy Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) for passenger and transport roles, flying long distance international routes.

Martin PBM Mariner flying boat
Also flown by NATS, it had almost double the range of the PB2Y and was used for passengers and cargo throughout the Pacific and worldwide.

The airfields

Santo featured three massive bomber airfields, a fighter airfield, a seaplane base and floating jetties for Naval Air Transport Service flying boats.

If the war hadn't moved north as it did, plans were drawn up for another fighter airfield and two or even three more bomber airfields.

Thankfully that leaves us with just six airfields and bases to cover.

Bomber Field #1 (Pallikulo Bay)

Constructed August–October 1942 by Seabees; runway initially ~5,000 ft, extended to ~6,200–7,000 ft of coral and punch plate or Marsten matting.

B-17 Flying Fortress (E & F models)
Used by USAAF 5th Bombardment Group squadrons (23rd, 72nd, 394th). B-17E "Yankee Doodle" was famously flown here by Lt. Gene Roddenberry before crashing in August 1943.

B-24 Liberator
Later flew from Pallikulo with continuing USAAF bomber groups.

Lockheed Hudson / Ventura (RNZAF)
No. 3 Squadron RNZAF operated Hudsons from Pallikulo in late 1942, later operating Venturas in 1944–45.

(continued...)

Bomber Field #2 (Pekoa)

Built late 1942 to mid-1943; runway ~7,000 ft, plus taxiways, revetments. Hosted Thirteenth Air Force units from January 1943 to early 1944.

Hosted same USAAF bomber types as Bomber #1: **B-17** and **B-24**, as HQ for XIII Bomber Command, XIII Fighter Command, and other units (e.g. **C-47** Troop Carrier, Reconnaissance and Fighter aircraft).

P-38 Lightning
USAAF units used Pekoa as a base for fighter operations, including long range escort missions for bombers heading north toward the Solomon Islands.

RNZAF **SBD-4 Dauntless** dive bombers and **TBF 1C Avenger** torpedo bombers were also flown from Santo fields by RNZAF/USMC units for reconnaissance & strike missions.

Bomber Field #3 (Luganville)

Constructed by 40th Battalion in early 1943: 6,800 ft × 300 ft runway, 27,000 ft of taxiway and 75 hardstands.

Functionally similar to Bomber #2: supported **B-17s**, **B-24s, Hudson/Ventura, C-47s** and occasional naval bombers, especially in early-mid 1943.

Turtle Bay Fighter Field
(Unofficially known as Kirby Schussuer Field)

Built July 1942; ~6,000 ft coral runway built in 20 days. Served USMC, USN, RNZAF fighter units.

F4U Corsair (USMC VMF 214 "Black Sheep")
VMF 214 under Major "Pappy" Boyington flew from Turtle Bay beginning March 1943. Corsairs dominated the air combat operations.

F4F Wildcat (USMC VMO 251)
Operated from Turtle Bay August–November 1942 in early fighter defense and support.

F6F Hellcat (US Navy VF 40)
VF 40 deployed F6F 3/5 Hellcats to support Solomon Islands campaign while based temporarily at Turtle Bay.

TBF 1C Avenger (RNZAF No. 30 Squadron)
Operated from Turtle Bay in 1944.

PBJ 1D (USMC variant of B-25 Mitchell)
One VMB 611 aircraft crash landed at Turtle Bay in October 1944.

C-47 Skytrain
Used early on as a field for aeromedical evacuation flights bringing wounded back from Solomon Islands or for patient transport to Australia/New Zealand.

(continued...)

Luganville Seaplane Base (Segond Channel)

Built 1942–43 with ramps, hangars and dry docks at Belchif Point. Hosted multiple U.S. Navy Patrol (VP) squadrons operating PBY Catalinas.

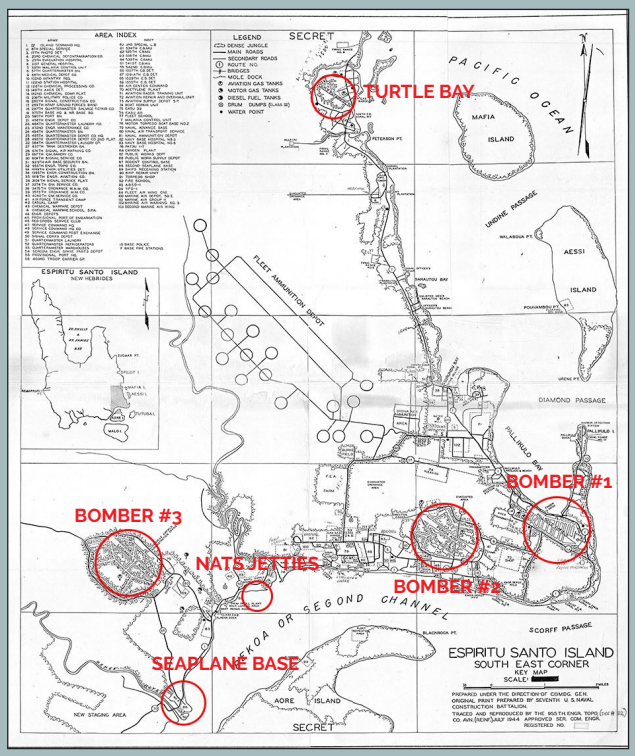
PBY 5/6 Catalina flying boats
Operating from Belchif Point ramps, multiple U.S. Navy Patrol squadrons (VP 11, VP 12, VP 14, VP 23, VP 24, VP 54, VP 72, VP 91) performed patrol, anti submarine, air sea rescue, and reconnaissance missions.

Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) No. 6 Squadron took over the base in October 1944 when the US Navy withdrew. The RNZAF also flew **PBY Catalina** aircraft from this location.

NATS Seaplane Base (Segond Channel)

Consisting of three floating jetties that could accommodate any seaplane in the US Navy fleet, the East Pier was completed and opened on 23 September 1943, and the West Pier on 12 October 1943. The third pier was not completed till about the middle of 1944.

Consolidated PB2Y Coronado and **Martin PBM Mariner** flying boats provided long range transport via regular passenger and cargo routes. One route known as the "Cannonball" service was a two-day service from Honolulu to Brisbane. The route passed through Palmyra, Canton, Funafuti, and Espiritu Santo. Only one overnight stop was taken, at Espiritu Santo before continuing through to Brisbane, Australia.



This map of Base Button illustrates the locations of the airfields and bases on Espiritu Santo.

THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY

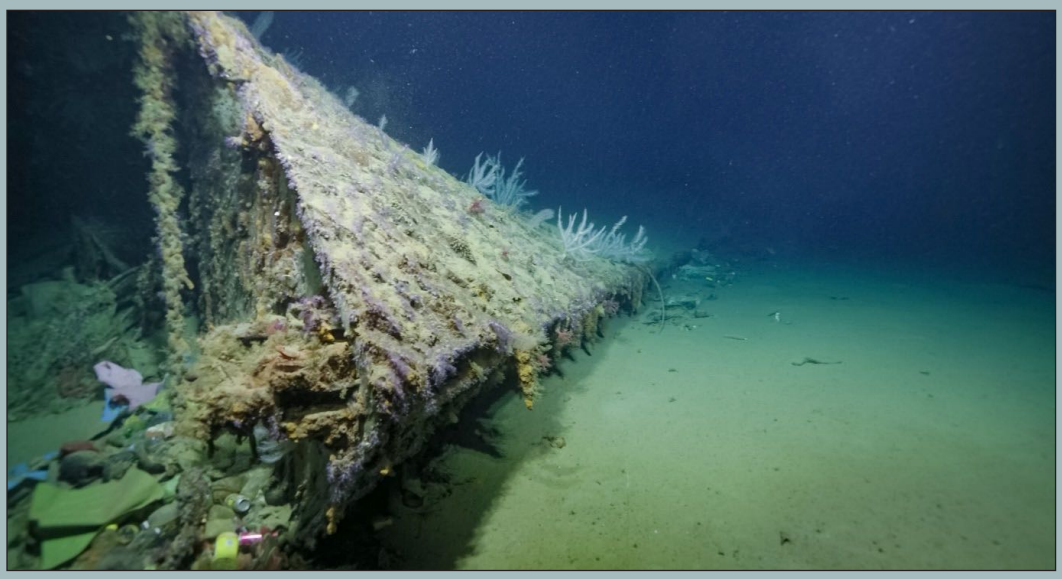
From the depths of discovery

It's been an exciting month for those intrigued by the discovery of sunken vessels in the waters dubbed Iron Bottom Sound.

That's the stretch of water around the Solomons nicknamed during the war for how many vessels were sunk in fierce fighting between the Japanese and US navies – most often in darkness.

It is thus a happy hunting ground for the famed underwater team of the Nautilus – operated by the Ocean Exploration Trust and led by Dr Robert Ballard.

The first find is not a ship at all – but a famous part of the USS New Orleans – to be precise, its bow.



The bow of the USS New Orleans – discovered after 83 years in Iron Bottom Sound by the team of the Nautilus. Photo – Ocean Exploration Trust.

It was torn off by a Japanese Long Lance torpedo during the Battle of Tassafaronga and is 675 metres under the sea. Identification was confirmed by markings such as hull number "3," anchor collars, and stamped anchor base reading "Navy Yard"

180 men died when the forward magazines detonated, ripping away the bow – but in a feat of damage control, the cruiser made it back to port.

Next is the IJN Teruzuki –a Japanese Akizuki class destroyer It was the Flagship to Rear Admiral Raizō Tanaka during the Guadalcanal campaign – and sunk in December 1942 off Cape Esperance after receiving two torpedo hits disabling its rudder and causing fire.

(continued...)

Nine crew died but most survived.

It had been surmised the destroyer sank when its depth charges – at the stern – were exploded.

But the discovery of the intact stern, 200 metres from the main wreckage, has laid that to rest.

The E/V Nautilus and its USV DriX that mapped the seafloor around Iron Bottom Sound. Photo – Ocean Exploration Trust.

The gun turrets remain upright – a striking signature of her intended role to defend aircraft carriers, rather than get involved in close combat with other destroyers.

IJN Teruzuki. Photo – Ocean Exploration Trust.

The third discovery is a close up survey of the USS DeHaven (DD 469) – a Fletcher class destroyer sunk by bombers as the Japanese withdrew from the Guadalcanal campaign.

It was first located in 1992, but a high-resolution survey has revealed intact artifacts including the ship's bell, propellers, artillery mounts, and torpedo warheads, some now displaced and showing deck collapse over decades.

167 men lost their lives -reminding us these wreck sites do mark war graves – and for many, a place where families and lives were changed forever.

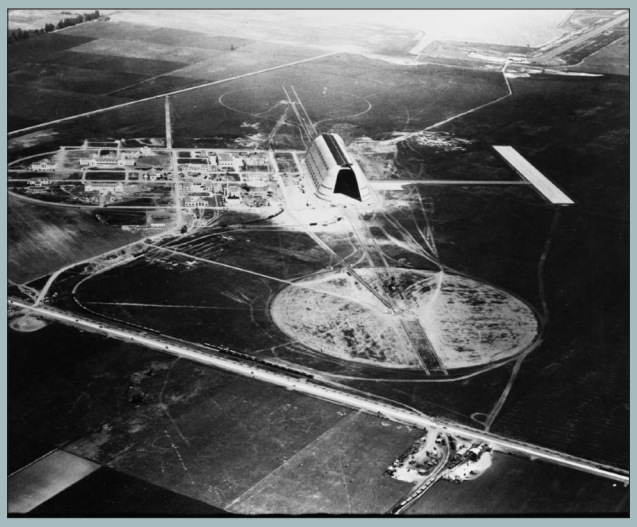
The ship's bell from the USS De Haven (DD-469) discovered by Ballard's team. Photo – Ocean Exploration Trust.

Another of the ships discovered in Ironbottom Sound was the Australian ship HMAS Canberra. Photo – Ocean Exploration Trust.

The Yard Department

The Backbone of the Base

The Yard Department began alongside the other units of what was initially known as LION ONE – later forming the nucleus of the Naval Advanced Base (NAB), Navy 140 – in the autumn of 1942. LION ONE was first established at Moffett Field, California, before deploying to the South Pacific. A LION being the largest deployable advanced base in the US Navy - for size, think Pearl Harbour prior to 1941.



While Moffett Field itself was not a deployed LION base, it played a role in training, staging, and outfitting personnel and materials for such bases in the South Pacific. Photo – Naval History and Heritage Command.

In its earliest form, the Yard Department followed the structure of a First Lieutenant Division in a standard land-based Naval Establishment. The original organisation chart called for a lieutenant to head the department, supported by one lieutenant (junior grade), two ensigns, and four warrant officers leading various divisions.

When Lieutenant Commander C. Y. Latimer, USNR, brought the Yard Department to Espiritu Santo, he arrived with the Second Echelon of LION ONE, though some elements had already deployed with the First Echelon. From these modest beginnings, the department expanded rapidly – "growed like topsy," as it was once described – and at its peak employed nineteen officers: one lieutenant commander, nine lieutenants, three lieutenant (jg)s, four ensigns, and two warrant officers.

What Was the Yard Department?

The importance of the Yard Department was perhaps best summed up by Commodore Boak (then Captain), the original commanding officer of LION ONE. Speaking at a conference in Washington, D.C., on 7 January 1944, he described the Captain of the Yard's Unit as "extremely important and something very difficult to visualise."

According to Boak:

"The Captain of the Yard's Department is probably the most important thing we have for service to the base and the fleet. It involves water transportation, garbage collection, police department, fire department – my God, there is a raft of them – a few shipfitters, mechanics, carpenter's mates. They don't give you any furniture at all on these advanced bases, and you've got to have something to set a typewriter on. A man can't operate a typewriter efficiently unless he is sitting down, and all those things have to be made. It is a long, tedious job. It's most desirable that a maintenance unit for the base – exclusive of the Seabees – be included in the Captain of the Yard's detail. You can't get too many seamen in the unit."

The desks and furniture Captain Boak was referring to. These are found in the Communications Centre on Santo. Photo – US Archives.

(continued...)

This broad scope meant the Yard Department handled everything from cutting grass to repairing leaky roofs, fixing flat tires, and finding bunk space and meals for personnel. If there was a problem, the first call often went to the Captain of the Yard.

Need some transportation? Or maybe the road to the sailor's mess is in need of repair. The Captain of the Yard will get it fixed for you. Photo – US Archives.

In short, the Yard Department was the service unit of an advance base establishment – a combination maintenance crew, problem solver, and emergency responder. It took care of all the day-to-day jobs that kept the base functioning, many of which went unnoticed until something broke down.

Its duties included fire protection, policing, safety, sanitation, and housing. As Commander R. D. Bell, Executive Officer, once remarked:

"You can take a hundred men from the Yard Department tomorrow and that Department will never notice it; but all the other departments will!"

The Role in Base Operations

The history of the Yard Department was, in many ways, the history of the base itself. In almost every major activity on Espiritu Santo, the department played a role. Its work touched all aspects of base life and operations.

During the war, the Yard Department's responsibilities were extensive:

Base Maintenance – Repairing and maintaining buildings, docks, piers, and other structures. This included painting, carpentry, and general upkeep to keep facilities serviceable.

Groundskeeping – Maintaining roads, drainage systems, and landscaping across the base.

Utilities – Managing electricity, water, and sewage to ensure these vital services were reliable.

Construction and Improvements – Undertaking building projects and infrastructure upgrades as the naval presence expanded.

Salvage and Disposal – Handling scrap metal, old

It was big - vast. And the Yard Department was responsible for keeping the entire base humming like a well oiled machine. Photos – US Archives. (continued...)

machinery, and waste, as well as recovering usable materials.

Vehicle Maintenance – Servicing and repairing trucks, tractors, and other essential equipment.

Fire Protection – Preventing and responding to fires, safeguarding both people and property.

Security Support – Maintaining fences, gates, and other measures to protect the base from intrusion.

The garbage pier at Base Button on Espiritu Santo. Garbage was one of the responsibilities of the Yard Department.

In essence, the Yard Department kept the base's physical infrastructure operational, allowing the Navy to focus on its primary wartime mission. Without this behind-the-scenes work, daily operations—and in many cases, fleet readiness—would have been impossible.

The Heart of an Advance Base

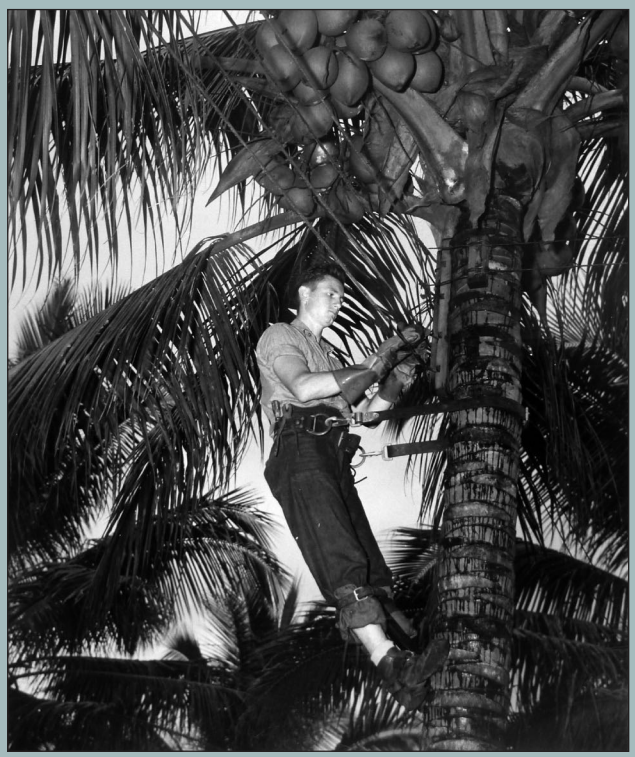
Life on an advanced naval base like Espiritu Santo was far from glamorous. Resources were limited, the environment could be harsh, and supply lines were stretched thin. The Yard Department provided the flexibility and ingenuity needed to adapt to these challenges. If furniture wasn't issued, the carpenters made it. If a drain clogged, the sanitation crew cleared it. If a vehicle broke down, the mechanics repaired it.

The department was also something of a "wailing wall" for base personnel – a place where problems could be brought and, more often than not, solved. Though rarely in the spotlight, the Yard Department was indispensable.

One of the many transport yards on Santo. These were managed by the Yard Department. Photo – US Archives.

By the time the war in the Pacific was drawing to a close, the department had built a reputation for efficiency and resourcefulness. Its officers and enlisted men ensured that Espiritu Santo remained a functioning hub for naval operations – a critical link in the supply and support chain that helped the Allies push toward victory.

In short, the Yard Department was more than just a collection of maintenance crews and support staff. It was the backbone of the base, quietly keeping the wheels turning while the war raged on.



Need electricity in a hurry? The Yard Department can hook you up. Photo – US Archives.

Pages of the Pacific

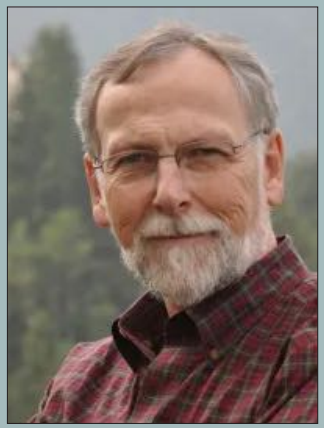
A book review by Tammi Johnson

We've got something new for you in this month's newsletter. Our good friend Tammi Johnson, who leads Project Strong, will be joining us each month to share her thoughts on a book. All her picks will be connected to World War II – and whenever possible, she'll shine a light on stories from the Pacific War.

We're thrilled to have Tammi on board, so let's jump straight into her very first review.

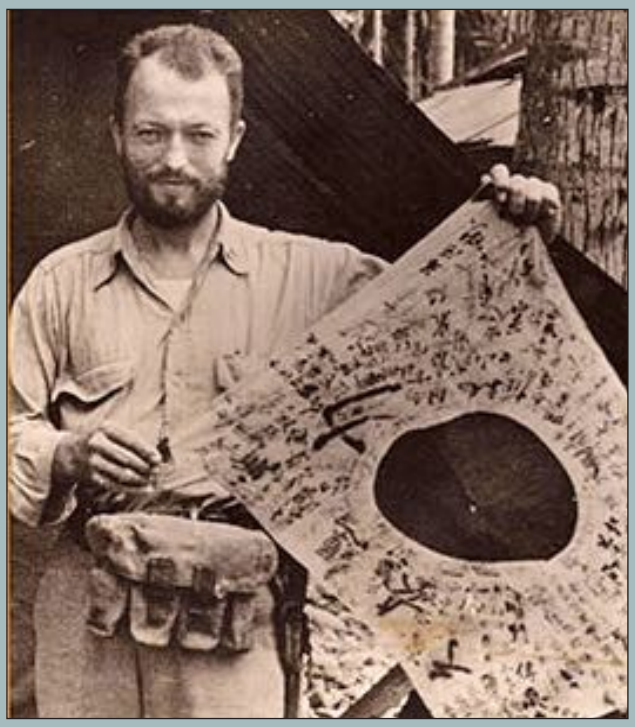
Hello all! I've read many books on WWII and can recommend some good reads. Many will focus on the Pacific Theater however, the European Theater has stories that bear sharing. Also, books about the roles of women in WWII that are worth reading, and many by people like me; relatives of men and women who were lost to the war, and those who came home. All deserve to be remembered.

A year ago, I took the memorial plaque for USS Strong DD467 to the South Pacific WWII Museum for its permanent home, so it seems right to review The Castaway's War by author Stephen Harding (the reason for the plaque).



Author Stephen Harding. Photo - Hachette Book Group.

I met Steve when he found my website back in 2013 and asked for help with research on an article about Lt. Hugh Barr Miller, Jr., a survivor of the Strong sinking. Over a few emails and phone conversations, this article turned into the book released in May 2016. Twice the book was optioned as a major motion picture; the second time filming was to begin in April 2020. Then came COVID.



Hugh Barr Miller following his rescue from Arundel Island. Photo – historynet.com

Steve starts the story of Strong with her construction in Bath, Maine between 1941-1942. Strong was launched in May of 1942 and commissioned on August 7th, the same day the battle on Guadalcanal commenced. After a shakedown cruise with 'plankowners' to the Mediterranean and North Africa, she headed back to Brooklyn Harbor to pick up new enlisted men and officers, including my uncle Bill Hedrick. The ship departed Brooklyn Christmas Day 1942 and headed to the Caribbean to cruise the islands looking for German submarines. From there, orders received sent them to the South Pacific and to Guadalcanal the same day the battle ended on February 7th, 1943.

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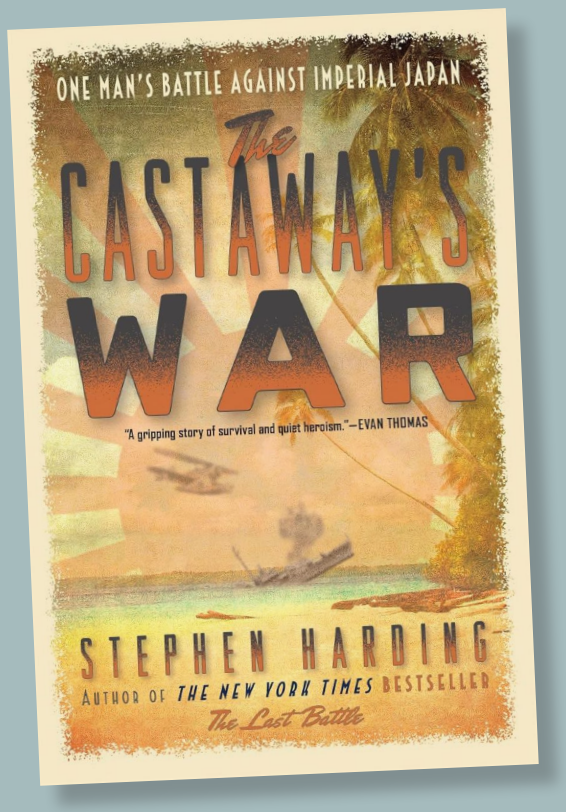


Stephen Harding's remarkable book could be set for the big screen.

On board was 33-year-old Lt. Hugh Barr Miller, Jr., probably the most notable survivor due to his 43-day ordeal, 39 of which spent recovering from life threatening injuries on the Japanese infested Arundel Island in the Central Solomons. He killed over 20 Japanese while there and gathered information shared with his superiors after being rescued. This information was the ammunition needed to invade Arundel Island in August-September of 1943 and push the Japanese further west and out of the central Solomons. His harrowing experience and stunning rescue are beautifully captured in this book that may yet become a movie or series.

Hugh Barr Miller was awarded the Navy Cross, personally bestowed on him by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Photo - usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil

The book reads like a movie script and it's easy to envision the experiences of Miller as he fights to survive. The book has been translated into a number of languages and is available worldwide at bookstores and online at destinations such as Amazon..

Steve has other notable books, including a NY Times best-seller that I will review in the future.

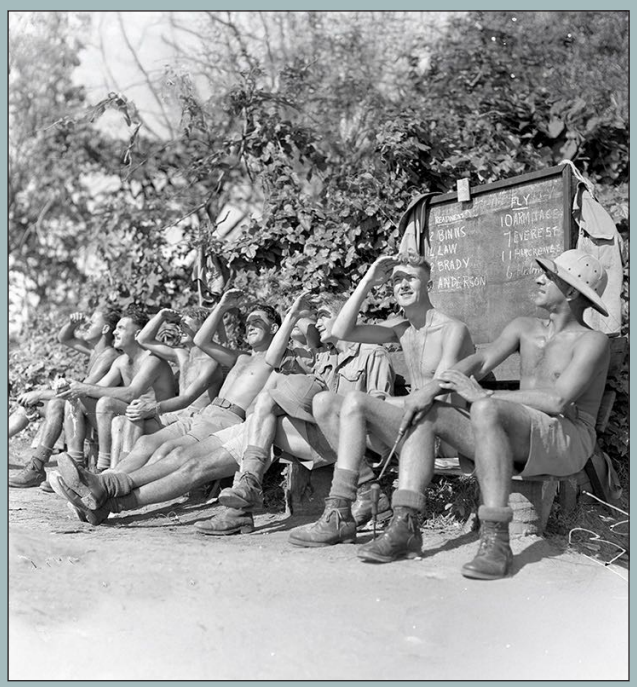
A worthy read and an exciting true tale!

RNZAF in Action

The other air force on Espiritu Santo

By mid 1942, as Allied forces surged into the South Pacific, Espiritu Santo emerged as one of the most strategically important bases in the region. It became the U.S. Navy's principal advance base for naval, air, and ground operations – supporting campaigns across the Solomon Islands and beyond.

The island's transformation was rapid. In less than two years, four major airfields and a seaplane base were carved from jungle and coral by the U.S. Navy's Construction Battalions – the Seabees. These airfields became the heartbeat of the Allied air presence. But it wasn't all American's who were based on Santo during World War II.



Royal New Zealand ground crew take a breather while waiting for aircraft to return from the front lines. Photo – RNZAF Museum.

RNZAF Squadrons on Santo

Between 1942 and 1944, the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) cycled multiple squadrons through Espiritu Santo. They flew diverse missions: reconnaissance, anti submarine patrols, dive bombing, torpedo strikes, and fighter defence.

No. 3 Squadron

Arrived October 1942 with Lockheed Hudsons, conducting long range maritime reconnaissance and anti submarine patrols. They were the first RNZAF unit to move from Santo to Guadalcanal in November 1942 and operated out of Pekoa Airfield (Bomber Field No. 2).

A RNZAF Lockheed Hudson on display in the Air Force Museum of New Zealand.

No. 9 Squadron

Formed in July 1942 in New Caledonia and moved to Pallikulo Bay Airfield (Bomber No. 1) in March 1943. Flying Hudsons, they carried out anti submarine and shipping escort sorties before returning to New Zealand in October 1943 to re equip. They came back to Santo in February 1944, later advancing to Bougainville and Emirau.

RNZAF Lockheed Hudson III (NZ2035) in service during World War II. Photo – Ferrymead Aeronautical Society.

(continued...)

Fighter Squadrons (Nos. 15 and 18)

Equipped with Curtiss P 40 Kittyhawks, these squadrons used Santo for air defence training and staging at Turtle Bay Fighter Airfield, before moving north to Guadalcanal and Bougainville. By late 1944, they were re equipped with F4U Corsairs.

A RNZAF Corsair taxiing on the runway at Turtle Bay Fighter Airfield located on the east coast of Espiritu Santo.

No. 25 Squadron

Reformed in 1943 with SBD Dauntless dive bombers, trained at Santo in early 1944, and then deployed to Bougainville. Returning later that year, they converted to Corsairs for operations from Guadalcanal and Emirau. They were based at Pekoa Airfield (Bomber Field No. 2), during their time on Santo.

RNZAF ground crews wiork on a Dauntless aircraft at Bomber #2 airfield on Santo.

No. 30 Squadron

Initially trained on older aircraft before receiving TBF Avenger torpedo bombers. They deployed to Luganville Airfield (Bomber Field No. 3) in early 1944 for training with U.S. Navy units, moving on to Bougainville and flying 573 sorties by May 1944.

A RNZAF Grumman TBF Avenger on the runway at Luganville Airfield – Bomber #3.

No. 5 Squadron

Operating from the Segond Channel seaplane base from November 1944, their PBY Catalinas performed anti submarine patrols, convoy escorts, and transport duties until war's end.

RNZAF PBY Catalina's on the ramp at the seaplane base on the Segond Channel in Santo.

(continued...)

Life and Scale of Operations

By 1943–44, the RNZAF had more than 17,000 personnel worldwide, with hundreds stationed on Santo at any one time. Each squadron – often 200–300 air and ground crew – was supported by servicing units, administrative staff, and specialist teams such as the RNZAF seaplane servicing crew at Segond Channel.

It is a story of adaptability and service – New Zealanders working alongside Americans and other Allies from a coral and jungle base that proved essential to victory in the Pacific.

A fabulous shot of personnel from the Royal New Zealand Air Force Catalina squadrons posing above and below the wing of one of their aircraft at the Segond Channel seaplane base on Santo..

Veterans recalled Santo as a staging post – six weeks of training, acclimatisation, and preparation before heading into forward combat zones like Guadalcanal or Bougainville. The base bustled with movement: aircraft taking off for long patrols, bombers returning from raids, fighters drilling for air defence, and Catalinas lifting off the channel for night patrols.

RNZAF Vought Corsairs parked off one of the taxiways at Turtle bay Fighter Airfield.

Why Santo was so important

From mid 1942 to late 1944, Espiritu Santo was the RNZAF's gateway to the northern Solomons and beyond. Its airfields supported every kind of operation – fighter sweeps, bombing missions, reconnaissance patrols, and maritime search. Kiwi crews trained, rested, re equipped, and then flew north into combat, forming a vital part of the Allied air war in the South Pacific.

A RNZAF Corsair demonstrates its ability to fold up its wings for carrier based deployment with the US Navy.

Channelling the Past

The Segond Channel on Espiritu Santo was home to one of the busiest seaplane bases in the South Pacific. In this month's comparison we're comparing the base as it was on 12 December 1942, to what it looks like today.

The seaplane base was located 6km by road, southwest of Luganville on the Segond Channel. Photo – US Archives.

The photos we're comparing are taken looking in a north easterly direction back up towards Luganville.. Photo – Google Earth.

Inspiring everyday heroes

You may recall that we talked a while back about the remarkable journey taken by students frustrated about the lack of global climate change. Not all journeys end well – but this one sure has – and provided a roadmap ahead.

Earlier this month, Ni-Vanuatu youth and climate activists celebrated a landmark advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands. It affirms countries have binding legal obligations to prevent climate harm and protect human rights.

Vepaiamele, a 16-year-old climate advocate, has highlighted the personal impact of climate change witnessed in Vanuatu. Photo – Pacific Media Network.

This ruling is seen as a significant step towards climate justice, particularly for vulnerable Pacific communities affected by climate change. It emphasized that climate change is both an environmental and human rights crisis, affecting children's rights globally.

The ruling follows years of advocacy led by Pacific youth, especially from Vanuatu, supported by their government. Vepaiamele, a 16-year-old climate advocate, highlighted the personal impact of climate change witnessed in Vanuatu.

Vepaiamele was part of the Vanuatu delegation to The Hague last December.

"It is an amazing advisory opinion because it completely clarifies what states need to be doing in regard to the climate crisis. We know that the climate crisis isn't just an environmental crisis, it's also a human rights crisis and affects children's rights. So, I'm sure that it will pave the way for justice for everyone around the world," she says.

For Vepaiamele, the struggle against climate change is personal. Growing up in Vanuatu, she has witnessed the impacts of climate change firsthand, including schools and clinics being put out of commission, forcing children to learn in tents.

Though not legally binding, the opinion carries strong political and legal influence. Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change, Ralph Regenvanu, says the government plans to present the ruling to the UN General Assembly to push for worldwide adoption, hoping it will set a new standard for protecting future generations.

Thanks to Pacific Media Network and Radio New Zealand Pacific for information used for this piece.

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