



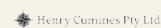
British High Commissioner visits Museum

In a wonderful surprise for the South Pacific WWII Museum, British High Commissioner to Vanuatu Karen Bell and her husband Adrian dropped in for an informal visit.

They were in Luganville sightseeing, but unfortunately it was raining. That was fortunate for us as it gave the High Commissioner the opportunity to visit the Museum in Unity Park.

We'd like to thank the High Commissioner for taking the time to visit us and look forward to hopefully meeting with her again soon.

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New WWII building found near Luganville

There are many structures still standing in and around Luganville, that date back to the Allied occupation of Santo. There are quonset huts, ammunition bunkers, the remains of airfields, transmitter towers, coral pits, seaplane ramps and even a bank vault.

So in some ways it came as no surprise when South Pacific WWII Museum Secretary, Mayumi Green discovered a new building, the Museum knew nothing about.

What was surprising was that the reinforced concrete building didn't have a door! Just a slit window on one side and a small archway on the opposite side.

Some speculated it might be an ammunition bunker. That can be ruled out as there were three types of bunkers built on Santo and this certainly isn't one of them. What's more, the bunkers were built on another part of Santo and over on Aore Island.



Various theories attempt to explain its purpose

One theory suggested it might be a 'pillbox' where soldiers stand guard within its walls. That too seems unlikely given there isn't a regular doorway into the structure.

The two steel pins on each side of the 'slit' window suggest there might have been some sort of flap there that hinged open to let air in, or smoke/fumes out. That being the case, is it possible it was some sort of oven for making bread? A boiler room associated with the washing of hospital linen? - afterall there were five large hospitals on Santo.

The area where the building is situated looks towards the Segond Channel and isn't far from US Navy Hospital No.6. That may go some way to help explain a connection with the hospital.

Further research will be done by the Museum to get to the bottom of the mystery. But for now, the building will remain another of Santo's wonderful World War II mysteries.



World War II signal tower locations found

It's always been known that during World War II there were signal towers on Espiritu Santo. However, until recently their exact number and locations have not been known.

The towers were used for a range of purposes including signalling ships in the harbour, radio transmissions and searching for enemy ships and submarines.

A chance find by Museum Project Manager James Carter in the United States turned up

a copy of the 'Base Facilities Summary for Advance Bases in the South Pacific Area' for Santo.

"These booklets were a guide to what was contained at each base. Based on other summaries, we were certain the details of the tower's locations would be there" he said. Sure enough under the heading 'Harbour Facilities', are listed two Harbour Entrance Control Posts (HECP) - 'skeleton wood towers' located at 15°30'42"S, 167°11'07"E and 15°24'25"S, 167°11'28"E.



Room with a view

The Harbour Entrance Control Post (HECP) tower overlooking the Second Channel was located on the hill overlooking the main harbour.



Protecting the northern and southern approaches to Luganville

While the first tower overlooked the main harbour in Luganville, the second was located at the northern end of Pallikulo Bay, on the east coast of Santo, not far from Turtle Bay Airfield. It was positioned on the top of what's known as 'Hospital Hill' which also included a radar and searchlight, artillery batteries and the 31st General Hospital, all operated by the US Army. The tower acted primarily as a forward observation post, watching for Japanese submarines attempting to enter Pallikulo Bay, which was after all, home of the giant 1000 feet long US Navy dry dock.

Vodafone confirms 2021 sponsorship

World-renowned multinational telecommunications brand, Vodafone has signed on as a sponsor of the South Pacific World War II Museum.

The exciting announcement comes after Vodafone generously agreed to honour the sponsorship agreement made by TVL prior to its takeover earlier this year by the telco. The sponsorship will remain in place until 2022 and the Museum is most appreciative of Vodafone for agreeing to continue its support of community-based projects like this one.



” I was absolutely thrilled when vodafone agreed to support the Museum project.

Lengkon Tokon - Project Office Manager

Ms. Natasha Liwuslili, Vodafone Vanuatu's Communication, Branding & Events Coordinator met with Lengkon on his recent trip to Port Vila and said the company would be only too happy to maintain the sponsorship agreement. "The South Pacific World War II Museum is becoming somewhat of a magnet for tourists and visitors to Luganville. Its plans for the future and its role in the local community are something we're thrilled to get behind and be a part of the Museum family," she said.

Mystery surrounds new dog tags find

It was just a normal day for our Museum team in early July when a colleague of the Museum Manager Lengkon Tokon sent through an exciting message about some dog tags she stumbled across.

Ms. Florence Lengkon in Port Vila had been doing some spring cleaning when she came upon the 5 dog tags that she had carefully stored away. She had purchased the dog tags from a man from Lelepa island all the way back in 2007. Thankfully for the Museum, she carefully put them away for safe keeping.

After making contact with Florence, Lengkon was delighted to learn that she wanted to offer them to the Museum.

We are very grateful for Florence's donation and already have our 'Master Researcher' Donna Esposito digging into archives to find the stories behind the dog tags we finally received in August.

Donna has already found some wonderful untold stories about two of the sailors which we will share in future issues of our newsletter and in our special Members' newsletter, The Santonian.

Becoming a member of the South Pacific World War II Museum is very easy and your donation will assist us in keeping the mini museum open and help us raise the funds needed to get the permanent museum built. You can find out more at southpacificwwiimuseum.com/membership-2



The collection of dog tags donated by Ms. Florence Lengkon in Port Vila.



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