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A Kiwi lands once more on Santo

The South Pacific World War II Museum has been greatly honoured to have historic items donated by the family of a New Zealand dive-bomber pilot who served in the Solomons, including *Espiritu Santo*.

The items are two plates retrieved from the wrecked Douglas Dauntless SBD that Flying Officer Leslie Jolly was piloting on April 2 1944 on a mission over Rabaul. Flying back to land at Torokina airstrip in Bougainville, he discovered incendiary bombs had not dropped. Pilot Jolly burned off as much fuel as he could and then attempted a perilous landing.

As his son Maurice recounts: "On landing the bombs were ejected by the impact and followed the aircraft along the runway exploding, resulting in severe damage and setting fire to the aircraft.

Leslie Jolly waited for the engine to stop (to prevent fanning of the flames by the prop) then alighted unharmed. His gunner got out earlier, and was badly burnt.



He however also survived.

The SBD was written off, but the painted panel was retrieved intact."

Dr Maurice Jolly has now donated the items on behalf of the family to the museum. If you live in Luganville, you will know that Maurice has like his father, done two tours of duty in *Espiritu Santo*, serving as a locum doctor at the town's Medical Santo clinic.



The panels (above) and Dr Jolly with our chairman Brad Wood.



Another island group touched by war



Kevin McCarthy with one of four RAF Typhoon Eurofighters permanently based in the Falkland Islands.

The Museum's communications advisor, formerly a Volunteer Service Abroad volunteer, is Kevin McCarthy. He helps write this newsletter, but not from Vanuatu anymore. Instead, he is living with his partner Leesa in the Falkland Islands, in the deep South Atlantic.

Kevin is there for at least two years as the country's Head of Communications. His family emigrated from the Falkland Islands to New Zealand in 1961, so Kevin, who was born a year later, is the first McCarthy to return long-term to the islands in more than 50 years.

"When I was growing up I could not avoid hearing about the Falklands but I never imagined I would one day be living here. Of course in 1982, when Argentina invaded the islands and were later defeated by the British armed forces, we were very concerned and fearful for those living here. My family of course knew just about everyone. It was very strange."

Kevin says the Islands are the climatic and geographical reverse of Vanuatu — temperatures in the low teens (celsius) and virtually no trees. "But is it very beautiful in its own right, and we are looking forward to living here."

There are similarities to Vanuatu. You can see evidence that this has long been a place where, strangely, there has been conflict. In 1914 there was one of the most famous naval battles in British history, just off the coast of the Falklands. And in 1939, another famous battle—the Battle of the River Plate—occurred not far from the islands.

"It's not hard to find the UK equivalent of the Quonset hut still in use here, and remnants of the 1982 battles are not far away. We even had a cluster bomb defused recently quite close to where our house was. And at least once a week we're reminded that this remains an important UK defence responsibility. That's when a couple of Typhoon jets come swooping low over Stanley harbour.

Kevin says there is a very strong local tradition of interest in history, with a very good local museum and plenty of local publishing. The islands have a thriving tourism industry, with frequent cruise liner visits and new flights through Brazil will make it much easier to fly to the Falklands from Europe and the US.

If there any Museum supporters who fancy visiting one of the last great wildlife frontiers, and drinking warm beer, then please get in touch with Kevin at admin@southpacificwwiimuseum.com

Inspiring Everyday Heroes



Melica Ngisa and Mala Meake with The Minister of Education, Jean Pierre Nirua – picture Vanuatu Daily Post

Our Heroes this month are definitely going somewhere that few people will ever visit.

The two Ni-Vanuatu students have been given the opportunity to study at universities in Georgia thanks to the assistance of the Vanuatu Government scholarship scheme.

By Georgia, we don't mean the US state. We mean the country of Georgia. They will be undertaking their degree studies.

Mala Meake from Futuna will be studying at the International Black Sea University (IBSU) while Melica Ngisa from Santo will be doing her Bachelors of Business Administration and Tourism at Illia State University.

Both universities are located in the city of Tbilisi. Ngisa told the Vanuatu Daily Post that they are excited but also nervous about the opportunity.

The Minister of Education, Jean Pierre Nirua, told them to perform to their best, complete their studies and bring back skills to Vanuatu. More than 180 Ni-Vanuatu students have received scholarships to study overseas this year.

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



This month in military history

In November 1942, Noumea in New Caledonia became the headquarters for the Allied Commander of the South Pacific. But what was important was not the base, but the commander. Just days earlier, Admiral "Bull" Halsey (pictured right with Chester Nimitz) had been appointed to the command. Halsey would take the faltering campaign at Guadalcanal by the neck, and ensure eventual US victory by early 1943. Famously one his first orders was that all men under his command would get rid of their ties. It symbolised it was time for a fight.