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We're Approved

The South Pacific World War II Museum has reached another milestone, with official approval of the project by the Government of Vanuatu.



This is an important step as it strengthens our profile with potential donors and of course, domestically.

We are very pleased to have this approval as a vote of confidence in what we already know—that the Museum will be a significant tourism, cultural and economic asset to Vanuatu.

The project approval comes via the support of the Ministry of Justice & Community Services, which oversees the Vanuatu Cultural Center who is responsible for the preservation of cultural and historical heritage of Vanuatu.

The Museum also has a memorandum of understanding with the Vanuatu Cultural Center signed in May this year.

We thank the Vanuatu Cultural Center, Ministry of Justice & Community Services and the Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) for this support.

Our Navara Fund keeps growing

The Museum's Navara Fund is delighted to announce its latest member, Australian businessman Bob Hill.



The Navara Fund has been setup to allow businesses and individuals to support our project office during our fundraising.

Bob was the founder of ADCO Constructions in 1972; it's now one of the top 50 companies in Australia, has nearly 600 employees, and works with major clients from government to corporations.

Bob remains a director but has a home on Espiritu Santo.

New Navara Fund member Bob Hill (Right) with our project manager Alma



Inspiring everyday heroes



Bob Hill



Official Navara Sponsors

He has already been invaluable in his support by linking us to the expertise needed to estimate how much the Museum will cost to build.

It's the sort of support that is priceless for us at this early stage, and we thank Bob for now coming onboard as our latest Navara Fund sponsor.

And we've been thrilled by the support for the Museum coming from the US brothers who call themselves the Thiele Boys.

They've made a generous contribution to our cause through becoming Navara members.

The Thiele Boys are the sons of Lt (jg) Ray Thiele, a Ventura pilot whose squadron deployed through Espiritu Santo. He came here on a visit in 1970, and his wife Barbara and three sons would settle here in the 1970s.



Lt Ray Thiele is at the top row left.

Inspired by their fond memories of this place, sons John, Mark and Chris have decided to contribute to the Navara Fund. You can read much more about their story on the front page of our website at:

<http://www.southpacificwwiimuseum.com>

If you'd like to know more about the Navara Fund and becoming a member, please contact Alma Wensi at info@southpacificwwiimuseum.com

Every year Vanuatu's TokTok event sees a group of Australian, New Zealand and New Caledonia tourism specialists hosted at attractions they can then promote to potential visitors.

For the first time, they were able to visit our project office in Luganville. We had 15 TokTokers here, who heard from project manager Alma Wensi, saw our promotional video, and looked around the mini-museum.

We understand we were a hit, and true to our newsletter motto, it was a case of unfolding the untold for many in the group who were not aware of the rich Second World War history of the island and Vanuatu.

We hope the visit by TokTok will in time lead to more people discovering us, spending time on Espiritu Santo, and learning about our Museum vision.



TokTok visitors inside the museum's project office, Wednesday 29th August 2018

The Museum this month also had a visitor from an Australian travel writer who has been to 184 countries.

TokTok Vanuatu visit



Toktok Visitors - Lauren Orlina from Tomahawk, a website company based in Auckland, NZ and Almonique Seule from Sanma Department of Tourism



Darren McLean has a website called taste2travel.com and spent time with us to learn about our work.

He has been in Vanuatu for three weeks, and we look forward to being in one of his website travel guides which reach an audience around the world.

Darren from taste2travel.com

A short flight to disaster



The badly-damaged prop of the SBD-4 dive bomber which flew into a limestone cliff at night with fatal consequences

The Museum team recently had the chance to visit Mavea Island, reputedly nicknamed as Mafia Island by the Americans during wartime.

It's a beautiful small island just 15 minutes or so across from Turtle Bay fighter airstrip. During the US occupation, the villagers were eventually moved and the island turned into a firing range.

Because of that there were unexploded munitions left there, and tragically, several lives were lost post-war when a bomb or shell detonated. The locals say two men had been trying to remove explosives for fishing; the only silver lining was that they told children nearby to stay clear.

Our visit included climbing to a well-documented crash site, where a Marine Corps Dauntless SBD dive bomber on a night training mission crashed in July 1943. Captain Henry White and Staff Sergeant Thomas Meek died in the crash, their remains being recovered in 2012 by the US military.

Their plane had taken off from Turtle Bay only a couple of minutes earlier, and the explosion of the crash was observed from Espiritu Santo.

We've got some interesting background to reveal about the pilot that day in our latest issue of the Santonian, along with the story of the Kiwi doctor trying to trace the footsteps of his father's time on Espiritu Santo, and another puzzle for our dog tags sleuth.

The Santonian is the added-value newsletter for signed up members of the Museum. It comes out every three months.

You can become an official Museum member by signing up online using this link:

<https://southpacificwwiimuseum.com/membership-2/>

This month in military history



USS Juneau 16th Sept, Espiritu Santo anchorage, with the destroyer USS Laffey in foreground, both carrying survivors from the sinking of the USS Wasp the day before. Juneau was torpedoed and sunk in November 1942, with nearly 700 men lost.

On September 16th, 1942, US warships arrived at Espiritu Santo carrying the survivors of the catastrophic sinking a day earlier of the aircraft carrier USS Wasp. The Wasp with other major units of the US fleet was escorting the 7th Marine Regiment, which had sailed from Espiritu Santo on September 14th. The Marines had to get through if the US was to keep its tenuous hold on Guadalcanal.

Their course took them through waters where Japanese submarines were on patrol, and the Wasp was hit by two torpedoes fired by the I-19. Wasp was very vulnerable; she'd been constructed to take advantage of the tonnage allowance under a major inter-war treaty intended to limited a naval arms race. Smaller than other US carriers, she was less well protected.

The last remaining American carrier in the South Pacific, USS Hornet, was targeted minutes later by a second submarine, the I-15, but its torpedoes instead hit the battleship North Carolina.

There were 2247 men onboard Wasp, of which 193 were killed and 366 wounded. The double blow to the US fleet left the battle for Guadalcanal in the balance, but the 7th Marines had reached the island.

USS Wasp ablaze after the torpedo attack. Source: National Naval Aviation Museum



Smart Sistas take on the world



Smart Sistas in Mexico City. (Photo from Smart Sistas)

Our Inspiring Everyday heroes this month are the 'Smart Sistas', a group of young Vanuatu women becoming expert in ICT technologies of the future.

Members of the Sistas last month attended the second-ever Global FIRST challenge, in Mexico City. They competed with teams from around the world in building a robot to undertake tasks with an energy theme. The Vanuatu team finished in the top two-thirds of the competition, which had 163 countries taking part.

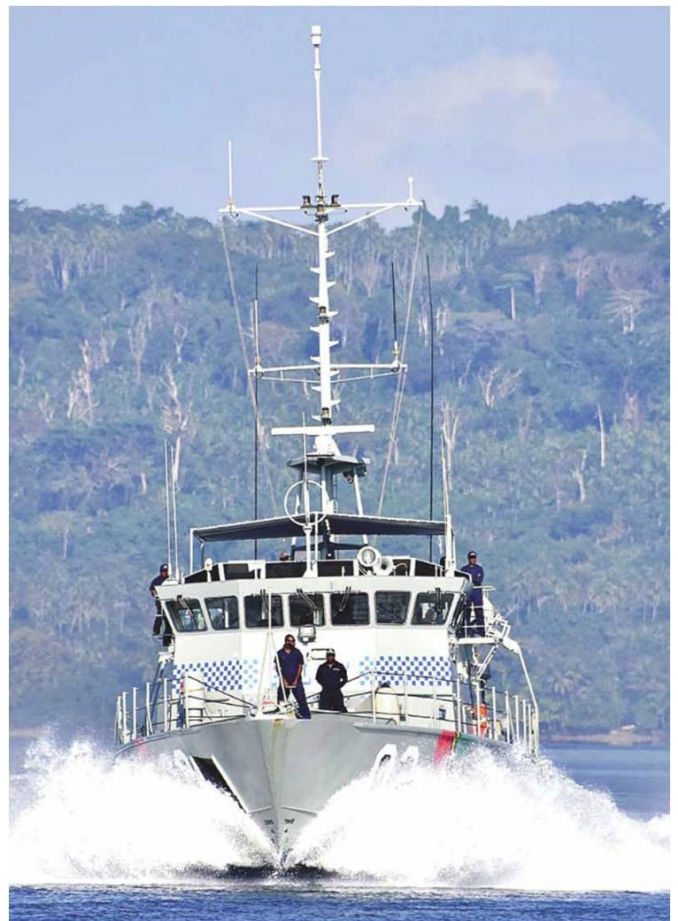
For more information on the SMART Sistas, how you can support them and girls in ICT in Vanuatu, please check out their website at <http://www.smartsistas.vu> and make sure you like them on [Facebook](#).

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

Smart Sistas in Mexico with FIRST Global Challenge President Dean Kamen, (Photo from Smart Sistas)



Full speed ahead!



Chris Sattler from Henry Cumines Ltd snapped this wonderful picture of the patrol craft 'Tukoro' when he paid a recent visit to Vanuatu.


Henry Cumines are supporters of our museum project.

Tukoro is one of 22 patrol vessels provided by Australia to Pacific Island nations for maritime patrol, included fisheries protection.

The 160-tonne vessel has had a busy career, including being badly damaged during Cyclone Pam in 2015.

A new class of modernized patrol craft is on its way, with the Guardian class now being built in Australian dockyards.

One of the class is due to be deployed in Vanuatu by 2021.

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"Inspiring everyday heroes"



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