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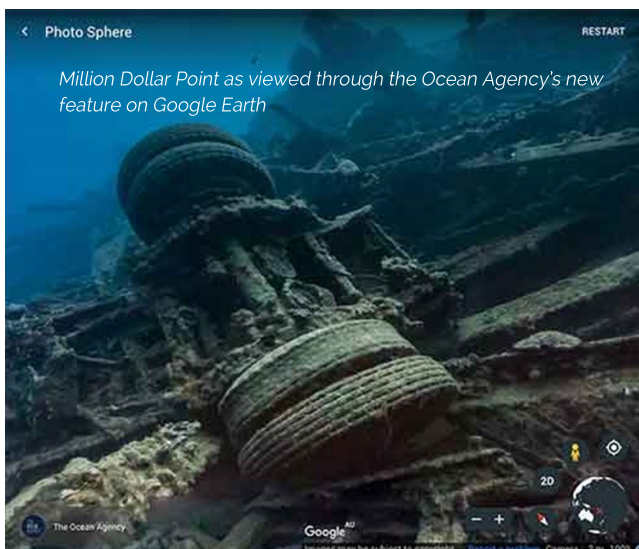
Dec 2018

## Time to get your wetsuit on!

It's no secret one of the reasons some people visit Espiritu Santo is to dive the wrecks of the SS President Coolidge. A fair few of them to our project office either before or after their dives - and we've never heard anyone voice anything other than excitement.

But for those of us who aren't proficient to dive, there is a way now to get your feet wet while on dry ground.

That's thanks to [The Ocean Agency](#) which is a ground-breaking non-profit organization based in Washington DC, that uses the latest technology



## Christmas wishes

It's been a tremendously busy year for the South Pacific WWII Museum and we'd like to thank all of our readers for their support during that time.

Some of you have contributed directly to our museum fundraising, while others have donated after visiting our project office in Luganville. Still more of you have sent us emails asking for historical information, and we've done our best to help. Others have shared previous photos and memories.

There's been plenty of lively debate on our Facebook pages, especially when we ask your help on something we're puzzled by.

Best of all, well over 4,500 of you have visited us in person.

Thank you, we feel blessed by your support. Merry Christmas to you all, and a happy New Year to come.



*Menu from No.2 (GR) Squadron RNZAF Christmas dinner, 1942. From the collection of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand. This squadron would spend its next Christmas on Espiritu Santo.*

in their quest for encouraging ocean sciences and above all, ocean conservation.

They developed an underwater 360-degree camera, capable of revealing the oceans in Google Street View. As they state on their website, more people went virtual diving in the first week of its launch than have ever been diving in person. Amazingly, their imagery is the most viewed underwater imagery in history.

So we're thrilled earlier this year when the Ocean Agency asked to provide some historical material for a series they were doing for Google Earth on the Pacific War.

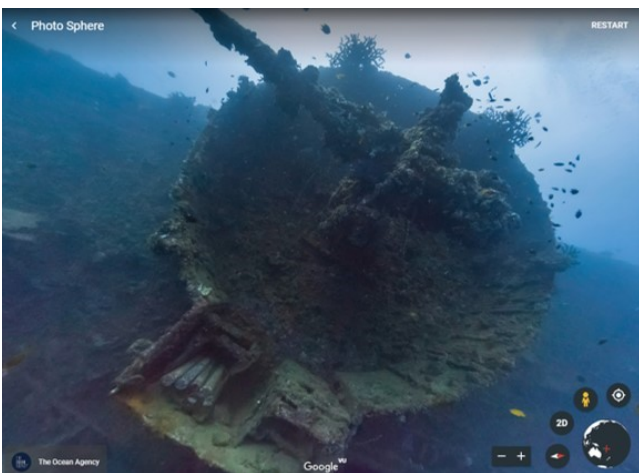
This wonderful journey lets anyone explore some of the most significant underwater WWII sites across the Pacific including our very own SS President Coolidge and Million Dollar Point sites. And if you click further, it takes you through to information on our website.

We're very proud this innovative project came to us when it wanted authoritative information.

Congratulations to the Ocean Agency for once again bringing the oceans to life in ways we never thought possible and sincere thanks for giving us the opportunity to play a small part in this exciting project.

To view War in the Pacific on Google Earth for yourself, simply click [here](#), or paste this link into your browser:

<http://earth.app.goo.gl/MNYkiE>



SS President Coolidge as viewed through the Ocean Agency's new feature on Google Earth

## A time of joy



Christmas caroling by the Museum team (L-R) - Marina Moli, Alma Wensi, Kevin McCarthy and Leesa Roy.

Our museum family recently took to the stage to join others for Christmas carols at a Luganville school.

It was a fun-filled evening, but got us thinking about what Christmas would have been like for the tens of thousands of servicemen and women in the New Hebrides at this time of year during ww2.

No doubt they would have sung the many traditional hymns of years gone-by, but there would also have been a fair few "modern" Christmas tunes in play – many of them talking about a very un-South Pacific yuletide!

So we've curated on Spotify a playlist for you to enjoy some of the wartime Christmas tunes from 1941 to 1945. Actually we open with a song from 1946 but when you hear the words, you'll realize why we had to include it.

If you are subscribed to Spotify, you can access it online. It is called "South Pacific WW2 Museum Christmas Playlist", and has been kindly curated by Leesa Roy.

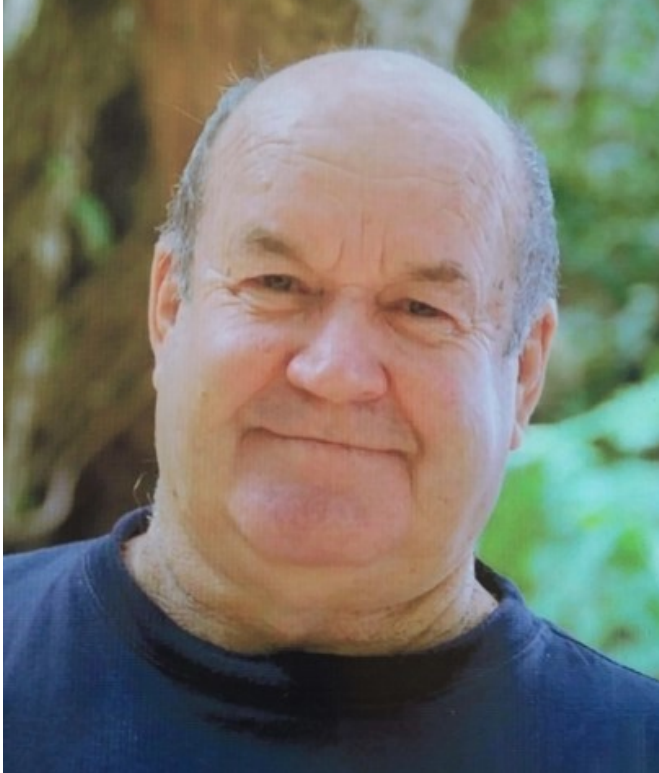
## A Christmas gift?

Why not buy your loved one a membership that not only helps our project but also has some goodies attached – like our special newsletter, the Santonian, exclusive to Museum members.

If you've enjoyed watching our website video interview with 99-year-old Milton Staley, then you'll want to catch the next issue of the Santonian. Milt talked for a lot longer than three minutes, and the Santonian (out the end of January) will feature much more from his interview.

If you'd like to check out becoming a Museum member, you can see more [here](#).

## The passing of a legend and a true friend to many



Last week we awoke to the devastating news of the passing of one of the true legends of SCUBA diving, Allan Power. But more than just one of the world's most respected divers, Allan was a unique and cherished identity on Espiritu Santo,

Born in Sydney, Australia in 1933, Allan began his working life as a qualified pastry chef in 1953, before working in a foam rubber factory for 15 years. Purchasing his first underwater camera in 1956, his passion with the undersea world soon blossomed spending his holidays in the early 60s on Heron Island on the Great Barrier Reef. It wasn't long before Allan's eye for the exquisite beauty of the reef saw him win the much coveted Levanto prize for underwater photography, and the beginnings of a remarkable career photographing the world's oceans. His treasured book *The Great Barrier Reef* published in 1977, opened the eyes of the world to the incredible beauty of the reef.

In December 1969 he travelled to Santo on board the salvage ship *Pacific Seal* with Barry May to photograph the salvage of the propellers from the SS President Coolidge. However, Allan soon became involved with the salvage operation itself and one could assume, this was where his passion for the great lady began.

*Thanks to Dave Cross from [Beachfront Resort](#) for his assistance in preparing this tribute.*

In 1978 Allan was offered the position of diving director on Bokissa Island Resort. It wasn't long before he returned to Santo following the Coconut Rebellion, and in 1981 he established Allan Power Dive Tours. Popularity for Allan's tours grew quickly and between 1982 and 1985 as many as 45 groups booked dive tours with him in one year – which incidentally made Hotel Santo's name. In fact, it is widely recognized that Allan initiated tourism on Espiritu Santo and was therefore a founding father to economic growth of the island, prompting the locals on Santo always called him "Uncle".

Allan's reputation for the way in which he looked after his diving guests and ran his dive operation saw the business grow in stature as the premier dive operation on Santo and one that was held in high regard worldwide. So much so that on November 8, 2011, Allan was inducted into the International SCUBA Diving Hall of Fame in the Cayman Islands. This prestigious award recognized his contribution to the diving industry in general and his incredible work and achievements on the Coolidge.

When Allan became the unofficial caretaker of the Coolidge, he also became the guardian of the remains of Captain Elwood J Euart, which were yet to be discovered on the great ship. It wasn't until after the formation of the Elwood J Euart Association and their South Pacific World War II Museum project was launched, that by pure coincidence Allan's team discovered the remains of Captain Euart on the Coolidge, where they had been lying for around 70 years. That find resulted in the successful recovery and repatriation of Captain Euart's remains back to his home town in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, USA. For the past 15 years, a memorial built by Captain Euart's men has been cleaned and repainted by the dive community, led by Kevin & Mayumi Green, to ensure his name will forever be associated with the rich history of Espiritu Santo. Allan made over 15,000 dives on the Coolidge and has taken over 20,000 divers to the Lady alone – a remarkable achievement for someone who was still diving into his 85th year.

Once in a lifetime someone comes along who can change the way we look at the world. To see it in a way we could never have imagined. For those lucky enough to have spent dive time with Allan Power will appreciate why he was indeed, one of those people.

## The month in Military history



Turkey for dinner - Christmas Day - Espiritu Santo, 1942

Wars continue even through celebrations like Christmas – the conflict often continues unabated.

But in 1942, December was very much a watershed in the battles for Guadalcanal – especially for the Japanese.

They had been unable to recapture the island, despite strenuous efforts at great cost in men, planes and ships. 10,000 soldiers remained on Guadalcanal but could not be supplied, and were largely starving.

In the last days of December, with the knowledge of Emperor Hirohito, the decision was taken to no longer try to retake Guadalcanal and instead evacuate. But the Solomons would be staunchly defended.

On the US side, there was no knowledge yet that that this was the case. Army troops had now replaced the Marines on the island, and the fighting went on.

And on Espiritu Santo, the swift expansion of the mighty base continued. The war in the South Pacific was in no way about to end.

Gifts for everyone, Dec 1942, Espiritu Santo



## Into the Cruise Ship season

The cruise ship season in Espiritu Santo starts in earnest around November and runs through to about June, when there's a lull of around five months.

We had two in November, while a third was unable to berth because of very unfavorable winds. Two will visit late December, and three in January.

Some but not all passengers are aware of the island's wartime past, and we're working at ways to make sure that if they have an interest, that they know about our mini museum and pay us a call.

One of our steps has been to develop a number of very attractive new billboard signs for strategic spots around Luganville, including of course the cruise ship wharf.

As we keep good track of our visitor numbers, we hope over time that we'll see this and other approaches paying off with more people finding their way to us.

Right now Luganville has a modest share of the number of ships visiting, with most still berthing at Port Vila. However there's confidence that with the new wharf and efforts to improve the attractions here for visitors, that ship numbers will grow in future years.



Right this way. One of our smart new signboards

## A Zero is found



The final grave of a Japanese Zero fighter - picture courtesy Dive Munda

Many hundreds of plane wrecks have been found in the South Pacific, but it's still exciting when a new one is announced.

Last month divers uncovered a Zero A6M2 fighter in the waters near a major Japanese wartime airbase at Vila, Kolombangara, in the western Solomons.

It was found by Sunga Boso of Dive Munda and Barbara Buchanan of Wreck Diving magazine.

Boso said that a lot of Wrecks are lying around underwater but nobody knows where the planes are, and so he and Barbra were so excited when they found the name and number of the plane.

The wreckage sits on black sand and is still in good condition with the cockpit intact.

While we don't know exactly how the Zero and presumably its pilot met their end, the divers have identified both a manufacturing number (5455) and "patriotic presentation number"( 1049). Hopefully more research will reveal more about the fate of this Zero.

## Inspiring Everyday Heroes

As a Hollywood film once said - if you build it, he (or she) will come - and that's just what they are doing at Vaemali on the island of Epi, central Vanuatu.

Recognized Seasonal Employment (RSE) workers have raised around 8 million vatu (nearly \$100,000 Australian dollars) to fund a newly fully furnished doctors house at Vaemali Health Centre.

The RSE workers have been setting aside part of their earnings while working at Birdhurst Orchards in New Zealand.

After handing the key to the Ministry of Health, the RSE workers ask that the government appoint a doctor to live in the house and serve the medical needs of the people on the island.

Lack of decent housing and support facilities is one factor discouraging doctors and health workers from working in rural areas.


The new doctor's house at Vaemali has three bedrooms, a kitchen equipped with utensils, bathroom and laundry area and furniture.

Meanwhile the fund is still going strong, and there are other plan by the RSE workers.



The new doctors home at Vaemali - picture courtesy of Vanuatu Daily Post

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

 **PayPal** Help us build the South Pacific WWII Museum  
Online donations to [Elwood J Euart Association](#) Paypal account

**"Inspiring  
everyday  
heroes"**



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