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A new flag from Australia



Pictured from left to right, Minister Regenvanu, Alma Wensi with the gift flag, Brad Wood, General Campbell, Minister Napuat, H.E. High Commissioner Jenny Da Rin, and Lieutenant Commander Kelly Turnbull.

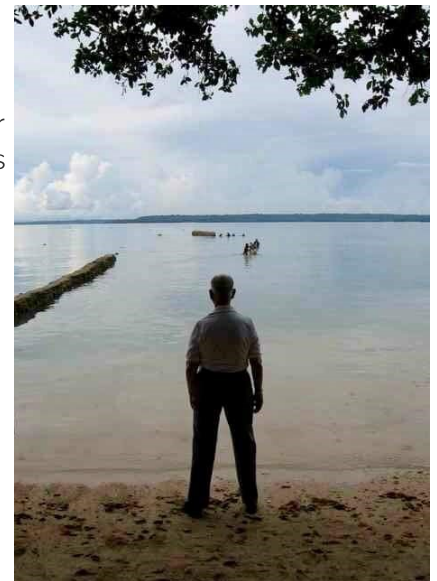
The South Pacific World War II Museum is now the proud possessor of an Australian flag, presented to us by that Country's top military commander.

The great honor happened earlier this month at a reception in Port Vila for visiting Australian Chief of Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC. The Chief of Defence Force is the senior ranked officer in Australia's armed forces, representing the army, navy and air force.

Australia's High Commissioner, H.E. Jenny Da Rin, kindly invited the Museum to attend the function, which also included the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ralph Regenvanu, and the Internal Affairs Minister Andrew Napuat.

Milton's still on duty

Everyday at our mini Museum at Luganville, 99 year old Milton Staley is there to greet our visitors. As many of you may have heard, Milton, one of the last-known survivors of the sinking of the SS President Coolidge, passed away peacefully earlier this month at his California home.



Milton in 2008 looking out to the site of the wreck of the SS President Coolidge

Last year, the Museum was able, thanks to Milton's nephew Richard Staley and other family, to record Milton on his wartime experiences. In a long and fascinating interview, Milton took us from the shores of Espiritu Santo to Utah beach on D-Day in Europe.

In the words of Richard Staley, the decorated veteran leaves behind "a large, international legion of friends - who called him their 'rock star' - after several return visits to WWII battlefields and sites from Normandy, France and Belgium to Espiritu Santo.

SOUTH PACIFIC WWII MUSEUM
Inspiring everyday heroes

Air Vanuatu BSP TROPEX EXPORTS LTD Bob Hill

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General Campbell made the presentation to Elwood J Euart Association chairman Bradley Wood and Museum Project Manager Alma Wensi. General Campbell was able to learn first hand about our work and we discovered from him that his wife's grandfather actually served on Espiritu Santo during the war.

Of course we also took the opportunity to make it a memorable time for the General by presenting to him a framed print. The reproduction of a sketch by famous US wartime artist Howard Brodie shows an Australian sergeant major during training of members of the New Hebrides Defence Force in 1943.

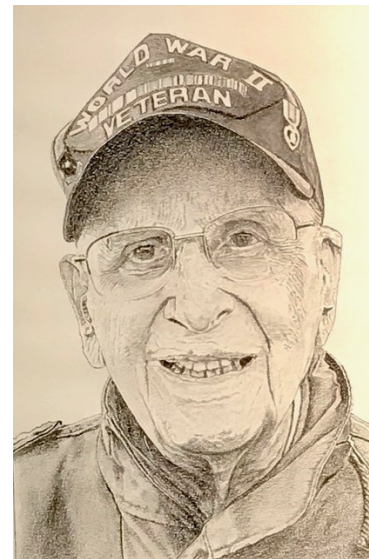
This one image links the three countries together. The New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the United States as the artist and Australia in providing military training and uniforms.

The print was handsomely mounted in a rosewood frame hand-made by Bradley Wood.



"Milt's overseas visits were his avenue to numerous new friendships and resulted in a huge following on social media such as Facebook.

He also gave back generously to fellow veterans and befriended younger veterans coping with post service issues."



After the war he returned to Minnesota and married his high school sweetheart, Doris ("Dorie"), who died in 1998 at age 77. They moved to California in 1950 and ran two successful businesses.

Milton is survived by three grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

The interview with Milton was and is an invaluable recording, and we at the Museum have created a shorter version. It is playing as part of our mini museum videos, and is also available on our website, at <https://southpacificwwiimuseum.com/hps-milt/>

This month's edition of 'The Santonian' newsletter for Museum members reproduces an Island Life magazine article written by the Museum team, based on Milton's interview. It also includes parts of the interview that didn't make the final version.

Milton's a perfect example of how our museum's existence can preserve knowledge for future generations, and we thank again him and his family for this gift.

Milton and nephew Richard Staley welcomed in 2008 at Espiritu Santo's Pekoa International Airport, known as Bomber 02 during ww2.



So who was Howard Brodie?

The image of a New Hebrides Defence Force sergeant major that we reproduced is held in the US Library of Congress. The original is clearly done on a sheet from a reporter's notebook. That's what Howard Brodie was' a frontline capturer of images during wartime.



Original print presented by the museum to General Campbell

When war began, Brodie enlisted in the Army. He became one of Yank magazine's best-known artists during the war. He sketched everything from Guadalcanal to the Battle of the Bulge and was famous for his attention to detail.



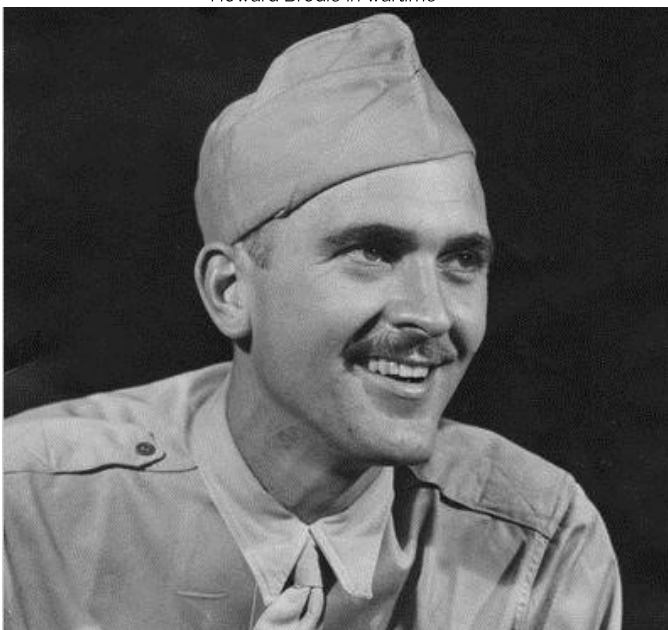
One of Howard's sketches from Guadalcanal

He put himself in combat situations many times and, while he never carried a weapon, worked as a medic when needed. He received the Bronze Star for valour.

After the war he became a sketch artist in courtrooms and was present at some amazing cases, such as the trial of Charles Manson, and of Jack Ruby, as well as the Watergate hearings.

He also continued to sketch from combat zones and went to Korea, French Indochina, and Vietnam.

Howard Brodie in wartime



A Japanese visit



Captain Hiroshi Yamanaka (2nd from left) at our project office with board member Mayumi Green (2nd from right), chairman Brad Wood (far left), and manager Alma Wensi (1st from right)

We were pleased last month to welcome our first Japanese diplomatic visitor to our museum project office.

Second Secretary Hiroshi Yamanaka was being hosted on a visit to Espiritu Santo by our very own board member, Mayumi Green.

Mr Yamanaka is based at the Embassy of Japan in Fiji. He is a Captain in the Japanese Air Self Defence Force.

Japan has a strong interest in Vanuatu, through its agency JICA and at a government level, and there are a number of young Japanese volunteers on Espiritu Santo.

We thank Captain Yamanaka for his visit, and look forward to further engagement with the Government of Japan concerning the museum project.

The Santonian is out

The fourth issue of our added-value for members of the Museum is now published.

As mentioned earlier, it features more of the story of Milton Staley, a very comprehensive guide to some of the great museums of the world that touch on the story of the Second World War, and a puzzle about a Japanese bayonet found on a nearby island.

If you'd like to become a member to financially support our project, and receive 'The Santonian' please see this link:

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

This month in military history



Rendez vous at Espiritu Santo

A picture says a thousand words, although we have no idea exactly what Admiral Chester Nimitz (left) and Admiral William Halsey are discussing.

The meeting between the two famous commanders occurred on the seaplane tender USS Curtiss (AV-4) right here at Espiritu Santo.

Its January 20th 1943, and it's not hard to see from the body language that there are serious matters afoot.

A second photo of the same scene shows Admiral Nimitz jabbing a finger at Admiral Halsey, who does not look that impressed.

At this time, although the Allies do not yet quiet realize it, they have decisively won the Battle of Guadalcanal, with the Japanese beginning to withdraw from the island.



Inspiring Everyday Heroes

Our inspiring Everyday Heroes this month are eleven young Vanuatu people who are literally taking to the oceans.

They're now in Japan to participate in the 31st Ship for World Youth programme.

The programme is an annual event funded by the Japanese Government for young people around the world.

Participants look at how education can make a more peaceful world, global health and citizenship, information and media, and youth diplomacy.

It's the fourth time Vanuatu has participated.

The programme starts in Japan where the training will commence and from there the young people will board the Ship for World to travel to Australia via Palau and Solomon Islands.

While on board there will be other programmes, and each country will also do cultural performances and presentation of country statements.

The youth delegates will return in March.



Ready for the world, 11 youth off to Japan, pictured with family and friends in front of a ww2 aircraft engine part on display at Bauerfield, Port Vila (Picture courtesy of the 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.

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"Inspiring everyday heroes"



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