

FOOTSTEPS OF MY FATHER
ANDREW JEFFERSON SHOEMAKER JR.

Presented 11 November 2024

Mark Shoemaker

Hermosa Beach Museum Board Member

AGENDA

- A.J. Shoemaker Jr. before WWII
- First Pacific Tour – Battle of Tarawa
- Second Pacific Tour – Okinawa Kamikazes
- Footsteps of My Father
- Rising & Warming Sea Level

A.J. JR. CHILDHOOD

- Born 17 June 1918 in West Louisville, Kentucky
  - Eldest of ”Tribe 2” – 5 Children born from 1918-25
    - “Tribe 1” had 11 born from 1881-98 – 4 died young
  - A.J. Sr. was a Farmer and Bank President
- Active in the Future Farmers of America
- Left home during the Depression in the late 1930’s
  - Worked on a farm in Iowa





UNITED STATES NAVY

- A.J. enlisted on 8 April 1941
- Pearl Harbor attack – 7 December 1941
- Doolittle Raid on Tokyo – April 1942
  - Carrier launched North American Aviation B-25's
  - Built by South Bay workers
- Based at Camp Pendleton for Medical training
  - Pharmacist Mate Second Class USMC
- Bound for the Pacific – August 1943





- A.J.'s brother Hubert (not shown) enlisted in the U.S. Army, and served in Europe
- Both were overseas when A.J. Sr. died 17 April 1945



In Navy

Andrew J. Shoemaker, Jr., above, has been transferred to the U. S. Navy Hospital school, San Diego, Calif. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Shoemaker, of St. Joseph, Ky.

TUVALU / ELLICE ISLANDS

- 9 small coral atolls – infrequent contact with foreigners from 1568-1861
- Christianity arrived in 1861
- Peruvian Blackbirds" - 1862-3
  - Decimated the population
  - 2/3 of population were taken into slavery





SUSTAINABLE TUVALU BEFORE WWII

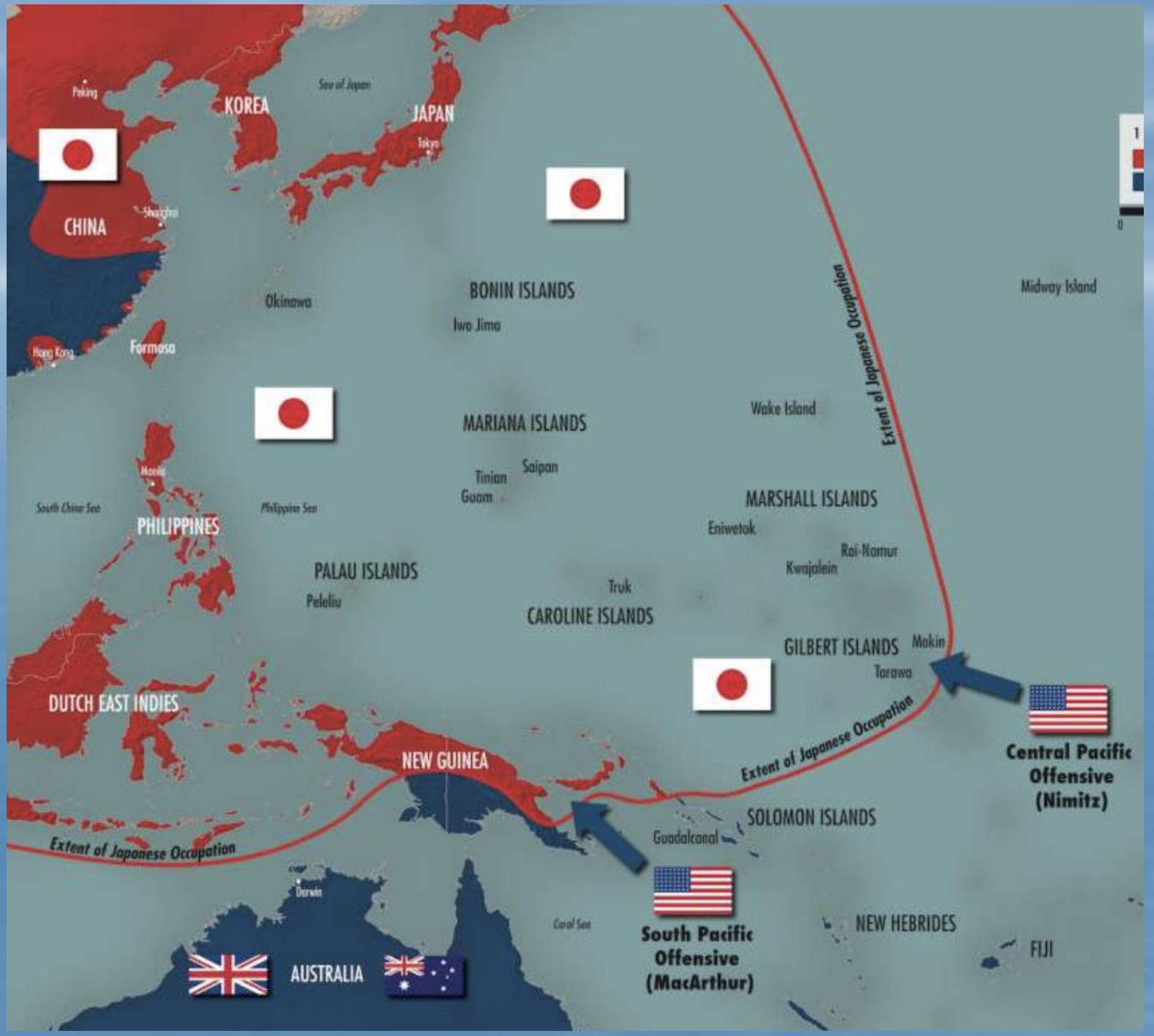
- Living from the sea and land
  - Men fished from outrigger canoes
  - Papaya, banana, breadfruit and coconuts
- Taro (poi), main source for carbohydrates
  - Pulakas carved out of the coral for centuries
    - Filled with composted soil





OPERATION GALVANIC

- Ellice Islands strategic importance
  - Push Japanese out of the Pacific
- Staging ground for Battle of Tarawa
- Seabees in Funafuti - October 1942
  - Built a 5000’ runway
    - 70% of Pulakas destroyed
    - Adversely affects Tuvalu
- 40-bed Hospital is built





LOUIS ZAMPERINI

- Born in 1917, raised in Torrance California
  - Ran in 1936 “Hitler” Olympics
- Enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force - September 1941
- Posted to the Pacific island of Funafuti – April 1943
- Bombardier on B-24D Liberator “Super Man”
  - Bombed Nauru - 18 April 1943
  - 3 Japanese Zeroes attacked “Super Man’
  - Severely damaged – 594 bullet & fragment holes
  - Skidded to a stop at Funafuti with a flat tire
- Torrance Airport is name “Zamperini Field”



DESTROYED & REBUILT

- Japanese attacked Funafuti - April 1943
- US military told islanders to evacuate this church that was destroyed

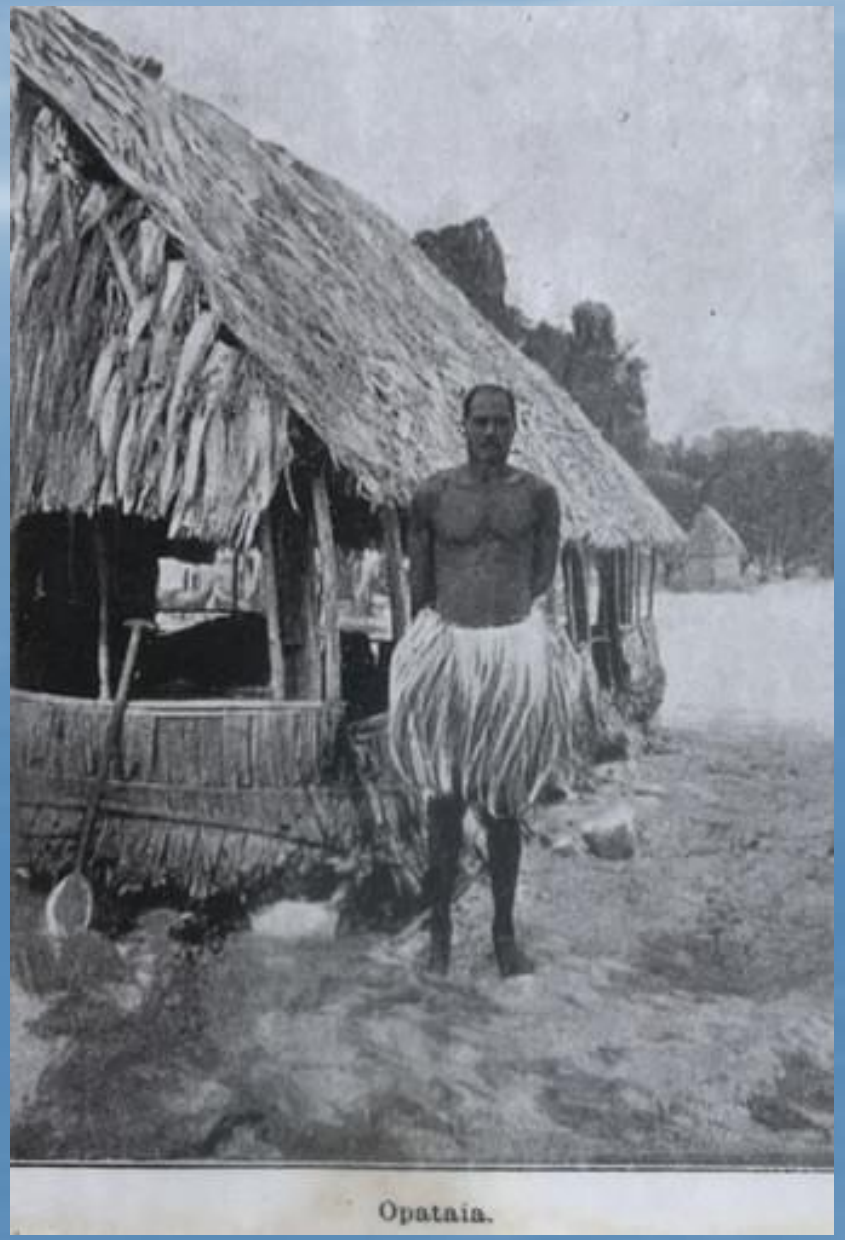




SIAOSI FINIKI (OLDEST PERSON IN FUNAFUTI) & HIS FATHER

Both survived the Funafuti Church aerial bombing





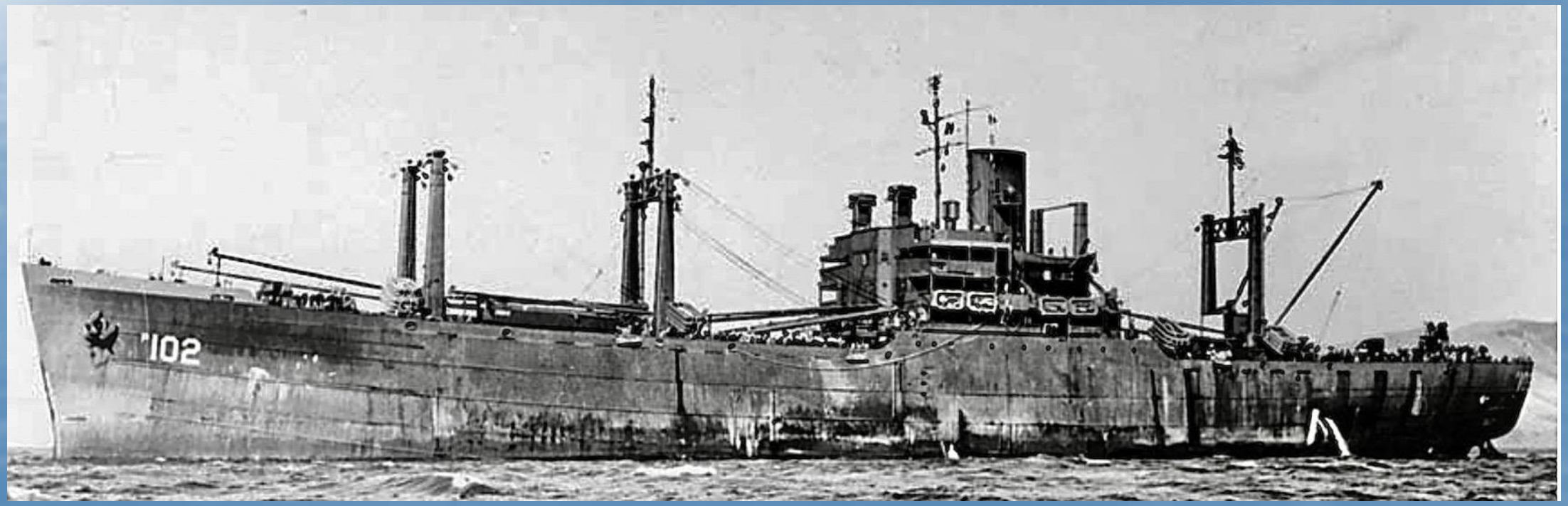
FINIKI FAMILY FOTO

Europeans married indigenous people



A.J. INTO THE PACIFIC

- Departs Port Hueneme, CA, on transport ship AP-102 La Salle
  - Arrives in Pago Pago, Samoa August 1943
- Seabees occupy Nanumea, Tuvala and build a 7,000 foot Bomber runway in September 1943
  - Japanese aerial attack Nanumea & Funafuti
  - U.S aerial bomb Tarawa & Abemama
- A.J. arrives in Funafuti and a week later departs to Nanumea in October 1943
  - 7 weeks before the Battle of Tarawa



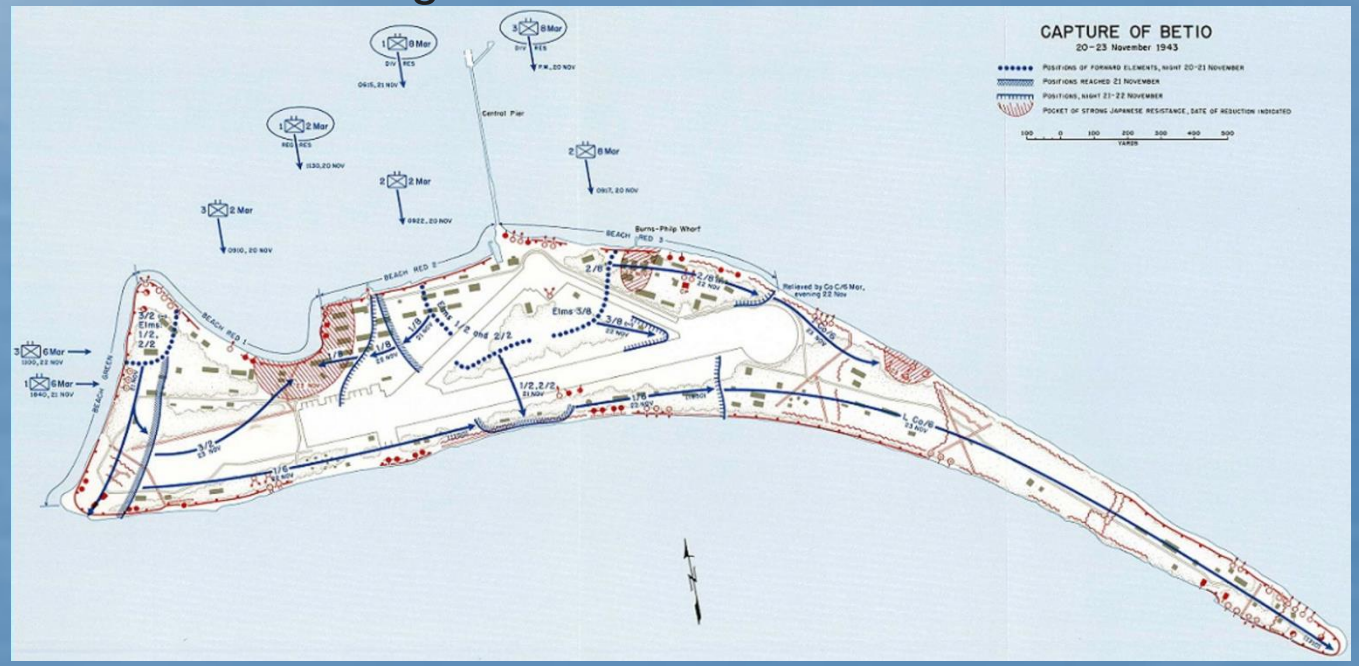
NANUMEA ATTACKS

- 12 Japanese bombers attack Nanumea -11 November 1943
  - One U.S. B-24 is destroyed
- U.S. starts widespread bombing from Funafuti and Nanumea
  - B-24 crash lands at Nanumea - 17 November 1943



BATTLE OF TARAWA - 20-23 NOVEMBER 1943

- 1-square mile island called Betio - about the size of Central Park
- Poor intelligence
  - U.S. Naval and aerial bombardments did not disable well entrenched Japanese as planned
- Disastrous untried amphibious landing
  - Did not wait for high tides - landing boats got stuck on the reefs 700 yards from shore
    - Marines had to walk/swim to the beach under machine gun fire
    - U.S. 1115 killed, 2292 wounded
- Japanese were eventually attacked with flame throwers and grenades
  - Of the 3,636 Japanese, only one officer and sixteen enlisted men survived – many suicides
  - Of the 1,200 Korean laborers brought to Tarawa to construct the defenses, only 129 survived


CAPTURE OF BETIO
20–23 November 1943
Central Pier
BEACH RED 2
BEACH RED 1
BEACH GREEN
Burns-Philp Wharf
RED 3
Elms 3/8
Elms 1/2, 2/2
1/2, 2/2, 21 NOV
Relieved by Co C/15 Mar, evening 22 Nov
L Co/8
23 NOV
1/8
3/8
2/8
1/2
2/2
1/6
3/2
1/10
1/15
2/10
2/18
3/18
3/10
3/6
3/23
1/23
2/23
1/18
2/6
3/6
1/6
2/15
3/15
1/2, 2/2, 21 NOV
1/8, 2/2
1/8, 2/2, 3/8
1/8, 2/2, 3/8, 1/6
1/8, 2/2, 3/8, 1/6, 2/6
1/8, 2/2, 3/8, 1/6, 2/6, 3/6
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MORE HUMAN LIFE PER SQUARE YARD THAN ANY OTHER ENGAGEMENT IN U.S.M.C. HISTORY

AFTER TARAWA

- A.J. tended wounded at the Nanumea Field Hospital



- A.J. departs Nanumea to U.S, Naval Hospital at Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii - August 1944
  - Goes to Guadalcanal in November 1944
  - Returns stateside to San Francisco – 15 January 1945
    - Travels home to Kentucky to see Mom and family

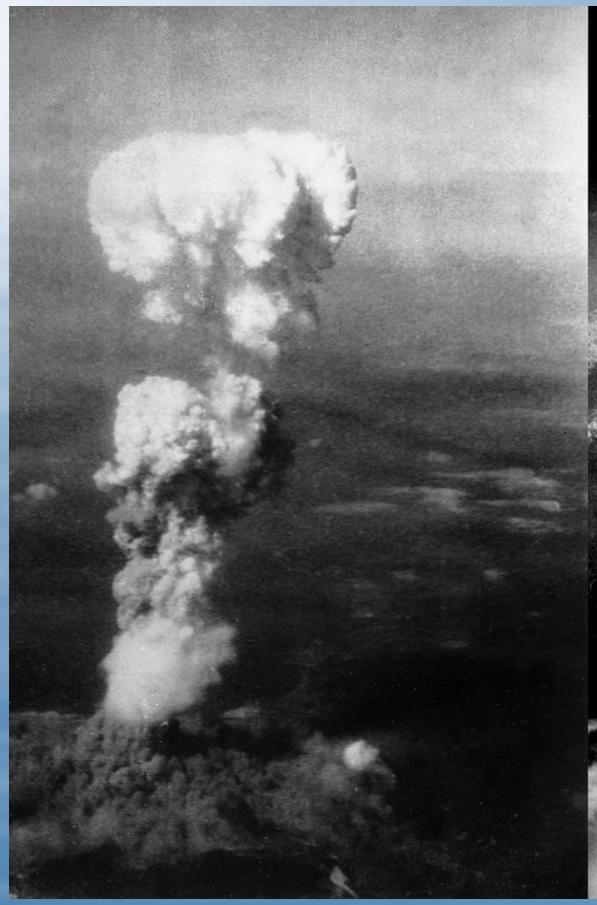
2ND PACIFIC TOUR

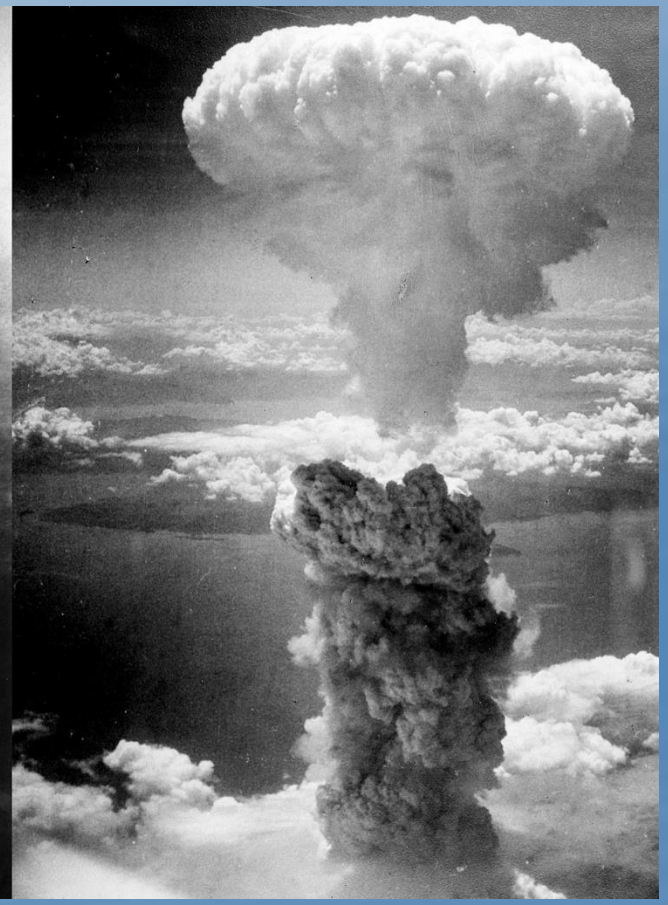
- Departs to the Philippines – 20 March 1945
  - Joins the Fletcher Class Destroyer DD-570 USS Chares Ausburne – 30 April 1945
  - Departs the Philippines to Okinawa – 13 May 1945
    - Survives four Kamikaze attacks
- Approximately 2,800 Kamikaze attackers sank 34 Navy ships, damaged 368 others, killed 4,900 sailors, and wounded over 4,800



WWII ENDS

- Okinawa is captured – 22 June 1945
- Atomic bombs are dropped
  - Hiroshima - 6 August 1945
  - Nagasaki - 9 August 1945
- Japanese unconditional surrender – 10 August 1945







PEACETIME & COMMENDATION

- Okinawa to Honolulu – 10 September 1945
  - Free beer!! – 20 September 1945
- To Washington D.C. – 25 September 1945
- Panama Canal – 8 October 1945
- Up the Potomac to D.C. – 17 October 1945

U.S.S. CHARLES AUSBURNE (DD570)

WAR DIARY

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

10-19 September 1945 (con'd)

Underway in company with Task Force 11, consisting of BatDiv. 3 BatDiv. 6 less WASHINGTON; MONTEREY, BATAAN, DesRon 23 less BRAIN, THATCHER, and YOUNG and DesRon 25 less HARRISON enroute Pearl Harbor, T.H.--estimated destination East Coast U.S. (CHARLES AUSBURNE received message from CTF 11 stating that we would probably be routed to Washington, D.C.) CTF 11 was Com First CarTask Force (Vice Admiral SHERMAN) in U.S.S. NEW MEXICO, ComScreen, ComDesRon 25 in U.S.S. JOHN RODGERS. The AUSBURNE, plus eighty passengers, was finely on its way home.

The voyage was uneventful but pleasant. Fair weather allowed topside movies to become a nightly event--a new underway experience for most of the crew. Prints were freely exchanged between ships. The crew did a fine job of turning to, and by the time we arrived at Pearl Harbor the CHARLES AUSBURNE was well on its way to becoming a "peacetime ship".

20 September 1945. Zone Time in Use / 9½

0800	1200	2000
20 53 00 North	19 59 00 North	21 23 00 North
159 01 00 East	157 56 00 West	157 59 00 West

Arrived Pearl Harbor in the afternoon and moored in Middle Loch. SOPA remained CTF 11 (Vice Admiral SHERMAN), who shifted his Flag to U.S.S. ENTERPRISE, ComDesRon 25 (Captain LUDEWIG) retained command of Destroyers in the force.

Although liberty that night had not been contemplated, ComDesPac was accomodating and sent out liberty boats soon after we arrived. There was free beer for the men at the recreation center and free chit books for the officers at the club. In short, our first taste of Pearl after one absence was a pleasant one.

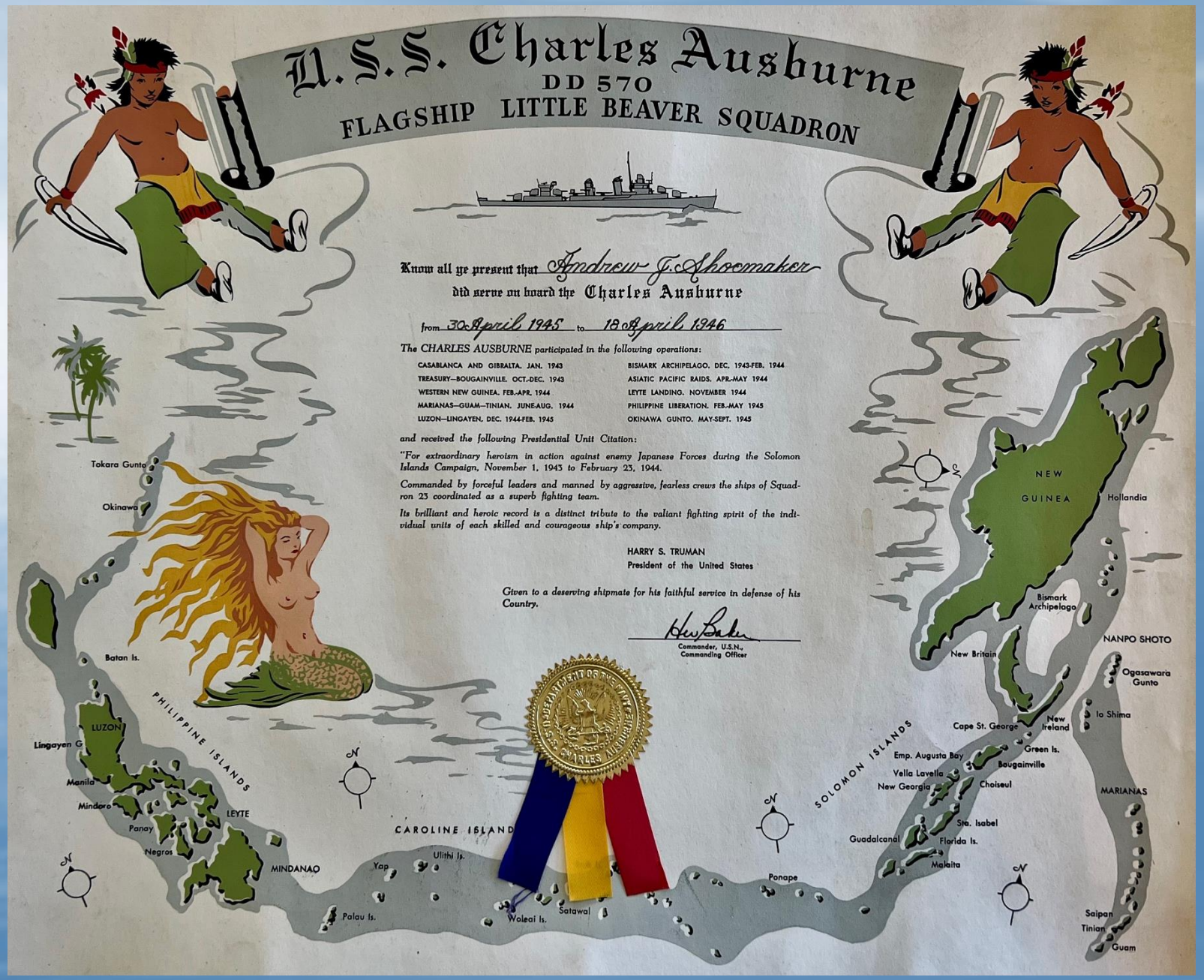
PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION CEREMONY 19 OCTOBER 1945





Admiral “31-Knot” Burke
Former Captain of DD570
Chief of Naval Operations

James Forrestal
Secretary of the Navy



Know all ye present that Andrew J. Shoemaker
did serve on board the Charles Ausburne

from 30 April 1945 to 18 April 1946

The CHARLES AUSBURNE participated in the following operations:

CASABLANCA AND GIBRALTA. JAN. 1943	BISMARK ARCHIPELAGO. DEC. 1943-FEB. 1944
TREASURY—BOUGAINVILLE. OCT.-DEC. 1943	ASIATIC PACIFIC RAIDS. APR.-MAY 1944
WESTERN NEW GUINEA. FEB.-APR. 1944	LEYTE LANDING. NOVEMBER 1944
MARIANAS—GUAM—TINIAN. JUNE-AUG. 1944	PHILIPPINE LIBERATION. FEB.-MAY 1945
LUZON—LINGAYEN. DEC. 1944-FEB. 1945	OKINAWA GUNTO. MAY-SEPT. 1945

and received the following Presidential Unit Citation:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy Japanese Forces during the Solomon Islands Campaign, November 1, 1943 to February 23, 1944.

Commanded by forceful leaders and manned by aggressive, fearless crews the ships of Squadron 23 coordinated as a superb fighting team.

Its brilliant and heroic record is a distinct tribute to the valiant fighting spirit of the individual units of each skilled and courageous ship's company.

HARRY S. TRUMAN
President of the United States

Given to a deserving shipmate for his faithful service in defense of his Country.

Commander, U.S.N.,
Commanding Officer

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION



POST WWII

- Married Theresa Gertrude Sallot – 22 December 1945
  - Honeymoon in New York City – New Years Day
- Decommissioned ships in Charleston through 1946
- Graduated from Loyola University & built a house in El Segundo in 1948





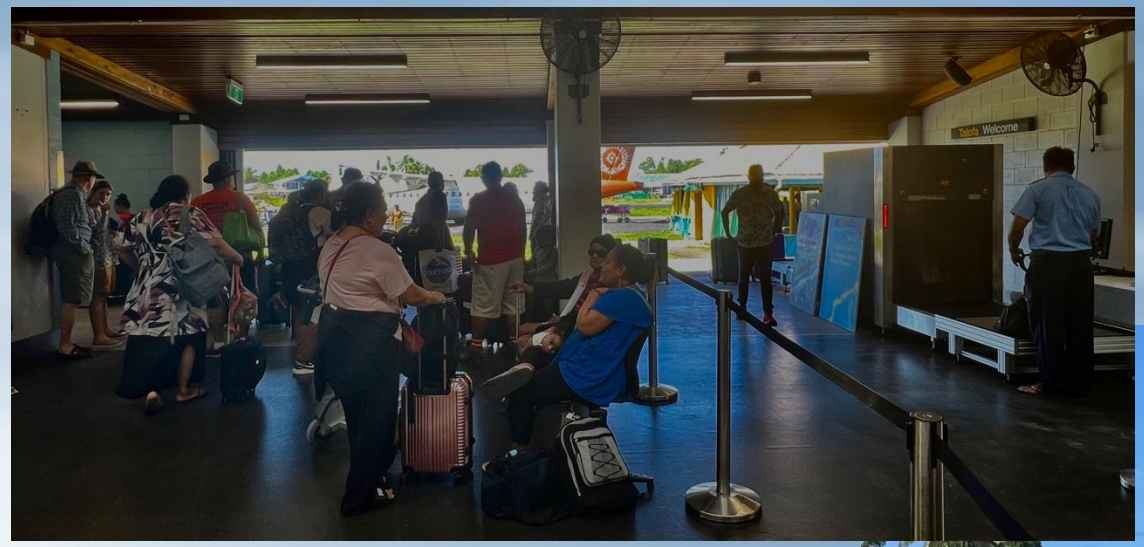
FOOTSTEPS OF MY FATHER

RETURN TO TUVALU

- The Plan – Explore for War Remnants & Snorkel
  - Nonstop LAX to Nadi, Fiji > Suva, Fiji > Funafuti, Tuvalu (three flights a week)
  - Try to get ticket on a Cargo Ship to Nanumea
- Upon arrival
  - No advanced hotel reservations
  - No confirmed cargo ship schedule
  - No money exchange except for cash – no credit cards or electronic payments
  - No fresh fruit or vegetables

FUNAFUTI WWII REMNANTS

WWII RUNWAY IS NOW COMMERCIAL









“BORROW PIT”

Land was used for the runway surface; the pit is now the island dump



155MM ANTIAIRCRAFT GUN EMPLACEMENT



- Sea level is rising
- Beach sand base is gone
- Now subject to the tides





SECRET RADIO COMMUNICATION SITE



Outer islet of Tepuka

Quonset Hut hidden in jungle







CEMENT LOADING RAMP DISAPPEARING

- Outer islet of Fualafeke
- Sea level rising – beach eroding







CARGO SHIP TRAVEL TO NANUMEA WWII REMNANTS











CARGO SHIP TRAVEL

- Funafuti > Nanumea > Naunumanga – 5 days
- Nice people - sleeping on deck
- Basic food
- No AC

LANDING SHIP TANK LST-203

- Built by Chicago Bridge & Iron
  - Commissioned 22 April 1943
- Grounded on the reef delivering supplies
  - 2 October 1943

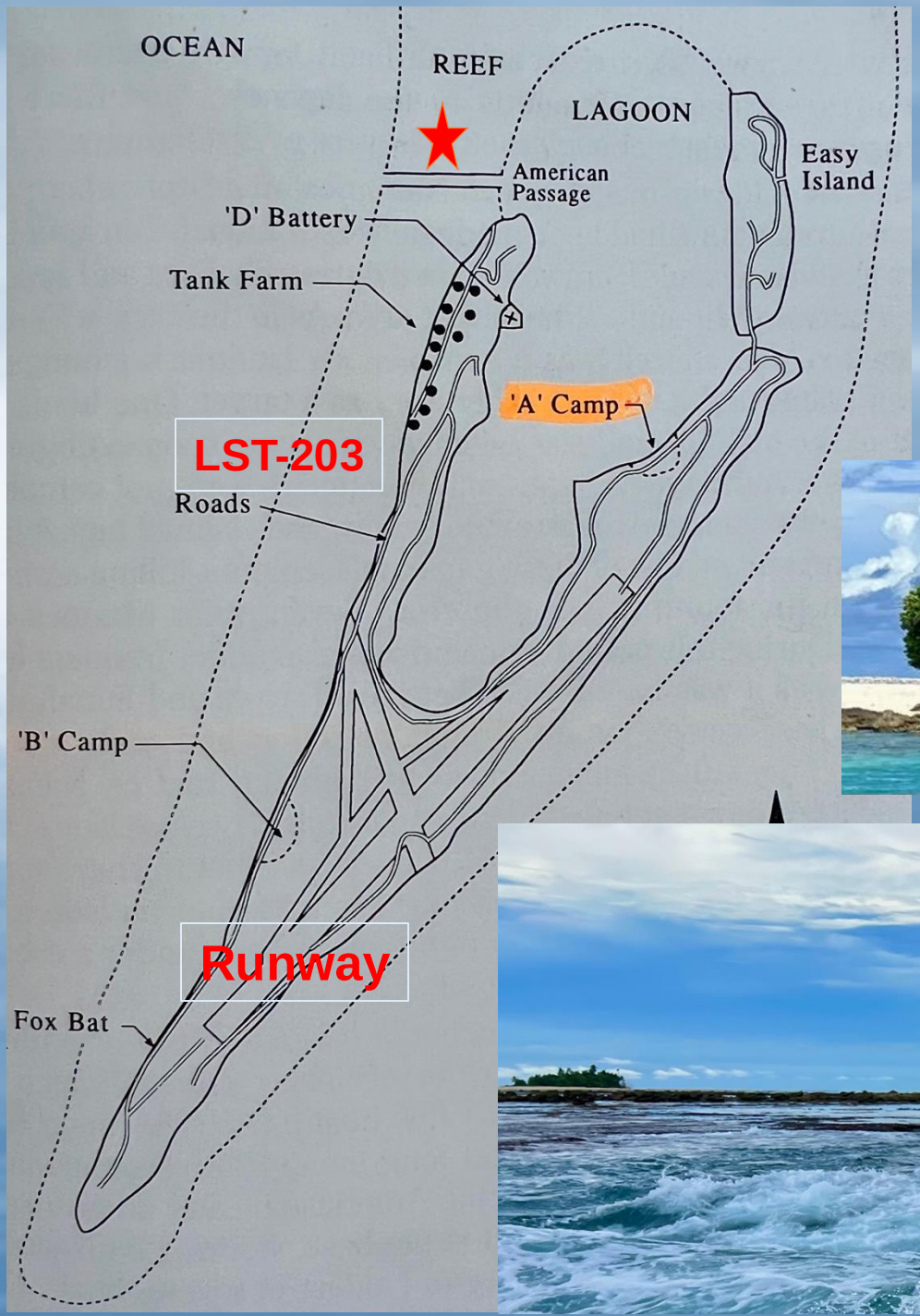






AMERICAN PASSAGE

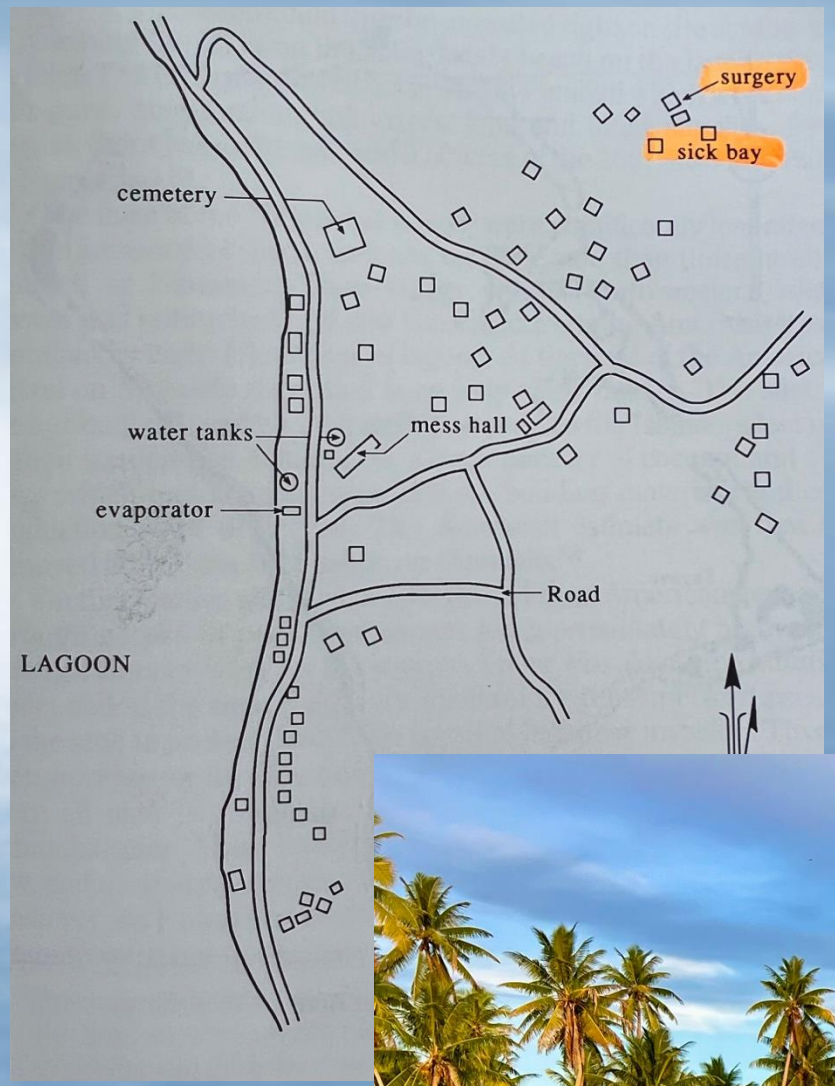
- Coral was dynamited to create a ship passage
  - Aided by skilled local divers
- Entry to a calm lagoon for U.S. ships







A.J. FIELD HOSPITAL LOCATION







SCOUT BOMBER DOUGLAS SBD-5

- Built by Douglas Aircraft in El Segundo - 23 September 1943
- Wheel up crash landing - 7 November 1943







BOMBER B-24J LIBERATOR “RAUNCHY”

- Built by Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego – 1943
- Crashed at night in strong winds – 19 November 1943







CARGO SHIP TRAVEL TO NAUNUMANGA



TRADITIONAL BURE

- The only one I saw in two weeks



WATER WARMING
RISING SEA LEVEL

DEAD CORAL

- Warm water has killed the coral
  - Brown “turf algae” covers coral skeletons
  - Fish population has been decimated
  - Native fishing almost nonexistent
- Only snorkeled twice in two weeks





FRESH WATER DEPLETION

- Rising seal level has tainted fresh water supplies
  - Wells are no longer usable
- All homes have to collect rainwater





AGRICULTURE DESTRUCTION

- Saltwater intrusion into roots has depleted fruit and vegetable production
  - Coconuts, papaya, banana, taro, and vegetables
  - Natives are primarily dependent on International Aid for food supplies
- International Aid helps provide limited vegetable production



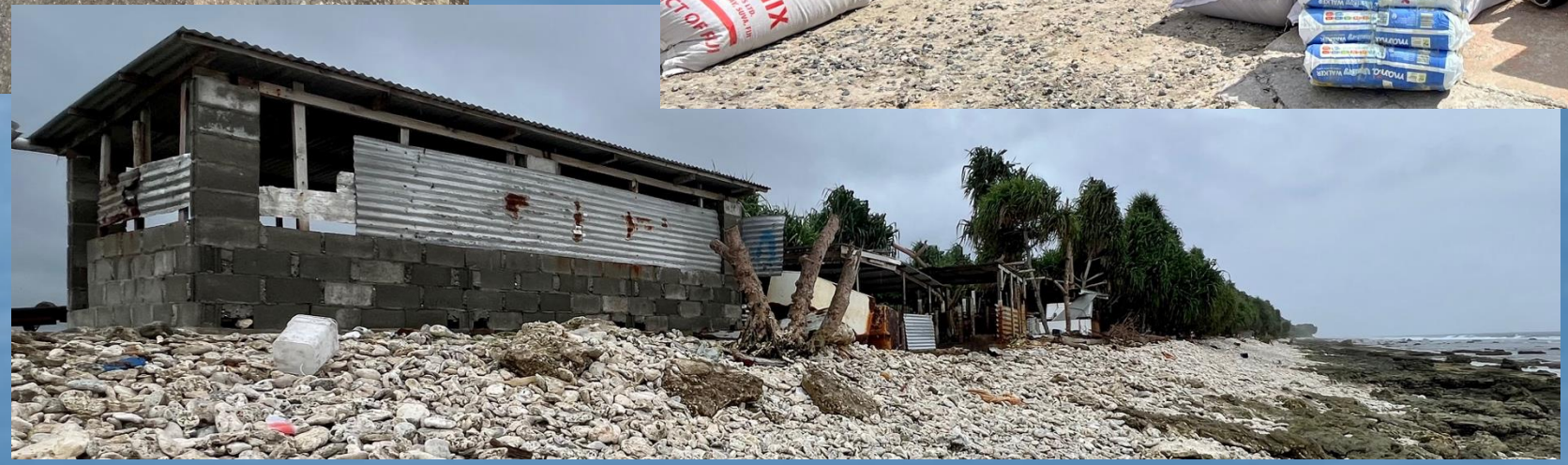
Distressed Taro Pulaka



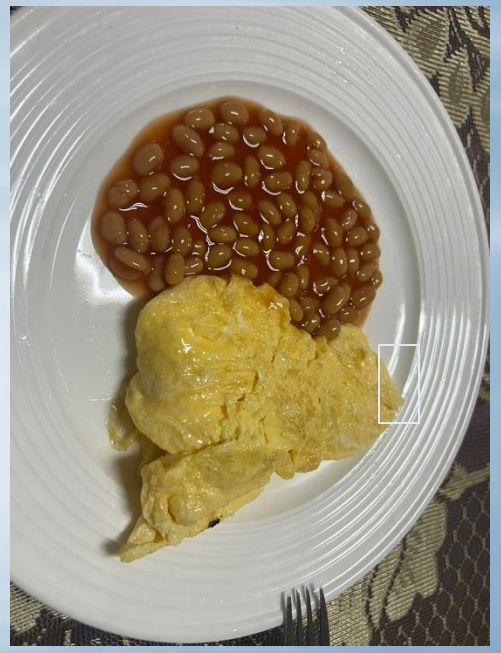
MILL MIX – REPLACES COCONUT & FOOD SCRAPS FOR PIG FOOD







RICE, MEAT & CANED FOOD DIET













BUILDING BARRIERS & LAND

- International Aid trying to keep the islands livable





TRADITIONS ARE AGING OUT







TUVALU FUTURE

- In Country
  - Sustainability declining as temperature and sea levels rise
  - Increasing dependence on International Aid > Food and Sea Barriers
  - Open immigration to New Zealand and Australia
    - Loss of skilled labor: medical profession, teaching, and other professional ranks
    - Population decline: 2017 = 10,869; 2024 = 9,646
- Abroad
  - 4653 Tuvaluan’s live in New Zealand
    - Keeping the culture alive and vibrant





ON THIS VETERANS DAY
LET THE PAST & PRESENT
NOT BE FORGOTTEN

US military bases in Northeast Asia



JAPAN

120 BASES

53,713 TROOPS

KOREA (ROK)

70 BASES **26,414** TROOPS

US Pivot to Asia

A US foreign policy in 2011, is meant to counter China's rapidly-growing influence in the region.

80,100 TROOPS

Estimated number of US military service members that are deployed in Japan and Republic of Korea. It's nearly half out of 173,000 total troops deployed around the world.

Presence of the US military in the Philippine territories



EDCA site map

2016 Agreed locations for the American troops upon implementation

- Antonio Bautista Air Base (Palawan)
- Basa Air Base (Pampanga)
- Benito Ebuen Air Base (Cebu)
- Fort Magsaysay (Nueva Ecija)
- Lumbia Airport (Cagayan de Oro)

2023 Announced four new EDCA sites under Marcos Jr. administration

- Balabac Island (Palawan)
- Camp Melchor Dela Cruz (Gamu, Isabela)
- Lal-lo Airport (Lal-lo, Cagayan)
- Naval Base Camilo Osias (Santa Ana, Cagayan)



US military in the Pacific



GUAM

56 BASES

6,140 TROOPS

NUCLEAR TESTING SITE

MARSHALL ISLANDS

used as a nuclear testing site by the US from 1946 to 1958.



Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC)

a biennial naval warfare exercise—recorded as the largest in its history—can be considered the US' "show of force" in the subregion.

Half of the 170,000 U.S. Troops abroad are in this region

THANK YOU VETERANS