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Pacific
Theater

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The Pacific Theater

*Island Representations of
World War II*

Edited by
GEOFFREY M. WHITE
and
LAMONT LINDSTROM

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Editor's Note

BY AROUND the turn of the century, the Pacific Islands had been divided among several colonial powers, and the colonization of the region had been completed. With the exception of the interiors of the largest Melanesian islands and some small and remote islands and atolls, missionaries had penetrated most of the region, and traders had long been established almost everywhere.

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, the Pacific was a peaceful and quiet backwater far removed from the mainstream of world events. Communication with the metropolitan capitals was slow, infrequent, and mostly by ship. Colonial administrators, planters, and traders often lived in artificial worlds that were poor imitations of the domestic routines and social arrangements of their homelands.

The Europeans in the Pacific were convinced of their own superiority and their right to rule and convert the heathen. They also suffered certain illusions as to what the future would bring. The post-European decline in indigenous populations had ceased, and a slow but steady regeneration of island populations had begun during the first three decades of the twentieth century. By and large, this trend had gone unnoticed, and Europeans had the notion that Islanders were dying out and the Pacific was to become a white man's lake. During the 1930s, the influential R. W. Robson, founder and editor of *Pacific Islands Monthly*, called for the formation of a regional association to serve the commercial interests of Europeans and prepare the way for larger white settlements.

World War II shattered both the peace in the islands and the pre-

vailing colonial mindset. The inability of the colonial authorities to halt the advance of the Japanese forces caused Islanders to question the power and status of their European rulers. At the same time, Islanders observed the great power and wealth of the American military forces, together with the egalitarian behavior of American enlisted men toward themselves. They questioned the former colonial order and its social inequities. For many Islanders, involvement in the war took them far away from their home communities, expanding their opportunities for new experiences and giving them a larger perspective on at least their own island world. The Pacific could never be the same again. This volume examines the experiences of Pacific Islanders in the war and their remembrances of it—as observers, as laborers, on patrol, and sometimes under bombardment. As the different chapters indicate, the worldview and conceptions of self of many Pacific Islanders were altered forever.

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ROBERT C. KISTE

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Preface

WORLD WAR II has not been a traditional topic of research among anthropologists. This may be because the experience seems “too near”—both too recent and too much of our own making as Americans, Japanese, or members of the other metropolitan societies that waged the war. Yet almost anyone who has carried out anthropological work in the Pacific Islands in the last forty years has encountered the war’s legacy of stories and songs. It was thus not surprising that our suggestion of a war ethnohistory session at the annual meeting of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) met with an enthusiastic response. Even though few scholars had focused their research on war experiences, many indicated that they had gathered relevant materials in the course of other ethnographic work in the Pacific.

An ASAO Working Session was organized under the same title as this volume for the 1985 annual meeting held in Salem, Massachusetts. In addition to the authors represented here, that session also benefited from contributions by Judith Fitzpatrick (Torres Straits) and Wari Iamo (Keakalo, Papua New Guinea). The ASAO format of comparative discussion proved to be an effective way of pursuing the cultural significance of the war in various regions, and participants at the Working Session decided to revise their papers for a formal symposium the following year. The formal symposium, held at the 1986 ASAO meeting in New Harmony, Indiana, profited greatly from remarks added by Lawrence Fo‘ana‘ota, Eugene Ogan, and James Watson and from commentary by William Davenport, acting as discussant.

A number of photographs from the Pacific War have been selected from official archives and personal collections and distributed through the book. Some of the photographs portray people or events discussed specifically in a chapter; others relate more indirectly to the text, but they provide a valuable pictorial supplement insofar as they portray occurrences elsewhere in the Pacific theater that parallel events described here.

Our work on the comparative anthropology of the Pacific War is part of a larger project carried out at the Institute of Culture and Communication of the East-West Center. We are grateful to the former institute director, Mary Bitterman, and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for their support of that project. The present volume has benefited from contacts and discussions with a broad range of people under the rubric of the Center project. We would like especially to thank Hugh Laracy, Hank Nelson, and John Waiko for their historians' advice and perspectives. The National Archives of the Solomon Islands and the U.S. Naval Historical Center have been most helpful in providing relevant documents. We would like to give special thanks to Ismael Isikel and Vasiti Donita Simmons for their careful work on the index for this volume, and Joan Larcom for suggesting its title. We also take pleasure in acknowledging extensive assistance with manuscript preparation from Edith Yashiki, Louise Ishibashi, Wesley Oasa, and Michael E. Macmillan.

GEOFFREY M. WHITE
LAMONT LINDSTROM

PART I

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

War Stories

LAMONT LINDSTROM
AND GEOFFREY M. WHITE

CONVERSATIONS with older men and women on many Pacific Islands not uncommonly call forth memories of how things were during the war. Whether it's called *bata eo*, *daidowa*, *sahaya kana tuta*, or *taemfaet*, World War II has sedimented into an intense—if narrow—band in the stratigraphy of social and individual histories. Sometimes exciting, sometimes tragic, wartime events made vivid and enduring impressions.

The war is still the gist of good talk today. Many personal recollections dating from the war have frozen into narrative accounts. Formalized by frequent retellings, these war stories compose a historical archive. They store local experience and interpretation about the events and consequences of the war. The postwar generation has acquired an understanding of wartime events, unparalleled since, through the war stories of its elders. This historical knowledge repository also includes war songs—both local and exotic. For example, sitting in a village clearing on certain islands, one may be taken aback to hear older men and women burst into “God Bless America” or Japanese anthems from the 1940s.

This book presents a collection of studies of the sociocultural effects and meanings of World War II in the Pacific Islands. While the military history of the Pacific War is thoroughly documented, the experiences of Islanders who were profoundly affected by their encounters with thousands of troops and tons of war equipment have been largely overlooked. It is these experiences and their consequences that the contributors to this volume have been concerned to document. We base our analyses on anthropological fieldwork that

tapped into a recent but nonetheless rich oral tradition: the conflux of war stories and songs that continue to circulate about the Pacific today. Our purpose is twofold: to examine the significance of wartime experiences within the framework of island cultures and to examine island cultures within the frameworks imposed by the war. Like briefer moments of crisis, the war presented many societies with an extended period of novelty and disruption that evoked, challenged, and sometimes transformed basic social and cultural structures. The contributors to this volume are interested in the war because it interests Islanders, remaining a topic of conversational and even ceremonial attention forty years later.

World War II was a watershed event in the history of the Pacific region (Oliver 1961; Grattan 1963). These islands witnessed some of the most prolonged and ferocious fighting. To wage their military campaigns, the Allies and the Japanese poured hundreds of thousands of troops and millions of tons of materiel into islands once isolated on the colonial fringe. A sudden confrontation with the military power and economic resources of America and Japan left deep and enduring marks on postwar history and culture. In many areas, intense wartime experiences and cross-cultural interactions have been linked to subsequent struggles for increased autonomy, power, and wealth—struggles to redefine economic and political relations with ruling colonial authorities (see, e.g., Worsley 1968).

In addition to first encounters with new goods and technologies, the war occasioned first encounters with new kinds of people—especially with Americans and Japanese. Islanders' previous experience with outsiders had been limited, in general, to interactions with planters (e.g., Corris 1973; Bennett 1987), traders, missionaries, and government officers. During the war, instead of routinized, regimented, and hierarchical interactions with plantation managers and colonial agents, Islanders encountered exotic military outsiders in a wide variety of roles and situations. Some who had worked in colonial police forces, for example, served as armed scouts and soldiers in island regiments, fighting side-by-side with Americans and Australians (Kais 1974; Ravuvu 1974; Lord 1977; Sesiguo 1977; Nelson 1980a). Others served as Japanese Army auxiliaries (Somare 1975; Higuchi 1986). A far greater number were recruited as carriers or laborers. Thousands of Islanders joined wartime labor corps, rubbed shoulders with military servicemen, and engaged jointly in work and the novel informalities of eating, trading, playing, and worshipping.

The events of the war were not equally distributed. Some islands, such as Peleliu—flashpoints at which the two opposing forces clashed—experienced near total destruction of villages, plantations, and landscape. Other regions, away behind the lines, caught only whispers and echoes of battle. The war's particular effects on people around the Pacific depended on the nature of their prewar accommodations with colonial authorities and their situation vis-à-vis the often rapid movement of the front through the region. In addition, the continuing significance of the war for island societies depends very much on the social and cultural frameworks of understanding brought to bear on making sense (and making history) of often anomalous and unexpected events.

Chapters in this volume describe the war, its consequences, and its stories in a number of societies located in Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Our concentration is on the latter two culture areas, which were affected more seriously by invasion and counterinvasion, although events in behind-the-line areas (such as Samoa and Vanuatu) that were the sites of major Allied bases or the staging points for invasion are also described. (The Philippines, equally important within the Pacific theater, are not included here.)

We are now in a period of World War II anniversaries and remembrances. The fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor is on the horizon. As these dates approach, they bring to mind important questions about the meaning of the war—the “good war” as Studs Terkel (1984), noting the irony, has recently named it—and about the social and cultural consequences of war in general. The problem for us is to discern the Pacific War's effects on contemporary social and international relations by examining its place within the lives of those people it swept up, challenged, and, in some cases, transformed.

In this period of war reanalysis, the erstwhile combatants—the Allies and the Japanese—are rephrasing interpretations of the war in attempts to define its place within their histories more clearly. Reinterpretation never occurs within a political vacuum, as international protests concerning the revision of Japanese high school history textbooks and the visit of an American president to a German war cemetery have proved. Multiple readings of the war sometimes jostle against one another.

It is opportune and useful that the Islanders who both served and suffered the Pacific war effort also find a voice in this recollection and reanalysis. Although ethnographers have commented fre-

quently on the war's events, this commentary has been, in general, ancillary to other research concerns. Military historians writing about the Pacific War, for their part, have ignored wholesale the people living on the islands over which the armies were "hopping." We can augment and enrich reinterpretations of the war by listening to the stories, songs, and personal recollections of some of the thousands of Pacific Islanders who took part in the events of the 1940s. Their stories, too, compose a valuable historical archive.

The chapters that follow, although geographically diverse, find common ground in their concern to document the war's consequences for two areas of prewar village life: challenges, alterations, and even confirmations of local images of "self" and "other" set in motion by encounters with wartime outsiders; and disruptions and transformations of prewar social relations and structures within and beyond the village. These changes in village society were to a large extent precipitated by new relations of exchange and production brought about by the war economy. Islanders on both sides of the battle lines were recruited as fighters and workers. These topics, which span the particularities of the war on the different islands described here, are introduced in turn.

Island Selves and Wartime Others

Alongside the experience of new military means and relations of production, the encounter with military personnel—new sorts of people—had perhaps the most profound transforming effects on conceptions of self and community. Before the war, Pacific Islanders held certain understandings of Europeans, Americans, Japanese, and other outsiders, just as the outside world, for its part, entertained notions of "South Seas natives." The events and encounters of the war had important consequences for these images. Expectations about the other became unsettled. More significantly, as conceptions of the other changed and deepened on both sides, so did understandings of the place of the self in the postwar world.

As colonial powers, the Australians (in New Guinea and Papua), Americans (in Samoa), New Zealanders (in Samoa), British and French (throughout the South Pacific), and the Japanese (in Micronesia) were known to Pacific Islanders. The war, however, changed things in three ways. In place of the relatively small numbers of colonial administrators, settlers, traders, and missionaries, thousands of

ordinary men and women recruited into the several militaries found themselves on islands "somewhere in the South Pacific." These people had less commitment to maintaining prewar relations of inequality between metropolitans and locals; old hands in more than one colony were scandalized and dismayed by what they perceived to be indiscriminate and dangerous mixing between Islanders and military personnel.

Secondly, the Japanese and the Americans, in particular, spilled over prewar borders to inundate large portions of the Pacific basin. Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere extended as far east as the Gilbert (Kiribati) and Solomon Islands. In counterpoint to the Japanese thrust, the Americans reinforced their presence on Samoa and established bases on Tonga, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Vanuatu and eventually pushed northward through the Solomons, New Guinea, and the Philippines and westward from Hawaii through Micronesia.

Finally, these new outsiders were bent on killing one another. Because of this, the tenor of the military's relations to Islanders, its interest in acquiring lands and labor, were part of planning for the short rather than the long term. All of these factors distinguished these new others from those known previously in the region.

Islanders had, of course, cultural understandings they could use in attempting to size up military newcomers and calculate what they were up to. Warfare and raiding were not uncommon in precolonial Pacific societies. For some, the battles of the Pacific War might be seen as grander versions of traditional tribal fighting. Certainly, many Islanders drawn into the war practiced war magic to protect themselves and employed traditional skills of fighting to ambush and attack the enemies of their new allies (chapter 14). For example, the Fijian First Commandos, who distinguished themselves in the fighting in the Solomons, quickly obtained a reputation for bravery, ferocity, and skilled jungle combat. As one American sailor wrote home: "We also have some Fiji Islanders fighting here. . . . they love to cut the Japs up. One Fiji had 40 Jap dog tags which he had taken from the Japs he killed . . ." (Fahey 1963, 46).

Traditional enemies in the Pacific generally were acquainted with each other; often, they might be related by marriage. This was less likely in World War II's Pacific theater. Here were brought together a cast of characters whose knowledge of one another was superficial, based primarily on a number of stereotypic motifs. Many servicemen first experienced the Pacific through the flattest of imagery:

island landscape was fetid, dangerous jungle; Islanders themselves were either amorous maidens or stewpot cannibals. Once in the region, however, servicemen also encountered other representations of Islanders, those of the dominant colonial world. In some cases, American personnel reacted to colonial presumptions. In the view of an American journalist:

Here, "Out East," as the British put it, a European clerk or shop-keeper at home could become, because of the color of his skin, an absolute monarch. His native vassals—and he had swarms of them—were each paid four cents a day. . . . If he was single he hired a mistress by the week. . . . (Manchester n.d., 85, cited in Weeks 1987)

For their part, the British and other long-resident colonials looked askance at American attitudes toward the locals. As one coastwatcher observed,

. . . the blossoming of the varied talents lying dormant in the islanders until the war called them forth was more easily understood by the Coast Watchers and others who had been in the islands for some time than by the Americans, who were inclined to equate them as somewhat intellectually below the Negroes of the United States. (Horton 1975, 146)

Islanders themselves could not avoid knowledge of the prewar images of "savage" and "native," which were the cross-cultural currency of understanding in this world. There is some evidence that Islanders occasionally used these stereotypes to their advantage during the war. In chapter two, White, decoding a war narrative from Santa Isabel, discovers an ironic mixture of humorous self-deprecation and superior cunning. By playing the role of "native," the heroes of the story escape from a dangerous encounter with the Japanese. Here, the image of "savage" is accepted on one level to be denied on another, establishing an ironic counterpoint characteristic of much of the war's oral literature. Falgout also recorded war stories from Pohnpei that celebrate getting the better of Japanese bosses, and she notes how people used songs to encode plans to avoid Japanese treachery (chapter 12). In these narratives, ruling images are rewritten, and purported relations of inequality between self and other inverted. Nero recorded similar tales from Palau (chapter 5). In chapter 10, Thune notes that irony is the primary mode of stories told by Normanby Islanders about the time a small Australian mili-

tary base was established nearby. Anecdotes such as that of an old man boiling an unopened tin of meat, eating the label, and throwing away the "bone" (only to have his children retrieve the can, open it, and consume the contents) point to generational differences within the village that are also related to changes in relations with the outside world.

Something of the content of prewar images of colonial masters and island subjects can be glimpsed in the 1943 publication *You and the Native: Notes for the Guidance of Members of the Forces in their Relations with New Guinea Natives*. This, written by an Australian, was distributed to troops in New Guinea. Alongside practical instructions on what to do if lost in the jungle were exhortations to maintain the colonialist images of self and other when interacting with "natives." Note 14 commanded: "Always therefore maintain your position or pose of superiority, even if you sometimes have doubts about it." Note 22 instructed: "Don't clasp him round the neck. Brotherhood is all right. But don't act like a twin brother. Be very much the big brother." And Note 23, concluding a section called "Conduct Towards Natives in General," prescribed: "Always, without overdoing it, be the master. The time may come when you will want a native to obey you. He won't obey you if you have been in the habit of treating him as an equal."

These notes attempted to initiate thousands of newcomers to the Pacific into the niceties of prewar etiquette so that relations between Islanders and outsiders might be reproduced. Wartime encounters threatened established symbols of separation and inequality. A sumptuary code regulated interaction between Islanders and colonists. This informal but profoundly charged code restricted Islanders' access to particular foods, set alcohol off limits, and prohibited eating at the same table with colonists, the wearing of certain types of clothing such as long trousers, the speaking of some styles of the dominant colonial language, or otherwise engaging in acts that served to maintain symbolic boundaries between colonizer and colonized. A small example of this code in action came when members of the Papuan Infantry Battalion, accustomed to wearing shirts with rank insignias, were transferred to the First New Guinea Infantry Battalion, where laplaps (the prewar dress of plantation labor) were the official uniform. The order that they simply sew badges of rank on their laplaps sparked a brief uprising in which two Australian officers were injured (Barrett 1969, 496; see also Robinson 1981, 79).

Japanese, American, and Australian servicemen, fresh from home countries, generally had little knowledge of prewar symbolic conventions or interest in protecting these symbols of inequality. Military commanders—beset by agitated colonial officials—issued numerous orders that forbade troops to fraternize with locals, to overpay island laborers, or to give away military supplies. For example, a memorandum issued by U.S. Major General Alexander M. Patch on Guadalcanal began:

It has come to the attention of the Commanding General that certain practices on the part of military personnel prejudicial to the full utilization of native labour and the control of natives by the British authorities are becoming prevalent. These practices include—overpayment for services or commodities, employment of casual labour without adequate supervision or control, failure to provide for necessary rotation of natives so that their gardens can be maintained and permitting casual natives to wander through camps and military areas and encouraging this latter bad practice by feeding or making gifts to these casual natives. (Patch 1943)

As several authors in this volume point out, servicemen commonly ignored these orders and violated the symbolic boundaries of inequality. Perhaps the most significant of these symbols were restrictions on commensality. Islanders from many areas still recount their surprise and pleasure when asked to share a meal with servicemen. A former member of the Solomon Islands Labour Corps described laborers' encounter with Americans:

They invited us inside [their tents], and when we were inside, we could sit on their beds. We got inside and they gave us their glasses so we could drink out of them too. They gave us plates and we ate with their spoons. That was the first we had seen of that kind of thing. (Fifi'i and Akin 1988, 224)

Given the traditional significance of food as a medium of exchange used to form social relationships in many Pacific societies, it is not surprising that war stories throughout the region take special note of food sharing and exchange. The following chapters show that for many societies the principle of reciprocity played a central role in organizing interactions with the military newcomers. In chapter 2 White observed that the *absence* of reciprocity is a major theme in recollections of encounters with Japanese in Santa Isabel—a theme that



Uliithi Islanders dining in a military mess hall at Falalop, 22 May 1945.
(*U.S. Marine Corps*)

stands in complementary opposition to memories of relations with Americans reported in many of the other chapters.

A major dimension in images of military others encountered during the war, and contrasted with prewar colonials, is generosity versus meanness. Particularly in many Melanesian societies where political stature is acquired through the distribution of resources, giving out food, cigarettes, clothing, and military supplies accrued considerable prestige to the givers. Many U.S. servicemen engaged in profligate exchange of goods, ranging from cash or barter transactions for souvenirs and local foods to the giving-away of unwanted personal or military supplies. The Americans, who imported the greater tonnage of war materiel into the area, were best known for their generosity—generosity (with taxpayer-supplied goods to be sure) that sparked a local image of American character that many of the elder generation of Islanders still embrace today.

One legacy of these attributions of abundant surplus wealth is rumors of hidden caches of wartime goods left behind by the Americans. Stories of the war that marvel at the spectacle of vast amounts of war machinery and supplies that passed before people's eyes occa-

sionally speculate about the possibility of rediscovering America's abandoned wealth. Thus, Counts in chapter 8 told of Kaliai efforts only a few years earlier to dig up goods believed to be buried near the beach where U.S. Marines departed, and Gegeo listened to former labor corps workers tell of their belief that well-oiled machinery remains, unknown to government authorities, in good working order in underground warehouses on Guadalcanal today. Speculations such as these are not limited to island Melanesia. A visitor to Christmas Island, where the Americans developed a major air base, was told that "a million dollars worth of delicate scientific instruments" had been secretly stashed in an underground location known only to U.S. officials (Howell 1957, 169).

Islanders—save for those who suffered most from the war—on the whole constructed positive images of troops in counterpoint to prewar colonials (see Read 1947). Robinson, drawing on oral histories he collected from people in Papua New Guinea, noted:

They said they got on well with them [Americans] and they recalled that both black and white troops stood up for them when ANGAU [Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit] officers called them 'boys.' The Americans had said, 'They should not call you boys, you are men already.' The carriers also liked the American troops because they spoke with them in a friendly fashion, paid good prices for carvings and always welcomed them into their camps to eat or even to sleep. (1981, 80)

In his description of Americans, the Solomon Island laborer quoted previously was explicit in contrasting these new military others with prewar varieties of white men. He went on to say,

We talked about it like this, "Those people like the British and the whites before, it was terrible because they were not kind to us! These people here are really nice to us. We can all sit on one bed and we all eat together." (Fifi'i and Akin 1988, 224)

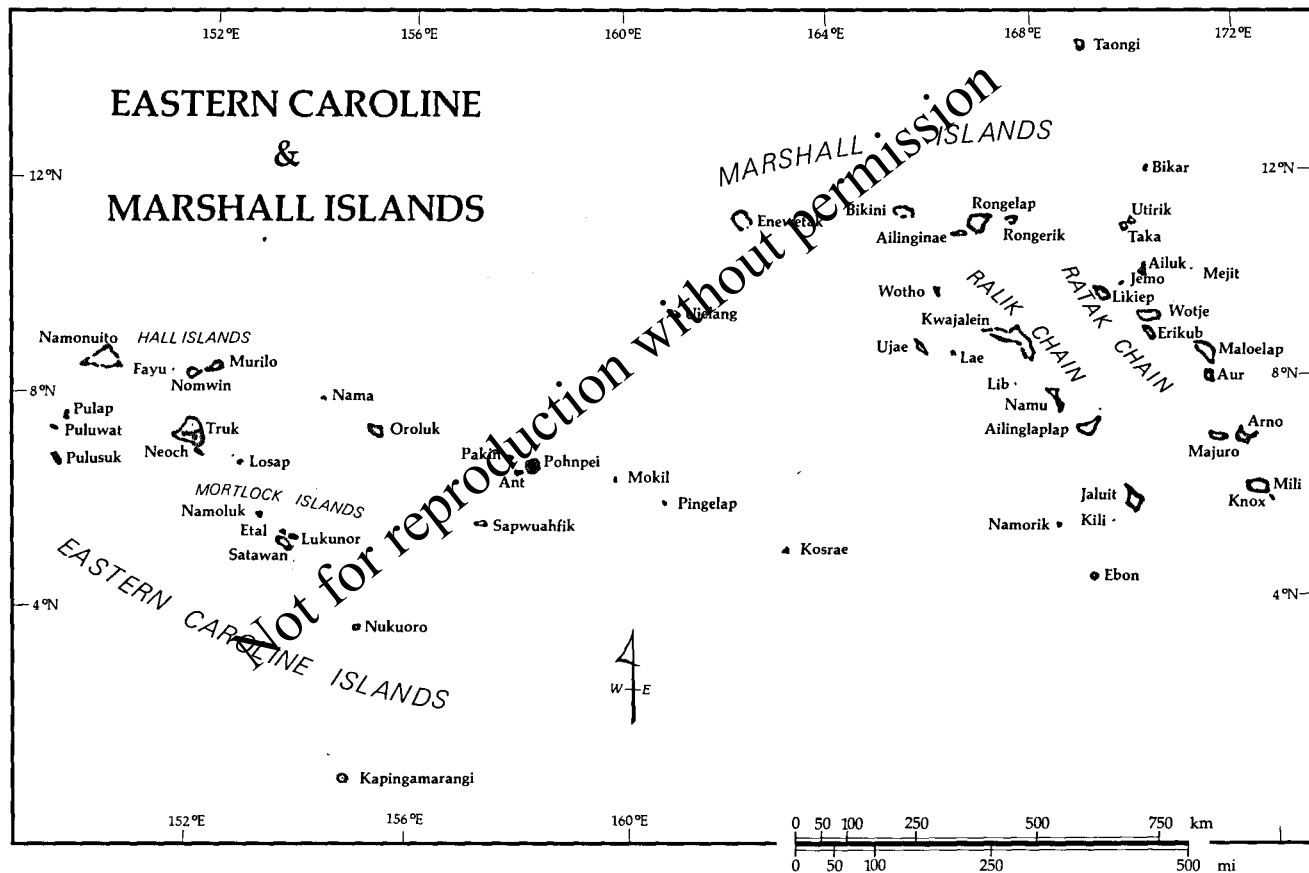
These same contrasts were again drawn in a very pronounced way at the end of the war when officials in many areas reasserted their authority by expropriating much of the wartime booty that laborers had accumulated (Robinson 1981, 79, 173). For example, British overseers on Guadalcanal went into labor tents one day, piled up surplus clothing, and burned it while workers were off on assignments. Whatever the reason for the burning, it is *remembered* as a fla-

grant example of British domination that angered both Solomon Islanders and their "American friends" (Fifi'i and Akin 1988, 225; Keesing 1978, 48). Such ungenerous acts evoke the most bitter memories and harshest criticisms today.

The war is also notable for the variety and complexity of new relations with outsiders, beyond the stark contrast of prewar colonials and wartime soldiers. People compared Australians with Americans, blacks with whites (see below), and British with Americans, as well as Allies with Japanese. Solomon Island laborers working on Guadalcanal noted that they were categorized as "British" along with New Zealanders, Australians, and Fijians, whereas the American forces included whites, blacks, Hawaiians, and even Japanese-Americans (serving with the former Hawaii National Guard unit called up for army duty). In chapter 12, Falgout discusses the manner in which the Kitti people recruited by the Japanese on Pohnpei found themselves working on Kosrae along with Kosraens, Koreans, and Gilbertese, all ordered according to a distinct, Japanese-imposed system of social stratification. In Papua New Guinea, more than five thousand Indians captured in Singapore accompanied the Japanese occupiers along with conscripted Chinese and Indonesian laborers (Nelson 1980*b*, 251).

The exact quality of image of other expressed today in war stories is shaped by the details of interpersonal encounters which in turn depended largely on a community's position vis-à-vis the warring powers. In parts of Micronesia previously administered by the Japanese, representations of the colonial era are often positive, darkening only during the logistical exigencies of the latter part of the war. In Melanesia, where the Japanese drove out prewar colonial authorities, presenting themselves as liberators, the same trend appears even more sharply drawn, as initially positive or neutral relations deteriorated along with Japan's military fortunes. In areas where Islanders met both Japanese and Allied personnel, the image of one plays off against the other. Falgout has described the revision of images of Americans on Pohnpei from inept bumbler to clever strategists as they brought increasing offensive pressure to bear on the island.

Representations of military others are everywhere complex, shaded by ambivalences that mute glowing impressions of Americans and humanize memories of Japanese. Both Americans and Japanese are frequently recalled for their efforts to protect Islanders from unnecessary risk (just as surely as their efforts to recruit labor-



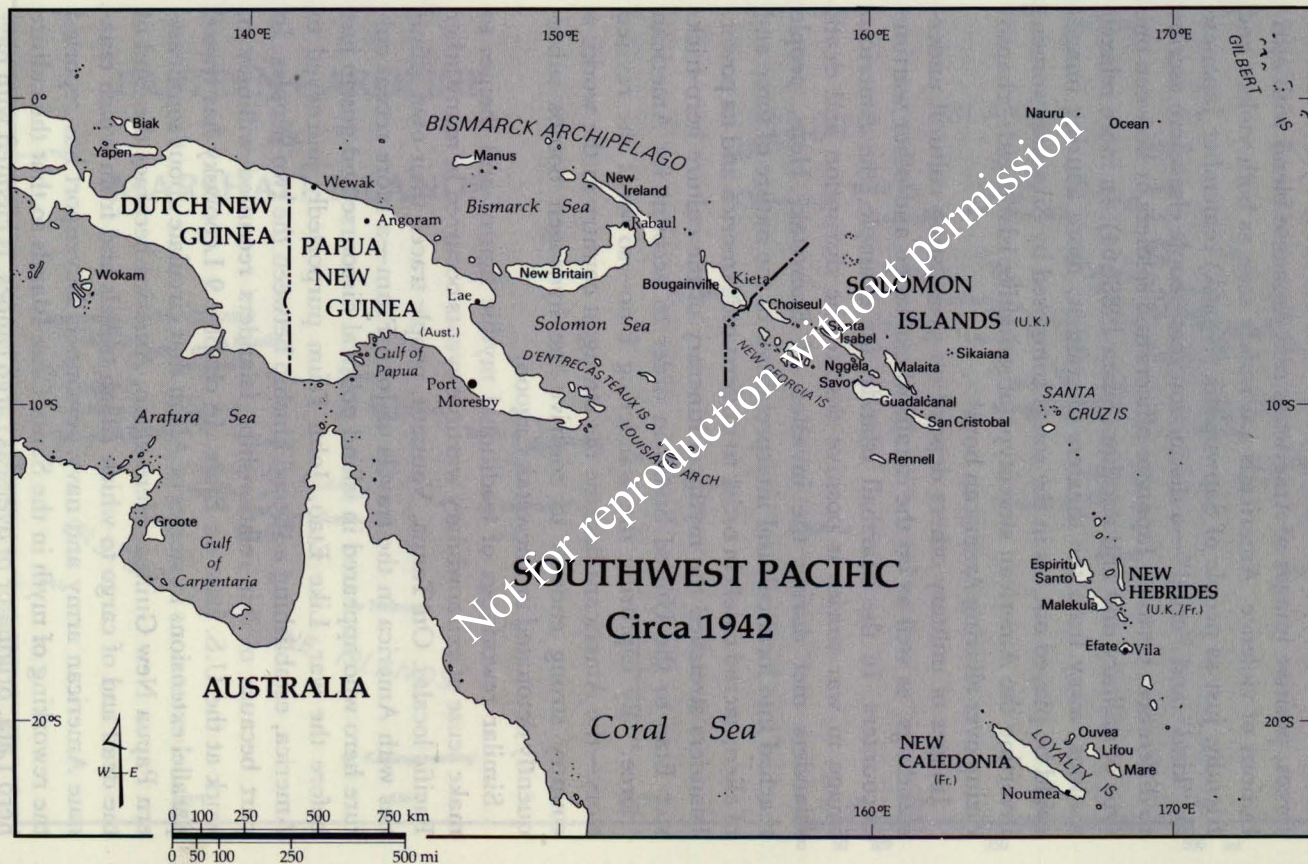
Map 1

ers and scouts exposed Islanders to those same risks). As military forces, positive images of Americans and Japanese blend with attributions of violence. Americans are widely seen as both violent and friendly, just as people of Sapwuahfik (Ngatik) remember Japanese as "kind" and "cruel"—a distinction that people elsewhere ascribe to differences between Japanese officers and soldiers or between one type of military unit and another (Silata 1988, 64). In more relaxed settings, away from the theaters of combat, more alluring images could be played out, as in the songs composed by Sikaiana women, inverting the American stereotype of seductive island girls, rhapsodizing over alluring American boys!

Images of military others depend on preexisting cultural understandings, as well as on the details of exchange and other wartime encounters. In the Marshall Islands, for example, the American image in war stories is positive despite the disruption and death Islanders met during the invasion of Enewetak. Here, people reached into local cultural interpretations of the nature of force and of alien, sacred chiefs in order to understand America and its power. Islanders stretched the mythical itinerary of the culture hero-trickster Etao to the United States in order to account for American "force." By capturing the wandering Etao—so went the revised story—the Americans became the strongest country in the world: a country strong enough to contrive the hydrogen bombs subsequently detonated in Enewetak Lagoon.

Similar reworkings of traditional mythic figures and themes to make sense of extraordinary wartime events occurred in many other Pacific locales. On Tanna, Vanuatu, people traced their own affinities with America in the travels of John Frum—a more recent culture hero who appeared in island political discourse and gossip just before the war. Like Etao, John Frum purportedly journeyed to America, establishing a special kinship between the two peoples. In part because of this relationship, Islanders recruited willingly to work at the U.S. base on Efate. In chapter 9 Lepowsky has traced parallel extensions in stories of Alagh that circulate about southeastern Papua New Guinea. Here again, America becomes the land of the dead and of cargo to which Alagh travels and from which emanate American army and navy personnel. Davenport has reported the reworking of myth in the Santa Cruz Islands so that the culture hero Lata, originator of overseas cargo canoes, is credited with having invented steamships and taken his invention to America.

Islanders employed a range of other devices to account for mili-



Map 2

tary others in traditional terms. If some Micronesians relied on traditional notions of chiefly hierarchy and mythic force in order to make sense of the newcomers, others found answers in history. People on Sapwuahfik, whose sense of community derives from common historical understandings of the past, used these understandings to sketch an image of Americans. Because they speak a pidgin English (a linguistic curiosity stemming from a nineteenth-century massacre of most of the men on the island), these Islanders asserted a special relationship with American personnel. This founding of a wider social solidarity on common history (Americans were key players in the massacre) and common language is also the basis of the narrower shared identity of the island. For the people of Sapwuahfik, World War II contacts provided an opportunity to affirm the distinctiveness of an identity based in earlier historical events. Elsewhere, the extraordinary World War II period is regarded as one of two major epochs of contact experience, second to the arrival of missionaries. In Santa Isabel, recollections of encounters with the Japanese fit within a literary genre of contact narrative, but invert a number of themes expressed in stories of Christian conversion. There, as with the Loboda villagers described by Thune, the more idiosyncratic stories of World War II have not been incorporated into collective representations to the same extent as legends of missionary heroes who produced more enduring transformations.

In Melanesia (where chiefdoms are less common than in Micronesia), people turned to notions of shared kinship to account for the other. Kinship is an idiom of political alliance. In some cases, one may hear Islanders refer to significant military others as "fathers," with connotations of benevolence and dependency. For example, the man who led the postwar Maasina Rule movement on Santa Isabel talked about the influence of his American "father," met during labor corps work in the Russell Islands. More frequently, the casual relations enjoyed with military others are phrased in an idiom of brotherhood. In Vanuatu, the motif of shared kinship with American troops is an important theme in local war stories. An elder from Nguna recounted his recollection of a conversation with Americans on their departure from Efate: "But they said, 'Don't feel bad. Sometime we'll come again in peace. We'll be brothers; we'll have good times' " (Schutz 1968, 312).

The importance of brotherhood in Pacific cultures, fortuitously, may have harmonized with a loose usage of the term "brother" common within black and other varieties of American English. The

word has a cognate, *brata*, in Melanesian Pidgin English. Former labor corps members from Vanuatu, for example, told of their encounters with black Americans: "When they called out, they called us 'brother.' 'Brother,' their brothers they didn't say that we were no good" (chapter 17).

Whatever the facts of linguistic coincidence, the presence of black American troops—particularly in Melanesia—contributed to a positive image of military others. Approximately two hundred thousand black military personnel served in the Far East and the Pacific. Although the greater number of these—given the fact that the U.S. Army and Navy both remained segregated—served in service units (transportation, engineer, quartermaster), some were members of coast artillery or infantry units that engaged the Japanese in combat. Melanesians saw for the first time skilled American servicemen looking at least superficially similar to themselves: made, as it were, in their own image, but already possessing the knowledge and accoutrements of Western culture. The perceptions recorded in this volume make it clear that it was not the physical segregation of the U.S. forces that made an impression on island memories but their "similarity of condition" in terms of styles of dress, food, and work. The obvious abilities and achievements of American blacks personified the prewar aspirations of many Islanders.

Reports vary as to the nature of Pacific impressions of blacks as persons. This is a topic deserving of more study, but accounts of Islanders' wariness and fear of black soldiers (Koch 1978, 30) are at least as numerous as the inference that "They liked black troops because they had the same colour of skin" (Robinson 1981, 80).

War era imagery of military others, which we read embedded in war narrative and song, still shapes apperceptions of new outsiders in the Pacific. The anthropologist is one of these. The war, as shared heritage if not mutual experience, enjoins reflexivity—compelling the anthropologist to examine expectations and images held by the ethnographic other. Certainly the warm welcome accorded many anthropological strangers newly arrived in Pacific villages stems in large measure from wartime experiences. But there are also liabilities associated with inherited World War II images. For example, Counts reports discovering that he disappointed his new hosts when he arrived without hand grenades—a much appreciated wartime technology for killing fish (chapter 8). And how could Lindstrom, newly arrived on Tanna, be American if he did not take up residence in a John Frum village (Lindstrom 1979)? Descendants of



Anthropologist Camilla Wedgewood and children, Port Moresby, 23 November 1944. Wedgewood was a lieutenant-colonel in the Australian Army's Directorate of Research. (*Australian War Memorial*)

wartime Americans nonetheless, we violated the image of our military forebears. More worrisome still, is the image of anthropologist as spy. And Lepowsky, working with a people who conflated wartime others with their own dead ancestors, found herself suspected of being a wayward ghost (chapter 9).

In that most of the contributors to this volume are American, it is perhaps not surprising that Islanders produced tales that lauded the powers and generosity of American ancestors. Along these lines, Zelenietz and Saito explore the effects of storytelling context (the identity of audience, in particular) on the content of war stories. Kilenge (New Britain) storytellers crafted their tales to suit the nationality of their anthropologists and that anthropologist's personal feelings—positive or negative—about the war. Zelenietz and Saito have also noted the moral function of war narratives. The centrality of exchange and generosity in these stories provides a clue. If war stories encode historical understandings, they can also serve as useful parables; gentle hints that anthropologists in a village ought morally to emulate the philanthropy of their wartime ancestors.

Not only anthropologists suffer vis-à-vis images of powerful war-time actors. As Counts has pointed out, postwar government officials—both colonialist and independent—often come up second best when compared with military personnel (who have the further advantage, in most regions, of having gone away). The mundane regularities of contemporary life pale beside an intense period of traumatic events, heroic actions, movements of massive amounts of goods, and the arrival of hundreds of thousands of newcomers during the 1940s.

Tourists are another sort of postwar other. De Burlo has suggested that tourist-Islander interaction is flavored in part by people's war-time images of military others. Many tourists are themselves ex-servicemen now grown old, on pilgrimages to the sites and relics of the battles of their youth (see Manchester 1979). De Burlo has pointed to current generational differences in the evaluation of tourists between older Islanders, who encountered military personnel themselves, and their children, who know the war and its actors only through stories.

Changing images of the other, affected by the arrival of Japanese, American, Australian, and New Zealand troops, have turned back to influence the images Islanders have of themselves. The war had an important impact on a generation of men and women (e.g., Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979; Lacey 1985). The war years were a transitional period in the life histories of many individual Islanders. Culturally formed images of self and aspirations for the future were, for many, transformed significantly. Evidence for this is to be found in published autobiographies of present-day island leaders that inevitably devote a chapter to World War II experiences (e.g., Somare 1970, 1975; Zoleveke 1980; Osifelo 1985).

In some parts of the Pacific, a comparison of self with seemingly all-powerful military others had humbling consequences, weakening people's self-images. In Sikaiana a sense of smallness and remoteness is projected in ironic humor. In Enewetak, too, people were shunted aside after the American invasion and made little contribution to the subsequent war effort. They felt belittled vis-à-vis Americans; resultant self-images differed from earlier, more positive evaluations stemming from relations with the Japanese, who had needed their labor to fortify the island.

Elsewhere, however, prewar images of self in relation to other improved. Self-esteem and self-respect resound in many war narratives that assert local contributions to the war effort. In these stories,

people stress the reciprocity of wartime exchange and document the help they offered to the Allies and the Japanese.

In the Japanese territories of Micronesia, the need for fighters and skilled labor elevated the role of Islanders in the empire. In some islands images of warrior status were rekindled, increasing identification with Japan. Already in 1937 Islanders from Rota, Saipan, and Pohnpei had petitioned to be allowed to participate as Japanese in the war with China (Higuchi 1986, 43). In World War II, when Palauan recruits were organized into a military unit, a member of the corps composed a patriotic song with the verse, "On our shoulders rests the name of Palau, the opportunity for us to devote ourselves to the Emperor's country, Japan, has come" (Higuchi 1986, 44; chapter 5; and see chapter 12 for the experience of people of Pohnpei recruited to fight in New Guinea).

Similar patterns emerge in the Allied colonies. Solomon Islanders, for example, took note of the sudden, expedient shift in prewar racist attitudes among colonial officers now dependent on them for survival. One coastwatcher's observations are typical of many during this period: "They revealed qualities of body and mind which had not been suspected prior to the war and carried out tasks which had previously been thought to be beyond their capacities" (Horton 1975, 226; and see British Colonial Office 1946). Many other examples could be cited of the effect of wartime involvements, especially the performance of combat roles, on images of Islanders, among both Europeans and Islanders themselves. Many Maori today see the raising of the Maori Battalion in New Zealand as an important benchmark in the revitalization of Maori identity in the twentieth century. Certainly Fijians look with great pride at the heroic actions of the much-decorated battalions that fought in the Solomons (Ravuvu 1974). To a somewhat lesser degree, the same can be said for the Solomon Islands Defence Force (White et al. 1988, chapter 3) and the Pacific Islands Regiment in Papua New Guinea.

The sense of relatedness and mutual respect engendered by Islander contributions to the war effort was signified in a wide variety of ceremonial events. Military authorities recognized individual heroics with the award of decorations and medals. War heroes such as Sergeant Yauwika of Bougainville and Sergeant Major Jacob Vouza of Guadalcanal attained international prominence on the basis of media attention—creating suitable imagery for a new type of stereotype of loyal and dedicated subjects (see, e.g., British Colonial Office 1946).

Islanders, however, went about the business of acknowledging and affirming their newfound relations with military others by organizing collective presentations of traditional and not-so-traditional gifts to various Allied "big-men." These events included untold numbers of feasts in which military men were given food, bestowed with gifts, and regaled with customary entertainment. For example, Tongans and Fijians repeatedly welcomed American officers with kava ceremonies; Fijian troops presented a whale's tooth to U.S. Major General Oscar W. Griswold on Bougainville; Solomon Islanders in 1943 took up a collection and gave American commanders a donation for the American Red Cross (Laracy 1983, 17); members of the Defence Force presented Rear Admiral A. W. Fitch with a plaque inscribed with the words, "To the United States Navy with appreciation from the people of the British Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, 1943"; and people from Guadalcanal, Vella Lavella, Green Island (Nissan), and other Christian communities near Allied bases erected churches and dedicated them to the units they had interacted with. Implicit in all of these actions is the recognition of mutual relations formed with significant wartime others.

In general, a wholesale violation of symbolic boundaries of inequality was perpetrated: the idiom of brotherhood with military others, the joint engagement in similar wartime activities, and the example of black American troops all contributed to transformations in images of self. As brothers, as equals, Islanders could more clearly justify demands to retake control of their own homelands and to acquire a place within the modern world system, along with some of its benefits. The war in the Pacific, as in colonial areas around the world, impelled movements towards independence that eventually culminated in the political emancipation of most of the region's colonies in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. These alterations in image of self and other, on the personal level, parallel the war's disruptive and transformational effects on Pacific politics and economy, on the social.

The Local Scene: Disruptions and Transformations

The war influenced and continues to influence conceptions of history in many Pacific societies. In the most extreme case, it partitions time into two eras: before the war and after the war. Like other historic events meaningful enough to continue to resound in the

present (such as first contact with Westerners), the war serves to organize people's maps of the past, just as their maps of the past serve to organize understandings of the war.

War disrupts everyday life, sometimes fatally. People trapped between two large forces intent on destroying one another will obviously find their lives disturbed by attack and counterattack, shellings, and bombings. Even more disturbing in the Pacific, however, were the new relations of exchange and production that the war economy demanded. Islanders were drawn out of distant villages to take part in new activities and encounters.

After the war's fronts had swept over or around particular islands, and after bases were rolled up, many of the people sank back into ordinary quietude. Social organization and the main character of everyday existence drifted back into prewar routines. In many communities, the expansive social networks enjoyed during the war years shrank back to normal. Elsewhere, however, basic elements of village life had been undermined, if not transformed by the war, leading to transformations of postwar society. In the Micronesian islands (apart from Guam and Kiribati), thirty years of Japanese rule gave way to a continuing American military presence. In Papua New Guinea, a new breed of Australian administrators replaced their prewar colleagues.

For some Islanders the war years brought death and the destruction of homes and gardens. People suffered greatly, especially on islands that experienced extended jungle warfare (such as Bougainville and north coast New Guinea) or amphibious assault (such as Enewetak). Many of the Islanders who had joined local defense forces and labor corps also came under fire, sometimes fighting other Islanders, recruited on the opposite side of the conflict. Not only did New Guineans fight New Guineans at various stages of the war, but Fijians fought Bougainvilleans (Ravuvu 1974) and Pohnpei people fought New Guineans serving with the Australians (Higuchi 1986). The prolonged fighting in New Guinea left many villages caught in the middle, suffering extremes of deprivation, physical injury, and death. In several cases, new treachery was perpetrated along the lines of old rivalries. Ninety-six men and one woman suspected of collaboration with the Australians were massacred at the Iatmul village of Timbunke by people from other Sepik villages acting under Japanese orders (Gewertz 1983, 137). Others were captured, imprisoned, and even executed as spies by one side or the other. Testimony at the postwar trial of the Japanese commander on

New Ireland revealed that forty New Guineans had been executed under his command. And the executions did not stop with Allied victory. When the Australian authorities resumed control, ten Papuans were hanged for treason (Nelson 1980*b*, 254; and see Waiko 1988).

Hundreds, if not thousands, of casualties resulted from the bombing of villages by both the Allies and Japan. Both sides targeted villages thought to be either harboring or collaborating with enemy forces, causing hundreds of villagers in occupied New Guinea and Bougainville to lose their lives. In the Solomons, where the Japanese occupation was briefer, villages on Choiseul were bombed for suspected collaboration, and there were numerous incidents of indiscriminate bombing. For example, Allied planes bombed Malaita villages two days in a row, resulting in at least twenty-four deaths. On the second occasion, the British resident commissioner wrote in his diary, "7 U.S. planes bombed Laulasi village—18 killed—most inexplicable as no enemy reported there" (Marchant, 7 August 1942). On Santa Isabel, Defence Force scouts threatened to cease their coastwatching work after Allied planes bombed their home village (Kuper 1946).

If they became separated from sources of supply, servicemen of both sides were taught to live off the land—that is, off people's gardens and domestic animals, in the main. In New Guinea, thousands of Japanese, cut off from their supply lines for months, were led in desperation to exploit the local communities (e.g., Lawrence 1964, 110) and commit numerous atrocities. Islanders' perceptions of Japanese weakness produced an increase in guerrilla actions and collaboration with Allied forces, which in turn evoked further retributions. Perhaps the most ignominious fate was that of the Arapesh individuals who were killed and eaten by starving members of the Japanese Eighteenth Army in 1945 (Tuzin 1983, 63). In Dutch New Guinea, where cult activity was widespread before and during the war, and where many actively resisted the Japanese, hundreds were killed in executions and punitive massacres (Worsley 1968, 142–143).

As well as causing death and injury, fire fights damaged houses, gardens, and plantations. Moreover, the military preferred to situate airfields on lands already cleared (i.e., gardens). Where fighting was intense, people obviously had difficulty planting and harvesting and sometimes left their homes behind, taking to the hills to escape as the battle approached. Life was also hard on Japanese-controlled Micronesian islands that the Allied forces decided to "neutralize" by

cutting off supply lines. Falgout's and Nero's descriptions in this volume of the consequences of this strategy on the local populations of Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Palau testify to experiences of deprivation throughout Micronesia.

Experiences of uprooting are frequently depicted in terms of oppositions of culture and nature. People who had been forced to abandon the order and safety of the village for life in the bush described that time as a liminal period of danger and uncertainty. For many of those living on the coast, the movement represented an inversion of the principles of established cultural life: they found themselves scattered in interior regions, eating raw foods, unable to worship in church, and fearing the destructive effects of war—either from the invaders or from a resurgence of traditional fighting (see chapters 9 and 11).

Perhaps the most disruptive effects of the war were felt by Islanders evacuated or removed from their homes by the armies. For example, the Americans shipped nearly the entire population of Nissan (Green Island) to Guadalcanal, where many died of malaria. At Ulithi, site of a large Allied naval base, Islanders were concentrated on a few of the atoll's islets, as they were at Enewetak and elsewhere. Similarly, after the Americans had taken Guam and the Marianas from the Japanese, Islanders were gathered for a time into concentration camps.

Villages that provided workers for military labor corps also experienced at least temporary disruption of their demographic and social structures. Men either volunteered or were pressed into labor, leaving behind villages of women and children and the elderly or infirm. As whole regions were depleted of able-bodied men, the women left behind frequently composed laments to their missing relatives (Waiko 1986). On Santa Isabel, the women of one area composed a song cursing the recruiter, a "Mr. Jack," who appeared periodically in his landing craft ("open-mouth boat") to recruit young men. Falgout has noted among the effects of this absence of men in the Kitti district of Pohnpei, how visions of women's work capacities and roles in society were enhanced (chapter 12).

The war precipitated other changes in island social structure and everyday life. In some cases, people discovered themselves caught up in *two* wars: the withering of colonial government controls permitted traditional enmities to break out once again (see Gewertz 1983, chapter 7). Lepowsky has reported how people on Sudest (Vanatinai) vacated coastal villages in fear of intergroup ambushes



The American landing on Nissan Island, 15 February 1944. (*U.S. Marine Corps*)

and revenge killings. In the Santa Cruz Islands, although people did not revive warfare, with the melting away of government and mission agents some men took the opportunity to challenge and revise traditional social structures. On Nidu, people established a “New Law” movement, which deregulated marital and sexual relations between men and women (chapter 11).

On the whole, these injuries, deaths, property damages, and population movements occasioned fewer enduring transformations of Pacific societies than did other, less cataclysmic episodes of the war. The consequences of the war included improved economic and political infrastructures as well as alterations in people’s skills, aspirations, and self-images. To wage war, the combatants imported into the Pacific new technologies—part of the martial mode of production—more complex than any seen before in the region. Alongside weaponry, Islanders encountered new means of communication and transportation as well as many novel tools and machines. On many islands, army engineers and naval construction battalions left behind improved roads, bridges, docks, new airfields, waterworks, and telephone systems.

The concentration of troops in each base area created new market opportunities. Many Islanders living near large bases went into business as petty traders. On 7 May 1943, on Guadalcanal, Father

Emery de Klerk wrote in his diary of observing "a whole fleet of native canoes travelling toward Lunga to trade with American soldiers." The trade in local artifacts markedly raised prices of items such as walking sticks, mats, and grass skirts. In Tonga, the inflation was gauged at 400 percent (Weeks 1987). In many areas, the influx of cash was a major incentive for new projects. In the words of Neli Lifuka of Vaitupu (Tuvalu, formerly Ellice Islands), his efforts to organize his people's purchase of an island in Fiji began during war-time work for the Americans: "When I was in Funafuti, I saw that the Americans paid a lot of money for our mats and baskets; maybe two or three, sometimes five dollars. When I saw that, I made up my mind to collect all the money for the people in Vaitupu" (Koch 1978, 45). On Vanatinai, government agents paid people to gather copal gum, used as varnish on naval vessels (chapter 9). Moreover, the war's economy required large amounts of labor; recruits took part not only in new relations of exchange with Japanese and Allied servicemen, but in novel relations of production as well.

Across much of the Pacific, the war furthered the encroachment of the modern world economy. The availability on a large scale of imported goods such as manufactured clothing and cigarettes altered local consumption patterns. War stories chronicle a leap in the level of local integration into the world economy in this respect. Franco, for example, has documented the importance of military work opportunities in Samoa in furthering both the economic skills and the aspirations of Islanders. He has shown the significance of the World War II experience for the subsequent emergence of international networks of Samoan movement and migration centered on American naval bases in Hawaii and California.

One facet of integration into the world economy is the growth of tourism in the Pacific. The war left behind a legacy of airfields, roads, and jet-plane technology that constitutes the infrastructure of regional tourism. Moreover, the seashells, ersatz traditional grass skirts, and other curios people learned to make and sell to servicemen in the 1940s are now offered to tourists instead.

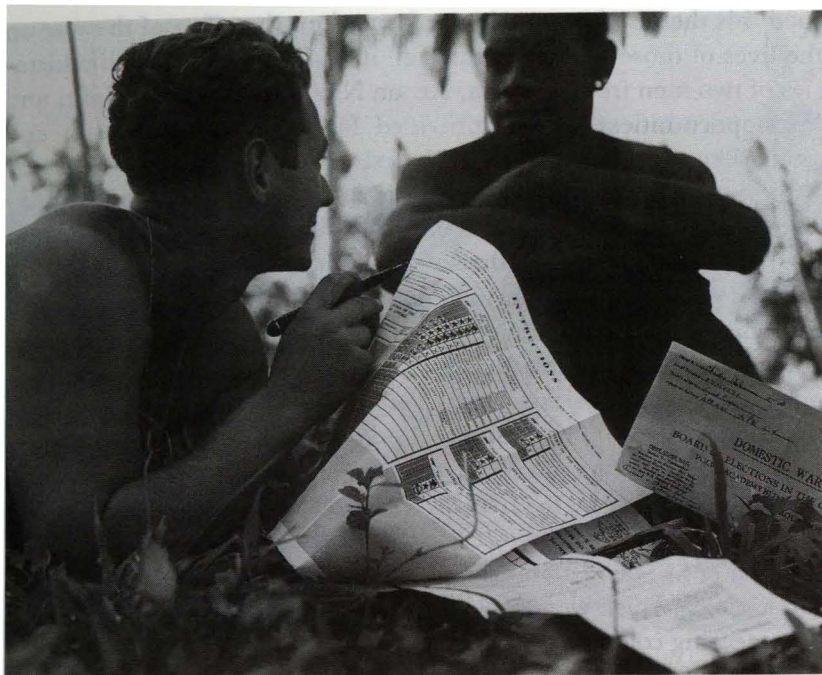
The war affected political relations as well. In some areas, colonial penetration and control of island societies were enhanced. In general, improved communication and transportation systems facilitated colonial control when the administrations were restored after the war. For instance, on Vanatinai, government agents and missionaries were able to establish a continuing presence for the first time and proceeded to reorganize settlement and subsistence practices. In

some areas, the positive image Islanders had constructed of British and Australian servicemen became tarnished. Postwar colonial agents, reestablishing real and symbolic relationships of inequality, confiscated much of the cash and other goods Islanders had received from servicemen. Many war stories in this volume include bitter comments on this negative exchange (see also Robinson 1981, 79, 173; White et al. 1988).

Although the war may have enhanced the ability of colonial governments to control village life, it also fueled local movements that disputed that authority. The demographic consequences of large-scale mobility—set in train by wartime labor recruiters—precipitated new social unities. Despite obvious dangers, the war greatly improved transportation and communication in the Pacific, and many Islanders traveled (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not) as they had not before and have not since. Increased mobility furthered people's access to knowledge. Moreover, the recruitment of men from various islands broadened social as well as informational exchange networks.

For much of the Pacific, the war came at a time of increasing restlessness with entrenched colonial regimes (Read 1947; Inglis 1969). Local autonomy and participation in political structures were already expressed issues of concern (Keesing 1978). Many have noted the importance of the war for subsequent political development and the formation of independent island nations (e.g., Belshaw 1950, 70; Guiart 1951; Oliver 1961, 395; Grattan 1963, 516; Brookfield 1972, 96–97). Others have suggested that anticolonialist ideals were circulated in wartime encounters between Islanders and servicemen—particularly Americans (e.g., Laracy 1983, 36). British authorities in the Solomon Islands, concerned with increasingly vocal demands for political autonomy, attributed much of their trouble to the corruptive influence of American servicemen. One writer commented that Solomon Islanders “had been saturated with foolish anti-European-British propaganda by some—quite a lot—foolish Americans” (Burrows 1950, 37, quoted in Fifi'i and Akin 1988, 217). Even more important, no doubt, were the increased and wider opportunities for Islanders to converse with one another.

New solidarities among Islanders were apparent in a number of strikes organized by labor corps bosses in New Caledonia and on Guadalcanal (White et al. 1988). Ideas and aspirations shaped by wartime encounters were also articulated by ex-laborers who joined postwar movements around the Pacific, including that led by Pouva-



Alex Kwaisufu observing Lieutenant Charles Schuman filling out an absentee ballot on Guadalcanal, October 1943. (*U.S. Army Signal Corps*)

naa in Tahiti; Maasina Rule in the Solomon Islands (Keesing 1978; Laracy 1983); the movement led by Buriga in the Calvados chain of Papua New Guinea, advocating the killing of all Europeans and part-Europeans (chapter 9); and the John Frum Movement in Vanuatu (chapter 17).

On Enwetak, an annual rite of intensification, *Raan in Kamolol* 'day to be thankful', brings together the war's survivors and their descendants to celebrate the anniversary of the end of the battle for the island, serving to affirm island solidarity. Here, a wartime event stands as a core unifying symbol for a people who have come through both the disruptions of the war and the subsequent use of their atoll as a site for postwar atomic testing. Exchange visits between villages in Palau, during which people tell war stories and enact shared deprivations in skits and songs, play a similar unifying role.

On a personal level, wartime encounters drew to the fore a new generation of island leaders, many of whose political goals were enlarged by these experiences. Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo have pur-

sued this theme of personal transformation: the effect of the war on the lives of those who lived through it. They followed the life histories of two men from Malaita, Arnon Ngwadili and Isaac Gafu, and the opportunities the war provided for these men to attain and strengthen the personal roles each desired.

Similarly Zelenietz and Saito have described the war's significance for the career of Tave, a New Britain leader. A parallel case in the Santa Cruz Islands is that of Mepuke, a community leader and advocate of modernization, who volunteered to work at an American coastwatching station (chapter 11). Conversely, island leaders who responded favorably to the Japanese repulsion of European colonists lost their positions, and sometimes their freedom or their lives, after the war. For example, one of the most prominent Solomon Islanders of his time, George Bogese, a literate and educated man who was among the first native medical practitioners trained in Fiji, was interned in Australia for three and a half years during the war. Later he was sentenced to another four years in prison for treasonous acts (which were probably aimed at settling old scores with a domineering colonial officer).

Many of the relics of war—smashed planes, beached landing barges, sunken ships, and abandoned weaponry—are still visible at important battle sites. Other “relics” of war are those movements in village political and economic life the war set into play. Not always obvious, nor always immediate, the war's transformational effects are nonetheless preceptible in Pacific societies, oral traditions, and individual life histories today. For many people, these changes began when they joined the war to fight and work.

Joining In: Fighting and Working

Some of the most sustained wartime encounters were those of fighting and working. Instead of experiencing intense, brief encounters with passing combat units, Islanders became absorbed by the war effort, participating in its martial economy as scouts, soldiers, coastwatchers, and workers. Falgout, for example, has told of twenty-seven Pohnpei people recruited by the Japanese to fight in Papua New Guinea; twenty-three of them died there. Franco has discussed the wartime enlargement of American Samoa's Fitafta guard and its training to defend the island from attack. In Samoa, opportunities for military recruitment—much augmented during



Members of B Company, First New Guinea Infantry Battalion on their way to Pomio village on Jacquinot Bay, New Britain, to establish their headquarters, 6 November 1944. Company Sergeant Kube stands with knife. (*Australian War Memorial*)

the war—have been transformed into a permanent employment (and retirement) strategy. Many young men today follow their fathers or grandfathers into the U.S. military. In Fiji, Fijians enlisted eagerly into new combat battalions. More than 2200 participated in the Allied campaign in the Solomons, where they fought as guerrilla units as well as more orthodox infantry troops (Ravuvu 1974, 57). In Papua New Guinea, more than 3500 Melanesians had served in the Pacific Islands Regiment (Papuan Infantry Battalion and the First and Second New Guinea Infantry Battalions) by the end of the war (Nelson 1980a, 19). The Solomon Islands Defence Force, formed in 1939, grew to about four hundred men as it absorbed members of the Armed Constabulary and other hastily trained recruits to work as scouts and fighters supporting coast-watchers and Allied military units (Horton 1975; Lord 1977; White et al. 1988).

In chapter 14, Boutilier has documented one of the most active units of island soldiers: a small “army” of Solomon Islanders who served under the harsh and eccentric British colonial officer Donald

Kennedy. As the only British presence in the Western Solomons during the early months of Japanese occupation, Kennedy moved his operations from place to place, eventually establishing a base at Seghe on New Georgia. He recruited men from several islands, including Rennell, Santa Isabel, and New Georgia to coastwatch, to scout enemy positions, and to rescue downed flyers. His men also went into action against the enemy. Boutilier has described a number of successful engagements in which Islanders killed or captured Japanese soldiers and sailors (see also British Colonial Office 1946; Bennett, Gegeo, and White 1988; Lord 1977, 201).

Other Islanders joined wartime labor corps in large numbers. In many cases they eagerly sought out opportunities to work for the Japanese or the Allies. However, many in Papua New Guinea, Guam, and elsewhere in Micronesia during the latter years of the war found themselves forced into labor (Robinson 1981; chapter 12). The length of time their labor was required varied from place to place. In Papua New Guinea and some Micronesian islands, many recruits did not see their homes again for more than two years. Elsewhere, tours of duty were short—officially, three months in Vanuatu. Even so, working encounters in many cases had lasting effects.

In many areas of Japanese Micronesia, Islanders volunteered to work for victory (Higuchi 1986). In occupied Melanesia, the Japanese also employed local people. Behind the Allied lines, the U.S. military employed some 1500 New Caledonians out of an indigenous population of approximately 30,000. In Vanuatu, nearly 2000 worked at various times at the American bases on Efate and Espiritu Santo. In Fiji, 1375 men had joined the First Battalion, Fiji Labour Corps, by the end of 1942. A company of these men subsequently embarked for Bougainville to work as stevedores at the base at Torokina.

In the Solomon Islands, more than 3700 men worked on Guadalcanal, Tulagi, the Russells, and New Georgia (White et al. 1988). Those on Guadalcanal were joined by 400 Gilbert Islanders formerly employed on the Lever plantations but prevented from returning home by the Japanese advance. Monthly labor strengths in Papua New Guinea peaked at nearly 38,000 men in June 1944 (just prior to the war the total number of Papua New Guineans working on plantation contracts was only about 50,000 [Nelson 1980*b*, 248]). The wartime figure does not count an unknown number of other laborers working for the Americans as well as for the Japanese in what was then Dutch New Guinea. As late as January



Solomon Islands Labour Corps workers packing a trunk with clothing and other possessions, Guadalcanal, 16 September 1943. (*U.S. Marine Corps*)

1945—after the action of battle had shifted far to the northwest—at least 700 men still worked for the Americans in Samoa, 229 in Fiji, and 137 at Funafuti, Tuvalu. In addition to regular labor corps recruits, large numbers of Islanders worked for the military as casual or day-laborers.

At these bases, workers established new and extended social networks. In general, the war's communicative and transportation systems contributed to a widening world. People from Sapwuahfik moved to work for the Japanese on Pohnpei. There, they met and established enduring social relations with both Pohnpeians and their co-workers from other islands of Micronesia. Some also went as far as the Marshalls. Meanwhile, nearly two hundred men from Kitti district, Pohnpei, were shipped to Kosrae, where they encountered Koreans and Gilbertese already working for the Japanese. The Allies' base at Milne Bay attracted workers from many of the islands of southeastern Papua New Guinea, including Vanatinai. Young men from Normanby also worked at Giligili and other Milne Bay

Province bases. Recruits from the Santa Cruz Islands traveled west to work on Guadalcanal alongside hundreds from Malaita and Guadalcanal itself. A thousand men from Tanna shipped north to the U.S. base on Efate.

World War II—in Pacific perspective—might be considered an alien affair, the outcome of disputes over resources and sea lanes between competing imperial powers. It was nevertheless fought on, over, and around the homelands of Pacific Islanders. Many were caught up and transformed by supporting the Japanese or the Allies as workers and fighters. In documenting these contributions, island war stories assimilate alien events into local systems of historical understanding.

Conclusion: The Pacific Theater

In the Pacific theater, Islanders were much more than spectators. They were actors in a double sense. First, many took part in the play of battle as fighters, scouts, coastwatchers, carriers, stretcher-bearers, and victims—roles mostly unknown before 1941. More importantly, Islanders have continued to enact the events of the war in the retelling. The Pacific theater survives only as long as its stories. The war exists now in Pacific communities as story, and “warriors” as storytellers. The active, continual retelling maintains, and also reworks, the script and the meanings of the war. Island storytellers are dramatic agents, who, continually booking the theater, serve to reinterpret the past so that it makes useful sense in the present.

Will these war narratives and songs survive, particularly given the passing of the generation for whom they record personal experience? There are generational differences in interpretations of the war and its various actors. The perspective of those who lived through the war is fed from more sources than that of the younger generation, who know it only through the stories. Older people in Vanuatu, for example, entertain images of the United States that are considerably more charitable (some might say bemused) than those held by their sons and daughters educated in Suva or Port Moresby. Through its stories, the older generation may also lay claim to intimate acquaintance with cataclysmic events, marvels unknown since, and a daring spirit it sees lacking in the young.

Rights to stories, however, are complex. Where the hero still lives, he alone may control the right to draw ultimate conclusions



Marshall Islands children read American magazines on Majuro, 1945.
(U.S. Navy)

from the tale. Although others may tell his story, his is the right to correct (Lindstrom 1984). But stories are property and are inherited as such in many Pacific societies. Where a person's heroic narratives are not inherited, war stories may eventually be silenced by the passing of their heroes. However, in many of the societies in which the war first played, the Pacific theater might expect a longer run.

It is not uncommon in Pacific narrative traditions for the teller to assume the place of the hero; the tale is told using the first personal pronoun "I" (cf. Sahlins 1983, 523). In this manner, those born after 1945 may sometimes take on wartime roles of worker, fighter, or spectator of prodigies. Ultimately, the personal recollections that war stories store and circulate transform in this way into shared historical understandings of the past, of time, of self, and of the relation of that self to the outside world.

The survival of war stories and songs—the inheritance of the identity "war hero"—hangs upon their meanings in the present. Those that endure may possess various utilities. If some of them continue to capture the imagination of local audiences in the Pacific, it is because they encapsulate common conceptions of history that con-

tribute to a sense of self. These stories have become a facet of Islanders' shared identity, worked out across a long span of history encompassing the war epoch. Other war stories are like traditional myths and legends in that they transmit key pieces of culture from one generation to another. These, too, are good to remember. And others, in recoding events of an anomalous time, offer meaningful commentary on the current state of social relationships within a society, and with the much larger world outside. Drama in the Pacific theater can have many plots.

The capacity of war stories to shoulder these several semantic loads is not surprising given their content. They are tales of cultural contact of the most massive sort. Cross-cultural encounters are particularly salient foci for the production of narrative and the elaboration of histories. As Basso (1979) and others have demonstrated, local accounts of interactions with outsiders frequently express key moral problems and delineate the bounds of collective identity.

Insofar as they sediment into memory, stories about the Pacific War become part of the historical "archives" of Pacific societies (see Waiko 1986). Formalized as accounts of individual experiences and encounters, they compose an interpretation of world events in such a way that they speak to and affirm the village community; they represent an accounting and domestication of alien but deadly powers, a construal of exotic others that makes sense of the self. It is fitting that this volume interpret and extend the multiple lines of narrative thought that continue to affirm the distinctive identity and history of local Pacific communities.

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PART II

Island Selves and
Wartime Others

CHAPTER 2

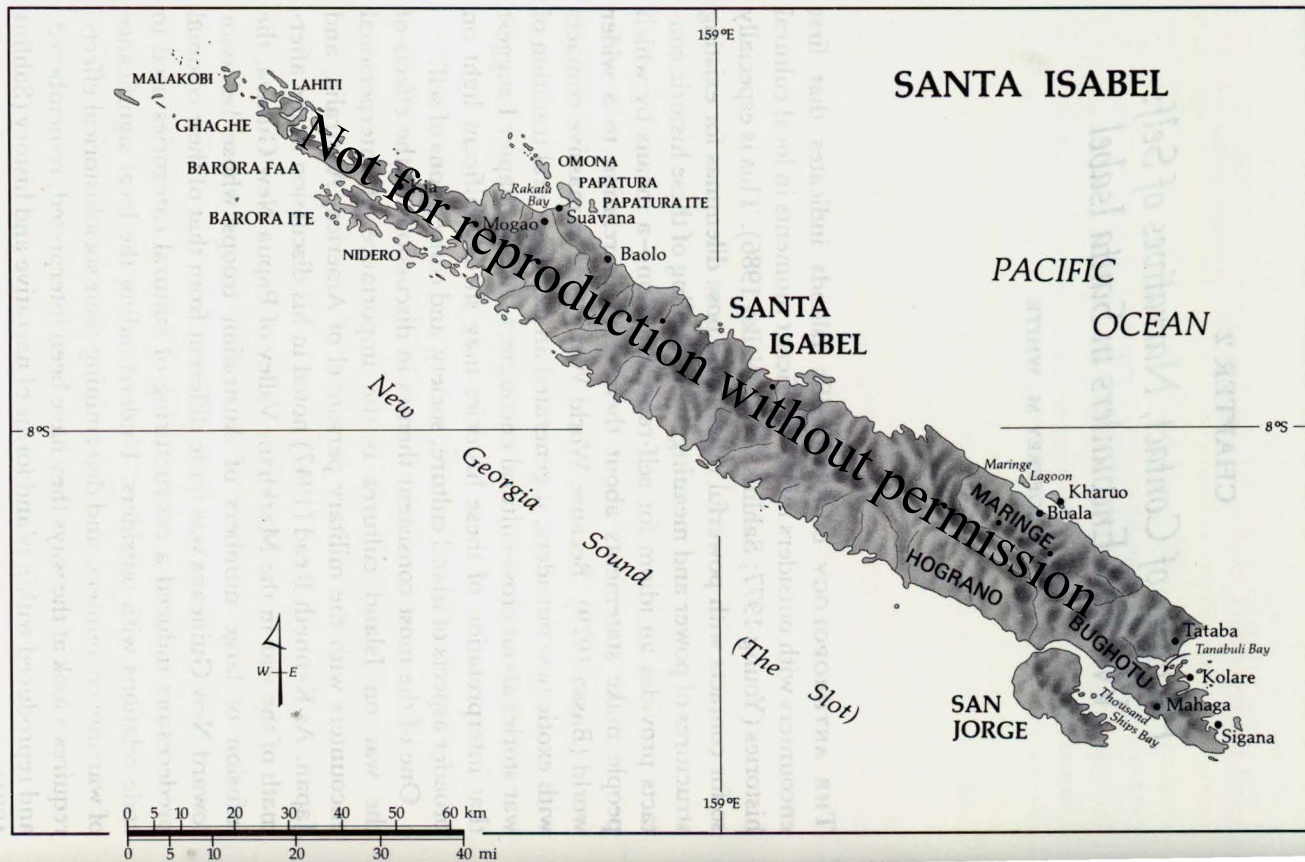
Histories of Contact, Narratives of Self: Wartime Encounters in Santa Isabel

GEOFFREY M. WHITE

THE ANTHROPOLOGY of the Pacific Islands indicates that first encounters with outsiders mark significant moments in local cultural histories (Young 1977; Sahlins 1985; Waiko 1986). This is especially so for contacts with powerful others who pose dilemmas for existing structures of power and meaning. The retelling of these historic contacts provides an idiom for self-representation—a means by which people make statements about themselves in relation to a wider world (Basso 1979). Because World War II led to massive contacts with exotic new outsiders, it generated an extensive oral tradition of war stories about cross-cultural encounters. In this chapter I suggest that interpretation of these histories may shed significant light on broader aspects of island culture, society, and conceptions of self.

One of the most consistent themes in discussions of the effects of the war on Island cultures is the importance of interpersonal encounters with the military personnel of America, Australia, and Japan. As Kenneth Read (1947) noted in his discussion of the aftermath of the war in the Markham Valley of Papua New Guinea, the infusion of large numbers of Australian troops whose behavior toward New Guineans was quite different from that of their colonial predecessors induced a restructuring of cultural categories used to code relations with outsiders. Understanding the local significance of wartime encounters, and determining their sociohistorical effects, requires a look at the ways they have been interpreted, remembered, and reproduced within island forms of narrative and history (Sahlins 1985).

Santa Isabel stories about wartime others fit within a genre of historical narrative concerned with first contacts. The prototype for this



genre is the story of the arrival of missionaries and conversion to Christianity—a story with many variants as people in each locale retell the legendary exploits of missionaries and ancestors who first brought Christianity to their region (White n.d.). In both epochs of contact—the arrival of missionaries and World War II—certain events, encoded in narrative, have taken on mythic status as they have been retold over time, sometimes in ceremonial contexts (cf. chapters 3, 10). This chapter examines one such story, an account of the arrival of Japanese forces in the Maringe Lagoon. The analysis asks what social and moral messages are represented in the narrative and what communicative forms are used to deploy them. As others have noted (Fussell 1975), the literary forms used to retell the past shape the meaning of events represented. The narrator of this text makes artful use of humor and irony to describe interactions with wartime others and convey his portrait of self and community (cf. chapter 10).

War Comes to the Solomons

The experiences of Pacific Islanders with the warring forces during World War II vary greatly. Some of the differences depend on geographic position in relation to territories occupied by the Japanese that subsequently became the sites of major battles as Allied forces pushed them out. The four thousand or so people of Santa Isabel found themselves located between two major battlegrounds—Guadalcanal to the east and New Georgia to the west—and host to one of the largest Japanese bases established in the Solomons, a seaplane base and barge-staging point at Suavana plantation on Rakata Bay (usually spelled Rekata in war histories). The Japanese began surveying the Isabel base during the month prior to the American landing on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942 and used it extensively in their efforts to retake that island. At its peak, Rakata is estimated to have supported between three and four thousand troops (Andresen n.d., 6), nearly equal to the total indigenous population of the island at that time. Although the Japanese did not occupy other parts of the island, their arrival by the thousands and the presence of large numbers of ships and planes marked a unique period of massive intrusion by outsiders. The story told here focuses on the moment when Japanese forces first contacted people in the Maringe area—the day eleven Japanese ships sailed into their lagoon.

In contrast, the Americans never established a base on Santa Isabel, although their presence was felt almost daily as planes flew overhead, frequently bombing Rakata and its surroundings. In addition, ships passing on the horizon and distant explosions rumbling through the night were constant reminders of the conflict raging on neighboring islands. The American presence on Santa Isabel was limited to occasional downed pilots and a couple of reconnaissance patrols sent in after the Japanese evacuation. An American landing on Isabel was avoided when the Japanese withdrew from Rakata in the face of the Allied advance up the Solomons chain. By the end of August 1943, just one year after the Japanese moved in, they had completely evacuated their forces from Santa Isabel. During the period of Japanese occupation, the primary contact between Isabel people and Americans came as island scouts and villagers joined in efforts to rescue downed fliers and return them to their bases (Kuper 1946; Lord 1977; Zaku et al. 1988). The greatest amount of sustained contact with Americans came as hundreds of able-bodied Islanders recruited during 1944 and 1945 to work at U.S. supply bases, primarily the base established in the Russell Islands. Anywhere from half to three-fourths of the men in the Maringe villages signed on for six-month contracts in the Solomon Islands Labour Corps.

To put wartime experiences in cultural perspective, it is necessary to step back and see the war in relation to the longer sweep of colonial history. Like others in island Melanesia, most people in Santa Isabel considered themselves, by the 1930s, part of a wider world, living lives changed markedly by missionary and colonial institutions. In 1942 everyone on the island was a baptized Christian, participating extensively in Christian ceremonial life (specifically, the Anglican Church of Melanesia). In keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit that has been described throughout Melanesia, many Islanders were actively seeking material improvement through agricultural and commercial endeavors. The first organized rumblings of discontent with the colonial government were heard in the late 1930s as local leaders of both church and government sought educational and economic advancement (White 1980).

Prior to the war, experience with outsiders was largely limited to interactions with missionaries, plantation managers, and colonial officers of either British, New Zealand, or Australian extraction. Contact with the wider world was routed through mission institu-

tions, with numerous young men educated in mission schools in other parts of the Solomons and the South Pacific. For others, avenues to experience outside Santa Isabel included signing on as plantation labor or ship's crew. In most cases, young men returned home after only a year or two away.

By early 1942, Santa Isabel was an island profoundly altered by conversion to Christianity, but only minimally affected by economic changes occurring elsewhere in the region. Because it was regarded as fixed firmly within the orbit of the Melanesian Mission, it had been largely ignored by the colonial government (except for the imposition of taxes initiated in 1921). No roads had been built and most transportation was by foot or canoe. No more than a handful of Europeans lived on the island—one missionary teacher (Emily Sprott, the widow of a priest), several plantation managers, and a district officer who occasionally resided at the district station at Tataba in the Bughotu area.

Their relative isolation did not dampen people's fascination with news of the outbreak of hostilities between Japan and the Allies. Since even the combatants were amazed at two great powers turning a remote chain of islands into a major battleground, it is not surprising that the Islanders may have been baffled by news of impending conflict. The representatives of the British empire did their best to put the Japanese advance into perspective. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, and with the Japanese military moving relentlessly toward the Solomons in January 1942, District Officer Donald Kennedy (see chapter 14) was given responsibility for touring the entire Western Solomons, including Santa Isabel, to instruct villagers about the likelihood of Japanese occupation. The message was essentially that Japanese forces might well occupy the area, forcing a temporary withdrawal of the colonial government, but the American military would not be far behind to assist with reestablishment of British rule. The story presented here refers to the government's (i.e., Kennedy's) instructions to evacuate coastal villages in the event of Japanese landings and to await eventual assistance from the Americans. People living along the coast, such as those of Buala village on the Maringe Lagoon, waited in suspense to see whether the Japanese or the Americans would arrive and what would happen next. The story focuses on just what did happen next: the arrival of Japanese ships in the lagoon. It is difficult to fix the precise dates of the events referred to in the text, but it is clear that the encounter occurred in the period

of July–August 1942, at a time of maximum uncertainty, when British administrators had withdrawn, the Americans had not yet arrived, and the Japanese were moving into the Solomons.¹

Prior to the Battle of the Coral Sea (4–6 May 1942), when Japanese plans for a naval invasion of Port Moresby were thwarted, the Solomon Islands played only a minor role in the much larger drama unfolding in Papua New Guinea. But, as Rabaul was turned into the largest Japanese base in the South Pacific—an armed fortress with port facilities and numerous airfields—pressure quickly mounted on the besieged British protectorate to the south. Only forty miles southeast of Isabel, the capital at Tulagi on Nggela was bombed repeatedly beginning in January 1942, hastening evacuation of European residents. These activities culminated in the unopposed Japanese occupation of Tulagi on 3 May. In anticipation, Resident Commissioner William Sydney Marchant had already moved his headquarters across the Indispensable Strait to Auki on Malaita. With the arrival of the Japanese at Tulagi, Marchant and most of his group, including the Anglican bishop of the Melanesian Mission, moved farther into the Malaita bush, where they remained until after the American counterattack (see chapter 15). A few former district officers and other colonial auxiliaries, supported by cadres of Solomon Islanders (mainly former police), began operations behind the lines on Japanese-occupied islands as coastwatchers, radioing reports on the movements of Japanese ships, planes, and troops (see chapter 14; Horton 1975; Lord 1977).

Two coastwatching posts were established on Santa Isabel. The first was set up by Geoffrey Kuper, a part-European medical practitioner, at Tataba, former site of the district office at the southern end of the island. Kuper was sent out with a radio set on 18 August 1942, less than two weeks after the American landings on Nggela and Guadalcanal, and just as the Japanese were moving into their base at Rakata Bay. At that time, only three other coastwatchers operated beyond Kuper in the critical area north of Guadalcanal—Kennedy on New Georgia (chapter 14) and two others on Bougainville. Kuper and his party of twelve Isabel scouts were kept busy rescuing downed American fliers² but soon realized they were too distant from the Rakata Bay base in the northwestern sector of the island. So early in January 1943 a second coastwatching station was set up by an Australian officer³ supported by Isabel scouts and former police. It was positioned literally on top of the Japanese base, located on a hill (Mogao) about four and one-half miles inland, overlooking

the Rakata facility. With these two radio posts as the nuclei for reconnaissance, virtually the entire island was mobilized to relay information about Japanese troop movements and assist with the return of American pilots during the year of Japanese occupation (Kuper 1946; Zaku et al. 1988).

The single wartime activity that touched the lives of many Santa Isabel people in their own villages was the rescue of downed pilots, both American and Japanese. The narrator of the story that follows referred to the evenhanded attitude of the time: American pilots were picked up and delivered to Geoffrey Kuper, and Japanese pilots were often returned to their base at Rakata Bay (although scouts on Santa Isabel were also active capturing Japanese pilots and turning them over to Allied forces). In the story, the motivation for this humanitarian practice is explicit: "fear" that one side or the other would regard the local populace as allied with the enemy and take retribution. The attitude of many Isabel people toward the war is best summed up in a local string-figure game called "big fight," which depicts two armies annihilating each other.

A small number of Isabel men, primarily those who had been police prior to the war, served as members of the Solomon Islands Defence Force,⁴ working closely with the coastwatchers in the day-to-day coordination of reconnaissance. One man in particular, the headman at Buala, was charged with organizing local surveillance of the Rakata Bay area and is remembered for his incredible success in deceiving the Japanese commander. He is said to have formed a friendship with the commander that gained him access to the full layout of the base. On repeated visits he noted the location of armaments and troops and relayed the information back to the Allies through the coastwatchers. His success in this deception has become part of island lore about the war (see Zaku et al. 1988) and has figured in written histories of coastwatching activities (Horton 1975, 146-147; Lord 1977, 166; Feldt 1979, 112; Rhoades 1982, 43). Isabel police or scouts also captured several Japanese pilots and, on one occasion, attacked and killed twenty-five Japanese attempting to return by barge to the Rakata Bay base (Kuper 1946, 6; Zaku et al. 1988; PIM 1973).

These more dramatic activities of the Isabel coastwatchers and scouts—capturing and attacking Japanese—make up a significant portion of the stories about the war that continue to circulate. Once I expressed my own interest in recording war stories, I was referred to surviving members of the main group of scouts as the source of

important recollections. But the story that is the focus of this chapter is somewhat less dramatic. It is about the experiences of ordinary people who encountered the Japanese and the interactions that followed. The narrator self-mockingly told how he chose to flee rather than face these warriors. His story has attained legendary status through frequent retelling and through being encoded in a ballad commemorating the same events.

The Story

When I arrived in Santa Isabel for the first time in 1975, I went to Buala village, the seat of the district government, to make the acquaintance of various local leaders before taking up residence in an outlying village. One of the people whose names I had been given was Nathaniel Hebala, the most respected chief in the area and third son of the island's first indigenous Christian priest, Hugo Hebala. In line with his reputation as the leading entrepreneur in local politics and business, Hebala quickly became my host, informant, and adviser. He also acted as advocate for my studies of language and "custom," suggesting appropriate people to seek out on points of tradition and history.

Although he frequently deferred to others on matters related to precontact traditions, Hebala talked enthusiastically about his own life history and the changes that have occurred on the island since he was born in 1913. During the many hours we spent sitting on his verandah, Hebala would frequently slip into a narrative mode and recall events of the past, either his own or that of the community. His stories often dealt with local history, how things had come to be the way they are, how church and government had come to the island, epidemics that once decimated whole populations, and, especially, World War II.

As a topic of anthropological investigation, war stories did not at first particularly interest me. Yet, Hebala enjoyed telling them, and others besides myself enjoyed listening to them. One reason these stories made for good storytelling sessions during my visit was that they established a link between myself and my hosts—particularly those who recalled the time other Americans first arrived in significant numbers. The villagers' questions about what my father had done during the war and my answers about his part in the European theater provided confirmation of some degree of mutual knowledge,

of possible connections between otherwise disparate worlds (see chapter 7).

However, the ease with which the war became the topic of conversations between Santa Isabel people and myself indicates that more was going on here than people reaching for some form of connection with an American visitor. Many stories and songs about the war circulate among Isabel audiences without the presence of an outsider. Some have become routinized through repetition and even ceremonial performance. During my second visit to Buala, Hebala arranged for a group of women to sing a number of songs deemed suited for the "anthropological record." One of these, composed by Hebala's eldest brother, was about the war. Like many such historical ballads, it commemorated the war era in terms of significant places and events, sketching relations among its key actors—in this case Islanders, Japanese, and Americans.⁵

When I returned to Maringe for a brief visit in 1983, I again found myself sitting on Hebala's verandah listening to some of the very same stories I had first heard nearly ten years earlier. Only this time I came with a specific interest in recollections of the war, so I asked Hebala to repeat some of his stories for tape recording. He gladly agreed and set about "setting the stage" for telling and recording the stories. That evening, he invited two other men known for their wartime experiences to gather with family members and assorted others in his house for a session of storytelling and tape recording. Once everyone was settled and the tape recorder situated prominently on a table in the middle of the room, Hebala launched into his narrative. The story is given in translation in the appendix.⁶

Hebala's narrative is built around one incident: the arrival of eleven Japanese ships in the Maringe Lagoon and subsequent events involving the people of Buala village. Hebala, whose house today sits about thirty yards from the lagoon shoreline, played a key role as one of two men who first made face-to-face contact with the Japanese. In other words, he is an engaged storyteller, reenacting his own experiences with a sense of drama and humor. Based on my recollection of his account of these events on other occasions, the recorded version given in the appendix closely matches earlier tellings. To summarize briefly, the story is about Hebala's encounter with the Japanese, followed by their coming ashore to collect food and water supplies. After five days they make a hasty exit as two American dive-bombers attack and sink several ships outside the lagoon. The narrative concludes with brief reference to the activities

of coastwatchers on the island. Although Hebala did not stop talking at the end of the text shown in the appendix, he did give closure to the story. Even though he had, at the end of the story, begun talking more broadly about the various fantastic events that occurred during the war, he twice framed the major topic of interest: the first encounter with Japanese. At one point he said, "That's how it was, we just saw the Japanese, the first Japanese to come here, in 1942." And, after briefly raising the topic of coastwatching and rescuing downed pilots, he again concluded, "That's how it was. That's all I know about. That's how we saw the Japanese when they first came."

The Ironies of Power

Like most stories of the war on Santa Isabel, this one begins with reference to the oncoming Japanese occupation. The list of occupied regions, including Bougainville and Guadalcanal, makes it clear that, at the time of the story,⁷ Isabel was inside the perimeter of Japanese-held territory. By stating that the rumored American counterinvasion had not yet occurred, the story locates its events in a period of heightened uncertainty when the colonial world was dissolving and people were waiting for the arrival of yet unseen forces. This uncertainty sets up a framework for the story's humor and irony as Hebala and his companion set out to greet the newly arrived ships, thinking they may be American.

The story begins to evoke laughter from its audience with the sudden revelation, conveyed by the storyteller's startled amazement, that the ships are Japanese. Of the two canoes that ventured out from different points to meet the ships, the larger one, with several men aboard, just kept on paddling, fleeing to one of the lagoon islands. This immediate, fearful reaction, fleeing into the distance, establishes the vulnerability of the local populace and sets the tone of humorous self-deprecation that characterizes much of the narrative. The rapid withdrawal of the larger canoe signifies local inabilities that seem all the more amusing for their exaggerated proportions in the presence of a major military force (cf. chapter 6). If the sudden departure of the large canoe is amusing, the panic and confusion of Hebala and his partner in their small dugout canoe are even more so. Once they realize their mistake, the duo suddenly begins paddling in opposite directions in an uncoordinated effort to flee. Hebala not only describes this confusion, but enacts it, with frantic paddling gestures accompanying the conversation in the canoe.

The humor, evident in Hebala's display of desperation, stems in part from the incongruous juxtaposition of a small dugout canoe and eleven Japanese warships. This overwhelming force establishes a sense of danger, as well as providing the background against which Hebala's response and those of others take on further meaning as the narrative progresses. The foreign military force is obviously an ominous and superior power, but the ultimate failure of that force to enter into enduring (exchange) relations with Maringe people creates an ironic counterpoint to the themes of fear and intimidation (see below and cf. chapter 10).

That the Japanese force was regarded as seriously threatening is undeniable. The sudden intrusion of warships and armed troops established the kind of imminent danger that frames many stories of wartime events. Hebala's narrative clearly portrays a life-and-death situation, not just by referring to the guns trained on him and his companion, but by quoting the characters' thoughts as they recognize that they may die but decide to proceed anyway (a standard rhetorical device in local narrative):

[T]he Japanese are looking our way and holding their guns like they want to shoot us. They say, "Come! Come! If you don't come we'll shoot you now." So, of the two of us, one man paddles [forward] and one man goes backward. "Hey! Man, now we are going to die!" "If that's the case, it doesn't matter if we die, whether we go back or whether we go on, we're going to die anyway." "Let's go ahead."

Of course, the narrator and his companion did not die. With a bit of what Americans would call "fast talking," the two paddlers made their escape back to shore. After telling the Japanese what they apparently wanted to hear—that there was plenty of food in the area available for the taking—Hebala and his partner were allowed to return to shore with the understanding that they should begin to gather food. Once ashore, however, Hebala "just ran away, to the bush," while the other man "looked all over the place for oranges."

Reciprocity Denied

Hebala's account of his interactions with the Japanese does more than describe a single tense encounter and a narrow escape. It condenses much broader understandings about relations between Isabel people and outsiders (cf. Basso 1979; chapter 3). Hebala succinctly portrays a posture of engagement with the Japanese occupiers that



Tulagi people selling grass skirts to sailors on the USS *Nicholas* anchored in Purvis Bay, 22 August 1943. (*U.S. Navy*)

was characteristic of the war era and evident in other Isabel stories as well. While seeming to comply with the powerful outsiders, Hebala and his partner perpetrate a deliberate deception that allows them to escape. An important element in this deception is the pretense of compliance, enacted as a gross caricature of the ignorant and foolish “native,” willing and even eager to give away food resources for the asking.

In spite of their fear, Hebala and his companion paddle forward in compliance with the beckoning Japanese. Hebala then responds to their inquiries about the availability of food with eager and rapid agreement, repeating “Ya, ya, ya” with an exaggerated nodding of the head. The interaction is portrayed as a rapid sequence of questions and answers in which the Japanese inquire about the availability of various foods and Hebala promises whatever they ask for—in

abundance. Hebala's answers, given without hesitation or qualification, exemplify feigned submission, displayed with the goal of staying alive:

"Are there any oranges (ashore)?"

"Ya, ya, ya, oranges!" . . .

"What about papayas?" they ask again.

"Oh, plenty of papayas in Buala."

"What about yams, chickens?"

"Oohhh, really a lot!"

That's how the two of us stayed alive.

It is significant that the opening scenario in this first encounter involves a transaction for food. Although this may seem incidental to the narrator's concern with saving his life, food and the transactions that surround it constitute the essence of the relationship (or lack thereof) emerging in the story between the Japanese and the people of Buala village. Food, or rather the exchange of food, is the primary medium for the creation and expression of mutual social relations in Isabel society (cf. chapter 15). The Japanese quest for food and their failure to enter into exchange relations constitute a denial of reciprocity that runs throughout the story. The Japanese, superior in military power, seek food, the very symbol of sociopolitical status and prestige in the context of Isabel traditions. However, as is well known in the Melanesian region, it is not food per se, but the ability to accumulate and distribute food among followers and exchange partners that establishes relations and accrues prestige to local leaders. The Japanese, in their pursuit of provisions, manifest an inversion of this principle by using their power to acquire food supplies rather than distribute them, failing to acknowledge or compensate owners.⁸ These actions contrast with the generous actions of the Americans, who are remembered for giving in excess (chapters 15, 17).

The denial of reciprocity implicit in Hebala's first encounter with the Japanese becomes increasingly flagrant as the narrative proceeds, underscoring the irony of the Japanese position: a military power lacking food and unable to establish an exchange relationship with its "hosts." The Japanese are depicted as proceeding single-mindedly in their quest for food, at first failing to give adequate compensation and later resorting to intimidation. After the Japanese initially present Hebala and his partner with cigarettes, sugar, and

tea, some Buala people (who presumably had not evacuated their village) send out a canoe loaded with fruit. However, they are disappointed in the response—the Japanese “simply didn’t pay, just gave cigarettes. A full canoe and they didn’t even pay, just gave cigarettes.”

While the villagers may be disappointed with cigarettes as a medium of exchange, matters deteriorate even further as the Japanese come ashore to replenish their stocks of fresh food and water. They begin killing chickens and forcing people to climb trees for coconuts. The quoted dialogue mirrors Hebala’s shipboard encounter. Requests for food are met with overwrought gestures of deference and compliance, signaling the absurdity of powerful outsiders extorting food through force:

“What about papaya, are there any?”

“Oh ya, there are.”

“Where are the chickens?”

“They’re here, you all eat them!”

So they just shot all over the place killing chickens. It didn’t matter that we were there, they shot all over the place.

Once again, as in the opening episode when Hebala and his partner engage the Japanese in conversation with guns trained on them, fear and intimidation surround transactions in the village. When the Japanese want coconuts, they force people to climb coconut trees to take them under threat of being shot:

“We want coconuts.”

We didn’t know how to climb up to get them, but they forced us.

“Climb up! If you don’t climb up we’ll shoot.”

They all just climbed up. Even if someone didn’t know how to climb up, he just went-up.

When the Buala people work for the Japanese, carrying buckets of water to fill up a supply boat, they are once again compensated only with cigarettes. In this instance, the medium of exchange is devalued even further as the cigarettes become soggy because people are compelled to carry two buckets at a time and are unable to smoke properly.

So then they came ashore in a big boat. “You all, we want you to take water [to the boat].” All the people of Buala carried water for the Jap-

anese. Cecil was the boss of people here for carrying water. They went to the stream, taking a bucket, two buckets per man. One Japanese followed, he was their boss. Then [he] put a cigarette in our mouths, and in Cecil's mouth he put two cigarettes. That's how it went, every cigarette got soaked because you couldn't hold it in your hand with two buckets. The cigarettes were completely wet in our mouths.

Here the Japanese officers' gesture at compensation becomes farcical. Their dominance is manifest in a rigid work routine (each person carrying two buckets of water) overseen by a "boss" who rewards people by inserting cigarettes into their mouths. The local "boss," Cecil, is doubly rewarded, or perhaps doubly demeaned, by receiving two cigarettes instead of one. The image of people adhering to such a meaningless regimen with only soggy cigarettes in return makes for one of the narrative's more amusing passages, reminding the audience, in the self-mocking tone characteristic of much of the story, of the absurdities that may be encountered in dealing with powerful outside forces. The hollowness of compliance with the water-carrying regimen is made obvious by the inability of the people even to smoke the cigarettes they are given. Not only does the compensation become worthless, but the apparent act of cooperation is exposed as a meaningless facade, requiring ungainly behavior without purpose or enduring social significance.

Deception and Denigration

The work for soggy cigarettes might seem to epitomize the submission of the Buala people to the powerful outsiders who appear on the scene and extract local resources easily, at will.⁹ Yet a series of deliberate deceptions enacted by the villagers at various points in the narrative suggests that this is not so, that they, rather than the Japanese, understand and manipulate the interaction. Ironically, the posture of submission or unthinking cooperation in large measure provides a vehicle for their manipulations.

The theme of deception runs throughout the narrative, especially in depictions of conversations between Japanese and villagers. On the one hand, the exaggerated offers of food, available for the taking, are an obvious manipulation, even if motivated by fear and a desire to escape from the dangerous intruders. However, the confidence of the Isabel people in their ability to manage their interactions with the Japanese is best expressed in their most direct decep-

tion: their concealment of two Europeans in the face of persistent Japanese questions about the whereabouts of "whitemen."

The pattern of deliberate deception emerging in the narrative crystallizes as the Japanese come ashore and begin asking about the presence of Europeans. The Maringe people were in fact hiding two Europeans (Emily Sprott, the mission teacher, and a plantation manager) at inland locations and ultimately transported them by canoe to the resident commissioner's outpost on Malaita. The story describes the way the Maringe people, in the person of their best English speaker, Father Henry, revealed nothing to the skeptical Japanese. Hebala's comment that, "actually we were hiding Miss Sprott; and Mr. Martin, we were hiding him at Kubolota" is an important statement about the island's ability to resist the intrusion of powerful outsiders, as is Hebala's earlier, more comedic description of how he faced Japanese rifles on board their ship.

In other stories of wartime encounters, strategies of deception emerge as a useful means of interacting with the Japanese. For example, the success of the Buala headman, Mostyn Kiokilo, in gaining access to the Rakata base by befriending the commander is well known. His deception began with the pretense that he was an uneducated "native," dressed only in a loincloth, who wanted to visit the Japanese to sell them fruits and vegetables. This is a prime example of a genre of deception stories, circulating in several of the occupied islands, where scouts or police acting as "natives" are said to have obtained valuable intelligence information about the strength of Japanese installations (see Nelson 1982, 199–200 for an example from New Guinea and Ngwadili et al. 1988 for Malaita). Kiokilo was so skillful that he became a regular visitor among the Japanese, who reportedly gave him a nickname and a military cap and allowed him extensive access to their base.¹⁰

In deception stories, Islanders engage the Japanese in interaction under the guise of "native," thus imposing their own definition of the situation. The contrast between pretense and reality is most clearly drawn in the case of members of the Solomon Islands Defence Force, such as Mostyn Kiokilo and former police, who were both educated and clearly working in the service of the Allied forces in the Pacific. These men repeatedly assumed the posture of the "simple native" in their contacts with the Japanese, as in the example of one armed scout working with the coastwatchers who recalled how he and others would plan their encounters with Japanese groups by first dressing in loincloths or tattered clothes and then

moving along in a loud procession pretending they had not noticed the Japanese until they were seen and called upon (Zaku et al. 1988, 34).

Epic Encounters: The War in Historic Perspective

War stories continue to be told in a variety of contexts, reflecting the broad significance of the war as a focal epoch in cultural constructions of Isabel history. Along with the arrival of Christian missionaries, the war is one of two subjects most elaborated in oral historical traditions. Within the longer, episodic view of the island's past, those two epochs mark major junctures in local historiography. Both periods are characterized by radical change induced by the sudden intrusion of powerful outsiders. In the case of missionaries, contact marked the beginning of deep and enduring transformations, while the effects of the war were largely temporary, followed by reimposition of the British status quo. As others have noted, World War II is commonly positioned as one of a series of historiographic signposts associated with distinct shifts in relations with outsiders, such as periods of colonial transition (Gewertz 1983, 133–148; Scaglion 1983; chapters 4 and 10).¹¹

While the two key periods of history are temporal indices structuring concepts of the past, they are also focal points for the elaboration of social meaning and concepts of self. The retelling of epic encounters with Japanese, like mythic accounts of missionary contacts (White n.d.), fashions images of identity out of scenarios of interaction with outsiders. War stories, like conversion narratives, are “good stories” (chapter 17) because they are, to use Thune's words (chapter 10), “temporal cassowaries”: representations of events that are at once anomalous and laden with cultural significance. It is instructive to compare the narrative examined here with stories of missionary contact as a way of illuminating its sociocultural significance within the broader perspective of Santa Isabel cultural history.

In certain respects, war stories and mission stories resemble one another as examples of a genre of contact narrative in Isabel oral literature: both portray heroic encounters between an indigenous protagonist and one or more outsiders in a life-and-death situation. Both represent their subject matter as a scenario of approach, resistance, and resolution. However, the war period is in large measure

represented as an *inversion* of the events and relations depicted in conversion narratives. Whereas acceptance of Christianity involved movement out of the bush into coastal villages, the war reversed this direction: evacuation of villages to return to the bush. This movement also entailed a reversal of certain key social transformations associated with conversion to Christianity. Whereas settlement in Christian villages involved consolidation of formerly dispersed families, the wartime retreat to garden lands once again splintered the village polity into smaller units. More importantly, the process of pacification associated with the arrival of Christian missionaries was obviously reversed in wartime, when the intruders brought not peace but violence. In both epochs, the elements of change (coast/bush, unified/dispersed, peace/war) are the same, but the transformations are mirror images of one another:

Christianity

bush → coast
dispersed → consolidated
warfare → peace

World War II

coast → bush
consolidated → dispersed
peace → warfare

Situating Hebala's narrative of war within this longer ethnohistorical context reveals greater significance for the irony of Japanese power discussed previously. When juxtaposed with the genre of missionary stories, the military power of the Japanese is analogous to the strength of pagan warriors: intimidating but ultimately ineffectual. In Hebala's story, the indigenous protagonist is Christian; the outsider is not. The outsider brings threats of violence rather than peace; and the native actor, rather than the missionary outsider, overcomes that threat. The significance of Japanese strength is further diminished by its disassociation from Christian notions of spiritual power, or *mana*, derived in part from religious belief and practice. Although the Buala people are forced to abandon their village church (used by the Japanese to interrogate Father Henry), they continue to hold communion ceremonies conducted by a local priest in the bush by the light of a kerosene lamp.¹²

The representation of wartime encounters with Japanese depicts more of a confirmation than a transformation of social and cultural life, which may explain why war narratives have not been incorporated in ceremony in contemporary society to the same extent as conversion narratives. The events of the war are much less the sub-

ject of ceremonial reconstruction than are the events of Christian contact and conversion—celebrated in speeches, songs, and skits performed on a variety of occasions (White n.d.). Unlike missionary heroes in conversion narratives, the Japanese in Hebala's story remain a nameless backdrop to a historical drama portraying a range of practices, from humorous deception to the ritual of Holy Communion, that mark continuous threads in Isabel selfhood. The confirmatory messages of the war narrative may be less salient than the depiction of transformation in missionary tales where narrator and audience identify with protagonists on both sides of the encounter: pagan ancestor and Christian hero. These contrasts in depictions of two key historical epochs illustrate differences in the sociocultural uses of history, such that events of the past are appropriated by historical representation (and self-representation) to the extent that they have cultural significance for the persons doing the remembering.

Conclusion

Although many individuals tell stories about wartime experiences, a few events and the narratives that encode them have gained mythic proportions by virtue of being repeated over time. I have examined one such narrative as a way of asking what it says about social history and identity and how it continues to stimulate the cultural imagination. The recollections of a first encounter with Japanese are a parable of Isabel selfhood. Portrayal of the encounter as a scenario of interaction creates images of identity that have continuing significance for contemporary audiences.

The story discussed may be "read" on several levels. Description of events that seem at one level to confirm the vulnerability and submission of Isabel people to powerful outsiders at another level establish their ability to impose their own definitions of social reality on critical encounters. The narrative's portrayal of Islanders' strategies of guile and deception in dealing with the Japanese, including the enactment of self-conscious images of the "ignorant native," depicts important understandings about the self in dealings with outsiders that have been useful throughout colonial history. The tropes of humor and irony highlight differences in power and forcefulness that, in the local cultural context, are more apparent than real. In contrast with portraits of the era of conversion to Christianity, the

narrative of wartime encounters confirms an indigenous (Christian) way of life and its ability to resist intrusions from seemingly powerful outsiders.

As Lindstrom (chapter 17) has noted for war stories still circulating on Tanna, the theme of *exchange* is the major motif of the narrative taken up here. But the absence of reciprocal exchange marks transactions with the Japanese and contributes to the essential irony of their military power. A further irony is revealed when the narrator observes that the Islanders' largesse was, in the end, reciprocated. When the Japanese ships that had anchored in the lagoon were attacked outside and three transports went down, much of their cargo washed back ashore:

Later we saw all the stray cargo of the Japanese coming [up on shore]. . . . We were fortunate to get biscuits, rice, all kinds of things like that came up on the beach at Kharuo. We just went to pick it up. Some gasoline drums, 44-gallon drums, were full of rice, fish, coffee, all kinds of things like that of the Japanese.

Appendix

Speaker: Nathaniel Hebala

Place: Buala village, Santa Isabel

Time (of recording): 2 July 1983

We heard about the war between Japan and America and we were really worried. "When will this war reach here?" Because we had heard, the government announced, "America will help us." So we waited and waited and waited like that. But what happened? Japan was already coming. They came and occupied Bougainville. They had taken Bougainville and they had already taken all of the Western Solomons. That's how [they] came. They reached Lungga [on Guadalcanal] and just took it over. They had already taken Lungga. Everywhere, from Honiara, Lungga, Tenaru, and places like that, the Japanese had already taken them. Then we started to wait. "When is America [coming]?" "Maybe America is just bluffing," we thought. Then all of a sudden eleven Japanese ships came and anchored here, in the lagoon here. So, we didn't know about Americans and Japanese, but we just heard "Oh! The Americans are coming now! The Japanese and Americans are coming now." "That

must be eleven American ships coming now! Let's go [out] to them." So one big canoe went out from Buala, from the Buala side. Then Belo and I went out in a canoe too, "[Let's] go to the Americans," we thought. But what happened? It was the Japanese. Belo and I went paddling, paddling out. But the other canoe, with about ten men, was also paddling. They recognized the Japanese flag and then went all the way to the island [on the other side of the lagoon]. "Hey, it's Japanese!" So [they] went to the island. [But] Belo and I didn't know. There is a man, Belo, his name is Alan Belo, and he lives at Kaori now. So the two of us were paddling along like this [makes paddling motion with arms]. Now we look [at one of the ships]. It had a Japanese flag, with a round sun. Now we're looking at it, "Hey! It's Japanese, man. It's not American. Oh, let's turn back!" Now we want to turn back. [But] the Japanese are looking our way and holding their guns like they want to shoot us. They say, "Come! Come! If you two don't come we'll shoot you now." So, of the two of us, one man paddles [forward], and one man is going backward. "Hey! man, now we are going to die!" "If that's the case, it doesn't matter if we die, whether we go back or whether we go on, we're going to die anyway." "Let's just go ahead." So we just go on. Go on, with the Japanese still pointing their guns at us. Now off we go, "Oh, it doesn't matter if we die now." [We] go on like that, go reach the ship at the place where the ladder comes down. Two men take two short ropes. As they look we think, "Oh! [that's] for tying us up!" "Now we are going to die." It [the boat] comes closer bit by bit. I pray a little. "Oh, we are going to die now," we think. Now the two Japanese come holding the two ropes. And they come and ask us, "Are there any oranges [ashore]?" So I answer first, "Ya, ya, ya, [lots of] oranges!" "What about papaya?" they ask again. "Oh, plenty of papayas in Buala!" "What about yams, chickens?" "Oohhhh, really a lot!" That's how the two of us stayed alive. "All right, you two go now, go quickly." [They] gave us cigarettes, gave us sugar, gave us tea. With that [they said], "you two go quickly, take this food now." We [thought] "Whew, lucky!" So we paddled [back]. I don't know when the big canoe that went all the way to the island came back. It was nighttime before it returned. [We] got back here, and Belo looked all over the place for oranges. I just ran away, to the bush. Because every family, everyone in Buala, had already gone to stay in the bush. The government order said, "Go right away!" It had been one month since the government told us "You all go [hide] outside [the village]." All the people here had

gone to stay behind a certain hill. Just a few men stayed. So now I went all the way [to the bush]. I was frightened because [I thought], "Oh, if I go I'm going to die." So then Belo came and started talking [about what happened] all over the place. Father Henry Vasula [priest and head of local school] and others were there. At which point [Father Henry said], "Oh, you all send all those things out [to the Japanese]." Then they took some canoes, taking oranges, because there were lots of oranges in Buala before, and papayas and things, and went. Then the Japanese said, "We are going to come to Buala, going to come ashore." So then they came ashore. They took that food, [but] they simply didn't pay, just gave cigarettes. A full canoe and they didn't even pay, just gave cigarettes. When they came [they said], "Where is someone who knows how to speak English?" But at that time, Father Henry was the only one who knew how to speak a little English. The rest of us didn't know how. When we talked to the Japanese, we just said, "Ya." "What about papaya, are there any?" "Oh, ya, there are." "Where are the chickens?" "They're [here], you all eat them." So they just shot all over the place killing chickens. It didn't matter that we were there, they shot all around. So then Father Henry and the Japanese talked in the church. "Are there any whitemen here?" "None." "No, there are some whitemen somewhere [around here]." But actually, we were hiding Miss Sprott [missionary]. And Mr. Martin, Nelson Martin [plantation manager], we were hiding him at Kubolota [near Buala], above Kubolota village there was a whiteman. All right, we were hiding Miss Sprott at Loghadou [inland from Buala]. We were hiding them then and wouldn't tell. Some of the Japanese said, "Oh, there are some whitemen here." "None." That's how it was. So then they came ashore in a big boat. "You all, we want you all to take water [to the boat]." All the people of Buala carried water for the Japanese. This Cecil [of Buala], Cecil was the boss of people here for carrying water. They went to the stream, taking a bucket, two buckets per man. One Japanese followed, he was their boss. Then [he] put a cigarette in our mouths, and in Cecil's mouth he put two cigarettes. That's how it went, every cigarette got soaked because you couldn't hold it in your hand with two buckets. The cigarettes were completely wet in our mouths. [We] went and tossed the water in the boat. Didn't put it in any tank, just put it in the boat. [They] came back [and said], "We want coconuts." We didn't know how to climb up to get them, but they forced us. "Climb up! If you don't climb up, we'll shoot." They all just climbed up. Even if some-

one didn't know how to climb up, he just went up, afraid of dying. That's how it went for one night and one day. Then one night Father Eric [Gnhokro] came. Because Father Eric was staying in the bush too. "Let's have Holy Communion." "Hey, that's hard, man." "Okay, if so, then (we'll have it) at night." He just lit one bottle [of kerosene], and he read from the book for Holy Communion, having Holy Communion at night. That's how we were for quite a while, until five days had passed. [Then] I think the Japanese heard that the Americans were coming. I think the Americans had already arrived. [They] told us, "Tomorrow we are going out [of the lagoon]." "Oh." "We are going out and there might be a big battle tomorrow." "What's happening, a big battle where?" "Oh, the Americans are coming, have already come. . . ." "Ya?" Now we were really worried too. In the morning we looked, because we were on top of a hill. Just all the men were there. We wanted all the women to stay outside [in the bush]. So we were looking when morning came. Couldn't see any of the eleven ships in the lagoon. Then all of a sudden, two Americans, two planes came. We looked up and [saw] a star [on the planes]. "Hey! The Americans are coming now, everyone!" But all the ships were just outside, off the coast here. Maybe the Japanese knew too, "If we stay in the lagoon, we'll all die." So now [they] go and separate. As we watch, the two Americans go following along the hillside here. We see them [and think], "Oh, the Americans are coming now, guys." "This is what we've been waiting for." "The Americans are coming now." The two planes go as far as Ghojoruru [end of the lagoon] and turn back. As we watch, the Japanese begin firing "brr, brr, brr, brr, brr." Now they are shooting, shooting first. As they shoot, we look up, because the shells exploded twice, once here and once in the sky for shooting the planes. We look up and it's completely dark, dark all over. "Oh, lots of airplanes!" we thought, but it was just the shells exploding. Then, we watch the American planes come down like this [motions with hand], go up like this, around like this, and go along, go down, drop a bomb and go up, shooting. Then this one large ship blows up and starts burning. "Oh! now one's burning." We just watch. It [the plane] goes around like this, comes back, and drops another one, two of them. Now another one blows up. "Oh, one is dead now." They [the Japanese] shoot all over, but the Americans are not high up, they're just going like this [motions with hand skimming over the floor] all over underneath [the fire]. If it went up like this [motions upward with hand], it was going to drop a bomb. So two

ships were already dead. It went on like that, and six all totally burned in one day. So then we watched for a long time and at supertime other planes came in their place. I think they [the planes] were from beyond Lungga, or were already at Lungga, I don't know. Two more came, replaced them between one o'clock and six o'clock, two came to bomb. Three more ships died. At night, they still went on fighting. Then we watched all the fires; the flames from the fires were like a city, burning until daylight. Maybe seven ships or something like that. Later we saw all the stray goods [cargo] of the Japanese coming [up on shore]. After one week all the loose goods came ashore, oil came ashore. We were fortunate to get biscuits, rice, all kinds of things like that came up on the beach at Kharuo [Maringe Lagoon island]. We just went to pick it up. Some gasoline drums, 44-gallon drums, were full of rice, fish, coffee, all kinds of things like that of the Japanese. So, a short time later, we heard that the Americans had reached Lungga. We heard a big battle, with guns blasting one week, we heard it, but all the noise of bombs and ships and airplanes really made us frightened and very worried. It went on, we heard, "du du du," "du du du du du" like that all the way through the night, until daylight, we still heard it, without letup. At night we saw those searchlights. We just saw them in the distance, like when the moon comes up. All the Americans were shooting up at all the planes coming over. Maybe three, four, five hundred planes, Japanese planes this time, went down, we didn't know. That's how it was, we just saw the Japanese, the first Japanese to come here, in 1942, or something like that. That's when we first saw the Japanese. We didn't see the Americans until the Japanese came to Suavana [seaplane base in western Isabel], then we saw the Americans that the Japanese at Suavana shot down. Then some people here, like Christian [Ko'uti] and Mostyn [Kiokilo], went to scout, to go around there and keep watch. If they saw an American crash, they came and reported to us and went to Tataba [district station, then location of coastwatcher Geoffrey Kuper]. If a Japanese crashed, [they would] take him to Suavana, just the same. We were afraid too. Lest they think, "They're on their side." Then the written statement of the Japanese circulated among us. In Maringe and Isabel it said, "Now we [Japanese] are natives, all of us are natives." That's what they said. "If you see the sun still going up like that [in the east], Japan is still winning." "If the sun goes up here, America is losing." "You all just watch." "When the sun comes up in the east, Japan will win completely." "If you see the sun go up in the

west, America will win." [Laugh. To GW:] Putting you [Americans] down [laugh]. That's how it was. That's all I know about. That's how we saw the Japanese when they first came.

Notes

This chapter has profited from comments and discussion by participants in the ASAO symposium and by members of a seminar at Pitzer College, where an earlier draft was presented. Comments from Jim Boutilier, Don Brenneis, and Lamont Lindstrom have been particularly helpful, as has my collaboration with David Akin, David Gegeo, and Karen Watson-Gegeo on related work at the East-West Center.

1. Documentary evidence suggests that the events described in the narrative unfolded during the course of several weeks. The oral account, however, describes a single visit by eleven ships over the course of five days, beginning with their unexpected arrival and ending with a hasty exit when two American dive-bombers attack and sink several of them. Whatever the case, we know that Japanese ships were present in Maringe Lagoon for about six weeks prior to an attack that sank three ships just offshore on 28 August (Marchant, 29 August 1942). Japanese warships and transports were probably present throughout this period—the same time that the seaplane base was being established farther up the coast at Rakata Bay.

Resident Commissioner Marchant kept a diary during the period he took refuge in Malaita (1942–1943). The daily entries consist primarily of a running record of reports coming in by radio and from scouts about happenings on the various islands. The entry for 15 July includes the note, "Report from Ysabel of transport aground Maringe Lagoon." And on 5 August, two days before the American invasion, Marchant wrote, "Letters from Ysabel show Maringe Lagoon being extensively used by Jap warships up to 30 July." A bombing incident off the Maringe lagoon, most likely the one referred to in the narrative, is referred to in Marchant's 29 August entry as simply "3 Jap ships sunk off Maringe 28th."

2. Santa Isabel was one of the most active areas for the return of Allied (mostly American) pilots. According to the count compiled by Kuper (1946; and see Lord 1977, 293), the Isabel scouting network returned twenty-eight pilots, about one-fourth of the total number picked up in all of the Solomons. The large number of pilots to be rescued was due in large measure to the notorious accuracy of the anti-aircraft gunners at the Japanese base at Rakata Bay. Despite his meritorious service, Kuper, born on Makira, was the only one of sixteen coastwatchers manning radio posts throughout the Solomons never given an officer's commission.

3. J. A. Corrigan, succeeded later by A. M. Andresen and then F. A. Rhoades.

4. The Solomon Islands Defence Force (SIDF), referred to as the "youngest combatant unit in the Empire" (Horton 1975, 246), was hastily formed in 1939. A small number of Solomon Islanders were trained with Australian assistance prior to the war, but most of the force's four hundred or so members were made up of former members of the British administration and the Solomon Islands Armed Constabulary. Most recruits of the SIDF who saw combat action did so as scouts

assigned to Allied units. Although few in number and short on experience, they proved to be effective fighters.

5. The text of the song, recorded on 6 March 1975, is given here in translation:

The Japanese enemy
 has reached Tulagi
 with their strength
 with their guns
 Lungga and Tenaru
 Kukum and Point Cruz
 Maravovo and Hautambu
 The Japanese went first
 Tulagi headquarters
 Lever Brothers at Ghavutu
 Girl's school at Bungana
 Io dere (refrain)
 Capital Tokyo
 They came out from
 Seat of the big fight
 That has arrived
 Airforce weapons
 Warships, submarines
 These things, friend
 Surround the Solomons
 Now this is good
 To walk around
 In the Solomon Islands
 Ko hi'e hi riri'eo
 [You] come here to die
 Stay alive until
 Arrives the Honolulu airforce
 Ko hi'e (refrain)
 Airplanes above
 Submarine below
 Come to take back
 The headquarters at Tulagi
 You watch out, my friend
 America is facing you
 They want to drink you
 They want to consume you
 Run for your life
 Whether we die or live
 That's how we are, fathers
 Ko hi'e hi riri'eo (refrain)
 At first you asked for a sign
 From your home Tokyo

But left to live or die
Ko hi'eo (refrain)

6. The original story was told in Solomons Pijin. I asked Hebala to speak in Pijin so that his narrative would be accessible to a wider audience (see Zaku et al. 1988). Pijin is well suited to recollections of the war era, a period when it was often spoken in intercultural contexts. Furthermore, Hebala frequently uses Pijin in conversations with persons from outside the Maringe area. The Pijin version of the narrative, with interlinear English translation, is available from the author upon request.

7. Reference to the Japanese presence on the north coast of Guadalcanal (Honiara, Lungga, Tenaru) fixes the date of the arrival of Japanese in Maringe sometime after mid-June 1942, when the Japanese established themselves on Guadalcanal to begin building the airstrip that was to be taken over and renamed Henderson Field by the Americans.

8. As other chapters make clear (e.g., chapters 3, 8, and 12), relations between Japanese and island peoples in many areas deteriorated as the war progressed, and troops cut off from their supply lines were forced to exact food and labor by coercive means. However, the events described in the story occurred at the outset of the Japanese occupation, and the troops at the Rakata Bay base were evacuated before severe hardship set in. In fact, as the appendix story reports, they left behind large quantities of rice and clothing.

9. No doubt the story of Buala villagers cooperating by assisting with the reprovioning of Japanese ships could be told in many ways, depending on who is speaking, who is listening, and so on (see chapter 7). As the narrator says, the Buala people had been told to evacuate their village and avoid contact with the Japanese. Yet a certain number, including village leaders such as the Anglican priest Father Henry Vasula (Hebala's brother), remained to talk and even work with the Japanese who came ashore. Not long before, the district officer and coastwatcher Donald Kennedy (see chapter 14) had reported that he was worried about anti-British sentiments among the Isabel people (Marchant, 19 May 1942).

10. The story of Mostyn Kiokilo and his spying on the Rakata Bay base attained enough notoriety to merit mention in written histories of coastwatching in the Solomons. For example, Horton (1975, 147) reported Kiokilo's activities (referring to him as Alik) as follows:

Alik looked a complete fool, but he had a very shrewd brain and any amount of courage. When the Japanese first established themselves at Rekata Bay he walked into their camp with fish and vegetables for sale. He was immediately seized and taken before the commandant. . . . Eventually the commanding officer was satisfied of his innocence and made him a personal friend . . . allowing Alik to move all over the camp and see the gun positions, the barracks and other arrangements.

In a locally produced collection of mimeographed stories about the war, a man from Maringe writing about some of the same incidents described here also gave prominent mention to Kiokilo's exploits (Palmer 1980, 10). Not all accounts of Kiokilo's remarkable deception, however, are so clear about just *who* he was deceiving. The last of the three Isabel coastwatchers, F. A. (Snowy) Rhoades, who took over the

Isabel post just after the Japanese evacuated Rakata Bay, wrote in his diary, "Unfortunately a native from Meringi [*sic*] lagoon who had been Corrigan's master spy . . . had apparently been doublecrossing both Corrigan and the Nippon Commander. He had entry into the enemy lines at all times and had a good idea of their main bivouac areas. However he never gave us these as a bombing target and most of the bombing of Rekata Bay was futile" (1982, 43).

11. It is certainly the case that the war serves such a function in Isabel maps of history. As I took a census and recorded migration histories, I soon realized that people repeatedly invoked the war as a before-and-after reference point for their own life events.

12. It should be noted that the priest referred to in the story was not just any priest. Father Eric Gnhokro is widely remembered as a man of exceptional *mana* or spiritual power who performed numerous "miraculous" feats during his time.

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CHAPTER 3

The Source of the Force in Marshallese Cosmology

LAURENCE MARSHALL CARUCCI

For the survivors—on their forty-second *raan*
in *kamolol* 'day of thanksgiving' (March 1986)

THE FOCUS of this volume on World War II brings out, perhaps more than any other single topic, both similarities and dissimilarities in the experiences of Pacific Islanders with outsiders. In many societies war experiences had a considerable impact on how Islanders came to conceive of interactions between themselves and others (see chapters 4, 6, and 10). The effects of those experiences differ from one society to another according to the ways events are constructed in local interpretations. Yet in spite of these dissimilarities some commonalities unite societies in disparate regions of the Pacific. Comparable ways of interpreting displays of military might are particularly notable in this regard.

The way in which Islanders lend supernatural cause to displays of power is a theme that ties this paper to several others in the volume (see chapters 9 and 15) and cuts across regional boundaries. Enewetak people see this power integrated into their daily lives in ways that become manifest in their portrayals of themselves and others (see chapter 8). Marshall Islanders construct portraits of "we" and "they" much as Northern Apaches portray whites in a series of enacted "jokes" that are simultaneously a type of linguistic play and deft sociopolitical polemic (Basso 1979). Like those of Apaches, each Marshallese sketch is necessarily intersubjective. Who "we" are is only defined in relation to who the Japanese and the Americans are. Simultaneously, the sketches collapse past and present, creating images of the war in relation to a currently understood worldview and in accord with conceptualizations of a young, unmarried, male ethnographer who, for some, at least at times, was a *ribelli* 'white man' or 'American'.

It is difficult to talk with an Enewetak person for long without mention of “the war.” Even in the minds of children raised on Ujelang, separated by thirty years and one hundred thirty miles from the battle, the war is very real. Therefore this chapter begins with narratives that focus on elementary questions. How do Enewetak people conceive of World War II? And, as part of the same query, how do members of this group envisage themselves vis-à-vis Japanese and Americans who selected these isolated atolls as a stage for conflicts of international consequence? Given the resultant destruction, it is amazing that Enewetak residents construct positive images of Americans when encounters with them have been ambivalent at best and often negative. One might be tempted to explain the phenomenon by reference to Polynesian *aloha*, or its Marshallese equivalent, *iokwe*, a notion that focuses on love, respect, welcome, empathy, and caring. It is an idea clearly involved in the Enewetak worldview, yet is too general to have much explanatory value. For one thing, it fails to address the question of why Americans and Japanese are typified differently. A more useful approach is to consider narratives and indigenous explanations of the war and, through an analysis of their content, seek to answer the question.

Indigenous Understandings of “The War, Number Two”

The war came to Enewetak late in the 1930s. According to local exegesis, the first indications were subtle shifts of treatment and demeanor on the part of resident Japanese entrepreneurs. Within a short time, Japan began to make Enewetak into a military base.¹ Well before 7 December 1941, Enewetak was preparing for war:

At first, when the warriors began to arrive, they took a little space, there, in from the pier on the lagoon side of Mokoni. It was in that spot that they stayed, inside the pen—sleeping houses, cookhouse(s), outhouses, gardens—everything was within the fence, that is why we called it “inside the corral.” Only the wharf and the road [to the pier] were outside; but all of us, Marshallese, we lived outside as well, surrounding [on the periphery]. Nonetheless, we worked for the military men. All the time there was work [to be done]: cooks, cleaners . . . some cleaned the sleeping quarters, some cleaned the dining spot, others cleaned the cook area, and some the latrines—we (exclusive) had to take the feces and urine collected in buckets to the gardens and use

it to fertilize plants. Yes, the Japanese were a certain type. In one way they were very smart, but in others they were crazy.

The thing was, we (exclusive) had to work, work all the time; and if your work was not suitable—[they would] beat you. Hit you. Yes, all the time they beat you. So then we knew—you could work hard and work [harder], and they would thrash you: with hands, with belts, with sticks [boards]. A few only, they liked, such as that man Maku. He worked in the kitchen, they gave him cigarettes, and other things; and they made him whip us. . . .

So life then, it was difficult; it wasn't like now with the whitemen [in this case, Americans]. You see that, the Japanese, they needed assistance. They made us work and treated us like children. They struck us to the point of impossibility when our work was bad, but they also taught us because we would grow up to be like them, Japanese. The Americans, however, they are very kind and smart. But such is their intelligence they do not need Marshallese. We are like shit to these foreigners [Americans]. They give us a new way of governing and take off, because they do not need us. We will never become Americans. Now we quarrel like cats and rats because this new way of law is unsuited. We need someone to help us and to straighten us out because we are not like Americans, we are still uneducated [crazy], like children.

The multiple images of this sketch help clarify the highly relativized context in which Enewetak and Ujelang people have come to think of Americans, a theme to which I shall return. First, however, it is necessary to place these images in the context of the war as viewed from an outer island, for our own assumptions about World War II directly contradict the processual picture in the minds of Marshallese. The above quotation was generated when my informant wanted to "tell me a little about the war."² It returns to comparisons of Americans and Japanese (the subject of my friend's earlier conversation), and it places a mental boundary around the beginning of "the war"—the Japanese military buildup on Enewetak (see Tobin 1967, 28).³ World War II has two conceptual beginnings: one, recounted above, predates 7 December 1941; a second, more tightly constrained "war" refers to the battle of Enewetak, a time that begins either with obvious preparations for battle in January 1944, with American reconnaissance planes and submarines a week or two before the bombings, or with an "in the trenches" account on 4 February 1944. None of these images of "the war" corresponds to American understandings of World War II, which begin

with the war in either Europe or Pearl Harbor and end with the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"The war," in Enewetak eyes, means either a direct existential encounter among Japanese, Americans, and Enewetak people on Enewetak Atoll, or it refers to processes of Japanese and American militarization. According to the latter, commonly expressed view, the war that began in 1939 has never ended; it has only moved from place to place. This astute interpretation is based on an experiential apperception, one in which American military personnel took Enewetak, first from the Japanese and then from the Enewetak people themselves, who were moved to a camp on Bijili and Alembil (small Enewetak islets), to Kwajalein, back to Bijili and Alembil, to Ujelang for "permanent relocation," out to sea to witness nuclear tests on Enewetak (and prevent exposure to nuclear fallout on Ujelang), and eventually, beginning with short visits in the late 1960s, back to Enewetak (map 1). All of these moves were carried out under the direction of the United States military.

The perception of unending war also relies on an ancient Marshallese model of warfare in which *pojak* 'preparedness' or 'preparing for' is a critical phase of war (see Kotzebue 1830; Hager



Kwajalein Islanders being evacuated by Americans to a camp on Enilapkan Island, 1 February 1944. (*U.S. Army Signal Corps*)

1886). Enewetak people consider all of the nuclear tests on Bikini and Enewetak as part of a larger project that made the United States not only the strongest military power on earth, but kept them *pojak wot im pojak* 'ready still and ready' and 'extraordinarily prepared' for all skirmishes. All conflicts (Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Middle East) are viewed as a continuation of the war. When a visiting Peace Corps member suggested that the United States had lost the war in Vietnam, listeners rejected his interpretation in favor of their own more pervasive processual perspective that allows Ujelang residents to make sense of continued United States interest in Enewetak and Kwajalein. One person, for example, explained away the visitor's suggestion in the following way:

Oh, yes, perhaps Americans lost one battle [in Vietnam], but they won many others; when the war settles down there, it only appears elsewhere. And the warriors are prepared to go in and extinguish it. And when no one moves there, in Cuba or another [place], the fighters remain, so when they begin a battle elsewhere, in the Middle East and around those parts, they [the soldiers] are still ready to quell the fighting.

Or another says:

These battles, there are many even today, and the war, it still goes on. Like the fighting on Enewetak. It began on Hawaii and then grew. They moved to Kiribati and then to the Marshalls, then they came to Enewetak and ruined it, and then moved onward to Pohnpei and Saipan and those places. And after Japan they moved onward to that place they call Korea and afterward to Vietnam. You see that, they haven't finished fighting [or haven't finished the war], they only move around from place to place; . . . and all the time they [the warriors] have to remain ready.

The war that came to Enewetak is the same one that continues today. It involves a United States preparedness that involved Enewetak for thirty years. Yet, instead of bitterness, Enewetak people feel a certain relief. Having conceptualized the future in terms of ancient wars with other Islanders and in terms of daily abuse under the Japanese war effort, many view the overall encounter with Americans in a positive light: "We were fortunate, they [the American military] took Enewetak, but they could have killed everyone."

Rearranging Forces: They Could Have Killed Everyone

The second Sunday of March on Ujelang and Enewetak is called *Raan in Kamolol*—‘Day to Be Thankful’ (or give thanks). As anyone will explain, “it is the day we came out of the holes,” and was originally celebrated on the first anniversary of the end of the battle of Enewetak in 1945, a tradition that has continued for forty-five years. As a ceremony of commemoration it has become a core symbol for Enewetak people that reaffirms their solidarity in the shadow of the sacrifice of nearly 15 percent of their number. With subsequent population increases, only about 11 percent of the 1983 population actually experienced the event, but the yearly recounting of their stories reconveys the apocalyptic nature of an occurrence that altered their lives.⁴

In the course of the ritual, the war is relived. With each narration, the battle is given a new symbolic shape that survivors as well as their children incorporate as a significant part of what it means to be an Enewetak person. The formal part of this celebration takes place at church with a *tikon* ‘deacon’ or elder of the church who lived through the battle briefly recounting the scene. Tears are shed by other survivors not only for their dead kin but also for their remembered terror. In the staid tradition inspired by New England missionaries, hymns reshape sorrow into themes of thanksgiving. On Ujelang, the community divides into three groups to present songs. Residents who lived through the battle on one of three islets—Enewetak, Meden, or Enjebi—form the core of each chorus. Since their repatriation on Enewetak, they have been joined by a fourth group whose membership consists of the now-aging group of secondary school students who witnessed the war on Pohnpei.

All four sets of survivors are supported in their singing by relatives born after the battle. As with most ritual events, though, each resident has relatives from various groups. Since the overall intent is to create a sense of continuity and atoll solidarity, it is important that everyone participate in the celebration. Those born after the battle may affiliate with the group of their choice, but children nearly always follow their mothers and fathers while young adults often select the group of an aged relative who may not witness another *Raan in Kamolol*. Food is collected, prepared, distributed, and shared after the service by members of each of the four groups.

The remainder of the day is spent visiting, sharing with fellow village members scenes of the past, checking on aging relatives and

newborns. The day recreates many of the activities of *Niu Yia* 'New Year's Day' a few weeks earlier, though reasons for each celebration differ. Both are rites of renewal and intensification. Both conjoin representatives of the past and of the future, but *Raan in Kamolol* has a group of survivors to create vocal and visual enactments of the event. Their stories concentrate on warfare, helplessness, and death. They transport listeners back to a time of terror, when the very existence of Enewetak was tenuous and community survival was miraculous. The survivors, those who transmit the tales and shape their content, themselves become signifiers of continuity and renewal. Their stories construct events as they are recalled from Enjebi (or Lujor), Enewetak, and Meden (the three residence islets at the outbreak of the battle). Those who were on Pohnpei as young men and women also contribute stories, although the Enewetak tales are most significant. Everyone has relatives who witnessed the war on the tiny sand spits of their homeland. Their accounts differ in the intensity of despair, but all reaffirm the helplessness of Marshallese in the face of the awesome grandeur of the event, the incredible display of power by its perpetrators, and thankfulness for having survived.

Each of the following three sets of stories re-presents "the war" in its narrowest connotation: that is, they construct events from *bata eo* 'the battle'.⁵

We (personal exclusive) who were on Enjebi, perhaps we were the most fortunate. Like the others, we knew the vehicles [planes] were coming because for three or four days previously they had flown toward us to view the atoll [on reconnaissance flights]. They had also seen the submarines, the Enewetak residents, but we did not know that until later, after the battle, because it was forbidden to sail. So damaged [inefficient] were the Japanese that they had to use our canoes to chase the subs! They also used them to move troops . . . yes, Japanese military men; like the one time the man, Lematen, had to sail from Meden, pick up a group of warriors on Runnit, and bring them to Enjebi. So large were the sailing canoes at that time that he brought forty soldiers to Enjebi. But still, to use the canoes to chase submarines on the ocean side of Ananij and those parts! So crazy [ludicrous] were the Japanese, perhaps they thought they could capture a sub with sailing canoes! They were really unprepared. They knew before. They knew they could not win because of their unpreparedness. They needed another half of a year to ready the atoll for battle, but the Americans, perhaps they knew [this] and they moved toward us still, hurriedly. Yes, when the [American reconnaissance]

planes began coming, they were still working on the airfield. It was nearly ready and planes were landing, but we still worked on the periphery. And then they made us cut coconuts and prop them up like big guns and cover them up with brush so the Americans would think they were totally prepared. Such was the craziness of the Japanese. But the Americans were not deceived. They came anyway and began dropping bombs, first off on Enjebi. And planes kept coming, not from Kwajalein, but from the north, the island they call Wake, because it is lined up with Enjebi and very near the northern islets [of this atoll].

On that day, nothing moved. It was still the midst of darkness and then, the sun had not even appeared and we heard the engines, many, and we knew it was the time. . . . When the bombs began to drop we were frightened and we went to ask if we could run—off downwind to the islets to the south. And we were fortunate because the “colonel” was kind . . . and [he] told us to take the children and women and fly. We hurriedly went back and revealed the news, and took only an adze and a machete and moved from that place. We were fortunate, and we thanked God he was kind.

We flew in a leeward direction to Mijenkadek, on to Kidenen, on then leeward still to Lujor, the islet that is the property of Lijemlok [female clan head], and then hid and remained still and watched.⁶ We stayed there for [some] week(s) until the Americans came. [Shaw, Nalty, and Turnbladh (1966, 197) noted that the marines found a group of twenty-five natives on “Canna” (Lujor) while setting up artillery positions to support the Enjebi offensive.] And we were frightened and thought they would kill us, but when they saw we were natives (*kanaka*) they grouped us together and asked about Japanese and then took us to the ships. So by that time there were families and families of ships on the lagoon side of Enjebi, and they took us there and asked us questions, and gave us food. But by then, the war on Meden and Enewetak was completed, and we had witnessed it, and so great had been the damages we thought no one was still alive.⁷

Other versions mention specific details of Enjebi and yet others the awesome impression of the bombs, most of which were dropped on Enjebi to destroy the airfield and the Japanese bunkers:

[A]nd the vehicles [planes], there was no end to them, they flew toward us still and always bombed the islet, not only the north but the southern sectors as well. Sometimes it was like night, the sky was so dark, and then red and white when the bombs exploded, reflective, so bright you would never see properly [be blinded]. You would be amazed. In some places a coconut stood, there, and one [way] over there; but in others they were all gone. Not even one remained. . . .

As Enjebi people subsequently learned, their relatives in the south suffered more severely:

Perhaps we on Enewetak first knew that the fighters were coming for we had the observation tower, and at night we saw the lights over in the shallow pass, near Biken, because the Americans had discovered that pass and came through it at night, maybe, and into the lagoon to picture the atoll. They, those whites were smart, for they knew that the Japanese had set charges in the pass. But maybe they also came in through the small pass, by Jeptan, there where it is very deep. There were also charges [in that pass] but they were not deep so maybe the submarines came in below them to tour. But when we told the Japanese, "Oh, there are lights in the pass, way over in the leeward part of the atoll," they did not believe it. They thought we were seeing demons and laughed and struck us and said we were stupid, so we shut up; because they could not see the lights and we did not like it when they beat us. . . .

It was on Enewetak that they first landed. We had seen the planes picturing, and then even the Japanese believed they were coming; and my friend, a low person [Japanese soldier] came and said goodbye, that we would all die soon, and that he loved us very much. And then, on that day, very early at dawn, I went out to the ocean side to defecate, and they appeared. Families and families of ships. One upon the other, and combined, so long were they, like an island from here to Meden [about five miles], and the landing craft had already started to leave the ships. And then I ran back to the holes, over there nearby, on the ocean side toward the windward of Lojitak and Elelen [land parcels in the central part of Enewetak islet] and revealed the news. And the women and children began to cry and said we were all going to die. But then the old man Erneĵ came from the other holes and we all prayed together and shared our love. Then we sang a song from the hymnal and separated from one another in the various holes.

By that time the shooting had already begun on the lagoon side, and the Americans at first were losing because they stayed there a long time, on the lagoon side from Lojitak leeward to about here [Lobet]. Perhaps it was difficult because, even though there was no precipice like now, they were in the sea and coming ashore, up toward the Japanese bunkers. But then the planes came and started to battle, and the warriors from the ocean side came ashore. Within minutes they found us, and I could see them coming because I kept sticking my head out of the hole to watch and smoke . . . and the captain [leader] saw me and began to raise his gun. So great was my fear, I [indicates rapid retreat into bunker with head]. Then, nothing happened, so I stuck my head out just a little and [again indicates quick withdrawal into hole]. But the captain wanted me to come out. He does this thing

[Marshallese wave to come in direction of speaker], so again I stick my head out—maybe you say I was crazy, but then I was a young man—and he signals that kind of thing again. So, slowly, I come out of the hole. But then the fighters raised their rifles and I flew, hurriedly returning to my place. In a bit I came back out, a little only, and the captain said this sort of thing [signalled the men to keep their guns down], and he came toward me slowly. I also went, but when he started to raise his gun, I hurriedly retreated. Then he stopped, and took his radio and called the ship, and in a moment they answered. He asked, “You speak English?” and then I responded, “Some word” because we had learned from the missionaries and from that man Ernej. And then he said, “Wait” and again called the ship. Then he said, “How many you?” and I said ‘Many’ [single quotes indicate Marshallese *qua* English (code switching), even for captain’s utterances] and pointed out the hole to him. So he said, ‘Are there other holes, kanaka?’, and I pointed to the leeward and said ‘Another two’. And he said, ‘Wait’ and called again. But you see his gun was still ready, not lifted, but this kind of thing [at the hip]. So I was really scared, knees trembling and throat [the seat of the emotions] unsteady. And then he signalled for me to come over, and he took his rifle and did this sort of thing [stood it on the butt] and signalled for me to come over [Marshallese signals—come closer]. Nonetheless, the other soldiers, they had their guns readied, and I was frightened. He took out a cigarette and signalled me to take it. So I stayed there, about four *baar* away [15 or 20 feet] and thought, maybe now I will disappear [die]. But the others [in that bunker] did not know any English, so I went ahead then and took the cigarette. He lit it for me, because I was so nervous. I could never hold it steady, and said, ‘You wait’. Because there is going to come a Japanese speaker, and then, as soon as he arrived, in maybe five minutes, he spoke to me and asked about the others in the hole and about the Japanese.

And I told him all the Japanese were there to the downwind, but maybe they already knew, for those who had landed on the ocean side had met the others there to the windward and come down [leeward] and gone past us and were fighting farther downwind. [This was probably a Marine reserve battalion that had landed on the lagoon side and crossed the island to support the flank of the “pinned down” First Battalion (Morison 1951, 297–298).] And he asked about the other Marshallese, but when some soldiers went to see, they had already been discovered by others and they came in a group to join us. They were crying and shaking with happiness to see us, but also sad, because the old woman [Lijani] had been killed with a fragment that entered the bunker, and the old man had also been damaged, there in the leg.⁸ And the others came in the hollow, there where it was low,

and in a few minutes they took us to the lagoon shore along a windward, northward, and lagoon-tending route and then we boarded and went to one of the big ships in the lagoon. Again they asked about the Japanese, how many, and where were they, but mainly they fed us and gave us clothes, and checked the wounds.⁹ By that time the Japanese were gone [doomed]. Another group of Americans landed on the far leeward end of the islet and were making the Japanese abandon their trenches [bunkers?]. Windward, they unearthed them, toward the others [Japanese troops]. We could hear the fighting, but it lessened, and perhaps they [the American troops] met and combined in the area of Bakaen or Larej; and maybe the last Japanese stood there near the house of the old lady [a mutual grandmother] and thence to the ocean side and farther downwind around the place they call Lokieb and around there with Leibual, because it was in that area that the final sounds were heard. . . .¹⁰

But we were lucky. It was the people of Meden who were unfortunate.

The struggle on Meden, the last and least important islet to be taken, has received less attention from military historians than have the others. For Enewetak people, however, it remains the most important symbol of the war precisely because it captures the senseless brutality of battle. A scene of holocaust, Meden presents a case of marked destruction. But it also contradicts the treatment others received in the hands of the Americans. Marshallse resolve a generalized positive portrait with the harsh handling Meden residents received by attributing the latter to a fiendish personality. But the misguided acts of the perpetrator have left an indelible stain on an otherwise incredible image of high regard in which Americans have been held.¹¹ In the eyes of those who lost close relatives in the battle, these acts seem even less forgivable. (Like most of the others, the following account was reconstructed from notes immediately after the storytelling session; the rest were transcribed from audio tapes.)

For those of us on Meden, perhaps it is lucky we are speaking still today because, in only another moment, we would have been gone. It was that man on Meden [the battalion commander] who was very *lej* [ferocious and unpredictable], bad and worse yet [than bad]. So great was his uncontrolled anger that in a moment he would have killed us all. From the beginning, those of us on Meden were unfortunate. To begin with there were ships, lagoon and ocean side, and planes helping from above. From all directions the damage was inflicted. If you wanted to 'go' [run], you had to dig, for there was no other place open

for escape. From dawn to dusk they shot at this islet. At the finish, there was not a single coconut standing. Also on Enewetak it was almost the same, but the two were not equal [in intensity]. It was on Meden that the whitemen, the soldiers, exhausted their total strength. All of us were in the holes. Anything not in the holes disappeared. But even in the shelters there was damage. That man Lekomta, the reason he is damaged today results from the holes; fragments of shells destroyed his vision. So much harm was done, he was fortunate to still be alive. And others also died in those holes, some from fragments, but almost all after the soldiers landed. You see, there was no boundary to the warring aspect in that man's throat [the commander's "heart"; in this respect his attitude is seen as inborn, a core feature of wild males, unshaped by culture (see Carucci 1985)]. In the holes it was awful. We were hungry and thirsty, but no one could go out. If you traveled outside you would disappear. So the hole was also bad because we had to pee and shit inside, even desecrate the face of close kin. Then in their coming, the warriors were not straight in their work. They came to the shelter of ours, guns ready, and looked toward us inside. So great was our fear that we were all in a corner, like kittens. And then they yelled and threw in a hand grenade.

[LMC: Did they really see you? The thing is, they knew you were Marshallese?]

They knew! The soldiers called out to the leaders, "Kanaka; kanaka!" and waited until they responded, and then threw in the hand grenade. Such was the measure of their damage [mental impairment].

Well, at that time we knew we were gone [dead].

[Long pause—smokes—reflects] Perhaps it was a bad explosive. When it burst, the whole shelter was torn apart. So powerful was the thing one could never stand. Earth fragments struck us [*pekoti*: used for those struck with bird droppings], but the others in the other half, they died. All the force of the explosion went over there. *Iokwe* 'love, empathy, sad recollection' [Uses endearing kin terms to list those who lost their lives].

Afterward, we did not move, but stayed there for awhile amidst the dirt and sand, and then they returned to check, and they took us out and stripped us with the bayonets on the fronts of their guns, like some sort of game [entertainment], and then they took all of us to the field and lined us up and prepared to shoot us. We trembled, so great was our fear, but still they pointed guns at our heads. And then they tied cloth around our heads so you could no longer see in front of you and readied us to be slaughtered. Perhaps some did not want to shoot us and told the colonel that they did not wish to, but he made them raise their rifles. They quibbled, and maybe that person [their leader]

was mad because they answered [spoke back to him], and he became enraged. Then we said, "Okay, perhaps we are gone now," and some started to cry like old women at the announcement of a death, and others began to pray; but all of us trembled.

We stayed there a long time. They called the ship. We waited. They spoke again to the ship. And so on it went. And afterward, they took the blindfolds, and took us to the ship, and gave us fatigues, and food, all kinds of food [see note 9]. But for some days we did not see the others [from Enewetak and Enjebi], so we could not yet determine who was alive and dead.¹²

These three accounts are taken from a series that represents indigenous recollections of the battle of Enewetak. They differ from most in that they are relatively general accounts that recreate the battle as a process. Many other narratives give detailed fragments about specific aspects of the war, often as an example of how things should or should not be accomplished. Another genre consists of accounts by those who were not a part of the battle but have come to know it as a critical phase of "our era," "the time of Enewetak people." Even those who did not experience the war directly still feel they have participated in it. It is an existentially real part of the present, separate from the ancestral past.

Each of the accounts details the ominous grandeur of the event and the incredible display of force by the United States military. The apparent ability to impose that force not only at will, but also quixotically, forms a core element of discourse. These things are all part of seeing Americans as the parallel of traditional conquerers writ large—that is, as sacred (and foreign) chiefs like those who ruled the Marshalls and many times attempted to take control of Enewetak and Ujelang. The mythical template for sacred chiefs derives from the tale of Lewoj 'that man, the [original] place', or 'he who accompanies' and Lanij 'that man, god', primeval first rulers of earth. Several other accounts of battles between Enewetak or Ujelang people and invaders from the east reinforce the images of chiefly strength. Like Hocart's typification of Fijian ruling chiefs as stranger, guest, and heavenly god (1927, 1929, 1970), Marshallese high chiefs are both foreign and sacred. This generalized description of chieftainship, as Sahlins (1985, 81) reminded us, gains importance not as "the rationalization of power" but, instead, "as the representation of a general scheme of social life."

The lens that allowed Americans to be construed as sacred chiefs took time to focus. It relied not only on gifts of food and offers of care

but, additionally, on an image of incredible strength and physical distance. The resulting framework of interpretation was, for Islanders, simultaneously mythical and pragmatic (see Sahlins 1985, 66). The overpowering strength of the Americans, not only in relation to the Marshallese but also vis-à-vis Japanese forces on Enewetak, left no question as to the supernatural foundation of their force. It took years, however, to make sense out of the battle (at least the precise sense rendered in the narratives). During that time, impressions were worked into an ideology that could explain the force displayed in battle in terms that demystified Japanese and Americans in relation to indigenous Islanders. This process, which has been going on for forty years, relies on images of the war as an experienced continuity, not as a finished event.

After the Battle of Enewetak

The war in its narrow sense ended on Meden or, for a few school children, on Pohnpei three months later. The 47th and 820th Divisions carried out a strike on Pohnpei on 28 May though reconnaissance flights began in early February (see chapter 12). Captured Japanese military bases were useful to American troops and Enewetak became one of the most important. From Enewetak, troops were shipped out, either southward or westward. For a while naval personnel even turned eastward—to the Marshalls—to “clean-up” atolls that had been leapfrogged in the rapid push toward Japan. For example, Bikini was occupied on 30 March, more than a month after Enewetak had been secured (Bickett 1965; Morison 1951, 313). During this period, the view of America as a source of sacred force was celebrated and enforced. Obedience and enjoyment were simultaneous, for under the auspices of the navy, Enewetak people were moved first to Enjebi, on 25 February (see HOE n.d.), then relocated to concentration settlements on Aoman and Bijili (two small islets), where they were fed and “watched over” or cared for. Through both physical and social distancing, the image of the Americans as sacred chiefs developed.

The “Native Island” settlements created an unusual sort of chiefly arrangement. Enewetak and Enjebi people reconstructed their communities in small villages that lacked the division into reef-to-lagoon family land parcels. For the first time, some people lived on lands not their own. Capricious high chiefs in the Marshalls were

believed to rearrange land holdings at will, and after the recent displays of military might, "a kanaka would be crazy to question" the desires of the United States. More unusual were the types of exchange relations set up with the conquerors. At least since the late nineteenth century, traditional high chiefs in the Marshalls had made occasional rounds of the atolls they controlled to collect tribute (Doane 1861). Local Enewetak chiefs imposed no levies but held land and asked *kajor* 'workers' to help them with copra-making tasks. In sharp contrast, American military personnel required obedience but exacted no material goods or services. Eventually, a brisk trade in handicrafts was established, but the basic prestations, food and clothing, moved entirely from "chief" to "commoner." This contradicted indigenous sensibilities, but, in the long run, it was worked into the emerging explanatory ideology:

The things that we took over there, coconuts and pig, and chicken, and fish, and flour [bread], and rice, all kinds, these things they took and revealed their thanks. But later we saw them on the beach, damaged, disposed of. All kinds [of things], they [the Americans] throw out, for they add nothing. Such is their strength, they do not need them.

This conception of Americans contrasts sharply with images of the Japanese, who, as part of their colonial policy, required Islanders to be industrious, reprimanded them when they were not, and also taught them. By allowing Micronesians to work toward becoming citizens, and by offering them the channels to do so, Japanese violated traditional understandings of the chief-commoner relationship. This is evident in numerous statements that categorize Japanese as "being like us," "thinking more like us," even "speaking a language like Marshallese—it is not difficult to learn, as is English." In contrast, Americans are said to be "gods or chiefs [*iroij ro*] of the earth," "another kind than [are] we," and "smart, but their intelligence is different from our own."

These different images of Japanese and Americans point up affinities between Marshallese and Japanese and distinctions between Enewetak people and Americans. The ideal, but distant, attributes assigned to Americans are based on a lack of contact and a distribution of wealth with few expectations of return. In contrast, Japanese lived with Enewetak residents for nearly fifteen years. The positive and negative typifications are tied closely to actions and events that

reflect this active association. For some Islanders, resident Japanese remained distant and formal, but, with time, others were able to establish closer ties. Most of the closest associations were established with lower echelon military personnel early in the 1940s. In contrast, the Americans isolated Islanders in distant camps and restricted interactions. Regulations were relaxed after the war, but it was only a short time before Enewetak people were placed in an even more insular state on Ujelang.

Along with these divergent experiences, the longer-term effects Japanese and Americans have had on local social organization differ decidedly. Active political and economic interests in the area created the conditions for a new diversified hierarchy under Japanese rule. Many point to the effects of democratization and American schools as a source of transformation in the Marshalls, but on Enewetak, all of today's magistrates and community leaders were educated in Japanese schools. Moreover, those Islanders who supported Japanese trade stores with large copra crops found an equally significant source of power. With the arrival of the military, an increasingly specialized array of positions was made available, for the Japanese attempted to incorporate Marshallese in the war effort. Often, this introduced a hierarchy that the community found unacceptable, and, with the possible exception of local chiefs, those who lorded it over other Islanders were faced with ostracism in subsequent interactions.

In reconstructing a vision of the war, stories about internal divisions and seeking out favored positions are overwhelmed with images of community solidarity. As Tobin (1967, 16) suggested, distinctions between the Enewetak and Enjebi communities were all-important. Living in close association on Aoman and Bijili, then for many years on Ujelang, undoubtedly created the sense of oneness that residents now feel. But after the fact, the battle has become the unifying, coherent force. The unequal privileges bestowed in the Japanese war effort, and the variable punishments, were suddenly transformed with the arrival of the Americans. Though there are piecemeal reports to the contrary, it is said that when the Americans arrived they were welcomed by all. As part of this symbolic attempt to separate opposites, no one claims to have done more than was required to support the Japanese in the final days of the conflict.

In contrast, United States forces wanted Islanders out of the way, an approach that would become policy in the coming years. By island accounts, "only a few days passed" until the Americans built a temporary landing field on Enewetak islet, a task that had taken

the Japanese a couple of years to accomplish on Enjebi. Within weeks, they repaired the Enjebi landing strip and began to use it as well. More critically, Americans had no use for local labor, and "Native Islets" were as distant from the central activities bases as possible. In parts of Melanesia local laborers could be useful to the war effort (see chapters 15 and 17). On large islands shrouded with vegetation they could also act as scouts, tracing movements of the Japanese, and in many places becoming active fighters as well (see chapter 14). But on an atoll with a land area of less than 3 square miles, cleanup was not a problem. Instead, American forces moved the Islanders out of their way.

On Enewetak, the war era was extended with nuclear tests. Battles moved elsewhere, but "the war" did not end. Military personnel remained. What had been a staging ground for the march through the western Pacific toward Japan became a testing ground for battles that would likewise "secure the peace and freedom of all mankind" (see Carucci 1980; Kiste 1974). The official rhetoric that led Marshall Islanders to agree to relocate temporarily also gave Ujelang people reason to think of the war as an ongoing project. Project Crossroads (a development program in disguise) would demonstrate to the world the ferocity of the force that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The resultant fear would be enough in itself to save the human species from the annihilative potential of that same force. In theory, only two small groups of Pacific Islanders would suffer.

On a world scale, the nuclear demonstration model failed miserably, leading instead to arms proliferation. However, Enewetak people experienced the awe and the fear that others could only witness secondhand. During this phase of the war, while they were exiled in a permanent settlement on Ujelang, they had further opportunities to reconfirm their images of American strength. Eventually, the ties between nuclear bombs and sacred force would be elaborately symbolized in the yearly renewal celebration called *Kūrijmōj* where piñata-like planes, rockets, and bombs contain wealth displayed for God (Carucci 1980; Alexander 1979). While nuclear standoff came to be called "the cold war" elsewhere, for Ujelang people this distant, yet very personal, war had a much more intense emotional impact. Nowhere is this more evident than in stories of the first tests of hydrogen devices:

After explaining the tests, he [the district anthropologist] returned, went away from us, on a boat belonging to the military people. We

took only a few clothes and left everything else behind and closed up the houses because they said the trip would be fast. And it was still closer to evening when we left and straight away sailed in a southward direction for Kosrae and those parts. We spent the entire evening and all night at sea and sailed off, way off there to the south, and those ships are fast, not like the Marshallese vessels [trade boats], they do about fifteen or eighteen knots. And then early in the dawn we stopped, and drifted a bit, and floated with the bow of the boat to the windward, and then that man [the government representative] and the officers took us to the edge of the vessel and pointed off toward the north. Perhaps they had prearranged the time, for in just a little while we saw it. First like a cloud, white, but enlarging, up, away; then, as if they set ablaze the entire earth—colors: red, blue, purple, all colors of the rainbow, but stronger. Up higher and wider, until the entire sky to the north was filled with colors.

And then they told us it was Enewetak, one of the bombs, and we began to be sad, for we knew it was gone. After some minutes, then we heard the sound, like thunder, but louder and it stayed. And we again saddened, for the sound revealed the truth: perhaps Enewetak was gone. And we did not hear talk of the atoll for many years, until now, recently [perhaps the late 1960s], and it only revealed to us our own thoughts, that island, the island of ours, was gone.

This event, in November 1952, was another phase of the war for Ujelang residents that was simultaneously close to their hearts (throats) and far from their lives. Of the many explosions they had witnessed during the war, this one was much greater. It served to confirm the images of great power that Enewetak people had built up about Americans, an image of untouchable, distant, might reinforced by the lengthy exile on Ujelang. Demonstrations of power and physical distance only increased the culturally conceived separation of colonizer and colonized. Micronesia's sole value to the United States was strategic, and interpersonal contact, especially with outer islets, was minimized. Whatever interactions there were came through a localized administration that operated on a shoe-string budget. Requests from the district anthropologist had to travel from Ujelang to Majuro, then to Saipan, then through the Department of Interior. There were no direct government ties (see Wolf 1966, 77).

How do we know that Enewetak people think about relations with the United States in these terms? Is not the account a reflection of the anthropologist's position and suppositions? I think not, though

clearly a Japanese anthropologist would be given representations of a different shape (see chapter 7). Enewetak people, like all Marshallese, encode the present using materials from the past. They derive current relevance from stories of the past that inform how, in indigenous terms, earth comes to be empowered. These accounts deal with chiefs and commoners, foreign beings from the sea and sky, and the residents who have long inhabited the land.

One sequence of such stories deals with Etao, the sly one, typically considered the "trickster" of the Marshall Islands (see Carucci 1983; Beidelman 1980). Etao visits numerous atolls of the Marshalls and at each performs different sorts of deeds. Traveling from the Carolines, he first visits Ujelang, where he is upset that women will not share their arrowroot. He urinates on the arrowroot and makes it bitter. Since that time, arrowroot has required intensive labor to make it edible, whereas previously it could be eaten like a potato. This explanation of women's suffering is based not on sexually unacceptable behavior but on lack of generosity—which on Ujelang is a quality controlled by female-headed extended families. On Enewetak, his next stop, Etao teaches the chief how to fish and performs other deeds. Not properly reciprocated, he steals the chief's pillow, a bag of arrowroot flour, and runs off to Bikini. Various landforms are created not only by Etao's footprints but also by the falling arrowroot. The chief, chasing after Etao, rips the bag. Although Etao escapes, some of the arrowroot drops to the sea, creating a renowned shoal area between the two atolls, a marker for sailors and reputedly a location where a wayward voyager can dive for drinkable brackish water. The shoal also divides the Marshalls into patrilineally and matrilineally inherited chiefly domains. While Etao deals with other chiefs in the Ralik and Ratak chains, none of them pursues him beyond the reef and out of sight of his atoll. Their right to rule comes through lines of women, localized sources of power contained within the perimeter of an atoll.

Other sorts of primordial empowerment occur at each of Etao's stops, the final one in the Marshalls being Mili. There, Etao finds the chief's daughters very attractive and, after trying various ploys to get them alone (each plot foiled by the old chief), he settles on a cooking scheme. He leads the old chief to believe that being buried in an earth oven will cure his minor ailments. After Etao magically demonstrates the feat, the chief agrees to be buried in the oven only to become the cooked complement of the staples that surrounded him in the oven!

According to the tale, Etao escapes from Mili with the beautiful daughters and sails for Kiribati and then on toward Fiji. But several versions continue the tale. Etao leaves Fiji for America (or stows away aboard an American vessel and is taken to that "island"), where he is asked to consult with the government (as he has done, quite properly, on nearly all the atolls he visits). Once in the United States, however, Etao is captured in a bottle! He is only allowed to secure his release if he agrees to help the government with its experiments on planes, rockets, bombs, and spacecraft. In this way, the sacred force that is involved in empowering the Marshallese universe is co-opted by the United States and becomes the source of the force wielded by the military in the ongoing war that makes the United States, in the worldview of Marshallese, "the strongest [country] on earth." At the same time, that empowerment maintains a Marshallese heritage. The strength that manifests itself in military might does not come directly from the great (missionary) God. It is channeled through the trickster Etao, who is constantly able to turn the tables on established chiefs. Etao's path from west to east retraces the steps of primordial Islanders who first came to the Marshalls. He continues his route, eventually being out-tricked by the stealthy Americans, far to the windward. At the same time, Marshallese become figurative ancestors of the Americans (and current Islanders become collateral kin) by weaving part of their substance into the physiological and geographical path traveled by Etao to America.¹³ From their Biblical mentors, Marshall Islanders learned *A ro etā burueir re naj jolit ene eo* (or *Re naj jolit lōl*) 'the meek shall inherit the land' (or 'the earth') (Matt. 5.5). With the high chiefs having claimed rights of access to the land, however, by Marshallese reckoning, what better way to secure one's inheritance than through established claims to a primordial place on the path that leads to the source of the force.

Notes

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1. According to Bickett (1965), 5 September 1941 marked the beginning of Japanese military development on Enewetak. Morison claimed that the "Japanese made no military use of it [Eniwetok] until November 1942" (1951, 283). Residents, using birth histories, place the beginning of the war effort in 1939 or early 1940.

2. The narrator, Lemijkan, was a male in his teens at the time of these occurrences. He attended the Japanese school in Pohnpei, where he witnessed the battle. A superb storyteller, his rhetorical ability to make the listeners feel they are part of an event makes up for the way his stories may bend the truth or come up with "one kind of thought, solely his own." In this case, his story corresponded closely with others (though Maku contended he was a Japanese favorite, he failed to mention that he whipped other Islanders) as well as drawing a comparison between Japanese and Americans. Others often accused Lemijkan of being out for his own gain. In this instance, though, he was saying that the Japanese style of governance, while dictatorial, was more suited to Marshallese than the American *laissez-faire* approach, a theme that he reiterated in various forms on several occasions.

3. "The war," unmodified, conjures up images of World War II since the only prior wars anyone can remember are stories of interatoll wars that ended somewhere between 1840 and 1875. Even the oldest residents can only reconstruct these battles from narratives they heard when they were children from witnesses of those battles.

4. In 1983, 85 of the original 132 survivors were still alive; 21 people were killed during the battle, but in intervening years the population has grown to 744.

5. While indigenous accounts agree with those of military historians in general outline, many versions of the battle exist. Shaw, Nalty, and Turnbladh (1966, 591) noted a number of "disagreements of official records with journals and reports," and Enewetak accounts are equally varied. In general, Enewetak people construct their narratives to show how a series of events supports a common theme. When two or three participants are present, it is not unusual to have minor disagreements over sequencing. These are dealt with as trivial points hardly worth mentioning. For example, a storyteller may respond to an interjection about the sequence of events, "Oh, yes, this fellow is correct. It is all the same, though, because the thing that was difficult was . . ."; in other words, the reason for including the event was to support a larger idea about how tough life was during the war.

6. "Property" is a poor translation of "land-class object," since ownership is held in common by all members of Lijemlok's bilateral extended family and is cared for by the current living members. Several possessive classes are selected out of the universe of possibility by the Marshallese language as being particularly important, and land is one of the most critical (see Bender 1969, 18-22). While the extended-family ownership of a parcel is often mentioned, the narrator Jobaba may well be reminding me that this is land to which his family has special rights and is therefore a most logical place to flee to. On the other hand, since the rights to this islet are critical in current disputes about the division of trust-fund monies, he may also be telling me how important this parcel was in the Enjebi past.

7. This account, by an Enjebi man who was about sixteen at the time of the battle, connects two tellings of his story of the battle. Older residents claimed that he was too small to know much about the war, but, in fact, his accounts are among the most complete overviews of what happened to the Enjebi people. His narratives cover several aspects of the battle process and contain, in synoptic form, the critical

features of many other accounts that focus on particular events. While some of his stories stress the sensational in comparison with others of the genre, this one is notably mundane.

8. The historian's ability to create events of a certain shape is evident in the following account: "One interesting episode occurred on the nineteenth while the infantry were disposing of one underground entrenchment after another. After a grenade was dropped in a hole covered by a palm frond, the sounds of a Christian hymn emerged. Investigation revealed a native chief with several companions (all uninjured). Several others were in a nearby shelter. In a typical GI reaction, primary attention was temporarily given to a sociable exchange of souvenirs and cigarettes" (United States Navy 1944). All Enewetak accounts disagree with the injuries that resulted from this grenade and with the relative levels of sociability and fear in the encounter that followed.

9. In indigenous terms, feeding and "caring for" were critical to the way in which Marshallese accepted Americans as "good people" (something like Marshallese conceptions of themselves). Similar ideas are common in other parts of the Pacific (see chapters 6, 8, and 10). On the other hand, being perceived as chiefs required, as well, the maintenance of distance and the display of strength, concepts of person that developed gradually as "the war," in its broadest Enewetak sense, continued.

10. Some Enewetak people considered the stories of Maku, the narrator, to be distorted and egocentric. His critics contended he was two-faced for having maintained a close relationship with the Japanese and then rapidly switching loyalties when the Americans arrived, all for personal gain. This narrative is told in terms of Maku's own contributions, but it also conveys a good sense of how the battle of Enewetak transpired.

11. American hands-off policy has meant a minimum of interaction at the interpersonal level. This lack of contact is in part responsible for the positive image Enewetak people hold of Americans, an image that has been tarnished to some degree by contacts made during Enewetak's resettlement.

12. I have selected this account, by Lekomta, a respected older man whose wife's family has substantial landholdings on Meden, because it contains nearly all of the most commonly mentioned features of the Meden offensive. His wife wandered in and out during the telling of this version of his story and added occasional sidelights or correctives. I originally heard Lekomta give his recollections of the battle during *Raan in Kamolol*, but I asked him to retell the tale for me.

13. During my first stay, Ujelang residents constructed a parallel pragmatic ploy by proposing my marriage to a local woman (a member of the Enewetak ruling line). A close relative explained, "You see, when you return and become president (evidently an easy task in his mind!), you will take her; and then there will be the offspring of the two of you; and then there will be our possibility [of ruling], *adan maron* in America."

(LMC: "Whose possibility?")

"Ours [inclusive]. The Ujelang people. We [inclusive] will be the chiefs of America!"

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CHAPTER 4

Echoes of Massacre: Recollections of World War II on Sapwuahfik (Ngatik Atoll)

LIN POYER

UNLIKE most other communities described in this volume, the people of Sapwuahfik (formerly Ngatik Atoll) were far from the front lines of World War II (map 1).¹ Even when war came to the central Pacific early in 1944, the eastern Carolines were never invaded by Allied troops, and Sapwuahfik itself was not attacked. The people of Sapwuahfik suffered little of the trauma and physical devastation reported for the Marshall Islands (chapter 3) or the southwest Pacific, and they did not experience the mass movements of foreign troops and war materiel that had such an impact on the people in those areas. But the war nonetheless affected the people of Sapwuahfik. Today, they recollect their own experiences and transmit those of their elders in the first stages of the absorption of this global event into the ongoing stream of the local understanding of history. In this chapter, I indicate how the people's memories of World War II reflect continuing cultural and historical concerns of the Sapwuahfik community.

The focus of my field research in 1979–1980 was the recollection of Sapwuahfik's nineteenth-century past; I did not intensively collect accounts of World War II. Except for a few collected in casual conversation, those that I have for the most part result from conversations in which an informant and I pursued a chronological framework as he or she explained to me the unfolding of the island's past. Interviews on specific historical topics generally began with what the speaker knew of aboriginal life on Sapwuahfik, then moved through nineteenth- and early twentieth-century oral history, usually tracing some theme important to the speaker, and concluded with discussion

of World War II, the transition from Japanese to American control in Micronesia, and comments on life in the American era. My interest, in these formal interviews, was explicitly historical. I was speaking with people who, in the context of these conversations, were also interested in the process and meaning of history and the significance of particular historical events. The resulting dialogue provided me with important clues about the nature of Sapwuahfik understanding of the past. In the case of World War II narratives, it directed my attention to how these stories select and reflect themes common to the presentation of other aspects of Sapwuahfik history and identity. As I have shown elsewhere (Poyer 1985), what it means to belong to Sapwuahfik today has a great deal to do with the Islanders' vision of local history.

In 1837, the entire male population of Sapwuahfik was massacred in an attack by a group of European and American sailors aided by warriors from the nearby island of Pohnpei (see Riesenberger 1966; Poyer 1983, 1985 for details). Following this destruction of its people and culture, the atoll was gradually repopulated by deliberate and accidental immigrants from Pohnpei, the Gilbert Islands, the Mortlock Islands, Europe, and the United States, who joined the surviving women and children to create a new cultural community. During this period, the new population of Sapwuahfik began speaking an English pidgin, derived from nineteenth-century Anglophone sailors' speech. Men of the atoll still use this language in certain situations; their ability to speak English was to be very important during World War II, when it gave them privileged access to American military personnel. Late in the nineteenth century, the atoll population converted to Christianity, closing a period said to have been filled with anarchy and violence. In the modern understanding of the meaning of Sapwuahfik history, the 1837 massacre is "read" in one context as a punishment of the aboriginal people as heathens. This punishment was followed by the voluntary acceptance of Christianity on the part of the reconstructed community, which rejected sorcery and other sinful practices and was, in exchange, rewarded by special supernatural protection. (I have condensed and simplified enormously here; a more complete discussion is in Poyer 1983.)

On Sapwuahfik, identity is culturally constituted; it is not based on a presumption of biological unity or a great depth of tradition. The shared history of descendants of this new atoll community began in the years immediately following the massacre and continues into the present. I have argued elsewhere that history is central

to the symbolic construction of cultural identity on Sapwuahfik (Poyer 1983) and that the 1837 massacre is the key historical event, reconstructed in oral traditions that maintain a vision of the massacre for contemporary identity. As Price (1983) described for the Saramaka, references to massacre-era events and persons are a touchstone for understanding modern life on Sapwuahfik. Yet this was not the last traumatic event to affect the atoll. In the Islanders' vision of the past, several marked periods and important events followed 1837.² As with many Micronesians, the historical eras recognized by the people of Sapwuahfik mark the changing of colonial regimes, though the specific dates and rubrics do not correspond exactly with Western dates for the beginning and ending of each colonial power's hold over the islands.

These locally recognized historical eras are as follows:

ansou en mehn mahs (*mahs, mahs*) 'the time of the ancient people (long, long ago)'

ansou en mehn Spain 'the time of the people of Spain'—the Spanish era

ansou en mehn German the German era

ansou en mehn Japan the Japanese era

ansou en mehn America the American era

lel rahmwet 'until today' (this is a term of variable meaning; its specific time reference depends on the theme pursued by the speaker)

When a person from Sapwuahfik recounts a series of events, or compares the form of a social institution over time, these eras constitute the temporal framework in which information is presented. Note that the event of the massacre is not explicitly mentioned as a watershed in this listing, though its status in marking off *mehn mahs* from the modern era is both implicit and explicit in the entire corpus of historical tales told on the atoll.

In the same way, World War II, though not an era in itself (eras are identified by the dominant foreign political power in the region), serves to mark off the period of American control from earlier post-massacre history. That its structural role in dividing "then" and "now" matches that of the massacre in dividing the "people of long

ago" from the modern population of Sapwuahfik can be supported by several similarities between local historical treatments of the massacre and of World War II, revealed by a study of oral traditions associated with each. Both involve the violence of armed attack; each is a case of invasion by foreigners from the outside; each is followed by a perceived reward—that is, the massacre by the eventual arrival of the much-prized Christian message, and World War II by the entrance of the materially wealthy American government onto the scene.

Though I argue that they are structurally similar in terms of ethnohistory, World War II and the 1837 massacre differ, of course, both in scale and in kind. For the people of Sapwuahfik, the massacre is the key event, the archetypal act of destruction and creation of their community. World War II—despite its incalculably greater destructive force elsewhere—affected the atoll with only a shadow of the massacre's violent impact. Seen in light of the local vision of history, World War II events echo certain salient attributes of the massacre. Understanding the meaning of those events depends on understanding the people's view of themselves and their history, a view predicated on local interpretations of the 1837 massacre (chapters 2, 10). In the rest of this chapter, I present what is preserved of World War II events in the personal and community life of Sapwuahfik.

The Japanese Era

The period of Japanese control began in Micronesia in 1914 with the Japanese naval takeover of the area, which was officially sanctioned by League of Nations mandate in 1921. Japanese interest in the islands was primarily economic and, in later decades, military. In the Caroline Islands, the greatest impact of Japanese colonial policy was on the high islands. For Sapwuahfik, this meant Pohnpei. Sapwuahfik itself experienced the early decades of Japanese control mostly in the form of increased visits by traders, augmentation of the amount and variety of purchasable goods, the assignment of local men as government representatives, regular censusing and announcement of government regulations, and widespread though nonintensive schooling. Pohnpei, by contrast, saw a large influx of Japanese nationals, intensive development of agriculture (especially the production of rice), construction of roads, government build-

ings, wharves, and a municipal center at Kolonia that included waterworks, an electrical generating plant, and, in the later 1930s, military installations. During the height of hostilities in November 1943, Pohnpei was the site of a Japanese airfield and seaplane base, as well as a center for supplies, fuel, and the restaging of troops (Morison 1951).

The people who remained on Sapwuahfik knew a few Japanese in the context of everyday life as traders or visiting representatives of the colonial government. Those who met Japanese through such sporadic contact offer little today in the way of recollections or ethnic stereotypes of them. In contrast, men and women who lived on Pohnpei during this time were usually there either as employees of Japanese entrepreneurs or officials or, as the military build-up got underway, as conscript laborers. They developed familiar and in some cases intimate relations with individual Japanese and readily provide anecdotes and summaries of how they felt about them. In interviews about the Japanese era, the people of Sapwuahfik usually distinguish between the “good times” of the early years of the Japanese presence and the “hard times” of the years of military build-up, climaxed by the war.

In Japanese times, that's when I was a man, starting at about age eighteen [i.e., in the early 1920s]. There was a time, at the beginning, that it was very good, because there were friends, there were different kinds of work, and money, and things to buy weren't expensive, they were cheap. Well, so we worked, and time passed, and it was good. Time passed, and then came the time that we call *daidowa* ‘war, dispute’ [from the Japanese] when the war of America and Japan was going to take place. That was when we began to have difficulty, because they would come and take away the young men of Ngatik to go and work at their places of war. So, we went along to that place [Pohnpei] to make houses, places to stay during the war, over there, we went along and did that until the war was done. I stayed until the time when American planes flew over, and they started the fighting, the war, on Pohnpei.

This man (born in 1903) also contrasted the Japanese era with the period of American occupation (bear in mind that he was talking to me, an American):

We lived under the “law” [using the English word] of the Japanese, which is the reason we went along and lived there [on Pohnpei] and

could simply die, for we lived under Japan's rule. Until the Americans came, and kept coming, and the time came that the Japanese begged for mercy; well, apparently [then] we were free. The Americans came to Pohnpei, and made it good, everyone was free. Americans came and made it so that all were free, and were walking around [at liberty]. If you wanted to work, you worked. If you didn't want to work, you didn't work. If you wanted to sell your land, you sold it. If you died, then you died. It was up to people [what they wanted to do].

The strictness of Japanese law is widely remembered by those who lived under it. Particularly recalled today are the prohibitions on alcohol production and consumption by Islanders:

No one could flout [the law] by drinking alcohol. If one obviously had been drinking, they would beat him until he suffered, they would almost destroy his life. They would whip him with a whip—a rope, or some such thing . . . kanakas were afraid of the Japanese. Their laws were very strict.

Certain stories about life in the Japanese era encode negative feelings about this colonial power succinctly and effectively. One man, who had in his youth worked as a house and office “boy” (his word) for the Japanese administrator on Pohnpei, told me that the Japanese had given medication (*wini*, the word means both “magic” and “medication”) to both men and women so that “they would not want to produce children” and that plans were afoot to move the people to Tinian and to replace the atoll's population with imported Japanese in order to exploit the massive phosphate deposits that this man claimed were beneath Sapwuahfik's soil. The commonest single-word negative stereotype of Japanese is that they were *lemei* ‘cruel’, expounded on by reference to harsh schoolteachers' punishments and police officers who administered beatings with canes.

Despite such recollections of harsh times under the Japanese, individuals from Sapwuahfik and Japanese living on Pohnpei at times formed ties of patronage and friendship, some of which endure to the present. The most frequent single-word positive stereotype of individual Japanese is that they were (and are) *kadek* ‘kind’. Several men recalled in detail their relationships with particular employees in the earlier, civilian period of Japanese control. They worked as house laborers, mostly, living in storage sheds if they were live-in help or sleeping in a large house that the young men of Sapwuahfik built for themselves. When relations of close friendship tied Japa-

nese employer and Islander employee, they were expressed in prompt, good pay, the chance to learn Japanese, an account at a Japanese-owned shop, even an illegal nightly bottle of liquor to be drunk alone and in secret. A few young women from Sapwuahfik worked as domestics, and more did heavy work in the rice fields. I heard mention of Japanese with Sapwuahfik girlfriends. About seven alliances of women from Sapwuahfik with Japanese men produced more than a dozen children born in the 1920s and 1930s, another indication of close relations between the two groups.

People who had good relations with individual Japanese employers recall the first part of the Japanese era as *kaperen* 'enjoyable' or *mwahu* 'good'. Some Islander employees, including at least one man from Sapwuahfik, were selected for special training to work with machinery. Some learned to speak fluent Japanese. Everyone who worked with Japanese became more knowledgeable about the use of money, industrial technology, the size of the world, and the diversity of cultural ways.

One man's ties with Japanese are so strong that he has visited Japan several times. On his most recent trip, in the 1970s, he looked up two men he had worked for when they were in the Japanese army. The men were happy to see him, and he showed me snapshots of the celebratory party they all enjoyed in a fancy hotel.

The era of Japanese colonial control, then, is generalized in the Sapwuahfik vision of history into three distinct periods. The good times of plentiful trade goods, wage labor, the learning of new skills, and some pleasurable travel; the period of increasing militarization of Micronesia and the early years of World War II, when imported goods became scarce, Islanders were pressured to provide increasingly scarce food to Japanese, and conscripted labor ate up the time, strength, and even lives of Islanders; and the final wartime years and the immediate postwar period, when military attacks produced danger and death for Islanders, manufactured goods all but disappeared, and people lived in destitution and fear. The ease with which these "times" are characterized is not accompanied by blanket generalizations about the Japanese themselves, who are consistently distinguished as individuals by the people of Sapwuahfik—who knew them as such—and are evaluated on the basis of their personal relationships with Islanders.

The Japanese presence in Micronesia today is felt both historically and immediately, as Japanese capital and Japanese imports contribute to the local economy of Pohnpei and all of Micronesia. It would

require a separate study to consider how memories of the Japanese era influence attitudes toward Japanese entrepreneurs today, but in numerous cases Islanders continue to form business and personal relationships—as employees, customers, affines, and friends—with individual Japanese, and people of Sapwuahfik both admire Japanese as industrious and clever and recognize them as sharply different from themselves in enforcing strict discipline on themselves and others.

The War Years

People of Sapwuahfik who lived through the years of war experienced very different circumstances, depending on whether they remained on the home atoll during the critical period of U.S.-Japanese military encounters or were at that time residing on Pohnpei. Those who spent the war years on Pohnpei were affected not only by the trauma of wartime pressures—from food shortages to U.S. bombing attacks, which they shared with the Japanese and the people of Pohnpei—but by the fact that they, like others brought to Pohnpei to work for the Japanese, were away from home. This meant that they had to deal with peculiar living situations and social relations with the Japanese as well as with the people of Pohnpei.

Most of those who recount stories of the war years on Pohnpei went there as laborers conscripted by the Japanese. Although I do not have adequate statistical data, interviews suggest that the great majority of the men of Sapwuahfik, and many of the adult women, spent time as laborers for the Japanese military administration. For the men, most of this labor involved constructing airstrips and other military installations. Women worked in rice fields, supplying the food needed for the wartime population on Pohnpei (cf. chapter 12). Sapwuahfik was left with old men, some women, and children and youth.

Pohnpei during the War

By the spring of 1943, Allied resources were sufficient to support a second front in the central Pacific, while continuing the southwest Pacific offensive.³ The intent was to open a second “road to Tokyo” by a westward sweep through Micronesia. It remained unclear for some months which Micronesian islands would be attacked and in

what order. The United States had little information about Japanese installations in the area, and little experience, at first, in amphibious attacks on small islands. Pohnpei was twice scheduled for major attacks that were later cancelled.

The Gilberts were conquered in November 1943, and the establishment of Allied airfields there meant the beginning of intermittent air attacks on Pohnpei and Kosrae in order to neutralize their value as Japanese bases. American concern with the base at Pohnpei intensified immediately prior to the invasion of Enewetak (chapter 3). "Between 15 and 26 February Liberators based at Hawkins and Mullinnix Fields, Tarawa, made five visits to Ponape, a flight of over 900 miles each way, dropping 118 tons of bombs and over 6000 incendiaries. At the conclusion of these strikes Ponape was out" (Morison 1951, 287), though it was operative once again later in the war.

Although the directive of the Combined Chiefs of Staff of 24 August 1943 called for Pohnpei to be invaded after the Marshalls, the decision was made to bypass it and aim directly for Truk. Morison wrote that the Joint Chiefs of Staff "had agreed to let Ponape be by-passed because it had too much rainfall for a major air base and in general was not worth the effort" (1951, 315n). Pohnpei had also been scheduled for a major attack on the return trip of the first air strike on Truk (February 1944), coinciding with the invasion of Enewetak, but this also was cancelled in exchange for a sudden thrust at the Marianas.

The second major attack on Truk, at the end of April 1944, brought simultaneous naval bombardments of Pohnpei and Satawan, two islands where the Japanese were suspected of building alternate air bases. The Pohnpei attack force had seven battleships plus destroyers and aircraft carriers.

Airstrips, town and seaplane base were duly bombarded on the afternoon of 1 May, the only opposition coming from antiaircraft guns, which ceased firing when the big shells began to burst. Admiral Lee, after a shoot of 70 minutes, concluded that no worthwhile targets remained, and called quits to avoid wasting ammunition. As at Satawan, the main profit in pounding Ponape lay in giving the ships practice on live targets. . . . (Morison 1951, 40-41)

Though not the scene of actual invasion, the "by-passed" Japanese bases in the Marshalls and Carolines were subjected to constant

air strikes up to and through the Marianas campaign, with especially severe attacks coinciding with major invasion activity, such as Enewetak in mid-February and the invasion of Saipan on 15 June 1944. In addition, Pohnpei underwent a single massive bombardment on 1 May. To be "by-passed" for land invasion did not mean escaping the war.

Men who went as laborers from Sapwuahfik to work for the Japanese government on Pohnpei during the military escalation recall it as hard, endless physical labor. There were no machines to make their work easier, nor did Islanders know how to use construction machines. (They learned this later, from Americans, whose use of machinery to replace the Japanese system of intensive human labor impressed them very much.) One man estimated that more than forty men from Sapwuahfik worked for the military. This labor put them in close contact with laborers from the Mortlocks, Pingelap, Truk, Pohnpei, and Korea also working for the Japanese. As laborers were sent where they were most needed by the military government, local men had a chance to travel, willy-nilly; some of them spent time working in the Marshalls or on other Japanese possessions, instead of or in addition to Pohnpei. A woman who spent this period working for the Japanese in Pohnpei's rice fields tells stories of this time that contain hints of espionage and excitement in Kolonia town. She tells of knowing a Japanese man who told his girlfriend from Sapwuahfik about his activities spying for the Americans, of Pohnpei people hiding an American, and of a Sapwuahfik man in radio contact with the Americans.

When the air attacks began, laboring to construct airstrips and other military facilities became dangerous as well as backbreaking. One man recalls that Koreans "died, died, died" as bombs fell on the place where they worked. Vivid memories of dirt erupting, trees being blown up, and workers scattering to run for their lives rise readily to people's lips. As supply lines to Japan and other islands were cut and food supplies dwindled, the Japanese made additional demands on the local population. One man recalls that people on Pohnpei were forced to work both during the day, when they prepared food, went fishing, and grew taro, and at night, when they worked on the airstrip.

When the bombing became severe, work was impossible. People scattered for shelter, well aware that foxholes were no guarantee of safety:

People ran, we scattered because we worked with the Japanese. We ran and hid when they dropped them [bombs]. They had dug holes, before the "evil time," before it arrived, because they knew bad things were going to come to Pohnpei. So that's what people would do, run and hide in a hole. But if a bomb went straight in, it would destroy [everything], no hole is going to make it all right. You would really be destroyed. . . . Many died, in that evil time.

Men and women who were on Pohnpei during the bombings retain vivid memories of their unwilling involvement in a war not their own.

[It was] hard, hard for us, because we are not white people, and we were afraid, for we didn't know what we would do. We waited to die. That's what we did. Because they brought bombs, and dropped them, brought guns, and shot them. Apparently, we were stupid [naïve]—we hid ourselves around in holes, or in rocks, or in trees and suchlike. We were all the time trembling.

As conditions became extremely dangerous, many people stopped working and simply left the area under attack. Calling on kin or other ties, they sought the relative safety of the rest of Pohnpei Island. One man recounts how he and a few companions spent the time "until it became somewhat more peaceful" traveling around Pohnpei. As he explained it to the people of one Pohnpei household that he visited:

The oldest woman who lived there asked me, "Where do you all come from?" I said, "Oh, we are resting from work, and we are going around Pohnpei visiting, going around, and we stop at places where we know people. We rest for two or three days, and then we go on again. We've been traveling, and we arrived at this place. We went from around the side of Sokehs to the side of Kitti, going up to Mado-lenihmw" [i.e., three-quarters of the way around the island!] Yes, we circled Pohnpei, resting a little here and there, resting from work.

The pressures of strict Japanese military discipline and wartime laws, forced labor, food shortages, and bombings put everyone on Pohnpei into unusual social situations. Between enforced meetings in work groups, the crowding of Kolonia, and such voluntary visiting as described above, the people from Sapwuahfik considerably expanded their range of contact and personal relations with other

Islanders, especially people of Pohnpei. They already had ties of kin and clan with some Pohnpei families, but the war period created novel opportunities to form social relationships with others. Many of the ties formed with particular Pohnpei families due to the exigencies of this period continued after the war in marriages, adoptions, and business relationships. In the context of describing his first encounter with Pohnpei gardening magic, one man described the special relationship that developed between several Sapwuahfik people (including himself) and an elderly Pohnpei couple:

I felt sorry for that woman, for she was just an old woman. We thought of her as our "mother" [classificatory]. And also that man, an old man who could no longer walk. People carried him, his legs were paralyzed. He owned that land. We were the ones who were feeding them. We Ngatikese would go fishing, and take some to them, we'd make food, breadfruit or bananas, and feed them. It was their land, but there was no one to take care of them, because it was the time when the Americans and the Japanese were fighting. Hard times, those. The people who were truly their family threw them aside and ran away. So there were only those two, nor were any of their children there—their sons were with Kosraeans, working as forced labor for the Japanese. Well then, the Ngatikese went and took care of them. That's the reason they gave permission to all the Ngatikese to come and plant on their land.

A number of people from Sapwuahfik worked this land and supplied the elderly couple with food. "Many Pohnpei people were in difficulty," my informant concluded. "It was hard, very hard, for no one wanted to help them. The old woman, the old man—very pitiful."

Several from Sapwuahfik lost their lives on Pohnpei during these years—whether from illness or attack I do not know. Two men carry marks of the U.S. attacks on Pohnpei to this day. One lost an arm to an American bullet. As I was told, "It was Americans who took off his arm." Another man's limp is due to bullets from American planes strafing Pohnpei.

By the end of hostilities, local people on Pohnpei were short of food. The disruption of trade meant that they were living in rags and had reverted to coconut oil lamps and traditional cooking methods. These hard times during the war on Pohnpei are remembered in sharp contrast to the experiences of the same years on Sapwuahfik Atoll.

The War on Sapwuahfik

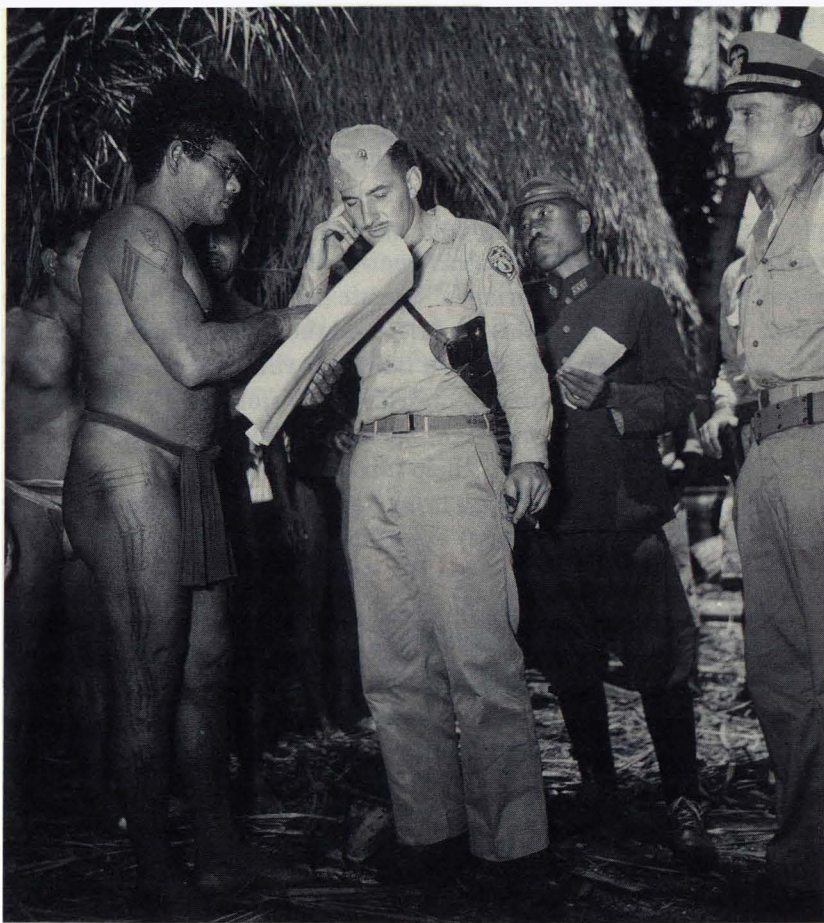
In contrast to the descriptive historical recollections characteristic of people who worked on Pohnpei during the war, the less numerous stories of the war years on the atoll seem emblematic in nature. That is, rather than conveying descriptions of particular activities, or the ambience of the period, these anecdotes selectively report incidents and circumstances that represent, for the people of Sapwuahfik, something considerably more important than the remembered events of that time. Specifically, they are evidence in support of Sapwuahfik's particular vision of itself, of the people's interpretation of their own past and of the meaning of their identity as a community.

Extremely important to the people of Sapwuahfik, for both pragmatic and less obvious cultural reasons, is the fact that their atoll was not hit by U.S. bombs. In fact, people repeatedly claimed that it was the only island in what is now Pohnpei State not bombed. The explanation given by at least two individuals is that certain local people, knowing the English pidgin spoken by men on Sapwuahfik, wrote messages on the beach. American pilots, seeing these messages, responded appropriately. In one story, a man wrote in the sand, "No Japanese on this island," and the Americans, flying over Sapwuahfik on their way from a bombing run on Pohnpei, spared the atoll. An elderly woman confirmed this story and added that a woman wrote another message, spelling it out in coconut fronds, requesting the Americans to "help this island."

The "help" Sapwuahfik got from Americans went beyond preservation from bombing. In fact, according to numerous eyewitnesses, the atoll actually benefited from the presence of American planes in the area. In place of bombs, Sapwuahfik was bombarded with packages of food, clothing, tobacco, and chocolate dropped by navy planes into the lagoon, there to be picked up by Islanders. Sapwuahfik's good luck is explicitly contrasted in these stories with Pohnpei's hardship: where Pohnpei received explosives dropped by Americans, Sapwuahfik received gifts; where people of Pohnpei were suffering dire want from shortages of food and clothing, Sapwuahfik's people were walking around fully clothed and replete with tinned corned beef, thanks to the U.S. Navy. Thus, World War II reinforced the special ties people of Sapwuahfik feel themselves to share with Americans, who, along with other English speakers, had been instrumental in attacking and resettling the atoll in the nineteenth century.

Navy planes even landed in Sapwuahfik's lagoon on occasion, trading with the people and directly renewing the atoll's ties with America—ties that had lapsed during the German and, especially, the Japanese eras. Several women recalled times when seven, nine, or twelve planes would fly over, and American military men would stop at Sapwuahfik to rest, giving away candy and other gifts. The fact that the men spoke pidgin made these interactions rewarding rather than frustrating for both sides, and the people used these opportunities to learn about America.

Sapwuahfik men who were on Pohnpei when the U.S. military



Caroline Islander provides information to American and Japanese officers during the evacuation of the Japanese garrison on Woleai, September 1945. (*U.S. Navy*)

moved in also found their pidgin useful and a marker distinguishing them from Pohnpei people.

When Americans arrived in Pohnpei, when the Navy captured Pohnpei, all the Ngatikese went and conversed with the Americans. [Q. But Pohnpei people couldn't?] They couldn't, that's right! They would ask, "Who is Ngatikese?" and [then say] "Come here, come here!" and the Ngatikese talked with the Americans, they discussed all kinds of things. They very much liked it, that the Ngatikese knew English. That's the reason that, when cigarettes were scarce, all the Ngatikese would walk around with their pockets, their trousers full of cigarettes. They would give us a carton as a gift. We are the ones who gave cigarettes to Pohnpei people, made it easy for them. Truly, they [Americans] were nice. But today, with schools, Pohnpei people have surpassed Ngatikese, very much surpassed them in knowing English.

This distinction and implied competition between Pohnpei and Sapwuahfik is an important marker of the latter's identity. The reversal of the direction of the flow of goods—normally from high island to small island—is worth noting.

An elderly man began a conversation with me by asking which U.S. state "fought the most," offering his opinion that it must be Texas. He followed this with a World War II recollection of an American who flew into Sapwuahfik during the time when Americans in planes were giving gifts to the Islanders. The Americans were exchanging U.S. goods for seashells when this Sapwuahfik man asked one flyer, a Texan, "Don't you have any soap [to trade]?" The Texan replied, "Soap?! I didn't come here to bathe, I came to die [in battle]!" (see chapter 6 for a similar comment and similar friendships with flyers). Such encounters were important in shaping initial impressions of Americans, the next colonial rulers of Micronesia.

Although Sapwuahfik was never bombed, a few of its people did suffer as the result of one attack by U.S. military forces. A young girl was shot in the leg by a machine gun when a canoe traveling between islets was strafed by an American plane. According to one account, several people were in a canoe when a plane shot at them. The girl didn't even notice at first that she had been shot. The plane turned to come back to shoot again, and the people jumped out of the canoe and swam to land. They noticed that the water around them was full of blood, and then saw that she had been shot. The

explanation given by those who were in the canoe is that perhaps there had been a box or boxes with Japanese writing in the canoe, and that the plane crew had seen this through binoculars and so shot at them. Like the two men hurt by American bullets on Pohnpei, this woman had the right to file for reparations for her injuries after the war, but, unlike the men, she did not do so.

Conclusions

These several atoll anecdotes and the story of using pidgin to good advantage on Pohnpei during the war years were told to me several times. Unlike stories about the prewar period and the time of bombing attacks on Pohnpei, they were told not as memories of personal experience, but as genuine "oral traditions"—events that are widely known and recounted by people who were not personally involved with them. They were told by the younger generation as well as by those old enough to have been eyewitnesses. Why do these war stories have such historical currency? Of all the personal memories of World War II, why are these few told and retold? I think it is because the themes expressed in these anecdotes repeat, and their events validate, the people's understanding of Sapwuahfik's history and their community's identity.

Major themes in the history of Sapwuahfik center on the massacre of aboriginal males by a group of American and English seamen and Pohnpei warriors in 1837. The attack on the atoll and the destruction of the culture were followed by resettlement and by the decision of the reconstituted Sapwuahfik population to discard sorcery and accept Christianity (Poyer 1985). In return for this act of faith, Sapwuahfik received special divine protection—a Christian continuation, perhaps, of the traditional spirits that had guarded the island long ago (Poyer 1983). In telling me the moral of Sapwuahfik's history, the people spoke explicitly of the protection of the atoll from the horror of bombardment during World War II. One Western-educated man stated that sometimes he blames the white attackers for the 1837 massacre, but then he thinks about World War II and the fact that Sapwuahfik was not bombed, and he thinks, "maybe it comes out even."

The people speak of their atoll as *sapw paiaiwahu* 'the fortunate land' because of this special protection, as well as because of Sapwuahfik's bountiful gardens and lagoon. This theme recurs in war

stories, as the island is vividly contrasted with the situation of near-starvation on Pohnpei in the final years of the Japanese era. Community identity centers on the locus of Sapwuahfik identity vis-à-vis several crucial others. In particular the people of Sapwuahfik see themselves as distinct from, though specially tied to, the people of Pohnpei and as having a unique relationship with Americans (Poyer 1988). Both of these critical relationships derive from the Islanders' understanding of their past and are reflected in what they consider to be the significant events of the World War II period.

Because of historical circumstances, Sapwuahfik shares with Pohnpei partial biological identity, a language, and much of the cultural content of everyday life. Pohnpei warriors assisted in the 1837 attack on Sapwuahfik, and men and women from Pohnpei were among the most numerous of the immigrants who resettled the atoll, intermarrying with survivors, Euro-Americans, and immigrants from other islands. One of the important and problematic aspects of modern Sapwuahfik identity is marking off the atoll's culture from that of Pohnpei.

Two aspects of this distinction are reflected in accounts of World War II—references to pidgin, and social ties established with Pohnpei people. English pidgin, unique to Sapwuahfik, continues today to be a marker of identity for the atoll's men, who may be teased about it when they are in Pohnpei. Personal relations with Pohnpei people established during the "hard times" of the war period both reinforced the Sapwuahfik sense of culture shared with Pohnpei and sharply distinguished the two on the matter of sorcery and magical practices. People of Sapwuahfik consider these to be widespread on Pohnpei, but nonexistent among themselves (except when they obtain magic from people of other islands).

The Sapwuahfik sense of an identity shared with Americans is also based historically on the 1837 massacre: American sailors participated in the murderous attack, but a few also remained to become ancestors of the present population. Several other Americans arrived on Sapwuahfik for brief or lengthy stays during the Spanish, German, and Japanese eras. The island is seen as being "like America" because of its English pidgin, because Sapwuahfik, like the United States, has a plentiful food supply, and because its people and Americans share a preference for egalitarian, democratic social relations with a minimum of attention to the forms of aristocratic honorifics and etiquette (Poyer 1983). Christianity, introduced by American missionaries in the Carolines, is another shared

bond, though it is shared as well with other Micronesians (see chapter 3 for positive Marshallese impressions of Americans).

In World War II recollections, this special tie with Americans is expressed in several ways. Their fluent pidgin gave Sapwuahfik men on Pohnpei control over a difficult situation and preferential access to American resources that set them apart from Pohnpei people. Americans conversed with people from Sapwuahfik—not only in the simple words necessary to the situation, but about “all kinds of things,” and Americans favored these Islanders with gifts of cigarettes. On the atoll, too, Americans displayed special interest in the people. They avoided bombing the atoll, dropped gifts to Sapwuahfik, and visited, trading and conversing in pidgin. Here again, communication—in the form of messages on the beach and the men’s pidgin—is the *entrée* to this special relationship.

For Sapwuahfik, then, World War II anecdotes, like stories of the 1837 massacre, encode a good deal of information about what it means to belong to the island. Of relevance to the subject of this volume are the ways the people distinguish themselves from, identify with, and relate to various sorts of foreigners, most notably those of Pohnpei and the United States. Also significant is the perception that Sapwuahfik is peculiarly protected from outside attack. The elaboration of these aspects of the historical understanding of the massacre and of World War II, and the perception of the position of the Sapwuahfik community in its regional context today, reveal continuities of structure and of theme in the people’s understanding of themselves and their history.

Notes

My thanks go to Sinio Nahior, who checked my translations of interviews, and to the people of Sapwuahfik for their hospitality and assistance. Twenty months of fieldwork in 1979–1980 were funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.

All quotations are from interviews with men and women who personally experienced the war years, recorded on Sapwuahfik and Pohnpei in 1979–1980.

1. From early European contact until 1985, Sapwuahfik was known as Ngatik Atoll. “Ngatik” is retained verbatim in direct quotations. Detailed ethnographic information about Ngatik/Sapwuahfik is available in Fischer and Fischer 1957, and Poyer 1983.

2. Other marked events preceded the 1837 massacre, but I will not deal with those here.

3. Information on Allied war plans and the progress of the central Pacific campaign is from Karig, Harris, and Manson 1948 and Morison 1951.

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CHAPTER 5

Time of Famine, Time of Transformation: Hell in the Pacific, Palau

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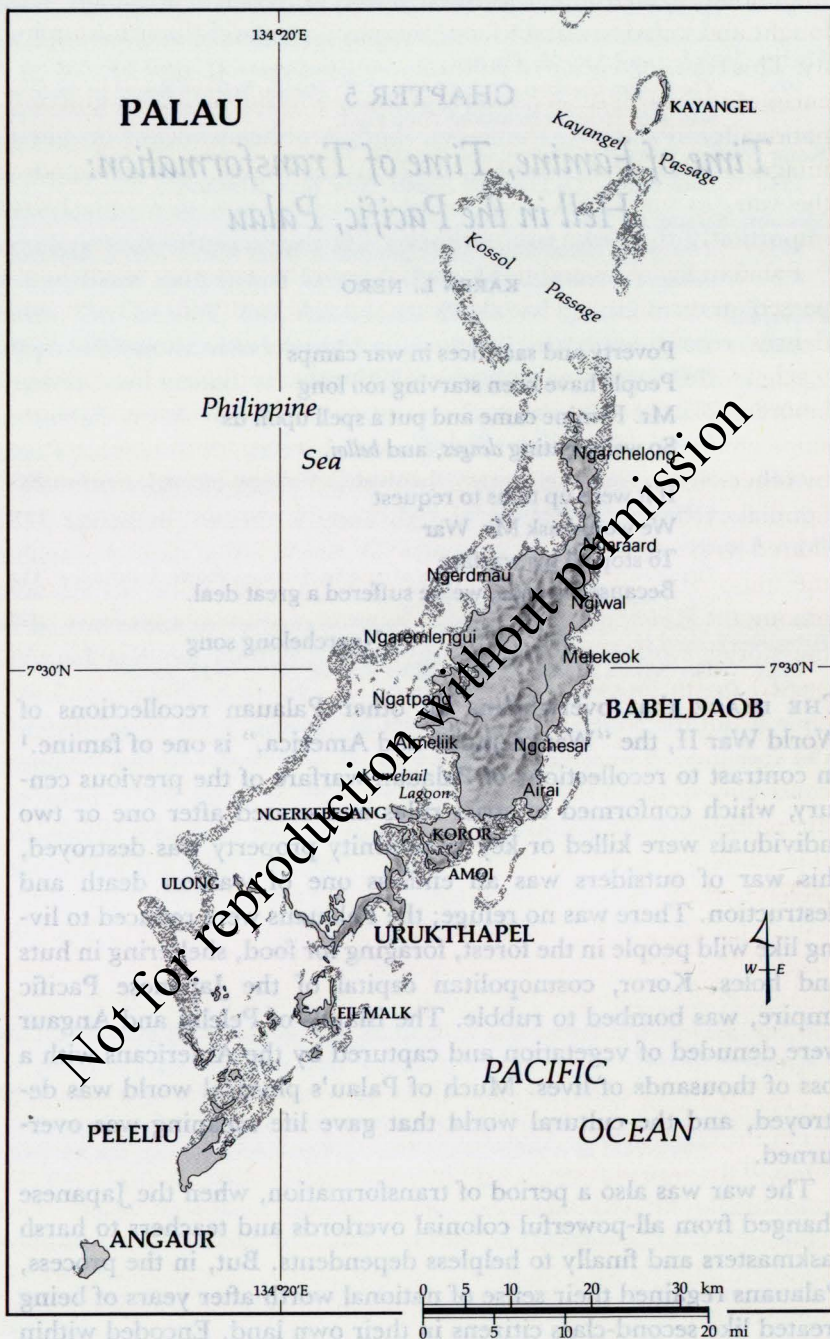
Poverty and sacrifices in war camps
People have been starving too long
Mr. Famine came and put a spell upon us
So we're eating *denges*, and *belloi*.

If it were up to us to request
We would ask Mr. War
To stop all his warfare
Because, friends, we've suffered a great deal.

Ngarchelong song

THE IMAGE that overwhelms all other Palauan recollections of World War II, the "War of Japan and America," is one of famine.¹ In contrast to recollections of Palauan warfare of the previous century, which conformed to strict rules and ceased after one or two individuals were killed or key community property was destroyed, this war of outsiders was an endless one of wanton death and destruction. There was no refuge; the Palauans were reduced to living like wild people in the forest, foraging for food, sheltering in huts and holes. Koror, cosmopolitan capital of the Japanese Pacific empire, was bombed to rubble. The islands of Peleliu and Angaur were denuded of vegetation and captured by the Americans with a loss of thousands of lives. Much of Palau's physical world was destroyed, and the cultural world that gave life meaning was overturned.

The war was also a period of transformation, when the Japanese changed from all-powerful colonial overlords and teachers to harsh taskmasters and finally to helpless dependents. But, in the process, Palauans regained their sense of national worth after years of being treated like second-class citizens in their own land. Encoded within tales of the starvation, privation, and fear of the war years is an important contrast between the people of Palau, who continued to



Map 4

share food, to share their humanity, and the soldiers of Japan, who fought and killed to obtain food, thereby "proving" their inhumanity. This transformation of cultural identities arising from the experiences of the war has been a slow process, varying by generation and nationality. Palauans, Japanese, and Americans draw on their images of each other, constructed and transformed during and after the war, to guide not only their understandings of it but, more importantly, their own continuing relationships.

Palauan histories and understandings of the war are retained and passed on through a rich body of art and oral traditions. Chants and dances record early perceptions of the Japanese governors and teachers, the war's bombing attacks, and the feelings of the Palauan laborers in Palau and Papua New Guinea. The new social relationships created when entire villages were displaced and given refuge by others are maintained today through intervillage visits and inter-familial exchanges. Stories of the war are told within the family and shared with outsiders. At times these stories are filtered according to the nationality of the outsider, as Zeleneitz and Saito discovered among the Kilenge (chapter 5). In other cases, there is evidence that the stories are solidifying into historical accounts, maintained and passed on through the repetition of key phrases retained despite changes in the time, locale, and identity of either the storyteller or the audience. At least one such account is a myth in which the details contradict independent historical evidence but nevertheless provide an explanation for behavior otherwise inexplicable to Palauans. In this chapter I examine a sampling of this rich oral tradition, collected by various researchers over a fifty-year period from the 1930s to the present, to elucidate changing Palauan perceptions, both of themselves and of outsiders, and the catalytic role the war played in changing these perceptions. Finally, I consider the ways these transformations are understood and have been incorporated into Palauan history.

The Palauan experience of the Pacific War differs significantly from the experiences of other Pacific Islanders presented in this volume. This was not the first major encounter between the Islanders and the Japanese. Palau had been capital of Japan's South Seas empire for thirty years, and (some) Palauans had been thoroughly indoctrinated by the "mother" country despite the differential treatment given them. Prior to the establishment of the Japanese colonial administration, Palau had a history of interaction with outsiders spanning several centuries. Because of their long association with

the Japanese, Palauan families, despite their own difficult circumstances, took in the wives and children of Japanese colonists and helped them to survive. A number of Japanese children were left behind after the war and adopted by Palauan families. Furthermore, the war was not a distant echo, as it was in other Pacific regions, but a real presence in 1944 and 1945. After the Americans cut off communication and supply lines to Palau in 1944, approximately fifty thousand Japanese soldiers were reduced to "self-support" on an island where productive capabilities were crippled by daily American strafing attacks designed to prevent anyone from farming or fishing. For the Japanese soldiers and civilians, and the five thousand Palauans, the war became a struggle to obtain enough food to survive. The Japanese, who suffered the heaviest losses, attempted to segregate the Micronesian and Japanese populations and their food supplies. All Palauans were severely dislocated and disrupted by the war, especially those evacuated from the invasion sites of Peleliu and Angaur. Palauans died from the bombing runs as well as from starvation and associated diseases.

Despite the differences, Palauans share with other Pacific Islanders many commonalities in their war experiences. As the epigraph song demonstrates, an abstract war was personalized; the war was experienced in terms of interpersonal relationships between the Japanese and the Palauans, and later between the Americans and the Palauans. Japanese and American stereotypes of "the native" entered into these relationships, which the Palauans at times used to dupe the Japanese in otherwise unequal exchanges. The primary Palauan contribution to the Japanese war effort was conscripted labor; the removal of men from their communities entailed family hardships even though Palauan women had always been the agriculturalists. A number of Palauans volunteered to work for the Japanese surveyors in Papua New Guinea supervising work teams of other Pacific Islanders. Toward the end of the war, a team of Palauans was trained as "suicide commandos," although they never saw action.

The most significant commonality of experience, noted elsewhere in this volume, was the wartime perception of Americans as unbelievably powerful, wealthy people who possessed and shared unlimited supplies of food and treated the Palauans as equals. Sharing of food, the quintessential Pacific metaphor of social relationships, took on added significance after a year of starvation and famine. The image Palauans formed of Americans shaped subsequent expecta-

tions as Americans acquired administrative responsibility for the islands after the war as a United Nations trusteeship. Furthermore, the lessons of the war and its aftermath inform American-Palauan negotiations to bring that trusteeship to an end.

The History of Outsider-Palauan Interactions

Palauans have a long history of close interactions with *Chad er a Ngebard* 'people of the west' (the direction from which the first Europeans arrived) and well-established ways of incorporating outsiders and tapping their greater wealth and expertise. The first written record of contact with Europeans followed the shipwreck of the Honourable East India Company's trading packet *Antelope* off Koror in 1783 (Keate 1788), when Ibedul, paramount chief of Koror, befriended the captain. In return for food, water, and assistance in rebuilding his ship, Captain Wilson aided Ibedul in his local wars and, when he departed, left five muskets and his gunner, who preferred to remain in Palau. During the next century, the Koror chiefs managed to contain and benefit from their relationships with British, European, and Japanese traders. Any trader wishing to settle on the island was adopted into the chiefly clans and given a wife according to Palauan custom, effectively transferring his wealth to the chiefly clans as well as affording him protection.

Even when (in European perspective) Palau became a colony of Spain (1886) and then Germany (1899), Palauan chiefs continued to govern and to use the outsiders' wealth and firepower for their own purposes. The Spanish colonial presence was limited to rare visits by passing Spanish ships and several Catholic missionaries, who did not arrive until 1891. After Germany "purchased" the islands in 1899, little changed. In 1901 the German administration appointed James Gibbons, a black British West Indian, as governor. Gibbons was one of Ibedul's dependents and had been given the seventh-ranking title in Koror's governing council. Only after his death in 1904 was a resident German administrator appointed, one Herr Winkler, whom the Palauans promptly married to a daughter of a chiefly clan. Just ten years later, at the beginning of World War I, the Japanese occupied the islands, and Winkler returned to Germany with his Palauan wife.

In the first century and a quarter of interaction with Westerners (among whom Palauans include Japanese), Palauans were for the

most part able to incorporate and use the outsiders while retaining significant local control and autonomy. The outsider, the other, was perceived to possess superior knowledge and technology. But the Palauan self retained a high valuation, for the Palauans were capable of controlling outsider wealth and power for their own purposes. Indeed, the chiefs used considerable political skill to manage their relationships with outsiders, resorting to subterfuge and manipulation as required (see Nero 1987).

The Japanese occupation presented an entirely different set of problems and over the years resulted in substantial shifts in Palauan perceptions of themselves and outsiders. No longer were outsiders limited to a few traders or administrators easily incorporated into Palauan society and relatively supportive of the continuing power of the Palauan chiefs, whom they needed in order to "rule." Instead, the Japanese worked to build a productive outpost where they could settle their people and produce foodstuffs and minerals for the homeland. By 1935, the Japanese population outnumbered the Palauan. In addition to a large administrative, military, and religious center on Koror, there were four Japanese agricultural villages on Babeldaob, and mining centers in Ngerd mau and on Angaur and Peleliu. During the next five years of increased militarization, the Japanese population quadrupled. Palau was planned as a rear supply base in the Japanese Asian-Pacific economic development zone. The military appropriated the island of Ngerkebesang in Koror, and by late 1944 nearly all Palauans had moved or been evacuated to the big island of Babeldaob. There they were far outnumbered by the Japanese; even after thousands of Japanese casualties from battles, suicide, and starvation, approximately forty-five thousand Japanese military personnel surrendered on Palau on 2 September 1945 (Higuchi 1986a, 98).²

The Palauan Self

Palauan perceptions of the Japanese vis-à-vis themselves underwent a series of transformations during the three decades of Japanese rule. In Palau, inversion is a well-established principle of social change, captured by the proverb *a cherechar obelbult* 'time overturns'. It is expected that one's fortunes may reverse. For example, the ranking of the highest chiefs of most village councils has been reversed over time in response to particular historical incidents.

Palau is a highly stratified society with clearly established internal relationships of domination and submission. Whereas in the past Palauan chiefs had retained power, the political and economic changes introduced by the Japanese now put the chiefs into a position of subservience to the Japanese. Originally the Japanese ruled through local chiefs, but they soon reduced chiefs to impotent intermediaries who only communicated and carried out Japanese directives. The Japanese replaced any chief who dared oppose them, including the two paramount chiefs of Palau. In the words of one of Koror's eldest chiefs, beginning with the Japanese-introduced chiefs the traditional system "descended into darkness." Political power was transferred to the Japanese, and economic power, once concentrated in the hands of the chiefs, was now held by younger Palauan men with wage employment. The youth were valued over elders, the sons of the chiefs over the true matrilineal heirs. Land was alienated, and the concept of individual ownership introduced. Children were given three to five years' Japanese education to prepare for jobs as laborers and were indoctrinated in Japanese cultural ideals and love for "the motherland." Palauan autonomy had been completely undermined by 1936 when Iwakichi Muranushi recorded this war chant:

When they traveled from place to place
 There was nothing good about Palau.
 Now that we are under Japan's control
 Palau has improved (because of industriousness).
 When Japan first fought in the war they landed in Russia.
 They landed in Russia and confiscated the flag.
 They confiscated the flag; now they sound their trumpet.
 Now they sound their trumpet and everyone shouts "banzai."
 The second war Japan fought and
 The islands of Micronesia came under its control.
 We became its subjects for good.

(Tatar 1985, 43)

There is an expression of finality in the original Palauan closing statement, *e di merikong* 'and there it ended'. Palauans accepted their second-class status when faced with such a wealthy, powerful country.³

The early war years brought two major, somewhat contradictory transformations to Palauan perceptions of self and Japanese other. The first was an increased pride and identification with the Japa-

nese. In contrast with the other "natives" now coming under Japanese control, Palauans were considered part of the homeland, and there was a Japanese campaign to develop Palauan loyalties to Japan. Although perhaps only second-class citizens, the Palauans were nevertheless considered and trained as citizens. Speaking Japanese fluently, Palauans could supervise other Asians and Pacific Islanders as the Japanese extended their control. Palauans increasingly identified with the Japanese, collected donations for the war effort, and enlisted in volunteer work crews. These contributions increased their self-esteem, as shown in sample verses from the war period. The first is about a Palauan survey team that traveled to Papua New Guinea:

I'm leaving home and going very far,
We, young Palauans, are on our way to the South
There are about sixty of us
We are Palauans,
But what we do is for Japan.

I just want to let you and everyone know
Our work is difficult, it's a matter of life and death
The dangers and the snakes are difficult to describe
We crossed dangerous rivers and plains.
(Palau Department of Education 1986)

The second describes the strong young work teams in Palau:

We are a group of young men from all over Palau
Our camp is in the middle of savannah
We are lonely, all of us
There is nothing to do for fun.

From morn til night
Over the clear surrounding area
Airplanes keep flying over
With loud sound of their bullets.

We, Palauans, are
Young men from all over
The enemies are flying over us
But we have to keep working.

The bullets are falling
Just like we're in the rain
But with the war approaching the end
The sound of airplanes is diminishing.

(Palau Department of Education 1986)

The Japanese Other

Coupled with increased pride was a diminished respect for the Japanese. Previously, there had been two categories of Japanese in the islands—administrators and teachers, highly respected for their knowledge and power, and poorer agricultural settlers from Japan's outer islands, respected for their hard work and agricultural skills. Now Palauans were confronted with relatively uneducated soldiers of Japan's poorer classes, who looked down on them. Palauan males were conscripted for intensive labor projects. They built the Airai airport and placed heavy anti-invasion guns high in the hills overlooking the major harbors and breaks in the reefs. Palauans worked long hard hours under men who were, at times, cruel taskmasters. Palauans discarded their earlier stereotype of the Japanese as wise, cultured people from whom they could learn. They discovered there were also rough, uneducated Japanese who considered themselves superior simply because of their race. The final blow to the prestige of the Japanese was their inability to counteract the American military offensive. The Palauans discovered that the all-powerful Japanese were vulnerable. Indeed, in the search for survival, many Japanese now became dependents of the Palauans.

On 31 March 1944 the Americans attacked Palau and destroyed the airport that the Palauans and Japanese were constructing at Airai, effectively neutralizing Japanese air power on Palau. Palauans of that generation remember the confusion of the attack and the flight to avoid the bombs. Many Palauans and Japanese civilians were still in Koror and fled to the rock islands for shelter, as reported in this account I recorded in 1985:

So it was early in the morning, one day in March, and then there were a lot of airplanes all over Palau, and there was a lot of confusion. And we were at the time expecting some reinforcements from Japan, from Saipan, to prepare for the United States attack, so there was a lot of confusion as to whether they were enemy planes or Japanese planes. And then they started bombing and strafing, and my father didn't have time to come back to help us. So my mother and about eight children (I was about ten or eleven years of age at that time) we just put together some empty drums and then some belongings, some food, blankets, stuff like that. And then we just made a platform for our food, clothing, and then we drifted. We started to swim across the channel, looking for some island, some rock-island hideout. Because the bombs were falling all over the place. And my father was not there, so it was the oldest son, the male in the family, who was myself.

And so we sculled together under some rock-island overhang, and in the water, all night, all day, all night. The following morning we didn't know whether my father had been killed at the [Airai] airport. And then about three families got together. My family and the other families got together and because my father was not there the other men in the two families felt sorry for us so they took us in and then we became a group of three families and we found a little cave. So we set up a little place to stay, and the three families stayed together for about three days without my father, and we assumed that he had been wounded or had been killed.

The Americans returned in force in September and captured Peleliu and Angaur. Peleliu was one of the Pacific theater's bloodiest battles, and war historians to this day question whether the battle was necessary. By its end, the dense tropical vegetation was completely blown away—not a tree, no greenery was left. In only two weeks nearly ten thousand Japanese and Americans lay dead (Hough 1950)—more than twice the total Palauan population at that time. To this day Palauans describe with horror the deep revolving wave at the point of Peleliu, which was blood red for days. The few Palauans who had remained on these islands as laborers described the death and horrible destruction to other Palauans. Before the war, European missionaries had tried to describe European-style warfare to the Palauans, but Palauans at that time could not even conceive of such a war. Now they had witnessed it first-hand.

The battle for Peleliu began on 15 September and ended on 25 November (Costello 1982, 497). By early November and December, all the Chamorros on Babeldaob and a few Palauans had escaped in small canoes to the American ships off the reefs of northern Babeldaob. They were evacuated to the American headquarters, which had been established on Peleliu and Angaur. The Palauans were even more amazed by the immediate transformation of these islands. Palauans had labored for a year to build the Airai airport and to put defensive guns in position, yet these defenses had been quickly destroyed or neutralized. Then in a matter of weeks the Americans themselves built airfields and bases at Peleliu and Angaur. An elderly Palauan woman from Angaur recalled that, "It was a different island. There were roads all over the island, a new cement airstrip, planes, new houses, and buildings everywhere. It was a new place." Who were these people who had so easily vanquished the all-powerful Japanese, who could so rapidly transform an island to serve their own needs? They did not even bother to

invade the rest of Palau, ignoring the powerful anti-invasion guns put in place with such hardship, but simply harassed the Japanese, who could do nothing against them.

The Year of Famine

Then the most difficult, excruciating war began, the year of famine and starvation that affected the Palauans as well as the Japanese. Planes flew overhead every day to threaten fishers in their canoes and farmers in their fields. Villages were bombed, and the people took refuge in the woods, forced to live in rude shelters. The Japanese soldiers sent Palauans to collect food and then took all they were able to get. Sometimes they beat a man if he would not give up his only pig, which he had saved to feed his children. Two accounts were recorded in 1985 from Palauan men, one educated in the Japanese school for Palauan children, the other a Japanese-Palauan educated in the school for Japanese children. One hid outside Ngaraard, a village that accepted refugees from Peleliu and Angaur:

So Palau spent a whole year of preparation for an invasion by the United States forces which didn't materialize. The Americans just tried to cut off, to use those two islands [Peleliu and Angaur] and to cut off supply lines to Palau and render Palau ineffective as a defense post to interfere with the invasion of the Philippines. So it began, a long, grueling one year of starvation. The poor people, there were many, many soldiers all of a sudden cut off from their regular supply, shipping lines, military transportation of Palau. So we had to turn to whatever food was left behind and eventually whatever food we found and grew on Babeldaob. So we are talking about maybe two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand [actually less than one-third that number] and then maybe five thousand to six thousand natives. So in the first half of that year things seemed to be okay, because there were still a lot of Japanese supplies. But the last, long part was very, very terrible—a terrible period of starvation and sickness. And the Japanese came to find out that they could not rely on the Japanese mainland to supply them, and they had to make do with what they had at the time, which was not very much. And then they came to the natives for their food source, and in some places the Japanese took over the food gardens, and taro, and food sources from the natives, by force, in order to feed the military persons. And some administration people, [trying to coordinate the food problems with the Palauans] many times came to my father to seek advice what to do. And then my father

said of the coconuts that were turned to food supply, that if the people just eat coconut with nothing they would get too much oil and get sick. So they started squeezing oil out of the coconut and eating the cake, cooking it with leaves. And that way it's more compatible with the Japanese stomach. Because a lot of people would die of diarrhea rather than starvation. And my father came in very handy in advising the Japanese what to do. And the secretary of a very high official, a secretary of a high man in the Japanese administration who was also his girlfriend—the official asked my father to take care of the woman, and then the woman came to live with us. And we were all very young kids, and she was maybe twenty, twenty-one. And so she came to live with us, and we were just told she was another sister, and we lived very closely, she became to be regarded as just a member of the family.

The chiefs of all Palau were called and told that first Peleliu people were to be evacuated, and Angaur people to be evacuated, and asked the chiefs for accommodation. And then the Ngaraard chief, my chief, said that he would take in Peleliu and Angaur, all of them in one place. So they came to live in Ngaraard at that time, during the war period. We all lived out in the woods. There was sickness, we didn't know how to live, we didn't know how to cook, that kind of living. The woods were there all the time, but we had not learned how to live in those woods. And a lot of people got sick, you know, of exposure to the cold. We built very simple huts in the woods, so the dampness, the rain and all came in. We took one whole year to get adjusted. It was more than hunger and lack of food. The true danger, I think, was the environmental sanitation—that was a very crucial factor in our survival at the time. A lot of people got sick. And some of the people from Peleliu and Angaur died while there at Ngaraard, and were buried there, and because of that they became common ancestors for both, for the two villages.

The other Palauan hid outside Aimeliik, closer to the Japanese civilian and military camps:

So the war became more intensive, and therefore we had to move. Before we left Koror, there were Japanese teachers with their families, and their husbands were taken to the military but the families were left, the mother with the kids. And I remember my father said, "Be nice to these people, because they are your school principal's family." So the man left and the family moved in. Two daughters, fourteen and sixteen, and the wife. And my father asked them if they wanted to join us. The war was going on, the Japanese were winning, at least they thought. . . . So they had that pride, I recall, and what pride can do to destroy. Knowing that. But the family decided to join with the Japanese. So we moved, the war became very intensive. They [bombers]

came every day around eleven o'clock, from Guam. They used to come in threes. And it became a daily ritual, kind of. Mmmmmmm mmmmmmm. From Kayangel they were coming. Spat, spat. Then Airai, pass, Ngerkebesang. . . . They were coming hourly, so we couldn't go fishing, we couldn't farm. If we did, there was the plane. So that gave us a hard time. So we farmed at night-time, in the moonlight.

So the war became very intensive because of the patrol planes, come from Peleliu, by then they took Peleliu. You could see them. The black guy, or the white guy. You know they come so, like that, and you see them. But they didn't wave. If they waved, then maybe we would have been saved. How stupid we are, if I waved, maybe. . . . Psychologically brainwashed, that guy is an enemy, maybe a machine. They kill you. Like any war, an enemy is an enemy—you want to make an enemy as dirty as possible. So those guys were bad. And so, that's the patrol planes.

That side of Babeldaob they didn't have food. Ngaraard and Ngchesar, all the way. I don't know that side of it. The other side, they didn't have food, but where we lived, we almost starved to death. We ate dog, pig, went to places where we thought we could find spoiled coconut. We ate practically everything except snake. Japanese ate snakes. And so we lived in Aimeliik and watched the bombing of Koror, including occasional submarines coming out. The Japanese just couldn't do a thing.

I was in the boonies. Finding food, that was my job. My brothers were so small, so weak, they couldn't move. The three of them. One was a baby. They couldn't move, too weak. We lived in a dugout, a hole, practically. It was a hole. Covered with leaves. Rain came in. Small, not a house. It was not a house. Dirt. About this size, this deep. If you ask the others, they wouldn't remember. They were just lying on the mattress. And I was going out to get coconuts, other food, we didn't know. So that was the life, and we were almost starved to death. That's what I know.

So one day after I came from where I was looking for food, I saw this lady, the Japanese lady, ragged. She was the wife of the principal and then I remembered the whole picture. The Japanese lady, after they went to Ngatpang where the Japanese civilians stayed they ran out of food, they didn't have food. But of course the military saved some, but they ran out of food, and the two girls died. You see the pride they had? So I heard that they died.

Palauans' war experiences differed according to the village in which the individual lived during this year, but several themes are repeated in these two parallel accounts of the year of famine. First, there was recognition that the Japanese were completely helpless to

do anything to stop American bombers. The storytellers stated that the Japanese were reduced to stealing and violence to obtain food, yet both reported that their families reached out to attempt to save individual Japanese friends or associates (especially civilians) from death. Although Palauans had little food and little knowledge of how to survive in the wild, they were still better able to cope with the disaster than were the Japanese civilians who lived in camps. Personal relationships still counted, both with the Japanese and among the Palauans. It was also a time when strong new relationships were formed, when families became bonded to one another through burying each other's dead.

Perhaps the most striking parallel in the two accounts is the description of life in the woods. This was a life of animals, not people—a life for which there was no cultural preparation, no experience to draw on to help them survive. They were at the mercy of the elements, ill, weak, starving, living in holes. Yet the Palauans lived not as animals but as people. They continued not only to share their food among themselves but to reach out to assist Japanese as well, to share what little they had.

The sharing of food, that primary Pacific definition of social relationships, was the pivot on which the redefinition of Palauan self and Japanese other turned (see chapter 2). Even living like animals in holes in the forest, the Palauans continued to share their food. In contrast, the previously all-powerful Japanese no longer shared food and even stole it from the Palauans. Like animals fighting over food, Japanese soldiers beat people and stole their food.⁴

At least one war story tells of “playing the native” to get back at a Japanese soldier hated for his violence. When ordered to collect taro and other foods by this soldier, a Palauan man was careful to position some poisonous wild taro on top of the basket. Without knowing that this type of taro requires special cooking, the Japanese man was poisoned. He was ill for weeks, his mouth horribly swollen and sore. The “native who didn't know any better” escaped Japanese wrath because he simply followed orders to bring the soldier taro to eat.⁵

The American Other

Just when the dominant-dependent Japanese-Palauan relationship was inverted the Americans arrived. Palauans had had little pre-

vious communication with Americans, except for two they had known as spies—brilliant military strategist Colonel Pete Ellis, who died in Palau in 1923 of excessive drinking (and very plausibly Japanese poison), and a Mr. Curtis, who had left the islands before the war. Most Palauans received images of Americans second hand. European missionaries, who had been in Palau before the war and were subsequently executed by the Japanese, had told people that the Americans were stronger than the Japanese. The Japanese, on the other hand, had told the Palauans that Americans were monsters who would kill them and rape their women. They forbade people to read the circulars written in Japanese that the Americans dropped over Babeldaob to inform Palauans that they could come over to the Americans without fear of harm. The Japanese increased security measures after Joseph Tellei, who had been the highest Palauan police officer prior to the war, escaped to the American ships in December 1944. Frightened of both Japanese and Americans, the Palauans remained in hiding until the end of the war. For most, the end of the war was signalled when American pilots overhead finally waved back rather than dropping bombs.

Palauan accounts of the end of the war frequently mention *genbaku*, a new Japanese loanword referring to the nuclear bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Palauans know that only the demonstration of nuclear firepower convinced the proud Japanese to surrender.

After the surrender, the Americans summoned Palauans from Angaur and Peleliu to come to Renrak, the dock at the southern end of Airai, for transportation back to their islands. As a sign of the final break of Palauan-Japanese relationships Palauans reportedly refused to share a meager last meal of rice with the Japanese, stating that they would eat American food instead.

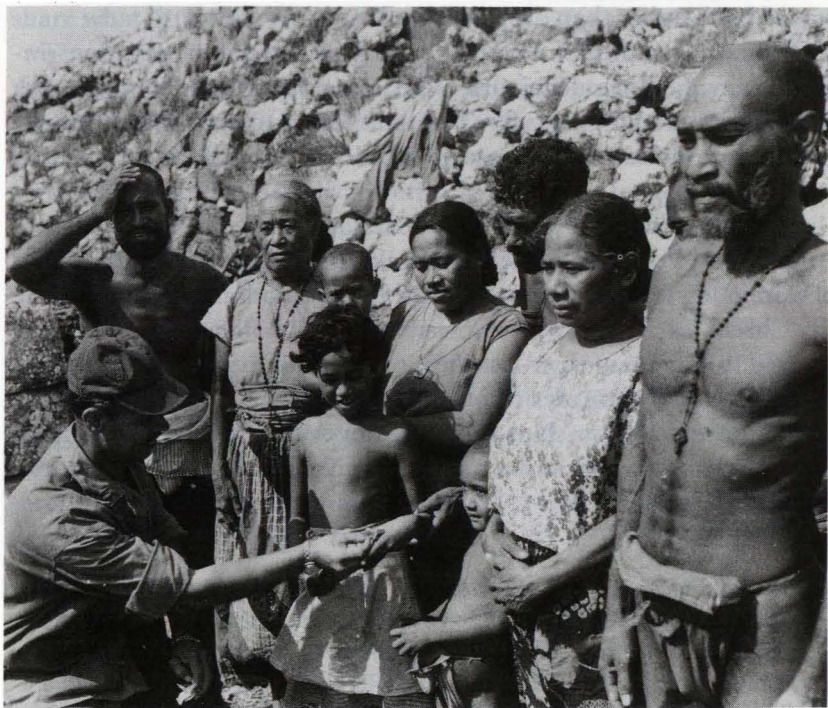
On the evacuation ships they were overwhelmed by offerings of food. A woman who had been hiding in Ngaraard with her children recounted:

They told us to come to Renrak, and then we boarded the boat to go back to Angaur. And they offered us food, and candy. And we took the candy, but didn't eat it. We put it aside in our purses to give to our children. And so they gave us more, and again more. Soon we had a pile of food in our baskets, and we finally ate some ourselves. All different kinds of food, and food we hadn't had before. Bread, cheese. Good food. And then when we got back to Angaur, it was a com-

pletely different island. There were roads, new roads everywhere. And new houses, lined up on both sides of the street. And we were shown which house we should have. It was a completely new island. And there was so much food.

The Americans gave an overwhelming abundance of food, unaware of the cultural import of this food exchange. Even more important, they ate together with Palauans. In local cultural perspective, this demonstrated an equality unknown during the Japanese administration. The sharing of food, the physical transformation of Peleliu and Angaur, and the military might that vanquished the Japanese all united to create an image of Americans as all-powerful, magnanimous new benefactors. A Palauan man who was a youth during the war recalled,

After the war, we came out of the woods in Babeldaob and our only contact with United States military troops was that every so often,



American civil affairs officer distributing candy on Peleliu, October 1944.
(*U.S. Marine Corps*)

maybe every other week, we would get a supply of food, then Ngaraard would have a share, it would be divided into sixteen shares in Koror and Ngaraard would come in a big boat and haul our supply to Ngaraard and then divide them and end up with a lot of food. And this was from the military, you know. And then we would go back home and all of a sudden we would say, "These are very kind people, very rich, like Santa Claus." And it was a very awesome thing, you know. All the Japanese were telling lies, these people were like angels come from heaven, with these candies, food, everything, produce. We were no longer frightened of the Americans. We looked at them as an easy source of food, of abundance. The rest of the Palauans were very fast to reconcile with the Americans, while the Japanese were still on the island they were ready to evacuate. So they quickly turned against the Japanese for lying to them, causing them all these miseries and so forth. And there was some conflict between individuals, between Japanese and Palauans over all the hardship and mistreatment they had with each other during the war period, the hard times.

The War's Aftermath: Reassessing Images of Self and Other

Palauans, Japanese, and Americans have taken years to assess and learn the lessons of the war, to revise their images of self and other in light of this new knowledge, and to incorporate this knowledge into their understandings of one another. Many of the lessons of the war were only learned in retrospect, by comparing actions of different peoples, lessons that were impossible before such comparison was possible. Oral histories, chants, and dances provide a dynamic forum for exploring these understandings. When Japanese and American tourists visit Palau, they are often shown dances depicting the war years, alive with the sounds of the American planes overhead.

But immediately after the war there were feelings of helplessness and turmoil. The Japanese, teachers for three decades, were conquered; the Americans were still an unknown force. These feelings are captured in a song written (originally in Japanese) as a farewell to the Japanese:

Our departure was very sudden
For us Islanders and our mother country.
We're sad for such sudden good-bye.
Japan, our mother country,
Was destined to be defeated.

We won't forget you good Japanese people
Who were our teachers for thirty years.
My favorite sakura.
Our relationship with you has ended.
We don't know which direction to go next.
(Palau Department of Education 1986)

For many the farewell was particularly difficult. Japanese families who had settled for several generations during the pre-Japanese colonial administrations were repatriated to Japan. Palauan wives and children of Japanese-Palauan families had to decide whether to follow their Japanese husbands and fathers back to Japan, or to remain alone in Palau. Many of the Palauan families chose to remain behind, and a few Japanese families left their children in Palau, reasoning they would have a better chance of survival there. These children were adopted and raised by Palauan families. One family went to Japan, but after struggling to survive decided to return to Palau. The strong-willed Palauan wife forced her way in to see General MacArthur personally and succeeded in obtaining American passports for herself and her children and clearance to return to Palau. They eventually were allowed to bring the father back to Palau to work in the Angaur phosphate mines, but when the mining ceased he was once again scheduled to be repatriated to Japan. At the last moment, the military governor in Guam permitted him to remain.

The American image gradually tarnished. After the American soldiers departed, the civilian personnel segregated themselves from the Palauans as their Japanese predecessors had done. They had their own clubs, their own rules ("natives" weren't allowed liquor, an echo of U.S. policies toward American Indians). The new administrators were not sure how to treat the Palauans, and many in the Interior Department drew on experience with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As a Palauan observed: "You [Americans] didn't really know how to be colonists. Your only experience was with slaves, with the Indians." Only in the 1960s under President Kennedy, when the American administrative policy toward the islands changed, did the barriers between Palauans and Americans relax. At that time, hundreds of Peace Corps volunteers arrived to live in the villages, and Palauan students went to the United States.

Education is one of the main issues in terms of which Palauans have analyzed and compared Japanese and American others. It is

the primary contrast between the Japanese time and American time. Palauan elders today recognize that the Japanese held them back in education, only providing enough for them to learn Japanese and to work as laborers. Most received only three years' education, and all higher education was restricted to vocational subjects—carpentry and agriculture. Palauans' highest praise is reserved for American education policies that have provided access to high office in island government. Although elder Palauans fault the American education system for its lack of discipline (in contrast to the Japanese style of education), they appreciate education as a key to equality and empowerment.

The Myth of Morikawa

One of the most fascinating of all Palauan accounts of the war is the story of Morikawa, who many Palauans believe was an American spy who saved Palauans from genocide. The story demonstrates the importance of stereotypic images and their influence in making sense of the war. Morikawa figures prominently in historical songs and chants about the war:

Meringel a Mekemedil Rubak
(Merciless War of the Rubak)

by Buikispis

Reckless was the way Isoroku [Yamamoto] handled the war
That he irritated Roosevelt that he sent out *kidobutai* [Japanese mobile troops]
He sent out *kidobutai* to fill the whole Pacific
That it filled the whole Pacific and getting its weapons turned on
Wow—these are *okabes* [planes] flying *kusentei* [submarine chasers] shooting the lands
Wow—*kusentei* shooting. Hiding in the woods we were unaware that
They [Japanese] were preparing a *bokugo* [air raid shelter] at Ngetbang
In an effort to exterminate us all.
Were it not for the rescue of Morikawa, spy of Roosevelt
We should have all perished at Ngatpang.

(Higuchi 1986b, 4)

The reference to an air raid shelter reflects the Palauan belief that they would all be put inside the air raid shelter at Ngatpang and a bomb detonated to kill them. Morikawa and other Japanese officers denied that any such plan existed, but the belief was common in Palau at the end of the war and survives to this day.

"Spy" is a customary label used by Palauans to characterize outsiders whose behavior and presence are anomalous to their national stereotype. In fact, this use of the term has a historical basis, for Colonel Pete Ellis was an American spy in Palau between 1921 and 1923 while presenting himself as a trader (Ballendorf 1975). Palauans believed the American ornithologist Curtis was also a spy who used his birds to send messages to the Americans on Guam. Curtis left Palau before the war and was one of the Americans stationed on the ships off Babeldaob during the war, when he sent messages to his Palauan friends inviting them to join him. Today, Palauans label anomalous foreigners as "spies"—it is a favorite designation for anthropologists.

To the Palauans, especially with hindsight after the war, Morikawa was an anomalous Japanese. He was tall, which alone caused him to be identified as a Japanese-American *nisei* from Hawaii. He was cultured and well educated, which contrasted markedly with many of the other Japanese soldiers the Palauans encountered. And he was of the upper classes and a graduate of the Japanese Officers' Training School.

Many accounts of Morikawa have the sound of informal reminiscences rather than formal chants or songs. I was therefore surprised to discover that the opening phrase in an account of Morikawa (from a 1975 interview with a Palauan man from Ngeremlengui) was the same as the opening phrase and information given me in an informal interview I conducted in 1987 with a woman from Ngaraard. "Morikawa arrived in Palau without informing anybody as to which airport or commercial port he would arrive" (Higuchi 1986b, 2). The phrase itself is an unusual communication, for Palauans would not necessarily know or follow the comings and goings of all the Japanese officers, particularly new ones. But this phrase is used to emphasize the difference between the other Japanese officers and Morikawa.

Fearful of the radical behavioral change in the Japanese, many people were convinced that they planned to kill all Palauans. Some elders discounted the fear, but many believe to this day that such a plan existed and only the intercession of Morikawa saved their lives.

Morikawa was responsible for agricultural production and worked directly with Palauan farmers to try to increase production for the war years. He also served as intermediary and conciliator in war-time disputes. After the Japanese image was reversed during the war, the only way for Palauans to explain Morikawa's kind behavior, as well as his greater size, was to presume that he must be an American.

Higuchi has recently interviewed Morikawa, and Morikawa paid a return visit to Palau in early 1987. He was surprised to learn of the Palauan myths about him. He denied being an American spy or *nisei*, pointing out that he was a Japanese military officer trained in the Officers School in Japan (Higuchi 1986b, 4).

Palauan Relationships Established by the War

Palauan oral accounts are structured into history through the repetition of key phrases by which they are solidified and transmitted. One of the public occasions supporting this process is itself related to the war experience and has been incorporated into existing cultural practices. Prior to the war, related or allied villages cemented and maintained their relationship through *klechedaol* 'intervillage visits' up to several weeks in duration. The chiefly councils and men's and women's clubs planned the interchange and prepared the dances to be performed, and a large delegation from one village then made a formal visit to its partner. Throughout the *klechedaol*, the visitors were accommodated in the village meeting houses (or the houses of relatives), and all meals were prepared by the host village. People often congregated at the central village square where dances were performed, stories told, chants sung. The *klechedaol* was a means of keeping alive ties between two communities, expressing reciprocal responsibilities between the villages. The host village would subsequently make a return *klechedaol* to balance the exchange and continue the obligations.

The village evacuations and relocations brought about by World War II established relationships between villages that had not been linked in the past. The sharing of the extreme privations of the war forged strong relationships between both clans and communities. Where people died during their relocation the new relationship took on special significance, because of traditional Palauan burial practices and the importance of ancestors. Normally an individual is

buried by his or her maternal clan on clan lands. Titleholders and other important persons of the clan are buried under the stone platform in front of the clan house. These burials are in a real way the material records of the clan and its interrelationships and are used to verify clan history. People believe that their ancestors continue to assist the living, and it is important that the dead are properly buried because their activities after death are associated with the sites of their death and burial.

The war made it impossible for many clans to return their dead to their maternal lands for burial. By burying the dead of another clan, a host clan acquired a close relationship to the descendants of the deceased. As previously quoted, a Palauan man noted that, "the people from Peleliu and Angaur . . . became common ancestors for the two villages."

The new relationships created by the war have been maintained. In 1985 the village of Ngaraard made a *klechedaol* visit to Peleliu that expressed the war-established relationship between the villages. People explained that Peleliu hosted Ngaraard to thank it for the hospitality Ngaraard provided during the war. A second *klechedaol* between the villages will keep this relationship alive, linking individual families and the communities in general.

The *klechedaol* is a time of visiting and celebration. New chants are composed and performed to remind the people of their shared past (see chapter 3). Old dances are performed, and members of the older generation sing songs that were popular during their youth. The *klechedaol* is perhaps the most significant occasion for cross-generational and cross-cultural sharing among Palauans, for older people sing the Japanese songs popular when they were young. They tell tales of the war and what their lives were like under the Japanese administration. Through such performances war remembrances are codified and transmitted to members of the younger generation.

The War in Palauan Historical Perspective

In many Pacific societies the war was a time of demarcation between the ways of the past and the ways of the present. The structuring of social relationships was transformed, and a new era was begun. In Palau, as well, the war engendered major structural upheavals. Following the social transformations under the Japanese administration, the war constituted a liminal period of anti-structure. The year

of famine was outside Palauan cultural frames of understanding. People could no longer live in villages but retreated to the forest, where they lived in rude shelters and foraged for food like animals.

Immediately after the war there was an effort to reestablish cultural understandings and reevaluate power relationships vis-à-vis the new administrators. Under the Japanese a reversal of many Palauan social structural principles had occurred: youth were valued over elders, the patriline was supported over the matriline, and individual land ownership and economic status were supported over clan control. However, the war and the subsequent transformation from Japanese to American administrations are now coded simply as two eras in the larger mytho-political framework of historical knowledge. *Taem er a Siabal* 'Japanese time' and *Taem er a Merikel* 'American time' follow two earlier colonial administrations, *Taem er a Sebangiol* 'Spanish time' and *Taem er a Dois* 'German time'. The larger mytho-historical structure, the world of Milad, founding goddess of the existing Palauan political hierarchy, remains intact.⁶

The first mythological world of Palau was the world of Chuab, who established the chiefly council system of governing and who peopled the land. Seven of Palau's villages descend from the children of Chuab, headed by Mengellang, a village in the state of Ngarchelong. A flood that inundated Palau marks the demarcation between the era of Chuab and the era of Milad (She Who Was Dead), who died in the flood but was brought back to life by messengers of the gods. Milad gave birth to the villages of Imeungs (Ngaremlengui), Melekeok, Ngerebungs (Aimeliik), and Koror, thereby engendering the existing mytho-political structure of Palau. The two paramount chiefs are from the villages of Melekeok and Koror, and intervillage relationships are still expressed in sibling terms. The existing structure is one of chiefly rule, governed by paired male and female councils of chiefs respected for their wisdom. As the eldest son of Milad, Ngaremlengui is considered the wise older brother who makes peace between his brash younger brothers, Melekeok and Koror. Palau has a stratified political system, with the remaining villages ranked in relationship to the four children of Milad.

The islands' political and economic structures during the Japanese administration remained stratified, although the chiefly system was weakened. In principle, the American system should also have supported youth, the patriline, and individualism, with the important addition of an ethic of equality rather than stratification.

Oaikawasang Joseph Tellei, son of the paramount chief of Mele-

keok and the highest Palauan officer under the Japanese administration, worked to retain the status and position younger men had achieved under the Japanese administration. One of his means was to reinterpret Palauan history. He tried to interpret the war as a major structural break in the mythological worlds of Palau, which had shifted Palau out of the world of Milad. He maintained that Palau was now in the cycle of Mengellang, one of the children of Chuab. The important difference was Tellei's characterization of Mengellang's world as one of equality among villages and people rather than one of stratification and rank (Vidich 1980, 313-314). Through a reinterpretation and recoding of Palauan mythology and history, the circle would be complete and Palau would continue to draw on the past for its current and future political structure throughout this structural transformation. But in practice the equality the Americans seemed to offer turned out to be an illusion. As the Americans took over the administration of the islands they looked to the chiefs to reestablish political and social order and to be the agents through whom they could govern. Moreover, the Americans did not support economic development in Palau, so the wages and prestigious employment that had given the younger men the economic basis to challenge the structure during the Japanese administration were no longer available.

Perhaps the sedimentation of the present precludes a clear picture at this time, but Oaikawasang's attempted reinterpretation of history has not been accepted in the postwar years. Intervillage relationships today are for the most part conducted in the cultural idiom of the world of Milad and the ranked relationships traditionally established. The chiefs of the two sons of Milad, Koror and Melekeok, are still recognized as the paramount chiefs of Palau despite the disjunctures between the traditional political system and the constitutional government of sixteen equal states governed by the elected president of the Republic of Palau.

Stereotypic Images and War Remembrances Today

Whatever their degree of accuracy, images of the other formed during the war continue to color relationships between Palauans, Japanese, and Americans. Such images affect Palauan-American interaction in particular. They figure heavily in the stalemated negotiations to establish a Compact of Free Association between the two countries that would confirm U.S. military rights in Palau.

Hell in the Pacific, an American cinematic attempt to make sense of the Pacific War, was filmed in Palau in the mid-1960s. It provides a valuable window onto American images of the war and the tropics. In one way, it combines Pacific and American sensibilities about the war. It takes an island-style approach to the war by reducing the typical war movie genre of spectacular battle scenes to a confrontation between two men. A Japanese, played by Toshiro Mifune, and an American, played by Lee Marvin, are both shot down near an uninhabited remote tropical island covered with dense vegetation. They must find a way to survive in this unfamiliar environment while working out whether to continue on a personal level the deadly war in which their respective countries are engaged.

The discontinuities between the stereotypic images portrayed and the war's realities afforded Palauan spectators much amusement during filming. Moreover, they highlight the role many Pacific Islanders played during the war—that of unrecognized laborers. The movie set was located just outside the busy harbor of Koror, rather than in an uninhabited remote area. The site had figured prominently in the early history of Koror (though most Palauans today do not know its Palauan name, calling it “Lee Marvin’s Beach”). This part of the rock islands was the same area where people took shelter during the March 1944 attack on Koror. Similarly amusing was the Hollywood stereotype that a dense tropical forest must include bamboo. This island has no bamboo, but every day of filming Palauans were paid to cut bamboo and “plant” it there so that the Hollywood image could be “correct.” Once again, Palauans were behind-the-scenes workers.

Perhaps the most telling stereotype in the film is the absence of any Islanders at all, reflecting the American government’s approach to Palau. Local inhabitants are largely ignored, too few to be taken seriously, for the main significance of the islands is their strategic position in global politics.

The Interplay of Palauan and American Images of Each Other

In retrospect, one Palauan storyteller now realizes how bad the initial American generosity was for Palauans, how it raised impossible expectations of what the Americans would do for Palau.

The spoils of war, the United States, that is the worst thing that ever happened to the people of Palau. Here in Palau there were the rem-

nants of war supplies, of food, and there was just an abundance of everything, and you think heaven had come to earth. The United States has so much that you can just walk into the woods and stumble over corned beef, canned corned beef, you know, military supplies. We had cheese, the kids were playing with cheese like mud, you know, and everything so much, so plenty. And then Palau people coming out of starvation and sickness and all of a sudden get hit with this, and it's really like heaven come to earth. Then they started to say, "Oh, the United States is so rich all you need to do is sleep and eat, for the rest of your life." And it began to be "Give me this, and give me this, and give me this." And then came the reality. And they said, "Oh, the United States is really stingy." See, because of the anguish of being left languishing in poverty because the United States has forgotten. But that is actually the reality of life—that you have to go out there and pick the soil for your own livelihood.

The image of generous Americans has now been inverted. By their neglect they are now perceived as stingy, as having ulterior motives. After the initial profusion of food and medical supplies and services given freely, the naval administration was replaced with a civilian administration under the Department of the Interior that operated under a limited budget. Anthropologists were called in to assist, to ease the cultural transitions. Although the anthropologists were perceived locally to be in positions of power within the Palauan administration, their influence in Washington was minimal. Washington bureaucrats continue to entertain images of the "primitive native." Washington failed to recognize that Koror had been an urban center with excellent communications, roads and sidewalks, electricity, stores, restaurants, theaters, newspapers. Although Palauans were perhaps second-class citizens of the town, these services were available to and used by them. Some had large bank accounts that were confiscated during the war and not replaced. Palau's productive infrastructure, its roads, electricity, docks, boats, and canoes, was destroyed during the war. Its gardens were heavily bombed. Housing was in the main destroyed. But the image of the Palauan in postwar Washington was of "natives" who should not be spoiled by giving them things beyond local means of production. What the Palauans feared, as reported by anthropologist John Useem, came to pass:

The character structure of Palau society is basically that of a people in the midst of acculturation and eager to complete the transition.

Unlike the Yap islanders, the people of Palau are impatient to resume the historic process of change so successfully directed by the Japanese, and are deeply concerned lest the process be reversed. The predominant fear is that under American control, Palau may be regarded merely as a primitive society and allocated goods and materials accordingly. There is anxiety that with the termination of hostilities in the Pacific, America may forget its commitment to Palau and abandon it, and the island will then revert to conditions which prevailed prior to the coming of the foreigner (1949, 65).

The assistance the United States offered to rebuild Europe, Japan, even other Pacific islands, was less generous in the U.S. Trust Territory, earning it the nickname "Rust Territory." Some temporary reconstruction was done in Koror, Angaur, and Peleliu—mainly quonset huts (some of which are still in use today)—but in general there was little reconstruction in Palau. The bombed-out Japanese buildings were patched up. Palau languished under a small civilian administration, largely forgotten by Washington. The first war-claim payments were not received by Palauans until the mid-1970s. In the words of a Palauan politician,

After the supply, the war supply and the guns disappeared at Koror, we began to take a look, and the Americans were doing very very little, even for just war reparations. Just to bring the road back to its original condition, that was not taking place. Construction, reconstruction, that was not taking place. You know the biggest buildings up here in Koror to this day are the court house, the Palau Legislature, the high school. These were all Japanese buildings. High school was a hospital, where MOC [Micronesian Occupational College] is. The Palau legislature. It is kind of a shame when someone asks "who built this?" That was a powerhouse for communication. A Japanese international communication system powerhouse. You go to the basement where there are tunnel-type rooms—that was loaded with machines for communications. Now it is the highest building. It is the Palau Legislature. Our president of the republic sits where there used to be a court room for the Palauan administration.

After twenty years, the twenty-fifth year, the people began to wonder. "Where is the war reparation, the reconstruction? It's not taking place. We are tired of improvising on the remnants of war." And as you know, the conditions have not changed very much to this day. And we are about forty years now. And so that people began to think that maybe after all the United States took this by force, took Palau and the rest of Micronesia for other purposes than to liberate the peo-

ple of Palau, to help them catch up with the rest of the world, civilization and development. And this thing has grown deeper and deeper as more people go to the United States and get education and come back here.

Palauans realize that their earliest expectations of American largesse were unrealistic but continue to expect more reconstruction than the Americans have been willing to offer.

The military considerations alluded to in the quotation above now overshadow the relationships and miscommunications between Americans and Palauans. Both sides use lessons they learned during the war as they try to arrange for future relations, but there are serious differences in the ways both Palauans and Americans interpret these lessons. American military strategists refuse to give up the islands that were so dearly won in the battle of Peleliu. Palau is considered the closest fall-back position if America loses its bases in the Philippines. Even though modern military practices and equipment may make the establishment of bases in Palau impractical, strategists wish to have options.

Within Palau there are numerous interpretations of the lessons of the war and the economic and political options of an independent Palau. Although political considerations and factional disputes among government branches and departments in both the United States and Palau affect the status negotiations between the two countries, the focus of discussion continues to be the military situation. What is the United States willing to pay for Palau's strategic location? What are the Palauans willing to accept and give up in return for economic assistance? The answers to these questions turn, in part, on the differential lessons and interpretations of the war. Many elderly people equate a military presence with their vulnerability to other nations' wars and fear the return of a military presence to Palau. When one of the early United Nations Visiting Missions visited a rural village during an inspection tour and asked for villagers' comments, an elderly woman seriously requested "the next time you have a war, please don't have it here." Islanders know that nuclear explosions brought an end to the war in the Pacific, destroyed an entire island in Bikini Atoll, and caused cancer among the Marshallese. Many continue to fight to maintain a nuclear-free Palau. On the other hand, many Palauans appreciate the complexities of the world political scene and the necessity for small Pacific islands to maintain alliances with strong geopolitical powers. The negative

example of Palau's close neighbor, East Timor, is often cited. Most Palauans wish to maintain a close alliance with the United States. It is a matter of balancing military, economic, and political considerations, and the balance has not yet been achieved.

Notes

1. The final verses of a song about World War II are presented in the epigraph. The song was written in 1945 in Ngarchelong and collected by the Palau Department of Education in 1985–1986. I would like to thank Masaharu Tmodrang for permission to use this and other songs quoted in this chapter. These songs were collected by a research team including Masaharu Tmodrang, Kodep Kloulechad, Justina Ramarui, Dilmei Olkeriil, Hermana Ramarui, and Demei Otobed.

The Palauan *denes* and *belloi* referred to in the text of the song are the inedible fruit of the oriental mangrove (*Bruguiera gymnorhiza*) and bitter yam (*Dioscorea bulbifera*), respectively, which were used as famine foods during the war.

2. I would like especially to thank Wakako Higuchi for sharing and discussing her research data on the interactions between Japanese and Palauans prior to and during the war and on the history of the Japanese administration.

3. Wakako Higuchi (personal communication) has pointed out that Palauans were more precisely considered “third class.” They were called *santō kokumin* or “third class people” ranking after the Japanese and the Koreans and Okinawans (Peattie 1988, 111).

4. In the accounts of famine and starvation, and the cultural depictions of the Japanese who stole food, the effect of the nationality of the interviewer is most apparent. Palauans interviewed by Wakako Higuchi during an oral history project on the Japanese administration of Palau (Ballendorf, Shuster, and Higuchi 1986) focused on their admiration for their Japanese teachers, Palauan contributions to the war effort, their work as members of the survey team, their training as Japanese “commandos.” They downplayed the hardships and famine of the war, the transformation of their images of the Japanese, images that are today being redefined more favorably in any case as Japanese businesses move into Palau and provide employment, and as more Japanese tourists visit Palau. Although Higuchi's informants reported that several Palauans died during the war, the starvation and Palauan losses are not emphasized. In a 1987 conversation concerning our respective data on the war, Higuchi was surprised to learn of Palauan deaths due to starvation or related diseases during the war. We discovered that the information provided to each of us in turn, one Japanese, the other American, was colored by our nationalities. In many cases, similar or identical material was reported, but at times the tone, the emphasis differed. Palauans would share negative images of the Japanese with me which they might hold back from Higuchi, and undoubtedly the converse was also true.

The format and time frame of interview topics also colored the information provided. Palauans would discuss in detail their remembrances of working for the Japanese—of the work teams, the construction projects, and the commando team—in terms of these experiences. But new understandings of their relationships with the

Japanese were only reached later, when Palauans could compare Japanese and American approaches. Often, interviews on more contemporary subjects provided analytic reflections back to the war, its lessons, and comparisons between the Americans and the Japanese. Palauan house servants who worked for Japanese families before the war did not question that they were not allowed to eat with the families, that they only served them. Some established warm relationships that continue to this day. Only later, when Palauans were invited to eat with Americans, did they reflect unfavorably on Japanese practices.

5. Another story told with great humor today is of the man who, when surprised in the open by American strafing planes, sought to disguise himself as a pandanus tree! He took his pose but was shot by the American pilot and bears scars to this day. Not every trickster or magical response to the war could be relied on.

6. An understanding of Palauan conceptualizations of time and history is required to grasp the potentiality of major structural transformations. The Palauan sense of time and history differs from Western understanding, which is more linear in conception (see Parmentier 1987 and Nero 1987 for comprehensive explications). In Palau, time is conceived of more in circular or incorporative terms. *Cherechar* 'forever' is the root word from which both the past, *irechar*, and the future, *mo Cherechar* (literally "go to forever") derive. The image is also one of sedimentation, but this sedimentation is perceived not just in linear geological terms but as an active selection of what shall remain. The best of present actions are sedimented onto the past to legitimate the future.

Examination of a key Palauan proverb perhaps helps elucidate the semantic complexities: *A Cherechar a lokelii* 'The essence of the past becomes the future'. *Cherechar* is used reflexively to indicate the circle that includes both past and present. *Lokelii* evokes two images, and people identify two roots from which the verb may be derived (evinced a Palauan predilection for layered, multifaceted communication). The first root, *melakel* 'to render the essence', is used for the act of extracting coconut oil from coconut cream, an image of preserving the best, the purest from the whole. The second root, *omekang*, means "to feed, to provide sustenance"—the best from the present is an extracted sediment that forms the sustenance of the future. Time is conceived both in terms of the long duration and as continually reincorporative. The structure is derived from the mythological past, and at the same time the best from the present is reencoded into the past in order to give legitimacy to the present structure. But the future is often unclear because of turbidity that has not yet settled, and whenever the changes are too great to be incorporated within the existing world, a new world is "born."

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CHAPTER 6

"Far Away" and "Close Up": World War II and Sikaiana Perceptions of Their Place in the World

WILLIAM W. DONNER

EARLY in my stay on Sikaiana, a small Polynesian community in the Solomon Islands (map 2), an elderly woman recounted her interactions with Americans during World War II. Recalling why some young women were reluctant to marry American servicemen, she said that they were afraid because at that time America was "far away." But she added that America now is "close up," meaning that the economic and cultural distance between it and Sikaiana is no longer very great. This woman's statement about Sikaiana's relative economic and cultural distance from industrialized nations reflects an important concern with social change and economic development that continues in present-day Sikaiana society. World War II was a period when Sikaiana had intensive, although brief, contact with massive technology and world events. It is therefore an important point of reference when the Sikaiana consider their place in the world.

The events taking place during World War II made a profound and lasting impression on the Sikaiana people who witnessed them, and they frequently recounted these experiences to me. Many of these accounts recur in a similar form, and I consider them to have become fully incorporated into Sikaiana's oral traditions along with legends and stories about the island's original settlement, history before colonial administration, and conversion to Christianity (see chapter 17). Whether accurate or distorted, I will assume that recurring themes in these accounts reflect Sikaiana perceptions and interpretations of their experiences with the war and Americans.

Sikaiana

Sikaiana is a small atoll about one hundred miles east of Malaita Island in the Solomon Islands. Sikaiana, like the other Polynesian outliers in the Solomon Islands such as Tikopia, Ontong Java, and Rennell and Bellona, is occupied by people whose traditions, language, and culture are Polynesian. It was originally settled by Polynesians who migrated to the fringes of Melanesia (see Bayard 1976). Today Sikaiana is an administrative council district within Malaita Province. The population residing on the atoll fluctuates at about two hundred to two hundred fifty people; about four hundred to four hundred fifty others have emigrated from Sikaiana to various parts of the Solomon Islands. Once a month a boat brings and takes passengers, unloads supplies, and loads copra, the main cash crop.

Compared with many other communities in the Solomon Islands, Sikaiana has had long and comparatively close relationships with Westerners.¹ In the nineteenth century, the atoll was visited by whalers and traders. By the early twentieth century, older Sikaiana people remember that tobacco, trade cloth, bush knives, pots, pans, steel tools, flint, flour, and even canned beef were available at local stores supplied by European traders.

In 1929, Anglican missionaries in the Solomon Islands sent their ship, the *Southern Cross*, to Sikaiana and left a group of missionaries to convert the island's population. The conversion was rapid and, within ten years, virtually complete. The missionaries took young people away from the island to be educated at missionary schools, including Pawa and Maravovo. Many traditional practices and ceremonies were discontinued and replaced. At the time World War II reached the Solomon Islands, Sikaiana had a long history of casual contact with Western culture that had intensified in the previous decade. Sikaiana's inhabitants were mostly Christian. Many young men had attended mission schools, others had worked for Europeans, and some spoke Solomons Pijin and even a little English. Shortly before the Japanese invaded the Solomon Islands, many Sikaiana emigrants, including the children at mission schools, were taken back to the atoll. Some, however, did not get back and spent at least part of the time in various places, including Santa Isabel and Guadalcanal.

During World War II, the Sikaiana people remember that American seaplanes often visited Sikaiana; some stayed overnight and left on the following day. The names of some of these fliers are remem-

bered, as are the families they stayed with. Several events are recounted frequently, including the visit of three fliers who crashed near the island, a visit by several warships, an air skirmish over the island, and a brief visit by a Japanese submarine.

The rescue of the three fliers is one of the most vividly recounted incidents. The Sikaiana claim that early one morning in late August 1942 three fliers came ashore at one of the roughest areas of the reef. As fate would have it, the sea was calm that morning. They stayed on the northeastern side of the main islet (Hale) until they could determine whether there were any Japanese on the island. The fliers were eventually discovered and escorted to the inhabited area of the island. One of the men is reported to have had a "broken" leg, which was mended by a Sikaiana person using traditional medical techniques. The fliers stayed for several days before being rescued. Their names are remembered as "Ben," "Paul," and "Clyde." (See appendix.)

Sikaiana was at the fringes of most of the conflict. There were no large troop movements through the area or consistently heavy fighting. However, Sikaiana is located very near the site of two naval battles fought in 1942, the Battle of the Eastern Solomons and the Battle of Santa Cruz. The naval engagement of 23–25 August 1942, now known as the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, was originally named the Battle of Stewart's Island (Sikaiana). During this engagement Sikaiana was directly between the American fleet to the south and the Japanese fleet to the north and west. On 24 August, Japanese airplanes flew over the atoll on their way to bomb (and disable) the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, which was located about fifteen miles southwest. Records at the U.S. Naval Historical Center in Washington, DC, report that one plane from Torpedo Squadron Three of the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* was unable to land because the *Enterprise* was under attack. The crew crashed at sea and arrived on Stewart's Island, where they were rescued several days later (United States Navy 1942). This crew included Ensign Harold L. Bingaman (Ben) and Aviation Radiomen Paul W. Knight and Calvin ("Clyde") P. Crouch (United States Navy n.d.).

The Transformation of World Events into Community Events

After the departure of these three fliers, a series of songs was composed that commemorated their stay. These songs are still remem-



Marakei Islanders rescuing American from downed seaplane, 6 July 1944.
(U.S. Navy)

bered and performed on occasion by older Sikaiana women. In traditional Sikaiana society, men and women periodically divided into separate groups and composed humorous songs critical of the opposite sex. After the arrival of Christian missionaries in 1929 and the conversion of Sikaiana, the missionaries discouraged these song festivals. However, they continued in a modified form until after World War II. During the school holidays men and women divided into separate groups and continued to compose songs, although the missionaries discouraged explicit sexual references.

The following songs were composed by the island's women shortly after the departure of the three American fliers.² The songs describe the beauty of the American fliers and the young women's attraction to them. The songs, however, were intended not so much as praise for the Americans' beauty as a taunt to the island's young men by comparing Sikaiana men unfavorably with the Americans. This type of taunt is very common in song composition, and indeed in daily joking.

Song 1

A toku lautama he tuunia na moena o na kehu kaihe sulamai
A toku lautama he tuunia na moena o na kaniva kaihe sulamai

O toku ohia te kili maania a "Ben" ki moe ma nau
 O toku ohia te kili maanoni a "Paul" ki moe ma nau
 Noho koe ku kino i a nau
 Noho koe ku kino i a "Clyde"
 Noho koe ku kinokino, hakaoti

Unmarried young men do not burn the bedding of the
 beautiful whites who just appeared
 Unmarried young men do not burn the bedding of the
 rainbows (beautiful people) who just appeared

I want the very white skin of Ben to sleep with me
 I want the fragrant skin of Paul to sleep with me
 You are disgusting to me
 You are disgusting to Clyde
 You are simply disgusting

Song 1 describes an incident that occurred shortly after the fliers left the island. The young women of the island demonstrated their romantic interest in the Americans by gathering together to sleep on the bedding they had used. The young Sikaiana men burned the bedding mats. (This was all done as a form of teasing or joking and is consistent with contemporary patterns of male-female teasing and joking.) In song 1, the light color of the fliers' skin is mentioned to taunt the Sikaiana men for having darker, less attractive, skin color. (The Sikaiana prefer lighter complexions, much as some American women are said to prefer men who are "tall, dark, and handsome," or sometimes it is asserted that "gentlemen prefer blondes.") The terms *kehu* in line 1 and *maania* in line 3 describe the very white skin of the fliers and are meant to be complimentary. In line 2, the word *kaniva* is literally a "rainbow," but in this context it means a beautiful person. Paul is described by reference to a common romantic idiom, *maanoni* 'fragrance'. In the final three lines, the young men of Sikaiana are taunted for not being worthy of the attention of the young women, especially in comparison with the fliers.

Song 2

A "Clyde," A "Clyde," noho tani tani
 Tani, tani ko nau ei
 Luuluu ki taaua i Tai Hale
 Luuluu ki taaua ko ka hano

“Clyde,” “Clyde,” (I) remain crying
 Cry, cry, I am crying
 We shake hands at the sea shore
 We shake hands, you are about to go

On Sikaiana, following European custom, it is common to shake hands at departures, especially of foreign visitors. The women composed the song to describe their sadness at the departure of the fliers and to taunt the Sikaiana men. Clyde is remembered as the youngest of the fliers.

Song 3

Melika, too vaka ku aleha te ulu henua
 E tahuli ki hano saaua toku manava
 E saele ki kake moku loimata
 Taaua ia heki poloaki

America your plane circles the island
 When it turns to go, my heart swoons
 When (they) walk to climb (into the plane), I cry
 We have not yet said goodbye

Song 3 describes the departure of the fliers on the seaplane that rescued them. The phrase in line 2, *saaua toku manava*, literally means “the belly is carried,” a frequent idiom that is used to describe being in love. The young woman is crying because she has not said goodbye.

In 1969 another song festival was held to mark a feat of American technology, the landing of Americans on the moon. The island’s men and women composed songs that used the moon landing to criticize each other. The Sikaiana men performed a skit imitating the launching. One man put on the earphones from the island’s short-wave radio and acted the part of mission control. Another soaked a rag with kerosene, tied it to the tail of a bird, and lit it in imitation of a rocket’s launch. The men composed a song claiming that the astronauts met a beautiful woman on the moon, Sina, who was far more beautiful than any woman on the earth below (the women of Sikaiana). (Sina is a common folktale figure whose image is said to be seen weaving a mat on the moon.) After hearing this song, the women composed a reply (*hakapili*) describing Sina’s dislike of the men of this earth (the men of Sikaiana) because they steal coconuts, copra, tobacco, and money.

In 1942, and as recently as 1969, Sikaiana people memorialized world events in their song compositions, reformulating these events in a manner that reinterprets them in terms of community concerns. These activities are one of several ways in which the Sikaiana attempt to maintain themselves as a separate and distinct community in the face of ongoing sociocultural change.

Social Images of Americans

In addition to these songs, stories are frequently told about encounters with Americans. In these stories, several recurrent themes present an image of Americans as sharing a manner of behaving or a social character (see chapters 2, 17). This ethnic stereotype, whether accurate or not, reflects the consolidation of experiences with a group of outsiders. These images continue to shape Sikaiana perceptions of America and Americans as well as to reflect important processes in Sikaiana's experiences with outsiders.

Overall, the Americans left a favorable impression as being a friendly, if also violent, people who shared in Sikaiana life-style and social relationships in a manner that was very unusual in light of previous Sikaiana encounters with Westerners (see also chapters 15, 17).³ The Americans prayed in the local church, played cards with the Sikaiana people, and drank fermented coconut toddy. Several are reported to have wanted to "marry" Sikaiana women. (There are, however, no offspring of Americans.)

The Americans did not find the Sikaiana life-style to be repulsive or disgusting (*hakalialia*). The term *hakalialia* is frequently used to describe disgust at an inedible or rotten food or the revulsion some people feel when caring for a person with a severe physical deformity. The Sikaiana people expect that most Westerners will find their living conditions and food to be simple, plain, and even disgusting. One woman explained my own adjustment to Sikaiana life in terms of her experiences with these Americans: being American, I did not experience revulsion at Sikaiana food and life-style.

In normal Sikaiana social interactions, hostility and anger should be controlled. Americans are remembered as being friendly to the Sikaiana and not given to anger. One woman recounted that once some children were playing on the wings of a seaplane and damaged them, rendering it unable to take off. Nevertheless, the pilot did not get angry.



"Duck" seaplane at Kwai, Malaita, Solomon Islands, June 1943. (U.S. Navy)

Reciprocity is an important basis for social relationships on Sikaiana, and Americans are described as becoming involved in Sikaiana systems of reciprocity. Some of the young men formed friendships (*soa*) with individual fliers and helped them during their stays.⁴ In return, the Americans are remembered as giving gifts and sometimes parachuting supplies with their friend's name on them. The Sikaiana people claim that several days after the American fliers were rescued, packages of medicine and other supplies were dropped from an airplane.

Although the Americans were friendly to the Sikaiana people, they are also remembered as being brave, fierce, and violent. One man who was on Guadalcanal said that the marines had told him they had "come to die." America is still thought of as a place where there is constant violence and Americans are thought to be a potentially violent people.

Americans are also remembered for their great material wealth. People found large tins full of food and other supplies that drifted ashore. Some of the men claimed that they began smoking during this time because there were so many free cigarettes. Americans are still seen as powerful, an attitude extended to the value placed on their technology and manufactured goods. World War II stainless steel is highly prized and preferred for making fishing spears. My

aspirin and other medical supplies from the United States were thought to be more effective than the same generic medicines sold in the Solomon Islands. Many people thought that American brands of watches such as Timex were better (or at least more prestigious) than other brands such as Casio or Seiko.

Overall, the Sikaiana people have a favorable impression of Americans. Generally, they are much kinder in their assessment of the character and motivations of Westerners, including Americans, than they are in their assessments of one another. Over the course of their contacts with outsiders, the Sikaiana people have made a very favorable impression on those who have encountered them, including myself. The population had acquired a reputation as friendly and hospitable by the mid-nineteenth century (Bayliss-Smith 1975, 298-299; see also Schertzer 1861, 622-623; Woodford 1906, 165; Woodford 1916, 41; Lambert 1941, 109-110). During World War II the Americans also seem to have formed positive impressions of the Sikaiana (see appendix). An article in *Time* magazine dated June 1943 described Sikaiana as a "terrestrial paradise . . . where the South Seas live up to their literary tradition and the native girls really look like Dorothy Lamour." Just as the Sikaiana people formed an image about American character, this article suggested that Sikaiana was seen by Americans as a manifestation of long-standing images of the romantic South Seas.

Locals and Cosmopolitans: Sikaiana's Place in the World

Memories about World War II and social images of Americans are part of the broader context of Sikaiana perceptions of economic and social change and their place in the world. Many areas of Sikaiana life have been altered dramatically over the last fifty years. After World War II, the British Solomon Islands Protectorate government developed new political institutions on the island. At present, a local church, school, court, government council, medical clinic, and cooperative store are well established. Younger people are no longer familiar with much of the traditional technology, including loom weaving, fishing techniques, and canoe making. Many legends and indigenous practices are known only to older people, who say that they know much less than their elders did. Many other traditional activities have been discontinued or replaced, including song feasts, tattooing, magic incantations, rites of childbirth and burial, and sev-

eral ceremonies involving gift exchange. Before the conversion to Christianity, marriages were arranged when the couple were young children. At present, most marriages are made by the couple's choice. Traditional songs have been replaced by compositions for the guitar, which in turn are being replaced by commercially produced music heard on radios and tape recorders. Western-style dances between young men and women were introduced on the island in the 1970s. Traditional games are being replaced by Western games such as soccer, netball, volleyball, and cricket. The Sikaiana language is changing through the simplification of its grammar, the loss of Sikaiana lexemes, and borrowing from English. Some younger adult males consider Solomons Pijin, the lingua franca of the Solomon Islands, to be their first language. Some Sikaiana people have attended training courses and universities in England, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and Fiji.

Generally, the Sikaiana people have responded readily to opportunities for participation in Western institutions and practices, but they have found economic and cultural change to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they sometimes recount their traditional rituals with self-mockery. They remember that seances with ancestors in the traditional ritual system caused hostility, disease, and deaths. They claim that in traditional society there were high rates of adultery, along with the heightened conflict and hostility that resulted. On the other hand, they also feel that in previous times social relationships were more harmonious and people were happier. They lament the loss of certain traditional activities and events, including dances, song styles, games, and interpersonal etiquette. But they also encourage their children to attend schools where they have contacts with other Solomon Islanders and learn different cultural practices.

During World War II massive new technologies entered the Solomon Islands, and important world events, at least for a while, centered there. In the accounts of the events associated with World War II, there are the seeds of many issues that continue to concern the Sikaiana people and reflect some of their perceptions of their place in a complex world. The Sikaiana people had intimate contact with Americans and their technology. The war is, therefore, an important reference point for their perceptions about economic and cultural development and their relations with industrialized nations. They view themselves as developing and changing, but they also see a wide gap between themselves and industrialized countries. In many respects, they still think of themselves as "far away."

The Sikaiana people often joke about the small size of their community in comparison with the large size of industrialized societies. A man who completed a secondary education jokingly described a bush path on Sikaiana as a "highway"; another man pretended that his canoe was a battleship. Several people referred to Sikaiana as the "United States of Sikaiana," joking about the island's small population in relation to the large size of the United States. Indeed, such concepts of size are inherent in Solomons Pijin; the word for industrialized countries is *bikples*, from the English "big place."

The Sikaiana continue to be fascinated with the technology of warfare. I was frequently asked questions about U.S. military capabilities. People who could read English eagerly passed around my *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines. During my stay in 1980–1983, there were conflicts in both Lebanon and the Falklands. These wars stirred interest on Sikaiana, and indeed in the rest of the Solomon Islands. For a while, the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation had a special radio show devoted to updating events about various wars going on around the world. When the bishop of Malaita visited Sikaiana, he was asked about the possibility of a nuclear war. A Sikaiana man first told me about Reagan's plans for the Strategic Defense Initiative, after he heard about it over the national radio.

This interest in world events and technology corresponds with a self-deprecatory humor about Sikaiana's smallness and lack of sophistication. In some descriptions of events that took place during World War II, there are incidents that expose a lack of sophistication. For example, one man recounted his adventures trapped behind Japanese lines near Henderson Airfield on Guadalcanal. He was sent out as a scout to find out whether there were any Japanese or Americans nearby. Laughing and shaking his head, he recalled that he had never seen people of either nationality and had no way to distinguish their racial features. Local traditions are not always denigrated in war stories; in the story of the three fliers, people always recount that one flier had a broken leg that was set by traditional medical techniques.

This concern with lack of sophistication is a frequent theme in present-day Sikaiana teasing and joking. A commonly used Pijin term, *lokolo*, ridicules behaviors or people for lacking sophistication. *Lokolo* is derived from the English, "local," in the sense of referring to the attributes of a "local" community—that is to say, "provincial" or "hick." Usually, *lokolo* is used to tease a person for lack of familiarity with a sophisticated life-style or Western manufactured goods. For example, some people teased me for being *lokolo* because

of my clumsy efforts at using pressure lamps, axes, and other manufactured goods. Sikaiana men often joked that many Sikaiana women were *lokolo* because they were not familiar with Western housekeeping, cooking, dance styles, and interpersonal etiquette.

The statement that America is no longer "far away" but is now "close up" reflects the culture and economic change that older people have witnessed. But it belies a continuing ambivalence about Sikaiana's small and relatively isolated place in the larger outside world.

Conclusion

Sikaiana experiences in World War II were a particularly intensive part of a longer process of social and cultural change. For older people who witnessed these events, and for younger people who hear their stories, World War II is a kind of reference point, when there was intimate contact with wealthy and powerful outsiders, and when world events were briefly centered on the Solomon Islands.

The Sikaiana developed images of Americans as friendly, wealthy, violent, and willing to participate more intimately in Sikaiana activities than other Westerners. However, the Islanders became aware of not only the similarities, but also some of the dramatic differences in power and wealth between themselves and these outsiders (for other examples from the Solomons, see chapters 11 and 15). The Sikaiana remain fascinated with this power and wealth; they admire it, but also distrust and fear it.

The songs that were composed about the three American fliers, and more recently the songs composed following the American landing on the moon, reflect one aspect of Sikaiana's interaction with the industrialized world. Global events are incorporated into the community's traditions and memorialized in terms of community social relationships, in these cases the fundamental Sikaiana distinction between men and women. The songs reaffirm the community in terms of events of the outside world.

But often cultural and social change is not incorporated so neatly and fully into local community experience. Western institutions have had a profound effect on the Sikaiana community, resulting in emigration, wage-labor, formal education, new values, and interactions with non-Sikaiana people. Whether or not the Sikaiana will be able to maintain their community as a distinctive cultural tradition

and social group is not clear. For better and worse, Sikaiana continues to be strongly influenced by cultural and social change, and technologically advanced societies provide frames of reference for this change. In this respect, World War II was an especially dramatic and intensive stage in a longer process.

Appendix

After writing this chapter, I enlisted the help of the Department of the Navy to contact Paul Knight, one of the fliers commemorated in the songs in this text. His letter follows.

August 29, 1986

Dear Sir,

I enjoyed very much your letter and the verses by the native girls on Stewart Island. Although your letter is dated in April, I just received it from the Navy Department in St. Louis. I would like very much to read the entire paper you are writing about the island.

I'm no doubt the "Paul" referred to. The event took place during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. Late in the afternoon of August 24, 1942, we were returning to the carrier Enterprise, from a mission in a TBF and were attacked by 3 zeros. The task force we had encountered were cruisers and destroyers. When we arrived within sight of the "E" she was under attack by Jap planes. We received a radio message to stand clear, so we continued to circle on the horizon. We found ourselves alone when the zeros attacked. In later years, in reading about the battle, it seems there were two task forces: the one we encountered and another with carriers in it. I shot one down, confirmed by myself and Ens. Bingaman, the pilot, but they also finished us and we went into the drink. We spent several hours in the life raft, before landing on the beach of Stewart Island in the wee hours of the morning. We remained on the beach until day-break, when Bingaman and Crouch left to explore the island. I couldn't walk, so remained behind. An eternity later three

natives appeared. That was a frightful moment. I didn't know whether they were "friend or foe." I had a .45 and was getting ready to shoot them when one raised his hand and smiled. I decided to take the chance that they were friendly, which might be the best decision I've ever made in my life. The picture of them approaching me is like it is happening now; I was on that beach, hurting all over, with a cocked .45 wondering what to do. They carried me to their village, and gave the three of us a hut to ourselves, which must have meant that a family moved out for us. During the days that we remained in their village they treated us splendidly. I couldn't walk and had other wounds, an especially bad one in the forehead, and two older men were constantly with me washing the wounds, etc.

I especially remember a young lady who daily brought a fresh stalk of bananas into the hut. Also from the hut I could see an elderly woman who seemed to be the cook; she constantly tended a fire and was cooking. They fed us well, and I think I've never had more delicious chicken. One evening I remember well. A group of the men gathered in a circle in our hut with some type of alcoholic beverage; it tasted terrible but we drank with them to show our gratitude for their kindness. They also had a sort of wine in a coconut shell that was real tasty. We had given them the whistle from the life raft, and on the evening they gathered in the hut one would blow it and they'd all laugh like crazy; when the laughter subsided, he would blow the whistle again and the laughter started all over. They really seemed to enjoy the evening.

Some of the men spoke pidgin English, and told us some missionaries were there some years before, and taught them. I got the impression they knew the difference between our planes and the Japanese. I recall one indicating he had seen a plane with a round ball, and not liking it. I couldn't determine if a Jap plane had crashed there, or just flown over.

Each day there was the sound of a drum, and I would see the entire village going past our hut. Crouch went with them and told me they went to worship each day. They also went to the water and bathed daily, as well as cleaning the street through the village.

When you were there, did they still have the rubber life raft we left? The rations in the raft consisted of a hard cracker and sweet chocolate. They didn't care for the crackers any more than we did, but did enjoy the chocolate.

The day the PBY flew over and saw the flare, and landed in the lagoon to pick us up, the entire village accompanied the outrigger canoe we were in out to the plane. The crew of the PBY gave them several packages of cigarettes. I was able to shake hands with several and wave to the others as we were boarding the plane. Even though I wasn't feeling well, and was happy to know we were rescued, I still felt sad at leaving these people behind. If you do have contact with them, tell them I remember them very well. Over the years I have thought of them often, and in discussions have often related the story of our stay there. They were wonderful people, and I'm certain the two elderly men, no doubt now passed on, who tended to me constantly saved my life. The wound in my head became infected, even with their constant washing, and my head became quite puffy; I could push with my fingers at any location and green pus would ooze from the wound in my forehead. The PBY that rescued us took us to the seaplane tender, USS *Curtis* in New Hebrides, where the Navy doctor told me I would probably have died from the infection in a few more days. I might not have had the "few more days" if they hadn't kept washing the wound.

The verses by the young girls were amusing. I remember they would stand around outside our hut, looking in and giggling. I also remember they wore only a cloth around the lower part of their body; nothing from the waist up.

This was many years ago, but it seems like yesterday. I hope this will be of some help in your studies of the people on this island. If I can help further, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Knight

Notes

Fieldwork on Sikaiana was conducted for thirty-three months from October 1980 until July 1983. Support was provided by the National Science Foundation. I am grateful to many different people in preparing this manuscript. Geoff White made helpful comments on an earlier version of this manuscript. Dean Allard and his associates at the Naval Historical Center in Washington were very helpful in researching navy records about Sikaiana. Paul Knight kindly responded to my letter. His letter is attached as an appendix. Finally, William Davenport, my thesis adviser, helped make me sensitive to many issues of cultural change in the Solomon Islands.

1. I use the word Westerner to refer to Caucasians (from both Europe and North America). The Sikaiana refer to these people as *tama maa* 'white people'.

2. These three songs were collected by myself during 1981 and transcribed and translated with the aid of Dr. John Kilatu, among others.

3. The American servicemen may have appeared friendly because, unlike other Westerners, they had no long-range economic and political interests and responsibilities. Moreover, studies of soldiers under high stress suggest that they tend to be more egalitarian and interested in primary group relations (see Stouffer 1949; also Mauldin 1983).

4. *Soa* is the Sikaiana term for "friend." At present, it most often refers to a sexual liaison between an unmarried man and woman. It also describes informal friendships between people of the same sex and is often used to describe Sikaiana friendships with non-Sikaiana people. Finally, it also refers to several types of formal friendships in which there are expectations of reciprocity, mutual respect, and deference.

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CHAPTER 7

The Kilenge and the War: An Observer Effect on Stories from the Past

MARTY ZELENIETZ
AND HISAFUMI SAITO

MANY Kilenge people of northwest New Britain recall the Second World War as if it happened yesterday. As they gesture at the surrounding land and seascape, the people of Portne, Ongaia, and Kilenge villages provide vivid and detailed accounts of events four decades past. But despite the detail, despite the vividness, different audiences come away having heard substantively different stories of the war, stories impossible to reconcile in their differences. Our objectives, then, in this essay are threefold: to document the war from the perspective of the Kilenge people; to discover why different anthropologists heard different versions of the war stories; and to place war stories in the wider context of Kilenge historical narrative.

The Kilenge see the war as more than just a series of impersonal, isolated, inconsequential events. The war consisted largely of the actions of people as groups and as individuals: the Kilenge themselves, Japanese, Americans, and Australians. The war marked a pivotal point in recent Kilenge history. Even today, people who lived through the conflict use it as *the* major time marker in their lives: things happened *bipo long wa* 'before the war' (Tok Pisin) or *bihain long wa* 'after the war', whether in 1948 or 1973.

Studying Kilenge perceptions of the war highlights a crucial methodological issue of field research: the influence of the observer on the observed, or the listener on the speaker. In the field, the relationship between the observer and the observed, the audience and the narrator, the anthropologist and the informant, is always problematic. Knowledge of the context and manner in which anthropologists gather their data is often as valuable to the reader of the account as the data themselves. The researcher's central interest may generate discomfort in his or her informants: it may be a topic they wish to

avoid at all costs. In such circumstances the research can, at best, only proceed obliquely and with great sensitivity. Conversely, a topic peripheral to the researcher's original objectives can crop up repeatedly, signalling to the anthropologist the importance that people attach to the subject. Both conditions occurred in our fieldwork.

By and large, the information we present does not result from systematic investigations on the impact of the Second World War in Kilenge villages. Zelenietz did not concentrate on war research in 1977-78 and 1981-82. Rather, people from Ongaia and Portne villages spontaneously offered information on the war, sometimes in the course of relating employment histories and often in other contexts. In short, people liked to talk about the war. In contrast, in 1981-82 Portne villagers did not talk spontaneously with Saito about their wartime experiences. They preferred to tell their Japanese guest about Japanese citizens they saw in Rabaul before or after the war, rather than their experiences during the conflict. Only the tenacity and empathy of Machiko Saito, a journalist, allowed the Saitos to gain access to some of the desired information.

Anthropologists in pursuit of data inevitably learn something about their own relationships with their hosts, how they as outside observers fit into the local scheme of things. *Who* the anthropologist is (his or her identity and national origin) may have an important impact on the research conducted (for example, see chapter 17). We found this to be true with some (but not all) aspects of our research, particularly those aspects related to the war. In our case, we found that an American and a Japanese anthropologist collecting information on the war (occasionally from the same villagers, but at different times) received markedly different versions of the same events. Our identities as Japanese and American, it seems, had an important bearing on the stories Kilenge told us. Thus, we not only address here Kilenge actions in and reactions to the war, we also analyze relationships between Kilenge and outsiders—the storyteller and the audience—to learn something of the influence of Kilenge narrative style and the effect of the observer on reconstructions of social history.

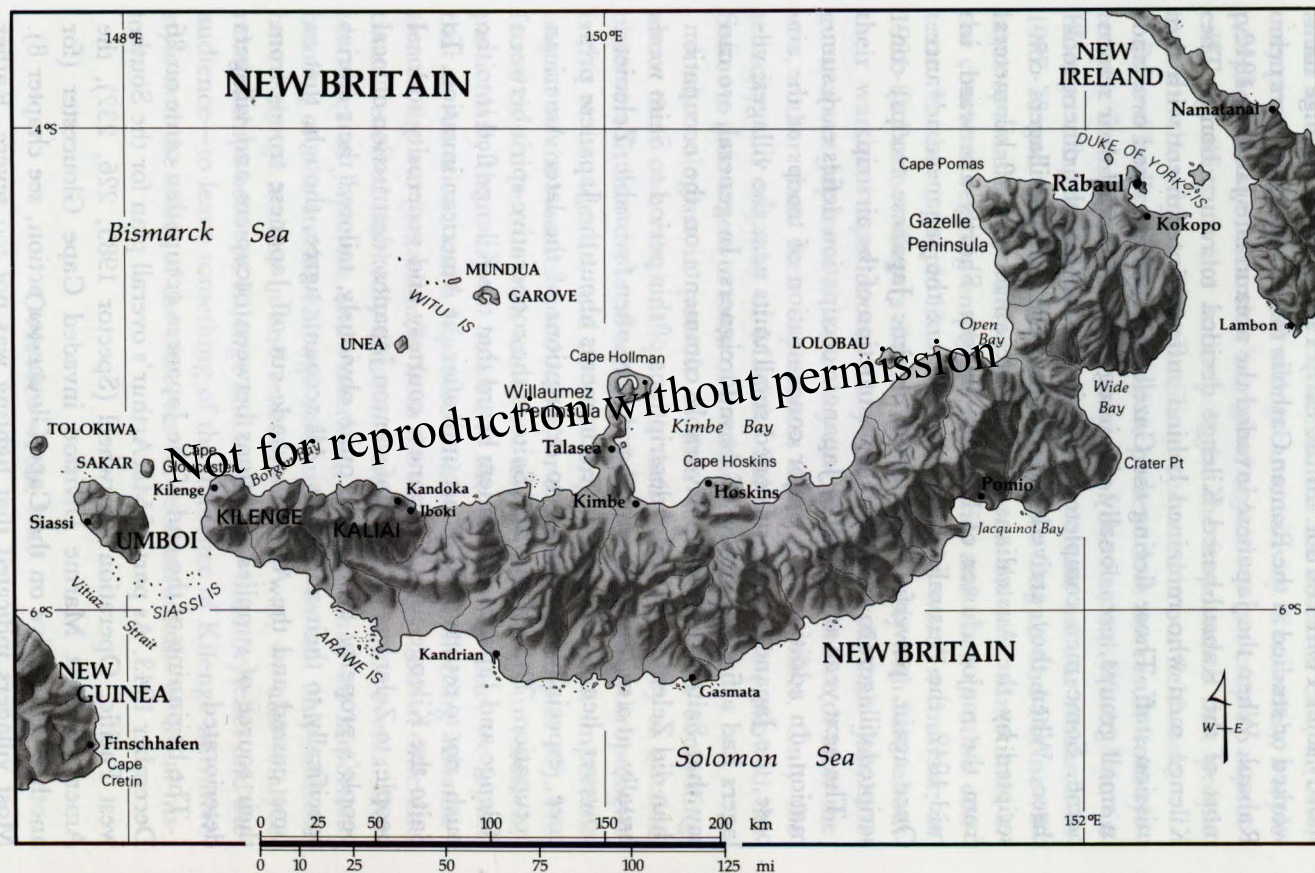
Overview of the War

The Kilenge people live in what Davenport (chapter 11) has identified as one of the "hot spots" of the war, which for them began

shortly after Pearl Harbor. In the early 1940s, many Kilenge men worked or studied at the Roman Catholic mission headquarters near Rabaul. When the Japanese invaded the area in late January 1942, most of the Rabaul-based Kilenge decided to return home. The Kilenge men who remained behind suffered internment with the mission staff. Those fleeing the Gazelle Peninsula walked overland in small groups, occasionally obtaining canoes to speed their return home. Some men completed the trip in one month; others took three. When they arrived they found their fellow villagers conscripted by the Australians to complete an airstrip 10 kilometers from the major cluster of Kilenge villages. Shortly afterward, in mid-1942, the Australians withdrew before the Japanese advance. Once again, powerful outsiders (this time Japanese troops) conscripted villagers to work on the construction of the airstrip.

The next year and a half of Japanese occupation defies easy summation. In addition to a major concentration of troops at the air base, the Japanese army stationed small units near the villages; villagers had a firsthand view of these foreigners. In general, we can say that Saito heard more favorable comments on the occupation than did Zelenietz. Kilenge descriptions of this period to Saito were usually, at a minimum, neutral and were often favorable. Zelenietz, however, heard many negative comments about the Japanese presence, especially in contrast to descriptions of the later American occupation. The Kilenge told Saito of the cooperative spirit between Kilenge and Japanese; Zelenietz heard that the Kilenge fled into the bush, not to return to the coast until after the American invasion. To Saito the Kilenge told of Japanese courtesy and generosity to local people; to Zelenietz they told of wanton Japanese destruction of local people's property. Narrators, quite obviously, tailored their stories specifically to their audiences. All accounts agree, though, that as time passed and the Allied blockade cut off Japanese troops from their source of supplies, relations between occupiers and villagers deteriorated.

The beginning of the end of the Japanese occupation came on 26 December 1943. As part of MacArthur's overall plan for the Southwest Pacific, Operation Cartwheel (Spector 1985, 226, 232), the American First Marine Division invaded Cape Gloucester (for another perspective on the Cape Gloucester action, see chapter 8). Most villagers indicated that fighting was not too severe. Rather than make a stand at Cape Gloucester, the Japanese withdrew eastward across New Britain. The Kilenge were not caught in any cross



Map 5

fire. The only casualties ascribed to the fighting as such came just before the invasion, when the smoke of cooking fires attracted aerial bombing and strafing. After securing the area, the Americans gathered the Kilenge at a temporary settlement near the airstrip, site of the main American base. At this settlement near the village site of Masele,¹ Americans and Australians conscripted young adult Kilenge men to serve as carriers and soldiers. Some conscripts headed east to the fighting on Bougainville, while others went to join the leapfrog campaign on the north coast of New Guinea. The rest of the Kilenge returned to their coastal village sites to rebuild. Unlike the Kaliai (chapter 8), who had only fleeting contact with American troops, the Kilenge felt American influence for the duration of the American sojourn at the Cape Gloucester air base. Except for those conscripted, the fighting was over for the Kilenge. Later, after the American pullout, all that remained of the war was a large quantity of abandoned material and ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit) officers.

People's reactions to these events, not surprisingly, reflect their previous experience with the world outside Kilenge, what they saw during the conflict, and how they saw it. In the next sections, we will deal with the events of the war on a personal level, in the eyes of Kilenge villagers.

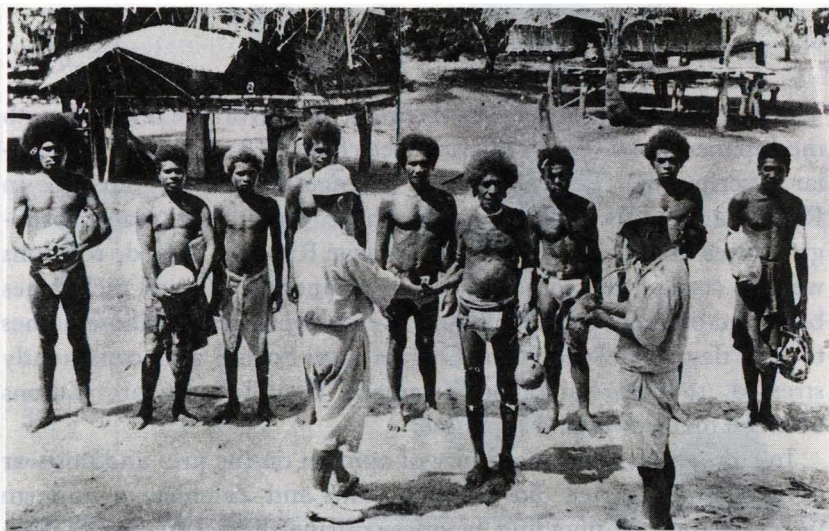
The Japanese

The Kilenge told both authors of cordial and favorable relations with the Japanese in the prewar period (see chapters 3, 4, and 12 for similar descriptions). Before the war, Kilenge worked for Japanese in Rabaul and on the seas, diving for shells. Saito heard many nostalgic stories about the Japanese in prewar Rabaul. Indeed, relations were so cordial that some Kilenge permanently adopted nicknames bestowed on them by their Japanese employers and use those names to this day.² The people of Ongaia and Portne also consistently stressed, to both Saito and Zelenietz, friendly postwar relations between themselves and Japanese.

In contrast to their unanimity of opinion on the pre- and postwar periods, the Kilenge did *not* give Saito and Zelenietz a uniform impression of the invading Japanese during the occupation of New Britain. When talking with Saito, people never missed the opportunity to stress their ties with the Japanese and to emphasize the gener-

osity of Japanese soldiers (see Read 1947, 105). Although some informants said that women and children fled to the bush during the occupation, leaving only men in the villages, men and women alike mentioned Japanese generosity with food and the similarity of the Japanese diet to their own (see chapter 10). Japanese punishment for various crimes of theft was just, informants said, even though they saw non-Kilenge New Guineans beheaded for the theft of a pig. When the Kilenge interned in Rabaul talked about seeing a military policeman beat a New Guinean servant for no apparent reason, they hastily added that a Japanese officer severely reprimanded the MP. Even the internees, when speaking to Saito, emphasized the positive aspects of internment: the warm and human relationships they formed with individual Japanese soldiers and civilians. The theme of cooperation and mutual respect between villager and Japanese runs parallel to a theme of generosity in Kilenge narratives. Of the eleven people the Saitos interviewed in depth about the war, only one favorably mentioned the Americans, and even he took great pains not to criticize the Japanese in comparison.

Zelenietz and Grant received a totally different view of Japanese occupation forces. Their informants generally agreed that villagers hid in the bush from the occupiers, avoiding them at all costs. Of the thirty or so people who talked with the North Americans about the



People visiting Japanese military camp on Panaeati, Louisiade Archipelago. (*Mainichi Shimbun*)

war, only one boasted of remaining in the village and cooperating with the Japanese while everyone else fled. Most people condemned the Japanese for their lack of generosity and their wanton theft from Kilenge gardens. "There was so little left, no taro, no yams, that we grubbed in the bushes like wild pigs, looking for famine foods." Rather than stress dietary similarities, Ongaiaans decried the way in which the Japanese wasted coconut palms, cutting them down just to eat the shoots or the hearts of the trees. They talked about Japanese repression, excessive punishment for minor theft, and the callous way in which the Japanese destroyed personal property, houses, and sacred masks. They commented with curiosity on the Japanese custom of cremation of the dead.

In sum, when speaking to the Japanese about Japanese during the war, Kilenge provided a picture of tolerance and cooperation, stressing friendly individual contacts between the two groups. When speaking to North Americans about the Japanese, the Kilenge painted a desolate scenario of harsh, unfeeling overlords with strange and unfathomable customs.

The Americans

In war recollections gathered by the Saitos, the Americans generally assumed an impersonal status of walk-on characters in a play, as an element of the story mentioned and then, for the most part, discarded. "The American planes bombed us [in Rabaul] and left." "The Americans evicted the Japanese and we returned to the villages." Only one informant favorably compared the Americans to the Japanese for the Saitos.

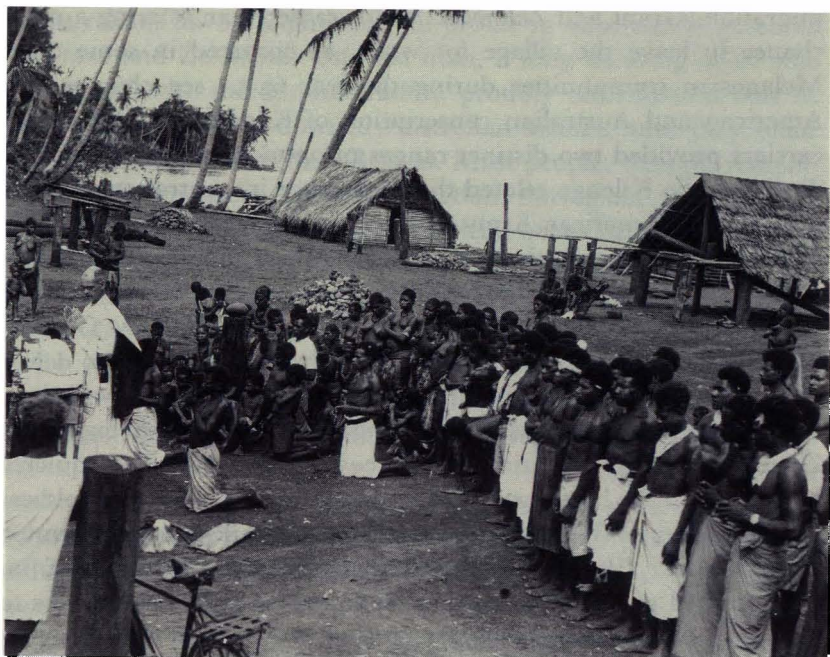
In sharp contrast to this neutral attitude, Zelenietz and Grant constantly and consistently heard stories praising the Americans. "We stopped living in the bush like animals, and came back down to the beach. They took care of us—gave us food, clothes, housing." This is the dominant narrative theme: American wealth and generosity (see chapters 9, 10, and 17). The Kilenge had never experienced or dreamed of wealth on the scale brought by the Americans. Even villagers with work experience in Rabaul, who had tasted of Australian wealth and technology, remember with awe the vast quantity and kinds of American material goods.

Kilenge related their amazement when the Americans unloaded their ships and barges and then distributed a portion of the goods to

villagers (the stuff, in other parts of Melanesia, of which cargo beliefs are made). "The inside of every house was like a store—full up to the rafters with all kinds of goods." "Those Americans, everything they had came in tins. They gave every household tinned beef, tinned lamb, tinned tongue, even their bread and sweets came in tins. Those were the good times." American soldiers stationed at the Gloucester air base would come to the villages bringing wealth, and all they asked for in return were "cat's eyes," the polished opercula of various gastropods. For Kilenge narrating their experiences to a North American audience, American wealth, generosity, and technology stood in sharp contrast to Japanese relative paucity of material goods. The well-supplied Americans had all wants catered to by tinned goods, all work done by technological products of their industrial culture. Machines, not indigenous people, built American airstrips (see chapter 4). And the machines came in an endless stream, discarded with as little thought as an Ongaian would cast aside a coconut husk. How the Kilenge wondered when the Americans lined up dozens of amphibious armored vehicles in a swamp near the airstrip, drained the oil from the engines, turned on the ignitions, and walked away. What kind of people were these, what kind of wealth did they possess to so casually dispose of valuable, powerful machines, sure in the knowledge that more machines would await them at their next stop? Not the same kind of people as the Japanese, who seemed impoverished, with more limited food and technological resources.

American technology and wealth and its seemingly endless availability made such a deep and lasting impression on the Kilenge that even a young man born several years after the war recited a very detailed "eyewitness" account to Zelenietz. For this villager, the event might have happened yesterday, rather than before he came into the world. Older villagers, fondly remembering American generosity, asked Zelenietz to approach the president of the United States to request that Papua New Guinea (or at least New Britain) become part of America.

Another aspect of the American occupation that deeply impressed the Kilenge (as evidenced by their constant reference to the topic) developed from the apparent equality between black and white servicemen in the American armed forces (see also chapters 8 and 15). The sight of black, as well as white, American soldiers, wearing the same uniforms, using the same equipment, and eating the same food, amazed the Kilenge. It contradicted most of their previous



First Catholic mass after Japanese withdrawal from Cape Gloucester, New Britain, 12 March 1944. (*U.S. Marine Corps*)

experience of black-white encounters under Australian colonial domination. The Kilenge put their experience under Australians into a new focus when they saw apparent equality between black and white American servicemen and participated in a new form of black-white interaction. Villagers now speak of their relationships with Americans in profound contrast to their relationships with Australians. Kilenge impressions of equality received a boost when one of their own leaders, "Tave" (a pseudonym), achieved the status of paramount *luluai* (chief village headman). They still describe with wonder and delight how Tave stood on a platform, flanked by Americans and Australians, while a brass band played in his honor. Regardless of the true state of integration or segregation in the American forces, the Kilenge interpretation of the situation undoubtedly influenced their postwar perceptions of, and relations with, the Australians. Villagers had a new, different model for black-white relations, a new way to define their relationships with whites.

The war provided employment opportunities for young Kilenge men, opportunities that continued an existing pattern of labor

migration (Grant and Zelenietz 1980), rather than offering a novel chance to leave the village for work, as occurred in some other Melanesian communities during the war (e.g., see chapter 17). American and Australian conscription of Kilenge as soldiers and carriers provided two distinct ranges of opinion from the Kilenge. To Saito, the Kilenge related the experience in neutral or negative terms. "The American Army took our young men to the battlefield and their parents and wives cried missing them. Some villagers died in battle" (cf. Robinson 1981). Zelenietz, however, listened to many stories of the experiences men had in distant parts of New Guinea, how the Kilenge willingly cooperated with the Americans to defeat the Japanese on New Britain, Bougainville, and the New Guinea coast. Once, during a hunt, some Ongaian men began to explain to Zelenietz their pig-hunting techniques and sorcery. Talk quickly jumped from the hunting of pigs to the hunting of Japanese soldiers during the war. "We had guns and hand grenades, and we hunted the Japanese." "It was sometimes uncomfortable, but no one from Ongaia died of wounds, because we knew the sorcery [for how to hide from the prey] and couldn't get shot. A couple of men from the villages did die, but from diseases, not wounds." Today, aging men complain bitterly that the Papua New Guinea government does not provide them with a pension or compensation for their enforced participation in the war. They hear of some participants receiving pensions, provided they have medals to show for their service. But they contend that when they were demobilized at Talasea, they had *their* medals and papers confiscated. Still, they remember the service experience itself in a positive light.

In summary, when speaking with the Japanese ethnographers, the Kilenge quickly dismiss the American presence and role in their area. When talking with Americans, they recall with evident fondness instance after instance of American generosity and equality.

The Australians

The Saitos heard remarkably little about the Australian role in the war. Although the colonial power, Australians received surprisingly minimal attention in Kilenge reminiscences to the Japanese. The Australians infrequently visited the villages before the war, drafted people to work on the airstrip in 1942, left when the Japanese came, and came back when the Americans arrived.

Australians have a slightly higher profile in information gathered by Grant and Zelenietz. One old man, a long-standing *luluai* who got on well with the administration, proudly remembered how he fed and sheltered two downed Australian airmen until they made good their escape from New Britain. Most people, though, remember with bitterness the Australians' actions during and after the war, particularly in comparison with American behavior. As soon as the Americans departed, the Kilenge saw Australians reimpose the pre-war situation of sharp distinctions between colonial rulers and colonized subjects. Gone was the apparent black-white equality fostered by the Americans, replaced by apparent Australian discrimination and segregation (see chapters 8 and 10 for similar local perceptions). Above all, the actions of ANGAU infuriated and alienated the villagers. The Americans, as they left, gave the Kilenge all manner of goods: housing materials, clothing, food.³ Shortly after, in a pattern repeated all across Papua and New Guinea, ANGAU agents arrived and confiscated materials left by the Americans. People still bitterly recall how members of ANGAU punctured tins of food and threw them into the ocean, how they took away and destroyed clothing. From the Kilenge perspective, their Australian colonial masters vengefully displaced the friendly, egalitarian Americans, reimposing colonial stratification.

The Aftermath

Without question, the Kilenge see the war as a watershed event in their recent history. The war exposed them to new technologies, new scales of wealth, new role models, and a new social order. The old isolation of coastal villagers broke down before the onslaught and intrusion of global conflict. The Kilenge reshaped their images of themselves, and of the world, as they tried to comprehend the events thrust upon them and to instill those experiences with meaning.

The onset of the war disrupted their lives of subsistence horticulture, taking them away from their gardens, their ceremonies (Zelenietz and Grant 1980), and their trade with neighboring groups (see Harding 1967). First conscripted by the Australians and then by the Japanese to work on the Cape Gloucester airstrip, the Kilenge later spent months hiding in the mountain bush, fearful of the Japanese and of roving American planes. Villagers remember this period as a bitter time, full of discomfort. Unable to work their gardens, they

had to subsist on famine foods. Unable to light fires (for fear of being bombed), they ate food raw and had no relief from the damp misery of mountain dwelling. Life, in short, became uncertain.

The appearance of the generous and egalitarian-seeming Americans generated new role models, new images of self and wealth. The subsequent ANGAU actions of confiscating the fruits of that generosity and destroying those images by restoring prewar social differentiation undoubtedly exacerbated Kilenge uncertainty and hostility. Out of this uncertainty and confusion emerged a man who gave stability and focus to Kilenge life, who provided the potential to recapture the wealth, technology, and newfound self-image of the American era. Tave traded on the prestige of being appointed paramount *luluai* by the Americans and Australians and called upon his considerable abilities to set the course of Kilenge development for the next quarter century. Tave first outlawed sorcery and then reinstituted it as a means of consolidating political control (Zelenietz 1981). He relayed administration orders to begin coconut planting and later set the pattern for business development and activities in the villages (Zelenietz 1980; Grant, Saito, and Zelenietz 1986). From the confusion of the Second World War, he created an orderly, stable, and yet greatly transformed life for Kilenge villagers. Without the war, Tave would probably not have had the chance to be the leader he became. Without Tave, the Kilenge might not have become the people they are today. True, the outside world has and does impose changes on the Kilenge, but what they make of those changes, and how they respond to and manipulate them, is largely predicated on their postwar experience under Tave's tutelage.

One common change in postwar Melanesian communities was the rise of cargo ideologies. The people of Vanatinai (chapter 9) developed a nonviolent ideology to account for American wealth and technology and to place themselves in a clear relationship to the Americans; while on Tanna (chapter 17) the war served to fuel an existing ideological construct. The Kilenge never responded to the material wealth of the war with a ritualistic cargo ideology. They had *belief* in cargo, cargo to be attained through commercial, rather than ritual, activities (see McSwain 1977). We suspect that Tave channeled people's aspirations for material wealth. A ritualistic cargo ideology did not suit his ends in the immediate postwar period. By the time Tave abandoned commercialism and opted for ritualism, he and his policies no longer had the credibility needed to get a cult accepted (Zelenietz 1981, 113).

The Kilenge speak with one voice on the war itself, whether talking to Japanese or North Americans. Villagers agree that the war showed them new things, opened up new vistas, and introduced them to people who treated them, in their eyes, in a better fashion than did the Australians. The war brought them new wealth (short-lived as it was), new horizons and aspirations, and change. But they decry the war itself, the fighting and killing, the bombings and discomfort, the dislocation and destruction. These are things, the Kilenge say, they can live without.

Looking Back

Kilenge accounts of the war would drive a military historian to distraction. General themes emerge, only to lose definition and clarity in apparently contradictory statements. In these circumstances, the question "What *really* happened?" becomes impossible to answer and subservient to other inquiries, inquiries designed to discover the meaning of events for narrators and listeners and the relationship between those parties. Who said what to whom becomes as important as what was said. The overall Kilenge story of the war becomes, in part, a product of the anthropologists who record it and also, in part, a product of the way the Kilenge relate events. In order to understand the story, therefore, we have to know the backgrounds of the field-workers and their attitudes toward the subject matter, and try to fathom the attitude of the Kilenge toward the anthropologists.

Not surprisingly, the war as a historical and personal family event carries different meanings for Zelenietz and for Saito. Both born after the war, the authors developed different attitudes toward the conflict. Zelenietz, raised during the postwar boom on American ideals, and seeing those ideals shatter with American involvement in Vietnam, saw World War II as the last "good war." He reacted favorably to stories about the war, and Ongaian men pressed him for details of his father's role as an army engineer in the struggle for Okinawa and for stories of his father's elder brother's combat exploits in Europe. Zelenietz felt that both he and the Ongaian used such stories as a way to create a common past, to bridge the vast distances of culture, time, and geography: the Kilenge and the anthropologist's kin had fought on the same side in a global conflict. They were, after a fashion, comrades-in-arms.

The war had a different meaning for Saito and his family. Saito's

father served the Japanese army as an architect in Korea and China and often told his son of the hardships he, his wife, and Saito's eldest brother endured on the long road home following the defeat of the Japanese empire. The knowledge and understanding that he was an invader did not mitigate Saito's father's loathing of Koreans and his treatment at their hands following the Japanese defeat. Saito sympathized with his father, dragged into Japanese imperialism, but rejected his father's biased view of Koreans. Saito saw Japanese veterans of World War II as victims of imperialism, with the right to indulge in vivid reminiscences of the war. He felt, however, that they have generally ignored the victims of Japanese imperialism in other countries. Saito's aim in collecting war stories in Portne, then, was to discover the extent of disruption Japanese troops caused the villagers. Saito did not conceal his ill feelings about the conflict and about Japanese militarism and always tried to encourage the Kilenge to ignore his origins and speak from the heart, to give an unbiased account of their feelings about the Japanese and the war. He felt that, in terms of his war research, he suffered because the people of Portne never failed to show him courtesy and compassion.

We feel that our different origins, our expressed attitudes, and Kilenge perceptions of what they thought we wanted to hear strongly influenced much of the information we collected. Perhaps, had Saito expressed support of Japanese participation in the war, he might have heard even more positive narratives from the Kilenge. Zelenietz, with his positive response and feedback to war stories, was showered with favorable accounts of American doings. Much as they tried to elicit negative comments, the Saitos failed to evoke them from the Kilenge. Portne villagers would not, despite the explicit invitation, provide images that might possibly offend their guests. Why?

For years, the people of Portne had wanted an anthropologist. Several English-speaking anthropologists had lived and worked in Ongaia over the years, while Dutch anthropologists studied Kilenge proper. In 1977, in response to a request from some Portne men, Zelenietz promised to try to provide them with an anthropologist of their own. In 1981, he made good on the promise and arranged for the Saitos to visit Portne. Given their desire for an anthropologist, and their obligations as host, we doubt that the people of Portne would have endangered their relationships with the anthropologists by telling derogatory tales about the "kin" of one of the field-workers.

Why did the people of Portne want an anthropologist? Why, indeed, did Zelenietz, in 1977, receive delegations from other New Britain communities asking for anthropologists of their own? For one thing, the people of West New Britain recognize the rapid change around them. They want to record their past, and have that record preserved and disseminated. They see this as the work of anthropologists, people from the outside world who appear to have empathy and sympathy for the local situation and who also seem to have access to resources unavailable in the villages.

But the people of West New Britain, who have had long and amicable contacts with anthropologists, perceive these slightly strange outsiders as more than stenographers of the past. Anthropologists have additional roles in the village scheme of things, and the war stories collected by Saito and Zelenietz illustrate one such role. The stories told to the anthropologists have the recurring theme of the generosity of the field-workers' *wantoks*, their fellow countrymen. Both anthropologists saw the war stories as parables, as lessons in social behavior: Generosity was the hallmark of your *wantoks*; so too should generosity be the mark of your behavior. We need not expound on the well-documented importance of generosity in Melanesian cultures to make our point. Suffice it to say that the anthropologists, with their comparative wealth from the world outside the village, should replicate the appropriate social behavior (generous redistribution) of their cultural ancestors. Although we knew the importance of generosity before entering the field, the message was not lost on us.

The issue of generosity, the stories told to the North Americans and the Japanese, and the way in which the Kilenge told them all illustrate aspects of Kilenge narrative style. Kilenge narrative does not merely recite dry facts, places, names, and events.⁴ Narrative, especially when dealing with recent events and the known past, reflects a dialectical process between the storyteller and the listener. The teller can try to provide the listener with what the listener wants to hear, or at least what the teller *thinks* the listener wants to hear. The narrator sizes up his audience and then delivers an appropriate recital, secure in knowing that no other Kilenge will openly contradict the account. Public disagreements over stories provoke needless disputes. Storytelling is a leisure activity, meant to entertain, and "facts" are much less important than the sense of conveying a "good story" (cf. chapter 2). Bystanders who want to amend or correct the story can do so later, after the teller departs. No one is openly

insulted. No one publicly takes offense. Only when the stakes are high, only when "facts" count (as in ownership of an important resource) is public disputation and the resultant social tension deemed worth the cost.

The distinction between public and private narrative correction dovetails with another aspect of Kilenge narratives of the known past. In most cases, the narrator is the protagonist in the story. The narrator could have been 50 kilometers away, or perhaps not yet born at the time the events occurred, but by talking about them he or she can become the central figure in the drama, affirming a bond with the community and its past. This first-person narrative style is not unique to the Kilenge; Counts (personal communication) reports the same for the Kaliai.

The Kilenge imbue the war with numerous meanings. Stories of the war become means to ends, rather than ends in and of themselves. The kind of audience present, as well as selective memory (see chapter 8), may determine the kind of story told. Narrators can tailor their stories to fit specific audiences and convey specific messages. The narrator is an entertainer and a historian, making the events of yesterday or yesteryear come alive for the listeners. The narrator is also the good host, indirectly praising the guest by directly praising the actions of the guest's fellow citizens. The narrator can also be an educator, teaching the guest proper behavior by using parables. For both the Kilenge storyteller and the foreign observer, Kilenge narration parallels the injunction laid out for the Jews in the *Haggadah*, the recitation to celebrate Pesach (Passover) and the exodus from Egypt. Each person must be made to feel personally a part of the exodus from Egypt, to have participated in the past. So too can Kilenge narration evoke a sense of continuity, or personal participation, with the past. The Second World War ended a generation ago, and villagers directly affected by it grow fewer in numbers each year. For those who will listen, though, the war might have ended yesterday. Its impact continues to unfold.

Notes

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1981-82 and by Machiko and Hisafumi Saito in Portne village in 1981-82. We all owe thanks to the people of those villages for their wholehearted cooperation with the research effort and for their warmth and generosity as hosts. The research was funded in part by the University of Papua New Guinea, McMaster University, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. We thank these institutions for their aid.

1. Masele was the only Kilenge "hard luck" village. Separated from the main cluster of Kilenge villages by 10 km of swampy coast, it was destroyed by a tsunami in the 1880s. Rebuilt by the survivors, it was leveled for strategic reasons (proximity to airstrip) during the war and never resettled.

2. For the significance of names in Kilenge, see Grant and Zelenietz 1983.

3. They may have abandoned the material, and the Kilenge simply perceived that the material was there for their use. The important feature is that the Kilenge see the material as gifts given by the Americans.

4. Although this is not the place to explore it in detail, we must note that Kilenge perceptions of the past, history and legend, are organized on a geographical, not chronological, basis. *Where* things happened is emphasized far more than *when*. Kilenge history seems to be written in the landscape, rather than in a time sequence.

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PART III

The Local Scene:
Disruptions and Transformations

CHAPTER 8

Shadows of War: Changing Remembrance through Twenty Years in New Britain

DAVID COUNTS

WORLD WAR II ended more than forty years ago. It came to New Britain in the early days of the fighting when Japanese forces struck at Rabaul, on the eastern tip of the island, on 6 January 1942 (Mori-son 1962, 259; map 5). From Rabaul, capital of the League of Nations mandated Territory of New Guinea controlled by Australia, the invading Japanese forces moved swiftly westward, establishing small garrisons at various points along the north coast of New Britain.

Although the Japanese remained in Rabaul until the end of the war, their occupation of the western half of the island was brief but intense. It was followed, a little less than two years later, by an invading counterforce composed primarily of the U.S. Marine First Division. The marines landed in the early morning hours of 26 December 1943 at Cape Gloucester on the western end of the island and in the next three months reclaimed the whole of the western portion of the island as far east as Cape Hoskins. The marines were relieved and replaced by the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) on 5 April 1944. Meanwhile, continuous aerial bombing had rendered the massive Japanese forces based at Rabaul completely impotent. With their ships and aircraft totally destroyed and no roads to permit land forces to move into action, the garrison of nearly one hundred thousand men in Rabaul was simply left until the end of the war.

The fighting from Gloucester to Talasea/Hoskins has received only brief treatment by military historians. Most have judged the invasion of Gloucester to have been of little strategic significance. Its claim to note arises from the fact that the Gloucester campaign was the last of the fighting that took place in tropical jungle conditions

and, by some accounts (Morison 1968), the most difficult. The difficulty of the New Britain campaign was caused by the weather more than by the enemy forces: the landing took place just as the northwest monsoon hit with full force, and the maps marked "damp flats" should have read "waist-deep swamp." To be sure, some of the fighting was fierce as the Japanese forces, nearly ten thousand strong, fell back from Borgen Bay eastward toward Rabaul, but most of the accounts stress the difficulty of keeping dry in the "green hell," as the marines dubbed northwest New Britain.

In this chapter, I am concerned only with the interplay of the opponents in the fighting as they affected the indigenous people of the northwest coast of New Britain, now part of the West New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea. My research in the Kaliai area of West New Britain has extended over a period of twenty years. During that time local perceptions and recollections of World War II have shifted and dimmed as the people who were adults, and whose lives were most directly affected by the fighting, have grown old and witnessed more recent changes of equal significance for them.

The Japanese invasion and the American counterthrust were but an interlude in the colonial control of New Britain by Australia. Although the Australians left New Britain briefly, when they returned they reestablished, as best they could, the prewar status quo. This chapter discusses war experiences that affected their ability to accomplish that task.

A second concern in this chapter is to assess the ways in which different kinds of persons remember the war. I start from the assumption that a person's view of the war takes on a distinctive cast, whether he or she was actively engaged in the fighting in a formal capacity; indirectly engaged by being employed by one or both of the fighting forces; or a village dweller whose normal life was disrupted by the events going on around him or her (see chapter 15). It is important to note, also, that a person's recollections are further skewed by experiences in the intervening decades, especially by the amount and intensity of contact with outsiders, whether Australians, migratory anthropologists, or officials of the new state of Papua New Guinea.

The War's Legacy

In this chapter I deal with recollections of the war among the Kaliai or, more properly, the Lusi-Kaliai, consisting of about a thousand

Lusi-speaking coastal people dwelling in five villages located roughly halfway between Cape Gloucester at the western end of the island and Talasea on the Willaumez Peninsula to the east. Their language is one of a number of related languages found along the north coast of New Britain and is distantly related to the Kilenge language (chapter 7).

When we arrived in Kaliai for our first fieldwork in 1966, Dorothy Counts and I were, to the best of my knowledge, the first Americans to be seen in Kaliai villages since the departure of the marines during the war. I remember writing a letter to friends not long after our arrival and noting that one of the great disappointments of our arrival (as far as the villagers were concerned) was that we had brought no supply of hand grenades. We would be reduced to fishing with hook and line instead of concussion. Some Americans!

In 1966, Kaliai memories of the war were not only fresher than they now are, the war remained palpably present in their physical environment. Landing in a DC-3 at Gloucester airstrip (started by Australians, finished by Japanese, and improved by Americans), one could see the skeletal remains of warplanes scattered around the periphery. Looming out of the bush on the road between the strip and the government station at Gloucester were abandoned American armored personnel carriers, and at Gloucester station itself, site of the invasion in December 1943, the bones of landing craft lined the beach—slowly decaying reminders of all the wealth used and left behind in the effort to dislodge Japanese forces from islands that most Allied servicemen had never even heard of before the war.

In the villages, too, the war was still present and providing useful implements and income, if not the excitement, that had attended the war itself. In Kilenge villages near the airstrip, for example, many houses were fenced with metal strips of marsden matting that had paved the runways. Farther to the east, in Kaliai, the heavy wire mesh that had strengthened the spotter plane strip at Iboki plantation made useful grills for people cooking beneath their houses. And a brisk trade in nonferrous metals was being carried on by the plantation's manager. Everything from brass propellers from Japanese barges to live cannon shells was brought in copra sacks by people from the Kaliai villages. Based on reports from other parts of New Britain, the Lusi-Kaliai were also aware of the continued presence of some of the war's dangers. During that year, Radio Rabaul reported the death of two children who had been attempting to open a beached sea mine with screwdrivers.

The overwhelming import of the wartime reminiscences for which I have notes from 1966 was the excellence, generosity, friendliness, and care of American troops who came through Kaliai, mopping up after the expulsion of the Japanese from Cape Gloucester. Zelenietz and Saito (chapter 7) raise pertinent questions about the meaning of such sentiment. They suggest that storytellers who stress the generosity of American troops during the war are giving to later Americans (including anthropologists) a message about New Guineans' continuing expectations after the war. Clearly, the same possibilities apply to my materials, as well, since Zelenietz and Saito and I are reporting on closely related events with the same troops as referents. But, while noting this, I would also point out that I have never found the "America = good : Japan = bad" contrast to be as sharp among the Kaliai as Zelenietz has reported from Kilenge.

The tales stressing American generosity were usually told (and many still are) by actual participants in the described events. Many have the kind of background detail and richness that one expects from recollections of experience. Yet there is an element of mythic content in a number of them that, not surprisingly, calls to mind cargo myths. The main theme or scenario of these tales goes something like: "If only I/we/someone had done the one more thing required, then some desired outcome would have taken place."

A couple of these stories, briefly summarized, serve to illustrate the point.

The Chance to Live in America

The Americans were occupying the Kaliai area, and people had come back down from the interior, where they had hidden away after the coast became the target of American strafing and bombing. A group of children went swimming on the beach and afterward, finding an unexploded shell on the sand, passed the time throwing stones at it. The oldest of the group said that it was time to go back to the village. My informant, then a ten-year-old boy, picked up one last stone to throw and, of course, the shell exploded.

Several of the boys were slightly injured, but the thrower, my friend, suffered a compound fracture of the upper arm just at the mid-point of the bicep. The arm was nearly severed. He was carried to the aid post at the small installation at Iboki plantation. The Australian medic on duty there said that the arm would have to be amputated, but the American Marine who had brought the boy in

insisted that the loss of his arm would ruin his life. He put him on a patrol boat and accompanied him to the field hospital at Cape Gloucester, 60 miles to the west. There the American doctor saved his arm, though it remains scarred still. The marine who saw that his arm was saved stayed with him through his convalescence and toward the end proposed that he take the boy home with him to live in America. One of the local elders at Gloucester forbade it, however. So, my friend says, he is still a New Guinea villager and not an American.

The Chance for Wealth

A young married man, after working for the Japanese for a while, fled to the interior to escape the bombing and strafing on the coast. Months later, when the bombardment of the beach seemed to have ended, he and his wife decided to creep quietly down to the beach early one morning to collect saltwater in a bamboo container. As they approached the beach, they heard someone call, "Hey boy, where you goin'?" The man took his wife's hand and tried to run back into the trees, but the marine called again, "No, no, you come—I give you this . . .," while holding out a tin of meat from his rations.

My informant, Jake, now in his sixties, told me that then and there he decided that these Americans were all right. Over the next few months, he developed a friendship with this American, whose name he remembers as Connor. Connor, stationed at the Iboki camp, used his rifle to hunt some of the cattle that had strayed from the plantation so that the villagers could feast, and Jake showed Connor the reefs and helped him to collect shells. The night before Connor's unit was to be relieved, he came to Jake and told him that they were leaving. He said that he had some things he wanted to give Jake, and that he should come to the camp very early the next morning—preferably before 4 AM. But Jake failed to wake until just after six o'clock, as the sun rose. He ran to the camp as fast as he could but found Connor just getting onto the ship that would take him away. "I'm sorry," he said, "but we had to bury all the things I was going to give you in a hole on the beach this morning."

No one ever found the place where all the wealth was buried, though as late as 1975 a group of men went to the plantation manager to try to get him to dig up the beach with a bulldozer.

Such events and beliefs as those described above did not, in

Kaliai, lead to any cargo movement featuring the Americans, and many of the stories are told with a sadness about what might have been. The story of the buried wealth left by the Americans, however, often is told with an entirely different slant. In these cases, while it still serves to highlight the generosity of the Americans, it does so by contrasting that trait with the stinginess of the Australians who are said to have forced the Americans to undertake the burial *in order to deny the wealth to the villagers*. I have never heard the Americans' fabled generosity contrasted with any niggardliness of the Japanese forces. The Japanese show up in the stories, rather, as objects of ridicule for their poor command of Tok Pisin or as objects of pity for the enormous difficulties they faced in trying to escape after their defeat at Cape Gloucester.

Kaliai War Experiences

The people of Kandoka village in Kaliai, where the bulk of my research has been carried out, experienced the war in a number of ways. Two men were members of the police who were serving on the New Guinea mainland near Wewak when the war broke out. One of them was taken by the Japanese and subsequently executed, according to his son, who was a witness. The son survived the family's imprisonment and now lives in the village. The other policeman, whom I will call Sergeant, accompanied Australian officials in their flight from Angoram up the Sepik River, across the Highlands, and down into Port Moresby. He later served as part of a forward observer group locating Japanese encampments for Allied bombing runs along the Markham River in the Lae area.

Sergeant died in early 1986, but if the length and detail of his war memories are any guide to significance, then one event that took place before fighting with the Japanese began claimed greatest importance. As he recounted it, when word came to Angoram, where he was stationed, of the invasion of Rabaul by Japanese forces and of their impending arrival on the north coast of New Guinea, all of the *kiaps* 'administrative officials' and whites living in the area gathered at the government station to decide what to do. The police detachment was called together to get instructions as well. Briefly, the police were told that those who were from the mainland should try to make their way home; that married police from the islands (principally Manus, New Britain, and New Ireland) would be evacuated with their families, if possible, as would the married whites

and their dependents; but the islands' policemen who were single were to stay with the administrative officers in order to harass the Japanese, even though they were poorly armed and supplied and did not have the means to make war.

The officer in charge of the station (Sergeant refers to him as *Kiap* Ellis, or Masta Ellis) did not agree with the others and (according to Sergeant) argued that the action proposed would not harm the Japanese but would only lead to the needless loss of life among the Angoram party. He suggested that they simply wait and surrender to the Japanese as noncombatant personnel and hope that they would be repatriated to Australia. The others shouted him down and informed him that he was relieved of his responsibility and should go to his house and remain there.

Once at his house, Ellis called the police sergeant-major and had him assemble all the policemen. He then instructed a detachment to bring all the station's weapons and ammunition to him—in short, he fomented a police revolt. Sergeant's account goes on at length, but the final outcome of this revolt was a brief skirmish between the policemen and the expatriate community in which one of the white officers was wounded. The wounding of a colonial official so upset the native policemen that they dispersed into the bush, leaving Ellis alone. According to Sergeant, Ellis, realizing that he had not only lost but had also put the men under him in great danger of imprisonment, then wrote a note accepting full responsibility for the actions of the police and asking that they be granted amnesty. He then killed himself in his house. Sergeant says that when the other Europeans found Ellis dead, they honored his wishes with respect to amnesty, but cremated his body then and there and suppressed the incident.

According to accounts given by J. K. McCarthy (1963, 215–217) and Gewertz (1983, 133–137), the sequence of the events took place pretty much as described to me by Sergeant, except in one major respect: the positions of the major protagonists are reversed. Ellis, then assistant district officer at Angoram, led the police revolt because he wanted to stay and *fight* the Japanese, while the others had decided to evacuate up the Sepik to safety. The fighting did end with the wounding of a white officer, whereupon Ellis's opponents withdrew down the river to get reinforcements. The police did disperse into the bush, and Ellis did commit suicide. Unlike Sergeant, though, some of the police, joined by a small number of local people, went on a rampage of murder and rape until they were finally subdued by the Australian officers (Gewertz 1983, 134).

Sergeant, in his account, not only made no mention of the violent

incidents that followed Ellis's suicide, but attributed to Ellis only care and concern for the lives of the police—an interesting reversal of the other documented accounts. Nevertheless, and however much his interpretations are at odds with other historical facts, Sergeant recalled that he was deeply shaken at the time and that he stayed hidden by local villagers for some weeks until convinced by a priest that there was an amnesty in effect and that he could safely return and take up his duties. Subsequently, he served with considerable distinction, was decorated after the war, and continued as a policeman until his retirement in the early 1960s. As he put it to me, before that incident he and other policemen and, indeed, New Guineans in general had always heard white people speak with one voice (*Ol i gat wanpela lo tasol: ol i tok long wanpela maus* 'They have only one law: they speak with one voice'). In this incident, whites not only showed to the New Guineans the certainty of at least initial defeat at the hands of the Japanese, but were in such disarray that there was open strife and killing among them.

Sergeant, who was in his seventies when he died, was for as long as I knew him impervious to any hint of cargo belief—to such an extent that he reported and caused the arrest of a man preaching such beliefs while wearing a police uniform. His long experience with white people and his observation of their disarray at the beginning of the war seems to have convinced him that whites had no special relations with spirits.

Another retired policeman, Paul, provided a different perspective. At the outbreak of the war he was stationed in Rabaul, the first point of contact with Japanese forces. Given warning of the approach of the invasion force in the early days of January 1942, most expatriates and administration officials along with the police battalion managed to escape Rabaul before the Japanese arrived. Many people made their way to Iboki plantation, three miles to the east of Kandoka (Paul's home village) and camped there for a few days before regrouping and being withdrawn to Port Moresby. Paul, along with other New Britain policemen, was told that he should remain when the Australian forces left, should remove his uniform and all other evidence of having been a policeman, and should try to live as inconspicuously as possible until the administration returned and he could resume his duties.

Paul followed his instructions to the letter, but when an old man (responding to Japanese questions about who knew how to use firearms and could do some hunting for them) identified Paul as such a

person because he was a policeman, Japanese officers immediately arrested and imprisoned him as a spy, using a copra shed as a temporary prison at their Iboki plantation headquarters.

Whatever their intentions toward him may have been, Paul was then (and remains still) convinced that he was being kept there only until his captors could arrange for his execution. When his guard fell asleep during the heat of the day, Paul took the opportunity to escape and fled into the interior, where he spent the rest of the period of the Japanese occupation.

Japanese

For the villagers of Kaliai who were not police, but were bystanders caught in the ebb and flow of war, the Japanese occupation of the north coast of New Britain was (at least until Allied air attacks began) a time of some excitement, of some amusement, and perhaps of bewilderment, but it was not a particularly difficult time. All of the people with whom I discussed this matter agreed that the villagers suffered no atrocities at the hands of the Japanese. There are no reported rapes. There are no half-Japanese children left from that time. No one was killed or mutilated, and gardens and pigs were usually safe from confiscation. People *were* frightened. Rumors of Japanese cruelty filtered out from Rabaul, and the escaping Australians had warned villagers about the cruelty and inhumanity of the Japanese. I have not heard Kaliai mention the leaflets dropped by Japanese in some areas urging New Guineans to cooperate in overthrowing the white colonial government and promising a high standard of living and a surfeit of manufactured goods (Gewertz 1983, 13). Given what they did know of the combatants, the villagers were understandably wary. One informant recounted that when a Japanese officer came into the village and expressed a wish to buy a large pig, its owner (his father) refused because the pig was already dedicated to a future ceremony. The officer became insistent, though, and my informant advised his father to sell lest he lose more than just a pig. He did.

Village men were required to work for the Japanese occupation forces, but they did not describe this as forced labor. As they put it, they were required to work on the same terms and in the same way as they had previously under the Australian administration. Each village along the coast was required to send men to one or another

Japanese camp for a week at a time to act as carriers, to build sheds, and to load and unload cargo from barges. The men were paid no money, but they were provided with food and given tents in their own encampment. This arrangement was in effect from the time the Japanese came until shortly after bombing and strafing of the coastal installations began. The Japanese who supervised the laborers were solicitous of their welfare. One man who reported to work despite a severe boil on his leg recounted that the *kempitai* 'Japanese supervisor' (from *kempeitai* 'military police') immediately instructed him not to work that day and sent him off for medical treatment at the aid post.

When the bombing of Japanese installations began, labor supervisors were careful to protect their workers. They would shout *Skoki Amerika!* 'American planes!' at the first sign of approach and send the villagers off to hide in ditches and foxholes. As the coastal raids increased in severity with the buildup to the invasion of Cape Gloucester fifty miles to the west, the Japanese instructed village laborers to build a new camp for themselves farther away from the work site. Most workers think that this saved their lives. Shortly after the move the Japanese camp and ammunition dump were destroyed in a night incendiary raid that caused severe loss of life among the soldiers.

The intensity of this particular raid frightened the local people and, coupled with leaflets dropped by Allied planes warning villagers to hide in the interior, led people finally to flee the coast. The Kaliai people spent the rest of the period of Japanese occupation living in temporary shelters in the interior, cooking only at night and eating mostly famine foods. This was the most difficult time of the war for them, sitting through the cold and damp of a monsoon season without even the simple friendliness of a fire for fear this would attract the marauding planes. When the people melted away into the bush, their Japanese employers made no effort to recall them.

After the invasion at Cape Gloucester by the U.S. Marines, and as the Japanese forces fell back to the east through Kaliai, relations changed. Although there continued to be little direct contact between the Japanese forces and villagers, most claimed that the defeated troops from Gloucester, often hungry and ill, were no longer respectful of villagers' pigs, gardens, or other possessions. People recounted the tendency of retreating troops to take food from gardens and to shoot pigs anytime they could find them. They said that houses in the villages that had survived the air attacks were also

destroyed. Any possessions left behind were scattered about and broken, and entire coconut palms were cut down so that the palm heart at the top could be eaten. When villagers encountered retreating Japanese troops, they were often asked to help guide the Japanese across the island to what they hoped would be a secure installation on the south coast at Gasmata. In return for the villagers' help, or sometimes just to lighten their loads, soldiers often gave away weapons and other possessions.

Americans

Whereas interaction between villagers and Japanese was characterized by wariness and their relations are remembered as mostly neutral, the recollections of those who worked with Americans are strikingly different. The Americans seem to have been universally held in high regard by my informants, and their widely renowned generosity is only one of their remembered characteristics. Other elements—apart from generosity—are also mentioned again and again.

First, the presence of black troops among the American contingent was of enormous import to the people of New Britain who came into contact with them (see chapter 7). The local people identified strongly with black servicemen on the basis of skin color and hair form and were apparently unaware of the segregation of black troops by unit in the American armed forces in 1944. What they did see astounded them: black-skinned Americans housed, clothed, and fed in the same way as white Americans (see chapters 9, 15, and 17).

To understand the significance of this to New Britainers, it is necessary to note that the separation preferred by Australians and other expatriate colonial planters, administrators, and even missionaries was most strongly symbolized by a denial of commensality and by distinctions in dress and housing. In Kaliai experience, not only had Islanders been excluded from eating *with* white people, but when their employers provided them with food, it was (they believed) food that whites themselves would not eat, such as rice and tinned beef. Similarly, when clothing was provided by employers it was clothing appropriate for "natives" to wear and never the kind of clothing worn by whites themselves. Those who had worked on plantations knew too that even the lowest-ranking white could and did command a much higher standard of housing than did any native worker. The war generated a confusion of these symbols of separa-

tion; the physical segregation of black troops was less significant than their similarity of condition.

Two personal anecdotes serve to illustrate how strong and pervasive these rules regarding commensality remained even in 1975 at the time of Papua New Guinea's independence, more than thirty years after the war. The first occurred when an Australian patrol officer whom we had invited to lunch while he was in the village holding elections for local government councillor seats declined the invitation when he found that we had only "native" food (rice, tinned beef, and local vegetables) to offer. The second incident indicates how strong the rules remained in force for New Guineans. Returning to the village from Rabaul, I booked passage on a cargo barge that left port at dusk. Not until the next day, near noon, did one of the crew come and ask if I would be willing to eat *kaikai bilong Kanaka* 'native food', by which he meant rice and tinned fish. In both cases the foods offered were regarded as "native" despite the fact that they were store-purchased items. Their low status and resulting inappropriateness as consumption items for whites result from their having been fare for plantation workers and colonial servants.

When New Britain men were called upon to act as carriers for the American forces (all my informants tell me that they were not paid by the Americans any more than by the Japanese, so I do not describe them as having been employed) they say that they, too, were treated like the troops they were assisting. My informants vary as to whether they were issued fatigue uniforms—some apparently were, while others were simply given cast-offs by those for whom they worked—but all agreed and emphasized that they ate the same food and were housed in the same sort of quarters as the soldiers.

Given the conditions of war and the monsoon season that was in full swing during the months of the American presence, neither the food nor the shelter could have been described as luxurious, but they are nonetheless remembered as such, surely a rare description of C- and K-rations, quonset huts, and pup tents. Still, the significance of these items lay not in what they were, but in that they were the same for everyone.

Another common theme running through informants' memories of the war is amazement at the scale on which Americans did things. Americans brought, used, and abandoned things in enormous quantities, a fact that has lent itself to the "cargo" interpretations of the war and provides the sharpest contrast between the American forces

and those of Japan. The Japanese (at least in the early days of the war) had sufficient food and other materials for themselves, but this food was regarded by New Britainers as similar to their own (see chapter 10) and the Japanese did not display it in quantities so great as to stagger the imagination. While the Japanese were not stingy and provided well for those who worked for them (see also Read 1947), they are not portrayed as constant gift givers in the way that Americans are.

Australians

When Americans are described in contrast to Australians, on the other hand, especially ANGAU members who accompanied the American forces and resumed administrative control of the area when the Americans departed, the dimension of contrast is generosity versus niggardliness. The problem, as informants recounted it, was not merely that Australians had and gave less, but that they actively discouraged or forbade the generosity of the Americans. As



Two children at ANGAU refugee camp, Sipilangan, New Britain, 27 July 1945. Six hundred refugees from the northern coast of the Gazelle Peninsula were housed in this camp. (*Australian War Memorial*)



ANGAU refugee camp staff, Sipilangan, New Britain, 27 July 1945. (*Australian War Memorial*)

informant after informant put it: "If an American was going to give something to me, he had to look around and make sure that none of the ANGAU were present. If an ANGAU saw an American give one of us something, then he would come and take it away."

The same theme emerges in story after story of the departure of the American forces. The Americans are remembered by many—indeed most—as having taken almost nothing with them. Jeeps, armored personnel carriers, tanks, food, shelters—nearly everything was left behind. Some of this is demonstrably true. The tanks and personnel carriers still lining the road near the Gloucester airstrip give mute testimony to the claim. Even weaponry was sometimes abandoned, as attested to by the discovery in 1971 of case after case of live American hand grenades near the old camp at Iboki plantation. The theme of generosity versus stinginess appears when informants assert that it was the intent of the Americans that these weapons, food, vehicles, quonsets, and the like were to be left for the villagers. Stories vary from informant to informant as to whether ANGAU officers forced the Americans to bury all the good things

and leave only the broken ones, or whether the Americans simply left the things and ANGAU came along behind confiscating everything and burying it in great pits.

When informants discuss the war, Americans come off as good, while Australians are said to have actively undone the things that the Americans tried to accomplish through generosity and brotherhood (a story that parallels Solomon Islanders' talk about American soldiers and British colonial officers—see chapter 15). The Japanese, except in the memories of those few who were actively involved in conflict with them, emerge as more to be pitied than censured. Poorly equipped and supplied, resident for but a brief time, they retreated from the Americans sick and in disarray, sometimes destroying things in their way, but also giving away their goods and weapons. The impact of the Japanese on the consciousness of the Kaliai people was slight. The worst things that are said about them are stories of barbarous practice in Rabaul filtered through many tellings but witnessed by none of my informants.

Conclusion: The Present

If focus on the war and its immediate aftermath shows Australian administrators in such poor light, what happens if the focus is shifted to the present when, like the Americans at the end of the New Britain campaign, the Australians have departed, yielding up their power to a different regime? This time, of course, the new administrators are New Guineans.

I have been startled to hear the same people who bitterly recalled Australians robbing villagers of Americans' largesse shake their heads at the venality and incompetence of officials of the current government and contrast New Guineans' inefficiency and lack of care with the good government and well-ordered society they had under Australian rule. I do not propose to examine the truth or falsity of the allegations made against current officialdom. The experience that I have had in dealing with officials of Papua New Guinea since its independence in 1975 suggests that most are, like government officials everywhere, quite variable in skill, competence, and devotion to work. That is not at issue here. What is significant in my view is the rehabilitation of former Australian administrators in the minds of those who criticized them so strongly when they were in power.

A number of interpretations could be read from these stories.

Zelenietz and Saito (chapter 7) called our attention to the fact that the identity of the person to whom a story is told affects the story's shape and content. The material in this chapter lends itself to another interpretation. While this might result from my lack of opportunity to compare Kaliai stories told to me with stories told to a Japanese ethnographer, I do not think that is all that is at issue. A final anecdote will make the point.

One of my informants in the early years of my research told me a story of a debate held by the senior men of Kandoka. When the first marine patrol reached Kandoka in the wake of the retreating Japanese garrison from Borgen Bay, one of the first questions asked was whether there were any Japanese in the area. The men of the village knew that there *was* a small group of Japanese hiding in the bush a mile or two in from the beach, because they had been giving them food. But they also knew that the Japanese were sick, hungry, and without weapons and that they wanted only to make their way across the island to Gasmata. After a short debate among themselves, the men decided that the Japanese were harmless and that to expose them would lead to their needless death. So they denied any knowledge of Japanese in the area and sent a youth to warn the Japanese that Americans had come. The next day the Japanese were gone. I do not think that I would have been told this story if all that was at issue was my identity as an American.

It may be that the material in this chapter indicates only that whatever government is in power makes mistakes and has to make difficult decisions and that, therefore, former authorities, whose mistakes, inefficiencies, and unpopular actions have faded into the past, are seen in a softer, more favorable light. Thus, the Australian administration is now lauded by its former critics for the very behaviors that were formerly resented bitterly: the fact that patrol officers *patrolled*, that they paid regular visits to villages, that they enforced health regulations, that they maintained order in the towns, that they forbade easy access to alcohol. Back then, it is said, there were no "rascals" making the roads unsafe, and money bought more than it now does (though there was less of it). In particular, the Australian administrators are remembered for having demanded and deserved the respect of those whom they governed. But the "respect" that was demanded by patrol officers and other Australians took precisely the form of maintenance of social distance. Social distance was enforced and villagers were continuously reminded of it by the ubiquitous symbols of separation. Australians dressed, ate, and lived differently from the villagers and made clear to the people

that the way they ate, dressed, and lived was not only different but better than what was available to or permitted the local people.

In stories of the American occupation, it is precisely the *absence* of these symbols that is remembered and stressed in images of the Americans as ideal persons. Yet a New Guinean official who dispenses with the trappings of social distance becomes the object of contempt. When a member of Parliament, coming ashore in a canoe on a visit to one of the villages in his constituency, removed his shoes and socks, rolled up his trouser legs, and waded ashore rather than waiting to be carried (as would a "proper" patrol officer in similar circumstances), the local people on the beach were heard to mutter, *bus kanaka, tasol* 'Just a jungle savage'!

It would be interesting to know how the Americans were regarded while they were in Kaliai. There seems to me no doubt that they were generous without intention because the things they gave had little value for them. I have no doubt, either, that Americans violated Australian symbols of separation more in ignorance than intent (although there is evidence elsewhere that American troops deliberately derided British colonial pretensions). But the greatest American advantage was the brevity of their stay and their lack of political responsibility over Islanders. The influence that the American interlude has had on Kaliai perceptions is, it seems to me, ironically related to the fact that they were there for so brief a time.

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CHAPTER 9

Soldiers and Spirits: The Impact of World War II on a Coral Sea Island

MARIA LEPOWSKY

BEFORE the Japanese invasion of New Guinea in 1942, Sudest Island in the Louisiade Archipelago, known as Vanatinai to its inhabitants, was one of the most remote outposts of the Australian Territory of Papua. With the advent of the war, the people of Vanatinai and their neighbors were swept up in events that deeply affected the entire region. But these events produced differing responses among two neighboring groups of Islanders. Both responses explained the current social upheavals and the presence of new political forces in terms of relations with ancestor spirits, but differed in other respects. A violent anticolonial and antiwhite cargo cult found adherents among Saisai and Misima peoples to the northwest of Vanatinai, but was rejected by Vanatinai Islanders, who saw themselves as allied with the absent whites against their Saisai traditional enemies. In this chapter, I explore the social, cultural, and historical bases for these different responses to the extraordinary events of World War II.

In May 1942, the island and the adjacent Coral and Solomon seas suddenly became the arena of a massive air and naval battle between the Allies and the Japanese. This Battle of the Coral Sea stemmed the southward advance of the Japanese in the Pacific and forestalled the invasion of Port Moresby and northeast Australia. In the Louisiade Archipelago, a panicky withdrawal of almost all whites and colonial government officers led to outbreaks of raiding among traditional enemy groups as well as the cargo cult with protonationalist overtones.

Forcible conscription of young men to labor for the Allies at Milne



Bay on the mainland of Papua offered an unprecedented opportunity for Vanatinai people to learn about the outside world and encounter a variety of "Europeans," particularly Americans, whose perceived behavior contrasted strikingly with that of prewar Australian resident planters, traders, and government officers. Using traditional mythology to explain their new and unprecedented experiences, Islanders concluded that the spirits of their own dead turn white and go to America. During this time, military administrators established tight control over island affairs, moving settlements, ordering changes in subsistence, and dispensing justice on the spot. These wartime government edicts were never rescinded, and island life has been permanently altered ever since. The postwar years brought continuing interventions into island life by colonial and later national government officers.

Vanatinai and Its Neighbors

Vanatinai, labeled Sudest or Tagula on maps and charts, is the largest island of the Louisiade Archipelago, the chain of islands that separates the Solomon Sea from the Coral Sea. It is 50 miles long and 8 to 15 miles wide. A central mountain range rises to 2645 feet at Mt. Rio, said to be the home of the creator spirit, Rodyo, and the spirits of the dead. Vanatinai and adjacent islands are encircled by one of the world's largest lagoons. Numerous uncharted coral patches and shallow waters make the region dangerous for shipping, contributing to the island's lack of integration into the world economy.

The Islanders, however, participate in elaborate systems of interisland exchange of foodstuffs, local goods, and ceremonial valuables such as shell-disc necklaces and greenstone axe-blades. These goods are taken by sailing canoe throughout the Louisiade Archipelago and as far as Ware Island, 175 miles to the northwest. The Louisiade exchange networks are linked with those of the *kula* exchange network to the north and west and with trading systems of the south Papuan coast (see Lepowsky 1983).

The small, drought-prone, infertile islands of the east Calvados Chain begin just a few miles to the northwest of Vanatinai. Known locally as Saisai, they are inhabited by about twelve hundred people who are ethnically and linguistically distinct from the people of Vanatinai. Just as the larger island of Vanatinai in precolonial times comprised numerous districts whose relations with one another

shifted from enmity to uneasy alliance, the Saisai area was not politically unified. While the people of Wanim (Grass Island) were traditionally allied with the southwestern portion of Vanatinai, the people of Sabara Island often raided Vanatinai, carrying off yams, pigs, and people.

Farther to the northwest, in the west Calvados Islands, is the beginning of the Misima language area, which also includes the islands of Panaeati Lagoon, Kimuta, and Misima itself. The west Calvados Islands, like the east Calvados, are marginal for cultivation. Their inhabitants rely on trading smoked fish and shellfish, clay cooking pots, and outrigger sailing canoes to the more fertile and larger islands of Misima and Vanatinai. Some of these people, particularly those of the pottery-exporting island of Utian (Brooker), were famous on Vanatinai, not only as traders who sought sago starch and yams in exchange for their clay pots, but as persistent raiders and headhunters who plundered Vanatinai when fragile trade alliances broke down. It was primarily the inhabitants of the east and west Calvados Islands who joined the wartime insurrection against colonial authorities described in this chapter.¹

On Vanatinai, as well as the neighboring islands of the Louisiade Archipelago, ancestor spirits are believed to be the source of all good fortune and prosperity, and their descendants maintain relationships with them through an elaborate series of mortuary rituals. Good health, fruitful gardens, and success in trade (and formerly warfare) are only obtained through their blessings, secured by the appropriate ritual or magic and through observance of relevant taboos. These traditional beliefs in ancestral power were extended to explain and organize responses to new sorts of people and new situations encountered during World War II.

Relations with Europeans

The first recorded Western contact on Vanatinai was with the visit in 1849 of HMS *Rattlesnake* during its voyage to survey the approaches of the Torres Strait (Macgillivray 1852; Huxley 1935). The charts produced on this occasion were used by the Allies during World War II. Secretive traders and whalers probably bartered with Louisiade peoples in the early 1830s or before (see Jacobs 1844, 250–251 for an account of contact in 1834 with Louisiade peoples, probably in the Calvados Chain). A brief gold rush on the island in 1888 triggered

the formal annexation of all of British New Guinea, but no motherlode was discovered. Many miners moved onto Misima Island, soon to be a government and mission center for the region, where they operated gold mines with contract labor until World War II. A few miners remained on Vanatinai to open trade stores or work small coconut plantations. The Islanders brought gold dust, copal gum, and pearlshell to exchange for small quantities of tobacco, rice, cotton cloth, and steel tools.

There were no missions on the island until 1947, in contrast to the Misima-Panaeati region, where the Australian Methodist Missionary Society had British and Tongan workers from 1891. Nevertheless, rephrased and reinterpreted versions of Christian prophecies of the second coming and the resurrection of the dead must have traveled through the Louisiade Archipelago, carried by trading partners along with ceremonial valuables, sailing canoes, clay pots, dance styles, and other myths that are identified by Islanders as recent imports from the northwest. As elsewhere in Melanesia, Christian teaching about the imminent return of spirits of the dead was congruent with traditional beliefs about the power of ancestor spirits and the efficacy of spirits in daily and ceremonial life. The social changes resulting from the new political dominance of the colonial government and the economic power of the archipelago's handful of white residents may have lent credence to predictions of the arrival of spirits of the dead.

Government officers rarely visited Vanatinai. After 1906, when the region became the Australian Territory of Papua, government patrols visited Vanatinai in 1911, 1912, 1925, and 1934. Prewar colonial officers collected the hated head tax, held court, and sentenced men guilty of sorcery, adultery, and nonpayment of taxes to imprisonment and hard labor on Misima Island (Territory of Papua 1911, 1912, 1925, 1934). Military officers of the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) took over from the civilian colonial government in February 1942, following the Japanese invasion of Rabaul, but Vanatinai was not visited until February 1943.

The British and Australian colonial authorities were under the impression that the Louisiade Archipelago had been pacified in 1888. However, while the frequency of raids by warriors of small and infertile Utian, Sabara (Sabarl), and the Engineer Group near the Papuan mainland had lessened, attacks on the food-rich island of Vanatinai had not ceased. Until about 1910, the people of Kwairaiwa, near Tubetube in the Engineer Group, sailed to Vanatinai

every year after the yam harvest to trade in some hamlets and to raid others, making off with yams, pigs, women, and children. Vanatinai people say the last raid (by Sabara people) took place in the 1920s. Nevertheless, the decades before World War II are remembered as a relatively peaceful time when elaborate interisland trading expeditions and lavish months-long mortuary feasts took place without government interference.

Even today very few people leave the island to work on coastal vessels, plantations, or in towns or to go to school. Even fewer left the region in the prewar years, in contrast to people of the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago (Young 1983*a*; chapter 10). Prewar contact with whites was limited to interactions with the few resident planters, traders, or the rare government officer.

World War Comes to the Louisiade Archipelago

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the Japanese advanced rapidly in southeast Asia and the southwest Pacific. The British colony of Malaya fell at the end of January, and Singapore was captured on 15 February 1942 (Bateson 1968, 111–115). On 21 January 1942, an invasion force, which had steamed south from Truk in the central Caroline Islands, overwhelmed the small Australian garrison at Rabaul. The Australians, who until just prior to the war had been selling their scrap metal to the Japanese, were stunned, furious, and frightened of an imminent invasion of their own east coast. It seemed likely that Port Moresby would fall next to the Japanese and then be used as a springboard for the bombing and invasion of Australia itself (Milner 1957; Johnston 1943).

By February, all white civilians, including government officers, were ordered to evacuate the territories (at the same time as white residents were evacuating the Solomons; see chapter 14). The rule of law broke down in Port Moresby itself, where undisciplined Australian troops looted stores and homes. Other notorious examples of the collapse of civil order occurred at Misima Island and at Samarai, burned to the ground in a “premature scorched earth policy” (Inglis 1969, 511–512).

A 1945 patrol report reconstructed the Misima situation:

During January 1942 a mysterious radio was received at this station [Misima] to evacuate everyone because attack was imminent. [The

source of this message was never traced, and it may well have been sent from Rabaul by the Japanese]. The Europeans naturally obeyed orders including the representatives of law and order but left behind three white men of poor repute and over a thousand foreign natives who had been indentured [mostly Northern District and D'Entrecasteaux Islanders who were on contract as laborers in the gold mines]. The general uproar that followed may well be imagined. The Whites on one side, the foreign natives on the other engendered the usual species of Vailala Madness amongst the locals. Money in safes as well as gold and other loot provided incentives. I hesitate to criticise many of the subsequent actions of the white man as I am not in full possession of the facts. Certain it is that for a lengthy period of time there was as much Justice extant as was promulgated by a medieval Grand Duke of Russia. (Territory of Papua 1945-1946)

There was no civilian or military colonial administration in the Louisiade Archipelago for a further ten months. The disorderly retreat of almost all the whites from Misima combined with the accompanying looting and violence to leave an atmosphere of uncertainty about the future. Just after the white retreat there arose a millenarian prophecy that ancestor spirits would return if all whites and mixed-race people were killed. In compliance with this prophecy, Australian Lieutenant Mader and a party of police were murdered soon after arriving in the islands in November 1942 to establish a military colonial administration.

The postwar patrol report continued,

One of the Europeans got out and went to live on Motorina [site of Mader's murder], here also his actions did not endear him to the indigene. It was not until November '42 that an Officer was sent to take over the Station area. As the natives of these islands have been schooled in treachery by the Caucasian for the past couple of years his fate was sealed when he was selected to come to Misima, just as would anyone else's fate after such a period of incompetence and lawlessness. (Territory of Papua 1945-1946)

Immediately after the hasty departure of all but three whites from Misima two days after the fall of Rabaul, a man named Buriga (sometimes spelled Buliga or Bulega) from Siagara village on the northeast coast of Misima, adjacent to the principal gold-mining area, proclaimed that he had received a message from the ancestor spirits. He prophesied that if the Islanders killed all white and mixed-race people, the spirits would return to the islands with a ship

full of the European cargo that whites had diverted from Islanders by trickery.² Buriga found few adherents at Misima and later moved to the west Calvados island of Motorina.

The patrol officer's comparison of the situation at Misima with the "Vailala Madness" of the Gulf District of Papua in 1919 was apt. This earlier, famous outbreak of cargo-cult beliefs predicted the coming of a European ship with the ancestor spirits on board as well as an abundance of European "cargo," or material possessions such as rifles, flour, rice, and tobacco (Williams 1923; Worsley 1968). Many of the Vailala movement's most enthusiastic adherents were men who had worked in the Lakekamu goldfields (Worsley 1968). It is possible that some of the "foreign natives" who worked at Misima brought cargo beliefs with them.³ Another Vailala theme that was to reappear in the Misima District was, as Williams said, "vague ideas of Papua for the Papuans" (1923, 15). The departure of government officers, mission personnel, and traders from Misima showed clearly the limits and impermanence of white rule.

In early May the Japanese established a forward seaplane base in Panaeati Lagoon (Deboyne Lagoon), thirty miles to the west of Misima. Their military strategy was to advance from Rabaul south, passing west of Misima and Vanatinai to head for Jomard Passage, a rare break in the barrier reef to the southwest of Vanatinai. Turning to the west, they could move along the Papuan coast and invade Port Moresby. Both Japanese and Americans sent reconnaissance planes over the Louisiade Archipelago.⁴

The Islanders were afraid of the mysterious patrolling planes and boats, which they referred to as "spirit boats" and "spirit planes" (as they today label unidentified and unexplained high-flying planes or boats spotted on the horizon in the hazy distance outside the barrier reef). Spirit boats and spirit planes are also described as the vehicles of the region's notorious flying witches (*wādawada*). These witches would traditionally use a crocodile as a kind of supernatural amphibious attack vehicle. Similar flying witch beliefs are found in the Trobriand and D'Entrecasteaux islands (Malinowski 1922; Fortune 1963).

Between 4 and 8 May 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea was fought in the Louisiade Archipelago's skies and waters. It has been described as "the first naval battle in history in which the opposing ships never came within sight of one another" (Bateson 1968, 163). The people of Vanatinai and Rossel apparently had no direct contact with the two belligerent forces but witnessed their awesome firepow-

er. Aircraft from American carriers bombed and sank the Japanese carrier *Shoho* as it lay with its support vessels between Misima and Panacati, an attack that was spectacularly and frighteningly visible from both islands. The following day, Japanese planes bombed and sank the American carrier *Lexington* to the south of Vanatinai. Attack planes in both cases would have flown directly over the island. One unidentified wrecked fighter plane lies inland from the hamlet of Buyawe on the southeast coast of Vanatinai. Similarly, a Japanese submarine is still eerily visible on the reef near the northeastern tip of Rossel Island.

ANGAU

The Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit was organized in April 1942 to take over the functions of the colonial government and to organize "native" labor and the production of strategic tropical commodities (Ryan 1969). One ANGAU officer, hastily promoted from clerical work at Port Moresby to sole representative of the military government in the Trobriand Islands, recalled that he was "to keep crude law and order . . . sen[d] back reports of any movements of troops or natives . . . and encourage the natives that the Allies had not abandoned Papua" (Saville 1974, 20).

In the Misima District (which included the entire Louisiade Archipelago), the first ANGAU officer, Lieutenant Mader, accompanied by Papuan police, arrived at the government station at Bwagaoia in November 1942. Hearing about the cultist prophecies of Buriga, Lieutenant Mader and his party traveled by boat to arrest him at Motorina Island in the western Calvados. Just as the government boat was anchoring in the shallows off Motorina, Lieutenant Mader was stabbed in the back. George Burfitt, a plantation owner who was the son of an English gold miner and a Vanatinai woman, was also murdered, as were six Papuan members of the ANGAU party, including two policemen.⁵

ANGAU Lieutenant Sidney Smith, sent to investigate the murder of Lieutenant Mader and his party, reported that "a man named Kaiwata of Mamanila [a village of Panawina Island in the eastern Calvados, quite close to George Burfitt's plantation on the same island] is known to have assisted in the murder of Lt. Mader and his party on Motorina. I heard that when he returned to his village he boasted of his deeds and hoisted a flag made out of scraps of calico,

saying that the Government had now been killed and they would fly their own flag" (ANGAU 1943*a*). The uprising inspired by Buriga had a clear anticolonial theme: from now on the oppressive white government is no more, and the Islanders are in charge of their own affairs. The nationalistic tone of many Melanesian movements was pointed out almost forty years ago by Guiart (1951).⁶

Lieutenant Mader and his entourage were murdered with traditional blackpalm spears and war clubs by a group of men from as far away as Misima and the Misima-speaking islands of Motorina and Bagaman and the Saisai-speaking islands of Sabara, Kuanak, Panawina, and Nigaho in the eastern Calvados. All of these islands are small and infertile, with food supplies insufficient for their populations, a situation traditionally remedied through interisland trading and raiding. These Islanders collectively had in earlier times attacked Vanatinai regularly. The people of the Calvados Chain had had fewer opportunities to obtain Western goods than the people of either Vanatinai or Misima, where gold could be worked and copal gum collected and bartered to the resident white traders.⁷

Shortly after the Motorina murders, an old, mixed-race Filipino trader and his Vanatinai crewman were murdered off Panawina, in accordance with Buriga's decree that mixed-race individuals, who tended to be traders or planters on a small scale, must be killed too. Another Vanatinai man was killed at Wananim while attending a feast, and his body was thrown into the deep sea. Eyewitnesses to this murder told me that the man was accused of killing an erstwhile trading partner with sorcery because he felt he was owed a debt of ceremonial valuables.

As ANGAU Lieutenant Sidney Smith wrote in April 1943:

After these latest murders it seems quite definite that every native in the Calvados Chain, from Motorina Island in the west to Nimoa in the east, had decided that Government control had more or less ceased to exist and they could return to their old fashions and kill with impunity. . . . It is hard to say how far the influence of Buriga the "false prophet" extended. It had even reached Sudest by one of his disciples but had gained no hold there and this may be the reason why the Nigahau, Sabari, Panawina and Joannet people had decided to attack Sudest. The Sudest natives certainly believed they were going to be attacked for they deserted their villages and had been living in the bush for two or three months before I visited the island. (ANGAU 1943*a*)

The people of Vanatinai recall the period following the withdrawal of whites from the region and the various murders in the Calvados Chain as a time of terror and flight from their homes to the high, defensible ridges of the central mountain range. They used to build their hamlets there in precolonial times for protection from raids on their coast. They refer to the period following the murders as a time of *gaizi* 'fighting' or 'warfare'. They were not concerned with the Allied-Japanese war, which no one had bothered to explain to them, but with the resumption of traditional forms of interethnic raiding and enmity among the peoples of the Louisiades. Davenport (chapter 11) has described similar concerns in Santa Cruz in the Solomon Islands. Another murder that took place during this period also had "revolutionary" or anticolonial overtones. ANGAU put out orders for young men to "volunteer" to labor for the Allies at the new base at Milne Bay. The first person to convey this message was a policeman from the village of Hebwaun (Bwailahine) on the island of Panatinani (Joannet), just northwest of Vanatinai. Eyewitnesses told me that when he returned to his home village to deliver this message, some men said, "Why should we go and die for the *lumolumo* [Europeans]?" The police officer was speared and fell dead on the beach. The motive for this murder was apparently never discerned by ANGAU authorities, who were at the time chasing the scores of men implicated in the Motorina murders from island to island in the Calvados Chain.

Eventually, 151 men were arrested for the various murders, including Buriga himself. Nine ringleaders were sentenced to death by public hanging, which all available residents of Misima Island, from old people to small children, were forced to witness. Buriga hanged himself in his cell the night before (or possibly was hanged by his cell-mates; see Macintyre 1987, 9). Eight other men were executed in front of a horrified populace, most of whom had rejected Buriga's prophecy from the beginning. One man, who had been a small child at the time, told me of how he too had been forced to watch and how his nightmares about this episode have continued for decades. The first civilian patrol officer to return to Misima after the war criticized ANGAU officers for their arbitrary dispensations of justice and for forcing "hundreds of natives" to witness this "multiple execution" (Territory of Papua 1945-1946). A large percentage of the adult men of the Calvados Islands spent time in jail for their involvement in the murders or for other cult activity.

Because their loyalty was suspect or they were already in jail, Calvados men were not subject to the same forcible recruitment by ANGAU officers to labor for the Allies at Milne Bay. By March 1943 a visiting ANGAU officer on the north coast of Vanatinai observed: "I did not see many young men. Apparently the island of Sudest has been recruited pretty thoroughly" (ANGAU 1943*b*, 21 March). About seven hundred men from the islands of Vanatinai and Misima were sent to Milne Bay.

ANGAU officers in 1943 administered the islands as they believed appropriate. "Native court" was convened on the spot when necessary. On the same visit, the ANGAU officer noted that he sentenced one sorcerer to six months of hard labor at Misima: "This native said he did not give two pins for the Government and that he would kill anyone by sorcery if he so wished. Apparently thought he had seen the last of the Government in this district" (ANGAU 1943*b*).

It is likely that Islanders on Vanatinai were also contemptuous of colonial power in an area that had last been "patrolled" by government officers in 1934. Yet despite the presence of resentment against whites and a lack of respect for the power of government, the people of Vanatinai did not join Buriga's antiwhite uprising. Its main adherents included many of their traditional enemies from the eastern Calvados, who had threatened to attack them and had already murdered a Vanatinai man at an east Calvados feast. Furthermore, Vanatinai people saw whites as trading partners from whom they could obtain European goods in exchange for gold dust and as political allies whose presence in prewar days forestalled the possibility of attack on their settlements and gardens by raiders from the eastern Calvados.

To regain control over a truculent population, ANGAU officers issued new orders commanding that people build new, nucleated villages at designated sites along the coast, where they could be more easily subjected to government control. This order has never been rescinded, and the present coastal villages of Vanatinai remain as its result.⁸

A white government officer took up residence on Vanatinai for some months in 1943 to organize the production and transportation of copal gum, taken from trees in the forest for use as varnish on naval vessels. In July 1943, Lieutenant Sidney Smith reported that he had secured 15 tons of gum in two weeks. He traded with the Islanders at the rate of one stick of trade tobacco for six pounds of gum. He noted that women and children did most of the collecting

and that the older men (the young ones were in Milne Bay) collected the tobacco. He recorded the "propaganda" he gave to the Islanders: the gum was "used to make paint for Battleships and the Battleships are used to fight the Japanese, therefore no gum, no paint, and no Battleship" (ANGAU 1943c).

Another ANGAU officer concluded that the Islanders were insufficiently involved in gardening and relied too heavily on a diet of sago and fish. He attributed part of their reluctance to garden to the precolonial period of interisland hostilities and fear of raids: the smoke from clearing gardens could have been seen by enemies. The officer therefore ordered Vanatinai people to increase the area of their gardens, in which they grew yams, sweet potatoes, and bananas. He referred to "much fertile land . . . now being put under cultivation." He was quite pleased with their larger harvest and wrote of how people of different areas presented him with a total of three pigs in gratitude for his gardening "advice" (ANGAU 1944).

ANGAU orders to grow more food in gardens have permanently changed local subsistence and dietary patterns.⁹ This dietary shift may have had a deleterious effect on the nutritional status of island children and adults (see Lepowsky 1985).

The absence for several years of hundreds of young and able-bodied men from Vanatinai who were conscripted by ANGAU and sent to labor for the Allied war effort on the mainland increased the workload of island women. Along with elderly men, they were now responsible for gardening, collecting wild vegetable foods, making sago, fishing and collecting shellfish, hunting small game, and collecting the copal gum demanded for the war effort by ANGAU. Male absence strengthened the position of island women in decision-making and community affairs (see chapter 12). Women's economic, political, and ritual authority was also traditionally high in prewar island culture (see Lepowsky n.d.a).¹⁰

Milne Bay and the Americans

The young men who were sent to Milne Bay, a strategic tropical fjord at the southeastern tip of mainland Papua where the Allies constructed a major naval and air base, recall their initial fear of dying in someone else's war. They arrived after the July 1942 Battle of Milne Bay, at which a Japanese naval advance on the Allied airstrip was repulsed (Milner 1957). Their jobs were to construct a new

wharf at the old Lever Brothers coconut plantation at Giligili, to improve the airstrip, and to unload ships. The Australians and the Americans continued to use Milne Bay as a staging area from which to launch attacks on the Japanese strongholds at Buna and Gona. A huge number of Allied troops passed through Milne Bay, along with enormous quantities of war materiel.

The men from Vanatinai and nearby islands who traveled to Milne Bay to labor for the Allies returned after the war with amazing stories to tell their kin. They reported that American soldiers contrasted sharply with Australians in being friendly and regularly giving them gifts of food, clothing, tobacco, and money. They were amazed to find black Americans who dressed like and worked with whites. And they were deeply impressed to see that the black and the white American soldiers sat down and ate together. Sharing food is a potent symbol of friendship and trust on Vanatinai (as it is in many Pacific cultures; see chapter 15). Most prewar Australian residents never ate with Papuans (see Nelson 1982). Segregation was still official policy in the U.S. Army until 1953, but I have heard similar stories of blacks and whites eating together from other sources (see chapter 8).

People of Vanatinai concluded, and continue to believe, that the spirits of their own dead not only travel to Mt. Rio, the highest mountain on the island and the traditional home of the dead, but turn white and go to America. The color white is traditionally associated with corpses and spirits. The corollary of this belief resembles Buriga's prophecy without the homicidal theme, as well as many other Melanesian cargo beliefs: one day the spirits of the dead will sail home from America bringing with them the material possessions that Americans possess in such great abundance to give to their descendants on Vanatinai. The generosity and wealth of American soldiers led Islanders to believe that these white, and black, people must be their kin, because their behavior was in marked contrast to that of prewar Australian residents and ANGAU personnel.

Myths that explain the origins of European material possessions are told in many parts of New Guinea from Dobu to Biak (Fortune 1932, 136; Worsley 1968, 126-130). The Biak story includes what Michael Young (1983*a*, 1983*c*), using material from Goodenough and adjacent islands, called "the theme of the resentful hero." This motif features a mythological being who is treated badly and leaves a locale, taking with him valuable goods. A similar myth on Vanatinai tells of a female snake spirit who produces the first shell currency

from her excrement but is chased away to Rossel Island by foolish young men (Lepowsky 1983).

More relevant to the belief that the spirits of the dead turn white and go to America is the Vanatinai myth of Alagh (sometimes called Ghalagh), a supernatural being who lived at the summit of Mt. Rio, home of the ancestor spirits, with his two wives. Alagh was a carpenter who disturbed the sleep of Rodyo, "owner" of the mountain and of the dead, with his constant hammering and sawing. Rodyo sent Alagh away. Alagh took with him one of his wives, Egogona, and his assistant, Kilimboa, and sailed away on his European-style boat, *Buliliti*, headed for the "land of Europeans" (sometimes identified as Sydney or England). He also took with him all the noisy implements that had offended Rodyo, including engines, hammers, nails, saws, chickens, cattle, and gold (formerly mined with machinery on Vanatinai). This is the local explanation for Europeans being wealthy and Papuans having only shell valuables. It seems likely, following the wartime contact with Americans, that Islanders concluded that Alagh and the other ancestor spirits had headed for America, clearly the home of the most abundant and valuable cargo ever seen in Papua.¹¹

The Vanatinai myth of the banishing of Alagh and his noisy European cargo, with its corollary hope that one day he will come sailing back to the island with all the European goods that rightfully and originally belonged on Vanatinai, shares key elements with the mythological "charter" of Buriga, the Misima cult prophet, as recounted by Macintyre (1987, 5-7). In the Misima version, a powerful leader leaves Misima for Mt. Rio, where he becomes known as Kimbauwa, recognizably the same figure as Alagh's "assistant" Kilimboa in the Vanatinai myth. Kimbauwa creates Papuan wealth, then leaves for the land of whites, where he becomes known as Jehova and creates European wealth. Someday he will return home with this wealth, and cultists attempt to lure him back by their practices, as Macintyre has detailed.

It is likely that parts of Buriga's prophetic myth were grafted onto preexisting Vanatinai mythological sequences, so that Kilimboa becomes the subordinate of Alagh, a traditional supernatural figure (see Lepowsky 1981, 42-43). It is not clear whether the Vanatinai mythological motif of Alagh's departure with European goods predated the period of Buriga's prophecies in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and perhaps even inspired them, or whether it arose concurrently with or after the Misima cargo myth. In any case, the story

remains one of the most frequently told myths on Vanatinai today. The Islanders make no overt efforts to attract Alagh and his cargo back home. But the myth, with its cargoistic explanatory theme, validates the theory that the spirits of the dead turn white and go to America and explains the behavior of American soldiers encountered during World War II as well as that of the resident American anthropologist (see below).

Some officially reported versions of Buriga's prophecies state that he proclaimed that the Islanders would turn white (cf. Nelson 1976, 46-48; Macintyre 1987, 6). Buriga's movement took place before any direct contact with Americans, although the huge ships of both Americans and Japanese were observed from the Louisiade Archipelago. The "Americanist" theme of many postwar Melanesian cargo cults has often been noted (Guiart 1951, 1952; Worsley 1968; chapter 17). Other contributors to this volume have recorded discussions about the relative virtue, friendliness, and generosity of the Americans versus prewar colonialists and, particularly, the Australian ANGAU officers (e.g., chapters 8 and 15).

Many ANGAU officers were concerned with maintaining proper hierarchical relations and social distance between colonials and "natives" and with limiting pay scales so as not to inflate postwar expectations. Nonfraternization rules were promulgated to keep indigenous laborers away from Allied troops (Ryan 1969).¹² Read (1947) noted that in the Markham Valley the local people distinguished between the colonial authorities and the friendlier Australian and American soldiers (cf. Worsley 1968, 125-126). An Australian veteran of the Papuan campaign recalled that at base camps the Australian troops invited Papuan conscripted laborers to "share our food. This was, quite frankly, frowned upon by the local population. . . . They were quite disgusted, and I believe they made protests" (Nelson 1982, 172-173). These accounts suggest that both Australian and American soldiers behaved in a strikingly different way toward Papuans and New Guineans from prewar Australian colonials. The wartime memories of the "generous," "friendly," and egalitarian Americans reported by the people of Vanatinai and elsewhere are therefore not being contrasted to Australian *soldiers* but to prewar Australian colonials and to the wartime ANGAU authorities—people who had power over the Islanders and a vested interest in maintaining it over the long term.

The ANGAU image remains today. Villagers who shout commands at their family or neighbors are still sarcastically addressed as

"Angau." In comparison, Mead (1956, 185) reported that on Manus Island, "'Angau' is the nickname for a man who takes things away from other people by excessive winnings at cards, or overuse of his privilege of begging from his relatives." Manus people, like many others discussed in this volume (see also Robinson 1981), recalled that ANGAU officers confiscated the goods American soldiers had given them.

After the War

World War II permanently changed life on Vanatinai in several ways. The tighter government control, imposed on the region following the uprising and murders of 1942-1943, has remained in force. Yearly patrols were instituted by the civilian government in 1946. Greater government control led both the Roman Catholic Mission of the Sacred Heart and the Methodists (formerly the Australian Methodist Missionary Society, now the United Church) to establish mission stations in the region in 1947.

Vanatinai settlement patterns and subsistence practices conform, on the surface, to the orders given during the war by ANGAU officers. Most people either live or claim to live in nucleated coastal villages located on sites designated by ANGAU. Houses throughout the Louisiade Archipelago are now built with a pitched roof rather than the curved, "turtle-back" roof that was traditional in the region until the mid-1940s. The new roof style emulates the design of European-style buildings observed by laborers at Milne Bay and Samarai. The increased emphasis on cultivation of starchy tubers, such as easy-to-grow sweet potato and manioc, as opposed to the extensive collection of wild foods, has persisted since the well-meaning initiative of the ANGAU lieutenant in 1943.¹³

Dress styles changed rapidly after the war. Men returning from Milne Bay very rarely wore the traditional male dress of etched pandanus leaf drawn between the legs and belted around the hips with locally made bush twine. They preferred to wear Western-style shorts or trousers or a *rami* 'lap-lap' of two yards of brightly colored trade cloth wound around the hips. Most women continued to wear the traditional dress of several knee-length skirts of shredded coconut leaf. As a final note on appearance, adults and children alike enjoy tossing off a snappy military salute when posing for pictures today.

Ancestors

Vanatinai people retain an intense interest in America. I was frequently asked, "In what direction is America? How many days sail is it from here? How is the American Negro doing?" When I first came to live on Vanatinai in early 1978, I asked about climbing to the summit of Mt. Rio, home of the spirits of the dead. I was told the story of how some Americans had visited the island in the 1950s and climbed the sacred mountain, although their island guides were said to have been too frightened to accompany them to the top, where they spent the night. I was told it was so cold they froze together in a block of ice and did not thaw out until the next morning. (I later learned that an expedition from the American Museum of Natural History had in fact climbed Mt. Rio in the mid-1950s, collecting botanical and zoological specimens.)

The man who told me this story asked me, "Why do you Americans always want to climb Rio *watai* 'Rio's summit'?" The significance of his question did not become apparent to me until some weeks later when a middle-aged man came to the house where I lived with a local family. He too asked me a question: "Where do we go when we die?" Taken aback, I began a discussion of comparative theology. He suddenly confessed that he had heard that the spirits of the dead turn white and go to America. A woman present immediately told him to be quiet, saying such things would land him in jail. He moaned, "O, why did I say this foolish thing?" I tried to reassure him, but he and the others present were afraid to say anything more. I later learned that this belief was held by virtually all of the Islanders born before World War II. The younger people, even if they had never been to school (and most had not in the late 1970s), had another explanation for Americans: they are *lumolumo* 'Europeans' of a slightly different kind from Australians.

I learned further that I was believed to be the spirit of Taineghubwa 'upright forest tree', an important woman who had died a few years previously and who was buried not far from where I lived on her clan property. It was said that I had returned from America, the land of the dead, to "help" the people. This was why I was said to be generous with gifts of food, tobacco, and trade goods.¹⁴ A minority theory held that I was the returned spirit of the mother of the orphaned teenaged boy who lived in the same house as I did.

From the beginning I denied strenuously that I was an ancestor spirit, but I was apparently not believed. Why else was I living,

seemingly permanently, in that spot? I was treated with friendliness by people who had announced to others that I was a returned spirit, but I was attributed with great power, both beneficial and destructive. For example, I was warned that I should hide the strands of my hair which fell out in my brush, for they could be used not only for powerful forms of love magic and garden magic (to make yam vines grow long) but as aids to murder by sorcerers. Ancestral relics such as a tooth, bone, or lock of hair are traditionally used as essential paraphernalia for performing acts of magic and sorcery (see Lepowsky n.d.b). One important man in his sixties, whom I had known well for many months and with whom I had sailed to a mortuary feast on the other end of Vanatinai, sat up late talking with me by the fire as our hosts slept on their mats nearby. "Tell me, Maria," he said, "Will you really die as we will?" Stunned, I replied with an adaptation of Shylock's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, "Yes, I am just like you. If you cut me I will bleed. I will die the same as you will." He looked unconvinced.

I left the island in 1979. When I returned for a visit in 1981, I found that the fact that I had not stayed on the island had convinced most of the elders that I was just a "European" after all. I had been different in that I had lived in a local village, eaten their foods, and learned their language, but, like all other Europeans, I had only stayed for a while and gone back to my place (see chapter 10). But when I returned to Vanatinai again in 1987, I was still referred to as *kaka* 'ancestor spirit' by one old man who had labored for the Americans during World War II. When no one else was nearby, another older man asked me in a whisper if it was "truth or lie" that I was an ancestor spirit and an immortal. Again I had to argue for my own mortal human status.

Conclusion

The apocalyptic, "cargo cult" beliefs held by some of the Islanders of the Louisiade Archipelago during and after World War II are responses to unprecedented social upheavals and new experiences. The seemingly omnipotent white colonial, mission, and commercial figures left the islands suddenly and in panic. Their departure triggered outbreaks of looting and violence in the government station area at Misima. The collapse of the colonial apparatus of patrol officers, armed police, and "native courts" encouraged various individ-

uals to settle personal vendettas and exacerbated interethnic hostility among the Islanders. The awesome spectacle of aerial and naval warfare during the Battle of the Coral Sea contributed to the general sense that powerful new forces had arrived in the region and that major changes were about to occur. Buriga's prophecy of the return of the dead on board ships full of European cargo—if only the remaining whites and mixed-race people were killed—appealed to hundreds of Islanders as an explanation for wartime events and as a strategy for action.

The Calvados Islanders, who had received little material benefit from whites, were the most enthusiastic adherents of Buriga. At this point the Vanatinai Islanders probably believed that the dead would sail home on cargo ships, but they did not subscribe to the plan of killing whites. They regarded the traders, miners, and planters who lived on the island before the war as allies against attack by their old enemies from the Calvados Chain. Having heard of the murders of several men from their own island by people from the Calvados Chain, Vanatinai people interpreted the plans of Buriga's followers as a plan for a general attack on themselves as well as whites.

The experiences of young men from Vanatinai at Milne Bay, specifically the contact with a new kind of "European" who possessed seemingly unlimited wealth and who treated Islanders with friendliness and generosity, gave rise to a different "cargo" belief when they returned to the island. Americans were identified as returned ancestor spirits sailing back with cargo from the land of the dead, in congruence with part of Buriga's prophecy. This belief differed in emphasizing that Americans were kin, allies, and supernatural exchange partners, as opposed to enemies to be killed in order to usher in the Golden Age. Preexisting exchange relations with whites on the island and the preexisting myth of a group of supernatural beings from Mt. Rio who had sailed off to the "land of Europeans" contributed to this newer explanation of the identity and significance of the Americans observed at Milne Bay.

Buriga's prophecy and Vanatinai beliefs that Americans were returned ancestor spirits synthesized traditional and mission-introduced beliefs. They amalgamated ideas about the power of ancestor spirits in the daily lives of their descendants with preachings about the imminent end of the world and the return of the dead to earth. The collapse of white political and economic power in the region, the threat of resumption of interisland raiding, and the arrival of new and powerful beings—the Americans—generated two distinct, syn-

cretic responses that offered ideological bases for the transformation of the Islanders' social world.

Notes

The research on which this chapter is based was conducted from November 1977 to March 1979. For the bulk of the research period I resided in the village of Jelewaga on the south coast of Sudest Island, or Vanatinai. I wish to thank the people of Vanatinai and their neighbors for their friendship, assistance, and moral support during my residence with them. Financial support for this research was provided by the National Science Foundation and the Chancellor's Patent Fund and the Department of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley. This support is gratefully acknowledged. I would like to thank participants and audience members for their comments at the 1985 and 1986 meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, where I presented earlier drafts of this chapter. I owe special thanks to Geoff White for his helpful comments on an earlier draft.

1. The fourth distinct linguistic and cultural group in the Louisiade Archipelago lives on Yela, or Rossel Island. Yela is encircled by its own lagoon and separated from the rest of the archipelago by a treacherous deep-water channel, which was rarely crossed in precolonial times for either trading or raiding purposes (see Liep 1983; Lepowsky 1983). The Islanders speak a non-Austronesian language, unlike any of their neighbors for hundreds of miles to the east or west, and their culture differs markedly from others of the archipelago (see Armstrong 1928). They did not participate in the anticolonial uprising described in this chapter. Their young men were conscripted as wartime laborers, and it is possible that they shared with Vanatinai people the same belief that whites are returned ancestor spirits.

2. Macintyre (1987, 5-9), based on work on Misima Island, located the origin of the cargo cult in the late 1930s, noting that it gained momentum with Buriga's prophecy of the millennium in 1942 during the upheavals of the Japanese advance and the white civilian withdrawal. But she said that the cult did not advocate violence, even though Buriga and his followers murdered an ANGAU lieutenant and his party (1987, 9). I was told, not only by Vanatinai and Saisai people but by older Misima Islanders, that according to Buriga's prophecy the return of the dead with European cargo could only occur after all the whites and mixed-race people in the region had been killed. These same Misima Islanders told me in 1978 and 1979 of continuing cargo cult activity (without any homicidal theme) based at Siagara village on the north coast of Misima, Buriga's natal village (Lepowsky 1981, 378-379). Battaglia, who conducted research on Sabara Island in the east Calvados Chain, recorded that during the 1940s "in the wake of cargo-cult violence many of the able-bodied men in the [Calvados] Chain suddenly disappeared into mainland jails" for an average of five years (1983, 451). An Australian patrol officer, who in 1946 investigated a further cult outbreak on Iwa Island, where it was predicted that ancestor spirits would come to life and return with foods and other goods (and in anticipation of which some gardens and coconut trees were destroyed), reported, "It is said that this 'prophecy' had something to do with the preachings of BURIGA (the man who caused all the trouble here at Misima which culminated in

the murder of Lieutenant Mader, George Burfitt and the others in 1942/43). He said that after all the Europeans were killed the world would turn over and then any white people remaining would change into natives and natives would be changed into whitemen" (Territory of Papua 1945-1946).

3. Similarly, Keesing (1978, 247) suggested in his discussion of the Maasina Rule "politico-religious movement" on Malaita in the Solomon Islands that "specific elements of Malaita cultism may derive from diffusion on plantations." Goldfields and European-owned plantations were both locations in which Melanesian men from many different cultural groups met, communicated with each other, and formulated responses to their contacts with Europeans.

4. William Davenport (personal communication 1981) was on a small U.S. Navy patrol boat that traveled at night without running lights in the waters near the strategic Jomard Passage looking for evidence of Japanese movements. Although their orders forbade them to land, he recalled being close enough to see the silhouette of Sudest Island against the night sky.

5. As an act of violent resistance to white colonial rule, this ambush has several parallels with the murder of District Officer Bell and his "native police" on Malaita in the Solomon Islands in 1927 (see Keesing and Corris 1980).

6. Both this anticolonial theme and the idea that the spirits of the dead would return in a European-style boat (the latter prominent not only in Buriga's cult prophecies but in a Vanatinai myth discussed in this chapter) first appear during the Milne Bay Prophet Movement of 1893, the earliest recorded New Guinea cargoistic movement (see Worsley 1968, 52). The Milne Bay region is culturally related to the Louisiade Archipelago and is linked to it through traditional exchange systems.

7. In the period since World War II, although Misima Islanders continue to have the greatest amount of contact with white traders, government officers, miners, missionaries, and other visitors, the Calvados Chain peoples have had somewhat more contact with whites than have the people of Vanatinai. There were no white residents on Vanatinai by the early 1970s. The Catholic Mission of the Sacred Heart established a mission on Nimowa Island in the East Calvados in 1947, staffed by Australian priests and nuns. Virtually all the east Calvados peoples consider themselves Catholics and send their children to the mission primary schools, and many sell copra to the mission.

8. Until about 1888, the traditional settlement pattern was for people to live in dispersed hamlets along the ridgetops for purposes of defense; thereafter people resided in dispersed hamlets situated near water sources and garden lands. People still believe that they will be taken to court if it is known that they do not really inhabit the coastal villages, so many come down from the uplands once a year just before the government census patrol. Although ANGAU officers thought they were picking out healthy settlement sites away from swamps, the traditional pattern of living at altitudes of above 800-1000 feet affords people greater protection against the island's three species of *Anopheles* mosquitoes, which carry both *Plasmodium vivax* and the sometimes fatal *P. falciparum* malaria (see Lepowsky 1985).

9. Individuals with whom I discussed island diet and subsistence in 1978-1979 explained that forty years earlier, when many of them were children or young people, the local diet was far more heavily dependent on the collection of wild tubers, nuts, legumes, fruits, and leaves, the production of sago, and fishing and hunting than the present intensive cultivation of starchy tubers. A mixed economy of food-

collecting and yam and banana growing was traditional. This earlier, more varied diet contained a greater quantity and range of vitamins and minerals (Lepowsky 1985).

10. By contrast, the sexual division of labor in the Keakalo region of the Papuan coast was permanently changed by the absence of men conscripted by ANGAU during World War II. Women assumed the responsibility of caring for betel nut palms and yams in gardens and groves, which were traditionally maintained exclusively by men and taboo to women. When people observed that these crops flourished under female care, the old sexual division of labor in gardening was abandoned in the postwar years (Wari Iamo, personal communication 1985).

11. Similarly, Davenport reported (chapter 11) that in the Santa Cruz Islands, "traditional myths were reformulated to explain the technological superiority and enormous wealth of the Americans." When a deity is not obeyed in the mythical past when European trade goods were available without money, he is offended and leaves for America, which "is why Americans are so rich now" (see chapters 3 and 17 for comparable themes).

12. American soldiers at Milne Bay, and at the base established in 1943 in the Trobriand Islands, were enthusiastic purchasers of carvings made by island laborers and villagers (see Saville 1974; chapter 13). The collections of the University of California Lowie Museum of Anthropology contain a number of artifacts purchased in the Trobriand Islands during World War II, including a large drum with a monitor-lizard-skin head and an ebony letter-opener in the shape of a lime spatula with the words, "made in New Guinea 1943" carved on it. One San Francisco man, who had been in the merchant marine, donated to the museum a large anthropomorphic carving which he had obtained on Kiriwina during the war in exchange for a bedsheet.

Allied soldiers were supposed to keep out of local villages as part of the antifraternization orders, but people recall frequent visits from American soldiers. One quiet morning on Vanatinai, I was astonished when my woman friend, who grew up in a Milne Bay village, suddenly began to teach her three-year-old daughter to sing and dance the "Hokey-Pokey" ("You put your right foot in, you put your right foot out . . ."). She explained that "American Negro soldiers" had taught it to her mother and other young village women, who had later taught their own children.

13. The only tangible evidence of the Japanese wartime presence, besides the submarine on the reef at Rossel Island and perhaps the wrecked fighter plane inland from Buyawe hamlet, is a large, sweet yellow banana variety known locally as "Japan." These bananas are said to have been introduced by the Japanese at Panaeati Lagoon (perhaps from Rabaul?), from where they were taken to Ebora at the western tip of Misima Island and spread to other settlements of the Louisiade Archipelago.

14. Michael Young (1971, 42, 56), who wrote about separate cargo cult movements on culturally similar Goodenough Island, three hundred miles northwest of Vanatinai, was believed by some people to be "a spy for the ancestors" who had been sent "to assess their worth and readiness for the millennium."

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CHAPTER 10

The Making of History: The Representation of World War II on Normanby Island, Papua New Guinea

CARL E. THUNE

The wartime was a source of happiness and a source of sadness and also a source of death but also of happiness because there was a big group of Australians and a group of Americans. There was a crowd of Chinese. The Negroes' behavior was very good. And the Americans and Negroes came with their mothers [women].

—Bobi of Loeliya hamlet, Loboda village

MY INTRODUCTION to recollections of World War II, and, indirectly, to what might be called ethnohistoriography, occurred during my first afternoon of fieldwork on Normanby Island in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea (map 6). After I mentioned that I was interested in history, several older men as well as a group of younger people gathered to talk about the past. To my surprise, the past they described contained only two clearly visible segments, the first associated with the arrival of the Reverend W. E. Bromilow, the first missionary, on Dobu Island in 1891, the second with World War II.¹ Why these two events were thought worth repeating to an obviously naive foreigner only became clear during subsequent months of fieldwork on Normanby Island.

However, one clue was given a few months later following an evening news broadcast of Radio Milne Bay that contained a story about a Japanese soldier rumored to be still hiding in the mountains at the eastern tip of Papua New Guinea. The group sitting around the radio began to talk about this soldier and then to reminisce about the war years. Talk quickly returned to the soldier himself, to what he must have looked like after having not cut his hair or beard for thirty years, to what he ate, and to how and where he had lived. People spoke with an almost morbid fascination about his radical and all but inconceivable social isolation.²

This vision of an isolated, socially abandoned individual embodies one moment of a more general rhetorical structure underlying most recollections of the war years by the people of Normanby Island. As a recollected literary subject, the war is more about the structures and possibilities of social relations than about the violence of wartime events. In this chapter I explore and am primarily concerned with the structure of the Loboda villagers' recollections of a number of war-related events. The events themselves are of secondary interest.

This chapter is based on a number of "autobiographical" stories told by residents of Loboda village about their personal experiences during the war years. Although the stories were told specifically for my benefit, they were all more or less known in a standardized form by friends and relatives of the raconteurs.³ Like all literature—both oral and written, recited or composed spontaneously—these stories are cultural artifacts that must be understood within the larger literary universe that supports their construction, recitation, and reception. Recollections of World War II are structured using the same rhetorical devices that structure the literary representation of any other event, whether "true," "fictive," or "mythical."

Matrilineality, External Relations, and Loboda Village Rhetoric

Loboda village is located at the northeastern tip of Normanby Island, which is one of the D'Entrecasteaux Islands. It is similar in culture and social structure to the other villages of the southeastern D'Entrecasteaux Islands—Dobu, Sanaroa, east Fergusson, and Normanby (cf. Thune 1980, 1983; Fortune 1963; Schlesier 1970; Roheim 1950). Like these other villages, Loboda is divided into small, self-contained matrilineages (*susu*), each of which "owns" at least one hamlet (*kasa*) with which the matrilineage and its members' identity are deeply bound.⁴ Internal (matrilineal) relations are a person's only "natural" links to other people and as such, should never be compromised by external affiliations with people of other matrilineages.

Although matrilineality provides the essential component of a person's identity, it can only be maintained through the creation of a variety of external affiliations with spouses, trade partners, friends, and employers. If the immediate problem of social life centers on the maintenance of matrilineal identity in a day-to-day world containing forces threatening to undercut it, a complementary but equally real

problem centers on the creation of external relations that both support matrilineality and, by their very existence, are threatened by it.

Precisely because matrilineality renders external relations necessary but unnatural, external relations have an extraordinary but always threatening visibility in literature as in daily life. "Normal" internal, matrilineal social relations are so natural and, hence, uninteresting that they remain largely invisible within Loboda literature. Indeed, internal relations only become visible in literature when they are shattered by unnatural division within a matrilineage. Conversely, external relations are invisible as long as they are anonymous and do not threaten the matrilineal order or are sufficiently domesticated that they support rather than threaten the matrilineal world.

All Loboda literature, whether myth, folktale, history, or autobiography, is a literature of the tension between simultaneously visible internal and external social relations. Frequently the conflict is displaced from a strictly matrilineally defined universe to a universe that is defined by species, village, geographical, or what might be vaguely termed "racial" differences. For example, many folktales are built around a theme of a leading character's inherently unstable marriage to, friendship with, or adoption by a "human-like" fish or plant. Similarly, many "historical" accounts portray abortive and destructive attempts at constructing social relations between those of different villages or islands (cf. Thune 1980). On a broader scale, the conventionalized account of the arrival of the Reverend W. E. Bromilow on Dobu Island is built around the exploration of the problems and implications of external relations between Dobuan people and Europeans (Thune n.d.b).

The underlying message of these stories is that external relations, whether based on marriage, adoption, or friendship are fundamentally unnatural. However, as the Bromilow story shows, external relations carry the potential for dramatic social expansion if they can be made to serve the internal social order rather than undercut it.

World War II and Northeast Normanby Island: The War as a Literary Domain

In Loboda, as elsewhere in the Pacific, events associated with World War II are among the most dramatic and visible features of the recollected past. However, unlike nearby areas,⁵ Loboda did not experience actual violence. A practice amphibious landing was held some

five miles from the village and warships were briefly anchored in Sewa Bay, but no serious fighting occurred in northeast Normanby Island. A temporary Japanese and subsequent Allied presence in the area, though initially feared, is not described as really threatening. Even the bombing and strafing seen by northeast Normanby Islanders then living on Dobu, east Fergusson, and Goodenough islands are not recollected as seriously dangerous.

Yet, if northeast Normanby was on the periphery of the war, it was on a very close periphery. The battle of Milne Bay occurred less than fifty miles away and occasioned a massive buildup of men and material. A sizable air base was established in the Trobriand Islands. A temporary Japanese occupation of portions of Goodenough Island was followed by larger Allied bases. And the ocean around northeast Normanby was the site of a major shipping route between the Japanese center in Rabaul and the Milne Bay-Coral Sea area. More important, as the war approached, Normanby became one of the prime recruiting grounds for laborers, especially in the Milne Bay area. Almost every young man of the time spent at least a year away in support of the Allied war effort.

Loboda villagers use the phrase *sahaya kana tuta* to refer generically to the World War II period and also occasionally to refer to the period of intervillage raids before colonially imposed "pacification." *Sahaya* is a generic term that can variously be translated as "war," "raid," "battle," "struggle," "fight," "quarrel," "debate," "contest," or today even "school examination." It is inherently vague. *Kana tuta* can be translated as "its time" or "the time of." However, it, too, is vague and does not point to a sharply demarcated calendar-defined time span. It can more accurately be translated as a "period or phase within which an unusual (but not defining) event or phenomenon occurred."

When Loboda villagers use the phrase *sahaya kanà tuta*, they are referring to a general period of the past that can most easily be referenced by mention of the war, *sahaya*, though it is by no means defined by the existence of warfare and violence. If anything, *sahaya kana tuta*, when used to point to both World War II and the precontact period, refers to a kind of epical moment in which the essence of social life is visible, challenged, and actively explored.

Five major episodes can be seen in Loboda villagers' recollections of the World War II period. They center on stories of the initial disruption of the colonial world beyond the village; the temporary presence of a group of shipwrecked Japanese sailors in northeast Nor-

manby Island; the presence of a small Australian military base near the village; the massive recruitment of young men to support the Allied effort; and the end of the Allied military presence and the return of the colonial regime. These five episodes roughly followed one another. However, recollections of each center on the portrayal of a different outcome of attempts at constructing external relations.

The Advance of the Front and the Collapse of Social Relations

We didn't have any way to go home because the Japanese blocked all the paths. At Samarai we came to see Mr. Smith [the government officer]. He told us, "What? Are you afraid?" We said, "No." He said, "You remember God and don't you think about dying." . . . All the [European] women and small children were taken away by a plane. It carried them away. But we didn't have any way to go.

—Dagela of Loeliya hamlet, Loboda

They said to that sergeant, my father, "You can't come [to send your contract laborers home]. A different leader will come and take them and look after them." He was very sad. He cried. He said, "I didn't send them off." My father cried and cried. He said, "Later, if I go to Esa'ala or perhaps Schulea [patrol post], I will go down to your village and stay there for good."

—Manuweli of Kebelukwa hamlet, Loboda

Loboda villagers' earliest recollections of the war years are of the disruption in the colonial world that suddenly confronted young men engaged in contract labor in the Milne Bay area and elsewhere in Papua. Men of their generation recollecting contract labor portray it as an adventure providing a dramatic introduction to the world beyond the village. However, rather than emphasizing novel and exciting events, their stories usually focus on deep involvement with individual Europeans. These one-to-one relations are critical to the stories' overall rhetorical coherence. While many stories mention disdain and brutality from a relatively anonymous European community, each describes how the narrator established an especially warm relation with a single European on whom he was depen-

dent for friendship, food and shelter, and protection from other Europeans and Papua New Guineans, as well as a more generalized sentimental concern. It is the creation of these relations, rather than the wealth or technological virtuosity of the colonial world, that returning laborers recall as particularly impressive about their experience.

Occasionally these counterparts in the colonial world are described using the word *tasi*- 'brother' (literally 'sibling of the same sex'). However, more commonly they are described using the word *tama*- 'father' (or more generally, 'father or father's brother' or 'mother's or mother's sister's husband'). Unlike other external relations (e.g., with spouses or formal trade partners), the "paternal" relation involves an asymmetrical indebtedness between the two parties, as a "father" provides goods and services, including the sharing of knowledge, skill, and experience, that his "child" can never hope to repay.⁶ Indeed, "paternity" is the one multidimensional relation in which dependency and asymmetrical indebtedness to a person of another matrilineage are not only acceptable but expected. Even more important, the paternal relation permanently links a person not just to his or her "father" but to his or her matrilineage and that of the father. In other words, acquiring a relation to a "father" not only ensures concern, support, and protection but generates a dramatic expansion of an individual's social horizons.

The "paternal" relation provides a model for portraying the multidimensional associations with the closest associates of the external world on whom contract laborers were dependent. These relations were in sharp contrast to the rigid and distant, unidimensional relations with colonial representatives encountered in the village world. They were unique even in the traditional world in which such multidimensional relations were rarely established with people from other geographical areas unless legitimized by a prior genealogical tie. Later recollections suggest that contract labor offered a dramatic social expansion that could incorporate a portion of the wider world into the village experience.

In general, since relations between two individuals (and consequently their respective matrilineages) cannot be severed as long as any unbalanced indebtedness exists between them, the paternal relation, because it is characterized by permanent indebtedness, should be the one unbreakable external relation in a Loboda villager's life. Manuweli's statement illustrates that wartime recollections portray the unexpected breaking of the tie of contract laborer to employer as

traumatic for all parties involved. In prewar years, many contract laborers experienced a break with their employers at the expiration of their contracts, at which time they were expected to return home to assume local responsibilities. Others involved in longer-term work relations experienced a similar break as a result of the death or return to Australia of their employers. Still others had to break their ties to their employers after being called back to their village to assume local responsibilities, usually following the sickness or death of their senior matrilineage mates. All of these reasons for the ending of relations with the European world make sense because they involved the demands of internal relations which quite properly took precedence.

By contrast, the sudden end of their contract labor immediately before the war is not interpreted as the result of either the laborer or his European "father" being reclaimed by their respective worlds of internal relations. Rather, the approaching war brought about the collapse of an entire social universe. The returning contract laborers describe the haste and disorganization within what had previously seemed to be a solid and orderly, if rather peculiar and incomprehensible, European social world. Some point to the sudden evacuation of the European women and children, who had made Samarai into a functioning social universe rather than a collection of isolated individuals, as typical of the European world's disorder.⁷

These recollections are structurally reminiscent of many folktales describing the collapse of relations between isolated individuals such as orphans and persons of an alien world to whom they created a temporary quasi-adoptive relation. The underlying message is that matrilineally isolated people cannot establish permanent relations with an alien world because their acceptance of such relations implies that world's fragmentary quality. In other words, the matrilineally isolated are only accepted by those of an alien world when that world, too, is in a state of imminent collapse.

The Other Foreigners: The Japanese on Normanby Island

The Australians came and they turned over empty meat tins and empty coconut shells and husks of coconuts and they looked for the Japanese in the bush. They looked all over for them. Perhaps the Japanese were hiding [by using magic to make themselves very small].

—Auwepo of Kegebwai hamlet, Loboda

The Japanese knew sorcery [*barahu*]. When they came they had packets of poison [*barahusa*] that they carried with them. Deuku carried his poison in his pocket. He wouldn't let me see it. The Japanese only used sorcery against the Australians. They didn't use it against the Duau people because we were their friends.

—Eidan of Sawawanubwa hamlet, Loboda

Collective recollections of the war period begin with the arrival of a group of Japanese sailors from a ship that was sunk apparently as a part of the Battle of the Coral Sea. They arrived in two lifeboats, exhausted by their ordeal, without weapons, and having little in the way of resources to support themselves or to effect their return to Japanese territory. Although seen to be an alien form of humanity having no structured relation to northeast Normanby Islanders, they are never described as a real threat. Loboda villagers speak of them alternately with tones of pity for those who were alone and suffering, of amusement at the ignorance and foolishness of those who did not know how to live in Normanby society, and of comradeship with those who were, in some ways, less threatening than representatives of the colonial world.

The sailors were essentially abandoned for a time by the Japanese, who were unable to rescue them, and by the Allies, who were not sufficiently concerned about their presence to make a concerted attempt to capture them. Eventually, Loboda villagers say, the Australians landed a force near Dawada village that was able to capture the wounded and sick among them.⁸ The remainder were able to reach a Japanese ship that is said to have taken them to Rabaul.

Japanese (*mejapan*) are members of the higher-level category of human beings (*dimudimu* 'foreigners') that rather vaguely includes any non-Melanesian. Most typically it includes Australians, New Zealanders, English, and Americans, but also Asians such as Indians, Chinese, and Japanese.

Like other categories of people, "foreigners" are subdivided at lower taxonomic levels into successively narrower categories.⁹ Each category of human being, whether a broad grouping such as "foreigner" or "Papuan" or a low-level category such as a single matrilineage, is characterized by common *bubuna*, a word that can variously be translated as "custom," "behavior," "habit," or "personality." A people's "custom" reflects and embodies their ances-

tors' historical experience and residence, being matrilineally inherited but also partly derived from the land on which they live. At all levels, "custom" always has an authentic and inherent, essentially unchanging, quality. External relations, by definition, are with those having different "customs."

The Japanese were an anomalous presence, not exactly a part of the colonial world but also not a part of the world of Normanby Islanders. Certainly the Japanese were "foreigners," but their "custom" contrasted them with an unnamed category of people containing Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, and English. Within the category of foreigners, the Japanese are the marked subcategory. If Australians and other Europeans were aliens, the Japanese, because they did not clearly fit into the category of "foreigner," were an even more conceptually difficult category.

For example, unlike European "foreigners," the Japanese possessed a variety of forms of knowledge—such as *barahu* 'sorcery', *koba* 'magic', and *welabana* 'witchcraft'—with which Loboda villagers are familiar. The quotations from Eidan and Auwepo indicate that the villagers believe this knowledge assisted them in avoiding the Allied forces. Again unlike most Europeans, the Japanese at least vaguely understood traditional Normanby Island food such as taro.

On the other hand, at least in the villagers' recollections, the Japanese made fewer attempts to fit in with traditional society than did the representatives of the Allied forces later encountered by Loboda villagers. People stress that the Japanese used signs to indicate their wishes rather than learning the local language, that they did not chew betel, and that they survived by raiding gardens and killing pigs. They are described as *gomwasoula* 'fierce', 'angry', or 'difficult to get along with'. Women were initially afraid of them because they were sexually aggressive. In addition, the Japanese possessed technology similar to that of Europeans.

One dimension of the anomalous status of the Japanese sailors in Loboda village stories is their problematic position relative to other major categories of people. However, a second, equally anomalous dimension is their relatively asocial, uncontrolled behavior. They are frequently described as if they had lost their relation to, or position within, their own group and wider Japanese society. Even though Loboda villagers remember Amanaka and Deuku as *kapitani* 'leaders' of the Japanese sailors, the entire party is never portrayed as a coherent, internally organized group.

Nevertheless, many of the young men of the time formed close ties with individual Japanese, and many actually learned some Japanese they remember with pride today. A number of young men today have the Japanese names of their fathers' close friends. These relations are always described as one-to-one relations between individual northeast Normanby young men and individual Japanese. Yet, unlike relations between representatives of alien worlds in traditional society, neither party approached the other as a representative of his own group. Furthermore, in contrast to earlier relations between contract laborers and Europeans, relations between northeast Normanby Islanders and the Japanese are described as relatively egalitarian. If anything, the Normanby Islanders were in a slightly ascendant position, being able to provide food and housing to the sailors, who were unable to support themselves.

These relations are usually described using the word *gosia*- 'friend'. In many ways "friendship" is an even more distant association than "paternity." The "paternal" relation suggests the existence of a structured and formalized, if conceptually difficult, external relationship between two people, each embedded within their own internal relations. "Friendship," by contrast, implies an egalitarian external association of two people having no deeper obligations linking them. It is a relation between discrete individuals rather than between people who are representatives and embodiments of larger groups.

Because there is no formalized exchange and consequent accounted indebtedness, "friendship" does not have the expectation of permanence that characterizes the "paternal" relation. Indeed, "friendship" is a relation of recognized and marked distance rather than intimacy between two people. Frequently two people who initially form a relationship they describe as between "friends" will quickly transform it into a more intimate, metaphorically "internal," relation they describe using the word *tasi*- 'brother' or 'sibling of the same sex'. While referring to another person as "brother" is metaphorical, it suggests that each will act as though he had an internal relation not only to the other but also to relatives and other associates of the other.

One of the clearest markers of this formal distance between the villagers and the Japanese is that they are consistently described as obtaining food inappropriately. When people wish to point to their asocial quality, they stress that the Japanese pilfered from gardens, killed pigs without regard to their ownership, and ate raw taro.

When people wish to stress their dependent and pitiful condition (and by implication the concern that they themselves felt for them), they describe the trips that groups of Japanese made from hamlet to hamlet each morning to obtain gifts of food that were not reciprocated. And, when they wish to point to their more socially appropriate relations, they describe how the Japanese engaged in *grimane* 'barter' of their limited possessions (such as a compass, one of the lifeboats, and clothing) for food and assistance. Theft, unreciprocated receiving of gifts and consequent dependency, and barter are progressively more socialized techniques of marking distance and the absence of an ongoing external relation. Nevertheless, each reflects a considerable social distance between the two parties.

By contrast, the ideal transactional structure underlying external relations in traditional village life is the balanced movement of goods and services between the two sides in such a way that mutual and approximately equivalent indebtedness is never removed (cf. Thune 1983). It is significant that Loboda villagers choose to use the movement of food to mark the ultimate distance between themselves and the Japanese because food is traditionally used to mark and define external relations between matrilineages.

In some ways, the Japanese occupied the same structural position vis-à-vis the northeast Normanby Island people that the contract laborers occupied vis-à-vis the wider colonial world. Like the contract laborers, they were socially isolated, relatively helpless individuals facing an organized social universe as dependents. In recollection, however, contract laborers accepted this dependency by using the word "father" to describe the relation that they created, whereas Loboda villagers indicate that they were unwilling to accept or unable to create a "paternal" relation to the Japanese sailors, defining them as *natu* 'children'. This status was inappropriate given the manifest Japanese possession of knowledge and technology (even though temporarily disrupted) and their generally aggressive manner.

From the perspective of Normanby Islanders interested in constructing expansive external relations, development of a "paternal" relation to a "child," especially if the "child" is isolated or an orphan, carries less expansive potential than the development by a "child" of a "paternal" relation to a father. For this reason, as well, it made better structural sense for the Japanese to be recollected as "friends," with the distance, the relative egalitarianism, and the relative isolation that term implies.

Ultimately this relation with the Japanese ended. One reason for the inevitability of its failure is structural: it involved relations between isolated individuals. The message here, as well as in traditional literature, is that external relations only survive when they are between persons who are socially embedded representatives of their respective social worlds. External relations are only meaningful and only likely to survive if they lead to a social expansion in which each principal party can represent his or her social universe to the members of the other's universe. External relations only survive as the principals' individuality disappears beneath their roles as mediators between two wider social collectivities.

The structure of the stories that I am describing has a problematic relation to what "actually happened." It can be plausibly argued that Loboda villagers, on seeing the collapse of their ties to the Japanese, subsequently erected a story explaining why the collapse was inevitable. What is critical is that they choose a typically Loboda rhetorical approach to describing their relations to the Japanese.¹⁰

Allies and Villagers: The Base at Koyagaba and Dancing in the Village

I was staying in Loboda and then the Australian soldiers came to Koyagaba. The Air Force and the Army came. We were working for them. We washed their clothes and they gave us rice and meat. They dynamited fish and I grew up to be a young man.

—Bobi of Loeliya hamlet, Loboda

The soldiers stayed for a long time. Its end was 1945. The war was over. All my friends were, staying. I came and I was thinking about what I would do next. So I was thinking. I said, "Oh, perhaps, I will look for a school," because the place I was staying was not good.

—Alipi Gibson of Kasayahai hamlet, Loboda

Shortly after the Japanese sailors had escaped or were captured, the Australian Army and Air Force established a small base at Koyagaba, a narrow point of land between Loboda and Kwanaula villages. This installation was apparently primarily a radio and coast-watching installation manned by a small number of American and Australian military personnel.

The base at Koyagaba was a source of endless fascination, interest, wealth, and knowledge. Young people and children went there in the morning to receive leftover food that they took to the bush and ate. In the evenings, villagers went there to watch movies with the soldiers. A number of Loboda women are said to have had soldiers as lovers. Soldiers visited the village to participate in traditional dances. Those who were children at the time fondly recall spending time with the soldiers, eating mess food, learning about Allied military hardware, and talking about the future much as they would at village households with which they had a direct or indirect association.

Whereas the relations people created with the abandoned Japanese were egalitarian links to those who were detached and isolated from their worlds, those formed with the military personnel at Koyagaba were with people who carried a sizable piece of their cultural ancestry with them in the form of an impressive social structure and a massive amount of material goods. Whereas the Japanese were dependent on Normanby Islanders for food and shelter, the soldiers at Koyagaba were independent and well supplied. Finally, whereas the Japanese were seemingly cut off from their compatriots, the soldiers at Koyagaba were visibly representatives of and supported by the Allied forces.

Recollections of relations with the soldiers at Koyagaba stress that both sides met as embedded members of their respective social worlds with neither dependent upon the other. Indeed, these are the only recollections from the war period in which villagers embedded in the village social scene were able to meet, live, and work with Europeans who were themselves equally embedded in a functioning social world. More concretely, in contrast to the contract labor stories in which villagers are portrayed as visitors in a European world or the stories of the Japanese sailors in which the sailors appear as visitors in the village world, these are the only war stories in which both Loboda villagers and the "foreigners" each had their respective visible "place" embodying their "custom" and historical experience.

This is the condition of fully developed multidimensional relationships with the external world and, as such, it offers the possibility of a real social expansion. If stories of the prewar contract labor experience and those of the experience with the visiting Japanese are built on alternative models of relations between individuals and an alien social universe, stories of the war period are built on a model showing multifaceted relations with a much closer alien that situates all

members of each group with respect to all members of the other. Rather than a "paternal" or "friendship" model of social relations, the images in these stories come closer to a model in which an expanded social world is created precisely because residing in, or at least visiting, each other's places is possible.¹¹

As people recall this period, they describe a social excitement and expansion that is found at no other time in the village past. In recollection, at least, the period of the base at Koyagaba was the high point of the war period. People describe a dramatic transformation in day-to-day village life precipitated by a sudden widening of social horizons.

One woman, for example, while describing the excitement that became a part of daily village life, vividly described the sudden awakening of the village each morning to the sound of hand grenades being used to "dynamite" fish. Everyone would rush from their houses to the beach to collect the fish that had been killed, and the fish were gathered without regard to genealogical connection to the person who originally threw the grenade. Her recollection stresses that, with hand grenades, fish became so plentiful that their restricted distribution through normal channels became irrelevant. Similar stories are told about the unrestricted distribution of meat and other tinned food acquired from the base at Koyagaba during this period.

In recollection, the village suddenly appears as an indivisible social unit. What this woman and others describe is a temporary *communitas* in which matrilineally based social relations became irrelevant.¹² Recollection using the vocabulary of *communitas* to unite those of the village and the Allied base was possible precisely because members of both parties were firmly embedded in their respective, fully visible social worlds. Unlike recollections of other wartime episodes, descriptions of the Koyagaba base show villagers transcending social structure precisely because this structure is so fully visible and present.

Irony is the primary trope used to describe village life during the period of the Koyagaba base. Endless stories abound, such as that of the old man who boiled a tin of meat, ate its label, and threw the "bone" away, complaining that there was no meat on the Europeans' food. His children retrieved the tin, opened it, and had a feast at his expense. Many were offended by the strong odors of foods such as onions and cabbage in the tins they received, again providing a feast for younger people. And some threw away pieces of

cheese in disgust on discovering that the “soap” would not raise a lather. Many older people refused to eat rice, thinking it was boiled maggots. These stories are told with wry humor at the ignorance of the older people who were not involved in daily social relations that brought knowledge of the European world.

Irony is used to comment on villagers’ internal, village-wide relations that became visible with the arrival of visiting soldiers. In recollection, food is the predominant marker of the new external relations that people created. The ironic humor with which the period is recalled is especially appropriate given that older people were unable to eat “foreign” food.

Stories told in the ironic mode describe only events within the village. Similar events must have happened to people working beyond the village, but they, being purely idiosyncratic, never became a part of the collective village historic lore. More important, while events beyond the village might be used to comment on the socially insignificant relation of individual villagers to individual Europeans, use of the ironic mode in this context allows people to speak indirectly to the relation of the village as a coherent social world to an equally coherent European social world. With irony, one can point to socially irrelevant, and therefore humorous, differences and thereby underscore the true unity that is described as emerging.

Within Loboda oral literature, irony—a trope used to display internal differences in individual experiences, knowledge, and skill—is apparently only appropriate where boundaries based on the differences between internal and external relations become temporarily invisible. Irony then is a literary counterpart of social *communitas*.¹³

Although I am describing the representation of the relations between Loboda villagers and the soldiers at Koyagaba, the reality was more problematic—for example, disputes did occur as a result of alleged involvement of local women with soldiers. But the literary structure chosen to represent this period disguises these difficulties and ambiguities, whereas that used to represent the activity of the Japanese sailors highlights it.

An Overabundance of Sharing: External Social Relations and the Construction of Boundaries within the Alien World

So we went to them and we became friends.
They gave us our shirts and our trousers and

our boots and socks and all kinds of European goods. They gave us bayonets, our weapons, but we didn't encounter any fighting. They gave us our dress and we walked around carelessly [unabashedly] proud. There was so much meat it was like rubbish.

—Bobi of Loeliya hamlet, Loboda

They [the returning wartime laborers] said, "If you go to Giligili to the Americans' place you will see many women have come." They said, "If you go to the Americans, they will call to you." They said, "Their behavior is good. During the war we went to the Americans' place inside their fence [compound]. They boiled their tea and they set a table with European food. They would call, they said, 'Hey, boys, you come and let's eat.' We thought about it and we went up and ate with the American soldiers. But we were afraid of the ANGAU soldiers. We said, 'If we go up and eat with the Americans, they [the ANGAU soldiers] will see us and they will scold us.' "

—Auwepo of Kegebwai hamlet, Loboda

About the same time that the base at Koyagaba existed, most of the young men of Loboda were recruited to work for the war effort at bases associated with the battle of Milne Bay. In contrast to the small base at Koyagaba, these bases were overwhelming in size. The stories of these bases, with their stress on the enormous number of soldiers, the massive quantities of cargo, the size of ships and airplanes, and the scale of violence, are similar to the stories told by other Pacific people who served in similar capacities at other large military installations (see chapter 15).

Recollections of this wartime work for the Allies are superficially similar to other recollections of prewar contact. Whereas stories of relations with the soldiers at Koyagaba describe collective village-wide experiences, those who left home to work for the war effort had experiences that were relatively individual and idiosyncratic.¹⁴

The soldiers at Giligili and other major Allied installations brought a functioning social system with them that is portrayed as the wider universe of the "foreigner" writ small. In the stories former wartime laborers tell, the colonial social world was much more

visible than that described in stories by prewar or postwar contract laborers. Auwepo's mention of the presence of "foreign" women at the Milne Bay bases is one indication of the complexity and completeness of this "foreign" world. Even more important in the recollections of this episode are ethnic differences among the European "foreigners." From this period persistent stereotypes of various sub-categories of European "foreigner" are derived: Americans drink coffee, Australians drink tea; Americans speak English using open vowels, English and Australians clip their words; and so forth.

As these contrasts suggest, these stories are attempts to portray an underlying structure in relations between these different kinds of "foreigner." For example, one man suggested that Americans wanted to marry Australians so they could drink tea and Australians wanted to marry Americans so they could drink coffee. He specifically compared this pattern to a D'Entrecasteaux stereotype in which Fergusson Islanders marry Normanby Islanders so the former can eat Normanby Island yams and the latter, Fergusson Island taro.

Stories of life in the Milne Bay area include images of violence defining the relations between groups of "foreigners." However, this is not war-related violence—the few men who actually saw parts of the Battle of Milne Bay find it so incoherent as to be literally indescribable; the violence of the battle was not grounded in any relations of which they were a part. No wartime stories explore the wartime opposition of the Allies and the Japanese. For Loboda villagers, both sides were more or less "good" people with whom they could attempt to form external relations. Rather, stories of violence focus on tensions among the Allies that, unlike the war between the Allies and the Japanese, were meaningful and relevant to their daily concerns.

The Americans and the Negroes would protect us from the Australians so they weren't angry. If they were angry we went and reported them and the Americans and Negroes were angry. They said, "If they are angry at you, you come and take a gun and go and shoot them."

—Bobi of Loeliya hamlet, Loboda

Stories of fights and quarrels between Australians and Americans are common and well developed. Much of the affection northeast Normanby Islanders express for American servicemen stems from their feeling that they and the Americans were allied against the

Australian and ANGAU servicemen. Even when no actual violence is mentioned, the stress on the generosity of Americans is invariably contrasted with the lack of generosity on the part of other "foreigners."

A second theme of recollections of men who went away to work is the amount and variety of goods that moved between the Allied forces and the contract laborers. To stories of the well-known generosity of the Allies, Loboda villagers add recollections of an equally prominent movement of goods in the opposite direction. They made toy canoes, grass skirts, carvings, and other artifacts and collected shells, coconuts, and other traditional food to trade with the Allied soldiers. Several describe clever ways developed with their trading friends to outwit attempts by officers to reduce this traffic.

For Loboda villagers this two-directional movement of goods implied an equality between the two parties that they are anxious to preserve. Unreciprocated and uncontrolled generosity is impressive in the recollections of many villagers. However, such generosity is always described as originating from anonymous soldiers or groups of soldiers. When Loboda villagers speak of their own special friends among the Allies, they stress reciprocity rather than uncontrolled generosity.

Their behavior was good. We came to them and we received all kinds of things from them. We went and we washed their clothing. They gave us money and they gave us food. We carved their toy canoes and made their grass skirts and armbands [to give to them]. All sorts of things. We went to them and we traded. We collected *louwahu* shells and we went to them and we traded them.

—Lasaro of Silitaho hamlet, Loboda

Uncontrolled generosity might be the ideal of a "paternal" relationship, but, precisely because it implies an asymmetrical indebtedness, it undercuts the egalitarianism required for a long-term relationship between "friends."

This self-conscious focus on building "friendship" relationships based on egalitarian reciprocity is at the heart of the interest in and consciousness of ethnic differences among the "foreigners." Men wanted to be sure they were giving gifts or trading with those of the proper group with which they had established their formal trading relationship. For example, several men noted that when black American soldiers asked for coconuts, the men would explain that

they were saving the coconuts to trade with the white American soldiers who were their special friends.

In contrast to descriptions of the "friendship" created with the Japanese on Normanby Island, these are descriptions of truly balanced relationships. And in contrast to the stories of Koyagaba, stories about labor in the Milne Bay area reflect the discovery of internal divisions among "foreigners."

Violence and generosity divide the world of the "foreigner" into units that can be embedded within a larger oppositional structure. Loboda villagers rarely act or speak using a vocabulary based on a model of complementary oppositions. Rarely would anyone contrast "foreigners" and nonforeigners (for which there is no generic term) just because the two parties involved in an association happen to derive from these respective domains. Indeed, one rhetorical requirement for visible external relations is the ability to segment the world of aliens as complexly and finely as possible. Just as in overseas *kula* exchange, relations are always expressed as being between specific hamlets of Loboda and another village rather than between villages or islands, so the wartime laborers speak of their relation to a person from New York, California, or, at least, America, rather than a person who is only a "foreigner."¹⁵

It is no accident that villagers who recollect the most intense one-to-one relations with soldiers in the Milne Bay area underscore that intensity by discussing the fine geographical and "customary" subdivisions of the "foreigners' " world from which their "friend" or "brother" came. Likewise the failure of relations with the Japanese is reflected by a relative lack of interest in exploring subdivisions within the Japanese community.

The End of Social Expansion and the Reaffirmation of Boundaries

When I came [home to Loboda] I was arguing a bit with a patrol officer . . . about the land and war damage claims. That man got angry. When they sent me a telegram telling me to go [to a course for government employees] in Rabaul, he didn't tell me about it. We were supposed to start school in March, but March was over and it wasn't until some time in April that he told me. . . . I said, "Oh, you

save room for me next year." But the next year he didn't tell me again.

—Alipi of Kasayahai hamlet, Loboda

Stories of the final episode of the war experience describe the withdrawal of the military presence and the reestablishment of civilian colonial government. Loboda villagers recall this as a drawn-out, bitter experience. For example, a variety of disputes developed over expected compensation for war-related property damage that was delayed or never paid.

More important in recollections of this episode are descriptions of the returning authorities' seizure or destruction of clothing, weapons, and other memorabilia that the "foreigners" had given to village people (cf. chapters 8 and 15). For villagers, this amounted to the loss of a substantial amount of wealth that they had no prospect of replacing. More significant, the goods were markers of relations they had established with the world of "foreigners" beyond the colonial establishment.

Villagers are unclear about why these goods were taken or destroyed. Some say, dubiously, that the colonial authorities claimed that the "foreigner" clothing would make them sick. Others suggest that the colonial authorities simply did not want villagers to become too wealthy. Most, however, interpret the returning colonial government's activities as designed to break the relations villagers had formed with "foreigners" outside the colonial power system.

These stories bring recollections of the war years to a close in a way that is structurally similar to the end of many traditional folktales and myths. Internal relations, that is, ties of identity uniting villages, are dramatically foregrounded, leaving fragmented external relations visible only as a broader, partly historical, context.

External relations at the close of the war are explicitly problematic and contestable. On the one hand, ties to the Allied soldiers and the Japanese sailors had been broken by another group of "foreigners." On the other hand, for the first time, external relations with some "foreigners" were defined in terms of opposition rather than alliance. Earlier opposition existed, for example, between Australian soldiers and Loboda villagers, but had been used primarily to highlight a more important alliance of villagers and other soldiers. In the final episode of the war, the opposition of colonial authorities is paramount, serving to underscore the impossibility of other external relations. Whereas previously external relations of alliance were

built on a union of a fragment of the Loboda village world with a fragment of the "foreign" world, usually a single individual in each case, now there is an opposition of all Loboda villagers to all of the colonial authorities. Even more than the prewar colonial world, the postwar colonial world is described as a unified, undivided universe containing anonymous individuals with whom no real relations are possible.

By contrast, stories about earlier episodes of World War II are built around a foregrounding of external relations as internal relations are only visible to provide their underlying context. During those earlier episodes, internal rather than external relations are absent, problematic, or ambiguous. The contrast of the unified village in postwar stories to the individual, socially isolated prewar contract laborers, the wartime Japanese sailors beset with anomie, and the largely individualistic wartime laborers is unmistakable.

Conclusion: The Meaning of World War II and the Limits of Ambiguity

It is easy to recall the past as a time that somehow led to or generated the present. Loboda villagers, especially those who consciously reflect on village change, are inclined to view both the arrival of the first missionary and a variety of events surrounding World War II in such terms. Several men and women say contact with Allied soldiers led them to seek an education, precipitating a radical transformation of their lives and of those of their fellow villagers.

It is easy to see recollections of the past as depicting either a lost "golden age" or an age of darkness and misery. Loboda villagers occasionally speak in such terms. For example, when I was conducting my fieldwork in 1976, many villagers feared they were entering a socially contractive world as "foreigners" left Papua New Guinea following independence. For them, World War II was a period of optimism precisely because it was a time of social construction and expansion of external relations.

However, more generally, Loboda villagers recollect World War II as a period in which they see alternative solutions (however unsatisfactory) to the problems of external relationships in a world where only internal relations naturally exist. Lévi-Strauss has observed that animals that are "good to think" have an inordinate position within many a cultural universe (Lévi-Strauss 1966; Bulmer 1957).

The same might be said of certain episodes within a people's past. Yet, as Bulmer has shown, animals that are "good to think" are frequently those that are somehow strange, peculiar, odd, or unnatural. Both the time of the arrival of the first missionary and the period surrounding World War II are, as it were, temporal "cassowaries" that, in their very unnaturalness, allow the past to speak to the present.

Like cassowaries and pangolins, the episodes of World War II that are visible in Loboda village literature are those that are tensely ambiguous and structurally incoherent in culturally critical ways. At the least, they represent the coming into contact of people and customs that should have no point of contact. But, more than this, unlike normal external associations, such as paternity, marriage, and formal exchange (e.g., *kula*), this contact was not only unnatural but never clearly structured. While retrospectively created stories may represent an attempt to discover coherence or pattern, the episodes remain visible precisely because such attempts are necessary.

Loboda village recollections of World War II are frequently about essentially individual experiences. Even the majority of recollections of events that took place in Normanby Island derive from one-to-one relations between individual villagers and Japanese sailors or Allied soldiers.

World War II stories do not appear likely to be woven eventually into a single, commonly accepted story. In contrast, during the ninety years since the Reverend Bromilow's arrival on Dobu, the events surrounding the early years of the mission have been condensed and compressed until they are situated around Bromilow himself. In the commonly accepted Bromilow story, he condenses within his person an entire literary domain comparable to the World War II period. Similarly, most matrilineages have a *mumugwa* 'myth' describing key points in their past by representing them as the result of the actions of a single individual.

Unlike these clearly recalled events, there are no "heroic" figures who embody the World War II experience. Precisely because war-derived experiences were so individual and were not permanently productive of ongoing external relations, they cannot be embedded in the collective past of a district, village, or matrilineage. They cannot easily be perpetuated as collective representations using traditional Loboda village principles of rhetoric.

Ambiguity and incoherence are characteristics required to make the past visible, even if it is temporarily anchored in the experiences

of a single individual. But the ambiguity in and incoherence of external relations does not itself ensure the long-term survival of stories describing them. What I have described here, then, is a body of eminently forgettable stories.¹⁶ In the process, however, I have tried to underline the reasons why, despite their being forgettable, these stories will, in the immediate future, continue to be remembered at least as long as their central Loboda village participants are alive. In a very real way, the social relations Loboda villagers founded are much more alive in memory than they probably ever were in reality because they gain their life from the contrast of these memories with present reality.

Notes

This chapter is based on fieldwork conducted from October 1975 to May 1977 primarily in Loboda village, which is located at the northeastern tip of Normanby Island in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. This period is the "ethnographic present" of this chapter. Research was supported by NIMH grant no. 1 F31 MOH5340.

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1. This conversation took place in Sisiana village during the first day of my fieldwork on Normanby Island. The Sisiana villagers and I spoke a mixture of very ragged Dobuan on my part and equally ragged English on their part. Clearly, their recollections of the past were severely edited to cope with our respective linguistic limitations. However, these two episodes retained an unparalleled prominence in the stories I collected from other villages on Normanby Island. And they continued to be prominent even after I began to work intensively in Loboda village, located at the opposite end of the island, and after I had gained a fair proficiency in the Loboda language. While the specific details recollected regarding the founding of the mission and the World War II period varied from village to village, a common historiographical structure underlay the recollections of the past I heard. Editing during the literary reconstruction of historical episodes, even to meet the linguistic deficiencies of an alien anthropologist, certainly required the exclusion of some supporting details but did not involve a modification of the underlying literary structure and presuppositions.

2. Loboda villagers say a number of Japanese sailors lived in the Amphlette Islands for some years after the war and were hidden by the Islanders from the infrequent visits of colonial representatives. In contrast to the soldier described in the broadcast, these soldiers are always described as embedded within Amphlette Island society, which protected them from the alien colonial representatives. This is

the reason Loboda villagers show little interest and excitement when discussing them.

3. One measure of the structuring and stability of these "autobiographical" stories is that when I collected several accounts of the same events in an individual's life, the later versions closely paralleled the earlier versions in terms of both concrete events and underlying structure.

4. I have dealt with Loboda village social organization in more detail elsewhere (Thune 1980, 1983, n.d.c).

5. For example, Dobu and Fergusson islands were bombed, a major base was established in the Trobriand Islands, and the Japanese were temporarily established on Goodenough Island.

6. Because marriage within a matrilineage is theoretically proscribed, a person's relation to his or her father is by definition an external relation.

7. Lepowsky (chapter 9) has made it clear that this disorder within the Milne Bay European community was much more than just Loboda villagers' perceptions or recollections. However, the villagers choose to emphasize it within their recollections because it provides a powerful rhetorical device for presenting the problems of external relations with the European world.

8. Loboda village accounts of this landing are fuzzy. As elsewhere, local people were not really clear about what was intended as large numbers of Allied forces arrived on their island. This landing may have been part of the more general test of Allied ability to land a large number of men that took place in the Dawada-Bwala-wada area.

9. As might be expected, the complexity and detail of the taxonomy that individuals use depend heavily on their experience and sophistication, much of which was gained during the war. Some men, for example, recognize clear differences between Californians and New Yorkers by pointing to behavior characteristics that ring true even today.

10. Zelenietz and Saito (chapter 7) have shown that recollections of the Japanese in New Britain are powerfully conditioned by the fieldwork context in which they are told. While this is certainly the case in Normanby Island as well, I suspect the omnipotent recollection of intimate one-to-one relations between narrators and individual Japanese sailors means memory is relatively more important than the context of story telling.

11. "Alternating residence" (cf. Thune n.d.c) and *kula* (Thune 1983) are two expressions of the idea that external relations should be grounded in their participants' respective positions within the geographical world.

12. After Turner (1969, 96) I use the Latin term *communitas* to refer to a relatively unstructured state in which normative lines of social distinctions are minimized and a heightened sense of undifferentiated community may emerge. The one occasion within traditional village life when such *communitas* appears (seeming similarly to erase matrilineally derived boundaries) is the final *sagali* funeral feast. There, too, the distance between representatives of remote villages and even islands disappears in the face of such quantities of food that identity and difference, normally marked by exchange of food, become irrelevant. Food, consumed and exchanged without regard to the normal rules of genealogically based distribution, becomes a marker of the fact that matrilineality has been temporarily transcended (cf. Thune n.d.a).

13. White (chapter 2) has also described the use of irony and humor in narrative

wartime recollections. However, in Santa Isabel narratives it is used to subtly underline the differences between what appeared to be one kind of relation with the Japanese and what were actually relations of quite a different kind. Whereas White's narrators use irony to point to differences and sophisticated cleverness, Loboda villagers use it to speak of village unity while pointing to what are actually irrelevant and, hence, humorous differences.

14. However, these experiences were not completely idiosyncratic. Work groups were frequently composed of young men from a single village and headed by the oldest of the group. The wartime camaraderie that emerged among the members of these groups is still visible today.

15. *Kula* is a traditional exchange system linking communities and islands throughout the Massim region of Papua New Guinea.

16. See Lindstrom (chapter 17) for an example of how wartime recollections are eminently unforgettable because they are used to derive the present directly from the past. By contrast, Loboda village recollections speak to the present, but only indirectly, by showing structural transformations or alternatives.

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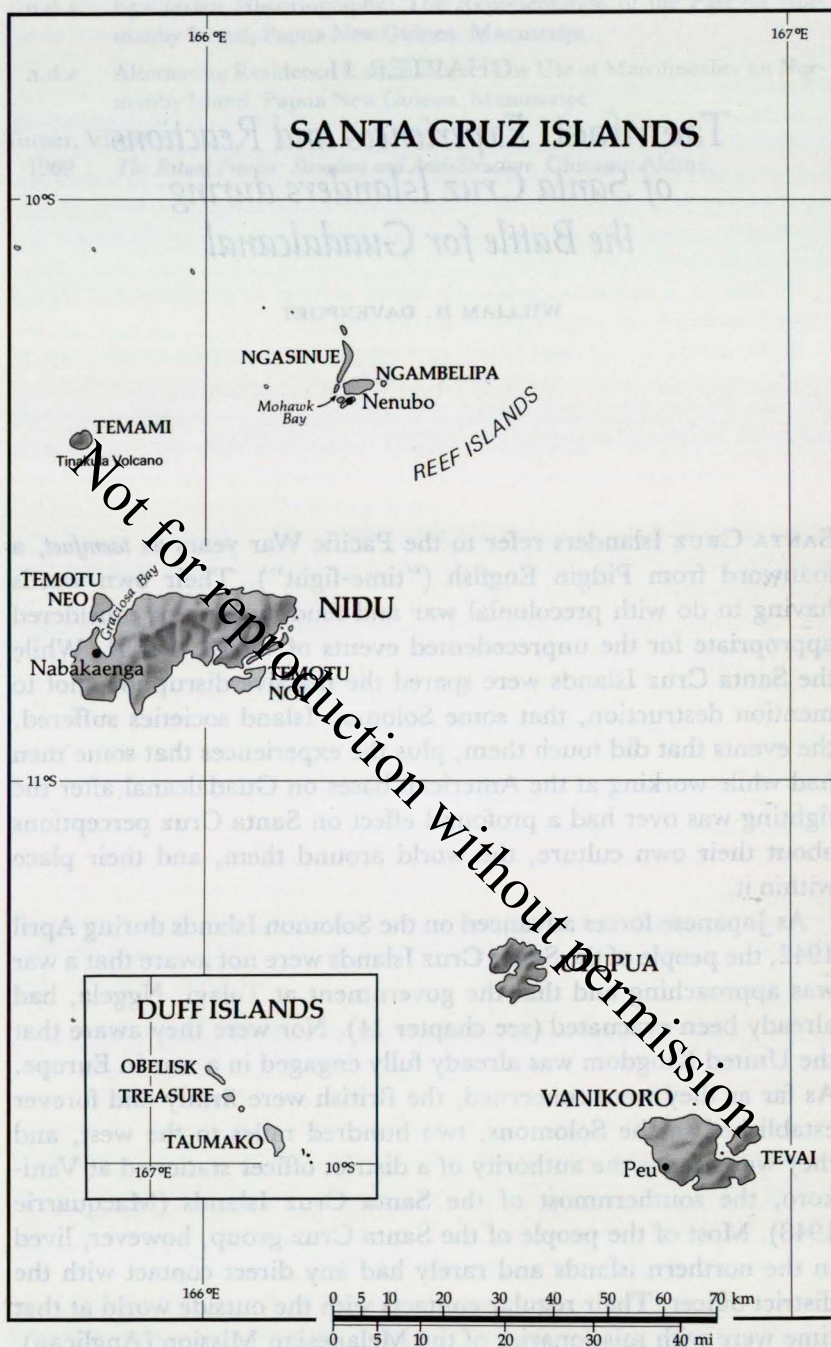
CHAPTER 11

Taemfaet: *Experiences and Reactions of Santa Cruz Islanders during the Battle for Guadalcanal*

WILLIAM H. DAVENPORT

SANTA CRUZ Islanders refer to the Pacific War years as *taemfaet*, a loanword from Pidgin English ("time-fight"). Their own words having to do with precolonial war and feuding are not considered appropriate for the unprecedented events of World War II. While the Santa Cruz Islands were spared the massive disruption, not to mention destruction, that some Solomon Island societies suffered, the events that did touch them, plus the experiences that some men had while working at the American bases on Guadalcanal after the fighting was over had a profound effect on Santa Cruz perceptions about their own culture, the world around them, and their place within it.

As Japanese forces advanced on the Solomon Islands during April 1942, the people of the Santa Cruz Islands were not aware that a war was approaching and that the government at Tulagi, Nggela, had already been evacuated (see chapter 14). Nor were they aware that the United Kingdom was already fully engaged in a war in Europe. As far as they were concerned, the British were firmly and forever established in the Solomons, two hundred miles to the west, and they were under the authority of a district officer stationed at Vanikoro, the southernmost of the Santa Cruz Islands (Macquarrie 1948). Most of the people of the Santa Cruz group, however, lived in the northern islands and rarely had any direct contact with the district officer. Their regular contacts with the outside world at that time were with missionaries of the Melanesian Mission (Anglican), who came and went several times a year on their ship, the *Southern*



Map 7

Cross; with Captain Fred Louis Jones, who traded in his small ship throughout the islands; and an occasional visit from other recruiters seeking labor for plantations in the Solomons. Even though the Santa Cruz people recognized the district officer and his squad of police as the embodiment of authority and the enforcers of something called "law," they assumed that all other Europeans with whom they were familiar were either directly associated with or in some way agents of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate government.

At Vanikoro, too, there was an Australian logging company, also thought to be associated with the government in some way because it and the district office had come to the island at the same time, about fifteen years before. The timber company had a few Europeans in supervisory positions and employed twenty to twenty-five local men, who were recruited from all over the Santa Cruz Islands. Captain Jones, in addition to being the sole trader in the area, had a contract with the company to recruit and repatriate its local labor. A steamship called at Vanikoro two or three times a year, as necessary, to take away the logs.

The district office at Vanikoro consisted of only the district officer and a squad of police from the Solomon Islands, but the most significant aspect of it from the local point of view was the jail, where a few Santa Cruz men were always incarcerated for minor offenses. Serious offenders were sent to Tulagi to serve out their sentences. The district office maintained radio contact with Tulagi and with Fiji, where the British high commissioner for the Western Pacific resided. Rarely did the district officer at Vanikoro have a small ship at his disposal, so he was unable to tour his district regularly. If he had orders or information to send to his local representatives, called headmen, he usually did so via the mission ship *Southern Cross* or through Captain Jones. Despite these handicaps, the district office on Vanikoro had managed to impose and maintain the *pax Britannica* in this outpost of empire, although even in 1942 it was a fragile and uneasy peace. With some justification, the peoples of the Santa Cruz Islands had earned a reputation for violence against Europeans, especially missionaries, before the British arrived, and their pacification by British authority had been both brutal and bloody. As a result, the people had learned to fear, if not respect, the district officer, and they were painfully aware that they had to obey official orders or risk becoming involved with the police and jail sentences at either Vanikoro or Tulagi.

The Europeans Withdraw

The first news about the Japanese invasion of the Solomon Islands was not passed on to the Santa Cruz Islanders until late April or early May 1942. All the laborers then at Vanikoro were called in from the timber-cutting areas, informed that an enemy had invaded the Solomons, and told that they would be repatriated to their respective islands as soon as possible. While they were waiting for Captain Jones to arrive in his small ship, a U.S. Navy vessel, possibly a destroyer, arrived outside the harbor at Peu, site of the district office and the timber company headquarters. Shortly after arriving, it was attacked from the air. Bombs were dropped, but no direct hits were scored. The ship fired back as it steamed out to sea, apparently unharmed. This engagement took place in full view of everyone on shore; no one even took cover. The unexpected magnitude of the bomb explosions in the sea and the noise of the ship's anti-aircraft guns stunned the Islanders, who, though familiar with steamships, rifles, and small charges of dynamite, had not seen a warship before and knew nothing about bombs and cannon. This action probably occurred on 4 or 5 May as U.S. and Japanese task forces fought the Battle of the Coral Sea.

In due course, Captain Jones repatriated the laborers to their home islands north of Vanikoro and returned to Vanikoro to evacuate the Europeans employed at the timber company and the Solomon Islander police to Port Vila, New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), about four hundred miles to the south. The district officer stayed on for several months more, but from then on Vanikoro came under the direct military jurisdiction of the U.S. command in the New Hebrides. Also left behind was another British government employee, Guso Piko, an assistant medical officer from one of the Solomon Islands, who would play a significant role later.

At the same time the U.S. Navy vessel was attacked off Vanikoro, a single aircraft, presumably Japanese, flew low over the villages surrounding Graciosa Bay, Santa Cruz Island (Nidu). This created great consternation. One woman, Inane of Nepna village, who was a spirit medium, went from settlement to settlement explaining that the aircraft was Kio, a deity, one of whose manifestations was a great bird. Others claimed it was Lu, a phoenix-like creature that dwelled in the fiery peak of Temami (Tinakula), an active volcano located ten miles north of, and visible from, the Graciosa Bay villages. However, two men who lived in the Graciosa Bay area had seen a sea-

plane a few years earlier while they were at Tulagi serving jail sentences, and they tried to explain what an airplane was. They assumed that the plane belonged to the British.

The Santa Cruz laborers who had been evacuated from Vanikoro learned something of the larger situation during their repatriation voyage. Captain Jones, unlike most district officers, spoke fluent Pidgin English and had a good, long-standing relationship with the local people. He made it very clear to the repatriates that the British government was leaving, not just Vanikoro, but also Tulagi; that the Melanesian Mission yacht *Southern Cross* probably would not call at the islands for a long time; and that he, as well as another occasional recruiter who came to the Santa Cruz Islands, would also not be returning for some time, maybe never.

The Santa Cruz Islands were now cut off from all contacts with the outside. Fortunately, only two men from Nidu, who were employed as crew on a government ship, were stranded outside. Within the group three persons belonged elsewhere: a deacon at Graciosa Bay, a catechist in the Duff Islands, and the assistant medical officer, mentioned before, at Vanikoro. All three men were from Santa Isabel in the Solomons. None of the Santa Cruz Islanders really knew who the Japanese were, although a renegade Japanese by the name of Ito had traded in the group some years earlier and Japanese shell poachers had often made fleeting visits to—and made a nuisance of themselves at—some of the islands. The eyewitness reports of the aerial attack on the American warship at Vanikoro caused fear everywhere. No one understood who the Americans were, what they were doing in the area, or why they should be fighting the Japanese. But the greatest puzzlement of all was caused by knowledge that the government was gone. There would be no more district officer, hostile police, or jail sentences for poorly understood crimes. That part was welcomed, but neither would there be visits by the *Southern Cross*; no more Captain Jones and opportunities to work at Vanikoro. All their means of access to work, money, and trade goods were closed off, and that was a severe blow.

The Forces of War Arrive

During the first few weeks after the evacuation of Vanikoro, the peoples around Graciosa Bay, Nidu, were frequently frightened by the appearance at night of a large and completely darkened ship cruising

inside the bay. Often, the ship probed the shoreline with a searchlight, and many people assumed that if the searchlight picked out a house or person, the ship would shoot it. Unbeknown to them, this was a Japanese destroyer that was patrolling the area, looking for evidence of an American presence.

Suddenly one day a large cargo ship entered Graciosa Bay, steamed to the head of it, and dropped anchor. No cargo ship of this size had ever entered the bay before. For several days the ship discharged hundreds of drums of gasoline, which were stashed in an uninhabited swampy area, called Lekapi, the same site that Alvaro Mendaña and his company had briefly occupied in 1595, an event of which no memory was retained in the Santa Cruz Islands (Allen 1976; Green 1976, 31-32). Some information was exchanged between the ship's crew and a few local men who viewed the activities from a cautious distance. They learned that the ship was American, and they were warned to stay away from the petrol—an order they respectfully observed.

Several weeks went by, then a large U.S. Navy ship arrived and anchored in Graciosa Bay. It was the USS *Curtiss*, a naval aircraft tender, and it was soon joined by several Catalina (PBY) flying boats. Immediately, the aircraft commenced making patrols, taking off early in the morning and returning just before dark. The gasoline that had been unloaded some weeks before was aviation fuel for the aircraft. None of the ship's crew came ashore just to visit and look around, but often late in the afternoon an armed squad would land and march in close order through several villages. At first the villagers thought this might be a repeat of an earlier experience when a squad of protectorate police marched through the villages of Graciosa Bay and burned all the sacred houses.

The excitement caused by the U.S. Navy activities soon took an ominous turn. One day a PBY returned trailing smoke. After landing safely, it taxied straight to the shore, where it was beached near a village. Just as the crew had safely abandoned it, the aircraft exploded. On another day, another returning aircraft sank in shallow water before it could be beached. Despite language problems between the Americans and the local people, communication was good enough for the local people to learn that the aircraft had been observing Japanese warships not far away, and several had been hit by enemy gunfire. The two aircraft that were now out of action were among those that had been hit, and because their hulls had been holed, their crews had tried to beach the planes before they sank in Graciosa Bay.

One day orders came from the ship that all the people in the bay area should leave their villages immediately and go inland because a Japanese attack was expected. Within hours all villages along the inner shores of Graciosa Bay, an area called Nabakaenga, were vacated. This involved about one thousand people, more than half the population of Nidu. They took refuge in their gardens, which were located on a limestone plateau above the narrow coastal strip along which the villages were situated. Most households maintained shelters in their gardens, so there was some rude housing to move into. Evacuating the villages and taking refuge in the gardens was not an unfamiliar action, because, before peace was established under British rule, such actions were often taken during feuds and periods of warfare. However, it would be eight or nine months before the Nabakaenga people could move back to their villages, and that was a much longer period than any evacuation had lasted before.

Life in the gardens was very upsetting. It was not only physically uncomfortable, but all community life was disrupted because garden sites and shelters were scattered (cf. chapter 15). Except for rainwater, which had to be collected from tree trunks, there is no fresh water in most of the garden lands. There could be no bathing or washing of clothes in the sea at dusk, a custom that was a pleasant daily event in village life. In rotation, a few people would return to their villages each day to fetch fresh water from the wells and springs located there and to wash themselves and their clothes in the sea. A few brave souls, however, tarried in their villages, and children paddled out to the ship on rafts and boards to beg from the crew. The Americans were always friendly and often threw down scraps of food and cloth (bed sheets, probably). The Americans were seen as cordial and very generous, because no persons aboard the *Southern Cross* or the steamers at Vanikoro had ever given anything away in this manner.

The anticipated Japanese attack finally came. At the time, the aircraft were away on patrol, so the attack was directed toward the ship. Bombs were dropped, there was some strafing, but no direct hits were scored. The ship fired back, and witnesses believe that the attack was beaten off. There was apparently only one casualty: a local boy about five or six years old, who had been paddling about the ship, was struck in the face by a bomb fragment. He made it back to shore and recovered from his injuries, but he lost one eye. Shortly after the attack, the ship weighed anchor and left Graciosa Bay not to return. The remains of the two damaged PBVs that were hit by enemy fire are still visible, one on the beach and one in shal-

low water. Both have been stripped clean of every fragment that could be hammered and cut away, but they are testaments to that memorable war action in Graciosa Bay.

These events took place in June and July 1942. During this period the Japanese were consolidating their hold on the Solomon Islands, and the Americans were expanding their supply bases in the New Hebrides (cf. chapter 17). Naturally, the people of Nidu knew next to nothing about what was going on around them. As far as they were concerned, they were the center of a war between two peoples about whom they knew very little. However, from the frightening events at Vanikoro and Graciosa Bay they had learned that, for better or worse, they were allied with the Americans against the Japanese, who were a fearful enemy.

An American Outpost

In June 1942, just before the USS *Curtiss* had taken up its station in Graciosa Bay, a team of five U.S. Army enlisted men was surreptitiously put ashore with large quantities of stores and equipment on the islet called Temotu, which lies on the western side of the entrance to the bay. It was immediately noticed by some people of Malo village, a fully Christian community that had had more contact with both the Melanesian Mission and government officials than any other Nidu village. Its mission was to establish a hidden lookout station and maintain radio contact with U.S. Army Intelligence in the New Hebrides. A smaller unit was put ashore on Vanikoro at the same time. Although these observation units were copies of the famous coastwatchers of the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, they are not to be confused with them. The coastwatchers were a special force of civilians, under the command of the Australian navy, that manned observation posts inside Japanese-held areas (see chapter 14; Feldt 1946; Lord 1977; Michener 1947, 52-72).

A good relationship was immediately established between the Malo people and the U.S. Army coastwatchers. The unit decided to set up its lookout station, not on Temotu islet, but at a concealed and isolated location above the eastern shore of Graciosa Bay, several miles from the closest village. Several young men from Malo volunteered to help transport all the gear and set up the station. The informal leader of the Malo group was Mepuke, who later became a dresser (i.e., medical aide), a distinguished community leader, and a

staunch advocate of modernization on Nidu. The American team asked the Malo men who were helping them to beg their fellow villagers not to talk with people of other villages about their mission. For the most part, these instructions were obeyed, and very few other Nidu people learned about the U.S. Army presence on the island.

Just as the lookout station became operational, the USS *Curtiss* arrived, rendering it, for the moment at least, more or less superfluous. The station was to be supplied from time to time by the small motorized sailing ship, the USS *Echo*, a trading vessel that had been commandeered by the U.S. Navy in the New Hebrides.

By the time the USS *Curtiss* left Graciosa Bay, all the men in the coastwatching unit had become seriously ill, their radio did not always work, and their supplies had run out, because the supply ship had failed to call as promised. Mepuke and his crew supplied local food, but often the Americans were too ill to eat, and there was fear in Malo villages that the Americans would die. When the USS *Echo* finally did arrive with supplies and discovered the desperate plight of the observation unit, it called for a special air rescue mission from the New Hebrides to evacuate one man. Illness continued to plague the team until it was finally removed (Garrison 1983, 42-54, 124).

The "New Law"

During the time that the USS *Curtiss* was on station in Graciosa Bay, Assistant Medical Officer Guso Piko arrived at Nidu. He had paddled alone from Vanikoro, ninety-five miles away, in a small canoe. There were no medicines at Nidu, so he could give little medical attention to the people, but he made it known that he had been instructed by the district officer, who by then was spending most of his time in the New Hebrides, to maintain some sort of official government presence in the northern islands.

Guso Piko quickly discovered a tense social situation that seemed to require his services, not as a medical practitioner, but as a representative of the protectorate government. In a village on the south coast of Nidu a bitter dispute had broken out, having to do with the traditional authority of senior men over women. At issue were such hallowed customs as the arrangement of marriages, the receipt of bride wealth, and the acceptance of damage payments by men for sexual offenses against women over whom they had authority. Guso

Piko stepped in to adjudicate the dispute. The policy position that he adopted was one that had been advocated, but not enforced, by both the protectorate government and the Melanesian Mission: women should be able to choose their husbands if they so wished; the payment of bride wealth should be a voluntary matter; and senior male relatives should not collect damages for sex offenses against their female kin, because this appeared to be very much like pimping. As a result of Guso Piko's attempt to introduce these "progressive" ideas, the situation became worse. Before long, the senior men of several villages declared that the traditional authority held by men—chiefly fathers—over unmarried women was no longer to be recognized. Moreover, men and unmarried women could have sex relations according to any private arrangements that were agreeable to the parties and without incurring any legal liabilities whatsoever.

What followed was an open competition among the adult males for the sexual favors of unmarried women. The consenting women, however, demanded to be compensated with gifts. In addition, some lascivious communal games were invented. The men who became the most successful in the competition for girls were obviously those who had, or could lay hands on, the most trade goods, because the women involved would accept only calico, tobacco, tea, and sugar as gifts. Two economic factors are relevant to this excessive reaction to the customs that regulated sexual relations. First, the south coast villages had always been poorer, in every way, than the north coast villages, which had been the center for interisland trade and the favored place for the recruitment of wage labor. Second, since the flow of trade goods into Nidu had been cut off by the war, the south coast communities were doubly short. The knowledge that the imposed authorities of both the protectorate government and the Melanesian Mission were no longer present was probably another crucial factor.

This reaction against tradition by the men of two villages soon spread and grew into a social movement, called the "New Law." Because Guso Piko had been involved, it was also called "Guso's Law." However, Guso Piko denied any connection whatsoever with the movement, and he ultimately got in his canoe again and paddled off to the Reef Islands in the north (Davenport 1970).

The New Law spread through most of the villages of the south and west coasts, which accounted for slightly less than half the total population of Nidu. Around Graciosa Bay, however, the New Law was rejected, in large part because of vigorous opposition by the deacon.

He was a devoted clergyman who had been placed there before the outbreak of the war by the Melanesian Mission in order to support the wavering Christian minority who lived in Nabakaenga and to continue proselytizing. The social movement would continue to flourish until the war was over and officials of both the government and the mission returned to denounce it.

Mysterious Doings in a Rear Area

The American campaign to recapture the Solomons from the Japanese commenced on 7 August 1942 with simultaneous landings by marines on Guadalcanal Island and in the Florida Islands (Nggela) at Tulagi, the old protectorate capital. The bitter battle for control of the Solomon Islands would rage for six months before the Japanese were forced to withdraw, and the vanguard of the Japanese thrust into the Southwest Pacific was turned back. The original battle plans of the U.S. forces included a third landing on Nidu, known to be unoccupied by the Japanese, and would be carried out by the force that had invaded Nggela as soon as Tulagi was secured. However, the situation on Guadalcanal became so difficult that no troops could be spared, even for an unopposed occupation of the Santa Cruz Islands (Griffith 1980, 30, 32-38, 168-169, 193). Of course, the people of Nidu knew absolutely nothing about either a possible invasion of their island or the fierce fighting that was going on in the Solomons. The U.S. Army coastwatching group was still at its post overlooking the eastern shore of Graciosa Bay, but, as before, they had become desperately ill, their radio had ceased to function, and they did not communicate much about the war situation with the Malo men who were helping them. In due course, a PBY came to evacuate all but one of the coastwatchers. Not long after, word came via the radio that two of those evacuated had died of their illnesses.

Sometime in early October a landing craft suddenly came into Graciosa Bay and landed a party of U.S. Navy Seabees on the beach of a small cove of Temotu islet, again close to the village of Malo. Supplies were landed, and a temporary camp was set up. While not hostile to the Malo people who watched their every move, the Seabees made little attempt to communicate or explain their presence, and without asking for guides, most of the party set out for the forested center of Temotu, which was only about an hour's walk from the shore. There they cut small clearings and pegged strips of white

cloth to the ground. With this task completed, they returned to their camp, and in a day or two departed, leaving behind most of the supplies they had brought. During this brief and unexplained visit, the last coastwatcher was removed and the station was shut down. The local people never did fully understand the purpose of the activities involving the clearings and the cloth. Months went by before they scavenged the cloth, tents, tinned rations, and other useful items that had been left behind. The disregard that the Americans had for all these valuable goods was a puzzle.

When the coastwatching station at Graciosa Bay was closed down, a substitute was established in the Reef Islands to the north. The position selected for it had a commanding view of Mohawk Bay, the only harbor of significance, but it was in a completely exposed position. However, disease was not a problem there as it had been at Graciosa Bay, and the men enjoyed close and friendly relations with the two nearest villages.

At this time, the situation on Guadalcanal had become desperate for the U.S. Marines. Some of the strategists had revived the plan to occupy Nidu as a rear-area base and a place to fall back to, should U.S. forces be compelled to abandon Guadalcanal. The party of Seabees that had come ashore at Temotu was an airfield construction unit from the New Hebrides sent to select and mark a suitable site for a landing strip on the flat, interior plateau of the islet. Unnoticed by the local people, a high-flying photo reconnaissance aircraft from a mapping unit in the New Hebrides had made several passes over all of Nidu immediately after the cloth markers had been laid out on the ground. However, the U.S. military situation improved on Guadalcanal, so the contingency plans to occupy Nidu were abandoned, and the maps that were to be made from the aerial photographs were never completed. To this day probably no Santa Cruz Islander is aware of the fact that twice their islands narrowly missed being occupied and transformed into a rear-area base similar to those that had been constructed in the New Hebrides and had proved so important in the battle for the Solomon Islands.

About two weeks after the Seabees came ashore on Temotu, on 25 October to be exact, airplanes began to fly low over Nidu and the Reef Islands. The peoples of Graciosa Bay, who were still living in their gardens, were terrified because they recognized Japanese insignia on some of the planes. They had learned to recognize the markings of both U.S. and Japanese aircraft while the USS *Curtis* was stationed and attacked in Graciosa Bay. At Mohawk Bay in the Reef

Islands a Japanese submarine appeared and immediately was attacked by a U.S. aircraft. The submarine escaped from the shallow waters of Mohawk Bay and, in full view of the people of Nenubo village, submerged as bombs burst all around it. Reef Islanders believe that it was sunk. This was probably the Japanese submarine I-21, but it is not listed as having been lost in that engagement.

On the same day that the Japanese submarine appeared and was attacked, the army coastwatching station was bombed and strafed by Japanese aircraft. None of the coastwatchers was injured, but the station was put out of action, and the team went to the village of Nenubo to live. Reef Islanders still point to shrapnel scars from the bombing on some coconut trees growing on the site of the lookout station. Some weeks later the army coastwatchers were removed from the Reef Islands, and some months later a baby girl was born to one of the young women of Nenubo. The father was one of the army coastwatchers, but he never contacted the mother after he left the Reef Islands.

The intense air activity over all the northern Santa Cruz Islands lasted only two days. Afterward, the islands slipped back into quiet isolation. Later, great quantities of flotsam, some of it useful, washed up along the sparsely populated northern shore of Nidu and onto some of the beaches in the Reef Islands. This was another notable, but unexplained, event that was not directly associated with the last appearance of aircraft.

These events were fringe actions of one of the great naval confrontations in the Pacific War, the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands. The main engagement took place north of the islands, far beyond the limits of sight and hearing of the northern peoples of the Santa Cruz group. The Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands was very significant because it forced the main body of the Japanese navy to withdraw from the entire Solomons area.

Isolation and Cultural Revival

By this time the northern Santa Cruz Islands (Nidu, the Reef Islands, and the Duff Islands) had responded to their isolation and the growing scarcity of trade goods with a rejuvenation of traditional craft specializations and an intensification of trade among the islands. More and more overseas trading canoes were built, men's house associations began to flourish again as commercial groups,

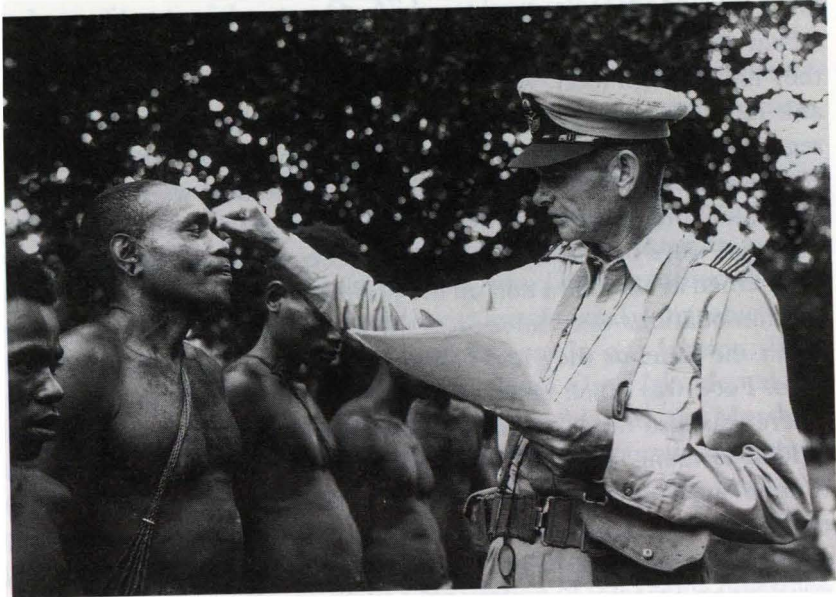
local leaders reasserted their traditional authority, red-feather money again became the standard medium of exchange, and new wealthy persons began to emerge. However, there was one significant difference between this revival of the traditional economic and political systems and the situation that prevailed before protectorate "law and order" had been imposed: feuding and warfare did not return. There seems to have been a residual fear that violence among themselves might still provoke some kind of retaliation from the outside, if not from the British, perhaps from the Americans or the Japanese, either of whom could drop bombs on the people. Then, too, the people may have come to regard peace as a desirable state of affairs.

For six or seven months after those two days during which aircraft were continually flying over their islands (that is, the Battle of Santa Cruz) there was no more war-related activity in the Santa Cruz Islands. However, a tragedy of another kind occurred in the Reef Islands. A trading canoe on a voyage between the islands was found to be months overdue at its destination, and its crew was presumed to have perished at sea. Over a year later two survivors of this ill-fated voyage were returned by a government ship to their home islands. They had drifted all the way to Sudest Island, Papua New Guinea, where they were nursed back to health by U.S. Army medics and then sent back to the Solomon Islands, although the Americans could not figure out where they had come from (Davenport 1964, 140-141).

Labour Corps Work and Contact with Americans

One day the isolation was broken by the appearance of an American ship that called at both Graciosa Bay and Mohawk Bay. Aboard were recruiters seeking labor to work at the U.S. military base on Guadalcanal. The people of Graciosa Bay were also advised that it would be safe to move out of their gardens and back into their villages. About a dozen men each from Nidu and the Reef Islands agreed to recruit. They thought they were going off to fight in the war on the side of the Americans, although by that time the fighting was over on Guadalcanal.

For nearly a year these recruits worked as laborers at the main U.S. base on Guadalcanal, in the environs of what is now Honiara, the national capital of the Solomon Islands. The sheer scale of the



Solomon Islands Labour Corps officer C. V. Widdy recruiting workers on San Cristobal, June 1943. (*U.S. Navy*)

operation there overwhelmed them (cf. chapter 15). Never had they imagined there were so many Europeans, virtually none of whom were British, or that such vast quantities of materiel could exist. Their perception of the world, all of which together was called "The Big Place," and their relationship to it was totally shattered. Suddenly, they realized how few, how poor, and how powerless they were in comparison with the Americans. Obviously, too, their estimation of the British diminished, for they still knew nothing of the European war theater, nor did they understand that the Pacific War was still raging farther to the west in New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific.

Their contacts with white Americans were only minimal, but the impressions they did get were that they were a totally different kind of person from the English and Australian traders, missionaries, and government officials to whom they were accustomed. The Americans were different, too, from the French and German bosses under whom, many years before, some of their fathers had worked when they recruited to work on plantations in the New Hebrides. The troops they did work with closely were black, and their relationships with these Americans were not the best. The black Americans were distant, gruff, and authoritarian; at best patronizing. On the other

hand, the black Americans never asked them to do things they would not do themselves, were always concerned about whether they had enough food, were adequately dressed, and were comfortable in their quarters. They saw, too, that the black troops were segregated from and inferior in rank and authority to the white soldiers. In this hierarchy they and other Solomon Islanders were also segregated, and they were at the bottom.

Wages were only a few shillings a week, the same rate that they had earned at Vanikoro and on the plantations before the war. Their accommodations were inferior to the labor lines at plantations, but about the same as they had contended with in the forests of Vanikoro. Food was much better, however, and there was no limit to it. There was also beer, which, under protectorate law, had been forbidden to them. The work was about the same, but not nearly so routine and boring. However, the excitement of it all put this recruiting experience in a class by itself. Work went on day and night, there were movies every night, and there were virtually no restrictions on salvaging things from the massive rubbish dumps. American soldiers, both black and white, were always giving them shoes, clothing, knives, candy, and cigarettes. When the time for repatriation came, they were allowed to take with them all the salvaged materiel, but no explosives, that they could carry aboard the ship. Not all the Solomon Islanders who worked at the Guadalcanal bases were allowed to take home their booties of salvage, and as a result they bore grudges against the British officials who deprived them of their spoils (Davenport and Çoker 1967, 125; Keesing 1978, 48). For the Santa Cruz Island men the value of this booty they had accumulated constituted compensation that far exceeded anything they had ever expected to receive. There can be little doubt that this was a significant factor in the way that Santa Cruz Islanders later accepted the reinstitution of British rule as well as their lack of interest in and rejection of an antigovernment social movement (cf. chapter 15).

The repatriates from Guadalcanal were welcomed back as returning heroes. The amount of "cargo" they brought back was unprecedented, and their stories were listened to with awe. In earlier times, the few men who had gone to Australia and returned were all called liars when they tried to explain the wonders of Sydney. This time, however, the new insights and perspectives that the recruits had gained were believed and shared by all. All the notable experiences of their prewar lives grew pale in light of the extraordinary events

and experiences of the war. On Nidu, at least, all of the so-called big men (*kaetu*) and all of the so-called rich men (*bonia*) began to see themselves in a new and greatly diminished way. They were merely "rubbish" compared with the white Americans who were in command on Guadalcanal.

Subsequently, too, many well-known myths appear to have been reformulated in recognition of the technological superiority and enormous wealth of the Americans. For example, there is a saga about the deity Lata, a culture hero who, among other things, invented the specialized overseas cargo canoe (*tepuki*) for which the northern Santa Cruz Islands are well known. In one version, Lata invents steamships, then abandons the Santa Cruz Islands, taking his wondrous invention to America (compare this with the Marshallese mythic "trickster" Etao, chapter 3, and the Vanatinai myth of Alagh, chapter 9). In other myths an earlier historical period is described in which Santa Cruz Islanders did not have to work to produce their food, but this paradise was lost because someone failed to obey the commands of a deity. One version of this theme describes the former time of plenty as one in which not only was there no hard work but European trade goods also came without money. When the deity who was responsible for this free abundance was offended, he went off to America, and that is why the Americans are so rich now. Many other stories in this genre extol the technological and material superiority of the Americans but at the same time establish a direct connection between them and the people of the Santa Cruz Islands.

Reestablishing Colonial Authority

The direct authority of the protectorate government and the influence of the Melanesian Mission were slow to be reestablished in the Santa Cruz Islands after the fighting was over in the Solomons. What few ships, government personnel, and European missionaries were available had to be used to serve the larger populations of the protectorate located in the central and western districts. The U.S. military command stayed completely out of all protectorate affairs, except where military matters were directly concerned, so no Americans appeared again (until I arrived in 1958) in the Santa Cruz Islands. It was several years before the timber company recommenced operations on Vanikoro, and Jones, the trader, did not return until the timber company was again operating. The Santa

Cruz Islands remained cut off and more or less isolated for many months after the war was over and even after the protectorate government assumed full administrative control again.

As the protectorate government began to reassert its administrative authority, it faced a new major crisis. The peoples of the central and eastern Solomon Islands, constituting well over one-half of the total population of the protectorate, had coalesced into a visionary, antigovernment social movement called Maasina Rule, or Marching Rule (Allan 1951; Keesing 1978, 46-53; Laracy 1976, 121-143; Worsley 1957, 170-183). For several years, nearly all the resources of the protectorate as well as the efforts of all the missions were directed at containing this social movement, which was perceived as an insurrection against the protectorate government. Thousands of Maasina Rule militants were rounded up and placed behind barbed wire at the capital on Guadalcanal. All government plans for the reconstruction of the economy and the institution of administrative reforms were frustrated because so much government effort was going into dealing with Maasina Rule. Consequently, small populations that were not caught up in the social movement were just left to shift for themselves, and the Santa Cruz Island peoples fell into this category. The people of Nidu were exposed to Maasina Rule ideas, but they rejected them outright.

The first act of the protectorate government to reestablish its authority in the Santa Cruz Islands was the appointment of new and additional government headmen. It was also decided not to reopen the district office of Vanikoro but to administer the Santa Cruz Islands from Kira Kira, San Cristobal, two hundred miles to the west. At that time a government-appointed headman was an official representative of the district office, but he had no power of arrest, and, needless to say, had neither arms nor police to enforce protectorate law. In reality, a headman was merely a spokesman and a source of information for the district officer. One of the newly appointed headmen on Nidu was a man who had gone to Guadalcanal to work for the Americans, and there he had become a convert to the ideas that were to crystallize as the Maasina Rule movement. As a headman on Nidu, he lost no time in trying to organize the island around the manifesto of Maasina Rule, as he perceived it. One of the Maasina Rule objectives was the creation of a more centralized political system under "chiefs" instead of the traditional system of big men (*kaetu*), but these innovations fell on deaf ears. Subsequently, his actions were reported to the district commissioner, who

not only discharged him as headman, but charged and tried him for insurrection. He was acquitted, however.

On the first visit of the bishop of Melanesia to Nidu aboard the mission yacht *Southern Cross*, he was, of course, apprised of the New Law movement that was still going on but with reduced enthusiasm. The heart of the movement was in some villages that were difficult for the mission to reach because they were near neither an anchorage nor a safe landing place. The bishop remained on Nidu for several days longer than planned and went overland to these villages, which no European missionary had ever visited before. Nor had a bishop ever strayed that far from the safety of his ship. Even though there were no active Christians in these villages at that time, the bishop had no difficulty in persuading the leaders of the New Law that they were in error. Not many months later the bishop brought to Nidu, for a second time, a contingent of Solomon Islander proselytizers called *Tasiu* (Brotherhood) in an effort to bring Nidu more fully into Christendom. This time the *Tasiu* were very successful (Fox 1958, 268-272; Whiteman 1983, 194-198).

The rejection of Maasina Rule and the rapid acceptance of the Anglican church after many decades of unsuccessful missionizing reveal something about the postwar state of mind, so to speak, of the Nidu people. The war had cut them off, and the economic consequences of that were painful. New knowledge about Europeans had diminished their high estimation of themselves and their cultural heritage, which up to this time they had vigorously defended against all efforts by government and mission to change. Furthermore, the great powers that their deities possessed seemed puny in comparison with the apparent miracles that had been revealed by the war. Europeans, and especially the Americans, while mortals like themselves, displayed talents and powers that were even greater than those of their own deities. Even as late as 1958, comparisons of the feats of their deities and those of Europeans were favorite topics of conversation. Needless to say, the question, "How did Europeans acquire their superior knowledge and powers?" was a constant perplexity.

The smallness of the entire Santa Cruz population was also a depressing fact in the postwar reappraisal of themselves because they saw that even if they all worked together, as the Americans had done on Guadalcanal, they would not constitute much of a work force. Missionaries, and even some devout government officials, were quick to take advantage of this reappraisal of traditional beliefs and the quandary about perceived European superstitions. They

preached that God was the source of all the miraculous European achievements. This "good news" was partly accepted by the Nidu people, but at the same time they were not convinced that Got (God) would ever favor them as he favored Europeans. There was no reason to reject their own deities for the one called Got. On the other hand, if Europeans received their powers from Got, that great deity certainly deserved their respect too. So, in the years immediately following the end of World War II in the Pacific, most of the population of Nidu calmly and passively accepted Christianity.

Conclusion

While *taemfaet* was a period of excitement, fear, and even deprivation, in sum it was a humbling experience. Even though the extraordinary experience of the war had an apocalyptic effect on the way the people of Santa Cruz perceived themselves, their culture, and their relative place in the world, it did not elicit a reformulation of their culture. No prophet arose with a plan for restructuring Santa Cruz culture and society. The reformulation that occurred as a result of the people's war experiences was a recognition that the world about them was not only quite different from what they had thought before, but it was also dominated by a massive group of people called the *Lematangi* 'Europeans', and among them the *Lemelika* 'Americans' were dominant. In comparison, the Islanders were small, poor, and powerless. The Americans were awesome; they had qualities similar to the people's own deities, but they were more powerful than those supernaturals. Still, there was also a great enigma about these people who were so rich, so powerful, so approachable, yet so removed: why had they come to replace the British and fight a terrible war with the Japanese? Why, also, after sacrificing so many men and so much extraordinary "cargo," did they disappear just as suddenly as they had come?

Note

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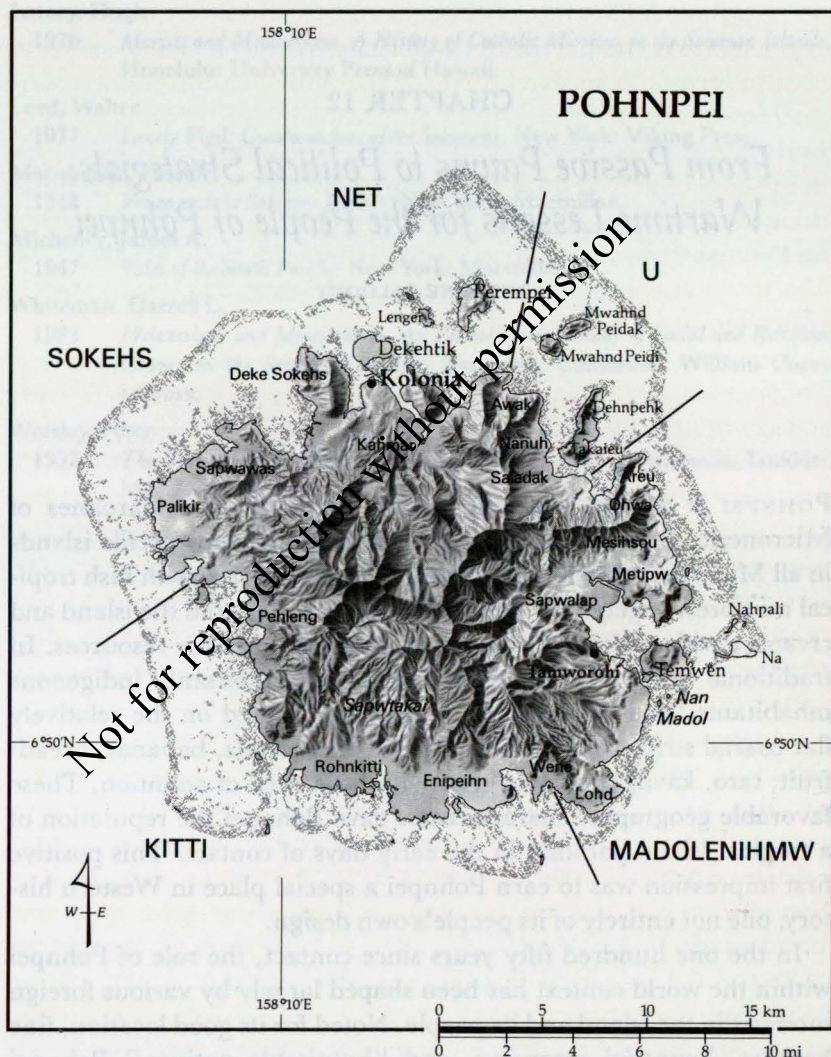
CHAPTER 12

From Passive Pawns to Political Strategists: Wartime Lessons for the People of Pohnpei

SUZANNE FALGOUT

POHNPEI is a high, volcanic island in the Eastern Carolines of Micronesia. It is one of the largest, wettest, and most fertile islands in all Micronesia, with lofty mountain peaks covered with lush tropical rainforest vegetation. A coral reef stretches around the island and creates a wide, calm lagoon area with plentiful marine resources. In traditional Pohnpei, an estimated twenty thousand indigenous inhabitants lived on dispersed farmsteads located on the relatively flat coastal strip, where an abundance of coconuts, bananas, breadfruit, taro, kava, and yams grew with little need of attention. These favorable geographic characteristics gave Pohnpei the reputation of a tropical island paradise in the early days of contact. This positive first impression was to earn Pohnpei a special place in Western history, one not entirely of its people's own design.

In the one hundred fifty years since contact, the role of Pohnpei within the world context has been shaped largely by various foreign interests in the island and its people. Noted for its good location, fine harbors, bountiful resources, and "hospitable natives," Pohnpei became a favored port of call for whalers and traders in the early 1800s. Later the island was selected as headquarters for Catholic and Protestant missions and for Spanish, German, and then Japanese colonial activities in eastern Micronesia (Fischer and Fischer 1957, 12-68). These outsiders regarded the people of Pohnpei as passive pawns, to be used according to their own desires. Where Pohnpei wills clashed with theirs, colonial governments used military force to ensure outward compliance.¹ While pockets of resistance continued to exist, Pohnpei gradually yielded to the foreign presence (Ehrlich 1975).



Map 8

Pohnpei's involvement in World War II was likewise largely shaped by outsiders. The island was literally caught in the middle of a bitter struggle for control of the South Pacific. The fate of Pohnpei and its people rested in the hands of Japanese and Allied forces and varied with their changing strategic plans. Because the island was located in the eastern region of the Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the Japanese colonists initially envisioned Pohn-

pei as a staging base that could be used as a springboard for further expansion. As the tide of the war changed, the Japanese used the area to form a defensive buffer for the home islands. Efforts were directed toward fortification of the islands in case of Allied attack. Early Allied strategic plans called for seizure of the island, which lay in the path of their central Pacific thrust toward Japan. Later, it was decided to neutralize and bypass the island. Japanese headquarters on Pohnpei and other military-related sites were razed in early 1944, and the island was left behind as Allied forces concentrated their efforts on islands closer to Japan.

A general lack of consideration for the wishes of the people of Pohnpei is revealed in written sources of the period. Mostly, these sources are drawn from Allied military documents, which are limited to strategic plans, dates and targets of attack, plus some intelligence data on Japanese activities (cf. Crowl 1960, 1-19; Morison 1975, 38-41; Richard 1957, 10-17; Sherrod 1952). The limited nature of this information, combined with the use of such seemingly innocuous labels as "neutralized" and "bypassed," tends to play down wartime activities on the island. Furthermore, a reader is left to wonder if there were any indigenous inhabitants on the island or how they were involved.

Although it was not their fight, the people of Pohnpei did play a significant role in the war. Miraculously few of the people of Pohnpei died in the cross fire between Allied and Japanese forces. However, they did not escape the horrors of war. For the duration of the war, they were subjected to forced labor, relocation, and confiscation of farm goods by the Japanese, as well as the threat of air and naval attacks by the Allies.

Today, the people of Pohnpei consider World War II to be an important part of their own history, which is vividly recounted in songs, anecdotes, and personal narratives. These accounts provide detailed descriptions of the variety of wartime activities in which the people participated. They also reveal how they themselves understood, felt about, and coped with those experiences. Initially, wartime events were interpreted in light of their own cultural traditions. Many embraced the Japanese goals and voluntarily joined the fight. As time went on, and the vastly different nature and scale of this foreign war were realized, Pohnpei people were forced to reevaluate their customs: the wisdom and strength of some were reaffirmed; others were found wanting. Pohnpei people were also forced to reevaluate their interactions with foreigners and to consider the

nature and significance of their role in the larger world context. World War II serves as the most extreme example of the price of foreign dependency. It is a price that they are unwilling to pay again.

In the Service of the Emperor

Pohnpei at the time of first Western contact was a traditional chiefly society. The island was divided into several petty chiefdoms, each led by a dual line of chiefly titles.² Everyday life within the chiefdom was guided by an elaborate system of formal etiquette and by personal industry, both offered in respect to the chiefs.

The key to the good life in traditional Pohnpei was attainment of title within the chiefdom, bringing with it status, respect, and wealth. Membership in a ruling matrilineal clan was an important consideration in promotion to title for both men and women. However, a man could also attain high title by virtue of his personal achievements, regardless of his birth.³ The most important forms of achievement for Pohnpei men were called "little work" and "big work." Military prowess, the most highly valued form of achievement, was considered "little work."⁴ Pohnpei people explained this form of service as little because it was of relatively short duration, especially if a man was killed early in battle. Presentations of agricultural products and other community services were considered "big work" because this form of service continued throughout a man's lifetime.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on 7 December 1941 Pohnpei had been under Japanese colonial rule for twenty-seven years. At the beginning, the people of Pohnpei considered their wartime efforts as traditional forms of service to the highest chief in their realm at that time—the emperor of Japan. They could not anticipate the nature or scale of the hardships they would be forced to endure in this foreign war.

Big Work at Home

The physical characteristics of Pohnpei played an important role in the Japanese use of the island, even before the war. At the time of their original takeover of the German colony in Micronesia, the Japanese found Pohnpei unsuited to their naval needs. Territorial head-

quarters were moved to Palau, and a branch office was established in Kolonia, Pohnpei's port town in the north (Hanlon 1981, 83-114). When the war broke out, the island's treacherous almost-barrier reef, mangrove swamps, and rugged terrain were recognized as a natural defense system. Construction of barriers and mining operations helped secure open areas in the reef system. Land communication and radar installations, several defensive gun emplacements, blockhouses, shelters, a seaplane base, and two small airstrips were constructed to bolster the island's defenses (Ashby 1983, 48-49; Denfield 1979, 17-29).

The island of Pohnpei had been well suited to Japan's initial goals of resettlement of its burgeoning population and of economic production for the homeland (Fischer and Fischer 1957, 59-64). Plantations were established around the island to grow tapioca, rice, sugar, and a variety of other foodstuffs as well as tobacco. A sugar mill and an alcohol processing plant were among the various types of manufacturing operations conducted on the island. Copra, bonito and other fish, hibiscus bast, coconut-leaf fiber, ivory nuts, cassava, alcohol, kava, lumber, mangrove bark, trepang, black pearl, and shells were included in the list of Pohnpei's exports. Paper, tobacco, cigarettes, cotton cloth, charcoal, buttons, salt, molasses, liquor, coconut oil, kava, coffee, rice, and fresh vegetables were produced for local consumption (Bascom 1965). With the goal of furnishing supplies for war efforts on other islands, economic production was increased during the early war years.

Events in 1944 changed Pohnpei's role once again. In early February 1944, Pohnpei people remember seeing several Allied planes flying reconnaissance missions over the island.⁵ A few days later the bombing began. According to Allied reports, forty-two B-24 Liberator bombers of the Seventh Air Force based on Tarawa struck Pohnpei. Their goal was to neutralize Pohnpei before proceeding with the attack on Enewetak. Within two weeks, five raids dropped a total of 118 tons of high explosives and more than six thousand incendiary bombs. On 1 May, six U.S. battleships shelled the northern portion of the island.⁶ The attack was halted after 70 minutes when it was determined that no worthwhile targets remained. Indeed, all air bases had been destroyed and of the 940 buildings in Kolonia, an estimated 75 percent were leveled (Denfield 1979, 30-35; Hanlon 1981, 107-109). Furthermore, shipping was effectively blockaded. The new goal of the Japanese in Pohnpei necessarily became one of self-sufficiency.

Pohnpei men and women were among those hired to work on various wartime projects. At first their participation was on a voluntary, wage-labor basis. Officially, Pohnpei civilian workers were to be paid one-and-a-half yen per day for skilled labor, one yen for unskilled labor, and three-fourths yen for women. As the war in this part of the Pacific intensified, the Japanese instituted forced labor, and the level and harshness of their demands increased. All able-bodied Pohnpei people were taken from their homes and relocated to various projects around the island or even abroad. Husbands were often separated from wives. Mothers were forced to leave their young children in the care of the aged or infirm. Those left behind had to fend for themselves. Farmsteads were neglected, and consumption of produce was carefully monitored by Japanese soldiers. Permission was needed to slaughter livestock, and restrictions were placed on kava drinking and traditional feasts.

Work crews put in long hours, from sunrise to sunset. Days off were reduced to alternate Sundays, then completely cancelled. Some workers were locked in compounds; others were forced to sleep in bunkers too tiny to sit upright in. A war song, originally composed by a Pohnpei woman supervisor who worked in the tapioca fields of Sokehs chiefdom and sung by women in her bunker, tells:

Our dwelling makes us really lonely
It is worse than being in prison
because we have assumed the appearance of frogs,
crawling around and looking straight ahead.

—Lena Dehpit Rikardo

The extreme efforts in food production on the part of the Japanese and the Pohnpei people were apparently effective. Although there was a severe shortage of cloth and a few other imported goods, Pohnpei people do not recall any serious lack of food during the war years.

Allied forces repeatedly bombed the island in order to prevent the rebuilding efforts of the Japanese. An estimated two hundred fifty air strikes were mounted by the Allied forces between February 1944 and August 1945 (Denfield 1979, 35). Some Pohnpei people recall being able to set their watches by the arrival of the airplanes. One woman who worked in the Palikir rice fields of Sokehs chiefdom remembered beginning work at 5 AM. When the planes arrived at 8 AM, workers hid in bunkers and ate their breakfast. When the alarm



Japanese supervisors oversee Chamorros planting new rice on Guam, 1942. (*Kyuya Takenaka*)

sounded again, they went back to work. But sometimes the planes arrived unexpectedly. Informants vividly recall shaking with fear as they vainly attempted to hide themselves in open fields or in fishing boats in the lagoon. One Madolenihmw fisherman's war song laments:

. . . there is no place we can hide.

Those who work making salt and farming are lucky
because on land there are places to hide.

—Pretrik Ringland

Little Work Abroad

No major battle was actually fought on Pohnpei soil. However, some Pohnpei men were drafted into the Japanese military and were transported to other islands to join in the fighting. In May 1942, the Japanese drafted twenty Pohnpei men, five from each of the then four chiefdoms, to fight in Rabaul (Higuchi 1984). The Japanese motive for this decision was unknown to the people of Pohnpei, but it was generally believed to be a test of their courage and loyalty. One Kitti man who witnessed the draft proudly recalled, "A Japanese officer came and did the picking. He strongly stated Pohnpei men were clever and could indeed do the fighting." When they

reached Rabaul in July, these men were assigned to different units. Seventeen would die in battle against the Australians in the fight for Buna, Papua New Guinea. The remaining three later returned to Pohnpei with the remains of their comrades (Watakabe 1972).

The Japanese decided to draft an additional two hundred Pohnpei men in July 1943. These men were from Kitti chiefdom and represented nearly all the remaining able-bodied men from this area. Located on the opposite side of the island from administrative headquarters in Kolonia, Kitti was the most remote and traditional part of the island. Some believe the reputation of Kitti men as hard workers made them the obvious choice. Kitti men were renowned for their "stupid work": they regularly completed contracts in less time than was expected by the Japanese. Others felt their selection was punishment for this behavior, which some Japanese considered to be mischievous. One Friday, the story goes, a Japanese administrative officer came to inspect the work at the Sapwalap rice field in Madolenihmw chiefdom. He was angered that Kitti men relocated there had completed the assigned work and left early for home. He reportedly stated, "It would be better for Kitti men to be put in a washbasin and driven off the island."

Another Pohnpei man's Japanese brother-in-law had told him that the initial plan was to take fifty men from each of the four chiefdoms, until he (the brother-in-law) had warned them that rivalrous fighting would surely break out. The plan was then changed to drafting all needed men from one state. Only Kitti could provide this many men. Kitti men vividly recall being drafted. One of the draftees explained,

Someone from the administration and a military officer came to Kitti. They had a register listing the names of men and women of each municipality, and they checked off the names without knowing if they were fathers, brothers, etc. They had no thought for checking whether people were related. They called out the names of people and assembled them at Rohnkitti. Those involved in work at the airstrip or working Japanese military jobs were not included.

The criteria used by the Japanese in drafting Kitti men were age and physical ability. They made no exceptions for those who had personal disabilities or who were of royal status. However, Pohnpei men were themselves able secretly to make a number of such substitutions. In the end, 179 men left from Kitti.

The Japanese plans for the Kitti draftees were a closely guarded secret. However, most Pohnpei people believed the plan was to send them to join the fighting in New Guinea. Their send-off from Pohnpei was a highly emotional one, breaking the traditional Pohnpei code of stoicism in the face of adversity (Falgout 1984, 103–133; Falgout 1985). One woman approaching hysteria reportedly screamed after them, “Go and don’t ever come back.” Another cried to her relative, “Please jump off the boat. I love you and don’t want you to die.” Emotions also ran high among the Kitti men themselves, and many sobbed openly. Only when they reached the open sea aboard the *Sun Sang Maru* on 12 August 1943 were the draftees informed that their destination was Kosrae. Their feelings were captured in the opening lines of the “Memorial Song of Kosrae,” written by one of the Pohnpei supervisors:

Running there, we suddenly see Kosrae,
with mountains like those of Kitti chiefdom.
I begin to recall our happy chiefdom
that we were forced far away from.
At one o’clock we reached the open sea of selfishness⁷
all of us prepared and going forth.
Myself, I believe there is no authority
for throwing my life away . . .⁸

—Linter Hebel

Once on Kosrae, the Pohnpei men encountered others who had been relocated there to serve as laborers on various military projects: people from Kosrae and Kiribati, plus Okinawans, Koreans, and Japanese soldiers. The Pohnpei men were initially assigned to build a seaplane airstrip at Lele. The project was half complete when, in November 1943, the Japanese realized it would never be needed and the project was abandoned. On 8 February 1944, four American planes arrived. The *Sun Sang Maru* was sunk, and the Japanese warehouse, the airstrip, and other military buildings were destroyed.

No Pohnpei men and only a few Japanese were killed in the attack on Kosrae. However, this event marked the beginning of real hardship on that island. After this incident, three large ships carrying numerous Japanese reinforcements from Truk were dispatched to Kosrae. Allied bombing of Truk shortly afterward disrupted further transportation and effectively stranded these soldiers and cut off needed goods. Food was in very short supply, and an emphasis was

now placed on establishing agricultural plantations. But the numbers of people on the island were too great; strict rationing was begun, but starvation soon set in. Other defensive military construction projects were initiated, with work continuing night and day with little rest. No one remained idle. Even the sick and dying were assigned tasks according to their remaining abilities.

The Japanese assigned different foodstuffs to each of the different cultural groups on Kosrae according to a hierarchical ranking. The best foods, including all large fish and most other sources of protein, went to the Japanese themselves. Those from Kiribati, former British subjects, were considered to be POWs by the Japanese and as such, were given least preference in foods. Pohnpei fell in between.

At first, Pohnpei people were given breadfruit and coconuts to eat, both important items in their traditional diet. People of Kiribati were given only less desirable swamp taro. As times got tougher, Pohnpei people were given the Kiribati foods. Kiribati workers then subsisted on the few tiny potatoes that grew and, finally, on just potato leaves. Reportedly, many died of malnutrition. Japanese soldiers, unaccustomed to the island foods and environment, did not fare well either. The sight of Japanese soldiers who had degenerated into "stick men" is one that many Kitti men cannot forget.

Maybe We Were Dreaming

Pohnpei understandings of the war and attitudes toward Japanese and Americans shifted during the course of the war. Initially, many men were eager to join the Japanese in their war effort. They were overwhelmed by the spirit of camaraderie and this opportunity to display traditional Pohnpei manly virtues of hard work, bravery, and cleverness and thereby rise in status. One man who served as a construction worker recalled:

We heard *Daidowa* [the Japanese name for World War II] had started. But it was so far away, and we did not think much about it. We were not afraid. We were a bit excited. This was the "custom of men," and we talked about who would become a soldier. At the time Japan hit Pearl Harbor and I heard the news, I was working at the airstrip at Nanpohnmal. I was not afraid. I was excited to prepare for war.

Few questioned whether Japan would win the war. In contrast to previous Spanish and German colonial administrations, Japan ruled

its Micronesian possessions with a firm hand and was clearly in control. Most of the Pohnpei population truly believed the emperor was the “Heavenly Prince” and was therefore invincible. Furthermore, the Japanese had led them to believe that the Allies, particularly the bumbling Americans, would never be able to mount an effective military campaign, much less actually fight in Pohnpei. The Americans’ inability to use their sophisticated wartime technology effectively was the butt of Pohnpei jokes. Indeed, when American planes finally reached the island, their gunfire was usually wide of the presumed target, often landing in the jungle or the ocean.

The shock Pohnpei people felt when the serious bombing began, however, is indelibly etched in their memories. For the first time, they began to realize that the war could be fought on their own soil. They also began to sense the potentially enormous scale of a war fought with such advanced technology. A man who worked as an assistant and interpreter for the Japanese talked about the bombing of Kolonia:

It was only then that I realized Americans would actually fight in Pohnpei. The Japanese had given us instructions on how to protect ourselves if we were bombed. They told us to put our thumbs in our ears and fingers over our eyes. Before this [the bombing of Pohnpei], we used to joke about it. We used it to tease our friends. Now, we realized what could happen—we could lose our eyes, even our lives.

Kitti men who served on Kosrae reported experiencing acute loneliness, fear, and nervousness after the bombing began. Some were diagnosed as having a dread Pohnpei disease, “sickness of unhappiness,” a debilitating disease affecting both body and mind (Ward 1979, 78–80). Several reportedly died from it. Some Pohnpei women, traditionally unaccustomed to heavy work and the scene of combat, reported severe hemorrhaging toward the end of the war. They blamed their subsequent infertility on the wartime hardships they endured.

For the first time, Pohnpei people began to recognize the possibility that Japan could lose the war, and they feared reprisals for their role in such a failure. Some Japanese soldiers, sympathetic to the plight of the Pohnpei people, warned them that the Japanese would not allow them to be taken as prisoners. Should invasion occur, rumor had it, the Japanese planned to annihilate the people of Pohnpei as they huddled in their bomb shelters. While they continued to

build bomb shelters according to Japanese specification, the people secretly made their own plans to escape both sides. These plans were codified in song and transmitted through the gossip network.

Close encounters with advanced technology changed the Pohnpei view of Americans. American "incompetence" was reinterpreted as "restrained fierceness," a posture designed to trick the Japanese into letting down their defenses.⁹ Misplaced shots were suddenly reinterpreted as messages for the people of Pohnpei to stay clear of Japanese soldiers. Stories of American pilots who waved to Islanders engaged in traditional activities away from military targets began to surface. Americans came to be seen as extremely powerful, clever, and benevolent types—qualities Pohnpei people expect in their traditional chiefs.

In the end, the Japanese surrender of the island to the Allies was accomplished without incident. Lieutenant General Masao Watanabe surrendered to Commander Ben H. Wyatt, United States Navy, aboard the USS *Hyman* on 11 September 1945. Captain Albert Momm, division commander of the *Hyman*, became the new military governor of Pohnpei the following day (Momm 1945). John Fischer, who served as naval administrator of the island from 1950 to 1953, reported that the people of Pohnpei regarded Americans as the latest in a series of conquerors, rather than as philanthropists. He wrote, "Moreover, some of our behavior (e.g. treatment of government land, caste and social barriers between Americans and natives) appears to the Ponapeans to confirm this view. We are considered as better conquerors than the Japanese mainly because we order people around less, do not slap them, and leave them to pursue their own ambitions" (1949-1954, 550-649).

Returning from Kosrae, the Kittu men sang:

We no longer believe
[we are] awaiting death.
[There is] shocking news;
maybe we were dreaming.
—Linter Hebel

Wartime Lessons

"War is the greatest hardship" is a phrase that Pohnpei men and women use to sum up their experiences in World War II. Conditions

on Pohnpei were not as bad as in some other locations in the Pacific theater. Nevertheless, the nature and scale of the hardships Pohnpei people suffered greatly exceeded anything previously known to them.

The profound impact of World War II on the people of Pohnpei is attested to by the large number of wartime accounts still recalled and by the variety of traditional genres in which they occur. Anecdotes of amusing wartime incidents remain popular on the island today. And, as already noted, many events were codified in song. A number of these are simple verses that were sung primarily by one individual. Some songs composed by Pohnpei leaders served to unite their people in their protest against the poor conditions they were forced to endure; others served as memory aids for secret plans to escape the Japanese and Allied forces. Occasionally, more elaborate memorial songs were composed to commemorate significant people and events. Certain events have achieved legendary status on the island. These are cast in the traditional episodic form and preserve important details about the significant people, places, and dates associated with these events.

A measure of the original vitality of these World War II experiences remains today. Accounts are often told or performed at informal evening kava gatherings of family, friends, and neighbors. The more famous ones have been recorded and are occasionally broadcast over the local radio station. Significantly, the more detailed memorial songs and legends are now being treated in the secret-sacred manner of traditional historical lore.¹⁰ Whatever the genre, these World War II accounts are remarkably revealing of Pohnpei people's innermost thoughts and feelings. Wartime experiences were poignantly recalled in personal accounts collected in this study. Some informants stated that they still found it difficult to discuss this period in their lives. At times, an informant would shudder at the memory of an event, ask for a break, or even halt the interview.

Common themes running throughout these World War II accounts are the bad conditions, the poor treatment by Japanese and Allies alike, and the question of why Pohnpei had been caught in the middle of this foreign war. The extreme circumstances of the war led Pohnpei people to reevaluate themselves—to assess their cultural limitations and their cultural strengths.

In some areas Pohnpei traditions were found lacking, and some of them have been modified. For example, as a result of the people's wartime experiences, gender distinctions became blurred and rede-

fined. Pohnpei men, proud of their traditional roles as hard workers and fierce warriors, came to sense their impotence in a foreign war fought with advanced technology. Women, not traditionally expected to engage in strenuous work, realized they could overcome culturally imposed limitations on their activities. This was particularly true of Kitti women who were left behind to care for their families, farmsteads, and communities. This generation of Kitti women is renowned for overstepping traditional gender boundaries both in work and in politics. They opened the way for further changes in women's roles brought by the subsequent American rule of the island.

In other areas, the people of Pohnpei believe their wartime success was unequalled. One source of inspiration is the remarkable survival of Kitti men who returned from Kosrae—only 6 of the original 179 died. The success of these men is largely attributed to the wisdom and strength of some Pohnpei traditions.

Traditionally, long-distance voyaging is a major life event for Pohnpei individuals and is marked by important rituals designed to ensure a safe trip and to give protection from sorcery whilst among strangers. Such a ritual feast was held for the Kitti draftees before their departure. As a Pohnpei proverb asserts, "Out on the open sea, each man looks after his own life." However, ideally, concern will also be extended to other members of one's matriclan. At this feast the draftees were given a single cup from which they all drank Japanese liquor. Later, one of their high chiefs gave a speech in which he enjoined them to follow another ancient Pohnpei voyaging custom; he told them to "become as one," as though they had a single mother and were therefore all clansmates. Furthermore, he directed them to act as good Pohnpei people—not to act haughty or as know-it-alls and not to be disobedient. Instead, they were to cooperate with each other and work hard. Such important words from a respected leader were to be taken seriously.

Once on Kosrae, the reputation of Pohnpei people as hard workers made them quick favorites of the Japanese. They were also quick to establish real or fictive kinship links with some of the Kosraeans. Both of these ties gave the Pohnpei men increased access to supplies and other forms of assistance.

Pohnpei people credit their unusual cleverness as a major factor in their survival. Anecdotes in which they outwitted the Japanese soldiers—doing less work and receiving more food than they were entitled to—have become legend throughout the island (cf. Santa Isabel

stories of wartime deception, chapter 2). Careful monitoring of labor activities by the Japanese was met by Pohnpei trickery. By presenting the same items over and over again, they were easily able to inflate statistics on worker productivity. Under the pretense of hunting game for Japanese officials, extra rations could be taken. These stories emphasize the Pohnpei ability to beat the Japanese at their own game.

World War II experiences also led Pohnpei people to reassess their relations with outsiders and their position in the world context. Until then, the history of contact in Pohnpei had followed a pattern of various foreigners seeking fulfillment of their own goals in the island and its people. At first, the people of Pohnpei had bent these foreign interests to serve their own traditional ends—to acquire new forms of material wealth, to gain powerful allies with superior weapon systems, and, by these means, to enhance their prestige within the chieftdom. However, later colonial regimes were able to impose their rule through threat of military force. Pohnpei people became more passive in their response to foreign domination and more dependent upon them for goods and services. Gradually, they were becoming marginal figures in their own land (Petersen 1984*a*, 1984*b*).

Although Pohnpei people became increasingly compliant to foreign demands over the period of contact, they have always resented foreign rule. Fundamental differences between traditional Pohnpei and Western-based concepts of power and authority have been a continual source of strife throughout the colonial era. In contrast to a rigid, autocratic model of government in our Western intellectual tradition, Petersen (1984*a*, 121–122) wrote,

[I]t may well be that Ponapean chiefs never had especially centralized control of their communities despite their enormous ritual status. . . . What all this means is that the true locus of authority in Ponapean communities is the community itself. An able chief is respected and listened to, but he founds his authority on his ability to listen. If pronouncements are made, they are liable to fall upon deaf ears or meet considerable disagreement.

The people of Pohnpei consider good government to be flexible, responsive to current conditions, guided by a measure of consensus. Good government provides leadership while assuring a measure of personal autonomy:

A system of law, and of government, that asserts timeless principles is understood, but one that expects them to be lived by is not. Because authority is not alien, separate, or distinct but lies within the fabric of community life itself, Ponapeans at some level perceive themselves as being in control of their own lives. (Petersen 1984a, 127)

Today, some forty years after the war, the people of Pohnpei have been given the chance to decide the course of their future. Now they must reconcile their economic dependencies on the United States with their strong desire for political self-determination. Their desire to regain control over their own lives is not limited to local affairs, however. In the June 1983 referendum on the Compact of Free Association with the United States—an agreement that assured continued American funding and local self-government—Pohnpei alone within the Federated States of Micronesia voted in favor of independence. The compact gained the simple majority needed to pass by overwhelming majorities in Yap, Truk, and Kosrae. However, the Pohnpei vote sent a strong message that the people ultimately wish to gain control of their external affairs (Petersen 1985).

Clearly, Pohnpei people are no longer willing to place their fate in the hands of others. The hardships they were forced to endure in World War II serve as the extreme example of the consequences of foreign dependency. But wartime experiences also suggest a solution to the Pohnpei dilemma. The involvement in World War II heightened awareness of the strategic geographic position Pohnpei holds in the world context. Some Pohnpei leaders now see this strategic position as a significant bargaining chip to be used in charting Pohnpei's future. They regard their position as an important export commodity that can be exchanged for the Western goods and services they desire. Today, Pohnpei people place additional emphasis on formal schooling to enhance their political astuteness. As one Pohnpei government leader explained to me, "I don't care if my sons receive advanced education and then just come back to work on the land. They need to know what is going on in the world." Pohnpei people, he explained, are educating themselves so that they can never be "tricked" by outsiders again.

Notes

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1. For a discussion of the Pohnpei concept of person, particularly the distinction between proper outer form and true inner feelings, see Falgout (1984, 103-133).

2. During subsequent colonial administrations of Pohnpei, the number of chiefdoms increased from three to five. Today, these are the chiefdoms of Kittu, Madolenihmw, Uh, Net, and Sokehs.

3. A woman's status and title were largely ascribed. As an unmarried girl, her father's high status could lead to the receipt of a title of her own. Once married, a woman generally took the feminine counterpart of her husband's title. In exceptional cases, a woman's personal achievements could win her high title; however, this usually occurred in an indirect manner. For example, a woman's achievements could result in an auspicious liaison, which could bring her personal reward or a favorable marriage, which in turn could lead to high title (Falgout 1984, 28-29).

4. Ideals of bravery, fierceness, stoicism, cleverness, reserve, humility, respect, special knowledge, and skills are qualities Pohnpei men and women seek in men. The ideal characteristics sought in women are somewhat different, however. A desired woman, literally a "good woman," is a combination of beauty, kindness, and strength. She is pretty, pleasant, witty, and fun-loving; nurturant, giving of food, goods, and help to her family and to others. She works hard at home and knows how to take excellent care of her charges. Finally, she has an inner emotional strength to bear her and her family through difficult times. A "good woman" Pohnpei people say, is like an outrigger; she steadies her husband on his voyage (Falgout 1984, 115-119).

5. Exact dates vary in both written reports and in oral accounts (Denfield 1979, 30).

6. USS *Iowa*, USS *Massachusetts*, USS *New Jersey*, USS *Alabama*, USS *North Carolina*, and USS *South Carolina* (Ashby 1983, 50).

7. In "little work" performed in service to the high chief, Pohnpei men are expected to be bold, courageous, and stoic. A man should not give any thought to losing his life. Rather, he should be willing to throw his life away with no more regard than he would give to throwing away a clamshell. But, as one Pohnpei proverb states, "Out on the open sea, each man looks after his own life."

8. Perhaps the author of this song was expressing some doubt over Pohnpei's involvement in this foreign war.

9. See Falgout (1985) for a discussion of "restrained fierceness" as part of the Pohnpei personality.

10. See Falgout (1984, 133-173) for a discussion of the management of Pohnpei traditional historical lore.

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List of Major Informants

Salter Hadley

Linter Hebel

Pensile Lawrence

Aiako Mauricio

Berda Mauricio

Dorip Mauricio

Marihna Mauricio

Lihno Mihkel

Pelisida Peter

Lena Dehpit Rikardo

Pretrik Ringland

Konsihda Seneres

Lattes Seneres

CHAPTER 13

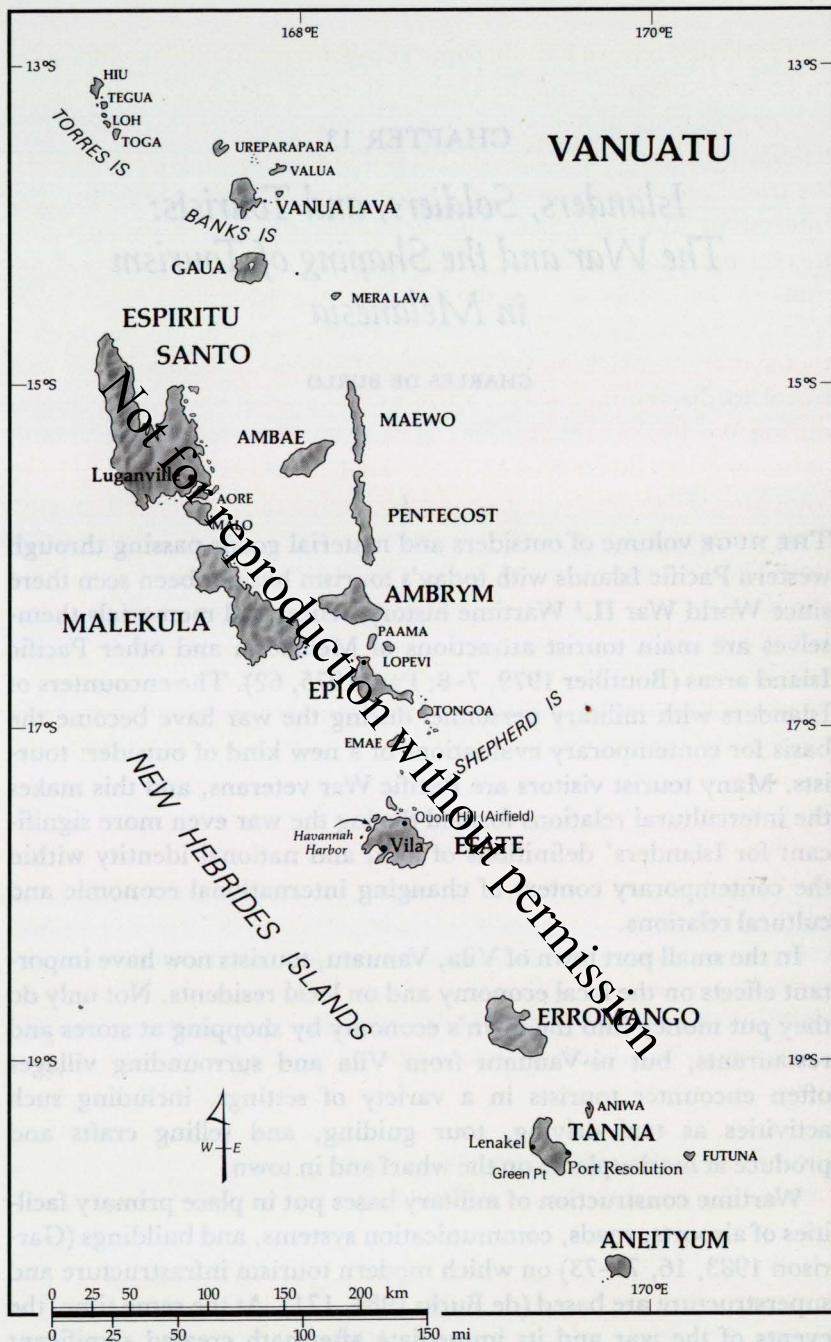
Islanders, Soldiers, and Tourists: The War and the Shaping of Tourism in Melanesia

CHARLES DE BURLO

THE HUGE volume of outsiders and material goods passing through western Pacific Islands with today's tourism has not been seen there since World War II.¹ Wartime history, relics, and memorials themselves are main tourist attractions of Melanesia and other Pacific Island areas (Boutilier 1979, 7-8; Parr 1975, 62). The encounters of Islanders with military personnel during the war have become the basis for contemporary evaluations of a new kind of outsider: tourists. Many tourist visitors are Pacific War veterans, and this makes the intercultural relations formed during the war even more significant for Islanders' definitions of local and national identity within the contemporary context of changing international economic and cultural relations.

In the small port town of Vila, Vanuatu, tourists now have important effects on the local economy and on local residents. Not only do they put money into the town's economy by shopping at stores and restaurants, but ni-Vanuatu from Vila and surrounding villages often encounter tourists in a variety of settings, including such activities as taxi driving, tour guiding, and selling crafts and produce at marketplaces on the wharf and in town.

Wartime construction of military bases put in place primary facilities of airports, roads, communication systems, and buildings (Garison 1983, 16, 71-73) on which modern tourism infrastructure and superstructure are based (de Burlo 1984, 171). At the same time, the events of the war and its immediate aftermath created significant places and visible reminders of the conflict that have become tourist sites (Boutilier 1979, 8; MacCannell 1976, 110-111; Oliver 1961, 391; Parr 1975, 62).



Map 9

Travel and leisure have become key elements in modern life-styles in Japan, Australia, and the United States, and travel is available to a wide spectrum of the populations of these societies (Moeran 1983, 94-95; Stringer 1984, 158-160; Van Doren and Lollar 1985, 484). As travel has increased along with income, air fare discounts, and interest in unusual places and activities, the travel industry has increasingly segmented its market in order to promote new destinations to both older and younger customers (Moeran 1983, 95-96; Van Doren and Lollar 1985, 480). A recent factor in this market are thousands of retired veterans from the United States and Japan who travel to the South Pacific to revisit the places where they fought during World War II. Veterans of the war in the Pacific travel both as individuals and on group tours to such places as Guadalcanal and Vanuatu, as well as New Zealand and Australia, to visit battle sites and see war relics (Robert Reynolds, pers. comm., Feb. 1986; Boutilier 1979, 8). One U.S. Marine veteran of the Guadalcanal campaign began operating tours to Australia and the Solomon Islands in 1972. Now that the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific has recently passed, many retail travel agencies, tour operators or wholesalers, and cruise ship lines are also organizing tours of "remembrance" and tours for special events (such as the General MacArthur Thrust dedication scheduled for 1988) (*Travel Marketing Magazine* 1985, 130-131).

This chapter examines two themes that are central to the impact of World War II on Islanders and recent socioeconomic change in island Melanesia. The first is the appearance of two sorts of outsiders—soldiers and tourists—and how Melanesian conceptions of the former have come to influence their perceptions of the latter, especially in the case of Americans. Tourism is part of the post-1970 modernization in these islands. Differences in perception of tourists between a younger generation of Islanders and older people who experienced the war reflect that modernization. A second theme is the effect of the war on recent economic changes in the islands, including the development of an infrastructure basic to tourism and the stimulation of local tourist arts.

War in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

Between March 1942 and December 1944, the southwest Pacific was the scene of major troop movements, battles, and the construction of

large military bases. The Solomon Islands became the focal point of an intense struggle between Allied and Japanese forces from August 1942 to August 1943 (Editors of *Navy Times* 1968, 11-12; Tregaskis 1943, 14). Approximately "half a million allied and Japanese servicemen served in the Solomons" during that time (Boutilier 1979, 8). The place-names of land battles—Tenaru River, Matanikau, "Edson's Ridge" on Guadalcanal, and Tulagi on Nggela—and naval battles of Santa Cruz, Vella Gulf, Kula Gulf, Cape Esperance, and Tassafarango live on in the memories of veterans of the Japanese and American (and other Allied) forces, as well as in those of the Melanesians who witnessed these encounters.

Vanuatu was not the scene of any major battle. It was, however, strategically located and served as a critical staging point and communication center for Joint Command operations in the South Pacific theater and for the Solomon Islands campaign in particular (Garrison 1983, 20, 33). The U.S. military established Island Command bases III and IV at Port Vila, Efate, and Luganville, Espiritu Santo, in Vanuatu. (See chapter 17 for further discussion of these bases.)

An advance base—with a naval base, inshore patrol squadron, and a large naval hospital—code-named *Roses* was set up at Port Vila by Task Force 9156. This task force arrived on 4 May 1942 with "6,400 troops (Army and Navy officers and men), and 59,850 ship tons of cargo." It eventually consisted of about twenty thousand persons (Garrison 1983, 9-10, 27). The Third Island Command Base on Efate comprised headquarters in Vila, a camp at Malapoa Point, and hospital and construction units also in the Vila area. There was also a major installation at Havannah Harbor, northwest Efate, to which the naval base headquarters later moved because of a deep-water anchorage there. The main airfield—Bauer Field—was constructed just outside Port Vila. One month before the landing on Guadalcanal, Luganville (on Espiritu Santo) was designated as an airstrip site to support the invasion. This base eventually became one of the largest and costliest built by the navy (Garrison 1983, 69, 87-92).

Wartime Changes in the Islands

The war was, of course, destructive of the islands as well as the lives of Islanders (Oliver 1961, 376-378). It also brought positive changes

in the form of facilities and economic infrastructure and new work opportunities for Islanders. For Solomon Islanders and ni-Vanuatu, these noncombatant working relations with U.S. forces provided new perspectives on foreigners and on relations with colonial administrations (Belshaw 1950; chapters 11 and 17). The wartime creation of an economic infrastructure and attendant new social relations between Islanders and servicemen led the way for subsequent social and economic changes, including tourism, in the region (Bedford 1973, 43; Bellam 1970, 70-71; Philibert 1976, 85).

Building airfields, roads, wharf facilities, communication systems, hospitals, and housing were major activities undertaken to support combat and military administration in the southwest Pacific. Developed infrastructures did not exist before the war on many Islands (Bellam 1970, 70; Garrison 1983, 65). Vila—the commercial and administrative center of Vanuatu (then the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides)—consisted of a few Asian shops, the stores of two main trading firms (Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides and Burns Philp), and a small hotel (Wallin, quoted in Garrison 1983, 16). It had a population of about fifteen hundred residents (Brookfield, Glick, and Hart 1969, iv). Santo (or Luganville), situated along the Second Channel on Espiritu Santo, was even smaller (Bennet 1957, 119, 126). The present capital of the British Solomon Islands, Honiara, came into being after World War II, when the British administration moved from Tulagi (on Nggela Island) to Guadalcanal. Before the war, the area of the town site was only sparsely settled (Bellam 1970, 72).

The establishment of military bases created such basic infrastructure as all-weather roads, wharves, water systems, and airfields important for future economic development in the islands (Bedford 1973, 43; chapter 8). Honiara was built on the site of the former Fifth Island Command base because this infrastructure was present (Bellam 1970, 70). Henderson Field, located near Honiara, was begun during the war by Japanese forces (including Korean laborers) and completed by American forces after their landing on Guadalcanal. Its capacity made it the country's international airport. Bauer Field, built by the American Third Island Command just northwest of Port Vila, is likewise the primary international airport for Vanuatu. These airfields, key goals of military construction efforts during World War II, were critical for the growth of commercial aviation in the islands as well as subsequent mass tourism (Spoehr 1960, 588).

Construction of military base facilities and other infrastructure required the assistance of local labor and afforded Islanders direct contact with military visitors. The colonial administrations of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu assisted the U.S. military in the recruitment of laborers. In Vanuatu, about thirteen hundred adult men were recruited for three- to five-month "contracts" (Bedford 1973, 38) from both northern and southern islands to work on Espiritu Santo and Efate. Word of the generous supplies of food, cigarettes, and clothing spread widely and quickly from laborers who returned to their home villages. As a result, others were eager to sign on (Bedford 1973, 38-39). People of the villages around Vila were also in close contact with thousands of American military personnel on Efate. Men of nearby villages such as Erakor were involved in work for the French or British administrations (in the police force, for example), as well as for the American military. Women, apparently, had less contact but did wash clothes for some military personnel.² What is remarkable about this cross-cultural interaction is its large scale. Ni-Vanuatu came from outlying islands to town in unusually large numbers, and they thought positively about "America" in spite of long hours of hard work for limited wages (chapters 15 and 17).

Encounters with Americans as Soldiers and Tourists

Melanesian impressions of the war, expressed in oral narrative, focus on motifs of American generosity and the plenitude of available materials, food, and money. For the generation of Solomon Islanders and ni-Vanuatu who experienced the war, perceptions of Americans established then have since influenced evaluations of tourists as more recent sorts of outsiders. Although most visitors are received with hospitality, those construed to be Americans often excite a special interest and may be received in an especially positive light due to recollections of Americans encountered during the war (Lindstrom 1981, 304; Worsley 1968, 186).

Senior men of Erakor village often regaled me with war stories about American generosity. Robert Kallon, for example, speaking of currently hard times, moved into a wartime recollection:

When America was here, no problems with food, cigarettes, and money. There were a lot of them all the time . . . You did not have to

pay anything. Things were given freely—lolly, crackers—when you went to [the camp at] Ekasik. You did not ask for these things, they wanted to give them to you.

“Grandmother” Pama recalled a similar image of those times:

There was a big camp at this place [Ekasik]. They stayed there. We—all the children and adults—wanted such things as crackers or whatever. We bought them at Ekasik.

[Q: You paid for them?]

Yes, we bought them from them. But they gave us gifts too . . . Of crackers, all kinds of food.

On Tanna one hears stories of working for individual labor supervisors such as the legendary “Tom Navy,” whose first name and service group label (e.g., Navy, Army) are combined into a name. There are many stories of how the soldiers swore, drank, messed in groups, and joked with the Tannese and how “America” helped the Tannese against the condominium government. A man of Isini echoed the stories of many others:

When the war came the government said it would not pay and feed the Tannese men taken by the Americans to Vila to work. But America wanted to pay and to feed us Tannese. The condominium government gave four shillings each day with no pay for work at night. At the airfield, the Tannese worked clearing land. This land belonged to a French woman and she was to feed us but the food was gone. Ballande’s food was also gone, and so Tannese and the government went to the Burns Philp store; only a half-bag of rice was there. *Morinda* was to bring food from Australia, but where was *Morinda*? America called all the big-men of America and said “the problem of the people of Tanna is this.” The big-men of America went to the tribunal to talk to the condominium. America—Tom Navy—said that they would feed the Tannese and gave us a lot of food. This was a different way. We did not ask for money. America gave us money for work. We started to throw away the food because we could not finish it all. Some of us went back to Tanna [before they had their money]. America was trying to give us the money, but married men wanted to go home. But before they left America—Tom Navy—promised that we would someday get the payment. But the condominium government still blocks it.

Other men of Tanna who worked on Efate remember the work, how it was organized, and how long they worked each day. “Man

Tanna and America worked at night when all the others slept," is a typical recollection. John Frum, the mythical personage at the core of the ideology of the John Frum "cargo cult,"³ is alleged to have visited Tanna and spoken to some Tannese before the war and the arrival of the U.S. military. Thereafter, as John Frum had prophesied, "America" helped the Tannese. A man of Ionanhan village on Tanna asserted:

Men talked with John on Tanna were sent to Vila to jail and were put to work. They got a message from John to watch for a sign. Then one night they saw a light at Pango Point [Efate], and next day they saw a long, long line of ships—battleships, mailboats, more battleships, and more mailboats—came into sight . . . All the people of the Efate villages were frightened when the soldiers came ashore and they ran away and hid in the bush. The police could do nothing. Then the cargo came ashore. The cargo was just like refuse on the beach . . . The government would not let America pay us.

Men of Tanna often tell an American visitor that the people of Efate did nothing and were even afraid of "America," and that the Tannese and "America" built all the roads and airfields on Efate themselves. Such versions of the past, and the special relation between "John" and "America" developed in them, suggest a special kind of exchange relation in which the Tannese are joined to a powerful entity—as evidenced by the goods in large quantities, the organization of work, and productive capabilities. Tannese valued the organizational aspects of wartime work and have tried to fit that organization to their own social systems (chapter 17). Tannese stated that they did not at that time ask for payment from "America" for their work but that "America" was generous and gave it willingly, despite difficulties with the condominium government.

This wartime relationship was a turning point at which the Tannese discovered more about the outside world and from which they developed ideas and strategies to use in local political processes (Guiart 1951; Lindstrom 1981). A local leader in south Pentecost who worked on Espiritu Santo for the American military likewise explained his rise to leadership in a "custom" group as due partly to his wartime experiences that gave him knowledge of the outside world and partly to the rifle given him by "America" that made the condominium government "angry" with him and local Christian villagers afraid of him (cf. Jolly 1982).

Efate villagers did not run and hide in the bush when the U.S. military command arrived in Vila. They had been for many years involved with urban activities, the cash economy (e.g., copra production from their own groves), and holding government posts (e.g., on the French and British police forces). They had less reason to recruit for wartime labor than did the rural Tannese (Philibert 1981, 321). Urban villagers also enjoyed friendships and the generosity of the Americans, as well as opportunities to trade with "soldiers." (Some women of Erakor village, however, said they were frightened of black American "soldiers" stationed on Efate.)

The Emergence of Tourist Arts

The presence of military personnel at Allied bases enabled Melaneans to use their skills in producing cultural artifacts to use in gift exchange and trade with servicemen. These skills would later be significant in the tourist trade (Boutilier 1979, 17-18, 24; Philibert 1976, 85; Weiner 1982, 66-67). Objects such as "grass skirts," shells made shiny, and replicas of "traditional" artifacts were made for exchange with, or sale to, servicemen. Weiner (1982) has shown that in the Trobriand Islands, wood carving for European and American visitors has been a stable means of entry into the cash economy in that carving fits well into indigenous production and exchange systems.

In Vanuatu, the sale of garden produce and marine foods to European residents of Vila had been practiced for many years, but trade with soldiers differed in its scale and regularity. Wartime trade contributed to the development of regular marketing patterns and a marketplace in Port Vila. The tourist trade generated a regular craft market at the deep-water wharf where cruise ships dock (cf. Boutilier 1979, 17-18). Women whose parents initiated the marketing of produce to Europeans in Vila later collected shells and made necklaces to sell to American servicemen—*long olgeta soja*. An old woman of Erakor village whom I asked about selling shells at the marketplace in the past explained:

No, we did not sell these at the market. We sold them to them at the place here. Small shells.

[Q: Who bought them?]

They did. All the soldiers.

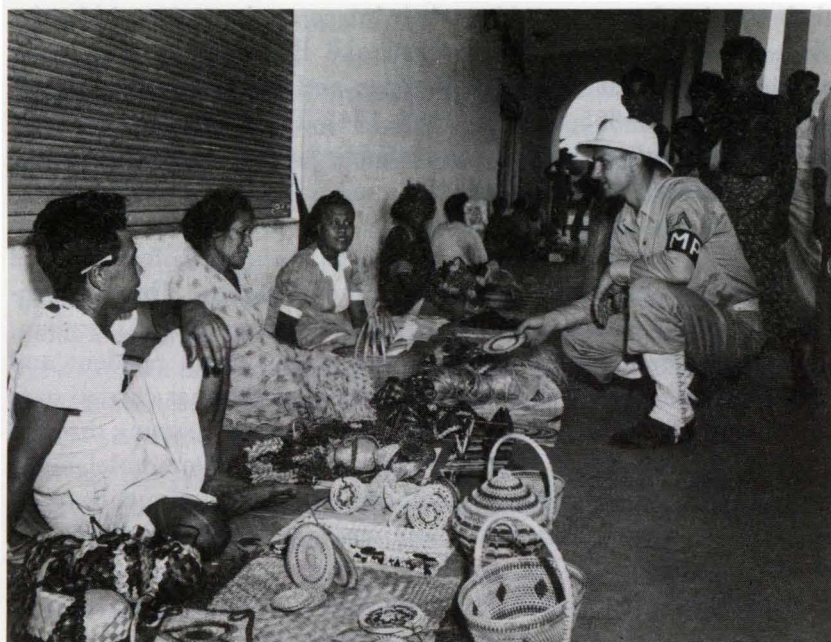


Artifact market, New Georgia, 2 December 1943. (*U.S. Navy*)

She went on to relate how servicemen had come to the islet (on which the village was then located) in the lagoon to set up a post, and she recited various camps around Vila—Eluk (Marines); Bellevue (Navy); Ekasik (Army)—and how she could buy things at the post exchange store and also received sweets (e.g., cookies, “lollies”) freely from servicemen.

Curios made for the “soldiers” were often produced on direct request and given to a specific serviceman in exchange for some other items. Others were presented as gifts to servicemen who had become friends. Craft skills were refined during the war; twenty-five years later wartime styles continue to set styles for the tourist trade. Robert Kallon of Erakor clearly defined the difference between today’s tourist craft trade and the wartime trade:

Before, the women did not make necklaces because there were no tourists yet. All the tourists came in peacetime. But, if a big-man—a general—came to the village, then the men and the chief gave him a *nalnal* [i.e., a “custom” club] . . . When the soldiers were here, when we worked with them, they wanted these things. It was not given for a price, but it had its own idea—they gave something back to you.



Artifact market, Apia, Western Samoa, 11 January 1944. (*U.S. Army Signal Corps*)

The current trade in handicrafts manufactured specifically for sale to tourists is viewed by many ni-Vanuatu as distinctly different from the earlier trade in curios with military personnel during the war. The crafts made for the soldiers, were, however, a direct precursor to tourist craft production; servicemen asked for specific curios such as “grass skirts” that were not made or used by Christian ni-Vanuatu of Efate and had to be reinvented.

American servicemen and ni-Vanuatu encountered each other in a variety of situations ranging from formal work contexts to informal exchange relations involving direct reciprocity or trade in goods. The procedures and regulations of the U.S. Island Command and the colonial government, however, were designed to keep these encounters structured and limited to certain areas and situations. Information from veterans of the Solomon Islands campaign and from duty on Efate indicates that Islanders and servicemen did not have wide contact.

Many Melanesians were impressed by the organization and overall “power” of American military groups. The Melanesians often adopted superficial aspects of military insignia and routines into

their own local groups and into their interpretations of local identity vis-à-vis that of others such as colonial European residents and administrators and invading American and Japanese forces (Lindstrom 1981, 303-305; Worsley 1968, 174). The Americans, for their part, were fighting, working, and waiting for the war to move along to other islands (Michener 1947, 9).

Melanesians' wartime experience of U.S. servicemen resulted in conceptions of Americans as powerful yet freehanded, friendly, and egalitarian people who differed from other outsiders. This categorization of Americans as a people culturally distinct from Australian, British, or French administrators and Asians (both resident and invading military) left a persistent impression that has carried over into Melanesian perceptions of the newest "other" passing through the islands—tourists. Tourists are categorized by Solomon Islanders and ni-Vanuatu, for example, according to their nationality (e.g., *man America*, or *man Australia*, or *man Japan*; see Cochrane 1969), not simply as "tourist." This may be due in part to the low volume of tourist arrivals in these islands compared to major Pacific destinations (Pi-Sunyer 1977, 154). Americans, however, evoke special interest for Islanders because of relations established during the war. Australians, who form the largest percentage of tourist arrivals, in contrast to Americans, are seen as less generous (chapter 8) and less affable. Ni-Vanuatu, for example, often state that they prefer American tourists, rather than tourists from other places, because Americans are "friends" and would be "helpful" to them. Ni-Vanuatu also often seek to contact American tourists in order to establish exchange relations connecting themselves to "America," the reputed place of special power (chapters 3, 8, and 17). Impressions of Americans as notably different from other foreigners remain among Islanders, especially those of the older generation (chapter 9), and carry over into current attitudes toward tourists. The relics of war and the battle sites continue to bring ni-Vanuatu and Americans together.

Island Tourism and Veteran Tours

Tourism is one of the two or three largest sectors of international trade in the southwest Pacific. The developing countries of Asia and the Pacific have one of the highest growth rates of tourism (ASTA Travel News 1985, 6). Japan Airlines, the leading carrier in international revenues, is now a Pacific regional airline with hub service

into the Pacific Islands from Tokyo, Nadi (Fiji), and Auckland (New Zealand) (*Pacific Islands Monthly* 1985c). Major Japanese corporations—such as Tokyu Corporation, which owns a wide range of businesses including Pan Pacific Hotels—are currently focusing their interests on the Pacific Basin (*Pacific Islands Monthly* 1985a, 33).

Significant growth of mass tourism in the South Pacific began in the mid-1960s when large-capacity jet aircraft operating on trunk routes and packaged tours made the area more accessible to wider markets. Fiji became a regional hub and tourist destination, although countries such as Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea had only nascent or no tourism, being off the main air service routes. In 1968, for example, Vila had only three small hotels and Santo had only two; there were only six thousand visitor arrivals (Great Britain Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1973, 20). The Solomon Islands did not reach six thousand tourist arrivals until 1975 (Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance 1980, Table 3) due to its low capacity in both international air service connections and tourist accommodations (Boutilier 1979, 10–11). The British colonial government of the Solomon Islands paid little attention to developing tourism; nor has the national government since independence (Boutilier 1979, 19; PATA 1985a, 28). Papua New Guinea developed a tourist industry earlier; by 1975, it boasted some eighteen thousand “holiday” tourist arrivals (Williamson 1977, 31–33).

Tourism in the Solomon Islands, and in Vanuatu in particular, has grown significantly since 1975 due to improvements in regional aviation (Kissling 1982, 53, 61), creation of large hotels and resorts in the islands, and special attention given to tourism in national economic development plans (PATA 1985a; PATA 1985b; Philémon 1985). In 1984, the Solomon Islands received 10,700 tourist arrivals from overseas, and 8000 visitors who arrived by cruise ship (PATA 1985a, 3). An increase of visitor arrivals to 29,000 and a 73 percent expansion in accommodation capacity by 1990 are recommended by the United Nations Development Program and Pacific Area Travel Association advisers for the Solomon Islands (PATA 1985a, 3).

Vanuatu is attempting economic development through its tax haven status, the growth of a financial center in Vila, and by expanding its tourism sector (de Burlo 1987). Tourism now earns \$20 million a year in gross revenue for Vanuatu (PATA 1985b, 19). In 1984 tourist arrivals totalled 26,000, and cruise ship passengers added another 64,000 visitors (PATA 1985b, 7).

Tourist destinations require a supply of attractions as well as

superstructural and infrastructural components to meet travel market demands. As with infrastructure, the islands rely not only on natural resources such as climate, coral reefs, beaches, and indigenous cultures, but also on what World War II left behind. As one Efate villager said, "When they [the American military] left there were plenty of things all over—houses, vehicles—many things left in all the islands."

In addition to natural and cultural attractions, war relics and battle sites have for many years been basic attractions for tourism in the southwest Pacific (Boutillier 1979, 8; Parr 1975, 62). In the Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal attracts Japanese and American tourists because of its history as a main battle area of the Solomon Islands campaign and the renown of such places as "Bloody Ridge" ("Edson's Ridge"), "Iron Bottom Sound," and the beaches where the First Marine Division landed, as well as various relics (e.g., parts of aircraft and vehicles) scattered about the island (Boutillier 1979, 30n11). The travel industry has also promoted the sunken troop ship (and former luxury liner) *President Coolidge* off southeast Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu, as it has the Kokoda Trail and Bomana War Cemetery in Papua New Guinea (Hook 1981, 538). These places and relics of the war are now so much part of the tourist itinerary in these islands that they constitute tourist "sights" (MacCannell 1976, 135).

The new interest in the Pacific Basin has caused travel industry principals currently to promote a variety of destinations in the Pacific. In 1985 the Pacific Area Travel Association and the American Society of Travel Agents held a trade show together in Philadelphia at which the Pacific was a central theme. The Pacific division manager for United Airlines is reported to have stated that UAL will actively promote South Pacific "places that, unless you were in World War Two, you probably never heard of" (Levere 1985, 12-14).

As more people from Japan and the United States travel overseas, there is a parallel effort in the travel industry to segment its market by promoting special interest tours (Van Doren and Lollar 1985; Moeran 1983). Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are expected to gain the most from marketing efforts by concentrating on an "upscale" segment of well-educated people interested in the cultural and historical attractions of the islands, as well as in climate and watersports activities (PATA 1985*b*, 2; PATA 1985*a*, 34). Retired people form a special market for a variety of tours, including adven-

ture tours to South Pacific island destinations for the "active affluent" and over-59 set (Crissey 1981, 113-114). Another special market segment consists of veterans of World War II.

For veterans of the South Pacific theater, a growing number and variety of tour packages is offered by specialized operators (Travel Weekly 1985, 20-36). In 1972 a former member of the First Marine Division and Guadalcanal campaign veteran, Al Bonney, created a "Sentimental Journey" tour to the South Pacific for a group of veterans, including a visit to Guadalcanal. Bonney tied this effort in to the Guadalcanal Veterans Association, whose newsletter he edited, and in 1984 formed a larger group, the South Pacific Veterans Association. He organized more than ten veterans' tours from 1975 until his death in 1984. The tours included visits to sights in Australia, such as the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne and the Marine Memorial at Ballarat, and in Guadalcanal (Bloody Ridge, Red Beach, Tenaru River, and air "flight-seeing" of Tulagi).

Valor Tours is now also devoted solely to veterans' tours of the Pacific and caters to a wide range of veterans' groups—First, Second, Fourth Marine divisions; Seabee battalions; Thirteenth, Twentieth, Fifth Air forces, and others—and package tours to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, the Philippines, Saipan, and elsewhere (Robert Reynolds, pers. com. Feb. 1985).⁴ In Vanuatu, Valor Tours groups visit Vila, Santo area, and Tanna, with optional excursions to other islands. Valor Tours uses the Royal Viking Cruise Lines extensively, and in April 1986 Royal Viking offered a "Pacific Memory Cruise" to Sydney, Espiritu Santo, Guadalcanal, Rabaul, the Admiralty Islands, Milne Bay, Port Moresby, Bali, Singapore, Manila, and Hong Kong (Valor Tours 1985). With Valor Tours, Royal Viking Cruise Lines has offered a "Coral Sea Encounter Cruise" (Valor Tours 1984).

Tours packaged for war veterans of the Pacific theater have become more conspicuous since 1972 as the thirtieth and fortieth anniversaries for the major events of the war have passed. In August 1982, one hundred American and Japanese veterans of Guadalcanal met there with former coastwatchers, various ambassadors, and some Islanders to dedicate a memorial at Henderson Field (Bonney 1982, 11; Mohs and Dunn 1982, 25). These international meetings will continue, given the importance of the events they commemorate and the appeal they make to the sense of history shared by the combatants. As tour operators institutionalize tours and war-related travel in the region, tourism by veterans and their descendants will

grow along with mass tourism in the region (*Travel Marketing Magazine* 1985, 130). As a result, the historical site markers (MacCannell 1976, 135-37) connected with World War II will be perpetuated as general tourist attractions.

Veterans are not exactly standard holiday tourists. Veterans who return to Pacific Islands battlegrounds are making both group and personal pilgrimages (e.g., Manchester 1979). Not only do they leave mundane existences at home for a valued journey that takes them into "a non-ordinary sphere of existence" (Graburn 1977, 24), they return to a time and place (in mind and fact) that was in their earlier life quite extraordinary. They return to exotic places they last saw as members of a special kind of "tour" group (the military), during a time of fighting, fear, and destruction. These are "memory tours" of unique times and places, not just a departure from the workaday world for leisure and recreation.

The remembrances of Pacific theater veterans bring out well this extraordinary quality of the wartime tourist experience. One Guadalcanal veteran who returned there in 1982 for the airfield dedication is reported to have said, "Guadalcanal was the most traumatic period of my life" (Mohs and Dunn 1982, 25). Marine fighter pilot ace Joe Foss, also at the 1982 gathering, commented, "It is a strange feeling to come back to a place where you were shot at and find business going on quite normally, as if nothing ever happened" (ibid.). Pacific theater veterans with whom I have corresponded or spoken recalled first, and mainly, battle events on various islands and the injuries they sustained, or being "very young" and far from home. One veteran of the Guadalcanal campaign, Joseph Spaulding, encountered only two Islanders, both of the Solomon Island Police Force, working with coastwatcher Martin Clemens. He recalled:

One or the other of these two natives would materialize shortly before we set out on patrol, guide us to our objective, retire to a safe distance when we made contact, and, subsequently, accompany us back to headquarters. He would wait until I had requisitioned several packages of chewing tobacco, and upon receiving these would vanish. Presumably he returned to some point where he was less likely to be under enemy fire. . . . As to Guadalcanal itself, I saw only a small section that was tactically important, and that, of course, was battle ravaged.

Combat troops and other military personnel in the Pacific theater, unlike those in the European theater, encountered radically different

environments (e.g., jungles or coral atolls) and an enemy and indigenous people different in appearance and culture from any they had direct experience with before (Terkel 1984, 59, 64, 158). In general, combat troops and other military personnel had little contact with Islanders.

Some veterans from Vermont were recently interviewed by students of a high school history class and told their interviewers about battles being long and difficult, as in thirty-six hours of fighting in the Slot in the Solomon Islands.⁵ Others talked of fighting and fear, "My first day in action [on Angaur] was about twenty-four hours long. It was quite frightening. . . . As I've said often in the past, I wouldn't do it again for a million dollars but wouldn't take a million dollars for my experiences. You do what you have to do when you're there, you know, you're trained to do a job and you do it;" or about malaria and rough living conditions, "They called us the Jungle Air Force and that's what it was. You didn't have any towns or cities. You went into an island and right into the jungle" (*Burlington Free Press* 1985). In part because of such sentiments, it may be that many of these men will not choose to return to the Pacific as "remembrance" tourists. Those of us who have been to the Pacific Islands only in peacetime should not be surprised that veterans who have not visited since the war and perhaps have put it out of their minds find it, as Joe Foss said, an incredibly different place, and greatly modernized at that.

Most tourists require modern facilities and transportation. Veterans on tour are like other tourists in this regard. They use tour operators' packaged services that include international-class hotels, airlines, cruise ships, and professional guides or tour leaders. Standardization by the travel industry of this special-interest tourism may enable limited room for direct contact with Islanders outside tourist service situations. Because of their age or retired status, American and Japanese veterans who take remembrance tours may have the time and money to travel to outer islands. Their special experiences provide them with the interest to make courteous (as well as profitable) tourists for island nations to encourage. The interest veterans have in the islands helps to create an atmosphere of mutual respect in their encounters with Islanders.

The common experience of World War II sometimes bridges the cultural gap between Islanders and tourists of the war generation. On Ambrym, Vanuatu, for example, when the Lindblad cruise ship stopped in 1981 with its senior citizen tourists, Ambrymese were

delighted to see them, not just because the tourists were bringing in money for crafts and viewing a traditional ritual event. They were Americans of an age who remembered the war—even if they did not participate in it in the Pacific theater—and shared that memory with the Ambrym people.⁶ In the flow of tourism in Vanuatu, where war relics are not a main tourist attraction (because it was not a battleground), occurrences such as this are unusual. Ni-Vanuatu do, however, enjoy talking about “America” and often state a preference for more tourists from America because of wartime associations with Americans and a general belief that America is a rich country, the one with the most “power.”⁷ People on Tanna who have met Lindblad ships recall these encounters as good ones compared to those they have had with European, New Caledonian-French, or Australian tourists.

Tourism is an industry that depends on standardized organization. In South Pacific island nations, tourism is increasingly oriented toward a pleasure-seeking tourist mass market. Its scale will mean challenges to the physical and social capacities of the islands. Although about 25 percent of visitors to the Solomon Islands are returning U.S. veterans, at least 40 percent are Australians on business or holiday trips (Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance 1980, Table 4). For Vanuatu, 73 percent of visitor arrivals are Australian (PATA 1985*b*, 11). Another potentially large travel market for the South Pacific islands is Japan (*Pacific Islands Monthly* 1985*c*). Japanese tourists in the southwest Pacific are now mainly young married couples or business travelers (cf. Moeran 1983) and less often returning veterans.

As tourism expands, special tourist types such as veterans become lost in masses of tourists, and resident responses to even those more benign tourists may become increasingly negative in tone (Smith 1977, 5). The older generation of Islanders and veteran servicemen is passing. The present relation between the wartime heritage of the islands and the attraction of veterans as tourists will cease. Tourism is already contributing to changing relations with outsiders, and a younger generation of Islanders has grown up that does not recall the war (but see chapter 7) and will establish different relationships with foreign visitors (chapters 9 and 17).

Islanders encounter tourists most frequently as employees providing tourism-related services in such roles as hotel workers, waiters, bartenders, taxi and tour drivers, guides, performers, or craft vendors. In all these contexts, Islanders are no longer “working with”

visitors, as they say they were during the war. Instead, they are serving or hosting visitors they know will depart very soon, will pay for goods and services, and are often not particularly generous (de Kadt 1979, 50). Whereas stories of the visitors of wartime stress their generosity and partnership with Islanders in "work," the attitude toward modern tourists is one of expecting "help" in the form of money. A man from the island of Tongoa living on Tanna, who was in the British police force in the 1940s and is now involved in tourism as a tour driver and tour vehicle owner, explained:

Tourists must come to give money to help us. We sell grass skirts, pawpaw, bananas to the tourists so we can get money. I have a truck for the work of tourists. I must pay tax for the roads, insurance, and petrol. The tourist is a way for the native to get money. We natives have nothing.

Tourists purchase "custom" by paying to see dances and the like, and some Tannese are willing to allow this commercialization of tradition. A John Frum ideologist of White Sands, Tanna, decided that since tourists make films of "custom," including the ritual preparation of kava, which is only to be known to males, and since these films are shown widely in towns and overseas, "This is all a bad way. . . . It is finished now. You [tourists and other Tannese] showed tradition already. In my past women did not know. But you showed it." Another Tannese man said, "Some Tannese say that tradition is something not to be sold; others say that it is something to be sold. This thing came from white people. Before, we did not do this."

A direct consequence of tourism for the values and attitudes of indigenous people is that they more frequently experience social relations with outsiders as being primarily commercial in content. This is a common occurrence with increasing density of tourism (de Kadt 1979, 61). Although the objectification of traditions may be seen in wartime trade, commercialization is a definite departure from the informal exchange relations and balanced reciprocity that were common with American military visitors during the war.

At the Vila marketplace, tourists buy mainly fruits, dresses, and crafts, including shells, shell necklaces, and wooden objects. Women of the nearby villages as well as urban Fijians, Tongans, and Asians (from whom some ni-Vanuatu women learned to make tourist crafts and dresses) are the main producers and sellers of crafts to tourists.

For these women this is "tourist business." Women (and a few men) from areas dependent on the tourist trade because of shortages of garden land bring only curios, rather than produce, to market. A few years ago they reacted violently to having other Islanders selling crafts at the cruise ship wharf, which they allege is on their land.

Two aspects of this market relation with tourists stand out as markedly different from the relations of trade with soldiers—its intensity and its increasing diversification. For example, when Erakor village women discovered that they could trade shells or "grass skirts" to American servicemen for food, candy, cash, or other items, they did it mostly on the basis of individual demand. Now there are regular places at which crafts are sold, and women of Erakor (and other villages) expend a great amount of time and effort preparing for the tourist markets (on the wharf, in town, and in villages), staying there for long hours in the hope of a sale. Many women trade in craft items to supplement other household income, but some are renowned as specialists in making and selling tourist handicrafts and regard this activity as a personal business venture.

Cruise ship arrivals in Vila have augmented the curio trade because many tourists are disgorged into town on specific days each month. Boutilier (1979, 18) has noted that in Honiara cruise ship arrivals have produced a "sophisticated cottage industry in handicrafts." Women in Vila are similarly selling a widening array of goods from shells, dresses, shell baskets and bracelets, shell necklaces, wooden "knives," and miniature (wooden) canoes (made by men), to postcards, "tea towels," and other knickknacks bought in local Asian shops.

Tourism is accelerating the rate of change toward commercialization in social relations as tourists travel more widely outside the towns and as Islanders in rural areas take crafts to town to sell or migrate to towns to work in tourist services. This is, most notable with the younger generation of Islanders. These young people know of World War II only through stories told by their elders. They have grown up with tourism, and the tourist is the kind of outsider they most often encounter.⁸ In contrast to their parents and grandparents, young people often categorize foreign strangers first as "tourists," rather than "American" or other nationality, especially in urban areas. That American servicemen in World War II gave away large quantities of things is recalled as unusual behavior for foreigners at that time. Some Australian cruise ship passengers now throw coins off the ships' decks for children at Vila wharf, but today's

youth, who usually ignore tourists or seek cash and alcoholic beverages from them, expect this behavior. However, older men and women who worked for the Australians at bases in Vanuatu are still attuned to evaluating tourists on the basis of cultural traits and their wartime experiences. Generational differences are an important factor in how Islanders conceptualize and relate to tourists.

In many rural areas of Vanuatu, where tourists are less common, nationality is important for both old and young people as a key to the categorization of visitors. This is especially the case for places, such as Tanna, south Pentecost, and Espiritu Santo, where conceptions of "Americans" formed during the war are important in the context of specific ideological movements (Worsley 1968, 151; Lindstrom 1981, 289). In these places, where many wartime laborers and defense force personnel were recruited, the war continues to stand out as an important historical reference point for people's relations with the outside world. The wartime influx of new kinds of outsiders remains a powerful reference that will continue to influence the understandings of even the younger generation. For example, young people have ideas about Americans that are based on the war stories of their elders and tend to evaluate international current events with some reference to those preconceptions and local mythologies; "America" continues to show its "power" against other nations.

It is probable that tours for Pacific theater veterans of World War II will cease as that generation passes, but the attraction of the wartime history of the Pacific Islands will remain. A proposed survey of attraction resources in the Solomon Islands (PATA 1985*a*, 34-35) and Vanuatu (PATA 1985*b*, 22) may be carried out in both countries for the purpose of tourism promotions. This marking of sites of wartime events and relics—such as the sunken *President Coolidge* at Espiritu Santo or Bloody Ridge on Guadalcanal—will eventually institutionalize them as tourist "sights" in the world of sightseeing tours (MacCannell 1976, 135-137). This institutionalization of places now visited by war veterans will perpetuate the remembrance of World War II for tourists and Islanders.

Conclusion

World War II devastated many Pacific islands and disrupted the lives of their residents, but it also brought Islanders into direct con-

tact with a wide range of new ideas and technologies, as well as new kinds of people (Oliver 1961, 371). The development of commercial aviation and tourism in the region has brought further changes to the islands of the southwest Pacific and to the lives of Islanders.

Many groups of Pacific theater war veterans are now interested in traveling to former Pacific battle and base sites, and a number of tour operators package these "remembrance" tours for veterans groups. Veterans tours mark personal and group recollection and memorialization of events and places unique and special to these travelers. Veterans are tourists with a genuine interest in the history of the islands, not just the exotic climate.

Wartime encounters between Islanders and American servicemen often created for Islanders enduring, positive impressions of Americans. Islanders of the generation that witnessed the war also use that experience to evaluate today's tourists. Because many tourists to the southwest Pacific nations are ex-servicemen (both American and Japanese), there is some juxtaposition of "soldier" and "tourist."

Modern mass tourism, conversely, also gives a younger generation of Islanders less attachment to the past in their relations with outsiders. However, the standardization of tours marking war relics and war event locations as historic "sights" for mass tourism might enable the remembrance of World War II to become a historic reference point in intercultural relations. In this its importance will outlast the generation of Islanders, Americans, Japanese, Australians, New Zealanders, and others involved in the war itself.

Notes

This chapter is based on research conducted in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands in 1980-1982 and on subsequent inquiries to veterans' groups in 1985 in the United States. I am grateful to the people of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu who helped me with this work and to the veterans who were so cooperative. My thanks also go to Laurie A. Kutner for her comments and editorial work.

1. International tourism, made possible by the military technologies of World War II (especially long-range and jet aircraft), is becoming an important sector in the economies of western Pacific Island countries. National governments are giving more explicit attention to tourism development (*Pacific Islands Monthly* 1985b; Philemon 1985). Regional airline companies such as Qantas, Air New Zealand, Ansett Airlines, and Japan Airlines are competing to establish control in a regional network of air services through contracts to manage the national airlines of several island nations, including Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (Kissling 1982). The major international and regional carriers bring mass tourism

into the islands through their linkages with hotel and resort corporations. Japan Airlines and Ansett Transport Industries, for example, both have interests in resorts and hotels in Vanuatu (*Pacific Islands Monthly* 1985a, 31-54; 1985b, 18). This growth in transportation and tourism is partly due to the economic rebound and expansion made by Japan following World War II. It reflects the vitality of trade relations between the United States and the East Asian-Pacific region (Perry 1985, 50).

2. Many Erakor village women have told me this. It seems that men who knew particular American servicemen arranged the wash work for women, delivered the clothes to the soldier, and received payment in clothes, other goods, or in cash.

3. The social movement referred to as the John Frum cult appeared before the arrival of the Americans. It is well documented by Jean Guiart (1951, 1956).

4. Reynolds is president of Valor Tours, Inc.

5. The class was supervised by Robert Weir.

6. Kirk Huffman (curator, Vanuatu Cultural Center), personal communication, December 1980.

7. People speculate about which nation has more "power"—Russia, America, or some other. Ni-Vanuatu also often interpret distant foreign events heard about in the news media as though America is still fighting a war (cf. chapter 3).

8. Examples of regular tours to rural areas are those to Laulasi islet adjacent to Malaita, Solomon Islands (Boutilier 1979, 24), and to Chimbu, Papua New Guinea (Paula Brown, personal communication, 1979).

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PART IV

Joining In:
Fighting and Working

CHAPTER 14

Kennedy's "Army": Solomon Islanders at War, 1942-1943

JAMES A. BOUTILIER

FOLLOWING their attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the Japanese struck southward in an effort to establish a huge defensive perimeter. One part of their strategy involved the occupation of Melanesia, a move designed to enable them to threaten Australia and interdict the sea routes between the United States and Australia-New Zealand. Lying across their path were the Solomon Islands, a British protectorate since 1893. The British authorities in the Solomons were entirely unable to provide the Islanders with protection in the face of the Japanese advance. Most of the European residents—planters, traders, and missionaries—were evacuated from the islands between 12 December 1941 and 8 February 1942, and the resident commissioner, W. S. Marchant, went into hiding on the island of Malaita with a few of his staff (see chapter 15).

One other category of European remained behind as well—the coastwatchers. These were, for the most part, district officers who served near or behind enemy lines, reporting by teleradio on the movements of the Japanese forces. Their services were invaluable when the time came for the Allies to reoccupy the Solomons. Admiral William Halsey, U.S. naval commander in the South Pacific, was later to observe with characteristic hyperbole that “the coastwatchers saved Guadalcanal and Guadalcanal saved the Pacific” (Horton 1970, 247). What he failed to say was that the Solomon Islanders saved the coastwatchers. Without the Islanders’ support, the coastwatchers would never have been able to collect the intelligence that made the coastwatching system so valuable; nor would they have been able to survive in Japanese-held territory. Nowhere

was this truer, perhaps, than in the case of Major Donald Gilbert Kennedy, DSO, who carried the war into the enemy camp.

In this chapter Kennedy's activities in the period January 1942 to July 1943 are described. Kennedy was a man who was bigger than life. He needed "a wide screen on which to throw his shadow" (Horton 1970, 42). The war, and the unstinting support of the Solomon Islanders, made that possible. In focusing on Kennedy, I have done a disservice to the other coastwatchers who supported one another—and Kennedy—as a matter of course. Similarly, I have done disservice to a good many of Kennedy's "army" who remain nameless. Fortunately, however, some of them are known. The war was their struggle as much as his, and while his activities provide an element of continuity, I have attempted to highlight their wartime experiences and accomplishments as well.

"This Bold Conspiracy"

By late January 1942 Rabaul had fallen to the Japanese, and Kieta, on Bougainville, was reported occupied. Marchant was obliged to decide what the British administration, based in the protectorate capital of Tulagi, should do in the face of the impending Japanese onslaught. Any notion of defense was "ludicrous" (British Colonial Office 1946, 9). The only forces available to Marchant were a tiny Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Catalina flying-boat detachment; an Australian Infantry Force (AIF) group consisting of 18 men and 1 officer; and the British Solomon Islands Protectorate Defence Force (BSIPDF), established in September 1939, consisting of 3 officers, 1 British NCO, 1 Islander warrant, and 112 Islander other ranks. As the force was ill-trained and absurdly under-equipped, the islands were "to all intents and purposes defenceless" (*ibid.*, 10). Yet total withdrawal, while militarily sound, was politically unthinkable. Since the Islanders, it was thought, would view evacuation as desertion, it was imperative that the fiction of British rule be maintained. "This bold conspiracy" (*ibid.*, 12) would only work if the Islanders knew what the government was up to and lent their wholehearted support to British efforts.

In practical day-to-day terms, a number of things had to be done: Europeans had to be sent south to Australia; the Islanders had to be instructed what to do when the Japanese arrived; plantation workers had to be repatriated to their villages; and a "scorched earth" with-

drawal scheme had to be worked out for the district stations and for Tulagi, where the radio transmitter, government buildings, and wharves were of military value.

The bulk of the European population was evacuated from Tulagi early in February on board the Burns Philp steamer *Morinda*. Shortly after, Marchant moved his headquarters to Auki on Malaita. The repatriation and education policies he was obliged to leave to his district officers. One of them was Donald Kennedy, who, early in 1942, held a roving commission covering Nggela, Isabel, the Russell Islands, New Georgia, and the Shortland Islands (Figure 5). Kennedy was a born leader, a big, bluff New Zealander of Scots descent. He had served as schoolteacher, radio operator, and district officer in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony before coming to the Solomons in July 1940 (Marchant 1940).

Kennedy had two major mandates early in 1942: to ensure that district and village headmen continued to carry out their duties, thereby maintaining a semblance of the British administrative structure, and, as an officer gazetted to the Defence Force, to activate coastwatching arrangements in his district (Noel 1945). The coastwatching concept antedated the war and was the idea of Lieutenant-Commander Eric Feldt of the Royal Australian Navy. Feldt was aware that Japanese fishing and pearling vessels had probably collected hydrographic data in Melanesia in the 1920s and 1930s (Walton 1985, 44), perhaps in anticipation of possible campaigning in the area. He was also aware that the mountainous, jungle-clad nature of the islands made it possible for agents to work clandestinely behind enemy lines, reporting on the movement of hostile forces. The system that he organized in the late 1930s was code-named Ferdinand after the bull who preferred to smell flowers than to fight. In keeping with the name, the coastwatchers were expected to be passive, watching but not engaging the enemy. Coastwatching was a sufficiently hazardous occupation that most coastwatchers were content with this approach. Not so Kennedy. He found the Ferdinand approach too tame, for practical and personal reasons. While lesser mortals accepted coastwatching directives to avoid clashes with the Japanese, Kennedy appears to have largely ignored such instructions. His successes were such that few dared to complain.

The Japanese had . . . been ordered to make friends with the natives but they couldn't make friends with these natives while they were trusting me. Had I had one defeat from the Japanese, the thing would

have been completely different. Had I taken the advice of this Ferdinand thing of don't fight, let them do this and you keep out of the way, then it would have been different. But these people realized that while I was able to fight and able to lead them and to win in the little skirmishes we had . . . they were on the right side. (Kennedy 1969, 61)

"The Fury and Flurry of Things"

In January 1942, as the "fury and flurry of things" (*ibid.*, 46) was just beginning, Kennedy decided to move his administrative and coastwatching headquarters from Tataba, on the shores of Tanabuli Bay at the southeastern end of Santa Isabel, to the mountain village of Mahaga (map 3). From there he enjoyed an unrestricted view of the anchorage of Thousand Ships Bay and the ocean passage between Isabel and Malaita. Central to the coastwatching system was the teleradio network, which enabled coastwatchers to submit intelligence reports first to Tulagi, then to Marchant's temporary headquarters in the Malaita bush (for rebroadcast, after 7 May, to the Allied authorities in Vila, New Hebrides [Vanuatu]), and finally, following the American landings on 7 August, to Guadalcanal. Kennedy recruited two European planters, Charlie Bignall and Frank Gorringe, to operate the teleradio, and they, together with a detachment of Solomon Islands police, some medical staff, and about fifty carriers and messengers, completed the coastwatching complement in eastern Isabel (Kennedy 1943).

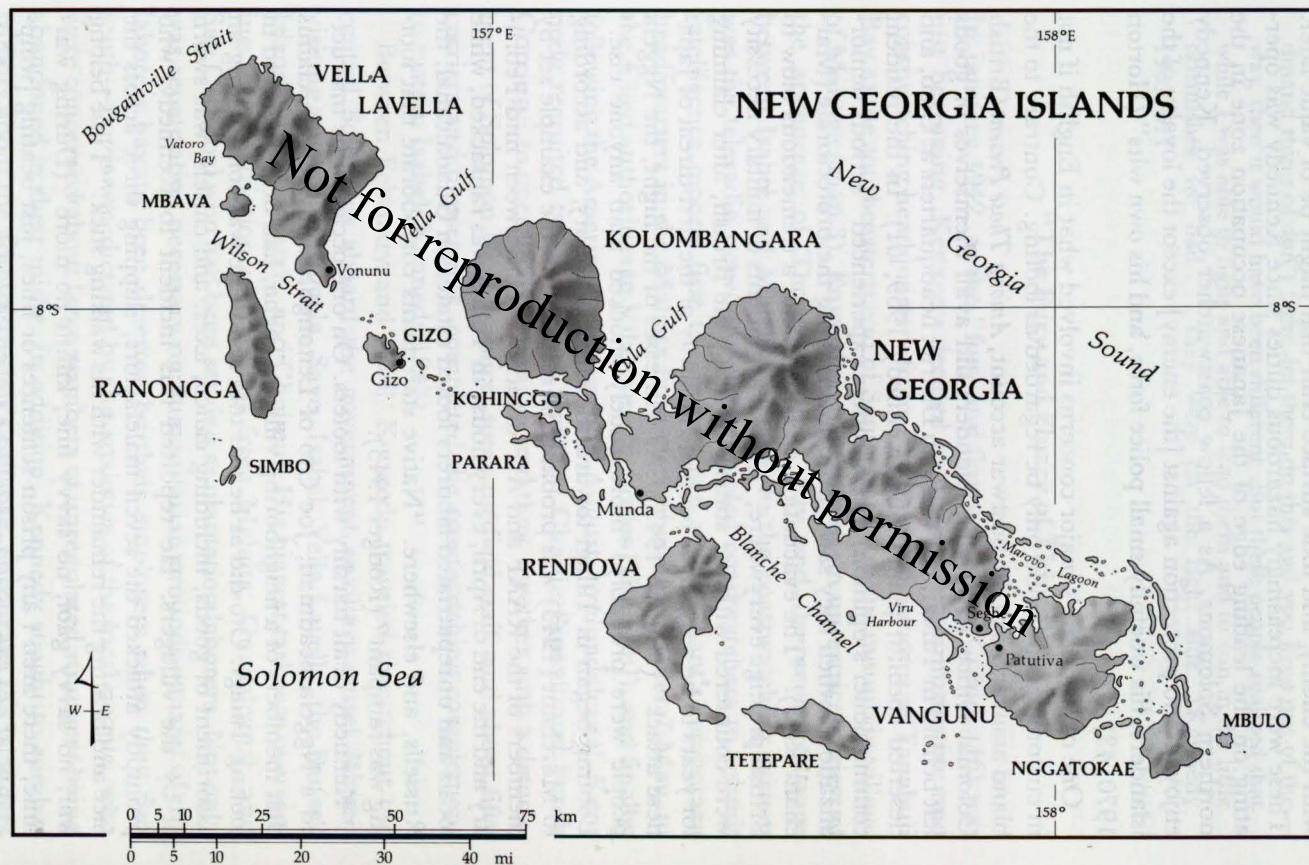
Between February and April, Kennedy traveled throughout the central Solomons aboard the government auxiliary vessel *Wai-ai*, visiting villages on Nggela, Savo, Isabel, Vella Lavella, the Russell Islands, the Shortlands, and Choiseul. His biggest task was overseeing the repatriation of Islanders from Malaita, Guadalcanal, and San Cristobal who had been serving as plantation laborers. Not only was repatriation necessary on humanitarian grounds—many of the laborers having been deserted by their employers when they fled south—but it was dictated by the anxieties of the local people, who were concerned about large numbers of unregulated strangers being abandoned in their midst. In addition, Kennedy sought to combat rumors about the administration's collapse, encourage the Islanders to move their gardens into the hills, establish secret caches of food and fuel, organize Islander coastwatching patrols under the direction of district and village big men, educate the people about dealing

with the enemy, and hide surface craft that might be of value later. These were increasingly hazardous duties since Kennedy was operating on the leading edge of the Japanese occupation zone in the northern Solomons. As a fellow coastwatcher observed, Kennedy enjoyed "no protection against [the enemy] except the loyalty of the islanders, his woefully small police force, and his own wits" (Horton 1970, 43).

One of Kennedy's major concerns involved what in English if not in customary law could only be regarded as looting. Contrary to the bland assurances of the postwar account, *Among Those Present* (British Colonial Office 1946), the Islanders did avail themselves of goods left behind in Tulagi, the Western District headquarters at Gizo, and deserted coconut plantations (Kennedy 1969, 61). In the resident commissioner's opinion, the Islanders experienced "serious demoralization" when they saw Europeans leaving the protectorate (Marchant 1943). "The evacuation of Tulagi dealt a tremendous blow to British prestige everywhere," and all arguments of military necessity were countered with the statement that "the British, after claiming for years to be a superior people, ran away at the first threat of Japanese attack" (Hogbin 1943).¹ As witnesses of the flight, the Nggela people were probably "more rudely shocked than anyone else." Looting began in Tulagi toward the end of January, and according to Marchant (1943) was probably in response to the example set by members of the RAAF and AIF detachments. Between mid-February and the end of April, every house in Tulagi was ransacked, while locals and unrepatriated laborers looted estates on Guadalcanal, the Russells, and elsewhere. "Native statements corroborate that looting was rampant" (Rodger 1943).

Kennedy dealt harshly with looters. On one occasion he instructed a Nggela headman, Joe Oto of Leitongo, to investigate claims that members of a neighboring village, Togha, had been involved in looting Tulagi. Oto did as he was told and as he was confiscating an assortment of goods, including calico, axes, and chisels, was sworn at by the villagers. He reported this incident to Kennedy, who promptly attacked the seven malefactors, slapping three across the face and beating the remainder with his walking stick. "Time belong war, no savvy gaol, no savvy fine, killim no more" (During war-time, there aren't any prison sentences or fines, just beating [whipping]), Kennedy announced (*ibid.*).² The legal processes to which the people had been accustomed were now no more. For the moment, Kennedy was the law.

On another occasion, Kennedy met Belshazzar Gina, a Solomon



Map 10

Islander minister with the Methodist church in the Western Solomons, on Ranongga in March 1942 and accused him of telling the people of the island of Simbo to loot Gizo. According to Gina, he had been instructed by District Officer Miller to make his way to Gizo to recover stocks of gasoline but on reaching his destination found the settlement in flames—in consequence of the government's scorched-earth policy—and did not go ashore.³ Instead he saw three canoes laden with kerosene, bedding, and crockery heading for Simbo. Kennedy refused to believe Gina's explanation. He ordered his police to put the villages of Patusogara, Nusasibo, and Riguru to the torch in order to demonstrate to the people of Simbo that the authorities would not countenance looting.⁴ To what extent the story is true is hard to say. I have independent confirmation of Kennedy's activities on Simbo but only Gina's 1977 recollections to go by in terms of the details. Certainly Gina had every reason to cast Kennedy in a bad light. Quite apart from the injustice of false accusation if Kennedy's allegations were untrue, Patusogara was Gina's own village. Moreover, Kennedy was a notorious womanizer, and Gina alleged that Kennedy beat him about the head with a stick when he failed to procure a young woman for him. When a Marovo woman was obtained by one of Kennedy's lieutenants, she turned out to be one of Gina's relatives, a source of great shame for the Methodist minister. Kennedy, for his part, never trusted Gina, who was a cousin of George Bogese, an Isabel man who betrayed Kennedy and the coastwatching organization to the Japanese. Gina himself appears at one stage during the war to have directed Kennedy and his men toward a Japanese ambush at Viru Harbour, New Georgia. Whatever the case, there was very bad blood between the two men, a fact that makes each of their accounts suspect.

The *Wai-ai*

In mid-February 1942, Kennedy recruited Geoffrey Kuper, a part-Solomon Islander, who had been serving as a Native Medical Practitioner (NMP) on the Polynesian island of Rennell, south of Guadalcanal.⁵ Kuper had gone to the Fiji School of Medicine before the war. His father, Heinrich, had been one of the pioneer planters and traders in the group and was the original owner of the 14-ton government sloop *Wai-ai*. Kuper came to serve with Kennedy on the *Wai-ai* as it toured throughout the Solomons (chapter 2). The master

of the *Wai-ai* and Kennedy's second-in-command was William (Billy) Bennett, a part-Solomon Islander from New Georgia (see Bennett, Gegeo, and White 1988). Like Kennedy, Bennett was a man of many parts: sailor, radio operator, mechanic, medical dresser, cook, and schoolteacher.

Together, they sailed for the Shortlands in late March, visiting Faisi briefly before moving on to Choiseul Bay. Little did they realize how close they had come to being captured by the Japanese. While the *Wai-ai* lay at anchor, two Japanese warships moved through the straits to put a landing party ashore on Faisi on 10 April. Unaware of these events, Kennedy set course for New Georgia, where he convinced John "Dutchy" Klaucke to transport Hugh Wheatley, NMP, a part-Solomon Islander (whose father, the Englishman Norman Wheatley, was the self-styled "king" of New Georgia early in the century), and a local dresser, Joseph Alene, to the Shortlands to treat an outbreak of dysentery and influenza. The three men blundered straight into the Japanese stronghold: Klaucke was never seen again; Alene made good his escape, paddling at night via Fauro to Choiseul; and Wheatley was sent to Rabaul, only to lose his life when the prisoner-of-war vessel he was traveling on, the *Montevideo Maru*, was torpedoed by an American submarine.

In April, Kennedy ordered Gina (whom he had obliged to travel with him since the Simbo incident) to go to Ranongga to recover two vessels, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) schooner *Dadavata* and the 8-ton auxiliary cutter *Joan*, in the care of a part-Solomon Islander, Joe Martin. Gina made his way from Isabel to Choiseul, where he secured the services of a nineteen-man canoe. They crossed the Slot at night, avoiding Japanese naval patrols in the darkness and rain, and reached Vella Lavella at daybreak. Gina traveled on foot to Vonunu, the Methodist headquarters on the island, and sailed from there on the *Cecily* to Ranongga. According to Gina, Kennedy showed no appreciation of his efforts when he delivered up the two vessels to Isabel. "He just [took] me as an ignorant person," he recalled (Gina 1977, 3).

During Gina's absence, Kennedy continued to bring stores from evacuated plantations to his outpost at Mahaga. Butter, condensed milk, rice, crockery, oil, and even iceboxes were lugged up the hill by local porters and hidden in the bush. While Mahaga seemed secure enough, Kennedy took the precaution of establishing an emergency base overlooking Kanggava Bay on Rennell. While he was on Rennell, Kennedy recruited six local men who were destined

to serve with him for fourteen months. They became his machine-gun corps, efficient and reliable soldiers whose "coolness under fire had a steadying effect" on the other men in Kennedy's "army" (Kennedy 1943). It was just as well that Kennedy had organized a fall-back position, for on 3 May the Japanese occupied Tulagi, and he and his followers found themselves behind enemy lines.

The following day aircraft from the carrier USS *Yorktown* attacked Tulagi, sinking the Japanese destroyer *Kitutsuki* and damaging several other naval vessels. It appears that survivors from that attack or the Battle of the Coral Sea, which took place immediately after (5-8 May 1942), were rescued and brought ashore on the island of Savo. They were treated there by George Bogese (often spelled Bogesi), a Native Medical Practitioner from Isabel (Kuper 1972). When the Japanese on neighboring Tulagi learned that their comrades had been saved, they came to Savo and took Bogese into custody. Recalling these events thirty years later, Geoffrey Kuper maintained that the Tulagi invasion force had included a Japanese civilian named Shima, who had run a small commercial concern in Suva prior to the war and had known Bogese when he was enrolled at the Fiji School of Medicine.

It is unclear at present how Bogese was "turned around," but it is clear that he hated Kennedy. Once again the issue was Kennedy's womanizing. The people from Bogese's district on Isabel (his family lived on Sigana Island) had complained to the resident commissioner about Kennedy's conduct, and Bogese and Kennedy had fallen out. Bogese and Gina were related, and Bogese's wife's brother, a man named Supa, had helped Kennedy and Kuper hide the *Wai-ai* at Sigana Bay on the southeastern Isabel coast. The stage was set for mistrust, treachery, and—in British eyes—treason.

At daybreak on Sunday, 17 May, Bogese directed two Japanese landing barges, carrying one hundred troops, to the island of Kolare near Mahaga on the southeastern coast of Isabel. Scouts informed Kennedy that the Japanese were recruiting Bogese's relatives to act as guides in preparation for an attack on the coastwatching headquarters. The situation seemed desperate. All of the south Isabel carriers deserted, and Kennedy and Kuper were left with only five police from north Isabel and the six Rennellese. Together, they made ready to destroy the camp, but at the last minute the commanding officer of the Japanese detachment received word that he and his troops were to return to Tulagi.

In the meantime, Supa had alerted Bogese that the *Wai-ai* lay hid-

den in a creek nearby. Thwarted in their efforts to get at Kennedy, the Japanese decided to destroy the vessel as a parting gesture. Having heard engines in the distance, Bill Bennett had dispatched two of his crew to reconnoiter. They returned almost immediately to announce that "two boats are coming" (Bennett 1977, 3), and at that moment the barges hove into view. Under instructions not to allow the *Wai-ai* to be captured, Bennett doused the little vessel with gasoline. Just as he was doing so, a tracer bullet from a Japanese barge hit the ship, and "the whole bloody kaboodle went boom." Bennett was trapped momentarily in the tangle of mangrove branches that had been strewn over the upper deck as camouflage, but he managed to plunge through the flames into the sea. A moment later the *Wai-ai* blew up, and he pulled himself ashore, terribly burned. The local people attended to him for two days until Geoffrey Kuper arrived to give him medical treatment and take him back to Mahaga.⁶

It was obvious that Kennedy and his band were no longer safe at Mahaga. Not only did the Japanese know the location of the coastwatching station, but there was increasing evidence that the Isabel people were withdrawing their support, which was vital to Kennedy's survival. The day after the *Wai-ai* was destroyed, Kennedy reported to Marchant that the district headmen at Maringe and Hograno had deserted with their followers and that half the intelligence reports he was receiving from the Islanders were "suspiciously false" (Kennedy 1942). Gina recalled urging the local big men to tell Kennedy that they were frightened for their lives and to make it seem to be their own idea. Whatever the case, toward the end of May Kennedy left Mahaga for Rakata Bay aboard the 14-ton former SDA auxiliary ketch *Marara*. Once there, he discovered that the Japanese had begun to use the bay as an anchorage, so he worked his way around to Veavea on the southwest flank of northern Isabel. However, this location proved unsatisfactory as well, because all of the evidence suggested that the main Japanese supply route from Rabaul to Guadalcanal lay to the west of New Georgia and not down the Slot (New Georgia Sound).

What was needed was a new base, unknown to Bogese, from which Kennedy could monitor Japanese activities and carry out district administration more effectively. One place that recommended itself was Seghe, the site of Harold Markham's coconut plantation at the southeastern tip of the island of New Georgia. The location was superb. The admiralty charts of the area (which Kennedy suspected

would form the basis of general Japanese intelligence assessments) portrayed the Seghe Channel incorrectly as being blocked by "foul ground" and coral reefs. However, not only did the waterway provide relatively easy access to both the Slot and Blanche Channel (a route much used by the Japanese for barge traffic to and from Munda), but it was ample enough for flying boats to land in front of the plantation.

Seghe: The Eye of the Storm

Leaving Geoffrey Kuper behind to supervise the coastwatching organization on Isabel (see chapter 2), Kennedy departed for Seghe early in July 1942. His first task was to establish a new headquarters. Markham's old home served as a residence for Kennedy and a seventeen-year-old Rennellese woman, Magiko Sogo, whom he had brought along as his mistress. Leaf houses were built for his New Georgian carriers and scouts. The teleradio was located in a shack half a mile into the bush, "getaway roads" (as he called them) were cut through the jungle, and secret caches of food were established (Lord 1977, 210). In addition, a corrugated tin and barbed-wire stockade was erected for prisoners of war, trenches were dug, and lookout and antiaircraft gun emplacements were put in place. An armory was built to house Kennedy's catholic assortment of weapons obtained from downed American and Japanese aircraft, enemy soldiers, and Allied sources. "Enemy equipment captured by the armed scouts included six barges (one of which was later destroyed), one twenty-millimeter cannon, two Hotchkiss-type machine guns, one Bren-type machine gun, two submachine guns, twelve pistols and about sixty rifles. Ample stocks of ammunition were also captured and in most of the actions . . . Japanese arms and ammunition were used by the Scouts" (Kennedy 1943).

Following the American landings on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942, there was a dramatic increase in the number of Japanese aircraft flying between the northwestern and the central Solomons. As most of them flew over Seghe, Kennedy was able to alert the Americans at Lungga on Guadalcanal that they were on their way. At the same time, local coastwatching patrols throughout the New Georgia archipelago provided Kennedy with a constant stream of information about the movements of Japanese naval and merchant ships. This intelligence was further supplemented toward the end of the



Kennedy's "Army," Seghe Point, New Georgia, June 1943. (*Michael Currin*)

year, when Lieutenants Henry Josselyn and Dick Horton of the Royal Australian Navy were appointed as coastwatchers on Vella Lavella and Rendova, respectively. Kennedy was in constant communication with both men by teleradio and local canoe patrols, and the information that they and their own networks of scouts provided was relayed by radio to Lungga or picked up by Catalina flying boats at Seghe. (Early in November 1942 the value of local assistance was dramatically illustrated when Henry Josselyn made a 130-mile journey by canoe through enemy waters to deliver a radio to Kennedy.)

The Japanese occupied Gizo in October, and as a result of Gina's scouting the Americans were able to dive-bomb the Japanese encampment and drive them off the island. At the same time, the Japanese occupied Viru Harbour, only nine miles from Seghe. Once again Gina was sent to reconnoiter the Japanese position. He entered the camp with two young companions, and they quickly determined the location of the enemy dumps, guns, and barges. The Japanese were accustomed to having Islanders appear now and then, though by this stage in the war fear of the enemy and Japanese raids on garden plots had driven most of the local people into the bush (Siosi 1972, 1; Paia 1972, 1). Suspicious for some reason, one of the Japanese soldiers stopped Gina and interrogated him, in the

process hitting him on the side of the head with a rifle butt. "I just remembered God's will and the hundreds of thousands of people praying for salvation from war," Gina recalled (1977, 5). Shortly afterward, the threesome managed to escape, and, equipped with intelligence from Seghe, the Americans were able to launch a series of major air strikes against the Japanese outpost.

The Japanese were well aware of Kennedy's activities but were not aware of the exact location of his base. They sent out patrols repeatedly to probe the jungle and scan the coast toward Seghe. Unless threatened directly, Kennedy was happy to pursue a live-and-let-live policy, but once the enemy penetrated what he called his "forbidden zone" he worked on the principle of total annihilation. On a number of occasions he and his men wiped out enemy patrols or overwhelmed Japanese detachments that strayed too close to Seghe in their barges. Total annihilation not only left the enemy fearful and uncertain, but it helped alleviate the problem of prisoners. Kennedy's stockade was frequently full of prisoners, who had to be guarded as well as competing for the extremely limited supplies of food. The Seghe "garrison" had access to a few plantation cattle and some local garden produce. According to Bennett (1977, 5), the garrison lived off the village gardens on a rotational basis, one village per week. However, the Islanders resisted feeding the enemy. "We don't mind feeding you and your force," they informed Kennedy, "but we don't feel like feeding Japanese prisoners. Either you can give them to us and let us deal with them or you can get rid of them" (Kennedy 1969, 55). In December 1942 a Japanese destroyer and three cargo vessels were destroyed by American aircraft at Wickham anchorage south of the island of Vangunu. Kennedy and his scouts managed to recover about ten tons of rice and dry rations from the wrecks (Horton 1970, 150). Eventually, Kennedy arranged for prisoners of war to be flown out by American Catalina flying boat to Guadalcanal, but in the interval prisoners were a problem.

Kennedy's scouts and the local people were extremely adept at rescuing downed American pilots and capturing Japanese soldiers and airmen. (For example, the rescue in February 1943 of Lt. Bob Sorensen, USN, and four others is described by Lord [1977, 167].) George Jamokolo of Kavolavata village, Nggatokae, was involved in one such episode. Thirteen Japanese flyers had made their way to the Levers plantation at Yandina in the Russell Islands. There they stole a dinghy and, having fashioned a sail from copra bags, set course for Munda, where the Japanese had landed on 24 November

1942. "The southern parts of New Georgia and the Marovo Lagoon [across which they were sailing] were risky areas for the Japanese," Jamokolo recalled (1981, 1), "because of the ruthless effectiveness of coastwatcher Kennedy and his 'guerrilla army'." When the Japanese sailed past Kavolavata to Sobiro, Jamokolo announced to his friends, "mi go lukim givim kaikai" (I'll go see them and give them some food). The Japanese revealed their plans to Jamokolo, whom they considered friendly, but others reported the enemy's whereabouts to Kennedy. He came with his men and attacked the Japanese in the middle of the night. Eight of them were killed, and of the five that escaped one was shot at in the water and presumed dead. However, he survived, and Jamokolo was pressured by one of Kennedy's scouts to bring him in. When Jamokolo delivered the man to Seghe, he was shot by Kennedy as he tried to leap out of the canoe into the sea.

A Hard Man

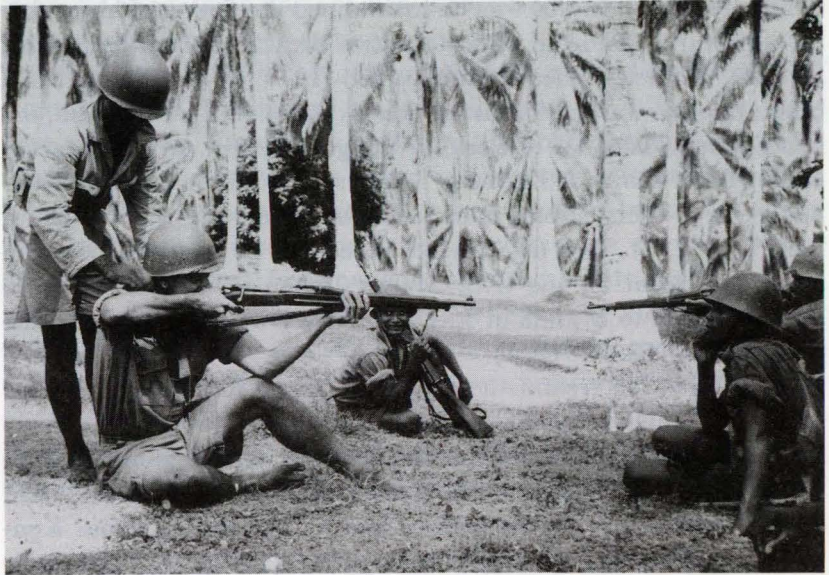
Kennedy had a complex and powerful personality, and his relationship with the Solomon Islanders was only partly determined by his successes as a big man, organizing affairs, executing skillful ambushes, and protecting their interests. There was a dark side to his character. "Kenti," as he was often called, was a man much given to suspicion, jealousy, and brutality. He never forgave those who crossed him or those whom he suspected of being less than loyal. He was insanely jealous of Magiko and tried to keep her confined to the house so that none of the men could speak to her. Magiko remembered him as a kind and sensitive man early in the war. Later, however, he became "very hard" (Sogo 1977, 1).⁷ He lived on the edge, his life constantly in danger. He drank heavily, and Bennett recalled how, after the Americans reached Seghe in July 1943, Kennedy went "off his head" one night and tried to machine-gun nonexistent Japanese in the jungle (1977, 6).

His men were more frightened of Kennedy than of the Japanese. He demanded complete obedience, and when he judged that it was not forthcoming he would thrash the man involved or sentence him to "the drum." The victim was then spread-eagled over a 44-gallon drum and flogged to within an inch of his life with fathom lengths of *loia* cane (Kennedy 1969, 63). Kennedy, it seems, never administered the punishment himself, preferring to let his lieutenants carry

out the sentence. In this way he maintained the fiction of impartiality, a posture reinforced on at least two occasions when he had his favorite, Bennett, caned. (Gina argued [1977, 7] that Bennett had been unduly rewarded for his services as a procurer.) Willy Paia, the first Solomon Islander to work for the government (in 1926), acted among other things as Kennedy's chief scout and recalled that Kennedy was a "very strong man [and that] everyone was afraid [of him]" (1972, 1). That assessment was echoed by Milton Siosi, who acted as a scout for the U.S. Marines when they advanced from Zanana Beach to Munda in July 1943: "My word, he whipped the people a lot" (Siosi 1972, 1).

A victim of this treatment was one of the six Rennellese machine gunners, Timothy Togaka. According to Gina (1977, 7), Kennedy hit Togaka on the back with the butt of a rifle, and he vomited blood and died. Magiko Sogo confirmed that one of the six Rennellese had died at Seghe, that the Rennellese had a "bad feeling about Kennedy," and that he was "very hard on them" (1977a, 1). "The name of the Rennellese who died after corporal punishment was Timothy Tongaka [*sic*]. He lingered for about two weeks. . . . no one remonstrated because they had come to see that in war anything could pass. They lived in intense fear of K., and both [informants] stressed that the Western Solomons remained loyal to [the] British cause because they could visualize the consequences if K. found them guilty of any disloyalty" (Sogo 1977b).

One of the principal victims of Kennedy's brutality was Belshazar Gina. At one stage, as the Japanese were sending out patrols from Viru Harbour in search of Kennedy, Gina convinced the coastwatcher to allow him to conduct a reconnaissance of the Japanese position. In due course he sent back word that there were about three hundred Japanese encamped on one side of the harbor and about nine unguarded barges on the opposite shore. Capable of attaining speeds of fifteen knots and carrying one hundred men each, these well-armed vessels made attractive military targets. Kennedy, anxious to deny his opponents their maritime mobility, resolved to destroy the barges. Fortunately for him and his fellows, another member of his "army," Ngatu, the partly blind chief of Patutiva, had been keeping Gina under surveillance. He knew that Gina was not even at Viru Harbour and that the barges, far from being unguarded, were fully manned in anticipation of Kennedy's arrival. Ngatu was able to get word to Kennedy at the last minute, just as he reached the entrance to the harbor with twenty canoe-



Kennedy's "Army" in training at Seghe Point, June 1943. Belshazzar (Billy) Gina stands behind one soldier helping him to sight his rifle. (*Michael Currin*)

loads of fighting men (Kennedy 1969, 71). The Islanders demanded Gina's execution for treachery, but, according to Kennedy, he dissuaded them from that course. Instead, Gina was sentenced to one hundred lashes on the drum. When the count reached twenty-five and Gina's backside had been reduced to a bloody pulp, Kennedy halted the punishment. From then, Gina was under what amounted to house arrest at Seghe.

The Viru Harbour episode raises questions about Gina's seemingly contradictory behavior. Why was he prepared to risk his life for Kennedy on numerous occasions and to betray him on another? Was his alleged treachery a measure of the degree to which his relationship with Kennedy had deteriorated since the Simbo incident? Was he, in fact, honestly mistaken about the enemy dispositions or was he the victim of some "court" intrigue on the part of his colleagues? SDA correspondence (1968) suggested that there were "at least two men who tried hard to kill [Kennedy] in the midst of battle," but their shots from behind only grazed him. Further, the same correspondence maintained that "It was one of [Kennedy's] own men that went across to Munda and invited the Japanese to the Marovo Lagoon." Gina may have been the instrument or unsus-

pecting victim of an unsuccessful scheme on the part of disaffected members of Kennedy's army.

The Battle of Marovo

Another victim of Kennedy's wrath was the Seventh Day Adventist pastor, Kato Ragoso, whose fate was intimately connected with another celebrated Kennedy exploit, the "Battle of Marovo." On the evening of Tuesday, 18 May 1943, ten Japanese entered the Marovo Lagoon in a whaleboat and came ashore to spend the night on the island of Vorusu near the SDA station at Mbatuna.⁸ At the time, Ragoso was visiting people who had fled to Nono when the Japanese occupied Viru Harbour seven months earlier. Fearing for his family, he proceeded by canoe to Mbatuna only to discover that his wife and children had taken refuge on the island of Telina not far from where the Japanese were bivouacked. Alerted by his scouts, Kennedy reached Telina that night as well. He was furious with Ragoso for failing to report the enemy's presence in the lagoon and placed the pastor and Lodi, the government headman for Marovo, under arrest on board the *Dadavata*.

Kennedy and Ragoso had crossed swords before, and mission politics may have been at the heart of the matter. Ngatu, a Methodist adherent and Kennedy's right-hand man, was allegedly jealous of Ragoso's authority in the Marovo area (Steley 1985), and, according to Ragoso, Kennedy had attempted to "spoil" his life on several occasions by trying to hold court in an SDA schoolhouse on the Sabbath, trying to force SDA adherents to work on the Sabbath, and trying to persuade Ragoso to leave the mission and work for the government during the war (Ragoso 1945). Were (1970) stated that Kennedy was planning to hold court in the SDA schoolhouse in order to try some of the Simbo looters and wanted Ragoso to act as an assessor. Were maintained that Ragoso refused to take part in the proceedings because he would not condone the whipping of his own people (1970, 72).

Additional evidence suggests (though does not confirm) that "a disaffected or disgruntled SDA" from Buini Tusu, a village near Seghe, may have been to blame for "feeding Kennedy lies about Ragoso's activities and loyalty" (Steley 1986). If this was the case, and Ragoso was indeed the victim of a calumny, it would go far toward explaining Kennedy's brutal and immediate response. Ra-

goso was not one of Kennedy's scouts and was under no formal obligation to report to him. Furthermore, if the sequence of events was as tight as it appears to have been, the pastor, having himself only just learned of the Japanese presence, was hardly in a position to communicate with the coastwatcher in time. Rather, it seems that Kennedy, his paranoia suitably fueled, gave vent to his own fears and frustrations by striking out at the nearest victim.

Late that day, the nineteenth, word reached Kennedy that the Japanese had departed Vorusu and were heading for Vangunu. Ragoso was locked in a cabin aft (where he is said to have invoked Jehovah's assistance), and the *Dadavata* set off in hot pursuit. The Japanese had a five-hundred-yard lead, and as the gap closed a fierce machine-gun duel took place. Despite the jamming of their 50-caliber Browning after three belts and Kennedy being hit in the upper leg, they kept fighting. One of the Japanese managed to hurl a concussion grenade, which stunned Kennedy and his crew, but a moment later the *Dadavata*, with Bennett at the wheel, rammed the whaleboat, and the Japanese were finished off in the water. It now appears that Kennedy was also meant to be a victim. Only months before his death in 1988, Bennett revealed that it was he, and not the enemy, who had fired the bullet that wounded Kennedy (White and Laracy 1988, 3-4). It seems Bennett had recently been flogged and used the heat of battle as a cover to attempt to kill the coastwatcher in revenge. Fortunately for Kennedy, an awkward angle of fire combined with the movement of the ship to save his life, and he never realized that his own lieutenant had tried to kill him.

When the *Dadavata* returned to Seghe, Ragoso was brought to "trial" before Kennedy, Bennett, the Nggela scout John Manebona, and three other men. During the proceedings (and we have only Ragoso's account for details), Kennedy allegedly struck Ragoso on the head with a rifle three times and, seizing his hair, beat his head against a post till he bled profusely. Recalling these events more than thirty years later, Magiko Sogo remembered that Kennedy beat Ragoso until he was almost dead. Ragoso's recollections and Magiko's account confirm that the young Rennellese woman pleaded with Kennedy to stop. "Finish master, no killim more" (Stop, sir, don't hit him anymore), she is reported to have cried (Ragoso 1945).

But the end was not yet in sight. One of Kennedy's men, Isoa, was ordered to flog Ragoso on the drum, and subsequently the pastor was sentenced to be shot. It is part of SDA mythology that either

the gun would not fire or that "Thomas," as Kennedy was called in one account, was prevented by God from giving the order to shoot (Martin 1985, 12). If this was not sufficient proof of the victory of the forces of light over the forces of darkness, Kennedy's departure from the Solomons in September 1943 was interpreted as resulting from his disgraceful treatment of the man whose faith had been his shield.⁹

Kennedy had been invalidated out of the protectorate, nearly a broken man. Alcoholism, loneliness, and stress had reduced him to the point where the resident commissioner was convinced that he was mentally ill (BSIP 1944). Kennedy's problems arose in part from, and were compounded by, the realization that he was no longer needed—at least not in the way he had been before. His war was over. At one stage he had been in the eye of the storm, caught between the Japanese in the northern Solomons and on Guadalcanal. But the eye shrank as the Japanese occupied New Georgia and the Americans advanced west of Guadalcanal. For a brief period, Seghe was almost on the front line. Then in June 1943, the U.S. Marines, who had conducted a reconnaissance of Seghe three months earlier, returned to stay. An airstrip was constructed in the middle of Markham's estate, and the anchorage was given over to naval vessels. The front line moved slowly but steadily westward to Munda and Bougainville, leaving Kennedy and his army behind. He left the Solomons on 13 September. His men went back to their gardens, to working with the Solomon Islands Labour Corps, and to assisting the Americans and their allies "up west." Fortunately for the Islanders, the physical damage to their world was slight. Plantations on the north coast of Guadalcanal and in the Munda area had been shot up badly, but local villages escaped largely unscathed. For most Solomon Islanders the war was over with the same inexplicable suddenness with which it began.

Conclusion

The war struck the Solomons like a tropical storm, suddenly, violently, and seemingly beyond human control. The old order dissolved with unsettling rapidity. British claims to greatness were seen to be hollow pretense. The Islanders were demoralized by the collapse of colonial authority, and some of them availed themselves of

the goods left behind by the Europeans. The authorities called it "looting," and a number of Islanders acknowledged that what they had done was contrary to British law. Others no doubt viewed the abandoned spoils as legitimate booty, given the circumstances.

Despite the dark and uncertain future, the Islanders remained overwhelmingly loyal to their colonial "masters." The fiction of British rule was maintained, and throughout the protectorate the Islanders for the most part served the British, the Americans, and the coastwatchers faithfully and resolutely.

The same was certainly true of those who came within Kennedy's orbit, though the experiences of his army were not typical. The most obvious distinction sprang from Kennedy being a far more active coastwatcher than the others. Not only did he command a larger and more vital area for a longer period than did his colleagues, but he attacked the enemy. In addition to being scouts, carriers, messengers, and interpreters, Kennedy's men were soldiers. They became seasoned guerrillas, exploiting mobility, surprise, and local knowledge to great effect. Furthermore, they were operating in a friendly environment. In the words of the Chinese general, Chu Teh, they were the fish and the resident population was the sea. By providing assistance to Kennedy and his men and by denying it to the Japanese, the local people made Kennedy's war not only successful but possible. As Kennedy recalled "the natives of the whole of New Georgia . . . had taken my word as Gospel. They treated me really well. They did not deviate for one second from the thing that I'd given them to do. I told them to get out of their villages, comfortable villages near sand beach, make your gardens . . . up in the hills where the Japanese will have a hell of a job to find you and you'll be safe. And with the exception of a few who lost their pigs by leaving them in their familiar positions they were safe" (1969, 60). When Kennedy did encounter difficulty, as with Bennett, Bogese, Gina, and Ragoso, it was usually the result of personal antipathy rather than disloyalty to the Allied cause. Men like Bogese probably thought more in terms of settling old scores than of advancing the enemy's fortunes. What complicated matters for Kennedy was the unpredictable way in which such factors as kinship, jealousy, religious sensitivity, and fear multiplied and translated danger from one part of the protectorate to another. But good fortune, skill, and the unswerving loyalty of the vast majority of the Islanders enabled Kennedy and his men to overcome those dangers and win their war.

Notes

I am particularly grateful for the constructive criticism and kind support that I received from Graham Baines, Charles Forman, Dennis Steley, Geoff White, Lamont Lindstrom, and Sam Elbert in the reworking of this chapter. My thanks go as well to my Solomon Islander informants who made this account possible.

1. The anthropologist Ian Hogbin was asked to comment on unrest on Nggela during the war. His confidential report, dated 30 October 1943, to Resident Commissioner O. C. Noel, analyzed the reasons for the administration's unpopularity and contained observations that throw interesting light on the origins of the postwar nativistic movement, Maasina Rule. One of Hogbin's recommendations was that "Several thousands of copies of official publications describing the British war effort, as well as large numbers of such journals as the *Illustrated London News* might be distributed [throughout the Solomons] to counteract the effect of *Life* and other American magazines now [1943] so much in evidence." *Among Those Present* (British Colonial Office 1946) was a piece of British postwar propaganda designed to highlight the Islanders' contribution to the war effort and perhaps to defuse some of the antiadministration sentiment arising at that time. For Hogbin's report, see WPHC, IC: BSIP/FC Kennedy Coastwatching.

2. Allegations respecting Kennedy's brutality on Nggela were subject to lengthy investigation. See Hogbin 1943; WPHC 1944. Western Pacific High Commissioner Sir Philip Mitchell (1944) noted that "after investigation by the district officer of the Nggela District, Resident Commissioner [O. C. Noel] considers that there is no need for further action in respect of allegations against Kennedy."

3. District Officer Miller provided a detailed description of the destruction of the RAAF gasoline stores (250 44-gallon drums in the Burns Philp bond warehouse) at Gizo on the morning of Tuesday, 27 January 1942. Why he would have instructed Gina to recover gasoline from Gizo is unclear under the circumstances (see Miller 1942).

4. During an interview in September 1969 Donald Kennedy recalled how he had found the Union Jack torn down at Gizo and defecated upon by the Islanders. He was convinced that Gina had put the Simbo people up to the looting. "I gave him [the police sergeant-major] orders to burn every second house," Kennedy recollected. "He started and then I looked and I saw there was quite a number of kids, and I've got a soft spot for kids. I just couldn't think of them, bloody adults probably crowding the [remaining] houses and driving the kids out. So I said 'Every third house, sergeant-major.' He burnt every third house. We stayed and watched them burn. The whole damn crowd was standing there shivering, so I changed my mind and burned half of them or more. Well that story went all around the island of Guadalcanal, everywhere, and my word was law, wherever I went after that. Those people were enemies. They'd shat on the king's flag and they had done everything to indicate that they would be the first people to join the Japanese. Actually, none of them joined the Japanese and that was the reason, I'm satisfied. But had I been weak with them they would have" (Kennedy 1969, 62-63).

5. By the time he joined Kennedy, Kuper was working at the clinic at the Aola district station on Guadalcanal (Kuper 1972, 4).

6. Bogese was captured during the American reoccupation of Tulagi on 7 August

1942. The following month he was committed to three years' internment in Australia. When he returned to the Solomons in October 1945, he was arrested and brought to trial charged with an offense contrary to Section 27 of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939. He was found guilty and sentenced on 3 May 1946 to four years' hard labor at Rove prison on the outskirts of the new capital, Honiara. Supa was reportedly captured at Tulagi by Bennett and taken back by canoe to Kennedy at Seghe, where he was at first jailed and then released to serve with the coastwatchers. See BSIP 1946.

7. Magiko and five of the six Rennellese members of Kennedy's "machine-gun corps" were flown from Seghe back to Rennell early in 1943 on a Catalina flying boat. Magiko was pregnant by Kennedy and had a daughter. The baby girl died of malaria in 1945 and was buried at Kanggava, Rennell (Sogo 1977a).

8. Lord gave the wrong date in *Lonely Vigil* (1977), where he described these events as taking place in April. He based much of his account on the transcript of an interview with Kennedy without cross-checking his facts. For example, Kennedy recalled Ragoso's name as Punda, and this error and others found their way into Lord's account.

9. Ragoso's diary entries for this period are frankly puzzling. The entry for Thursday, 20 May, describes how he was whipped fifteen times, questioned about the Japanese, and informed that he was to be shot in the morning. The entry for the following day consists of one line: "Today the prisoners were making the wharf at the lagoon." There is absolutely no reference to his miraculous reprieve (Ragoso 1943).

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CHAPTER 15

World War II Experience and Life History: Two Cases from Malaita, Solomon Islands

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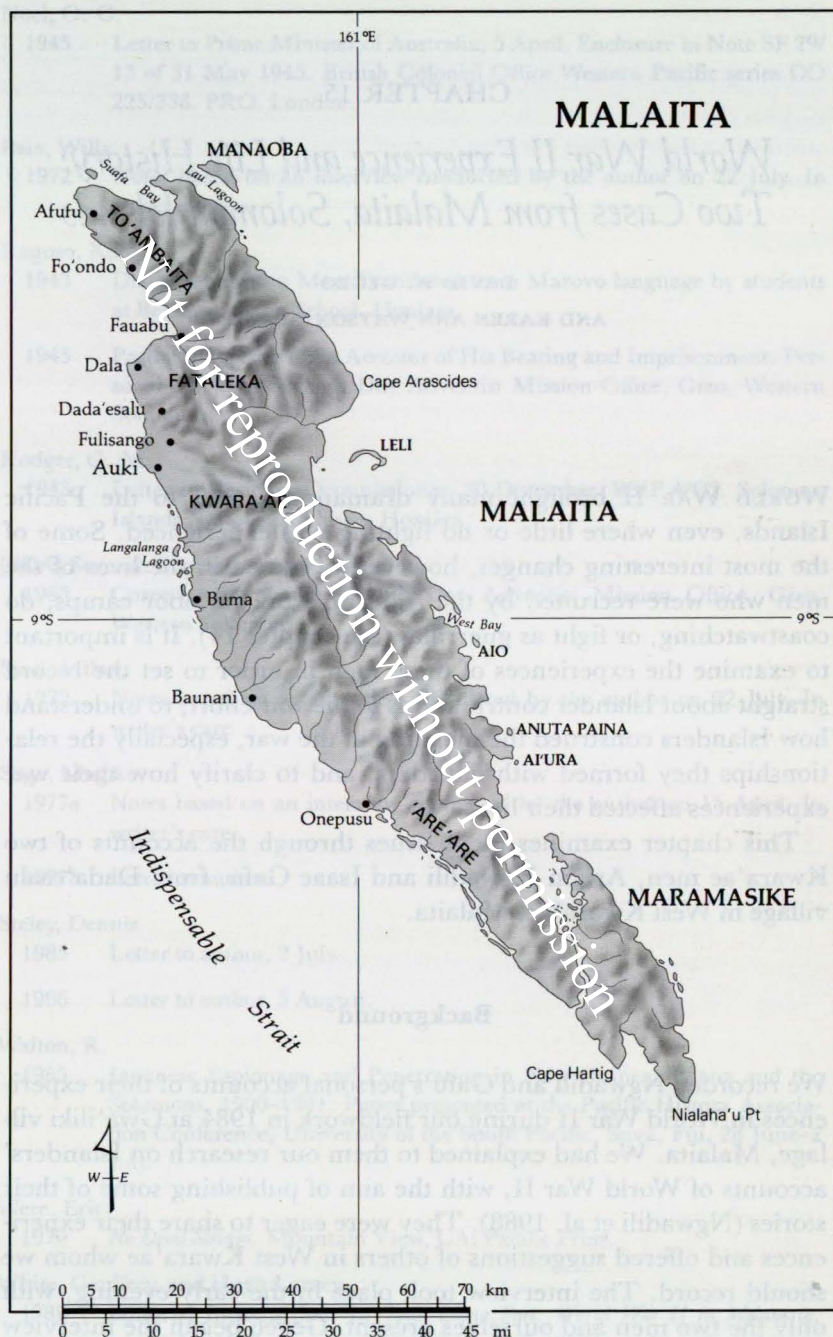
AND KAREN ANN WATSON-GE GEO

WORLD WAR II brought many dramatic changes to the Pacific Islands, even where little or no fighting was experienced. Some of the most interesting changes, however, occurred in the lives of the men who were recruited by the Allies to work in labor camps, do coastwatching, or fight as guerrillas (see chapter 14). It is important to examine the experiences of these men in order to set the record straight about Islander contributions to the war effort, to understand how Islanders construed the meaning of the war, especially the relationships they formed with outsiders, and to clarify how their war experiences affected their lives.

This chapter examines these issues through the accounts of two Kwara'ae men, Arnon Ngwadili and Isaac Gafu, from Dada'esalu village in West Kwara'ae, Malaita.

Background

We recorded Ngwadili and Gafu's personal accounts of their experiences in World War II during our fieldwork in 1984 at Gwa'iliki village, Malaita. We had explained to them our research on Islanders' accounts of World War II, with the aim of publishing some of their stories (Ngwadili et al. 1988). They were eager to share their experiences and offered suggestions of others in West Kwara'ae whom we should record. The interview took place in the early evening, with only the two men and ourselves present. Gegeo began the interview by asking them to "talk about the war." Ngwadili and then Gafu gave narrative accounts, but soon the interview became a conversa-



Map 11

tion with both men comparing their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Gegeo occasionally asked questions for further information or clarification. The session lasted about ninety minutes.

Our discussion in this chapter also takes into consideration accounts volunteered by other villagers who participated in the war, as included in our field notes from trips to Malaita in 1978, 1979, 1981, and 1984.

Malaita's War Involvement

Malaita, the most populous of the six large islands composing the Solomons, was not the scene of any major battle during the war. Its direct involvement was primarily in supplying able-bodied men to the Allied war effort. Some Malaitans actually participated in the fighting, but most served as workers in the hastily formed Solomon Islands Labour Corps. At least three sites on Malaita were bombed during the war. In one case, the Japanese shelled buildings at the Anglican hospital at Fauabu, with no casualties. The other two incidents occurred just prior to or during the American landings on Guadalcanal and Nggela, and both resulted in casualties. The Japanese dropped twenty bombs on the Fo'ondo Mission on the north coast on 6 August, killing at least six Islanders (Marchant, 6 August 1942), and U.S. planes bombed two artificial islands in Langalanga Lagoon for no apparent reason on 7 August, killing between eighteen and twenty-two inhabitants (Marchant, 7 August; Maelalo 1980, 7).¹ On one occasion a Japanese ship arrived in Auki harbor but withdrew to join the battle between the Americans and the Japanese on Nggela. On two occasions in November and December 1942, Malaita scouts and police were instrumental in helping American marines attack and destroy Japanese detachments in northern Malaita (Aubin 1942-1943, and see below).

For West Kwara'ae, the episode remembered most today began with the Japanese occupation of Tulagi on 3 May 1942, when Bishop Walter Hubert Baddeley fled from Nggela to join the British resident commissioner, William Sydney Marchant, at Auki, Malaita. The next day, the bishop, the resident commissioner, two British women schoolteachers, and a small group of Solomon Islands men went into hiding at the inland village of Fulisango (located about four miles up a ridge from Ngwadili and Gafu's home village and about eight miles from the west coast facing Guadalcanal and Nggela).

Malaita people experienced the terror of war, even if largely from a distance. They saw planes being shot down in the channel between Guadalcanal and Malaita, they heard the pounding of guns during the American campaign on Guadalcanal, and they lived in fear that Malaita could be invaded at any time and place. One night word came that the district commissioner had just ordered all living on the west coast of Malaita to abandon their villages and take refuge in the forest. People still talk about how the women pulled their sleeping children from bed and fled into the forest with them, and how the men spent the rest of the night laboring to erect shelters for their families in mosquito-infested swampy areas, using the dim light of dried bamboo and coconut leaves (cf. chapter 11 for an account of similar evacuations of coastal villages on Santa Cruz). During this period people were prohibited from building fires at night and from fishing at sea so that they would not become targets for the combatants. The stories we collected all emphasize the constant state of fear, heightened by the unusual sounds of explosions and the sightings of battleships and airplanes.

Arnon Ngwadili and Isaac Gafu: Background

Ngwadili and Gafu, who are both from Dada'esalu, present an interesting contrast in their backgrounds, war experiences, and subsequent social roles. In his youth, Ngwadili completed junior primary schooling at Onepusu, the large South Sea Evangelical Church (SSEC) school in East Malaita. For awhile he was an orderly for the Malaita District Council and then took a variety of odd jobs in Auki (Malaita's commercial center). He joined the Solomon Islands Constabulary as a policeman just before the Second World War began. In 1939 he was recruited into the newly formed Solomon Islands Defence Force and was sent to Tulagi on Nggela, where he and the other Solomon Islanders in the Defence Force were trained to fight. He was still there when the Japanese first bombed Tulagi on 22 January 1942.

The Japanese continued bombing Tulagi over the next few months and eventually occupied it in early May. In late February, Malaita District Officer C. N. F. Bengough selected Ngwadili and a few others to accompany Resident Commissioner Marchant as he moved his headquarters from Tulagi to Auki. One of the others selected was Salana Ga'a, who became an important political leader

in West Kwara'ae after the war. Ngwadili was chosen because he spoke relatively good English and was regarded as a stable, calm person. Bengough and the Solomon Islands police stayed in Auki when the rest of the party took refuge at Fulisango with Bishop Baddeley. On 2 December, when Marchant moved to Lungga on Guadalcanal, he took Ngwadili to be caretaker of his house and Ga'a as his bodyguard and companion.

When Ngwadili became involved in the war, he was a young man who had already traveled away from his village, received some Western schooling, spoke good English, had trained and worked in the wage-labor economy, and was accustomed to interacting with European church and government officials. In contrast, Gafu was an Anglican villager who had grown up in a very traditional lifestyle. A quiet, gentle man, he had always lived in the shadow of his elder brother, who had been chosen as the head of his descent group, given special traditional training for the role, and had become village chief by the time of the war. Gafu had not traveled far from his village and spoke only Solomon Islands Pijin in addition to his native Kwara'ae. Soon after the Americans made their landing on Guadalcanal, a call went out for Solomon Islanders on Malaita to join the Labour Corps. Gafu joined and arrived on Guadalcanal in December 1942 with the first Malaita units of the Labour Corps to assist with the American campaign.

Ngwadili's War Experiences

Ngwadili was involved in the war effort from the beginning, and his account demonstrates an understanding of the war as a process—troop movements, battles, weaponry, and events going on in different parts of the islands simultaneously. This larger perspective also reflects his own location in the war, working for the resident commissioner and therefore having access to information and events at the governmental level. His account is punctuated with personal experiences and short narratives of events he remembers best, including quoted dialogue that reveals what he and others were thinking at the time. But many of the events he reported are second-hand because he himself was never sent to the battlefield.

First he described the initial Japanese bombings of Tulagi in January 1942 and the scene as he and others scrambled into foxholes and fired back, eventually shooting down one of the Japanese

planes. After Tulagi had been bombed three times and the Japanese were reportedly on their way back for a fourth time in late February, Ngwadili, with Solomon Islands policemen and others, walked across Nggela with Resident Commissioner Marchant and Bishop Baddeley to board three small ships and flee to Malaita. One of the most interesting parts of Ngwadili's account was his portrayal of the argument over whether the Solomon Islands men at Tulagi should stay to fight with the Allies or flee to Malaita. He described how Sergeant Major Stephen Sipolo and Sergeants Sau and Falasi of the Solomon Islands Defence Force argued with Bishop Baddeley that the Defence Force should stay and fight the Japanese. But the Bishop won out in the end, arguing that if the Islanders fought, they might kill a few of the enemy, but "the Japanese will kill every one of you. And they will harm the village people." In the end, the resident commissioner agreed with the bishop.

Ngwadili described how, while they were at Fulisango scouts were sent out to keep track of the Japanese and to assist the coastwatchers, who stayed in contact with the resident commissioner by wireless (see chapters 2 and 14). Two ships had been hidden on the eastern side of Malaita to provide escape in case the Japanese occupied the island. During this period a ship carrying forty Japanese soldiers landed at Auki wharf. Solomon Islands scouts hurried up into the bush to bring the news, and the Fulisango group radioed the Americans at Santo asking for help. Ngwadili reported that the Americans radioed back, "All right, we will be there Friday morning at eight o'clock." The next morning came the American invasion of Nggela and Tenaru Beach, Guadalcanal.

With the Americans needing more assistance, more Solomon Islanders began to be trained by New Zealanders on Malaita at Camp Baunani, where a Fijian battalion trained Solomon Islanders in jungle fighting. Ngwadili reported that again Bishop Baddeley intervened, arguing that "This is not our fight. It belongs to England. The Americans only came to help us." Ngwadili reported that this was the point at which Gafu and the men of his Labour Corps unit became involved in the war.

A secondhand description was given by Ngwadili of the American marine attack on the Japanese radio post at Afufu about 6 November 1942 (see Aubin 1942-1943; Wall 1946; Fox 1962, 123; Horton 1975, 89-90). From the time the Japanese first established the radio post in July 1942, Solomon Islands scouts gathered information by selling fresh food to the soldiers stationed there (see chapter 2 for

similar tactics on Santa Isabel). Prior to the attack, the Solomon Islanders cut a trail for a force of about fifty U.S. Marines, who surrounded the camp and surprised the Japanese at morning prayers. All were killed immediately, except one taken prisoner and two others who escaped but were subsequently hunted down and killed by the Solomon Islands police. (Estimates of the number of Japanese manning the post at the time disagree. Ngwadili's recollection of sixty is higher than either Aubin's (1942-1943) or Fox's (1962, 123) estimate of about fifty or Wall's (1946, 5) figure of twenty-three.) Ngwadili also recalled having been involved in the capture, near Afufu, of seven Japanese soldiers, one of whom turned out to be an important Japanese officer and former spy. Bengough told the Solomon Islanders that "This man has more college education than I have," and that he had actually attended an American university.

Although many Solomon Islanders in the Defence Force fought in important battles and skirmishes, Ngwadili explained that he himself did not because of his duties as quartermaster and caretaker of the resident commissioner's house. He ended his account by discussing how many Japanese and Americans were killed in the war and how many planes both sides lost in the battle for Guadalcanal.

Gafu's War Experiences

In contrast to Ngwadili's account, Gafu talked about the details of everyday life in the Labour Corps. His descriptions of the terror of war were graphic and personal. There was an immediacy to his account of what war was like for those who witnessed it close up. His surprise at the numbers of soldiers and the amount of materiel involved was also vividly portrayed. He, too, quoted lengthy dialogues between Solomon Islanders and American soldiers to portray the events he witnessed. Gafu was a firsthand witness on the front lines and remembered many more incidents in detail than did Ngwadili. Our summary of his account is necessarily short and omits many of these incidents.

On 3 December 1942 the first two hundred Solomon Islanders were recruited into the Solomon Islands Labour Corps (officially constituted by the resident commissioner on 30 November). As Gafu put it, word came to Malaita District Officer Bengough that men were needed to work on Guadalcanal. Gafu was in one of the first six sections of Malaitans to join the Labour Corps at Auki.

These sections were each made up of twenty-five laborers, one of whom served as "sergeant." Gafu and many other single men joined in the hope of earning money for their wage labor. In early December 1942 they boarded the *Maris Stella* bound for Guadalcanal. Prior to their arrival, a new encampment site for the Labour Corps had been selected on the western bank of the Tenaru River (BSIP, C.O. Native Labour Corps to Resident Commissioner, 1 January 1943).

Gafu recalled well the new recruits' reaction to the sight before them as they neared their destination. "We could not believe what we were seeing as we approached Guadalcanal," Gafu said. "Those big steamers and warships were frightening. We were so scared because this was something none of us had experienced before."

By the time they arrived, the U.S. Marines had driven the Japanese out of Tenaru, and the members of the Labour Corps set up their tents there in lines. Gafu and the others were horrified by what they saw. "The plantation was empty. When the Americans killed Japanese soldiers they would just leave them lying in the bush. You could see heaps of the dead bodies of Japanese soldiers. And we were so afraid. We had not seen war before." Eventually the Japanese bodies were all buried in holes, he added.



Solomon Islands Labour Corps workers unloading beer on Guadalcanal, 29 March 1944. (U.S. Army Signal Corps)



Solomon Islands Labour Corps workers unloading fuel drums on Guadalcanal, March 1943. (*U.S. Navy*)

Gafu described work in the Labour Corps as very heavy. At day-break the American soldiers would come to collect sections of the Labour Corps, each of which worked in a different place. Gafu talked about the heavy work done on an airfield under the hot, tropical sun. "We became so absorbed with work that we did not know which day was Sunday or which one was Saturday. Every week was just like the one before. Every day was just the same. We had no time to rest. We just worked." Moreover, the work was fast-paced and dangerous, aside from Japanese raids:

The steamers and warships were constantly coming and going like that. At that time we went out to work lifting bombs and cargo for fighting onto big trucks. There were so many trucks. You had to look carefully when you went about. If you did not a truck would run you over. There were many people. We were there and all of a sudden the American soldiers arrived and, my goodness, it was difficult to count how many of them were disembarking from the ships. If you went

somewhere without knowing how exactly to get there, you might not make it . . . We were afraid but did not stop working.

During the year Gafu was on Guadalcanal, his section worked on a wide variety of tasks. They helped to build and repair airfields, unloaded ammunition and cargo, did laundry, and worked all along the coast building wharves and unloading landing craft. Other sections helped to guard supply depots at Lungga, Tenaru, and Kukum. Members of the Labour Corps were shifted around according to the immediate needs of the Allied forces on Guadalcanal. During the early stages of the offensive, this meant that they were frequently where the action was heaviest, especially if they were involved in carrying supplies and equipment for the marines as they advanced.

Gafu's account emphasized that work was punctuated by battle. He said that at first some of the Labour Corps members carried ammunition for Americans during the raids, but they told them, "You are not here to fight, because you do not know how. The Japanese may think that you came to fight. You must go back and continue working on the cargo."

One of Gafu's most vivid memories is of the Japanese shelling at Lungga, where the Labour Corps had its main camp, in January 1943. Shelling of the camp had occurred before. The commanding officer at the camp described one such bombing that occurred shortly after the arrival of the Malaitans, possibly in late December. In his letter to the resident commissioner, he reported that many of the Islanders at the camp "became scared and demanded to be returned to Malaita." Five were permitted to go back to Auki, but they soon decided to return to the camp at Lungga.

The second bombing—that described by Gafu—was much more serious than the first. It occurred late at night on 26 January. Gafu and some of the other laborers took refuge in the river. At daylight when the raid was over, they returned to their camp. "We looked and oh, my goodness, our people were dead! The bombs had smashed their heads into pieces and gashed their bodies." According to Resident Commissioner Marchant, eleven Malaitans were killed in the attack or died of wounds later, and nine others were wounded (BSIP, Resident Commissioner to High Commissioner, 11 March 1943). This incident marked the single greatest loss of life among the Solomon Islands Labour Corps. Gafu described how he and many others fled into the plantations in grief and fear. His account and

Marchant's telegram agree in describing how the Malaita laborers "walked out of camp and for some days refused to work" (but see British Colonial Office 1946, 34 for a very different portrait of this incident painted in wartime propaganda). According to Gafu, Bishop Baddeley arrived, prayed with the laborers, and convinced them to return to work. To avoid a recurrence of such a disaster, the main camp was divided into four smaller camps separated at some distance from each other, and Labour Corps recruitment was temporarily postponed. (By the time of the second bombing the Labour Corps had 1100 members working on Guadalcanal.) At that point, Gafu's section was moved to nearby Koli. Gafu himself returned to Malaita in 1943 when his year of contract labor was up.

Relationships with Outsiders and the Meaning of the War

Both Ngwadili, who had some familiarity with Western life before the war, and Gafu, who had little experience with things Western before he joined the Labour Corps, were deeply affected by their experiences. This is noticeable in the amount of detail in their recollections of wartime events forty years ago. For example, they still recall military terms for airplanes, ships, guns, and other war materiel, as well as the names of American soldiers they knew. Both offered lengthy descriptions of procedures followed in the war, and of strategies and planning that went on. Yet neither gave an overall summation of what the war meant. As Gafu put it,

There were so many things that happened during the war that I just don't know what to talk about. Things happened so quickly. Fear, too, made it harder for me to think clearly about some of the things that happened. . . . You would be looking at those things and just say to yourself, "Tsk! I couldn't describe all these things!" There were so many things that we had not seen before and . . . simply did not know what they were.

One area of their experience that both narrators focused on was the relationship of Solomon Islanders to the Americans, on the one hand, and to the British on the other.

We have already seen in Ngwadili's account that the British Anglican Bishop Baddeley attempted to protect Solomon Islanders from direct fighting against the Japanese. Gafu reported that the

Americans similarly tried to protect members of the Labour Corps from identification as soldiers by the Japanese. Moreover, during Japanese raids, Gafu said, the Americans tried to see that the Solomon Islanders were safely in their foxholes before taking cover themselves, and "they guarded our foxholes."

Beyond this, both men talked about the friendliness, generosity, and equality with which American soldiers treated Solomon Islanders (see also chapters 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11). An important feature in this treatment was the sharing of food, which assumes special importance because of the Kwara'ae key cultural values of *fangale'a'anga* 'sharing' (lit., "eating good") and *kwaisare'e'anga* 'feeding without expectation of return'. According to Gafu, the first few American troops arrived with only enough food to feed themselves, so the Solomon Islanders ate captured Japanese food. But when large numbers of American troops began arriving,

They came with their cargo and you ate until you could not eat any more so you threw the food away. When the boxes would break open and food would fall out of them all over the place we would not take them because we were afraid as we never stole before. But the Americans said, "You all eat these things. This is our food. Let us all eat while we are all still alive. If the Japanese kill one of us [that is, if they kill either the Americans or the Solomon Islanders], there will be no more eating together."

The unity of Solomon Islander with American reflected in this reported statement, together with its emphasis on sharing food, could seem almost sacred to the Kwara'ae. The Americans recognized the role of good food in the Islanders' ability to work hard, Ngwadili and Gafu said. During lulls in the war, Americans often invited Solomon Islanders to visit them in their tents (see also Fifi'i and Akin 1988), and even during attacks they often shared meals together. Gafu went on to talk about the "loving" way Americans treated Solomon Islanders: "They outnumbered us, but there was not a feeling of white versus black among us. We all stayed together as if we were of one race. . . . They treated us that way and it was really good. . . . We all ate together."

Both men were also surprised by and interested in black American soldiers. While the Labour Corps members wore lavalavas, black Americans wore uniforms like white American soldiers. From the Islanders' point of view, black American soldiers did the same work and had the same privileges as white soldiers (cf. chapter 8; Fifi'i



Black American Seabees trading for clubs and betel nut at Halavo Seaplane Base, Nggela, September 1943. (*U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Historical Center*)

and Akin 1988; but see also chapter 11 for different perceptions reported by Santa Cruz laborers). Ngwadili was also impressed that both white and black American soldiers—though much larger and stronger than himself—obeyed his orders to stay out of the resident commissioner's house.

The extension of equality to Solomon Islanders by American soldiers was also given expression in the American reaction to the level of pay received by the Islanders. Ngwadili reported that the Americans asked Gafu and other Solomon Islanders, "Why is it that you all come and join the war, and are doing the same kind of work that we are doing, but your government is not paying you well?" (Here Ngwadili's report indicated how Islanders clearly "compared notes" about the war after they all returned home and discussed their relationships with both the Americans and the British.) In contrast, the Americans told them, "We want to pay you like we pay ourselves, the same salaries. We want you to eat like we do because you do the same work that we do." The Americans gave Islanders boxes of goods and handed out cigarettes freely.

Both men expressed a very different feeling about the British during the war—a feeling that both complemented and contrasted with their attitude toward the Americans. As Ngwadili summarized it, “the two reasons that we are still angry with the British are, bad pay and their taking away of the things the Americans gave to us” (cf. chapters 8 and 10). The emphasis on Americans’ sharing of food, not calling Islanders “boy,” and treating them as equals was intended to contrast the Americans with the British. Both men dwelt at length on the low pay under hazardous conditions that the British colonial government gave the Islanders, which they reported as being \$2 per month (pay was £1 in British currency per month for “privates” or general laborers and up to £5 for “sergeants” who were their section leaders). Disputes over laborers’ pay occurred repeatedly during the war, as documented, for example, in a letter by the Labour Corps’ commanding officer to Marchant reporting a “strike” organized by several section leaders (BSIP, 19 March 1943; again, see British Colonial Office 1946 for a different picture).

Even worse, Ngwadili argued, after the war was over the British took back the goods given to Islanders by the Americans. In particular, Ngwadili complained, the British officials “said that we were not allowed to take any food, and so they threw cases of food into holes [and] used bulldozers to bury them.” Ngwadili pointed out that had this not happened, “our villages would have been filled with food.” Other goods were burned by the British. These acts of confiscation seem to most anger Ngwadili and Gafu even today (cf. chapters 8 and 10). As Ngwadili said, “The British came and took all the things and burned them. That was the thing that was really bad. I have been listening to the Parliament meetings there in Honiara on the radio in case the issue is raised, but nothing has been said about it”—which he attributed to today’s Parliament members not having served in the war themselves. His statement implied that he saw today’s Parliament as composed of young Solomon Islanders who were trained by the colonialists and are ruling the country as the British did. Both men argued that many Solomon Islands heroes were not decorated by the British after the war, attention going to just a few such as Jacob Vouza, a Guadalcanal man in the police force who was made a war hero by the Allies.

As in many other parts of the Solomons, therefore, Kwara’ae people who participated in the Second World War, or heard stories about it afterward, have strong positive feelings about Americans and a sense of having been wronged by the British. Even after sev-

eral years of independence, the anti-British feelings linger and the pro-American feelings are strong. If anything, there is a sense among the older generation that the Americans may come back. After telling the story of John F. Kennedy's rescue, Ngwadili explained and Gafu corroborated that the Americans hid huge quantities of war supplies on Guadalcanal, underground in cement buildings:

Those things still remain a secret. They said that they had hidden them for the next world war. There is a big town in the earth on Guadalcanal. The British and some other people have been trying to find it, but they have not succeeded. . . . The Americans made maps about those houses. They also wrote them down in their books. . . . It is not possible that the things in the houses could have gone bad, because they oiled them. . . . That was an incredible thing. It took the Americans six months to build those houses.

The idea that the Americans may come back seems connected to an unspoken wish that they had never left. As Ngwadili wistfully said of the American soldiers, "My goodness, if they had stayed, the Solomon Islands would have been America's possession! Solomon Islanders would by now be speaking American English. And we would have adopted American culture."

Community Roles after the War

After the war, Ngwadili went back to his job as a policeman in Auki until about 1946, when his stepfather died and his mother asked him to return home. Back in the village, he decided to become a South Sea Evangelical minister, and the church sent him abroad to Australia and then New Zealand for theological training. No doubt his ease in making these transitions was assisted by his previous experiences working with the Solomon Islands police and various British officials during the war.

When Ngwadili returned to Malaita he spent several years as minister at 'Areo, a former SSEC village, which later moved to Kilusakwalo, near Dada'esalu. During these years he worked with the late Australian missionary Norman C. Deck, translating the New Testament and liturgical writings into Kwara'ae. After Deck retired, Ngwadili worked with other missionaries and various Sum-

mer Institute of Linguistics translators who came to Malaita to prepare translations of religious materials. Through these activities he became very well known among Europeans in the Solomons.

In the late 1970s Ngwadili retired as a minister. He had become disillusioned with the church over retirement benefits for local ministers and over all the translating work he had done without being compensated. He turned his attention to getting the churches to recognize traditional Kwara'ae culture (see Keesing and Tonkinson 1982 on the resurgence of Melanesian ideas of *kastom*), including retranslating church liturgies into proper Kwara'ae. Because of his previous role as a church leader and his new campaign on behalf of traditional culture, Ngwadili emerged as an important religious and political figure in the late 1970s. As a sign of his importance in this area, he was elected as a paramount chief for West Kwara'ae during a major meeting in 1978.

About this time he was also widowed. In 1979 he married a young Anglican woman from To'ambaita (a language and culture area north of Kwara'ae), whom he came to know through relatives. In 1980 the wife of a close relative of Ngwadili's died suddenly. Women in the SSEC village where they lived accused his wife of sorcery (the Kwara'ae think of To'ambaita people as potential sorcerers). Angered by what he regarded as a ridiculous charge, Ngwadili returned to the religion of his childhood, the Anglican Church of Melanesia, and with his wife and young children, moved back to Dada'esalu. On his own he began traveling all over West Kwara'ae, assembling genealogies from all tribes and clans of the area in an attempt to construct a history of Kwara'ae.

Ngwadili seems to be a man caught between two cultures. In manner and outlook he is very Westernized, yet his primary interest now is in conserving and promoting traditional culture (*falafala* in Kwara'ae, *kastom* in Solomon Islands Pijin). Similarly, he is caught between two religious denominations, sometimes attending one church and sometimes the other. His younger brother, who concentrated his efforts in business and politics, became very wealthy. Despite Ngwadili's prestige and the respect shown him by SSEC members and Anglicans alike, he does not see himself as a success vis-à-vis his brother, and attributes his poverty to the years he spent working for the church.

Gafu returned to Malaita in 1943 and resumed a very traditional life of subsistence gardening. His elder brother, the head of their descent group, took advantage of Gafu's war knowledge and experi-

ences to build his own reputation and influence. An experienced orator, he told stories he heard from Gafu as he went about from village to village, thereby enhancing his prestige as a political leader.

For Gafu, his elder brother's leadership role worked against his own possibility of becoming a political leader. A quiet, unassuming, noncompetitive man, he is respected today in Dada'esalu and the surrounding villages for his depth of knowledge, his humility, and his contribution to communal work. He is seen as a hardworking, dignified man who has raised a large family and earned the title of *gwaunga* 'i 'elder'.

Conclusion

World War II afforded Ngwadili and Gafu the opportunity to compare two kinds of Europeans—Americans and British—and two ways of dealing with Islanders (see also Read 1947). Their experiences enhanced their roles as leaders in their community (though for Gafu, his brother received more benefits from the experience than he himself probably did). "Enhancement" suggests that the war experience alone did not bring about new roles for these men so much as strengthen roles they were already in the process of building.

In the future we plan to continue interviewing Kwara'ae men who participated in the war, as well as women who were left behind or who observed Bishop Baddeley's stay at Fulisango. We know of others who seem to have used the war experience to build roles as religious or political leaders, and yet others will have returned home to create other roles for themselves, such as storyteller-educators or clown-entertainers (who do informal performances at social gatherings, often imitating people they have observed). One question that interests us is how particular experiences in the war may have affected the kinds of roles—secular or religious, educational or entertainment—that Islanders later took on. We also want to continue to pursue the relationship between individual Islanders' involvement in the war and their perception of what the war meant.

Finally, Islanders have had several ways of reacting to the war. For some, the war was a traumatic introduction to Western life, and they have been unable since to remain comfortably at home in the village. They drift back and forth between town and village, and their children now follow the same pattern. The radical juxtaposi-

tion of two cultures is unresolvable for them. For others, the display of material wealth became an irresistible beacon; they have remained in town, pursuing the goal of wealth and sometimes even refusing to speak their native language. Finally, others like Ngwadili and Gafu returned to their villages and incorporated their war experience into their lives as a highlighted moment of traumatic education that they have transformed and shared with others.

Note

In conversations with a former member of the Solomon Islands Armed Constabulary, we learned that it was his impression that the bombing followed from a request from the British district officer for reprisals against suspected collaborators. While these impressions derive from firsthand accounts of radio messages sent to the Americans, recent historical data unearthed by Hugh Laracy (personal communication) shows that the bombing was done by American planes that mistook Langelanga for Coleridge Bay farther to the north where Japanese were suspected of having a base.

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CHAPTER 16

Samoa Representations of World War II and Military Work: The Emergence of International Movement Networks

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WHEN Commander Benjamin F. Tilley arrived at Tutuila in August 1899 he marveled at Pago Pago harbor, “a perfect fortress . . . stronger for defense than Gibraltar.” Eight months later eastern Samoa was ceded to the United States, and Tilley set out to establish a naval administration for the territory. He created a government that included only two new institutions, a judicial system and the Fitafta guard, who were to enforce court decisions and generally maintain order. Tilley formed the Fitafta in order to attract “the elite young men and thus bring them under the influence of the government” (quoted in Olsen 1976, 9–10, 21). During the 1920s and 1930s employment with the naval administration brought a great deal of prestige to the Fitafta guardsmen. Darden (1952, 13) stated that the Fitafta were an important source of cash for their extended families (*aiga*) and that guardsmen were “accruing prestige vastly out of proportion to their traditional status.”

In the early 1940s, World War II came to American and Western Samoa. When Samoans speak of this period they talk of the abundant wage labor opportunities and the continuities of their military service to the United States. In the 1940s large numbers of Samoans, not just Fitafta guardsmen, gained access to opportunities for wage labor and military enlistment and a chance to redefine their status in relation to their traditional chiefs (*matai*). Hundreds of American and Western Samoans developed transportation, communication, and supply skills and, with the end of the war, were eager to succeed in overseas labor markets. In this way World War II provided a major stimulus to international migration by Samoans, a

migration that now encompasses a wide geographic expanse from New Zealand through Samoa to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland. For Samoans, as for other Islanders discussed in this volume (see chapter 3), the aftereffects of World War II have been as disruptive as the war itself.

During World War II in American Samoa, for the first time hundreds of Samoans were allowed to volunteer for the U.S. military, either as Fitafta guardsmen or as members of the U.S. Navy or Marine Corps Reserve. When the naval station at Tutuila was closed in 1951, these recruits and their dependents, nearly a thousand people in all, were relocated to Hawaii. From the 1940s to the present, Samoans have been volunteering to serve in the U.S. armed forces, and, as they have traveled to military bases in Hawaii, California, and Washington, they have found kin who have preceded them and established Samoan enclaves near these military bases. From World War II to the present, military enlistment has been a significant catalyst to migration and a major strategy for adapting to American urban environments.

American Representations of Samoans during World War II

In 1940, Pago Pago was only a minor naval station lacking "the facilities necessary to handle wartime logistical problems" (Olsen 1976, 175-176). In the spring of 1940, Captain A. R. Pefley went to American Samoa to draw up plans for the development of defense capabilities on Tutuila. His development plan included the following points:

1. Additional quarters for officers and enlisted men must be constructed;
2. Expand commissary, storage, and refrigeration;
3. A new dispensary and additional generators needed;
4. Increase light and heavy machinery and equipment;
5. Purchase additional land at Fagotogo and Utulei;
6. Build garage, machine shop, and recreation facilities;
7. Improve sanitation in Pago Pago and other areas;
8. Develop a thorough agricultural program to feed the men.

In November 1940 expansion of the naval station began. Later, this expansion program was part of a contract, "The Pacific Air Bases

Program," which included construction work at Pearl Harbor (Burke 1972*b*, 25).

Much of this initial expansion on Tutuila was conducted under the administration of G. K. Brodie, director of the Public Works Department. From the naval records there appears to have been a great urgency to this expansion. For example, the records refer to "war clouds brewing" and "the clouds of war descending." Brodie felt that the necessary speed of the work was unfortunate and that there would be problems going from a "decrepit, minor Naval Station" to a "Pacific Air Base" (Burke 1972*b*) in a short period. In a memorandum to Lieutenant Commander W. L. Richards, Brodie wrote:

The labor situation is most unique. . . . In general, the native labor will be sufficient and satisfactory. However, there are several points that require special mention: a) Native Food supplies have to be maintained. The natives have one great fault; they have little foresight. As long as they have sufficient food in the ground for their needs, they are satisfied. They do not entirely grasp the fact that when we take most of their men for labor they will have to rely on the women, old men, and children for plantation work. We are making every attempt to encourage or force them to keep planting in excess so that there will always be adequate food to supply the men working. If their food supply fails, we will have to take over the task of feeding the island by the importation of rice and by fishing with dynamite. At regular intervals, native Public Works employees who have high standing with the natives are being sent out to check the plantation and put pressure on the chiefs to keep the planting going. This is an odd and perhaps illegal expenditure, but it is almost mandatory under the circumstances; b) The natives can do a good 8 or 10 hours work a day, but when worked beyond that, they cannot keep up the pace. They desire to work as much as possible to get the money, but trials have proved that they cannot physically stand up under long working hours. (Burke 1972*b*)

Brodie did not want to import laborers to work on the naval station. Instead he felt that Samoan workers could be more productive if their diet were improved. He was also concerned that debilitating worms were negatively affecting Samoan workers, and he expressed a need for a "sustained deworming." His memorandum continued:

The native diet consists almost entirely of taro, breadfruit, banana, and coconut . . . not enough fish. It is necessary to furnish transpor-

tation for the majority of the workmen living in outlying districts. If they were allowed to crowd into the already overcrowded villages adjacent to the station, the sanitation problem would be an active menace. Furthermore, by transporting them to their own localities, they are able to receive food from their own plantations and to some extent, work them in their off time. If forced to stay in the vicinity of the station, they would have to spend all their wages for food; this, of course, would soon lead to dissatisfaction on a large scale. (Ibid.)

In January 1941 Samoans were employed on naval defense projects, working on the construction of fuel storage facilities, an airfield and hangar, a dispensary, gun emplacements, shelters, and other facilities (Olsen 1976, 176). In February 1941 the governor requested that the insular defense force, the Fitafita guard, be expanded to about five hundred men. Three months later, in May, the commandant of the Marine Corps authorized the organization of the First Samoan Battalion, Marine Corps Reserves (Burke 1972*b*), and this unit was not to exceed five hundred men. Early in 1941, Fitafita guardsmen were trained in various defense situations, and later in that same year they visited villages on Tutuila and Manu'a, training the Samoan civilian population in military techniques.

On 1 March 1941 the Seventh Marine Defense Battalion arrived, composed of 443 officers and men responsible for shore defense. At this time a few gun emplacements and a small power-generating plant had been completed by a growing American civilian workforce and local Samoan labor. When Pearl Harbor was attacked on 7 December 1941, nearly thirteen hundred American civilians were employed on Tutuila. With the beginning of hostilities, these civilian workers had to be evacuated from Tutuila, where they were replaced by Seabees and Samoan laborers. After 7 December 1941 there was a "noticeable acceleration in the expansion taking place" on Tutuila (Burke 1972*b*, 40). Burke went on:

When the Samoans heard that the U.S. was at war, they came in from all sections of the island armed with bush knives volunteering to do anything necessary for the defense of Tutuila. There was no longer any time to worry about expense or approval. Time became the valuable factor and the race against the Japanese was of prime importance. All able-bodied Samoans were called in to assist in building defenses. The women and children were encouraged to work on their land so that there would be no food shortage. At this time the Com-

mandant was authorized by the Bureau of Yards and Docks to utilize all civilian personnel and equipment for any defense purpose he desired. (1972*b*, 41)

In January 1942 Brigadier General Henry Larsen and the Second Marine Brigade Reinforced arrived on Tutuila to take command of the Samoa Defense Group. The operational plan for the Samoa Defense Group, which also included the Ellice Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and all the Pacific south of the equator and east of Tonga, excluding Easter Island, was drawn up by the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Burke described the general features of the operational plan:

The purpose of occupying these islands was to fill out the defense ring of Fiji, Samoa, and New Caledonia for protection of the essential sea and air communications between the U.S. and Australia and to provide a base area for future operations against Japan. (1972*a*, 50)

Later in the war Samoa became a staging area for campaigns in the Gilbert and Marshall islands. Samoa played an integral role in the early stages of World War II, and Samoans sensed the urgency of the conflict. It was a war America needed to win.

On 25 April 1942, Major General Charles F. B. Price relieved General Larsen. When Price took command of the Samoa Defense Group he was concerned that "hostile raids . . . and strong land and air attacks were possible in the near future" (Burke 1972*a*, 55). In April 1942 the first major Marine forces landed on Tutuila; the Seventh Construction Battalion arrived in July 1942, and the Third Marines Reinforced, comprising 4316 men, sailed for Tutuila in August of the same year.

By October 1942 the U.S. military was preparing for a possible attack on Tutuila and for a protracted engagement. The role of the Fitafita guard in any defensive action was clearly specified:

Fitafita section 1—Take the enemy forces under fire approaching within the east sector of the Naval facility. Control the spread of fire during lulls in the battle.

Fitafita section 3—Take enemy forces under fire approaching within the *malae* area. Control fire . . . safeguard essential material and records as directed. Be prepared to carry out Naval Station Logistic Plan One on order.



Fitaifita color guard, American Samoa, 20 December 1944. (*U.S. Navy*)

Fitaifita section 4—Take enemy forces under fire approaching within the west sector . . . control fire during lulls in the battle.

Fitaifita section 5—Take enemy forces under fire approaching within the *malae* area. Be prepared to man fire truck on order. Power house detail control damage to Naval Station power supply. (Burke 1972a)

Samoans were also active within the Supply Division at Pago Pago, which was viewed as one of the most important because it was necessary to “keep the logistics train functioning smoothly” (Burke

1972*b*, 129). The Supply Division consisted of 2500 civilian employees, and it is assumed that most or all of these were Samoans.

After Pearl Harbor, many ships were directed to Pago Pago. According to Burke,

Ship arrivals jumped from three in December, 1941 to fifty-six in December, 1942. Shipping activity was intensive throughout 1943. In March, 1943, 121 vessels passed through Pago Pago harbor. Shipping arrivals declined after February, 1944, from fifty per month to less than twenty. (1972*b*, 135)

There was a great deal of military activity in Samoa between January 1942 and March 1944. In October 1942, there were 14,371 American servicemen on Tutuila and Upolu. During the following twelve months the number decreased to 9491, and by February 1944 only 2080 American servicemen remained in Samoa (Burke 1972*a*, 75). The "Marine Era" on Tutuila ended on 1 March 1944, when the base reverted to a naval station. The naval commandant was then responsible for the "roll up" of the base; that is, he made available a huge amount of supplies and building materials to be sent to the forward bases in the northern and central Pacific. The naval station was given a new, less urgent mission (Burke 1972*a*, 7), providing:

1. Limited anchorage facility
2. Permanent fueling facilities
3. Minor naval repair depot
4. Supply facilities
5. Communication facilities
6. Weather observation station
7. Limited aviation facilities
8. Hospital facilities
9. Internal security using any personnel available

Even in 1945, more than seven hundred Samoans were working as stevedoring personnel using cargo-handling equipment, cranes, trucks, and trailers, and reports from Tutuila remarked "Ships are promptly discharged to full limit of labor and equipment available" (Burke 1972*a*, 13).

In general, the U.S. military presented positive assessments of the Samoan labor force, especially during the period of intense military activity, 1942-1944.

Throughout the entire war period Samoan personnel were used wherever possible releasing the Navy personnel for more vital jobs. The Samoans performed very satisfactorily. Although the Samoan did not have the stamina of a Caucasian, he could work for about ten hours a day without losing efficiency. (Burke 1972*b*, 131)

The U.S. military was also present on Upolu and Savaii after 27 March 1942. The greatest concentration of American troops was on Upolu, as Savaii was considered too rough and mountainous for airfields, and there were no anchorages for larger ships. Through negotiations with A. C. Turnbull, acting administrator in Western Samoa, and other representatives of the New Zealand government, the United States was able to secure tenure over 5000 acres of land for the duration of the war. The land was to be developed into an airstrip using U.S. military personnel and Samoan workers. The Samoans were paid five shillings per eight-hour day if they were laborers and eight to sixteen shillings per eight-hour day if they were foremen or specialists. It appears that the Western Samoans were also eager to work, as one report stated that "sufficient labor is available at all times" (Burke 1972*b*, 46). In addition to assisting military personnel with the construction of an airstrip, Western Samoans also worked in roadbuilding. As the war moved westward beyond Samoa, Western Samoans worked to maintain the airstrip as an emergency facility.

Olsen, in his fine history of American naval administration in Samoa, summarized some of the beneficial and disruptive effects of Samoan participation in World War II:

One of the most important benefits that Samoans would derive . . . was the experience and training Samoan mechanics and craftsmen gained working alongside American civilian contract employees and the Seabees. As a result after the war, Samoans were competent to construct, maintain and operate the Island Government facilities. With the exception of the Public Works officer and his assistant . . . all the employees of the Public Works Department were Samoan, including draftsmen, surveyors, foremen, machinists, heavy equipment operators, plumbers, electricians, refrigeration mechanics, welders, and clerks. Also, during and after the war, Samoans working for the naval station learned valuable trades that allowed them to open their own small businesses, such as small auto repair shops, paint shops, and carpentry services. Other Samoans who had enlisted received veteran's benefits allowing them to further their education. (1976, 177-179)

However, Olsen went on to argue:

On the whole the impact of World War II was disruptive despite the benefits Samoa gained as a result of the war. The very foundation of Samoan society—the *matai* system—was threatened. . . . The replacement of Samoa's plantation economy by a wage economy gave the young men . . . a feeling of independence gained from having money in their pockets rather than being dependent on their *matai* who controlled the family's lands. (1976, 179)

In 1945, Governor Hauser addressed the American Samoan Fono in these words: "We have much to do, as native industry, agriculture, education, and the like suffered greatly when you made your all-out effort for the U.S. and our allies" (quoted in Olsen 1976, 186). Governor Hauser warned the Fono that the wartime prosperity would soon be over. This prosperity is probably best reflected in the growth of the assets of the Bank of American Samoa during the period. Between 30 June 1941 and 30 June 1945, the bank's assets grew from \$309,768 to \$1,804,281 (Olsen 1976, 178).

In the period 1945–1950, the American Samoan Fono asked the naval administration to address three major issues. First, a request was made to give all Fitafita guardsmen and Samoan Marines American citizenship, but the request was withdrawn when questions about citizenship and land ownership were raised. Second, Chief Tuiasosopo complained from his position within the Fono that during the war years the military administration had inappropriately selected lower-ranking chiefs for government positions. Third, in the discussion over a constitution for American Samoa, it was decided to remove a clause prohibiting "involuntary servitude" because the Fono was afraid that such a clause might restrict the authority of *matai*. These issues show quite clearly that American Samoan political leaders, even after the disruptions of World War II, still placed great value on their *matai* system and its prerogatives in economic decision making. Further, the citizenship issue foreshadowed an ongoing concern over citizenship status and land tenure questions.

The period 1940–1950 was a decade of rapid population growth in American Samoa, no doubt partly due to the presence of the U.S. military (see Keesing 1973). By 1951, the wartime prosperity was ending, and Samoans were finding it difficult to readjust to a lowered standard of living. Lewthwaite, Mainzer, and Holland vividly

described the diaspora that accompanied the closing of the U.S. naval base in American Samoa in 1951:

So when the *General R. L. Howze*, the last scheduled naval transport, sailed on 25 June 1951, it carried many members of the disbanded Fita Fita Guard north to Hawaii. . . . And when, in 1952, the *President Jackson* called on short notice to pick up dependents, the authorities were faced with something of a rush. For many claimed relatives in Hawaii and seized the opportunity for free or low-cost naval transportation, and though the hastiness of their medical and financial screening was to provoke Hawaiian protest, almost 1,000 [Samoans] embarked for Honolulu. (1973, 135)

Samoan Representations of Military Work, 1940 to the Present

The following discussion is based on interviews conducted in Samoa during 1984 with ten Samoans, six of whom were members of either the Fita Fita guards or the Samoan Marine Reserve during World War II. Since four of these men retired from the U.S. military after thirty years of service, their statements will be used to elucidate the process of Samoan enlistment in military service to the present. Falani,¹ a retired government worker from American Samoa, discussed his memories of the 1940s in Tutuila:

Most of the Samoans got jobs working with the marines. The government hired local people to help the marines. The people helped build houses for the marines to stay in and barracks to store the equipment. There was more labor needed, so the government had to bring people from Western Samoa before the war. The working hours were limited to eight hours a day, but some people worked for ten to twelve or even twenty-four hours a day. When the war began people were forced to work and most of them worked for two or three days in a row. The government told the people that if they don't work, the MP truck would take them to jail. In most of the families we seldom saw men. Most of them went to work except for break time, during which time they could be at home. But within several hours they were called on duty again. The women were then in charge of the families. The Samoans worked hand-in-hand with the marines as if the marines were Samoan. The marines wanted the Samoans to work hard for them building bases for their own protection. The people were forced to work, and if they didn't they would end up in jail. There was at that time a judge named Blake. If he found you during working hours

doing nothing, he would ask you what you were doing. If your answer was wrong, then you would be punished. During night shifts, Blake would walk around with his civilian clothes to check on the workers. . . . When the war came, money began to flow into the island. Beside the increased jobs in government, most of the women did laundry for the marines and got money. The navy and marines made contact with the local people through the village mayor. They looked for skilled men in each village. The people who were chosen would have to sit a certain exam in order to get a better job. In those days there were no newspapers. Everything that the marines wanted from the people would go through the village mayor. There was a blackout on the whole island and everything was controlled by the marines. At night no one was allowed to walk around in the village or make noise. If you were seen by the marines, they just called you three times and if you don't show yourself, they shoot you. Most of the Samoans who sneaked around in the night were asked where they were going. When the marines found them they took them to their destination. That was for the protection of the Samoans. The Samoans liked to work with the marines unless they got mad and ruined everything. . . . Regardless of the hard times, the marines and the Samoans did work hand-in-hand. After the war there were many people who left the island. The navy base was closed and the marines were shipped to the United States to finish their service.

This account is in general agreement with the ones that will follow later and with the historical material from the Department of the Navy. On one point, however, there was disagreement among Samoan informants. Falani was the only one who mentioned Samoans being forced to work under the U.S. military administration. There are indications in the historical accounts discussed earlier that some force might have been applied in getting Samoans to produce the maximum from their agricultural lands, but in general it seems that Samoans were eager to earn income through work with the U.S. military. (For a comparative look at the issue of forced labor during the war see Robinson 1981; and chapters 15 and 17.) An older Samoan teacher, when asked, "How did Samoans respond to the work activities introduced during World War II?" replied,

Like flies around carrion, magnificently. They built airports. Others said of Samoans "they can't handle machinery; they are a farming people. We tried for years to tell them not to dig a hole with this foolish stick *'oso*, and we showed them all these modern planting techniques, and after three months of training we go away, and they pick

up the stick and do the same damn thing they've been doing for hundreds of years," and much of what they said was perfectly true. And there were many who said Samoans were unteachable. Somebody showed up with great big tractors and overnight they were building airfields and putting up modern communications. Every piece of road on Tutuila, Samoans help build. They were ready, willing, a very capable workforce, very versatile.

This informant went on to discuss the incentives that drove the Samoan worker during the early 1940s.

Five million dollars went through here in a three-year period, 1942-45. That's an awful lot of money. The place had never seen so much money. Samoans could see a point to the work, the money, and there was a war; there were the Japanese whom we were fighting. It wasn't secular work; there was a holiness to the whole thing. There was a great big *fa'alavelave* (a problem requiring the mutual support of the entire extended family, or *'aiga*); we all had to go to work. Samoans in World War II were willing to do more than they were asked to. Look at all these people coming to our islands; there must be a big *fa'alavelave*. We must help these people; this is our country; we are Americans. The money was wonderful. The Samoans were happy doing that kind of work. I think they were happy and they volunteered in droves for the army and navy.

An American Samoan *matiai* agreed that there was no need to force the Samoans to work. He stated,

The Samoans saw the importance of the war work . . . and saw the work as a big opportunity. . . . It was all so new and fast. After the Samoans understood the new working conditions they worked enthusiastically for the marines.

Finally, with respect to the issue of whether Samoans were forced to work, an older Samoan service veteran stated: "I loved the work I did for the marines. I felt like Nathan Hale when he said 'I regret that I have only one life to give for my country.' "

With the end of World War II, American Samoans faced the reality of limited employment opportunity, and, with the departure of the navy in 1951, another sudden change confronted the young Samoan worker. The older Samoan teacher provided an illuminating picture of the changes that confronted Samoans in the 1940s and 1950s:

Even before Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government sensed that there would be something. As early as the summer of 1941 there were already marine contingents beginning to land. Already a road was being improved and people were hired all over the place. Before that the navy only did as much work as was necessary to keep the navy base functioning pleasantly and the rest was "benign, kind neglect." In many ways that was wonderful, and in many ways it was absolutely terrible. So that there was almost no work and what there was was for the navy and for the government. Pearl Harbor was the biggest sudden shift into a money economy psychology that could have happened to the place. The departure of the navy, well, that was the navy's move. When the navy left, the two hundred Samoan families *had* to go. They had enlisted in the U.S. Navy, and when the navy left, when the navy base was closed here, those who enlisted had to be relocated. What made the later Samoan exodus so easy and so successful is that the U.S. government actually created—around naval bases—safe, intact Samoan communities to which other Samoans could go. Pearl Harbor, Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Francisco, the Samoans could move to these areas because there were Samoan military communities to meet them. From these places, the Samoans moved out and the mess began. Some Samoans wanted to leave here because they had work skills and nowhere to use them. If they were just people looking for jobs they might have turned around defeated and come back home. What made the footholds was that the navy made the transition a safe, workable, easy one. They gave these sailors communities around bases, with commissaries. Once firmly established, other *'aiga* members join them in search for work.

This informant clearly believed that the navy pullout from Samoa led directly to the establishment of the Samoan migration network in the United States. Another informant who worked for the U.S. military immediately before, during, and after the war, also moved along this network, and his life and work history present an intriguing picture of the Samoan response to military work, from the 1940s to the present:

In 1937, the best jobs were bus driver, truck driver, school teacher, or the Fitafta. In 1940, I worked for the Public Works Department as a general laborer, for 15 cents an hour. When the navy contractor came down, I worked as roadman for the surveying of the Tafuna airstrip for 28 cents an hour. Then I succeeded to heavy equipment operator for 37 cents an hour. When I got my paycheck, I thought it was gonna kill me; it was so much money. I immediately turned it into liquid and

did a little gambling. After four to six months of heavy equipment work for the navy contractor, the Seabees arrived and we got a chance to work overtime. At that time the number of marines on the island was so tremendous you could hardly move. The Fagotogo central area (*malae*) was in bad shape because it was a heavy storage area, things all over the place. In the six to eight weeks after Pearl there was tremendous activity. General Larsen and the marines arrived and there was martial law. The attorney general, Baracco, was very mean; he did not care about us. He said, "No more gambling," and if you were caught gambling you had to go before him in court. He would find out how much we had in the bank, and then he'd roll the dice. If he won, he would take some of the money from your bank account. If he lost, he'd say, "You're lucky, no fine." He got a lot of money from us, but that money was used to build the governor's building and the hospital. All able-bodied Samoans were required to work, but all were motivated to work. The U.S. was making a big drive in the Pacific. We built a supplemental airport at Leone. I was making 67 cents an hour. In 1944 I took a test to become a teacher because this was the best job then. I taught school from 1945-1950. The pouring of American troops into Samoa is something I will never forget. The ships kept coming in, ships moving around the island, and ships anchored at the mouth and the harbor ready to come in. As soon as they finish unloading, they moved out, the next one came in, dropping off marines and supplies.

There were many training areas between Leone and Vailoatai. Ten to twenty nets were hanging down and the marines are climbing up. The marines came and took over the island. When the Seabees arrived, everyone worked, even old ladies, because they saw the value of the money. That's what makes things go. The time came in 1946 when the jobs became fewer and fewer. When I saw the marines working on tanks, vehicles, tractors, and cars, I got interested in that kind of work. After 1946, we could go to school if we wanted to. The government would pay us and we'd go to school. Go to school to get the paychecks. At that time I told myself to go to the U.S. and join the armed forces. Then the navy came to pick up the dependents and the Americans here. My brother was in the Fitafta guard. I asked him if I could go with him. He said, "No, you shouldn't go; stay here with dad." "Wait a minute," I said. "We have four kids here, they can take care of the old man. We can go up there and look for a better job." My brother didn't like the idea because I asked him to pay my fare as a dependent on the ship, ten dollars for meals actually. I went to Hawaii in 1950. We arrived on a Saturday night. It wasn't much of a surprise, except the lights way up on the mountains looked just like a Christmas tree. The following Monday, I went to look for a job. In the

afternoon, I went to Shell Oil Company, and they hired me as a laborer. I made a good impression, and after a week they told me, "You can be a permanent employee." They gave me a truck to service the airplanes at the airport for three months. I still wanted to get into the Marine Corps, but I didn't believe I could. I was thirty-two years old when I went to the U.S. I wanted to get into the civil service, so I went to fill out the application at Pearl Harbor. My first week at Shell, I cleared \$134—I was about to fall over. But what I really wanted was to become retired with retirement from the government. In my life I've seen so many people retire from the navy and the Fitafta. I wanted to become retired. I was a very good asset to Shell, to their outdoor work. But I wanted to try Pearl Harbor. I'm not the kind of person who says, "I'll stop here." I want to see if I can do better, like to see how high I can go with the small education I have. I went to Pearl Harbor, and I had to make a choice. They gave me a job as a crane operator on the pier for preparing ships. As an apprentice I made \$3 an hour. I worked three weeks at Pearl Harbor; after two weeks I got a paycheck. I got into the Marine Corps Reserve, and they sent us to San Diego for boot camp. Federal law said I'd get my job back. In December 1950 I went to California and returned to Hawaii after ninety days. I noticed a big difference in California. In Samoa, you see a car accident you ask, "Anybody hurt?" In Hawaii, you see a car accident you ask, "Anybody killed?" In California, you see a car accident you ask, "How many killed?"

The first week at San Diego, there was a big group of Samoans, an all-Samoan platoon, ninety-six of us. They ask me to be the interpreter. The Samoans knew how to speak English, but they were scared. In San Diego, I got some ideas on how to manage life in the U.S. I had to pay respect to the drill instructor [DI]. I didn't care about the language barrier. I'd talk to him. If I had to show the Samoans I was angry I'd do it. The DI told me to be the interpreter. I said, "Yes sir, I'll do it."

I returned to Hawaii, and right away I wrote a letter to the battalion CO in San Diego. I really wanted to serve as a regular marine. It was all I could say, like a broken record. I left my heart in San Diego, not San Francisco, but San Diego. They made a man out of me in San Diego. I went from 240 pounds, what I weigh now, to 190 pounds. They really trimmed me down. I felt so young then, but I was thirty-three. In the letter I praised the Marine Corps, they gave me a chance to serve. It was a handwritten letter, sort of a joke. Then one day Captain Matthew called me in at 9:00 AM. I said, "Yes, sir!" He said, "Do you know what a chain of command is? Why didn't you follow it?" I answered, "Sir, I felt if I did that my letter would go in your waste paper basket, sir." Captain Matthew said, "Better sit down. I'm

going to call Pearl Harbor; if you're one minute late, I'm going to hang you. But pray that you will never be in under any of my command." "Sir, is that a threat, sir?" I replied. He was so mad at me. But he had the sergeant fill out all the papers, and he said again that I should not be one minute late, but be at Pearl Harbor at 9:00 AM sharp the next day. I said, "Ay, Ay sir," turned around, and left.

I called Pearl Harbor because I know the guy there. I told him, "I was told never to be late one minute, but tonight I'm happy and I'm going to drink. I'm joining the armed forces." My friend asked, "What time you supposed to come in?" I said, "Nine o'clock." He said, "OK, come in at ten." But I was scared, could be a bait. But next morning I came to work before nine o'clock.

I went back to Camp Pendleton. I was in the marines twenty-one years, enjoyed every minute of it. Fair treatment, you know it. Some Samoans don't have it. They think they're kings. That doesn't make it. I left the marines in 1973. I went to Korea in 1952 but did not go ashore. At that time they called a cease-fire. I know five Samoans who fought in Korea, but more than thirty fought there. In the 1950s and 1960s the military was the easiest way to get a job in the States. You could earn good money in the service and get good jobs. I got twenty weeks of mechanical training at Camp Lejune. Sometimes the military is flexible with their entrance exam. Sometimes they like to get the Samoans in and get the training from there. Now the Samoans have the idea of going in for two years and then coming right out because they get educational benefits. This idea is new, its coming in, the people don't like it.

After Camp Lejune, I went to a base in Virginia. They picked me for training on a new grader and for operations training. They sent us up to cut the mountains down when I was back in California at Port Hueneme. There was no family for me in California, but other Samoans in the military had family, so we go over and they fed us. Maybe a nice-looking young man would try to make ways with the man's wife or daughter, then the man would cut you off and you had to leave. When I was in Southern California, I had family in San Francisco, so I drove up. They asked for money and said they were running short of everything. A Samoan would find '*aiga*' everywhere. Samoans flow to Samoans. If I need support, I can go see my Samoan family. But if my parents can give me money, I don't have to go to the '*aiga*'. This is what I will teach my children. I have money for them, so they don't need to go to '*aiga*' if they want to go the U.S. I went into the military because I wanted to become retired and see the benefits that come back to me. I didn't care too much for education. Now I know; I wish I could be young again so I could go back to school.

Three older Samoans, who have retired from the U.S. military and now reside in Hawaii, discussed their twenty- or thirty-year careers in the military and government work in similarly favorable terms. One of these men was a Fitafita guardsman and band member from 1932 to 1948. In 1948, he came to Hawaii, where he was stationed at Fort Shafter in Kalihi. Two years later he volunteered to be an individual weapons instructor and was transferred to Schofield Barracks in Wahiawa. From 1952 to 1954 he was in Germany, where he rejoined the division band. In 1954, he returned to Hawaii, but there was no position for him as a band sergeant. Because he already had twenty-two years in the service, he could request where he wanted to be stationed, so he chose Hawaii and was named an infantry sergeant. In 1962, after thirty years, he retired from the service. When asked what he got out of his military experience, he replied:

I improved my own leadership abilities. I learned courtesy and discipline. I was once the governor's orderly for Governor Milne in American Samoa. This governor saluted everyone he met, even women and children. I remember that respect. A person must have that respect. I learned leadership. I know how to treat people; sometimes there were more than sixty people in the barracks. I gained a lot of leadership in the army. I've taken that leadership into the community. I respect the older people, because in their younger days they were somebody else. Sometimes I see the drunk people. I never drink, and I watch them, and I try to help them. I know how to handle drunks. When I volunteered to be a weapons instructor, they asked me what I knew about teaching. I said, "I know the techniques and I know the discipline." I believe the more you put in, the more you get. I should have come out of the military better than I did. I learned leadership and the discipline. In Samoa, discipline started in the family. *Palagis* [Europeans/Americans] aren't disciplined early, so they don't like military discipline. In Samoa, if my child wanders off to a distant village and misbehaves, anyone can spank him. We call that discipline; here they call it child abuse. *Palagis* don't like all the courtesy in the military; Samoans don't find it so difficult.

Another of the older Samoan military retirees had joined the military in 1941 and stayed in until 1945. He entered the vocational school the navy opened in American Samoa in 1946. In 1952, he went back into the marines, where he received supply training. In 1961 he retired from the military and went right to work in the Civil

Service Supply Division in Honolulu. He told his two sons the positive things about military service, and they both are now serving in the U.S. military. He speaks proudly of his sons:

My oldest boy is a certified civil engineer, first class builder. He's been in sixteen years. My youngest boy is also an engineer. He's been in eight or nine years. They will both stay in more than twenty years. They are stationed in San Diego. I was stationed in San Diego in 1955-1958. There weren't too many Samoans there then.

The third Samoan military retiree interviewed in Hawaii joined the regular navy in 1945 and went to the Navy Training Center in San Diego in 1946. After twenty years' service he left the navy with a disability retirement. He emphasized that the navy gave him the time to study the Bible. He learned to respect his elders and those of higher rank. He also felt he gained leadership ability in the service and said, "My pension makes me happy."

The American Samoan *matai*, a service veteran of World War II, who has remained in Samoa for most of his life, discussed some of the practical benefits of his career in the service.

In the military, during the war, I was a general supply assistant. We used to take the PBY supply boats [seaplanes] to Western Samoa each week; sometimes we'd take ice cream to the Americans on Upolu. Later, I was in charge of the mess hall. That work helped me in my job running this cafeteria. Also now when there is a big *fa'alavelave* or a big Sunday meal (*to'onai*) I know how much food will feed so many people.

One Samoan who had worked for the U.S. military during the war complained about how Samoan workers were later treated by the Department of Interior administration:

I had worked in supply for the marines and later the navy. I continued working right until 1953. But then the Americans came down and after a couple of years working here they got a raise in pay. They told me because I was not an American citizen I wouldn't get a raise. Well that was enough for me. I quit and came back here, and now I have all these breadfruit trees and plenty of taro to sell in the market.

Older Samoans interviewed all speak favorably of their experiences in the military. The speaker just quoted had his experience of

felt-discrimination during the Department of Interior administration. Older Samoans in general have probably communicated their positive experiences to their sons and their sons' sons. But what of the experience of these second- and third-generation Samoan American servicemen? What have been their incentives and experiences within the American military?

When the same group of older Samoans was asked about the current incentives for Samoans to join the military the strongest incentive seemed to be the "retirement benefits." One Samoan who currently works for the Veterans Liaison Office in American Samoa gave rough estimates of the modern-day incentives for military enlistment:

Of the 900 veterans in American Samoa today, 238 served either twenty or thirty years in the military. After twenty years they have already picked up their children and come right back to Samoa. Today, the younger Samoans go in, about 20 percent go in because they want the retirement benefits. Another 30 percent go in for the educational benefits, but that's something new. The rest go in for money or job training.

Increasingly it seems Samoans are joining the military for nonretirement reasons. The older Samoan teacher stated that in the 1950s and 1960s, many Samoans joined for retirement benefits and just "to get away," "to travel." Now with so many Samoans overseas it is not necessary to join "to get off the rock." The American Samoan *matai* related that the "G.I. Bill educational benefits" now work as a powerful incentive to join the services. He too emphasized that this was a recent development, as "parents can't afford to pay for education." Some Samoans see the military as a work opportunity or as a means to get job training. This *matai* also pointed out that many Samoans go in for what they think will be a two-year stint, but after their first enlistment period, they change their minds and decide to stay in until retirement. He concluded the discussion with the statement, "We are real proud of our young men for serving the United States."

Younger Samoan servicemen in Hawaii seem to be comparing their military options with their employment opportunities in the wider community. Each new enlistment period brings at least potential salary increases as well as bringing them closer to retirement. They can assess their chances of using a military-learned job skill in

the Honolulu labor market and weigh that income-earning potential against the military service options.

Samoans in Hawaii still see the military as a generally positive work opportunity. A survey conducted in the Kalihi, Hawaii, area in 1983 gathered information on the military experience of sixty-six Samoans. Eight of these Samoan servicemen spent twenty years or more in the military, and the average length of enlistment was 8.6 years. Forty-eight of these servicemen were perceived as having improved their employment potential because of their military experience. Since the 1952 voyage of the USS *Jackson* from American Samoa to Hawaii there has been a close relationship between military participation, migration, and employment, and the close interaction of these three processes continues today (Franco 1985, 312-313).

Informants in American Samoa were asked about how the wider Samoan community views the returning service veteran. The answers to this question, not surprisingly, emphasized that it varies according to the individual veteran. Again, the informant with experience at the Veterans Liaison Office presented some rough estimates:

Many of the vets are working for the government and this is seen as a good role; about 28 percent work for the government. These Samoans are making a contribution to the economy and getting benefits for their families. About 26 percent retired from the service and are now working part-time or full-time. They are important men in their villages. About half the vets go back into the reserves and combine that income with some farming. They give up one weekend a month. Some have a bad record of discharge and probably 10 percent are not interested in being useful to the government, to their families, or to their villages. Quite a few of them are running around looking for beer.

Military work, in and of itself, is not perceived as prestigious, but if an individual uses that military experience for the benefit of government, family, or village, he is viewed with respect, and he is positively identified as a Samoan veteran. A Western Samoan *matai* remarked: "Samoans see military work as *faigaluega i le malo* 'work for the government'. This gives military work much more prestige."

Conclusion

During the 1940s a rapid increase in the number of wage-labor opportunities stimulated large-scale rural-urban migration to Pago Pago. Job skills acquired during World War II gave Samoans the confidence to begin moving internationally—American Samoans to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland, Western Samoans to New Zealand—in the early 1950s. These early international movers were probably more highly skilled than any later wave of Samoan migrants. The initial migrants to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland established Samoan communities around military bases, and these “ethnic enclaves” have provided, and continue to provide, points of entry for new Samoan migrants.

Samoan representations of their experience with, and in, the U.S. military show a great deal of continuity. Samoans speak proudly of their performance during World War II, and they speak proudly of the performance of their sons and daughters in the U.S. military today. There is no doubt that Samoan perceptions of work, and overseas labor force opportunities, were shaped by their experience of World War II.

Note

All names assigned to informants are pseudonyms.

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CHAPTER 17

Working Encounters: Oral Histories of World War II Labor Corps from Tanna, Vanuatu

LAMONT LINDSTROM

THE LARGEST single employer ever to engage labor in Vanuatu (New Hebrides) was the American military.¹ World War II was a critical event in the labor history of the Pacific as a whole. Above and beyond its sometimes voracious, sometimes sporadic demand for unskilled labor, the war for a time transformed the existing economic means and relations of production in the Pacific. On those islands the combatants chose to occupy and develop, military authorities recruited and organized "labor corps." In structure and economic function, these wartime production groups diverged considerably from traditional relations of subsistence labor based within family, lineage, and neighborhood. Similarly, wartime labor corps, although reflective in part of existing plantation gangs and other colonial labor practices, also differed significantly from the preceding forms (Geslin 1956, 278-279). No copra here, the new product was war.

Before the war, no airfields and very few roads existed in Vanuatu (map 9). As the main productive line of war action moved northward, it left standing in its wake enlarged communication, transportation, and public utility installations, which became (and today remain) the heart of Vanuatu's economic infrastructure (see chapter 13). The American-built road that circles Efate was initially named "Efate, U.S. route #1" (Heinl 1944, 250, 256). Islanders, in addition to the novel experience of having their labor disciplined, also encountered exotic sorts of technology in putting to work imported martial machinery and knowledge. Some were as simple as the wheelbarrow; others as complex as bulldozers, airplanes, municipal water systems, and base hospitals.

Although wartime labor corps in Vanuatu came into existence with the arrival of U.S. forces in the first half of 1942 and were mostly disbanded before the end of hostilities in 1945, the local importance of the labor corps experience has long outlived the war itself. Postwar changes in Islander identity and sociopolitical aspirations are as much relics of the war as are the infrastructural contributions, roads, airfields, crashed planes, abandoned Quonset huts, and other debris left behind when Truman brought home his troops. Apart from relations of combat itself—typically brief if sometimes intense—the war also engendered more mundane and more routinized cross-cultural relations between Islanders and outsiders on an unprecedented scale. Encounters with Americans, their allies, and the Japanese stimulated the social imaginations of all parties and led many war workers to rethink their relations with Europeans and colonial regimes (Geslin 1956, 277–278).

In this regard, World War II had a major influence on the tropology and ideology of a number of postwar social movements, including that of John Frum on Tanna, an island of southern Vanuatu. Elsewhere in the Pacific, it prompted more direct political action, such as the Maasina Rule of the Solomon Islands (Keesing 1978; Laracy 1983; chapter 15). The war is frequently held to have been partly responsible for sparking these ensuing movements, sometimes described as “proto-nationalistic” (Worsley 1968, 255; Guiart 1951). The experience of wartime labor corps—the wider relations and questioning knowledge workers encountered and circulated—constituted more than a temporary modification of existing modes of Pacific production. The war’s practice (its altered opportunities for travel, communication, material exchange, and work) in the end affected and challenged, more generally, the discourses and truths of ruling colonial economic and political regimes.

The erstwhile combatant nations have entered the season of war anniversaries—a season that looks to extend into the twenty-first century. Perhaps more than any other twentieth-century event, World War II fuels a complex historical industry. Its apparatus—which includes archives, war memorials and other sites of historical knowledge storage, periodic national ceremonies and holidays, and printed, electronic, cinematic, and video productions—generates a constant output of war texts, which satisfy and feed several markets. Beyond academic circles, such markets include the popular taste for war stories and battle-site tourism (chapter 13), as well as various state ideologies—which relentlessly recollect victorious national

truths. Here, as war history serves public memory ("lest we forget"), so it serves acknowledged veracities of national identity, of the "right" relations between peoples, and of the present's necessary relation to the past as known.

As with the ex-combatants, so with those Pacific Islanders overrun, caught up, and challenged by an extraneous, intrusive war. Here, too, war stories enunciate present statements of identity and desire, of self and other, and of the past in the present. Most of these island war "texts," however, are stored in personal memory; unlike the historical discourse practiced by the victors and vanquished, they circulate orally. In conversation, Islanders throughout the southwest Pacific continue to tell and retell stories of their experiences during the war.² These oral texts, which continue to shape definitions of identity and attitude toward the Pacific rim countries, chronicle war history from an island point of view.

In Vanuatu, the most intensive war experience was labor; the most routinized wartime encounters were working encounters (see chapter 16). In early 1942, the U.S. military agreed to establish an advanced operating base on Efate in counterpoint to the Japanese movement into the Solomon Islands. Several companies of troops from New Caledonia landed at Port Vila on 18 March 1942 to secure the island. A much larger fleet steamed into the harbor on 4 May (Garrison 1983, 13). At its peak, the island's garrison, comprised close to fifteen thousand servicemen. The attack and then defense of Guadalcanal and subsequent Japanese defeats soon shifted the war's front line farther to the north. In June, the U.S. military began to construct a much larger base on Espiritu Santo, 165 miles or so closer to the fighting in the Solomons:

As the war moved northward, the two advanced bases in Vanuatu (Third Island Command "Roses" and Fourth Island Command "Buttons") gradually transformed into behind-the-lines supply, hospital, transit, and repair facilities. Aside from a few ineffective bombings, Vanuatu was never a battleground; people escaped the injurious effects of combat that others in the southwest Pacific suffered (see, e.g., chapter 3; Robinson 1981). Base operations, however—particularly cargo unloading and storage—required considerable inputs of unskilled labor. The Americans turned to the relatively large population of Tanna, an island about 140 miles south of Efate, for a large percentage of their labor needs.³

It has been more than forty years since the Americans withdrew from Efate. Even so, older Tannese men vividly recall and often dis-

cuss their experiences of the war. Some of these accounts have been formalized in narrative and song. My aim here is less to establish the historical facts of the labor corps and their operation than to attempt an understanding of the recollected and acknowledged truths of that wartime experience as currently circulated in common island discourse: How do people today represent the war; and why do they continue to retell war stories?

Island Laborers

It was standard American World War II policy to recruit local labor to supplement quartermaster, engineering, and transportation units, thus freeing troops for combat (Coakley, Cocke, and Griffin n.d.). The American military generally worked through or with colonial powers to recruit and supervise indigenous laborers. In the Pacific, labor agreements with the British, Australians, and French generally limited tours of duty to 90 or 180 days; this and other colonial restrictions affected the total number of workers on duty at any one time.

Even so, in many parts of the southwest Pacific, the large majority of able-bodied men engaged in at least one tour of military labor duty. Labor requirements during the peak period of Pacific base operations exceeded the capacity of many local labor pools, absorbing nearly all available hands. In October 1943, for example, the U.S. military employed fifteen hundred New Caledonians out of a total Melanesian population of approximately thirty thousand. Labor corps strength on Guadalcanal (organized by colonial authorities as the British Solomon Islands Labour Corps) exceeded two thousand (Coakley, Cocke, and Griffin n.d., 2-3). Allied forces in Papua New Guinea employed at least 49,500 workers with monthly average labor strengths exceeding 34,499 in 1944. Workers there were recruited by agents of Australian New Guinea Administrative Units (ANGAU) (Robinson 1981, 23; Ryan 1969, 540). The Allies also signed on an unknown number of local laborers in Dutch New Guinea with the assistance of the colonial Netherlands East Indies Civil Affairs Detachments (Coakley, Cocke, and Griffin n.d., 11).

The U.S. military and the Pacific colonial powers frequently held divergent interests in the recruitment and supervision of labor. The Americans aimed to secure large numbers of recruits and to keep them healthy enough to perform arduous and long hours of work.

Government agents, on the other hand, were typically concerned as far as was feasible to maintain prewar relations of colonial domination and to reserve a supply of labor for local plantation, business, and domestic needs. The colonial governments, therefore, passed various regulations in an endeavor to control military use of local labor. In Vanuatu, such laws served to restrict the number of laborers the Americans might recruit and to define the sort of work that might be performed (for example, New Hebrides Condominium Joint Defence Regulation no. 8 of 1944). Furthermore, colonial regulations limited the wages the U.S. military could pay its workers, thereby protecting the interests of local planters and businesses that otherwise could not compete in the labor market and, moreover, feared postwar wage inflation. Colonial labor regulations also attempted to restrict informal encounters and interaction between Islanders and American or Allied servicemen in order to prevent the circulation of anticolonialist and other dangerous knowledge.

The war's working encounters undoubtedly exposed the ruling powers to new hazards—both economic and political. The colonists in both the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu confronted serious local challenges to their authority (challenges that culminated, for example, in the postwar Maasina Rule and John Frum nationalistic movements). Voices among both the Islanders and the Americans publicly questioned the political authority and the economic development abilities as well as the past accomplishments of the ruling powers. Echoes of Islander calls for the Americans to retain a presence in both archipelagos after the war's end bounced about the U.S. Congress. Some Americans, at least, were not altogether willing to restore power to impotent, had-to-be-saved-from-the-Japanese European colonists whose heyday obviously had come and gone.

In Noumea, for example, relations between the Free French civil and American military authorities were never altogether smooth. Conflicting interests influenced the recruitment and supervision of labor. In May 1942 Major General Alexander M. Patch requested that the French governor establish a camp to house approximately 480 dock workers employed by the Americans as stevedores, longshoremen, winch operators, hatch tenders, and jitney drivers. The camp, named Joe Louis and located at a Melanesian school in Monttravel, was initially administered by an appointed French "colonial chief of camp." The U.S. Army agreed to pay all camp and labor expenses, including the salaries of the French labor supervisors.

By January 1943, however, the army officer in charge demanded to assume day-to-day supervisory responsibilities to ensure that his workers received proper food, medical care, and sanitation services (Wyman 1944). Under sole French administration,

sanitation was bad, so bad as to present a health menace. Sick call was very high. The majority of French supervisors were low grade . . . native pay was very low, causing several minor strikes . . . it was no longer possible to acquire sufficient food, of a satisfactory nature, and it was impossible to furnish any clothing or equipment. (Wyman 1944, 1-2)

The Americans' eventual appropriation of camp administration, leaving the French only titular authority, addressed these problems and also, according to American reports, improved labor recruitment: "Good personal relations with the local gendarme and tribal chiefs have been instrumental in obtaining, for the most, a good quality and quantity of labor. This was not true when recruiting was solely a French function" (Wyman 1944, 5).

Although agreeing to American *de facto* operation of the camp, the French continued to restrict tours of labor duty to 90 days (extended to 120 under American pressure), forbid reenlistments, and limit wages to 20.50 francs per 54-hour work week. Moreover, the French colonial authorities insisted that the U.S. military turn American payroll funds over to their Native Affairs Office, which then used the money to pay indigenous laborers working at U.S. military installations (Wyman 1944, 5). ANGAU in Papua New Guinea and the British in the Solomon Islands similarly insisted on organizing and controlling local labor, thus limiting as much as possible the military's function in these areas, as well as restricting the informal encounters between American and Allied servicemen and local workers (see Robinson 1981, 80; White et al. 1988).

In Vanuatu, as in New Caledonia, the U.S. military first worked through colonial authorities, but soon took over day-to-day labor recruitment and supervisory responsibilities. The American military's usurpation of civil control of local labor perhaps related to its amused yet exasperated evaluation of the condominium government (Geslin 1956, 267-271; Wallin 1967, 18).

The ground element of Marine Fighter Squadron VMF 212 first recruited labor in Vanuatu to work on airfield construction in April 1942 (Wallin 1967, 19). On their arrival in May, forces of the army

and the navy's Construction Battalion (Seabees) assumed construction and other logistical responsibilities on Efate including those of labor procurement. For the army, Colonel S. D. Slaughter, general staff officer in charge of logistics (G-4), assigned these recruitment duties to his assistant G-4, Major George Riser (Garrison 1983, 80). For the navy, H. N. Wallin, officer-in-charge of the Third Naval Construction Detachment (of the First Naval Construction Battalion), turned over labor recruiting and supervision to Thomas Beatty, boatswain first class (Wallin, personal communication). Beatty is renowned on Tanna even today as the famous "Tom Navy" (Paul 1974, 6-10).

The Americans needed labor to work at the several military installations they began to build on Efate, at Port Vila, Havannah Harbor, and Quoin Hill. When their needs rapidly outstripped the population of Efate, then approximately three thousand (Wallin 1967, 18), they turned south to Tanna, which provided the majority of the one thousand or so workers who served on Efate that year:

The American forces at Vila are now employing 950 natives secured from several islands, but mainly from Tanna, on a three months contract. They are paid 45 shillings, or \$7.50 per month. They are worked 10 hours per day and given every other Sunday off. The arrangement at Santos [*sic*] is similar. (Hudgins 1942; see Wallin 1967, 29; OCMH n.d.a, 186)

Most labor recruitment took place in 1942, during the initial period of base construction and organization, but Tannese men worked for the navy on Efate at least until 1944 (United States Navy 1944). Some records indicate that the army stopped the official use of local labor in May 1943 (OCMH n.d.b). Labor requirements and strengths no doubt declined on Efate throughout 1943 and 1944.

Labor needs elsewhere in the archipelago were less than on Efate. A few men worked at the eight or so coastwatching stations established throughout northern Vanuatu and the Santa Cruz Islands (Garrison 1983, 42-49; chapter 11) and received wages of one pound per month in addition to food and tobacco (Patten 1942, 7), comparable to wage levels for the Solomon Islands Labour Corps (British Colonial Office 1946).

Other Islanders worked on Espiritu Santo. Here, the Americans began construction of Fourth Island Command Base installations in June 1942 (Wallin 1967, 26; Garrison 1983, 88). The U.S. com-



Tannese labor corps recruits with American supervisor, Major George Riser ("Tom Army"), on Efate, Vanuatu, 1942. (*Steven Slaughter*)

mand ordered an airfield built at Palikulo large enough for B-17 bombers to support "Watchtower," the invasion of Guadalcanal in August that year. Seabees, struggling to build and open this airfield for business in only twenty days, immediately recruited island labor to assist in the construction work (Wallin 1967, 27). After the opening of base installations on Santo, island labor strength rose to at least six hundred in 1943 (Major A. G. King, personal communication). However, military recruitment and quartering of workers ceased altogether on 20 December 1944, following in part the condominium's imposition of restrictions on Islander employment with the military (Kralovec n.d., 442).

By this time, too, army medical officers, discovering significant malaria and filariasis counts in labor recruits, cautioned against the use of large numbers of island workers and further advised that they be kept apart, as much as possible, from American troops (Major A. G. King, personal communication; Robinson 1981, 80). An army survey of workers in March 1943 suggested that 26 percent were carriers of filariasis. On Santo, as on Efate, the navy continued to employ workers after the army had stopped recruiting (Major A. G. King, personal communication).

On Efate, however, through 1942 and 1943, nearly a thousand men from Tanna (out of a total population of fewer than six thou-

sand, about two thousand of whom were adults) encountered, interacted, and worked with American labor supervisors and American servicemen. Although the condominium civil authorities had contracted at first to procure and administer local labor, the military took over labor recruitment, as at Camp Joe Louis in Noumea, when colonial agents failed to meet labor quotas (Paul 1974, 7). The Americans also assumed supervisory responsibilities after workers complained about the food and housing they received from the British and the French. Thomas Nouar, in charge of a labor gang from southeast Tanna, recalled

The time when we landed, the Americans didn't provide any food for us to eat. The French and the English demanded to feed us. They fed us but gave us bad food. We starved; there was no food. They gave us Fiji taro to eat—Fiji taro and rotten bananas, woody manioc. People nearly died the hunger was so bad. We still went into the ships and worked on this bad food. It was poorly cooked, what they gave us. I was our boss, so I took it and went and put it down in the face of the big boss of the Americans. I don't know his name, but I showed it to the boss in the ship. The ship boss took me and explained the problem to a boss living on the small island Iririki. He told me to throw the food into the launch. The launch sped to the islet Iririki, and I went into the office with the food on a plate. We went to see an American officer. A general. I brought the food and showed them what we were eating—stinking salt meat. It stank even though we boiled and boiled it. Bad Fiji taro. He took the food and led me, the police coming along with guns, and we two went to find two other big-men sitting in another office. One was white and one black. We went in, and they discussed the problem, and at the same time, that evening, the Americans had already sent us rice. And they gave us meat. And gave us different fruits and all different foods. And they gave us clothing, old clothing; they stacked up used clothing in a huge pile. Trousers, coats—you passed by and if you saw your size you took it. And boots, and hats, shirts . . . We perhaps ate [French] food for a month until we refused and the Americans began to feed us. When America fed us, men ate but couldn't finish it all. (1983; cf. chapter 13)

The working encounters between the Tannese and the American military were a relatively brief episode in the history of labor relations in Vanuatu. These war-induced alterations in local relations of production were, for the most part, militarily specialized and temporary. Nonetheless, people today recollect and frequently represent in stories their wartime labor experiences. The war's working encoun-

ters have influenced and still continue to affect local political relations as well as understandings of self and of the outside world.

Willing Workers

In Papua New Guinea, where the war was close at hand, military demands for labor exceeded the number of Islanders willing to put up with the burdensome and dangerous work, poor wages, and sometimes harsh treatment. ANGAU conscripted workers, chasing people down in their villages. It was forced to extend the length of labor contracts up to three years and sometimes beyond, to use police to control labor gangs, and to chastise deserting or dilatory workers with caning and other sorts of punishment (Robinson 1981, 21, 50, 65, 70, 78; Ryan 1969, 540-543). In New Caledonia, labor relations were also occasionally tense. Both Tonkinese and Melanesian workers organized strikes in the early days of the war (see Wyman 1944, 2). In Vanuatu, contrarily, the Tannese were anxious to recruit to work. They suffered adverse and unaccustomed conditions of labor without much complaint: Islanders were "genuinely friendly and incredibly eager to help any Americans" (Heinl 1944, 239).

The disparate willingness of Tannese labor volunteers vis-à-vis Papua New Guinea conscripts no doubt relates to the different sorts of labor and labor conditions in each area as well as to operative colonial labor policies. However, Tannese wartime volunteerism also began in the instructions of their island's latter-day culture hero, John Frum (Guiart 1956; Lindstrom 1979, 1981; chapter 13). News of the enigmatic John Frum first came to the attention of colonial authorities in 1940. A shadowy figure, he appeared at night at Iamwatakarik kava-drinking ground near Green Point on the island's southwest coast. Whether or not astute intellectual entrepreneurs conjured up this apparition for their own ends, John Frum since has taken his place in the island's pantheon of knowledgeable ancestors, didactic culture heroes, and spirits of place.

John Frum's message to the faithful changed from one that initially supported the government and island missions to one more anticolonialist in character. He ordered his listeners to resume their customary practices of dancing and kava drinking (both set aside in the mission period) and to withdraw support from European government agents, traders, and missionaries. In response, the condomin-

ium district agent, concluding that a small group of troublesome men were conspiring to delude their fellows, instituted a series of arrests and deportations that were to continue for the next seventeen years.

Word of America had begun circulating within movement conversations at least by September 1941. The government intercepted a letter sent from Port Vila to Tanna that spoke of John Frum's son traveling to America to bring back the king (Guiart 1956, 410). The ideological reference here to America may have been in fortuitous counterpoint to the British and the French then governing the islands. Fischer (1964) has suggested that colonized people call upon any known outside power perceived to be unlike local colonial authorities in order to challenge ruling economic and political inequalities. Whatever the reasons for the movement's doctrinal appropriation of America, this was a successful shot in the dark. Six months later, an American occupying army arrived in force at Port Vila. It arrived, moreover, desperate for Islander unskilled labor to unload its ships and to clear airfields for the upcoming Solomon Islands campaign.

If the Americans desired labor, the Tannese desired to work. Island men were keen to travel north to Vila to join the labor corps (leaving behind a politically tense situation at home). As Nouar noted:

At the time the Americans came, we were ignorant. But one of our spirits, John Frum, had predicted this. He advised us that Americans would come. We were ignorant of planes, but he was the first to say that planes would arrive. We were ignorant of many things, but he said that trucks for us would arrive; there were no trucks on Tanna, but John said that they would come. . . . We were ignorant of America. But at that time they came to fight we knew that it was America. One here had said the name of America. John Frum, a being who lives here on Tanna and away in America, was the first to say the name of America. We were ignorant about America, but John Frum explained, and afterwards we went to see. We understood. . . . Perhaps you would say that what he spoke here was a prophecy. John Frum's prophecy spoke truly. He predicted things which happened later. . . . We saw America as the prophecy John Frum had predicted we would. (1983)

The journey north to work for the Americans on Efate was doubly significant, combining as it did elements of pilgrimage as well as contravention of now devalued colonial and mission truths.

The military, having John Frum to thank for worker *esprit de corps*, was occasionally nonplussed by the enthusiasm. In October 1943—after most Tannese workers had returned home—a John Frum spokesman, Neloia, organized his followers to construct an airfield. On this, American planes might land at Tanna as well as at Efate. U.S. military authorities agreed to transport colonial police and New Hebrides Defence Force members to Tanna on the USS *Echo* (a supply and transport vessel) in order to put down this doctrinal insurrection (O'Reilly 1949, 201–203; Barrow 1952; Guiart 1956, 184–188). Two American intelligence officers who went along as observers informed those movement supporters who had gathered to clear a runway in the forest that “American forces had no connection with Jonfrum and that they did not want an airport built on Tanna because they and the British and French were fighting the Japs in the Solomons” (Patten and Carson 1943, 2).

This local enthusiasm—or rather, this ideological appropriation of America—persuaded island men to engage in unknown relations of military production and to submit themselves to novel forms of labor practice and discipline. Colonial recruiters first sent requests for labor to Tanna through a system of assessors—local subalterns working under island district agents. When this message reached southeast Tanna, Nouar recalled:

We were living and we heard that America had come to Vila, at that time. In wartime. And they wanted to gather up some men. We left as a company—my company here at Port Resolution. . . . We gathered together, the big-men of [America] talked and set a date and told us to come in the middle of the night to meet the ship at Lenakel. We made ready and prepared a feast to say farewell to one another in the village. Pigs were killed and fowl, tuber puddings were made, kava was drunk. After our feast, in the evening, we left along the big road walking at night. . . . The beach was full of people crying. Women and men cried. Since we were going away, the Americans said to us that they would like us to dance. We danced. We danced at sea and heard the ship's deck resound. (1983)

On the beach at Lenakel, officers of the USS *Cape Flattery*, which had detoured to Tanna while returning from a supply voyage to Noumea, took down the names of Nouar and other embarking workers. When the ship reached Efate, the military issued the new labor recruits numbered dogtags and distributed them in labor

camps at various places about Port Vila (such as Tebakor). One or two so-called boss boys, appointed because of their command of Pidgin English (Bislama), led each labor team, generally composed of men from the same language group. After the Americans came to assume day-to-day responsibilities for labor supervision, they also provided worker housing (tents and cots), clothing (including boots and coats for cool nighttime work), cigarettes, food (pairs of men from each gang rotated cooking chores), transportation to and from work sites (trucks arrived at labor camps each morning to fetch workers), medical care (for example, the experimental and generally worthless wartime malarial prophylactic atabrine), and occasional nights of entertainment (for example, cinema viewings).

In Vanuatu (as opposed to New Caledonia, for example) island workers mostly undertook unskilled labor only. They unloaded cargo (Nouar [1983] recalled in particular bombs and Marsden matting), provided garbage and janitorial services, worked with mosquito abatement crews to cut grass and spread oil on standing water, and gardened in vegetable farms the military ordered its quartermasters to plant. Nevertheless, in so doing, they served complex military technologies. The Tannese worked on and inside the holds of liberty ships; they moved cargo in and out of large refrigerated storage facilities; they traveled to work on large military vehicles; they ate foods processed and packaged in the United States and prepared in military messes. They observed bombers returning from the Solomons; fighters circling overhead to protect the bases; air-raid drills punctuated with klaxon alarms and defensive artillery action; tractors and bulldozers clearing roads and fields; telephone systems, radar, and weather observation posts; weaponry; the wounded and the dead flown in from the front, ambulances, and base hospitals.

Moreover, the work was rigorous and the organization of labor considerably unlike what Islanders had experienced before within either the local subsistence or the colonial economies. Although some of the men who joined the labor corps had previously worked on colonial copra plantations, the war's organization of unskilled labor was as much martial as it was industrial or plantational in character. The military established work squads (which ate and bunked together). It established chains of command. It uniformed workers and numbered them with dogtags. It organized workers' leisure as well as labor hours. It instituted labor shifts of up to ten hours, with some men working days and others working nights

under lights. Workers had only one day off every two weeks. Nouar recalled little time available for anything else but work: "The work was hard night and day. If we fooled around, Japan would beat us. We didn't rest. Night and day, night and day, night and day. Hard work" (1983; cf. chapter 15). Under this regimen, a number of workers fell sick and several from southeast Tanna died and were buried on Efate in American blankets.

These working encounters with exotic technologies and martial productive relations—working encounters, moreover, illuminated in part by the auspices of John Frum—inform people's recollections of the war today. By 1946, the Americans had won and gone home. Before this, the various labor corps had disbanded and the Tannese too had returned home to their island. However, people continue to rehearse these few months of wartime experience in story and song. More than a passing exploitation and modification of island labor, the war bequeathed new knowledge with which to chart and express altered postwar political identities and oppositions.

War Stories

In a conversational, nonliterate society, history exists as memory only. There is no written text. Instead, there are stories whose continued existence depends solely on their retelling. Here, more so than in textualizing literate/electronic orders of discourse which store knowledge externally, the past exists to the extent it speaks to the present. War stories, in this regard, must make good stories (cf. chapter 2). How has the war become island history? Why, here, are war stories told and retold?

Contemporary Tannese statements about the war—either freely delivered or elicited in interview—enunciate a number of elementary themes. In most of these narratives, the principal motif is that of exchange (chapter 7). Island war stories, as apologues of American wealth and generosity, enumerate a litany of goods received: rice, bread, meat, cake, fruit, boots, hats, coats, shirts, trousers, blankets, knives, forks, plates, cups, pots, pans, cigarettes:

It wasn't like [today] when cigarettes are scarce, they gave us freely many cigarettes. If I sat to rest, I had plenty of cigarettes. . . . They gave freely many long cartons. One would give us his, another give us his, and another give us his so that we worked hard to smoke them all.

Those were cigarettes. The Americans gave us cigarettes. Our cigarettes. They gave us food, gave us cigarettes. Rice, meat arrived, pork arrived, chicken arrived. Bread, they gave us bread to eat. They cooked and sent bread—small bread, large bread, long bread, all sorts. (Timothy 1983)

Narratively represented, this exchange is not one-sided, but reciprocal (see chapter 10). In return for goods, the Tannese provided labor to assist the defeat of Japan. The stories relate not simply blind American generosity but ongoing relations of reciprocal exchange: "America came here and asked for help to beat the Japanese. We worked so hard together we nearly died. If any Americans remember me, they might send me some cigarettes—that's all I want. If they don't remember me, that's all right too" (Timothy 1983). The continuing narrative rehearsal of the establishment of these wartime relations of exchange presents a case for a special relationship—a relationship that the Tannese and Americans might resume at any moment.

War stories also represent American wisdom—powerful knowledge that those men who traveled north to work perceived and occasionally learned—for example, "We joked sometimes and they also taught some of us boxing. How to hit people. They taught us to hit ourselves" (Nouar 1983).

War stories particularly chronicle that secret American knowledge which appeared to parallel local magical practice (chapter 12). Radar and other communication devices, which permit one to see yet not be seen, or to talk when at a distance, have counterparts in local tradition:

We carried large glasses to the tops of trees. You climbed to the tops of banyan trees and installed the glass there. Men sat there, shooting, looking off towards Japan. If one saw a Japanese set out, he would warn people. These things of the war. If he saw one [ship] leave and reach the passage he would say "something over there has set out." America watched it. The glass was long. You went and saw well things far away. In Japan. You saw well the ships of Japan. A glass. It was like a round glass. An engine was inside. It permitted monitoring the words of America and those things of Japan. . . . It was off-limits, people couldn't go there. But sometimes an American who was good to you called you to come and look in secret. No one told. It was like that. The accomplishments of the wise, right? They are wise to be able to look off so far. (Timothy 1983)

War narratives, in drawing these cultural parallels—apart from making sense of exciting, unfamiliar experiences—also assert an identity between Tanna and America.

The retelling of Tannese war stories has served to emphasize this connection. Enunciating the exchange relations, and even closer identities that unite Tanna and America, island war narratives make several different statements. One of these statements, certainly, has been anticolonial. The identity between the Tannese and their wartime employers that war stories assert serves to highlight the absence of balanced relations and shared identity between Islanders and the British and French colonial authorities. Tanna and America thus unite in distinctive opposition to the colonial powers.

Island pundits went to work adducing further cultural similarities that identified America with Tanna. War workers analyzed astutely military practices and organization in terms of certain of their own cultural structures. They diagnosed the military's divisions (army, navy, marine, "Negro") and figured that these mirror traditional island moiety structures. Origin narratives shifted, slightly, to account for an initial mythic separation of two brothers—the one staying on Tanna, the other lost away in America. The war occurred to celebrate their reunion (Lindstrom 1979; chapters 3, 9, 11).

If we appraise wartime labor corps with a postwar vocabulary not common in the 1940s, island laborers were exploited and their American military supervisors patronizing if not worse. If the Tannese already knew America through the construals of John Frum, the Americans already knew Tanna by virtue of cinematic and literary representations of savage cannibals, fetid jungles, and South Sea idylls, not to mention the acknowledged racial truths about blacks and whites within the United States. A few cinematic entrepreneurs, led by the American Martin Johnson, had made small careers out of filming counterfeit cannibal feasts in Vanuatu itself—and these texts were only bit parts within a larger commercial apparatus for the appropriation and representation back home of the true Pacific (for example, Heintz 1944).

Workers called their American supervisors "master"—although sometimes also "brother" (Schutz 1968, 312; Mead 1966, 173–177). And the Americans called their employees "boy"—but sometimes also "Joe, or Dick or Jimmy, whatever. They named us. John. They called us anything. They gave us any kind of name. They acted so" (Nouar 1983). The Americans also amused themselves with local dances—but sometimes joined in the dancing:

We danced all the time, night and day. One danced on shore and on the deck of ships. . . . If the cold was bad, the Americans said "Okay, dance, dance, dance!" and men danced and danced. . . . The soldiers too danced at night. . . . When we danced some came to dance with us, to try to dance too. They tried to dance like us. They swung their arms and stamped their feet. (Timothy 1983)

Official reports occasionally complain about the quality of local labor—but U.S. officers also appreciated its assistance: "We are deeply indebted to these hard working natives who supplemented my work force. Our work load was so great and the schedule so tight that we needed every pair of hands and legs we could get" (Admiral H. N. Wallin, personal communication).

No matter the inherent economic and other inequalities within wartime labor relationships, there were effective unities of purpose that brought the Americans and the Tannese together. In significant areas, both joined to oppose the colonial condominium government. If the military agreed on paper to limit Islander wages to protect condominium economic interests, American servicemen nonetheless augmented those wages with food and goods, and occasionally must have blamed the condominium for tying their hands so that they could not give more. Tannese workers today certainly do:

America didn't say it wanted to maltreat us, but the French and the British stood in the way. They paid us badly. . . . They blocked, prevented. They only let America feed us, but America didn't give us money. The French and the British gave money to us. They paid us, but the money was small! We worked hard for it. . . . What bad treatment. (Nouar 1983)

In general, U.S. military interests aimed at the short term while their allies sought to do what they could to ensure the continuation of colonial economic and political relations into the postwar period (Mead 1966, 184). Beyond the Tannese desire to establish material exchange relationships (which converged with the American desire for a well-fed and healthy work force), other interests worked to oppose military and civil authority. Some of these related directly to the exercise and scope of that authority itself. Worker Nase Kapa-ho's war stories—we need not worry about their factuality—tell how he eluded condominium police in hot pursuit by racing from town to military camp in order to find a laughing refuge behind protective American military police.

Many American servicemen had little love for their own military authorities let alone those of the colonially tedious British and French (cf. Robinson 1981, 182). Despite agreements and orders to keep a measure of distance between Islanders and servicemen, some Americans were interested to meet and speak with workers—if, sometimes, only to draw upon their local knowledge of the hide-aways of available women. Thus, as Nouar recalled:

They were good men but they wanted women. They searched for women. . . . They asked us where they could get women. But there were no women. . . . If they wanted to steal a woman they said "suksuk." They said thusly, this word "suksuk." They all wanted suksuk.⁴ They all said it. Asking us this we all joked and laughed. (1983)

Tanna war stories describe numerous sorts of informal interactions between Americans and Islanders (such as the boxing practice Nouar recalled). These include the sharing of food, gifts of money for small services, the consuming search for women, and the occasional sharing of homemade alcohol—"jungle juice, torpedo juice."

A considerable percentage of the American servicemen passing through Efate were black. The black Twenty-fourth Infantry Regiment, a unit of the old segregated army, was a major part of the force that landed at Port Vila on 4 May 1942. Approximately 3400 men of the army's landing force of 4612 were black (OCMH n.d.a, 158). As the Twenty-fourth Infantry moved north toward the front, other black servicemen arrived to undertake engineering, supply, and transportation duties at the base.

Tannese workers encountered these black servicemen engaged in various tasks:

Some Negroes were soldiers, some lived on ships, some went with the army, some did the work of the marines, some the work of the navy, some lived on ships and worked. Some drove trucks, lots of Negroes drove trucks. The Negroes. . . . They were good men, but they too wanted women. They searched for women. . . . When they called out, they didn't say—they called us "brother." Brother, their brothers. They didn't say that we were no good. They liked us, and because of this our hearts were happy with them. Eh, the Americans! (Nouar 1983)

Nouar also recalled a black serviceman named Jesse who understood a little Pidgin English. (Heinl [1944, 249] recorded friendships between black servicemen and local children). The significance of

the wartime black American presence for relations of exchange and identity between Americans and Melanesians has often been sounded in the postwar literature (Mead 1966, 177; Worsley 1968, 172; Robinson 1981, 161, 173, 182, 187; chapters 7, 8, 9, 15).⁵

Since 1945, the war stories that people have circulated—and thus maintained within their historical repertoire—continue to enunciate the goodness of America: “Americans are good men. Love was in them. They were good men. Kindness” (Nouar 1983; see also chapter 15). America’s postwar withdrawal and absence no doubt have kept the Tannese heart growing fonder. Island war stories, as they tell of the goodness and kindness of America, implicitly criticize the postwar badness and meanness of the British and the French (Read 1947, 108–111; Worsley 1968, 126, 151, 161, 173; Inglis 1969, 514; chapters 7, 8, 10, 15). On Tanna, war stories are good stories insofar as they serve (or once served) to enunciate an island challenge to the colonial authorities—a narrative charting of a political disjunction that culminated in national independence in 1980 (Inglis 1969, 524–525). Recollections of the Tannese identity with wartime Americans became part of the metaphoric furnishings of this opposition between Islanders and outsiders. Properly arranged, they sketch relations of likeness and unlikeness (see chapter 4).

War stories make good stories for reasons of internal island political identities and oppositions as well. Various political factions on Tanna have attempted to appropriate war memories: to stake a claim to America. In particular, the John Frum movement tropologically incorporated a range of wartime elements, including symbolic red crosses, ritual drill teams commanded by sergeants, carefully preserved military uniforms and dogtags, the logo “U.S.A.” used as a body-paint design, and American flags (Lindstrom 1981). Here, Islanders narrate stories that, in asserting their differential, competing exchange relations with America (asserting, moreover, that such relations continue into the present), serve to trace out those cleavages that oppose island political factions.

Similarly, the elders nowadays also make use of history; their war narratives serve to counter the stories of the ignorant young. In this case, the young are considered ignorant of those war times when work, as represented in stories, was meaningful and exciting. The young may tell tales that flash their modernity and rehearse their travels to today’s Port Vila; but their stay-at-home parents can always mark these stories down—depreciating them in terms of wartime working encounters with America when the world *really* moved.

Conclusion

War stories have made good stories, becoming and remaining part of island historical knowledge, by virtue of their capacity to continue to make statements about the present. In the recent present, Islanders have cultivated and achieved national independence. War stories record the early period of this process of self-identification. The war's working encounters—however hard and exploitive this labor may have been—provided Islanders with the experience of a new set of relations of labor and production, and novel technologies as well as other exotic knowledge.⁶ Wartime working encounters, culturally plotted into war stories, have enjoyed continuing exchange value and political utility within island discourse. These stories too are the war's history: the Pacific theater according to Islanders who were there.

Notes

I gathered war stories from Tannese labor corps veterans in 1982 and 1983. I also returned to Tanna in 1985 to discuss the possibility of future ethnohistorical research on the war in Vanuatu. I would like to thank the University of Tulsa's Faculty Research Program, the University of Tulsa College of Arts and Sciences Summer Faculty Grant Program, and the Institute of Culture and Communication, East-West Center for research assistance. On Tanna, I thank especially chiefs Thomas Nouar, Rapi Timothy, Jack Uiuai, and Joel Iau for entertaining and informative stories.

1. That is, until a recent expansion of the national civil service.

2. Few of these have been textualized in print (but see Ravuvu 1974; Robinson 1981; Schutz 1968, 300-312; Keeble 1980). The generation of people who directly experienced the war is now elderly. Although war texts (whether informal or relatively formalized in story or song) will no doubt continue to circulate after its passing, the next few years present a unique—if final—opportunity to document the local significance of the war among those Pacific Islanders who lived through it.

3. Historical information that documents the operation, effects, and significance of wartime labor corps on Efate may be obtained from military, governmental, and other war archives, from those surviving Allied servicemen who were involved in recruitment and supervision of the labor corps, and from the Tannese men, now respected elders, who traveled north to work for the Americans in 1942. Although I rely in part on an initial search of U.S. military archives and on correspondence with a number of American servicemen stationed on Efate during the war, this chapter draws principally on oral histories I collected on Tanna in 1982 and 1983. My nationality, too, was an important factor in the interview equation (Lindstrom 1979; see chapter 7).

4. *Suksuk* may derive from Samoan *susu* 'breast', 'milk' or Fijian *susu* 'to nurse'.

5. Some Tannese workers, however, recall being afraid of black troops (cf. Robinson 1981, 103; chapters 10, 13). This is an important area for further ethno-historical research—both in Melanesia and in the United States.

6. "One island attendant in an officers' mess became a regular reader of the *New York Times*" (Heinl 1944, 256).

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