

Cruising & Diving the Marshall Islands

May – Oct 2013



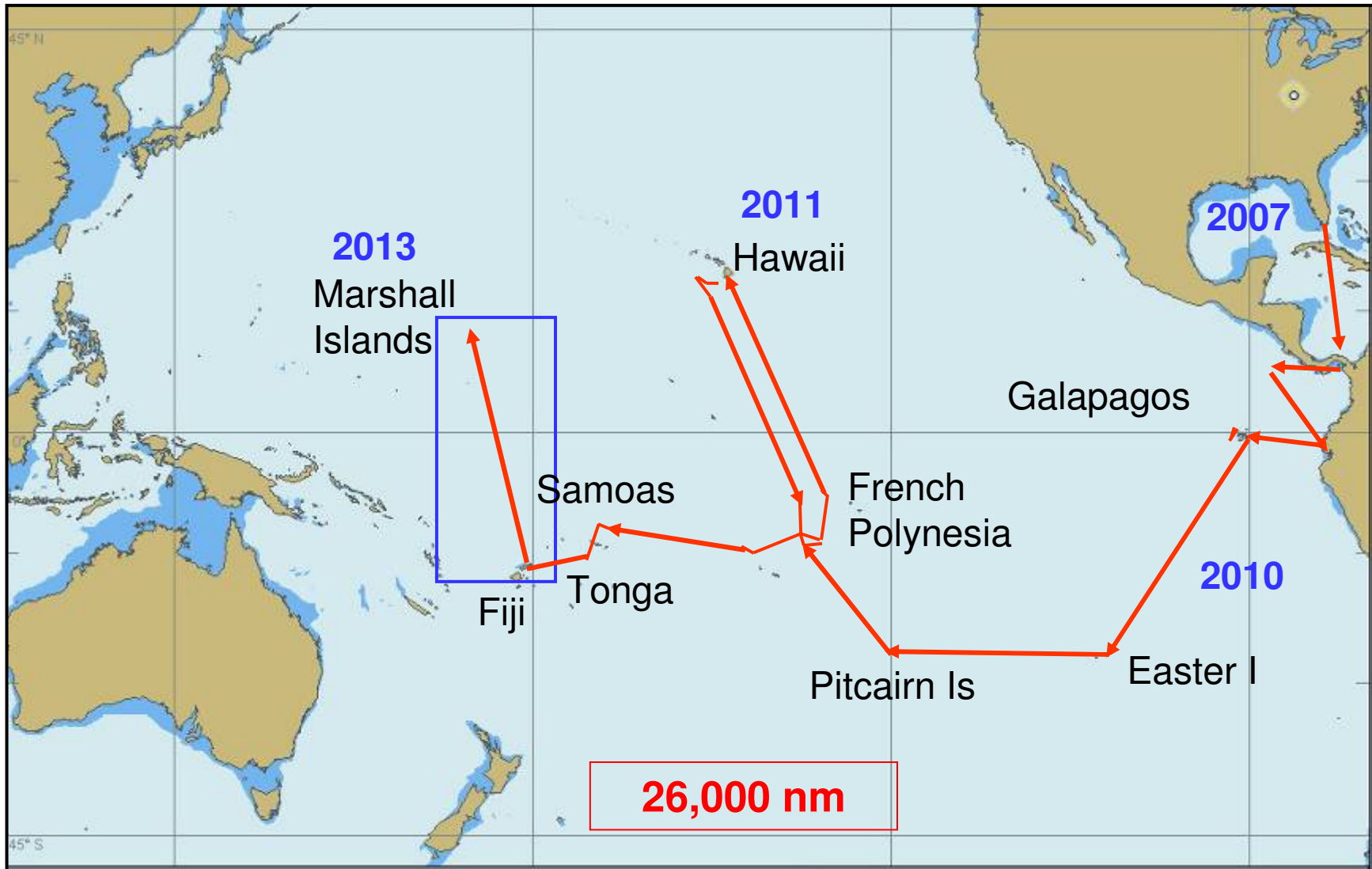
**Sherry and Dave McCampbell
svsoggypaws.com**

SSCA Gam November 2013



**Seven Seas Cruising
Association
SSCA.org**

2007-2013 Track

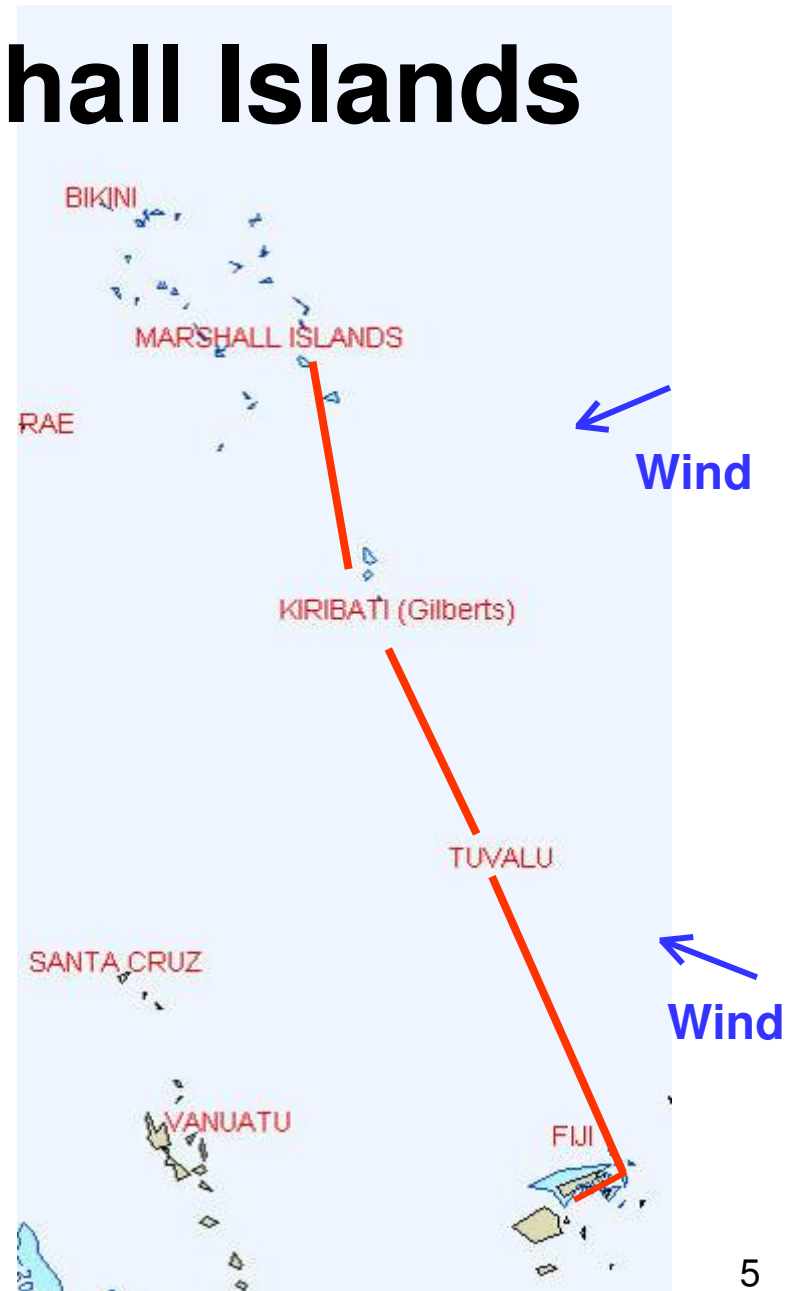




Soggy Paws – 1981 CSY 44 WT

Fiji to the Marshall Islands

- **1,700 Miles**
- **20 Days**
- **2 Stops**
 - Funafuti, Tuvalu (4 days)
 - Tarawa, Kiribati (3 days)
- **Mostly Light Wind Sailing**
 - Except “Mother of All Squalls”
- **Arrived Majuro on May 10 (right on schedule)**
- **Saw only one other cruising boat during the whole trip**



Marshall Islands History

- Prehistory Micronesian
- 1880s-1915 - German
- 1915-1945 - Japanese
 - Heavy infrastructure construction
- 1943/44 - Major U.S. bombing campaign
- 1946-50 – Nuclear bomb testing
 - Bikini/Eniwetok Atolls
- 1945-1986 - U.S. Trust Territory
- Independence - 1989



Republic of the Marshall Islands Today

- **Population - 70,000 (30,000 in Majuro)**
- **Language: Marshallese (some English)**
- **Land area: 70 sq miles**
 - **24 Atolls, 1,156 Islands/islets**
 - **Highest point of land: 30 meters**
 - **Water area: 600mi x 200mi = 120,000 sq miles**
- **Site of US missile testing and radar defense base (Kwajalein)**

Marshall Islands Today

- **Primary industries:**
 - US & Foreign Aid
 - Tuna Fishing
 - Copra (Coconut Oil)
 - Handicrafts
 - Tourism
 - 40% unemployment



220' Tuna boat

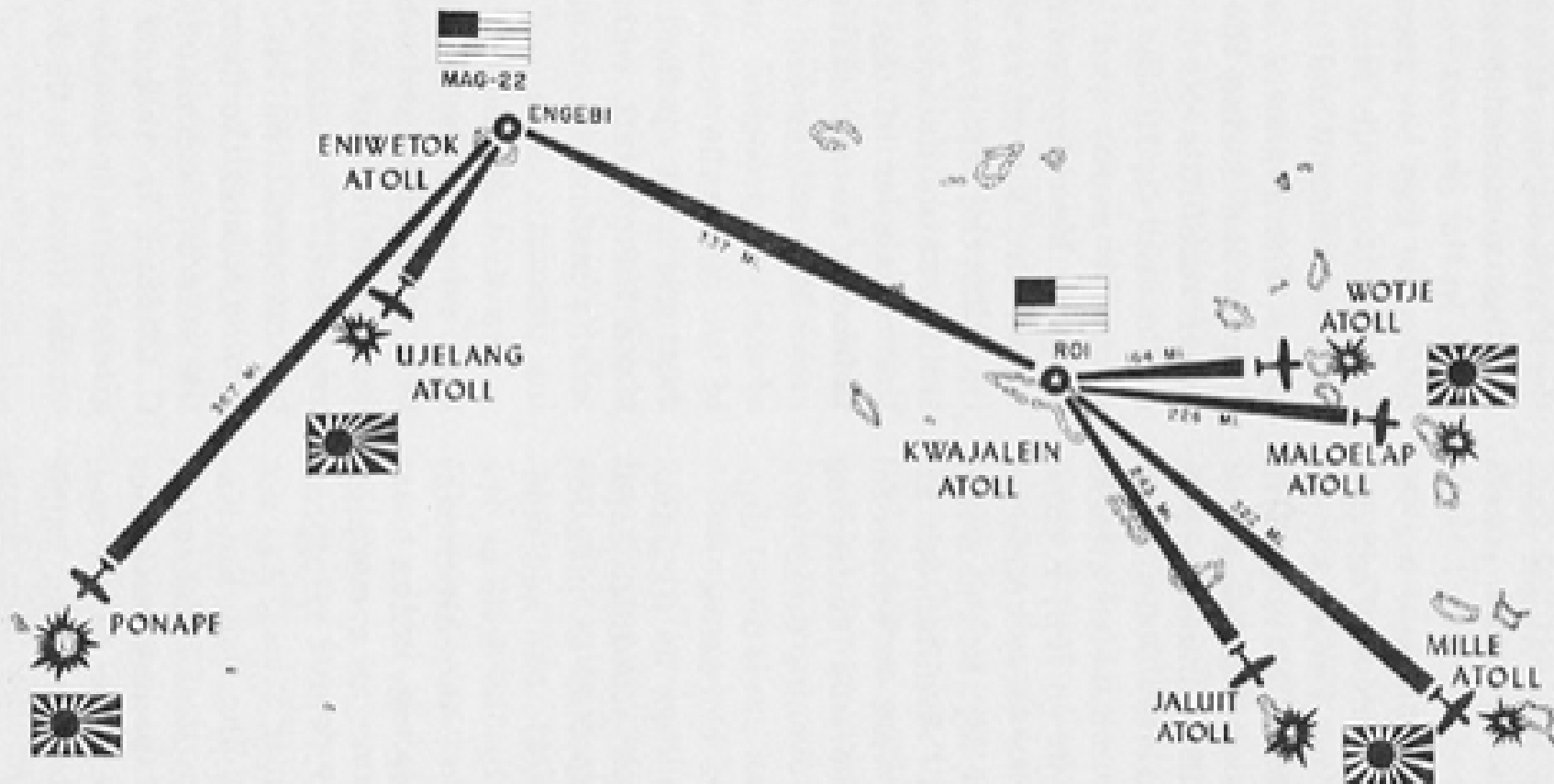
Marshall Islands Today

- **Terrible transportation infrastructure**
 - 50-100 miles between atolls
 - 600 miles end-to-end
 - National airline has 1 airplane, (sometime working)
 - Few inter-island boats working
 - Islanders “stranded” for months
- **Constitutional Government**
 - “In free association with the United States”
 - Heavily influenced by “chief” system
 - Inherited titles, land, influence
 - Ongoing dispute with U.S. over Nuclear testing legacies

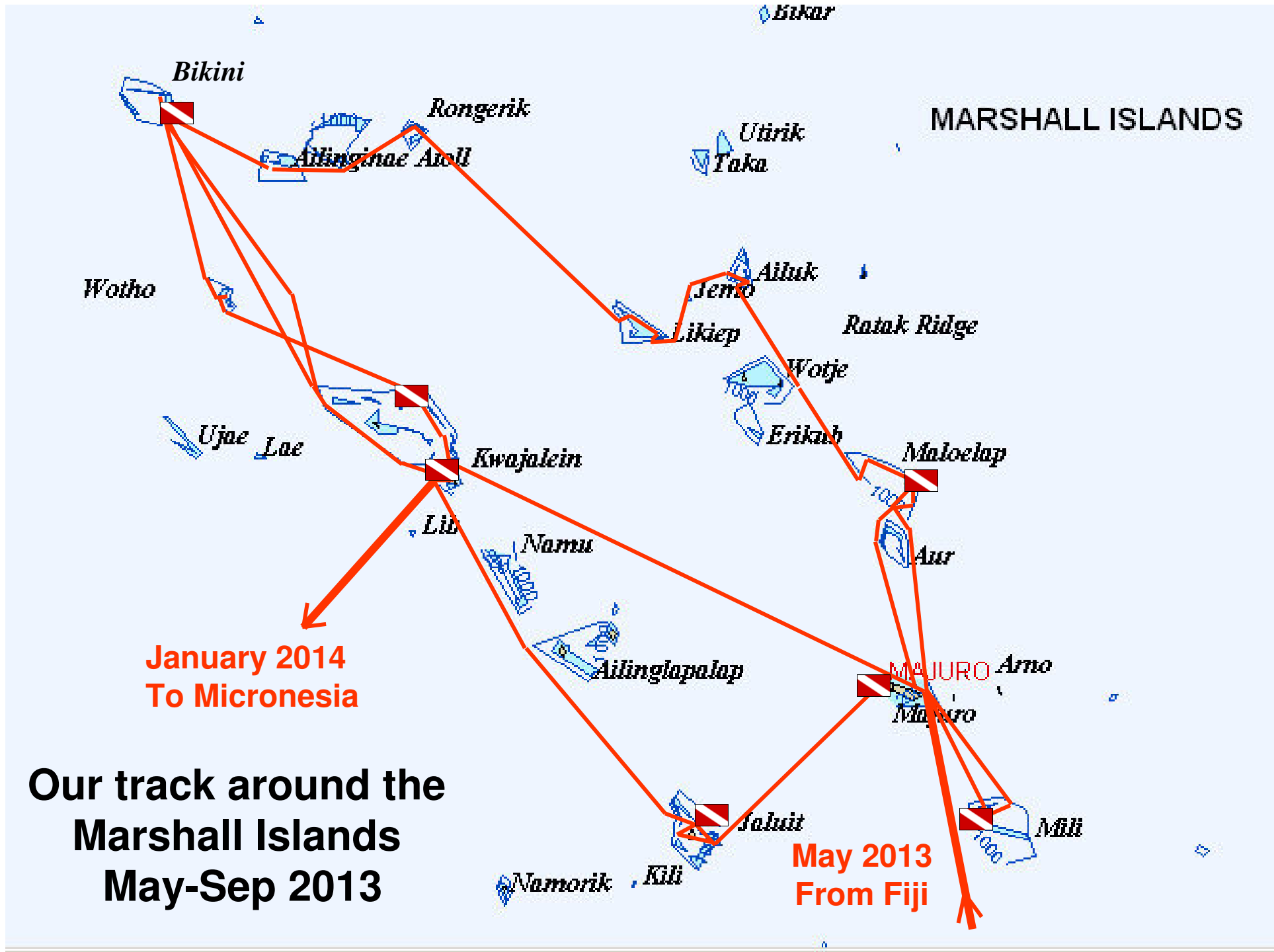
Cruising the Marshall Islands

- **Dive, dive, dive...**
- **Major World War II sites/relics**
 - **7 major Japanese shore bases**
 - **Lots of US & Japanese planes**
 - **Lots of US & Japanese shipwrecks**
 - **Lots of big Japanese shore guns**
- **Bikini Atoll Nuclear Test Site**
 - **CV, BB, SS shipwrecks & many bunkers**

MARSHALL ISLANDS MAG-22 OPERATIONS 1944

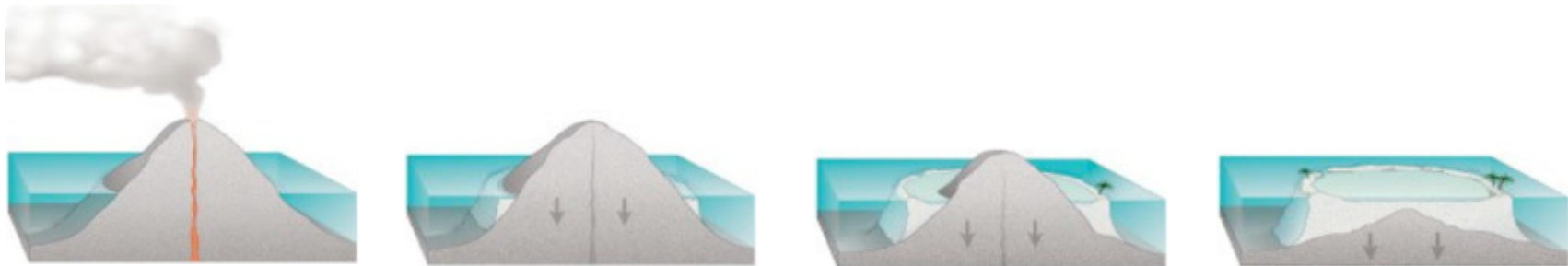


US Bombing Raids on Japanese Facilities
After taking Kwajalein & Eneweitok



What is an “Atoll”?

- Undersea volcano rises above surface
- Cone eroded to sea surface
- Corals form islands around cone rim
- Center of atoll left at 1-200’ deep





Typical Atoll

Source: Wikipedia



Majuro Atoll

Marshall Islands Majuro Atoll

Roguren

Djarrit

R'airikku

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image © 2013 DigitalGlobe
Data LDEO-Columbia, NSF, NOAA
© 2013 Google

Google earth

78 0.560' N, 171 8.804' E, elev. 6211 ft, eye alt. 22.42 mi



Parking Lot

Coca Cola
Heaven

Djarrit

Majuro Dive
Sites

Anchorage

Rairikku

PBM
Mariner

F6F

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image © 2013 DigitalGlobe

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Google earth

Majuro, Capital City

- Customs/Immigration
- 3 U.S.-style supermarkets
- Internet
- Cell Phones
- Restaurants
- U.S. Post Office
- International airport
- Good cruising community
 - VHF Net
 - “Yachties Weekly Night Out”
 - Other group activities



**Sunken Fishing Trawler
(part of mooring field)**

Majuro Diving

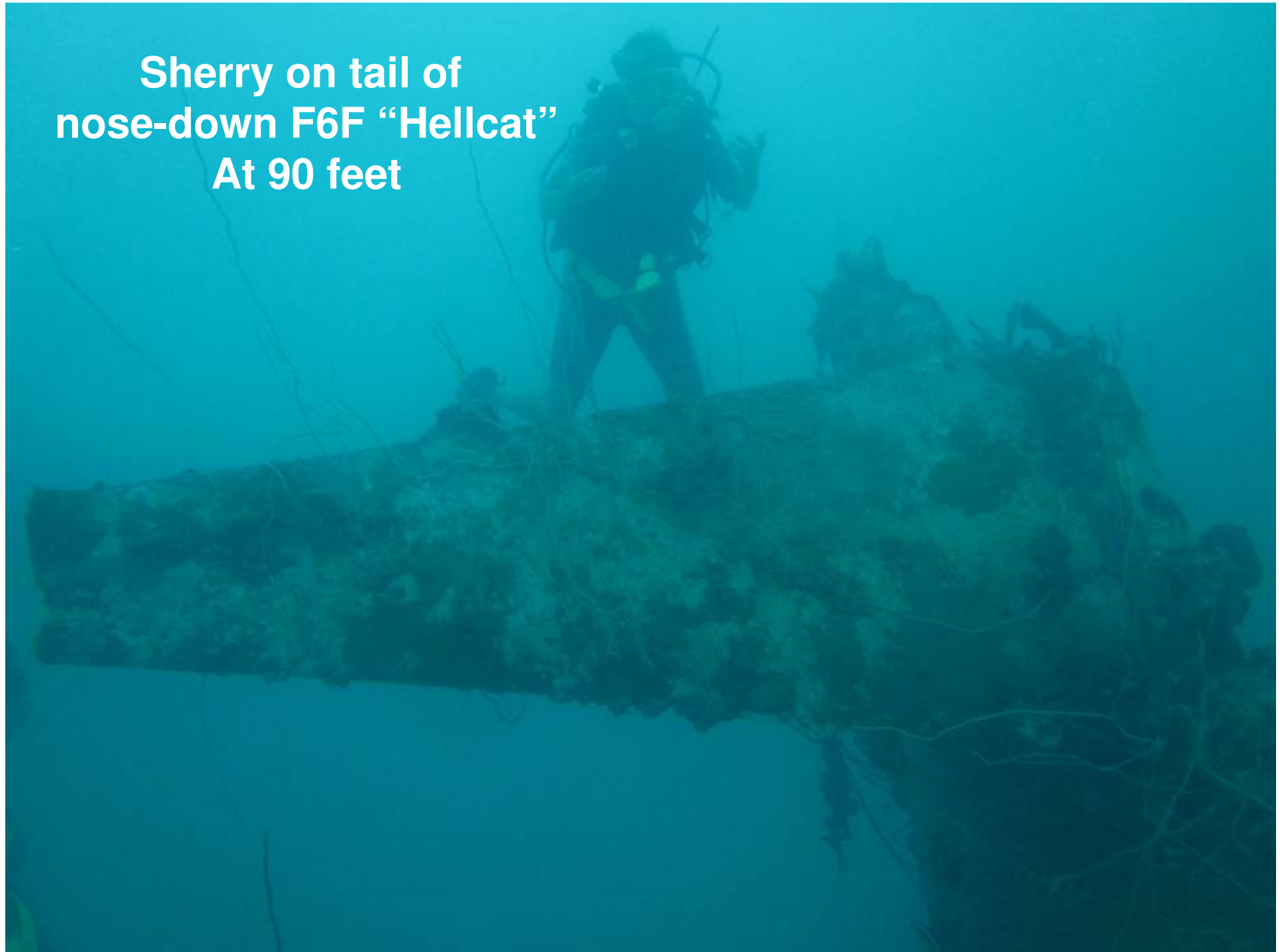


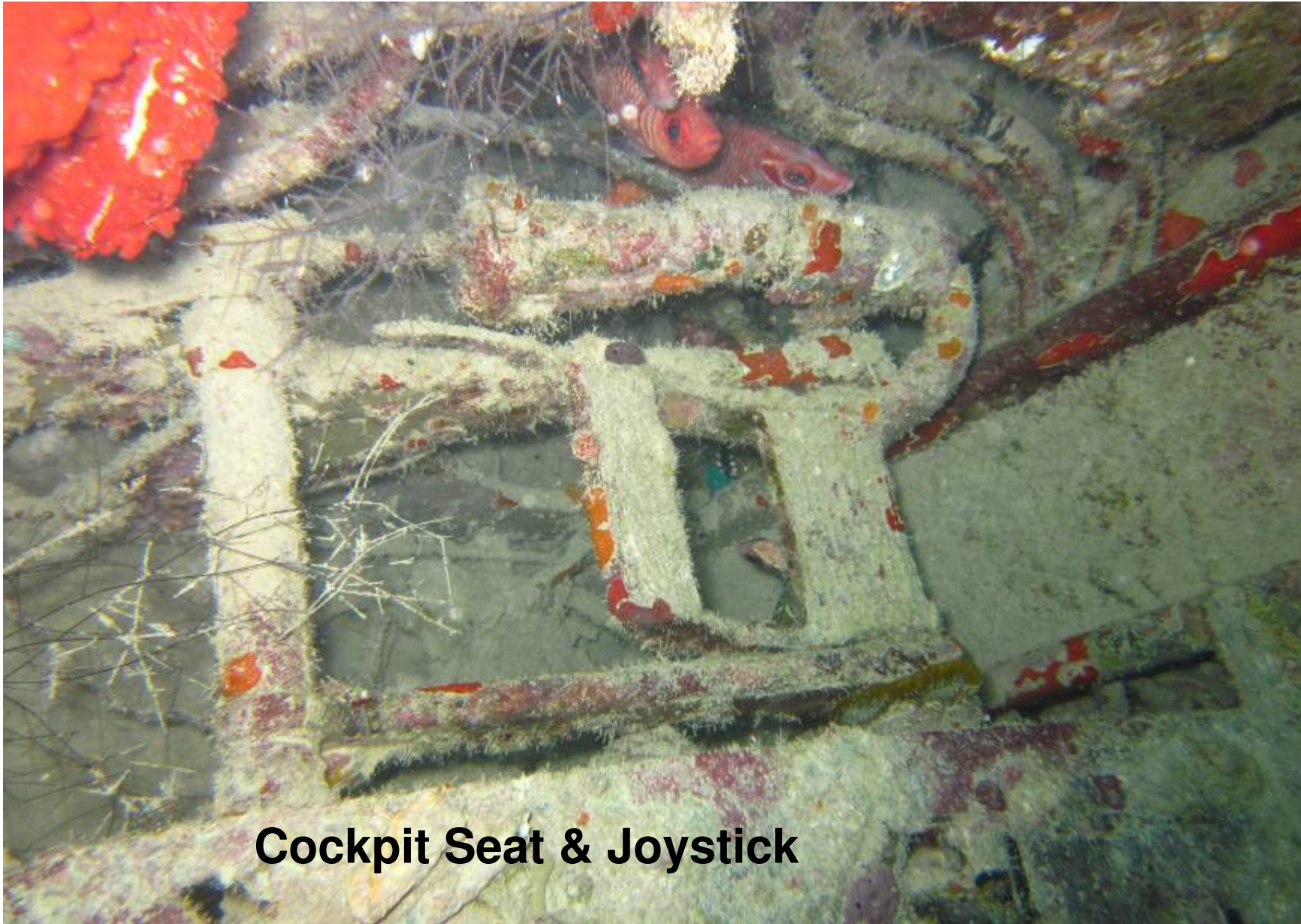
Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat Fighter



'Minsi III'
McC Campbell Oct 1944

**Sherry on tail of
nose-down F6F “Hellcat”
At 90 feet**





Cockpit Seat & Joystick

Martin PBM-5 Mariner Sea Plane



Beechcraft Twin Bonanza



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Beechcraft Twin Bonanza

The “Parking Lot”

Lots of 1940s/WWII vehicles





Sherry 'Driving while Diving'





Truck front end



Fuel truck w/ tank and hose reel



**Fuel truck pumping
station**



Fire truck

Coca Cola Heaven

An underwater photograph showing a vast seabed covered with hundreds of dark glass Coca-Cola bottles. The bottles are scattered across the sandy and rocky bottom, some lying upright and others on their sides. The water is clear, and the lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the seabed and the shape of the bottles. The overall scene is a testament to the scale of the 1944-5 Coca-Cola bottle production.

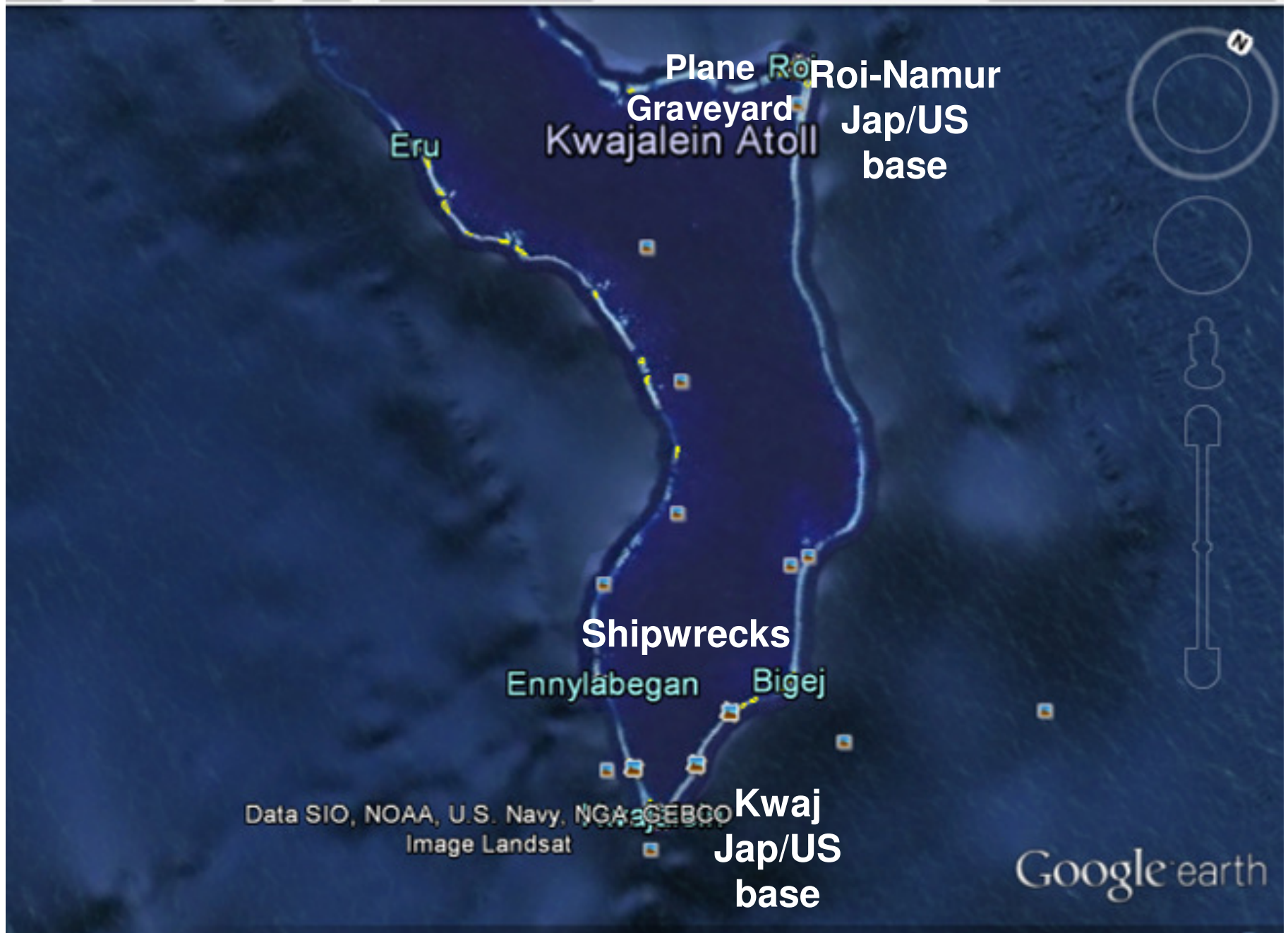
1944-5 dated Coke
bottles



1940s Sewing machine

Kwajalein Atoll

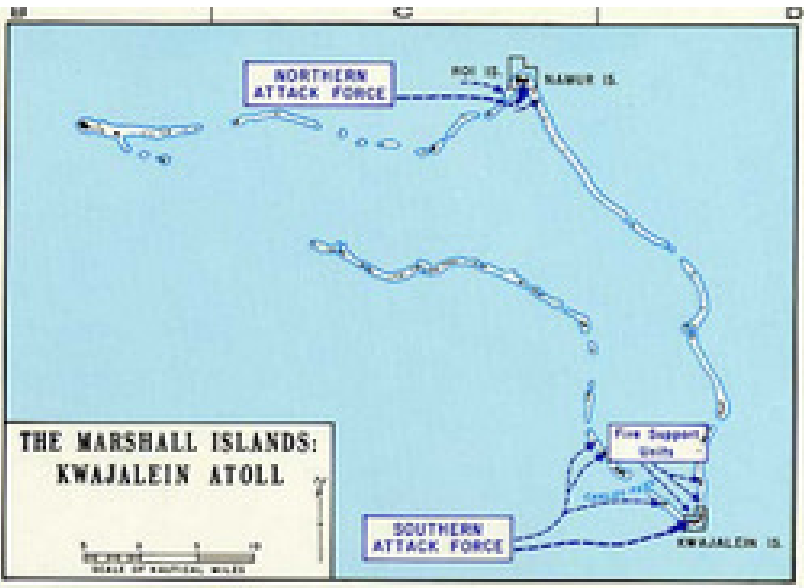
- **250 miles NW from Majuro**
- **World's largest atoll – 70 x 40 nm**
- **2nd largest Marshallese population**
- **Two Japanese air bases in World War II**
- **Taken over by U.S. in 1944**
- **Now home of “Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site”**
- **Restricted access to bases/some islands**
- **Rest of atoll is open for cruising/diving**



Kwaj Base

- **1940s a Japanese air base**
- **Now a ‘Special Mission’ US Army Base**
 - **Tracking test missiles from US**
 - **Long range radar surveillance**
 - ~ **20 Army personnel**
 - ~ **2,000 civilian contractors**
- **Everyone lives in “quarters”**
- **No privately owned cars – all use bicycles**
- **“Sponsorship” required to visit**
- **Very large diving club**
- **Small boat marina & yacht club**

a

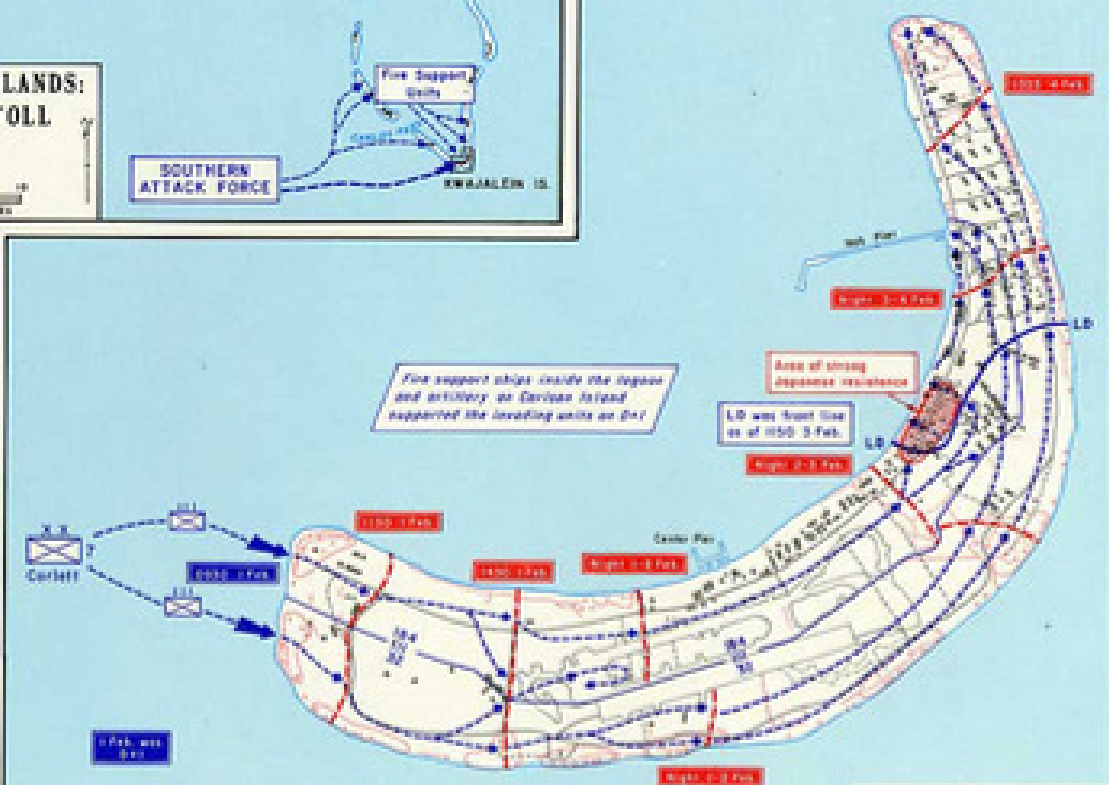


Following the capture of Kwajalein Island elements of the 17th Infantry Regiment checked and cleared the remaining islands assigned to the 7th Infantry Division.

24

b

The 32nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team plucked out the 18th Infantry Combat Team to complete operations from vicinity of Red Pier north.



**NORTHERN KWAJALEIN ATOLL:
ROI AND NAMUR ISLANDS, 1944**
4TH MARINE DIVISION OPERATIONS,
31 JANUARY - 2 FEBRUARY 1944

Four battalions of Marine artillery (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th) supported landings from nearby islands - Leah, Jarak, Abraham, Albert, and Alton - on D-Day, 31 January.

**SOUTHERN KWAJALEIN ATOLL:
KWAJALEIN ISLAND, 1944**
7TH INFANTRY DIVISION OPERATIONS,
31 JANUARY - 4 FEBRUARY 1944

Kwaj Feb 1944

Kwaj Feb 1944



Japanese shipwrecks

Housing

Docks

Downtown

Radars

Soggy Paws

Marina

Airfield

© 2013 Google

Image © 2013 DigitalGlobe

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Google earth





Test missile landing in lagoon





**Soggy Paws at the
marina & dive locker**

Lots of radars!





Biking to lunch

Diving In Kwajalein

A diver in full gear is seen swimming in clear blue water. In the foreground, a large, rusted metal structure, likely part of a shipwreck, is covered in coral and marine life. The diver is positioned in the upper right, looking towards the wreck. The scene is set in a deep, clear blue ocean.

Asakazi Maru (Japanese)

Japanese & German Shipwrecks





**AA gun on 424'
Asakazi Maru,
sunk 3 Dec 43**



Prinz Eugen

- Last German WWII Cruiser – 681’
- Survived Bikini nuclear tests
- Radioactive--Towed to Kwajalein
- Sunk upside down Dec 1946
- Great dive site!





A diver in a blue and black wetsuit, yellow mask, and black fins is sitting on a concrete ledge underwater. The diver is holding a large, black, cylindrical object, which is a 30.06 caliber rifle, in their hands. The background is a dark, blue underwater environment with some concrete structures.

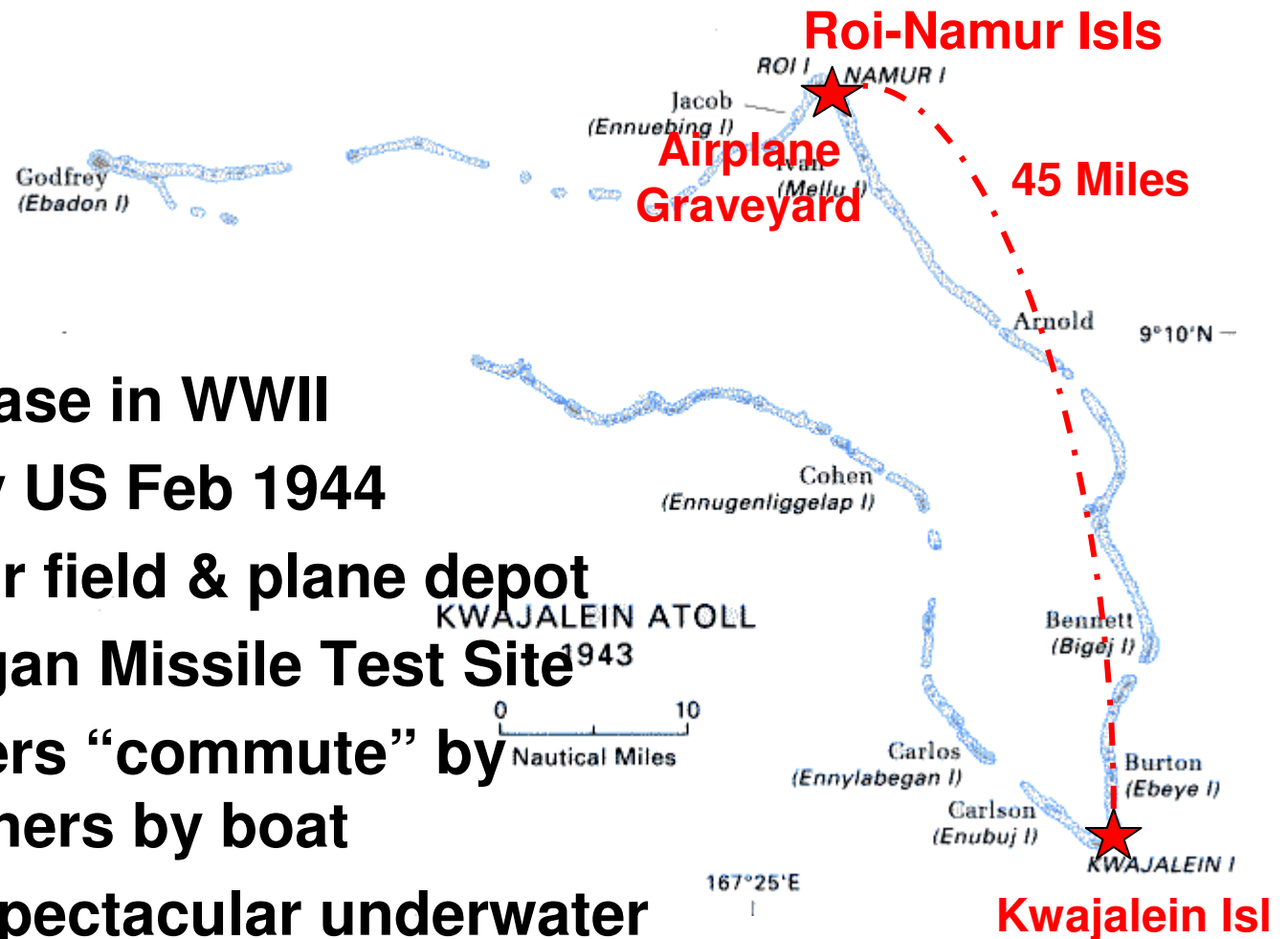
8" guns

My, What Big Guns You Have!



Prinz Eugen AA guns

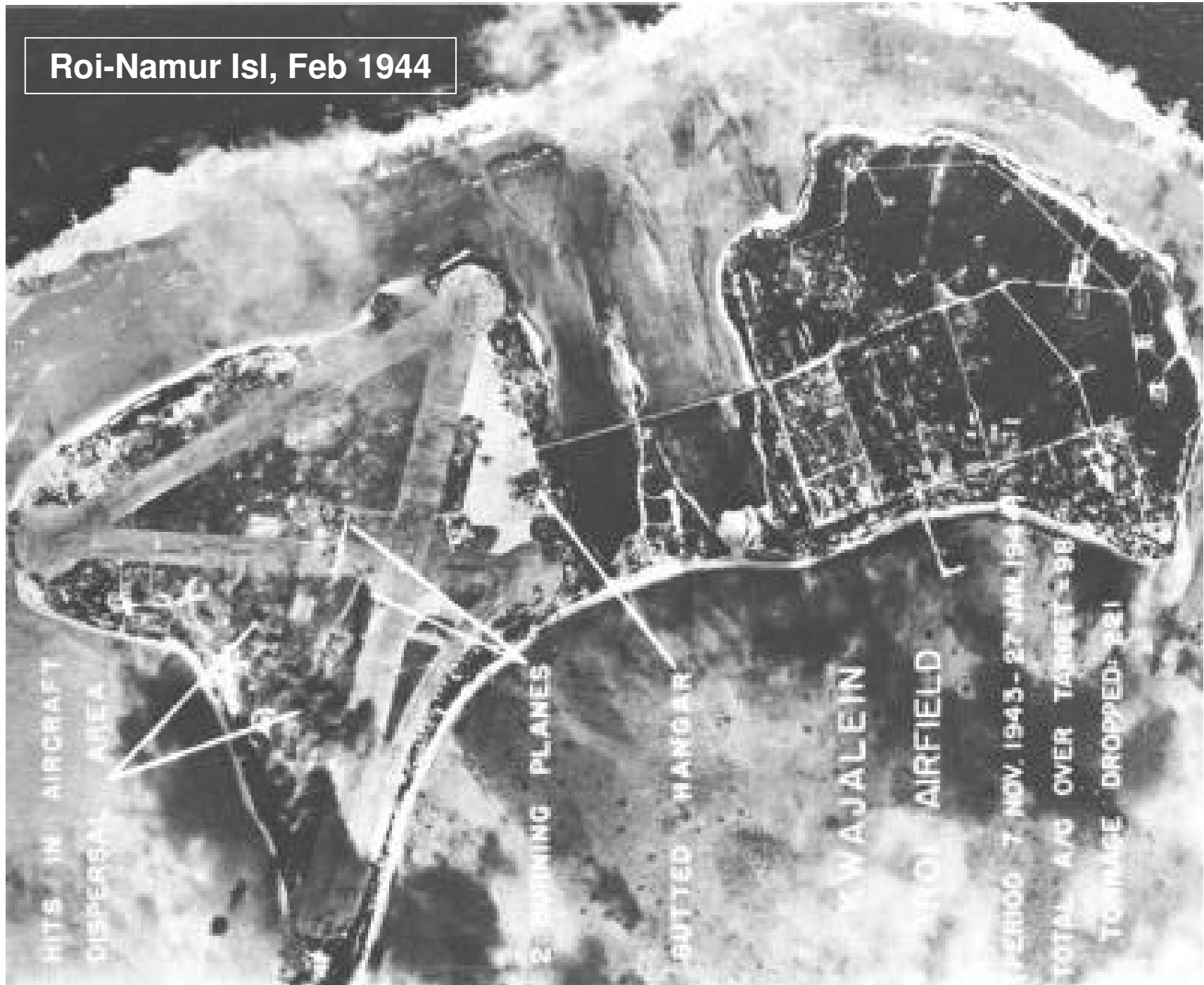
Roi-Namur (Kwajalein Atoll)



- Japanese Base in WWII
- Captured by US Feb 1944
- U.S. WWII air field & plane depot
- Part of Reagan Missile Test Site
- Some workers “commute” by small jet, others by boat
- Site of the spectacular underwater “Airplane Graveyard”

20 mins 54

Roi-Namur Isl, Feb 1944



HITS IN AIRCRAFT
DISPERSAL AREA

2 BURNING PLANES

BUTTED HANGAR

KAWAJALEIN

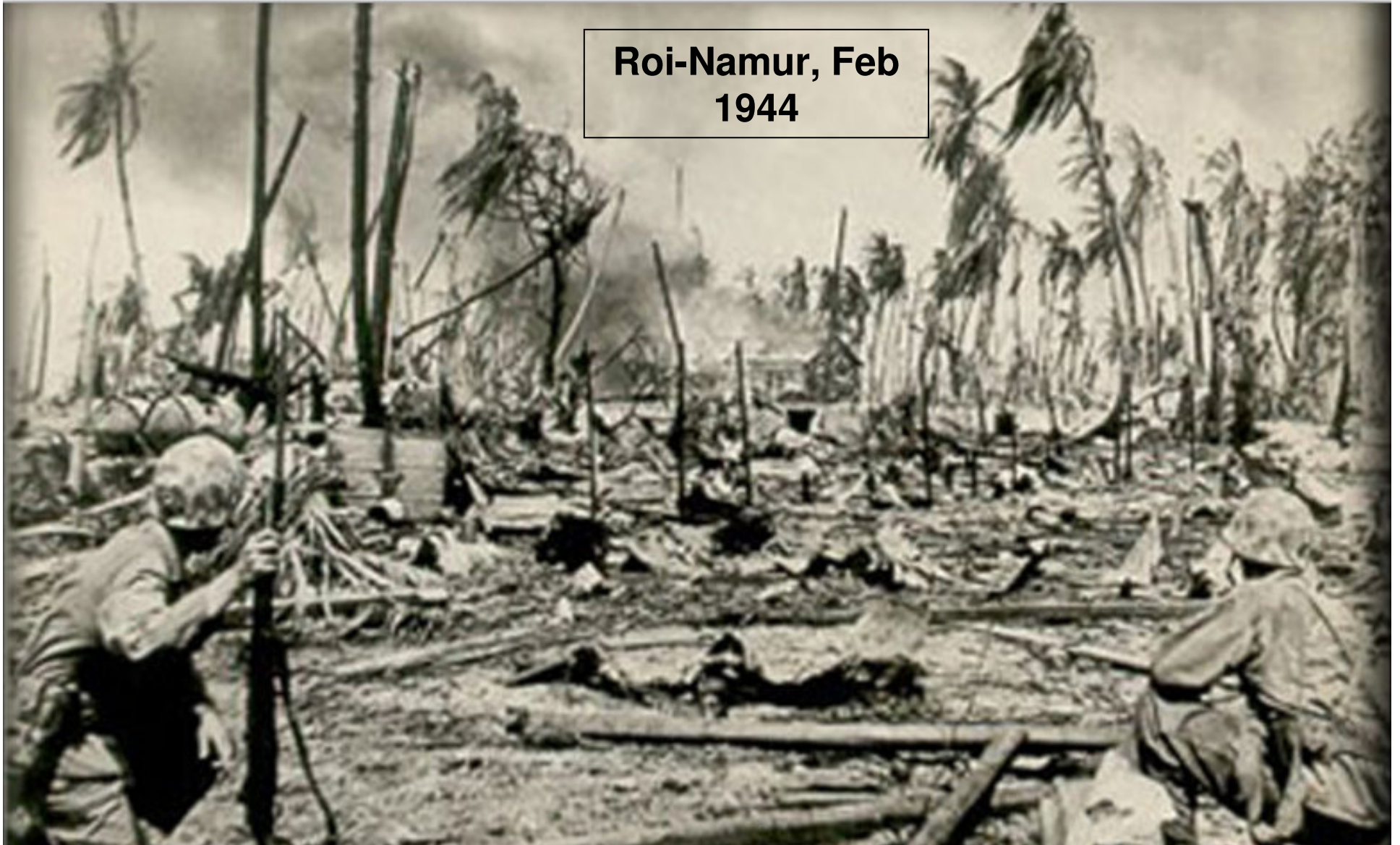
ARROY AIRFIELD

PERIOD 7 NOV. 1943 - 27 JAN. 1944

TOTAL AVG OVER TARGET - 98

TONNAGE DROPPED - 281

**Roi-Namur, Feb
1944**





Roi-Namur anchorage

Roi Radar Installation



Zapped!



Diving the 'Unique' Airplane Graveyard

Airplanes everywhere!



A6M Japanese Zero/Zeke Fighter





Zero upside down



A6M Zero wing gun

Douglas SBD Dauntless Dive Bomber





SBD Dauntless



Sherry on SBD Dauntless tail





SBD Cockpit



SBD Cockpit

Chance Vought F4U Corsair Fighter



1943 Pappy Boyington



F4U Corsair



F4U Corsair



Lots of extra props

**Lion Fish around
planes**





Lion fish

Curtis SB2C Helldiver Dive Bomber



North American B-25 Mitchell Bomber



1942 Doolittle Raid



**B-25 Nose and
cockpit**

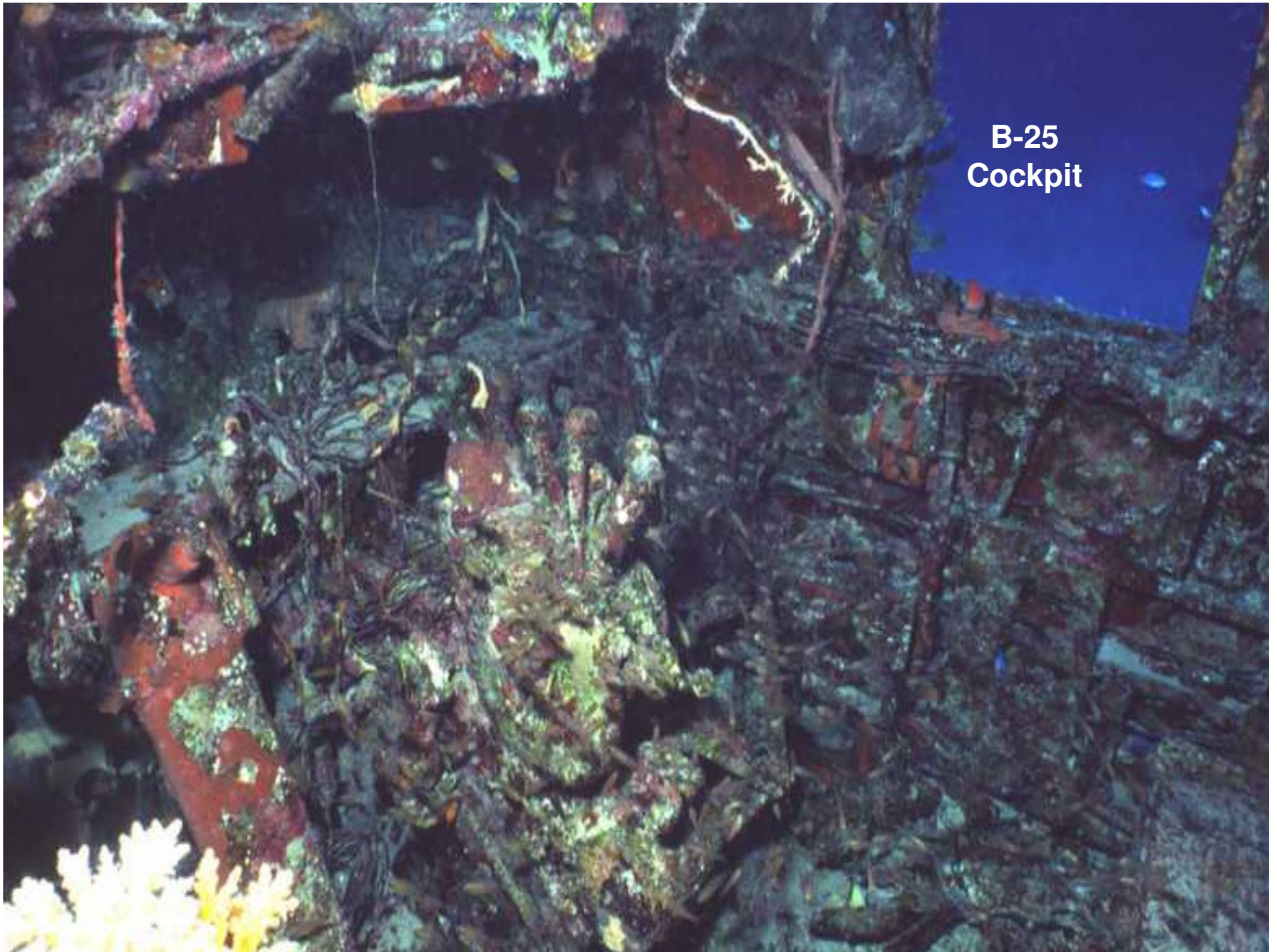


Tail

B-25 Nose

Sherry & B-25 cockpit

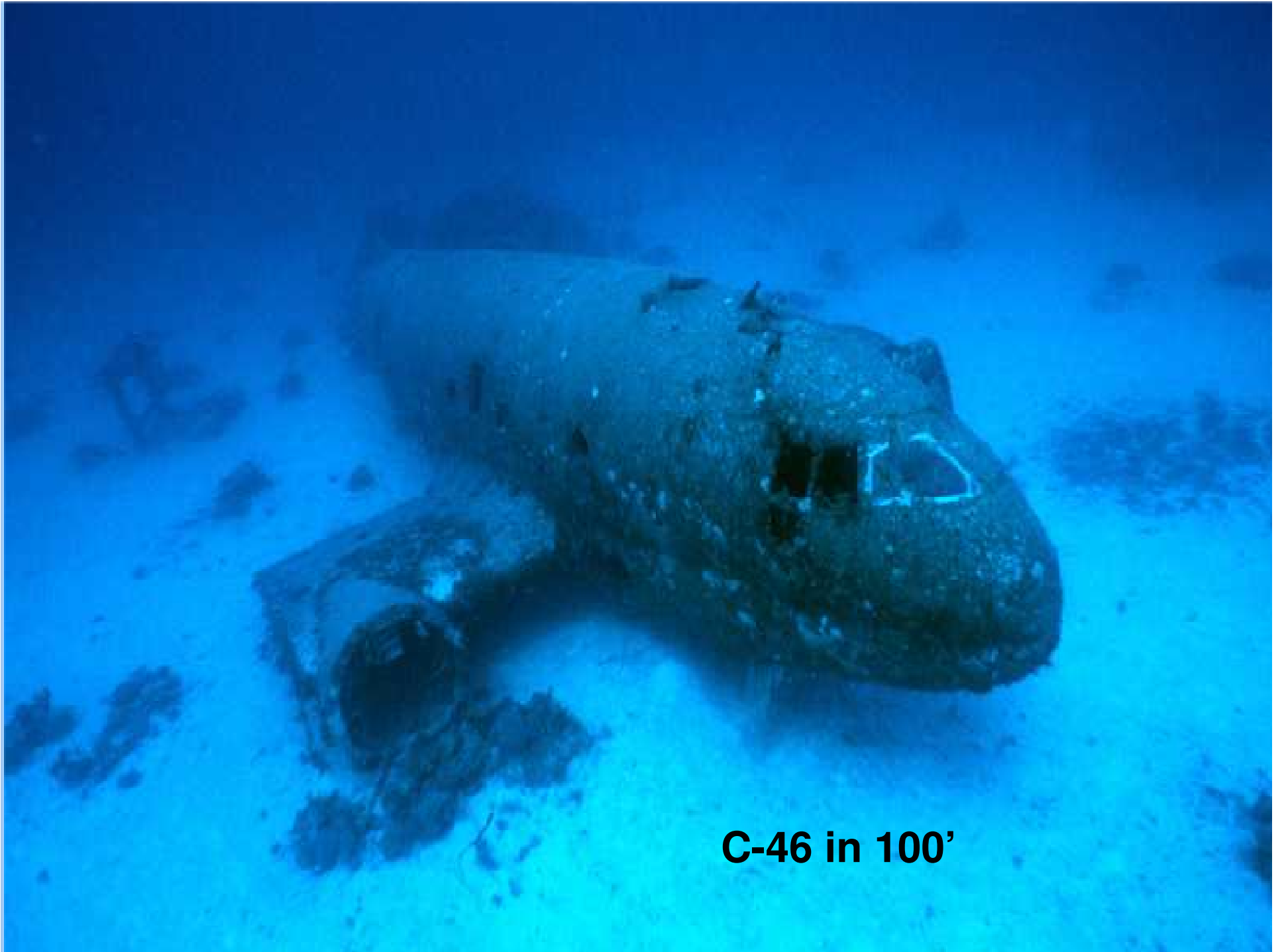




**B-25
Cockpit**

Curtiss C-46 Commando Cargo Plane





C-46 in 100'



C-46 Interior, looking forward

Japanese Shipwrecks





Eiko Maru #2 bow, 340' Japanese cargo ship, sunk 29 Jan 44 by USS New Jersey

Sherry at Eiko Maru
#2 AA gun





**Part of the cargo including
human remains**



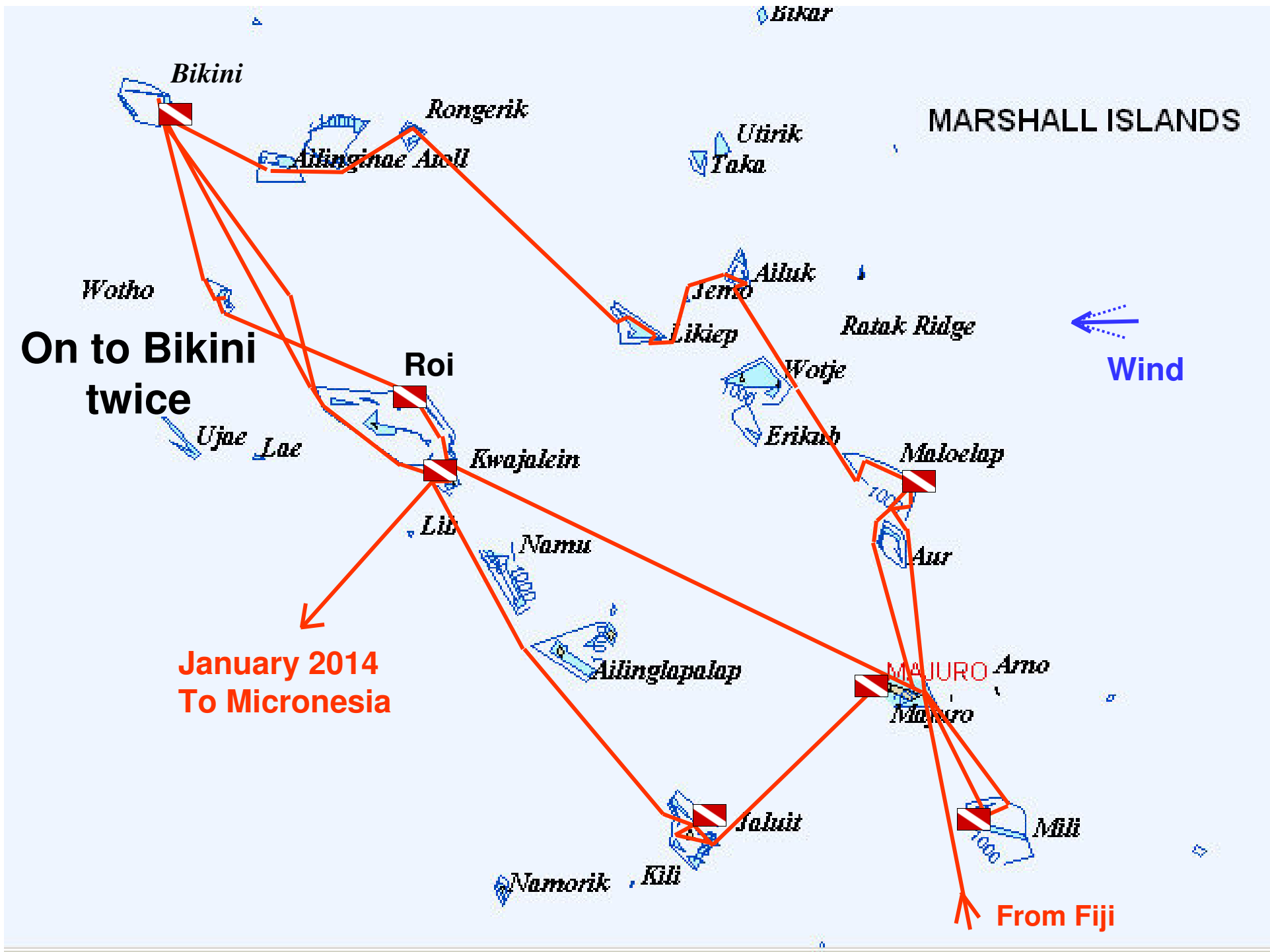
Ship's deck funnel



Exploring the main deck



**Inspecting the cargo boom
uprights**



Bikini Atoll

- **Site of Nuclear Bomb Testing, 1946-58**
- **167 original residents relocated**
- **23 nuclear devices detonated in lagoon**
- **Operation Crossroads (first tests)**
 - **242 Ships and 42,000 U.S. personnel in Bikini for test prep**
 - **95 Ships moored in Bikini for tests**
 - **11 Ships sunk as a result of testing & still there today**
 - **Saratoga CV3, 2 BBs, 2 submarines**

**1946 Bravo Bomb
UW test**



Bikinians Try to Return

- **Bikini declared “safe” in 1968**
- **Bikinians returned in 1970**
- **Mid-70’s... significant nuclear contamination from locally grown food**
- **Bikinians evacuated again in 1978**
- **Safe for “occasional visitors” but not full-time residents**
 - **Must bring own food and water supply**
 - **Totally safe underwater**
 - **Today only cruisers and live aboard divers visit**

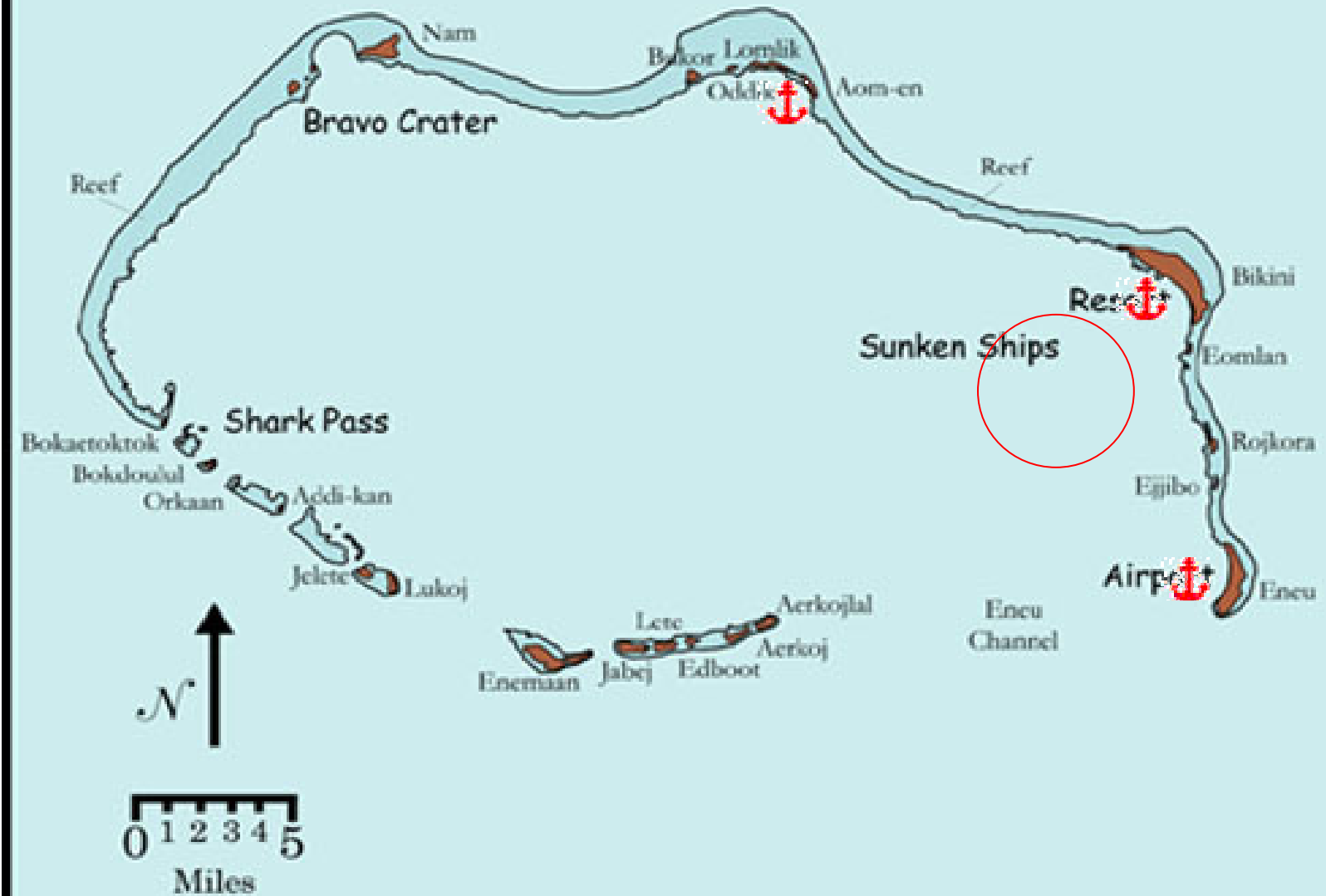
Dive “Resort” Established

- **Intended to provide income for Bikinians**
- **1989/90 U.S. Navy & National Park Service Survey (Nat Geographic & ABC TV)**
 - **Locating, mapping & documenting the wrecks**
- **Construction of “dive resort”**
 - **Airport facilities**
 - **Hotel, galley, chamber and support facilities**
 - **Piers, fuel supply & other infrastructure**
- **Opened 2001, netted \$500,000 in first year**
- **Operated until Air Marshall Islands failed in 2007**

Bikini Atoll Today

- **Hotel/Dive operation closed in 2007**
- **3-4 caretakers on Bikini Island**
- **No air service, infrequent supply boats**
- **Live aboard dive boat visits May-October**
 - **12 day trips from Kwaj / \$6,500 pp**
- **Open for cruiser visits anytime**
 - **Only restriction: No wreck diving!**

Bikini Atoll



Cruising Bikini

- **170 miles N of Roi (N Kwajalein)**
- **Check-in with caretaker upon arrival**
- **Easy navigation in lagoon**
- **Great diving on coral mounds**
- **Deserted beaches**
- **Many deserted nuclear test facilities to explore ashore**



Soggy Paws Arrives in June



WELCOME

Iokwe - Welcome

BIKINI ATOLL



From the proud people of Bikini Atoll.

KILI BIKINI EJIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Deserted Killer Beaches





Fully equipped workshop

BPD BIKINI REPAIR SHOP
WE CAN FIX EVERYTHING
EXCEPT
BROKEN ♡ HEART



Exploring Old Nuclear Test Bunkers





**Copper screening
blocked EMF
interference**



**Explosives
inside!**

Diving in the Lagoon





A Truly Giant Clam



Awesome Beachcombing



Lobstering on the Reef





**M/V Windward Finally Arrives
(the dive boat)**

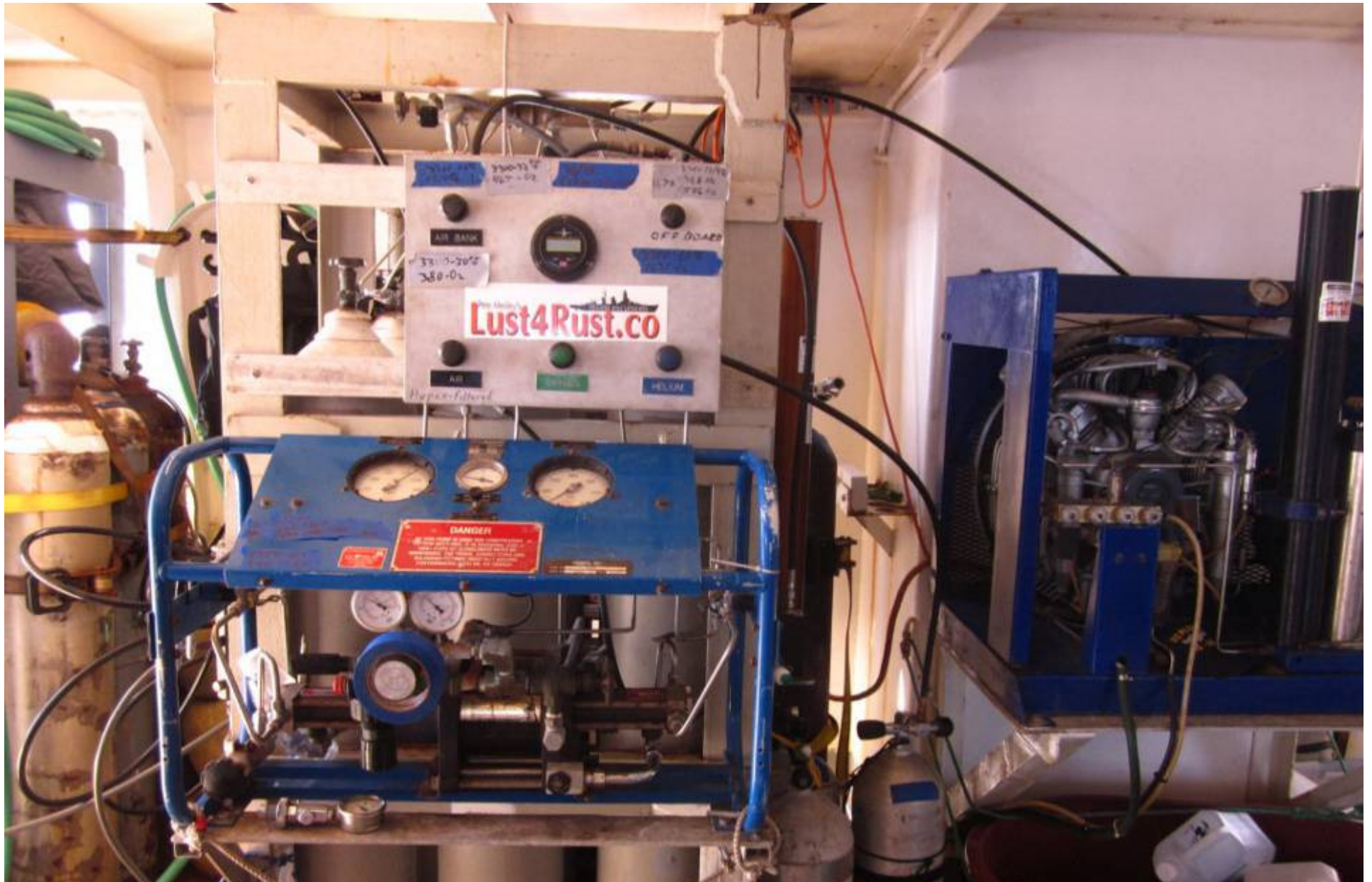
**Not much to
look at, but
fully equipped
for deep
wreck diving**



Decompression Bar

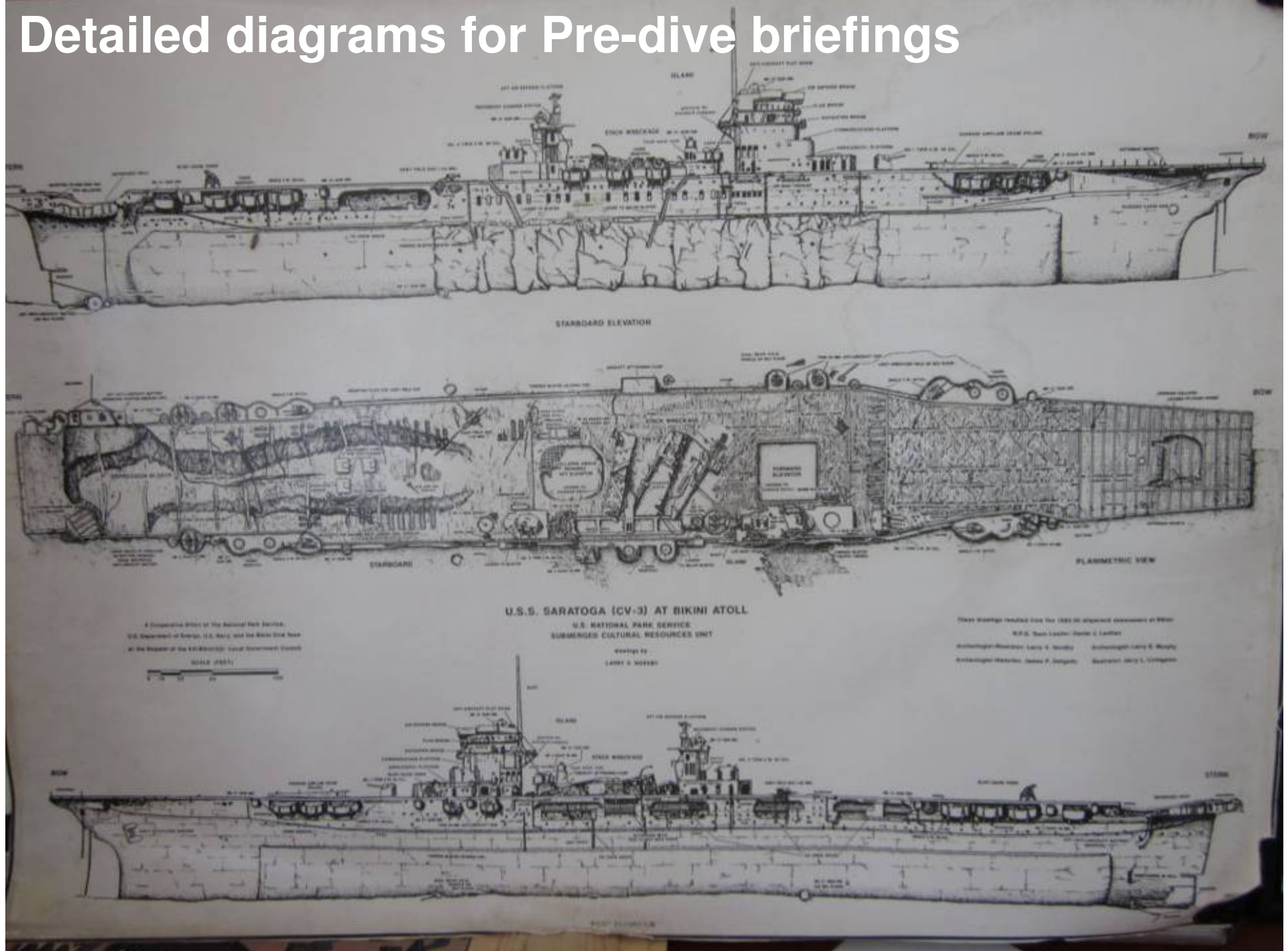


Recompression Chamber



Onboard Tri-mix machine for tank fills & rebreather support for Tech divers

Detailed diagrams for Pre-dive briefings



These Guys are Serious Divers!





**\$10,000 in
Dive Gear & Camera**

Diving the USS Saratoga (CV-3)



Commissioned in 1928

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On the Bow of the USS Saratoga





Bridge - conning station looking fwd, battle ports, compass, helm

Magnetic compass, helm





24 hr clock, dishes, bottles



5"- 38 deck gun



Curtis SB2C Helldiver



Dave & SB2C Helldiver in Hangar Deck at 130'





Helldiver's Instrument Panel



Hard Hats in the Dive Locker



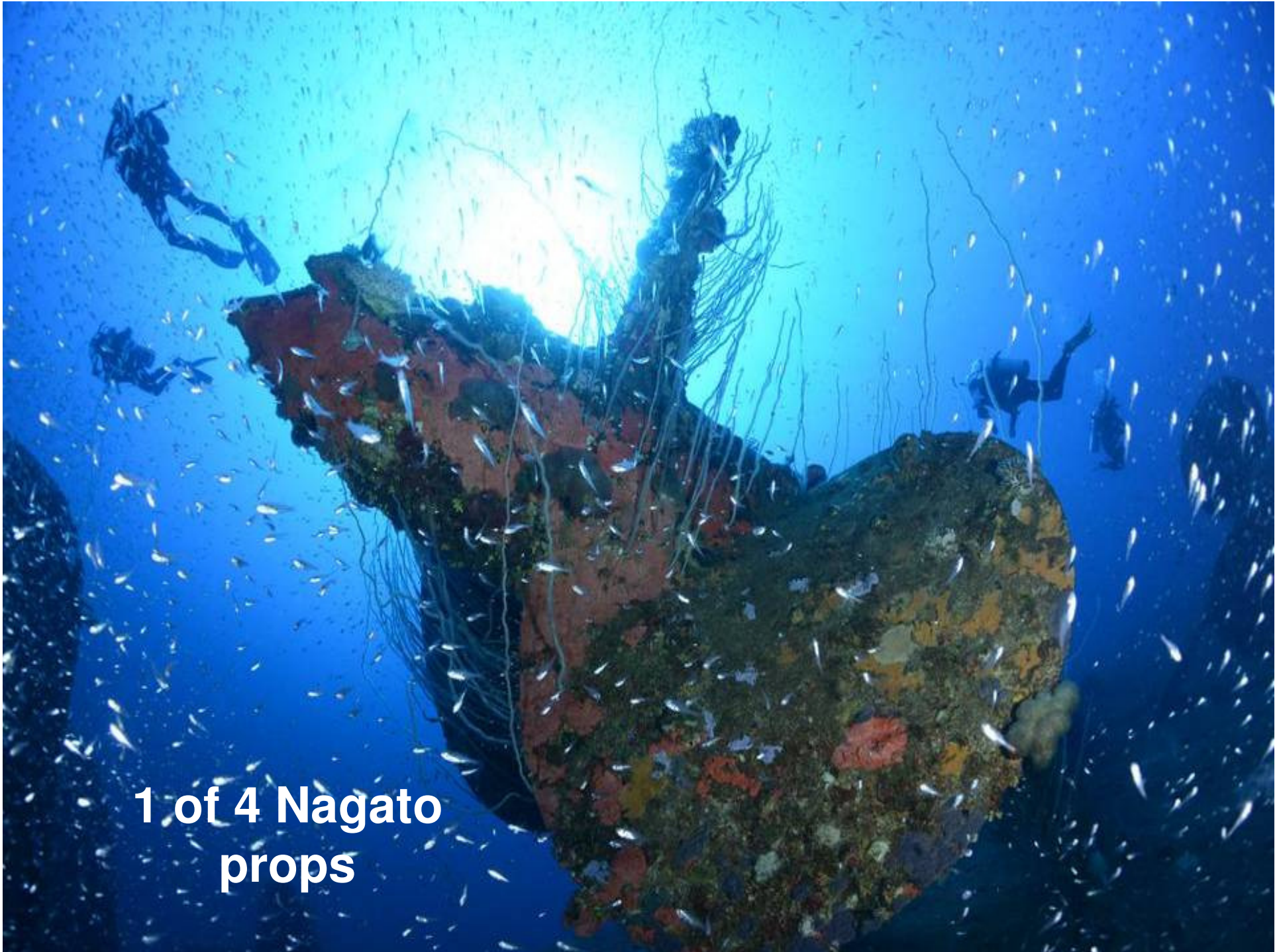
Still leaking oil after all these years...



**Last Japanese Battleship Nagato,
Adm Yamamoto's flagship**

Nagato's Propellers at 100'



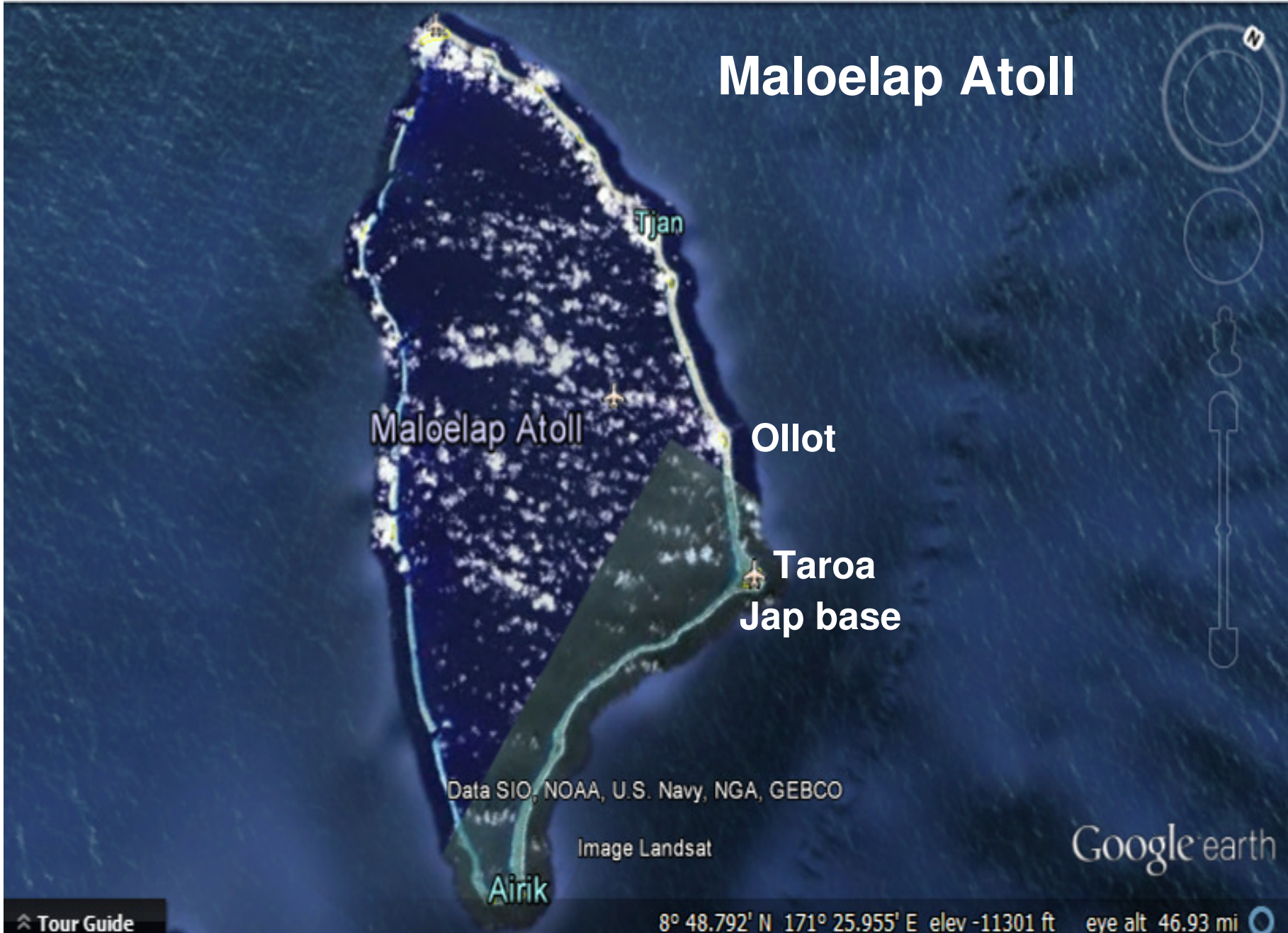


**1 of 4 Nagato
props**



**Sherry Sitting on
Nagato's
Prop Hub**

Maloelap Atoll



Maloelap Atoll

Tjan

Ollot

Taroa
Jap base

Airik

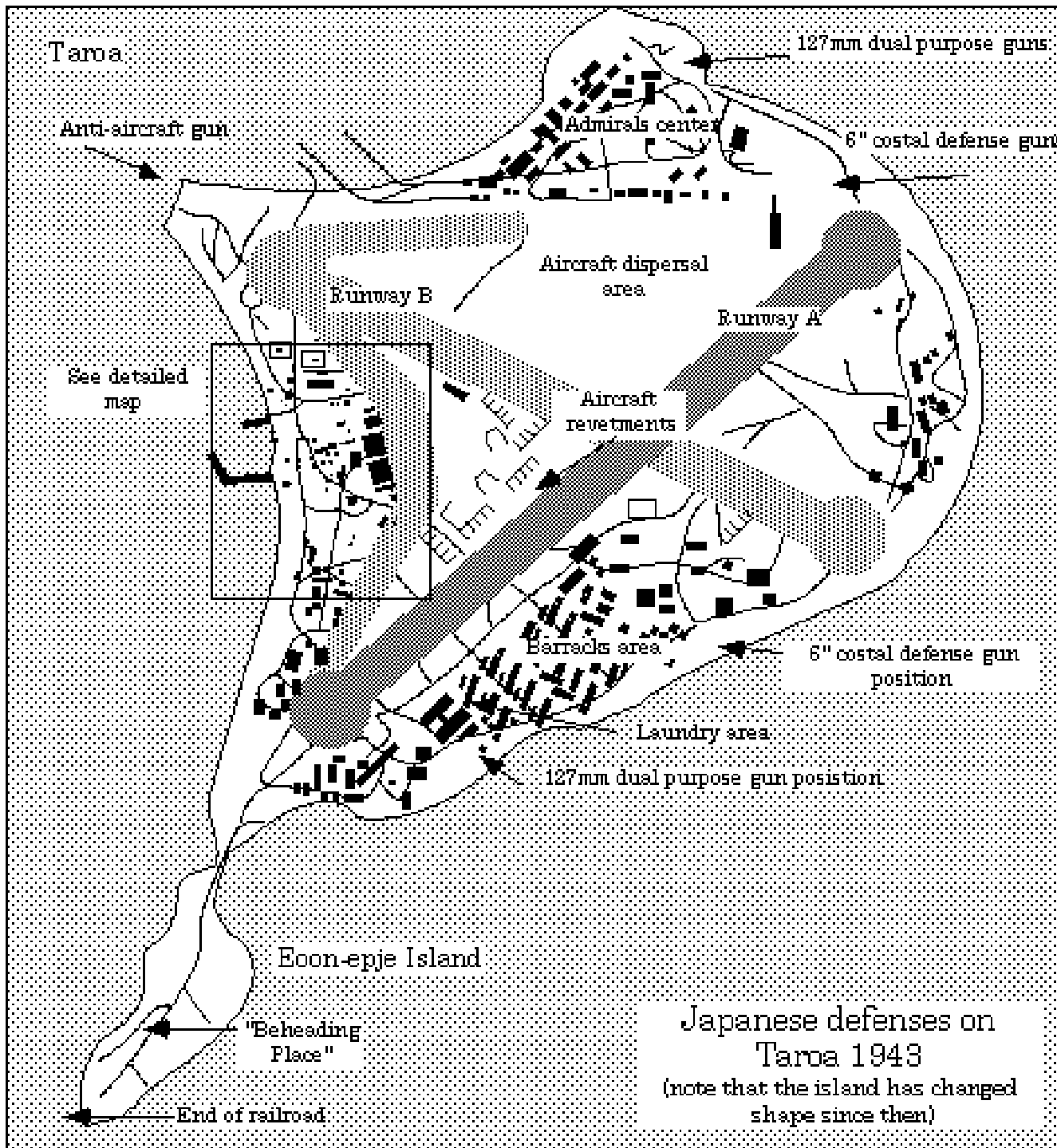
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Image Landsat

Google earth

Tour Guide

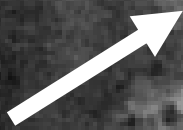
8° 48.792' N 171° 25.955' E elev -11301 ft eye alt 46.93 mi



40 mins

Taroa Isl, 1944

N





Taroa Isl, 1944

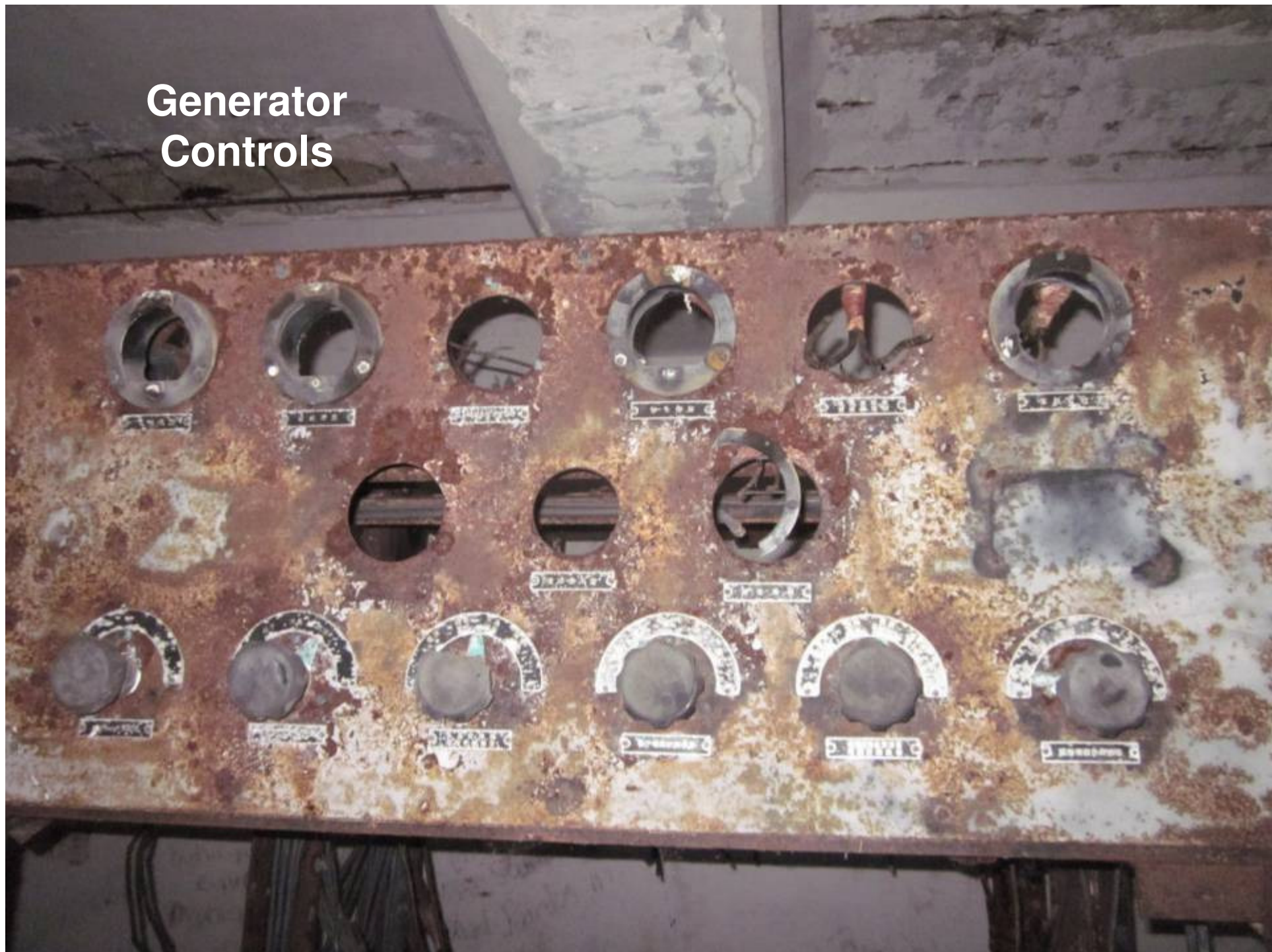


Taroa Generator Building

Diesel Generator Room



Generator Controls



Bomb damage



Japanese nameplate





Command & radio building



**Japanese aviation
fuel tanks**



**A6M Zero in the
Plane Graveyard**

Plane Graveyard





**Intact engine in Plane
Graveyard**



Sherry in the Plane Graveyard



**Plane
auxiliary
fuel tanks**

Defensive Shore Structure





Japanese AA shore gun



**Guns in the jungle
everywhere**

Unexploded Ordnance





**Ordnance Recently
Rendered Safe**

Consolidated PBY Catalina

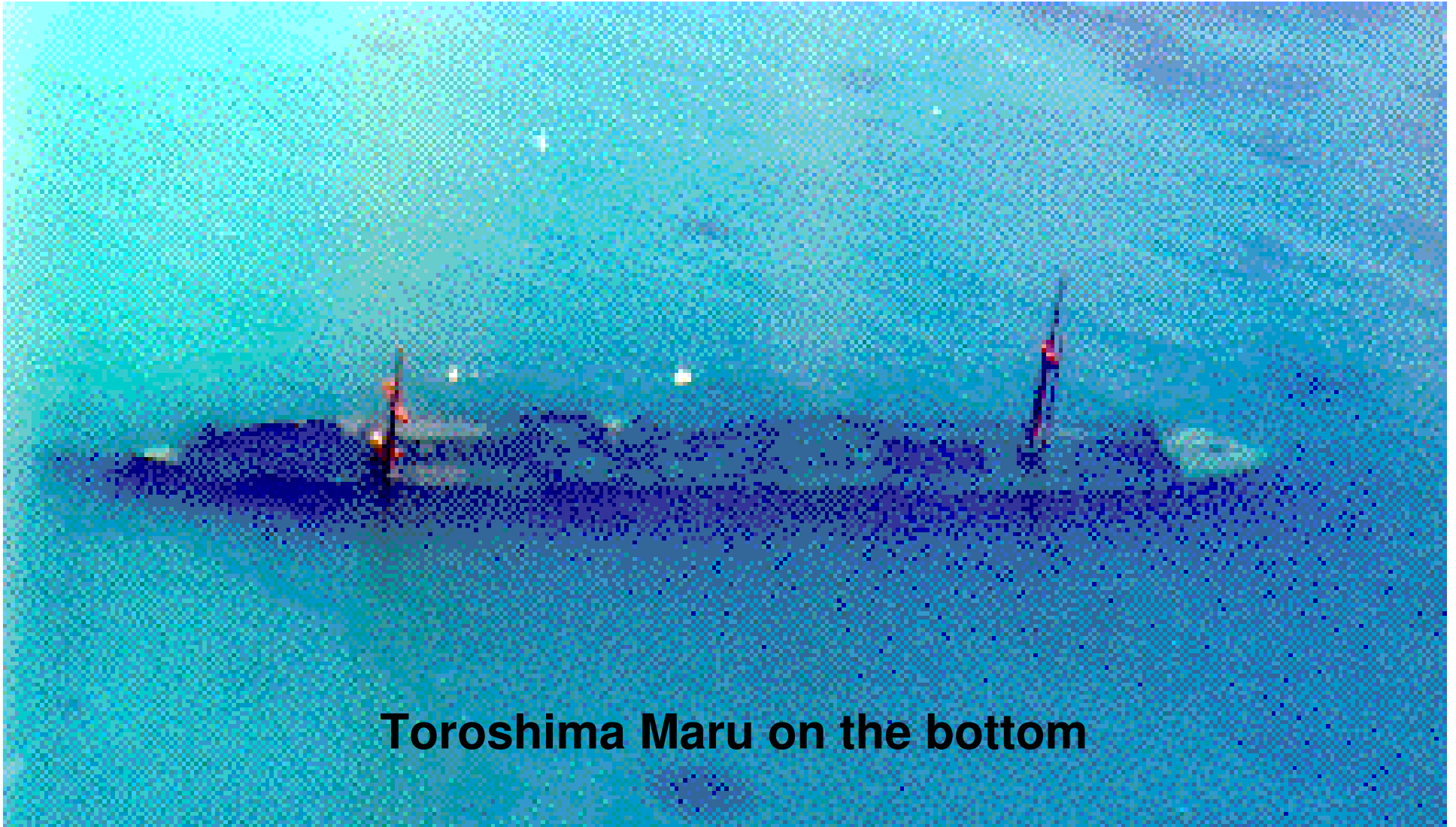


PBY engine





Japanese ship Toroshemia Maru sunk at Taroa



Toroshima Maru on the bottom



Sherry at Toroshima Maru prop

Toroshima Maru depth charges

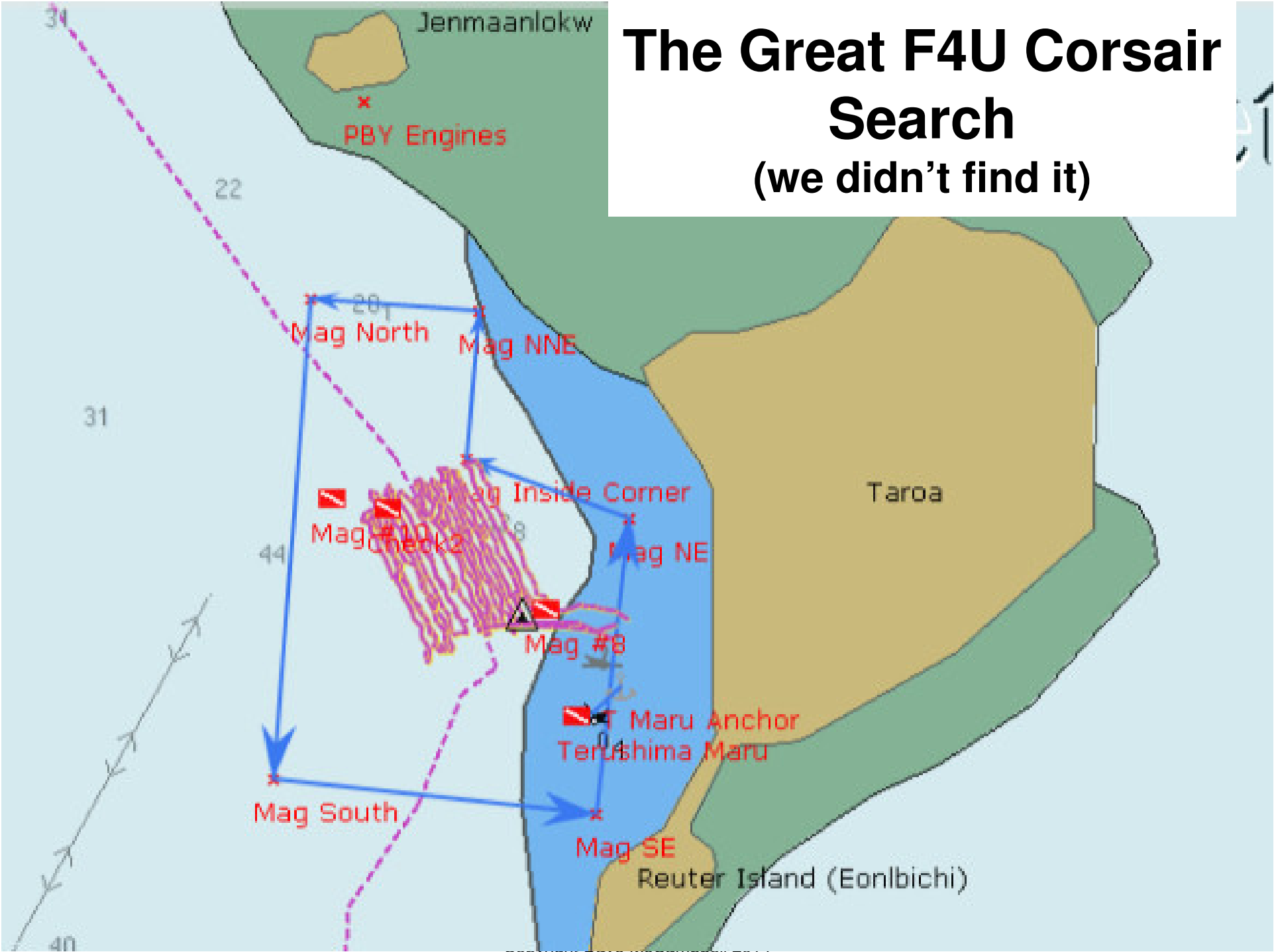


Vought F4U Corsair Search



1943 Pappy Boyington

The Great F4U Corsair Search (we didn't find it)



Mitsubishi A6M Zero/Zeke





Japanese A6M “Zero”



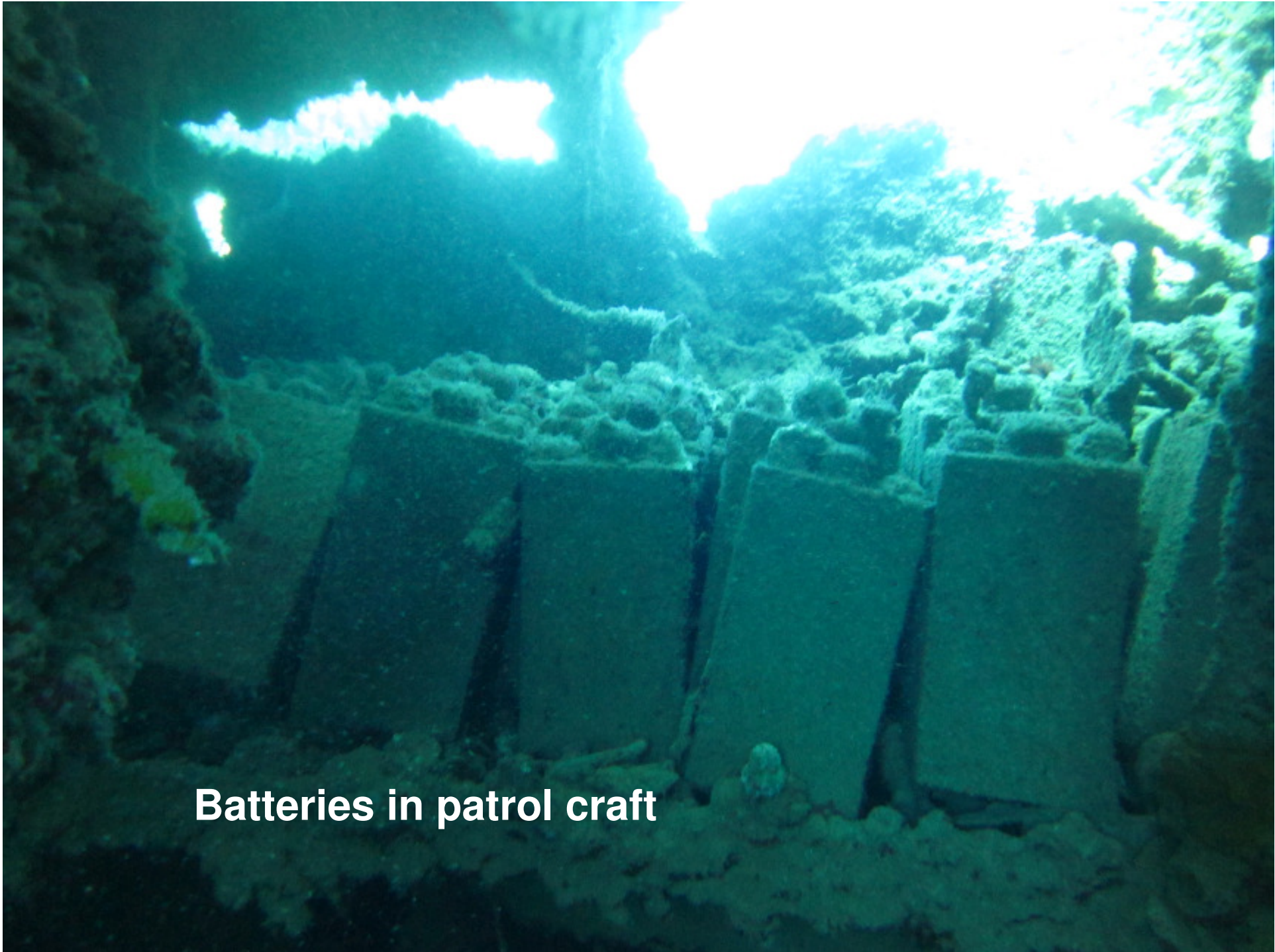
A6M Zero engine, bent blades mean crash

Local kids posing with the Zero



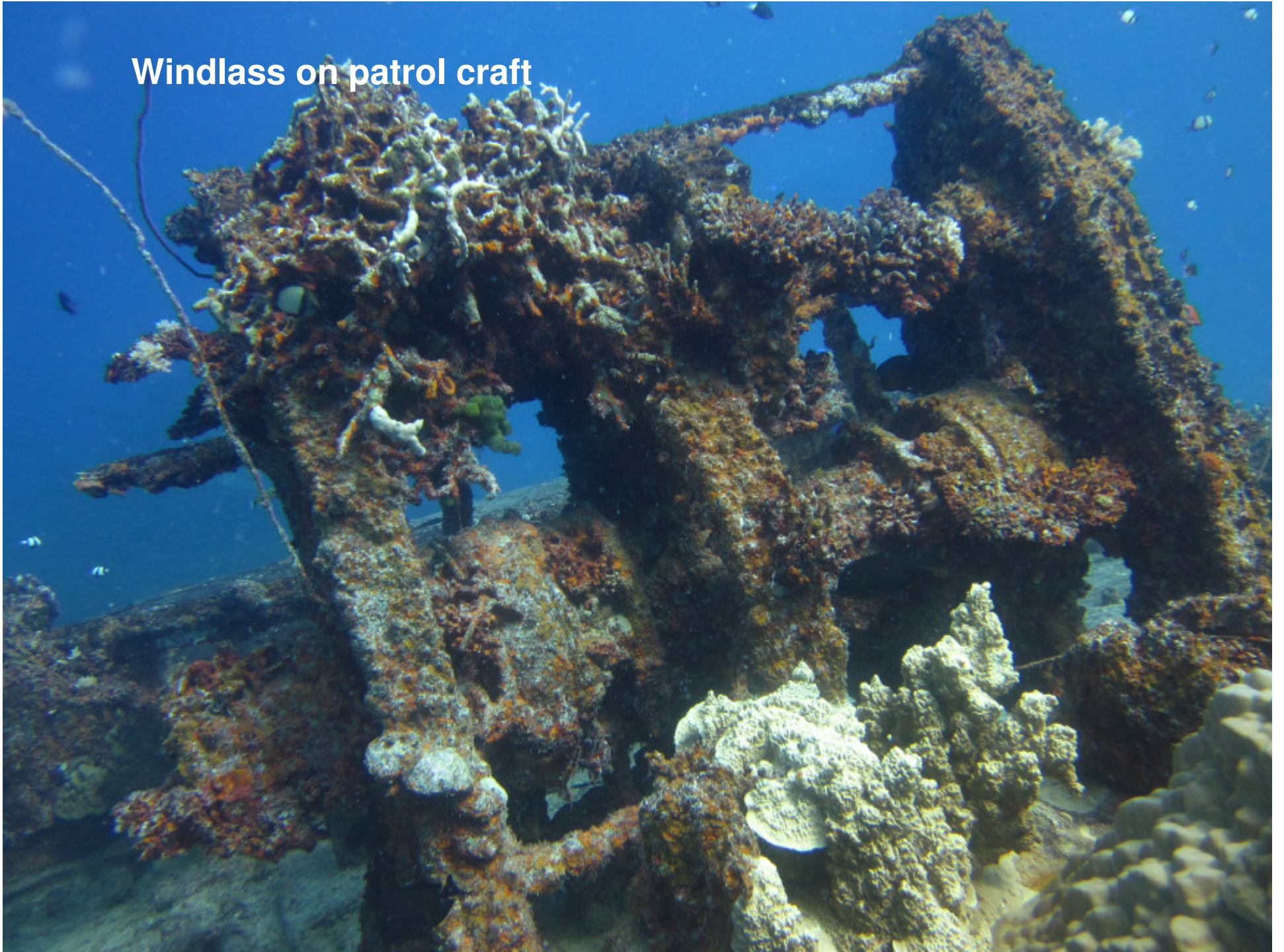


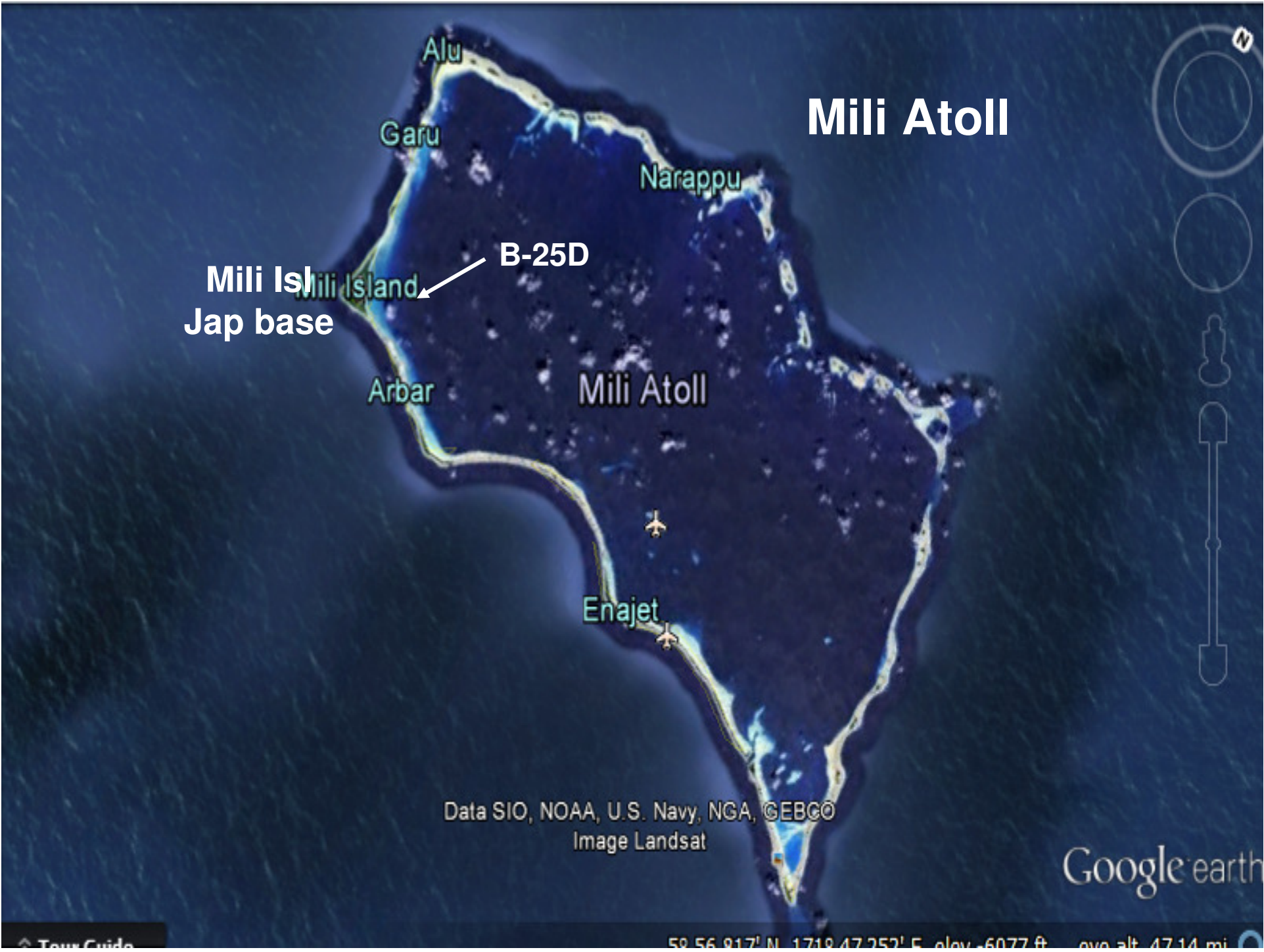
**Japanese patrol craft off Ollot Isl,
picked up Lt Zamperini**



Batteries in patrol craft

Windlass on patrol craft





Mili Atoll

Mili Isl
Jap base

B-25D

Alu

Garu

Narappu

Arbar

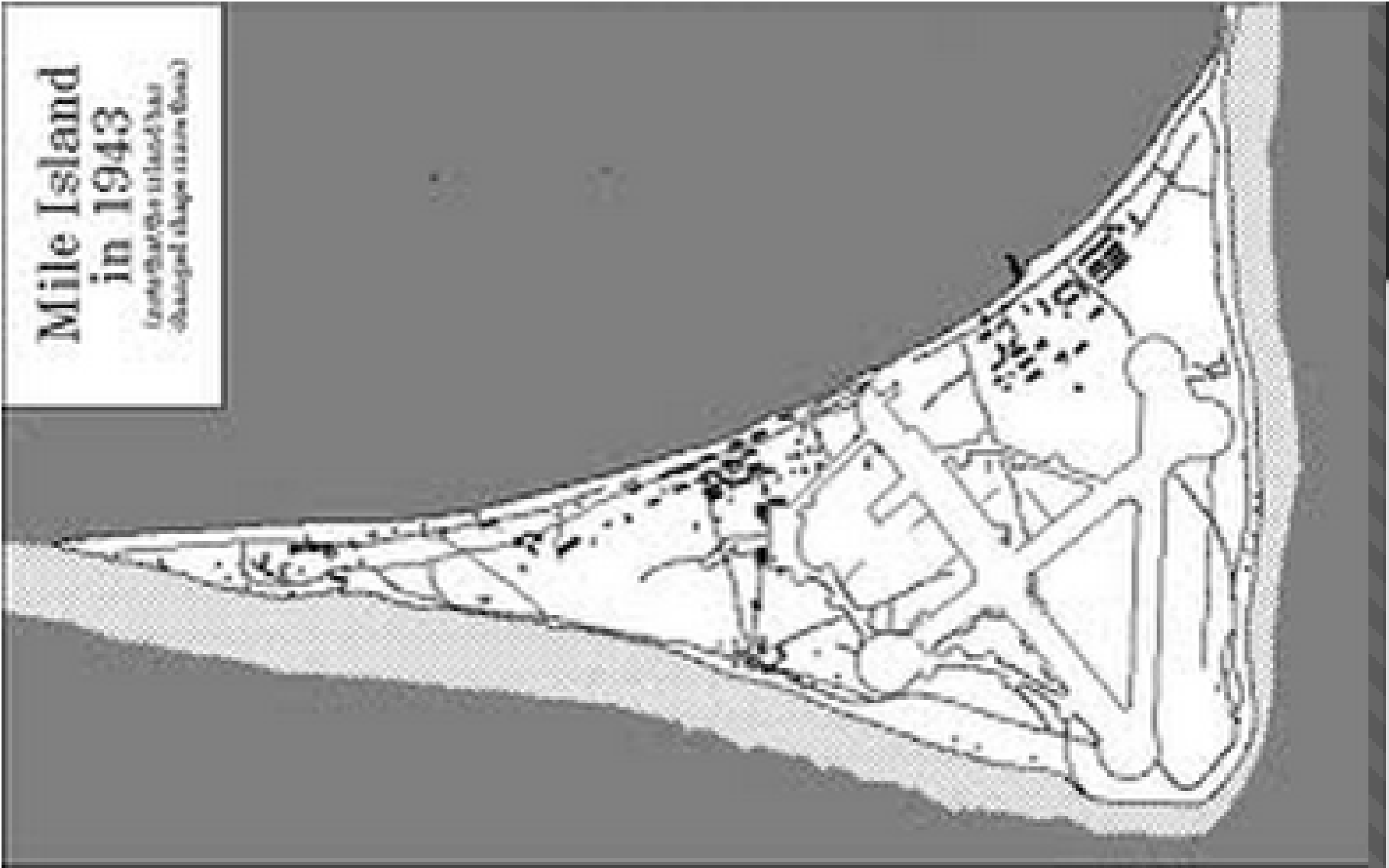
Mili Atoll

Enajet

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat

Google earth

Mili Island Japanese Air Base, 1943





Mili Atoll, 1944

PacificWrecks.com



Locals home over WWII bunker



**Japanese
fishing balls**



Japanese AA gun



Japanese AA gun



Japanese 120mm shore gun

Mitsubishi G4M Betty Bomber



**G4M Betty
Bomber**

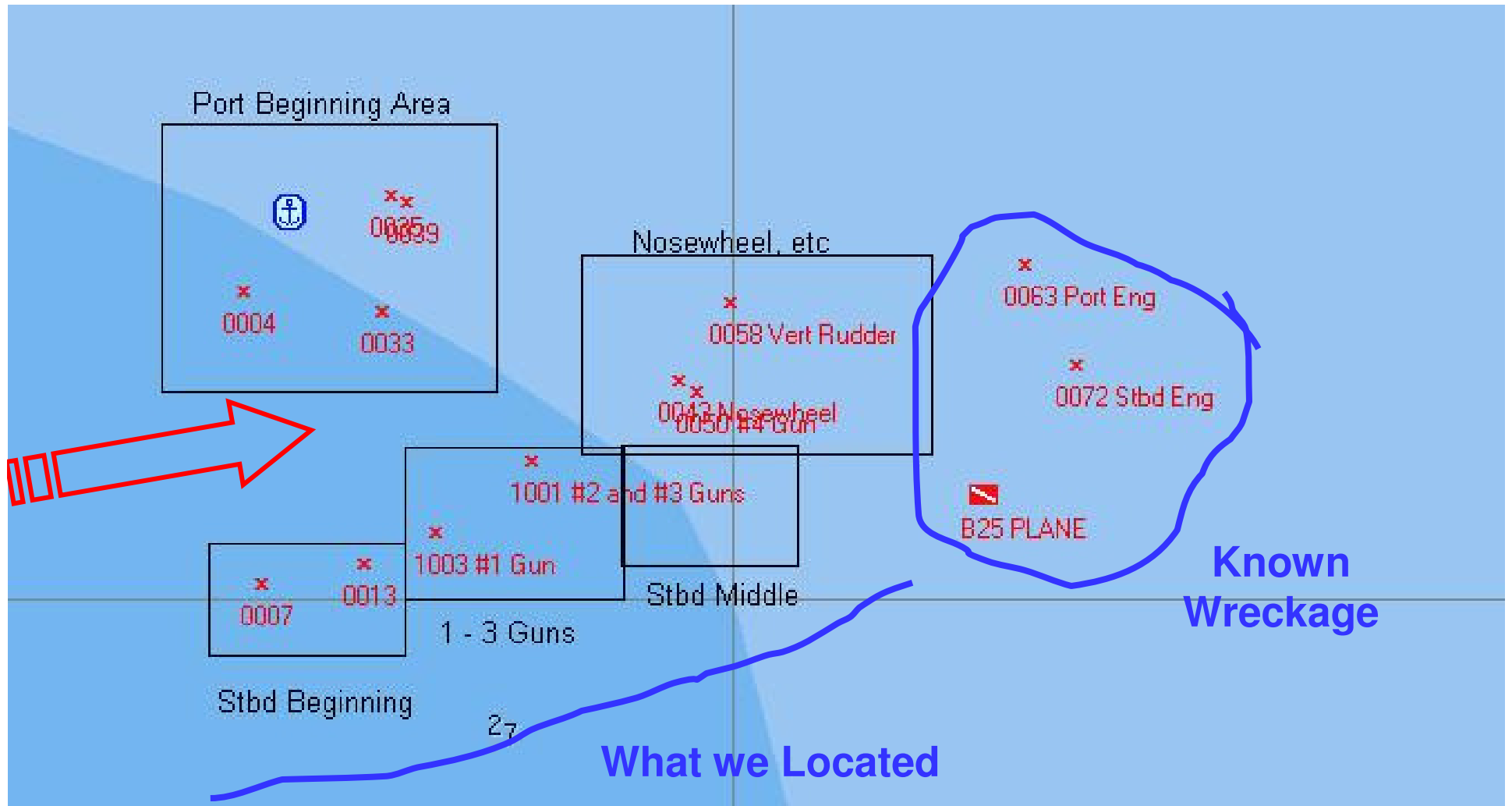


North American B-25J Mitchell



1942 Doolittle Raid

B-25D Search Site Map





B-25D Bomber in 25'



Sherry at Mili B-25D



B-25D Mitchell



B-25D cockpit, throttles



Mili B-25D waist 50 cal gun



Mili B-25D seat & 50 cal belt

An underwater photograph showing the rear gun turret of a B-25D bomber. The turret is a large, circular structure with a complex internal mechanism, including a large circular opening. It is heavily encrusted with dark, textured material, likely coral or other marine life. The background shows a sandy ocean floor and some blue fish swimming in the water. The overall scene is dimly lit, typical of an underwater environment.

Mili B-25D rear dual 50 cal mount



Mili B-25D rear dual 50 cal machine guns

Mili B-25D 50 cal gun



Jaluit Atoll





The Regina, a ship used by the Catholics to travel around the Marshall Islands. Place: Jabor Island, Jaluit Atoll. Photo by Joaquim deBrum in approx. 1919.



Emidj Island

Emidj Isl, 24 Jun 1945



Jaluit Atoll – Radio & Generator Facility



Grounded Japanese shipwreck



German Trading Ship Wreck




English Barque Manchester, 1900

**1880s German trading ship at 90',
composite construction**





Mast partners



**Sherry at stern of WWII
Japanese tugboat**

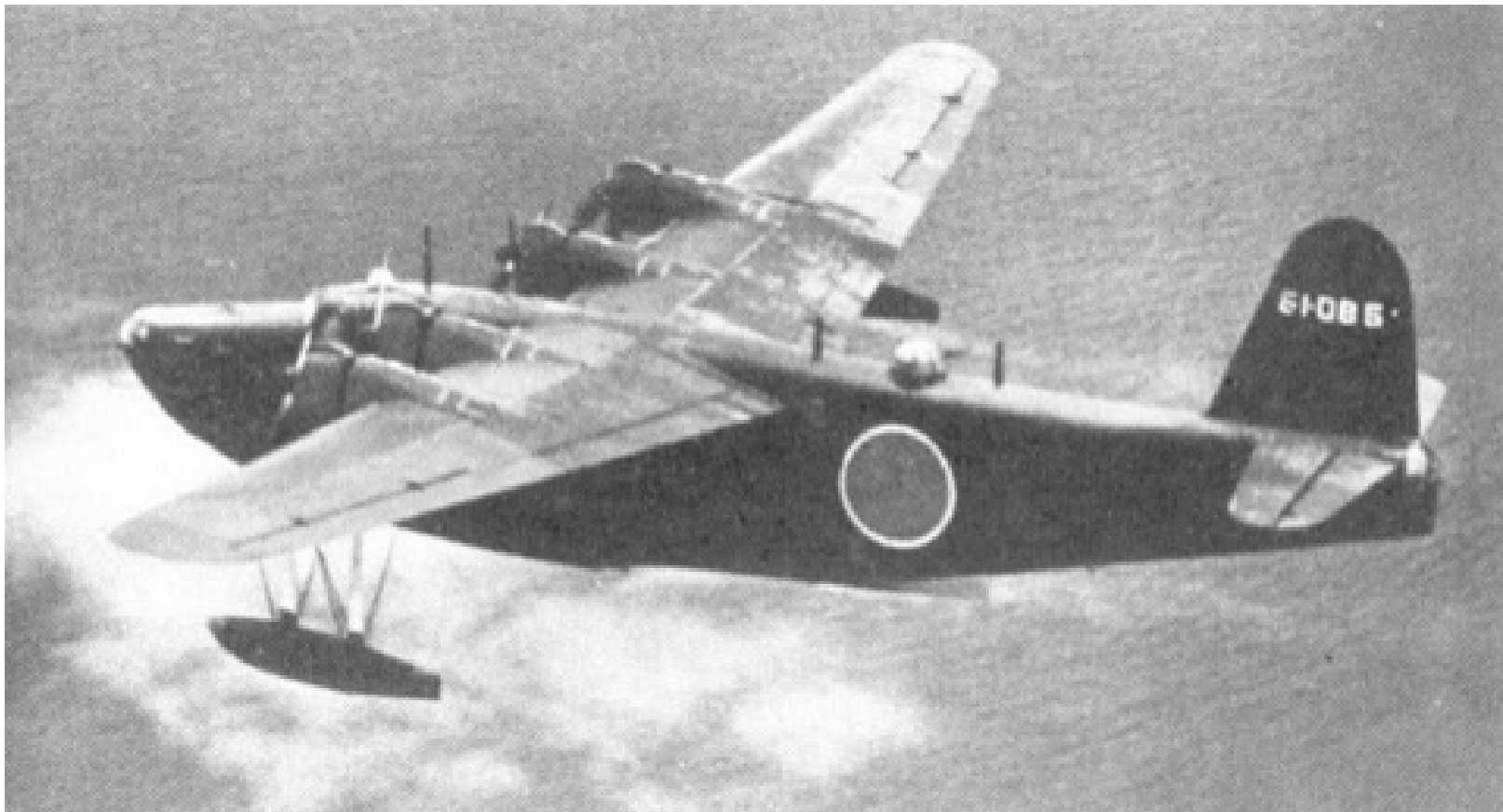


**Japanese Sea Plane
Base, Aineman Isl**

WWII Japanese Seaplane Pier



Japanese H8K Emily Flying Boat



Two sunk at anchor by American bombing in Jaluit Atoll

Kawanishi H8K Flying Boat



125' Wingspan, 4K nm range

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Sherry, engine & prop

Sherry inspecting the interior





H8K Emily rear gun

An underwater photograph showing a large, dark, rectangular pontoon structure. The pontoon is supported by two vertical legs that are connected by a network of ropes or cables, forming a truss-like structure. The entire scene is set against a deep blue background, indicating an underwater environment. The lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the silhouette of the structure.

Starboard wing pontoon



Sherry on H8K engine

Douglas TBD Devastator Torpedo Bombers

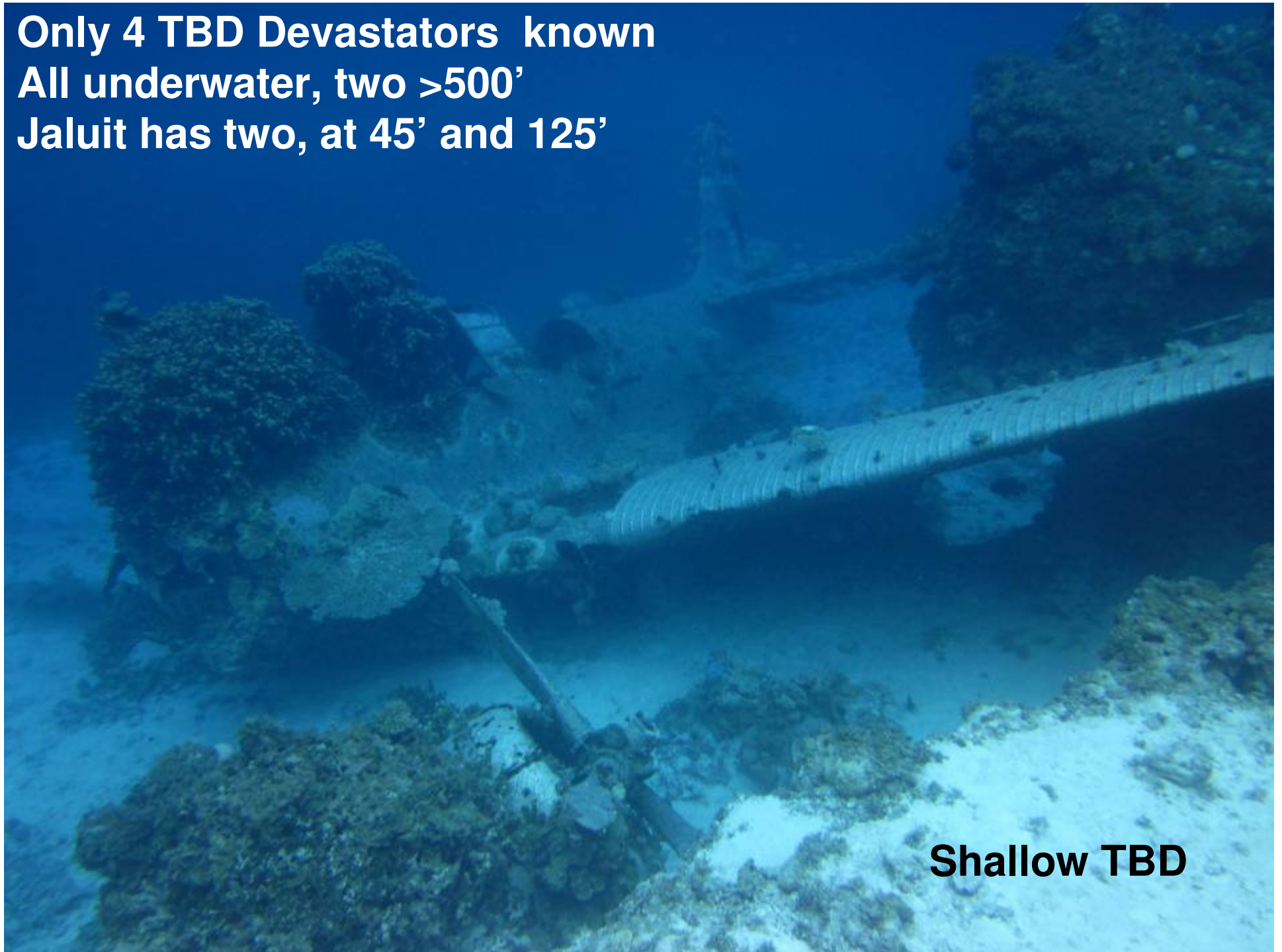


TBD Devastator

3 seats-pilot, navigator/bomber,
gunner/radioman



Only 4 TBD Devastators known
All underwater, two >500'
Jaluit has two, at 45' and 125'



Shallow TBD

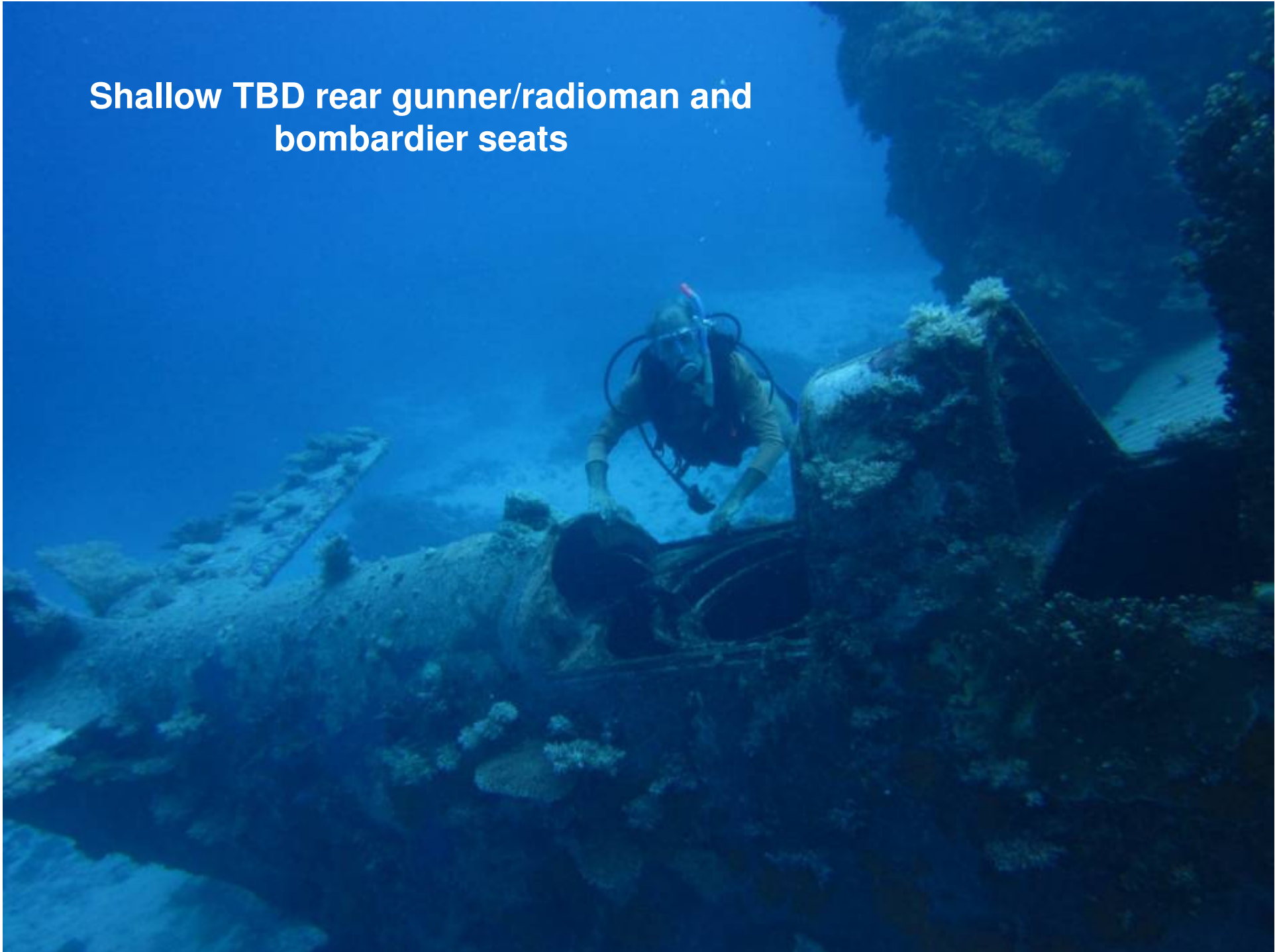
Shallow TBD port wing detail





Shallow TBD tail section

**Shallow TBD rear gunner/radioman and
bombardier seats**



TBD rear gunner's position



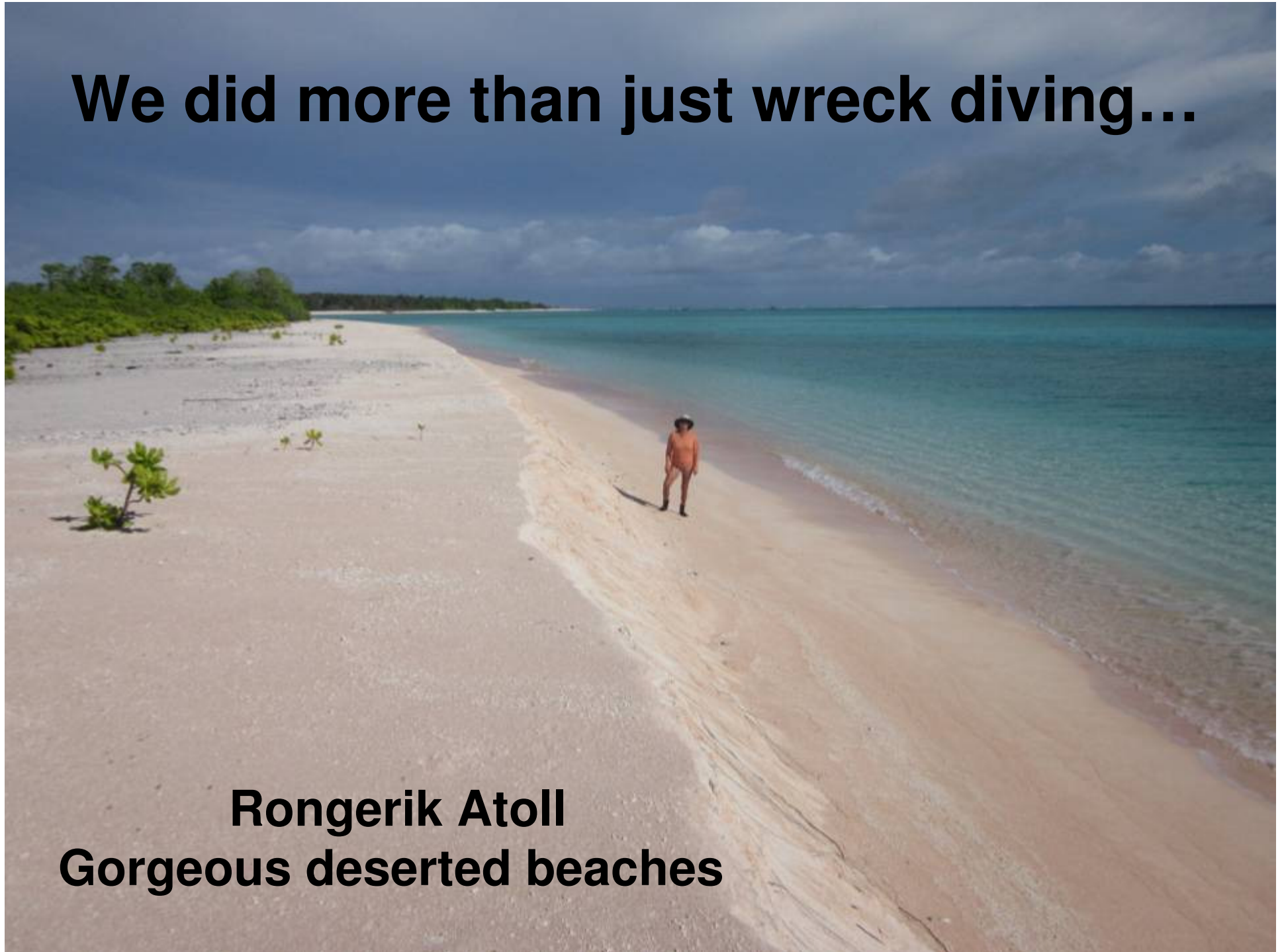


TBD P&W R-1830 engine

Deep TBD Devastator at 125'



We did more than just wreck diving...

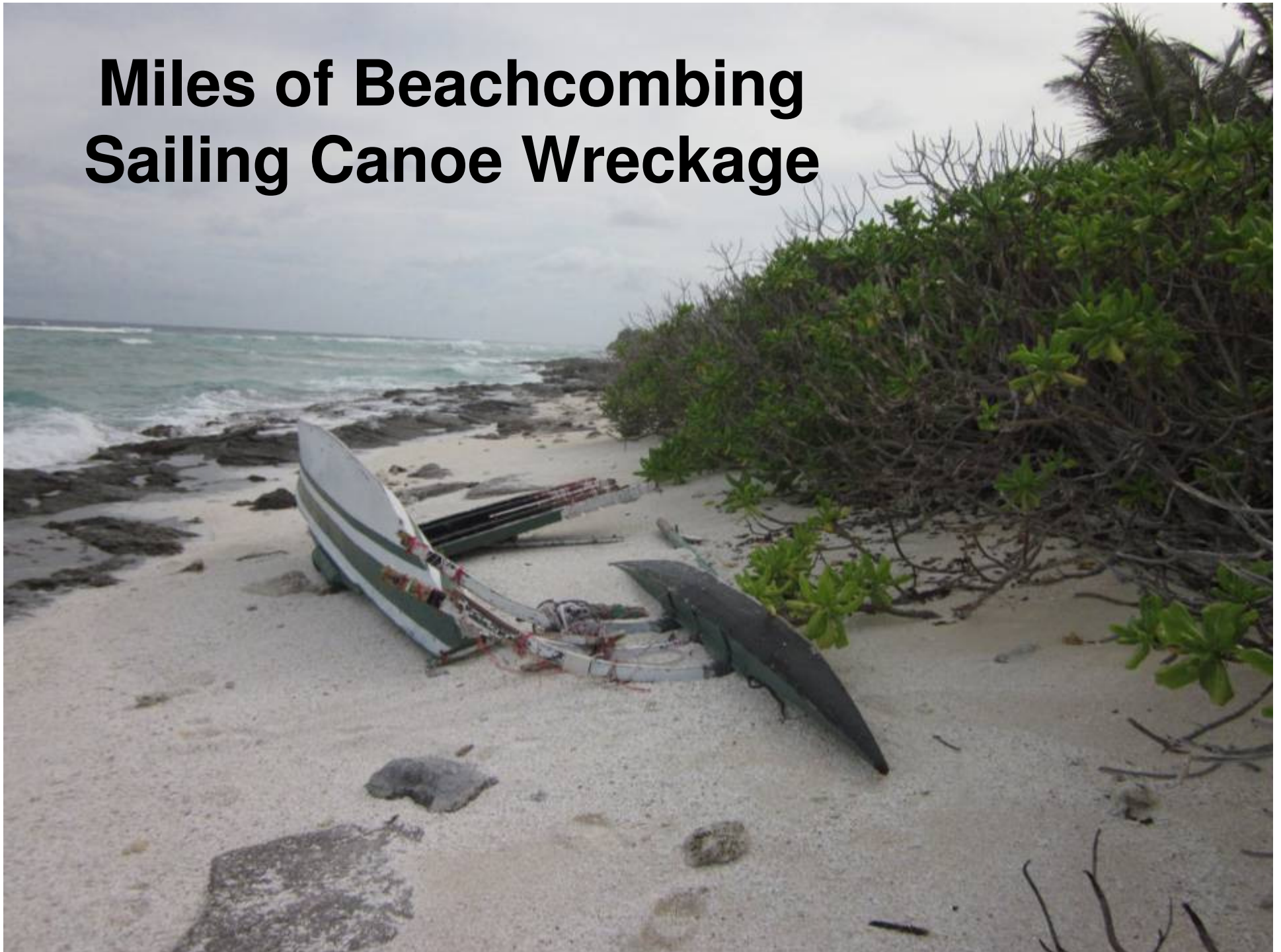


**Rongerik Atoll
Gorgeous deserted beaches**

Lots of Nesting Birds



Miles of Beachcombing Sailing Canoe Wreckage





**Helping the Locals
Sherry Checking a Radio in Wotho**



**'Pumpkin' &
Sunday School
in Ailuk**

Church Service in Marshallese Two hours!



Marshallese Sailing Canoes

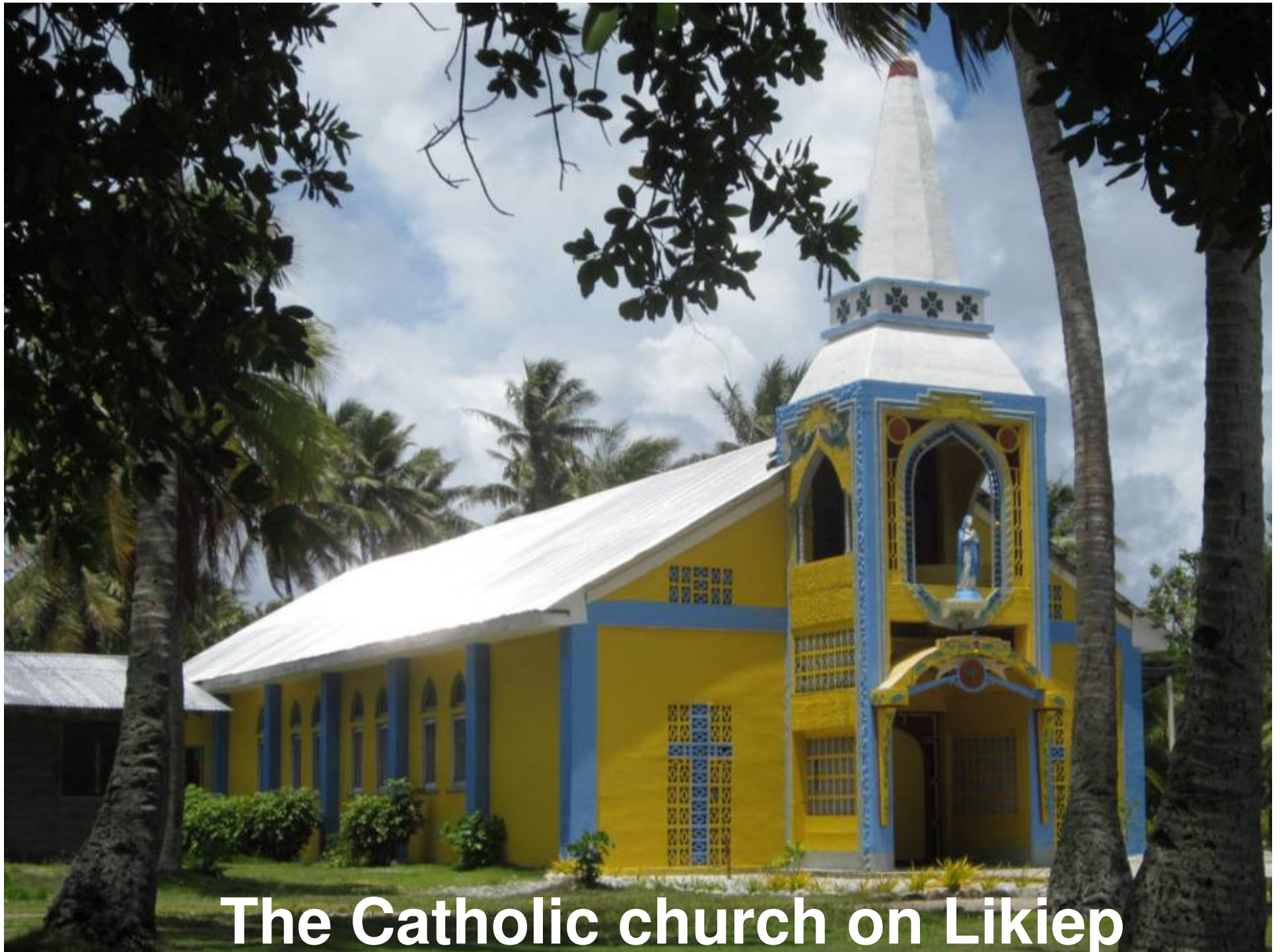


Sailing Marshallese style



Out Island Supermarket (Likiep Atoll)

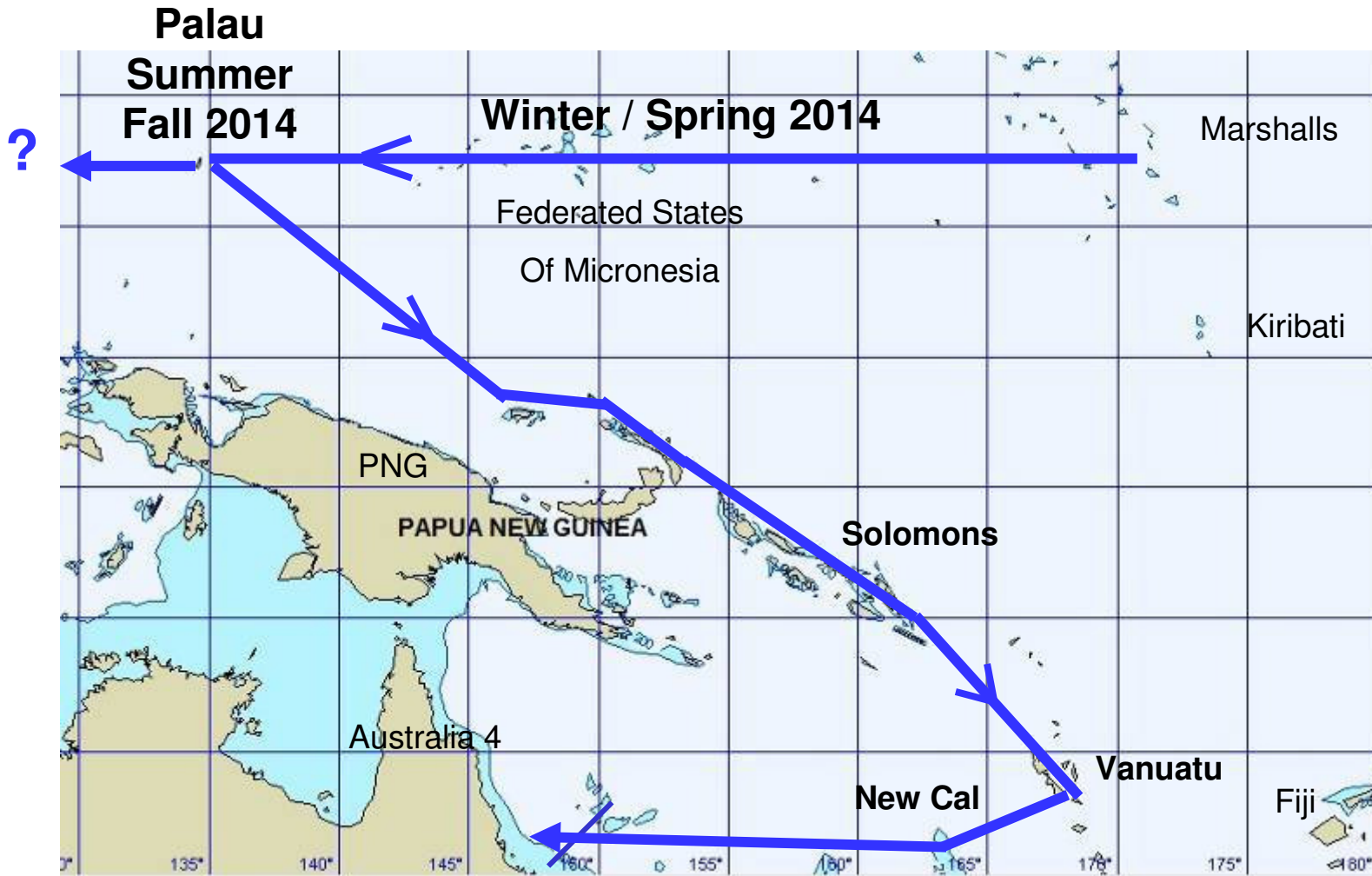




The Catholic church on Likiep

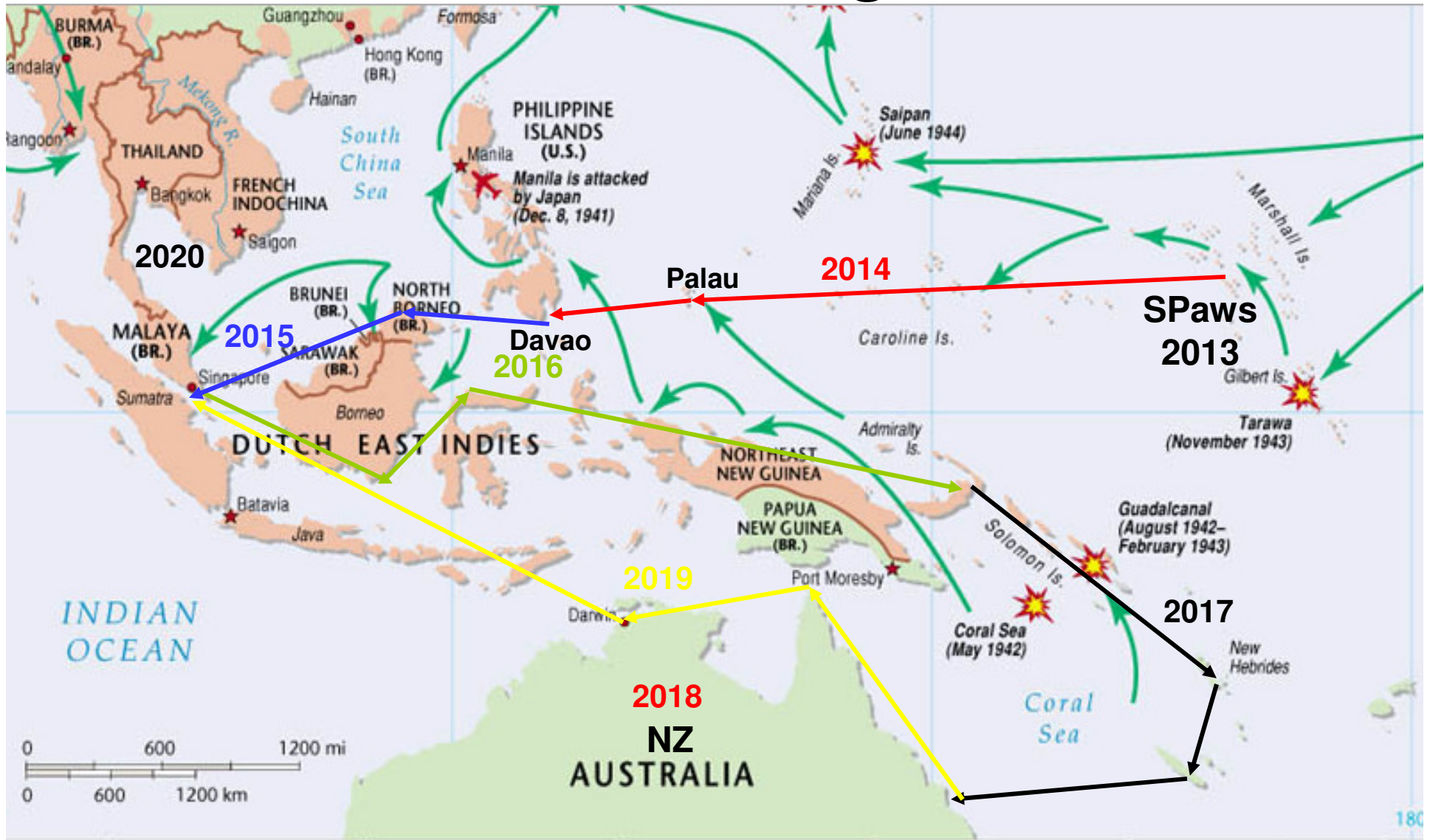
What's Next??

Plan A: Palau to Australia via PNG, Solomons, Vanuatu – 3 yrs



60 mins
232

Future Cruising Plans



Plan B: Palau to Australia via Philippines, Indonesia, Borneo, Malaysia, Singapore, PNG, Solomons, Vanuatu – 4 yrs

More here...

<http://svsoggypaws.com>

<http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com>



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The End