

# **Soggy Paws Adventures 2012 - 2013**

**Fiji – Tuvalu – Kiribati – Marshall Islands**



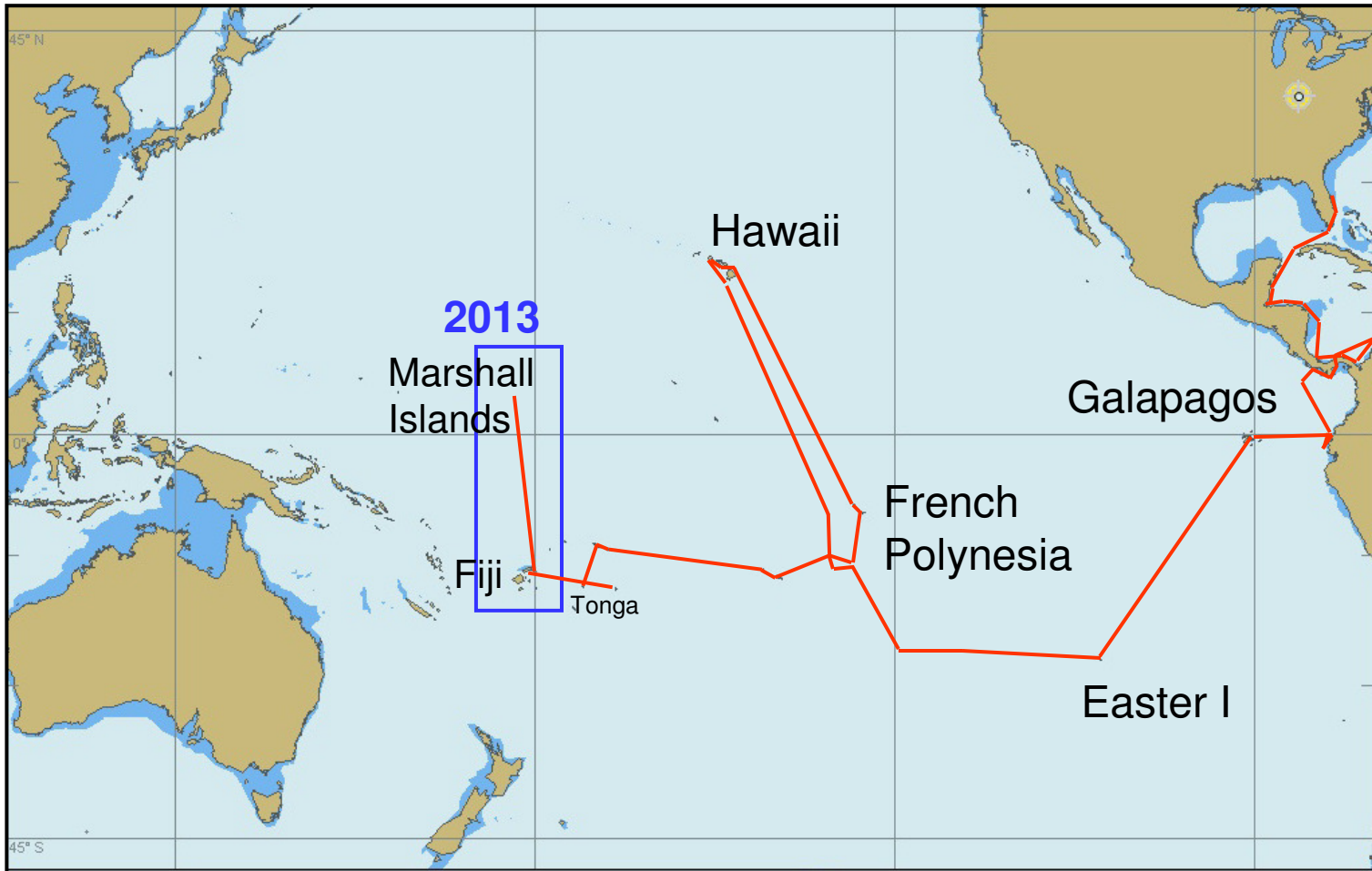
**Proud Member of**



**Seven Seas Cruising  
Association**

[www.ssca.org](http://www.ssca.org)

# 2007-2013 Overview





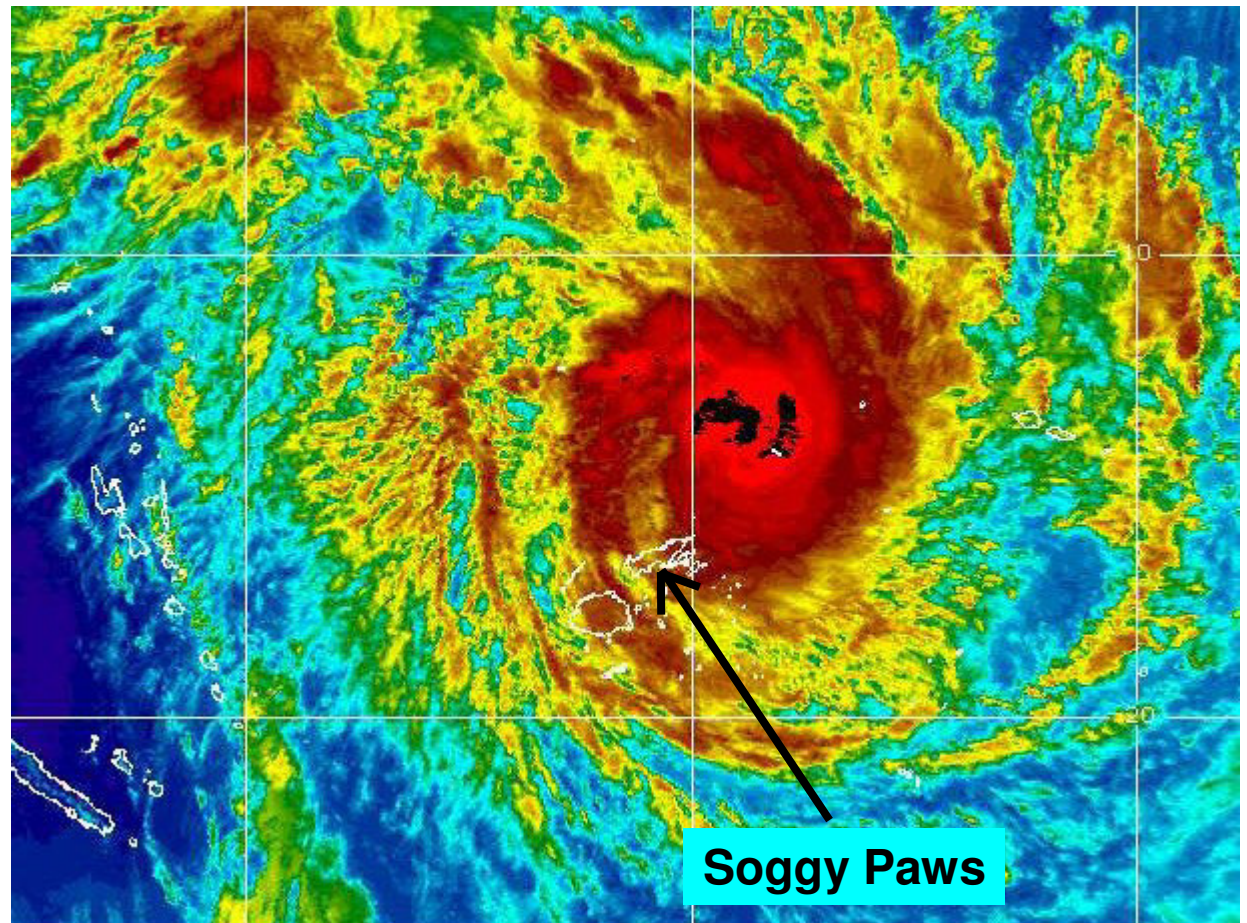
**Our boat, our home**  
***Soggy Paws - CSY 44 (1981)***

# Back to Fiji...

## Cyclone Season Starts Early

- Cyclone Evan – Dec 20
- Largest cyclone ever to hit Fiji
- We were on our way back to Soggy Paws
- Stuck in LA for 3 days as Evan passed over Fiji

Satellite Picture Dec 15

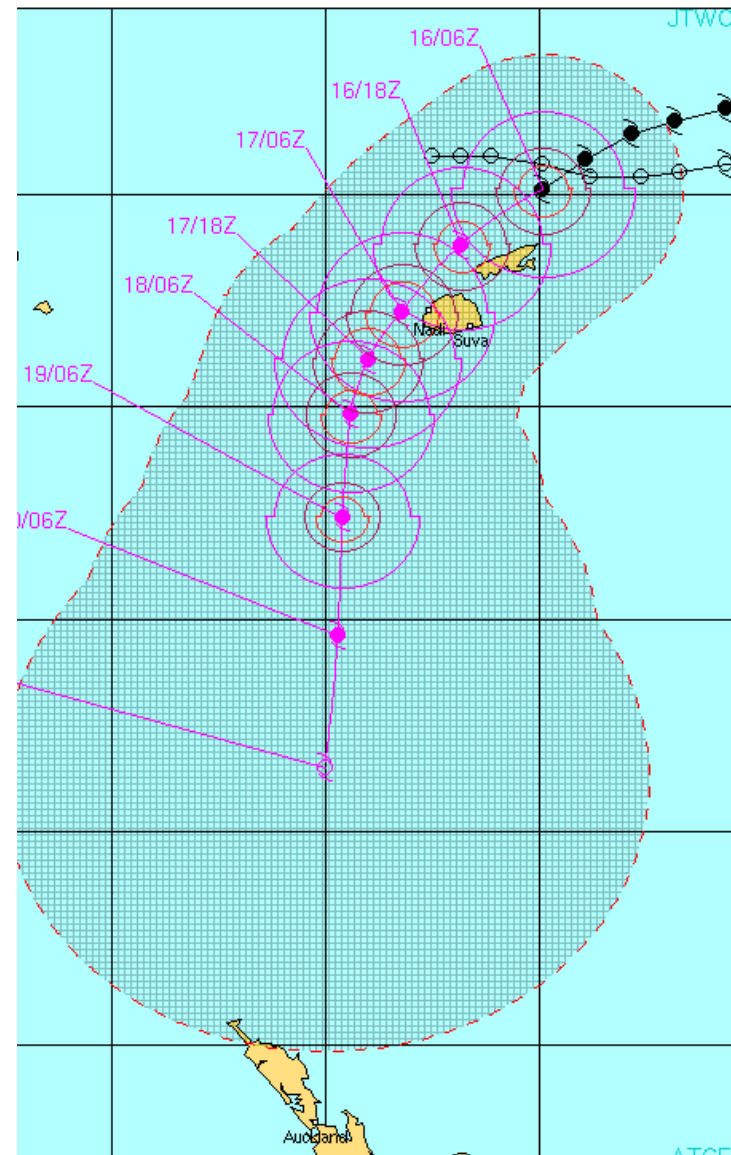


# Cyclone Evan Recap

- Missed Savusavu (us) by 100 miles
- Protected harbor
- 2 boats dragged moorings
- No major damage

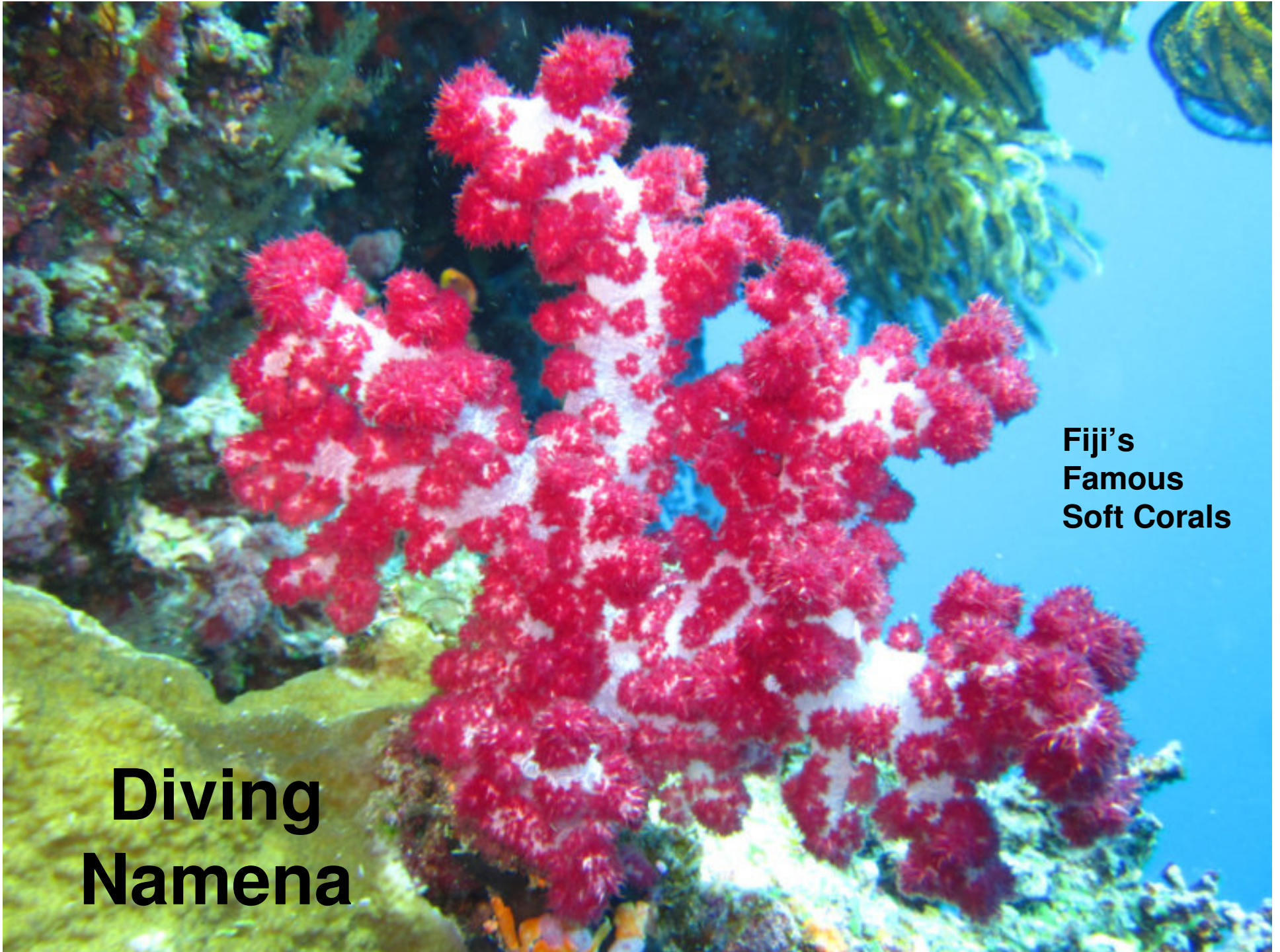
## Elsewhere

- Boats bashed up in tight marina
- 3 boats sunk at floating docks
- Lots of damage on land
  - Flimsy houses
  - Rain/mud slides
- Rest of Season easy



# Our January Round Fiji Cruise

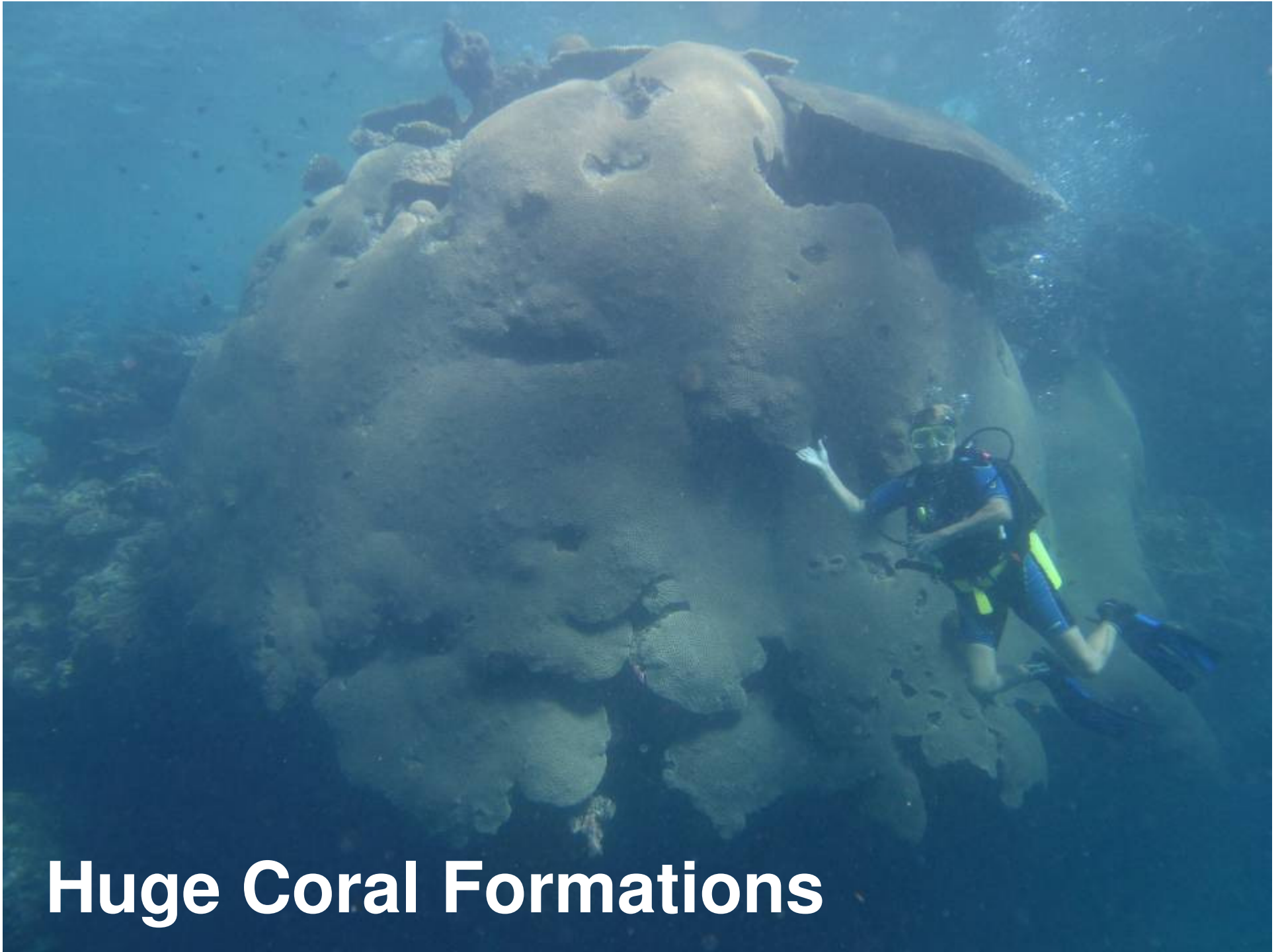




**Fiji's  
Famous  
Soft Corals**

**Diving  
Namena**





**Huge Coral Formations**









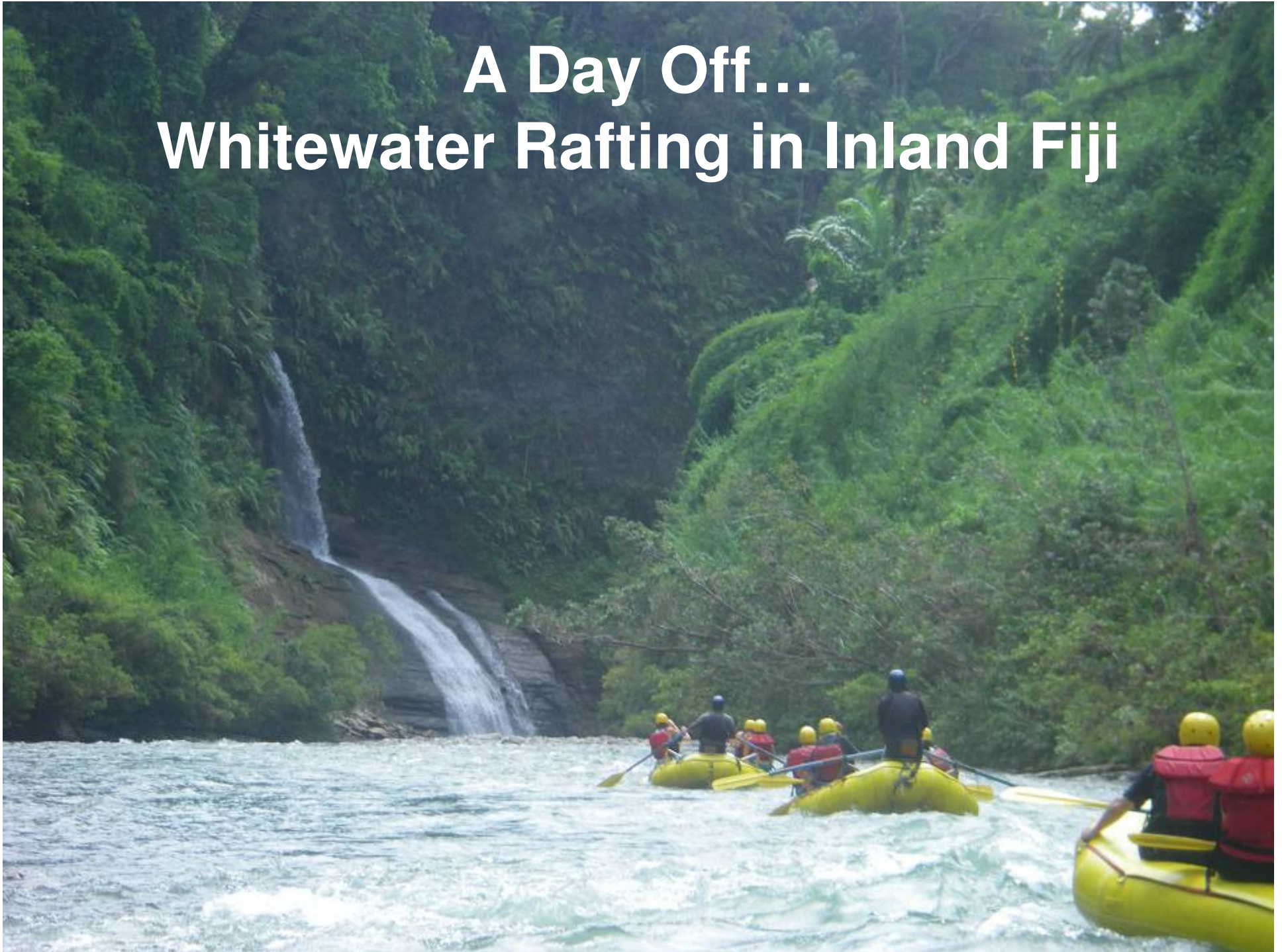
**Quick Haulout**



**Nice view from our deck...**



# A Day Off... Whitewater Rafting in Inland Fiji







# Back to Savusavu...



# February / March Maintenance & Upgrades

New Arch  
Shipped  
From U.S.



**Assembled in  
2 Days**



**3 Weeks to Finish!**







**Removable Bowsprit for Light Air Sail**

# A Vacation from our Vacation

## *Liveaboard Dive Trip*

- One Week Trip
- Half-price summer rates
- 1/2 Sightseeing
- 1/2 Diving





# Hiking Taveuni Island Waterfalls

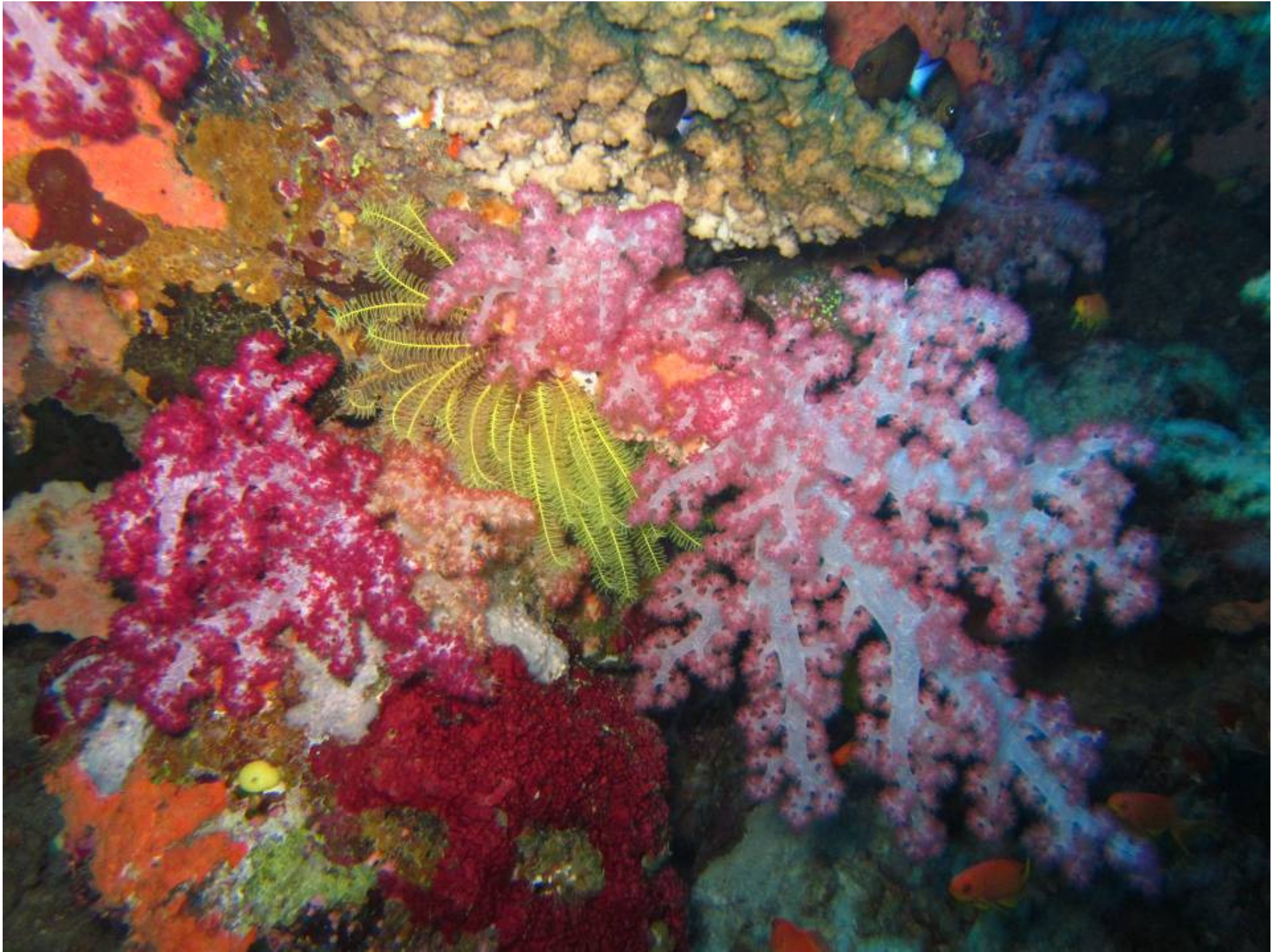


**Worst weather we had all summer**



**Didn't slow us down much...**



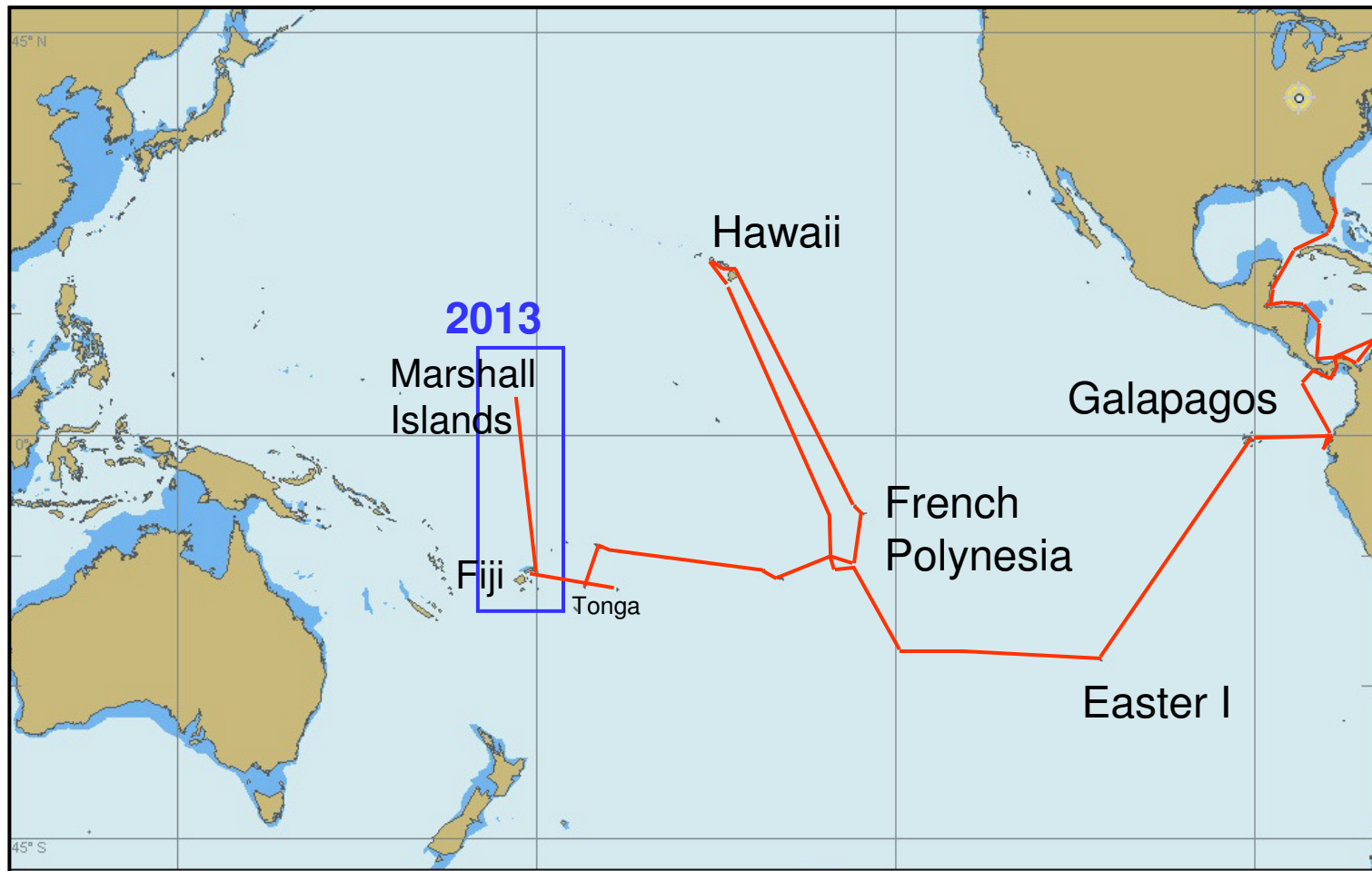








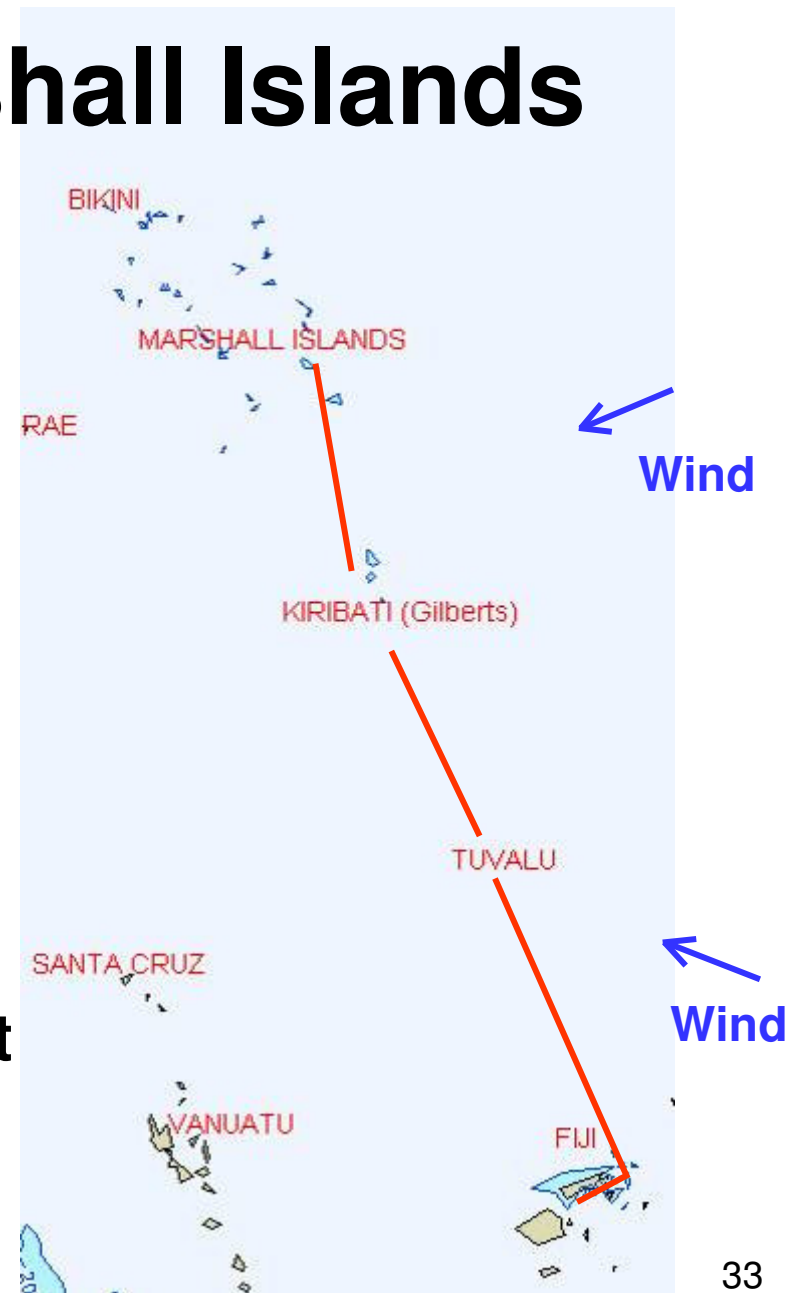
# April: Marshall Islands or Bust!





# 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)
- Only one other cruising boat during the whole trip



# Marshall Islands Overview

- **Japanese 1915 – 1945**
  - Heavy investment in infrastructure
- **Major U.S. Bombing Campaign 1943/44**
- **U.S. Trust Territory 1945-1986**
- **Site of Atomic Bomb Testing 1946-50**
  - Bikini Atoll
  - Eneweitok Atoll



# Marshall Islands Today

- **70,000 people (30,000 in Majuro)**
- **Site of US Missile Testing (Kwajalein)**
- **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**
- **Brevard County Comparison**
  - **1,015 sq miles**
  - **550,000 population**

# Marshall Islands Today

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

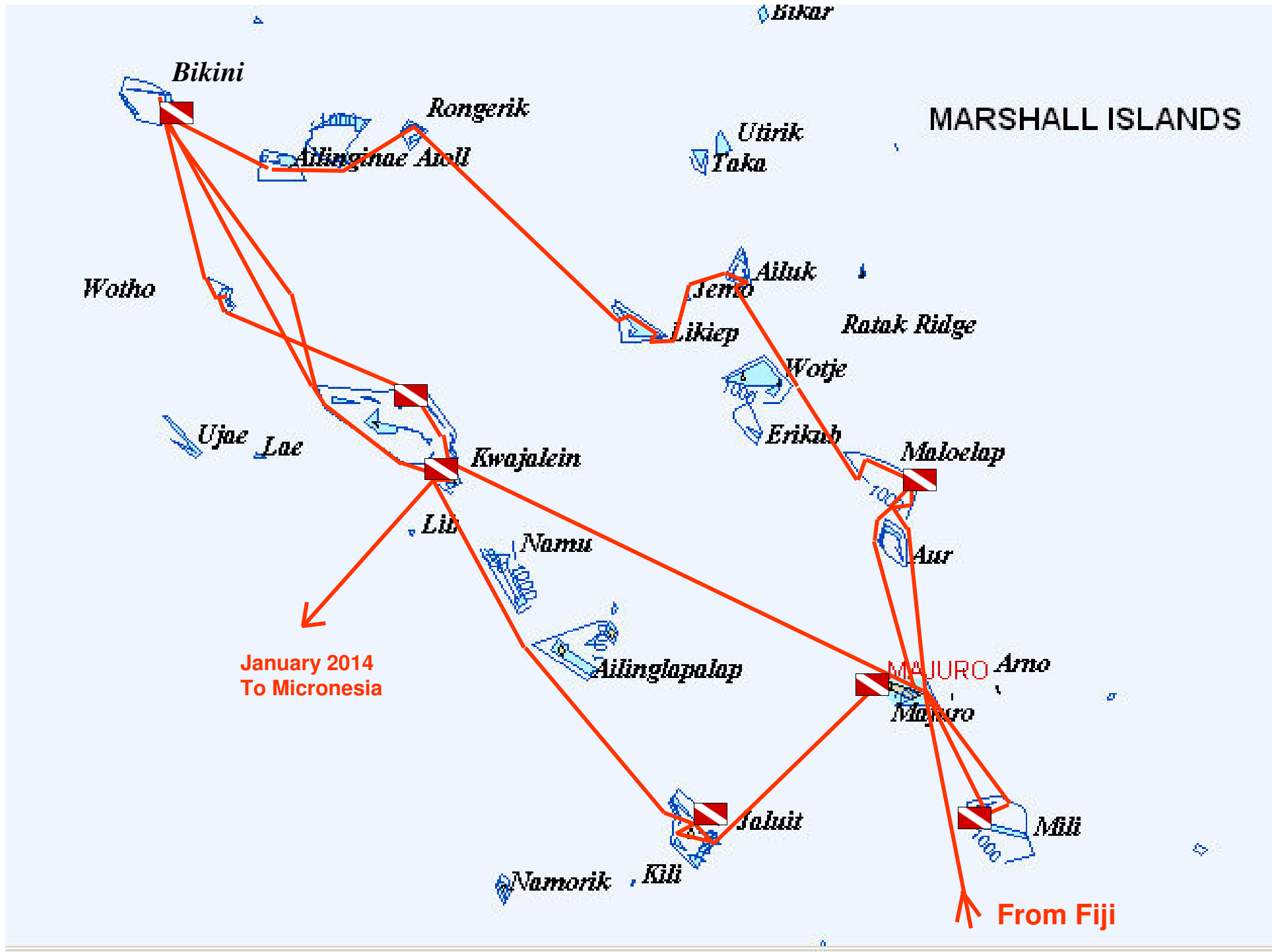


# Marshall Islands Today

- **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 “stuck” 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

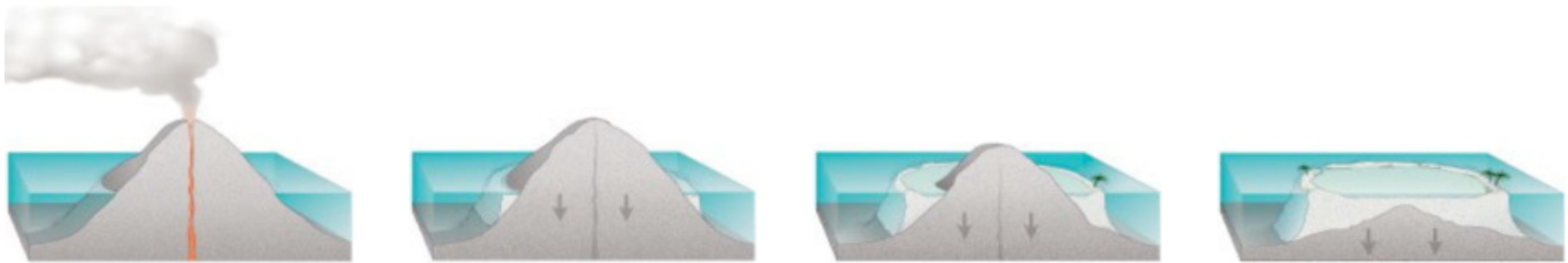
# **Cruising the Marshall Islands**

- **Dive, dive, dive...**
- **World War II relics**
  - **Japanese Installations**
  - **Downed airplanes**
  - **Sunken ships**
  - **Big guns**
- **Bikini Atoll Shipwrecks**



# What is an “Atoll”?

- Ring-shaped coral reef
- Formed by volcanoes that sink







Source: Wikipedia

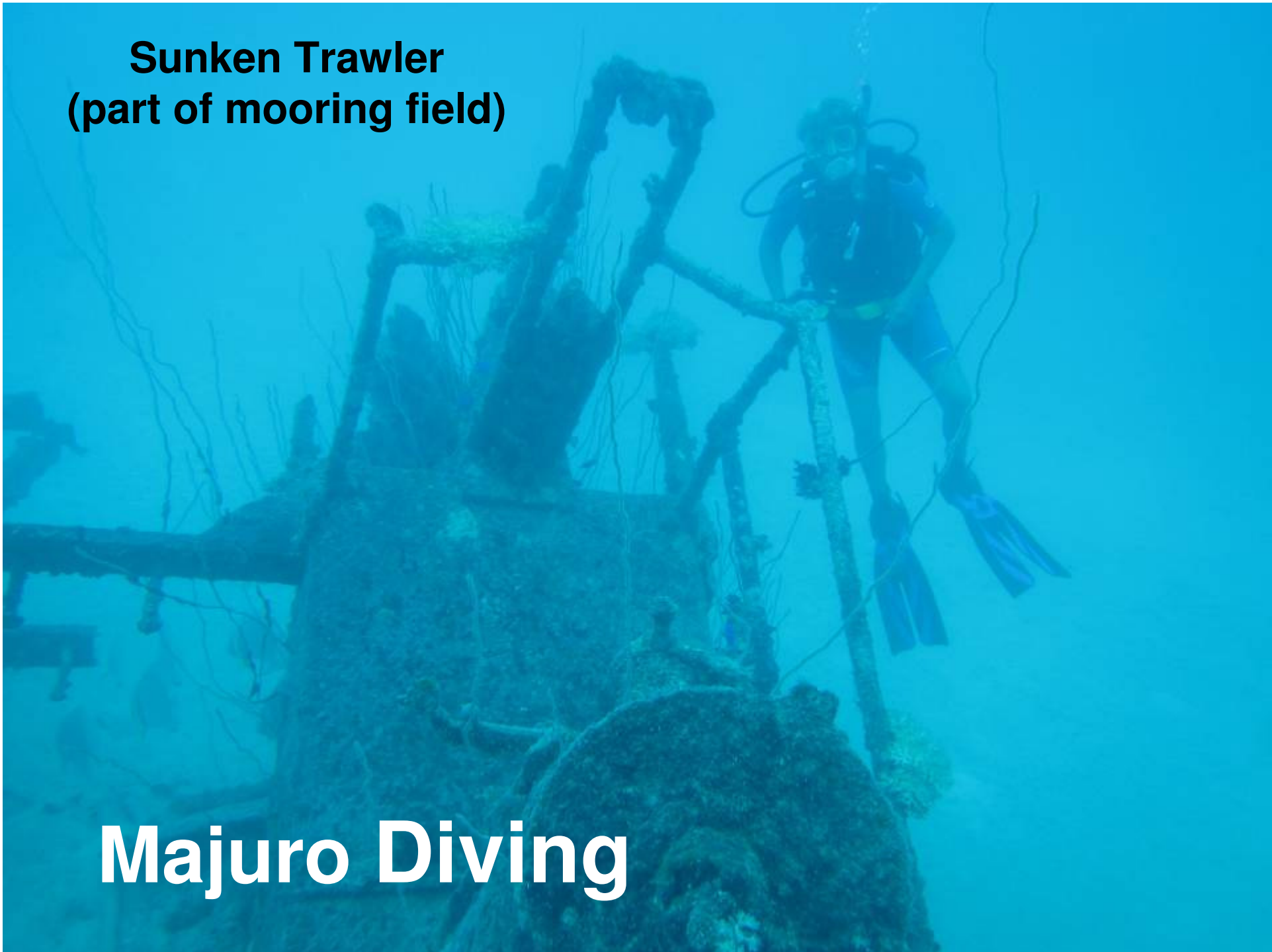
# Majuro, Capital City

- **Customs/Immigration**
- **2-3 U.S.-style supermarkets**
- **Internet**
- **Cell Phones**
- **Restaurants**
- **U.S. Post Office**
- **International airport**
- **Good cruising community**
  - VHF Net
  - “Yachties Night Out”
  - Other group activities



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

**Majuro Diving**



# Grumman F6F-3 Hellcat



1944 McCampbell

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





**Beechcraft Twin Bonanza**



**The “Parking Lot”**







# Coca Cola Heaven



# **Kwajalein Atoll**

- **250 Miles from Majuro**
- **World's largest atoll**
- **Japanese base in World War II**
- **Taken over by U.S. in 1944**
- **Now home of "Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site"**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Marshallese Population**
- **Restricted access to bases**
- **Rest of atoll is wide open for cruising**

# Kwaj Base

- **A cross between Key West and KSC**
- **US Army Base**
  - ~ 20 Army personnel
  - ~ 2,000 contractors
- **Everyone lives in “quarters”**
- **No privately-owned cars**
- **“Sponsorship” required to visit**



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Image © 2013 DigitalGlobe

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

Google earth









# Diving In Kwajalein



Asakazi Maru (Japanese)





# Prinz Eugen

- Famous German WWII Battleship
- Survived Bikini Able and Baker Test
- Radioactive--Towed to Kwajalein
- Sunk from neglect Dec 1946
- Great dive site!





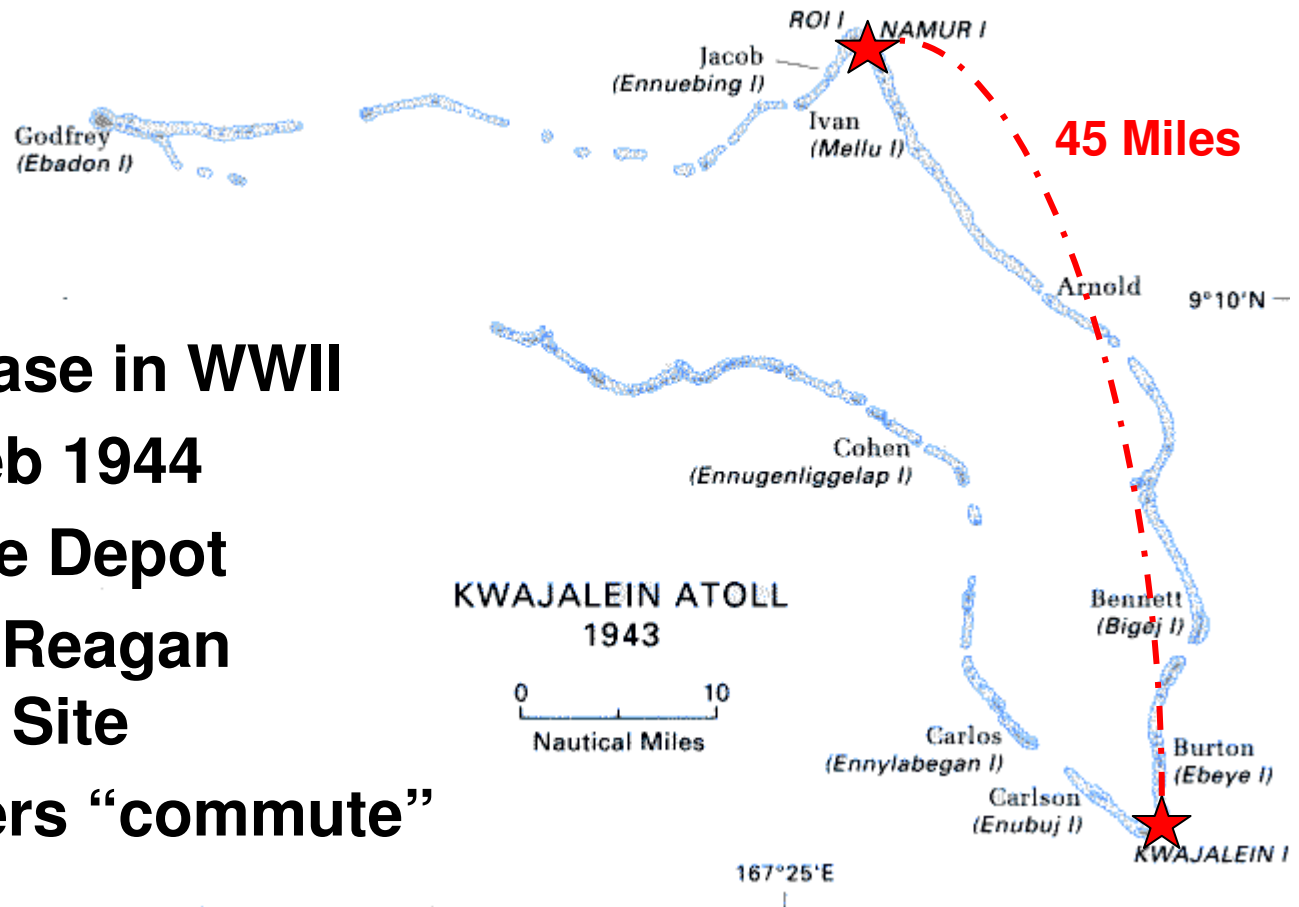


**My, What Big Guns You Have!**



# Roi-Namur (Kwajalein)

- Japanese Base in WWII
- Captured Feb 1944
- U.S. Airplane Depot
- Now part of Reagan Missile Test Site
- Some workers “commute” by small jet
- Site of the “Airplane Graveyard”







# Roi Radar Installation





A diver in a dark wetsuit and scuba gear is seen from the side, swimming over a large, rusted metal wreckage of an airplane on the sandy ocean floor. The wreckage is partially covered in coral and other marine life. The water is a deep blue, and the scene is dimly lit, typical of an underwater environment.

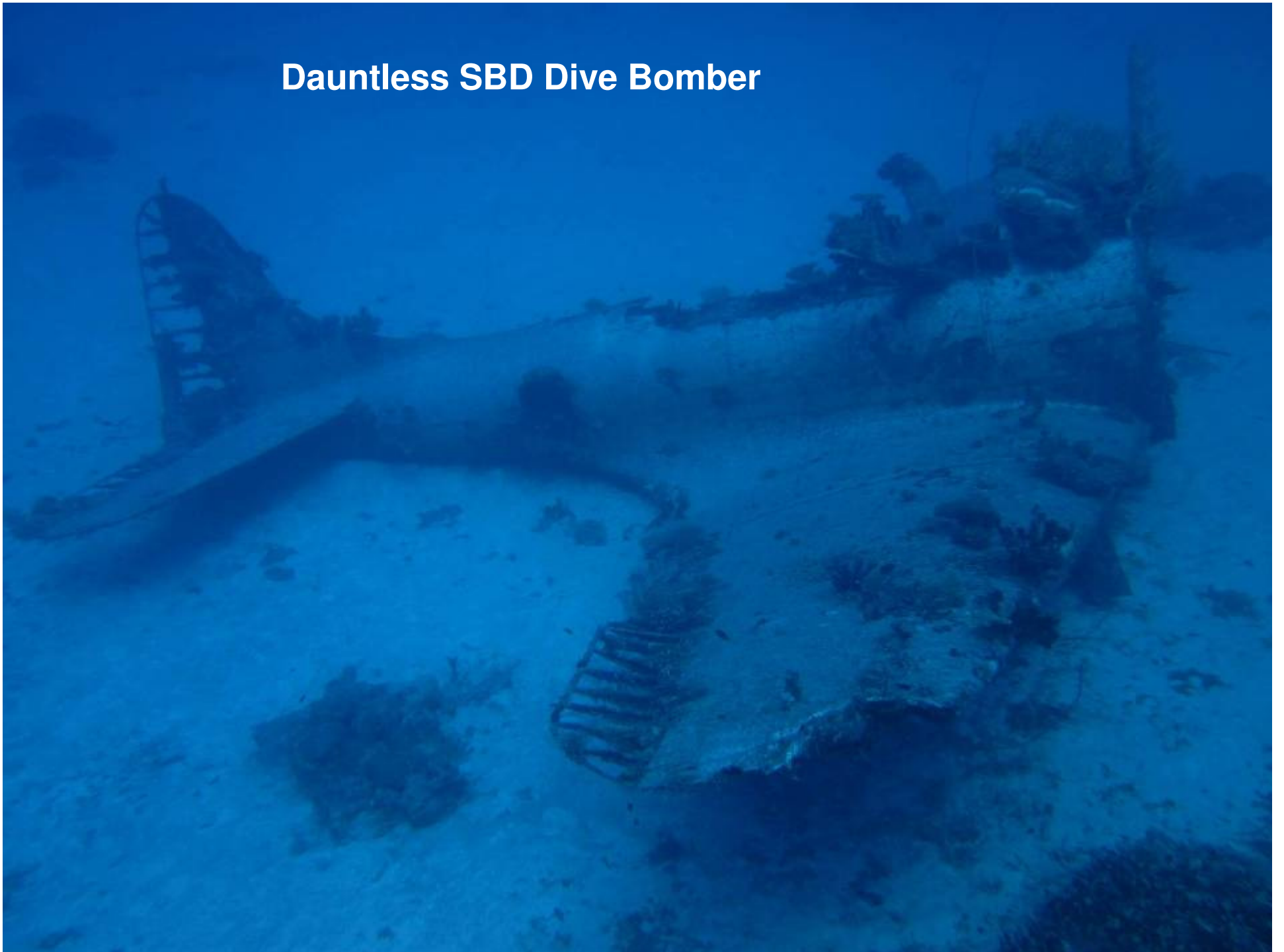
# Diving the Airplane Graveyard

**Japanese A6M “Zero”**

# Mitsubishi A6M Zero/Zeke



## Dauntless SBD Dive Bomber





# Douglas TBD Devastator



1942 Torpedo 8 Midway





# B-25 Bomber





# North American B-25 Mitchell



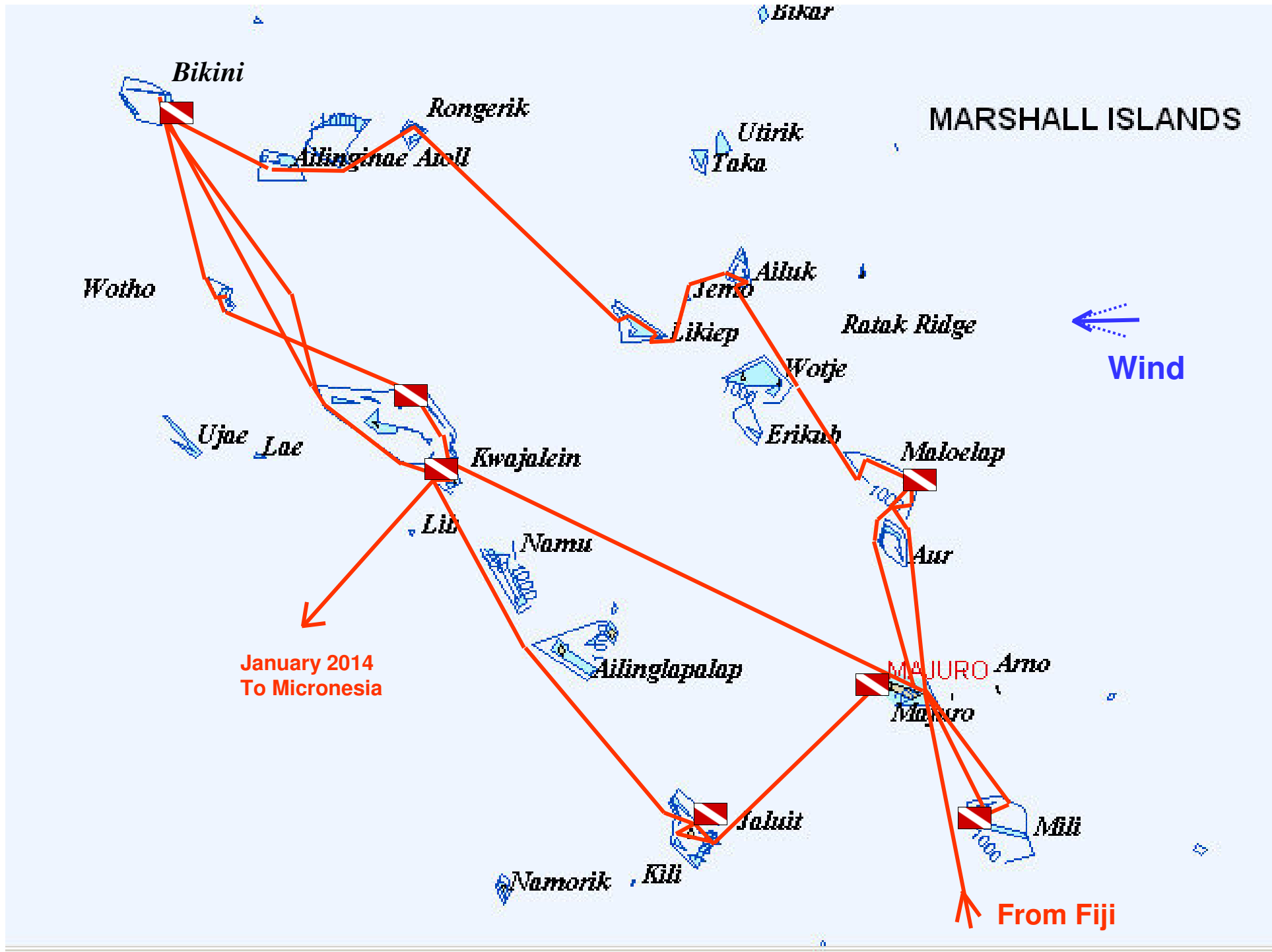
1942 Doolittle Raid



**Japanese Ship  
Eiko Maru #2**









# Bikini Atoll

- **Site of Nuclear Bomb Testing, 1946-58**
- **23 Nuclear devices detonated in lagoon**
- **167 Original residents relocated**
- **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**



# **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**

# **Dive “Resort” Established**

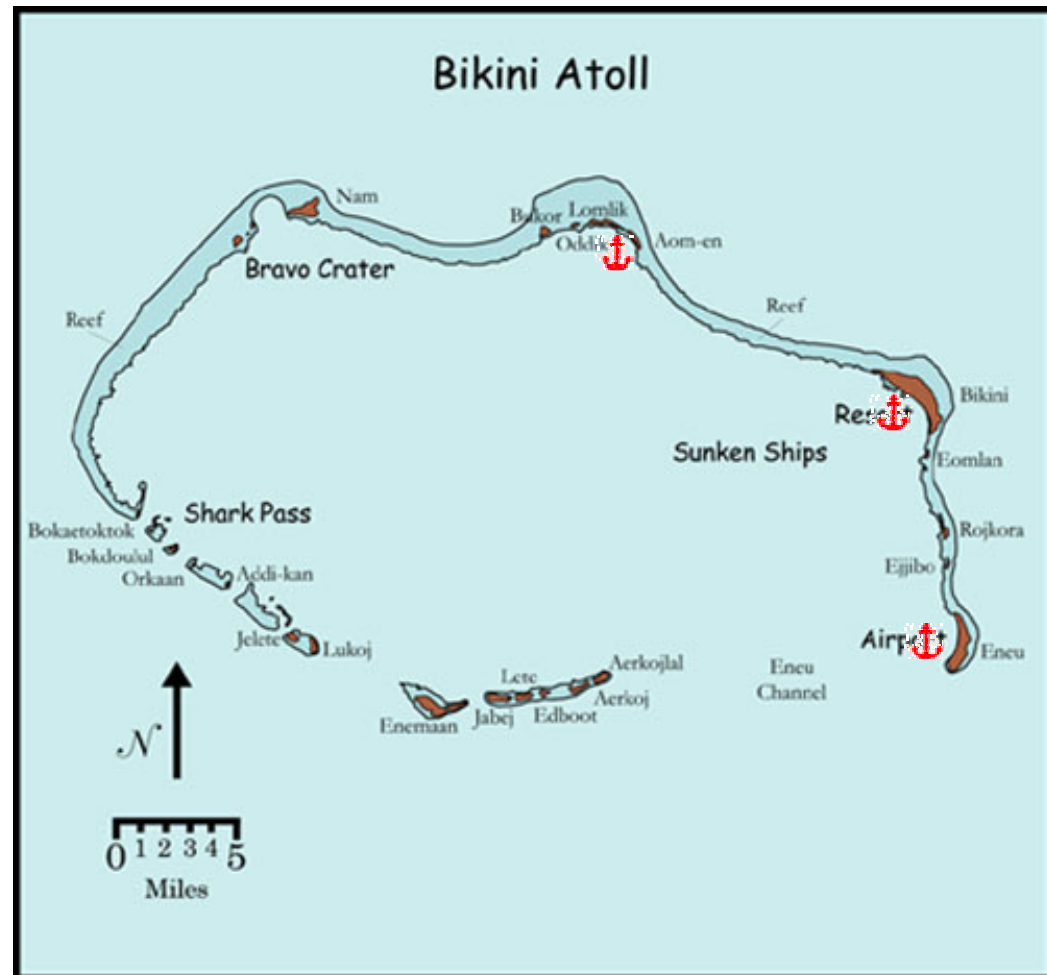
- **Intended to provide income for Bikinians**
- **U.S. Navy & Park Service Survey**
  - **Locating and mapping the wrecks**
- **Construction of “dive resort”**
  - **Airport**
  - **Hotel and support facilities**
  - **Piers & other infrastructure**
- **Resort first opened 2001**
- **Netted \$500,000 in first year**
- **Successful until Air Marshall Islands failed in 2007**

# **Bikini Atoll Today**

- **Hotel/Dive operation established in 2000**
  - Closed down in 2007 due to economy & logistics
- **Only 3-4 caretakers on Bikini Island**
- **No air service, infrequent supply boats**
- **Liveaboard dive boat visits May-October**
  - 12 day trips from Kwaj / \$6,000pp
- **Wide open for cruisers**
  - Only restriction: No wreck diving! (\$\$\$\$)

# Cruising Bikini

- 170 miles from Roi
- Check-in with caretaker on Bikini
- Easy nav in lagoon
- Great diving on coral heads
- Deserted beaches
- Fun exploring deserted facilities ashore













**Fully-equipped Workshop**

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



# Exploring Old Nuclear Test Bunkers





# 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**



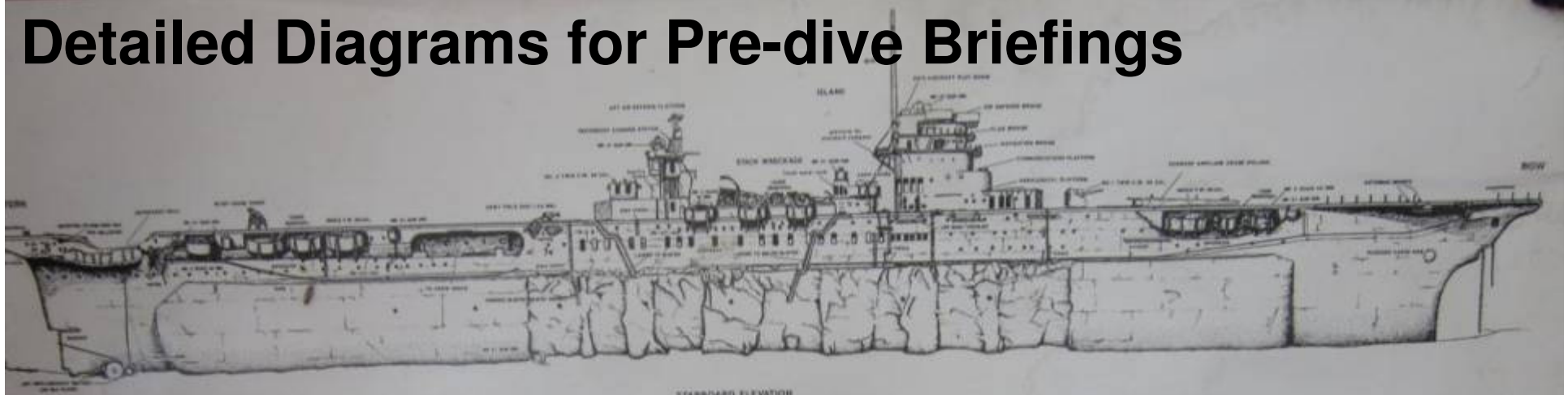


**Recompression Chamber**

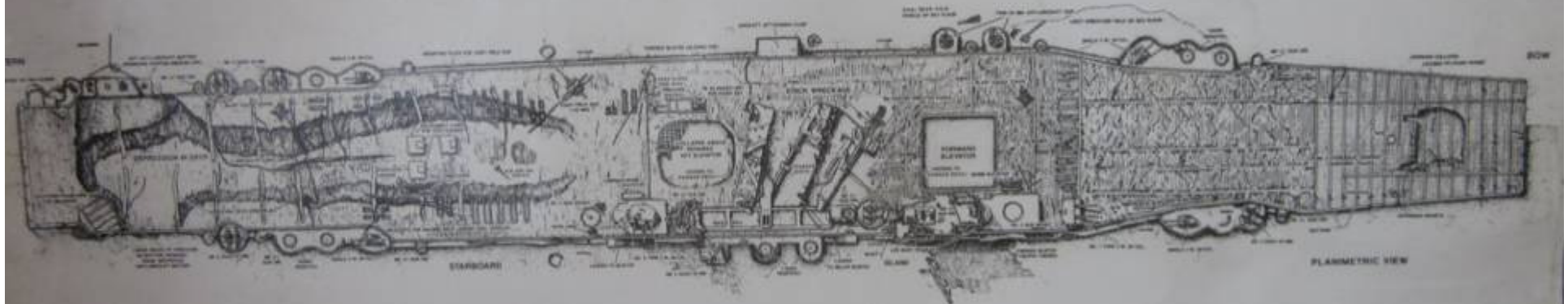


**Onboard Tri-mix Tank Fills & Rebreather Support**

# Detailed Diagrams for Pre-dive Briefings



STARDARD ELEVATION



PLANIMETRIC VIEW

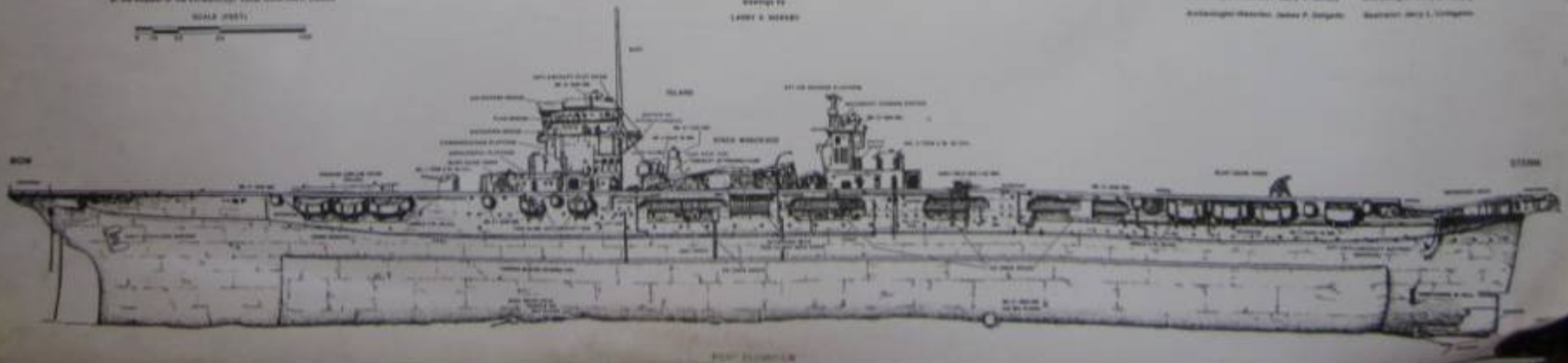
A Cooperative Effort of The National Park Service,  
U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Navy, and the Bikinian People  
at the Request of the U.S. District Court Government Consent

SCALE (200:1)  
0 20 40 60

U.S.S. SARATOGA (CV-3) AT BIKINI ATOLL  
U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCES UNIT

DESIGNED BY  
LARRY S. MERRILL

These drawings resulted from the 1982-86 archeological excavations at Bikini  
N.P.S. Team Leader: David A. Lindner  
Archaeologist/Restorer: Larry S. Merrill      Archaeologist: Larry S. Merrill  
Archaeologist/Restorer: James P. Searles      Scientist: JIM S. CAMPBELL



BOW ELEVATION



**These Guys are Serious Divers!**





**\$10,000 in  
Dive Gear!**

# Diving the USS Saratoga (CV-3)



**Commissioned in 1928**

# Playing on the Bow of the Saratoga



# On the Bridge



# The Helm Station











# A “Helldiver” still in the Hangar Deck





**The Helldiver's Instrument Panel**

# Curtis SB2C Helldiver





**From the Dive Locker**



**Still leaking oil after all these years...**



**Japanese Battleship Nagato**

# The Nagato's Propellers (100' deep)



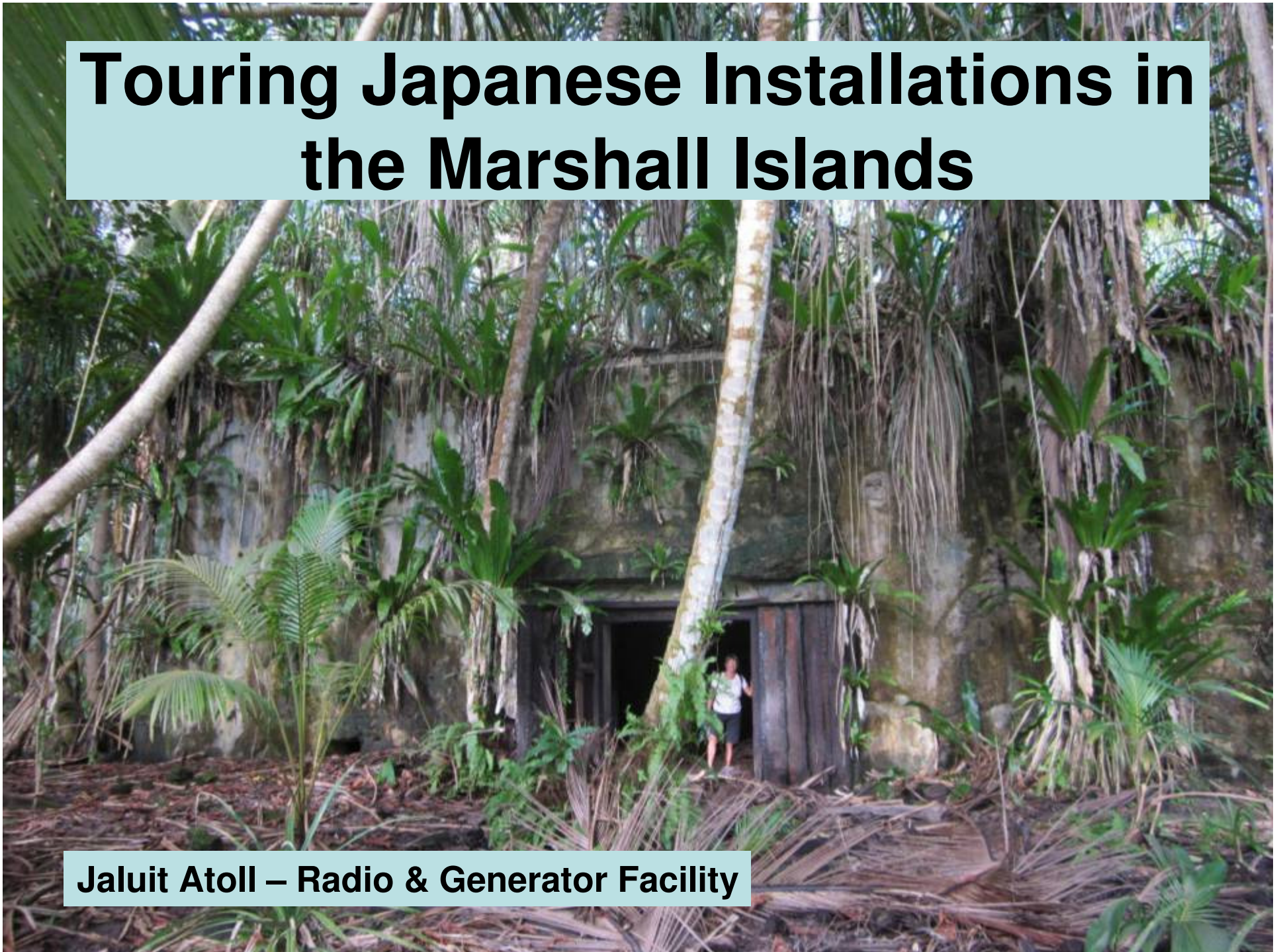




**Size Perspective:  
Sherry Sitting on the  
Propeller Hub**



# Touring Japanese Installations in the Marshall Islands



Jaluit Atoll – Radio & Generator Facility







AG

天

阪

安公司南興鐵廠鐵管部

興

廠







# Maloelap





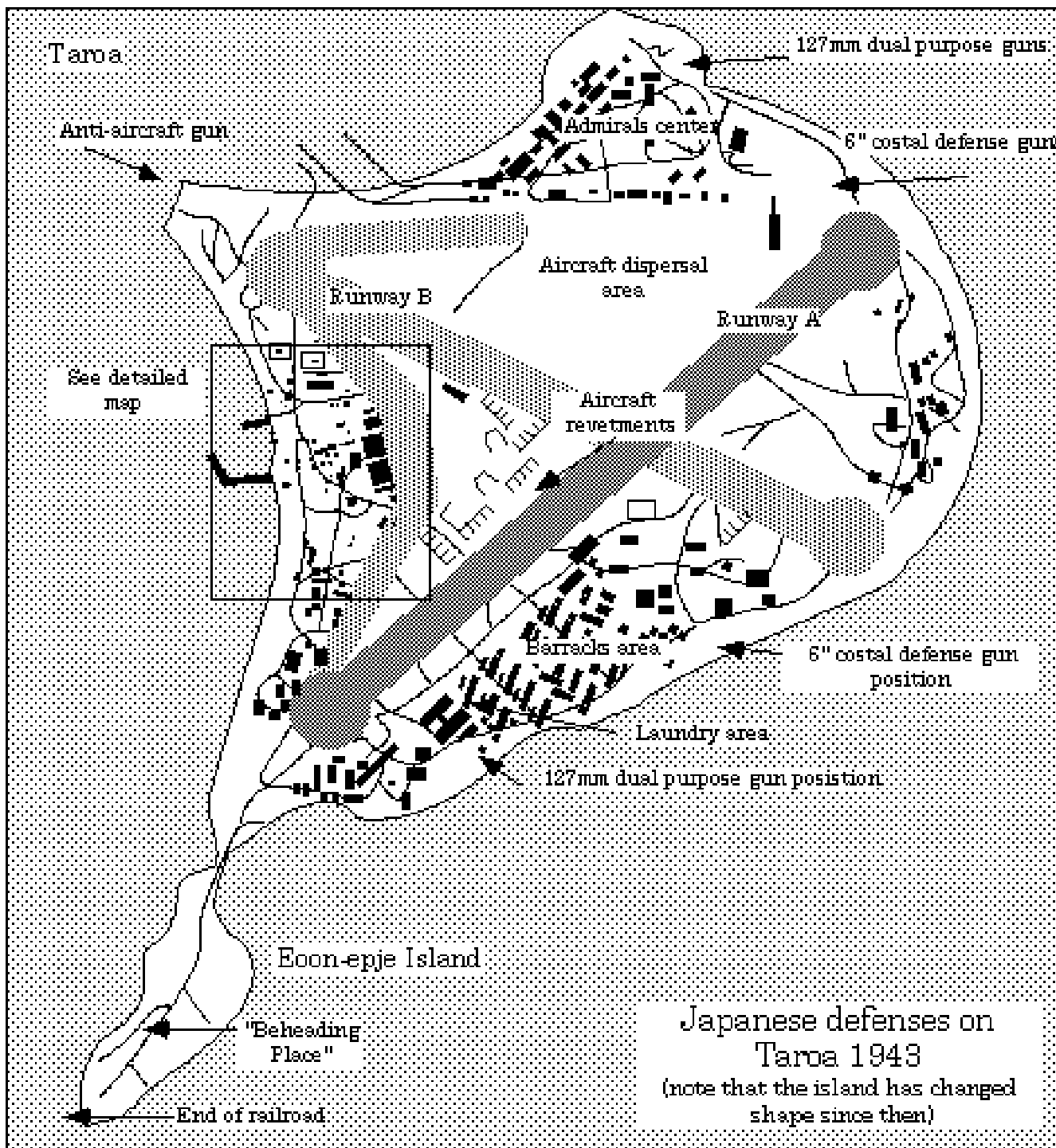


# Japanese A6M “Zero”





















# Unexploded Ordnance

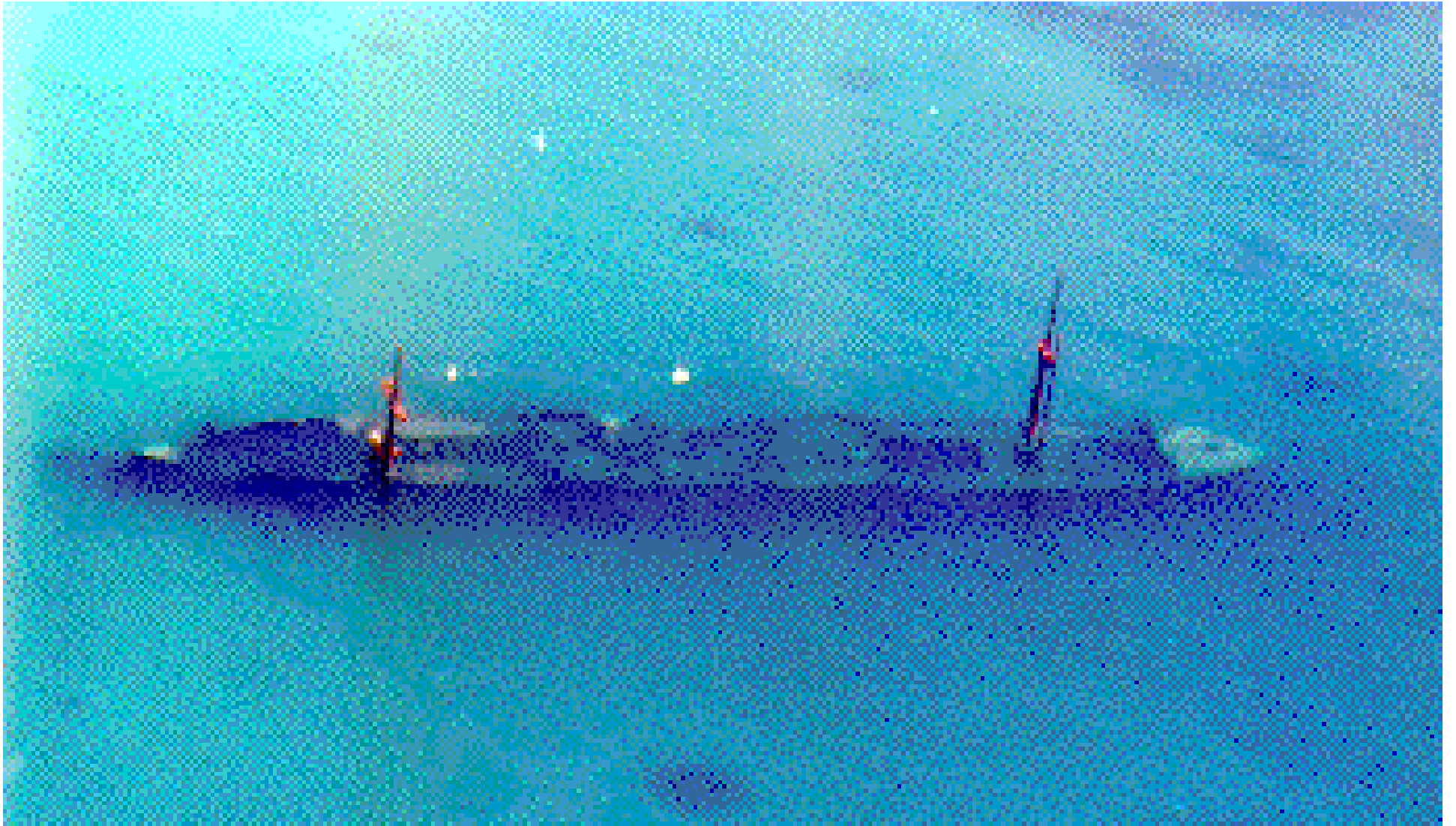






# **Ship Sunk at Anchor**

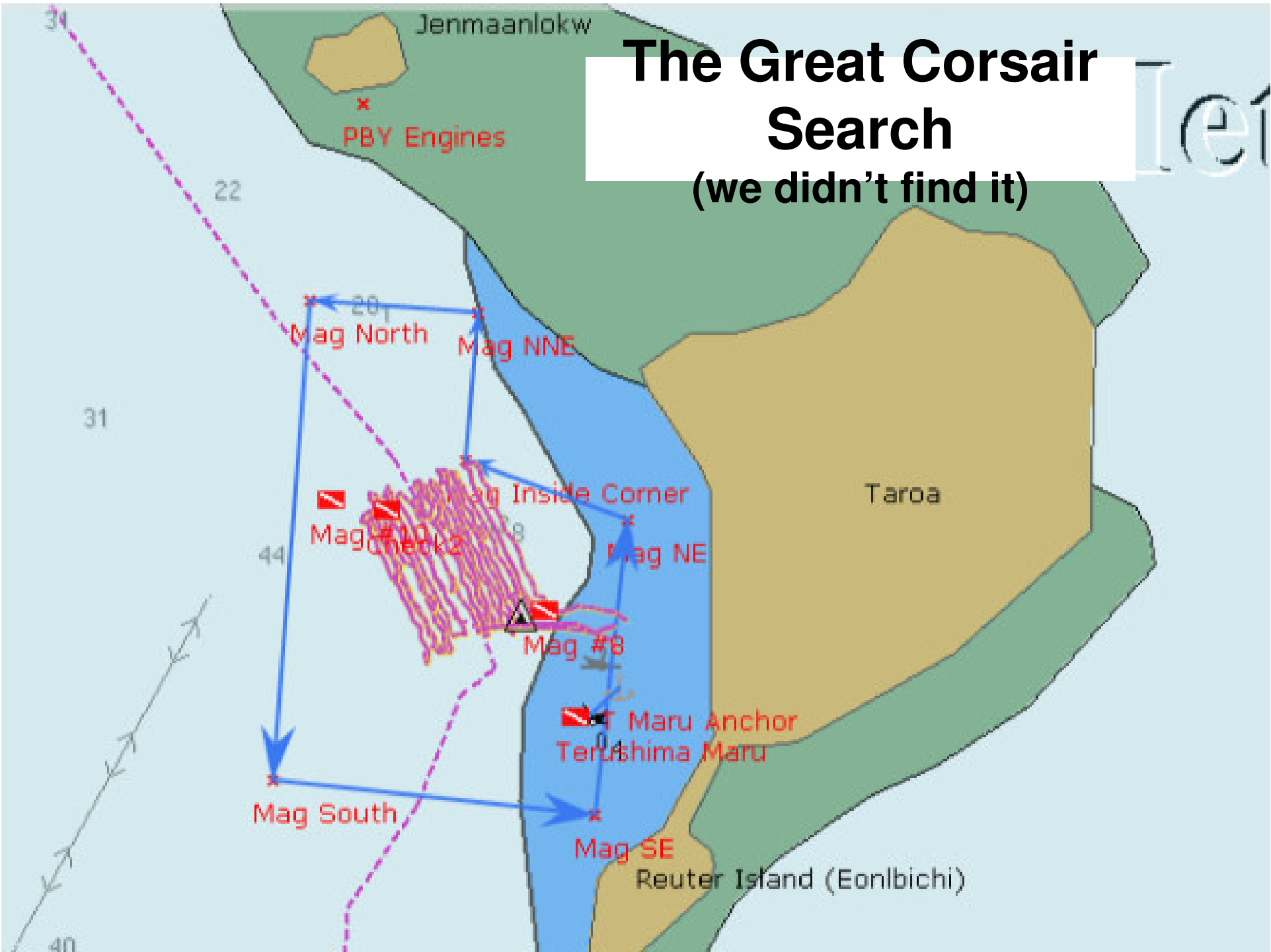
## **Japanese Ship Toroshemia Maru**





# The Great Corsair Search

(we didn't find it)



# Vought F4U Corsair



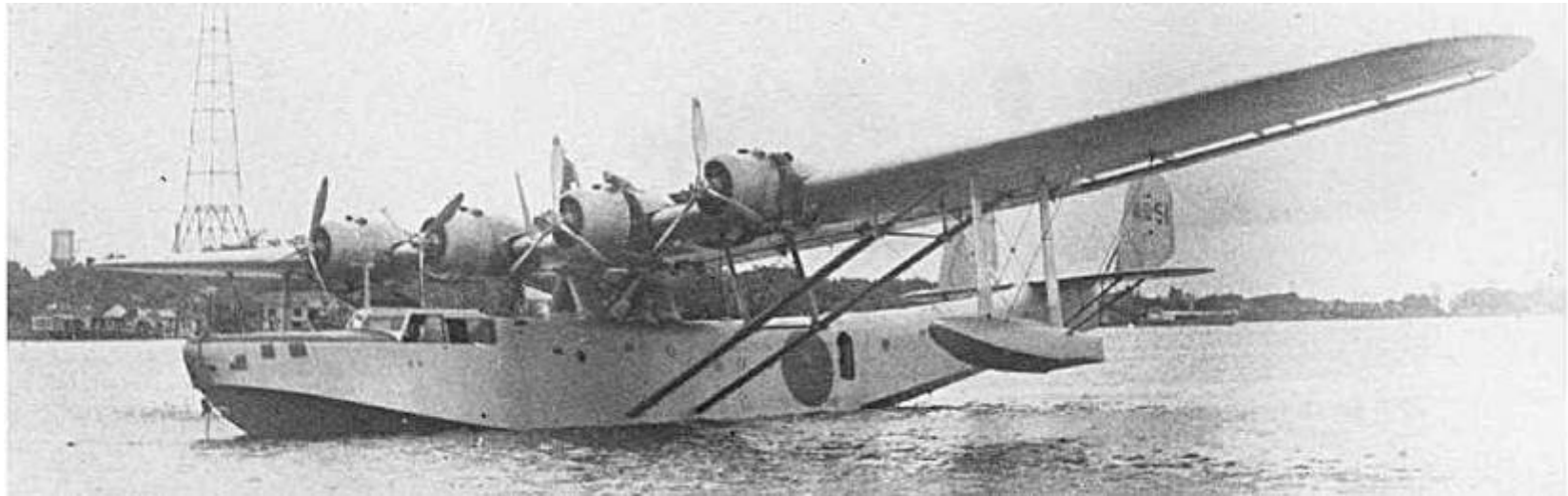
1943 Pappy Boyington

An underwater photograph of the Japanese flying boat 'Mavis' wreck. The aircraft is partially submerged on the seabed, with its fuselage and wings visible. A diver is standing on the wing in the background, providing a sense of scale. The water is clear and blue.

**Japanese “Mavis”  
Flying Boat**

**Underwater  
WW2  
Artifacts**

# Two Sunk at Anchor by American Bombing in Jaluit Atoll









# American TBD Devastator







# Douglas TBD Devastator



1942 Torpedo 8 Midway

An underwater photograph showing the wreckage of a B-25 bomber aircraft. The aircraft is partially submerged in clear, turquoise water, with its fuselage and wings visible. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an underwater environment. The text "B-25 Bomber" and "Mili Atoll" is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

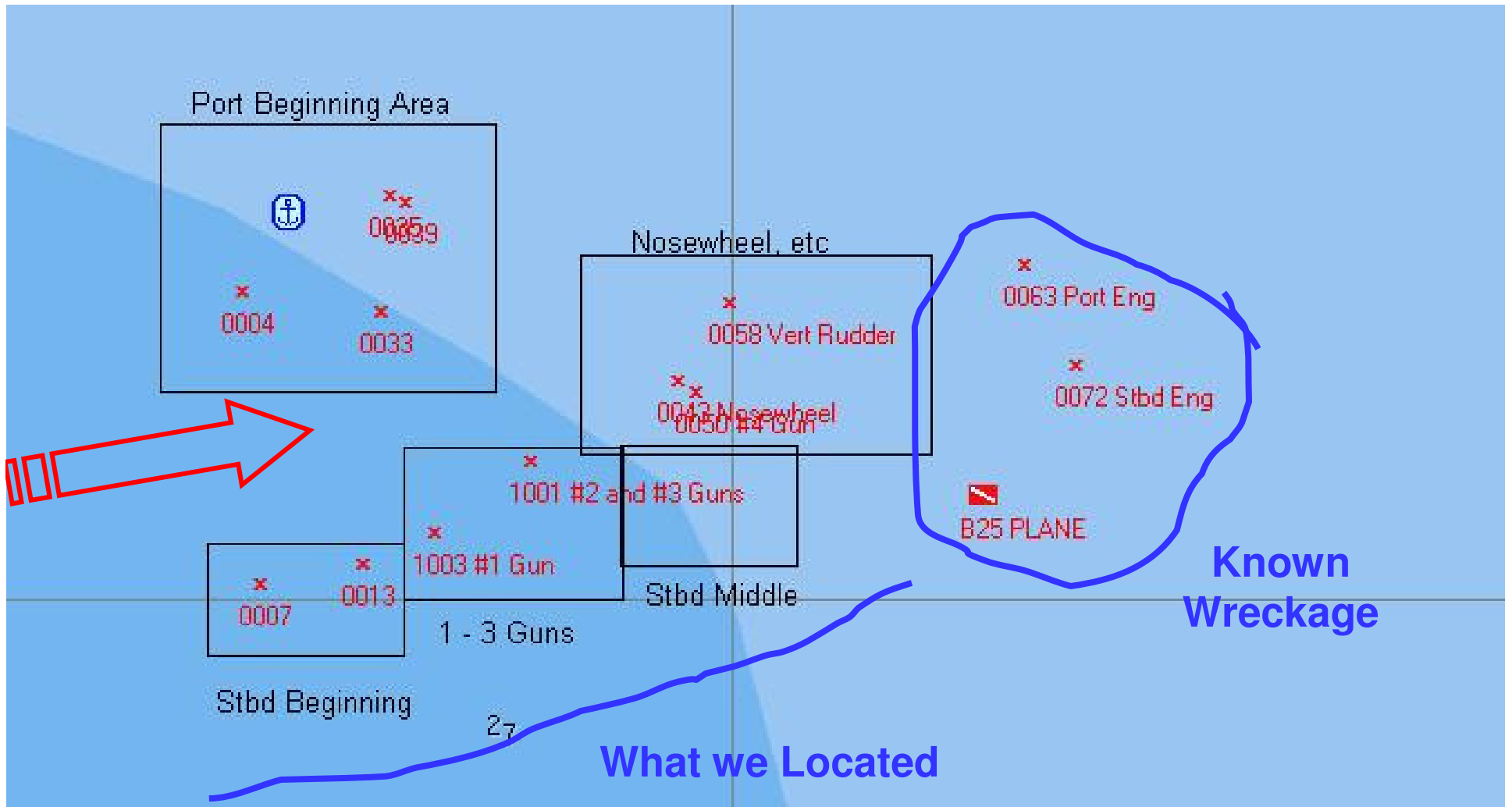
**B-25 Bomber**  
**Mili Atoll**

# North American B-25 Mitchell



1942 Doolittle Raid

# Our Site Map

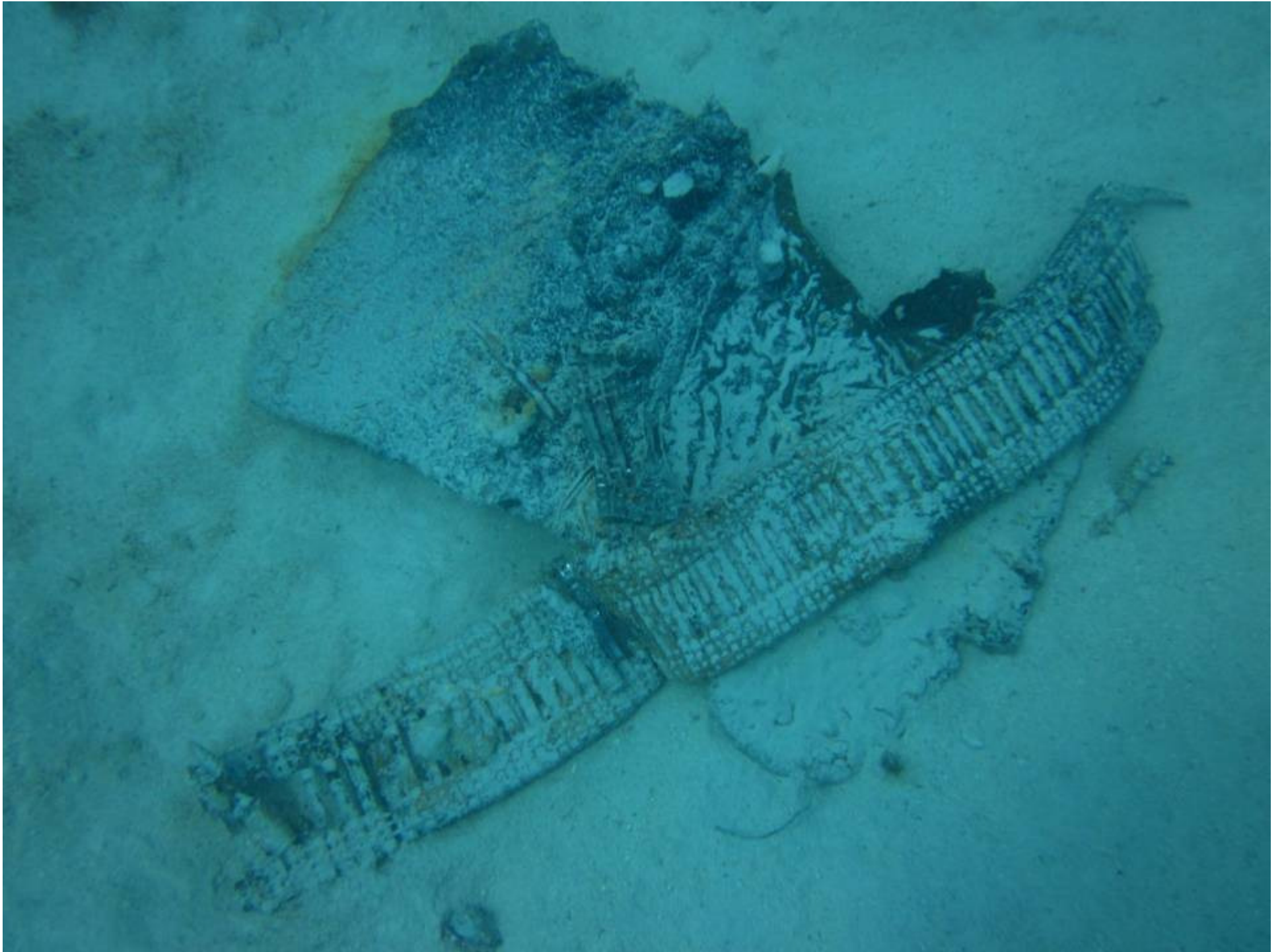














**We did more than just wreck-diving...**



**Gorgeous Beaches – Rongerik Atoll**

# Nesting Boobies



# Sailing Canoe Wreckage on an uninhabited atoll





**Sherry Checking a Radio in Wotho**



**Sunday School  
in Ailuk**

# Church Service in Marshallese





# Marshallese Sailing Canoes





# The Biggest Store on Likiep Atoll

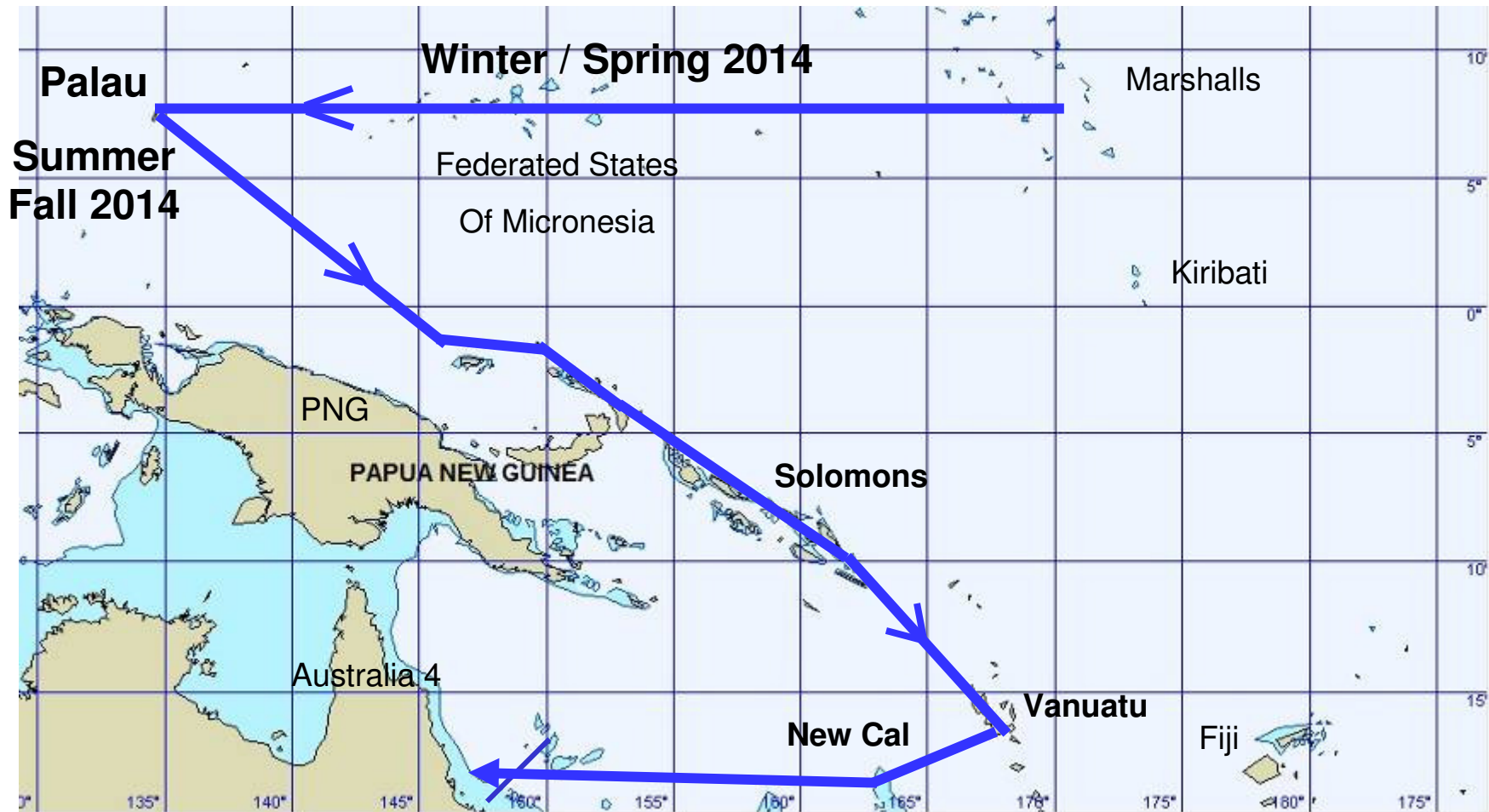




**The Catholic Church on Likiep**

# What's Next??

Marshall Islands to Australia via Micronesia  
... Maybe also via Philippines, Indonesia & Malaysia



# More here...

<http://svsoggypaws.com>

<http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com>



[ssca.org](http://ssca.org)



The End