MONTAGE # 309

Guadalcanal: Island of Death

FADE UP ON WIDE SHOT, COST OF GUADALCANAL

CLOSER SHOT COASTLINE

NATIVE SONG IN BACKGROUND (SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN BACKGROUND)

ANCHER:
The song is in Pidgin English. It tells of the islands of the South Pacific which lie near the equator a thousand miles and more above Australia.

It tells of the native love of palms and parrots, of sun and streams, of boy and girl, and love of the island, the way it was, once.

Perhaps before the world knew of Christ.... before Gauguin knew of Tahiti.

Geographers call these bits of volcanic residue and coral the Solomon Islands. Had someone not discovered that coconut oil made the soap of another world less harsh, perhaps Western man might have passed them by.

For six months in 1942, the fury of a world gone mad enveloped these islands,
and women in America discovered exotic names in the headlines they searched for word of sons and husbands.

In one swift stroke, the world learned of places called Pearl and Midway and Wake, and of this island, Guadalcanal.

The Japanese called it the Island of Death.

They left 23-thousand men among the coral ridges. The U.S. Marines left 1600.

After nearly thirty years, signs of those battles remain.

A rusted C-Ration can...

A bent rifle cleaning rod...

...and at night, on a lonely ridge near the sea when there is no light at all save the much too distant stars,

A faint rumble of naval batteries and the coughing of machine guns still stalks the island...
ANCKER CONTINUED:

...and the sights and smells and ghosts of death wait, deep in the kuna grass in ambush. By day, the island belies its tortured past in shimmering surg and Gargantuan growth...

but the sun shines as well down the barrels of Japanese field guns still on sentry duty facing Savo island...

...and on lines of amphibious trucks rusted into formation for a Marine advance that will never come.

WIND NOISE BKG BECOMES MUSIC

At dusk, some islanders say, headless soldiers float down through the palms to the sea, still searching for battle on Guadalcanal...the Island of Death.

MUSIC FULL
Guadalcanal: Island of Death

SECTION B

HONG KONG STREET SCENE

HONG KONG STREET NOISE

ANCKER:

On a small square by a busy street in the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong, stands this war memorial, erected just after World War Two ended.

Those who were enemies then are allies now, and the men who died in battle are remembered in stone and bronze on countless such memorials around the world.

STREET NOISE BECOMES BATTLE SOUND, LOW GUNFIRE, VERY SPORATIC.

This program is also intended to serve as a kind of memorial...to the soldiers of both sides who, when the need came, left home to fight for their country, in a war that ended 25 years ago, on September 2nd, 1945.

BATTLE SOUND BECOMES MUSIC IN BACKGROUND

The War began here....at Pearl Harbor. Then, there were huge ships at these docks... warships that had not seen action in decades. The Imperial Command in Tokyo knew an attack here would amputate the Pacific legs

PEARL HARBOR AS IT APPEARS TODAY

MARINES FIGHTING ON TROPICAL ISLAND

ARIZONA MEMORIAL
ANCKER CONTINUED:

of this antique American Navy...

...and the Emperor's troops could possess the exotic treasures of the Pacific, long before the Americans could limp into battle. History records it as the beginning of American participation in World War Two...

SOME BOMBS, FIRE AND AIRCRAFT NOISE September 7, 1941.

BATTLE SOUNDS

ANCKER CONTINUED:

By the summer of 1942, the Rising Sun flew in the Pacific from Manchuria to New Guinea. The Emperor's war machine was moving, and it would not stop.

Far to the south, Australia lay determined but weak in the shadow of the Rising Sun. A few bombs delivered from an airstrip in the string of islands that stretched down to the northern tip of the continent, and Australia would be Japanese.

It seemed a safe maneuver. Europe had priority, and the United States had only a 15-thousand man collection of middle-aged men and new recruits to send against the
ANGKER CONTINUED:

Japanese. They were well-trained and tough but they were only 15-thousand. To the Imperial Command, these motley Marines would be no match.

BIRD AND JUNGLE SOUND

Australia would see the next invasion, and it would come from a small airstrip in the Solomon Islands...on Guadalcanal.

BENNET:

When the Japanese landed, they distribute letters to the people of the island, that, uh, the British and American, they finished, they under the sea, they've gone home and the Japanese have taken over these islands. Which of course, we don't believe them, because we got our Coastwatchers, we got our government, our district officers in the bush...we hide them away, we don't believe what they say.

ANGKER:

The Japanese, for all the planning and intelligence operations, did not know of a British and Australian Organization called the Coastwatchers....

...people who lived in the islands...and stayed to help fight the Japanese. Among them, Bill Bennet.
BENNET: I could remember very well what my number is... my number as a Coastwatcher is, uh, One, Oh, Oh, Seven. That was my number. I can still remember it today.

JUNGLE AND VILLAGE SOUND IN BKG.

Life in the islands before that was very, very peaceful. I think it was very, very peaceful... and when the Japanese invaded these islands, uh, those things we never experienced, we don't see them before, and we take it as somebody else's war...

RIVER SOUNDS IN BKG.

They bring in uh, guns, things that we don't see before. They strange to us. But when we are told that they are invading our islands, and our government, our district officers, and resident commissioner, and the Coastwatchers Association, uh, told us that they are invading the islands, and seeing that we are under the British, we helped to fight the war with our own people.

...and uh, this is just on the landing of American Marines, we form up a Coastwatching station at Sagi. Uh, this is exactly the 7th of August, 1942.
THE day before August 6, most of the First Marine Division was at sea, aware only that they were unaware.

By the original plan, the Division and its reinforcements were not to see action until January of 1943... and then only after six months of jungle training. But those six months were not to be. After a few weeks, for some, a few days, 19 thousand Marines set off to fight on Guadalcanal.

It was overcast. There were no Japanese ships or planes... and, on the morning of August 7, the Marines were there.

ANCHER:
The First and Third Battalions, Fifth Marines were first ashore at Beach Red. The gunfire was American. The attack was unexpected, and the surprised Japanese, suffering more from injured pride than from shells, disappeared into the coral ridges. At 1100 hours, the First Marines were on the beach, and advancing inland. Still no
ANCKER CONTINUED:

opposition.

But it was Japanese territory...and there were Japanese submarines. The Navy captains, aware that the small fleet standing off Guadalcanal was almost the entire allied fleet in the Pacific...wanted the safety of open water. The unarmed transports were sitting ducks if planes attacked.

The only American aircraft carriers in the Pacific...Enterprise and Wasp and Saratoga, had their planes aloft, but even now, fuel was low for both ships and planes.

At 1230 hours, one destroyer was damaged by Japanese bombers sent in from Rabaul north of New Guinea.

The ship unloading was out of hand...great piles of supplies lay on the beaches, and in the distance, all could hear the battle raging on Tulagi. 21 miles away, the Japanese were fighting with a vengeance.

August 8, 1942. The First and Fifth Battalions were cautiously, sometimes too cautiously, advancing on the Lunga River.

At 1230 hours, another Japanese air raid...setting the USS Elliot ablaze, and with it most of the supplies for the Second Battalion of the First Marines.
By 1600 hours, the nearly-completed Japanese airstrip was owned by the First Marines. They would keep it and hate it for six months to come.

The retreating Japanese left everything. Scattered around the field were Japanese supply depots...trucks, material, weapons, and rice. An occasional soldier was captured as well.

General A. A. Vandegrift was summoned aboard the McCawley by Rear Admiral Richard Turner.

Vandegrift learned then that because of aircraft losses and fuel shortages, Vice Admiral Fletcher was taking Task Force 61...all three aircraft carriers...away from Guadalcanal immediately. Without the planes, Turner explained, he could not keep the transports.

There would be no more unloading of supplies. Admiral Crutchley would remain with a force of cruisers to help, because there was, now...a Japanese Naval Force steaming to Guadalcanal through the Slot...that narrow strip of deep water that ran for hundreds of miles from Rabual to Beach Red.
WIND AND NIGHT SOUNDS

ANCHER:

On the island, Marines in foxholes strained to see Japanese Patrols scouting the new American positions in the night.

Vandegrift left the McCawley with no hope, just before midnight. On the way back to Beach Red, in the barge of Admiral Crutchley, the sky around Savo exploded like a Roman candle.

The Japanese surface fleet had arrived...one by one, they attacked Admiral Crutchley's fleet. Within two minutes of their arrival, all seven Japanese ships had fired torpedoes.

The heavy cruiser Chicago was hit...then the Australian ship Canberra...the Quincy and the Vincennes sank in the night. The Canberra and the Astoria were still afire in the morning light, and had to be sunk.

In all, four of the six cruisers went down, some with all hands. The Chicago limped away, and Admiral Crutchley's fleet became the first layer of underwater steel that would become Iron Bottom Bay.
ANCHER:

The morning of August 9, Marines watched the Cruiser Australia and her attending destroyers pick up survivors and slip away through the columns of smoke from the still burning remains of the American fleet.

General Vandegrift's Marines...with less than half the supplies they needed...little food, rationed ammunition...would finish and defend a Japanese airfield...alone... on Guadalcanal.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SECTION B
Guadalcanal: Island of Death

SECTION C

DC 3, TAKING OFF FROM HENDERSON FIELD

SOUND OF DC 3 TAKING OFF FROM GUADALCANAL

ANCKE R:

Guadalcanal is one of those peculiar places where history never seems to die. This DC 3, now in regular passenger service for Trans-Australian Airlines, once belonged to General Montgomery who presented it to General MacArthur. It might have left Henderson Field before, more than 25 years ago, headed west to a similar destination. That is the name of this airfield...

Henderson. To the Marines who came here intent on defending this airstrip, the least they could do was give it the name of a fellow Marine, Major Lofton Henderson, of Lorain, Ohio.

Every battle had it's heroes, but Major Henderson was special to the Marines... during the battle of Midway, he had fought the Japanese in the air until he had no ammunition...

then piloted his plane into a Japanese ship.
Though it was named for a hero, Henderson Field produced its own.

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ANCKER CONTINUED:

Creek.

BATTLE SOUNDS

A few minutes later, just after midnight, comes the first Banzai charge of World War Two.

BATTLE SOUND, THEN IT BEGINS TO DIE OUT
FIRST THE GRENADES, THEN SCATTERED GUNFIRE

ANCKER:

At morning light, the Marines go across the shallow river to carry the attack, and by dusk they have 15 prisoners. The rest of the nine hundred, including Colonel Ichiki, are dead. Somehow, only 34 Marines are lost.

INFLIGHT PLANE NOISE SOUND

Henderson had been defended for the first time in the campaign, and the planes which arrived late the day before were safe.

WAVE SOUND

On September 8th, a probing mission found freshly beached supplies. Another Japanese force...more than four thousand men...had arrived on the island.

SOUND OF DISTANT MARCHING
ANCKER CONTINUED:

By now, Tulagi and Gavutu were secure. Vandegrift ordered some of the Marines to move as reinforcements to Guadalcanal. Within a few weeks, there would be more.

Bloody Ridge lies to the southwest of Henderson Field stretching back to the banks of the Lunga River. The Battle-weary First Raider Battalion and the First Parachute Battalion dug the foxholes there.

When the new Japanese troops attacked, Colonel Merritt Edson was convinced it would be here.

They did...three hours before midnight, on September 12th.

First a flare, then 20 minutes of bombardment by 8 inch guns from ships off shore...then the Japanese Infantry.

In the dark, no one knows where he is. "C" Company falls back up the ridge, overwhelmed by the Japanese. But in the confusion, there
ANCHER CONTINUED:

is no advance,

SOUND FADES OUT

.....and the battle ends as suddenly as it begins.

WIND SOUND

SOUND OF GENERAL ACTIVITY, EQUIPMENT MOVING, TRUCKS, MEN WALKING, ETC.

On the 13th, reinforcements arrive...among them a pfc, now on reserve training duty in Cleveland, SGT.-MAJ. Bob Miller.

MILLER:

We moved over to the canal itself around the middle of September. And the day that we went across there, we got in the beach and started moving inland....

...towards the airfield, and the air raid SOUNDOFSIREN

alarms went off. And it was the first time I had ever been in a real air raid.....

(PLANE NOISE)

...and so we took, took off for cover and a 'buddy' of mine and I took off and saw a bunch of boxes stacked over in one area and

SOUND OF BOMBS
MILLER CONTINUED:

got in between these boxes, and bombs started falling all over, and he says, "Did you see what's in these boxes around us?". And not at the time, and I started looking and there was 250, 300 pound bombs all around us. So the, bombs or no bombs falling, we got out of there, we moved from that position and went back...and

WIND SOUND

up in the Bloody Nose Ridge area where we relieved the uh, what we used to call in the Marine Corps, the Raider Battalion up there.

ANCKER:

By dusk, 400 men are dug in on Bloody Ridge to man a defensive line 18-hundred yards long.

BATTLE SOUNDS

The night explodes with flares, and four thousand Japanese soldiers charge up the ridge. One B-Company platoon is surrounded, ...and in the confusion, the entire company withdraws to the top of the ridge. The Japanese are through the line, and now Edson and Captain Bailey are moving up and down the ridge, leading men to new positions,
ZOOM BACK FROM BLOODY RIDGE TO HENDERSON

SLOPE OF BLOODY RIDGE

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ANCHER CONTINUED:

bringing ammunition...all through the night, there never seems to be enough ammunition... the parachutists want to fall back...and Captain Torgerson is sounding a roll call and leading men back to positions...

There are 300 able bodied now...and fresh Japanese troops...the parachute battalion is hit again, and Edson is pulling the line back...to the Battalion reserve line, and back to the spine of Bloody Ridge. Now there is room, and the artillery begins to fire... hundred-and-five millimeter shells are raining down, spotting the Japanese who keep sending up flares...and keep charging up the Coral Ridge.

WIND SOUND ONLY UNDER NARRATOR

By daylight, the field is quiet. 31 Marines are dead...104 are wounded and 9 are missing. On the slopes in front of the guns, more than six hundred Japanese soldiers lie dead...and more in the jungle. The rest of the four thousand are scattered and they will die of wounds or disease before they find a way out. There are more attacks around the field...but the Marines can hold. And there are more Marines coming...now
from Samoa...one was Sgt. Major John O'Neil, now a retired Lieutenant, of Cleveland.

O'NEIL:

I landed there September the 17th off the President Jackson. It came from the Northern Samoa with the Seventh Regiment, United States Marine Corps.

My first impression of it, uh, was a beautiful, beautiful sight.

Shortly after we landed, the Jap planes started coming in, there was five or six ships there. Jap planes started coming in, strafing. We got ashore and I had a mortar platoon and it was sitting under some coconut trees there, and pretty soon the word come down is take so many men and go out to the Jackson and get as much ammunition and stuff as we possibly could as the ships had to leave immediately as there was a Japanese task force coming in, so we did, got everything up we possibly could and the ships pulled out. Well that night, we were in this coconut field right off the beach, and was another fellow and I ran under a pancho, it was raining, we hadn't dug any foxholes, but we learned then to dig a foxhole. We're laying under this
O'NEIL CONTINUED:

pancho, and it's raining and all of a sudden the sky lit up, you could read a newspaper. It must have been about eleven o'clock at night. You could read a newspaper. So, I says, boy, we're sure laying it into them guys tonight. Unfortunately, it was a Japanese submarine that was firing a star shell in there and some destroyers or cruisers was in there and they was laying under some shells, and we pulled out and we went on to... across Henderson Field and went into the, our first position at the foot of Bloody Nose Ridge.

ANKER:
The devasting bombardment on Henderson Field began several miles away...

...where the Japanese entrenched on Mount Austin could survey all that occurred behind the Marine lines. Before the landing, General Vandegrift intended to take Mount Austin, but the terrain did not match the maps. It was months before Marine troops stood on the the grassy knoll just visible from Henderson... the knoll that lies exactly in line with Bloody Ridge.

From it, the Japanese could pinpoint targets
for Naval guns and hit at will whatever position the Marines decided to maintain.

From here, the incessant nightly shelling was directed against Henderson Field.

**JUNGLE SOUNDS UNDER NARRATOR**

Mount Austin was somewhat typical of the Japanese entrenchment on the island. The foxholes occupied by Japanese soldiers were hidden in the jungle...they were deep and often covered with brush...and so, might go unnoticed by patrols passing within a few feet.

The Japanese were jungle fighters...and the best in the world at that time.

Within a few weeks of the landing on Guadalcanal, the Marines learned the score. ...and they burned the jungle to even the fighting odds.

But on Guadalcanal, as on innumerable other island battlefields in the Pacific, the prodigious growth of the jungle vegetation would cover the remains of a battle...not in months, but in days.

**JUNGLE SOUNDS FULL**
MICITARY DRUMS IN BACKGROUND

ANCKE:
Fighting a war on Guadalcanal was unlike any war had ever been. Regularly, three times a day, there were air raids...and nightly, Japanese ships off shore pounded the island with Naval guns.

O'NEIL:
...the worst thing that, I believe, was the shelling of the Japanese battleships. They fired, started firing at 12 o'clock at night, fired til about 2:30 in the morning, fired 16 inch in there and they were hitting in there and the...they fired all of their explosive shells and then they started to fire in the armor piercing shells. We had a regiment of artillery on that field there, the 11th Marines were on the field, a lot of planes. And we had some of, people that had stopped there, some Army planes coming back, going back to New Caledonia, had stopped overnight, had been bombing somewheres.
And most of them planes were knocked out that night, most of the planes were knocked out. And the first one of them shells that went over us about midnight, we had never heard 16 inch shells and I, we were the first troops in the history of the world that ever heard 'em. As that shell went over, I said to a guy, "What is that thing?" "It sounds like a freight train roaring over our head." And we soon found out, it was them Japanese battleships out there, two of 'em, so they laid there, they fired everything they had, but they didn't land. They just fired. Fired and never landed any infantry or nothing like that. And a couple of days later, then they would land, but by then, the Marines would be ready for 'em.

And then the only daylight worries you had was the air raids, constant air raids, uh, which, uh, I don't think many of our American troops have really experienced since then, or before that, was these air raids.

Sometimes you'd get fifty or sixty airplanes
over your head at one time, and it was really a feeling to be sitting in a hole knowing you couldn't fight back, and hear these planes over the top of your head dropping bombs. Sometimes you could sit and look up in the air and watch them falling, you know, coming down, and just hope that one of 'em didn't land on you.

O'NEIL:
The men slept in foxholes and fought out of foxholes, and uh, they would take uh, pieces of branches you know, put 'em over the top of 'em, you know, and it ... for cover. You get a call at night, "How's your foxhole?" You say, "It's full of water." They say, "Bail it out, there's a Japanese cruiser coming in here." See, so you get down and bail it out and jump in the mud. So the only clothes that we had anyway over there to fight with was a pair of dungarees, a pair of shoes, no socks, no underwear, no nothing, see. And a steel helmet or a rifle or a tommy-gun or whatever you were operating with, see.

MILLER:
I imagine the biggest thing that I remember
MILLER CONTINUED:

is the malaria that, the malaria problem there, the mosquitoes there seemed to be the size of B-29's at the time, when they come out it is almost impossible to fight 'em off, uh, ... and disentary was a big problem, but but the malaria was probably the biggest problem there, and our battalion at the time, at one time was probably down to 60% casualties. And this was due to say, disentary and malaria itself. We would move I'd say, on a patrol, going back into the hills, and the, probably before we'd get out of the area, we would lose maybe 40 to 50 people just from disentary and malaria itself.

O'NEIL:

We had the finest doctors, and uh, men would be wounded and stuff and then them doctors'd be standing right back there. There wasn't no hospital. A hospital was a, a large hole about 10 feet deep, maybe about 30 or 40 feet long with sandbags around it and coconut trees over the top and the, the floors of that was covered with mud. And then they had some tents outside where the doctors would operate on these guys and
O'NEIL CONTINUED:

when the planes would come in in the day
time bringing gasoline and bombs and shells
in they would try to get some of the worst
of the wounded out and take 'em to New
Caledonia. They did a grand job, them
doctors did a wonderful job there, we had
some fine doctors there.

I was 42 years old, and uh, an old soldier
then, and all of these youngsters, you know,
it would hurt you every time any one of them
got hurt or anything like that. And uh,
of course, you know, they went back after
they got hurt. They would send them back to
the rear, which the rear was probably two,
three thousand yards, and you wouldn't
see them anymore if they were seriously
hurt see. Or they sent back to New
Caledonia or wherever they were sending
them to. But uh, it bothers you every time
a man gets hurt, regardless if you know 'em
or not.

MILLER:

Where a man gets hit in Vietnam, he might be
back in the hospital ship within a matter
of 10 or 15 minutes, and uh, in those days,
MILLER CONTINUED:

a man, if you got hit back in the hills somewhere he had to be carried out by hand, and a lot of times you lose them that way.

I lost a couple...people I went through boot camp with in the same platoon, I lost them yes. You missed them, but at the same time, uh, everyone was in the war and everyone had a job to do so you had to do it. I'm sure they would have probably felt the same way about me if it had happened to me.

MILITARY DRUMS

FADE TO BLACK

ALL SOUND OUT

END OF SECTION D
On the second try, in October, the Marines gained a position on the Metanikau River south and west of Henderson. In charge was Colonel Chesty Puller. The Japanese attacked in waves...in Banzai charges.

SOUND OF GUNFIRE AND GRENADES AND SCATTERED GUNFIRE

...But the Marines and the 164th Infantry held the position, from midnight to seven in the morning.

Above Henderson Field, the planes that could still fly battled Japanese Zero fighters, averaging one against five, but winning.

The second night, October 25, was worse. Another arm of what was a new and huge Japanese force began to besiege the airfield, and on the banks of the Metanikau, the Japanese took the crest line. At dawn, the Marines took it back.
The Japanese plan almost worked. The main force had been split into three columns, one to attack along the beach at the Metanikau...

...one to move through the jungle and strike at the rear of Henderson, the third to strike further east. The reason it failed was the jungle.

Even the Japanese could not move through the jungle any better than the Marines had been able to do. The coordinated, three-prong attack came in piece-meal skirmishes, days apart, and, except for the Metanikau, the fights were futile.

By the 27th of October, the huge force was dead or scattered in the jungle.

Admiral Yamamoto, commander of the combined fleet of the Imperial Navy, turned his flagship out of Savo Bay toward Rabual. The Japanese bombarded the island for 24 hours without pause in mid-October...the Marines survived.
FIGHTER TAXIS ON HENDERSON

SHORT VERSION_L_35

ANCKER:

By November, there were Marines at the Metapona River, East of Henderson. There was heavy fighting.

SOUND CHANGES, FROM CARBINE FIRING TO FIGHTER TAXI (THUNDERBOLT)

ANCKER CONTINUED:

There was a new commander for the Pacific now, Admiral William Halsey, who sent planes and ships to meet the Japanese fleet.

PLANE NOISE CONTINUES
SOLDIERS MARCHING

ANCKER:

Malaria became a serious problem now... several hundred men a week would fall with it. The Japanese still attacked repeatedly... and the air raids and bombardments were still daily events.

But the Marines stayed... and even found some humor in doing it, in defiance of the conditions on Guadalcanal.

O'NEIL:

We had been up on this Bloody Nose Ridge for quite some time, and colonel came along and he says, "Red, let's go down to the
rivers and take a bath." And this was just before 10 o'clock in the morning, and at ten o'clock in the morning, you better start looking for a foxhole because they bombers'd come in.

So, we're down there in this river taking this bath and was standing there and condition red went.

SIREN (AIR RAID) THEN SOUND OF HEAVY PLANES IN DISTANCE FLYING... ADD SOUND OF FIGHTERS REVING AND STARTING ENGINES...

...and I says we'd better get out of here.

He says, "Oh, they're a long ways off yet." Condition red, we still stayed around, I was getting a little uneasy. So finally we jumped out and got in this jeep

...and our planes from the shortage of gasoline, our fighters would wait til the Jap bombers got practically on us, and then they would go straight up, and then they'd hit these bombers from above 'em. Well, we took off in this jeep

SOUND OF JEEP ENGINE, AND OCCASIONAL BOMB DROPPING, PLANE ENGINE NOISE.
and all these fighters was takin' off and we're in this jeep on the edge of Henderson Field on the way to Bloody Nose Ridge and all the smoke and uh, dust and stuff, it looked like that we were getting ready to go up too, you know, in this jeep. So we, you could hear these bombs going drub, drub, drub...and I says, "Colonel, I am bailing out."

And I jumped out and I got into a ditch and he kept on going. And after the planes went over, I went over to this pagoda and sat around there for awhile and went up to the ridge. The Colonel came down about a week later, says, can we go to the river. I said, "If I'm on this island for ten years, don't you ever ask me to come down to this river again." (LAUGHS)

Any new arrival was well noted at Henderson. Planes brought mail and food and ammunition and gasoline...and sometimes, men like Admiral Halsey, who handed out decorations...
MILLER:
These coast, Coastwatchers would pick them up and radio, I think it was New Caledonia where the Coastwatchers headquarters was, and the Fleet Commanders headquarters there. So by the time these here planes would get uh, about half way to the canal, our, our planes would be up in the air waiting for 'em, when they get close to the canal, they'd come down on top of them.

MILLER:
In those days, the Amtracks were in their, like a Model T Ford Stage. The armor itself was very thin, I think a 30 caliber could probably penetrate it...

...and uh, the power, the engines were not powerful enough in those days to power the Amtrack itself, either. They used an old, I think, a 12 cylinder reciprocating airplane engine in this thing, and it just wouldn't do it. It just wouldn't hack it. All that metal to push along. Same
O'NEIL CONTINUED:

way with the tanks. They didn't have the armor and they didn't have the guns. I think the heaviest gun they had was the 37 millimeter, until they came out with their, uh, Sherman Tank, I believe, and that was a little bit heavier armament on that. Uh, you couldn't use 'em anyway, you get 'em off the road or off the beach and they'd get sunk, stuck in the mud or, and then it would take another dozen people to get them out of there or another Amtrack, and by that time, you've lost a couple of Amtracks. So uh, they weren't of too much use in those days.

O'NEIL:

Washing Machine Charlie, he must have been a float plane. He'd come on to some inlet or something and just as it was dark, he could cruise around three or four hours every night and he had the loudest motor you have ever heard in your life. And that was just to keep you up, to keep you from trying to sleep in the foxhole. And you, and I guess he was still there when we left, I don't believe they ever did shoot down Washing Machine Charlie. Unless
O'NEIL CONTINUED:

they kept bringing in a new one all the time, you know, see.

MILLER:

One thing we never had to worry about in those days was many people falling asleep on watch in their foxholes...uh, because you'd have not only these here big Iguanas fall into your foxhole and wake you up, and uh, sometimes, another thing out there that, was these big mammoth land crabs running all over the place. Uh, one of those would jump in the foxhole with you, and if you was sleeping there, so, you was always kept awake by something at night. It was mighty dark there, it was real bad. You couldn't see your hand in front of you, sometimes. And I'll never forget uh, the day we landed there on Guadalcanal, I think the Congress back in the States came out and said that there would be no one overseas 17 years old...

JUNGLE SOUND

and here I was, already there, and it was too late then.

JUNGLE SOUND

FADE TO BLACK
Throughout the Guadalcanal Campaign, the Japanese fought bitterly, and often, at their choosing. Japanese garrisons were regularly supplied by ships from Tokyo...

...so regular were the runs, the Marines began to call them the Tokyo Express, and expected the defending destroyers and cruisers to anchor off Savo Island during the nightly supply forays and pound the Marine entrenchments with heavy shells.

But in October and November the beleaguered Marines watched squadrons of planes touch down at Henderson.

Aboard was everything from food to bombs and gasoline...and suddenly offshore, American ships began to appear until there was a fleet...and in pitched battle, the planes and ships repaid the Japanese Navy for the defeat
The ANCKER continued:

at Savo in August.

SOUND OF PLANES LANDING

COLOR SHOT, SHIP BEACHED

SEAGUE TO BEACH SOUND (WAVES) FROM PLANE NOISE

Some of the remains are visible today...tropic transports, beached and haggard, still feel the Pacific Surf.

B&W SHOT, SHIP BEACHED

There were four aground, as this one was...

ANGLE OF HULK

...and many others lie just below the surface...

BEACHED SHIP

...some still carrying their cargo of Japanese troops.

COLOR SHOT, REMAINS OF SHIP

...The remains rusted on the Guadalcanal beach until ten years ago, when the Japanese steamed through the Slot once more to reclaim the steel for scrap. From all four transports, the superstructure was cut away to the waterline, and piled on shore for transport back to Japan. For some reason, either weather or tide or need, the Japanese left the scrap, where it lies today.

SCRAP STEEL PILE

SHIP HULK, FROM SEA SIDE

BEACH SOUND
ANCKER:
And beneath these waters that run deep and blue between Guadalcanal and Savo Island, lie other ships, both Japanese and American. Some authorities say there may be 30 heavy cruisers and battleships rusting on the bottom...some accounts put the total as high as 85 ships of varying sizes. The slaughter of these vessels began early in the campaign for Guadalcanal, and throughout the war, as it is today, this small body of water was called Iron Bottom Bay.

Throughout the island, such relics still live...In a small clearing perhaps a mile from the main road, through a coconut plantation, sits a Marine tank. What the circumstances of its presence there may actually be, no one knows.
Theories come easy. Perhaps the tank, on a patrol sometime after the battle of the Metanikau River, came searching for Japanese troops...and turned into an anti-tank broadside, fired from the brush
not a hundred yards away.

The damage is obvious. An armor-piercing shell through the turret, another between the treads, and raking machine gun fire.

In the rust, still welded to the steel, is a shell that did not explode. It didn't matter.

Inside, bullets ricocheting around the turret could not have missed the crew. But it is theory...no one knows, except for the men who might have found it after the skirmish...and perhaps they are dead too, now.

If the land battles were dangerous, those in the air were devastating. It is uncertain just how many warplanes ended as this one did, on a small ridge about three miles east of Henderson Field. It is an Aircobra, BW 139. Air Force records are incomplete.

Bell P-39 Aircobra was accepted by the Army Air Force on December 9, 1941. The aircraft was boxed...

...for export to England on January 5, 1942. Later it somehow found its way into the
ANCKER CONTINUED:

Air Force inventory again, and sometime between August 9, 1942 and November of that year, was a part of the operational forces of the 67th Fighter Squadron. The 67th was then stationed at Guadalcanal and was a part of the 347th Fighter Group. The aircraft was declared unfit for service in November, 1942, and it is assumed that it crashed during that month.

The identification, BW 139, is on English origin.

Guadalcanal extracted a high toll from the Japanese Army, but the damage to the Air Force was critical. More than 300 planes and experienced pilots were lost at Midway... before Guadalcanal became a battlefield...

Around this island, the Japanese Air Force lost more than 600 aircraft and pilots.
ANCKER CONTINUED:

experienced pilots and navigators were left, that Japanese bombers attacking from far to the north often became lost and a disappeared forever.

SOUND OF PLANE FLYING OVER

On Guadalcanal, the Marines lost more aircraft on the ground from bombing raids and off-shore shelling,

SOUND OF BOMBER LANDING

...than they lost in the air. The total was less than 100 destroyed on the ground

SOUND OF FIGHTER LANDING

and less than 50 destroyed in the air.

SOUND SEAGUE TO JUNGLE AND WIND NOISE:

ANCKER:

Some islanders who came out of the bush after the war, tell of finding a skeleton in flying uniform sitting under a tree, looking back at this plane.

JUNGLE SOUND

An allied base constructed after the island was secure became the city of Honiara.
The Ohio National Guard was there then,
ANCKER CONTINUED:

federalized into the Army...

JUNGLE SOUND, SOME DISTANT GUNFIRE

...searching for Japanese soldiers who still lived in their mountain foxholes, and supplying the Allied push to the Philippines at the same time. The last Japanese soldier did not surrender until 1947.

JUNGLE NOISE

A Cleveland man, Nick Mariani, filmed these scenes with an 8-milimeter camera. He was a bandsman, sent along to help entertain the troops who came back to Guadalcanal for rest. But most of his time was spent as a medic...or helping a mortar squad...or on patrol. Guadalcanal was not the only action his unit from Ohio would see in the Pacific.

Mr. Mariana died in peace a few years ago, but his priceless film remains.

SEAGUE TO MUSIC (NATIVE STUDENTS SINGING PIDGIN ENGLISH WAR SONG)

ANCKER:

28 years later, the battles still surface.

East of the city, in a broad expanse of kuna grass, a British Bomb Disposal team works steadily at clearing live ammunition
ANCKER CONTINUED:

from the coral sod.

In three months this year, 80 thousand pieces of ammunition were removed from here...hand grenades, rifle grenades, 55 and 75 and 105 milimeter shells, even an occasional blunt-nosed Japanese artillery shell. Tons more remain. Their final resting place is the floor of the Pacific.

There is no need for shells when a war is over.

MUSIC GRADUALLY TO FULL TO CONCLUSION

FADE TO BLACK

END SECTION F
SIGN, NEAR RIVER
MUSIC (NATIVE PIDGIN, STUDENTS)

ANCKER:
Three years and a few days after the Marines landed on Guadalcanal, the ungodly fury of the atom twice staggered the Japanese.

STRAW ROOFED HUT,
ZOOM BACK TO SHOW RIDGE
Now there would be no need, ever again in the world, for land combat....

BEACH SCENE
such as Guadalcanal...the world would be at peace, because, if there were war, the world might become a Nagasaki.

ALLIGATOR CREEK
Whatever the reasons for the war had been...
whether too much nationalism...a ruler deluded by trusted advisors...or a world so withdrawn in isolation that it presented an easy conquest...the Emperor now wanted peace.

B&W FOOTAGE,
BATTLESHIP MISSOURI
Some historians say he did not know of the ambitions of his military until it was too late...and two cities had almost disappeared from the world.

MACARTHUR WALKS ONTO DECK

JAPANESE WALK ONTO DECK
Whatever the reason, now there would be peace, signed aboard the USS Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Harbor...25 years ago.
MACARTHUR:

It's my earnest hope and indeed, the hope of all mankind, that from this solemn occasion, a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past. A world founded upon faith and understanding. A world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fullment of his most cherished wish for freedom, tolerance and justice. I now invite the representatives of the Emperor of Japan, and the Japanese Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to sign the instruments of surrender at the places indicated.

PAUSE

The supreme commander for the allied powers will now sign on behalf of all the nations at war with Japan. Will General Wainwright and General Percival step forward and accompany me while I sign?

PAUSE

The Representatives of the United States of America will now sign.

(OFF MIC) "Admiral Halsey and Admiral Sherman"

PAUSE
MACARTHUR CONTINUED:

Let us pray that peace be now restored to the world and that God will preserve it always. These proceedings are closed.

CROWD NOISE, THEN DOWN TO BKG FOR ANCKER:

Guadalcanal was over, and with it, the old ideas of war.

SEAGUE FROM CROWD SOUND TO WAVE SOUND

When the Marines landed, they re-wrote the books on war...and re-shaped the soldier... forever.

BLOODY RIDGE

The final score...of 40-thousand Japanese troops sent to Guadalcanal, about 17-thousand survived.

CEMETARY IN JUNGLE

Of the 40-thousand Americans, all but 16-hundred men who went ashore, lived to fight again.

About 25-thousand men died there.

DISSOLVE TO DEAD ON BEACH

Both the Japanese and the Americans were good soldiers, and while the Marines won the battle, few went away gloating with victory. Death, even of an enemy, is not a pretty sight.
ANCKER CONTINUED:

That was another world and another war. Peace in the Pacific would be short.

On the west end of Guadalcanal, where the Japanese evacuated their remaining troops in 1943, stands St. Paul's Secondary School. The students are islanders, who still know of how it was before the war. And each one can tell you of the war...of the Battle at the Metanikau or the Tenaru or Bloody Ridge, or of Sergeant Major Vousa or of PT 109 and its famous skipper.

But Guadalcanal, the Island of Death, is peaceful. The blood is gone, and war remains are covered with grass.

Almost 25-thousand men died on this tiny island. However history has judged the ideals for which they fought, they will be remembered for fighting...for answering the call to arms.
ANCKER CONTINUED:

Enemies are friends now. 25 years later, it seems simple. Why was it not so simple then?

MUSIC TO CONCLUSION

BEACH SCENES FOR TITLES
CREDITS

BEACH SCENE

FADE TO BLACK

MUSIC OUT WITH VIDEO (NATURAL FADE)

END OF SECTION G