

# Solomon Is. Freedom



## HIDDEN HISTORY IN PARADISE

The Solomon Islands boasts a rich history, both above and below water.

Once a fierce battlefield, today the islands are a playground for divers and World War II history buffs. Here, you will find countless remains from underwater and partially submerged wrecks, guns, amphibian tanks and military bunkers, left exactly as it was or part of a museum collection, each piece with a unique story to tell.

The Solomon Islands marked a turning point in WWII, with the Guadalcanal Campaign halting the Imperial Japanese Army's grip on the Pacific. Thousands of soldiers fought for freedom on this foreign land, sacrificing their lives in honor of their country. It was on this land that fierce battles took place, ultimately bringing an end to the fighting and gaining freedom for the world. This will always be a significant part of Solomon Islands' history.



*Vilu War Museum, Guadalcanal*

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## RELIVE HISTORY

American forces first landed on the Solomon Islands- Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and the Florida Islands on the morning of August 7, 1942. After fierce fighting and many battles, the U.S. Marines cleared Tulagi and Florida by August 9. Relive this history with local guides who offer memorable and moving tours to the WWII Museum in Honiara and other significant sites, including the American Memorial at Skyline Ridge and the Japanese Solomons Peace Memorial.

You can also visit some of the many battle sites that today still remain virtually untouched. Artefacts such as rusting jeeps, tanks, and amphibious vehicles lie buried in the jungle, along with foxholes and caves used as Japanese observation points and hiding places.



*Mbonege beach, Guadalcanal*

If diving or snorkeling is more your thing, explore the many WWII relics that remain submerged in the surrounding glistening waters. See oil tankers, seaplanes, and submarines, some of which can be snorkeled just a short distance from shore, while others are only accessible by experienced divers.



*Mbonege beach, Guadalcanal*



*Tandai museum, Guadalcanal*

## REMEMBERING AND LIVING THE LEGACY

The capital city, Honiara, on Guadalcanal, is home to both the U.S. and Japanese War Memorials. As visiting veterans hold the Solomon Islands close to their hearts, annual anniversaries and commemorations are held in the capital and provinces. During these times, flags of both the U.S. and Japan fly high in remembrance of all the brave souls who once fought on this land. Today, modern guided tours often incorporate these commemorations and anniversaries.

Further afield, across the provinces, you can snorkel over a downed US Hellcat aircraft near Gizo. While there, visit Kennedy Island, where the former U.S. President John F. Kennedy swam to safety after his PT-109 patrol boat was sunk by Japanese forces, and from where he was rescued by a local scout. You can also explore bunkers and caves dug by soldiers as hideouts or visit the former US Naval Base at Lumbaria on Rendova Island.

There is much historical significance to discover in the Solomon Islands, every step rooted to where a soldier once fought with courage, every step a step into history.

### Battlefield Tour Operators

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