

For Immediate Release

AMERICAN TOURIST HELD CAPTIVE IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

One American's Battle to Save World War II History in the South Pacific

SOLOMON ISLANDS — December 10, 2007 — A young American, Justin Taylan, 30, of Hyde Park, New York, has been held captive five weeks since November 6, 2007 in the Solomon Islands, a tiny Pacific island nation off the east coast of Australia. Taylan is founder of a non-profit history website detailing World War II stories and Pacific theater airplane wrecks. Traveling by boat from Papua New Guinea, he hoped to explore relics from the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Also held in custody by Solomon authorities are Taylan's colleagues Yoji Sakaida, 41, of Chiba, Japan, World War II enthusiast and graphic designer, Rodney Pearce, 57, citizen of Australia and the ship's captain, and Daisy Eliah, 25, citizen of Papua New Guinea, the ship's cook.

On November 6, Taylan inadvertently stumbled upon a salvage operation underway at Ballale Island, part of the famous Battle of Guadalcanal. "There are more World War II plane wrecks there than anywhere else in the world," Taylan said. "We saw six Zero fighters, a Val dive bomber and a Betty bomber being illegally removed. That's why all this started."

The group drew the attention of the salvagers. The Royal Solomon Island Police Force confiscated their passports, photos, and videotapes placing them in detention without charges. They have since been charged with illegally entering the country and pleaded innocent since they crossed borders through a published port of entry and in accordance with Solomon Islands law. Trial begins December 12 and the maximum sentence is three years in jail.

Taylan testified in September 2006 before Papua New Guinea Parliament National Parliament in the "Inquiry into the National Museum and Art Gallery and the Sale and Export of the *Swamp Ghost Aircraft*." He received an official commendation from the governing body that his "evidence as to the extent of the removal of these aircraft over the last decade and the complicity of the Museum to be of great assistance."

The grandson of World War II combat photographer Carl Thien, Taylan gained an appreciation for Pacific War air battles early on. As a teenager, he accompanied his grandfather on a return trip to Papua New Guinea to photograph wrecks in their original locations.

More information, photos, and updates are available at <http://taylandefensefund.org>. Interviews with Taylan may be arranged through the press contact listed above.

PACIFICWRECKS.COM

Taylan searches out wrecks, safeguards human remains, and returns dog tags and other artifacts to surprised veterans. He is founder of PacificWrecks.com, a free, non-profit history website detailing World War II stories and Pacific theater airplane wrecks that draws 45,000 hits a month. He produces and distributes his own historical documentaries and has appeared on The History Channel and PBS.

Taylan was featured in the October 2007 issue of Smithsonian Magazine in an article titled "Swamp Ghosts: In Papua New Guinea, a journalist investigates the controversy over a World War II bomber." He wrote his first book about the war, "No Place for a Picnic," at age 16 and has since been published in many historical and flight publications and spoken on this topic around the world.

See attached photo of Justin Taylan anchored aboard the "Barbarian" and rapidly running out of rations.

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Photos for print & web



Low on rations: Justin Taylan, World War II plane wrecks historian, awaits trial in anchored detention offshore the Solomon Islands.

WEB: taylan_key_art_1-web.jpg
PRINT: taylan_key_art_1-print.jpg



Captive in the Solomon Islands: Justin Taylan, World War II plane wrecks historian, awaits trial in anchored detention.

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Captive in the Solomon Islands: Yoji Sakaida (Japan), Justin Taylan (USA), Daisy Eliah (Papua New Guinea), and Rodney Pearce (Australia).

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Fact sheet

WHO Justin Taylan, 30, from Hyde Park, New York, USA, an historical researcher, author and documentary producer detailing World War II plane wrecks in the Pacific in their crash sites. Also held captive are Yoji Sakaida, 41, Chiba, Japan, and the ship's captain and cook.

WHAT Taylan and colleagues have been held in detention, without charges, for one month on their chartered boat by Royal Solomon Islands police, since November 9; police confiscated passports, video and data. Recently charged with illegal entry, they have pleaded innocent.

WHERE Solomon Islands, a tiny Pacific nation off the coast of Australia that includes Ballale Island, part of the Battle of Guadalcanal and crash site for many remaining World War II wrecks.

WHEN Trial begins December 12, 2007.

WHY On November 6, they inadvertently stumbled on a salvage operation underway on Guadalcanal dismantling a number of these World War II wrecks. They were detained soon after.