

CHILE, JACK AND VT-21

Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton “Chile” McKinney, USNR, O-114265, Pilot

ARM2c Jacob Casper “Jack” Durner, Jr., USNR, 6421589, Turret Gunner

Killed in Action July 7, 1943, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Listed by DPAA as “Recoverable”

Grumman TBF-1 Avenger Torpedo Bomber #125, Bureau Number 06063

Torpedo Bombing Squadron Twenty-One (VT-21), Carrier Air Group Twenty-One (CAG-21)

Introduction

Chile (like the food or country) is my first cousin, one generation removed. His mother was my grandaunt, Aunt Octo, whom I remember fondly. I was born sixteen years after Chile died and never heard of him. Maybe the family formed a pact never to speak of him because it was just too painful. By all accounts he was charismatic, charming and intelligent and liked by all. My mother and her sister were Chile’s first cousins, my grandparents were his aunt and uncle, but yet I never once heard his unusual name. Chile wrote a letter dated March 19, 1943 from the south Pacific to my grandparents who were dairy farmers north of Sulphur Springs, Texas where we were all born. He asked if he could fly my grandad’s tractor when he got home, and asked about my mom’s schooling, and my aunt’s new husband, H.B. Onley, who was training to be a B-17 pilot, and how milk tasted, and said that he had been tangling with the Japs some.

Imagine my surprise when I learned about cousin Chile for the first time in 2018 while researching my family tree. He was a hero; a TBF Avenger combat pilot awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross who died fighting in the famous battle for Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands after “probably” sinking a Japanese destroyer. I knew something about the significance of this battle. My dad was a Navy veteran who served aboard USS *LST-495* and fought at the battle for Okinawa. I had always been interested in World War II history and particularly naval battles in the Pacific theater where dad served.

I was astonished when I eventually learned that Chile had ditched his badly shot-up TBF off the north coast of Guadalcanal, where he and his turret gunner went down with the plane. Their bodies were never recovered. His radioman survived and was rescued by a patrolling ship, and his name became an important key to discovering the whole story.

Over the last five years, I have researched Chile, his crew, the circumstances of his death and the probable location of his TBF. This document tells that story and the story of his squadron - Torpedo Bombing Squadron 21 (VT-21) or Torpedo 21 for short. Every member of VT-21 is a hero. Of the 143 men listed on the VT-21 Guadalcanal roster, 32 of them were killed in action during the war; a death rate of 22% which is three times that of the 8th Army Air Forces over Europe at 7.42%. One more VT-21 crewman was killed in noncombat service over California on September 4, 1945, two days after the Japanese surrendered.

Chile’s Early Life and Navy Training

Murray Charlton “Chile” McKinney was born April 16, 1920 in Sulphur Springs, Hopkins County, Texas to Charles Pierce “Charlie” McKinney (1889-1960) and Octo Delia Connor (1893-1972). He had one

sibling, an older sister named Martha Lavina McKinney (1917-2012) who married John Paul Hardin (1917-2007) in Sulphur Springs on July 21, 1940. They had one son (Chile's blood nephew) and they adopted a son. Chile was a Boy Scout, a member of the Model Airplane Club and President of his 1937 Senior Class at Sulphur Springs High School. During high school and college, he worked as an elevator operator, soda jerk, gas station attendant, house painter and bookkeeper. Beginning in the fall of 1937, he attended Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, Texas and paid his own way through all four years of college. At TCU he met and fell in love with Ruth Allen Priest, who was born in Fort Worth on January 4, 1922. Ruth and Chile were well matched and well liked at TCU, where each was elected a Class Favorite and a Class Officer several times. Chile was president of his 1941 graduating class and president of the National Intercollegiate Chamber of Commerce.

On May 7, 1941, five weeks before graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce, and seven months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Chile enlisted in the US Navy Reserve, V-5 Program as a Naval Aviation Cadet, along with his good friend and fellow '41 TCU classmate, John Byron Cason, Jr. They began training immediately at the Dallas Naval Reserve Air Base. In July they were transferred to the Naval Air Station (NAS) in Jacksonville, Florida and on the last day of August they were transferred to the new Corpus Christi, Texas, Naval Air Station where they both graduated with Class 8-B in April, 1942. During training in Florida and Texas, Chile and John made a new friend in fellow cadet Malcolm Johnstone Miller, born July 10, 1918 in Canada and raised in Muncie, Indiana.



Ruth Priest McKinney (Jun '43, McKinney home); Chile McKinney (May '41, TCU); Ruth & Chile (Seattle, Jul '42)

On April 3, 1942, Ensign John Byron Cason, Jr., age twenty-two, was killed on a solo training flight when his plane collided with an electrical powerline near Skidmore, Texas. Chile accompanied his best friend's body to Fort Worth for burial. Two weeks later on April 17, Chile received his Navy Aviator gold wings after being commissioned an Ensign (Ens.) on March 12. He spent fifteen days with Ruth in Fort Worth before reporting on May 9 to his new post at NAS Seattle, Sand Point, Washington. Ruth graduated from TCU in June and immediately joined Chile in Seattle where they were married on July 31, 1942 by US

Navy Chaplain Joseph Floyd Dreith, who became a Rear Admiral and the Chief of Navy Chaplains. Ens. Malcolm Johnstone Miller was Chile’s best man and Geraldine “Jenny” Clark was Ruth’s maid of honor.

At NAS Seattle, Chile was assigned to Escort Scouting Squadron Eleven (VGS-11) and began flying the new, single-engine, three-man crew, Grumman TBF-1 “Avenger” torpedo bomber. The Avenger could deliver a single 2,000-pound torpedo, a 2,000-pound aerial bomb, or the same weight in multiple aerial bombs. There were three machine guns: a 0.30 caliber mounted on the right side of the nose cowling, synchronized with the propellor and fired by the pilot; a 0.50 caliber in the electrically powered, rear-facing turret fired by the turret gunner; and a 0.30 caliber located below the tail, called the ventral gun or “stinger”, that was flexibly mounted, and aimed and hand-fired by the radioman (who also served as the radarman, bombardier and tail gunner) looking through small plexiglass windows. The fourteen-cylinder air-cooled radial engine produced 1,700 horse power. Fully loaded, the TBF-1 had a range of 1,000-miles when flying at its cruising speed of 215-miles per hour, and could climb to a ceiling of 30,000-feet. The TBF-1 Avenger was 40-feet long, 16-feet high, and had a wingspan of 54-feet. It was the heaviest single-engine aircraft in World War II. Avenger pilots, aircrew, carrier sailors and Marines affectionately called it the “Turkey” for its large size and challenging handling.



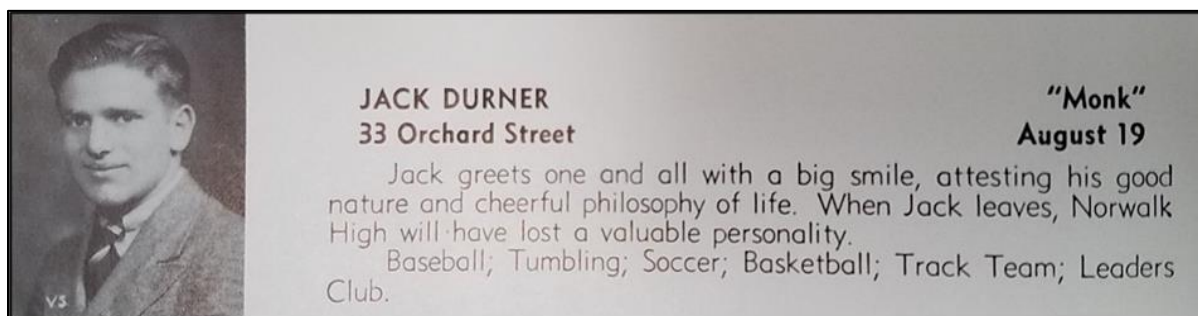
Left. A flight of seventeen TBF-1 Avengers over Espiritu Santo in October 1943. Right. TBF-1 Avenger at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, 1943 being loaded with four 500-pound bombs.

Avenger crews were in a dangerous business. Torpedo runs required that they fly low and slow, right into the concentrated fire of every antiaircraft cannon and machine gun on that side of an enemy ship. When attacking a ship with a 2,000-pound aerial bomb, or four 500-pound bombs, they used a technique called glide bombing. Glide bombing required they start their dive at a lower altitude and with a shallower angle of attack, and “glide” for a greater distance and with a lower bomb release altitude than other dive bombers; once again, exposing Avenger crews to concentrated fire for a longer period of time. The only time Avenger’s had an equal chance of survival compared to other bombers was when they carpet-bombed targets from high altitude using their Norden Bombsight; which seldom happened because this job was better suited to heavy bombers like the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-24 Liberator that carried four to five times the Avenger’s bomb load. The Avenger was an up-close and personal bomber.

Chile and Ruth’s time together as newlyweds was frequently interrupted by flight training. During September and early October 1942, Ens. McKinney qualified for aircraft carrier takeoff and landing from the deck of the USS *Long Island* (CVE-1) off the coast of San Diego, California. VGS-11 reported aboard

the escort carrier USS *Altamaha* (CVE-18) on November 2, 1942. The *Altamaha* departed San Francisco the next day in a nine-ship convoy headed for the southwest Pacific. Designated convoy PW 2157, it was escorted by the light cruiser USS *Honolulu* (CL-48). The Executive Officer of VGS-11 was Wildcat fighter pilot Lt. Edward Cobb "Eddie" Outlaw, who was the Chief Flight Officer at NAS Corpus Christi while Chile was there as an aviation cadet. Eddie Outlaw became a fighter ace in one day by downing five Japanese aircraft and retired as a Rear Admiral.

Jacob Casper "Jack" Durner, Jr., who always went by Jack, was born August 19, 1921. He was the middle child of three children, all born in Norwalk, Fairfield County, Connecticut to Jacob Casper Durner, Sr. (1894-1945) and Annabella Elizabeth "Anna" McKenzie (1895-1988). Jack's older sister was Cornelia Dorothy Durner (1919-1991), who first married Charles Richard Ellsworth (1922-2000) in 1943, and then married Leonard R. Freyler (1903-1975) in 1955. Jack's younger sister was Annabelle Elizabeth "Mickey" Durner (1924-1999) who married Francis B. Sheehan (1917-1989) in 1946. They had two children, John Francis Sheehan (1957-1999) and a daughter who is still living and is Jack's niece.



Jacob Casper "Jack" Durner, Jr., Norwalk High School Yearbook 1939. Courtesy of Jeff DeWitt.

Jack Durner graduated from Norwalk High School in June 1939 where he was a popular student and a gifted athlete, ranking among the top pole vaulters in Connecticut. He was also on the tumbling team and played football, basketball, baseball, and soccer. Jack was a member of the "Leaders Club" and according to his classmates who nicknamed him "Monk", he greeted everyone with a smile and possessed a "*good nature and cheerful philosophy of life.*" After graduation, Jack worked for almost three years as a shipping clerk at the local textile mill, J. and J. Cash, Inc., and enlisted in the US Navy Reserve in April 1942. According to his physical exam, Jack stood five-feet, six and one-half inches tall, had blue eyes and light brown hair with a ruddy complexion and weighed one hundred and thirty-eight pounds. After basic seamanship training, Jack was transferred to NAS Seattle, Sand Point, Washington where he graduated on September 22, 1942 as a VGS-11 Aviation Radioman Third Class (ARM3c). He served his first Guadalcanal tour with VGS-11 from February 1 (when he was promoted to ARM2c) to March 8, 1943 as a TBF radioman. Jack was designated a TBF turret gunner on March 1, 1943. VGS-11 departed San Francisco in convoy PW2157 with Ens. Chile McKinney, ARM3c Richard Dole and ARM3c Jack Durner on board headed for the southwest Pacific and ultimately Guadalcanal.

Overseas and Combat

By December, Ruth was living in Fort Worth on Primrose Avenue with her mother Jessie Bridget (Patton) Priest (1897-1978), the widow of Allen Harrel Priest who died in 1933. Also in the house was her younger

brother by three years, Robert Andrew "Bob" Priest (1924-1990). Ruth made the two-hour drive to Sulphur Springs often to visit her new family and friends. In a letter from Chile dated November 30, 1942 he wrote that he was safe somewhere in the south Pacific. Two days earlier, the *Altamaha* had moored at Noumea, New Caledonia with eighteen F4F-4 Wildcat fighters and six TBF-1 Avenger torpedo bombers, which were flown by VGS-11 from the *Altamaha* on air cover and anti-submarine patrols in the vicinity of Noumea throughout December. During January, VGS-11 performed the same patrol duties at Narew airfield (a.k.a. Nandi airfield and Nadi International Airport today) on the island of Viti Levu, Fiji. On January 22, 1943, Chile wrote home asking about his Sulphur Springs High School classmate and friend, "...*Glad to hear that Tommy Wood got home OK. Did they announce the sinking of the Hornet before he left? I guess he had quite a tale to tell. Since I've come out here, I've met quite a great many men in his outfit. Some of them are now in this squadron (VGS-11)*" Ens. Thomas Junior Wood flew with Bombing Squadron Eight (VB-8) aboard the carrier USS *Hornet* and fought in the tide-turning Battle of Midway. On the first day of the battle, June 4, 1942, after a fruitless search for the Japanese carrier task force, Ens. Wood was forced to ditch his Douglass SBD-3 Dauntless dive bomber 10-miles northwest of Midway when he ran out of fuel before reaching the *Hornet*. He and his radioman, ARM3c George Francis Martz, were rescued along with two other VB-8 crews who also ditched after running out of fuel. Five months later on October 27, 1942, the *Hornet* was sunk with the loss of one hundred and forty sailors in the Battle of Santa Isabel Island in the Solomon Island chain. Tommy Wood and George Martz survived the war.

According to the USS *Altamaha* War Diary, on February 1, 1943, VGS-11 was ordered to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands to fly combat missions with Marine Scout Bombing Squadron One Hundred Thirty-One (VMSB-131), who despite their dive-bombing designation and name, were flying TBF-1 Avenger torpedo bombers. Henderson Field is the famous airfield that so many US Marines gave their lives to capture and hold, and is today Honiara International Airport. The men that flew from Henderson Field from August through December 31, 1942 became famous as the Cactus Air Force, which included aircraft and airmen from the US Army, US Navy, US Marines and the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Cactus was the Allied codename for the operation to capture Guadalcanal. In February 1943, Guadalcanal Island was assigned a new codename - Mainyard.

On February 2, 1943, VGS-11 had its first combat casualty when Wildcat pilot Lt. William Harlan Simpson "Simp" Brady, was killed in action in the vicinity of Guadalcanal. On February 4, after sinking a Japanese destroyer north of New Georgia island, Ens. Joseph Riddle Jr. was shot down by enemy fighters. Riddle crash landed his Avenger on New Georgia Island and was killed. His badly injured crew survived, radioman ARM2c William Murrell Owen and turret gunner Aviation Machinist's Mate Third Class (AMM3c) Herbert Albert Hopp. Ens. Riddle received the Distinguished Flying Cross and had a destroyer named in his honor. On February 7 Chile wrote home, unable to state he was at Guadalcanal because of military censors, saying "...*I've been pretty well occupied since I got up here. We are bombed or shelled most every night and we bomb the Japs most every day several times...I'm really flying my tail off. When I do have a few minutes, I go down to the river to bathe and wash my clothes...I spend most of each night in a dugout or foxhole...it's really quite a feeling to have these bombs falling all around. We really play for keeps out here... Our morale is the best it's been since we left the States...*"¹ Three weeks later on February 28, his fellow VGS-11 Avenger pilot, Ens. Winfield Higdon Junk and crew, sank a Japanese cargo ship lying off Kahili airfield.

¹ The Feb. 1, 1943 VGS-11 order to Guadalcanal made Chile and his fellow VGS-11 squadron members eligible for the "Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal" campaign ribbon (P-9) from August 10, 1942 through February 8, 1943;

The Japanese Kahili airfield mentioned above and many times hereafter, was a frequent Allied target in the Solomon Islands campaign. It was located on the southern tip of Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea, about 300-miles northwest of Henderson Field. The Japanese and Americans alike generally referred to the entire southern coast of Bougainville as the Buin, Kahili, or Buin-Kahili area. Just offshore and slightly east of Kahili airfield was a favorite anchorage of Japanese warships and cargo vessels, and only 5-miles further east was another excellent anchorage in Tonolei Harbor. Japanese vessels frequently sailed through the 5-mile wide straight between Moila Point on Bougainville and Shortland Island, called the western entrance. With Kahili airfield located right on the coast and several enemy ships normally anchored just offshore or in Tonolei harbor, and more enemy ships squeezing through the western entrance or transiting the area enroute to other Japanese held islands to the south, Kahili was a target rich environment in a relatively small area. Those targets were attacked almost daily (or nightly) by Henderson Field bomber and fighter squadrons throughout most of 1943.



Left. Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, Jan. 1943, looking east-northeast at Lengo Channel and Koli Point.

Right. Avenger being serviced at Bougainville with a 2,000-pound AN-M66 bomb in foreground.

On March 1, 1943, Ensign McKinney was promoted to Lieutenant, junior grade (Lt.(jg)) and VGS-11 was recommissioned as Composite Squadron Eleven (VC-11). In a letter dated March 20, Chile writes he is at a resting base in the Pacific: *"...I am doing fine and having a swell rest. We are getting bored with inactivity, but the prospects of being back into the fight are promising..."* This was again Narew airfield on Viti Levu, Fiji where VC-11 spent mid-March through April. Chile's next letter home on March 30 spoke to the worst lessons of war, *"...Did I ever tell you that Christian, my only roommate who got his wings was killed in the Solomon Islands. You work up a dislike for those yellow bastards when they start killing your shipmates..."* Chile's roommate was aviation cadet Frank Leonard Christen (often misspelled as Christian) born January

and based on the VGS-11 early June missions from Henderson Field, VGS-11 members are also eligible for the "Consolidation of Southern Solomons" ribbon (P19-1) from February 8, 1943 through June 20, 1943).

14, 1919 in Fieldon, Illinois. Frank and Chile followed the same training path at NAS Jacksonville and then at NAS Corpus Christi where they each received their wings with Class 8-B in April, 1942. Frank chose the option of being commissioned a Second Lieutenant (2nd Lt.) in the US Marine Corps Reserves, rather than an Ensign in the USNR. He became a Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber pilot and was assigned to Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 132 (VMSB-132) at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal and flew with the famous Cactus Air Force. On December 16, 1942, 2nd Lt. Christen and his radioman, Private First Class (PFC), Glenn Shattuck, participated in a night strike against a Japanese destroyer off New Georgia, Solomon Islands. Christen dropped flares over the target, and was last seen entering his bombing dive. Christen and Shattuck were first reported missing in action, and officially declared dead on December 17, 1943. It was learned later that 2nd Lt. Christen was captured by the Japanese. Under interrogation at the infamous Rabaul POW camp, he revealed that PFC Shattuck was killed in the crash of their bomber off Munda. 2nd Lt. Frank Leonard Christen died while in Japanese captivity at an unknown date.

By May, VC-11 had moved forward again to Espiritu Santo where they were combined with their sister squadron, Escort Scouting Squadron Twelve (VGS-12), which had also just been recommissioned as Composite Squadron Twelve (VC-12). VGS-11 and VGS-12 had trained together at NAS Seattle, Sand Point, Washington and at NAS Whidbey Island 20-miles north. VGS-12 was attached to the escort carrier USS *Copahee* (CVE-12) while VGS-11 was on the USS *Altamaha*, and the two carriers were often found in the same southwest Pacific task force and locations. Now, many pilots who received their wings together at NAS Corpus Christi, and who trained together in separate units at NAS Seattle, would fly together as members of Carrier Air Group Twenty-One (CAG-21). Among those VGS-12/VC-12 members was Chile's best man, Avenger pilot Lt.(jg) Malcolm Johnstone Miller and Chile's High School classmate and buddy, Lt.(jg) William Carmack Smith, along with a fellow northeast Texan and mutual friend Lt.(jg) Thomas Donald Roach, both F4F Wildcat fighter pilots.² The CAG-21 War Diary, dated May 15, 1943 through August 5, 1943, begins with its commissioning on May 15: "*In accordance with orders received, squadron VC-11 and VC-12 were formed into Air Group Twenty One to be composed of Fighting Squadron Twenty One (VF-21) and Torpedo Squadron Twenty One (VT-21).*" Placed in command of CAG-21 and also the Avenger torpedo bombers of VT-21, was Lieutenant Commander (Lt. Cmdr.) John Hulme (1906-1997), who would retire as a Rear Admiral. The Wildcat fighters of VF-21 would be commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Charles Howard Ostrom, who had already achieved seven air-to-air victories, and would sadly be among the six hundred and forty-six Americans killed in action at the Battle of Makin (atoll) on November 24, 1943, when a single torpedo from Japanese submarine I-175 hit the bomb magazine of escort carrier USS *Liscome Bay* (CVE-56), sinking her in twenty-three minutes.

On May 16, 1943, six of the thirty VT-21 aircraft and crew were ordered back to Guadalcanal to fly with Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron One Hundred Forty-Three (VMTB-143). Chile stayed behind on Espiritu Santo. On Guadalcanal, Marine ground echelon personnel of VMTB-143 were responsible for keeping the Navy VT-21 Avenger aircraft flying. On May 18, Chile's fellow VT-21 Avenger pilot Lt.(jg) Frederic Burton "Fred" Sleyster and his two crewmen, ARM2c Harry Hampton Johnson and ARM3c

² Lt.(jg) William Carmack Smith survived the war with four F4F Wildcat aerial victories over Guadalcanal and then flew F6F-5 Hellcat fighters with Fighting Squadron Thirteen (VF-13) aboard the USS *Franklin* where he added a half-victory before being wounded in action on October 30, 1944. At retirement, his rank was Commander. Lt.(jg) Thomas Donald Roach, from Bogata, Texas, 38-miles from Sulphur Springs in adjacent Red River County, was killed in action in his F4F Wildcat on July 26, 1944 over Bougainville. Both men are named in Chile's letters home.

Manuel Paiva, were on a night mission laying mines off Kahili and never returned. Their bodies were never recovered. At Espiritu Santo on May 22, a VF-21 Wildcat fighter pilot crashed into the sea during gunnery practice and was killed. On May 26, a VF-21 Wildcat's engine failed and the pilot made a safe sea landing but lost the plane. On June 2, during night training exercises, a Wildcat made a forced water landing; the injured pilot got out before the plane sank. The newly commissioned CAG-21 losses were climbing fast.

On June 4, 1943, the remainder of Torpedo Squadron VT-21, including Chile and crew, received orders to report to Guadalcanal while VF-21 stayed behind on Espiritu Santo. The next day, twenty-four VT-21 TBF-1 Avengers landed at Henderson Field, and the following day twelve TBFs sortied to bomb the Japanese airfield at Munda, 200-miles northwest on the island of New Georgia.

Within the first two weeks of the entire squadron being back on Guadalcanal, three more VT-21 aircrews went missing in action. On the night of June 10, 1943 while returning from a mission to bomb Kahili airfield. Ens. Milner Lauzer "Andy" Andrews ditched his Avenger in enemy waters due to mechanical failure. He and his two crewmen made it to their life raft and were picked up by natives who delivered them to an Allied coast watcher. They returned to VT-21 on July 27 after forty-seven days of evading the enemy. On the night of June 13, Ens. James Reneau Sprague's Avenger was crippled by antiaircraft fire while dropping flares over Kahili airfield. Ens. Sprague nursed his plane back as far as the enemy-held island of Santa Isabel where he ditched a few miles offshore. Sprague and his turret gunner, Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class (AOM3c) Charles Alexander Stranahan, Jr., could not deploy their life raft before the plane sank, and in spite of their wounds, managed to swim to shore. They evaded the enemy for thirteen days, the last three of which were spent in a friendly native village. The natives sent Allies word of their location and the Navy sent a float plane to affect the rescue. Sprague suffered a broken collar bone and severe lacerations and Stranahan was permanently disabled by his wounds. The radioman, ARM3c Charles Dobbryn Christensen from Los Angeles, drowned when he went down with the Avenger. On the night of June 16, Lt.(jg) Edward Melville Peck and his two crewmen, AOM2c Stanley William Tefft and Ens. Jesse Scott, Jr., were shot down by antiaircraft fire while bombing Kahili and ditched southeast of Shortland Island in enemy waters. They were picked up in their life raft by native islanders, and with the native's continuous help, evaded capture on several enemy-held islands for three months. E.M. Peck, S.W. Tefft and J. Scott are incorrectly listed as killed in action on the VT-21 Guadalcanal roster because they had not yet returned when the roster was created in early August 1943. All three of these men survived the war.

On June 20, fighter squadron VF-21 flew their thirty-six Grumman F4F Wildcats from Espiritu Santo to Guadalcanal and began missions the next day. On June 25, 1943, by order of "Commander Fighters Air South Pacific" (ComFairSouth), Lt. Cmdr. John Hulme was detached from CAG-21 and replaced as commanding officer by Lt. Cmdr. Charles Howard Ostrom. The new VT-21 commander was Lt. Cmdr. Robert Lee Savage, Jr., born July 5, 1913 in Poteau, Oklahoma and died August 11, 1986 in Encinitas, California at age seventy-three. Lt. Cmdr. Savage and Chile were friends, and Savage would later provide important information about his death to Chile's wife Ruth and his parents, Charlie and Octo McKinney.

Complete mission crew lists, and records in general, from this period on Guadalcanal are sparse due to the chaotic pace of the fighting. The first crew list found that includes Chile is dated June 25, 1943 from "TBF Operations Henderson Field". Unfortunately, only the last name of the pilot is given and the names of the

turret gunner and radioman flying with each pilot is not listed. The pilots full name and additional information has been added by the author. The twelve VT-21 pilots and their Avenger "side" numbers are:

107 - Lt. William Everitt Rowbotham, Flight Leader (KIA June 12, 1944), C.O. VT-12 USS *Saratoga*
115 - Ens. Charles William "Chick" Schnabel (1921-1987), Navy Cross, VT-13, USS *Franklin*
113 - Lt.(jg) Lewis Ben Sanders (1917-1963)
117 - Ens. William Richard Winn, Jr. (KIA July 20, 1943)
112 - Lt.(jg) Alfred Frederick Jacobson (KIA July 17, 1943)
118 - Ens. John Decatur Morrison, Jr. (1918-2014)
121 - Lt.(jg) Malcolm Johnstone Miller (1918-2005)
122 - Ens. William Ross Yokley, Jr. (1921-1952)
111 - Ens. Robert Stephen Linari (1918-2000)
114 - Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton McKinney (KIA July 7, 1943), Distinguished Flying Cross, VT-21
109 - Ens. Turner Moreland Caldwell, Jr. (1921-2010), Distinguished Flying Cross, VT-23, USS *Princeton*
123 - Lt.(jg) Frederick Wistar Morris Janney (1919-1979), two Distinguished Flying Cross, VT-13, USS *Franklin*, career Central Intelligence Agency officer, Distinguished Intelligence Medal.



Left. Crew manning an Avenger: pilot on wing, turret gunner and radioman entering through rear hatch. Right. Rear hatch to radioman's compartment with ventral .30 cal. and turret access for .50 cal. gunner.

Their mission was to bomb the Munda airfield bivouac areas and antiaircraft batteries located on the southern coast of New Georgia. The eighty planes that took off between 6:27 a.m. and 6:40 a.m., and then rendezvoused over Savo Island 30-miles northwest, comprised the largest light and medium bomber strike force yet to takeoff from Henderson Field. All the TBF Avengers returned safely this beautiful June morning, with ceiling and visibility unlimited (CAVU), but four of the twelve pilots and crews on this mission would not survive the war.

Water Crash off Guadalcanal

Chile McKinney and Jack Durner lived twelve more days. On July 7, 1943, Chile, age twenty-three and Jack, age twenty-two, who was not part of Chile's regular crew but chosen by Chile for this mission, were

killed in action while flying the TBF-1 Avenger #125 with BuNo 06063. It was another night mission against enemy shipping which was a common occurrence on moonlit nights in the Pacific war. American radar could detect anchored or moving surface ships, but perhaps most helpful was the white propeller wash that trailed behind every moving ship's stern, night or day, which became a long "pointer" for bombers, both American and Japanese. The mission was once again to find and bomb Japanese ships in the Buin-Kahili area off southern Bougainville. Chile had flown many such missions to Kahili during his first Guadalcanal tour with VGS-11, and even more since their June 4 arrival for a second tour as VT-21.

The CAG-21 War Diary describes Chile's last mission. *"7 July 1943: 1720 [5:20 p.m. takeoff] – 2230 [10:30 p.m. return, Chile actually crashed at 11:10 p.m.]: 3 TBF's from VT-21 proceeded to the Buin-Kahili area on an anti-shipping strike. There was reported to be a large number of enemy ships in this area. One ship was observed in the harbor with all planes making a run on it. Considerable AA [antiaircraft] was encountered from the ship with two planes suffering considerable damage. Lieut. (jg) McKinney was attacked by an enemy plane and his plane was further damaged and his turret gunner mortally wounded. McKinney was unable to control his plane and crashed upon attempting a water landing. The radioman was rescued but no trace was found of the pilot. Our losses – 1 dead; 1 missing in action; 1 plane. Enemy losses – 1 DD [destroyer] hit and probably sunk."* The Cooper, Texas daily newspaper added *"...The radioman in Lieut. McKinney's crew was rescued unconscious and later recalled that the plane had made a crash landing at sea."* The War Diary of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, Daily Summary for July 1943, stated that on 7 July *"3 TBFs and 1 Hudson [Lockheed A-29 Hudson] attacked an enemy DD west of MOILI POINT [Moila Point, southwestern-most tip of Bougainville at the western entrance]. No hits observed. The Hudson is missing and 1 TBF crashed with pilot and gunner missing."*

The Japanese nightfighter that killed Jack Durner that night could possibly have been the same twin-engine Nakajima J1N1 Gekko (called an Irving by the Allies) that shot down the Hudson flare ship (called a PBO by the Allies) that accompanied them on this mission to illuminate the target area. The Hudson belonged to Number Three Squadron, Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) with fuselage number NZ2033 and serial number 3856. It took off from Henderson Field exactly five minutes before Chile and the other two Avengers to lead the way to Bougainville, where it dropped twelve flares from Moila Point easterly toward Alasina Island as assigned, and was never seen again. All five crewmen in the Hudson PBO were killed in action that night when it was shot down by the Gekko and crashed over western Shortland Island. The five airmen's remains were never recovered. The pilot of the Gekko was Ens. Shigetoshi Kudo of the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service, who became the first Japanese Nightfighter Ace with nine confirmed Gekko victories, including NZ2033 on the night of July 7, 1943. At that time, Ens. Kudo was flying with the 251st Kokutai (Air Group) from Ballale Island and airfield (Ballalae today), located 20-miles south of Bougainville. Ens. Shigetoshi Kudo survived the war and died in 1960 in Japan.

Jack Durner was awarded the Purple Heart. In addition to a Purple Heart, Chile McKinney was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) on February 19, 1944 by the Eighth Naval District with the following citation. *"The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross (Posthumously) to Lieutenant, Junior Grade Murray Charlton McKinney (NSN: O-114265), United States Navy, for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight during action against Japanese forces off Kahili, 7 July 1943. Lieutenant, Junior Grade, McKinney scored a direct hit with a 2,000-pound bomb and probably sank a Japanese destroyer. Although an enemy plane subsequently killed*

his turret gunner and shot away his radio and controls, he flew 300 miles to his home base and crash landed in the sea."

After flying his crippled Avenger 300-miles back to Guadalcanal and ditching at sea, the sole survivor was ARM2c Richard Thomas Dole, born November 26, 1922 in Des Moines, Iowa and died October 11, 1993 in Brandon, Mississippi at age 70. ARM2c Richard T. Dole was floating in his life vest with a broken right wrist when he was rescued by the minesweeper USS *Skylark* (AM-63) within five minutes of her crew members first seeing the Avenger crash about one nautical mile from their vessel. In letters to Chile's loved ones, C.O. Savage wrote that Chile had ordered Dole to prepare for a crash and that Dole was unconscious immediately after the crash and when he regained consciousness (before being rescued) there was no sign of Chile, Jack or their Avenger.

Chile and Jack's bodies were never recovered. Their names are engraved on the Walls of the Missing in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial located in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Manila, Philippines, within the former US Fort William McKinley. Chile is also memorialized on his parent's gravestone in the Sulphur Springs City Cemetery, and at the TCU Veterans Plaza, and also the Hopkins County Veterans Memorial on the Sulphur Springs city square.



March 1943 US Army map (DWG. NO. 38) with a ~5-nautical-mile grid showing the north shore of Guadalcanal at Henderson Field. Somewhere on this map is the crash site of TBF-1 BuNo 06063.

After Chile and Jack were killed, VT-21 losses continued to rise. During a particularly fierce and chaotic daylight raid on Japanese shipping off Kahili on July 17, the Jacobson crew was lost to either the heavy ship and shore antiaircraft fire, or the numerous attacking Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters. Killed in action were pilot Lt.(jg) Alfred Frederick Jacobson, radioman ARM3c Frank Joseph Felice and turret gunner Aviation Chief Machinist's Mate (ACMM) Clifford Roy Neuberger. Three days later, two Avenger crews were lost attacking the most recent "Tokyo Express" task force of six Japanese destroyers and three cargo

ships heading south from Kahili down “The Slot” to reinforce Japanese forces on New Georgia.³ At about 2:00 a.m., between 10 to 20-miles off Vella Lavella, the first wave of six VT-21 Avengers began their glide bombing runs and scored three hits with 2,000-pound bombs. The Winn crew and Robbins crew each scored hits, but never returned from this mission. Killed in action that dark morning was pilot Lt.(jg) Gerald Alva Robbins, radioman ARM3c Robert Simon Draisner and turret gunner AOM2c Stanley Rudolph Burdick. The second VT-21 crew killed in action on this mission was pilot Ens. William Richard Winn, Jr., radioman ARM3c Carroll Wooster Reynolds and turret gunner AOM3c Clifford Andrew Stratton.

Richard T. Dole survived the war, but fellow VT-21 acquaintance and radioman ARM3c Forrest Vernon Weaver was not as lucky. On July 25, 1943 while bombing Bibilo Hill at Munda, New Georgia in support of the ongoing US Army assault on that island, the radio compartment in the belly of his Avenger took a direct hit from a Japanese forty-millimeter antiaircraft shell that exploded under Weaver’s seat. The pilot, Ens. Robert S. Linari, headed directly for Henderson Field at top speed where every medical assistance was rendered, but ARM3c Vernon Weaver died of his wounds at 9 p.m., two hours after landing, and was buried the next day in the Guadalcanal US Military Cemetery. In 1948, his remains were reinterred in LaGrange Cemetery, LaGrange, Ohio.

At about 2:30 a.m. on July 20, 1943, thirteen days after Chile and Jack’s deaths, and eleven days short of what would have been Chile and Ruth’s first wedding anniversary, Chile’s best man, Lt.(jg) Malcolm Johnstone Miller and crew sank the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) destroyer *Yūgure*, about 15-miles northeast of Vella Lavella in the New Georgia Straight. The destroyer IJN *Kiyonami* rescued twenty survivors from *Yūgure*, but *Kiyonami* was sunk later that same day by US Army bombers. The entire two hundred and twenty-eight *Yūgure* crew perished and there was only one survivor out of the two hundred and forty-one men sailing on the *Kiyonami*. Four hundred and sixty-eight Japanese sailors lost their lives to Navy Lt.(jg) Malcolm Miller’s single bomb and a flight of eight twin-engine, twin-tail, B-25C Mitchell medium bombers from the Thirteenth Army Air Force’s Three Hundred Ninetieth Bomb Squadron of the Forty Second Bomb Group, known as The Crusaders, stationed on Guadalcanal and flying from Carney Field (a.k.a. Bomber Two) located 6-miles east of Henderson Field.

According to the CAG-21 War Diary, the last Guadalcanal combat mission logged for her VT-21 Avenger torpedo bombers was flown on July 28, 1943 and the last combat mission for her VF-21 Wildcat fighters was on August 1, 1943. During the hot days of August 3 and 4, all CAG-21 personnel arrived at Espiritu Santo either in their own aircraft or aboard Douglas DC-3 transports. On August 5, 1943, sixty-nine commissioned officers and sixty-nine petty officers of VT-21 boarded the cargo/passenger liner SS *Delbrasil* for transport to the United States of America. They were joined by thirty-four commissioned officers and thirty-six petty officers of VF-21. The *Delbrasil* (a.k.a. *Del Brazil*, *Delbrazil*) arrived in San Francisco on August 21, 1943 at 9:11 a.m. with two hundred and eight CAG-21 Guadalcanal combat veterans aboard. One month later the SS *Delbrasil* was recommissioned by the US Navy as the troop carrier USS *George F. Elliott* (AP-105).

³ “The Slot” was the nickname for the northwest to southeast sea route from Bougainville to Guadalcanal that went through New Georgia Sound and continued through the middle of the entire Solomon Island chain. The “Tokyo Express” was the name given to describe the almost nightly Japanese navy task force that would sail up and down “The Slot” resupplying their island bases in the Solomons, to avoid daylight attacks by the Allies. The Japanese ships were usually their fastest destroyers and cargo vessels and sometimes submarines.

After Guadalcanal

Malcolm Johnstone Miller lived to be eighty-six years old and died on May 10, 2005 in Solvang, Santa Barbara County, California. Ruth (Priest) McKinney married Robert Wallace Strong in 1945 and they had two sons, Michael Andrew Strong and Peter Thomas Strong. Robert died on May 1, 1958 in Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia. In 1960, Ruth married Roger Coit Dixon (1914-2010). She travelled the world with both husbands, was a prolific writer, researcher and author, earned a Master’s degree, and remained politically and socially engaged her entire life. Ruth died on August 8, 2004 at the age of eighty-two in Mitchellville, Prince George’s County, Maryland.

The VT-21 naval aviators and crewmembers that survived their Guadalcanal duty found homes on aircraft carriers and eventually flew the TBM-3 Avenger, an improved version of the original TBF-1 with the same airframe but with one .50 caliber machine gun in each wing, underwing racks for aerial rockets and better radar. Many VT-21 Guadalcanal veterans served on the USS *Belleau Wood* (CVL-24) where they proudly kept their Torpedo Squadron Twenty-One designation. Among the pilots were Lt.(jg) Joseph B. Stevens, Jr. and Lt. Winfield H. Junk who both survived the war. Others were not so lucky. In the early afternoon hours of October 30, 1944 while on routine patrol with Task Group 38A east of Leyte, Philippines, the *Belleau Wood* shot down an attacking Japanese kamikaze that crashed among the VT-21 planes parked on her stern flight deck. They were fully loaded with fuel, bombs and ammunition for an upcoming mission. The massive fire and multiple explosions killed ninety-two sailors. One VT-21 crew was killed while manning their Avenger. Twenty-three VT-21 crewmen were killed while gathered in the after ready-room for a briefing, directly below where the kamikaze struck and crashed through the flight deck. Among the twenty-three dead, eight were VT-21 Guadalcanal radiomen and turret gunners. The five radiomen are ARM1c Dodson Anderson Marsh, ARM1c John Patrick Gorman, ARM2c Robert Franklin Drake, ARM2c Joseph Patrick “Pat” Wall and ACRM Reynold “Ray” Soquist, the three turret gunners are AOM1c Billie James Nitzel, AOM1c Norman Earl Waters, and AOM2c William John Zeitz.



Navy aviator M421A summer jacket with VT-21 patch ca.1944(?) on the USS Belleau Wood (CVL-24). Some have called VT-21 the “Flying Sharks” but no military record has been found to verify that name.

Five VT-21 Guadalcanal pilots and one gunner were assigned to Squadron VT-13 aboard the USS *Franklin* (CV-13). The pilots were Lt. Norman David "Champ" Champlin, Lt. Frederick Wistar Morris "Jug" Janney, Lt. Edward William "Eddie" Larkin, Jr., Lt.(jg) Robert Query "Bob" Ranson and Lt.(jg) Charles William "Chick" Schnabel, and the turret gunner was AMM1c James Derick Whittinghill. Lt. Larkin and his gunner, AMM1c Whittinghill, were killed in action on October 19, 1944 after sinking an enemy vessel near Manila Bay. Five months later on March 19, 1945, while launching attacks on mainland Japan only 50-miles away, *Big Ben* as the *Franklin* was known, lost over eight hundred sailors when it was attacked by a twin engine Japanese bomber. Three VT-21 Guadalcanal pilots flew with Squadron VT-23 aboard the USS *Princeton* (CVL-23); Lt.(jg) Elwyn Paul Eubank, Lt. Charles Wayne Ferrell and Lt.(jg) Howard Russel Henrikson. Lt.(jg) Eubank was killed in action on January 11, 1944 when he was returning from a mission and crashed his Avenger into the *Princeton's* superstructure. The radioman and turret gunner survived. Nine months later on October 24, the *Princeton* was sunk by a single Japanese "Judy" dive bomber in the Battle of Leyte Gulf with the loss of one hundred and eight American sailors. Lt.(jg) Malcolm Lawty, another VT-21 Guadalcanal pilot, was killed on June 4, 1944 when his Avenger stalled and crashed into the sea after being waived off his landing on the USS *Kitkun Bay* (CVE-71). Guadalcanal VT-21 staff officer Lt. Cmdr. William E. Rowbotham became the Commanding Officer of VT-12 aboard the USS *Saratoga* (CV-3) and was shot down by antiaircraft fire on June 10, 1944 while attacking Japanese shipping off Soerabaja, Java (Surabaya today). He ditched safely 6-miles offshore and all three crewmen made it into the Avenger's life raft. They paddled to the opposite island of Maduro, Java where they were captured by Japanese soldiers that evening. Two days after their capture, the three Navy aviators were being flown to Japan as prisoners of war, and while in midflight, they attempted to overpower their guards with large wrenches and were killed with a samurai sword. Perhaps the most tragic of all VT-21 losses among her Guadalcanal veterans occurred two days after the Japanese signed the Instrument of Surrender on Sunday, September 2, 1945, aboard the USS *Missouri* (BB-63) anchored in Tokyo Bay. On Tuesday, September 4, with the world finally at peace and with a bright future ahead of him, twenty-four year old AOM1c Ralph Martin Hameetman, was the turret gunner in a TBM-3 Avenger on a routine flight from NAS Point Mugu (Oxnard), California when it collided with another Avenger fifteen miles north near the farming community of El Rio. Both Avengers went down in flames, crashing into a lemon orchard where all six Navy aviators perished.

There are one hundred and forty-three men listed by their last names and initials on the VT-21 Guadalcanal roster, who served during the months of (in part or whole) February, March, May, June, July and August 1943. At least thirty-two of these men were killed in action in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, including ten officer pilots and twenty-two petty officer radiomen and turret gunners, for a minimum death rate of twenty-five percent. "Minimum", because among the one hundred and forty-three men listed, seventeen men could not be positively identified, and their wartime fates are unknown after they left Guadalcanal on August 4, 1943. Seventeen of the total thirty-two VT-21 dead were killed in action while flying from Henderson Field. Based on available records, the number of wounded VT-21 flyers can be tabulated at only six, including AMM3c Herbert Albert Hopp, ARM2c Edgar Thomas Legere, ARM3c Richard Thomas Dole, AOM3c Charles Alexander Stranahan, Jr. and Ens. James R. Sprague; but it is certain there were many more who were wounded in action. It is also likely that at some point during their Guadalcanal tours, every CAG-21 member suffered from malaria, dysentery, dengue fever, beriberi, or other common and sometimes deadly tropical diseases. It is likewise a certainty that each man who survived, carried the psychological scars of their war for the rest of their lives.

The CAG-21 War Diary lists the VT-21 and VF-21 victories on its final summary page stating "*Enemy losses credited to Carrier Air Group Twenty One from 1 February 1943 to 3 August 1943: VF-21 - 68 enemy planes destroyed; VT-21 - 5 enemy planes destroyed, 6 enemy ships sunk; 7 enemy ships damaged*".⁴ The number of victories agrees with the VT-21 Guadalcanal roster. The roster symbolizes six enemy ships sunk including four warships and two cargo vessels; seven enemy warships seriously damaged (some of which may have sunk later); five enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground and in the air; and participation in seventeen night missions. The same total VT-21 victories are repeated in the Air Medal citation of Lt. Cmdr. William H. Keighley.

The middle daughter of Captain Robert Lee Savage, Jr., who was a CAG-21 pilot beginning May 15, 1943 and the VT-21 Commanding Officer beginning June 25, 1943, provided a digital scan of two communiques from among her father's documents. The first is undated, but has to be near the end of July because it is from US Navy Admiral, Marc Andrew Mitscher, who was in command of all air units at Guadalcanal from April through July, 1943. It is also from Mitscher's Chief of Staff, Marine General, Field Harris who replaced him. The recipients are all Guadalcanal squadrons that served under Mitscher and Harris, naming those squadrons at the bottom of the page. The communique states: "*Mitscher and Harris send to the best Air Force we know and the Air Force best known to the Japs. We are sad at relinquishing command of the toughest and best bunch of Jap killers on record. Best of luck, the best of landing and the best of hunting. Good bye, good luck and God bless you.*" It was sent to the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and Adjutant of the following squadrons "*VMF-122, VMF-213, VMTB-143, VMSB-144, VMSB-234, VF-21, VT-21, VT-11, F-2, SBD, TBF.*" The second communique is dated July 26, 1943 and is again from Admiral Marc Mitscher, Commander Air, Solomon Islands to the Commanding General, Guadalcanal, the Commander of Naval Bases, Solomon Islands and the Commander of Air Center, Solomons and states: "*Your unfailing and unstinted cooperation at all times and to all units of my command has been of utmost help in the job of killing Japs. Warmest thanks and best wishes for better days to come. Mitscher sends.*" At the bottom are the squadrons he copied on the communique: "*VF-21, VT-21, F#2 SBD TBF.*"

The oldest daughter of Captain Savage wrote: "*...when my father died...he requested that his ashes be taken out to the Pacific Ocean on a battleship and scattered there...this made me think that he carried the loss of his men throughout the rest of his life. To me, that means that he wanted to share the same burial place as the men he lost.*" Two of those men were my first cousin Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton "Chile" McKinney and his turret gunner ARM2c Jacob Casper "Jack" Durner, Jr. The search for the crash site of their TBF-1 Avenger #125 continues.

It is worth remembering, and frequently reminding ourselves, that the Chile McKinney story and the Jack Durner story, and the stories of the additional thirty other VT-21 heroes who were killed in action, are only a tiny fraction of the 435,713 American stories of loved ones who were killed or remain missing in World War II. The total global World War II dead and missing estimate of between seventy and eighty-five million is beyond comprehension.

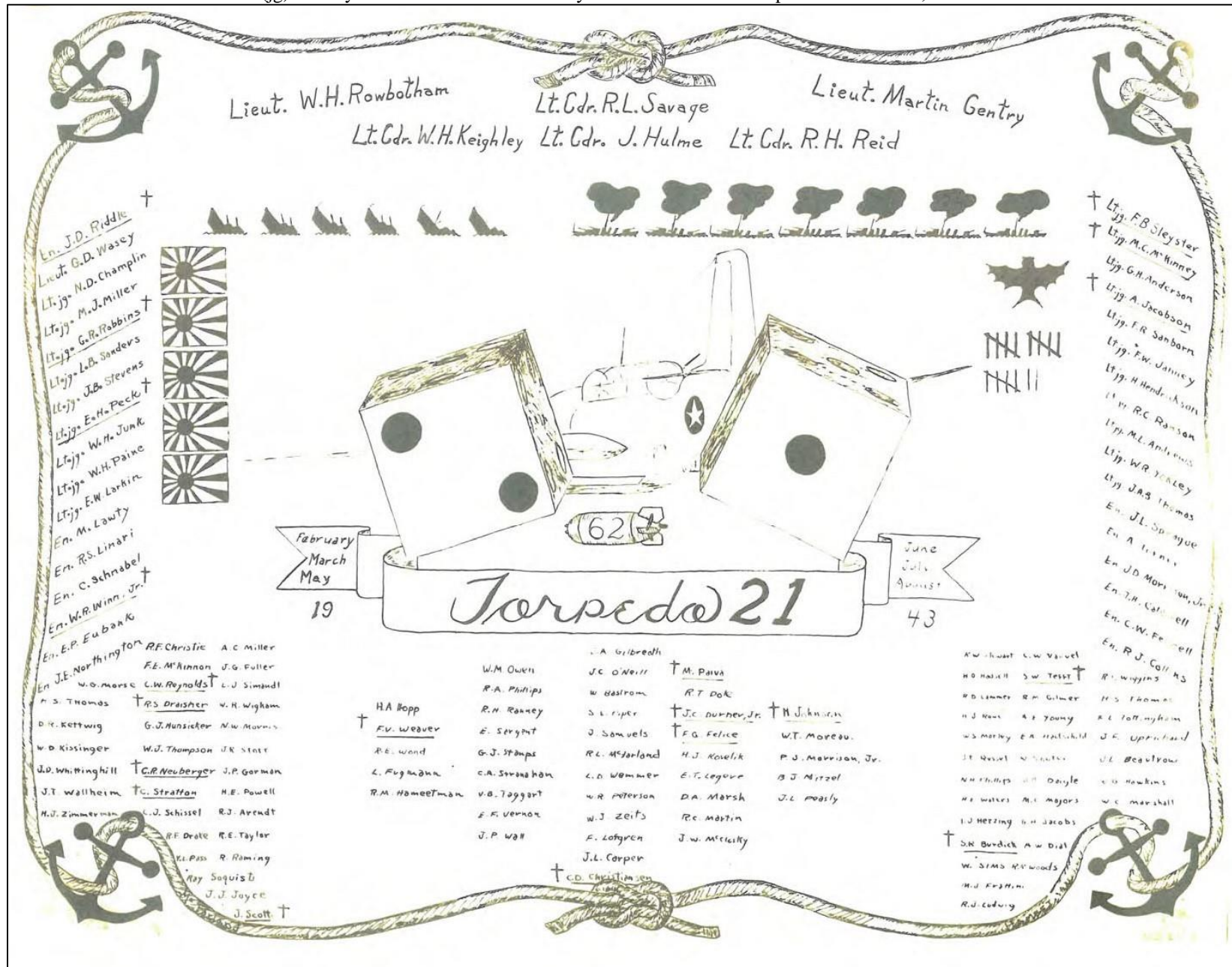
⁴ The CAG-21 War Diary date-range for enemy losses begins with their first Guadalcanal tour on February 1, 1943, when CAG-21 was still VGS-11, becoming VC-11 on March 1, 1943 and then finally CAG-21 on May 16, 1943 when they were combined with VGS-12/VC-12.

Chile, Jack and VT-21
Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton "Chile" McKinney and ARM2c Jacob Casper "Jack" Durner, Jr. USNR

143 MEN LISTED ON VT-21 GUADALCANAL ROSTER. CREWS ARE FROM COMBAT MISSION LISTS (<u>KIA</u> & DATE)								
38 OFFICER PILOTS ON CREW LISTS			35 PETTY OFFICER RADIOMEN ON CREW LISTS			35 PETTY OFFICER TURR. GUNNERS ON CREW LISTS		
LAST NAME	FIRST, MIDDLE, SUFFIX, "NICK" NAME	ST. BORN OR <u>KIA</u>	LAST NAME	FIRST, MIDDLE, SUFFIX, "NICK" NAME	ST. BORN OR <u>KIA</u>	LAST NAME	FIRST, MIDDLE, SUFFIX, "NICK" NAME	ST. BORN OR <u>KIA</u>
ANDERSON	George Harris	MS	<u>MARSH</u>	<u>Dodson Anderson</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>	<u>NIJZEL</u>	<u>Billie James</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>
ANDREWS	Milner Lauzer "Andy"	MN	KOSILEK	Henry Joseph, Jr.	IL	ZIMMERMAN	Harold John	OR
CALDWELL	Turner Moreland, Jr. "Red"	TX	PASS	Vincent Louis "Vince"	PA	<u>WATERS</u>	<u>Norman Earl</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>
CHAMPLIN*	Norman David "Champ"	MI	<u>GORMAN*</u>	<u>John Patrick</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>	KISSINGER*	William David	IA
COLLINS	Robert James	IL	SCHISSEL	Charles Joseph	IA	WIGHAM	William Edwin	WI
<u>EUBANK</u>	<u>Elwyn Paul</u>	<u>11Jan44</u>	<u>JOYCE</u>	<u>James Joseph, Jr.</u>	<u>25May45</u>	VARVEL	Carl Wesley, Jr.	MO
FERRELL	Charles Wayne	TX	THOMPSON	William Junior	OH	GILMER	R.M.	
HENRIKSON	Howard Russel	RI	SIMS	William	PA	POWELL	Hubert Elwood, Jr.	VA
HULME*	John	NY						
<u>JACOBSON</u>	<u>Alfred Frederick</u>	<u>17Jul43</u>	<u>FELICE</u>	<u>Frank Joseph</u>	<u>17Jul43</u>	<u>NEUBERGER</u>	<u>Clifford Roy</u>	<u>17Jul43</u>
JANNEY*	Frederick Wistar Morris "Jug"	PA	CARPER*	Jack Lee	NE	WIGGINS*	Richard Irving	NY
JUNK	Winfield Higdon "Wynn"	MS	RAMING	R.		LUDWIG	Robert Jean	OH
KEIGHLEY	William Harold	PA	ARENDT	Raymond Joseph	OH	FRATTINI	Michael John	CA
<u>LARKIN</u>	<u>Edward William, Jr. "Ed"</u>	<u>19Oct44</u>	<u>SOOUST</u>	<u>Reynold "Ray"</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>	<u>WHITTINGHILL</u>	<u>James Derick</u>	<u>19Oct44</u>
<u>LAWTY</u>	<u>Malcolm</u>	<u>04Jun44</u>	TAYLOR	Roger Ernest	IL	WALLHEIM	J.T.	
LINARI	Robert Stephen	CA	<u>WEAVER</u>	<u>Forrest Vernon</u>	<u>25Jul43</u>	YOUNG	A.E.	
	(E. Sargent replaced F.V. Weaver)		SARGENT	Estil	KY			
<u>McKINNEY</u>	<u>Murray Charlton "Chile"</u>	<u>07Jul43</u>	DOLE	Richard Thomas	IA	<u>DURNER</u>	<u>Jacob Casper, Jr. "Jack"</u>	<u>07Jul44</u>
MILLER*	Malcolm Johnstone	CAN	<u>McFARLAND*</u>	<u>Richard LaVerne</u>	<u>04Oct44</u>	STAMPS*	Gerald James	LA
MORRISON	John Decatur Jr.	MO	TAGGART	Vincent Bernard	IA	MORRISON	P.J. Jr.	
NORTHINGTON	Jack Ernest	TX	CHRISTIE	Robert Francis	NY	LAMMER	Robert D.	OR
PAINE	William Howard, Jr.	CA	<u>DRAKE</u>	<u>Robert Franklin</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>	HADSELL*	Herbert Orion	VA
PECK	Edward Melville	LA	SCOTT	Jesse. Jr.	KS	TEFFT	Stanley William	OH
RANSON	Robert Query "Bob"	NC	MILLER	Robert E.	OR	ROWE	H.J.	
<u>RIDDLE*</u>	<u>Joseph, Jr.</u>	<u>04Feb43</u>	OWEN*	William Murrel "Bill"	KY	HOPP*	Herbert Albert	WA
<u>ROBBINS</u>	<u>Gerald Alva</u>	<u>20Jul43</u>	<u>DRAISNER</u>	<u>Robert Simon</u>	<u>20Jul43</u>	<u>BURDICK</u>	<u>Stanley Rudolph</u>	<u>20Jul43</u>
<u>ROWBOTHAM</u>	<u>William Everitt</u>	<u>12Jun44</u>	FULLER	Joseph Glenn	OK	MORLEY	William Sabin, Jr. "Bill"	SC
SANBORN	Francis Reo	MI	LEGERE	Edgar Thomas	ME	MOREAU	Warren Theodore, Jr. "Jack"	CA
SANDERS	Lewis Ben	NE	KETTIG	Duane Randall "Tim"	SD	PHILLIPS	R.A.	
SAVAGE*	Robert Lee, Jr.	OK						
SCHNABEL	Charles William "Chick"	OH	McKINNON	Floyd Edward	OH	STEWART	Robert Warren	IA
<u>SLEYSER</u>	<u>Frederick Burton "Fred"</u>	<u>18May43</u>	<u>JOHNSON</u>	<u>Harry Hampton</u>	<u>18May43</u>	<u>PAIVA</u>	<u>Manuel</u>	<u>18May43</u>
SPRAGUE	James Reneau	MI	<u>CHRISTENSEN</u>	<u>Charles Dobbyn</u>	<u>13Jun43</u>	STRANAHAN	Charles Alexander, Jr.	CA
STEVENS*	Joseph Benson, Jr.	OH	SIMANDL*	Leonard James	IL	RUSSELL	J.F.	
THOMAS	John Arthur Light	ME	MORRIS	Nelson William	IN	PHILLIPS	N.H.	
TURNER	Arthur Nicholson	AZ				WOOD	R.E.	
WASEY*	Gager Douglas	OH						
<u>WINN</u>	<u>William Richard, Jr.</u>	<u>20Jul43</u>	<u>REYNOLDS</u>	<u>Carroll Wooster</u>	<u>20Jul43</u>	<u>STRATTON</u>	<u>Clifford Andrew</u>	<u>20Jul43</u>
YOKLEY	William Ross, Jr.	NC	VERNON	Edward Francis, Jr. "Ed"	IA	PEASLEY	Jasper Lynn	MI
2 STAFF OFFICERS ON VT-21 GUADALCANAL ROSTER			24 PETTY OFFICERS LISTED ON VT-21 GUADALCANAL ROSTER NOT FOUND ON CREW LISTS					
GENTRY*	Martin (Intelligence Officer)	MO	BASTROM	Walter	CO	MILLER	A.C.	
REID	Richard H. (Medical Officer)		BEAUTROW	John Edward	WA	MORSE*	William George	MI
9 PETTY OFFICERS ON VT-21 GUAD. ROST. NOT CONT'D			DAIGLE	Joseph Austin	TX	O'NEILL	J.C.	
LOFGREN*	Ferdinand		DIAL*	Adwin Winston, Jr.	TX	PETERSON	Walter Roland	MN
MAJORS	Marion Carl	TN	FUGMANN	Leonard	MI	PIPER	Stanley Louis	WA
MARSHALL	William Clarence	GA	GILBREATH	Joe Albert	AL	RANNEY	Robert Holder	IA
MARTIN	R.C.		<u>HAMEETMAN</u>	<u>Ralph Martin</u>	<u>04Sep45</u>	SAMUELS	J.	
McCLOSKEY*	Joseph William, Jr.	OH	HAUFSCILD	Erwin Arlington	SD	SOUTER	Wayne	TN
<u>WALL</u>	<u>Joseph Patrick "Pat"</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>	HAWKINS	W.G.		STOTT	John Russel	PA
WEMMER	L.D.		HERZING*	Ivan John	PA	THOMAS	Herbert S.	CA
WOODS	Robert Ralph	IL	HUNSICKER	George Jacoby	PA	TOTTINGHAM	Frank Leslie	MO
<u>ZETIS</u>	<u>William John</u>	<u>30Oct44</u>	JACOBS	G.N.		UPRICHARD	James Frederick	WA

ASTERISK * After last name indicates VGS-12/VC-12 squadron members before VT-21 was commissioned to combine VGS-11/VC-11 and VGS-12/VC-12.

Chile, Jack and VT-21
 Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton "Chile" McKinney and ARM2c Jacob Casper "Jack" Durner, Jr. USNR



143 men on the VT-21 Guadalcanal roster. 17, not 20, are KIA (underline & cross). Peck, Tefft & Scott are MIA & survived. Roster courtesy of Sandra (Savage) Skillman.

Chile, Jack and VT-21
Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton “Chile” McKinney and ARM2c Jacob Casper “Jack” Durner, Jr. USNR

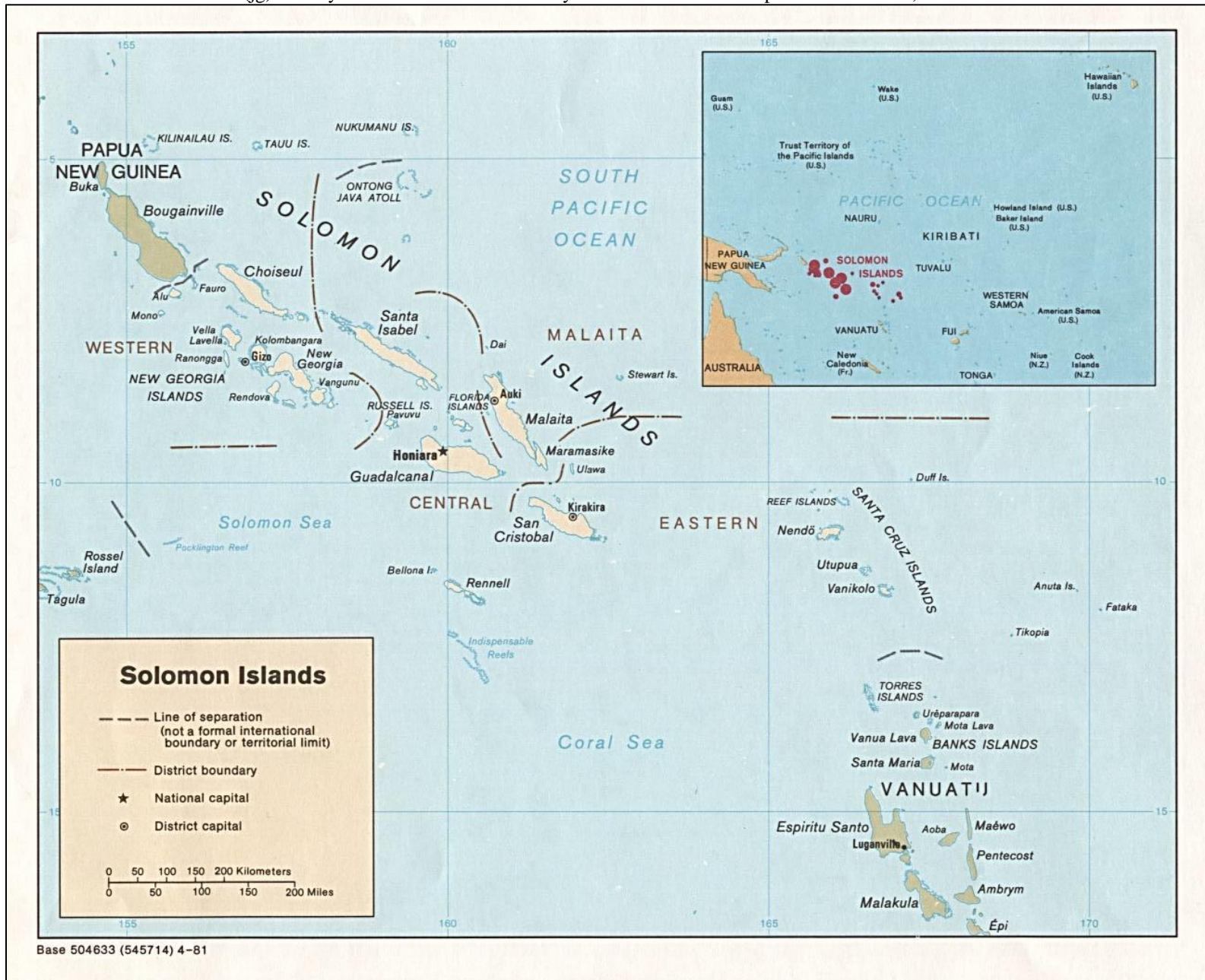


124 men of VT-21 combat air crews at Guadalcanal near the end of their tour on August 2, 1943. The number of men closely matches the end-of-tour VT-21 Guadalcanal roster on the previous page. The camp is in a sandy beach area with Sparrow's Mango trees (Buchanania arborescens).

Chile, Jack and VT-21
Lt.(jg) Murray Charlton "Chile" McKinney and ARM2c Jacob Casper "Jack" Durner, Jr. USNR



220 men of VT-21, all personnel, at Guadalcanal near the end of their tour on August 2, 1943. C.O. Savage: standing, first row, one right of center, garrison cap. Gunner, Michael John Frattini: sitting second row, middle left, on knees, open khaki shirt, white t-shirt, moustache. Picture courtesy of Michele (Frattini) Jackson.



Map of the Southwest Pacific Islands where VT-21 flew and fought.