

Guadalcanal and HMAS Canberra 70th Anniversary Tour

5 Nights 5-10 August 2012

On August 7, 1942, Allied forces landed on the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, the first step in a battle that was to become the turning point in the Pacific War. Now Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours is giving you the chance to walk in the footsteps of the marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought in this iconic Second World War campaign, and to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the battle. Your historian on this special journey is Mat McLachlan.



DAY 1 5 August – Arrive Honiara

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ **Airport transfer** ★ **Central, first-class hotel** ★ **Welcome dinner**

Welcome to our exclusive anniversary tour! On arrival in Honiara we will be picked up from the famous WWII Henderson Airfield and then transferred to our central hotel. We will enjoy a relaxing afternoon, perhaps visiting the nearby Point Cruz Yacht Club for a cool drink or two. This evening we will enjoy a welcome dinner, an excellent opportunity to get to know our travelling companions and Historian better. (D)

DAY 2 6 August – Guadalcanal

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ **Visits to the battlefields of Alligator Creek, Edson's Ridge, the Gifu, Mount Austen and more.**

Today we will explore the key battlefields from the campaign in and around Honiara. We will begin by visiting the US Memorial on Hill 73, which offers panoramic views over the battlefield. We will then drive to the Japanese Memorial on Hill 34 and also to the Japanese stronghold known as the Gifu, on the slopes of Mount Austen, where relics from the fighting abound. In the afternoon we will visit Alligator Creek, scene of the first major battle on Guadalcanal, and also the famous Bloody Ridge, where a small band of

marines held off a strong Japanese attack in September 1942. (B)

DAY 3 7 August – Guadalcanal 70th Anniversary

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ **Attendance at 70th anniversary commemoration services** ★ **Visit to Red Beach and the amtrac graveyard**

Today is the 70th anniversary of the Allied landings and a significant day of ceremonies. We will first attend a commemorative service at the US Memorial, built to honour the more than 7000 men who were killed capturing the island. Later we will attend a memorial ceremony for US Coast Guardsman Doug Munro who is the only member of the Coast Guard to have ever received the Medal of Honor. In the afternoon we will drive east and visit Red Beach, where Allied troops first landed on Guadalcanal, plus the 'amtrac graveyard', where dozens of World War Two amphibious tractors are parked in the jungle. (B)

DAY 4 8 August – Tulagi

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ **Boat transfer to Tulagi Island** ★ **Full day touring the islands of Tulagi, Gavutu and Tanambogo**

Today we man the boats. We will travel across the twenty miles of Iron Bottom Sound to

the island of Tulagi. At 7.40am on August 7, 1942, US marines made the first landing of the Guadalcanal campaign at Haleta on Florida Island. We will re-enact what can be regarded as the first step taken by US forces on the long road Tokyo. The 1st Raiders and the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines then pressed on with their Tulagi landings at Blue Beach. Later in the campaign Tulagi was an important Patrol Boat base, and this is where John F. Kennedy was originally stationed in 1943. During our day on Tulagi we will see the site of the Resident Commissioner's house and the fiercely fought over cricket pitch. In the afternoon we will see the smaller nearby islands of Gavutu and Tanambogo, which were also attacked by the marines on August 7. The Japanese fiercely resisted all these landings, and we will walk the ground where the marines fought their way ashore. There will also be the opportunity to snorkel over the wreck of a Japanese Kawanishi flying boat just off the wharf at Gavutu. We will then travel on to Purvis Bay where we will see the wreck of the American landing ship LST-342, which broke in half after being hit by a Japanese torpedo in 1943. The floating front half was towed to Purvis Bay and beached. In nearby Tokyo Bay we will see the sunken wreck of the Japanese destroyer *Kikutsuki* (and may even be able to clamber aboard the wreck if the tide is low). The *Kikutsuki* was used during the original Japanese landings on Tulagi on May 3, 1942 and was sunk the



next day by planes from Admiral Fletcher's carriers *Yorktown* and *Lexington*, in what can be regarded as the opening shots in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Late in the afternoon we will return across Iron Bottom Sound to Guadalcanal. (B)

DAY 5 9 August – HMAS *Canberra*
70th Anniversary

STAR INCLUSIONS:

- ★ Memorial service for HMAS *Canberra*
- ★ Vilu outdoor museum ★ Bonegi Beach ★ Dinner

Our first visit today will be to the Australian HMAS *Canberra* memorial on the anniversary of her sinking during the naval Battle of Savo Island. We will conduct a memorial service and lay a wreath in honour of the 193 Australian sailors killed or wounded during the battle. After the ceremony we will drive west to the amazing outdoor museum at Vilu, with its collection of wrecked aircraft, tanks and guns. We will also visit Bonegi Beach and see the wreck of a Japanese transport ship that was beached during the campaign. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner in our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 6 10 August – Farewell

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Airport transfer

Our last morning in Honiara gives us the chance to catch up on last-minute shopping and sightseeing. In the afternoon we will be transferred to the airport for our flight back to Australia. (Passengers who are joining a dive or fishing tour will be collected from the hotel.) Our journey may be over but the memories will last a lifetime. (B)

YOUR HISTORIAN

(see page 41 for more information about our leading War Historians)



Mat McLachlan

Mat McLachlan is one of Australia's leading war historians and battlefield guides, and has spent almost two decades following in the footsteps of Australian troops on battlefields around the world. He has published two books and regularly appears as a historian on television and radio.

Your tour includes

- ★ The best historian: This tour is being escorted by Mat McLachlan, the founder of Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours. Mat is an expert on the battles of Guadalcanal
- ★ 5 nights' first-class accommodation at the Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara's newest and highest-standard hotel
- ★ Extensive touring of the battlefield sites on Guadalcanal
- ★ All excursions, scenic drives and sightseeing as described in the itinerary
- ★ Full day tour to Tulagi including boat transfer
- ★ 70th anniversary commemorations at the US Memorial and HMAS *Canberra* Memorial
- ★ Daily breakfast, plus Arrival and Farewell dinners
- ★ All entrance fees as per the itinerary
- ★ Touring by comfortable mini bus
- ★ All tips to your historian and driver
- ★ Quality travel bag and luggage tags
- ★ Souvenir cap

\$2397 per person, twin share (land only)

Single supplement: \$697. Ask about our airfare deals, which offer great discounts when booked in conjunction with our tours.

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Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours

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*Conditions apply

Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours is the tour operator for the NSW Premier's Anzac Scholarships and the Victorian Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize 2011.



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