Expeditions to the Real “Bali Hai”

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Topics:

- Vanuatu – What’s That?
- Past Expeditions
- The Next Effort: Bali Hai -- Destroyed?
Vanuatu – What’s That?
Vanuatu is a country in the SW Pacific, with 83 volcanic islands and 250,000 friendly people.
Previously the New Hebrides, Vanuatu was the setting for *South Pacific*, and got independence in 1980 from Britain and France.
Vanuatu is famous for volcanos, beaches, and land-diving into the dirt below...

...which inspired bungee jumping!
The best wreck dive in the world, beautiful people, and exciting culture
Vanuatu is dominated by male chiefs, who rise in rank by killing sacred pigs with circular tusks.
Past Expeditions
First expedition in 2001 found WW II plane and interviewed chiefs
Explorers Club Flag expedition in 2013 solved aviation archaeology mystery

....evaluated the island emergency management plan...

....and observed a boar-killing ceremony
For 126 years anthropologists have stated or assumed that there are no female chiefs in Vanuatu.

Codrington in 1891:

“Women are completely excluded from the Suqe of the men…”
Our 2016 expedition team arrived on Maewo to observe the Women’s Festival and interview female chiefs.
The Festival emphasized traditions

Women in traditional pandanus leaf garments

Cooking w/ hot rocks

Food prep. w/ bamboo knife

Males opened and closed the Festival
Doreen Leona and her mother, from Pentecost island, ARE female chiefs
The Next Effort:
Bali Hai – Destroyed?
Mt. Manaro exploded in 2018 – 2019...
Ashfall covered 25% of the island
IN APRIL 2020 CYCLONE HAROLD HIT VANUATU AND AMBAE
OVER 60% OF HOUSES & STRUCTURES DESTROYED
2021 Ambae Expedition:

- Evaluate disaster response
- Review emergency plan & island habitability
- Aviation archaeology
- Find more female chiefs
Tank Yu Tumas!

QUESTIONS?