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Obituaries  
A—F  
G—N  
O—T  
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## Cameron couple on quest

Jessie Foss  
Chronotype staff

Five hundred miles southwest of Guam in the Pacific Ocean lies the sub-tropical Yap Island, known for its world-class scuba diving and Micronesian culture.

Hidden in the depths of the waters off its coast and deep in its jungles are remnants of the island's deep World War II history.

About 34 American planes carrying 159 men were shot down on missions to Yap Island during the war. Many of those planes and about 110 men were never recovered.

Many of the crash sites on Yap Island were thought to be Japanese planes because the Yap Islanders did not know the history of American losses.

Finding the planes-and one in particular-have become a life's passion for Pat and Cherie Ranfranz of Cameron.

Pat's uncle, Tech Sgt. John McCullough was one of 10 crew members aboard Coleman B-24 when it was shot down by a Japanese fighter over Yap Island and declared missing June 25, 1944.

More than 60 years later, the plane's wreckage and the bodies of those aboard have never been recovered, but for more than 20 years Pat and Cherie have been working to change that.

On his Web site, "www.MissingAirCrew.com," Pat said he believes the Coleman crew "should not lie anonymously in the waters near Yap Island. The crew member families need to know where their loved ones lie."

The Ranfranzes will make their fourth trip to Yap Island for a weeklong search for the plane the last week in August.

Due to the recent discovery of new information, Pat and Cherie are more confident than ever this could be the trip they find Pat's uncle and the rest of the Coleman crew.

"This is our best chance ever to find this B-24," Pat said.

Pat's optimism stems from a mid-July trip to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., where he found what he called the "holy grail" of finds while poring over documents.

He discovered documents, which were confidential until recently, including an interview with the one-time Japanese commander of Yap Island that showed the Coleman was shot down just east of Dora Channel.



*Pat and Cherie Ranfranz of Cameron hold sign commemorating Pat's uncle Tech Sgt. John McCullough, whose plane was shot down over Yap Island in 1944.*

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Music Other	As soon as Pat made this discovery he frantically e-mailed from his Blackberry contacts on Yap Island asking where Dora Channel is.
<b>Sports</b> High School Others	Those on Yap Island had never heard of it. Pat discovered the reason is because Dora Channel is what the Japanese called the channel.
<b>Outdoors</b> Other Activities Fishing & Hunting	Pat pulled out some Japanese maps of Yap Island, sent them to a Japanese-speaking friend in California, and the friend was able to find Dora Channel.  "We now have what we consider to be the location of my uncle's plane," Pat said.
<b>Special Sections</b> Area Visitor Guide Dining Guide Area Golf Guide	Pat and Cherie have searched this general area before, but the area is now narrowed down by miles. The two are both certified scuba divers, so they will be combing the channel's bottom looking for the plane.  The Ranfranzes will be joined on Yap Island by a few people from History Flight.
<b>Community Links - Non-profits, Schools</b> Community Links	The Florida-based organization is dedicated to preserving American World War II, Vietnam and Gulf War aviation history.  The group will use sonar and other equipment to help find the plane.
<b>Business Directory Links</b>	Pat said he can't even imagine what it will be like if they are able to find the plane. He believes finding plane wreckage is important and helps preserve the lost men's legacy.
<b>Submit Classified Ad</b>	"These are men who were basically forgotten until we brought them back," he said. "We bring back their passion. Otherwise it's just junk in the jungle."
<b>Try The Chronotype - Free Trial Offer</b>	Pat's passion for finding his uncle's plane began as a child when he heard stories about his uncle being shot down. Information was limited though, and the family knew very little about the Coleman going down.
<b>Subscribe - Complete Online Newspaper</b>	Pat said he always wondered what would have become of his uncle if he had lived.  He began researching and searching for the Coleman crew in 1988 while finishing his history degree at UW-Eau Claire.
<b>Place Your Ad Here</b> The Chronotype The Early Bird Chronotype/Early Bird Combo Buy	Pat continued his research through graduation, but it was put on hold soon after while he and Cherie went about working and raising their daughter.  After their daughter went off to college, the Ranfranzes were once again able to pursue their passion of hunting for planes.
<b>Games</b> Online Games	Pat also works full time as director of marketing at Rice Lake Weighing Systems, so much of his history research happens at night.
<b>Chronotype Advertising Rates</b>	He considers the research and plane hunting both a hobby and a passion.  "Rather than playing golf, I search for planes," Pat said.
<b>Documents</b> Government	Besides looking for the Coleman plane and crew, the Ranfranzes will also be helping the Yap Islanders learn the history of their island pertaining to World War II.
<b>Order Gem of The Red Cedar Valley</b>	Last week, Pat and Cherie shipped to Yap Island two signs marking the crash site of a Hellcat that was shot down there in September 1944. The two helped locate and document the plane's wreckage during a previous trip to Yap Island.  A larger sign was made by Kevin Adams of Buzz Signs and Graphics in Cameron. Adams researched what material would hold up in tropical weather and then made the sign.  What was created is a sign that documents what is known of the aircraft, the pilot who flew it and the circumstances surrounding its being shot down. The sign will be framed with wood and placed near the crash site.  The Ranfranzes also have shipped a marble engraved marker that will be placed closer to the crash site in memory of the Hellcat's pilot, Ensign Joseph Cox.



Many of Cox's remains were previously removed and buried by his family in Idaho, but pieces of bone have been found at the crash site. Pat said the marble marker will serve as somewhat of a tombstone for Cox.

It is Pat's plan and goal to commemorate each World War II crash site on Yap "island with such signs.

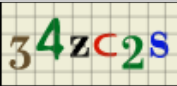
More information on Pat and Cherie's search for Pat's uncle and other missing planes and men can be found at "www.MissingAirCrew.com."

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