

Code Name Rascal

Book Club Kit



Dearest Reader,

I wish I could be sitting right next to you as you read *Code Name Rascal*, but I'm sure I would drive you crazy after five minutes. I'd be tugging at your sleeve, saying things like:

That really happened. It's even a scene in the movie *Tora! Tora! Tora!*

Did you know that Actress Jeff Dennell played Cornelia Fort?

Or, oh! You should see the Royal Hawaiian Hotel! It looks just like it did then, let me show you a few pictures,"

I'd be asking you about scene changes I made and if you like the original better. or get your take on deleted scenes.

So, instead of being a mosquito in your ear while you are trying to read the book, let me ask your opinion about a few things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (REALLY THE “TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK” QUESTIONS)

1. CJ, Ruth, Eve and Jane each come from diverse backgrounds. What does each woman bring to the story? Whose journey impacted you most?

OK, that's the serious book club question, but here's the real issue. I wanted to show the challenges for four very different women—different ages, economic, social background and marital status, but I also wanted to show that all women face some of the same challenges. Did I hit on any of you?

2. The novel explores secrecy, censorship, and trust during wartime.

How do these themes affect the relationships between characters?

The war stressed relationships more than normal, but We've all had one of those friends that either showed up for us or ghosted us during the bad times. I'm not so sure I could trust Eve, but then again, she did come through at the most unexpected times.

3. What role does class and privilege play in the story—particularly between the military, the press, and local communities?

There's nothing new about this issue.



4. The setting—wartime Hawai‘i—is more than just a backdrop. How does the island landscape and its transformation affect the tone and stakes of the story? How did the experience of reading this novel change or deepen your understanding of life in Hawai‘i during World War II?

OK, dear ladies, (and the few men who will be interested in CNR), I’m a former librarian. I spent 20+ years researching World War 2 Hawaii, so, the “spirit” of the book is right on, but I did mess with a few dates for the purpose of the story. I hope to show what it was really like living on Oahu during those first six months of the war.

5. How does grief and loss shape the choices of the main characters and how did the other characters support them?

We’ve all had our losses, and we all deal with them differently. I cannot imagine any worse loss than the death of a child, or sending a husband to war, but these ladies did it, and they did it together.

6. The ending offers resolution but leaves some emotional questions unanswered. What do you imagine happened next for each of them?

Ah, and maybe that’s the story of the second book

7. If you could ask the author one question about the book, what would it be?

Why not ask me in person? I’d love to get on a Zoom meeting with you. Email me and we can set something up.

Deebuckingham96744@gmail.com

🎵 WWII-ERA PLAYLIST

You mention World War 2 and I hear the Big Band sound and the Hapa Haole songs of Hawai'i. Some of the songs in this playlist are mentioned in *Code Name Rascal*.

Get your feet tapping and enjoy!

🎵 Big Band Essentials of WWII



Glenn Miller – “In the Mood”

Who doesn't think of this song when they hear “Big Band” sound. It became an anthem of wartime swing. The first bars were instantly recognizable and got GIs and their ladies on the dance floor. Here's a colorized youtube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aME0qvhZ37o>

Here's a link to Captain Glenn Miller's Army Air Force Band. Miller was killed in an aircraft crash during the war.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/major-glenn-miller-us-army-air-forces#:~:text=In%20the%20summer%20of%201942,Captain%20Glenn%20Miller%2C%20US%20Army.>

Artie Shaw – “Begin the Beguine”

The first song mentioned in *Code Name Rascal* is Cole Porter's “Begin the Beguine,” who wrote the story about couple beginning an intimate dance. It's evocative language and themes of lost love, nostalgia, and longing made it a World War 2 favorite.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCYGyg1H56s> (This is an instrumental.)

Glenn Miller – “Chattanooga Choo Choo”

Another song in the first chapter of *Code Name Rascal*. Poor Linc can't get his best man's toast out over the singing-along diners at Wo Fat's. Here are the Andrews Sisters singing with Glenn Miller's band.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdrYYUuT07Q>

The Andrews Sisters – “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy”

This rousing, swing song is the Andrews Sisters' most beloved songs. It became a cultural and pop icon for troops and civilians alike. This clip is from the movie *Buck Privates*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8of3uhG1tCI>

Vera Lynn– “When the Lights Go On Again”

I wanted to get this song into the book. I tried to sneak it in so many scenes, but it didn't fit. It has a soft, hopeful sentiment about the war someday ending, and the blackouts ceasing. Although it was written about the London Blitz, it deeply resonated with Americans. Its lyrics include: “When the lights go on again, all over the world, and the boys come home again, all over the world.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8of3uhG1tCI>

HAPA HAOLE PLAYLIST POPULAR DURING WWII



If you didn't grow up in the islands, you may not be familiar with some of these songs. Check out the links:

“My Little Grass Shack in Kealahou, Hawaii”

This playful ukulele-and-steel-guitar tune, blending swing rhythms with Hawaiian touches, was a #1 hit in early 1934—and became a soldier favorite during the war. Listen to a clip on youtube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kft66pAllc>



The photo above is of the Harry Owens band performing at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Eve Russell mentions the band in Chapter One. After the war, Owens took his band to the mainland, his show was a bit more “Hollywood” after that, but a video of an evening with Owens can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZDexAA0XZc>

“Hawaiian War Chant”

A lively, popular hapa haole number often featured in dance halls, sheet music, and "soundies" during the 1940s. Here's a video of the Tommy Dorsey Band playing (with Buddy Rich on the drums)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ZDQ43tWes>

“Aloha ‘Oe” (Farewell to Thee)

The traditional song of Aloha ‘Oe is a deeply emotional song written by Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1878. It is both a love song about a tender farewell between lovers but also reflects the Queen's sorrow and the loss of the Hawaiian monarchy and country, but during the war, it was often arranged with steel guitar and English harmonies for troops. Here is a traditional rendition.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1bIxMYPlas>

📍 LOCATIONS IN CODE NAME RASCAL

Many of the scenes in *Code Name Rascal* were inspired by real places across O‘ahu—some dramatic, others tucked quietly into neighborhoods or behind guarded gates. These locations ground the story in history and help bring the characters' world to life.



The Royal Hawaiian Hotel

If you have visited Honolulu, then you know the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Its pink stucco castle is an icon of the islands. The historic part of this hotel is untouched. When you stroll the lobby or walk into the ballroom you are transported to any time from the early 1900's that your imagination allows. Throughout the hotel there are displays of sets of china, ballgowns, photos and menus. <https://www.royal-hawaiian.com/>



Makapu'u Point Lookout

This dramatic overlook near the Makapu'u Lighthouse plays a powerful role in several scenes in the story. The striking ocean and neighbor island views reflect the emotional intensity of the story's turning point. There is no way a photo can give you the awesome glory of this lookout. I encourage you to search online for videos of this site.



Mō‘ili‘ili

In *Code Name Rascal*, CJ and Eve make a few trips to Mō‘ili‘ili, a Japanese neighborhood of Honolulu. The shock of seeing such a traditional “Japanese village” blocks from Waikiki is one of the ways I use CJ to explain the complex demographic and culture of the islands. This torii stands in Mō‘ili‘ili, in a triangular park across the street from organic health food stores, Safeway and

some college bars.



McCully and King Streets Neighborhood

One of the surprising facts about December 7, 1941, was that there were civilian casualties and that civilian neighborhoods were “bombed”—not by the Japanese, but by faulty American munitions.

Not only were homes hit, but the Lunalilo School was also hit. One of the Boy Scouts that helped with the evacuation of persons and with the fighting of fires was a high school boy, Danny Inouye, who later became a member of the famed “Go For Broke” regiment and was elected U.S. Senator.

RECIPES

The History of the Icon Mai Tai

Well, I told you I can’t give short answers!

This is a “history” of the recipes for the icon Mai Tai. There are as many Mai Tai recipes as there are mixologists. Are you ready?

Trader Vic Bergeron, Mai Tai, 1944

The original Mai Tai was introduced by Trader Vic Bergeron. There was no pineapple or orange juice in this drink:

2 ounces of 17-year old J. Wray & Nephew Jamaican Rum over shaved ice

½ ounce Holland DeKuyper Orange Curacao

½ ounce French Garnier Orgeat Syrup

¼ ounce Trader Vic’s Rock Candy Syrup

Add juice from one fresh Lime.

Simplified 1944 Mai Tai Recipe



After a few complaints from the bartenders, the recipe was simplified to:

2 oz / 60 ml Aged Rum
1/2 oz / 15 ml Orange Curacao liqueur
1/2 oz / 15 ml Orgeat syrup
1/4 oz / 7 1/2 ml Rock Candy/Rich Simple Syrup or Demerara Syrup
1 oz / 30 ml Lime juice

1956 Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai

The first Mai Tai wasn't served at the Royal Hawaiian until after World War 2, so, it had no place in *Code Name Rascal*. It was a lot less formal a recipe:

Juice of One Lime
Dash of Rock Candy Syrup
Dash of Curacao
Dash of Orgeat
1 1/2 ounces Trader Vic's Puerto Rican Rum
3/4 ounce Myers's Plantation Punch Rum
Stir and decorate with fresh mint

1972 Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai – This is what you think of as a “real” Mai Tai

The Royal didn't use pineapple until 1960, a few years after The Moana Surfrider put it in its drink.

The following recipe comes from *Drinks of Hawaii*. Paul B. Dick doesn't specify an exact amount of pineapple or orange Juice except to say that they should be

used in equal parts, so go with your gut!

OFFICIAL HANDBOOK • 100 RECIPES

Drinks of Hawaii



By PAUL DICK

FOURTH
EDITION
\$2.50

1972 Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai

1/2 oz Lime Juice
1/4 oz Lemon Juice
1 oz Orange Juice
1 oz unsweetened Pineapple Juice
1/4 oz Sugar Syrup
1/4 oz Orgeat
1/4 oz Orange Curacao
1 oz Demerara Rum
1 oz Dark Jamaican Rum
1 oz Light Rum

1990s Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai

Making the drink was made even more efficient with the development of a mix:

5 oz Mai Tai Mix
1 oz White Rum
1 oz Myers's Dark Rum
Fill glass with ice, add **mix** and rums

The Original Mai Tai Mix

10 oz Orange Juice
4 oz Orange Curacao
2 oz Orgeat
2 oz Rock Candy Syrup
2 oz Sour Lemon
Combine all ingredients and add water to make 1 quart



2010 Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai “secret recipe”

Then in 2010, The Royal added Amaretto and Cherry Vanilla Puree to the Mai Tai.

Really? What were they thinking? they were trying to court the “mixology” generation of tourists?

Here it is:

Build in shaker with ice.

- 1 oz Bacardi Rum
- 1 tsp Cherry Vanilla Puree
- ½ oz Amaretto di Saronno
- ½ oz Cointreau
- 1 oz Fresh Govinda Orange Juice
- 2 oz Fresh Govinda Pineapple Juice
- ½ oz Whaler’s Dark Rum Float

2022 Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai—back to common sense

The Amaretto was like all those Coca-Cola experiments—it was a failure. So, they went back to a variation of the original recipe:

- 2 oz Pineapple Juice
- 1 oz Orange Juice
- ½ oz Orgeat
- ½ oz Orange Curacao

1 oz Old Lahaina Light Rum
1 oz Old Lahaina Dark Rum (float)

Shake all ingredients except the Dark Rum with ice. Pour in a large “bucket” glass. Float the Dark Rum, garnish with a parasol with cherry, pineapple and lime wedge, but please don’t say “Aloha” when you pass it to your guest!

Here's a video that traces the history of the icon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1a3SCguPKU>

QUESTIONS READERS ASK ME:

1. What inspired you to write *Code Name Rasca!*

I’ve lived in Hawai‘i for over 30 years and always felt drawn to the hidden stories of women here during World War II. When I first learned about the Women’s Air Raid Defense (WARD)—an all-female, top-secret radar unit—I was stunned. These women played a vital role in defending the islands, yet their contributions were rarely acknowledged. I knew this was a story that needed to be told.

2. Are any of the characters based on real people?

No, my characters are fictional. They aren’t based on any real people but they’re inspired by a composite of experiences of women of the WARD.



Here I am with Ruth Cope. (1998?) You can read Ruth's true life love story on my website: <https://dorotheabuckingham.com/essay/>

I interviewed several women in my research and read oral histories, newspapers, academic works and searched the Hawaii War Records Depository for photographs. So, the women are not “real,” they are “true.”

3. Why did you choose to write a story with multiple women at the center?

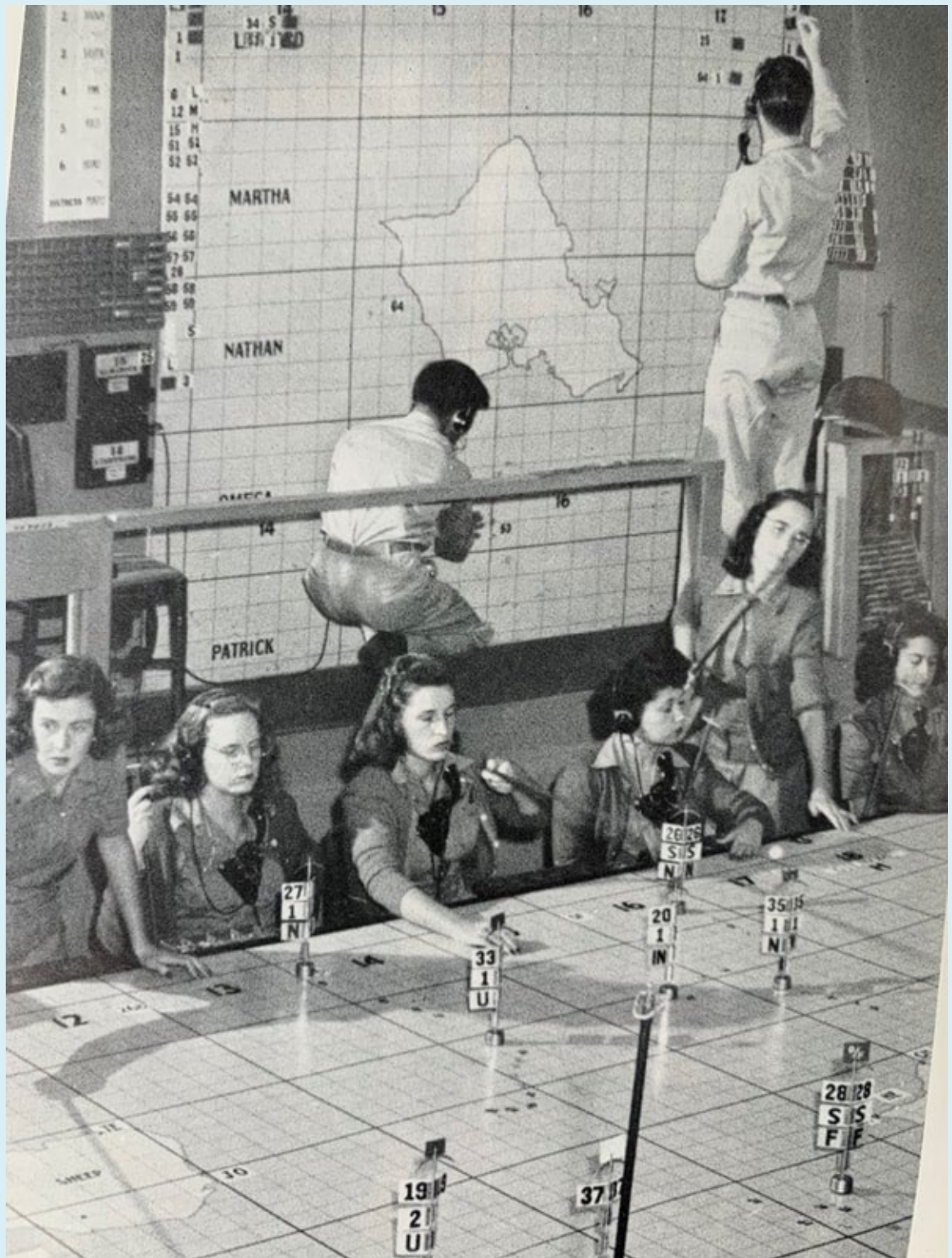
I wanted to show the diversity of wartime Hawai'i—local women, military wives, newcomers to the island. Each character presents a different view of the islands, the war, duties of a woman and the limits on women during that time. CJ, a newcomer, introduces you to the culture and mores of the time. She is wide-eyed, questioning all the time and gives a peak into what it was like for women journalists in the 1940s. Eve gives a view of life to the affluent whites during the war and represents the value changes that they were faced with when a war came to their backyard. Jane explores women who venture outside the expected. She's tough, she's a pilot, but when it came to a choice of husbands, she made a mistake and has to face those consequences in a time when women did not divorce. And Ruth, oh Ruth. There is no timeline for a mother who has buried her child, and the journey through a life of grief.

4. How did you research the book?

I spent years reading government reports, military archives, local newspapers from the 1940s, and oral histories from the University of Hawai'i's Center for Oral History. I also visited many of the locations in the book. Some details—like how blackouts were enforced, or what censorship really looked like—came directly from those sources. I followed any thread of information about that time. It became and is my passion.

For awhile I had a column in a (now defunct) local newspaper about Women of World War 2 Hawaii. I've taken some of that research, and research for *Code Name Rascal* and I post it in a Substack newsletter titled, "Beaches, Brothels and Barbed Wire." You can read it for free at:

<https://dorotheanbuckingham.substack.com/>



5. What do you hope readers take away from the story?

I hope readers come away with a deeper understanding of the home front in Hawai‘i during World War II—especially the lives of women who often went unseen in official histories. More than that, I hope they feel connected to these characters and, when they are finished reading the book, I hope they take these women with them for the rest of their lives.

6. **Will there be a sequel?**

7.

I’m considering it! The characters still whisper to me, and I know some readers want to follow them beyond the war. If I do return to their stories, it will be with the same commitment to historical accuracy and emotional honesty. Do you have any ideas for me?

DELETED IDEAS AND ALTERNATE PATHS

1. A fifth Woman in the WARD Unit

When the first of the girls leaves the WARDe I originally introduced at one point, a fifth WARD. I made her a recent Japanese American graduate of the University of Hawai‘i. She was cut early in the drafting process—not for lack of interest, but introducing her would complicate the story with politics, racism and the different opinions among the Japanese American community. I got too far down the rabbit hole with it, and cut it.



2. The Missing Letter Subplot

There was a subplot involving a letter from Ruth to her husband Gordon, that got lost due to military censorship. In it, Ruth asked raw, almost cruel questions of Gordon about his feelings about being a childless couple. It would have added tension but slowed the pace—the question of what happened to the letter hung in the wind. So, that thread went nowhere. I also decided it was too harsh for Ruth’s character to write. At that point in the story, she was more broken than angry. And I wanted to keep focused on Ruth’s silence and grief over their stillborn child.

3. Valentine’s Party at Parker’s Beach House

If you have heard the term “kill your darlings,” it applies here. Writers know “kill your darlings” as the need to cut a scene that are SO proud of, but they don’t contribute to the forward movement of the story.

Well, I wrote a great scene (in my humble opinion) about Parker’s past Valentine’s Day Party. It was Cole Porter and Pansy Culture at its finest! I had it vetted with several gay sensitivity readers and they, to a man, loved it and thought it was hilarious and inciteful.

The problem? Id didn’t belong in the book. It was a big bright shiny scene that said, “Look at me” and took you out of the story—but oh, I loved that scene!

Who knows? It may show up in the next book—or it may be a “darling”



I need to kill then, too.

6. Jane's sexuality

I thought about making Jane gay, but it was too cliché, and it seemed forced. It would add to the “if she’s a pilot in a man’s world and has short hair, she must be gay” attitude. And, it would have lessened the conflict she felt in the decision to leave or stay with Buck. So, I let the hint of that possibility exist, but in the end, the reader knows she happily remarries.

WELL, THERE IT IS MY “SHORT” BOOK CLUB KIT.

I warned you that I can't stop talking about the WARDs.

I'd love to meet you and "talk story" about *Code Name Rascal*. The best way for me to get there from Hawaii is Zoom. So, just email me at deebuckingham96744@gmail.com or use the form in the website.

And, if you'd like to know more about life in Hawai'i during World War 2, subscribe to my free newsletter, "Beaches, Brothels and Barbed Wire" at

<https://dorotheanbuckingham.substack.com/>



World War II Hawaii: Beaches, Brothels, and Barbed Wire

Beaches, Brothels, and Barbed Wire delves into the civilian experiences of World War II-era Hawai'i, highlighting the untold stories of wartime life, through research, personal interviews and photographs.

By Dorothea N. Buckingham · Launched 2 years ago

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