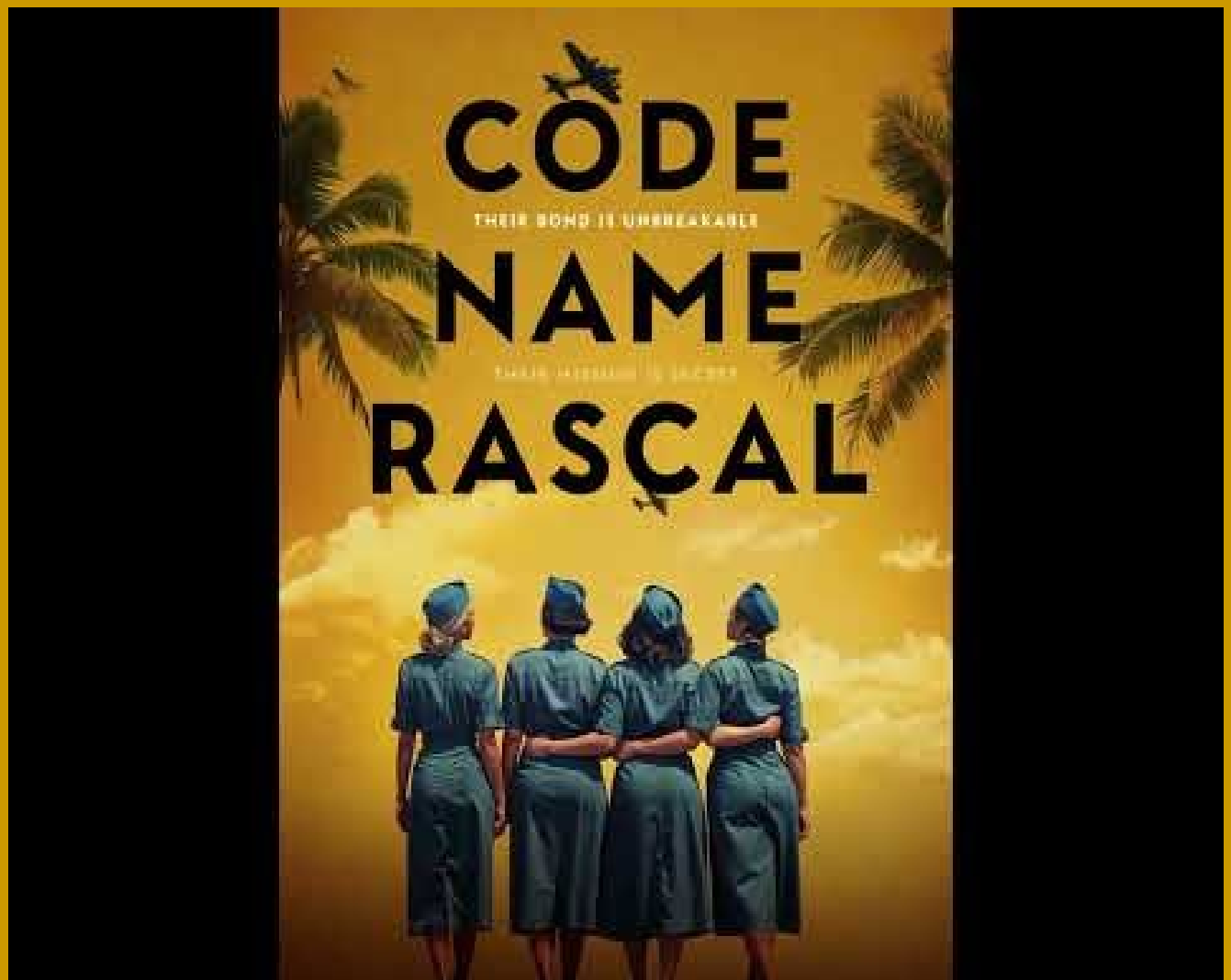


The Book Club Kit



Letter from Dee

Dear Reader,

I wish I were sitting right next to you as you read Code Name Rascal. I'd be tugging at your sleeve, saying things like:

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

“Oh! You should see the Royal Hawaiian Hotel! It looks just like it did then, let me show you a picture.”



I'd be telling you about real-life villains and secrets behind the scenes. Instead, I compiled this “sit down next to me and have some coffee” kit for your book club.

I'd love to visit you via Zoom!

Enjoy!

The Woman Who Started It All

I began researching what life was like for civilian women in Hawai'i during World War 2 in the late 1980s.

Here I am with Ruth Cope at Pearl Harbor National Memorial, 1989.



I still had brown hair!

Ruth and her husband Bill, a bomber pilot during the war, were weekly volunteers telling their story. She was the first WARD I met.

Ruth's Story

Ruth and Bill's love story has been told in magazines, documentaries, on my Substack newsletter

(<https://dorotheanbuckingham.substack.com/p/bill-and-ruth>) and on this website

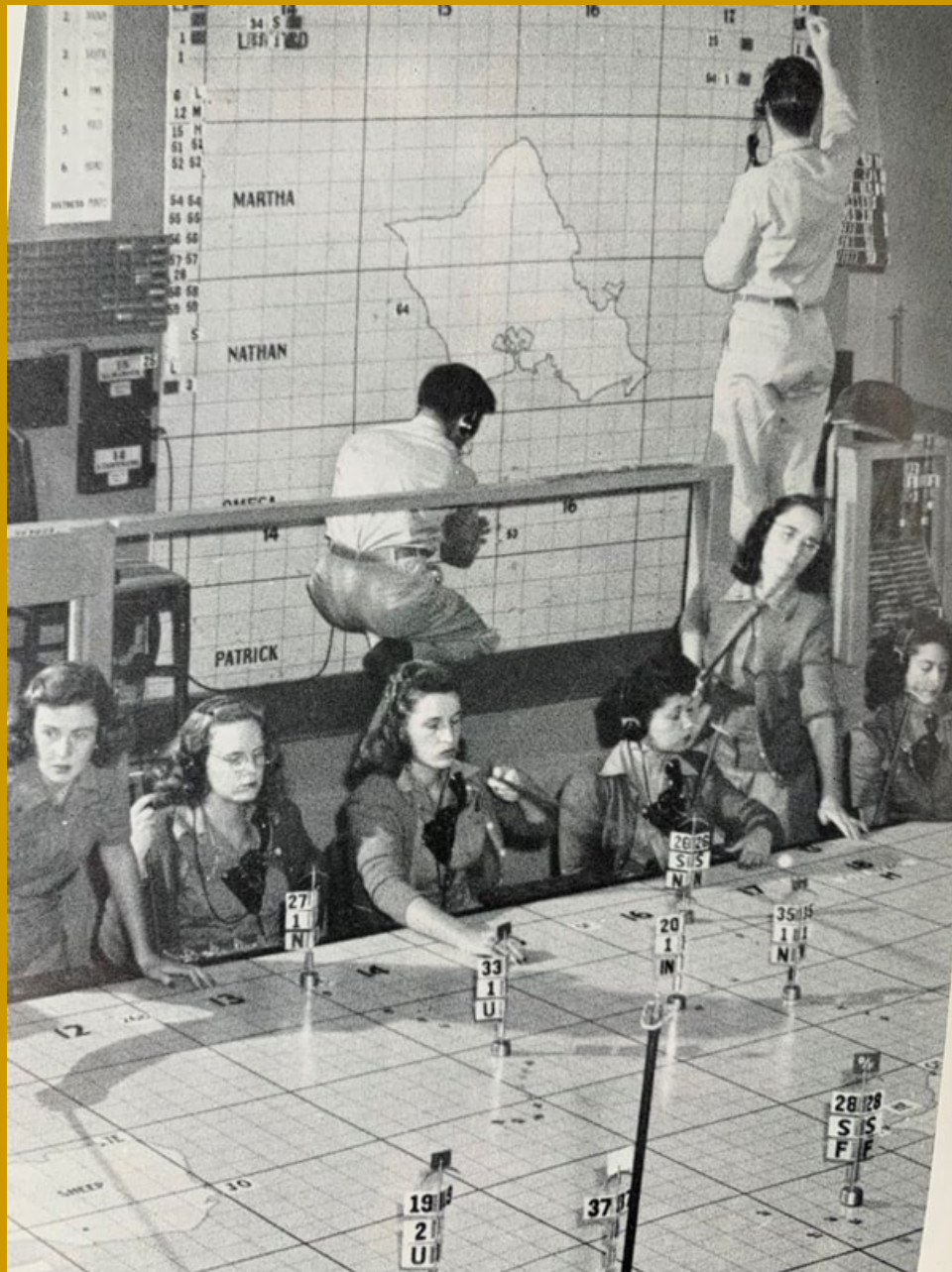
(<https://dorotheabuckingham.com/essay/>)

What started as an interview about women's role in the war ended in a long friendship between Ruth, Bill, my husband and myself.

Ruth was the first WARD (Women's Air Raid Defense) member I met, and she introduced me to Cathy Cooper who introduced me to others and so it went, until I had interviewed a cadre of women and developed a hero worship for each one of them.

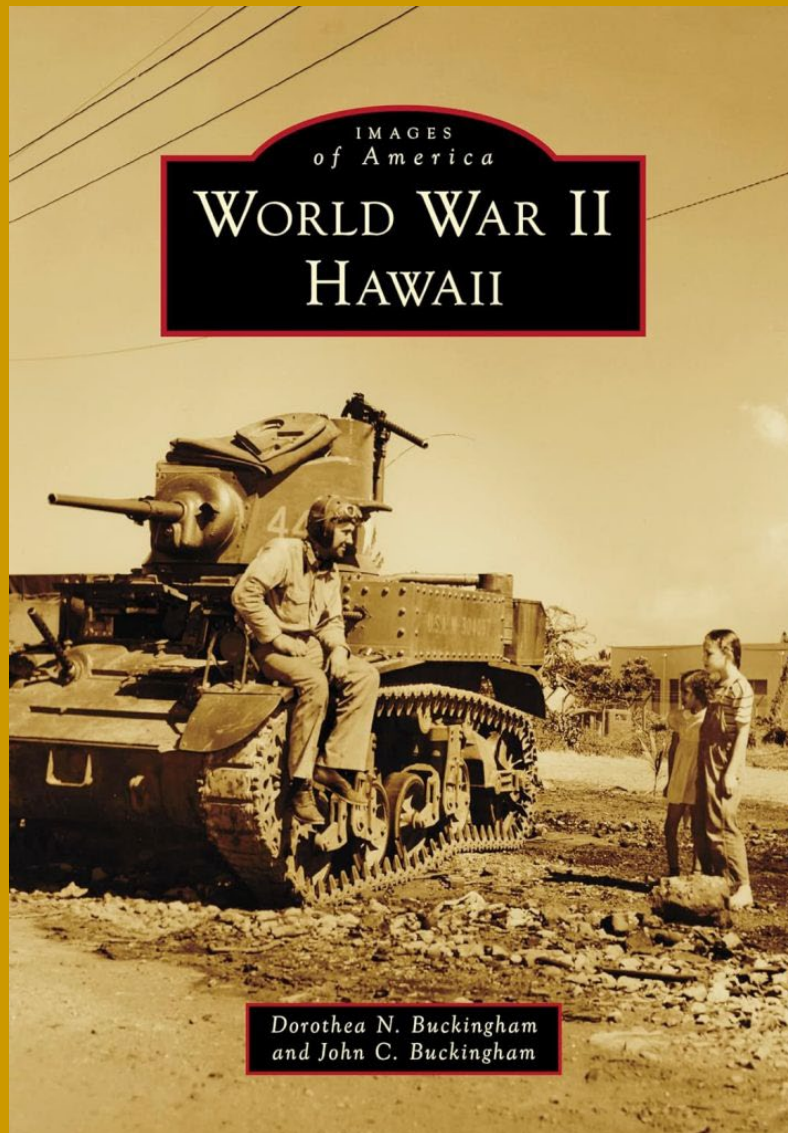
I have been working on this novel for 20 years.

It has become my passion, and I hope to honor them with this book.



This is the Lizard Tunnel map room. In 2025, I was privileged to visit it, and I was surprised by how small it was. (about 20' x 20') But I swear I “felt” my WARD ladies’ presence.

Along the way to writing Code Name Rascal...



My husband and I collaborated on a book of photos of daily life during World War 2. The cover shows a tank parked in a school yard.

**And a free Substack newsletter:
"Beaches, Brothels and Barbed Wire"**



Read behind-the-scenes stories about burning millions of U.S. dollars, schools taken over by the military, a year with no Christmas trees, and semi-legal prostitution.

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

Back to the Book!

Women support women. It's what we do and it's the underlying theme of Code Name Rascal.

Discussion Questions

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.

- 1. CJ, Ruth, Eve and Jane come from diverse backgrounds. Which woman did you relate to most and why?*
- 2. Let's start with Eve: I'm not so sure I could trust Eve as a friend, but then again, she did come through at the most unexpected times. What role did class and privilege play in her story? Is she a tragic hero?*

If you were to write a different ending for Eve's story what would it be? What if Linc lived and they married? Who would Eve be, and would that character be consistent with who she was?

3. *Alternative Eve: I knew Eve would have a negative arc when I started writing. It seemed to be the only honest course of her life. At the same time, I wanted her to be vulnerable. Then, I think, living in San Francisco, with Parker as a friend, living the life of the elite, she may have been happy and I'm judging her choices. Do you think Parker and Eve "live happily ever after" having an extravagant almost decadent life?*
4. *Next up is Ruth: There were times I wanted to gently hug Ruth and tell her she didn't have to be perfect. There were other times I wanted to shake her because she was self-righteous. But, to me, there is no greater grief than burying a child. What advice would you have given Ruth?*



5. *Alternative Ruth: I played with the idea of Ruth having an affair—probably with Paul. It would have been a regretted, desperate act. I did have her drink and “fall apart” and thought that was enough. Do you think I could have pushed her even farther in having an affair?*
6. *Jane: Oh, Jane. Her character 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. Did Jane have an alternative choice?*
7. *Alternative Jane: I thought about making Jane gay, but it seemed like a cliché to have a strong pilot required to be gay. To me it convoluted the decision she had to make—leave a disabled war veteran to pursue her ambitions. What do you think?*

8. *CJ: My problem child! CJ just couldn't get out of her own way. She was ahead of her time wanting it all—career, family and freedom. Are things so different today? CJ had so many false narratives: she had to be the number one, a trailblazer, a child of immigrants who was going to “make it” in America. Sometimes, I think that was her priority over Joe, and they slowly came to terms with what a marriage is. She was driven by expectations she imposed on herself. Did you like CJ?*
9. *Alternative CJ: Oh, there were so many! I had her father having a stroke which forced her to decide to go home and help the family or stay in the WARD. I had her having a miscarriage. I had her leaving the WARD and getting a job at the Stars and Stripes in Australia and becoming disillusioned. CJ—the main character—was the hardest for me to write.*
10. *I wanted each woman to show you a different aspect of life during the war. I hope that came through honestly.*

11. It is sometimes said that all novels are based on a conflict of class. What role does class and privilege play in the story—particularly between the military, the press, and local communities?



12. *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.*



13. *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?*
14. *How does grief and loss shape the choices of the main characters and how did the other characters support them?*

A Big Band Playlist



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>

Artie Shaw

“Begin the Beguine” In the early drafts of the book, Cole Porter’s “Begin the Beguine,” was the first song mentioned. It is the story about a couple beginning an intimate dance. It’s evocative language and themes of lost love, nostalgia, and longing made it a World War 2 favorite. (This is an instrumental.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCYGyg1H56s>

Glenn Miller

“Chattanooga Choo Choo” is a song in the first chapter (at Wo Fat’s restaurant) when poor Linc can’t get his best man’s toast out over the singing-along diners. 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=8of3uhGItCI>

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=8of3uhGIhCI>



Hapa Haole Songs of the War



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>

"My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua"

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>

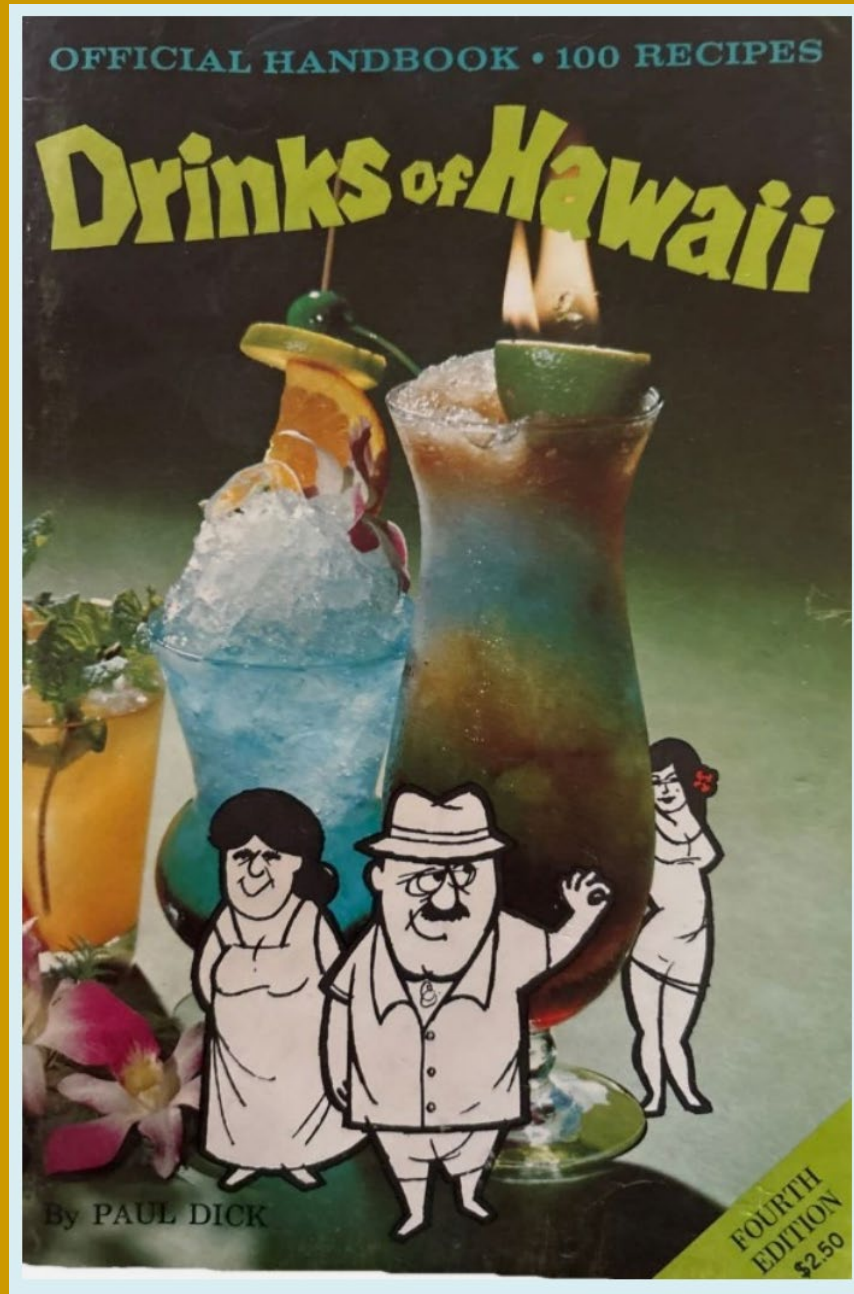
"Hawaiian War Chant"

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>

Recipes

The only one you'll ever need



The original Mai Tai was introduced by Trader Vic Bergeron in 1944. There was no pineapple or orange juice in this drink.

2 ounces of 17-year-old J. Wray & Nephew Jamaican Rum poured 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 lime.

The 2022 Royal Hawaiian Hotel Mai Tai

2 oz Pineapple Juice

1 oz Orange Juice

½ oz Orgeat Syrup

½ oz Orange Curacao

1 oz Old Lahaina Light Rum

1 oz Old Lahaina Dark Rum

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>

Well, there it is. . . The end!

I warned you that I can't stop talking about the WARDs. I have more photos and behind the scenes stories, but I've already gone on for too long.

I'd love to meet your book club and "talk story" about Code Name Rascal. Email me at:

deebuckingham96744@gmail.com

or use the form in my website:

<https://dorotheabuckingham.com/book-clubs/>

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>