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Bruce M. Petty. *Voices from the Pacific War: Bluejackets Remember*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004. Pp. 288. 27 Photographs. Chronology. Bibliography. Index.

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Response from Mr. Petty

13 January 2007

I read this review of my book some time ago, and took note of the part regarding Eleanor Roosevelt (E.R.), and the comments to the affect that according to the records in the E.R. Library, she was never in the Solomons at that time. From having read several books about her, as well as many other volumes on the Pacific War, I know that I have read in any number of accounts that she did visit Guadalcanal and other nearby islands.

It never occurred to me to check on the veracity of the interviewees comments regarding the hostile reception that she received because of comments related to being proud for having been selected to be among those to die for their country.

I have always been very conscientious about checking the official record against what comes out in oral history interviews. However, given the fact that I had read in the past that E.R. had made visits to the Solomons as well as other theaters of war, it never crossed my mind that I should check this one statement.

More recently, I read "Across the Dark Islands: The War in the Pacific," by Floyd W. Radike, Brig. Gen, U.S. Army. He was with the 43 Div. on Guadalcanal , and mentions in passing that E.R. did in fact visit the troops while he was there.

Keep in mind also, wartime censorship. In New Zealand , for example, the U.S. State Dept. would not allow New Zealand newspapers for over six month to say anything about the presence of U.S. forces in New Zealand .

None of the above does anything to resolve the question regarding the incident involving E.R. and U.S. Marines, but the fact that she did visit troops in the islands during that period, at the very least suggests that it could have happened.

At the same time, again given wartime censorship, can you imagine seeing in the headlines of U.S. newspapers: U.S. MARINES TAKE POTSHOTS AT PRESIDENTS WIFE!

Bruce M. Petty

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