

# PNG Kundu

SEPTEMBER 2020

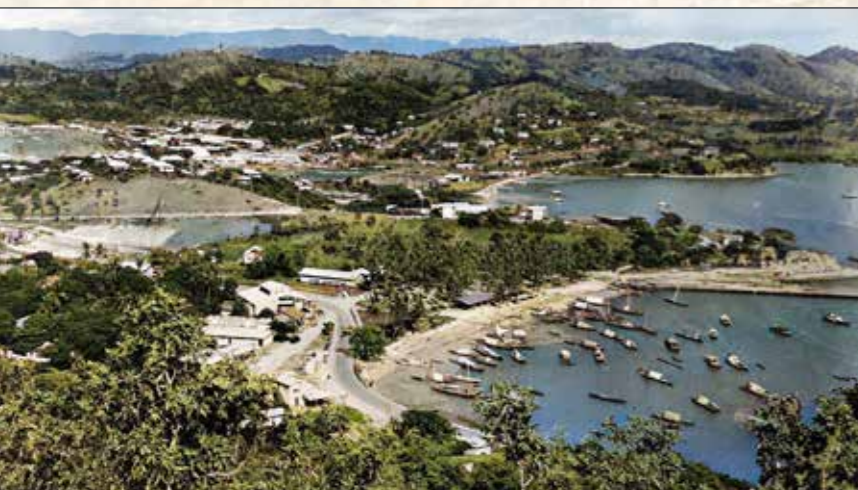


**Papua New Guinea Association  
of Australia Inc.**

**[www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)**

# PNG Celebrates 45 Years of Independence

FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, on 16 September 1975, the nation of Papua New Guinea achieved its independence from Australia and we, the members of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia, are proud of our past and continuing contributions to the Independent Nation of Papua New Guinea. Featured here are some memories from the pre-Independence days in Papua and New Guinea.



TOP: His Excellency Sir Hubert Murray, Governor of Papua (1908–40), during his travels  
 LEFT: Port Moresby in the late 1950s, with Koki bottom right and the surrounding suburb of Badili behind and to the top left  
 RIGHT: Prince Philip with Deputy District Commissioner Len Aisbett (left) at Mt Hagen in 1971  
 SECOND LEFT: Wong You's famous store at Buka, c.1960s  
 SECOND RIGHT: Policeman directing traffic at the Koki Markets, Port Moresby, c.1960s  
 BOTTOM RIGHT: Qantas flight arriving Lae, 1945 or 1946. Note that this aircraft, VH-AFA, had the distinction of operating the first Qantas service between Australia and New Guinea—2 April 1945.  
 (Photos courtesy of Stella Conroy, Karen Aisbett, Peter Meissner & Warren Young)



**PNG Kundu**, formerly *Una Voce*, is the official journal of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc.  
 (Formally constituted in 1951—incorporated in 1996)  
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KUNDU is the *Tok Pisin* word for the hourglass-shaped drum after which this journal is now named, and forms part of Papua New Guinea's Coat of Arms. It is called GABA in *Hiri Motu* which remains, along with English and *Tok Pisin*, one of PNG's three official languages. The Kundu has told fascinating stories for centuries, and through our PNGAA journal we will continue documenting history and the evolving special relationship between the two countries this association holds in its heart.

**Patrons:** Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffery, AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) and Mr Fred Kaad, OBE

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### PNGAA Membership:

This is available to anyone with an interest in PNG. Members, who receive four quarterly issues of our journal per year, have access to all parts of the website, and are encouraged to explore and become actively involved with all aspects of the PNGAA. Please refer to the *Treasurer's Corner*, at the end of this issue, for more details. Application forms also are available from the Membership Officer at [membership@pngaa.net](mailto:membership@pngaa.net) or our website. Membership operates on a calendar year basis and, for those receiving a printed copy of the journal, the address label shows the current status of your membership.

**PNGAA Mail:** PNGAA, PO Box 453, Roseville NSW 2069

**PNGAA Website:** [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)

### PNGAA Social Media:

FACEBOOK—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PNGAA>  
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 TWITTER—[https://twitter.com/PNG\\_ASSOC\\_AUS](https://twitter.com/PNG_ASSOC_AUS)

### PNGAA Collection:

For all donations to this collection (photographs, diaries, publications, etc.), please contact Cheryl Marvell at [collection@pngaa.net](mailto:collection@pngaa.net) or 0438 635 132.

**INTERIM PNG KUNDU EDITOR:**  
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**Deadline for the December 2020 issue**  
**Friday, 18 September 2020**

**Please send all contributions to:**  
**[editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

Contribution guidelines are available on the website or by request from [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)



# PNG Kundu

SEPTEMBER 2020

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**Front Cover Feature:**  
 Papua New Guinea's National Parliament House in Port Moresby  
 '... far more than just a building or even just a parliament—it is for Papua New Guinea, a symbol of political independence.'

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## From the President

So much is written about its mining wealth, but Papua New Guinea's real treasure is its people.

This association is proud to continue to tell the 'good news' stories of PNG, including of those young women and men inspiring new generations and making their mark on the international scene—and the parents who in turn inspired them.

They were youngsters who dared to dream—like the little eleven-year-old from Lae whose father showed her an article on the first female African American Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. That little girl is now Dr Yalinu Poya, one of the world's most accomplished young scientists whose trailblazing chemistry research has won plaudits from the United Nations, a string of international prizes and made her the face of plutonium



Dr Yalinu Poya, PhD

**As well as PNGAA events, members of the Management Committee continue to network on your behalf, attending a wide range of events and activities, and encouraging new members and possible partnerships to keep our association vital and viable. Featured here are reports and updates from the committee, other news of interest and a welcome to new members.**

on the Periodic Table of Younger Chemists.

As the then University of Glasgow PhD student told me for a blog for PNGAA last October:

'My parents were supportive of me while growing up, especially my father. The passion to do a PhD began when my father pointed out a newspaper article of Dr Condoleezza Rice,' said Yalinu.

'Being eleven years old I asked, "How can a medical doctor be the US Secretary of State?" My dad told me the title "doctor" comes from a PhD. And there I was, instantly attracted to becoming a doctor. I made a pact with my dad that before or at the age of thirty I would receive a PhD.'

Well, she did and it's a pleasure to update you with news that Dr Condoleezza Rice read the article about young Yalinu, sent her a congratulatory letter (*opposite*), and has reached out to set up a meeting between the two. Yalinu has promised to get some photos snapped for us on the day her other dream comes true in the post-COVID world!

Just as Yalinu was inspired and supported by her parents, so too was Benson Saulo. The son of a New Ireland man born on a beach and an indigenous Australian woman, was recently named as Australia's first indigenous Consul General (*see story page 31*).

Benson's dad arrived in Australia with little more than the



Benson Saulo

clothes he was wearing. His mum had been living in a tin shed. With dignity, perseverance and grit they made a life together and gave Benson every opportunity. In turn, Benson has thrown himself into causes for indigenous communities in Australia and for the education of young New Irelanders through his Mind Gardens Project.

Then there's the Kama kids, sister and brother Shera and Bal.

As Bal proudly announced



Dr Shera Kama

*In tackling ammonia synthesis, you've chosen a difficult course – but an indispensable one as we confront the enormous challenge of climate change. What's more, as a young, female, and Papua New Guinean chemist, you stand as a role model for those who have rarely seen themselves represented in the scientific community. Lastly – as another woman whose father challenged her to reach her full potential – I take pride in seeing the work you've put in to fulfill your pact with your father, becoming a well-educated global citizen. I have no doubt that you will make your family proud in all that you do.*

*I encourage you to maintain your passion for chemistry and your drive to serve the global community: your numerous awards well attest your intelligence and drive, but I know that they are only the start of a distinguished, impactful career! I hope that you and your loved ones stay safe in these unusual times, and my best wishes for your continued success.*

*Sincerely,  
Condoleezza Rice*

on Twitter recently: 'My sister, Dr Shera Kama just graduated from specialised medical training (Masters) and will be PNG's first national endodontic specialist. We endured the challenges of growing up in the village, but more for her as a female. Proud of her and an inspiration she has become.'

Dr Bal Kama himself wrote an award-winning PhD thesis (Law, ANU). He was conferred in April. Bal is also a Commonwealth Pacific Young Person of the Year and director of Kama Foundation Inc., empowering villages in health, education and youth development.



Bal Kama meeting Queen Elizabeth II at a ceremony in London in 2016, where he was presented with the Young Person of the Year Award. (Source: Adventist Review)

The social media outpouring of pride of the achievements of all these young role models—and their parents—has been heartening to see. The sentiments flow freely not only from fellow Papua New Guineans, but also from Australians in our association and other PNG-related groups.

There is no better tangible evidence of the ongoing bonds between the two countries.

On that note, there is no more admirable example of a person who embodies that relationship than our patron, Fred Kaad, OBE, who turns one hundred in September.

Our Special Feature and salute to Fred by Bill Brown (*pages 17-23*) is a staggering portrayal of a crowded life of personal achievement, public service and indomitable spirit.

It chronicles how the fastest schoolboy athlete in Australia went first to war in New Guinea then, subsequently, a cavalcade of hands-on and administrative positions—from patrol officer to district commissioner and multiple other roles. His contribution to the development of PNG was immense.

Fred's response to a plane crash



Fred Kaad, OBE

in New Guinea in 1964, permanent disability and confinement to a wheelchair, is as inspirational a story as can be told. It spurred him to new heights of study and service. Like General MacArthur, he did 'return'.

This association is privileged and proud to have Fred Kaad, OBE as patron and extend him our warmest birthday wishes as he and his family celebrates a wonderful milestone.

## MAX UECHTRITZ PNGAA President

### Journal Editor Required

The editor of *PNG Kundu* is a PNGAA Management Committee voluntary position. The person would need to co-ordinate the content for each issue, liaising with members and proofreaders as well as the Production Designer and the Website Manager on the final hard copy and electronic copy. Capacity to access articles via email and use track-changes in Word would be helpful; flexibility to learn about uploading items to the PNGAA website would be useful.

Some PNG history, a proficiency in written English, and some journalism or publishing experience would also come in ▶



handy. As articles are readied for publication, response periods are critical, requiring commitment to an 'all hands-on-deck' approach. The volunteer's physical location in this instance is not relevant as long as they have good access to the Internet. It's a rewarding role for those interested in our Australian/PNG story.

Expressions of interest to be forwarded by email to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net) or contact Andrea Williams on (mob.) 0409 031 889.



### Celebrating Forty-Five Years of Independence

Papua New Guinea achieved their independence on 16 September 1975, and became a constitutional



Raising the new PNG Flag

monarchy with membership of the British Commonwealth.

Officiating at the main ceremony, held in Port Moresby, were HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales; Sir John Kerr, Governor-General of Australia; Gough Whitlam, Australian Prime Minister; Sir John Guise, Governor-General Designate of Papua New Guinea and Michael Somare, who became the country's first Prime Minister.

Prince Charles was to return in August 1984 to open the new National Parliament building, which is featured on the cover of this issue of *PNG Kundu*.

Designed by Cecil Hogan, with the front façade by Archie Brennan, the building in the style of a *Maprik Haus Tambaran* (house of spirits) rises from a reflecting pool, whose waters symbolise that Papua New Guinea is an island nation.

### Christmas is Coming!

PNGAA's book, *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*, will make a great gift or an addition to your library.

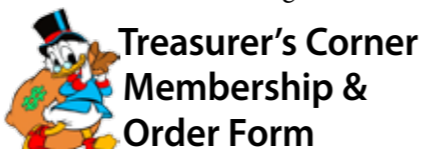
Published to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of *Montevideo Maru*, this book is a collection of personal stories, memories and reflections that enhance the history of civilians and soldiers living in Rabaul, Kavieng and the New Guinea islands at the outbreak of the Second World War.

And don't forget the PNGAA Tote Bag—these high-quality environmentally friendly, large laminated jute shopping bags, in natural colour, are great for your plastic bag-free shopping and for carrying everyday items.

More details are available about these and other items for sale in the **Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form**.

### PNGAA New Members

The PNGAA Committee welcomes the following new members: Robert Aitken, Colin Asher, Dominic Barnes, Roger Benzie, Paul Bloink, Joe Costello, Brad Eaton, Denise George, Glenn Halligan, Victor Malla, Peter McGuckian, Louise Moore, Rod Mountford, Mila Nelson, Iava Parapa-Falvey, Rodney Parker, Pauline Phillips, Ruth Pitt, Mik Plumb, Ian Smith, Peter Stace, Werner Strauss, Donald Varcoe, Peter Walsh, David West, Stephen Willis and Colin Young.



### Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form

If you wish to renew your membership, have a friend or family member who wishes to join, order one of the publications and DVDs available, or book for a PNGAA function, then use the **Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form**, printed at the back of this journal.

### Membership Details

Please help by keeping us up to date with your details, especially your email address, as this will facilitate access to the website: [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org), and ensure all our communications are delivered and not wasted. ♦



## Notice of Annual General Meeting and of Motion for Special Resolution 29 October 2020

**THE 69th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Incorporated will be held in Sydney on Thursday, 29 October 2020 at the Chatswood Bowling Club, Chatswood, NSW, commencing at approximately 11.30 am.**

Please note that it is intended to move a Special Resolution at the meeting to adopt updated consolidated PNGAA Rules. The proposed Special Resolution is provided below along with an Explanatory Note. A Proxy Form for those unable to attend is provided to members as a separate insert with this issue of *PNG Kundu*.

If you are mailing your proxy, please ensure that it is received by the Returning Officer, PNGAA, PO Box 453, Roseville, NSW 2069 by 5.00 pm on Tuesday, 27 October 2020. Proxies may also be emailed to the Returning Officer at [admin@pngaa.net](mailto:admin@pngaa.net) or may be handed to the Returning Officer prior to the start of the Annual General Meeting.

A light luncheon will follow the meeting, starting at approximately 12.00 noon.

### AGENDA

1. Members present and apologies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of the 68th AGM (circulated in June 2019 *Una Voce*, pages 3-10)
3. Business arising from the Minutes
4. President's Report
5. Special Resolution to adopt an updated consolidated Constitution
6. Treasurer's Report and receipt and adoption of the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019
7. General discussion

### SPECIAL RESOLUTION

#### Section A

That updated consolidated Rules of the PNGAA be adopted, incorporating all changes approved by members since the original Constitution was adopted.

#### Section B

That upon carriage by Special Resolution of the

alteration to Rules set out in Section A of this Special Resolution, the Public Officer of the Association shall cause the alteration to be engrossed and consolidated with the Rules as in force after the adoption by the Special Resolution of 29 October 2020 and submit the consolidated copy of the Association's Rules as now amended for registration by the Director General of the NSW Department of Fair Trading under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

### Explanatory Note

The Special Resolution seeks member approval to adopt updated consolidated Rules of the Association, incorporating all changes already approved by members since the original Rules were adopted. Some of these changes have already been consolidated into the Rules while others have not, so the Special Resolution is merely a formality required to bring all approved changes together in a single document.

### CHANGED AGM AND LUNCHEON DETAILS

Ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and associated uncertainties in regard to catering have forced us to take a different approach to the AGM and luncheon this year.

It has been decided that the best approach is to hold the AGM immediately after packing of the December issue of *PNG Kundu* ready for posting to members is completed. This activity is normally carried out by an enthusiastic group of volunteer members at the Chatswood Bowling Club, so we are asking everyone intending to be at the AGM to join in this activity from 10.00 am if at all possible.

As soon as packing of the journal is finished—we usually takes less than an hour and a half—we will hold the AGM, which should not take much longer than half an hour.

To address the issue of catering, which is not provided by the Chatswood Bowling Club, we are asking all attendees if they would be so kind as to bring a 'plate' so that everyone can enjoy a light lunch and each other's company after the meeting. Tea and coffee will be provided. ▶



## Notice of Annual General Meeting and of Motion for Special Resolution

(Continued from previous page)

These arrangements mean that there will be NO CHARGE to attend the AGM. To assist with the set-up of the room, however, it would be appreciated if those intending to be at the AGM could let our Membership Officer, Roy Ranney, know either by email at [membership@pngaa.net](mailto:membership@pngaa.net) or by calling him on 0412 556 593.

### Getting There

If driving, travel south on the Pacific Highway, turn left into Gordon Avenue (at Payless Tyres building), then left into Hammond Lane. There is plenty of free parking available. The club is also within walking distance of Chatswood station.

### The Objects for which the Association is primarily established are:

- a) to strengthen the civil relationship between the peoples of Australia and Papua New Guinea;
- b) to foster and encourage contact and friendship with Papua New Guineans and promote friendly association among members;
- c) to foster and maintain an interest in contemporary

- d) and historical events in Papua New Guinea; to provide appropriate financial, material or intellectual assistance to projects of benefit to Papua New Guinea as an Association individually or in conjunction with other agencies;
- e) to publish journals, magazines, newsletters, websites, books and other media to inform and educate people about Papua New Guinea and to provide a means of communication among members of the Association and others;
- f) to encourage the preservation of documents, historical and cultural material related to Papua New Guinea; including the production and recording of oral and written histories; and
- g) to safeguard and foster the retirement conditions of superannuated members of the former services in Papua New Guinea.

### In pursuance of these Objects, the Association:

- a) will not be involved in, nor engage in, partisan politics; however, this does not prohibit the Association from engaging with members of parliament or public servants in pursuit of its objects; and
- b) may raise funds for its approved projects.

## Membership Subscription Rate Increases Year Commencing 1 January 2021

FOR THE PAST two years PNGAA membership subscription rates have remained unchanged and in that time we have absorbed considerable price increases. Significant cost savings were made in 2019, as reported in the Abridged Annual Accounts published in the June 2020 issue of *PNG KUNDU* (page 4). Other substantial potential costs continue to be avoided through the ongoing contribution of member volunteers.

Despite these efforts to contain costs, we are faced with a situation in which membership subscriptions do not cover our operating costs. Of the current base \$45.00 annual membership fee (overseas postage is extra), \$36.00 goes towards production and distribution of the journal and \$10.00 is required to cover general operating costs [mainly public, product and officer liability insurance (\$2.50), storage (\$3.00) and website (\$3.00)]. A very small operating surplus is only achieved from interest earned on investments (a declining source of income), raffles and auctions at functions and profit on the sale of books, DVDs and other merchandise (again, in decline).

Clearly, such a situation is not sustainable. We regret, therefore, that all rates will have to be increased for the year starting 1 January 2021. The new rates for 2021 are:

<b>Within Australia</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Asia, Pacific (inc. New Zealand)</b>	<b>\$70.00</b>
<b>Rest of the World</b>	<b>\$80.00</b>
<b>Digital Membership (no postage charge)</b>	<b>\$33.00</b>

PNGAA's Management Committee, who are all voluntary, believes that membership of this association provides outstanding value. PNGAA's quarterly journal, *PNG KUNDU*, is highly regarded; the PNGAA Collection and the PNGAA website both provide lasting legacies of Australians who have contributed to PNG; the PNGAA is a unique organisation in formally preserving the Australian/PNG historical connection; and the opportunities for networking and engagement through various social functions nationally retain that Australian/Papua New Guinea connection valued by so many.



## Hello to My PNGAA Friends

As I write, my heart goes out to those in lockdown with COVID-19. Keep vigilant everyone. You are all important and I want you to be able to attend events as soon as possible!

The importance of keeping in contact with family and friends became most evident to me this past weekend. My sister, Lisa, has spent the last two years organising a memorial service at the Australian War Memorial for our great-uncle from South Australia, Leslie Redman, who was killed at Bellicourt in WWI. This occurred in early July and was a moving and family-oriented get-together. The staff were absolutely delightful and so accommodating.

The Committee continues to find great ways to communicate with its members so that the PNGAA remains relevant and interesting. Yana has some great ideas for social media like Instagram, so don't forget to send her photos and videos that interest you on PNG, as others will find it interesting, I can assure you.

I am enjoying reading the conversations and articles that are coming up on the PNGAA Facebook page. Do share our marvellous webpage with friends and encourage them to join up with PNGAA. As well as PNGAA's social media there is the opportunity to enjoy

## A listing of upcoming functions and events of interest to PNGAA members—if you have an activity to advertise or promote, please send the details to [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net) or [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)

our informative, personable and historical journal, *PNG KUNDU*.

Slowly the venues are opening up to reasonable numbers for events. At this stage it's one day at a time, though.

I have been fortunate to have had many people donate items for events to be sold or as part of the raffles at events. This helps make events fun and helps the Association's finances. Thank you to the individuals and the groups, who have shared their books, jewellery, artefacts, etc. Having PNG-focused donations is of interest to us all. They are conversation starters, they encourage information sharing and so much more.

The PNGAA Collection grows with your donations, too. These are catalogued and organised by one of our volunteer committee members, Cheryl Marvell. I will not be upset if you choose to give Cheryl your precious items!

Just a reminder that I will be needing silent auction items for our Christmas Luncheon in Sydney. So, as you're cleaning out the cupboards or the garage, keep me in mind for items of PNG significance—such as stamp collections, magazines, artefacts, material, etc.

And, finally, a reminder that the Events Co-ordinator role is still open. It is a PNGAA Management Committee voluntary position, which provides an opportunity to meet with a wonderful network of people, extend your skills and have fun. Please contact me to discuss this exciting role.

**SARA TURNER**  
Events Co-ordinator  
E: [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net)  
Mobile: 0401 138 246

### PNGAA Annual General Meeting, Sydney

**Date:** Thursday, 29 October 2020  
Please see details on page 5.

### PNGAA Annual Christmas Lunch, Sydney

**Date:** Sunday, 6 December 2020

**Venue:** Killara Golf Club, 556 Pacific Highway, Killara  
Plenty of parking/10 minutes' walk from Killara Railway Station. Disability access available.

**Time:** 11.30 am–3.30 pm

**Cost:** \$70 pp Two-course meal. Attendees to pay for their own beverages at members' rates.

NB: Please advise if you have any special dietary requirements when you book prior to the event. You are able to make up your own table or request seating with friends.

**RSVP:** 27 November 2020 to Sara Turner on [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net) or (Mob.) 0401 138 246

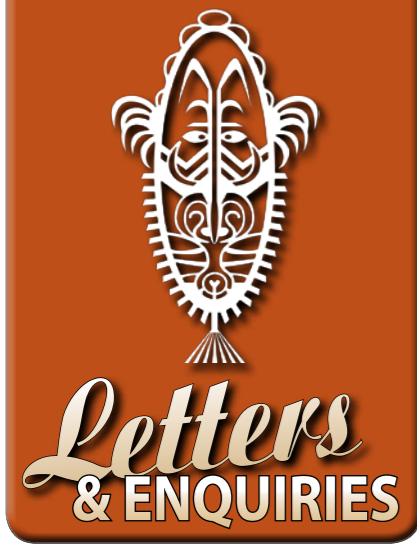
**Payment:** To PNGAA/Bank: CBA/BSB 062-009/Account No: 0090 7724.

Please email [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net) when payment is made and include code (SYDX and first three letters of your surname) used in your transfer.

Note: Numbers will be limited at this event this year due to COVID-19 and the first sixty responses will be confirmed. ♦



**SPECIAL NOTE**  
As we are all aware, anything could change before the advertised events. Please keep an eye out on our website, social media and check your emails for our Tok Save updates. Thank you.



WE THOUGHT WE'D share some of the kind comments we've received about *PNG Kundu*. We work hard to ensure the journal is special, and the comments are appreciated, thank you.

In sharing these comments, we hope that it might inspire more people to join this wonderful association!

**Peter Meissner:** Just to say that I read the June *Kundu* from cover to cover in two sittings and was awestruck by the balance the editing team achieved between, e.g. the Australian WWII soldiers, PNG soldiers, general post 'colonial' nostalgia, mining, medical, teaching, defence, fauna, tales of recent visits, etc. The sheer energy, intellect and compassion of so many people who have visited PNG is so inspiring.

**Peter Thomas:** Great effort with *PNG Kundu*.

**Belinda Macartney:** The *PNG Kundu* looks wonderful, with a rich selection of articles to keep members busy!

**Jason & Nasain Gwilt:** Just a note of thanks for the June issue of the *Kundu* magazine. Another excellent edition full of interesting stories and some outstanding articles from your readership. Please keep up the great work.

**Kay Tisdall:** Thanks to everyone for the new look magazine. I think it is fantastic. The articles and the

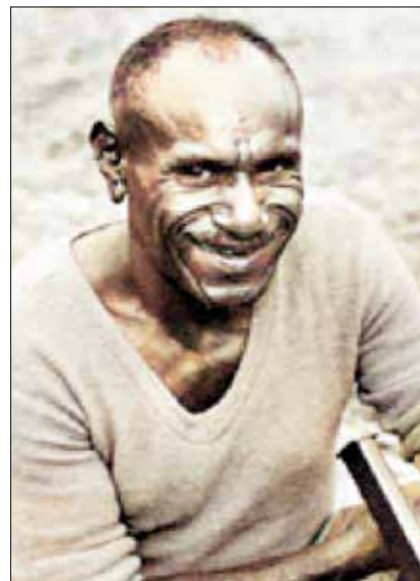
**Featuring commentaries about previously published articles and news items, along with opinions of interest to PNGAA members. Also included are enquiries from those who require assistance with their research or finding someone from the past. Please send your contributions to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

*pictures are great to see. The name PNG Kundu was a great choice. Thank you.*

**Harry Janssen:** I have received the copy of *PNG Kundu* and have read it from cover to cover. What a beautiful magazine, and wonderful articles. The one from Murrough Benson brought back so many memories as our nearly twelve years from 1970 to 1982 was all in the Highlands and his story made us re-live our life in the Chimbu, Western Highlands and Eastern Highlands. I was so emotionally surprised that I gave him a call immediately and we talked for over thirty-five minutes about all the people he knew and we knew as well. Wonderful.

### Anniversary of the PIB

In the June 2020 edition of *PNG Kundu*, I enjoyed reading the recognition given to the Papuan Infantry Battalion in the timely article by Max Uechtritz and Jeff



Robinson Sakiki, MM

Keough. Timely because this year marks the eightieth anniversary of the official formation of the PIB at Port Moresby in June 1940. As well as PNGAA, I belong to another association which honours the role carried out by the PIB and NGIB in our newsletters and website ([www.soldierspng.com](http://www.soldierspng.com)).

Our younger members were not aware of the wartime action of Robinson Sakiki so the photos of him are very welcome. That *PNG Kundu* article has prompted us to research Private Sakiki and his war record—our reference books simply note Private Sagigi (PN 97) being among the first one hundred recruits in June 1940 and there is no reference to a Military Medal award. Readers of *PNG Kundu* will be aware of the historical difficulty in recording PNG names accurately in English so the Sakiki/Sagigi difference is completely understandable.

**GREG IVEY**  
Vice-President,  
PIB-NGIB-PIR Association

### Pilot's Name?

After reading the query under Letters & Enquiries on page 7 of the June 2020 *PNG Kundu*, I contacted Graham Hardy and established that the pilot of the crashed Cessna 190, VH-BVD at Kompiam Patrol Post in June 1958 was my late husband, Frank Smith (full name Leonard Frank Smith). Frank was a pilot in PNG for many years.

Three photos were found of the damaged aircraft with the following

notes: *Cessna 190 VH-BVD at Kompiam, Western Highlands, TPNG, April 1958.*

The Cessna still exists in private ownership in Queensland.

**BETTY SMITH**

### Correction

Correction to the caption of the photo of David Eyre on page 57 of *PNG Kundu*, June 2020. David was a Chief Flying Instructor at the aero club after he left the Health Department. He was a medical assistant, not a medical student as captioned. The correct information, however, is included in the accompanying article.

**DARYL BINNING**

### The Swamp Ghost

The PNGVR Museum at Wacol, Brisbane, grows by receiving donations of new memorabilia. Items which have a story add so much more to the display.

For example, we have had, for some time, a couple of 0.5-inch calibre machine guns on display. These items were donated by member Ken McGowan (deceased) but their history could not be told until their provenance was confirmed.

They are the rear turret guns from a Flying Fortress B17E, Number 41 2446 from Unit 14 RS USAAG known as the *Swamp Ghost* (featured in *PNG Kundu*, June 2020, page 19), which most were aware was situated in a swamp near Popondetta.

Ken recovered these guns in the 1970s when he was a camp manager for a mining prospecting group located nearby—he used spare helicopter hours to be lifted in and taken out with the guns one weekend. There is a video of this recovery in the museum.

**PHIL AINSWORTH**



During his first visit to the Kokoda Trail, American General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander, confers with Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander of Allied Land Forces in New Guinea, and Maj. Gen. GS Allen, who led the Australian Imperial Forces

### 'Track' or 'Trail'

Sorry to bring up this never-ending saga yet again, but I must put in my disagreement on Robyn Kienzle's interpretation of her father-in-law's various versions of Track and Trail, none of which I dispute—*PNG Kundu*, June 2020, page 15.

I also met her father-in-law on several occasions, particularly when he was in town for meetings of the Patair Board. However, I do not ever remember having a discussion with him on the correct name, or otherwise of the Kokoda Track.

When I arrived in Port Moresby in mid-1954 there were plenty of 'befores' (those who lived in the country before the war and had returned to live and work) living in Port Moresby. I did get to know quite a few of them and actually lived next door to Les Clark, the Collector of Customs.

I cannot recollect any of them referring to the track as other than the track. In fact, there was quite incense at attempts to change it to 'trail'.

To a man they were all clear

on how this change came about and they all blamed the one man—General Douglas MacArthur.

Being an American and also Supreme Commander of the fighting in the Southern Pacific, he dictated that, in all correspondence and publicity, the Track was to be known and called the Trail.

This also answers Chips Mackellar's information that the Australian Army, etc. called it 'Trail'. They had no choice. Their Supreme Commander had instructed them, as the Americans only knew of the word 'Trail' whereas the Australians had always known it as 'Track', as in 'There's a track winding back,' etc.

How do I know all this? Well at one stage I researched the facts having spent time finding photographs of the police *bois* who carried the mail over the track before the war. One *boi* left Port Moresby and the other left Popondetta with their mailbags over their shoulders, meeting at Efogi, and changing over bags before returning to their point of departure. ▶

I was trying to put pressure on the Department of Posts to upgrade the park over the road from the then GPO in Port Moresby as a memorial to the *bois* who walked the track to deliver the mail. As an aside, no doubt you have heard the story of the time they mixed up the bags and returned with their same bag?

At present this park is known as the Customs Park, as the Customs used to be in the basement of the old Works building on the other side of the road. I had handed those photos to the General Manager of Posts so that he could get a statue made for inclusion in the refurbishment and, I hoped, re-naming. Unfortunately, the General Manager was replaced before the upgrade could take place—and with him went my photos.

I believe that Daryl Binning, who put in the Vale notice on David Eyre, in the June 2020 issue of *PNG KUNDU*, has also researched this matter and, independently, came up with the same result that I have found.

**SIR RAMON R THURECHT**

**'Track' or 'Trail' ...**

A reader's letter trying to justify the use of the word Trail and two feature articles in *PNG KUNDU*, June 2020, 'Bert Kienzle: The Architect of Kokoda' (page 15) and 'One of these days we'll get to Kokoda' (pages 16-17) sparked my special interest in *PNG KUNDU* of June.

I note that the subheading to that article used the words Kokoda Trail rather than the description used by the author.

In the March edition you had printed my letter 'Track' or 'Trail', which covered the confusion in the minds of many, and particularly some authors which are perpetuating a myth.

In describing the book, the text constantly refers to the word 'Trail', which is understandable, but incorrect when all the facts which led to the creation of this deception are objectively considered.

Although I don't have a book to promote, I am more than willing to email the letter contributor and the book's author, or anyone else for that matter, a copy of my research while in PNG and later as I collected evidence of why the public and the Diggers on the track were brainwashed by General MacArthur's edict that it must only be referred to by war correspondents as a 'Trail'.

My email address for those wanting to obtain a balanced assessment of the matter is [darylbinning@outlook.com](mailto:darylbinning@outlook.com). It is free.

Evidence supporting my findings is contained in the article on pages 16 & 17 of the same edition,

which recounts the writings of the experiences of an actual Digger on the track before MacArthur's media manipulation filtered through to the front lines. He exclusively refers to the muddy pathway as a 'Track'.

The Australian War Memorial has diaries and other material in its archives, which support this assertion.

Despite request, they identify any statements I made as incorrect, nothing has been received. My attempt to get the AWM to modify its display to acknowledge the original use of the word 'Track' have met a brick wall.

However, off-the-record remarks indicate they know a mistake had been made by various committees since the war, but nothing can be done about changing it now that subsequent awards and other official proclamations have been made.

It is a disgrace that our proud military history is being officially falsified to protect the reputations of those who originally got it wrong.

**DARYL BINNING**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Daryl has sent in an extensive article on this which will be included in the December 2020 issue of *PNG KUNDU*.



Men of the 2/31st Australian Infantry Battalion stop for a rest in the jungle between Nauro and Menari, during the Kokoda Campaign, 1942



1. Mick Foley, 2. Ted Hicks, 3. Mr Read, 4. Jerry Kasip Nalau, 5. Phil Bouraga, 6. Laurie Doolan, 7. Des Clancy, 8. Des Ashton, 9. Bob Bell, 10. Ian Holmes, 11. John Wakeford, 12. Dave Marsh, 13. Arthur Carey, 14. Syd Smith, 15. Orm Mathieson, 16. Ken Brown, 17. Des Clifton-Bassett, 18. Allan Gow, 19. ADMR David Hay, 20. Fred Kaad, 21. Les Williams, 22. Bill Seale

**Work Boats in PNG**

Forester Chris Borough has a project researching the history of wooden boats built in Australia and tracing what has happened to them, with a view to developing a database for all ships, boats etc which went to PNG. Whilst he is interested in the history of all wooden boats, he is particularly interested in those built on the Manning River and NSW Great Lakes area.

Chris was in PNG with the Department of Forests prior to 1975 and, with Dick McCarthy, has been recording the history and efforts of Australian foresters in PNG before 1975 (details circulated in the September 2018 Issue of *Una Voce*). He is looking for images of the work boats operated by the Administration prior to 1975

such as workboat *Motuana*; MV *Mangana* and the MV *Toa*. There may be other wooden boats built in Australia which ventured into PNG waters. Any such information would assist.


The Department of Forests utilised many of these administration boats in their resource surveys throughout PNG. It seems likely that many of the vessels used were ex-Army and built in Australia in WWII.

An example of the type of outcome of this ongoing project is <https://www.flickr.com/photos/glmrsnsw/albums/72157659331537960>

If you can assist, please contact Chris Borough, Forster, NSW, Australia Mobile: 0458 634 624 Email: [chrisborough@gmail.com](mailto:chrisborough@gmail.com)

**More Information?**

This photo was taken at a District Commissioner's Conference in 1969. The conference included District Commissioners and special guests. Does anyone know or have further information about No. 3—Mr Read please? If so, please contact Arthur Smedley by mobile 0420 411 944 or email at: [agsmedley@gmail.com](mailto:agsmedley@gmail.com)—or contact Andrea Williams by mobile 0409 031 889 or [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)



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# PNG in the News

At one-minute past midnight, 16 September 1975, Sir John Guise issued the Proclamation of Independence:

*Papua New Guinea is now independent.*

*The Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, under which all power rests with the people, is now in effect.*

*We have at this point in time broken with our colonial past and we now stand as an independent nation in our own right.*

*Let us unite, with the Almighty God's guidance and help,*

*in working together for a future as a strong and free country.*



**Featuring articles and news reports about contemporary Papua New Guinea—also included are the nation's sporting achievements and events, and stories about young people doing interesting things—we encourage young people to become involved in PNGAA to ensure the strong ties formed between PNG and Australia continue into the future.**

## The Hank Nelson Memorial Award

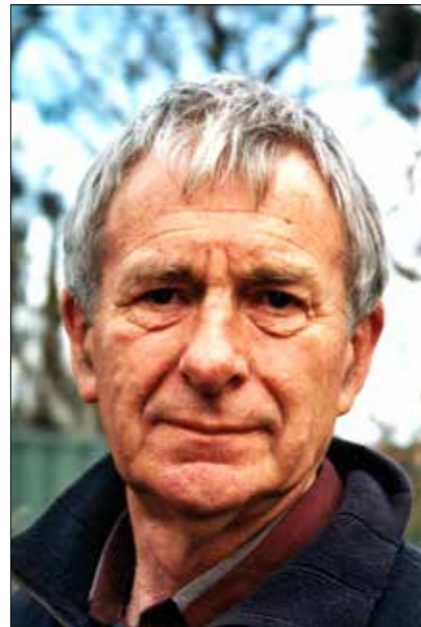
PNGAA is pleased to be associated with the Hank Nelson Memorial Award and congratulates the 2020 recipient, Dr Bal Kama. Dr Kama's thesis is titled *Reconceptualising the role of the judiciary in Papua New Guinea's 'Home Grown' Constitution* (ANU 2019). It examines the role of the judiciary and its complex relationships with the other arms of government in Papua New Guinea.

Dr Kama has a PhD in Law from the ANU College of Law. He specialises in public and constitutional law and governance in the Pacific, and currently works as a lawyer in Canberra. He is also a Commonwealth Pacific Young Person of the Year.

The Hank Nelson Prize honours the memory of Hank Nelson and his commitment to Papua New Guinea. For over forty years Hank Nelson was the leading historian of and commentator on PNG.

He wrote extensively on the country and the wider Pacific. His books, including *Black, White and Gold: Goldmining in Papua New Guinea, 1878–1930* and *Taim Bilong Masta: the Australian Involvement with Papua New Guinea*, established for him a reputation as the foremost historian of Papua New Guinea.

Hank arrived in PNG in 1966 to teach at the Administrative College, moving in 1968 to become a lecturer in history at the newly-established University of Papua New Guinea. In



Hank Nelson, AM

1973, he took up a research position in Pacific History at the Australian National University, where he remained for the rest of his life. He served as a solid mentor for younger scholars at ANU, and an inspiration to fellow senior colleagues.

Throughout his career, Hank worked through his teaching, writing, and commentary to promote a better understanding and knowledge of PNG and its



Dr Bal Kama, PhD



Frank Pryke's photograph of a Kukukuku warrior at the Lakekamu Goldfield in 1914, from Hank Nelson's book, *Black, White and Gold: Goldmining in Papua New Guinea, 1878–1930*

peoples. While his interests were varied, his work on PNG remained the hallmark of his academic career. In 2008, he was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of more than four decades service as a teacher, mentor and scholar. He passed away in 2012.

The award is awarded every two years for the best PhD thesis submitted by any student, internationally, on any aspect of PNG's history or society.

For further information: <https://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/prizes/hank-nelson-memorial-award>

## Sean Dorney, AO

PNGAA congratulates Sean Dorney, AO, MBE, CSM, FAIIA, former ABC journalist, who was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for his 'distinguished service to Australia-PNG relations' in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours. (See his

article about PNG Independence on page 15 of this issue.)

Mr Dorney told the ABC that he felt it was recognition of his long-time passion: 'that Australia's engagement with Papua New Guinea and the rest of the island nations in the Pacific ... is actually important'.

## New High Commissioner

PNGAA also congratulates Jonathan Philp who has been appointed Australia's High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea.

The announcement by Senator the Hon. Marise Payne was made in February.

In making the announcement Senator Payne commented that 'Australia and Papua New Guinea enjoy a long history of close cooperation underpinned by shared values, community links and common strategic and economic interests.'

'Our economic relationship is strong and growing. Around 5,000 Australian companies do business in Papua New Guinea with Australian investment totalling \$16.9 billion. PNG is also our largest bilateral development partner, with total assistance of \$578 million in 2018–19.'



Sean Dorney and his wife, Pauline



Jonathan Philp

'Mr Philp is a senior career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He has served overseas as Ambassador to Afghanistan and Ambassador to Turkey, as well as Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Embassy in Myanmar. In the private sector, Mr Philp worked as a senior executive with Woodside Energy.'

'Mr Philp holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the Australian National University.'

Senator Payne thanked outgoing High Commissioner Bruce Davis 'for his contributions to advancing Australia's interests in Papua New Guinea since 2015.' ▶





## Meet WARTABAR: PNG-born Artist

Leslie Gagau is a twenty-three-year old Papua New Guinean-Australian artist, and son of Steven and Jennifer Gagau who originate from Viviran and Raluana villages in the Gazelle Peninsula of the East New Britain Province, PNG.

Leslie has been passionate about music from the age of eight years old. Since then, he has been developing his creative skills in multiple areas musically—as a singer, songwriter, dancer, multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger and producer.

He enrolled in 2016 at the Australian Institute of Music in Sydney after completing his Higher School Certificate at Brisbane Water Secondary College, Woy Woy, Central Coast, NSW. He completed his Bachelor of Music in

Contemporary Performance course in April 2020.

He has been engaged by the National Rugby League on three annual Pacific test matches in Sydney, singing the PNG national anthem in the pre-match formalities with PNG Kumuls playing Fiji and Cook Islands. He also performs around Australia and internationally, on tribute shows for Daft Punk.

Leslie performs under the stage name WARTABAR, being his traditional middle name from his Tolai cultural heritage—and a Kuanua word. It has sentimental meaning to him as an artist—WARTABAR means ‘Gift’.

WARTABAR’s style of music is significantly influenced by pop music, infusing elements from R&B, Soul and Hip-Hop, defining his own style.

After four long years, he has officially released his debut single ‘This Love’. Collaborating with college friends, WARTABAR played electric guitar and co-produced the track alongside Tawanda (student of AIM/producer).

He has also briefly worked with Nick Littlemore, member of PNAU and Empire of The Sun. PNAU are an Australian dance music trio in Sydney and Empire of the Sun are an electronic music duo from Sydney and Perth.

WARTABAR premiered his



WARTABAR in Sydney, 2020  
<https://youtu.be/kftD4IMLFDY>

debut single on 11 June 2020 on radio station, Let’s Get Deep Radio, 2RRR, one day before its official release date. It is available by streaming on all world platforms including Spotify, Diesel, iTunes, YouTube, Amazon, Google Play and more.

‘It took plenty of time to find the right people that were dedicated to helping this project turn out the way that it finally did,’ WARTABAR said. ‘I finally got in contact with Tawanda and he really catered to my vision of what I wanted to achieve.’

‘Music is my platform to inspire, motivate and reach out to people, relating through life experiences, perspectives and empathises with their circumstances and situations.’

# Australia's Ignorance About Papua New Guinea is a Loss for Both Nations

SEAN DORNEY

The exotic and fascinating country—and Australia’s colonial past there—is out of sight and out of mind to most Australians. We should turn that around.

AUSTRALIA NEVER SPENT a great deal of money on Port Moresby when it was the headquarters of Australia’s colonial administration. Indeed, the contrast between what the British had built in Suva during its colonial governance of Fiji and what Australia constructed in Port Moresby for its administration of Papua New Guinea is revealing.

The stone and concrete Suva buildings are majestic examples of colonial architecture. In Konedobu, on the shores of the Port Moresby harbour, the Australian administration consisted of a collection of unimpressive wooden buildings, some quite ramshackle.

Australia, it seemed, was determined to pretend that it was not a colonial power.

‘I wouldn’t say that any Australians thought we had a colony,’ Dame Rachel Cleland, the widow of Sir Donald Cleland, Administrator from 1952 to 1967, told the ABC’s *Taim Bilong Masta* social history radio series in the early 1980s.

‘That was not in any way the thinking. The first time I heard “colony” mentioned was about 1965, and it gave me a distinct shock.’

Bertie Heath, a pioneer pilot in PNG, told the same program: ‘We are not colonials. The Germans were colonials. The British were colonials ... am I going to be called a bloody colonial in this country?’

Of course, the truth is that Australians were colonials—but it is something that does not fit well with the view that the nation holds of itself. Australia is a nation that evolved from a convict settlement, names Ned Kelly as an iconic figure and its favourite national song is about somebody who stole sheep.

So it is probably no surprise that Australia does not celebrate that as a nation it ruled over another people.

The British readily acknowledge their imperial history and take pride in having had a British Empire that is now the British Commonwealth. Not Australians.

It is because of our seeming reluctance to fully address our history in PNG and look rigorously at the consequences that I have coined the term ‘embarrassed colonialist’.

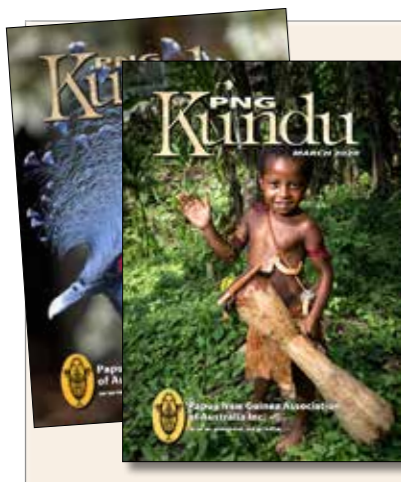
## Colony becomes an election issue

Gough Whitlam travelled to Papua New Guinea as opposition leader in 1969 and made PNG an election issue in Australia—for perhaps the first and only time. He advocated that an early date be set for the end of Australian colonial rule. He proposed that self-government should be granted as early as 1972.

On two highly-publicised follow-up trips in 1970 and 1971, Whitlam travelled to the Gazelle Peninsula in East New Britain, where some of the Tolai people were agitating for greater control over their affairs. There was also trouble brewing for the Australian administration on Bougainville ▶



Former Australian PM, Gough Whitlam, at Papua New Guinea’s Independence Day celebrations in 1975  
Photograph: National Archives of Australia



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<https://pngaa.org/members/become-a-member/>

# Frederick Peter Christian Kaad, OBE

**BILL BROWN**

**WITH SPECIALS THANKS TO GAYNOR KAAD,  
FOR HER MAJOR CONTRIBUTION AND GENEROUS ASSISTANCE**

**Frederick Peter Christian Kaad, OBE, we salute you with a tribute of admiration and respect from the members on 12 September 2020—your 100th birthday. Thank you for your great achievements and for your contribution to our lives.**

YOU HAVE ALWAYS been an inspiration: a competitor and a leader. Those traits may have developed between 1937 and 1939 at Sydney Boys High where you represented your school in athletics, rowing, and Rugby Union. You broke long-standing records in the broad jump, sprints, and 120-yard hurdles. In the latter event, you were the fastest man out of the blocks in Australia.

In 1940, after the nation went to war against Germany and Italy, and you joined the Army, a Sydney newspaper reported, 'Fred Kaad, star schoolboy athlete has enlisted in the AIF.' They got that wrong; your parents would not sign the papers for you to go overseas, so you joined the Citizen Military Forces. As Gunner Kaad, you served with a coastal battery near South Head—at the entrance to Sydney Harbour. And that was where the Army was determined to keep you. They knew about your athletic records and prowess as a rugby union winger. The war was a long way away, and they wanted to win all the interservice competitions with the Navy and the Air Force. That was until the Japanese bombed Hawai'i and started moving south towards Australia.

When you were discharged medically unfit from the CMF following an accident, you re-enlisted in February 1942. You joined the AIF, and within weeks, NX89868 Private Kaad was in New Guinea where the Japanese Army was on the offensive, attempting to capture the town of Wau. You and your cohorts landed as reinforcements to the 2/17th Infantry Battalion on the notorious uphill airstrip which was under enemy fire.

Your next move was an unexpected transfer to the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU). Promoted to warrant officer, you mainly worked under someone of commissioned rank, but in 1943 in the Northern District of Papua you conducted two solo patrols accompanied only by a small detachment of police. Your task was to restore native confidence following the withdrawal of the Japanese forces.

You got to know Captain JB McKenna and, later, you became acquainted with Lieutenant-Colonels S Elliott-Smith and JH Jones, ▶

over land matters relating to the opening of CRA's Bougainville copper mine. Whitlam won power in Australia in December 1972, and PNG became self-governing at the end of 1973 and independent in September 1975.

Australia could not have delayed giving PNG its independence for many more years without witnessing far more strife and, consequently, far greater post-independence problems. The debate is not 'Did PNG get independence too early?' but 'Did the preparations start too late?'

Michael Somare, Papua New Guinea's first prime minister, is fairly blunt about it: 'Australia did not put in enough effort to prepare us.'

Even a lot of people, some of whom became district commissioners, have admitted: 'Yes, it was a mistake we made. We never prepared. The territory was never prepared for those changes.'

There was a lot to be done. The Highlands did not really get opened up until the 1950s, and in 1970 there was still an area of some 170,000 ha classified as not being under administrative control. There is no doubt that many of the Australian kiaps, school teachers, health workers, missionaries and others performed some extraordinarily heroic work, in often very challenging circumstances.

Will Muskens, who was a kiap from 1958 to 1975, says it has always struck him as a missed opportunity that Australia did not enter into a treaty with PNG, so that more of those who had spent valuable years there could have stayed on working alongside their Papua New Guinean counterparts. He believes that a treaty could have kept doctors, teachers, agricultural advisers, technical and trade specialists and kiaps in PNG for a few more years.

'Such an agreement could have been subject to terms that could be reviewed every twelve months, with salaries paid for by the Australian Government,' Muskens says.

'I envisaged a scheme that would transfer all of these Australian officers to a special unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs seconded to PNG, but under the direction and control of the relevant PNG departments.'

But in our haste to leave after independence, we offered all these people golden handshakes.

'While I, and a large number of my colleagues, opted to leave under the terms of the employment

security scheme,' Muskens says, 'which literally encouraged us to take the money and run, I feel certain that if the Australian Government had been seriously committed to retaining our services I would have stayed on.'

## Few know much about a fascinating country

Inevitably, those thousands of Australians who did work in Papua New Guinea before independence are fast thinning out.

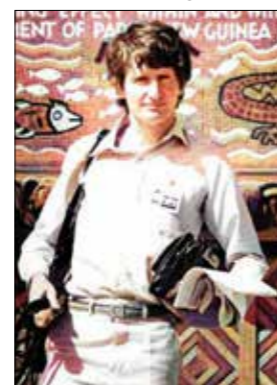
Fewer and fewer Australians have any real knowledge of this fascinating country to Australia's north, which we were responsible for bringing to nationhood. This lack of understanding affects our dealings.

The Australian media generally ignores PNG. And too few of those advising on or deciding on policy seem to show any deep, abiding interest. As one senior figure in Canberra told me in the corridors of Parliament House: 'The lowliest adviser and the backest of backbenchers can give you chapter and verse about the Middle East, but you could probably walk into a cabinet meeting and talk about PNG and everyone will stare at you and blink.'

There are exceptions. The opposition immigration spokesman, Richard Marles, who travelled there as a sixteen-year-old says: 'We have on our doorstep the most exotic country in the world. Life is lived in Papua New Guinea in a way that it is lived nowhere else on the planet.'

'It is genuinely remarkable and I think we Australians are incredibly lucky to have PNG as a neighbour. But I don't think that sort of amazement and that wonder about PNG is at all understood in Australia.'

But the level of ignorance is frustrating, he says: 'We used to be the world experts on Papua New Guinea and now the level of study and literature in Australia has gone down dramatically.' ♦



### *We should turn that around.*

An edited extract from *The Embarrassed Colonialist*, a Lowy Institute Paper (2016) by Sean Dorney, former ABC Papua New Guinea and Pacific correspondent

Sean, at the National Parliament House, Port Moresby in 1989





TOP: Fred Kaad at Namatanai with Gordon Steege's two dalmations, August 1950  
(Photo courtesy Kaad Family Album)

BOTTOM: Fred competing for Sydney Boys' High School in the GPS Open Hurdles, 1937  
(Photo courtesy 'The High Bulletin', June 2008)



and Majors Horrie Niall, Allan Roberts and Jim Taylor. They were all a long way above your pay grade, but they all played roles in your postwar career.

A few ANGAU officers accompanied the Allied forces that recaptured Aitape in an amphibious landing on 22 April 1944. You and other ANGAU personnel landed later. You became a member of Cole Force, a small ANGAU group attached to the 17th Australian Infantry Brigade advancing through the Torricelli Mountains, driving towards Maprik against stubborn Japanese defence. Your task: 'to locate and destroy enemy in the area; to obtain intelligence of enemy movements, to contact and rehabilitate the local people, and to recruit native labour.'

When elements of the 17th Brigade captured Maprik at the end of April 1945, the Japanese forces retreated to the hills around Ulupu and Yamil, and to Wewak where they surrendered on 13 September 1945. That was one month after they had formally surrendered in Tokyo Bay.

You were a lieutenant in ANGAU when the Army let you return to civilian life on 18 July 1946.

Three weeks later, on 9 August, you became a patrol officer in the Papua New Guinea administration.

In September JB McKenna became Assistant Director of Native Labour. McKenna had been your captain in ANGAU at Ioma, and he persuaded you to become District Labour Officer at Samarai. That was where you met the love of your life, June Grosvenor, who was enjoying the tropical isle. She and a friend were working as office secretaries after three years as wireless telegraphists in WAAAF. You and June returned to Samarai after your wedding in Sydney in September 1948.

The job in Samarai must have palled. You reverted to being a patrol officer in February 1949, and the director transferred you to New Ireland. When famed coastwatcher, Jack (WJ) Read, DSC (US), who was in charge of the district, posted you to New Hanover, he said that Taskul Patrol Post 'would afford ample scope for one of your keenness and experience'.

Ian Downs took over from Jack Read as District Officer at Namatanai at the end of February, and you got to know him well during your eighteen months at Taskul. You lost a Territorian friend when fellow kiap, Gordon Steege, resigned and returned to Australia in August 1950. Still, you acquired his cane chairs and two dalmatian dogs.

You had just returned from leave when Mount Lamington erupted on 21 January 1951, destroying villages and gardens, and killing more than 3,000 local people and thirty-five expatriates, including District Commissioner Cecil Cowley and all the administration staff at Higtaturu.

You were familiar with the area and its people from your ANGAU days. You volunteered your services and flew into Popondetta—the emergency operations centre—on the second flight to land there the next day. As Assistant District Officer in charge, first at Ilimo, then at Saiho, you led the team engaged in rescue, rehabilitation, resettlement and area development.

Sydney Elliott-Smith became the new District Commissioner on 12 March 1951, but the success of the relief and recovery phase was attributed to 'the strong leadership provided by Colonel Murray [the Administrator], Dr Gunther, Ivan Champion and Fred Kaad.'

When you returned to Australia in December

1951, prior to attending the two-year Diploma of Pacific Administration course at the Australian School of Pacific Administration in 1952 you declared that you were 5 foot 10½ inches tall (179 centimetres), weighed 13 stone (82.5 kilograms) were brown eyed with auburn hair, but you did not mention your bald patch.

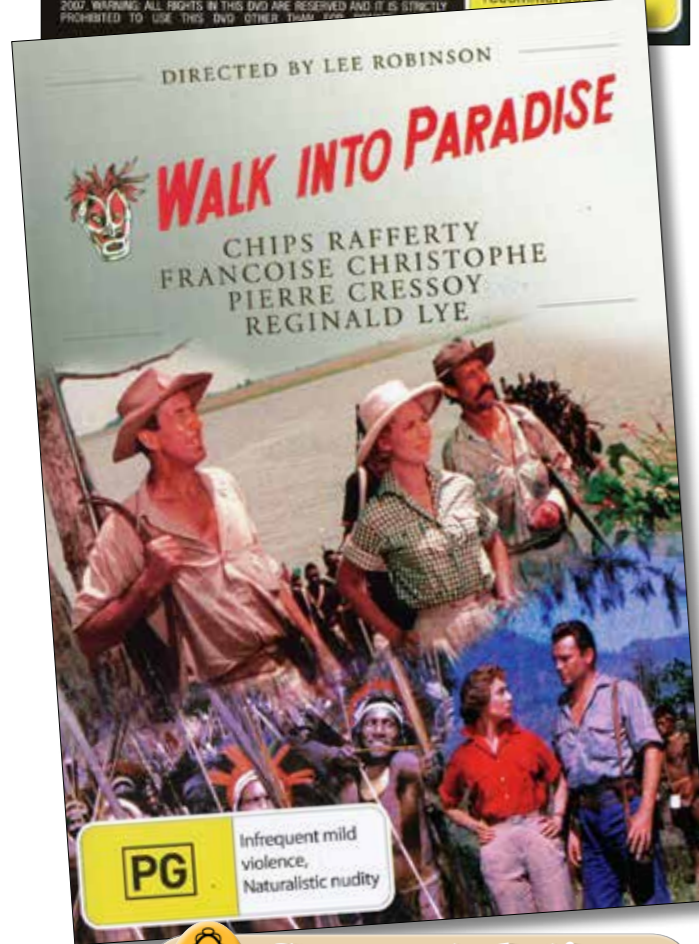
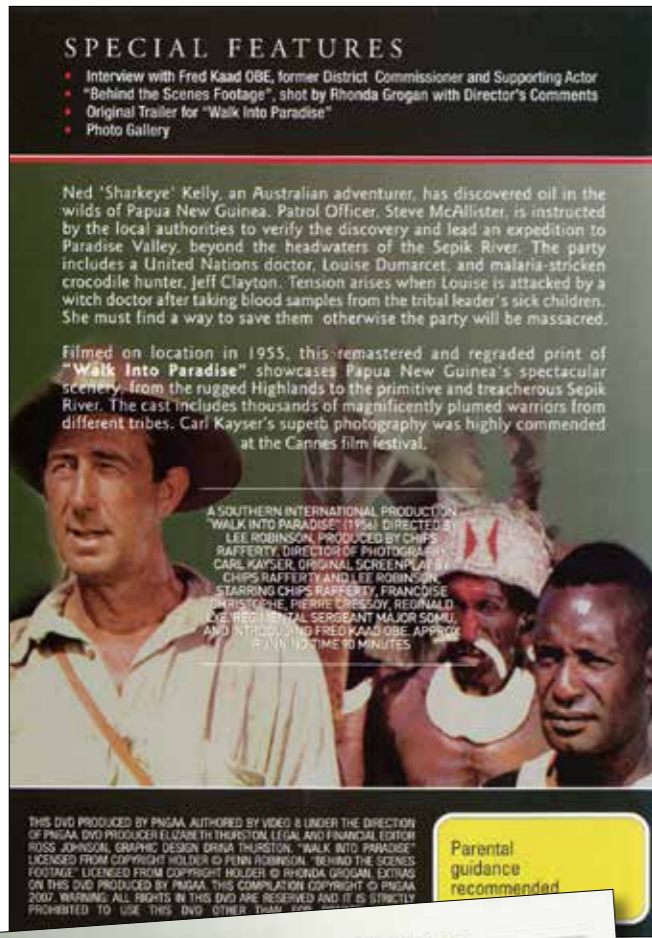
You returned to the Territory in February 1954—to Goroka in the Eastern Highlands. Ian Downs was District Commissioner and, knowing you from Taskul, he encouraged your enthusiasm and gave you free rein to implement your new ideas.

You became a movie star in June 1955 when you, police Sergeant-Major Somu, and Qantas pilot Dick Davis played cameo roles in *Walk into Paradise*. Filmed in English and French, the movie introduced Papua New Guinea to the world and preserved a vital segment of the country's colonial history. The worldwide audiences saw glimpses of Port Moresby and Koki, Madang, and the Police Training Depot at Goroka. More importantly, they saw basic kiap patrolling, villages and the people. Perhaps the most spectacular footage was filmed in the Asaro Valley. Hundreds of traditional festooned villagers beat drums and waved spears as they stamped and danced to flatten a newly-constructed airfield. The movie was a box office success in Australia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States when released in 1956. The Sepik River premiere, at Angoram in 1957, was in the world's first paddle-in theatre—a flotilla of canoes parked side by side and end to end floating on the river between two anchored schooners.

When you returned from leave to the Sepik District in February 1956, District Commissioner Sydney Elliott-Smith arranged for you to take over the Maprik Sub-district. In December, you moved to Wewak as acting District Officer of the vast Sepik District. At that time, it encompassed most of north-west New Guinea: from the Madang boundary westward to the border with Dutch New Guinea, and from the islands near the equator to the mountainous border with Papua.

You and June introduced the tiny town to LP records, loud music and Shirley Bassey singing the blues. June converted the Sepik Club's Saturday dances to come-in-costume carry-ons culminating in the spectacular Arabian Nights Ball.

You had only served five months as District ▶



Officer when District Commissioner Elliott-Smith abandoned his post and disappeared to Australia. Surprisingly to many, the Administrator bypassed some senior officers who were in the wings and appointed you to replace him. Perhaps to avoid uncertainty, the Assistant Administrator, John Gunther, used the government gazette to announce that you had replaced Elliott-Smith. You remained as Acting District Commissioner of the Sepik until Bob Cole took over as DC in September 1957. Dick White (seniority May 1939) was your District Officer, and Tom Ellis was ADO in charge of the Wewak Sub-district.

You attended the University of Queensland as a fulltime student in 1959, completing a Bachelor of Arts degree, and you made the news again on 5 May 1960 when you became the first person to have joined the Administration since the war to be promoted to District Commissioner. You took up the position of District Commissioner, Central District, Port Moresby in December.

The next four years were frenetic when you took on other weighty tasks in addition to your District Commissioner responsibilities.

In March 1961, you represented Papua New Guinea at a meeting of the South Pacific Commission in Noumea, New Caledonia which led to the inauguration of the South Pacific Games. Fiji hosted the games in 1963, New Caledonia in 1966, and Papua New Guinea in 1969. You also took an active role as Assistant Commissioner of the Papua New Guinea Branch of the Boy Scouts Association, and you completed a Postgraduate Diploma of Public Administration with the University of Queensland.

In 1962, you were appointed Secretary to the Select Committee on Political Development and travelled back and forth across the country with the members. Their report resulted in the introduction of universal suffrage and the first House of Assembly of Papua New Guinea in 1964.

Also, in 1962, you were elected President of the Amateur Athletic Union of Papua New Guinea, and you were captain of the Papua New Guinea athletics team at the Commonwealth Games held in Perth, Western Australia in November.

The turmoil continued in 1963 when Minister Hasluck decided—on Gunther’s recommendation—that you should be the Executive Officer for the

Commission on Higher Education. Gunther said that you were ‘one of the best-educated and most able of the District Commissioners’.

You accompanied the three commissioners: Sir George Currie, Dr John Gunther and Professor Oscar Spate to big and small centres across Papua New Guinea, and to universities in Australia and the Pacific. But even when the Minister tabled the Commission’s final report in the House of Representatives on 23 March 1964, you were not off the hook. You were back in Canberra discussing the report with the Department of Territories in July.

You had returned to the Territory and settled into your new appointment as District Commissioner, Madang, when disaster struck on 3 September. You were alongside the pilot in the front seat of the single-engine Dornier that crashed on take-off at Tauta in the Ramu Valley. Ray Jaensch, the pilot, did not survive. You suffered damage to your spinal cord, leaving you a paraplegic and in a wheelchair. You received extensive burns to your legs and from then on you suffered continuous low-level pain and spasms of acute short-term pain about every forty-five minutes. (Please turn to page 24 for Bryan McCook’s article ‘Tragic Events at Tautu’, for more information about the crash.)

Following that tragic accident, you flew to Sydney—medically evacuated—on TAA Flight 1303. You spent the next six weeks in the Intensive Care Unit at Royal North Shore Hospital, followed by nine months in their Spinal Injuries Unit, and you commenced a Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Administration by correspondence with the University of Queensland.

You displayed more of that indomitable spirit on 30 March 1965 when your medical team allowed you to attend a seminar on New Guinea in Canberra. You concluded your discussion with ‘One day I will get back as a District Commissioner. I am like MacArthur. I shall return.’

After your discharge from Royal North Shore Hospital, the PNG Administration seconded you to Sydney to lecture at the Australian School of Pacific Administration. You travelled around Australia to interview applicants for employment in PNG Administration; you visited PNG at least twice a year for conferences and consultations, and you completed the Diploma in Educational

Administration that you started while in hospital. In 1971 you completed a full year as a live-in student at the University of New England University studying towards a master’s degree. You were the first student permanently in a wheelchair to study and live for a full academic year in a university college.

At the end of each weekend, you drove your big old Ford Fairlane back to Armidale with your wheelchair on the bench seat behind you. Your eldest daughter, Gaynor, kept you company on each trip then flew back to Sydney. When June, your wife, died twenty-six years ago, Gaynor took over, devoting her life to being your carer, guardian angel and constant companion.

In 1972 you were retired from PNG on medical grounds and appointed as a lecturer and course director at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) in Sydney. And you completed your master’s degree by correspondence—graduating in 1973 as a Master of Educational Administration (Hons).

You continued as a lecturer and course director when ASOPA became the International Training Institute (ITI) in 1973—the year that Australia granted self-government to Papua New Guinea. Your students now came from the developing countries in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean as well as PNG. You retired from the institute in 1985 but continued with some ▶



Fred Kaad at a festival in the Maprik Sub-district, 1956



TOP: PNGAA's Ross Johnson, Fred and Gaynor Kaad at the Anzac Day March, Sydney 2019  
 BOTTOM: Fred Kaad and Chips Rafferty in the film, *Walk Into Paradise*, 1955

consulting work in Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Fiji.

In 1980, on the recommendation of the Papua New Guinea Government, the Queen made you an Officer of the Order of the British Empire 'for public service and services to the training of Papua New Guineans'. Papua New Guinea added to that recognition with the Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Medal in 2005, and the Royal Papua New Guinea Centenary Medal in 2008.

Your close involvement with the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia, and its predecessor, began in 1972 and has continued to this day. You served as honorary secretary as well as editor of *Una Voce* (the Association's journal) until 1989. And even though you were living with continual pain, you ended the newsletters with encouragement to us all. In the October 1981 newsletter you ended with: 'Remember when you are fed up, tired and wondering whether it's worth it—many clouds do have a silver lining, and the sun will shine tomorrow.'

You were the Association's Deputy President for years. In 2001 you and Mrs Roma Bates were appointed to be our Patrons 'in recognition of your distinguished service to the community, to Papua New Guinea, and in particular to our Association'. The Governor-General, Major General Philip Michael Jeffery joined you in 2003. **The Association awarded you Honorary Life Membership in 2011.**

We look back over the last fifty-six years with wonder and amazement. Despite your injuries, your enthusiasm was contagious. You spread happiness and encouragement to those around you. The members of Spinal Injuries Unit from Royal North Shore Hospital—the doctors (John Grant, AO, John Yeo, AO and Dr Sue Rutowski), the matron-in-charge Nancy Joyce, and nurses Barbara Hoefnagels and Susie Hirst became lifelong friends. And soon after leaving the hospital, you were adding the challenges of the wider community to your endeavours.

Among your other activities, you were International Commissioner representing PNG with the Scout Association of Australia from 1966 to 1972; a trustee of the Airmen's Memorial Foundation of PNG and a board member since its inception in 1969; a member of the Australia

Council on New Guinea Affairs from 1968 to 1975; Deputy Chair of Organizing Committee Far Eastern and South Pacific Games for the Disabled held in Sydney in 1974; a director of the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of NSW (ParaQuad) from 1966 and Vice President from 1975 to 1998; Pacific Area Consultant for the Commonwealth Council on Educational Administration from 1976 to 1999; Chair of the Spinal Research Foundation from 1991 to 2004 and Director from 1977 to 1991; a member of the Committee of Management of Physical Disability Council of NSW from its formation 1994–99; Director of the Spinesafe Education Program (now Youthsafe) from its incorporation in 1995 until 1999 and, prior to 1995, you were associated with its management when it was known as Awareness & Prevention Spinal Injuries. You were also a Member Educational Advisory Committee for Spinal Injuries Nursing Course, NSW College of Nursing, and a member of three of Mosman Council's Community Advisory Groups between 1995 and 2009.

The Australian College of Education invited you to be Fellow in 1980 and Life Member in 2002. You were also awarded life membership by the ParaQuad Association of NSW, Sydney High School Old Boys' Union, and Mosman Returned Servicemen's Club. And you received Rotary's Shine on Award for outstanding support to others with a disability.

2000 may have been a standout year. The Governor-General awarded you the Australian Sports Medal in August and, in October, you were selected to be a torchbearer to carry the flame from the lighting ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra to Paralympic Games in Sydney. You made the event spectacular and thrilled the crowd when, instead of driving your wheelchair directly down Miller Street, North Sydney as instructed, you made a complete circuit of the huge Victoria Cross intersection before passing the flame to the next bearer.

You interviewed some of us before we went to Papua New Guinea. You taught others at ASOPA. Some—like myself—worked under you in the Territory. Everyone knows about your role in the Association. We all thank you for being in our lives, and we all join in wishing you a very happy one-hundredth birthday. ♦



TOP: Bill Brown, MBE and Fred Kaad, OBE, celebrating the forty-third anniversary of PNG Independence, 2018  
 BOTTOM: Phil and Robin White with Gaynor and Fred Kaad at the National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 20 November 2010



# Tragic Events at Tauta

**BRYAN McCOOK**

**My first task this fateful day in September 1964 entailed flying a DCA aerodrome inspector from Goroka to Nondugl in the Cessna 185. Though my intention was to wait at Nondugl while the inspector finished his task, after landing and just before shutting down, DCA Madang called up with a request: a Dornier Do 27, the subject of an uncertainty phase, had not been heard of since calling 'taxying Tauta for Madang' some while ago.**

MY HEART MISSED a beat, for this was the replacement aircraft for one that I had crash landed. During my stint with the Lutheran Mission, I had piled up several hundred hours in both Dorniers before forced landing VH-AMQ, the one we'd called the Green Machine, at Mount Elimbari a couple of years before piling up. I, and others, had a miraculous escape following engine failure. Now it sounded as though VH-EXA, the Red Machine, could be in trouble.

Madang asked if I could have a look around the Finisterre Mountains in the vicinity of Tauta. An initially, somewhat disgruntled, aerodrome inspector agreed to my proposal that I drop back into Nondugl to collect him as soon as emergency duties had been done.

As I was uncertain of Tauta's exact location, my forty-minute flight there was via Dumpu Cattle Station in order to follow the Surinam Valley that ran down from the Finisterre Ranges to the Ramu Valley. From there the narrow, jungle-enclosed river could be followed upstream until it petered out high on a steep, forest covered, jagged and sinister looking mountain wall.

Circling Tauta, the prominent and notorious 'Shaggy Ridge', where Australian and Japanese forces had fought their bloody battle, could be seen a few miles west. The focus of my attention though was on the airstrip below, the newly-made gash in the forest.

There was no sign of the Dornier, except for wheel marks on the muddy surface. It was plain to see where pilot, Ray Jaensch, had landed and parked. Also, where the wheels had left the ground on take-off, usual for the Dornier, a very short distance from the start of its run. The airstrip, as yet without a blade of grass, sloped steeply down to the tree-lined river valley below.

Wasting no time, I swung around in a tight circuit for the uphill landing. At the top of the strip, swinging round to park at right angles to the slope, dozens of excited locals instantly closed in. The whole tribe was yelling and pointing down the strip into the valley below.

It appeared that not long after the Dornier had lifted off, some distance down the valley the engine faltered. The plane was seen to descend suddenly without rising. At times smoke was seen coming from the river valley.

This information was communicated in excited, rapid-fire *pidgin*, or '*tok ples*' [local dialect], volume at maximum, accompanied by much sign language with hands and eyebrows.



Wreckage of the Dornier Do 27, among the huge boulders in the stream in the valley  
(Photo courtesy the Kaad family album)

Looking down, the formidable valley floor with its thick rainforest cut by a narrow, winding, boulder-strewn stream did not fill me with hope. But take off and search I must. The villagers seemed uncertain as to which way my 185 would move. They darted away from the spinning prop blades in all directions as I swung round to face down the strip.

Requiring no climb at all, the take-off was easy, coasting off the strip into a descent below the treetops lining the valley. In less than a minute I saw a curl of smoke. And there it was! The wreckage of the Dornier among huge boulders in the stream.

No surprise I'd missed it on the way in as my eyes had been searching ahead for first sight of the new airstrip before banking sharply to turn away from the sheer wall of the forested mountain. Flying downstream as I was now, I could push the nose down and zoom over the wreckage at treetop height. Four people were on the rocks in the river. Two were waving frantically.

Coming around again, I recognised Dr Laurence Malcolm, District Medical Officer, Madang. He seemed unhurt as he tended another person stretched out on a rock, some twenty metres downstream of the wreck, by then a tangled mass of burnt out metal.

Buzzing low with a wing waggle, I then climbed and called Madang with the details. My immediate destination was Goroka to collect a storepedo—a large cylinder packed with emergency gear. Arriving there thirty minutes later, the right-side passenger door was removed and the rear bench seat. With re-fuelling over, the storepedo was loaded, along with Max Parker, a fellow pilot, as handler, to dispatch it.

Another half hour later we were coming in low and slow, for a downstream drop. On my signal, Max bundled the storepedo out on its static line, while I poured on the power, gaining height till a reverse turn could be made. Flying over the wreck again we saw the parachute draped over a boulder close to the wreckage. For the first time I felt somewhat reassured, knowing that Dr Malcolm now had some tools of his trade with which to work.

Climbing again to assess the recovery plan, the straight-line distance to Tauta appeared to be about one kilometre; a tortuous climb for the survivors, over boulders and through thick bush, but not by any means impossible with the help of the men of the village. There could well be a track somewhere

beneath the dense jungle. Adept with their razor-sharp machetes, the rescue party would have no trouble making stretchers from saplings and vines.

Radioing Madang that I was about to land at Tauta, they replied that Tauta was closed by order of the Director of Operations, DCA, Port Moresby, and not to be used under any circumstances. The telex to this effect also stated that my earlier landing there was in breach of regulations for the strip had not been approved, and I must submit an incident report on return to Goroka.

This stupid message I rate as by far the most ludicrous I have ever received or ever want to. Later, I was to see it as tantamount to criminal. In hindsight I should have ignored it. Regrettably, I was swayed by the imperious tone of voice from Madang insisting I acknowledge receipt of the NOTAM [notice to airmen], and further relaying the instruction that we were to remain over the crash site until arrival of the helicopter that presumably had been dispatched.

Even recounting the story years later distresses me, for Max and I circled for hours that day knowing full well that things down in the river were bad and that time was running out for the injured. There were two survivors wrapped in blankets stretched out on the rocks with Dr Malcolm and others attending. Each hour the story was the same. 'The chopper was on its way' ... 'No, a specific time of arrival could not be given yet.'

A note dropped to Dr Malcolm to tell him the chopper was coming was acknowledged with a thumbs up.

Fortunately, the weather further upstream towards the towering Finisterre Mountains remained fine. Streams in such narrow, steep gorges, are prone to flash flooding after deluges in the high country.

Three hours passed with no sign or word of the chopper. On the Tauta airstrip we could see villagers making their way down to the river. The sight of them caused us to wonder what their thoughts might be after spending many hard months chopping down the trees, carving out the strip, filling it, smoothing it off, all without machinery, awaiting the grand occasion of the official opening. The sight of them now using some nous gave me heart.

Next came a request from Madang to proceed to Goroka to uplift fuel for Dumpu Cattle Station so that the chopper could refuel there enroute to Tauta. And that a DC3 from Madang was coming into ▶

Dumpu to await the return of the chopper with the survivors.

On arrival Goroka I called Madang and told them that the strip at Tauta was perfectly safe for a fully loaded 185 considering the present weather. I said I could easily uplift the survivors from Tauta should the need arise. The answer was the same, 'Tauta is closed to all operations. The helicopter will uplift all survivors and transfer them to the DC3 at Dumpu.' Had I been standing by a brick wall I'd have banged my head against it.

After a hurried refuel, and the loading of a drum of avgas, we replaced the door and returned to Tauta via the Bena Gap and Dumpu. For some fortuitous reason the old enemy, an afternoon build-up of rain cloud along the Bismarck Sea and the Bena Gap, was nowhere in sight.

The weather remained abnormally clear and stable. The mountain tops and the cattle station, only a few miles from Tauta, all basked in bright sunshine. For me though, as I resumed my standby function overhead, a dark cloud of another kind was hovering nearby.

For hours I circled, frustration and anger building, while watching the two pitiful figures stretched out on the rocks with the doctor and the others ministering to them. Extreme anxiety for the wellbeing of those injured had got to me. There was still no sign of the chopper, nor could an estimate for its arrival be ascertained.

When the Ansett Mandated Airlines DC3 came up and gave its landing report at Dumpu I flew straight there for a briefing. Tom Deegan, a New Guinea airline veteran was flying the 'Three' with Rob Hopkins as First Officer. A government medical assistant was on board to attend to the survivors. Now taking the major role in the rescue, the DC3 would remain at Dumpu to transport the survivors to Madang when the chopper brought them in.

Tom was interested in the location of the wreckage but could not be enticed into flying his DC3 to take a look, though I assured him that it was perfectly safe for his bigger charge over the site at 4,000 feet, all surrounding heights being clearly visible. Again, I returned to Tauta to take up my circling watch, still in an angry state of mind.

At about this time a pilot with a Canadian accent came up on the radio. At last the chopper was somewhere nearby. He said he was having weather

problems leaving the Highlands for the Ramu Valley and Dumpu. He passed an estimate, or more likely a guesstimate, of four o'clock. My heart sank even further. The Dornier had already been down for seven hours and there was still some time to go before the chopper could be on the scene.

All the time, while circling, I'd been looking for a suitable pad for the chopper, a reasonable distance from the Dornier. To my mind there was nothing. I'd passed that information to Madang several times. There were no sandy stretches or clearings within coo-ee of the wreck. Big trees spread their branches out over the huge boulders that ran bank to bank.

I began to hate myself for not landing in defiance of the order. Had the Tautuans started on a ground rescue at the beginning, the stretcher-bearers might already have been on their way back up with the injured. The inland bush-men, the 'fuzzy wuzzy angels', became supermen when it came down to such tasks. From Tauta, the injured could have been flown directly to Madang in the 185, a flight of about twenty-five minutes in favourable weather.

Looking down on the scene in the river, a sickening feeling came over me. A tragedy was in the making. How could a man in faraway Port Moresby know whether the Tauta strip was safe or not, without seeing for himself, or questioning me about it? He had already been informed that Tauta was suitable for the 185. The accident with the Dornier was not related in any way to the state of the strip. Whether or not it would be possible to land the chopper in the narrow, boulder-strewn riverbed still had to be decided.

The next call from the chopper came as he entered the Ramu Valley at Arona Gap, about thirty kilometres away. At four-thirty he landed to refuel at Dumpu, alongside the drum that had been placed conveniently to allow for a quick turnaround.

I was mortified to learn that the pilot had been in New Guinea for only two weeks and hadn't been to this part of the country before! He'd been on a sortie from a surveyor's camp to faraway Mount Karimui when notified of the crash; this about an hour after I had been called to assist after landing at Nondugl. He knew next to nothing about what was going on.

With no one to brief him on the best route to follow to Dumpu, and ill-equipped with maps, he returned the surveyors to their camp, then chose a route that had, at least, doubled the distance to

Dumpu. It was easy to see that he was tired and nervous as I told him of the urgency of the situation in the Surinam Valley.

There was no time to lose. The Dornier's location was pointed out on the map that had been lent to him. My outstretched arm showed him the route to follow across the Ramu Valley plains to the entrance to the Surinam. He didn't seem to be too sure of himself. For that I could not blame him, new to this strange land. In fact, I felt sorry for him, though his attitude angered me. He wasn't acting as if he was in any sort of a hurry. I watched from the 185 as time ticked on. Finally, he got his rotors turning.

He lifted off and chattered away across the flat, open plain of the Ramu towards the entrance to the Surinam. The summits of the towering mountains of the Finisterres by then were purple in the lowering sun, soon to be hidden under huge, billowing, build-ups. Allowing a few minutes I took off, soon passing the slower mover and taking the lead where the Surinam's white water poured out into the Ramu. I climbed so as to orbit at a height to allow the chopper to manoeuvre. We established contact on VHF.

It was obvious that the chopper would not be able to set down close to the wreckage. I traced his movements as he began a hunt for a landing place upstream and downstream. My spirits were lower than low during that period of uncertainty. The thought of him not being able to find a suitable place and of a day wasted, from the rescue point of view, dismayed me.

Finally, he found a spot, one that looked far from acceptable to me. But with a flurry of cut leaves and foliage he put down. He told me he felt forced to risk what he did with night coming on. My respect for fling-wing drivers, never that high, rose rapidly, especially for the one down there in the riverbed.

A long time passed before a number of local men came hopping from rock to rock towards the chopper, path finding for a group carrying a blanket between them, with what must be Ray wrapped inside. The stream was now in dark shadow as the sun dipped behind the mountains. Fifteen precious minutes elapsed before the Tauta villagers, with Dr Malcolm, reached the chopper. The black wall of night would soon roll down over the valley, preventing a safe take-off. Why the others were still at the wreck some two hundred metres upstream I could not understand?

Tauta men, with their machetes, hacked away at branches that would interfere with the rotor blades during lift-off. Then came a delay while a mob of local men milled about the bubble of the chopper. The pilot radioed that they were having trouble. Ray would have to be shifted from the pannier where he was lying to inside the bubble. Due to the restricted area he could carry only the patient, and he would have to be seated beside the pilot to compensate for the critical balance of the helicopter at lift-off.

Still circling overhead, still fretting, time running out without a sign of the chopper starting up, only heightened my anxiety. Finally, at six o'clock the rotors began turning.

Thick foliage under the trees on the river banks began to flatten and fly as the blades speeded up for the lift-off. From above, the whole manoeuvre looked highly hazardous. The gap between the trees was so narrow. Though dreading to watch, I couldn't take my eyes away for a second. The canopy of the jungle began to quiver in the downwash as the chopper lifted clear.

I held my breath until some forward movement of the bubble with its skeletal frame behind could be seen. Judging by the foliage being whipped about, he was still below the level of the branches. That reminded me of a nasty dream I had once had; flying an aircraft down a busy street, trapped under tram and power lines unable to rise, with a busy intersection coming up ... before I woke with a start, very happy to be in familiar surroundings. Slowly the frantic waving of the foliage died down.

Watching that chopper rise from the dark valley was an experience never to be forgotten. The young pilot may not have known his way round New Guinea, but he certainly knew a thing or two about his helicopter's capabilities. I breathed a sigh of ▶



Dornier Do 27 VH-EXA waiting to load supplies at an airstrip in Papua New Guinea, c.1964  
(Source: Geoff Goodall's Aviation History)

relief skimming down the river to emerge out onto the plains of the Ramu, and so down into Dumpu, to be on hand when the chopper arrived. Tom and Rob of the DC3, after spending a boring afternoon, were eager to go. The sun had gone down. The short twilight had set in. A race was now on to beat the failing light.

They could have saved precious minutes by starting their engines ready for a quick departure when the chopper arrived, but that suggestion, coming from me, a general aviation pilot, was not received with any great enthusiasm, nor was there any sign of the engines being started up. Minutes later the chopper put down beside the DC3. I could see Ray beside the pilot, head and shoulders slumped as if he was supported only by the seat harness, his colour ashen-grey. He was unconscious. As I lifted him out to carry him to the DC-3, I could see that both his legs were broken. He was very cold and lifeless. It seemed to me that there was only a rasp of breath at times to show that he was still alive.

Ray was laid on a stretcher on the floor of the DC3 with the medical assistant tending him, while a couple of retaining straps anchored to the floor were passed over his body. Too many minutes later, Tom took the 'Three' away along Dumpu's dusty, grass strip, and turned low for Madang, disappearing quickly into the gloom of approaching night. I knew I'd never see my good friend again.

When they had gone I turned to the chopper's pilot, sitting on the pannier on the ground rails of his machine, his head bowed low to his knees. A fierce anger swept over me like a tide, as cruel, harsh words formed on my tongue, words that were meant to hurt. I said his lateness might be the cause of Ray's death. That I had spent most of the day circling in a tight valley uselessly waiting for him to arrive. I asked how the other four survivors could be uplifted out of the river now that darkness had overtaken their rescue.

My outburst was the result of the many stresses and strains of the day. Frustrations too, so words that should never have been uttered, were. As I simmered down, I deeply regretted the explosion of anger.

I quickly apologised. I could see that he was hurt badly. A form of truce now existed for there was nothing more we could do that night. We stayed at Dumpu homestead with Bruce and Barbara Jephcott. It was hard for them as well, for they knew everyone who had been in the crash.

Over dinner, the Canadian recounted his day's many trials. With the chopper, he was in a precarious situation on the summit of Mount Karimui (8428 ft/2569 m) over in 'old Papua', waiting for some surveyors to complete their work, when he received the rescue request. His party had to be shuttled back to their camp before he could set out for Dumpu, a necessary task that occupied more than a couple of valuable hours. Did the searchmaster not know, or understand, that those men must not be left on the top of Mount Karimui for the night I wondered? The rest I knew.

Again, I apologised for my earlier outburst. He finished by saying that he would not go back into the Surinam Valley again, ever, under any circumstances. The landing and take-off there had been a frighteningly close shave for him; he would not take the same risk again, come what may. I said not a word to him of my thoughts, but before sleep came, my mind was made up.

In darkness next morning, Bruce drove me over to the airstrip. I checked the 185 over by hurricane lamp. Madang didn't come on watch until six o'clock. Making no radio call, I taxied out. Throttle wide, I tore off for the Surinam and Tauta like a Spitfire pilot in the Battle of Britain. To the southeast, over the broad plains of the Ramu, the sky gave first glimmers of the new day.

With the sun's first rays hitting the upper slopes of the Finisterres, I three-pointed onto Tauta's notorious airstrip. There had been no rain overnight, a miracle in itself. The surface was firmer than the day before. There were no villagers about, most were solid sleepers in their windowless, darkened huts; it would take more than an aircraft arriving to wake them at that hour of the morning.

As I switched off, to my surprise, Dr Laurence Malcolm, Vin Smith, District Officer at Madang and Patrol Officer Tony Cooke, three of the Dornier's passengers, appeared from a nearby bush house. Their faces all showed signs of the stress suffered, during and after the crash. All were scratched, mud-spattered and grubby, but none seriously hurt. To a man, they praised Ray fulsomely for the landing on the big boulders in the river.

District Commissioner Fred Kaad was nowhere to be seen. He'd been sitting beside Ray and was now lying in the hut seriously hurt. ▶

*Continued on page 30*

## Kiaps and the Antarctic

### PETER WOHLERS

**This is a short, and probably incomplete, history of kiaps and the Antarctic. Around 1975, when Papua New Guinea gained Independence, many kiaps began to consider their future job prospects. Contract kiaps, in particular, began to realise that most were not particularly qualified to slot into any field of endeavour in Australia, although some managed to gain employment in various aboriginal affairs disciplines.**

IN MY CASE (Seniority 1/04/64), whilst on leave, I happened to notice an advertisement in *The Age* newspaper for a position as Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of an Antarctic station. Many of the attributes and requirements for the position appeared to echo the attributes and requirements of a kiap.

I applied in 1974 and was short listed for interview in Brisbane. I travelled from Tabibuga in the then Western Highlands to Brisbane, and had a haircut plus shaved off my beard, to be interviewed by a panel of three men with long hair and beards.

I was not successful on this occasion; however, I was informed that I was one of the last six for four positions.

I reapplied in 1976 and was successful in being appointed to the position of OIC at Mawson for the 1977 expedition.

In January 1978, the incoming OIC at Mawson was Ken Chester (Seniority 11/12/46), another ex-kiap. Ken had been the OIC at Casey in 1976. Peter McKenzie (Seniority 27/08/62), another ex-kiap, was the OIC at Macquarie in 1976. Bob Lachel (Seniority 18/07/69), yet another ex-kiap had been at Mawson in 1965, and returned as OIC at Macquarie in 1986.

Ex-kiap Alistair McArthur was appointed as Base Commander (Base Leader/OIC) for two consecutive years (winters of 1967 and 1968) at Base 'E', Stonington, with the British Antarctic Survey. He travelled over 2,500 kilometres by dog sledge conducting geophysical and topographical surveys on the Antarctic Peninsula (British Antarctic Territory). In the early 1960s Alistair McArthur worked as a kiap at Kundiawa, Kainantu, Gumine, Okapa, Henganofi and Wonenara.

After returning to PNG to work initially at

Mt Kare, and more recently for employment in the oil and gas industry, I have spoken with Dave Ekins (Seniority 13/06/67), who stated that he was interviewed for the position as OIC of an Antarctic station but was unsuccessful.\*

Additionally, John Reid (Seniority 24/08/70) informed me that he was interviewed and was successful in being appointed as OIC Macquarie, but declined the position as he only wanted a position as OIC on the Antarctic continent.

Peter Russell (Seniority 24/06/68) was married to Joan Russell, and Joan became one of the first female OICs of an Antarctic station. Joan was OIC at Casey in 1990 and at Macquarie in 1994.

No doubt there were other ex-kiaps who applied to join the Antarctic Division, but either were not selected for interview, or who were unsuccessful at interview.

It would be interesting to hear from other ex-kiaps who considered the Antarctic as a possible transition from Papua New Guinea.

\* Chris Warrillow tells us that actually Dave was selected at an earlier interview, but had to decline when his fiancée informed him that she might not be still around when he returned. He was assured of a position when he next applied and that his interview was merely a formality. However, by that time, a standard question was in regard to attitudes towards drugs. Dave stated that he would not tolerate 'hard drugs', but would be inclined to turn a blind eye to anyone smoking an occasional marijuana so long as it did not in any way interfere with that person's performance of their duties. Asked: 'What if someone hallucinating walked out into -50° temperatures?'

Dave assured the interviewer that one does not hallucinate on marijuana—end of interview! Dave saw a few more years in PNG including work with the oil and gas industry). ♦



Peter and friends, Mawson, 1977



## Tragic Events at Tauta

Continued from page 28

Guided by the village men, they had reached Tauta in the early hours, after trekking up from the crash site in darkness. They had watched the chopper take off; and knew it would not be for them, even if the pilot came back. Better the overnight trek through the bush to Tauta.

DC Kaad, suffering a spinal injury, was carried over to the aircraft on a bush stretcher. Laurence Malcolm considered the District Commissioner's injuries to be serious, which told me that both Ray and DC Kaad should indeed have been evacuated in the afternoon of the day before.

DC Kaad was obviously in intense pain. When told of the closing of the Tauta strip by a bureaucrat in Port Moresby, all three were ropeable. I felt small, for the look in their eyes told me that I should have gone in regardless of the consequences.

The thing about a chief pilot's responsibilities, and Lord knows I have had to spell them out enough times writing operations manuals, is that you are damned if you do, and you are damned if you don't.

Laurence was beside himself with rage, DC Kaad too, about the contents of the storepedo, which contained only blankets, bandages and dressings. Of sedatives, opiates, syringes or antiseptics there were none. Both vowed that their reports would cause heads to roll.

Before leaving, I let them know that as they were about to be party to an illegal flight, I felt obliged to give them the option of declining. The good doctor's response was a derisive snort as he set to load Fred Kaad, as comfortably as he could, carefully settling him on a layer of blankets on the floor, leaving room to squat beside him.

By splitting the load so as to allow an added margin of safety it was decided to make two trips instead of just the one. District Officer Vin Smith and Patrol Officer Cooke were, needless to say, quite content to wait for my return. All set to go, doctor and patient were clearly nervous about their second Tauta take off, particularly so because of the softness of the uncompacted strip surface. The doctor asked if the 185 could handle it or would I prefer he remained behind.

I responded by powering up against the brakes until the locked wheels could hold us no more. As we began to slide I released the brakes. Roaring down

the slippery slope, we were in the air by about half way. Throttling back, I pointed the nose down into the Surinam to find the bottom of the narrow valley, including the crash site, blanketed by fog.

In perfect early morning weather, cloudless and still, we climbed over Shaggy Ridge, taking in the fearsome mountains etched against the clear blue of the sky. Then it was down over Astrolabe Bay and on to Madang calling the mildly surprised tower at 6.30 am, thirty miles out.

Unloading at the mission hangar we heard the grim news that Ray Jaensch's wife, Betty, had met the DC3 only to find that Ray had died not long before. A sombre moment for us all, particularly Doc Malcolm and me, for Ray had been, for both of us, a true wantok.

After seeing Fred Kaad into his hospital transport, Laurence Malcolm said he must call on the Jaenschs before going to attend to Fred at the hospital. Though still distressed that there were no pain relief drugs in the air drop with which he would have been able to relieve Ray's suffering and perhaps prolong his life, he did say that Ray's chances of survival had been greatly eroded by the way he had to be sat in the front of the chopper for the short, hazardous flight to Dumpu.

For me, there was still work to be done as the 185 was urgently required back at Goroka, not to mention an aerodrome inspector cooling his heels at Nondugl. First, though, back to Tauta to pick up Vin and Tony. I'd got word that I was now clear to use Tauta at my own discretion! Good news of course, but also adding wry force to the old adage that if you do not stand for something, you will fall for everything.

Ray Jaensch's accident was his first after war service in Europe with the RAAF.

As chief pilot of Lutheran Air Services, Ray was the only pilot flying the Dornier. Later, I learnt that the purpose of the flight was to have Madang's District Commissioner open a newly prepared airstrip at Tauta, at the head-waters of the Surinam River on the northern side of the Ramu Valley.

Though I had survived several close shaves virtually unscathed, I still continued to fly round the mountains of New Guinea nearly every day. So, I feel that I must have been doing something right. I became increasingly involved with pilot selection and training despite having to deal almost daily with obstruction from DCA officials. ♦

## Australia's New Consul-General to Houston, USA, Has PNG Heritage

MAX UECHTRITZ

**Benson Saulo couldn't be prouder of his Dad. The father of Australia's next Consul-General to the USA is a Papua New Guinean, born on a remote beach in New Ireland, who came to Australia with little more than the clothes he was wearing and married an indigenous woman. Now, their son Benson has just been appointed Australia's first indigenous consul-general anywhere in the world, and will take up the post in Houston in the USA.**

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S most outstanding young achievers, Benson is only thirty-two years old.

The young man who has set up youth support programs in both Australian and PNG says he was inspired in life by his remarkable parents.

'My father always instilled in us—never think the world's not yours,' Benson told SBS TV. 'He was born in a very remote village in Papua New Guinea. He came to Australia with T-shirts, shorts and a pair of shoes and a small backpack in the middle of winter.'

Benson Saulo was born in Bordertown, South Australia, but raised in Tamworth, New South Wales. His mother was from Bordertown and lived in a tin shed on the outskirts of town in her early years. Through her, Benson is of the Wemba Wemba, Jardwadjali and Gunditjmarra nations of western Victoria.

He proudly outlined his parents' backgrounds to the Lowy Institute:

*We don't know how old my father really is because he was born on a beach in New Hanover, in the New Ireland Province of Papua New Guinea—so he got to pick a date for his birthday. Each year it changes depending on when he wants presents from us. His father was from Neikonomon, which is located in the mountains of West Lavongai, and his mother was from Lafu on the west coast of New Ireland. From an early age, my father always had a curious mind.*

*He fondly recalls leaving school at a very young age and following his father, who was a medical practitioner, around New Ireland. He speaks five dialects and would often disappear for weeks, sometimes months, walking and exploring different villages across the province. I think this is why he is such a people person.*

*Their stories and individual journeys still amaze and inspire me. They met in a very small rural town called Cootamundra, in New South Wales, where*

*they both attended bible college. The story of how they both came to the college is a novel in itself; filled with courage, faith and determination.'*

Growing up in Tamworth, New South Wales, where the Indigenous population is about three times higher than the national average, Benson says he can't remember seeing an Aboriginal person working in any of the businesses in the main street. That changed when he took on a school-based traineeship with the ANZ Bank at the age of fifteen.

'I knew I had a window of five minutes when I was serving a customer to leave them with something that might make them think differently about Aboriginal people,' he says.

Benson stayed on with ANZ for seven years, working his way up the ranks in business banking until, in 2011, he was appointed Australia's youth representative to the sixty-sixth General Assembly of the United Nations. He was the first indigenous Australian selected for the position.

'I remember calling my mum to tell her and she just started crying,' he says. 'The thing is, she was ▶



Benson Saulo

eleven years old [at the time of the 1967 Referendum for Aboriginal Rights] before she was even classed as a citizen in Australia. She said to me: “When I was young, they didn’t even want to know us, and now they’ve got my son representing them”—and that was pretty powerful.’

Benson met his now wife, Kate O’Brien, in Sydney and they married in Melbourne in 2016.

‘I describe her as one of the most courageous people I know; she’s unbelievable,’ Benson said. ‘She’s a doctor of clinical and forensic psychology, and for the past four years has been working as a torture and trauma specialist for refugees and asylum seekers.’

From the *Northern Daily Leader*:

*In March 2013, Benson founded the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Academy, which aimed to empower young indigenous people to lead positive change on issues they are passionate about.*

*‘Borne out of that national tour I undertook was the realisation that young Aboriginal and Islander*

*voices were missing from the national conversation on issues impacting young people,’ he said. ‘In the space of those two years, we developed and launched ten youth-led social action campaigns. The top three were climate change, mental health and suicide prevention. They’re not issues that just impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; they impact all Australians, but what we were doing was enabling young Aboriginal voices on these issues. We engaged all up ... over 100,000 people on these particular topics.’*

*Benson said these teens and young adults had ‘gone on to do amazing things’. ‘The connection of like-minded individuals passionate about the idea of change and the belief that they, themselves, can actually effect positive change – at its heart, that was what the leadership academy was about,’ he said. ‘That an individual has the ability to effect change, but we’re stronger together.’*

*Benson also co-founded Mind Garden Projects in 2014, an organisation that provides literacy support for schools in Papua New Guinea.*

*‘The organisation supports four schools across New Ireland Province on my grandmother and grandfather’s land’ he said. ‘There’s no shortage of passionate, good teachers, but the resources that enabled them to deliver the education was what was lacking.’*

Benson says his wife, Kate and their six-month-old daughter are excited about going to Houston.

‘Her name is Anaïs Ramo Saulo. The name Ramo is from my grandmother’s side on the west coast of New Ireland. It is an old name that hasn’t been used for a few generations. My wife and I felt strongly that our daughter would carry the name of my father’s land. My middle name Igua is from Neikonomon on New Hanover, which is my grandfather’s land.’

Australia’s new Consul-General, Benson Saulo, says he’s keen to share Australia’s indigenous culture and connecting with First Nations businesses and leaders in the US as part of his trade and investment promotion duties.

‘It’s really looking at Australia’s diplomatic relationships ... as well as trade and also investment,’ Mr Saulo said. ‘The role that I hope to play and the role I’ve always played ... in life, professionally and personally, has always been the ability to bring people together. To be able to convene a respectful and informed dialogue and if I can play a small role in my time over in Houston, but also here in Australia, it’s something that I’d hope to do.’

Benson Saulo, Consul-General, will take up his post at the end of the year. ♦

## Family Farm to PNG Development Bank—Story of a Didiman

### MURROUGH BENSON—Part Five

**The morning of 12 February 1970 saw Joy and me winging our way from Brisbane to Port Moresby, a three-hour trip that had us scheduled to touch down at midday. We arrived pretty much on time, notwithstanding three attempts at landing because of the cyclonic winds that almost forced the pilot to retreat to Cairns.**

AT THIS STAGE, all we knew was that DASF was transferring me to the Gulf District—but where? The first bit of information I gleaned from my visit to HQ at Konedobu was that we were going to Murua.

The next day we were at the Steamships store in town opening an account so that we could get goods sent on the ‘K’ boat that went to Murua once a month as well as buying a few basics to keep us going in the meantime. We could, after all, stock up more fully at Kerema ... couldn’t we? We were soon to find the answer ... if you were not in Kerema when the boat arrived from Moresby you missed out!

We found there was a flight going to Murua that afternoon so at 4.40 we were on our way, arriving about an hour later. There was no time to see too much of the house on that first day—just enough to find that there was a lot of cleaning to do and that even the most basic of furniture was missing. And so ended Friday the 13th of February 1970.

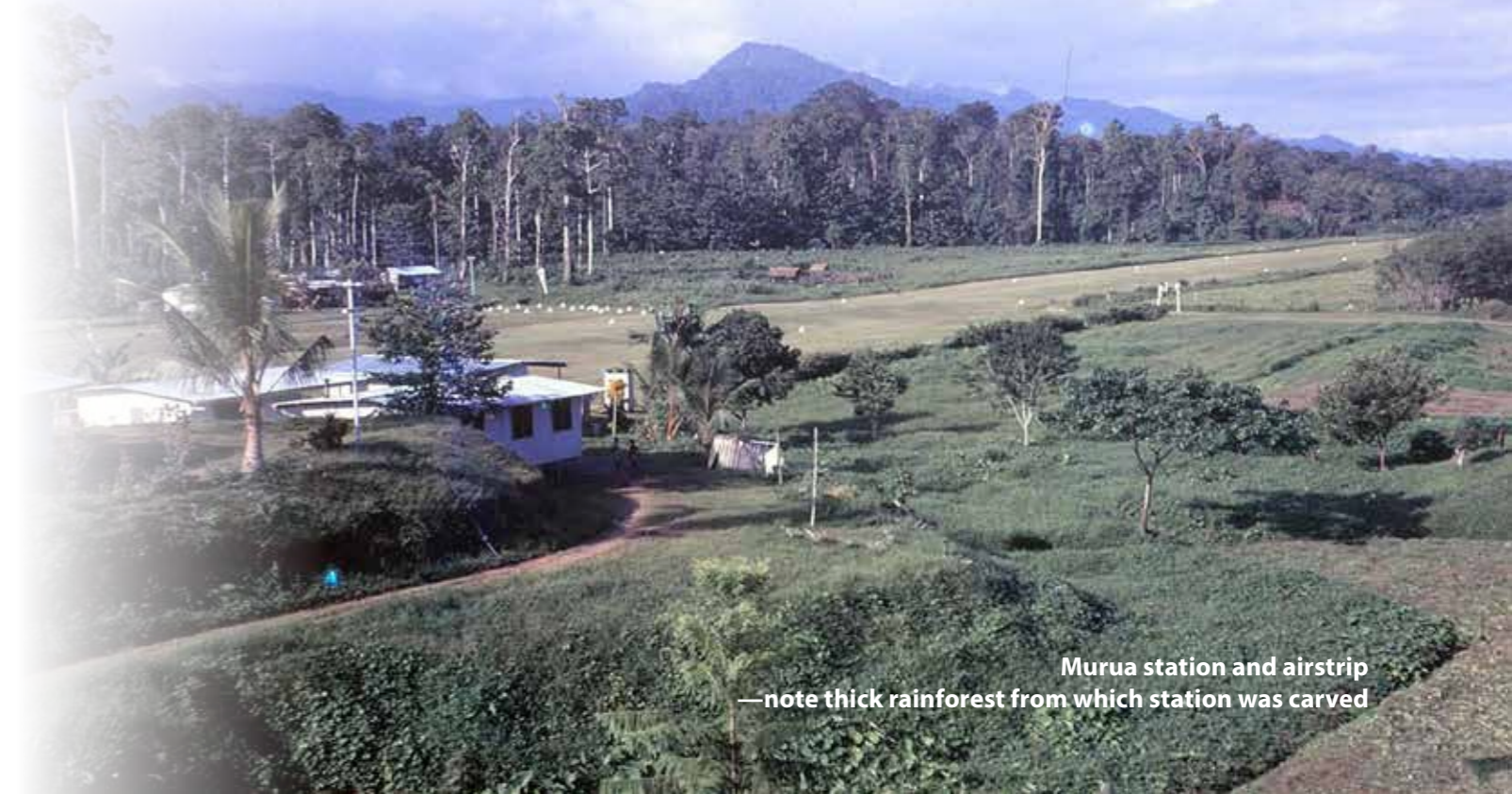
Murua was an agricultural training station some eight km as the crow flies north east of Kerema, the Gulf District Headquarters. Across the Murua River from the station was a small land settlement scheme of about forty blocks that produced rubber. There was no road access from the coast and no regular plane service so it was generally a boat trip across Kerema Bay and up one of the many inlets along that coast. This trip took about three-quarters of an hour by dinghy but could take twice that time in the big canoe that was needed to carry drums of fuel and other large items—44-gallon drums of fuel fitted across the canoe.

The normal arrival point was the wharf at Matupe from where it was about a five-minute drive on a well-formed road that had been built up through the low-lying tropical jungle.

Development of Murua station started in 1959 when DASF personnel tackled the virgin forest with nothing more than axes and machetes. Later, a chain saw speeded up progress somewhat. ▶



Benson Saulo’s parents at the United Church in New Ireland (top); Benson and his wife, Kate (bottom)



Murua station and airstrip —note thick rainforest from which station was carved



Farmer trainees being allocated tasks for the day (top); DASF's big canoe frequently had outboard motor problems (second); DASF office (third); Tapped rubber tree—note spout and cup to catch the latex (bottom).

Nevertheless, it was hot, sweaty, painstaking work in an environment of consistently high humidity.

Eleven years on, significant progress had been made: a good, solid airstrip running up the middle of the station; housing for staff across a range of departments; dormitory-style accommodation and kitchen/dining facilities for the farmer trainees; generator-powered electricity; rubber buying and storage facilities; a small store run by a club that had been set up by local staff to cater for the basic needs of people on the station as well as those living on the nearby rubber settlement blocks; and a small office.

A couple of cleared and fenced paddocks were home to three donkeys, two horses and a few cattle. A set of yards had been built in one of the paddocks. Across the river, next to the rubber blocks, was a primary school that catered for the children of both block owners and station workers.

Staff consisted of the DASF office clerk, three agricultural assistants, two carpenters, a tractor driver, car (Toyota LandCruiser) driver, the power boy (who was responsible for starting up the station generator each morning and evening and looking after its general maintenance) and a policeman.

A variety of crops had been planted. These were of both an experimental nature, to help determine what may be worthwhile pursuing on a commercial basis by the local landholders, as well as providing a training ground for farmer trainees who spent about twelve months on the station learning the different aspects of crop husbandry, particularly rubber. In addition to fairly substantial plantings of rubber of varying ages, there was Robusta coffee, nutmeg, vanilla, an oil palm plot and quite a few custard apple trees scattered around the place.

A considerable area of the blocks had already been planted to rubber trees and much of it was already in production. The settlers 'tapped' the latex each morning, allowing the white sap to flow into aluminium cups attached to the tree. Later, the latex was collected and taken to the small processing factory that each settler had on their block where it was put in trays with formic acid to coagulate it. The settlers processed their rubber to the Ribbed Smoked Sheet (RSS) stage, the coagulated latex being rolled into fairly thin sheets and smoked before being brought across to the station where DASF staff graded, weighed and bought it before packing it into 100 lb bales, which were then shipped on the monthly 'K' boat to Steamships in Moresby.

My work as a Rural Development Officer (RDO) at Murua was pretty varied. In the absence of any other government departments being represented by an

expatriate on the station, in addition to looking after the DASF staff I had to provide day-to-day support to the local officers working for Public Works, Education, Transport, Police and the Electricity Commission. I also had responsibility for the rural development work of a small team of DASF people stationed at Ihu, a little way up the Vailala River about fifty km around the coast west of Kerema, and made regular trips there by plane from Kerema.

A large part of my time was spent attending to the needs of the settlers on the nearby rubber blocks. Apart from assisting them with expansion of their plantings using seedlings from our rubber nursery, we had to ensure that all aspects of maintenance were attended to, that tapping of the older trees was done properly and consistently and that curing and smoking of the latex was done properly.

My exposure to rural credit in PNG started when I was posted to Murua. Development of the smallholder rubber blocks from virgin bush through to production would not have been possible without funding from the PNG Development Bank and, as was the case throughout the country, the effective disbursement of funds and subsequent repayment of loans relied very heavily on the local didiman, acting as the bank's agent.

Under the loans, settlers were paid a living allowance until their rubber production could support them. Drawing on the loan funds, we also organised the purchase of building materials for dwellings, rubber factories and smoke houses as well as tools and rubber processing equipment. The local officers' Staff Club, under the guidance of the didiman in charge at the time, had set up a small store on the station to service the basic needs of people living on and around it. Tools and equipment such as tapping knives, latex cups, coagulation trays, formic acid and rubber rollers as well as cover crop seed were ordered through the club from Burns Philp and Steamships in Port Moresby and shipped out on the monthly 'K' boat. Seedlings from the station rubber nursery were supplied to the settlers as they developed their blocks.

Regular individual Block Reports were completed for the bank, recording progress against the development plan, production details, income and expenditure. Budgets were reviewed regularly and amended as necessary with the approval of the bank. Apart from disbursing loan funds, DASF was also responsible for ensuring lease rental payments were up to date, collecting loan repayments and communicating to settlers if any action was being considered by the bank. ▶



Settler's house on the rubber blocks—the rubber factory is beyond the house (top); Rolling latex sheets in smallholder rubber factory—the final grooved roller increased surface area for curing/smoking (second); Settler processing latex from his rubber trees (third); Settlers with rubber sheets for sale at the DASF station (bottom).



Farmer trainees' accommodation with trade store in foreground (top): A fairly substantial settler's house on the rubber resettlement scheme (second); OIC's house (third); A new farmer trainee arriving at Murua (bottom).

I was also the paymaster for all government employees on the station and at the school across the river. Money for the pays as well as buying the rubber was advanced to us by Treasury in Kerema and brought up to Murua in a calico bag ... no, a locked calico bag! That was the only security on the trip up the river but it seemed to work all right! Once at Murua we had a proper safe in our office.

From time to time it was necessary to mediate in disputes between settlers, including when they sometimes came to blows. While there was a local policeman on the station, he was rarely the first point of call in these matters; realistically, a lone Chimbu policeman mediating between two groups of people from the Gulf was hardly likely to work.

Other tasks included arranging maintenance on all station housing, always a challenge given that PWD in Kerema rarely seemed to have much in the way of materials. The months it took to get our own house in a reasonably liveable condition was a good indication of the challenges faced—out of sight, out of mind seemed to be very much the way things were here. We suspected very strongly that a leaking roof was causing our electricity to short out but were having great difficulty getting anyone to share our view or even to look at it; eventually someone did come up and we were vindicated when they removed a sheet of Masonite from the lounge room ceiling, and the fellow was absolutely drenched by the water that had been trapped up there—with electric wiring sitting in it.

Our header tank, the only source of running water for the house, only held water for a very short time. Again, PWD couldn't help so we resorted to trying to plug the holes with whatever we could lay our hands on and, eventually, the problem seemed to be largely solved; at least we managed to slow the loss of water so that we could have a proper shower without one of us having to man the hand pump under the house to keep water supplied to the header tank.

Getting gas to flow through to the kitchen stove was a more intractable problem, but the solution lay hidden under a pile of rubbish. An old wood-burning stove that had long since passed its use-by date in one of the local officer's houses was found in one of the station sheds so we put the pieces together, did a few running repairs and set it up on the concrete pad under our high-set house. It served the purpose reasonably well for the remainder of our time at Murua. The one thing we had to be careful of was to finish our cooking well before darkness fell, before the hordes of huge mosquitoes that flourished in the tropical conditions carried us off. ♦



## Mt Fubilan, Ok Tedi & Other Tales

(Part Two)

**FRED PRATT**

**Fred Pratt is a surveyor and engineer who lived and worked in PNG from 1961 to 2014. He worked at Ok Tedi over the period 1969–83, and again briefly in 2014, and tells the story of a Star Mountains Patrol in 1963:**

IN 1963, ADO Des Fitzer, along with PO Ross Henderson and Surveyor John Groenewald, conducted the last of the great exploratory patrols into the Star Mountain foothills in the north-west corner of Papua. In 1969 stories began to circulate that the patrol had brought back copper-bearing rocks from Mt Ian. These stories seem to have originated from senior administration sources. It was quite common in those days to be in conversation with a government official, and when you mentioned that you were working for Kennecott in the Star Mountains to be told, 'Oh, Des Fitzer brought back copper samples from Mt Ian', as though that meant that the government, and not Kennecott, were responsible for the discovery of Mt Fubilan.

In those days copies of patrol reports were not readily available to the general public. Kennecott assumed that the patrol had come up the west bank of the Ok Tedi River, climbed and named Mt Tricia (after the DO's wife), crossed the Ok Mani River and proceeded north to Mt Ian (which they named after the Western District DO, Ian Holmes), then climbed Mt Ian to reconnoitre the way to the Kauwol Valley away to the north-west.

The question asked was 'did the patrol report record the collection of these samples?' No response to this could be obtained. Kennecott checked with the Mines Department assay laboratory in Moresby and there was no record of assays of rock samples being brought in by government patrols, but still the claim persisted.

The Dutch were still in charge of Netherlands New Guinea (NNG) until mid-1962. The Dutch had reported that their patrols had contacted villages in

the Star Mountain foothills in the 'Taub' valley on the Australian side of the border. The Australian administration decided to send a patrol to contact these villages, and to climb Mt Capella. Because ADO Jim Kent's 1954 Star Mountain patrol had been unable to proceed north past the Ok Mani River, it was decided that the 1963 patrol would follow the Ok Mani west to its headwaters, then follow the Ok Kwirok down to the NNG border, and then head north inside NNG to the 'Taub' valley. Fitzer made two reconnaissance flights over the proposed route.

The patrol departed Kiunga on 17 January 1963. On 8–10 February, while camped at Kaiumguin and Kumguit, just south of the Ok Mani, Fitzer again asked if there were tracks north of the Ok Mani along the west bank of the Ok Tedi and was again told 'No'. The patrol proceeded on its planned route. They camped at Guirok on 16–17 February, crossed the Ok Kwirok, and headed north inside NNG to the 'Taub' which they found to be called the Kauwol. The patrol contacted villages in the Kauwol Valley, and on 4 March moved north into the Benkwin area. There they were unable to obtain guides. On 13 April, after forty fruitless days trying to find tracks to the north, further efforts were abandoned, and the patrol headed east to the Alice (Ok Tedi) valley. They crossed the headwaters of the Ok Tedi on 16 April and reached Bultem on 17 April.

And that was the nearest that the patrol got to Mt Ian. So, there were no rock samples brought back from Mt Ian as the patrol got nowhere near Mt Ian.

The patrol then turned east and followed the Telefomin 'kiaps' route to Telefomin station. ♦ Photo (above): Star Mountains



## It All Started With Jeeps

BEVYNNE TRUSS

**I was born in Toowoomba in 1940 to a farming family. My mother had plans for me, but my father had a practical bent, and after spending time at Toowoomba Grammar I left school in year ten to join Eagers Holden as an apprentice. I must have had some talent because I finished in four years with a bonus pass in January 1957.**

DAD ALWAYS SAID ‘go diesel’. I joined a youth group, the Young Australia League and went to Cairns and visited the Tablelands. We stayed in a hostel next to the council workshops. Fascinated by heavy machinery, I arranged a transfer to Tanner & Kenny, road construction contractors. Later I went to Main Roads, as a field mechanic (fitter) A Grade, covering petrol and compression ignition engines (diesel).

I spent four years travelling all over the peninsula. I also mixed with young people and went on social outings. I met my first wife, Marlene, and we got married in 1960.

The Overseas Mission was looking for an artisan/mechanic to go to East Sepik to rebuild and restore eight military Jeeps and so, with my wife, I went to PNG in 1967.

My entry permit No. A1795, dated 17 February 1967, classified me as a motor mechanic and British Subject



We travelled out on rough hilly roads to Maprik. I was my own boss and reported to the superintendent of the AOG Mission, Pastor Cyril Westbrook. Marlene taught at the Hayfield School.

My Jeeps collected names. Jeep 1 came from Toledo, Ohio, and had been donated from Australia. This was called Cyril. Jeep 8 was named Dorcas, a biblical woman who helped the poor. This vehicle went to Fred Evans. They were stored in a corrugated iron workshop at Hayfield, and I arranged to have a special place reserved just for me and the vehicles I was working on. This was continuous work, breaking down battered Jeeps, occasionally straightening chassis and replacing engine parts as needed. I brought a lot of spare parts from Sydney. Fortunately, a previous artisan body builder had left me with eight bodies to be joined over the reconditioned Jeeps.

My assistant mechanic, Gaswat, was always on to me to teach him to drive. Teaching locals could be scary. Okay, easy. When you come to a bend slow down, brake and, if necessary, put both feet down on the pedal to avoid stalling. But Gaswat panicked and drove straight into a moreta shed. Fortunately, no damage to the jeep. He also wanted to ride the motorbike. It was a BSA Bantam and again he went into a building. But he learned quickly and in later

years Gaswat went into business with tipper trucks and worked on the Sepik Highway in 1977, including bridges.

Whilst Jeeps were used to further the gospel message in the area, they were vital for supplying village trade stores and getting our nurses to aid posts. They also had to drive these vehicles. Doubling the clutch to come down to first gear was a bit of a problem because if a nurse stalled in a river, the Jeep’s engine would be flooded. I taught them to remove the fan belt from the generator (a lever pulled it aside). Then put a grain bag over the front of the jeep—so creating a protective bow wave: *‘Never stop while in first gear because, if you do, water will get into the distributor. Always have weight (trade goods and medical supplies) in the back.’*

Crossing some rivers, the women complained of water up around their knees. Sometimes they raised their skirts, forgetting that wet clothes dried really quickly in the tropics. These girls took my advice and gentle ribbing in good measure. They worked hard and were a credit to the mission and the local population.

I became an expert in crossing rivers. In fact, threatened with rising water on one occasion, I left a Jeep at the Nanu River on my way back to Hayfield from Jambitanget in the Wasura. I stripped down to my underdaks and slung my boots, tying my clothes behind my neck. Cautiously I went into the water to check the depth. My height standard for a Jeep to cross was mid-thigh, but a rising ‘tide’ swept me off my feet. Fortunately, I kept my head and swam with the flow. Finally, I made it to the *pitpit*, worrying about snakes and crocodiles. Cut all over, I clambered back to dry land. Then I had to find a track back to the road heading for home. The Jeep was retrieved safe and sound the next day.

The locals were invariably friendly. Kids were always looking for a lift. They scrambled all over the Jeep I was driving: *‘Tell me which village you want to be dropped off at,’* I asked. They told me, but many times passengers disappeared. ‘Missing’ children were a worry, but fortunately no accidents.

The job finished in 1969 and I was interviewed in Wewak to become a foreman at the mechanical workshop in Kavieng, servicing all New Ireland. Sworn in as a public servant by District Commissioner Ted Hicks, I was on my way to get into heavy machinery. But that’s another story. ♦



Crossing a flooded river (top); Missionary Cyril Westbrook received the keys to rebuilt Willys Jeep from Bevynne Truss (second); and Bevynne Truss, Atherton QLD, 2002 (Photos: Martin Kerr & Fred Evans)

Bevynne Truss went to the Sepik in 1967 and remained in PNG for ten years, finishing as a plant inspector for Public Works Department in Goroka. Subsequently, he took a two-year secondment from Water Resources Queensland, volunteered and provided consulting services on a number of projects in PNG.



## There Are Buffalo on Selapiu Island

**PETER STACE**

**'Karabau em i dai pinis!' (The buffalo is dead!) the men shouted with great excitement. At the time I was a brand new 'didiman' and had been given instructions to shoot a buffalo. We were on Selapiu Island near Kavieng, and were on a buffalo hunt to collect blood and tissue samples for disease testing and I had just shot a big white buffalo bull.**

Wild Water Buffalo (above)

IN JULY 1967 I went to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG) as an agricultural officer, commonly called a 'didiman', having graduated from Hawkesbury Agricultural College the previous year. Before going to TPNG I had no pre-training, no expectations or cultural awareness before going; I just went.

I had been sent an air ticket, a permit to enter TPNG, a date to travel and, when I arrived in Port Moresby, no one knew I had arrived until I presented myself, bag in hand and sweating profusely, to the reception of the Department of Agriculture, Stock & Fisheries (DASF) head office at Konedobu, Port Moresby. I was sent to a boarding house for a week to stay until they (whoever they were) finally sent me to the Islands.

The first posting for this wet behind the ears, culturally ignorant, linguistically unskilled, straight out of ag college and enthusiastic for adventure twenty-one-year-old, was to Kavieng, the main town of New Ireland. New Ireland is the banana-shaped island far to the north-east of New Guinea. One of the first things I had to do was to count the buffalo on Selapiu Island.

Selapiu Island is located immediately south of the corner of New Hanover Island, in between Kavieng and New Hanover and due west of Kavieng.

There are wild water buffalo on Selapiu Island and, when I was there in 1967, they had trashed the plantation, village gardens, and the whole ecosystem of the island. These buffalo were the offspring of animals brought to Selapiu Island by the German planters when New Guinea was a German colony.

After the First World War, the German colony of New Guinea was ceded to Australian control. This resulted, eventually, in the deportation of German citizens and the seizure of all German property. However, before good management of Selapiu coconut plantation could re-start, the buffalo had gone wild.

Fifty years later in August 1967, as the new agricultural officer, straight from Australia and posted to the Kavieng office, I was told to go to Selapiu Island and count the buffalo!

What else do you do with a new boy? I suppose it was like telling a new recruit to find the 'left-handed cup', or ask for a 'long wait', or something as stupid. For me at the Kavieng office I was told to 'count the buffalo on Selapiu Island'.

I was provided with a boat called a 'tinny' with a 60 hp outboard motor, a local man who was a member of the fisheries section to be helmsman, navigator and local contact as his village was on a nearby island. There was also a large metal box to put my things in.

Early in the morning, when there was no wind, we skimmed across mirror-smooth water out of Kavieng Harbour. There were fingers of red sunrise colours reflected in the sea immediately around the boat as if we were skimming on fire.

I was confused for a moment as the sea and sky were the same blue and there seemed no horizon.

The New Guinean helmsman instructed me to move to a more convenient place. This allowed the 'tinny' to plane over the water. The experience was unbelievably exhilarating as it was like flying very low. Within an hour or so we had arrived at an island and picked up someone who came from Selapiu but was now a refugee from the buffalo. This fellow was to be our guide.

As we had neared the island, and after the helmsman had slowed down to a crawl, with the rumbling sound of the idling engine a school of yellow fin tuna went splattering past, stirring the mirror-like water into a frenzy. Birds were screaming overhead and dropping like dive bombers into this cauldron of fish.

A little while later a pod of dolphins checked us out, leaping higher than the boat to see us and then swimming inches from the tinny's bow. If this was working in PNG, I was quite happy being the new recruit on a flick pass job of 'What do you do with the new boy?'

We reached Selapiu Island, waded ashore, and were immediately met by the wreckage the buffalo had made. The buffalo had churned up swamps into stinking mud, damaged trees, and wrecked gardens.

There were seventy-year-old tall coconut palms with a tuft of fronds just visible on top. These coconut palms were the remnants of the plantation planted by the German colonists. Their fallen companions lay on the short-cropped grass, or as long grey poles of dead palms standing sentinel to another time. Replacement palms could not be planted as the buffalo would destroy them. The plantation had been all but abandoned to the buffalo, and the grass was short from their grazing.

We wandered around trying to count the animals but they ran away as soon as we were near, and counting was frustratingly difficult. Following the buffalo in the swamps was impossible, and on the open grassland of the plantation the buffalo bolted as soon as we appeared. All, except the 'alpha bulls' who would amble towards us with head held high, sniffed the wind and with intimidating bellows and snorts, telling us to keep away—which we did!

Interestingly these bulls were both white and black, although the white ones were covered in

mud so I suppose they were grey. Their horns were big and when they lifted their heads to bellow, or sniff the wind, their horns were flat on top, but very thick.

After three days of trying to estimate the number of animals, I decided to say 'there are lots of buffalo on Selapiu Island'.

We stayed overnight in a village government rest house on an island called Butei—some five minutes from Selapiu by 'low-flying tinny'. These government houses are in all villages for travelling government personnel. The house was made from bamboo woven mats for walls, split palm logs for floor and thatched sago palm leaves for the roof. The house was very close to the beach, where small waves sloshed to a gentle rhythm. It was one of the most idyllic and tranquil places one could ever imagine.

One morning a sailing canoe silently moved out to sea and the trees next to the beach filtered the morning sun so it was not too bright. It was a huge difference to the ecological trashed island only a small distance away.

On returning to Kavieng a report was written that went to head office. Within a short time, a vet from the stock section wanted to go to Selapiu Island to shoot a few buffalo to get blood to do serum antibody tests to check the disease status of the herd. Because this mob had been isolated for years, they would reflect the original disease status of the past. I was told to organise the event with boats, staff and fire-arms.

I had had experience with rifles being a member of a rifle club and had also shot targets at ag college, as well as shooting pigs and rabbits ▶





A homemade canoe at a beach in New Ireland (top); Part of the coast of Selapiu Island (below)

on the farms I had worked on, so I felt quite experienced for the task set me.

I went to the police station and asked to borrow one of their rifles with ammunition. There must have been some communication between my immediate boss and the police, because the New Guinean police man at the reception said, 'Yes sir, would you like to come to the armoury and choose which one you would like?' Just like that! I chose a standard issue Lee-Enfield No. 1 Mk III and a full bandolier of ammunition and walked out of the police station with the rifle slung over my shoulder and the bandolier across my chest.

The vet who initiated this excursion for the sampling of buffalo blood arrived by plane. He

was quite a robust man and I was a little worried about his ability to relate to the uncontrollable water buffalo of Selapiu. These Selapiu buffalo do not have the same placid attitude as the ones we see pulling ploughs and carts in South East Asia.

He wanted to go by boat, shoot a buffalo, get its blood and be back so he could catch the next plane to Port Moresby. He apparently had other duties to attend to. We piled into the tinny, but due to the extra weight the tinny would not get up and plane across the sea as before; instead, it ploughed through the water. We picked up our Selapiu refugee guide and arrived at the island by midday when it was hot, and any self-respecting buffalo were deep in the mud or water hole asleep. There was not a buffalo to be seen.

Eventually, the buffalo started to amble out of the swamps, onto the plantation pastures. However, they ran away as soon as they noticed us, except for the big bulls which, like before, confronted us with bellows and snorts. These guys were big and their horns were huge. The vet explained why these magnificent animals, just thirty to forty yards away, were challenging us.

He said they were only showing off, and protecting their harem. They probably would not come much closer. He mentioned that the white bulls demonstrated a high level of inbreeding as the original population from the German times included just a few animals.

He then identified a big white bull he would like shot so he could collect its blood.

With the loaded rifle in hand I slowly walked towards this big white bull. The wind was coming from the direction of the animal and he possibly could not smell or see me as their eyesight is poor. However, he knew I was there as he kept facing me, even when I moved to the side to a standing coconut palm. At about twenty yards away, and using the coconut palm to stabilise the rifle, I shot the bull in the forehead, which I thought was the best place to kill the beast (where the diagonal lines between the eyes and the ears cross). That's what I was taught at ag college. But my learning was about cattle, not buffalo; big mistake!

I was expecting the buffalo to fall over and die but it just stood there. The .303 bullet did nothing to this big white bull. He just turned around and ambled away. I was young and could run, which I

did, to follow the wounded bull. The New Guinea men were also running with me. We were on the chase. Jumping fallen coconut palms and crossing small creeks with one bound, with energy I didn't know I had, I finally arrived at a dense clump of bush into which the big white bull had disappeared. I stopped only a few feet from this dense bush and was pondering whether I should follow. The New Guinea men shouted to me 'Don't go in there or he will get you.'

I didn't have to go into the bush as the bull came out, straight for me. Its head was down and his horns hit my ankles as I jumped up. Then the bull tossed its head and I found myself flying over the bull and skidding along its muddy back in an undignified way. I landed on the grass, my hat gone and rifle flung away. I lay there for a few seconds before being helped up. I was okay. 'Peta, yu stap orait?' was the New Guinea men's cry as they helped me up. 'Baimbai, yumi mus kirup na kilia long dispela ples. Kwik!' (Peter, are you OK? Now we must get up and get away from this place quickly!).

Looking around, I saw the bull circling and coming back at us. The New Guinea men were quickly up the nearby trees, which were really thin and, on later reflection, it was quite comical. The thin trees with the men in them were bending down, low enough for the bull to hit them.

I quickly retrieved the rifle, flicked the safety catch off, raised it to my shoulder and aimed at the bull, which was coming at me—fast! I can remember thinking 'that bull is very close', as it took up all my vision with its head down and only its neck in the rifle's sights. I fired and the bullet hit the bull's neck bone, smashing the bone and breaking the spinal cord. The head of the bull fell forward onto the ground in between its front legs. The whole body of the bull then cartwheeled over its head.

I stepped to one side as the bull's body fell where I had just been standing. It hit the ground with a 'whump' letting out a great fart. I stood there shaking as I have never shaken before. I just vibrated. My hands shook, my legs shook, and my whole body quivered. I didn't feel good. The New Guinea men were then beside me, shouting and sharing in the excitement of the kill. 'Karabau, em i dai pinis!' (The buffalo is dead) they shouted.

Then I realised something else had died—within me; the immortal Peter had died and the

mortal was born. The idea that I was a great hunter with a powerful rifle was gone; all that was left was a shaking Peter and a powerful rifle and the knowledge that a .303 is powerful and had to be respected. I put the rifle on the ground until I stopped shaking.

Even though the big white bull lay at my feet twitching its life away, its neck smashed, and bodily fluids escaping—and I was still alive, unharmed!—perhaps I should have felt just a 'little bit immortal', but I didn't. I felt sad at the loss of the dignity, beauty and magnificence of the 'big white bull'.

Soon after, the vet arrived, red-faced and puffing. He waited a while to collect his breath and then chided me: 'You silly bastard, you will never kill a buffalo by shooting it in the head; their horns are too big and tough and the brain too small. A head shot will be absorbed like a splinter. Shoot them in the heart, knocks them over every time. I thought you knew that! Mate, you were lucky.' Taking a knife and sample bottles out of his pack, he then collected the blood and tissue samples needed from this huge white buffalo bull.

I cannot remember much of going back to Kavieng. I know we successfully shot a few more buffalo for blood samples. Shot in the heart, as instructed by the vet, with great success and no adventure. They died quickly. I hope at least I said thanks and paid lots of money to the New Guinea men that helped us in this adventure, but I don't remember. ♦



A herd of feral water buffalo

# The Demise of Regional Broadcasting

**GRAHAM KING**

**'And now let's spin another disc from the Beatle boys'—those were the words I heard from NBC announcer, Cathy Garoa, when I first tuned in my new radio-cassette player in early 1980.**



Justin Kili,  
NBC radio announcer  
(Photo: PNG Attitude)

WHERE I LIVED in Papua New Guinea, there was no FM radio, no television, no Australian newspapers and the internet was not yet a thing. So how did Papua New Guineans obtain their information?

If you lived in the major centres, *The Post-Courier* newspaper was available most weekdays. But for rural PNG the only source of news and entertainment was the National Broadcasting Commission, through its shortwave and small number of AM services. Overseas shortwave radio was available, but the reception was variable. Listening to the 'wireless' in the evening, and especially to dramas on Sunday nights was entertaining and educational for a newly-arrived expat.

One of the funniest episodes occurred during the high school quiz program when host Justin Kili asked, 'Who is the Queen of Papua New Guinea?' The student answered, 'Queen Elizabeth the second.' I was incredulous when Justin Kili responded, 'Incorrect. It is Queen Elizabeth Eleven.'

I recall listening to a rugby test between Australia and New Zealand. My car had a shortwave radio and I parked under a mango tree outside a friend's house and connected a wire from the car's antenna to the security wire on a window to get a stronger signal. The game was just audible through the static but, with an esky of SP between us, Ashley and I could listen to the match. At the end of the game we asked each other, 'What was the score?' *The Post-Courier* did not include the rugby results on Monday and I had to wait for the fortnightly letter from my father to get the result.

In 1981, Ela Beach RSL installed one of the first satellite dishes and I was able to watch the Bledisloe Rugby Test live. The RSL was packed. The Wallabies scored first early in the match, and I jumped out of my seat to cheer, but quickly sat down when I realised I was surrounded by All Black supporters. As usual the final score was not in Australia's favour.

The power of the provincial radio service was proven to me over and over again throughout my career. Whenever I had to go bush we would put out a *toksava* on the local NBC radio station to inform villagers that our team would be arriving on a particular date to hold an awareness meeting or survey food gardens. Without fail the message would have been heard and there was always a warm reception on arrival.

On occasion we would take an NBC officer with us and, with an ancient tape recorder, they would record awareness sessions and interviews. Everyone wanted to speak into the microphone and they would listen eagerly every night to hear themselves on the radio.

The oil palm extension service at Hoskins had a weekly thirty-minute radio slot which was broadcast on Tuesday nights at 7.30 pm. All the growers in West New Britain would tune in and listen to the information on pick-up schedules and other relevant topics.

I was scheduled several times a year to contribute to the program. My usual subject was fertilisers. We developed simple radio plays to convey the message that the nourishment was good for growth of the palms, and if the grower harvested every fortnight the payback from the fertiliser was very good.

We also took NBC announcers to field days and recorded interviews with growers for use in the weekly radio program. When the Lus Frut Mama Scheme was devised in 1996, the radio interviews with women participating in the pilot scheme at Sarakolok were very powerful in disseminating the benefits to women and families.

After one such broadcast, I travelled to Poliamba Oil Palms in New Ireland and attended a smallholder field day. As soon as I said, '*Moning olgeta*' [Good morning everyone], I heard them say, '*Ah em Grem King. Mi harim nek bilong em long Redio West long asde nait.*' [Ah, that's Graham King. I heard him on Radio West last night.] Smallholder oil palm growers in New Ireland were listening in to the oil palm program broadcast from Kimbe as that was their only source of news about oil palm prices and agronomy.

By 1999, the NBC studios in Kimbe were very run down and the original analogue equipment was mostly unserviceable. The technicians tried valiantly to keep it going but, with no funds for replacement and upgrade, the equipment died and so did the station. Similarly, the station in Popondetta was mostly non-functional when I started work there in 2000.

Occasionally, we would get a message that Radio Northern was back in operation, and we would go in to record a program. But the villagers had lost interest and were not tuning in to the station as it was so unreliable.

The government focus was now on television through Kundu TV and the internet had arrived as a means of communication. But outside the major towns, communication is still a major problem. Although the telecommunications company Digicel claims it covers ninety per cent of the country, the vast majority of the rural population cannot afford the cost of making a phone call, let alone surfing the internet.

I was prompted to write this after reading Keith Jackson's stories [in PNG Attitude] of the development of the NBC. It was a fantastic

achievement. School education broadcasts, news and current affairs and music were broadcast throughout PNG.

Every school had a radio as did most rural households. Village trade stores always had to make sure they had stock of D-size batteries and there was talk of setting up a dry cell battery factory in PNG.

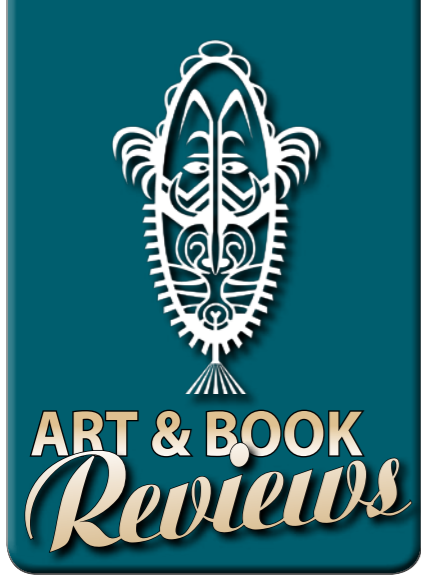
Sadly, successive governments failed to see the importance of a national radio broadcaster and the NBC is no longer able to fulfil its mission. It has a nice Facebook page but people cannot access this without power and reliable, cheap internet.

I cannot understand why the PNG Government has not seen the need to keep the people informed. Maybe this was deliberate. It seems to me that the majority of rural Papua New Guineans now obtain most of their misinformation from churches. They know more about God's plan than the government's plan for development of their communities. ♦



Hoskins (West New Britain) smallholders with harvested oil palm fruit





**R WALLY JOHNSON**  
***Roars from the Mountain: Colonial Management of the 1951 Volcanic Disaster at Mt Lamington***

Around 10.40 am on Sunday, 21 January 1951, Mt Lamington, in the Australian Territory of Papua, erupted explosively. This catastrophic event left thirty-five Europeans and over 3,000 Papuans dead. These fatalities were caused either by the concussion of the explosion, the scalding heat within its pyroclastic flow, or suffocation by the ash and toxic gasses contained in the ‘ash hurricane’. There were many more casualties, mostly terrible burns. This remains the worst natural disaster ever recorded on Australian territory.

Until just six days before the

**Featuring new books about Papua New Guinea and reviews, art and craft exhibitions, interviews of interest to members and information for authors, artists and craftspeople—please send your articles and photos to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

catastrophic eruption, when minor tremors were first felt and steam appeared, Mt Lamington was not even known to be an active volcano. There had never been any indication of activity recorded in the one hundred and fifty or more years since European explorers first sighted the mountain, nor was its reputation as a ‘fire mountain’ contained in the oral traditions and myths of the Orokaiva people that occupy the area.

As a consequence of this rapid onset and uncertainty as to its likely behaviour there were no orders to evacuate the government station at Higaturu and the nearby Anglican mission at Sangara; nor the Orokaiva villages and hamlets that were spread across the northern foothills of the mountain. These were all wiped out.

The Mt Lamington disaster has been an abiding personal and professional interest of Dr Wally Johnson for many years. Over several decades he has compiled a massive collection of official reports

and communications, photos, mission and plantation records, as well as letters and other first-person accounts of the event itself, its aftermath and its impact on the Orokaiva people.

Over those years he also interviewed some of the key personnel involved or their surviving relatives, as well as anthropologists and geoscientists that conducted research in the surrounding area into the 1960s and beyond.

This meticulous and forensic research has now been distilled into this work, which is both strong on detail and broad in scope. That it addresses the volcanology of the hazard is no surprise given that Johnson is internationally regarded as one of Australia’s most eminent volcanologists.

It also provides a detailed examination of the people, both native and expatriate, and the places that were exposed to the eruption and the degree to which they were susceptible or resilient to its impact and aftermath. It is this more comprehensive treatment that makes this study special.

It examines the response by both the colonial administration, the Anglican mission, the local European planters and the Orokaiva people to the disaster. A key feature of the response was the effort to provide refuge and sustenance for over 4,000 displaced Orokaiva until it was deemed safe enough for them to be resettled.

It also looks at the policy issues and jurisdictional conflicts that existed at the time as well as the parochial nature of the colonial

relationship with the Papuan people generally. The differences between traditional Orokaiva, colonial European and scientific perspectives of causation of the disaster have parallels in the current debates of causation of modern weather-related disasters such as the 2019-20 bushfire season. It is a case study in the analysis of risk in a genuinely unprecedented disaster.

*Roars from the Mountain* is a ‘must-read’ for anyone with an interest in PNG. It is a great story that is very well told.

**Ken Granger**

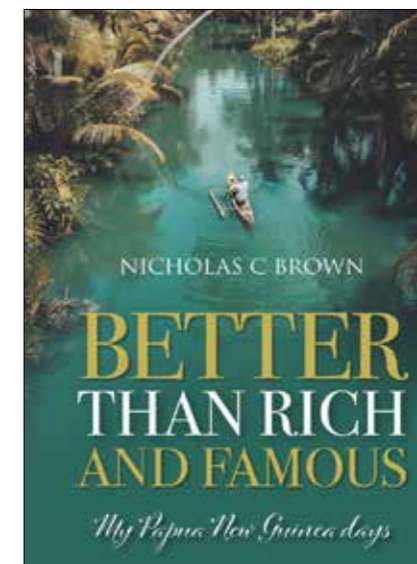
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**NICHOLAS C BROWN**  
***Better than Rich and Famous—My Papua New Guinea Days***

After three years selling gaskets under the grey skies of England, Nick Brown decided he’d had enough. But how to escape? He knew he would never be rich and famous and his dream of seeing the world seemed out of reach. Eventually, he found a way, travelling to the South Pacific to ‘captain’ a cargo boat running cocoa and copra between the islands.

Any notion of a tropical paradise soon evaporated when Nick found himself living without electricity, washing in the river and sailing treacherous seas.

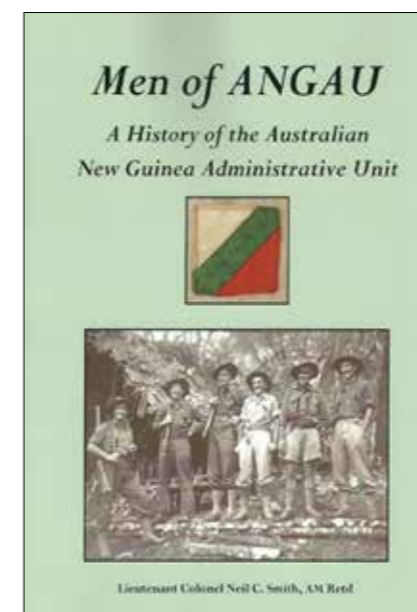
But life got better and soon he found himself flying around the country in light aircraft, travelling



by dug-out canoe to meet the locals in remote villages, climbing the tallest mountain in Oceania and even sailing the Coral Sea, just for the fun of it. This is his entertaining story of those years.

ISBN: 978-1-86151-964-1  
 Published by Mereo Books, 2020; Softback, 338pp, includes map of Sepik River, photos (colour or b/w), Foreword, Introduction, Bibliography, Acknowledgements, Postscripts and endnotes.  
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**LT COLONEL NEIL SMITH, AM, Retd**  
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**KERRY DILLON**  
***The Chronicle of a Young Lawyer: A Legal Journey into the Territory of Papua and New Guinea***

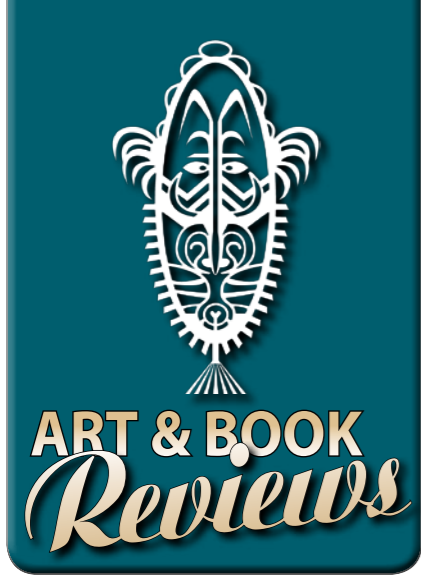
*‘The volcanic political atmosphere in the bubbling cauldron of the caldera that was the Gazelle Peninsula came to a head in December 1969.’*

This unique and enjoyable book tells the story of the day-to-day life of a criminal circuit lawyer, Kerry Dillon, some fifty years ago in a country where many people lived as generations before had lived. As a young criminal lawyer employed in the Office of the Public Solicitor, WA Lator, in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, Kerry travelled the country on Supreme Court criminal circuits from 1969 to 1971, appearing as counsel for indigenous people accused of serious criminal offences.

Written as a chronicle, this account features descriptions of criminal cases in major centres and in remote places only accessible by small planes. It depicts the clash of cultures as Australian criminal law was introduced and there is valuable



The devastation at Higaturu (Source: Bert Speer collection ANL)

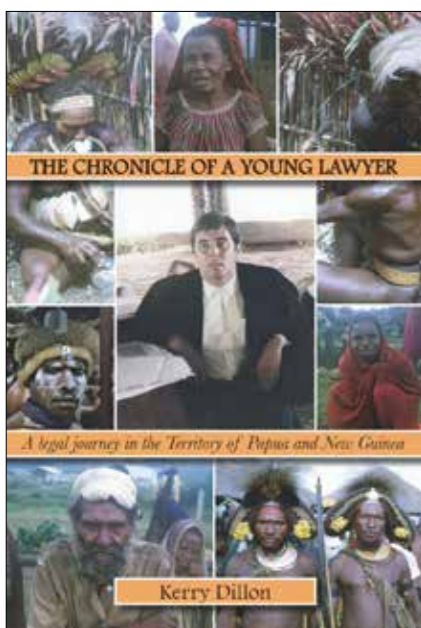


material on the application of the rule of law in the emerging nation.

The content is entertaining and well researched, sources are clearly identified, and much of the information has not been revealed before.

This first-hand account provides valuable new insights into the period shortly before independence. It is not a traditional legal book, as the legal insight it provides is set against the backdrop of everyday life. There is writing about travel and adventure as well as history and culture, all providing the context for the cases. As you read you will not only journey with Kerry and the Supreme Court to distant parts of the country, you will journey back in time.

*'The differing ways of life between Papua New Guinean communities,*



and the wide variation in the character of their interactions with Europeans and the Administration, was a significant part of the complex environment in which Kerry's experiences in the country took place and which his account illustrates.'

**Michael Adams, QC**

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**JONATHAN HOLLAND**  
***The Destiny and Passion of Philip Nigel Warrington Strong***

Philip Strong was Anglican Bishop of New Guinea from 1936–62. He built the cathedral at Dogura; urged missionaries to stay at their posts when the Japanese invaded in 1942 (as a result of which twelve were caught and executed).

He witnessed the Mt Lamington eruption; consecrated George Ambo as the first Papuan bishop; and was a member of the PNG Legislative Council till 1963, when he was made Archbishop of Brisbane.

His mid-20th century contribution to PNG was considerable, and his integrity unquestionable, even if distance and time allow now a reappraisal of some of his decisions and values.

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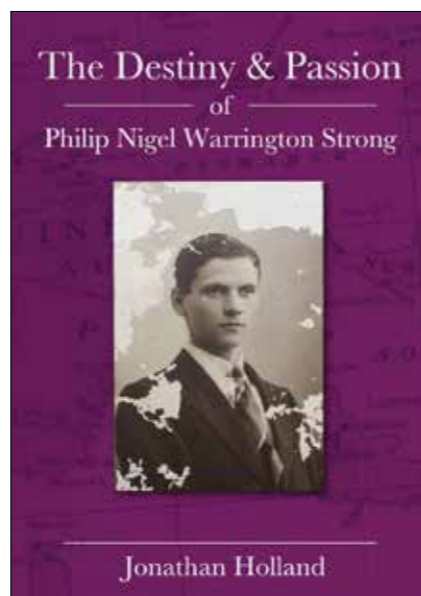
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**HANK NELSON**  
***Frank Pryke Prospector***

Hyland Neil 'Hank' Nelson, AM, was a prominent Australian historian and a Fellow at the ANU's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies until his death from cancer in February 2012. In 1966 he joined the staff of the Administrative College in Moresby and then transferred to the History Department of the Uni of PNG, spending a total of six years in PNG.

In 1976 he published *Black, White & Gold: Goldmining in PNG 1878–1930*. For the first time Nelson tried to tell the story of the involvement of the local people in the gold rushes. The government side of the story could be obtained from the government archives. Newspapers of the day published articles on the doings of the miners.

Of all the prospectors and miners on the Papuan fields and later on the Morobe Goldfields, it was only Frank Pryke who kept a sporadic series of diaries, and who kept letters and newspaper cuttings. The bulk of Pryke's papers are held in the National Library in Canberra, with others in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, and others are held by the Pryke family.

Thus it was that Nelson had to rely almost solely on Pryke's papers to give the miners', and where possible the local peoples', side of the story. From this Nelson seems to have assembled a biography of Pryke. A shortened form of this biography was published in *Papua New Guinea Portraits*, edited by James Griffin and published by ANU Press in 1978.

Failing to find work as a tanner in Goulburn or New Zealand, Pryke joined his older brother Dan in prospecting in Western Australia, thus beginning a lifetime of prospecting and mining. The brothers joined the 'rush' to the Musa River in 1896, however, that was a disaster and they eventually returned to north Queensland.

Pryke was back in Papua in 1900 and mined on the Gira, crossing in and out of German New Guinea. Over several years he worked on the Keveri inland from Cloudy Bay. With gold production declining the Papuan Administration financed a prospecting expedition which comprised Matt Crowe, and Frank and Dan Pryke and this expedition opened up the Lakekamu field.

In 1911 Pryke led another expedition. While on the Vailala he



Frank Pryke's photograph of a group of Kukukuku at the Lakekamu Goldfield, 1914

was shot in the chest by an arrow while attempting to make peaceful contact. Sir Hubert Murray, a great admirer of Pryke, wrote: *'Pryke is a man of iron nerve. An arrow went nearly through his body, and would have probably killed anyone else; Mr Pryke, however, simply pulled it out and went on prospecting.'* In fact, Pryke had been seriously wounded and after two days rest in camp had to be carried on a stretcher back to the coast.

After the Vailala, Pryke retired to Moree but returned to Papua in 1914 and, with his brother Dan, led a prospecting party financed by Sir Rupert Clark to test the headwaters of the Fly River. Again, he suffered an arrow wound in a sudden attack.

After a brief return to the Lakekamu, Pryke returned to Australia in 1915. He was back on the Lakekamu in 1919, by which time there were only six miners on the field. The days of the ▶

**The PNGAA Collection**

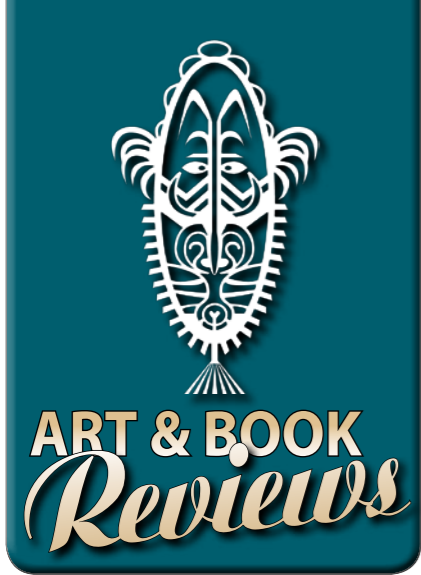
This consists of archival material on PNG—photographs, documents, maps, patrol reports, books—reflecting the lives and work of those who have lived in PNG. The PNGAA wishes to ensure these are readily available worldwide to our members, researchers or those simply interested in the rich history of Australia's relations with Papua New Guinea.

The collection grew from an idea of Mr Doug Parrish, former president of the association, and evolved over the years through the dedication and expertise of Dr Peter Cahill. From a modest collection of photographs, letters and diaries,



the PNGAA Collection is now a fast-growing compilation and continues to attract local, national and international interest. If you have items you would care to donate, or you would like to contribute towards the digitisation of items already in the collection, please contact Cheryl Marvell at [collection@pngaa.net](mailto:collection@pngaa.net) or 0438 636 132.

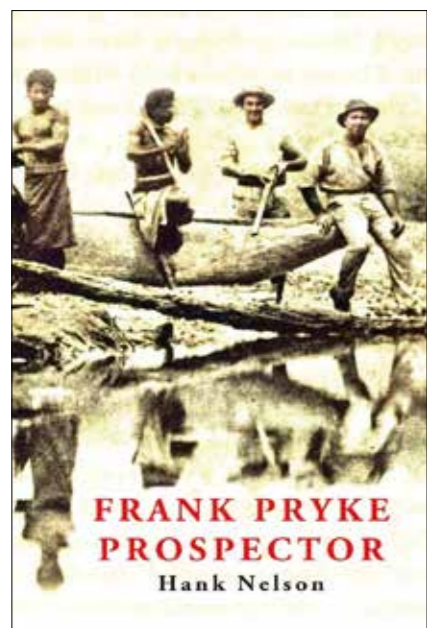




small individual miner in Papua were over.

In 1925 Pryke married Ina Cruickshank at Coogee, but left the next year to join the rush to Edie Creek. He went in to partnership with Les Joubert on a highly profitable claim on the Koranga. His wife joined him on the Koranga and, according to Idriess, worked her own claim above her husband's and Joubert's. I have read elsewhere that she managed 'Shark Eye' Park's claim for him.

They retired to Coogee in comfortable circumstances where Pryke died in 1937. His ashes were buried in Samarai where he spent many pleasant days recovering from prospecting trips. A 1903 diary entry for Samarai consists of one word: 'Imbibing'.



In his diaries Pryke made brief notes on the local people about their houses, weapons, gardens and physical appearance, and collected vocabularies. He had been in situations where he had had to shoot to survive but claimed to have never killed wantonly, but then again he had been in situations where he had endangered himself by showing extraordinary restraint.

Murray, not one to lavish praise on anyone, even on his own 'outside men', said of Pryke: 'He was known throughout the territory for his kind and tactful treatment of natives, and was of a humane disposition.'

His diaries contain his views on local affairs, such as Little's appointment to the Legislative Council as the miners' rep, and the miner O'Brien's virtual outlawing for murder, but they are silent on his relationships with Papuan women.

He could be highly critical of the government's handling of the local people, and of the missionaries' stand that in all situations the local people were blameless. In his editing of Pryke's diaries and papers, Nelson has given us a unique insight into life on the early Papuan goldfields as recorded by a unique man.

Ion Idriess's two short articles on Mrs Frank Pryke, included at the end of the book, are interesting as articles of their time. The attempts at *Pidgin* are excruciating. Idriess had an office in the booksellers Angus & Robertson in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. Just down the road was Usher's Hotel which was the 'New Guinea Hotel' where those down on leave from Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea would congregate, and it is there that he would have run into Pryke.

The (apocryphal?) story is that Idriess wrote *Gold Dust and Ashes* from tales told to him by the Morobe

Goldfields miners in Usher's Hotel.

It would have assisted the reader to have a map showing the various areas that Pryke worked in and referenced in the text, however, the book is an interesting read and highly recommended.

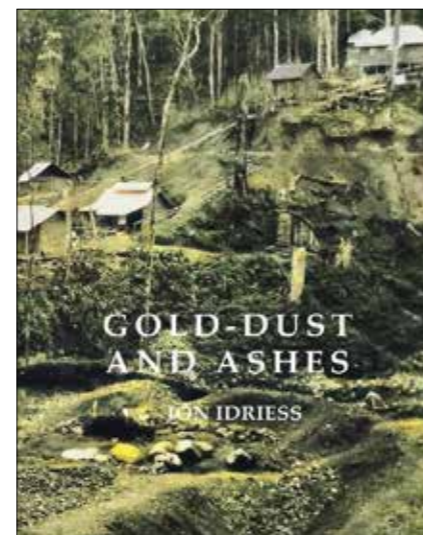
#### Fred Pratt

ISBN: 978-1-922384-18-8  
Published by ETT Imprint, May 2020, 75pp, paperback, available from your local book retailer or contact ETT Imprint on [ettimprint@hotmail.com](mailto:ettimprint@hotmail.com) or 0422 967 432  
Cost: \$24.95

#### ION IDRIESS *Gold-Dust and Ashes*

Originally published in 1933, and out of print for over fifty years, this is Idriess at his best, in offering the romantic story of the New Guinea Goldfields, through his interviews with the great prospectors—Shark Eye Park, Matt Crowe, Les Joubert and Frank Pryke.

The cover photograph is by Frank Pryke of the junction of Merri and Edie Creeks in 1928  
ISBN: 978-1-922384-78-2  
27th edition. 207 pages with B/W photographs (paperback), ebook in colour, original acknowledgements and glossary. Published in 2020 by ETT Imprint and available from your local book retailer or contact ETT Imprint on [ettimprint@hotmail.com](mailto:ettimprint@hotmail.com) or 0422 967 432—Cost \$29.99



#### BENJAMIN, Max d. 15 July 2020, aged 72

Max Benjamin trained as an agriculturalist at Muresk Agricultural College at Northam, east of Perth in Western Australia. He went to West New Britain in March 1966 with DASF as a field didiman (agriculturalist). He was the first Australian Administration Officer to establish Nahavio Oil Palm Smallholder Centre in 1966 and Kapore Land Settlement Scheme in 1967. This initiated the commercial oil palm industry of PNG which now includes thousands of PNG smallholders.

In December 1969, Max purchased and moved to a failed cocoa plantation called Walindi Plantation, located on the Talasea Highway between Kimbe and Talasea. His commercial aim was to rehabilitate it with oil palm, the new export crop for PNG.

In May 1975, Max married a fellow agriculturalist, Cecilie Kemp, a graduate in agricultural science from the University of Queensland, who was also working in agricultural extension in West New Britain.

In 1983, Max and Cecilie created a scuba diving resort, Walindi Plantation Resort, on the plantation foreshore facing onto Kimbe Bay. Walindi Plantation continues to operate as an oil palm

**The recent history of Papua New Guinea is intimately bound up with the people who made PNG their home and, in many cases, their life's work—it is therefore fitting, but also with deep regret, that we record the passing of members and friends—please send any information for this section to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

plantation. It is now on its third generation of planting with palms.

The diving resort gained an international reputation for the world-class marine biodiversity of the reefs accessed, as well as the land-based resort itself ([www.walindiresort.com](http://www.walindiresort.com)). Max, Cecilie and their son, Cheyne, were operating the resort at the time of Max's death.

Max took out PNG citizenship at Independence in 1975, as he had a strong belief in the future of the country. Max leaves a significant legacy in PNG, including the Max Benjamin Elementary School, which is located on land donated for its construction by Walindi Plantation.

Max and Cecilie initiated the Mahonia Na Dari Research and

Conservation Centre adjacent to Walindi Plantation Resort, Kimbe Bay in 1995 ([www.mndpng.org](http://www.mndpng.org)). Max was awarded an MBE by PNG in 2004 for services to agriculture and tourism.

Max passed away on 15 July 2020 at Cairns Base Hospital after a short but intense battle with an aggressive cancer. He is survived by his wife of forty-five years, Cecilie, and his three children—Charmaine Benjamin, Cheyne Benjamin and Auvita Rapilla.

For a tribute to Max from the diving world and more information on Walindi (<http://divemagazine.co.uk/eco/9037-max-benjamin-a-tribute-2>).

**Cecilie Benjamin & Mike Bourke**



The Walindi family—(back row from the left) Max Benjamin, his wife Cecilie, Michele Westmorland, Nancy & Harry Brock and their son; (front row) Max and Cecilie's son, Cheyne Benjamin & his wife, Ema Calvini



**BLOINK, Dixie RF**  
*d. 11 March 2020, aged 101*

With sadness I advise the peaceful passing of Dixie RF Bloink, one day after her 101st birthday. Many from the pre-Independence, Administration days, may remember the surname as Dixie's husband, Vince, was Government Printer and thus had his name in the fine print on many government publications.

Vince and Dixie met before WWII at the *Cairns Post*, where Dixie worked as a bookbinder and Vince a printing machinist. At the outbreak of WWII, Vince volunteered with the first batch of Australian troops to leave for overseas service. He fought with the Australian artillery in North Africa, Greece and Crete, where he was captured as part of the rear-guard action. Then came the nearly

four years in German POW camps. They kept in contact over this period despite the communication difficulties.

After the war Vince returned to Cairns and married Dixie one month after his army discharge. About a year later Vince took a job in Port Moresby as a machinist compositor in the Government Printing Office. Dixie went to PNG about six months later. In those early days Port Moresby was small with a population of 400 Europeans, and things were a little primitive as their only accommodation was a tar paper house.

Vince was promoted to Government Printer in 1962. Dixie took a job in the Treasury Department. They spent twenty-five contented years at Konebobu on the corner of Goldie Street. They had two children, Paul and Lois. Vince was a regular at the Kone Club, being awarded a life membership. Dixie was a keen gardener lovingly tending her orchid fernery in Port Moresby's adverse climate.

In 1971, Vince and Dixie retired. *The Post Courier* produced a two-page spread on Vince entitled 'He has ink in his name AND HIS BLOOD'. Vince was awarded an MBE for his service in PNG.



Dixie and Vince Bloink with Government Print employees

For Vince and Dixie a new phase of life began in Kenmore, Brisbane, establishing new friends and landscaping, making new garden and fernery. The orchid collecting began anew.

Things changed again when Vince passed away in 1989, aged seventy-seven, after a long battle with bowel cancer. Dixie in her stoic manner returned to the Kenmore home, living alone for another twenty-nine years with a son in Melbourne and a daughter in Sydney. She travelled and took up with her garden club and mahjong group. She enjoyed an overseas trip to Crete commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the WWII fall, visiting the old battle sites where Vince had once served.

In later years, with declining balance, hearing and eye sight, Dixie found it difficult living in the split-level Kenmore house on a steep block. Tending her beloved orchids became very difficult. Eventually, at ninety-nine, she needed continuous care and the difficult decision was taken to move Dixie into residential aged care. Thankfully her passing was very peaceful with family present, and free from the anxiety and confusion due to the late onset of dementia.

Vince was buried at Rookwood, Sydney, in a dual grave site, so now, after thirty years, they will be reunited. Rest in Peace together.

**Paul Bloink**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many courageous young people went to live and work in PNG before independence in 1975. It is interesting to reflect on Australia's role in PNG when Vince and Dixie Bloink chose to make it their home—Port Moresby's expatriate population was only 400 and those who went there after WWII had to both recover from their experiences of war, and assist a young nation to recover and develop.

**CARSWELL, Agnes**  
*(née Gangloff)*

*d. 19 March 2020, aged 82*

Agnes' mother was Elizabeth Ah Tam, whose father was one of the earliest and best-known Chinese immigrants to German New Guinea. Hardly five when the Japanese invaded, Agnes was one of many mixed-race and Chinese children left behind to endure the occupation, fleeing into the bush with the nuns and other missionaries in order to survive.

After the war she was educated by missionaries at Vunapope. Leaving school, she worked for Chinese traders before being accepted to train at the Nonga Nursing School where she graduated second in her class.

In April, 1962 Agnes married Stan Carswell, who was a transport officer in the Administration's Public Works Department (PWD). Stan was based in Lae where Agnes was able to continue nursing until the first of their three sons was born. Subsequent postings were Goroka, Mendi, Wewak, Port Moresby and back to Lae before 'going pinis' and settling in Cairns. Agnes is survived by Stan, their three sons and three grandchildren.

**Chris Warrillow**

**CLARINGBOULD, Joan**  
*(née Alder)*

*d. 8 March 2020, aged 93*

Joan arrived in Port Moresby in 1962 with husband, Roy after having spent several years in colonial Nigeria. Roy worked with the Department of Trade and Industry and the family lived on Budoa Avenue, Boroko, next door to the Port Moresby High School headmaster. Joan was a keen philatelist and member of the Boroko East PM&C. In later years she taught at the Waigani

Preschool, leaving PNG for good in 1973. The family settled in St Lucia, Brisbane.

Joan is survived by her three children, Michael, Susan and Jennifer, seven grandchildren and two great grand-daughters.

**Michael Claringbould**

**COX, Kenneth (Ken) Brian**

*d. 8 May 2020, age 90*

After service in the NSW Police between 26 October 1953 and 2 August 1956, he joined the ACT police on the following day and served until 27 July 1958. On 28 July 1958 he joined RP&NGC as a Sub/Inspector (personnel file p189). He served at Port Moresby, Bulolo, Lae, HQO as senior operations officer at Konedobu and OIC Rabaul in June 1971. He directed investigations into the murder of DC Jack Emanuel that August, and in the Mataunguan problems in Rabaul during the 1970s. He was retrenched from RPNGC under the provisions of the Permanent Officers Employment Security Scheme on 1 August 1974 at rank of Senior Superintendent. He was highly regarded as a conscientious highly efficient officer.

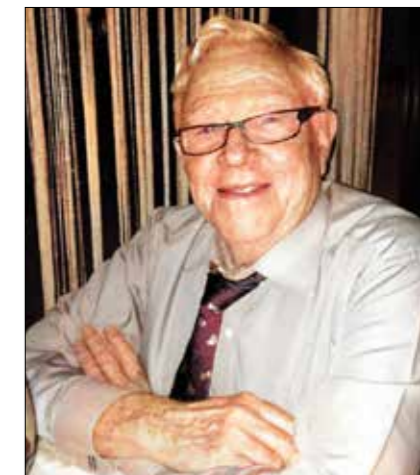
On his return to Australia he became Security Superintendent with BHP at Whyalla and later at Port Kembla from which he retired in 1990. His wife, Joan, pre-deceased him and whilst in retirement he had a nasty fall which left him with a broken back, three broken ribs and a fractured neck. He died of natural causes and is survived by son, Bruce and his family.

**MR Hayes, RPNGC 1959–74**

**DRAKE, Peter John**

*d. 4 January 2020, aged 77*

Peter was born in Brisbane on 21 December 1942, the older son



Peter Drake

of Jack and Phyllis Drake. Early schooling was at New Farm State School and Bulimba State School. Jack Drake was an avid sailor, sailing 12 ft, 16 ft and 18 ft skiffs on the Bulimba reach of the Brisbane River and gave Peter his early interest in sailing.

In 1954 the Drake family travelled to Port Moresby where Jack Drake took a supervisory position with John Stubbs Builders. Peter and younger brother Geoffrey attended Ela Beach School. Secondary school commenced in 1957 with both attending Ipswich Grammar School as boarders.

Unfortunately, Peter's tenure at IGS was cut short when he contracted rheumatic fever requiring him to finish his secondary schooling by correspondence in Port Moresby. After completing his secondary schooling Peter joined the Yorkshire Insurance Company in Port Moresby in 1959 as a clerk.

Peter followed his father's footsteps in sailing when he represented the Royal Papua Yacht Club in 1960, sailing in the VS class yacht in Sydney. The champion of that tournament was John Bertram.

Peter continued his employment with the Yorkshire Insurance & General Accident Group in Port Moresby in a succession of ▶



positions until he ultimately became Manager, maintaining the position until the mid-1980s when he accepted a position in Australia.

Whilst in Port Moresby, Peter was instrumental in the establishment of the Insurance Council of PNG. Peter, with his sound knowledge of the General Insurance business was used in a multitude of roles in the company, often filling roles back in PNG, Brisbane, Sydney, Cairns until ultimately becoming State Manager for Qld.

While in PNG Peter became a champion sailor representing PNG in the Lightweight Sharpie Class over many championships as well as competing in the Sydney to Hobart Race in 1974 on Red Boomer.

Peter married Lynette Dwyer in Port Moresby in 1971, and their daughter Johanna was born in 1975.

In the mid-1990s the family moved to Canberra where Peter took the position as State Manager for ACT, a position he held until the group sold their Australian insurance business in 2003 and closed the office.

Peter and Lyn liked the Canberra climate and especially the proximity to the Australian snowfields. They decided to remain in Canberra where Peter started his own successful insurance brokerage business. He was well respected as a general insurer by his peers.

Peter is survived by wife, Lyn and daughter, Johanna and brother Geoffrey.

**Geoff Drake**

**FRANCIS, James (Jim)**

*d. 17 February 2020*

Jim always maintained an interest in PNG where he worked with Bougainville Copper and then with the Electricity Commission, first in Port Moresby and then Goroka. He passed away after a long illness.

**Dawn Francis**

**KNIGHTS, John**

*d. 24 February 2019, aged 89*

John grew up in the northern suburbs of Melbourne as one of four siblings. At the age of nineteen he decided to leave Melbourne and move to Port Moresby, PNG, seeking adventure and an escape from the long Melbourne winters. He spent the best part of the next thirty years in PNG working in government and local government roles in various areas before returning to Australia (Brisbane) in 1976 following independence.

John, however, was subsequently offered contracts to return to PNG in the late seventies to early eighties, which he took up before finally returning to Brisbane to settle approximately mid-1980s. On return to Australia he took up a business opportunity before taking on a role in the ATO from where he retired at the age of sixty-five.

During his time in PNG, John spent approximately fifteen years in Port Moresby, five years in Goroka, six years in Rabaul and four years in Mendi. He held a range of roles including auditor, management and town clerk roles during this time and loved the work and absolutely loved PNG. He also received a number of recognition awards for his services to the development of PNG.

During one of his early leave returns to Melbourne he met and subsequently married the love of his life, Rosalie, in 1956, a marriage which lasted sixty-three years until his passing last year. John and Rosalie had two children, Rod and Narelle, both born in Port Moresby. John is survived by his wife Rosalie, two children, seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

John's love of PNG, his work and his adventurous spirit led to many fascinating conversations around the dinner table over the years. Sadly, this fine man, the incredible experiences, and many of the stories of his amazing adventures, air, sea and jungle, have now passed with him.

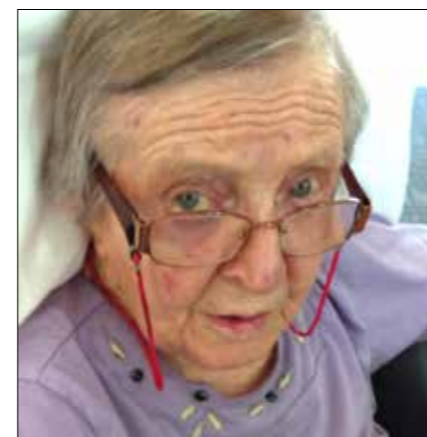
**Rod Knights**

**MANLEY, Elsie Beatrice**

*d. 15 May 2020, aged 97*

Elsie was born in 1923 at Albany, Western Australia, one of five children of the manager of a car business. She was educated at Methodist Ladies College, Perth, and subsequently worked as an accountant at a woollen mill and in the car business.

Elsie was in a WA cafe early in World War II when she fell into conversation with sailors on shore leave from HMAS *Sydney*. The sailors loudly criticised the ship's new captain: 'He doesn't seem to



Elsie Manley

know the difference between the pointy end and the blunt end of the ship'. In an encounter with a German warship shortly afterwards, HMAS *Sydney* was lost with all hands.

Four years later Elsie heard the chairman of the Australian Board of Missions, Bishop George Cranswick, call for Anglican missionaries to serve in postwar New Guinea. Ready for an adventure in a mission that had a certain romance about it, Elsie undertook studies to become a teacher. Her father asked after her forthcoming salary and Elsie replied \$50. 'Not bad, per month.' 'No', said Elsie, 'per year.' Her father was shocked—he would have to pick up any shortfall!

In 1949 she landed in north-eastern Papua and met that great orator, Bishop Philip Strong, at whose urging the Anglican staff had stayed behind in the face of the Japanese invasion. His radio speeches had won him much admiration and criticism as well.

Strong sent Elsie to Gona Mission Station, which had been devastated by Japanese and Allied gunfire. Here for twelve years, as headmistress of Holy Cross School, she worked alongside nurses and priests. Reading the Hon. Camilla Wedgwood's educational report in 1946–47 that Anglican schools in PNG's northern (Oro) district had been 'disorganised' by the war, her comment was: 'As for saying the school system had been disorganised, it is a wonder there were any schools there for her to see—the whole area had been one great bloody battlefield!'

She had a mischievous sense of humour, and published a booklet called, *Tropically Typically Topical*, which began with the number of words to describe a toilet: the loo, dunny, lavatory, privy, out-house.



The Right Rev. Philip Strong, army chaplain, Bishop of New Guinea and later Archbishop of Brisbane—please turn to page 48 for a review of Jonathan Holland's biography, *The Destiny and Passion of Philip Nigel Warrington Strong*

But in Papua New Guinea there was only one word: 'the small house'. She recalled the Queen's visit to Sydney in 1954 and laughed at Richard Dimpleby's radio commentary, which was heard throughout PNG: 'I don't think there is a small house in Sydney without a Union Jack flying on it today!'

After the Mount Lamington volcano in January 1951, with the deaths of 5,000 Papuans alongside government officials and missionaries, Elsie Manley joined Ted Marriott and moved the population of the church's Martyrs' School to temporary dwellings at Gona for a year.

By 1962 Elsie felt she had done all she could in PNG. Philip Strong had been elected archbishop of Brisbane, and when he indicated his need for a secretary, Elsie was pleased to accept. She lived in her own rooms in Bishopsbourne at Hamilton. Theirs was a platonic, close, loyal and comfortable friendship.

In retirement she continued with her own brand of directness.

She had little sympathy for feminism. She supported the 1987 Anglican General Synod's No Vote, which rejected women 'priests', and she was not amused at the liberals' attempt to have the issue revisited, insisting that 'No means No!' At the next General Synod the vote went the other way.

Elsie joined the staff of the Wangaratta Technical School in the mid-1970s. She taught there from 10 am daily after cooking the archbishop's breakfast. She was strict but fair, and 'if a student misbehaved at the bus stop she would give them a forceful poke in the backside with her umbrella'.

Her favourite pastime after the cathedral's Sunday services was joining her friends at the RSL or the pub, or 'wherever they had pokies'. She also travelled. Liz McAleese recalled Elsie visiting her at home in Samoa. The Samoans, 'expecting a typical conservative missionary, were surprised when she appeared off the plane armed with a carton of cigarettes, a huge bottle of whisky, and a repertoire of risqué jokes.'

Archbishop Strong died in 1983. Thirty years later Elsie's family in Albany persuaded her to move into care at St John's Village Wangaratta, where she died on 15 May 2020. Her Christian vocation showed in her willingness to serve others. She was a kind generous person with a wonderful sense of humour.

**Contributions by Diane Dower in Wangaratta, Bishop Jonathan Holland of Brisbane and Dr David Wetherell in Geelong**

EDITOR'S NOTE: A longer valed appears on the PNGAA website.

**MEISSNER, Emerson C**

*d. 12 April 2020, aged 85*

Born on 27 October 1934, Emerson worked for Treasury from 1963 to 1973 and, together with his ▶



family, Mary, Bob and Peter, greatly enjoyed his years in PNG.

Initially living in Port Moresby and then Popondetta, spare time was spent using an old Land Rover to explore the surrounding areas which were riddled with war relics.

After being transferred to Sohano, Emerson commenced designing and building a number of seaworthy power boats regularly used for recreational fishing in the pristine marine environment there, and around Madang and Lae after later transfers. He also built up quite a photography collection.

#### **Peter and Bob Meissner**

Editor's note: Emerson Meissner donated a bound collection of photographs in PNG over the years 1963–73 to the PNGAA Collection at the Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

#### **MOORE, Rev. Sir Desmond Charles, MSC, KBE**

**Bishop Emeritus of Alotau-Sideia**  
**d. 2 June 2020, aged 94 years**

Born on 12 May 1926, Bishop Moore went to PNG in 1961 as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart (MSC). His first twelve months in PNG were spent in Port Moresby, where he worked with the bishop and the parish priest.

In 1970, he was ordained Bishop of the 20,000 sq.km diocese of Sideia, succeeding the founding

bishop of the diocese, Bishop Francis John Doyle who was also a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

Bishop Moore was there for thirty-one years and knighted for his work in 1996. His house was always open to anyone in need or distress, and most left him helped or comforted. He was always available on the mission radio network for a yarn or to discuss any problems that arose in the far-flung parishes of his diocese.

Bishop Des was a man without any pretensions to be anything else but himself. He respected the formalities demanded by his Office, but apart from that was content to be what he would have described as 'a pretty ordinary bloke'.

He could often be found on the wharf helping to load one of the mission boats, or organising the passengers and deck cargo with typical energy—sometimes to the bemusement of the crew. Often, he would be out and about around Alotau—at one time on a motor scooter.

He could be found in the offices of business houses and stores, always bringing with him a breath of fresh air; people enjoyed his forthright views on everything from the price of roofing iron to how the country was being run.

**Extract from *Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Magazine*,  
28 June 2020**



Rev. Sir Desmond Moore, MSC, KBE

#### **NIGHTINGALE, John** **d. 19 May 2020, aged 73**

John was the pioneer independent cocoa trader who took the PNG Cocoa export monopoly away from colonial plantation companies when he established Agmark Pacific Limited in 1988. John's natural commercial skills and quick-thinking approach ensured Agmark rapidly became PNG's largest Cocoa exporter. John and Agmark single-handedly catapulted the prices offered to farmers upwards to reach over 80% of European market price, a level that has been world best practice ever since.

The name Hummingbird came about in 1974 at the Rabaul Yacht Club. Ross King gave us that name because of Nightingale name (bird).

John Nightingale arrived in PNG in early 1971 and purchased his first plantations and coastal shipping vessels in 1975. He later managed New Guinea Cocoa Export Co. until 1988 when he formed Agmark Pacific Limited in partnership with New Guinea Islands Produce Company Ltd and Kina Gillbanks Ltd. He was Managing Director of Agmark Pacific Ltd until the merger with New Guinea Island Produce Co. Ltd in 2005 when he became Managing Director of NGIP Agmark Ltd, a position he held until his death.

John grew up in Victoria, Australia and studied Agricultural Science before starting a career selling agricultural chemicals in Australia and later in pre-independence New Guinea. He travelled widely in Papua and New Guinea before settling in Rabaul where he married Darrie Padir in the days when 'mixed' marriages were uncommon. John had no regard for the prejudices or conventions of the day and was never happier than when he was going against the

flow. He was devoted to Darrie and devoted to seeing Papua New Guinea develop. John and Darrie were a formidable trading partnership and their company quickly became a household name. John became a PNG citizen at Independence and remained a PNG citizen for the rest of his life.

John had five overwhelming passions, all of which he loved and pursued wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. These were his family, his business, his staff, the farmers of Papua New Guinea and of course the sport of rugby league.

In 1991 he was one of three founding sponsors of the Rabaul Gurias team. For the next twenty-nine years his team was at the forefront of semi-professional PNG Rugby League, funded always by private sponsorship and acquiring a reputation for both sporting excellence and excellent sportsmanship. John acquired a second nickname, that of 'Papa Guria'.

In business, John experienced some setbacks. Firstly, the Bougainville crisis in 1989 and, secondly, the Rabaul volcanic eruptions of 1994. Characteristically it was John who was the first cocoa trader into Bougainville while the blockade was still in force, and it was John and Darrie who resumed cocoa buying in Rabaul just a few weeks after the eruption. John knew that without Cocoa his farmers would have no livelihood and he spared no effort to ensure that Agmark were there when needed by the Cocoa community.

John, 'Papa Guria', was a giant amongst men—he touched the lives of many and will be sadly missed by many for many years to come.

Condolences go to 'Mama Guria' Darrie, to John's sister Judy, to John and Darrie's children James, Nemika



John Nightingale celebrating Guria Premiership

and Steven, to grandchildren Marley, Denzel, Troy, Silas and Izaak, to the hundreds of staff of NGIP Agmark, to the 4000 shareholders of the company John created, to the cocoa farmers who John empowered and enriched; to all Guria players present and past and to the tens of thousands of spectators to whom John helped bring the enjoyment of watching the greatest game being played as it should be.

'The idea is not to live forever, but to create something that will.'

#### **Nick Lyons**

#### **PHILLIPS, Kenneth Macdonald** **d. 29 April 2020, aged 89**

Born on 13 August 1930, Ken was a living legend in many ways: geologist, executive, mentor, boss, husband, father, friend and gentleman with a quick wit and dry sense of humour to boot. He had a strong and steadfast moral compass, uncompromising principles, and a determination and unwavering commitment to his team—traits which allowed him to achieve great success as an exploration geologist, project manager and then as a company executive later in life. It can be said that Ken had at least two 'Eureka!' moments in his life, which bookend his professional career.

Firstly, as a young geologist in the jungles of Bougainville in 1964, and secondly as a mining executive when his company was subject to a US\$1.1bn takeover/merger in 2007, after which Ken gracefully entered into a much-deserved retirement.

Ken is recognised as the discoverer of the Panguna copper deposit on Bougainville Island in 1964 while working for CRA Exploration (CRAE). At the time and subsequent to the mine opening in 1972, it was and still is one of the largest porphyry copper deposits in the world and it provided some 40% of PNG's GDP whilst in operation. The mine was closed prematurely in 1989 following civil unrest on the island.

Ken's vision and determination led to the discovery of Panguna. In 1961 he was appointed project leader of a team within CRAE that was experimenting with the new geochemical technique of stream sediment sampling and assaying with atomic absorption spectrometry (AAS) with the aim of looking for porphyry copper deposits in eastern Queensland.

While on holiday in SE Asia in 1963, Ken visited the Atlas porphyry copper mine on Cebu Island in the Philippines. It was a combination of these experiences and gifted foresight that Ken was ▶



able to recognise what Panguna was when he and his team walked into the area in April 1964. Their aim was to investigate some old gold workings that dated to the 1930s, conduct stream sediment and soil geochemical sampling programs to see if the techniques worked in tropical environments and answer the fundamental question...could there be a porphyry copper deposit in the mountain range (Crown Prince Range)?

In short, the mineralisation that Ken saw in the banks of Panguna Creek reminded him of what he had seen at the Atlas mine on Cebu Island. It was his first 'Eureka!' moment. As a footnote, by the end of August 1964, stream sediment and soil sampling programs had identified a four sq.km anomalous zone representing the footprint of the Panguna copper porphyry deposit. Success all round.

Ken resigned from CRAE in late 1966 and was subsequently recruited as Project Manager for the Ok Tedi copper project in May 1969, with a remit of defining a mineable resource by the end of 1970. The Ok Tedi porphyry copper deposit is in the highlands of PNG, near the border with Indonesia and had been discovered by Kennecott Copper Corp. geologists in 1968 using stream sediment geochemical sampling methods.

For the next eighteen months,

up to late 1970, Ken provided the leadership, direction and focus the project needed and was able to define a major copper project for Kennecott.

Throughout what was a very busy time, Ken somehow found the time to meet and marry Pauline in Perth mid-September 1969. Ken and Pauline remained happily married until his passing and have two sons, namely Cameron and Tom.

Following his stint at Ok Tedi, Ken went on to run a number of mining projects for large companies throughout the Pacific Rim.

Ken's next big success story is as an executive and begins with his partnership with Norm Seckold, a serial and highly successful, mining entrepreneur based in Sydney. Norm and Ken had teamed up prior to starting Bolnisi Gold NL, a small company at the time with mining assets in the Republic of Georgia (FSU), in the mid-1990s.

However, it was following a visit to the Madneuli porphyry copper mine and surrounds in southern Georgia that Ken described the prospect of the area as being like a 'Garden of Eden'.

Bolnisi Gold was subsequently formed and named after a town nearby, and the company went on to successfully build a gold mining operation, treating gold-rich 'waste dumps'. The waste dumps had been neatly and systematically stockpiled



Kenneth Phillips

based on gold grade, by the operators of the copper mine that started in 1975.

In the early 2000s Bolnisi ventured into Mexico by purchasing the historic, silver-rich Palmarejo mine in Chihuahua state. For the next three years Ken and his team drilled, expanded the reserves and began developing the mine ahead of a US\$1.1bn takeover by Coeur d'Alene in mid-2007.

This was Ken's second 'Eureka!' moment and a fitting end to a long and highly successful career as geologist, executive, mentor, boss, husband, father, friend and gentleman. A legend.

Ken is survived by wife, Pauline, sons Cameron and Tom and three grandchildren.

**With thanks to Scott Marsh & AIG News, Issue 140, June 2020**

**PYE, David Raymond**  
**d. 17 March 2018, aged 94**

Lived in Rabaul prior to WWII. Attended Sydney Boys High School. Loving husband to Dorothy (deceased). Survived by his children, Wendy, Deborah, Robert and Ian, and five grandchildren.

**RHEINBERGER, Gregory J**  
**d. 10 April 2020, aged 82**

Gregory was in PNG from 1960-69. He was a Department of District Administration clerk in Tari for five years. Father of Heidi (dec'd) and Bradley (dec'd).

A death notice was in the *Dalby Herald*, 1 May 2020.

**SYPHERS, Captain Graham**  
**d. 16 June 2020**

Born in 1944, Graham worked for Talair and Macair. An online tribute said:

*Everyone loved Graham. He was a hardworking and incredibly skilful aviator of the highest degree. Many of us were enriched by knowing him*

*and we will all miss his relaxed and fun-loving nature enormously. Vale Graham—A true Gentleman Aviator of the highest degree.*

**THOMPSON, John Russell Stewart, OAM**  
**RPNGC Valour Medal, Australian National Medal (w/clasps), Reserve Forces Medal, PNG Independence Medal**  
**d. 14 April 2020, aged 85**

Stewart died peacefully of cancer at West Melton, New Zealand, six days before his eighty-sixth birthday. After service at rank of Senior Constable in the Mounted Division of the New South Police Force between 7 November 1955 and 14 June 1969, during which time he also served in the Citizen Military Forces (CMF), firstly as a private, before he was selected to attend the Officer Cadet Training Unit, Sydney, from which he graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant having been awarded the Sword of Honour.

He was appointed to RPNGC on 19 June 1969. He served at Mt Hagen, Rabaul, Lae, Tomaringa with mobile squads and, later, with the Joint Services College. At PNG Independence on 16 September 1975 he transferred to the new national government and served there during the Bougainville emergency (during which an estimated 10,000 Bougainville citizens died during the national government blockade).

In January 1977, he was terminated at his own request with the rank of Senior Inspector and returned to Australia, firstly to Springwood and then to a property 'Mistley Grange' at Tennyson, NSW. He is survived by his wife of sixty-three years, Joan, and family.

While in the Constabulary he also served in the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles

(Australia's only overseas CMF) from 12 February 1970 (SN 262290) as Captain and 2/IC of B Company, Rabaul until the PNGVR was disbanded in 1972.

On 8 June 2009, the OAM was awarded for service to the community through the Australian Light Horse Regiment 'A' troop.

His RPNGC Valour Award was only the third awarded to expat officers of the twelve medals awarded. The circumstances for this award are that during the Bougainville emergency a RPNGC Sergeant accidentally set off a gas grenade in the police armoury, which exploded. Stewart being aware of the danger to a large amount of police ammunition proceeded to throw it out of the armoury before it too exploded.

**MR Hayes, RPNGC 1959-74**

**WONG, Wanda Helen (née Mason)**  
**d. 30 May 2020, aged 77**

Wanda, originally from Sydney, was a nurse and transferred from Nonga Base Hospital, Rabaul to Kieta in 1967 where she worked for several months before returning to Rabaul to marry education officer, Kevin Wong. The couple moved to Canberra, at the time of Independence, where Kevin continued a career in education.



Stewart Thompson, OAM

His future prospects, supporting a family on a 'local' salary, determined the decision to leave PNG. Wanda's nursing career ended with the demands of raising two sons and a daughter. They retired to Witta in Queensland. Unfortunately, Kevin died fairly early into retirement.

**Chris Warrillow**

**WATT, Neal Currie**  
**d. 19 April 2020, aged 80**

Neal passed away at Coraki NSW after the diagnosis of a brain tumour in late 2019. Neal was the eleventh and youngest child of Ashley Watt and Muriel (née Saul). Born at Lismore, he grew up on the family dairy farm on the Richmond River at Swan Bay.

Neal was appointed a cadet patrol officer in 1958. In his ten years as a kiap, Neal served in Rabaul, Kandrian and Talasea in New Britain District; Daru and Balimo in the Western District; and Kavieng and Konos in New Ireland District.

Following his kiap service, he was an accountant in Sydney, Brisbane and Mossman in far North Queensland. In retirement, Neal lived initially in Hobart where his old Kavieng mate, John Duffy, was a regular golf partner. He settled finally in Coraki near Swan Bay.

Neal's passing is much felt by his beloved partner of the past forty-two years, Aafke McPhee. He is also missed by his surviving siblings Maisie, Roy and John, and a tribe of nephews and nieces many of whom continue to live around the Richmond River and Swan Bay area.

Neal is also survived by his former wife, Lynn Streakfuss (née Osborne) and their son Jason.

**Tony Beard**



**MEMORIAL  
News  
RABAU &  
MONTEVIDEO MARU  
SOCIETY**

**NGVR/PNGVR  
Ex-Members Association  
Montevideo Maru  
Service, Brisbane  
1 July 2020**

Twenty-eight members and friends attended NGVR/PNGVR's 78th Anniversary Memorial Service to those who were lost when the MV *Montevideo Maru* was sunk by an American submarine, USS *Sturgeon* early morning of 1 July 1942. It was held at the Brisbane Cenotaph.

The loss of 845 Australian POWs and 208 civilian internees remains the worst Australian maritime disaster.

Specific mention was made of the thirty-six NGVR soldiers who perished on the *Montevideo Maru* and others who died in the aftermath of the Japanese invasion.

We understand the Brisbane service, due to the coronavirus situation, was the only service commemorating the men lost on the *Montevideo Maru* held in Australia this year.

After words of welcome by President Phil Ainsworth, keynote speaker Association Patron, Major General John Pearn, spoke of

**The Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society was established in 2009 and integrated into the PNGAA in 2013. The society encourages students and adults to explore the significance of WWII in the Papua New Guinea islands and what the start of the Pacific War in 1942 meant for Australia, including its worst maritime disaster—the sinking of *Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942. If you have news for the members, please contact Andrea Williams on [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)**

sacrifice, service and the debt owed to those who gave their lives.

Prayers were said by Padre Ron MacDonald. Representatives of the Salvation Army were present. Charles Strunk, Councillor for Forest Lake Ward and his electoral assistant attended, the President of Queensland Commando Association, Mr Grahame Gough, Mick James representing the Battle for Australia Association Queensland and three members of the 31 Battalion Association also attended.

**Trove Archive Treasures  
Thanks to Gayle Thwaites**

Hidden in the Trove Archives are a treasure of stories and personal accounts, of the men that made it home and their journey to escape the invading Japanese Army in Rabaul in 1942. This article was published in the *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* newspaper:

Friday, 27 April 1973. This is an extract of the complete article:

*On January 23, Lieutenant Alex Tolmer commanded a platoon at Raluana opposite Rabaul. He has since checked the Japanese records and reckons the Japanese force numbered 27,000 of whom 7000 attacked initially.*

*He withdrew his platoon to the upper airstrip when the position became hopeless. He and Lieutenant Geoff Donaldson (now chairman of Woodside-Burmah Oil NL) took their platoons north. After three days the party of 40 reached a plantation.*

*The Japanese were dropping surrender leaflets and sent a message asking them to give up; but next day Sgt Kevin Walls arrived with news of McCarthy and his escape plan. They headed for Pondo in a tiny pinnace where they met McCarthy and Captain 'Pip' Appel who had taken the coast area.*

*Finally they reached Talasea*



NGVR/PNGVR Association Patron Maj-Gen John Pearn speaking at the Brisbane Cenotaph on 1 July 2020 (Photo courtesy Kieran Nelson)

*from where the troops had to climb over the mountainous peninsula. It took them three days to go over 27 miles to Volupai. They were taken by boat to Iboki where the increasing number of sick and exhausted were cared for by Mrs Gladys Baker, wife of a plantation owner.*

*Alex Tolmer took a boat party down the north coast seeking more survivors as far as the western tip of New Britain. Then he followed the other survivors who had crossed 70 miles north from Iboki to Vitu Island where the 380-ton coastal trader Lakatoi lay.*

*When he arrived she was being camouflaged, her bridge barricaded with bales of rubber, and her hold loaded with coconuts. About 214 people, including 140 Lark Force troops, sailed in her to Cairns.*

*Major John Akeroyd, regimental medical officer of the 2-22nd Battalion, had manhandled eight stretcher cases over the mountains to St Paul's Mission near the north coast with two squads of bearers.*

*When he heard that 90 patients at Rabaul's military hospital were without doctors he decided to be taken prisoner. He moved to the beach when the Japanese threatened to shell the mission if he didn't give himself up; by the time they finally collected him he had 56 patients from troops moving to link up with McCarthy.*

*Eventually he set up hospital in the Rabaul POW camp in two sheds each designed for 20, but each holding 60.*

*Just before the Coral Sea battle, the Japanese Navy took over, and Major Akeroyd complained that the rations had been reduced to two meals of rice a day. At the first complaint the Japanese officer drew his sword and said: 'I have no time for you and your sick.'*

*Confronted later with the Geneva Convention, he drew the sword again, pointed it menacingly at the Major and snapped: 'Inter-*

*national law is made by fools in time of peace. This is war.'*

Lt Tolmer and Major Akeroyd were both from the 2/22nd Battalion and some of the lucky few that made it back to Australia.

**Australian Government  
Leaflet to advise end of  
Pacific War**

The Australian Government leaflet (below), written in Pidgin/Tokpisin, to advise that the Pacific War would soon be over and Australians will be returning.

The following is the translation:

*To all the Luluais, Tultuls, older people and those who worked for the government.*

*Japan will soon be overthrown.*

*All our soldiers, planes and war ships will round up the Japanese.*

*All day, every day and at night we will work to round up the Japanese. The Japanese are no longer strong enough to fight. We have got rid of the Japanese from Salamaua, Lae, Finschafen, Sio, Saidor and*

*now our soldiers are close to taking Madang.*

*In New Britain we have taken Sag Sag and Kilinge. Our aircraft are continually bombing Rabaul so that the Japanese ships are no longer safe there and cannot stay there as they have previously done. In Kavieng also there is plenty of bombing—similar to Rabaul. You must not help Japanese or give food to them.*

*If you find an aircraft Captain or one of our soldiers, look after them well and hide them. If the Japanese try to talk you around, you must not listen. Very soon we will be coming back.*

*Note from the Government.*

**Slice of Life:  
Either Side of Eleven Minutes  
on the *Montevideo Maru*  
Decades Prior**

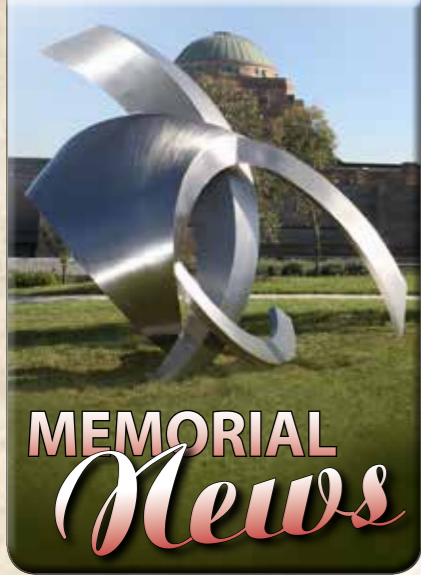
Harry Adams, a Bristol-born engineer who landed in Australia prior to WWI, wanted to serve in the war. It wasn't what he'd hoped for, he wanted to join the Royal Navy, but he ended up assisting the ▶



OL LULUAI NA TULTUL NA LAPUN NA BOI BILOG GUVMAN.  
JAPAN KLOSTU BAKARAP PINIS.  
OL SOLDIA—OL BALUS—OL WARSIP BILONG YUMI RONIM JAPAN.  
LONG SAN LONG NAIT OLTAIM MI RONIM RONIM. JAPAN NOKEN FASIM FAIT. MIFELO RAUSIM JAPAN LONG SALAMAUA, LAE, FINSHAFEN, SIO, SAIDOR, NAU SOLDIA BILONG YUMI I KLOSAP MADANG.  
LONG NEW BRITAIN MIFELO KISIM HAP LONG SAG SAG NAU KILINGE. OLTAIM BALUS BILONG YUMI BOMIM BOMIM RABAU. PLANTI SIP LONG JAPAN NOKEN STAP LONG RABAU OLSEM BIFOR. KAVIENG TU KISIM PLANTI BOMB OLSEM RABAU. OL YUFELO NOKEN HALIPIM JAPAN NO GIFIM KAIKAL.  
SUPOS YU FAINDIM KEPTEN LONG BALUS, NAU SOLDIA BILONG YUMI, LUKATIM GUD NAU HAIDIM, SUPOS JAPAN LAIK GREASIM BOI LONG SAMTING NOGUT LONG MIFELO YU MAST SAKIM DISFELO TOK. LIKLIK TAIM NAU MI KAMAP LONG YUPELO. GUVMAN I TOK.

From the Kenneth England Collection





Australian Navy in their effort to set up wireless communications. He did it on Nauru after starting in Bitapaka on New Guinea. According to the words of Una Adams, the woman who Harry would marry in 1919: 'The most important thing to do with the theatre of war is communications.'

### The Day of Harry's Marriage

Harry had proposed by letter and his soon-to-be wife, Una, had accepted. She came from Sydney to join him in PNG. It was 1919, and he had survived WWI. Harry had an engineering business going now, too. It went so well that he would eventually have to move it to the capital of Rabaul. Harry had a night with the bachelors prior to his day of days.

Una said that Harry was late meeting her when she arrived on the big day. But he was delivered to her by the men. They came in on a 'bulamakau cart', because cars were not available. But he did come in, and they were married about twenty-three years—until Harry died at sea on the *Montevideo Maru*, having been ordered to board by Japanese forces in Rabaul on 22 July 1942.

### It's 1 July 2020

Seventy-eight years since the *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed by the submarine USS *Sturgeon* off the Philippine island of Luzon—

they say it took eleven minutes for the ship to sink—and it's possible that my great-grandfather suffered the entire eleven minutes before perishing! It is very possible that he was helpless and frightened.

The USS *Sturgeon* didn't know there were prisoners-of-war and civilians on the *Montevideo Maru*. Otherwise, they surely wouldn't have sunk it.

In 2020, people are kneeling for nine minutes. They are realising how long nine minutes really is. Think about eleven minutes.

### JAN ADAMS

Information sourced from Mel Adams' recorded conversation with Una Adams, and Brian Adams' correspondence with Harry and Una's daughter, Marie Kerr

### Seventy-five Years Since End of Pacific War

On 6 September 1945 the surrender of all Japanese forces in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomons, by Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Imperial Southeastern Army, General Hitoshi Imamura and Vice-Admiral J Kusaka, Commander South East Area Fleet, was accepted by Lieutenant General VAH Sturdee, General Officer Commanding First Army, on the



Japanese signing the surrender on the HMS *Glory*, 6 September 1945

aircraft carrier HMS *Glory*, located off the coast at Rabaul.

Rabaul had been an important strategic location for Japanese forces in the Pacific due to its proximity to New Guinea and the Japanese-mandated Caroline Islands. In January 1942 Rabaul was the first Australian territory to be attacked by the Japanese.

The signatory to the surrender document, General Hitoshi Imamura, was detained at Rabaul before being tried in 1946 by the international Military Tribunal for the Far East set up by General Douglas MacArthur. Imamura was found guilty of committing war crimes in violation of the Geneva and Hague Conventions. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and released in 1954.

### Australian War Memorial Last Post Service

To commemorate the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* on this day seventy-eight years ago, the Australian War Memorial live streamed a tribute to Gunner Ivan Hatcher of Coastal Battery, Lark Force, on their YouTube channel. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Fq3Y5nTYjQ>



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Sunday, 6 December 2020

(See details on page 7)

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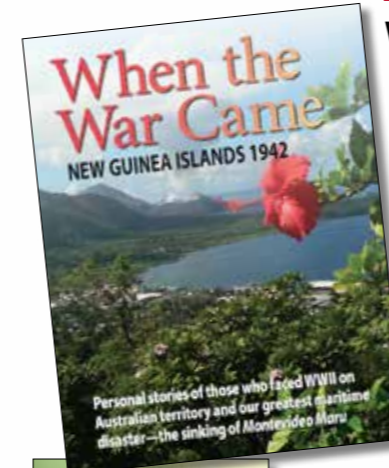
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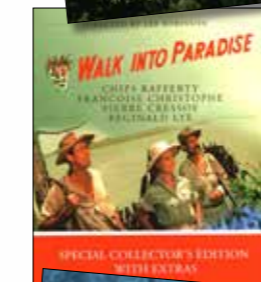


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### WHEN THE WAR CAME: New Guinea Islands 1942

Published to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of *Montevideo Maru*, this book is a collection of personal stories, memories and reflections that enhance the history of civilians and soldiers living in Rabaul, Kavieng and the New Guinea islands at the outbreak of the Second World War.

**\$60.00 (+ \$20.00 postage within Australia)**



### WALK INTO PARADISE: Collector's Edition

Starring Chips Rafferty and our own Fred Kaad, this unique film showcases fabulous scenery, and an authentic sing-sing with thousands of fantastically adorned tribesmen and women. Surplus funds generated from the DVD sale will be used to further the objects of PNGAA.

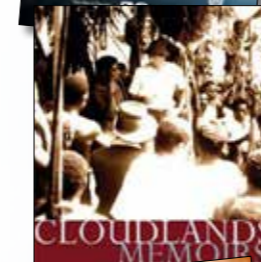
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### KIAP: Stories Behind the Medal

Some 2,000 young Australian men served as patrol officers (known as kiaps) in Papua New Guinea between the end of WWII and PNG Independence in 1975. In this film the men, their wives and children, tell their stories of living, working and growing up in Papua New Guinea.

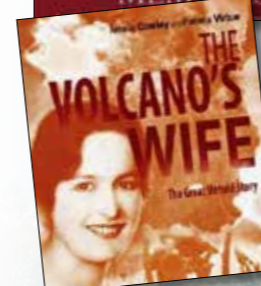
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### CLOUDLANDS MEMOIRS—Laurie Le Fevre

The author uses individual life stories to show how remarkably successful Papua New Guineans have been in various fields and by giving readers a thoughtful overview of some of the big issues facing the country today.

**\$15.00 (+\$3 postage within Australia)**



### THE VOLCANO'S WIFE—Pamela Virtue & Amalia Cowley

The great untold (true) story of Amalia, who marries in 1933 and is catapulted from Australia to the wild heart of PNG, walking the trail with convicted murderers to her first home, Kokoda, where she erected its first Australian flag and raised their two children in a land of serenity and great beauty.

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Great for your plastic bag-free shopping and for carrying everyday items! High quality environmentally friendly large laminated jute shopping bag in natural colour, with padded cotton handles and strong, seamed edges.

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# Final Japanese Surrender in Papua New Guinea

The final Japanese surrender in PNG came one month after VP Day, on 15 August 1945—seventy-five years ago.

It marked the end of the war against Japan in the Pacific and the end of World War II. However, as celebrations reverberated around the world, isolated groups of Japanese continued fighting in PNG.

In the Aitape-Wewak region, General Adachi of the Japanese XVIII Army had vowed to fight to the end. It was not until 13 September, almost a month after VP Day that he surrendered to Major General HCH Robertson, of the Australian 6th Division, at a ceremony at Cape Wom, near Wewak.

By then General Adachi's once proud army of 100,000 men had been reduced to about 13,000. His men died on the battlefield, from disease and from starvation. Earlier the Japanese had defended Wewak with utmost heroism. At the end, fighting from caves in the cliffs, many Japanese refused to surrender and were sealed beneath by explosive charges set off at the entrances.

Several hundred 6th Division troops were present at the surrender ceremony, when General Adachi was ordered to hand over his sword. He appeared very taken aback before taking two paces to the rear, stopping for a few moments, then handing his sword to General Robertson. General Adachi was escorted to the surrender table by two Australian Army military policemen.

After the war, General Adachi was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment. He committed suicide in 1947 after writing a letter which was described as 'a moving document of soldierly loyalty and an eloquent condemnation of the futility of war'.

The Aitape-Wewak campaign, along with the campaigns on Bougainville and New Britain, came in for considerable criticism from both Australian and Japanese officers, who found it difficult to understand why such aggressive actions should be fought as the war was ending.

Senior Australian officers, including General VAH Sturdee and Brigadier HH Hammer, referred to the 'military futility' of the campaigns. Japanese staff officers on Bougainville believed the campaigns were 'absolutely pointless', and that world prestige gained by Australia would not compensate for the loss of life and equipment. On the other hand, it was argued that the campaigns were justified as there was an obligation to liberate the people of PNG as quickly as possible from Japanese rule. In many areas, Japanese occupation was creating terrible privation.

It is likely that these campaigns were fought because General Blamey wanted to continue in command of a large army in the field, and because John Curtin, the then Prime Minister, and certain members of his Cabinet believed that a continued active fighting role would strengthen their position in the coming treaty negotiations.

Edited reprint from Don Hook's article, *Una Voce*, September 2015

*PHOTOGRAPHS (from the top):* Australian infantrymen resting on a river bank before attacking Japanese positions near Matapau in January 1945; A wounded Australian soldier being helped to a jeep-ambulance on a forward track in the Aitape Sector; On the way to the surrender, Lieutenant General Adachi, was carried in a litter by his troops; Lieutenant General Adachi hands over his katana sword as a symbol of surrender of the Japanese 18th Army to Major-General Robertson of the Australian 6th Division; Japanese officers handing their swords to an Australian officer at the surrender.

