

Frederick Peter Christian Kaad, OBE

BILL BROWN, MBE

**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.

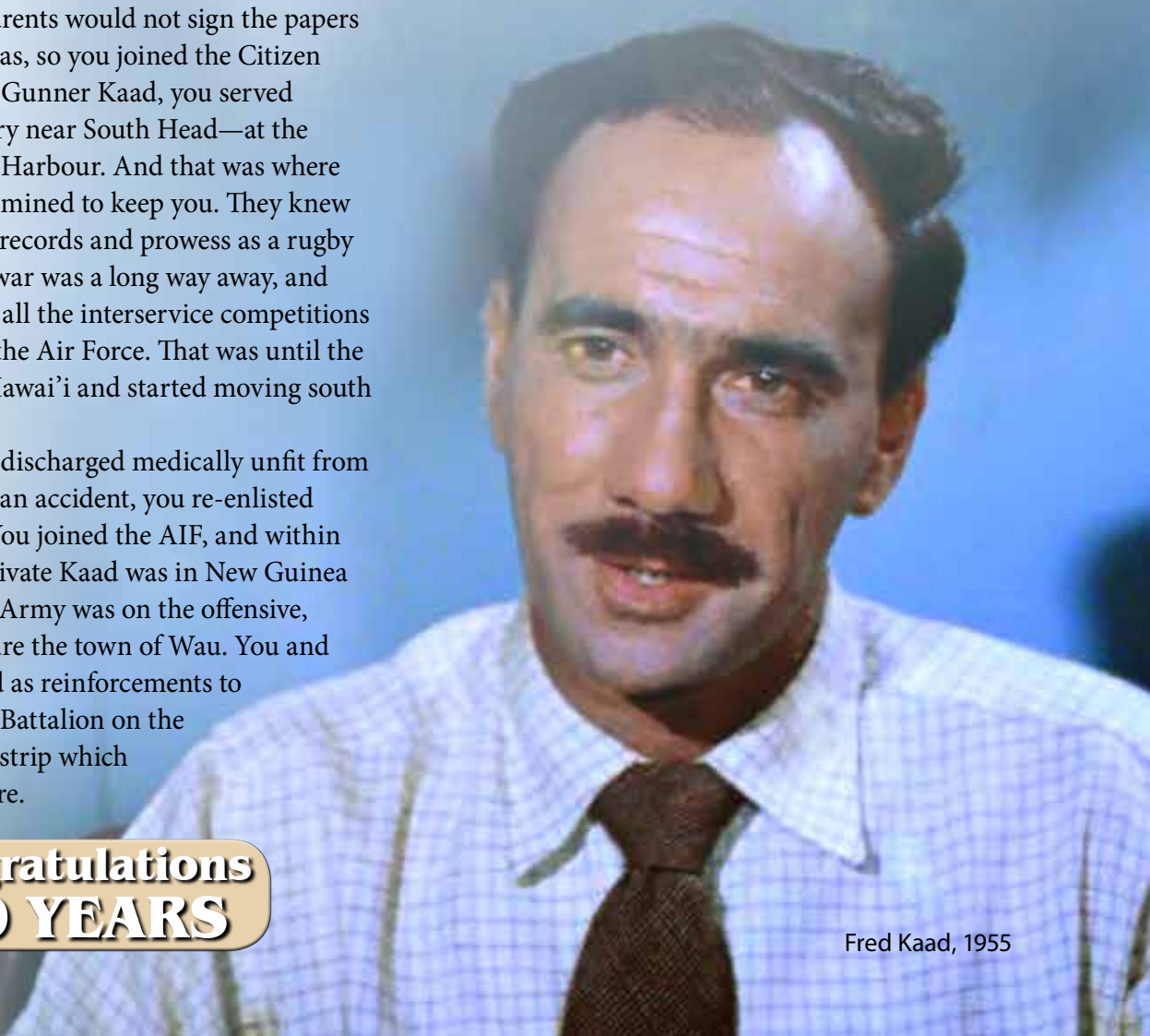
Your next move was an unexpected transfer to the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU). Promoted to warrant officer, you mainly worked under someone of commissioned rank, but in 1943 in the Northern District of Papua you conducted two solo patrols accompanied only by a small detachment of 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, and Majors Horrie



**Congratulations
100 YEARS**

Fred Kaad, 1955





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)



**Congratulations
100 YEARS**

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 Higaturu.

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

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Interview with Fred Kaad OBE, former District Commissioner and Supporting Actor
- "Behind the Scenes Footage", shot by Rhonda Grogan with Director's Comments
- Original Trailer for "Walk Into Paradise"
- Photo Gallery

Ned 'Sharkey' Kelly, an Australian adventurer, has discovered oil in the wilds of Papua New Guinea. Patrol Officer, Steve McAllister, is instructed by the local authorities to verify the discovery and lead an expedition to Paradise Valley, beyond the headwaters of the Sepik River. The party includes a United Nations doctor, Louise Dumarçet, and malaria-stricken crocodile hunter, Jeff Clayton. Tension arises when Louise is attacked by a witch doctor after taking blood samples from the tribal leader's sick children. She must find a way to save them otherwise the party will be massacred.

Filmed on location in 1955, this remastered and regraded print of "Walk Into Paradise" showcases Papua New Guinea's spectacular scenery, from the rugged Highlands to the primitive and treacherous Sepik River. The cast includes thousands of magnificently plumed warriors from different tribes. Carl Kayser's superb photography was highly commended at the Cannes film festival.

A SOUTHERN INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION
"WALK INTO PARADISE" (1955) DIRECTED BY
LEE ROBINSON, PRODUCED BY CHIPS
RAFFERTY, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
CARL KAYSER, ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY
CHIPS RAFFERTY AND LEE ROBINSON
STARRING CHIPS RAFFERTY, FRANÇOISE
CHRISTOPHE, PIERRE CRESSOY, REGINALD
LYE, RED LANTERN SERGEANT MAJOR SOMU,
AND INTRODUCING FRED KAAD OBE. APPROX.
#111/112 TIME 10 MINUTES

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Parental
guidance
recommended

DIRECTED BY LEE ROBINSON



WALK INTO PARADISE
CHIPS RAFFERTY
FRANÇOISE CHRISTOPHE
PIERRE CRESSOY
REGINALD LYE



Infrequent mild
violence,
Naturalistic nudity



**Congratulations
100 YEARS**

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.

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



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

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



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

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 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.



Shaggy Ridge in the Finisterre Range

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.

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.

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