

# <sup>PNG</sup>Kundu

**DECEMBER 2020**



**Papua New Guinea Association  
of Australia Inc.**  
**[www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)**



# Accolades for Fred Kaad

We thought we would share some tributes to Fred Kaad, OBE that have flowed in on email, Facebook and the PNGAA website on Fred's 100th birthday in September 2020.

**Ruby Rich, OAM**, of Dubbo, would like to pass on her congratulations and warmest good wishes to Fred Kaad, OBE, for his 100th. Ruby writes in an email to Patrick Bourke 'his contributions to education and society over a long period are deserving of special recognition'.

## From the PNGAA Facebook:

**Ian Frape:** It makes me feel humble to have, with others, carried this esteemed Australian up the stairs in to lecture rooms at ASOPA. He had a wonderful understanding and forgiving nature for those of us who, in our youth, indulged in beverages without counter lunches at the Mosman Hotel and felt an urge to rest our weary eyes.

**Paul Hopper:** A wonderful man!!!!

**Jane Hopper Cush:** Happiest of birthdays, Freddie.

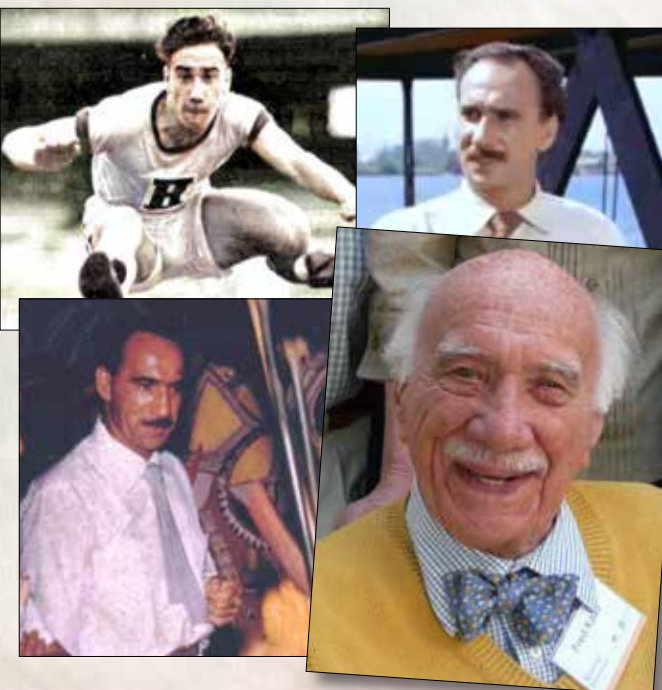
**Joan Colman:** Very best wishes to Fred Kaad, OBE from the Colman family.

**Rob Hicks:** Congratulations on a good life Freddy Kaad. Shirley Hicks, widow of your old mate, Ted, sends her regards.

**Margaret Kimmorley:** Happy 100th Mr Kaad—have a wonderful day.

**Rebecca Hopper:** Happy birthday Freddie—congratulations on reaching a century!

**Arthur Smedley:** Best wishes Fred and congratulations on reaching this important milestone.



**Paul Munro:** Another top score Fred, with Gaynor still at the crease with you!

**Jan Ross:** Happiest of birthdays Fred, 100! Congratulations!

**Sylvia Spring:** Congratulations Freddy—Happy 100th birthday. What a milestone—what a man!! Love from Sylvia and Jeff Kelly and Josh and Bella.

**John Pain:** Very best wishes, Fred. You interviewed me in Adelaide and subsequently I became a patrol officer in the Highlands. I have many wonderful memories of my time in PNG, wonderful people. Best regards.

**Elizabeth O'Brien:** Happy Birthday Mr Kaad!

**Anna & Peter Bettels:** Congratulations from the Rolfe family!

**Karl Kramer:** Have a nice time on your birthday, Fred. My family and I remember the great things you did for our country, PNG. God Bless.

**Sue Spencer:** Best wishes Fred from the Pulsford family

**Kat Glasson:** Congratulations

## From the PNGAA website:

**Anne Peters:** An excellent article about an extraordinary man. My parents were friends of Fred and June Kaad back in the early 1950s in New Ireland. Fred and June were very gracious and kind hosts to me when their daughter Gaynor and I both started at boarding school in 1964.

I will always recall their kindness to a little girl from New Ireland who had never even been to Australia until I started at boarding school!

I would like to add that Gaynor Kaad is an extraordinary and remarkable woman, whose devotion to her father has undoubtedly allowed him to achieve this remarkable birthday. I am honoured to count Gaynor Kaad among my friends.

**Jane:** Freddie Kaad is one of the most inspiring people I've ever known! (And one of the nicest.) From reading this article I discovered many early accomplishments that—due to his modesty!—I'd known nothing about. I, too, met him by attending boarding school with his daughter, and join with Anne in my admiration and affection for Gaynor.



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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. 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. Whilst *Tok Pisin* is one of the three official languages of PNG, please note that some authors still use the term *Pidgin* for *Tok Pisin*, and PNG KUNDU supports both terms.

**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.

For members 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:

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**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.



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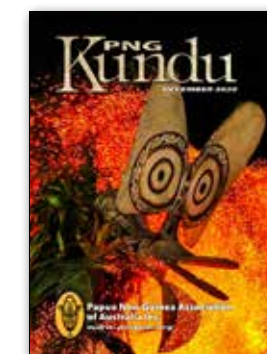
**Deadline for the March 2021 issue**  
**Friday, 29 January 2021**

**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)



Accolades for Fred Kaad	IFC
<b>PNGAA Update</b>	2
<i>Nominations Due for 2021 PNGAA AGM</i>	
<i>Special Offer for PNGAA Members</i>	
<b>Events Calendar</b>	6
<b>Letters &amp; Enquiries</b>	7
<b>PNG in the News</b>	11
The Finding of Ok Tedi	16
Back to Wau after the War ( <i>Part 1</i> )	18
Mt Fubilan, Ok Tedi & Other Tales ( <i>Part 3</i> )	20
Fast Track Teacher Training: My Experience	21
The Kokoda Correction	23
Family Farm to PNG Development Bank— Story of a Didiman ( <i>Part 6</i> )	29
Pilgrimage to Rabaul: Aussie Col's Legacy	32
The Christmas of 1968: The Longest Ever	38
Record Delivery Time	41
PNG Memories	41
A Memorable Experience ( <i>Part 1</i> )	43
<b>Art &amp; Book Reviews</b>	45
<b>PNGAA Vale</b>	48
<b>Memorial News</b>	57
<i>75th Anniversary Commemoration</i>	
<i>Chief of the Defence Force Address</i>	
<i>Farewell to Norm Furness</i>	
<b>Treasurer's Corner</b>	63
<i>Membership &amp; Order Form</i>	
<b>PNGAA Store</b>	IBC
Papua New Guinea Association of Australia	BC



## Front Cover Feature:

A Baining Firedancer from the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain

© Greg Hillman  
Kuranda Photography  
<https://instagram.com/greghillman11>

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## From the President

*Symbolism. Sweeping,  
sober reflection and emotion.  
Even quiet pride.*

These all coursed through a very special and historic event for our association at the Australian War Memorial on 6 September. It was a commemoration organised by the PNGAA for the 75th Anniversary of the signing of Surrender of Japanese Forces at Rabaul in 1945.

Distinguished guests including the AWM director, Matt Anderson, and the Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC, paid respects at the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial in the grounds of the national institution in Canberra.

It was fitting in so many ways.

The Japanese surrender ceremony in 1945 was aboard the Royal Navy aircraft carrier, HMS *Glory* nestled just off the Rabaul coast—in the same waters and route



Wreaths at the memorial

**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.**

where a massive Imperial Japanese invasion force had landed on 23 January 1942.

It was also the passage through which the ill-fated *Montevideo Maru* left Rabaul harbour carrying 1,053 Australian men and boys, who would perish when the prison ship was sunk off the Philippines on 1 July 1942. From Rabaul, too, Japanese assault forces had left for Kokoda, Buna and other battles. Then after Australia's bloodiest and costliest campaign of WWII, the New Guinea struggle was over and Rabaul was handed back to the Allies.

Japanese Lieutenant General Hitoshi Imamura signed the instrument of surrender. It was accepted by Lieutenant General VAH Sturdee, general officer commanding First Army.

Rabaul was so long forgotten or ignored in our national narrative that it was both heartening and appropriate that our most senior soldier made the key address (*see his speech in 'Memorial News'*). And it was an eloquent one by General Campbell. His final words resonated powerfully with our members.

*'We must not forget historical occasions such as the coming to peace in Rabaul. The friendship between Australia and Papua New Guinea has only strengthened through our remembrance. And we must not forget the significance of memorials like this one. They offer us this moment to reflect on what it has cost for our*

*society to remain open, and free, and in service of our communities and families while respecting our common humanity. Something that has come at such great a cost is truly invaluable. It should not be forgotten. We must forever cherish it.'*

Wreaths were laid by members on behalf of the PNGAA, the 2nd/22nd Battalion/Lark Force Association and the NGVR/PNGVR Ex-Members Association.

It was appropriate as well that PNGAA's Andrea Williams gave the thank you address. Andrea lost her grandfather on the *Montevideo Maru* and was instrumental in forming the committee in its name, and establishing a memorial for the victims of our greatest maritime disaster.

Travel commitments made my attendance impossible, but I was delighted that our extended family was represented by my cousins Dorothea and Carol Schultze, whose grandmother perished in a Japanese prison camp along with my great-grandmother and another relative.

On a current and more celebratory note, PNGAA is thrilled with a wonderful accomplishment of our former events co-ordinator, Julianne Ross Allcorn. Julianne was announced as the winner of the Trustees' Watercolour Prize 2020 for her painting, 'Mollitium 2' in the Wynne Art Prize at the NSW Art Gallery. The Wynne Prize is awarded annually for 'the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in

oils or watercolours or for the best example of figure sculpture by Australian artists' (*see her painting in 'Art & Book Reviews'*).

Your committee is pleased also to welcome the new Editor for *PNG Kuntu*, John Egerton, who has a long and passionate connection with PNG, and we know he will continue the fine tradition of our journal.

**MAX UECHTRITZ**  
**PNGAA President**

## Welcome to Our New Editor: John Egerton

John has been assisting with the December 2020 issue of *PNG Kuntu*, and will take over as Editor for future issues.

John began work as veterinary officer with Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries in 1956, providing services to owners of livestock and companion animals. Following a course at the University of London in 1960–61, he became OIC of the Central Veterinary Laboratory at Kila Kila, Port Moresby. In this role he organised veterinary diagnostic services for the Territory's veterinary service. John also investigated anthrax in pigs and, with colleagues from the health department, found the cause



John Egerton

of pig bel, the fatal disease which often followed traditional feasts on pig meat.

John and Margaret and his family lived in Boroko at the corner of Lahara Avenue and Huala Place. The Anthonys were neighbours and the Marvells lived nearby. His daughter, Lee, went to East Boroko Primary and daughter, Jenny, was born in the European Hospital, Port Moresby, in 1959. Son, Jack, was born five months after their return South.

In September 1964 John joined the CSIRO in Sydney as a research scientist. In 1972 he was appointed to the chair of veterinary medicine at University of Sydney, retiring from that in 2000. Since then he has continued to write and edit

articles and a book on veterinary research history. John now lives in Drummoyne, Sydney.

## Thanks to You All

It's been an absolute privilege and pleasure to work with our Production Designer, Jeannette Gilligan, to ensure that the four issues of our newly-branded journal, *PNG Kuntu*, arrive in your letter boxes and inboxes this year. Thank you, Jeannette, for an amazing year!

And to the proofreaders (especially Eagle-Eyes Benson and Wade) who assist with the final copy, to the Management Committee, including Chris Warrillow and Phil Ainsworth, for their support in so many areas, those who help with the website and post, and to the members of this wonderful association who have ensured our journal is packed with anecdotes, stories, letters and news—I have greatly enjoyed having this involvement with you.

I wish John Egerton many happy days in his role as Editor. Every member has a story about PNG, so please continue to share them in *PNG Kuntu*!

**ANDREA WILLIAMS**  
**2020 PNG Kuntu Editor**

## Bonus e-book for PNGAA Members

PNG is a land of tremendous contrasts—of smiling people, mad keen rugby players and followers, complex cultural dynamics and displays, singing that is out of this world, stunning scenery, incredible artefacts, opportunities for adventurous activities and delicious tropical fruits—all in a terrain that is carved by steep slopes and jagged peaks of mountain ranges, interspersed by fertile valleys and over a dozen active volcanoes—and in a country that is Australia's nearest neighbour, four kilometres away and only a few footsteps from our doors.

Published by PNGAA, ***Land of the Unexpected—Papua New Guinea***, covers many of the different facets of this amazing country—including a complex overview, flora, fauna and the environment, industries, art, culture, sport, the diverse history and some of those who helped to shape the nation.

This interesting and colourful e-book will shortly be available for members to view or download, at no charge, from the new 'e-books' section on our website, [www.pngaa.org/e-books/](http://www.pngaa.org/e-books/), or directly from the Home Page.



**COMING  
SOON TO  
OUR  
WEBSITE**





## Nominations Due for 2021 PNGAA AGM

The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia will be held on Saturday, 1 May 2021. Every two years elections are held for the PNGAA Management Committee. All positions, executive and general, will be vacated and a new committee voted into office.

All committee members are volunteers ... PNG enthusiasts. Virtual meetings are often held by email or Zoom, so location is not necessarily an issue, although some face-to-face is helpful. This is a great opportunity for those wishing to contribute some spare time, whilst exercising their skills, to a worthwhile and highly-regarded organisation, surrounded by a supportive team.

Nomination forms together with further information are available on the PNGAA website.

If you cannot access the PNGAA website, please contact the Secretary (*details on page 1*) and request the forms be mailed to you.

All nominees and those nominating need to be current members of the PNGAA.

Please consider your PNGAA Management Committee and send nominations in now.

Nominations are due by 5.00 pm, 31 January 2021.

## PNGAA Website— Help Wanted

The PNGAA website is expanding and increasing its functionality. Currently we have a team of volunteers who add and maintain the content on the website, but as the content expands, the need for additional volunteers to assist in monitoring and loading content also increases. Specifically, we need someone to assist in:

- Loading articles for the *PNG KUNDU* each quarter
- Monitoring and managing the comments put on the website by other members
- Loading 'news' articles on to the website
- Loading and maintaining content relating to PNGAA regional events.

Technical understanding of WordPress programs is NOT a requirement; however, some basic understanding of computers and access to the internet will be necessary.

If you have a reasonable computer capability, we are able to show you how to perform the necessary tasks. And, of course, we will answer any questions you may have and provide ongoing guidance. If you have an interest in PNG, this is a great way to help the PNGAA!

Being located in Sydney would be an advantage, but with communication these days, location is not really relevant.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Roy at [membership@pngaa.net](mailto:membership@pngaa.net)

## Free Digital Collection for PNGAA Members

In response to requests from members, we have introduced a new section on our website:

**PNGAA e-books**

Amongst many others, members will be able to view or download digital versions of David Montgomery's *A Didiman's Diary*—published as a series of articles in *Una Voce*, and Bill Brown's *A Kiap's Chronicle*—originally published online.

Why don't you check it out and remember that, over time, we will be adding many more publications our members will be able to download at:

[www.pngaa.org/e-books/](http://www.pngaa.org/e-books/)

## PNGAA New Members

The PNGAA Committee welcomes the following new members:

Karen Aisbett, Graham Aveling, Nicholas Brown, Anne-Maree Driver, Malcolm Dunjey, Hilary Euscher, Lance Govan, Lisa Hilli, Debra Humbley, Dyanne Jackson, Robert Jacobsen, Jeff Kinch, Lilianne Joku Kramer, Peter Laming, Joanne Martin-Blakey, Peter Meissner, Natalie Moxham, Russell Mumme, John Reid, Dennis Robbmond, Dorothea ('Doff') Schultze, Carolina ('Carol') Schultze and Elsi Wolff.

## 2021 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE

Rates and payment options are included at the back of this issue in the *Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form*

## CWA–PNG International Study Year Competition Judging

In February 2020, to complete the year of focus on PNG, Lyn Braico from the CWA asked the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia to help them judge their NSW competition entries. Every country they study has a competition at the end to review and imbed in their membership what they have learnt during the year.

The following was kindly judged by our association members:

**Senior and Junior School Journals** (most from regional NSW schools) **Judge:** Steven Marvell;  
**Postcards Judge:** Sara Turner;  
**Student PowerPoint Judge:** Cheryl Marvell.

Judges were chosen for their experience in the field.

Despite the challenges of COVID we could contribute, and all judges commented on how much they enjoyed seeing the detail and high quality of work presented.

The final NSW CWA Conference of the year is normally held in Dubbo and includes the prize giving and display of the handcrafted items made for the competition.

As the conference had to be cancelled the CWA gathered some judges from the PNG Women's Association of NSW—Lani Drosd (President), Jane Hickson (Secretary), Bernie Clarke (Treasurer), and the PNGAA—Andrea Williams and myself, at Lyn Bracio's home to judge the PNG Dolls, Handicraft items and Bilums.

A lovely morning was had by all reviewing the entries from the talent of the CWA (and sampling some



Judging PNG Dolls, Handicraft items and Bilums created by members of CWA NSW—(L-R) Cheryl Marvell, Jane Hickson, Bernie Clarke, Lani Drosd, CWA rep, Andrea Williams, CWA representative (above), and some of the other items on display

amazing cakes they are famous for). It was obvious the enormous impact that studying our closest neighbour had been on the CWA.

The PNGAA also immensely enjoyed and was excited to be able to be involved with this great initiative to promote better understanding of Papua New Guinea. Over the previous eighteen months PNGAA members had participated by speaking at conferences, talking about PNG at various CWA international days on PNG throughout NSW, and PNGAA had

produced a general information book about PNG that was provided to all CWA centres in NSW.

The CWA raises funds for the country studied and, in this case, the NSW branches already have a long-term association and support of PNG childcare centres and women's organisations among many other worthy causes.

We hope to be able to continue the great friendships and networks we have made over this year to benefit both organisations in the future.

**CHERYL MARVELL**

## Special Offer for PNGAA Members



When the founders of **Niugini Arabica Coffee** worked in Papua New Guinea, they fell in love with the coffee. They realised that nature has endowed PNG with a terrific diversity in its landscape. There are wonderful tropical rainforests, extensive river systems, volcanoes, waterfalls, rugged highlands, pristine beaches and remarkable flora and fauna. The fertile highlands are home to the best coffee in the world.

**Niugini Arabica Coffee** specialises in roasting organic coffee beans from the mountains of PNG. Specialisation means that we have been able to fine tune our roasting techniques to extract the optimal flavours from what are already optimal beans. The result brings to the fore the superb complex flavoursome body that is intense, yet smooth and silky on the palette with chocolate-nutty undertones. Our roasting operations are in Port Moresby and in Canberra. **Niugini Arabica Coffee** is open to the public at our shopfront cafe in Duffy, Canberra.

To spread our love for Papua New Guinean coffee, we've partnered with the PNGAA. Visit our online shop at <https://www.niuginiarabica.com/> and use the discount code 'PNGAA10' to get 10% off any order.







As we are all aware with current circumstances, anything could change before events. The PNGAA will be guided by government advice on gatherings, and any changes to events will be advised as required. Please keep an eye on our social media and your emails for any updates. Thank you.

### ❖PERTH

#### PNGAA Christmas Lunch

**Date:** 20 November 2020

**Venue:** New Dining Room, The RAAF Club, 2 Bull Creek Dr, Bull Creek (Perth, WA)

**Time:** 12 Noon

**Cost:** Counter lunch; parking available

**RSVP:** 27 November 2020

**Contact:** Linda Cavanaugh Manning M: 0429 099 053 or E: [lindam121@bigpond.com](mailto:lindam121@bigpond.com)

### ❖SYDNEY

#### PNGAA Christmas Lunch

**Date:** Sunday, 6 December 2020

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

**Time:** Registration—11.30 am; Leave premises—3.30 pm

**Cost:** \$70 pp for two-course meal. Please advise if you have any special dietary requirements when booking and prior to the event.

**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)**

Attendees to pay for their own beverages at members' rates. Special Guest Speaker TBA  
**RSVP:** 20 November 2020  
**Payment:** Please see *Treasurer's Corner* at the back of this issue for payment options, and notify [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net) when payment is made.

**EFT PAYMENT:**

Bank: CBA: BSB 062 009;

Account No.: 0090 7724

You may make up your own table of 8 or request seating with friends.

**Contact:** Sara Turner

M: 0401 138 246 or

E: [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net)

### ❖BRISBANE

#### Paradise Palette Haus Piksa

This is a PNG Film Festival & Contemporary Art Exhibition curated by Don Wotton on behalf of the Tumbuna Visual Arts Assoc.

**Venue:** Petrie Terrace Gallery, 3/162 Petrie Terrace, Brisbane

**Dates:** 04–15 November 2020—all welcome

**More information:** Don Wotton (email) [wottond@gmail.com](mailto:wottond@gmail.com)

#### PNGAA Annual Lunch

Easing of COVID-19 restrictions in Queensland meant that the annual lunch was able to proceed at The Ship Inn on 26 July 2020.



Those who took the opportunity to have an enjoyable lunch while they caught up with friends were Phil Ainsworth, Murrough and Joy Benson, Roger and Sabrina Butterick, Rolf and Lynette Grubwinkler, Des Hoban, Dyanne Jackson, Lilianne Kramer, Belinda Macartney, Joanne and Ian Martin-Blakey, Kieran Nelson, Graham Tuck, Sharon Wallace, David West, Hellen White and Don Wotton—some of whom are pictured here.

### ❖MELBOURNE

#### The Bloody Beachheads: The Battles of Gona, Buna and Sanananda

The Battle of the Beachheads was the bloodiest of all the Papuan campaigns. The resolve and tenacity of the Japanese defenders was, to Allied perceptions, unprecedented to the point of being 'fanatical', and had not previously been encountered.

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr Peter Brune, author of *A Bastard of a Place*.

**Date:** Saturday, 20 March 2021 at 8.30 am to 4.30 pm

**Venue:** Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

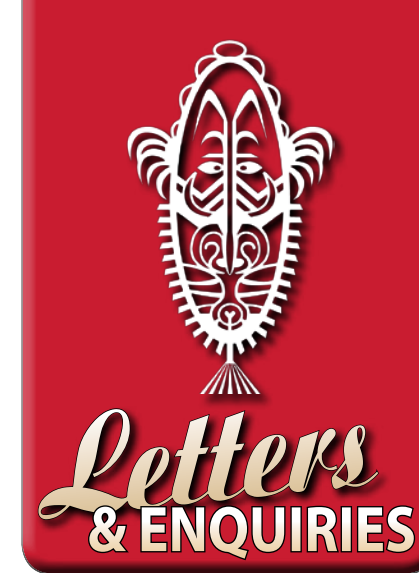
**Contact:** <https://www.mhvhv.org.au/event/the-bloody-beachheads-the-battles-of-gona-buna-and-sanananda/>

### ❖CAIRNS

#### Ex-Kiaps Gathering

This has been delayed from July 2020 until 24 July 2021. Information in *PNG KUNDU*, March 2021.

**Contact:** Deryck Thompson—E: [dandy51@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dandy51@bigpond.net.au)



#### The Kokoda Trail/Track Debate

I refer to the current Kokoda Trail/Kokoda Track debate in *PNG KUNDU*. 'Kokoda Trail' is the official name of Battle Honour awarded to the Papuan Infantry Battalion and the ten Australian infantry battalions who fought in the Kokoda campaign by the Commonwealth Battles Nomenclature Committee in 1958.

Battle Honours or colours symbolise the spirit of a regiment for they carry the names of battles that commemorate the gallant deeds performed from the time it was raised. This association of Colours with heroic deeds means they are regarded with veneration. In a sense, they are the epitome of the history of the regiment.

The full history of a regiment is contained in written records, but these are not portable in a convenient form. On the other hand, the Colours, emblazoned with distinction for long and honourable service, are something in the nature of a silken history, the sight of which creates a feeling of pride in soldiers and ex-soldiers.

This is a significance that some who have never worn the uniform will never fully comprehend. It would be a brave person who had the temerity to suggest that these battalions unpick the word 'Kokoda

**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)**

Trail' from their regimental colours and replace it with 'Kokoda Track'!

The Australian War Memorial, which is the custodian of our military heritage, honoured the Battle Honour of the ten Australian infantry battalions who fought in the Kokoda campaign by naming the Second World War Galleries 'Kokoda Trail'.

'Kokoda Trail' is the official name recognised by the Returned Services League of Australia. A motion by the NSW Branch of the league to have the Kokoda Trail renamed 'Kokoda Track' was defeated at the RSL National Congress held in Dubbo on 14–15 September 2010.

During the establishment of self-government in 1972, PNG government officials from the Department of Lands decided to examine the name of the mail route between Owers Corner and Kokoda with a view to formalising an official name for it. They determined that the name 'Kokoda Trail' would be proclaimed. One can assume they would have been influenced by the name of the Battle Honour which had been awarded to their Papuan Infantry Battalion in 1958.

Chief Minister Michael Somare assumed office on 23 June 1972 when the nation achieved self-government as part of the process to independence in 1975. Somare accepted the recommendation of the Geographic Place Names Committee and the name 'Kokoda Trail' was gazetted on 12 October 1972 (*PNG Government Gazette*, No. 88 of 12

October 1972, page 1362, column 2. Notice 1972/28 of the PNG Place Names Committee refers).

Further details on the research behind the official name can be found at: <https://blog.kokodatreks.com/2020/08/24/kokoda-track-or-trail/>

**MAJOR CHARLIE LYNN, OAM, OL**

#### PNG Independence

Thank you for the interesting articles in September issue of *PNG KUNDU*. I recalled many happenings from 1969 to 2004, first with the United Church and, from 1984, with the PNG Bible Society.

Independence in 1975 was a really special time to always be remembered. The enclosed article is just a personal account of that wonderful occasion.

I agree with Sean Dorney about Australia's ignorance about PNG being a loss for both nations. For a few of us at least the people will never be forgotten but, sadly, many of the younger generation may not



The Kokoda Memorial at Isurava





Sir John Guise receiving the Australian flag (top); HRH Prince Charles at the Independence Day Ceremony (below)

even know where the country is, much less on our door step.

Thank you for keeping the vital connection alive.

### Independence Day

16 September 1975 was a wonderful day of celebration after preparation following on from Self-Government. Young, educated, Papua New Guineans eager for the job of running their own country were aware that there would be many challenges, but they felt ready. Their desire was for the Konedobu workforce with both Australian and local staff to carry on with the daily administration. This routine work generally ended up with a qualified PNG national, ably assisted by a former office bearer.

A number of celebrations both before and after the big day were enjoyed by old and young, as well

as those in between. These included three different church services, with the Papuan one held at Poreporena, Hanuabada Village, in the United Church, a *Pidgin* one held at the Lutheran Church, Koki, with the English one at the Catholic Cathedral, Ela Beach. All these attended by dignitaries and people from all walks of life.

On 15 September a special ceremony at the stadium was held to lower the Australian flag. Rather sad in a way but, as mentioned by the Governor-General Elect, it had been lowered and not torn down.

Night brought a storm with its own fireworks and typical heavy rain. After the storm had moved on there were local fireworks and, on midnight, the Governor-General Sir John Guise announced via National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) that the country was now Papua New Guinea and independent.

The big day dawned calm and the early sunshine saw all roads leading to Waigani. As the United Church Volunteer Business Manager, together with Margaret Peterson, a senior educationist, we hailed the first passing truck, already pretty well packed with local enthusiastic Papuans and made a joyous bumpy ride to about as far as transports were allowed. This was followed by a rather boggy walk until reaching newly-laid bitumen leading to where the morning's event was to take place.

A very important part was the dedication of the Foundation Stone for the new Parliament House. Not the privilege of politicians but, as a Christian country, religious ministers did the honours. Bishop Ravu Henao of the United Church to pray in *Motu* and Bishop of the Catholic Church to pray in *Tok Pisin*.

It was timed to the second, the length of the prayer for exactly [the

time] when the few aircraft were to take off from Jacksons Airport with a flyover at the vital moment. Everyone ready and the planes taking off, then a message arrived to report that Imelda Marcos, wife of the Philippine President, and her entourage of forty, were awaiting transport at the airport.

Everything was put on hold until the unexpected visitors arrived on stage—what diplomatic action. Then everything continued like clockwork but with no 'flyover' as the planes had to return to base to refuel having flown around and around!

Prince Charles representing Queen Elizabeth II, was dressed in Dress Army Uniform and walked right past me having a rather animated conversation with the Commander of the Defence Force. Their backgrounds could not have been more different with one having an upbringing providing his needs, the other from a remote village in the Owen Stanley Ranges, early mission education before chosen for further study and training in Australia.

The afternoon and days to follow were spent winding up celebrations before the real work began.

### NITA TOBIN

EDITOR'S NOTE: For further reading see the piece by Stuart Inder MBE 'Independence Day Reminiscences' published in *Una Voce*, September 2005, available on the PNGAA website at: <https://pngaa.org/independence-day-reminiscences-2/>

### Rivers of the Western Province—Ok Tedi or River Tedi—Tautologies

As I am on the committee of the PNGAA and was the PNG Government's first Ok Tedi Co-ordinator my old friend, Fred Pratt, sent me a draft copy of his three

articles on Mount Fubilan with an invitation to comment or make suggestions.

I would like to place on record that, in paragraph 2 of his article in the September edition of *PNG Kundu*, Fred did not insert the word 'River' in his references to the Ok Tedi and Ok Mani.

Neither did I!

'Ok' is the word for 'river' in most of the local (Min linguistic-groups') languages in that part of PNG. Hence, most rivers and streams in the area are prefixed with Ok. Similarly, to the south, the prefix Wai is used by Ningerum language speakers. Thus, for example, a tributary of the Alice River near Rumginae should not be referred to as the Wai Mart River.

### CHRIS WARRILLOW

Editor's Note: Apologies for this error and thank you for the useful explanation!



### Well Done (again)!

Many thanks to our 2020 Editor, Andrea Williams, for steering *PNG Kundu* through a difficult year. Her exceptional knowledge, dedication and experience have been invaluable—as always. **JG**

### COVID-19!

2020 has been a very different year for all of us.

Our thoughts went to our Victorian members especially as the New South Wales border with Victoria closed at 12.01 am on Wednesday, 8 July 2020 as COVID-19 numbers soared. Some restrictions were eased on 13 September. In the meantime, one of our members, Donald Mackenzie penned the following and we are sure many of you will relate to the experiences:



Ok Tedi

WELL! HERE WE GO AGAIN! Lockdown for a full six weeks. Some people just don't get, or understand the ramifications of a pandemic.

Now! We're only allowed out for essentials. Therefore, a visit to Coles can only be done by one person in the family with a surgical mask worn when walking out of home and into the shop; and then have to leave it on till home again ... quite strange.

We are counted in to the store from a line outside; we have our temperature taken by a laser—by door monitoring personnel, and ushered to the hand sanitation station to rub and dry clean! Use a wet Dettol wipe for your basket handle, and then look toward your aisle for your social distancing route. So, now, when walking through Coles, everybody swaps left to right, or right to left, to miss oncoming possible spreaders of coronavirus, whilst all the time wondering ... 'Am I safe, am I far enough apart, who has touched this can of Glen 20, why don't they move quickly? Oh! What did I want in this aisle again?'

Then people look longingly through your mask to see if they actually know you, with long eye-contacting stares. You just nod your head. Hopefully, they may see your

tell-tale crow's feet eyes smiling, and maybe recognise you under your winter beanie and separating mask.

OMG! That was just the beginning of Day 1, Aisle 1, of the start of your Coles visit for food. Then to the chemist after Coles and maybe Bunnings ... 'Have I got my trade card?' Blast, this is a minefield of rules, and I've got six weeks of this. There's going to be a lot of planning for future painless visits.

### DONALD MACKENZIE

### Wartime Memories

Seeking those with memories of their time in Papua New Guinea—Anzac Days, the Kokoda Track, War Graves and World War II.

Do you have memories, from your time in Papua New Guinea, about how Australians commemorated World War II? Australian National University History PhD candidate, Alexandra McCosker, seeks your stories, if you'd like to share them.

If you were involved or participated in Anzac Day services or other World War II commemorative events, such as the 'Return to Kokoda' or 'Return to Wewak' events; if you have walked the Kokoda Track or have visited sites of World War II significance, such as Bomana, Lae and Rabaul War Cemeteries, and/or



other significant sites such as Cape Wom—Alexandra would love to hear your story!

Alexandra is exploring the idea of pilgrimage to Papua New Guinea looking at how Australians remember and commemorate the Kokoda campaign and, more broadly, the WWII campaign in PNG.

If you would like to have a chat either via telephone, email, written letter or in person, Alexandra would be really grateful to make contact with you. She can be contacted initially via email at: [alexandra.mccosker@anu.edu.au](mailto:alexandra.mccosker@anu.edu.au)

### Trail or Track (again!)

As always, I gain immense pleasure to see my copy of *PNG KUNDU* arrive in the post, however, I would like to add my comment regarding the debate over 'trail or track'. My husband, Gordon Hayes, first went to PNG in 1947 and was very definite about it being a 'TRACK'. Americans rode on a trail but Aussies walk down the TRACK.

**MERLE HAYES**

### Tribute to Keith Dyer

I arrived in TPNG as a raw eighteen-year-old Cadet Patrol Officer, fresh out of high school in Melbourne, in March 1958 and posted to Madang District. A brief stint at Bundi Patrol Post to hold the fort for Geoff Whiteoak who came to Madang while his wife was awaiting the birth of a child, and then transferred by DC Les Williams to Saidor in May 1958, where Keith Dyer was the ADO.

A strict authoritarian man, reflective of his upbringing in South Australia, Keith (or 'Mr Dyer' as was the fashion in those days) soon realised that his new cadet would be on a steep learning curve and set about the task with resolve.

At work, Keith was a strict disciplinarian, insisted on exactitude and unqualified accuracy in carrying out the daily outstation routines, and submitting detailed reports on census patrols that I carried out. Those who have worked with Keith would agree with me that the terms 'half-measure',

'near enough is good enough' were never part of his lexicon—to the contrary, although not obsessed with perfection, Keith clearly held the view that every task had to be done well.

But away from work both Keith and Gwen never failed to open their hearts and homes to myself and other field workers, and were extremely hospitable wherever they lived. On tennis courts the Dyers were formidable partners and always super competitive, and I recall a time when he came to Goroka in 1972 and, despite our sixteen-year age difference, literally wiped me off the squash court!

Following our return to Brisbane, we stayed in regular contact and I visited him regularly at Victoria Point. I feel really fortunate to have been a good friend of Keith and Gwen Dyer and admire him enormously for having had such a long and remarkable life filled with achievement!

### WILL MUSKENS

(Please see 'PNGAA Vale' in this issue.)

### Celebrating Noel Wright

On Thursday, 24 September 2020 four former kiaps who served in the Southern Highlands, and now live in Hobart, got together for a celebration of their mate, Noel Wright's life after he passed away on 20 September.

Like Noel, all four returned to PNG after their kiap-lives and spent varying times over a number of years working in various roles for mining and petroleum companies. (Please see 'PNGAA Vale' in this issue.)

Left to right: Lloyd Warr, Bernie Mulchay, Frank Leibfried and Dave Ekins



### First PNG Female Vet

A tremendous achievement—Dr Tania Areori will return to Papua New Guinea as the country's first female veterinarian!

Tania has spent the last six years studying a Bachelor of Veterinary Science in Wagga Wagga, initially leaving behind her nine-month-old son to further her education in a new country, and as a mature-aged student.

'When I started out, I didn't know that I was going to be the first female vet. I was just a young woman going after my dreams.

'I had separation anxiety as a new mum, I was worried about settling in and making new friends.'

Tania thanked Charles Sturt University student services and the School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences team which helped her settle into Wagga Wagga.



Dr Areori and her son, Taegan

**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.**

'I'm also thankful to the students from my year for their friendship and support, driving me to and from class, for group study sessions and working together to get through exams.

'I would like to make people, especially from the Pacific who are interested in pursuing this career, aware that studying veterinary science is possible.

'There is always a way. Just keep asking, searching and pursuing.'

### The Anne McCosker Collection

PNGAA members and their friends interested in the history of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, and the years after WWII up to independence in 1975, may like to know that Anne McCosker, a long-standing contributory member to PNGAA, has now given to the Fryer Library, University of Queensland, much of her valuable collection.

The material includes much of the primary source material on which is based Anne's book, *Masked Eden, a History of the Australians in New Guinea*, and her booklet, *New Guinea Waits*, now included in the second edition of *Masked Eden*.

In this collection are hundreds of photographs showing aspects of plantation life with Europeans and New Guineans both pre- and post-WWII; photographs of Rabaul, Kavieng, and other geographic areas; a few pre-WWI photographs; short stories and articles about the Islands, diaries, maps.

This Collection gives the viewer a sense of continuity not often available in archive material.

There are batches of pre-WWII letters from European resident 'Befores', also batches of letters from other 'Befores', people like John Gilmore, Stella Spencer, and Lil Evenson written to Anne in the early 1970s when she was researching material for *Masked Eden*.

Anne also has bundles of letters written in the 1990s from European resident 'Befores' like John Leeuwink Clark and ex-WWII soldiers, and then postwar residents like David Behrens. After *Masked Eden* was published in 1998, Anne received and responded in the following decades to a considerable number of people, 'Befores', ex-New Guinea soldiers, a few of these had escaped the Japanese invasion, sons and daughters of parents from the islands, even their grandchildren, and readers interested in New Guinea in general. These letters—and emails—have all been kept.

There is a good collection of letters from WWII in New Guinea between Stan McCosker, and his business partner, then Colonel, Walford King, the West Australian Government Auditor written when Stan McCosker was in active service in ANGAU.

Miscellaneous items of interest—so much ordinary material was lost during the war—are, for example, the Kokopo Club audit





Ellis Rowan's watercolour trio of Birds of Paradise

books prepared by Anne's mother, Marjorie McCosker, a chartered accountant, in 1938 and 1939 and several German New Guinea business seals.

Another selection of letters and photos are those on which is based Anne's book, *Lieutenant Martin's Letters, an Anzac in the Great War*. These are letters to Fred Martin's family in Queensland from Gallipoli, England, and the Western Front. There is also material on the Expeditionary Force to capture German New Guinea in 1914. Fred was a member of the Kennedy Regiment that sailed on the *Kanowna* from Townsville to Port Moresby.

The Collection also includes exercise books with their pages full of the first drafts of many of Anne's seven books of poetry. Other note books contain Anne's observations of New Guinea flora and fauna and the Islands in general, background material which she used when writing *Masked Eden*. This descriptive information has also helped Anne at times when writing some of her New Guinea poetry.

Anne plans to add more material later.

## Birds of Paradise: Ellis Rowan in New Guinea

This exhibition is on at the National Library of Australia in Canberra until 8 March 2021.

Ellis Rowan (1848–1922) is one of Australia's most celebrated artists, best known for her striking wildflower paintings but also for her interest in birds.

During WWI, when she was almost seventy years old, she had the opportunity to spend time painting professionally in New Guinea. Ellis created numerous pictures of the region's Birds of Paradise and wildflowers. She was able to paint most of the forty-two species of Birds of Paradise.

Her visits to New Guinea in 1916 and 1917 were at a time when it was uncommon for women of European descent to travel to the region independently. She befriended Irish-born writer and traveller, Beatrice Grimshaw, who hosted Ellis on her visit to the island of Sariba, near Samarai in the Milne Bay Province, and provided Ellis with advice about New Guinea.

Beatrice had sailed to Papua

in 1907 for a short visit but stayed close to thirty years managing a plantation, accompanying exploring parties up the Sepik and Fly rivers and growing tobacco near Port Moresby with her brother. She also wrote many of her forty-two books which included a part-autobiography, *Isles of Adventure*.

Beatrice was a close friend of the acting administrator, Sir Hubert Murray, and became his unofficial publicist. In 1908 Beatrice urged Australian Prime Minister Alfred Deakin to make Murray's position permanent. Deakin commissioned Beatrice to advertise Papua's need for white settlers and capital and, following pamphlets, a book was published in 1910, *The new New Guinea*.

Ellis preferred to work en plein air, which involved hiking to remote areas with the support of the local people. Her passion for flowers and insects is also reflected in her watercolour compositions. She captured the elaborate plumage and complex mating rituals of the male Birds of Paradise, their long tail feathers, curled wires and some with iridescent head feathers.

A significant portion of the material on display in the exhibition is available to view online. See more: <https://www.nla.gov.au/content/birds-of-paradise-ellis-rowan-in-new-guinea>

## Archaeology in the Great Papuan Plateau

Papua New Guinean and Australian archaeologists are investigating whether a remote and rugged part of PNG was an important transit point in the migration of people from South-East Asia to Australia tens of thousands of years ago.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/archaeologists-unearth-the-secrets-of-the-great-papuan-plateau/12358698>  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-01/afp-arrests-png-police-seize-500kg-cocaine-australia-bound/12515158>  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheProjectTV/videos/746031385944873-UzpfSTE4Mjg3Njg1OTA2NzA1OTA6MjY4NTA1MjcYMTcwODgzNQ/>

## 500 kg Cocaine Seized Near Port Moresby

An organised crime syndicate attempted to smuggle more than 500 kilograms of cocaine into Australia, but the small plane loaded with the drugs crashed while trying to take off in Papua New Guinea.

The criminal gang was already being watched by police as part of a two-year investigation, and five

people were arrested in Queensland and Victoria shortly after the plane took off.

The Cessna 402C was found empty with its pilot missing near what appeared to be a makeshift runway at Papa Lea Lea, about 30 kilometres north-west of Port Moresby.

The Australian pilot handed himself in to the Australian consulate in PNG and has already faced court in Port Moresby, charged with illegal entry into the country.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-01/afp-arrests-png-police-seize-500kg-cocaine-australia-bound/12515158>

## Bushfire Donation

Merimbula Rotary Club in far south New South Wales has received a donation of \$60,000 from twenty different organisations in the Morobe District of Papua New Guinea. This generous gesture will be used to assist the recovery of the community from last summer's bushfires.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-08/merimbula-receives-bushfire-donation-from-png/12531970>

## Archibald Prize

Papua New Guinean artist and student at National Art School Sydney, Lesley Wengembo, ent-



Lesley Wengembo with Mal Nabogi and his Archibald Prize entry

ered his portrait of campus assistant Mal Nagobi for this year's famous Archibald Prize. Although not among the prize winners, Lesley's obvious talent for realistic portraiture has attracted considerable attention.

Still only twenty-three years old he arrived in Sydney from Port Moresby in 2018 determined to develop further the skills he has exhibited since he was five years old. <https://www.theguardian.com/>

## Agricultural Exports Fall in PNG

This article, based on data from the Bank of Papua New Guinea, describes falls in exports of all major agricultural products—coffee, cocoa, palm oil and tea—in the last decade. It suggests that any improvements in production arising from increased government support for the sector will be some time in the future.

<https://postcourier.com.pg/png-agriculture-exports-drop/>

## Cocoa Production Drops by Twenty-three Per Cent

Cocoa has seen a twenty-three per cent drop in production in the first six months of this year, Cocoa Board of PNG (CBPNG) chief executive officer Boto Gaupu has told the *National Times*. He



More than 500 kilos of cocaine was seized by PNG police as part of a joint operation with Australian authorities





Purari River

said that the industry faced a challenging financial situation in the last quarter of 2019, and the first quarter of this year with the lockdown due to COVID-19. He said the industry was expected to rebound heading into the final quarter of 2020 to reach 44,219 tonnes or three per cent higher than last year's crop.

<https://www.thenational.com.pg/cocoa-production-falls-by-23pc/>

## The (Proposed) Purari Hydro-Scheme

When Australia's richest man, Andrew (Twiggy) Forrest, led a team of his Fortescue Metals Group executives to PNG in late August/early September the business pages of the Australian press gave the tour good coverage.

The main interest, as reported by the press, was 'clean' and 'renewable' energy which, these days, often refers to wind and solar power. The damming of rivers and creation of large lakes are not seen as eco-friendly. However, it was reported that among several projects the team was considering was the hydro-electric potential of the Purari River.

The recent closure of the Porgera

mine and long-proposed Pacific Marine Industrial Zone at Madang were also under consideration. Also mentioned was Twiggy's research vessel being in West New Britain waters at the time. It was searching for a Beaufort bomber, piloted by his uncle, believed to have been shot down near Gasmata Bay in 1943. Twiggy reportedly joined the search for a short time.

The team was believed to be proceeding to Indonesia after PNG and to Afghanistan in October. One could be forgiven for questioning the real motives behind the PNG trip, especially in light of PNG's recent policy changes in regard to foreign investment, which are perceived to have substantially increased 'sovereign risk'.

The potential of the Purari River has long been recognised and serious investigations and studies were first carried out in the mid-1950s by Comalco. That company finally decided that its large bauxite reserves in the Northern Territory and Queensland would be shipped, for refining, to Bell Bay in Tasmania or The Bluff in New Zealand despite the shorter distance to the south coast of (then) Papua.

During the world energy crisis of the 1970s the Japanese Government teamed up with the Australian and PNG Governments which financed Nippon-Koei and Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) to review the earlier studies and undertake a multi-million-dollar new feasibility study for a proposed dam at Wabo in the north of the Gulf Province.

The enormity of the proposed project with its associated cost, lead-time, construction time and falling oil prices resulted in a decision being made in 1977 to not proceed.

On 23 January 2007 a brief report appeared on page 22 of *The Australian* under the heading 'PNG Dusts off Blueprint for Hydro-electric Dam Project'. It went on to provide scanty details of Russia's interest in establishing a smelter, but there appeared to be little follow-up.

Then, in 2011, Origin Energy became interested and teamed up with PNG Sustainable Development Programme Limited, a company initially created to take over the Ok Tedi mine after BHP opted out. Another multi-million-dollar study was undertaken but the idea of any development was dropped in 2014 when Origin Energy realised that it might not be able to tap into international carbon credits to help make the proposed scheme financially viable.

The entire Purari Basin river system has a potential of more than 5000 megawatts (MW). A dam at Wabo, envisaged by the earlier proponents, would consist of 1800 MW installed capacity with a firm output of 1200 MW. Origin's proposals were for a total of 2500 MW based on the Wabo dam and one or two dams further upstream. Total cost in 2014 was estimated at \$5bn.

Whilst hydro might produce

'clean energy', the use of that energy to convert raw materials into useful products creates huge quantities of waste which has to be disposed of.

Such huge amounts of energy are far in excess of PNG's domestic needs and so the huge surplus generation would have to be exported by costly under-sea cable to Australia. Large power losses would be incurred along the length of the under-sea cable and transmission lines as far south as at least Townsville.

Alternatively, and as originally envisaged, the principal user would be a very large industrial complex on the south coast of PNG. Such a complex would create potentially huge social and environmental problems for PNG.

Thus, PNG might benefit from exporting its electricity to Australia but would have much to lose environmentally were an industrial complex to be constructed in the Gulf Province.

**CHRIS WARRILLOW**

## Unauthorised Use of COVID-19 Vaccine

Papua New Guinea has turned around a plane full of Chinese workers after it was revealed a Beijing-backed mine had been testing an 'unauthorised' coronavirus vaccine on its

employees at Ramu nickel mine. <https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/world/png-blocks-chinese-plane-after-workers-were-used-as-lab-rats-vaccine/ar-BB18cWd8?li=AAgfYrC&oci d=mailsignout>

## Kokoda Track

This article, written by Eric Bagshaw, suggests that the immediate threat of COVID-19 and the proposed establishment of a gold and copper mine near Naoro are both likely to have detrimental effects on the Kokoda Track and the tourism income it has generated in the past. <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/kokoda-is-struggling-to-survive-and-under-threat-warns-veteran-20200820-p55nkq.html>

## COVID-19

The Australian Government has provided \$135,000,000 to assist Papua New Guinea with management of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Radio Australia report includes discussion on the current PNG budget.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/aus-gov-offer-financial-assistance-to-png/12653382>

## Philip Clark

On 20 July 2020, Philip Clark of ABC Radio chaired a discussion of Papua New Guinea. His panel consisted of Ian Kemish, who grew up in PNG

and served as High Commissioner to PNG between 2010 and 2013; Stephannie Kirrowom, a lawyer from Madang who works in Port Moresby and Rowan Callick, a former Asia-Pacific editor and foreign correspondent for both the *Australian Financial Review* and *The Australian*.

The discussion was wide ranging and covered topics which included the Australian public's general ignorance of Papua New Guinea and its people, and the history of its association with Australia.

There was a frank treatment of the problems confronting a society changing from traditional ways to those of a self-governing democracy. The panellists agreed on the need for improved administrative performance from the government and the accelerated distribution of the benefits derived from exploitation of natural resources.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/nightlife/png/12482828>

## Bougainville Elections

Ishmael Toroama is president of Bougainville's new regional parliament. The election of the new parliament followed the referendum which saw 98% of voters favouring independence. The implications of this vote for PNG was discussed on Philip Clark's program included in this issue's PNG in the news.

<https://pngaa.org/bougainvillea-elections/>  
<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/nightlife/png/12482828>

## Ambulance Service Extended

St John Ambulance and Digicel Foundation have joined in a program worth K528,735 to expand its rural ambulance service to the Milne Bay District.

<https://www.looppng.com/community/rural-ambulance-network-expanded-93503>



St John board members receiving the cheque from the Digicel Foundation





## The Finding of Ok Tedi

COLIN YOUNG

**I have often meant to write of my 24-day patrol to the Star Mountains (Wopkaimin) in August/September 1966 and the finding of a copper sulphate presence in that remote north-western corner of the then Western District. There has been some confusion as to who first discovered evidence of copper leading to the Ok Tedi venture, hence this article.**

AT THAT TIME I was the sole kiap stationed at Olsobip Patrol Post, having relieved Gary Luhrs in April of that year.

Olsobip had only been established in 1964 by Bob Hoad (and I think Warren Dutton) and Des Fitzer had made the first complete patrol of the Stars in 1963. Luhrs had unsuccessfully attempted a patrol to the area earlier that year but, to my later benefit, had asked for a track to be cleared to the area of the villages Kwarobip and Gigabip visited by Fitzer.

In my patrol diary for Tuesday, 30 August 1966, I wrote:

*Departed KAWAROBIP for second Star village of GIGABIP arriving 1330 (walking) time 5.30. Track follows small creek north then swings west along the foothills of Benkwim Bluff. This small creek has a brilliant yellow sediment the whole length of its course and when handled crumbles to reveal a green centre. Most likely a combination of sulphur and copper washed down from the northern ranges ...*

This is taken directly from my preserved copy of the patrol report. I recall that the sediment reminded me of coronas used as road base in Pomio, West New Britain. My report went firstly to the ADC Kiunga, Mark Sage, who commented on the copper in his report to Daru Headquarters. I have the Olsobip copy of the letter sent by District

Commissioner FA Bensted to the Director, DDA, Konedobu which includes in the second paragraph:

*The sulphur/copper deposits below Benkwim Bluff (diary 30 August) may merit further enquiry. If part of the Carstenz Toppen (West Irian) is allegedly pure low-grade copper, could not the identical Star's massif possess the same virtues?*

DC Bensted made a flight soon afterwards to discuss the patrol with Mike Richards, a Kiunga CPO who accompanied me on the patrol, and myself. I was posted to Lake Murray post-leave and, being a lowly PO at the time, was unaware of the results of the patrol until told by visiting crocodile traders (Bluey Bedford and Herb Griffin) that a mining company's Jet Ranger helicopter had been to the Stars.

At this juncture I will allow the words of David Charles Hyndman to say what happened. In 1979 Hyndman submitted a thesis in the Department of Anthropology in University of Queensland for a Doctorate in Philosophy, entitled *Wopkaimin Subsistence: Cultural Ecology in the New Guinea Highland Fringe*. He was in the Stars area in 1973–74, 1975 and later in 1979, 1982 and 1984. He later authored the book, *Ancestral Rain Forests & the Mountain of Gold: Indigenous Peoples and Mining in New Guinea*. I met him in the 1990s when he was head of Anthropology at the UQ.

In that book, after referring in detail to any patrols touching on the Stars area, he repeated comments made in his thesis that are pertinent to this article, being:

*In August 1966, Young (1966) succeeded in bringing the Wopkaimin residents ... into the Olsobip Patrol Post census Division ... Cleared tracks and a rest house awaited Young's (1966) arrival in ... Kavorabip and Gigabip. Young (1966) came to have more profound impact on the Wopkaimin than any previously colonial administrative or army patrol. As he was 'enduring the bitterly cold weather at night, early morning and late afternoon' and was 'struggling over sheer ridges, mountain peaks, waterfalls, landslide scars and pounding rivers' below the Benkwim Bluff, he made ethnographic observations but more importantly he recorded that the streams seemed to contain copper deposits ...!*

*Based on Young's routine patrol report, the American transnational Kennecott took out prospecting authorities No. 28 and 35 P on Wopkaimin land with the Australian colonial Department of Lands in 1967.'*

As a last excerpt, I refer to comments made by Gerry Schuurkamp in his book, *The Min of the Papua New Guinea Star Mountains*, which is the definitive work on the Min culture, being the larger group of people inhabiting the Olsobip and Telefomin areas. He spent some thirteen years amongst the Min people from 1975. His book is of large size and comprises over 300 pages, amply illustrated with many photographs. The publication was sponsored by Ok Tedi Mining with a foreword by the then Prime Minister, Julius Chan.

At page 5 of the Preface, Schuurkamp says:

*In January 1963 Des Fitzer mounted the first extended patrol along the southern slopes of the Star Mountains, a 124-day ordeal. It was Colin Young's census patrol of 1966, well into the Wopkai territories contacted by Fitzer, that reported copper-like mineral deposits along the streams and rivers. This patrol would have a profound effect on the future of the area and its people, stimulating expensive exploration work in the upper Ok Tedi and Tifalmin area from 1968-72 by Kennecott, an American multinational company.*

Enough of the references. I do not know what happened in Konedobu to my report and the DC's comments on the copper sulphate find, but obviously it was either formally or informally made known to at least Kennecott. Someone would know but of course it is over fifty years now and many memories and documents are lost.

It has been put forward that a member of the

Fitzer patrol collected some rocks in the Stars and these were said to be have been shown to contain copper and therefore constituted the start of Ok Tedi mining. If rocks were so collected, there was neither mention of this in a report, nor otherwise in the Olsobip office, nor was the DC or any other district officer so aware.

Given that Kennecott moved promptly in 1967 in taking out the prospecting authorities soon after my September 1966 Patrol Report, and there was a time lapse of some three or four years since the stated find of rocks in 1963, I leave this fact, the above patrol report extract and the statements of civilians closely involved in the area mining, for others to form their opinion.

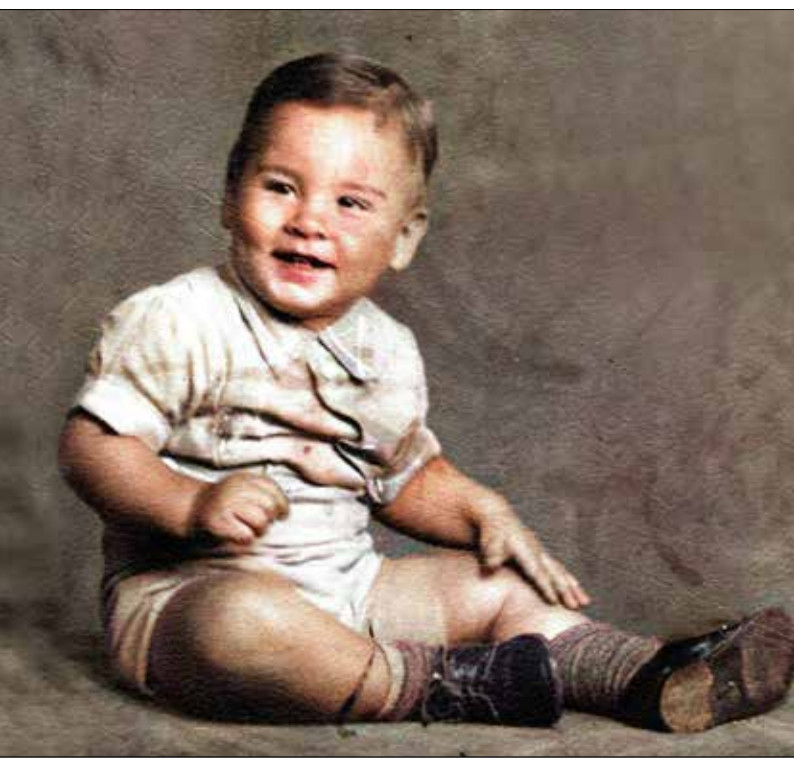
Sadly, Mark Sage died in recent times and it was really he who saw the copper sulphate find as having development merit—to me it was just something that brought back memories of blue-green copper sulphate crystals in a high-school chemistry class. Mark and I would meet at Sunshine Coast kiap reunions and he, still having connections with PNG and the Western District in particular, would jokingly tell me not to make known my role, as I may find myself being sued by those Fly River dwellers who have suffered physical and property damage from toxic releases from the Ok Tedi mining.

In conclusion, the patrol experience of the Stars was an exhilarating one with the moss forests, constant cloud and fog. ♦



A group of Faiwol men looking north towards the Hindenberg Wall, immediately east of the Star Mountains (above); Two Wopkai men enjoying the view (opposite) Photos: Bob Hoad





## Back to Wau After the War

**PETER SHANAHAN**  
**Part One**

**Peter Shanahan was one year old when he was evacuated from New Guinea in 1942 whilst his father, Tom, stayed on to fight the Japanese. Peter's grandparents were Juanita and Carl Wilde of Emira.**

**Juanita was the daughter of Franz and Caroline Stehr of Manuan plantation in the Duke of York Islands.**

**In this excerpt from Peter's story we hear about his return, by the Burns Philp ship *Montoro*, to PNG after WWII.**

**In Part 2, in the next issue, we will hear about Peter's return to his home in Wau.**

THE WAR WAS OVER and although there were pockets of Japanese in the north-west of New Guinea we were going home. I was five years old, standing proudly alone on the stern of Burns Philp's SS *Montoro*, the first vessel of civilians to return to New Guinea after the war, when a gust of wind blew the helmet from my head. Into the wake it went.

White churning waters extended to the horizon as the steady throb of the engine pushed us north. Momentarily I considered a hopeless rescue, but the helmet bobbed and disappeared from sight.

My mother had carefully put the helmet on a high shelf in our crowded cabin admonishing me not to touch it. But being an agile boy, I retrieved it and now I was in trouble.

My grandfather, CLB Wilde, or Bruno Vilde, as he preferred to be called, had come aboard before we departed from Sydney. He gave my mother Nita a package of letters and instructions. Then he said goodbye to me and my infant sister Gail. He had two gifts for me—a wonderful Meccano set and a colonial pith helmet to wear when we reached New Guinea.

Wilde came from minor German nobility. He and my grandmother were pioneer copra producers on the island of Emira, located in the Admiralty Islands north of New Britain. He had moved to the Wau goldfields after my grandmother had died from complications during childbirth aged thirty-six. Wilde founded the first commercial coffee plantation in New Guinea, growing Arabica coffee as well as operating several lucrative gold mines.

Bruno was 5 foot 10 inches in 'old money', a man of powerful intellect. He had been interned as a German national even though he had revoked his German citizenship when Hitler came to power. Too old for the hardships of plantation life he also suffered from heart problems.

This departure from Sydney was the last time I ever saw him. CLB Wilde died four years later having never returned to his beloved New Guinea.

My mother and I, along with other women and children, were evacuated from Wau in a commercial DC3 (Kurana registration VH-UZK) on 22 December 1941. I had just turned one and all Mum could take with her were nappies and baby food. My father, Tom, and the other men remained behind. They had joined the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles to defend their country, homes and families from the rapid advance of Japanese forces. At the end of hostilities Dad had taken his discharge at Lae and waited for the arrival of his family.

Mum spent most of her time in our cabin nursing Gail who had been born in Australia and conceived when Dad came down on furlough after being severely wounded by a Japanese land mine.

I don't remember Mum punishing me for taking the helmet. She had her own problems to attend to, while I had the run of the ship. Several times she sent me to the wire caged annex in the lounge that served as the ship's bar to get a small bottle of Schweppes Dry Ginger Ale for her whisky and occasionally she would pour me a small glass of effervescent liquid. To this day I enjoy ginger ale with my whisky.

The other passengers were a mixed lot including returning government officers, planters, business men, miners, wives of service men and others eager to return to their homes and businesses in towns and islands once occupied or attacked by the Japanese. Places with names such as Wau, Bulolo, Lae, Madang, Kokoda, Rabaul, Kavieng, Port Moresby and others.

I was big for my age, strong, talkative with attitude and curious. The passengers kept an eye on me. The presence of children was proof that the war was over and normality was returning. For some we were reminders of their own absent families in this atmosphere of cautious hope.

After crossing the Coral Sea, we sighted the brown kunai-covered hills of Port Moresby. But first we had to dodge funnels and masts of sunken allied vessels, silent reminders of the savagery of war. *Montoro*, with much shouting from the crew and blasting of the ship's horn, tied up to the wharf. Immediately hatch covers were moved and the ship's crane began unloading cargo. Some passengers left us here and others came on board.

I was fascinated by the dark-skinned children, some no older than me, diving for coins. Several passengers threw shillings further out. But these kids were fast, catching the coins before they sank out of sight. The water was clear and full of coloured fish that swarmed in the ship's shadows and around the wharf pylons. This first encounter with marine life began an addiction that lasted a lifetime.

At night locals, white and black, fished from the wharf catching a variety of fish while the unloading and loading of cargo continued well into the night. I was introduced to wrasses, parrot fish, trigger fish and many others of infinite shapes and colours.

The next day we departed with much blasting of the ship's horn warning native fishers in outrigger canoes to get out of the way. From now on we were always in sight of land, changing from the dusty kunai hills of Port Moresby to the deep green of thick rainforests. Small rainforest covered islands were

aplenty. Sometimes we passed so close that it felt one could stretch out and touch the vegetation.

While spending much time on deck observing the passing scenery, I became aware that there was someone nearby. My enquiring reputation had spread and concerned adults took it in turns to watch over me.

Our next stop was Samarai, known to writers and others as the Pearl of the Pacific. This tiny tropical island was chosen by the British administration of Papua because it could be protected against raiding Melanesians. It was also in a prime location for passing vessels. When the Commonwealth of Australia took over Papua it became a centre for the administration of Milne Bay and many island communities in the vicinity.

One of the passengers, a prewar friend of my parents, took me for a walk around the island which, for an adult, took twenty minutes. This was an extended adventure for a small boy, even though the main purpose was to give my mother relief from my explosive energy and constant questions.

Samarai's gardens displayed highly coloured plants and butterflies. Offshore islets were covered with swaying coconut palms and fringed by brilliant white sand. Massive clouds tumbled in a dark blue sky over an azure sea. I was in paradise. Mum's friend spotted a tiger cowrie in the sand and I picked it up. It seemed enormous, the colours and patterns of the shell held me spellbound. For years this ocean jewel lay in my bedroom and became one of my favourite possessions. ♦

**An excerpt from *Jungle Shan* (unpublished memoir) by Peter Shanahan, edited by Martin Kerr—Part Two will be published in the next issue.**



Peter and Gail Shanahan's New Guinea grandparents CLB (Bruno) Wilde and Juanita Wilde (née Stehr) on their veranda, Emira Island, pre-1928 (above); Peter in Sydney after evacuation, early 1942 (opposite page)



# Mt Fubilan, Ok Tedi & Other Tales

(Part Three)  
**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 an attack on field engineer, JA Davidson, on the Upper Ok Tedi in 1939.**

WHILE WRITING HIS BOOK on the 1938–39 Hagen–Sepik patrol conducted by ADO Jim Taylor and PO John Black, author Bill Gammage came across an entry in Black’s diary from the time Black was camped at Telefomin in January 1939. There were reports of a white man working to the south, who had just received an airdrop. Black sent a message, inviting the stranger to join him, but received no reply. In 1969, during a visit to Adelaide, Gammage met Jim Davidson, who told Gammage that he had been that white man. (In fact, it was probably IEC geologists, Osborne and Sadler, who at that time were working in the Olsobip basin).

Davidson spun Gammage a tale which Gammage records in his book, *The Sky Travellers: Journeys in New Guinea 1938–1939*, from which I quote:

*Early in 1939 Davidson was prospecting for Standard Oil on the Fly-Black River Junction. On the Ok Tedi headwaters he drove off attacks four mornings in a row. On the fifth the attackers kept coming. Davidson saw a warrior astride a policeman, banging his head with a rock. He put a rifle to the man’s ear and pulled the trigger. Click. The man grabbed him and they wrestled over a cliff. Davidson fell onto a ledge and broke his leg, the other plunged into the chasm.*

The incident is copied from Gammage and included in Jim Sinclair’s, *Mastamak*. Sinclair says of this incident:

*It is a stirring account—but there are none of these lurid details in Davidson’s log. Davidson says he had a police escort. The officer-in-charge of the escort would have been bound to report the killing of the tribesman, but no mention of any such incident has been located in official patrol reports, nor in IEC nor Papuan Government records. There are no reports in the ‘Papuan Courier’ or the ‘Rabaul Times’, which normally covered such exciting incidents.*

Davidson was employed as a field engineer by Island Exploration Company (IEC), which was a consortium comprised of Anglo-Iranian Oil (later British Petroleum), Vacuum Oil Co. (which merged with Standard Oil around 1934) and Oil Search Ltd (OSL). Davidson carried out a lot of survey work, though he appears not to have been a licensed surveyor. Like all IEC field employees he was required to keep a detailed daily log. A detailed account of Davidson’s activities, from 4 March 1937 to 1 June 1938 and taken from his daily log, is given in *Mastamak*.

The log records that on 1 June 1938 Davidson was surveying on a seismic line along the Ok Birum, on the west bank of the Ok Tedi, opposite what is now Ningerum Station. He fell and broke his leg. He was flown to Port Moresby for treatment and returned to Daru on 24 July, and departed for Melbourne on 11 September 1938 on expiration of his contract. Davidson was not even in Papua in 1939. ♦

## Fast Track Teacher Training in TPNG: My Experience

**LEN SMITH**

**In 1953 I started my apprenticeship as a fitter, at the University of NSW, School of Metallurgy. Here I met Jimmy Monteith, who had lived and worked on the Bulolo Gold Fields from the 1930s until the war broke out. His stories fascinated me so, when the government advertised in January 1961 for people to go to Rabaul in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG) to be trained as teachers, I couldn’t resist—and in mid-May at 10.00 pm on a Thursday night, I found myself going on my first plane ride, starting a new chapter in**

A WEEK OF ORIENTATION began on Monday, 15 May. Now we learnt what we had let ourselves in for and what was expected of us—until now nothing had been explained about what we were to learn, how long it would take and what would happen at the end of the course. This may seem strange to some, but all sixty of us were in the same boat and had set out on a life’s adventure without much detail. We were told that we were on the second ‘E’ course and that the first sixty recruits had left Rabaul a week before we had arrived, and they were now taking up their schools in all the fifteen districts of TPNG.

Orientation week included visits to Pila Pila, Nordup and Matupit Primary T Schools. There were lectures on survival in the tropics and what we were allowed to do and what not to do, if we wished to stay in TPNG. We were allotted to our lecture groups and issued with our textbooks. We learnt that we would study fifteen subjects and cover most of the standard NSW Teachers College course of two years in six months.

A week later lectures began in earnest and subjects included English, Maths, History, Music, School Administration, Infant Method and Education Principles. We were also in for a shock as each lecturer gave us assignments—this meant we were busy day and night trying to complete them all. After several months we all jacked up and said that it was impossible to complete all the work properly in the time available. We received a reprieve on some deadlines. All this work meant we didn’t have much spare time for rest and relaxation.

The college was in the grounds of the Malaguna Technical College and consisted of an office block, two lecture rooms, a mess hall, and eight dormitories set four each side of a common access path. We had six dormitories, the seventh was for the local technical college students and one was a recreation building. Each person had a bed, a small table and chair and a wardrobe. Our spaces were divided by partitions and a curtain instead of a door provided some privacy. The toilets and showers were in another block behind the dormitories.

The grounds also had a large sports oval and a hall where movies were shown for the technical students and us. We paid two shillings



Raburua School at the Rabaul  
Choir Festival, 1961



each week for the hire cost so the locals could see them for free.

*The Three Stooges* was the favourite of the native audience. Our salary during our time in the college was £858 per annum rising to £1,241 on graduation. If I remember correctly, we paid £7 a week for our mess and laundry.

Nine weeks into the course we were to have our first attempt at teaching. My school was to be Raburua Primary T School. However, on the Saturday afternoon before we started, a riot broke out in the Rabaul Markets. I had been snorkelling at Nordup that afternoon with a chap from the Methodist Mission across the road from the college; on our return we found all hell had broken loose, with mobs of natives racing up and down the road near the college, throwing rocks and armed with all sorts of weapons.

It seemed that a man from the Sepik District had assaulted a Tolai woman in the markets that morning and the local Tolais wanted revenge. They demanded that, either all Sepiks be removed from New Britain, or they would blow up the Shell fuel storage depot on the harbour foreshore. Several people were killed in the melee including one from the area where Raburua Primary T was located. It was a week before the disturbance settled. No Europeans were threatened; in fact, if we walked near a warring mob, they would stop and let us pass before resuming the fight.

Because of the death, teaching practice was delayed until the next Wednesday, when things had settled down a bit. During that first week, we had about twelve pupils, instead of the thirty to a class that was normal. The second week saw full attendance resume and the week ended with the villagers putting on a feast of thank you. I don't think one could have had a better introduction to what we could expect in some of the more primitive areas after our graduation.

It was a nerve-wracking experience coming back from demonstration lessons at Pila Pila School in the local bus. While the college had two, near new, twelve-seater Commer buses, the local buses were quite old and in poor condition. The return journey involved coming down the very steep Tunnel Hill road which ran about two kilometres down to the harbour.

The driver used to engage low gear for the descent

but, from the way the gearstick shuddered, I expected it to jump out of gear at any second and for us to go careering down the hill into the harbour.

My final practice school was called Talwat and it was located on the water's edge at the foot of the South Daughter Volcano at the entrance to Simpson Harbour. The road to Talwat was the roughest we had experienced and the ride there was torture each morning and night with six of us crammed into the back of a covered, short-wheelbase Land Rover. However, the children were fun to teach and we had a very successful two weeks after which the villagers put on a sing-sing to thank us.

Our last three weeks in Rabaul were full on, with revision followed by a week of examinations. We had fifteen in all, three each day. It was an exhausting experience. One examination that some of us found quite hard was to play 'Good King Wenceslas' on a recorder, which we had all been asked to buy and learn to play. Have you ever heard the wailing of sixty recorders each afternoon trying to play this tune in 'F flat'? The exams were followed by a week of shopping and packing for our postings, which were announced mid-week. I was going to the Madang District, one of the two I had nominated.

Monday, 13 November was reserved for our graduation ceremony and dinner, to which we had invited all the local Rabaul dignitaries and Sir Donald Cleland, the Administrator of TPNG. We entertained them with our choir singing which we had been practising from day one. We sang 'Cielito Lindo', 'Going Home' and 'Gaudeamus Igitur'. We had omitted to invite the parliamentary member for New Britain for some reason or other, but he turned up with his wife on the night, and there was much rushing around by the student committee to fit them in at the last minute. This was a fun night and the caterer to the college turned on a good feed, which had not always been the case during our six months in residence.

Early Tuesday morning found us at the airport waiting our departure for pastures new and a new way of life. Our DC3 to Madang was a cargo plane and we had to sit along either side of the plane with our cargo stacked down the centre of the cabin. It was an experience in itself, as the door between us and our pilots was open, and we had a running commentary of our flight, as we were overloaded and running late. ♦



Damien Parer's famous photo from the assault on Salamaua  
—Pte WOW Johnson of 58/59th Battalion assisted by Sgt GRC Ayre

## The Kokoda Correction

**DARYL BINNING, ACS**

**One of Australia's longest running controversies which still ignites passion on both sides of the debate—often fuelled by myth and mis-information—is what to call the wartime overland route from Port Moresby to Kokoda—is it a trail or a track?**

DOGMATIC BUREAUCRATIC CULTURE, this writer would argue, meant mistakes in the past are unlikely to be acknowledged or efforts made to correct them. With the Australian War Memorial (AWM) beginning to spend half a billion dollars on expansion and refurbishment and a new director appointed, it's a perfect time for them to address a long overdue assessment of the credibility of one of its displays which has caused dissent amongst military historians, respected authors, the media and the public over the decades.

The following text is compiled from personal experiences, information from credible people and extracted from earlier private and official publications. As one with close links to Papua New Guinea as a cinematographer and always open to correction based on factual information, my essay should not be taken as a definite academic statement on the matter, but as the legendary television physics presenter Professor Julius Sumner-Miller put it, 'poses enchanting questions for enquiring minds'.

American General Douglas MacArthur's media conferences in Port Moresby precipitated a series of events culminating in the AWM presenting and perpetuating a questionable interpretation of our military history. It was due to the general's notorious control he exercised over the media, especially the most powerful communications tool in living memory at the time—the motion picture newsreel—that some of Australia's military battle heritage was incorrectly chronicled.

The Australian government and many international newsreel companies had cameramen covering the Pacific action. This resulted in most of the world including Australians and troops based in the Pacific being exposed to saturation coverage of the Kokoda campaign, yet unfortunately mostly interpreted and presented by overseas entities.

The Australian Battles Nomenclature Committee was established in 1947. It gazetted official names to significant military encounters including those in the South Pacific Region. For reasons which will become apparent later, their choice of title including



the word ‘Trail’ for the Kokoda campaign was based on accepted terminology used at the time by military personnel, respected authors, the manipulated media and the public. Subsequent investigation into the early days of the battle now provides an insight into and supports the argument why most Australians are now adopting the original description of the route as the ‘track’. Despite holding evidence to the contrary within its own vaults and archives, the AWM stubbornly clings to the official line to the detriment of accurately portraying Australian military history.

There have been persuasive arguments by credible academics, authors and historians who prefer the word ‘trail’. However, most of their supportive evidence can nearly always be traced back to journals, official decisions and material published after General MacArthur took control of the war in the Pacific. It is evident most of those later accounts were influenced by the media of the day, with subsequent events and records being compiled by those who themselves were fed structured information by the military and controlled civilian media. Earlier evidence has been suppressed.

Japanese aircraft began bombing Port Moresby on 3 February 1942 while attempting to secure the town as a base from which they could mount an invasion of Australia. The attack was followed by the Battle of the Coral Sea three months later. Having been vanquished by the Japanese in the Philippines, General MacArthur and his army retreated to Australia in March 1942. The following month he was appointed Supreme Commander of all Australian and American troops in their mission to defeat Japan. Port Moresby was the focus of major Allied efforts to prevent the Japanese from

capturing the town. MacArthur at first considered it to be only a side-show to the main event. However, the Australian army brass in Melbourne stressed to him the importance of stemming the Japanese push towards Australia, forcing him to focus his attention on that conflict. This is the point where historical accounts of the Kokoda action became distorted for other than military reasons.

To understand the politics of the situation one needs to dig deeper and uncover the reasons for the subsequent mis-informed recording of this now legendary action by some of our own troops.

Before the whole Kokoda campaign operation was put under the new command, the term ‘track’ had been used exclusively by our fighting forces to describe the tortuous jungle path between Port Moresby and Kokoda over the Owen Stanley Range. Because of MacArthur’s new role in charge of the Pacific action, the journalists who attended his press conferences in Port Moresby were instructed to refer to the Kokoda route as a ‘trail’ rather than its Australian description ‘track’. An early book written by Bill James, ‘Field Guide to the Kokoda Track’, hand-written by one of the 2/23 Battalion includes a photo of a diary indicating they have been ordered to use the name ‘Kokoda Trail’.

Similar diaries and records in the AWM archives tell the same story. Interestingly MacArthur saw no reason to rename the important supply track to Wau further to the west which was always known as the ‘Bulldog track’ possibly because there was no significant American involvement or media coverage of this route. It reflects the disregard for local names and customs as evidenced by the naming of the later wartime route through the Vietnamese and Cambodian jungles as the Ho Chi Min ‘Trail’. Unfortunately, the AWM is unconvinced of this and other evidence pinpointing the origin of debate but cannot provide any factual material to disprove it.

During this writer’s time in Papua New Guinea in the early 1960s as a newsreel cameraman he was fortunate and privileged to meet and work with respected Canadian journalist Kate Vellacott-Jones. She was stationed in Port Moresby before the war and remained there during the conflict. Kate was amongst the many accredited war correspondents at MacArthur’s media conferences and was able to confirm his insistence on the use of the word ‘trail’

in all outgoing despatches. After the war she worked for the Department of Information and Extension Services as senior communications officer. There was no reason to doubt her recollection of these significant history-manipulating directives. However, some journalists at those conferences have attempted to take credit for introducing the word ‘trail’ into media reports.

Long-time Aussie journalist Sean Dorney in PNG with the ABC consistently referred to the route as the ‘track’ in all his despatches. A scene in a 2018 documentary on his last pre-retirement trip back to the new nation reveals him standing under a government-erected edifice with bold overhead signage claiming it to be the ‘Kokoda Trail’ while he talked about the significance of ‘the track’. In January 1963 when this writer arrived in Moresby there had been a crude sign erected at Owers Corner proclaiming it to be the ‘Kokoda Trail’ although some alternatively worded signs still remained which refer to the ‘track’.

He noted there was local resentment to the use and eventual official adoption of the word ‘trail’ to describe the route and later, the government unfortunately gazetting the unpopular name and including it in military awards. This distortion over the years is a classic case of where official war records and public perception have been over-ridden on the personal preference of an influential overseas army commander rather than the Australians, Papuans and New Guineans who were engaged in the action.

With the involvement of America in the Pacific war and knowing that the cinema audiences in the United States would not understand the meaning of the word ‘track’, the word ‘trail’ was substituted in nearly all the narratives. It was presented to the public through the eyes of predominantly overseas newspaper and newsreel editors. The latter worked for the European Gaumont and Pathe companies as well as the much larger American newsreel production and distribution arrangements of MGM, Paramount, Fox Movietone, Universal International and their affiliates who dominated the world cinema newsreel industry including Australia. Our local Cinesound Review was a minor player in cinemas and received much less local screening and little, if at all, overseas. As such, most of the world’s population, including the writer during the 1940s, was exposed to the overseas companies’ coverage

and interpretation of the American offensive. This contributed to a less than accurate portrayal of Australian activities by overseas media.

Apart from his press conferences aimed at international exposure, MacArthur also established a radio station in Port Moresby which was eventually taken over by the Australian Broadcasting Commission and known as 9PA. It was aimed to inform and motivate the troops camped nearby, but always referred to their looming battleground as ‘the trail’. The soldiers at camps near Moresby and elsewhere were also fed a regular diet of American newsreels included with other regular morale-boosting film entertainment. While this was intended to keep them in touch with how the war was going, soldiers’ diaries in the AWM’s archives show the use of the American description gradually appearing in their personal entries. Many began to refer to their combat area as ‘the trail’ as they became indoctrinated with the use of this foreign term. It explains why they used it decades later when historians interviewed the veterans.

The Australian public and Melbourne-based military HQ personnel not actually engaged in the fighting were constantly exposed to these references in the cinemas, in the newspapers, over the radio, and increasingly at official briefing sessions.

Unfortunately, the army top brass, their propaganda machine and cartographers were continually influenced by this media bombardment which is reflected in their documentation. In the absence of other information except that which had been approved by MacArthur, it added to the factual distortion. Maps which had previously shown the route using various names including road, path, track etc. were now being changed to ‘trail’. Some historians who support this name refer to a book written in the early 1930s by a rubber plantation manager’s wife at Sogeri who referred to the route as a ‘trail’, not realising the book was written to appeal to those in her homeland—America.

It has been established nearly all the soldiers who were based in Port Moresby prior to MacArthur’s appointment and who actually fought in the Owen Stanley’s originally referred to ‘the track’. Legendary wartime cameraman Damien Parer who initially covered these events for the Australian Department of Information and later Paramount News referred to ‘the track’ in all his ‘dope sheets’. These were



Soldiers of the 2/14th Battalion, 7th Division on the Kokoda campaign—only one of these men survived



factual descriptive shot information details for the editors and which accompanied his reels of films out of Port Moresby. The word 'track' was used in some Australian newsreels and even by Parer himself as he made a specially filmed impassioned appeal to many previously complacent apathetic Australians to support their troops in combat. Most Australian newsreels received very little exposure in the cinemas due to the domination of overseas reels which were mostly owned by or affiliated with the big American studios. Also the majority of the Australian print media complied with MacArthur's directive, cementing the name 'trail' in the mind-set of the public.

The official Commonwealth Battle Nomenclature committee in London and later its Australian counterpart capitulated to the overseas media onslaught. Their recommendations were based on the Army records and other distorted official documentation produced subsequent to MacArthur's involvement. It was unwittingly supported by the writings of several credible authors who had produced books towards the end and after the conflict which, due to the censorship of information during the wartime years, had been mostly derived from official sources. In 1958 a 'Kokoda Trail' award was created and presented to the Papuan Infantry Regiment and ten Australian infantry battalions thereby further entrenching a military misnomer. Successive government and other instrumentalities have relied on these erroneous proclamations without examining the original source of the information. This contributed to further distortion of fact.

While this military masquerade was generating momentum, about the same time, Sapper H Bert: Beros, NX6925, 7th Australian Division, Royal Australian Engineers, was penning this now-famous poem, 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' (*at right*), in the brief moments between battles on the track and which he later sent home to his mother.

While the AWM has this poem and other evidence in their archives which clearly establishes the route was known as a track, they persist in ignoring there is a factual and more credible alternative interpretation of events to that presented in its display.

In recent years this writer unsuccessfully attempted to get the AWM to address his concerns,

and on 20 March 2017 he wrote to its Chairman. Instead of the expected direct response, the first reply received some time later was from an AWM-compliant commercial Kokoda tour operator and author of a book promoting the route as a 'trail'. He had obviously been given a copy of the letter and was asked to respond on the AWM's behalf. He denounced the facts presented, referring to his appended published writings which denigrated those who thought otherwise. This included a scathing critique of the Department of Veterans Affairs who also supported use of the word 'track'.

By accusing those who opposed the word 'trail' of having an anti-American bias it further unnecessarily inflamed the perpetual controversy. It only reinforced the suspicion all parties were closing ranks to protect the status quo by justifying and promoting the use of the word 'trail' as is included in his own business name. Such language from AWM's quasi representative did little to engender rational debate. It was interesting to note the same vigorous proponent of the use of the word 'trail' was featured on the track on TV in November 2019 during the coverage of local villagers who had erected barricades along the route. They were complaining they had not received enough compensation for damage done to their land by commercial trek operators who were using it for their own profit. It is significant that the protesting villagers erected signs near their homes stating 'Kokoda Track is closed'.

Another argument used to support the use of the word 'trail' is its use to describe the route between various sites of interest such as the Western Front Battlefield Trail in Europe and similar locations. However the distinction between the two names becomes apparent when you consider most Aussies use the term track to describe a route through bushland or similar terrain such as the 'Australian Alps walking track' (NSW, ACT & Vic), 'the Bibbulmun' and 'Cape to Cape' tracks (WA), the 'Overland', 'Port Davey', 'South Coast', 'Overland' tracks (TAS) and others throughout the nation. It is obvious why the path through the Papuan jungle was known to the Australian fighting troops as a 'track'. Americans make no differentiation of the type of terrain in which the routes exist. This is why in later years some new hiking routes and trekking paths in Australia have been called 'trails'.

There are many examples where contemporary

authors, especially those who have used the term 'trail' in their earlier writings have been fiercely compliant with the AWM's interpretation of events. After a follow-up email by this writer to the AWM subsequent to the initial communication, on 29 April 2017 a positive and informative letter was received from the AWM's chairman which attempted to justify their stance. Paradoxically it included a published well-researched and un-biased document by the AWM's military section historian Dr Karl James who conceded the soldiers who fought the Kokoda campaign overwhelmingly used the term 'track' to describe the route.

The Remembrance Service at the AWM commemorating seventy-five years after the epic battle of the Kokoda campaign was poignant and significant, evidenced by the steadily declining numbers of Kokoda Diggers who attended the ceremony—those who had put their lives on the line defending this country.

However, during the ceremony, it was refreshing to note most of the speakers with the exception of establishment-compliant Army personnel were now using the word 'track' to describe the route. While the current army top brass focus on non-military matters such as social issues and Royal Commissions while ignoring their obligation to their own soldiers and veterans, they are unlikely to give any priority to putting their own archival records in order. Encouragingly, retired General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove is understood to use the term 'track' when referring to the battle.

The problem is compounded because of the army and curatorial culture where the reputation of predecessors must not be tarnished by admitting mistakes have been made in the past. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the AWM stubbornly continues to use the word 'trail' exclusively in its otherwise impressive display about the Kokoda campaign. It has diaries, maps and other documentary material in its archives to support the use of its rejected version of history. When the writer and his wife checked in 2012 there was no mention of the word 'track' in the main text graphics. It is unfortunate that by complying with the official questionable records of our nation's military history, the AWM's own credibility and reputation is compromised in the eyes of an increasing number of Australians and many veterans who have attempted to challenge this misrepresentation.

Compounding the problem over recent decades is both the PNG and Australian governments' use of the AWM's interpretation as a benchmark and gazetting names and awards such as the military 'Kokoda Trail Award'. However, our politicians seem to want to have it both ways. During

## Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels

*Many a mother in Australia,  
When the busy day is done,  
Sends a prayer to the Almighty  
For the keeping of her son,  
Asking that an angel guide him  
And bring him safely back—  
Now we see those prayers are answered  
On the Owen Stanley Track.*

*For they haven't any halos,  
Only holes slashed in their ears,  
And their faces worked by tattoos,  
With scratch pins in their hair.  
Bringing back the badly wounded  
Just as steady as a hearse,  
Using leaves to keep the rain off  
And as gentle as a nurse.*

*Slow and careful in bad places  
On the awful mountain track,  
The look upon their faces  
Would make you think that Christ was black.  
Not a move to hurt the wounded,  
As they treat him like a saint;  
It's a picture worth recording,  
That an artist's yet to paint.*

*Many a lad will see his mother,  
And husbands wee'uns and wives,  
Just because the fuzzy wuzzies  
Carried them to save their lives  
From mortar bombs, machine-gun fire,  
Or a chance surprise attack,  
To safety and the care of doctors  
At the bottom of the track.  
May the mothers of Australia,  
When they offer up a prayer,  
Mention those impromptu angels,  
With their fuzzy wuzzy hair.*

Sapper H 'Bert' Beros



© George Silk





Members of the 39th Battalion withdrawing after the Battle of Isurava (Photo: Damien Parer)

a joint press conference in Port Moresby in 2008 held by the Prime Ministers of both Australia and PNG where the Kokoda route was the prime topic, transcripts reveal both politicians and the journalists used the word ‘track’ exclusively—‘trail’ was never mentioned! Those units who fought on the Kokoda track should collectively lobby to ensure our historical records accurately reflect the correct name as known to their mates, many whom they had to leave on that muddy mountainous mosquito-infested track.

Because of the reverence in which the AWM is held, individuals, organisations and the media are reluctant to confront its authority. Students of history, authors, the media and others continue to turn to it for authoritative guidance in their writings. Several newspaper journalists who used the term ‘trail’ in their Kokoda stories revealed, when challenged, they knew it was ‘track’. But when submitting their work to sub-editors were told it was policy to follow the AWM’s example. Unfortunately, its actions confirm the adage ‘if an error is repeated often enough it becomes the truth’.

Its curators should take a serious look at the way they are distorting military heritage by presenting their preferred version of events without acknowledging there is a credible alternative account now accepted by most Aussies. This is evidenced by the increasing use of the term ‘track’ by independent authors and journalists who have now decided not to regurgitate the writings in earlier documents which blindly followed the official line.

Recently ‘Battle of the Kokoda Track’ gold crown coins were produced for international distribution by Bradford Exchange to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the action. Memorial plaques in Kings Park near the WA State War Memorial and other locations throughout the nation refer to the ‘Kokoda Track’. Unfortunately, once enshrined in public service culture there will be continuing strong resistance to correcting the mistake.

Rectification will be costly and possibly humiliating for some academics, curators and Defence personnel but it is the least we can do to commemorate those brave Papuans, New Guineans and Australians who died on the track in the defence of our nation. The usual predictable response to the ‘track vs. trail’ argument is *‘It’s only words, both of which mean the same thing, so why does it matter?’* It matters to those remaining Diggers and their descendants who would prefer to see their gallant deeds recorded through the eyes of Aussie archivists—not an egotistical American General. It also side-steps the main issue in contention which is that a battle fought by predominantly Australian forces to protect our own country should be formally recognised and recorded in its national war memorial by the terminology of our own nation, not at the insistence to conform with words in common use by a powerful military ally.

The longer those at the AWM and the Army refuse to acknowledge mistakes of the past without taking meaningful action to correct them, the further their reputation for accurately recording military history will be compromised. With the current massive investment beginning at the AWM, now is the time for this long overdue honourable remedial action to be taken. It has the resources and opportunity to do so. It will be a brave and respected politician or curator who initiates the long overdue correction.

They should begin by reviewing the name given to its Kokoda gallery and re-naming it something like ‘The Kokoda Campaign’ with the text graphics reflecting the correct name. It could also provide the public with an informative account of how the decades-old naming controversy arose and acknowledge mistakes had been made and the charade has finally ended.

The Australian War Memorial and Army Archives owe it to the nation. ♦

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

### MURROUGH BENSON—Part Six

**Acting as the local vet was another responsibility I had at Murua. With the support of Joy and her nursing experience, we managed to keep our donkeys, horses, cattle and pigs in good health.**

THE PIGS WERE in fairly poor nick when we arrived. Their staple diet was pumpkins, of which there was no shortage on the station, supplemented with a little sweet potato that was bought from the locals from time to time, but clearly this didn’t provide sufficient nutrition. We introduced some rice to their diet as well as fencing a few small paddocks so that the pigs had access to *Peuraria javanica*, the leguminous cover crop that grew all over the station and was used mainly to suppress weed growth in the rubber plantings.

Skin infections thrived in the wet environment. At one point a donkey had a badly infected sore the size of a dinner plate on its rump. With nothing else available to us we applied liberal amounts of an antibiotic cream that we found in the office. We then put a dressing over it—not expecting it to stay on for very long at all—and hoped for the best. Amazingly, the injured donkey proved to be far more co-operative than usual over the next few days and allowed us to catch her and change the dressing which, just as surprisingly, stayed on. Within a week she was almost totally healed.

Maintenance tasks on the station extended beyond the buildings and livestock. A range of machinery always seemed to be requiring some attention. As was the case with house repairs, help from Kerema was normally a fairly forlorn hope.

Every now and again a Transport Department mechanic would find their way up the river, but mostly I had to apply my basic bush mechanic skills to the problem—and mostly I managed to get things working again. The LandCruiser, tractor, motorbike and water pump at the river all responded to my attention at various times. Success with outboard motors was, however, more elusive.

While Murua had a good airstrip, there were no scheduled regular flights. Planes would call in on a needs basis or if the Kerema airstrip was closed, usually due to inclement weather. We therefore had to ensure that the strip was kept well maintained and that regular reports on its condition were provided to the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA). Every now and then the strip would be flooded and we had to close it and put cone-shaped markers in a cross to warn any approaching aircraft that they could not land. Keeping the markers in position was an interesting challenge in rising floodwaters; they simply floated away. On my first attempt at retrieving errant markers I wondered why the local staff just looked on from higher ground; on questioning them they alerted me to the fact that it was not uncommon in floods for crocodiles to float in from the nearby swamps!



Murua Primary School





The normal mode of transport for Murua locals—DASF dinghy in foreground (top); Donkey with dressing on badly infected wound (second); Charlie Fletcher cutting Murrough's hair (third); Settlers' children (bottom).

On one occasion we had to accommodate a plane load of people overnight when the Kerema airstrip was closed. We had been at Murua for barely a month so were not all that well-equipped to cater for unexpected visitors when the plane dropped in late in the afternoon.

I had been on the plane too, returning from a day trip to Ihu, so bypassing 'town' meant that I had not been able to stock up on the basics on my way home. Shortly after we welcomed the pilot and a couple with two children into our house we had another visitor, a missionary who had been lost in the jungle for a few days while walking out of Kuka Kuka country in the hills behind Murua.

While we were a bit light on for some of the comforts of life (beds, for example) we had plenty of floor space and some creative culinary skills on Joy's part saw us all survive the night without incident and our visitors headed off on the plane the next morning.

We once hosted a visit by the Territory Administrator and the Executive Council and entourage. All went fairly smoothly until near the end of the event when some of the visiting party, sitting on the trayback of the station Toyota LandCruiser (their only motorised alternative was the tractor-drawn trailer), were taken in the wrong direction by the driver. They were reunited with the rest of the group a short while later—after all, there wasn't a lot of scope to get lost at Murua if you stuck to the very limited road network—but the Gulf District Commissioner (DC) accompanying the group was not particularly amused!

Later, we geared up for a visit by the 'lapun [old] Development Bank Board of Directors' (as seen through my twenty-four-year old eyes and recorded in my diary of the time). Pivotal to the planned visit was a trip up the Murua River in our huge dugout canoe. The river was tidal so I don't recall what we were to have done if the tide was out. Near the rubber factory of one of the settlers, steps were cut into the bank so that the visitors could have easier access to see first-hand how the bank's funds were being used; interesting to think how many directors we may have lost had we had a good downpour of rain, an almost daily occurrence in the Gulf.

Our carpenters made seats for the back of both the LandCruiser and the trailer to be towed by the tractor; no such refinements for the Administrator

and his entourage a couple of months earlier! Come the day before the much-anticipated visit and, surprise, surprise, we had the mother of all downpours and the station was flooded. The visitors were planning on flying in, but the airstrip remained waterlogged and we had no option but to close it and advise that it would be some days before it could be reopened.

Undaunted, arrangements were made for the visitors to come by boat from Kerema. We just had to make sure that whatever water craft were used were not stranded on the mud flats at Kerema at low tide. The visitors would also have to come prepared to wade out to their transport, as we always did, unless we could arrange to tie up at the wharf a bit further down the harbour.

What we didn't know until I overheard a conversation, while awaiting my turn on the radio 'sked' (schedule) on the morning of the planned visit, was that the people in Moresby had been told that the Malalaua airstrip, which was to be the first leg of their visit to the Gulf that day, had been closed. They therefore decided to cancel the whole trip. In actual fact, Malalaua was not closed at all and the ADC (Assistant District Commissioner) there was not at all happy as he had about 300 people waiting to meet the Development Bank delegation.

At least he was told about the cancelled trip, albeit rather late in the piece, whereas the only reason we at Murua knew about it at all was the conversation I overheard on the radio.

Too bad about the lunch that Joy had gone to a lot of trouble to prepare for the visitors. Getting food together for visitors always presented a bit of a challenge at Murua. Our main supplies came in on the monthly 'K' boat from Moresby, so you had to plan well ahead when you sent your order in to 'Steamies'. In between times we had to rely on the small store in Kerema; however, fresh supplies arriving there were swooped on by those living nearby and by the time we got into town the cupboard was invariably fairly bare.

While I learned a lot at Murua, and hopefully made a useful contribution, from very early in our time there I started casting the net around for a job at a place where Joy and I could both work. In early July a replacement for me arrived at Murua. I had no idea what DASF had in mind for me



Monthly 'K' boat unloading at Matupe wharf (top); Murua school children enjoying the river (bottom).

although a move to Ihu was rumoured. It was to be another seven weeks before I received any formal notification from DASF—I was indeed to transfer to Ihu so packing started. Just days later, I was offered a role as a Rural Officer with the Development Bank, based in Port Moresby, so I immediately applied for a secondment from DASF.

I heard nothing of my application for some time so went ahead and made arrangements to move ourselves to Port Moresby. Late in the day before our departure from Murua, a telegram was received from DASF Headquarters advising that my secondment had not yet been finalised and that I was not to leave my posting 'under any circumstances'.

I had already handed over to my replacement, our cargo had just been loaded onto the boat bound for Moresby and I was keen to start my new role. The HQ directive was therefore duly ignored and so began a wonderfully rewarding seven years with the PNG Development Bank that opened up opportunities for us both that certainly would not have presented themselves at Murua. This new direction will be the subject of the next instalment of my story. ♦



# Pilgrimage to Rabaul: Aussie Col's Legacy

**JO HOST & MELINDA UYS**

**For a Brisbane family, a cruise to Papua New Guinea's Rabaul was not just a frivolous holiday, but a pilgrimage honouring memory, family and a father's final wish.**

PAPUA NEW GUINEA has always held an incredibly special place in my heart. As a girl who grew up in the decidedly mundane suburbs of Brisbane, I was raised on stories of jungles, smiling faces and tropical scenes so vividly told by my mother and father that in many ways, I was in love with this tiny country despite having no memory of it. And when I finally did plant my feet on that verdant soil again in February 2020, a five-week-old baby strapped to my chest, it was one of the most poignant, saddest and yet loveliest moments of my life. But this story begins more than fifty years ago, before I was born and when the life of my father, Colin Host, stretched out endlessly before him, his enthusiasm for adventure leading him from the dry eucalypt forests and surf beaches of Australia to the stunning blue bays and green mountains of Papua New Guinea.

Like most great adventures, the call to PNG wasn't from some grand gesture or romantic idea, but from the suggestion of opportunity. My father, Colin, had been sitting on a beach in Newcastle, just north of Sydney, reading through the newspaper and stumbled across an advertisement seeking football players who also held a qualified trade to work in PNG. Opportunity knocked, and he opened the door wide.

Colin arrived in 1966 working as a plumber and playing for the Hawks Rugby League Football Club in Port Moresby. As a young man enjoying the warm ocean breezes and a vibrant expatriate community, Col soon met Mavis, a pretty Australian lass of Irish descent who, at that time, was working for the Department of the Administrator. The pair returned briefly to Australia, were married in Warwick, Queensland in 1969 and returned to Port Moresby, finally beginning their love affair with Rabaul in 1971.

Moving into their teaching positions here, Colin taught plumbing at Malaguna Technical College, whilst Mavis was at the Tavui Secretarial School and then, in 1975, at the new Rabaul Secretarial College at the end of Malaguna Road.

It could hardly be called work though: eight idyllic years were spent in Rabaul, playing golf (and efficiently managing the bar at the Rabaul Golf Club!), fishing out on the water on Colin's boat and spending precious time with the many friends they met whilst slowly adding to the family tree. My

brother, Brendan, was born at Nonga Hospital in 1972, followed by a second boy, Nathan, in 1976.

In 1979 they moved to Madang where I was born in 1980, and both taught at Madang Technical College. This was just as idyllic as Rabaul, with the tropical life continuing whilst they enjoyed playing golf, boating and travelling in their little Gemini to Bogia, Lae, Wau, Bulolo and even as far as Mt Hagen. Colin's fishing trips were close to his heart, but he also travelled in PNG to golf tournaments, which he greatly enjoyed. In 1981, Mavis and Colin returned to settle in Brisbane with their young family. Here, I was greeted with another brother Kieran in 1982 and my sister Tracey in 1986. Life took on the trappings of suburbia, with Mum continuing to teach and Dad running his own business.

Even though their PNG adventure had ended, that tropical heat had soaked into my father's bones and infused the stories he would tell, lending everything to do with that era of his life a little extra warmth. Dad was a keen fisherman and to the day he passed away, one of his greatest fishing stories centred around PNG.

Whilst on a fishing trip in his boat, he caught a large marlin off Rabaul: it was his pride and joy. He even had it stuffed and brought back to Australia! That stuffed marlin wasn't just a symbol of what he believed was his incredible fishing prowess or a record of achievement with a rod and reel. It became a symbol of the largesse of life in PNG, where every moment was lived brightly, full of colour and amongst the tropical smells of humidity and frangipani. For Colin, the marlin was PNG frozen in time, a reminder of those youthful, halcyon days spent in paradise.

Mavis and Col had returned to Brisbane, back to the crashing east coast beaches of Australia and had given themselves over to five children, and in turn, eleven grandchildren. But neither Mum nor Dad ever forgot Rabaul. For their fiftieth wedding anniversary, they devised a grand plan to take the entire family back to their paradise, to show them the place they loved so much and formed their young family's life.

After much research, a P&O cruise that stopped in Rabaul was found and Mavis set about organising the trip for her clan, booking our tickets eighteen months before the departure date. Finn, my little

boy, was yet to be conceived when the tickets were secured.

We were all excited but, of course, Dad most of all. He was looking forward to visiting his old fishing and golf haunts, showing off his knowledge of PNG and hopefully catching up with some of his students. However, about a year before the departure date, we were told of Dad's dire cancer diagnosis. Mum, our family rock, was of course worried about Dad's health, but also about his ability to return to PNG, to the place that symbolised their youth and was tattooed in their memory as one of the most idyllic periods of their life. This trip to Rabaul was not just a holiday, it was becoming their own private Mecca.

In the end, I advised her to push on with the cruise—I was now pregnant with Finn, and there was no way I could go on the boat with them. I would look after Dad if he couldn't go. Dad's feelings about the cruise were also clear when, during his first admission to Palliative Care, his biggest concern through the delirium and illness, was disappointing Mum—he already knew he would not be boarding that boat to Rabaul.

Sadly, he lost his battle to cancer, passing away in November 2019, a few months before we were due to go. Mum had clung to the idea of the cruise, praying his health would be good enough to allow the trip to go ahead, but as time went on, it was clear Dad could not and would not be sailing with us.



Mavis and Colin Host in Brisbane, and Jo and Finn on top of the volcano (opposite page)



His final wish however, was for his ashes to be returned to Rabaul and spread in the harbour he loved to fish in so much. The poignancy that he would return to the paradise of his youth, not to reminisce, but to remain forever, was not lost on any of us. Just like the mackerel, the cruise had become more than a holiday, but rather symbolised a pilgrimage of honour for our father and the country he loved so deeply.

Five weeks before the cruise was due to depart, I gave birth to our son, Finn, and wasn't permitted to join the family aboard the *Pacific Dawn* due to the age restrictions regarding infants. Missing this important day in Rabaul wasn't an option for me or the memory of my father—I organised flights from Brisbane to Port Moresby, then onto Rabaul with Finn. We would land in time to meet my family when the cruise ship docked.

Organising this aspect of the trip was nothing short of Herculean—have you ever attempted to take an acceptable passport photo of a two-week-old baby? This in itself was a six-hour job spread over two separate attempts (the first photo was deemed unacceptable). But the flights were eventually organised, our accommodation at the Rabaul Hotel was booked, Finn's passport arrived in time and my husband, two daughters and the rest of my family safely boarded their cruise a few days before we were due to fly. It seemed that despite the drama of an international trip with a newborn baby, this trip was going to go ahead.



View of Rabaul from Kokopa

I was still in Australia when, forty-eight hours before my flights, Susie McGrade, the owner of the Rabaul Hotel, contacted me to let me know that the *QE2* cruise ship had arrived in Rabaul on Sunday and had not been allowed disembarkation. Fear of the COVID-19 virus, which was rapidly sweeping the world, had arrived in PNG. At this stage, my entire family was aboard the *Pacific Dawn* and were still under the impression they would dock at Rabaul.

I devoured the news reports coming in from all over the world, as ports began closing down to cruise ships, my frustration and concern steadily increasing. I boarded my flight to Port Moresby focused on ensuring Finn was comfortable, hopeful my family would make it to Rabaul, but knowing in my gut the likelihood was slim.

The day before its arrival, the *Pacific Dawn* was delivered the news that it would not be docking in Rabaul under the orders of the Governor of East New Britain. This news was absolutely devastating for Mum and my entire family. They had come so far and were so close to delivering Dad to his final resting place, only to be turned away by a virulent microbe. It was overwhelming and utterly disheartening, but I was already on a flight to Rabaul at this stage.

Strangely enough, the sibling in the most unfavourable position to commemorate their father, would be the only one able to do so. I couldn't spread my father's ashes out over Blanche Bay, but I could honour my Dad in the only way left to us. Represented by his eldest daughter and his youngest grandson, we could pay tribute to Aussie Col by experiencing his Rabaul in a way that was just as memorable as his time here over forty years ago. Sharing those experiences with Mum and my family on our return, would simply be another suite of stories to add to his legacy.

Of course, I never really signed up to honour Dad by travelling with a newborn baby completely on my own, but the people I met in Rabaul and just being in this truly magical place, made our adventure there so much more special.

I'll give you the tip: travelling with a newborn baby can be really, really tough and very unpredictable. You need a few angels on your side and Susie, the owner of the Rabaul Hotel, was one such beautiful soul who appeared and went out of

her way to make the trip unforgettable. Generosity and kindness radiated from her from the moment she picked Finn and me up at the airport in Kokopo.

She chatted about points of interest as we drove along the water toward Rabaul. I listened, but the scenery was taking my breath away as well. I felt Dad's presence and heard his voice telling his stories about this very road. The sway of palm trees, the azure blue water, the smell of ginger and frangipanis and the omnipresent smoking peaks in the distance. It felt truly surreal that I was here, far from the house I grew up in, but perhaps closer to the essence of my father than I'd ever been.

Under the gentle guiding hand of Susie, I would fall in love with Rabaul, just as both Mum and Dad had all those years ago. Through her, I had the privilege of meeting many of her visitors and guests at the hotel. Hearing their amazing stories and sharing a few of my own over a cool drink at the end of the day was a real highlight of being at the Rabaul Hotel—I felt comfortable and supported which, as a woman travelling alone with a newborn baby, became very, very important.

Finn and I settled in easily, and we immediately set out, keen to soak up as much of this beautiful and historic town as possible. Susie organised staff to take me to Rabaul's Page Park Market and show me how to get around town on the PMVs (passenger motor vehicles). The market was an absolute delight. The array of the produce and crafts, the bright colours of the clothing worn by the people and the calm energy floating around this shady area was just incredible. Everything looked vibrant, clearer and brighter than 'real life' back in Queensland. Already, I could see why Dad loved this place.

Susie also took the time to show me around, starting with a trip down Mango Avenue, where the main town of Rabaul once stood before being destroyed in the 1994 volcanic eruption. She could describe everything so vividly—her knowledge and passion for the town was incredible and I came away with a very clear idea of how the once thriving Rabaul used to look. I couldn't help but wonder what Mum and Dad's tour of Mango Avenue would have been like in comparison; to have added their layer of memories to this place would have been wonderful.

As if I didn't have enough clarity on how



Susie McGrade, owner of the Rabaul Hotel, with Finn (top) and Albert J Konie, tour guide, with Jo (below)





Malaguna Technical School (top) and the staff at the Rabaul Hotel with Finn (below)

powerful the forces of nature boiling under the surface I was standing on were, the next stop was the Rabaul Vulcanological Observatory. Wow! Without doubt, this place has THE million-dollar views over Blanche Bay and the volcanos. We were lucky enough to visit when one of the local volcanologists was there, and since Susie knew him well, gave us an impromptu talk on the 'character' of the surrounding volcanoes. I was due to climb Mt Tavurvur the next day, but after listening to his description of the power and unpredictable nature of the volcano, I'll admit that my resolve faltered a little!

Another aspect of this tropical paradise which I was completely unprepared for, was the Japanese tunnels and caverns in the hillsides around Rabaul. The Australian involvement in WWII in PNG has become a revered and solemn aspect of our history, with much of the focus in recent years on the Kokoda Track. Incredibly, Rabaul was the scene of Australia's least publicised yet highest loss of life in WWII, with the killing of almost all of the town's Australian civilian males and over 2,000 Australian soldiers. A Japanese prison ship, the *Montevideo Maru*, holding over 1000 military and civilians from Rabaul were also killed when it was sunk off the Philippines by an American submarine.

The history of Japanese atrocities here is simply horrific, but it is tempered by the beauty, solemnity and pure hope of forgiveness offered at the Japanese Peace Memorial. This is the main Japanese memorial in the Pacific and is a testament to the forgiveness of the local people upon whose land these terrible battles were fought. Yet again, Susie was the ultimate tour guide, giving historical fact and her passion for Rabaul in equal measure.

Our next step was slightly more uplifting, as we drove down to the New Guinea Club. Established in 1933, the New Guinea Club was a beautiful businessmen's club which, through the horror of WWII and then a fire in 1993, has been badly damaged over the years despite attempts to restore it to its former glory.

The club was opened so we could see the amazing work of the Rabaul Historical Society, documenting the area's rich history and housing, in particular, a large collection of relics from WWII. It still has that air of the forties though, with lots of wood panelling and the black and white photos of soldiers adorning the walls. The tables and chairs

were handmade, each had its own New Guinea Club plaque and gave a brief glimpse into the air of opulence this once grand place must have had.

Without doubt, however, the most amazing experience was walking around a volcano with Albert Konie, one of the local tour guides introduced to me through Susie. This infamous volcano, Mt Tavurvur, sparked so much intrigue for me. It sits like a brooding presence over Rabaul, which was the provincial capital before 1994 when its eruption destroyed most of the town. With Albert's guidance, we were able to climb to the top to see the almighty power of this active volcano and take in the panoramic views of Rabaul from the top. It really did feel like a sleeping giant, the area around the volcano so barren and inhospitable as it rose up into the sky.

Finn was too young to be left behind, and so had an easy ride strapped to my chest in the baby carrier as I scrambled up the often hair-raising, hot and slippery climb. At only five weeks of age, Finn became one of the youngest people to ever summit Mt Tavurvur! I was proud of myself, not only for overcoming so many obstacles to get here, but to bring along this newborn babe with Colin Host's blood running through his veins. I think Dad was there with us, looking out over Rabaul and smiling.

Albert shepherded us back down the volcano, and was simply fantastic. He was very accommodating with the timing of our tour considering Finn was so young, and had us home before the heat of the tropics would have made the climb up Mt Tavurvur too difficult and oppressive.

We had time to rest, sleep, shower and change before we set off on an afternoon tour of Rabaul, which included Malaguna Technical School where Dad had taught. Walking around the school gave added weight to the stories we had grown up listening to, and I imagined Dad walking through the grounds as a young man, commanding the respect of his students through his no-nonsense yet generous manner. It was sad and wonderful.

Albert then took us to the old East New Britain Library as well as the St Francis Xavier Cathedral where my brother was baptised. I also felt sad for them—Rabaul is a part of their story too.

I was only one year old when we came back to Australia, and I have very few memories of PNG, but its people, its history and energy are so

intertwined with my history, that I feel an affinity for this place that has only deepened and solidified after my time here with Finn.

I'd like to thank Susie in particular for making my time here so special, but also all the guides who were so passionate and happy to tell me anything and everything about their beloved Rabaul. Even the guests I met at the hotel seemed to gather around Finn and me, ensuring we were safe and comforted so that we never felt lonely, which, considering the circumstances, I easily could have.

And I'd like to thank my mother, Mavis, whose unwavering commitment to her husband and Rabaul meant we have all had a little of that tropical heat re-injected into our veins. Rabaul was just as important to her, but she knew perhaps, that for Dad, the thought of returning would set him at ease for the rest of his days.

Of course, I wish with all my heart that my family had docked and disembarked, that we had spread Dad's ashes and explored this amazing area together ... but I'm not disappointed that I did it alone. I had Finn, and I know Dad was there too, joy emanating from his core at being back in his paradise, Rabaul. ♦

**RIP Colin John Host**  
**30 November 1943–8 November 2019**



Jo and Finn on top of Matupit





## The Christmas of 1968: The Longest Ever

**PETER STACE**

... I've seen Santa.

He has fuzzy brown hair, brown skin,  
a *laplap* around his waist and bare feet;  
and there was not one scrap of red  
winter apparel with white trim  
on him at all ...

AS A YOUNG MAN, I was extremely fortunate to work in Papua New Guinea with the Department of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries (DASF).

The Christmas of 1968 found me away from other Australians, as I had been posted from Kavieng to a new and then very isolated oil palm settlement called Tamba, near Hoskins, West New Britain. Christmas Eve found me walking around the settlement, feeling sad and with a severe case of homesickness. I had been invited for dinner on Christmas Day by the Pattersons at Nahavio, the headquarters for the oil palm settlement scheme, and I was looking forward to it, but Christmas Eve found me by myself.

The night was moonlit, the air heavy with the scent of the tropics. It was very quiet. I didn't carry a lamp or torch, as the blue-white light of the moon was enough for me to see the road. I had seen the lights of New Guinea settlers in their officially allocated sawn-timber houses, along with the occasional murmur of families as they prepared for the night. They were probably as confused as I was, as they had only recently come from many parts of PNG as settlers to the oil palm scheme in West New Britain. They were the pioneers of the scheme, the first of many.

I suddenly became aware of a fellow traveller coming my way. This man held a torch, which he used to light the road. The pain of homesickness left me with no desire for company, so I stepped into the dark shadows of some bushes. When the traveller came closer I could see he was carrying a bag over his shoulder, and as he came adjacent to me he suddenly gave a gasp and shone his torch onto my white legs. Being found out, I stepped out onto the road and identified myself. I recognised the man as a settler who lived close by and called his name. He recognised me and did the same.

We talked for a while and he told me he had been to the Chinese store at Hoskins some twenty miles away and purchased some little gifts for his children. These he had in the bag over his shoulder.

He had been able to get a ride on a PMV to Nahavio but, unable to obtain transport home from there, had walked the last few miles. We talked for a few minutes and then parted company, each to our own Christmas.

As I walked home I realised I had seen Santa, and it lifted my spirits. He had fuzzy brown hair,

brown skin, a *laplap* around his waist and bare feet; and there was not one scrap of red winter apparel and white trim, in contrast to the traditional Santa; however, this Santa had a real sack of presents over his shoulder. It was a timely reminder that, irrespective of our culture, we all love our families and this man's sack of gifts for his children reflected the true meaning of giving at Christmas—the fine humanity and dignity of the Christmas tradition.

Some days later I met this man again and he explained that when he had seen my white legs he had got a real fright as he had thought he had seen a ghost.

He said, '*Mi lukim lek belong wanpela masalai, em masalai belong dis nupela ples; Tasol em yu iet Peta; na em i orait.*' (I've seen the leg of a ghost, the ghost of this new place but it's only you, Peter; and that's OK.) At least this man had given me the credibility of '*orait*'.

Christmas Day 1968 saw me arriving in my old Land Rover (my vehicle allocation) at the Pattersons' place at Nahavio with a few beers, a bottle of Tia Maria and some sort of contribution to the dinner. I was looking forward to some Aussie companionship. The party had already started and I was a few drinks behind.

As I settled down with a pre-dinner drink, there was a knock at the door and a New Guinea man said '*Meri belong me i gat bel na em i bagarap pinis, na emi mus go long haus sik.*' (My wife is pregnant and she is not well, she must go to the hospital.)

To put things into context—in 1968 the oil palm scheme in West New Britain was very isolated.

There was no Kimbe town—Kimbe was a coconut plantation that had been purchased and was being prepared to be the capital of West New Britain. There was no New Britain highway—that was just a pumice dust track between rivers with not an inch of bitumen. There was no bridge over the Dagi River—that was being prepared by the engineers. There was no hospital either at Nahavio or Hoskins. The closest hospital was at the Catholic mission north of Hoskins (I think it was at Valoka) some hours' drive away).

It was obvious that since I had the only means of transport and was sober I was to take this lady in distress to hospital. So, I leapt into the trusty Land Rover and set out with the husband of the sick lady

showing me the way. On arrival at the settlement block there were a number of people waiting, and they quickly loaded the patient into the Land Rover. We set out with a number of concerned relatives, who proved to be very useful.

First thing to contend with was a fast-flowing flooded causeway. The extra weight kept the Land Rover on the road and not floating down the creek. Another flooded creek looked very deep, but a *laplap* draped over the radiator and held by someone sitting on the bonnet of the Land Rover, kept us going as the water was pushed away from the motor.

Finally, we arrived at the hospital and delivered the patient to the sister who appeared slightly annoyed that her Christmas Day was being interrupted—but the patient was at the right place and being looked after.

The home trip was uneventful and I returned to Nahavio hoping for a Christmas dinner. There was a little food left and everyone else was at the merry stage of Christmas which, as I was sober, was a little isolating.

As I drank the warm, flat beer that had been kept for me, I thought that it had been the longest Christmas dinner I had ever had; however, 'Santa' with his sack of toys, and helping a mother and unborn baby on Christmas Day had made this Christmas memorable. ♦



Inspecting settler oil palms (above);  
Settler woman checking young oil palm for fruit, 1972 (left & opposite)  
(Photos courtesy Lucille Stace)





## Record Delivery Time

**DERYCK THOMPSON**

**Jack Sweeney, who sadly passed away on 19 May 2018, aged ninety-seven, initially arrived in PNG in 1955 and worked for several years in various jobs, including crocodile shooting. In the 1960s he built a store in Daru, capital of the Western Province of Papua New Guinea, and purchased the ferro-cement boat, MV *Vanlin*, with which he commenced trading on the Fly River system and Aramia River.**

IN LATE 1973, when I was stationed at Lake Murray with Geoff Smith, Jack Sweeney anchored his trading boat, the MV *Vanlin*, came ashore and had dinner with us. Jack mentioned that he was going to send a shipment of artefacts from Daru down to Brisbane, and I asked if he could send some down to Melbourne for me. Jack agreed to assist and when I showed him my meagre accumulation, he said that to make it worthwhile to box up, I would need to add a few more items.

We agreed that he would supply these, and I gave him \$50 to cover the extras and the freight to Melbourne. Jack said that it would take a while because he would have to pack them up, send them to Thursday Island by boat, tranship to Cairns and then arrange rail freight to Melbourne and delivery to my parents' house. I was quite happy with the timeline he mentioned, but didn't realise how long it would be before I saw these items again.

I was transferred to West Sepik Province in 1974 and lost touch with Jack. After several annual leaves to Melbourne, the box had not yet arrived, but I still didn't worry about it. However, on my next leave in early 1977 the box of artefacts awaited me. I opened it and saw straight away that it was not my 'stuff', but I was not particularly worried about it as my artefacts were not exactly collectibles. I returned to West Sepik and didn't bother to try and contact Jack who departed PNG that same year.

Time moved on and I eventually ended up in Cairns in 1992, and settled into life there. Many years later I heard rumours that Jack was based in Brisbane but spent the winter months in Cairns. I finally tracked him down in 1998 and we had a yarn and a few beers at the pub.

I asked him if he remembered the box of artefacts he'd sent down for me and he said straight

away, 'It was the wrong one, wasn't it?' He explained that some years after he had sent 'my' box to me, he had opened another one he had stored under his house at Wynnum, recognised the contents as being mine and realised that he had sent the wrong box to me—but by then he was out of PNG and he had no idea where I was. Anyway, Jack very kindly agreed to send my original box up to Cairns after he returned to Brisbane.

Several months later Jack returned to Cairns followed by my box, and it was delivered to his flat in Cairns, where I picked it up and took it to my house.

So, on a Friday night soon after, I picked Jack up and brought him out to our house for dinner, along with a couple of neighbours, and after dinner had a formal opening of my box. Even though it had been more than twenty-five years since I had last seen my artefacts, I did recognise several of them, and also noted the extras that Jack had thrown in. All were in very good condition, and there was no rat or cockroach damage given the holes in the recycled plywood and the passing of the decades.

By now I was in Jack's debt as I had now received two boxes of artefacts, plus he had paid for two lots of freight, so we split the contents of the box between us. I kept the kundu drums and suki baskets and also gave a memento to our neighbours.

Twenty-six years—that would have to be a record for the longest delivery time!

But that is not the end of the story—the following week Jack went to Townsville for (planned) heart surgery, and one of the neighbours followed him down for (unexpected) heart surgery.

Added to this my wife slipped and broke her leg the following Monday and was hospitalised in Cairns. Was it the curse of the Daru box? ♦

## PNG Memories

**TONY SKELTON**

**The September issue of *PNG Kundu* 2020 arrived the day before I was due to drive to Melbourne from my home in Swifts Creek, Victoria, to catch a flight to Cairns for my return to Tabubil, PNG. Reading the issue en route inspired me to write this. Not only because I have been meaning to do so for some time now, but because of the several articles that were relevant to my time and experiences in PNG.**



Tony on the verandah of the Kiaps' house at Kaintiba Patrol Post, with Dave Henton in the foreground

FRED KAAD, Fred Pratt and Ok Tedi, the 75th Anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific, Murua Ag Station, John Nightingale, Sean Dorney, Max Benjamin, Bob Bell and Bryan McCook have all had an impact on my time in PNG in some way or another.

Let me start with Fred Kaad. What a remarkable man. I think he should be Sir Fred, along with his well-earned OBE. I arrived in the vast metropolis of Sydney in January 1971, having driven from my home town of Swifts Creek (population 300). I was to attend the six-month Kiaps' course at ASOPA, Middle Head, Mosman. Our mentor was Mr Fred Kaad. 'Mr' ... we dared not call him anything else. It was a great six months spent with thirty other candidates ranging from me as the youngest at twenty to Luke Hausmans, forty-something. We took our attendance very seriously at the beginning until we discovered the various pubs in the area, Tooheys and Reschs beer and the single girls attending the teacher training courses (and it was here that I met my future wife and mother of my three wonderful children).

Mr Kaad either noticed or was told of the dropping off in class attendances and was in the middle of reading the riot act to our group when I walked in, late and half-full of booze. As I attempted to scuttle down the back of the room I was met with a roar as he pushed himself red-faced halfway out of his wheelchair and proceeded to give me a dressing down like I had never experienced before. At the end of it he told us we thirty were selected out of over 1,000 applicants Australia wide, 500-odd which were interviewed and psych tested and that we had better pull our heads in if we wanted to be going to PNG.

Not only did we feel from then on a fairly special lot but, over a few beers that night, we all tried to imagine how bad the rest of the applicants must have been and, why us? A motley mob from all walks of life with no particular traits in common that we could identify. Strangely enough, despite our differences in ages and backgrounds, we all got on.

That was my experience with Mr Fred Kaad, one I will always treasure.

Mr Bob Bell (photo of District Commissioners on page 11, September 2020, *PNG Kundu*) was my next memorable encounter on being posted to the Gulf District. I remember being very disappointed at drawing the Gulf as we all wanted a Highlands posting. As it turned out it was the best thing and, standing to attention in front of District Commissioner Bell, I was told I was being posted to the inland Patrol Post of Kaintiba, established formally only several years prior. Mr Bell told me he expected me to be out on patrol nine months of the year, and we were. No electricity, no roads, one government charter flight a fortnight, weather permitting, and spent with two other kiaps, two expat primary teachers, two German missionaries—the total expat population on the station—and surrounded by wonderful Kamia (Kukukuku) people.

There were no cash crops and the only *Pidgin* spoken was with the police and our interpreters. One patrol lasted for sixty-two days away from the station, walking from village to village on mainly census and spreading the word on the impending self-government and Independence.

One of the more memorable treks was with ADO Dave Henton, walking from Kaintiba to Murua Ag Station, where we caught a canoe





to Kerema to attend the annual Kerema ball. It was there I met *didiman*, Charlie Fletcher, who looked after our carriers until we returned.

Two years later I was sent to Port Moresby to attend a local magistrate's course and, at the end of that, was told I was being posted to Ihu on the coast, where the previous kiap had been thrown in the river by some disgruntled locals. The mud and the mangroves wasn't my idea of fun so I reluctantly resigned, went south, and began my commercial flying training. It was firmly in my mind to return as soon as possible to pursue a flying career.

In November 1978 I was accepted by Talair and returned to be posted to Vanimo to start what turned into twelve wonderful years with that company. During my tenure between 1978 and 1990, as Chief Pilot, I met Bryan McCook who, in the September *PNG Kundu*, wrote the story of Fred Kaad's accident.

Bryan returned to PNG after some time away to help out Dennis Buchanan over the busy Christmas period. I was tasked with getting Bryan current again on the Twin Otter, a daunting task as Bryan had forgotten more about PNG flying than I knew at the time. However, I am proud to say he is in my log book, one of the true legends of PNG aviation.

During my time at Talair, Dennis sent me to the Solomons to help out there for several months, and it was in Kieta enroute that I met Sean Dorney. Since then I have followed Sean's career and what a marvellous one it has been. His battle with MND goes bravely on and, having lost a brother-in-law to that insidious disease, I have nothing but the utmost respect for his courage and determination.

I also read Fred Pratt's article on Ok Tedi and he is another I had the pleasure of meeting through our mutual friend, Richard Leahy. Having spent the past twenty years flying the Dash 8 based in Tabubil, it was fascinating to read of the early exploration days in the Star Mountains.

Max Benjamin and John Nightingale also feature in the September edition, unfortunately, as they have both been lost, far too early, to all of us in PNG. Through my time based in Rabaul with both Talair and Islands Aviation, I was fortunate enough to have met both these remarkable characters, like so many others who have made my PNG experience such a rich and rewarding one.

Last, but not least, was the mention of the 75th anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific. My Dad did two tours of PNG with the Australian Army during the war and I blame him for my lifelong fascination with the country and its people. VP Day also has special significance to me as it was on this day in 1945 that my father met Mum, a twenty-one-year-old girl in Melbourne. Sixteen days later, on the first day in Spring, they married and the union lasted sixty-five years.

I head back to PNG for a twenty-eight-day tour, reflecting on the past forty-two years of continuous flying up there. My short stint as a kiap will always remain very special to me as will my flying days—hopefully, a few more tours left before retirement.

A special thanks to those who produce this wonderful magazine, which I look forward to receiving every quarter. ♦

# A Memorable Experience

## Kandrian Sub-District, West New Britain District

### **BILL (JW) GORNALL, *Didiman*—Part One**

**Kandrian Station, a small outpost on the south-west coast of West New Britain.**

I ARRIVED THERE on 21 November 1967 from Talasea, where I had spent five months in introductory work under the tutelage of Jack Curran. The District Agricultural Officer was Mick Mead, based in Cape Hoskins, later Kimbe, who later transferred to the expanding new oil palm industry there. He was replaced by Mark Jones. DJ Kingston, Don Sheppard and Eric Wilson were in Islands Regional HQ, Rabaul. The Director of the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries (DASF) in Konedobu was Bill Conroy. My predecessor as OIC DASF at Kandrian was Neil Alcorn, but he'd departed some five years prior to my arrival.

Kandrian Sub-district had a population of 16,000 spread over 6,700 square kilometres and covered 320 kilometres of coastline. Permanently-based expatriate government employees at Kandrian and their spouses numbered about a dozen on average. The ADC upon my arrival was Peter O'Sullivan, followed by Col Campbell, and later Peter Sisley who was present when I was transferred on 9 October 1970.

Some other kiaps domiciled for a time during the same period were Mark Jerram, Tom Newton, Harry Topham, Wilhelm Speldewinde, Murray Bassett, Col Probyn and Scott Leslie. There were primary school teachers Jim (JJ) McMillan and Ken Farrar, vocational centre teachers John Hampson and Maurice Evans. Frank Roben was part of malaria control, Bill (WN) Styles and later Mac (C) McKinnon were medical assistants, and Bert Norton was Public Works Department (PWD) manager. There are faces I cannot

put names to, including other PWD staff and kiaps.

There were perhaps fifty kilometres (thirty miles) of dirt/*koronas* (crushed coral) roadway in the Kandrian area, the longest stretch some thirty kilometres heading north-west through Pomugu and Senemsi villages to the Alimbit River, though during the wet (March to October) some of this was cut off. Average annual rainfall for Kandrian was 4,064mm (160"). Gasmata, to the east, received 5,000mm+ (200"+). Weather permitting, DC3s called in to Kandrian from Lae on Thursdays and Rabaul on Tuesdays. The BP-owned MV *Kirwina* made a run along the South Coast every six weeks and the MV *Manugoro* every fortnight. Locally berthed government and private workboats included MVs *Garua*, *Langu*, *Aliwa* and *Aimara*. I would use one of these vessels for passage to a drop-off point, on coastal patrol work especially.

Inland patrol travel was mostly walking with occasional canoeing along rivers.

One particular event I will mention was the Passismanua Patrol crop census and orientation, January 1968. The Passismanua Census Division (CD) is an area of some 1,243 square kilometres (480 square miles) north-east of Kandrian and home to the Kaulong and Senseng groups of people (population 3,225 in 1969). Unique customs practised here included head-binding for beautification (then recently outlawed) and blowpipes for hunting. There were no known poisonous land snakes, but pythons grew to a large size in the thick rainforest habitat.

Two agricultural assistants and I were dropped

Kandrian Station from  
Turuk RC Mission







Government workboat MV *Langu* at Lindenhaven Plantation during election patrol (top); At Urin village on the Ilak River (below)

off at Pomugu village by Landrover, eight kilometres (five miles) north of Kandrian. We arranged sixteen carriers for our gear and set off walking.

Tracks were slippery, full of boggy holes and glutinous mud. Numerous streams had to be crossed, and 'bridges' ranged from some rickety bamboo poles, strung loosely together, to large fallen tree trunks, most covered in moss because very little, if any, sunlight filtered through the tall canopy. Leeches were flicked off as necessary, sometimes soaped. Even with precautions I still often washed bloodied socks at the end of the day's bushwalk. Through the carriers I learned that leeches sometimes fell from the overhead growth and small ones occasionally attached to an eye and caused blindness. I saw some of these results. Venturing further into the Whiteman Ranges, to reach villages such as Lakungkung and Arihi, the tracks increased in ruggedness, crossing one limestone ridge after another.

It paid to be fit and I must add I didn't catch malaria, probably thanks to chloroquine-based suppressives taken for ten years.

In ten days we visited twenty-seven villages, with populations of between thirty-four and 135, average seventy-three, total 1,981. Coconuts and coffee were counted. We conversed (in *Tok Pisin*) with the *luluai* and *tultul* (village chief and assistant) of many villages and they would present their village book for our recording anything of import during our stay. It was interesting to read of previous patrol visits. Neil Alcorn's walking times were similar to mine. He had

planted lemon groves beside some villages and I made much use of lemon juice in black tea and on *kindams* (fresh water shrimps).

The soil of the region was not particularly fertile. New gardens had to be established just after one or two plantings, and as these were established further from a village the villagers themselves would live in their gardens for longer periods, hence a village might be empty of people. In perhaps ten–fifteen years or so the village itself might be relocated.

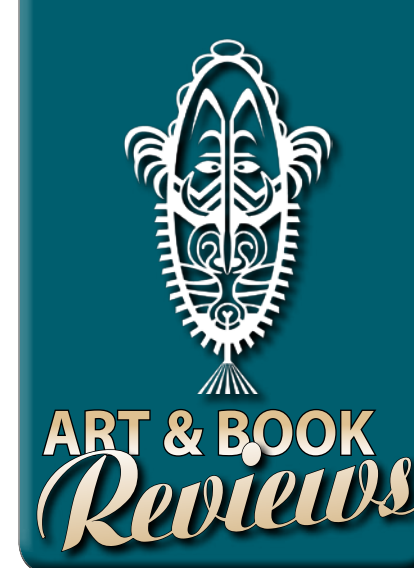
One day I turned a corner in the track and an adult cassowary stepped out of the bush into my path not 30 metres ahead. Both of us were very surprised! It quickly vanished into the bush on the other side.

Passing through Angelek village in less taxing topography, about 18 kilometres (11 miles) and three hours walk out from Kandrian on our way home, I conversed with American anthropologist Jane C Goodale, residing there on another study of the Kaulong people.

Back at the station I wished I had a clerk to assist with all the office duties: work management for nine Rural Development Assistants (RDAs) and fifteen Farmer Trainees (FTs), purchasing locally produced robusta coffee parchment (which was on-forwarded to Rabaul for shipment to Australia) and the establishment of an agricultural extension station, 'Nairlo'—the latter on top of the plateau between the airstrip and Turuk Roman Catholic mission. The inland road to Pomugu, Angelek and onwards dissected it. An office, store and fourteen-bed FT dormitory were the first built. Until my arrival, RDA Bernard ToParagia was in charge and performed office duties in his house at the old agricultural station, 'Aringi'. This was located two miles from the sub-district office (SDO) and past the vocational centre. We moved the files to my house in the interim and I typed at the SDO until a DASF typewriter arrived six months later.

Who could forget the fun times and hair-raising moments! The time when four of us rode our motorbikes for a 15-mile (24 km) fun ride out to Senemsi village, not far from the Alimbit River. The MV *Kirwina's* engineer was on his Yamaha, the rest on government Hondas, 90cc and mine 175cc. Along a particularly rocky stretch we all came off! No helmets, some bark lost, lots of laughter. Then, back to the club to recuperate.

**Part Two will be published in the next issue**



## Congratulations to Julianne Ross Allcorn

The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia congratulates Julianne Ross Allcorn for being awarded the 'Trustees' Watercolour Prize in the Wynne Prize 2020, held at the Art Gallery NSW. Juli's entry, a triptych in watercolour, is on twenty-one birch wood panels and titled 'Molitium 2'.

Juli's description says: *Molitium means 'resilience' in Latin. Resilience is the Australian bush; she embraces and forgives.*

*My work travels from right to left—from the threat of fire, to escape and regrowth. I've drawn wattle, banksia, grevillea, waratah, gumnuts, gum blossoms, seeds and leaves from different native plants, the Gynea lily and the wildlife of the bush.*

*Last summer's fires were stopped twenty minutes from our family getaway at Burrell Valley, near Laguna in the lower Hunter Valley, NSW. I spend much of my time there, drawing from all that surrounds me. When I walk through the valley, the scents, sounds, textures and colours envelop me and I lose myself. When you're in nature, I encourage you to stop, stand still, close your eyes and listen, then open your eyes and try to find what you saw, smelt and heard.*

**Julianne Ross Allcorn, 2020**

The Wynne Prize is awarded annually for 'the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in

**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)**

oils or watercolours or for the best example of figure sculpture by Australian artists'.

Juli, born in Rabaul to Barbara and Ross Jennings, was our former PNGAA Management Committee Events Co-ordinator from 2009–15, and anyone who came to lunches enjoyed her spectacular art on the menus. Who remembers the stunning 2015 PNGAA Art Exhibition Juli curated in Glebe, Sydney?

A talented and creative practising artist with works in many collections, Juli has displayed in group and solo exhibitions, and teaches at local and international residencies and art workshops, including holding her own Art & Imagination classes.

In 2020 Juli has also been a finalist in the Kangaroo Valley Arts Prize, the Gosford Art Prize, the Mosman Art Prize and the Gallipoli Art Prize.

The Wynne Prize, together with the Archibald and Sir John Sulman Prizes is open from 26 September

2020 to 10 January 2021. Because of COVID-19 capacity restrictions, you will need to book your tickets. Go and enjoy Juli's intricate and beautiful art!

## GRAHAM HARDY *Over the Hills and Far Away: Memoirs of a Kiap in Papua and New Guinea from 1952 to 1975*

If I could live my life over I think I would prefer to have been born twenty years earlier.

That would have made me too young to take part in World War II, but just the right age to go to Papua New Guinea as a kiap in the immediate postwar period. That period, especially in the highlands, probably represented the halcyon days of the Australian Administration.

The Papua New Guinean people still lived a largely traditional lifestyle, there remained large areas unexplored, and development after the war was still in its infancy.



Juli in front of her prizewinning entry in the Wynne Prize 2020, September 2020



There was a lot happening and life was exciting.

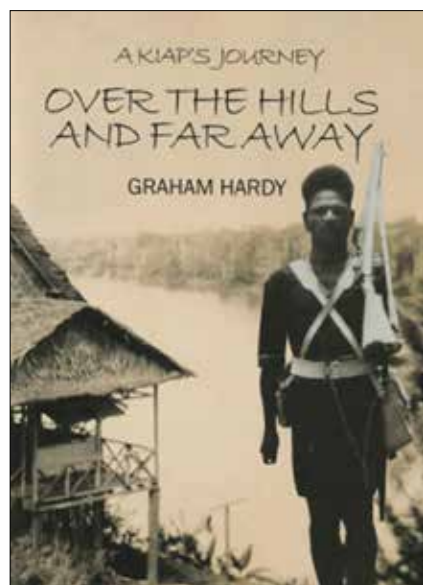
In that sense, I'm envious of Graham Hardy, who went to Papua New Guinea in 1952 and remained there until 1975.

His memoir, written mainly for his family, is one of the best I have read. In kiap terms, there is nothing particularly spectacular about his time in PNG, but the story is honestly told with a wry sense of humour and describes in fascinating detail his day-to-day experiences.

Graham began his kiap career at Kikori in the Gulf District but, as usual, the practical exigencies of administrative life saw him soon sent to Beara Patrol Post as officer-in-charge.

He was still a cadet patrol officer when he carried out his first patrol. It was a rule that cadets had to be accompanied by a senior officer on their first patrol, but that never happened then or anytime later. I had a similar experience and, just like Graham, put my trust in the senior policeman and made up the rest as I went along.

Graham attended the 'long course' at ASOPA in 1956 and was then posted to the Western Highlands, first to Wabag. His



time there makes for interesting reading.

Graham married Patricia in 1958. Their favourite posting was Tambul, and while they were there they built a large round house for visitors. Ten years later I was living in the same roundhouse while based there with officer-in-charge, Ken Wallace.

Graham's description of the general practice of kiaps as creative bookkeepers is interesting. Each station received funds to buy sweet potato to feed staff and prisoners:

'As the amounts allocated by Treasury were always far in excess of the amount actually needed to feed station people, fictitious sales were created and the money thus generated, known universally as 'funny money', was put in a safe place for use in building houses or buying equipment that was not available through official channels.'

While in charge of Wabag, Graham was nearly caught out when a treasury auditor arrived unexpectedly. He had over £700 of 'funny money' locked in a stationery cabinet, 'so a spending spree resulted with all stations in the sub-district getting lawn mowers and other exotic items available from the Lutheran Mission store at Wapenamanda—a very useful outlet for laundering funny money.'

Not to labour the point too much, another funny incident occurred when Graham was allocated £2,000 to improve the Wabag airstrip and did exactly that. This horrified Bob Bell, who was the Assistant District Officer at Wabag, but was in Mount Hagen filling in as District Officer while Mick Foley was on leave. Bell told Graham, 'You don't use airstrip maintenance money on airstrips!' He obviously had other plans for the money and Graham had upset them.



Graham Hardy as a cadet patrol officer in the Gulf District

Several of Graham and Patricia's eight children were born in Papua New Guinea and Graham describes how his wife, while looking after the children, often had to deputise as the station's unofficial officer-in-charge while he was away on patrol. This included taking the police parade in the morning and allocating the day's work for the station staff, attending to the radio schedules and carrying out Graham's other normal duties. Not a lot of credit goes to kiaps' wives but in many places they were integral to the running of remote stations.

Graham was posted back to the coast in 1964, to Kaiapit in Morobe District. In 1974 he was based in Port Moresby. About that time negotiations were underway to design separation packages for permanent Australian administration staff and Graham and Patricia decided to take a 'golden handshake'.

Their time in Port Moresby, where cyclone wire barriers on residential windows was becoming necessary, was a deciding factor and a portent of Papua New Guinea's coming problems.

Graham wryly and modestly notes that he never quite made it

to District Commissioner level, although he acted in that post several times.

As noted above, the book was written mainly for Graham and Patricia's family and only a limited number of copies are available and I was lucky to obtain one. Given the quality of the writing and the wide-ranging content it is nevertheless a valuable historical document, especially for Papua New Guineans anxious to know about those fascinating times.

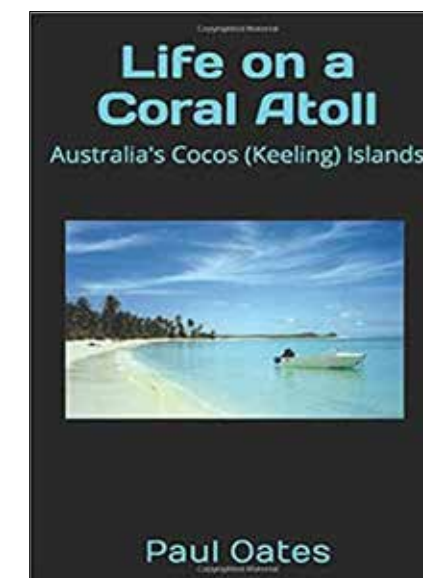
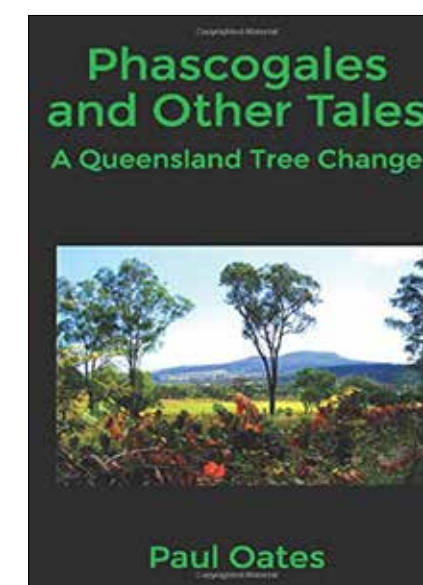
**Philip Fitzpatrick**

Privately published, 2020, 207 pages with numerous photographs, \$42 plus \$9.95 postage, available from the author at [gandphardy@gmail.com](mailto:gandphardy@gmail.com)

### PAUL OATES *Phascogales and Other Tales: A Queensland Tree Change*

The term 'tree change' often has hippy-like connotations, but Paul and Sue Oates could hardly be called hippies. Their 'tree change' was much more than a simple lifestyle change. They had serious intentions of becoming self-supporting farmers and perhaps pass that legacy on to their children.

This book is about how two professional people decided to get



back to their roots by creating a small tree and stud cattle farm in South Eastern Queensland. It chronicles the planning and execution of their change and all the high and low points they encountered in the process.

ISBN: 9798651038121

Published 2020, 237 pages with 296 colour photographs, paperback.

### PAUL OATES *Life on a Coral Atoll: Australia's Cocos (Keeling) Islands*

After serving for many years as a kiap (patrol officer) in pre-independent Papua New Guinea, Paul Oates returned to Australia. Like many of his fellow kiaps his experience in Papua New Guinea was life-changing and made settling down in Australia challenging. After five years of submitting applications to serve in the Cocos Islands Paul was finally accepted and with his wife began a two-year term there. Those two years in those idiosyncratic and peculiar islands were to prove as memorable as his years in Papua New Guinea.

ISBN-13: 979-8602004854

Published 2020, Paperback, 174 pages

Both of Paul's books are available from book stores or Amazon.

### Lesley Wengembo

Lesley Wengembo is a twenty-three-year-old artist originally from Papua New Guinea, currently in his second year studying a Bachelor of Fine Art at the National Art School in Sydney.

Lesley is a finalist in the Brisbane Portrait Prize, an exhibition run at the Brisbane Powerhouse, 119 Lamington Street, New Farm, from 30 September to 1 November. Whilst the exhibition is free, tickets are needed to ensure everyone is Covid safe.

Lesley's entry is a portrait, in oils, of Timothy V Fairfax, AC, titled 'A Man for All Seasons' (pictured below).

Lesley has tried to capture his down-to-earth nature depicted in his checked shirt, his wry smile and his knowledgeable and compassionate eyes. A devotee of the photorealist style, Lesley's other works often transform images he has seen into magnificent painted portraits of Papua New Guinea tribal leaders, in traditional dress.

His attention to the minute details of the subject are his trademark from the smallest skin blemish through to the delicate individual feathers that are used in traditional head dresses. ♦







**AISBETT, Margaret**  
d. 19 July 2020

**ALLAN, Valerie (née Grant)**  
d. 8 May 2020, aged 83

Valerie was born in Adelaide on 28 January 1937 to Methodist Missionary parents, Dawn and Ralph Grant.

She spent her early childhood on mission stations in the Milne Bay Circuit and developed a love of both the people and their culture which remained with her for all her life.

It was always said that you could take Valerie out of Papua, but not Papua out of Valerie.

With the imminent threat of a Japanese invasion at Milne Bay, her mother, with sister Rosemary (who later married kiap Ken Brown), were evacuated on Christmas Eve 1942 per the Burns Philp ship, *Neptuna*.

At aged eight years she was enrolled with Methodist Ladies College Burwood and completed her education in 1950, at which time she returned to Papua taking up employment as a typist in Merchandise Department of Steamships Trading Company, Samarai.

It was here that she met Ralph Allan and the pair were married in 1955 at the Kwato Mission with her father conducting the service whilst mother played the pedal organ.

Following a honeymoon in

**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)**

Australia, Ralph was posted to Burns Philp in Rabaul where their first son, David Ian, was born.

After four years in Rabaul, it was decided to go finish and the family took up residence in Sydney where we spent sixty-five years of married life up to the time of her recent passing.

During this period a second son, Wayne Boyd, was born.

Valerie excelled as an artist and specialised in water colour painting of Australian flora and fauna. She exhibited in Sydney, London and Singapore and produced commissions for private and commercial parties. Her talents also extended to other arts and crafts, including dressmaking, embroidery, knitting, porcelain doll making, teddy bear making and beadwork.

She is survived by her husband Ralph, sons David and Wayne, granddaughters Tanya, Sonia, Tiffany and Lara.

**BOURKE, Myra Jean**  
(née Schafferius)  
d. 27 July 2020, aged 77

Myra Schafferius was born in Wondai, Queensland in April 1943, the second youngest of eight children. She grew up on a dairy farm in Murgon where she attended high school, and where her interest in English literature was kindled by an inspiring teacher. She trained as a high school teacher in Brisbane in 1961, specialising in secretarial teaching.

From 1962 to 1965, she taught at Murgon High School and at

Malanda High School on the Atherton Tablelands. Two years working in England followed before Myra returned to Australia, changing her name from Myra to Jean. Jean taught at Murgon High School in 1968 and then at Fairholme College in Toowoomba.

She was restless and applied for a secretarial position at Coconut Products Limited in Rabaul, travelling there in late 1970. Within a few weeks, she moved to Tavui Secretarial College near Nonga Hospital, where a progressive teacher is said to have decided to convert the village primary school into a secretarial college, and the principal was keen to find trained experienced secretarial teachers.

Jean taught secretarial skills to girls from all over the New Guinea Islands region from 1971 to 1976, firstly at Tavui then in Rabaul after the college was moved to town. At the end of 1973, she married Mike Bourke, a food crop agronomist based at the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries



Myra Jean Bourke

(DASF) station at Keravat, forty km from Rabaul.

In January 1977, Jean and Mike returned to Australia where their first son, Edward, was born. Then they went to London, travelling in the UK and Western Europe. At the end of 1977, Mike had been offered a number of positions in the tropics, but they returned to PNG as the security situation was better in the PNG highlands than in the other tropical locations.

The family was based at Aiyura near Kainantu and Jean was offered three teaching positions on arrival. She chose a part-time volunteer position at Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Ukarumpa and taught typing. Their second son, Patrick, was born at Ukarumpa in March 1980.

In April 1983, the family returned to Australia where Mike was to undertake doctoral studies at the Australian National University. Jean continued her studies as an external student in English literature from the University of Queensland and graduated with a BA in 1985.

She returned to paid teaching in 1987 and taught typing to children with writing difficulties in Canberra for twenty years, retiring in 2007.

Her interest in literature, feminist issues and Australian indigenous issues led to a number of writing and editing projects. The most important edited published books, which were done with other female editors, were *Our Time, but Not Our Place: Voices of Expatriate Women in Papua New Guinea* and *Weaving a Double Cloth: Stories of Asia-Pacific Women in Australia*.

She provided significant editorial support to indigenous leader, Dr Chris Sarra, for his autobiography, *Good Morning, Mr Sarra: My life Working for a Strong,*

*Smarter Future for Our Children*.

Some comments written by friends and family after her death give further insights into her as a person and these are included on a longer vale on the PNGAA website.

She is survived by sons, Edward and Patrick, and granddaughter Ann Myra.

**Mike, Edward & Patrick Bourke**  
**BOURKE, Peter**  
d. 18 June 2020, aged 81

Peter, born 3 December 1938, came from a farming family and worked with his parents at Mungindi (NSW) and Stanthorpe (Qld) where he sheared sheep, fenced and did what all farmers do.

His contribution to Papua New Guinea as a teacher is legendary as were the stories he loved to tell. He was a true raconteur. Peter did his e-course primary teachers' training in Rabaul in the 1960s and then taught at Ajeka Primary School, next to the Kumusi River in the Oro Province.

Next was a move to the Sepik Province where he opened Passam Primary School opposite where the Passam National High school now stands. He also taught at Kaboibus in the Maprik area of the Sepik and collected many Sepik traditional artistic stools, carvings, pottery and shields in the 1960s. Peter's family have donated this collection of Sepik pottery to the Brisbane Art Gallery.

One of Peter's Sepik students, Charles Andreas, shared tales of how Peter motivated his students through stories. Peter shared many stories of the hardships during that time especially driving into Wewak on his motorbike along muddy dirt tracks and waiting for overdue food supplies to be delivered by plane.

There was never a dull moment when Peter came into the



Peter Bourke with a special Kwoma spirit pot he collected from the Sepik

Wewak Education office usually accompanied by a variety of students all eager to experience the 'big smoke'.

Australian Primary teachers were localised at PNG's Independence in the mid-1970s and Peter used his 'golden handshake' to purchase a block of units in Nambour, QLD. Peter returned to PNG, firstly working in Adult Education in the Sepik, then transferring to Port Moresby where he worked in the localisation unit of Posts and Telegraphs, and then in the PNG Department of Personnel Management, and finally in a training unit at the Ok Tedi mine. Peter mentored many Papua New Guineans.

On his return to Australia he settled in Nambour and worked in Yandina in real estate, a career he threw himself into with gusto. He never forgot his many PNG friends and acquaintances, both local and expatriate, and loved to dine out and share his experiences. One of nature's gentlemen.

**Keith Stebbins & Ray Watson**  
**Dunbar-Reid, Richard**  
d. 13 October 2020, aged 80



**DYER, Keith Dyer, ISO**  
**d. 17 August 2020, aged 97**

In August 1942 Keith joined the AIF, having been refused by the RAN and RAAF due to poor eyesight. In late 1944 Keith successfully applied for a course at Duntroon, Canberra, for training of Patrol Officers for ANGAU—the military administration of Papua and New Guinea.

Keith was the youngest to graduate and, with the end of the war, he went as a patrol officer in ANGAU to Port Moresby in December 1945. His military discharge was obtained in Lae on 26 March 1946, and he started as a civilian patrol officer that same day.

In June 1946 he was the junior member of a party of five that were the first postwar civilians to return to Rabaul, which had been the Japanese headquarters in New Guinea throughout the war and which was still recovering and repatriating Japanese.

He worked on the Gazelle Peninsula (Rabaul/Kokopo) until October 1947 when he moved to Mosman NSW and at the end of 1949 graduated with a Diploma of Pacific Administration from the first Long Course of the School of Pacific Administration. During that course, on 18 December 1948, Gwen and Keith married.

During 1950 Keith was Patrol Officer in charge at Taskul, New Hanover, New Ireland District. In 1951 they went to Kavieng where Keith was Acting Assistant District Commissioner. Lynette was born at Kavieng Hospital on 20 September 1951.

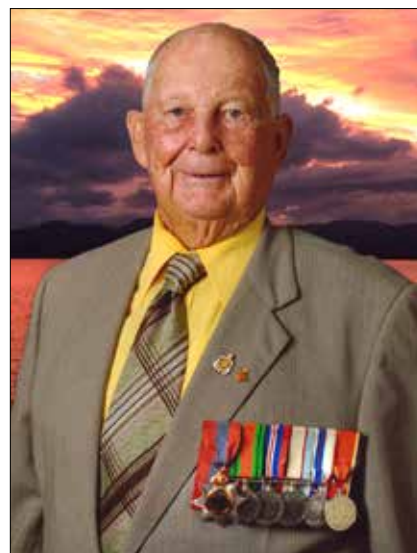
A move to Madang District in 1952 resulted in seven years as Assistant District Commissioner,<sup>1</sup> including a nine months' temporary transfer to Goroka. Most of the

time in Madang was on outstations—about three years at Bogia and almost four years at Saidor. John and Peter were both born at Madang Hospital—John 7 July 1953 and Peter 19 January 1958.

In 1959 there was a brief return to Goroka before a posting to Mendi, Southern Highlands, as Deputy District Commissioner. Of the three years there, the last two were acting as District Commissioner. Mark was born at Wapenamanda in the Western Highlands (now ENGA Province) 8 October 1961.

1963 was spent in Australia completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Queensland University before returning to Port Moresby as Principal Lands Officer with the Lands Department. It involved close liaison with the Justice Department on matters relating to land disputes, restoration of titles, land alienation and the training of staff in land investigations. Keith was also a member of the Land Board.

In June 1966 Keith was appointed District Commissioner for the new West New Britain District and went to temporary District HQ at Hoskins where Keith said: 'A development explosion occurred in that exciting District.' It was a huge challenge but before



Keith Dyer

the new District HQ at Kimbe was completed Keith was summoned to Port Moresby in mid-1969 to act as First Assistant Secretary for the Department which he did for two years leading up to self-government.

Late 1971 Keith transferred to a planning position with the Economic Advisor in the then Department of Lands, Surveys and Mines. Here he enjoyed becoming involved with major projects such as Bougainville and Ok Tedi copper and this, ultimately, led to his involvement in forming first the Office and later the Department of Minerals and Energy during 1974.

PNG attained full Independence during 1975 but Keith remained with Minerals and Energy as Assistant Secretary, and for a few weeks in 1980 as acting Departmental Head, until departing PNG at the end of June 1980.

Keith had set up a new department with a local university graduate, Nigel Agonia,<sup>2</sup> born 1948 at Gabutu, Port Moresby, who initially worked for him and eventually became his boss, with Keith his First Assistant Secretary! Keith acknowledged 'This was as it should be.'

Keith was awarded the Imperial Service Order (ISO) in the 1979 Queens Birthday Honours and the PNG Independence Medal; the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal; two Scouting Thanks Badges, and the Golden Kumul (equivalent to the Australian Silver Kangaroo) and a life membership of the Port Moresby Tennis club. Gwen represented PNG twice in the South Pacific Games (table tennis at Port Moresby and Tahiti) and John once (swimming at Tahiti).

Keith has written:

*I enjoyed a unique career which is no*

*longer possible. The experience was extraordinarily wide and it was my fortune through the HQ experience to visit all but about 2 of the 140 odd government stations scattered throughout the country. Very few have had this privilege.*

*My career in PNG was exciting, often difficult, and something different every day. My responsibilities included initial contact in uncontrolled territory; maintenance of law and order; police officer; magistrate; justice of the peace. I was the legal authority for births, deaths and marriages; bank master; treasurer and financier; post master; labour inspector; census taker; road maker as well as hosting and accommodating visiting dignitaries and so much more.*

*When opportunity permitted, I liked to be involved with sport and community affairs. For seven years I was National Treasurer of the Scout Association and helped raise in excess of 150,000 Kina (AU\$200,000). I played cricket in East New Britain, golf in Goroka and squash and tennis whenever I could, building tennis courts at Saidor and Mendi.*

*My services were amply rewarded with good superannuation in the career sense but there were other tokens of appreciation—many received during the early years from the local people were greatly appreciated.*

**ENDNOTES**

- 1 Prior to a 1960's reorganisation of the former Department of Native Affairs a District Officer (DO) was the District Commissioner's number 2 in a District (later Province). In charge of sub-districts were Assistant District Officers (ADOs). The reorganisation resulted in DOs being renamed Deputy District Commissioners (DDCs) and ADOs being titled District Officers. DOs in charge of a sub-district were given the title Assistant District Commissioner (ADC). Other DOs were appointed to special duties (SD) or specific 'non-general field duties', usually based in District (Provincial) Headquarters. Eg DO Local Government (DLGO); DO (Lands); District Government

Liaison Officer (DGLO); or to full-time magisterial duties.

- 2 Nigel Agonia also became PNG's cricket team's captain.

Editor: There is more information in Keith Dyer's vale on the PNGAA website

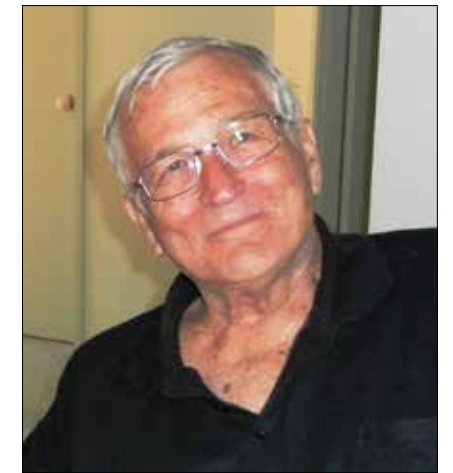
**FOWKE, John Philip**

**d. 10 September 2020, aged 81**

John was born in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) on 12 February 1939. His British tea planter family had been resident there for several generations but emigrated to New Zealand in 1947. After completing his education John had a number of jobs before being accepted, in 1958, as a Cadet Patrol Officer in the TPNG Administration's Department of Native Affairs (DNA).

He was posted to Kikori in the Gulf District where he served two terms. These included postings to Patrol Posts at Baimuru (a new station which he established replacing Beara, taking advantage of an oil-company-built airstrip) and Ihu. Returning for a third term he chose to transfer to the Co-operatives Branch of the DNA. This resulted in a posting to Talasea in West New Britain where he helped to form the Central Nakanai Native Association—a cooperative to market locally grown cocoa. He resigned in 1964 to accept an offer from Brian Heagney, in Mount Hagen, who was building up a business empire which included a soft drink manufacturing company, a tea and coffee packaging business, a service station, a freight company and numerous trade stores spread throughout the highlands.

John had met Penelope Joan McDonald whilst on leave in Sydney. They quickly became engaged and Pennie proceeded to TPNG on the *Bulolo* to be married. She also worked for Heagney and enjoyed



John Fowke

exciting drives out into the bush stocktaking and re-stocking the many trade-stores and collecting the takings.

However, John's desire was to manage a coastal plantation. He also believed that it would give him more time to achieve his ambition to become an author. Thus it was that he and Pennie spent three years managing a Steamships Trading Company (STC) copra plantation called Mamai, in Amazon Bay, Central District.

Aware of his highland's experience STC asked John to go to the Eastern Highlands District to manage their Goroka Coffee Producers coffee mill. John ran the mill for three years during which time his son, Philip, was born in Port Moresby.

In 1971 John moved the family back to Australia and his daughter Anna was born in Sydney in 1971. John took a job with Mobil in Townsville and spent eighteen months there before taking on the Mobil depot in the Far North Queensland town of Mareeba. During this time Pennie and John bought and planted a mango orchard.

Travelling back to PNG in 1975, John managed Korfena coffee plantation near Goroka until 1980. Returning to Australia John began



writing his novel *Time of Rain* under the nom de plume, John Stafford, and it was later published in 1984 by Rigby Publishing.

However, PNG again beckoned, and the family returned to Goroka in 1982 on a short-term contract with the (then) Coffee Industry Board.

Pennie and the children were based in Brisbane from 1983, as John did not want his children having the boarding school experience of his own childhood. From 1983 onwards John tried to settle in Brisbane.

However, his yearning for PNG led him back to the Mount Hagen area in 1986, where he worked for coffee planter, Dick Hagon. He then managed Kurumul Plantation, which had recently been purchased by an English company and he followed this with a stint with another highland's coffee pioneer, Red Williams.

John then 'settled down' for three years setting up and running the AgBank's management company, formed to encourage and assist local small-holder coffee growers—the 'Twenty Hectare Scheme'. Around this time John was writing his book, *Kundi Dan*, at the request of the Leahy family. The biography of Danny Leahy was published in 1995 by Queensland University Press.

In 1992 John returned, with Pennie, to Goroka once more. John became the quality control adviser to the Coffee Industry Corporation. The early 1990s saw much turmoil in the PNG coffee industry with the International Coffee Organisation and its quotas policy, political interference, bad management, increased competition and some questionable operators which, worst of all, resulted in a decline in quality.

In 1992 John was tasked, by the newly-constituted Coffee Industry Corporation, to introduce the Coffee Improvement Programme. Through his efforts 'the reputation of PNG coffee (was) substantially, if not totally, restored'.

In 2001, sadly, Pennie died after a year-long battle with cancer. John continued to work in PNG for the Coffee Industry Corporation implementing many of his ideas and insights. This period of his work life was satisfying but he suffered the loss of Pennie greatly.

In 2008 John retired to Brisbane but kept in touch with PNG, writing prolifically about PNG and its future. He believed passionately in the country and her people and their potential. He left an unpublished novel set in New Zealand, which he would have loved to have seen published. John is survived by his sister Felicity, his son Philip, daughter Anna and his two grandsons, Tom and Jack Fowke. He died peacefully with his family, reminiscing about a rich and adventurous life, well spent.

**Anna Fowke & Chris Warrillow**

**FURNESS, Norman Harold, OAM (VX23557)**

**d. 31 August 2020, aged 98**

Dearly loved husband of Val (dec.) for fifty years and Beryl (dec.) for ten years. Survived by Barb & Rob (McLeod), Denise and Tim (Watkins), Jan & Trevor (O'Brien) and their children and grandchildren.

*(Please turn to the vale in 'Memorial News' in this issue.)*

**GUEST, Ann Patricia 'Pat'**  
**d. 5 September 2020, aged 97**

Loved Wife of Bill Guest (dec'd), and mother of Annette and Scott.

**HUNTER, Richard (Dick), Campbell**

**d. 9 September, 2020, aged 75**

Dick became a Cadet Patrol Officer on 1 April, 1964. His first posting was to the Western District where he served two terms. He then served in the Southern Highlands District (SHD) until he and his family 'went finish' in 1976.

He and Noel Cavanagh (another former SHD kiap) bought a newsagency in Nambour, Qld. However, after three years Dick left for Melbourne where he joined another former SHD kiap, Peter Barber. Both held senior positions with the RSPCA before retiring. Dick spent his final years in Eden, NSW.

**MUNKLEY, Graham Rowland**

**d. 25 May 2020, aged 90**

Born on 4 June 1929, Graham came from a proud Queensland farming family and was educated at Ipswich Grammar School, where he excelled in both academic and sports subjects. He gained his Senior Teachers Certificate from Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education in 1948 and taught in Queensland schools before moving to Papua New Guinea, where in 1952 he became Head Teacher at Ela Beach Primary 'A' School.



Graham Munkley

A distinguished career in education saw him serve across Papua New Guinea in a variety of roles. Graham had postings to Madang, Wau and Goroka before teaching in Dagua, Angoram and Vunamami community schools. He then served as Area Education officer in the Duke of York Islands, Vunamami and Kokopo, and as District Education Officer in the Eastern Highlands, Southern Highlands and the Western Highlands.

In 1961 he was Principal of the Dregerhafen Teacher Training Centre. He then served as District Inspector in the Sepik, Morobe and Chimbu and East New Britain followed by Inspector, Teacher Education Division, then as Inspector for the Central District, and Provincial Superintendent in the National Capital District and as Regional Secondary Inspector for Papua, then Bismarck after a term in the Education Planning Section.

Graham took time off to study commerce and accounting at University of Queensland completing Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Economics and Post Graduate Diploma in Public Administration.

In 1978 Graham served as Superintendent of Curriculum/Inspections National Institutions Division and in 1988 was appointed as Senior Liaison Officer-Schools Administration.

Graham developed professional development courses in school administration, curriculum and in-service training. He was chairman of the national high school's curriculum development committee and coordinated an In-service training week for 600 teachers.

For many years Graham set

the Grade 10 Commerce School Certificate examination and chaired marking panels. He coordinated the first Higher School Certificate examinations and was a member of the College of External Studies and National High School Boards of Studies.

Graham's positions at Education Headquarters in Waigani, Port Moresby, included a role in the establishment of the International Education Agency, the guiding body for both primary and secondary curricula in International Schools as it separated from the Education Department.

He liaised with Bougainville Copper and Ok Tedi in establishing their education services and was a rostered consultant for the United Nations in Education. In 1991 his last position was Coordinator of the PNG/Australian Governments Scholarship Program.

In Port Moresby he sang with the Choral Society and performed in drama productions. Graham was proud of his contribution to education in Papua New Guinea, and his support and friendships with Papua New Guineans, many who became leaders.

After leaving PNG in 1993, he joined many volunteer organisations, being especially happy with his volunteer work for the Sydney Olympics and Para Olympics.

He worked with the 'Luncheon Club' a group under the patronage of the Lord Mayor of Sydney that assisted terminally ill HIV/AIDS sufferers. He eventually moved to Brisbane to be near his family and old friends. His lifelong support of the aspirations of Papua New Guineans and his contribution to the life and welfare of the country will long be remembered.

**Keith Stebbins**

**O'DONOHUE, Carolyn (née Dart)**

**d. 19 August 2020, aged 77**

Carolyn was born in Sydney in September 1942 and trained as a nurse and midwife at the Mater Hospital in Sydney. She had an adventurous spirit and visited different places during her holidays.

In late 1965, soon after completing her nursing training, Carolyn headed overseas by ship. She spent twelve months working in London and then teamed up with three girls she had met on the ship from Australia. They bought a VW Kombi van and set off to explore the UK and the Continent.

In late 1967 she returned to Australia and worked at the Mater Hospital in North Sydney for six months. She then joined PALMS, a missionary group and, after a short training course, was sent to work at a Catholic mission hospital in Port Moresby.

She was preparing to return to Sydney when Helen, a childhood friend who lived with her husband in Rabaul, invited her to visit before Carolyn left PNG. She accepted and flew to Rabaul. She liked what she saw there so Helen, who was also a nurse, suggested she apply for a position at the Nonga Base Hospital. She had an interview with the matron on a Friday and started at the hospital on the following Monday.



Carolyn O'Donohue



Carolyn worked there for the next two years during which time she learnt to scuba dive. In early 1970 she met John O'Donohue, a cocoa agronomist based at DASf, Keravat and they married in April 1971. They had four children (Meagan 1972; Kylie 1973; Bevan 1975 and Liam 1978) so Carolyn was kept busy with family responsibilities in this period of her life.

They purchased Vunapau Plantation near Keravat in the early 80s and spent the following years growing cocoa commercially. While at Vunapau, Carolyn spent much of the working week ferrying the children to and from school at Keravat and Rabaul, but she did make time to set up an aid post and counselling services for the plantation labourers, their families and neighbouring villagers.

The family returned to Australia in 1989 and John bought a farm near Boonah, southwest of Brisbane, growing lucerne, cattle and pigs. After selling the farm they bought a house in the Brisbane suburb of Gaythorne. John had a two-year stint as a real estate salesman and then he and Carolyn embarked on a number of small-scale property developments. Carolyn also returned to full-time nursing, at nursing homes for seven years, and then at the Prince Charles Hospital for the next fifteen years.

She was born to be a nurse and had the best interests of her patients at heart as well as being a staunch advocate for her fellow nurses. She was appointed to the Nursing Consultative Forum as a nursing representative for the hospital, and used this platform to bring about change which she perceived to be necessary. She was forthright in her manner and had no hesitation in putting her point across, even to the matron of the hospital. She

ended her career as a nurse on her seventy-first birthday in 2013.

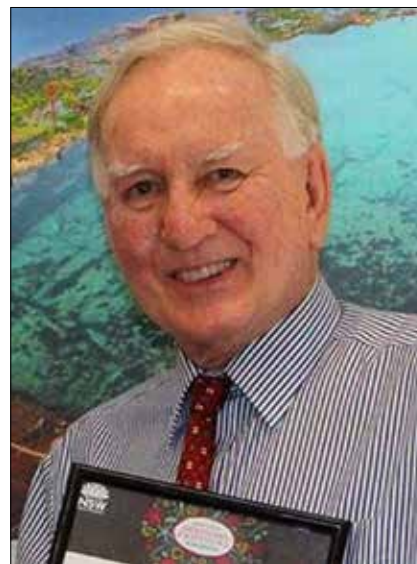
In her retirement years, Carolyn indulged her passion for gardening and assembled a huge array of plants. Carolyn was a wonderful mother to their four children and a loving grandmother to their nine grandchildren. She is survived by John, her husband of forty-nine years; their children Meagan, Kylie, Bevan and Liam; and their grandchildren Sam, Cole, Caden, Stella, Lola, Ned, Grace, Jack & Elle.

**John O'Donohue & Mike Bourke**

**REARDON, Ian**  
*d. Early August 2020*

Ian and his family lived in PNG from 1965 until 1984. His first posting was in Popondetta although Ian's wife, Helen, and children Dianne and Mark were unable to join him for some months because of lack of accommodation. After three years there, a year was spent in Kokoda, four years in Alotau, a year in Daru, eighteen months in Wau and eight years in Lae.

Ian was the Provincial Rural Developmental Officer and expenditure Plan Co-ordinator with Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries.



Peter Trist

Born on 1 April 1935, Ian grew up in Warrnambool, Victoria. After leaving PNG the family lived in Sydney. Helen died on 27 October 2010. Eventually, Ian went to Albany Creek in Queensland to be near son Mark.

Ian was on the PNGAA Committee from 1999–2008 and both he and Helen were regulars helping with labelling and packing of *Una Voce* through those years as well as assisting with various other committee roles.

**TRIST, Peter Oliver Edward**  
*d. 11 February 2020, aged 83*

Peter had wonderful parents whose sense of occasion was passed on to him with the initials of his name being POET.

His love of performing formally began when he completed a National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) production course.

Peter soon settled into a media career, and eventually went to Port Moresby where he worked at the University of PNG from 1966 to 1972, and as Senior Producer Drama and Features at the National Broadcasting Commission from 1974 to 1984.

Peter found the relay services from Australia were not particularly relevant to PNG audiences. He encouraged local writers to write original plays for radio, adapted books of interest to PNG audiences and also encouraged local musicians who would come and record on cassettes. Peter found the work challenging and interesting.

His huge output of radio features and dramas gave many Papua New Guineans and expatriate actors their chance to shine in theatre. Household names like Roslyn Bobom, William Takaku, Rose and Jean Kekedo and John Billie Tokume, and many

others, honed their craft crowded around 9PA's microphone, scripts in hand and eagerly awaiting Peter's cues and directions. In those far off days PNG had no TV and radio was king. *Sunday Night Theatre* was a program not to be missed.

Peter also directed at the Arts Theatre in Port Moresby working with playwright John Kolia and others. His golden voice and great personal warmth (and tact!) put us all at our ease.

On his return to Australia he was described as a hero of the Hunter for his remarkable series of monthly book chats held for audiences of around fifty people in the Newcastle Library. This dedication won him a NSW Senior's Local Achievement Award.

Peter Trist was interviewed by Jon Ritchie in the *Australians in Papua New Guinea (PNG) 1942–1975* oral history project, which is a sound recording in the National Library of Australia.

**Ray Watson**

**Weaver, Patsy**  
*d. 13 October 2020, aged 104*

**WRIGHT, Noel Wright**  
*d. 20 September 2020, aged 78*

Noel was born in Sydney on 27 June 1942 and lived in NSW until his appointment as a Cadet Patrol Officer on 26 February 1962, in what was then called the Department of Native Affairs in Papua New Guinea. His first term was spent in West New Britain, with postings to Cape Gloucester, Hoskins and Talasea.

In 1964, Noel attended the ASOPA Long Course in Sydney and upon returning to Papua New Guinea he was posted to Komo in the Southern Highlands. Just prior to returning, he also happened to catch the eye of one Maxine

Paterson on a Gold Coast beach. Four years of correspondence between them followed.

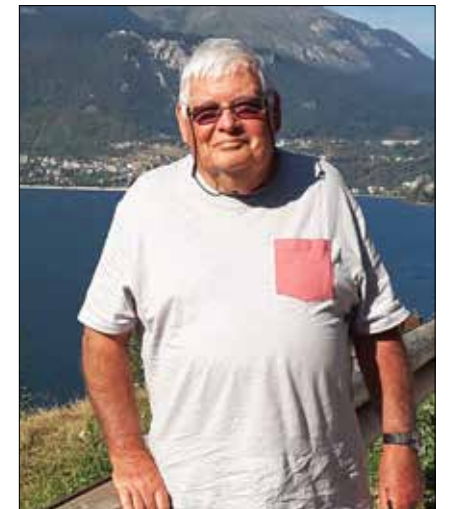
Noel and Maxine were eventually married in February 1969 and were posted to Poroma in the Nipa Sub-District. This was followed by postings to Ialibu, Nipa and Tari and then it was off to the Gulf District for sixteen months with postings to Malalaua, Kikori and Kerema. Happily, for Maxine, they were then posted back to the Southern Highlands to Tari then to Mendi, back to Tari, and finally to Mendi from where they 'went finish' on 13 December 1981.

Noel was a very diligent field officer and led many patrols in both the Southern Highlands and Gulf Districts. Up until their son Darren was born in 1974, Maxine 'accompanied' Noel on some of these patrols including an arduous ten-week foray amongst the Foi and Fasu in the Lake Kutubu area.

Noel was very suited to outstation life. He became an excellent cook, particularly of Asian cuisine, a clever and creative photographer, a mean tennis player who took no prisoners, a bibliophile and a melophile. He was a very convivial host. At his side, Maxine epitomised the perfect kiap's wife, and, as a single kiap, the writer was one of the well-fed beneficiaries of her care.

After returning to Australia in 1981, Noel set about re-establishing himself. He owned a hardware business at Southport for twelve years and, during this time, acquired a Bachelor of Business degree from Griffith University.

In 1995 he commenced a second career in Papua New Guinea in the role of Business Development Officer at Porgera gold mine. After Porgera, he worked as a Business



Noel Wright

Development Manager on the PNG LNG Project and for twelve months prior to permanently retiring in 2012, he worked in Australia as a consultant to the Frieda River project.

Noel was an inveterate traveller and over the years he and Maxine traversed the globe from Mongolia to Antarctica, across Asia, South America and Africa, Japan, Europe and the Middle East. Noel planned their journeys meticulously and a legacy of their travels is a marvellous photographic record supplemented by Maxine's detailed daily notes. (*Trip Advisor* has nothing on the Wrights!)

Noel and Maxine also traversed much of Australia by car and caravan, often accompanied by or meeting up with good friends. The Tamworth Music Festival was an annual pilgrimage in the caravan. Noel was still planning further adventures right up until his hospitalisation.

Noel was well read and possessed a quick, dry wit that he wielded like a rapier.

He was much loved and respected by those who knew him. He had many friends and was embraced by all of their families. Noel passed away at the Gold Coast Hospital following neurosurgery.





Maureen and Bill Yeomans

He leaves behind his beloved Maxine, his son Darren, daughter-in-law Dani and grandson Jacob. He is also survived by his sister Ann and brother Ian.

*'To live in the hearts of others is not to die.'*

**Dave Ekins**

**YEOMANS, Maureen Anne (née Spencer)**

**d. 9 July 2020, aged 85**

Maureen was born in Rabaul on 8 May 1935 to Tom and Stella Spencer, then of Kenabot Plantation near Kokopo. Apart from absences

during the war and to attend boarding school, Maureen spent her life until the early seventies in PNG with her husband, Bill, where they raised a family of four. Their youngest, Shane, was killed in a traffic accident in Lae. Bill was employed by the PNG Electricity Commission and they were posted to Rabaul, Wewak, back to Rabaul again and then Lae.

After WWII Maureen's family moved to plantations along the south coast of Papua spending time at Cocoalands, Veimari, Mariboi, Sagarai before moving back to

New Britain and taking up home at Raulavat Plantation on the north coast not too far from Rabaul. It was in Rabaul she met and married Bill Yeomans.

The Yeomans family left PNG prior to Independence and settled near the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. Always a lover of animals, Maureen and Bill settled, eventually, on small acreages where horses, dogs and other pets were comfortable.

Maureen lost Bill in 2005 through ill health and remained on their acreage at Peachester maintaining the property with the help of sons, Christopher and David, who made regular trips up from north of the city for that purpose.

Maureen passed away in Redcliffe Hospital from injuries following a fall. Maureen is survived by her children Christopher, David and Janine, nine grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren, as well as Maureen's siblings, Elaine and Ian.

*Note: Raulavat in Kuanua means 'On top of a stone or boulder'.*

**Ian Spencer**

**Correction to PNG KUNDU, June 2020, page 59:**

Peter Shanahan died on 13 March 2020, aged 79 years



## 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.

# MEMORIAL News

## RABAU & MONTEVIDEO MARU SOCIETY

**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 MS 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)**

## Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Signing of the Surrender of Japanese Forces at Rabaul, 6 September 2020

The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia commemorated the 75th Anniversary of the signing of the Surrender of Japanese Forces at Rabaul, at the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Memorial, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, on 6 September 2020.

The Instrument of Surrender was signed on HMS *Glory*. On that day General Hitoshi Imamura, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Imperial Southeastern Army formally surrendered to the Australian 1st Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Sturdee.

At the commemorative wreath-laying ceremony in Canberra, a warm welcome was provided by Mr Matt Anderson, PSM, Director of the Australian War Memorial. The PNGAA gratefully acknowledges the outstanding support of the AWM for this special occasion.

Both Mr Anderson and General Campbell acknowledged the passing of Norm Furness, OAM (VX23557), President of 2/22nd/Lark Force Association who passed away on 31 August 2020.

General Angus Campbell, AO DSC, Chief of the Defence Force, delivered the main address (*following*) reflecting on, and honouring, all those who served and who were sacrificed and remembering all combatants regardless of side or nation.

Unfortunately, His Excellency Mr John Ma'o Kali, PNG High Commissioner, was unable to attend at the last moment.

Other attendees included Her Excellency Mrs Vicki Treadell, CMG, British High Commissioner; Captain Manish Rai representing the High Commissioner of India; Major General Anthony Rawlins representing the Chief of Army; Rear Admiral Mark Hammond, AM, RAN, Deputy Chief of Navy; Air Commodore Phil Champion, Director General Strategy and Planning, Royal Australian Air Force; Colonel Mark Goina, PNG Defence Adviser to Australia; Major Brett Gallagher, Chief Commissioner Salvation Army.





Ms Rebecca Mills attended with her grandfather, Dr Les Drew, to represent 2/22nd/Lark Force Association, Michael White represented the NGVR/PNGVR Ex-Members Association and read the Ode.

A number of PNGAA members attended, however, numbers were limited due to COVID-19. All attendees were required to respond well in advance under AWM and governmental requirements.

On this clear, sunny Canberra morning, the Australian Federation Guard's Colour Flag Party added dignity and poignancy to the ceremony.

A bugler, SGT Duquemin, and a vocalist, MUSN Liz Cherry, from the Band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, were present with the vocalist singing both the Australian and PNG National Anthems.

Photos of the ceremony can be seen at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial/albums/72157715884995821>

A service was also held in Rabaul at the same time.

Following the ceremony a luncheon was held at The Pavilion, Northbourne Hotel in Canberra. John Reeves organised this luncheon with twenty-four attendees. **AW**

## Chief of the Defence Force Address

**GENERAL ANGUS J CAMPBELL, AO, DCS**

**Firstly, I want to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet—the Ngunnawal People—and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I would also like to acknowledge the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial, in front of which we have gathered today to commemorate the Signing of the Surrender of Japanese Forces in Papua New Guinea.**

***'Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won ...***

***The entire world is quietly at peace.'***

General MacArthur's radio address to the American people, 2 September 1945

THOSE WERE THE words of General Douglas MacArthur on the deck of the USS *Missouri*. He was speaking on the 2nd of September 1945, following the signature of surrender of Japanese Forces and the Japanese Government.

The moment marked the formal end of the Second World War.

As many as seventy-five million combatants and civilians lay dead; perhaps many more, uncounted. General MacArthur further declared that:

*In reporting this to you, the people, I speak for the thousands of silent lips, forever stilled among the jungles and the beaches and in the deep waters of the Pacific which marked the way.*



Some of the dignitaries at the ceremony, with General Campbell and the PNG Defence Attache, Colonel Mark Goina (second and third left) and Andrea Williams (centre), representing the PNGAA

This was a truth we knew too well, no matter which country you came from. Almost 40,000 Australians lost their lives in the line of duty; their families never to hear their voices. Many more were wounded, or prisoners of war or both. And many of those Australians who fought and died, or fought and survived were part of the campaign in New Guinea and Papua which ran from 1942 until the declaration of peace.

And today we remember all the combatants, regardless of side or nation. And we acknowledge the significant sacrifice and service of Papua New Guineans who defended their homeland. Who cared for and showed compassion to wounded Australian troops and their injured Allies? Who suffered greatly in a war that came unwanted to their shores and their way of life?

This memorial, is one of many that punctuate our landscape in remembrance. It is dedicated to the prisoners who lost their lives when the Japanese maritime vessel, MS *Montevideo Maru*, was attacked and sunk on 1 July 1942. It was but one tragedy within the greater catastrophe of world war.

Today, the 6th of September, we commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the surrender of Japanese Forces in Papua New Guinea. The surrender was formalised in an Instrument signed by Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee, General Officer Commanding of the First Australian Army, and by General Hitoshi Imamura, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Imperial Southeastern Army. Sturdee and Imamura put ink to paper aboard the British carrier HMS *Glory*, which sat in the waters off the coast of Rabaul. The Instrument was but one of many surrender documents signed by representatives of Allied and Japanese forces across the region.

And with the Japanese surrender in Papua New Guinea, there were sighs of relief. From Papua New Guineans. From Australians. From the Allied forces who had fought in the skies above Papua New Guinea; in its jungles; and on the surrounding seas.

And so today—reflecting on the Japanese surrender in Papua New Guinea specifically and the war more broadly—we commemorate. To honour those who served, and those who sacrificed on our behalf; to remember the principles and ideals that warranted the fight over six long years; and to reaffirm the hard-won, costly lessons of war.

Soldiers, sailors and airmen and women fought for their country, their community, their family and their mates. They fought for freedom—so that we could determine our destiny, and that our destiny would not



General Angus Campbell, AO, DCS, at the ceremony

be determined by others. They made a quiet promise—to defend liberty; to defeat evil—even with their last breath, if need be. Ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, embodied the simple virtues of Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity, and Excellence in defence of their nations.

Every country suffers in conflict, and conflict comes at a cost to our common humanity. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, the Montevideo Maru Memorial, and thousands of others stand as a testament to this truth. Speaking on the surrender of Japan, General MacArthur looked to the future:

*I speak for the unnamed brave millions homeward bound to take up the challenge of that future which they did so much to salvage from the brink of disaster. It is my earnest hope, and indeed the hope of all mankind, that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past.*

Hard words to hear, seventy-five years on.

Weighed against the cost of that war alone, it is uncertain whether we have lived up to the standards of peace and common humanity it demands. Indeed, it is uncertain if we could ever live up to that great cost. And we must make sure that their great sacrifice was worth what it taught us in loss and grief. But we have beaten our swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, before. We have made once bitter enemies our close friends.



Today we fight, when we must, alongside our hard-earned friends. We remember the principles for which we fight, and the cost of departing from them. Most of all, we must not forget the lessons of MacArthur's war-weary speech. We must not forget historical occasions such as the coming to peace in Rabaul. The friendship between Australia and Papua New Guinea has only strengthened through our remembrance.

And we must not forget the significance of memorials like this one. They offer us this moment to reflect on what it has cost for our society to remain open, and free, and in service of our communities and families while respecting our common humanity.

*Something that has come at such great a cost is truly invaluable. It should not be forgotten.*

*We must forever cherish it.*



## Farewell to Norm Furness

**NORMAN HAROLD FURNESS, OAM (VX23557)**

**15 January 1922–31 August 2020**

Norm, who was President of the 2/22nd Btn/Lark Force Assoc., was involved in the formative stages, in early 2009, of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, which has now been integrated into the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia. He tirelessly supported the fundraising for the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Memorial at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and spoke, on behalf of all the military, at the dedication ceremony on 1 July 2012.

Norm managed to survive the horrific onslaught of the Japanese in the early part of WWII—his escape from Rabaul in January 1942 involved walking down to Talasea in West New Britain, boating across to the Witu Islands and sailing out on the *Lakatoi* under extreme conditions from the Witu Islands to Cairns. He always remembered his mates who died in the Tol Massacre, on the *Montevideo Maru* and whilst escaping, through illness, hunger or drowning.

Each year in January there is a memorial service at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, for many years organised by Norm. And each year in July a casual gathering for families of Lark Force at the original campsite in Traawool, Victoria.

In 2012 Norm Furness was awarded the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Medal, and received an OAM in the Australia Day Honours 2016. The citation read: *'For service to veterans and their families.'*

Norm was involved with the erection of several memorials in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

- Memorial at the original campsite at Traawool in Victoria;
- The Montevideo Maru Memorial dedicated at Ballarat in February 2004;
- The Rabaul 1942–45 Memorial, dedicated 16 September 1993 on Rabaul foreshore;
- The Tol Plantation Memorial, dedicated May 1987 on the site where over 160 Australians were massacred by the Japanese;
- Plaque at Bendigo Soldiers Memorial Museum, dedicated 11 November 2011;

- Haus Niugini, Frankston, Victoria (part of RSL Park), dedicated 1991;
- Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Memorial, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT.

He is particularly well-known for his lifelong active work in support of the widows and families of the 2/22nd Battalion/Lark Force Association, and also for his commitment to the few survivors of the battalion, despite their widely scattered homes. In the 1960s and 1970s Norm was involved in raising funds to build three units at RSL Care, Frankston, for widows of the 2/22nd Battalion.

Following that, Norm was involved in the fundraising for Haus Niugini, Frankston, Victoria (now part of RSL Park), a community centre dedicated in January 1991. On a visit to Haus Niugini a few years ago, Norm realised that there was no longer knowledge about the 2/22nd Battalion/Lark Force which was disappointing.

Norm's efforts as Welfare Officer for the East Malvern RSL Sub-branch earned him both a Life Membership and an RSL Life Membership.

Norm has been interviewed regularly, including for John Schindler's DVD series: *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru* and *Some Came Home*. He was



Norm Furness (far right) with HQ Platoon, 2/22nd Lark Force Battalion

also interviewed for the Australians at War Film Archive: <http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/464-norman-furness>, and for the *Burwood Bulletin's* March 2013 issue, where he spoke about his escape from Rabaul in 1942.

Norm once said 'The 2/22nd Association has been my life as I was born in 1922, lived in house 22 in Fairfield, went into the 2/22nd Battalion, my Army Number VX23557 adds up to 22...'

Norm's seventy+ year commitment to the families of those who did not survive has been extraordinary. In order that history can learn from the past, and so that his mates did not die in vain, Norm has also worked to ensure that what happened to the 2/22nd Battalion, a unit which has not been re-raised, and Lark Force, will not be forgotten.

Norm Furness was clearly an outstanding Australian. Being one of a fortunate few to escape New Britain at the start of WWII, he has devoted his life to the 2/22nd Battalion community and to helping others. In selflessly and proactively caring about others over a long period of time, he demonstrates a wonderful spirit of humility, kindness and strength that all Australians might aspire to. He has been a loyal friend to his mates who did not survive Rabaul, 1942, by doing all he could to assist the widows and families, and to ensure the memories of their men live on.

Tributes flowed in on the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Facebook.

**ANDREA WILLIAMS**

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

## No Longer a Tropical Paradise

*Norm Furness gave the following talk at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, Victoria, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the invasion of Rabaul, 15 January 2017.*

Many of the force and locals, lost their lives as a result of the Japanese invasion. Approximately three hundred escaped, but have now long since passed on. I was an original member of the 2/22nd Battalion when it was founded at Trawool, seventy-seven years ago. We later moved to Bonegilla Camp with thousands of other men and we became the 23rd Brigade comprising four infantry battalions (the 2/21st, 2/22nd, 2/23, 2/24th).

However, things quickly changed and it was decided a new divisional makeup was required. The 9th Division was formed in the Middle East using men from the 6th and 7th Divisions. They wanted more troops from Australia and the 2/23rd and the 2/24th were chosen. This left us one battalion short, so the 2/40th Battalion from Tasmania joined us to make up the three battalions to a brigade. But more was to come!

We became part of the 8th Division and the rumour was that the whole division was going to Malaya, which it finally did. But guess what? Not the 23rd Brigade. Again, we were split up and the 2/22nd was to go to New Guinea, the other two battalions went to Darwin and later to islands in the Timor Sea—Timor and Ambon. Now, back to us!

We finally leave and sail from Sydney to God knows

December 2020 • Vol. 1, No. 4 • PNG KUNDU 61





Norm Furness at a 75th anniversary commemoration of the sinking of *Montevideo Maru* at Bendigo RSL, 2017

where, as we weren't told a thing. But it turned out to be Rabaul on the island of New Britain. Most of us had never heard of the place and we thought it was a tropical paradise. In Rabaul, the 2/22nd Battalion, comprising 946 men, including officers, was joined by several smaller groups, like signallers, engineers, anti-tank, anti-aircraft and medical units with others to finish up with a total of about 1,400 men. We became known as Lark Force. Then life became so different, we received orders and dug out foundations for two naval guns. We had them cemented in and only one practice shot ended up being fired! Life was good but this was not what we enlisted for. This sort of activity went on for about nine months. We became the 'Forgotten Unit', we lacked so many things and our equipment was so outdated some of it was completely useless.

Finally, Japan entered the war. From March 1941 until December 1941 we were garrison troops frustrated that the real war seemed so far away, but all that was about to change. As enemy planes were soon heard overhead, bombs began to fall ... and in January 1942 the war came to Rabaul! With Japan entering the war, it quickly indicated that Rabaul was indeed a prime objective and priority for them. Whilst listening to their planes overhead, our air force arrived—eight Wirraways, built in Melbourne, but built for one reason only—to teach our young pilots to fly. They weren't fighter planes and certainly no match for the Japanese Zeros. I personally saw the five that took off all shot down on their first mission up against the Japanese planes. The Japanese wanted Rabaul as a major base, so that from there they could push towards Australia.

On 23 January 1942 in the early hours of the morning, the Japanese invasion fleet arrived, and landings were soon taking place which we found impossible to stop.

We were so outnumbered—out gunned—we had no planes, as our gallant airmen had been lost in the air raids that preceded the landing. We lacked any modern guns and/or ammunition. Our meagre task force put up great resistance that left many of the enemy dead, but we were soon bypassed and surrounded. We had no choice, but to fall back under concentrated firepower and continual strafing by the Japanese planes.

Finally, the order 'Every man for himself' was issued as resistance became impossible, due to a total lack of supplies and communications. So without ammunition, stores, food or medicine, small groups of survivors headed for the mountain ranges behind Rabaul. Some men were to finish up on the south coast, others on the northern coast of New Britain.

The sad story of what happened after that has been told many times. Prisoners being massacred at Tol Plantation and Gasmata. Later, many prisoners of war and civilians lost at sea with the sinking of the Japanese ship, *Montevideo Maru*, on route to Japan. Others dying in the jungle due to sickness and starvation. We survived that and after months on the move in the most shocking conditions, owe our lives to Patrol Officer Keith McCarthy, who organised the escape plans that saved so many lives.

What happened in Rabaul was a tragedy. We should always remember the sacrifice made by the men of Lark Force. We had a job to do and we did it to the best of our ability with what we had. It at least delayed the enemy's push towards Australia.

Today, very few of those 1,400 men still survive. We are not here today to glorify war, but to honour our dead, and to pray that the younger generation learn by the mistakes of the past. ♦

Edited extract from *When the War Came: New Guinea Island 1942*, PNGAA, 2017



PNGAA's education package encourages students and adults to explore the significance of WWII in the Papua New Guinea islands. It complements the Australian History curriculum for secondary students and can be taught in one or two lessons.

All information is available online through our Rabaul and Montevideo Maru website:  
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(See details on page 6 of this issue)

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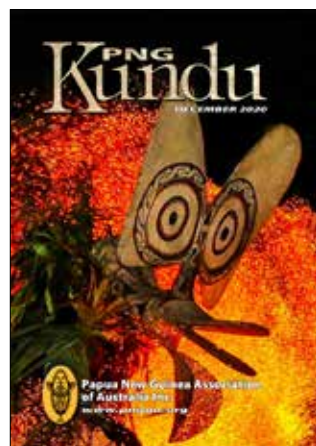
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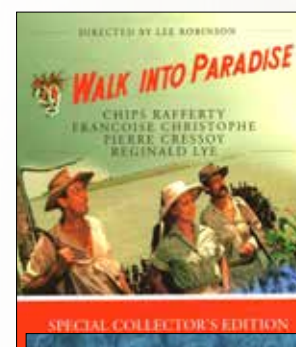
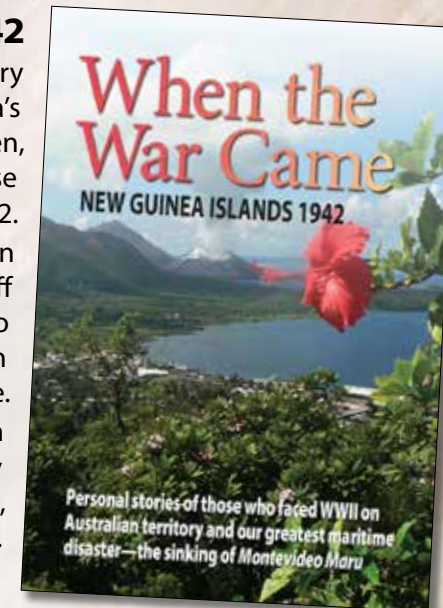
### WHEN THE WAR CAME: New Guinea Islands 1942

Published in 2017 by PNGAA to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*, Australia's greatest maritime disaster, tells the stories of the civilian and military men, women and children caught in the leadup and aftermath of the Japanese invasion and occupation of the New Guinea Islands in 1942.

The book brings into focus the actions and characters of young men who left home to willingly serve their country, and then literally vanished off the face of the earth; of nurses and missionaries who volunteered to stay to help both the war effort and the local people; and of civilians—both men and women—caught at home on WWII's Pacific front line.

Alongside are incredulous stories of escape and survival in an environment that threw every obstacle in their path, with a Foreword by the Hon. Peter Garrett, AM and an introductory piece by Max Uechritz, Large format, 544 pp, over 400 photos, index, etc.

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



### WALK INTO PARADISE: Collector's Edition

Starring Chips Rafferty and our own Fred Kaad, this unique film—directed by Lee Robinson and Marcello Pagliero, with cinematography by Carl Kayser—was shot on location in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, and showcases fabulous scenery, and an authentic sing-sing with thousands of fantastically adorned tribesmen and women.

**\$10.00 (+\$5 postage within Australia)**

### 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, and their families, tell their stories of living, working and growing up in PNG.

**\$25.00 (+\$5 postage within Australia)**

### ... and don't forget the PNGAA Tote Bag

These high-quality environmentally friendly, large laminated jute shopping bags, in natural colour, make great gifts and are great for everyday and your plastic bag-free shopping.

**\$15.00 (+\$10 postage within Australia)**



As a free service for our members, you are able to view or download digital versions of selected publications of interest including, amongst others, PNGAA's *Land of the Unexpected: Papua New Guinea*, David Montgomery's *A Didiman's Diary*, Bill Brown's *A Kiap's Chronicle*, Phil Ainsworth's *Keepers of the Gate: NGVR 1942*, Max Uechritz's *Our National Myopia*—with new titles being added regularly at [www.pngaa.org/e-books/](http://www.pngaa.org/e-books/)

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# Papua New Guinea Association of Australia

Papua New Guinea and Australia share an ongoing story that deeply connects them through history and people.

The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA) originally established itself as the Retired Officers' Association of PNG (ROAPNG) in 1951. The Association's role has progressively broadened and changed to include activities such as working to strengthen the civil relationship between Australia and PNG, supporting projects in PNG and facilitating communication, interaction and education about Papua New Guinea. The PNGAA fosters healthy conversations and development around identity, community, immigration and the increasing importance of our shared futures in a rapidly shifting global landscape.

We also aim to preserve historical and cultural materials related to PNG with the PNGAA Collection. Among the items in the collection are photographs and writings about the two world wars, which had such a profound and devastating effect on Papua New Guinea, and provide a background to the significant changes in the progress towards independence. Other sections of the collection include patrol reports (some with maps and photographs), oil and gold mining, family photographs and diaries, and a definitive collection of material relating to ANGAU and its functions.

The PNGAA wishes to ensure the collection is readily available worldwide to our members, researchers or those simply interested in the rich history of Australia's relations with Papua New Guinea.

PNG is now one of the fastest growing nations in the South Pacific. One of PNGAA's visions is to see the establishment of an interactive hub in Australia—a place of learning, cultural exchange and collaboration for community groups engaging the Pacific Nations.

This hub would enable knowledge, development and growth amongst our wider network and Australia's close neighbours—and recognise Australia's important role in developing PNG to become an independent nation on 16 September 1975, an achievement of which both countries should be proud.

We encourage you to explore and become actively involved with PNGAA so that we can all tell this story together.

Members receive four issues of our journal per year, full access to all content on the website, informative emails via *Tok Save*, and network through events and social media.

For more details, please turn to the Treasurer's Corner at the end of this issue or follow the link:

[https://pngaa.org/site/members/become\\_a\\_member/](https://pngaa.org/site/members/become_a_member/)

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

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