

# KPNG Kundu

*MARCH 2022*



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

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





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## PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

(Formally constituted in 1951—incorporated in 1996)

### 2021–2022 PNGAA Office Bearers

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**PNGAA Membership:** [www.membership@pngaa.net](http://www.membership@pngaa.net)—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 Membership & Order Form*, at the back of this journal, for more details. Application forms also are available from the Membership Officer or our website. For members receiving a printed copy of the journal, the address label shows the current status of your membership.

**PNGAA Store:** [www.pngaa.org/store](http://www.pngaa.org/store)—If you are interested in the history, adventure and stories of Papua New Guinea, and those who helped build the nation, then any of the items in our store will be a great addition to your library or a unique gift for any occasion. With every purchase you make, PNGAA attracts funds for ongoing work through the generosity of their writers and creators. Details of other items are available on our website or on the *Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form*, which can also be used to renew your membership, introduce a friend or family member who wishes to join, or book for a PNGAA function.

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### PNG KUNDU is the official journal of the PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

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Kundu is the *Tok Pisin* word for the hourglass-shaped drum that forms part of Papua New Guinea's Coat of Arms, and after which this journal is named (formerly called *Una Voce*). 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.

#### ◀ Deadline for the June 2022 issue: FRIDAY, 22 APRIL 2022 ▶

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**From the President**

The start of 2022 has come and gone again and perhaps, like me, you are in a little trepidation as to how the remainder of the year will unfold with COVID still hanging over us and seemingly endless debate about how to deal with it, including the seemingly pointless debate (in my mind) about whether to vaccinate or not.

Many of us who were born in PNG in the 1950s and 1960s, were vaccinated with BCG to provide us with protection against tuberculosis, and I don't ever recall there being much debate among parents as to whether or not to have children vaccinated. It was simply highly recommended and the advice of trained medical professionals was accepted as the right thing to do to save people from a serious disease. The same thing happened with smallpox

The Management Committee network on your behalf, organising and attending a wide range of events and activities, encouraging new members and possible partnerships to keep our association vital and viable. Featured here are reports from the committee, along with other news of interest and a welcome to new members.

and polio vaccinations and I daresay most of us were given a healthy start in life because these vaccinations were available and not fiercely debated or contested.

As I write this report, I am now waiting to see if a second COVID booster is recommended and I continue to be amazed at how much attitudes to public health have changed and how much resistance there is to vaccinations these days.

**'PNG Voices'**

I have recently had several conversations with the Whitlam Institute, located within the University of Western Sydney, in regards to their most recent research project specifically focused on Papua New Guinea. Entitled 'PNG Voices—Perspectives on Australia and the World', the report aims to provide Australian policy makers with enhanced knowledge about how the people of Papua New Guinea perceive themselves, their communities, their country and their relationship with Australia—

for the benefit of our long-term bilateral relations.

The report was produced after an extensive series of interviews, focus groups and surveys with a wide range of PNG citizens and is due to be published in March 2022. I am hoping to arrange a lunch event in Sydney where the PNGAA can participate in a public launch of the report.

**Corporate Membership**

Your committee has been continuing its work to promote the activities of the PNGAA and is considering a number of initiatives including increasing the participation of corporate members. Before doing so we need to define specific guidelines for such members and the executive committee and I now have these guidelines under active consideration.

We hope this will, among other things, create new partnerships that can be used to increase the resources and capacity of the PNGAA to provide a higher level of interaction with PNG and to address bigger challenges. Further information will be available once the committee has finalised its position.

**Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway**

We have also resurrected our discussions with the Board of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, located in the Sydney suburb of Concord. The Walkway is an established tourist attraction and educational site commemorating the battles along the Kokoda Track

during WWII. These discussions have been focused on the objective of securing a permanent home for the growing collection of books, documents, files and artefacts donated to the PNGAA over some years.

The site includes an education centre and kiosk as well as the walkway and, obviously, has a close affiliation with PNG. The actual land on which the Walkway sits is owned by Canada Bay Council and we are arranging discussions with the mayor and your committee feels that there is a natural synergy, which would provide benefits to both parties, including a potential increase in visitor numbers.

**PNGAA New Members**

The committee welcomes the following new members: Ron Austin, Tony Behm, Michael Challinger, Ken Cheung, Antonia da-Rin, Terence Hubbard, Yvonne & Tim Leahy, Richard Lee, Eddie Leonard, Debbie McNeil, Dorelle Parry, Ashley Rogers, Graham Setchell, Chris Skelding, Kim Terrell, Victor Terry, Brent Thomson, Peter Walpole and Quenten Watson.

*Hopefully, 2022 will be a healthy and fruitful year for all of us and I wish everyone the best.*

**CHRIS PEARSALL**  
*President, PNGAA*



This and later issues of PNG KUNDU acknowledge the eightieth anniversary of the year the Second World War came to Papua New Guinea.

This was a significant event in Australian history—never before had land under our control been attacked by a foreign power.

In this issue we recount the story of the bombing and invasion of New Britain, the initial military success of the Japanese and its horrific aftermaths, the Tol Massacre and the loss of the *Montevideo Maru*. Subsequent issues of the journal will retell the stories of battles in Papua and on the New Guinea mainland, and the long campaign that ended with the defeat of the invaders.

These well-recorded military histories are graphic illustrations of how war impacts the people directly involved—the men and women of the armed services and their families.

Australian and other civilian residents of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea had their lives seriously disrupted. Women and children were ordered back to Australia. Men were called into service in volunteer units of the Army. The people who were also seriously affected were the Papua New Guineans and resident Chinese who lived in the villages in and around where Allied forces and the Japanese fought pitched battles. The stories of some of those people are now being told, as in PNGAA's book, *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*.



**The PNGAA Needs YOU!!!**

Like most volunteer organisations, the PNGAA operates with the assistance of dedicated volunteers who are willing to provide assistance to further the development of the PNGAA and the advancement of its objectives.

Currently, the PNGAA Committee badly needs a few volunteers who are able to assist by providing a few hours each month to undertake a number of critical tasks essential to the smooth and efficient running of the organisation. Specifically, we need:

- A Committee Secretary • A Treasurer • An Events Co-Ordinator

Usually committee meetings are held about every eight weeks via Zoom, offering convenience for committee members not based in Sydney. You will be joining a dedicated group of existing committee members who have a strong interest in Papua New Guinea and its people, and who want to see the bilateral relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea continue to grow and prosper. It is now forty-seven years since Papua New Guinea achieved independence and since then the nation has achieved a lot through many difficult circumstances.

However, good relationships with Australia can only be maintained and grown with continued nurturing of the relationship at government level and through the work of organisations such as the PNGAA.

But the PNGAA can only be as effective as the collective skills and involvement of its members!!! That's why we need to fill the above committee positions.

If you can help, please feel free to contact me for any further information.

**CHRIS PEARSALL—[president@pngaa.net](mailto:president@pngaa.net)**



Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Centrepiece at Concord





Salamaua, 1928 (top); Salamaua 1938 (centre) and an unknown man—does anyone know who it is?

Other stories of the striking actions of individuals to the threat of war continue to emerge. An example, on page 18 of this issue, is the response of the Resident Magistrate on Misima Island when it seemed that Japan might invade.

This issue also records the life and death of Ben White, soldier,

coastwatcher and postwar planter with a special tribute on page 58.

And, on a lighter note, the front cover of this issue features a view of Kwato Island—an island in China Strait, Milne Bay Province. It is famous for the hilltop church that was built in 1891. More information about the church and Rev. Charles Abel, is included in ‘Saving Kwato Island’ on page 34.

**JOHN EGERTON**  
Editor, PNG KUNDU

### News from the PNGAA Collection

Early in 2022 a very welcome box was delivered from Maria Andrews full of historical documents and photos that her father, Roy Andrews, had collected during his lifetime.

Roy was a Kiap from 1959 until independence in 1975. He served in the Simbu Province, Milne Bay Province and finally at the District Headquarters in Samarai. His love for the country shines through in his collection and his strong interest in those who came before him.

Details of just a few of the items:

- Original photographs taken by John Hinton of prewar Salamaua.
- Old prewar postcards and small photo albums that he has collected.
- Warren Young’s self-published book on the Japanese occupation of Rabaul.
- Old photos but unfortunately some are unnamed.
- Copies of documents surrounding the Battle of Milne Bay, 1942.
- Three volumes of copies of letters written 1929–32 by JHW Johns

to his parents and sister. Johns appears to have been employed in Salamaua—perhaps at the Bank of NSW branch.

If you can shed any light on our unnamed photographs here, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you, Maria, for thinking of us and keeping these items safe until we could receive them.

If you have any material that you think might be of interest to us or of historical significance that you think should be kept, please contact me on 0438635132 or [collections@pngaa.org.au](mailto:collections@pngaa.org.au)

**CHERYL MARVELL**  
PNGAA Archivist

### Celebrating PNGAA’s 70th Anniversary with a Tropical Christmas Lunch

A great day was had by all, and we were fortunate to have Kylie Adams-Collier, with her lens and extraordinary eye, taking snapshots to remember this special day! Thank you so much, Kylie.

Julianne Ross Allcorn, an Archibald and Wynne Finalist, AGNSW 2021, winner of the AGNSW Wynne 2020 ‘Trustees Watercolour Prize’, and PNGAA Events Co-ordinator from 2009–15, generously donated the lucky door prize—a 2022 calendar and cards reflecting her wonderful paintings. These are available by contacting Juli.

Beautiful bilums were available for purchase through Karo Haltmeier, who is donating funds to the Sepik. PNGAA was pleased to assist Karo in this endeavour.

For a full report and some ‘mug’ shots, please see the Inside Back Cover of this issue.

**ANDREA WILLIAMS**



## Notice of Annual General Meeting—30 April 2022

The 71st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Incorporated will be held in Sydney on Saturday, 30 April 2022 at the Hornsby RSL, 4 High Street, Hornsby, NSW, commencing at 11.30 am.

A luncheon has been arranged starting at approximately 1.00 pm.

### AGENDA

1. Members present and apologies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of the 70th AGM, 1 May 2021—available on the PNGAA website at [https://pngaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PNGAA-AGM-1-May-2021\\_-002.pdf](https://pngaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PNGAA-AGM-1-May-2021_-002.pdf)
3. Business arising from the Minutes
4. President’s Report
5. Treasurer’s Report and receipt and adoption of the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021
6. General discussion

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

- a) to strengthen the civil relationship between the people of Australia and Papua New Guinea;
- b) to foster and encourage contact and friendship with Papua New Guineans and promote friendly association among members;
- c) to foster and maintain an interest in contemporary and historical events in Papua New Guinea;
- d) to provide appropriate financial, material or intellectual assistance to projects of benefit to

- e) to publish journals, magazines, newsletters, websites, books and other media to inform and educate people about Papua New Guinea and to provide a means of communication among members of the Association and others;
- f) to encourage the preservation of documents, historical and cultural material related to Papua New Guinea, including the production and recording of oral and written histories; and
- g) to safeguard and foster the retirement conditions of superannuated members of the former services in Papua New Guinea.

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

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

### AGM LUNCHEON DETAILS

The AGM should not take long and there will be plenty of time for mingling (observing social distancing as required). PNGAA requires that attendees are fully vaccinated. It is anticipated that there will be a guest speaker at the AGM so please watch the website, [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org), and social media for further information. Members, their families and friends are all welcome—but please let us know if you wish to come to the luncheon by either:

- completing the booking form and payment details on the ‘Treasurer’s Corner’ form included at the end of the March 2022 PNG KUNDU and returning it by Thursday, 14 April 2022; or
- by direct credit to the PNGAA bank account, including your surname, member number (if known) and the code ‘AGM’ in the transaction description—and followed up with a confirming email to [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net) as the full transaction details do not always show up on our bank statement.

The cost of \$45.00 per person does not include liquor or soft drinks but these will be available from a cash-only bar. Bookings and pre-payment are essential and need to be made by Thursday, 14 April please.

Please note that Good Friday is 15 April 2022.

Cancellations advised by Thursday, 14 April 2022 will secure a full refund. This is the date we need to inform the venue of final numbers; after this date the Association must pay for those unable to attend. All PNGAA functions may be affected by changes to COVID-19 restrictions applying in NSW.

There is free on-site parking available to those driving—entrance via Ashley Lane at the rear of the Club. The train station is nearby; public transport information Ph: 13 15 00.





**Perth Christmas Lunch, November 2021**

The Perth Christmas lunch was held at the RAAF Club on 26 November 2021 and the highlights of the day were the short films of the main towns in TPNG in the 1960s. Daryl Binning brought along his mobile projector and showed films of Moresby, Lae, Rabaul and Madang in the sixties. Fabulous. We all loved it.

Jill Worsley made another lovely quilt (pictured), featuring a bird of paradise,



(L-R) Romantha Barron, Linda Cavanaugh, Jill Worsley, Michael Lowe, Greg Leech, Trevor Muller, Doug Stewart, Peter Worsley, Rose Lowe, Brett Dowsing, Ron Todd, Daryl Binning with his projector, Margaret Dwyer, Maxine Collins, Robyne Petricevic née Stewart, Audrey Bredmeyer & Terry Collins

Reviews of events and reunions held throughout Australia and PNG, and a listing of upcoming functions and social gatherings for PNGAA members. If you and your friends have an activity to advertise or promote, or have been 'out & about' recently, please send your details, reviews and photographs to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net) by 22 April 2022, the Copy Deadline for the next issue.

Events are also listed on our website, under *Resources>Events*.

that raised \$90.00 for the PNGAA charities. Rose Lowe won the raffle.

Our next lunch will be on the 25 March 2022 and Daryl Binning will return us to our shared past with his marvellous films.

**LINDA CAVANAUGH**

**Asia Pacific Triennial Art Festival**

PNGAA members Belinda Macartney and Don Wotton, curator of Paradise Palette, visited an annual exhibition of Port Moresby Street artists held at the Petrie Terrace Gallery, Brisbane QLD.

They also attended the Asia Pacific Triennial Art Festival (APT10) at QAGOMA, South Brisbane. Their advice is to start on the top floor where PNG arts are well represented and work down towards the river café!

The exhibition is of its usual exceptional international standing



Belinda and Don at the Petrie Gallery and well worth a visit if you are in Brisbane. The exhibition closes on 25 April 2022.

**Lunch at Cairns, December 2021**

About twenty people attended our lunch in early December 2021. A newcomer was Maggie van Fleet, daughter of Peter van Fleet, who was on my kiap intake course in February 1972 (fifty years ago next month). Unfortunately, Peter is not in good health and is in a care facility in Brisbane.

As usual, old memories were shared, and a few good stories were told and retold, and a few new ones surfaced from the mists of time!! Caroline Fountain and Hugh Miller, who were also present, escaped the photographer (overleaf).

We had apologies from Allan Wood, Arch McArthur, Bobbie and Allan Graham, Chris Warrillow, John Mudge and Caroline McIntosh, Terry Gough and Wayne Dorgan.

**DERYCK THOMPSON**



**PNGAA Visit Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway**

**Wednesday, 23 March 2022**

The executive committee decided at its meeting on 27 January 2021 to visit the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord to examine further the potential for collaboration with that group.

All members of PNGAA are invited to participate.

**Venue:** Killoola Street, Rhodes Park, Concord 2137

**Time:** 10.00 am

**Parking:** Available at site and at Concord Hospital.

**Public Transport:** Rhodes is the closest rail station and within easy walking distance. See also: <https://www.kokodawalkway.com.au/planning-your-visit/>

**RSVP:** Contact Cheryl Marvell 0438 635 132 or Andrea Williams 0409 031 889.



**PNGVR Executive Committee Meeting**

**Saturday, 9 April 2022**

**Venue:** PNGVR'S Museum, Wacol, Brisbane at 10.00 am

**Catering:** Bring your own lunch. All members welcome.

**PNGAA Melbourne Luncheon**

Some PNGAA members and visitors gathered at the Curry Vault in Melbourne on 7 December 2021 to celebrate freedom—and to enjoy some drinks, food and conversation.

Looking forward to next curry lunch sometime in March 2022!

**ANDY GRAINGE**



**Cairns Lunch:**

1. Anna McGibbon, Phil Aldous, Ashley King, Jim van der Kamp and Graham King;
2. Laurie Bragge, John Wilkinson, Deryck Thompson, Dymrna Leonard & Lyall Forde;
3. Maria van Steveren, Maggie van Fleet, Paul van Steveren and Bob Welsh

**Melbourne Lunch**

- (L-R) John Reid, John Meehan, John Egerton, Chris Warrillow, Andy Grainge, Peter Lipton, Robin Gibson, Jenny Meehan & Shirlee Reid





## Death of Founding Father

Sir Pita Lus was born on 16 September 1935 in Lehinga in the Sepik district and died in Maprik not long after Independence Day in 2021.

He was a founding member of the Pangu Party and persuaded Sir Michael Somare to enter politics. He was a major figure and influence throughout his political career, being elected to seven Papua New Guinea parliaments including the first House of Assembly in 1964. His political career ended in 2002 after thirty-eight years. He was knighted in 1979.

He was not a recognised clan leader by birth and did not learn to read and write until he was twenty-four years old. He was raised by his mother and older brother and very early showed an independent and aggressive temperament.

He left home aged fourteen, finding work in Rabaul and Kavieng as a cook and domestic servant. By 1952 he was working for the Australian Navy on Manus Island. There he became a spokesman for a group of striking workers dissatisfied with their working conditions. At a hearing of the matter by the local kiap he identified himself as spokesman and put their case against unfair working hours.

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

Reportedly, he was struck and an angry scene resulted. This was resolved when negotiations resulted in improved working conditions. Sir Pita stayed on at Manus for another seven years training as a painter and becoming foreman.

In 1959 he returned to Maprik and asked a missionary at the South Seas Evangelical Mission to teach him to read and write. He reached Grade 3, became literate and then worked as a Pentecostal catechist in the Maprik Dreikikir region. Here he built his political power base and, eventually, defeated five other candidates to become member for Dreikikir. He transferred to the Maprik electorate in 1968 and he represented that for a further thirty-four years.

In parliament he was regarded both as an obstreperous rebel and, variously, as a parliamentary clown



Founding father Sir Peter Lus with Prime Minister James Marape

interjector, champion of the little man and outspoken critic of the colonial government.

At this early stage of his political career he constantly criticised expatriate domination of politics, claiming that they only made the profits and went away with them. He said he had a strong faith in the capabilities of Papua New Guineans and he was a very early advocate for self-government.

He was successful in business as well as in politics—he had interests in farming, trading and trucking. His last public appearance was on Independence Day 2021, when a frail Sir Pita was joined by Prime Minister James Marape. He continued to urge his compatriots to be independent and strong. He died on 1 October 2021, aged eighty-six.

**Editor's Note:** This tribute has been abstracted from Keith Jackson's post on Ples Singing: <https://plessingsing.com/2021/10/08/founding-father-sir-pita-lus-dies-at-86/>

## Pioneer Public Servant, Gabriel Buanam, Dies

The last of fifteen national district commissioners, who replaced expatriate commissioners in the late 1960s and early 1970s, has died. Gabriel Buanam, from Korak village in the Bogia district, Madang Province died on 20 October 2021 in his home in Madang. Gabriel served in the Southern Highlands, Milne Bay, West New Britain, Simbu, Eastern Highlands, Northern and Madang provinces as a public servant.



Gabriel Buanam, OBE

He started his career in 1964 after graduating from Sogeri High School in Central Province in 1963. The soft-spoken, down-to-earth man climbed the public service ranks to become a district commissioner for Milne Bay Province in 1973, replacing the late Kingsley Jackson. He was one of the top administrators then, and it was during his posting in Milne Bay that he and his late wife, Dorothy, hosted Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, Prince Philip, in their family home during a Royal visit in 1974.

In October 1982, during Her Majesty's next visit to the country, Mr Buanam was awarded the Order of the British Empire for distinguished services to the public service, among others like the late Noel Levi and Colonel Robert Dademo. Their investiture was held on board Her Majesty's yacht, *Britannia*, in Port Moresby.

The people in Tari, SineSine, Yongumul and Kainantu too, will remember him as the first local kiap who helped establish stations in those districts. After many years of serving in other provinces he moved to Madang in the late 1970s where he served as the deputy secretary for the Madang provincial

administration until he retired in 1984. He died two months short of his eightieth birthday and his body will be repatriated to his village for burial.

**Editor's Note:** Obituary, *PNG Post-Courier*, 26 October 2021.

## Telstra and Australian Government Buy Digicel Pacific

In a press release on 25 October 2021 Andrew Penn, CEO of Telstra, announced that the company had joined with the Australian Government to acquire Digicel Pacific, the biggest mobile operator in the South Pacific region. He said it was a unique and very attractive commercial opportunity for Telstra to boost its presence in the region. Its network already includes the Torres Strait Islands just off the coast of Papua New Guinea—Digicel Pacific's largest market.

With 1,700 employees and around 2.5 million subscribers Digicel Pacific is the number one telco in Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, and number two in Fiji. Telstra has also been a licensed operator in Papua New Guinea since 2012 and already provides connectivity and



Roadside booth in Port Moresby

technology services to a number of large enterprises there.

Telstra will contribute US\$270 million in equity for Digicel Pacific, and the Australian Government, through Export Finance Australia, will contribute US\$1.33 billion to the US\$1.6 billion purchase price. The government will also provide Telstra with strategic risk management support. Telstra will own 100 per cent of the ordinary equity.

Digicel Pacific will be run as a separate business and will retain the Digicel brand. The Digicel Pacific management team will continue the day-to-day running of the business.

## Retirement of Dr Ruth Turia from Papua New Guinea Forest Service

Dr Ruth Caroline Hitahat Turia (née Ruth Polume from Manus) was one of the first two women graduates from the Forestry Department at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology (PNGUT) Lae in 1980. The other woman was the late Agatha Pokatou from New Ireland.

Dr John Davidson in his last year at PNGUT (as Pro Vice Chancellor) recalls what an excellent student Ruth was when in her third year of the four-year Forestry Course during 1979.

Dr Ruth Turia has spent more than forty years with the PNG forestry sector, thirty of which were with the government forestry agency working in various sections, including industrial forest monitoring (enforcement and compliance), forest policy and planning, project



management and ten years with educational institutions (seven as a postgraduate student and three as an academic staff member).

In her last position with the PNG National Forest Service as Director of Forest Policy and Planning she engaged with both national and international agencies on issues relating to forestry and general policy issues relating to natural resource management and climate change.

Ruth has worked with external research and education partners, in research and learning directed at addressing the challenges of forest management and sustainability and general natural resource management, including climate change. She has directed and coordinated a number of national and external funded projects relating to forestry and climate change challenges, including coordinating the review to the amendment of the Forestry Act, 1991 (as amended).

During her career, after graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 1980, Ruth undertook a Diploma in Economic Policy Analysis at the Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research (1989), followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in Forest



Dr Ruth Turia

Science, Melbourne University (1994). In 1995, Ruth attained a Master of Social Science, Development Planning, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Ruth then went on to complete a PhD at the Australian National University in 2005, becoming the first woman from Papua New Guinea to gain a doctorate in Forestry.

Ruth's PhD thesis was titled *Cannot See the Land for the Trees. The forest management dilemma in Papua New Guinea.*

This thesis examined the role of customary landowners in the application of forest policies in the Australian colonial administration and the post-colonial state of the independent nation of Papua New Guinea. In particular, it examined the ways these policies have sought to reconcile the goal of sustainable forest management with the country's customary land tenure systems.

**DICK McCARTHY,  
Dr JOHN DAVIDSON &  
Dr RUTH TURIA**

### Death of Bougainville Leader, Joseph Watawi

On 15 December 2021 Andrew Kilvert of the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the death of Joseph Watawi, a champion of the independence movement in Bougainville and the instigator of the recent independence referendum. He was only sixty-one years old. He came from Gohi village in North Bougainville, where his mother was a chief and landowner in the matrilineal culture of Selau, and his father was a clan chief.

After education and training

at Malaguna Technical College and Lae Technical college Watawi began work at Rio Tinto's Panguna mine in 1979. Active in the union movement he found a role in advocating for the rights of both workers and land owners. Despite the mine's profitability, the royalties paid to land owners was insufficient to provide for food for their families.

The dispute over the mine's operations and its impact on landowners escalated and Watawi was instrumental in closing the mine when negotiations broke down. This led to a civil war between the PNG Defence Force backed by Australia and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army that lasted for ten years. New Zealand brokered a peace agreement in 2000.

As paramount chief of Selau during the civil war, Watawi found himself in the dangerous position of having to lead negotiations with the PNGDF.

A tall, commanding figure, a great intellect and great orator, he was able to survive this period while protecting the civilian population of Selau.

The Bougainville war was effectively won in 1994 at the Kangu Beach massacre where the Bougainville Revolutionary Army joined forces with the Bougainville resistance, which was supposed to be fighting on behalf of the PNGDF.

After the peace agreement was signed, Watawi became chairman of the Bougainville Interim Authority and later vice-president of the first Autonomous Bougainville Government in 2005.

He was re-elected member for Selau in 2015 and took up

the position of chairman of the parliamentary committee for the UN-backed Independence Referendum of 2019. During this period, he was a key figure in running a traditional truth and reconciliation process to heal the wounds and internal divisions left by the war. He travelled the length and breadth of Bougainville from remote mountain villages to making a long voyage to the remote Bougainville atolls advocating for a peaceful referendum and 'yes' to the independence vote.

He coined the referendum slogan '*Bruk lus, bruk gut, bruk steret na bruk olgeta*' (Break loose, break clean, break now and break up altogether).

While instrumental in disarmament, peace and reconciliation in Bougainville he never forgave Australia for its role in supplying helicopters and pilots to strafe and burn Bougainville villages, and strafe boatloads of school children.

He remained a staunch critic of Australian political interference in Bougainville affairs and the Bougainville Referendum, campaigning against the Australian practice of setting up 'advisers' as the heads of Bougainville government departments.

In a 2017 press release he famously told Australia: 'Australian aid is not about helping Bougainville but about gaining power and influence. As it stands now Australia would have more power and influence here if they replaced their foreign and aid corps with a drunk rugby team.'

As the referendum numbers came in, he kept track in a tally



Joseph Watawi

room he set up in his house at Kokopau calling the 97.45% vote for independence before the Bougainville Electoral Commission.

He is survived by his wife Belinda Watawi, six children and seven grandchildren. He is loved and missed by thousands of extended family, clan and language group members in Selau as well as people throughout the twenty-plus language groups of Bougainville.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/bougainville-loses-a-father-of-independence-20211215-p59hs4.html>

### Santos and Oil Search Merger Completed

The proposed merger between Santos and Oil Search concluded on 10 December, after PNG's court approval on 9 December 2021. Shareholders approved it, with 95.07% in favour, on 7 December.

The merged Santos-Oil Search will have 'unrivalled' growth opportunities and a stronger platform to navigate the transition to low carbon energy, Santos CEO Kevin Gallagher said in a statement after the scrip-based takeover of the Papua New Guinea oil and gas producer took effect.

Santos chairman Keith Spence said the merger 'combines two industry leaders to create a regional champion of quality, size and scale with a unique and diversified

portfolio of longlife, low-cost oil and gas assets'. He said Santos was looking forward to integrating the businesses to create one high-performing team, 'with a vision of becoming a global leader in the energy transition.

'Santos and Oil Search are stronger together and will have increased scale and capacity to drive a disciplined, low-cost operating model and unrivalled growth opportunities over the next decade.'

Oil Search was incorporated on 17 January 1929 to explore what is now modern-day PNG.

Operating in PNG's challenging terrain was a daunting prospect, but the company remained steadfast in its belief that there was significant oil and gas to be found in the unexplored region.

The company grew to be one of Papua New Guinea's largest companies, and in 2006 was responsible for 13% of Papua New Guinea's gross domestic product and was publicly listed on the Port Moresby and Australian Stock Exchanges with a market capitalization of around US\$12 billion.

The government of Papua New Guinea held a 17.6% interest with Oil Search operating in Yemen, Egypt, Libya, and the Kurdistan region of Iraq as well as PNG.

In May 2014, ExxonMobil shipped the first cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the US\$19 billion PNG LNG Project, in which Oil Search owns a 29% interest.

<https://www.santos.com/news/merger-of-santos-and-oil-search-implemented/>; <https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/santos-swallows-up-oil-search-as-merger-takes-effect-20211210-p59ghr>



## Low COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake a Danger to PNG and Australia

On 9 December 2021 Stephanie Vaccher, an epidemiologist at the Burnet Research Institute, pointed out that, because less than one in twenty of people in PNG have been vaccinated against COVID-19, there was a high probability that a new variant could develop in our nearest neighbour, Papua New Guinea (PNG), which is already struggling with high rates of HIV and multi drug-resistant tuberculosis.

'PNG's COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been severely hampered by misinformation and fear, compounded by practical and logistical issues. Across the country, conspiracy theories spread by word-of-mouth and WhatsApp at immense speed. Even healthcare workers are not immune,' Dr Vaccher said.

The End COVID For All (<https://endcovidforall.com/>) initiative is calling for the Australian Government to invest \$50 million to address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. In PNG, there's an urgent need for a large-scale behavioural change campaign to convince people of the importance of COVID-19 vaccination. Changing minds is particularly challenging when you consider that PNG has no routine adult vaccination programs and some of the lowest childhood vaccination rates in the world.

Western Province, bordering Indonesia and Australia, has the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates outside Port Moresby thanks to strong partnerships between government, churches, local leaders, and international organisations, and ongoing community engagement.

Additionally, visits to remote and hard-to-reach villages for vaccine awareness and immunisations have been pivotal in helping overcome fears.

Similar successes have been seen across the Pacific. Samoa has applied strategies learnt from its 2019 measles outbreak to boost COVID-19 vaccination rates. Following an intense community messaging and awareness campaign, local teams went door-to-door across the country and increased first-dose vaccination rates by 12 per cent in a single weekend. In Fiji, a team of healthcare workers hiked for five hours to vaccinate a village with just sixty people. Every vaccination counts.

Mass vaccination campaigns are resource intensive. If the international community wants to increase COVID-19 vaccinations in PNG, they must build relationships and work with trusted local organisations. Initiatives such as providing fuel for healthcare teams to conduct vaccine outreach, or small incentives like snacks or t-shirts post-vaccination can go a long way in supporting widespread vaccine rollout.

[https://www.burnet.edu.au/news/1555\\_png\\_a\\_candidate\\_for\\_next\\_variant\\_if\\_australia\\_doesn\\_t\\_help\\_boost\\_jabs](https://www.burnet.edu.au/news/1555_png_a_candidate_for_next_variant_if_australia_doesn_t_help_boost_jabs)



Western Province Governor Hon. Toboi Awi Yoto receives his COVID-19 vaccination (Keam)

## Australian Help for PNG's COVID-19 Response

In response to an email to the office of Senator Seselja, Minister for Pacific Development from David Slattery, Director PNG Human Development & Strategy, provided a detailed statement describing Australian Government assistance to PNG in its struggle to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Some key points from this statement follow.

Following the surge in cases beginning in October 2021, Australia sent a sixth medical team led by AUSMAT (Australian Medical Assistance Team) to provide clinical advisory support to PNG health agencies and specifically to develop COVID support bricks (bundles of essential medical supplies) which the RAAF helped transport to fifteen provinces. Each brick contained Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline health workers and oxygen-related supplies and medicines for the treatment of critically ill patients.

Two hundred and forty oxygen concentrators were supplied to help with the treatment of acutely ill patients in hospitals most severely affected by the surge in cases.

Supplementary funding was provided to help with the recruitment of more staff to help with vaccine roll-out and 60,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine were sent to PNG in November 2021 bringing the total number of doses supplied to 204,970. Further vaccine support to which Australia is committed. Australia has also committed \$144.7 million over 2020-23 specifically to the roll-out through the Vaccine Access



AUSMAT deliver supplies to Port Moresby General Hospital

and Health Security Initiative (VAHSI). PNG also benefits from Australia's broader vaccine support to the region through the \$130 million contribution to the COVAX Facility's Advance Market Commitment (AMC) for developing countries, including for the provision of vaccines.

A further \$102 million from the Pacific COVID-19 Response Package has been provided to support PNG's economic recovery of which \$87 million is to bolster health and education services.

## Battle for Australia Oration, 2022

For a long time, late 1941 and 1942 seemed like the crucible of modern Australia. Within a few months, the country was at war with Japan, conscripts were in Papua, Britain's empire in Asia was in tatters, and Australia's own north was under direct attack. The nightmare of generations had become real.

More positively, the country was forced to stand on its own two feet. The full resources of the country—human and material—were mobilised for its defence. A kind of quasi-colonial dependence came to an end. Nationalism received a hoist. A new alliance, one with the United States of America, was forged.

In time, some historians came to challenge this way of looking at 1942 as a decisive moment in the country's history. The fall of Singapore, they said, was a shock, but it did not weaken Australia's attachment to



empire. Most Australians still felt proud to be British. The Curtin Government was soon preoccupied with strengthening its relationship with Britain and it had left many of its forces far from Australia in any case. Australia remained more closely aligned with Britain than ever as it entered the final years of the war and post-war reconstruction.

In this year's oration, I return to an older and more conventional argument. If we wanted to identify a single year in which the foundations of an Australian independence were laid, we could not do better than settle on 1942. It is a story with political, constitutional, economic and cultural dimensions. Australia's new independence rested on all of these pillars. ♦

**FRANK BONGIORNO, AM**  
Professor of History, ANU

**Editor's Note:** The Battle for Australia Oration, of which Professor Bongiorno provided this summary, is held each year to mark the date in 1942 when Prime Minister John Curtin coined the phrase 'Battle for Australia' in communicating to all Australians the dangers that lay ahead, following the Fall of Singapore. An initiative of RSL NSW, the Oration was delivered in Sydney on 17 February 2022.

Over \$6 million has been provided to UNICEF and WHO, including for PNG's COVID-19 'Sleeves Up' vaccine communications campaign to tackle vaccine hesitancy and there are partnerships with organisations such as the NRL, PNG churches, NGOs, and media organisations to promote COVID-safe messages.

## Successful Polio Vaccination Program in PNG

Papua New Guinea vaccinated more than 1.18 million children under the age of five during the nationwide polio immunisation campaign conducted in November 2020.

The campaign mobilised more than 9,000 health workers and community leaders across the country under the leadership of

the Provincial Health Authorities (PHAs) and in the later stages of the program included measles and rubella vaccine. Other medicines like Vitamin A and a deworming treatment were also offered to participants.

The polio vaccination campaign was led by the Government of Papua New Guinea, the NDOH and PHAs, with support from WHO and UNICEF. Funding for the campaign was provided by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Gavi, Rotary International, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US-CDC) and the Governments of Australia and Zealand.

<https://www.who.int/papuanewguinea/news/detail/23-12-2020-papua-new-guinea-successfully-completed-polio-vaccination-during-covid-19>





### Three Degrees of Separation ...

Congratulations on another excellent edition of *PNG KUNDU*.

I found the article by Steve Capelin about his novel based on the ill-fated attempt to colonise New Ireland and his associated research quite interesting. Even today travel in that part of the world is still very challenging.

In 1970 I was in Sixth Form (Year 12) at Dubbo High School with Kathleen (Kathy) Morandini. Kathy's great-grandfather, Dominico Morandini, was one of the Italians who went to New Ireland in 1880.

Through marriage my Bourke cousins have a connection to the Morandinis. Their father, Laurence Bourke (my father's

Featuring commentaries about previously published articles and news items, along with opinions of interest and memories. Also included are enquiries from those who require assistance with their research or finding someone from the past. Note that letters may be edited for length, and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the PNGAA. Please send your contributions by 22 April 2022, the Copy Deadline for the next issue, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)

brother), married Gene Nash. Gene's sister, Patricia, married a Brian Cass. Brian Cass's sister, Marjorie, married Ray Morandini, Ray Morandini was Kathy's father and the grandson of Dominico Morandini. A rather long line of family connections. I hope it is not too confusing!

Another family link to New Ireland is Lloyd Sibraa, my father's cousin, who was in the 1st Independent Company. In early 1942 he was recorded as being captured at Kavieng, New Ireland. Lloyd has been listed as dying as a POW on the MS *Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942.

**PATRICK BOURKE**

**Editor:** With Patrick's approval I forwarded his letter to Steve Capelin who responded as follows:

It's quite amazing how many people can track a connection to this story. Three degrees of separation and all that. I have a family tree of almost

500 people (and growing) most of whom I've never met or will ever meet, all of whom are descendants of my great-grandfather who was on the expedition. I'd estimate he has around 10,000 direct descendants and then further connections such as Patrick's. It feels like it goes on forever.

The Morandinis were a family of five on the voyage, the youngest a two-year-old.

Kathleen was a 1954 baby according to my records, so it all fits. Like my family, the mother seems to have named the children and the Italian Christian names vanished. My father was a Kevin, his siblings Rita, Cyril, Nathaniel (could have been Natale but not so), and then an Esma!!

**STEVE CAPELIN**

### Panaras Jack

The September 2021 issue of *PNG KUNDU* has a story which refers to Panaras Jack. I knew this fellow reasonably well as his plantation was next door to the one I managed (see *PNG KUNDU*, December 2021). Panaras Jack's name was Jack Western. He was a raw-boned, argumentative fellow and he leased 'Panaras' from Burns Philp & Co. It was a small, rundown property about twenty-five km from mine, 'Patlangat'.

To visit Jack, as I did occasionally, required a long walk along a jungle track and every so often along the beach so I would usually stay

overnight with him. Jack was married to Marie, a New Ireland woman who was part Chinese, and he treated her very badly. She was trapped in a position from which there was no escape.

However, she was killed accidentally when Jack's World War II Jeep turned over on the rough track from 'Panaras' to Kavieng. By coincidence, I was in Kavieng that weekend having arrived by copra boat. I was staying in Jack Caffy's pub where I met Panaras Jack. He was never a boozier when I knew him but there he was, slumped over the hotel bar, crying. There was no one else there.

'Marie's been killed,' he told me, 'you have to go to the funeral today.'

There were three in attendance at that funeral—Jack, a Catholic priest and me. Tropical rain pelted down and we were all soaked to the skin. Jack was crying uncontrollably. I have never forgotten the scene or been to a funeral like that one. The *PNG KUNDU* story brought it all back.

**IAN SMITH**

### Tim Terrell

I read the letter in the latest *PNG KUNDU* from Dr Holly Northam, OAM regarding the death last year of Tim Terrell. I met Tim in early 1962 when he and Judy were at Finschhafen. He was the ADO in charge of training the first group of Assistant Patrol Officers, i.e. the first Papua New Guineans to be trained in this role. I can't remember how many were being trained, just a few, maybe six.

I took one, Leana Gari, on his first patrol, which was actually the start of building a road from Siki Cove to the mission station



Charles Edward Timothy Terrell, AM

at Sattelburg. The road was intended to eventually reach the patrol post at Pindiu.

I spent thirty-four days (January to March 1962) on that task, but I don't think Leana was with me for all that time. After a short break for the seventy labourers to go back to their villages and tend their gardens, I spent another forty-eight days on building the road.

**PETER WORSLEY**

### The Star Mountains

The stories by Chris Sharples in *PNG KUNDU* September and

December 2021 about the Star Mountains brings back memories. I was posted to Telefomin in early 1965 and soon afterwards had Tom Hayllar (mentioned in the September story) and his five fellow expeditioners staying with me.

They were a mixed group. Tom Hayllar, the leader, was an experienced bush walker and traveller who had already walked across Australia. The others were Barry Craig—then a schoolteacher but later an anthropologist, Paul Symonds a psychologist, Dave Cook a geologist and Mike Shepherd a geology student. The sixth member, Jean Huon Navrancourt, left the group three weeks after the expedition began.

The expedition was a difficult exercise and the mysteries of Mount Capella filled me with awe.

My experience at Telefomin and my contact with these expeditioners later inspired me to write a series of three novels based on the life of a fictional character, Amon Mortlake, who is successively involved in an



An artist's impression of the newly-arrived survivors (including Dominico Morandini) in Sydney from the disastrous voyage to Port Breton, *Sydney Illustrated News*, 14 May 1881



This photograph was taken before the expedition began in February 1965—(L to R) Barry Craig, Dave Cook, Tom Hayllar, the expedition leader and Mike Shepherd outside kiaps' quarters decorated with Telefomin Shields



expedition to the Star Mountains, in mining in that area and later, in Australia, as a mining consultant and dealer in New Guinea artefacts.

### MARTIN KERR

**Editor's Note:** Martin Kerr's many publications, including the three Amon novels, are available at [maskimedia.com.au](http://maskimedia.com.au) and some as ebooks from [www.amazon.com.au/kindle-books](http://www.amazon.com.au/kindle-books). Tom Hayllar's account of his expedition, *The Star Mountains*, was published in 2016 and is also available as an ebook from Amazon.

### Belated Vale

I always follow the Vale notifications—sad, but good to know how people's lives have progressed over the years.

I was wondering if you could add my parents, Agnes Prudence Alexandra Frank and Kendall Thomas Frank, to the Association's records?

My mother died on 3 March 1988. She and her family lived in Papua New Guinea from early in the twentieth century—Scottish relatives were gold miners. She was secretary to the Administrator and then Mr Groves, the Director of Education. She worked for the Legislative Assembly and taught typing to the Administration's native employees. We were all evacuated during World War II and she returned in 1945 or 1946.

My father set up the telecommunications throughout



Kendall Thomas Frank's gravestone, Townsville QLD

Papua New Guinea before World War II and was a coastwatcher. Born in Western Australia on 4 November 1904 he died in North Queensland on 21 August 1951. He is written up in the Australian Dictionary of Biography: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/frank-kendall-thomas-10236>

I was born in Port Moresby and PNG holds a very special place in my life and memories.

Thank you to everyone for all your work

**PRUE CLARKE, OAM**

### Apology

I refer to my response to the Vale for Ms Marjorie Walker in the December issue of *PNG KUNDU*.

It has been brought to my attention that Ms Walker's maiden name was also Walker not, as I said, Zeck and the correct name of the school I attended was St Gabriel's Church of England Grammar School.

I apologise to her family for the lapse in my memory of events that took place forty-eight years ago.

**SUELLEN HOLLAND**

### Tom Herket

I have a comment on the story on Page 62 of *PNG KUNDU*, December 2021. Tom was one of 208 civilians on the *Montevideo Maru*—and he is also listed in my article.

<https://thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com/coastwatching-organization/civilian-casualties/>

**JIM BURROWES**

### Kiap Debate

In the December 2021 issue of *PNG KUNDU* Ian Spencer wrote about the origin of Kiap and invited debate to continue. My late husband, James Sinclair, was meticulous with



Marjorie Walker

research so I offer some interesting facts some of which come from the *Oxford Dictionary* and some from his books.

Variouly Captain (Kiapin) refers to: An officer holding subordinate command; a position in the Army or Navy; Superintendent of a mine (about 1600); Foreman of a workshop (1885); Head Boy of a School; Head of a Cricket Team; Chief of a Club.

And then to New Guinea where Kiap was a term used for all field officers of TPNG administration from lowly Cadet to DC. Kiap was loosely used as a term for patrol officer. This position can be traced to the very beginnings of Australian administration in then British New Guinea from 1906. Then patrol officers were termed Government Agents—a term actually more accurate than patrol officer. More senior officers were called Assistant Resident Magistrates and Resident Magistrates.

Kiap was a *Pidgin* term and originates in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea between the two World Wars. It was a corruption of the German word 'kiapin'. The term was not used in

the Territory of Papua during this period, although the position of patrol officer was common to the two Administrations.

**JAN SINCLAIR**

### Rabaul Photos

I recently came across an internet site with fantastic photos of Rabaul, which brought back great memories for my brother and me. The site can be accessed at: *Rabaul-The Town-Google Sites*—<https://sites.google.com/site/simpsonhafen/home/the-town>

**EDDIE LEONARD**

### Keith de Lacy Eulogy

A tribute/eulogy for Keith de Lacy published in *The Australian* on 26 November 2021 for the former treasurer of Queensland does not mention the fact that he was in the Territory of Papua New Guinea at one stage with the Department of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries.

Keith was Principal of the Popondetta Agricultural Training Institute (PATI) where I knew him more than fifty years ago. DASF was running PATI to provide certificate level training for their local agricultural extension officers.

I am told that the Institute no longer exists—closed, no money.

**JOHN HORNE, EX-DASF**



Keith de Lacy



### Sky High Over the Wahgi

Our Air Niugini F70 flight from Mt Hagen today takes us over the great Wahgi Valley and Chimbu.

I think about the Leahy brothers and Jim Taylor who discovered the valley in the 1930s.

They walked all the way from my home in Salamaua, Morobe (the New Guinea boom town of the 1930s), through valleys, mountains and rivers to find this hitherto unknown land: a people that time forgot.

Up in the cockpit is young Engan pilot Captain Lloyd Timano.

He epitomises how the Highlands of PNG has changed since the days of 'First Contact'—from Stone Age to Jet Age.

The sky is so clear I can see for miles and miles. I can see the towering Wilhelm in the distance. Down below is Karamui, South Chimbu, touted as the next 'food bowl' of Papua New Guinea.

I can't help but become a tad emotional as I see the panorama unfold before my eyes.

*'Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the world Thy hand has made ...'*

God has given us a beautiful country with so many, many resources.

We are not poor, as some would like us to believe, far from

it. We must all build this country, with positivity, not destroy it with negativity.

The plane starts descending into Port Moresby.

**MALUM NALU**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/5846828693/permalink/0160214236518694>

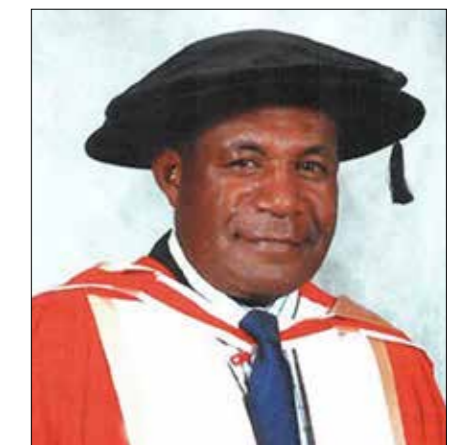
### Postcard from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

When I returned home to PNG after my UNE studies, I joined the National Department of Education, first acting and then as the Director for Inclusive Education, where I worked for seven years.

My first greatest achievement was completing a major review of the National Special Education Policy and Guidelines and developing a ten-year Strategic Implementation Plan (2020–29). My second was completing post-doctoral study.

Since then, I have been the Principal Appointment Advisor with the Teaching Service Commission of the Ministry of Education. Here, I initiated a pilot project for inclusion in PNG schools, beginning with those with a visual impairment and followed by other disabilities.

The New Zealand Government,



Dr John Pokana



through the Maori Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, provided development aid for the introduction of an inclusive model in three PNG provinces. Thanks to a New Zealand consortium (Christian Blind Mission—CBM) and a grant of NZ\$1.6 million, this model is now being rolled out in three provinces as a pilot project, and will eventually be extended to PNG schools in all provinces. This means the government, as well as development partners including

DFAT (AusAID), will fund the projects.

After the project is completed, I intend to achieve my goal of becoming an Associate Professor/Professor. I also want to invite UNE to help achieve my next project—to deliver online education to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. In this way, I can assist the children, young people and adults of Bougainville to build their capacities and prepare for self-determination.

I thank my PhD supervisors (Adjunct Professor Dr Thomas Maxwell, Dr David Paterson, and Dr Charles Kivunja), UNE, and above all God Almighty for his manifold wisdom and for helping me to achieve these milestones from humble beginnings.

**DR JOHN POKANA**

**Editor's Note:** *The University of New England Alumni News* has generously agreed to our republishing this letter in *PNG KUNDU*. They advise that there are 195 UNE alumni with an address in PNG.

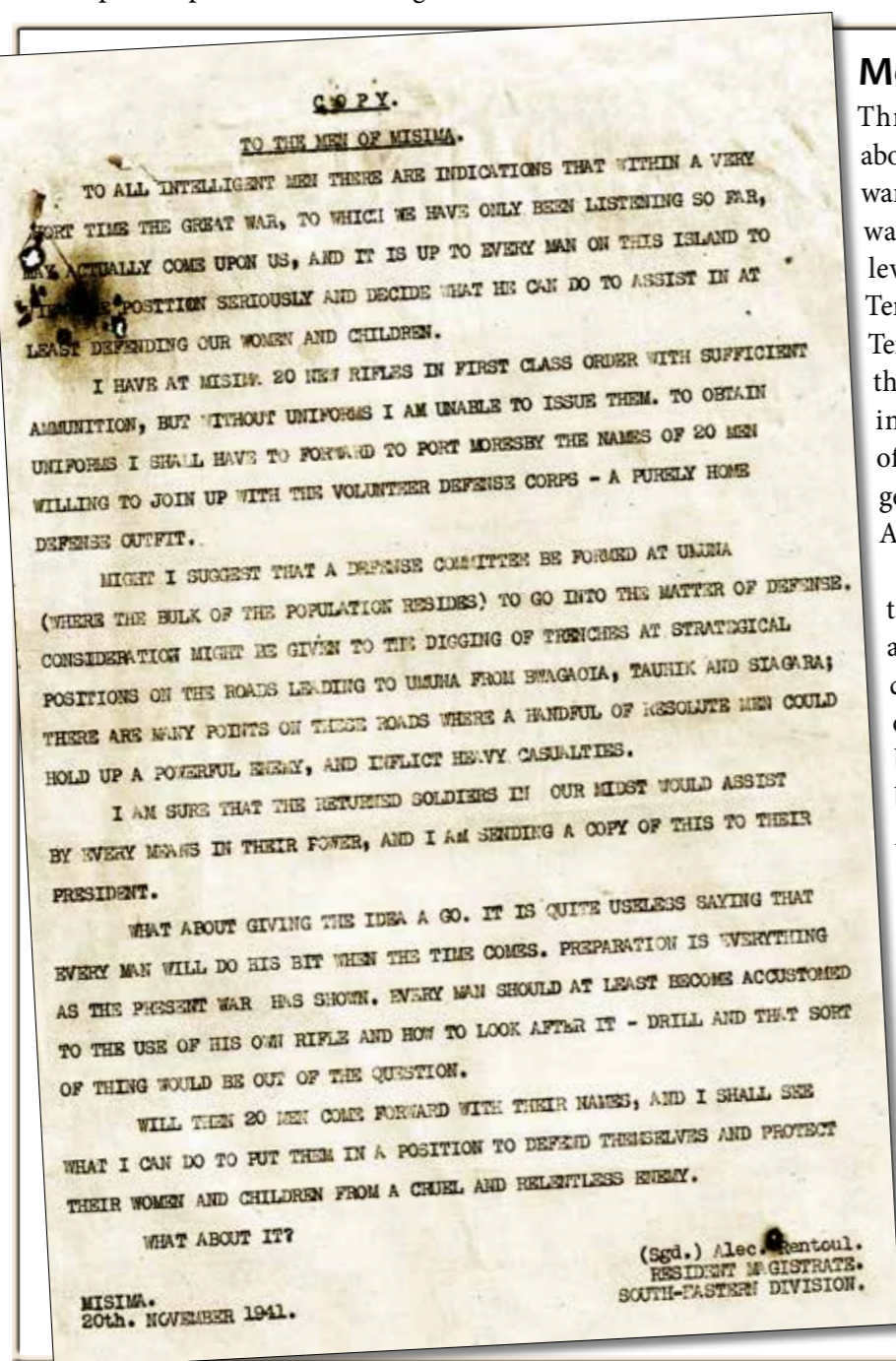
### Men of Misima

Throughout 1941 concern increased about if, and when, Japan would declare war on the US, UK and Australia. There was obviously concern at an official level about the vulnerability of the Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea because, from the beginning of that year, it became increasingly difficult for the wives of residents of the two Territories to get approval to return after being in Australia on leave.

There is no better illustration of the foreboding of Territory people about the likelihood of war than a circular sent to the men of Misima on 20 September 1941 (three months before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor) by the resident magistrate on Misima, Alec Rentoul.

Reproduced here, this document was found among the papers of Eric Daniel Ryan, a resident of Misima before and after World War II. It, and other documents, were given to Deryck Thompson by Ryan's son, Roger. This circular gives some background to the series of articles commemorating the battles of 1942 during the New Guinea Campaign, which we will be featuring in the journal during the coming year.

**JOHN EGERTON, Editor**



## THE PACIFIC WAR

# New Guinea Islands 1942



*The bleakest, most depressing days in Australia's history were surely the six months following Japan's entry into the Second World War ... the invasion of Rabaul by Japanese troops on 23 January 1942 was the first occasion on which enemy forces had landed on Australian-controlled territory.*

Lt-Gen. the Hon. Sir EF Herring

In January 1942 Rabaul was Australia's front line in the Pacific war. This war was fought on Australian soil against Australian people. It was a critical period in the history of both Australia, and what was then the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

Rabaul, on the northern tip of the Gazelle Peninsula, is surrounded with volcanoes and therefore complicated by the natural danger of volcanic activity. Its magnificent port was the export and import centre for the New Guinea islands with vessels loading copra, cocoa, timber and marine products. Whilst Rabaul had the major population, others were scattered on New Ireland and other islands in the Bismarck Archipelago.

When WWI broke out in 1914, Australia moved quickly to secure the former territory of German New Guinea, and Japan seized those German territories in the Pacific, north of the Equator—the Caroline Islands, the Mariana Islands and the Marshall Islands. At the conclusion of WWI the Council of the League of Nations granted mandates to both Australia and Japan in respect of these former German territories.

Whilst Australia had responsibility to protect the people of New Guinea, certain League of Nations restrictions were imposed prohibiting the establishment of fortifications, military or naval bases and of training local inhabitants other than

**SPECIAL FEATURE**





1. Detail of Geoffrey Mainwaring's painting, 'Japanese Landing Near Vulcan, Rabaul'; 2. Main road of Rabaul prewar; 3. Evacuating residents from Rabaul, before the Japanese invasion; 4. Three of the army nurses who were captured and sent to Japan on MS *Naruto Maru*; Previous Page: Wreckage of a Japanese Betty Bomber near the Old Rakunai Airport on Matupit Island

for maintaining law and order. Australia abided by the conditions but Japan did not.

The European residents in New Guinea had considerable unease as they watched increasing visits by Japanese and German shipping to Australian Mandated New Guinea. After war with Germany broke out in 1939, a coastwatching network was set up by the Royal Australian Navy.

A militia unit—the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR), using obsolete WWI equipment—was formed in the Territory with its headquarters in Rabaul. This was made up of planters, administration officers, traders, schooner masters and other members of the community—men between sixteen and forty-five with intimate knowledge of New Guinea and its people.

In 1941 Australia sent Lark Force, 2/22nd Battalion, to Rabaul, and 1 Independent Company to Kavieng. No plan was made for the civilians. The defence of New Britain was to be the responsibility of 1,400 Australian troops, based around the 2/22nd Battalion. Among them was a Salvation Army band from Brunswick in Melbourne.

The 1 Independent Company, a commando unit, comprised around 250 officers and other ranks. About 150 men were based in Kavieng to protect the airfield, while others were deployed as observers to central New Ireland, Bougainville and Manus, as well as to Tulagi in the British Solomon Islands and Vila in the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu.

On the ground, the military command could not possibly cover the miles of coastline with the token force they had. Yet the Chiefs of Staff in Australia had decided that the garrison would not be evacuated, would not be reinforced and would not be re-equipped. In August 1941 Rabaul was assessed to be at risk of a major invasion, but a proposal to evacuate civilians was rejected.

### European Evacuation from Rabaul—22 December 1941

The first Japanese surveillance aircraft flew over Rabaul on 8 December 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor. On 11 December 1941 Canberra said there would be no evacuation, reversing this decision the following day. Males over sixteen years were to remain, although there were cases of younger boys staying.

The fate of Lark Force was set in a cable sent to Washington, on 12 December 1941, by the Prime Minister's Department, Canberra:

... it is considered better to maintain Rabaul only as an advanced air operational base, its present small garrison being regarded as hostages to fortune.

Word had to hurriedly reach outlying plantations, and small vessels were delayed bringing women and children in to Rabaul because of the treacherous weather and rough seas. The Burns Philp ships, MV *Macdhui* and MV *Neptuna*, evacuated European women and children on 22 December 1941, although many from outlying plantations and New Ireland missed these ships. Upon reaching Australia the lives of the evacuees fragmented and many struggled. They had lost their men, their homes, their friends and their community.

The evacuation order did not apply to indigenous, mixed race or Chinese people. The failure to evacuate Chinese women and children in Rabaul and Kavieng caused understandable bitterness in a Chinese community that feared the Japanese. Later, those on the New Guinea mainland were approved evacuees. Despite the evacuation of women and children, many wives and families of missionaries and several nurses could not reach Rabaul in time, or elected to remain.

### The First Bombs—4 January 1942

These were dropped on Rabaul on 4 January 1942, and the last civilians were taken out on 8 January 1942. 1,700 servicemen and at least 300 European civilians were not evacuated, despite several ships entering Rabaul before the bombing started.

In early January 1942 Lark Force was told that 'Every man would fight to the last'. Still, no dumps of food, medicines, ammunition or maps were made in the mountainous jungle behind the Gazelle Peninsula.

Air attacks were made on Rabaul and Kavieng on 20 January. Rabaul saw eighty bombers and forty Zeros bomb shipping, wharves, airfields and buildings. One result was inevitable for the gallant five Wirraway crews of the RAAF No. 24 Squadron who took off to do battle in the face of overwhelming superiority, and they will always be remembered for their magnificent courage.

### The Fall of Rabaul—23 January 1942

It was only a few hours after the Japanese invasion force of around 5,000 troops, mainly from the 144th Infantry Regiment, entered Simpson Harbour, quickly overwhelming the small Australian garrison on 23 January 1942, that word went out 'Every man for himself'.

Those who escaped were considered the lucky ones and yet what many of them went through, walking hundreds of miles over rugged mountainous jungle in the wet nor'west season, crossing raging rivers often infested with crocodiles, suffering hunger and starvation and the dreaded malaria, can only be imagined. 214 escaped on MV *Lakatoi* and 156 were rescued on HMAS *Laurabada*. Others escaped New Britain and New Ireland on smaller vessels.

Japanese brutality towards prisoners of war, coastwatchers, interned civilians and missionaries in both New Britain and New Ireland was regular. For those captured or who gave themselves up, there was five months of imprisonment labouring for food.

The sixty officers who had been separated from the men, together with seventeen nurses and one civilian woman planter, were shipped to Japan on 6 July on MS *Naruto Maru* and spent the rest of the war years as prisoners of war. In addition, more than 150 civilians were eventually liberated from a valley camp at Ramale in the Kokopo area after WWII ended—nearly all were members of the Sacred Heart Mission, including many nuns.

Many of the soldiers and civilians who were rescued owed their lives to members of the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), the New Guinea residents and some courageous New Guineans. These people took initiatives and accepted risks.

Rabaul became a key Japanese staging and supply centre, headquarters of the Japanese South East Fleet. In 1945, when Japan surrendered, there were nearly 100,000 Japanese troops and auxiliaries in this part of New Britain.

Difficult and costly battles were fought during the New Guinea Campaign from the invasion of Rabaul by Japanese troops on 23 January 1942—the first occasion on which enemy forces had landed on Australian-controlled territory. Many people



mistakenly believed the first Japanese attack was the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942, which received comprehensive media coverage—whereas Rabaul, the horrific massacre at Tol Plantation and the tragic sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru* received little, if any, mention.

The Rabaul 1942–45 Memorial on the shores of Simpson Harbour, honours all those who lost their lives in the defence of New Britain, and in the course of the Japanese occupation during 1942–45. It also features a cairn in remembrance of *Montevideo Maru*.

A memorial has also been erected in Bomana War Cemetery in Port Moresby to commemorate over 700 officers and men of the Australian Army (including Papuan and New Guinea local forces), the Australian Merchant Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force, who gave their lives during the New Guinea Operations, and who have no known grave.

**EIGHTY YEARS LATER many Australians are still unaware of this history. It is important to ensure that the sacrifice of these men is not forgotten, and that the Fall of Rabaul and surrounding islands and the sinking of Montevideo Maru remain an enduring part of the nation's history.**

Edited extract from the Introduction, Andrea Williams, *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*, PNGAA

### Tol Massacre—4 February 1942

Some of those who escaped from Rabaul and walked through the jungle eventually found a few small boats, in which they crept along the south-east coast of New Britain coming ashore in the vicinity of Tol Plantation at the eastern end of Wide Bay. Unfortunately, they were expected and were met by five barge loads of Japanese troops. The exhausted Australians had no choice but to surrender. Two men escaped and were re-captured at the neighbouring Waitavalo Plantation, where they were smeared in pig grease and burned alive in the house.

Another who escaped, eventually came into contact with some civilians on the bank of a creek about half a mile from the beach at Tol Plantation. They untied the cords which had been on his wrists all the time, and provided him with food.

After the war, 160 bodies were discovered in the vicinity of Tol and Waitavalo Plantations, including seven NGVR soldiers. A few survived by playing

dead although they had terrible wounds and, against all the odds, managed to get back to Australia. They later described how most of them were rounded up and in the early morning of the next day, 4 February 1942, tied up in small groups, led into the jungle and bayoneted or shot by Japanese soldiers. The Japanese officer responsible for these war crimes was Colonel Masao Kusunose, who later committed suicide.

Some historians believe that the Tol Plantation massacre was among the most callous in the war. A school in the area has been named the 2/22 Lark Force School, and a small cairn was erected at the site in 1987 by survivors of the 2/22nd Battalion and members of the 3rd Brigade Australian Army.

### 'Keepers of the Gate'

The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR), a militia unit, was established in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea in September 1939. With an establishment of twenty-three officers and 482 other ranks, sub-units were established in Rabaul, Kokopo, Wau, Bulolo, Lae, Salamaua and Madang.

When the Japanese invaded Rabaul in the early hours of 23 January 1942, there were eighty soldiers from the Rabaul company of the NGVR positioned on the extreme northern flank of the defence around the western shore of Simpson Harbour, but they withdrew when outflanked to the south, and most moved west along the north coast. Of these, twenty-two escaped, forty-six were captured and twelve perished in battle or succumbed to privations suffered during their escape.

Other NGVR units monitored the Japanese bases in the Huon Gulf region, establishing observation posts and camps overlooking the main approaches—they were the *'Keepers of the Gate'*. In a series of raids NGVR inflicted significant casualties on the Japanese. On 28 June 1942 NGVR and the newly-arrived 2/5th Independent Company carried out a highly successful attack on the Japanese garrison in Salamaua.

Later, when the focus shifted to the Kokoda and Milne Bay battles, NGVR continued to man its posts overlooking the Japanese—1942 was NGVR's year. However, it was an exhausted unit by September. Although some troops remained in place, there were too few to be effective when NGVR was officially disbanded in April 1943. It was later reformed as the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (PNGVR) in 1950.

### Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU)

From their inauguration in April 1942, the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) played a vital role. The Australian Army called for young men to become patrol officers in ANGAU—the section of the Army which carried out the function of the two former civil administrations of the Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

When a large part of New Guinea was occupied by the Japanese, some amazing feats of valour and endurance were performed by ANGAU Patrol Officers. Courage, ingenuity, bold shrewd enterprise, great patience and perception were required of them. They were deprived of the company of all other white men and without even the most ordinary comforts of life. Yet, enabled by their intimate knowledge of the indigenous people and the country, they lived amidst the enemy, causing incalculable losses by the intelligence sent to headquarters by wireless.

The ANGAU officers and their New Guinean carriers, labourers, scouts, guides and police were highly regarded by the American and Australian military. After the end of World War II, ANGAU was abolished and was replaced under the Papua New Guinea Provisional Administration Act (1945–46) by the combined government of Papua and Australian New Guinea.

### The Coastwatchers

This force had its beginning in 1922 when the Royal Australian Navy received approval to recruit a network of unpaid, carefully selected civilians, including merchants, missionaries, planters and public servants who were living or working on or near the coast of the northern mainland of Australia and the islands to the north. The network was established for the purpose of reporting in wartime, any unusual or suspicious happenings along the coast.

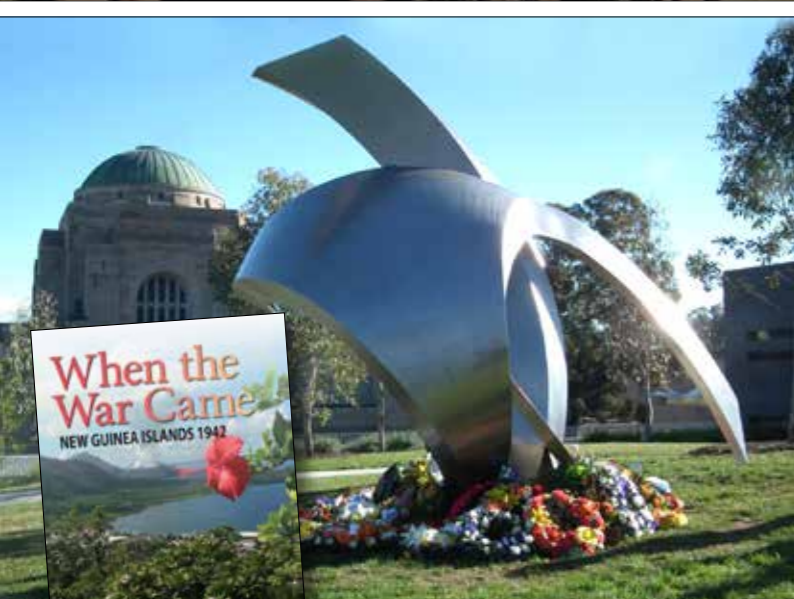
When Japan began its move southward in January 1942, the network was enlarged. More people with local knowledge were recruited as well as personnel from the Australian armed forces.

These men were landed at various vantage points, mostly at night, to observe and report by radio, movements of enemy shipping, planes and troops and any other information deemed important.



1. Sr Berenice Twohill and the nuns being evacuated from the mission in Ramale Valley; 2. Memorial cairn at Tol Plantation, 1987; 3. NGVR B Company proudly display a Japanese flag captured at Mubo, 21 July 1942; 4. A group of Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) personnel





Most of them were helped by the local people, including Pita Simogun, Luluai Golpak and Kina Awai amongst others, who risked their lives and that of their families, operating behind Japanese lines, fighting the enemy and gathering critical intelligence for the Allies—despite the threat of instant reprisal if they were discovered. Some of our men were accidentally betrayed and taken prisoner, which earned them instant execution. Theirs was a lonely death—alone against a brutal enemy.

The names of many of the coastwatchers who died are recorded on the memorial at Madang: *'Watched and Warned and Died that We Might Live'*

### Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group

This was established in 2009 to represent the interests of the families of the soldiers and civilians captured in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands after the Japanese invasion in January 1942, many of whom are believed to have perished on MS *Montevideo Maru*.

The major objective of the group was to have a memorial erected for those lost and, on 1 July 2012—the seventieth anniversary—a commemorative sculpture was unveiled by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC, CVO, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, at a ceremony attended by 1,700 people—many in their eighties and nineties—at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

The Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group was wound up in 2013, with its assets and remaining objectives being transferred to the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia, and in 2017 the PNGAA published *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*, to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*.

The book tells the stories of the civilian and military men, nurses, missionaries, women and children caught in the leadup and aftermath of the Japanese invasion and occupation of the New Guinea Islands.

The group has now produced an education package to complement the Australian History curriculum for secondary school students—and they work to encourage everyone to explore the significance of WWII in the Papua and New Guinea Islands—and what the start of the Pacific War in 1942 meant for Australia. ♦

### Sinking of *Montevideo Maru*—1 July 1942

Early in the morning of 22 June 1942, members of the Australian 2/22nd Battalion, No. 1 Independent Company, and civilian prisoners, captured in New Britain during the Fall of Rabaul in January of that year, were ordered to board MS *Montevideo Maru*, a Japanese passenger vessel used by the Imperial Japanese Navy during WWII as an auxiliary vessel transporting troops and provisions throughout South East Asia—only the army officers, some nurses and a small number of civilians were left in the Malaguna Road camp.

MS *Montevideo Maru* sailed unescorted for Hainan Island, keeping to the east of the Philippines in an effort to avoid Allied submarines. On 1 July 1942, the ship was spotted by the American submarine, USS *Sturgeon*, which manoeuvred into position and fired its torpedoes. The ship sank by the stern in as little as eleven minutes from their impact.

Although the Japanese crew were ordered to abandon ship, it does not appear they made any attempt to assist the prisoners to do likewise. Of the eighty-eight Japanese guards and crew, only seventeen survived the sinking and subsequent march through the Philippines jungle.

While the exact number and identity of the more than 1,000 men aboard *Montevideo Maru* has never been confirmed, Japanese and Australian sources suggest an estimated 845 military personnel, including thirty-six NGVR soldiers, and up to 208 civilians perished in the tragedy—the greatest loss of Australian lives at sea in war or peace.

Considerable efforts were made by both the International Red Cross and the Australian Government to seek details of *Montevideo Maru's* passengers from the Japanese authorities, however, the deaths in Australia's least-known maritime disaster were not revealed until after the end of the war, when Japanese records were accessed in Japan.



1. USS *Sturgeon*;
2. Some of the men from the 2/22nd Battalion, all drowned on the *Montevideo Maru*;
3. Philip Coote (right), a civilian who also drowned, with his family in Rabaul before the invasion;
4. Sgt Gullidge conducting the 2/22nd Battalion Band, most of whom were lost on the ship







# A Biographical Story: The Army Patrol That Went Wrong

## Part 1

**NALAU BINGEDING**

**I grew up in Wagangluhu Village, along the banks of the Buso River in the Bukawa area of Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. As a kid the banks of Buso River were the best place in the world for me. I could not think of another place in the world that could substitute the Buso River and the many adventures my peers and I encountered every day. The Buso River was our swimming pool, it was our fishing ground, it was our playground, and the lush tropical rainforests along the banks of the river provided us with countless adventures daily.**

Moreover, annually, the Papua New Guinea and Australian defence forces used the banks of the Buso River for joint military drills, and the excitement of watching these drills after school was a bonus for my peers and me. The sound of machine guns, bazookas, M16s and army helicopters drove our little minds crazy, and all we could think of doing the next day was to come again and watch these epic military drills.

Although we were just third and fourth graders in our local primary school, we knew the names of most of the military equipment used and the types of actions taken by the soldiers in the drills. We also knew the role of the radioman and we learned by heart the words he spoke during the drills.

After the drills were over and the soldiers left, my peers and I usually struggled to fit back into our routine village and school lives. And if you saw three or four heads clustering in one corner of the school yard during lunch break or after school, you can be sure the discussion was about the latest military drill along the banks of the Buso River.

But to really get the hangovers of the latest military drills out of our systems, we would gather at the river after school and act them out using whatever resources we could find in the nearby bush. And to top it off, we would take army patrols along the banks of the river in the direction of the sea, and if dusk set in we would abandon the patrols and return home. Acting out the drills after school would go on for some time until the military madness was flushed out of our systems and life in the village or at our local school returned to normality.

But of all the military enactments my peers and I had during our childhood days, I have not forgotten one of our regular army patrols along the banks of the Buso River. What happened on that fateful day is implanted forever in the back of my mind, and every time I run into my childhood friends I am reminded of the army patrol that went wrong.

### ***Buso Platoon Reconnaissance***

It was a Friday and we were let off at 10 am after completing work parade at school because our teachers needed to go into Lae City to collect their pay cheques.

The school bell rang and it was time to head home, but we all knew where we would meet and what we would do that day. A certain spot along the banks of the Buso River was where we would meet that very day for our next military patrol. This meet was special because the fifth graders had heard our stories and were enthusiastic about joining us, the third and fourth graders.

When we were all gathered at the appointed place at the river, everyone went about preparing for a patrol down the banks of the Buso River. Wild banana stumps, sticks, vines, stems of giant ginger species, known as *golgol*, were plucked out of the nearby bushes to make replicas of machine guns, bazookas, M16 guns and a wireless radio.

At first there was some excitement, but it soon died down and there was silence as every kid in the platoon wanted to make the best gun he could possibly think out. As each individual crafted his gun, he would glance at the others around him to ensure his gun was better than theirs. Everyone in the platoon was making a gun except one person, his name was Wayakwa, and he was tasked by our platoon commander to make a wireless radio.

Wayakwa was one of the kids who was usually picked on by others at school for trivial matters, and most of the time you would not find him mingling with other kids after school. But that very day Wayakwa came to join the platoon and, somehow, he was appointed to be our radioman and was accorded some respect.

I had crafted an M16 gun for myself, but the quality of my gun was not at par with that of the other kids. And as I took a glance at the other kids and their guns, I could not comprehend why they were so serious in crafting guns that were perfect replicas of real M16 guns, bazookas and machine guns.

There was something special about this particular patrol so the preparations were meticulous, but I could not work out what it was. I had a hunch something big was going to happen that very day, but I could not tell whether it would turn out to be a good or bad thing for the platoon.

As the preparations progressed, all eyes were now fixed on the radioman and his wireless radio. Everyone wanted the radio to be a perfect replica of a real radio, and once in a while somebody would

comment on what had been left out or what needed to be amended to improve its quality. When the radio was completed, Wayakwa was standing beside this replica made out of wild banana stumps, sticks, vines and stems of *golgol*. I could tell that it would have been in excess of 20 kg.

For third graders like Wayakwa and myself 20 kg was usually beyond our carrying capacity, but I could tell that Wayakwa was not bothered by the radio's weight. He had the special task of being our radio man, and it was his responsibility to carry the radio despite its heavy weight, and to earn the respect of the platoon.

Finally, everything was in order and the platoon was ready to head downstream. Everyone had their faces painted with charcoal and their heads covered in banana leaves or some grass species, and their weapons were in their arms or on their shoulders.

Our radio man was already raring to go, but his twenty kg load of wireless radio was still on the ground as he gazed at it with a smiling face.

Then the platoon commander and his subordinates gathered some ten metres from where we were and discussed the patrol plan while we waited anxiously for their instructions. The plan was that the platoon commander, Namun, was to take the lead of the patrol and his subordinates, Geding and Uyac', were to strategically position themselves in the patrol line to give necessary instruction should we encounter enemy patrols. The radioman, Wayakwa, was to be the last person in the patrol line so that he could call for a helicopter from Igam Army Barracks in Lae City if there were any casualties along the way.



The Buso River Patrol (above) and the Buso River (opposite page)



Slowly, the platoon headed downstream. There was silence as the troopers cautiously scanned the surrounding bushes for signs of enemy patrols, and, once in a while, the platoon commander would turn around and signal for us to sit down in the bushes and wait for some villagers to pass by on their way to our village.

The platoon had travelled for two miles and the patrol seemed to be progressing smoothly with no casualties, and the presence of the platoon had not been compromised so far. Villagers who were returning from their gardens or fishing trips to the sea did not spot us, and we were anticipating a successful patrol if the commander would call off the mission in the next one or two miles.

### **Danger close!**

All was going well as the platoon headed further downstream, but suddenly there was a scream from the front line and the platoon came to a halt. Then the troopers in front whispered to each other and passed the word down the line so that all platoon members were aware of the situation.

The platoon commander, Namun, was hurt. He had stepped on some rattan spikes and his foot was bleeding heavily.

‘Quick, get the radioman to call for help from Igam Army Barracks,’ said Geding, one of the two subordinates to the platoon commander. ‘Call for headquarters to send a helicopter as soon as possible, our platoon commander is down,’ said Uyac’, the other subordinate to the platoon commander.

As the rest of the platoon waited patiently, some of our medics began work on the casualty. The rattan spikes were removed from Namun’s foot, the wounds were cleaned with some clear sap extracted from some nearby vines, and juice from the leaves of the piper plant was squeezed into the wound to dry up the blood.

While this was going on, some troopers began preparing a stretcher using sticks and vines to carry the injured person to the riverside for the helicopter to come and whizz him off to Igam Army Barracks for further treatment.

At the same time the radioman had begun making frantic calls to Igam Army Barracks for a helicopter to be sent immediately.

From the back of the line we could hear Wayakwa frantically calling Igam Army Barracks for

help. ‘This is Alpha 1 calling Bravo 2, Over; Bravo 2, do you read me? Over. This is Alpha 1. Please send a helicopter to Buso River; Over. We have a casualty; the platoon commander for Alpha Company is injured; Over.’

Then we hear Wayakwa changing the tone of his voice and answers himself as if Igam Army Barracks was responding to his calls. ‘Roger, this is Bravo 2 calling Alpha 1; Over. Message copied; do you read me? Over.’

While the medics were preparing the casualty for evacuation and Wayakwa was calling for help, the rest of the platoon was on alert in case an enemy patrol crossed our path. The troopers were vigorously scanning the riverbank and the nearby bushes for signs of an enemy patrol approaching.

Then it was good news. Wayakwa, after making frantic calls to Igam Army Barracks informed the platoon that Igam Army Barracks had dispatched a helicopter and it was on its way.

It was all thumbs up for the platoon, and you could see smiles all around as we waited patiently for the helicopter to arrive.

But after some thirty minutes or so, there was no sign of a helicopter coming to pick up the casualty.

The platoon commander, Namun, was already placed on a stretcher, and he was impatient and wanted to know if the helicopter was really coming.

So Uyac’ whispered to the trooper next to him to send word down the line to the radioman to call Igam Army Barracks again to send a helicopter to pick up the casualty. Word was quickly sent down the line and we could hear Wayakwa calling Igam Army Barracks again to send a helicopter.

‘This is Alpha 1 calling Bravo 2; Over. Bravo 2, do you read me? Over. This is Alpha 1. Please send a helicopter to Buso River. Over. We have a casualty; the platoon commander for Alpha Company is injured. Over.’

As Wayakwa repeatedly called Igam Army Barracks using his wireless radio, the platoon listened intently. Then Wayakwa turned around and enthusiastically informed the platoon that a helicopter had been dispatched and would soon land on the river-bed of the Buso River to pick up the casualty. ♦

**Editor’s Note:** This story and its second part to be published in the next issue were originally published on the writers’ blog Ples Singing: <https://plessingsing.com>

## Literature in Papua New Guinea

### Part Two: DECLINE AND REGENERATION PHILIP FITZPATRICK

In Part I of this story the author described the early stages of the creation of a national literature in Papua New Guinea. Further developments follow in this part of the story.



It wasn’t until 1977 that a Papua New Guinean novel appeared that was specifically targeted at Papua New Guinean readers, Russell Soaba’s *Wanpis*. In *Tok Pisin*, the title refers to someone who is lonely or alone, like an orphan.

*Wanpis* is about identity and there is angst on display that is quintessentially Papua New Guinean. That same anguish of 1977 is recognisable in Papua New Guinea writing nearly forty years on.

*Wanpis* stood out from its predecessors because it was unashamedly aimed at PNG readers. In that sense, and distinct from Vincent Eri’s pioneering work, it was the first novel written wholly for Papua New Guineans.

The years following independence saw this brief period of literary flowering taper off. At the same time, publishers like Jacaranda shifted their attention back to their core markets in Australia.

By 1984 the Literature Department at the University of Papua New Guinea had been reduced to two staff, and the government had lost all interest in supporting the country’s literature. When Prithvindra Chakravarti resigned in 1986 the death knell of literature in the new nation was effectively sounded.

While many people in Papua New Guinea maintained an interest in books, the new elite had other things on their minds. Libraries everywhere, including in the schools, began to disappear. In the few places books were offered for sale, often at inflated prices, ordinary people couldn’t afford to buy them. New acquisitions at the university library dried up. The UPNG library today is an antiquarian booksellers’ dream, complete with ancient dust.

The Papua New Guinea Library Service had a budget of K1.3m or about AU\$500,000 in 2015–16. It had a staff ceiling of twenty-three and had holdings of 100,000 volumes. These figures are for the total government library system in PNG, including libraries in all schools and tertiary institutions.

A few Papua New Guinean writers, including the indefatigable Paulias Matane, persisted in their efforts but were increasingly forced to fund their own books and sell them personally. Vanity publishers, especially India-based ones, filled the void left by the departing publishers, and the quality of editing and production declined. The publishing program at the university foundered.

The fallow period following independence was frustrating for creative writers in Papua New Guinea. With few outlets for their work in their own country and indifference from Australian and international publishers, the promise of those early years all but evaporated.

The only bright spot was the resolution of the UPNG to keep teaching literature. Russell Soaba taught there as did writers Regis Stella and Steven Winduo. These men published their own works while sustaining, where they could, the embryonic literary tradition. Many students who attended the university have fond memories of all three.



Russell Soaba and Steven Winduo are still at the university but Dr Regis Stella, who wrote two fine novels, *Gutsini Posa* (Rough Seas, 1999) and *Mata Sara* (Crooked Eyes, 2010), died in 2012, just short of his fifty-second birthday and days away from the launch of a new book.

Divine Word University in Madang had also begun to teach literature during this period inspiring would-be writers but later abandoned its program. In late 2016 it was thankfully reinstated.

During the barren years from around 1986 to 2010, there were several attempts to set up writers' organisations, mostly within the universities. A national literature competition also ran for a short time but, with lack of support and continued indifference from the government, both enterprises had short lives.

By the turn of the century, Papua New Guinea had largely become a nation without a literary soul. While constantly spruiking the need for unity and nationalism, successive governments seemed ignorant of the role literature might play in this endeavour.

In the schools, students usually had no access to literature by their own countrymen and women. Instead, they were fed a diet of overseas writing, much of it inappropriate to their needs and interests.



Authentic and often pedestrian memoirs and novels by Australians who had worked in Papua New Guinea, sat alongside works by international writers who seemed to regard the country as exotic and remote and a worthy setting for a pot boiler. By and large most of these efforts were irrelevant to the cause of regenerating a Papua New Guinean literature.

Then a faint light appeared on the horizon.

Social media took a long time to take off in Papua New Guinea and, when it did, coverage was poor and services expensive. It also took Papua New Guineans a while to work out how best to use it. A couple of blogs appeared, like Emmanuel Narokobi's 'The Masalai Blog', that recognised the internet's potential for serious content and debate, but generally the early efforts were superficial, personalised, often vitriolic and had limited reach.

In 2007 the Irish company, Digicel, set up shop in Papua New Guinea. Digicel served many of the remoter and least developed parts of the world and was a good fit for PNG. It began an ambitious program of building mobile phone towers.

Digicel set off a social media revolution in Papua New Guinea, in both urban and outlying areas. By 2010 it seemed that just about everyone had a mobile phone. The rates were high, but are now gradually decreasing.

While the quality of the blogs improved there were none especially useful for creative writers. A few writers set up their own blogs to get their work out but their audience was limited.

By far the most successful blog in terms of creative writing and reach was Australian-based Keith Jackson's 'PNG Attitude'. This blog began life in 2006 as a point of contact for Australians who had worked in Papua New Guinea before and shortly after independence. Keith had been a teacher and broadcaster and the blog was mostly read by Australians who had worked in these fields.

However, as it evolved, the site attracted a wider audience, including many Papua New Guineans. They contributed short articles and essays and, as these increased in number, it became apparent that many writers saw the blog as a useful outlet for their work.

In 2010 I contributed an article to 'PNG Attitude' outlining the parlous state of literature

in Papua New Guinea. From there Keith Jackson and I devised a writing competition for Papua New Guineans, which we called The Crocodile Prize in acknowledgement of Vincent Eri's pioneering novel.

When that first contest was done and dusted in September 2011, we produced an anthology of PNG writing and continued to do so each year as the competition continued.

Initially, we used a local Papua New Guinean printer and publisher, Birdwing Publishing, which printed its books in China or India. It was expensive and, given that we distributed the books free of charge within PNG from donated funds, print runs were restricted to the lower hundreds.

Our quest to find a cheaper way of publishing coincided with the emergence of CreateSpace, a US-based digital, print-on-demand system, which is a subsidiary of Amazon. This fitted our purpose well and, after 2012, the anthologies were all produced this way. We were now able to distribute up to 1,500 copies to schools and the few libraries that had survived in PNG.

Along the way we created Pukpuk Publications. As well as the annual anthologies, Pukpuk has published almost forty books by Papua New Guinean writers, including novels, poetry, essay collections and a range of other works.

When you consider that today's Papua New Guinean literature has sprung from a deeply moribund era only in the last five years, this output has been impressive. Through the Crocodile Prize, we have discovered a very encouraging band of poets, writers and critical essayists.

This has been a fascinating and rewarding process. Writers seemed to emerge out of the blue and, when they are first encountered, there is the repeated electric feeling of discovering substantial and hitherto unknown talent.

The first writer to ignite that spark was the prolific blogger, Martyn Namorong, in 2011. He bombarded us with a series of short and incendiary essays on Papua New Guinean politics and society that quickly put paid to any paternalistic sense we might have harboured about what we were doing.

The poet, Michael Dom, joined later by Wardley D Barry-Igvisa, demonstrated an impressive mastery of the form in all its iterations. Beneath these palpable talents was a much bigger swag of emerging

poets who demonstrated a natural link between the traditional oral literature of PNG, song and a more modern poetry.

There were also some interesting memoirs and novels. The productive Bougainvillean writer, Leonard Fong Roka, stunned us with his raw and uncompromising account of growing up during the Bougainville civil war of the 1990s. The trauma of the cold-blooded execution of his father by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army drove Leonard's writing, and this sad event was to form the centrepiece of his award-winning book, *Brokenville*.

Of his own volition, Baka Bina published his novel, *Man of Calibre*, using Amazon's CreateSpace. It was a compelling fictional account of two torrid days during a family dispute in an Eastern Highlands' village. And, in his novel, *Sibona*, Emmanuel Peni produced a splendid account of the life of an unwanted teenager growing up in Port Moresby.

Both of these novels followed the 'written here—for here' tradition of Russell Soaba's *Wanpis*, and are clearly definable as PNG literature.

In a country with severely limited publishing opportunities these successes effectively proved digital publishing and print-on-demand as a viable alternative to high priced and poor quality vanity publishing. ♦





# Researching the Saipan Connection

**ROY RANNEY**

**The story by Adam Liu, 'The Search for Nicolasa', in the December issue of PNG KUNDU had more relevance to me because of the Saipan connection than the Rabaul connection.**

I did my Peace Corps training in Saipan, the capital of the Commonwealth of North Mariana Islands (CNMI), a territory of the United States and have visited Garapan, although it was a pretty nondescript village back then. I spent seven years living/working in the Caroline Islands and regularly visited Saipan.

The Chamorro people are the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands, but because of Spanish colonisation centuries ago, they all have names like Santos, Camacho, Cruz, etc. and their language now has a lot of Spanish-sounding words in it.

A long time ago many people from the Caroline Islands were introduced into the Saipan population. These were people from islands now in the Yap and Chuuk states which had been devastated by a typhoon. The Chamorro and Carolinians are two different ethnic groups now living on Saipan. I am not sure if Adam Liu made that distinction.

I forwarded the article to a good friend of mine who married a woman from Satawal, an outer island in Yap state, and who is now living in Hawaii doing consulting work in fisheries throughout the Pacific for the last thirty years. His wife still has lots of relatives living in the Carolinian community in Saipan. The following is his response:

*Thanks for forwarding the story. It is incredibly interesting. If it has not already, it should go somewhere in an academic journal to be available for posterity. I subscribe to the Journal of Pacific History, and I think that would be an appropriate one for submission.*

*Nicolasa's father was from the Celebes and ended up on Saipan. Not that surprising given the trading that took place during the late 19th century. I think most of the names mentioned are Chamorro, not Carolinian. So how did Nicolasa get from Saipan to Rabaul? Well, Rabaul was the headquarters of German New Guinea.*



Chamorro people in 1915

*The Germans at the time controlled the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall Islands. German ships that conducted government business were based in Qingdao, China that the Germans controlled. Considering the geography, it is likely that shipping routes between Qingdao and Rabaul stopped over in Saipan (controlled by Germany from 1899 to 1914).*

*If you want to pursue this further, you might want to contact Dr Dirk Spenneman, who is at Charles Sturt University. He has done extensive research on Micronesian history and culture. I just had a look at his personal website and he wrote an article, Spennemann, Dirk HR (2009), 'Ships and Shipping in the German Mariana Islands 1899-1914'. Report prepared for the CNMI Historic Preservation Office, Albury, NSW.*

I also wrote to Fran Hezel, an historian with the Catholic church, who is actually now living in Guam. His response:

*It sounds as though the author of the article you forwarded did his homework well. He seems to have strung together nearly the full story of the Saipanese woman, Nicolasa, who married a few times and saw much of the world before her death in her nineties. I just have a little background to add.*

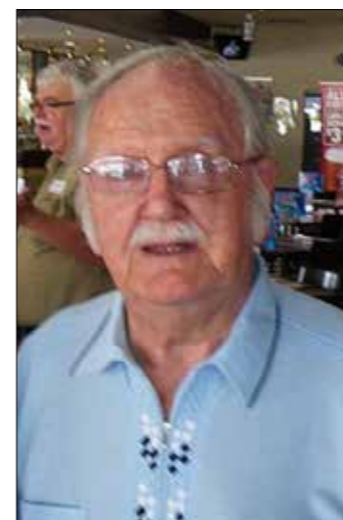
*Saipan was resettled by Carolinians in the late 1800s, but the Spanish made sure to send some of the Chamorros from southern Guam up to Saipan after them to 'civilise' them, i.e. make sure they wore proper clothes and learned to make the sign of the Cross. It sounds as though Nicolasa was one from one of those latter families.*

*When the Germans took over Saipan in 1900, they established a link with other places around the Pacific—Rabaul and Angaur for mining as well as in Nauru. They were buzzing around the Pacific in their ships until 1914, when they lost their possessions, so it wouldn't have been hard for Nicolasa to meet Germans of all types during that period. She wouldn't have had any big problem in moving from place to place either. ♦*

# The Faithful Committal

**CHIPS MACKELLAR**

**Sad to read in the December 2021 edition of PNG KUNDU of the passing of Denys Faithful. He was indeed a famous artist, aviator and kiap, and he was one of those lovable denizens in the Parthenon of colourful characters of pre-Independence Papua New Guinea (PNG).**



Denys Faithful

And amongst the myths and legends of the pre-independence legal fraternity of PNG, Denys is well remembered in a Supreme Court case known unofficially as 'The Faithful Committal'.

To set the parameters of this story it is first necessary to understand the multifunctional world of the kiaps. In the isolated communities in the Highlands or the islands of pre-independent PNG, it happened that just like Saint Paul (*1 Cor. 9:19-22*) the kiap had to be all things to all men. He had to be a policeman, lawyer, jailer, magistrate, coroner, sociologist, historian, engineer, meteorologist, mechanic, surveyor, architect, clerk, builder, banker, handyman, anthropologist, cartographer, genealogist, postmaster, auditor, and representative of every government department for his area of jurisdiction. And why? Because in these remote locations there was no one else there to perform these functions.

So, if you could imagine a kiap conducting a court case, you might see him first asking each witness the questions a police prosecutor might ask then, on cross-examination, questions a defence counsel might ask, and then you might hear him summarise the case for both the prosecution and then the defence, and then as a magistrate you might hear him consider both summaries and then he would decide the case. Then, if the decision included a jail sentence, who would take custody of the prisoner? Why the kiap of course because he would be the jailer.

It all sounds chaotic, doesn't it? But it never was, because although all these duties were performed by the same kiap, the separate functions, in theory, were kept separate. Thus, a prison sentence would be documented by the kiap as magistrate, issuing a Warrant of Commitment to himself as jailer, and that warrant would be the legal authority for the kiap to keep the prisoner in custody in the station jail. So, it often happened that when the kiap was acting in one jurisdiction, he might be required to authorise himself to perform some other function in some other jurisdiction by issuing himself with the correct form.

But, of course, some kiaps considered that authorising themselves to do some other function by way of the correct form was a whole lot of bureaucratic nonsense, since no one would ever stop them from doing their various duties anyway, and the correct piece of paper could often be issued in retrospect if it was ever needed. So, it often happened that the correct form was never used.

However, the city-centric legal profession of pre-independent PNG insisted that the exactitudes of modern civilisation be maintained even in these far-flung reaches of empire. And this happened in the case of 'The Faithful Committal'.

I was not present at this court case, and it occurred so long ago that retrospection dulls the memory but, from what I remember one lawyer telling me, the story went something like this:

Denys received information that a village woman had been murdered by her husband. Acting swiftly to prevent payback from the wife's relatives, Denys went to the village and arrested the suspect. Although the wife had already been buried, it was still necessary to obtain the appropriate evidence of cause of death, so Denys ordered the wife's body to be dug up so he could examine it. Denys then saw that the wife's skull had been cloven clearly



## FRONT COVER FEATURE

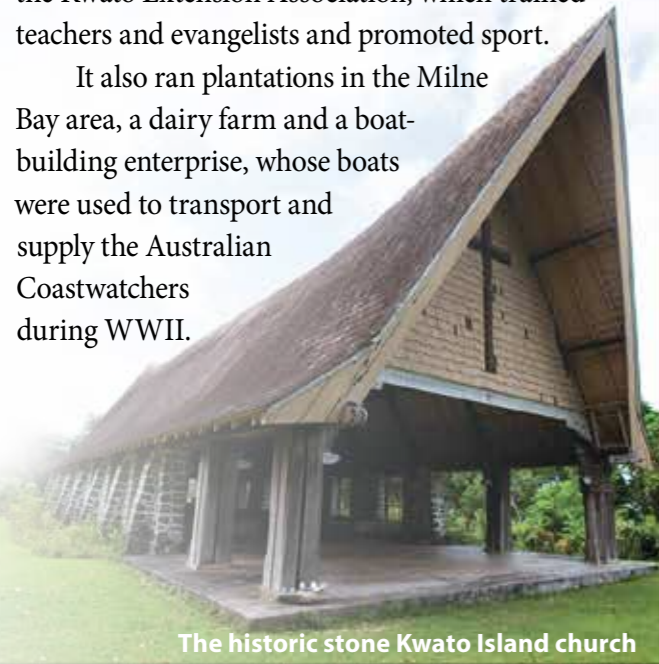
# Saving Kwato Island

English missionary, Rev. Charles William Abel (1862–1930), began work at Port Moresby in 1890 and in 1891 he joined Rev. FW Walker on the mission station at the island of Kwato, about 3 km west of Samarai Island in Milne Bay. Mainly because of hard physical labour by the two men, Kwato was reasonably habitable by 1892 and some buildings had been erected, including the stone non-denominational church.

After Rev. Walker resigned, Charles Abel and his new wife, Beatrice, worked hard to make Kwato a model mission station. A boarding school was established to train Papuans in manual skills such as Western-style carpentry for house and boat construction and furniture making. In 1911 he established coconut plantations for the production of copra.

These activities were opposed by the London Missionary Society (LMS) who believed Abel was pursuing practical education at the expense of religious studies. In 1916, when the LMS withdrew financial support, Abel resigned, and established the Kwato Extension Association, which trained teachers and evangelists and promoted sport.

It also ran plantations in the Milne Bay area, a dairy farm and a boat-building enterprise, whose boats were used to transport and supply the Australian Coastwatchers during WWII.



The historic stone Kwato Island church

consistent with the blow from an axe, and he found the axe in the suspect's house, still with vestiges of dried blood and human hair. Denys photographed the wound and ordered the body reburied. With plenty of witnesses, a murder weapon and appropriate photos, it was a clear case of murder. So, back at the station Denys convened a coroner's court, recorded the witness depositions, remanded the suspect in custody and committed him for trial at the next circuit sittings of the Supreme Court.

But when Denys later gave evidence at the Supreme Court trial, he was subjected to persistent questioning by defence counsel like this:

**Counsel:** Who was the police officer in charge of the murder investigation?

**Denys:** I was.

**Counsel:** You said you exhumed the body for examination.

**Denys:** Yes.

**Counsel:** In what capacity did you exhume the body?

**Denys:** In the capacity of police officer investigating the case.

**Counsel:** Who authorised the exhumation of the body?

**Denys:** I did.

**Council:** Did you have an Exhumation Order issued by the Coroner?

[Pause. What could Denys say? If he admitted that he did not have an Exhumation Order it would have meant that he had committed the crime of unlawfully interfering with a corpse. So, he had to say yes.]

**Denys:** Yes.

**Counsel:** Well, I have looked through the depositions of the committal proceedings, and I cannot find any exhumation order. Can you tell the court where it is?

**Denys:** It is in my head.

**Counsel:** Can you explain that?

**Denys:** Well, when I was the police officer investigating the crime I asked the Coroner for an exhumation order and I know he issued one.

**Counsel:** How do you know that?

**Denys:** Because when I was the police officer I knew what the Coroner had in mind at all times.

**Counsel:** How could you know that? Who was the Coroner?

**Denys:** I was.

Ah yes, Denys. You were the epitome of the colourful kiap and we miss you. ♦

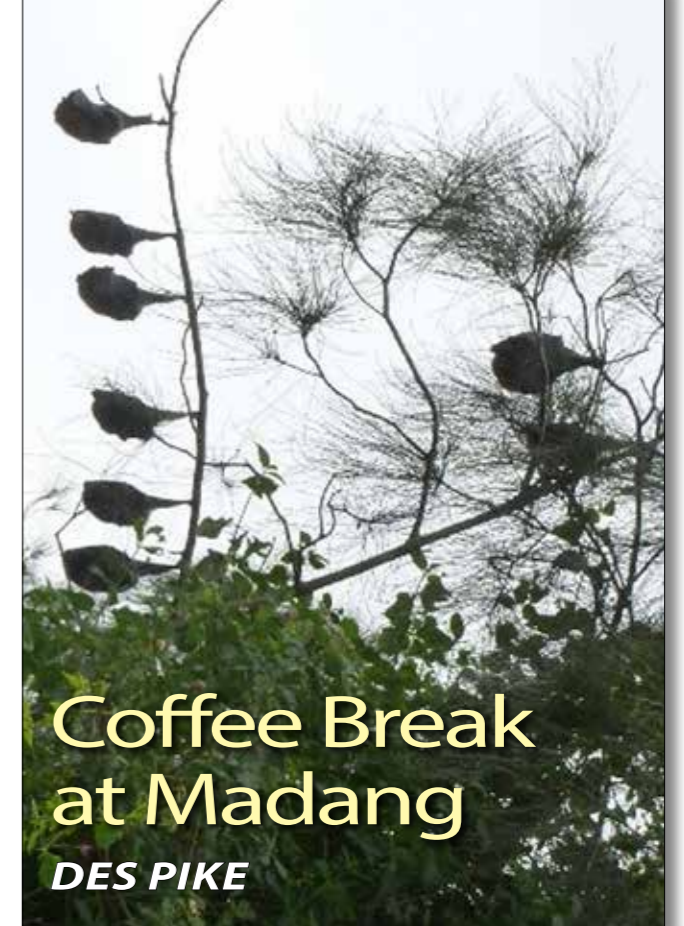
The lowset building that served as the District Office in Madang in the mid-1960s was a dilapidated WWII structure that had received little maintenance since the Army departed in 1946. I believe it was originally some sort of medical facility, built after the Allies retook Madang from the Japanese forces.

The U-shaped building was in the centre of the small township and there were several additional offices that had been built on adjacent sites to meet the needs of new departments. The interior green paint was peeling and there were at least two long established native bee nests in the hollow plywood walls. The worn concrete floor had been laid with inferior cement and was full of eroded patches. The roof leaked when it rained, and when a severe monsoon deluge set in, the drains would overflow and two or three inches of water would flow through the offices.

After such inundations the smell of decay would disappear for a while but it would return after a week or so. A large drain at the rear of the building was supposed to handle any runoff from the area, but this it patently failed to do. Lining the edge of this drain was a row of tall casuarina trees, the last individual trees in this row providing shade for the office.

About the time we arrived a large colony of Spectacled Flying Foxes (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) took up residence in these casuarinas (right). These large fruit bats were a nuisance, being noisy and smelly, but after a while, the office staff became used to them and tolerated their presence.

The Ramu Subdistrict was unusual in that it was decided that the Subdistrict Office would be located within the Madang District Office complex. Every other subdistrict in Papua New Guinea had its office on an outstation within the area being administered, and on such outstations this inevitably meant that the Assistant District Officer (ADO) became involved in the day to day running of his station and oversighting the administrative functions such as post office, banking, issuing of rations and payments to staff, being gaoler, and ensuring adequate general station maintenance, including upkeep of the airstrip in many cases.



## Coffee Break at Madang

DES PIKE

When it became necessary to create office space for the newly created position of ADO of the Ramu Subdistrict, one corner of the front veranda of the District Office was sectioned off. This provided barely enough space for a desk, chair and a filing cabinet. All of the typing was to be done by the existing office staff, so I became an additional burden to these long-suffering individuals.

As ADO Ramu, I was not saddled with the annoyances of having to run an outstation and was free to concentrate on spending time visiting the four patrol posts and two base camps within the subdistrict. I spent as little time as possible in this office, as every week I would usually be using the government charters to fly to the various outstations in the subdistrict to hear court cases, encourage road developmental programs, carry out patrols or attend Local Government Council meetings. There were no road communications with any of the Ramu Subdistrict outstations and access was only possible by light aircraft.

When I was obliged to spend time in the office, I fell into the general office routine, which, of course included minor socialising during the morning and afternoon coffee breaks. As the DC's secretary, it was my wife Philippa's job to collect the money from all coffee consumers to purchase the instant coffee, tea, sugar and powdered milk on a weekly basis.

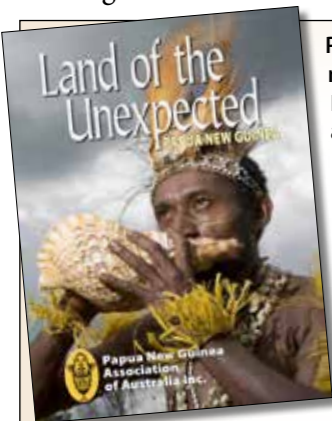


The actual making of the tea and coffee fell to one of the local orderlies in the Madang office, just one of the duties they undertook throughout the day.

For the first few months that I worked from the office, I would regularly drink the cups of coffee and grumble about the unusual taste, along with the other office workers. Then one day I happened to be walking past the rainwater tank at the rear of the office just as the orderly was filling the large urn from which the hot water was drawn to brew the morning beverages. I was appalled to see the colour of the water that was coming from the tap into the urn. It was a very dark brown—about the colour of strong tea. I checked the flow from the tap and the colour was unchanged as the water flowed.

The water in the tank was obviously severely polluted. It was only then that I looked up and realised that the corrugated iron roof of the District Office, from whence the tank received its rainwater, was covered with a thick layer of casuarina branchlets, which must have remained undisturbed for many years. To add to the flavour of the water draining into the tank, many months of flying fox droppings had been added to the layers on the roof. This combination immediately explained the peculiar taste of the coffee and tea which the District Office staff had been drinking for many months.

I went to the District Commissioner and asked the others in the office to come and see my demonstration of why we were being supplied with foul-tasting coffee and tea. I turned on the tank's tap and all present recoiled in disgust at what flowed out. It was pointless to blame the orderly for not having drawn attention to the situation, as he probably saw nothing unusual in the condition of the water.



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The immediate result was that workers were called in and the office roof was cleaned of its accumulated debris and the tank was drained and cleaned. However, the saddest outcome lay in store for the flying foxes. After consultations, the Police Superintendent arranged one day for the shooting of these creatures as they clustered together in their colony in the casuarina trees.

Just about everyone in town who owned a shotgun was assembled at the office and, on the Superintendent's command, the firing commenced. There must have been about fifteen or more shooters concentrating on a small area of trees, which were very heavily populated with the fruit bats. The death toll was high, with the survivors circling overhead and many being shot out of the sky as they flew around in panic. As the dead bats fell to the ground, the local men who had learned of the proposed massacre were in the area and seized on the victims as they lay flapping on the ground. That evening there were many cooking pots in the various town compounds that contained one or two flying foxes as a flavoursome addition to the usual stolid fare of rice and bully beef.

When we went home that afternoon, I took my usual walk around the garden and found that a small flying fox was hanging on a low branch of our mango tree. It made no attempt to fly away as I approached, and I was able to examine it to make sure that it had not been wounded. It stayed there overnight and was still there the next afternoon.

Assuming it was hungry, we offered it slices of fruit, which it gingerly accepted and ate. It seemed content to stay under our care, although these social creatures normally would live in colonies. For the next few days, we regularly fed this bat until one day it was no longer there and I assumed that it must have overcome whatever trauma had caused it to seek refuge in our mango tree. In those days we had no reason to fear lyssavirus infection from flying foxes, and it became so accustomed to us feeding it that we could scratch and tickle it without concerns of being bitten.

We continued to work in the old District Office until 1970, when a new building at the western end of Modilon Road was completed. It provided a pleasant working environment but lacked the character of the old structure. ♦

## Mining Impacts Across the Ok Tedi & Fly River Floodplains

**HOWARD ROGERS  
& BEGA INAHO**

**The flood plains of the Ok Tedi and Fly River extend over approximately 3,500 km<sup>2</sup> and from the air appear to be an uninhabited wilderness of intact forests, woodlands and swamps. However, natural resources of the riverine landscape support several small, but remote, subsistence communities that are dependent upon the landscape for their livelihoods and wellbeing. The forests, woodlands and swamps provide numerous essential materials for house construction, trees to make dugout canoes, medicinal and food plants, household items, hunting tools and fibres to weave traditional bags and mats.**

The extensive lagoons and waterways provide an abundance of food for communities including native barramundi, black bass, catfish, freshwater prawns, an overwhelming abundance of the introduced tilapia and freshwater and saltwater crocodiles. Grasslands support substantial populations of game including bandicoots, wallabies and the invasive rusa deer that have spread from West Papua. The game provides an important source of local protein and income with deer meat and fish being traded across the border.

The Fly River system provides for an important transport route throughout the floodplain. In addition to the daily movements of dugout canoes, the main channel provides an essential transport route for copper concentrate from the giant Ok Tedi mine and general freight to Kiunga, the main river port of Western Province, located approximately 550 km inland.

The Ok Tedi mine is located in the Star Mountains at the head waters of the Ok Tedi, a major tributary that joins the Fly River thirty-two km downstream of Kiunga. The mine has been a success for the nation in generating revenue and employment of skilled Papua New Guineans, however, ongoing operations since the 1980s have progressively increased its footprint on the environment across the lower Ok Tedi and middle Fly River floodplains. This has impacted over 1,150 km<sup>2</sup> of forests and woodlands.

The open-cut copper mine produces an average of 60,000 tonnes per day of ore and a peak of 240,000 tonnes a day of overburden. Associated with this has been an increase in sediment load in the Ok Tedi rising from a natural load of 3–5 megatons per year to a mine impacted load of 45 megatons per year from 1985 to 2000. Riverine waste rock and tailing disposal



was approved in 1994 by the PNG government after the failure of the foundations of a proposed tailings storage facility. Between the commencement of riverine waste disposal in 1984, and the end of 2019, 754 megatons of tailings and 1,275 megatons of waste rock have been discharged to the river system.

Much of this waste is retained in the upper reaches of the Ok Tedi however the finer particles are transported down the river and, if unmitigated, into the Fly River. Over the same period the ongoing tailings disposal and losses from the erodible dumps resulted in considerable riverbed aggradation and associated overbank flooding of the lower Ok Tedi and Fly River floodplains. This change to the natural flood regime resulted in higher frequency duration of flooding and subsequent forest dieback that was first observed at Iogi in the lower of Ok Tedi in 1992 and progressed downstream into the middle Fly from 1996 and continues today.

The decline in forest and woodland health



TOP: Bega Inaho, ecologist, Ok Tedi Mining Limited  
 BOTTOM: Dieback conversion to sedgeland

is attributed to flooded anaerobic soils, depleting oxygen uptake by roots and microorganisms resulting in root death followed by canopy dieback and eventually tree mortality. This process is exacerbated by increases in the duration of flooding due to the deposition of sediment at the mouth of the tie-channels and on levee banks, which prevents floodplain water from draining out.

As a major mitigation project for riverbed aggradation and forest dieback a dredging operation was commissioned in the lower Ok Tedi in 1998 to reduce sediment loads reaching the lower Ok Tedi and the Fly River systems. The dredge removes ten million cubic metres of sand annually which comprises approximately 60% of the sediment load while the remaining 40% of silt material which cannot be captured by the dredge enters the lower Ok Tedi and Fly.

After two decades of dredging costing over US\$55 million per annum, the riverbed levels have reduced by two to four metres in the lower Ok Tedi and have stabilised throughout the middle Fly.

Overbank flooding and the associated first die back have decreased compared to the 1996/97 period and recovery of some forest species has been observed in the lower Ok Tedi and upper Fly River. Forest and woodland dieback are expected to continue at a slower rate. Dredged sand is stored in engineered stockpiles on the east and west banks at Bige covering 1000 ha of land that had been impacted by the dieback. Completed sections of the stockpile are being progressively rehabilitated to forest with native species and early monitoring results have indicated a positive trajectory towards a self-sustaining vegetation.

Dieback monitoring across the floodplain was implemented in the 1990s using satellite imagery. However, it was not until 2017 that widespread, detailed field studies were undertaken to understand the impact of changes in the flood regime on the forests and woodlands. From 2017 to 2019 an extensive monitoring system was established incorporating the use of transect and unbounded plots to monitor stressed and healthy forests and woodlands. Transect establishment included the permanent tagging of all live trees for re-measurement to monitor changes to stand structure and tree health. Unbounded plots were established to monitor species changes in all plant life forms from



TOP: Field work in sago swamp  
 BOTTOM: Howard Rogers, Booyong Forest Service

ground layer to emergent trees including epiphytes and climbers. Of the 1,150 km<sup>2</sup> of the impacted forests and woodlands that were mapped in 2018, 70% is alluvial forest and over 12% is inundated, low lying hill forest, 8% is swamp woodland 5% is low lying seasonal forest and the remaining 5% is mostly successional forest and mixed swamp woodland swamp/grass land.

Field work in such a remote area is logistically and physically challenging. A dedicated liveboard research vessel, the *Fly Explorer*, motorised dinghies and sea kayaks are used to conduct the studies. All work is undertaken with prior agreement of local landowners who are often engaged to assist with navigation and transect establishment. Frequently, transects were established and measured from sea kayaks by the field team that have been trained in basic sea kayak skills and rescue procedures. The use of sea kayaks to survey and establish vegetation monitoring transects in the flood plains is probably a first in PNG.

In some areas, impacts have been severe with the conversion of tall and diverse alluvial forest to lagoons and swamps grasslands, evidenced by the presence of trees stumps near the surface. Alluvial forest, although subject to a natural flooding cycle

in the wet season, appears to be the most susceptible to the increased frequency and duration of flooding. Approximately 1000 km<sup>2</sup> of alluvial forest have succumbed to dieback with only occasional stands remaining in a highly stressed dieback condition. The main exception to this is in the lower Ok Tedi where alluvial forest had been subject to severe dieback but is now partly recovering to form a secondary forest, currently dominated by pioneer species and Pandanus.





Benjamin Kelambua, botanist, and Howard Rogers in lower Fly non-impact area

Recovery is occurring as a result of the dredging operation. Impacts are also evident in the Melaleuca dominated swamps woodlands which occur in low-lying basins and at the fringes of seasonal forest. Melaleuca woodlands are adapted to seasonal flood cycles but are still susceptible to prolonged flooding. When stressed numerous trees show dieback in the crowns or have died but species diversity is less impacted. At the fringes of the Melaleuca stands extensive lowlying plains of tall, large-diameter *Leptospermum suaveolens* occur before seasonal forest dominates. The expansion of the flood impacted area is currently causing uproots of the largest *Leptospermum* with increased waterlogging. Low lying seasonal forests have also been impacted where previous flooding events were not part of the natural disturbance regime. Emergent and canopy trees do not survive, however, understory species respond with extensive adventitious roots reflecting long duration of flood levels.

The extent of forest decline is expected to continue with the ongoing operations of the mine. The affected communities and the government are aware of, and receive, compensation for these

impacts. Ok Tedi Mining Limited (OTML) has established compensation agreements with 158 affected communities under its Community Mine Continuation Agreement (CMCA).

In 2020 OTML paid 44 million kina in compensation and 816 million kina since the start of CMCA in 2001. The company engages the Ok Tedi Development Foundation, a subsidiary of the mine, and works closely with the Fly River Provincial Government to support community livelihood and wellbeing through sustainable development programs.

OTML is committed to maintaining the monitoring program in the flood plains and to extend the study to incorporate hyper-spectral data from satellites to classify vegetation types to better understand the important terrestrial flora and fauna resources for river dependent villages. This will help understand the dynamics of forests and woodlands and changes that the availability of associated key flora/fauna resources are having on community wellbeing and livelihoods. ♦

**Editor's Note:** This story was first published in *Commonwealth Forestry Association Newsletter*, No. 94, September 2021. The photos were generously provided by Howard Rogers and Bega Inaho.

## Beyond the Kubo

**BOB HOAD**

**In 1963 I was fortunate to lead a patrol from my base camp, Nomad River in the Western District, safely through 'restricted areas' into the Southern Highlands District and return. Most of this area was very remote. It had little or no contact with the outside world. This was a community in a Stone Age.**



A wigman at Tari in the Southern Highlands

A couple of other kiaps and I had spent the previous two years at Nomad building up a base camp with an airfield. Workers from a different area (Awin, North Fly) had been brought to Nomad because the local people were not settled and were not offering assistance. In a Stone Age culture, there is not much surplus labour. Only steel could drastically reduce the enormous time and labour required for subsistence farming.

The whole area was a vast forest on the Great Papuan Plateau surrounding Mount Bosavi, an extinct volcano. Knowing that it would be difficult to recruit carriers from place to place I had a permanent 'line' of fifty-five porters, recruited from Awin and Pare speakers, from the west side of the Strickland River. With nine members of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary accompanying, we left Nomad on 13 November 1963. My patrol travelled up the Nomad River—making contact with local communities—then travelled around the eastern side of Mt Sisa into the Southern Highlands. Assistant Resident Magistrate Jack Hides had done much the same in 1937.

Language barriers and communicating with people were among the difficulties we faced. Our official interpreter was from the Pare. He could communicate with people he called the Supei (or Samo) but not the group further to the east, the Biami (or Bedamuni). Even simple questions got lost in translation. I recall a very lengthy discussion once, through three languages, and the reply was, 'why?'

We cajoled a more adventurous Bedamuni man to join with us going to the Highlands. But he was soon lost for words when we left the plateau. There was no evidence of any trade going north. Indeed, there was no evidence of any foreign goods (shell, steel, utensils) amongst the Bedamuni.

Our first contact with the Huri (approaching Komo Patrol Post) was extraordinary. Villagers ran down and took the boxes from our porters. Vibrant, laughing, singing, they made the tired party very welcome. But our Bedamuni guide looked very uneasy. We were all strangers here—





there was no claim to kinship, recognition, trade or previous contact. Here they were a different people, but very friendly.

The patrol officer from Komo sent his tractor down, as far as the road went, to assist with our stores. The Bedamuni was stunned, jaw-dropping, unable to comprehend what kind of monster this could be. He was invited to ride on the tractor, but soon became too anxious and got off.

So we passed through Tari and Koroba, taking a short sojourn at each, and then walked west to the Lavani Valley and two more small (Huri) communities. I had hoped to continue on in this direction to the Strickland River but the country became a nightmare. Beyond these small settlements of Hanoi and Geroro there were, according to the local people, just bad, bad spirits. 'No one went there. No one.'

Nothing we offered could cajole a guide (Huri) to take us further. They reiterated that it was indeed bad country. Who lived there? Just bad, bad spirits.

I had a hand-held compass and we attempted to go west. First encounter was high-altitude moss forest, as usual; then cane; then honey-combed limestone fissures. I became aware of a strange phenomenon—silence. No one was making a noise. The porters were terrified. I tried a bit of bravado—scoffing, speaking loudly, and banging trees, apparently in control, apparently unnerved. But I admit now I was somewhat profoundly scared. We had come a long way. This was not looking good.

We proceeded thus for another two to three hours before I acknowledged that it was hopeless. We turned south and down through what I believed to be the Muller Range.

We stumbled on a narrow foot-track on the back of a ridge going south. I had a glimpse, for the first time, of the Papuan Plateau—a pattern of forest-covered ranges broken by tributaries flowing west. We could hear the sound of a river in the distance. The porters were happy again. It was a miracle!

We moved quickly down the track. As we did so, the noise of the river was becoming louder—like a locomotive out of control. An hour later we came to a screaming torrent. We couldn't shout above the noise. Clearly, we could not cross this. It was terrifying, again. We retreated, away from the noise, to discuss the situation. Some police would go upstream, some would scout downstream. What would we do? It had been a long day.

In the morning we found the river had not changed at all. It was still a raging torrent. But our scouts did find a large boulder. My hopes were 'maybe we can fell a tree to this boulder, then bridge to the other side'. The river was ferocious, the noise relentless. Anyone falling in would not be getting out. The river was finally bridged. It took several anxious hours. It took a great deal of harmony to lift and shove and grunt the long poles, shaped from felled trees, across to the first boulder thence onto a couple of others and to the opposite bank. The police



Huri people in the Lavani Valley



A single house north of the Cecilia River—probably a Kubo community

and porters were fantastic. It was a great relief when everyone had crossed safely.

Thus far we did not have any map to cover this area. We had descended the Muller Range and possibly crossed the Burnett River. It would be a little further before we could identify, correctly, our positions on the APC maps we had. I was so happy. In the next few days we crossed the Liddle, Carrington and Cecilia rivers, and returned to Nomad station.

After we had left Huri country we found few cane bridges and few houses. Initial contact with the inhabitants was a disaster when they fled, and the porters gave chase. We could not find houses or cultivations. Was this the Febi or the Kubo? Later, further down, we did find a small settlement with a few men and boys. But we could not talk with them. They were not what our interpreter called the Supei (Samo).

Naming features and communities can be controversial. With so many languages there is the likelihood for different names. Our interpreter was from Pare, on the western side of the Strickland. He reported on what he heard from his associates, and that may have been different from what other groups had to say. It was not surprising.

What is surprising (or perhaps not, when money is changing hands) is when mythology is changed. In 2007 I was manager in an oil-company camp on the edge of the Highlands overlooking the plateau towards Mount Bosavi. In the camp there were some well-trained and sophisticated employees from Huli country, and even as far away as Enga Province. Juha on the lowlands had been drilled and defined as a potential future gas field. These gentlemen were seriously proclaiming proprietary rights to this territory. This is our land, these are our kinsmen. So they said. How things can change. Years before, when I made first contact, it was the bad lands down there with very bad spirits (I can attest to that); to be avoided at all costs.

When I went to PNG in 1957 we were some very brash baby kiaps. I recall a colleague saying how troublesome and potentially misguided the missionaries could be. Umm ... we shall see. A few years later after Independence, most kiaps left whilst most missionaries stayed on, for a few years. Nevertheless, many former kiaps did remain long after independence. Whilst some found work in the private sector, quite a number were given senior positions in other government departments after





One of the Biami people

the demise of the old system. In the late 1990s-early 2000s quite a number, like me, returned to work as contractors for mining and petroleum companies.

## A Summary: Patrolling in Western Papua

**CHRIS WARRILLOW**

**As described in the previous article—in late 1963, in what was probably one of the last great patrols in the Territory of Papua—Patrol Officer Bob Hoad set out to explore the country east of the Strickland River, north of Mount Bosavi and into the western part of the then Southern Highlands District.**

It returned via the Lavani Valley and had to cross many unbridged rivers and streams, tributaries of the upper Strickland. The main purpose was to ascertain just what populations might still be uncontacted in that remote area and inform those people of the government's intentions.

The full formal Patrol Report (Nomad Patrol No. 4/1963-64) is available on-line at the University of California San Diego Library. Unfortunately, none of patrol leader's excellent photographic skills appeared to be possible to download a useful reproduction—I believe that most, if not all, of the original images have long since vanished from the original report, held in the PNG Archives!

The patrol was actually conducted in two stages. The first, from 16 September 1963 to 10 October 1963

My own opinion is that everyone contributed. And they usually did it with the very best intentions—even the missionaries with a motivation that was difficult to fathom. Also, the planters, the pilots, the storekeepers, the academics, the linguists, the NGOs all contributed in some way. The Catholic missionaries in the Goilala, whom I count as my very best friends (though some still talked about the 'wars' between the government and the church), did excellent work.

Finally, I would like to compliment Peter Dwyer and his partner, Maureen Minnegal, anthropologists, for their many years work in the Kubo—in my time a godforsaken, wretched community. They suffered from disease and disadvantage, living in the forlorn shadow of the Muller Range, and the wild streams that flow from it. I will also give tribute to Henry. Henry was the patrol dog, which accompanied us on our walk through the Highlands to the Kubo. Henry disappeared on Australia Day, eighteen days before we arrived back in Nomad on 12 February 1964, probably the victim of a cassowary or a crocodile. He did not quite make it back. ♦

was to make contact with various groups north of Nomad and east of the Strickland. It was also hoped to get some idea of the terrain through which the patrol would eventually return from the Highlands.

Hoad had to break the patrol in order to be at Nomad to prepare for a visit by then Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, on 17 October and then be on standby for the first landing of a DC3 which took place on 25 October. He then awaited the availability of a chartered light-aircraft to conduct an aerial reconnaissance over the rest of the planned patrol route. The second stage commenced on 13 November, 1963 and headed east through Biami territory, thence north-east and north to the Tari Basin. It then headed back west, thence in a southerly direction, finally arriving back in Nomad on 12 February 1964.

On 24 December Hoad was joined by Mickey Rarua, a young Papuan Assistant Patrol Officer. Rarua, recently posted to Nomad for training and experience, had expressed a desire to join Hoad for the walk to Tari and, with a suitable escort, managed to catch up with the patrol in two days' hard walking from Nomad.

Much attention has earlier been given to patrols which headed into the Star Mountains north of Kiunga. The first of these was Ivan Champion's patrol from the Fly to the Sepik in 1927. In April 1942 an epic evacuation from the invading Japanese used the route (mapped by Champion) after fleeing inland from the Wewak area. Eight Europeans and eighty-two Papua New Guineans, led by prospector JH Thurston endured five months of privations to reach the safety of Daru.

Several patrols from Daru/Kiunga headed for the Stars after the interruption of World War II. Two of them reached Telefomin before returning. However, the area to the east, which Hoad patrolled, had only been briefly penetrated by a few patrols out of Lake Murray/Kiunga to the west and Lake Kutubu to the east.

In 1954 an Australian Petroleum Company (APC) geological exploration party, escorted by Assistant District Officer Des Clancy, walked from Lake Kutubu to the Strickland and thence to Kiunga. This patrol became famous at the time due to its 'discovery' of the Lavani Valley—dubbed 'the new Shangri-la' by the Australian Press.

These patrols had little success in contacting any people—let alone bringing them under government influence. Mostly the people ran away and hid or shouted abuse and made threats from a distance, urging the intruders to move on. In fact, it was due to an attack on a patrol led by McBride in 1959 that led to the decision to establish a patrol post at Nomad. Assigned this task was Mal Land. Hoad took over from him and sometimes had the company of other officers such as Ian Douglas.

First, basic buildings (bush material) for a permanent patrol post were constructed. These included the kiaps' house and police housing, an office, a government storehouse, a large building to accommodate visitors from outlying villages as their confidence rose and, of course, a 'haus kalabus'. With the completion of the airstrip in 1963, Hoad was in

a position to commence patrols of 'consolidation', extending far out from his station.

The earlier patrols merely 'penetrated' the vast area west of Mount Bosavi or, in the case of APC, 'walked through it'. Hoad's patrol took a great circle route and spent much time camped in sparsely-populated areas checking on the people's connections with each other and attempting to establish the names of the various groups and their languages. Also attempted was explaining the reason for the patrol's presence, making known the establishment of a permanent patrol post and what the aims of the administration were.

To give some idea of the intense demands of patrol work in those days, Hoad was again off into the bush the day after his return to spend a further six days chasing down a group of Kubo men who had broken into the government store during his absence and stolen all the axes. Then, on 14 February 1964 Hoad departed on Patrol No. 5/63-64 to spend twenty-four days conducting the census for the first House of Assembly National Elections through the Pare area.

Of course, with the airstrip built and no other services to attend to at Nomad (it lacked any schools, aid posts, post office or bank agencies, etc.) there was not a lot to do on a remote outpost during its formative years! The main agenda was to establish law and order, bring peace to the area and cut out tribal fighting and 'payback' killings. Such was essential before other services such as health, education and agricultural extension could be offered to the people. *This could only be achieved by extensive patrolling.* ♦

**Editor's Note:** All the photographs courtesy of Bob Hoad, detailed descriptions of the patrols before and after Bob Hoad's can be accessed in the e-book, *Taim Bipo*, on the Association website.



Men of the Star Mountains



## Images to Ashes

**DARYL BINNING**

After recently moving into a retirement village, I made a distressing discovery. Amongst the personal items and memorabilia from my old home were thousands of feet of motion picture film, which I shot during my five years of cinematography and film production activity in Papua and New Guinea during the 1960s. Until recently most of the material could still be viewed. On re-opening the cans late in 2021 it became immediately obvious nearly all the television and cinema newsreel stories had dramatically deteriorated since it was previously inspected. Unique historic images were no longer retrievable. Of about one hundred news stories, only a dozen or so were in a stable condition and possibly still able to be digitised.

During the past four decades, several attempts to get the PNG Government and other potentially interested entities enthusiastic about the offered donation were less than encouraging. With local pressures of work, the time to find a credible professional repository for the footage, which appreciated its archival value, was eventually put in the 'too hard' basket.

I joined the Department of Information and Extension Services in 1962 to help establish its film unit, principally to service other departments' film communication requirements. Unfortunately, it was not permitted to produce material for Australian or overseas exposure. With unacceptable delays due to bureaucracy and unable to adopt established film industry production schedules, to keep myself sane I purchased my own 16 mm camera and film and began shooting news stories for Australian TV stations during weekends. These were the only regular TV news stories from PNG during this period, as the country was preparing for nationhood.

Circumstances forced me to resign from the Public Service the following year. Unfortunately, a local freelance journalist working for a Sydney newspaper alleged my extra-curricular activities were detracting from his income, resulting in the Administrator, Sir Donald Cleland, dishing out a severe reprimand. Thereafter there were no more stories on TV for several months.

Subsequently my wife, Wilma, and I established our own local film production business, Films New Guinea. Apart from our increasing production of colour documentaries and locally sponsored films, the escalating requirements of the Australian and international TV news editors and cinema newsreels meant a large volume of these films were accumulated, eventually being taken back home to Perth in 1967. Most colour documentary productions managed to survive into the 21st century but, unfortunately, most black and white TV newsfilm was processed with the priority for speed rather than its archival survival qualities. This proved to be a massive loss for all concerned.

During recent months I have been trying to salvage what is left, in the hope one day, digital copies and other PNG productions will be able to be screened to PNGAA members. I have also recently compiled a more detailed account of our experiences filming in PNG and hope to see this in future issues of *PNG Kundu*. ♦



Daryl Binning with ruined film



## Peter Broadhurst's Donation of Law Notes

**PAUL R MUNRO**

In my extended family, as in so many others I know, advancing years throw up questions about what to do with 'stuff' that has been hoarded away for some years. 'Nobody will want it!' Peter Broadhurst had that problem ...

A patrol officer attending the 1962 Long Course at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA), for the intervening sixty years he had kept four gradually mouldering folders of the Law Course Lecture Notes. The notes had been a very useful aid over his subsequent career as a kiap, hearing some 2,000 court cases and, occasionally, afterwards in Australia. He had kept them well. But years, Sepik service, and regular use, all leave their trail on even the best foolscap paper. Anyhow, who wants 1962 readings about the law of two, now independent, territories? Better toss them. He wavered.

Earlier this year Peter asked PNGAA Archivist, Cheryl Marvell, whether the PNGAA might be interested in having the lectures for its Collection. She agreed to have a look. Peter sent a 5 kg box of over 700 pages for review. In a nineteen-page analysis of Peter's donation soon to be available on the PNGAA webpage, I drew upon my wide experience in PNG and Australia as a lawyer to state: *The donated materials are likely to be a relatively unique source of information about several aspects of course content and training orientation.*

*The first set of twelve lectures is intrinsically valuable. They present a snapshot, the prevailing*

### FEATURED ABOVE: ASOPA 1962

Back row (l-r): Bob Lyons, R Hallahan, Peter Whitehead, Denis Fisher, John Coad, Chris Warrillow, Wilhelm Speldewinde, Mark Lynch;  
Middle row: Terry O'Donnell, Rob Deveral, Barry Downes, Bill Benham, Peter Broadhurst, George Cutts, Martin Cornhill;  
Front row: Bob Beck, John Irwin, RL 'Basha' O'Connor, David Speakman, Frank Howard, Brian Robins, Richard Craig, Arthur Marks, Peter Power.  
[https://exkiap.net/photographs/group\\_photographs/1962asopa/19620000wspel\\_asopa\\_01.jpg](https://exkiap.net/photographs/group_photographs/1962asopa/19620000wspel_asopa_01.jpg)

*perspective of administering of law and justice as of 1962. Those lecture notes range over the contemporary and historical constitutional structure, sources of law of Papua New Guinea; principles covering the administration of justice; legal interpretation and construction of statutes and instruments.*

*An important feature of later lectures is the regular reference to the so-called Native Courts. Those Courts represented distinctive jurisdictions established in each of the respective Territories. Some of this material may now be obscure or not readily available; its presence adds to the value of the lectures as part of an historical record. The scope of the law course covering criminal and other jurisdictional procedures has collateral value. It is objective corroboration of the range and exactitude of judicial administrative work demanded of kiaps in District and Sub-District administration. As Peter Broadhurst's career demonstrates, many kiaps undertook substantial caseloads away from the main centres to which fulltime magistrates were posted.*

In a note about his donation, Peter Broadhurst wrote:

*At the time of my retirement from PNG in August 1975, I was an Assistant District Commissioner. I joined the service in February 1959 and attended ASOPA in 1962. The course was a specific program for patrol officers employed in the Department of District Administration. The law notes were provided to me at that time, as were the lecture notes on the Law of Evidence.*

*The notes have served me well and I relied heavily on them, particularly in the over 2,000 District Court and Local Court cases I heard. In fact, PNG Crown*



Law appealed three major cases that I heard, and all three appeals were dismissed by the Appeals Court. The law notes were extensively relied on.

Back in Queensland I worked in Industrial Relations and as an advocate appearing before the District Court and Industrial Commission.

Jack Mattes' law and evidence notes, and related precedent cases indirectly served me well. That is probably why I have been reluctant to destroy them after nearly sixty years.

Jack Mattes, the author and lecturer, was Medallist in Law from the University of Sydney, a distinguished legal scholar, Principal of ASOPA, and a leading figure in the consolidation of laws received by Papua New Guinea upon Independence.

It is not only for the Law Lecture notes that the



## A Memory Jogged

JOHN QUINN

The December 2021 PNG KUNDU article, 'Recollections of a Plantation Manager', and especially the few paragraphs about the native, indentured workforce, jogged a dozing gene in my intellect about my early days (1960s) as a cadet patrol officer at Lumi in the then Sepik District. The Sepik was one of the providers of labour for the island plantations and Lumi was at the forefront of recruitment for this workforce.

The main recruiter there was a now long-dead Irishman with an inordinate thirst for Negrita rum, who, luckily, had a couple of experienced Papuan clerks who were able to handle much of the paperwork.

The young men who 'signed up'—that is popped their inked thumbprint—on a contract that they only vaguely understood, often had a specific reason for leaving.

After marriage and the arrival of the couple's first baby there could be no normal marital relations—to put it politely—for approximately the next two years! Why? The possibility that another baby might be born would lead to a heart-breaking decision, because breast-milk was the only means to feed an infant and the extra mouth meant that one of the children would have to be killed.

1962 ASOPA Long Course will be remembered. Like the lecture notes, many of the alumni, now show the passage of the years. As the picture of the Class of 1962 shows, many were at the start of brilliant careers, and many are active presences still in PNGAA affairs.

As a lawyer who worked in circuit courts, I was fascinated to revisit aspects of the role of kiaps and to also see for the first time details of Native Courts, the Native Affairs Regulations, about which I knew almost nothing at the time: of Head Tax; a power to impose a whipping; the electoral role for LegCo; the legislative arrangements for Local Government Council creation; and glimpses of pre-war judges, Gore J, Bignold J, and superseding them, Mann CJ, developing a modernist concern from 1957 on. ♦

The woman had her clan and tribe to provide what assistance they could in the young husband's absence for a couple of years.

It was fascinating to see the new recruits—many scrawny and ill-fed and often afflicted with *grile* (a skin disease) clambering into the single-engined, ex-wartime Noorduyn Norseman of Gibbe's Sepik Airways—all apprehensive, many terrified! Their first-ever flight, first-ever sight of the Big Town of Wewak, first sight of the sea and first experience of the other peoples and lands that made up Papua New Guinea.

In contrast, the Norseman had perhaps disgorged returning labourers who had completed their contract—fit, healthy men, well-dressed in shirts and shorts with sandals on their feet and invariably with their hair nicely cut and dyed blonde—a fashion statement! Their bags and other luggage items would be filled with presents for family and clan members.

Much telling around the village campfires of all the new experiences and new sights they had experienced and, perhaps, in another year—and another baby—the decision to sign on for yet another two-year contract! ♦

## Traditional Chest Surgery Among the Enga

ROBIN COOKE,  
OBE, OAM



Infected chest wound (top), traditional bandage of chest wounds (centre), healed chest wound (bottom)

In 1980, while attending a conference on malaria in Sydney, I met Peter Sharp, who was at that time working in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea as a medical officer. He described to me an increasing number of cases where patients complained that they had pus in their chests and requested that a hole be made to let it out. The patients knew they had pus in their chests because a sorcerer had put a spell on them, and it was necessary that pus be demonstrated so that compensation could be claimed.

When examined, these patients had no evidence of the presence of pus in their chests and Peter refused to operate. Weeks later some of these patients reappeared and now they did have pus in their chest cavities. They also had two holes in their chest walls one of which was plugged with a rolled leaf which acted as a drain. Treatment with penicillin and drainage was now needed.

Further enquiry revealed that the holes in the chest wall had been made by the patients' traditional village doctor with a bamboo knife after which water was poured into the chest. Inevitably pus appeared sometime later and a compensation claim for sorcery was justified. Not all these treatments had a favourable outcome. Peter Sharp conducted a post-mortem examination on a patient who died after this traditional chest surgery.

Inter clan rivalry and fighting was common among the Enga at that time. Each fight team had a nominated fight doctor whose task it was to remove arrows as quickly as possible from anyone wounded. This was important because the bone-tipped arrows used by the fighters were deliberately contaminated with faeces or dirt—an early example of biological warfare.

According to patients and their relatives, the Enga people, among whom chest cutting was observed, believe that a blow to any part of the body or an embedded arrow tip that has not been removed causes the development of *pikale* (bad blood). This fluid accumulates in the base of the lungs and eventually caused *lyin* (pus) to develop.

The patient with *lyin* believed that it was necessary to remove it and consulted the village doctor, usually an older man known for his surgical skill and known as *patali pingi akali* (rib cutting man). During the operation the patient sat upright and was restrained by family members while the patient bit on a piece of wood. The first cut was made between the sixth and seventh rib on the side where the pus was believed to be. The doctor probed into the chest cavity with his finger. The hole was then plugged with a rolled leaf or the stem of a taro plant. Sometimes a second cut was made higher up in the chest and more towards the midline. The fee for the operation was one or two pigs.

With the advent of western medicine some of the people preferred to go to the local health centre for the relief of their *pikale*. Being refused 'treatment' there, they had recourse to more traditional surgery.

While the cases described here were in the 1980s when inter clan fights were still occurring, Dr Stan Wrigley saw evidence of chest cutting while he was conducting a survey for tuberculosis in the Lagaip



area in the early 1960s. He saw scars unrelated to tuberculosis in the chests of some men and investigated their cause. These men claimed that one scar was due to an arrow wound, and that the other was the wound resulting from traditional surgery by fight doctors and as described above. When questioned about the results of these operations the men said: 'some people died, some lived.'

The Enga believe that the origin of the chest cutting operation came about through the intervention of the mystical forest spirit people, the *pututuli*. It is said that a hunter once shot and injured a *pututuli* mistaking him for a tree kangaroo. He recognised his mistake, removed his arrow, apologised and released his victim. Many years later this hunter suffered a chest wound in a tribal fight. Later, in great pain, he believed he was going to die and asked to be left alone in the sun. As he lay there the *pututuli* came and pierced his chest with his long fingernail, releasing the pus and thereby saving the warrior's life.

It is possible too that the public post-mortem examinations done traditionally by the Enga people

may have encouraged some of them to think about ways to release the pus seen in the chest cavity of some cadavers. For example, fight doctors, those specialising in removing arrow heads, would be the ones more likely to think about the benefit of draining the chest cavity of their patients. In other Melanesian societies, where the club is the preferred weapon and depressed fracture of the skull resulted, war 'surgeons' became skilled at their treatment. In peace time trephining (opening of the skull) was offered by these men as a treatment for headache and epilepsy.

Societies everywhere sought to understand sickness and developed ways to treat or prevent health problems. Blood-letting of patients, once common in western medicine, is an example of a treatment thought to be of benefit, but eventually discarded. Chest cutting among the Enga arose from the need to solve a recurring problem—the infections which followed penetrating wounds suffered during the constant inter-clan fighting. We can only hope that the Enga realise soon that the best way to prevent these wounds is to stop fighting. ♦

## A Concrete Legacy

**DAVID (Dave) KEATING,  
OAM**

**After being at ASOPA from 1961–62 I taught at four high schools in Papua New Guinea (PNG) —Malabunga, Goroka, Karkar and Brandi—from 1963 to 1977.**

**It is often hard to judge our impact as teachers. We cross our fingers and hope our efforts have left a lasting legacy, something that has significantly improved our students' lives.**

**Sometimes there is tangible evidence of our students achieving great success.**

**But this is not always the case. Many achievements go unobserved by us.**



So, it has always delighted me that I was able to measure at least one level of my involvement in education—in concrete! Tangible blocks of concrete! Wherever I went during my time in PNG, I worked with staff and students to leave a concrete legacy in the form of basketball and tennis courts! We built facilities for the local community and created venues for competitions to take place. Hundreds of students gained great pleasure in using these facilities for basketball, tennis, volleyball, netball, etc.

But this was easier said than done. I arrived in Papua New Guinea (PNG) with no handyman skills. But there were lots of things going my way to achieve this lasting legacy.

Firstly, there were the helpful manual arts teachers in the schools, who provided invaluable expert advice, and enabled us to combine the curriculum with practical experience producing a product that could be used by all students and the local community.

There was a lot of construction going on in PNG at that time. This resulted in bountiful supplies of arc-mesh, and seemingly endless supplies of cement. Funding was available for sporting facilities. And, fortunately, we had a plentiful supply of labour, in the guise of willing students who assisted during school hours, and in the after-school 'work parade'.

I cannot remember how many personal hours I spent mixing metres of cement by hand, with spades, in the absence of any mechanised turning equipment. Each court was laid down in smaller blocks, with ten to twelve blocks making up a basketball court.

In all, I organised the building of five basketball courts at Malabunga High School, two basketball courts at Karkar High School and a tennis court for the social club on Karkar Island, and two basketball courts and a tennis court at Brandi High School.

The physical labour was hard in the tropical conditions. Although high humidity meant we didn't have problems with the concrete drying out too fast, it meant the heavy work was exhausting. Carting sand, stones, cement, water, and then mixing all these was extremely tiring ... but enormously satisfying.

The environment also delivered its own surprises. There was always the fear of a sudden tropical downpour. We had that event 'covered' literally. Tarps were ever-present, with schoolboys rostered to stand by, ensuring the tarps were secured, so as not to allow water to seep onto the newly-laid concrete.

But this kind of activity was a sign of those times. We teachers were often a long way from the major centres. If we just sat back then nothing would have happened. So, we just got on, and did it! It's how we approached our 'career with a challenge'. We were thrown in 'at the deep end' and found a way to do constructive things.

I shudder when I look back, realising our lack

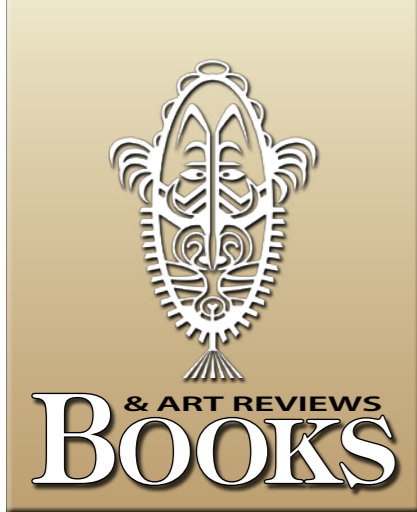


Basketball Team, South Pacific Games, Guam, 1975 (top); David Keating with Sir John Dawanincura (above); Inter-house Basketball at Brandi Secondary School (opposite page)

of health and safety awareness. In the early days, we worked barefoot, in the harsh sun, with no sun-screen, and no hats. Twice-yearly I now visit my skin specialist to have sun cancers burned off or cut out. This is another long-term outcome of my enthusiasm for leaving a concrete legacy!

I revisited Malabunga Secondary School and Karkar Secondary School in 2008. I was most pleasantly surprised to see the courts still in use some forty years later. In fact, at Malabunga, the courts had been provided with a roof and now doubled as an assembly/performance area. ♦





## KEVIN DEUTROM

### *When the War Came to Our Ples: Some stories from the Momase Region of PNG*

When war zones are on the lands of indigenous subsistence farmers, the impact on the inhabitants is disastrous. Stories of this impact are revealed in a series of interviews collected between 1988 and 1990 mainly from men of the Madang, Morobe and East Sepik Provinces of Papua New Guinea (PNG), who could still remember the conditions in the villages and towns during and after the Japanese invasion of 1942. The author has done much research and he also lived in PNG during the 1970s and 80s.

Stories are headed by a photograph of the interviewee then an oral history of when they fled from the Japanese. They recount being forced into work gangs where some men were selected to work for the Japanese because of their local knowledge, language or usefulness to control the locals. Mention is made of British Indian Army POWs who were captured in Malaya and Singapore by the Japanese and used as forced labour.

The stories cover the period of departure of Australian expatriates, the bombing, invasion and occupation by the Japanese, the bombings by American/Australian forces and the complete destruction

Featuring book reviews about Papua New Guinea, art and craft exhibitions, interviews and information of interest to members and authors, artists and craftspeople—please send your articles and photos by the Copy Deadline, 22 April 2022, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)

of villages and food gardens and their later restoration.

This unique and thought-provoking record of recollections from a PNG perspective complements the well-known publications concerning World War II and makes enthralling reading.

**Editor's Note:** Adapted from a review by Glen Woodward  
Published by Kevin Deutrom, 2021; 428 pages; cost: \$25.00 plus \$10 postage in Australia; available from the author at [vzeal17@gmail.com](mailto:vzeal17@gmail.com)

## SUE BUSSELL

### *Dad's Story*

This book describes the author's father's time in the 2/22nd Infantry Battalion AIF—from Trawool to Rabaul and Zentsuji.

It covers the invasion of Rabaul, the *Montevideo Maru* tragedy and the experience of the officers and prisoners of war who went to Japan. It features her father's photo album from 1940 to late 1941, and has many wonderful photos of the men in the 2/22nd.

In putting the book together Sue put a call out for an editor and an illustrator. It transpired that the illustrator, Jannece McClelland, née Lega, had a close connection! Her mother, Jean Lega, was pregnant with Jannece when she was evacuated from Bulolo, PNG, on Christmas Day 1941. Her father, Chris, and his brother, Tom Lega, remained behind and joined the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles.

Self-published, 2021; Cost \$30+p; 153 pp with maps and photographs  
Limited numbers are available from the author [suezb@iprimus.com.au](mailto:suezb@iprimus.com.au) or M: 0475 344 545

## SUELLEN HOLLAND

### *Blacksand and Betel Nut—Childhood Memories of Papua New Guinea*

The second edition of this book is a delightful memoir of the author's young life in Rabaul, East New Britain, the place she considers to be her 'home' though she was born in India and had lived in Australia prior to her life in Rabaul. It is an easy read about her family, who fitted into the lifestyle and community of Rabaul with all its changes over the sixties through to the seventies.

The essence of the book is the life lived by the Holland family from an everyday perspective with the interjections of the major events that occur in a family and the community in which they live. Suellen touches on the familiar patterns of daily swims after her father's return home from work, to weekly jaunts round the Gazelle Peninsula to visit friends



and places of interest over many years. Many of these friends were met through her father's work connections and became a part of her story.

People and places mentioned will be familiar to those of us who lived in Rabaul and make this an endearing story to read as we can relate to both. Father Franke, Collier Watsons, Pila Pila, Queen Elizabeth Park, Keravat and Court Street Primary 'A' School are just a few. The story of childhood friend, Ruth and Suellen's escapade in the Catholic church is quite amusing—and the friendship between these two young girls is palpable.

It's a typical memoir in that Suellen writes about the animals, homes and close people in her life. The poignant relationships she has with her mother and father are quite different and her reflections reveal Mr and Mrs Holland's personalities clearly. Suellen expresses the deep and steady interactions with her quiet, gentlemanly dad so beautifully. The times when they ganged up against her mother about something were quite funny and easily pictured. On the quiet mind you, as her mother was a formidable person.

Suellen's wonderful sea and shell relationship, which her mother encouraged over her life is so intrinsic to her life. This aspect of the book reveals the knowledge that Suellen has about shells from the Pacific. So much to learn from the descriptions shared about where, when and how these shells exist.

This could be also said about her descriptions of the Japanese tunnels, the Simpson Harbour, the earthquakes too—all casually interwoven into the parties, picnics

and adventures of a young person enjoying life.

By including aspects of life such as dealing with house staff, the reliance on food from overseas, the earthquakes, indigenous markets and the Chinese community of Rabaul, Suellen remembers her life with great fondness.

The Glossary of Terms would be helpful for those that want to read a book of remembered happiness. There could be some discrepancies in some of the spelling of the *Pisin* words for some of us depending what era you were in PNG. I so enjoyed the photos included as they give that personal touch.

Don't let the few grammatical and spelling errors worry you as the story is too much of a treasure to read. An insight into the secure and appreciated childhood that has made Rabaul 'Home' to Suellen. Reading this memoir will bring back so many pictures of life and explain why so many of us have this connection with Rabaul.

Thank you Suellen.

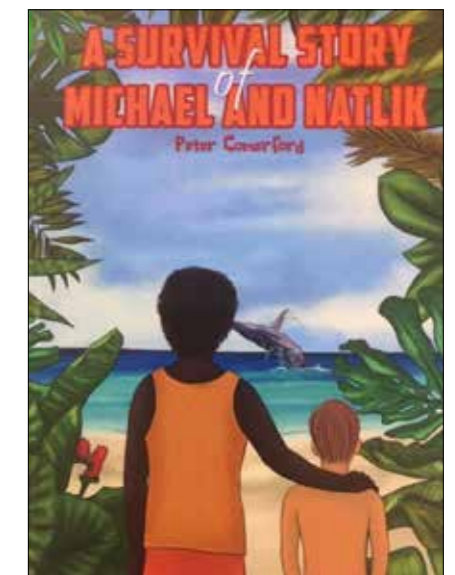
**SARA TURNER**

Published by Suellen Holland, 2021; 367 pages; soft cover; \$30.00 (incl. postage within Australia); the author will donate \$5.00 to PNGAA for each copy sold. Available from the author at [www.suellenholland.com.au](http://www.suellenholland.com.au)

## PETER COMERFORD

### *A Survival Story of Michael and Natlik*

Michael's holiday on a tiny offshore island in Papua New Guinea, where his uncle owned a copra and cocoa plantation, was like an exciting dream. It was there that he became friends with Natlik, his uncle's house servant who taught him to spear fish, recognise poisonous



plants and corals and to light a fire without matches.

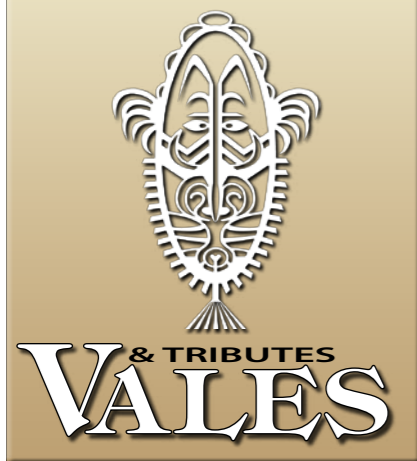
However, an incredible boating and fishing trip with his uncle suddenly turned into a nightmare when disaster struck. Michael was left floundering in shark-infested waters off the coast of Southern New Ireland. When Michael failed to return home from the fishing trip, Natlik, using his sharp powers of observation and tracking skills is faced with a risky and dangerous trip across sea and through jungle to try and find his young friend.

**Reviewed by Lou Ware**

This richly layered and fast paced story will keep young readers on the edge of their seats. With adventure, survival, courage, and the power of friendship being its key themes, the book will fire the imagination of readers, keeping them invested in the fate of the main characters.

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ISBN: 9781398457652/E book  
Published in 2022 by Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd, UK  
148 pages— \$24.75 plus shipping  
Available from the publishers:  
<https://www.austinmacauley.com/book/survival-story-michael-and-natlik> and online booksellers





**BOOTH, Nicholas Peter**  
*d. 22 November 2021, aged 76*

Nick Booth, who died in Sydney on 22 November 2021, was a busy and enthusiastic man, who delighted in being with people and working with people to get things done.

Nick was born in England in 1945 and later found himself in Papua New Guinea, where his father, Dr Peter Booth, in the late 1950s, was appointed medical officer at Saiho hospital—'eighteen miles and eighteen rivers from Popondetta', he wrote. 'Bush materials, flat swampy ground, a tropical paradise and absolutely lethal. Infested by mosquitoes all full of *Falciparum* malaria, not chloroquine-resistant in my day.'

In 1962, Dr Booth established the Blood Transfusion Service of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. By this time Nick had been packed off to school and university in Brisbane (where he edited the student newspaper, *Semper Floreat*), spending holidays in PNG.

An arts degree in his pocket, and wife Lynn and children now in his life, circumstance took him to the University of New England in Armidale, NSW, as Information and Publications Officer.

In 1976, this is where we met, as I fled PNG to establish a new radio station in Armidale. Nick was one of my most valued associates. He was already immersed in the city, the university and the medium. Just a

**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 tributes by the Copy Deadline, 22 April 2022, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

year later, Nick moved to Sydney to the Higher Education Board.

Nick was also a first rate and highly-skilled radio presenter with a wonderful sense of how to construct a music program. Listenable but not loud. His radio 'presence', as we called it, was warm, intimate and witty. Nick could have made a career in radio and I told him that a number of times (in fact, I once offered him a job).

But radio careers can be skittish and Nick, with family and security in mind, chose instead the path of an administrator in public service, a role in which I understand he was highly competent and senior.

This important side of his life I did not know well and, with me, his talk was always of broadcasting and family.

When 2SER-FM on Sydney's Broadway launched on 1 October 1979—not all that long ago for us who are getting old—Nick's was the first voice on air.

Later Nick presented a popular program called 'Summer Breeze'—lovely languorous leisurely radio; the music mellifluous and (mostly) calming (Nick was mischievous



Nick and grandson, Conor

and could spring surprises). The presentation was laidback, witty and concise.

He let the music do the talking, if you get my drift. In real life beyond the studio, Nick liked to let his talking do the talking.

The song of the same name was the opening theme of the program. 'Summer Breeze', by Seals & Croft, a hit in 1972, is playing as I write. It reminds me so vividly of Nick.

Many years later, Nick later resumed contact with Papua New Guinea as a committee member of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA) and was treasurer at the time the association showed great generosity to the Crocodile Prize.

Nick was asked to run our PNGAA and Rabaul & Montevideo Maru websites, together with Ross Johnson. Nick's knowledge and expertise with both editing, as well as the technical behind the scenes work on the website was a wonderful assistance to both the PNGAA and the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Group, continuing for many years.

Nick was always friendly and happy—nothing was ever too much trouble. He was really generous with his time and experience.

So we have lost a fine man and we grieve for him but are grateful for who he was.

We get old and our friends depart, taking a bit of us with them as they leave. That is life's sorrow. But its joy is that they were with us at all.

Our condolences to Lynn, the

boys and the family. Nick was so proud of you.

**Editor's Note:** This vale has been abstracted from Keith Jackson's tribute on his website: <https://www.pngattitude.com/2021/11/nick-booth-who-had-png-in-his-blood-dies-at-76.html#more>, and includes a contribution from Andrea Williams.

**BURTON, James Frederick**

*d. 23 May 2021, aged 83*

James, known by most people as Jim, was born in Bowen, North Queensland. One of four children, he started his schooling at Merinda Primary, however, the family moved to Mount Isa so his schooling was completed at Mount Isa High. On finishing school he commenced work as an apprentice carpenter for Mount Isa Mines, but after three months he decided that was not what he wanted to do and went to work in Burton's Hardware, the family business. The work was not fulfilling for Jim so he applied to work for Burns Philp in Cairns (*below*). He returned to the family business after a period away and met Joan Campbell who was working there.

Jim was drawn to the Pacific Islands for employment opportunities. His South Pacific journey began in June 1957, when he was nineteen. He arrived in Fiji as a trainee clerk with Burns Philp (South Sea) Company Limited in their Suva office. He would go on to serve more than sixteen years with Burns Philp—six years in Fiji, nine

years in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and one and a half years in Papua New Guinea. His career ended with Burns Philp in June 1975 when he was thirty-seven.

Later Jim returned to Papua New Guinea for two and a half years to manage a trading store.

His wife, Joan, joined Jim in the New Hebrides in 1962 when she was seventeen. Joan also worked at Burns Philp in the office as a secretary. They would go on to have three children. The first child, Merelyn, was born in Vila in 1963 and two sons followed, Wade in 1967 and Brett in 1972.

On Jim's return to Brisbane he worked at the Government Stores until retirement in 2002.

Jim and Joan's love of the South Pacific islands never left them. Jim worked tirelessly on a project close to his heart. He had an extensive collection of *Pacific Islands Monthly* magazines going back to the first edition in 1930. From the magazines he developed his Identities Project, which collected, documented and researched those born in the Pacific islands and those who came to the islands to make their contribution towards the development of each island nation.

In early 2007 Jim and Joan organised a get-together for expatriates who had been born in the South Pacific islands or had lived there at some stage of their lives. The first meeting took place at Mount Ommaney Library with twelve attendees. They named it 'Memories

of the South Pacific Islands', and asked for former residents to gather and contribute to this nostalgic trip down memory lane.

When Jim got up to address those in attendance, he said:

*A few words before I begin my address. My uncle used to say of me, 'Jimmy's a good bloke but don't mention coconuts or the islands to him, you won't shut him up.' Furthermore, my wife Joan has often said, 'we returned from the islands many years ago but Jim hasn't really left the islands behind him'.*

The first guest speaker at the meeting was Max Quanchi. Other notable speakers were author James Sinclair, ABC Correspondent Sean Dorney and many more. After a few meetings the group moved to the Indooroopilly Library in August 2007 and then finally settled at Toowong Library in January 2009. The meetings have been held once a month and many people have attended and given wonderful talks about their life and experiences whilst living in the Pacific islands. The meetings have provided wonderful friendships with a common bond.

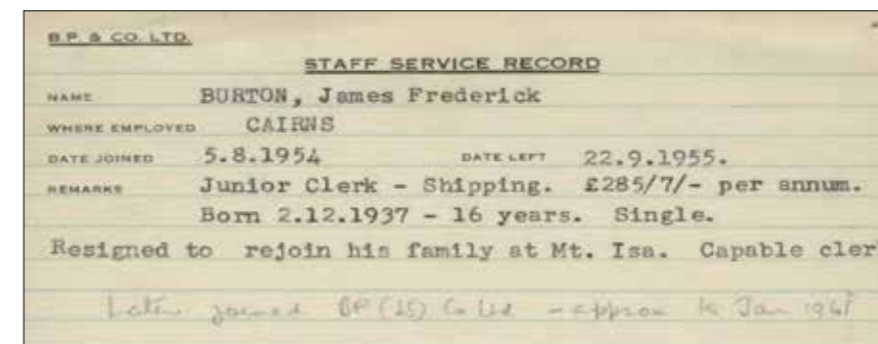
Unfortunately, due to ill health, Jim was not able to attend the meetings for the last couple of years. However, Ian Lockley took the helm and steered the ship onwards. Jim will be remembered for his love of the South Pacific, and he said it was one of the greatest privileges of his life to work and be able to contribute in his own small way to the welfare and advancement of the three South Pacific nations he was associated with.

**Keitha Brown**

**KERLEY, Fr Kevin, SM, OAM**

*d. 29 September 2021, aged 93*

Kevin Kerley was born in Gympie, QLD, on 23 July 1928. He spent three years schooling with the Sisters of







Fr Kevin Kerley

Mercy and ten with the Christian Brothers, matriculating in 1945, then working in the Commonwealth Bank, Brisbane for three years.

Kevin was professed as a Brother in the Society of Mary in September 1950 and spent three years as assistant bursar at St John's College, Woodlawn, NSW, before transferring to Oceania Marist Province in 1953.

From 1954–72 Br Kevin worked in Bougainville as diocesan procurator, builder, manager of woodwork in Tsiroge Technical School, a small ships master and supervisory work at a sawmill. During 1973–74 he was bursar at Tutu Training Centre, Fiji.

In 1975 Br Kevin began studies for the priesthood at Catholic Theological Union, Hunters Hill, reaching diaconate in December 1978. Then followed pastoral experience during 1979–80 in Bougainville and priestly ordination in Brisbane in September 1980.

Returning to Bougainville, during 1981–83 Fr Kevin was parish priest in Tsimba, Sipai, and Kuraio, isolated parts of NW Bougainville. From 1984–88 he was part of Kieta Area Ministry Team based in Manetai and working in Tunuru and many neighbouring parishes.

In November 1988 the Bougainville Conflict erupted, the

worst catastrophe in South Pacific since World War II, with up to 20,000 deaths. For years Fr Kevin experienced Papua New Guinea Defence Force resistance and rebel gunmen close by. While thousands of expatriates departed Central Bougainville, Fr Kevin was one of the few who stayed on and ministered. He was an unofficial 'chaplain' to both sides, eventually receiving recognition and thanks from both.

In late 2001 Fr Kevin returned to Australia to live at Villa Maria, Hunters Hill, and work on his memoirs of the Bougainville conflict. He attributed his survival to the intercession of Emmet McHardy who 'blazed the trail' in the Kieta region. Fr Kevin intended his memoirs for Marists and the Church. As they responded slowly the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB), nine Pacific Research libraries that give priority to vulnerable and/or elusive material, intervened. The PMB continued to microfilm Fr Kevin's notes of years of his work.

In 2014 Fr Kevin was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his commitment to the people of Bougainville. In 2015 he moved briefly to the Montbel community before taking up residence at Twilight Aged Care facility, Hunters Hill, where he continued his work of recording and collating memories of the Bougainville crisis.

He died peacefully on 29 September 2021, aged ninety-three. May he rest in peace.

**Paul Mahony, SM**

### **RAMPLING, Anita (née Larcher)**

**d. 27 September 2021**

Anita Larcher was born in Crosby, Lancashire, on 31 January 1936. She attended Eardington Grammar School from 1946–53 where she excelled in science and won a

Warwick County Scholarship to attend Nottingham University. Her original intention was to become a farmer, but after graduating with a degree in dairying, she went to work in the laboratory of Craigmore Hospital in Inverness as an assistant bacteriologist.

Anita came to Australia in 1959 and worked for three years as a dairy bacteriologist in the Department of Agriculture and Stock in Queensland.

In 1962 she was appointed to a position in the Territory of Papua New Guinea as pathologist/bacteriologist at the Veterinary Laboratory at Kila Kila, Port Moresby. Part of the Division of Animal Industry, this laboratory processed specimens collected by veterinary staff from diseased animals throughout the Territory. Anita's experience with growing and identifying bacteria was a welcome addition to the skill set in the laboratory at that time.

Anita lived and worked in Port Moresby for the next five years. Apart from the routine diagnostic work of the laboratory she made an important contribution to the investigation, with Tim Murrell of the Department of Health, of the cause of *pig bel*. This was a disease of Highlanders, often fatal, associated with feasting on pig meat. The bacterial component of that disease was isolated and provisionally identified for the first time at the veterinary laboratory while Anita worked there.

Her work at Kila Kila inspired an interest in research. After an unhappy marriage she left TPNG in 1967 with her infant child, Michael, and returned to England where, in succession, she completed a PhD and then a degree in Medicine.

With these qualifications she enjoyed a long career as a consultant bacteriologist in the Public Health Laboratory service of the UK.

Following remarriage to

veterinarian, Jim Darbyshire, and retirement Anita began a new life on a small farm in Dorset. Here Jim bred Dexter cattle and Anita was able at last to have the horses she always wanted and to begin, and eventually to excel at, the sport of dressage. She continued riding into her early eighties and after Jim's death in 2006 all her animals were a great consolation for her.

After a series of strokes over the last few years she had to stop riding, but kept her horses until her death from a heart attack in September 2021.

Anita is survived by her son, Michael, who practises medicine in the UK.

**John Egerton, AM**

### **STEWART, Michael John d. 2021**

Michael John Stewart (Mick, Mick the Flick, Flicky) was born on 11 February 1948 in Nyngan NSW, the eldest of fifteen children. He grew up in Bourke and left school early for the shearing shed and other country jobs.

Around 1969 he moved to Sydney and lived in Manly where he met his wife, Ann. They moved back to Bourke and were married in 1974. His eldest daughter, Michelle, was born in November 1974. Two more daughters followed—Amy in Mackay and Libby in Port Moresby. (Libby arrived in 1986 at the General Hospital, nine months after the curfew expired.)

Around 1976 he began work with Flick Pest Control in Sydney and travelled around Queensland working for Flick before moving to Port Moresby in 1981. Mick worked for many years as the company's general manager in PNG until branching out on his own with PNG Pest Control, a company he began with his 'brother from another mother', the late Steven Piriki Kamma, MP.

Mick was known as Flicky around his Port Moresby stomping grounds including, in the early days, at the Ela Beach RSL, the Boroko Golf Club and in later years at the Port Moresby Golf Club where he was made a life member due to his tireless work on the committee.

Mick 'went finish' to Brisbane around 2013. Mick and Ann then moved to the Gold Coast in 2015 where he played an active role as the grandfather of three bubu girls. His grandfatherly activities included spending time with Maxine out in Tallebudgera Valley with her beloved horses, reliving the stories of his youth and playing some of his favourite songs to Ruby and Phoebe.

He also enjoyed spending time with his sons-in-law, Kotti and Luke, who he trained to fill out TAB betting slips and they, along with his eldest brother Christopher 'Condo' Stewart, will sadly miss his Saturday racing tips.

Mick the Flick was appropriately mourned and farewell by the Royal Port Moresby Golf Club.

**Bruce Mackinlay, OBE**

**Editor's Note:** Mick's daughter, Libby, contributed to the preparation of this vale.

### **WILSON, Roger d. 9 June 2021**

Roger was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 9 July 1948. His first job in PNG was with Burns Philp as District Accountant in Madang from October 1981 to August 1982, and then he was transferred to Port Moresby. He had played golf at the Madang Country Club, and joined Port Moresby Golf Club upon arrival in 1982. His employment continued at Burns Philp until leaving PNG in late 1989.

His second job in PNG was with The Lotto in Port Moresby when he returned in late 1992 as Financial



Controller, and then became General Manager. When The Lotto ceased operations, he started his own consultancy business in 1995. He then worked for various companies including Port Moresby Golf Club as Club Manager.

Roger was a member of the Club from 1982 onwards and served on the committee at various times, including holding office bearer positions. He also started up the Burns Philp/Ela Motors Pennants team, and organised sponsorships through various companies.

Roger was generous and trusting, he always made new members and visitors welcome at Royal Port Moresby Golf Club and had many friends there and in the community.

Roger died at Paradise Hospital from post-operative complications. He was mourned and farewelled by his many friends from Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

Our condolences were passed on to Evelyn, Scott and other family members.

His ashes were spread over the 17th green at Royal Port Moresby Golf Club. A bronze memorial plaque (*above*) reminds us of his friendship and contribution to the club over many years.

**Bruce Mackinlay, OBE**





**Benjamin J White, DCM  
1912–1959**

Benjamin enlisted in the Australian Military Forces, in Victoria, in June 1940. After training he transferred to No. 1 Independent Company, No. 3 Section (a commando unit required to live and fight independently from main forces) in May 1941. He landed with the section in Kavieng, New Ireland, in July 1941 where they spent the next few months training and acclimatising themselves to the tropics.

In October 1941, the section travelled on the schooner, *Induna Star*, to Buka Island where they prepared themselves for the expected Japanese invasion, which occurred in late January 1942. His section was now behind enemy lines, patrolling and watching. The next move was to the main island of Bougainville where again they spent their time patrolling, reporting and evading capture. They were spasmodically re-supplied by Catalina flying boats.

Towards the end of April, the fragmented section, including Ben White, was evacuated by the US submarine, *USS Gato*. Paddling out to the submarine, which had surfaced offshore, they clambered on board and were fed and attended to by the crew after many harrowing months evading the enemy and sickness—the first proper food and medical treatment they had received for many months. They arrived at Guadalcanal on 29 April 1943. By May, Ben was back in Australia and to his home in Victoria, recovering from his tropical ailments and then transferring to M Special Unit (part of the Australian Intelligence Bureau) in November 1943.

After being promoted to Acting Corporal, he departed for two further stints of active service on Bougainville from January to March 1944, and returned home to marry Elizabeth. He returned to Bougainville and Cape Torokina in June 1945 and took part in the offensive operations there. He was promoted to Sergeant and in July he learnt of his award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for his bravery in action while serving in the Allied Intelligence Bureau.

With the cessation of combat operations and the surrender of the Japanese on Bougainville, Ben returned to Australia and was discharged from the AIF on 29 November 1945. Apart from his DCM, he was also awarded the 1939/45 and Pacific Stars, the 1939/45 War Medal and the Australian Service Medal.

A story in the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, November 1959, recorded Ben White's death from a heart attack on Garua Island in October 1959 and described his postwar experience in New Guinea. He stayed on, working first for Choiseul Plantations Ltd, Bougainville. He became a well-known and respected planter, later managing Robert Stuart's Tenakau Plantation, then Bali Plantation. In 1953, he went south for a spell and for several years farmed in Victoria, but he returned to New Guinea in 1956 first as the manager of Garua Plantation and later working for Coconut Products Ltd.

His wife, Elizabeth, three daughters and a son survived him.

In this postwar period Ben enlisted in the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve (Special Branch) and was commissioned as a lieutenant on 17 July 1951.

After his death Ben was buried on Garua Island just off the coast from Talasea, New Britain (left). Due to difficulties in accessing Garua Island for the purpose of maintaining the grave, some years ago, a decision was made to commemorate him officially with an Australian War Graves bronze plaque at the Victorian Garden of Remembrance, which is part of the Springvale Botanical Cemetery in Melbourne's south-east.

It is the intention of the Office of Australian War Graves to continue to attempt to access the island so that, if possible, his grave can be restored and a maintenance program organised.

**Greg Knight**

**MEMORIAL NEWS**  
**RABAUL & MONTEVIDEO MARU GROUP**

Established in 2009 to represent the interests of the families of the soldiers and civilians captured in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands after the Japanese invasion in January 1942, and the sinking of *MS Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942, the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group was integrated into the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia, after the erection of the commemorative sculpture at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in 2012.

Members receive *PNG KUNDU*, the quarterly journal of the PNGAA, which includes the 'Memorial News', dedicated to those who lost their lives at the start of the Pacific War in New Guinea.

**80 YEARS 1942-2022**

**Commemorating the 80th Anniversary**

● **Commemorative Service—1 July 2022**

A special service will be held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 1 July 2022. A dinner will also be hosted that evening. It is likely that numbers will be capped.

Full details of these events will be available soon on both the PNGAA website ([www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)) and the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group website ([www.montevideo-maru.org/](http://www.montevideo-maru.org/)) as well as social media. Additionally, you can send email enquiries to [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au), if you would like to be kept informed.

● **Radio 2GB Interview**

Further recognition of commemorative events was made when, on 23 January 2022, Radio 2GB's Chris Smith interviewed Tony Webster, whose father, Corporal Hugh 'Nipper' Webster, was from the 2/22nd Battalion, Lark Force, and one of only six who survived the Tol Massacre. Tony told Chris and listeners the story of this significant historical event and the men who lost their lives. If you missed it and would like to listen to the podcast, you can do so at this address: <https://www.2gb.com/podcast/today-marks-the-80th-anniversary-of-the-battle-of-rabaul/>

● **Last Post Service, Australian War Memorial**

On 23 January 2022, Private Alfred William Hawkins NX68309, 19th Dental Unit, AIF, was remembered at the Last Post Service at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the fall of Rabaul and Kavieng. He died with the sinking of *MS Montevideo Maru*.

Alfred William Hawkins's name will be projected onto the exterior of the Hall of Memory on: Sunday, 10 April 2022 at 3.44 am; Friday, 15 July 2022 at 5.24 am and Thursday, 8 September 2022 at 8.48 pm. <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/last-post-ceremony/past-ceremonies#2022Ceremonies>

● **2/22nd Battalion Service**

The 22nd Battalion held a service at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the invasion of Rabaul. The service was held on 16 January 2022, with a small group attending. Residents of Bendigo and surrounds gathered at the Bendigo RSL to listen to the live stream. On 4 February 2022 a small service was held at Bendigo RSL for those who died in the Tol and Waitavelo Massacres.





Dion Coote visiting Gladys Baker at her home ay Langu (top), and Gillian Nikakis' painting, 'Rabaul' (below)

#### ● **Lark Force Men of Gippsland**

Lyn Skillern of Leongatha Historical Society gave an interesting talk on 23 January 2022. About 20–30 people attended, all of whom had connections in some way to the 2/22nd Lark Force men of Gippsland. Lyn is producing a book which we look forward to seeing in the next few months.

#### ● **Virtual War Memorial Australia Website**

Information about Lark Force has now been included on the Virtual War Memorial Australia website at <https://vwma.org.au>. Put 'Lark Force' in to the search bar—there is excellent coverage.

On 1 July 2022 the names of the soldiers who died on MS *Montevideo Maru* will be in the Honour Roll section of the website.

#### **Anzac Day, 25 April 2022**

Please write to your local newspapers, local schools, historical societies and RSL clubs telling them your

connection with this eightieth anniversary and asking that they remember this extraordinary part of Australian history.

#### **Gladys Baker: 'Evacuation of Rabaul'**

Still hidden in our National Archives are stories, reports and military records of the civilian evacuation and escape stories from Rabaul. One such record is a radio talk presented by ABC war correspondent, Gladys Baker—'Evacuation of Rabaul'.

It is interesting to read the story from the perspective of a female civilian and how Mrs Baker assisted the Australians in their time of need, plus her personal escape journey to Brisbane.

If you would like to read more about Gladys' story, please check out the PNGAA 75th Anniversary Commemorative Book Project, *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*—personal stories of those who faced WWII on Australian territory and our greatest maritime disaster—the sinking of *Montevideo Maru*. Copies are available for purchase or are available for viewing at the National Library of Australia or your State Library.

**GAYLE THWAITES**

[www.facebook.com/RabaulAndMontevideoMaruSociety/](http://www.facebook.com/RabaulAndMontevideoMaruSociety/)  
[www.facebook.com/RabaulAndMontevideoMaruSociety/posts/4827515767341009?notif\\_id=1644231641128559&notif\\_t=page\\_post\\_reaction&ref=notif](https://www.facebook.com/RabaulAndMontevideoMaruSociety/posts/4827515767341009?notif_id=1644231641128559&notif_t=page_post_reaction&ref=notif)

#### **New Website**

We are currently working on updating the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Memorial website and this should be completed in March 2022. The new link will be:

**[www.montevideo-maru.org](http://www.montevideo-maru.org)**

For more information, please contact Andrea Williams  
[admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)

#### **Rabaul—a painting by Gillian Nikakis née Spencer**

During lockdown Gillian has been busy painting and this one may be going into an exhibition she is organising in June 2022. Gillian also wrote the book, *He's Not Coming Home*, which was published in 2005 and 2006 and republished in 2016. It costs \$25.00 (+ \$7.00 postage), total \$32.00 and is available by emailing Gillian Nikakis at [gcniks@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gcniks@bigpond.net.au)



In early 1942 the Pacific War came to the New Guinea Islands, and the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group has prepared research about soldiers and civilians who were there during the outbreak of hostilities, information on which is included below. Also featured overleaf is a report on the death of the Japanese commander responsible for the horrendous massacre at the Tol Plantation on 4 February 1942, when 160 soldiers were slaughtered, in what many believe was the most callous military action of the Pacific War.

IN THIS EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR we suggest you contact your local secondary school to suggest they focus on some of the soldiers and civilians who were caught up in the Battle of Rabaul on what was Australian Mandated Territory. This is an appropriate project for Anzac Day, for 1 July and for Remembrance Day. A list, or a link to it, of those who perished on the *Montevideo Maru* can be supplied to any school interested in perhaps choosing their own person, if you do not have a relative or friend who was involved and who you can recommend. This project is not confined to those who perished on the *Montevideo Maru*.

Schools can also obtain a copy of the book, *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*, and use the group's online education package at <http://memorial.org.au/Education/index.htm>

It includes all those men, women and children, in the New Guinea Islands at that time:

- Those who died in the initial Battle for Rabaul (including Lark Force, New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and civilians)
- Those killed at Tol
- Those who drowned on the MS *Montevideo Maru*
- Those who died of sickness and starvation whilst trying to escape
- Those who spent weeks and months escaping over the rough terrain, never knowing what was around the bend in the track
- Those who were evacuated
- Those who survived and perhaps went on to serve in other fields of battle
- Those who were captured and became internees and prisoners of war in both Rabaul and Japan
- Those who were killed during the Japanese occupation of Rabaul
- Those who had to endure those war years in Rabaul and surrounding New Guinea islands.

- Those who served in both WWI and WWII
- Coastwatchers
- Those who survived and went on to make their homes and lives in the then Australian Territory of Papua New Guinea, assisting in its development in various areas.

Many were Missing in Action due to no known graves. Many men who survived did not speak of their escape afterwards—they often had survivor's guilt. Some families have not found out their relative escaped until after they passed away.

All these stories are significant. We have an opportunity to identify more of those involved and focus on what we can document about individual soldiers, civilians and their extended families.

#### **Story Themes**

Some stories will include reports from survivors—official and personal—some will include Red Cross reports on the fate of individual people.

All will contain the background to a civilian living there at that time, or the soldier's details and, for many, reveal and share the generational memories of their families of those years.

The stories will aim to focus on relevant aspects to the individual soldiers and their families.

All these stories are different and combine to reflect a time and place important in our history.

Please contact us, and we will assist you to place your story or memories onto our new website. If you use material from our journal or website, please acknowledge the source as the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group, Papua New Guinea Association of Australia and any original author/custodian of material. Contact [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)



#### **The Pacific War: New Guinea Islands 1942**

Published in this issue of *PNG KUNDU* is a special feature commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands, the Tol Massacre and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*.







Remains of Australian soldiers after the massacre at Tol

### The Butcher of Tol

It was late in 1946 and Colonel Masao Kusunose, was about to be tried by the Allies. The reason: at Tol Plantation on New Britain on 4 February 1942, he had authorised the bayoneting to death of 160 Australian prisoners. The prisoners were military and civilian escapees from the Japanese invasion of Rabaul. Tired, hungry and demoralised after nearly two weeks in the jungle, they had decided to surrender. A couple of men miraculously survived the slaughter, and escaped to tell the story.

Colonel Kusunose, fifty-eight, according to his peculiar code, was a man of honour. For him there

was only one possible course—suicide. He could not commit hara-kiri because his samurai sword had been confiscated by the Allies. So, he decided to end his life by starvation and exposure in the sub-zero weather.

While Allied authorities hunted him, Kusunose went to the foot of Mount Fujiyama, to a deserted army barracks where he had soldiered as a youth. On 9 December 1946 he sat down facing the great mountain, which rose so steeply above him he had to bend his head back to see the splendour of the sunlit, snow-capped summit.

As he sat dying, Kusunose covered fifteen pages of his small black Japanese army notebooks with entries. On the last two days, he mentioned pains in his stomach and legs. His last entry was scrawled in red crayon: ‘Heaven will preserve Japan and the Emperor.’ Death came for him on 18 December 1946.

When an Allied search party reached the barracks at the foot of Fujiyama, they found an old straw sandal, a chopstick and a rusty can—Japanese, lacking Kusunose’s peculiar sense of honour, had long since looted everything else. The searchers also found his body, but it no longer faced the sacred mountain. Before he died, Kusunose had found the strength to turn away. The diary explained why: ‘It would be disrespectful if I died in the presence of revered Fuji.’ His left eye had been eaten away by rats.

Extract from *Time Magazine*, 1947

### Tol Biscuit Christmas Cards, 1945

The Australian War Memorial posted the following on Facebook on Christmas Day 2021.

During Christmas 1945 the men of 1st War Graves Unit were stationed at Tol Plantation in New Britain. The unit was involved in locating the remains of (and creating a cemetery for) the approximately 160 Australians massacred by the Japanese at the site on 4 February 1942.

In the midst of this cheerless task, Corporal Victor John Robertson, a signwriter from Western Australia, approached Captain David Keith Hanson with the idea of creating Christmas cards from the hard tack biscuits in their rations. Hanson readily agreed and Robertson created a biscuit card for each of his nine-unit members. Hanson sent his ‘card’ to his fiancée; to his amazement, it arrived in one piece.

The biscuit was donated to the Australian War Memorial in 1995 —still in its original packaging.



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#### PNGAA EVENTS

*(See details in the Events Diary of this issue)*

- PNGAA AGM Luncheon—30 April 2022**

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AGM

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## PNGAA Membership

Annual membership within Australia is \$50.00 (overseas extra) and available to any person with an interest in Papua New Guinea

Members receive four issues of our journal, PNG KUNDU, per year, full access to all content on the website, including our eBooks, receive email updates via Tok Save, network through events and social media and are encouraged to explore and become actively involved with all aspects of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc. and new members are always welcome.

For more details, please turn to the previous page or follow the link: <https://pngaa.org/membership/become-a-member/>



**PNGAA Store**

If you are interested in the history, adventure and stories of Papua New Guinea, and those who helped build the nation, then any of the items in our store will be a great addition to your library or a unique gift for any occasion. Details are available on this form, or on our website: [www.pngaa.org/store/](http://www.pngaa.org/store/)

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I would prefer to access a 'digital' PNG KUNDU via the website, using a membership log-on, instead of receiving a hard copy. This 'digital membership' is available at a reduced rate (see Order Form overleaf).

**NEW MEMBERS WELCOME:** see <https://pngaa.org/membership/become-a-member/>

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## Celebrating PNGAA's 70th Anniversary with a Tropical Christmas Lunch



Fifty guests enjoyed mingling and chatting at PNGAA's celebration of its seventieth anniversary and its annual Christmas Lunch on Sunday, 5 December 2021. Whilst a smaller number than usual, following months of lockdown in Sydney due to COVID, the spirit was even more buoyant.

PNGAA President Chris Pearsall welcomed everyone, including special guest, Roxanne Pouru, President of the PNG Sydney Wantok Association, and wished the beautiful and delightful Libby Cadden a very happy 105th birthday for 9 December.



Following a delicious lunch Roxanne, who specialises in community consultation and engagement, explained how the work of the Sydney Wantok Association helps PNG students assimilate into the community in Australia, and how valuable the Australian/PNG network is as our associations all work together. Together with former president of the Sydney Wantok Association and former PNGAA Management Committee Member, Steven Gagau, PNGAA's current committee hopes to expand this vision with Roxanne and other affiliated associations.



The PNGAA was also pleased to be able to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of this unique association, and during the year editor of PNG KUNDU, John Egerton, had delved deeply into the association's history to find out about PNGAA's founding committee and its early days. Reading this story in the December 2021 issue of PNG KUNDU is intriguing! John kindly shared some of this research with guests at the lunch.



It often happens that we know little about the varied background of some of our members and what inspired their own lives in PNG, and so John was asked to share some of his own background. John was enticed to PNG with his first job after completing veterinary science at university. He began working with pigs and became involved with Sir Edward Hallstrom's challenging sheep project at Nondugl in the Wahgi Valley.



John expanded on the fascinating backgrounds about those who saw the huge need for the PNGAA (then called the Retired Officers' Association of Australia), and were inspired to formalise it. Seventy years later here we are! An Australian/PNG national organisation with a geographically and professionally broad network of people who come together because our lives have been forever touched by living or having an interest in PNG. We thank John for his interest and tenacity in ensuring the association has its early history on record.

**FEATURED:** Roxanne Pouru and Louise Pearsall; Jeremy and Jessica Dykgraaff and Jessica's daughter (centre); Jenny Gagau and Karo Haltmeier; Libby Cadden at 105; President Chris Pearsall; Jan Murray, Ross MacDonald and Christine King

What is important now though, as John emphasised, is our future relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea, including the Pacific islands. PNGAA's Management Committee will have a focus on this as we move forward.

**ANDREA WILLIAMS**





**The New Guinea Campaign of WWII lasted from early 1942 until the Japanese surrender at Wewak in September 1945. During the initial phase, eighty years ago, Japan invaded the Australian-administered Mandated Territory of New Guinea on 23 January 1942, the Australian Territory of Papua on 21 July, and overran western New Guinea at the end of March. Many important historical events led up to the first assault.**

## Prelude to the Pacific War in New Guinea

- 1920–30:** Japan's imperialism and industrial development increased.
- 18 September 1931:** Japan occupied Manchuria, in northeast China.
- 7 July 1937:** Japan invaded China, starting the Second Sino-Japanese War.
- 1 August 1940:** Japan announced the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a self-sufficient bloc of Asian nations, led by Japan.
- 27 September 1940:** Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany & Italy.
- April 1941:** Australia sent 2/22nd Battalion Lark Force to Rabaul, and 1 Independent Company to Kavieng, New Guinea.
- April/May 1941:** Germans invaded island of Crete, 274 Australian soldiers from the 6th Division, AIF, killed, 507 wounded and 3,102 taken prisoner.
- July 1941:** Japan extended its control over the whole of French Indochina.
- 26 July 1941:** US froze Japan's assets, established an embargo on oil and iron.
- 19 November 1941:** Loss of HMAS *Sydney II* and 645 lives in Australian waters—the worst naval disaster in the Royal Australian Navy's history.
- 7 December 1941:** Japanese military strike upon the US naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii—war was declared on Japan the next day by the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, The Netherlands & China.
- 8 December 1941:** Japan invaded Malaya, which was defended by the British Indian Army, the 8th Australian Division and the RAAF. There was also a Japanese reconnaissance flight over Rabaul on this date.
- 10 December 1941:** Japanese land and torpedo bombers sank Royal Navy ships, HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*, in the South China Sea.
- 4 January 1942:** Rabaul came under bombing attack by large numbers of Japanese carrier-based aircraft.
- 23 January 1942:** The Battle of Rabaul, was fought on the island of New Britain, with the Japanese invasion force quickly overwhelming the small Australian garrison, the majority of whom were either killed or captured.

In this issue we feature the 80th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul, the Tol Plantation Massacre and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*. Throughout the year, we will be remembering the major battles of 1942—Kokoda, Milne Bay and Buna-Gona—and we pay tribute to all those involved in the war effort, and those who did not survive.

**JOHN EGERTON, Editor**  
[www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)



1. Imperial forces in China, 1937;
2. 2/10th Field Ambulance detachment in Rabaul, 1941;
3. RAN's HMAS *Sydney II*, 1941;
4. USS *Arizona* topples over into the sea at Pearl Harbor, 1941;
5. 2/9th Gurka Rifles in Malaya, 1941