

# PNG Kundu

**DECEMBER 2022**



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

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





## PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

(Formally constituted in 1951—incorporated in 1996)

### 2021–2022 PNGAA Office Bearers

**PRESIDENT:** Chris Pearsall—(Mob) 0410 530 502; (Email) [president@pngaa.net](mailto:president@pngaa.net)

**TREASURER:** Murrough Benson—(Mob) 0448 216 049; (Email) [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net)

**JOINT SECRETARIES:** (Email) [admin@pngaa.net](mailto:admin@pngaa.net)

Norma Dewick—(Mob.) 0407 940 756; Gaynor Kaad—(Tel.) 02 9969 7217

**MEMBERSHIP OFFICER:** Roy Ranney—(Mob) 0412 556 593; (Email) [membership@pngaa.net](mailto:membership@pngaa.net)

#### PNGAA ARCHIVIST & COLLECTIONS:

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

**EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR:** Vacant—a volunteer needed

#### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Phil Ainsworth, Chris Warrillow, John Egerton, Andrea Williams, Kalo Fainu & Max Uechtritz

**RABAU & MONTEVIDEO MARU GROUP:** [www.montevideo-maru.org](http://www.montevideo-maru.org)

Andrea Williams—(Mob) 0409 031 889; (Email) [admin@montevideo-maru.org](mailto:admin@montevideo-maru.org)

**PNGAA Mail:** PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515 • **PNGAA Website:** [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)

**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 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 journal, the address label shows the current status of your membership.

A list of the names and addresses of PNGAA members is now available on our website. Please go to:

<https://pngaa.org/membership-directories/>

**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 make sure you check out the selection of books and DVDs available in our store. Details are 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, book for a PNGAA function or make a donation.

**PNGAA Social Media:** FACEBOOK—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PNGAA>

INSTAGRAM—[https://www.instagram.com/png\\_association\\_of\\_australia/](https://www.instagram.com/png_association_of_australia/)

TWITTER—[https://twitter.com/PNG\\_ASSOC\\_AUS](https://twitter.com/PNG_ASSOC_AUS)

LINKEDIN—<https://www.linkedin.com/company/papua-new-guinea-association-of-australia/>

### PNG KUNDU is the official journal of the

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

ISSN 2652-5208, PPA 224987/00025 • DECEMBER 2022 • Vol. 3, No. 12

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 March 2023 issue: 30 JANUARY 2023 ▶

(Estimated delivery 10 March 2023—please allow for unforeseen delays, etc.)

**JOURNAL EDITOR:** John Egerton—(Mob) 0400 311 320

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

Designed & produced by Jeannette Gilligan—[dragonwick1@outlook.com](mailto:dragonwick1@outlook.com)

Reviewed by Murrough Benson & Andrea Williams

Printed & bound in Australia by Lismore City Printery—[www.cityprint.com.au](http://www.cityprint.com.au)

Contributions may be edited for length and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or the PNGAA. Guidelines for contributors are available on page 62 of this issue or on the website.

© Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc. & Individual Contributors

*PNG KUNDU* is published four times a year for the information of members of the PNGAA. All rights are reserved, and no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the publishers. It is written with care, in good faith and from sources believed to be accurate, and every effort is made to publish free of factual and typographical errors. However, readers should not act, or refrain from acting solely on the basis of information in the journal about financial, taxation or any other matter. Having regard for their own particular circumstances, readers should consult the relevant authorities or other advisers with expertise in the particular field. Neither the PNGAA nor the editor accepts any responsibility for actions taken by readers. Please note that some of the photographs have been digitally coloured whilst maintaining historical accuracy, and all enquiries should be made to the publishers. Acknowledgement and thanks are given to all contributors, creators of images and information used in the public domain and under non-profit and fair-use guidelines, and to the various sources referenced in this publication.



## Features

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 1926–2022 <i>PNGAA Tribute</i>	5
The Pacific War: Buna-Gona 1942 <i>80th Anniversary Special Feature</i>	19
PNG Ports: Built on the Scars of War <i>PNG Ports Corporation</i>	24
First Flight to Tadj— Remembering the Liberation of Aitape <i>Rob Parer CMG, MBE</i>	26
By Air & Sea— Dramatic Rescues in the South Pacific <i>The Age, 14 February 1944</i>	28
A Thousand Miles to Freedom <i>Sydney Morning Herald, 10 November 1945</i>	30
Early Teaching Positions <i>Ken McKinnon AO</i>	31
Mother's Love: <i>Meri nambis</i> <i>Jeffrey</i>	34
Plantation Life in the 1960s <i>Ian Smith</i>	37
Rural Development and Planning— A Case Study <i>Barry Holloway/Chris Warrillow</i>	39
Guam Lakes Patrol <i>Des Pike</i>	42
Coca Cola Diplomacy in Papua New Guinea <i>Deryck Thompson</i>	45
June Lovisa Whittaker AM #2 <i>Gaynor Kaad</i>	48
How Do Papua New Guineans Count? <i>CA Volker</i>	51
PNG Kundu Contributor's Index 2020–22	59
Artist from PNG has Solo Exhibition in London <i>John Egerton AM</i>	IBC
Japanese Prison Ships <i>John Quinn</i>	BC

## Contents

### FRONT COVER—December 2022

*Papua New Guinea's famous Dendrobium nindii orchid, Port Moresby, © Eric Lafforgue*

PNGAA REPORT	2
LETTERS & MEMORIES	11
EVENTS DIARY	13
PNG IN THE NEWS	14
VALES & TRIBUTES	53
MEMORIAL NEWS <i>Rabaul &amp; Montevideo Maru Group</i>	55
TREASURER'S CORNER <i>Membership &amp; Order Form</i>	63



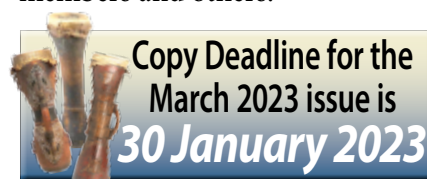


## President's Report

The next edition of *PNG Kuntu* seems to come around very quickly and, as I write this report, I am reflecting on the state of the PNGAA and what has been achieved so far this year, and what could be achieved in different circumstances.

Like many voluntary organisations, the PNGAA still struggles in many ways as it strives to achieve its objectives including continuing to promote friendship and goodwill between Australians and the people of Papua New Guinea. Like other voluntary organisations, and many service clubs, the PNGAA suffers from a lack of engagement with those who have an interest in Papua New Guinea. Part of it stems from the passage of time and changing interests in the general community and although the PNGAA should be a 'special interest' group given its specific focus, finding ways to sensibly engage and develop interactions remains a challenge.

The Committee would welcome any suggestions from members and others.



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.

## Scholarship Fund

In my last report, I did mention that your committee has been working over the last six months to establish a scholarship fund to provide financial support to Papua New Guinean students to attend high school. We were fortunate enough to receive valuable assistance from Glenda Giles, a former teacher and district education inspector in PNG. Originally from New Zealand, Glenda has recently retired and now lives in Wewak.

She has experience in the West Sepik Province and has agreed to work with the PNGAA to establish and operate the PNGAA Scholarship Scheme, which will commence in January 2023 by awarding scholarships to two students (one male and one female) to attend high school.

In my next report, I will outline how the scheme will operate and hopefully announce the names of the first two scholarship recipients. With Glenda's assistance, the PNGAA will receive regular reports on the student's progress.

## PNGAA New Members

The committee welcomes the following new members: Kylee Andersen, Michael Carter, Ron Perry & Carolyn Leigh, Peter Ryan, Angela Tincknell-Stott and Bruce Williams.

**CHRIS PEARSALL**  
President, PNGAA

## From the Editor

This issue of *PNG Kuntu* is the eighth I have edited in the last two years. I have enjoyed the challenge of changing from writing and editing papers for scientific journals to preparing your contributions to the journal.

In addition to those there have been plenty of stories, about Papua New Guinea in the media and online. We have covered major events like COVID-19, the recent elections in PNG and commemorated anniversaries of historical significance such as those of the Second World War and of the Mt Lamington eruption of 1951 (pictured below).

In this issue we mourn the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of State of both Australia and Papua New Guinea, having previously noted with sorrow the deaths of several of PNG's leaders including that of the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare. The Association also mourned the loss in 2021 of its two patrons, Major General the



The Mt Lamington eruption of 1951

Honourable Michael Jeffery AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) and Fred Kaad OBE.

It has been a pleasure to record some aspects of the culture of today's PNG. We have included stories by their contemporary authors and noted that crafts like the making of *bilums* and *bilas* have found their way to international markets. It has been exciting, too, to see the women of Oro Province having international exhibitions of their *nioge* (bark painting).

*PNG Kuntu* will continue to publish stories about the experiences of people who lived and worked in PNG before Independence in 1975 and those who continue to do so. These stories about the kiaps, doctors, nurses, schoolteachers and *didimen* and many others are an important part of the historical record of Australia's contribution to PNG's continuing development and the ongoing relationship between our two countries.

To everyone—please keep writing and submitting and thank you to all who have contributed in the past two years.

**JOHN EGERTON**

## Christmas Lunch Silent Auction

*PNG Kuntu*, June 2022, page 4, mentions the PNGAA Scholarship Fund and the beautiful quilt that will be part of PNGAA's fundraising for the scholarship fund at the Sydney Christmas lunch. If you would like to participate in the silent auction, or make a donation, please go to [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org).

You might also choose to



bid up until 2 pm on the day of the lunch by texting your name, mobile number and bid to 0409 031 889.



## The Pacific War: BUNA-GONA 1942

In this issue is the last of our special features commemorating eighty years since the start of the Pacific War in New Guinea.

The New Guinea Campaign lasted until September 1945—and was arguably the most arduous fought by any Allied troops during WWII, and we pay tribute to all those involved in the war effort—and the many who did not survive ...

We have also incorporated the the important battles and events, featured in *PNG Kuntu* throughout the year, into a special eBook, which can be downloaded from: [www.pngaa.org/e-books/](http://www.pngaa.org/e-books/)

## Ken McKinnon Donation

Emeritus Professor Kenneth McKinnon AO has, most generously, donated \$5,000.00 to the Association to enable it to further pursue its objectives.

Professor McKinnon was initially a teacher and, later, the Director of Education in the

former Territory of Papua and New Guinea. He occupied this critical position from 1966–73 and was responsible to the Australian Government for making the changes in education policy needed as PNG approached Independence. In addition, he was directly involved in the establishment of the University of Papua and New Guinea.

After leaving the Territory Professor McKinnon had a distinguished career in the university sector and in public administration. Now retired, and a member of the Association, he maintains an interest in PNG affairs.

In the past he was a generous donor to the Crocodile Prize, an initiative of PNG Attitude with sponsorship from the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA), and which supported creative writing by Papua New Guineans.

Because of Professor McKinnon's key role in the education of Papua New Guineans, the Management Committee has elected to use his donation to support the scholarship program for needy



Emeritus Professor Ken McKinnon AO





students in isolated parts of PNG, and initially in the West Sepik, announced in the President's Report.

This program will start with the support of two students. If it is to expand and support more children who could not otherwise get an education more help is needed from the membership of the Association. Please consider using the Donation Button on the Association's website home page or follow the directions for donations in the Treasurer's corner on page 63.

## POSITIONS VACANT

*The PNGAA Management Committee urgently needs a Treasurer and an Events Co-ordinator, so please consider nominations*

### • PNGAA Treasurer

The present treasurer, Murrough Benson, has been on the Executive Committee for seven years and would like to step back from this role, which he has fulfilled outstandingly since 2019.

### • Events Co-Ordinator

The committee position for Events Co-ordinator is currently vacant. It is another key position and needs member support.

**ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE TO:**

- [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net)
- [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net)

## Brisbane Annual PNGAA Lunch

The annual lunch at The Ship Inn on 31 July 2022 went very well despite COVID concerns and rain periods, which may have deterred some of those who have attended in previous years from joining us on this occasion. All of those participating had a very enjoyable day catching up with old friends and making new ones with those who share the common bond of having lived in PNG and their experiences of the best years of their lives.

Joining us on this occasion were Bryan and Joy Iles, Belinda Macartney, Ally Martell, Samantha Morton, Kieran Nelson, Iava Parapa-Falvey, Julie Webb, Allan Burrow, Andrea Williams, Don Wotton, Christine Leonard, John Johnston and Sue Krone. The small donations of \$10 from everyone to assist with fundraising for various PNGAA projects are very much appreciated by our association and we thank them for that.

During the lunch Don Wotton spoke on the 'Paradise Palette' exhibition, which opened at the Royal Queensland Art Society (RQAS) gallery on Petrie Terrace, Brisbane, on 7 September 2022 and Andrea also brought along some PNGAA items available to purchase which were well received.

## Annual General Meeting 2023

The 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA) will be on Saturday, 29 April 2023. Every two years elections are held for the PNGAA Management Committee. All positions, executive and general, are automatically vacated and a new committee voted into office.

All committee members are volunteers, PNG enthusiasts. Meetings are normally held by email or Zoom, so location is not necessarily an issue, although some face-to-face contact is helpful.

This is a great opportunity for anyone wishing to contribute spare time, whilst exercising their skills, to a worthwhile and highly-regarded organisation, surrounded by a supportive team.

Nomination forms, together with further information, are available on the PNGAA website. If you cannot access this website, please contact the Secretary (see Inside Front Cover of PNG KUNDU) and ask that the forms be mailed to you.

All nominees and those nominating must be current members of the PNGAA. Nomination, seconding and acceptance can also be sent via email to [admin@pngaa.net](mailto:admin@pngaa.net).

Please help your Association and send nominations in now. Nominations are due by 5:00 pm, 31 January 2023.

Please find a nomination form on the PNGAA website at: <https://pngaa.org/documents-relating-to-the-2022-agm/>

Her Majesty  
Queen Elizabeth II  
1926–2022







After ascending the throne at just twenty-five, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gave a lifetime of service providing a bedrock of stability for the monarchy as the world shifted around her.

She was born on 21 April 1926, and died peacefully at her home at Balmoral Castle, Scotland on 8 September 2022, aged ninety-six. She was succeeded by her eldest son, now King Charles III, and in an address to the nation the next day, he honoured the memory of his mother:

*Queen Elizabeth's was a life well lived; a promise with destiny kept and she is mourned most deeply in her passing. As the Queen herself did with such unswerving devotion, I too now solemnly pledge myself, throughout the remaining time God grants me, to uphold the constitutional principles at the heart of our nation. And wherever you may live in the United Kingdom, or in the Realms and territories across the world, and whatever may be your background or beliefs, I shall endeavour to serve you with loyalty, respect and love, as I have throughout my life.*

He paid tribute to his wife, Camilla, who becomes the Queen Consort, and to Prince William, who now inherits Charles's title of Duke of Cornwall, he added:

*Today, I am proud to create him Prince of Wales, 'Tywysog Cymru', the country whose title I have been so greatly privileged to bear during so much of my life and duty. With Catherine beside him, our new Prince and Princess of Wales will, I know, continue to inspire and lead our national conversations, helping to bring the marginal to the centre ground where vital help can be given.*

Upon hearing of the Sovereign's passing, The Hon. Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia, said:

*With the passing of Queen Elizabeth the Second, an historic reign and a long life devoted to duty, family, faith and service has come to an end. It is a day of profound sadness and grief for the royal family who have lost a beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Australian hearts go out to the people of the United Kingdom who mourn today, knowing they will feel they have lost part of what makes their nation whole. It is a time of mourning for the people in Britain, across the Commonwealth, and indeed around the world.*

The Commonwealth of Nations is a political association of fifty-six member states, the vast majority of which are former territories of the British Empire. King Charles III is now the Head of State of fifteen Commonwealth Realms, while thirty-six other members are republics and five others have different monarchs.

1. Princess Elizabeth and Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on their wedding day, 20 November 1947; 2. Official portrait of Queen Elizabeth II on her coronation day, 2 June 1953; 3. Princess Elizabeth, her fiancé Prince Philip, her parents, Queen Elizabeth and King George VI, and her sister, Princess Margaret; 4. Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, with their children at Balmoral Castle in 1972; 5. The Queen and her friend, Paddington Bear, having tea and marmalade sandwiches in 2022; 6. The Queen's funeral procession, 19 September 2022; 7. The Royal Parade on the River Thames, for the Diamond Jubilee, 2012; 8. Queen Elizabeth II in 2015, with the direct line of succession—Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales; Prince George; and Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge; 9. The Queen after the Commonwealth Day service in Sydney, March 2006; 10. The Queen on her Platinum Jubilee, 2022





Until her death, Queen Elizabeth II was Head of State of Papua New Guinea, where she was known as *'Missis Kwin'* and *'Mama bilong bik famili'* in Tok Pisin. She was represented by the Governor-General, who is nominated by the country's parliament, and had a close connection with Papua New Guinea, making three royal visits during her long reign of over seventy years.

### Royal Visit, February 1974

After the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand, the Queen visited Papua New Guinea with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, and daughter Princess Anne with her husband Capt. Mark Phillips and Lord Louis Mountbatten. During this time, the royal party toured Rabaul in New Britain, and Goroka, where the royal party drove around the showground in an open vehicle. People came from as far as Mount Hagen, 200 miles further into the mountains, to put on the biggest display of their finery and their war dances that the Highlands have seen. The famous Asaro Mudmen in clay masks were there, the Moss Men wore ropes of weeds, the Lufa Men had their towering headgear and thousands of others donned colourful skins and leathers.

They later flew to Lae, where the Queen laid a commemorative wreath at the cemetery, and then to the capital, Port Moresby, where they were greeted by a 21-gun salute.

### Royal Visit, March 1977

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip returned for the Silver Jubilee in 1977 when she toured Port Moresby, where she was presented with a headhunted trophy, complete with heads, at a 'people's welcome' at a sports stadium after she had presented a new Queen's Colour to the Pacific Islands Regiment. She walked briefly among traditional dancers before attending a state luncheon. The next day the royal party flew to the provincial centres of Popondetta and Alotau, in eastern Papua.

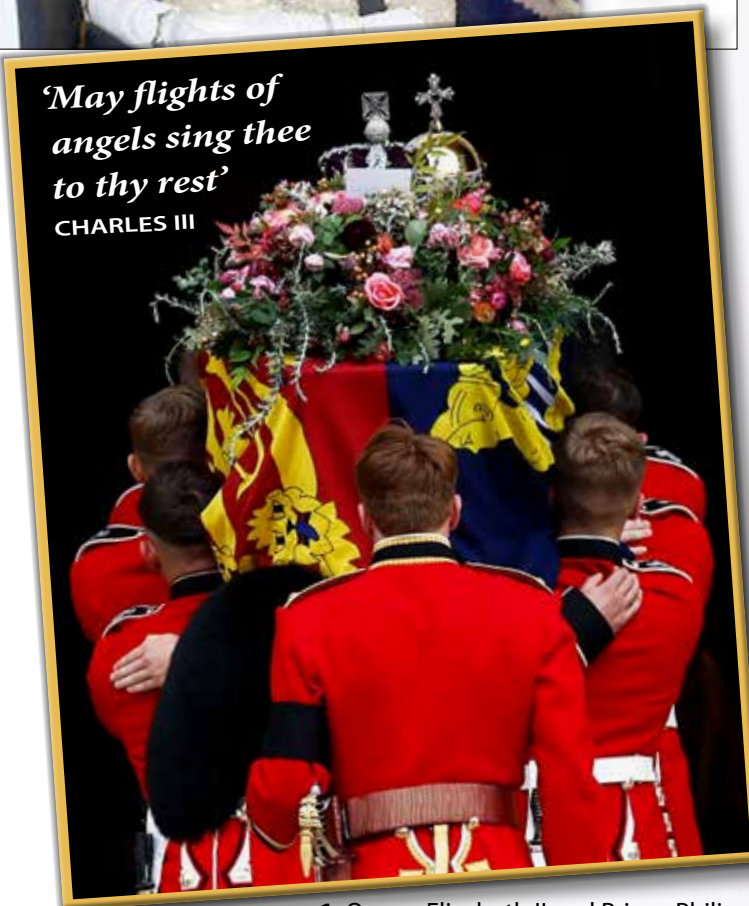
### Royal Visit, October 1982

The Queen and the Duke visited Port Moresby again and also Mt Hagen in 1982, after the XII Commonwealth Games in Brisbane. They arrived in Port Moresby, where more than 100,000 people in traditional dress greeted the couple, before an official welcome from Prime Minister Michael Somare, followed by a state reception. In an arrival speech, the queen congratulated the country on the progress it had made since her last visit:



1. Capt. Mark Phillips, Princess Anne, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip waving to Asaro Mudmen at Goroka Showground from a jeep during the royal tour in 1974.  
2. The Queen and Duke in Port Moresby, 1977;  
3. The Queen inspecting the guard in Alotau, 1977;  
4. The Queen and Duke examining pearls from Saribu Island, 1977; 5. The royal couple laying a wreath at Lae Cemetery, 1974; 6. Queen Elizabeth II in Alotau, 1977;  
7. Queen Elizabeth II on her arrival at Port Moresby, 1982.





*'May flights of  
angels sing thee  
to thy rest'*  
CHARLES III

1. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, at the Sir Hubert Murray Stadium, Port Moresby, during their royal visit in 1982; 2. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh with Prime Minister Michael Somare, at a state reception, Port Moresby, 1982.

*It reflects great credit on the leaders and the people of Papua New Guinea, who have accepted the challenge of creating a nation and bringing it thus far into the modern day and age after so many centuries of isolation. God be with you till we meet again.*

When Prince Charles journeyed to Papua New Guinea in 2012 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, he spoke to crowds in Port Moresby about his mother's reign and her special relationship with the country:

*This is a great day and a magnificent spectacle. We are gathered here to celebrate the Queen's sixty years of service to others. I know how honoured Her Majesty is to be your Queen, a title borne by her with immense pride and renewed by the people of this great country upon Independence in 1975.*

Though she did not get involved in government matters in Papua New Guinea, Her Majesty continued to play an important symbolic role, and PNG Prime Minister James Marape stated, upon her death:

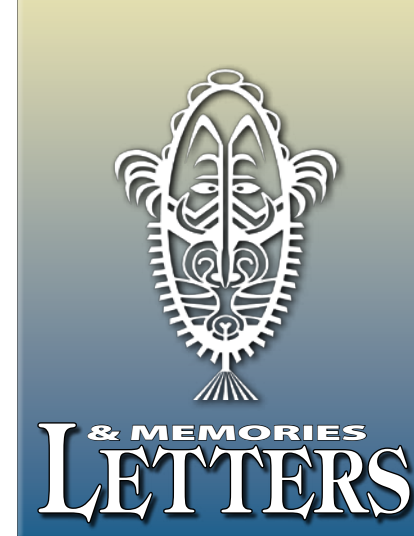
*Papua New Guineans from the valley and coasts rose up this morning to the news that our Queen has been taken to rest by God. She was the anchor of our Commonwealth and in PNG we fondly call her 'Mama Queen' because she was the matriarch of our country as much as she was to her family and her Sovereign realms. God bless her Soul as she lays in rest, and may God also bless King Charles III. Her Majesty's people in PNG share the grief with King and family.*

AFTER A PERIOD of public mourning, Queen Elizabeth II's State Funeral took place at Westminster Abbey in London on 19 September 2022. This was attended by her family, members of Europe's royal families, world leaders, including Australia and Papua New Guinea, and representatives of charity organisations, among many others. Her coffin was borne by soldiers from the Queen's Company, 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards.

Later, Her Majesty was laid to rest in the King George VI Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle, alongside her beloved husband, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, who died last year.



**The PNGAA extends its sympathy and condolences to the Royal Family and all members of the Commonwealth of Nations**



## Airstrips at Lake Kutubu

The brief history of the Terrells in the September issue of PNG KUNDU is excellent but there is an error in the second paragraph, page 41. The original Lake Kutubu grass airstrip at Moro was just as far from Lae as the current Moro strip built by Chevron!

The Kutubu oil project owes its existence to the hundreds of Hercules (civilian version of the military Lockheed C30) flights carrying tens of thousands of kilos of material from Lae (Nadzab) to the newer Moro airstrip for the construction of the facilities to produce the oil for export.

Road access by extension of the Highlands highway came after production commenced.

'First Oil' production for export began on 27 June 1992. First operations into the new Moro 'strip began in May 1990. The official opening of the 'strip was on 15 June 1990.

Moro is approximately 400 kilometres from Nadzab. Three Hercules, supplied by Southern Air Transport, could each carry 20 tonnes of freight. At peak construction, in good weather, they sometimes managed five round-trips a day. Over 62,000 tonnes was flown by these aircraft

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.

Please send your contributions by 30 January 2023, the Copy Deadline for the next issue, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)

to enable construction to be completed on time and below cost.

**CHRIS WARRILLOW**

## Burial of the Flying Cowboy

I read the article on Squadron Leader Peter Turnbull DFC with interest (September 2022, PNG KUNDU). My late father (Private Bert Armit, QX1501, B Company, 2/12th Btn, 18th Brigade, 2nd AIF) fought at Milne Bay and was part of the detail that buried Squadron Leader Turnbull DFC with dignity. My father's younger brother, Lionel, recorded his war service during his later years and it included the following passage:

*Meanwhile, two volunteers were required to go out and bury Sqdn Leader Peter Turnbull. Whilst Cpl Viv Rammett led an RAAF party to crash site, both 'Ringer' Albert Simpson and I volunteered to carry*

*out the burial of his remains. (Peter Turnbull had crashed whilst carrying out low level strafing operations, forward of KB Mission).*

*Both Ringer and I dug the grave, whilst the RAAF personnel arranged the body in a canvas covering. The RAAF party was smartly dressed in clean starched uniforms, shoes polished, and wearing their navy-coloured forage caps—an unusual sight in this jungle. Ringer Simpson who always carried a Bible, read the 'Burial Service' and I, where necessary, answered the prayers.*

Dad enlisted in October 1939 with others whilst working in Hughenden. Together with recruits from Townsville and Cairns, they went into the rifle companies.

*Lest we forget.*

**BRIAN ARMIT**

## War Stories

The series of the Australian War Memorial's Kokoda Campaign stories in the past couple of editions of PNG KUNDU was appreciated. However, due to their creation several decades ago before the authenticity of some military records began to be questioned, the articles perpetuate mistakes by military archivists, many of whom relied on American interpretation of the Kokoda Campaign on which to base their conclusions. Subsequent respected historians and authors followed their direction, further compounding the misinformation.







Kate (centre) at her retirement party in Konedobu

Of all the articles in the Kundu's wartime series, I found one in the June edition, 'Damien Parer, Master Photographer' the most interesting. As a kindred newsreel cinematographer, I am very much aware he used the word 'Track' in all his shot lists and dope sheets—background story information—which Damien included with all his exposed film sent back to Australia, and which is now in the AWM's archives. The existence of this evidence, amongst a mountain of similar material which has not been taken into account when it decided on its official version of the Kokoda Campaign does little to enhance its reputation. The Australian Cinesound newsreel was the only one which attempted to portray the conflict from an Australian perspective.

I was privileged to work in the early 1960s with Kate Vellacott-Jones before she retired. Kate was a British-Canadian journalist who was stationed in Port Moresby for the Australian Broadcasting Commission at the outbreak of the war. We talked about her wartime experiences and MacArthur's press conferences where she confirmed his 'Trail' directive to all the correspondents. If Kate was with us today, she would be

disappointed to see how some aspects of Australia's official presentation of the Kokoda military campaign differs from reality.

I have previously expressed my concern in *PNG Kundu* over the AWM's reluctance to accept overwhelming evidence, including within its own vaults, which confirm historical documentation mistakes had been made.

I sincerely hope a compromise will soon be found to allow the AWM to admit, in its promotional materials and displays, that the 'Trail vs Track' argument has existed for 80 years and, rather than continue in denial, that there was never an alternative to their official account of the campaign. An open and factual explanation of how the controversy occurred, should be a part of their future plans.

**DARYL BINNINGS**

### Films on Pre-Independence

While researching information about the pre-independence era



Mathias Kauage's portrait of Queen Elizabeth II

of Papua New Guinea, it occurred to me to pass on to members that a number of excellent films about the work of officers in the Administration are available, at a small cost and in digital format from the National Film and Sound Archives:

<https://shop.nfsa.gov.au/new-guinea-patrol>

**WILL MUSKENS**

### Queen Elizabeth II by Mathias Kauage

Mathias Kauage OBE (1944–63) was from Miugu, Chimbu Province, Papua New Guinea.

When the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, was officially opened by the Queen in 1996 Kauage was invited to the opening. He attended the opening wearing *bilas*—full ceremonial PNG dress—and met the late Queen.

Following this he created a series of works depicting the event and sent the Queen a portrait he had painted of her as if she were wearing *bilas*. It is now in the Royal Collection and was said to be a favourite of the Queen.

**SUE AHERN**

*The Pacific Newsroom*

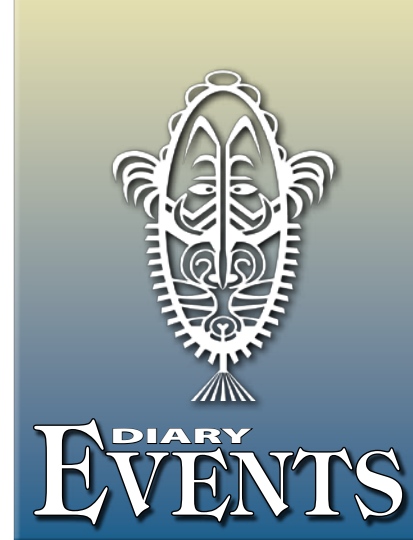
### Wanted—Patrol Boxes

A significant part of patrol life in PNG were the patrol boxes that accompanied every journey. It is evident to me now that we have none in our collection. I realise this is probably because they are such useful boxes for storage.

BUT, if anybody has one or more in good condition that they can bear to part with—they would be gratefully received by us.

**CHERYL MARVELL**

Mobile 0438635132;  
Email: [collection@pngaa.net](mailto:collection@pngaa.net)



### ❖PERTH

#### PNGAA Christmas Lunch Friday, 25 November 2022

**Venue:** RAAF Memorial Estate,  
2 Bull Creek Drive, Bull Creek

**Time:** 11.30 am for 12 noon

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

### ❖CANBERRA

#### Christmas Lunch Saturday, 10 December 2022

**Venue:** Pavilion Hotel,  
242 Northbourne Ave, Canberra

**RSVP:** 3 December 2022

Bookings via [www.eventbrite.com/e/pngaa-christmas-luncheon-tickets-423803697267](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/pngaa-christmas-luncheon-tickets-423803697267)

Reviews of events and reunions held throughout Australia and PNG, and a listing of upcoming functions, events of interest 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 30 January 2023, the Copy Deadline for the next issue. Events are also listed on our website, under *Resources>Events*.

Please contact Sharfel directly on 6250 9187 or [functions@capitalhotelgroup.com.au](mailto:functions@capitalhotelgroup.com.au) with any specific dietary requirements.

**Time:** 12 noon to 4 pm.

**Cost:** \$ 61.22 pp, includes a 3-course lunch buffet, drinks from the bar are a personal expense.

**Contact:** John Reeves, mobile 0448 483 932, email [neradaq@gmail.com](mailto:neradaq@gmail.com)

**Transport/ Parking:** Parking is available in the Pavilion, and Canberra light rail stops almost in front of the venue.

**Special Notes:** The guest speaker will be Dr Henry Ivarature, Deputy Director of the ANU College of Security.

### ❖ADELAIDE

#### OAS Forum: Australia in the Pacific—Cultures Past, Present & Future Sat 26–Sun 27 November 2022

**Venue:** Pacific Cultures Gallery, South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

**Program:** The forum includes displays, discussions by experts of Art from PNG and Northern Australia and a Pacific Islands dance performance.

**Special Notes:** Prospective attendees are encouraged to make accommodation and travel bookings early as November is a busy time of year in Adelaide with major events scheduled.

**Contact:** Jim Elmslie at [jelmslie@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jelmslie@ozemail.com.au)

## PNGAA Sydney Annual Christmas Lunch SUNDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2022

**Venue:** North Ryde Golf Club, Twin Road, North Ryde

**Time:** 11:30 am to 3:30 pm

**Cost:** Meal \$70 for two courses; attendees pay for their drinks.

**Payment:** Direct deposit to PNGAA CBA BSB 062-009 Account Number 00907724 (ref SYDX+ surname).

Please advise [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net) when payment completed including code SYDX and surname.

**RSVP:** 18 November 2022 to Cheryl Marvell 0438 635 132, email: [collection@pngaa.net](mailto:collection@pngaa.net) or Andrea Williams 0409 031 889

**Special Notes:** Please advise special diet requirements at time of booking.

**Guest Speaker:** Dulciana Somare-Brash, who was a candidate in the recent elections and has been a political advisor to the Government of PNG and to the United Labour Party.







## Two Women Elected to PNG Parliament in 2022 Poll

Jo Chandler, supported by the Judith Neilson Institute, and writing in the *Guardian*, has reported how Rufina Peter, an economist, became just the eighth woman ever elected to parliament in Papua New Guinea.

The celebrations, when news broke that Rufina had been elected to the governorship of Papua New Guinea's Central Province, one of the 118 seats in parliament, had a particular sweetness. She won a bruising, exhausting and at times dangerous campaign after an early struggle to get an education.

Peter's home village is a short flight but a six-plus hour drive from the capital, Port Moresby, when the road is passable. One of eight children, she and her older brother were due to start high school the same year. Her mother wanted her to stay and help her but her father, unusually, insisted that she should go on to high school.

The Catholic high school at Tapini had a good academic reputation. But the costs of having four children in high school simultaneously were beyond her father's income as a medical

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 PNGAA to ensure the strong ties formed between Papua New Guinea and Australia continue into the future.

orderly, so Peter had to start work early to earn money for fees, clothes and other needs.

'I was grateful that someone spoke up,' she said. 'And instead of it being my mother, it was my father.'

Last year, as Peter prepared for the 2022 election campaign, male authority again opened the door to opportunity. Chiefs from Tapini and other centres in her home district, including a former provincial governor, gave her their endorsement.

After four weeks of an election process plagued by murder, violence, chaos, missing ballots, incomplete voter rolls and fraud allegations, Peter secured enough preferences to unseat the sitting member.

Dr Orovu Sepoe, a political scientist and expert on women's activism in PNG said, 'Rufina is intelligent and stands for everything we call democracy and good governance.'

Peter was Sepoe's student



Rufina Peters (© Facebook)

in the 1990s, before going on to senior roles in agricultural and economic policy and banking.

The prime minister, James Marape, has said his Pangu party has the numbers to form a coalition government. In that event Peter, a member of the People's National Congress (PNC) party headed by former prime minister Peter O'Neill, will be on the opposition benches.

Peter says she initially decided to run for office out of frustration at the continued deterioration of infrastructure, services and living conditions. After securing a strong vote in 2017, she worked full-time toward her election in 2022, travelling to villages across the province, handing out her CV and trying to persuade voters that supporting a woman was in their interests.

Rufina said she had to challenge people about their perceptions of women, especially women in leadership. 'I would just use the analogy of a woman in a home, and what she does when she wakes up, how many jobs she gets done before she sleeps and don't you think she is going to do the same in this house, this parliament house?'

It has been exhausting and consuming. It has also been dangerous, and Peter recounts direct threats to her safety and that of her team.

So, why do it? 'Because honestly, I would be equally



Kessy Sawang (© The Guardian)

responsible for the lack of development, and I could not live with that. You know, the least I can do is to put my hand up.'

*The National* reported that Kessy Sawang, a member of the People's First Party and a candidate for the Madang Rai Coast seat, had also been elected, making her the second woman to succeed in the 2022 election. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/08/shouldering-the-weight-of-four-million-women-png-elects-its-first-female-mp-in-a-decade> <https://www.thenational.com.pg/legality-looms>

## PNG's Flag Bearer at the Commonwealth Games

Rellie Kaputin (*below*) was Papua New Guinea's flag-bearing warrior for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

She currently holds the



national records in PNG for the high jump, long jump, and triple jump events. In 2017, Kaputin competed at the 2017 World Championships in London, and in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, where she finished 19th in the long jump. Rellie, who has been supported by PacificAusSports, says her biggest influence has been her uncle, Sir John Kaputin. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-28/sport-birmingham-commonwealth-games-png-flag-bearer/101272870>

## A Rugby League Team from PNG for the NRL Competition?

On 22 July 2022 Fox Sports reported that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese had thrown his support behind an NRL team in Papua New Guinea, and floated expansion into the Pacific region as well.

The Australian PM met with his PNG counterpart, James Marape, at the Pacific Islands Forum held in Suva 11–14 July. As the PMs made small talk, Marape spoke of his nation's love for rugby league. 'If there's something good that Australia has left as far as a lasting imprint in Papua New Guinea, rugby league is one of them,' he said.

Albanese replied: 'We have to look at a team eventually in the NRL for PNG, and perhaps from the Pacific as well.'

<https://www.foxsports.com.au/nrl/nrl-premiership/nrl-news-2022-expansion-to-18-teams-papua-new-guinea-team-pasifika-anthony-albanese-support-pacific-side/news-story/51cb7a20f80a49d22d38c3765ae41531>

Just days after Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese raised the prospect of forming an

NRL team to represent the Pacific Islands during a visit to Fiji, Andrew Prosenko, writing in *The Sun-Herald*, revealed that the initiative for an 18th NRL team was being considered by a prospective Papua New Guinea-led franchise.

The development comes at a time when the NRL is seeking \$60 million in federal government funding to help grow the sport in the region.

<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/nrl/bold-bid-for-pasifika-team-to-become-nrl-s-18th-franchise-20220716-p5b23t.html>

William Leben of the Australian Pacific Policy Institute commented thus on the proposal that an 18th team in the NRL be established in PNG:

*Rugby league is immensely popular in PNG, the only country in which it is the national sport. The code was exported to the then-territories in the 1930s and 1940s by miners and soldiers. The men's national side, the PNG Kumuls, plays an Australian Prime Minister's XIII annually. The country has also fielded a women's international side, the Orchids, since 2017.*

*Just a little bit of Australian government money directed towards a PNG (or Pacific) team would make a substantial difference to the commercial viability and reach of such a club.*

*Potential Australian government support shouldn't be seen as purely financial. There is a lot at stake here, and it is important that a PNG club not simply go ahead but genuinely succeed. This means making sure the club is properly administered and that it is assisted with regulatory and immigration hurdles, for instance. Drawing on the successes and lessons*





Lachlan Lam of Papua New Guinea celebrates with teammates after scoring a try during the Men's International Test Match between PNG Kumuls and Fiji at Campbelltown Sports Stadium in June 2022 in Sydney

of the Hunters and Silktails (teams from PNG and Fiji already playing in Queensland and NSW), both of which have received Australian government assistance, is an obvious starting point.

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-next-nrl-team-should-come-from-papua-new-guinea/>

## Senator Penny Wong in Port Moresby

Introducing Senator Penny Wong, the Foreign Minister of Australia, to assembled journalists in Port Moresby on 29 August 2022 Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea (PNG), Justin Tkatchenko, said, 'we've had fruitful discussions on strengthening our relationship with Australia in the future.'

Continuing, PNG's Foreign Minister said: 'We discussed the labour mobility program and its having bigger and broader reach for sending skilled labourers and labourers (from PNG) to Australia to boost the Australian economy, to get them skilled in Australia, to boost our economy as well—a win-win situation.

'We also talked about security

issues here internally and internationally and looked at areas where we can improve and support each other in partnership in these areas. We also spoke about rugby league – that is not the typical subject matter—but a very important one for PNG, about the PM's XIII, about the NRL bid (for the inclusion of a team from PNG in the Australian competition), and about the game's incorporating more women.'

In response, Senator Wong began with some background of Australia's relationship with PNG. 'We share so much,' she said 'and on the way here I read



Senator Penny Wong

Gough Whitlam's speech upon your independence. It is really moving and he spoke about the relationship between our countries. He said—and these words are as true today as they were when a Labor Prime Minister spoke them nearly 50 years ago—*Australia wants the closest possible relationship with her nearest neighbour, the nation of Papua New Guinea, a relationship of equals based on mutual respect, understanding and trust.*

'I come here today with that same message, that you are profoundly important to us. We share history. We share values. We share affinity. And we share a region, and our futures are tied together. You see that by looking at today, but also by looking at the past, whether it is thousands of years ago, we were connected by land, we have had trade between our countries and First Nations Australians for thousands of years too. And we, today, remain not only a solid partner, but a partner that seeks to work with you, as your nation charts your way towards greater prosperity and greater security, and the fulfilment of the independence that a Labor Government was part of.

'So, I am happy to be here again, to listen, to listen to the new government and to the people about your priorities. PNG is a regional leader, and we together want something similar. We want a stable, resilient and prosperous Pacific. We want a region in which sovereignty is respected, and I know you want a team in the NRL as well! Thank you very much for having me here today.'

Senator Wong and Foreign

Minister Tkatchenko then answered questions about China, the trade imbalance between PNG and Australia, labour mobility, the management of personal information by Telstra and illegal fishing in PNG waters. Readers may access the answers on the website:

<https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/transcript/joint-press-conference-port-moresby>

## Manus Detainee is Archibald Finalist

Kurdish refugee Mostafa 'Moz' Azimitabar is an artist, musician, writer and human rights activist. He was born in Iran in 1986. After fleeing persecution, he arrived in Australia in 2013, seeking asylum. He was held in detention, first on Manus Island, then in a Melbourne hotel. Freed in 2021, he now lives in Sydney.

'On Manus Island, I was surrounded by chaos and trauma. Art helped me find tranquillity. It also allowed me to build friendships with people in the outside world, including artist Angus McDonald, in whose studio I created this painting,' says Azimitabar.

'I made this self-portrait to share my story. My face looks outwards, showing the suffering I have experienced, but also my strength and determination. I



Azimitabar with his self-portrait



PM Marape and his Cabinet outside Government House on 23 August 2022

painted it with a toothbrush using coffee and acrylic because I wasn't allowed to have art supplies in detention, so I used a toothbrush and coffee to make paintings on paper or whatever else I found. I chose the title KNS088 because for eight years I was called by this number instead of a name.

'The message of my painting is love. Love is how we kill the monsters. We are all one family, connected by our humanity.'

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/2022/30409/>

## Prime Minister Marape Appoints Four Ministers of Agriculture

In a report in *PNG Business News* of 30 August 2022, Prime Minister Hon. James Marape announced the allocation of four ministries to the agriculture sector. The Marape Government's focus on 'Taking Back PNG' was, he said, 'deeply embedded in the agriculture sector, which is the backbone of Papua New Guinea (PNG), to drive the country and economy.'

The Prime Minister said it was no secret that agriculture had declined since Independence in 1975, and allocation of the four ministries was to rekindle the sector and to make it a major income-generator for PNG.

The new ministers and their responsibilities are:

- Goroka MP Hon. Aire Tambua, the Minister responsible for administration of the department and for tree crops and horticulture;

- MP Hon. Francis Maneke, Minister for Oil Palm, PNG's biggest and most-valuable crop, which brings in over K1 billion a year. Minister Maneke is from Nakanai, West New Britain, one of the biggest oil palm districts in PNG and has been a strong advocate for the industry;

- South Fly MP, Hon. Seki Agisa, Minister for Livestock, an industry which thrived pre-Independence, but has since been reduced to a skeleton of its former self. Western Province, Minister Agisa's home province, has huge tracts of unused land which can be used for development of livestock;

- Anglimp-South Wahgi MP, Hon. Joe Kuli, Minister for Coffee, another crop which has seen better days. The Wahgi Valley, Minister Kuli's home, once housed some of the biggest coffee plantations in PNG. One of his major tasks will be to revive the legendary Wahgi Mek plantations of the valley.

PM Marape said PNG's



livestock industry must be revived urgently for import replacement as well as to be an exporter. 'Once upon a time, the Highlands Highway from Mt Hagen to Lae, was filled with cattle on the roadsides,' he recalled. 'Papua New Guinea had a thriving cattle industry, started in the colonial days, by experienced Australian cattlemen.'

*"PM Marape targets growth in agriculture with four ministries given to sector" — News — PNG Business News*

## Lowy Institute Networking Event

On 9 September 2022 the Aus-PNG Network of the Lowy Institute hosted an event at which 19 Australia Award Scholars from PNG met and talked with people with an interest in our nearest neighbour. These post graduate students, studying at Australian universities, have been recognised as current or future leaders in diverse sectors including agriculture, business, development practice, education, engineering, environmental management, governance, health and sports management.

All the scholars I met, at this

well organised and enjoyable event, were enthusiastic about their work in Australia and pleased to have had the advantage of an Australia Award Scholarship. I enjoyed my conversations with them and discussion of their future work when they return to PNG. All were interested to know of the PNGAA and of our objectives. Some professed an interest in joining the Association.

**JOHN EGERTON**

## New Consul General for PNG

The New Consul General for Papua New Guinea in Australia, Mr Ponobe Yuwa, took up his position on 1 August 2022. The contact details for his office in Sydney are:

Telephone; 02) 9283 9020

Email: [pngcg@kundusyd.org](mailto:pngcg@kundusyd.org)

Website: [www.pngcanberra.org/consulates/index.htm](http://www.pngcanberra.org/consulates/index.htm)

## Major Earthquake Strikes PNG

On Sunday 11 September an earthquake of magnitude 7.6 on the Richter scale struck the Markham Valley, in Morobe, on the north coast of Papua New Guinea, and was followed

by a second 5.0 magnitude earthquake.

By Tuesday 13 September the death toll had risen to seven, and authorities feared many more could be missing, dead, or buried under landslides.

Police Commissioner David Manning said that the tremors caused damage to buildings and roads and a number of landslides were triggered. He also warned about the "significant risk of aftershocks", warning people to avoid areas where there is the potential for landslides and coastal areas that could be at risk of tsunamis.

The most significant damage reported has been in the districts of Morobe, Eastern Highlands, Madang and parts of Gulf Province.

The new MP for Rai Coast, Kessy Sawang, said that while there were two confirmed deaths in the area, there were fears the death toll could be much higher.

"The damage is extensive, houses destroyed, some buried under the landslide. A lot of people are injured and we fear some people may also be buried under the landslide," she said. "I'm very worried about the villages in the remotest part of the district, places where there is no telecommunication network."

Telecommunications and electricity have been knocked out in some parts of the country, meaning that the extent of the damage and the true death toll is not yet known.

The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/13/papua-new-guinea-earthquake-dead-as-authorities-fear-more-could-be-buried>



John Egerton (right) and Maima Sine (left) who is studying animal nutrition at the University of Melbourne

## THE PACIFIC WAR

# Buna-Gona 1942



*I'm putting you in command at Buna. Relieve Harding ... I want you to remove all officers who won't fight. Relieve regimental and battalion commanders; if necessary, put sergeants in charge of battalions and corporals in charge of companies—anyone who will fight. Time is of the essence ... Bob, I want you to take Buna, or not come back alive ... And that goes for your chief of staff, too.*

General Douglas MacArthur  
to Major General RL Eichelberger, 29 November 1942

**The Battle of Buna-Gona followed the conclusion of the Kokoda Trail Campaign, and was fought by Australian and United States forces against the Japanese beachheads at Buna, Sanananda and Gona.**

Both forces were riddled by disease and lacking the most basic supplies, including medicine and food. The Japanese were under pressure to hold Guadalcanal, which had forced them to withdraw their forces when they were within sight of Port Moresby. Since arriving in June on the north coast, the Japanese had built hundreds of well-camouflaged, reinforced bunkers in mutually supporting positions blocking all available approaches.

Combined with the forces who had returned from the Kokoda Trail, the Japanese initially had nearly 5,500 troops on the northern coast. This rose to about 6,500 later in the battle.

Because of poor intelligence, Supreme Commander MacArthur and his staff vastly underestimated the number of defenders and the superior quality of the Japanese defensive system—referred to as 'hasty field entrenchments'.

When the Allies attacked on three fronts beginning on 16 November, they were immediately stymied by the excellent Japanese defensive position. The Allies suffered heavy



**SPECIAL  
FEATURE**





1. Japanese ammunition captured when the Australians attacked the eastern portion of Gona village (*G Silk*); 2. Soldiers at Buna preparing a hot meal of 'jungle stew'; 3. George Silk's famous photo for *Life Magazine* of a Papuan orderly leading wounded Australian soldier, Pte Whittington, to the base hospital in Buna; *Previous Page*: Detail from Geoffrey Mainwaring's painting, 'Action at Buna, 1942' © AWM

casualties and gained virtually no ground. They had only a few artillery pieces and their mortar ammunition was so limited it was rationed. Although requested, the Allies lacked tank and naval support. They received only partially effective air support.

MacArthur repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction with the US 32nd Infantry Division's inability to defeat the Japanese. On 29 November, after thirteen days of poor results and high casualties, he ordered Lieutenant General Eichelberger—commander of the US I Corps in the South West Pacific Area—to relieve Major General Edwin F Harding along with most of his regimental and battalion commanders.

Harding was replaced in turn by, first, his former artillery commander Albert W Waldron, then Eichelberger's Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Clovis E Byers, and finally by Eichelberger himself. Only then did Eichelberger fully appreciate the difficulty faced by the Allies in overcoming the Japanese forces. He learned that the majority of his troops were sick with a variety of illnesses including malaria, dengue fever, bush typhus, and tropical dysentery.

Supplies, including food, were a major problem for both the Allied and Japanese forces. The Japanese were at first resupplied by destroyers who slipped through from Rabaul, and later by submarines that arrived by night, until the Allies' increasingly effective air and naval forces cut off further supply. After the battle ended, the Allies found evidence of cannibalism among the Japanese.

The Allies were at first supplied only by air drop and by sea until they could build rough airstrips at Wanigela and then Pongani. Even then, they remained short on ammunition, medicine, and food. Some US troops were reduced to a small portion of a C ration each day.

The Allied forces only made significant progress when they were finally given the tanks and artillery they had long sought. On 2 January 1943, they captured Buna, and on 22 January, after prolonged intense fighting in extraordinarily difficult conditions, the Allied forces killed or captured almost the entire defending Japanese forces. Only a few hundred escaped to the north. Casualties on both sides were extremely high.

General Eichelberger later compared the casualty rate to that of the American Civil War. As a percentage of casualties, killed or wounded in action at Buna exceeded the better-known Battle of Guadalcanal by a margin of three to one.

## Recognition & Memorials

For eligible Australian units, the US Government bestowed the battle honour for Buna–Gona. Subsidiary honours were also bestowed for Gona, Sanananda Road, Amboga River, Cape Endaiadere–Sinemi Creek and Sanananda–Cape Killerton.

A brass memorial plaque was placed between Soputa and Sanananda, and the Japanese also erected a monument commemorating their soldiers' struggle there. The Australians placed a plaque in memory of their fallen comrades:

*To the memory of the 161 members of the 53rd & 55th Australian Infantry Battalions (AIF) who gave their lives in Papua New Guinea 1942–1945.*

The memorial at Popondetta, capital of Oro (Northern) Province, commemorates the service and sacrifice by Australians, Papua New Guineans and their Allies in the Battle for Buna, Gona and Sanananda in 1942–43. The upgrade, completed in October 2002, involved a significant refurbishment of the existing memorial and the construction of a new pavilion at the entrance to the park.

The original structure built in 1962 featured seven battle notices, which were relocated to the site from Buna, Buna Old Strip, Cape Endaiadere, Giropa Point, Gona, Sanananda Point and Wye Point, so that they could be preserved at a central place of commemoration.

Plaques were erected at Kingscliff NSW, and Townsville QLD, detailing Australia's involvement and commemorating the contribution of South Sea Islanders to the defence of Australia.

## 'A Magnificent Tragedy'

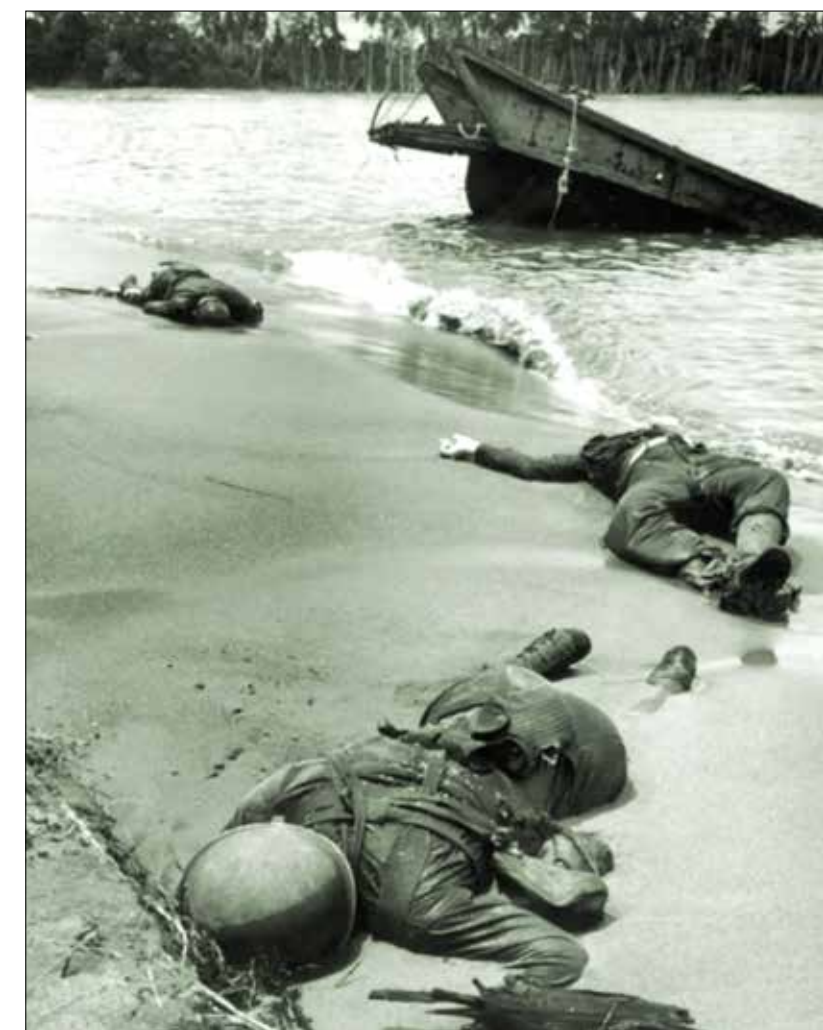
The Battle of Buna during the defence of Australia in New Guinea saw both sides battle stubborn resistance, harsh jungle, and treacherous mountains. The casualties on both sides were staggering, with the Allies suffering 6,419 killed, wounded, or missing at Buna. Comparatively, on Guadalcanal the Americans suffered 5,845 total casualties. The Japanese at Buna/Gona lost 8,546,

nearly all of them killed. Senior commanders in the Japanese Army later referred to the New Guinea campaign as 'a magnificent tragedy'.

Both the Americans and the Australians were exhausted from their victory. There would be no new offensive operations on New Guinea for six months. When fighting began again, pockets of Japanese along the north shore would be bypassed altogether and left to starve in the jungle. The Allied strategy of 'Island Hopping' grew in part out of fear of another Buna.

Subsequent battles of World War II would take higher death tolls on both sides, but never again would Allied armies go into battle as unprepared as they were at Buna.

For months after American photojournalist, George Strock, made his now-iconic picture, 'Dead Americans at Buna Beach' (*below*), *Life Magazine's* editors pushed the American government's military censors to allow the magazine to publish that one photograph. The concern, among some at *Life Magazine* and certainly many in the government, was that Americans were growing complacent







1. Sir Thomas Blamey and Lieutenant General Robert L Eichelberger;

2. Australian infantrymen resting before attacking Japanese positions near Matapau in January 1945;

3. A wounded Australian soldier being helped to a jeep-ambulance on a forward track in the Aitape Sector

Acknowledgement is given to the editors and contributors, to the Australian War Memorial, and the online sources referenced in this publication.

about a war that was far from over and in which an Allied victory was far from certain. A 25-year-old magazine correspondent in Washington named Cal Whipple refused to take no for an answer from the censors and he *'went from Army captain to major to colonel to general, until I wound up in the office of an assistant secretary of the Air Corps, who decided that it had to go to the White House.'*

In the 20 September 1943 issue of *Life Magazine*, in which the famous photo first appeared (and in which it was given a full page to itself), the editors made the case to the magazine readers for publishing the picture—even if it took the better part of a year to bring the censors and President Franklin Roosevelt himself around to their way of thinking—and, in part, the editorial read:

*Here lie three Americans. What shall we say of them? Shall we say that this is a noble sight? Shall we say that this is a fine thing, that they should give their lives for their country? Or shall we say that this is too horrible to look at?*

*Why print this picture, anyway, of three American boys dead upon an alien shore? Is it to hurt people? To be morbid? Those are not the reasons. The reason is that words are never enough. The eye sees. The mind knows. The heart feels. But the words do not exist to make us see, or know, or feel what it is like, what actually happens. The words are never right ...*

*The reason we print it now is that, last week, President Roosevelt and [Director of the Office of War Information] Elmer Davis and the War Department decided that the American people ought to be able to see their own boys as they fall in battle; to come directly and without words into the presence of their own dead. And so here it is. This is the reality that lies behind the names that come to rest at last on monuments in the leafy squares of busy American towns.*

© *Life Magazine* & Glenn Barnett

## Future Operations

After the Battle of Milne Bay and the recapture of Gona and Buna in late 1942, the campaign continued, and from 1943 to 1945 Australian and American forces launched major offensives against the Japanese occupying New Guinea.

Among the battles fought were those at Wau, Salamaua and Lae, raids were conducted at Japanese-held Rabaul and the fighting culminated with the Aitape-Wewak Campaign, in northern New Guinea.

Although ultimately successful with the Japanese forces cleared from the coastal areas and driven inland, amidst difficult jungle conditions, casualties from combat and disease were high.

## The End of the War

The final Japanese surrender in New Guinea came one month after VP Day (on 15 August 1945). It marked the end of the war against Japan in the Pacific and the end of World War II. However, as celebrations reverberated around the world, isolated groups of Japanese continued fighting in PNG.

In the Aitape-Wewak region, General Adachi of the Japanese XVIII Army had vowed to fight to the end. It was not until 13 September, almost a month after VP Day that he surrendered to Major General HCH Robertson, of the Australian 6th Division, at a ceremony at Cape Wom, near Wewak.

By then General Adachi's once proud army of 100,000 men had been reduced to about 13,000. His men died on the battlefield, from disease and from starvation. Earlier the Japanese had defended Wewak with utmost heroism.

At the end, fighting from caves in the cliffs, many Japanese refused to surrender and were sealed beneath by explosive charges set off at the entrances.

Several hundred 6th Division troops were present at the surrender ceremony, when General Adachi was ordered to hand over his sword. He appeared very taken aback before taking two paces to the rear, stopping for a few moments, then handing his sword to General Robertson. General Adachi was escorted to the surrender table by two Australian Army military policemen.

After the war, General Adachi was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment, but he committed suicide in 1947.

Japanese War Crimes Trials took place in Rabaul over three periods from December 1945 to August 1947. Of the 188 trials, 390 Japanese accused war criminals were tried, and 266 were convicted. Of those, eighty-four were hanged and three were shot. The location of the graves of the criminals was never revealed even after overtures from the Japanese Government in the 1970s.

The Aitape-Wewak campaign, along with the campaigns on Bougainville and New Britain, came in for considerable criticism from both Australian and Japanese officers, who found it difficult to understand



1. General Adachi surrendering his sword to Major General HCH Robertson, 13 September 1945;

2. Japanese War Trials gallows at Rabaul, 1946

why such aggressive actions should be fought as the war was ending.

HH Hammer, referred to the 'military futility' of the campaigns. Japanese staff officers on Bougainville believed the campaigns were 'absolutely pointless', and that world prestige gained by Australia would not compensate for the loss of life and equipment. On the other hand, it was argued that the campaigns were justified as there was an obligation to liberate the people of PNG as quickly as possible from Japanese rule. In many areas, Japanese occupation was creating terrible privation.

It is likely that these campaigns were fought because General Blamey wanted to continue in command of a large army in the field, and because John Curtin, the then Prime Minister, and certain members of his Cabinet believed that a continued active fighting role would strengthen their position in the coming treaty negotiations. ♦

Edited extract from *Una Voce*, September 2015

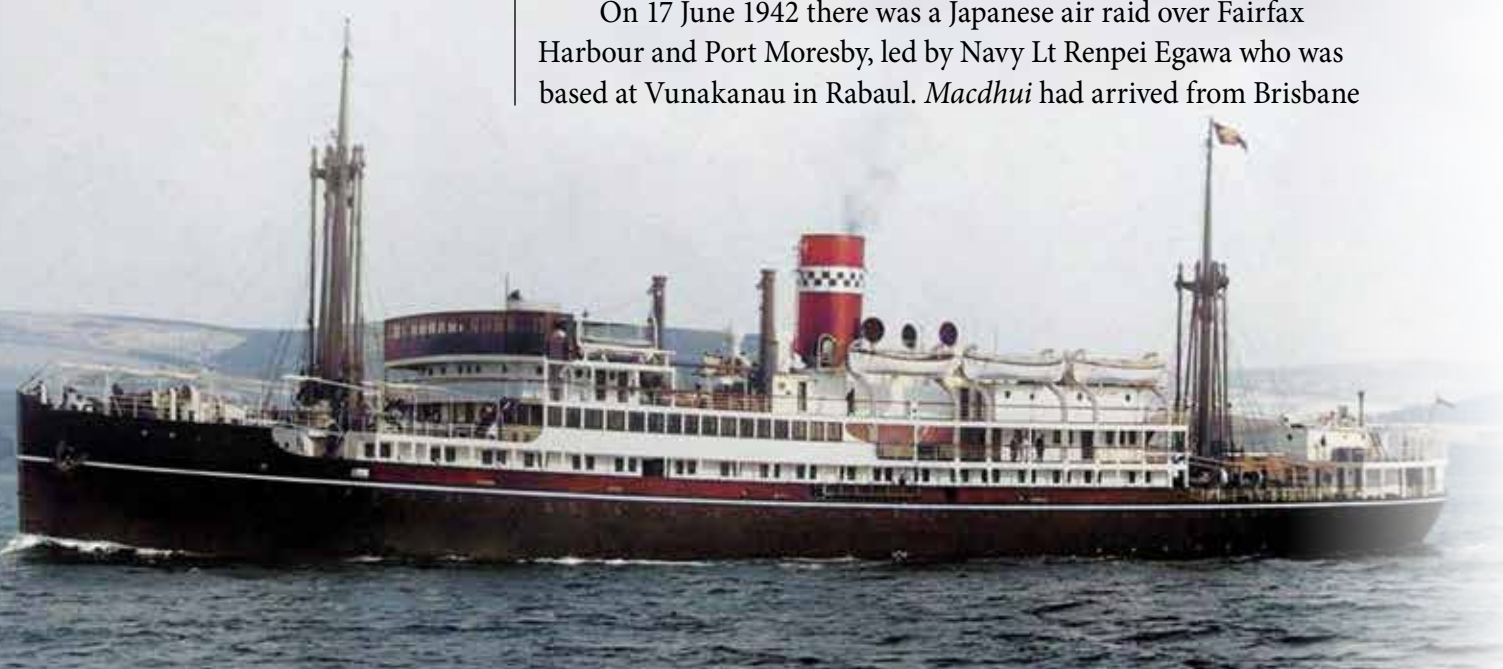


# PNG Ports: Built on the Scars of War

With thanks to the PNG  
Ports Corporation who  
posted the following  
80th Anniversary Tribute  
to the MV *Macdhui* on  
Remembrance Day,  
23 July, this year  
in PNG.



Painting by Richard Ashton, showing Japanese bombs exploding around the MV *Macdhui*, in the first bombing attack on the vessel at Port Moresby



Towards the west of Fairfax Harbour, near the Port Moresby Technical College at Kanudi, lies the wreck of a vessel with a colourful history. Lying almost completely under water, MV *Macdhui* has been there for 80 years and is a common landmark of Port Moresby, but its history is unknown to many oblivious travellers. *Macdhui* is the ship that brought explorers, missionaries, kiaps, and colonisers to Papua New Guinea before WWII, assisted to evacuate them during the war, and brought in medical supplies and Australian troops to fight the war in PNG.

*Macdhui*— named after the Scottish mountain Ben Macdhui—a passenger and cargo ship of 4,480 tons, was built by Barclay Curle & Company in Scotland for Burns, Philp & Co., and launched on 23 December 1930 at the Clyde River shipyards in Scotland. She was 113.6 m long, 17 m wide and powered by a four-stroke diesel engine of 4,710 hp rated at 15 knots.

The ship could carry 167 first-class passengers and had a music room, smoking room, a large deck area that could cater for a game of cricket, and a dining room that could hold all the passengers in one sitting.

Her maiden voyage took place in March 1931, when she sailed for Suva, Fiji, via the Azores, Jamaica, and the Panama Canal, carrying coal.

Later, *Macdhui* became a name synonymous with PNG, travelling to most ports there, and made round trips from Sydney, Bougainville and PNG. These round trips were popular and sometimes the ship was fully booked before departure.

In the 1930s, while exploration and colonisation progressed in PNG, *Macdhui* was the only regular link between PNG and Australia.

Kiaps like Jim Taylor and many missionaries and explorers sailed to PNG on *Macdhui*. These included the famous Leahy brothers, the gold prospectors and explorers whose legacy, families and businesses still thrive in PNG today.

However, her most critical role came during WWII, when *Macdhui* was used to evacuate civilians from PNG, then carry Australian troops and medical supplies back to Port Moresby.

On 17 June 1942 there was a Japanese air raid over Fairfax Harbour and Port Moresby, led by Navy Lt Renpei Egawa who was based at Vunakanau in Rabaul. *Macdhui* had arrived from Brisbane



on the evening of 12 June 1942, and was docked at Fairfax Harbour after unloading aviation fuel stored in 44-gallon drums. Like all other vessels there, *Macdhui* avoided bombs from the surprise attack by moving around Fairfax Harbour. The next day, the bombers returned, and while *Macdhui*'s commander, Capt. J Campbell, was again missing bombs by more skilful manoeuvres, she was hit directly amidships, and lost rudder control.

Of the 68 bombs dropped that day, four hit *Macdhui*, whereupon she reportedly hit the reef central in the harbour, and rolled on her side, about 750 m offshore. Her captain was killed in the attack, along with ten of the 77 crew, and five Australian gunners. The rest escaped on lifeboats and went ashore with the help of three RAAF medical officers and locals who had been watching the attack from the shore.

That was on 18 June 1942, and *Macdhui* has been there ever since.

*Macdhui*'s main mast was salvaged in the 1960s and serves as a flag mast at the Royal Papua Yacht Club as well as a memorial to those who died. The Yacht Club also named its restaurant after the MV *Macdhui*. One of the ship's bells was removed in the late 60s and is being used at the St John's Anglican Church in Port Moresby, overlooking Ela Beach.

Like *Macdhui*, there are countless war wrecks and relics that lie on the sea floors of the harbours which surround the declared ports and harbours from which PNG Ports Corporation Ltd (PNG Ports)



1. The remains of MV *Macdhui* in Port Moresby Harbour;  
2. A group of survivors from the *Macdhui*, sunk in Port Moresby

operates its 15 ports. In fact, PNG Ports was built upon the scars of both wars.

The foundations of the ports were laid by weary soldiers, and its harbours are the graveyards of countless heroes declared 'missing in action'.

On Remembrance Day (23 July), PNG Ports remembers these selfless soldiers, fallen in the cause of the free, on another man's land, each with their own stories, untold.

We also remember our very own, the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels', without whom the war with Japan could never have been won.

In the words of Czeslaw Milosz, one of the greatest poets of the 20th Century: 'The living owe it to those who no longer can speak to tell their story for them.'

*We don't know them all, but we owe them all.*

*Forever shall we remember them. ♦*





## First Flight to Tadji— Remembering the Liberation of Aitape

**ROB PARER CMG, MBE**

**18 April 1944 was the day that General MacArthur's liberation force took Aitape and Hollandia, the largest amphibious operation of the South Pacific War.**

**Within 42 hours of the landing, No. 62 Works Wing of the Royal Australian Air Force had Tadji Airfield ready for the Australian Kittyhawks of 78 Fighter Wing to land.**

**The airstrip was a soggy mess—Flight Sergeant Arch Simpson RAAF tells the story.**

'We set off from Cape Gloucester in West New Britain on the long hop to Tadji Airstrip knowing that there was, as yet, nowhere for us to land—no properly prepared strip, only an area that had previously been a small enemy airstrip.

On the plus side there had been a previous softening up of the place by naval bombardment and air strikes, and we were reassured by the fact that our assault troops, ground support and strip building units had gone ashore and were rebuilding the strip.

Even as we took to the air, additional landing barges were at the beachhead unloading all the necessary supplies, including Marsden matting, to set up a brand new, functional operational base.

So away we went with blind faith.

RAAF ground forces began work on the airstrip at Tadji only a few hours after its capture. When we got to the point of no return on our westward flight—not enough remaining fuel for us to safely get back to friendly territory—we contacted the landing party, and they informed us 'Come on in, we will have the strip ready by the time you get here.'

On we went, to arrive over our destination where this rather rough looking area of what looked like a road under construction awaited our arrival.

Billie and I were ordered to maintain a patrol while the others landed, for there was still only a narrow perimeter around the strip in our hands.

But then, goodness, one of those landing

suddenly flipped over onto his back without going far along the strip in his landing run.

What had happened was the strip was right on the coast and only a couple of feet above sea level, and bomb and naval shell craters from the previous softening up were deep enough to penetrate the water table and allow them to fill with water.

The strip builders of the RAAF's Airfield Construction Unit could only fix these with loose tramped earth and sand and hope for the best.

Unfortunately, wheels coming across one of these wet, loose-filled craters sank and bogged and over went the aeroplane.

Of course, with those of us still in the air running short on fuel, and the strip being only wide enough for one at a time, wreckages had to be unceremoniously bulldozed out of the way.

As Billie and I circled, covering the others as they landed, watching, and noting that those who did land right way up had to get some sort of help off the strip. We made plans as to how we would attempt to stay right way up, especially as an audience had gathered to watch the excitement.

By this time the strip looked like a muddy construction site, with deep wheel marks from those who had landed and from the tractors and bulldozers that had gone to their rescue.

I reckoned one of our standard turning approaches, tail high, 'see a little of where you were going' wheeler landings might be a bit risky so harked back to early training days and what were called precautionary landings.

The idea was to get the speed right back with everything hanging out—lots of drag with full flap, gills, wheels, open canopy, low and slow in a nose high attitude, with a fair bit of power.

In that attitude and with power the prop is taking a bit of the aircraft's weight, and giving extra airflow over the wing centre section and control surfaces, and the aircraft is more or less in tail down landing angle anyhow, while on approach.

I felt uncomfortable because I could not see a thing straight ahead with that bloody great nose up high in the air, but I could see some trees on either side, so kept going. I felt the wheels, all three of them make contact, and straightway poured lots of power into the poor old girl, with the stick hard back in my belly, to give elevator help in keeping the tail down.



1. Flt Sergeant Arch Simpson;  
2. Flt Sergeant Jim Harvey with his Kittyhawk;  
3. A Gallion grader moves to repair the airstrip;  
*Opposite Page: Arch Simpson's Kittyhawk on a raid, painting by Geoffrey Pentland*



My faithful bird sloshed along for a short distance, but the part-buried wheels soon prevented us going any further. The tractors came to get us out of the way, while Billie had his successful turn at landing.

My good mate, Jim Harvey, was one of the unlucky ones to turn wrong side up, and a little of his blood was spilt when he bumped his head. Your head is pretty close to the ground in an upside down Kittyhawk.

But for his troubles he was entitled to an American award—a Purple Heart. This medal was awarded to any serviceman who spilt blood on the field of battle.’

IN RECENT YEARS Tadj has become an important site for the recovery of aircraft wrecks some of which have been rebuilt up to flying standards.

The frame of the Gallion grader in the picture was still near Pro village when I last saw it in 1989. The International Diesel engine from it was used by Catholic lay missionary Peter Hughes to run the main bench of the St Anna sawmill in 1951.

Over the years Peter had cut enough timber to build the Seleo Island boarding school complex, Malol mission station, various churches and the first permanent buildings at the Raihu Catholic Mission’s leprosarium which housed 400 patients.

The engine caused him much trouble as he had to start it with a tiny petrol engine attached to the side and then switch over to diesel.

He had a nickname for it. ‘Satan.’

Peter was killed tragically some years later when a piece of timber came off the bench striking him in the neck.

He survived for six hours with Dr Judy Fitt of Raihu Hospital looking after him but, just as we were putting him in to a Gibbs Sepik Norseman aircraft to go to Wewak, he passed away. The small community was in deep sorrow for a very long time.

His wife Dorothy and four lovely young children accompanied his body to Wewak Hospital and continued on to Geelong, Victoria, never returning to Aitape.

Peter Hughes was an amazing builder, a gifted mechanic and dedicated missionary.

**Editor’s Note:** This story was first published on 25 April 2017: Keith Jackson & Friends (PNG ATTITUDE—typepad.com)

## By Air & Sea: Dramatic Rescues in the South Pacific

*The Age, Melbourne, 14 February 1944*

Preparing to bail out as his damaged Kittyhawk fighter laboured across the South Pacific, Squadron Leader Ian Loudon of Port Moresby and of an RAAF fighter unit in the New Guinea area, was intercepted and trailed by an Australian Beaufighter until he abandoned the aircraft and was safely aboard an American torpedo patrol boat, which raced to the rescue.

The Beaufighter, which circled the Kittyhawk until the patrol torpedo boat picked the pilot up, was actually looking for another Kittyhawk pilot who had bailed out 24 hours before on his way back from covering a Beaufort daylight strike. Half an hour later the other Kittyhawk pilot was located 50 miles away. The Beaufighter then intercepted a Catalina



Squadron Leader Ian Loudon (left), CO of No. 76 Squadron RAAF with pilots (l to r) Flight Lieutenant Bowes, Flying Officer Bill Cashmore, Flying Officer James Hannigan and Flight Lieutenant Byrne (foreground)—© AWM

flying boat manned by Americans and guided it to the dinghy.

The second pilot to be rescued within an hour was Warrant Officer (WO) JEC Arthur, of Burnie, who had been adrift in a rubber dinghy for 28 hours.

The aircraft piloted by Squadron Leader Loudon, who was a sergeant 15 months ago, was hit in three places by fight anti-aircraft fire while strafing Cape Hoskins. One bullet damaged the lubricating system and oil thrown out burnt on the exhaust stacks. With a tremendous expanse of sea between him and home, Loudon set course as a film of oil started to cover the windscreen. The oil was leaking so freely that he prepared to abandon the Kittyhawk as he crossed the south coast of New Britain. At this stage his Kittyhawk section sighted two torpedo boats and directed him to change course.

Just then the motor, which had begun to vibrate intensely, lost power, and shuddered violently. Loudon jettisoned the hood, which struck him above the right ear as the slipstream tore it off. He rolled the aircraft over and fell out.

The parachute opened immediately. He released the harness at 20 feet and dazed himself by landing hard on his face and stomach. He swallowed several mouthfuls of water before he could get into his dinghy. Nine minutes later he was aboard a torpedo boat.

### The Second Rescue

Flight Sergeant Boehm’s Beaufighter, which had intercepted the Kittyhawk’s calls, and another, piloted by Flying Officer R Albrecht, of Bundaberg, circled the dinghy and torpedo boat until Squadron Leader Loudon had been picked up. On the Beaufighter were Warrant Officer Don West, of Merewether, NSW and Sergeant Jack Leary, of Mildura, as look-outs. It was the diversion to the Kittyhawk to which the Beaufighter’s crew partly attributes the location half an hour later of Warrant Officer Arthur after he had been afloat for 28 hours. This event took them sufficiently off their original course to see him 300 to 400 yards from their aircraft, another 50 miles due north.

They could easily have missed him, as several aircraft had already done, had they continued the exact course they had been following. While adrift WO Arthur saw searching aircraft turn within 200



Squadron Leader Ian Loudon, with helmet in hand (right), checks with Flight Lieutenant Jim Harrison, in the cockpit

yards without sighting him. He watched a Catalina for two hours on the first afternoon and, in the twilight, saw it pass practically right over him on its way home.

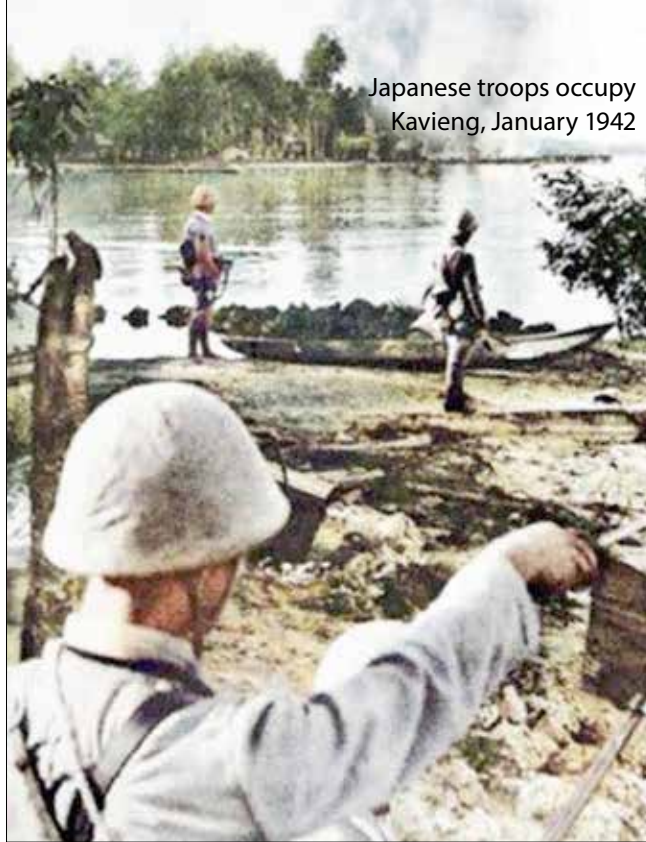
He kept on paddling after dark, getting his direction from the Southern Cross. FO Albrecht’s Beaufighter, which was navigated by F/Sgt J Carroll, of Ballarat, dropped a dinghy as an extra marker and a water bottle within 20 yards of the dinghy. Altogether, a large number of aircraft, including Bostons, Beauforts, Beaufighters, Kittyhawks and Catalina flying boats and two torpedo boats, as well as an RAAF rescue boat, took part in the search. A total area of 5,300 square miles of the South Pacific was scoured. ♦

**Editor’s Note:** Ian Loudon was a Spitfire pilot in England in 1940, a Wing Commander at age 23, and after his New Guinea service joined the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy.



He was awarded the DFC and was Mentioned in Dispatches. He survived the war and returned to Eilogo Plantation at Sogeri where, post-war, he established a herd of Angus cattle. He died in a car accident at the bridge over the Laloki River on 2 November 1957. *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (1 November 1957)





Japanese troops occupy  
Kavieng, January 1942

## A Thousand Miles to Freedom

**Eighty years ago,  
in what was one of the longest and  
most arduous rescue trips in the Pacific  
war zone, five civilians, survivors of a  
party of twenty-nine, got clear of the  
Japanese at Kavieng, in New Ireland,  
travelled nearly 1,000 miles of hostile  
land and sea and, en route, helped to  
rescue 37 American airmen, most of  
whom had been forced down during the  
Battle of the Coral Sea.**

The story is told by Mr WR Thomas, of Sydney, who was radio telegraphist in charge of the AWA radio station at Kavieng at the time of the first Japanese air attack there on 21 January 1942. The station was badly damaged, but Mr Thomas was uninjured, and got clear with a teleradio set. By schooners and punts, he and some of the other survivors escaped and hid in a swamp. Here he made wireless contact with Port Moresby. A week later, the hideout was virtually surrounded, and in his last messages to Port Moresby

from the swamp Mr Thomas said the chances of escape seemed hopeless, and he was ordered to destroy the radio.

It was then that a friendly native penetrated the Japanese cordon and brought news that a lorry, hidden off the road near Kavieng, had not yet been discovered by the enemy. By stealth and at night those of the party who elected to take the risk, sneaked out of the swamp, made their way to the lorry, and got away to the other side of the island.

However, there were many tremendous hazards ahead. The objective of the party was to reach Tulagi in the British Solomons. A boat was necessary, which they found and installed the engine from a lorry and, with a propeller and shaft retrieved from another part of the island, motorised the craft. Seven perilous weeks after the getaway from Kavieng, the party again put to sea.

But, when they were within easy reach of Rabaul, the engine broke down, and the party travelled 40 miles back towards Kavieng. Notwithstanding the presence of the Japs, the little group reconnoitred until a small punt was discovered 100 miles down the coast. It was a dangerous coastline, and the punt was wrecked on a reef, but they found a small Chinese-owned schooner, which took the party back to New Ireland, where they discovered the Japs had taken Tulagi and Bougainville. The party was advised to make due south for Papua in the schooner. But after weeks of dietary deprivations, the food situation had gravely deteriorated.

It was seven days before the schooner made a landfall at Buna where, for the first time, the escapees were out of enemy territory, and there was a week's blessed rest. Then they were ordered on to Oro Bay, there to join a larger boat, and proceed to Milne Bay, Samarai and Port Moresby. On that trip they rescued 37 American airmen, who had been forced down during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

At the end of that fateful May in 1942, the five Kavieng men reached Port Moresby. In the four and a half months they had travelled approximately 300 miles on and around enemy-occupied New Ireland, and the sea voyage on to Papua involved nearly 700 additional miles in hostile waters. ♦

**Edited extract from the *Sydney Morning Herald*,  
10 November 1945**

## Early Teaching Postings

**KEN MCKINNON  
AO**

**Arriving in Port Moresby  
in 1954 after three  
months at the Australian  
School of Pacific  
Administration (ASOPA),  
I began my career in the  
Department of Education  
of the Territory of Papua  
and New Guinea (TPNG).  
After a period in the  
headquarters of the  
Department during which  
the Director WC Groves  
resigned and, among  
other duties,  
I taught English to Papua  
New Guineans and  
expatriates in the public  
service, I was assigned a  
temporary posting, filling  
in for someone absent for  
three-months' leave after  
21 months' service.  
The posting was to  
Samarai, in the Milne Bay  
District, as a temporary  
Area Education Officer.**

Samarai is an island one can walk around in about a half an hour. It had a long history as a copra and trading-centre, so it was quite an attractive post in which to spend time. Milne Bay had been a major war zone in World War II, and the district included the fabled Trobriand Islands of Malinowski fame, the Ferguson Islands, Misima, Dogura, the headquarters of the Anglican Mission, Kwato, where the Abel family had established a mission over two generations, and various other Catholic and Protestant outposts. It even had a nearby island with a small beach where some surfing was possible.

The three months were full of interest. It included my first acquaintance with Misima, a two-day boat trip from Samarai, and the furthest east of PNG's islands. An emergency trip came immediately after a serious cyclone that neatly took away half its vegetation, including all the trees, leaving a clear demarcation line between that half and the other more intact, more populated half. The trip was to check that John Lee, who ran the Misima School and the school had survived. He had, and incidentally, looked after me, and provided a lesson in how to survive alone in a remote place. Sadly, in later years, he died in an aircraft that crashed into a mountain in the Milne Bay area.

The boat trip out and back was story-book tropics: The crew caught large fish with a line over the back of the *Chinampa* and later cleaned and grilled them for dinner. Few things could be better than an evening with the boat tied up to a coconut plantation's small jetty, enticing smells from the copra oven, balmy tropical evening air, crew members quietly singing well-known islands songs accompanied by guitar music.

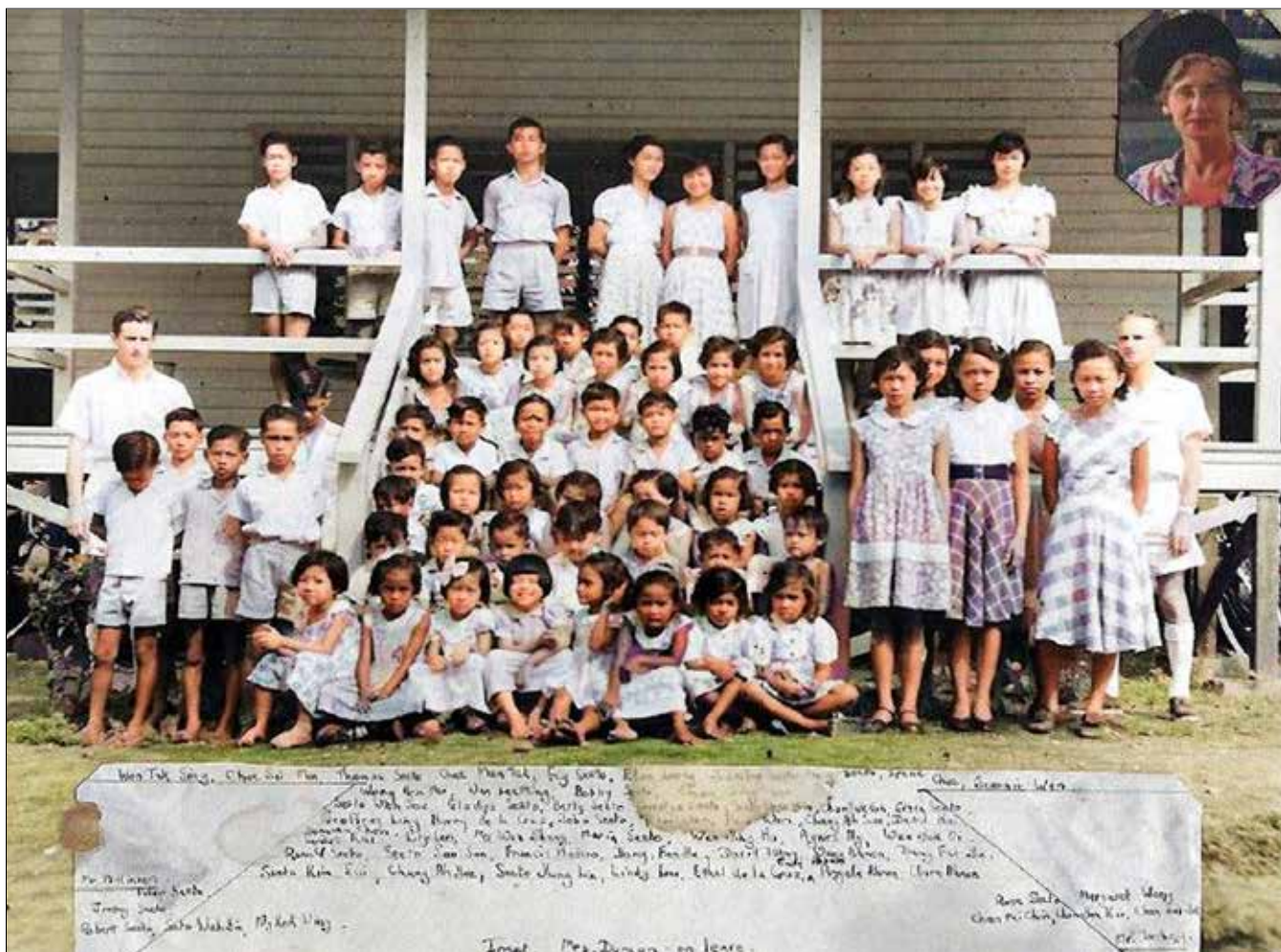
Later in that posting period I went around the Trobriand Islands, a place so much reported by anthropologist Malinowski that, with forewarning ahead from one of my former students of the Port Moresby classes, Lepani Wadeson, was notable for the warm welcome and generous islands hospitality. Pity I did not like yams much!

The Samarai time was most enjoyable. Nevertheless, the position was too senior for me to be a real posting. It was inevitable that I would be moved. I was.



District Education Office, Ela Beach, Port Moresby, 1963





Ken McKinnon and Jeff Tuohey with their students at Lae, PNG, 1955

The instruction was to go to Lae as Head of the Elementary B School (a euphemism for the Chinese School) in Lae. In later times the separation of schools into ethnic groups would have been called apartheid; in those days it had simply been the tradition in PNG, based as much on differences in culture and background, together with the wishes of the parents, as any ideological reason.

The appointment was not one that I sought. I had come to PNG to work with indigenous children, but I could not argue, and it was an interesting challenge. Before this posting came my way, I had been vocal in Education HQ about this separation of types of schools. Its retention was at least an outmoded racial concept. I thought the reality would be hard yakka, with the students needing intensive work to overcome the handicap of having their schooling in English as a second language. It turned out to be an unexpectedly great experience, playing an important part in my own growth.

Partly this was because of the kids, partly because of the kindness of the community and the

parents' circumstances. Most of the people in the community were immigrants or descendants who had first arrived from southern China as coolies, pre-war, imported to work on the copra plantations. Many had been interned or ill-treated by the Japanese during the war.

The post-war administration allowed them and their children to stay in TPNG but without any clarity about citizenship. They were in no-man's land. Like immigrant groups around the world, they were deeply involved in making the best of their circumstances, using their energy and commercial talents in building businesses. Indeed, by then, Chinatowns had become permanent sections of the main towns of TPNG.

Jeff Tuohey and I, the two Australians on the staff, had enough enthusiasm to become involved with the community and community projects. Perhaps the best accomplishment for that year, a small contribution to breaking down the racial prejudices of the time, came at the end of the year when we successfully engineered amalgamation of the Elementary A Schools for white

students and Elementary B Schools for non-white non-indigenous students.

Significant professional insights into how students learn and how much fun can be had in the process, even with young children, came from this experience. School started at eight in the morning, using the normal western curriculum until 2:00 pm, after which an aged Chinese teacher, hired by the parents, took over for another two hours teaching Chinese language and a Kuomintang (anti-Communist) version of Chinese history and culture.

I was always fascinated by that afternoon session. It was a cacophony, with students of all ages congregated in the one group, all reading comics or doing anything but attending to the teacher, while reciting loudly, but not in unison, the words he was saying or had written on the blackboard in Chinese characters. They answered his questions with little semblance of, or attempts by him to achieve, order. Amazingly, the kids learned and remembered what he was teaching.

An outstanding, but unorthodox Australian teacher, Mrs Ford, who had been my predecessor, had filled the students with unlikely stuff like Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and other similar books. These feisty kids were apt to produce remonstrating phrases from a wide range of English literature. For instance, when I asked a student to desist from noisy, over-eager chat, he asked good-naturedly what I would do if he did not. 'I will take steps,' I replied. 'How many, sir, thirty-nine?' a clear reference to John Buchan's famous novel. Similarly, when I rehearsed a new arithmetic process, someone said 'You taught us that the other day, sir.' I explained that it was necessary to recapitulate to ensure new material was really learned.

'White kids might need that; we are Chinese; we are trained from birth to remember,' was the good-natured, rather scornful response.

They were a joy. The social position of their parents was still definitely inferior, so they were extraordinarily pleased with our educational and community contributions. Jeff Tuohey and I tried hard to follow Mrs Ford's example, with a great deal of extra time spent on music, plays, public speaking, western history and customs, sporting events at school and involvement in the community.

One community example was a request to advise on wedding etiquette. Invitees to this Chinese

wedding included the District Commissioner and other senior white guests and customers. It was to be a big wedding. You could say that it went off with a bang. Plane-loads of pigs and chickens were flown in from Wau, speeches (ghosted by us) met the standards of any Australian social wedding. And the traditional fireworks display, worth hundreds of dollars, which had been draped over the extra-large old plane trees in front of the school, made an impressively noisy spectacle.

In the Chinese way, small children were omnipresent as parents did not seem to discipline them at all before the age of about eight. When I tried to organise the behaviour of the older children, by stressing the importance of serving their parents before eating themselves, and the need to keep quiet during the speeches, they responded that they knew how to behave. They did, serving respectfully, cleaning up without being asked, and listening intently. They knew what to do and did it without supervision.

Another example of the welcoming spirit came from the community youths with whom I played basketball. When they found that I could not afford a vehicle, they hacked a wartime jeep from the multitude left entangled in the jungle after the war and repaired it sufficiently for me to use, free. Similarly, near the end of the 1955 year, when they learned that Mavis (my first wife) and I planned to marry early next year with a quiet event in February, they thought it must be a consequence of poverty. As they believed in spectacular weddings, they were moved to take over the arrangements, contemplating inviting everyone at their expense.

Wiser heads prevailed, but nevertheless, on the morning of the wedding a sizeable delegation arrived in a utility loaded with presents. Most teachers have experienced the pleasure of former students introducing themselves with appreciative comment about their school days. To have such a sustained warm glow from the comments of both former students and parents years later was a huge reward.

We went on leave after the wedding not knowing where headquarters would post me after our return later in 1956. ♦

**Editor's Note:** Emeritus Professor KR McKinnon has generously provided PNGAA with a digital copy of his memoir, *Brushes with History*, from which this story has been abstracted.





# Mother's Love: *Meri nambis*

JEFFREY

**She married a Highlander,  
was humiliated by her husband  
and family but bore the pain and  
raised her kids alone as her husband  
remarried other wives.  
She sent her kids to school and,  
finally, she passed on.**

My mother was always called a *meri nambis* by my people ever since I was old enough to remember. Growing up, I started noticing how different she was from my aunties and Grandma. She had longer hair, was slimmer and was more fragile, I guess.

I started realising that, unlike all the other women who had married into our *haus lain* [family] she was the only one who seemed to have no relatives nearby. It was only when I was in Grade 5 that I understood that her family were far away, in a place called Port Moresby.

You see, she was still in school when Dad married her and stole her away to his village. She was beautiful, and I was always so proud of her because she had the longest hair and was the best cook in the village. There were times the village leaders or the church leaders would come asking her to cook during big gatherings at the village or at the church and, besides, she was the only woman in the village who could speak the white man's language so the French Catholic Priest would always greet us and talk with Mum. In those moments, I remember, I was proud that Mama could speak their language.

Mama and Papa had five kids, three girls and two boys, but I was Mama's favourite and her best friend. I was her first-born son. Years came and went. Dad's business grew and soon he stopped coming home. We would sit in the *kunai* house, around the fire, and wait for him, me and Mama. I would see the pain in her eyes, but she would just smile and tell me Dad was really busy. A month later, we heard, Dad had married a woman from the neighbouring village, who had a well-connected family in the area.

But Mama just stayed. She made *kaukau* gardens with the other women in the village and would sell them on the roadside to buy our oil and salt or, occasionally, our school stuff, despite Dad being a businessman, because it seemed like Papa had forgotten us.

A couple of months later, my Dad's sister came to the house and told us that Dad's new wife had given birth to a son. I saw the pain in Mama's eyes, but she smiled at me and said 'Hurry, let's go meet your new brother.' So

we went to the hospital, and there he was, an ugly looking baby lying in that other woman's arms. Mama just went and took the baby from her and welcomed her to our home, where she became our second Mama. Soon after, Dad came back home too.

A few months later, he built two new houses, one for Mama and one for the other woman. Soon things were normal again, even though we now had two mothers and a new younger brother. But then things started changing. The more Dad's business grew, he became a leader and was well respected. And, as a leader, he would kill pigs and make feasts for almost every little thing.

Every time Dad hosted a feast, Mama and I would just stand on the side, while Dad's second wife and her family would bring pigs to support him. Soon Papa's family started rejecting Mama because she could not support Papa with pigs; she had no uncles or brothers nearby to come and support her. I could see the pain in her eyes during those times, but she would just smile.

After that Papa stopped giving us money; he stopped coming to our house. Every time, his second wife and his sisters would accuse Mama of using *marila* [love charm] to lure him. Sometimes they would gang up and beat Mama. After several incidents, Papa stopped coming to us. He became a drunkard and a womanizer marrying three other women. Every time they would fight, the second wife and the other three, Mama would just watch and walk away.

She had no family there, but she would make gardens and sell the produce, she washed the local French priest's clothes and cleaned his house, she sewed dresses for little girls and sold ice blocks at my school. Every day of her life, she worked to ensure I and my four siblings had food, clothes, and school supplies. And every night she would tell us of her village, of the dark blue sea and the white sandy beach. She would tell us to go to school so that we can work and, one day, purchase her ticket to return home.

When my sisters were older, being girls, they were taken care of by our uncles who paid for their school fees, bought their clothes, and gave them money because they would one day claim bride price payments from their husbands. My two sisters lived with our uncles. So, it was just Mama, me, my younger brother, and our youngest sister.

My younger brother dropped out of school in Grade 10, the same year I was accepted to Unitech (University of Technology) but, together, he and Mama raised funds to pay for my school fees. I was a Somalia, no room, no meal card. I used to sleep in the lecture halls.

Sometimes, I used to go hungry for days. When I was doing my fourth year, my little brother moved to Lae. He sold betel nuts on the roadside and every afternoon would buy me food. Then we were able to rent a little room. I continued my study and he continued to sell betel nut.

Occasionally our uncle and aunty used to send us money. Sometimes Mama would send us money. But it seemed Papa had completely forgotten us. After completing my education, we went back up to the village to see Mama as she and my younger sister had been living alone for a long time.

A few months later, Mama sent me back to Lae a week before graduation. She was crying that morning at the bus stop as she could only afford to buy me a red shirt, which I still keep, even today. She could not come as she could not afford the bus fare and the accommodation fee in Lae.

On graduation day, I was embarrassed to see my father come with his latest wife. I was angry, and thought to myself, 'Why didn't he bring Mama?' But I am a Highlander, I was raised to respect my father, to love him no matter what and to know that he is the law and everything he does is right. So, I swallowed the anger.

When the Chancellor called me to receive my award, Papa beamed with pride and, later that evening, he bought us beer to celebrate, and his new wife cooked a feast for us. The next day I was offered a job in Port Moresby and father sent me down to Port Moresby to take up the job. I did not get to see Mama or say goodbye to her.

Two years I worked, every pay day I sent money for my mother and my little brother who chose to stay in Lae. I would ask her, should I buy her ticket? She would tell me, 'Wait, the girls haven't left the nest yet.'

One day, I got a call from the Catholic priest. In those days there was no mobile phone, so he called me at my workplace and said that Mama had collapsed and that she did not have much time left. The last two years, whilst I was working in Port



Moresby, Mama had had cancer. And she never told us. She never told me and my brother.

I flew up to Lae, and my younger brother and I drove up all night. We got home, just when dawn was breaking. Whilst driving I could see Mt Giluwe was still covered in mist and I had this feeling, somehow, I knew that Mama would be gone with the mist, and I had to hurry.

When I arrived in our home, Mama was lying next to the fire. She was so thin, so small, I could not recognise her. I picked her up like a child, just like she used to pick me up, and I could see the pain in her eyes but, just like always, she smiled.

She told us, one very last time again, of her home, where the sea was dark blue and the sand so white. I kept crying, asking why she did not come when I wanted to send her the ticket. Why didn't she go home and see her people? 'All those years, when Papa started bringing new wives home, why didn't you go home?'

The sun was starting to rise by then. Papa came running in, and tried to take her from me, but I held my Mama. I was ready to defy culture and beat him up and he saw it in my eyes and took a step back.

But then I heard Mama's hoarse whisper. My brother and I held her; carried her in our arms and she told us that she will be gone. She also told us:

*When you were young, I did leave, I wanted to go back to my home. I went as far as Goroka, but I could not get on the plane. I could not leave you behind. So, I came back. Many times, I thought of leaving, but you five needed me.*

*Though my heart was broken, and I was in a place where I had no family to lean on, I could not leave my babies. My husband cheated on me, but I am still a mother. He beat me, he humiliated me, he brought more women into our marriage, but I am still a mother and, son, I have*

*no regrets. Because I have raised you all and can now go in peace knowing that you all will be fine. Love your Papa, love your stepmothers, and remember their children are your siblings too.*

I was sobbing by then. I was losing my mind. I carried her out and tried to will my life into her, my strength into her, but the mist started to clear as the sun rose and Mama asked us to recite Psalm 23 but, in the middle of the recital my beautiful Mama, 'meri nambis' left to be with the Lord.

We buried her in our village, where the wild sunflowers grew. And every year, when I visit her grave, I bring a bottle of sand with me to pour on her grave. She left her dark blue sea and white sandy beach and, despite the hardship, chose to stay in the cold mountains to raise us. I am who I am today because of a *meri nambis* who chose to stay.

TODAY, Jeffrey and his wife have helped repatriate close to 12 *meri nambis* who were trapped in violent, polygamous marriages back to their home provinces. Being the down-to-earth person he is, both Jeffrey and his wife have done all this alone and without media coverage. Jeff's youngest sister is a nurse, and his brother is a businessman in Lae, employing over 200 Papua New Guineans. The two older sisters have since married and have their own families. Both reside in the village. Jeff's father died two years after his mum and is buried next to her in their village up on the blue misty mountains. ♦

**Source:** Rebecca Kuku on Facebook. Rebecca is a journalist based in Port Moresby, covering politics, security, and social issues.

This story is reproduced with thanks to Freelance Journalism, a voluntary group of journalists who wish to shine a light on some practices in their communities which have existed for decades and which they feel could be improved.



## Special Offer for PNGAA Members

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

**Niugini Arabica** specialises in roasting organic coffee beans from the mountains of PNG. Specialisation means that we have been able to fine tune our roasting techniques to extract the optimal flavours from what are already optimal beans. The result brings to the fore the superb complex flavoursome body that is intense, yet smooth and silky on the palette with chocolate-nutty undertones. Our roasting operations are in Port Moresby and in Canberra. **Niugini Arabica Coffee** is open to the public at our shopfront cafe in Duffy, Canberra. To spread our love for Papua New Guinean coffee, we've partnered with the PNGAA. Visit our online shop at <https://www.niuginiarabica.com/> and use the discount code 'PNGAA10' to get 10% off any order.



## Plantation Life in the 1960s

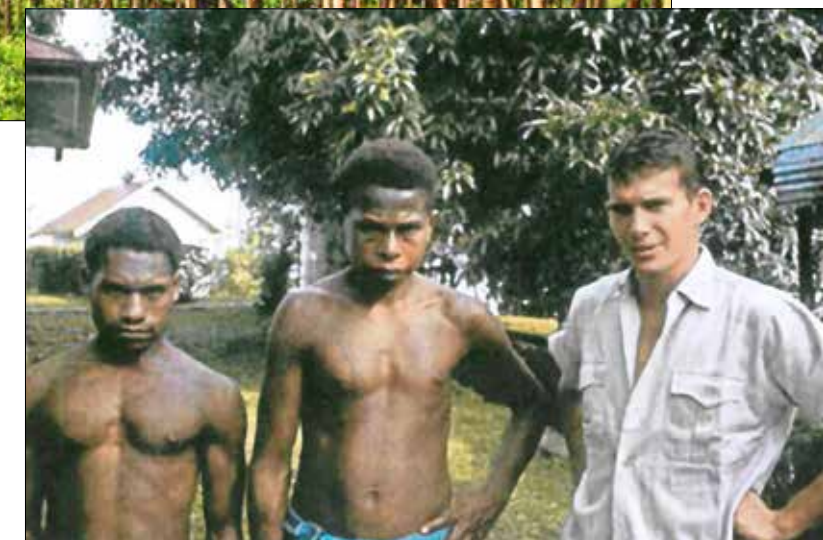
IAN SMITH

Isolated and remote locations like the New Guinea Islands seemed to attract colourful and interesting people in the 1960s.

Some of these characters were involved in the management of copra and cocoa plantations.

Many of these properties were very isolated and required strong mental toughness on the manager's part to be able to handle many situations especially where indentured labour was concerned. In their villages in the New Guinea Highlands these workers had signed a contract to work for two years. Then they experienced an aeroplane flight, sailing on a small ship and going to an isolated plantation. So much change was hard for them to comprehend.

Many feared monsters occupying large clumps of bamboo. Personal sickness, to their mind, was caused



Ian Smith at Patlangat

by some nasty person from their home village and malaria prevention tablets were taken with suspicion. No doubt the company I worked for (WR Carpenter) had some understanding of this behaviour as the labour was paid every lunar month—13 times over a 12-month period. I remember an eclipse of the sun that happened about midday and, no matter how hard I tried to explain this phenomenon, general panic started and everyone went to their houses and shut themselves inside.

The native workers were good-natured and hard-working and it was always fun to have a joke, especially if it was on me and, like most employees, they were better led than driven. Generally, work





Patlangat workforce line for pay and anti-malarials

on copra and cocoa plantations was routine, but if an incident occurred 'alarm bells' would be ringing. Such incidents included things like a major mechanical tractor breakdown, cyclonic weather, an accident or injury or a fight between groups. Being alone with no immediate help one had to be aware of all circumstances.

A particular incident I remember among many others was when a native employee from the plantation next to Patlangat (the property I was managing) arrived at about 4:00 am panting and out of breath to wake me up from a deep sleep to tell me that his boss, the manager, was injured and needed help quickly. This was easier said than done as the next plantation was about 20 km away. Access to it was by a single jungle track that sometimes emerged on to a sandy beach but most alarming was a tidal, mangrove tree lined creek that had to be crossed. However, just before daylight I set off taking two of my most reliable plantation workers and a medical kit with me. We started off at a jog trot and a quick walk to get there soon as possible.

Fortunately, the tidal creek was receding so I guess it would have been only about half a metre deep, but I could not help thinking of crocodiles and water snakes as we splashed across as quickly as we could. We eventually arrived at the neighbour's plantation at 10 or 11 am.

This copra plantation would be one of the worst for a junior manager to be sent to by the company that we both worked for. It fronted the ocean and extended to the foothills about four km away. However, in the centre of the plantation was

a very steep hill that I imagined was the top of an extinct volcano. The manager's house was situated in the top of this pinnacle and was painted battleship grey inside and out. The view from all the windows consisted only of the tops of coconut palms. It was a depressing place for a single person.

Access to this manager's home was by way of a steep, winding, dirt track, and one of the company's instructions to the manager was never to drive the tractor up or down this steep incline. However, this is what Harry (I will call him that for this story) had done. Of course, he lost control of the tractor and it had rolled over. I really did not know what to expect when I arrived there.

Harry was rolled up in bed; he had been boozing but was not drunk and he assured me he was okay. He had a few minor cuts and bruising but some part of the tractor had torn his scrotum open and one testicle had protruded. Maybe some of our medico readers would remember the freezing solution called ethyl chloride? It was in a pressure-packed can like insect spray. Well, Harry had somehow used this solution to numb the area then to push 'things' back into place. Using a mirror between his legs and he put two stitches in. There was not much I could do except give him a morphine injection to reduce his pain, after which he told me he could cope until I got help for him.

Finding his plantation foreman, I told him to run things as normally as possible then started the return jog-trot home. Fortunately, the tidal creek was not too deep, and I arrived home in the late afternoon, mentally tired and physically exhausted, but immediately sent a radio message to Rabaul for assistance.

A 13-m work boat went to collect Harry and a temporary relieving manager appointed. Of course, the company sacked Harry, and I thought that would be the last I would see or hear of him.

It was about three months later that I spotted an old yacht about one kilometre out to sea and sailing past Patlangat. This was a very unusual occurrence, so I looked through my binoculars and recognised Harry standing in the yacht's rigging, waving madly at me as I stood on my house veranda. Was he off on another adventure?

One wonders whatever happened to this fellow. It would be anyone's guess. ♦

# Rural Development and Planning—A Case Study

**BARRY HOLLOWAY**

**This story is about Patrol Post X in Papua New Guinea and how, in the mid-1950s, the Patrol Officer (PO) of the Department of Native Affairs had to manipulate the law, public monies, government stores, specialist workforces, his authority and the truth to achieve development. The successful 'operator' had to know how to work within, and outside, the formal structure of the bureaucratic organisation.**

**He depended very much on his personal relations with individuals for survival as many a PO had gone to the courts, been dismissed or sent away to more forbidding places for making errors in human relations.**

An officer of the Department of Native Affairs had to be a generalist and, on this patrol post, his duties included being in charge of police and prisons; he was also a magistrate and arbitrator and cared for the agencies of Treasury, Posts and Telegraphs, Public Works, Health, Education and Civil Aviation. One of his most important jobs was the exploration

of the hinterland and the consolidation of central government influence.

In this case study the PO wanted to get teachers and an education complex established on Patrol Post X, a station rated very low for central government priorities, especially with regard to education, as first contact was still being made with the local people.







Building being constructed by indigenous men under the supervision of Australian kiaps

*Previous Page:* Kainantu, Eastern Highlands (main) and a patrol officer surrounded by young children

The PO wrote a letter to the District Officer (DO) explaining the need for a school at Patrol Post X. The DO minuted it on to the District Commissioner (DC) and the DC wrote another letter to the District Education Officer (DEO). The DC and DEO met each other at golf but there were many things to discuss other than a school at Patrol Post X. Eventually, a letter came back from the DEO, through the DC and the DO, saying that no money was available to build a school and that the few teachers available were already posted for the following year. The DEO indicated that three teachers might be available in 18 months.

The PO knew the DEO personally and contacted him directly on the radio telephone and informed him that the station staff and surrounding villages were so anxious to have a school that hundreds of volunteer labour had come into the station and had already partly completed the school. The DEO had just come back from a short course at the London School of Economics, and this sounded romantically like lectures he had attended on a new method called community development. The DEO was interested and promised a tour of inspection after the Christmas vacation and, if all was in order, could possibly direct three teachers to this project.

There was no school at Patrol Post X; nor had the people thought of one because they did not know what a school was. The PO sat down to plan the project and the first thing was to study the

availability of money and manpower. His funds were as follows:

- £1000 minor new works (excavation airstrip),
- £150 minor new works (establishment of latrines),
- £800 purchase fresh foods for prisoners,
- £400 pounds payment of carriers,
- £200 pounds incidentals.

Out of these funds he very quickly calculated he could misappropriate £1500 for the new school project. The prisoners had planted acres of gardens and the station was self-supporting in the supply of fresh vegetables. They had already excavated the airstrip while the PO was on patrol. It was only a matter of the PO making out cash contingencies with fictitious names.

In the absence of two other literate officers all he had to do was sign them three times in the capacity of authorising officer, paying officer and certifying officer. The PO had to be especially careful about this because Treasury had returned contingencies in the past because one signature was lacking.

The PO then had a meeting with administration employees on the patrol post, including the police, to study manpower requirements. The expert in this field was the Sergeant Major of police, a holder of several war medals and 30 years' experience in self-reliance, self-help and community development. He had taught the PO how to be a magistrate and arbitrator as well as how to avoid being speared in uncontacted and uncontrolled areas.

The Sergeant Major drew attention to a recent clash between two nearby village groups. Consequently, 125 men were to appear before the PO next day charged with riotous behaviour. Most of the able-bodied men about villages were involved in the clash and, apart from the gaol being full, the PO had considered there were the social and human aspects of having them away from their families for three weeks in the particular season when subsistence was extremely difficult.

The next day the villagers resolved that 250 people among them would assist in the project for half a day, each day, for four weeks. Each would receive one meal a day. This arrangement would be in place of 125 men going to gaol for three weeks with three meals daily and accommodation provided. The PO duly submitted court returns to substantiate a false requirement for stores of meat, fish, salt,

flour, hard peas, rice, soap and tea. It established a tremendous amount of goodwill to give a hot mid-morning meal to any volunteers who came to assist the school project. Additional calico ordered for the prisoners who never went to gaol would be the first two changes of dress the children would receive on their first day of enrolment.

Within several days the manpower requirements were adequate and 300 adults were well supervised and hard at work. Among them were 80 prisoners who went off without police escort in their own supervised teams to collect bush materials from station land. Management was a small problem and so some long-term trusties, who knew from past experience what bush materials were required, were allocated as supervisors of village groups.

The police were appointed as construction supervisors under the able management of the Sergeant Major. They marked out and had levelled the sites for three married quarters, three classrooms and a sports field.

The pilot-owner of the Dragon Rapide that flew into Patrol Post X was briefed on the scheme. His silence was assured because he also became the agent to purchase materials such as louvres, fly wire, nails, screws, three-ply, hinges, stoves etc from the coast. Several extra charters were paid for in cash out of money made from the sale of sweet potato. He also had the task of delaying the DEO's tour of inspection by one week and to ensure that space on his plane was not available for a surprise visit by the DC, DO or auditor.

After the first week the project really started to take shape with evidence of structures going up, a new flagpole and a stone-lined pathway. All this drew the curiosity of nearby villagers, and they helped in providing materials for thatching the roof, which were unavailable on the government station.

In the fourth week the outside work had been completed and work started finishing the interior of the houses and making school desks. Children, girls and boys from the government station and villages nearby and faraway, 120 of them, were listed by the PO in anticipation of their enrolment. Dormitories and gardens were commenced, and orientation classes were started in the middle of the fifth week. A medical orderly, a corporal, the office clerk and the Sergeant Major's wife were class leaders. The Sergeant

Major taught the children to march and to sing 'God Save the Queen'. He took great pride in this because, only several years earlier, he had been to the Queen's coronation.

Finally, in the sixth week the DEO came on his tour to see the school buildings. He was impressed, not only by the school buildings but also by the massive cultivations around them, the flag flying in the breeze and 120 children, dressed in unbleached calico, singing 'God Save the Queen'.

In speeches, it was related to him how the people had desperately wanted a school and that they had gathered their meagre resources together to build it. They knew his name and feasted him well. He made a case study of their achievements and, although based on false information, it seemed to fit in perfectly with techniques he had learned at the London School of Economics. He wrote glowing reports to headquarters, and within another two weeks, three teachers were posted to Patrol Post X. The PO had achieved his objective.

**Biographical Note:** Sir Barry Blyth Holloway KBE; born 26 September 1934; died 16 January 2013. He went to PNG as a Cadet Patrol Officer in 1953 and, after time as a kiap, settled in Kainantu where he was a foundation member of the Bully Beef Club, and was a strong advocate for independence in the lead up to the 1968 elections. He was Speaker in the House of Assembly from June 1972 to September 1975 and then continued as Speaker in the National Parliament until August 1977 after which he was Minister for Finance until 1982. He served on many committees and continued in various roles for the governments of Sir Michael Somare and other prime ministers. ♦

**Submitted to PNG KUNDU by Chris Warrillow**



Holloway with a UN Trusteeship Mission in 1956



# Guam Lakes Patrol

DES PIKE

In January 1972, I undertook a brief patrol of the Nodabu region of the Aiome Patrol Post administrative area, which includes villages along the banks of the Ramu River. As this was to be a brief trip of only a few days, I thought that this would be a good opportunity for my wife, Philippa, to accompany me into an area that was seldom visited by outsiders. This was a departure from normal practice, and would probably not have been agreed to had I sought approval from Port Moresby. However, at the local level the District Commissioner, Des Clifton Bassett, gave his consent, so the proposed trip could proceed.

Although the Ramu Valley had numerous oxbow lakes (billabongs) and cut-off meanders and flooding in the wet season temporarily covered huge areas, permanent wetlands were a rarity in those upper and middle sections of the river. It came as a real surprise when, on an earlier visit, it was not possible to access these villages from the Ramu River by our outboard-powered river truck. Instead, we proceeded up a small, but strongly flowing clear water creek, to a point where encroaching vegetation made further progress impossible. From there, all the cargo was transferred to dugout canoes, which were waiting for us across a narrow stretch of dry land.

These canoes were then used to travel through the very extensive expanse of wetlands categorised as Lake Vargu, which was fed in part by wet season overflows from the Sogeram River, a major tributary of the Ramu. Much of the area was dependent on the monsoonal rains to maintain water levels, which dropped significantly during the dry season. The



Philippa and Psyche in the borrowed Church of Christ Mission's aluminium canoe, en route to Kominimung

interlocking lagoons were covered with water lilies and bordered with banks of tall rushes. Water birds were present in large numbers and the inherently unstable nature of the dugouts, together with their few inches of available freeboard, were of some concern in such a crocodile-friendly environment.

Fish were feeding at the surface among the lily pads while frogs and insects were abundant in the water. Dead trees were encountered as we paddled along, and I noted a fine specimen of the orchid *Dendrobium mirbellianum* flowering on the spare branches of one as we drifted by.

The trip to the first village took over an hour in the hot sun, but it was a revelation to me, as I had never experienced such a natural wonderland before. In later years, at Morehead and in Kakadu, the traversing of wetlands was to become commonplace, but that first quiet journey through the water lilies and winding reed-lined channels is still one of the most pleasant memories of the time I spent in the Madang District.

My initial visit to these villages had established that they were an independent lot. Given to quarrelling among themselves and harbouring a deep suspicion of other villagers who lived on the banks of the Ramu, they were renowned for their contentious qualities. I later learned that a little over twelve years previously, two patrols had been attacked while visiting these Guam Lakes people. In September/October of 1953 while on patrol of Kominimung area of Guam River, Jack Worcester and Bob Blaikie were attacked by a large group of village people many of whom had not had previous contact with Europeans. Patrol Officer Graham Taylor had a similar incident the previous year on the first visit to the area. Fortunately, there were no fatalities on either side on either occasion.

On this second visit Philippa, our dog Psyche and I first travelled to Aiome on one of the regular government charters and then, on a tractor with all our patrol gear, to the bank of the Ramu at Atiape. We then travelled downstream by river truck to the Base Camp established at Nodabu, which was more central to the majority of Middle Ramu populations.

A furnished, permanent material single officer's house had recently been built there, which was currently unoccupied. While walking around the environs of the small station we found a good crop of mushrooms emerging from the grass around the house. Rather foolishly perhaps, we decided to have these mushrooms as a supplement to our evening meal. They were fried in butter and were a tasty and unexpected garnish to our dinner. However, I still had qualms about these fungal delicacies, so before retiring for the night I wrote a brief explanation of what we had eaten and left it on the dining table, addressed to 'The Coroner'. In the event of our deaths by mushroom poisoning during the night, I thought I would make it easier for anyone conducting any inevitable investigation.

The following morning, we awoke without any adverse gastric consequences and set off in the river truck for the stream accessing the Guam Lakes. The canoes previously arranged for our onward journey were late but, eventually, after transferring our gear, we were off, paddling among the water lilies and after another pleasant journey we reached Kominimung village and set ourselves up in the rest house.

One of the reasons I was returning to the area was to purchase one of the traditional mosquito nets still being used by these villagers. I had noticed these on my first visit and had approval to use government funds to buy a suitable specimen for the PNG Museum, so I set about negotiating a fair purchase price. I was also to offer a Madang training course in gill netting to three suitable young men from the area.

The huge area of wetlands and swamps surrounding these villages meant that they were exposed to attack by dense swarms of mosquitoes after nightfall. The residents sought to solve this problem by weaving a large bell-shaped bag, open at the larger end, about six feet high, with a circumference at the open end of about twenty feet. This was made from the soft inner bark of the 'tulip' tree, *Gnetum gnemon*, and was very tightly woven to preclude access by any insect. The bottom sections were left as long unwoven streamers, which assisted in sealing the bottom of the bag. The pointed end was suspended from the roof of a village house, which was built on supports having a raised floor usually made from split lengths of black palm.

As the evening meal was consumed at twilight,

the nightly sleeping arrangements were organised. The floor of the sleeping area was covered in mats closely woven from pandanus leaves, preventing mosquitoes from coming up through the floorboards. The mosquito net was then lowered until the streamers of fibre covered these mats and formed an acceptable seal. The whole family would then crawl into the protection provided by the woven bag and settle down for a night's sleep.

The claustrophobic atmosphere inside this bag must have been dreadful and the foetid air barely breathable. I had heard stories of puddles of sweat being found under houses, beneath these mosquito nets after a particularly hot and humid night. These nets were highly valued and represented many hours of weaving by women in the extended family. Despite their shortcomings comfort-wise, anything was better than being attacked by the hordes of relentless and malarial mosquitoes.

After some haggling, I was able to buy a net in good condition. On handing over the cash, I suggested that the money paid be used to buy proper mosquito nets at the trade store at Annaberg Mission, but there was distrust of the flimsy European nets, and the old style of insect protection still had its supporters.

The changes that progress was imposing upon these isolated group of villages was brought home to us later when we were travelling back down the Ramu, and called in at a recently established riverside mission station at Korbanka. The missionary had been approached by a delegation from the Vargu Lake villages, with an unusual request. These villagers had



Traditional mosquito net in Romkuin House



a strong tradition of men's cult activities, based on intermittent celebrations held at night, despite the mosquitoes. While the whole village assembled at a designated area, the cultural ceremonies would begin by the lighting of fires around the periphery of the area. At some point in the proceedings, a mournful sound would be heard coming from the surrounding bush interspersed with a vibrating drone. The women and children would be very fearful as they were told that this was the sound of their ancestors' spirits, emerging from the waters to participate in the ceremonies.

In fact, these sounds were produced by long bamboo flutes played by older men, and bullroarers so large that they took a strong man to swing them around at the velocity needed to create the vibrating drone.

At puberty, young men were initiated into the secrets of the cult, including the existence and function of the flutes and bull roarers, and were required to keep all they were told a deadly secret. Women were never to learn the truth about what was generating the sounds heard during these night-time ceremonies.

The problem for the tribal elders was that the flutes and bullroarers had to be hidden away in a *haus tambaran* (spirit house) or even in the bush, so that none of the uninitiated would ever come across them. In an inundated area such as the Guam Lakes, secure hiding places were difficult to find, and many were concealed in the convoluted trunks of banyan trees. The traditional penalty for any woman finding



Philippa and Psyche at *Haus Tambaran*, Romkuin village

one of these sacred ceremonial items by accident, was immediate death.

Traditionally, the death of a village woman could be attributed to, and accepted as, due to supernatural causes. However, with the advent of regular government patrols, the covering up of a death imposed for a cultural infringement, was a much more difficult proposition. As a way around this dilemma, the tribal elders decided to approach the Korbanka missionary with the request that he assume control of these sacred items, and that he hide them in some place on the mission where they were safely out of sight of all females. He told me he was initially reluctant to take on the job of caretaking heathen ritual objects, but he later consented on the grounds that it was evidence of the breaking down of unacceptable traditional practices, as well as eliminating a potential source of tragedy for some girl or woman.

We returned to Nodabu with the mosquito net, which was duly despatched to the museum. Philippa had had the opportunity to see an area which was seldom visited by outsiders, and in which the inhabitants still retained some of their more interesting traditional cultural practices.

I made several subsequent visits to the Kominimung area and never tired of the canoe journey to reach the group of villages surrounded by water. However, the outside world was catching up with this group. The local member of the House of Assembly, Jim McKinnon, arranged for a drum of Tilapia fish fingerlings to be dumped into the lake system. This was done on the grounds that these Tilapia had already been introduced into the lower Sepik area and had become a staple food for the villagers there. They were also supposed to prey on mosquito larvae in the water, but their dietary preferences in such an unfamiliar environment could not be guaranteed. Why he thought that the Guam Lakes needed an alien fish species, when there were large stocks of native fish available, was not explained.

We did arrange for several young Guam village men to visit Madang to be instructed in the use of gill nets and they were sent home with several nets each, to provide the residents with a ready source of food. What they caught with these is unknown, but it was probably an endless supply of tasteless, soggy-fleshed Tilapia. ♦

# Coca Cola Diplomacy in Papua New Guinea

**DERYCK THOMPSON**

**In 2017 I was working for an exploration company in the far west of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Our exploration camp, Kili Teke, was in the middle of nowhere on the border of Hela and Enga Provinces and about 15 minutes airtime west of the Porgera gold mine.**

The only way in and out for we FIFO workers was by Bell 212 helicopter from Mount Hagen. Ten of us would be jammed in, with five passengers facing forward and five facing towards the rear of the helicopter which was the same body size as the Iroquois helicopters from the Vietnam era. If you were lucky enough to be on an end seat, then you could look out of the small window and see the passing terrain just below. If you were in the middle seats all you saw was the face of the passengers opposite. There was no space to move and no facilities at all on board, so it was just a matter of sitting tight for the trip of one hour.

Kili Teke camp was at 1400 m ASL and the mountains around went up to 2000 m ASL. The nearest roadhead was at Pori far away down in an adjoining valley. An unencumbered man could walk down to Pori in one day, but the return trip would always take two days as one would be walking up the steeply rising terrain.

All our camp supplies came in by helicopter but the local village people, usually the women, had to walk to Pori to buy supplies at a small trade store there. They would carry back rice and canned fish and meat, and other items like cigarettes and noodles and, believe it or not, cans of Coca Cola, all of which they carried in string bags slung from their heads. The return trip would take four days, or more if they had children with them.

Up on the mountain high above our camp was a small area on a ridge line that had been flattened by a previous exploration company to make a campsite. The locals used it is a very rough soccer field and a few people had built their houses near it. The track up from our camp was very steep and, in some places, we had to walk on wooden walkways built from trees cut from the surrounding jungle.

On one occasion we walked up from our camp to meet with the local village people to discuss recruitment of some local men. It was a very







1. Kili Teke camp looking west;
  2. Access to village site above camp;
  3. Map Showing campsite location. Kili Teke is marked KT. Porgera mine is near SG1;
- Previous Page: Boarding a 212 at Kili Teke for trip to Mt Hagen

contentious issue because they all wanted to be employed and we could only employ a few of them at a time. On this day about 100 men and women were present. It was a good sign that women and children were present as it meant that it was going to be a peaceful occasion but, unbeknown to us, there was a grievance in the village about alleged favouritism by the local leaders when nominating prospective workers. Our company team consisted of me, my PNG field manager and one seasoned police constable who was carrying an M16 firearm. There were seven clans in our area and an argument started between two of the clan leaders about employment grievances. We were there as outsiders and had no legal authority and all we could do was watch.

Every man present carried a very sharp bush knife or an axe. These axes were very similar to axes carried by the Vikings in recent movie productions—that is the axe had a long skinny shaft and small head, so the warrior had plenty of manoeuvrability. These axes are called ‘*namba seven*’ as they looked like the number 7. In past years when someone was killed by an axe, they would say that a number 7 got him. In recent years most rural deaths are from homemade shotguns or factory-made firearms.

Anyway, this argument flared up and all the men immediately split into two groups, with lots of yelling and screaming and very soon they engaged in man-to-man combat. There were about 25 men on each side and very soon I could see that it was a very ritual type of fighting because there was no blood being drawn. If you have a very sharp bush knife and you hit someone with the blade down it is definitely going to cut them but if you turn the blade over and strike with the back of the blade down, that is with the blunt side down, then it is not going to do too much damage, maybe some bruising. The same with an axe. So, these warriors were dancing around and slapping each other with these weapons and not drawing blood. But, of course, the problem is that if blood is accidentally drawn then it can get very messy ... very quickly.

I remember thinking to myself that I had just arrived in this area—it was only my second rotation—and that I had no work experience with this part of the PNG Highlands. I turned to my PNG field manager, and I asked him what we should do, and he said just stand fast. So, we stood and watched

as the men danced around with their weapons and yelling all sorts of abuse, most of it in their local language, which we could not understand. Then suddenly, from just behind us, a firearm discharged, a single round. It was the police constable, who, with good self-discipline, let the combatants fight just long enough to de-energise the situation but not to let it get out of control.

The fighting stopped immediately, and he stepped forward and said in PNG pidgin ‘*Yupela laki tru inogat blut, sapos igat haus bai pia*’, which literally translated as ‘You are lucky that no blood was drawn because houses would have caught fire’, which really meant that if they had lost control and drawn blood he would have punished them by setting some of the nearby houses on fire. So, the two sides calmed down, but the two spokesmen continued to call out to each other.

Meanwhile, the women and children were watching this and did not seem too worried by it. Yelling and chest beating is a big thing in PNG. Some women had just arrived back from the four-day return trip to Pori and they were displaying items for sale that they had carried back, including cans of Coca Cola.

A self-appointed peacemaker stepped forward—he may have been a pastor. He went over and he took a can of Coca Cola from one of the women and he put it on the ground between the two protagonists who were standing about 10 m apart and still yelling at each other. The peace maker said in language (and in *Tok Pisin* for our benefit), ‘Brothers drink that Coca Cola and make peace and be friends.’ But still the protagonists argued, and the peacemaker went back to the Coke can and opened it and left it on the ground and still the two protagonists continued to argue. The peacemaker then went back and picked up the open can and took it to one of the protagonists and said, ‘Brother you drink,’ and he did. He then took the can to the other protagonist and said, ‘Brother you must drink and be in peace with your brother because he drank from this can,’ and he did, but still the anger was there.

The peacemaker called out ‘Now you have both drunk from this can of Coca Cola and so you must be friends’, but the two men continued calling out and then the peacemaker said, ‘Well, you have both drunk from the Coca Cola can so we might make



1. Women selling noodles, Coke and cigarettes carried up from Pori;
2. Coca Cola cans as home decoration

a small exchange of money just to calm everyone down.’ There must have been an imbalance of accusations and insults, which we did not pick up because of the mix of the local language and *Tok Pisin*. One of the parties paid the other 20 kina and the other party paid 50 kina and then it was all over, and they shook hands and we continued with our presentation about company business.

I had a fleeting thought that, if I had been able to record this event, it would have gone viral on YouTube.

Coca Cola is so entrenched in local culture that empty cans are used for house decorations.

POST SCRIPT: The peace and quiet did not last for long because two months later a neighbouring group of locals, jealous of the benefits that our local village people were getting, attacked and destroyed our drill rig. The company had been exploring for three years but it decided to close the camp. Although I was not in camp when the attack took place, I ended up being on the very last helicopter out of Kili Teke, but that is another story. ♦



# June Lovina Whittaker AM

## TEACHER, HISTORIAN, AUTHOR, FARMER & FRIEND

### Part 2

#### GAYNOR KAAD

The family's two-year adventure in the early sixties travelling through Europe and working in the UK and Canada had fuelled June's desire to explore other countries. In 1972 she had an opportunity to visit the People's Republic of China with a group of academics from the University of Sydney. Earlier that year President Nixon had visited China ending years of diplomatic isolation between the two countries. In Australia, the Liberal/National Party coalition had been in government for 23 years.

The travel group was to leave just prior to a federal election and June was informed that, if she visited China, on her return she might have to find a new job. But the election saw the ALP, under Gough Whitlam, sweep to power and June's group, the only Australians visiting China officially at the time, were fabulously wined and dined by their hosts! In 1977, towards the end of the Cultural Revolution, June visited China again, leading her own group of educationalists and friends on a three-week tour. This was an exciting time as foreign visitors to the country were still very rare.



China education tour



June holding *Kable* trilogy

During her time in Sydney and in between her travels abroad, June wrote several historical studies and for ten years was a valued historical consultant for Old Sydney Town. She also managed to research, write, and publish three historical novels based on her ancestors—'convict extraordinaire' Henry Kable and his wife, Susannah Holmes, who came to Australia on the First Fleet. Academically, she found the time and energy to co-author with Noel Gash *A Pictorial History of New Guinea* and co-edit with Noel Gash, John Hookey and R Lacy *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History (Pre-history to 1889)*, the first publication by a group of ASOPA staff. Charles Rowley commented in his foreword:

*It was fitting that it should be this impressive collection of New Guinea documents and materials. Such a collection has long been required.*

Throughout her life, June's devotion to her work was supreme and she was held in high esteem by her colleagues and students, as evidenced by the many emails Kristian received after her death. One read:

*Along with Noel Gash, June was my favourite lecturer at ASOPA. She had a motherly and caring nature, but a businesslike approach which captured*

*this 19-year-old in 1970. I still have my Gash and Whittaker publication, A Pictorial History of New Guinea. Fifty-one years later I still hold clear visions of June lecturing in history to the 1970 First Year Arts Class.*

And another:

*I remember June well—hated history at school—loved it at ASOPA. June was our mentor on our practice teaching trip to Port Moresby. She was a real hit with the local teachers where we were staying. Great lady who would turn heads wherever she went. John Beagly used to love doing caricatures of June. Love to be transported back to 1970—great times!*

And another:

*I loved June's PNG history lectures and she, together with Noel Gash, set me on a course to be an historian, although not reaching her class. I admired and respected her especially as she modelled what an engaging and professional teacher should be like. Those happy years at beautiful ASOPA were, like for so many of us, transformative in my life—thanks to people like her and Maurie Saxby and so many others.*

After their retirement in 1993, June and Merv purchased the home block of Merv's grandparents' property, Fairview. They set about designing and building a home and buying a light plane, for which they built a shed to house both it and themselves during the build. While living in Sydney, apart from his teaching career, Merv had kept up skills learnt in the Air Force and taught flying at Bankstown Airport. He prepared a section of sloping land beside the house as an airstrip, the kind where you get one chance, and one chance only!

By the end of 1994 they had taken up residence, June had learnt to cook and fill the freezer with stand-by meals for unexpected guests or needy locals, and the pantry with homemade jam; Merv had set up beehives and honey extraction equipment, and a chook house. Geese, being kept in order by Blixen, their beautiful black dog, rambed the lawns. They spent any spare time flying up and down the countryside to visit friends, family and attending ASOPA reunions!

June plunged into Tumbarumba life with her usual gusto founding, with other like-minded citizens, the Friends of the Library group, which set about saving the Tumba Library from closure by



June with Merv at ANZAC Day

the then council. Together with two other 'activists', whose names also began with 'J', they became known as the 'Triple J's', being regarded by the council as a true force to be reckoned with.

She contributed to the activities of the CWA and the Rosewood Friendship Group, organising the annual two-up game each Anzac Day. Having loved music from a young age and being an accomplished pianist and able to play by ear, June was a popular performer at Tumbarumba's nursing home, playing for weekly sing-a-longs for several years. Later she learned the flute and chanter for the bagpipes and joined Tumbarumba Pipes and Drums, playing at the Tumbarumba Show and other events.

Always the consummate writer, nothing changed in retirement. In the words of her daughter Ingrid:

*I can quite clearly recall, as a teenager, the constant clatter of her typewriter, ceasing only for her to pass comment on something of interest, or to take a quiet sip of scotch placed conveniently within reach. She was either preparing lectures or programs, drafting novels, penning helpful advice to politicians, venting her wrath about their stupidity, or simply writing letters to friends, something she did all her life.*





Guest speaker at Kable reunion, with Merv

June joined the local writers' group and helped write and publish a series of three books, *The Elders of Tumburumba*, and in 2007 June and a relative, Paul Kable, published *Damned Rascals?*, which retold the story of Henry and Susannah Kable using primary sources collected in the UK and Australia.

She continued to write, entering the Elyne Mitchell Writing Awards for short stories, and was shortlisted in 2016 for her *Heineche's Pub*, and in 2017 won the Local Award category with *The Man Who Spoke to Bees*, based on a friend and ardent beekeeper she met in Europe, Phillip Sharpe.

Her latest historical novel, *When Only the Moon Rages*, is awaiting publication. It is based on the journey of several locals who find their way to Tumburumba through various countries of war-ravaged Europe during World War II.

June and Merv spent the last 25 years of their marriage at Fairview, a marriage just three weeks short of 67 years, constantly and happily surrounded by good friends and growing family. In 2008 her daughter Ingrid, with husband Alan, moved from Kurrajong to their property, Burradoo, within sight of Fairview, and thereafter began

a regular stream of grandchildren and great-grandchildren visiting 'Girl Gummy' and 'Boy Gummy'. June's son Kristian, with wife Song Yang and children, often came to stay from their home in Canberra.

In 2009, in recognition of her work at ASOPA/ITA and her contribution to her local community in retirement, June was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. The citation reads

*For service to international relations in the Pacific region through education, training and development in the field of public administration, and to the community.*

After Merv died in 2019, June continued to live at Fairview until her final five months when she decided that she should live with Ingrid across the creek at Burradoo because, as she suggested, that was where she could have the best of both worlds—family and friends could stay at Fairview, while she could be good company for Ingrid after Alan had died suddenly in October 2021.

June was the life of the party, hosting a memorable Christmas for family and friends at Fairview in 2021. She followed this by thoroughly enjoying a week's holiday with Kristian and his family at Merimbula in January.

June was a great gatherer of friends and family. To use Ingrid's words:

*I often thought of Mum as a Queen bee, Queen June. She drew those who stimulated her intellect to her hive where she entertained them with her dinner extravaganzas, engaging conversations and free-flowing wine. As I grew up our family home, no matter where we happened to be living, was constantly filled with June's and Merv's friends, students, and colleagues. Debate was intense, laughter prevalent and singing raucous accompanied by June on the piano. She was fiercely loyal to her friends and would keep in close contact with them, remembering their birthdays and other special events in their lives. She was the sharpest tool in the box, often leaving me floored at how good her memory was.*

June's life and contributions were remarkable—full of rich experiences. She was an extraordinary person, wonderful mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, and friend, who touched the lives of so many with her vibrancy, compassion, thoughtfulness, and intellect. ♦

## How Do Papua New Guineans Count? CA VOLKER



*Professor Volker is a linguist living in New Ireland, and an Adjunct Professor in The Cairns Institute, James Cook University in Australia. He welcomes your language questions for his monthly discussions at*  
<http://craig.volker@jcu.edu.au>.

*Or continue the discussion on the Facebook Language Toktok page.*  
[https://www.thenational.com.pg/number-systems-in-societies/?fbclid=IwAR3bJvo7sTUPzPZDEe6rqT4\\_](https://www.thenational.com.pg/number-systems-in-societies/?fbclid=IwAR3bJvo7sTUPzPZDEe6rqT4_)

For most people in Papua New Guinea (PNG) today, the answer to 'How do Papua New Guineans count?' will probably be 'we count just like Australian, American, and British people do.' Even if they normally use a vernacular language for other purposes, most people today use English numbers, especially for anything to do with money. This is true even if they do not speak English. For example, in *Tok Pisin*, most people have dropped the older *Tok Pisin* forms such as '*tupela ten na et*' (2 x 10 + 8) in favour of English 'twenty-et'. This use of English covers up the fact that Papua New Guineans have traditionally had very diverse and often very complicated ways to count.

Mathematicians classify counting systems by their 'base'. English and other European and Asian languages use a base-10 system. In these languages we count to 9, and then use a grouping (1 group of 10) for the next number. Larger numbers are counted in groups of 10 plus any leftover numbers, so that 58 is expressed as 5 groups of 10 plus 8. We do this until we get to 100, which is 10 x 10, or 1000, which is thought of as 10 x 100 (10 x 10 x 10).

Some PNG languages follow this base-10 system, but a great many do not. The Huli, for example, have a base-15 system, so they have individual names for numbers from 1 to 14, but then organise larger numbers in groups of 15. Thus, while Europeans think of 48 as 4 groups of 10 plus 8, to Huli speakers this is 3 groups of 15 plus 3. If we wrote numbers down according to Huli instead of European-Asian way of thinking about numbers, we would write it '33' (3 x 15 + 3) instead of '48' (4 x 10 + 8). Either way, the number would have the same value, but the units would be grouped and expressed differently.

Other languages group numbers in very small units, with base-3 and even base-2. We should not think of these systems as being primitive because they use this kind of base system. Computers use a base-2 system, and all the calculations that computers and calculators make, use this base-2 system, which is sometimes called the binary system.

A few languages do not use a base system at all. One of these is the *Alamblak* language of the Angoram District of East Sepik, which has only four 'real' words for numbers: 1, 2, 5, 20. All other numbers are an equation based on these words. The number 59, for example, is formed with words that have the meaning (20 x 2) + (5 x (2+1) + (2+2)). Mental arithmetic was obviously not a problem in this society!

Systems that do have a base system tend to group numbers in units that are based on the human body, since we tend to use our body parts to count or to express numbers with gestures. The English base-10 system, for example, is based on the number of fingers and thumbs humans normally have. Many languages use a base-5 system based on only one hand, while others use a base-20 system using the toes as well as the hands.

A number of languages use a base-12 system based on the fingers, toes, and wrists. Many mathematicians say this dozenal system (named after 'dozen') would be the most efficient system to use because 12 is easily divided by many numbers (2, 3, 4, and 6), whereas 10 is easily divided by only 2 and 5. There is even a Dozenal System in Europe and the USA that



advocates switching to the base-12 system of some PNG languages.

One of the most complicated systems based on the human body is the counting system of the *Oksapmin* language. The *Oksapmin* people have identified 27 body parts going from one thumb around the hand to the parts of one arm, the neck, and shoulders until they go to the other arm. They therefore group numbers in groups of 27 and point to different parts of their body to indicate numbers from 1 to 27 silently.

The most comprehensive collection of counting systems in PNG languages was made by Glendon Lean, a PNG University of Technology lecturer in the 1980s and published as a series of books, one for each province, in 1991 by the PNGUT Department of Mathematics and Statistics. He gathered information for 539 languages, so while this is not completely comprehensive, it is a remarkable collection of data. Unfortunately, these volumes have not been digitalised and put online, so we must go to one of the few university libraries in the country to access them.

A more accessible collection of data about counting systems in PNG and elsewhere in the world has been put online by Hong Kong linguist Eugene Chan, who is attempting to document as many of the world's counting systems as possible. You can see if your language is represented on his website at: <https://mpi-lingweb.shh.mpg.de/numeral/>. He welcomes corrections or data from languages that are not on the website. His email is <http://euslchan@yahoo.com>.

In Western countries, mathematics teachers often introduce students to different base systems to give them practice in thinking more flexibly about mathematic concepts and to help them realise that there are numerous ways of presenting numbers. With their many counting systems using diverse ways of representing mathematics, PNG languages provide us with tools to do this with the traditional languages people still speak. It is important that we do not let these tools disappear. ♦

© Craig Alan Volker, republished with the author's permission.



If you're interested in the history, adventure and stories of Papua New Guinea, and those who helped build the nation, then either of these books will be a great addition to your library or a unique gift for any occasion. Purchase details are available on the Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form at the back of this issue or on our website: [www.pngaa.org/store/](http://www.pngaa.org/store/)

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

Published in 2017 by PNGAA to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*, Australia's greatest maritime disaster, tells the stories of the civilian and military men, women and children caught in the leadup and aftermath of the Japanese invasion and occupation of the New Guinea Islands in 1942. The book brings into focus the actions and characters of young men who left home to willingly serve their country, and then literally vanished off the face of the earth; of nurses and missionaries who volunteered to stay to help both the war effort and the local people; and of civilians caught at home on WWII's Pacific front line. Alongside are incredulous stories of escape and survival in an environment that threw every obstacle in their path.

### LAND OF THE UNEXPECTED: Papua New Guinea

Our nearest neighbour, Papua New Guinea, is a land of tremendous contrasts—of smiling people, mad keen rugby players and followers, complex cultural dynamics and displays, singing that is out of this world, stunning scenery, incredible artefacts, delicious tropical fruits and opportunities for adventurous activities—all in a terrain carved by steep slopes and jagged mountain ranges, interspersed by fertile valleys and over a dozen active volcanoes. PNGAA's new publication covers many of the different facets of this amazing country—a complex overview, flora, fauna and the environment, industries, public services, art, culture, sport, the diverse history and some of people who helped to shape the nation.



### ASMUSSEN, Alan d. 5 July 2022

Alan Asmusen was born in Brisbane in 1938. He went to (then) TPNG in 1960 as a Cadet Patrol Officer and was initially posted to Ihu in the Gulf District. Subsequent postings included Wapenamanda and Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands then eventually Port Moresby in the Central District.

During this period, he met and married his wife, Val, and they had two daughters, Penny and Prue.

They returned to Australia in 1974 and settled on the Gold Coast where Alan was employed by Telstra for the next 20 years and where, unfortunately, Val passed away in 2010.

Alan retired from Telstra but after several years of poor health he died on 5 July 2022.

Bruce Dunn

### MILLS, John OAM d. 14 July 2022, aged 86

Hearing that John Mills, formerly pharmacist of Rabaul Pharmacy, had just passed away at age 86, reminded me almost immediately of the title of a book by one of my favourite authors, James Hilton—remember *Goodbye, Mr Chips?* which sums up everything about John Mills: 'So Well Remembered'.

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 for the next issue by the Copy Deadline, 30 January 2023, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)

My memories of Rabaul are getting as hazy as this old 1967 photograph (pictured right) of John 'Pills' Mills, standing outside Rabaul Pharmacy with his staff.

In 1970 I was a young audit clerk with the firm of chartered accountants of Hancock, Woodward & Neill, and we kept John Dowling's accounts, including Rabaul Pharmacy's debtors' ledger. Our backdoors faced each other and John Mills and his staff regularly visited our office to check on some customer accounts.

I left Rabaul at the end of 1970 for the Bougainville Copper Project 'next door', but John Mills stayed on for many more years before returning to Australia where he bought his own pharmacy in Nambucca Heads, which he operated for 20 years. He became a locum for the next 23 years, working in various pharmacies from Kempsey to Coffs Harbour.

He then launched himself



John Mills



into a whole string of volunteer jobs, from Meals on Wheels to the Salvation Army, and, ever the humble 'Pills Mills', was still dumbfounded when awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

John has put away for good his mortar and pestle which is sad, but he will remain forever, at least for me, the man 'so well remembered'.

Peter Goerman

<https://athomeriverbend.blogspot.com/2022/07/so-well-remembered.html?fbclid=IwAR22tjnAp>

### SKINNER, David Ian Scott d. 31 July 2022, aged 81

David Skinner was born 28 June 1941 in Lismore NSW, and spent his early years with his mother Marie in northern NSW and southern Queensland while his father Ian was serving in the Middle East and as a coastwatcher on New Britain during World War Two.

In early 1946 the Skinner family, which by that time included a second son, Peter, returned to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea where Ian continued his career as a kiap with the Australian



Administration, which he had joined as a Cadet Patrol Officer in 1937.

The Skinner family lived in numerous areas of Papua New Guinea including Kainantu, Talasea, Wewak, Lae, Madang, Mount Hagen, Mendi and Port Moresby, and during those years David developed a keen interest in bushwalking, rifle shooting, anthropology and traditional archery. As well as being an accomplished archer with long and recurve bows, he was also an excellent rifle marksman. When in Mount Hagen his firearms interest and skill with a rifle prompted legendary New Guinea pioneer, Dan Leahy, to gift David a vintage Mannlicher rifle.

At various times, either on patrol with his father into areas such as the Jimi River Valley or accompanied by a local guide, he journeyed among highland tribes learning about their culture and also collecting traditional bows and arrows. His principal collecting trips were in the Eastern Highlands in 1968 and 1969 and he was justly proud of his comprehensive collection and was an authority on the subject,



David, Ian and Peter Skinner, on patrol into the Jimi River Valley, c.1957

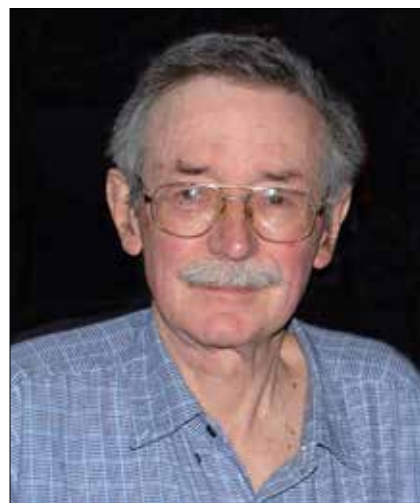
publishing numerous articles on Melanesian archery.

During the early 1960s, when Ian Skinner was District Commissioner Southern Highlands, based in Mendi, David was enlisted to assist explaining electoral procedures prior to the first national election. That involved walking into remote areas and trying to, as he enjoyed telling listeners, 'introduce the highlanders to the Westminster system'.

In 1954 he was accepted into the Royal Australian Navy as a cadet midshipman in the last intake of 13-year-old cadets. His two-year stint at Flinders Naval Base, Victoria, ended when an eyesight issue curtailed his aspirations to be in the Fleet Air Arm. David returned to The Southport School, Queensland, where he completed his education before embarking on a career in journalism.

Initially, he completed a cadetship with *The Daily Telegraph* in Sydney and then joined *The Sydney Morning Herald*, where he made a name for himself as an expert on gold during the heady days of Australia's first mining boom. He later ventured to London where he joined Reuters. David and his wife Dawn travelled via Port Moresby—visiting his parents and sister, Julie-Marie, who had been born in Madang in 1956—to Asia, a year-long overland journey through India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass and, eventually, to Europe.

David's career flourished in London and as a financial journalist he became a chief sub-



David Skinner

editor with Reuters working in the agency's international bureaus in Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Sydney.

To many friends and colleagues David was known as 'Captain', an affectionate nickname bestowed during his early years in Sydney and Captain Skinner became something of a legend within his close-knit community.

David and his second wife, Wendy, lived for many years in Sydney before he retired from Reuters and they relocated to Moss Vale in the Southern Highlands. David's health declined and he suffered lung and heart issues. He died peacefully in Bowral District Hospital, with Wendy and the three children by his side.

David, whose former wife, Dawn Fletcher, pre-deceased him, is survived by his wife, Wendy, children Eliza, Sam and his wife Jess, Zoe and her husband Joe, brother Peter and his wife Cilla, sister Julie-Marie, nephew Scott Skinner and niece Yvette Honey (née Skinner), great-nephew Andy Skinner, and numerous cousins.

**Peter Skinner**



# 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.**

**For more information, please contact Andrea Williams on [admin@montevideo-maru.org](mailto:admin@montevideo-maru.org)**



## Are You Interested in a Trip to Rabaul?

A number of people have expressed an interest in returning to Rabaul with a group of interested travellers. The week around Anzac Day 2023 is being considered. At date of publishing we could not get firm prices to offer, but if you are interested, please contact [admin@montevideo-maru.org](mailto:admin@montevideo-maru.org) for further information.

## Keeping the Memory of George Dalton VX24211 Alive

Ray Dalton was just three years old when his older brother, George, enlisted at aged 20. George was the third of 13 children. His family did not know it at the time, but within two years, the young Indigenous soldier was dead, a casualty of Australia's worst maritime loss. Over three years after the sinking of *Montevideo Maru* and a month after the end of WWII, George's family received a telegram notifying them he was 'presumed dead' on *Montevideo Maru*.

Aboriginal military historian, Peter Bakker, believes the disaster was unreported by the government during the war for reasons of national morale, which were already low by 1942 as the Pacific conflict drew closer to Australia. Bakker also speculates that another critical factor in the suppression of details surrounding the incident was because the submarine responsible for downing the unmarked, unescorted Japanese POW ship was an Allied submarine, USS *Sturgeon*.

A non-Indigenous soldier who shared the same surname, Bombardier Francis Patrick Dalton, served with George in the 2/22nd Battalion. Francis Patrick Dalton's younger brother, Private Bernard Joseph Dalton, who also served in the 2/22nd Battalion, was killed at the Tol Plantation Massacre near Rabaul four months before *Montevideo Maru* was sunk.

Ray does not know much about his older brother George, but he knows that he was a talented sportsman, a member of the Warrnambool Football Club's premiership side just before the war. Their mother refused to acknowledge her aboriginality. Ray was 18 and a handy boxer, undefeated on the local show circuit, when he came up against an Aboriginal opponent. A chance comment from the crowd that Ray was more Aboriginal than his opponent resulted in his discovering the truth. 'She brought us up as white because she was afraid of losing us, said Ray. His mother feared that acknowledging their aboriginality





TOP: Uncle Locky Eccles and Ray Dalton  
(Morgan Hancock)

RIGHT: Private George Christopher Dalton



meant increased chance of their being removed under government policies of the time that created the Stolen Generation.

Uncle Locky Eccles, George's nephew, is a well-respected south-west Indigenous elder. He did not suspect his First Nations heritage until, at age 15 in 1967, a letter arrived from the government advising that Indigenous residents were to be counted in the Census from that time. In Warrnambool's Aboriginal Remembrance Service of 1 November 2021, Locky Eccles spoke publicly for the first time of George's enlistment and tragic death.

Inspired by the NAIDOC celebrations of early July 2022, and the rallying call to 'Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!' Ray Dalton and Uncle Locky Eccles are more determined than ever to keep alive the memories of their brother and uncle, and those who died alongside him.

Memorial News acknowledges the original article by Jenny McLaren in the *The Standard* of 15 July 2022.

<https://www.standard.net.au/story/7820700/keeping-the-memory-of-warrnambool-soldier-george-dalton-alive/>

## Members' Stories

The *Narromine Star* of 7 July 2022 had an article titled 'Remembering the *Montevideo Maru* maritime disaster: commemorations in Canberra'.

Following publication Kirrilly Janhsen contacted the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group and said:

*Private William Leslie Everingham was my great-uncle (my mother's uncle, my grandfather's youngest brother). I have just found out that he died on the Montevideo Maru. I am overwhelmed with this information and do not know where to turn next to learn more and connect with others related to this disaster. I am hoping you can help me. My mother has information and photos of William which I hope might be of help.'*

Each year around the anniversaries of the fall of Rabaul, the Tol Massacre, Anzac Day, and the sinking of *Montevideo Maru*, we ask members to share your stories so that more family members can find out about this history. The Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group also has an excellent online education package available for schools, an informative website and a fascinating book, *When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*, sharing a variety of stories. Additionally, there are DVDs, online videos, and books available for further information.

We thank those who approach their local newspapers, schools, and history groups to share their stories and research. The Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group appreciates this ongoing support.

## Official Commemorative Plaque

Captain Kay Parker NFX180287 was one of the Australian Army Nurses captured by the Japanese armed forces after Rabaul fell on 23 January 1942. Cpt. Parker spent most of the war as a POW in Japan. Recently Patrick Bourke discovered that her name was not on the commemoration section of the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs website. He followed this up and received a reply from Ms Kerry Russell of the Office of Australian War Graves saying that a commemorative plaque will now be installed for Kay Parker in the NSW Garden of Remembrance, recognising her WWII war service.

Captain Kathleen Isabel Alice 'Kay' Parker Sly is indeed automatically eligible for official commemoration as an ex-prisoner of war.



Capt. Kay Parker, Lt Lorna Whyte, Lt Daisy Tootie Keast & Lt Mavis Cullen on their return from Japan

Prisoners of war did not become eligible for official commemoration until the 1990s, meaning, because she died in 1979, she was not automatically eligible at that time. Years later, many families of deceased ex-prisoners of war were not aware that an official commemoration could be provided.

*Unfortunately, we have no contact details for any of Kay's family, however we will provide the commemoration she is entitled to in our NSW Garden of Remembrance. It will be maintained in perpetuity in recognition of her service. I can confirm that her plaque in Palmdale is a privately placed plaque.*

## Should We Fall to Ruin, New Guinea 1942

This is a new book by Harrison Christian, and is the untold true story of a remote garrison and their battle against extraordinary odds.

Published August 2022 by Ultimo Press ISBN 9781761150067 Paperback 336pp Available from your local book retailer.

*Rich in detail drawn from first person accounts, 'Should We Fall to Ruin' illuminates this period in military history. It is a compelling tale of bravery and resilience in the face of a seemingly unstoppable enemy.*

## Jewish Diggers Experiences of Rabaul

Coinciding with the 80th anniversary, the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* published a paper by Peter Allen on 1 July 2022 titled, 'The Eight Jews of Lark Force—Tragedy and Salvation: The Japanese Invasion of Rabaul, 1942'.

*The paper tells the epic and powerful stories of the eight Jewish soldiers of Lark Force: David Bloomfield, Keith Levy, David Selby and Issy Weingott who escaped New Britain after the Japanese invasion of*

Rabaul in January 1942, while Harry Bernstein, Albert Fernandez, Leslie Pearlman, and Herbert Silverman MID did not escape. It seeks to bring to light this forgotten saga, illustrating the terrible suffering and demise, as well as fortitude, of the Australian soldiers who confronted the brutal Japanese forces during the Second World War. As exemplified by the experience of these eight men on New Britain, their adversaries included not only the Japanese and their cruelty, but also hunger, exhaustion, disease, volcanoes, tropical jungles, crocodiles, head-hunters and dangerous seas.

Few people appreciate that [New Britain and New Ireland] was the first Australian territory attacked by the Japanese—in January 1942—more than a month before their attack on Darwin, and most Australians do not know Lark Force's horrific story.

*The battle for Australia has commenced,' the acting prime minister and minister for the army, Frank Forde, told the nation during an emergency national broadcast on January 24, 1942, the day after the invasion of Rabaul. 'For the first time in her history, an attack has been launched against her territory, for the first time her soil has been violated.'*

For the Japanese, Rabaul was important because of its proximity to the Caroline Islands, mandated to them by the League of Nations after the First World War and the site of a major Imperial Japanese Navy base on Truk. The capture of New Britain would offer them one of the best natural deep-water harbours in the South Pacific and airfields to provide protection to Truk, and to attack lines of communication between the United States and Australia.

A total of 1,485 Australian troops made up Lark Force, plus some local New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. They defended the eastern part of the Territory against the Japanese threat of invasion, with more than 1600 km of coastline. The reality was that Lark Force was ill-equipped to repel an invasion. It had no sea support, poor air cover and little artillery. The infantry units were lightly armed and possessed few mortars or machine guns. The view of the Australian Chiefs of



Tol Memorial, 1987 (Bill Harry)





Privates Leslie Pearlman &amp; Albert Fernandez

*Staff was that, at best, this force could no more than delay, briefly, a Japanese advance.*

Following the invasion of 23 January 1942, and without an evacuation plan, the ill-equipped Diggers of Lark Force had to fend for themselves. Less than 400 of its 1,485 members managed to escape death. Japanese troops committed a series of massacres of POWs, including at Tol Plantation in early February 1942, where 160 Diggers were murdered. When the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk, the majority of the 1,053 Australian soldiers and civilians on board had survived five months of facing constant hunger, disease, and unimaginable cruelty as POWs at the hands of the Japanese.

Besides Fernandez and Bernstein who died because of the *Montevideo Maru*'s sinking, Private Leslie Pearlman was brutally murdered in the Tol Plantation massacre.

*In late January 1942 Captain Silverman and Major Akeroyd, the 2/22nd MO, had been in a party heading westward. As the Japanese occupied Four Ways, cutting off the road to Tobera, the party skirted it and moved on through the dense jungle, avoiding the roads and eventually reaching the Keravat River, near the north coast.*

*However, following a skirmish there on 26 January, infantry Lieutenant Lennox Henry and Captain Silverman were delayed while treating some wounded troops, and were captured by the Japanese. The officers refused to identify another Australian soldier involved in the skirmish. The Japanese then*

*beheaded Henry on the spot and took Silverman to Rabaul because he said he was a doctor.*

*Back at Rabaul, on 30 January Silverman had unfortunately not been wearing his Red Cross brassard (armband) and the Japanese would not recognise his status as a doctor. They therefore considered him an escaping soldier and summarily executed him. [65 Watters, *Stitches in Time*, p. 194.] Captain Herbert Silverman, aged 31 and one of at least five Lark Force officers murdered by General Horii's troops, was posthumously Mentioned in Despatches.*

The names of these men are engraved at Bitapaka War Cemetery, Rabaul, and on the Australian Jewish War Memorial in Canberra.

Private David Bloomfield, Lance Sergeant Keith Levy, Lieutenant David Selby, and Signaller Issy Weingott not only survived but continued active service.

Levy was fortunate to escape on one of the last two Sunderland seaplane evacuation flights, after hiking for days to SumSum.

Bloomfield, Selby and Weingott miraculously survived months of hiking through the jungle until reaching Jacquinot Bay, where they were among 156 Diggers and civilians who boarded HMAS *Laurabada*, bound for Port Moresby on 10 April 1942.

Allen told *The Australian Jewish News*:

*Even as a researcher, I had not fully appreciated until now the primitiveness, cruelty and depravity of the treatment of the Lark Force POWs by the Japanese, and so I feel it is part of our military history that has not been told enough to the broader Australian community, and also the Jewish community.*

*We all know about the Japanese attack on Darwin, but their attack and invasion of Rabaul—which was then part of a territory of Australia—preceded that and resulted in greater loss of life.*

*What struck me most during my research was what each of those eight [Jewish] chaps went through, and their stories are a reflection of what all the Australians in Lark Force endured.*

**Information from  
'The Eight Jews of Lark Force—Tragedy and Salvation: The Japanese Invasion of Rabaul, 1942' by Peter Allen and the Australian Jewish News, 1 July 2022**

**Memorial News welcomes your stories, photos, research, maps and memorabilia**

**General email:** [admin@montevideo-maru.org](mailto:admin@montevideo-maru.org) (Andrea Williams)

**Send stories to:** [stories@montevideo-maru.org](mailto:stories@montevideo-maru.org) (Andrea Williams)

**For education information email:** [education@montevideo-maru.org](mailto:education@montevideo-maru.org) (Patrick Bourke)

## PNG KUNDU CONTRIBUTORS' INDEX: 2020–22



<b>ANTHONY, Quentin</b> A Smile from the Deep	Dec-21	<b>EGERTON, John AM</b> Artist from Papua New Guinea	Dec-22
<b>AUSTIN, Ron</b> A History of TAA Bristol Freighters Flown in New Guinea	Jun-21	has Solo Exhibition in London	Dec-22
Bristol Freighter Meets Wau Airstrip	Dec-21	Australia Remembers Kokoda	Jun-22
How to Bog a Bristol	Jun-22	Prelude to the Pacific War in New Guinea	Mar-22
Madang Yacht Club	Sep-22	Snakes Alive!	Jun-22
<b>BABLIS, Gregory</b> Lark Force Track	Sep-22	The Foundation Committee of the PNGAA	Dec-21
<b>BATEMAN, Sam</b> The RAN: the Silent Service in PNG (#1, #2)	Mar & Jun-20	<b>ELLIOTT, Adam</b> Death of Teaching Brothers	Mar-21
<b>BELL, Jane</b> Mantles & Mackerel from Beeps	Jun-22	<b>FAINU, Kalolaine</b> Goroka's Lovely Loos	Dec-21
<b>BELLOWES, James OAM</b> Native Troops in World War II	Sep-22	The Kina Meets the Tabu	Sep-22
<b>BENSON, Murrough</b> Family Farm to PNG Development Bank (#3 to #9)	Mar-20 to Sep-21	<b>FAVETTA, Fulvio</b> The Swamp Ghost	Jun-20
Establishment of Government Stations (Report from JK McCarthy)	Jun-21	<b>FINDLAY, Barney</b> One of these days we'll get to Kokoda ...	Jun-20
<b>BINGEDING, Nalau</b> The Army Patrol That Went Wrong (#1, #2)	Mar & Jun-22	<b>FITZPATRICK, Philip</b> Literature in PNG (#1, #2, #3)	Dec-21, Mar & Jun-22
<b>BINNING, Daryl ACS</b> The Kokoda Correction	Dec-20	<b>GAGAU, Steven</b> 'Iau Kul Kaugu Loko'	
Images to Ashes	Mar-22	I Bought My Rooster	Mar-21
<b>BROWN, Bill MBE</b> Frederick Peter Christian Kaad OBE	Sep-20	<b>GORNALL, Bill (JW)</b> A Memorable Experience (#1–#4)	Dec-20 to Sep-21
<b>CAPELIN, Steve</b> The Colony of La Nouvelle France and Paradiso—a Novel	Dec-21	<b>GOUGH, Joe</b> Close Calls: Spanning Forty Years in PNG	Mar-21
<b>CLELAND, Bob</b> My Last Years as a Kiap	Mar-20	<b>GUDE, Rupert</b> Experiences of a Medical Student in 1969	Jun-21
<b>COOKE, Robin OBE, OAM</b> Kuru—Science Meets Sorcery in the Fore	Jun-21	On Medical Patrol in the Highlands in 1969	Dec-21
Martin Ata'o, Pathology Museum Curator	Jun-22	<b>HARRIMAN, Bethanie</b> Farewell to the Grand Chief	Mar-21
Pig Bel—or, Too Much of a Good Thing?	Sep-21	<b>HENDERSON, Margaret</b> Memorial Commemorative Roll	Jun-22
Traditional Chest Surgery Among the Enga	Mar-22	<b>HOAD, Bob</b> A Walk from Tapini to Kokoda and Port Moresby	Dec-21
<b>DORNEY, Sean</b> Australia's Ignorance About PNG— a Loss for Both Nations	Sep-20	Beyond the Kubo	Mar-22
<b>DOWNIE, Catherine</b> John Downie's Flying Career in PNG	Jun-22	<b>HOOK, Don</b> Final Japanese Surrender in PNG	Sep-20
<b>EGAN, Graham</b> The Mount Tura Cargo Cult of 1971	Dec-21	<b>HOST, Jo &amp; UYS, Melinda</b> Pilgrimage to Rabaul: Aussie Col's Legacy	Dec-20
		<b>JEFFREY</b> Mother's Love: <i>Meri nambis</i>	Dec-22
		<b>JOHNSON, Wally</b> 70th Anniversary of Mt Lamington Disaster	Mar-21
		<b>JONES, Vice Admiral Peter</b> A Trail-Blazing Maritime Strategist	Jun-21



<b>KAAD, Gaynor</b> June Lovina Whittaker AM (#1, #2)	Sep & Dec-22	<b>McDONALD, Jenny</b> Training at Mt Hagen, 1982	Sep-22
<b>KEATING, David OAM</b> A Concrete Legacy	Mar-22	<b>McKINNON, Ken AO</b> Early Teaching Postings	Dec-22
<b>KERO, Gynnie</b> How Jackson Airport, Port Moresby, Was Named	Jun-22	<b>MILLER, Hugh</b> Our Walk from the Gimi Valley to Baimaru	Dec-21
<b>KIENZLE, Robyn</b> Bert Kienzle: The Architect of Kokoda	Jun-20	<b>MOOR, Rick</b> Papuan Carriers Memorial	Jun-21
<b>KING, Graham</b> The Demise of Regional Broadcasting	Sep-20	<b>MOXHAM, Natalie</b> Working with NGOs in PNG	Mar-21
<b>KIRKBY, Roy</b> Tisa: A Teacher's Experience in 1962–75 (#3)	Mar-20	<b>MUNRO, Paul R</b> Peter Broadhurst's Donation of Law Notes	Mar-22
<b>KNIGHT, Greg</b> Lieut-Colonel Maurice Wilder-Neligan	Jun-22	<b>MUNTZ, Bill</b> A Career Change Called	Sep-21
<b>KRANZ, Peter</b> Those Concert Parties of Wartime PNG	Sep-22	<b>MUSKENS, Will</b> The Day I Gave the Bad News to Kela Smith	Dec-21
<b>KUMARA, Vincent</b> A Place Where Heaven Meets Earth	Sep-21	<b>NALU, Malum</b> Building the Kassam Pass in 1953	Jun-22
<b>LIU, Adan Phillip</b> The Search for Nicolasa	Dec-21	<b>NORTHAM, Holly</b> Tim & Judy Terrell—An Enduring Love	Sep-22
<b>MACARTNEY, Belinda</b> Be Prepared for the Unexpected	Jun-20	<b>PARER, Rob CMG, MBE</b> First Flight to Tadj—Liberation of Aitape Samuel Warren Carey, Oil Search Ltd	Dec-22 Jun-20
<b>MACEY, Myra</b> Gemo Island Hospital (#1, #2)	Jun-20 & Jun-21	<b>PEACOCK, Andrew</b> Papua New Guinea's Transition to Independence	Sep-21
<b>MACKELLAR, Chips</b> The Faithful Committal When the Last Old Kiap Dies	Mar-22 Sep-22	<b>PIKE, Des</b> Astrolabe Bay Coffee Break at Madang Guam Lakes Patrol	Sep-22 Mar-22 Dec-22
<b>MARIBU, Grace</b> Rabaul ... September 1994	Dec-21	<b>PNG Olympic Committee</b> 'Faster, Higher & Stronger'— 2021 Olympics, Tokyo	Dec-21
<b>McBURNIE, Bronwyn</b> Laurie Bragge's Generous Donation to JCU	Mar-20	<b>PNG Ports Corporation</b> PNG Ports: Built on the Scars of War	Dec-22
<b>McCARTHY, Dick</b> External Interventions into the Forest Sector	Jun-22	<b>POWELL, Marg</b> Out of the Box ... Sgt Herbert Collection	Sep-22
<b>McCOOK, Bryan</b> Tragic Events at Tauta	Sep-20		



In the Eastern Highlands near Goroka, villagers celebrate receiving sanitation certification, 2021—(Kalolaine Fainu)



Namau Primary School students, Karkar Island, 1961—(Len Smith)

<b>PRATT, Fred</b> Mt Fubilan, Ok Tedi & Other Tales (#1, #2, #3)	Jun, Sep & Dec-20	<b>STACE, Peter</b> There are Buffalo on Selapiu Island The Christmas of 1968: The Longest Ever The Kukukuku Clubs Food Forests of West New Britain	Sep-20 Dec-20 Mar-21 Jun-21
<b>QUINN, John</b> The Free West Papua Movement A Memory Jogged Japanese Prison Ships	Jun-20 Mar-22 Dec-22	<b>The Sydney Morning Herald</b> A Thousand Miles to Freedom	Dec-22
<b>RANNEY, Ron</b> Researching the Saipan Connection	Mar-22	<b>The Age, 1944</b> By Air & Sea: Dramatic Rescues in the South Pacific	Dec-22
<b>ROGERS, Howard &amp; INAHO, Bega</b> Mining Impacts Across the Ok Tedi & Fly River Floodplains	Mar-22	<b>The Canberra Times, 2019</b> Turning Point in WWII	Sep-22
<b>ROGERS, Peter</b> A Wartime Aviation Tragedy	Mar-20	<b>THOMPSON, Deryck</b> Coca Cola Diplomacy in Papua New Guinea Travel in the Land of the Unexpected Misima After Thirty Years Record Delivery Time	Dec-22 Mar-20 Jun-20 Dec-20
<b>ROSS, Annette</b> Strength & Fortitude—Pat & Bill Guest	Mar-21	<b>THURSTON, Elizabeth</b> Kina Awai from Baluan in the Admiralties	Jun-20
<b>SCHAFFARCZYK, Sylvia</b> A Port Moresby Museum?	Jun-21	<b>TONER, Mary</b> Una Voce's Correspondent from the Northern Territory: Jim Toner BEM	Jun-20
<b>SHANAHAN, Peter</b> Back to Wau after the War (#1, #2)	Dec-20 & Mar-21	<b>TRUSS, Bevyne</b> Building the Road up the West Coast of New Ireland It All Started with Jeeps Plant Maintenance in New Ireland The Boluminski Highway Trials & Tribulations	Sep-21 Sep-20 Mar-21 Jun-21 Jun-22
<b>SHARPLES, Chris</b> The PNG Star Mountains: Still Wild After All These Years (#1, #2)	Sep-21 & Dec-21	<b>UECHTRITZ, Max &amp; KEOUGH, Jeff</b> Robinson Sakiki MM	Jun-20
<b>SINCLAIR, Jan</b> A Four-Day Visit to Madang for the Launch of the DIWAI	Jun-20	<b>UECHTRITZ, Max</b> The Huli Wigmen of Tari Australia's New Consul-General Has PNG Heritage	Mar-20 Sep-20
<b>SKELTON, Tony</b> PNG Memories	Dec-20	<b>VIAL, Brian</b> From Little Things, Bigger Things Grow	Mar-20
<b>SMITH, Ian</b> Recollections of a Plantation Manager in the New Guinea Islands Plantation Life in the 1960s	Dec-21 Dec-22		
<b>SMITH, Len</b> Fast Track Teacher Training: My Experience Namau Primary T School Life and Times at Talidig School 1961–62	Dec-20 Mar-21 Sep-21		



<b>VOLKER, CA</b> How Do Papua New Guineans Count?	Dec-22	<b>WORSLEY, Peter</b> Memories of a Kiap: Morobe District	Mar-20
<b>WADE, Russell</b> Sydney Anzac Day March to Remember	Sep-21	<b>WOTTON, Don</b> The Yonki Dam Project	Jun-20
<b>WALL, Jack</b> The Old Goroka Hospital	Sep-21	<b>WRONSKA-FRIEND, Maria</b> Tony Friend Scholarship for Telefomin & Oksapmin Students	Jun-21
<b>WARRILLOW, Chris</b> A Summary: Patrolling in Western Papua Rural Development and Planning— A Case Study (B Holloway)	Mar-22 Dec-22	<b>YOUNG, Colin</b> The Finding of Ok Tedi	Dec-20
<b>WETHERILL, David</b> Are These PNG's Oldest Surviving Mission Buildings?	Sep-22	<b>ZIMMER-TAMAKOSHI, Laura</b> The Imuri Fire Dancers	Dec-21
<b>WHITE, Osmar (Courier-Mail)</b> Ordeal of New Guinea Evacuees	Jun-22	<b>PNG Kundu Editorial</b> Accolades for Fred Kaad	Dec-20
<b>WHITEMAN, Josephine</b> Two Tales from My Visit to the Fore Area in 1957	Sep-21	Anzac Day, 2022	Jun-22
<b>WHITLAM INSTITUTE</b> PNG Voices: Listening to Australia's Closest Neighbour	Sep-22	Damien Parer, Master Photographer	Jun-22
<b>WILLIAMS, Andrea</b> 80th Anniversary Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Commemorations	Sep-22	Marston Matting	Sep-22
Celebrating PNGAA's 70th Anniversary	Mar-22	Papua New Guinea Association of Australia	Dec-20
Last Pack 'n Post	Sep-21	Papua New Guinea's Road to Independence	Sep-21
Vale to Our Patrons	Mar-21	PNG Celebrates 45 Years of Independence	Sep-20
<b>WOHLERS, Peter</b> Kiaps and the Antarctic	Sep-20	PNG Kundu Contributors' Index 2020-22	Dec-22
<b>WOODWARD, Susan</b> With DCA in PNG	Jun-20	Saving Kwato Island	Mar-22
		The Flying Cowboy: Sqd. Ldr Peter Turnbull DFC	Sep-22
		<i>Una Voce: 'with one voice'</i>	Mar-20
		Vale Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh	Jun-21
		Victoria Crowned Pigeon— <i>Goura victoria</i>	Jun-20
		<b>PNG Kundu Special Features</b> Farewell to the Grand Chief	Jun-21
		Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 1926-2022	Dec-22
		The Pacific War: Buna-Gona 1942	Dec-22
		The Pacific War: Kokoda 1942	Jun-22
		The Pacific War: Milne Bay 1942	Sep-22
		The Pacific War: New Guinea Islands 1942	Mar-22



## Guidelines for Contributors to PNG Kundu

**We welcome factual and anecdotal stories of various lengths, information about members of PNGAA and their activities, letters and enquiries, reviews of art and books, photos, news and reunions—a diverse range of material is welcome—the common factor being that it is relevant to Papua New Guinea in some way.**

- **Who can contribute?** We welcome contributions from members and non-members. Citizens of PNG are welcome to contribute.
- **Contributions to be submitted as Word documents:** We prefer Arial font, size 11 for all electronic submissions. Appropriate references are required if the article has been taken from a website or another primary source. Note: PDFs and handwritten submissions will be accepted subject to availability of volunteers to convert them into Word documents.
- **Length of contributions:** Stories should be between 500 and 1,500 words—longer submissions are welcome but may be split over two or more sequential issues due to space issues. Vales are normally about 300-500 words—longer vales may be separated into a shorter vale and the longer version added to the website. News items and reviews should not normally exceed 500 words. The number of words should be added to each contribution.
- **Photographs:** should be submitted as JPGs, minimum 300 dpi, with appropriate acknowledgement and captions.
- **All contributions are subject to editorial consideration:** The editorial team reserves the right to reject, reduce and/or postpone publication. While every attempt is made to reply or publish in a reasonable time, there may be times when your patience is appreciated. However, members may add their stories and photos directly to our website.

**All contributions should be submitted to the editor, John Egerton, at [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net) by the Copy Deadline stated on the masthead page of each issue of PNG Kundu**



## Treasurer's Corner

**Payments to:** PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515

**Enquiries to:** [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net) or phone 0448 216 049

### MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

To place an order, please tick the appropriate boxes below, fill in the details on the form overleaf, and mail to PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515 or email to [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net)

#### PNGAA MEMBERSHIP

Rates shown are for 12 months' membership

☐ I wish to renew my membership

☐ I wish to become a new member

**Resident in Australia**

**\$50.00**

MEMB

**Resident in Asia/Pacific Postal Zone**

**\$70.00**

**Resident in Rest of World Postal Zone**

**\$80.00**

**Digital Membership only**

**\$33.00**

(i.e. no hard copy or postage costs)

#### PNGAA DONATIONS

☐ General Donations

DON

☐ Scholarship Fund

DONSF

#### PNGAA EVENTS

(See details in the Events Diary of this issue)

☐ **2022 PNGAA Christmas Luncheon—4 December 2022**

**\$70.00**

SYDX

#### PNGAA STORE

☐ **Land of the Unexpected**

**\$30.00**

LOTU

Add \$7 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942**

**\$60.00**

WWC

Add \$20 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **The Volcano's Wife**

**\$25.00**

VOL

Add \$7 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **Cloudlands Memoirs**

**\$15.00**

CLD

Add \$3 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **Walk Into Paradise (DVD)**

**\$10.00**

WIP

Add \$5 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **Kiap: Stories Behind the Medal (DVD)**

**\$25.00**

KIAP

Add \$5 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **Rabaul and Montevideo Maru 70th Anniversary (DVD)**

**\$20.00**

RMVM

Add \$5 postage within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **PNGAA Tote Bag**

**\$15.00**

TOTE

Add \$10 postage (10 bags \$20) within Australia—o'seas extra

☐ **PNGAA Membership Directory: 2022 Edition**

Available free of charge to members on the PNGAA website. First log on with your password at: [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org) then select 'The PNGAA' then 'Official Business (Members Only)' and follow the links. If you need help, please contact our Membership Officer, Roy Ranney, whose contact details are inside the front cover of this journal.

**TOTAL COST \$ .....**



## 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/)

## MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Please **print** your name and address below and fill out the relevant parts of the Order Form overleaf  
**Note that your journal address label indicates when your membership expires**

Name: ..... Membership number (if known): .....

Address: ..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: ..... Mobile: .....

Email address: .....

☐ 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/>

## PAYMENT—Please tick method of remittance

☐ **CHEQUE Payable to:** PNGAA **Post to:** PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515

☐ **EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer)** **Transfer to:** BSB: 062-009 / Account No. 0090 7724

In the transaction description include the Purpose Code (from the Order Form overleaf) and Member Number or surname. (Note: More than 20 characters may not be transmitted by the bank.)

Please send a confirmation email to: [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net)

☐ **CREDIT/DEBIT CARD**

Either post to: PNGAA, PO Box 250, Kilcoy QLD 4515 OR pay through the PNGAA website

Card Number: ..... / ..... / ..... Amount Payable: \$ .....

Expiry Date: ..... / ..... Security Code (on back of card): .....

Name on Card (please print): .....

Signature of Card Holder: ..... Date: .....

## Artist from Papua New Guinea has Solo Exhibition in London

An artist, whose making of bark cloth (*nioge*) and exhibition of examples of it at the Royal Academy of Art in London were described in the September 2022 issue of *PNG KUNDU*, is now to have a solo exhibition in the UK. This is the first solo exhibition by an artist from Papua New Guinea to be held outside that country.



1. Lima Savari Eje Breast Plate—Bark Cloth 2020, 330 x 60

2. Ilma Savari, Eye of the Sun, 2020 —Bark cloth

3. Lima Savari Victory Banner, 2020 —Bark Cloth

(Images courtesy of Rebecca Hossack Gallery)

The artist, now exhibiting as Ilma Ugiobari, is a member of the Ömie people, a group from the slopes of Mount Lamington in the Oro Province of Papua New Guinea. Her boldly composed and meticulously executed images are painted on sheets of fine-grained bark cloth made from the inner bark of mulberry or fig trees. Additional elements are appliquéd onto this ground, stitched with a needle fashioned from the finest bone of a bat wing.

The exhibition, 'Eye of the Sun', to be displayed at the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, 2a Conway Street, London, W1T 6BA from 5–30 November 2022 will include 15 works, all of which will be for sale. Prices for the artworks will be available from the gallery closer to the time of the exhibition but, as an indication, a piece exhibited at the Royal Academy of Art was valued at £2,275.

Her restrained palette—of ivory whites, charcoal greys, cinnamon reds, and brilliant golds—derives from her immediate rainforest environment. Pigments are made variously from pounded and chewed leaves, roots, volcanic ash and fruit pulp.

*Nioge* are a central feature of Ömie life and culture. Made almost exclusively by women, they are used for personal adornment, domestic comfort, and ceremonial purposes. The essential iconography of their decoration derives from long tradition and combines schematic

*Soru'e* (tattoo) designs with figurative elements gleaned from close observation of the natural world.

The Gallery describes her work thus:

*Every pattern and colour choice is freighted with meaning. Nioge play a vital role in contemporary Ömie society in their recording and preservation of ancestral stories and spiritual teachings. Deploying these traditional elements in her own distinctive fashion, Savari creates work that combines a deep knowledge of her ancestral history with an unexpected contemporary directness.*

Ilma is excited to be attending the exhibition at the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery in London—a gallery committed to championing indigenous women artists from around the globe.

### Previous Ömie Artists Exhibitions

- The National Gallery of Victoria had an exhibition of bark paintings of the Ömie people in 2009. Thirty-four *nioge* created by 14 artists were on display from 29 November 2009 to 14 March 2010.

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/wisdom-of-the-mountain/>

- In 2017 Oceanic Art Society had an exhibition of new works by senior artists and chiefs of the Ömie Artists Inc.

<https://www.oceanicartsociety.org.au/omie-barkcloth-art-png/>

- The catalogue for an exhibition of *nioge* in London in 2018 can be viewed at the following website:

[https://issuu.com/jgmgallery/docs/omie\\_catalogue\\_for\\_issu](https://issuu.com/jgmgallery/docs/omie_catalogue_for_issu)

**JOHN EGERTON AM**



# Japanese Prison Ships

**Readers of PNG Kundu are familiar with the sinking of the Japanese prison ship, *Montevideo Maru*, on 1 July 1942, and that 20 of the Japanese crew successfully abandoned the ship leaving the prisoners locked below to endure their ghastly fate as seawater flooded in. They might be unaware, however, of what conditions for the Australian prisoners would have been like on other prison ships and what was likely to be their fate if ships reached their destination.**

*Lest We Forget*

Their movement from PNG was part of a systematic attempt by the Japanese to remove all European prisoners from areas they had conquered to places either near to or in Japan itself—from where it would be harder to escape and where their labour might be useful to the Japanese war effort, seeing that millions of Japanese males had been conscripted into their armies.

To give you an example, the *Kukai Maru*, a prison ship from Singapore, had its holds fitted with a double tier of bunks with each bunk covered with thin straw matting with each prisoner having a six-foot by two-foot space and those on the bottom barely able to sit up with those on the top bunk slightly better off. On this ship, the prisoners were allowed on deck for six hours a day before being locked down, suffering the fearful anxiety that they were doomed if any Allied plane or submarine chanced upon them as there was no indication that the ship carried prisoners.

Food, at best, was two cups of rice mixed with barley in the proportion of two to one, a cup of watery stew flavoured with either onion or a type of cabbage and maybe a few tins of meat and vegetables—from captured British supplies. As one could imagine, the stifling heat in these steel ships in tropic conditions (no air-conditioning) was almost unendurable. Latrines, built of flimsy timber and overhanging the side of the ship were never adequate and the scenes during the periodic outbreaks of diarrhoea and dysentery were revolting in the extreme. Another unnamed prison ship which also left Singapore with over 1,000 prisoners had 80 dying from dysentery and starvation on the voyage with another 200 dying after it reached its destination.

When they had landed, prisoners could expect arduous labour in coal mines, shipyards and steel mills, perhaps working 12- and 18-hour shifts with brutal beatings the norm and barrack buildings becoming infected with lice, flies and other bugs. As the war deteriorated for Japan in 1944 and 1945, rations were cut and cut again with Red Cross parcels being plundered and not handed out and there was also the ever-present danger of becoming casualties of the American B-29 air-raids, which covered the whole of Japan.

After the Japanese surrender, over 14,000 Australian prisoners of the nearly 21,000 captured were repatriated with the lost 7,000 including the 1,053 from the *Montevideo Maru* never to be forgotten. ♦

**JOHN QUINN**

See also: <https://veteransresources.org/2020/09/wwii-hell-ships/n>



*Rakuyo Maru,*  
one of the Japanese Hell Ships

**ISSN 2652-5208, PPA 224987/00025**  
**DECEMBER 2022 • Vol. 3, No. 12**